

North & South: Asian Angst

Contributed by Steven Young
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ASIAN ANGST

OCR scan of magazine text – may include minor errors.

Auckland, once known as the Polynesian capital of the world, is a very different city now. Asians, more than 18 per cent of the city population, have changed the City of Sails forever. Super- busy Koreans in central-city mini-marts smile and sell exotic vegetables and shiny buns.

Pakuranga's plethora of ethnic restaurants fill each night with noisy, cackling families. On the North Shore, Kiwi kids dropped off at school by mums in battered hatchbacks seethe with resentment as they watch Asian classmates arrive in their very own late-model BMWs, Mercedes or souped-up Subarus.

The massive influx of Asian investment in our commerce and education has indeed been bounteous. In 2002 alone, 72,000 Asian students contributed \$258 million. Our current annual income from export education is a staggering \$2 billion, and that's not counting the millions brought in to the country by 60,000 business migrants.

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And, yes, we'll say it loud and clear from the start, the vast majority of Asians making New Zealand their new home are hard- working, focused on getting their children well educated, and ensuring they're not dependent on the state (unlike so many New Zealand-born citizens).

But not every Asian is a good Asian and -the human cost of the gathering crime tide aside -New Zealand taxpayers are picking up the legal bills for many of the worst Asian criminals. The Legal Services Agency confirms legal aid is available to anyone charged with a criminal offence here -you don't have to be a New Zealand citizen or even a permanent resident to qualify.

As we shall see, Asian criminals making millions pushing drugs frequently don't pay for legal assistance once caught out. And others are helping themselves to our hospital care and seafood and deliberately flouting commercial legislation New Zealand companies must abide by.

As each week passes with news of yet another arrest involving a Chinese-sounding name, disquiet grows in heartland New Zealand about the quality of migrants we're letting through the door.

In less than two decades criminal behaviour among Asian immigrants has gone from a few uppity, wealthy boy racers to highly organised and ruthless criminals seemingly prepared to do anything for big profit. It's capitalism at play, crime following market forces, and currently the market is bullish in class-A drugs, poached paua, fraud, prostitution and, to a lesser extent, extortion.

So how does this affect the average New Zealander? Ask the carefree boaties motoring under bright and promising skies out of Auckland's picture-perfect Westhaven marina last Good Friday who tried to haul a large, floating suitcase out of the water. Shocked to peek human flesh they called the police, who discovered the body of English language student Wan Biao within. The 19- year-old had been kidnapped and taken to a central-city hotel where his head was sawed off (save for one flap of skin) and his body was folded into a suitcase that was hauled through the streets and pushed off a downtown wharf into the harbour.

Early in 2007 Li

Zheng and Cui Xian, both 21, will be tried in the High Court at Auckland on charges of kidnapping and murder and their colleagues Wang Yuxi, 20, and Yin Lianda, 21, will face charges of kidnapping and being accessories to murder.

At least one of

the accused, Cui has been granted legal aid, but the full cost can't be calculated or made public until the case is (expected to last a month) is finalised and all appeals exhausted.

Meanwhile

in smart Waitakere and North

Shore suburbs councils

are struggling to control illegal suburban brothels. Owned and managed by Asian gangs, they operate out of what look like tidy family houses with neighbouring children playing innocently in gardens nearby. Under the Prostitution Reform Act 2003, a maximum of four prostitutes in one residence may operate without a licence. But according to United Future MP Gordon Copeland, who's trying to amend the legislation, Chinese gangs -pimps - are grossing over \$600,000 a year per house from up to a dozen mainly Chinese girls, usually international students.

In

July 2005 Tam Yam Ah, known as an Asian gang "enforcer", was assassinated outside the Top Karaoke Bar in Symonds St Auckland, as he stepped from his car. Seven months later police ~ charged 53-year-old Petone man Wan Yee Chow with Tam's murder ~ (the case is yet to be tried). The Crown alleges Wan drove from Wellington specifically to carry out the shooting. In the early 1990s Tam was nearly killed by his then wife, Jai Fong Zhou, when she whacked him 10 times with his own meat cleaver. Zhou was the first woman in New Zealand to walk free after successfully pleading battered woman syndrome, and her defence lawyer described her husband, who came to New Zealand in the late 1980s, as "a terrible, terrible bastard".

Not long before he

was shot to death, Tam had been freed after serving a prison term for attacking someone with a meat cleaver while working as a bouncer at another Auckland karaoke bar.

Not all Asian crime is gang-related but that doesn't make it any less bloodthirsty. Trauma doesn't begin to describe how residents of a quiet Unsworth Heights street on Auckland's North Shore felt in April 2003 when Chinese student Wen Hui Cui turned the neighbourhood into what police called a "bloodbath".

Annoyed at being jilted by his Chinese student girlfriend Bin Lin, also known as Ruby, Wen stabbed her in a frenzied attack. Her screams echoed down the road before he slit her throat from ear to ear. After washing his hands and changing his clothes Wen gathered his cell phone, some money and two kitchen knives and went out on the street, where he stabbed two of Ruby's friends - teenage boys - in the heart, killing one.

Wen, in New Zealand ostensibly to study English, was sentenced to 19 years' jail and was granted \$75,382 legal aid for the trial and \$14,189 for a subsequent unsuccessful appeal.

In September 2006 Alex Kwong Wong, a 37-year-old Chinese man who arrived here in 1987, received a 17-year jail term for importing methamphetamine hidden in a shipment of lava lamps intercepted by Customs. The drugs had a street value between \$3.5 million and \$12.5 million.

Despite proof he'd gambled away \$1 million in the previous four years and paid cash for a \$90,000 Porsche and a \$120,000 Mercedes, Wong was granted legal aid. (In 1994 he'd been sentenced to nine years' jail, serving only three, for kidnapping.)

A flick through the crime files shows the Asian menace has been steadily creeping up on us. In 2000, Hing Hung Wong from Thailand, described as an Auckland businessman, was extradited to the United States to face trial there for his alleged leading role in trafficking 300 kgs of heroin between Thailand, Hong Kong and New York. Wong (who had eight aliases) ran his business from Auckland for two years. He was convicted in the US then extradited to Hong Kong, where he was also convicted for heroin dealing and is still in prison.

Frustration about Asians' attitude to New Zealand law first bubbled into public view in May 2003 when Auckland Senior Constable Steve Lamb, clearly at the end of his tether, wrote to the New Zealand Herald angry about young Asians' rising crime.

Lamb, later

investigated by his superiors and banned from talking to the media, said he was so busy dealing with Asian students in downtown Auckland involved in "theft, fraud, fighting, assault, intimidation, vehicle crashes, drunkenness, disorder, domestics, stabbings and a sideline of extortion and weapon- carrying" he couldn't respond to calls from the public.

The

same week, Auckland District Court Judge Cecilie Rushton echoed Lamb's sentiments when sentencing a 25-year-old Chinese kidnapper, Da Wan, to eight years' jail: "Hardly a week goes by in this court without a case involving the kidnap of a Chinese student and a ransom demand," she railed.

But

still the criminals continued their brazen pursuit of big money.

In

2005 three Asians -Changsong Li, 33, Xiang Quan Chen, 28, and Zu Ping Zhou, 19 (recipients of \$11,105 in legal aid) - were each jailed for 10 years after admitting kidnapping Howick woman Qing Zhao and demanding a \$1 million ransom. The ringleader, Wanzhe Gui, 31, an over-stayer who already had a criminal record in New Zealand, was jailed for 13 years and ordered to be deported at the end of his sentence.

These examples are

just that, and by no means a comprehensive list of Asians hauled before our courts for serious crimes within the past decade. Alongside the undeniable benefits of Asian immigration, New Zealand has also imported an alien, ruthless and secretive crime culture committed by educated, profit-driven individuals and gangs.

Nonetheless,

commentary on Asian immigration 'has been overwhelmingly positive. Until recently, that is. In the past 12 months a few lone Asian voices have started speaking out against the behaviour of recent immigrants. One regular critic is Auckland-based Lincoln Tan, editor of the English-language, Asian-focused iBall magazine, who regularly rails against Asian crime in his weekly Herald column. If deterrents are not given in the form of harsh penalties, he says, then New Zealand's international reputation will suffer.

Tan, who moved here from Singapore in 1997, says Asians' criminal actions "are fuelled by the perception that laws in New Zealand are lax and that even if they are caught they will only get a slap on the wrist".

So what, if anything, to do about Asian crime? In a featureless multi-storey building in Otahuhu, South Auckland, where the shopping centre's \$2 shops, immigration services and quick loan purveyors advertise in English and Chinese, Detective Sergeant John Sowter heads the Auckland Drug Squad, just upstairs and down the corridor from the Asian Crime Unit.

It's no coincidence both units are housed in the same building. "Of our big Auckland drug cases [and Auckland is where the bulk of in-bound drug seizures happen]," says Sowter, "90 per cent involve foreign nationals and the large majority of those are Asian. The only recent case involving New Zealanders was the so-called celebrity bust [in which Brent Todd and Marc Ellis were convicted]."

Sowter, in the drug squad since 1998, has seen major change in our big drug dealers. "There's a real criminal element of Asian people in New Zealand now. The other day 600,000 Codral-type tablets [used for making P, or methamphetamine, and known as precursors] were imported from China. Obviously there's a market for it. Where does it go? It goes to Asian gangs. It's cooked up and sold, and lots of people are using P."

In China one Codral-type capsule costs two to 10 cents; here it sells for \$2 to \$5. It's low-risk, high-return, explains Sowter, because as precursors -not drugs of abuse per se -they are only class C, carrying a maximum penalty of eight years' imprisonment. Even then, the Crown must prove a defendant supplied the drug knowing it would be used to manufacture P.

Hence the acquittal in February 2006 of Auckland City Hospital heart surgeon" Xiao-Zhong Chen, who allegedly made \$250,000 profit selling Telfast tablets. Chen was charged with selling the pills for the manufacture of the drug P, but successfully argued he didn't know what methamphetamine was when he started supplying the tablets.

Until 2003

"flu" and cold medications could be purchased ~ relatively easily from pharmacies. But intense lobbying by the ~ Police Association, coupled with voluntary restrictions by some ~ chemists, has resulted in pharmacies now being required to limit ~ and register sales per customer of any drugs containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine.

But instead of

stifling the illegal manufacture of P, this has simply created a niche for Asian gangs to make huge profits by importing the precursor tablets from Northeast Asia. Now Auckland has a large Asian population with good connections in China, Sowter explains, "they can pick up the phone, call a cousin and get him to package up the stuff and throw it in the post".

P-related offences

here, according to the latest police crime statistics released in October, increased a staggering 50 percent in just 12 months to June 2006. Police Commissioner Howard Broad calls the drug "a driving force" behind spiralling crime rates. "It's a particularly pernicious drug, one that very quickly causes addiction, one that takes an average person and makes them violent,"

It's

such a big deal that we now have our very own New Zealand police officer, Inspector John Doyle, formerly of Hornby, stationed in Beijing in an attempt to halt the spread of organised Asian crime here. Doyle insists New Zealand (along with Australia) has the largest number of amphetamine users per capita in the developed world, making our country a "prime target for Asian gangs".

But it's difficult

to see what one man in Beijing can do to halt the amount of methamphetamine and precursors flooding in, Especially when the Customs Service acknowledges around \$90 million worth of methamphetamine, mostly from China, was stopped at our borders last year.

In May, Customs

and police seized methamphetamine and pseudoephedrine worth \$135 million hidden in shipping containers sent from China -the largest single haul ever and a good example "of the lengths these transnational organised crime groups will go to smuggle drugs", according to Comptroller of Customs Martyn Dunne. "By concealing their activities in the legitimate flow of goods they're

bringing New Zealand's international reputation as a safe and trusted trader into disrepute."

Six men (five unemployed and one a tour guide) were arrested. Guo Wei Deng, 43, Li Fan, 28, Weifeng Pan, 35, Kin Kwok Leung, 66, Ming Chin Chen, 42, and Kai Lok Fung, 41, will go on trial in 2007.

In September in one swoop Customs seized \$5 million worth of crystal methamphetamine -pure P- at Auckland Airport. The class-A drug was packed into 43 picture frames in the luggage of two Canadian passport holders who'd arrived via Hong Kong.

Customs would not reveal the pair's ethnicity to North O. South, but they next appear in court, for a depositions hearing, in December.

This bust brought the total amount of methamphetamine intercepted at Auckland Airport in nine months to 109.1 kgs, nearly 10 times the amount seized in the whole of 2005.

Such alarming figures come as no surprise to Police Association president Greg O'Connor, who's been banging on about P-labs and gang-related crimes for more than a decade.

"All this was predicted in 1990 but police philosophy then was about centralisation. While the police force, particularly CIB, was being centralised the organised crimes were centralising. Asian organised crime is now a major problem."

And the crime bosses have a ready supply of distributors -drug mules -who speak English as well as Cantonese or Mandarin: international students. These are the pushers who seem innocent enough -in universities, English language schools, technical institutes, cafes and nightclubs -with easy access to anyone wanting to buy P.

Making it even

more difficult for police, says drug squad boss Sowter, is "that they all look the same to us so you wouldn't know [they're gang members] if you passed them on the street. We've got Asian cleaners and I look at them sometimes and wonder."

While Sowter

doesn't have a problem with our immigration policies as such, he'd like swifter action to be taken against immigrants who offend. "There should be laws not giving them a second chance. I've heard them plead in court they can't go back for all sorts of reasons, but that's just fairy tales. If they come in and commit a serious crime within 10 to 15 years they should immediately get the boot."

In

August, the audience at Auckland's 15th annual international education conference was warned drug peddling was becoming the "crime of choice" within the international student community. Detective Sergeant George Koria was the deliverer of that ominous message to education providers keen and eager to attract more fee-paying international students into their classrooms.

Koria runs the

Asian Crime Unit just down the Otahuhu corridor from the drug squad.

On the entrance foyer

wall someone has pinned pages of case histories under the heading "Maori Deaths Resulting From Family Violence".

So, why a special

crime unit for Asians and not for Maori?

"Good

question," grins Koria, a tall shaven-headed Samoan with a Manchu moustache who explains his four-man unit, first established in 1992, focuses on trying to infiltrate and understand Asian crime organised by two or more people. He says it's a media myth that Asian gangs in this country are triads. "They've taken on that moniker, but triads were actually a political group who tried to overthrow the government in China, then went into crime."

Asian

gangs here don't have an organised hierarchy like the Mafia, nor are they founded on undivided loyalty like the Mongrel Mob, he explains. Asian gang bosses have New Zealand residency and members will flit between different gangs committing crimes for profit, not revenge. "Chinese and Taiwanese may work together to commit a specific crime or they might do it on their own." Kidnapping charges have "settled down" to around 200 a year because they are "not so profitable", says Korcia. Currently the Asian unit's four police work mostly on cases of illegal drugs and fraud, gathering intelligence from informants then passing it on to the CIB for investigation and prosecution.

One

recent success was the October conviction of 35-year-old Grey Lynn company director Rebecca Li, who was operating a "high- tech elaborate operation producing a large number of documents to the Asian community", according to Korcia. She was convicted on 49 fraud-related charges after a six-day Auckland District Court trial. The Asian Crime Unit arrested Li in June 2004 and seized fake university degrees, educational diplomas and certificates, birth certificates, immigration documents including visa permits, and even mobility parking permits.

Hong Kong-born Li,

who arrived on a student visa and obtained permanent residency after finishing her computer science degree, had been counterfeiting for at least five years, advertising in Chinese language newspapers and selling documents, destined for overseas clients according to the police, for \$5000 a pop.

And

yes, Li was granted legal aid, but as with drug pusher Alex Wong, the total taxpayer damage won't be made public until she has exhausted all avenues of appeal.

So

does the generalisation, reported in North & South in May 2003, that people of Asian origin have long been known in New Zealand for their "all-round fine citizenship" still stand? Or do Asians and their crimes attract more attention because their names and faces are so different from, say, immigrants from Britain?

The snapshot of

this country's population provided in the 2001 Census showed 270,000 people identified themselves as Asians, up 37 per cent from 1996. Not as big a jump as in the previous five years, when Asian New Zealanders increased by 74 per cent.

In December, the release of the 2006 Census data is expected to put the number of Asians here at nearly 400,000, or just under 10 per cent of the population. Projections suggest that In 20 years Asians will number 860,000-10,000 more than Maori.

The largest single Asian ethnicity is Chinese, at 44 per cent. In 2001 they made up three per cent of our population. Overseas- born Chinese hugely outnumber New Zealand-born Chinese, largely due to the influx of international students who've come here for secondary or tertiary training, then been granted residency.

In 2001 more than 78,000 Chinese New Zealanders were overseas born, compared with just 25,473 born in New Zealand.

At that time, although Asians made up 6.6 per cent of the population, they were responsible for just 1.7 percent of all criminal convictions.

However, according to Statistics New Zealand national apprehension figures from 1996 to 2005, total offences committed by Asiatics (not including Indian) aged 17 to 50 rose 53 per cent, from 1791 to 2751. Compare that with offences committed by Pacific Islanders, who make up 6.5 percent of the population. They certainly committed more offences -11,292 in the same decade -but their increase was only 2.9 per cent.

Accusations that New Zealand is too soft on potential crooks coming here to make a living out of crime are just not justified, according to Api Fiso, Immigration Service manager of border security. Fiso, a former policeman who ran the Asian Crime Unit from 1992 until 1999, defends New Zealand's immigrant screening. "We have one of the best systems in the world, along with Australia. But we deal with about four million people annually so it's always a balancing act."

Well couldn't we be more careful about Asian students, especially since the government has just announced another \$15 million to be spent on recruiting

them? "How we deal with them is no different from any other sector wanting to come to New Zealand," says Fiso. "Obviously there are visible issues like the body in the suitcase, but the Asian reputation as a law-abiding community is still there."

Some 60 per cent of Asian immigrants qualify under the skilled migrant/business category, and nowhere in New Zealand is their mark more indelible than Auckland. Asian-owned souvenir shops are seemingly everywhere, displaying health

products promising good skin, great sex and eternal youth just by taking daily doses of sheep placenta, deer velvet, shark cartilage or royal jelly.

Queen
St's Strand Arcade is crammed with fashion boutiques where Asian girls speaking minimum English sell glittery frilly frocks to equally tiny-sized Asian girls.

Some
of these retailers keep Commerce Commission inspectors busy issuing warnings about selling clothes with no country-of-origin or care labels or slapping writs on purveyors of placenta pills advertised as clean, green and Kiwi but actually manufactured in China from Australian sheep.

Graham
Gill, the Commerce Commission's Auckland-based fair trading manager, chooses words carefully when discussing his organisation's responsibilities. He's anxious not to single out Asians for criticism.. "I try to avoid talking of Asian this or that. Chinese, Korean, Japanese -they're as different from each other as Germans, Australians and New Zealanders."

Put
on the spot, he will acknowledge that "anecdotally, at least, there's a huge problem out there with recent immigrant traders not complying with the Fair Trading Act".

The
full extent of the problem is "a little unclear", says Gill. "We

find they're often employing family members, or people of the same ethnicity, recent arrivals, who don't know their rights and obligations."

The
commission tries to educate migrants about New Zealand's consumer protection laws but has issued nine warnings in the past year to Asian traders for alleged breaches of the Fair Trading Act. 1\110 were for misleading consumers on their rights to a refund, one for making false representations as an immigration consultant and six related to misleading representations about the country of origin of royal jelly and sheep placenta supplements.

In
November 2005 the commission prosecuted Jonathan Ken (also known as Sang Rae Kim) and his company, Tomorrow Dream Line, for falsely labelling and selling ordinary honey as UMF (unique manuka factor). UMF honey, also known as active manuka honey, has natural antiseptic qualities, sells at a premium above ordinary honey and is a multimillion-dollar export earner. Ken was fined more than \$50,000 for his second prosecution in less than six months for the same offence.

Shan
Eric Yin, director of Merric Apparel, had lived in Auckland for 11 years before he was fined \$26,000 in 2005 for selling incorrectly labelled clothing imported from China. Yin told the Manukau District Court he was aware of our regulations requiring country-of-origin and garment-care labels but believed the rules were "not compulsory".

Graham
Gill is at pains to point out there are "ratbags who regardless of their ethnicity will break laws put in place to protect the public". But he concedes the Commerce Commission hasn't translated product safety information or fair trading laws into any other languages apart from Korean and Mandarin.

By the
commission's predictions, Auckland's Asian population will rise to nearly 380,000 in 2016 (in 2001 it was 169,000). So is Gill confident that Asian merchants ripping off customers is just a temporary glitch, a mere settling-in process, and is the commission winning?

"We are actively working to get on top of it but the issue is not going away."

Early evening at an Auckland car pound and a young police officer tries to sort out an argument between three young Asian students over an impounded vehicle. Before the officer arrived the men were speaking to one another in broken but understandable English, but when the policeman starts asking questions, suddenly they do not comprehend.

"How come all you students can never speak English when we come along but you're all over here attending English language schools?" he snaps.

It's the same convenient language barrier encountered by Auckland health providers when immigrants are caught trying to access free hospital treatment for which they're not eligible.

In October it was revealed a 66-year-old Chinese woman, legally in New Zealand in 2004 on a temporary student visa (but not entitled to taxpayer-funded health care), used the passport of another Chinese woman who'd died in 2002 (but who would have qualified for free health care) to scam \$51,189 worth of treatment from blood and heart clinics.

Auckland District Health Board chairman Wayne Brown told North O. South it's very hard to believe the woman (who's since skipped the country) didn't deliberately set out to rot the system. "Most of them say they didn't know they had to bring their passport, and you can possibly believe that, but it's a bit hard to claim you didn't know you had to bring your own passport."

So how does a 66-year-old Chinese woman get a student visa? Incredibly, there's no age limit on students applying to study here.. Api Fiso again: "New Zealand welcomes older students wishing to study in New Zealand and, like many other countries, recognises their contribution to our economy."

is compulsory for international students, but not for tourists or business migrants. So was this a one-off or the start of a trend where we may be targeted by those who want to avoid paying for expensive medical treatment in their own countries?

Brown estimates the Auckland board has around \$2.5 to \$3 million of health "stolen" each year from its annual budget of \$1.3 billion. "In the big picture it's not a major problem, but it's a pain in the arse. Our staff are not detectives. They shouldn't have to confront patients. Foreigners, unlike New Zealanders, know the full value of public health care and they'll go out of their way to get it."

In November 2005 the government introduced new health screening policies. Anyone wanting to stay in New Zealand longer than 12 months must have a full medical examination and assessment before leaving their home country. And immigrants or visitors intending to stay shorter periods but who come from high-risk tuberculosis countries may be required to undergo TB screening.

These new regulations came too late to protect Palmerston North Boys High School, where a 2006 outbreak of TB, regarded as one of the world's top four fatal infections, forced 1800 people to be tested for the disease. The outbreak was traced to a 13-year-old South Korean immigrant who arrived with his family in 2002. He'd been ill for eight months before being admitted to Palmerston North Hospital, and is still in isolation.

Despite the fact the school had to employ a staff member to Mantoux-test all 1750 pupils, plus teachers, follow up with consultation, co-ordinate a daily information campaign and calm parents wanting to withdraw their children from the school, Health Ministry senior adviser Dr Andrea Forde is anxious to avoid any public panic over the situation. "It's so important to remove the stigma around tuberculosis. It's a disease that is eminently treatable and people have to be aware it's treatable."

Nevertheless last year there were 344 recorded cases of TB in this country, 250 of them in people born overseas.

Over the phone Wellingtonian Rosemary Jones QSM sounds like any New Zealand woman with two adult sons, a retired school principal husband, and community work to keep her busy. Face to face, however, she could easily pass as an impeccably dressed recent Chinese immigrant, struggling to make friends and learn a foreign language.

Which is exactly what she was in 1966 arriving in New Zealand from Hong Kong to live in Highbank, mid-Canterbury, after meeting and marrying young Jack Jones on his OE. She was isolated, scared, lonely and surrounded by sheep. "It was very, very hard to come here in those days. When my mother visited us in 1971 she went through a tremendous rigmarole and had to swear on the Bible she would not apply for a permit to stay."

Jones has been vice-president of the Wellington Ethnic Council, chairperson of the Wellington Chinese language school and founder of the Chinese Operatic Society. She also worked for the New Zealand Dairy Board, ran her own marketing and financial services company, and in 1972 was crowned Mrs Otaki.

Which all shows she's successfully straddled the two ethnic worlds. But now she's sad and angry at increasing criminality among recent Asian immigrants. "It's too easy to come here now. Immigration policies are largely economically driven, and it's all about money."

Jones makes the point that the business migrant scheme assumes wealthy immigrants automatically make good citizens, when the reverse can be true. To prove her point, she refers to the 19th-century gold miners who came here with no English skills and were treated harshly. Against all these odds, some chose to stay and made good lives for themselves as market gardeners, restaurant owners, laundry proprietors, greengrocers.

In turn, their New Zealand-born children went to universities and entered professions such as education, medicine, accountancy, law. These families became integrated.

Now,
she says, there's "a wee bit of conflict" as these very Kiwi Asians
see all the effort they made to overcome discrimination and establish reputations
as law-abiding and hard-working being eroded by the bad behaviour of
international students and some new residents.

"We call our
children bananas -white on the inside, yellow outside. They're Kiwis, locally
born. Their heritage is New
Zealand and they're different from these new
Asians, who have a lot of money and speak languages the bananas don't, with a
different Chinese history.

"Many
mainland Chinese have become very wealthy in the last 20 years, and the Chinese
mentality is if you have money you give your children the best, so they send
them abroad with a pile of money for their
education. A lot of these international students are spoilt rotten. I see these
little emperors at restaurants, with their credit cards, spending up large, with unlimited freedom and
no parental control or discipline. They see New Zealand as a soft touch.

"Immigration
policies used to be so tough and New Zealand didn't have such a high
profile internationally. New
Zealand has become the place of choice. But
the horse has bolted now, so what can we do?"

Right now the government is looking at bolstering immigration. In
August Associate Education minister Dr Michael Cullen announced \$15 million
will be spent on seven overseas education counsellors, plus increased
ministerial missions to Northern Asia, including China. Cullen's aim is to boost New Zealand's annual export
education income another half billion, to \$2.5 billion, by 2011.

But
Statistics New Zealand predictions aside, the Asianisation of New Zealand may
be on the wane. In 1996 most of our immigrants came from Northeast
Asia -18,600 out of a total of 57,000. But by April 2006 that
figure had dropped to 9800, and the number of migrants coming here from the UK and Ireland more than doubled to
15,500.

The
Department of Labour's Migrant Trends report in January 2006 showed the

proportion of Chinese and Indian people granted residency was declining. It attributed this to the introduction in 2003 of the skilled migrant category, which toughened standards for English language testing and favoured applicants from comparable labour markets -Europe rather than China, for instance.

While these changes -at the time dubbed racist and a knee- jerk reaction to New Zealand First leader Winston Peters' trenchant criticism of our immigration policies -appear to have quelled the number of Asian immigrants, that may prove to be temporary.

In October, Trade minister Phil Goff said that as part of a free- trade deal with China, New Zealand could consider allowing Chinese workers easier access to this country in exchange for the people's republic importing more New Zealand products. Goff admitted he had concerns about such an arrangement, but said we could consider taking "chefs, traditional medicine specialists, Mandarin teachers and young Chinese on working holidays."

And the government sees no need to toughen the screening process of immigrants from Asia. Immigration minister David Cunliffe defends the current policies, saying the Immigration Service checks and verifies all applications thoroughly so the "vast majority of undesirables are intercepted before they even get on an aircraft. The public don't see that but a great deal of work goes into it."

Harsher deportation rules, Cunliffe says, would have an adverse effect on our international reputation and cause "considerable damage" to our economy.

Currently, some migrants who commit serious offences can face deportation, but it's not automatic. The toughest we get is on anyone who's had permanent residency for less than 10 years. If they commit a crime which earns a minimum of five years' jail they may be kicked out. It depends on the sentencing judge, and the defendant has extensive appeal rights.

Cunliffe also says he's seen no evidence Asian crime rates are higher than any other ethnic groups and challenged Auckland Drug Squad boss John Sowter's assertion that the vast majority of recent big Auckland

drug busts involve Asians.

National's

Immigration spokesman Lockwood Smith was also surprised when told of the disproportionately high number of Asians involved in drug peddling.

"There's a tremendous need to get tough on drug gangs and if we've got an Asian gang problem we need to deal with it."

But

how tough, exactly, when two senior politicians from opposing parties are both ignorant of a major problem under their very noses? When nearly everyone in authority approached for comment, including Smith's own leader Don Brash, seems more concerned about praising law-abiding and industrious Asian immigrants than getting tough on the ones who go bad? Haven't we all become a bit too PC?

"Yes,"

says Smith, "While I wouldn't condone racism, we have to be honest about certain types of Asians who are organised criminals. We can't be seen as a soft touch. Personally my gut reaction is why the hell are taxpayers paying for these bastards."

Meanwhile,

Asian crime continues to greet us with monotonous regularity as we open daily papers and turn on the telly.

In

mid-October Zeshen Zhou was jailed for 17 years after being found guilty of murdering his wife, Shunlian Huang. The 35-year-old unemployed Papatoetoe man, who'd lived in New Zealand

12 years, stabbed her 76 times and bashed her with a meat cleaver and a claw hammer in an 11-minute attack because she hated his gambling and wanted out of the marriage. When police arrived they described the scene as an abattoir, with blood all over the ceiling, walls and kitchen. The victim was still alive when put under the shower by her husband, who wanted to minimise the mess. He then slit her throat, killing her.

Zhou

is a New Zealand

resident and will not be deported. .

END

