

S. C. W. P.

6 Dec 1985

## A dedicated life of service 10-2

The death on Saturday of Sir Sik-nin Chau at the age of 82 marks the end of a long chapter of distinguished service by a much honoured community leader. Though he has been out of the headlines for many years, largely due to a prolonged illness, Sir Sik-nin was active and prominent during the term of three Governors.

These were Sir Mark Young, Sir Alexander Grantham and Sir David Trench, all of whom called on his experience during Hongkong's formative years as an industrial and trading community. For it was the practice in those days for the administration to rely heavily on the advice of the Unofficial members of the Executive Council in the absence of the wider electorate we enjoy today.

Sir Sik-nin, who was knighted for his long services to the community, was the cousin of another highly regarded figurehead, Sir Tsun-nin Chau. But it was the extensive connections which Sir Sik-nin Chau formed that projected him into the forefront of the public.

There was hardly a major organisation with which he was not at one time involved, in fields ranging from tertiary education, medicine, trade, industry, management, productivity, and of course racing, for he served for many years as a steward of the Jockey Club.

But he will be remembered chiefly as the first chairman of the Trade Development Council, and for his contributions to setting up the Hongkong Federation of Industries, the Management Association and his chairmanship of the Productivity Council.

Undoubtedly by his extensive travels overseas, he helped the TDC get off to a good start and put Hongkong on the map of world trade.

Born in Hongkong, he was educated at one of the top schools, St Stephen's, and went on to get his first degree from the Hongkong University before travelling to London to take up medicine and specialise. He then returned to the territory to lecture on ophthalmology and later to become a surgeon at the old Government civil hospital. It was there that his enthusiasm and public interest was recognised in his appointment to the Urban Council in 1936. Sir Mark Young invited him to join the Legislative Council after the Pacific war and Sir Alexander Grantham appointed him to the Executive Council in 1947.

Sir Sik-nin Chau was, in addition to his many public functions, the chairman and general manager of the Hongkong Chinese Bank, from which he derived his close interest in banking and economics. As a doctor he was particularly interested in tuberculosis and the ravages it caused to Hongkong's population in the early postwar years.

His contributions to many fields are not questioned. It was regretted by some that after a number of extensions to Exco, a petition for a further extension was turned down in 1962. This was not a lack of appreciation by the Government but a wish to tap new talent and take advice from those with a different background and upbringing.

There will be genuine expressions of goodwill and thanks to his family for all he did, not the least being his deep interest and involvement in many fields of activity, over a period of 40 years. It is a record that few can emulate in these or any other times.