

ALL ABOUT SHANGHAI AND ENVIRONS



With a New Foreword by Peter Hibbard

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Chapter One
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

S Shanghai, sixth city of the World!
Shanghai, the Paris of the East!
Shanghai, the New York of the West!

Shanghai, the most cosmopolitan city in the world, the fishing village on a mudflat which almost literally overnight became a great metropolis.

Inevitable meeting place of world travellers, the habitat of people of forty-eight different nationalities, of the Orient yet Occidental, the city of glamorous night life and throbbing with activity, Shanghai offers the full composite allurements of the Far East.

Not a wilderness of temples and chop-sticks, of jade and pyjamas, Shanghai in reality is an immense and modern city of well-paved streets, skyscrapers, luxurious hotels and clubs, trams, buses and motors, and much electricity.

Less than a century ago Shanghai was little more than an anchorage for junks, with a few villages scattered along the low, muddy banks of the river. What it will be a hundred years from now is a test for the imagination. Principal gateway to China, serving a hinterland population of more than 200,000,000, many close observers believe it will become the largest city in the world.

Early History.—Although neighbouring cities like Nanking, Soochow, and Hangchow figure spaciouly in the chronicles of ancient China, Shanghai is very rarely mentioned. It undoubtedly formed part of the Kingdom of Wu (B.C. 513), a great feudal state that embraced the modern province of Kiangsu, in which Shanghai is situated, but the connection is not recorded. The earliest reference to what is now Shanghai is placed at approximate-

ly B.C. 200, when it was called "Hu-tuh" and known as a fishing station. From that remote date until A.D. 1280, when it acquired the name of Shanghai ("Above the Sea"), there is a marked hiatus in the historical record.

In 1554 Shanghai attained the status of a "Walled Town." The wall is stated to have been from three to four miles long and twenty-three feet in height, with six gates and twenty arrow towers. Its principal purpose was to ward off attacks by Japanese pirates, who at that period frequently raided and pillaged the coastal towns of China. The last remnants of the wall disappeared after the Revolution in 1911. The Shanghai of the 16th century was notable in another way. It was the birthplace of Lu Tsih and Wang Ke, two of China's greatest writers, and Hsu Kwang-ch'i, friend and pupil of Matteo Ricci, the Jesuit missionary.

There is nothing of outstanding importance to relate about Shanghai from the dawn of the 17th century down to 1843, when it was opened to foreign trade.

Coming of the Foreigners.—What was probably the first definite attempt to open Shanghai to foreign trade came in 1832 when Mr. Hugh Hamilton Lindsay was entrusted with a commercial mission to the North from Macao by the East India Company. He was denied entrance to Amoy, Foochow, and Ningpo, but succeeded in obtaining a hearing by Chinese authorities at Shanghai. The decision, however, was that foreign trade should be restricted to Canton. In a report of his voyage Mr. Lindsay said Shanghai had great possibilities as a commercial centre. He was right.

Friction over trade relations at Canton culminated in a conflict between Great Britain and China, the so-called "Opium War," 1840-43, and one result of this war was the birth of modern Shanghai. In the course of their operations the British sent a combined naval and military expedition to the North, captured Amoy, Ningpo and Chapoo, forced the Woosung forts and a landing party entered a district now included in the International Settlement.

Treaty Ports Opened.—Pressing their way up the Yangtze river, the British reached Nanking and the Treaty of Nanking was signed on board a British warship, August 29, 1842. The most important provision of this pact between Great Britain and China was that Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai were to be opened to foreign trade, the "Treaty Ports," as they became known. Formal declaration that Shanghai was open to foreign trade was made on November 17, 1843, following ratification of the treaty.

It is interesting to note that in this original treaty no definite provision was made for territorial acquisitions, but it was clearly provided that within the Treaty Ports "British subjects with their families and establishments shall be allowed to reside for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraint."

Following closely on the British action, the United States and France by treaties signed on July 3, 1844, and October 24, 1844, respectively, acquired the right of trade by their nationals in the Treaty Ports. Thus, in effect, all of China was opened to foreign commerce. Great Britain, the United States and France were thereafter known as the "Treaty Powers."

In its early development the boundaries of the original Foreign Settlement were the old Yang King Pang creek (now covered by Avenue Edward VII) to the South, the Whangpoo river on the East, what is now Peking Road on the North and, on the West, Barrier Road (now Honan Road), enclosing an area of 138 acres.

French Concession.—The nucleus of the present French Concession was created April 6, 1849, when the first Consul for France at Shanghai, M. Montigny, reached an agreement with the Chinese authorities for the creation of a defined district which should be under French government. The area was 164 acres.

France has ever since exercised exclusive control over its own Concession. A proposal to unite the French Concession and the International Settlement was once brought forward but failed to receive the approval of France.

Americans Join British.—It is impossible to give an exact or definite account of the formation of the original American Settlement, that section of the present International Settlement lying North of Soochow Creek and including the present Hongkew district, for it was a natural, not a political growth, caused by an expansion or overflow from the old Foreign (British) Settlement.

The American Settlement was really founded in 1848, when the American Episcopal Church Mission, under the direction of Bishop William J. Boone, the first Anglican Bishop in China, was established North of Soochow Creek, in Hongkew. Hongkew then was low and swampy, with the present Broadway the fore-shore of the Whangpoo river. The United States Consul to Shanghai, raised the American flag in the district in February, 1854.

A natural community of interests resulted in the union of the British and American Settlements in 1863, and the concurrent birth of the present International Settlement.

WARS AND ALARUMS

Throughout the ninety years of its occupation by foreigners Shanghai has frequently been the centre or a major theatre of stressful military and political action. That during this brief period, as history is measured, Shanghai, despite the many crises it has faced, has developed from a village into one of the world's principal metropolises is sufficient proof of the inherent virility of this youngest of the great cities. Being a Guide Book, not a history, this section must necessarily be brief.

The Taiping Rebellion, bringing to China one of its most terrible scourges, had its inception in Canton in 1851. A group of rebels known as the "Small Swords" fought their way northward to Shanghai and on September 7, 1853, entered and captured the Chinese City and held it until February 17, 1855. During this period of almost constant fighting between the Imperialists and rebels the Foreign Settlement remained neutral and, except for irregular and occasional violations, maintained its territorial integrity.

Volunteer Corps Formed.—As a precautionary measure of defense, when it appeared that fighting was inevitable, representatives of Great Britain, the United States and France, meeting on April 12, 1853, authorized the organization of a volunteer corps. This was the birthday of the present splendidly efficient Shanghai Volunteer Corps, which on many subsequent occasions has protected the city.

The Volunteers received their first real baptism of fire on April 4, 1854, when, operating with British and American naval parties, and unexpectedly reinforced by Chinese rebels, they dislodged a large force of Imperialists from a threatening position near the western boundary of the Settlement. This engagement, known as the "Battle of Muddy Flat," was fought at what is now the Race Course and Public Recreation Ground, in the heart of Shanghai.

Customs Service Supervised.—Another important development of this period of governmental instability was the re-organization of the customs service under foreign supervision, undertaken by representatives of Great Britain, the United States and France, the three Treaty Powers, with the concurrence of the local Chinese authorities.

The re-opening of the Custom House on July 12, 1854, may be said to mark the birth of the present admirably conducted Chinese Maritime Customs service.

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Taipings Menace City.—The "Small Swords," expelled from the Chinese City by a joint action of French and Imperialist forces, were never recognized by the Taipings but their incursion was part of the general revolutionary movement. Shanghai had a brief breathing spell but the Taiping Rebellion soon had spread over most of northern China and there was almost constant fighting during the period 1860-64. (Details of this and other periods in Shanghai's history may be obtained from the works mentioned in the Foreword to this book).

With the capture of Soochow by the Taiping rebels in June, 1860, Shanghai was again faced by a deadly menace. The situation had been further complicated by the second war between Great Britain and China, 1856-60, in which France was allied with the British, but which had slight direct bearing on Shanghai. On August 17, 1860, the rebels attacked Shanghai but found the city stoutly defended by British and French forces, the Volunteers, and foreign warships in the Whangpoo. There was desultory, long range fighting but the foreign settlements were not invaded.

"Ever Victorious Army."—At this juncture, in a concerted effort to suppress the Taiping Rebellion, one of the romantic figures of history appeared, Frederick Townsend Ward, a New England (American) shipmaster, who organized the "Ever Victorious Army," composed of foreigners and loyalist Chinese. Ward, commissioned a General by the Imperial government, led his forces in many engagements against the Taipings and was killed in action near Ningpo, September 21, 1862. His memory is still revered by the Chinese.

Ward was succeeded by a lieutenant, one Henry A. Burgevine, who soon faded out of the picture, and command of the "Ever Victorious Army" came to Charles George Gordon ("Chinese Gordon"), a British army officer. Gordon's aggressive campaign broke the Taiping Rebellion by May, 1864, and the "Ever Victorious Army" was disbanded. The rebellion ended entirely in 1865.

Ward and "Chinese Gordon."—Historians differ widely in

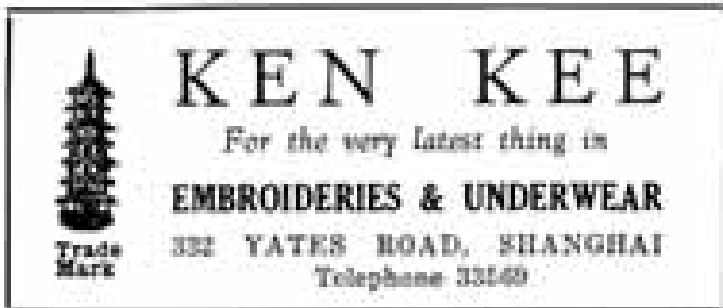
their evaluation of the character and services of the American, General Ward, but it is noteworthy that Gordon paid him a very eloquent tribute as a man and a soldier. "Chinese Gordon," as he was afterward known, served Great Britain brilliantly in North Africa and died in the defense of Khartum against the Mahdi, January 26, 1885, a gallant gentleman and officer. It is not unreasonable to assume that the joint efforts of Ward and Gordon saved Shanghai from destruction during the Taiping Rebellion.

Ward's career was a stormy one. During his early military service for the Imperialists he was summoned before the American Consul in Shanghai, charged with inducing the desertion of British and American sailors, many of whom, attracted by the promise of adventure and high pay, and perhaps loot, had joined his "Ever Victorious Army." Presumably to avoid trial, Ward renounced his American citizenship and became a subject of the Emperor.

Later, however, both British and Americans welcomed the help of Ward's army in keeping the Taipings out of Shanghai and he was hailed as a hero.

Waged with the utmost ferocity by both Imperialists and rebels, the Taiping Rebellion (1851-65) ravaged eleven of the richest provinces of China and caused the death of 20,000,000 people.

It is a grotesque fact that the years of the Taiping Rebellion proved a temporary boon to Shanghai, for from the influx into the foreign settlements of Chinese refugees there resulted an



enormous increase in population and property values, and necessarily, subsequent extension of the settlements' boundaries. There was a marked recession in population later, it is true, but permanent gains were made.

Minor Troubles.—For many years following the Taiping Rebellion, save for minor internal and major external disturbances which exercised slight effect, Shanghai enjoyed a period of growth and comparative tranquility.

There were the Ningpo Guild riots in the French Concession in 1874, in which the Chinese registered their opposition to the creation of a road through a cemetery; the French and Chinese war, 1881-85, growing out of a dispute over trade routes through Annam, which had no repercussions in Shanghai; the anti-missionary demonstrations in the Yangtze valley in 1891; the Sino-Japanese war of 1894, from which Shanghai was entirely excluded as a theatre of operations, although a certain degree of apprehension was felt, and the rioting of April 5, 1897, when the Shanghai Municipal Council increased the license tax on wheelbarrows.

The "Plague Riots" occurred on November 10, 1910, resulting from opposition to the enforcement of Public Health by-laws for the prevention of plague.

Boxer Uprising.—A strong anti-foreign spirit developed in 1899 and culminated in the Boxer troubles of 1900. The story of the siege and relief of the Peking Legations is too well known to require exposition. Shanghai was apprehensive but was not menaced.

Purely local, and serious, trouble came on December 8, 1905, however, through agitation over decisions and jurisdiction of the Mixed Court. Rioters attacked and set fire to the Louza Police Station, which later was to figure in a much more important incident. The police in this instance were under instructions not to shoot. Eventually the situation was placed under control by the police, Shanghai Volunteers, and naval landing parties. There were several casualties.