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## Hong Kong's place in South East Asia

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## Chapter 6 Forging Networks (1900-1940)

Having met women and men who were fundamental to the making of Hong Kong as a Eurasian Port City, here we will meet some of their key successors. We do this partly because this next generation of Eurasians held large sway and made vital contributions to the building of Hong Kong in the early twentieth century. It is also important to meet these people, however, because of the networks they formed. Precisely as successors, these new people and clans were a development on past iterations, particularly in the networks they created, thereby raising questions about the evolving character of Hong Kong. Men such as Caldwell were outliers. Now men such as Chater, Kadoorie, Li, Mody, Macumber Churn, Anderson and Kotewall were building new groups of friends, colleagues and collaborators. Through these new networks we find new foci of belonging. Some of these networks were formed on the basis of business collaboration, others on faith or ethnicity, yet others crossed all such borders. This chapter asks, therefore, to what extent Hong Kong society was communal (locked into separate communities)? Or was it indeed cosmopolitan?

The term Eurasian here continues to encompass the broad range of peoples from geographic Eurasia, as well as the more narrowly defined products of mixed liaisons. Both usages apply here. By following these individuals—both those of mixed race and those with roots in Eurasia—and tracking what they did, we will see how Hong Kong's many different people were gaining in confidence, regardless of ethnic background. This consolidation of Hong Kong's port-city peoples took place against a backdrop of rising nationalism, sharper definitions of identity, and cross-border conflict in which the harshest boundaries were drawn on the basis of class, not race. Yet Hong Kong was in fine fettle. Celebrations of the royal jubilees ('golden' in 1887 and 'diamond' in 1897) had established the colony as a shining light of the empire in the East. That confidence produced, by the early twentieth century, new land, electricity, telephone, mining and property companies, mostly facilitated and funded by Hong Kong's Eurasians. The odd whiff of revolution in China was largely ignored—after all, there was always some sort of chaos going on over there. Few had any inkling that a couple of world wars and Communist revolution would follow; it was startling enough to some that opium divans were to be closed by 1910.

It was also still a magnet to new arrivals. A quarter of a million people in Hong Kong in 1895 grew to around 450,000 by 1911, despite bubonic plague in the 1890s. And, 'as the Chinese population doubled, the non-Chinese trebled.'<sup>401</sup> The Census showed that the 1911 population (excluding the British military presence) comprised 5,185 Europeans and Americans, 2,558 Portuguese, 3,482 'Indians and others', 55,157 Chinese on boats, and the rest Chinese on land. Who among this medley would thrive amid the gathering clouds of racism, nationalism, revolution and war?

### **Chater, the Armenian**

Back in 1864, a teenager arrived in Hong Kong to stay with his sister and work as a bank clerk. Yet this man would become the central figure in a dominant network, formed from his friends - his Parsi business colleagues, dynamic Chinese investors, a bevy of Portuguese friends, a handful of Scotsmen, and a foundational core of Baghdadi Jews. These were all people of Eurasia who shared multiple identities and ambition. Together, they made Hong Kong ready for a new century.

Paul Catchick Chater, later Sir Paul, arrived in Hong Kong just two years after Belilios, also off a ship from Calcutta. Born in 1846, orphaned aged seven, and one of thirteen children, he was sent in 1855 to La Martiniere School for Boys, where he became prefect and captain of the cricket team. His graduation to enter the India Survey Department meant he had a neat legible hand, a thorough knowledge of arithmetic, square and cubic roots, geometrical progression, fractions, and logarithmic calculations, algebra, trigonometry, and a knowledge of plan drawing; he also had 'a healthy and vigorous constitution, and good eye-sight for observing.'<sup>402</sup> Those skills, especially the plan drawing, would be seminal to his success. So, too, were his roots in Indian Armenian aristocracy. The East India Company's interlocutor, eminent Armenian merchant Khojah Phanoos Kalandar, was great-grandfather of Begoom, who married Agah Catchick Ariel; their granddaughter was Paul Chater's mother. The family, known for its liberal, cosmopolitan spirit, had spread from Julfa to India and beyond.<sup>403</sup> Chater would later donate to the Armenian Relief Fund of London and (in 1899) sponsor six young

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<sup>401</sup> Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora*, p154.

<sup>402</sup> These requirements appear in the 1855 Manual of Surveying for Revenue in Bengal and the North-Western Provinces.

<sup>403</sup> *Calcutta Gazette*, 29 July 1790, a eulogy on the death of Agar Catchick Arrakiel.

Armenians to travel to and settle in Hong Kong. He was not a waif of few prospects - he had the strength of lineage. 'He often put his money into enterprises that seemed risky, but his supreme confidence was usually vindicated in their success.'<sup>404</sup>

Being Armenian meant being tied into regional ribbons of trade through Penang and Singapore where Chater would develop business and property interests. A Catchick founded the *Straits Times* newspaper, and Armenian A.L. Agabeg was publishing the *Daily Press* in Hong Kong in 1860. Chater sailed to Hong Kong on an Apcar ship;<sup>405</sup> Arratoon Apcar (born at Julfa in 1779) had founded Apcar and Co. in 1819; the family intermarried with other Armenians such as Seth and Sarkies (behind the Raffles, Strand, and Eastern and Oriental hotels). By the mid-1840s the Arratoon Apcar was plying the Calcutta-to-China circuit, carrying people, wedding cakes and tombstones for the Armenian community. On arrival in Hong Kong, Chater stayed with his eldest sister, Anna who had married a Jordan. Her son, Dr Gregory Jordan had studied medicine in Edinburgh. Chater would go into business with his brother Paul; the brokers shared digs also with colonial surgeon Dr. Philip Ayres and Port Health Officer Adams—then Gregory moved in. All were keen Freemasons. Chater and Paul Jordan were stewards of the Jockey Club. Chater, Ayres and Adams were justices of the peace; Gregory Jordan would succeed Ayres as port health officer.<sup>406</sup>

Chater made friends easily. Austin Coates says, 'With his high broad forehead and wide-spaced, friendly eyes, he radiated kindness. Everything he did in his long life was for the public benefit as well as his own ... Chater never did anything drastic. He simply contrived to make things happen.'<sup>407</sup> Rare criticism arose of the 'gambling mania' he spurred on the stock exchange.<sup>408</sup> Chater's networks were first Armenian but quickly encompassed Indian, Parsi, Chinese, and Jewish, and eventually the heart of British power in Jardine's, the Hong Kong Club, and Government House. Like his Bengali forebears, he was an enthusiast for royalty and for British rule.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Bard, *Traders of Hong Kong*, p96. Chater, 64, married Swedish Maria Christine Pearson, 31.

<sup>405</sup> See Wright, *Respected Citizens* p94. Also, Clarence-Smith, in Baghdiantz, Harlaftis, and Minoglou, *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*.

<sup>406</sup> Mattock, *Hong Kong Practice*, pp3-4.

<sup>407</sup> Coates, *China Races*, p133.

<sup>408</sup> *The China Mail*, 14 January 1893; *Hongkong Government Gazette* 1893, pp479-80.

<sup>409</sup> Chater chaired Queen Victoria Jubilee committees (1887 and 1897), knighted in 1902, and honored by France after his investment in coal mines in French Tonkin.

Chater soon met his lifelong business partner and trusted friend, the Parsi Hormusjee Nowrojee Mody. This was probably when they were clerks at the Bank of Hindustan, China and Japan.<sup>410</sup> Both men would be knighted; both had forebears who had been trading for generations, in Mody's case with the Portuguese before the British arrived.<sup>411</sup> Born in Bombay on 12 October 1838, Mody had a printing press and newspaper, 'Pruthvi Prakash'. He arrived in Hong Kong thanks to the leading Parsi, Jehangirji Faramji Buxey. When Buxey thought of retiring after the closure of R.H. Camajee & Co, he wrote to his wife Mithibai in Bombay suggesting one of his three sons could be sent to take charge; none were keen. So Mithibai offered Hormusji, her sister's son, who very willingly said yes. Mody's friendship with Chater would change Hong Kong. Together they built Hong Kong and Kowloon land and docks, institutions and community organizations. (They would also invest in mining in Tonkin Indo-China and be honoured by the French Government.) Chater set up his Mr. Paul racing stable in 1872 when Mody set up his Mr. Buxey stable; Chater later became chairman of the Jockey Club. Just as Chater had his vast Marble House, Mody had Buxey Lodge. Alongside the bling was the philanthropy<sup>412</sup> to the Ladies Benevolent Society, the Seaman's Institute,<sup>413</sup> and the marble fountain at the Parsi Cemetery, amongst much more.

Within three years, Chater became a broker, thanks to a next circle of connection, with the Baghdadi Jews, the Sassoons. Seth, the Armenian historian, believes Chater had their backing to be independent: 'One day he plucked up the courage to ask the head of Sassoons whether they would help him if he started as an Exchange broker. The reply being in the affirmative, Chater tendered his resignation... With the help

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<sup>410</sup> See Chater, *Sir Catchick Paul Chater: A Brief Personal Biography*. That Mody also worked at this bank is uncertain, however; the *Chronicle and Directories* between 1861 and 1865 are unavailable. Arnold Wright said Mody arrived c. 1861 'to enter the service of a firm of Hindoo bankers and opium merchants.' Wright and Cartwright, *Twentieth Century Impressions*, p128.

<sup>411</sup> The Pavri Papers offer a genealogy back to a seventeenth-century ancestor, Lavji Dhunji, a ship chandler in Surat, whose descendants were cloth merchants and founders of cloth weaving and dyeing works. pp291-296ff.

<sup>412</sup> In 1907, Mody hosted the Bombay wedding of daughter Shirin to Nusserwanji Jamshedji Dadyseth. Here was the Parsi elite, the Jijibhoys, Readymoneys, Wadias, Behramjee Jejeebhoy, Petits, Camas, Banajis, Dadyseths, with several Indian Princes. The bride's sari was studded with small pearls, with diamonds on her shoes. Mody gave her diamond and emerald jewellery once owned by Marie Antoinette. When his effects were auctioned after his death, a 39-page booklet included 1,000-piece sets of silver, Waterford crystal, Wedgewood crockery, Silver Cups won by his horse stable. Deacons Archive 18/905, Inventory, 'Buxey Lodge.'

<sup>413</sup> This was because Mody believed 'to our Merchant seamen this Colony owes so much of its prosperity, its commerce, its very existence.' The Pavri Papers, p309.

of the Sassoons, he started auspiciously, and cleared \$600 in the first month as a broker. Thenceforth Fortune smiled on him...'<sup>414</sup>

The Li family, meanwhile, came from closer by, having sided with the British in Kwangtung (Guangdong) Province during the second Anglo-Chinese, or Arrow, War of 1856–60 after arriving in Hong Kong in 1854. The Li family's firm, Wo Hang, established in 1857 by the former artist Li Leong, was a typical Gold Mountain firm, meaning its focus was not on the traditional trade in marine and forest products between South and Southeast Asia with China, but on servicing—with labour, opium, and money transfers—areas opening up through the discovery of gold.<sup>415</sup> The family won the opium monopoly in 1862–63 and 1873–79 in Hong Kong, and so got a lock on the market for high-quality prepared opium in North America and Australia; they also traded extensively in rice. In between, on Li Leong's death in 1864, his cousin Li Sing took charge. He pioneered the first Chinese-owned insurance companies and in 1882 set up the Wa Hop Telegraph Company to lay a cable from Canton to Hong Kong. Li Sing was Hong Kong's twelfth-largest taxpayer in the 1870s and a leading man of the colony.<sup>416</sup> His youngest son, Li Po Chun, founded a primary school in his father's name and greatly expanded the family real estate business.<sup>417</sup>

Chater had already done business with the On Tai Insurance Company, set up by Li Sing and Poon Pong. These men had all known one another other since the 1860s. A triangular pattern emerged—where the Armenian Chater, the Parsi Mody, and the Chinese Li Sing would change the shape of Hong Kong. Out of this nexus came the development of the stock exchange, the Jockey Club, the central business district, the docks of Kowloon, mining in the New Territories, the University of Hong Kong, and

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<sup>414</sup> Seth, *Armenians in India*, p553.

<sup>415</sup> Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, pp33, 110–19.

<sup>416</sup> He would later finance a housing scheme on land once held by the Tang clan; Li Sing's front man in the Tang land projects was Ho Amei. Neither the Chinese nor the British governments backed the Tang. But there were still some ancestral claims, mortgaged by one young Tang clan member to Li Sing and his family.

<sup>417</sup> In 1865, Li Sing had invested in the jungles of Borneo. Two Americans in Hong Kong, Joseph Torrey (editor of the *Hongkong Times* and *The China Mail*) and Thomas Harris, had bought two concessions in Brunei and secured Li Sing's firm, Wo Hang, as partner in the American Trading Company of Borneo. This shipped in labourers, placing Torrey in charge as 'Supreme Ruler,' and tried to develop the land. The settlement slowly starved. New backers included Baron von Overbeck, the Austrian consul general in Hong Kong, but the Brunei adventure never worked. See Tregonning, *Under Chartered Company Rule*, pp7–10.

most leading companies: the Hongkong and Kowloon Wharf and Godown Co., the Hongkong Land and Investment and Agency Co., the Dairy Farm Co., Hongkong Electric, Hongkong Telephone, and many more. Only in the 1880s did the Scots of Jardine Matheson and Co. wake up to their importance, when Chater forged a next vital relationship with John Bell-Irving, the oft-overlooked taipan of Jardine's. He and Bell-Irving were both unofficial members of the Legislative and Executive councils. Bell-Irving was succeeded by his cousin J.J. Keswick in late 1889, so much of the credit for developments on the waterfront went to Keswick when in fact they had grown out of the far deeper tie between Chater and Bell-Irving. It was said: 'Where Chater goes today, Jardine's goes tomorrow.'<sup>418</sup>

Where Chater went, he also brought his networks with him – bringing together Armenians, Parsis, Jews, Chinese Scots and many more. Such networks reveal a large and cosmopolitan vision.

### **Hong Kong People Building Hong Kong**

From the first land sales of 1841, marine lots—those fronting the harbor—were most in demand. Traders on the foreshore could have the latest news and commodities off ships in the harbor, brought by small boats to their door; they usually built their own jetty from their office into the sea, and hoped for the best when typhoons thundered in. A first reclamation in 1851 created Bonham Strand, headquarters of the Nam Pak Hong. Next efforts by Governor John Bowring met entrenched resistance among merchants. Chater began experimenting in land creation in the 1870s by extending his lots in western Hong Kong. This area, Kennedy Town, was developed largely by Chater, Li Sing, and Meyer Sassoon.

Now Chater's early training in surveying techniques would prove useful. He hired a sampan by night, to let down a plumb line to measure the depth of the harbor. He was collecting data, privately. This was the genesis of the Praya Reclamation

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<sup>418</sup> Waters, 'British Hongs,' p225. Jardine Matheson Archive material shows Jardine's seeking Chater's business in 1880, writing that they had heard of two lots coming up for sale that might suit Chater, so what would he like to offer—JMA, C14/13: 1880. Ties deepened through intensive collaborations over the years but the comment from Jardine's head office at 3 Lombard Street London was measured: 'for many years he has been a good friend to the Firm and he will be much missed in Hongkong'—JMA J1/2/20, 3 June 1926. The firm then engaged in making sure a statue of Chater was built, see J1/2/21 and J1/2/22.

Scheme, which Chater finalized by 1887. He was the pivotal figure—with his surveying skills, investor's courage, knowledge of how to persuade the government to support the plan (from his membership of the government's top advisory councils, and visits to London), and his design of a finance scheme to keep the merchants (of which he was one) on side. Chater's innovation was to give the rights to reclaimed land to the nearest marine lot holder. Successive meetings with lot holders were chaired and charmed by Chater; Bell-Irving or Li Sing would then propose motions with the other seconding it, thereby securing approval from all. Through his freemasonry network, he got the Duke of Connaught to lay the foundation stone in 1890. Then Chater and Bell-Irving founded the Hongkong Land Co. to develop the newly emerging central sites. Chater had a lock on most of them because the Sassoons had passed them on when leaving the colony in 1902.<sup>419</sup> Chater moved the prestigious Hong Kong Club, which he now chaired, to the new square, on which he arranged to place statues of royalty.

While the vision was Chater's, the building of Hong Kong's new central business district could not have succeeded with the support of his friends. Li Sing and his brothers and sons had stakes in almost a dozen key marine lots, just next to those owned by the Sassoons. All were good friends in business, now joined through Chater to Jardine's Bell-Irving. These sites became—by 1905—the heart of central Hong Kong. Chater and his friends created most of the land from the tram line to the shore, where some of the most expensive real estate in the world is now found.

Chater then secured control of Kowloon's waterfront. In 1860, Britain had acquired the tip of the peninsula across the harbor up to Boundary Street, ceded in perpetuity. Kowloon was rugged, with small hills, rice fields, and sandy beaches. The population was 5,105 persons, in perhaps ten mostly Hakka villages. By 1871 there were 81 stone quarries in Kowloon; the Taiping Rebellion then spurred entire families, now Cantonese (Punti) to move in.<sup>420</sup> No colonial administrators or magistrates were based there in the nineteenth century; police appeared only in

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<sup>419</sup> It's not clear why the family quit Hong Kong around 1902. Several of David Sassoon's sons of Bombay were moving to England and joining the British aristocracy through friendships with royalty, lavish hospitality, support of horse-racing and politics. Lack of support for Sassoon's widow, running the business in Bombay, might explain the departure. One wing of the eastern enterprise had already moved to Shanghai—that of E.D. Sassoon with his trading company and later bank, which would fall to Sir Victor Sassoon, and then to war and communism.

<sup>420</sup> Hayes, 'Old British Kowloon.'

emergencies. Ownership of vital Kowloon marine lots was initially split among Sassoon, Mody, and Chater, but by 1887 were assigned by Chater to Hongkong and Kowloon Wharf and Godown Co., his first venture with Jardine's. Reclamation works expanded as more land was needed for the Kowloon Canton Railway, to open in 1910. Chater was a first buyer of land in Kowloon, and gave land and money to build St. Andrew's Church. (He had already, in 1899, secured the Hong Kong Island site for his famed Marble Hall.)<sup>421</sup> Mody, too, 'had special faith in the development of Kowloon at a time when it was almost an empty area, and invested heavily in real estate there,'<sup>422</sup> seen in the name, Mody Road.

### **A University is born**

Mody's greatest gift was his funding of the University of Hong Kong. Since the 1880s, Hong Kong had become home not only to traders of all kinds, but also to what might be called intellectuals. Men such as Patrick Manson and James Cantlie were socially engaged professional men. Dr. Philip Ayres, friend of Chater, was exceptional for his regular visits to the plague warrens of Taipingshan. With Dr. Gregory Jordan and Ho Kai, the Hong Kong College of Medicine was founded in 1887. New life was coming to drama, choral, literary, sketching, and debating societies, including the Odd Volumes Society, formed in 1893 to develop 'a community of men striving for the truth.' The idea of a university took off in 1908, with the arrival of Frederick Lugard as Governor. He had a brutalist reputation from his Nigeria days to live down, and an erudite wife, Flora Shaw.

The list of early donors to the university is a map of the burgeoning elite. Here are the Chinese of the Nam Pak Hong, active in the Tung Wah Hospital and the Po Leung Kuk charities, such as Lau Chu-pak and Ng Li Hing, Sin Tak Fan, Chan Kai Ming, and Tso Seen-wan; they not only gave money but time to attend HKU Council meetings and fund scholarships. The Anatomical Laboratory was backed entirely by Chinese guilds, trading in opium, gold leaf, salt fish, pigs, hemp, cattle, rice, and pawn-brokering.

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<sup>421</sup> Marble Hall is described in purple prose in the *Hongkong Telegraph*, 22 December 1904; See also, Chater, *Marble Hall Hong Kong—A Pictorial Review*.

<sup>422</sup> Bard, *Traders of Hong Kong*, p87.

Alongside the wealthy Chinese and Eurasians stood Southeast Asians: Tseng Shek Chau of Saigon, Eu Tong Sen of the Straits Settlements, and Loke Yew and Cheung Pat Sze of Penang. Another major chunk of money came from the viceroy of Canton. The only British trading family to make significant pledges was John Swire and Co. The university's historian, Peter Cunich, believes that British merchant opposition to the project stemmed mainly from the (indeed justified) fear of creating a class of educated, brighter, and cheaper Chinese who would supplant many Europeans at work.<sup>423</sup> Eventually, donations came from the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank and Jardine's, but the next-biggest corporate donors were the (Jewish) Sassoons and (the Armenian and Parsi) Chater and Mody Co. Passage of the University Bill through the Legislative Council was held up with its provision for 'one Parsee and one Mahommedan representative' on the court. Opposition to the wording was a sign of how an active community was far ahead of its blinkered bureaucrats. 'Representatives of Asiatic races other than Chinese' wouldn't work either, as that could exclude Jews. At last, the governor was able to nominate 'two additional members' without mentioning race or religion. Chater was honorary treasurer, and Robert Ho Tung was fretting as usual about whether his name would be prominent enough. (Mody died on 16 June 1911, before the university opened on 11 March 1912; his funeral was attended by the governor and stock exchange and government offices were closed.)

Thereupon the university began to build a small, tightly knit campus life; all students lived on campus unless exempted for religious observances such as Ramadan. The student body included Portuguese names as well as Parsi, Muslim, and Eurasian. The largest group of non-Hong Kong students came from Malaya, but then as now, openness on race far pre-dated equality of gender: no women were admitted for the first decade. The first women students, in 1921, were Rachel Irving, daughter of the director of education, and Irene Ho Tung, daughter of the biggest Eurasian donor. The university struggled constantly with finances but was saved by Sir Robert Ho Tung and a stunning interest-free loan worth \$500,000 from Penang's tin magnate, Loke Yew.<sup>424</sup> Chinese donors were especially keen on an arts faculty,

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<sup>423</sup> Swire's engagement could be traced to its Quaker roots, but also to its desperate need for a better image after a Swire's employee allegedly kicked to death an elderly Chinese passenger on one of their coastal ferries. Cunich, *A History of the University of Hong Kong*, pp119–20.

<sup>424</sup> Donors included H.M.H. Nemazee, a dealer in Persian opium. Cunich, *A History of the University of Hong Kong*, p226, p 497n100. The Hongkong and Shanghai Bank in Shanghai advised 'Great Caution' but noted he was 'sole proprietor of M. Nemazee of Princes Bldg

pressing to go beyond medicine and engineering into ethics, law and philosophy.<sup>425</sup> Fung Ping-fan said his father, Fung Ping Shan, a key donor, saw the university as a 'lighthouse of the Far East' and 'the centre of learning in South China.'<sup>426</sup> Graduates became part of a bilingual, bicultural elite from China to Southeast Asia.

Above all stood Chater—British and Indian and Armenian, yet still sometimes sniffed at by people who didn't know better, such as callow young Charles Hardinge Drage, aide-de-camp to Governor Sir Reginald Stubbs (and future spy). His diary entry for 1 December 1923 'with a busy day ahead of me. With H.E. to lunch with Sir Paul Chater, a coloured magnate and the multi-millionaire of Hong Kong...'<sup>427</sup> Yet Chater was 'British,' said member of Parliament T.P. O'Connor: 'Sir Paul Chater is perhaps the least known and at the same time one of the most powerful and, what is more important, one of the most beneficent figures in the Empire ... He is at the head of everything there; no enterprise gets on without asking his assistance... He is the father of everything in Hong Kong, by long residence and service. He is the oldest British settler...'<sup>428</sup>

Whatever identity he chose or was given, it was Chater who brought Hong Kong into modern times. Governor Sir Cecil Clementi spoke emotionally on 27 May 1926, the day after Chater's death: 'When, as a young cadet, I first landed in Hong Kong, I stepped ashore upon ground which under a most successful scheme, devised by Sir Paul, had been newly reclaimed from the sea ... [his] sage advice ... wonderful foresight ... breadth of vision ... remarkable financial skill ... unbounded enthusiasm ... above all he has bequeathed to Hong Kong development schemes of great magnitude ... which have changed the face of the land, which have vastly increased the prosperity of the colony, and which will inure to the comfort and contentment of present and future generations of its inhabitants.'

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Hongkong, who is favourably reported on by our office there. He is possessed of large means and is considered good for his engagements.' HSBC Archives (London), Bankers Opinions, HQ SHG II 688. Jardine Archives saw him as a respectable tea trader with an avaricious market in Persia. JMA: J1/12/4, 26 April 1934.

<sup>425</sup> See HKU Archives, Minutes HKU Council, 1911–1941, 17th meeting, 6 September 1912; 23rd meeting, 30 May 1913; 25th meeting, 15 January 1914.

<sup>426</sup> Cunich, *A History of the University of Hong Kong*, p317.

<sup>427</sup> Drage, Commander C.H. *The 1914–1933 Diaries* (mss), in Wise, *Travellers' Tales*, p194.

<sup>428</sup> Seth, *Armenians in India*, cites *The Sunday Times*, September [no date] 1924, pp553–54.

Another example of the cosmopolitan impulse at work can be found in the hostel opened to give single 'white' European women visiting the colony somewhere respectable to stay. The Helena May Institute for Women and Children was born thanks to deep Jewish (Kadoorie), Chinese (Lau Chu-pak) and Eurasian pockets. The Eurasian was Ho Kom Tong, who shared a mother with Sir Robert Ho Tung and had a Chinese father but was buried in the Eurasian cemetery. Ho Kam-tong had at least 12 concubines and more mistresses; his wife, Edith Sze Lin-Yut, was also Eurasian, daughter of a Jardine's tea merchant in Shanghai and a part-Chinese, part-Parsi mother. One of Ho Kom Tong's favourite things was to sponsor—and then take leading roles in—Chinese theatre performances. He also converted a sugar blockade-busting run to Cebu into a charitable enterprise when, having sold the sugar at huge profit to troops busy fending off the Boxer Rebellion, he carried more than three thousand refugees out of Beijing.<sup>429</sup>

Ellis Kadoorie was the youngest of three brothers to arrive in Hong Kong in the 1880s, offspring of the philanthropist patriarch Silas Kadoorie of Baghdad with his Sassoon-related wife, Reemah Yacoob Elaazar Yacob. His eldest brother, Moshi, was followed by Eleazar Silas or Elly Kadoorie, who had joined E.D. Sassoon and Co. in Bombay and moved with his job to Hong Kong.<sup>430</sup> Elly became best known, with sons Lawrence and Horace, for philanthropic capitalism. Elly got ahead by getting sacked when working for E.D. Sassoon and Co. (he had broken open the stores of disinfectant to combat plague). Moshi gave him \$500 and the result was the soon-dominant Benjamin, Kelly and Potts brokerage. Elly Kelly took a stake in the Hongkong Hotel—founded by Chater, Ho Tung, and the Parsi Dadabhoy Rustanjee. When China Light and Power Co., founded in 1901, needed more funding, it came from Ho Tung and the Kadoories. From this came generations of wealth production; when its first Peninsula Hotel opened in 1928 in Kowloon it was seen as too far away across the harbor, until Sir Robert and Lady Margaret Ho Tung celebrated their golden wedding anniversary there in 1931, making it achingly cool.

Elly Kadoorie moved to Shanghai in 1911, encouraged by the Hongkong Bank to help save a rash of flailing rubber companies. A neighbour said Elly was a humble man. 'He would just come out and just put his hand on our head and talk to us

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<sup>429</sup> Tse, *Ho Kom-Tong*, pp173–74.

<sup>430</sup> Elly and Ellis used Kelly as a surname for some years before reverting to Kadoorie.

quietly and gently, and he never pushed himself to the forefront, he was always taking a back-seat, and people would come and kiss his hand, but that was a mark of respect . . .'<sup>431</sup> The Jardine archive gives another impression with its anti-Semitic tone, resentful of Kadoorie success and dreading the arrival of a Kadoorie on any of their company boards for the investigative determination that will follow.<sup>432</sup> Meanwhile, in 1897, Elly married Laura Mocatta, an adventurous traveller, painter, and diarist from a prestigious family of Portugal that had fled the Inquisition to Amsterdam in the late fifteenth century and become bullion dealers for the Bank of England in the seventeenth century. Their first son, Lawrence, was born in 1899; Victor, born in 1900, died in infancy; Horace was born in 1902. The Kadoories took on the Sassoons' mantle as leaders of the Jewish community, for alongside the cosmopolitan was also always the communal; in 1905, they endowed the adjacent Jewish Club and in 1909, its expansion. The traveller Israel Cohen, visiting in 1925, thought it 'the finest Jewish institute of the kind I have ever seen.'<sup>433</sup> Kadoorie money has backed the Synagogue ever since, in a strong pledge of communal support.

The Kadoories, however, saw their world as far larger than that of the synagogue alone. After their mother, Laura, died when their home in Shanghai burned down in 1919, Lawrence and Horace went through formative years in London—where their home was host to King Faisal I of Arabia and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia—before returning to the open-minded city of Shanghai. That world demanded education, health, and other help which the Kadoories gave irrespective of religion and, surprisingly, gender. Kadoorie charities are still legendary, from The Helena May in Hong Kong, to schools for girls in Baghdad or Indian boys in Hong Kong, to agricultural training for Ghurka soldiers to pig-rearing research and the grant of farms to Chinese refugees reaching Hong Kong. 'We Kadoories know everything about pigs but the taste,' said Lawrence.<sup>434</sup> They backed the Hebrew University in Jerusalem but also non-Jewish schools and hospitals in Iraq, Iran, Syria, France,

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<sup>431</sup> Manook Nissim, interviewed by Amelia Allsop for the Hong Kong Heritage Project, 16 April 2010, in San Francisco.

<sup>432</sup> JMA J1/2/31, 27 April 1933; J1/3/5, 7 November 1935; J1/3/5, 28 and 14 November 1935, Letter No. 1753; J1/24/54, 31 October 1935, Letter No. 1521; 22 November 1935, Letter No. 1529: 'The Kadoories will not be 'handled,' and they are as relentless as they are patient. They try persuasion first, tortuousness second, and if necessary weight of shares third. They so often suggest steps which appear foolhardy, and are foolhardy, and yet they retain their wealth and add to it. But then they prefer gold to goodness, desire to duty, and perhaps falsehood to fact. Yours very truly, W.J. Keswick.' Also: J4/2/2, 4 and 23 February, 30 March, and 6 April 1937.

<sup>433</sup> Cohen, *Journal of a Jewish Traveller*, pp116–17.

<sup>434</sup> In Debra Weinter, 'Rothschild of the East,' *Hadassah*, March 1983, pp36, 54–55.

Turkey, India, Britain, and China; they also endowed a synagogue in Portugal. In 1901, Ellis founded the Ellis Kadoorie Chinese Schools Society with his good friend Lau Chu Pak, to build schools in Shanghai, Canton, and Hong Kong.<sup>435</sup> Lawrence became the colony's first baron. His brother Horace led the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association as it helped villagers get their produce to markets and underpinned agricultural innovation.<sup>436</sup> The Kadoories shared the vision of many in-between people—that Hong Kong was home. Speaking in 1986, Lord Lawrence told me: 'Hong Kong is far less class- or race-dominated than it used to be... The Chinese have got to know those families which have been here a long time. And I think there is a feeling of 'better the one you know than the one you don't.' Perhaps we're more trusted... In the old days for the Europeans, class was just a matter of how far up the Peak you lived. But that attitude has almost disappeared.'<sup>437</sup> In 1997, his son Michael said: 'We will not run off in different directions. We are Hong Kong people.'<sup>438</sup>

So too were Hong Kong's biggest landowners and ratepayers – all now Chinese, Eurasian, Jewish, Armenian, and Parsi. Some had fled China a generation earlier for Australia or beyond, and chose to return not to China but to Hong Kong. Eighteen-year-old Gock Lock, for example, left Guangdong for the Australian goldfields but instead found compatriots working the nursery gardens from which he saved enough to branch out on his own, even going to Fiji to buy bananas. In 1897 he opened his own store and called it Wing On (or 'Perpetual Peace'). Gock Lock was the tough entrepreneur, his brother Gock Chin the calm administrator; both converted to Christianity.<sup>439</sup> They opened their still prominent Wing On Department Store in Hong Kong in 1907. Their fellow fruit-and-vegetable merchant Ma Ying-piu had helped the young brothers in the Fiji banana

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<sup>435</sup> See *Hongkong Telegraph*, 4 March 1913, for a report on when the governor opened a school extension in a stunning Chinese yamen-style building.

<sup>436</sup> Denis Bray, a young district officer in Tai Po, lacked the budget for the cement needed to link a vast spread of villages, then met Horace Kadoorie, who gave all the cement at once. Holdsworth, *Foreign Devils*, pp46–47.

<sup>437</sup> England, 'Hong Kong Taipans—Lord Kadoorie.'

<sup>438</sup> *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 27–28 June 1997, p1. During the 2019 political crisis, Sir Michael noted that over 140 years, Hong Kong 'gave us the opportunity to prosper... [and] instilled the Lion Rock Spirit in me and my children—that energy, ambition, drive and creativity has powered our prosperity and helped us to face many challenges. My faith in our home is undiminished. Now is a time for everybody to unite and be unswerving in our commitment not just to Hong Kong's special place, but to a peaceful solution to our current crisis for this generation, the next, and beyond.' *South China Morning Post*, full-page advertisement, 28 August 2019.

<sup>439</sup> Wing On official 100th anniversary celebration materials, 2007, in newspaper advertisements and the Wing On anniversary book, *A Modest Beginning*.

breakthrough. Ma's founding in Hong Kong of the Sincere Department Store in 1900 had inspired the Kwoks to follow suit. Ma, too, was Christian, and his innovations included the hiring of women shop assistants, and the novelty of fixed prices and receipts. His wife, Fok Hing-tong, daughter of the vicar of St. Stephen's Anglican Church, co-founded the Young Women's Christian Association in Hong Kong in 1918. Alongside birthing thirteen children she backed the Anti-Mui Tsai Movement, a statement for both feminism and worker's rights.<sup>440</sup> Members of this crowd, just as Belilios, Chater, Mody, Kadoorie, and Ruttonjee before them, were now stayers. Hong Kong was their home.

So too were all variations of poorer Westerners, Russian Jews, Sindhiworkies, Sikhs, Muslims and Portuguese. Marjorie Matheson's stockbroker father went bust, so she became a housekeeper at the Repulse Bay Hotel, poor but respectable. Rosie Weill arrived from Harbin, with her family's Sennet Frères jewelry business; daughter Sophie wed the failed tap dancer-turned-impresario Harry Odell, born in Cairo in 1896 as Abadovsky, whose Empire Theatre revolutionized the entertainment scene. Aaron and Amelia Landau, new from Constantinople in 1916, set up Landau's and Jimmy's Kitchen restaurants. DGS teacher Irma Last, came from Czernowitz, a place variously found in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia.<sup>441</sup> George Smirnoff of Vladivostok became an architect and renowned watercolorist.<sup>442</sup> George and Fanny Green arrived from Romania in 1904 and ran The Criterion pub; their dynasty owns Arnholds trading company and lives in lavish surrounds on the Peak.<sup>443</sup> Many more, of course managed merely to survive until the next rupture. Being white and poor was 'letting the side down' and injurious to notions of British prestige.<sup>444</sup>

Sikhs were imported by the British as watchmen (preferred for ammunition duty as they did not smoke) back in the 1860s. Through their long trading history linking Greek, Persian, Arab, and Sindhi mariners, Sikhs brought another global dimension to Hong Kong; their diaspora reaches from Malaya, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia to Canada. Hindus and Sikhs abroad often shared places of worship. Muslim

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<sup>440</sup> Fourth son Ma Man-fai became a rights advocate and pioneer in the democracy movement.

<sup>441</sup> Thanks to Howard Elias, Hong Kong Jewish Historical Society, 15 October 2018.

<sup>442</sup> Stuart Heaver, 'How the White Russian Refugee Crisis Unfolded in China a Century Ago, and the Lucky Ones Who Made It...', *South China Morning Post*, 7 May 2017.

<sup>443</sup> England, *Arnholds*, and *Empire's Children*.

<sup>444</sup> Ganachari, 'White Man's Embarrassment.'

Punjabis also came, many living around the Shelley Street Mosque first built by Shaikh Moosdeen in the mid-1800s. Muslims intermingled with Chinese families through their wives. The families of Moosdeen, Arab, Rumjahn, Curreem, and Sadick all intermarried with Chinese.<sup>445</sup> Chinese Muslims came too, fleeing repression in the Panthay Rebellion (1856–73), a separatist movement of Hui Muslims in Yunnan. As so often, Hong Kong was haven. Here too was the technicolour world of the Sindhis, offshoot of a worldwide network of ‘Sindhiworkies,’ typically trading in lavish fabrics, lacquer work, embroidery, and brass items. As with the Sikhs and Punjabis, Sindhiworkies were forced abroad due to the British annexation of Sind in 1843. A first destination was Egypt, but thanks to the new Suez and Panama canals and steam shipping, the demand for ‘curios’ and oriental textiles only grew through that high noon of imperialism.<sup>446</sup> Sindhis spread far from home into Africa and East Asia, stopping along the way at Colombo, Calcutta, Singapore, Penang—and Hong Kong. The pioneers included Pohoomull, Chellaram, Chotirmall, and Wassiamall Assomull, descendants of whom remain in Hong Kong today.

Another of Hong Kong’s communities had meanwhile been making Kowloon their own—the Portuguese, a good example of both cosmopolitan sensibility and a coexisting communalism.<sup>447</sup> Of Yaumatei’s 12 farm lots, mostly on the seafront, five went to ‘foreigners’ – Marcos do Rozario and Delfino Noronha, R. A. do Rozario, Fredric Sander, Henry Charles Caldwell, and J.M. d’Almada e Castro. Portuguese also took hold of the Garden Lots available.<sup>448</sup> They were joined in Kowloon by the

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<sup>445</sup> In 1934, well-known tennis player H.D. Rumjahn married Mary Leung of Canton; by the 1950s a Rumjahn married Mary Teresa Xavier at St. Margaret’s Church. From early lives in trade or government jobs, some such as Ahmet Ramjahn became ‘broker’ and ‘Gentleman,’ their lives recorded in the newspapers and remarked upon with respect. He was survived by five sons, renowned sports and business figures. When Ebrahim Sadick married Miss Firdos Effiandie Rumjahn, the bridesmaids were Norah and Eillen Leonard (from a prominent Eurasian family), the page was Master Sydney Chow, and the flower girl was Thelma Gonzales, covering the Chinese and Portuguese communities, too. Rumjahns became champions in tennis, football, and lawn bowls; they worked for Deacon’s, ran the Jockey Club sweep, bought chunks of land in Kennedy Town in the early 1910s, and established industries (such as the Hong Kong Macao Mosaic Tile Factory of Usuf Rumjahn, who died in 1947).

<sup>446</sup> Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants*, p120.

<sup>447</sup> ‘Everyday pleasures took place in a satisfying and simple middle-class milieu. Club life with cards and mahjong, family gatherings ... jaunts to Macao, weekly outings to the beaches in summer, food and gossip, movies and sports. These were an integral part of the Filho Macao life.’ Silva, *Todo o Nosso Passado*, p31.

<sup>448</sup> Garden Lot holders included Daniel Caldwell, Joao L. Britto, V.I. Remedios, V.S.T. Engholm (female), J.D. Humphreys, C.F.A. Sangster, A.G. Morris, N.B. Dennys, H.J. Holmes, J.M.A. da Silva, A.F. Alves, C.F. Degenauer, Dorabjee Nowrojee, Andrew Miller, W.H. Brereton, George

Kadoories, who knew J.P. Braga who had joined the China Light & Power board the same year Elly Kadoorie had (and was related by marriage to Noronha). They built what became the Kadoorie Hill district.<sup>449</sup> The naming of Braga Circuit attests to his influence.<sup>450</sup> Braga had been editor of the *Hongkong Telegraph* from 1902 until 1911 and later became the first Portuguese member of the Legislative Council. Braga helped Sir Robert Ho Tung to set up a New Territories Agricultural Association. Portuguese were also first settlers in another garden suburb, Kowloon Tong,<sup>451</sup> and in the district built by Francisco Soares, a future consul to the Portuguese. Gardening and horticultural shows brought diverse peoples together across the harbour (including Chater and Mody). Parsi hotelier Dorabjee Nowrojee's glorious garden also spawned the Star Ferry when he lent his private boat to family and friends to visit; demand grew so that it became commercial in 1880; four boats in 1890 averaged 147 crossings a day. J. J. dos Remedios and Mathias Soares were avid gardeners. Meanwhile, Noronha and Rozario's garden, 'Delmar', drew in friends Soares and Charles Ford, superintendent of the Botanical and Forestry Department, to found Hong Kong's Horticultural Society.<sup>452</sup>

Differing places on a spectrum from communal to cosmopolitan can also be seen in clubs, some with enforced boundaries, others with fewer than thought. Contrary to public assumptions, The Hong Kong Club had Jewish members from the 1880s.<sup>453</sup> Cross-cultural play was established at the racecourse, on cricket grounds or football

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McBain, J.B. Coughtrie, T.D.C. and J. Parker, M. d'Azevedo, E.R. Holmes, M.J.D. Stephens, Mohamed Fakeera, E.G. Humphreys, F.X. da Chagas, J.A. dos Remedios, J.W. Torrey, F.V. Ribeiro, A.R. Madar, H.L. Noronha, Frederick Rapp, B.A. Erane, James Craig, F. d'A. Gomes, H. L. Dennys, I.P. Madar, James Henry Cox. Jarrett, *Old Hong Kong / by Colonial*, p605.

<sup>449</sup> Jardine's managers disliked the enterprise: 'This Company gives me a pain. Their method is to acquire cheap land...sell the balance in small lots at very high rates...pose as public benefactors. Ho Tung, you know Braga is his running dog, is I think mixed up in it.' JMA, J1/24/48, 2 June 1932, from Paterson to Beith, p3.

<sup>450</sup> With Lo Man Kam (son-in-law of Sir Robert Ho Tung), Braga urged in vain an end to government censorship in 1936. His son José Maria 'Jack' Braga was a prolific writer on the Portuguese, his papers now held at the Australian National University. See Holdsworth and Munn, *Dictionary of Hong Kong Biography*, pp45–46.

<sup>451</sup> Originated by Constantinople-born insurance man, Montague Ede. St. Joseph's School opened nearby in 1924 drawing in more Portuguese; St. Teresa's Church followed. Hayes, Smith, Werle, et al., 'Programme Notes,' pp221ff.

<sup>452</sup> Braga, *The Portuguese in Hongkong and China*, pp226–28.

<sup>453</sup> D.E. Sassoon joined in 1886, M.S. Sassoon in 1894, S.A. Levy in 1894, A.J. Raymond in 1898, D.M. Nissim in 1899, C.S. Gubbay in 1905, E.S. Kadoorie in 1905, Dr. R.A. Belilios in 1907, H.H. Solomon in 1910, and A.S. Gubbay in 1911. Resident members on 1 February 1924, included: A.H. Compton, 1915; E.M. Raymond, 1921; J.S. Gubbay, 1922. The 1911 Membership included the Armenian Dr. G.P. Jordan, 1886; Dr. P.J. Kelly, 1910; and the Parsi, Sir H.N. Mody, Kt, 1910. See also England, *Kindred Spirits*.

pitches. Cricket, rifle shooting, football, golf, lawn bowls, alley bowls, racquets, hockey, lawn tennis—all were on offer. The Parsi community initiated their own Parsee Cricket Club in 1897 before Mody opened the Kowloon Cricket Club in January 1908. By the 1930s, KCC membership was almost entirely Eurasian.<sup>454</sup> The Kowloon India Tennis Club, formed in 1907, was also used by the Indian Muslim Society (established in 1924). Eurasians went to the Diocesan schools (DBS and DGS) or St. Paul's, and played at the KCC; those identifying as Portuguese would attend Maryknoll and La Salle colleges, play at Club de Recreio, and worship at St. Teresa, St. Joseph, and Rosary churches. 'Chinese' Eurasians had Ho Tung's Chinese Club.

City Hall had initially allowed only limited access to non-elite and non-white groups, but this didn't last. Men joined the Hongkong Volunteer Regiment in 1862 (and its revived version from 1878). Masters of the mercantile marine had the Phoenix Club, born in 1907 out of the Hong Kong Bowling Club, founded in 1898. Club Germania was founded in 1859, The Nippon Club in 1903.

Interestingly, the goal of the international YMCA was to attain a 'higher standard of morality... amongst the Europeans and thus remove one of the great hindrances to the progress of Christianity among the Chinese.'<sup>455</sup> As McPherson saw it, 'Our membership is largely made up of what might be termed the middle classes. We have to a large extent left out the soldiers and sailors, while bank clerks, assistants in the large shipping firms and government officials, who think themselves the highest grade of society, have left us out... which we cannot afford to let go without the greatest effort.'<sup>456</sup> The Victoria Recreation Club saw itself as cosmopolitan, meaning, it seems, that membership was open, mixed, and cheerfully unpretentious. It did not mean inclusion of Chinese members unless they carried foreign passports, until rules changed in 1964. Its roots lay in the Regatta Club of Canton (birthed back in 1832); a look at its 1892 membership lists shows that out of 403 members, there were at least 46 Portuguese, 23 Jews, four Parsis, two Armenians, and a dozen Indians. Many

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<sup>454</sup> The 1935–36 cricket team included George Souza, Tinker Lee, Francis Zimmermann, Bill Hong Sling, Ozorio, Hung, Gosano, and Fincher. By 1941: Anderson, Lay, Mackay, Lee, Lloyd, Broadbridge, Fincher, Zimmermann. Ezra Abraham was club president from 1945 to 1954. A tennis star was Enid Lo (later Mrs. E. Litton, mother of Henry). In 1932 the Hong Kong vs. Shanghai tennis team included M.W. and M.K. Lo. See Hall, *150 Years of Cricket*.

<sup>455</sup> McPherson, 'J. L. McPherson,' p41.

<sup>456</sup> Annual Report of the Foreign Secretary, 1909–10 (New York: Foreign Dept. International Committee of YMCAs). Cited in McPherson, 'J. L. McPherson,' n22.

more will have been of mixed origins.<sup>457</sup> Club Lusitano has been serving the Portuguese community since 1866, later joined by Club de Recreio and the VRC.<sup>458</sup>

Yet clubs divided as much as they brought together; many of mixed race have stories of exclusion based on notions of race or class.<sup>459</sup>

### **Borders, grey zones, prejudice and passports**

Therein lay the hitch, as a specifically nationalist republican revolution convulsed China in 1911. Although Sun Yat-sen would later praise his education under British rule, his uprising was for the Chinese. It was not a time for people who were half or three-quarters Chinese, or who felt a different Chineseness, informed by time abroad or in bed with the Other. Frank Dikotter found ‘the biological category of ‘race’ and the administrative category of ‘population’ were heralded by modernizing elites as objects worthy of systematic investigation.’ A slogan arose: ‘To strengthen the country, one first has to strengthen the race; to strengthen the race, one first has to improve sex education.’<sup>460</sup> Assertions of Chinese racial pride made it more difficult to be different. One reformer, Tang Caichang, thought amalgamation of races was best, using the intelligence and strength of mixed-race people in Hong Kong to prove his point. But more commonly, Hong Kongers were looked down on by China’s new nationalists precisely for their hybridity, with women’s loss of chastity related directly to Hong Kong being colonized.<sup>461</sup>

World War One introduced new notions of the nation state and less porous borders as old umbrella-type empires collapsed, and colonial governments faced off nationalist revolutionaries. Early twentieth century China anti-Manchu sentiment merged with Social Darwinism to spur scholars such as Wang Jingwei to believe a state comprising one single race was far superior to one comprising a mixture of

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<sup>457</sup> Names ranged from Botelho and Belilios to Castro, Chater, Gubbay, Joseph, Kew, Levy, Lopez, Madar, Manuk, Nowrojee, Remedios, Sassoon, Sherazee, Stopani, and Wodehouse. Jardine Matheson Archives, JMA-HK and CLUBS JM L6/7.

<sup>458</sup> See *Club Lusitano, 150 Years of History, 1866–2016*.

<sup>459</sup> Dawn Leonard recalls: ‘I know for a fact that my aunt Mabel, who was married to a Belgian banker, Uncle Pierre, was definitely refused entry to a club because she was Eurasian, and she was flatly denied the option to adopt a child when they couldn’t have their own, on the same grounds.’ Correspondence with the author.

<sup>460</sup> Dikotter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity*, pp102, 109.

<sup>461</sup> Lu Dangling, closely linked to the KMT, wrote: ‘The most unseemly sight one sees on the street is a Chinese woman walking with a westerner...’ In Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, pp114–18.

different peoples. From here it was an easy step for China's Nationalists to develop racist ideologies and practices.<sup>462</sup>

Attorney General Sir Challoner Grenville Alabaster warned of race trauma to come, supposing the lack of laws against miscegenation was because 'until as recently as 1911 the Eurasian problem did not exist...'<sup>463</sup> To him, Eurasians were Portuguese, Chinese, or British: 'The grouping would depend on many things, the least of which would be the quantum of blood admixture. A man with such a name as Remedios, Xavier, or Silva, who was a Roman Catholic, educated at St Joseph's College, with relatives in official positions in the neighbouring Portuguese colony of Macao, and who was a member of the Portuguese staff of a British firm, besides being a member of the Club Lusitano, would never be regarded as Chinese, even though he was Oriental in feature and had only a fraction of European blood in his veins. Again, one would have no difficulty in giving a Chinese classification to a half-caste, even though his father were English, who wore Chinese clothes and a queue, who passed under the name of Wong or Chang, who had married according to Chinese custom a 'Kit Fat' (wife) and three concubines, and who after some years' business training in the compradore department of a foreign firm was trading on his own account under a Chinese 'hong' name, besides being a member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. At the same time a Eurasian with an English surname who dressed as a European and lived as such, both in business and in his home life, would not be regarded legally as a Chinese, although his parentage might affect him socially.'<sup>464</sup>

1911 had 'gone far to bridge the pre-existing gap between the Chinese and British Eurasian... [with] the awakening in the pure Chinese of a spirit of nationality which is resulting gradually in forming in their minds the idea that the Eurasian Chinese should no longer be classed as Chinese, or at any rate as the leader of the Chinese community and the exponents to the British of Chinese thought and sentiment.' So 'the race problem has been brought into existence,' requiring legislation in a 'broad and sympathetic spirit.' But, 'it will not be easy—to give an imaginary case—to classify Major Long of Eton, Corpus and the Rifle Brigade, and his father, Mr Leung,

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<sup>462</sup> Dikotter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity* and *The Discourse of Race*. The existence of many non-Chinese in late Qing China was resolved by the Communist Party's idea that assimilating border peoples freed them from class oppression. Wade in Evans, *Where China meets Southeast Asia*, p34.

<sup>463</sup> Alabaster, 'Some Observations,' p247.

<sup>464</sup> Alabaster, 'Some Observations,' pp247–48.

the chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and ex-representative of the Chinese community on the Legislative Council.<sup>465</sup>

The British of Hong Kong were themselves conflicted, often genuinely loving their local partners (in life or business) one minute, then feeling obliged to disown them the next. Though not expressly forbidden, intermarriage was discouraged; one risked losing free accommodation, contract renewal, and promotion.<sup>466</sup> Governor May, husband to the Helena who enjoyed Jewish, Eurasian and Chinese funding of her Institute, believed that any Chinese or Eurasian women willing to marry Europeans was bound to be of a low class; she wouldn't consider it otherwise. There was also the ever-present fear—apparently nonexistent if the spouse was non-Chinese—of influence by the wife's relatives. Only by the 1930s had some of these strictures begun to be relaxed.<sup>467</sup> When May tried to ban Ho Tung's children from attending Peak School, he was firmly quashed.<sup>468</sup> Yet the Portuguese who kept banks and business running were routinely underpaid. Said a Jardine's manager: 'I rather think funeral expenses are a charge on the Firm, Europeans a first class affair, Portuguese second.' Yet they were respected too: 'here in Hong Kong [they are] as good as I remember it to be bad at Shanghai... But they all commit matrimony at an early age and they all have enormous families... sickness or any form of bad luck puts them down the drain ... we have to tread delicately.'<sup>469</sup>

At the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, an earlier tolerance, or neglect, gave way to racist exclusion in the inter-war years. Chief manager in the 1930s, Vandaleur Grayburn, insisted that at this 'British' bank his staff must marry 'British' wives. His name has been enshrined in a halo since his genuinely heroic death from Japanese torture for funneling money to prisoners during World War Two. But his views were startling: *These youngsters... presumably had decent relatives & upbringing, yet one falls for a Russian Jewess of doubtful origin & the other for a half-caste Japanese... These young fools make me quite sick & it disgusts me to think they can so quickly forget their British*

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<sup>465</sup> Alabaster, 'Some Observations,' p248.

<sup>466</sup> The 1909 Crewe Circular, though not law in Hong Kong, said moral objections to concubinage were 'self-evident.' No administrator could tolerate such behaviour 'without lowering himself in the eyes of the natives, and diminishing his authority to an extent which will seriously impair his capacity for useful work.' Confidential Circular, 11 January 1909, CO854/168.

<sup>467</sup> CO129/392, no. 31578, 7 October 1912. See O'Sullivan, 'George Hennessy.'

<sup>468</sup> CO129/409, no. 983, 8 January 1914. When an extension was sought for the Eurasian cemetery it was granted instantly. CO129/411, no. 27973, 31 July 1914.

<sup>469</sup> JMA, J1/15/2, 23 January 1936; J1/9/4, 20 August 1936.

*standing & home upbringing... We do not want Russians, dagos & half-castes attached to our staff... I will not tolerate 'mixed' marriages with Russians or half-castes, and I look with disfavour on most marriages with non-British women.*<sup>470</sup>

More significant was the rise of the passport. The importance of this document as a tool of division cannot be underestimated. Through its small pages runs a story of nation state development that directly impinged on this floating world of multinational people coexisting in multicultural port cities. Throughout the twentieth century, Hong Kong's in-between people would feel its lash; as British and Chinese Nationality laws were tightened, identity was no longer a matter of choice of name and dress. It was a state-controlled whip of exclusion.

Sprawling, often cosmopolitan empires - the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, Tsarist—were after 1911 a mass of individual states in the process of becoming. Borders were needed to define themselves, ending a laissez-faire approach to national identity and freedom of movement. France, Britain, Germany, Italy and others passed laws requiring foreigners to carry identification documents. This trend for nationalist self-definition took off such that this 'extraordinary expansion of the capacity of states to control the migration of populations using documentary means... was, in fact, one of the central features of their development as states.'<sup>471</sup> Similarly threatening was the shift in status of 'British Protected Persons'. This had been a loosely defined category of people—such as Baghdadi Jews—including those who might have been of British origin but were not British subjects, in places where Britain exercised extraterritorial or capitulatory rule (such as Turkey and China). It was sometimes a short hop from BPP status to full British nationality—but this could no longer be assumed when the national mood everywhere became more intense.

### **Class conflict and racial exclusion**

Hong Kong's next decade opened with a mechanics' strike, the first in a string of victories for organized labour. The seamen followed in 1922, demanding equal rights to those of non-Chinese seamen. At first ignored, they went on strike with

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<sup>470</sup> HSBC Archives (London), HQ HSBC 0003-0001 and 0002, Grayburn Letters, 20 June 1936, 25 January and 20 November 1937, etc.

<sup>471</sup> Caplan and Torpey, *Documenting Individual Identity*, p270.

devastating effect in a port city. When strikers set off on foot for Canton they were shot at by British police and troops; after 52 days, the government had to cave in, relegalize the union, and agree a substantial pay hike. It was an eerie dress rehearsal for the more far-reaching strike and boycott in 1925. Local demands for pay, improved work conditions, and even democracy, combined with the ambitions of the left wing of the nationalist Kuomintang and of the fledgling Communist Party in Canton, creating a perfect storm for colonial rule. If viewed solely through a lens of anti-colonial struggle, these conflicts were clear harbingers of radical change, presumably with 'Chinese' on one side and 'British/Westerners' on the other. Examined through a lens of prosopography, however, the working classes achieved their peak revolt through the agency of mainland-based nationalists and communists while the Hong Kong class that eventually negotiated to maintain its power was British, Chinese and Eurasian. Class interests trumped those of racial difference.

Trouble began in Shanghai in May 1925 when Sikh police under British command in the International Settlement opened fire and killed at least nine Chinese demonstrators. By June, most of the students at Hong Kong's Queen's College had heeded the call to strike, as had cargo carriers, tram drivers and conductors, seamen, typesetters, and others. Later that month, during a heated public demonstration in Shameen—the foreigners' island off Canton—50 Chinese protesters were killed by the foreign troops based there (as they were in every treaty port around China); anti-British placards appeared in Hong Kong to rise up against the colonialists and their Chinese 'hunting dogs.' On 22 June, Stubbs declared a state of emergency. Soon, Hong Kong was a ghost town. Many thousands of Chinese left for Canton, banks tottered, the economy quickly deteriorated.

On whom could the colonial government rely? It needed its workers, but it needed the support of the local elite more, its rich Chinese and Eurasians, who were often directly anti-worker to maintain their own standing.

One was Shouson Chow, whose family—unusually—went back to the 1600s on the south side of Hong Kong Island. His father was a comprador based in Canton, and young Shouson, after starting at Central School, was selected by the Chinese

government in 1873 as part of a first batch of pupils to study in the USA.<sup>472</sup> Back in Hong Kong, he co-founded the Bank of East Asia and was director of many leading firms and charities. Chow was a rare combination of Hong Kong roots, Western education, and Chinese conservatism—he also, in a typical elite Hong Kong posture, despised any hint of ‘bolshevism’ such as seamen asking for a living wage, while being a keen philanthropist. At the same time he was a member of the League of Fellowship, which advocated good fellowship within the colony irrespective of race, class, or creed.

The second key man was Robert Kotewall, the son of a Parsi—Rustomjee Hormusjee Kotewall—and his Chinese woman, Cheang A Cheung. The elder Kotewall had been a cotton and yarn dealer for the great Parsi firm Tata and Co.<sup>473</sup> He brought up his family on Peel Street, Soho, and when he died in 1895, A Cheung was gifted property in her name and, in time-honored fashion, made sure her children got a good education. Robert Kotewall later admired his father’s willingness to flout convention ‘when in an environment such as ours, British prudery and Parsee bigotry were superimposed on Chinese conservatism.’<sup>474</sup> In a memoir, Robert described dressing, speaking, and in every way living as Chinese.<sup>475</sup> A government clerk, he joined the elite by running the Hong Kong Mercantile Company for the well-connected Eurasians Chan Kai-ming (manager of the Opium Farm), Lau Chupak, and Ho Fook.<sup>476</sup> Kotewall was invited onto the Legislative Council in 1923 to represent ‘the Chinese,’ a role he clearly treasured, despite or perhaps because he was not wholly Chinese himself.

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<sup>472</sup> Educated at Phillips Academy and Columbia University, Chow returned to be Chinese consul in Korea, managing director of the state-initiated China Merchants Steamship Navigation Co. (in 1903) and the Peking-Mukden Railway (in 1907), oft decorated by China’s imperial government.

<sup>473</sup> *The Chronicle & Directory*. From 1868 until 1897, the directories record H. R. Cotwal as a clerk at D. C. Tata and Co., but in 1875 the spelling changed to Cotwale, in 1877 to Cotewall, and the company name to Tata and Co. From 1880 to 1896 the listing is consistent as Cotewall, H.R., merchant, Tata & Co., Hollywood Rd.

<sup>474</sup> Cook, *Robert Kotewall*, pp10–11.

<sup>475</sup> He never went to Bombay or spoke Parsi-Gujarati. After tuition in Canton, he went to Queen’s College, then DBS. His first wife, childhood sweetheart Grace Hung, died in childbirth. Second wife, Edith, was from the established Eurasian Lowcocks.

<sup>476</sup> When Chan Kai Ming died in 1919, mourners were led by Sir and Lady Ho Tung, Sir Ellis Kadoorie, Sir Boshan Wei Yuk, the Honourable J.H. Kemp and Hon. Lau Chu Pak, M.K. and M.W. Lo, and Robert Kotewall. Also: Kew, da Silva, Ellis, Razack, Hall, Ismail, Rumjahn, Samuel Macumber Churn, Anderson, Moraes, and more. Wreaths came from the governor, the university, the Bank of East Asia, Dairy Farm, the Kadoories etc.

Both men wholeheartedly backed the British colonial government against the workers – both because they genuinely believed in Hong Kong as *sui generis*, and because of their own interests as beneficiaries of the existing hierarchy. The demands of the striking masses in 1925 sound today as profoundly radical – both to then British colonial rule and today’s Chinese communist rule. The strikers six demands were: freedom of speech, publication, assembly, and organization; universal suffrage for direct election to the legislature; legal equality with Europeans; labour protection laws including an eight-hour workday; rent control and provision of adequate housing; and the right of Chinese to reside anywhere in the colony.<sup>477</sup> The strike spread through schools, clubs, hospitals and threatened to bring about Hong Kong’s economic collapse.

Yet the local elite never wavered. Historian John Carroll concurs this active collaboration by Chow, Kotewall and other elite figures with the colonial government ‘was to protect their own class interests’ and enabled ‘the leaders of this bourgeoisie to prove themselves to the colonial government as loyal Hong Kong Chinese.’<sup>478</sup> The new, Chinese-speaking governor, Cecil Clementi, put Chow and Kotewall in charge.<sup>479</sup> Kotewall’s Bureau of Counter-Propaganda established the Kung Sheung Yat Po newspaper to counter strikers’ news; he advocated the creation of a strike-busting gang of ‘intimidators,’ called the Labour Protection Bureau. Posters warned that Canton’s adoption of outright Russian Bolshevik principles presaged ‘a reign of unspeakable terror...if assistance is not speedily given this poisonous tide of Bolshevism will steadily grow until it engulfs the whole of China beyond the hope of redemption...’<sup>480</sup> By October 1925 the government could relax but unrest continued for a year.

The government saw the importance of its ‘Loyal Chinese.’ As Governor Stubbs reported: ‘In the first panic, when the Chinese might have been likened to a herd of frightened sheep, they [Chow, Kotewall, et al] immediately came forward and shamed and compelled their fellow countrymen into at least a semblance of courage.

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<sup>477</sup> Neither China’s nationalists (KMT) nor communists (CCP) backed these ideas; Hong Kong had to wait 65 years before even limited voting was allowed.

<sup>478</sup> Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, p132.

<sup>479</sup> When Clementi was made governor in 1925, Kotewall was lucky; as First Clerk, Magistracy, in 1913, he presented an illuminated address and led the expressions of admiration to Clementi when he was departing assistant colonial secretary.

<sup>480</sup> Kotewall’s report, reproduced in CO129/489, p167.

Anonymous letters threatening violence and murder were received by them daily, a reward for their heads was posted in Canton, and still they worked incessantly, gathering at first a few of the more venturesome spirits, who in their turn brought in others, till in a short time the whole Chinese Community had forgotten its fears.<sup>481</sup> Secretary for Chinese Affairs D. W. Tratman stressed 'the wonderful spirit of loyalty and solidarity shewn by the Chinese intelligentsia of the Colony in the face of this great crisis.' Chow became the first Chinese on the Executive Council in 1926.<sup>482</sup>

Nonetheless, Stubbs fretted about 'excessive' Eurasian influence, saying during the 1922 unrest: 'We can rely on nobody except the half-castes and even they will throw their lot with the Chinese if they think they will be on the winning side.'<sup>483</sup> Yet, David Pomfret notes, deep divides between British and Chinese elites 'perpetuated the government's continued reliance in the crises of the 1920s upon elite Eurasians to represent 'responsible' Chinese opinion.'<sup>484</sup> Kotewall would remain an outlier: in the first films (shot by Ho Kom Tong's son-in-law Tse Kan-po) of 'the leading Chinese', it is striking how different he looked, which probably mattered.<sup>485</sup> The slipperiness of Eurasian identity made him useful, but vulnerable.

### **Eurasians step out of the Shadows**

Eurasians were, by the 1920s, into their second or third generations. Each family produced at least one difficult character per generation who lost the family fortune, sparked conflicts among multiple mothers or worse. Sometimes struggles were expressed in racial language—one might be derided or praised for being, or looking, more or less 'European' or 'Chinese.' Class divisions arose as progeny of protected women and foreign merchants accrued wealth and power, while legitimate mixed offspring of civil servants rarely scaled such heights. But by decade's end, this group that had once dared not speak its name would publicly, proudly declaring themselves Eurasians. In less than two decades since nationalist revolution next door, they effectively decided to be themselves.

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<sup>481</sup> CO129/489, 30 October 1925, p428.

<sup>482</sup> Chow was replaced in 1936 by Kotewall; both were knighted. In 1928, two new slots went to Chinese physician Tso Seen Wan and Portuguese Jose Pedro Braga.

<sup>483</sup> CO129/478, letter by Stubbs, 16 September 1922. CO129/462, 29 July 1920.

<sup>484</sup> Pomfret, 'Raising Eurasia,' p330.

<sup>485</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=U\\_4fQwlcRBQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_4fQwlcRBQ), and ff.

Perhaps seeing Kotewall in the top councils of government strengthened Eurasian confidence; more likely it was their own growing wealth and ever-spreading network through colonial Hong Kong that strengthened their hand. A need to define themselves arose when nationalism grew in the neighbourhood, and was made possible due to their own rising confidence. Their children attended the best schools, and often ran them too; their young men entered the top professions often with London training and experience. Each elite family had its roots in a commercial or irregular liaison across ethnic lines, each next generation was educated through colonial-era institutions, each joined the ranks of commerce, law or administration thanks to pre-existing and ever-multiplying networks of kin, class or creed. Each, by the end of Hong Kong's first century, claimed a position of privilege, having secured a hold on the levers of wealth and influence within the colony – the top conglomerates, leading law firms, government advisory bodies and more. Well-established Eurasians also now knew their relationship with all powers (Chinese, British and beyond) was always ambiguous and they should stand on their own two feet. One descendant of this elite, Dawn Leonard, concluded that the slights against them are 'why the Eurasians got together to become such an economic force. To put the two fingers up to both sides—the Chinese and the Brits!'

On 23 December 1929, these interwoven, mutually supporting and competitive clans decided it was time to combine as Eurasians, in order to help other Eurasians. They founded the Welfare League (which exists to this day), thanks to an anonymous donation for the care of destitute Eurasians. The league's committee, then and now, is a roll call of the Eurasian elite, as they see it, covering names from Ho Tung and Kotewall to Churn, Grose, Ho, Hung, Gittins, Litton, and more.<sup>486</sup> Shying away from a hard and fast definition of 'Eurasian,' the league decided to help in the maintenance and education of permanent residents of the colony, and their families. 'Of course, at that time, aside from the Eurasian Community, few considered

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<sup>486</sup> The four men in receipt of the cheque were S.M. Churn, John Francis Grose, Hung Hing-kam, and Wong Kam-fuk. Attendees at the first meeting, 23 December 1929, were: Lo Cheung-shiu, Hung Tsze-leung, Henry Gittins, Hung Tsze-yee, Ho Leung, S.M. Churn, W.H. Peters, J.L. Litton, J.D. Bush, E.D. Bush, J. Kotewall, A.E. Perry, M.K. Lo, M.W. Lo, Fung Tsok-lam, J. McKenzie, J.F. Grose, Wong Tak-wong, Edward Law, P. Abesser, W.M. Gittins, J.F. Shea, H.K. Hung, Hung Ho-chiu, and C. G. Anderson - aka Charles Graham 'Carl,' the son of Hung Hing Kam who had taken the name Anderson. The first president was Sir Robert Ho Tung, vice president Hon. R.H. Kotewall, honorary treasurer Samuel Churn, honorary secretary Carl Anderson, and committee members Wong Kam-fuk, Henry Gittins, Ho Wing, M.K. Lo, J.F. Grose, and Wong Tak-kwong. This group was in charge until World War Two with Abesser and Law, the latter giving free medical treatment to all league beneficiaries. Kotewall was president 1937–1939, then Churn.

themselves permanent residents of Hong Kong,' noted Eric Peter Ho in his account of the league.<sup>487</sup> His comment highlights the extent to which Hong Kong's core community was neither entirely Chinese nor British but a mixture of both and more.<sup>488</sup>

Carl Anderson said at that first meeting:

*Gentlemen, it has been said of us that we can have no unity...this, though palpably absurd, is a challenge to be faced and an insult to be wiped out. Our detractors little know that if we have not coalesced sooner it is simply because the urge to do so has not been pressing. They do not realise that, after all, there is no gulf between a Chan and a Smith amongst us and that underlying the superficial differences in names and outlook, the spirit of kinships and brotherhood burns brightly. We Eurasians, being born into this world, belong to it. We claim no privileges but we demand our rights for which we must contest to the last ditch. With the blood of old China mixed with that of Europe in us, we show the world that... this fusion, to put it no higher, is not detrimental to good citizenship.*

As John Hung said, 'The only pure blood I know is mixed blood—we, the compradors, are the ones who melded Hong Kong together.'<sup>489</sup> Indeed, these people straddled many worlds in which the sorry misery assumed to be the lot of mixed-race peoples was rarely the whole story.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Ho, *The Welfare League: The Sixty Years 1930–1990*, in Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*.

<sup>488</sup> Initially the League defined 'Eurasian' as product of a Chinese mother and Occidental father, but helps those of other mixes too. Portuguese were not eligible as they already had welfare organizations. The help was usually for sending children to DBS or DGS. There was debate about whether migration out of Hong Kong should be paid for, as, in one committee member's view, 'Hong Kong after World War II could no longer be regarded as permanent,' but this was shot down with the excuse of a lack of funds. Special funds exist in names of Samuel Macumber Churn and Carl Anderson. That of another past president, Grose, goes to the China Coast Community, a home for (mixed) elderly. A notable president was Dr. Douglas Laing. By 1990 the fund was worth about \$14 million; it has since grown, but can't find causes to spend on.

<sup>489</sup> Interview, 17 November 2017.

<sup>490</sup> Lamson 'The Eurasian in Shanghai,' pp642, 647, 648, said they were 'depressed... despised by both the Chinese and the foreigners,' but Barbara Merchant, a Shanghai Eurasian descendant, says: 'They seemed to live a life quite different from the sorry existence described by Lamson—there absolutely was a 'group spirit' around which the Eurasians rallied, which was composed of all Eurasians, whatever their racial/national origins, and the 'lower paid' Westerners. They didn't mix socially with the upper-class Westerners or Chinese, but many did do well, despite their disadvantaged beginnings.' Email correspondence, Barbara Merchant, 2017–2019.

The Eurasian entry into and capture of the colonial establishment had been generations in the making, and should not be surprising given the centrality of in-between people to any port city.

Take the extended Macumber-Churn-Leonard family with its Chinese, Scots, Portuguese, Belgian, and other roots, for example. Descendants of Samuel Churn maintain two gravestones for one great-grandmother as they're not sure which woman is the right one. Is it Ms Cheung or Ms Yip, and where does the name Lily Brown come in? William Macumber was a Scots merchant in Shanghai in the 1880s when he met the mystery woman who would produce Samuel Macumber Churn aka Cheung Kit Tsoi in 1887.<sup>491</sup> Samuel was one of Hong Kong's coming men in the booming interwar decades. As an officer in the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps he was sent to Bangkok and Saigon for rice supplies just ahead of World War Two. Caught in Bangkok as war began, he went to work for British military intelligence in Calcutta, becoming a major. He was part of the post-war rebuilding of Hong Kong and a regular donor to veterans' funds, lepers, family planning, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He strongly supported Diocesan Girls' School, where most of his progeny were educated. His investments focused on the growth of Hong Kong: the pilings to support new, taller buildings offered by Vibro Piling Co.; wharf and warehouse ownership for an expanding port (through China Provident and Trust Co. and North Point Wharves); Hongkong Gas Co., and fuelling the Chinese and Southeast Asian diaspora in the Sandakan Light and Power Co. of Borneo. The Union Trading Co. name remains in family hands today.

He married Lena Johnsford (1894–1940), another Eurasian, and had six children: Molly, Eddie, Mabel, Eva, Doris, and Samuel 'Charlie' Churn.<sup>492</sup> Along the way,

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<sup>491</sup> Samuel's mother, Cheung or Yip, was also second wife of Sin Tak Fan in a union that produced no children—Carl T. Smith Collection, Index Card 39-783. His descendant James Lowcock told Anthony Sweeting, 22 October 2007, that 'a particular Scottish merchant loved his 'Chinese wife and family' so much that, when he had to leave Hong Kong due to ill-health, he begged his replacement to look after them. The newly arrived merchant did much more than that; he married the woman and gave his name to her children, thereby establishing a rather complex provenance for this particular Eurasian family.' Sweeting Papers, p102, HKU Archive.

<sup>492</sup> Eddie's first wife, Doris Frith, had earlier married Oswald Chan of the Tyson-Chan Eurasian clan. Doris had thus been a daughter-in-law of Chan Kai Ming. Eddie divorced Doris to marry a movie star, Dora/Ting Ho. Carl T. Smith, October 2000. Eddie's sister Mabel married a Belgian financier, Raymond Pierre Mardulyn; indicative of his standing, despite or because of his marriage, he was chairman of five companies, director of the Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Co. Ltd. and Peak Tramways Ltd. One of his pallbearers (in 1985) was Michael Kadoorie.

Samuel accumulated Lena House, Pinecrest, and a beach house. Samuel formally dropped his Chinese name in 1913. Charlie, his youngest son, recalled his father claiming to be 70 percent European because his mother, Lily Brown—a surprise name to today’s descendants—had mixed blood. ‘There’s a story that my father went back to America to meet his real father, who told him: “Son, I now have my own family. I will ask ‘certain friends in Hong Kong’ to give you a helping hand.” Was it Macumber? We don’t know. They were very secretive in those days about the parentage. I think this happened after I was born but before the war,’ said Charlie. His father was ‘very tough, autocratic’ and ‘successful because he was in the right place at the right time, and yes, he knew the right people. Father never said we were Eurasians, we were English-Chinese. He was proud of what he was, never mind Eurasian or not.’<sup>493</sup> Perhaps it had become possible to celebrate being Eurasian as long as one had (by now) learned how to behave as British when desired. He was not alone. The first chronicler of this world, Peter Hall, called it the Web when he found myriad connections among a long list of related names.<sup>494</sup> When he began his research, he faced constant obstruction. One generation on, there is now more ease with the past.<sup>495</sup>

‘Growing up was very hard—my Chinese cousins used to call us half-breeds! But we Portuguese couldn’t care less,’ recalled Pat Botelho, the granddaughter of Choa Lap-chee, whose daughter Trixie had married a Portuguese. Two different forebears had each married a so-called pure Chinese. The products of one union were accepted as Chinese while the others were called half-castes. ‘Apparently they didn’t look like bastards, but we did. But we had the best of two worlds—we celebrated Christmas, midnight mass, presents, and then when we came out of mass we had a bowl of congee and roast duck waiting for us. At Chinese New Year we were dressed in padded jackets and full-length cheongsam and we got our lai-see [Chinese gift envelope]. Marrying a Portuguese was seen as marrying down but my mum worked it in such a smart way—she was Chinese in many ways. Just as Chinese did every

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<sup>493</sup> Author’s interview with Samuel ‘Charlie’ Churn, Hong Kong, 3 March 2018.

<sup>494</sup> Hall, *In the Web*.

<sup>495</sup> Fourth child, Eva, studied medicine at HKU, became a physiotherapist in London and married Norman Leonard; their bridesmaids were her sister Doris and Miss Cicely Kotewall; ushers were Eva’s brother Eddie Churn and H.E. ‘Bots’ de Barros Botelho. Norman’s father, from Liverpool, was in the Hong Kong police in the 1890s and in 1916, left his widow, Caroline, with 12 children to raise; Norman described himself as one quarter Chinese and chose to speak Cantonese with a foreign accent. Eva, Norman, and children (Joy, Dawn, and Keith) moved to England in 1963.

Chinese New Year, she took us first to eldest son of her 'First Mother,' i.e., Dad's first wife. Then to second brother, third brother, etc. She followed the Chinese hierarchy. You know where you stand. But one whole family thinks they're different. They still don't have much to do with the rest of us. But did I care? No! We all bleed the same, and shit too.'<sup>496</sup>

### **Too close to call?**

Many are the family lines which became very close indeed, that of Sir Robert Kotewall, for example, whose three daughters married three sons of Adolf Zimmern. They were repeating a pattern of three generations earlier. In the 1870s, Henry W. Lowcock, British partner in one of Hong Kong's biggest firms, Livingston and Co, was a member of the Legislative Council. He married Annie Loftus Russell but their only child did not survive. But Henry already had two sons - Charles in 1853, and George in 1864 - from a relationship two decades earlier with a woman whose name and ethnicity remains unknown. Charles was father to dynamic Mary Lowcock, wife to a half-Chinese, half-German Jewish man, Adolf Charn Kwong Zimmern. His parents were Adolf Hermann Christian Anton Zimmern and Lai Kim Ip, or Yip.<sup>497</sup> The elder Adolf Zimmern (1842–1916) had come to Hong Kong in 1868, worked for the trading firm Reiss and Co., was made partner in Shanghai and served on the Shanghai Municipal Council when he was also on the General Committee of the prestigious Hongkong Club alongside the cream of society.<sup>498</sup> His son, young Adolf, on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 1914, and Mary 'Gum Gai' Zimmern produced Andrew, Ernest, Frederick, Francis, Nora, and Archibald.

With Charles's brother George, and the pattern is similar. He, too, had a Chinese or Eurasian lover (perhaps with Parsi blood); among his offspring was Edith Lowcock, born in 1889. She would marry Robert Kotewall, our man of government knighted in 1938, and they would produce Esther, Phoebe, Doris, Helen, Bobbie, Maisie, Cicely,

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<sup>496</sup> Interview, 21 January 2019.

<sup>497</sup> The elder Adolf also had three other children. The oldest, Mary, was Protected Woman of Sir Jacob Sassoon in Shanghai, and a brother, Andrew, produced various children including the well-known Rev. George She. The other daughter, Lucy, married Lo Cheung-shiu, thereby tying the Zimmern line to the Ho Tung.

<sup>498</sup> *The Chronicle & Directory* 1871, p152.

Cyril, and Patsy.<sup>499</sup> The Zimmerns and Kotewalls who married each other in the twentieth century had no idea their families were tied generations earlier. When Doris Kotewall married Frederick, they were wed by a cousin of the groom, Rev. George She; dignitaries present included top officials from the Chinese and British governments, and members of Hong Kong's leading families. Unsurprisingly, when Dr. Ron Zimmern, direct grandson of Sir Robert Kotewall, checked his DNA he found 29 percent Scottish/Irish/Welsh blood, 21.4 percent Chinese/Vietnamese, 15 percent Ashkenazi Jew, 11 percent South Asian and West Asian, 2.3 percent Middle Eastern, and 11 percent Filipino/Indonesian/Malaysian.<sup>500</sup>

Doris Kotewall's sister Helen married Frederick Zimmern's brother Francis, the leading broker, and produced five daughters. Doris and Helen's sister Cicely married Frederick and Francis's brother Archibald Zimmern and produced Annabel and Hugh. Francis Zimmern would later outline his roots deep in Hong Kong-style aristocracy by listing his Zimmern father and grandfather as leading businessmen, his cousin George the Anglican canon, Frederick the solicitor, Archie the barrister, Queen's Counsel, and first local high court judge. His wife's lineage through Sir Robert Kotewall warranted mention too because he had been on the colonial government's highest decision-making body, the Executive Council. Francis Zimmern recalled stockbroking in the prewar days: 'there were some clients who smoked opium as people smoke cigarettes today, and I often had to arrange only to visit them after they woke up from their opium daze...'<sup>501</sup> Meanwhile, another Kotewall daughter, Phoebe, married Walter Alexander Hung, whose sister was the wife of Sir Robert Ho Tung's son Robert Ho Sai Lai. Kotewall daughter Bobbie never married; her sister Maisie married Dr. George Choa, the son of Choa Po-sien; while the youngest, Patsy, married John Fenton. Their daughter Kim Fenton notes: 'The money came later, from the Zimmern marriages, all the girls. Robert Kotewall had a lot of land in Stanley, so the girls, who were all very smart, sold off bits of land and the girls made millions... only Esther and Patsy married men who already had

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<sup>499</sup> Meanwhile, Edith had a brother, named Henry after his grandfather. He married his sister's niece, daughter of Robert Kotewall's brother Samuel, Mabel Constance. Samuel was the black sheep, leaning on Robert for financial support; he had at least two children; alongside Mabel was Dorothy, who married Luigi Ribeiro. Family legend is that George died when he rode a bicycle down steep Garden Road, straight into the harbor. Carl T. Smith Collection, Index Card 51-878.

<sup>500</sup> Correspondence with Dr. Ron Zimmern, January 2020.

<sup>501</sup> Hong Kong Stock Market History Project, Interview with Francis R. Zimmern, Former Chairman of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange 1972-77, 14 November 1996.

money.’ It’s believed by some in the family that Sir Robert had other children as his will also specified the ‘Remaining two equal parts for persons whose names I have in a separate letter to my trustees’.<sup>502</sup> Such convolution was not a problem, believes Kim, because generations of Eurasians were now being ‘brought up loved and educated. We have no problems because we are so full of ourselves, and yes, we have money. There were hang-ups around the 1900s; it’s when they got rich and educated that the hang-ups evaporated.’<sup>503</sup>

Kim’s father, John Fenton, was son of Solene Hung So Lin—eighth child of Kan Shun Tsoi and Charles David Bottomley, who had paid for his daughter, Maria Louisa Emily Angele, to be schooled by the Canossians. ‘Solene wouldn’t talk about family because her mother had so many men,’ remembered Kim. Kim’s mother, Patsy, has no such self-doubt. ‘I never thought about being different to others at all,’ she says, laughing. ‘I’m a Eurasian, and I have no problem at all, I’m quite happy. Lots of Shanghai Eurasians, they feel, ooh, they must say they are English, or Chinese. But in the case of my family, we didn’t care at all because we were very well treated by everyone. Our family is quite different to other Eurasians—we have a road named after us!’<sup>504</sup>

Another family memoir described the Zimmern and Lowcock families as Eurasians who were ‘more Chinese than Western in their outlook. In fact they usually went by their Chinese names.’<sup>505</sup> When Cicely Kotewall wed Archie Zimmern she saw his mother, Mary ‘Gum Gai’, as Eurasian ‘but her looks were the very antithesis of her manner. She looked Western, being tall and fair, yet her demeanour was totally Chinese. She barely spoke any English, always wore Chinese clothes, smoked a silver bubble water pipe and loved playing mahjong.’<sup>506</sup> Patsy had met John Fenton when her older sister Phoebe was marrying Walter Hung. John Fenton’s sister Doris married her aunt’s son Tom Baker, a journalist in Shanghai—Doris’s family were disappointed as they wanted a higher-status match. One of their daughters, Vivienne, married a Portuguese, Frank Correa, so she too was looked down on by some in her family. At the Kadoorie-run China Light and Power, where her husband

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<sup>502</sup> Carl T. Smith Collection, Index Card 50-117.

<sup>503</sup> Interview, 21 March 2018.

<sup>504</sup> Interview, 23 March 2018, at 114 Waterloo Road.

<sup>505</sup> Cicely Kotewall-Zimmern, ‘Recollections of My Life,’ p62.

<sup>506</sup> Cicely Kotewall-Zimmern, ‘Recollections of My Life,’ p66.

worked, Vivi remembered three washrooms, one for Europeans, one for Chinese, and one for Local, meaning Portuguese and others.<sup>507</sup> With such marital ties went not quite empires, but lucrative businesses, and leading positions in society.

Behind the solicitors' firm Lo and Lo lies a long Eurasian trail, which goes back to the nineteenth-century Shanghai merchant Thomas Rothwell who had three children with his Chinese woman; Jardine's helped his failing business by buying his Shanghai land in 1880, employing him, and moving to Hong Kong the children then known by their Chinese names: Lucy aka Lo Shui-choi, and her brothers Lo Cheung Shiu and Cheung-ip.<sup>508</sup> Lo Cheung-shiu married Lucy Zimmern. His sister married Ho Fook, brother to Robert Ho Tung. Lo Cheung Shiu became assistant comprador to Jardine's in 1894, a job long in the gift of Ho Tung, becoming top comprador in 1918.<sup>509</sup> One of Lo's sons, Man Kam Lo, was chosen by Sir Robert Ho Tung to marry his eldest daughter, Victoria, and was co-founder with his brother Man Wai of the Lo and Lo legal firm.<sup>510</sup> With his three brothers, M.K. would lead the next generation of professional Eurasians into a postwar era in which many realities would change.<sup>511</sup> Where the American Club's country club facilities now stand, at Tai Tam Bay, were once three magnificent villas of Ho Tung's extended family.<sup>512</sup> Just above those three stood the Lo mansion—all with sweeping sea views and grass tennis courts. Old M.W. would greet visitors in shorts and old rattan hat, appearing to be the gardener rather than the host.<sup>513</sup> Ian McFadzean, the property dealer who found the lease loophole to enable the sale to the American Club, understood the Eurasian

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<sup>507</sup> John and Doris's father, George Lambert Fenton, traded in Macao, where he took Portuguese nationality. Interview, 19 October 2017.

<sup>508</sup> Thanks to Brian Rothwell, correspondence 2019–2020.

<sup>509</sup> In a letter on Lo Cheung-shui's death in 1934, Sir Robert Ho Tung wrote that the loss was of 'a dear and trusted colleague who... Lo Cheung Shiu and I shared many happy years together.' The letter went on to applaud how Lo Cheung-shiu had 'brought into the world a circle of extremely capable sons and accomplished daughters.' *Lo Cheung Shiu Esq., J.P.: A Memoir by His Sons*, 1934.

<sup>510</sup> M.K. Lo was educated in England from the age of 12, returning to Hong Kong in 1915 to follow his father, from the boards of Hongkong Land to the Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Co. By 1921 a justice of the peace, he had joined the Sanitary Board, District Watch, and Tung Wah by 1932, the Urban Council in 1935, the Legislative Council, 1935–43; he was knighted in 1948.

<sup>511</sup> M.K. Lo stood out in prewar Hong Kong for activism against discriminatory laws and payment practices; he represented seamen's unions in 1922. With Jose Pedro Braga, he set up the League of Fellowship in 1921, against racial discrimination.

<sup>512</sup> Stanley Ho, casino king of Macao, was born in one of these, Stanley Villa, to Ho Kwong, son of Ho Fook and nephew of Robert Ho Tung. 'I believe in talent. I don't believe this pedigree business any more... I was so fed up when I saw how our rich relatives treated us, how much my mother suffered. Sir Robert invented the name of Ho Tung to distinguish his side of the family from the failures. Sometimes it's very embarrassing—big families, you know, normally they are like that.' England, 'Hong Kong Taipans—Stanley Ho.'

<sup>513</sup> Indeed, exactly this happened when the author walked into his grounds in 1985.

nexus: 'The Los, the Hotungs, and the others, they did not mix with real Chinese and vice versa. And of course the Brits didn't see them as real Chinese. Who did [Jardine's family] the Keswicks rely on, whether in China or Hong Kong? Their compradors. And who were they? Half-European. This half-world was run by Eurasian compradors.'<sup>514</sup> Some Eurasians saw Chinese ways as more distinguished, looking down on Eurasians with English names.<sup>515</sup> Henry Gittins (Hung Tsin), a keen churchgoer who worked at Jardine's, had married the Eurasian Dorothy Ahlmann and had eleven children. But still Sir Robert Ho Tung had trouble giving his approval when his daughter Jean wanted to marry one of Henry Gittins's sons, Billy.

### **Dancing on the Edge**

In the first week of December 1931, those who saw themselves as the great and good gathered at the behest of Sir Robert Ho Tung for his golden wedding anniversary. Of course, everyone knew Sir Robert had two wives and countless other lady friends, but this event was to mark ties to Lady Margaret, his first wife. A booklet reprinted glowing purple prose from the local newspapers, in case anyone might have forgotten how important, visionary, wealthy, romantic, intelligent, and downright heroic Sir Robert had been, so far.<sup>516</sup> Half-Parsi Robert Kotewall said: 'Those who have known Sir Robert, as I have, for the last thirty-five years or so, can tell you that his intellectual powers have not shown the slightest diminution...' He spoke 'in the name of their Chinese friends who can be said to comprise the Chinese community.'

It was as if there were no Eurasians there that night in a hotel built by Baghdadi Jews, served by a Parsi ferry on docks built by an Armenian.

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<sup>514</sup> Interview, 15 August 2011. Ian's father was Alec McFadzean, Professor of Medicine at the University of Hong Kong.

<sup>515</sup> Another family linked to Ho Tung is that of Wong Kam Fuk, product of Chinese mother and Scandanavian sea captain. With wife and concubines, Wong had nine children; the oldest, Wong Sik Lam, married Mary Patricia, a daughter of Robert Ho Tung. Wong and Ho Tung links were reinforced over two generations amid tension over which family was more 'Chinese'. One Wong daughter knew renowned Chinese leftists and met Rewi Alley in Macao in 1942. Another was proud to be Eurasian, as were eight out of ten of her DGS classmates; her war was spent with the Soong Sisters and Chiang Kai-Shek. Wong daughter, Jasmine, married Kenneth Chan Tyson, tying Wongs to descendants of Chan Kai Ming, thus back to the Lam sisters. (The Chans changed name back to Tyson in the 1950s, deciding they looked more Western than Chinese by that time.)

<sup>516</sup> JMA L14/9 Wedding Anniversary Booklet—Souvenir of the Golden Wedding of Sir Robert and Lady Ho Tung 1881–1931.

Exactly ten years later, on 2 December 1941, a spectacular diamond wedding celebration for Sir Robert and Lady Ho Tung was held at the Hongkong Hotel—and one week later, Hong Kong would be at war. Dancing on the precipice is fun; not even seeing it was there, is silly. In 1933, when Sir Robert and Lady Margaret travelled through Europe, he was proud to meet President von Hindenburg in Berlin, the man who would appoint Adolf Hitler as chancellor of Germany, and Franz von Papen, Hindenburg's protégé; in Rome he had a private audience with the pope—and on the same day was received by Signor Mussolini.<sup>517</sup>

Back in Hong Kong, 600 prominent citizens were taken in hundreds of cars to the distant reaches of Castle Peak in the New Territories. A new brewery was opening its doors, and vats in August 1933 and the general officer commanding, Major General Borrett, usually busy running the military behind British rule over Hong Kong, was there to toast it. The Hong Kong Brewers and Distillers Ltd's directors included Sir Elly Kadoorie, the Hon. Jose Pedro Braga, Ho Kom Tong, Wong Kam Fook, the Armenian theosophist Malcolm Manuk, and J.H. Ruttonjee. Lead investor was Jehangir Hormusjee Ruttonjee, whose father, Hormusjee Ruttonjee, had traded in wines, spirits, and provisions in Hong Kong since 1884.<sup>518</sup> For an enterprise born from Parsi, Jewish, Eurasian, and British financiers, religious services on Sundays were provided by the Irish Jesuit fathers who happened to have a study house nearby. The Ruttonjee name would become known for philanthropy, which, unlike that of many Parsis, was focused not on Bombay or Baghdad, but Hong Kong.<sup>519</sup>

But as the beer was brewing, so too was the catastrophic fall of the second-generation Ho Tungs. Two nephews of Sir Robert—Ho Leung and Ho Kwong

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<sup>517</sup> *China Review*, London, January–March 1933.

<sup>518</sup> Jehangir Hormusjee Ruttonjee built the distinctive Homi Villa on a promontory nearby to oversee the brewery's construction. See the Industrial History of Hong Kong Group website, post by Hugh Farmer 6 November 2016; and Holdsworth and Munn, *Dictionary of Hong Kong Biography*, pp376–78. Young Jehangir arrived in Hong Kong aged twelve with his mother, Dina, in 1892. After graduating from Queen's College, he joined H. Ruttonjee & Son, taking charge in 1913. He married Banubai Master in India in 1902. A son, Dhun, and two daughters, Tehmi (Vera) and Freni, were born in Hong Kong. Ruttonjee also adopted his two young nephews and niece—Rusy, Beji, and Minnie Shroff—after they lost their father in a typhoon at sea. Freni then married Rusy Shroff and Tehmi married Rustom Desai.

<sup>519</sup> The brewery founder's son, Dhun Ruttonjee, married a Chinese and served on the Urban and Legislative councils. His aunt, Perin, graduated in medicine and married Nariman Shroff. Another Shroff family has taken on the legacy of Ruttonjee charities and chairs the Zoroastrian Charity Fund of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao. The Ruttonjee Hospital (now Tang Shiu Kin Ruttonjee Hospital) began in 1948 as a tuberculosis sanatorium at the former Royal Navy hospital in memory of Jehangir's daughter Tehmina, who had died from TB five years earlier.

(father of the late Stanley Ho)—and Robert's adopted son Ho Wing had been buying up all the shares they could find in the Jardine's-managed Yee Wo (Ewo) Spinning Factory in Shanghai. Instead of rising in value, they fell and Ho Leung had already been in debt for years, with Uncle Ho Tung the guarantor. In the same year that another son of Ho Fook, Ho Iu, had tumbled off the cliffs at Tai Tam (perhaps for fear of being outed as homosexual), Ho Leung shot himself dead on the same cliffs. Ho Tung would save his adopted son but not Ho Kwong (hence Ho Kwong's son Stanley's lifelong bitterness), while Jardine's scrambled to retrieve company funds lost down the Ho drain. By June 1934, with M.K. Lo mediating, the Jardine's boss, W.J. Keswick, wrote to London:

*I wish I had Peter Fleming's powers of describing to you our interviews, how we whispered at each other sitting huddled together on the most uncomfortable Victorian sofa in an immense room hung with extremely bad portraits of halfcaste concubines, how when things became too strained we switched to shares—always oil on the troubled waters of a Ho Tung mind—how we fenced with a profusion of flattery, insincerity and jibes ... and so on. The dramatic effect was magnificent, even the chorus was good—nurses, boys, inquisitive offspring sidling in with blankets, smelling salts, milk and impudence. But underneath it all was that clear cold mind of Shylock immovable. Pathos and playacting are all very well, but what we want is more than a million dollars!*<sup>520</sup>

A month later, and Ho Tung had been pushed to \$600,000, and so a deal was done.<sup>521</sup>

Four years later, Japanese bombs fell on central Shanghai, sending floods of refugees to Hong Kong. The portents were there, if anybody happened to be looking, as Japan's long-held designs on China were becoming more pressing. Partly, blindness to the precipice was the natural urge to enjoy the wealth while it lasted. Behind it, however, was a feeling in the highest British circles, that Japan's aggression against China had a silver lining—it would stop China from uniting and becoming a formidable trading and political force. Chief Bank manager Vandaleur Grayburn, in a letter to London agreeing with a colleague's analysis of the situation, said: 'While no-one wants to see Japan in complete possession of China it would be infinitely

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<sup>520</sup> JMA, J1/24/53, 25 October 1934.

<sup>521</sup> JMA Series E3/10, J1/2/22, J1/2/33, J1/9/1, J1/9/2, J1/24/49, J1/24/51, J1/24/52, J1/24/53, and J7/6. See also, Ho, *Tracing My Children's Lineage*, Ch. 13.

worse, as Henschman says, if China beat Japan, for life in China for a foreigner would be impossible.<sup>522</sup> The director of medical services, Selwyn Selwyn-Clarke, saw this too: Though the sky was full of warnings in that twilight phase, there was a tradition of 'business as usual' while orientals fought each other, and an ambivalence of attitude which allowed some mercantile minds to approve the weakening of Chinese nationalism at the hands of Japan...<sup>523</sup>

As war approached, the cosmopolitan dream had not quite died. Even new nationalisms, more passports and rising racism could not kill it. After all, this frontier town was made by migrants. Virtually everyone had roots elsewhere. But the first half of Hong Kong's twentieth century had brought dramatic change to both its elite – now firmly Eurasian of all kinds – and to the growing number of non-elite Hong Kongers. British colonial rule had survived, thanks to its reliance upon its local, conservative elite. This had shown itself to be anti-labour, anti-democratic and anti-feminist for years – and after World War Two would again stymie democratic reforms in order to maintain their own exclusive status. But British rule needed its collaborators, and these Eurasians needed the expansiveness of an often-distant imperium to thrive. Thanks to their evolution through several generations from impoverished single-mother deprivation through education, commerce and law into the highest circles of society, Hong Kong's mixed cosmopolitan core felt they had a Hong Kong to call their own. They would soon lay their lives on the line to defend it.

### **Communal and Cosmopolitan**

In this chapter, we have seen the same names recur across each fresh idea, highlighting how the creation of Hong Kong was due as much to the apparent outsiders as it was to Chinese who arrived across a closer border. Perhaps these newly wealthy men were simply buying a place in society, seeking favor with the colonial power structure? Yet the record of contribution shows that both motives and beneficiaries were diverse.

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<sup>522</sup> HSBC Archives (London), HQ HSBC 0003-0001 and 0002, Grayburn Private Letters, 13 November 1937.

<sup>523</sup> Selwyn-Clarke, *Footprints*, pp56–57.

Both leading man and 'coloured magnate', Chater stands out in this imperial age where race, as Tim Harper notes, had long been 'insinuated in bureaucratic processes' but was now more policed than ever before, 'and this imposed fresh limits on the ambitions of Eurasians and the emerging Asian middling class. The racialization of state practice gathered pace.'<sup>524</sup> This posed challenges to all people of ambiguous or multiple identity but at least in Hong Kong, in contrast to the racially segregated courts of Batavia and Singapore, the legal system was based on Common Law for all. Hong Kong had no separate courts for other races or faiths; it allowed more room for difference. Despite societal taboos against mixing in some circles, there were no legal barriers to do so.

Concepts of cosmopolitanism, too, change over time. The hosting of American General Grant to dinner at Government House in 1879 was taken as a sign of how cosmopolitan Hong Kong was becoming. Next decade, *The China Mail*, when Belilios Scholarships for St. Joseph's College went to two Portuguese—J.P. Braga and L.G. Barretto—explained this was because Belilios had been nurtured in 'that spirit of liberty and fair play which disregarded the distinctions of creed and nationality ...'<sup>525</sup> By 1902, the *Hongkong Telegraph* noted the Zoroastrian New Year: 'Hongkong is certainly a very cosmopolitan city, enjoying the benefit of being the home of useful men with different customs and religions ... Each is of service to the other, all exchanging knowledge ... today, the Parsees have their new year's day to keep up, and we hope they will enjoy many returns of it.'<sup>526</sup>

Historian Philip Mansel showed Levantine port cities were cosmopolitan - in governance, associations, individuals of mixed antecedents, skills, and interests - and communal, in that distinct communities also pursued their own interests.<sup>527</sup>

So, too, was Hong Kong.

The cemetery at Happy Valley hosted a multitude of faiths; Parsis, Eurasians and Muslims could choose their own cemeteries or this 'colonial' resting place. All races mixed at the most popular recreation, horse-racing. The Freemasons admitted men

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<sup>524</sup> Harper, 'Singapore 1915', p1794, pp1797-98.

<sup>525</sup> *China Mail*, 9 January 1885.

<sup>526</sup> *Hongkong Telegraph*, 15 September 1902.

<sup>527</sup> Mansel, *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe*, pp129-134.

of any hue who pledged faith in one God: beside Chater and Jordan were Polycarpo Andreas da Costa, Chan Tai Kwong, Sir Kai Ho Kai, and Wei Yuk.<sup>528</sup>

Whereas Robert Ho Tung felt the need to hold massive wedding anniversaries every decade, he was demonstrating his place in the earliest generation of Eurasian, when making such vast statements of status was felt to be necessary. But his time was passing in these between-wars years, and his place was being taken by men who were less insecure about their own identities and more intent on simply building their own lives. By so doing, their focus was on a wider idea of Hong Kong which – with land, university and more, they were bringing into the twentieth century. A close examination of the processes involved in these achievements show that this was both a communal and a cosmopolitan Hong Kong. By following key personalities, the networks they formed and the institutions and associations they built, we have seen the growing confidence of Hong Kong's Eurasian core. This took place, despite, new notions of the nation state, of passports, and the less porous borders as colonial governments faced off nationalist revolutionaries.

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<sup>528</sup> In 1899, Brother O'Driscoll Gourdin disapproved of this reality: 'Grand Lodge is ... strongly opposed to the admission of Chinese into Freemasonry, and though we have the misfortune to have one or two of such nationality attached to one of our lodges, their number is not likely to increase.' Haffner, *The Craft in the East*, p73. He was soon proved wrong.