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China's vast inland waterway, met the Pacific sea routes. Only after 1949, when foreigners were booted out of their concessions in Shanghai, did Hongkong begin to assume real importance as a port and a financial center.

The British Empire acquired Hongkong Island as a permanent colony as the result of the first Opium War of 1840—Britain's bloody enforcement of its need to balance the East India Company's books by selling opium to China, the only "profitable" venture of this trading empire. (Britain produced nothing that any other nation wanted to buy; opium was its great "success.") Following the Second Opium War of 1856, launched by Anglo-French forces, China had to cede the tip of Kowloon peninsula, also "in perpetuity." In 1898, as other world powers were staking out spheres of influence in China, Britain forced the Qing government to sign a treaty, the Convention for the Extension of Hongkong, to grant a 99-year lease to a large stretch of land on Kowloon and over 200 islets, called the "New Territories." These were the "three unequal treaties."

McLaren noted that, at the end of World War II, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt "would have preferred to see Hongkong made over to Chiang Kai-shek, once the Japanese had been ousted. That would also have been Chiang's preference, and he had no doubt been encouraged to believe that Hongkong would be returned by Britain's willingness, in the Sino-British Treaty of 1943, to confirm its abandonment of the right to extraterritoriality and to maintaining concessions in China. Winston Churchill, however, had no intention of giving up Hongkong."

The British colonial administrators imprisoned by the Japanese after 1941, were determined to re-take Hongkong. When the Japanese capitulated in August 1945, their forces were still in possession of huge areas in Southeast and East Asia. Gen. Douglas MacArthur had forbidden Britain to accept the surrender of Japanese forces anywhere, until the final surrender document was signed in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945. But, in Hongkong, an interned British colonial official slipped out of a Japanese prison camp, retrieved a British flag he had hidden in 1941, and ran it up. A British naval task force sped to Hongkong, to take the Japanese surrender on Aug. 29—violating MacArthur's orders. The Chinese forces would not take the territory of an ally; Hongkong was again British.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese policy has been to consider Hongkong part of China's territory. The People's Republic did not recognize the three "unequal treaties" as valid; its policy was that the issue of Hongkong should be settled through negotiations when "conditions were ripe"; until then, the status quo should hold.

China's policy remained, during the complex situation following World War II, to recover Hongkong, as the People's Republic's statesman, Zhou Enlai, repeatedly stated. Already in 1958, McLaren wrote, Zhou Enlai warned in a conversation with a British visitor to Beijing, that a plot was being hatched to turn Hongkong into a self-governing territory like Singapore. He wanted the British government to know that China would consider any such development, a very unfriendly act.

In March 1963, the Beijing *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* (*China News Daily*) reported, "faced with overseas criticism of China's Hongkong and Macao policy (such as, that 'a socialist country actually tolerates colonialism')," China published for the first time in the *People's Daily* the statement that: " 'Hongkong and Macao are leftover historical problems from a series of unequal treaties forced on China by imperialism.' As to such problems, 'our consistent stand is that, when the terms are ripe, we will solve them peacefully through negotiation. But until they are solved, we will maintain the status quo.' "

China remained isolated. Although the Soviet Union, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and other independent developing nations recognized the Beijing government after 1950, Western nations did not. Britain, followed by the Netherlands in 1954, established relations, but only at the *chargé d'affairs* level; they maintained ties with Taiwan.

It was French President Charles de Gaulle who broke the situation open. In January 1964, stating the importance of dealing with the nation of China in world affairs, especially over the crisis in Vietnam, he sent a full ambassador to Beijing. It is one of the tragedies of recent history, that de Gaulle had wanted to discuss this policy toward China with U.S. President John

Cricket and the British Empire

One essential matter for understanding the workings of the British mind, are the "rules of the game" of cricket. The very highest level of "mandarins" constantly use images from this most British of games, one of endless "rules" and "precedents," not of action and motion. The greatest of British social values is to "keep the playing field level"; Sir Percy Cradock expressed his outrage at the national leaders of China, that they had insisted that the British "should give the game away before we ever got on to the pitch."

Cricket play is dominated by its bible, called the *Wisden,* which is an annual chronicle of all cricket matches played around the world. It contains not only the scores, but also the rules of the game, controversies, and so forth. This behemoth ranges in length from more than 1,000 to 2,000 pages. Cricket rules are so extensive, and so enormously complex, that no one save a lawyer or an umpire can possibly begin to remember them. Every cricket match requires two umpires working simultaneously.

The rules are called the "laws" of cricket. Although it originated as a folk game, it was taken over by the aristocracy and gentry in the seventeenth century, and only after

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Kennedy, whom he had warned about the dangers of falling into a morass in Vietnam. This discussion never took place: Kennedy was assassinated before it could happen.

In 1972, Britain and Japan also sent ambassadors to Beijing, but the United States did not establish full diplomatic relations with China until 1979.

Regaining Hongkong

In 1972, the United Nations General Assembly voted to give the permanent seat on the Security Council, until then occupied by Taiwan, to the People's Republic. China then sent a letter to the UN Special Committee on Decolonialization, stating: "The questions of Hongkong and Macao belong in the category of questions resulting from the series of unequal treaties which the imperialists imposed on China. Hongkong and Macao are part of Chinese territory occupied by the British and Portuguese authorities. The settlement of the questions of Hongkong and Macao is entirely within China's sovereign right. . . . The Chinese government has consistently held that they should be settled in an appropriate way when conditions are ripe."

This ensured that it would not be possible for the British to create a situation in which Hongkong or Macao would be declared "independent," and that decisions on the future of Hongkong were to be dealt with only bilaterally, between China and Britain. The 27th UN General Assembly supported the Chinese view.

In the same period, the leaders in Beijing were developing their strategy for dealing with London. In May 1974, Mao Zedong met with British Conservative Party leader Edward Heath, and the two agreed to the "peaceful and stable handing over of Hongkong in 1997," the Zhongguo Xinwen She (China News Agency) wrote on the history of Hongkong on June 29.

(Heath, British prime minister during 1970-74, is an interesting figure. In March 1972, under Heath, Britain sent its first full ambassador to China, and ended its diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Heath leads the moderate, anti-Thatcher wing of the Tory Party; his relationship with his successor, Margaret Thatcher, can be described as one of mutual loathing. The British press have commented that his love for Classical music stands in contrast to her intense dislike of it. In the midst of Thatcher's drive for war against Iraq in 1990, Sir Edward was the most prominent member of the British Conservative Party in Parliament to publicly, repeatedly oppose her.)

A new solution to an old problem

When Deng Xiaoping came to power, and the Cultural Revolution's "Gang of Four" was crushed, his policies to modernize and open up China were confirmed in 1978 by the

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1830 did professionals and their patrons begin to appear on the scene. After 1870, and until the 1940s, the game was controlled by the gentry. Each summer, in England, there would be two cricket matches between the "Gentlemen" and the "Players"—the "Gentlemen" being the aristocrats and gentry, who, of course, did not play the game for money, while the "Players" were the money-making professionals and other social "riff-raff." When these two games were played at the Lord's—the most exclusive of English cricket clubs, located in the London suburbs—the "Players" were only allowed to enter the ground through one designated gate, while the "Gentlemen" had the privilege of entering through the other. Mixing up the gates was never allowed.

In 1744, many new "laws" were introduced, drawn up by the London Club, whose president was the Prince of Wales, and a committee consisting of noblemen from London, Middlesex, Kent, Hampshire, Surrey, and Sussex.

An affliction of the Commonwealth

Cricket has been made an affliction of the British Commonwealth. Former colonies have the privilege of engaging in "Test Matches" between the best 11 players of two countries. Currently, England, Australia, the West Indies, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, and South Africa are allowed to play "test matches"; Bangladesh has only just now qualified to join this "elite" group.

A test match is a five-day affair, with five test matches usually played between two countries at one go, called a "rubber." On each day, under normal conditions, the game is played for six hours: two hours before lunch, two hours between lunch and tea, and two hours between tea and when the "stumps are drawn." During the two-hour sessions, "drinks" are brought in twice on a trolley by the "twelfth man" of each side.

A game *can* be won or lost during the five days—but not necessarily! In the second case, there will be a draw, or a drawn test match. Whoever wins more test matches, out of the five played, wins the "rubber." Notably, more games are drawn than won or lost.

The most extreme example of such aimless "play"—but always by the rules!—was what is known to cricket historians as the "timeless" Test. This Test was scheduled to be played to an end, but *could not be finished* and had to be recorded as "abandoned." The "timeless" Test was played at Durban, South Africa, in 1938. The game started on a Friday morning. On the tenth day of play, the players finally came off, because of rain. While there could have been an 11th, and indeed a 12th day of play, the charade had to end, because the players' boat, *Athlone Castle,* was leaving for England and could not delay its departure any longer.—*Ramtanu Maitra*