The Migration Effects of Chinese Returnees on Emigration in the Late 19th Century as Compared to European Migration

FUJIMURA Korekiyo

(Abstract)

By analyzing the passenger traffic statistics of four exit ports – Amoy, Swatow, Kiungchow, and Hong Kong – from 1855 to 1940, this report presents a new perspective on Chinese migration along China’s coast in the late 19th century. Mencarini’s statistical study of three Chinese treaty ports from 1876-1898 has not been carefully examined for over a century. By including statistical data from Hong Kong, which Mencarini did not use, this study presents detailed flow diagrams to highlight the movement of migrants between China and nearly all regions in Southeast Asia and part of North America.

Up until 1928, statistical figures on migration between Chinese coastal cities and Southeast Asian countries or San Francisco in the United States all showed long-term upward trends, except for during World War I when these figures temporarily dropped. The annual return rate to China remained, and the rate was approximately 80 percent, except for between 1931 and 1933. The percentage of women and children leaving China rose to over 50 percent around 1937. The monthly distribution of the number of Chinese entries and departures to and from San Francisco in the three months before and after the Lunar New Year was four and eight times higher than the other months.

This report also discusses why most trends simply show an increase in the number of emigrants in direct proportion to that of immigrants for almost every year. The analytical approaches of previous studies failed to point out the link between the departures and entries of Chinese migrants. This drawback is attributed to the method used, which involves determining the factors affecting migration rates based solely on yearly statistics. The key to explaining the simultaneous annual rise in the number of exiting and entering Chinese migrants is the micro migration cycle, which is most clearly recognized in the monthly movements of Chinese to and from San Francisco.

Each year, former emigrants tended to return to China before February, and new emigrants left for the same destinations after the Chinese Spring Festival. The money and knowledge that these returnees brought back to their local communities in South China attracted others to join the collective emigration to San Francisco. The returnees and settlers from the United States and Southeast Asia were instrumental in bringing Chinese newcomers from their own groups, and upward trends were generally observed. This cycle was the fundamental base of Chinese mass migration.

Lastly, this study statistically compares the migration effects of Chinese returnees on emigration with European returnees’ influence on their respective outflow to the United States. Italian migration cycles between Italy and New York will provide an interesting example from the viewpoint of the Chinese return migration cycle.

(Full Paper)

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*Introduction*

By analyzing the passenger traffic statistics of four exit ports – Amoy, Swatow, Kiungchow, and Hong Kong – from 1855 to 1940, this paper presents a new perspective on Chinese migration along China’s coast in the late 19th century.

Mencarini ［1901］

Amoy

Swatow

Kiungchow

Hong Kong



Fujimura［2009, 2010］





1855

Chart 1 Coverage of the Period of Chinese Migration

Source：Fujimura [2012：97, 101]

Mencarini’s statistical study of three Chinese treaty ports from 1876-1898 has not been carefully examined for over a century. By including statistical data from Hong Kong, which Mencarini did not use, this study presents detailed flow diagrams in order to highlight the movement of migrants between China, nearly all regions in Southeast Asia, and part of North America.

*Ⅰ．Passenger Traffic Statistics of the Four Chinese Exit Ports*

*(1) Departures and Arrivals to and from Outside China*

Chart 2, below, showing annual departures to and arrivals from each destination outside of China, 1855-1940, uncovers the following points. Up until 1928, statistical totals on migration between Chinese coastal cities and Southeast Asian countries or the U. S. A. and Canada showed long-term upward trends, except for during World War I when these figures temporarily dropped. The annual return rate to China remained steady at approximately 80%, except for the period between 1931 and 1933.



Chart 2 Annual Departures to and Arrivals from Each Destination (1855-1940)

Source：Table 2, below.

Table 1. Departures from and Arrivals to Each Exit Port (1855-1940)



Source：Fujimura [ 2010：130；2017, in Yoshihara (ed.), forthcoming ].

Table 2 Departures to and Arrivals from Each Destination (1855-1940)



Source：Fujimura [ 2017, in Yoshihara (ed.), forthcoming ].

*(2) Singapore Statistics, Prepared and Verified*

Tables 3 and 4 show the the statistics regarding Singapore. Table 3, below, verifies the Singapore statistics prepared by this author, as shown in Table 4 on the next page.

In Table 3, it can be seen that almost all of the rightmost I/J figures, are near 1.00, indicating that the method used here to count the statistics is generally adequate.

Table 3 Verification of Singapore Statistics



Source：Fujimura[2012：110]

Table 4 Preparing the Singapore Statistics

Source：Fujimura［2012：107］

*Ⅱ．Return Rates*

*(1)Total Return Rates*

Chart 3, below, shows the return rates of each exit port and each foreign destination. The five left-hand sets of bars show the departures and arrivals of each exit port and the total, while the nine right-hand sets of bars show the departures and arrivals to and from each destination and the total.



French

Indochina

Total

Total

Hong

Kong

Singapore

U. S. A.

Thailand

Amoy

Dutch

East

Indies

Canada

Swatow

Philip-pins

Others

Kiung

chow

Chart 3 Total Return Rates (1855-1940)

Source：Tables 1 and 2, above.

It is important to note that the leftmost Hong Kong departures bar is lower than the arrivals one, and the number of arrivals to Hong Kong was 1.21 times as many as the number of departures. Conversely, every arrivals bar for the other three ports is much lower than the respective departures bar. For example, the return rate of Swatow is only 35.96%. The contrast between the return rate of Hong Kong and those of the other three ports is due to the special character of Hong Kong as a home-coming port. Many of the emigrants from the other three ports, Amoy, Swatow and Kiungchow, returned home via Hong Kong, because they could easily exchange foreign currencies into Chinese currency and could buy gifts for their family and community in Hong Kong.

Turning our attention to the right-hand bars, all departures bars are longer than the arrivals ones, and, generally, most of the return rates are not far from 80%.

1. *Monthly Return Rates (San Francisco)*

This paper also discusses why most of the trend lines show an increase in the number of emigrants in direct proportion to that of immigrants for almost every year, as shown in annual return rates in Table 1 and Chart 2. The analytical approaches of previous studies failed to point out the link between the departures and entries of Chinese migrants. This drawback is attributed to the method used, which involves determining the factors affecting migration rates based solely on yearly statistics.



●February

Hong Kong→San Francisco

San Francisco→Hong Kong

Chart 4 Monthly Departures to and Arrivals from San Francisco (1855-1895)

Source：Fujimura［2013：64］

*Ⅲ．Migration Cycle*

The main focus of this study is to illustrate that the micro migration cycle between China and San Francisco presents a universal and principal trend that developed worldwide in the late nineteenth century.

The key to explaining the simultaneous annual rise in the number of exiting and entering Chinese migrants is the micro-migration cycle, which is most clearly recognized in the monthly movements of Chinese to and from San Francisco, shown in the Charts 4 and 5.

The monthly distribution of the number of Chinese entries and departures from and to San Francisco in the three months before and after the Lunar New Year was four and eight times higher than the other months.



February

Chart 5 Average Monthly Departures to and Arrivals from San Francisco

Source：Fujimura [2013：66]

It is necessary to statistically compare the migration effects of Chinese returnees on emigration with European returnees’ influence on their respective outflow to the United States. Italian migration cycles between Italy and New York will provide an interesting example from the viewpoint of the Chinese return migration cycle [Ferenczi, I., and W.F. Willcox (1969. [1929, 1931]): 462-463; 477].

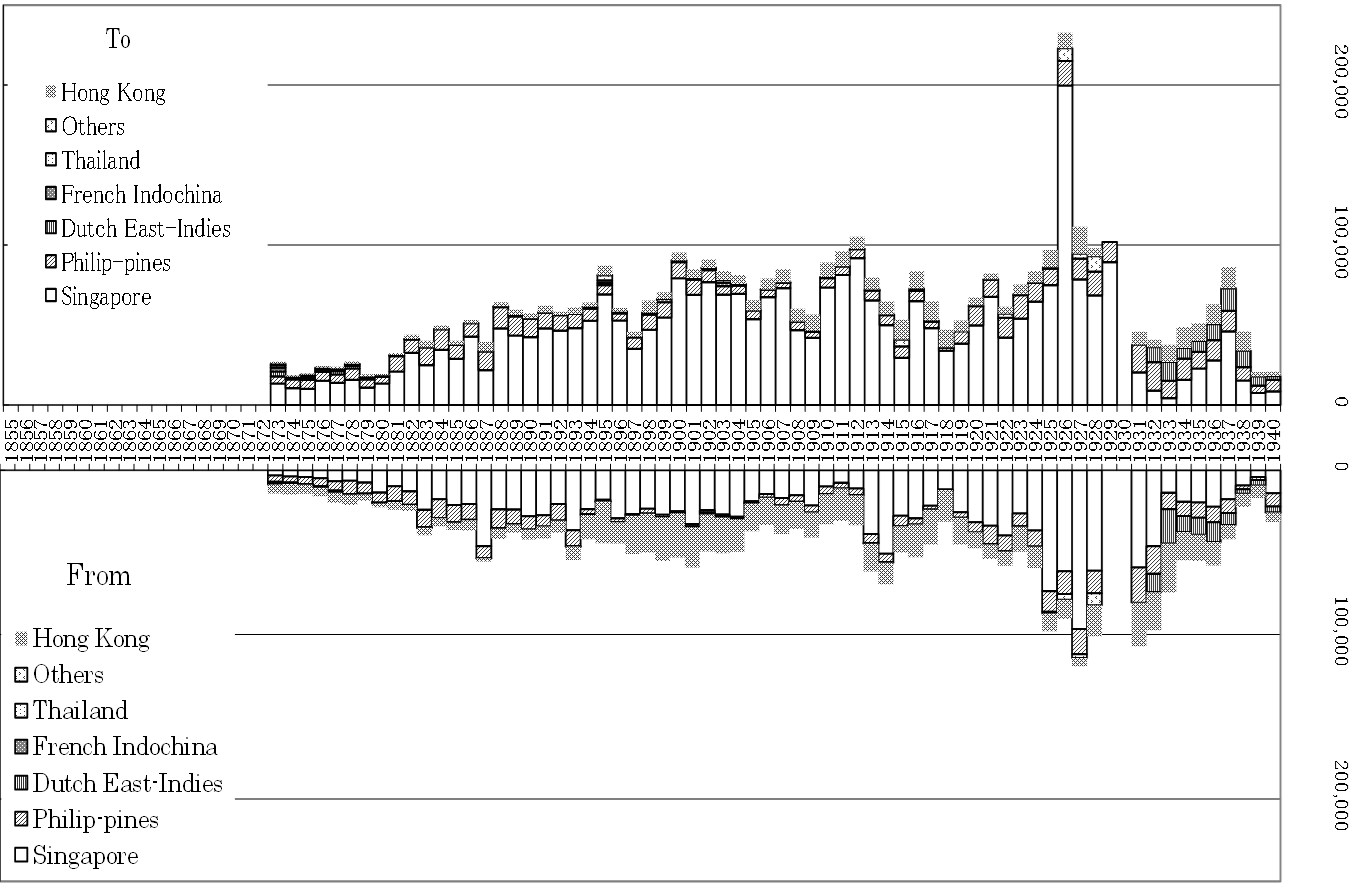
*Conclusion*

Each year, former emigrants tended to return to China before February, and new emigrants left for the same destinations after the Chinese Spring Festival. The money and knowledge that these returnees brought back to their local communities in South China attracted others to join the collective emigration to San Francisco. The returnees and settlers from the United States and Southeast Asia were instrumental in bringing Chinese newcomers from their own groups, and upward trends were generally observed. This cycle was the fundamental basis of Chinese mass migration.

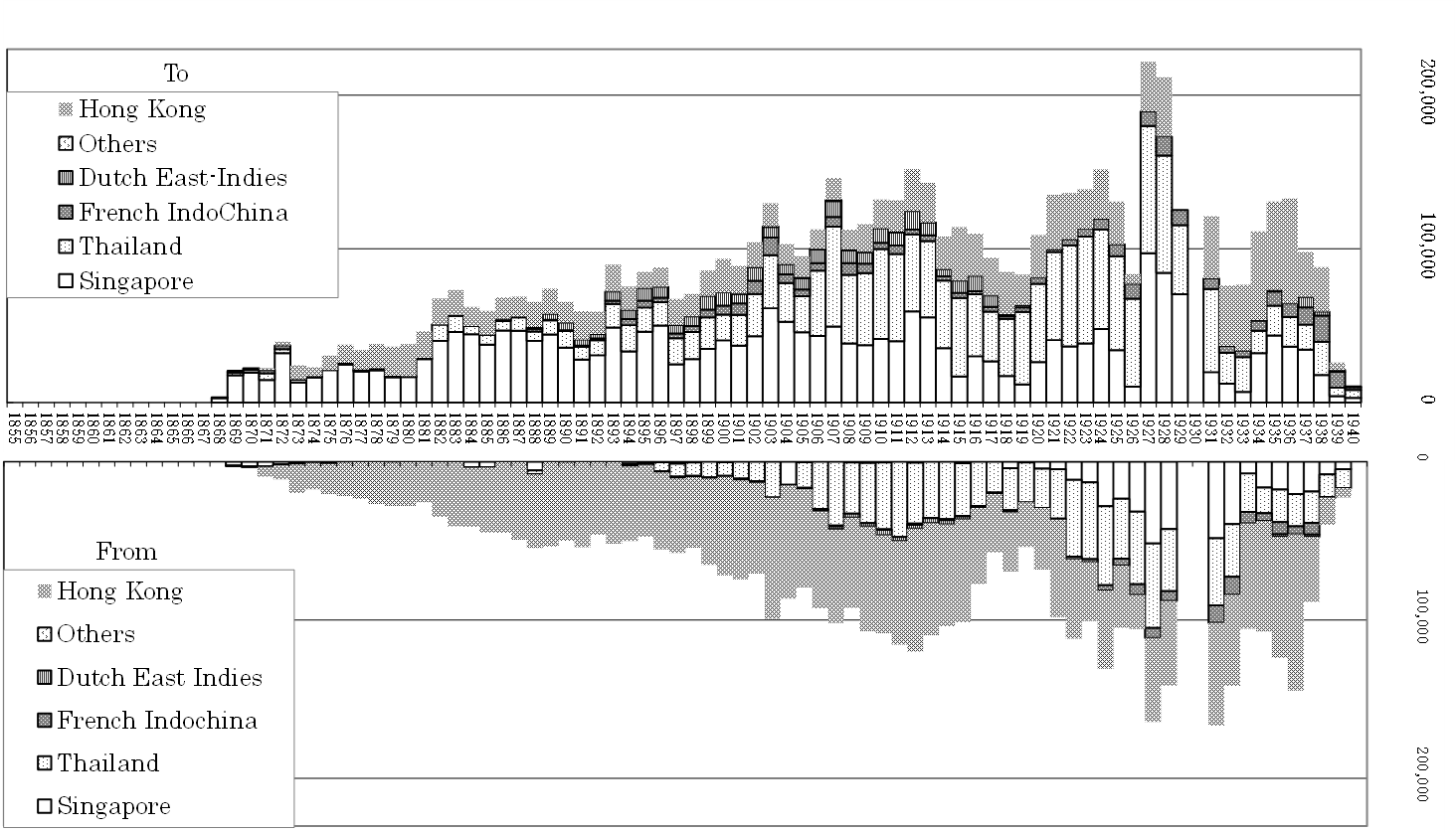
Appendices



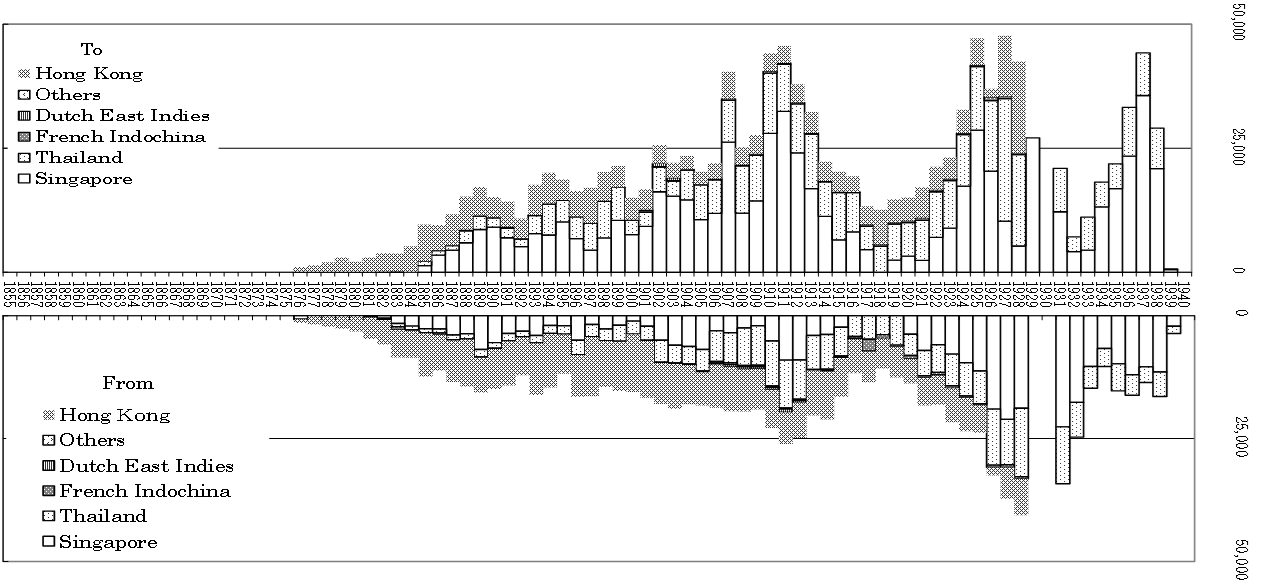
Appendix 1. Hong Kong (1855-1939)



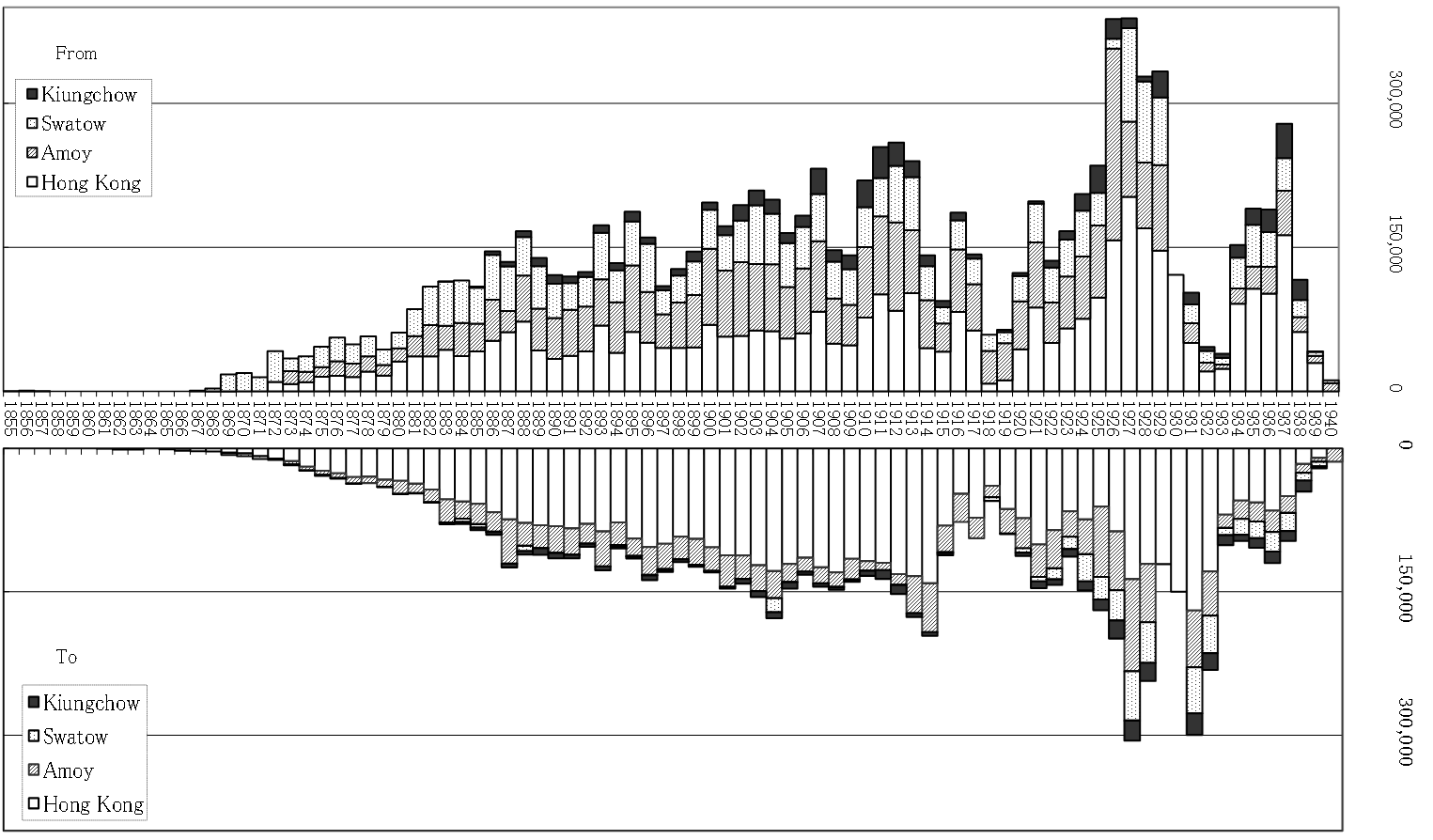
Appendix 2. Amoy (1873-1940)



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Appendix 5. Singapore / Straits Settlements (1855-1940)



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Appendix 10. U. S. A. and Canada (1855-1939)



Appendix 11. Annual Departures from and Arrivals to Each Exit Port (1855-1940)

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