

HONG KONG

1841-1862

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BIRTH, ADOLESCENCE AND COMING OF AGE

GEOFFREY ROBLEY SAYER

With new Introduction and Additional Notes

by D. M. Emrys Evans



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FOREWORD

IN PRESENTING this new printing, with a new Introduction and Additional Notes, of G. R. Sayer's *Hong Kong: birth adolescence and coming of age*, I would like to thank Oxford University Press for kindly making it possible by authorizing the reprint and the Hong Kong University Press Committee for their encouragement and support. A special debt is owed to Mr Y. K. Fung, Editor of the Hong Kong University Press, for his careful editorial assistance, and to those others who contributed information which I hope will have made the Additional Notes more useful to the modern reader. The fee agreed for this work has been donated to the English Schools Foundation of Hong Kong for the award of an annual 'G. R. Sayer Prize in History' which is intended for award to students at The Island School, Hong Kong.

D. M. EMRYS EVANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE 1980 REPRINT

GEOFFREY ROBLEY SAYER's *Hong Kong: birth, adolescence and coming of age* was first published in 1937 by the Oxford University Press. It has been difficult to come by for some time and, as it is one of the few general works on the history of Hong Kong, albeit ending with the events of the year 1861, its republication now will enable many to capture its period flavour and set it alongside the works which have appeared subsequently. It was the first of the two works by Sayer on the history of Hong Kong, the second being *Hong Kong 1862-1919: the years of discretion*, published by the Hong Kong University Press in 1975, some thirteen years after the author's death in 1962 and some thirty-seven years after his retirement from the service of the Hong Kong government in 1938.

Not many general historical works on the origin and development of Hong Kong had appeared before Sayer's offering, though more have appeared since. Sayer's two works do make a contribution to what we can now see as a wider canvas set against the background of traumatic change on the mainland of China. But Sayer was not a professional historian—he was a career civil servant. After a classical education at Highgate School and Queen's College, Oxford, he joined the Hong Kong government as a cadet officer in 1910 after a competitive examination. The description 'cadet' had originally been used, at the time when Governor Sir Hercules Robinson instituted his new scheme of recruitment of civil servants for Hong Kong in 1861, in its East India Company sense of a junior in the Company's service. But, by the time Sayer came to Hong Kong, the expression denoted an administrative officer, the highest grade of civil servant, and it remained in use officially until 1960 when it was replaced by the more prosaic 'administrative officer'.

Sayer was thus one of an élite, one of a highly selected group many of whom gave distinguished service both in Hong Kong and elsewhere.¹

¹ For an account of the origin and development of the cadet grade in the Hong Kong Government, see H. J. Lethbridge, 'Hong Kong cadets, 1862-1941', *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (hereafter referred as *JHKBRAS*) 10 (1970) 36-56, which has a reference to Sayer on p. 44 and in note 34.

One of the first three cadets appointed in 1862, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, was to become Governor of the Straits Settlements, and later cadets were to achieve recognition in Hong Kong and elsewhere as Governors and High Commissioners. Their contribution was not to be made, however, only to the quality of government but also to the development of British Sinology. Though they were, as Lethbridge puts it, 'gentlemen trained in the ideology of pre-war English public schools and older residential universities', and conformed to the mores and values of the upper middle classes from which they were drawn, not all allowed 'their curiosity and intelligence to slumber in a sub-tropical climate'.² Many of the Hong Kong cadets were men of letters who brought to bear on their everyday administrative duties a scholarly and literary approach, which found intellectual outlets in areas far beyond the dutiful or even imaginative discharge of their duties, and further cultivated their intellects by turning to what was to them a new culture lying but a short distance across the border in China. The sojourn in Canton required of them by their terms of service served also to whet their appetites for a good deal more than learning the Chinese language, and many were to embark on a voyage of discovery through the language and civilization of China. Some were to achieve scholarly attainments in these fields which lay far beyond the confines of their official duties: mention here need only be made of Sir James Stewart Lockhart and Sir Reginald Fleming Johnston (the latter in 1931 became Professor of Chinese at what is now the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies after climaxing his public career as Commissioner of Weihaiwei).

Sayer too was of this breed though he never fully ventured into Sinological studies. He was, nevertheless, definitely a scholar administrator, a man of letters who brought to the execution of his duties a scholarly concern for the history and culture of the place which he helped to administer. But, perhaps, *coelum, non animus, mutant*³, a feature

² Lethbridge, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

³ In his later work, *Hong Kong 1862-1919*, Sayer quotes (p. 25) from a despatch from Governor MacDonnell of Hong Kong to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in which MacDonnell suggests a motto to accompany the Colony's official coat of arms. This suggested motto was derived from an epistle of the Roman poet Horace and read: *coelum, non animus mutant*. The full quotation reads as follows: *coelum, non animus, mutant qui trans mare currunt* which, roughly translated, says that they who cross the sea may change the sky above them but their spirit is not changed. Ironically,

of the finest kind of colonial civil servant who, wherever he served in the Empire, maintained his intellectual traditions and enhanced the government of the particular colony where he was posted.

The republication of *Hong Kong: birth, adolescence and coming of age*, therefore, allows the reader of today to take another look at a flower of that tradition.

But what of his literary work? Doubtless, Sayer would have been modest about his first published work, a translation of some of Horace's *Odes* published privately in 1922, and his other published writings, apart from his two histories of Hong Kong, were two translations in his retirement of Chinese works on pottery—Lan Pin-nan's *Ching-te-chen T'ao Lu*⁴ and Ch'en Liu's *T'ao Ya*⁵ in 1951 and 1959 respectively, both works considered significant in the history of Chinese ceramics.

Sayer was thus one of the administrative élite and was probably conscious of this. Indeed, one of his contemporaries, Stephen Francis Balfour,⁶ even as Sayer was engaged on his two historical works on Hong Kong as a British colony, was concerning himself with the history of Hong Kong before it became a British colony.⁷ But what of Sayer's official business whilst he was engaged in his academic pursuits?

A review of his career⁸ suggests that his historical inquiries may well have been a relief from the generally humdrum nature of the duties cast upon him. He was not destined to achieve the highest office in spite of his excellent showing in the Colonial Service examinations, which would have qualified him to opt for India had he wished (a contemporary, Norman Lockhart Smith, for example, was to become Hong Kong's Colonial Secretary in 1936, only two years before Sayer's retirement⁹),

though many cadets were to venture into new intellectual fields of inquiry, their intellectual traditions, nurtured in the English classics, as was that of Sayer, were to persist.

⁴ London, Routledge, Kegan Paul & Co., 1951.

⁵ London, Routledge, Kegan Paul & Co., 1959.

⁶ Balfour joined the Government in 1929 and died in internment in Stanley during the tragic Allied air-bombing of the internment camp in 1944.

⁷ The fruits of his research were originally published as 'Hong Kong before the British' in the Shanghai journal *T'ien Hsia Monthly* 11-12 (1940 & 1941) 330-352 and 440-464. This was reprinted in *JHKBRAS* 10 (1970) 134-179.

⁸ For a summary of Sayer's career, see p. 15.

⁹ Smith was fortunate enough to have retired just a few days before the Japanese assault on Hong Kong in December 1941.

and he filled a wide variety of positions which ranged from Assistant Superintendent of Police, Acting Private Secretary to the Governor, through Head of the Sanitary Department¹⁰ until he reached his last position of Director of Education. It was a much-varied career which not only included service in the Great War but which took him through nine different facets of government in Hong Kong.

As a writer, his classical upbringing remains evident. His literary style was somewhat idiosyncratic, a fact which might be more readily discerned in *Hong Kong 1862-1919: the years of discretion* than in *Hong Kong: birth, adolescence and coming of age*. The former he considered ready for publication but it required considerable sub-editing to make it acceptable as a piece of continuous and readable prose. *Hong Kong: birth, adolescence and coming of age*, coming from the same pen at a not very much earlier date, must have received considerable editorial attention for, though it bears the unmistakable mark of Sayer's pen, it suggests also the influence of an unseen hand. So be it. It is the work as we have it that we must judge and from that and that alone we must attempt to evaluate Sayer's importance and the importance of the two historical writings which represent his contribution.

He classed himself modestly as a chronicler, a gleaner and assembler of facts. But, as has been said, 'reporting facts is the refuge of those who have no imagination' (Luc de Clapier, *Réflexions et maximes*). A cursory glance, however, at *Hong Kong: birth, adolescence and coming of age* reveals an active mind at work—there is here no mere recording of past events but we see colours on a palette, mixed and applied to his canvas to produce a view all his own. In retrospect, it must be said that Sayer was not a man of dazzling insight whose writings cause the scales to fall from our eyes and he would not have claimed as much. Unlike many, his writings reveal an innate modesty and appreciation of his own achievements which led him into unnecessary self-deprecation with which it is not possible wholly to agree. It is best today to see his historical writings in two different perspectives: first, against a backdrop of earlier historical accounts of Hong Kong and then in the context of our further developed views of today. The latter is a task which can best be left to the reader and not attempted in an introduction such as this,

¹⁰ Curiously, Lethbridge, op.cit., p. 49, states that this was a Department which required a Head with 'specialist knowledge' rather than a cadet. Yet Sayer headed the Sanitary Department from 1920 to 1925 and from 1928 to 1934.

though it will be necessary to draw attention to some anomalous parts of the book.

Sayer was clearly heavily dependent on secondary sources for his introductory material concerning the ineluctable struggle between Britain and China which we have come to know pejoratively as the 'Opium War'. In particular, he drew heavily on Hosea Ballou Morse's *The chronicles of the East India Company trading to China*, an epoch-making work published in 1925 by the Oxford University Press. He also had the same author's *The international relations of the Chinese empire*, published in 1907. He was well served too by *The Chinese Repository* and by printed series of British Parliamentary papers on relations with China during the 1830s, to which he makes constant reference when dealing with events before and after the time when the East India Company's monopoly of trade was brought to an end in 1833 and events moved towards their climax in the years 1839 to 1842. It would be too easy today to dismiss Sayer as being unduly uncritical of the traumatic events of those days, but a reading of his presentation of the concatenation of events which eventually resulted in the Opium War shows an attempt to separate the diplomatic dilemma from the sordidness of one of the articles of trade involved. Perhaps Sayer does not go far enough in underlining the extent to which many of the prime actors in the drama themselves found the opium trade repugnant but sublimated this to what they perceived a greater principle: free trade and open and equal relations with the Chinese Imperial Government.

Pens will continue to scratch for many a year over the rights and wrongs of the Opium War and many will continue to disregard the expressions of doubt which were felt by many of the British merchants who could not be discarded into the popular category of pirates and smugglers beloved of the denigrators of British diplomatic conduct of the time. Sayer was writing for a public which he assumed would not necessarily have any great knowledge of the history of the events which culminated in the Opium War and the cession of Hong Kong. Indeed, when Sayer wrote this book, apart from the works of Morse, there were few accounts of the Opium War and of the foundation of Hong Kong. But in the last decade or so, a number of works have appeared, some popular, some scholarly. There are two popular works, Coates' *Prelude to Hong Kong* and Collis's *Foreign mud*. There is Inglis's more learned work, but still aimed at the popular market, *The Opium War*, and then

scholarly works such as Beeching's *The Chinese Opium Wars* and Fay's *The Opium War*. But the classic is and will remain Fairbank's *Trade and diplomacy on the China coast*. Finally there is Hurd's *The Arrow War* dealing with the events surrounding what is sometimes called the 'Second Opium War'.¹¹ Sayer's sources were, of course, far more limited, both in terms of original sources and in terms of published accounts. By and large, except for periods when he took home leave, he would have been limited to the sources available to him in the Colonial Secretariat Library including, possibly, the correspondence of the Colonial Secretariat, and the University of Hong Kong Library. Today, of course, we have the advantage of many other works from which we can derive our source information. The Public Record Office of Hong Kong is now a treasure-house of primary material and adds to the wealth of the University of Hong Kong Library (though it must be pointed out that Sayer must presumably have had access to materials now long since destroyed during the Japanese occupation). Much of his historical speculation has now been overtaken by documented and scholarly works such as Lo Hsiang Lin's *Hong Kong and its external communications before 1842* and a multiplicity of micro-studies, which have appeared in the *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, re-established in 1960 shortly before Sayer's death in 1962. Sayer himself tended to use broad sweeps of the brush with periodic attention to fine detail, and his writing is within a certain classical tradition. He set himself an objective and, within the limits which he set, he achieved that objective.

Before Sayer wrote this book, there had been very few attempts at an overview of the historical antecedents and development of Hong Kong. As the question of China's relations with Britain came gradually to the forefront of the minds of Britain's literate classes in the 1830s, general descriptive works flooded onto the market to satisfy eager readers. The outbreak of hostilities, the Opium War, saw a large crop of personal reminiscences of experiences in China, possibly the first being Lord Jocelyn's *Six months with the Chinese expedition* (London, John Murray, 1841). In introducing his book Lord Jocelyn confessed that 'all opinions are hazarded with the greatest diffidence as, from the slight and imperfect knowledge those most acquainted with the country have been able to obtain, very little weight must be given to the remarks and

¹¹ See the supplementary bibliography, pp. 20-21.

suggestions of any private individual.' Indeed, he went on to confess further that each piece of 'slight information' gained served only 'to show the darkness under which we are still labouring; and the faint insight hitherto obtained'.

Jocelyn himself was a cautious and cultured writer but he was to be followed by a flood of literature, mostly produced by military men engaged in the campaign and they undoubtedly fed an eager popular imagination with their accounts of their encounters with the mysteries of the Orient and of the 'Celestials' (as the Chinese were popularly called at the time). The majority of these accounts were highly coloured by the popular prejudices of the day but the sheer number of volumes of this sort which poured off the presses in the 1840s showed that they had a ready market. Some of these works were undoubtedly serious and remain important reading today: see William D. Bernard's *Narrative of the voyages and services of the Nemesis* and Sir John Davis's slightly later work in two volumes (after his retirement from the Governorship of Hong Kong) *China during the war and since the peace*. Less important is Rev. G. N. Wright's *China illustrated in a series of views*, which is best known today for the 128 engravings which have now become popular collectors' items (the so-called 'Allom engravings'). Wright's accompanying letterpress is little more than a melange of plagiarism and prejudice but it found a ready market in its day. There were many others and Sayer does not, unfortunately, include a bibliography.¹²

But it is necessary to collate and examine the secondary works which would have been accessible to Sayer whilst he was writing his history. The Opium War writings and the contemporary newspapers can be taken for granted but these were sources and not in themselves 'historical writings'.

It was not until 1861 that there appeared for the first time a work which set out to be an historical treatment of the origins and development of early Hong Kong (even though it is largely an eyewitness account of contemporary events). This was William Tarrant's *Hong Kong, 1839-1844*, first printed in weekly instalments in Tarrant's newspaper, the *Friend of China* in 1861 and the early months of 1862.

Tarrant arrived in China for the first time in 1835 at about the age of eighteen and he was thus present through all those events which led

¹² A bibliography of the works to which Sayer refers and which he has not included in his 'Abbreviations used in the references' is given on pp. 18-19.

up to the outbreak of hostilities out of which Hong Kong emerged as a British Colony. Though he intended to cover the period 1839 up to 1862, personal circumstances cut short his account when he had dealt with the events of 1844. That he was unable to complete his work is unfortunate in that Tarrant had himself been caught up in the vicissitudes of the young colony and he suffered both from the ill-will of those whom he antagonized and from the self-inflicted wounds of his undoubtedly indiscriminate pen. His account of the infant colony and of its early struggles was based on his own observations as well as on documentation and he did attempt to create a perspective which would enable the reader to evaluate the events which he recounted. It was a work of history in spite of the personal spleen which punctuates his writing and his invaluable reportage is not totally obscured.

Tarrant probably intended the work in its completed state to be an apologia for himself and his troubled career, much of it reads as a vindication of his character and reputation. Even if completed, it would never have been a great work of scholarship and Hong Kong had to wait some years before another history, entitled *Europe in China* by Dr E. J. Eitel, emerged in 1895. Eitel had access to a good deal of source material (as did Sayer, of course) which no longer exists for the use of modern researchers (some of it was lost during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong), but Eitel's inherent approach to the subject mars his extensive work in many ways. Eitel himself first came to Hong Kong with missionary intentions though his career in Hong Kong made him a Government Inspector of Schools. The moral prejudices evident in the book led a later writer, Sir Charles Collins (below, p. 9) to say that the book had the reputation of being the 'book of the bad governors', and the bias with which he interpreted events and the colours chosen by him for the broad sweeps of his brush are almost everywhere evident. But he was a painstaking author and there is much fact in his pages which is not now obtainable readily, if at all, elsewhere. Eitel certainly has his value, therefore, as a secondhand source. But he has to be read as a creature of his own time and taken for what he would undoubtedly have held himself out to be and no more.

In 1898, a few years after Eitel's work appeared, James Norton-Kyshe, then Registrar of the Supreme Court, produced his painstakingly all-embracing *History of the laws and courts of Hong Kong*. Norton-Kyshe wrote a number of books on legal subjects (including the highly esoteric

The law and customs relating to Gloves), which he assiduously drew to the attention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the vain hope that they would gain him preferment in the judicial side of the Colonial Service. London was not impressed and he left Hong Kong in 1904, a disappointed man, and on reading his *History* it is not difficult to see why. The man was a chronicler and nothing more. But Norton-Kyshe had, as did Eitel, the advantage of having access to many records now, alas, destroyed and his two-volume work, though nothing more than an unselective compilation of names and events in chronological order and in no way a work of history, is a most useful and fascinating collection of data, personalities and events with an attraction all its own and to which Sayer admits resorting.

Sayer was the next to make a serious attempt to give a real historical impress to the forces which shaped and guided the Colony, and to put in some order the principal happenings of moment by completing this present volume and when he wrote its successor volume, *Hong Kong, 1862-1919: the years of discretion*.

In 1952 there appeared a work entitled *Public administration in Hong Kong*, an account of the development of public administration in Hong Kong from the earliest days until the period just after the end of the Japanese occupation. The author, Sir Charles Collins, treated Eitel's *Europe in China* and Sayer's *Hong Kong: birth, adolescence and coming of age* as 'the standard works of reference for the earlier part of Hong Kong history' (he was, presumably, unaware of Sayer's later and then unpublished work) and commented that Sayer covered the same ground as Eitel 'though not so minutely, with greater judgment'. Nicely put!

To complete the picture, we have G. B. Endacott's three works: *A history of Hong Kong, Government and people in Hong Kong* and the posthumously published *Hong Kong eclipse*, edited by A. Birch, which is concerned with the events leading up to the fall of Hong Kong in 1941 and with the years of the Japanese occupation. Endacott's works have the great virtue of solidity and dependability though his style is turgid and his manner of dealing historically with his subject is not calculated to inspire his readers to an eager exploration through the pages of Hong Kong history. But Endacott's own purposes were probably achieved by his books and, even if they are uninspired, they are meticulous. They do give the modern reader a solid factual standpoint from which to assess the idiosyncrasies of earlier writers and to detect their fanciful or

sometimes wilful deviations from the plain truth or historical fact. But history is little without the judicious intrusion of the historian's own psyche into his professionally objective assessments and judgments. It is well to bear this in mind when taking a modern view of Sayer and we should remember that our view of the events which he describes has been influenced by many works published later. Certainly, our view of the diplomatic events which he investigates must necessarily be affected by later works such as Gerald S. Graham's *The China Station* which covers roughly the same ground as Sayer's account of the early years of Hong Kong and the diplomatic role of its early Governors (though Graham does approach his subject from a naval and military standpoint).

Why, then, should it be felt worthwhile to republish Sayer's work at a time when attitudes have moved on, when more detailed scholarship is available to us in published form?

In republishing a work in the form in which it appeared some forty years ago, there should be the implicit assurance that it is as worthy of attention *now* as it was when it first appeared. The work may represent a stage in the intellectual development of a man whose life's works are themselves worthy of critical examination, or the work itself may represent an historical point of view which contributes both to our understanding of particular historical events and our perception now of the underlying reasons of others' attitudes in time now past to those events. In other words, the work itself may have become a piece of history.

Sayer describes succinctly his own view of the historian's task in his Preface to this volume. He said that 'the business of the historian is not simply to record a sequence of events . . . but to select and to draw inferences.' It should be emphasised that he said this by way of an apology for not quoting chapter and verse to support all the statements which the book contains. Occasionally, he admitted, he allowed himself the luxury of jumping what he called a 'yawning gap' in the factual record, sometimes having the satisfaction or suffering the mortification of finding 'an ample bridge close at hand'. He even admitted that he shut his eyes on occasion to the possibility of such bridges existing though, he continued, 'I suppose several of my guesses are capable of easy confirmation or refutation by reference to official documents.' That he did not do so is a damaging admission but at least his candour may disarm to a certain extent the critic who is able to reveal the fallibility of some of his guesses and, as will be seen from the Additional Notes to

this reprint, his readable prose is not free from fallibility. It must be said, unfortunately, that, having access to the sources to which he refers in his Preface but not all of which he used, he should not have allowed himself that luxury of guesswork which, if indulged in by a historian, should at least take refuge behind the cloak of drawing legitimate inferences!

Considering Sayer and his work in this light, *Hong Kong: birth, adolescence and coming of age* in many ways cannot be seen as a part of a continuum of scholarship and writing. The work was published but one year before retirement ended his career of public service to Hong Kong and comes, therefore, more as a wave of farewell than as a casting off upon an intellectual odyssey. His second historical work about Hong Kong, covering the period 1862 to 1919, was all but finished when he left Hong Kong in 1938 and reached what he himself considered its final form the following year. The Second World War delayed its publication for some time and Sayer had some difficulty in finding a publisher for what he was content to leave as a work deliberately not brought up to date (it contains many references—as does the present work—to a Hong Kong familiar only to those who lived in Hong Kong during the term of Sayer's career in Hong Kong from 1910 until 1938). He left the manuscript substantially as it was and it remained unpublished at the time of his death in 1962. It was finally published by the Hong Kong University Press in 1975 and it represents Sayer's final statement on Hong Kong. It is unfortunate that he chose not to leave a record of his own time in Hong Kong for it was a period of immense change on the mainland of China, a period which did not leave Hong Kong untouched. Sayer undoubtedly played a significant part in the administration of Hong Kong during the troubled times of the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties, but we cannot now know his views on the events which he witnessed since he wrote purely as an historian of past events.

He took a bland, if not a neutral, and certainly forthrightly simple view of the history of relations between China and Britain. Our perspectives are different, no doubt, today and we would now probably attach more significance in the long term to the Opium War and the Arrow War than the long-popular notion that both of those wars represented sordid gunboat diplomacy in the aid of a despicable trade. Those who take that view and that view only betray their own lack of familiarity with the broader sweeps of the history of China's diplomatic, cultural

and political contact with the West and Hong Kong's role in it. Sayer's wider concern is perhaps evident in the space which he devotes to the long series of incidents and events leading up, over an extended period, to the Opium War. His work comes across, therefore, as a story both of the development of a new colonial settlement under peculiar circumstances and of trade and diplomatic relations. The most important period dealt with by him is probably that of the Arrow War and its diplomatic aftermath, the Treaty of Tientsin and the Convention of Peking.

But some features of the work as a whole do call for comment. First and perhaps foremost is his decision to build the work up chronologically in terms of 'birth, adolescence and coming of age'. This he accomplished, with the exception of the first three chapters, by treating his subject in chronological episodes tied, from Chapter IX onwards, to the periods of governorship of successive Governors of Hong Kong.

If Sayer's work were to be published for the first time today, Chapter I would be considered as directed at those unfamiliar with the geography of the region (and, in any event, it is concerned, as is the whole book to a large extent, with the *island* of Hong Kong as a whole). Chapter III is today not only unnecessary but contains a great number of inaccuracies. Sayer entitled it 'Introduction—Linguistic' and he sought to introduce his readers to the complexities of rendering Chinese expressions into the English language. This was, as he described it, 'an apology for the Chinese proper names and place-names liable to appear in the text'. It was, he said, 'a complicated subject and the reader who is unfamiliar with the Chinese language may find it bewildering.' But he also expressed the hope that the chapter would draw attention to 'the more general gulf, the immense difference in outlooks, ideals, modes of thought, habits of life, and beliefs between the two peoples who have settled side by side to make the history of the British Colony of Hong Kong' (p. 15). He drew attention, in this connection, to the role of the 'cadet' in bridging the gulf.

Whilst there are some interesting insights into the origin of otherwise obscure expressions (for example, the deriving of 'Ewo', the sobriquet of Jardine, Matheson & Co., from a Cantonese name, Ng I Wo, of How Qua, the old Hong merchant), the chapter fails to take into account or even mention the Wade-Giles system of romanization which is now doomed to extinction with the official and all-pervasive utilization of *Pinyin*, the comparatively new official romanization.

It should also be remembered that Sayer was describing a Hong Kong very much in its birth pangs: he indicated as much by his subtitle. He was seeking to describe the early struggles of an ill-equipped young colony facing an uncertain future, a colony which was left to work out its own internal problems at the same time as coping with the vicissitudes of uncertain relations with its vast neighbour. Sayer was speaking of a period of empirical government in which the few qualified to administer were forced to rely on a host of inferiors for whom civil service was a novel concept. The period he describes was one in which Hong Kong struggled for survival against a combination of political and economic uncertainty, and inefficiency and corruption within the government. It was a period of personalities who scarred public life with their animosities, yet it was a period which ended with the resolution of the problem of Hong Kong's relationship to China and the institution of a new system of more professionalized government in Hong Kong itself.

It was this period which Sayer chose to treat, a period which closed with the demise of the old and the tentative. Hong Kong was to 'come of age' in 1861 when Sir Hercules Robinson cleansed the Augean stables and, *inter alia*, instituted that new system of civil service recruitment of which Sayer himself was a part, the cadet system.

The date which he chose for the close of his narrative may have been a date of convenience but it was also a date of wider significance both internally in Hong Kong and externally in terms of China's relations with Britain and other nations. Hong Kong's diplomatic position was radically altered and it may be said that Sir Hercules Robinson, who had succeeded Sir John Bowring in 1859, had set in motion internal reforms which were to give Hong Kong a much better style of Government. A new era opened with his governorship and it was there that Sayer chose to close. His instinct, looking back, was right.

Sayer, as has been said, admitted his own fallibility. It is desirable to put the factual record straight and this is done in the Additional Notes. Doubtless there are other points which have not been picked up but the purpose of the notes is to clarify Sayer's references to a Hong Kong of 1937 with which the reader of today might not be familiar.

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