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# THE SIX-DAY WAR OF 1899

Hong Kong in the Age of Imperialism

**Patrick H. Hase**



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## Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Studies Series

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*For Aileen*



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# Foreword

The appearance of this volume, the fourth in the *Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Studies Series*, records a forgotten but very significant series of events in the history of Hong Kong. Dr Patrick Hase has made an important contribution by his scholarly research and lively description of the serious fighting that took place as the British asserted their control over the New Territories.

The publications in the *Studies Series* have been made possible initially by the very generous donation of seeding capital by the Trustees of the Clague Trust Fund, representing the estate of the late Sir Douglas Clague. This donation enabled us to establish a trust fund in the name of Sir Lindsay and Lady Ride, in memory of our first Vice President. The Society itself added to this fund, as have a number of further generous donors.

The result is that we now have funding to bring to students of Hong Kong's history, culture and society a number of books that might otherwise not have seen the light of day. Furthermore, we were delighted to be able to establish an agreement with Hong Kong University Press which sets out the basis on which the Press will partner our efforts.

This book is the fourth in the series which began in 2005. The Trustees of the Ride Fund are actively pursuing a further dozen or so titles, all in various stages of progress.

Robert Nield  
President  
Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch  
March 2008



# Preface and Acknowledgements

I first became interested in the Six-Day War of 1899 during the middle 1980s, while working on the history of Sha Tau Kok market.<sup>1</sup> Dr James Hayes drew to my attention that there were translations of two interesting letters from the Sha Tau Kok elders in a collection of documents printed for the Colonial Office called *Eastern No. 66: Hong Kong; Correspondence (June 20 1898, to August 20 1900) Respecting the Extension of the Boundaries of the Colony*.<sup>2</sup> Reading through this collection,<sup>3</sup> I found my Sha Tau Kok letters, but also large numbers of documents on the Six-Day War. Shortly afterwards Dr Hayes drew my attention to two further official collections, printed for the Legislative Council, Hong Kong, entitled *Despatches and Other Papers relating to the Extension of the Colony of Hong Kong* and *Further Papers relating to the Military Operations in Connection with the Disturbances on the Taking Over of the New Territories*<sup>4</sup> which had more material on this short war.<sup>5</sup> I found these collections extremely interesting, but took no further action on them until 2005, when Dr Hayes urged me to put the material into some sort of order: this book is the result.

It will be clear that I am greatly indebted to Dr Hayes, and it gives me great pleasure to express my thanks and indebtedness to him here. It was Dr Hayes who, thirty years ago, first opened my eyes to the great wealth of interesting material to be found on the history of the New Territories. Since then, he has been an unfailing source of material, advice, common sense, support, and suggestions. I owe him more than words can say. In every real sense, he is my master and mentor.

I also owe my thanks to many others who have helped me in the preparation of this book. Lt. Col. N. Collett, Mr R. W. A. Suddaby of the Imperial War Museum, Mr Tim Ko Tim-keung, Dr Chan Wing-hoi, Mr Robert Nield, Dr Sydney Cheung, as well as Dr James Hayes saw the book at early draft stage and gave me very many valuable comments and good advice. Specific thanks are noted in the footnotes. I am also very indebted to the various village elders who have given up their time to speak to me and to answer questions, especially Mr Tang Shing-sze of Ping Shan, Mr Tang Tsim-lam and other elders of Kam Tin, and to Mr Man Chun-fai and Mr Man Pak-hang of Tai Hang. I would also like to thank the President and Council of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch, for giving me the opportunity to

present this research at a public lecture of the Society: the comments made on that occasion were of great value. All errors, however, are mine alone.

I am indebted to the Principal, George Watson's College, Edinburgh (the owners of the Lockhart Papers), and to the National Library of Scotland (the custodians of the Lockhart Papers) for access to these papers.

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Plates 1, 2, and 3 were previously published in *Hong Kong Invaded, a '97 Nightmare*, Gillian Bickley, Hong Kong University Press, 2001, together with some other photographs of the Hongkong Regiment. Plate 5 was previously published as the Frontispiece of *Unequal Treaty 1898–1997: China, Great Britain and Hong Kong's New Territories*, Peter Wesley-Smith, Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1980 (2nd, revised, edition 1998).

Finally, my thanks go to my wife, Aileen, for putting up with eighteen months in which my thoughts, speech, and often actions have been totally dominated by the Six-Day War.



## Introduction

This book is a study of a small war fought over six days in the New Territories of Hong Kong, between 14 and 19 April 1899. This war was the only military campaign fought within the Hong Kong area during the period of British administration, other than the fighting against the Japanese during the last World War. It was an Imperial war, fought to secure an expansion of the British Empire, and it took place during the period when Imperialism as a belief-system was at its peak in Britain and the British Overseas Dominions, and this also makes it an interesting area of study.

The War was fought with some ferocity. There were no deaths on the British side, but several hundred villagers were killed, probably about five hundred. However, there are almost no references to the War, either in official sources or in villager sources, of a date later than 19 April 1899: there can have been few significant military conflicts which have disappeared so totally from both the official and the public memory. The reasons for this are another interesting area of study. The Hong Kong Government did not want memories of the War to distort its administration of the New Territories, and the villagers who had taken part in the insurrection seem very quickly to have come to the view that it had been a very bad idea, and so both sides deliberately set out to forget the War as soon as it was over.

The Governor of Hong Kong in 1899, Sir Henry Blake, saw the insurgency as a civil disturbance by misinformed and misguided men, and wanted it put down using minimal force, and maximum conciliation: force was to be used basically only to extricate the troops if they were attacked. However, the Colonial Secretary, James Stewart Lockhart, and the military commander on

the ground, Lt. Col. The O’Gorman,<sup>1</sup> saw the insurgency in a different light, as a rebellion. They felt that the rebels should be destroyed. By what may well be called a cover-up they managed to destroy the rebels, while publicly stating that casualties on the rebel side were very few. The General, William Gascoigne, accepted this version, and called the campaign “Somewhat trivial military operations . . . without any serious loss of life”, and this dismissive line has remained the accepted verdict on the War from then until the present.

The British had taken a 99-Year Lease of the New Territories in 1898, and were proposing to take the area over formally with a Flag-Raising Ceremony on 17 April 1899. The villagers of the western part of the area, around Yuen Long Market, with some support from the villagers of the area around Tai Po Market, objected to the British taking the area over, and decided to oppose the takeover by force. The villagers assembled a total force of about 2,600 fighting men, and started their campaign by burning the matsheds which had been erected for the Flag-Raising Ceremony (14 April). A force of about 125 British soldiers (ethnically Indian, from the Hong Kong Regiment) were sent on 15 April to the site, at Tai Po, where they were quickly put under siege by about 1,200 villagers, armed with old-fashioned cannon (culverins) and jingals (arquebuses). The British troops were rescued from a difficult situation by the arrival of a Royal Navy ship whose guns shelled the insurgent positions, and silenced them.

The following day, 16 April, the Flag-Raising Ceremony went ahead, a day earlier than had originally been proposed. On 17 April, most of the British troops (by now numbering about 425 men) attacked about 1,100 of the insurgents at a cannon emplacement prepared by the insurgents at the head of the Lam Tsuen Valley: the attack involved a bayonet charge and sustained rifle volleys. Once the emplacement was over-run, the insurgents were pursued through the hills until well after dark, the British troops firing on them whenever the opportunity to do so arose.

On 18 April, the remainder of the insurgent force (about 1,600 men) attacked the British at Sheung Tsuen. By then there were only about 350 British troops available at the scene. They threw themselves into a defensive posture along a slight watercourse, and waited for the attack. When the insurgents came to about two hundred yards from the British troops, the British opened heavy and continuous rifle volleys, which eventually broke the attack. The British troops then pursued the fleeing insurgents until nightfall. The following day, 19 April, the insurgents and their villages surrendered, and the campaign came to an end.

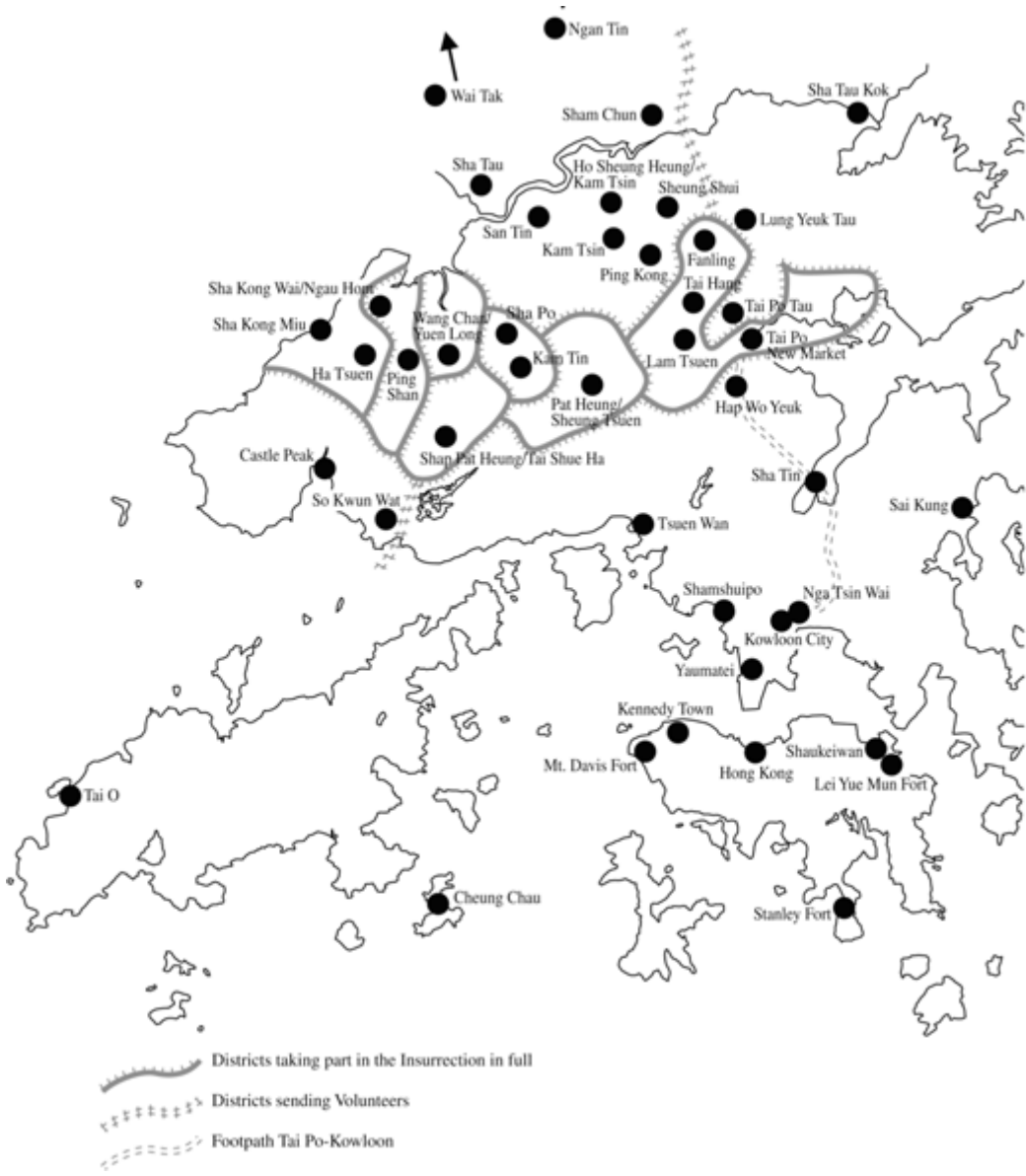
Following the closure of the campaign, the Governor insisted, in his own words, on “passing a sponge over” the War, and starting afresh, to implement

his vision for the New Territories, that is, a place marked by a policy of amicable co-operation between the administration and the villagers. He absolutely refused to countenance any retributions or punishment for the insurgents. He withdrew the military from the area within a few days. When he visited the New Territories later in 1899 to meet the village leaders (including several who had been leaders in the insurrection), he scrupulously avoided any mention of the fighting. Blake's policy of amicable co-operation remained as the unchanging policy of the Hong Kong Government towards the New Territories from then onwards until recent times.

The campaign was ill-managed by the Hong Kong military authorities. Intelligence was a conspicuous failure. Provision of supplies to the British troops was extremely poor. Command was unclear and imprecise. The artillery was badly handled. That the campaign was such a success on the British side is due entirely to the professionalism and skill of Captain Berger, who led the troops on 17 and 18 April, and to the extremely antiquated and poor weaponry on the insurgent side. The insurgents showed marked military understanding: they prepared excellent cannon emplacements for the fighting on 15 and 17 April, and attacked with great bravery on 18 April. They were let down by the nature of their weapons, and the far greater fire-power available to the British troops.

The leaders of the insurgency were taken from the traditional village leadership, and comprised almost exclusively gentry figures of great wealth and status, men older than the average from their villages. None of the leaders died in the fighting. Those who died came from the poorer and lowest in status of the village families. They were mostly young men, either unmarried or recently married, aged between about 16 and 28.





Map 1 Places Taking Part in the Insurrection, or mentioned in the text

# 1



## 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),<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

## 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),<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup>

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”.<sup>8</sup>

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.”<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

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 were 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”),<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup>

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"),<sup>18</sup> 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";<sup>19</sup> "The tone of Empire is to be heard everywhere now, strong, clear, and unmistakable".<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

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 Secretary<sup>22</sup> (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),<sup>23</sup> and one of British troops (in 1899 the Royal Welch Fusiliers).<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup> 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),<sup>26</sup> 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).<sup>27</sup> 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),<sup>28</sup> 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).<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>

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.<sup>32</sup>

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”.<sup>33</sup> 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*:<sup>34</sup>

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*:<sup>35</sup>

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.

## 2



# Riots, Disturbances, Insurrection, and War: Armed Opposition to the Imperial Ideal

Of course, the Imperialists had to deal with the question of what attitude to adopt, and what action to take, should any of the subject peoples rise up to oppose the British, and to reject the civilisation which the British were bringing with them. Since the British were, in their own eyes, bringing the great benefits of civilisation and a benevolent government, and were working hard to improve the lot of the subject peoples, they started from the premise that any opposition had to be, at best, misguided, and, at worst, insane. Any such opposition must be, therefore, brought to an end in short order, so that those who were misguided or insane could not have space to infect others with their mistaken views, and so allow the benefits of British rule to continue to be provided to the rest of the subject peoples.

Opposition to the British could take the form of demonstrations, riots, or other civil disturbances, or else insurrection, rebellion, and open war. The reaction of the Imperial authorities differed sharply as to how to deal on the one hand with civil disturbance, and on the other with rebellion. The one was to be “pacified”, the other “suppressed”. Civil disturbances were, in principle, a matter for the civil authorities to deal with. However, if the civil authorities were faced with disturbances beyond the power of the police to settle, the civil authorities could request the Army for assistance. Where the Army was called in to assist the civil authorities to restore order following an outbreak of civil disturbance the aim was usually to return the area to normal civilian administration as soon as feasible, using minimal force combined with conciliation. However, where the opposition went beyond civil disturbance, and became insurrection, rebellion, or open war, then this lay

within the sphere of responsibility of the military authorities, who would take what seemed to them the best course to suppress the insurrection, using whatever degree of force the military authorities considered the most likely to lead to long-term pacification. It was, in the last resort, a matter for the civil authorities to decide whether a particular outbreak of violent opposition was a civil disturbance, to be pacified using minimal force, or an insurrection to be suppressed as effectively and expeditiously as it might be.

### **Insurrection, Rebellion, and Open War**

In the later nineteenth century a great deal of thought was given to the best way the Army should be used to suppress an insurrection. Much of the success of this was due to Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief, India, 1885–1893. Roberts was an intensely charismatic and intelligent man, an administrative genius, greatly respected by all his men, both British and Indian. Roberts thought deeply about the problem of how to suppress insurrection, even as a very junior subaltern. He stated in his autobiography<sup>1</sup> that, as early as 1852 (when he was only 21), he discussed with his father<sup>2</sup> what the best and most effective tactics in colonial warfare, especially on the North-West Frontier, might be.<sup>3</sup>

In his autobiography, Roberts discusses in detail three battles he fought on the North-West Frontier: the taking of the Umbeyla Hill (1863), the taking of the Peiwar Kotal (1878), and the taking of Katez-i-Mir (1879).<sup>4</sup> While he does not say in so many words that these battles should be taken as models, the fact that he singled them out for a detailed discussion undoubtedly implies that Roberts saw them as such. Each of these three battles exhibits certain common features. In each case, the insurgents had fortified a strong point at the summit of a hill, or at the crest of a pass, in sufficient strength that making an unsupported frontal attack on it would have been a very dangerous option. Roberts in each case divided his forces to enable a frontal attack to be co-ordinated with one or more flank attacks. The forces moved towards their targets at a deliberate pace, but, when close in, pushed the attack home at the double, the attack involving heavy rifle-fire and bayonet charges. As soon as the enemy strong point was over-run, Roberts ensured that the victory was total, and the enemy effectively destroyed.<sup>5</sup>

Roberts also spells out his views on colonial war in his “Instructions for the General and other Officers Commanding Columns in Burma”. These instructions, issued by Roberts as Commander-in-Chief, for the Burma Campaign of 1886, state that:

Where there is an enemy in arms against British rule, all arrangements must be made not only to drive him from his position, but to surround the position so as to inflict the heaviest loss possible. Resistance overcome without inflicting punishment on the enemy only emboldens him to repeat the game, and thus, by protracting operations, costs more lives than a severe lesson promptly administered, even though that lesson may cause some losses on our side.<sup>6</sup>

Here again is the insistence on a total and decisive victory, and also once again, the need to attack on the flanks as well as the front, so as to surround the enemy at the moment of attack.

Roberts seems to have discussed his views with his officers, especially, perhaps, during the Afghan War of 1879–1880. Several British officers wrote textbooks on the prosecution of colonial wars in the 1890s: almost all were among Roberts' officers in that War. The most important of these military theoreticians were Charles Callwell<sup>7</sup> and Reginald Clare Hart.<sup>8</sup> Callwell wrote a book on the theory and practice of colonial war:<sup>9</sup> Hart wrote primarily on large-scale warfare, but includes a good deal of discussion of smaller-scale conflicts as well.<sup>10</sup>

Hart was born in 1848, and entered the Royal Engineers as Lieutenant in 1869, after the usual period of engineering studies. Hart was an intelligent man, who thought deeply about military service. He was a good teacher, and was appointed Director of Military Education, India, by Lord Roberts (from 1889 to 1896): he was later to be Commandant of the School of Military Engineering in England (from 1902 to 1905). He was later still to be Commander-in-Chief, South Africa (from 1912 to 1914). His two books, *Reflections on the Art of War*, and *Sanitation and Health* (this latter book was a compendium of advice for officers on keeping the health of their troops at a high level, dedicated to Lord Roberts) were both highly influential and much read.<sup>11</sup>

Callwell, born in 1859, entered the Army in 1876, receiving a commission in the Royal Artillery in 1878. After commanding a battery of the Royal Artillery in the Afghan War of 1879–1880, and then again in the First Boer War of 1881, he took the top place in the entry examination for the Sandhurst Staff College in 1885. He was an intensely intelligent man, and had already before 1885 studied the practice of colonial military campaigns, both British campaigns and those of other Imperial powers, but concentrating on the practice which had developed along the North-West Frontier of India. Callwell wrote up his views in a long essay, which won the Royal United Services Gold Medal in 1886. His views on colonial warfare were essentially the same as those of Lord Roberts, with whom his relations were cordial (after the

disasters of the early part of the Second Boer War (especially ‘Black Week’, in 1899), Lord Roberts was sent to South Africa to bring victory out of defeat; Callwell was one of the officers Roberts chose to help him in this). The military authorities asked Callwell to write up his essay into a book. This book was ostensibly only the personal ideas of one individual officer, but it was published by Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, and the 1906 edition had a Foreword written by no less a figure than N. G. Lyttleton, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who “recommended it to officers as a valuable contribution on the subject of the conduct of small wars”. In these circumstances, the book appeared little less than an official military textbook. It was immensely influential, and was very widely studied by young officers privately, as well as being used as teaching material in the Staff Colleges, a popularity helped by its clear and easy style, and logical structure.

Another military theoretician, although one whose relationship with Roberts was distant and cool, was Lord Wolseley.<sup>12</sup> He wrote a book, the *Soldier’s Pocket Book for Field Service* (1869, thoroughly revised for the 4th Edition, 1882). This was a substantial volume (over 500 pages), but printed in small type and to a small size, so that it could be easily carried. It was designed as a *vade mecum* for officers, giving rules for every military contingency. While this volume concerns itself mostly with large-scale warfare, it has a good deal to say as well on small-scale colonial campaigns. While Wolseley’s relationship with Roberts was poor, his maxims for small-scale colonial campaigns are effectively the same as Roberts’.

The role of the Imperial Army in dealing with rebellion or open war as seen by these men was straightforward. Should any of the subject people be so misguided as to take up arms against the British in a rebellion, then the British response should be immediate and firm. A small force of the British Regular Army should proceed against the rebels, and destroy them, as speedily and completely as possible. Callwell stresses this time and again:

The object is not only to prove to the opposing force unmistakably which is the stronger, but also to inflict punishment on those who have taken up arms . . . Mere defeat of the adversary is not enough, the opposing forces should be beaten so thoroughly that they will not offer further opposition. They must if possible be in a military sense destroyed. Decisive victory is to be sought for and not merely success . . . Mere victory is not enough. The enemy must not only be beaten. He must be beaten thoroughly . . . What is wanted is a big casualty list in the hostile ranks . . . They have been brought up to the scratch of accepting battle, they must feel what battle against a disciplined army means . . . Success in action shall mean not merely the defeat of the hostile forces but their destruction . . . The great problem

... is ... to make certain that the victory shall be a real victory causing the enemy heavy loss ... The object is to inflict heavy loss on them ... It must never be forgotten that ... it is not capturing positions, but thinning the hostile ranks which brings operations to a triumphant close ... It must never be forgotten that ... the great object to be kept in view on the battle-field is to inflict the heaviest possible loss upon the enemy ... the speediest method terrifying irregular warriors into submission is to thin their ranks ... It is a fundamental principle of tactics ... that troops must get at their adversaries and give them a lesson which they will not forget ... Battles [need to] be won ... in the sense that the adversary is crushed, cowed, and convinced that unless he lays down his arms he will be utterly destroyed.<sup>13</sup>

Hart and Wolseley take much the same line, at least by implication:

The best way to avoid being killed ... is to kill the other man first, ... and the safest way to attain that end is to employ from the outset as many rifles as the space available will contain. The stronger the firing line, the more intense will be its fire, and the greater the losses and the demoralization of the opposing line, and consequently the less the loss in the attacking line.<sup>14</sup>

With all savages, to kill its warrior is ... the most efficacious policy, and it should therefore be regarded as of primary importance.<sup>15</sup>

The main question Callwell addresses is how to achieve “the heaviest possible loss upon the enemy”. Callwell notes that the regular troops had certain major advantages over their irregular opponents:

On the battle-field the advantage passes over to the regular army. Superior armament, the force of discipline, a definite and acknowledged chain of responsibility, esprit de corps, the moral force of civilization, all these work together to give the trained and organized army an incontestable advantage. ... Nothing can compensate for the difference in weapons, in training, in cohesion and in method, between regular troops and the forces of an uncivilized adversary ... It is safe to assume that the enemy from the nature of his weapons, want of training and so forth, is almost invariably far inferior to the trained infantry as regards the efficacy of musketry.<sup>16</sup>

Hart makes the same point. Speaking of the occasions when “British troops are opposed to Asiatics”, he states:

An examination of the circumstances shows that prestige of race, combined with superior arms and discipline, has always compensated for a very marked inferiority in numbers.<sup>17</sup>



However, Callwell also notes that these advantages were much more powerfully present when the regular forces were on the attack, and especially where they were attacking a position defended by the irregular troops, and that they disappeared as an effective advantage where the regular troops were facing guerrilla attack. The conclusion Callwell draws was, therefore, clear: the regular troops should so deploy as to encourage the irregulars to defend a fixed position, and they should do everything possible to discourage resort to guerrilla tactics.

The object to be sought for clearly is to fight, not to manoeuvre, to meet the hostile force in open battle, not to compel them to give way . . . The most efficacious plan is to engage them on every possible occasion . . . An assault upon the enemy will prove at once a safer and a more efficacious plan than some profound strategical combination designed to drive him from his ground without a fight . . . When there is a chance of a fight it should not be allowed to slip by . . . General engagements are the object to be aimed at . . . pitched battles . . . The severer the conflict, the more the superiority of the regular troops is brought home to the enemy . . . Battles are the object to be sought for by the regular troops . . . The strongest grounds exist for tempting [the enemy] to fight, for drawing him on by skilfull dispositions, and for inducing him to enter eagerly upon the conflict . . . Battles being so desirable . . . it stands to reason that when a conflict does occur, the opportunity should be taken full advantage of.<sup>18</sup>

Hart and Wolseley agree with this in principal. Hart says: "In mountain or jungle warfare . . . The enemy should be brought to battle as soon as possible",<sup>19</sup> but notes that this is not always so easy to achieve: "The . . . tribesman understand guerilla warfare and excel as skirmishers . . . A general action is just what the tribesmen generally know it is to their interest to avoid".<sup>20</sup> Wolseley takes a similar line: "When operating in the hills . . . the initiative of attack should always be with us . . . In all such operations endeavour to impress upon your . . . enemy that you despise him as an adversary, and that you are always only too glad to come to close quarters with him".<sup>21</sup>

Callwell urges that the regular forces ought to deploy with speed and decision, to avoid the insurrection becoming widespread or deeply entrenched within the local population. The regular forces must seize, and keep, the initiative, and proceed with "vigour and determination", "without hesitation", with "energy and resolution", with "decision and resource", with "dash and audacity".<sup>22</sup> Once the regular forces begin to move, there must be no delay, progress must be inexorable:

The great point to aim at is not so much that there should be no delay in getting into motion, as that when once in motion there should be no check . . . The initiative must be maintained . . . the regular army must lead while its opponents follow . . . the enemy must be made to feel a moral inferiority throughout . . . There must be no doubt as to which side is in the ascendant, no question as to who controls the course of the war; delays must not occur . . . It is not a question of merely maintaining the initiative, but of compelling the enemy to see at every turn that he has lost it, and to recognize that the forces of civilization are dominant, and not to be denied.<sup>23</sup>

Hart and Wolseley take the same line: "An attack having been launched, it must be pressed with vigour, supported with judgment, and driven home with resolution."<sup>24</sup> "You must strike hard, and strike quickly."<sup>25</sup>

The prime reason for such an inexorable and unhesitant approach is that it would convince waverers on the irregular side to stay at home: "A vigorous offensive has the effect of keeping at home those who hesitate to take up arms and of thereby diminishing the fighting strength of the enemy. A bold plan of campaign tends to reduce the hostile force to the lowest limits and to disincline those who are uncompromised from joining in."<sup>26</sup>

Once in motion, the regular forces should move forward against the enemy slowly, but steadily and methodically. Callwell is emphatic that it is not acceptable to settle into place and await the attack of the enemy:

It cannot be insisted on too strongly that . . . the only possible attitude to assume is . . . the offensive. The regular army must force its way into the enemy's territory and seek him out. It must be ready to fight him wherever he may be found. It must play to win and not for safety . . . The advance should . . . be conducted deliberately . . . nothing has so great an effect upon undisciplined forces holding a position as a steady advance against them.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, the advance must be orderly. Callwell disapproves of any attempt to terrify the population at large, by burning villages or food-stores or the like:

Expeditions to put down revolt are not put in motion merely to bring about a temporary cessation of hostility. Their purpose is to ensure a lasting peace. Therefore, in choosing the objective, the overawing and not the exasperation of the enemy is the end to keep in view. The destruction of crops and stores of grain of the enemy is . . . more exasperating to the adversary . . . wanton damage tends to embitter their feeling of enmity. It is so often the case that the power that undertakes a small war desires to acquire the friendship of the people they are chastising, that the system of what is called "military

execution” is ill adapted to the end in view . . . Sometimes, . . . villages must be demolished and their crops and granaries destroyed; still, it is unfortunate when this is the case.<sup>28</sup>

Hart and Wolseley strongly agree with this view:

It is not advisable to destroy villages . . . because they serve as pledges that induce the inhabitants to warn off parties of the enemy . . . If the villages are burnt the inhabitants are driven to desperation . . . Great harm may be done if villages are destroyed without discrimination . . . even if shots have been fired from the direction of a particular village at night, it may be the work of enemies in order to get the village burnt.<sup>29</sup>

The burning of villages . . . is bad policy for it enrages without seriously punishing them.<sup>30</sup>

During the advance, Callwell insists, the regular army must maintain fire discipline. Opening fire too soon would encourage the enemy to quit their defensive position prematurely, so making the “heavy casualty list” difficult to achieve. “Reserving fire” until the regular forces are very close to the enemy is the best way forward: firing at a distance is futile, and firing should be kept back until close quarters are reached:

In attack . . . fire should generally be reserved as long as possible . . . effective fire at 800 yards range does not pave the way for decisive victory, it leads merely to an abandonment of his position by the foe<sup>31</sup> . . . The great objective to be achieved is to get up close to the enemy, and to fire effectively on the fugitives when they quit their cover . . . Unless the shooting is accurate, the enemy suffers little loss, and is not really defeated even if he retires . . . In attack . . . there is seldom any reason for very rapid . . . fire except at the closest quarters . . . It is well to reserve fire till the range is so short as to ensure its being thoroughly effective.<sup>32</sup>

Once “the closest quarters” have been reached, at about 200 or perhaps 300 yards from the enemy, without heavy firing having been allowed up to that point, then the attack proper should take place. If at all possible, the regular force should be split into three, to make a simultaneous attack on the front and both flanks. The attack should be pushed home as fast as possible, with the troops making a bayonet charge, and firing as fast and as effectively as possible.<sup>33</sup> The result would be, Callwell states, the immediate over-running of the insurgent position, and the flight of the insurgents.

Frontal attacks combined with flank attacks are infinitely preferable . . . It does not seem to occur to irregular warriors that they may not necessarily be attacked at the point where they have made their most elaborate preparations . . . An attack on one, or even both of [the flanks] can generally be carried out without meeting with serious resistance . . . In a word, flank attacks tend to bring about decisive victories . . . If it can be arranged that the frontal attack shall develop just as the flight begins so that the fugitives can be shot down by the troops working on their line of retreat, an ideal tactical situation has been created . . . It is the last two or three hundred yards which are critical, and, if the assailants can get up as close as this with enough left for a dash at the end, they may manage to do a good deal of execution even if the defenders bolt the moment the charge begins . . . Once irregulars break and run the ordinary infantryman has not the slightest chance of catching them, but . . . he may do good execution with his rifle . . . It is always necessary to fix bayonets . . . Irregular warriors seldom stand to receive a bayonet charge . . . Troops have proved the value of the bayonet charge against irregular warriors over and over again. The bravest of them turns and flees before a bayonet charge . . . The bayonet charge scarcely ever fails and . . . the enemy will not even face it as a rule.<sup>34</sup>

Hart also stresses the need to make frontal attacks combined with flank attacks:

Asiatics will often fight with stubborn courage against a direct attack; but immediately their flank or rear is assailed, or even threatened, they are thrown into confusion and disorder, because they possess neither the organization nor the mobility to change front in the presence of the enemy . . . Asiatics often make a stubborn resistance to a frontal attack, but the least pressure on the flank or rear is the signal for retirement. Consequently, it is wrong to make a direct attack, unless the enemy is surprised, or the position is weak, or there is a flanking movement in co-operation . . . Wherever possible, there should be two lines of advance . . . offering mutual support, for example, the two spurs bounding a ravine.<sup>35</sup>

Wolseley also prefers the split attack, on the front and the rear, and states that this plan was not often enough adopted, and also stresses several times the need for a measured approach, and a final rush.<sup>36</sup>

As much of the “destruction” of the enemy which Callwell insists is so vital took place after the enemy defensive position was over-run as during the storming of the defences. As soon as the defenders broke and fled, they were to be shot down, and pursued with the utmost vigour, “followed up”:

It is not only essential to drive the assault home with vigour, but to follow up any success gained with the utmost energy and decision . . . Once they are got on the move they must be kept on the move . . . The more quickly and resolutely [the enemy] is followed up the smaller does the chance of his showing further fight . . . The great problem when attacking irregular warriors in position is not so much to decide how to capture the position, for the chances are that this will not prove very difficult, as to make certain that the victory shall be a real victory causing the enemy heavy loss . . . The point [to be] kept specially in view tactically [is] to make certain that the foe does not escape when once brought to battle . . . It must never be forgotten that . . . decisive success . . . depends not only upon beating the enemy but also upon following up the success forthwith . . . Success in action [must be] merely the prelude to an obstinate pursuit and general advance of the victorious troops . . . It is impossible to insist too strongly on the importance of determined and vigorous pursuit . . . The object of pursuit is to convert the retreat into a rout, and to give a coup de grace to . . . the broken force . . . If the enemy bolts the right thing to do is to rush up and get the heaviest possible fire to bear on the fugitives . . . The object is not merely to drive them off from their ground, the object is to inflict heavy loss on them as well.<sup>37</sup>

One reason Callwell gives for the need for the pursuit to be immediate and vigorous was that any delay would make it easy for insurgents to hide their weapons and merge into the general population, when nothing could be done about them, since Callwell always assumes that no action could ever be taken against anyone not found with weapons in their hands.

While attack was the most desirable strategy for the regular forces to follow, there was always the risk of the regular troops being subjected to attack by the insurgent forces, and forced onto the defensive. Callwell notes that, in these circumstances, the way to maximise the advantages the regular troops had over their opponents was by way of taking the best defensive posture available, and there to wait, holding their fire to the last possible moment, and then unleashing the maximum possible fire-power on the irregulars, so as to break the attack, and turn the attackers into flight. Once in flight, the regulars should, as if they had made a successful attack, pursue the defeated foe with vigour and despatch:

When it is a case of an enemy making a formidable attack in great force . . . there can be little question that steady controlled fire should be maintained up to the very last possible moment before magazine fire is resorted to . . . Reserving fire till the range is such as to ensure its being effective is equally desirable in attack and in defence . . . The great object is to let the enemy get to fairly close quarters . . . When standing on the defensive it is often

better to reserve fire . . . the object is to tempt them to come on until they are within effective range . . . The great object to be kept in view is to develop to the full the fire-effect of the modern rifle, and to push all men . . . into the firing line.<sup>38</sup>

There are some other points which Roberts clearly felt were of the greatest importance in any colonial war, and which Callwell and Hart go on to discuss in detail. The most important of these were supply and the transport needed to carry it, and intelligence. Roberts discusses supply and transport in a number of places, and the difficulties arising wherever transport provided to a campaign was inadequate. He constantly bemoaned the lack of a proper Army Transport Corps in India, and the problems this brought (“It became evident . . . that our onward movement would be greatly impeded by want of transport (1871) . . . The inefficient state of the transport added to my anxieties (1878) . . . Carriage was so short that I could only move a little more than half the troops at one time (1879) . . . Our greatest difficulties on all occasions arose from the want of a properly organised Transport Department (1888)”<sup>39</sup>). In fact, Roberts considered the establishment of a Transport Corps, with training courses for all officers in the proper management and use of transport, to be perhaps the single most important achievement of his time as Commander-in-Chief in India.<sup>40</sup> Roberts insisted on his soldiers personally carrying two days’ supply of basic food with them each when engaged on active service, against the risk of supply failing, and also ordered groups of soldiers on campaign to have with them ten to fourteen days supply in baggage wagons and supply depots which were always to be kept with or close to the force.<sup>41</sup>

Wolseley was in complete agreement with Roberts on this:

The commissariat question will generally be your greatest difficulty . . . In drawing up schemes for small wars against an undisciplined or barbaric nation, the arrangements for feeding your men will generally be your greatest difficulty. If you have . . . to halt . . . to bring up provisions you give . . . renewed courage to the enemy . . . He imagines you halt from fear. It is much better to postpone beginning the campaign to a late period . . . to complete all your supply arrangements beforehand . . . than to rush into it at an early date before everything has been prepared.<sup>42</sup>

Callwell devotes an entire chapter to the question of supply and transport (“The Influence of the Questions of Supply upon Small Wars and the Extent to which it must govern the Plan of Operations”).<sup>43</sup> Callwell, like Wolseley, considered that supply was the single most crucial factor in how a small colonial war might be fought:

It is not the question of pushing forward the man, or the horse, or the gun, that has to be taken into account, so much as that of the provision of the necessaries of life for the troops when they have been pushed forward . . . The less fertile and productive the theatre of war, the more elaborate have to be the arrangements for the commissariat. The worse are the tracks, the more difficult it is to ensure an efficient transport service to carry the supplies . . . This all-important question of supply is in fact at the root of most of the difficulties . . . to which regular troops engaged in small wars are . . . prone . . . If no supplies can be obtained from the theatre of war, as is so often the case in these operations, everything in the way of food for man or beast has to be carried . . . So great indeed are the difficulties that arise in many small wars from supply, that it becomes necessary to cut down the forces engaged to the lowest possible strength consistent with safety . . . It may be accepted as a general principle that in small wars supply presents not only great difficulties in the way of organization, but exerts a powerful influence over tactics when the regular troops meet their antagonists in conflict.<sup>44</sup>

Hart takes exactly the same view:

The chief difficulties are connected with supply, transport and climate . . . Troops cannot march without transport, supplies of food, ammunition, and clothing . . . The question of supplies even more closely affects the condition of an army, and its mobility, than the weather or the state of the roads . . . In our small wars . . . supplies [have] to be sent forward from the base, consequently in our small wars the transport question is always uppermost.<sup>45</sup>

Roberts, Wolseley, and Callwell all insist that the very worst thing that can be done is to halt the forward movement of a campaign, so that the troops can go back to pick up supplies: nothing, they state, is more likely to encourage the enemy.<sup>46</sup>

As for intelligence, Roberts, Callwell, and Hart all stress the overwhelming importance of getting the best possible intelligence whenever engaged in warfare with irregular soldiers, although all three also stress the difficulties in doing so.

All this is clear enough. If any of the subject peoples was so insane as to reject the benefits of British rule to the point of actual armed insurrection against them, then everything possible was to be done to destroy the madmen. The insurrection was seen as a sort of cancer on the body politic, which must be excised, and the place cauterised. If this surgical removal was undertaken soon enough, and if the excision was total, the cancer would not spread, and the health of the body politic would be restored. After a short and sharp campaign, involving good supply and transport preparations and the best

available intelligence, the insurgents would be destroyed, the regular troops would then withdraw, and the normal benevolent British administration would resume.

The regular troops would limit their actions to those actually found with arms in their hands, and the peaceful population around them would not be touched. The healthy flesh, the bulk of the people, was not to be harmed, only the cancerous growth removed. Roberts makes it very clear that “the rules of civilized warfare” demanded that: “The persons and property of the Natives were respected, and full compensation for supplies was everywhere given.” Roberts believed that, in the Afghan Campaign of 1879: “The inhabitants of the district through which we passed could not have been treated with greater consideration, nor with a lighter hand, had they proved themselves friendly allies.”<sup>47</sup> Roberts put his views on this issue very clear in his 1886 “Instructions” for the Burma Campaign:

It must be remembered that the chief object of traversing the country with columns is to cultivate friendly relations with the inhabitants, and at the same time put before them the evidences of our power, thus gaining their good-will and confidence. It is therefore the bounden duty of commanding officers to ascertain that the troops under their command are not permitted to injure the property of the people or wound their susceptibilities . . . Too much pains cannot be taken . . . to assure the people both by act and word of our good-will towards the law-abiding . . . The success of the present operation will much depend on the tact with which the inhabitants are treated . . . The broadest margin possible will be drawn between leaders of rebellion . . . and the villagers who have been forced into combinations against us.<sup>48</sup>

Hart similarly notes that the standard practice of the British Army was to pay at once and in full for any supplies taken from the country, and notes the positive effect this had on the native inhabitants.<sup>49</sup>

## **Civil Disturbance**

However, none of this was seen as appropriate where riot or civil disturbance was in question. If rebels were madmen utterly unworthy of British benevolence, fit only to be destroyed, rioters and workers of civil disturbance were seen as merely misguided or misinformed. The appropriate action to be taken against such men, if the matter was beyond the capacity of the Police, was for the regular troops to go in to “assist the civil authorities to restore



order". However, any action taken by the regular troops had to be within the framework of "minimal force". Every attempt should be made, before force of any sort was used, to explain and clarify whatever policies of Government had triggered the disturbance, both by discussions by officials with ringleaders, and by putting up explanatory posters, and so on. Conciliation should be considered, especially if there seemed to be some grounds for the disquiet of the populace. If this failed to work, then force would have to be used, initially, if possible, to arrest the ringleaders. If removal from the scene of the ringleaders did not lead the rest of the rioters to disperse, then warnings would be given, eventually leading to warning shots fired over the heads of the rioters. If all else failed, and the rioters did not disperse peacefully, then the troops would open fire on them. However, such fire should be deliberate, and should stop as soon as the rioters started to flee the scene. There should be no "following up" of fleeing rioters. As soon as the rioters dispersed, explanatory and clarification action should be resumed. No reprisals of any sort should be taken against those misguided enough to riot, and even the ringleaders would normally be released very shortly afterwards, after warnings about future conduct had been given.<sup>50</sup>

While it is undoubtedly true that the late nineteenth century concept of "minimal force" was a good deal more robust than today's, nonetheless, the late nineteenth century British view of how the regular troops might assist the civil authorities in restoring order in the context of a serious riot or a major civil disturbance is not far from the view taken today.

Of course, a major problem was the decision as to whether any particular disturbance was merely misguided civil disturbance or the much more serious rebellion or war. It was not a question of the size of the disturbance, or of the weaponry used: there are plenty of examples of late nineteenth century disturbances which were considered to be merely civil disturbances, even though the rioters numbered several thousand, and were armed with muskets and even cannon. The basic point was whether the men taking to the streets or hills were considered to be misguided or misinformed, and thus amenable to being brought to a better understanding of the essential benevolence of British rule, or not.

It was an essential feature of British Imperial law that the regular Army could not normally take any active military action within any area with a settled civilian Government, without the consent of the civilian authorities. This was because the decision as to whether a disturbance should be viewed as rebellion or civil disturbance was a political one, not a military one, and thus one which only the civilian authorities could take.<sup>51</sup> The civil authorities were at liberty to issue instructions to the military as conditions of any

permission given for active military action to be undertaken: where the civil authorities viewed the disturbance as riot or civil disturbance it was a frequent condition that only minimal force was to be used: that every opportunity should be taken of trying to remove misconceptions and to clarify the thinking of the Government was another very common condition. It was also usual for the civil authorities, having given permission for active military action to be undertaken, to require a Political Officer to accompany the troops, a civilian official aware of the thinking of the higher civil authorities, and able to give on-the-spot permission on behalf of the civil authorities for specific action felt in the heat of the moment by the military to be required, or, should his reading of the political situation be such, to refuse permission.<sup>52</sup>

While firm suppression of civil disturbance was an everyday occurrence within the British Empire, so that few of the subject peoples could ever have been unaware of the risks of rioting, or unaware that the regular Army would if necessary, put down any such civil disturbance, nonetheless, it was clear that pacification of civil disturbance was always viewed as something radically different from the suppression of rebellion.

### **The 1899 Disturbances in the New Territories**

As noted above, in April 1899 disturbances broke out in the New Territories by villagers opposed to the British takeover of the area. The Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Henry Blake, seems to have viewed these disturbances as arising from misunderstandings and from the villagers mistaking what British intentions for the area were. In other words, he seems to have seen these disturbances as being essentially a civil disturbance, not a rebellion. While his instructions were somewhat unclear, it seems likely that he wanted minimal force to be used in pacifying the disturbances, and the maximum possible effort to be made in explaining British intentions and in clearing up the misunderstandings. He was sure that the leaders of the disturbances could be brought to be good citizens once they understood what British rule would actually entail. The most probable interpretation of his views on the insurgency is that he wanted “pacification”, to be handled in accordance with the usual rules for the settlement of civil disturbances.

The Colonial Secretary, James Stewart Lockhart, who was the official appointed by Blake to accompany the soldiers sent to pacify the disturbances as Political Officer, however, viewed the disturbances as a rebellion, to be crushed. The villagers who had taken up arms should be, he believed, destroyed, and their families and villages punished. Any ringleaders not killed in this

suppression should be exiled. Only after this rebellion had been destroyed, and the anti-British forces wiped out, he felt, should benevolent British administration be put into place.

In the event, Lockhart, as is discussed below, was able to finesse matters so that a Roberts/Callwell/Hart-style “suppression” campaign was in fact put into effect, thus leading to heavy casualties among the villagers, although Blake’s views and policies were, subsequent to the campaign, put into effect.

# 3



## July 1898–March 1899: The Road to War

### The New Territories in 1899

If the City of Hong Kong was, in 1899, a prosperous mercantile centre, modern, and self-consciously sophisticated, introducing new Western technologies as soon as they became available, seeking always to act in accordance with its self-image as one of the foremost of the world's commercial metropolises, then this could not possibly be said of its rural hinterland. To anyone then standing on the Praya, the harbour-front of Hong Kong, the view was closed to the north by the mountains of the New Territories. The community which was sheltered by those mountains was, in 1899, entirely rural, and one of the most conservative in South China.<sup>1</sup>

The New Territories were mostly very mountainous, especially in the centre and east, with little flat land except in patches along the stream-courses or seashore. In places in the mountains were patches of dense forest, and much larger areas of scrub forest. In 1899 tigers were still common, as were deer and wild boars. Wild ducks were abundant in the marshes.

Over most of the area villages were small, with a dozen or so tiny houses, built in short terraces, backing onto the mountains, and facing into their fields in front. In the centre and east, there were some relatively large and moderately wealthy villages, built where these patches of flat land formed a rather larger area, at places like Nga Tsin Wai (衙前圍) just outside Kowloon City Market, or Tai Po Tau (大埔頭), just outside Tai Po Market, or Tai Hang (泰坑, also known as 叉坑, or 太坑), a little further from Tai Po Market, but it was only in the west, around the market town of Yuen Long (元朗),

and the north, in the valley of the Sham Chun (深圳, Shenzhen) River, that there were extensive areas of fertile flat land, and it was here that the largest and richest villages stood — Ha Tsuen (廈村), Ping Shan (屏山), and Kam Tin (錦田) in the Yuen Long plain, and villages like San Tin (新田), Ho Sheung Heung (河上鄉), Kam Tsin (金錢), Ping Kong (丙崗), Sheung Shui (上水), Fanling (粉嶺), and Lung Yeuk Tau (龍躍頭) in the Sham Chun River valley. The north-western coastal area, around the mouth of the Sham Chun River, was mostly marshy.

These large, rich villages were Punti (本地, Cantonese-speaking): many of the small mountainside villages spoke Hakka (客家). Unlike in some other parts of Kwangtung (廣東, Guangdong), inter-ethnic relations between Punti and Hakka in the New Territories were usually amicable.

Foreigners visiting the area in the late nineteenth century found the villagers generally very poor. They noted the tiny, dark, comfortless houses, the lack of furniture or decorations, the coarse food of the villagers, and the rough and often patched or ragged cloth of which their clothes were made. The villagers, however, did not see themselves as poor, as they normally (except in famine years) had enough to eat, and had enough spare to maintain temples (usually one to every twenty or so villages), and schools (often one to every three or four villages), and to mount occasional elaborate rituals, especially the decennial Ta Tsiu (打醮, more correctly 太平清醮) rituals.

The villagers were subsistence rice farmers. Wherever they could, they grew rice, which was, quite literally, what their lives depended on. What they grew, to a large extent, they themselves ate. Alongside the rice they grew vegetables. If they had a glut of one type of vegetable, they would exchange some with a neighbour. Rice and vegetables, with a little fish or meat, was the staple diet. The villagers wore clothes made of hemp, grown along the edges of their rice-fields. In the market-towns, merchants made and sold wine, soy sauce, and almost everything else needed on a daily basis: very little had to be brought in from outside — salt, iron bars, paper and books, and the occasional luxury.

In 1911, at the first census of the New Territories, the land population there was a little above 94,000 residents, in about 650 villages and a dozen market towns. Of these, about 9,400 lived in the Tai Po area, and about 21,500 in the Yuen Long area: it was from these 31,000 that the local insurgents in the Six-Day War were mostly drawn. In the poorer centre and east, about one in ten adult males were fully literate: in the richer west about three in ten.<sup>2</sup> Of these literate men, about one in ten was regarded by his fellow villagers as a scholar: even in the poorest parts of the New Territories, therefore, every village could expect to have one or several literate villagers, and would

have had access to a scholar, if not in their own village, then in a nearby one, should the need arise. Many of these village scholars were school-teachers (most of the village schools were taught by local men), or medical doctors.

Famines came occasionally, when blight, drought, or flood destroyed the rice-crop for four or five successive harvests. In famines the weaker and poorer died. The villagers feared famine greatly, and in consequence saw conspicuous consumption, waste, as a great evil, and thrift as the corresponding virtue. Some of the lack of furniture and decorations that foreigners saw as poverty, the villagers saw as thrift, avoidance of waste.

The area was without modern medicine. As a result, half of all children born died before they reached the age of marriage: those who survived to marry lived to an average age of about 45, although every village had some elders who lived to 70 or even 80.<sup>3</sup>

The New Territories area was a long way away from the centres of Imperial power. The Prefecture in which the area lay was centred in the Provincial Capital of Canton (廣州, Guangzhou), a hundred miles away. Very few villagers ever made the laborious ten-day journey to Canton. The Imperial officials in Canton were not much interested in this distant and rather poor area, and spent most of their time and efforts looking into the needs and problems of the immensely wealthy areas around Canton. To a large extent, the New Territories area was left to look after itself: this was especially so in the period 1855–1880, when the Imperial Government was at a low level of efficiency.

In the New Territories a traditional Land Law had grown up which was at odds with the norms of Ch'ing law.<sup>4</sup> It divided rights to land into two: the Sub-soil (地骨) and the Top-Soil (地皮) rights. The Sub-Soil landowner would let perpetual, hereditary tenancies to the Top-Soil landowners, who thereafter had the right to till the soil, and to enjoy the fruits of their labour, subject to the payment of a fixed annual rent-charge to the Sub-Soil landowner. This rent-charge was supposed to represent the Imperial Land Tax, paid by the Sub-Soil owner, but this was usually a legal fiction: Land Tax should have been paid on all land under the plough, but in fact was paid on only very little of the land actually ploughed, and the Sub-Soil landowner took the rent-charge from far more land than he paid Land Tax on.

The larger and wealthier villages, both those in the west and north, and those in the better patches of land in the centre and east, were mostly first settled in the later Southern Sung, or during the Yuan or the very early Ming (between about 1200 and about 1400). The people of the New Territories area were driven inland to deny assistance to the Ming remnants on Taiwan in the first years of the Ch'ing (1661–1669) in what is called the Coastal Evacuation. Very large numbers of those thus driven inland died of hunger,

and most of those smaller villages which had existed before the Evacuation had to be re-founded with new residents after it. The smaller villages were thus mostly founded or re-founded in the late seventeenth, eighteenth, or even the nineteenth centuries, during the Ch'ing.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Sub-Soil landowners (who were almost invariably the ancient Punti clans living in the great villages of the Yuen Long plain or the Sham Chun River valley) kept the Top-Soil landowners under tight control as their tenants (佃人). The tenant villages were expected to give complete obedience to their masters, and to follow their social and political lead in all things. The great Punti villages had militia forces at their disposal to enforce their will at need. However, as the tenant villages grew in size, this subordinate relationship irked them. They formed themselves into oath-sworn mutual-defence inter-village leagues, or Yeuk (約) to resist their masters, and trained their young men in martial arts to support their bid for independence. During the nineteenth century, the villages of the centre and east of the New Territories mostly threw off their ties to their old masters, or at least made of them no more than an annual cash payment, with no social or political strings attached. In the west, in the areas immediately around the ancient Punti villages, the great clans were able to keep some villages in a completely subordinate position, but even here they had had to allow the larger tenant villages to achieve a measure of independence, to move from the status of tenants to that of "allies" (朋). Each of the great Punti villages was thus surrounded by a zone of "tenant and ally" villages, but further away they had, by 1899, either lost their influence completely, or else were able to get only an annual cash payment.

The nineteenth century saw a growing land shortage in the New Territories, as the population outstripped the arable land available to sustain it. Reclamation of shallow inshore waters, to extend the area of arable, was undertaken between about 1820 and 1890 in every bay capable of reclamation by the hand-technology available to the villagers, and even the most marginal mountain-side land was brought under the plough during the same period. This land shortage inflamed the movement towards independence of the Top-Soil tenant villages. The resulting social stresses led inevitably to conflict. Given the inefficiency of the Imperial Government in the period, these conflicts often became inter-village wars. Some thirty are known, almost all from the period 1855–1880.<sup>5</sup> Most of these inter-village wars saw ten or twenty deaths on each side. Martial arts were, in consequence, highly valued, and the society became rather militarised.

As a result of this drive to independence, the small villages managed themselves without outside interference, and became very self-reliant. The

British in and after 1899 found this self-reliance very refreshing. In the small villages in 1899, the rich and the poor were not far apart in income: houses and lifestyles did not differ markedly. Only in the great ancient Punti villages in the west and north were there wide differences between the life-styles of the rich and the poor: in these areas there were some very rich villagers living in far more elaborate houses than the norm, and with far more luxurious life-styles.

This society was, by 1899, surprisingly little influenced by the great new City at Hong Kong. In part this was due to widespread villager distrust of any outsiders; in part to very poor communications. The New Territories in 1899 had no roads capable of taking any sort of wheeled vehicle, but only footpaths, mostly narrow and unpaved, or paved only with rough boulders. Where the paths went over the hills they often became interminable flights of ill-paved steps. Only in one or two places were there short stretches of footpaths smooth-faced with granite slabs. As a result, it was almost impossible for the villagers to export goods to Hong Kong: transport was just too difficult (it was, in 1899, thus cheaper to import rice into Hong Kong from Saigon in Vietnam than from Yuen Long). Only on the southern fringe of the New Territories, around the market-towns of Shamshuipo (深水埗) and Kowloon City (九龍城), separated from the City of Hong Kong only by the Harbour, had the presence of the new City led to important social consequences: in these areas, by 1899, many of the rice-fields had been converted to market-gardens, the produce of which could easily be rowed across the Harbour to the City. Some of these new market-gardens were run by immigrant tenants of the villagers.<sup>6</sup>

However, the new City had had one major effect on its hinterland by 1899. From the 1870s in particular, the surplus male population of the villages, those young men for whom there was not enough arable land to keep them occupied, went to the City and took work there, or got a berth on a ship as a sailor, or else went overseas to make their fortunes. Probably ten thousand village youths from the New Territories were thus working away from their villages in 1899. This outlet ensured that land-shortage did not spill over into increased famines in the later nineteenth century. Money remitted back by these youths working away from home was beginning to affect their home villages by 1899, but was to transform them between 1910 and 1930.

The Six-Day War broke out in this society. The insurgents were mostly from the great Punti villages of the Yuen Long plain, with their tenants and allies, and with some of the independent village areas nearby who were coerced into joining in. Of the independent Yeuk areas of the centre and east of the New Territories, only one, the Tai Po Tsat Yeuk (Tai Po League of Seven, 大埔七約), joined in, and then not completely. This Yeuk area also dropped out



of the insurgency after the first day of fighting. The fighting force of the insurgency was made up of the young men of the villages who had been trained in martial arts. In many ways the Six-Day War was the last flourish of the old society of the New Territories, the last time the old great Punti clans and villages were able to dominate local politics and society. After the coming of the British, these ancient Punti clans had to accept equality with their old tenants and allies.<sup>7</sup>

### **Agitations against the Lease, 1898**

The Convention of Peking, which set out the framework for a Lease of the New Territories to Britain, was signed on 9 June 1898.<sup>8</sup> Ratifications were exchanged on 11 June 1898, and the treaty was thus formally agreed. Under International Law, however, the area of the leased territory could only come into the control of the Hong Kong Government after it had been “taken over” in some clear public ceremony: until then the territory remained under Chinese administrative control. The Hong Kong Government was in no great hurry to take the area over. It wanted to know a good deal more about the place before becoming responsible for it, and there remained issues which the Convention had left for subsequent agreement (most importantly, the exact line of the new frontier), and which the Hong Kong Government had to have finalized before arranging the takeover. In the event, the New Territories were only to be taken over by the Hong Kong Government in a Flag-Raising Ceremony held on 16 April 1899, over nine months after the Convention came into effect.

The first major step taken by the Hong Kong Government was to send the Colonial Secretary, Stewart Lockhart, on a tour of inspection of the New Territories.<sup>9</sup> Lockhart, a fluent Cantonese speaker and scholar of Chinese, spent most of August 1898 on this tour of inspection. He wrote it up in a Report which he submitted in October 1898.<sup>10</sup> Lockhart seems to have been generally well-received on this tour, except in Kam Tin, where stones were thrown at his party, and he was refused entry to some villages.

In October 1898 it became known in Hong Kong that some local people, both within the boundaries of the territory which was to be leased, and north of it, in the Sham Chun area, were agitating against the lease, and threatening violence to stop it going ahead. According to journalists in Hong Kong, money was being raised to support an insurrection (more than \$100,000 had been raised, according to one journalist), and villagers within the New Territories who were ready to support a British takeover were being “intimidated”.<sup>11</sup>

The hilly area north of Sham Chun was, at this date, in a “very disturbed state”, because of “the rising of the Triad Society”. This was a rebellion mounted under the aegis of Sun Yat-sen (孫中山), and master-minded by Chung Shui-yeung (Chinese characters unknown).<sup>12</sup> The Governor (at that date Maj-Gen. W. Black, Officer Administering the Government, replaced by Sir Henry Blake from 25 November 1898) said: “the district north from the Sam Chun [Sham Chun] River to the East River includes the most turbulent portion of all China. It contains the headquarters of the Triad Society, and the districts are composed of practically robber clans”.<sup>13</sup> The Viceroy of the Double Kwang (the most senior Ch’ing official in South China) claimed that the people who joined the fighting in the New Territories in April 1899 were: “secret society men from an adjoining district . . . they appeared to be connected with the Triad Society from the North Sano[n] [新安, Xinan] district”.<sup>14</sup>

Mr F. H. May, the Captain-Superintendent of Police, investigated the situation during October 1898. \$100,000 had, indeed, May found, been collected, but he was of the opinion that this money was being raised not so much to support anti-British violence within the New Territories, but more for the benefit of the leaders of the “robber clans” which the Governor was so concerned about. May considered that these leaders were extorting this money under the pretence of gathering funds in the first place to defend the area generally from “rowdies”, i.e. from the Triad Society men and Chung Shui-yeung’s people, rather than to prepare for military action against the British. May came to the conclusion that the idea of anti-British violence had been abandoned, as far as the residents of the New Territories were concerned, although he noted that the Sham Chun people remained “resolutely opposed” to Britain acquiring the area. The Government in Hong Kong thus allowed the matter to rest.

### Preparations for War: March–April 1899

While the matter does seem to have died away to some degree during the Autumn of 1898, it was not forgotten by the villagers, and the whole issue was resurrected during March 1899. The trigger for the revival of interest in opposing the British takeover seems to have been the agreement on the exact line of the new Frontier (11 March).

A number of meetings to discuss armed opposition to the British takeover were held in mid-March 1899 in Ping Shan (屏山), probably in the Tat Tak Kung Soh (達德公所), the Militia and Market Offices there, initially involving only the Tang (鄧) clan of Ping Shan, but then widening to include also the

Tangs of Ha Tsuen and, later still, the Tangs of Kam Tin (see Map 1). A firm decision to take armed opposition was taken in late March following a further meeting, in the Ha Tsuen Ancestral Hall. An inflammatory public notice (more probably a series of such notices) was accordingly issued, on 28 March.<sup>15</sup>

A translation of one version of the notice issued on 28 March stated:

We hate the English barbarians, who are about to enter our boundaries and take our land, and will cause us endless evil. Day and night we fear the approaching danger. Certainly people are dissatisfied at this and have determined to resist the barbarians. If our firearms are not good we shall be unable to oppose the enemy. So we have appointed an exercise ground and gathered all together as patriots to drill with firearms. To encourage proficiency rewards will be given. On the one hand we shall be helping the Government; on the other we shall be saving ourselves from future trouble. Let all our friends and relatives bring their firearms to the ground and do what they can to extirpate the traitors. Our ancestors will be pleased and so will our neighbours. This is our sincere wish. Practice takes place every day.<sup>16</sup>

A translation of another version reads:

The English barbarians are about to enter our territory, and ruin will come upon our villages and hamlets. All we villagers must enthusiastically come forward to offer armed resistance and act in unison. When the drum sounds to the fight we must all respond to the call for assistance. Should anyone hesitate to take part or to hinder or obstruct our military plans he will most certainly be severely punished, and no leniency will be shown. This is issued as a forewarning.<sup>17</sup>

Other inflammatory material was being circulated at the same time. One Tang Wang-tsung (鄧宏重), a Sau Choi, wrote an inflammatory Bamboo Clapper Song (竹枝詞) which he circulated to other local scholars:<sup>18</sup>

云新界

制度規模一律新，  
既居界內屬英民，  
國家不以文章重，  
何必區區枉費神。

云室家

百年恩澤本難忘，  
風土人情頓變常，

世故遷移閱氣數，  
試將鑑史細推詳。

云迎兵頭

現頒例則順人情，  
井里相安市不驚，  
舞我固宜為我主，  
幸迎憲節各輸誠。

云功名

稱呼雅俗概同論，  
不別耆民與士紳，  
紙上功名如畫餅，  
悠悠願作等閑人。

On the New Territory

Everything is being systematically changed!  
Everyone within the bounds of this territory is to become British!  
This nation [Britain] cares nothing for our culture!  
Why should the people waste their energies uselessly?

On Our Clans

We owe so much to our clans, to our Ancestors!  
But local customs and manners will be changed in a single moment!  
The whole world is being moved, our fates are in danger!  
Try to think about your own history, study it carefully!

On Welcoming the Warriors

Rules have been proclaimed, which are in accordance with men's  
wishes!  
Our villages are at peace, our markets are not disturbed!  
I will follow those who lead me to do something right for my ruler!  
Let us welcome the warriors gladly, lest we all become faithless!

On Heroes

Whether we are educated or not is all one!  
There are no differences between the elders and the gentry!  
We don't want paper heroes, insubstantial and unreal:  
I would rather live in obscurity than that!

These inflammatory documents were designed to beat up support for the armed insurrection against the British. They were issued at this time with a view to a meeting which the Ping Shan and Ha Tsuen people wanted with the other ancient great clans of the New Territories area (the Man clan, 文, of San Tin and Tai Hang; the Haus, 侯, of Ho Sheung Heung and Ping Kong; the Lius, 廖, of Sheung Shui; the Pangs, 彭, of Fanling; and the Tangs, 鄧, of Tai Po Tau and Lung Yeuk Tau). The Ping Shan people wrote to them on 29 March,<sup>19</sup> setting up a meeting in Yuen Long, which took place on 1 April. Elders from Sheung Shui, Fanling, Tai Po Tau, Ping Kong, and San Tin came to the meeting.

It would seem that most of the elders present at the meeting on 1 April, apart from the Ping Shan and Ha Tsuen people, were doubtful about the wisdom of proceeding to an armed insurrection. Liu Wan-kuk (廖雲谷) of Sheung Shui later stated that he, and the Ping Kong, San Tin, and Tai Po Tau elders, declined to take part. They were then threatened by the Ping Shan people with having their villages burnt down if they did not join the insurrection. The elders of these doubtful villages thereupon arranged a meeting among themselves in the Temple to the Two Righteous Officials (周王二公書院, also known as the Chau-Wong Temple) at Sheung Shui, where they agreed to send a token donation in cash. At the same time they readied their trained-bands to meet any eventuality (defending the villages against the Ping Shan and Ha Tsuen people seems to have been the major eventuality that they felt might need to be prepared for).<sup>20</sup> The elders also banned the export of grain from the area, presumably because of a fear that they might find themselves besieged in their villages by the Yuen Long people (both Ha Tsuen and Ping Shan lie within the Yuen Long market-town district).<sup>21</sup> It seems likely that the elders agreed to allow volunteers from their villages to join the Yuen Long people, but not to send the whole of their strength: whenever the Yuen Long people asked them for more thorough-going assistance they came up with excuses.<sup>22</sup> Certainly, it would seem, they held back their trained-bands to ensure they could, if necessary, defend themselves.

The Ping Shan and Ha Tsuen people were thus, it would seem, the first to lend their full strength to the insurrection, and they brought with them their allies and their tenants from within their home territories, the Ha Tsuen Heung (廈村鄉) and the Ping Shan Heung (屏山鄉). It was the Ping Shan people who invited people from Ngan Tin (雁田, Yantian)<sup>23</sup> and Wai Tak (懷德, Huaide) to join them: these villages, in Tung Kwun (東莞, Dongguan) County, close to the border with San On (新安, Xinan) County, some twenty miles to the north, were of branches of the Tang clan genealogically closely related to Ha Tsuen (Ngan Tin) and Ping Shan (Wai Tak). These villages lay

in the lawless and disturbed mountain area north of Sham Chun, where the insurrection of Chung Shui-yeung had been centred, and were always ripe and ready for any violence, especially if it was against the authorities. It is unclear when the Ngan Tin and Wai Tak people arrived in the New Territories area: probably about 14 April. Ha Tsuen and Ping Shan agreed (12 April) to contribute 100 Taels to the fighting fund per village (Ha Tsuen and Ping Shan each comprise some half-dozen villages).<sup>24</sup>

Shap Pat Heung (十八鄉) was initially much more doubtful: Ping Shan had to threaten them on 12 April with having their villages burnt before they agreed to join in in full.<sup>25</sup> Shap Pat Heung also had to be “compelled” to contribute money to the fighting fund (“if the rich inhabitants should be unwilling to pay, rowdies would be hired to rob and plunder them”). Kam Tin, too, was initially less than enthusiastic.<sup>26</sup>

On 10 April, a Command Centre was established at the Yuen Long Meeting House, the Tai Ping Kung Kuk (太平公局, “The Public Office for Establishing Peace”).

The original idea of the villagers seems to have been to rise up on 17 April, with an attack on the Flag-Raising Ceremony which was due to take place on that day. This was to have been arranged so that the attack would have come as a surprise. The Governor certainly stated, on 16 April, that he understood that a surprise attack on the Flag-Raising Ceremony was the intention.<sup>27</sup> However, the Tai Po (大埔) people seem to have jumped the gun.

The Tai Po people thus, on 3 April, attacked and burnt the matsheds which were under construction for the Flag-Raising Ceremony, to the consternation of the Ping Shan and Ha Tsuen people, who were, at that date, not ready to take action. The Ping Shan and Ha Tsuen elders refused to accept the burning of the matsheds as a righteous act: they stated that the attack was due to “some drunken men”.<sup>28</sup> However, it was felt in Ping Shan and Ha Tsuen that the Tai Po people ought, nonetheless, to be supported, and so a force of 60 men was sent from Ha Tsuen on 5 April. When they arrived at Tai Po, however, it was to find that the villagers had apologized to the British and that everything was quiet, so they returned on 6 April to Ha Tsuen. The second attack on the matsheds, on 14 April, was also due to the Tai Po people starting things prematurely. Again, reinforcements were sent from Ha Tsuen and Ping Shan, but they arrived only well after the matsheds had been burnt. This meant the insurrection started on 14–15 April, with the burning of the matsheds and the Battle of Mui Shue Hang (梅樹坑), rather than, as planned, on 17 April. There can be little doubt that the premature start cost the insurrection dear.

By burning the matsheds on 14 April, the Tai Po people had ensured that the insurrection began without all the plans of the Tai Ping Kung Kuk being ready. It is probable that the Ngan Tin and Wai Tak people had not yet all arrived by 14 April. The Sheung Shui, Ping Kong, and San Tin people were still prevaricating. In Tai Po the vital Hap Wo Yeuk (合和約) refused to come in with the rest of Tai Po, despite threats, and so there was no chance for the leaders of the insurrection to close the land road between Tai Po and Sha Tin (沙田) and Kowloon (九龍), which ran through the Hap Wo Yeuk (see Maps 1 and 2 below). All these problems might have been overcome if the leaders had got the extra two days they had planned for.

### The Insurgent Force

It seems likely that the military forces of the insurrection were arranged in six Brigades. Clan loyalties and enmities meant that groups of fighters had to be carefully arranged, to keep village contingents apart from their clan enemies, for fear that fights would begin within the insurrection military force.<sup>29</sup> Thus Ha Tsuen people could not be asked to fight in the same brigade as Ping Shan, because of the enmity between the two villages (which had fought an inter-village war only thirty years or so before), even though the two sets of elders were in entire agreement about the need to fight the British. Ping Shan headed a Brigade of its own, but Ha Tsuen joined with Kam Tin (its genealogical close relative and ally) to form the Kam Tin/Ha Tsuen Brigade. Shap Pat Heung could not be asked to fight alongside Ping Shan, with whom it had deep and long enmities (again, there had been several inter-village wars between Shap Pat Heung and Ping Shan in the generations before the Six-Day War, one probably in 1851, and another about thirty years later), and so it formed a Brigade of its own. Pat Heung (八鄉), for many years the enemy of Kam Tin, could not fight alongside Kam Tin, and so found a more congenial place within the Ping Shan Brigade. The other three Brigades would have comprised respectively the Ngan Tin, Wai Tak, and Tai Po people.

Some clan enmities were so deep that they ensured some clans never joined the insurrection at all. The Tai Po Tsat Yeuk (大埔七約, “The Tai Po League of Seven”) had managed to break the monopoly of the Tai Po Old Market (大埔舊墟) in 1892 when they successfully established the Tai Po New Market (太和市, 或大埔新墟). The Old Market was owned by the Tang clan of Tai Po Tau: the resulting enmity was so great that the fact that the Tsat Yeuk (except for the Hap Wo Yeuk) entered the insurrection was enough to ensure that Tai Po Tau stayed out. Similarly, the fact that Fanling

(a member of the Tsat Yeuk) entered the insurrection was enough to ensure that their bitter enemies, the Tangs of Lung Yeuk Tau, stayed out.<sup>30</sup>

Equally, the facts of village life meant that some districts or clans had to come in if the insurrection was to succeed at all. Ping Shan and Kam Tin could not send their men out to fight if Shap Pat Heung and Pat Heung stayed out of the fighting, because the risks of Shap Pat Heung or Pat Heung going behind their backs to pay off old scores were too great. Similarly, there was no hope of inducing Ho Sheung Heung or Kam Tsin into the fighting if Sheung Shui stayed out: the risk of a stab in the back if they left themselves defenceless against a treacherous attack from their neighbours was just too great. It is in the context of these problems that the threats to burn their villages unless Shap Pat Heung and Sheung Shui joined in must be seen.

Provisioning the military force was the responsibility of the three main Brigade districts near to the scene of the fighting — Ping Shan, Ha Tsuen/Kam Tin, and Shap Pat Heung. Each district brought provisions to the front in turn, each day one Brigade district taking responsibility. The provisions were mostly pigs (presumably, the Brigades took their own rice and salt and tea with them).<sup>31</sup>

## Opposition to the Insurgency

The insurrection was never supported by all the influential people in the villages. Many elders questioned the wisdom of proceeding to an armed uprising. The “weaker and smaller” districts (such as Shap Pat Heung in particular) had to be “coerced into joining the rebels”,<sup>32</sup> and did not join of their own free will (as a result, the villages in the Shap Pat Heung area petitioned Lockhart after the fighting, on 26 April, asking for protection for the future from “bullying” from the gentry of the larger villages).<sup>33</sup> Some villagers could see the opportunities for profit that the new arrangements under a British administration would give them. On 27 August 1898 (at about the time when armed resistance first began to be mooted), 235 elders of the Ping Shan Heung and the Ha Tsuen Heung wrote to the Governor expressing their earnest desire “to be brought under a proper government . . . to have over us a competent and considerate ruler”.<sup>34</sup> They asked the Governor to appoint Stewart Lockhart as the administrator of the New Territories. While they gave no hint that some members of their villages were talking about violent opposition, in hindsight, this letter clearly indicates this group of elders’ doubts as to the wisdom of taking this line. On 5 April 1899, a party of elders spoke to Lockhart expressing their “friendly” intentions, and then went on to say



that, having shown their views, they were “afraid to return to their native villages, because . . . the ‘unfriendlier’ . . . will be sure to attack them”.<sup>35</sup>

Again, on 12 April, nine elders from Ping Shan came to Hong Kong, and kowtowed to the Governor, presenting a petition, which sought “leniency” for the village, and pardon for any wrong it had done in the matter of the burning of the matsheds on 3 April (when, in fact, no Ping Shan people had been present), and stating that they had endeavoured to “undeceive the people” against the views of “lawless rascals” who were saying British rule would be harsh. Again, this petition makes no mention of the active preparations then in hand for military opposition to the takeover, but, in hindsight, it clearly expresses the opposition of this group of elders to it.<sup>36</sup> On 15 April “village representatives” presented two silk British flags to the Governor, expressing the delegation’s “deep regrets” for the disturbances, and asking that the flags donated be used for the Flag-Raising Ceremony, another action which is a clear statement of opposition to the insurrection.<sup>37</sup>

Some of the elders who took part in the discussions about the insurrection claimed, after the event, that they had opposed violence, and were able to show letters from the other elders which tended to support this claim (Ng Ki-cheung, 伍其昌, on whom see below, and Liu Wan-kuk in particular).<sup>38</sup> One Kam Tin elder surrendered himself to Lockhart on 18 April, expressing his shock at what had been done, and his sorrow that he had, even for a short time, gone along with it.<sup>39</sup> The Tai Po community leaders similarly came to Lockhart and Major-General William Gascoigne, the General-Officer-Commanding, Hong Kong, on 16 April and “humbly apologised for the disturbances”: Gascoigne “instructed them regarding the good intentions of the Government and told them they would have to answer for the further disturbances in their village”. The Tai Po leaders thereupon, “after kowtowing”, stayed to witness the Flag-Raising Ceremony, and then withdrew, and called all the Tai Po villagers to come back home from the insurgent force.<sup>40</sup>

There are several statements suggesting that it was a part of the gentry and elders only who were anxious for military action: the ordinary villagers were originally uninterested, but, once their zeal had been fired up, there was no restraining them.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Factors Driving the Insurgents into Armed Opposition**

There are a large number of statements as to why the villagers decided to resort to a military uprising, and why they were so strongly opposed to the British takeover.<sup>42</sup> At base, of course, there was the simple fact that the

British were “barbarians”: clearly that was enough for many of the villagers. Some villagers believed, as a result of this xenophobic and atavistic hatred of foreigners, that village women would be violated by licentious barbarian soldiers: they “would not be allowed to close their doors at night”.<sup>43</sup> This was obviously a rumour which had been spread through the villages in the months between the signing of the Convention and the takeover by the British. In one or two cases this anti-foreign prejudice became a more sophisticated nationalism, as in the poem copied above, and in a petition presented to the San On Magistrate by the Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角) gentry, where the gentry say “we will all become foreigners, which will be a great disgrace to us all”.<sup>44</sup> It must be borne in mind that there was considerable anti-British feeling in Kwangtung in this period, following the Anglo-Chinese Wars of the 1840s and 1860s, and it is quite clear that large sections of New Territories society were deeply prejudiced against the British as a result. This prejudice undoubtedly underlies the strength of feeling among the villagers in 1899.

Some villagers stated that they had been bullied into taking part, by ‘rowdies’, or ‘Triad Society men’, who had also extorted money from them.<sup>45</sup>

Another potent source of disquiet was the fear that, with the British Government in place, taxes would be raised. According to statements by the villagers, some made before the insurrection, some after it came to an end, they were afraid that a Poll Tax would be levied,<sup>46</sup> that houses would be taxed,<sup>47</sup> that licences would be required for domestic animals,<sup>48</sup> and that port dues would be charged on all movements of boats.<sup>49</sup> Local customs would, they feared, be prohibited: wood-cutting would be prohibited,<sup>50</sup> and fishing as well.<sup>51</sup> Marriage and funeral customs would be changed,<sup>52</sup> and births and deaths would have to be registered<sup>53</sup> — in these latter two cases the fees charged were clearly the main worry. Some villagers feared that “taxes would be raised” or customs altered without specifying which taxes or which customs.<sup>54</sup> The *Hongkong Daily Press*, on 20 April, noted that these concerns were seen as significant by the Chinese: “They fear they will have to pay duty on their salt; also that a house-tax and other imposts will be levied.”

A further major worry was the possibility of the establishment of a Sanitary Board in the New Territories.<sup>55</sup> This worry is explained more fully in the petition of the Sha Tau Kok elders against the leasing of the New Territories:<sup>56</sup>

worst of all, when the plague epidemic broke out some years ago the Sanitary Board made strict search for sick people, and that when they found any Chinaman who was thin, delicate, they falsely declared that he was sick, and forcibly removed him to the Board, when they cruelly dosed him with arsenic, until he died of its poisonous effects . . . those who suffered in this way were innumerable, that if a sick man was found in a house, no matter

how much the house was worth, it was destroyed by fire, and the houses adjacent to it closed, that the cruelties experienced were truly great, and that if such proceedings are introduced into the area the people will not be able to survive them . . . your petitioners having been made acquainted with these circumstances found them on enquiry to be true.

These areas of concern were all (except the one about village women not being allowed to close their doors at night to make life easier for licentious barbarian soldiers) legitimate, insofar as the things complained of did indeed occur in the City (a Poll Tax, in the form of the Night-Pass system, had long been in effect, although it had been cancelled shortly before 1899; houses paid rates on a quarterly basis in the City; licences to keep cattle or pigs were required in the City; Port Dues were levied in the City; and wood-cutting was prohibited there). Marriages and funerals required licences in the City, and Registration of Births and Deaths was required in the City (although, in practice, this was not well enforced), and fees were charged. Certainly, the Sanitary Board had been given, and had exercised, emergency powers during the plague outbreak, although sick patients had definitely not been poisoned with arsenic!

Between the agreement in principle to lease the area (July 1898) and the takeover (April 1899) was a period of nine months. During this period the Hong Kong Government seems to have made no attempt to explain to the villagers what its policies in the New Territories would be. The Government was in contact with village leaders during this period (for instance, when the 235 elders of Ping Shan petitioned the Governor on 27 August 1898, and the many villagers that Stewart Lockhart's assistants, especially Ng Shui-sang, were in contact with throughout the period). Village leaders regularly visited Hong Kong on business, and some at least of them were known to the Government. The Government had sent groups of officials through the area during the period between June 1898 and April 1899 (e.g. surveyors for the Kowloon-Canton Railway, and parties looking for sites for new Police Stations). There can be little doubt that the Government could easily have communicated its ideas as to the policies it would adopt in the New Territories to the elders during this period if it had wished to do so, even before the takeover. There was thus, clearly, a serious failure of public relations.

Most of the points of concern raised by the villagers had, in fact, been considered by the Government, well before March 1899, and the decision taken not to extend the laws and policies in question to the New Territories since they were considered to be measures inappropriate to a rural area, but without this vital information having been passed on to the villagers.<sup>57</sup> The Government thus allowed rumour and scare-mongering to proceed unchecked,

and worries to build up into major concerns, even though the matters which had led to the worries arising in the first place had all been noted and agreements reached that these policies and laws should not be imposed. The *China Mail*, in its editorial of 21 April, identified this as a major factor in the outbreak of the insurgency:

We very much fear . . . that the initial mistake made was the lack of timely notice on the part of our Government officials, and of information concerning the humane intentions of the British administration towards the new people . . . Had adequate measures been taken to inform the inhabitants what changes were likely to be made — as to land tenure, taxes and Customs rules — the transfer might have been made [peacefully].

The Governor issued a Proclamation on 7 April outlining the Government's policies towards the New Territories (the Proclamation was published on 9 April: see Appendix 1, and Plate 8). This Proclamation contained clear statements as to how the New Territories were to be ruled, but this Proclamation was issued far too late to have any effect on the situation, which had already by 9 April reached the point of no return.<sup>58</sup>

Another area of concern to the insurgent villagers was Fung Shui (風水): the Fung Shui of the villages would, they felt, be damaged by the building, above all, of new Police Stations and roads.<sup>59</sup> This was a matter of considerable concern to the villages. The Government insisted on the need to build Police Stations, and to build them near major centres of population, and already, before March 1899, had plans to build roads linking those major centres of population. At one or two places the Government had shown sensitivity in dealing with Fung Shui questions. Thus, at Tai Po, F. H. May had agreed to move the site of the proposed Police Station on Flagstaff Hill from the one first chosen to another which the local villagers indicated was of less Fung Shui sensitivity. The Government had thus indicated its willingness, in this case, to be reasonable where Fung Shui was in question, but not to the point of cancelling vital projects.

During March 1899, however, May, with a party of Police, visited Ping Shan, looking for a site for a Police Station there. Colossal insensitivity was used in identifying the site: the Police wanted a site right on the summit of the Fung Shui hill behind the village, directly behind the two main Ancestral Halls of the Tang clan, and on the direct Fung Shui line of the Halls. The Ping Shan hill is shaped “like a crab”, with the village sheltered between the crab's claws to the west, and screened from the east by the body of the crab. The very name of Ping Shan, indeed, reflects this Fung Shui situation (Ping

Shan, 屏山, means “Screen Hill”). The Police Station was “like a rock, crushing in the crab’s head”. This insensitivity seems to have played a major part in driving the Tangs of Ping Shan into armed insurrection. The other local clans came to Ping Shan, saw the site, and were convinced that the British would pay no attention to their Fung Shui, but would damage or destroy it whenever they wanted to. Thus, the poor judgement shown in choosing the site of the Ping Shan Police Station was a major inducement to the villagers to rise up in arms against the British. A statement issued by Ping Shan shows how concerned the villagers there were:

Mr May . . . went to Ping Shan [27 March], and examined a site there on the Pi Kau Hill.<sup>60</sup> The Ping Shan people became excited, being of opinion that if the police station were erected there, the Fung Shui of the place would be seriously affected. . . . They said that the English proclamation [the Governor’s proclamation of 7–9 April: this statement of Ping Shan feeling was issued shortly after 9 April] was simply meant to hoodwink the ignorant people. It states that lands, buildings, and customs will not be interfered with, but will remain the same as before. Why should they therefore, when they first come into the leased area, wish to erect a police station on the hill behind our village? When has China ever erected a police station just where people live? The proclamation says that things will be as before. Are not these words untrue?<sup>61</sup>

Clearly, this problem could have been reduced had the authorities been more willing to compromise, and to explain and talk with the villagers, but no attempt seems to have been made to co-operate with them, or to explain what was going ahead.

Finally, there was the question of land. The New Territories villagers were all rice subsistence farmers, to whom ownership of rice-lands was, literally, a matter of life and death.<sup>62</sup> Between July 1898 and April 1899 rumour and scare-mongering abounded in the villages on the question of land-holding under the future British administration. There were three basic scare-stories circulating: that the British would confiscate land without compensation and give it to cronies of senior British officials (on this see, for instance, the notice of 28 March given above: “We hate the English barbarians, who are about to enter our boundaries and take our lands”), that Hong Kong land development companies would be allowed to buy land for a fraction of its real value, and that the rights of the ancient great clans to receive rent-charges from the actual cultivators would be stopped. Once again, the Hong Kong Government failed to explain to the villagers what they proposed to do about land after the takeover (once again, the Governor’s Proclamation of

7–9 April was the first attempt to explain things, and it came too late), and so allowed scare-stories to abound. There was never anything other than fear behind the confiscation-without-compensation scare, but there were real factors behind the other two scare-stories.

The Colonial Secretary, Stewart Lockhart, had built up a network of contacts who kept him apprised as to the feelings and views of the Chinese community. The close understanding he gained of the Chinese community in this way was critical to his notable success as Colonial Secretary. One or two of these contacts, especially Ng Shui-sang,<sup>63</sup> had developed groups of contacts of their own in the New Territories area in the period between the signing of the Convention and the takeover. However, a certain Land Development Company (owned by Li Sing, 李陞, who was one of the largest land developers in Hong Kong at the time) was buying up land widely in what was to become the New Territories in the year before the takeover, since this company was of the opinion that New Territories land would become significantly more valuable after the area had been taken over by the British, and thus felt that buying up this land was a good medium-term investment. They used agents to identify land for purchase, and to negotiate a price with the owners. In at least some cases the agents they used were among Ng Shui-sang's contacts. This fuelled villager worries that "the company" was so close to the Government that it would, in the event, be able to get away with anything it chose to do.

Rumours thus abounded throughout the New Territories that these agents of Li Sing's Land Development Company were using threats to acquire land at less than its true value, by intimating that they had contacts in the Government, and that people who would not sell their land at low prices would face problems after the takeover, or even see the rest of their land confiscated. The Governor was extremely concerned about this rumour, seeing how quickly it could become a factor of major social unrest.<sup>64</sup> The *Hongkong Daily Press* also identified this as the major trigger for the insurrection: "word went forth that the foreigners were going to dispossess the natives of their land, and that it would be necessary to raise money . . . to resist the encroachment of the foreigner".<sup>65</sup> Stewart Lockhart did not believe that any land had in fact been sold at below its true value,<sup>66</sup> and no evidence of forced or undervalued sales was in fact brought to light, despite an investigation. Nonetheless, it is clear that the villagers widely believed the rumour that underhand action was taking place, by people connected with the Government, forcing or coercing sales of land to "the company". It is, furthermore, clear that this rumour was particularly strongly believed in Ping Shan, where at least one doubtful land-sale had gone through.<sup>67</sup> Whether

there were any improper land sales or not, the important thing was that rumours of such sales were rife, and no effort was made by the Government before the Governor's Proclamation of 7–9 April 1899 to explain or clarify the situation, or to explain what the new administration's policy on land was to be. The Governor was quite correct to view the matter as a serious one: it undoubtedly induced many to join the insurrection:<sup>68</sup> it is a pity that no attempt was made to explain the new policies on land until it was too late.

The final problem was, perhaps, the single most significant. As noted above, under the traditional Land Law that had been in place in the New Territories since at least the later seventeenth century, the ownership of land was divided into two, the Sub-Soil Rights (地骨) and the Top-Soil Rights (地皮).

The owners of the Sub-Soil Rights were inevitably the ancient great clans which had been present in the area since the Ming, four hundred years before the Lease. The holders of the Top-Soil Rights were the "small families", many of whom had settled in the area in the late seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Rumours abounded in 1899 that the British would forbid the Sub-Soil/Top-Soil system, and would prohibit the continued payment of the rent-charges, on the ground that these rent-charges were illegal except where the Land Tax was actually being paid by the Sub-Soil land-holder for the land in question. In this case, this is precisely what the British did do, and thus the rumour had considerable substance.

Given that most of the leaders of the 1899 insurrection were members of ancient great clans, to whom continuing receipt of the rent-charges was financially important, it is likely that this rumour was important in inducing them into the insurrection. Stewart Lockhart and the Governor both thought that this was the most powerful of all the factors involved. The Governor said:

Mr Stewart Lockhart . . . is of opinion that this attack is part of a general movement against our occupation on the part of the literati who have hitherto lived by irregular squeezes [i.e. the rent-charge from the Top-Soil land-holder] from the people . . . I am inclined to agree with him.<sup>69</sup>

Mr Robert Hotung, in a Report to the Government in October 1898, also pin-pointed this factor as the critical one:

though the owners of property in the neighbourhood of Kam Tin village hold deeds they have to pay tax to the said village. If England got the place

it is feared that the benefit will be deprived of. The shops and houses of the [Yuen] Long village[s] have also got to pay their tax . . . [every] year.<sup>70</sup>

Chau Kwan-nam,<sup>71</sup> a villager of the Yuen Long area, commenting after the insurrection was at an end, was also of this view:

the resistance really originated with the avaricious gentry . . . They wished it to be arranged with the British Government that while the land should belong to Great Britain . . . the gentry might [still] be able to squeeze the people and enrich themselves. This was the real reason for their inciting the people.<sup>72</sup>

The *China Mail* newspaper, on 15 April, when the first news of the disturbances broke out, was also of this opinion:

Large bands of rowdies from over the proposed boundary line had been actively engaged during the week inciting the people of the villages in the new territory to resist the British occupation. These bad characters found hearty sympathisers in a section of the official classes who will be deprived of substantial emoluments when the territory is brought under British control.

There can be little doubt that it was this factor, affecting the gentry above all, which induced this group to start the insurrection, although rumours and scare-stories about high taxes and threats to land, and the believed high risks to village Fung Shui, led the ordinary villagers to support them once the decision to go ahead had been made by the gentry.





# 4



## April 1899: The War

### 3 and 14 April: The Burning of the Matsheds

The first firm intelligence that the Government of Hong Kong received that some of the inhabitants of the New Territories were proposing to go to extremes to try to stop the handing over of the New Territories to British control seems to have been received only on 1 April 1899. A party of workmen had been sent to Tai Po in March 1899 to prepare matsheds to act as a temporary Police Station, and to provide the venue for the Flag-Raising Ceremony by which the area would be made formally and legally subject to British control, and another party of workmen had been sent to mark the newly agreed frontier. It was on 1 April that the Governor learnt that the workmen at Tai Po were being menaced by the local residents, and that the party that had been sent to mark the newly agreed frontier had been threatened with death. It was also on 1 April that the Governor learnt about the inflammatory placards that were being posted in the New Territories urging the inhabitants to arm to resist the British.<sup>1</sup>

The Governor was so concerned at what he learnt that he made an emergency visit to Canton (廣州, Guangzhou) by torpedo-boat destroyer, to visit the Viceroy (2 April: see Plate 9), to try to learn if these disturbing developments had the support of the Canton authorities, and to urge the despatch of Chinese troops to keep order until the British took the area over.<sup>2</sup> The Viceroy emphatically denied that any encouragement was being given, whether overt or covert, and agreed to send troops, to have the posting of the inflammatory placards stopped, and to send a senior military officer to reason

with the villagers.<sup>3</sup> A small troop of five semi-trained Chinese soldiers (“braves”) was accordingly detailed to be sent to Tai Po to defend the matsheds (3 April), and Major Fong<sup>4</sup> was sent (12 April) to speak to the Yuen Long villagers (subsequently it was learnt that Major Fong had given the villagers the impression that they could do as they wished, stating that he would “in no way use force, but will freely allow the villagers to carry out their own settled plans”).<sup>5</sup>

On 3 April, the Captain-Superintendent of Police, Mr F. H. May, went to Tai Po, escorted by four Sikh policemen and an interpreter, to show the five Chinese braves the site at Tai Po.<sup>6</sup> On arrival he found the local villagers assuming a “threatening attitude”. May took his party into Tai Po New Market (太和市, also known as 大埔新墟) to try to find out more as to the intentions of the villagers. A meeting was held at shortly after 3.00 p.m. with some of the elders in the Meeting Hall (the side-hall of the Man Mo Temple, 文武廟, in the market), but this soon became “noisy and turbulent”. May was told that the objection to the matsheds was that they damaged the Fung Shui of the area, but May rejected this, pointing out that the site of the matsheds had been changed from the first site chosen, in deference to the Fung Shui of the area, and the new site had been accepted as not a Fung Shui problem by the villagers of Pun Chung (泮涌), the only village near the site. The meeting then became riotous, stones were thrown and wooden weapons readied, and eventually May had to order bayonets to be fixed to get his party safely out of the market (no-one was hurt during all this).

May retreated to the site of the matsheds (“Flagstaff Hill”).<sup>7</sup> As it was clear that an attack might take place, and since it was clear from words that had been said while the party was in the Market that those Chinese working for the British were at particular risk, May sent back his interpreter, and the two District Watchmen who had been looking after the matsheds, to return overland to Hong Kong, carrying with them a note from him asking for urgent reinforcements.<sup>8</sup> This small group left Tai Po about 4.30 p.m., and arrived back at Hong Kong about midnight. At 9.00 p.m. May noticed that large parties (he estimated them at about 100–200 men) were approaching the site with lights. Two “bombs” were exploded. May realized that he and his tiny party were in considerable danger. He retreated to a “nearby hill” where the party hid in a thicket of dense undergrowth from where he watched the rioters fire one of the matsheds, and then, some time after midnight, he led the party over the mountain tracks back to Sha Tin, and thence to Hong Kong.

The Governor received May’s note asking for urgent reinforcements about midnight. He immediately ordered a company (125 men) of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, under Lieutenant-Colonel Mainwaring, accompanied by the Colonial

Secretary, Stewart Lockhart, to be sent to Tai Po. In addition, the General Officer Commanding (G.O.C.), Major-General Gascoigne, decided to accompany the force in person.<sup>9</sup> These troops left Hong Kong in *H.M.S. Whiting* at 2.30 a.m., and arrived at Tai Po at 9.00 a.m. (the passage to Tai Po was slow because of heavy fog).<sup>10</sup> On arrival the force went to Tai Po New Market, and had a meeting with some of the elders at the Man Mo Temple. There they learnt that May had got away safely, but that the matsheds had been burnt down.

It was felt that the prompt arrival of this military force had impressed the villagers, and that no further trouble was to be expected: Major-General Gascoigne was of the opinion that the appearance of the troops “frightened the villagers”, and induced them to “express great regret”, after which “the incident was considered closed”.<sup>11</sup> The troops accordingly returned to Hong Kong in *H.M.S. Whiting* and *H.M.S. Fame* (which had arrived at Tai Po shortly after *Whiting*), arriving at Hong Kong about 4.40 p.m.<sup>12</sup> Since the affair had apparently been settled, the Government assumed that no further problems need be anticipated, and that matters could proceed without any further precautions being taken.

The Governor thus immediately ordered the matshed to be rebuilt and readied for the Flag-Raising Ceremony by which he would take the New Territories over, and which he ordered was to be held on 17 April. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, noted his approval of what had been done.<sup>13</sup>

The Governor prepared, as noted above, a Chinese-language Proclamation (7–9 April) to be posted in the villages, in an attempt to assuage any continuing doubts or disquiet there might be in the area, promising that British rule in the New Territories would be based on a spirit of amicable co-operation between the administration and the villagers, and promising that their traditional way of life would be safeguarded.

The Governor sought to employ villagers to post the Proclamation widely in the villages, but those who took the job on were threatened with death, and one, indeed, was actually murdered, as is discussed further below.<sup>14</sup>

Unknown to the Governor, however, the villagers of the Yuen Long area were still, in these early days of April, actively continuing to prepare for a military attack on the British, in an attempt to stop the Lease of the New Territories going ahead. They initially wished to initiate their assault on 17 April, in a surprise attack on the Flag-Raising ceremony, but, as noted above, eventually action was initiated a few days earlier, on 14 April.

On Friday morning, 14 April 1899, both the Director of Public Works and the Colonial Secretary received warnings in Hong Kong from “respectable

inhabitants of the district” that the matsheds which were under construction on Flagstaff Hill at Tai Po in preparation for the planned Flag-Raising ceremony on 17 April, and which were entirely unguarded (the five Chinese “braves” having been withdrawn after the 3 April incident), were at risk from “rowdies”, who were proposing to burn them.<sup>15</sup> The Governor, having been warned of this threat, immediately directed the Captain-Superintendent of Police, Mr F. H. May, to go at once to Tai Po, taking with him the Police (about 20 of them) who were to have been posted to Tai Po on 17 April, in order to protect the matsheds. So that the party could get to Tai Po as quickly as possible, the Governor ordered that they be taken there by naval torpedo-boat destroyer. The party set off at 2.00 p.m. in *H.M.S. Fame*, and can be assumed to have arrived at Tai Po about 5.00 p.m.<sup>16</sup>

On arrival at Tai Po, May found the matsheds already burnt, and a large number (about 150) of Chinese occupying the “opposite hill” in a war-like manner, with two flags flying, shouting, beating gongs, and firing off jingals, bombs, and fire-crackers. May and Lt. Keyes, the commander of *Fame*, went into Tai Po New Market, which they found deserted except for a few old people and the Temple Keeper. The Temple Keeper told them that the matsheds had been destroyed about five hours before, i.e. about noon, and that, in addition to the Chinese on the hill opposite, there were about a thousand more occupying a hill about a mile to the north-west of the market (i.e. near Tai Po Tau village). On investigation, May found that this group were also behaving in a war-like manner, firing off jingals, and beating gongs and setting off fire-crackers, and showing four or five flags. Some of the villagers were armed with rifles “of an old fashioned sort”, as well as the jingals. The Temple Keeper beseeched May to leave as soon as possible, before the people from the hill descended on the Market, and murdered them. He told May that the coolies who had been working on the matsheds had all escaped safely, and were making their way back to Hong Kong overland. Lt. Keyes was quite ready to attack, but, given that the party must have been out-numbered at least 30 times, May declined, saying that he “had no authority to use force”, since the Governor, the civilian authority, had given no permission for force to be used.<sup>17</sup> May sent a report back to Hong Kong, and withdrew his party, taking them back to Sha Tin, and thence over Kowloon Peak to Kowloon and Hong Kong. The party left Tai Po about 6.45 p.m. and arrived back in Kowloon late that evening, “between ten and eleven o’clock”, according to the *China Mail*.<sup>18</sup>

The groups which had burnt the matsheds on 3 and 14 April were villagers from the Tai Po Tsat Yeuk, predominantly from Tai Hang and Lam Tsuen (林村), with some from Fanling. They had been reinforced, on both days, by

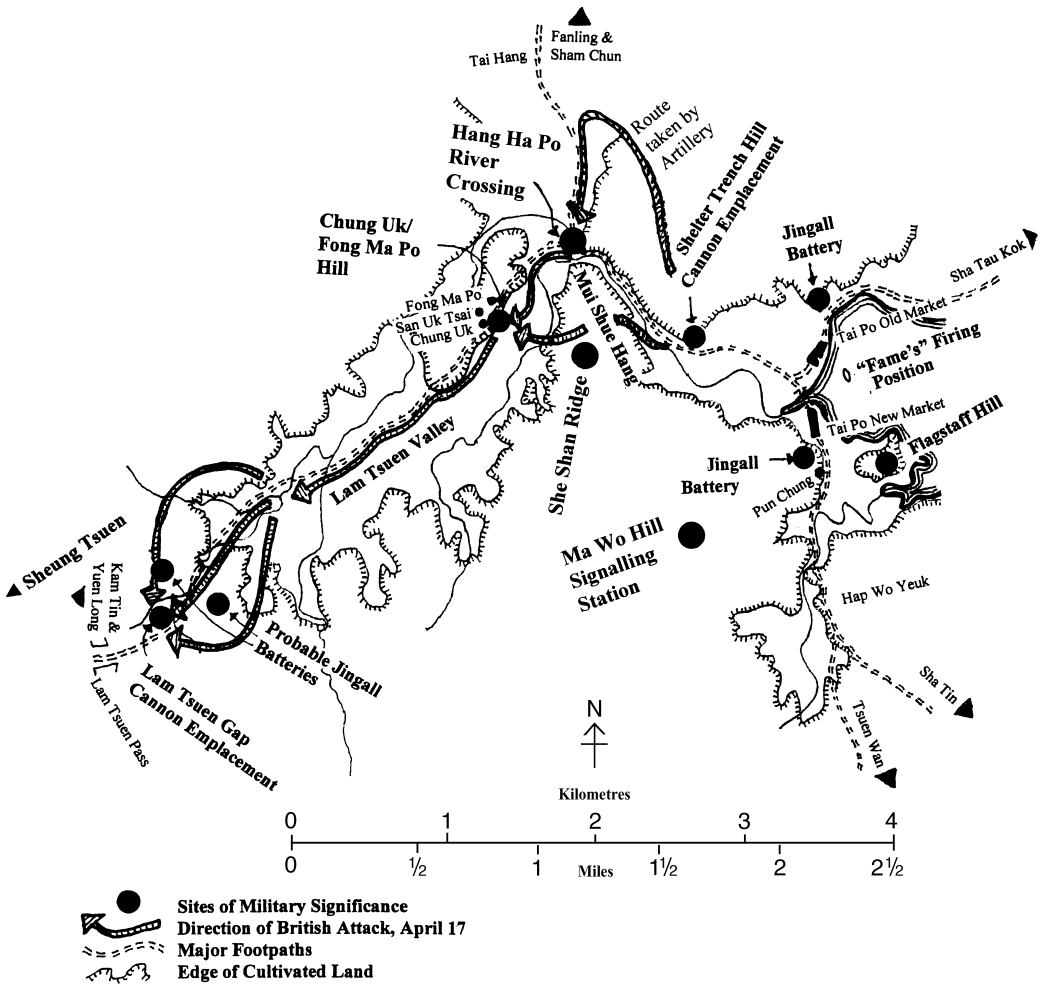
villagers from the Yuen Long area (Kam Tin and Pat Heung). On both days, these reinforcements had, however, arrived only after the matsheds had been burnt. On 14 April, the Yuen Long people were accompanied by a substantial group of people from “over the border”. They had been provided on 14 April with provisions by Ping Shan, which had sent a consignment of pigs.<sup>19</sup>

### The Main Campaign: 15 April, the Battle of Mui Shue Hang (梅樹坑)

When May returned to Hong Kong, late in the evening of 14 April, and reported to the Governor, the Governor immediately told May to go back at first light with his group of Police to Tai Po by Government launch, to prepare a camp for a full company (125 men) of the Hongkong Regiment,<sup>20</sup> under Capt. E.L.C. Berger<sup>21</sup> (see Plates 1, 2, and 3) which the Governor also immediately ordered to Tai Po: this latter party was to travel overland.<sup>22</sup> May and the Police arrived at Tai Po in the middle of the morning on 15 April. The men of the Hongkong Regiment left Kowloon at 6 a.m. on 15 April, and reached Sha Tin about 12.30 p.m.<sup>23</sup> It was the Governor’s expectation that the appearance of a force of this size would induce the insurgents to reconsider their position, as had been the case with the similarly sized force sent on 4 April: he stated in a despatch to the Secretary of State on 15 April (sent before he had been informed of the fighting which in fact took place on that day) that “I do not think there is any probability that this Force will be attacked”.<sup>24</sup> This was the understanding also of the *China Mail* which stated, on 15 April: “It is not thought that [May and his party] will be further arrested as the rowdies will fully disperse on the arrival of [Berger and his party].”

When May and the Police reached Tai Po, however, they were immediately attacked by the insurgents from the surrounding hills. May was unable to land his supplies or men, and went back to Sha Tin, where he met Berger and the men of the Hongkong Regiment. Berger told May to return and to land whatever he could, and that Berger would arrive as fast as possible to cover him. This May did. Berger sent a message back to the commanding officer of the Hongkong Regiment, Lt. Col. J. M. A. Retallick,<sup>25</sup> from Sha Tin describing the situation at Tai Po as “grave”, and urging the immediate dispatch of reinforcements. This message was sent back on foot, and was received in Hong Kong, according to Berger, “that night”.<sup>26</sup> Retallick sent it immediately on to the Governor.

Berger then sent his men over the mountains by forced march, to find May and his men under heavy fire at Flagstaff Hill, from both cannon and rifles (see Maps 2 and 3). The *Hongkong Telegraph* was impressed by the way



Map 2 The Fighting on 15-17 April

the Police acted, given the overwhelming superiority in numbers of the insurgent force: “Captain Superintendent May and his small force of Police are said to have been behaving in the coolest and pluckiest manner when the troops arrived, lying down and firing as though at target practice. It is this doggedness of purpose and coolness in a tight place that instils a respect for the British into the native mind”.<sup>27</sup> It is clear from Berger’s account that the size and ferocity of the attack came as a surprise to him. Berger got his men onto Flagstaff Hill (by about 4.00 p.m.) to relieve May and the Police, but the position was, clearly, a very dangerous one.

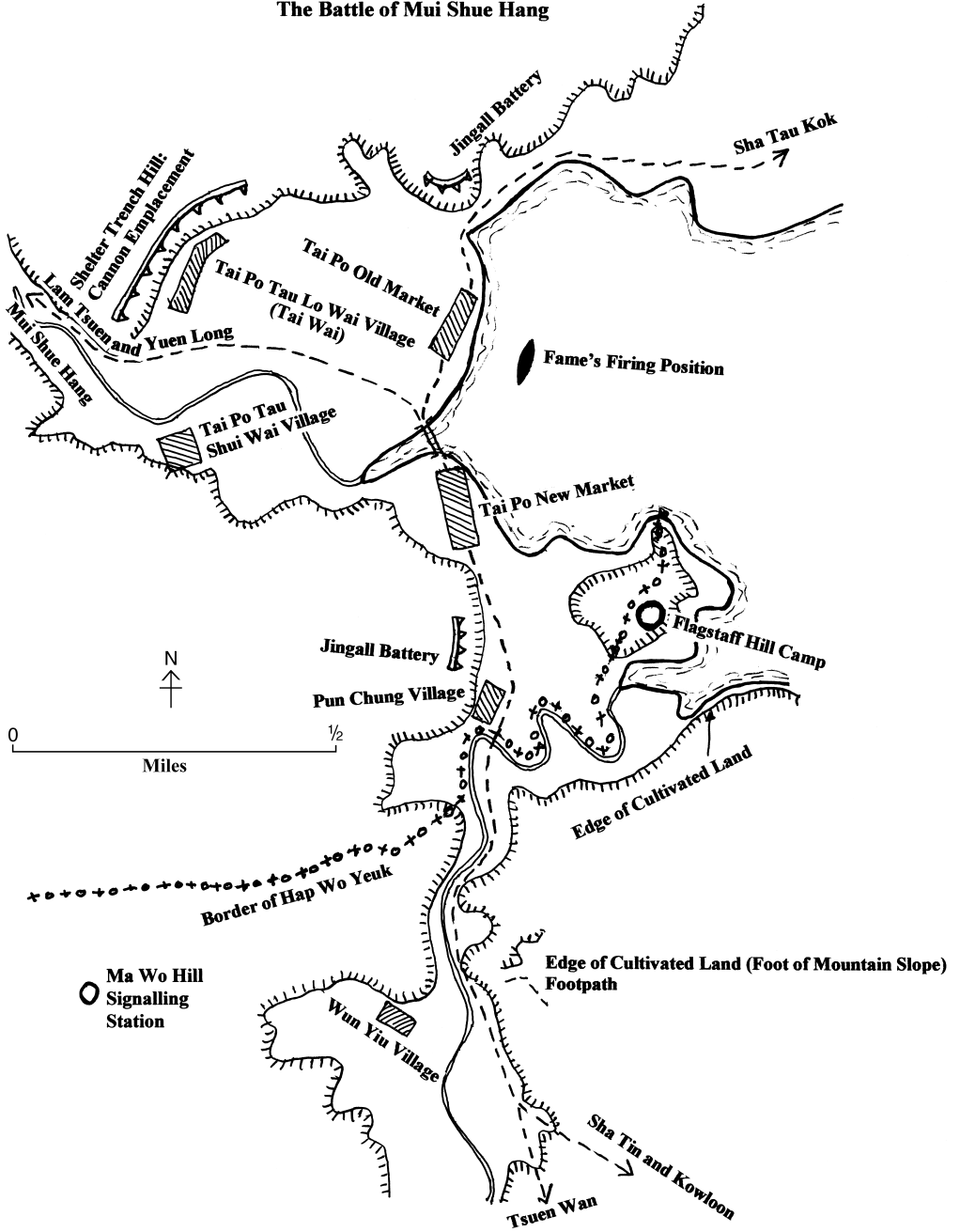
Berger found that he was opposed by three batteries, the two noted by May the day before, and another group of men with jingals on the northern shore of the bay. The main “entrenchment” was a battery of cannon which had been placed on the hill behind Tai Po Tau Village. The English-language newspapers in several places say that this main battery was “at Tai Wai village” (i.e. Tai Po Tau Tai Wai, 大埔頭大圍). It is described as being “about a mile from the market”, and “on a ridge . . . about 2,500 yards” (about 1½ miles) from Flagstaff Hill, to the north-west. Long trenches were dug on either side of this battery, to shelter the insurgents.

There can be little doubt that the main jingal battery was placed on Kam Shan (錦山), the hill immediately behind Tai Po New Market (it is described as standing on “the hill behind the market”, or again as lying “500 yards to the west” of Flagstaff Hill). There was a second jingal battery on “the hill behind the village north of the market”, or “the village to the north-west”: presumably the hill at San Wai Tsai (新圍仔) just north of Tai Po Old Market, at the northern end of the trench system (see Maps 2 and 3 for the fighting on 15 April).<sup>28</sup> There were thus two jingal batteries, at Kam Shan and San Wai Tsai, in addition to the main emplacement with its cannon. Keyes thus notes that May and his men “were under fire from several jingals on the hill above Tai-po-Hu [Tai Po Market: i.e. Kam Shan], and the village to the northward [i.e. San Wai Tsai]”, as well as from the “strong force of Chinese” at Tai Po Tau, and elsewhere he speaks of “two more entrenched positions” as well the main entrenchment.<sup>29</sup> Berger notes “bodies of infantry all along the ridge”, which would presumably have included any fighters entrenched on the San Wai Tsai hill, as well as those in the main emplacement (see Map 3 and Plate 4).

As can be seen from Maps 2 and 3, this arrangement, with these three batteries, was clearly designed to deny the British forces access through Tai Po New Market into the Mui Shue Hang defile, through which any force landed at Tai Po would have to pass before proceeding inland. Certainly, at least the jingals at Kam Shan and the cannon at Tai Po Tau would have been



# The Battle of Mui Shue Hang



Map 3 The Battle of Mui Shue Hang

able to fire into the camp at Flagstaff Hill, and must have been placed where they were to enable fire to be directed onto this site. These batteries thus overlooked the site of the Flag-Raising Ceremony, and, if the element of surprise had not been lost by the premature firing of the matsheds on 14 April, could have given a distinctly unpleasant shock to the dignitaries who would otherwise have been present for the Ceremony on 17 April.

It was noted at once by all the military officers at the site that this arrangement showed evidence of good military understanding. The arrangement of the batteries was well thought out and sound. The main battery was placed in a well prepared and well dug-in position. This was described by various observers as “a regular entrenchment”, “a carefully prepared shelter of trenches”, and a “regular emplacement for light artillery”: Lt. Col. O’Gorman<sup>30</sup> said of this emplacement: “the Chinese had constructed here a very creditable two hour shelter trench made on orthodox principles evidently under military supervision”.<sup>31</sup> Berger calls it a “very large shelter trench extending along the crest of the hill for a considerable distance, say 300 yards . . . [with] buckets of cold tea at intervals of every 20 yards evidently intended for the refreshment of the men protecting the trench”. Keyes also mentions the “two great buckets of hot tea, several teacups” found at the trench.<sup>32</sup> The *China Mail*, probably getting this information from Gascoigne, called it “a long line of shelter trenches, which they had evidently been some days in making”.<sup>33</sup> The *Hongkong Telegraph* said that: “most elaborate preparations had been made . . . a small battery of guns had been mounted and trenches had been constructed so as to command the site of the flagstaff”.<sup>34</sup> The *Hongkong Daily Press* said that: “Besides a small battery it was found that a complete series of shelter trenches commanding the spot where the flag was to be raised . . . had been made”.<sup>35</sup> This emplacement was thus clearly a well-prepared position. It housed perhaps six substantial cannon, and perhaps six smaller guns.<sup>36</sup> The jingal batteries were also well placed and well constructed: they housed probably a couple of dozen jingals. Further, many of the insurgents in the batteries and “entrenchment” were seen to be wearing what seemed to be standard Chinese military uniforms (see Plate 17). The flags flying also seemed to be standard Chinese military flags. The suspicion was inevitably aroused that the villagers involved were being strengthened by Chinese regular army officers. At the least, as the Governor observed, it was not unreasonable to suspect that they had access to advisors who could give them good military advice: the “entrenchment”, said the Governor, could not have been “made by peasants without direction from a person having military training”.<sup>37</sup> Not surprisingly, the Governor suspected support for the insurgents from Canton.

The position of the soldiers of the Hongkong Regiment on their arrival at Tai Po was thus exposed and dangerous. They were without shelter, food, or supplies. They were outnumbered by the opposing force by at least eleven or twelve to one, possibly by sixteen to one. The soldiers of the Hongkong Regiment only had those rifles and ammunition they had been able to carry with them on their forced march from Kowloon (they only had some 40 rounds of ammunition per rifle with them, and so had to conserve their fire). They had no Maxim gun with them. They had no artillery. The opposing force, with some twelve cannon and perhaps a couple of dozen or so jingals, was clearly, at least on paper, a match for them. The British forces had no naval ship with them to protect their rear or to provide for an avenue of retreat. Captain Berger was able to keep the opposing force from storming the defences he prepared on Flagstaff Hill by rifle fire against anyone who approached, but was unable to leave his defences to attack the batteries, nor did he have any guns able to fire into the opposing batteries. By late afternoon, he was also running seriously short of ammunition.

At about 5.30 p.m., however, *H.M.S. Fame* arrived in Tai Po, carrying supplies and ammunition. She also brought with her the G.O.C., Maj-Gen. Gascoigne, the Royal Naval Commodore, F. Powell, and Captain Long, one of Gascoigne's two Staff Officers. These senior officers had come to Tai Po as observers. As soon as *Fame* arrived, she was fired on by the insurgents. Lieutenant Keyes, her commander, quickly had her kedged to a point as close to the Tai Po Old Market waterfront as possible. *Fame* was armed with a 12-pounder gun, very much heavier than any of the insurgent guns, designed to be effective at up to three miles. From the position she reached, the opposing batteries were all less than a mile from the ship, mostly about a half-mile off, which was, effectively, point-blank range for her. *Fame* opened fire with her heavy gun, about 6.30 or 7.00 p.m. Keyes (who was on shore during this bombardment, at Flagstaff Hill) stated: "The fire was admirable, the first shell falling into the largest jingal battery and silencing it and causing several Chinese to bolt. The other batteries were silenced in a few minutes".<sup>38</sup> Berger says *Fame* made "most accurate practice on the hill". The *China Mail* said: "the destroyer fired a few very effective rounds". According to the *Hongkong Telegraph*, "seventeen rounds" were fired by *Fame*.<sup>39</sup> The insurgents were seen to be retreating from their positions, which were now untenable in the face of *Fame's* fire-power.

The soldiers and ratings attacked from Flagstaff Hill immediately following *Fame's* barrage, in a charge, with bayonets fixed, and the Regiment's colours flying,<sup>40</sup> and cleared the entrenchments and batteries of any remaining insurgent troops. This attack was made at dusk, and was only completed at

9.30 p.m., well after dark. Following this action, Keyes had the stores he was carrying landed, using his own ratings, “nearly all the coolies having failed”,<sup>41</sup> a job which took his men three hours to complete (it involved the ratings carrying heavy loads on their backs as they waded through “several hundred yards” of muddy water), and which thus cannot have been completed until well after midnight: he also sent about 16 men from the ship’s company to strengthen the troops on Flagstaff Hill, and a 7-pounder boat-gun from one of his boats.

The attack captured one of the flags which the villagers had been flying, but all the insurgent artillery was withdrawn safely before the storming of the batteries, and none of the insurgent guns were captured. The flag proved to belong to the trained-band (憲團練) of Tai Hang Village (the large village cluster immediately north of the Mui Shue Hang defile, see Map 3).<sup>42</sup> These trained-bands were local militia groups who were, it would seem, in the last decades of the nineteenth century receiving quite sophisticated military training from some source, and who were permitted to use uniforms and fly flags: the Viceroy stated to the British Consul at Canton, when it was suggested that the presence of the trained-bands, with their official-looking uniforms and flags, in the fighting on 15 April was suggestive of official involvement: “as regards munitions of war, uniforms, and flags, as at present the Militia is being everywhere organized, no place is without these appurtenances”.<sup>43</sup> Most of the major village areas of the New Territories seem to have had such trained-bands in 1899; the trained-bands of Tai Hang, Castle Peak (屯門, also known as 青山), Sheung Shui, and Ho Sheung Heung are specifically mentioned as having been called out during the Six-Day War.

On 15–16 April, an emergency signalling system was set up by the British, with signal stations at Kowloon Pass (九龍凹), Sha Tin Pass (沙田凹), and on the crest of the Ma Wo hill (馬窩山) between Flagstaff Hill and Sha Tin Pass, to allow messages to be passed by “flags or heliographs” by day, and by lamps by night, but, clearly, this signalling system was inadequate, and a field-telephone system was laid down as well: this was completed on 17 April.<sup>44</sup>

This action on Saturday, 15 April can be called the Battle of Mui Shue Hang. On the insurgent side, villagers from Tai Po (including especially Tai Hang and Lam Tsuen), Fanling, Pat Heung, and Kam Tin took part in this day’s fighting. Ha Tsuen provided them with provisions, sending pigs to the front-line. It was estimated that the insurgent force opposing the British on this day totalled 1,600 men, although a British communiqué issued on 16 April more conservatively stated that the insurgents were “roughly estimated at over 1,000 men”.<sup>45</sup>

The villagers of the Hap Wo Yeuk in Tai Po (the area around Wun Yiu

village, 碗窰) were unwilling to take part in the fighting, as noted above, and they were threatened on 14 April by the villagers of the other Tai Po villages with having their villages burnt to the ground unless they agreed to join in: “luckily, the British troops arrived” before this threat could be put into effect.<sup>46</sup> As can be seen from Maps 1 and 2, the Hap Wo Yeuk was strategically important to the insurgents. It lay immediately south of Tai Po New Market, and the footpath from Tai Po to Sha Tin and Kowloon across Sha Tin Pass crossed the Hap Wo Yeuk land.<sup>47</sup> With the Hap Wo Yeuk neutral, the insurgents could not close this road. The British used this road frequently during the Six-Day War: thus, the troops sent out on 15 and 16 April came this way, the heliograph stations set up on 16 April were on Hap Wo Yeuk land, and the field telephone that was completed on 17 April was laid alongside the path. If the Hap Wo Yeuk had come into the war the insurgents would, almost certainly, have sent a detachment to the summit of the Sha Tin Pass to try to deny the British the use of this road. It is not surprising that the insurgents were particularly eager to bring the Hap Wo Yeuk people into the insurrection.<sup>48</sup>

## 16 April, the Flag-Raising Ceremony

While this Battle of Mui Shue Hang was successfully undertaken by the British troops, it was clearly only a success because of the fire-power of *Fame's* guns. Once the insurgents had retreated through the Mui Shue Hang defile, to points out of sight of *Fame*, thus rendering her guns helpless, the weakness of the Hongkong Regiment detachment was, once again, serious. The Governor decided, on receipt of Berger's note of 15 April, to reinforce the detachment sent earlier on 15 April, sending three further companies of the Hongkong Regiment (300 men) under Lieutenant Barrett,<sup>49</sup> and a company of the Asiatic Artillery (48 men and six 7-pounder mountain-guns) under Capt. Simmonds.<sup>50</sup> No Maxim machine-guns were sent as part of the armaments of this force. These men were to be sent to Tai Po by forced march overland, leaving at dawn on 16 April. *H.M.S. Brisk* was to go by sea, with the Colonial Secretary, Stewart Lockhart, who was sent by the Governor as Political Official in attendance.<sup>51</sup> *Brisk* also carried the guns of the Asiatic Artillery, and the ammunition likely to be needed for a few days. A Hong Kong Government launch, the *Wingfu*, was also sent. It was planned that *Brisk* and *Wingfu* would arrive at Tai Po at the same time as the reinforcements, that is, shortly after noon on Sunday, 16 April.<sup>52</sup> The *China Mail* reported that the baggage for this force was sent from Kowloon by land to Sha Tin, and then carried by the

*Miner*, the Royal Engineers' launch, round to Tai Po by sea: the *China Mail* managed to send two reporters to Tai Po who travelled with this baggage train.<sup>53</sup>

At first light (4.15 a.m.) on 16 April, *H.M.S. Fame* landed a force of naval ratings and marines, who searched the emplacements shelled during the battle of the previous evening, to ensure that they had not been re-occupied during the night. After a thorough search found the area empty of insurgents, this force re-embarked on *Fame* at 9.30 a.m.

The reinforcements from the Hongkong Regiment and the Asiatic Artillery duly arrived (the Colonial Secretary landed at Tai Po at 2 p.m. on 16 April, while the troops of the reinforcing force had arrived a couple of hours earlier). By about 2.30 p.m. all the supplies had been landed from the *Miner*, and placed in a secure part of the Flagstaff Hill camp. The Governor had decided to bring the Flag-Raising Ceremony forward a day, from 17 April to 16 April, since the military action being taken, where the British had not yet formally taken the territory over, was extremely doubtful in International Law.<sup>54</sup> Stewart Lockhart, as Colonial Secretary, was deputed the duty of raising the flag, which he did at 2.50 p.m. with as much pomp and ceremony as the exigencies of the situation permitted, in the company of the G.O.C., Major-General Gascoigne, and the Royal Naval Commodore (see Plate 5).<sup>55</sup> All available troops were paraded. *Fame* and *Brisk* were dressed overall, and an artillery salute was fired. Notification was sent back to Hong Kong by the heliograph, and a salute was fired in Hong Kong as well, at the same time as the salute was fired in Tai Po: the Members of the Hong Kong Club stood to drink a toast. A silk flag was used for the ceremony, which was then carefully folded and sent back to Hong Kong in *Fame*, which sailed after the ceremony with despatches: this silk flag was probably that which had been donated by a group of villagers<sup>56</sup> who disapproved of the insurgency, and who had given the flag specifically in the hope that it would be used for this Flag-Raising Ceremony.

A second, parallel Flag-Raising Ceremony was conducted by the Governor, Sir Henry Blake, just outside Kowloon City (九龍城), at the time originally fixed for the Ceremony, i.e. mid-afternoon on 17 April. The elders of the Kowloon villages were assembled for this Flag-Raising, and the Governor gave a speech on this occasion outlining his hopes for the future of the New Territories (see Appendix 2).<sup>57</sup> The Governor on this occasion was not accompanied by any significant military guard, but had with him just an honour guard of two policemen and a small number of Indian soldiers.

There were in the Tai Po area by the time of the Flag-Raising on 16 April about 425 men of the Hongkong Regiment (the 125 brought by Berger on 15

April, and the 300 with Barrett who had arrived on 16 April), 48 of the Asiatic Artillery, about 15–20 Police, and probably available on shore detachments from *Fame* and *Brisk* totalling about 40 men. In other words, the entire British military complement available on shore on 16 April was about 530 men at the most. The insurgent force comprised two to three thousand men.

The Governor was very alive to the risk of the Flag-Raising Ceremony being interrupted by the insurgents (“Intention was evidently to open fire upon the mixed company that would be hoisting the flag”: this would have been “a catastrophe”),<sup>58</sup> and even after *Fame*’s dawn search, the risk of some insurgents creeping back to interrupt the proceedings was obviously great. The *China Mail* also believed that this had been the original intention of the insurgents:

The general assumption is that the rebels, having heard that His Excellency the Governor originally intended to hoist the British flag at one o’clock at Taipohu, they assembled to make a strong resistance, and if they had not previously asserted themselves they might have caused considerable trouble.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the risks, however, very little seems to have been done, on 16 April, to find out what the insurgents were doing. From the flag seized, and from information received, it was known that Tai Hang and Lam Tsuen were deeply involved in the fighting on 15 April. These were the two village areas immediately at the inner mouth of the Mui Shue Hang defile (see Map 3). Further, the insurgents had been forced to retreat during the evening of 15 April, but they had not fled: they still had their guns and ammunition. A reconnaissance towards Tai Hang and Lam Tsuen, (to try to discover their likely future attitude, and then to find out where the main body of the insurgents and their artillery were) could have been expected, but it seems that this was left until the morning of 17 April, a full 36 hours after the action on 15 April, a somewhat surprising delay. As noted above, however, the Tai Po elders came to Flagstaff Hill at about 1.00 p.m. on the 16 April to apologise for having joined the insurrection. They kowtowed to Gascoigne and Lockhart and stated that they were withdrawing all their men from the insurgent force. They then probably stayed to witness the Flag-Raising Ceremony, thus demonstrating publicly their acceptance of the British. This group almost certainly included Man Tsam-chuen, the leading elder of Tai Hang. The first of the men of Tai Po started returning home from the insurgent force during the afternoon and evening of 16 April, and the rest of them did so during the morning and afternoon of 17 April.<sup>60</sup> Gascoigne may well have felt that, with this surrender of the Tai Po elders, including Tai Hang, a reconnaissance could safely be postponed.

The Governor referred in one despatch to some fighting on 16 April,<sup>61</sup> but Maj-Gen Gascoigne stated that 16 April “was without opposition of any kind . . . the villagers all appeared perfectly quiet”,<sup>62</sup> and the *China Mail* stated that “the natives left the camp unmolested”, although “some distant firing” was heard during the night of 16–17 April.<sup>63</sup> The *Hongkong Telegraph* stated that “there was no fighting”.<sup>64</sup> The *Hongkong Daily Press*, on 18 April, said that on 16 April: “there was no stirring on the part of the enemy the whole [day].” Clearly, if there was any firing on 16 April, it was only late that night, long-distance, and desultory and insubstantial. It is very unlikely that there was any significant military action on 16 April.

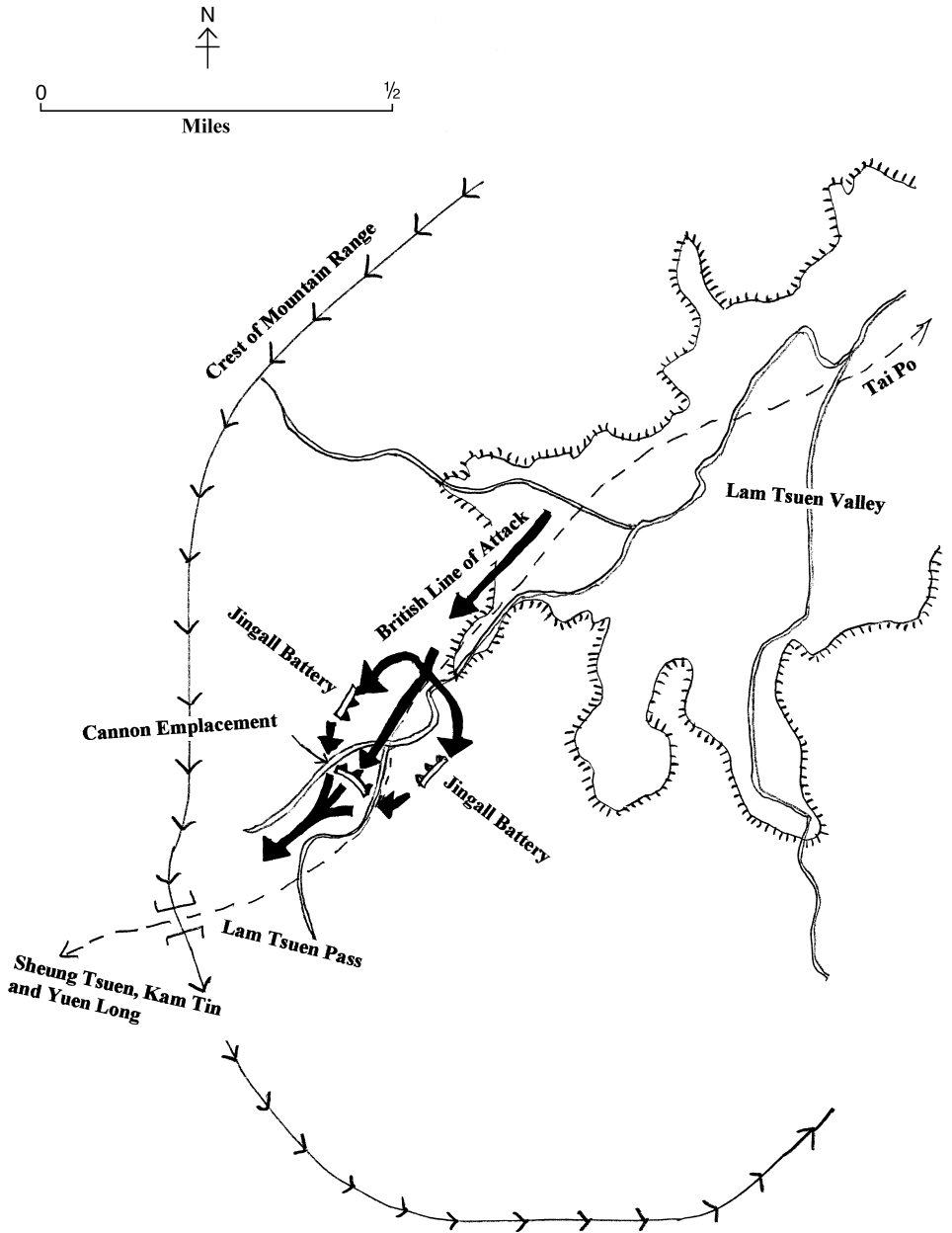
On the part of the insurgents, it was the turn of the Yuen Long and Wang Chau (橫洲) people to provide provisions for the insurgents on 16 April; as on the previous two days a number of pigs were sent to the front line.<sup>65</sup>

### **The Main Campaign: 17 April, the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap (林村凹)**

At 8 a.m. on 17 April, a probing reconnaissance patrol comprising all the available Hongkong Regiment manpower, and led by Gen. Gascoigne in person, went through the Mui Shue Hang defile as far as the hill that dominates the centre of the Lam Tsuen Valley, the Chung Uk/Fong Ma Po Hill (鍾屋/放馬莆山).<sup>66</sup> The insurgents had, when they withdrew from the Shelter Trench Hill emplacement on the evening of 15 April, moved to another set of entrenchments at the head of the Lam Tsuen Valley, at the pass where the road from Tai Po to Yuen Long goes through the mountains (see Maps 2 and 4, and Plate 6). In the morning of 17 April, Gascoigne took the troops only as far as the Chung Uk Hill, in the centre of the Lam Tsuen Valley, about two miles short of this insurgent emplacement. Gascoigne failed to note the insurgent position, and, since he had found no sign of the insurgents, he had the patrol return to Flagstaff Hill at about 12.30 p.m. Gascoigne wanted to move the British camp from Flagstaff Hill to Chung Uk Hill, because of its strategic importance (the site dominates the Lam Tsuen Valley to the south-west, and the Tai Hang Valley to the north-east, and the inner entrance of the Mui Shue Hang defile), and wanted to inspect the site. Gascoigne wanted to proceed slowly, taking two days to erect a camp at Fong Ma Po, and moving the troops there before undertaking any fighting, although Stewart Lockhart was eager to move more quickly.

In the event, however, the decision was taken by the insurgents. As soon





Map 4 The Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap

as the British patrols were seen to be returning to Flagstaff Hill, the insurgents moved down from the position they had taken up on the evening of 15 April (the entrenchment at the head of the Lam Tsuen Valley), coming up quietly behind the British, and occupying the Chung Uk/Fong Ma Po Hill as soon as Gascoigne had withdrawn from that site. Once Gascoigne had left the Lam Tsuen Valley, the insurgents moved forward from the Chung Uk Hill, and moved up to the crest of the She Shan ridge (社山), between the entrance to the Lam Tsuen Valley and the Mui Shue Hang defile (see Maps 2 and 3). They moved with great care, for the British troops remained entirely unaware that the insurgents were coming up immediately behind them. According to the *China Mail*, the first hint that the insurgents were advancing was made by the signalling party on the Ma Wo hill, who sent a report to Gen. Gascoigne at 12.35 that the insurgent forces were within their sight, approaching the crest of the She Shan ridge.<sup>67</sup> The insurgents on the crest of the She Shan ridge would have been about a mile from the signalling station, and about two and a quarter miles from Flagstaff Hill. The insurgents, as soon as they reached the crest of the She Shan ridge started to fire on the British signallers and the picket of troops protecting them at Ma Wo hill, and, at extreme long-range, at the troops at Flagstaff Hill. The insurgents started firing about 12.45 (see Maps 2, 3, and 4 for the fighting on 17 April).<sup>68</sup>

As soon as the insurgents started firing, Gascoigne ordered Berger to take action against them. Because of the need to respond quickly to this insurgent attack, the troops had to be turned round immediately on hearing of the attack, so that they had no time to stand down from the morning patrol, or to eat a mid-day meal. The *China Mail* noted: "The bugle sounded the call to arms, and in an amazingly short space of time the troops were formed up."<sup>69</sup> Gascoigne also ordered that the guns of the Asiatic Artillery be hurriedly "disembarked" from the ship where they had been returned after firing the salute on 16 April, and formed up as fast as possible into a battery "on the neighbouring crest" from where they could fire shrapnel into the insurgent position at the She Shan ridge.<sup>70</sup> The British action began a little before 1.00 p.m.

Gascoigne was thus clearly present at the start of this fighting, but he left Tai Po early in the afternoon to return to Hong Kong: Lockhart wrote at 2.50 p.m. that the general was by then "returning to Hong Kong".<sup>71</sup> Gascoigne's return to Hong Kong was to seek political approval from the Governor, as civil authority, for military action to put the insurgents down. The Governor gave the necessary approval that evening. Gascoigne left the direction of the campaign to Lt. Col. The O'Gorman, although O'Gorman did not take any part in the actual fighting until 18 April.

This advance by the insurgents at mid-day on 17 April was clearly a well-executed move. The insurgents were able to achieve a complete surprise, despite having to move very closely behind the British, and despite having to man-handle their guns up very difficult terrain through dense woodland at She Shan. It is quite clear that the British were caught out badly by this insurgent advance. The *Hongkong Daily Press*, on 18 April, noted that the appearance of the insurgents and their cannon on the She Shan Ridge came as a total surprise to Gascoigne and his staff. That Berger and his men were forced to turn round without any rest or food, and that the guns had to be rushed back onto land from the ship and scrambled into an impromptu battery are all eloquent testimony to the complete surprise achieved by the insurgents. The British were, quite clearly, caught on the wrong foot. The *China Mail* suggests by implication that Gascoigne was to blame for not having spotted the insurgents moving up behind him:

It seems somewhat remarkable that the General and party, who visited the district in which the Chinese had congregated with only a small guard a few hours previously had not been molested. They were a considerable time wandering about the plateau, but saw no sign of the insurgents.<sup>72</sup>

The *Hongkong Daily Press*, on 18 April, also suggests, albeit obliquely, that Gascoigne was unobservant not to notice the insurgents so close behind him: “The Major-General and a small party inspected the site of the proposed camp yesterday morning, when they must, unknown to themselves at the time, have been in very close proximity to the rebels.”

The *China Mail* notes that this attack by the insurgents from the She Shan ridge was conducted in full sight of their reporters, and also of a “picnic party” of civilian gentlemen from Hong Kong from the *Wing Kwai* launch.<sup>73</sup>

Berger and Barrett led the troops of the Hongkong Regiment in two sections to attack the insurgent position at the She Shan ridge, one section passing through the Mui Shue Hang defile, to come up behind the insurgent position, and the other attacking it from the front, while the artillery fired shrapnel into the insurgent position. Because they were exposed to artillery fire from the battery set up by the Asiatic Artillery, and seeing the danger of Berger’s men coming up behind them, the insurgents withdrew from the She Shan ridge at about 1.45 p.m., after having been in action at that site for about an hour, and fell back onto the Chung Uk Hill. The British troops, by about 2.30 p.m. “entered the village of Fong Ma Po” (immediately adjacent to Chung Uk) and “soon became hotly engaged”.<sup>74</sup> The insurgents were soon cleared from the hill, and Berger then “advanced slowly” down the length of the Lam Tsuen Valley, driving the insurgents before him towards the pass

(“the enemy was retiring slowly through the Lam Tsun [Lam Tsuen] Valley keeping up a hot Artillery and Rifle fire”).<sup>75</sup> By about 4.00 p.m., Berger and his men had reached a position a little under half a mile from the summit of the pass (see Maps 2 and 4, and Plate 6), that is, they had reached the foot of the slope which leads up to the pass. Berger states that he was economical with his fire during the pursuit through the Lam Tsuen Valley, as he wanted to reserve his fire until he could make a devastating, point-blank attack on the massed body of the insurgents, since that would give his fire maximum impact. The artillery was ordered to support Berger, but, because of lack of coolies, the guns could not move except very slowly, and hence were unable to catch up with him.

The insurgents had retreated after the Battle of Mui Shue Hang, on the evening of 15 April, to positions at the summit of the Lam Tsuen Gap (林村凹), where the road from Tai Po to Yuen Long crosses the mountains, near today’s Kadoorie Farm.<sup>76</sup> As on 14 April, with the sites at the mouth of the Mui Shue Hang defile, it is likely that the insurgents had prepared a properly dug-in and trenched emplacement for cannon, with positions for jingals and rifles to either side and a little forward of the cannon emplacement.<sup>77</sup> The insurgents thus occupied “very strong positions” according to Lt. Col. O’Gorman.

This position was indeed a very strong one (see Plate 6). The probable site of the main emplacement is at the head of a long, steep, and rather open slope (this slope is that up which today’s Lam Kam Road rises to the summit: this road runs close to the line of the nineteenth century footpath, but a little to the south of it). The most likely site of the cannon emplacement is protected by deep-cut stream-courses to either flank, and faces straight down the line of the then footpath. The hill-slopes to either side are so steep and broken that a flanking approach was considered to be out of the question by the insurgents, who were confident that the British would have to attempt a frontal attack straight up the slope towards their guns. During the fighting through the Lam Tsuen Valley, the insurgents were able to retreat in good order back into these emplacements with their cannon and ammunition intact. Behind these gun-emplacements, the insurgents had at least 1,000 men, very possibly 1,200, mostly from Kam Tin, Ha Tsuen, Ping Shan, and Shap Pat Heung.<sup>78</sup>

Given the short time available to the insurgents between their retreat from the entrenchments at Tai Po Tau (evening of 15 April) and their re-grouping in the emplacement at the Lam Tsuen Gap (17 April), it is probable that they had prepared two sets of entrenchments, those behind Tai Po Tau Village, and those at the Lam Tsuen Gap, at the same time, so that the insurgent force would have a second ready-prepared set of defences available

should the first set be over-run. This was standard Chinese military practice, allowing controlled withdrawals from one prepared position to another, without the second set of defences having to be prepared in a rush while the withdrawal was actually taking place.<sup>79</sup>

Given the strength of the position, and the fact that the British forces were seriously outnumbered, the decision was taken to put all the available British forces into the attack. Berger had with him about 350 men of the Hongkong Regiment (there remained a small quarter-guard at the Flagstaff Hill camp, and a small detachment which was with Capt. Simmonds and the artillery). The Asiatic Artillery contingent was ordered to move in his support.<sup>80</sup> The camp at Flagstaff Hill, with its ammunition and supplies dump, was to be left defended only by the Hongkong Regiment quarter-guard of about 25 men, the 15 or so Police, 8 gunners, and a small detachment of 16 naval ratings, with the single 7-pounder gun previously landed from *H.M.S. Fame*. This small group was also to be responsible for conveying ammunition and supplies to the front line. Although this left the base camp dangerously exposed, it was felt that the risks of the frontal assault on the insurgent emplacements were so great that this danger would have to be accepted. Even with 350 men from the Hongkong Regiment thrown into the battle, the British forces were still outnumbered three or four to one. However, during the late afternoon of the 17 April, *H.M.S. Humber* and *H.M.S. Peacock* arrived at Tai Po, carrying stores, and their complements greatly eased the situation at the Flagstaff Hill camp.<sup>81</sup> *Peacock* remained at Tai Po overnight, to keep the camp under the protection of her guns, while *Humber* returned to Hong Kong with despatches. As noted above, a field telephone line was laid from Kowloon to Tai Po: it was probably completed by early evening on 17 April.<sup>82</sup>

The cannon in the hands of the insurgents were all very old-fashioned. They had no swivels nor could their elevation be easily altered, and thus they were, when mounted, effectively fixed, and could not be easily fired except in one single direction. At Lam Tsuen Pass they were mounted in such a way that they were trained on the foot of the slope immediately in front of the insurgent entrenchment, commanding the area about 300–600 yards in front of the position, where the access path up the slope was open and with little cover. It was assumed by the insurgents that the whole of the British force would have to attack up this slope.

The Hongkong Regiment was, however, formed of Pathans and others from the North-West Frontier region of India. These were “mountain men”, trained from childhood in fighting in mountain country, and they were able to tackle the slopes which the insurgents had considered impassable. When Berger had grouped his men at the foot of the slope rising up to the Lam Tsuen

Pass, just out of the effective range of the insurgents' cannon, he divided his force into three. One group was sent to scramble up the slopes to the left, and a second group similarly up the slopes to the right. Berger himself, with the last third, went straight ahead, using all available cover, until he reached an area covered from the insurgents' cannon in the lee of a small hillock, about 200 yards from the insurgent position. This deployment allowed Berger to attack simultaneously on both flanks and the front of the emplacement. All three groups made these moves as fast as possible. Berger held his fire until all three parties reached about 200 yards from the insurgent's entrenchment, when they all attacked the insurgent position "at the double", firing as fast and furiously as they could, while they charged, doubtless with fixed bayonets, until the entrenchment was over-run and the insurgents fled. Berger, by reserving his fire until the last moment thus secured a devastating shock, which would have been very effective after his three hours of light and intermittent fire. This attack was completely successful, in part at least because Berger's sudden "at the double" attack meant that the insurgent cannon could not be re-deployed quickly enough to cover the flanks, nor be depressed quickly enough to fire at the troops making the frontal assault. The insurgents fired continuously during the attack, until the position was over-run — O'Gorman mentions the "very heavy" firing from the insurgents during the attack, and the *China Mail* states that "the Regiment on advancing to force the pass was received with a tremendous fire"<sup>83</sup> — but this enemy fire was ineffective, since the shots went over the heads of Berger and his men after their initial rush.

The only British casualty was Major Brown, of the Royal Army Medical Corps, who had established a small dressing station a few hundred yards behind the front line. As such he was, in fact, within range of the insurgents' cannon, and was hit by a spent shot, which broke his arm.<sup>84</sup> While not very seriously wounded, he was forced to retire back to the base camp at Tai Po, and then back to Hong Kong. With his departure, it would seem that no doctor was available to the troops for the remainder of the fighting, although there may have been one or two medical orderlies.<sup>85</sup>

Lt. Col. O'Gorman regarded the mountain warfare training his troops had had, the modern guns of the British troops, as compared with the poor and antiquated weapons the insurgents had, and the speed of the British attack, so that the insurgents could not move their guns to face the attack in time, as the main reasons for the overwhelming victory the British troops secured:

their natural qualities as hillmen have made them admirable soldiers for frontier warfare in this mountainous region . . . Capt. Berger . . . explained

the absence of many casualties to our force by the fact that the Chinese kept firing in the direction of the mountain path, believing the troops would not be able to move over the steep hill sides . . . when they found out their mistake . . . their fire was wild and practically harmless . . . These rebels were . . . badly armed and untrained to war . . . and . . . had no idea of the power of the modern rifle.

Maj-Gen. Gascoigne pointed to the same factors as the critical features in the success of this battle: “the men of the Hongkong Regiment . . . not only got over the most difficult country at great speed, but also by making use of cover most efficiently, took the enemy completely by surprise”. The *Hongkong Telegraph* also pointed to this factor in the success of the campaign: “The Pathans of the Hongkong Regiment . . . did their work capitally, swarming over the hills with the agility of a flock of goats and totally undeterred by the roughest or steepest hillside.”<sup>86</sup>

This attack on the emplacement at the head of the Lam Tsuen Valley began at 4.00 p.m.

Once the British had reached the crest of the hills, and broken through into the emplacement, the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap (林村凹: it was called this at the time) was almost at an end. The main body of the Hongkong Regiment pursued the insurgents along the main footpath as far as Sheung Tsuen (上村: two and a half miles from the pass), firing at those they were pursuing as and when the opportunity arose. Sheung Tsuen was reached about dusk, at 7.00 p.m. Other sections of the attacking force pursued bands of insurgents into the hills and down the side paths. The troops halted at Sheung Tsuen, for fear of out-running supplies and ammunition (O’Gorman issued orders for them to “bivouac” at Sheung Tsuen, for fear that, if they extended themselves any further forward, they might be “drawn into an ambushade” by the insurgents: the site chosen was near the Sheung Tsuen Temple). Fighting continued until well after dark (about 10.00 p.m. according to O’Gorman) as the British troops mopped up groups of insurgents who had fled into the hills (“Soldiers drove back the enemy from hill to hill and working admirably, like true Indian Frontier fighting men, they took full advantage of cover while continuing hotly the pursuit of the foe.”)<sup>87</sup>

It was lucky for the British forces that the insurgents’ guns were so antiquated, and their skills in firing them so rudimentary, that the attack came off with very little damage to the British side. However, Stewart Lockhart, the Colonial Secretary, admitted that, had the insurgent guns been better and their skills higher, the battle would have been a much closer thing: “The Chinese had chosen their positions well, and if they had only fired well, the British troops would have fared very badly”. This opinion was shared by

O’Gorman: “had this advance not been conducted with great care the loss to our troops must have been heavy”. Maj-Gen Gascoigne gave a similar verdict: “if this rising had not been so promptly met . . . it would have assumed very formidable proportions, as . . . it had been most carefully planned beforehand”.

Once the emplacements at the pass were stormed, the insurgents retreated in some disorder. Their two largest and heaviest cannon were abandoned in the pursuit (the insurgents sank them in a deep pond with a view to retrieving them later, where they were discovered entirely by accident when a British officer literally stumbled over them when bathing there later in the evening), although the insurgents managed to carry away their smaller pieces of artillery. The insurgents regrouped at a site a mile or so to the west of Kam Tin Village, possibly at or near Sha Po (沙埔) Village.<sup>88</sup>

In the fighting on the evening of 17 April, Berger had used up most of the ammunition his men had had with them when they had set out at mid-day. He sent a small detachment of his troops back to the Flagstaff Hill camp from the battlefield, who were ordered to pick up and bring back blankets, while also begging for ammunition and supplies to be sent to him.<sup>89</sup> A small group of about twenty naval ratings from *H.M.S Fame* was quickly gathered together and detailed to convey ammunition to Berger, under the protection of a small group of riflemen from the Flagstaff Hill quarter-guard, and under the personal command of the Captain-Superintendent of Police, F. H. May: this detachment probably took back with them the men Berger had sent back to Flagstaff Hill to pick up the blankets. This small detachment was only able to carry enough ammunition for about one further engagement. May arrived at Sheung Tsuen about midnight. Since May spoke excellent Cantonese, he was able to hold discussions with the Sheung Tsuen villagers which ended with the villagers providing food for a light meal for the troops (two heifers, rice, tea, and cakes).<sup>90</sup> May also passed to Berger a promise from O’Gorman that he would receive more supplies before dawn, and that the artillery would meet up with him by then, too. May then returned to the Flagstaff Hill camp. By the time the food was provided, cooked, and eaten, it was 2 a.m. The food provided by the Sheung Tsuen villagers was only enough for one light meal for the 350 men. Heavy rain then fell, soaking all the troops to the bone, as they were encamped in the open air, without tents or shelter of any kind.<sup>91</sup>

### **The Main Campaign: 18 April, the Battle of Shek Tau Wai (石頭圍)**

The Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap was a heavy defeat for the insurgents. Capt. Berger felt the chances of a further attack on his camp on the next day,



18 April, to be low. Lt. Col O’Gorman, whom Maj.-Gen. Gascoigne had placed in overall command of operations, but who had not been personally present at the fighting on 17 April (he joined the troops at Sheung Tsuen about 1.00 p.m. on 18 April),<sup>92</sup> also believed that it was unlikely that the insurgents would be able to mount another attack on 18 April.

Capt. Berger sent a detachment of his men at dawn on 18 April on a long-range patrol around the foot of the hills to the south of Sheung Tsuen. Some firing had been heard from this direction during the night, and Berger suspected that the bulk of the insurgents had fled this way, towards the pass to Tsuen Wan (荃灣). Berger wanted to continue to harry the fleeing insurgents, to ensure that they could not re-group, and he also wanted to ensure that there was no insurgent force in being in this area, threatening his flank. Berger had no Cantonese-speaker with him, and was thus unable to get any intelligence from the Sheung Tsuen villagers.

Berger had no money with him, and all his supplies were at the Flagstaff Hill camp, nine miles away. He had no authority to take anything from the villagers, and he made no attempt to do so, since he did not wish to turn them against the British. By dawn on 18 April, Berger’s men, soaked, and without any supplies, were in considerable discomfort. Berger had been promised that supplies would reach him before dawn (about 4.30 a.m.), but this failed to materialise. A convoy of coolies, who had been hired by May late the previous evening (17 April), bringing rations, under guard of a single rifleman, had in fact set out, but they abandoned their loads and ran off into the hills about 4.00 a.m. Berger seems never to have got these rations. Given the miserable condition of his men, Berger felt at dawn that he had been left with no alternative but to lead the bulk of his remaining force (about 200 men) back to Tai Po to pick up supplies (especially food and personal kit): they left Sheung Tsuen at dawn, and reached Tai Po at about 7.30 a.m.<sup>93</sup> Only about 40 men were left to defend the temporary camp at Sheung Tsuen, under Lt. Barrett.

Simmonds of the Asiatic Artillery had encamped on the Chung Uk Hill late on 17 April. He received orders at 3.00 a.m. in the early morning of 18 April to take his guns and go to the support of Capt. Berger. This order had been delivered by the small party of coolies who had been induced by May to carry goods for the British. The *China Mail*, 21 April, states that “no coolies being available at Taipohu”, May had had to use naval ratings and policemen to carry the ammunition to Berger in the evening of 17 April, but that, en route to Sheung Tsuen, he was able to “pick up” some coolies from the Lam Tsuen villages, probably about 9.00 p.m. May would have sent these coolies back to Flagstaff Hill in the first instance. This group of coolies were those

then sent off, under the guard of a single rifleman, with blankets and rations for Simmonds and his men, after Simmonds had sent his runner to request supplies. These supplies reached Simmonds about 11.00 p.m. The coolies, having delivered these supplies returned at once to the Flagstaff Hill camp, and were immediately turned round, loaded with supplies for Berger and his men, and sent back out. Since Simmonds' camp was directly en route to Sheung Tsuen, the rifleman guarding the convoy was able to bring the order to Simmonds to take his guns to Sheung Tsuen. Simmonds went off with them, to reconnoitre the feasibility of the paths his guns would have to take.

When they got to the Lam Tsuen Pass, at about 4.00 a.m., the coolies decided they had had enough. They had been working, mostly carrying heavy loads, without any rest for seven hours. The number of coolies was small, and would not have been enough to allow any relief. By the time they got their loads to Sheung Tsuen they would have been carrying them for at least nine hours. They would then have faced a three- or four-hour-walk back to Flagstaff Hill, when they might have been allowed to rest for a short time, but would indubitably have been sent off again very soon thereafter with more loads. They would thus, by the time they returned to Flagstaff Hill, have carried goods throughout the night, and were facing the prospect of going entirely without sleep. Furthermore, the night was pitch-black, the rain was very heavy, the coolies were soaked to the skin, the paths were slippery and treacherous in the dark, they lost their way several times, and altogether they must have felt the conditions were such that the pay was not worth it. They abandoned their loads, ran off into the mountains, and made their way back to their homes. In the dark and rain the single rifleman guarding the convoy was unable to do anything about this.

The coolies who thus abandoned their loads and ran off were not the only coolies May had found, however. The *China Mail*, 21 April, states that four more convoys carrying supplies reached Berger on 18 April, but all arrived well after dawn. Two of these convoys included gangs of coolies. None seem to have carried much in the way of rations. One, carried by a mixed group of naval ratings and coolies, under command of Lieutenant Hillman R. N., left Flagstaff Hill for Sheung Tsuen about 6.45 a.m., carrying "ammunition and commissariat stores": it would have arrived at Sheung Tsuen in the late morning. This convoy was a substantial one, with about fifty coolies. Another small convoy, of naval ratings, under Lieutenant Snowdon R. N., arrived at "Pat Heung" (i.e. at the Sheung Tsuen Camp, which was in Pat Heung) "about noon", and a third, presumably comprising another group of coolies, but with a guard of nine men taken from the quarter-guard of the Hongkong Regiment which had been left at Flagstaff Hill, arrived at Pat Heung in the

early afternoon. These latter two convoys were probably also carrying mostly ammunition, given the relatively heavy guard they had with them. Berger would not have received what the last convoy brought until after he returned to Sheung Tsuen late in the evening of 18 April. Another convoy, with a light guard of naval ratings, under command of Warrant Officer Macgill R.N., carried tents. This party arrived late on 18 April, and placed the tents in store, not at Sheung Tsuen, but at a new camp-site which had been identified at "She Hau".<sup>94</sup> These tents were only erected on 19 April. The *China Mail* notes that the naval officers and ratings were under orders to return to their ships when they had completed the convoy work, but that Col. O'Gorman countermanded those orders, and kept the ratings with him to increase his attack strength: by early afternoon of 18 April he thus had with him some 93 or 96 naval ratings to add to the Hongkong Regiment strength.<sup>95</sup>

Capt. Berger received a note from Capt. Simmonds "at dawn" (presumably about 5.00 a.m.) on 18 April saying that he had been ordered to co-operate with Berger's force, but saying that he needed help if there was to be any chance of moving his guns, and telling Berger that the rations for his force were lying abandoned at the Pass. Berger told Simmonds that he would rendezvous with him at the Pass, on his way back from his trip to pick up supplies from the Flagstaff Hill camp, but he clearly expected Simmonds to get his guns to the Pass by himself.

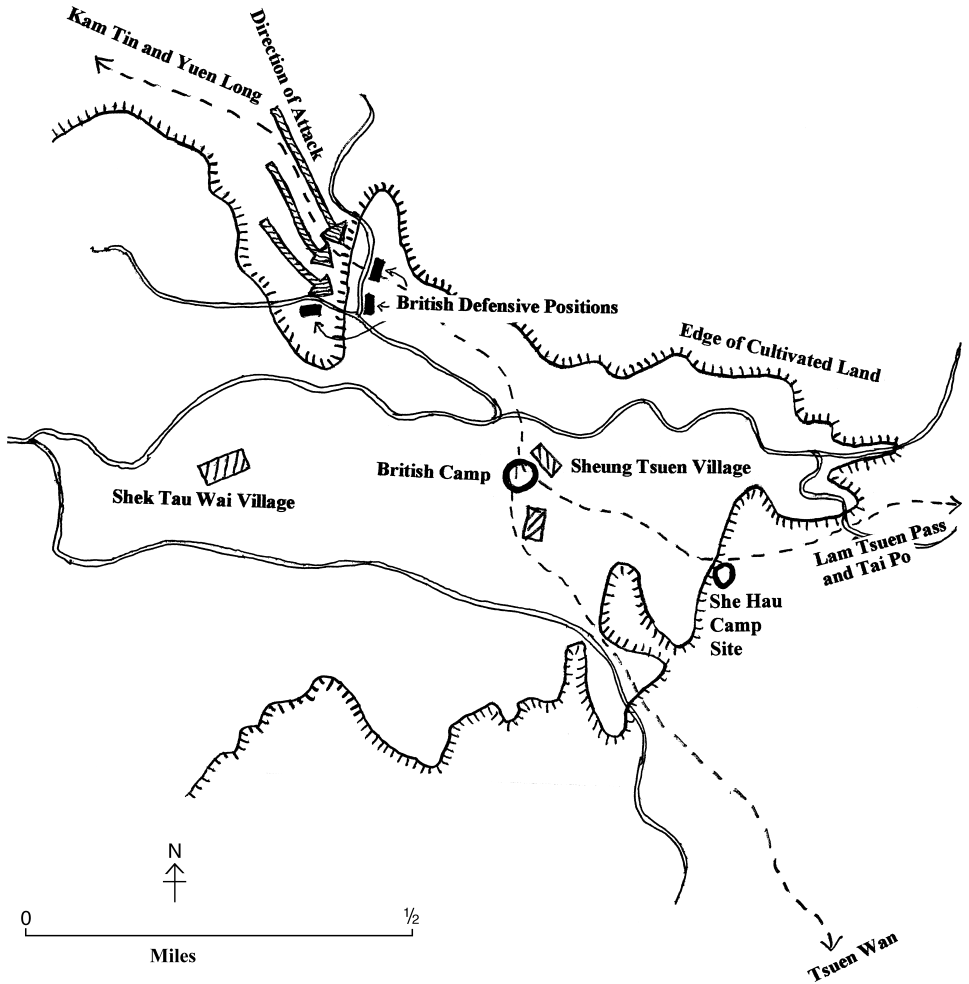
At about 11.30 a.m. Berger arrived back at the Pass after his trip to Tai Po, with O'Gorman and Stewart Lockhart, but the guns were not there, Simmonds remaining obdurate that, without substantial assistance, his men could not move them, and that, in any event, the Lam Tsuen Pass was "impracticable" for his guns, even with coolies. Berger had expected Simmonds to arrive at the Pass with his guns by mid-morning, but this was now out of the question (Simmonds had already, by this time, in fact started moving his guns out in the opposite direction, towards Fanling: see below), and Berger became very concerned about the safety of Lt. Barrett and his men at Sheung Tsuen. This was especially so since gunfire in the vicinity of Sheung Tsuen was now heard. Berger hurried back to Sheung Tsuen at top speed (he arrived there about 1.00 p.m.), en route intercepting a somewhat plaintive note from Barrett to Simmonds asking where he and his guns were. Because of the urgency of the situation at Sheung Tsuen, Berger was unable to pick up the supplies abandoned at the Pass: these seem to have been pilfered during 18 April, and never reached Berger's men. Berger's men had only been able to make a hurried meal at Flagstaff Hill, being turned round for the march back to Sheung Tsuen only about an hour after they had arrived at Flagstaff Hill.

The insurgents had, as noted above, re-grouped outside Kam Tin Village in the evening of 17 April. By this point the insurgent force, which was assessed at 2,600 men at the start of the affair on Friday, 14 April, was much less. The men of Tai Po and Fanling had taken no further significant part after the Battle of Mui Shue Hang, and there must have been other desertions and defections after the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap. By the evening of 17 April, it seems that only some 400 men were in the insurgent camp at Kam Tin.

There were, however, men of the insurgent force who had not taken part in any of the battles up to this point. There had been detachments sent to guard the landing-places at Castle Peak and at Sha Kong Miu (沙江廟) in Deep Bay (後海灣), and other detachments patrolling the villages,<sup>96</sup> and keeping an eye on those people regarded as less than enthusiastic about the fighting. These were all called in to the camp at Sha Po by letters sent out on the evening of 17 April: these letters demanded that they leave their posts and join up with the main insurgent force at Sha Po at first light on 18 April. By the early afternoon of 18 April, the insurgent force at Sha Po had thus been increased to about 1,600 men, although the insurgents by then had no other manpower resources in reserve to call on.<sup>97</sup> Given the detachments of his force which had been sent out on patrol, Berger only had about 250 men at this point, divided into four under-strength companies, plus the 93–96 naval men who had carried supplies, and who had been commandeered by O’Gorman. By the time Berger got back to Sheung Tsuen (a little after 1.00 p.m.), it was clear that an attack was imminent. Berger, in fact, only had just enough time to get his men into position before the attack began. This meant that, once again, Berger and his men had no time to eat before being readied for battle. It may have been this tight timing that led O’Gorman to leave everything to Berger: he seems to have been no more than a spectator during the ensuing battle.

The insurgent force attacked during the afternoon of Tuesday, 18 April (the attack began about 2.30 p.m.).<sup>98</sup> The insurgents, according to O’Gorman: “came on in three lines and in fairly regular formation over a perfectly level plain on dry ploughed land, waving banners and shouting loudly. It was distinctly a determined advance”. According to Lockhart, they “swept down the valley in excellent skirmishing order”. Berger says that the “advance of the enemy was made in a most determined and confident manner”. The *China Mail* stated on 20 April that “the whole rebel force advanced with perfect confidence”, and, on 21 April that “the rebels . . . advanced in skirmishing order, about 1200 men being engaged, and opened a very heavy fire from all sides”. The insurgents advanced on a wide front of about half a mile. They fired cannon, and both muzzle-loading and more modern rifles. To meet them,

Berger put his four companies into a defensive posture along the banks of a “dry watercourse” which ran across the site, and which provided shelter for the troops (see Map 5 and Plate 7).



Map 5 *The Battle of Shek Tau Wai*

Once again, the British forces were heavily outnumbered (by about five or six to one), and would have been in difficulties if the arms and training of the insurgents had been as good as their courage. Lockhart said of the insurgents: “had their weapons been modern, they would have given our troops a warmer time of it: even so they displayed great courage”. O’Gorman assumed that the aim of the insurgents was to use their superior numbers to overwhelm the small British force: “their intention was to press home and crush us believing in the vast superiority of their numbers”.<sup>99</sup> Berger withheld his fire until the insurgents reached about 200 yards from the British line. Berger then started firing as fast and furiously as possible at them. The insurgents then broke and scattered, in face of this sustained heavy fire from the British rifles.<sup>100</sup> According to the Governor, the British troops held their fire after they saw that the insurgents had broken and fled: according to O’Gorman, the “Hongkong Regiment fired individually and very deliberately”. However, according to Berger, the troops fired “as rapidly as they could” at the retreating insurgents, and pursued the insurgents for some time: this account is by far the most likely. Simmonds says that firing continued until 5 p.m.

After the attack, the insurgents broke and fled, abandoning most of their arms on the field: O’Gorman picked up “some seven pieces of small calibre artillery, a quantity of jingals and a few old-fashioned rifles”. The remaining larger pieces of artillery were carried away, and sunk in a pond at Ping Shan.<sup>101</sup> Men from Ping Shan, Ha Tsuen, Castle Peak, Wang Chau and Yuen Long, and from Sham Chun (深圳, Shenzhen), Sha Tau (沙頭, Shatou), Wai Tak, and Ngan Tin from north of the Sham Chun River took part in this attack.<sup>102</sup>

This attack was called at the time the Battle of Shek Tau Wai, and presumably, therefore, took place near that village. The most likely site is a little north of, and across the river from the village (see Map 5 for the fighting on 18 April, and also Plate 7). The nineteenth century footpaths from Tsuen Wan over Tai Mo Shan (大帽山), and from Tai Po over the Lam Tsuen Pass, met at the Sheung Tsuen Temple, and then crossed the Kam Tin River by a footbridge, and thence went on to Kam Tin through Wang Toi Shan (橫台山). The insurgent attack must have been centred on this major footpath. The attack, as O’Gorman makes clear, took place over an area of dry cultivation crossed by a watercourse. All the double-cropping rice fields in the area would have been flooded for the main rice crop by 18 April. The “dry watercourse” cannot have been a major river (which would have been uncomfortably full of water at this date), and must have been a slighter ditch. Berger says that Shek Tau Wai village lay to the right-hand flank of the insurgent force. All the conditions are met at the site tentatively suggested, half way between Wang Toi Shan and Shek Tau Wai.

As soon as the insurgents fled (about 5.00 p.m.), Berger led his men in pursuit of them, accompanied by O’Gorman and Lockhart. This pursuit continued as far as Kam Tin, about three miles off, where Lockhart ordered that the gates of two of the walled villages be blown in.<sup>103</sup> Berger left Kam Tin at dusk (about 7.30 p.m.), and returned to Sheung Tsuen. By then, a few basic supplies had arrived there, and at 10.30 p.m. a very basic meal was readied for the men (it consisted of just “rice and some Chinese sugar”), nearly 24 hours since their last meal. Simmonds and his guns arrived at Sheung Tsuen at about the same time as Berger got back from Kam Tin. That night, Berger and his men once again had to sleep in the open, as the tents that had been brought had been left at “She Hau” about a half-mile to the rear, and seem not yet to have been erected (they were erected there during 19 April), and Berger clearly did not feel justified in moving away to his rear so soon.

### **Problems with the Artillery**

A particular problem for the British troops was that the artillery failed to take part in the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap, and, indeed, in any of the engagements of the Six-Day War, other than the shelling with shrapnel of the insurgents at the She Shan ridge at mid-day on 17 April.

Captain Simmonds of the Asiatic Artillery commanded a half-battery of six Mountain Guns (also known as Mule Guns: they fired 7-pound shells) which had been shipped out to Tai Po by the Royal Navy on 16 April. These were guns designed for use in rough conditions, where roads were not adequate to carry heavy guns. These light guns were mounted on wheeled carriages, which were light enough that they could be pulled along even poor roads, but, if the roads were too poor for any form of wheeled transport, then they could be broken down and moved in sections. The guns were designed to be broken down into four sections (the barrel, the breech, the carriage, and the wheels). Each section weighed a little above 200 pounds, the whole gun together weighing about 900 pounds. These sections were designed so that each section could be carried by one mule. At least two further mules were needed to carry ammunition for each gun (one mule could carry about 30 shells, weighing, with the boxes they were packed in, about 250 pounds, so two mules could carry enough ammunition for one relatively short engagement).<sup>104</sup> Mules could carry these guns for considerable distances without problem, even over steep mountain footpaths. Each gun required a crew of eight gunners. When these guns had been carried in sections to the place where they were to be used, the gunners would remove them from the mules, quickly re-assemble

them, and then fire them, breaking them down and re-mounting them on the mules if they were required to move forward again.

No attempt was made, however, to send mules to Tai Po to move these guns from the Flagstaff Hill camp. The guns had initially been sent there to fire the ceremonial salute at the Flag-Raising Ceremony, and hence it was not anticipated that they would have to be moved, and so no provision seems to have been made for their use in combat. In the absence of mules, it was possible to move these guns by coolies, but only with difficulty. Coolies could carry "full loads" of 100 cattiees (133 pounds) on good paths over flat land, but, where the paths were poor and the inclines steep, then they could only manage "mountain loads" of 66 cattiees (100 pounds).<sup>105</sup> If the guns were broken down into sections, therefore, two coolies could in theory manage to carry each section over short distances, but the awkwardness of the load meant that, in practice, four coolies were required per section. To move the whole gun in sections, therefore, sixteen coolies would be needed, even over relatively good paths, with a minimum of a further four to carry ammunition. If the gun had to be moved in sections over any distance, however, additional coolies would be needed, probably one or two to every two or three, to allow rest by rotation of the coolies, particularly those carrying ammunition, where the individual loads would have been well above a "mountain load" in weight. If the gun was likely to have to be moved in sections over any distance, therefore, a minimum of about twenty-five to thirty-five coolies would be needed for each gun. If the guns could be pulled on their carriages, about twenty or twenty-five coolies per gun could do the job (eight to pull the gun, four to carry ammunition, and six or a dozen to allow rest by rotation). However, if the paths were very poor, comprising steep flights of steps, with many sharp bends, and very narrow, with overhanging vegetation, groups of four coolies, carrying awkward loads slung between them, would be unable to pass unless the vegetation was cut back, the worst of the bends smoothed out, and potholes and unfaced sections improved: in these circumstances, the guns, if they could be moved at all, would have required at least forty or fifty coolies per gun. Even where the guns were able to be pulled or carried by coolies, they would move much more slowly than guns pulled or carried by mules. It seems to have been assumed that coolies sufficient to move the guns would be available at Tai Po, if it turned out that moving the guns was necessary, but, in the event, this turned out to be wrong: very few of the local villagers were willing to work as coolies for the British while hostilities were in progress.<sup>106</sup>

Gascoigne, before he left Tai Po on 17 April, and once the insurgents had abandoned the She Shan position, ordered Simmonds to take his guns in support of Berger. In the absence of mules or coolies, the only way he could



do this was to use his gunners to haul the guns. Simmonds decided to try to move two of his six guns. Leaving eight gunners behind to guard the remaining four guns and the ammunition dump, Simmonds thus had forty gunners, twenty to each gun. This was quite inadequate to move the guns, if they had to be carried in sections over any distance. Since all Simmonds' gunners would be fully occupied moving the guns, a small guard of riflemen from the Hongkong Regiment was detached to accompany the guns and to ensure that the insurgents did not attack them.

O'Gorman, in his report on the fighting states that Simmonds "unfortunately took a wrong turn", and he suggests that this was the reason Simmonds and his guns took no part in the fighting, but this seems to be a false suggestion. From Tai Po two footpaths extended inland. One, through the Mui Shue Hang defile, the route which Berger had taken on 17 April, was rather rough, and Simmonds clearly thought it impracticable for his guns. The other, which crossed the hills towards Tai Hang was a better path, and paved, and Simmonds went that way (this path would probably have allowed the guns to be hauled on their carriages for some of the way). Having reached the vicinity of Tai Hang, Simmonds then had a good footpath leading into Lam Tsuen, and turned on to it.<sup>107</sup> Both the Tai Hang route, and the route through Mui Shue Hang, however, involved crossing the Lam Tsuen River at Hang Ha Po (坑下莆). The small footbridge there could not take the heavy weight of the guns, and thus the guns and ammunition had to be wrestled through the river. The river was, in 1899, deep, and it had then a very rough, rocky bed, across which man-handling the guns must have been a very heavy and difficult task. The guns would certainly have had to be taken through the river in sections. By 4.00 p.m. on 17 April, when Berger had reached the foot of the slope up to the Lam Tsuen Gap position, and was beginning his attack, Simmonds and his men were still busy forcing a way for the guns through the river, about three miles away. By 6.00 p.m., when Berger and his men had over-run the insurgent emplacement and were pursuing the insurgents, Simmonds had reached the Chung Uk Hill about a half-mile from the river crossing. By then, since his men were on the point of collapse from exhaustion, Simmonds stopped, forming a camp and putting the guns into position to guard against any insurgents coming into the Lam Tsuen Valley from the Fanling/Tai Hang area.

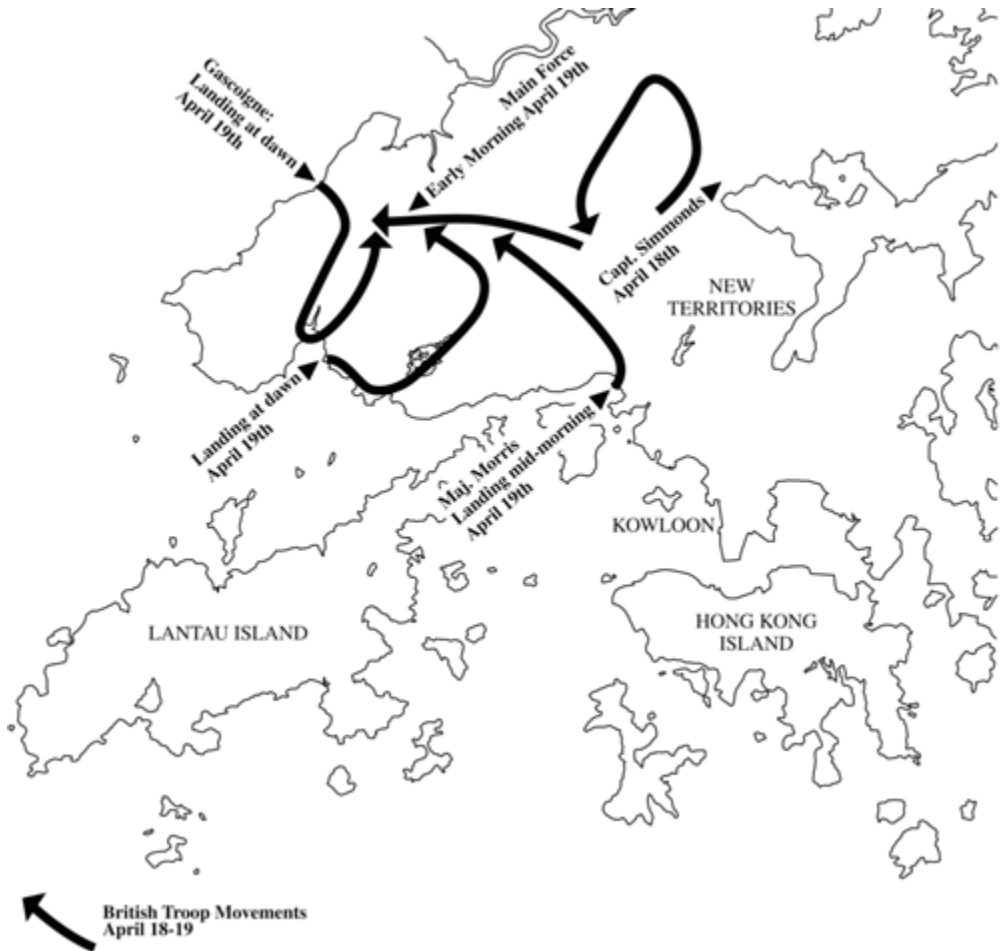
Simmonds then sent a runner back to Flagstaff Hill, requesting that food and blankets be sent for his men. He eventually got these supplies, but only well after dark. As noted above, Simmonds later received orders that he should, at first light, take his guns in support of Berger, who was by now at Sheung Tsuen, some four or five miles off. Simmonds went to reconnoitre the footpath

as it crossed the Lam Tsuen Gap to Sheung Tsuen, and found it utterly impracticable for his guns, if they had to be carried by his gunners, or, indeed, if they had to be carried by any sort of coolies. He heard, however, that there was a good footpath, paved, running from the Fong Ma Po Hill, past Tai Hang to Fanling, and then going from Fanling to Sheung Tsuen via Tsiu Keng (蕉徑) (see Map 6). This path was a good eighteen miles long. Simmonds was able to locate and hire a gang of coolies,<sup>108</sup> and, early on 18 April, he set off from the Chung Uk Hill in an attempt to reach Sheung Tsuen via Fanling, with the guns hauled by the coolies. He managed this Herculean task, and arrived at Sheung Tsuen at dusk, having averaged about two miles an hour for almost ten hours. It seems likely that, for at least most parts of the journey, the paths were good enough to allow the guns to be hauled on their carriages. Nonetheless, despite the tremendous effort this day's work must have entailed, Simmonds arrived at Sheung Tsuen only well after the third battle of the war, the Battle of Shek Tau Wai (石頭圍) on 18 April, was all over.<sup>109</sup>

In these circumstances it is clear that the failure of Simmonds to get his guns and men to the battlefields was due entirely to his being given orders impossible to implement. It was not that he "took a wrong turn", but that the military authorities having failed to provide him with either mules or coolies, he was physically unable to move his guns as fast as would have been needed to get them to the battlefields, especially given the extremely steep and rough footpaths over which the guns would have had to be hauled if they were to travel by the shortest route.

### **The Main Campaign: 19 April, Surrender of the Insurgents**

The morning following the battle of Shek Tau Wai, Wednesday, 19 April, the main body of British troops made a "very hot and tiring" march from Sheung Tsuen to Ping Shan, arriving at Ping Shan about 1.00 p.m. (this was a march of about eleven miles). This march was a hurried one, as Stewart Lockhart was concerned about the safety of the Ping Shan elders who had kowtowed to the Governor on 12 April. In the event, they were found safe, although they had been threatened with their lives.<sup>110</sup> On the way, the force took the surrender of the villages of Pat Heung, and of Kam Tin, Yuen Long, and Ping Shan (for the troop movements on 18–19 April, see Map 6). In the afternoon it took the surrender of Ha Tsuen. Stewart Lockhart insisted that every village passed display white flags and open its gates to them.<sup>111</sup> The Kam Tin villagers, doubtless anxious as to how their previous intransigence would be viewed (they must have seen the blowing-in of their gates the



Map 6 British Troop Movements, 18-19 April

previous evening as a very ominous warning of possible reprisals to come), attempted to placate the soldiers by providing them with a substantial mid-day meal as they came up to Kam Tin, and this was very well received by the hungry soldiers and their officers.

Capt. Simmonds had, as noted above, taken his men to Sheung Tsuen via Fanling during 18 April, and had taken the surrender of Fanling during this journey (see Map 6). Capt. Simmonds blew in the gates of one village (Sheung Wai, at Tai Hang, today usually called Fui Sha Wai, 上圍 or 灰沙圍). Capt Simmonds' force, which had arrived at Sheung Tsuen late on 18 April, followed the main force to Ping Shan, arriving there in the evening of 19 April.<sup>112</sup>

As noted above, a better site for a camp than Sheung Tsuen had been located at "She Hau", which must be the mouth of the Lam Tsuen pass on the Sheung Tsuen side, i.e. at least the lower part of the area today used as the Shek Kong Camp, and a start was made at putting up tents which had been delivered there in the afternoon of 19 April.

## 19 April, Troop Movements in the Western New Territories

Stewart Lockhart sent a message to the Governor on 17 April, saying that a force should be sent to clear the two landing-places at Castle Peak and Sha Kong Miu, and Maj-Gen. Gascoigne, on his return to Hong Kong on 17 April, also spoke to the Governor about the dangers of these insurgent detachments. The Governor, concerned about the very real threat to Yaumatei (see below), entirely agreed, and ordered an attack to be set up. *H.M.S. Hermione* was detailed to convoy six steam launches full of troops, armed with rifles and a Maxim gun, to land at Sha Kong Miu in Deep Bay at first light (6.00 a.m.) on 19 April.<sup>113</sup> *H.M.S. Fame* was detailed to undertake a very similar plan at Castle Peak (she landed the troops she was convoying there at 6.00 a.m.). In both cases every care was to be taken to ensure the landing was a complete surprise. Maj-Gen. Gascoigne himself accompanied the Deep Bay landing. Both landings were undertaken successfully, but the landing-places were found abandoned by the insurgents when the troops landed.<sup>114</sup> The detachments of the insurgents at Castle Peak and Sha Kong Miu had still been in place at the landing-places on the afternoon of 17 April, when the Castle Peak detachment fired on a party of Europeans who had chosen to sail there with a view to having a picnic on the beach.<sup>115</sup> They had doubtless been abandoned by the insurgents at dawn on 18 April, as a consequence of the detachments being ordered to leave the positions at first light on that day

to join the rest of the insurgent force at Kam Tin. A further detachment of British troops was landed from *Fame* at Tsuen Wan a little later on 19 April, and sent to Kam Tin over Tai Mo Shan (see Map 6). It is possible that the troops landed at Castle Peak crossed the hills from So Kwun Wat (掃管笏). Once the troops had been landed at Castle Peak, Sha Kong Miu, and Tsuen Wan, they pressed forward slowly, and eventually met up with Stewart Lockhart and the rest of the main force, and Capt Simmonds and his men, in the evening of 19 April, at Ping Shan. This was the only other military action which took place during the Six-Day War other than the three major actions discussed above. Maj-Gen. Gascoigne believed that the sudden appearance of troops from all sides during 18–19 April was effective in inducing the villagers to surrender and end the insurgency (the troops passed by almost every significant village in the Western New Territories on 18–19 April).

The surrenders of 19 April effectively ended this short War, which had thus lasted six days, from the burning of the matsheds on Friday, 14 April, to the surrender on Wednesday, 19 April.

The men from the New Territories did not thereafter ever again attempt to rise up against the British. The men of Ngan Tin, in the hills north of Sham Chun, however, considered re-opening the insurrection about a month after the surrender of the New Territories villages. They had been involved predominantly in the battle of Shek Tau Wai on 18 April, but probably not significantly in the fighting on 15 and 17 April. They started collecting money and training men for another fight during May 1899. They menaced the Basel Mission at Lilong (李朗, Lilang) north of Sham Chun, which appealed to the Governor for help.<sup>116</sup> In the event, none of the New Territories villages was willing to support re-opening the insurrection, and the Ngan Tin initiative withered away without any action having been taken.

## 16 April, Alarms about an Attack on Yaumatei

As well as the main campaign, centring on the three battles at Mui Shue Hang, Lam Tsuen Gap, and Shek Tau Wai, there was also, however, one side show during the Six-Day War. The insurgents had, as noted above, detached groups of men to man defences at the Castle Peak and Sha Kong Miu landing-places, to deny these to any British attack. The insurgent detachments at these two places were significant, but the insurgent leaders ordered them to display large numbers of flags, to give the impression that there were even more men there than there were.<sup>117</sup>

On 16 April, the Governor received credible information that the insurgents at Castle Peak were planning an attack on Yaumatei (油麻地). They were, he was told, going to load two cargo junks with arms, and hide men in the holds. They would come into Yaumatei during the night, and, when berthed at the Praya, the men would spring out and attack the Police Station (the most important Government building in Kowloon at this date: it stood immediately on the Praya at Yaumatei), and fire it. They also aimed at sinking the Police Boat moored at the Government Pier there, and firing the waterfront.<sup>118</sup> This was a daring plan, but one which could well have succeeded: cargo junks in large numbers came into Yaumatei at every hour of the day and night, and there were no controls on them. The Police Station was not equipped to withstand a sudden attack from a substantial body of determined men, and might well have fallen. Reinforcements could not have been sent over from Hong Kong Island within less than an hour or so, by when an attacking force would have left.

The Governor was very concerned at this report, and sent a company of the Hong Kong Volunteer Corps (100 men) to Yaumatei at very short notice on the evening of 16 April, to man two sand-bag defences at the northern and southern ends of the Yaumatei Praya, with search-lights and orders to keep every junk arriving under very close surveillance throughout the night.<sup>119</sup> In the event, nothing happened, but this may well have been because the insurgents learnt in time that their plans had been betrayed.

## Guns and Arms

Given that the mountain guns of the Royal Artillery never took part in any of the fighting, except for the shelling of the She Shan Ridge at mid-day on 17 April, and that no Maxim guns seem to have been with Berger and his men, the British weaponry in this campaign was effectively limited to rifles. These would have been standard British Army repeating rifles. Berger's men also carried bayonets. They used these at the charge which over-ran the Shelter Trench Hill emplacement on 15 April, and can be assumed to have fixed them for a bayonet charge at least at the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap. These rifles were highly effective weapons, capable of great accuracy in the hands of well-trained troops, and capable of delivering a devastating fire when significant numbers of them were being used together. The men of the Hongkong Regiment were highly trained and had a high reputation for the accuracy of their fire: the Commandant of the School of Musketry at Hythe said of the men of this regiment that the school had "little we could teach them . . . their

work was so admirable in all respects that it provided an object lesson for some of our instructors of the extraordinary skill that proper recruit training can develop".<sup>120</sup>

As noted above, the insurgents, however, had only very old-fashioned and ineffective weaponry. The sources mention about a dozen "guns" (probably here meaning cannon). These are dismissed as "guns of sorts", and can be assumed to have been small, muzzle-loading weapons, without proper carriages, incapable of being either easily elevated or depressed, and without swivels so they could not easily have their direction of fire altered. As such, these guns, when once in place, were, as noted above, effectively capable of firing in only one direction, and at only the one, pre-set elevation. They would have been carried from place to place by three or four men. They were similar in character to the culverins of sixteenth century Europe. They seem to have had no effect on the campaign. There were also jingals, long matchlocks, firing small slugs or small round-shot: there were several jingals with the insurgents, but probably no more than a couple of dozen. These jingals were similar in character to the arquebuses of sixteenth century Europe. Some of the individual insurgents had their own firearms, mostly old-fashioned (see Plate 17: one of the two fighters in this photograph is armed only with a short sword, or "fighting knife", the other with an old-fashioned black-powder musket and a short sword), although some modern rifles are mentioned in the insurgent hands at the Battle of Shek Tau Wai.

Given that there were some 2,600 insurgents in all, the few dozen firearms that the insurgent force possessed must have meant that the great majority of the insurgents were armed only with spears, fighting knives, or similar edged weapons.

None of the sources on the Six-Day War discuss in detail the weaponry of the insurgents. In 1900, when the Weihaiwei (衛海威) villagers rose up to oppose the takeover of Weihaiwei by the British, however, there are rather fuller descriptions of the villager armaments:

There were a few modern firearms, a large number of old matchlocks, all loaded with shot and slugs, but by far the greater number of these misguided peasants were content with sticks with old knives or bayonets lashed to one end, pitchforks, and other implements of peace rather than war. There were also three or four rusty old cannon . . . Their fire was more remarkable for its noise than for any effect it had. Bullets, slugs, nails, and odd bits of metal fell around in profusion, but with no harm to any of our people. On their right flank the mob had a wonderful piece of ordnance, carried by several men. It made a terrific noise and emitted an immense volume of smoke, but no projectile ever seemed to come out of it. If one ever did it must either

have fallen very short or gone far over the camp, most likely the former, as nothing was ever seen or heard of it.<sup>121</sup>

This description seems to show a situation very similar indeed to what was available to the insurgents in the Six-Day War. The *China Mail*, 20 April, thus states that the insurgents were armed “with jingals, cannon and antique arms of every description”, and, on 21 April, that they were armed with “jingals, small culverins, old rifles, but judging from the reports, some of the men are armed with modern rifles”. On 18 April, the *China Mail* described the insurgents’ cannon at the She Shan Ridge: “the guns of some description were fired repeatedly but from such a distance that they were unable to see what the projectiles were. The guns made a great report, but as they fired from a distance estimated at about four thousand yards there were no signs of what they were firing”. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, on 18 April, states that, on 17 April, at the She Shan Ridge, the insurgents: “opened fire with cannon, but the range was apparently too great for any damage to be done and it was impossible to judge what class of gun or projectile was being employed”. The *Hongkong Daily Press*, also speaking of the firing from the She Shan Ridge, states that the insurgents had “two or three big guns of some description” at the She Shan Ridge, but that they were “unable to see what the projectiles were”, the distance being too great. The *Hongkong Daily Press*, on 21 April, said: “several pieces of ‘cannon’ have been captured, and extraordinary looking things they are”. The insurgents in the New Territories should thus be assumed to have been armed in much the same way as the Weihaiwei villagers.

While Berger’s force was always heavily out-numbered by the insurgents, his 250–350 repeating rifles meant that he was always better armed, and was able to field by far the stronger fire-power. Only on 15 April, when Berger and May were besieged on Flagstaff Hill, were the British in any danger of being out-gunned, and that was only because Berger was so short of ammunition that he could not risk an attack. In addition to this superiority in fire-power, Berger had the great advantage that his men were well-trained, and could be trusted to use their fire-power to the most devastating effect when called on to do so. There can be little doubt that it was the huge disparity in weaponry and its effectiveness which was the major reason for the overwhelming dominance of the British in the battles of the Six-Day War.

### **The Murder of Tang Cheung-hing**

An unpleasant incident that took place during the fighting was the murder of Tang Cheung-hing.<sup>122</sup> When the Governor became aware that there was a



steadily growing anti-British feeling in the New Territories prior to the hoisting of the flag, he issued a Proclamation (7 April, translated and issued on 9 April, see Appendix 1 and Plate 8), as noted above, in which he stressed that the new British administration would respect the traditional ways of the villagers, and that his administration would be based on amicable co-operation between the Government and the leaders of the villages, under the rule of law. The Government then looked for people to post up this Proclamation in the villages (9 April). Ng Shui-sang, a contact of the Colonial Secretary, was asked to locate and employ people to post up the Proclamation. Three were so employed, Tang Tsz-kwai, of Ping Shan; a woman, (the wife of Ma Tso-wong); and Tang Cheung-hing, of Ha Tsuen.<sup>123</sup> Both the woman and Tang Tsz-kwai were stopped by the village leaders, and threatened with death for betraying the Chinese people by doing work for the British. Both returned to Hong Kong to tell Ng Shui-sang of the threats made against them (9 April). Tang Cheung-hing was arrested by the village leaders at Ma Wan (馬灣, also known as Kap Shui Mun, 汲水門) on 17 April. The documents in the *Extension Papers* suggest that he was arrested on his first trip with the Proclamations, but it is, perhaps, more likely that, as with Tang Tsz-kwai and the woman, he had carried the Proclamations out in the first place on or about 9 April, had been threatened by the village leaders, had returned to Hong Kong to tell Ng Shui-sang of the threats, and was, on 17 April, on his way back to his village from Hong Kong.

On 17 April, Tang Cheung-hing was carried to the Meeting House in Yuen Long in chains, where he was reviled and beaten by various village leaders. Eventually Tang Tsing-sz and other Ha Tsuen elders said that Tang Cheung-hing was a Ha Tsuen man, and that Ha Tsuen should deal with him. He was accordingly handed over to them, and they took him back to Ha Tsuen (late evening of 18 April). There he was savagely beaten, and then shot. Tang Nin (a good-for-nothing rough) committed the murder, at the orders of Tang Tsing-sz, who was a scholar and a village leader.<sup>124</sup> The body was pushed into a pig-basket and thrown into the creek at Wang Chau: the dead man's family found the body on 22 April, after several days' searching.<sup>125</sup>

The Governor and the Colonial Secretary believed that the murder was committed solely because Tang Cheung-hing had accepted employment from the British. Both were united in finding the murder a despicable and cowardly act. The villagers, however, stated that Tang Cheung-hing was executed, not just because he had agreed to post the Proclamations, but because he had betrayed the villagers' military secrets to the British. The Governor said he had no knowledge of this.<sup>126</sup> However, Tang Cheung-hing had been in Hong Kong on 16 April, when the Governor learnt about the plan for a night-

attack on Yaumatei. It was also on 16 April that the Governor learnt that the insurgents planned to attack during the Flag-Raising Ceremony, and that fighters from Ngan Tin and Wai Tak, from across the border, were with the insurgents. It is, at least, a matter for speculation that it might have been Tang Cheung-hing who gave the Government all this information. Tang Cheung-hing was in contact with Ng Shui-sang, and could easily have sent the information through this channel, without the Governor knowing the source.

The evidence implicating Tang Tsing-sz and Tang Nin in the murder was very clear. They were arrested in China on the orders of the Viceroy, and extradited to Hong Kong, where they were brought to the High Court on trial for murder and found guilty. They were executed on 31 July 1899.<sup>127</sup> Three other village leaders were found guilty of being accessories, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. One, whose connection with the crime was marginal, was pardoned by the Governor.<sup>128</sup>



# 5



## Blake and Lockhart: Conflicts and Casualties

### Casualties: The Official British View

There were only two casualties on the British side during the War: Major Brown and a private soldier, both slightly wounded at the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap.<sup>1</sup> There remains to be considered the question of the casualties suffered by the insurgents. Almost all the official British documents agree that the casualties on the insurgent side were slight. Unofficial British documents and village documents, however, strongly suggest that this is incorrect.

Thus, in the official British documents, Lockhart says, with regard to the Battle of Mui Shue Hang: “It is impossible to ascertain whether there were any casualties”<sup>2</sup> and he said, on 17 April, to the reporters of the *China Mail*, that there was “little if any bloodshed” in that fighting.<sup>3</sup> With regard to the battle of Lam Tsuen Gap he states: “The casualties on the Chinese side cannot be ascertained, but some men have been killed.”<sup>4</sup> With regard to the Battle of Shek Tau Wai he states: “casualties . . . on side of Chinese not known”.<sup>5</sup>

O’Gorman has nothing to say about casualties at the Battle of Mui Shue Hang. As to casualties at the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap all he says is: “it is impossible to render even an approximate estimate of the enemy casualties, for Chinamen always carry away their wounded and dead”, although this statement implies that there were at least some wounded and killed there.<sup>6</sup> As for the battle of Shek Tau Wai, he states:

a few of the enemy fell, but were carried away by their friends. In my opinion not many of them were hit. Seven men were observed to fall and we saw

two corpses in another part of the field later on. I know it is not easy to hit running men at distances beyond 600 yards, but considering the number of rounds fired the enemy's casualties were, I believe, slight.<sup>7</sup>

Later he repeats this assessment:

I cannot claim any merit for having inflicted only, as I believe, small loss upon our enemy in this action, but I am heartily glad that not many of them were killed or even hit.<sup>8</sup>

Capt. Berger and Capt. Simmonds say nothing about insurgent casualties at all.

Maj-Gen. Gascoigne, presumably taking his words from Stewart Lockhart's and Lt. Col. O'Gorman's Reports (as noted above, Gascoigne himself was not present at any of the battles other than the very start of the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap) states that the insurgents suffered "a small loss" at the Battle of Mui Shue Hang, and "some loss" at the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap. He makes no comment on insurgent casualties at the Battle of Shek Tau Wai. He sums up the whole campaign as "somewhat trivial military operations . . . without any serious loss of life".<sup>9</sup>

It is this assessment of Gascoigne's which underlies most comments on the Six-Day War by subsequent official commentators and historians.<sup>10</sup> Typical of official comments on the April 1899 fighting are the remarks on it included in the official Government Annual Reports. Thus, the Orme Report on the New Territories (1912), the first Annual Report on the New Territories,<sup>11</sup> says: "Some resistance was experienced from discontented factions in and out of the Territories, but this was soon put down without any loss on our side". Almost fifty years later, the Government Annual Reports have wording along even more dismissive lines:<sup>12</sup> "The initial British occupation, which took place in 1899, met with some ill-organized armed opposition in the Tai Po and Yuen Long areas, but the confidence of the people was quickly established". More recent Government Annual Reports have included even briefer comments along the lines of the 1988 Annual Report: "There was some desultory opposition when the British took over the New Territories in April 1899, but this soon disappeared".<sup>13</sup>

These statements all suggest low insurgent casualty rates, perhaps a dozen or so killed throughout the six days of the war. Village sources, however, have a very different tale to tell, suggesting deaths among the insurgents of perhaps 500.

## Casualties: The Villager View

The Ping Shan people kept a list of what they and their historian, Tang Shing-sz (鄧聖時), insist are the names of the dead from the Ping Shan Brigade of the insurrection, and this was eventually carved into an inscription which survives today in the Tat Tak Kung Soh at Ping Shan (see Plate 11).<sup>14</sup> The Ping Shan brigade consisted of the fighters from Ping Shan itself, from its allies and tenants in Sha Kong Wai (沙江圍), Lam Hau (欖口), Shan Ha (山下), Ngau Hom (牛壩), and the villages nearby, from Wang Chau (橫洲), from the western side of Yuen Long, and from Pat Heung (八鄉), with a few volunteers from other areas. It was, as noted above, one of probably six Brigades which made up the insurrection fighting force. 172 dead are listed on the inscription. They are all called “righteous martyrs” (烈義士). 69 of the dead are marked as being from Ping Shan itself, 38 of them Tangs, and 31 of other surnames, presumably tenants of the Tangs. Wang Chau and Yuen Long between them had 36 dead, Sha Kong Wai had 17, Ngau Hom 5, Shan Ha had 5, and Lam Hau 4. It is known that the single village area of Ping Shan fielded “more than 100” fighters to the 1899 insurrection, but probably not many more, perhaps about 130.<sup>15</sup> Assuming that the villagers are correct, and the list in the Tat Tak Kung Soh is of those who died in the Six-Day War, then, if the “more than 100” refers to all the Ping Shan men (i.e. the Tangs and their allies and tenants), then the death rate reached nearly 70 percent: if just to the Tangs (the more likely meaning), then to about 25–30 percent.<sup>16</sup>

This list of the dead was originally, it would seem, kept on a sheet or roll of paper folded up and placed behind a tablet in a shrine-cupboard in the Hero Shrine at the Tat Tak Kung Soh. When the shrine was restored in 1938 this paper (the existence of which had been forgotten) was re-discovered, and it was inscribed onto stone to ensure it was preserved for posterity.<sup>17</sup> The Hero Shrine in which this tablet with its roll of paper was kept was not built to house it: the stone inscription over the door has the title (英勇祠, Ying Yung Tsz, “Hero Shrine”), but also has a date in the Tongzhi period (1865–1874). Clearly, the Shrine was originally built to honour Ping Shan dead from some other fighting, presumably the inter-village war with Ha Tsuen which we know took place during the 1860s. The dead from this 1860s inter-village war with Ha Tsuen were probably commemorated on a tablet kept in a second shrine-cupboard on the altar in the shrine, but, if there was a paper list of names connected with this tablet, it was not inscribed onto stone in 1938: if any such list on paper existed, it may well have been damaged to the point where it could not be reproduced by that date.<sup>18</sup>

It is very unlikely that the list of the dead as inscribed on the stone tablet in 1938, and as we have it today in the Tat Tak Kung Soh, is the list of the dead from the earlier fighting against Ha Tsuen. There are far too many dead for this list to come from an inter-village war: everywhere else in the New Territories with Hero Shrines honouring the dead in inter-village wars has lists of ten or a dozen or so. If this list in the Tat Tak Kung Soh commemorates the dead in an inter-village war, then that war was ten times bloodier than any other inter-village war known in the New Territories area. That this is very unlikely, however, is suggested by what is remembered of the Ping Shan–Ha Tsuen inter-village war by the Ha Tsuen elders, who insist that that war ended very soon after it started, as the result of the defection of Sha Kong Wai and Ngau Hom from the Ha Tsuen side to the Ping Shan side.<sup>19</sup> It would thus seem that this inter-village war lasted too short a time to have caused 172 casualties on the Ping Shan side alone.

Furthermore, the list of names in the Tat Tak Kung Soh includes men who died who came from various places far from Ping Shan, from Pat Heung eight to ten miles from Ping Shan to the east of Kam Tin (fourteen dead), and even from Ka Long (家朗, Jialang) in the north-western part of San On County, twenty miles from Ping Shan (three dead), and Wai Tak in Tung Kwun, also twenty miles from Ping Shan (three dead). None of these would have fought with Ping Shan against Ha Tsuen. The list also includes eleven women who were killed. It is difficult to believe that eleven women would have been killed in an inter-village war (leaving aside these eleven, and the women commemorated on the Kam Tin shrine to the dead in the Six-Day War, no women are known to have died in any inter-village wars in the Hong Kong area).

The list as it survives today has all the looks of a single document, put together on a single occasion. The list contains, for instance, several groups of names that seem to be men of the same generation of a single family, suggesting that the people on the list died at approximately one date.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, as is discussed further below, seven or eight of the names on the Tat Tak Kung Soh list of the dead can be identified from the Yat Tai Tong (一體堂) Genealogical Record from Ping Shan: all of them were of young men in their late teens or early twenties in 1899, men who would not even have been born at the date of the inter-village war with Ha Tsuen. It is, therefore, entirely probable that the Ping Shan people and Tang Shing-sz are correct, and that the list inscribed in the Tat Tak Kung Soh in 1938 is of the dead from the Ping Shan Brigade in the Six-Day War, the dead from the fighting with Ha Tsuen having been separately enshrined and commemorated, in a shrine that has not survived to the present day.

It is true that the Sha Kong Wai people today believe the Tat Tak Kung Soh list as we have it includes the names of the Sha Kong Wai people who died fighting with Ping Shan against Ha Tsuen.<sup>21</sup> However, given that there seem originally to have been two shrines in the Tat Tak Kung Soh, it is more likely that the Sha Kong Wai people who are listed on the surviving inscription died in the Six-Day War, with those who died in the fighting with Ha Tsuen commemorated on the second shrine, which has not survived.<sup>22</sup> The Sha Kong Wai people have never in living memory visited the Tat Tak Kung Soh to worship the dead enshrined there, so an error of this sort could have grown up easily.

The Shap Pat Heung people also kept a list of what they insist are the dead from their Brigade in 1899. This list, inscribed on a tablet in a Hero Shrine which occupies the southernmost side-hall of the Tin Hau Temple at Tai Shue Ha (大樹下天后廟, see Plate 12), comprises 162 names. This tablet has not previously been published: given its historical interest, a copy is at Appendix 5.

The Tai Shue Ha Hero Shrine, like the Hero Shrine at the Tat Tak Kung Soh in Ping Shan, was not built to honour the dead from the Six-Day War. As at Ping Shan, the Hero Shrine has a stone inscription over the doorway giving the title (英勇祠, Ying Yung Tsz, “Hero Shrine”, the same title as at Ping Shan), but, again as at Ping Shan, has a date (in this case the 10th Year of Guangxi, 1884), which shows that the shrine was originally built to honour the dead in some other conflict; probably the latest of the inter-village wars between Ping Shan and Shap Pat Heung. However, there is nothing in the shrine as it stands today which seems to reflect any 1884 dead. The present shrine was restored in 1997, and before that in the early 1930s (it was restored then under the aegis of one of the surviving leaders of the insurrection, Ng Shing-chi 伍醒遜, also known as Ng Ki-cheung 伍其昌, on whom see below): the inscription as we have it today was recut in 1997, but is identical in wording with the previous inscription.

It is just possible that the two sets of Shap Pat Heung dead were amalgamated, and that the inscription as we have it today records two sets of heroes, but, if so, there is nothing to distinguish the one group from the other on the inscription: the villages from which the dead came are not given on the inscription, which is just a list of names, arranged by surnames. However, as noted above, from the various other Hero Shrines dotted around the New Territories honouring the dead in inter-village wars, it seems that such conflicts very rarely gave rise to more than ten or a dozen dead. The great majority of the dead on the Tai Shue Ha inscription, as with the list of names at the Tat Tak Kung Soh, must be of the dead from the Six-Day War. There is every



likelihood that the entire list is of the dead from the Six-Day War, as the Shap Pat Heung villagers believe. Since the Shap Pat Heung Brigade was probably rather smaller than the Ping Shan Brigade, but, like the Ping Shan Brigade, fought in all three battles, it is likely that the death rate was about the same, and a casualty rate of 162 would be about what would be expected. There are large numbers of groups of men on this tablet who seem likely to have been men from the same generation of a family, and thus to have died at about the same date, rather than at dates fifteen years apart.<sup>23</sup>

A Hero Shrine for those who died in the Six-Day War was established at Kam Tin (see Appendix 6 for the history of this shrine,<sup>24</sup> and Plate 13). The building in which it was placed was rebuilt in 1990, but the old shrine was carefully replaced as the centre-piece of the new building, and the spirit-tablets on it are those which had stood on the previous altar, probably from the date the shrine was first established, in or immediately after 1899. There are three spirit-tablets. The first, standing in the centre, is inscribed to 南陽鄧氏諸位志士之神位 (“To the spirits of all the determined men of the Tang clan of Nam Yeung”). The second, standing to the right as one views the altar, is inscribed to 本鄉異姓諸位志士之神位：別鄉親朋諸位志士之神位 (“To the spirits of all the determined men of various surnames from this Heung: To the spirits of all the determined men, both relatives and allies, from other Heung”). The final tablet, on the left as one views the altar, is inscribed to 南陽鄧母諸位烈婦之神位：本鄉異姓諸位烈婦之神位 (“To the spirits of all the martyred women married into the Tang clan of Nam Yeung: To the spirits of all the martyred women of various surnames from this Heung”).

The Brigade which the fighters from Kam Tin were part of consisted primarily of the men of Kam Tin and Ha Tsuen. The phrase “the Tang clan of Nam Yeung” is probably meant to cover both Kam Tin and Ha Tsuen. Both the Kam Tin and Ha Tsuen Tang clans regularly use the phrase “the Tang clan of Nam Yeung” to describe themselves (sometimes the phrase is given as “the Tang clan of Nam Yue”, 南遇鄧氏). The present-day villagers of Kam Tin are all descended from the oldest of four cousins, the other three of whom were the Founding Ancestors of Ha Tsuen (late fourteenth/early fifteenth century). Furthermore, the Kam Tin shrine stands in a hall known as the Yau Lun Tong (友鄰堂). This is a hall (a Meeting Hall rather than an Ancestral Hall) belonging to all the Tangs of Kam Tin, unlike almost all the other major public buildings of Kam Tin, which are mostly owned by one or other section of the clan only. This hall has a name which immediately suggests the name used by the Ha Tsuen clan for itself when it acts communally: the Ha Tsuen people call themselves the Yau Kung Tong (友恭堂). The Yau

Lun Tong and the Yau Kung Tong should thus be seen as the names for the two branch clans when viewed collectively. The two names, so similar, are probably names chosen to reflect the close relationship between the Founding Ancestors. This hall, the Yau Lun Tong, given the implications of this name, would thus be a very suitable site for a shrine designed to commemorate the dead from both branches of the clan, and the use of the term “the Tang clan of Nam Yeung” should probably be seen as implying that the dead from both branches were commemorated here, not just those from Kam Tin alone. Certainly, Ha Tsuen never seems to have had any Hero Shrine for their dead alone. When the Yau Lun Tong hall was rebuilt in 1990, the expenses were borne by Kam Tin alone, but Ha Tsuen presented two very handsome stone inscriptions to the new building, celebrating their close relationship with Kam Tin, again suggesting that Ha Tsuen recognizes that this hall is the place in Kam Tin where they are closest to their Kam Tin relatives.

However, if the “determined men” of Kam Tin and Ha Tsuen were the heart and core of the Brigade, there were also others. There were the tenants and allies of Kam Tin from villages like Sha Po and Fung Kat Heung (逢吉鄉), on the fringes of Kam Tin Heung, and there were “relatives and allies” from further afield, probably including at least the tenants and allies of Ha Tsuen from the Ha Tsuen Heung. The Ping Shan tablet similarly shows that the Ping Shan Brigade included not only Tangs from Ping Shan, but many of their tenants and allies.

As at Ping Shan, there were a number of women killed. These martyred women included both women married into Kam Tin, and also women from the tenant villages of Kam Tin Heung. How many is not stated, but the twice-repeated phrase “all the martyred women” can only mean that there were several from both the Tangs and the tenant villages.

All this strongly suggests a brigade similar in its make-up to the Ping Shan Brigade. The tablets also, it would seem, suggest a substantial death rate, more than just a few.

A Kam Tin account of the fighting (see Appendix 6), drawn up in 1935 for a Genealogy of part of the Tang clan of Kam Tin, by a scholar who, it can be assumed, would have been an elder at the date of writing, and was probably, therefore, an eyewitness of the fighting, even more strongly suggests a very heavy death rate there. This account states that, after the fighting, Kam Tin was “awash with blood”. The phrase translated “awash with blood” (喋血) is a very strong one. One dictionary definition of this phrase is “where many men are slain, so that to walk you must splash through blood” (殺人眾多, 踏血而行), and another is “bloodshed such that the ground is totally covered with blood” (流血滿地). The writer of this account from the Kam Tin

genealogy calls attention to the phrase by bracketing it with quotation marks, and clearly meant it to be read as suggesting a very heavy death rate. The same writer also notes that the families of the dead were “not able to cope” with the funerals (犧牲者之遺骸其中之家屬不能辦理). The implication is probably that the number of dead overwhelmed the capacity of Kam Tin to provide individual burials, so that the dead had to be buried communally. This account again very strongly suggests that the Kam Tin dead were very many more than just one or two.

The Kam Tin/Ha Tsuen Brigade fought in all three battles, and it is unlikely that it suffered any less than the Ping Shan Brigade. It would have been about the same size as the Ping Shan Brigade: it comprised the men of Kam Tin (probably about 80–100), of Ha Tsuen (probably again about 80–100), the allies and tenants of those two villages, and numbers of volunteers — perhaps about 325–350 in total.<sup>25</sup> It is unlikely that the dead from this brigade were any less than those from the Ping Shan Brigade. Knowledgeable Kam Tin elders believe that the dead commemorated in the Yau Lun Tong Hero Shrine are “about 200”, and thus very probably about the same number as died from the Ping Shan Brigade.<sup>26</sup>

The Kam Tin villagers believe, as noted above, that the number of their dead was so great that it overwhelmed the capacity of the village to provide individual funerals, and so the dead, or a substantial percentage of them, had to be buried communally. The site of the communal grave was between Sha Po and Fung Kat Heung villages, on land belonging to a communal trust of Kam Tin (see Plate 14). Later, in 1936, a Buddhist nunnery, the Miu Kok Yuen (妙覺苑), was built alongside, so that the nuns could pray for the souls of the dead three times each day. In 1996, when the communal grave was restored, the top of the grave-pit was uncovered. The nuns of the nunnery kept a close watch during this period, to ensure that the remains of the dead were treated with respect, and their rest disturbed as little as possible. The grave-pit, as exposed, was large and long.<sup>27</sup> The bodies were not placed in the grave-pit in orderly rows, but thrown in, in a disorderly heap: “they were all jumbled together: an arm could be seen sticking out here, and a leg there”. How deep the grave-pit is was not seen, but there were “many layers of bodies, one on top of another”. The nuns did not allow any disturbance to the remains, and so no body count was conducted, but the number of dead was “very great: many, many, more than just a couple of dozen”. What was seen at the restoration of the grave in 1996, therefore, is entirely consonant with the villagers’ belief that at least a hundred of their dead are buried there, and that the dead from the Kam Tin/Ha Tsuen Brigade numbered close to two hundred.

Thus, while the possibility cannot be entirely ignored that the lists of dead at Ping Shan and Tai Shue Ha represent, either in whole or in part, dead from some conflict other than the Six-Day War of 1899, this possibility seems, on the whole, very remote. It is entirely unlikely that the Kam Tin Hero Shrine at the Yau Lun Tong commemorates any dead other than those from the fighting against the British. It is most probable, therefore, taking the evidence of the lists of the dead at face value, that the dead of these three brigades alone in 1899 came to about 500 (172 from Ping Shan, 162 from Shap Pat Heung, and perhaps another 170 or so from Kam Tin/Ha Tsuen).<sup>28</sup>

No lists of the dead are known from the other three Brigades (Tai Po including Fanling, Ngan Tin, and Wai Tak). The Tai Po and Fanling people dropped out of the insurgency after the Battle of Mui Shue Hang. They probably suffered quite heavily at that battle, where they may well have taken the brunt of the attack. The Lam Tsuen and Tai Hang elders of today are aware that numbers of Lam Tsuen and Tai Hang people died at the Battle of Mui Shue Hang, although neither the Lam Tsuen nor the Tai Hang people have preserved any list of names, nor do they have any Hero Shrine for them. Thus the Tai Po/Fanling Brigade certainly suffered casualties, although how many is unclear. Since they took no part in the last two battles, their casualty rate was doubtless lower than that of the Ping Shan, Shap Pat Heung, and Kam Tin/Ha Tsuen Brigades, which fought in all three battles. This Tai Po/Fanling Brigade was also probably smaller than the Ping Shan and Kam Tin/Ha Tsuen Brigades, probably closer to the size of the Shap Pat Heung Brigade. If it suffered about a sixth of the casualties of Shap Pat Heung the dead from this brigade would have totalled about 25 men.

The Ngan Tin and Wai Tak people seem only to have taken a substantial part in the last battle, at Shek Tau Wai, and not in the first two battles. They were probably the soldiers who had manned the defences at Castle Peak and Sha Kong Miu, and who had patrolled the village areas behind the front lines on 14–17 April. At the same time, these two brigades were large. The best estimate of how many men came from Ngan Tin and Wai Tak suggest that there were respectively 350 and 700 of them,<sup>29</sup> which would have made the Ngan Tin Brigade about the same size as the Shap Pat Heung Brigade, and the Wai Tak Brigade twice as big. If the casualty rate was about a sixth that of Ping Shan, the death rate in these two brigades would have been about 25 and 50 men respectively. These two Brigades, therefore, may have seen deaths of about 75 men, with the dead from the Tai Po/Fanling Brigade this would imply deaths in these three brigades of perhaps 100. The total number of deaths, therefore, could easily have been 600, but, given the lack of precision in the evidence, a more conservative figure of 500 is used here.

The Ping Shan list of the dead, as noted above, makes it clear that a significant number of women were killed in the fighting, and the tablets in the Yau Lun Tong at Kam Tin suggest the same. Eleven women are named on the Ping Shan list, five from Ping Shan, four from the Wang Chau/Yuen Long area, one from Sha Kong Wai, and one from Ngau Hom. All were married except for three of those from Wang Chau. Of the Ping Shan women who died, only one was the wife of a Ping Shan Tang, the others were presumably the wives of Tang tenants. The Kam Tin tablets imply that there were several women killed married to Tangs of Kam Tin, and several others from the tenant villages of the Kam Tin Heung. Perhaps 20 or 25 women from Ping Shan and Kam Tin, therefore, died in the fighting. These women were all probably engaged in carrying provisions to the front line when they got caught up in the fighting. It is probable that they mostly died in the fighting at the Lam Tsuen Gap. Whether other women died, from the other brigade districts, is unknown.

### **Casualties: The Unofficial British View**

An official communiqué on the fighting on 15 April was issued late on that day, or, more likely, early on 16 April, and this was printed in full in the *China Mail* on 18 April. That communiqué stated, of the Battle of Mui Shue Hang: “No bodies were found on the position held by the Chinese, but it is asserted that they could not have escaped without loss.”<sup>30</sup>

The *China Mail* managed to get two reporters to Tai Po on 16 April (they hitched a lift with the baggage train, and got there about noon on 16 April). These reporters stayed at Tai Po until late on 17 April, when they returned to Hong Kong to file their copy. One of them returned to Tai Po early on 20 April, and was there until late on 21 April. On 17 April, at about noon, these reporters interviewed Gascoigne and Lockhart (the interview was broken off short when the insurgents attacked at the She Shan Ridge). On 17 April, Gascoigne and Lockhart said to the reporters, with regard to the Battle of Mui Shue Hang: “There were no casualties on the British side, and none of course reported on the other side. The shooting must have been more or less wild, but sufficient to drive the enemy out of their entrenchments with little if any bloodshed.”<sup>31</sup>

The reporters seem to have taken this statement with considerable scepticism. While not directly criticising the statement, they also congratulated the *Fame* for the effectiveness of her shooting, which they clearly felt was anything but wild, and included also a statement from May, or one of his

officers, that, even before Berger had arrived at Flagstaff Hill, “there is little doubt but that several of the insurgents were wounded if not killed” by Police fire. Careful readers of the *China Mail* would also have noted that this statement by Gascoigne, given on 17 April, was at significant odds with the communiqué of 16 April, where it said that “they could not have escaped without loss”. As is discussed further below, other press reports on the deaths among the insurgents on 15 April all suggest they were significant.

This scepticism about the truthfulness of official statements is probably the reason that the *China Mail* reporter, on the second trip to Tai Po, seems to have made no attempt to interview O’Gorman or Lockhart, but merely to take their information from lower-ranking, but probably more factually accurate, sources. No hint is given in the *China Mail*, therefore, of any “official line” for casualties at the Battles of Lam Tsuen Gap or Shek Tau Wai.

Lt. Keyes, of *H.M.S. Fame*, who was present in the area throughout the fighting, and took an active part in the events of 15 and 19 April, as well as carrying supplies and dispatches on 16 and 17 April, certainly thought insurgent deaths were generally heavy. His comment on the fighting at large was: “The troops, . . . under Colonel O’Gorman, encountered about 4,000 Chinamen, who were driven off with considerable loss”.<sup>32</sup>

As late as 1908, some unofficial comments still suggest heavy death rates, especially on 18 April. The book *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong Kong*, for instance, says:

Just prior to the date for the taking over of the New Territory . . . the British . . . were attacked by bands of rebels, and military operations were found necessary. An engagement was fought at Sheung Tsun [Sheung Tsuen] on April 18th, and the rebel force . . . was completely routed.<sup>33</sup>

The initial Press reports of the fighting on 17 and 18 April in the Hong Kong English-language press all state that insurgent casualties were heavy. On 18 April the *China Mail* stated, with regard to the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap, that: “the Chinese losses in killed and wounded are reported to be very heavy”. On 19 April, again with regard to the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap, the *China Mail* stated that: “great slaughter was effected. The numbers killed are not known but it is thought that they run into hundreds”. The *Hongkong Daily Press* stated on 19 April, with regard to the fighting at the She Shan Ridge on 17 April, under the headline “A Great Many Chinese Killed” that the guns had “killed a great many of [the rebels]”. On 20 April, again with regard to the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap, the *China Mail*, under a headline “Slaughter of the Chinese”, noted that “the Chinese had sustained a very severe loss . . . the rebels are carrying off their dead and wounded”, which

seems to suggest a significant number of dead and wounded. On 20 April, the *China Mail*, speaking of the Battle of Shek Tau Wai, said: “finding that the Indians’ rifles had a marvellous way of finding billets in their comrades, the huge force of Chinese turned their backs and ran”. On 21 April, the *Hongkong Daily Press* stated, with regard to the Battle of Shek Tau Wai, that they “are not able to give the number of rebels killed, but they suffered severely”, suggesting very heavy casualties at that battle. On 21 April, the *China Mail*, speaking generally of the campaign, said: “it would appear that the rebels are almost completely routed”.

### Casualties: An Analysis

It seems likely that the heaviest death rate was the result of the fighting on 17 April, the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap, but with a heavy death rate also at the fighting on 18 April, the Battle of Shek Tau Wai.

While the death rate on 15 April, the Battle of Mui Shue Hang, may have been relatively less, there must have been a significant number of deaths then as well. *Fame*’s 12-pounder shells, making “most accurate practice on the hill”, with “every shot” telling and silencing an insurgent gun, and thus with shots dropping right into the insurgents’ emplacements, must have killed large numbers of the defenders before the remainder retreated. The Police were sure that they had caused some casualties even before Berger arrived, and Berger’s rifle-fire is entirely likely to have caused some more, even before *Fame* shelled the insurgent trenches. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, on 17 April, states that “forty or fifty of the Chinese were killed” by the shelling of *Fame*. Keyes noted in 1939 that “the Chinese newspapers in Canton” acknowledged fifteen dead from the battle of Mui Shue Hang, but Keyes was quoting from memory forty years later, and his “fifteen” should be considered as probably a lapse of memory for “fifty”.<sup>34</sup> The *Hongkong Daily Press*, on 17 April, stated that “several Chinese were killed and wounded” in this engagement, and, on 18 April, repeated the statement: “The *Fame* accordingly opened, and threw several shells . . . towards the enemy, several of whom were killed.” The Hong Kong correspondent of the *North China Herald* also stated that “a number of our opponents” had been killed at the shelling of “the Chinese trenches”.<sup>35</sup> The *China Mail* printed an interview with a Hong Kong domestic servant who had returned to his village to visit his family and got impressed into the insurgent force, and sent to the entrenchment on Shelter Trench Hill (“the heights overlooking the British camp”), where he was shelled (he described the shell as “a great black thing like a devil”, presumably from the shrieking

sound it would have made as it approached), and stated that the shell killed “about a score” of his comrades, whereupon he fled back to Hong Kong.<sup>36</sup> The official communiqué of 16 April assumes significant casualties at this battle, even if, as noted above, Gascoigne and Lockhart tried to step back from this statement when they were interviewed by the *China Mail* on 17 April. All in all, a casualty rate of forty or fifty at this battle would not be at all unlikely. Gascoigne and Lockhart’s “little or no bloodshed” should be treated with the scepticism the *China Mail* reporters gave it.

At the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap fighting lasted nine hours, from 12.45 p.m. to 10.00 p.m., involving, between about 1.00 p.m. and 1.45 p.m., shrapnel shelling of the insurgent position, and then, especially between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m., bayonet charges and hand-to-hand combat, with sustained and continuous volleys of rifle-fire. Capt. Berger stated that he held his fire earlier in order to make the fire when he ordered it devastating, and the death rate from such an attack cannot have been other than high. The death rates on this day thus must have been substantial. One reference to the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap (from a villager who had been present there) calls it a “disastrous defeat”.<sup>37</sup> The Press reports on 18 and 19 April, with their references to “slaughter” and to “deaths in the hundreds”, refer to this day’s fighting.

Equally, the fighting at the Battle of Shek Tau Wai, with Berger’s men “firing as rapidly as possible” at the retreating enemy cannot but have produced a large number of casualties. A reference to the Battle of Shek Tau Wai (again from a villager who was present there) speaks of “many dead and many wounded”.<sup>38</sup>

There are, indeed, one or two places in the official collections of British documents which suggest rather more dead than the formal official reports: Lockhart thus says in one place that “the defeat has filled the Chinese with terror”,<sup>39</sup> and in another that “the Chinese . . . have been badly whipped”,<sup>40</sup> and O’Gorman states that “many of the villagers had lost friends”,<sup>41</sup> but these comments were made in semi-private documents, documents, that is, other than the formal reports sent on the fighting, and it was essentially the formal reports submitted in particular by O’Gorman and Gascoigne which became the standard British understanding of the fighting, and those both speak of few casualties among the insurgents.

There is, however, one official British Report which speaks of heavy insurgent casualties. This Report is quoted by Gen. James Lunt in his book *Imperial Sunset*.<sup>42</sup> It reads:

On the 17th April at 4 p.m. very heavy fire was heard . . . men of the Hongkong Regiment . . . soon became hotly engaged, and did the work



splendidly. The enemy were forced to retire . . . the Hongkong Regiment followed up the retreating foe with great bravery and tenacity and inflicted serious loss upon them. Captain Berger's force . . . utterly routed the Chinese. On the 18th April 1899 hostilities were renewed . . . The Hongkong Regiment force of about 400 under command of Captain Berger and directed by Colonel The O'Gorman, were attacked by the Chinese to the number of about 2,600; they gallantly repulsed the attack and utterly routed the enemy.

This Report is believed to be a Special Standing Order, issued by Col. Retallick to the Hongkong Regiment, for the information of those of the Regiment who had not been sent to the fighting, immediately at the end of the campaign.<sup>43</sup> As such, it can be taken as representing the understanding among the officers of the Regiment as to what had happened, free of any influence from the views of O'Gorman.

In the Governor's formal Report on the disturbances, sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Joseph Chamberlain) on 28 April, he said, in his final round-up paragraph: "it is idle to ignore the fact that the assailants have suffered serious losses in their four days hopeless contest against disciplined forces. Nor can I look upon such needless loss of life with equanimity"; Blake went on to state that the fighting "involv[ed] grave loss of life", and that: "The villagers acknowledge they were hopelessly beaten".<sup>44</sup> In a Minute to Lockhart, of 26 April, Blake said that: "The fault [i.e. starting an insurrection] has been sharply punished."<sup>45</sup> On 1 May, in a letter to Lockhart, Blake said: "Those who opposed the troops got a severe lesson."<sup>46</sup> These comments by the Governor should be taken as an indication that Blake became aware that the statement by Gascoigne, that the fighting was conducted "without any serious loss of life" was not accurate, and that the losses had, in fact, been serious,<sup>47</sup> at least after 20 April, when he met and spoke with F. H. May.

Maj-Gen Gascoigne at no point in 1899 suggests he knew of any substantial insurgent death rate, but, in 1902, in his speech to the Hong Kong Regiment on the occasion of its disbandment, he said that the Regiment's actions in the Six-Day War constituted "sharp punishment", so he was also aware that the death rate was higher than suggested in his Report to the War Office.<sup>48</sup>

Taking all these points into consideration, therefore, it seems possible that up to 600 men of the insurgents died: at the lowest likely estimate there must have been about 450: a death rate of 500 can be taken as extremely likely. The suggestion that only about a dozen of the insurgents died, as O'Gorman implies, can be dismissed out of hand: there are probably eight or ten times that number buried in the mass grave at Sha Po alone. Since the

total of all the fighting men of the insurrection is several times given as 2,600, the overall death rate must have been, therefore, about 17–23 percent: as noted above, the death rate among the Tangs of Ping Shan was probably about 25–30 percent, which is broadly in line with this overall death rate. There can be little doubt that the figures for the dead from these village sources, from the unofficial British reports, from the Press, from the Governor's formal Report to the Secretary of State, and from Retallick's Standing Order, all of which state that the losses to the insurgents were serious, and constituting an "utter rout", a "disastrous defeat", with "many dead and many wounded" are much closer to the truth than the bland statements of "slight loss" in the British official Reports in the official collections.<sup>49</sup>

### **Berger's Views as to His Duties**

Berger's actions during this campaign show that his understanding of what was required of him in a small colonial war was entirely in line with what Roberts, Callwell, Hart, and, indeed, Wolseley, stated was desirable.

Given the large numbers of copies of Roberts' autobiography and of Callwell and Hart's theoretical studies which were sold during the 1890s, it is entirely probable that Berger had read and studied them. However, even if Berger had not himself read and studied these books, he can be assumed to have got the gist of their teaching from his first Colonel, Edmund Barrow, and Barrow's deputies, Faithfull and Retallick. Barrow, like Callwell and Hart, was involved in Lord Robert's Afghan campaign of 1879. Barrow, like Callwell and Hart, was highly intelligent, a man who thought deeply about military matters. Like Callwell, Barrow won the United Services Institute Gold Medal for his views on military affairs (1880 and 1884). Again, Barrow was a man, again like Callwell and Hart, who was highly regarded by Roberts, who hand-picked him to establish the Hong Kong Regiment in 1891. Barrow in turn chose as his deputies in the Hong Kong Regiment men who had been with him on the Afghan Campaign (both Faithfull and Retallick had fought in that Campaign). Barrow certainly knew Hart (Barrow and Hart fought together in the Afghan War, in the Egyptian Campaign, and in the Tirah Campaign, and they were of much the same seniority), and may also have known Callwell by 1891. Barrow's views on how a colonial war should be fought seem to have been the same as those of Roberts, Hart and Callwell. Barrow also seems to have been eager to publicise his views on how such campaigns should be managed.

Barrow was present at the taking by Sir Samuel Browne of the Ali Musjid position in 1879, which dominated the Khyber Pass. The Ali Musjid affair

was seen in Britain as a great victory, but Barrow considered it very badly managed, and as coming close to being a terrible disaster. He analysed it in a long printed letter he sent home to England in 1879, and, at the end of his career, analysed it again in his collection of "Campaign Diaries".<sup>50</sup> Browne decided to attack in a two-front pincer movement, with a frontal assault supported by a force sent behind the position, Barrow notes that the plan was a good one. However, the execution of the plan was seriously marred,<sup>51</sup> and the position was only taken because the defenders slipped away without a fight because of concern at the risk to their position of the force coming up behind them.

Barrow clearly felt strongly that the way this affair was handled was disgraceful. That he distributed a printed statement of his views makes it certain he wanted those view widely known. There can be little doubt that Barrow would have discussed the taking of the Ali Musjid position with Berger (next in command after Faithfull and Retallick),<sup>52</sup> and it can be assumed that Berger would thus have learnt why his Colonel felt that, if it had been undertaken as the Peiwar Kotal affair had been, that is, according to the rules laid down by Roberts and people like Callwell and Hart, it would have been a better-run thing. If Berger did not himself read Roberts, Callwell, and Hart, Barrow would thus have made sure Berger was at least aware of their thinking.

Barrow issued Standing Orders to the Hong Kong Regiment in 1893 which included certain rules the Regiment was to follow if ever it faced active service.<sup>53</sup> These do not spell out in full what he expected of his regiment when in action, but includes enough to make it clear that he expected his men to act in ways Roberts, and following him Hart and Callwell, would have approved of. Thus, Barrow demands that his men proceed against the enemy at a quick pace, but reserving their fire until close to the enemy, since otherwise the attack would be "feeble". When the point of attack was reached, the fire should be as overwhelming as possible:

In the attack, the Firing Line should . . . be as thick a line as is compatible with free movement. The stronger the line, the heavier will be its fire, the greater will be the confidence with which it advances, and the greater its moral effect on the enemy.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, Barrow demands that his men always fix bayonets immediately before an attack, and that they train rigorously until they are able to fix bayonets as they advanced, without stopping. These Standing Orders would have been in Berger's mind during his attack, as they constituted part of the orders under which he was operating.

During the Six-Day War the campaign was fought by Berger in a copy-book way, at every point his actions are entirely in line with his Regimental Standing Orders, and with what Roberts, Hart, and Callwell stated was desirable in a colonial war. Thus Berger, when he was moving against the insurgent position at the She Shan Ridge, divided his force to make a frontal attack supported by an attack from the rear. When he was moving through Lam Tsuen on 17 April, he moved slowly but steadily forward, “without firing a shot”, until he was within 500–600 yards, and then starting to fire in a moderate way, exactly as Barrow’s Standing Orders and Hart’s and Callwell’s theoretical views state should be done. He then divided his force into three, a centre party and two flanking parties, to attack the insurgent position on three fronts simultaneously, and charged forward “at the double”, from positions about 200–300 yards from the insurgent entrenchment, firing as heavily as possible, and succeeded in over-running the position. While Berger does not specifically state this, there can be no doubt that this final at-the-double charge would have been with bayonets fixed, as had been done on 15 April, when he and his men charged and over-ran the insurgent entrenchment at Shelter Trench Hill, and as Barrow stipulated in his Standing Orders. At the Lam Tsuen Gap, the men fired as heavily as could be managed as the charge took place. All this, again, is as Callwell (and Barrow) would have wanted. Berger then immediately pursued the enemy, firing at them as much as he could as he and his men ran after them. When it was possible, he had his men fire volleys. He only stopped pursuit when darkness fell, making further pursuit impossible for the time being, but he sent out half his force at first light to continue the pursuit in the direction he believed the bulk of the insurgents had fled. All this, too, was in line with Callwell’s views. On 18 April, Berger’s disposition of his men in defence, his refusal to allow any firing until the attacking insurgents were very close to the British line, and then his unleashing of as rapid and devastating a fire as possible until the enemy broke, and then immediately going onto as determined a pursuit as possible — all this was in accordance in every respect with Callwell’s theories.<sup>55</sup> Finally, Berger’s extremely proper and careful treatment of the Sheung Tsuen villagers, and his refusal to commandeer food or shelter from them, is entirely in accord with Robert’s, Hart’s, and Callwell’s views that unarmed villagers had to be treated as carefully as possible, to avoid exasperating them, and driving them into armed opposition. Berger had fired some straw-stacks as he passed through Lam Tsuen, to ensure that the insurgents were aware of where he was, and that he was inexorably approaching them, but this was a far less serious matter than commandeering food or shelter.

Given that Berger was thus undoubtedly fighting in accordance with late nineteenth century theories of how small colonial wars should be fought, and since those theories demanded the highest possible enemy casualties in the early stages of any such small-scale campaign, it is on the whole extremely unlikely that there were not high insurgent casualties in the two days of fighting which Berger was in charge of, or effectively in charge of, that is, on 17 and 18 April.

O’Gorman states, in his Report to Gascoigne<sup>56</sup> that Berger, on 15 April, had “very strict orders to avoid a conflict with the Chinese, if at all possible”, but he goes on to say that these orders were limited to the period before the hoisting of the Flag on 16 April (“because the Hinterland had not actually been taken over”). The *China Mail* also notes that Berger had orders to refrain from hostilities. On 15 April it notes: “Instructions have been issued to the troops to be careful to avoid any conflict with the natives”, and, on 18 April, with regard to the fighting on 15 April, that Berger: “had also received careful instructions from the General and general instructions had been issued to the troops, to avoid any conflicts with the natives”. The *China Mail* also noted, on 18 April, that, at its interview with Gascoigne and Lockhart at noon on 17 April, that: “the General had given orders that the troops were not to take any notice of the Chinese until fired at repeatedly”.

It would thus seem that O’Gorman considered the restraints on Berger and the troops were removed once the area had been taken over (i.e. after early afternoon of 16 April). The *China Mail* on 18 April suggests that Gascoigne believed that the restraints were still in place at noon on 17 April, that is, 24 hours after the formal takeover, but it is very doubtful if Berger was aware of this. Berger was not, it would seem, given any written orders on 17 April by Gascoigne. Berger phrases his orders as “I then received permission from General Gascoigne to make a counter-attack”: phrasing which certainly makes it likely that Berger was acting only on the vaguest of verbal orders. Again, on 18 April, Berger speaks of putting his men into position with the “permission” of O’Gorman — as on 17 April, it is very unlikely that there were any written orders, or anything other than vague verbal commands. It seems probable that, throughout 17 and 18 April, Berger was acting on verbal instructions along the lines of “make a counter-attack”, “put yourself into a good defensive position” or “deal with these rebels”. Berger at no point suggests that, on 17 and 18 April, he considered himself still bound by the restraints which he had been bound by on 15 April. In such a situation, Berger would reasonably have assumed that a Roberts- or Callwell-style campaign was what the authorities wanted from him, since such a style of campaign would have been standard military practice at the time, and so he endeavoured to produce

as good a campaign in that style as he could, and succeeded admirably. It is unlikely that Berger was ever informed of the Governor's intention (see below) that the campaign be conducted according to the rules for civil disturbances, with maximum restraint and minimum force to be used throughout the campaign, both before and after the formal takeover: he certainly gives no hint that he had ever been given to understand that this was the policy of the civil authority.

### **Blake's Policies towards the Insurgents**

In these circumstances, it is difficult not to suspect that either O'Gorman and Stewart Lockhart were singularly unobservant, or else that their bland statements as to insurgent casualties were a deliberate attempt to hide the truth as to the scale of the slaughter.

There was a very major difference of opinion between the Governor, Sir Henry Blake, and the Colonial Secretary, Stewart Lockhart, whom the Governor had appointed Political Official in attendance on the campaign, as to what the correct attitude to the insurgents and their leaders should be, which makes a deliberate attempt to hide the facts a definite possibility (see Plate 9 for Blake and Plate 10 for Lockhart).<sup>57</sup>

Blake was a mild and humane man of eirenic views, and had a clear view that establishment of a relaxed and friendly administration under the rule of law in the New Territories was the politically expedient and desirable line to take, and that everything possible should be done to get the New Territories villagers to have confidence in their new rulers. He made this policy quite clear in his Proclamation of 7–9 April, when he stated:

It is right for me to . . . assure you that all the inhabitants residing within the limits of British territory will be permitted to follow undisturbed their lawful occupations . . . Your commercial and landed interests will be safeguarded, and . . . your usages and good customs will not in any way be interfered with . . . It will be my duty to improve your position by every means in my power. The most respected of your elders will be chosen to assist in the management of your village affairs, to secure peace and good order and the punishment of evil-doers . . . Your perfect freedom from oppression is assured. Should you have any complaint to make the Governor will always be willing to hear it and order what is right.<sup>58</sup>

Blake viewed this proclamation as an absolute promise made by him to the villagers. On 28 April, in his Report to the Secretary of State on the

disturbances, he described the military action taken as constituting “violated promises”, breaching his “most earnest desire to establish relations of friendship and confidence from the moment of my assumption of the Government”.<sup>59</sup>

On 12 April, Blake met a delegation of elders from Ping Shan. He “explained to them fully the system of Government that [he] proposed to adopt”,<sup>60</sup> presumably reiterating what he had said in his proclamation of a few days earlier. On 17 April, during the fighting, he again stated that this remained his policy, instructing Lockhart “to make every effort to beget confidence and to remove the idea that we have come to change their customs or to confiscate their land”.<sup>61</sup> Also on 17 April, Blake, at the Flag-Raising at Kowloon City made a most important speech (see Appendix 7). In this speech he took the main lines of his 7–9 April Proclamation, and reiterated them in as simple a form as possible, to ensure that those present would not be in any doubt as to his intentions, making absolutely no mention of the fighting then taking place a little to the north:

I welcome you as friends . . . This territory to-day becomes part of Hongkong. If you, the Chinese, want to know how you will be treated, you can go to Kowloon and Hongkong and there see for yourselves. There you will find that all the Chinese are well protected, and all their interests cared for. You may carry on your lawful occupations and your buying and selling unobstructed. Your ancestral temples and your temples for worshipping your gods will remain . . . I . . . hereby declare that your customs and usages will be respected. Village Courts will be established, and representatives will be selected from your elders to assist in the management of public affairs, and while acting in accordance with the law you will be allowed perfect freedom. The taxes will be equal . . . You need now have no fear of being squeezed by the officials . . . You will be protected in your rights, even the poorest people will be free from molestation . . . Should you have any complaints the Governor will listen to it. No injustice will be allowed . . . You need have no fear.

On 19 April, Blake informed the Secretary of State that he had “issued a reassuring proclamation”,<sup>62</sup> and on 21 April, he instructed Lockhart to “distribute copies of the remarks in Chinese which have been prepared for distribution, and let it be known that persons who resume their occupations will not be interfered with”.<sup>63</sup> These “remarks in Chinese” of 21 April are, probably, the same as the “reassuring proclamation” of 19 April. The records as we have them today do not include anything which could be called either a “reassuring proclamation” or “remarks in Chinese” issued on or about 19 April, and it is probable that Blake merely wanted his speech of 17 April to

the Kowloon elders to be circulated as widely as possible on and after 19 April: it is known from the Press reports that the Chinese translation of the speech was printed and distributed widely on 17 April to everyone present at the Kowloon City ceremony.<sup>64</sup>

On 20 April, in a further instruction to Lockhart, Blake stated: "I consider it of great importance that the people should be fully informed of our intentions not to interfere with their holding of land".<sup>65</sup> On 8 May, Blake wrote to Lockhart again: "I hope that time will prove to those people that their fears are groundless, and we should do everything in our power to bring the fact home to them."<sup>66</sup>

As part of this policy, Blake was extremely anxious that everything possible should be done to make the villagers have confidence in the new Administration. As noted above, Blake instructed Lockhart on 17 April to "make every effort to beget confidence",<sup>67</sup> and this instruction was re-issued on 21 April, when Blake ordered Lockhart to "leave nothing undone to beget confidence", stating that this was a major part of "the general policy for the administration".<sup>68</sup> By 21 April, too, the Naval Commodore was writing to Vice-Admiral Seymour: "I have instructed the Commanding Officers of ships stationed in Mirs Bay to use every endeavour to assure the natives of our friendly intentions, and to establish good feeling towards us and confidence in us", presumably in this reflecting instructions received from the Governor.<sup>69</sup> On 22 April, Blake again reverted to this theme: in a personal letter to Lockhart he said: "The most difficult part of your work now begins: that of getting the administrative machinery to work, and begetting confidence".<sup>70</sup>

On 2 and 4 August, Blake visited the New Territories, and met the newly appointed councillors, chosen from the village elders. He made no mention, even very distantly, to the recent fighting. He spoke to them of "the principles upon which the Government of this portion of the Colony of Hong Kong will be conducted". He said:

I desire that you . . . shall co-operate with the Government in regulating the local affairs of your villages so that the people shall enjoy security and that there shall be no disorder . . . I rely on you to discharge your duties in a faithful and upright manner . . . I wish to interfere as little as possible with your good customs . . . I have appointed you . . . because you have been recommended to me by your villagers . . . Your responsibility is very real, as I look to you to preserve the peace and good order of your villages, and report to the authorities all bad characters . . . I look for the firm establishment of internal peace and prosperity, and I undertake that you shall be fully protected by the Government from any interference from without.<sup>71</sup>



All this shows that Blake had a clearly conceived policy for the New Territories, based on amicable co-operation and mutual confidence between the villagers and the Administration, or, as he put it himself, "relations of friendship and confidence". This policy was clearly expressed before, during, and after the fighting, which Blake saw only as a deplorable interruption in the smooth implementation of his policy.

When the insurrection broke out, Blake seems to have generally viewed it as a civil disturbance, a matter of misguided villagers rising up to oppose what they did not understand. He seems to have viewed it as a matter to be pacified as quickly as could be, but generally using minimal force. Every effort was to be made to increase confidence and friendly feelings between the villagers and the Administration, by clarifying what the Administration's policy was to be, and by showing a consistently friendly face to the villagers.

Thus, on 3 April, Blake instructed Lockhart that: "You will accompany the party, and take immediate civil charge of the expedition . . . There has been no actual attack, only a riot . . . I desire to avoid any hostilities except as a defensive measure, or so far as may be necessary to relieve Mr May, should you find him attacked".<sup>72</sup> On the same day, he instructed the G.O.C., Maj.-Gen. Gascoigne, in a similar vein: "This is only an ordinary riot so far, and I am anxious to avoid any bloodshed or interference involving responsibility until I take over the place . . . It will be time enough to act when we have assumed responsibility . . . It is well to have a show of force".<sup>73</sup> Blake was very alive to the risk of some military hot-head going beyond the minimal force he was ordering, and added to his instructions to Gascoigne: "but have a prudent officer in command". In a telegraph to the Secretary of State on 4 April, Blake summarised his instructions as: "to withdraw British subjects, avoid hostile attitude, except in case of an attack or relief meeting with opposition".<sup>74</sup> Another version of the 4 April telegraph to the Secretary of State gives the instructions as: "to withdraw British subjects, but not, unless attacked, to adopt hostile attitude".<sup>75</sup> In another telegraph sent on 4 April, to the British Consul at Canton, Blake stated that he was: "sending a force to relieve [May] and remove [his party] . . . I have directed the relieving force . . . to do no more than relieve British subjects, except they are attacked".<sup>76</sup> On the same day, Lockhart was instructed: "to warn inhabitants of dangers of opposition",<sup>77</sup> suggesting that Blake saw explanations and discussions as the first line in the pacification process. On 7 April after matters had settled down, Blake described the events of 3–4 April in these words: "I am not disposed to attach much importance to this attack . . . Such a sudden access of militant irritability is not uncommon in Ireland, and subsides as rapidly as it rises".<sup>78</sup> On 12 April, when Blake

met the Ping Shan elders, he accepted their statement that the events of 3–4 April were due to the people having been “led astray”: in other words that the people were misguided, but not irrecoverably rebellious.<sup>79</sup> On 28 April, in his report to the Secretary of on the disturbances, Blake stated, of the events of 3–4 April, that “the occurrence seemed to be nothing more than a sudden affray”.<sup>80</sup>

Blake’s instructions with regard to the events of 3–4 April are thus clear: the matter was a civil disturbance undertaken by misguided and misinformed men, a matter to be put down by a show of force, but hopefully without any actual military action. While Blake accepted that military action might become necessary, it was to be limited to the minimum necessary to rescue May and his party, or to extricate the troops if they were in danger. Certainly Blake’s instructions gave no authority for any Callwell-style suppression campaign to be waged. In the event, the disturbances on 3–4 April were indeed pacified without recourse to force.

It is probable that Blake intended the actions taken between 14 and 19 April to be much the same as those taken between 3 and 4 April. May was sent on 15 April with instructions that his men were not to: “take any notice of any demonstration on the opposite hills except an attack be made, pending the formal assumption of jurisdiction on Monday [17 April]. After that we shall make our jurisdiction respected . . . We must only be patient and forbearing; at the same time suppressing at once any active opposition to our jurisdiction”.<sup>81</sup> In a telegraph to the Secretary of State of 15 April, Blake summarised these instructions as: “I have instructed the troops to take no steps unless attacked, in which case they have orders to assert authority”.<sup>82</sup> another version of this telegraph states: “Troops have been ordered to act with forbearance and, unless attacked (in which case we must assert our authority) to take no steps”.<sup>83</sup>

It will be seen that these instructions read very much the same as those issued on 4 April, and it is entirely likely that Blake intended them to be implemented in a similar way, i.e. that there was to be a show of force, but no military action unless unavoidable, and then only the minimum required to safeguard the safety of the troops. The critical phrases are surely “to act with forbearance” and “we must only be patient and forbearing”.

However, it must be said that Blake’s instructions of 14–19 April are somewhat equivocal. His statement that no military action should be taken “unless attacked, in which case they have orders to assert our authority” was probably intended to allow minimal force to be used, sufficient to rescue the troops from immediate danger, as in the disturbances of 3–4 April, but could, clearly, be read as allowing a far more substantial military response. Blake

does not define exactly what he meant by “suppressing at once any active opposition to our authority” or “they have orders to assert our authority”. Furthermore, Blake, in his instructions to May, stated that his orders to take no action unless attacked were valid only up to the moment of the actual formal takeover. These instructions could be read, therefore, as allowing far more force to be used after the takeover. O’Gorman, as noted above, seems to have read the instructions in this way. He states: “Captain Berger had very strict orders to avoid a conflict with the Chinese, if at all possible, because the Hinterland had not actually been taken over”, and notes that Berger in consequence was careful to avoid anything other than minimal action on 15 April.<sup>84</sup> However, O’Gorman makes no mention of any restraints on Berger’s actions on 17 and 18 April, after the takeover on 16 April, and probably considered that there were none.

The G.O.C., Gascoigne, as noted above, left Tai Po shortly after military action began at mid-day on 17 April, and hurried back to receive Blake’s further instructions as to what action should be taken now the territory had been taken over. Unfortunately, Blake does not seem to have written down his 17 April instructions to Gascoigne. All we have is a note from Blake to Lockhart, stating that Gascoigne would return to Tai Po on the evening of 17 April, and that Lockhart should be “guided entirely” by Gascoigne “as to the movement of the troops, [and] in the suppression of active opposition and armed attacks upon Her Majesty’s Forces”.<sup>85</sup> This was presumably because Gascoigne was fully in the picture on Blake’s current views, after his verbal discussions with Blake. However, Gascoigne did not, in the event, return to Tai Po on 17 April. In fact, he only returned to the New Territories on 19 April, after the fighting was over. Blake sent Lockhart a personal letter at the same time as this note, on the evening of 17 April, in which he made it clear that his views remained that military force should be avoided as far as possible: “Even though these people are on the hills, I am still anxious to avoid bloodshed if possible: but if they do not retire on knowing that we are in possession, then of course we must make them”.<sup>86</sup> This letter again puts the avoidance of bloodshed in the first place. Lockhart, however, only received this letter in the evening of 19 April, when the fighting was over.<sup>87</sup> There is thus no indication in the records that Lockhart, O’Gorman, or, crucially, Berger, learnt what instructions Blake had given Gascoigne in the evening of 17 April until after the end of the campaign.

Thus, while it is likely that Blake’s wishes were for minimal force to be used, with forbearance as the central policy, his instructions were sufficiently equivocal to allow Lockhart and O’Gorman to read into them permission to mount a Callwell-style suppression campaign, especially since his instructions

to Gascoigne of 17 April seem not to have been received until after the campaign was at an end.

That Blake's policy was posited on minimal force being used is the more likely since Blake consistently speaks of the insurgents as misguided and misled, but otherwise not to be considered as being at serious fault. He never calls them "rebels" or "the enemy", but usually simply "the people". On 12 April, as noted above, Blake accepted the statement of the Ping Shan elders that the people involved in the events of 3–4 April had been "led astray". In a letter to the G.O.C., Gascoigne, of 21 April, he called the insurgents "misguided peasantry".<sup>88</sup> On 28 April, in his report to the Secretary of State, he gave his opinion of the insurgents as: "Those people possess some of the qualities that make good subjects, and, foolish as their opposition may have been . . . their action disclosed no moral turpitude".<sup>89</sup> On 8 May, he stated that some of those active in the opposition to the British "may be useful members of the district councils", and, on 10 May, that he believed that "a good Chinese regiment could be raised" in the New Territories, presumably envisaging that the core of such a regiment would be taken from the men who had fought against the British so bravely.<sup>90</sup> In the light of statements such as these it is most probable that Blake saw the putting down of the insurgency as being more a matter of conciliating and guiding the villagers than of destroying them.

When the fighting ended Blake wanted the whole matter forgotten as quickly as possible, so that affairs could move towards his goals without being encumbered by bitter memories of the fighting. The leaders of the insurgency were, Blake insisted, to be treated well. No extra-legal or legal penalties were to be imposed on them, on their villages, or on the men who had followed them.<sup>91</sup> As noted above, Blake felt the insurgency was not in any way a case of "moral turpitude": it was not a criminal offence which should be punished. As he said to the Secretary of State on 13 May, the insurgents were merely: "A number of Chinese subjects who objected to being cut off from the Empire and handed over to a foreign government", or, in other words, that they should be viewed as a group of misguided but brave men demonstrating manly independence.<sup>92</sup>

After the insurgency came to an end, Blake was, as noted above, very eager to spare no effort to "beget confidence", implying at the least that no retribution should be exacted. His instructions to Lockhart were explicit (26 April): "I do not consider it advisable that any land should be confiscated in connection with the recent troubles . . . I do not consider it just or expedient that a vindictive retribution should be exacted". He went on: "doubtless clemency may be misunderstood", but, nonetheless, that was the way he wanted to play

things.<sup>93</sup> On 1 May, the Governor instructed Lockhart: “it is not my intention to exact any punishment for the events” of the War, and went on to say: “I should advise you to ignore what has passed”. He then instructed Lockhart to look for “the best material” to recommend for the district councils then in process of being formed, and to recommend whoever was best for the position, whether or not they had been significant figures in the insurgency.<sup>94</sup> When, on 8 May, Blake had to consider what to do about a group of gentry who had petitioned the San On Magistrate on 12 April, urging that the Lease of the New Territories be not proceeded with, he instructed Lockhart: “I cannot see any grounds for taking any action in the matter against the petitioners. Some of them may be useful members of the district councils”.<sup>95</sup> On 13 May, Blake summarised his policy towards the New Territories and towards the insurgent leaders in a despatch to the Secretary of State, when he said:

I hold that having restored order . . . our best policy is . . . to pass a sponge over the events of the past month, and leave them to discover, as they will in a short time, that our rule is not the grinding tyranny that they expected . . . It is to my mind not improbable that in the future the leaders in the movement may be our most useful assistants in carrying out the local arrangements in the new territory.<sup>96</sup>

Blake thus, at least three times, stated that leaders of the insurgency should be considered as members of the district councils he wished to establish. In the event, at least three of those identified by Lockhart as ringleaders in the insurrection were chosen to sit on the district councils. Tse Heung-po (謝香圃) of Sheung Tsuen, Tang Tsing-wan (鄧青雲) of Ping Shan, and Man Tsam-chuen (文湛泉) of Tai Hang were appointed district councillors, despite being identified as ringleaders in the insurrection. Man Tsam-chuen, indeed, was identified as a major ringleader, the prime mover in the burning of the matsheds on 3–14 April, and a major contributor in cash to the building of the cannon emplacements on 14–15 April.<sup>97</sup>

On 2 and 4 August, as noted above, Blake visited the New Territories, and met with the members of the newly appointed district councils from the Tai Po and Yuen Long areas, in other words with all the New Territories district leaders except those from Kowloon (whom he had met on 17 April), and those from the Islands (離島) and Sai Kung (西貢). At this meeting, as noted above, he made no allusion, not even very distantly, to the events of the War, a reticence entirely in line with his policy of “passing a sponge” over the events of April. Again as noted above, he reiterated to the councillors the view he had set out in his Proclamation of 7–9 April, and in his speech of 17 April, that is, that the new administration was to be one based on amicable

co-operation between the village leaders and the administration, under the rule of law, and that he looked forward to an era of friendly and intimate closeness. He then invited all the leaders to take tea, cakes, and cigars with him, while he discussed district affairs and his hopes for the future with them. He was impressed with the openness, intelligence, and shrewdness shown by the leaders. They, in turn, replied in speeches suggesting a huge sense of relief that the troubles of April were to be ignored for the future, and a new start made: "We are well aware that Your Excellency's policy in this territory is a kind and benevolent one, and your subjects are unanimous in their feeling of gratitude", "We know that Your Excellency is doing your utmost for the good of the people, and under your Government this outpost of the Empire will continue to be more and more prosperous, and the people enjoy greater peace and security", "We know that Your Excellency will treat us justly, considerately, and impartially".<sup>98</sup> The elders would have been very well aware that, had they risen up against the Government of Ch'ing China, retribution would have been harsh and widespread. Blake's obvious willingness to forget the past and start afresh, without any retribution, and even to allow leaders of the insurrection a public role in the new system, to the extent of taking tea and cakes with him, and discussing local affairs with him in a frank and friendly way, must have been a huge relief to them, and their fulsome praise of him and his policies should be seen as genuinely heartfelt.

On 19 November 1903, Blake, on the eve of his departure from Hong Kong, gave a Farewell Address to the Legislative Council, in which he outlined what had been achieved during his tenure as Governor. He put the establishment of the New Territories on a firm footing in the first place, seeing it as his most significant success.<sup>99</sup> In this speech he outlined his policy towards the War, gave reasons for having adopted this policy, and suggested that the policy had proved to be a success. He said:

The taking over of the New Territory was not accomplished without some trouble . . . Certain agitators inflamed the minds of the people by false statements as to the result of our occupation to such an extent that armed resistance to the transfer of the New Territory was agreed upon. On the 14th April the matsheds erected at Tai-pó Hu were destroyed and the police and troops who proceeded to the place preparatory to the ceremony of the 17th were attacked by large numbers of Chinese apparently under military direction. Reinforcements were at once sent out and formal possession of the New Territory was taken over on the 16th, so that our position should be made perfectly regular. After two engagements, in which the Chinese displayed considerable courage in acting against regular troops, and suffered some losses, the opposition collapsed . . . Order having been restored, the

question had to be reconsidered as to the system on which this apparently turbulent population of the newly acquired territory should be governed. Two courses presented themselves — repression or co-operation. The leaders of the people had been almost to a man actively engaged in the operations against us, but if these leaders were put aside and degraded from the position of local consideration and authority hitherto enjoyed by them, we should have been face to face with a hostile population without the means of communicating with them through trusted local intermediaries whose assistance is so essential to good government. I have had some experience in coercion. In certain situations it becomes necessary. But it engenders an ever-deepening distrust, atrophies local interest in preserving order, and with the lapse of time becomes day by day more difficult to abandon without danger to the public safety. I felt besides that these leaders would not have been guilty of such egregious folly had they not believed the scandalous statement of our intentions that were so freely circulated, and, believing them, I could not withhold a meed of sympathy for misguided men who dared to face in open fight an overwhelming power in defence of their customs and homes. I therefore chose the latter course . . . I met the elders and gentry of the districts at Tai-pó and Ping Shan [and] disabused their minds as to their fears<sup>100</sup> . . . I have recapitulated the general lines of policy in the New Territory, as on their soundness will depend the success or failure of this assimilation with the Colony of a large agricultural population with a reputation for turbulence, suspicious of foreigners, and with a rooted objection to any interference with their settled habits or customs. It is yet too soon to judge of the results, but so far they are promising . . . Confidence has been established, and the inhabitants have learnt to appreciate the benefits of the honest performance of official duties . . . Of this there was gratifying evidence in 1901 during the serious disturbance in the district adjoining the New Territory when the people who, two years before, had faced our troops with arms in their hands, sent a delegation of elders to request that I would send out to the frontier a small military force to prevent the entrance of disturbers of the peace, with whom they were no longer in sympathy, desiring to pursue their avocations with the quiet and security to which, as British subjects, they had become accustomed . . . I have especially dwelt upon the treatment of the problem to be solved in the New Territory because on the experience of the 400,000 Chinese in this Colony is formed the Chinese estimate of British justice and of the security that is to be found under the British flag.

In this speech Blake thus stresses his belief that the insurgents were misguided rather than rebellious, that the leaders were capable of working with the British, and that a new start without recrimination or repression and based on co-operation was the best and most politic way forward, and intimates his belief that the policy was, and would be, successful.

In his reply to this Farewell Address, Dr Ho Kai, as the Senior Chinese Unofficial, agreed with Blake's summary. He stated:

Your Excellency . . . your past administrative acts have given entire satisfaction . . . and won the confidence and respect of the whole of the Chinese community. I am confident, Sir, that they will be fruitful of the best results to the Colony and to the New Territory.<sup>101</sup>

All this is very clear: from first to last Blake had a consistent policy: he wanted no retribution or singling out of those who had risen up against the British, and a policy of flexibility and friendliness aimed at inducing a feeling of contentment and confidence at being under British rule, all this arising from a benevolent and co-operative Government. He wanted the War to be forgotten as soon as possible.

### **Suppression of Disorder with Minimal Force: The Example of Weihaiwei (威海衛)**

The takeover of Weihaiwei by the British can usefully be looked at in clarifying what Blake meant by calling for a minimal-force pacification in the New Territories, with military action being limited to bringing troops under attack to safety. The territory of Weihaiwei in Shantung (山東, Shandong) was leased to Britain by China in 1898, at the same time as the New Territories were leased. Britain formally took over the territory of Weihaiwei in 1899, but the delimitation of the new Weihaiwei border was not undertaken until the spring of 1900. This delimitation triggered armed opposition to the British by the Weihaiwei villagers in an insurrection which has a great deal in common with the Six-Day War.<sup>102</sup>

The village opposition in Weihaiwei was whipped up by gentry members and scholars from two major clans during March 1900. It was fanned by a lack of understanding of what British rule would imply (as in the New Territories, there had been very little attempt before the takeover to discuss practicalities with the village leaders): there was, in Weihaiwei as in the New Territories, a widespread fear that the British would force the sale of land to themselves at a fraction of its real value. The gentry leaders called for armed opposition, and set up training camps and mass meetings where inflammatory speeches were made. Confrontations between the British and the villagers occurred on 26 March, 28 April — 1 May, and on 5 and 6 May 1900. These confrontations became steadily more dangerous, and on 5 and 6 May about 3,000 insurgents



faced a small group of British soldiers (only twelve soldiers in the morning of 5 May, but about 130 in the afternoon of 5 May, and on 6 May), and, in cutting their way out of the situation they found themselves in, the British killed about 20 villagers on each of those days. The villagers, as in the New Territories, were hampered by very poor weaponry. As in the New Territories, the British soldiers involved were not ethnically British: in the Weihaiwei case they were Chinese, natives of Shantung, from whom a British Regiment had been formed in 1899.

The main differences between the fighting at Weihaiwei and that in the New Territories were two. In the first place, there were, in Weihaiwei, none of the dreadful failures in supply, intelligence, and leadership that marred the New Territories campaign. This may be because Weihaiwei was, at the time, under a Military Commissioner (the civil administration of Weihaiwei was only set up in 1902), so that military and civil affairs were under a single head, Col. A. R. F. Dorrard R.E. In the second place, Dorrard clearly saw the disturbances as civil disturbances, as Blake did in the New Territories, but got his minimal-force policy actually implemented by the officers under his command.

On 26 March, the British got to hear that a mass meeting of disaffected villagers was to be held in the Weihaiwei countryside, and a force of about 420 soldiers was sent to the site. There they found about 700 villagers gathered together. Col. Bower, who was in charge of the force, tried to explain to the village leaders that their fears were baseless, but he was shouted down, and things got ugly for a while. However, the soldiers fixed bayonets, and were able to arrest the ringleaders and disarm the rest, without any casualties. The ringleaders were taken to a jail on Liu Kung Tao Island (劉公島, Liugongdao), from where they were released some weeks later, without charges being brought against them.

On 28 April a small force of about 60 British soldiers stationed on the new Weihaiwei border was surrounded by about 2,000 villagers shouting that they would never sell their land. Col. Bower again tried to explain the position, and specifically stated that no land was to be purchased, but, again, things got rather ugly. Bower again arrested six ringleaders, but released them after a short time when the villagers refused to disperse without this. The following day, the British soldiers were surrounded by about the same number of villagers, and were unable to take any action, until they were reinforced on 30 April by a further 60 soldiers, and again on 1 May by a further 170, when the soldiers were able to move away from the site, without further problem. On these two days, 30 April and 1 May, the soldiers sought to move away from the sensitive area without a fight, having got an agreement from the Chinese Border

Commissioner that he would seek to clarify the situation with the insurgents, and issue an explanatory proclamation, and the soldiers wanted to move away to allow these clarificatory efforts to bear fruit (in the event, in fact, the Chinese Border Commissioner seems not to have attempted to issue any explanatory proclamation).

On 5 May a party of surveyors and 12 soldiers, under Major Penrose, who were engaged in marking out the new border at Weihaiwei, was suddenly attacked by about 1,500 villagers. Major Penrose was attacked when he came forward (probably to try once again to explain what was going on), and was injured in the head and legs, but was rescued. The British party then moved off in the direction of their camp, where a further 120 soldiers were encamped, firing at their attackers the while. In thus cutting out through his attackers, Penrose's small party killed three villagers. As they neared the camp, the sounds of gunfire brought out the 120 soldiers there, and they drove off the villagers, and brought Penrose and his party within the safety of the camp. In doing so, they killed a further 16 or 17. Captain Perreira was badly injured by a pitchfork thrust into his chest. The total casualties among the insurgents on this day are given as either 19 or 20. The following day, 6 May, the encampment, with its approximately 130 soldiers, was surrounded by about 3,000 insurgents (i.e. twice as many as the New Territories insurgents ever brought into the field at any one time). The soldiers took up defensive positions, and fired on the insurgents until they withdrew, allowing the soldiers to withdraw from the camp to a safer area to the east. The number of dead on this day is given as either 10 or 20: the latter figure is the more likely. On both 5 and 6 May, there were considerable numbers of wounded insurgents carried off from the field: at least some of these would have died subsequently. Injuries to the British side comprised Major Penrose, Captain Perreira, and three soldiers of the Regiment, none of whom died. The fighting on 5 and 6 May is called the Battle of Tsao-miao-tze<sup>103</sup> in British sources, and as the Battle of Taibo Shan (太薄山) in Chinese sources.

It will be seen that at no time did the British military in this instance undertake a Callwell-style suppression campaign to destroy the insurgents, but that on every occasion they treated the disturbances as civil disturbances, and did their best to pacify them using minimal force. On 26 March, and again on 28 April, the senior officer present tried to discuss the insurgents' grievances with them and to explain the misapprehensions about British rule which the villagers had. On both days, when this attempt to clarify the facts failed to make any impression, the expedient of arresting the ringleaders was tried. On 30 April–1 May the expedient of seeking the assistance of the Chinese Border Commissioner in clarifying the position was tried. On

5 and 6 May, the soldiers found themselves surrounded by the insurgents. On 5 May it was probably while Major Penrose was attempting to discuss grievances with the insurgents that he was cut down and wounded. The soldiers then, on both days, cut their way through the surrounding mass of the insurgents and moved off to a safer position. Had they not done so, they might have been massacred, especially on 5 May, when they were outnumbered two hundred and fifty times.

On no occasion did the British troops go onto the offensive at Weihaiwei, on no occasion, once the insurgents broke off the confrontation and retreated, did they pursue them. Once the insurgency petered out (after 6 May), the remaining prisoners (those arrested on 26 March) were released. No reprisals were enforced. No black-list of names of ringleaders was prepared, and no-one was subsequently treated with suspicion in Weihaiwei because he had taken part in the uprising. At the end, although the Weihaiwei insurgents put twice as many people into the field as those in the New Territories, the death-rate was less than ten percent of what was seen in the Six-Day War.

The Weihaiwei uprising thus shows how a major civil disturbance could be expected to be handled in this period. It can be taken as an illustration of what Blake was looking for in the New Territories, with every attempt being made to clarify and explain, attempts made to defuse disturbances by arresting the ringleaders, and, where fighting could not be avoided, keeping it to the minimum, and not following it up with pursuit. Certainly Weihaiwei shows no attempt to “destroy” the insurgents. This is the sort of thing that treating an uprising as civil disturbance and using minimal force would give rise to, and should be considered close to being the sort of action Blake had wanted in the New Territories.<sup>104</sup>

### **Lockhart’s Views of the Insurgents**

While Blake had been in Hong Kong for only a few months in April 1899 and had no background of Chinese studies, Lockhart had lived in Hong Kong for many years, and was a man with many close Chinese friends and admirers. He spoke and wrote excellent Chinese, and was a convinced sinophile. He had a reputation as an easy, pleasant, and sociable man. He was one of Hong Kong’s finest public servants. However, when faced with an anti-British insurgency, a different side of his character seems to have come into play, for he comes across during this period as rather stern, demanding drastic retribution for every anti-British action.

Lockhart thus took a very different line towards the insurgents than did

Blake. To Lockhart, only “good villagers” should be permitted to return to their normal way of life and exercise their traditional pursuits: anyone who had stepped out of line should be disciplined. Those who took part in the War should be punished severely. The leaders of the insurrection should be exiled, their houses destroyed and their property confiscated for the benefit of the public coffers. Villages supporting the insurgency should be treated drastically: their gates should be destroyed, and the major “offenders”, such as Kam Tin, should have their walls demolished. Villagers of influence who had not opposed the insurrection should also be punished, even if they had not personally taken part in it, since Lockhart felt they should have used their influence more effectively. The villagers should receive such a salutary lesson through the ferocity of the response to any opposition that they would be in a state of terror thereafter at the very thought of opposing the Government. He believed that leniency would be seen as weakness, and that only a merciless punishment meted out to every offender would achieve results: conciliation should wait until after due and salutary punishment. He felt strongly that he was the expert on Chinese affairs, and that Blake, only arrived in Hong Kong a few months before the outbreak, should take advice from him and not impose views on him. Lockhart clearly felt no need to attempt to negotiate with the insurgents: his only response to their uprising was to seek to have them driven off and dispersed, without any discussion between the two parties.<sup>105</sup> The differences between Blake’s view of the insurgents and Lockhart’s came to the surface during the fighting, but are most clearly shown in the surviving records from documents dating from after the combat came to an end.

Thus, on 18 April, Lockhart wrote to the Governor: “I wish to urge once more the importance of dealing with Un Long [Yuen Long] and Kam Tin in a drastic manner, and also with Ha Tsun [Ha Tsuen] in the same manner”,<sup>106</sup> and on 21 April: “the rapid and immediate action, which I recommended from the first, . . . has had the desired effect”,<sup>107</sup> but no document survives of a date earlier than 18 April which clarifies exactly what Lockhart meant by “a drastic manner”. The earliest document clearly showing Lockhart’s views is of 18 April. Lockhart reported then to Blake:

I made the teaching masters of Un Long [Yuen Long] appear before me, and told them their action in taking part in the resistance to British authority would certainly involve them in trouble,

but there is no evidence that these teachers had played any part in the insurgency other than not opposing it.<sup>108</sup> They were, however, men of influence, and Lockhart clearly felt they ought to have opposed it.

On 22 April, Lockhart wrote to Blake:

I strongly recommend that the ringleaders in the recent movement should be banished and their property confiscated . . . Large rewards should be offered for their arrest, and if the men are captured the rewards should be paid by the villagers concerned.<sup>109</sup>

The following day, 24 April, Lockhart urged the Governor:

The leaders in the movement should be dealt with severely. Any leniency shown would be misunderstood. Their property should be confiscated, and the proceeds applied to public purposes.<sup>110</sup>

A week later, on 30 April, he returned to this theme:

I trust it is Your Excellency's intention to deal in some way with the ringleaders in the anti-British movement. . . . It will, I fear, tend to shake the belief of the people in British justice if the rascals who have created all the trouble are allowed to escape unpunished.<sup>111</sup>

On 1 May he reiterated this view yet again in a letter to the Governor:

I have already informed Your Excellency that I am of opinion that it is necessary in the interests of peace and good order in the new territory that an example should be made of the ringleaders in the anti-British movement. If no steps are taken to punish them, the people will think that rebellion can be organized and carried into effect with impunity.<sup>112</sup>

Again, on the same day, in another letter to the Governor, Lockhart wrote, with regard to how the ringleaders should be punished:

It appears to me that the simplest plan would be to banish them from our territory, and to confiscate their property, devoting the proceeds to public purposes. These men did not wish to enjoy the benefits of British rule, so it will be no great hardship to them to transfer their energies to a soil more congenial to them.<sup>113</sup>

On 5 May, Lockhart again wrote urging exile as a suitable punishment for the ringleaders (in this case, the Sha Tau Kok elders who had petitioned the San On Magistrate, asking that the Lease of the New Territories be not proceeded with):

The persons who presented the petition do not desire to be governed by the British. It will therefore be no hardship to them to turn them out of our territory, and I recommend that they be sent away, as being dangerous to the peace and good order of the territory, and their property confiscated and devoted to public purposes. There can be no doubt that by disseminating such libels as are contained in the petition [i.e. that British rule would be harsh and expensive], the petitioners have helped to incite people and to work up resistance to British authority.<sup>114</sup>

Lockhart told the Governor that “those who resisted the British are beating about for an excuse to lessen the gravity of their offence”, and, by implication, that the governor was credulous for being willing to overlook their actions.<sup>115</sup>

At Sai Kung, a man called out in the street “two red-haired devils” when he saw Lockhart’s party on 29 April. Lockhart’s reaction was to demand that “extra police” be stationed in the town “until their behaviour improves”.<sup>116</sup> The implication is probably that the Sai Kung villagers should pay for the extra Police.

Lockhart’s view of the co-operation expected from the village leaders was that “the Government expects the gentry, elders, and villagers to co-operate in the maintenance of peace and good order”, which is, clearly, far less than the amicable co-operation Blake had in mind.<sup>117</sup>

Lockhart was strongly of the opinion that there should be communal punishment of the villages which had supported the insurgency, and of the families of the insurgent leaders, as well as of the insurgents personally. The clearest evidence of Lockhart’s attitude towards the families and villages of the insurgent leaders came on 22–23 April. When Lockhart heard of the murder of Tang Cheung-hing, he “instituted enquiries” and came to the conclusion (on very little evidence) that Tang Tsing-sz, Tang I-shek, and Tang A-mei<sup>118</sup> were implicated in it. Since these three were “already known” as “ringleaders in the anti-British movement”, Lockhart decided to punish their families and village (Ha Tsuen), since the three suspects had fled into Chinese Territory, and were hence outside his reach. He went to Ha Tsuen, and had the houses in which the three suspects lived with their families demolished and the ruins burnt: three other houses rented out by Tang Tsing-sz Lockhart had closed. Lockhart then ordered Ha Tsuen village to pay the widow of the murdered man \$15 a month.<sup>119</sup> The next day he amended this communal fine of a monthly payment to a single lump sum payment of \$1,200, to be shared between Ha Tsuen, Kam Tin, Pat Heung, Shap Pat Heung, and Ping Shan; Ha Tsuen to pay half, and the other four village areas to pay an eighth each.<sup>120</sup> Lockhart also, on 22 April, went on from burning the houses at Ha Tsuen to Yuen Long, where he burnt the Meeting House, which was

the communal property of the whole of Yuen Long District.<sup>121</sup> It will be seen that these acts punished the families of the three suspects (who lost their place of residence), the villages from which they came, and the whole of the wider community of which the village was a part.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Lockhart tended not to call the insurgents “the people”, or “misguided peasantry” as Blake did, but used much stronger terms, such as “rebels”, “the enemy” and so forth. On 23 April he told the villagers that: “good people would receive every protection, but that bad characters would be punished without leniency”,<sup>122</sup> or in another place, that “all good people would be protected, and should return to their work as usual, and that disturbers of the peace would be severely dealt with . . . well-behaved people will be protected and disturbers of the peace punished”<sup>123</sup> or, again, a day or so later: “His Excellency had instructed me to tell them [the village leaders] that all good people would be protected; that bad characters would be severely dealt with; and that they should carry on their occupations as usual”.<sup>124</sup> There can be little doubt that Lockhart meant, by “good people” and “well-behaved people” those who had not joined the insurrection, and, by “bad characters” and “disturbers of the peace” those who had joined it. In another place he spoke of the villagers who had gone to fight as “this rabble”.<sup>125</sup>

Lockhart’s intransigence seems to have stemmed from his deeply-held Confucian beliefs. Lockhart had been deeply impressed with Confucianism during his initial study of Chinese and Chinese culture, and was strongly of the opinion that Confucianism was something which ought to be upheld in full in the governance of Chinese people.<sup>126</sup> It would seem that, for Lockhart, if British political and legal systems were in conflict with Confucian norms in the governance of the Chinese by the British, then the Confucian norms should prevail.

Confucianism saw the governance of the people as being the province of the Superior Man. The Superior Man was a man of great intelligence, learning, and benevolence, who had been given the powers of governance by the divinely appointed Emperor. His relationship with the Common People under his authority should be a reciprocal one. The Superior Man should give up all his strength and intelligence to ruling the Common People with benevolence and for their benefit, providing them with governance which met their needs. The Common People should, in return, revere their leader, the Superior Man, and hold him in awe, giving him the absolute obedience which would allow him to provide the governance they needed with least problem. Their duties towards government were to “listen, understand, and obey”. They were required to live in accordance with Confucian morals and duties, living decent lives, without greed, or covetousness, or selfishness.

Confucian teaching placed little value on law. Edicts and laws were seen as statements issued by the Government which should teach the Common People the way they should live: they were thus idealistic moral statements rather than documents intended to be obeyed in every particular on every occasion. It was for the Superior Man on the ground to decide to what degree the Edicts should be obeyed, and he had the complete right to take another way if it seemed to him that the circumstances of the case on the ground required this.

Confucian thinkers were always horrified by the prospect of violent opposition to Government. Any such an act was an utter perversion of the proper way the Common People ought to live. It was anathema, and must be put down without mercy. There could be no mercy shown, for violent opposition was contrary to the divine way by which all men should live, to the divine order by which the world should be run. Chinese mandarins faced with violent opposition had no hesitation in using the most extreme force to wipe the opposition out: those rising up and all their relatives could expect nothing but death in battle, or execution once peace was secured. This had been the fate of those who supported the Taipings and Nien in the 1850s and 1860s, and those who had supported the lesser rebellions in the later part of the nineteenth century. Even those who had not taken part directly in the rebellion would be likely to suffer execution if the mandarins felt they had not done enough to stop it. In 1899, any rebellion against the Ch'ing authorities would certainly have been met by extreme force and condign punishment. Confucian theoreticians stated that violent opposition might be acceptable where the authorities had ceased to act as Superior Men should, behaving without benevolence, acting as wolves, rather than shepherds, to their flock. However, the authorities would never admit that their rule had failed in such a way, and hence only force could be used to destroy anyone rising up against them.

Lockhart saw himself as a Superior Man. He worked hard at doing what was right by the people. He tried hard to be a benevolent ruler. Where anyone of the Common People had been wronged by evil-doers, or had his property taken by bandits or pirates, Lockhart was indefatigable in seeking redress on their behalf. He was always open to any of the Common People with grievances or wrongs. He used his great intelligence to work hard to govern the Common People well, and ensure that Government addressed their needs. He was extremely hard-working. He was clean and incorrupt in his personal life, and never sought to make money from his position. He was, in fact, an ideal Confucian ruler. As such, he was indeed revered and admired by those who came into contact with him.



Lockhart, however, given his Confucian belief-system, could not accept that violent opposition could be anything other than an attack on the divine order of things, something to be put down without mercy. He knew that the British Empire at large, he personally, and the Hong Kong Government of which he was part, were all benevolent and working in the best interests of the Common People: no opposition could be treated as anything other than an evil act to be destroyed.

Lockhart also had to a great degree the standard Confucian cavalier attitude to law. Extra-legal, or even directly illegal action was more than acceptable to him if such action would be effective in the circumstances on the ground, and would be in accord with the greater aim of getting done what was for the good of the Common People. He was dismissive of the difficulties of getting things done through the law, the niggling problems of finding proofs that would stand up in Court, when the facts were quite clear to the mind of the Superior Man. In the Six-Day War Lockhart consistently urged extra-legal or illegal actions on the Governor, on the grounds that such acts would be effective, while Blake consistently rejected such proposals on the grounds that the Rule of Law must be upheld.

The blowing in of the gates of Kam Tin on 18 April was thus an illegal act: the villagers of Kam Tin had opened them to the Army, and the Army did not have to blow them in to gain access. The gates were blown in directly and specifically to punish the villagers of Kam Tin communally for having supported the insurrection: there could be no justification in Common Law for doing this. Lockhart, in fact, urged on Blake that all the villages supporting the insurrection should have their gates blown in in this way, and “major offenders” (he again had Kam Tin in mind), should have their walls destroyed, as a collective punishment for their anti-British attitudes, but there could be no possible legal basis for any such action. That Lockhart limited himself to just blowing in the gates of two villages was not due to any restraint on his part — owing to the dreadful supply situation, Berger only had gun-cotton enough for two gates, and then not quite enough to destroy the second set of gates effectively. Had there been more gun-cotton, Lockhart would without doubt have gone on to destroy many more.

As noted above, Lockhart consistently, and over a period of some time, urged the Governor to exile all those Lockhart identified as leaders of the insurrection. While the Governor, under Hong Kong law, had considerable powers of discretion in the exercise of the power of exile, he had no legal powers to exile the indigenous residents of the New Territories, whose right to continue to reside in their ancestral homes had been specifically guaranteed in the takeover arrangements. Yet again, Lockhart’s ruling that the villagers of

those he had decided were responsible for the murder of Tang Cheung-hing should be fined a huge sum communally to support Tang Cheung-hing's widow and sons was similarly illegal: as Blake pointed out, no punishment could be levied under Common Law until after a Court had found a man guilty, and even then the family of the condemned man could not be punished for offences he had committed.

Similarly, Lockhart's demolition and firing of the homes of those men of Ha Tsuen he believed to have been involved in the murder of Tang Cheung-hing, designed as a punishment on them and their families, was entirely illegal, as Blake pointed out in his very strongly-worded response to this initiative of Lockhart's. Blake was outraged at Lockhart's actions with regard to the houses at Ha Tsuen, and the imposition of a communal fine on the Yuen Long villages. He wrote on 23 April to Lockhart that his actions were "unfortunate". He noted that Lockhart was using strong-arm methods that would have been typical of Chinese Mandarins, but the fact that the villagers were used to such high-handed actions was no reason for implementing them in a British territory which was under the Rule of Law:

I have no doubt that fuller consideration will satisfy you that the means adopted were unfortunate . . . I have no doubt that the burning of the houses was effective, but we have come to introduce British jurisprudence, not to adopt Chinese.<sup>127</sup>

Lockhart was completely unrepentant:

I much regret that you consider the means adopted in connection with the atrocious murder of Tang Cheung were unfortunate . . . unless action had been taken at once to mark the horror which such a barbarous murder must inspire, an impression must have been created that we are powerless to deal with such a crime — an impression which would have received still further confirmation if no action had been taken until all the evidence necessary for a prosecution and conviction in a court of law had been procured.<sup>128</sup>

To this Blake replied (26 April):

All the arguments used would be equally applicable to any murder committed . . . You have the names of several, for whose arrests warrants can be obtained. This will mark very clearly that the law is not dead. The other means [i.e. burning the houses without going to law first] are doubtless effective, but the two systems mark the difference between benevolent despotism and law.<sup>129</sup>

In his personal diary Lockhart went further, expressing his disgust at the Governor's attitude, and at the Governor's unwillingness to accept Lockhart's views and suggestions. He wrote (on 25 April):

It is disappointing to say the least of it, not to receive the support which one has a right to expect from one's Chief, especially when there can be no doubt that the prompt action taken has had the effect of satisfying the people and making them believe in the justice of our rule. British jurisprudence is excellent in theory, but in practice was quite inapplicable to the state of affairs we found in existence when we took over the territory. I have not the least hesitation in saying that had we acted otherwise than we did and sat still doing nothing until we had tried to obtain strictly legal proof, which may never have been forthcoming, a most unfavourable impression of British justice would have been created among the people.<sup>130</sup>

This somewhat self-righteous statement expresses the differences of view between Lockhart and Blake extremely clearly: Lockhart was a believer in a benevolent despotism, and Blake in the Rule of Law. That the Rule of Law was an absolutely central part of British Imperial theory seems to have passed Lockhart by.

Lockhart was later to become Civil Commissioner at Weihaiwei. There he again, on a number of occasions, took extra-legal or illegal action where he felt this would be effective. Lockhart yearned to become Governor of Hong Kong. The Colonial Office in London was doubtful of him, and, in the event, May was chosen over Lockhart when the opportunity arose in 1912. There can be little doubt that the doubts of the Colonial Office were due to Lockhart's Confucian mind-set, and this tendency of his to assume that he could, at will, order extra-legal or illegal acts, if he felt this was in the best interests of the Common People. The Colonial Office noted that Lockhart would be a liability in any large colony, with a fully-fledged Legislature and a Judiciary (Weihaiwei, as a very small territory, had neither: Lockhart, as Civil Commissioner, ruled by decree, and he and his deputy, as Police Magistrates, were the only judicial officers there). Blake would doubtless have agreed with this judgement. Had Lockhart's actions during the Six-Day War been tested in the Hong Kong High Court, by, for instance, the families of the Ha Tsuen men whose houses were destroyed and burnt, then Lockhart would have been handled very roughly there, for taking what would, without doubt, have been ruled to be criminal acts.

Lockhart was, therefore, while a devoted and very successful colonial official, one with quirks in his mental outlook, a willingness to condone force and violence, and to take extra-legal action, which made him unusual. It was

Blake, with his consistent strong demand that the Rule of Law be maintained who was closer to the norm of the British Imperial belief-system.

It is thus clear that Lockhart's views were radically at odds with those of the Governor, and equally clear that he regularly distorted Blake's instructions to him.

In these circumstances, it is no surprise that Blake felt it necessary to write to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, to point out the differences of opinion he had with Lockhart, and to ask for London's support for his stance. On 28 April he wrote:

I attach some reports from Mr Stewart Lockhart, with my minutes on them that I do not think it advisable to attach to an open despatch. I do not approve of the burning of the houses of those persons stated to have been engaged in the murder, nor do I see how Mr Lockhart's order as to money payment could be enforced.<sup>131</sup>

On 13 May he wrote:

The correspondence between Mr Lockhart and me will show you that our views are very divergent upon the question of the treatment of the leaders of the movement. He strongly advocates their banishment and the confiscation of their property . . . I hold that having restored order and received petitions from a number of villages, showing that they are submissive, our best policy is, so far as the mere question of resistance is concerned, to pass a sponge over the events of the past month, and leave them to discover, as they will in a short time, that our rule is not the grinding tyranny that they expected. Indeed, were the other policy to be adopted, I question if I could legally take cognizance of any arrangements entered into by them before possession was taken over. It is to my mind not improbable that in the future the leaders in the movement may be our most useful assistants in carrying out the local arrangements in the new territory.<sup>132</sup>

Chamberlain in due course wrote expressing his complete agreement with Blake's stance. On 25 July he stated:

I concur in the view which you express . . . as to the inadvisability of any attempt to punish the ringleaders in the disturbances. At the time of their offence the persons who stirred up the population to resist the occupation of the territory owed no allegiance to Her Majesty, and were not in British territory.<sup>133</sup>

The *Hongkong Daily Press* got wind of the difference of opinion between Blake and the men on the ground in the New Territories, and devoted its

editorial of 19 April to pressing the point that the Army should be given a free hand, and not be constrained by conditions laid down by the civil authorities:

There is a rebellion in progress . . . and the Government must not hesitate to take such measures as may be necessary for its suppression . . . The British Government is responsible for the restoration of order in British territory, and the responsibility is one that cannot be shirked. Has General Gascoigne, then, been given a free hand to clear the country, or is it a fact, as we have heard suggested, that he is restrained by the civil Government? There seems some reason to suppose that the latter suggestion is not unfounded . . . General Gascoigne should at once be entrusted with definite orders to clear the country and be allowed to use an unhampered discretion in carrying out the orders.<sup>134</sup>

Lockhart, would doubtless have entirely agreed with this Press view.

### **The Official Reports: An Analysis**

It is in the context of these serious disagreements as to the correct way of treating the insurgents and their leaders that the contradictions between the bland statements of low casualties in most of the British official Reports, and the unofficial reports of heavy casualties, and the lists of the dead from village sources with their suggestion of high casualties, must be considered. The Governor would, on the basis of his statements of intent and policy with regard to the War, never have given permission for a massacre of the villagers. Lockhart clearly felt that a salutary and condign punishment should be meted out to the insurrectionists, and doubtless felt that a massacre, or something close to it, was exactly what should be implemented, even if that had to be done by flying in the teeth of his instructions from the Governor.

In the event, O’Gorman and Lockhart supervised a campaign which seems to have led to heavy death rates among the villagers, but they publicly stated that casualties were the “not known”, “some”, “not known” of Lockhart’s Reports, or the “not known”, “a few”, “small loss” of O’Gorman’s Reports. Certainly Maj-Gen. Gascoigne in 1899 seems to have accepted “small loss” as the truth of the campaign.

That there was a cover-up of the scale of the slaughter thus seems certain. Why this was so is less certain. Why Blake did not disown Gascoigne’s Report, and give London a more truthful account is equally unclear. There may have been an attempt to try to hide the facts from the Governor, although Blake

cannot have been unaware of the scale of the casualties after he met May on 20 April (after, however, the fighting was over). Lockhart may merely have wanted to defer letting the Governor know the facts until it was too late for Blake to issue new instructions. O’Gorman (and perhaps Gascoigne) may have wanted interest in the campaign to drop away quickly (as it would if death rates were seen as minimal) to avoid the dreadful errors and incompetencies of Military Headquarters being subject to any long-term investigation. Again, Lockhart and O’Gorman may have found themselves embarrassed by the actions of Berger on 17 and 18 April, and have wanted to sidetrack enquiries into why they had sent him off without written orders and unsupported by the involvement of his senior officers. Another aim of the cover-up may have been to mask the scale of the casualties from the authorities in London: Britain was engaged at the time of the Six-Day War in delicate negotiations with the Imperial Chinese authorities (the Boxer Rebellion was beginning at just this point in time), and any substantial death rate of Chinese people in fighting in Hong Kong would have made those negotiations more difficult and even more sensitive than they already were. There can be no doubt that Blake would have been well aware that London would not have welcomed being forced to face the reality of a heavy death rate, although it is probable that he believed that London would be quite complacent about such a death rate, so long as the authorities there were not required to take formal notice of it by having it spelled out in a Report formally submitted to them. Blake may also have felt that his instructions on 15–17 April were so equivocal that it would be better for him not to dispute Gascoigne’s report as incorrect, for fear that his orders would be subject to criticism in London.

Clearly, if there was an attempt to hide the actual scale of the deaths in this campaign, O’Gorman and Lockhart must have agreed between them as to what to say. O’Gorman does seem to have been a man of one mind with Lockhart. Lockhart wrote of him: “Col. O’Gorman and I have co-operated, and the results have, I trust, been satisfactory”, and again: “Col. The O’Gorman and I work together splendidly, so I trust we may be allowed to continue to co-operate”.<sup>135</sup> O’Gorman wrote in a similar vein: “To the Honourable J. H. Stewart Lockhart, CMG, Colonial Secretary, is due the admirable results that have been attained . . . his measures have been taken . . . in a manner that long experience has shown him were suitable to the occasion. The result has been a most complete success. . . . A most hearty co-operation has existed throughout between us and no difference of opinion on any one point has arisen”.<sup>136</sup> It can be assumed from this that O’Gorman had the same view as Lockhart as to the necessity of delivering a merciless punishment to those who “opposed British authority”.

Whatever the reasons for the cover-up were, it is at least clear that the cover-up began from the very start of the campaign, and that it involved Gascoigne as well as O’Gorman and Lockhart. The general consensus of the scale of the casualties on 15 April, the Battle of Mui Shue Hang, as noted above, was that it was significant, with perhaps fifty deaths. The communiqué issued on 16 April stated that the insurgents: “could not have escaped without loss”. The next day, 17 April, however, also as noted above, Gascoigne and Lockhart tried to tell the reporters of the *China Mail* that there had been “little or no bloodshed”. The reporters clearly expressed doubts: how could this be, they must have said, when the Police had, in the afternoon, been coolly taking careful shots “as if at target practice” (and the Sikh Police had a high reputation as marksmen), and when *Fame* dropped seventeen rounds of 12-pounder shells right into the insurgent entrenchments? Gascoigne’s attempted riposte, that all the firing had been “wild” clearly did not impress: the reporters continued to state that all the fire on 15 April had in fact been extremely accurate. It is, therefore, clear that Gascoigne and Lockhart were committed to covering-up the scale of the casualties before the major fighting of the campaign, on 17 and 18 April, even began.

It is certainly the case that the number of people present at the fighting who might have given a different view on the question of insurgent casualties was very small, making a cover-up at least feasible. The soldiers of the Hongkong Regiment were all Indian, who tended to keep their own counsel, and whose views rarely, if ever, influenced public opinion or were reflected in the local newspapers in Hong Kong. There were, it is true, several British military officials present in Tai Po during the Battle of Mui Shue Hang, on 15 April, from both the Army and the Royal Navy, but this day was, almost certainly, the day when the fighting produced the fewest casualties. On 17 April, at the Battle of Lam Tsuen Gap, there were only two British officers present, Capt. Berger and Lt. Barrett, both young professional soldiers. The British officers with the artillery had all gone off with Capt. Simmonds, and came nowhere near the fighting, on either 17 or 18 April. The only British doctor, Brown, of the Royal Army Medical Corps, had to withdraw from the field injured before the major attack, when the entrenchment at the Lam Tsuen Gap was stormed, began. On 18 April, the Battle of Shek Tau Wai, there were just four British officers and officials present, Capt. Berger and Lt. Barrett, and Lt. Col. O’Gorman and Stewart Lockhart. If Lockhart and O’Gorman had wished to cover up the insurgent casualties, they could not have asked for an easier situation to do it in. Barrett, it seems, never wrote anything substantial on the fighting.<sup>137</sup> Berger’s report was dictated to Stewart Lockhart, and entered into his private Diary, and never reached any official

repository. Simmonds' report, too, got no further than Lockhart's private papers.<sup>138</sup> The only reports that reached the official records were those submitted by O'Gorman and Lockhart.

There was, however, one further British official present in the area throughout the period of the Six-Day War, whose actions perhaps suggest he disapproved of the way things were handled. This was F. H. May, the Captain-Superintendent of Police. May was rigidly upright, rather humourless, and a noted disciplinarian. He was also a very fine public servant. Despite the undoubted severity of his personality, however, he seems to have shared with Blake the view that the relationship between the Government and the villagers should be one of amicable co-operation and close trust. May seems to have had the same views as Blake on the need to beget confidence, and to have shared also the view that the ringleaders should not be singled out for retribution.

May was present in Tai Po throughout the period of the Six-Day War, until 20 April.<sup>139</sup> For most of this time he was in charge of the base-camp at Flagstaff Hill in Tai Po. He spoke good Cantonese, and most certainly would have spoken with local villagers, and the various groups of coolies, and would have been very well aware of the villagers' understanding as to how many people had been killed. He must have undertaken the preliminary interrogation of prisoners taken and sent to the camp at Flagstaff Hill for safe-keeping.<sup>140</sup> May conveyed ammunition to Sheung Tsuen on the evening of 17 April, passing over the Lam Tsuen Gap as he did so, crossing the actual battlefield, only a couple of hours after the fighting. At Sheung Tsuen it is known he had a long conversation with the villagers, which ended in the villagers providing food for the troops, but which must also have given him considerable detail as to their views on the fighting by then just over.

May's role in the Six-Day War was thus significant, and a formal Report from him might have been expected. It would appear, however, that May kept completely silent, writing nothing which might give his views on the fighting. The only Reports he submitted were those on the problems he had experienced on 3–4 April, and again on 14 April. He submitted nothing on what he saw, learnt, or felt, about the fighting on 15–18 April, nor on the period immediately after the end of the War, or, if he did write anything, it has not survived. He did, however, verbally brief the Governor on 20 April, which is likely to be when Blake learnt that the press reports of heavy casualties, published in the English-language newspapers on 18 and 19 April, were correct, and that casualties had, indeed, been substantial.

It is likely that May disapproved of Lockhart's views as to the need for condign punishment. That disapproval with the way Lockhart was handling



things was the reason for May's silence in 1899 is suggested by what he was to do in 1912. May became Governor of Hong Kong in July 1912. By that date there was still one man in prison serving the life-sentence imposed on him as an accessory to the death of Tang Cheung-hing in 1899 — Ng Shing-chi, one of the ringleaders of the insurrection. May took immediate steps to have him released. A few weeks later, May arranged to have a private interview with Ng Shing-chi, at Au Tau (凹頭), near Ng Shing-chi's village of Sha Po, where May "wished him well".<sup>141</sup> This quite extraordinary behaviour by the Governor towards a convicted felon must suggest some very serious doubts in May's mind as to the way the events of 1899 had been handled, and reinforces the view that May's silence in 1899 arose from the same feelings of doubt. Certainly May's meeting with Ng Shing-chi at Au Tau was seen as support at the highest level for Ng Shing-chi, and, with him, all other veterans of the 1899 fighting, to play a full and equal role in public life in the New Territories, support which Ng Shing-chi took full advantage of.<sup>142</sup>



*Plate 1 British Officers of the Hongkong Regiment, 1897*

Lt. Barrett seated, second from left; Capt. Berger seated, fourth from left; Lt. Col. Retallick, standing, second from left



*Plate 2 British Officers of the Hongkong Regiment, 1902*  
Capt. Berger seated left; (at this date Lt. Barrett was in India)



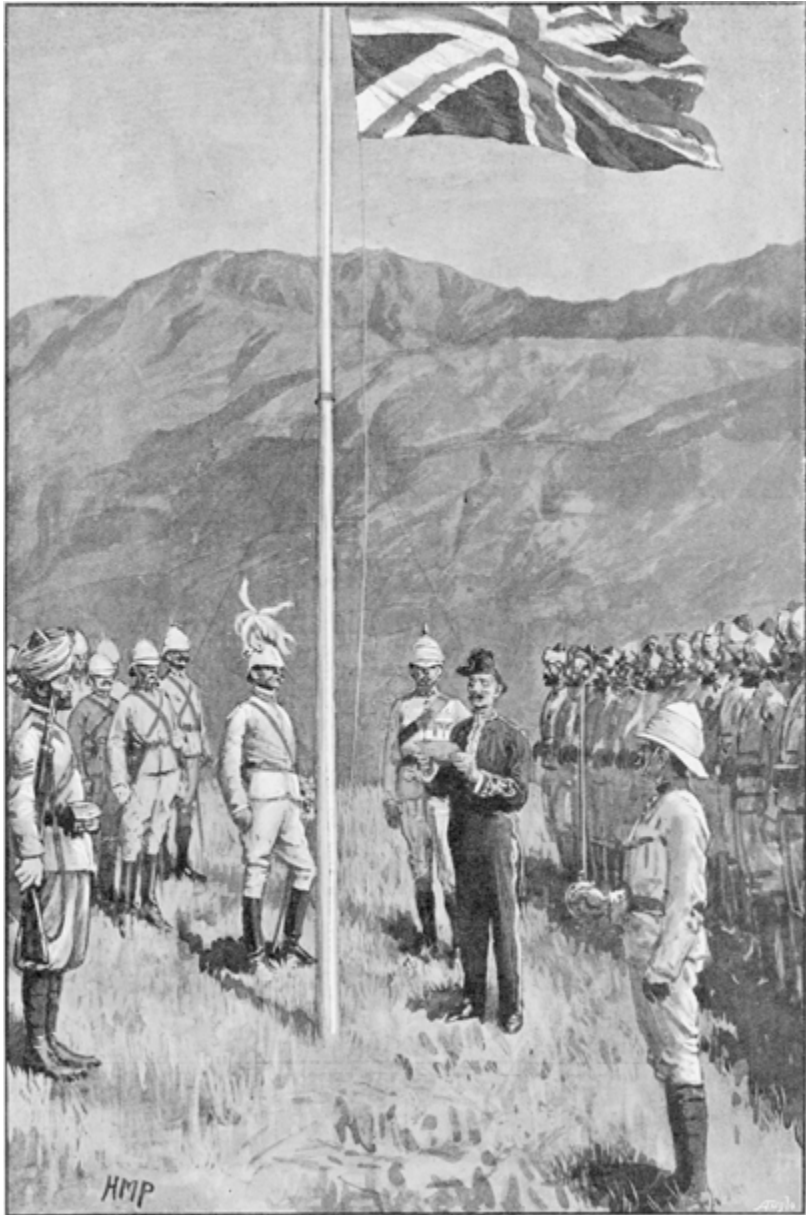
*Plate 3 Viceroy Commissioned Officers of the Hongkong Regiment, 1902*

(at this date, the Viceroy Commissioned Officers of the Regiment from the Wing which fought in the Six Day War were in India: this photograph is of the Viceroy Commissioned Officers from the other Wing)



*Plate 4 The Tai Po Area*

(from an aerial photograph of 28 December 1956)



*Plate 5 The Flag-Raising Ceremony at Tai Po, 16 April 1899*

(This drawing is taken from a contemporary photograph. The officer in black reading the Order in Council is the Colonial Secretary, James Stewart Lockhart. Opposite him, in a plumed helmet, is the General Officer Commanding, Hong Kong, Maj. Gen. William Gascoigne. Behind Lockhart, the tall officer in a white uniform and a helmet is the Commanding Officer of the Hong Kong Regiment, Lt. Col. J.M.A. Retallick. Behind Gascoigne are his Staff Officers: the one standing slightly in front of the others is Lt. Col. N.P. O'Gorman. The officer in the foreground holding a bared sword is Captain E.L.C. Berger. The soldiers drawn up on parade are from the Hongkong Regiment.)



*Plate 6 The Lam Tsuen Gap*

(from an aerial photograph of 6 November 1945)

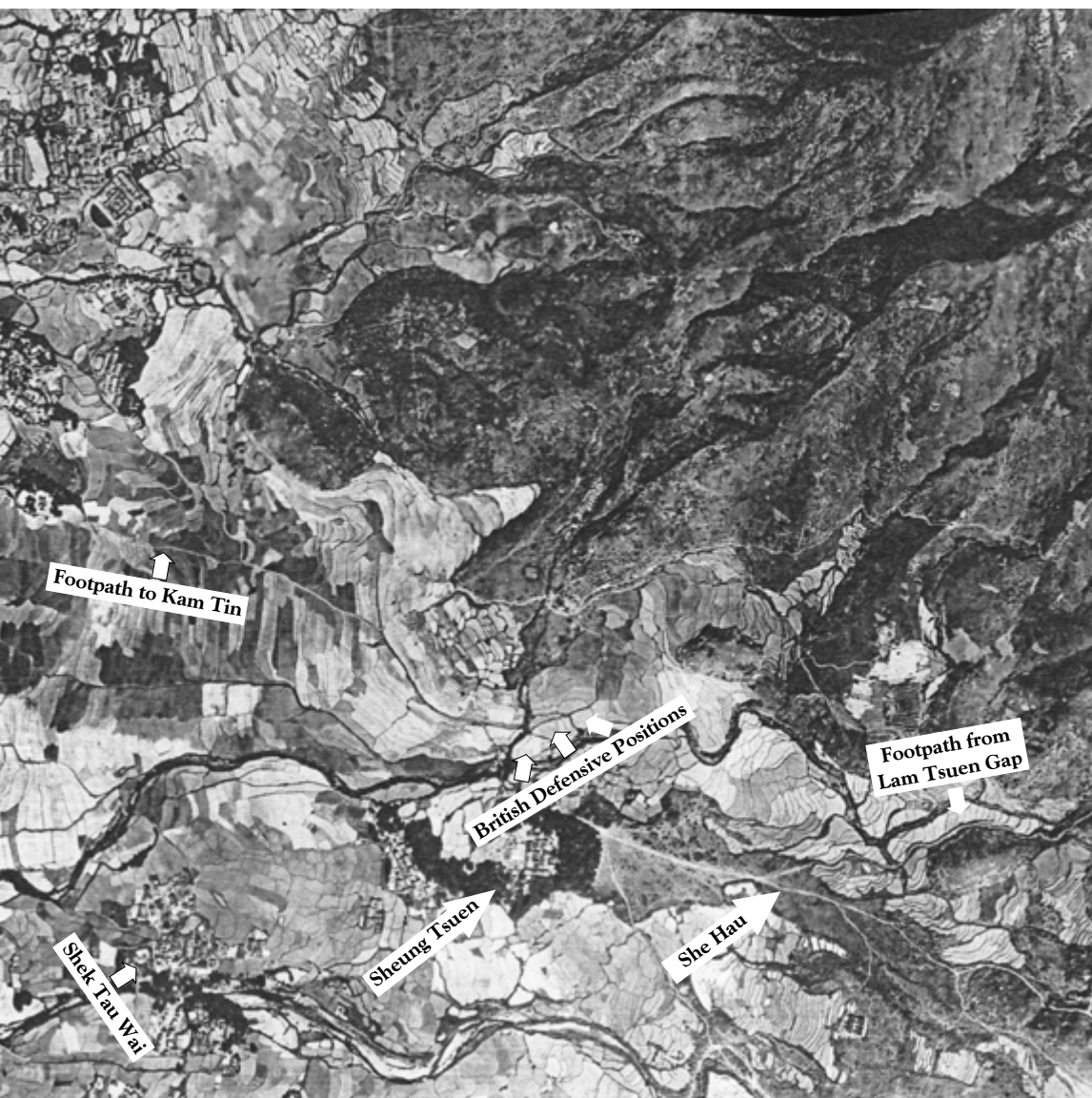


Plate 7 The Sheung Tsuen/Shek Tau Wai Area  
(from an aerial photograph of November 1945)



大清國大皇帝諭旨

大英一千八百九十一年四月九日  
 大清國大皇帝諭旨：批為香港展拓界址去年十一月  
 諭命來信言江業船工現擇於西曆四月十七日即中  
 大英一千八百九十一年四月十七日即中  
 諭命來信言江業船工現擇於西曆四月十七日即中  
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Plate 8 Proclamation issued by Sir Henry Blake on 9 April 1899



*Plate 9 Sir Henry Blake K.C.M.G., Governor of Hong Kong 1898–1904 and the Viceroy of the Double Kwang, Tan Chung-lin*

(Photograph taken on 2 April 1899, during the visit of the Governor to Canton to discuss with the Viceroy the inflammatory placards then being posted in the New Territories, calling on the inhabitants to take up arms against the British)



*Plate 10 James Stewart Lockhart, C.M.G., Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong, 1895–1902*

(Lockhart became Civil Commissioner, Weihaiwei, in 1902, and it is unclear if this photograph was taken in Hong Kong or Weihaiwei, but the date is about 1902)



*Plate 11 The Tat Tak Kung Soh, Ping Shan*

(The Hero Shrine is the Side-Hall on the left of the Plate, furthest from the viewer)



*Plate 12 The Tin Hau Temple, Tai Shue Ha*

(The Hero Shrine is the Side-Hall on the right of the Plate, closest to the viewer)



Plate 13 The Hero Shrine in the Yau Lun Tong, Kam Tin



*Plate 14 The Communal Grave at the Miu Kok Yuen Nunnery, Sha Po*



*Plate 15 Tang Fong-hing, one of the leaders of the insurrection, shortly after 1899*

醒公遺像



Plate 16 Ng Shing-chi, one of the leaders of the insurrection,  
shortly before his death in 1938





*Plate 17 Two Village Trained-Band Fighters from the Hong Kong area*

(This photograph was taken at the Pun Lun Photographic Studio, at the junction of Queen's Road and Pottinger Street, Central, in the 1890s, and it can thus be assumed that the two young men in the photograph came from a Trained-Band in the near vicinity of Hong Kong. Since most of the Trained-Bands in the area were involved in the Six-Day War, it is likely that these two young men were fighters in that conflict: indeed, it may well be the imminent likelihood of their being involved in a war that was the trigger inducing them to be photographed. The characters on the roundels on their chests mean "Strong and Brave", and are part of the traditional uniform of Chinese soldiers, hence the frequent use of the term "Braves" in English for them.)

# 6



## The Campaign: An Assessment

The Six-Day War cannot be seen as a shining example of British military genius. It was, in fact, a “text-book case of how not to conduct a campaign”.<sup>1</sup> Hong Kong Military Headquarters seem to have done nothing right, and the whole affair would have been a disaster for the British if it had not been for the extremely outdated weaponry which was, effectively, all that was available to the insurgents, and for the professionalism and skill with which Capt. Berger managed his men and conducted the campaign.

### Problems of Poor Military Intelligence

As noted above, all the British writers on small-scale warfare — Roberts, Hart, and Callwell — stress the vital role intelligence ought to play in such warfare, and urge that this be given a high priority in any such small-scale campaign. However, British military intelligence was notable throughout the period of the Six-Day War for its ineffectiveness.

The Hong Kong Government had been made aware in October 1898, as noted above, that the villagers were contemplating armed opposition to the takeover, and that they had been collecting money with this end in view. While it seemed that the movement towards armed opposition had become less dangerous during the Autumn of 1898, this cannot justify the total lack of any attempt to “keep an ear to the ground” between October 1898 and April 1899.<sup>2</sup> No hint of villager thinking seems to have been received in Hong Kong during this period at all. The Colonial Secretary, Stewart Lockhart

had contacts in the New Territories, but they seem to have sent back no intelligence as to villager thinking on the takeover. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, in a stinging editorial on 18 April, drew attention to this shortcoming:

It was known months ago that opposition was likely to be offered to the peaceable taking over of the new territory, and that money was being collected . . . for the purpose of organizing a sufficient force . . . The fact must not be lost sight of that the press was aware of the anti-extension movement months ago, and . . . it is incredible to suppose that our intelligence department has been in the dark all along with regard to the probable course of events . . . How is it that the events of the last week have been allowed to come as “bolts from the blue”? Surely our officials should have been in possession of information regarding the preparations made . . . We do not understand how it is that matters have been allowed to come to such a pass.

The Hong Kong correspondent of the *North China Herald*, the main Shanghai newspaper, also pin-pointed this shortcoming:

It has been very well known in the Colony for some time that there would be opposition to the taking over of the Kowloon Extension . . . It was provoking opposition to send only a few Sikh policemen [to Tai Po] . . . On the 15th our correspondent telegraphed us that the matsheds at Taipohu [Tai Po Market] had been burned down again — we should have thought that after this had occurred once, a sufficient force would have been sent to prevent a repetition of the outrage . . . the management of the affair seems to have been weak in the extreme.<sup>3</sup>

Even the burning of the matsheds on 3 April does not seem to have led to any attempt to improve intelligence-gathering in the New Territories. The Captain-Superintendent of Police, F. H. May, had been put in serious risk of his life, and troops had had to be sent to Tai Po on an emergency basis. However, the G.O.C., Maj-Gen. Gascoigne, decided that the villagers had been taught a lesson by the speedy appearance of the troops. He seems to have decided that there was no need to doubt that things would be smooth thereafter, and to have taken no action to check that this was a realistic assessment, and so seems to have made no attempt between 4 and 14 April to learn what the people in the New Territories were actually thinking and planning.

Between late March and mid April 1899, the Yuen Long villagers held at least half a dozen public meetings, involving dozens of elders on each occasion. Open letters were sent to all the major villages in the area. Inflammatory

placards were posted up. Military training was put in hand, which must have involved hundreds of young men. By early April everyone in the whole of the western and northern New Territories must have been aware that there was to be an armed insurrection. However, the Hong Kong Government only heard of most of this as late as 14 April, and then only because it received unsolicited warnings from “respectable inhabitants of the district”. Equally, the Government in Hong Kong only learnt on 16 April of villager plans to fire the Yaumatei waterfront, and that the original plan had been to attack during the Flag-Raising Ceremony on 17 April: had there been any effective intelligence gathering, this information should have been known in Hong Kong earlier than this.

The background to this failure of intelligence was probably a feeling that the New Territories villagers were only unsophisticated rustic backwoods ploughmen: “peasants” or “rowdies” as the Governor called them, “this rabble” as Stewart Lockhart called them. It would seem that the view in Hong Kong was that such rustics could not be a danger to the British, and thus they, and their capacity for trouble-making, need not be considered seriously. The British in consequence underestimated the insurgents at every point. On every day of the fighting, the British found themselves surprised by the military capacity of the insurgents. They were amazed at the high quality of the entrenchments put up by the insurgents (15 April), they were surprised that the insurgents were able to appear with their guns on the She Shan Ridge on 17 April without being spotted beforehand, and they were surprised at the effectiveness and strength of the Lam Tsuen Gap emplacement (17 April), and at the excellent order of the insurgent attack on 18 April, and their surprise and amazement is repeated several times in the surviving documents. The 36-hour delay in sending out any reconnaissance patrol after the fighting in the evening of 15 April is, again, another clear sign of underestimation of the insurgents. It is entirely likely that the high degree of military understanding which the insurgents showed was due to the military training the villagers had received in the local trained-bands.<sup>4</sup> The sort of training the villagers were receiving in the trained-bands, and the likely implications of it, should have been known to the British, and would have been had any attempt been made to gather intelligence before fighting broke out.

Although the British only took the New Territories over on 16 April, 1899, there would have been no problem in gathering intelligence over the previous eight months had there been the desire to do so. As noted above, the Government was in contact with village leaders during the period between July 1898 and April 1899, as, for instance, when village leaders petitioned the Government on some matter, or on the side-lines to British surveys in the

New Territories as to the route of the Kowloon-Canton Railway or for the new Police Stations, or when the richer villagers came to Hong Kong on business. Some of Stewart Lockhart's contacts were certainly active in the New Territories throughout the period.

This failure of intelligence did not end with the opening of hostilities, but continued to be an obvious source of problems throughout the fighting. Thus, when Berger and his single company were sent to Tai Po on 15 April, he was sent with no understanding of what he was going to face. He had, clearly, no briefing before he set off at all. He only learnt of the numbers of the enemy from a friendly villager in Sha Tin, en route for Tai Po, and he did not believe it until he got to Tai Po and saw things for himself. May was sent back to Tai Po on the morning of 15 April, with just 17 Police and small arms, to fend off well over 1,000 insurgents armed with cannon and jingals, an act which can only be justified on the assumption that no-one in Military Headquarters in Hong Kong had the slightest idea of what was actually going on. Simmonds, too, was clearly given only the most summary of briefings: he was instructed to take his guns in support of the "general advance" ordered on 17 April, but was not told the route Berger and his men had taken, nor given any way of keeping in contact with him. So Simmonds had to guess which way he should go ("My direction was NW over a good road . . . where I had seen a company of the Hong Kong Regt. advancing . . . judging this would probably be our line of advance" — see Simmonds's Report at Appendix 3). When Simmonds subsequently wished to contact Berger, the only way he could do this was to go himself, with an inadequate guide who kept getting lost.

It is symptomatic of the poverty of British intelligence-gathering that Berger's force was sent into battle without being accompanied by even one Chinese speaker, so that, on the evening of 17 April, far from being able to ask for information from the Sheung Tsuen villagers, he was unable even to ask for food from them, until the somewhat adventitious arrival of F. H. May conveying ammunition. Lockhart noted this as a problem, although only after the fighting had come to an end, on 20 April, when he reported: "There is no interpreter with the troops."<sup>5</sup> Another example of the same sort of thing is that, on the morning of 18 April, Berger believed that a further attack by the insurgents was impossible, even though one was being prepared just four miles off, near Kam Tin, and so felt safe in sending half his men off on a long-range patrol along the southern flanks of the Kam Tin Valley to see if there were any insurgent forces there (clearly he was unable to get any intelligence as to whether this was so or not), while he took most of the rest back to Tai Po to load up with supplies, leaving the Sheung Tsuen position very exposed to

attack. Berger was clearly unable to get any news of what was happening at the other end of the Kam Tin Valley.

### **Supplies and Transport: Logistical Failures**

That Roberts, Wolseley, Hart, and Callwell were united in seeing transport and the provision of supply as the single most important factor in any small-scale campaign is very clear, as noted above. Military Headquarters in Hong Kong, however, seem to have ignored supply and transport as a problem to be addressed in the Six-Day War.

Berger was thus sent to Tai Po on 15 April without food, tents, or any other supplies, apparently on the bland assumption that he would be able to get such things in Tai Po: when he could not (everyone having fled from Tai Po Market), there was no fall-back position prepared. Similarly, the Asiatic Artillery had been sent to Tai Po by forced march overland, and their guns had been sent round by sea, but it was assumed that they would only be required to fire the ceremonial salute, and so no provision was made to send mules or other draught animals to Tai Po. There was thus no provision made for what was to be done if the guns were needed for active service. At best, it was assumed that the troops would be able to find oxen, or coolies, to haul the guns when they got to Tai Po: had there been any intelligence gathered, it would have been known that this was unlikely. As it was, Simmonds was forced to put his gunners into the traces so that they might haul their guns themselves, which they did very slowly, and, probably, very unwillingly.<sup>6</sup>

Presumably because it was assumed that the appearance of Berger and his soldiers would immediately cause the insurgency to collapse (in itself a failure of intelligence), it was not felt necessary to arrange supplies for him. He was sent with just 40 rounds of ammunition per rifle, and with no immediate way of getting more. He was sent with rations for just one meal, which was eaten at mid-day on 15 April: nothing was done for many hours about providing him with any more food (his men next ate 24 hours later, in the late morning of 16 April). Roberts and Wolseley both insisted that their soldiers must not go out without two to five days rations in their packs, and ten to fourteen days rations stockpiled close behind them: Military Headquarters sent Berger out with just half a day's rations, and no stockpile was prepared until a couple of days later. Berger was sent out without tents (the first tents to go up at Flagstaff Hill were erected in the early afternoon of 16 April, and no tents were put up for the troops at Sheung Tsuen until 19 April), no spare uniforms, no medical supplies (the Royal Army Medical Corps staff — a single doctor and orderlies

— only arrived late on 16 April), and no money to purchase anything found lacking.

Once the other 300 men of the Hongkong Regiment arrived at Tai Po on 16 April, the same lack of effective arrangements about supplies can be seen. Supplies were sent out on 16 April with the reinforcements, and arrived at Tai Po about noon on that day, but nothing was done about sending them on from the camp at Flagstaff Hill to where the troops actually found themselves. Berger went onto the attack at 12.35 on 17 April. He drove the insurgents from the She Shan Ridge, and then the Chung Uk Hill, led his men the seven miles through the Lam Tsuen Valley, stormed the insurgent emplacement at the Lam Tsuen Gap, and pursued the fleeing insurgents a further two miles to Sheung Tsuen, where he stopped, well after dark. His men had been without food since first light on 17 April. They were nearly out of ammunition: what ammunition they had carried with them had, to a large degree, been expended during that day's fighting. They had, in the evening of 17 April, no blankets, tents, supplies, or money.

By the evening of 17 April there were indeed tents and blankets, an ammunition dump, and rations stockpiled at the Flagstaff Hill camp, but little thought seems to have been given as to how they were to be moved out from Tai Po to where they were needed, nine miles off. It would seem that it had been assumed that coolies would be easily employed at Tai Po, but, in the event, few could be found, since most of the villagers had fled into the hills, and the remainder were unwilling to work for the British while the area was a combat zone. As May noted with regard to the burning of the matsheds on 3 April, Chinese people working for the British were regarded as traitors by the insurgents, and were at risk of their lives. Few New Territories villagers were, therefore, willing to risk themselves for the small sums they would have earned as coolies carrying goods for the soldiers.

During 17 April, O'Gorman and Stewart Lockhart discussed the problem of finding coolies, but could come up with no answer: the possibility of press-ganging coolies was considered, but Lockhart vetoed it, since it was clear that any attempt to do so would merely cause the few remaining villagers in the area near Tai Po to melt away into the hills.<sup>7</sup> This failure to arrange for the movement of supplies was a major one. No answer to the problem was found before late in the evening of 17 April.

At no stage does it appear that any real thought was given to shipping mules, horses, or coolies out to Tai Po from Hong Kong to carry supplies from Flagstaff Hill. Lt. Keyes states that shipping coolies out from Hong Kong was considered early on in the campaign, but the first group of coolies hired, when they learnt where they were expected to work, all ran away. The *China Mail*

refers to what is probably the same attempt to recruit coolies at the start of the campaign. On 16 April, the reporters of the newspaper were accompanying the baggage train. As this passed through Kowloon City Market: “an effort was made to obtain the services of some more coolies, but no-one would volunteer for the journey”.<sup>8</sup> Keyes also says that other coolies approached, considering the risks to their lives, demanded danger-money (\$5 a day, as against the normal daily fee of 20–25¢). Military Headquarters considered this price too high, and the idea was dropped, and never apparently re-considered.<sup>9</sup> No hint is given in any of the sources that any thought was given to sending mules, horses, or oxen to haul supplies.<sup>10</sup>

It was as a result of this lack of coolies that Lt. Keyes of *H.M.S. Fame* had to use his own ratings on 15 April to land the stores he was carrying at Tai Po: “the ship’s company worked admirably, and from 9 p.m. until midnight have been landing stores, bedding, etc for the Hongkong Regiment, wading several hundred yards with their loads, nearly all the coolies having failed”.<sup>11</sup> This incident clearly rankled with Keyes, for, forty years later, he again described the incident, from memory, which had obviously remained vivid: “the whole of the *Fame*’s ship’s company turned out for the next three hours, wading with heavy loads through half a mile of shallow, muddy water, and carrying the stores up to the camp on the hill” because “there were no coolies”.<sup>12</sup> While the Royal Navy prided itself on being able to do anything demanded of it, such heavy stevedore work would not normally have been undertaken by naval ratings.

Simmonds was similarly forced to use his gunners to haul his guns on 17 April because of this complete absence of coolies. Again, the first group to convoy ammunition to Berger, late in the evening of 17 April, comprised naval ratings, under the command of F. H. May, the Captain-Superintendent of Police, and included no coolies. Even more telling as to this complete lack of coolies was that Berger was forced to send a squad of his men on the eighteen-mile round-trip to Flagstaff Hill in the evening of 17 April, despite these men being exhausted after nine continuous hours of fighting, to pick up blankets, and his being forced to lead most of the rest of his men on the same long journey at dawn on 18 April to get breakfast and pick up a few more supplies.

However, once Man Tsam-chuen and the other Tai Po elders had decided to pull the Tai Po brigade out of the insurgency, and had gone to kowtow to Gascoigne (mid-day on 16 April), Tai Po was no longer involved in the conflict. The men of Tai Po drifted back home during the evening of 16 April, and the morning of 17 April, once the news of their recall reached them.<sup>13</sup> With their men safely home, and their elders having publicly accepted



the British, the attitude of the Tai Po villagers to working for the British changed. May was thus able to engage some coolies from among the Lam Tsuen villagers late in the evening of 17 April, as he passed through the area with his ammunition convoy, and Simmonds also managed to engage a gang at about the same time.

Of the coolies May thus engaged late in the evening of 17 April, the first gang, who agreed to start work immediately, were, as noted above, overworked by O'Gorman, and eventually abandoned their loads and ran off into the hills, at about four the next morning. The second gang May engaged, however, were to start work at first light on 18 April, and these fifty or so coolies were busy carrying ammunition and a few other basic supplies to Sheung Tsuen during 18 April. As noted above, a coolie can only carry 100 pounds weight over any distance, and these fifty coolies could thus only carry 5,000 pounds at a time, and, given the eighteen-mile return distance, could not do two trips in a day.<sup>14</sup> 5,000 pounds, especially with much of this weight taken up by ammunition, was nothing like enough to get all the supplies needed to Sheung Tsuen for a force of about 450 men, especially as most of what was carried to Sheung Tsuen, whether by this gang or by convoys of naval ratings, did not reach Berger until quite late in the evening of that day. Simmonds's gang, too, was engaged to start work at first light on 18 April: given the success he had in moving his guns the eighteen miles to Sheung Tsuen through Fanling, it is likely that Simmonds's gang comprised fifty or more coolies as well, allowing the coolies to be taken out of the traces for one hour in two, or even for two hours in three, and so keep hauling the guns without fear of exhaustion.

It is thus clear that, even though May and Simmonds were able to engage gangs of coolies to work from first light on 18 April, the numbers May was able to engage were entirely inadequate to carry everything Berger needed to Sheung Tsuen. In particular, they were only able to bring a very small quantity of rations, so that Berger and his men, after their seven hours of continuous fighting and marching on 18 April, were only able to have a highly inadequate meal of "rice and a little Chinese sugar".<sup>15</sup> O'Gorman specifically states that the convoy brought "nothing for officers".<sup>16</sup>

The problem of inadequate numbers of coolies, and the difficulties of getting supplies to the troops only really eased in the afternoon of 19 April, when, after the surrender of the insurgents, the Yuen Long people began to be willing to sell supplies to the troops, and to carry them to where they were needed.

If the initial problem of inadequate provision for supplying the troops was due to the assumption that the insurgency would collapse as soon as Berger arrived at Tai Po, and that a show of force, without any actual fighting,

would be enough to end it, the continuing problems were clearly due to the pace of the campaign being such that the fighting troops were always about 24 hours ahead of their stores: the Military Headquarters just never caught up with things until after the fighting was all over.

*H.M.S. Fame* brought some supplies out to Tai Po in the evening of 15 April, i.e. the supplies which the naval ratings needed three hours to unload and bring on-shore, but these supplies seem to have been mostly limited to ammunition and the artillery. Tents and blankets were also landed, but the tents were not erected until the afternoon of the next day, 16 April.<sup>17</sup> As a result of all these failures in supply, May and his Police, and Berger and his troops, seem to have had very little food on the night of 15 April, and again on the morning of 16 April. When the *Wing Kwai* picnic party (including the reporters of the *Hongkong Daily Press*) reached Tai Po, they found the Police “half-famished”, and off-loaded much of the food they had brought for their picnic, in order to allow the Police a decent meal.<sup>18</sup> This act of charity was doubtless well received, but is stark evidence of just how inadequate the supply situation was on 16 April. Similarly, May and Berger and their men had to spend the night of 15 April in the open, on the inhospitable slopes of Flagstaff Hill, without tents.

Further supplies, including rations and more tents, arrived at Flagstaff Hill during 16 April, but Berger and his men were to be effectively out of reach of these stores throughout 17 and 18 April. Berger was thus to be without food throughout 17 April (after his breakfast at first light, eaten at Flagstaff Hill), and again without food for most of 18 April, apart from his inadequate meal of beef and rice at 2.00 a.m., his hurried breakfast at Flagstaff Hill when he brought his men back there, and his totally inadequate meal of “rice and Chinese sugar” at about 10.00 p.m.<sup>19</sup> He was without tents for both nights, and only had blankets because he sent a squad back to Flagstaff Hill to get them: on 17 April the very heavy rain made this open-air bivouac singularly unpleasant. On 19 April, Berger and his men cannot have had anything more for breakfast than the remains of the previous evening’s “rice and Chinese sugar”. He then had to lead his men on a gruelling six-hour march to Ping Shan. By the time he arrived there, in the early afternoon, tents were going up at Sheung Tsuen, but there were no tents with him at Ping Shan. By the time he got to Ping Shan, too, rations were arriving at Sheung Tsuen, but not to Ping Shan. He would have spent another hungry and unpleasant day and night at Ping Shan if the villagers of Kam Tin had not offered the troops a good mid-day meal, and if the villagers of Ping Shan, after the surrender, had not been willing to provide food and shelter for the evening.

Simmonds had been present when the coolies abandoned their loads and ran off into the hills at 4.00 a.m. on 18 April. He was thus very aware of the dangers of over-working the coolies, and the risks of their running off. On 18 April he knew he had to work his coolies for a full ten hours if he was to get his guns to Sheung Tsuen: if he was unable to feed them, they would inevitably run off. Unfortunately, he had no supplies, and no chance of getting any from Flagstaff Hill, as all his coolies were needed for the guns. In this quandary, he used his guns to blow in the gates of Fui Sha Wai at Tai Hang, despite Man Tsam-chuen's surrender to Gascoigne on 16 April, and took rice he found stored in the gate-house to feed his coolies: he himself and his gunners were probably fed by the Fanling villagers, anxious to stand well with the British — as he said: “the people of Fanling treated us well”.<sup>20</sup>

On 19 April, P. S. St. John, the Commander of *H.M.S. Peacock*, in a report to the Commodore, noted the detachment of naval ratings to “convoy coolies with stores”, and made clear his unhappiness at the lack of coolies and the consequent need to use naval personnel as stevedores and for convoying stores by saying: “The Commissariat Department seems to have made some very unsatisfactory arrangements”.<sup>21</sup> The *China Mail* made the same point: “The transport arrangements have been very irregular”.<sup>22</sup> The *Hongkong Telegraph* also noted this problem of poor logistical support: “Then came the difficulty of transport for, during the last few days, it has been next to impossible to obtain coolies to act as carriers for the troops”.<sup>23</sup> The *Hongkong Daily Press*, on 21 April, also identified the lack of coolies as a serious problem: “A great difficulty has been experienced in getting hold of coolies, the villagers having been threatened with death if they do anything for the Europeans”. The *China Mail*, on 19 April, describes the difficulties of the troops encamped at Sheung Tsuen in some detail, and again on 21 April: “The troops operating against the rebels have had to undergo great hardships on the march. There are no tents in the camp at Pat-heung, only blankets . . . Some shelter was found in the villages, but the men have had many a drenching during the week.” On 22 April, the *Hongkong Telegraph*, in an editorial summing up the newspaper's views on the campaign pointed to this as the greatest problem shown up by the campaign:

Another point to which the attention of the authorities requires to be drawn is the difficulties experienced in obtaining transport . . . There were no coolies forthcoming to carry the kits and rations for the men, so that they were greatly hampered by the want of a good commissariat . . . Had a few mules been available matters would have been very different . . . This weak point in our arrangements, for so it has been proved to be, is worth a little attention on the part of the authorities.

It is likely that Berger would, at least privately, have agreed with these assessments.

One point of interest in this question of supply, is that, no matter what the shortages, supply does not seem to have been extorted from the villagers. Roberts and Hart, as noted above, stress that nothing should ever be commandeered from villages because of the adverse effect this would have on the situation. Villagers not in arms must not be exasperated so as to turn them against the British, on the contrary, everything must be done to give the villagers a positive impression. Anything needed must be paid for, in cash, and on the spot. Lockhart was entirely in agreement with this: as noted above, he ordered that “good villagers”, who had not been involved in the insurrection, were not to be molested.

Berger seems to have entirely accepted the importance of this view. However, he had been sent out without any money, so was unable to pay for supplies needed. He and his men were thus forced to sleep on the ground on 17 April, since Berger clearly accepted that it would be improper to attempt to commandeer village houses, or other buildings. Berger at no stage took food from the villagers: he and his men went hungry when supplies failed. Simmonds expropriated rice from Tai Hang on 18 April, to feed his coolies, after blowing in the gates of Sheung Wai, but this was the sole case of the kind. The food supplied by Sheung Tsuen to Berger late at night on 17 April was, without doubt, to be paid for, and the food supplied by Fanling to Simmonds on 18 April, and by Kam Tin to O’Gorman and the troops at midday on 19 April, were doubtless free-will gestures by the villagers designed to placate the military. It is true that Lockhart, after blowing in the gates of the two Kam Tin villages, had taken the gates as spoils of war, and given them to the Governor, Sir Henry Blake (in 1925, however, the then Governor, Sir Reginald Stubbs, had them brought back from Blake’s house in Ireland, and returned to Kam Tin with great ceremony). The removal of the gates, and Simmonds’ rice, are, however, the only things mentioned which were taken from the villagers.

The failure of Military Headquarters to get tents to the troops in the field, especially given the very high risk of heavy rain, was similarly a serious matter. Hart, who was very interested in the problem of keeping troops healthy, was adamant that troops should never be required to bivouac under the open sky unless absolutely forced, since nothing was so likely to cause disease to strike. Roberts, too, disliked bivouacs except in extreme cases. Hart also stressed the need to have good supplies of clean, dry clothing for the men to change into if they were caught in heavy rain.<sup>24</sup> Berger and his men, however, were forced to bivouac for three successive nights, were drenched to the skin on

one of those nights, and seem to have had no access at all to dry uniforms, or even blankets, until they went back to Flagstaff Hill to collect some.

### **Problems of Command**

Another inadequacy was the question of command. Command was diffuse, unclear, and patchy throughout the period of the fighting. The greater part of the Hongkong Regiment was sent to Tai Po. The Commanding Officer of the Regiment, Lt. Col. Retallick, came to Tai Po by ship on 16 April. However, the G.O.C., Maj-Gen. Gascoigne, was also present at Tai Po, and decided that he would give command to his Chief Staff Officer, Lt. Col. The O'Gorman, Gascoigne's Deputy Assistant Adjutant General, who was also a personal friend of Gascoigne's, and Retallick was sent back to Hong Kong.<sup>25</sup> The normal way for a campaign of this sort to be conducted at this date would have been for the Commanding Officer of the Regiment to take command of the troops, with some sort of Force Commander at the base camp to liaise with Military Headquarters, and to control supplies. If only one officer was felt to be necessary, then it would normally have been the Commanding Officer of the Regiment. Gascoigne's dispositions must be seen as unusual. Col. Retallick, and the men of his Regiment, would most likely have seen Retallick's being passed over as a public insult. Gascoigne's dispositions strongly suggest that he found it difficult to trust young officers,<sup>26</sup> or officers he did not know personally: he either wanted to take command himself or have his Staff Officers do so. The Governor's expressed wish to "have a prudent officer in command" may also have influenced Gascoigne's preference for an older officer. It is possible that distrust of Indian Army Officers (like Retallick) on the part of career British Army Officers (like Gascoigne) was involved as well: such distrust between officers of the two main British Armies was not uncommon in the late nineteenth century.

When fighting actually started, on 17 April, Gascoigne initially took over command personally. This must be seen as a strange decision. The proper role of a G.O.C. is to stay behind the lines, not interfere in the command of a group of soldiers comprising a mere four companies.<sup>27</sup> However, Gascoigne, as soon as the fighting started in earnest, suddenly left the scene to return to Hong Kong to seek political approval from the Governor, leaving O'Gorman in charge. This disruption to the chain of command, done while fighting was actually in hand, cannot but have caused problems. Furthermore, O'Gorman was left in command at a time when Berger was already several miles away fighting at Lam Tsuen, and between the camp at Flagstaff Hill and Berger's

front-line position there was no way of sending signals.<sup>28</sup> O'Gorman was quite unable to exercise command in any way, unless he tried to catch up with his troops, which he made no attempt to do. In fact he stayed in the Flagstaff Hill camp throughout 17 April, holding discussions with Stewart Lockhart, joining up with the men at Sheung Tsuen only about 1.00 p.m. on 18 April. Berger, in other words, was on his own throughout 17 April and the morning of 18 April, and had no senior officer, either to control or advise him, or to give him orders: indeed, during 17 April, Berger was not even aware of who his senior officer was, since it was only when May brought the ammunition to him late that night that Berger would have learnt that he was under O'Gorman's command. During the fighting on the afternoon of 18 April, it was clearly still Berger who made all the decisions, even though he dutifully went through the motions of seeking O'Gorman's permission.

O'Gorman was a bluff and hearty man, a sportsman, and a man capable of making and keeping friendships.<sup>29</sup> He does not seem, however, to have had the knack of inspiring confidence and respect from his subordinates. His relationship with the officers in the campaign from the Royal Artillery seems to have been particularly poor.

As noted above, British field-guns, even the mountain guns used in this campaign, required a good deal of power to move. In the New Territories area, movement of the guns would have required cutting back undergrowth, and, in many cases, widening footpaths, requiring even more coolies. O'Gorman seems to have had no understanding of the practical problems of moving the guns. Simmonds clearly felt that O'Gorman was so blind to the practical problems of moving the guns that his orders were, effectively, meaningless, and hence treated O'Gorman's orders with scarcely veiled contempt.

Simmonds received four direct orders from O'Gorman, and none of them were implemented. The first, at 1.45 p.m. on 17 April, was to take his guns in support of Berger's infantry. O'Gorman, however, could not provide Simmonds with coolies or draft animals to haul the guns, and ordered that the gunners haul the guns themselves: an escort of riflemen from the Hongkong Regiment would protect them. The guns were soon, as noted above, far behind Berger's front line. By early evening, Simmonds was five miles behind, and had only reached Chung Uk Hill, with his gunners absolutely at the last reserves of their strength.

O'Gorman then ordered Simmonds to return with his guns to the camp at Tai Po. Simmonds received this order in the early evening of 17 April. Since Simmonds clearly believed this to be an impossibility, given his men's exhaustion, and the obvious impracticability of wrestling the guns through the river at Hang Ha Po in the dark, he went himself to Tai Po, but gave his

second-in-command strict orders that the guns were not to be moved unless coolies were sent by O’Gorman to haul them. Very early the next morning (18 April), O’Gorman again ordered Simmonds to take his guns forward to support Berger. Simmonds again gave his second-in-command orders to stay put unless assistance in hauling the guns was provided, either by coolies from O’Gorman, or by men from Berger’s force.<sup>30</sup> Simmonds states further that, when he arrived at Lam Tsuen Pass at first light on 18 April (4.15 a.m.), he “decided that the pass was impracticable for my guns”: the footpath over the Pass was doubtless a long series of stone steps, up which it would certainly have been difficult to take guns, and quite impossible without very large reserves of haulage power. Simmonds does, as noted above, seem to have acquired some coolies ready to work from first light on 18 April, but, when he received a further order from O’Gorman to bring the guns to Berger by the shortest route, he instead took them the long way round, through Fanling, rather than try to force them over the Pass, despite instructions received from O’Gorman that this was “going the wrong way”, instructions which he ignored.<sup>31</sup>

O’Gorman made, as noted above, no attempt to direct or control Berger on 17 April. As noted above, only one order from O’Gorman to Berger is recorded, an instruction that he should not pursue the insurgents further than Sheung Tsuen, but this order was received by Berger only when May brought it to him at midnight, long after he had already come to rest at Sheung Tsuen, and clearly had no effect on Berger’s actions. O’Gorman, in fact, comes over as indecisive and ineffective generally, as well as being blind to the problems of moving the guns.

Muddy and unclear chains of command are a dangerous thing in any military situation. In the case of the Six-Day War, command was exceptionally unclear and diffuse. Among the consequences of this imprecise command structure was that Berger never seems to have got any briefing as to what he should do. It would seem, for instance, as noted above, that he was not aware that the Governor’s instruction to avoid conflict was intended to cover the period subsequent to the Flag-Raising as well as that prior to it. Berger was, however, aware that he should not expropriate supplies from the villagers, but leave them unmolested: this was probably part of Berger’s general military understanding, but, in every likelihood, he had also received instructions from Lockhart on 16 April about not harming the villagers who were not with the insurgents.

Berger undertook the fighting in a copy-book way, fighting to the best of his capacity a standard British colonial campaign, in line with what Roberts, Hart, and Callwell stated was desirable, aiming at a decisive early victory

which would shatter opposition, and with maximum insurgent casualties, subject only to problems arising from the poor intelligence available to him and his lack of supplies. Berger does not seem to have been aware that this was contrary to the Governor's political instructions. Furthermore, Berger's training and experience had all been on the North-West Frontier of India,<sup>32</sup> and his men were all from the North-West Frontier region. Berger ran the fighting, not unexpectedly, in standard North-West Frontier ways — no prisoners, no assistance to enemy wounded, no counting enemy casualties, no negotiations with the enemy, but going all-out for an overwhelming early victory. It was the poor command structure, and the fact that this left Berger alone and without guidance, which led to this copy-book attack, despite what the political masters had ordered.

Berger conducted his fighting with great professionalism and skill, and his men were of the highest class as fighters in mountain areas. The fighting on both 17 and 18 April was well-handled. Berger had dash and flair, and his men had stamina and skill. Without Berger, the British would probably have faced a disaster, even taking into account the poor insurgent weaponry. It was luck, and Berger's competence more than anything else which managed to bring off a complete victory despite the dreadful intelligence, non-existent supply-lines, patchy and diffuse command structures, and non-transmission of orders down the line to the fighting front. This was certainly the view of the *China Mail*, which stated, on 20 April: "great credit is due to Colonel The O'Gorman, Captain Berger and Lieutenant Barrett for their magnificent handling of the men of the Hongkong Regiment, who displayed great dash and steadiness in action". The following day, the reference to Col. O'Gorman was quietly dropped. On that day the newspaper stated: "The Regiment was handled in a magnificent fashion by Captain Berger and Lieutenant Barrett . . . those who saw the advance of the Indians speak with enthusiasm regarding the magnificent way the two companies were handled, and the implicit reliance the men had in their officers . . . the men . . . have displayed a calm keenness in their work, and obeyed the orders of the officers with promptness and precision and without a murmur." The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 19 April, notes of the Hongkong Regiment: "This is, of course, their first experience of active service, and the men have shown themselves to be thoroughly reliable, and a credit to their officers." The *Hongkong Weekly Press*, 29 April, said of the "decisive victory obtained" that the victory: "reflected the greatest credit on all concerned. The regiment was handled in a very able manner, and showed the greatest dash and steadiness under fire, soon dispersing the rebels when led forward by their officers, notwithstanding the pertinacity of those opposed to them". Indeed, had Berger not been a charismatic officer of great



professionalism, it is doubtful if he could have kept his men as keen as they were throughout the campaign, despite the privations they were forced to suffer.

### **Inadequate Reports**

At the end of the Six-Day War formal military Reports on the campaign were written, by O’Gorman and Gascoigne.<sup>33</sup> Reports made by Berger and Simmonds went no further than Lockhart’s personal papers. Neither O’Gorman’s nor Gascoigne’s Reports are good. O’Gorman’s is marked throughout by heavy flattery of Gascoigne, to whom it is addressed, and is marked by inaccuracies (for instance, he states that it was he himself who “ascertained” that the insurgents were retreating through the Lam Tsuen Valley: at the time when the insurgents were doing this, O’Gorman was sitting put in the Flagstaff Hill camp, five miles off, and any ascertaining was being done by Berger, not O’Gorman).

The Report by Gascoigne is so full of mis-statements and errors that it would be dangerous to take any statement made in it which is not supported by other statements made by other witnesses elsewhere, as truth. It reads as if Gascoigne’s prime aim was to ensure that no awkward questions were asked in London: it reads as if written quite deliberately to ensure that the campaign was forgotten, and the report shelved with no further action taken on it. It must be borne in mind that Gascoigne had only been in Hong Kong for a couple of months when the Six-Day War broke out, and it was his first posting as General Officer Commanding a major garrison: he must have been extremely anxious that no hint of incompetence or poor management would get back to London to mar his record there. It is in this context that his statement that the campaign constituted “somewhat trivial military operations . . . without any serious loss of life” must be read — this statement, it can be safely assumed, would ensure no further action was taken in London. That this statement is untrue is clear from what has been detailed above. The untruths contained in this Report are similar in character to Gascoigne’s attempt on 17 April to convince the reporters of the *China Mail* that there had been no insurgent casualties at the Battle of Mui Shue Hang on 15 April.

Gascoigne also writes up those parts of the action in which he was personally involved: he praises himself very highly, exaggerating his role. He thus states that it was he who was responsible for raising the flag on 16 April, whereas the unanimous view of all other witnesses is that this was done by Stewart Lockhart. He also states that he was in command of the operations

until the end of the fighting on 17 April, whereas in fact he left the area very shortly after fighting began. He states that the action on 19 April, when he commanded a small contingent, was alone responsible for the successful ending of the campaign (“I was completely successful in my operations, as the whole district was cleared at our approach, the insurgents being either driven into the Force operating under Col. The O’Gorman, or over the border . . . This was really a very difficult operation . . . It could only have been successful by perfect discipline and carefully thought out orders . . . On Wednesday the 19th . . . the ubiquitous appearance of the troops . . . so completely quelled the insurrection that all the inhabitants gave in their submission, and surrendered a large quantity of arms”), ignoring the fact that all the insurgents had left the district at dawn on 18 April, 24 hours before Gascoigne landed, and that the surrenders had all been taken by Lockhart eight hours or so before Gascoigne appeared on the scene, although it is undoubtedly true that the action on 19 April was well conceived and well managed.

Gascoigne also wrote, it would appear, to bolster the reputations and careers of his Staff Officers, whether he had grounds for this or not. Captain Long is thus praised very highly (“I have no more capable officer in my Command, and I wish to bring his name to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief”), in the first place for the action on 15 April (despite all other witnesses, and especially Keyes’ autobiography, making it very clear that most of the decisions then were taken by Keyes and Berger), and then for master-minding the action on 19 April. Gascoigne also praises Long for carrying out “the somewhat difficult tasks of supplying the several camps at great distances from each other”. Given the very poor supply situation, this praise is clearly less than deserved, especially given Long’s background as a logistics specialist.<sup>34</sup> O’Gorman is praised for “his untiring pertinacity in keeping touch with and following up the insurgents”, a pertinacity which Gascoigne states “contributed in great measure to the early quelling of the trouble”. This, clearly, is entirely untrue. O’Gorman made no attempt to keep in contact with the insurgents, leaving this entirely to Berger.

As a result of giving all the credit of the campaign to Capt. Long and Lt. Col. O’Gorman, Berger’s role (and that of Lt. Keyes) is sharply downplayed: Gascoigne merely states that Berger “handled [his] men with marked ability”, but even this is shadowed by a note that this was done “under command of Lt. Col. O’Gorman”. There is no hint in the Report that the handling of the campaign was almost entirely Berger’s. Gascoigne does not mention Keyes by name at all.

There can be little doubt that, after the Six-Day War was over, Gascoigne had had difficulty with Lt. Col. A. R. Fraser, the Commander of the Royal

Artillery in Hong Kong. Simmonds' problems with O'Gorman's impossible orders must have angered the Royal Artillery. As a result, while O'Gorman's report is critical of Simmonds, Gascoigne says not a word in his report about any problems with the artillery. He writes up Simmonds' part in the fighting on 17 April, when the She Shan Ridge was shelled with shrapnel ("I ordered . . . No. 3 Company Hongkong-Singapore Battalion R.A. under Captain Simmonds to shell the insurgents position. This work was most efficiently performed . . .") He then goes on to give Simmonds exactly the same degree of praise as Berger, "Captain C. B. Simmonds R.A. . . . acting under command of Lt. Col. O'Gorman . . . handled [his] men with marked ability".

Having thus ensured that no questions would be raised on his handling of the campaign, and that due praise was given to his Staff Officers, Gascoigne left these "somewhat trivial military operations" to gather dust in the filing cabinets.<sup>35</sup>

No honours and awards were given for this brief campaign,<sup>36</sup> but O'Gorman was, the following year, 1900, promoted to full Colonel, and Captain Long was promoted to Major at about the same date (Long was to be promoted acting Lt. Col. in 1902). It is probable that these two promotions in 1900 were due, in large part, to Gascoigne's praise of their conduct during the Six-Day War. Berger was promoted to Major in September 1901, and was given command of the Regiment and the acting rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in March 1902, but to what degree this was due to his conduct in the fighting in 1899 is doubtful. Keyes received no recognition for his role in this campaign: he was promoted to Commander in 1900, but this was specifically a reward for his conduct during the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in that year. Gascoigne was to be knighted in 1901 for his services in Hong Kong generally, so the authorities in London clearly did not find anything untoward to record about his conduct of the Six-Day War.

## Conclusions

Berger, as noted above, had quite probably read and studied Roberts, Callwell, and Hart, or some of them, and would certainly have imbued the essence of Roberts's views from Barrow, Faithfull, and Retallick. His actions in the Six-Day War thus demonstrate Berger's understanding of what a standard British colonial war should consist of: it was, in every respect, a copy-book example of a small-scale British military operation.

At the same time, Military Headquarters in Hong Kong do not seem to have taken any of these late nineteenth century writers' advice to heart at all.

Every error that could be committed was committed: all of Hart's and Callwell's maxims failed to be observed. It must be a matter of conjecture as to what Roberts would have done with Gascoigne if this campaign had come under his command, and if the facts of how it was managed had been drawn to his attention.



# 7



## The Villagers: Leaders and Led

### The Leaders of the Insurrection

Lockhart, as part of his attempt to get the leaders of the insurrection exiled, their houses destroyed, and their villages penalised, prepared a black-list of the leaders of the insurrection. Two versions of this list survive.<sup>1</sup> It is possible to identify a number of the leaders of the insurrection from these lists, and thus to say something about them, and their background.

The largest number of identifiable leaders are those from Ping Shan.<sup>2</sup> Lockhart gives nine names of leaders from Ping Shan, to which the Ping Shan villagers have added a tenth.<sup>3</sup> Seven of these ten are identifiable. All of the seven who can be identified come from the core of the dominant Ping Shan gentry leadership.

Ping Shan was dominated by one particular segment of the clan, from the mid-Ming down to the 1960s and even later.<sup>4</sup> The political dominance of this segment of the clan seems to have stemmed from the 13th Generation Ancestor, Tang Sze-chung (鄧時中), 1497–1575, who achieved a Tsun Sze Degree (the highest normal degree) in the middle sixteenth century. One of his sons, a grandson, and both of his great-grandsons were Sau Tsoi degree holders.<sup>5</sup> This concentration of gentry status in this one family can be assumed to have reflected political dominance of Ping Shan by this family throughout the latter half of the Ming, and down to the period of the Coastal Evacuation at the start of the Ch'ing. After the rescission of the Coastal Evacuation Edict in 1669, dominance by this segment of the clan became even more complete. In this period, with most of today's New Territories area in chaos, and hence

with many families desperate for funds to allow them to rehabilitate their lands, houses, and villages, the opportunities for anyone with cash in hand were, clearly, very great. One of Tang Sze-chung's great-great-grandsons, Tang Tsai-shuen (鄧際選), 1672–1723, had inherited most of the family wealth, and was well placed to increase this wealth by wheeling and dealing in these troubled years. He himself was a Sau Tsoi degree holder, as was his eldest son (his other two sons were Kwok Hok Sang, 國學生, "Candidates": men accepted as fit to take the Sau Tsoi degree examinations). He became hugely wealthy. His descendants form the Yat Tai Tong (一體堂) segment today, and it is from this small segment of the clan that the majority of the clan leaders were to be taken from the early eighteenth century down to today.

Tang Tsai-shuen had three sons, Tsoi-kwong (才光), Tak-kwong (德光), and Yi-kwong (義光), known respectively as the Ying Fung (應奉), Ying Sze (應泗), and Ying Kwoh (應果) Ancestors. The descendants of the Ying Kwoh Ancestor were to be of less importance than the other two descent lines. The descendants of the Ying Fung Ancestor (who was himself a Sau Tsoi degree holder) included one Military Kui Yan degree holder, five Sau Tsoi degree holders (two of them holding military degrees), six Kwok Hok Sang, and two other men with minor gentry titles. It was, however, the descendants of the Ying Sze Ancestor who were to form the most politically significant segment.

The Ying Sze Ancestor had three sons. The eldest, Ting-ka (定家), 1738–1772, was to have three Sau Tsoi degree holders (two of them holding military degrees), four Kwok Hok Sang, and one holder of a minor gentry title among his descendants. The youngest, Sam-ka (三家), 1748–1814, was to have one Kui Yan degree holder, one Sau Tsoi degree holder, and two Kwok Hok Sang among his descendants (this descent line was very much smaller than the other two, and of considerably less political presence in the village). The second son, Yi-ka (二家) died at the age of ten, and the younger son of Sam-ka, Tang Sui-tai (鄧瑞泰), 1777–1831, was posthumously adopted to him to preserve his name and descent line. Sui-tai was himself the holder of a Kui Yan degree. He had six sons, one of whom held a Military Kui Yan degree, three held Sau Tsoi degrees (one a military degree), and one held a minor gentry title. These six sons comprised the Chap Ng Tong (輯伍堂), but are more usually called "The Six Families" (六家). Among the sons and grandsons of these six brothers there were to be, before the ending of the Imperial Examination system in 1905, two Kui Yan degree holders, three Sau Tsoi degree holders (one a military degree-holder), thirteen Kwok Hok Sang (all young men, who had not been able to compete for the Sau Tsoi degree before 1905), and one minor gentry title holder. Some of the degree holders held examined degrees, and some held purchased degrees. The Six Families were,

by the middle nineteenth century, fabulously wealthy in New Territories terms. It was said of them, that, for a woman to marry a son of this segment was “Good Luck enough for three lives”, because no wife of any of these men would ever have to work, and the wealth of the Six Families was proverbial even as far away as Canton.<sup>6</sup>

The Tang clan of Ping Shan had a significant number of military degree-holders, both at Sau Tsoi and at Kui Yan levels, and a number of holders of minor military gentry titles. Military degrees are generally considered to be “second class” as compared with civil degrees, but the Ping Shan clan held military degrees in high honour. The clan ran sophisticated training courses for those of its young men who seemed likely to be able to take these military examinations. Several of the Ping Shan military degree holders were appointed to official posts within the local County militia. Clearly, the existence of these military degree holders, with their intimate connections with the County military authorities and sophisticated military training, would have strengthened the clan in its disputes with other clans. Within Ping Shan, the military degree-holders were, to a large degree, as honoured as the holders of civil degrees.

All but one of the identifiable leaders of the insurrection from Ping Shan came from the Yat Tai Tong, and three of them were from the Six Families. In the middle-later nineteenth century the centre of the political dominance of the Ping Shan clan was the family of Tang Fan-yau (鄧勳猷), 1812–1862, the third son of Tang Sui-tai. Fan-yau was a military Kui Yan, and a pair of flagstaff bases celebrating his achievement of this degree can still be seen in front of the Ancestral Halls at Ping Shan. Fan-yau was a County militia official. In 1899 three of his sons were still alive, Tang Sai-ying (鄧世英, 1841–1912), Tang Hau-ying (鄧厚英, 1849–1909), and Tang Sau-ying (鄧壽英, 1869–1907). Sai-ying had a purchased Sau Tsoi degree (例貢生) while Hau-ying (who was usually called Kwan-shan, 衮臣) was a Kwok Hok Sang, as was Sau-ying. Sai-ying and Kwan-shan were both leaders of the insurrection.

A grandson, Tang Lai-suen (鄧礪孫, 1864–1910) of Sui-tai’s fourth son, Tang Yi-yau (鄧懿猷), was another leader. Lai-suen had no gentry title, but his father and grand-father were both Sau Tsoi, the grandfather being a military Sau Tsoi. Lai-suen was probably counted as a leader of the insurrection because he represented his family as Manager of the family Trust.<sup>7</sup> Lockhart gives this man’s name as “Lai-sang, 礪生”, but “孫” and “生” are pronounced the same in the Ping Shan dialect, and there can be no doubt that Tang Lai-suen is the man meant. Tang Lai-suen is the more correct form.

Three other identifiable leaders came from the other segments of the Yat Tai Tong, one from the descendants of Ting-ka, and two from the descendants



of the Ying Fung Ancestor. The leader coming from the descendants of Ting-ka was Tang San-pui (鄧申培), more usually known as Tang Fong-hing (鄧芳卿), born in 1853, who lived into the 1930s (see Plate 15). Fong-hing was a Kwok Hok Sang. Lockhart regarded Fong-hing as one of the major leaders of the insurrection. The leaders from among the descendants of the Ying Fung Ancestor were Tang Nok-sheng (鄧諾聲), 1816–1904, more usually called Tang Chiu-yi (鄧朝義), and his son, Tang Sek-leung (鄧錫良), born in 1853, who lived until after 1917.<sup>8</sup> Chiu-yi and Sek-leung were both Kwok Hok Sang. In 1899, Tang Chiu-yi was the head of the Yat Tai Tong (房長), being the only surviving man of the 21st generation of the clan in the Tong, and, given his age (83 years of age), his leadership was, doubtless, nominal, the work being done by his son.

Of the other, unidentifiable leaders from Ping Shan, one, Tang Tsing-wan (鄧青雲), may also be from the Yat Tai Tong. The Manager of the Yat Tai Tong Ancestral Trust<sup>9</sup> says that the name is familiar to him and that he believes it must be a Yat Tai Tong descendant, but no such name appears in the Yat Tai Tong Genealogical Record. The name may be an alternative name which failed to be transcribed into the Record. Tsing-wan was one of those leaders of the insurrection appointed by Blake as Committee Men after the insurrection was ended.<sup>10</sup>

One of Lockhart's nine names is a "ghost", and not a real person. Lockhart names one leader 'Tang I Yau' (the Chinese characters are not given in the original). He adds this name to his list as an after-thought. Lockhart lists eight Ping Shan leaders, and then, towards the ends of the list, after giving the names of leaders from several other villages, adds 'Tang I Yau's' name. He did so because this name was found attached to one of the inflammatory letters sent out on 29 March. However, this name may well be the name of an Ancestral Trust, the letter having been sent out by the Manager of the Trust, but signed (or, more probably, sealed) with the name of the Trust. Tang Yi-yau (鄧懿猷), as noted above, was the fourth of the six sons of Tang Sui-tai. His descendants kept land in an Ancestral Trust in his name. Tang Lai-suen was doubtless the Manager of this Family Trust in 1899. There is every chance, therefore, that Lockhart's "Tang I Yau" and "Tang Lai Sang" are doublets, and that both refer to Tang Lai-suen, the one in his capacity as Manager of his Family Trust, the other in his personal capacity. In both capacities it can be assumed that Tang Lai-suen was acting on behalf of his entire family.

The name of one of the leaders from Ping Shan is given by Lockhart in a form which might be one of several villagers ("Tang A Lam", "鄧林"), and is so unidentifiable.

The remaining leader of the insurrection from Ping Shan named by Lockhart, Tang Tsik-shin (鄧積善), cannot be identified. He seems not to have been from the Yat Tai Tong, and was probably one of the relatively few Ping Shan leaders from one of the other segments of the clan. Seals bearing this name were found attached to several of the inflammatory letters and other documents sent out in late March and early April. Lockhart, given the number of times this seal appears, considered Tang Tsik-shin a major leader of the insurrection. However, Tang Tsik-shin was one of the Ping Shan elders who came to kowtow to the Governor on 12 April, when he (and several others) signed a document to say that he and the others, "through listening to false reports, were foolish enough to collect people to offer resistance, but after receiving the kind proclamations issued by the British and Chinese Governments, we then became conscious of our error . . . We pray that [the Governor] may be pleased to examine it and mercifully pardon us. We undertake from this day henceforward to be law-abiding and loyal subjects, and if we again create any disturbance we will willingly surrender ourselves for punishment according to law".<sup>11</sup> Tang Tsik-shin, therefore, even if he had been involved in the early stages of the insurgency clearly was not a leader of the insurrection by the time the fighting started.

It will be seen, therefore, that the leadership of the insurrection from Ping Shan mirrored almost exactly the political leadership of the clan generally. The great majority of the Ping Shan leadership in the insurrection came from the single politically dominant segment, the Yat Tai Tong, half from the Six Families, and at least a quarter from the immediate family of Fan-yau. All the identified leaders, except Lai-suen, held degrees or were at least Kwok Hok Sang, and all without exception came from families with many degree-holders or Kwok Hok Sang. None of these identifiable leaders came from a poor or minor segment, and none from a non-gentry background. Furthermore, most were middle-aged or even elderly. In 1899 Chiu-yi was 83 years old, Sai-ying 58, Kwan-san 50, Sek-leung and Fong-hing were both 46. Only Lai-suen, at 35, could be called relatively young, but, as noted above, he probably stood for the whole of his family as Manager of his family Trust. The leadership generally was, therefore, entirely within the traditional gentry leadership cadre of the clan in every respect.

However, there is one segment of the Six Families which is conspicuous by its absence from the list of leaders. This is the segment consisting of the descendants of Tang King-yau (鄧經猷), 1815–1838, more usually known as Tang Kan-ting (鄧覲廷), the fifth son of Sui-tai. At the end of the nineteenth century, this descent line was trying to wrest political control of the village away from the descendants of Tang Fan-yau to themselves. To achieve this

they spent lavishly (they built the elaborate guest-house complex, the Ching Shue Hin, 清署軒, and the Kan Ting School, 觀廷書室, which are both today Scheduled Monuments). They also opposed themselves to the policies of the Fan-yau line where possible. Since the Fan-yau descent line was, as noted above, entirely committed to the anti-British insurrection, it is not surprising that the descendants of Tang Kan-ting supported a pro-British line. It was this descent line which thus formed the core of the group of Ping Shan elders which came to kowtow to the Governor in the days just before the insurrection broke out. This was especially the case for Tang Siu-yung (鄧兆鎔), more usually known as Tang Ying-sang (鄧英生), the eldest grandson of Kan-ting, a Kwok Hok Sang, and the head of the Kan-ting descent line in 1899. Ying-sang and his three brothers (two Kwok Hok Sang and a minor military officer) were all involved in this expression of loyalty to the new authorities, and the villagers of today are sure that Ying-sang instigated it.<sup>12</sup> Both Lockhart, in 1898, and Blake, in 1899, stayed in the Ching Shue Hin guesthouse, which doubtless brought this descent line a good deal of prestige. In the early twentieth century the descendants of Kan-ting did indeed manage to wrest political dominance away from the descendants of Fan-yau, and were to keep it right through until recently.<sup>13</sup> It seems very likely that the Fan-yau descent line lost a huge amount of prestige by their espousal of the insurrection, which brought Ping Shan nothing but the death of so many of its young men, and that this helped the Kan-ting descent line, whose pro-British stance would have been seen subsequently as a sensible and pragmatic approach.

A somewhat similar situation can be seen at Tai Hang, near Tai Po. The Man clan of Tai Hang were not as wealthy or prestigious a clan as the Tang clan of Ping Shan, but were, nonetheless, regarded as a gentry clan. In 1899, the clan was dominated by Man Yi-fan, 文以訓, usually known as Man Tsam-chuen, 文湛泉, 1826–1902.<sup>14</sup> Man Tsam-chuen's history has a good deal in common with his contemporaries in Ping Shan. His ancestor, Man Ko-fat, 文高發, 1683–1750, had cash in hand in the early eighteenth century, and greatly expanded his wealth by lending money in those troubled years to villagers wanting to rehabilitate their lands and homes. The family remained wealthy throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. The family was, in fact, the wealthiest in the village throughout this period. However, the family seems usually not to have interested itself very much in village politics, but to have lived quietly on their rents: in particular, Man Tsam-chuen's father and grandfather do not seem to have interested themselves in local politics. Similarly, the family do not seem to have bothered about gaining formal gentry status for themselves: Man Ko-fat and his son and

grandson were Sau Tsoi,<sup>15</sup> but not the next three generations of the family. Man Tsam-chuen himself purchased a Kung Shang degree.

Man Tsam-chuen was born in 1826. He was a highly intelligent man, and came to be the dominant political figure, not only in his own village of Tai Hang, but throughout the Tai Po area. The clan Genealogical Record includes a brief biography of him (see Appendix 7). That biography makes it clear that he was careful with money, always looking for ways to increase his wealth, and using it, as far as possible, to buy up fields and farmland. His descendants strongly support this view of Man Tsam-chuen: “he bought up farmland wherever and whenever he could: he ended up with plots of land everywhere from Sham Chun [Shenzhen, 深圳] to Sha Tin”.<sup>16</sup> However, Man Tsam-chuen in particular bought up land on the eastern edge of the Tai Hang village area, and there he built an entire new village for his descendants: San Wai (新圍, “The New Village”), adding a fourth settlement to the three old Tai Hang villages. The biography in the clan Genealogical Record clearly regarded this as his most significant achievement.

According to his descendants, Man Tsam-chuen made much of his wealth by lending money.<sup>17</sup> In the 1850s and, indeed, down to the end of the nineteenth century, many of the villagers from Tai Hang and the other villages nearby wanted to move to Malaya or Singapore, to set up in business there, to better themselves. Few, however, had the capital required for such a venture. Man Tsam-chuen would lend them the wherewithal, so that they could go and start their new life. The arrangements were kept reasonable: he did not require repayment of the loan until the new business venture was established, after several years, and the interest was kept to moderate rates (especially for his fellow Tai Hang villagers). This is the sort of attitude which is behind the clan Genealogical Record’s comment that he always looked to the long-term, and did not seek a quick return. He was in consequence seen as a public benefactor, and many of the village families helped by such a loan would have supported his political position. Also, given the moderate nature of the interest on the loans, and the long repayment period, he faced few bad debts, and this money-lending business in due course made him very wealthy indeed. It is probable, if he acted in the same way as other people who lent money to would-be emigrants in this period in other village areas,<sup>18</sup> that he also acted as guarantor for emigrants, and as Country Agent for the Native Banks handling remittances from these Overseas Chinese, all of which would have increased his income.

Man Tsam-chuen also made a great deal of money by running a guest-house for travellers.<sup>19</sup> Tai Hang is about half-way between Sham Chun and Kowloon. After the establishment of the city at Hong Kong in 1841, traffic

between Sham Chun and Kowloon grew hugely. Many travellers, after the twelve-mile walk from Sham Chun to Tai Hang, would want to rest before tackling the second twelve miles to Kowloon, over the mountains, especially those carrying goods for sale. These could stay in Man Tsam-chuen's premises, where they would get an evening meal and breakfast and a bed. His price was reasonable, and many travellers used this facility. Man Tsam-chuen would not charge a fee of any scholar or Fung Shui expert who came to stay, nor of anyone of political significance in the area. This brought him into close contact with most of the scholars, gentry, and village leaders of the area, but, even though he allowed such people to stay for free, he still made a great deal of money from this trade.

Man Tsam-chuen was a generous donor to a number of public development projects. The clan Genealogical Record notes his involvement in the restoration of the Man clan Ancestral Hall. He was also deeply involved in the restoration of the Tai Hang Man Tai Temple (泰坑文帝廟) in 1884. To that restoration project he donated the huge sum of 156 Taels (\$216).<sup>20</sup> A close cousin donated the same sum, but the next highest donors gave only a tenth of that figure.

Man Tsam-chuen's most significant public activity, however, was in leading the "Small Villages" in the foundation of the New Market at Tai Po (太和市). Ever since the fifteenth century, the Tang (鄧) clan of Tai Po Tau (大埔頭), together with the Tang (鄧) clan of Lung Yeuk Tau (龍躍頭), (both these Tang clans were distant relatives of the Tangs of Ping Shan) had been the dominant political force within the Tai Po area. They owned the local market, the Tai Po Old Market (大埔舊墟). Access to this market was, for many of the local villagers, by way of a ferry over the river. This ferry was owned by the Tangs, who charged what the "Small Villages" considered an inequitably high fee. The Tangs charged tolls to all non-Tangs wishing to sell in their market, and enforced their right to pre-emption (the right to buy anything they wanted, at whatever price they considered reasonable, even if a non-Tang wanted to buy it at a higher price). The "Small Villages" (meaning all the villages of the area except the Tang clan villages) had, by the late nineteenth century, long chafed at the Tang clan domination. They wanted a market of their own. However, on every occasion that they tried to get a market established, the Tang clan took them to court, where the Magistrate ruled that the proposed new market would be too close to the existing one, and would constitute unfair competition.

In 1892, Man Tsam-chuen led the "Small Villages" to a successful end to this long fight. He enlisted on the side of the "Small Villages" the Pang (彭) clan of Fanling, ancient enemies of the Tangs of Lung Yeuk Tau, using his

close friendship with several of the Pang clan elders to achieve this. He donated, without seeking any payment, a large block of land on which the new market might be erected, to a trust set up by all the "Small Villages".<sup>21</sup> Above all, he funded in large part the inevitable court case, pouring money in until the Magistrate found for the "Small Villages". When this was done, a donation drive was set in motion, to find funds to bridge the river at the site of the Tang ferry, to pave a new market street and market-place, to dig a well, and to build a temple for the new market. Man Tsam-chuen donated the princely sum of \$100 to this donation drive (the next largest donor was the Fanling Ancestral Trust, at \$70).<sup>22</sup> When all was ready, it was found that most of the "Small Villages" had exhausted all their spare cash in the expenses of the court case and in building the bridge and temple and laying out the market street, and had no money left to build the new shops needed. Man Tsam-chuen personally built at his own expense a row of ten shops (at 20 Taels each), and found tenants for them.<sup>23</sup> When these new shops quickly showed a profit, other shopkeepers appeared wanting to set up in the new market: Man Tsam-chuen offered them loans of 20 Taels each, to build their shops, the money to be repaid, with moderate interest, once the new business was established. All this not only demonstrates the extent of Man Tsam-chuen's wealth, but is also eloquent testimony to his local political stature. His New Market not only proved hugely successful (the Tang clan Old Market withered within a very few years after 1892), but his success in getting it set up marked the end of the Tang political dominance of the area: from 1892 it was the "Small Villages", under Man Tsam-chuen, which were to dominate the area.

It was Man Tsam-chuen who was responsible for the burning of the matsheds on 3 and 14 April. He chaired the meeting of the elders in the New Market temple on 4 April when May, the Captain-Superintendent of Police, was threatened, and had to cut his way out with a bayonet charge.<sup>24</sup> He was thus very active in the initiation of the insurrection. He wrote to the Yuen Long villagers after the burning of the matsheds on 3 April, asking for their help, and this, as all witnesses agree, precipitated events, and he must have been behind the presence of the Tai Hang trained-band in the fighting on 15 April.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, it can hardly have been anyone other than Man Tsam-chuen who was responsible for withdrawing the Tai Po contingent of the insurrection after the fighting on 15 April. The group of Tai Po leaders who came to Gascoigne to apologise for the insurgency on 16 April must have done so with Man Tsam-chuen's support and advice: Man Tsam-chuen probably headed this delegation.

Man Tsam-chuen, despite his crucial role in the beginnings of the insurrection, was appointed a district councillor by Blake in July 1899.

It is interesting that his clan brethren did not consider Man Tsam-chuen's role in the Six-Day War as worth mentioning in his biography.

Thus, Man Tsam-chuen shows, as at Ping Shan, that the leadership of the insurrection was tied tightly to the general leadership of the village communities. Man Tsam-chuen was hugely wealthy: again as at Ping Shan, it was the wealthy and influential who were the leaders in the insurrection. Man Tsam-chuen, again, was a gentry figure: his purchased degree gave him a definite gentry status within the Tai Po community, where examined Sau Tsoi were very much rarer than at Ping Shan. (In 1884, at the restoration of the Tai Hang Man Tai Temple, seven Sau Tsoi donated from the Man clan, but only two were examined, the rest holding purchased degrees, and these seven were, almost certainly, all the formal gentry that Tai Hang then had). Man Tsam-chuen, even if he had no examined Sau Tsoi, was of a scholarly bent, although his scholarly interests were more in the study of Fung Shui than of the Classics: both the clan Genealogical Record and the memories of his descendants refer to this interest in Fung Shui. Man Tsam-chuen was again in line with the Ping Shan people by being elderly: he was 73 years old in 1899 (His son, Man Kung-shan, 文拱宸, a Kwok Hok Sang, and his grandson, Man Tai-lung, 文泰隆, a holder of a purchased Sau Tsoi (Kung Shang) degree, are recorded as "assisting" Man Tsam-chuen as the leader of the insurrection within Tai Po).<sup>26</sup> Thus the case of Man Tsam-chuen entirely supports the evidence from Ping Shan, that the leadership of the insurrection was overwhelmingly drawn from the richest families, those already in a politically dominant position, and from men mostly older than the average.

The case of the final leader to be discussed here, Ng Shing-chi (伍醒遲), also known as Ng Kei-cheung (伍其昌), similarly supports these conclusions (for the biographies of Ng Shing-chi, see Appendix 8. See also Plate 16). Ng Shing-chi was a villager of the Punti (Cantonese-speaking) village of Sha Po (沙埔), a small village north-east of Yuen Long, and north-west of Kam Tin. Sha Po lies on the edge of the Kam Tin Heung, and it is one of the "ally and tenant" villages of Kam Tin. It may well have been established originally as a settlement of tenants of the Tang clan of Kam Tin, but, by the nineteenth century the village was no longer a settlement of tenants, but of allies. Nonetheless, it was still subordinate to Kam Tin, and expected to revolve in Kam Tin's orbit, and to support the Tangs as clients.<sup>27</sup> Ng Shing-chi came from a family of Sha Po which had moved to the market at Yuen Long — his father was a merchant there — and he was born in his father's house at Nam Pin Wai (南邊圍), the village next to the market where many of the market merchants lived. His clan village, however, remained Sha Po.<sup>28</sup> Ng Shing-chi was a highly intelligent youth, who passed the County examination at the

extremely young age of 16, in 1875, and later passed the Sau Tsoi examinations with excellent results.

Sha Po was emphatically not a gentry village: compared with Ping Shan and Tai Hang it was small, poor, and entirely without influence. As a formal member of the gentry, and a villager of Sha Po, Ng Shing-chi was a figure of the greatest importance within the community of the Kam Tin “allies and tenants”: probably from 1875 onwards. As a Kwok Hok Sang, and later as a Sau Tsoi, Ng Shing-chi could speak on equal terms with the gentry from Kam Tin; something none of the other men of this community could do. At the same time, Yuen Long Market, which was Ng Shing-chi’s normal residence, was part of the Shap Pat Heung (十八鄉) village alliance. This was an area of relatively small villages, with relatively little influence or status on the broader stage. There were, in 1899, very few formal gentry figures in any of the Shap Pat Heung villages: Ng Shing-chi was, therefore, an immensely important figure within this community, as well as within the community of the Kam Tin “allies and tenants”. Thanks to his father’s successful merchant career in the Yuen Long market, he was probably also the wealthiest Sha Po villager of his generation, although not in any way in the same league as Man Tsam-chuen or the Ping Shan Six Families.

Shap Pat Heung was originally extremely reluctant to join the fighting. There was ancient enmity between Shap Pat Heung and Ping Shan, and the two communities had fought a number of inter-village wars in the previous generation (Ping Shan wanted to make Shap Pat Heung into an area of client “ally and tenant” villages, while the Shap Pat Heung villages wanted to keep their independence). When Ping Shan urged Shap Pat Heung to join the insurrection, the Shap Pat Heung villagers refused. Ping Shan threatened to burn the Shap Pat Heung villages to the ground. Eventually, however, there was a change of heart on the part of Shap Pat Heung, and Shap Pat Heung did join in, and suffered heavy casualties as a result, as the name-list of the dead in their temple at Tai Shue Ha (大樹下) shows. It was, almost certainly, Ng Shing-chi who was responsible for getting the Shap Pat Heung villagers to agree to join the insurrection. The biographies thus state that he “encouraged the other villagers to get together” and that he was “braver than the rest”. The biographies also make it clear that the Shap Pat Heung villagers only joined in the insurrection when the Ha Tsuen and Kam Tin elders urged them to: Ha Tsuen and Kam Tin were Shap Pat Heung’s ancient allies against Ping Shan. It is clear that the negotiations over Shap Pat Heung’s entry into the insurrection were complex and, doubtless, sensitive: Ng Shing-chi’s role in this must have been crucial, especially given his close ties to both Kam Tin and Shap Pat Heung.



According to the lists of leaders prepared by Lockhart, Ng Shing-chi was the most important leader of the Shap Pat Heung people, together with Ng Fung-cheung, who is presumably Ng Shing-chi's elder half-brother (伍鳳昌), the father of Ng Man-wu (伍文瑚), who the biography of Ng Shing-chi suggests was at risk of reprisals after the insurgency came to an end, presumably as having been his father's assistant. There can be little doubt, therefore, that Ng Shing-chi and his close relatives were extremely important to the involvement of the Shap Pat Heung people in the insurrection.

As noted above, Ng Shing-chi was found by the High Court in August 1899 to have been an accessory to the murder of Tang Cheung-hing, and he was sentenced to death as a felon. The elders petitioned on his behalf, and the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He was released from prison by the direct intervention of Sir Henry May, when May returned to Hong Kong as Governor in 1912. After his release, Ng Shing-chi once again became a vitally important leader of the Shap Pat Heung community, being the leader of the community in the major rebuilding of the Tai Shue Ha Temple (including the shrine to the dead in the Six-Day War), and in the rebuilding and modernization of the Pok Oi Hospital (博愛醫院) in Yuen Long Market. By the time of his death in 1938, he was one of the most important single villager leaders in the Yuen Long area, with funeral banners presented by the District Officer, as well as by such luminaries as Sir Robert Hotung (何東爵士) and Tang Shiu-kin (鄧肇堅). Ng Shing-chi changed his name after he was released from prison: his new name (Shing-chi, 醒遲, "Lately Awakened") probably represents his determination to forget the past, and to start afresh under the British administration. One of the Funeral Banners presented at his funeral in 1938 makes the point that both his bravery in 1899, that is, his service to the Ch'ing, and his charitable work after 1912, that is, his service to the British administration, were equally admirable, since he served the two Empires equally well:

裁成多士結納多賢早已蜚聲傳藝苑  
名著兩朝望隆兩國自應含笑返蓉城

He was a model man, more so than most scholars. He associated himself with the virtuous. From an early age his reputation and his real virtues were known far and near.

He was famous under two Empires: eminent in two Countries. On his death he could indeed smile at his successes.<sup>29</sup>

## The Rank-and-File of the Insurrection

If the leaders of the insurrection thus seem to have come, almost exclusively, from the wealthy, well-educated, middle-aged and elderly gentry — the traditionally dominant figures in village society — the same cannot be said of the villagers who died in the fighting, who seem to have come, again almost exclusively, from the poorest and least influential segments of that society.

It is only from Ping Shan that we currently have evidence enough to support this conclusion, where the list of the dead from the Tat Tak Kung Soh can be checked against the Ping Shan Yat Tai Tong Genealogical Record. This Genealogical Record does not include biographies, but limits itself to giving the names, gentry titles if any, details of birth, and death, and similar information on the deceased's wife or wives, and details of any sons born. However, there are some clues in this as to whether the deceased was from a high-status family or not.

When the revisers of the Yat Tai Tong Genealogical Record revised the Record in 1917 they asked the families of the Tong to provide them with details of their dead. The high-status families all seem to have kept family genealogical notebooks, and were able to provide the revisers with exact details of the dates of birth and death of their dead, and, in most cases, of the deceased's wife or wives. Many of the lower-status families, however, did not keep such family records, and were thus unable to provide any of this detail, usually giving only the name of the deceased and details of sons born to him (the Record notes, in such cases, 生終年月未詳, "The dates of birth and death cannot be ascertained").<sup>30</sup> Thus, an entry in the Genealogical Record with all this detail absent is suggestive as likely to be from a low-status family. This is suggestive only, but the likelihood becomes very high where this absence of detail is combined with a lack of close gentry relatives (given the very large number of gentry figures in Ping Shan), and even more where the deceased is given only one name in the Record. Men from high-status families in Ping Shan usually had three or four names recorded in the Record record (*wei*, *tsz*, *hao*, and often an "alternative *wei*" or "alternative *tsz*": 諱, 字, 號, 別諱, 別字). Where the Genealogical Record only records a single name (*wei*, or, even more tellingly, *ming*, 諱, 名), then this strongly suggests a low-status family.

The list of the dead in the Tat Tak Kung Soh includes 38 names of Tang clan dead from Ping Shan. Seven are recorded with their childhood names only ("Ah Hoi", "Ah Kwok", "Kau Tsai", 阿海, 阿國, 九仔, and so on), and these cannot be ascribed with confidence to any of the names in the Genealogical Record, where the formal adult names are given (although "Kau

Tsai” may well be Tang Kau-hing (鄧九興), from the Yat Tai Tong). Of the remaining 31, seven can definitely be ascribed to the Yat Tai Tong, and are to be found in the Yat Tai Tong Genealogical Record, eight if “Kau Tsai” is taken to be Tang Kau-hing.<sup>31</sup> This represents about a fifth of the dead. Since the Yat Tai Tong represented about a fifth of the total population of the Tang clan of Ping Shan, this suggests that the dead were spread evenly through the clan, even though the leaders were overwhelmingly from the Yat Tai Tong.

None of the seven or eight dead who can be identified from the Yat Tai Tong Genealogical Record seems to have come from a high-status family of that segment. In none of their cases were their families able to give the revisers of the Record in 1917 any details of the dates of birth or death of these dead, or of any of their brothers or close cousins. In only one case did the dead have more than one name recorded (Tang Kam-yung, 鄧金容, who had a *Tsz*, Tin-hon, 殿翰). In no case did any of the dead have close gentry relatives. The dead, therefore, seem to have come entirely from the poorer and less influential sections of the Yat Tai Tong.

None of the dead from the Yat Tai Tong came from the Six Families. None of the men identified as leaders by Lockhart died.

Four of the identifiable dead (including Tang Kau-hing) were unmarried. It can be deduced from the 1911 Census of the New Territories that the average age of marriage of male villagers was 23–24.<sup>32</sup> This makes it likely that these four men were aged about 17–22: old enough to fight, but not old enough to marry. If they were older than that, they probably would have come from families so poor that they could not afford to marry at the appropriate time. The seven dead recorded in the Tat Tak Kung Soh only by their childhood names (including “Kau Tsai”) were, almost certainly, also unmarried at the date of their death, since it was on marriage that childhood names were usually given up for adult names. This high proportion of unmarried youths is not unexpected. Evidence from elsewhere in the New Territories shows that it was usual, when villages went to war, for the villages to call, in the first place, on the unmarried young men of the village to fight. Young married men would only be called on to fight in extreme cases. This evidence shows that, in the Six-Day War, at least at Ping Shan, the call for fighters went, in the first place, to the unmarried young men from low-status families.

At the same time, four of the identifiable dead from Ping Shan were married: the Six-Day War was, clearly, an extreme case, and some at least of the young married men were also called on to fight, at least from low-status families. Tang Tak-cheung, 鄧得昌, and Tang Yi-yau, 鄧宜佑, who both died, were brothers, Tak-cheung being the eldest son and Yi-yau the third and youngest son. Yi-yau was unmarried when he died, but Tak-cheung was

married, and left two sons. Yi-yau was probably about 20–22, and Tak-cheung rather older, but probably no more than about 28–30.<sup>33</sup> Tak-cheung and Yi-yau had a pair of first cousins, the brothers Tang Tak-yi, 鄧得義, and Tang Tak-lung, 鄧得龍, both of whom died as well. Tak-yi was the eldest son of his family, and Tak-lung was, again, the third son. Again, the younger brother, Tak-lung, was unmarried when he died, but the older brother, Tak-yi, was married, but left no children. It is probable that Tak-yi was recently married in 1899, so that he had had no time to get any children, and was thus perhaps 23–25 years old, while Tak-lung was younger, perhaps only about 17–18. Tang Kam-yung, and Tang Kam-on, 鄧金安, (not closely related) also died leaving widows and children — one son in each case. In both these instances it is likely we are dealing with men married for only a few years, and thus aged about 25 or thereabouts. The final man who can be identified from the list of the dead is Tang Tim-fuk (鄧添福). He was the third son of his family, the eldest having died at a very young age. He was unmarried when he died. Some time after his death, his elder brother's fifth son was posthumously adopted to him, to preserve his name and descent-line.

The deaths of these young married men are probably to be explained by the village authorities calling out the village trained-band. The trained-bands, or local militia, (憲團練, “Government Approved Trained-Band”), at this date were groups of young men who received military training within their villages, including, as noted above, some training of a more sophisticated character given by in-service or retired military officers. Members of the trained-bands were allowed to wear Chinese official military uniforms (see Plate 17). The trained-bands were divided into village based squads (奉), and were used by the village leaders to enforce their decisions and (so the Government hoped) to preserve the peace. These “Government Approved” trained-bands were an attempt by the late Ch'ing Government to bring local militias (which had often become gangs of unruly bully-boys) into some sort of control, but, in practice the village leaders used them much as they had the older militias. After the coming of the British, these trained-bands disappeared, to re-appear as less formally arranged village militias, without the uniforms, and without the veneration of official military support. In 1899, however, the trained-bands were under official military supervision, to a greater or lesser degree.

Training for this militia force began, usually, when a youth was about 16 or 17, but, at least in Ping Shan, with its heavy clan veneration of military skills, it is probable that young men, especially from low-status families, would stay in the trained-band for some years after they married. Early twentieth century evidence from Ha Tsuen and San Tin (新田) suggests that membership of the militia or trained-band was almost entirely from low-status families in

the clan, who were attracted by the small sums paid to members in training, by the free food available to trained-band members, and by the small increase in status membership offered.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusions

Taking all this evidence together, therefore, it is clear that the insurgents reflected very closely the broader society of the villages from which they had come. Leadership of the insurgency was effectively the monopoly of the traditional village leaders. The leaders were, almost to a man, gentry, holders of either examined or purchased degrees, or at least were Kwok Hok Sang, or represented their gentry families as Managers of their family Trusts. They were all noticeably wealthier than their clan brethren, emphatically so where the Six Families of Ping Shan or Man Tsam-chuen were concerned. They were mostly middle-aged or elderly: where younger men are noted as leaders, they were mostly representing the totality of their families as Managers of Family Trusts, or were supporting elderly fathers, the fathers having the name of leader, and their son doing the legwork for them. The leaders of the insurrection and the clan leaders generally had at the least a very similar composition. In Ping Shan, where there were two groups of elders manoeuvring for political dominance, one group came out in strong support of the insurgency, and the other against, again reflecting in the leadership of the insurgency the political leadership of the village in general.

As for the ordinary fighters, these, too, reflect the facts of village life. The dead came overwhelmingly from among the young men, either unmarried or recently married, from the low-status families of the area. These were the men who trained in the local trained-band, and it was these men who went to fight and die in the War. They were young men of no political, social, or economic status in their villages, from poor families, ill-educated and outside the corridors of village political life.

# 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”.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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:<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> According to the *China Mail*, this work was begun on 19 April.<sup>12</sup>

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.<sup>13</sup>

In the middle 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".<sup>14</sup> 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 middle 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup>

# Appendix 1

## Proclamation of the Governor, 7 – 9 April 1899

### English Proclamation as issued 7 April 1899

*Translation of a Chinese Proclamation issued by His Excellency Sir Henry A. Blake, G.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Hongkong and its Dependencies and Vice-Admiral of the same.*

Whereas His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China has leased to Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland as an extension of the Colony of Hongkong, certain territory situated in the district of San On, and certain Islands adjacent thereto, the boundaries of which are hereunder stated, viz.:-

The Northern boundary commences at the point of high water mark in Mirs Bay where the meridian of  $114^{\circ}30'$  East bisects the land, and follows that high water mark to a point immediately to the West of Shat'aukok, and then follows the road along the Northern edge of this town till the middle of a stream becomes the boundary as far as the road to Kang Hau. From Kang Hau to about a quarter of a mile West of Kang Tó the Northern edge of the road is the boundary. From this point to the mouth of the Sham Chun river the Northern bank of the Sham Chun river forms the boundary. From the mouth of the Sham Chun river the boundary follows the high water mark along the coast of Deep Bay till the point where the meridian of  $113^{\circ}52'$  bisects the land.

The Eastern boundary is  $114^{\circ}30'$  East Longitude

The Western boundary is  $113^{\circ}52'$  East Longitude

The Southern boundary is  $22^{\circ}9'$  North Latitude

All the islands situated within those boundaries are within the leased area as are all the waters of Mirs Bay and Deep Bay.

And whereas Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to appoint me as Governor of the said territory, and whereas it is desirable that British and Chinese territory should be clearly defined so that the friendly relations now existing between the two nations may be always maintained.

Now, therefore, I have fixed the 17th day of April, 1899, as the date on which the British flag shall be hoisted, and the administration of the territory be taken over by duly authorized British Officers.

To remove any cause for suspicion in your minds as to the good intentions of the British Government, and to prevent you from being deceived and misled through ignorance by false reports disseminated by lawless persons who may seek to further

their own interests by thus causing trouble, it is right for me to warn you against such persons and to assure you that all the inhabitants residing within the limits of British territory will be permitted to follow their lawful occupations, whatever they may be.

I would also impress upon you that this territory having been leased by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China to Her Britannic Majesty the Queen, as subjects of Her Majesty's Empire, your commercial and landed interests will be safe-guarded, and that your usages and good customs will not in any way be interfered with.

It is the wish of Her Majesty the Queen that all her subjects in every part of the world shall be prosperous and happy, and it will be my duty to assist you to improve your position by every means in my power. The most respected of your elders will be chosen to assist in the management of your village affairs, to secure peace and good order and the punishment of evil-doers. I expect you to obey the laws that are made for your benefit and all persons who break the law will be punished severely.

It will be necessary for you to register without delay your titles for the land occupied by you, that the true owners may be known. Should any land be required for public purposes it will be paid for at its full value.

Remember that as subjects of the Great British Empire your perfect freedom from oppression is assured. Should you have any complaint to make the Governor will always be willing to hear it and to order what is right. There will be no injustice allowed, nor any laxity in the administration of justice. All must render implicit obedience.

### Chinese Proclamation as published 9 April 1899

Printed on a sheet of white paper 47" x 24", with characters a half-inch high. Authenticated with the seal of the Governor and autograph authentication marks; see Plate 8.

#### 欽命總督香港等處地方提督軍務兼二等水師提督軍門佩帶頭等寶星卞為

劉切曉諭事照得新安縣屬等處地方勘定東西南北四至界限開列於下乃我  
大英國大皇帝承

大清國大皇帝諭旨准行批為香港展拓界址去年十一月本部堂躬膺

寵命來督香江兼轄茲土現擇於西曆四月十七日即中曆三月初八日在界內一帶地  
方換樹

大英旗號乃欲答安疆界和好長敦屆期本部堂飭屬臨莅此間恐爾居民人等未及週  
知賴開疑竇或被匪造謠煽惑釀成禍端小民無知必至一倡百和合亟先行凱切  
曉諭為此示諭新安縣屬界內等處各色居民人等知悉自示之後爾等照常安居  
樂業守分營土慎毋造言生事煽動人心須知新安縣屬等處一帶地方係

大英國大皇帝向

大清國大皇帝批為展拓界址之地將來通商互市共享勝平凡確屬爾等自置田產仍  
歸爾等自行營業如爾等善美風俗利於民者悉仍其舊毋庸更改蓋凡守內屬於

大英國土地之人民我

皇上皆一視同仁務使各享昌熾康樂之福本部堂仰體

皇上德意自應致力以增高爾等之地位方為盡職故先擬遴選爾鄉中耆老為素日物望所歸者以佐辦地方事務又妥立除暴安良之法保護爾等鄉閭使得太平安靖各遂其生本部堂深信爾等具有天良自能安分守法須知

國家立法本為益民起見如有自外生成作奸犯科者定必按律懲治決不姑寬今與爾居民人等約凡有田產屋宇之業主須將契卷呈出速行註冊以便查核誰是真實業主無得蒙混倘

國家需用公地可按照價值給回爾等須知凡屬

大英國子民確可保無受苛虐情事倘有冤抑遽情呈遞凡官斯土者無不樂為伸理也本部堂言出法隨毋枉毋縱各宜凜遵毋違切切特示(\*)

計開展拓界址及大小各海島

一北界以東經線一百一十四度三十分過大鵬灣潮水漲界之處起沒漲潮水線直至沙頭角西為止由沙頭角西繞沙頭角北以小路為界由沙頭角至逕口以小河中為界由逕口至逕肚以山道為界後由逕肚之西約一里處起至深圳河口止以深圳河北岸為界由深圳河沒海以至東經線一百一十三度五十二分過後海潮水漲界為止

一東界以東經線一百一十四度三十分

一西界以東經線一百一十三度五十二分

一南界以北緯線二十二度九分

一所有大鵬灣及後海水[]俱歸大英管屬

龍鼓	筲洲	上帽洲	下帽洲	赤蠟角	大嶼山
枕箱洲	疎哥	長洲	石鼓洲	茶果洲	平洲
尼姑洲	校椅洲	馬洲	青衣	箔寮	蒲台
潞洲	青洲	佛堂洲	牛頭洲	吊鐘	白蠟
塩田子	橘嘴	滘西	塔門	赤洲	白潭洲
黃坭洲	霜洲	吉澳	坪洲		

大英一千八百(\*\*)九十九年四月**初九**(\*\*\*)日示

(\*) Autograph mark of authentication

(\*\*) Seal of the Governor

(\*\*\*) Autograph

It will be noted that there are significant differences in detail between the English and Chinese versions of this Proclamation: these have the effect of increasing the prominence, in the Chinese version, of the Governor's commitment to the local population to administer the territory in close and amicable co-operation with them.

## Appendix 2

### The Speech of the Governor, Sir Henry Blake, to the elders of the villages of the Kowloon area, on 17 April 1899

(from the *China Mail*, 18 April, *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 18 April, *Hongkong Telegraph*, 18 April, *Hong Kong Weekly Press*, 22 April)

This is the place where the British flag is to be hoisted. The territory has been ceded by the Emperor of China to the Queen of Great Britain. I, being the Governor of Hongkong, have been deputed by my Government to receive the new territory, and I welcome you as friends and not as enemies. To-day 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 our 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 come under British protection. This territory to-day becomes part of Hongkong. If you, the Chinese, want to know how you will be treated, you can go to Kowloon and Hongkong and there see for yourselves. There you will find that all the Chinese are well protected and all their interests cared for. You may carry on your lawful occupations and your buying and selling unobstructed. Your ancestral temples and your temples for worshipping your gods will remain. Our Queen hopes that you will always enjoy prosperity and happiness, and I, as Governor, by command of Her Majesty's Government, hereby declare that your customs and usages will be respected. Village Courts will be established, and representatives will be selected from your gentry to assist in the management of public affairs, and while acting in accordance with the law you will be allowed perfect freedom. I do not say that existing regulations may not be altered, but the alterations will only be such as will meet with the approval of the law-abiding people. The taxes will be equal and the revenue will be collected justly. You need now have no fear of being squeezed by the officials. If exactions are made in excess of the just charges, the Government will dismiss the officials responsible. The taxes collected will be expended in maintaining order and in public improvements. I am going to make a road from this place to Shatin and thence to Kowloon so that you may easily transport your goods to Hongkong for sale. There will be no Customs charges or lekin<sup>1</sup> and you may freely bring back with you goods in exchange. You are now all British subjects, and can thus share in the benefits resulting from the prosperity of Hongkong. There you will find people who, starting with little capital have built up

great businesses. You will all have the same chance of becoming prosperous. In all the villages we will establish schools and you will be protected in your rights; even the poorest people will be free from molestation. The laws that are made for your benefit must be obeyed, and all who break the law will be punished severely. All people, the gentry, the scholars and the common people must act honestly. From this time forth you are British subjects, and should you have any complaint to make the Governor will listen to it. No injustice will be allowed, nor any laxity. If you obey the law you need have no fear, and I hope you will all form one united community bound together by ties of love and respect. I pray God to afford you His protection and give you happiness.



# Appendix 3

## Report on the Fighting 15 – 18 April Capt. Berger as taken from Stewart Lockhart's Diary

(Note: this was dictated by Berger to Lockhart and entered into Lockhart's *Diary*. The words dictated by Berger are given below in ordinary print: Lockhart's bridging passages are in *Italics*. Editorial comments are in square brackets, and *Italics*.

*April*

*Sunday 16th*

*British flag hoisted at Taipo by me, at 2.50 p.m. in the presence of General Gascoigne, Captain the Hon. Trefusis A.D.C, Captain Long D.A.A.G, Commodore Powell, and Mr Molton R.N, Secretary to the Commodore, Mr F.H. May, C.S.P, Captain Wrey, H.M. S Brisk, Commander Keyes, H.M.S. Fame; 400 men of the Hongkong Regiment under the command of Colonel Retallick supported by Captain Berger and Lieut. Barrett; 60 men of the Asiatic Artillery under Captain Simmonds R.A, Lieut. Colville R.A, and Lieut. Peininger, R.A, with six seven pounders; & 15 men of the Hong Kong Police. A salute of 21 guns was fired by the Artillery and by Her Majesty's Ships in Tolo Harbour which were dressed, immediately after the flag had been hoisted the Convention signed at Peking in June and Her Majesty's Order in Council were then read by me, and the ceremony ended. I slept on board the Wing Fu, a launch chartered by the Government for duty in connection with the New Territory, where May and Ts'oi, my Chief Chinese Assistant also spent the night.*

*I wrote to the Governor, Sir H.A Blake, G.C.M.G, reporting the hoisting of the flag.*

*Mr Langer, who is surveying for the Kowloon-Canton Railway and Mr Bagnall Wild, R.E, who is assisting him called on board the Wing Fu to inquire whether they should continue their surveying in view of the disturbed state of the New Territory, Mr May and his men of the Police Force, and Captain Berger and the men of the Hongkong Regiment having been fired upon on the afternoon and evening of Saturday, the 15th inst. The following is Captain Berger's oral account of what occurred:*

"I left our barracks at Kowloon at 6 a.m. on the 15th inst. with a party consisting of 3 Jemadars<sup>1</sup> and 122 rank and file of the Hongkong Regiment with Queen's Regimental Colours with orders to march to Taipo Hü [*Tai Po Hui, i.e. Tai Po Market*] go into Camp there, and form a guard of honour at the ceremony of hoisting the British flag, which had been arranged to take place on Monday, the 17th April.

On arrival at Sha Tin valley, met Mr May, C.S.P. about 12.30 p.m., who told me that he had been unable to effect a landing at Taipo, that is to say he had been unable to land any of the stores, tents, etc which were necessary for the Camp I had been ordered to form. Being under the impression that it was only a matter of a few unarmed villagers, I told him to go round again, and I would cover, with the men under my command, anything he liked to land. Mr May agreed to this, and left in a launch for Taipo, whilst I proceeded on my way over land to the same place.

I was told by a villager at Sha Tin that there were thousands of men on the hills and that I should have some trouble. On reaching the top of the pass overlooking Taipo Harbour, the advance guard reported large numbers of Chinese collected on several hills. I halted my party and personally reconnoitred, when I saw what appeared to me large bodies of armed men drawn up in military order not only on the hills immediately in front of Taipo, but covering the hills in the distance in the direction of Chinese territory. I counted 6 or 7 banners and as every now and then I saw a puff of smoke followed by a sound of a cannon I came to the conclusion that Chinese troops were in position to prevent our occupation of Taipo.

I therefore wrote a note to Col. Retallick, reporting as above and stating that I intended to advance and take up a position close to Taipo and remain on the defensive and suggested that he should send me more ammunition, as I had only 40 rounds per rifle. I then called for two volunteers to take the letter back and Privates Meholi Khan and Akhbar Shah volunteered to go back, although they had already marched 20 miles and had no food left. These two privates reached Kowloon that night and delivered my note.

I then rested my men for an hour, collected all the water I could, and advanced with usual precautions on Taipo. On nearing that place, the enemy on the hills above Taipo opened fire in the direction of Flag Staff Hill, and I saw the fire being returned by a small group of infantry with an officer in a white hat in command, who turned out to be Mr May and a small force of Police. We doubled forward and took up a position on the hill to the left front of Flag Staff Hill. The Chinese on the hill then fired on me. They apparently had two batteries of something in the nature of cannon on the hill opposite to us, with bodies of infantry between all along the ridge, who kept shouting and firing occasional rounds at us. As I was anxious about my ammunition I fired only occasional shots in reply; half a section or two or three men at a time. The effect of my fire was sufficient to cause the Chinese to adopt a more cautious attitude. My men were distributed as a firing line lying down behind the crest of the hill to the left front of the Flag Staff Hill with supports and colours under cover. One of the non-commissioned officers was hit on the toe, but not hurt. At this period I brought up the Colour party to Flag Staff Hill and let our Colours fly, and a volley.

This continued for about an hour, when *H.M.S. Fame* came into Tolo Harbour. We made a signal to her for ammunition and a party was

immediately landed, accompanied by Captain Long DAAGi.s. and Commr. Keyes RN. It was then determined to attack under cover of the 12 pounder gun of the *Fame*. Captain Long took command. The necessary signals directing the *Fame* to open fire on the right of the hill opposite were made and two sections of the H.K.R. having been told off to hold Flag Staff Hill, protect the Colours, and by their fire cover the advance of the remaining 3 sections who, under the command of Jemadar Rang Shah, with Captain Long and myself, advanced to the left of the hill opposite with the intention of covering the hill opposite and taking the guns in flank, this movement was duly executed: the guns of the *Fame* making most accurate practice on the hill as shown in the sketch attached [*no longer attached to the Lockhart Diary*]. On reaching the top of the hill, no enemy could be seen, but we observed that the party with the Colours left on the hill had advanced to the Bridge near the village and were firing volleys in the direction of the retreating enemy.

It was now dark – about 7.30 p.m. – and the Force advanced after having been collected, in the direction of the village to the east of Taipo [*sic: probably west is meant, with Tai Po Tau as the village in question*]. It was found to be almost deserted although there had been a battery of guns there during the action. We lighted the ricks of dry grass for the double purpose of getting light and of notifying our success to the surrounding villages. We then advanced to the right front in the direction of a large hill where a considerable force of the enemy had been in position during the action. On reaching it we fired a few precautionary volleys to which we received no reply and then occupied the hill. We here found a very large shelter trench extending along the crest of the hill for some considerable distance, say 300 yards. The trench was deserted but a banner was found there, and buckets of cold tea at intervals of every 20 yards evidently intended for the refreshment of the men protecting the trench. We then retired and I proceeded walking company to Taipo and burnt the ricks there. We bivouacked on Flag Staff Hill for the night.”

*When I arrived at Taipo at 2 p.m. on Sunday [16th] on board H.M.S. Brisk, the Camp was in process of being erected. All work was temporarily suspended for the ceremony of raising the Flag. The Camp was completed that night and the G.O.C. slept there.*

Monday 17th

*I landed at 10.a.m. at the Camp and found the G.O.C. had gone to inspect the proposed camping ground at Fong Ma Po with Captain Long, and Berger and 100 men of the Hongkong Regiment. On his return to Camp at 12.30 p.m. I had an interview with the G.O.C. I was in favour of pushing on with as little delay as possible. The G.O.C. wanted to wait until Wednesday the 19th inst. in order to allow time to have the Camp established at Fong Ma Po and to let the troops rest. The labour question and the enforcing of labour if necessary was discussed. I reported this interview in a dispatch to the Governor. At 12.45 p.m. whilst*

my interview with the G.O.C. was proceeding a report was received from the detached post on the Taipo Hill [Ma Wo Hill] that large bodies of the enemy were occupying the hills in the direction of Lam Tsün [Lam Tsuen].

Captain Berger has provided me with the following oral account of what took place afterwards.

“On receiving the report that the enemy was advancing, I ordered E Company to reinforce Taipo Hill under Lieut. Barrett. H Company and the Subadar Rang Khan were moved to the right across the bridge, G Company under Subadar Khuha Baksh to the left of Taipo Hill as a support. Subadar Ghulam Jilani was left in Camp with half of F Company with orders not to leave it on any account. I then received permission from General Gascoigne who was present to make a counter-attack in the direction of Shelter Trench Hill [*behind Tai Po Tau Village*].

H Company continued the onward course: E Company under Lieut. Barrett was ordered to follow on and bring with them a picket of F Company on Taipo Hill, Subadar Khuha Baksh with G Company to follow on as a reserve. I then joined the advance Company. Major Brown R.A.M.C. accompanying me. We continued the advance over Shelter Trench Hill round to the left, where we halted temporarily. The enemy was seen flying up the hill [*the Fong Ma Po/Chung Uk Hill*] and were fired on. I found I had H Company with me and wheeled round to the left; burning the grass in the villages as we went; crossed the river and occupied the village at Fong Ma Po. I was here found by Lieut. Barrett and E Company.

We continued our advance slowly up the valley burning all ricks as we went. Lieut. Barrett with E Company on the left captured 3 muzzle-loading cannon of small calibre left by the Chinese in their flight. I now discovered that owing to the sudden appearance of the enemy the men under my command had turned out before their food for the day was ready. They had therefore had no food since the evening before. I continued my advance slowly in the direction of the Lam Tsün Gap on which large numbers of the enemy were seen to be collecting. Our advance continued slowly. When about 2000 yards from the Gap we were fired upon by the enemy. We paid no attention to the fire, but continued to advance slowly. I gave orders for no one to fire, my object being to get as close to the enemy as possible in order that our fire might be more effective, and that he might have no excuse for bolting before I got to an effective range.

At a point about 700 yards from the Gap I collected all the men I had with me behind a hill close to the road in the centre of the Pass. Jemadar Rang Shah had occupied the heights to the left his men under fire with one section in advance under Havildar Pazl Khan and another section in support. I then sent Jemadar Hajib Ali up the hills to the right to take up a similar position. When he was in position, I continued my advance, still without firing, up the centre line of the Gap, taking advantage of all cover. The

flanking parties advanced along the hill, still without firing a shot. The enemy all the time was firing incessantly, their shots going overhead.

The centre party now reached a point in rear of a hill, the crest of which was about 20 feet below the level of and 500 yards distant from the centre of the Pass, which was thickly occupied by the enemy. The rear face of this hill was so precipitous as to afford absolute cover to troops forming to occupy the crest. At this time I sounded to fire, and the flanking sections opened fire with half-section volleys at 600 yards. As soon as the men with me in the centre were formed I occupied the crest and fired volleys at the centre of the Gap, paying no attention to the small parties of the enemy who were firing down at us from positions high up on either side of the Gap.

I then advanced at the double to occupy a hill about 300 yards from the main position of the enemy, the flanking parties advancing along the hillside in a similar manner. The enemy from the moment we opened fire were very cautious about showing themselves above the crest, and though they fired incessantly their shots all went overhead. Major Brown R.A.M. C., who was in the rear, was hit and also one private. They were only slightly wounded. The men now advanced cheering, and the Chinese fled. Lieut. Barrett with one company advanced along a path leading to left of the central conical hill [*presumably Kwun Yam Shan*], whilst I advanced along a similar path which crossed the Pass to the right of the central conical hill.

When we reached the head of the Pass, the Chinese were seen running in all directions about 4 or 5 hundred yards off. We opened independent firing as we ran after them down the hill until I reached a pond in an open space 400 yards distant from Sheung Tsün [*Sheung Tsuen*] Village, where I halted. All the men fell in in single rank in line and fired volleys at various parties of Chinese disappearing in various directions.

Most of my men had been out on a reconnoitering patrol from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. They had then again turned out without having had any food and had followed the enemy 9 miles up a steep pass which they had captured and pursued for 2 miles down the Valley. It was nearly 7 p.m. when we reached Sheung Tsün.

Four prisoners were brought in, including one who had fired two shots from a revolver at a non-commissioned officer<sup>2</sup>. The villagers at Sheung Tsün received us with crackers and prepared tea and cakes for us.

Major Brown returned to Taipo with a guide as he was not well enough to stay, and with a report from me. Mr May with 12 Police now arrived from Taipo accompanied by an escort of 40 men of the H.K.R. He brought 4 boxes of ammunition.

I bivouacked at Sheung Tsün for the night in single rank square formation, with outposts in front of each face of the square, and ordered fires to be lighted at the 4 corners so as to light up the surrounding country. Mr May's arrival proved most opportune in enabling me to obtain supplies from the local headmen. In a very short time two heifers and enough rice

were obtained to feed the men. By 2 a.m. all ranks had had a hearty meal. During the night heavy rain fell, put out the fires and drenched us all to the skin. The rain cleared up and lights were seen moving down the hills, signaling from hill to hill. Volleys were fired at the lights, which put out one, but had no effect on the other.

Next day, Tuesday [18th] at 4.30 a.m. Captain Simmonds sent me a note from the head of the pass saying he had had orders to co-operate with me and asking to send a party to help with his guns. He also forwarded me a letter from Col. O'Gorman acknowledging my report of my action of the previous night and directing me not to advance any further unless I could co-operate with the force that might-be-landed at Castle Peak. I then determined to occupy the village, to send a party to help Captain Simmonds, and with the bulk of my force equipped very lightly to return to Taipo for food and blankets for the force left at Sheung Tsün. I arrived at Taipo at about 8 a.m. and ordered my men to get food & pack up the kits that had been left in Camp, store them at the Quarter Guard, and to ready [*themselves*] to return carrying blankets and food and ammunition for the Force at Sheung Tsün.

I then heard that Captain Simmonds' guns had gone astray and therefore ha[d] lead off the 100 men only [*he*] having gone to the head of the pass. They had in all probability gone too far off to enable them to interpose in case of attack on Lieut. Barrett whom I had left in charge at Sheung Tsün with about 40 men. I was therefore anxious about Sheung Tsün, and at 10 a.m. a report was received from the outpost at Taipo Hill that heavy firing was going on in the direction of Sheung Tsün. I left hurriedly at 10 a.m. accompanied by Col. The O'Gorman and Mr Stewart Lockhart, with the object of reaching Sheung Tsün as quickly as possible.

We reached Sheung Tsün at 12 a.m. finding all safe, though a note from Lieut. Barrett was received on our way to Sheung Tsün as follows:-

“18th April. Captain Simmonds RA. I hear the enemy is advancing in force. I have not many men here. We shall hold the position till you arrive (signed A.L. Barrett).”

On my arrival I went round the posts with Lieut. Barrett and could distinctly see a large number of the enemy in position on low-lying hills about 3 or 4 miles off in the direction of Kam Tin. At about 2.30 p.m. the enemy was reported to be advancing and I sent out Lieut. Barrett with one company in advance on the left flank whilst two companies were held in reserve in the village. The enemy continued to advance in open formation covering a front of about 1/2 mile. I advanced G and H Companies, sending H Company to the right, and extended my men across as broad a front as possible, about 400 yards distant from the village of Sheung Tsün. A dry water-course traversed the front of the position in a semi-circular manner, the apex reaching about 1,000 yards from the village.

The position of affairs at this moment was as follows: one company at left of nullah: one company across the ground between the two sides of the water-course: a company on the further side of the water-course: and a company in support. Col. The O'Gorman now took command and with his permission I sent Lieut. Barrett with two sections up the water-course to his left in order to get near some guns of the enemy, which had been firing incessantly. The enemy was allowed to advance firing for some considerable time before any fire was returned, though their shots landed all around us. The shots from his guns now began to fall near us and the advance of the enemy was made in a most determined and confident manner. The enemy appeared to be firing cannons of large calibre and although their small-arms men were for the most part armed with obsolete muzzle-loading weapons, I several times noted, as did others, the sound of bullets fired from a modern rifle.

At this point the fire was sounded and shortly after a general advance was ordered. The centre of the H.K.R. under myself accompanied by Col. The O'Gorman and Mr Stewart Lockhart advanced at the double towards the watercourse, and then along the bed of the water-course, and was able to get within 300 yards of the Chinese who commenced to move rapidly across to his right front. The species of fire used by our men was independent with fixed sights. Our men advanced across the plain in extended order firing as rapidly as they could at the enemy who ran away as quickly as their legs would carry them. We pursued to the village of Shek Tau Wai where we halted."

*I accompanied the troops to Shek Tau Wai, where Col. The O'Gorman and I had a consultation and it was determined to proceed to Kam Tin, which is notorious for having taken a leading part in the disturbance, in order to blow down the gates of the walled villages there. The troops accordingly continued their march to Kam Tin and were drawn up in line in front of the walled village of Fui Sha Wai which has strongly made iron gates. This is the village which was so insolent to me last Summer when I visited the new territory. Col. The O'Gorman ordered the gates to be blown down, which order was effectively carried out by two Sappers by means of gun cotton. The troops were then marched to the village of K'in On the gates of which were also partially blown down. It was not possible to blow them down so effectively as in the former instance, on account of the supply of gun cotton brought with us not being sufficient, and because darkness having come on it was deemed advisable to return to the quarters at Sheung Ts'ün. We found Captain Simmonds R.A, Lieut. Peininger R.A, Lieut. Colville R.A, and the men of the Royal Asiatic Artillery, who had arrived at 7.30 p.m. from the Fan Ling Valley. I attach an account of Captain Simmonds movements with which he has kindly furnished me.*

# Appendix 4

## Report on Operations: C.S. Simmonds, Capt. Royal Artillery

### Report

Operations – April 17 & 18, 1899

#### April 17

At 12.30 p.m. it was reported in camp at Tai Po Hu [*i.e.* *Tai Po Market*] that the rebels were advancing in force from the westward; I received orders to take 2 guns on to a low spur W. of Tai Po Hu. I experienced great difficulty in getting the guns up quickly, and I had no coolies & all my men were very tired from the night march and hard work of the previous day. After firing six rounds (during which the rebels had been firing from several positions to the westward) & some volleys from the Hongkong Regiment the rebels disappeared. As a general advance was ordered I followed as fast as I could; I took only 2 guns & all available men so as to push on, as fast as possible. My direction was NW over a good road up “Shelter Trench Hill” where I had seen a company of the Hong Kong Regt. advancing; having reached the head of the pass leading down to Sheung Wai [*Tai Hang*] firing had ceased & I halted to rest the men and sent back for coolies. While I halted I noticed smoke rising from the villages to SW and W. The hill-tops to NW and NE had men on them but none opened fire. While waiting for coolies I made a rough sketch of the ground shewing my position & asking to be allowed to bivouac for the night under a small escort on a small hill about a mile NW in the valley, judging that this would probably be our line of advance. Just after sending this message I received an order signed by Captain Long — “The G.O.C. orders you to retire to camp — pass Captain Berger’s orders to him”. This I received at 3.50 p.m. Everything quiet. I went into camp & gave Colville [*Simmonds’s second-in-command*] orders to retire as soon as the coolies came up. On arrival in camp I found Col. The O’Gorman was in command of the Kowloon Field Force. He ordered me to move in support of Berger, who was hotly engaged, & if necessary cover his retreat — I was given an escort of 20 rifles & met the guns near Shelter Trench Hill & took them on towards Fong-ma-po; on crossing the stream I found firing had ceased & as dark was coming on I decided to bivouac in a position N of Fong-ma-po where I could command the approaches to Tai Po Hu & cover Berger’s retreat if necessary; as I was getting into position we were fired on from the heights NW at about 2000 yds off and in the twilight we could see rebels coming down the spurs into the valley of Sheung Wai [*Tai Hang*]. I thought it advisable not to return their fire as the report of my guns might give unnecessary alarm to the camp, where there were practically no troops left. Prior to taking up the position



I found 10 men of the H.K. regiment guarding 3 rebel guns. I could not spare coolies to take the guns to Tai Po Hu but thinking the men might be of use in strengthening my escort I sent Lieut. Peininger [*one of Simmonds's junior officers*] to throw them into the river close at hand, at a spot where they could afterwards be found. The guns were carried by my own men so that coolies could not know where they had been thrown. During the night many men returned from the heights to the W into the adjoining villages which we could detect by the barking of dogs and lights on the hillsides, these were probably men who had been fighting during the day. I posted sentries round the bivouac with instructions to bring any persons passing, other than our troops, for me to see. Major Brown R.A.M.C. came through on his way to camp about 11.30 p.m. & reported that Berger had bivouaced about 2 miles up the valley to SW. About 2.30 a.m. I got a letter from O/C troops instructing me to co-operate with Berger, this was brought by a guide who was taking a convoy of coolies with food for Berger's force; I thought it best to try & see Berger myself, so I went off with the convoy & a few of my own men who had their carbines. As it was a dark rainy night the guide frequently lost his way & we did not get to the top of the pass until 4.15 a.m. It was then getting daylight & as Berger's camp was some way down the valley and I was feeling exhausted I sent a letter to Berger by an orderly to say that I had got to the top of the pass and asked him to come to see me, stating at the same time that some food was on its way for his men but the coolies had bolted & that he must send some men up for it. After waiting a quarter of an hour I saw what I took to be his advance guard moving off NW; having decided that the pass was impracticable for my guns I decided to push back to camp & look round N & W skirting the hills & taking the rebels in rear or driving them on to Berger's party — my escort now consisted of 30 rifles HKR and 10 of my own men with carbines; I reached the bivouac about 6 a.m. where I had left Colvile in charge & he reported all quiet & no orders had come in from Tai Po Hu — I considered my escort sufficient owing to the hasty manner in which the rebels had retreated & judging by their arms so I decided to push on at once, on arrival at Sheung Wai [*Tai Hang*] — a walled village — I blew in the gate (3 common shell from a 7 pr) this was the village to which the rebels had descended after firing at us the previous night — I found the village deserted and discovered some ammunition but no guns. I gave the coolies some rice I found in the village and proceeded to Fanling; all the country seemed quiet and the people of Fanling received us well — I had heard no firing in any direction. At Fanling I received a note from O/C troops that I had gone in the wrong direction & was if possible to join him in camp that evening at Sheung Ts'un. I started at once SW skirting the foot of the hills over an easy pass of which I knew into the Pat Heung Valley & arrived in camp about 7.30 p.m. I had heard firing about 5 p.m. & pushed on as fast as possible but the guns arrived too late to take any part in the fight. I reported my arrival to Col. the O'Gorman when he got back to camp about 9 p.m.

Signed

C.S. Simmonds

Capt. R.A.

Ping Shan

April 20th /99

# Appendix 5

## The Spirit Tablet Inscription in the Tin Hau Temple, Tai Shue Ha

<p>公元一八九七年九月廿三日再次重立</p>	<p>何何何何何何楊楊楊楊楊          唐有添亞樹耀容積禮亞正光振          壽乾壽德德廷富鳳和生興茂興</p> <p>林鄭鄭葉葉葉葉葉簡簡簡簡簡          月瑞喜舜光興茂善亞光觀亞福          德舜安仔德貴楊亮添龍龍五興</p> <p>譚譚譚胡胡胡胡朱林林林林林          聖啟廷廷應品廷清光春勝昌開          凱聖柱茂求大玉崇輔茂天壽枝</p> <p>劉徐俞俞俞吳伍伍鄧鄧周周          能富鳳鳳鳳長為英月金興德華          有有祥周奇大英仔華仔祥有壽</p> <p>曾易薛薛易易易駱駱駱駱駱劉          武漢觀國榮培培太卓成亞太黃          義柱北柱昌柱聖佑住福保喜壽</p> <p>程程程戴鍾賴謝謝陶陶關趙          聯德亞亞華太雲牛耀天廷有美          芳賢三先長平奇耀邦有廷貴英</p>	<p>列位眾姓英勇宿老之神位</p>	<p>陳陳陳陳陳陳陳陳陳陳陳陳陳          百萬上百水富光旭瓊達瓊發光朝          全全達壽九佑達邦大朝芳有裕發</p> <p>李李李李李陳陳陳陳陳陳陳陳陳          廣乾英等魁灶懷富鳳月耀富顯明          廷賢元勝賢福拔貴倫保宇昌拔宇</p> <p>張張張李李李李李李李李李李李          廷亞華希美峻英亞公舜觀漢觀土          槐三六賢英可晁就興鳳祿廷容佑</p> <p>黃張張張張張張張張張張張張          禮亞步乾振觀奇水仕有彩水惠亞          芳七高亮安耀耀發大興玉嬌大長</p> <p>梁梁黃黃黃黃黃黃黃黃黃黃黃黃          群水乾智亞金換太乾華萬國添連          槐福夫芳記保興富護德英柱興柱</p> <p>熊盧龍蔡蔡蔡蔡蔡蔡蔡蔡蔡梁梁梁          容錦有己金美廷祖英國添容牛發          弟棠全福福壽耀舜喜禎勝壽仔齊</p>
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# Appendix 6

## The Six-Day War and Kam Tin

### 錦田鄧氏族譜

光緒二十四年戊戌（公元一八九八）… 外人垂機脅要中國領土為租借地… 不料我鄉先輩揭櫫起義，並登高一呼聯合各鄉民眾… 遂與英軍衝突故演成‘錦田喋血’事件… 此一場可歌可泣之民族抗戰遂告一段落

當對英人抗戰之役，我鄉及其他有關被犧牲者之遺骸，其中之家屬不能辦理善後事者，乃由錦田公眾擇地於圭角山麓之同福堂地藏廟後山殮葬

其神牌則附設於周王二公書院之前座右進，至民國二十三年甲戌（公元一九三四）則遷錦田市之友鄰堂宗祠以供配享。至今鄉人顏其名曰‘英雄祠’。每年春秋二祭猶憑弔其壯烈不忘也

上文錦田曆史簡略於民國二十四年乙亥自修師儉堂家譜時搜集

### The Genealogy of the Tang Clan of Kam Tin, 1966

In the 24th Year of Kuang Hsü, a Mo Sut Year (1898) ... foreigners seized the opportunity to force China to lease territory. ... All our forefathers in this village decided to rise up in righteous opposition, and to raise a loud voice against this, together with the masses of the other villages. ... Subsequently the British Army clashed with them, and the result was that ‘Kam Tin was awash with blood’. ... This people’s war of opposition should be commemorated after the end of the affair.

In this war of opposition to the British, the bones of those of our people and the others involved who had been sacrificed could not be dealt with by their family members, and eventually the Kam Tin Community chose land at the foot of Kwai Kok Shan, land on the hill behind the Tei Tsong Temple of the Tung Fuk Tong, and buried them there.

Their Spirit Tablet was placed in the temple to the Two Righteous Officials, at the front, on the right of the entrance, but it was moved in the 23rd Year of the Republic, a Kap Sut Year (1934) to the Yau Lun Tong Ancestral Hall in Kam Tin Market, for public veneration. Up to today the inscription ‘Heroes Shrine’ can be seen there. Every year at the Spring and Autumn Sacrifices, these heroic martyrs are worshipped so that they are not forgotten.

The above brief text on the history of Kam Tin was written in the 24th Year of the Republic [1935], a Yuet Hoi Year, when the branch genealogy of the Sz Kim Tong was revised, and is copied here from there.

# Appendix 7

## The Biography of Man Tsam-chuen

(Taken from the Genealogical Record of the Man clan of Tai Hang, most punctuation added)

### 二十世 以訓

行一；字德昭，別字賡虞，號湛泉，例貢生。剛方義直。怡情山水，有時游日聘懷，雖登高遠。而益樂為廣田原，以足衣食。講禮養義，以課子孫。儉理祖嘗大修宗廟。立村造墟，以燕胎翼，用啟鴻圖，考其生平末務。兼長詳于天星日課，而吉凶預決精於堪輿地理；而先骸妥葬。種竹栽花焚香，展卷以娛日永正承先啟後。人也生道光丙戌年八月二十五日。終光緒廿八壬寅年十一月廿二日申時。葬土名賣茶凹石地，癸山，丁向，地形仰瓦留珠。配陶氏；生道光甲申年十二月廿七日。葬隔海大窰凹屋後，與長媳鄧氏，二人同壙。子二人，拱宸，燦宸，女一人 [text lost] 共計子七，人女二人。

### 21st Generation: Yi-fan

He was the first-born son. His *Tsz* was Tak-chiu, his alternative *Tsz* was Kang-yue, and his *Hao* was Tsam-chuen. He had a purchased Kung Shang degree. He was a straightforward and just man. Fine scenery lifted his spirits: at times he would travel to refresh his heart, even climbing high mountains or hiking to far-away places. He was always happy to extend his lands, to ensure an adequate income. He spoke courteously and always behaved virtuously, to set an example for his sons and grandsons. As Manager of the Ancestral Trust he undertook a major restoration of the Ancestral Temple. He founded a village, and established a market: like a swallow, leaving shelter for the following generations, by making detailed and long-term plans - throughout his life he always thought to the future. Furthermore, every day he would calculate very carefully the influence of the heavenly bodies; and would use *Fung Shui* to calculate lucky or unlucky futures: he buried properly the remains of the ancestors. He planted bamboo and flowers, and burnt incense to cause pleasure all day long, both for his own time, and for those who came after. He was born on the 25th Day of the 8th Moon, in the *Ping Sut* Year of Tao Kuang [1826]. He died at the *San* hour, on the 22nd Day, 11th Moon, of the 28th, *Yam Yan*, Year of Kuang Hsü [1902]. He is buried at the place called Mai Cha Au, at Shek Tei. The *Fung Shui* specifications are *Kwai*

*Shan, Ting Heung*. The site is shaped like “Looking up to the tiles where a pearl is fixed”. He married the Lady Tao. She was born on the 27th Day of the 12th Moon in the *Kap San* Year of Tao Kuang [1824]. She is buried at Kak Hoi Tai Kau Au, behind the houses, together with the older daughter-in-law, the Lady Tang; the two are buried together. She had two sons, Kung-shan and Kit-shan, and a daughter [text lost]. In total there were seven sons and two daughters.

# Appendix 8

## (a) The Biography of Ng Shing-chi

(written by his son, Ng Man-to, and published in the pamphlet prepared for Ng Shing-chi's funeral)

哀啟者先嚴諱其昌字榮賓號醒邈大父例貢生冠三公仲子生而岐嶷童蒙時能屬對讀四子書過目成誦出省就傳業師陳廉夫水部期以大器年十六隋先伯父應縣試屢擢前列邑令廷入內堂謁太夫人以幼慧賞異之辛巳方星槎司馬權縣篆拔置全案第一名學使馮友文大鴻臚取列縣學第三名壬辰歲考與先伯父同受知於徐花農學使以優第二名補增廣生丁先王父憂哀毀盡禮性孝友事先叔祖梅閣公如父與先伯父鳳昌公先叔父麟昌公雖異母出而姜被之樂數十年如一日識見明達辦事勇敢鄉鄰有難挺身排解不避勞怨新界案起先嚴義憤激發倉葛一呼義民畢集抗戰數日夜意氣不屈終以群情渙散勢將瓦解先伯父乘夜謂先嚴曰當此千鈞一髮亟宜走避與其坐而待斃若去而圖存速行速行毋致禍生眉睫先嚴從容答曰弟以磊落之身視死如歸何忍畏罪潛逃而置義民於爐火之上卒肯長與先從兄文瑚公同被逮先嚴念姪年少無辜慨然以一身任過脫從兄於獄今學忠學孝二猶子成立得廷先伯父之嗣先嚴力也歡諸神環請改繫永監又十三年而獲釋五十有三抵里門里人燃爆竹歡迎盛筵款接者匝月先嚴撫姪孫輩酒淚言曰學忠學孝不圖叔祖今日之得甘分與汝也港督梅軒利氏按臨凹頭前席慰問時國體變更斯文將墜先嚴以啟迪後進為己任就宅畔開兩椽講學以教族中子姪鄉里髦秀多出其門時與先嚴為難者咸知悔悟時亦假以詞色先叔祖嘗謂先嚴曰汝今日所親者即昔日之仇也獨不念十三載囚園痛苦乎先嚴徐徐答曰姪非不知恩怨但不念舊惡怨是眉古有明訓不敢為己甚也聞者咸為感動至其創辦公益見舊墟之市場偏小也則集資以創設新市憫貧民之患病無依也捐以創建醫院祖嘗則絲毫無所私兩致千金修大樹下廟宇設永安社學校規模既立繼承弗替同人舉充元朗約正合益公司總理博愛醫院主席新界農業會寶安縣修志局委員與張公漢三伍公叔葆兩太史同歲補縣學生時相唱和注籍酥醪觀嘗往遊羅浮登陟不倦人咸稱之晚歲深得攝生之道精神矍鑠道貌岸然夙為鄉望所歸歸卑端待理或勸以八十高年宜事休息先嚴答曰我非戀棧不過好行其善舍是則不安耳平生未嘗有病客歲小春始患河魚之疾然不服藥辦公如故飲食如故臨終前五小時猶在公司伍心泉伍于瀚蔡寶田鄧輝當朱揆文註公親訪訪問酬應無倦客問以身後事唯諄囑以維持合益公司博愛醫院及營墓祖塋事勉子姪親睦保家而已耳嘗曰吾懼為社會罪人為祖宗罪人令各事付托有人吾心安耳何囑為同時

與姪孫學忠親檢賬部凡宗親貧債貧而無力者悉焚其卷學忠詢其何以出此 先  
 嚴戒之曰時非若所知毋多言且勿為外人道也返家後五小時溘然長逝春秋七十有  
 九不孝侍奉無狀罹此鞠凶 慈親在當不得不苟延殘喘以冀大事謹奉 先靈暫  
 厝於牛軛曲山泣述其平生大節伏維有道君子哀卹而表章之感且不朽

孤子伍文濤泣述

The writer's late revered father was called Kei-cheung; his literary appellation was Wing-pan, and his use-name was Shing-chi.<sup>1</sup> He was the second son of my late grandfather, who was the knowledgeable holder of a purchased Kung Shang degree. My father was born a bright boy. Even as a mere child he could produce couplets and read the Four Character Classic. What he learnt at this very young age he never forgot. Since it was hoped that he would achieve great things, he was sent to study under Chan Lim-fu, a well-known teacher, with a post in the Board of Works. When my late revered father was sixteen, he participated in the county examination, together with my late elder uncle, and achieved a good result. My father's success was so outstanding that the county official was utterly taken by surprise and he took my father to meet the official's mother in their home. In the San Yi Year [1881] he was the highest placed of the students of Szema Kuen, a man from Shing Chai. Later my father studied under the great master Fung Yau-man, and achieved the third place in the examinations. In the Yam San Year [1892] he studied with Tsui Fa-nung, another great master, together with my late elder uncle, and achieved the second place in the examinations in that year. He was granted the rank of Tsang Kwong Shang.

My late revered father was kind and loyal to his family and friends. He greatly respected my late younger great-uncle, Mui-kak, and treated him as his father. Father was kind and courteous to his elder and younger brothers, my late elder and younger uncles, Fung-cheung and Lun-cheung, even though they had different mothers.

My late revered father's character was firmly established from an early age. He was knowledgeable, understanding, and brave. He often arbitrated for neighbouring villagers whenever disputes arose, and would do this quietly, and without any fuss.

During the New Territories Incident, my late revered father, being inflamed with this righteous cause, encouraged the other villagers to get together. They resisted for a few days and nights with an indomitable spirit. However, the resistance eventually died down and collapsed. Noticing that the resistance was failing, my late elder uncle advised my father that the situation had become very dangerous, and suggested that he should flee. He felt that it would be better for my father to flee away as quickly as possible rather than to stay, and be arrested and taken off and die. My late revered father replied calmly that what he was doing was righteous, and that he did not fear death. He would not run away on his own when the righteous villagers as a whole were in a dangerous situation. Soon after, he was arrested, with his nephew, my late cousin Man-wu. Taking into account Man-wu's youth and innocence, my father took full responsibility, and Man-wu was in due course released from prison. Thanks to my father's efforts, Man-



wu grew up and learnt to practice the two great virtues of loyalty and filial piety, and so became an exemplary heir to my late elder uncle.

Due to the concerted efforts of the village gentry, my father's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. In the event, he was imprisoned for thirteen years. When he was released he was fifty-three years old. Upon his return, he was met at the entrance to the village by all the villagers, burning fire-crackers. The village treated him to a series of banquets, lasting a full month. My father wept when he saw his young relatives, and reaching out to touch their shoulders he urged them to be loyal and filial and thrifty, not depending on their inheritance from their ancestors. When the Governor, Henry May, visited Au Tau, he came to pay a visit to my father, and, sitting with him, wished him well.

As the nation was, at that time, changing, and knowledge was declining, my late revered father regarded the education of the youngsters as his mission. He started teaching the younger members of the village, in the house next to his own. Most of the outstanding villagers in the neighbouring villages learnt from him. Some people had been hostile to my father in the past, and now falsely stated that they regretted this: these he would rebuke with strict words. My late younger great-uncle once asked him if he had forgotten his thirteen years in prison, given that some of those now close to him had been his enemies in the past. My late revered father replied quietly that it was not because he could not distinguish between graces and grudges, but that it was an ancient moral principle not to harbour hatred. Everyone who heard this was touched.

My late revered father did many things for the public good. He helped found the Hop Yik Company, collecting money to build a new market when he saw that the old one was too small. He persuaded people to donate money to build a hospital for the poor. He was in charge of the ancestral trust property, but never took a cent for doing this. He spent thousands of dollars in repairing the Tai Shue Ha Temple, and in establishing the Wing On She school. He was subsequently elected Director of the Hop Yik Company in Yuen Long, and Chairman of the Pok Oi Hospital. He became a Board Member of the New Territories Agricultural Association, and also served as a Member of the Board for the Revision of the Po On County Gazetteer. He served there with two friends, Cheung Hon-sam and Ng Shuk-po, who had been fellow-students with him in the County Academy: they would often meet to read poetry, to study the classics, and to spend convivial time together.

My late revered father enjoyed good health to the very end of his life. He climbed to the summit of Lo Fau Shan, and this was seen as evidence of an excellent state of health. My father not only looked healthy, he also showed himself to be spirited and courageous. When asked if he would retire once he reached eighty, he replied that the work he did was not done with a view to making a name for himself, but just because he wanted to do charitable things, and would feel uneasy if he stopped. My father never felt sick, except once, when he was away from home one Spring, and suffered some minor problems. He never took medicine, and he worked, and ate and

drank, just as usual, right up to the time he died. Even just five hours before he died he went to the Company's offices, and there had a discussion with Ng Sam-chuen, Ng Shuk-po, Choi Po-tin, Tang Wai-tong, and Chu Tam-man, who had gone there to see him.

Whenever my late revered father was asked about what should be done after his death, he gave no instructions, but only expressed the wish that the next generation would look after the Hop Yik Company and the Pok Oi Hospital, and care properly for the ancestral graves. He also expressed the wish that the younger generation should live together in harmony. My late revered father said that the only thing that worried him was if he were to be seen as guilty by the community at large, or be judged to be at fault in the face of his ancestors. He felt relieved when everything had been assigned to the right persons. He checked the account books with his grand-nephew, Hok-chung, and told him to burn the bonds of those poor clan members who were too poor to repay what they had borrowed. Hok-chung asked why this should be done, and my late revered father said that there was no need to discuss the matter, as Hok-chung should be able to understand the position. My father said there was no need to tell the others about it. Father then went home, and died five hours later. He was then seventy-nine years old.

I am not competent enough to write about the revered deceased. My mother is even now at the Hall taking charge of things there. The coffin of the revered dead will be placed temporarily on Ngau Ngak Kuk Shan. With the greatest respect, and many tears, I thus write this account of my father's life and his noble mind, so that he might be remembered.

The bereaved son, Ng Man-to, with many tears.

\* \* \* \* \*

## (b) The Biography of Ng Shing-chi

(written by his friend, Chan King-tong)

伍醒遲，諱其昌，初號星墀後改醒遲也。新界元朗南邊圍人。十六歲縣試名列案首，[ ]派入學，獲中秀才。生平膽識過人，忠義愛國。一八九八公年英國租借新界。鄉民不知底。先生激於義情與同伍礪石，廈村鄧儀石，錦田鄧青士各鄉紳，牽領義民，抗戰四日。被執判發死刑，尋諸紳環請，改為終身監禁。英皇子愛德華訪港大赦獲釋，計被囚禁十三年。改號醒遲，以示醒悟遲[ ]回里改。築作書室，設館授徒，並盡力於地方公益為創設元朗合益公司，博愛醫院，大樹下永安社學校，新界農業會等將行其善，極為鄉人所欽仰。亨壽七十九歲終於一九三八年農曆五月廿八日

Ng Shing-chi was named Kei-cheung, and initially had as his use-name Shing-chi, which he later changed to Shing-chi (*the same sound, but different characters*). He was a man of Nam Pin Wai Village, Yuen Long. When he was sixteen he took the County Examinations, and passed well. He entered the County Academy and in due course passed his Sau Tsoi examinations. He was by character braver than the rest, loyal, righteous, and patriotic. In 1898, the British leased the New Territories. The villagers did not understand the implications. The deceased was inflamed with righteous indignation, and, together with Ng Lai-shek of the same village, Tang Yi-shek of Ha Tsuen, Tang Tsing-si of Kam Tin, and the other local gentry, led the righteous people out to fight a war of resistance for four days. He was arrested and sentenced to death, but, thanks to the representations of the gentry, this was commuted to imprisonment for life. When Prince Edward visited Hong Kong,<sup>2</sup> and there was a general release of prisoners, he was allowed to go free. In all he was in jail for thirteen years. He then changed his name to Shing-chi, the meaning being that he had been roused up even though it was late. He established a school, building premises and taking in students, and he gave his all to charitable causes for the local people, as in the establishment of the Hop Yik Company in Yuen Long, the Pok Oi Hospital, the Tai Shue Ha Wing On She School, the New Territories Agricultural Association and such like charitable activities, which caused him to be greatly admired by the local people. He died in 1938, at the age of 79, on the 28th Day of the 5th Moon.

# Notes

## Preface and Acknowledgements

1. See “The Alliance of Ten: Settlement and Politics in the Sha Tau Kok Area” in *Down to Earth: The Territorial Bond in South China*, ed. D. Faure and H. Siu, Stanford University Press, 1995, pp. 123–160, and “Eastern Peace, Sha Tau Kok Market in 1925”, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch*, Vol. 33 (1993), pp. 147–202.
2. *Eastern No. 66: Hong Kong; Correspondence (June 20 1898, to August 20 1900) Respecting the Extension of the Boundaries of the Colony. Printed for the use of the Colonial Office*, Colonial Office, November 1900.
3. This collection is referred to in this book as *Extension Papers*.
4. *Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, 1899*, No. 32 of 1899, *Despatches and Other Papers relating to the Extension of the Colony of Hong Kong*, Government Printer, Hong Kong, 1900; and *Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, 1899*, No. 35 of 1899, *Further Papers relating to the Military Operations in Connection with the Disturbances on the Taking Over of the New Territories*, Government Printer, Hong Kong, 1900.
5. These collections are referred to in this book as *Despatches* and *Disturbances* respectively.

## Introduction

1. Lt. Col. O’Gorman was Chieftain of the Irish clan O’Gorman, and, as such, was properly and formally known as “The O’Gorman”, although he was often known, more informally, as simply “Lt. Col. O’Gorman”. In this book he is usually referred to as “Lt. Col. O’Gorman”, except where quoting from original sources. The Colonial Secretary, Stewart Lockhart, was usually careful to give him his full, formal title.

## 1 1899: Hong Kong in the Age of Imperialism

1. Placenames in Hong Kong are given as in the Hong Kong Gazetteer of Placenames, except where direct quotes from original documents are in question. Placenames in Guangdong Province are given in standard Cantonese transliteration, with pinyin and characters on first occurrence, except where direct quotations from original documents are in question, when the standard

transliteration is provided in square brackets. Personal names are given in Cantonese transliteration. For personal names and placenames in Hong Kong, the Chinese characters are given in brackets on first occurrence. See Map 1 for places in Hong Kong mentioned in the text.

2. There are a huge number of books on the British Empire and Imperialism. Among the more valuable are A. P. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies: A Study in British Power* (Macmillan, London, 1959; 2nd ed. Macmillan, 1985); A. P. Thornton, *Doctrines of Imperialism* (John Wiley & Sons, New York and London), in series *New Dimensions in History: Essays in Comparative History*, gen. ed. Norman F. Cantor (1965); William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890–1902* (1935, 2nd ed. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1951), (particularly, in the context of this current study, chapter III, “The Triumph of Imperialism”); P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism* (1st ed. Longmans, London, 1993, 2 Vols; 2nd ed., *British Imperialism, 1688–2000*, Pearson Education, London, 2002, 1 Vol.); B. Porter, *The Lion’s Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850–1970* (Longman, London, 1976, 3rd ed. extended to 1995, Longman, London, 1996); B. Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: What the British Really Thought about Empire* (Oxford University Press, London, 2005); V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to the Outside World in the Imperial Age* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1969; 4th ed. Serif, London, 1996); D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Penguin Books, London, 2001); and K. Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character* (Tauris, London, 1990).
3. On the somewhat dubious grounds that Britain “ruled the seas” and that the Royal Navy had the right to enforce British law anywhere on the seas.
4. See, for instance, Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, 2nd ed. op.cit. pp.xxix–xxx; Thornton, *Doctrines of Imperialism*, op.cit. pp. 7, 89.
5. Quoted in William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 92: Chamberlain’s words are taken from speeches given in 1895, 1896, and 1897.
6. Quoted in William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 93, from Curzon’s book, *Problems of the Far East, 1894* (first sentence): the second sentence is taken from G. N. Curzon, “The True Imperialism”, in *Nineteenth Century*, January 1908, p. 157 ff, quoted in Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, 2nd ed. op.cit. p. 72. See also the very similar sentiments of Lord Milner, the great proconsular ruler of South Africa, as given in E. Crankshaw, *The Forsaken Idea* (London, 1952) p. 37, quoted in Thornton, *Doctrines of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 205, and those of H. W. Wyatt, a publicist of Imperialism, quoted in William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 93, from Wyatt’s essay “The Ethics of Empire”, 1899. See also the statement of aims of the *Daily Mail* newspaper (1896): “The *Daily Mail* is the embodiment and mouthpiece of the imperial idea . . . to be the articulate voice of British progress and domination . . . We know that the advance of the Union Jack means protection for weaker races, justice, for the oppressed, liberty for the down-trodden:” quoted in William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 84.

7. The quote is taken from Churchill's biography of *Lord Randolph Churchill* (London, 1906), Vol. I, p. 156, quoted in Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, 2nd ed. op.cit. p. 71.
8. Langer thus notes that it was widely assumed that "any interference with the progress of British imperialism [was] an attempt to counteract the will of God", and quotes H. D. Traill on the subject of the belief of the Englishman that his actions in the Empire were God's will: "Any interference with him . . . may be justly resented and resisted by him . . . as a perverse attempt to obstruct the manifest designs of Providence." (*Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. pp. 94–95, quoting comments by Traill from 1896). Nehru, speaking of the officers of the Raj he became acquainted with in the first decade of the twentieth century, remarked on their "calm assurance of being always in the right . . . There was something of the religious temper about their attitude." (J. Nehru, *Autobiography*, 1936, p. 428, quoted by Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, op.cit. p. 72). Thornton, speaking of the Imperial officials of that period, notes that they were men "with a self-appointed mission", men "exceedingly serious-minded on the duties of Empire", "believing in Empire as a common good, and believing in the firm use of power to attain a desirable end". Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, op.cit. pp. 87–89.
9. William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 92.
10. Most of the public schools were English, but Scottish young men, from the Scottish public schools, and the Scottish Universities were similarly sought after: the ethos of the Scottish educational system at this period was essentially the same as that of the English system.
11. William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 94.
12. However, as Langer points out, the 1890s were the years when Social Darwinism became a significant thread among a small section of British thinkers, and Social Darwinism was posited on racialist ideas. However, Social Darwinism never became a mainstream trend in British thinking. See William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. pp. 85–88.
13. As Langer points out, the most important opponents of Imperialism were the Cobdenite Free-Traders, and this group were losing influence very quickly in the last decades of the nineteenth century, to the point where only 13 Members of the Cobden Club turned up to its annual meeting in 1897. See William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. pp. 70–76. Langer dates the change to dominance of British political ideas by Imperialism to 1870.
14. J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism* (London, 1902); L. T. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction* (London, 1904); Beatrice Webb, *Our Partnership* (no date, about 1902). See Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, 2nd ed. op.cit. pp. 72–74. S. Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire 1918–1966* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1993) can find no significant left-wing anti-colonialism before the period of the First World War. Langer (*Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 68) notes one critical study of Imperialism before 1902, in an article published in the U.S.A. in 1898, but this article had very little influence in Britain.

15. See William L. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. for the strongly Imperialist attitudes of the ordinary working-class man in Britain at this period.
16. Thus, Sir Henry Rider Haggard published *King Solomon's Mines* in 1885, and *She and Allan Quatermain* in 1887. George Henty published *The Young Buglers* in 1880, *Under Drake's Flag* in 1883, *With Clive in India* in 1884 and *With Moore at Corunna* in 1898, as well as many others. Rudyard Kipling published the two *Jungle Book* volumes in 1894–1895, *Stalky and Co.* in 1899, and *Kim* in 1902, as well as his volumes of stories about India (*Plain Tales from the Hills*, 1888, and *Soldiers Three*, 1889) aimed more at the adult market, but very popular among older boys as well. These books were immensely popular and influential: Henty sold 150,000 volumes each year in the 1890s, and Rider Haggard sold 5,000 copies of *King Solomon's Mines* in two months. These books for boys demonstrate just how entirely Imperialist the market for boys' adventure stories had become by this period, and reflect in turn how Imperialist the atmosphere in Britain was generally. See Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. pp. 82–84 on the importance and growth of “blood-stained fiction”. At the same time, biographies of the great Imperialist figures also sold extraordinarily well: the autobiography of Field-Marshal Lord Roberts (*Forty-One Years in India: from Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief*) went through no less than 30 editions in twenty months in 1896–1897.
17. See Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 71 for Seeley and his colleagues.
18. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 77.
19. Rhodes, 1899, quoted in Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 79.
20. An anonymous writer in the *Quarterly Review*, 1899, quoted in Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, op.cit. p. 81.
21. In the last sixty years, the New Territories have become very much more than just a quiet rustic hinterland: today fully half Hong Kong's seven million people live there, mostly in one or other of Hong Kong's nine New Towns. The return of Hong Kong to China in 1997 was precipitated by the completion of the term of the New Territories lease, given the impossibility of modern Hong Kong surviving without the New Territories.
22. Much later this post was retitled “Chief Secretary”.
23. This Regiment was an Indian Regiment, formed from men from the North-West frontier area but seconded to the British Army for the defence of Hong Kong. It was formed by Col. Edmund Barrow. As normal with Indian Army regiments, it had a small nucleus of British officers, and a larger group of Indian officers (Viceroy Commissioned Officers) subordinate to the British officers, as well as Indian non-commissioned officers. It was formed in 1891 and was to be disbanded in 1902. It was this Regiment which fought the Six-Day War: see below.
24. So spelled. The Royal Welch Fusiliers were an ancient regiment, and used an antique spelling of the word “Welsh” as a gesture of pride in their history.
25. For Lockhart's family background and early life, see S. Airlie, *Thistle and Bamboo: The Life and Times of Sir James Stewart Lockhart* (Oxford University Press, 1989).
26. Later this post was retitled “Commissioner of Police”.

27. For the biographies of May and the other cadets here discussed, see *20th Century Impressions of Hong Kong: History, People, Commerce, Industry, and Resources*, originally published 1908, republished in a reduced format 1990, pp. 106 ff.
28. This post was later retitled “Financial Secretary”.
29. This post was later divided, most of the responsibilities going to the post titled today “Secretary for Home Affairs”.
30. For details of Johnston’s background, see S. Airlie, *Thistle and Bamboo*, op.cit. p. 129, and S. Airlie, *Reginald Johnson, Chinese Mandarin* (National Museums of Scotland Publishing, Edinburgh, 2001).
31. See Appendix 2 and the reports of this speech in the *China Mail*, the *Hongkong Daily Press*, and the *Hongkong Telegraph*, all of 18 April, and the *Hongkong Weekly Press*, of 22 April. These are the four surviving English-language Hong Kong newspapers of the period. The *Hongkong Weekly Press* was a sister publication of the *Hongkong Daily Press*, and comprised mostly extracts or précis of articles from the *Hongkong Daily Press*, or, occasionally, from one of the other dailies. It only rarely included material not already published in a daily. Unfortunately, no Hong Kong Chinese-language newspapers survive for the period of the Six-Day War: the main Hong Kong Chinese-language newspaper surviving for the 1890s, the 華字日報, has a gap in its surviving run for the Spring of 1899, including the whole of April.
32. A copy of the speech is to be found in E. G. Barrow’s “Campaign Diaries” (MS Eur 420/27, British Library, p. 337ff). This is a volume into which Barrow, in his retirement, copied all those documents from his immensely successful career which he felt he most wanted to be left to be remembered by. Another copy of the speech is to be found in the Hongkong Regiment Standing Orders (P.R.O., London, MS WO30/103, p.69), for the speech was published as a Standing Order for all the Regiment to read. An account of this Farewell Dinner and speech are also to be found in the “Scrapbook” of press accounts of the Regiment kept by Capt. E. L. C. Berger, one of Barrow’s most trusted officers (now MS 6012–68, National Army Museum, London). Barrow, in his speech said that Indian officers were less successful as natural leaders than the British officers, because of their tendency to form cliques.
33. This article was copied by Barrow into his “Campaign Diaries”, and by Berger into his “Scrapbook”, see above.
34. Kelly and Walsh, Hong Kong, 1893, reprinted as *The Hong Kong Guide*, 1893 (Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1982). See pp. i–ii and pp. 72, 76.
35. Op.cit. pp. 145, 152.

## 2 Riots, Disturbances, Insurrection, and War: Armed Opposition to the Imperial Ideal

1. Frederick S. Roberts, Lord Roberts of Kandahar, VC, KP, GCB, GCSI, GCIE, 1897, *Forty-One Years in India, from Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief* (30 editions published between January 1897 and September 1898).



2. General Sir Abraham Roberts, GCB, a man with considerable experience of fighting in that area.
3. On the late Victorian Army's view of itself and its Imperial role, see C. Barnett, *Britain and her Army, 1509–1970* (Penguin Books, London, 1970; 2nd ed. Cassell, London, 2000); G. Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society: Studies in Social History* (University of Toronto Press, 1977); B. Bond, *Victorian Military Campaigns* (Frederick Paeger, London, 1967; 2nd ed. T. Donovan, 1994).
4. *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. pp. 288–289, 355–364, and 430–431 respectively.
5. Roberts makes his views clear also in his discussion of the Afghan Peace of 1879. He felt this Peace was ill-considered because the Afghan military power had not been smashed beforehand, and his comments on this must have strengthened in his readers the view that only a thorough-going victory was of any value: "I felt that the Afghans had not had the sense of defeat sufficiently driven into them to convince them of our strength and ability to punish breach of treaty, and, therefore, that a peace made now, before they had been thoroughly beaten, would not be a lasting one, and would only end in worse trouble in the near future . . . I thought that peace had been signed too quickly, before, in fact, we had instilled that awe of us into the Afghan nation which would have been the only reliable guarantee." *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. pp. 376, 380. Roberts states that he became physically ill with worry over the prospect of any peace on the Frontier not based on an overwhelming victory over the Afghans. In the event, the Minister sent to Kabul in accordance with the terms of this Peace (a friend of Roberts') was in fact murdered, with all his staff, shortly after his arrival there.
6. *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. Appendix XI, p. 573.
7. Callwell fought throughout the latter part of the Second Boer War, where he did very well, earning a knighthood. During the First World War of 1914–1918 he was successively Director of Military Intelligence and Director of Munitions. He died in 1928, as Major-General Sir Charles Callwell, KCB.
8. He was a brave and resourceful man, winning the Royal Humane Society's Silver Medal and the French Medaille d'Honneur (1st Class) for an act of bravery while still a student (1869), and winning the Royal Humane Society's Silver Medal a second time in 1884. In 1879, during the Afghan Campaign, he won the V.C. for an act of great bravery in saving the life of an Indian private, at great risk of his own. He was mentioned in Despatches in 1879, 1882, and 1897, during the Afghan, Egyptian, and Tirah Campaigns. By 1897 he had been knighted, and was a Brigadier. He was promoted Major-General in 1902, Lieutenant-General in 1908, and full General in 1914. He received the K.C.V.O. in 1904. He was Commander-in-Chief, South Africa, 1912–1914, when he retired from active Army service. He was then, however, appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey, 1914–1918, and was granted the honorary position of Colonel-Commandant of the Royal Engineers in 1922. He died in 1931.
9. *Small Wars: Their Principle and Practice* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1896; 2nd ed. 1899; 3rd ed. 1906). The 3rd edition was re-printed in 1990 as *Small*

*Wars: A Tactical Textbook for Imperial Soldiers* (Greenhill Books, London). I am indebted to Lt.Col. N.A. Collett for drawing my attention to this book and its significance.

10. *Reflections on the Art of War* (William Close, London, 1894; 2nd ed. 1897; 3rd ed. 1901). Hart's comments on small-scale warfare are scattered throughout the book, but are found in particular in his chapter on 'Mountain Warfare' in the 3rd edition. I am indebted to Dr James Hayes for drawing my attention to this book.
11. *Reflections on the Art of War* went through three editions between 1896 and 1901, and *Sanitation and Health* through four by 1901.
12. In 1882, Lieutenant-General Sir Garnet Wolseley, GCB, GCMG, later Viscount Wolseley, 1833–1913.
13. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 41, 106, 151–152, 159, 173, 318, 384, 388–389, 395, 432. The same principle is to be found elsewhere in Callwell as well.
14. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 175.
15. *Soldier's Pocket Book*, op.cit. 4th ed. pp. 396, 398.
16. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 90, 398.
17. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 213.
18. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 41, 91–92, 103, 106.
19. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. pp. ix–x. Hart italicises this comment to stress its overwhelming importance in his view.
20. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. x, repeated p. 342a.
21. *Soldier's Pocket Book*, op.cit. 4th ed. p. 403. Wolseley goes on to say, however, that the officer must, nonetheless, take great care to avoid being surprised by the enemy.
22. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed, chapter VI, "Boldness and Vigour the Essence of Effectively Conducting Such Operations", pp. 71–84.
23. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 72, 75.
24. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 175.
25. *Soldier's Pocket Book*, op.cit. 4th ed. p. 396.
26. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. p. 76. Hart also notes the tendency of tribesmen to wait on events before casting their lot in with an insurrection, and notes that steadiness and resolution on the British side would induce many to stay out: *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 342a.
27. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 75, 383. Hart makes the same point: "A deliberate defensive is generally right only when all the conditions are so unfavourable that practically there is no alternative", stressing this by italicising the comment. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 154.
28. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 40–42.
29. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 342k–l.
30. *Soldier's Pocket Book*, op.cit. 4th ed. p. 398. See also *Soldier's Pocket Book*, op.cit. 4th ed. p. 402, where Wolseley states that many small-scale campaigns fail because "the object aimed at was the capture and burning of villages instead of the killing of these . . . warriors".

31. See also Hart: *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 342a; “If our artillery fires at distant ranges, it often happens that the enemy escapes all loss”.
32. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 391, 393. Callwell does not use the phrase “fire only when you can see the whites of their eyes”, but clearly is a believer in the idea.
33. So also Hart: *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 342g; “When the enemy is within charging distance, the firing line should be thickened, and bayonets fixed.”
34. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 160, 161, 162, 163, 384, 376, 399.
35. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. pp. 167, 342g.
36. *Soldier’s Pocket Book*, op.cit. 4th ed. pp. 397, 399, 401, 403. “Rapidity of movement and sudden unexpected attacks demoralise an undisciplined enemy . . . When the enemy is approached sufficiently near, he must be rushed with a ringing cheer . . . Nothing will demoralise the undisciplined enemy more than rapidity of movement and an unhesitating display of energy and a constantly renewed and prolonged effort on your part . . . Do not press or hurry your men, for men out of breath are useless for the final charge; this charge, when made, should be accompanied by loud cheering, sounding of bugles etc . . . Turning movements with a view to surprise and to getting behind the enemy so as to inflict really heavy losses upon him, have [not] been tried as often as they should have been.”
37. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 170, 173, 192, 194, 209, 211, 377, 378.
38. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 394, 395, 376. “Magazine fire” is automatic fire, as opposed to the deliberate bullet-by-bullet fire. The implication is that there should be a massive increase in the firing rate as soon as the troops reach close quarters.
39. *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. pp. 312, 349, 398, 522–523, and 572–573.
40. *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. pp. 522–523.
41. *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. pp. 288, 572.
42. *Soldier’s Pocket Book*, op.cit. pp. 398, 400. Wolseley insists that everyone “officers included” should carry with them 4 or 5 days basic supplies, or at the least, “in very mountainous country” one day’s basic supplies, but only if the rest of the supplies are carried on mules which are kept with the force. Hart states (*Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 328) that Wolseley demanded that every soldier take two days’ hard rations with him whenever engaged in active service, against the risk of supplies failing.
43. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 57–70.
44. Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. pp. 57–60.
45. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. pp. ix–x, 311, 324, 329. See also op.cit. pp. 342g et seq. for Hart’s comments on how the needs of the transport will affect the tactics used in small-scale warfare.
46. See Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. p. 572: “The work of a column obliged to return to its base of supply before it has had an opportunity of completing the object of the expedition must be more harmful than beneficial, as its failure emboldens the enemy, and weakens the confidence of the people in our power to

- protect them and to reach the offenders.” Wolseley, *Soldier’s Pocket Book*, op.cit. 4th ed. pp. 400, 403: “If you have to halt . . . to bring up provisions you give . . . renewed courage to the enemy . . . He imagines you halt from fear . . . When actually in presence of the enemy, all delays before attacking . . . they attribute to fear, and are emboldened in consequence.” Callwell, *Small Wars*, op.cit. 1906 ed. p. 74 similarly states: “The history of small wars offers many striking examples of the evil which results when a miscalculation of supply and transport requirements brings the operations of the regular army to a standstill in the middle of a campaign.”
47. *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. pp. 494–495. These comments by Roberts were made in the context of the Afghan War of 1879–1880.
  48. *Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. Appendix XI, pp. 573–574.
  49. *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. 3rd ed. p. 324: “With English armies, it has been the wise and honourable rule to pay for all supplies . . . [taking] nothing without paying for it with hard cash on the spot.”
  50. There is no book like Callwell’s discussing at any length the role of the military when in support of the civil power during a civil disturbance. G. Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, op.cit. pp. 171–215 has a few comments on this side of the Army’s task.
  51. If law and order had broken down entirely, the civilian authorities might “declare martial law”, in which case the decision as to whether a disturbance was rebellion or civil disturbance would be a matter for the military authorities, but declaration of martial law was seen as a statement of failure, and was resorted to very rarely: usually the military required the consent of the civil authorities before undertaking any active duty.
  52. Although many military officers found this condition irksome and annoying, as unduly fettering their discretion: in some cases military commanders were able to by-pass or side-track their Political Officers, or even get the requirement cancelled. Roberts, however, was strongly in support of the system, ordering that Political Officers accompany each column involved in the Burma Campaign of 1886 (*Forty-One Years in India*, op.cit. Appendix XI, 9th, 13th, 15th, 16th and 18th sections, pp. 573–574).

### 3 July 1898–March 1899: The Road to War

1. For the traditional New Territories society and economy, see the works of James W. Hayes, especially *The Hong Kong Region 1850–1911: Institutions and Leadership in Town and Countryside* (Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut, 1977), *The Rural Communities of Hong Kong: Studies and Themes* (Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1983), and *The Great Difference: Hong Kong’s New Territories and Its People 1898–2004* (Hong Kong University Press, 2006). Chapter 1 of *The Great Difference* “The Leased Territory in 1898” gives an excellent overview of the New Territories at the date of the Six-Day War. See also David Faure, *The Structure of Chinese Rural Society: Lineage and Village in the Eastern New Territories, Hong Kong* (Oxford

University Press, Hong Kong, East Asian Monograph Series, 1986), and James L. Watson and Rubie S. Watson, *Village Life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender and Ritual in the New Territories* (The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 2004). For a study of the demographics of the traditional New Territories society, see P. H. Hase, “Traditional Life in the New Territories: the Evidence of the 1911 and 1921 Censuses” in *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 36, 1998, pp. 1–92.

There were two societies in the New Territories in 1899, the rural society of the area north of the City, and a maritime society in the fishing ports of the south, on the edge of the South China Sea. The maritime society was entirely geared to the commercial fishing trade. Thousands of tons of fish were landed each year, salted and dried, and shipped inland, to meet the insatiable desire of the farming communities for affordable protein. The fishing ports were, in 1899, by far the largest settlements in the New Territories: up to ten times as large as any of the rural market towns. These fishing ports were entirely dominated by the sea: ship-building yards, ropewalks, sail-yards, anchor and chain makers, oar-makers, breaming yards, salt-merchants, dealers in tar and canvas and rattan, filled the streets, together with the service premises needed to service the crews of the more than 3,000 fishing boats. The village communities of the areas immediately around these fishing ports were, to a large degree, dependent on sale to the fishing fleet of their surplus rice, vegetables, poultry and firewood. These fishing port communities were more sophisticated than the rural market towns: they were in close contact with the City of Hong Kong, with numerous sailing ferries going backwards and forwards every day, and even with steam ferries connecting the largest of them, Cheung Chau (長洲), with the City. Items made far away from the area, even items from overseas, could be seen in their shops. However, the maritime community of the New Territories played no part in the Six-Day War, and hence this community is not described any further here.

2. On this, see P. H. Hase, “Traditional Life in the New Territories”, op.cit.
3. On this, see P. H. Hase, “Traditional Life in the New Territories”, op.cit.
4. Similar traditional Land Laws existed at the time in other parts of South China.
5. On this see P. H. Hase, “A Village War in Sham Chun” in *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 30, 1990, pp. 265–281.
6. For this development, see P. H. Hase, “Beside the Yamen: Nga Tsin Wai Village” in *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 39, 1999, pp. 1–82.
7. In the British land settlement, the British accepted only the actual user of the land as the new Crown lessee, and did not accept any payment of any rent-charge to any land-lord except where a tenancy for a term of years, or a mortgage, was in effect. The ancient Punti clans thus lost their rights as Sub-Soil landowners. Furthermore, the British treated the elders of every village equally, leaving each rich, ancient village as only one among many. Of course, the wealth (and the scholarship) of those ancient villages still gave them a great deal of influence within the area, but nothing like what it had been before 1899.

8. Other than from the collective memory of the village elders of the villages concerned, almost all we know about the Six-Day War is contained in a small collection of printed transcripts of official records. One, referred to above, and published for the Colonial Office, is entitled *Eastern No. 66: Hong Kong; Correspondence (June 20 1898, to August 20 1900) Respecting the Extension of the Boundaries of the Colony. Printed for the use of the Colonial Office*, (Colonial Office, November 1900) (hereafter *Extension Papers*). This collection of transcripts was taken from the files in the Colonial Office. A broadly similar compilation, also referred to above, was prepared as a Sessional Paper for the Legislative Council Hong Kong (*Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, 1899, No. 32 of 1899, Despatches and Other Papers relating to the Extension of the Colony of Hong Kong*, Government Printer, Hong Kong, 1900) (hereafter *Despatches*). This collection was taken from the files in the Colonial Secretariat, Hong Kong. Neither collection is complete: both contain documents not transcribed in the other, although the Colonial Office collection is the fuller. Both edit documents, sometimes without indicating this: the Colonial Office collection includes a number of documents which have been paraphrased, where the full original document survives in the Sessional Paper collection. In some documents in the Legislative Council collection (which was a quasi-public document) some sentences of a personal character, and others of a confidential character have been omitted, with the Colonial Office collection including them. The documents included in both collections tend to appear in a different order. The Sessional Paper collection tends to transcribe Chinese names with greater accuracy. There is also a second Sessional Paper prepared for the Legislative Council, again referred to above, (*Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, 1899, No. 35 of 1899, Further Papers Relating to the Military Operations in Connection with the Disturbances on the Taking Over of the New Territory*, Government Printer, Hong Kong, 1900) (hereafter *Disturbances*). This second set of papers, which includes some important documents, is not included in the Colonial Office compilation.

The private papers of Stewart Lockhart, at the time of the Six-Day War Colonial Secretary, and Political Official accompanying the campaign, also contain a good deal of material, especially his personal *Diary* (hereafter *Lockhart Diary*) and a folder of papers entitled *My Part in the Acquisition of the New Territory Hong Kong 1898–1899* (hereafter *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*). There is also a good deal of information in the English-language Hong Kong newspapers of the period.

Discussions of the Six-Day War can be found in P. Wesley-Smith, *Unequal Treaty 1898–1997: China, Great Britain and Hong Kong's New Territories* (Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1980, reprinted and revised 1998, pp. 59–67 and 95–123); S. Airlie, *Thistle and Bamboo: The Life and Times of Sir James Stewart Lockhart* (Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1989), pp. 100–109; H. Lethbridge, *Hong Kong: Stability and Change, A Collection of Essays* (Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1978); Essay VI *Sir James Haldane Stewart Lockhart: Colonial Civil Servant and Scholar* (pp. 130–162), and R. G. Groves, "Militia, Market, and Lineage: Chinese Resistance to the Occupation of Hong Kong's New Territories" in *Journal*

- of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. 9, pp. 31–64. Another account, by 鄧聖時 (Tang Shing-sz) can be found in 屏山鄧族千年史探索 (“Collected Notes on a Thousand Years of the History of the Tang Clan of Ping Shan”), ed. Tang Shing-sz, pp. 1–13. Tang Shing-sz was born about 1922, and in his youth in the late 1930s asked questions of the elders still alive then who had fought in the War or been eye-witnesses of it. See also the article 新界風暴 (“Storms in the New Territories”) by Lau Tsak-sang (劉澤生) in 香港史話 (“Notes on Hong Kong History”), ed. Kam Ying-hei (金應熙) (Guangdong People’s Press, 1988), pp. 108–112. Other accounts of this fighting can be found in 香港歷史問題; 資料選評: 租借新界 (“A Selection of Material on Hong Kong History: The Lease of the New Territories”), 劉存寬編著, ed. Lau Tsuen-foon (Joint Publishing, Hong Kong, 1995); 十九世紀的香港 (“Nineteenth Century Hong Kong”), 劉存寬, 余繩武 (Lau Tsuen-foon, Yue Shing-mo), 麒麟書業 (eds.) (Hong Kong, 1993); 香港問題始末 (“A Full Study of Questions on Hong Kong”), 姜秉正 (Keung Ping-ching) (陝西人民出版社, Xian, 1987); 香港主權交涉史 (“A History of the Negotiations on the Sovereignty of Hong Kong”), 劉偉 (Lau Wai) (廣角鏡出版社, Hong Kong, 1983); 香港新界屏山九七慶回歸特刊 (“A Special Publication of Ping Shan, New Territories, Hong Kong, to Celebrate the 1997 Return of Hong Kong to China”), 鄧聖時 (Tang Shing-sze) (privately printed, Ping Shan, 1997). The most recent study is by Sidney C. H. Cheung, “Martyrs, Mystery and Memory behind a Communal Hall” in *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol. XI, 2000, pp. 29–39. There is also some material on the Six-Day War in Sidney C. H. Cheung, “Remembering through Space: the Politics of Heritage in Hong Kong” in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2003, pp. 7–26. Other recent studies are long feature articles in the *South China Morning Post*, 25 April 1999, and 11 November 2006.
9. See Wesley-Smith and Airlie, op.cit. for a discussion of the actions which took place between the agreement of the Convention and the decision to take over the area.
  10. This Report is included in a Sessional Paper prepared for the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (*Papers Laid Before the Legislative Council of Hong Kong*, 1899, No. 9 of 1899, Government Printer, Hong Kong, 1900, *Extracts from a Report by Mr Stewart Lockhart on the Extension of the Colony of Hong Kong*) (pp. 181–212).
  11. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 1–7, No. 172, pp. 191–197, give details of what was discovered about all this during October 1898.
  12. *Despatches*, p. 30 states: “the men . . . come from districts north of Sham Chun and are supposed to be the remnants of the followers of Chung Sui-yeung and Sun Yat-sen, who tried to create a rebellion in the Kwangtung Province”. The Viceroy suggested on 23 April 1899 that the troubles of 1899 were entirely due to the British, who had refused to extradite Chung Shui-yeung in 1898, thus allowing his followers more chance to cause later problems: “whether the present affray at Tai Po H[ü] is the work of Chung Shui-yang’s remaining confederates, I have not yet positively ascertained. But if, when the outlaw was arrested last year, the Hong Kong authorities had been willing to hand him over at once,

- instead of releasing him, then the infliction of punishment at the very outset would have made the people fear the law, and matters would never have come to the present pass” (*Extension Papers*, Enc. 30 in No. 204, p. 277).
13. *Extension Papers*, No. 172, pp. 189–190.
  14. *Extension Papers*, No. 191, pp. 231–234. The Viceroy is often spoken of in English as the Governor-General, but Viceroy is used here as it is the invariable title used in the papers relating to the Six-Day War.
  15. Versions are at *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 135, pp. 138–139 (*Despatches*, p. 6) and Enc. CIIIa and CIV in No. 171 pp. 187–188 (*Despatches*, pp. 48–49). See also *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–186 and Enc. CII, pp. 186–187 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46 and 46–47).
  16. *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 135, pp. 138–139 (*Despatches*, p. 6). The notice was issued by Ping Shan village. According to Tang Shing-sz, op.cit. p. 4, the notices were written out on sheets of red paper, to make them stand out on the walls of the various villages. No good copy of the Chinese text is known: a Chinese version is included in Tang Shing-sz, op.cit. and another is at Vol. 4, section 16 (第四卷第十六章: 租借新界: “The Lease of the New Territories”, p. 1697) of *明清兩朝深圳檔案文獻演繹* (“A Collection of Historical Documents from Shenzhen from the Ming and Ching Dynasties”), 深圳市檔案館編, (廣州花城出版社, 2000). However, both these Chinese versions seem to be re-translations from the English.
  17. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CIV in No. 171, p. 188 (*Despatches*, p. 49). No Chinese version of this version survives.
  18. It is not known which village Tang Wang-tsung came from, but it was probably Ping Shan, where “Tsung” was the generation name used by the 23rd Generation of the Tang clan for their tsz, with at least 28 men from the main part of the Third *Fong* of the clan sharing this character. The poem was found in a handwritten collection of local verse. I was given a photostat of the page on which this poem is to be found, but had no opportunity of studying the booklet as a whole: unfortunately, this gave me no opportunity of finding out anything more about the author, or the village from which he had come, nor yet the village where the booklet was written. It was in the hands of a non-villager when I saw it. I am indebted to Mr Tim Ko Tim-keung for assistance in translating this poem.
  19. *Despatches*, p. 68, and see Tang Shing-sz, op.cit. p. 6. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CIIIa in No. 171, p. 187, (*Despatches*, p. 4), is one of the letters sent on this occasion.
  20. *Despatches*, p. 68.
  21. *Despatches*, p. 66.
  22. *Despatches*, p. 67.
  23. Also known as Ngan Fui or Pan Tin (Chinese characters unknown).
  24. Tang Shing-sz, op.cit. p. 3 notes that still surviving Account Books in Ping Shan show these payments. See also *Extension Papers*, Enc. 17 in No. 204, p. 262.
  25. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, p. 185 (*Despatches*, p. 46).
  26. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CIIIc in No. 171, p. 187 (*Despatches*, p. 49), is a letter



- (probably of 30 or 31 March 1899) threatening retaliation if Kam Tin does not join in fully.
27. *Extension Papers*, No. 107, p. 123 (full text at *Despatches*, p. 22).
  28. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI and CII in No. 171, pp. 185, 186 (*Despatches*, pp. 46, 47).
  29. Tang Shing-sz, personal comment. I am indebted to Mr Tang Shing-sz for answering my queries on this and other points.
  30. The *Hongkong Daily Press*, however, notes in its editorial of 17 April, that Tang Yuen-keng, the Hanlin Academician, and the headmaster of the Kwong Nga College in Canton (a higher-level school under the direct patronage of the Viceroy) was “connected” with the insurrection (presumably by way of writing documents in support). Tang Yuen-keng was a villager of Lung Yeuk Tau. Tang Yuen-keng’s support for the insurrection was not enough, however, to induce his clan brethren into the insurrection alongside their foes from Fanling.
  31. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–186 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46).
  32. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 18 in No. 204, p. 262.
  33. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 20 in No. 171, p. 177 (*Despatches*, pp. 57–58).
  34. *Extension Papers*, Sub-enc. in No. 30, p. 29.
  35. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 9 in No. 204, pp. 250–251.
  36. Tang Shing-sz has stated (Sidney Cheung, personal comment) that these elders did this as a ploy to ensure that the Government did not believe anything was under planning, but it is more likely that they were expressing their opposition to any armed insurrection.
  37. *Extension Papers*, No. 114, pp. 126–127 (full text in *Despatches*, p. 23). The despatch does not say which villages the representatives came from. See also the *China Mail*, 16 April. The *Hongkong Telegraph* and the *Hongkong Daily Press*, both on 17 April, also mention this delegation’s visit to the Governor. The deputation waited on the Governor at Government House, and kowtowed to him there. The *Hongkong Telegraph* says that the delegation was “a deputation of the leading Chinese in the New Territory”, which suggests that the delegation came from a number of places, probably those districts of the New Territories not involved in the insurgency. See also Chapter 4, n. 56.
  38. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI and CIIIc in No. 171, pp. 184–186 and 187 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46 and 49), and *Despatches*, pp. 68 and 67.
  39. *Extension Papers*, Sub-enc. in Enc. 10 in No. 204, p. 252.
  40. See the *China Mail*, for 18 April.
  41. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 26 in No. 171, pp. 182–183 (*Despatches*, pp. 44–45), Enc. CII in No. pp. 186–187 (*Despatches*, pp. 47–48), Enc. 17 in No. 204, p. 258, also No. 204, pp. 261–262.
  42. The most significant are: (A) *Extension Papers*, No. 141, pp. 9–10 (*Despatches*, p. 143); (B) *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 159, p. 151 (*Despatches*, p. 157); (C) *Extension Papers*, Enc. 26a in No. 171, p. 183 (*Despatches*, p. 43) (repeated at *Extension Papers*, Enc. 8 in No. 204, p. 250); (D) *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–186 (*Despatches*, p. 45–46); (E) *Extension Papers*, Enc. CII in

- No. 171, pp. 186–187 (*Despatches*, p. 47–48); (F) *Extension Papers*, Enc. 6 in No. 172, pp. 195–196; (G) *Extension Papers*, Enc. 10 in No. 204, p. 252; (H) *Extension Papers*, No. 204, pp. 261–262; (I) *Extension Papers*, Enc. 13–16 in No. 204, pp. 263–265; (J) *Extension Papers*, Enc. 19 in No. 204, p. 267; and (K) *Extension Papers*, Enc. 22 in No. 204, pp. 273–274. See Wesley-Smith, 1998, *op.cit.* pp. 110–116.
43. (E) (H) (J) above.
  44. (K) above.
  45. See the views of May, above. The English-language press in Hong Kong all took this line. The *China Mail*, 15 and 16 April, points to this as a major factor. The Viceroy, as noted above, also felt this was the case.
  46. (B) (H) (K) above.
  47. (G) (H) (J) (K) above.
  48. (B) (E) (H) above.
  49. (K) above.
  50. (B) (E) (H) (J) above.
  51. (E) (H) above.
  52. (B) above.
  53. (H) above.
  54. (C) (D) (G) (H) above.
  55. (B) (J) (K) above.
  56. (J) above.
  57. See *Extension Papers*, No. 180, pp. 213–214. This was the formal submission to the Secretary of State of an Ordinance (*The Hong Kong Extension Exemption Ordinance*) passed by the Legislative Council on 18 April 1899, following several months of discussion. This Ordinance exempted the New Territories from the operation of 24 Ordinances. The Secretary of State, 16 June 1899, felt that the New Territories should be exempted from rather more Ordinances than this new Ordinance proposed (*Extension Papers*, No. 189, pp. 221–222). The reason given for the exemptions was the rural and undeveloped character of the New Territories, which made laws designed for the better management of a major urban community inappropriate.
  58. The Proclamation was issued as a response to the Governor's learning of the inflammatory placards issued by the Tai Ping Kung Kuk at the end of March. The English version of the Proclamation is at *Extension Papers*, Enc. 3 in No. 159, pp. 158–159 (*Despatches*, p. 21). Five copies of the Chinese version are in *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*, and another copy is in Colonial Office file CO 129 *Original Correspondence: Hong Kong*. Since the Chinese version of this Proclamation has never been published, and given the importance of this Proclamation in the development of the New Territories, and the establishment of the rights of the indigenous inhabitants there, the English and Chinese versions are here attached as Appendix 1. See also Plate 8.
  59. (B) (C) (H) (J) above.
  60. Chinese characters not in original.

61. *Extension Papers*, No. 204, pp. 261–262. The Police Station remained as an irritant to the Tang clan from then on. When, a few years ago, the Police Station became redundant, the Police having moved to a newer Station nearby, the old Station was handed over by the Government, to be used as a Museum of the Tang clan, in the hope that this will once and for all end this long-term Fung Shui problem.
62. (D) (E) (F) (H) above.
63. Chinese characters not in original.
64. See in particular the Governor's views at *Extension Papers*, Enc. 15 in No. 172, p. 202.
65. The *Hongkong Daily Press*, 17 April.
66. See his comments at *Extension Papers*, Enc. 11 in No. 204, pp. 256–257.
67. See, for instance, the statement: "all present said the cession of the territory was the work of the company" (i.e. that Britain was being duped into taking a lease merely to benefit the corrupt pockets of these land developers) in *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–188 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46) and the statements in *Extension Papers*, Enc. 6 in No. 172, pp. 195–196 (this last shows that rumours of underhand land sales and forced purchases were rife as early as October 1898). Ng Shui-sang, the Colonial Secretary's contact, was named as one of those who were deeply involved in this development. One specific case was mentioned: Tang Ying-shang of Ping Shan was accused of selling Tang clan communal trust property in Cheung Sha Wan to "the company" as if it was his private property. See Wesley-Smith, 1998, op.cit. pp. 112–114.
68. Thus Tang Kok-lam stated as the reason he joined the insurrection: "Tang Tsing-sz . . . worked on my fears by dwelling upon the calamities that would overtake me hereafter. My ancestors having been occupiers of the soil for generations, how could I bear this change?" *Extension Papers*, Enc. CII in No. 171, pp. 186–187 (*Despatches*, pp. 47–48).
69. *Extension Papers*, No. 141 pp. 142–143 (*Despatches*, pp. 9–10).
70. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 6 in No. 172, pp. 195–196. Robert Hotung had been asked to submit this report to corroborate the reports reaching F. H. May and the Police about the agitations then going on in the area and the discussions then being held between various groups of villagers about the advisability of armed opposition. The report by Hotung discusses the rising of Chung Shui-yung, the money that was being extorted, the dangers that the purchase of land by people known to be connected with the Colonial Secretary posed, and other similar points.
71. Chinese characters not in original.
72. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 17 in No. 204, pp. 261–262.

#### 4 April 1899: The War

1. *Extension Papers*, No. 80, p. 105; Enc. in No. 84, p. 107; No. 135, pp. 138–139 (*Despatches*, p. 6).

2. The English-language press were all strongly opposed to this visit, which they saw as unworthy and un-British, a truckling to an effete and corrupt official.
3. *Extension Papers*, No. 80, p. 105; No. 82, p. 106; Enc. in No. 84 enclosure, p. 107; No. 140, pp. 140–142 (see also *Despatches*, pp. 6–7). The comments of the Viceroy make it clear that the Viceroy, equally with the Hong Kong authorities, had made no attempt up to that date to let the villagers of the area know the implications of the coming change in administration. The Viceroy issued a Proclamation (*Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 159, p. 158, tabled also in the Legislative Council, Hong Kong, *Sessional Papers*, 1899, No. 27/99), but only on 4 April 1899, and as a direct result of the Governor’s visit to him of 2 April. In this Proclamation the Viceroy stated that, after the British takeover: “The people would be treated with exceptional kindness, houses and lands cannot be bought by force . . . the local customs and habits shall all remain unchanged” (no copy of the Chinese original is known to survive). This Proclamation (which was not widely disseminated), like Blake’s, came too late to change the course of events. The failure in public relations was thus total. The Governor travelled in *H.M.S. Fame*, commanded by Lt. Roger Keyes. Keyes was later Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, “one of our national heroes” according to Sir Winston Churchill (Keyes held important commands in both World Wars) in the Foreword to Keyes’s autobiography of his early career, *Adventures Ashore and Afloat* (Harrap, London, 1939) (hereafter, Keyes, *Adventures*). Keyes gives considerable detail about the trip to Canton, at pp. 159–163 of this Autobiography. I am indebted to Dr James W. Hayes for drawing my attention to this book.
4. Chinese characters not in original.
5. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29); Enc. 26 in No. 171, pp. 182–183 (*Despatches*, pp. 44–45); Enc. CVIII–IX in No. 171, p. 189 (*Despatches*, p. 50); Enc. 13 in No. 204, pp. 254–255.
6. For the events of 3–4 April, see *Extension Papers*, No. 85, pp. 107–108; No. 141 and enclosures, pp. 142–148 (*Despatches*, pp. 9–15); No. 158, pp. 153–154; No. 171, pp. 164–168, especially pp. 164–165 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29 especially pp. 25–26); and Enc. CI and CII in No. 171, pp. 184–187 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–48): see also *Despatches*, p. 7, pp. 60–61, *Disturbances*, pp. 1–2.
7. The hill is the one where the Old District Office, Tai Po, the Old Tai Po Police Station, and the old Government School and Public Clinic stand. It is colloquially known as Kwai Tsai Kong (鬼仔崗 “Foreign Devils’ Hill”).
8. “District Watchmen” were members of a body of men who assisted the Government and the Police in undertaking certain local duties. They were established in 1866, and were, in 1899, under the control of the Registrar-General.
9. *Disturbances*, p. 2. Keyes, *Adventures*, op.cit, pp. 165–166 has details of the trip to Tai Po.
10. *Whiting* was a torpedo-boat destroyer, a slightly larger ship than *H.M.S. Fame*. *Whiting* struck a rock in the Tolo Channel in the fog, and was significantly damaged.
11. *Disturbances*, p. 2.

12. *Fame* was a torpedo-boat destroyer, a slightly smaller vessel than *H.M.S. Whiting*.
13. *Despatches*, p. 7.
14. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 5–7 in No. 204, pp. 247–250.
15. *Extension Papers*, No. 159, pp. 154–155 (*Despatches*, pp. 17–18); No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29); and Enc. in No. 190, pp. 223–224.
16. *Extension Papers*, No. 159, pp. 154–155 (*Despatches*, pp. 17–18); Enc. in No. 190, pp. 223–224; and *Despatches*, p. 30.
17. *Extension Papers*, No. 159, pp. 154–155; Enc. in No. 190, pp. 223–224 (*Despatches*, pp. 17–18). Jingals are long guns (about four feet long), firing small round-shot using black powder. They could fire up to about half a mile. They required two men to fire them. They were slow to load and fire, as they were muzzle-loaders, and had to be unshipped from their firing positions to be loaded, and then re-established in the firing position. They were the usual arms of the villages in this area at the end of the nineteenth century. These weapons were very similar to the arquebuses that had been used in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Keyes, *Adventures*, op.cit. pp. 167–168 states that he was sure that he would have been able, assisted by the Policemen, twenty men landed from *H.M.S. Fame*, and with the back-up of *Fame's* guns, to have “driven the Chinamen out of the territory”. *Fame* carried May and his men back to Sha Tin.
18. *China Mail*, 15 April.
19. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–185 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46); Enc. in No. 190, pp. 225–226.
20. The Hongkong Regiment was a regiment of Indian soldiers established specifically for service in Hong Kong in 1891, and hence named the Hongkong Regiment. The first Colonel of the Regiment was E. G. Barrow, a first-class officer (he retired in 1924 as General Sir Edmund Barrow, GCB, GCSI, in his 72nd year, when he retired from the position of Military Member of the Council of India, representing the Army on that body, the most senior organ of the Government of India, a position he had held since 1917), and he was determined that the Hongkong Regiment should be a first-class one. As it was stated in the Order by which the Regiment was formed, the Regiment was a “Class Regiment of Mussulmans, specially raised for Service beyond the Sea, so that not only have they in their keeping the reputation of the Corps to which they belong, but also the credit of Islam, and the good fame of the Indian Army, who, in a sense, will be represented by this regiment in the Far East”. This Order was written by Barrow. The Regiment comprised two companies of Pathans, two of “Punjabi Mussulmans”, and two of “Hindustani Mussulmans”, all from the general area of the North-West Frontier. It had a total of 8 British officers (Commandant, two Wing Commanders, and 5 Wing Officers), and 17 Indian Officers holding the Viceroy’s Commission (8 Subadars and 9 Jemadars including the Jemadar Adjutant), 117 Non-Commissioned Officers (including Havalgars, Naiks, and Buglers), and 870 Privates. The regiment was thus a standard Indian Army regiment, but one seconded to the British Army specifically for the defence of Hong Kong. The British officers were appointed from other Indian Regiments (Col. Retallick from

the 45th Rattrays Sikhs, and Capt. Berger from the 30th Bombay Infantry) and this must have been the case as well for the Subadars and Jemadars. The Other Ranks, however, were appointed directly to this new regiment. The recruits to the new regiment were so good that the Commandant of the School of Musketry at Hythe said that the school had “little we could teach them”. The Regiment saw action again in 1900, when it formed the core of the British troops sent to the relief of Peking in the Boxer Uprising (both Berger and Lt. Barrett, the two British officers directly involved in the Six-Day War were also involved in this campaign). In this fighting at Peking, the Regiment lost 11 killed, 31 wounded, 8 dead of disease, and 2 dead from accident. The Regiment was disbanded in 1902 at the demand of the India Office (the Colours were lodged in St John’s Cathedral, Hong Kong), to a large degree because of a problem of pay disparity — the men of the Regiment were paid more than the men of Indian Army regiments, and it was in consequence monopolising the cream of the new recruits — most of the men transferred then to a newly established India Army regiment (the 67th Punjabis). Both Berger and Barrett were to be transferred to the 67th. For the history of this Regiment, see the account given by Col. A. Barrett D.S.O in *The Volunteer: Journal of the Royal Hong Kong Defence Force*, Summer 1955, pp. 55–70, repeated in *The Volunteer*, 1971–1972, pp. 54–56 (this Col. Barrett was the Lt Barrett of 1899), and the account in James Lunt, *Imperial Sunset: Frontier Soldiering in the 20th Century* (London, 1981), pp. 319–324. See also the account in Alan Harfield, *British and Indian Armies on the China Coast 1785–1985* (1995). Barrow succeeded admirably in his aim of making the Regiment a first-class one. Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief, India, was full of praise when he gave the Regiment its first inspection, and this praise was repeated by the Governor of Hong Kong on several occasions. In 1893 Clement Scott, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, called it a “Swagger Regiment”, and praised the demeanour of the men, and their smart appearance (both Barrow and Berger kept cuttings of this article with their private papers, respectively housed today in the British Library and the library of the National Army Museum, see above). At the end of his life, when he prepared those of his papers he wished to have kept, Barrow classed the formation of the Hongkong Regiment as being something he took great pride in, it being, he considered, on a par with the various campaigns he had fought in, noting how much effort, and how much professional skill, was required in establishing a new regiment, and particularly so in establishing a new regiment which was to be a first-class one from the very beginning. Berger was closely involved with Barrow in the establishment of the regiment, being responsible for much of the recruiting. In 1949 the Hong Kong Volunteers, a local Hong Kong Volunteer unit, were renamed the Hong Kong Regiment. This latter Hong Kong Regiment had no connection with the regiment of 1891–1902, although the similarity of the name is a source of endless confusion.

21. Ernest Lewis Corbett Berger was born in 1867, and was commissioned into the Royal Marines in 1886, transferring to the Indian Army in 1888. He was eventually promoted to Major (1900), and then to a brevet rank of Lieutenant-

- Colonel in 1901. After transfer to the 67th, he reverted to his substantive rank of Major. He left the Army in 1909.
22. From this point, to the evening of 18 April, by far the fullest and best account of the fighting is that dictated by Capt. Berger of the Hongkong Regiment to Stewart Lockhart, the Colonial Secretary, on the evening of 18 April, and entered by Lockhart in his *Diary*, vol. xxxvi. Since this account has not previously been printed, it is given above as Appendix 3. The account of the fighting below is taken mainly from this account, supplemented by evidence from the other sources. Only the supplementary material from the other sources is noted in the footnotes. Apart from Berger's account (Appendix 3), the fullest descriptions of the fighting on 15, 17, and 18 April is in the Report presented to the G.O.C. by Lt.Col. O'Gorman (at *Despatches*, pp. 60–65), and the Report submitted by Major-General Gascoigne to the War Office (at *Disturbances*, pp. 2–4). Material in the *Extension Papers* mostly comprises reports and messages sent by Stewart Lockhart to the Governor, with some material sent to and from the Royal Naval authorities in Hong Kong. *Extension Papers*, No. 105, p. 123 (full text at *Despatches*, p. 22); No. 106, p. 123 (full text at *Despatches*, p. 22); No. 107, pp. 123–124 (full text at *Despatches*, p. 22); No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29); Enc 3 in No. 171, p. 170 (*Despatches*, p. 31); Enc. 21iii in No. 171, p. 199 (*Despatches*, p. 55); Sub-enc. to Enc 19 in No. 172, p. 206; Enc. in No. 177, pp. 211–212; Enc. in No. 190, pp. 223–224; Enc. in No. 191, pp. 231–234.
  23. The *Hongkong Telegraph* (17 April) states that Berger and his men “were despatched at two o'clock morning”: this was probably the time when the Governor issued the order for them to leave.
  24. *Extension Papers*, No. 159, pp. 154–155 (*Despatches*, pp. 17–18).
  25. John Mark Anthony Retallick was an Indian Army officer. He was born in 1857. He saw a good deal of active service, especially in the fighting on the North-West Frontier in 1878, 1879, and 1880. He took part in the Bazar Valley Expedition, and also in the fighting at Chihildakteram, where he was mentioned in despatches.
  26. At about 8.00 p.m. according to O'Gorman (*Despatches*, p. 60): a signal-station had been established at the summit of the pass between Sha Tin and Kowloon (the first phase of the heliograph signals link set up between Kowloon and Tai Po on 15–16 April), and the message was sent from this signal-station once the runners had reached there.
  27. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 17 April.
  28. Keyes's description of the insurgent emplacement is given in his report to the Naval Commodore of 15 April, *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 190, p. 226. Gascoigne states that the main emplacement was “1,500” yards away, probably in this case taking the measurement from where *Fame* moored, rather than from Flagstaff Hill.
  29. Keyes, *Adventures*, op.cit. p. 171.
  30. Nicholas Purcell O'Gorman, The O'Gorman, was probably born 1845–1847. He was commissioned in 1865, and retired from the Army as Colonel in 1902. He

was, as noted above, the Chieftain of the Irish Clan O’Gorman, and was thus formally called “The O’Gorman”.

31. *Despatches*, p. 61.
32. Keyes, *Adventures*, op.cit. p. 171.
33. *China Mail*, 18 April.
34. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 17 April.
35. The *Hongkong Daily Press*, 17 April.
36. Maj-Gen. Gascoigne states that there were 12 “guns of sorts” there: *Disturbances*, p. 3. Lt.Col. O’Gorman calls the hill on which this emplacement stood “Shelter Trench Hill”, again suggesting a well dug-in position (*Despatches*, p. 61).
37. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, p. 167 (*Despatches*, p. 29). The Governor repeated this view in 1903, in his Farewell Address to the Legislative Council (see below).
38. Keyes, report to Commodore, 15 April (*Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 190, p. 226). Keyes stated thirty years later that *Fame* “had the range exactly, every shell told”, and that every time an insurgent gun fired, he was able to silence it (Keyes, *Adventures*, op.cit. p. 170).
39. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 17 April.
40. That the soldiers made of this a bayonet charge is stated by the *China Mail*, 18 April. The Regiment’s colours were present at Tai Po because of the Flag-Raising Ceremony. Berger states that he left the colours on Flagstaff Hill, protected by a colour-guard, but that the colour-guard wanted to take part in the action, and came up with the rest of the forces, carrying the colours, unfurled. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 17 April, notes that it had become, by the end of the nineteenth century very rare indeed for the colours of any British regiment to be taken into battle, and that this “baptism of fire” for the colours was “an honour which is rarely vouchsafed to the colours of a British regiment nowadays”.
41. *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 190, p. 226.
42. *Despatches*, p. 34 has a drawing of this flag.
43. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 30 in No. 204, p. 277.
44. For the heliograph signalling system, see the *China Mail*, 15 April. For the field-telephone, see below.
45. This communiqué is printed in the *China Mail*, Special Extra, 16 April. The *Hongkong Telegraph* states that the insurgents numbered “from one to two thousand” (17 April).
46. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 26 CI in No. 171, pp. 184–186 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46); Enc. 17 in No. 204, pp. 259–262. The Hap Wo Yeuk people had taken part in the burning of the matsheds on 3 April, but had reconsidered their commitment to the insurrection in the meantime.
47. There was, at this date, no road or footpath along the coastline on the line of today’s Tai Po Road.
48. Wun Yiu, the dominant village of the Hap Wo Yeuk, was predominantly Catholic by 1899, with a Catholic chapel at its heart. The Italian priests of the Catholic Mission, many of whom had been conscripted into the Italian Army for a short term before ordination, were certainly aware of the power of modern rifles and



- artillery, and would have seen very clearly the risks involved in the villagers taking the British Army on. They therefore strongly advised the villagers not to take part in the insurrection. There can be no doubt that the refusal of the Hap Wo Yeuk people to join the insurrection cost the uprising dearly.
49. Arthur Leonard Barrett was born in 1872, and was commissioned in 1893. His first regiment was the Hongkong Regiment. He retired from the Army in 1924 as Colonel, after valiant service in the Afghan Campaign of 1921, where he was awarded the D.S.O. He died in 1964, at the age of 92.
  50. This artillery group, whose full title was the Hong Kong–Singapore Battalion of the Royal Artillery, was of Indian soldiers, and attached to the Hong Kong Garrison. For this Battalion, see Denis Rollo, *The Guns and Gunners of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1991). It was led by officers seconded from the Royal Artillery, like Simmonds. According to the *China Mail*, the main purpose of sending the Asiatic Artillery to Tai Po was to fire the salute at the Flag-Raising Ceremony, and only secondarily was the battery pressed into active service: “The 7-pounder guns of the Artillery, which had been brought round to Tai Po simply to fire the salute at the hoisting of the flag had been returned to ship in the forenoon [scil. of 17 April].”
  51. *Brisk* was a twin-screw Cruiser.
  52. The *China Mail* notes the presence of a number of other vessels at Tai Po on 16–17 April, the unarmed civilian launches the *Praya*, the *Miner*, the *Solent*, the *Mary and Joan*, and the *Wing Kwai*, as well as “a Police launch”. Some of these were carrying Government officials (the *Praya* was carrying staff from the Public Works Department who were to erect bamboo jetties for the landing of stores, the *Miner* was carrying a party of Royal Engineers, and the *Mary and Joan* was carrying the engineers who were surveying the route for the Kowloon–Canton Railway). The others were carrying spectators, including a “picnic party” on the *Wing Kwai*. See the *China Mail*, 15 and 18 April. Reporters from the *Hongkong Telegraph* and the *Hongkong Daily Press* were also on the *Wing Kwai*.
  53. *China Mail*, 18 April.
  54. International Law insisted on there being a public ceremony of takeover so that the inhabitants would know that the territory had been transferred from one state to another, and that they would be subject for the future to new laws and practices. Before the formal ceremony of takeover it was improper under International Law for the state taking the territory over to take any action in the territory which implied that the territory was already under their control: taking Police action, or action to suppress an insurrection would certainly fall under this rule.
  55. The instruction from the Governor to Lockhart to hoist the flag is at *Despatches*, p. 31. The presence of the G.O.C. and the Commodore are noted in Lockhart’s message of 16 April, *Extension Papers*, Enc. 2 in No. 171, p. 170 (*Despatches*, p. 31). Major-General Gascoigne states that he was responsible for raising the flag (*Disturbances*, p. 3), but it is more likely that this ceremony was conducted by the Political Officer in attendance, Lockhart. See the account of the flag-

- raising in *Lockhart Diary* at Appendix 3, and also the very full description in the *China Mail*, 18 April. See also Plate 5.
56. The *Extension Papers* say that the flag was donated by a group of villagers. It does not say from which villages they came (*Extension Papers*, No. 114, pp. 126–127, full text at *Despatches*, p. 23). The *China Mail* adds a good deal to this account, and is more to be trusted. In the *China Mail* (16 April) it states that there were two flags donated, by a group of villagers, who had visited Blake at Government House on 15 April, and who “on behalf of themselves and others of Her Majesty’s new subjects . . . expressed their deep regret at the disturbances which had taken place in the new territory, and said that they were all due to the Triad Societies, the members of which had been compelling . . . [the villagers] to disburse large sums of money”. The *China Mail* goes on to say that the flags were presented to the Governor in a carved blackwood box, with an inscription on the lid which read in translation “The country’s tranquillity and the people’s happiness” [presumably 國泰民安]. The villagers expressed the wish that one of the flags should be sent as a gift to the Queen, and the other in due course to be kept by Blake personally, after being used for the Flag-Raising Ceremony. The *China Mail*, however, does not say from which villages the group came from.
  57. This second Flag-Raising Ceremony is not mentioned in the *Extension Papers* nor in the *Despatches* collection, but is known from full accounts given in all the English-language daily newspapers on 18 April. All these accounts print the English text of the Governor’s speech (see Appendix 7). The flag was raised by Lady Blake. The Governor spent time greeting the elders before he gave his speech, and he distributed copies of the speech in Chinese and largesse to the women and children who had come to watch.
  58. *Extension Papers*, No. 107, p. 123 (full text at *Despatches*, p. 22).
  59. *China Mail*, 18 April.
  60. The surrender of the Tai Po elders is noted in the *China Mail*, 18 April, and the *Hongkong Daily Press*, 17 April. The presence of a party of elders at the Flag-Raising Ceremony is noted by the *Hongkong Daily Press*: given that the Tai Po elders had surrendered and kowtowed to Gascoigne and Lockhart only about an hour before the Flag-Raising Ceremony, there can be little doubt that it was the Tai Po elders who were the elders present at the Ceremony. The return home of the Tai Po men is noted in the *China Mail*, and also in Simmonds Report (see Appendix 4).
  61. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29); Enc. 4 in No. 171, pp. 170–171 (*Despatches*, p. 32); Sub-enc. to Enc. 19 in No. 172, p. 206.
  62. *Disturbances*, p. 3.
  63. *China Mail*, 18 April. The reporters of the *China Mail* were present in Tai Po for the 16–17 April, and those of the *Hongkong Telegraph* and the *Hongkong Daily Press* for much of 17 April, too.
  64. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 17 April.
  65. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–186 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46).
  66. The site is sometimes spoken of as being “at Chung Uk”, or else “at Fong Ma Po”

- and “at San Uk Tsai”. Chung Uk, Fong Ma Po, and San Uk Tsai (新屋仔) are contiguous villages, all sited on the summit of the hill. Berger says in his Report (Appendix 3) that about 100 of his men accompanied Gascoigne, but he also says that “almost all” of his men were involved. Probably there were two patrols, one with Gascoigne investigating the hill, with the rest of the men with Berger undertaking a reconnaissance through the adjacent villages.
67. *China Mail*, 18 April. The reporters of the *China Mail* were actually in the middle of an interview with Gascoigne and Lockhart when this report came in, thus forcing the interview to be broken off. Simmonds’ Report (in *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*) says “At 12.30 p.m. it was reported in camp at Tai Po Hü that the rebels were advancing in force from the westward”.
  68. The *China Mail* notes that firing began “about ten minutes” after the first report was received from the signalling station, which was when “large bodies of Chinese advancing with banners suddenly appeared crowning the heights” (18 April). The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 18 April, states that firing from the She Shan Ridge began “shortly before one o’clock” and ended “shortly before two o’clock”. The *Hongkong Daily Press*, 18 April, says that fighting from the She Shan Ridge began shortly before one o’clock, and ended “about a quarter to two”. Lt. Col. O’Gorman, clearly in error, states that the firing began about 4.00 p.m.
  69. *China Mail*, 18 April.
  70. That the artillery was all on board a ship, waiting to be returned to Hong Kong, and had to be rushed back on shore is reported by the *China Mail*, 18 April. That the artillery fired shrapnel into the She Shan position is noted by the *China Mail*, 18 April.
  71. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 5 in No. 171, p. 171 (*Despatches*, p. 35).
  72. *China Mail*, 18 April.
  73. *China Mail*, 18 April. Reporters from the *Hongkong Telegraph* and the *Hongkong Daily Press* were with the *Wing Kwai*. They arrived at Tai Po about 11.30 a.m., and left again for Hong Kong in the middle of the afternoon. Since there were no reporters from these two newspapers present in Tai Po after mid-afternoon on 17 April, the coverage in these newspapers of the battles of Lam Tsuen Gap and Shek Tau Wai is thin and lacking in detail, noticeably so compared with the coverage in the *China Mail*. The Chinese characters for *Wing Kwai* are not given in the original.
  74. *Despatches*, p. 61.
  75. *Despatches*, p. 61.
  76. The site of these prepared positions is called “Lam Tsun Gap” and “Lam Tsun Pass”. The *China Mail* says: “the rebels fell back and occupied the pass leading to Pat Heung” (21 April) — there can be no doubt that a position near Kadoorie Farm is implied.
  77. Berger mentions “small parties of the enemy who were firing . . . from positions high up on either side of the Gap”, and it is thus clear that there were insurgent positions forward of the main emplacement, on either flank, but probably with jingals and rifles only, as all the insurgent cannon seem to have been massed in the main emplacement..

78. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–186 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46).
79. Callwell notes that preparation of two sets of defences, to make controlled withdrawals easier to undertake and more effective, was a standard Chinese policy, and gives a number of occasions when this tactic was resorted to.
80. Because there were no mules or coolies, the gunners had to haul the guns themselves. They were too few to try to move more than two of the guns, and even then only could only move slowly. They never, in fact, caught up with Berger until the fighting was at an end. The problems of the artillery are discussed more fully below.
81. *Humber* was a storeship, and *Peacock* was a gunboat.
82. *Disturbances*, p. 4 draws the attention of the War Office to the “rapidity with which [Capt. des Voeux], under the greatest difficulty, laid a telephone line from Hong Kong to Taipo Hü, a distance of over 13 miles in a hilly and difficult country”. From 17 April, some communications from Lockhart to the Governor are headed “Messages” rather than “Minutes”, probably implying that they were transcripts of telephone messages. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 19 April, noted that the heliograph signallers struck camp and moved away from the site they had been occupying at Kowloon Pass late on 18 April, “having got the field-telegraph into working order”: it is very likely that this would have been done about 24 hours after the field-telephone was up-and-running, to ensure that time enough was given to iron out any teething troubles before they left the signalling station.
83. *China Mail*, 21 April.
84. A private was also hit, in the toe, but not seriously wounded. He remained with the troops.
85. Another doctor was sent out on 18 April, but seems to have met up with the troops only after the fighting was over.
86. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 20 April.
87. *Despatches*, p. 61.
88. *Extension Papers*, No. 115, p. 127 (full text in *Despatches*, p. 23); Sub-enc. to Enc. 19 in No. 172, p. 206; Enc in No. 191, pp. 231–234.
89. The *China Mail* report for 21 April mentions the detachment sent back for blankets.
90. The *China Mail* adds that some Chinese sugar and some Chinese local cigarettes were also provided, 18 April. It is probable that May promised payment for this food thus provided by the Sheung Tsuen villagers.
91. The troops camped in the courtyard of the Sheung Tsuen temple. The officers probably slept in the temple, which was also probably used to store the ammunition.
92. The *China Mail*, 20 April, states that “Captain Berger was in command” on 17 April, but that, on 18 April, about noon, “Colonel The O’Gorman . . . took up command”.
93. The number of men brought back by Berger, and the time of their arrival at Flagstaff Hill is taken from the *China Mail*, 21 April.
94. *Despatches*, p. 62; *Extension Papers*, Enc. 6 in No. 171, p. 171 (*Despatches*, p. 36);

- Enc. in No. 190, pp. 224–225, 228–229. The original calls this new camp-site “She Han”, but “She Hau” is more likely. The Chinese characters are not given in the original. The site must be the mouth of the Lam Tsuen Pass on the Sheung Tsuen side, i.e. at least the lower part of the area used today as the Shek Kong Camp.
95. *China Mail*, 21 April. The report gives two differing times for the convoy commanded by Lt. Hillman to set off to Sheung Tsuen, but the version given here is the more likely. The *China Mail* states that the naval officers and men were only released and returned to their ships in the evening of 21 April.
  96. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CVII in No. 171, pp. 188–189 (*Despatches*, p. 50) is a translation of a letter sent from the insurgent headquarters, probably on 14 April, which sets out that only 40 percent of the insurgent military force (about 1,100 men) should be sent to the front line, the other 60 percent (about 1,500 men) being used to garrison the landing places at Castle Peak and Deep Bay, and patrol the villages “for self-protection”. Sha Kong Miu lies a little south of today’s Lau Fau Shan, and was the major landing place in Deep Bay.
  97. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CVa-c in No. 171, p. 188 (*Despatches*, pp. 49–50). The *China Mail*, 20 April, notes that a large proportion of the insurgents involved in the Battle of Shek Tau Wai were those who had earlier been guarding the landing places.
  98. *Despatches*, pp. 63–65; *Extension Papers*, No. 171, p. 166 (*Despatches*, pp. 27); Enc. 10 in No. 171, p. 173; Enc. 11 in No. 171, pp. 173–174 (*Despatches*, p. 38).
  99. *Despatches*, p. 63.
  100. Again, no mention is made of Maxim guns, and it is probable that there were none present.
  101. The site of the pond where “six guns” were found is given as “Un-long” (Yuen Long) in *Extension Papers*, p. 166, but as “P’ing Shan” in the equivalent place in *Despatches*, p. 27. The *Despatches* version is more likely.
  102. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–186 (*Despatches*, pp. 45–46); Enc. CII in No. 171, pp. 186–187 (*Despatches*, pp. 47–48); Sub-enc. in Enc. 17 in No. 204, pp. 261–262.
  103. The first of these was the village which Lockhart noted “had been so insolent to me last summer”, when it had refused Lockhart entry. Lockhart was, it would seem, capable of holding a grudge.
  104. Wheeled ammunition carriages to carry the shells were available. However, if the paths were such that the gun could only be carried in sections, then the ammunition also would have had to be carried by mules or coolies, and the ammunition carriage collapsed and carried as well. No ammunition carriages were taken to Tai Po, since it was initially assumed that the guns were going to be used for the ceremonial salute only.
  105. Oral information from various villagers given to the author on various occasions.
  106. There was an attempt to hire coolies in Hong Kong and ship them to Tai Po, but they demanded danger-money (ten times the usual wage), and the authorities refused to pay this, so the idea was dropped. Keyes, *Adventures*, op.cit. p. 168. See below.

107. According to Lt. Col. O’Gorman (*Despatches*, p. 61). Berger says that Simmonds had “gone astray”. Simmonds himself (see his report in *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*, see Appendix 3) states that he was given no coolies to haul his guns, and that his men were tired from the long march on 15–16 April, that he was unable to use his men to haul more than two of the guns, but that, even so, they moved very slowly, so that, by early evening they had only got as far as Chung Uk (three and a half miles behind where Berger and his men were by that time). See Appendix 4.
108. The sources do not say who these coolies were, from whence they had come, or who had induced them to work for Simmonds.
109. For Simmonds’s actions during this campaign, see his *Report* at Appendix 4.
110. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 9 in No. 171, pp. 172–173 (*Despatches*, p. 39).
111. Lockhart sent a drawing of one of these flags to the Governor (*Despatches*, p. 59). This flag had an inscription, “大英國界內歸順良民”, “Submissive and Loyal People residing within British Territory”.
112. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 10 in No. 171, p. 173 (*Despatches*, p. 62); Enc. 11 in No. 171; enclosure 11, pp. 173–174 (*Despatches*, p. 38). Simmonds (Simmonds Report, *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*, Appendix 4) started this march about 10.30 a.m. on 18 April, getting as far as Fanling by early afternoon, and then joined Berger and O’Gorman at Sheung Tsuen in the evening of 18 April. He went on to Ping Shan on 19 April. Fanling had, however, almost certainly already withdrawn from the fighting on 16 April, when the Tai Po elders (probably including Fanling, and certainly including Tai Hang) kowtowed to Gascoigne. Simmonds’s actions at Tai Hang and Fanling on 18 April must be seen as rather dubious.
113. *Hermione* was a twin-screw Cruiser.
114. *Disturbances*, pp. 3–4; *Despatches*, p. 40; *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 190, pp. 229–231. The official documents do not say what troops were used for these expeditions on 19 April, but the *China Mail*, 19 April, states that they were men from the Royal Welch Fusiliers.
115. *Extension Papers*, No. 114, pp. 126–127 (full text at *Despatches*, p. 23). Nothing in the whole Six-Day War is more telling as to British self-confidence (even arrogance) in this period than this almost unbelievable attempt by a group of British civilians to go to have a picnic in the middle of a war-zone, clearly on the assumption that no-one would dare to try to stop them. The documents contain nothing suggesting that either the Governor or Lockhart regarded this attempt as foolhardy. The *China Mail*, the *Hongkong Telegraph*, both on 17 April, and the *Hongkong Daily Press*, on 18 April, all have full reports on this incident. These state that the party (of four men, hosted by “Mr G. H. Potts”, according to a further note on the incident in the *China Mail*, 20 April, and to a note in the *Hongkong Weekly Press* of 29 April) went to Castle Peak Bay for a picnic on 16 April. They proposed to eat on the beach, and then spend the afternoon shooting in the marshes behind the beach. Fishermen who met them at sea tried to dissuade them, and, when they landed, local villagers came to try to stop them

taking such foolhardy action, but they ignored this advice until they were set on by “several hundred” men from the surrounding hills, who attacked them not only with “small arms, but a field piece of sorts”, shots from which, according to the *Hongkong Telegraph*, landed within twenty yards of the launch. They retreated and returned to Hong Kong and told the Governor about “the serious condition of affairs”. Potts, however, was not abashed by his reception, but merely collected a larger group and returned to Castle Peak Bay the next day, 17 April, where he was again attacked, and was again forced to retreat. The *China Mail* seems to treat the whole affair as just an instance of British pluck and nonchalance, and notes that, when Potts and his party left for his second attempt, on 17 April, it was with the enthusiastic cheers of the membership of the Hong Kong Club, who saluted his launch as it passed the Club en route for Castle Peak. It should be noted that, while any landing of any Europeans at Castle Peak would have been provocative at this date, this particular landing of Europeans, carrying rifles with them, was particularly so. None of the newspapers, except for the *Hongkong Telegraph*, has anything critical to say about this foolhardy episode, and then all that it says is: “for our part, we consider that such trips are better left alone for the present”. G. H. Potts was a partner in the firm of “Benjamin, Kelly, and Potts”. This was a firm of stockbrokers. Potts was, in 1891, one of the 21 signatories to the creation of the Association of Stockbrokers in Hong Kong (which became the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 1914). The other partners in the firm were Solomon Sassoon Benjamin and Elly Kadoorie (I am indebted to Mr Robert Nield for identifying G. H. Potts). The *Hongkong Telegraph* notes that several other picnic parties were arranged during the period of the fighting, which went out to various places, but suggests that the Potts party was the only one which fell in with the insurgents. The *Hongkong Telegraph* on the following day, 18 April, has a full report on another of these picnic parties, which left on 17 April for Tsuen Wan. Since Tsuen Wan had not joined the insurgency, this party was met with friendliness, and had a completely uneventful day, climbing up Tai Mo Shan, and picnicking there. This was a party from Jardines. While the day was uneventful, the newspaper notes that nothing was known as to the attitude of the Tsuen Wan people before the party set off, and it remained a foolhardy venture. The *China Mail*, 19 April, records yet another venture of a similar character: a picnic party led by Mr W. H. Wickham, Manager of the Hongkong Electric Co., with Mr P. A. Barlow and Mr A. H. Barlow of the Hongkong Bank, set off on 15 April for a launch cruise along the coast of Lantau, and, at Tai O, on 17 April, they set up a flag-pole and celebrated an unofficial Flag-Raising Ceremony. This was, yet again, entirely foolhardy, as nothing was known in Hong Kong on 15 April as to the attitudes and intentions of the Tai O people. In the event, they had not entered the insurgency, and were friendly, so this provocative flag-raising passed off without incident, although the Tai O people warned them that there were “rowdies” about.

116. *Extension Papers*, No. 148, pp. 150–151; No. 208, pp. 287–289. See Wesley-Smith, 1998, op.cit. p. 104.

117. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CVII in No. 171, pp. 188–189 (*Despatches*, p. 50).
118. *Extension Papers*, Sub-enc. 2 in No. 190, p. 225; and Enc. 258, pp. 358–359.
119. The Hong Kong Volunteer Corps were volunteer part-time soldiers mainly drawn from the expatriate mercantile community of Hong Kong, which could be called on by the Governor to assist the regular forces at any time of military emergency. For this defence of the Yaumatei waterfront, see Phillip Bruce, *Second to None: The Story of the Hong Kong Volunteers* (Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1991), pp. 87–88. The Corps was called out at such short notice that some of the Volunteers manning the two defences were in dinner-jackets, having been called out while at dinner. See also the account of this incident in the *China Mail*, 17 April.
120. These comments are quoted in the Speech of the Governor to the Hong Kong Regiment on its disbandment in 1902, which was entered in full into the Regiment's Standing Orders, see file WO30/104, pp. 325–326, National Archives.
121. A. A. S. Barnes, *On Active Service with the Chinese Regiment: A Record of the Operations of the First Chinese Regiment in North China from March to October 1900* (Grant Richard, London, 1902), pp. 3, 12–13.
122. Chinese characters not in the original. For the murder of Tang Cheung-hing, see also Wesley-Smith, 1998, op.cit. p. 96.
123. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 5–7 in No. 204, pp. 247–250. See also *Despatches*, p. 65. The Chinese characters of these names are unknown.
124. The Chinese names are, according to Tang Shing-sz, 鄧年 and 鄧菁士.
125. The *China Mail*, 20 April, has an account of this murder.
126. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 16 in No. 172, p. 203.
127. *Extension Papers*, No. 237, p. 290. The names of the convicted murderers are given as Tang Cheung Sz and Cheung Tin: the first is probably in error for Tang Tsing (or Ching) Sz, and the second is probably an alternative name for Tang Nin.
128. Stewart Lockhart, who, throughout the period of the War consistently took a “hardline” approach to the insurgents (see below), was the only member of the Executive Council to object to this pardon: he felt that the man in question should be sent to prison to provide an example to others.

## 5 Blake and Lockhart: Conflicts and Casualties

1. A third man was gored by a water-buffalo.
2. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 3 in No. 171, p. 170 (*Despatches*, p. 31).
3. *China Mail*, 18 April.
4. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 6 in No. 171, p. 171 (*Despatches*, p. 36).
5. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 10 in No. 171, p. 173 (*Despatches*, p. 38).
6. *Despatches*, p. 63.
7. *Despatches*, p. 63.
8. *Despatches*, p. 63.
9. *Disturbances*, pp. 3–4.



10. Thus Wesley-Smith, op.cit. and Airlie, op.cit. both assume that there were no significant insurgent casualties.
11. Orme was the District Officer in 1912. His *Report on the New Territories, 1899–1912*, is published in Sessional Papers 1912, No 11/1912, pp. 43–63.
12. The quote is taken from the *Annual Report, 1958*, but similar or identical wording is used in every Annual Report of this period.
13. *Hong Kong 1988, A Review of 1987*, Government Information Services, Hong Kong, ch. 23 “History”, p. 310. The same form of words has been used every year down to and including the current, 2006, Annual Report.
14. It is printed at pp. 870–872 (Vol. 3) of *香港碑銘彙編* (Historical Inscriptions of Hong Kong), ed. 科大衛, 陸鴻基, 吳倫霓霞 (D. Faure, B. Luk, A. Ng) (Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1986).
15. *Extension Papers*, Sub-enc. in Enc. 10 in No. 204, p. 252. This statement, by a Kam Tin villager, says that Kam Tin and Ha Tsuen each fielded about 80 men, but that Ping Shan fielded over 100. However, if Kam Tin and Ha Tsuen fielded only 80, it is unlikely that Ping Shan fielded many more than 100.
16. One possibility must be discarded immediately: that the lists of names at the Tat Tak Kung Soh and the Tai Shue Ha temple represent those who joined the fighting, not those who died in it. The meaning of 烈義士 cannot be stretched to mean those who lived for a righteous cause: it can only mean those who died for a righteous cause.
17. Tang Shing-sz, op.cit. pp. 12–13.
18. Tang Shing-sz, op.cit. pp. 12–13 stated in an interview with the author that he believed that there had been two shrine-cupboards, one to the dead from the Six-Day War, and another to some other group of heroic village dead. Since Tang Shing-sez was born about 1922 and the Tat Tak Kung Soh was restored only in 1938 his views must be given weight.
19. Oral interviews with Ha Tsuen elders by the author, Summer 2000.
20. For instance 黃添興 and 黃添貴 from Sha Kong Wai, 黃發興, 黃美興, and 黃成興 of Ngau Hom, and 李金德 and 李英德 of Yuen Kong.
21. Dr Chan Wing-hoi, personal comment, from interviews conducted by him in Sha Kong Wai.
22. The question has to be addressed as to whether the inscribed list as we have it is an amalgamation of the two groups of dead, and whether the elders in 1938 inscribed both lists onto one combined tablet. While not impossible, the layout of the list (with all the names listed by village of origin) makes this unlikely, unless both the original lists followed this (highly unusual) format. There is no indication on the list as it survives today that it might have been drawn up from two previous lists.
23. Including 陳富佑 and 陳富貴, 陳百全 and 陳萬全, 李觀容 and 李觀祿, 李英元 and 李英晁, 李魁賢, 李朝賢 and 李希賢, 李漢廷 and 李廣廷, 張惠大 and 張仕大, 張觀耀 and 張奇耀, 黃禮芳 and 黃智芳, 簡觀龍 and 簡光龍, 蔡金福 and 蔡己福, 楊振興 and 楊正興, 何樹德 and 何亞德, 何添壽 and 何唐壽, 譚廷茂 and 譚廷柱, 易培聖 and 易培柱, and 俞鳳奇, 俞鳳周, and 俞鳳祥.

24. This account is taken from a hand-written Clan Genealogy of 1983, and was copied there from an earlier genealogy, of 1935. I am indebted to Dr Chan Wing-hoi for drawing my attention to this account of the Hero Shrine, and of the fighting and its aftermath.
25. Tang Shing-sz, *op.cit.* p. 13 states that the dead from San Tin (who would very probably have fought in the Kam Tin/Ha Tsuen Brigade) were honoured in a Hero Shrine in a sidehall of one of the Man clan Ancestral Halls there. It would seem, however, that no trace of any such Hero Shrine exists there today (Prof. James Watson, personal comment).
26. I am indebted to Mr Tang Tsam-lam and other elders of Kam Tin for their time and patience in answering questions on this and other points.
27. Details of the grave as seen in 1996 were given me by the nuns of the nunnery. I am indebted to their patience in answering my questions.
28. The lists of the dead must include, not only those killed in the fighting, but those who died subsequently from wounds suffered during the fighting. Given that there were absolutely no antiseptics available to the villagers, the number of those who would have died as a consequence of wounds turning septic must have been high.
29. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 13 in No. 204, pp. 254–155.
30. This communiqué is not included in the *Extension Papers* nor in the *Despatches* collection.
31. *China Mail*, 18 April.
32. Keyes, *Adventures*, *op.cit.* pp. 172–173.
33. *Op.cit.* p. 156.
34. Keyes, *Adventures*, *op.cit.* p. 173.
35. This article from the *North China Herald* was reprinted in the *China Mail*, 24 April.
36. *China Mail*, 22 April.
37. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CII in No. 171, pp. 186–187 (*Despatches*, pp. 47–48).
38. *Extension Papers*, Enc. CI in No. 171, pp. 184–186 (*Despatches*, p. 46).
39. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 9 in No. 172, p. 197.
40. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 15 in No. 171, p. 175 (*Despatches*, p. 42).
41. *Despatches*, p. 64.
42. The report is quoted in Gen. James Lunt, *Imperial Sunset: Frontier Soldiering in the 20th Century* (London, 1981) p. 322. It was quoted from Lunt in A. Harfield, *British and Indian Armies on the China Coast 1785–1985* (A. & J. Partnership, 1990), p. 198.
43. Lunt, *op.cit.* gives a bibliography to the appropriate section of his book, but the Report quoted does not appear in any of the books listed. There are two volumes of the Standing Orders of the Hongkong Regiment at the British National Archives, at Kew, one containing the Standing Orders issued between 1891 and 3 January 1899, and the second covering those issued between November 1899 and 1902. The Standing Orders issued during 1899 do not seem to be currently in the collection.

44. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, p. 168 (*Despatches*, p. 29).
45. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 15 in No. 172, pp. 202–203 (*Despatches*, p. 51).
46. *Extension Papers*, Sub-enc. in Enc. 11 in No. 204, p. 253.
47. Blake would certainly have been aware of the Press statements of deaths in the hundreds, and he was briefed by May on 20 April. May would have been aware of the extent of the deaths, having been in Tai Po throughout the six days of the fighting, and being in direct contact (through his excellent Cantonese) with the local villagers. However, while Blake was thus aware that insurgent casualties were significant, and was prepared to say so in a despatch to London, in public he continued to state that they were light. Thus, in his book *China* (London, Adam and Charles Black, 1909, p. 57) Blake states, of the jingal, that these were “used against our troops in the slight engagements that, took place when . . . we proceeded to take over the leased territory”. I am indebted to Dr J. Hayes for drawing my attention to this book.
48. This speech was entered in full into the Regiment’s Standing Orders: National Archives, file WO30/104, p. 247.
49. Sidney C. H. Cheung, op.cit. 2000, has also come to the conclusion that insurgent casualties must have been substantial.
50. British Library Ms Eur E420/27.
51. Thus, Browne’s movement to Ali Musjid had to be halted for a day to allow time for supplies to catch up with his troops. Barrow notes what a dreadful thing this delay was, emboldening the enemy, and weakening the attack. The two forces were sent to their positions during the night. However, the main force lost their way in the dark, and found itself far off to the left of where they were supposed to be, and without their artillery. Browne then ordered the attack to begin, but, when his advance guard was deeply engaged, he then changed his mind, and ordered their recall. This advance guard was then severely mauled in trying to extricate themselves. Meanwhile, the force sent behind the position was in ignorance of what was going on, no provision for signals between the two forces having been put in place. The likelihood of this debacle triggering a major uprising, and the possibility this might have led to a massacre of the force, is noted by Barrow.
52. Berger was too young to have been in the Afghan Campaign.
53. National Archives, file WO30/103, pp. 49–52 et seq. Barrow notes in this Standing Order that Commanding Officers of regiments were not allowed to issue Standing Orders as to the actions to be taken when on Active Service, and states that he thus was saying less than he would otherwise have done.
54. To emphasise this point, Barrow underlines the words “as thick a line as is compatible with free movement”.
55. The Governor stated that this withholding of fire was due to Berger’s wish to avoid hostilities unless absolutely forced, and the *China Mail* also states this (21 April), but it is far more likely that the withholding of fire until the last minute was entirely deliberate, as it was strongly insisted on in Callwell’s book.
56. *Disturbances*, p. 60.

57. Wesley-Smith, 1998, op.cit. pp. 95–99, notes and discusses this difference of opinion between Blake and Lockhart.
58. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 3 in 159, pp. 158–159 (*Despatches*, p. 21). See Appendix 1.
59. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29).
60. *Extension Papers*, No. 159, pp. 154–155 (*Despatches*, pp. 17–18).
61. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29).
62. *Despatches*, p. 23.
63. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 24 in No. 171 (*Despatches*, p. 41).
64. Unfortunately, no copy of the Chinese text of this speech seems to have survived.
65. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 15 in No. 172, pp. 202–203 (*Despatches*, p. 51).
66. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 21 in 204, p. 271.
67. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29).
68. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 24 in No. 171, pp. 181–182 (*Despatches*, p. 41).
69. *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 190, pp. 224–225. By Mirs Bay is here meant the whole of the eastern waters of Hong Kong, including Tolo Harbour.
70. The letter is in *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*.
71. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 1 in No. 242, pp. 337–338.
72. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 1 in No. 141, p. 143 (*Despatches*, pp. 10–11).
73. *Extension Papers*, under Enc. 3 in No. 151, p. 146 (*Despatches*, p. 13).
74. *Extension Papers*, No. 85, pp. 107–108.
75. *Despatches*, p. 7. In many cases what survives in the *Extension Papers* or *Despatches* collections are paraphrases of telegrams or despatches, and slightly different versions are, therefore frequently found: it is not easy to know which version is the closest to the original.
76. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29).
77. *Extension Papers*, No. 85, pp. 107–108.
78. *Extension Papers*, No. 158, pp. 153–154. Blake was an Irishman.
79. *Extension Papers*, No. 159, pp. 154–155 (*Despatches*, pp. 17–18).
80. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29).
81. *Extension Papers*, No. 159, pp. 154–155 (*Despatches*, pp. 17–18).
82. *Despatches*, p. 22.
83. *Extension Papers*, No. 105, p. 123. Another summary of this telegraph is at *Extension Papers*, No. 191, pp. 231–234, where the relevant words read: “British troops have been ordered to act with forbearance, but, if attacked, British authority must be asserted”.
84. *Despatches*, p. 60.
85. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 24 in No. 171, pp. 180–181 (*Despatches*, p. 41).
86. This letter is in *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*.
87. *Extension Papers*, Sub-enc. to Enc. 9 in No. 171, p. 173 (*Despatches*, pp. 176–177), Lockhart writes at 7 p.m. on 19 April: “Your letter of 17th April has just arrived”. On 21 April Lockhart wrote: “I have had no letter from Your Excellency since your communication of the 17th”. (*Extension Papers*, Enc. 9 in No. 172, p. 197, *Despatches*, p. 41).

88. *Disturbances*, p. 2.
89. *Extension Papers*, No. 171, pp. 164–168 (*Despatches*, pp. 25–29).
90. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 21 in No. 204, p. 271, and No. 148, p. 150.
91. With the exception of the murderers of Tang Cheung-hing: this murder was seen by Blake as an outrage and morally indefensible, and he always carefully excepted the perpetrators from his statements that there should be no retribution or penalties imposed.
92. *Extension Papers*, No. 186, pp. 218–219. This view of the insurgents as brave and manly but misguided was again stated by Blake in his Farewell Address to the Legislative Council in 1903, see below.
93. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 15 in No. 172, pp. 202–203.
94. *Extension Papers*, Sub-enc. in Enc 11 in No. 204, p. 253.
95. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 21 in No. 204, p. 271.
96. *Extension Papers*, No. 186, pp. 218–219.
97. The list of members of the district councils can be found in the *Hongkong Government Gazette* for 8 July 1899 (Government Notification No. 387). It is probable that more than three leaders of the insurgency were in fact appointed to the district councils, but the councillors are named on the *Gazette* list with their formal names, while the names on Lockhart's list of leaders are given with their everyday "use" names.
98. *Extension Papers*, No. 243, pp. 335–340. The speech is at enclosure 1, and the replies by the committee-men are at enclosures 2–5.
99. *Hong Kong Hansard (Proceedings of the Legislative Council) 1903*, pp. 51–55. I am indebted to Dr James Hayes for drawing my attention to this speech. See his *The Great Difference: Hong Kong's New Territories and its People 1898–2004* (Hong Kong University Press, 2006), p. 44.
100. At this point in his Address, Blake recapitulates the policies he had implemented in the New Territories between 1899 and 1903, mentioning new policies aimed at improving the health of the area, new educational and agricultural initiatives, improvements to communications, especially the construction of the Tai Po Road, and re-afforestation, as well as putting down banditry and piracy. Blake's reference to his experience of coercion is a reflection of his experience as a Police Magistrate in Ireland. Blake's view that confidence had been established he clearly considered was due both to his avoidance of repression in his handling of the Six-Day War and his post-War new policy initiatives for the New Territories.
101. *Hong Kong Hansard (Proceedings of the Legislative Council) 1903*, p. 56.
102. For the fighting along the Weihaiwei border in 1900, see A. A. S. Barnes, *On Active Service with the Chinese Regiment: A Record of the Operations of the First Chinese Regiment in North China from March to October 1900* (London, 1902), op.cit. The fighting is also discussed in P. Atwell, *British Mandarins and Chinese Reformers: the British Administration of Weihaiwei (1898–1930) and the Territory's Return to Chinese Rule* (Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1985), and in 張建國, 張軍勇 (Zhang Jianguo, Zhang Junyong), 米字旗下的威海衛: *Weihaiwei under British Rule* (Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, Jinan, 2006) (published

- simultaneously in Chinese and English versions, the English version translated by Alec Hill and Ma Xianghong).
103. Chinese characters not given in the original.
  104. Something very similar to what was done at Weihaiwei also took place at Tsingtao, when the Germans occupied the area in the 1890s. There, too, there was an uprising of the local villagers, which was put down by the German authorities using minimal force: two villagers were killed in this incident.
  105. Lockhart's views were thus very close to the standard British military doctrine on rebellion or anti-British wars, as laid down by Callwell, *op.cit.* The core of Lockhart's views of the insurgents was that they were rebels, and should be destroyed.
  106. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 7 in No. 171, pp. 171–172 (*Despatches*, p. 37).
  107. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 9 in No. 172, p. 197 (*Despatches*, p. 41).
  108. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 9 in No. 171, pp. 172–173 (*Despatches*, p. 39).
  109. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 10 in No. 171, pp. 197–198.
  110. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 26 in No. 171, pp. 182–183 (*Despatches*, pp. 44–45).
  111. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 11 in No. 204, pp. 252–253.
  112. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 17 and sub-enc. in No. 204, pp. 258–262.
  113. *Extension Papers*, Sub-enc. in Enc. 17 in No. 204, pp. 258–259.
  114. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 22 in No. 204, p. 272.
  115. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 14 in No. 204, pp. 256–257. See also Wesley-Smith, 1998, *op.cit.* pp. 96–97.
  116. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 14 in No. 204, pp. 256–257.
  117. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 20 in No. 171, pp. 177–178 (*Despatches*, pp. 57–58).
  118. Chinese characters not in original. In the event, only Tang Tsing-sz was found to have been involved in the murder.
  119. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 10 in No. 171, pp. 197–198.
  120. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 13 in No. 171, p. 200.
  121. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 12 in No. 171, pp. 199–200.
  122. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 16 in No. 171, p. 175 (*Despatches*, p. 42).
  123. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 20 in No. 171, pp. 177–178 (*Despatches*, pp. 57–58).
  124. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 25 in No. 171, pp. 181–182.
  125. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 9 in No. 172, pp. 172–173 (*Despatches*, pp. 39–40).
  126. For Lockhart's Confucian beliefs, see Airlie, *Thistle and Bamboo*, *op.cit.* For Confucianism in practice, see *China, A Cultural and Historical Dictionary*, ed. M. Dillon (Curzon, 1998).
  127. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 11 in No. 172, p. 199.
  128. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 14 in No. 172, pp. 201–202.
  129. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 16 in No. 172, p. 203 (*Despatches*, p. 56).
  130. *Lockhart Diary*, Vol. xxxvi. See Wesley-Smith, 1998, *op.cit.* p. 98.
  131. *Extension Papers*, No. 172, pp. 189–191.
  132. *Extension Papers*, No. 186, pp. 218–219.
  133. *Extension Papers*, No. 230, p. 289.
  134. The English-language press in Hong Kong at the time of the Six-Day War were all clearly in favour of a hard-line approach to the insurrection.

135. *Extension Papers*, Enc 12–13 in No. 171, p. 174 (*Despatches*, p. 40).
136. *Despatches*, para. 38 in Lt. Col. O’Gorman’s *Report* on the fighting, p. 65. Lockhart copied out this paragraph from O’Gorman’s *Report* to keep among his personal papers — it can be seen in *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*.
137. His only recorded comment, made in 1954 (by when he was Col. Arthur Barrett, D.S.O.), was a mention of the wounding of Dr Brown. See his notes on the history of the Hongkong Regiment in *The Volunteer*, loc.cit.
138. These two reports ought to have been submitted to the higher military authorities, i.e. Gascoigne, through O’Gorman. Lockhart must have said he would see them dealt with properly: as Political Officer for the campaign this would have been entirely proper. However, he did not do so. By keeping these reports in his personal papers, and ensuring that no copy reached the formal record, Lockhart was ensuring that voices which might have given rise to questions about the “official line” were effectively silenced.
139. *Extension Papers*, Encs. 13 and 14 in No. 171, pp. 174–175 (*Despatches*, pp. 40–41): Lockhart notes, on 20 April, that May “leaves this morning at 6 a.m. . . . Mr May will explain his views to you orally”, and, a few hours later, “Mr May . . . has, I suppose, seen Your Excellency by this time”.
140. In accordance with Berger’s “no prisoners” policy, only four prisoners seem to have been taken during the fighting.
141. When Ng Shing-chi died, in 1938, the funeral banners presented at his funeral were published by his son, Ng Man-to (伍文濤), in a book entitled 孝思錄 (“Filial Records”), published in 1938, who added a life of Ng Shing-chi at the end, from which these details are taken. The specific sentence in question reads: 港督梅軒利氏按臨凹頭前席 [sic, for 夕] 慰問. When he died, among those presenting complimentary banners were not only such luminaries as Robert Hotung and Tang Shiu-kin, but the District Officer as well. I am indebted to Dr Chan Wing-hoi for drawing my attention to this volume. See Appendix 8.
142. Ng Shing-chi immediately following this interview with May took a prominent part in local public life — he opened a school, and became a major leader in Yuen Long Market, where he was responsible in particular for the reconstruction and modernization of the Pok Oi Hospital there, and for the rebuilding of the Tai Shue Ha Temple (including its Hero Shrine).

## 6 The Campaign: An Assessment

1. Lt. Col. N. A. Collett, personal comment.
2. The lack of any intelligence gathering effort during this period is particularly surprising since the G.O.C. at the time, Maj-Gen. Black, was Officer Administering the Government (Acting Governor) from February to November 1898 (Sir Henry Blake took over as Governor in November 1898).
3. Reprinted in the *China Mail*, 24 April.
4. No serving or retired Chinese military personnel were discovered by the British

actually assisting the insurgents, and it must be assumed that it was training the villagers had received beforehand which was behind their conspicuous military skills. It must be remembered that the villagers had been fighting inter-village wars between themselves for decades before 1899. The villagers routinely hired men to teach their youngsters how to fight with spears, firearms, and so forth, and they would, without question, have been very interested in any more sophisticated military training that they could have access to. Any such training would improve their chances in any inter-village war. It is probable, therefore, that the local trained bands were providing some sophisticated training, more, perhaps, than is generally assumed. See the author's "A Village War in Sham Chun" in *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 30, 1990, pp. 265–281.

5. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 13 in No. 171, p. 174 (*Despatches*, p. 40).
6. Simmonds' Report on his actions (preserved in *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*, see Appendix 4) says, with respect to 17 April "I experienced great difficulty in getting the guns up quickly and I had no coolies . . . all my men were very tired from the night march and hard work of the previous day", and again speaks of being forced to stop, "while waiting for coolies", and again, after receiving orders to come back to Tai Po in the evening of 17 April, he gave orders "to retire as soon as the coolies came up . . . I could not spare coolies to take the guns to Tai Po".
7. Lockhart notes "difficulty is being experienced in obtaining coolies" in a note to the Governor on 17 April, at 10.20 a.m. (*Despatches*, p. 35), and mentions discussions with Gascoigne "on the labour question" in another note, the same day at 12.25 p.m.: in this latter note Lockhart remarks "If force has to be used to obtain labour, I presume such force must be exercised by the Military, but, of course, only after every effort has been made to persuade coolies to work willingly" (*Despatches*, p. 35).
8. *China Mail*, 18 April.
9. Keyes, *Adventures*, op.cit. p. 168.
10. It is possible that there were no mules in Hong Kong in 1899, but there were certainly oxen and horses.
11. *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 190, p. 226.
12. Keyes, *Adventures*, op.cit. p. 171.
13. Their return is noted in the *China Mail*, 18 April, with reference to the morning of 17 April, and in Simmonds' Report (Appendix 4) with regard to the afternoon and evening of 17 April.
14. The maximum distance coolies could travel in a day seems to have been about 24 miles (with meal and rest-breaks, this would have represented about twelve to fifteen hours' work, depending on the difficulties of the road). However, not all coolies could manage so long a day under loads, and few could manage to keep up so heavy a task for several days in succession. (Information from various villagers to the author).
15. O'Gorman's Report, *Despatches*, p. 64.
16. O'Gorman's Report, *Despatches*, p. 64.



17. See Berger's Report at Appendix 3.
18. *Hongkong Daily Press*, 18 April.
19. Hart has a maxim in *Reflections on the Art of War*, op. cit. 3rd ed. p. 321 which was clearly not observed by Military Headquarters, Hong Kong: "A good soldier has his stomach full. A hungry man . . . is good for nothing."
20. Simmonds Report, *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*, see Appendix 4.
21. *Extension Papers*, Enc. in No. 190, p. 226.
22. *China Mail*, 21 April.
23. The *Hongkong Telegraph*, 20 April.
24. Hart wrote a very well-received book, *Sanitation and Health* (4 editions by 1901), setting out rules and procedures for keeping troops in the field in good health. In Hart's *Reflections on the Art of War*, op.cit. p. 343, he states: "Bivouacking in the open should never be resorted to unless absolutely necessary, and this point cannot be too strongly insisted on . . . More men are lost by such a proceeding, especially in inclement weather, than by the hardest-fought battles on record." Roberts' views are seen most clearly in his "Instructions" for the Burma Campaign, 1886, sections 11, 16, *Forty-One Years in India*, op. cit. p. 574.
25. Retallick was relatively young (mid-40s). He had joined the Hongkong Regiment on its formation in 1891 as Captain, and had been promoted Major in 1895. He was made Second-in-Command of the regiment in 1896, and given command, with the acting rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, in 1897. He was, however, a vigorous and competent man, with experience in one of the finest fighting regiments of the Indian Army (the 45th Rattray's Sikhs), experience gained to a large degree on the North-West frontier. He was essentially a fighting man, a "soldier's soldier", mentioned in despatches for his actions in battle at Chihildakteram. O'Gorman was considerably older (mid 50s: he had entered the Army in 1865) and had been an administrator for many years. He had previously been involved in one other military action, the Hazara (Black Mountain) campaign in India in 1888. In that action he had also been a Staff Officer (Deputy Assistant Adjutant General to the General). He had been mentioned in dispatches in the Hazara campaign for his services generally (for an easily accessible account of the Hazara Campaign, see N. Collett, *The Butcher of Amritsar: General Reginald Dyer* (Hambledon and London, 2005), chapter 4). Gascoigne had a small Headquarters, with two Staff Officers, O'Gorman and Captain Long (who had taken control of the fighting on 15 April, before O'Gorman's arrival). O'Gorman was Gascoigne's Chief Staff Officer, and Captain Long was subordinate to him.
26. Most of the officers involved were young. Lt. Keyes was only 26 or 27, Lt. Barrett a year or two younger, Capt. Berger was in his mid-30s, and Lt. Col. Retallick in his mid-40s.
27. On 19 April, Gascoigne actually took command of a single company in the pacification of the area.
28. No attempt was made, for instance, to extend the Field Telegraph from Flagstaff Hill to Sheung Tsuen, or even to rig up a heliograph signalling link between the two sites.

29. The young Lt. Keyes liked him, for instance, often playing golf with O’Gorman and Mrs O’Gorman.
30. Simmonds Report (*Lockhart Acquisition Papers*). See Appendix 4.
31. Simmonds Report (*Lockhart Acquisition Papers*); see Appendix 4: *Despatches*, p. 61. The long way round involved travel over some of the best-paved and widest paths in the New Territories, it also involved crossing the hills by the pass between Pat Heung and Tsiu Keng, but Simmonds says that this pass was “easy”, unlike the Lam Tsuen Pass.
32. His experience before coming to Hong Kong had been in the 30th Bombay Infantry. This was a crack regiment (in 1906 it won the Kitchener Prize as the most effective unit in the Indian Army). The 30th Bombay was noted for its “dash” and vigour. It was stationed on the North-West Frontier (specifically on the Baluchistan Frontier). All Berger’s experience had been with this regiment before he came to Hong Kong, and he would have been well used to wild men and wild places, and vigorous military action against insurgents.
33. Respectively at *Despatches*, pp. 60–65, and *Disturbances*, pp. 2–4.
34. Long was an administrative officer; according to Keyes (*Adventures*, op.cit. p. 168), from the Army Service Corps, the Army logistics corps.
35. That the War Office, having read Gascoigne’s report, treated the Six-Day War as the trivial affair Gascoigne represented it as can be seen from the fact that they did not consider the report important enough to preserve, so the original of the report does not survive in the National Archives today.
36. The Governor, Sir Henry Blake, in 1902, in a speech given at the disbandment of the Regiment, said that the Regiment’s conduct during the Six-Day War “left nothing to be desired”, and that, in the Boxer Campaign the Regiment “particularly distinguished itself”, and went on to say: “Why no Clasp was given for these engagements is an inscrutable mystery to all those outside the War Office and Admiralty who know the facts connected with the expedition”, but the Governor was probably thinking predominantly of the Boxer Campaign, where the Regiment lost 21 men, with a further 31 wounded.

## 7 The Villagers: Leaders and Led

1. *Extension Papers*, Table attached to minute of Lockhart to Blake, under enc. 17 of No. 204, pp. 260–261 (*Despatches*, p. 53) (also at *Extension Papers*, at “B” under enc. 26 of No. 171, pp. 183–184). The *Extension Papers* Tables do not include the Chinese characters of the names.
2. It would be desirable to trace the leaders from the other villages which led the insurgency, and especially Kam Tin and Ha Tsuen, but this has not proved possible to date.
3. Personal information from Mr Tang Shing-sze.
4. My information about Ping Shan is taken primarily from the Genealogical Record (族譜) of the younger segment of the Third Fong of the clan, i.e. the Yat Tai

Tong (I am grateful to Mr Tang Shing-sze for allowing me sight of this Record), and from information given me personally by Mr Tang Shing-sze. Ping Shan has no clan Genealogical Record, but each segment of the clan keeps its own separate Record. There are at least thirteen Genealogical Records extant for the clan, therefore, of which only one is available in a library copy (the Fui Sha Wai Record, at Hong Kong University). I have been unable to get sight of any other of the Records, other than this Fui Sha Wai Record, and the Record lent to me by Mr Tang Shing-sze. The Fui Sha Wai Record was only brought up to date to the mid-nineteenth century, and therefore has no record of those involved in the Six-Day War.

5. The Imperial Chinese Examinations system was a highly complex one. In brief, it was open to almost all Chinese men (entry to the examinations was restricted to the families of tax-payers, and men from the families of criminals, or from the families of prostitutes, policemen, butchers, and some other groups were excluded). Appointment to a post in the civil service was restricted to those who had succeeded in the examinations, and thus only by success in the examinations could anyone achieve noble status, hereditary nobility being effectively unknown in Imperial China, other than in the Imperial Family itself. The competition was very keen: usually only one or two of every hundred candidates would pass. Extremely elaborate precautions were taken to ensure that the examinations were conducted fairly and that cheating was eliminated. The examinations were on the candidates' knowledge of the Classics. There were five steps up the examination ladder. At the lowest level were examinations conducted at the County level (for the Hong Kong area, at Nam Tau, 南頭, Nantou, now part of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone). Those who passed were known as "Candidates" (國學生: Kwok Hok Sang). Even a pass at this lowest level brought a great deal of prestige, although, in theory, passing the examinations at this level was merely a matriculation, allowing entry into the real examination arena. "Candidates" were eligible to enter the County Academy, under the control of the County Director of Education, and their names were entered onto his Register of Candidates. It was a requirement for entry into the next level of the examination for the County Director of Education to certify that the candidate was on his Register, had matriculated, and had been adequately educated to enter the next level of the examinations. The next level of the examinations was held at the Prefecture (for the Hong Kong area, at Canton). At this level, examinations were held twice every three years. Each County had a quota of passes (for the county in which Hong Kong stood, the quota for each examination was no more than about 20, of which three places were reserved for Hakka candidates, and the rest were reserved for Punti (Cantonese-speaking) candidates). Those who succeeded in the Prefectural Examinations were usually called Sau Tsoi (秀才, "Flourishing Skills"), although there were other, more formal, names. A Sau Tsoi could apply to take the next level of the examinations, held at the Provincial level (for the Hong Kong area, at Canton), once every three years. Men who passed this level of the examinations were usually called Kui Yan (舉人,

“Recommended Man”). It was success at this level which opened the door to official life. On average, from the county in which Hong Kong lay, about one candidate passed as Kui Yan in each examination. Success in the Kui Yan examination allowed the successful man to enter himself for the next level of examinations, held once every three years at the capital, Peking (北京, Beijing), in the year following the Kui Yan examination year. Success at this level brought the title Tsun Sz (進士, “Presented Scholar”, so called because the successful men were presented to the Emperor). Very few men from the Hong Kong area ever succeeded at this level of the examinations, no more than two or three over the last four hundred years of the examination system. Those who succeeded at this level could take yet a further examination, held within the Palace immediately after the Tsun Sz examinations. Success at this top-most level often led to a man being given a post in the Imperial Academy, the Hanlin Academy (翰林). Only one man is known from the Hong Kong area who achieved the rank of Hanlin Academician. The prestige and social position of anyone who succeeded in the examinations was immense. Men would try year after year to pass, sometimes succeeding only in extreme old age. Even those who passed only at the County Level were given certain social privileges, and were considered “gentry”, as opposed to the mass of the common people. So great was the prestige of a degree that the Imperial Government would sell degrees as well as award them by examination. A purchased degree brought the same social privileges and position, but did not allow for entry into official life. Most purchased degrees were Sau Tsoi degrees, and were mostly called “Kung Shang” (貢生, “Tribute Students”) degrees. The titles enjoyed by the holder of a purchased degree distinguished it from an examined degree, which had a considerably higher status. In addition to the normal “civil” degrees, there were also “military” degrees, divided into Sau Tsoi, Kui Yan, and Tsun Sz: these were generally regarded as being lower in status, but still brought huge prestige and social position. In some places, including Ping Shan, military degrees were given status almost as high as civil degrees. The Chinese Imperial examination system was greatly admired by the British, who modelled their own competitive civil service entry examination system on it in the early nineteenth century. The Imperial Examination system was cancelled in 1905, and replaced by examinations on a broader range of subjects. For more information, see Michael Dillon, *China, A Cultural and Historical Dictionary* (Curzon, 1998); Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese Gentry, Studies on their Role in Nineteenth Century Chinese Society* (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1st ed. 1955); and Ping-ti Ho, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility 1368–1911* (Studies of the East Asian Institute, University of Columbia, University of Columbia Press, 1st ed. 1962).

6. Tang Shing-sze, personal comment. Potter, in his study of Ping Shan, has this to say of the Six Families in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: “[Sui-tai] became very wealthy, and left an enormous amount of property . . . [The Six Families were] by far the dominant group in the village . . . famous throughout the New Territories for their wealth, prestige and education . . . The Six Families

- ... contained many officials and scholars, merchants and large landlords, whereas most of the other branches of the Ping Shan lineage was made up of small merchants or of poor peasant farmers. In other words, the internal segments of the lineage were anything but equal, and one group, because of superior wealth, power, and status, was able to dominate the village". J. M. Potter, *Ping Shan, The Changing Economy of a Chinese Village* (unpublished PhD Thesis, Hong Kong University and University of California, Berkeley, 1964), pp. 86 et seq.
7. This family was very tightly united. Tang Yi-yau (1814–1855) was more usually known as Tang Lai-ngam (鄧礪巖). His son, Yau-lung (佑隆), 1846–1894, was more normally known as Siu-lai (小礪), which in this case can only mean "son of Lai-[ngam]". The grandson, Tang Lai-suen (鄧礪孫) has a name which means "grandson of Lai-[ngam]". With a family as closely united as this, Tang Lai-suen's leadership should be seen as being the representative of his family.
  8. Lockhart calls this man "A Leung, 良", but also says that he was Chiu-yi's son. Neither of the other two of Chiu-yi's sons have the "良" character in any of their names.
  9. Tang Shing-sze, personal comment.
  10. For the Committee Men, see the list at *Government Notification — No. 387 in The Hongkong Government Gazette*, 8 July 1899.
  11. *Extension Papers*, enc. 2 in No. 159, p. 157.
  12. Tang Shing-sze, personal comment. For Tang Ying-sang see also Wesley-Smith, 1998, op.cit. p. 113.
  13. The withdrawal of Tang Tsik-shin from leadership in the insurrection on 12 April, when he came to kowtow to the Governor alongside the descendants of Tang Kan-ting is quite probably to be explained by a shift towards support of the Kan-ting line by whichever of the segments of the clan Tang Tsik-shin represented.
  14. My information on Man Tsam-chuen is drawn from interviews with Mr Man Chun-fai, Village Representative, Tai Hang, and Vice-Chairman of the Tai Po Rural Committee, and with Mr Man Pak-hang (now 89 years old), the great-grandson of Man Tsam-chuen, and from the Man clan Genealogical Record (泰坑文氏族譜), which I was kindly given sight of by Man Chun-fai. The name is given by Lockhart, incorrectly, as 文湛全.
  15. Ko-fat's degree was, according to Man Pak-hang, gained by a fellow-villager submitting papers in Ko-fat's name, for a substantial sum of money. Man Pak-hang also states that the deception went un-noticed because the Examiner, during the period of the Examination, was told that his wife had given birth to a son, his first (he was over 60), and the Examiner cancelled all the scheduled checks as a gesture of thanksgiving.
  16. Man Pak-hang, personal comment.
  17. Man Pak-hang, personal comment.
  18. For instance, there was a villager of the Chan clan involved in this business in Sha Tin, who undertook most of the remittance, introduction, and guarantee work for Sha Tin villagers wishing to go abroad in the late nineteenth century.
  19. Man Pak-hang, personal comment.

20. Faure, Luk, and Ng, *Historical Inscriptions of Hong Kong*, op.cit. pp. 192–193 (Vol. 1).
21. The land he donated was called “Man Uk”, 文屋, “The Man Houses”, and there was probably a tiny village there. The land was on the east bank of the river, across the river from the Tang clan Old Market.
22. Faure, Luk, and Ng, *Historical Inscriptions of Hong Kong*, op.cit. pp. 298–304 (Vol. 1).
23. Man Pak-hang, personal comment.
24. Man Pak-hang, personal comment: Man Tsam-chuen chaired other meetings of the elders in the temple during this general period.
25. “On the morning of the 24th Day (4 April) some drunken men at Tái pó took a crowd to burn the matshed. Men from Fan Ling took the card of Man Chám-ts’ün [i.e. Man Tsam-chuen] to various villages asking for assistance.” “Unfortunately, the incident of the burning of the matshed at Tái pó by some drunken men occurred. Man Chám-ts’ün wrote applying for help. Ha Ts’ün alone replied to the call.” (*Extension Papers*, Enc. CI and CII in No. 171, pp. 185, 186; *Despatches*, pp. 46, 48). These statements were made after the insurrection was over by some of the Yuen Long village leaders. Lockhart captured the flag of the Tai Hang trained-band on 15 April, and was very suspicious of Man Tsam-chuen’s role. He stated on 17 April: “It is, of course, possible that the flag may have been used without authority, but I have reason to believe that the head of the Man clan [i.e. Man Tsam-chuen] has been actively supporting the insurgents with money and food. He promised to come to Hongkong to beg for pardon [i.e. after the incident on 3–4 April], but never appeared on the plea of old age”. (*Extension Papers*, Enc. 22 in No. 171, p. 180; *Despatches*, p. 32). It is, in fact, inconceivable that the Tai Hang trained band could have been involved without Man Tsam-chuen’s active support. Despite Lockhart’s suspicions as voiced on 17 April, it is likely that Man Tsam-chuen was the leader of the group of Tai Po elders who surrendered to Gascoigne on 16 April, and apologised for their role in the insurrection.
26. *Extension Papers*, pp. 250–251.
27. Its subordination can be seen clearly in the arrangements for the Kam Tin decennial Ta Tsiu, where Sha Po, along with the other “ally and tenant” villages near it are excluded from the rituals, despite lying within the Heung.
28. We know of Ng Shing-chi’s life, as noted above, from a biography written by his son and published in a pamphlet (孝思錄) giving the texts of the funeral banners presented at his funeral in 1938: a second biography is written by hand onto the front cover of the copy of this pamphlet in the University of Hong Kong Library which was probably the text of a eulogy given at the funeral by one of Ng Shing-chi’s friends. For these biographies, see Appendix 8.
29. From the 孝思錄, the booklet published by his son at the funeral. This Funeral Banner was presented by Ng Shing-chi’s distant relatives, Cheung Tsok-tung (張作棟), and Tang Yi-shun (鄧爾純).
30. It should be noted that the Yat Tai Tong, while providing the great bulk of the

- dominant leadership of Ping Shan, also contained a substantial number of poor families with little or no local political influence or social status.
31. The names identifiable are Tak-cheung, 得昌; Yi-yau, 宜佑; Tak-yi, 得義; Tak-lung, 得龍; Tim-fuk, 添福; Kam-on, 金安; Kam-yung, 金容; and the possible Kau-hing, 九興. Tak-cheung and Yi-yau were brothers (eldest and third son respectively). Tak-on and Tak-lung were also brothers (eldest and third son respectively). These two pairs of brothers were first cousins.
  32. See the author's "Traditional Life in the New Territories: The Evidence of the 1911 and 1921 Censuses" in *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 36, 1996, pp. 1–92, esp. p. 40.
  33. There is, as noted above, a "Tang I-yau" from Ping Shan on the list of leaders given by Lockhart at *Extension Papers*, 204, p. 260. No Chinese characters are included on this list. It is extremely unlikely that this "Tang I-yau" is the same as the Tang Yi-yau of the list of the dead: this must be a case where one of the leaders had a name pronounced similarly to the name of one of those who died. As noted above, the "Tang I-yau" of the list of leaders was probably the name of an Ancestral, or Family, Trust, represented by its Manager, Tang Lai-suen.
  34. See James L. Watson, "Self-Defence Corps, Violence, and the Bachelor Sub-Culture in South China: Two Case Studies" originally in *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Sinology, Section on Folklore and Culture* (Taipei, Academica Sinica, 1989), pp. 209–221, reprinted in *Village Life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender, and Ritual in the New Territories*, ed. James L. Watson and Rubie S. Watson (The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 2004), pp. 251–265. Watson's study was essentially on the militia groups as they were in the period 1915–1930, the period of the youth of his informants in the early 1970s: before 1899, when the militia were supported by the Provincial Government, wore official military uniforms, and given some sophisticated military training, it is likely that membership of the trained-bands or local militia was not limited to the unmarried, but that the young married men continued with their training, at least for some years.

## 8 The Aftermath of the War

1. *Extension Papers*, Enc. 2 in No. 171, pp. 180–181 (*Despatches*, p. 41); Sub-enc. in Enc. 11 in No. 204, p. 253. Lockhart's views are at *Extension Papers*, Enc. 9 in No. 172, p. 197 (*Despatches*, p. 41). See also *Despatches*, p. 65 and *Disturbances*, p. 4. The troops who had landed at Castle Peak and Sha Kong Miu at dawn on 19 April, and those landed at Tsuen Wan later the same morning, seem to have been withdrawn even earlier than 21 April.
2. *Lockhart Acquisition Papers*.
3. Many of the troops withdrawn from the New Territories were sent to garrison Sham Chun, which was occupied by the British between May and November 1899.

4. For these events, see P. Wesley-Smith, *Unequal Treaty*, 1998, op.cit. pp. 99–110.
5. The Army also seems to have wanted to forget the whole affair. It was usual for the Army to enter details of the active service seen by officers in their entry in the Army Lists, unless there were grounds for not doing so. The Army did not enter the action in the entries of any of the officers involved. Given Berger's effective and professional conduct in the Six-Day War, his Army List entry could have been expected to mention this action, and this is even more so for Lt. Barrett, since this action was his first.
6. From the 孝思錄, the Funeral Pamphlet published by Ng Shing-chi's son on his death. This Funeral Banner was given by a distant relative of the deceased, Tsang Wai-kei (曾偉基).
7. Tang Shing-sz, op.cit. pp. 12–13.
8. Tang Shing-sz, personal comment.
9. Personal comment, Prof. James Watson.
10. The major difference, of course, is that Lam Tsuen was victorious in the fighting with Lung Yeuk Tau, but the Six-Day War was a serious defeat. Lung Yeuk Tau, on the other hand, has no Hero Shrine to its dead in the fighting with Lam Tsuen: this was a disaster to them, and so best forgotten.
11. The grave is usually spoken of as being "at Sha Po", but it is, in fact, much closer to Fung Kat Heung village. Tang Shing-sz speaks of the grave as being "at Fung Kat Heung" (op.cit. p. 12). Tang Shing-sz says that the grave was for those who died "in the battle of Shek Tau Wai" (op.cit. pp. 11–12), but it is, perhaps, more likely that it was used to bury the unclaimed dead from both the fighting at Lam Tsuen Gap and at Shek Tau Wai.
12. *China Mail*, 20 April: "The rebels are carrying off their dead and wounded".
13. Ng Kwok-chuen, Sha Po Village representative, personal comment. The nuns of the nunnery have confirmed to me that the elders still come twice a year to make an offering at the grave.
14. The "Six Days" are clearly the six days of the War: the "Three Districts" are, presumably, Ping Shan, Kam Tin/Ha Tsuen, and Shap Pat Heung. These two inscriptions also have Buddhist connotations.
15. See Selina Ching Chan "Politicizing Tradition: The Identity of Indigenous Inhabitants of Hong Kong" in *Ethnology* Vol. 37, No. 1 (Winter 1998, pp. 39–54), reprinted in *Narrating Hong Kong Culture and Identity*, ed. Pun Ngai and Yee Lai-man (Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 2003), pp. 73–94 on this. I am indebted to Dr James W. Hayes for drawing my attention to this article. It was in the context of this momentary interest that the Tangs of Kam Tin produced their clan history (Tang Shing-sz, op.cit.) centring on the fighting against the British, and similarly in this context that the Sha Po grave was repaired.
16. Tang Shing-sz, op.cit. p. 13, and personal comment to the author.
17. For this "office culture" see in particular James W. Hayes, *The Great Difference*, op.cit. This book also includes a discussion of the British land-settlement in the New Territories, which lasted from late in 1899 to 1905.



## **Appendix 2**

1. Lekin were the internal Customs duties, charged at this period in China at provincial borders and other significant trade nodes.

## **Appendix 3**

1. “Subadar” and “Jemadar” are “Indian Officers” with commissions issued by the Viceroy of India. They were subordinate to the British Officers, but senior to the Non-Commissioned officers (Havaldars and Naiks) of the Regiment.
2. These are the only prisoners mentioned during the fighting. They are also noted in several of the newspaper accounts. They were released shortly after the fighting ended. Berger was clearly operating on a standard North-West frontier “no prisoners” policy.

## **Appendix 8**

1. I am indebted to Mr Tim Ko for assistance with the translation of this biography.
2. There is a mistake here: Prince Edward visited Hong Kong in 1922, and Ng Shing-chi was released in 1912. Ng Shing-chi was released immediately on Sir Henry May’s becoming Governor in July 1912.

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