

*Petition by certain Chinese Merchants for Permission to use the  
Kau Ng Chek (foot measure).*

*Presented to the Legislative Council by the Honourable Wong Shing  
on April 8th, 1885.*

*To*

THE HONOURABLE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF HONGKONG.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED MERCHANTS.

HUMBLY SHEWETH:—

1.—That your Petitioners are merchants who have for many years been engaged in trade in and with this Colony.

2.—That your Petitioners have in the course of their business always used and adopted a certain Standard of measurement commonly known in English as a Chinese foot or Chek and called in Chinese “Kau Ng Chek.”

3.—That this Chinese foot or chek is the common foot of commerce in this Colony and is not a class measure of length.

4.—That this Chinese foot or chek is subdivided into Ten Chinese inches and is equivalent to  $9\frac{5}{16}$  inches of the Chek or foot commonly called in Chinese as “Pai Chin Chek” which is used by the Treasurer of Kwong Tung Province principally for the measure of land.

5.—That this Chinese foot is only .13 of a Chinese inch shorter than the Standard Chek used in all the Custom Houses in China in accordance with Article No. XXXIV of the Tientsin Treaty between Great Britain and China.

6.—That the Kau Ng Chek is about  $13\frac{3}{8}$  English inches; the Custom House Standard chek is about 14.1 English inches; and the Canton Treasurer's chek is about  $14\frac{5}{8}$  English inches.

7.—That there is no universal Standard chek used in China.

8.—That when English goods are imported into China it is usual in the cases where the duty is levied on the length to convert the English measures into measurements according to the Custom House Standard chek which is equal to 14.1 English inches and is only .13 of one Chinese inch longer than the Kau Ng Chek as aforesaid.

9.—That the chek exclusively used in Peking is a chek of the same length as the Kau Ng chek; and that the Kau Ng chek is well known to all Chinese and has been commonly in use in this Colony for at least thirty years.

10.—That in Ordinance No. 8 of 1885 which has already come into force, the Kwong Tung Treasurer's chek is adopted as the Standard chek in Hongkong and it is made compulsory for all Chinese merchants to use this chek.

11.—That the adoption of this chek will cause your Petitioners very great inconvenience and trouble in business as shewn hereunder :—

*a.* In all trade transactions where the price is according to length, the price will have to be increased.

*b.* That large quantities of goods have already been ordered with reference to the customary measure of the Kau Ng chek, and that the due fulfilment of these contracts will be rendered very difficult except by incurring heavy loss.

*c.* That the Kau Ng chek is so commonly used as to cause constant mistake and dispute if the Treasurer's chek is to be the Standard Chek.

*d.* That the Custom House will only levy duty according to the Custom House Standard chek, and if goods are sent up to Canton or to any Chinese port measured, invoiced, and marked according to the Kwong Tung Treasurer's chek, the goods will be liable to seizure owing to the excess of length.

*e.* That general inconvenience will be caused by the substitution of a measure little known or used in commercial transactions as the Treasurer's chek for the commonly used and well-known Kau Ng Chek or the Custom House Standard chek without any corresponding benefit.

*f.* That your Petitioners are for the present obliged to sell exclusively by English measures for the reason that the Customs Officers will of their own accord alter them into Chinese measurements according to their Standard Chek, and to avoid dispute and seizure.

*g.* That the exclusive use of the English measures will however cause much inconvenience and trouble to your Petitioners and to the Public.

12.—That the adoption of the Canton Treasurer's chek will afford the general community of this Colony no substantial benefit as a proportionately higher price will have to be charged for each chek of stuffs sold, while it may cause much annoyance and trouble to and misunderstanding between the buyers and sellers.

YOUR PETITIONERS therefore pray

1. That either the Kau Ng chek or the Custom House Standard chek be made the Chinese Standard chek in this Colony instead of the "Pai chin chek."

2. That this Honourable Council, pending decision in this matter, will suspend the operation of such portion of the said Ordinance No. 8 of 1885 as relates to the subject matter of this petition.

AND YOUR PETITIONERS will ever pray, &c., &c.

DATED this 8th day of April, 1885.