

# Parsi Contributions to the Growth of Bombay and Hong Kong

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Many Parsis (Parsees) were involved in the trade between India and China during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the money they earned from this lucrative trade, they made significant contributions to the development of both Bombay and Hong Kong. The large number of traders involved, the frequency of their visits to China, the volume of trade, and the fact that some of the traders decided to make Hong Kong their home all point to the vast wealth the traders amassed with a potential for more. Most of the traders involved were from western India, particularly Bombay. Therefore, the accumulated wealth found its way back to Bombay to help develop commercial activities, industries and shipyards. The China connection did not contribute merely to the economic growth and urbanization of Bombay. Chinese influences were reflected also in the social, cultural, political and intellectual life of this fast-developing commercial capital of India. An important aspect that needs to be highlighted is the volume of philanthropy the Indian traders indulged in, both in Bombay and Hong Kong. They were in the forefront for any worthy cause that merited a generous donation.

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The Parsis in Bombay started as guarantee brokers to British firms, and then entered into partnerships, banking and insurance, and real estate before they became entrepreneurs and pioneered the establishment of cotton textile mills. They contributed in a big way to religious institutions and created charitable trusts to promote education. The establishment of hospitals, medical colleges and research centers, and a college for art and architecture were some areas where their philanthropy served the noble cause of higher technical education. The Parsis were also among the earliest to start retail merchandising stores. They maintained cordial relations with the British Government while being active in political associations. They were associated with social and cultural activities involving not only their co-religionists but also the entire city of Bombay and their native province of Gujarat.

## PARSI COLLABORATION WITH EUROPEAN FIRMS IN BOMBAY

The doyen of Parsi traders in China in the first half of the nineteenth century was Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, who made several voyages to China between 1799 and 1807. He was in close association with Sir Roger de Faria, through whom he entered the trade in the first place. China fascinated him as a land of opportunities. While on his third voyage, from June 1803 to Dec. 1804, he not only consolidated his business but also established agencies at Madras and Calcutta as well as in Southeast Asian countries. On his fourth voyage he met William Jardine in a chance encounter. He established the most successful opium business at Canton and became their principal collaborator in Bombay. After 1816 he was broker to Bruce, Fawcett and Co.<sup>1</sup> Besides Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy,



many other Indian merchants also maintained relations with European firms and did business with them. Pestonjee Bomanjee Wadia, brother of the master builder Jamsetjee, was a partner of Bruce, Fawcett & Co. who operated in Bombay between 1789 and 1816. Hormusjee, another brother, had close relations with Forbes, Smith and Co. Dady Nasserwanjee was a partner of Alexander Adamson, a senior merchant of the East India Company, and later his son Ardesir Dady was their partner. Messrs. B. and A. Hormusjee used to consign to Dent and Co., and Muncherjee Jamstjee was a partner of Pope, Hamilton & Co.<sup>2</sup>

#### BANKING

The Parsi traders in China took the lead in establishing banking institutions and other related organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and insurance companies to facilitate business activities. The prominent merchant Dadabhoy Pestonjee Wadia (adopted by his maternal grandfather Pestonjee Bomanjee Wadia) was one of the founders of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and became a committee member in 1836. In December 1836 he was the only Indian member of the provisional committee to establish the Bank of Bombay. He was one of the promoters of the Oriental Bank, and at one time held three-eighths of the entire shares.<sup>3</sup> Framji Cowasji Banaji, another great Parsi, known as Lord Leicester of western India, was associated with the Bank of Bombay and the Chamber of Commerce. Cowasjee Nanabhoy Davar took the lead in founding the Mercantile Bank of India, which commenced business in 1853. The early shareholders were divided almost equally between European and Indian residents, with the Parsis the largest body of proprietors. The first Board of Directors had a balanced composition with three British and two Parsi directors.<sup>4</sup>

The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation was born on the eve of the tremendous speculative boom that occurred in Bombay in 1864.<sup>5</sup> The Hong Kong taipans from many nations founded it to finance the trade and development of the East. The founding of the Hong Kong Bank “may be described as a merger into one specialist corporation of the Bombay interests of the old agency houses.”<sup>6</sup> Of the fourteen members of the provisional committee,



Bank of Bombay. (All illustrations courtesy of Rustom Jamsetjee, Seventh Baronet).

three Indians represented the Bombay interests. They were Rustomjee Dhunjeeshaw of Messrs P. F. Cama and Co., Pallanjee Framjee of Messrs P. & A. Camajee and Co., and Arthur Sassoon of Messrs David, Sassoon, Sons and Co. The HSBC played a major role as banker and counselor in the finance of trade between India and China, which, so long as it remained legal, involved the finance of opium exports to China. The speculations in Bombay brought down many Indian Houses, and by July 1866 both Parsi members had left Hong Kong.<sup>7</sup> The taipan of David Sassoon and Co. continued to serve on the HSBC Board of Directors, except during World War II.

#### REAL ESTATE

The wealth earned through commercial activities was invested in buildings and bungalows all over Bombay. Cursetji Cowasji built the ‘Grant buildings’ at Colaba that were later owned by Kharsetji Fardunji Parekh, another China trader.<sup>8</sup> Properties in Parel, Mazagoan, Breach Candy, Cumballa Hill, and Lal Baug still stand testimony to the vast investment in real estate.<sup>9</sup> The Readymoney house and the Banaji house in the prime Fort area of Bombay are offices of the descendants of the erstwhile China traders. The many Parsi colonies all over Bombay inhabited by Parsi families are held as trust property by the charitable trusts charging nominal rents in prestigious and posh areas. Dadabhoy Pestonji Wadia was regarded as the owner of half of Mazagoan if not the Island of Bombay. He and his brother Muncherjee owned a large number of buildings in different parts of the island. Besides, they owned a large area of vacant land in Sewri near



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the seashore, which was later converted into salt pans. It was a good source of income to the owners, and the government benefited as well by realizing taxes.<sup>10</sup>

## SHIPPING

Since the Parsis were in the forefront of trade and commerce, they realized the importance of owning ships. Parsi merchants in the China trade usually shipped their merchandise in Parsi-owned ships. Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy took the shrewd decision to buy a fleet of ships to save freight charges, which swallowed most of the profits.<sup>11</sup> Pestonjee Bomanjee Wadia and his brother Hormusjee of the famous Wadia shipbuilding family made immense contributions to the development of the Bombay dockyard. Their involvement in the promotion of the shipping business is equally noteworthy. Framji Cowasji Banaji, who made a fortune trading in silk and opium with China, was a major ship owner. His brother Cursetjee Cowasji, also a China trader, owned several ships. At one time the Banaji family owned as many as forty country ships. Other prominent ship owners, the Dadiseths, the Readymoneys and the Camas, were also shipbuilders.<sup>12</sup>

According to Amalendu Guha, the significance of the Bombay shipyards lay not just in the number of ships that it produced but also in the forward-looking mindset that it helped to generate among Indian entrepreneurs. Christine Dobbin writes, "the Bombay dockyards assisted the transition of the Parsi mentality from mercantile to industrial by way of technological innovation."<sup>13</sup>

## INDUSTRY

The amount of capital sunk into the shipbuilding industry seems to have paved the way for subsequent Parsi industrial ventures. In fact, shipbuilding was a pre-industrial endeavour that was overtaken by Parsi investment in the cotton textile industry. Instead of investing only in land, as was generally the case of merchants and traders elsewhere, the Parsi merchants launched Bombay as a center of the modern cotton industry.

The earliest Parsi venture was the Bombay Spinning and Weaving Mill founded in 1851 by Cowasjee Nanabhoy Davar.<sup>14</sup> This triggered the setting

up of many textile mills such as the Bombay United Spinning and Weaving Co. by Mangaldas Nathubhai, the Maneckji Petit Manufacturing Company by Sir Dinshaw Petit, the Royal Mills (later Dinshaw Petit Mills), the Mazgoan Spinning and Manufacturing Co., the Victoria Spinning and Manufacturing Co., the Framji Petit Spinning and Manufacturing Co., the Golden Mills (later Bomanji Petit Mills), and the Bomanji Hormusjee Spinning and Weaving Mill by Bomanji Wadia. Merwanji Bhavnagari and Pallonji Kapadia established the New Great Eastern Spinning and Weaving Mill. These mills were started mainly with the Parsi entrepreneurs' own capital and contributions from relatives and friends.

The entry of "the Tata family into modern cotton industry is an excellent example of the fact that in the process of industrialization... the merchants have converted themselves into industrial leaders."<sup>15</sup> Before the Tatas emerged on the scene, Bombay mills had specialized in weaving coarse cloth for home consumption, or spinning the lower counts of yarn suitable for the Chinese market. Later the Tatas decided to compete with British manufacturers by spinning a finer yarn and weaving finer materials from local cotton.<sup>16</sup> The pioneering force in this venture was the Swadeshi Mills, the yarns of which had considerable success in the Chinese market.

Jamsetji Nasarwanji Tata, a great industrialist and well known as the father of Indian industries, was the founder of the renowned firm Messrs. Tata and Co. in Hong Kong and did extensive business on a large scale in textile goods. He was a pioneer of the cotton manufacturing industry and owned four large spinning and weaving mills in India. Jamsetji was the founder of the Tata Iron and Steel Works at Jamshedpur, the city that was named after him. The prosperity of the Indian trade with China and other parts of the world was due to this and other large industrial and hydroelectric works to which he contributed.

The Parsis were associated with every economic activity of consequence. They purchased shares of the great Indian Peninsular Railway and founded the Bombay Steam Navigation Co. and the Parsee Insurance Society.<sup>17</sup> Parsis established local businesses by retailing imported goods from Europe and China. Bhikaji Behramjee Pande first seized the opportunity and opened a shop at Meadow Street in 1725.



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## RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE WORKS

A strong tradition of giving charity among the Parsis, coupled with the relatively poor finances of the Bombay government, meant that many of Bombay's early buildings, roads and other facilities—some of them still landmarks of Bombay—owed their origin at least indirectly to profits from the China trade. Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, known as Sir J. J., was particularly generous with his public endowments, which amounted to about 2.5 million rupees altogether.<sup>18</sup> His philosophy of life was to participate in public activities for the growth of Bombay and to share his wealth for the common good by pioneering institutional philanthropy. Victims of fire, flood and famine got his generous support. His public activities won Sir J. J. considerable renown as an enlightened citizen. The extensive and diverse philanthropy of which he was the pioneer won him the gratitude of millions of Indians.<sup>19</sup>

Sir J. J.'s major public activity was his role in the Parsi *panchayat* of which he was a trustee from 1823-59. It performed quasi-judicial functions. He was a great believer in the Zoroastrian religion and authored *Kholaseh-I-Panchayat*, castigating the clergy for their ignorance.<sup>20</sup> However, he was by no means orthodox or unduly conservative.

Sir J. J.'s benefactions included fire temples, *dharma-shalas* (rest house or a temporary place of residence), *dakhmas* (tower of silence) and gifts of utensils. Fire temples (*agiaries*) with which his name is associated are in Surat, Pune, Navasari, and the Gamadia Agiary built by his sons out of his estate. He had a well sunk to benefit the residents of Colaba. The Sir J. J. Bund & Water Works in Pune cost him 173,050 rupees, while the government contributed Rs 84, 499. Avabai, wife of Sir J. J., shared his love for the city and his passion for uplifting the poor.<sup>21</sup> She sponsored the joining of Bombay to the thickly populated island of Salsette. The Mahim Causeway was built at the cost of 140,000 rupees donated entirely by Lady Jamsetjee.

Other Parsis involved in religious and charitable works include Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney, who provided thirty-two decorative fountains set up to provide drinking water.<sup>22</sup> Framji Cawasji Banaji got the Dhobi Talao tank cleaned and deepened in 1832 at a cost of Rs 20,000. Pestonji Bomanji Wadia was also a liberal patron of charitable institutions. His greatest contribution to the community was the stone

steps he built from Chawpatty right up to the tower of silence in memory of his mother Hamabai.<sup>23</sup> Dadabhoy Pestonjee, a prominent trader, was a public-spirited citizen and philanthropist. He rebuilt the Udvarda Atesh Behram building, the Atash Dadgah at Vadi Bunder, a *dar-e-meher* in their property at Lalbaug and a *dharma-shala* in Bassein. He also gave a donation toward a new tower of silence (*dakhma*) in Bombay.<sup>24</sup>

## EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES

Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy did not receive any formal education, but he wanted his name to be linked with every endeavour to diffuse education among the people.<sup>25</sup> He set up the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsi Benevolent Institution, which founded nineteen schools, including two girls' schools. Eight of the surviving schools run by the SJJPI are doing great service to the cause of

Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsi Benevolent Institution.





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education. Among the many diverse philanthropies, one that stands as the most remarkable is an endowment of 100,000 rupees toward founding a school of art. At a time when education was in its infancy and schools could be counted on one's fingers, the establishment of the Sir J. J. School of Art in 1857 was a remarkable act of benevolence. In 1878 the school shifted to its own building. In 1958 the government decided to trifurcate the school. Today the Sir J. J. School of Art, Sir J. J. College of Architecture and the Sir J. J. Institute of Commercial Art bear testimony to the foresight of this great visionary. Dadabhoy Pestonjee Wadia contributed Rs 1,500 towards the Elphinstone Professorship fund.<sup>26</sup> Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney spent about 1.4 million rupees on charity, which included an endowment of Rs 300,000 to build the Convocation Hall of the University of Bombay.<sup>27</sup>

At a time when there was no hospital for civilian patients, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy opened the Bombay Native Dispensary in 1834. In this effort he encountered difficulties. Therefore, Sir J. J. decided to make a donation of Rs 100,000 for a hospital. He augmented

the amount by a similar offer and a further donation of 50,000. The foundation stone of Sir J. J. Hospital was laid in 1843 by the then Governor of Bombay, Sir George Arthur. The old building of the hospital was replaced by a new eight-storeyed structure in 1958. Today the J. J. hospital is one of the leading public hospitals in Bombay. The first free Cosmopolitan Home for the Aged in India and the first obstetric institution were also established due to his generous grants.<sup>28</sup>

The Petit Sanatorium, built in memory of F. D. Petit, a China trader, and the B. D. Petit Parsi General Hospital are still receiving generous support from Parsis in Hong Kong.

Pestonjee Hormusji Cama, who had been a businessman in China, established the Cama Hospital.

## ART AND CULTURE

Two events in October 2002—An Exhibition of Paintings, Photographs and Artifacts of the Parsee, "Portrait of a Community" held at the National Gallery of Modern Art; and a Seminar, "Treasures from the



Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Hospital.



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Zoroastrian World” organized by the Bombay Museum Society—brought to light the India-China connection in the fields of art and culture. The collection of paintings and photographs displayed and the holdings of the Prince of Wales Museum (now Chatrapati Shivaji Museum) revealed an interesting cultural link that developed during the heyday of trading activities.

Parsis brought to India the richest of Chinese silk weaving, and their first significant contribution to the economic aspects of the arts and crafts of India was in the field of textiles. Chinese traders carried exquisite linen, embroidered cotton and silk to India, which were much sought after by the Parsi ladies who lived in Bombay in the early decades of the twentieth century. The display of a China connection in their lifestyle was a status symbol.<sup>29</sup> The most distinctive item of Parsi clothing, the *gara*, was made in China for the Parsi dowagers. These saris of thick silk, fully hand embroidered, showed scenes from Chinese mythology or social life.

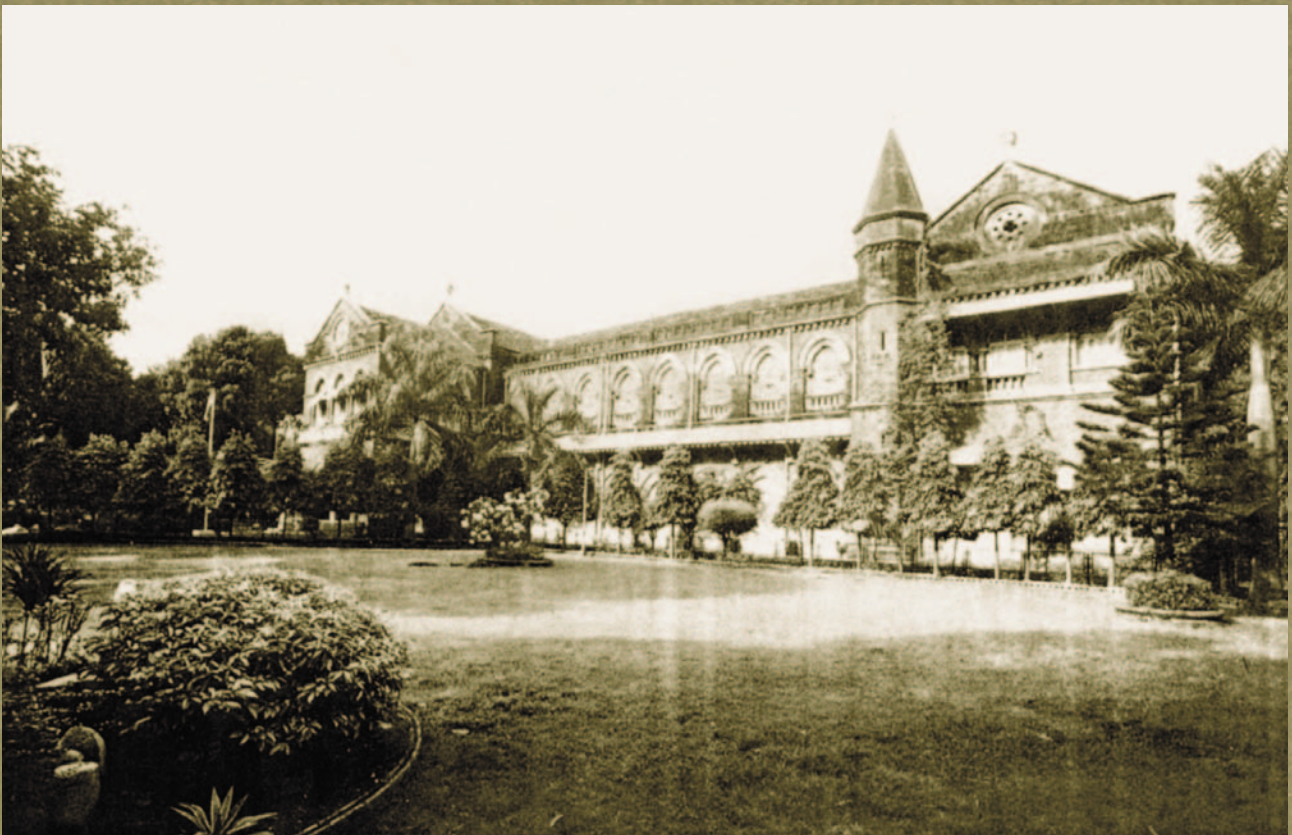
Parsi traders probably introduced the *gara* in India in the nineteenth century. It was patronized by

them and worn for weddings and *navjote* ceremonies. The original Chinese *garas* were considered quite bulky to wear as saris since they had embroidered borders on all four sides. There were typical scenes of Chinese life—pagodas, shrines, riverbanks, soldiers and cranes. The more intricate the designs, the more expensive the *garas* became.

Chinese characters, which appear on some saris, are taken to be the embroiderers' signature.

The *sali garo* and *tanchoi* were originally Chinese crafts, the *tanchoi* being named after the three (tan) Parsi Joshi brothers from China (Choi) who learnt the technique and brought it to India. Based on Chinese embroidery, it contains motifs of birds, animals, flowers, scenes and stories, often with clear Chinese influences e.g. pagodas and Chinamen. Many *garas* dating to the nineteenth century are precious heirlooms of the past, a celebration of the Indo-Chinese trade.<sup>30</sup>

Some Parsi portraits were also painted by Chinese artists visiting India or based in China. Portrait and glass painting became very popular in China in the



Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy School of Art.



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nineteenth century, especially in Canton. One of the most popular and prolific artists was Lamqua, who operated a studio in Canton with a team of assistants. Among the interesting Chinese paintings were a pair of 1830s unsigned oil portraits of Framji Pestonji Puatuck and his son Kaikhushru, another of Kooverji Katrak, and one by Sunqua of the 'Children of the Chandabhoy family'. The latter shows the children dressed in traditional costume, complete with embroidered prayer caps.

The Parsi furniture, with its distinctive carvings, shows cross-cultural links, including Chinese.

Sir Ratan Tata has an unparalleled collection of art, especially Chinese jade, including numerous small snuff bottles. They formed the most important single collection at the Prince of Wales Museum when it opened.

## OTHER PIONEERING WORKS

The name of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy is associated with a number of other pioneering public works and activities.<sup>31</sup> In 1852, when the first political association, the Bombay Association, was founded, he was voted the first honorary President. He was a patron of journalism and literature and provided substantial help to the Bombay Samachar founded in 1822 by Furdoonji Marzbanji. He was on the syndicate of the *Bombay Times* and *Journal of Commerce*, later renamed the *Times of India*. Sir J. J. gave money to Pestonji Maneckji for the Jame-Jamshed Press. He was also one of the owners of the *Bombay Courier*. Sir J. J. was one of the five fellows appointed to the University of Bombay in 1857. All the big Parsi traders were prominent members of the Parsi *panchayat*. The British appointed several to the Grand Jury or as Justices of the Peace. This ensured that they also exercised considerable political clout in their community and in the city. The major China traders thus were not just wealthy men, but constituted a fairly small, close-knit elite dominating various aspects of the life of Bombay right through the nineteenth century.

Sir George Anderson, Governor of Bombay, invested Jamsetjee with the rank and title of Knight of the British Empire in May 1842. This was followed by the presentation of a gold medal studded with diamonds in December 1842. Knighthood was not

considered a sufficient recognition for this enlightened citizen; the Queen conferred on him the Baronetcy in her birthday honours list in May 1857. The last precious honour by the Bombayites was a statue in his honour erected after his death. The statue still stands at the Royal Asiatic Library in Bombay.

Sir J. J.'s death in 1859 evoked a spontaneous outpouring of grief; the city schools, factories, offices and mills remained closed. Flags were flown at half-mast. His last rites (the *uthamna* ceremony) were observed not only in Bombay but also in towns of Gujarat touched by his munificence, by Parsis in India and even in Hong Kong. His name is included among the great Zoroastrians in all religious ceremonies even today.

## THE PARSI ROLE IN HONG KONG

Having given an outline of the Parsi contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of Bombay, we will survey in brief the important role the Parsi merchants played in the commercial, sports, social welfare, educational development and community work of Hong Kong. Even today they remain active in business and in other spheres of Hong Kong life. As noted earlier, the Parsis were among the first merchants from the Indian subcontinent to recognize the excellent possibilities of the China trade.<sup>32</sup> They saw the opportunities for huge profits in the opium trade and ran or chartered opium clippers for that purpose. Though the Parsi firms gradually engaged in businesses that were more connected with Hong Kong than with India, some continued to trade in Indian goods, such as cotton yarn, metals, spices, opium, precious stones, pearls and silk. Parsi dominance of trade declined during the early twentieth century when Chinese merchants entered the overseas market

## REAL ESTATE

When Britain took possession of Hong Kong, four Parsee merchants moved at once to the new colony from Macao where they had been living temporarily. Dhunjibhoy Ruttonjee Bisney, Hirjibhoy Rustomjee, Pestonji Cowasji and Framji Jamsetjee were among the first purchasers of land in June 1841.<sup>33</sup> By taking over some forty sites offered by the government, they



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contributed to the future prosperity of the colony. As the conditions stabilized, more merchants moved to Hong Kong and made it their home.

Dorabjee Naorojee, one of the earliest residents of Hong Kong (he came from Bombay in 1852), was an enterprising and prosperous merchant. He built large godowns at Wanchai and did storage business, thus relieving the congestion in the Indian trade from which the merchants were suffering.<sup>34</sup> He owned several properties in Kowloon and was responsible for the development of Kowloon as a residential area.

Hormusjee Ruttonjee, who arrived in 1884, joined his kinsman already in business in Hong Kong.<sup>35</sup> The Ruttonjee family became well known for their public service and generous philanthropy. J. H. Ruttonjee developed property in Kowloon, having an interest in the Kowloon and Palace Hotels.

Hormusjee Navrojee Mody reached Hong Kong in 1858 as a junior assistant, but with his enterprising spirit and foresight soon rose in prominence as one of the leading merchants of the colony.<sup>36</sup> In partnership with Sir Paul Chater, Messrs. Chater and Mody conducted business with such acumen and ability that they made themselves known as prominent financiers and owners of large properties in Hong Kong and Kowloon. They organized the Praya Reclamation Scheme, which proved very successful. The lofty and imposing Prince's and Queen's buildings are the largest built by them. This Central portion of the town is a prominent business and banking center of Hong Kong. He had special faith in the development of Kowloon at a time when it was almost an empty area, and he invested heavily in real estate there. When Kowloon started to develop as a residential area, the government wanted a large portion of Mody's estate to make a public road, and he generously granted that portion of the land free. In recognition of this valuable gift, the government named it Mody Road.

## BUSINESSES

The Parsis in Hong Kong engaged in a variety of businesses. Trading in a variety of products to and from India was their main business until they made Hong Kong their home and started participating in numerous other activities for the economic growth of Hong Kong and their own prosperity. Hormusjee

Mody switched from opium trading to exchange and share brokerage, in which he was eminently successful. This won him the respect and confidence of leading banks and the mercantile community of Hong Kong.<sup>37</sup> Hormusjee Ruttonjee, after having served with P. F. Daver and B. P. Karanja and Co., opened his own store in 1891 dealing in provisions, wines and spirits first at Lyndhurst Terrace and later at D'Aguilar Street. His son, J. H. Ruttonjee, expanded the business and diversified into imports and exports, agencies and real estate. He had an interest in the Kowloon and Palace Hotels, and after World War I he established a successful brewery.<sup>38</sup>

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Dorabjee Naorojee, after working with Duddell & Co., auctioneers and provision merchants, branched out as a baker and held for many years a contract to supply provisions to His Majesty's Army and Navy.<sup>39</sup> In 1870 he appears first as manager and later as owner of several hotels both in Hong Kong and Kowloon, including the Victoria Hotel, the King Edward Hotel and the Kowloon Hotel.

D. C. Tata of the Jamshedji Tata family traded chiefly in Indian and Japanese yarns, manufactured piece goods and sundries, in which he continued a successful business that later became Tata, Sons & Co. The Tatas are still active in business in Hong Kong.<sup>40</sup>

## EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES

Until the late nineteenth century, Hong Kong had a small College of Medicine and the Queen's College that catered to the advanced educational needs



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of the port city. When the medical college was incorporated in 1907, the then Governor Sir Fredrick Lugard proposed that Hong Kong should establish its own university.<sup>41</sup> It would provide a unique opportunity to assist China in the acquisition of modern technical and scientific knowledge. Lugard's appeal for funds did not at first attract much support; many Chinese were still suspicious of Western learning, while most European businessmen felt that a university was an unnecessary luxury. Hormusjee Naorojee Mody offered \$150,000 for the building and \$30,000 as an endowment. This munificent gift is Hormusjee's noblest and most enduring gift to the city that had made him successful and prosperous. His generosity received much praise and appreciation from the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Viceroy of Canton. His Majesty King Edward VII appointed him Knight Bachelor for this excellent philanthropy. Governor Lugard made this announcement in 1910 before a large distinguished gathering at the time of the laying of the foundation stone of the University. Mody's example inspired others, and at the time of the foundation itself over \$1,250,000 was promised for various faculties of the University.

Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee, who was among the earliest Parsi traders to purchase land in Hong Kong, transferred Marine Lot 10 to Jardine, Matheson and Co. and promised \$12,000 for the purpose of building a seaman's hospital.<sup>42</sup> However, when the Hospital Committee tried to secure the money, they were unable to do so as Rustomjee had apparently neglected to transfer the funds to Jardine. However Jardine stepped in to assume responsibility for the contribution and added another \$20,000. It was intended to be named the Heerjeebhoy Hospital but received the somewhat mundane name of Seaman's Hospital, later known as the Royal Naval Hospital. Much later the Hormusjee Ruttonjee family took special interest in the Hong Kong anti-tuberculosis association. When the former Naval Hospital was taken over as a hospital for tuberculosis patients, it received a Parsi name—the Ruttonjee Sanatorium—after the family of the principal donor.

## MISCELLANEOUS

When industry began to develop in Kowloon, Dorabjee Naorojee made his outstanding contribution

to Hong Kong by starting the Kowloon Ferry Company that later developed into the present Star Ferry Company.<sup>43</sup> It also contributed greatly to the development of Kowloon as a residential area. Dorabjee was a lover of flowers and had a beautiful garden in Kowloon. He encouraged horticulture and, more than any other resident of the city, promoted the growing of fruits and vegetables. He lived in Hong Kong for fifty-two years, and in his humble and unostentatious way contributed his mite to building this thriving and prosperous city.

Hormusjee Mody of the Hong Kong University fame took a prominent part on the local turf and owned the famous Buxey Stables. He named his ponies after roses and was an outstanding figure at the races, where he entertained friends. This noble and generous-hearted man not only worked for the welfare and prosperity of the people of this colony but also never forgot his co-religionists in India and subscribed liberally for the relief of the Bombay Parsis.

The Parsis made generous contributions to famine relief in China in the form of rice to the starving poor in Canton in 1858, and their good example was followed by others.<sup>44</sup>

One of the earliest contributions of the Parsis to Hong Kong was the provision of a bandstand in the Botanical Gardens, which was opened to the public in August 1864. Surrounded by trees, it is one of the very pleasant but inconspicuous features of the garden now.<sup>45</sup> The Parsis placed five Victoria Jubilee fountains in 1887 at different spots in Hong Kong. They were ornamental iron, and each cost \$1000. Ten years later, on the occasion of Her Majesty's second jubilee, it was necessary to bring them into functioning order again. In 1911 a question was raised in the Legislative Council concerning their state of disrepair. All of them seem to have disappeared over the years.

The Parsis maintained cordial relations with the British and were genuine in their loyalty to the Crown. Hormusjee Mody donated the great bronze statue of Her Majesty Queen Mary that stands in Statue Square. Several leading Parsi firms raised funds at the time of the jubilee in 1887. A Zoroastrian memorial service was held at the Parsee Club in 1910 to mark the death of King Edward VII.<sup>46</sup>

These are some of the many examples of the significant contributions that Parsis made to the life and growth of Hong Kong. **RC**



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## NOTES

- 1 There are several biographies of Sir Jamshetjee Jejeebhoy, such as B. K. Karanjia, *Give me a Bombay merchant—Anytime! The life of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Br. 1783-1859*, University of Mumbai, 1998; C. S. Nazir, *The First Parsi Baronet; Jehangir R. P. Mody Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy: the first Indian Knight and Baronet*.
- 2 Thomas L. Layton, *The Voyage of the Frolic: New England's Merchants and the Opium Trade*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press 1997, pp. 197-9.
- 3 Ruttonjee Ardeshir Wadia, *Scions of Lowjee Wadia*, Bombay 1964, pp. 110-2.
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