

福州

STIRRING TIMES: FOOCHOW & THE LOST JOSS HOUSE (1)

BY BRIAN L. COAK



Foochow lies south of Shanghai, where the China coast bulges lazily eastward toward the island of former Formosa now Taiwan.

Near the most easterly point on the coast, before the bulge recedes westward to the mouth of the Pearl River, the turbulent Min River comes rushing into the South China Sea. Flowing from the wild Bohai Hills, the Min bisects the Province of Fukien meaning "Province of Happiness."

Thirty-odd miles up-stream from the sea the valley of the Min widens into a plain of rice fields and olive groves, and in this valley lies Foochow, "City of Happiness," the capital city of the Province.



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Treaty of Nanking Aboard HMS Cornwallis at Nanjing 1842



The Treaty of Nanking or Treaty of Nanjing, signed 29 August 1842, was the unequal treaty which marked the end of the First Opium War (1839–42) between the British and Qing Empires. The treaties forced China to lower its tariffs.

In the wake of China's military defeat, with British warships poised to attack the city, representatives from the British and Qing Empires negotiated aboard HMS Cornwallis anchored at Nanjing. On 29 August 1842, British representative Sir Henry Pottinger and Qing representatives, Qiying, Libu and Niujian, signed the Treaty of Nanjing. The treaty consisted of thirteen articles and was ratified by Queen Victoria and the Daouyang Emperor nine months later.

Foreign trade was the fundamental purpose of the treaty to change the framework of foreign trade which had been in force since 1760 (Canton System). The treaty abolished the monopoly of the Thirteen Factories on foreign trade (Article V) in Canton and instead five ports were opened for trade, Canton (Shameen Island until 1949), Amoy (Xiamen) until 1930, Foochow (Fuzhou), Ningpoh (Ningpo) and Shanghai (until 1949), where Britons were allowed to trade with anyone they wished. Britain also gained the right to send consuls to the treaty ports, which were given the right to communicate directly with local Chinese officials (Article II). The treaty stipulated that trade in the treaty ports should be subject to fixed tariffs, which were to be agreed upon between the British and the Qing governments (Article X).

Foochow & Middle (Zhongzhou) Island 1850 where Jardine's had an opium godown.



Changhe Island—First Methodist Episcopal Mission Premises.

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The Second Opium War 1858 - 1860

The 1850s saw the rapid growth of imperialism. Some of the shared goals of the western powers were the expansion of their overseas markets and the establishment of new ports of call.

The Second Opium War or the Second China War, the Arrow War, or the Anglo-French expedition to China was a war of the British Empire and the Second French Empire against the Qing Dynasty of China from 1856–1860.

"Second Opium War" and "Arrow War" are both used in historical literature. "Second Opium War" refers to one of the British's strategic objectives: legalizing the opium trade, expanding coolie trade, opening all of China to British merchants, and exempting foreign imports from internal transit duties. The "Arrow War" refers to the name of a vessel which became the starting point of the conflict.

Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, there was an attempt to poison the Hong Kong Governor Sir John Bowring and his family in January 1854. However, the baker who had been charged with lacing bread with arsenic bungled the attempt by putting an excess of the poison into the dough. This meant that his victims threw up sufficient quantities of the poison as to only have a non-lethal dose left in their system. Criers were sent out with an alert, averting disaster.



In June 1858, shortly after the Qing Court agreed to the disadvantageous treaties of Tientsin, more hawkish ministers prevailed upon the Xianfeng Emperor to resist encroachment by the West. In the summer of 1860, a larger Anglo-French force 11,000 British under General James Hope Grant, 6,700 French under General Montauban with 173 ships sailed from Hong Kong and captured the port cities of Chefoo (Yantai) and Dalian to seal the Bohai Gulf. The Taku forts were taken being the gate to Peking.

Under a flag of truce envoys Loch & Harry Parkes went to negotiate with the Prince at Tungchow district Peking. After a day of talks, on September 29 they and their small escort of British and Indian troopers were taken prisoner and to the Board of Punishments where they were confined and tortured and some executed cruelly. Parkes and Loch were returned after two weeks, with fourteen other survivors. Twenty British, French and Indian captives died. Their bodies were barely recognizable. Lord Elgin ordered the Summer Palaces (Yi He Yuan & Yuan Ming Yuan) destroyed starting on 18 October. Anglo-French troops in Beijing began looting the Palaces immediately. Beijing was not occupied; the Anglo-French army remained outside the city.



The Treaty of Tianjin was finally ratified by the Emperor's brother, Yixin, the Prince Gong, in the Convention of Peking on 18 October 1860, bringing The Second Opium War to an end.



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Foochow Treaty Port

The city is also referred to as Rongcheng (榕城; Foochow Romanized: ̍ng-siàng) which means "city of banyan trees".

“It is difficult to describe the general appearance of such a city as Foochow. As you stand on Blackstone Hill , and look out over the city below you, the first impression is that of a sea of tiles, as all the roofs are covered with gray tiles. Then the beautiful foliage of the banyans, the lychees, and the bamboos, attracts attention and charms the eye. The tall red poles, indicating official residences and temple grounds, are numerous. The Pagodas come in for their share of admiration. The river, with its thousands of curious boats, with sails of bamboo, or of cotton cloth, and great awkward junks with their big eyes, present an animated scene. The nearer mountains, in their quiet beauty, and the more distant ranges, towering up in grandeur, complete a picture seldom rivaled, and not easily excelled.”



Middle Island or Chung Chau (Zhongzhou Island (中洲島)) was the small island in the centre of the MIn River about 3 miles south of the Foochow city wall. The island was about a third of a mile long and a quarter mile wide connected with the south and north banks of the river by a long stone bridge. For nearly a thousand years this bridge has resounded to the steady tramp of the multitudes, crossing and recrossing. So dense is the throng, that one sometimes find it difficult to keep our footing. Here, too, are men with eyes and noses eaten away by disease, piteous applicants for charity.

The English Episcopal Church was established here and the home of Foochow Lodge erected in 1881. (HMB Consulate 1841, St. John’s Church 1870 & Russian Consulate 1866 below).



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The Formation of Foochow Lodge No.1912 EC

For foreigners, known as barbarians by the Chinese, living in the Middle Kingdom was not always comfortable with long sea journeys, easy to succumb to the climate, jowl by jowl with poverty being the weight of numbers speaking 100 strange dialects. It needed persistence.



Here you can find the roots of Foochow Lodge. The foreigners living on Kulangsu island Amoy prospered sufficiently to erect two lodges, Ionic Lodge No.1781 E.C. in 1878 & next Corinthian Lodge of Amoy No.1806 E.C. in 1879. There was a strong presence of members from the Chinese Imperial Customs Service based in Amoy. Visiting though inconvenient and time consuming fostered camaraderie.

After meetings and discussion Ionic Lodge took a prominent part in sponsoring Foochow lodge and preparing for the petition dated 7 March 1881 for the warrant. The petition was proposed by W.Bro. Herbert Alan Giles as Master elect (PM Ionic Lodge No.1781 E.C.; Founder of Corinthian Lodge of Amoy 1806 E.C.; PDGSW of HK & South China; HBM Vice Consul at Pagoda Island Foochow & HBM's Acting Consul at Amoy). The petition was forwarded to District Grand Lodge with a remittance which proved to be short. The warrant dated 25 May 1881 was despatched from United Grand Lodge on 1 July 1881. The inaugural meeting of the new lodge took place on 18 March 1881 under a provisional warrant from DGM R.W.Bro. T.G. Linstead.

Herbert Allen Giles (1845-1935) Sinologist. First W.M. of Foochow Lodge No.1912 EC in 1881. He retired from Consular Service as Consul at Ningpo in 1893 and took the Chair of Chinese at Cambridge University. He died in 1935 in England at 90.



As one expects some of the local founding members of Foochow were involved in port occupations, bankers, surveying, merchants and holy orders. Noted members were **Charles Henry Brewitt-Taylor** (1857-1938) CIMC and Commissioner Chinese Customs Service and Foochow resident who taught Navigation & Astronomy. His home was wrecked in the Battle of Foochow 1884-5. He was a Member of CIMC Post Office in 1900 present at Peking Legation during the Boxer Rebellion. A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. His name did not show in the record of Foochow 1912 EC Masters between 1881 to 1981. He may have been a member of Foochow or another Lodge in China & the UK. Another prominent member was Dr. Thomas Rennie who had a port private practice and Medical Officer to the British Consulate & CIMC and Honorary Medical officer to the Foochow Native Hospital.

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Battle of Foochow 1884 -1885

On 11 May 1884 French and Chinese negotiators concluded the Tientsin Accord, an agreement designed to end several months of undeclared hostilities between France and China in Tonkin. On 23 June 1884, French troops advancing to occupy Lang Son, according to the terms of this agreement, clashed near the small town of Bac Le with a detachment of the Chinese Guangxi Army. The Chinese opened fire on the advancing French, precipitating a two-day battle in which the French column was seriously mauled. This incident, the Bac Le Ambush, was the proximate cause of the Sino-French War.

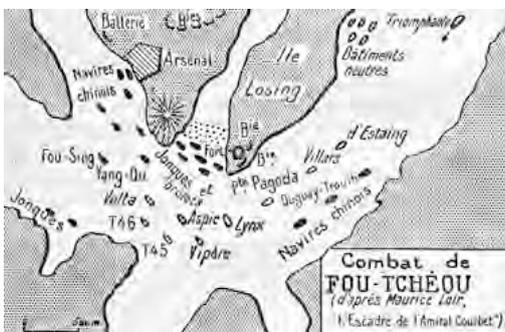
Negotiations between France and China broke down in mid-August, and on the evening of 22 August Courbet was authorized by the French government to begin hostilities.

On the morning of Saturday 23 August, although the Chinese commanders knew that the French would launch their attack at around 2.00 p.m., the sailors in both fleets went about their routine business. The ships of the Fujian Fleet made no attempt to redeploy or to anticipate the French attack by opening fire first. At 1.55 p.m. a Chinese mineboat advanced towards the French squadron. Courbet immediately ordered the attack to begin, only five minutes short of his original timetable. After attacking the Chinese fleet and bombarding the Chinese batteries.



The losses of the French squadron during the operations in the Min River were relatively light (10 dead and 48 wounded). The French estimated Chinese casualties at between 2,000 and 3,000 dead. The commemorative tablets in a shrine erected shortly after the war at the Pagoda Anchorage to honour the Chinese dead list the names of 831 sailors and soldiers killed on 23 August, (Attack on the Chinese Flag Ship Wangyu left)

Order of Battle and Min River



One member of Foochow Lodge is said to have left in 1895 on a French war ship.

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Foochow Turn of the Century & Masonic Hall 1900

China coast masons found it difficult approaching the century to muster support for the lodge due to early retirement, ill health and postings so 'calling off' was common. Despite these problems the brethren were keen to construct a building for their own ceremonial use.

Siemssen Snr. was the German Consul & Vice Consul of Sweden and head of Siemssen & Krohn & Co. and a tea exporter and other interests in Foochow. His son F.H. Siemssen became Master of the lodge in 1899.

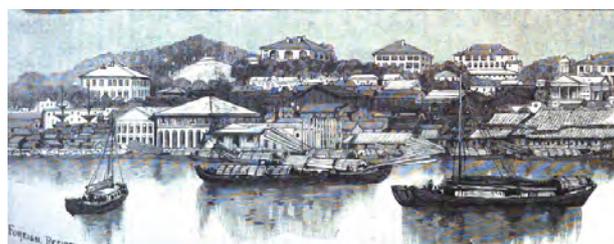
Despite short of members working at the 'quarries' the brethren acquired title of a generous plot of land with fruit trees near Jardines' godown and agent's office on Middle Island the foreign settlement in the Min River connected to the stone causeway.

By 1900 the membership increased but was clouded by the effect of the Boxer rebellion. Many Christians and followers were skinned alive or executed during this bloody campaign and Peking was seized by the international coalition a second time.

The brethren took off their ceremonial aprons and donned working aprons and tools and erected a single story structure comprising a Lodge room, dining room, changing room, kitchen and caretaker's room.

The streets of Foochow, were purposely crooked and narrow, so that if pursued by a devil, one could always shake him off by dodging around a sharp turn. The superstitious local denizens may have looked on the hall as a 'joss house' or Catch the Devil House.

The photo c.1907 below shows Middle Island and somewhere among the packed tiled Chinese little houses and European buildings and floating population is the Foochow Masonic Hall.



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Foochow Chinese Civil War 1900 - 1930

The Chinese Civil War fought between the Kuomintang (KMT or Chinese Nationalist Party) and the Communists (CPC) began in April 1927.

During the 1920s, the Communist Party of China activists retreated underground or to the countryside where they fomented a military revolt. Foochow played an important part in the events that ultimately led to the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912.

In the years that followed the Revolution, there was a succession of weak rulers in China. There were hordes of soldiers roaming the country, with allegiance to the Government, or to the greedy war lords, or to no one at all. They were undisciplined, often cruel, and followed the time honored custom of looting and living off the land.

Cruelty beget cruelty, and the sturdy Fukienese fought back. Any act of resistance brought cruel retaliation which, in turn, forced the peasants into the mountains where the change from citizen to bandit came easily. Soon the Fukien Mountains were full of bona fide bandits, soldier bandits, and peasant bandits. It was unsafe to travel the mountain paths or the river roads.

In Foochow, Communist agitators, were still busy with their anti-American propaganda so the USS Pillsbury, number 227 of the U. S. Navy's destroyer fleet, finally moved into the mouth of the Min River under forced draft. Women, children, some of the men moved out, down the steps and on board the escape craft.

It was nearly six months before residents were able to return to China. During that period some resident's houses in Foochow were burned to the ground and ended up and stripped of their possessions. All along the Coast and inland other Americans had the same experience. In some places there was real violence and American lives were lost. The anti-American campaign slowly subsided and order returned to most cities. The residents finally returned to Foochow just in time for the summer season at Kuliang hills to escape the sultry hot lower areas. (Kuliang summer houses below)



Fuzhou again became the center-stage of events during the 1933 Fujian Rebellion, when prominent leaders of National Revolutionary Army's 19th Army formed their own government, the People's Revolutionary Government of the Republic of China, in Fujian.

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The Struggle 1937-1945

With only thirteen members the 1937 Installation continued despite further angry European and Far East brooding war clouds and upheavals kept the lodge under constant threat from political influences. By 1938 the lodge was paper thin on the ground with only ten members but W.Bro. Sergeant was reinstated into the Chair.

During the Second World War, anti-Jewish and anti-Masonic publications were imported from Nazi Germany in large volume and were translated into Japanese. Japanese writers were also active in producing books of a similar nature. The situation began to deteriorate in the late 1930s and especially after the outbreak of war with China in 1937 and the attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941.

Bro. Crossland initiated in 1937 succeeded into the Chair of the Lodge on April Fool's Day 1.4.1941. Bro. J. A. Roberts wrote on 10 November 1942 to the Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge that Corinthian Lodge No. 1806 in Amoy hall was closed by the Japanese forces and the hall stripped of all documents of a Masonic nature.

In December 1941 the 'balloon went up' with a capital 'B' with the attack on Pearl Harbour and Hong Kong and with it Japanese sporadic attacks on the southern ports and the occupation of Northern China. The lodge members must have thought that their Masonic number was up.

By 1942 people changed their habits to meet the working schedules due to the bombing. Many were driven from home, drifted from town to town in search of hope and refuge. Colleges and universities took refuge far into the interior. Missionary families moved too, or stayed on with escape routes planned, essentials packed, farewells spoken, ready to move when the enemy landed. The names on the map might speak of Happiness but the mood of the coast was of terror and heartache. Despite these forebodings W.Bro.H.W. Worley was Installed.

Foochow denizens have been celebrated for its piracy and smuggling over hundreds of years but after 1941 the Fukienese became partners in the smuggling up the South China coast out of Hong Kong with the Japanese Navy. For approximately HKD \$34,000 Hong Kong dollars a month (U.S. \$8,500) Japanese Navy agents granted smugglers the right to sneak into China one tug with as many barges as it could tow up the coast. Military supplies were forbidden but gasoline was permitted.(Time Magazine 1941)

W.Bro. Jack Chubb the undaunted Installing officer for some years (the most urbane and friendly Mason the writer has ever met), W.Bro. J.G.P. Wilson & W.Bro. T.R.Kennedy (Chinese Maritime Customs) flew cross China in 1942 to escape where the 'indefatigable three' finally met up in Colombo naval base.

In April 1943 W.Bro. Pearson was installed but members were departing to other stations leaving W.Bro. Pearson alone in October 1944. Looting was rampant by Japanese soldiers. Pearson took with him the warrant and what he could carry including a copy of the land title depositing them with the Anping British Consulate up river and set off to Kunming. Two days later Pearson's residence was looted and with it the Lodge records.

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Foochow Photos Late 1945

Chinese Conquerors 'In' & Japanese Vanquished 'Out'



Early Reprisals & Public Summary Executions



Foochow Returning to Life



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Letter from Foochow PM H.E. Olsen to Mill Valley Lodge No. 356 USA 1946

Francis W. Barrington, Cmdr. Born: Feb 21, 1912

Entered: 17/10/44 Passed: 31/10/44 Raised: 14/11/44 Died: 22/7/64

Cmdr. Barrington was Boatswain (President) of the (Masonic) Anchor and Ark Club on Kwajalein Island, the Marshall Islands. The Anchor and Ark Club was recognized by the Grand Master of Massachusetts during the early part of WWII;

"The club is somewhat different from most 'clubs', it has a certain amount of secret work, some serious and some not so serious, but everyone enjoys it." The Anchor and Ark Club was petitioning for letters temporary to sponsor a DeMolay Chapter because: "A chapter is badly needed here as there is so many youngsters that have too much time on their hands, and with the brethren here I hope that we can find enough interesting work in the chapter to keep them occupied."

(Letter of January 20, 1949; Our secretary noted on the letter "Try to obtain Marin Chapters old robes when they buy the new robes".) A letter of 4 December 1946 relates how he had been quite busy in Masonry during the past year, "Helping out in the lodge at Tsingtao. When they reopened the Lodge there, there were not enough members to fill the officers, so have been filling the chairs of Junior and Senior Deacon. The work in English constitution is quite different but also interesting. The Lodge is the Northern Star of China No. 2673 E.C., in the blue book it is still listed at Newchang, but was moved to Tsingtao in 1933. Will try to remember to enclose a photo of the temple [done]. I have left China though. Left on the 19th of October, stopped two weeks in Okinawa, while there I joined their club and became a Sojourner, and am now in Guam. The lodge here, Charleston #44 has reopened and is plenty busy, they meet three times each week, and I understand that they are working every night, was up once saw two-thirds, it is good to see our work again."

There is a letter from Northern Star of China Lodge No. 2673 to Mill Valley Lodge No. 356 (San Francisco):

"I have the honour and pleasure to inform you that at the Regular Meeting of the above lodge, held at the Masonic Hall, Tsingtao, on Tuesday, 11th June, 1946, the following member of your lodge was unanimously elected a Honorary Member: Bro. FRANCIS WILLIAM BARRINGTON in recognition of the valuable services extended to our Lodge by the Brethren from the United States Naval forces in general and Bro. Barrington in particular.

On my return from Japanese internment camp I found the Masonic Hall stripped of everything in addition to damage to the building, all that we had saved was our WARRANT, we have also been able to recover a certain amount of furniture, however, I will leave it to Bro. Barrington to tell you personally of our many difficulties.

The material as well as personal assistance given to us by the Brethren of the United States Armed Forces enabled us to open the Lodge for our regular meeting in November, 1945, the first Lodge to open in Far East after the Pacific War, and I wish to place on record our most sincere appreciation for all their kindness.

I would ask you to convey to the Wor. Master, Officers and Brethren of your Lodge my personal, as well as those of the Members of the Northern Star of China Lodge No. 2673, E.C., fraternal greetings and all good wishes.

Yours faithfully and fraternally, H.E. Olsen, Actg Master

P.M. Northern Star of China No. 2673 E.C. P.M. Foochow Lodge (1930 & 1931) P.D.G.S.W.

Northern China P.D.G. Supt of W. HK & S. China

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Foochow Lodge Meet Again 1947-1948

From 1945 - 1949, a few foreigners slowly drifted back to their former stations.

All of China was imperiled by the civil war between the Communists and the KMT forces. Everywhere foreigners and Chinese alike were faced with the decision to stay on or flee. Inflation was rampant. A very ordinary dinner in Shanghai restaurant for two cost over \$250,000,000 yuan.

22 April 1947 W.Bro. Wilson acting Secretary reported a number of masons had returned to the port and a meeting was arranged to meet the following day at W.Bro. Worley's house being the first meeting of Foochow Lodge since 1944. Four Foochow members were present with four visiting masons, W.Bro. Worley W.M.acting w/o warrant.

The lodge building had been looted from the interior and only the walls were standing and it was decided to start a fund to restore the building. The photo below was taken in Foochow in 1945 and the writer believes it is the only known photo of the hall.

The warrant was thought lost but the British Embassy & Consul General at Amoy finally



returned the warrant deposited in October 1944 by W.Bo. Pearson. Without a ceremony the brethren continued to meet regularly until October 1947 at W.Bro. Worley's house until he suffered from a stroke so the venue was changed to Jardine, Matheson & Co. offices.

The civil war raged on depressing the port's economy. Zetland Lodge provided the Lodge with

four aprons and four rituals were found. The UGL contributed 500 sterling & Perseverance Lodge No.1165 donated the sum of \$654 towards the rehabilitation of the lodge building.

In January 1948 the lodge building was under repair making the ante & changing room ready by the 6 April 1948 Installation being the 560th regular meeting.

W.Bro. Jack Chubb was only one of two who could take the chair which he did.

The accounts shown ended 28 Feb 1948 income of CNC \$50,000,000 being 50% of the estimated cost of the refurbishment of the building (HK\$1,785) & CNC\$ 40,000 from sale of fruit from the Lodge trees around the building.

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The Transfer of the Warrant from Foochow to Hong Kong 1950

Following W.Bro. Jack Chubb's April 1948 Installation there was no interest of candidates coming forward as the community was only about 350,000. Swatow & Amoy lodges were already operating in Hong Kong.

By early 1949 the reconstruction of the Lodge building was mainly complete but for decoration and furnishing within the estimate skillfully worked by Bro. Wiant, an architect, using the old foundations offering pro bono advice and undertook the rebuilding work.

At the Installation on 5th April 1949 W.Bro. Chubb invested W.Bro. Wiant as Worshipful Master. However, the struggle for survival was far from over.

The Communists finally routed Chiang Kai Shek KMT faction and with it the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in 1949 and things changed and with it the appropriation of Masonic halls in China by the communists for other use!



In March 1950 W.Bro. Mitchell DGS wrote to W.Bro. Wiant inferring the advisability of transferring the warrant to Hong Kong until the Lodge could meet again in Foochow. There were candidates in the wings waiting in Hong Kong & Zetland Lodge No. 525 was prepared to sponsor Foochow if the lodge decided to transfer the warrant to Hong Kong.

The lodge members again found themselves between Cyllia & Charybdis to suffer outrages impinged on them by the new Communist regime and the agony of defeat or transfer the warrant to Hong Kong.



In March 1950 while stranded in Shanghai W.Bro. Wiant wrote to the DGS giving his assent to the transfer of the warrant. (Shanghai Masonic Hall left)

It fell to the Senior warden in charge Bro. Hawke to safeguard the Lodge's furniture and regalia and the building over which the members had spent so much time, patience and effort. As the hall was in danger of being confiscated by the new regime the building was reluctantly leased to the Foochow Branch

of the Bank of China for administrative work.

It was time to retreat gracefully from the 'City of Happiness' to fight again elsewhere. (SS Foochow shown below)



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The Lodge Revival in Hong Kong



On 12 April 1950 at an Emergency meeting of Foochow under dispensation at Zetland Hall Hong Kong, W.Bro. Quick acting Master, two Foochow Lodge members were present in Hong Kong when W.Bro. Quick & Bro. Sykes proposed and seconded 21 members of Zetland Lodge No.525 EC including DGM R.W.Bro. F.F.Duckworth and five members from other lodges as joining members. One of the joining members was Bro. H.F. Shields who was interned in Stanley Camp.

The honour fell to E.M.G. Hanlon as the first Master of the Lodge after the relocation to Hong Kong in 1950. The members got down to the task in hand including amendments to the by-laws. It also records the first Chinese joining member and the first Chinese initiate in Bros. Yeung Ying-yin and Dr. K.C.Lo. Five years later in October 1956 life in the streets was not all harmony. KMT and CPC factions again fought in Kowloon with looting leaving 59 deaths and 500 injured including the Swiss Consul's spouse who was burnt to death in her car.

Early stalwarts were W.Bro. Ken Rolfe (PWD). W.Bro. Jack Chubb (Dodwells) and our service members W.Bros. Cliff Fletcher (HKPolice), Brian Fender, Bob Holmes, Harry Worthington (Fire Services) and Dave Hampton (Correctional Service) and banking officer Stan Robertson, Len Smith (Colonial Secretariat). It is important to mention the support by our Indian brethren the Harilela brothers H.N. & J.N. with A.P & R.A. Jagtiani & H. Kima. Ted Bird was initiated in 1964 and served in office of Almoner three years and four years as Secretary.



The writer remembers too well his initiation in Foochow Lodge in 1966. It was easy to remember the date as the excesses of Mao's Red Guards & Culture Revolution spilled over into Hong Kong with the Leftist 1967's riots. Bombs (known as 'bohloh' pineapples)

and bottles filled with acid were thrown by communists from buildings and bombs placed in the streets to disrupt every day life and chaos to terrify the local residents into withdrawing support from the government calling the police 'yellow running dogs'. (See website <http://web.me.com/briancoak> 'The Hong Kong Police Finest Hour').



One remembers attempting to go up Garden Road to attend the lodge at Zetland Hall dodging the curfews and bombs after prosecuting the arrested rioters at Central Magistracy during the day.

The unlawful insurgency failed thanks to those who were prepared to stand up to terrorists but it left 51 dead including 5 police officers and 800 injured. The CCP failed to read Sun Tzu of War "For the skilled is profitable, for the unskilled it is dangerous".
(Sweet victory below)



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The Centenary of the Lodge 1981

Two years before the centenary it was decided to raise a sum of money for medical equipment for the Royal Masonic Hospital with a target figure of \$20,000. By the time of the Centenary Fund was closed the fund reached \$40,000.

On Saturday 21 March 1981 a Ladies Festival and Centennial Ball was held at the Repulse Bay Hotel exceeding 130 persons. As Bro. Trevor Berry was the Ball D. of C. so one can well expect the proceedings went with a bit of flair. The raffle raised \$1,880 for which the Master chipped in a dollar to make the sum of \$1,881 the year of the Lodge's consecration.

An application for a Centenary Warrant and jewel had been made and the warrant was received for the centenary meeting at Zetland Hall to be held on 22 April 1981. W. Bro. Ken Rolfe read the warrant and then handed it to the DGM who presented it to W. Bro. Denis Minns.

The DGM EC R.W. Bro. R.C. Lee (who was a member in 1966) applauded the efforts of Foochow Lodge over the last one hundred years of its life playing a distinguished part in Masonry in South China.

The lodge experienced the disruptions of war and political upheaval. After working 70 years in the city of Foochow, it faced in 1950 the hazards of settling itself in a new home in Hong Kong.

Bro. Trevor Berry who had been invested as a Steward deputized as Junior Warden as the JW elect was unavailable. The Resident Members numbered forty-six and fifty-one non resident members.

It was an evening to be remembered.



Back Row: W. Bro. H. Holmes (D.C.), Bro. R. Mills, Bro. E. G. Kennett (S.D.), W. Bro. K. Marshall (Asst. Sec.), Bro. I. S. Lees, W. Bro. T. E. Bird (Sec.)
Second Row: Bro. K. M. Elliott (L.D.), Bro. A. F. Wanda (Steward), Bro. E. E. S. Law (Steward), W. Bro. K. C. K. Lo (Asst. D.C.), Bro. J. Abbas (Steward), Bro. W. B. Pottar (G.L.), Bro. D. Lees (Treas.), Bro. B. T. P. Lee (Steward), Bro. N. G. Snyler (Org.)
Front Row: W. Bro. E. G. Fender, W. Bro. B. L. Cook, W. Bro. J. Arnold, Bro. K. T. O. Cui (Chap.), Bro. I. M. Miller (S.W.), W. Bro. D. Minns (W.M.), W. Bro. C. M. Leung (I.M.F.), Bro. T. C. Barry (Att. J. W.), W. Bro. H. Kims (Char. Steward), W. Bro. C. Fletcher, W. Bro. K. B. Rolfe, W. Bro. R. Jagtani.

Foochow 福州 Stirring Times & The Lost Joss House (17)

The Search for the Foochow Lost 'Joss House' 1997

W.Bro. Michael Eyles was in the chair of Foochow Lodge in 1997. It was a particular propitious year for Hong Kong residents! Many residents had already left the colony to ride it out before the PLA lorries and soldiers swept into Hong Kong to take over Hong Kong as part of China and under Beijing's wing.

To all accounts the Foochow Masonic Hall was damaged by the Japanese before the end of WW II but not demolished. The brethren found in 1945 that the building could be renovated which was done by 1949 but leased to the Bank of China in 1950 on the transfer of the warrant to Hong Kong to avoid the hall being expropriated by the communist regime.



W.Bro. Michael's mother Angelita and her aunt Kathleen, his father Denys came to visit Hong Kong. It was thought that it might be an opportunity to visit Foochow to see if we could find our old lost 'Joss House'. The intrepid band comprising Peter Wong; Michael & his mother, aunt & Denys, George and Margaret Todkill ; Graeme & May Large; Quincy Chuang; Sammy Wong; S. Bokhary; Gordon Loch & Brian Coak departed for Foochow in October 1979 arriving there with a particular bumpy hard landing at Foochow airport.

An old priest at the local Catholic Church and former Seminary (left) was sought out as he knew the locale well. The church was used as a factory during the Cultural Revolution and he was imprisoned for five years for his faith. Now with a little local knowledge the band set out around the old quarter where the old hall might be found.

One particular old dilapidated building was discovered which we thought could be the old hall but one came to the conclusion it was the former British Maritime Custom Officers building now occupied by about twelve poor families.



A visit was made to the former residence of Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu Foochow's most famous son who at the commencement of the First Opium War bared English Captain Elliot's beard for burning the English opium merchant's dirty foreign mud and the brunt of the Emperor. (See next page 18)

Another side trip was to a temple in the hills (left) which the red guards thankfully failed to destroy and the construction of a new Taoist temple where we could watch the skilled stone masons at work.

The little band left Foochow for Hong Kong with 'wet ass no fish' as one says in Cornwall without finding the old lost Joss House.

Foochow 福州 Stirring Times & The Lost Joss House (18)

The Search for the Allusive Foochow Lost Joss House 1997 Photos

The HK 'archeologist' team made enquiries with the Catholic Church parish priest and church used as a factory during Mao's Culture Revolution until renovated.



Search in Foochow old quarter & former Maritime Custom Officers Building (*right*).



Speculative Masons watching operative masons at work.



Commissioner Lin Zexu Memorial and his residence.



HK 'Wet Ass No Fish' Archeologists depart Foochow for Hong Kong





Foochow 福州 Stirring Times & The Lost Joss House (19)

Foochow Dragon Lodge Banner

The Foochow dragon (舞龙) is male and have five toes and oriental dragons are associated with water representing power, excellence, valour, boldness, heroism, perseverance and divinity and so this banner is appropriate for Foochow port.



THE WARNINGS OF THE PAST
FAINT dreamlike voices of the spectral Past
Whisper the lessons of departed ages;
Each gathering treasured wisdom from the last,
A long succession of experienced sages.
They steal upon the statesman as he sleeps,
And chanting Fancy's ear their warning numbers;
When restless Thought unceasing vigil keeps,
Trimming her taper while the body slumbers.

BLC





Dedication

We went in search of a great perhaps



To Brethren who founded us,
Those ladies who sustained us
Those we hope will follow.

By

Brother Brian Leonard Coak

