

THE SIX-DAY WAR OF 1899

Hong Kong in the Age of Imperialism

Patrick H. Hase



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1899: Hong Kong in the Age of Imperialism

The year 1899 was the pinnacle of Imperialism as a belief-system in Britain. That the Empire was a major force for good in the world was, in that year, a belief strongly held by the overwhelming majority of the people of Britain. Britain's continual Imperial expansion, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, had led the British to believe in themselves and their Imperial role with unshakeable self-confidence and pride.

Britain's Imperial expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century was marked off by a series of small colonial military campaigns, in which the British armed forces were almost uniformly victorious. These small colonial wars, punctuation points in the story of British Imperial expansion, were born of British self-confidence and pride in their Imperial role, and, in turn, boosted that self-confidence and pride even further once the campaign was brought to its inevitable victorious conclusion.

In 1898, Britain had acquired from China a 99-year lease of the New Territories (新界),¹ a large tract of land on the frontier of the old Colony of Hong Kong, ceded in 1843 and 1860. The New Territories were taken over by the British in April 1899. (See Map 1.) This act of Imperial expansion triggered an uprising of the indigenous people of part of the New Territories against the takeover, an insurrection that was put down by the British Army in a six-day campaign. This small colonial war was a reflex of the self-confidence and pride in its role and position which Hong Kong (香港) so clearly showed at this date. The detailed history of the campaign is given below, but it is desirable to preface it with a brief account of the British Imperialist belief-system which underpinned it.²

British Imperialism in the Late Nineteenth Century

By 1899, Britain had had an Empire for three hundred years, but Imperialism, the belief-system which justified Empire, was a development of the nineteenth century, and essentially of the fifty years before 1899. After the Reform Act of 1832, politics in Britain came to be dominated by the middle classes, who believed strongly that foreign policy had to be morally justifiable, and not merely a matter of crude national self-interest. This demand for a morally justifiable foreign policy was first expressed through opposition to slavery. After successfully getting the slave-trade stopped (in British ships from 1808, and everywhere on the high seas from 1818),³ slavery was finally banned throughout all British territories from 1833. Once this great victory was won, attention was turned to the justification for Empire, to ensure, to the satisfaction of the British middle classes, that it was morally justifiable for the British to rule over non-British peoples overseas.

In the middle and later nineteenth century, the dominant justification for Empire was the concept of “mission”: that the British had a duty to bring the benefits of civilisation to backward places. While British political leaders continued to be very much aware of concepts such as “British interests”, the bulk of British middle-class opinion came more and more to view the Empire as an essentially moral issue: how best could Britain use its power and position to civilise and enlighten the peoples of its Empire, and thus make the world a generally better place?

Britain produced few theoreticians of Empire: indeed, “pragmatism” was always held up by the British as one of the great virtues of their Imperial rule, by which was meant common-sense implementation of an understood, but not formally expressed, Imperial system. Nonetheless, that Imperial rule had to be underpinned at all points and all places by a sense of moral mission, a mission to ensure that all men achieved real and complete civilisation, was widely understood and accepted as the basis of British Imperial rule.⁴

Sir Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies for much of the 1890s, made a number of statements as to his concept of Imperialism, which show this concept of moral mission very clearly:

I believe that the British race is the greatest of governing races that the world has ever seen . . . As fast as we acquire new territory . . . [we] develop it as trustees of civilisation . . . In almost every case in which . . . the great *Pax Britannica* has been enforced there has come with it greater security to life and property and a material improvement in the condition of the bulk of the population . . . Great is the task, great is the responsibility, but great is the honour.⁵

Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India in the late 1890s, also put it very clearly:

The British Empire is, under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has seen . . . In Empire, we have found not merely the key to glory and wealth, but the call to duty, and the means of service to mankind.⁶

Winston Churchill said much the same: he was sure that the people of Britain had to fulfil:

their great, their proud, their peculiar mission of diffusing among the peoples who were now, or who might later become, subject to their rule, the blessings of civilisation, freedom, and peace.⁷

As these quotes make clear, Imperial rule was justified as improving the world. It was often seen, indeed, as a quasi-religious matter, a “faith”, a “belief”.⁸

It will be seen that, if British Imperialism was, as it considered itself to be, a great force for good in the world, then there could be few moral restraints on British Imperial expansion. If rule of colonial peoples by the British was to the benefit of the colonial peoples, then Imperial expansion was in itself a good thing, extending the scope of the civilising mission of the Empire. As Langer puts it, because of the “fitness to rule” of the British, as seen by them: “The extension of the Empire would be a boon to those peoples that were taken over, even if they were brought in by force.”⁹ At the very least, Imperial expansion was unlikely to be opposed on moral grounds in Britain, and opposition to any instance of expansion was more likely to be based on the expense or expediency of the proposal than the morality of it.

The civilisation that upper-middle-class Britain felt called on to introduce to the overseas areas under their control was their own: a civilisation built on the culture of upper-middle-class British gentlemen, the civilisation of the British public school. The extension of this culture and civilisation to the rest of the world was seen by them as self-evidently the best possible development, the best possible guarantee that the world would become a better place.

It is worth noting that there is nothing in the concept of Imperialism which is “democratic”: the “gentlemen” saw themselves, and expected to be seen by others, as leaders, an elite, set far above the mass of the people of Britain, and still more the mass of the people of the Empire, with a natural right to take decisions for those subordinate to them. “Law and Order”, which was, perhaps, the most vital part of this upper-middle-class British belief-system, meant, on the one hand, justice and fair-dealing, but it also meant the

poor and depressed following the leadership of their “natural superiors”, for that is what “order” essentially meant in the nineteenth century.

The British public schools, and the ancient Universities, especially from the second quarter of the nineteenth century (after, that is, the great reforms of the public schools of this period), took boys from “good, solid” middle-class families, and, to the best of their ability, built up their character and strengthened their powers of leadership, and thus turned them into “gentlemen”.

This concept of “gentlemen” implied that the graduates would, it was hoped, be young men who were manly, fit, valiant, dedicated lovers of sport, clean in life and body, but with a sense of fun. They would be men who were imbued with an immensely strong sense of duty, and an equally strong sense of patriotism. Such gentlemen would be men who were deeply committed to what was fair and above-board, so that they would be marked out as more than ordinarily just, truthful, frank, and trustworthy. At the same time, they would be men who were equally committed to the belief that “order”, the appropriate relationship between class and class or group and group, was something which needed to be sustained. They would be conventionally religious but without being excessively pious; highly intelligent and conventionally well-educated; hard-working, but uninterested in wealth or position; used to subordinating their personal ambitions and desires into what was best for the small, tightly-organised group of which they formed part, and so unwilling to push themselves forward, but who at the same time were natural leaders, trained from a very young age in leading those younger or less senior than themselves. They were, in short, therefore, men of a very strong and deeply laid character, but with charm, good-breeding, and good manners as well. Such “gentlemen” were seen by the upper-middle-class families from which they had come as being the very best the human race had to offer. In whatever situation they found themselves, their natural qualities would, it was assumed, ensure that they took the lead, and that other men would recognise this and take them as their leaders and rulers.

While not all public school boys were able to reach these high standards, a very large number of them did: at the end of the nineteenth century nothing is more striking than the very large numbers of young men who could be found throughout the Empire who did, to a large extent, meet them.

It was clear that, if this concept of Imperial mission was to be implemented, the first step to doing it would have to be the appointment as imperial officers of young men who themselves were fully committed to the implementation of the concept. The best boys from the public schools went on, in most cases, to the ancient Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Trinity College, Dublin,

or to one of the ancient Scottish universities, where the ethos and attitudes of their schools were, in this period, strengthened further. It was, therefore, clear to the rulers of the Empire that the best graduates from the ancient Universities should be chosen, by competitive examination and interview, and sent out to the Empire as District Officers to ensure that the Imperial mission was implemented.¹⁰

It was in the Punjab, in India, in the 1840s, that the Lawrence brothers started to try to select as their District Officers men meeting these criteria. By the 1860s, the same selection processes had started in at least those parts of the Empire with “cadet services” (India, Ceylon, Malaya, and Hong Kong): good public-school youths of promise would be selected from the ancient Universities as “cadets”, who would go out on probation to the territory chosen for them, and there they would, if trial found them to be as suitable as the selection process suggested, become “officers”. With every year that passed, more and more young men thoroughly imbued with Imperialist views were produced, and sent out to the Colonies, where they reinforced and developed the sense of Imperial moral mission to which they were all so committed.

It was not only the Colonial Service which wanted to employ these public-school youths, these “natural leaders”, these paragons of the British upper-middle-class culture: the Foreign Office looked to recruit its young consular and diplomatic officials from the same source, the Home Civil Service its officer recruits, and the Army its young subalterns, although the Army preferred to take them directly from the public schools, rather than the Universities, in this period. The major commercial companies also looked to this source for many of their senior staff. All these groups, therefore, in this period, were full of men of a very similar character, and equally committed to the British Imperial mission.

Once a suitable young man was chosen and sent out to some part of the Empire to work, there were, of course, certain assumptions made as to how he would react to the people and culture he had been sent to rule. There were two assumptions which were particularly significant. It was assumed, in the first place, that the young cadet officer would be a man of great intelligence and intellectual curiosity. He would wish to study and become master of the culture and beliefs of the subject people under him. The British Imperialist belief-system did not assume that there was nothing of value in the culture of the subject people. Quite the contrary: it was assumed that there would be much that was of great value in it. The British Imperial ruler would provide peace, prosperity, a modern infrastructure, the rule of law, a modern education, and a fair, transparent, and just system of Government. The native culture might have to be modified to allow this, but everything in it which could co-

exist with this modern, fair Government should be kept, and, indeed, defended and strengthened. The young cadet officer would, it was assumed, soon understand from his own researches and contacts with the people what there was in the native culture which was valuable, and which should be preserved, and would then take steps to ensure that it was so preserved.

The British Imperialists were very well aware that there were “civilised vices” as well as “civilised virtues”, and, while it was the young cadet officer’s prime responsibility to ensure that the civilised virtues were indeed introduced, his almost equally significant role was to try to ensure that the civilised vices were excluded. The Imperialist held no brief for the totality of British life in the late nineteenth century: that the inner-city slums of Britain were hotbeds of every vice and degradation, and that many British factories where scenes of gross exploitation were clearly understood by the Imperialist. Indeed, part of the Imperialist belief-system was the belief that the best of British culture could be exported to the Empire, and there conjoined with the best in the native culture, while the flaws and disgraceful facts of British inner-city life could be excluded. All this was best done by a forthright defence of, and support for, the virtues of the native culture. An intelligent understanding, even a scholarly study, of the native culture was, therefore, a duty for the young cadet officer, and it was assumed that he would react positively to this urgent requirement. It will thus be seen that British Imperialism was essentially conservative: it wished to defend and preserve the essential core of the traditional culture of the native peoples under British rule, as well as introducing the essential core of the traditional culture of upper-middle-class Britain.

The second important assumption as to how the young cadet officer would operate in the area he was sent to rule was that he would gather around himself contacts from the native people who would co-operate with him, and thus offset the lack of substantial numbers of British staff in the area. British Imperial rule was, and had to be, rule by a very small number of men. Britain just did not have the money to provide Government in depth for the quarter of the world it had become responsible for. Hong Kong, with over a quarter-million inhabitants by 1899, was ruled by no more than half a dozen or so cadet officers, perhaps twenty or so technical officers (engineers, doctors, etc), perhaps about the same number of British clerks and junior staff, and perhaps the same number again of Police Officers. However, Hong Kong, as a great city, had, if anything, more British officers per hundred thousand inhabitants than other, more rural, territories. It was always impressed on the young cadet officer that, even though he had been appointed because he was seen to be a “natural leader”, nonetheless he could not expect to do his job without support, support which he would have to get.

There were “natural leaders” also among the native peoples, and it was their support the young cadet officer should seek. Given the upper-middle-class basis of the Imperial belief-system, it was natural that the assumption was that these would be those of the subject people who were closest in their background to the British upper-middle-class: the native landed aristocracy, the wealthy native merchant-princes, and the native scholars. The young cadet officer was called on to draw these native “natural leaders” to his side, to establish amicable and intimate friendly relations with them, to ensure that he was, at all times, aware of their views and assumptions, and to address these in what he did, avoiding as far as possible insensitive disruption to them. There should be, in other words, a structure of co-operation: the British elite and the native elite should work together for the greater good of the native people at large. The British saw no urgent need or real value in their young cadet officers reaching out to the mass of the people under their control: they should be in close contact with the “natural leaders” of the native people, and these native “natural leaders” could inform the Imperial officer of what he needed to know about the thoughts and fears of the mass of the native people.

There was, of course, some racialism in the Imperialist system: it is not difficult to find late nineteenth century British statements about the racial superiority of the “white races” over the “coloured races”. What is noticeable, however, is how unimportant this element was in general. Imperialism was, at its heart, culturalist, not racialist. There was a general view that, while the British upper-middle-class intelligent public school and ancient University graduate was the best the world had to offer (as Langer, the great student of British Imperialism, put it: “The British were convinced they were the patricians of the human race”),¹¹ the native aristocracy of the subject people were often greatly to be preferred over the products of British inner-city slums. Racialism was certainly not the determinant factor in the British Imperialist belief-system.¹²

Imperialism, that is, this idea of Imperial mission, grew up as a powerful belief-system within the British politically-aware middle classes especially from the 1840s, as noted above. During this early period there were certainly opponents of the idea. However, during the 1860s, these anti-Imperial voices mostly died away.¹³ By the 1870s, there can be no doubt that Imperialism was the belief of the majority, probably the overwhelming majority, of the politically-aware groups in Britain.

In 1876, Disraeli arranged for Queen Victoria to become “Empress of India”. In this, as in so much of what Disraeli did, he was closely in touch with “public opinion” (as always, in the later nineteenth century, this means

the opinion of the middle-classes): this step was very widely popular, and should be seen as marking the point where Imperialism became undoubtedly part of the solid centre of British political life. Thornton, in his study of Imperialism and its enemies, can find no anti-Imperialists, no significant opponents of the Imperial Idea, in the whole generation from 1876 to 1902 within Britain. During this period, there were extreme Imperialists (“Jingoists”), whole-hearted Imperialists (including effectively the whole of the Conservative Party, except for the Jingoists, but also including a growing number of the members of the Liberal Party), and moderate Imperialists (in the 1870s and 1880s, these included the mainstream of the Liberal Party), but few, if any, anti-Imperialists. Such anti-Imperialists as there were, were seen as members of a “Lunatic Fringe”, and had no status or following. Thornton dates the first anti-Imperialist works of substance to the period of the Boer War, and specifically to 1902 and the years immediately after 1902.¹⁴

During the late 1880s and 1890s, this dominance of the political scene by Imperialism became even more absolute. This was the period when universal suffrage was being introduced into Britain, and the working classes were, at this date, very strongly Imperialist in sentiment.¹⁵ The killing of Gordon at Khartoum, in 1884, by the Mahdists, at a time when there was a moderate-Imperialist Liberal Government in Britain under Gladstone, led to a great wave of revulsion against the Liberals, who were seen as being directly responsible for his death because of what was seen as their half-hearted support for him. The Liberal Party fell from power, and were out of power for almost all the next decade, precisely because the electorate considered them unsound and not to be trusted on the Empire. By the time the Liberals came back into power, in 1894, the mainstream of the party had declared themselves to be “Liberal Imperialists”, and as whole-hearted in their support for the concept as ever the Conservatives were. In other words, whole-hearted Imperialism had, by the mid-1890s, become a common belief-system of both the main British political parties.

By the mid-1890s, therefore, Imperialism was thus an unquestioned political belief-system, throughout the field of politics in Britain. It was espoused with great fervour and vigour. Imperialism has been subjected to so much ridicule and bitter attack over the last seventy years and more that it is difficult today for anyone to realise how universal, and how deep, was the belief in Imperialism in the last decades of the nineteenth century in Britain. It resonated with the deepest-held beliefs and feelings of the young men of the day. It was seen as a belief-system to live and die for. It was viewed as the greatest hope for the general good of the world at large. If religious missionaries

strove to disseminate the beliefs of Christianity, Imperial officers strove to disseminate British secular beliefs. Both the religious and the secular missionaries were given similar levels of respect and adulation, both were regarded as doing a great work which was for the good of the whole world. It cannot be stressed too much how strong the support given to Imperialism was, especially during the late 1880s and 1890s.

In every field it is this period, the late 1880s and 1890s, which stands out as the pinnacle of the Imperialist Age in Britain. In this period, for instance, popular novels for boys became more and more Imperialist in tone and content.¹⁶ Equally, it is in this period that the first significant academic studies of Imperialism were written, especially the immensely influential *Expansion of England* published by Sir John Seeley in 1883, which gave considerable academic stature to the Imperialist belief-system.¹⁷

The great Imperialist public figures of the late 1890s were men of such towering eminence that it is not difficult to see how their presence dominated their age. This is the period when Curzon was Viceroy in India, Milner Governor-General in South Africa, Cromer was ruling Egypt, Swettenham Malaya, and Lugard was developing his theories of Imperial rule in East and West Africa, while the greatest of all Britain's Secretaries for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain ("the most spectacular and probably the most influential imperialist among British statesmen"),¹⁸ was running the Empire from his offices in Smith Square. Lord Roberts was coming to the end of his immensely successful period as Commander-in-Chief, India, during which he had made the Indian Army the finest Colonial fighting force in the world. Two highly competent, immensely fervid and thorough-going Imperialists — Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery — between them governed Britain as Prime Minister for all but two years of the period 1885–1902. Elsewhere, too, the 1890s saw immensely competent and charismatic figures occupying all the major Imperial positions. In the face of such a stellar group of figures it is certainly difficult to see how anything other than Imperialism could get a hearing in this period.

The British Imperial ideal started to fail during the Second Boer War (October 1899–1902). The incapacity of the British Army to defeat the Boers was highly embarrassing, and the cruelties inflicted even more so. The hollowness of the Imperialist rhetoric which this War highlighted led to people looking to see — and finding out — just how far the actual administration of the Empire had fallen behind the Imperialist ideal. The War showed that the assumed virtues of the British Imperialist system were not necessarily appreciated by the subject peoples who were receiving the benefit of them. Other subject peoples as well as the Boers, in Egypt and India especially,

started talking, and agitating, for Self-Rule, and the Imperialists were hard put to defend their continuing self-confidence in Britain's Imperialist mission. Academic texts fiercely opposed to Imperialism started to appear. From 1902 onwards Imperialism was on the defensive, and even more so after the First World War of 1914–1918. Imperialism was forced to accept defeat from the 1940s, and disappeared as a vital belief-system from then.

However, in 1899 this was all in the future. The Spring and Summer of 1899, before the Second Boer War broke out in October of that year, was the pinnacle of Imperialism. "The people of England . . . have all become Imperialists";¹⁹ "The tone of Empire is to be heard everywhere now, strong, clear, and unmistakable".²⁰ The Imperialist belief-system was then without significant opponents, absolutely confident in its role and purpose, under the direction of some of the ablest men Britain had ever produced, and supported with fervour by most of the people of Britain.

Hong Kong in the Age of Imperialism

Hong Kong in 1899 was an extremely self-confident city. That self-confidence was based, on the one hand, on confidence in Britain's Imperial role, a confidence Hong Kong shared with the rest of the British Empire, and, on the other, on Hong Kong's obvious successes as a well-governed, highly prosperous, and outstandingly successful commercial and mercantile centre.

The City of Hong Kong had been born as a result of the First Anglo-Chinese War (the First Opium War), of 1841. Before that date, Western trade with China was confined to Canton, and was subject to a stifling Chinese Imperial bureaucratic monopoly. The British were determined to use their victory in this War to force open more Chinese ports to trade. They were also determined to get a British possession on the coast of China where the essential banking and financial services needed to support Western trade with China could exist free of interference from the Chinese Imperial bureaucracy, where Western trading houses could have their Headquarters on soil that was under Western law, and where the British could have a military and naval presence to ensure that trade remained free for the future. The island of Hong Kong was the place agreed on as this British possession: it was taken possession of by the British in 1841. In 1861, following the Second Anglo-Chinese War (fought to try to persuade the Chinese Government to implement in full the agreements reached after the First Anglo-Chinese War), the Kowloon Peninsula, on the northern shore of the Harbour, opposite the central part of the island, was added to the Colony.

In the early years of British rule of Hong Kong, the City was notorious as a crime and disease-ridden place, ill-lit and poorly policed, constantly rocked by scandal, very much a 'Wild West' town of unpaved streets, gangsters, pirates, and merchants often of doubtful morals. By the 1860s, however, this had changed dramatically. Great wealth was by then flowing into the City, and there was a steady movement to make of it one of the world's great urban centres, modern, sophisticated, and a model for other places. By the end of the nineteenth century, there had developed a great feeling of civic pride in Hong Kong as a modern metropolis by a good number of its Western residents.

At the end of the nineteenth century, however, considerable concern was felt about Hong Kong's defensibility if some other Western power took control of the seashore opposite Hong Kong Island. Any such power might then place guns immediately overlooking the entrance to the Harbour, and within one mile or so of the central part of the island. The British military expressed their doubts as to their capacity to defend Hong Kong in such circumstances. Eventually the British Government persuaded the Chinese Imperial authorities to lease them an area of land inland of the Kowloon Peninsula, for ninety-nine years, so as to push the borders of the Colony out by a further twenty miles or so, and this was agreed in 1898. The area so leased was called the New Territories. The area leased was a rural area, comprising some 650 villages, and a handful of small market towns and fishing ports. The leased area was not seen as an economic advantage to the City (indeed, it was initially assumed that it would be a drain on the Colony's finances), but it was seen as greatly strengthening the City's security against attack.²¹

Throughout the period from 1841 to 1899, Hong Kong was ruled by a Governor appointed from London (in 1899 Sir Henry Blake), and responsible to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The bureaucracy, which was responsible for the day-to-day governance of the City, was small. It was headed by the Colonial Secretary²² (in 1899 James Stewart Lockhart). The Governor was advised by an Executive Council, comprising the Colonial Secretary and one or two other senior officials and a few appointed leaders of the mercantile community. Legislation was a matter for the Legislative Council, consisting of a number of senior officials ("Official Members"), and a number of leaders of the mercantile community, by 1899 both Western and Chinese, appointed as "Unofficial Members" by the Governor. Judicial affairs were under a High Court, headed by a Chief Justice: as elsewhere in the Common Law world, the Judiciary were not subject to control by the executive. There was no democracy, no voting of anyone into any position of power. Taxation was low, and every effort was made to ensure that the laws were kept simple, to

allow the mercantile community, both Western and Chinese, as much space as possible to make money.

By 1899, the City of Hong Kong (formally known as the City of Victoria), which had by then grown to 280,000 inhabitants, stretched along the north shore of Hong Kong Island from Kennedy Town (堅尼地城) to Shaueiwan (筲箕灣), a distance of some seven and a half miles.

By 1899, the great prosperity and commercial success of Hong Kong had led to the centre of the City being filled with fine, imposing modern buildings. Its harbour teemed with shipping: by 1899 Hong Kong was the second busiest port in the British Empire. It had a well-run and competent Police force. The leaders of the community were determined that the City should be a model of modernisation and sophistication. The City had had electricity since 1890. The streets had been lit by gas-lamps since 1864, but new electric street-lamps began to replace them as soon as electricity became available, in 1890. The Peak Tram had been opened in 1888. In 1899 discussions were nearing completion on the construction of an electric tramway to run the length of the City: work on this was to start in 1904. Similarly, in 1899 surveyors were identifying the best line for a railway to link Hong Kong with Canton: work on this was to begin in 1905. Communications were good: between 1873 and 1894 seven telegraph lines were laid down, linking Hong Kong with all its neighbours — six of these were undersea cables. Telephones had been installed in the City from 1881, and a cheap Penny Post inaugurated in 1898. In 1887 a tertiary educational institute, the Chinese School of Medicine, had been established: by 1899 talks were well-advanced as to the possibility of making of this a full University, and this was to be achieved in 1908. The Royal Observatory had been founded, and the first Typhoon Shelter constructed, both in 1883, in the hope that the dangers of typhoons to small craft might be alleviated. In 1889 the first phase of the Tytam Waterworks relieved the City's chronic shortage of drinking water: this improvement was to be underscored when the second phase came on stream with the completion of the Tytam Tuk (大潭篤) Dam in 1907.

Hong Kong was undergoing continual expansion in the 1890s. Following the cession of the Kowloon Peninsula in 1861, a New Town was built at Yaumatei (油麻地): by 1899 this stretched for a mile along the western shore of the Peninsula. Another town, the continuously growing industrial town of Hung Hom (紅磡), with its great dockyard, was growing up along the eastern shore as well: this town had been entirely replanned and rebuilt in 1881, following a fire. In 1890 the Chater Reclamation was begun: this vast reclamation, designed to provide more sites for modern commercial buildings, and stretching for over a mile and a half along the north shore of Hong Kong

Island, was perhaps the most ambitious project of its kind undertaken anywhere in the world by that date.

Hong Kong was also, in 1899, a major Imperial fortress. It was one of the Royal Navy's great bases, with defences as up to date as anywhere in the Empire, with great fortresses to defend the eastern and western entrances to the Harbour, at Lei Yue Mun (鯉魚門) and Mt. Davis (摩星嶺). These fortresses were manned by a strong force of Royal Artillery, and by two infantry regiments, one of Indians (in 1899 the Hongkong Regiment),²³ and one of British troops (in 1899 the Royal Welch Fusiliers).²⁴

At the heart of the City was the commercial centre, with the great banking houses which oversaw so much of the world's trade with the Far East, and the great trading houses, as well as the vast numbers of premises which serviced these commercial giants. Alongside them were the huge numbers of Chinese commercial firms, mostly much smaller, but in aggregate representing even more commercial power, firms trading in small ships with South-East Asia, America, and Australia, with alongside them the "Native Banks" and remittance-houses which financed these trades. In addition to these commercial houses, by 1899 Hong Kong was already beginning to see an industrial revolution which was, over the next thirty years, to make of the City one of the greatest industrial centres in the Far East.

Of course, for all its prosperity and self-conscious modernity, Hong Kong still had its problems in the late 1890s. Plague had struck the City in 1894, and again in 1896, and was to strike yet again in 1901. In 1894 this had triggered a short-term commercial depression, but the City weathered the 1896 and 1901 attacks without much trouble. In response to these attacks of plague, the Government acted to try to improve public hygiene: Oswald Chadwick had reported on public hygiene in 1882, and he was called back to report in greater detail in 1902. The result was a new and far-reaching Public Health and Buildings Ordinance (1903), and the building of miles of new sewers and dozens of new public bathhouses and latrines.

Another problem that Hong Kong had to face was that it was, to a large extent, a city of single men, men who had come to Hong Kong to make their fortunes, either postponing marriage, or else leaving their families behind them in the country. As a result, prostitution and venereal disease were rife. The problem was to decrease steadily throughout the period from the 1880s to 1940, as more and more men brought their families to Hong Kong with them, but, in 1899, the number of adult men in Hong Kong who were living with their families was still well below half.

Hong Kong in 1899 can be seen to have fallen squarely within the Imperial belief-system. It was ruled by a tiny group of cadet-officers, all men of

considerable intelligence and stature, men who fitted the Imperialist cadet-officer mould perfectly, in association with the almost equally tiny group of senior managers of the great British commercial houses.

James Stewart Lockhart, Colonial Secretary in 1899, was born to a good banking family, with excellent connections with various landed families in the west of Scotland.²⁵ He was educated at King William's College on the Isle of Man, and George Watson's College, Edinburgh, both excellent public schools of a high reputation. At George Watson's College he became Captain of the School, and Captain of both Cricket and Rugby, as well as an outstanding scholar, noted especially for his skill in the Classics. He went on to study at the University of Edinburgh, where again he was noted for his sport and scholarship. He took a cadetship for Hong Kong in 1878 after a stiff competitive examination. During 1878–1879 he studied Chinese in London, proving extremely quick in this. He also joined the Royal Asiatic Society in London, showing even at this early age (he was then 21) his academic interests in the East. He arrived in Hong Kong in late 1879. Twenty years later he had risen to the summit of the Government service within Hong Kong as Colonial Secretary, and had been honoured with the CMG. In Hong Kong he became a sinophile, and a convinced Confucianist. He quickly gathered around himself a number of Chinese friends and contacts, mostly of the wealthy compradore merchant class. He was noted always for his dedication to his duty, his willingness to work hard, and, above all, for his total dedication to what he saw as being the best for the people of Hong Kong. He was widely respected by both the expatriate community of Hong Kong, and by the upper-class Chinese in the city.

If Lockhart thus seems a paradigm of the ideal colonial officer, his Hong Kong colleagues were scarcely less so. Henry May, in 1899 the Captain-Superintendent of Police (the title of the Colony's Police Chief),²⁶ but destined to take over from Lockhart as Colonial Secretary in 1902, and later to become Governor of Hong Kong, came from a good solid Anglo-Irish family (his father was Lord Chief Justice of Ireland), with excellent family connections (his wife was the daughter of General Sir George Digby Barker).²⁷ He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Dublin, where he excelled, becoming "first honoursman and prizeman" in Classics and Modern Languages. He was an excellent sportsman (especially riding and yachting — he wrote a *History of Yachting in Hong Kong*), and a lover of hunting, fishing, and shooting. He entered the Hong Kong cadet-service following the normal competitive examination in 1881. He was a first-class linguist, writing a "Guide to Cantonese", and achieving the very high distinction of passing the Higher Examination for Interpreters in Mandarin of the Consular Service. May was

an austere and somewhat stiff-mannered man, with a tremendous dedication to duty. He did not make friends easily, but had a circle of close contacts among middle-class Chinese merchants. As with Lockhart, by 1899 he had been honoured with the CMG. Again, as with Lockhart, no-one who met him ever doubted that everything he did he did because he was convinced that it was for the best for the people of Hong Kong.

Alexander Macdonald Thomson, Colonial Treasurer in 1899 (the Colonial Treasurer was in charge of the Colony's finances),²⁸ was the son of a Scottish schoolmaster. He achieved first-class honours in Mathematics at Aberdeen University. He entered the Hong Kong cadet service by the normal competitive examination procedure in 1887. In Hong Kong his interests were mostly in technical subjects (public sanitation, the problem of subsidiary coinage, the editing of the Hong Kong General Orders). While he was not known as a linguist, he was a competent speaker of Cantonese. In his youth he was a sportsman, but later gave this up.

Arthur Brewin, born to a good family in Settle, Yorkshire, was educated at Winchester, and came to Hong Kong as a cadet following the normal competitive examination in 1888: in 1899 he was Assistant Registrar-General (the Registrar-General was responsible mainly for communication between the Government and the Chinese community in Hong Kong: Brewin was the second in command to the Registrar-General).²⁹ He was a more than competent speaker of Cantonese, having studied the language for two years: during the Six-Day War he translated Chinese documents for the Governor when Lockhart was not available. Francis Baddeley, in 1899 May's Deputy in the Police, was the son of an Anglican clergyman, and was educated at the Clergy Orphan School, and at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he passed "senior optime" (the highest-graded graduate of his year) in Mathematics. He came to Hong Kong as a cadet after the usual competitive examination in 1890. He was a competent speaker of both Cantonese and Hindustani.

Reginald Johnston, appointed a Hong Kong cadet following the normal examinations in 1898, was another young man of the same sort.³⁰ His father was a lawyer, and he was educated at the University of Edinburgh, where he excelled in all his studies (Gray Prize for History, First Class Honours in English Literature, Modern History and Constitutional Law). He was a first-class linguist, who was to end his career as Professor of Chinese at the University of London. In 1899 he was Assistant Clerk of Councils (as such, he was Secretary to the Executive and Legislative Councils: this post was often used as a training post for recently appointed Cadets). Like Lockhart he was to become a noted sinophile, with a huge circle of Chinese friends. He, again like Lockhart and May, was a man who no-one ever doubted did

what he did because he considered it to be in the best interests of the people he served.

It will be seen from these short biographies that the Hong Kong cadets in 1899 were to a very large degree men of considerable intellectual stature. Most were sportsmen, and all were either competent in Cantonese, or genuine linguists. All fit the mould of the classic Imperial officer. They all seem to have been imbued with dedication to Hong Kong and its people, and all seem to have worked hard at doing what they saw was best for the people of Hong Kong. All were fully committed to the ideal of Imperialism.

Above the cadet officers were the Governors, and Hong Kong was never to have so eminent a group of men as those who held the post between 1891 and 1930, and especially between 1898 and 1919. Sir Henry Blake, Sir Matthew Nathan, Sir Francis Lugard, Sir Henry May: all of these were men of the highest stature and competence.

Within Hong Kong in the 1890s it is not difficult to find classic statements of Imperialist beliefs. The Governor, Sir Henry Blake, gave a speech on 17 April 1899, in the middle of the Six-Day War, to the elders of the Kowloon (九龍) villages (see Appendix 2), in which he included a classic statement of the essential benevolence of British Imperial rule. He said:

This is the place where the British flag is to be hoisted . . . This is an important epoch in your lives for to-day you become British subjects. All the world over it is known that the ways of my country in ruling other people are excellent. We simply aim to make the people happy, and my country is respected by all the nations of the world. Our dominions spread over the four quarters of the world and millions upon millions of people own our protection. From this day of hoisting the flag you and your families and your property enjoy full British protection.³¹

Col. Barrow, of the racially Indian Hongkong Regiment, on his posting away from the Regiment to higher responsibilities in India in 1895, at a farewell dinner hosted by the British officers of the Regiment said:

The British officer avoids intrigue and tries to be just and fair, and that is why he is able to lead and rule soldiers of all races, English, Indian, or African. They all trust him. Be just, that is the secret of ruling men.³²

This is a classic statement of the belief that an English gentleman, as a natural leader, would be seen as, and accepted as, their leader by all the people placed by fate under him, so long as he behaved as a gentleman should.

Another interesting account, again connected with the Hongkong Regiment, is a long account of the Regiment, written by Clement Scott of the

Daily Telegraph, headed “A ‘Swagger’ Regiment”, and contrasting the “stalwart Pathan giants . . . soldier-like young warriors” of the Regiment with the “pale-faced weedy boys . . . pale, broken-down, weedy striplings” who formed the manpower of the mass of the British Regiments, whose degenerate bearing and furtive looks betrayed their inadequacies. Scott summarises his views by saying: “A regiment recruited in India and officered by Englishmen makes as fine and smart a corps as any soldier would wish to see.”³³ Again, this is a classic statement of the Imperialist belief that the best of the subject peoples were markedly better than the average British youth.

Above all, this period is full of writing about Hong Kong by the more articulate English-speaking residents of the Colony. Invariably these writings state or imply that the prosperity and accomplishments of Hong Kong are due to British administrative and commercial skills, these providing a benign, modern, and efficient government, under which hard-working and skilful British merchants were able to build up a prosperous business community. Only occasionally do these statements mention the input into the prosperity of Hong Kong of the Chinese commercial and mercantile community. These writings breathe self-confidence: in Hong Kong, at least, the national self-confidence of the Imperialist age was bolstered by a vast local pride and self-confidence in the City as a hugely successful mercantile community. This sort of view becomes a *topos* of the place and time, and is yet another classic Imperialist statement. One of the best examples of this sort of local self-confidence comes from the 1893 *A Handbook to Hong Kong; Being a Popular Guide to the Various Places of Interest in the Colony, for the Use of Tourists*:³⁴

No apology can be necessary for offering a Hand-book to the British Crown Colony of Hongkong . . . It stands forth before the world with its City of Victoria and a permanent population of over two hundred thousand souls — a noble monument to British pluck and enterprise . . . Its roads and buildings constructed at enormous cost . . . the variety of its inhabitants . . . its magnificent land-locked harbour . . . Hongkong is of surpassing interest as a British possession . . . No stranger, however unsympathetic, can pass along the roads and streets of Hongkong without a feeling of wonder and admiration at the almost magical influence, which in so few years could transform the barren granite mountain sides of the island of Hongkong into one of the most pleasant cities in the world.

The Colony celebrated the Queen’s Jubilee . . . on the 9th November, 1887. The Chinese . . . collecting, among themselves, and spending over one hundred thousand dollars . . . a very gratifying assurance of their appreciation of the just and liberal government of the British Crown.

Reviewing the whole history of Hongkong it will be found that the Colony has more than fulfilled the purposes for which it was ceded in 1841.

From a barren rock it has rapidly risen to be a possession of immense importance . . . Governed by the broad principles of English liberty, justice, and humanity, the improving influence of Hongkong is surely, though silently, extending into the vast Empire which it touches, and in proportion to its growth, its commanding influence will extend.

Similar expressions can be found in the 1908 book, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong Kong*:³⁵

The island of Hongkong is well fashioned by nature to serve as an outpost of the British Empire . . . The haunt of a few fishermen and freebooters less than seventy years ago, this tiny spot has become, in the hands of the British, a phenomenally prosperous entrepôt of trade . . . The almost precipitous slopes of the hills . . . are covered from base to summit with verdure, and a fine city of 300,000 inhabitants, who live amid all the advantages of Western civilisation, has sprung up . . . “It may be doubted,” as Sir William des Voeux, a former Governor, wrote . . . “whether any other spot on earth is thus more likely to excite, or much more fully justify, pride in the name of Englishmen”. . . . Stretching along the coast for nearly five miles is the City of Victoria. A thriving hive of industry, built on a narrow riband of land, much of which has been won from the sea, it is a wonderful monument to the enterprise, energy, and success of the British as colonisers.

There can, therefore, be no doubt that Hong Kong, in 1899, was not only an immensely prosperous commercial city, modern and sophisticated, but was also entirely part of the Imperialist world, with beliefs about itself and its position in the world which were essentially Imperialist, and ruled by men who, in their intellectual stature and eminence entirely typified the best Imperial officer tradition.

When these men, this society, were faced with armed opposition to British rule in April 1899, their reaction was inevitably based on this self-confidence and this belief in themselves as the self-evidently appointed rulers of the area, with results which are discussed at length below.

8



The Aftermath of the War

As soon as the War was over, the Governor Sir Henry Blake did what he could to get the whole episode forgotten. As noted above, the Governor wanted “to pass a sponge over the events of the past month”, and again as noted above, he said to Lockhart: “I should advise you to ignore what has passed”.

The Governor, as early as 21 April, made it clear that he was going to withdraw half the military from the New Territories immediately, and most of the rest as soon as the Police could arrive there. The military authorities did not object, although, perhaps not unexpectedly, Lockhart did, writing back to the Governor in the evening of 21 April, stating that the area should be kept under military control for longer: “I think it is unfortunate that any of the troops here should have been withdrawn at the present moment, as their withdrawal may be misunderstood, and their presence is creating such a good effect”.¹ The Governor responded the following day, in a personal letter to Lockhart:

As to the retention of the troops, apart from the fact that the Chinese attacks, which happily resulted in no casualties, have collapsed, and a wholesome lesson has been given to the rowdies, it is better that the population should feel that if necessary an overwhelming force can be poured in from East to West in a few hours, and that we are not afraid of them, than that they should be too familiarized with large bodies of troops, and the feeling possibly induced that we are afraid to remain without their support . . . You will have 25 or 30 police at each of the stations of Tai Po Hui [Tai Po Market] and wherever you decide that the Un Long [Yuen Long] station

shall be built, with a company of the Hongkong Regiment. It will I think be advisable that your guard when moving about shall be police . . . as the people will become accustomed to seeing the police and will know the uniforms.²

A further 100 men were accordingly withdrawn before the end of April, thus leaving the military stationed in the New Territories the single company Blake had argued was enough in his letter of Lockhart of 22 April. The Governor's aim was, clearly, to remove any obstacle to "passing a sponge" over the fighting. Essentially all the military had been withdrawn, it would seem, by August 1899.³

Because of serious doubts that remained as to the degree the Viceroy in Canton, and the Ch'ing officials at the local level, were aware of, and supported, the insurrection, the Hong Kong Government sent troops to occupy Sham Chun (深圳, Shenzhen) between 16 May and 13 November 1899, and also sent troops to eject the Sub-Magistrate and Ch'ing troops from Kowloon City (16 May). The occupation of Sham Chun was eventually ended on instructions from London, but the ejection of Chinese officials and troops from Kowloon City remained in force. While these events can be seen as reflexes of the Six-Day War, they are separate events, and are not discussed in detail here.⁴

Blake's policy of removing the military to avoid their presence constantly reminding the villagers of the fighting, and so of "passing a sponge" over the War was entirely successful: from August 1899, down to the present, it is, as noted above, almost impossible to find any reference to the War in any official document, apart from the very dismissive comments in the *Hong Kong Government Annual Reports*.

On the villager side, it seems that the villagers also very quickly decided that the whole insurrection had been a very bad idea. They seem to have been uniformly willing to treat the whole affair as a bad dream, and forget it.⁵ This is not, perhaps, unexpected: it is a common cultural trait of the South Chinese to put out of mind and forget as fast as possible any serious disaster, and not to dwell on it, or allow it to over-influence the survivors, who have to get on with life, and might as well do so, as far as possible, by making a new start.

One of the Funeral Banners at the funeral of Ng Shing-chi, probably the last surviving leader of the insurgency, in 1938, expresses the view of the villagers well:

奮螳臂以當車勁節同欽事略已歸前背錄
蘇鮒魚於涸轍耄期不倦典掣留與後人看

Like a valiant mantis trying to stop a cart with its front claws, a matter of strong selflessness, a matter to be admired, this is what the generation before the lease was like:

He would revive all those fish he found gasping on dry land: even in extreme old age he remained a model, indefatigable. Let those who come after remember him!

According to this Funeral Banner, therefore, if the insurgency was admirable in its bravery and idealism, it was still, in the last resort, like a bug below a cart-wheel — a hopeless case, an exercise in pointless valour — and Ng Shing-chi's charitable work after 1912 was at least as admirable.⁶

Some villagers have claimed, in recent years, that villager silence on the War after 1899 was due to fear of reprisals from the British if they should mention that their families had been involved. This, given May's explicit sanction of Ng Shing-chi in 1912, must be seen as exceedingly unlikely. It is very doubtful if any New Territories family would have been scared of reprisals after 1912 at the latest.

Lists of the dead were kept, as noted above, by at least the Ping Shan and Shap Pat Heung people, and the San Tin people also may have kept a list of their dead, at least for a time. However, although ritual activity did take place by the elders before the tablets of the dead in the various Hero Shrines (at Ping Shan, Shap Pat Heung, Kam Tin, and possibly San Tin), the normal way in which the memory of important events was kept alive by village communities, nowhere did this become a major or prominent ritual activity, except at Kam Tin.

Thus, the Shap Pat Heung elders light incense before the list of the dead in the Hero Shrine at Tai Shue Ha when they go to worship at the temple there on the Festival of Tin Hau. It is likely that rituals were performed by the Ping Shan elders in the Hero Shrine at the Tat Tak Kung Soh in the years immediately after the fighting, but no rituals seem to have been conducted there between the Japanese War and 1996, and even before the Japanese War ritual activity seems to have been small-scale. When the Tat Tak Kung Soh was restored in 1938, and the shrine-cupboard there was opened, and the tablet moved, the villagers were surprised to find the list of names which was probably hidden behind the tablet:⁷ the shrine had not been opened for many years before that date, and the existence of the list had been forgotten. The list sufficiently interested the elders that they had it copied onto a stone inscription, but this does not seem to have given rise to any regular ritual activity thereafter. There is no memory at Ping Shan of any regular or irregular ritual activity before the inscription at least in the fifty years from 1946 to

1996.⁸ For the last decade, the Hero Shrine has, indeed, been in a state of ruin, with a foot and more of water covering the floor, and is inaccessible.

The Kam Tin Hero Shrine in the Yau Lun Tong was, as noted in the comments in Appendix 6, regularly worshipped down to the Japanese War by the Kam Tin elders (there is no memory of the Ha Tsuen elders worshipping there, certainly not in the last sixty years). Today the Hero Shrine is still paid appropriate respect, but the ritual activity there is small scale. There is no significant ritual activity related to the San Tin dead paid today.⁹

The Lam Tsuen and Tai Hang elders are aware that there were villagers who died fighting the British, but they cannot remember any details, they never established any Hero Shrine, and they make no efforts to teach Lam Tsuen or Tai Hang youngsters about this incident. Lam Tsuen has a Hero Shrine, dedicated to the twelve villagers who died in an inter-village war, probably with Lung Yeuk Tau, in the 1860s: the elders worship here twice a year, and recently put up a long inscription to ensure that the background to the inter-village war will never be forgotten by subsequent generations of Lam Tsuen people: the difference between the treatment of this group of village dead and those who fell in the Battle of Mui Shue Hang is very significant.¹⁰

As noted above, immediately after the fighting, the Kam Tin villagers collected the bodies of the dead who had not been claimed by their own families, and took them to a communal grave they established near Sha Po village.¹¹ According to the *China Mail*, this work was begun on 19 April.¹²

The communal grave at Sha Po is a large affair, some fifty feet across (see Plate 14). It originally had a single inscription on it, 義塚, "Charitable Grave". It was built in a lychee orchard belonging to the Tung Fuk Tong (同福堂) of Kam Tin. The Tung Fuk Tong is a communal Trust of a charitable nature which any member of the Kam Tin Tang clan may apply to join. It was the Tung Fuk Tong which arranged to have the unclaimed dead collected, carried here, and buried at their expense. The site is within the Kam Tin Heung, although a good way away from the centre of the area. It is likely that there were regular ritual activities conducted here in the generation after the fighting, mostly, it would seem, by veterans of the fighting, and the close family members of those who had died. By the 1930s, however, as most of the veterans of the fighting began to get elderly and die, ritual activity became spasmodic. The Tung Fuk Tong decided that they needed to establish an organization to undertake the appropriate rituals. The Tong therefore founded alongside the grave a small Buddhist nunnery (1934, completed in 1936). The main altar of the Buddha Hall was dedicated to Tei Tsong Wong (地藏王), the Keeper of the Souls of the Dead, a highly suitable dedication for a nunnery founded to

pray for the dead in the adjacent communal grave. The nuns of this new nunnery (today called the Miu Kok Yuen, 妙覺苑) were to light incense three times daily on behalf of the Kam Tin elders, and care for the grave generally, and this they still do today. However, the nuns having been installed, the elders of Kam Tin seem to have considered that all that remained for them to do was to send a few elders twice a year to make an offering at the grave on behalf of the village at large.¹³

In the mid-1990s the grave started to become dilapidated, and it was repaired. On this occasion two additional inscriptions were added, 高超六欲天, "Six Days of Elevated Aspirations", and 早達三摩地, "Three Districts of Early Righteousness".¹⁴ As noted above, during the restoration process, the removal of the old grave front left the top of the grave-pit open for a short time.

When the repairs to the grave were completed in 1996, the elders, not only of Kam Tin, but of the wider New Territories, came to pay their respects, but this ritual activity has not subsequently been repeated, other than the twice-yearly offerings made by the Kam Tin elders. An act of worship was also conducted by the Ping Shan elders in 1996 outside the Hero Shrine at the Tat Tak Kung Soh.

In the mid-1990s, with the return of Hong Kong to China imminent, there was a flicker of interest in this grave and the fighting against the British. It was felt that perhaps the new administration might look in a kindly light on those who could demonstrate genuine anti-British activity in their clan past.¹⁵ When the new administration showed that it was not impressed, this flicker of interest subsided. At present, no major ritual interest is shown towards either the Hero Shrine at Ping Shan, or to the Sha Po grave.

Given the universal feeling among the villagers immediately after 1899 that the Six-Day War was a serious error of judgement best forgotten, there is almost no village source for the Six-Day War. There are almost no village memories and stories to call on. Tang Shing-sz, when drawing up his history of the fighting against the British, had to get most of his factual information, at first or second hand, from the *Extension Papers*: while he drew what he could from his own memories, and the memories of other Ping Shan elders, this source added relatively little. He was able to find almost nothing in writing from village sources. There were, clearly, almost no vital oral stories by the 1990s circulating in Ping Shan about the fighting in 1899. Tang Shing-sz states that, in his youth (he was born about 1922), when he wanted to talk to those elders then still alive who had taken part in the War, or whose fathers had been leaders in the insurrection, he found no-one willing to say anything: it was a matter best forgotten.¹⁶

By August 1899, therefore, and Blake's meeting with the village leaders, it is almost as if the War had never happened. If it were not that the contemporary correspondence was printed in the *Extension Papers* and the *Despatches* and *Disturbances* compilations, it would be easy to believe that no such insurrection had ever occurred. If it were not for the somewhat adventitious survival of the lists of the dead at Ping Shan and Tai Shue Ha it would be very easy indeed to believe that the number of deaths in the fighting was very low, as stated by Maj.-Gen. Gascoigne. There can be few significant military operations which have disappeared so completely from the official and popular memory as the Six-Day War.

Blake's policy towards the New Territories, that it should be a place where the administration should be based on amicable co-operation and mutual confidence between a benevolent and paternalistic administration, with village leaders enjoying easy and amicable access to the District Officers, quickly became settled Hong Kong Government policy towards the area. May, and, later Stubbs, and other pre-War Governors, all held to the same policy. The New Territories Administration quickly developed an "office culture" which lasted at least down to the 1980s, which entirely stems from Blake's views and stance. Lockhart's Confucianist attitudes disappear from the New Territories scene: no "hardline" stance can be seen at any date after the end of April 1899. The Hong Kong Government quickly found that Blake's easy and amicable administration was very well received by the villagers: Lockhart's contention, that only a hard-line Chinese-style Confucian administration would be understood or respected, was quickly found to be wrong. The War was thus to be forgotten, and does not seem to have affected local affairs or the views and culture of the local administration in any significant way.¹⁷

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