

# The Chinese Community Press in Hawai'i

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## INTRODUCTION

The beginning of modern Chinese journalism is considered by most scholars to date from British missionary Milne's publication of the *Chinese Monthly Magazine* in Malacca during the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In the New World Chinese journalism began during the mid-1850s. For the first few decades Chinese periodicals and newspapers existed only outside the Chinese Empire. Not until the 1860s with the publication of the *Shanghai Hsin Pao* did the modern press become established in China itself.<sup>2</sup>

This essay traces the evolution of Chinese community newspapers in one region in the Western Hemisphere, Hawai'i. Comparisons are made with the development of the Chinese community press on the U.S. mainland, especially in San Francisco. This analysis, however, only takes into account the effects of demographic factors. This writer has not considered other factors, such as individual commitment, political priorities, and outside subsidies, which can prolong the life of a publication long after it has proven to be uneconomical as a commercial enterprise. These last-mentioned factors may be overriding considerations, especially in the case of political organs.

## CHINESE JOURNALISM IN THE NEW WORLD

During the mid-nineteenth century sizable Chinese communities sprang up in California, British Columbia, Hawai'i, Cuba, and Peru as Chinese immigration increased in response to the developing economies of these regions. As each community grew, social organizations and institutions were founded to fill the needs of the population. Since each Chinese community was affected by various economic and

political factors in the host society over which it had little or no control, each tended to develop at a different rate. The Chinese community in San Francisco quickly forged to the forefront to become the leading Chinese community in the Western Hemisphere.

The lure of gold had attracted thousands from all over the globe to California. People from many nations, including China, settled in San Francisco, the principal port of entry. The Chinese population kept pace with the city's growth and a thriving Chinatown of about two thousand in population, with associated social institutions and mercantile concerns, was established by the early 1850s. It was here, in April 1854, that the first Chinese newspaper in the New World, *Golden Hills' News*, was started by a Mr. Howard, evidently under missionary influence, to "settle and explain our laws, assist the Chinese to provide [for] their wants and soften, dignify and improve their general character." This pioneering effort, however, lasted only a few months and was succeeded by another missionary-associated effort in San Francisco. Another in Sacramento was apparently also missionary inspired.<sup>3</sup>

During this period when the press was still a novel concept to most Chinese, a Chinese newspaper could survive in the relatively small Chinese community only with the dedicated effort of the individual involved. Such enterprises quickly disappeared after the individual had left the scene. The Chinese journalistic field in San Francisco became quiescent by the late fifties and did not revive until the mid-1870s when California's developing economy stimulated increased Chinese immigration. By this time a Chinese newspaper had already been published for more than a decade in Hong Kong, the port through which most of the emigration to California was channeled.<sup>4</sup> Thus the concept of newspapers was no longer new to many Chinese emigrants to California. As the state's Chinese population increased rapidly, Chinese entrepreneurs began to establish newspapers in San Francisco around the mid-1870s. They became firmly established as community institutions and for the next few years San Francisco was the sole center for Chinese journalism in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1880s and 1890s, Chinese communities in New York City, Boston, Chicago, and Honolulu had also developed

to the point that enterprising Chinese were encouraged to launch local journalistic efforts. In the East and Midwest of the continental United States, however, these efforts proved to be premature. The small and scattered Chinese populations were inadequate bases to support such endeavors, which quickly petered out.<sup>6</sup> Only in Honolulu did Chinese journalism find fertile soil. Hence this city became the second center for Chinese journalism in the Western Hemisphere.

#### THE EARLY HAWAII' I CHINESE PRESS

The Chinese had reached Hawai'i even earlier than California as a result of the China trade. But the Chinese population did not increase substantially until the sugar industry expanded and Hawaiian planters began recruiting laborers from China during the 1850s. However, this effort soon faltered. By 1872, out of a total population of 56,897 in the Islands, there were only 1,938 Chinese. In Honolulu Chinese made up a mere 632 out of the 14,852 inhabitants.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, the population in California had already reached 560,247 by 1870 with 49,277 Chinese, 12,022 of these being counted in San Francisco.<sup>8</sup>

Beginning in the late 1870s, however, the vigorous development of the cane sugar industry greatly stimulated Hawai'i's growth. The island population nearly trebled in the quarter century from 1875 to 1900. This was accompanied by development of mercantile and other support services in urban centers, especially Honolulu, where the total population increased to 20,487 in 1884 and reached 39,306 by the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup>

During this same period the Chinese population took a quantum jump as the sugarcane plantations resumed large-scale recruiting of Chinese labor. The Honolulu Chinese population grew rapidly when many Chinese forsook harsh working conditions in the plantations for better opportunities in the city. By 1884, the Chinese population in Honolulu reached 5,225, almost 30 percent of Hawai'i's Chinese population. By 1900 it had reached 9,061.<sup>10</sup> Major community institutions emerged to meet the social needs of this growing community.<sup>11</sup>

It was during this period that the *Lung Kee Sun Bo* or *Hawaiian Chinese News* was founded in 1883 in response to the Chinese community's need to keep abreast of current events and happenings in Hawai'i and abroad.<sup>12</sup> This weekly is generally considered to have been the first Chinese-language newspaper in Hawai'i and to have launched the beginning of the Hawai'i Chinese press. Honolulu, as the chief urban center with the greatest concentration of Chinese, assumed a natural role as the center of Hawai'i's Chinese journalism.<sup>13</sup>

The *Hawaiian Chinese News* was founded by members of the new Chinese middle class that had emerged in the community by the 1880s. Owner C. Winam was a Christian

Hakka merchant who, a few years later, also became the English secretary of the United Chinese Society.<sup>14</sup> Ho Fon, a Christian who later was associated with the Bank of Bishop, became manager.<sup>15</sup> Cheng Shiqiao was the first editor<sup>16</sup> of this handwritten and lithograph-reproduced weekly newspaper.<sup>17</sup>

The success of the *Hawaiian Chinese News* was followed by the appearance of the *Wah Ha Bo* or *Honolulu Chinese Chronicle*, a weekly founded in 1893 by Chinese Christians.<sup>18</sup> This newspaper was noted for its numerous advertisements from non-Chinese businesses, indicating that it already had many contacts with the mainstream society. William K. F. Yap, later one of the prime movers in founding the University of Hawai'i, was a translator for the newspaper. It was also one of the rare Chinese journalistic enterprises that paid dividends to stockholders. The paper continued publishing until the early 1900s when its owners, who favored revolutionary changes in China, voted to merge with the *Hawaiian Chinese News* to become the newly founded *Man Sang Yat Po*.<sup>19</sup> Another early weekly was the *Lai Kee Bo* or *Chinese Times*, founded around 1895. This last enterprise, however, only enjoyed a relatively brief existence of about five years.<sup>20</sup>

#### CHINA POLITICS AND THE PRESS

These early Chinese newspapers, like those existing in the continental United States during the same period, were apolitical commercial enterprises. Around the turn of the century, however, the Chinese began to become more politicized as a result of nationalistic feelings emanating from China, where demands for reform and modernization had grown increasingly intense by the 1890s. This new attitude was soon reflected in the new political role played by the Chinese-language newspapers. In 1894, Sun Yat-sen came to the Islands to seek funds and recruit supporters for the revolutionary cause. He founded the Xingzhonghui (Revive China Society) in Honolulu to work toward the overthrow of the imperial government. Both Ho Fon and C. Winam of the *Hawaiian Chinese News* became members of the group, and the founding meeting of the Xingzhonghui was held at Ho's home.<sup>21</sup> The *Hawaiian Chinese News* began to publish items favorable to the revolutionary cause. Shortly afterward Xingzhonghui members in Hong Kong raised funds to enable the *News* to acquire used lead type and a secondhand manual press from Hong Kong newspaper *Tsun Wan Yat Po* in 1899. Then the *Hawaiian Chinese News* began semiweekly publication.<sup>22</sup>

At this juncture, however, revolution was still too radical a cause for most Chinese to espouse. Another political group soon appeared at the turn of the century that offered a more moderate alternative program. In 1898, after the Hundred Days of reform, when edicts for sweeping changes in the ancient empire were issued in the name of Emperor Guangxu, the ultraconservatives, led by the empress dow-

ger, engineered a palace coup d'etat and made the emperor her captive. Many reformers were executed or exiled to the frontiers. Others, including Kang Youwei, fled abroad. In 1899 Kang reached Victoria, British Columbia, where the Chinese Empire Reform Association (also known as the Protect the Emperor Association until its name was changed to the Constitutionalist Association in 1906) was founded to give support to the imprisoned emperor and to press for reform in imperial China. The organization spread rapidly among Overseas Chinese communities.<sup>23</sup>

From the beginning the Reform Association recognized the importance of the press in generating public support for its political program. On the mainland Reform Association members converted the San Francisco weekly *Mon Hing Bo* (Chinese World) to a party organ in 1899.<sup>24</sup> Soon afterward, in 1900, Kang Youwei's disciple, Liang Qichao, reached Hawai'i from Japan. His fame and charisma helped to recruit members for the newly founded local chapter of the Reform Association.<sup>25</sup> That same year the reformers established the *New China News* (*Sun Chung Kwok Bo*) in Honolulu as the party's voice.<sup>26</sup> Under a series of capable editors the *New China News* quickly became the leading Chinese newspaper in the Islands. This newspaper started as a semiweekly but became a triweekly in 1902.<sup>27</sup> It was not until 1904 that the *Chinese Reform News* was founded in New York with the intent to establish Reform Association organs in all three major Chinese communities in the United States.

The presence of the rival revolutionary and reform groups in Honolulu led to political controversy and intrigue within the Hawai'i Chinese community as each faction sought to win adherents. When Sun Yat-sen returned to Hawai'i in 1903, he found that many Xingzhonghui members had defected to the rival Reform Association. In order to regain lost ground he convinced the owner of the *Hawaiian Chinese News* to reorganize the newspaper and to expand its staff. Its Chinese name was changed to *Tan Shan Sun Bo*. Sun proceeded to use the paper as a platform to advance the revolutionary cause. He personally authored essays attacking the rival Reform Association's political program and apparently regained some lost ground.<sup>28</sup> However, the reformers were still at the high point of their power in the Chinese community, and their *New China News* remained an influential rival voice.

Shortly after Sun departed from Hawai'i, the aging C. Winam retired and sold the *Hawaiian Chinese News* to fellow Xingzhonghui member Zeng Changfu. The *News* then merged with the *Wah Ha Bo* to form the *Man Sang Yat Po*, which began publication in 1907. This appears to have been the first Chinese-language daily in Hawai'i.<sup>29</sup> Soon afterward the newspaper's editor resigned and the owners turned to the *Min Bao She* in Tokyo for help. This latter was the official organ of the Tongmenghui, the revolutionary alliance organization formed by Sun Yat-sen in 1905 from several Chinese anti-Manchu groups in Japan. In response to their request Sun sent Loo Sun, student in Japan and former reporter on

the *Chung Kuo Jih Pao* (China Daily News), a revolutionary organ in Hong Kong. Soon after Loo arrived in Honolulu to assume the editorship, political enemies persuaded immigration authorities to initiate deportation proceedings against him, alleging that newspaper editors were not among the classes exempted from the Chinese exclusion acts. The newspaper's owners appealed to Washington, D.C., and received a precedent-setting ruling that newspaper editors should be considered as teachers.<sup>30</sup>

Secured in his new post, Loo began to launch attacks against Manchu rule in China. But the owners' apparent less-than-enthusiastic support for his efforts soon led him to resign his position. Loo was not out of work long, however, for in 1908 local supporters of the revolution, led by Zeng Changfu, established another newspaper, the triweekly *Chee Yow Shin Po* or *Liberty News*, which became the first Tongmenghui organ in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>31</sup> The following year the first revolutionary organ in the continental United States, the weekly *Youth*, started publication in San Francisco. This latter paper changed to the daily *Young China Morning Post* in 1910.<sup>32</sup> Honolulu and San Francisco were the only two Chinese communities in America to have official Tongmenghui organs before the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912.

Honolulu supporters of Sun Yat-sen also established the *Dasheng Bao* beginning around 1909. Used to shield the *Liberty News* from lawsuits, it published items—often written by *Liberty News* editors—that may have been potentially libelous. Due to a shortage of personnel and funds, however, the *Dasheng Bao* soon ceased publication.<sup>33</sup>

In the meantime the *Man Sang Yat Po* had difficulty finding an editor, and the owners finally sold the enterprise to merchants belonging to the Honolulu Chinese Chamber of Commerce in 1909. The newspaper was reorganized as the *Wah Hing Bo* but was familiarly known as the *Shangjia Bao* (Merchants' Newspaper). It was allegedly subsidized by the Yuan Shikai government in China and expressed support for Yuan after the latter proclaimed himself emperor in 1915. It ceased publication around 1919,<sup>34</sup> and its equipment was sold to the Chee Kung Tong organ, the *Hon Mun Bo*.<sup>35</sup>

A third political force in America was the Chee Kung Tong, also known as Hoong Moon or Triads,<sup>36</sup> a secret society that had numerous lodges in Hawai'i and on the North American mainland. During the early 1900s the organization's leaders, inspired by nascent nationalistic feelings emanating from China, sought to establish its own political voice. The San Francisco main lodge took the lead with the founding of the *Chinese Free Press* (*Ta Tung Yat Po*) in 1903.<sup>37</sup> In 1908 members of local Triad organizations, the Wo On Society, Bow Leong Say, and Kwok On Society, in Honolulu organized the *Kai Ming Bo*, but when the paper began publication it bore the title *Kai Chee Shun Bo*.<sup>38</sup> This paper did not exhibit strong political stances on either the constitutionalist or the revolutionary programs. However, in 1909, the newspaper hired

a militant Sun Yat-sen supporter, Wong Hung Fei, from San Francisco as editor. He soon came into conflict with the more conservative owner because of his anti-Manchu slant. Two months later Won left to join the staff of the *Liberty News*, just in time to help Loo Sun in an editorial battle with the *New China News*. He later became its chief editor in 1910 when Loo returned to the Far East.<sup>39</sup> The *Kai Chee Bo*, now with another editor, changed its name to *Hon Mun Bo* upon the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912.<sup>40</sup>

These political developments during the first decade of the twentieth century ushered in a new phase of Chinese journalism wherein China's politics dominated the Chinese press. Chinese communities became political arenas, with the reformers and their supporters on one side and the revolutionaries and their allies on the other, waging ideological battles to win the hearts of their compatriots. Editorials became an important feature of newspapers as political factions engaged each other in a war of words. The press also was influential in molding public opinion. For example, in an editorial protesting America's harsh applications of the exclusion laws, Chen Yikan of the *New China News* made the initial suggestion that eventually led to the anti-U.S. boycott movement of 1905.<sup>41</sup> In still another incident during the struggle between the revolutionaries and the constitutionalists (originally the Chinese Empire Reform Association), Won Hung Fei and the *Liberty News* were instrumental in instigating a Chinese community protest in 1910 against the Chinese consuls' announced intention to use proceeds from registration fees he exacted from local Chinese to support the Mun Lun School, which subsequently was established in 1911 by Reform Association members.<sup>42</sup>

After the 1911 Revolution, as China became embroiled in civil war, the Chinese press continued its preoccupation with China politics. Both the Kuomintang and Chee Kung Tong by this time had also established newspapers in New York, the third center of Chinese population in the United States.<sup>43</sup> Political battles were continually waged in the Chinese press throughout the United States, with the Kuomintang, successor to the Tongmenghui, supporting the forces led by Sun Yat-sen on one side, and the constitutionalists supporting the Peking government on the other. The latter side was also joined by the Chee Kung Tong, the Tongmenghui's erstwhile ally, which had broken with Sun Yat-sen after the establishment of the Republic of China.

By the late 1920s the Kuomintang established dominance as the sole legal political party in China. This political situation was reflected in the decline of the opposition press in the United States. Declining readership due to older Chinese passing away or retiring to China soon forced the Honolulu Chee Kung Tong organ, the *Hon Mun Bo*, to close in 1929.<sup>44</sup> San Francisco's Chee Kung Tong organ followed in 1932. The New York voices of both the constitutionalists and Chee Kung Tong also were silenced by 1937 and 1948, respectively.<sup>45</sup> Financial supporters, principally Chun Quon (C. Q.

Yee Hop), however, enabled the *New China News* in Honolulu and its sister publication in San Francisco, the *Chinese World* (*Sai Gai Yat Po*), to continue.<sup>46</sup>

China politics also intruded into the Kuomintang press when a power struggle broke out in the party after its ascendancy to power in 1927. In a bloody purge the Kuomintang expelled Communists from its ranks in China. The party's "right" wing under Chiang Kai-shek established a government in Nanking, while a "left" faction headed by Wang Jingwei established a rival regime in Hankow. Although the Hankow and Nanking regimes soon reached an accommodation and merged, the schism continued to be expressed in Overseas Chinese communities by the existence of "left" and "right" factions, frequently with separate party headquarters and rival newspapers.

In the continental United States the *Kuo Min Yat Po* (*Chinese Nationalist Daily of America*; founded in 1927) in San Francisco and the *Mun Hey Po* (founded in 1915 as a weekly; started daily publication in 1927) in New York supported the "left" faction. The "right" countered with *Young China* in San Francisco and in addition started the *Zhongguo Ribao* (founded in 1929) in New York City and the *San Min Morning Post* (founded in 1930) in Chicago.<sup>47</sup> A similar split prevailed in Honolulu, where the *Liberty News* supported the "left" faction, while the "right" established the *United Chinese News* (*Chung Wah Kung Bo*) in 1928.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the preoccupation with China's politics during the first half of the twentieth century, a sense of a Chinese American community was also developing in the continental United States. Nonparty newspapers emerged to take their places alongside the organs of the three Chinese political groups. In San Francisco there were the *Chung Sai Yat Po*, founded in 1900 by Chinese Christians, and the *Chinese Times*, founded in 1924 as the voice of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. In New York the independent *Chinese Journal of Commerce* was founded in 1928.<sup>49</sup> This flowering of the Chinese press on the mainland was sustained by a readership consisting mostly of immigrants, who during this period still made up a majority of the Chinese population in the continental United States. Continued discrimination against the Chinese, which hindered Chinese entry into mainstream America, also tended to provide some motivation for many U.S.-born to maintain some proficiency in reading Chinese.

The same developments did not occur in Hawai'i. From an early date there had been a greater percentage of Chinese families in Hawai'i than on the mainland. By 1920 more than half of the Chinese in Hawai'i were native-born,<sup>50</sup> a stage not reached on the mainland until two decades later.<sup>51</sup> The fact that there was only a small White middle class in Hawai'i facilitated Chinese entry into Hawai'i's mainstream society. A growing number of the Hawai'i-born Chinese lost the capability to read Chinese. By 1929 less than 40 percent of school-age Chinese children were attending Chinese schools.<sup>52</sup> Thus, although U.S. census figures indicate that from 1920

to the eve of World War II the total Chinese population in Honolulu exceeded that in San Francisco, there was also a greater number who were illiterate in Chinese. Accompanying this phenomenon of Americanization was also a decreasing interest, especially among the Hawai'i-born, in China politics. Thus, even when the Chinese press was at its height in Honolulu during the first three decades of the twentieth century, none of the newspapers could publish more than three times weekly, though their San Francisco colleagues had been publishing dailies as early as 1900. (It should be noted, however that the second-largest population center for Chinese on the mainland, New York City, could not justify a daily either until 1927, and dailies were not published in Los Angeles, third in population, until after the late 1970s!)

The typical Chinese newspaper in Hawai'i before World War II was a triweekly printed with lead type, usually eight to ten pages long. Not counting the advertisements, about a fifth of the news concerned the local community. China news comprised some 30 to 40 percent, split between news of Guangdong and the rest of China. International news made up another 10 to 20 percent. Editorials could be approximately 10 to 15 percent of the text, and literature and featured articles comprised the remaining 15 to 25 percent. The contents, except for local news, thus were not dissimilar to those of the contemporaneous Chinese-language press in the continental United States.

San Francisco was the political, economic, and cultural center of Chinese on the mainland, so its Chinese newspapers had access to a large market in the continental United States, especially in the Western states, and in Mexico. This market was not accessible to the Hawaiian Chinese newspapers because their local news coverage was not relevant to most mainland Chinese. Thus they were limited mostly to serving the decreasing numbers in the Islands who were still literate in Chinese.

A brief renaissance of the Hawai'i Chinese-language press occurred during the Sino-Japanese War, when heightened interest in war news encouraged the newspapers to consider daily publication. The *New China News*, under the editorship of Dai Ming Lee, led the way on March 20, 1941, changing its English name to *New China Press* in the process. Later when martial law was declared in the Islands after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Chinese press assumed the additional role of informing Hawai'i Chinese about military government regulations.<sup>53</sup> By 1942 and 1943, respectively the *United Chinese News* and the *Liberty News* also became dailies.<sup>54</sup> But the revival proved to be only temporary. The decline of the Chinese press resumed soon after the war ended as the older immigrant generation passed away or retired to China and fewer and fewer of the U.S.-born were capable of reading Chinese. This situation was aggravated even more by the closure of Chinese schools by the territorial government from 1943 to 1948.<sup>55</sup> By the mid-1940s the *Liberty News* ceased publication.<sup>56</sup> After the Kuomintang defeat on the Chinese

mainland (in 1949), the *United Chinese News* was reorganized in 1961 as the *United Chinese Press* (*Chung Wah Sun Bo*).<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, the old constitutionalist organ, the venerable *New China Press*, continued to limp along, supported principally by the C. Q. Yee Hop (Chun Quon) family.<sup>58</sup>

#### THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS

As the Hawai'i-born Chinese population grew, an Americanized Chinese Hawaiian middle class of professionals and businessmen emerged by the 1920s and began to develop a new sense of community. Organizations such as the University Club (founded in 1919) were established, reflecting their aspirations to achieve equal status in Hawai'i's multiethnic society. In 1925 a group of native-born formed the Hawaiian Chinese Civic Association to strive for the civil and political rights of the Chinese. In 1926 a member of the association, Dr. Dai Yen Chang, became the first full-blooded Chinese to be elected county supervisor.<sup>59</sup>

The same year the first Chinese-published bilingual paper in the New World, the *Hawaii Chinese News*, was founded as part of this effort by Hawai'i-born Chinese to become part of mainstream society and to express their existence as a Hawai'i Chinese community. Ruddy Tong was the weekly's first editor and manager. It should be noted that the first English-language Chinese community newspaper on the continental United States, the *Chinese Digest*, was not founded in San Francisco until 1935.

The *Hawaii Chinese News*' premier issue stated that it

is the proud child of an ideal developed within the Chinese community and the happy realization of the long cherished expectation and hope of the Chinese people throughout the territory. It has been established to serve, to help, and to promote the best interests of the thousands who make up the Chinese community. It answers the flood of inquiries from thoughtful Chinese as to why the present generation, educated in American schools and colleges, cannot conduct a newspaper of their own; it fulfills the dreams of farseeing individuals who years ago, had already pictured the progress of the Chinese along all lines of endeavor.

The motto on the newspaper's masthead read: "For richer life among the Chinese" and "For more friendly relations with others."

This weekly was the first Chinese community newspaper to express a U.S. citizen's viewpoint, and it paid more attention to community, social events, and sports news than did the Chinese-language newspapers. It targeted the younger Hawai'i-born element as its audience. However, when its rivals began publishing more local Chinese news by the early 1930s, the *Hawaii Chinese News* began to lose circulation and advertising revenue.<sup>60</sup> It ceased publication in 1932.<sup>61</sup> For a short time during the mid-1930s, the *United Chinese News* tried to attract the growing number of English readers by publishing an English-language section. This effort ended around 1938.<sup>62</sup>

During this period a growing number of locally born Asians were rapidly becoming Americanized. In the process many had lost fluency in their ancestral tongues; however, the common experiences of the several Asian groups striving for equality in Hawai'i and their common use of the English language became factors drawing them together. On January 20, 1936, Charles Ling Fu started publication of the English-language weekly *Oriental Tribune*, a paper "aimed at and dedicated to the Westernized Oriental of Hawai'i Nei." This, the first newspaper to use the Asian American concept to unite people of Asian descent, lasted less than a year, as there apparently were not enough readers ready to embrace this principle.<sup>63</sup> The next year another weekly, the *Hawaii Chinese Journal*, describing itself as "the Voice of 27,000 Chinese," began publication on November 12, 1937. The first manager of this new venture was Chock Lun, and the editor was William C. W. Lee.<sup>64</sup>

The *Hawaii Chinese Journal* emphasized local community news but also included China news of concern to Hawai'i Chinese. During World War II, from August 29, 1940, to December 7, 1944, this publication was bilingual. In 1952 it published a special issue to commemorate the Hawai'i Chinese centennial. This newspaper had a life of two decades before it ceased publication on December 31, 1957. It was succeeded by the *Hawaii Chinese Weekly*, "the Only English Weekly for Hawai'i's Chinese," which began publication on July 3, 1958. However, a little more than a year later, on November 16, 1959, the paper closed its doors forever.<sup>65</sup> Since that time English readers have had to depend on Honolulu's metropolitan dailies or outside publications such as Vancouver's *Chinatown News* to read whatever news the editors choose to print on the Hawai'i Chinese community.

#### SINCE THE 1960s

The relaxation of immigration curbs on Asians resulted in a large influx of Chinese immigrants into the United States after 1965. By the 1980s these new immigrants formed about 70 percent of the Chinese population, creating a large potential market for Chinese newspapers. In 1961 Hong Kong's *Sing Tao Jih Pao* began sending daily issues to San Francisco for sale. By 1963 the paper had launched an airmail edition. After a successful trial period, *Sing Tao* established offices and published different editions in major North American Chinatowns.<sup>66</sup> The coverage in these editions included local community news as well as features and news stories taken from the Hong Kong editions of the paper. *Sing Tao's* coming launched a new stage in development of the Chinese American press: the appearance of nationwide newspapers financed largely with capital from abroad.

During the next few years rival Chinese newspapers with national distribution also appeared, including the *World Journal* (*Shijie Ribao*, founded in 1976 by the owner of Taiwan's

*United Journal*); *International Daily News* (founded in 1981 by Taiwan immigrant Chen Tao); and *Centre Daily News* (founded in 1982 by Taiwan immigrant Fu Caho-hou as the North American edition of Hong Kong's *Centre Daily News*). These newspaper networks have higher professional journalistic standards than the preexisting local newspapers and maintain offices staffed with reporters in several cities. Moreover, instead of waiting passively for news items to be delivered to their offices, as was often the wont of older existing community newspapers operating on shoestring budgets, these newcomers actively assign reporters to cover local events.<sup>67</sup>

Hawai'i also experienced some increase in immigration, although not to the extent that the U.S. mainland did. By the 1980s the foreign-born had increased to about 30 percent of the Chinese population in the Islands. This situation led an enterprising entrepreneur to begin publishing the *Honolulu Chinese Press* on September 11, 1975, to test the local market. The results, however, were not encouraging, and the experiment was terminated on November 1 of that year.<sup>68</sup> Shortly afterward, in 1978, the *New China Press*, then the oldest Chinese newspaper in the Islands, also closed its doors.<sup>69</sup> This left only the Kuomintang-subsidized *United Chinese Press* still hanging on. The 1988 Oahu telephone directory also lists both the *World Journal* and *Sing Tao* as having business offices in Honolulu; however, their newspapers are imported from the mainland.

The demand of Chinese Americans for equal rights and affirmative action on the U.S. mainland spawned the Chinese American weekly *East/West* in San Francisco in 1967. Growing community consciousness also led to the founding of weeklies in smaller Chinese communities, such as the *Sampan* in Boston (founded in 1972), the *Southwest Chinese Journal* in Houston (founded in 1976), and the *Seattle Chinese Post* (founded in 1982).<sup>70</sup> But there were no such journalistic endeavors in Honolulu, where the Chinese had fought and made progress on similar issues two to three decades earlier. These issues apparently no longer presented the same challenge and stimulus for the Hawai'i Chinese population in the sixties and seventies.

#### CONCLUSION

Chinese journalism in Hawai'i has one of the oldest histories in the Western Hemisphere. Chinese-language newspapers were founded earlier in Honolulu than in any other Chinese community in the New World, with the one exception of San Francisco. From the late nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth the Chinese press played an important role in providing information about local and world events to the Hawai'i Chinese population and both influenced and reflected community sentiments.

The press went through several stages of development as Hawai'i Chinese society evolved. Initially, during the late

nineteenth century, local Chinese newspapers were apolitical commercial enterprises whose objective was merely to inform the reader. Around the turn of the century China politics became the dominant theme as the press reflected the concerns of Chinese immigrants over the course of events in their ancestral homeland. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, as Hawai'i Chinese developed an increasing sense of community, newspapers also began to give more emphasis to community news and issues. These stages of development closely paralleled developments in the Chinese community press on the mainland. However, the Hawai'i Chinese population's earlier participation as an integral part of mainstream life prevented those developments from proceeding as far as they did on the continent. Instead, the Chinese press exerted ever-decreasing influence on the Hawai'i Chinese community and finally was all but completely superseded by the mainstream metropolitan newspapers.

Throughout the history of Chinese journalism in Hawai'i the publication of Chinese-language newspapers was seldom a profitable business. During the first half of the twentieth century such newspapers were established primarily to promote specific political causes. Circulation was usually low, and often newspapers had to be subsidized by political sympathizers. For example, N. W. Ayers and Sons' *American Newspaper Annual* lists a circulation of only five hundred to six hundred during the early 1900s for the *New China Press*, one of the leading Honolulu newspapers. Just before World War II the *New China Press* had increased its circulation to around a thousand copies. Even with heightened public interest in the news during the war years, sales increased only to around two thousand.<sup>71</sup> Such a small circulation could at most justify triweekly publication. A limited market remained one of the major obstacles to the development of a flourishing nonparty, commercial Chinese-language press in Hawai'i.

A well-managed newspaper might possibly generate sufficient income to cover operating expenses, but it would lack sufficient funds for expansion and improvements. For this reason, publishing facilities could seldom be upgraded. Editors of Chinese newspapers in Hawai'i generally had a good mastery of Chinese but no training in journalism. Moreover, the tight fiscal situation only allowed them to hire a minimum number of reporters. Hence investigative-type reporting was nil. The more common practice was to translate news from the metropolitan dailies or wire services, or to wait passively for local news releases. Consequently the quality of the reporting was poor when measured against U.S. journalism standards.

By World War II, the Chinese language had declined in importance as a vehicle for communication for the more acculturated Hawai'i-born generation. As Chinese schools dropped in enrollment, many of the Hawai'i-born lost their ability to read the language and identified less with China. As the older immigrant population decreased due to natural attrition, the Chinese-language press readership declined.

While the more recent increase in Chinese emigration to the United States has given the Chinese newspapers on the mainland a new lease on life, Hawai'i has not experienced this revival; more than 70 percent of the Islands' Chinese population remain U.S.-born.

The question arises whether an English-language community press might ever have been able to assume the same function as the Chinese-language newspapers for English readers. The answer seems a negative one, for as Chinese join the mainstream they tend to merge with the rest of the population. Although many Chinese in Hawai'i probably still have a sense of ethnic community, as can be seen from the continued existence of Chinese organizations, mainstream issues have become more relevant and Chinese community issues increasingly less so to most individuals. Thus the market for English-language community papers among the Hawai'i Chinese appears to be limited because there are not enough of the pressing local issues that would justify the existence of such a newspaper.

From the above it can be seen that population is a major factor in forming a potential market for a community newspaper. In addition, for the paper to survive, the population must have enough readers. As Chinese became increasingly acculturated and integrated within the mainstream society, there was apparently a decreasing need for community newspapers as vehicles to express their hopes and aspirations. Therefore, the Chinese press declined in Hawai'i. The same trends have been observed on the U.S. mainland, but there the large influx of immigrants from the mid-sixties through the eighties staved off the marked decline and made possible a market for Chinese newspaper networks of national and international scope. Granted, however, that demographic changes influence the continued operation of newspapers, one wonders if more subjective factors such as entrepreneurship and community spirit may play just as important a role, especially since cities such as Boston; Washington, D.C.; Seattle; and Houston, all with less than half the 1980 Chinese population of Honolulu, do regularly publish Chinese community newspapers.<sup>72</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Ge Gongzhen, *Zhongguo baoye shi* [History of the Chinese press] (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 1995; reprint of 1935 Commercial Press edition, Shanghai), 64.
2. Roswell S. Britton, *The Chinese Periodical Press, 1800-1912* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1933), 49.
3. H. M. Lai, "The Chinese-American Press," in Sally Miller, ed., *The Ethnic Press in the United States: An Analysis and Handbook* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1933), 27-43.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Clarence E. Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i, 1980), 128.

8. Thomas W. Chinn, H. M. Lai, Philip P. Choy, eds., *A History of the Chinese in California: A Syllabus* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1969), 21.
9. Glick, 128.
10. Ibid.; Andrew W. Lind, *Hawaii's People* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1955), 58-59.
11. "Ben quan chengli shi lue" [A brief history of the founding of our meeting hall], *Tanxiangshand Zhonglus Huiquan 50 zhou'nian ji'nian tekan* [Publication to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Chinese Society of Hawai'i] (Honolulu: United Chinese Society, 1934), 1; Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent/Hui-qian System," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 1987 (Chinese Historical Society of America, 1987), 13-51; Dormant C. Chang, ed., *The Chinese of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1929), 79-81.
12. Tin-Yuke Char, "Chinese Newspapers in Hawaii," *The Bamboo Path: Life and Writings of a Chinese in Hawaii* (Honolulu: Hawai'i Chinese History Center, 1877), 220-33. The masthead of the facsimile of the October 8, 1904, issue shown in Chang, 11, states that the *Hawaii Chinese News* was established March 16, 1883. The issue number is 1,332. Assuming consecutive numbering from 1, weekly publication up to 1899, and semi-weekly publication from 1899 to 1904, then the paper would have commenced publication around 1883. This conflicts with information in Glick, 207, which gives a date of 1881 and states that Ho Fon took over as manager in 1883. It is conceivable, however, that the numbering of the issues began only after Ho became manager.
13. The biography of Jackson Hee in Chang, 79, mentions that he was editor of the *Tsun Wan Daily* in Hilo. The writer has not been able to corroborate this information from other sources.
14. Glick, 207.
15. Glick, 291.
16. Hong Wai (Feng Yulong), "Hua bao lishi jishi" [A historical account of Chinese newspapers], *The Chinese of Hawaii: Who's Who, 1956-1957* (Honolulu: United Chinese Penman Club, 1957), 32-33.
17. Su Yuan, "Tanxiangshand qiaobao canqsang lu" [Rise and decline of Chinese newspapers in Hawai'i], *Oiaowu Yuebao* [Overseas Chinese Affairs Monthly], No. 84 (June 30, 1959), 11-14.
18. The *Chinese Chronicle*, with Yuen Chu Ho as editor, is mentioned in a note to Table 14 in Glick, 294. This editor apparently is identical to the Ruan Zhaohe cited as editor of the *Wah Ha Bo* by Hong. A single copy (dated September 25, 1901), bearing the title *Honolulu Chinese Chronicle*, is in the collection of the Cooke Library, Punahou School, Honolulu.
19. Hong.
20. Glick, 294.
21. Chang, 12.
22. Hong; Glick, 293; Su.
23. Wu Xianzi, *Zhongguo Minzhu Xianzhengdang dangshi* [History of the Democratic Constitutionalist Party of China] (San Francisco: Democratic Constitutionalist Party of China, 1963), 25.
24. Lai. By 1901, this newspaper had become a daily.
25. Wu, 28.
26. Chang, 64.
27. *Hawaii Newspapers: A Union List*, 68, sent by Mary Ann Ahao, Historical Records Branch, Hawai'i State Archives, February 10, 1988.
28. Su.
29. Su; Hong; Feng Ziyou, "Meizhou Geming Dang bao shu lue" [Brief descriptions of revolutionary party newspapers in the Americas], *Geming Yishi* [Anecdotal history of the revolution], v. 4 (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1965), 135-44. A society, the Man Sang Sheh (Minsheng She or People's Livelihood Society), was established by Honolulu Chinese merchants in 1906 to maintain law and order in the Chinese community. In 1907 members of this revolutionary society raised capital to start the *Man Sang Yat Po*. See Chang, 77. A single copy of this paper, dated May 20, 1908 (issue no. 112), is in the State of Hawai'i Archives, listed under *Chinese Daily News*. The issue states that the paper was published daily except on Sunday. The manager was Ho Fon and the editor Chong Yee Pack.
30. "Tanxiangshand Ziyou Xin Bao xiao shi" [Brief history of the *Liberty News*], in Feng Ziyou, *Anecdotal History of the Revolution*, v. 4, 197-201. The *Chung Kuo Jih Pao* was the earliest organ of the Xingzhonghui and was founded in 1899 in Hong Kong. The paper moved to Canton in 1911 after the revolutionaries had captured the city. See Feng Ziyou, *Huaqiao qeming kaiquo shi* [Role of the Overseas Chinese in the revolution and founding of the republic] (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1953 reprint of 1946 Chongqing edition), 8-10. By international treaty, diplomats, merchants, teachers, students, and tourists were exempt classes not barred from entry under the Chinese exclusion acts.
31. Chang, 63-64.
32. Lai.
33. Won Hung Fei, "Wo Zai Tanxiangshan Tongmenghui he Ziyou Xinbao gongzuo de huiyi" [Reminiscences of my activities in the Tongmenghui and *Liberty News* in Hawaii], in *Xinhai Geming huiyi lu* [Reminiscences of the 1911 Revolution] (Beijing: Wen-shi Ziliao Chubanshe, 1982), 309-34; Huang Guangfu, "Xinhai gianhou Tanxiangshan de ji jia xuanchuan geming de baozhi" [Several newspapers in Hawaii doing propaganda work in support of the revolution before and after 1911], in *Sun Zhongshan yu Xinhai Geming shiliao zhuanji* [Special collection of historical materials on Sun Yat-sen and the 1911 Revolution] (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), 91-96.
34. Hong.
35. Ibid.
36. This is a far-flung South China secret society dedicated originally to the overthrow of the ruling Manchu dynasty and to the restoration of Han Chinese rule to China.
37. Karl Lo and H. M. Lai, *Chinese Newspapers in North America, 1854-1975* (Washington, D.C.: Chinese Research Center, 1976), 90.
38. *Sun Chung Kwok Bo* (*New China News*), advertisement dated April 24, 1908, in June 12, 1908, issue.
39. Won.
40. Chang, 64.
41. Ibid., 10.
42. Won.
43. Lo and Lai, 45, 57.
44. Hong.
45. Lo and Lai, 45-46.
46. Chun Quon, "81 zishu" [Autobiography at 81], *Tributes to Mr. C. Q. Yee Hop on His 81st Birthday* (Honolulu: 1947), 91-117; "Chen Kun xiaqnsheg shishi 13 zhou'nian" [In commemoration of the thirteenth anniversary of the passing of Mr. Chun Quon], *Chinese World*, August 11, 12, 1967.
47. Lai.
48. Char.
49. Lo and Lai, 55, 89, and 97.
50. Lind, 92. In 1910, some 66.8 percent of Chinese were foreign-born; the figure was 47.5 percent in 1920 and 27.5 percent

in 1930. The U.S. Census considers children of citizens to be native-born even if they were born abroad. Thus these percentages will be slightly higher if citizens' offspring born outside the United States are included.

51. Betty Lee Sung, *Mountain of Gold: Story of the Chinese in America* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1967), 269.
52. Chang, 61.
53. Interview with C. H. Kwok, former editor of *New China Press*, June 6, 1988.
54. Communication from Mary Ann Ahao, Historical Records Branch, Hawai'i State Archives, February 10, 1988, including pages from *Hawaii Newspapers: A Union List* (Honolulu, n.d.), 41, 68.
55. Kong Sun Lum, ed., *Hawaii Chinese in the Foreign Language School Case: A Memorial Publication* (Honolulu, Hawaii Chinese Educational Association and Chung Wah Chung Kung Hui, 1950), 58-214.
56. February 10, 1988, communication from Hawai'i State Archives.
57. Lo and Lai, 37, 39.
58. Chun Quon.
59. Chang, 16.
60. Glick, 295.
61. *Hawaii Chinese Annual* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1933), 4:16.
62. Communication from Hawai'i State Archives, February 10, 1988.
63. *Hawaii Chinese Annual* (Honolulu: Overseas Penman Club, 1936), 7:1, 7:14. Special Collections, Hamilton Library, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, has issues from January 20 to May 27, 1936.
64. Hong.
65. Char.

66. *Xianggang Baoye 50 Nian: Xingdao Ribao Jinxi Baogqing Teikan* [Fifty years of journalism in Hong Kong: Special publication to commemorate the golden anniversary of *Sing Tao Jih Pao*] (Hong Kong, 1988), . 57, 60-61.

67. Lai.
68. Char. Dates based on issues in Special Collections, Hamilton Library, University of Hawai'i at Manoa.
69. *Chinese Times*, August 8, 1978.
70. Lai.
71. Interview with C. H. Kwok, former editor, May 6, 1988. Circulation figures published in trade publications such as *Ayers Directory of Publications* are apparently greatly exaggerated. For example, the *New China Press* claimed circulation figures of over nine thousand in the 1950s and 1960s, greater than any Chinese newspaper in San Francisco!
72. Standard metropolitan population figures for 1980 include the following:

Statistical Area	Total Chinese Population	Foreign-Born
Honolulu, Haw.	52,301	11,828
Boston, Mass.	21,442	14,732
Washington, D.C.	18,250	12,370
Seattle, Wash.	14,141	8,776
Houston, Tex.	13,956	9,822

Source of statistics: *Asian and Pacific Islander Population in the United States: 1980* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1988), Table 20, "Family Characteristics of Chinese Persons by Nativity for States and SMSAs with 10,000 or more Chinese Persons: 1980."