



A high-pooped junk slowly threads its way amongst the traffic of one of the world's greatest harbors—Hong Kong.

Amazing Hong Kong

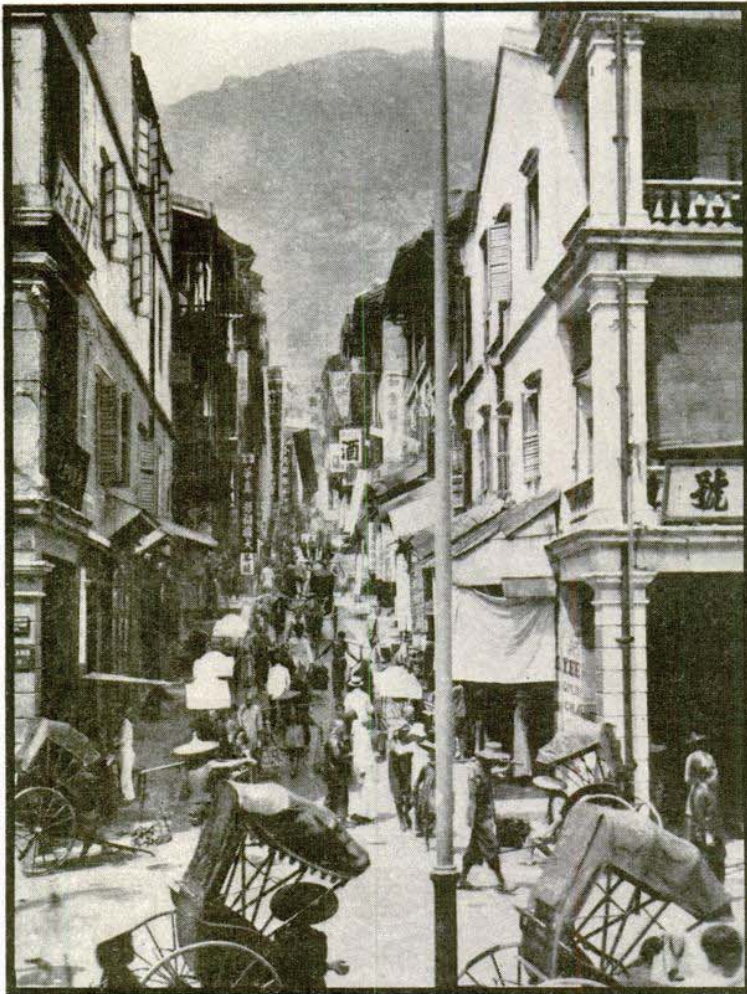
By Lillian Dow Davidson

THE large number of pretty, smartly dressed Chinese women you see on the streets!" That was my husband's reply to my question, "What strikes you most forcibly about the Hong Kong of today?"

"What an astonishing change!" I exclaimed as my mind leaped back to the streets of Hong Kong of twenty-five years ago.

At that time, it was rare to see any but coolie women, poor drab drudges, prematurely aged by

hard labor and rendered still more unattractive by their dingy, black, flapping trousers and wide, loose, clumsy jackets, making them all look fat and shapeless. The woman always followed many paces behind her man, as custom so rigidly decreed, the wind carrying back to her the few sing-song words he cared to address to her. These women of a passing age still shamble along the city roadways, their minds probably stunned at the daring of the very



case the frame is both dainty and pleasing. One thing, however, calls for admiration. Although the minds of these young Chinese women must have leaped centuries of Chinese inhibitions in acquiring their modern ideas, yet, withal, they were sensible and loyal enough to want to retain their own more becoming oriental garb,—but with modifications. The Chinese men, in the Treaty Ports especially, have donned the complete outfit of Western clothes and wear them remarkably well.

In fancy I can almost see the birth of the modern “long gown” of the Chinese women. About a table upon which is spread the age-old Chinese tunic and trousers, a group of Chinese women, lead-

*Here one may buy—well, anything
—a rug, carved ivory, and if one is
lucky—perhaps a piece of choice jade.*

*The great Bank of Hong Kong
through which flows silver (not
gold) from the tradesmen's counters
and back again.*

modern young Chinese who so boldly and defiantly oppose that enslaving dragon, Tradition.

Two things above all must horrify them; first, that these sheltered members of the gentry should appear in public at all and, secondly, that they dare to place themselves on a par with Chinese men by walking side by side with them on the streets, and even appearing with them at such places of amusement as cinema shows and at dances at hotels and restaurants. In truth, I am as dumbfounded as they at such an unbelievable change, seeming as if a miracle had taken place in this thought-to-be “Unchanging East.”

One of the Hong Kong British newspapers, in an editorial, boasted of the beauty of the Chinese girls of that city and justly so for nowhere else in China did we see a greater display of comeliness. Clothes always help to frame beauty and in this



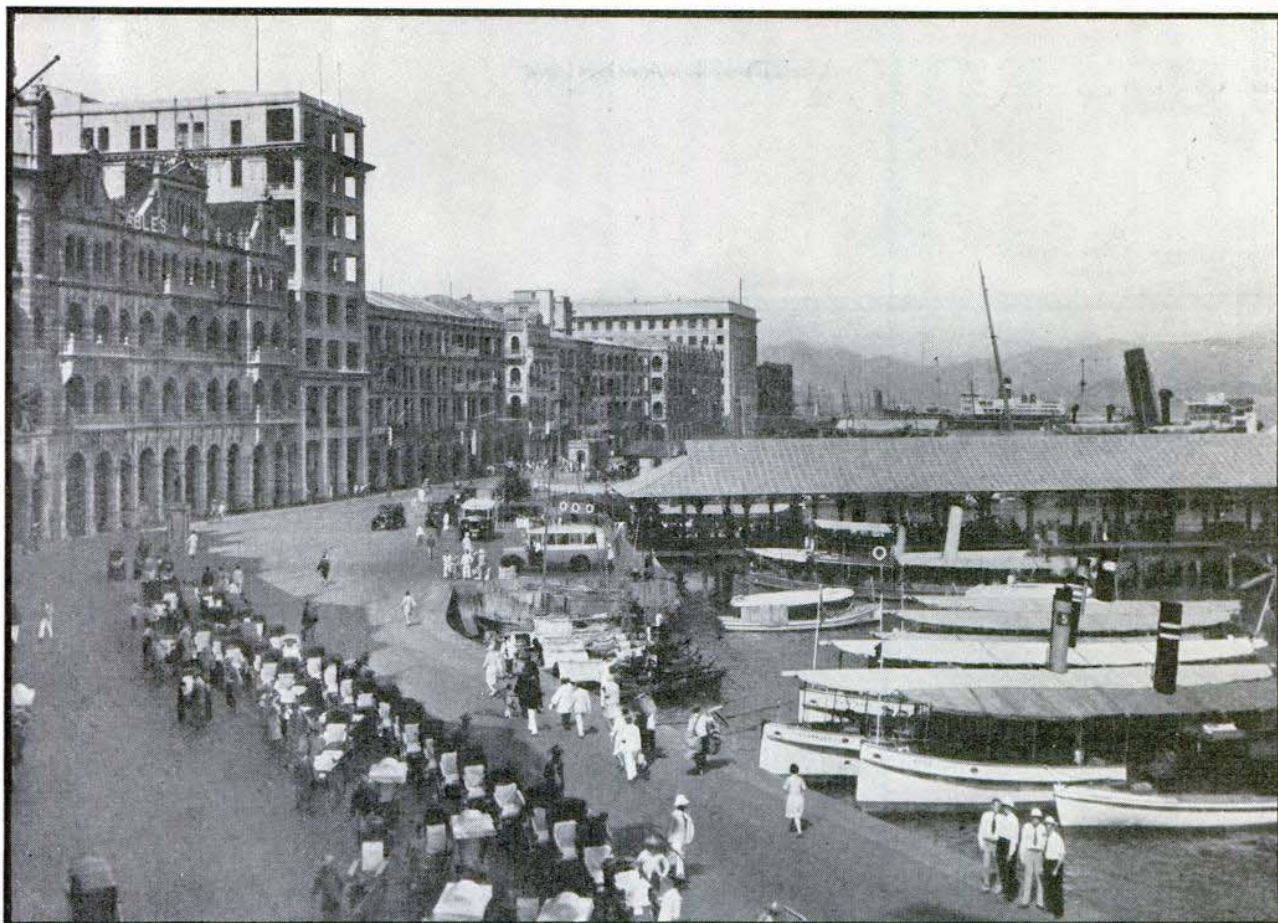


Photo: R. Moultn, from Ewing Galloway, N. Y.

Here along the West Praya, occupied mostly by banks and mercantile firms, one buys and sells to the constant hum of international trade.

ers in the new movement, are gathered. By mutual consent the trousers are discarded because of their ugliness, and they turn their attention to the tunic, seeing possibilities of modernizing it. The characteristic side fastening with its cute decorative frogs, so thoroughly Chinese, is good, so they decide to keep it, likewise the high collar; the sleeves are too long and too full, so they must be taken in and shortened to elbow length; scissors must be applied freely on the sides of the too-wide garment to make it fit snugly but easily and by lengthening it, it would look much like the sheath-like one-piece gown of the West. The resulting simple but modest costume of rich material revealed for the first time in thousands of years the slender, graceful bodies of these little ladies. Smartly coiffed bare heads and up-to-date European shoes set this dress off to perfection.

EVEN the Chinese food in Hong Kong seemed a subtle blend of East and West. Doubtless our host and hostess, a Chinese doctor, a Rotarian, and his wife selected only dishes that were pleasing to the Western palate. Always in China one sits at a round

table for the food is placed in the center and each guest helps himself constantly throughout the meal to any of the dishes he desires. As chopsticks were used, I proved so inexpert that the Chinese ladies sitting near me saw to it that my private bowl was always well filled from the source of supplies. Among the dishes were these: chicken with walnut meats, exceptionally good and my favorite; roast chicken done to a turn; crab meat, bambooshoot and egg omelet; small squares of garupa fish fried in deep fat to a rich golden brown; asparagus with crab meat; stewed shark's fin with crab gravy; stewed chicken with bambooshoots; mashed chicken in bird's-nest soup; rice with shrimp, pork, ham and egg; fried chicken noodles (chau min), etc. Steaming, perfumed towels were brought around at the beginning and end of the meal to cleanse the hands.

Beautiful, sky-soaring Hong Kong with its peak almost two thousand feet in height and lovely wooded slopes casts its own unique spell. European homes, invariably white in color like the villas on Lake Como, encircle the peak, drop down the slopes, palatial, with their massive [Continued on page 44]



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Amazing Hong Kong

[Continued from page 35]

many-arched verandahs, so typical of Hong Kong, and nestle among the soft green trees. Nowhere else could one find a city with a more entrancing residential district. Here sites-with-a-view are not for the favored few but for all. Below is spread out a delightful panorama of the long harbor, the water of which is dotted thickly with the most curious and interesting water craft imaginable from the odd looking "Hermes," air-craft carrier attached to the British China Squadron which is located in these waters during the winter season, down to the fraillest sampans of the Chinese water folk. Busy little ferries ply constantly back and forth between Hong Kong and Kowloon on the mainland opposite.

The most amazing thing about Hong Kong is that the British and they alone have made this island city what it is today, the most beautiful city in the East with one of the busiest harbors in the world. In the beginning of time, Nature covered the island with trees but the Chinese peasants, poor souls, needed firewood so badly that they, in the course of centuries, denuded the land, so much so that the island of Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain 89 years ago by the Chinese Government, who deemed it worthless for it was as barren and bald as a potato. But far worse than this, it was notoriously unhealthy and had but one Chinese village upon it whose inhabitants when not fishing were plying their more lucrative trade of piracy.

The British people when confronted by a combination of evils such as these are at their best and with dogged determination set about conquering them. They planted millions of trees, cleaned out the pirates and set to work to make it a healthful city but not without the sacrifice of many European lives before they met with success. Besides the magic touch of beauty, they raised it to a commercial city of the first magnitude. Statistics speak louder than words. They

show at a glance the present importance of Hong Kong as a distributing centre. In 1928, 52,278 vessels with a total tonnage of 37,640,694 entered and cleared this port. In 1931, imports and exports totaled £165,000,000 or \$820,000,000.

There is a terrible manifestation of nature in the shape of Tai Foons (Big Winds) against the fury of which the British of Hong Kong must needs match their brains. The typhoon of 1906, coming as a complete surprise, took a life toll of 10,000 Chinese and fifteen Europeans; fifty-nine European ocean-going vessels, representing 72,185 aggregate tons were driven ashore or otherwise very badly damaged and 2400 Chinese craft were lost. The British officials then grimly put their heads together to devise a comprehensive system of signals. When a red T is hoisted in several points of the city, a typhoon is within 300 miles of Hong Kong, a black signal shows it is within 180 miles and then all shipping activity ceases, large ocean-going ships proceed to safety anchorages while the smaller craft run for one of three large typhoon shelters. An hour-glass signal indicates that the gale is expected to increase while a black cross shows that it is expected soon. Because of these warnings when the typhoon of 1923 swept over Hong Kong, the wind reaching a record velocity of 130 miles, it did far less damage than the former one. Rarely does a year pass by without a typhoon. While we were there one day the red flag was hoisted and the ferries stopped running but fortunately it veered off to the north.

IN COMING to Hong Kong we reached the last of the big cities established by Great Britain through Asia. We were struck with the far-sightedness of the British statesmen responsible for establishing these cities as free ports, on a basis of freedom and equality to all. There is no red tape whatsoever upon arrival. The briefest examination is made mostly in connection with the Health Department and this may even be overlooked if there is no special reason to suspect contagious diseases in other ports. Once ashore, there is the same complete absence of formality and the stranger, if a prospective resident, regardless of his race, color, or religion enters the contest to make a living on equal basis with the British who are certainly not coddled nor given any advantage over the men of another country.

MANY special trains will handle the movement of Rotarians and visitors to Seattle for the Rotary Convention, June 20-24. Districts and a number of the larger clubs already are making arrangements for solid Pullman trains to carry their delegates.

No one railroad has been authorized by Rotary International as the official railroad. Various districts and clubs are selecting those railroads which offer the most from the standpoint of convenience, service and saving of time.

And now in regard to the organization of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong my husband wrote: "I am glad to reach Hong Kong because I would be approaching that part of the world in which I had lived thirteen years, nine of them in Formosa, across the way, although I had little hope of finding out here many whom I had known, for changes in this part of the world are very numerous.

"Furthermore, I was looking forward with pleasure to the task of organizing a Rotary club here. There had been many previous efforts made to organize, all of which had failed. I was convinced and still am that a Rotary club can be started in any city with sufficient population providing one knows his Rotary and is in a position to spend the time necessary to do the work. There is the occasional group who have become interested in Rotary through some favorable contact with Rotary elsewhere made by one of their number which will welcome anyone who will come along and help them, but it was not my good fortune to find such a situation in any of the larger cities.

"Though working in an honorary capacity, I considered that it was my particular business at the time to organize the club regardless of opposition and I was not attempting it as some had done before me who were unable to give sufficient time to the task or whose primary object in the city was either business or sightseeing. I approached the difficult problem in Hong Kong without any fears of failure. I was fortunate in the fact that the new Governor, Sir William Peel, had come to Hong Kong from Kuala Lumpur and that he had attended the official inauguration meeting there. As he was seated next to me at this dinner meeting, I was able to tell him much about Rotary.

"I had explained to Sir William that the gentlemen I wished to meet were such as would be representative of the official business and professional community and include representative Chinese. For I believe the greatest service that Rotary can render in these Asiatic communities is that of developing friendship among the different races and nationalities resident there, so often antagonistic toward each other, and I feel that if Rotary rendered no other service it would be well worth while.

"Among the eight letters of introduction received from the governor, three were to representative Chinese who stood high in the confidence of both the Chinese and European communities. They very kindly volunteered to divide the Chinese list among them and to have a

preliminary interview with prospective members. Such of these as displayed interest were then brought together at one of the Chinese social clubs in groups of four to six. I enjoyed those meetings very much. They were a fine type of Chinese, cultured, advanced, and capable. Nearly all spoke perfect English. Many were university graduates, all very hospitable and interested in the ideals of Rotary, the primary object of which is a development of a better understanding and friendship among different nationalities. The Chinese ladies were no less delightful and Mrs. Davidson, Marjory, and I were the recipients of hospitality from them which we appreciated very much.

"Regardless of pleasant features, the organization of the Hong Kong Club was a difficult task, requiring a month's stay which included two meetings of the board of directors following the organization. The inaugural dinner was held December 8th with over eighty present including guests. All of the Press were very kind in their efforts to help the movement, one of which in commenting upon the meeting stated that perhaps

never before had there been brought together in Hong Kong a group representative of so many different vocations, officials, business men, educationalists, engineers, scientists, important men in their respective lines and representing both European and Chinese communities. The officers were: president, Sir William Hornell, active head of the Hong Kong University; vice-president, Hon. Dr. S. W. Tso; honorary joint secretaries, Mr. L. F. C. Bellamy and Mr. B. Wong Tape; treasurer, Mr. N. J. Perrin; directors, Hon. Mr. W. E. L. Shenton, Messrs. Allan Cameron, Chau Yue-Teng, J. M. Wong, Wong Kwong-tin, and B. Wylie.

"Hong Kong was the last city on my program of club extension. With it we could truthfully say that Rotary was now a world-wide organization for now practically every city of importance from the Mediterranean to the China Sea and the Pacific had its Rotary club. From Hong Kong on, my duty consisted of official calls on existing clubs in the Philippines, North China, Manchuria, Korea, and Japan and to interest such clubs in extending Rotary to the smaller communities in their vicinity."