Chapter 4

The Rosa and Braga families in Macau and Goa, 1714-1841

Part 1 – the Rosa family in Macau

Europeans colonising distant parts of the Earth seldom arrived with the intention of learning much of the people among whom they settled. Instead, they maintained resolutely as much of their own culture as possible. Marcel Yvan was surprised to find that, after nearly three centuries in Macau, its inhabitants had adopted none of the cultural attributes of the Chinese Empire to the fringes of which they had clung for so long – domestic architecture, furniture, language, dress. They remained resolutely Portuguese in all respects save one, the necessity of intermarriage with local people.

The same was true of their governmental and community organisations. Macau, like all far-flung Portuguese communities, conformed in practically every detail to the systems of local government, justice and to the benevolent institutions that had developed in Portugal during the fifteenth century. Naturally, the same is true of its ecclesiastical arrangements. However, the missionary task the Church set itself in early years did shape the form and outlook of its seminaries. Perhaps the most enduring organisation of Portuguese Macau was its camara, the municipal council, universally known locally, as it was in Goa, as the Senado, the Senate. Founded in 1583, it remained largely unaltered until 1783, when its powers were severely curtailed by royal decree which required that ‘no decision could be taken without the governor being heard’.285 They were further reduced in 1833 as part of a general overhaul of municipal arrangements, and then continued until 1999, exercising more limited functions.286

285 Não tomasse qualquer decisão sem que fosse ouvido o Governador. M. Teixeira, Toponimia de Macau, vol. 1, pp. 59-60. This implies the Governor’s consent. I am indebted here and at other points in this thesis, to the skilled assistance and advice of Alberto Guterres in clarifying the relations between governor, council and citizens in early Macau.
286 M. Teixeira, Toponimia de Macau, vol. 1, pp. 45-46; C.R. Boxer, Portuguese society in the tropics, p. 44.
However, for most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Senado in Macau exercised in the Portuguese community what were in effect paramount powers, because the mandarins of the Casa Branca refused to deal with the governor, whose jurisdiction effectively extended only to the various fortifications. Here too, the Senado dominated to the extent that it supplied the ordnance and paid a miserable
pittance to the garrison.\textsuperscript{287} By contrast, in Goa, the Viceroy’s powers exceeded those of the \textit{Senado do Goa}, although the Senate was set up at the foundation of the city of Goa itself in 1510.\textsuperscript{288} Albuquerque’s immense influence as the conqueror of Portuguese Asia meant that the Viceroy had unquestioned authority for more than three centuries afterwards.\textsuperscript{289}

Despite this, the prestige and authority of the \textit{Senado do Goa} made membership of it a prize coveted by citizens. It was at this point that the status of the Portuguese-born men and Goanese of mixed blood sharply parted company. Pure-blooded Portuguese men, \textit{reinóis}, in effect recent arrivals, were the only people who might aspire to positions of eminence.\textsuperscript{290} This led, over time, to the expectation that an elite of parvenus would hold sway. It rewarded aspirational young men who came from Portugal. They may have come from humble origins, but once they arrived in the East, it was not difficult to acquire the manner, bearing and self-confidence that would ensure success.

Another path to prominence in the East was the purchase of a position. Always short of money, the Portuguese court was well known for selling offices, even quite minor ones. A major position in Portugal itself or in Brazil might prove costly. A judicial post in a minor African colony or in far off Macau, just a quiet backwater, might be attainable to an aspirant with little money and no family distinction. This appears to have been the background of two young men who became the forebears of the Braga family, later to achieve distinction in its own right in the British colony of Hong Kong. The first was Manuel Vicente Rosa, from the small town of Tancos, who took up the position of \textit{Ouvidor} (a judge appointed by the Crown and therefore of high standing) in Macau in 1714. The second was Félix Fernandes, who on arriving in Goa in 1739 from the city of Braga, assumed the surname Braga with its

\textsuperscript{287} Ibid., p. 54. These unfortunates, usually from the African colonies, received what was left, if anything, after all other expenses had been met, especially the exactions of the mandarins. The Senate even had to pay the stipend of the bishop, often years in arrears.
\textsuperscript{288} C.R. Boxer, \textit{The Portuguese Seaborne Empire}, p. 280.
\textsuperscript{289} However, the garrison at Goa fared badly too. Because of the threat from the Marathas, whose territories lay close to its Indian possessions, the Portuguese Government was obliged throughout the eighteenth century to maintain a garrison of about two thousand European soldiers. ‘These soldiers were miserably paid and as miserably fed.’ J.N. Fonseca, \textit{An historical and archæological sketch of the city of Goa}, pp. 180-181.
\textsuperscript{290} C.R. Boxer, \textit{Portuguese society in the tropics}, p. 67.
connotations of social eminence. Each was to make his mark in the place of his choice.

Manuel Vicente Rosa and his heirs and descendants for the next four generations were prominent members of the business community of Macau throughout the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{291} Fr Domingo Navarrete had written in 1670 of ‘the Broils, Uproars, Quarrels and Extravagancies there have been at Macao’.\textsuperscript{292} They continued unabated in the following century, and the Rosa family were enthusiastic participants in them. There is no record of a Rosa family in Macau before 1704, the year in which Manuel Vicente Rosa is thought to have arrived. Many years later, Marcel Yvan was surprised to find in Macau ‘two rival governments, or rather two contesting powers, perpetually striving to extinguish each other’.\textsuperscript{293} That had been the situation for most of Macau’s history. Rosa, who saw himself as the founder of something like a dynasty, also saw himself as the leader of the cohort ranged against the governor for at least part of his 47 years in Macau.

According to Jorge Forjaz, that indefatigable researcher of Macau’s genealogy, his father was Vicente Rosa, who was born about 1650 in the small town of Tancos, in Vila Nova da Barquinha, in the district of Santarém, Estremadura province, some 80 km from Lisbon along the valley of the River Tagus.\textsuperscript{294} It was a little known place, not prosperous and certainly not the country seat of a distinguished family with noble ancestry. Yet this was an age when young men could arrive in the colonies and acquire instant gentility. One had only to be Portuguese-born to be seen as one of the fidalgos, the gentry. Prosperity, dress and deportment would effortlessly achieve in the East what could never be gained in the homeland, where mere merchants could never attain fidalgia or nobreza, gentility or nobility. Given that the whole of Macau’s population, Portuguese and Chinese, survived through trade, strict rules of gentility could never be applied.\textsuperscript{295} Yet in 1710, not long after Rosa’s arrival in

\textsuperscript{291} Some sources use the name ‘da Rosa’ or ‘Roza’. J. Forjaz, \textit{Familias Macaenses}, uses the form ‘Rosa’, which is the correct form and has been followed here.

\textsuperscript{292} J.S. Cummins, \textit{The travels and controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete}, vol. 2, p. 270.

\textsuperscript{293} M. Yvan, \textit{Six Months among the Malays and a Year in China}, p. 300.

\textsuperscript{294} J. Forjaz, \textit{Familias Macaenses}, vol. 3, p. 295. Nothing else is known of the origins of a man who achieved prominence as soon as he arrived in this distant Portuguese outpost. Speculation that, in the light of his subsequent career, he may have had legal training must remain just that.

\textsuperscript{295} This was despite the presence of some families descended from the fidalgia e sangue e espada: the old nobility, the nobility of blood and sword. These included the d’Almada e Castro family, who would eventually become prominent in the early history of Hong Kong (Information from Alberto M.
Macau, a royal decree, confirming a requirement of the Viceroy at Goa in 1690, stated that the posts of the municipal government of Macau cannot be given to ‘*os que não forem nobres*’ – ‘those who are not nobles’, while recognising that this did not require descent of pure Portuguese blood, given that few Portuguese women ever went to the East. Thus this qualification grew more elastic, and could be claimed by any resident with some degree of education.\(^{296}\) Whatever his background may have been, Manuel Vicente Rosa was from the first one of the *poderosos*, or ‘great ones’ in the community, or ‘people of influence’ in Macau.

He was born in Tancos, his father’s home town, about 1680, and arrived in Macau about 1704. He made, said Forjaz, a large fortune in commerce, and was regarded as ‘one of the most powerful and influential businessmen of his time’.\(^{297}\) This suggests that he may have started with some capital. Like all successful businessmen, he was also a public figure. Among other positions, he was a councillor of the Senate and held the significant position of *Juiz dos Orfãos*, Judge of Orphans, in 1712. An unpaid position, normally held for three years, it gave the incumbent experience in administration, and showed whether he was suitable for higher office.\(^{298}\)

The position of *Ouvidor* in a small colony was of singular importance, especially when, as in Macau, the governor’s position was relatively weak. As a Crown appointee, the *Ouvidor* was responsible to the Crown through the Viceroy of India at Goa, but not accountable to anyone in Macau. Thus there was plenty of scope for the holder of the office to use it for his own benefit, for he was both Chief Justice and administrator.\(^{299}\) ‘These men are kings out here’, wrote a young adventurer to his father, recommending that his younger brother join him in the East as *Ouvidor* in Goa.\(^{300}\) The post had been abolished in Macau in 1642 following a petition from the citizens, but was re-established in 1702, leading to a renewed succession of abuses.

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\(^{297}\) C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese society in the tropics*, p. 175.


\(^{299}\) C.A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao*, p. 49.

In the next ten years, two holders of the office were quickly removed, the second, Thomaz Garcez do Conto, being recalled to Goa as an excommunicated prisoner after a year in office, having fallen foul of the bishop.\textsuperscript{301} The next appointee, Rosa, did not last long either. He held the position only from 1714 to 1716. The office itself did not endure, and was again briefly suspended in 1740.\textsuperscript{302} A century later the administration of the \textit{ouvidores} of this period would be described as a ‘torrent of iniquity’.\textsuperscript{303} One instance of Rosa’s use of his position against an enemy was striking.

The number of wealthy, powerful men in Macau at a time when commerce was declining can only have been few. Wealth created rivalry and enmity. Among Rosa’s enemies was António de Albuquerque Coelho, who as President of the Senate in 1712 played a leading part in the re-establishment of commercial relations with Cochin China and conducted negotiations with the Heungshan mandarins. His critics, chief amongst whom was Rosa, gained the ear of the Viceroy of Goa, Vasco Fernandes Cesar de Menezes, who ordered his arrest and return to Goa in 1714 to answer charges of ‘tyrannous behaviour not only to the citizens of Macau but equally to the foreign nationals who sought to trade in that port’.\textsuperscript{304} When these instructions reached Macau, Rosa took advantage of his position as \textit{Ouvidor} to imprison Albuquerque Coelho in the fortress of Nossa Senhora da Guia.

However, when the case reached Goa, Menezes not only quashed the charges but went on to appoint Albuquerque Coelho to the post of Governor and Captain-General of Macau. By the time he eventually returned in triumph to Macau in 1718, his enemy, the despotic Rosa, had already been removed by Menezes from his position as \textit{Ouvidor} under orders from Goa, following a petition from Macau.\textsuperscript{305}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{301} C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., p. 167.
\bibitem{302} G.A. Gomes, \textit{Efemérides da história de Macau}, p. 76.
\bibitem{304} C.R. Boxer, \textit{Fidalgos in the Far East}, p. 245.
\bibitem{305} The episode was dealt with at some length by M. Teixeira, \textit{Os Ouvidores em Macau}, pp. 89-91, C.R. Boxer, \textit{Fidalgos in the Far East}, p. 206, and C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., p. 167. Boxer, however, identified the Viceroy who restored Albuquerque and removed Rosa from office as Menezes’ successor, the Archbishop of Goa, Dom Sebastião de Andrade Pessanha.
\end{thebibliography}
Rosa may have grown more circumspect following this severe reversal of fortune. The record of his activities following this contretemps is a catalogue of commercial dealings, growing wealth and importance and a significant role in community leadership.\textsuperscript{306} Perhaps the most significant document bearing his name of which a record has survived was a carefully worded memorial to the Kangxi Emperor in 1719, accompanying a gift of selected European delicacies and curiosities. Significantly, the gift did not include clocks, which were already known to fascinate the Chinese.\textsuperscript{307} That was probably beyond the straitened means of the Senate. The Address, signed by the vereadores (councillors) of the Senate, headed by Manuel Vicente Rosa, carefully avoided claiming Portuguese sovereignty over Macau, and shrewdly stopped just short of acknowledging vassalage. It was occasioned by the imperial prohibition of navigation to foreign countries, which did not include the Portuguese, but put a stop to Chinese external trade.\textsuperscript{308}

\textsuperscript{306} M. Teixeira, Os Ouvidores em Macau, pp. 85-88.
\textsuperscript{307} C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., p. 137. The great Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci, had enchanted the Viceroy of Guangzhou with a clock as early as 1582.
\textsuperscript{308} C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., p. 129.
Whether it was drafted by Rosa cannot be known, but as his was the first signature, this may have been so. It may be presumed that he was the President of the Senate.

The Portuguese of Macao govern the place, Manoel Vicente Rosa etc., with all the others, have always received immense favors of your Imperial Majesty, whose name fills all the world, and lately a new one bestowed upon us by not being included in the prohibition of navigating the southern seas; we have more than ten thousand mouths to provide for. The favor of not being comprehended in the prohibition is above all comparison great, and certainly we can never acknowledge it as we ought. To shew in some way our thankfulness, we have selected a few articles, which we at present transmit to the Tsung-tuh, or Viceroy, begging him to have the goodness to present them to your Imperial Majesty, and we shall be very happy, &c. Macao, 1st March, 1719.

Signed, M.V. Rosa, &c. 309

What this letter did not convey was the Senate’s rejection of the emperor’s offer to centre at Macau the entire foreign commerce of the Chinese Empire. 310 For this catastrophic error of judgement, discussed in Chapter 1, Rosa must take his share of responsibility. However, the Senate would take the opposite view in 1732, having seen the commercial necessity for such a step. As a leading participant in the situation, Rosa was likely to have been part of this sea-change.

As a private trader, Rosa was a successful shipowner, dealing, among other things, in rice shipped from Siam to Macau and China. 311 Despite these successes, or perhaps because of them, he became ‘o mais rico e o mais odiade de toda a praca’, the richest and most hated man in the whole place. 312 He remained influential, too important to be ignored. 313

310 C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., pp. 129-130.
312 A contemporary comment, quoted by C.R. Boxer, without citation, in Renascimento, November 1943, p. 458.
313 In June 1719, he was a member of a delegation of three: himself, Pascoal da Rosa and Manuel Leite Pereira, sent as envoys by the Senate to the Viceroy of Kwangtung to receive a present from the Emperor of China to the Senate. M. Teixeira, ‘A Missão Portuguesa no Siao’, in Boletim Eclesiástico da Diocese de Macau, vol. 60, no. 703, November 1962, p. 933.
In 1724, lacking an heir, he considered returning to Portugal. But the governor, superiors of the religious orders, members of the Senate, and other influential citizens asked him to stay. The resolution of this assembly was corroborated by the Viceroy of India who, in a letter of 11 January 1725, expressed the desire of seeing him continuing his work in Macau.314

The following year, in 1726, Rosa vindicated their opinion of him when he gave 726 taels of silver for expenses relating to Alexandre Metello de Sousa’s embassy to the Chinese Emperor.315 A long series of disputes followed. In 1731 a later Ouvidor, Moreira da Souza, was sent in chains to Goa by order of the Captain-General and Governor, António Barretto, who had been bribed by Rosa, it was alleged, with ten gold bars. Moreira da Souza too was reinstated, with orders from Goa to send back both Barretto and Rosa, also in chains, for further enquiries. Rosa escaped by seeking sanctuary in the seminary.316 It may have been then that he withdrew to Bangkok, where he had trading contacts, returning when the fuss had died down.317

More than thirty years after the Albuquerque Coelho imbroglio, another Menezes was appointed Captain-General and Governor of Macau in 1747. António Telles de Menezes became instantly feared by personally thrashing one of the judges, António Pereira Braga, for neglect of his duties. Rosa pursued this second Menezes with implacable animosity. He did not have to wait long for an opportunity. A fracas concerning the Chinese customs officials spun out of control, leading to the death of two Chinese and thus placing several Portuguese soldiers in peril of strangulation by the Chinese authorities. Menezes was accused of handling the affair badly, and this was held to be grounds for impeachment. The accusation was supported by Rosa, no stranger to bribery, with a present of solid gold oranges to the Viceroy in support of

314 *Arquivos de Macau*, February 1965, p. 127 and March 1965, p. 148. See Note on Sources for an explanation of this series.
315 M. Teixeira, ‘A Missão Portuguesa no Sião’, in *Boletim Eclesiástico da Diocese de Macau*, vol. 60, no. 703, November 1962, p. 933. This was in addition to the 18,500 taels that the Senate was required to raise to finance this grand expedition. To do this, it had to mortgage its revenue, and its finances were crippled for over thirty years (C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese society in the tropics*, p. 56).
316 Recounted at length by C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., pp. 168-170. The seminary was either the Jesuit *Seminário do S. Paolo*, which remained active until 1762, or the *Seminário de Nossa Senhora do Amparo*, razed to the ground in 1749 at the insistence of the *Casa Branca* mandarin for sheltering a Chinese catechist caught proselytising in his native land. *Historic Macao*, pp. 178-179.
317 According to an unreferenced note in J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/7.2/88 – Rosa, Manuel Vicente.
the allegation. This time, Rosa had the satisfaction of seeing his enemy removed for good, first being imprisoned in Guia fortress. Of all such turmoils, the Macanese historian Montalto de Jesus had this to say: ‘The colonies, all stunted by the royal trade monopoly, were further blighted by the blinded, suicidal egotism of Portuguese merchants’, contrasting this deplorable situation with the Dutch, whose prosperity, he maintained, was mainly due to their solidarity of purpose.

As often happens with wealthy, driven businessmen focussed solely on amassing personal power, wealth and prestige, Rosa had a succession problem. After many years’ residence in Macau, he married Isabel da Cruz, sister of another rich merchant, António da Cruz. She died not long after, probably before 1738, leaving a legacy of $10,000 to the convent of Nossa Senhora do Rosário. With no heir, and in his fifties, Rosa sent home to Portugal for his nephew, Simão Vicente Rosa, a young man of twenty, to come to Macau, be adopted by his uncle, marry well and soon inherit his rich uncle’s fortune. It was a prospect that the nephew, impecunious and with no prospects, could not resist. He arrived in Macau on 3 October 1738, and sixteen days later was married off to Maria de Araújo Barros, a bride pre-selected by his uncle. Teixeira hinted that the bride was ugly; be that as it may, there were seven children by 1750.

Manuel Vicente Rosa died the next year, aged about 70, confident that the succession problem was solved. He was to be seen in retrospect as one of the three most important personalities of eighteenth century Macau. The next Rosa generation would become still richer, but by 1835 those of their descendants who are discussed in this study had lost everything. Like his wife, Rosa was buried in the

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318 In recounting this strange tale, C.R. Boxer cautiously observed that ‘the nineteenth century historian, António Marques Pereira, a careful and conscientious writer who lived many years in Macau, claims that the truth of this story was proved by authentic documents which he himself had examined.’ Fidalgos in the Far East, p. 245. C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., pp. 171-175 gave a detailed account of the episode, citing António Marques Pereira’s pioneer work, As Alfandegas Chinesas de Macau, p. 109.
319 C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., pp. 133-134. A Franciscan friar, José de Jesus Maria, who lived in Macau from 1742 to 1745, was appalled by the venality of the place. Remonstrating, he was told that it was impossible to live in Macau without indulging in dishonesty and deceit. C.R. Boxer, Fidalgos in the Far East, p. 256.
320 M. Teixeira, Os Ouvidores em Macau, p. 83.
321 Ibid., p. 82.
323 By C.R. Boxer, Portuguese society in the tropics, p. 68.
churchyard at the entrance of St Dominic’s church. Like her, he left a substantial legacy, the former Judge of Orphans leaving 1,000 taels of silver (37.5 kg) to poor orphans to enable them to marry, this being an era in which dowries were essential.

Map 13 – ‘Plan de la ville et du port de Macao’.

*A French map of Macau by Nicholas Bellin, 1784, reissued by a Dutch cartographer. The map shows the built-up area, the city walls and fortifications in considerable detail. To the north-west of Macau is the compound of the ‘Casa Branca’ mandarin. nla.gov.au/nla.map-rm302.*

325 Ibid.
Rosa made a major impact on Macau in the 47 years of his residence. Like many successful entrepreneurs, he was an enigmatic figure. The phrase homens de maior condição, men of higher standing, the essential qualification for public office in Macau, was sometimes used too loosely, but it was well applied to Manuel Vicente Rosa. While enriching himself, he had also, as a shipowner, provided employment for young Macanese men as seafarers. He was personally successful in a period of continuing decline. He readily fitted into the traditional role of community leadership that Macau’s particular circumstances gave, not to its own well-established families, but to young men fresh from the motherland. He was aspirational, opportunistic and at times ruthless. He was both a great hater (and was greatly hated, for success breeds envy) and a respected spokesman for Macau, dextrous in handling the difficult relations with the Chinese authorities. Yet the Senate, of which he was a leading member at the time, turned its back in 1719 on the Emperor’s offer to give Macau a monopoly on foreign trade. However, having changed his mind, he appears to have been part of the strong but unsuccessful advocacy in 1732 for opening the port to foreign traders. By then it was seen as a vital opportunity of reviving Macau’s premier trading position. Within the lifetime of Rosa’s nephew Simão, the Viceroy’s rejection of this renewed opportunity was seen to have been a serious error of judgement.

Simão Vicente Rosa was possibly still more successful in business than his uncle. As well as being a prominent trader, he secured a powerful position in Macau by

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326 C.R. Boxer, Portuguese society in the tropics, pp. 61, 63.
lending to the Jesuits, whose earlier strong position in China had faded away significantly. The younger Rosa was aged 33 when his uncle left him the fortune that he had anticipated for thirteen years. He inherited his uncle’s wealth, his business acumen, and perhaps his opprobrium. Part of the inheritance was a large house on the Praia Pequena, the small praia, on the Inner Harbour, and well-placed to watch over shipping.\textsuperscript{327} After his death on 31 January 1773, Rosa’s mansion passed to his son-in-law Manuel Homem de Carvalho. It became one of many leased to foreigners, in this case to the Dutch East India Company.\textsuperscript{328}

Rosa became embroiled in a bitter dispute with the Bishop of Macau concerning his uncle’s legacy, which he refused to hand over. The Bishop of Macau, Alexandre da Silva Pedrosa Guimarães, appealed to the Viceroy in Goa, and Rosa was made to pay.\textsuperscript{329} Another appeal to Goa yielded greater success for him. The attractive Ilha Verde, Green Island, just north of Macau’s Inner Harbour, had been owned by the Jesuits since Macau’s early days. The hard times on which Macau had fallen affected most people and institutions, including the Jesuits. To maintain their mission, they borrowed from Rosa, the debt totalling 6,174 taels by the time of the suppression by Pombal of the Jesuit Order in 1762.

In satisfaction of the debt, Rosa claimed Green Island, and on 14 April 1766 the Viceroy ordered the Macau Senate to hand the island to Rosa.\textsuperscript{330} It had been the site of a Jesuit retreat house and chapel from the early days of the settlement and had become an orchard – hence its name.\textsuperscript{331} Rosa now turned it into a private park.\textsuperscript{332} Later, he and other members of his family would be buried there in a private park.

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\bibitem{327} The Praia Pequena, the ‘small praya’, was on the other side of the peninsula, far from the fashionable, mansion-lined Praya Grande, the ‘big praya’. Apparently one of the best houses in Macau, it was selected by the Senate as the residence for another ambassador who came to Macau en route to Peking in 1752. However, the Governor asked that the Bishop’s palace be used instead (M. Teixeira, Toponimia de Macau, vol. I, p. 401).
\bibitem{328} Notes prepared by M. Teixeira for his Toponimia de Macau. J.M. Braga Papers. MS 4300/15.1/29.
\bibitem{330} J. Forjaz, Famílias Macaenses, vol. 3, p. 296.
\bibitem{331} It was described in 1637 by Peter Mundy in appreciative terms. ‘On the Inner side of the City lieth a little rocky Island called Isla Verde or Greene Island belonging to the Padres of Saint Paulle, or the Jesuits, and by them caused to bee planted, soe that now in a Manner it is covered with fruit trees that yieldeth by report 2 or 3000 ryall off eight yearly profits to them.’ M. Hugo-Brunt, ‘The Portuguese settlement at Macao’, PLAN, vol. 3, no. 3, 1963, p. 127.
\end{thebibliography}
cemetery that existed until the 1920s. It was later left to his youngest daughter, and became part of her dowry on her marriage to Manuel Homem de Carvalho, so passing out of the Rosa family. Rosa was one of the few creditors in Macau, which continued to decline gradually. The Senate, like the Jesuits, was also in his debt, still mired in the huge cost of the 1726 embassy and the constant exactions of the mandarins. He had his own wharf at a place called Tarrafeiro on the Inner Harbour.

Naturally this prominent man was significant in the affairs of the Senate. He held the major post of procurador for the years 1745, 1759, 1761, 1764 and 1771. Most Portuguese town councils had a procurador, generally an attorney representing the interests of artisans who lacked the franchise to vote for councillors.

Because Macau had no Portuguese artisans, the role of procurador was quite different, and vastly more important. Here he was appointed from the elected

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333 The grave may have been moved to Green Island from St Dominic’s. J.M. Braga to Lieut. Fernando Amaro, 12 April 1961, ‘I remember seeing on the top of Green Island the tombstones of my ancestors, Manuel Vicente da Rosa and his [adopted] son’. J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/4.4/13.
335 J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/7.2/88 – Rosa, Manuel Vicente.
336 Cantonese speakers often have difficulty with European sounds, but the name Simão (the terminal syllable pronounced rhyming with ‘lung’) was readily adapted, and up to the mid-twentieth century the place where Simão Vicente Rosa’s wharf and godown were located was, according to J.M. Braga, still called ‘See-mang Ma Tau’. The name ‘See-mang Ma Tau’ is not given in Chinese characters in J.M. Braga’s notes. He spoke Cantonese, but did not read or write Chinese.
vereadores, and was the Senate’s representative in all dealings with the Chinese. He was accorded by them the grade of a junior mandarin to enable such dealings to take place. He had to negotiate the amount of ‘squeeze’ to be paid and see to its raising in Macau.\textsuperscript{339} Hence he was the key man in the city, with greater importance than the Governor.\textsuperscript{340} For Rosa to hold this position five times was a sign of his capacity, but it also reflected the dwindling pool of those who were seen as suitable people, so that office-bearers increasingly became a self-perpetuating oligarchy.\textsuperscript{341}

Simão Vicente Rosa was one of the very few people of his era of whom something approaching a likeness is known. In the almost complete absence of portraiture, statuary was the only way of creating a likeness. He commissioned a plaster statuette, still extant, a rare survivor of the last years before British commerce became dominant in Macau.\textsuperscript{342} It is thought to have been made in Manila about 1770, three years before Rosa’s death, so the artist may have relied on a written description of the subject. It shows a be-wigged fidalgo in his fifties, clad in frock coat and breeches, and indicates that formal colonial attire followed closely that of metropolitan Portugal. His dress indicates his station in life, for inhabitants of Macau

\textsuperscript{339} C.R. Boxer, Portuguese society in the tropics, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{340} Ibid., pp. 45-46.
\textsuperscript{341} C.R. Boxer, The Portuguese seaborne empire, p. 287; C.R. Boxer, Portuguese society in the tropics, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{342} It is held in the Pictures Collection of the National Library of Australia as part of the J.M. Braga collection. nla.pic-an6227500.
‘who are not Europeans by birth or descent’ were prohibited in 1744 from wearing wigs or carrying of a paper umbrella, a visible sign of status. This was a colonial society in which upward social mobility was almost impossible except for reinôis, those born in the homeland. Simão Vicente Rosa could not have foreseen that this was at the end of a time when a successful career could be celebrated in this way.

This statuette, commemorating a successful man towards the end of his career, is accompanied by a smaller bust of a much younger man at the beginning of his. This is of Simão d’Araújo Rosa, the fifth child and fourth son of Simão Vicente, born in 1745.

Although he was a younger son, he, not his brothers, succeeded his father in business in 1773. His bust is less self-important, and less self-assured. It is perhaps a portent of what would follow as Macau continued to decline. According to his descendant, J.M. Braga, Simão d’Araújo Rosa carried on his father’s business but he did not participate in the growing trade between Calcutta and Macau. By that, of course, he meant the lucrative opium trade. Rosa and most other smaller traders were left behind as that trade accelerated. Simão d’Araújo Rosa, like his predecessors, confined his trade to dealings in Bangkok and occasionally Goa.

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343 C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese society in the tropics*, p. 69; A. Ljungstedt, *Contribution to an historical sketch of the Roman Catholic Church at Macao; and the domestic and foreign relations of Macao*, p. 31.
344 It is also held in the Pictures Collection of the National Library of Australia as part of the J.M. Braga collection. Height 15.5 cm. on plinth 11.7 x 13.5 cm. nla.pic-an6396552.
345 J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/7.2/88 – Rosa, Manuel Vicente.
His prosperity gradually slipped away. The *Arquivos de Macau* provides an occasional glimpse of a man doing his best to maintain the trading business he had inherited:

Captain and supercargo of ship *St António e Bom Successo* owned by Simão de Araújo Roza to Bengal and Malacca, passport 31 December 1784.  

To get his ship away, it seems that he had to mortgage a house near Monte (the principal fort) and shops at *Bazar Grande* in the Chinese quarter. That was one voyage, the success of which is unknown. Montalto de Jesus gave the overall picture:

Towards the end of the eighteenth century Portuguese shipping at Macao had dwindled to some eight or ten vessels trading mostly with Siam; and from Portugal one or two vessels annually came with Brazil snuff, then in great demand among the Chinese, and the usual small shipment of home produce, bringing in return but a dwindling cargo of oriental products. In a word, trade at Macao was dying out ... the people of Macao grew none the better, but became poorer; and their poverty was an evil without remedy.

In 1789, Five years after the voyage of the *St António e Bom Successo*, Simão de Araújo, under the name Simão Vicente Roza, appears to have borrowed 2,500 taels from the *Misericórdia* using a ship, the *Effigenia*, as security.

The situation remained much the same in the 1830s. In 1831, the whole shipping, according to Ljungstedt, consisted of sixteen ships totalling 5,331 English tons. In 1834, there were fifteen, totalling 4,185 tons. He added that ‘the greater part of the shipowners are destitute of sufficient means to lay in a suitable cargo, and to bear the charges and expense of long voyages’. As one of those shipowners, Simão d’Araújo Rosa had seen over the years the gradual collapse of the prosperity his family had once enjoyed.

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347 Court file, 1782, indexed by Carl Smith. Arquivo Histórico de Macau, Carl Smith Index Cards, MO/AH/CS/INDEX/ 31275.
348 C.A. Montalto de Jesus, op. cit., pp. 136, 137.
349 Session of the *Santa Casa de Misericórdia*, 8 November 1789, indexed by Carl Smith. Arquivo Histórico de Macau, Carl Smith Index Cards, MO/AH/CS/INDEX/ 31301a.
350 A. Ljungstedt, *An historical sketch of the Portuguese settlements in China*, p. 103, repeating a comment made initially in his article ‘Actual state of Macao’ in the *Canton Miscellany*, no. 5, 1831, p. 351.
Despite what must have been years of constant worry, Rosa carried out his civic duties as his forebears had done. As a young man he was a councillor of the Senate during the Francis Scott case in 1773. Much later, he was received into the brotherhood of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia, the Holy House of Mercy, rather late in life, on 14 April 1810. The Misericórdia was for several centuries an important and effective means of exercising charity in a community in which other social services were absent. Apparently active and conscientious in his duties, Rosa became the secretary of the Misericórdia on 1 November 1812. He was also mestre de campo do Terço de Auxiliares, an officer in the militia. Forjaz, diligent in his fact-finding and checking, also recorded that he described himself as cavaleiro da Ordem de Cristo, a knight of the Order of Christ, but added, without comment, that his name does not appear in the register of the Order in the National Archives in Lisbon. This may have been a clerical omission, but may also reflect Rosa’s endeavour to bolster his family’s sagging reputation.

He married in September 1760, aged fifteen, as was common in a tropical place where life was uncertain. His wife, Maria Ana de Liger Lopes da Silva, bore him seven children between 1761 and 1772, but by 1782 he was a widower. He married again in 1790, there being no further children. He died on 22 December 1821, aged 76, with Macau in a sad plight, its economic woes accentuated by a conflict between the Conservatives and the Miguelists, reflecting the political situation in Portugal, soon to be wracked by civil war.

351 Notes prepared by M. Teixeira for his Toponimia de Macau, p. 21.
352 Arquivos de Macau, July 1981, p. 265. In Portugal and its colonies, the Misericórdia, as it was commonly termed, went hand in hand with the council. In Macau, the Misericórdia had been established in 1569 (J.M. Braga, The Western pioneers and their discovery of Macao, p. 91; C.R. Boxer, Portuguese society in the tropics, p. 59), the Senado a little later, in 1582. It was a mark of distinction in the community to be elected to membership of either, though originally, and for many years afterwards, membership was separate. Despite its name, the Misericórdia was a secular organisation, though that scarcely applied in a community that was profoundly devout and observant of its religious duties. To be a brother of the Misericórdia was a pious obligation for a poderoso.
355 C.R. Boxer, Portuguese society in the tropics, p. 54. This was the ordenança, a citizens’ militia, often set up in Portugal and its territories, ‘to protect property and to establish and ensure order’. It was organised by the Senate and officered by them. It mounted nightly patrols ‘to protect property and to establish and ensure order’.
357 Court file, 1782, indexed by Carl Smith. Arquivo Histórico de Macau, Carl Smith Index Cards, MO/AH/CS/INDEX/ 31275.
The eldest of his three sons succeeded to his business interests. This was another Simão d’Araújo Rosa, sometimes known in the records as Simão Vicente Rosa. He may have adopted the alias, seeking to borrow the lustre of the name of his famous grandfather. He was born in Macau about 1765 and died there on the 21 October...
From about 1785 there are fewer references in the archives to a family that had fallen on hard times. He still had connections with Thailand, which presumably led in 1828 to an invitation to go to Bangkok as commissioner of the Senate ‘to care for various subjects’, but he declined the invitation. The details are unknown, but he was then aged 63 and the prospect of a sea voyage cannot have been attractive. Moreover, this sad man, a widower since 1823, had by 1827 fallen into debt to the Misericórdia. Nevertheless, he was in 1825, the provedor, the president of the board of guardians, of the Misericórdia. This was its most important elected position, and a significant recognition of community status. In earlier times, before the greatly reduced circumstances into which Macau fell, the role of the provedor was set out in clear terms. ‘He must always be a fidalgo of authority, prudence, virtue, reputation and age, in such wise that the other brothers can all recognise him as their head.’ By the 1820s, it was hard to find a community leader with the family background and the financial standing that was once taken for granted in such a position. Simão d’Araújo Rosa was indeed a man of good reputation, but the once wealthy Rosa family was now in difficulties. Following his death, aged 70, on 21 October 1835, his personal effects and property: his house and three shops were seized and auctioned.

Part 2 – the Braga family in Goa

In happier times, as a young man of 27, Simão d’Araújo Rosa had travelled to Goa, perhaps in his father’s ship, and there married on 14 May 1792 Ana Joaquina, daughter of António Félix Fernandes, also known as António Félix Braga, and Ana

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359 Ibid., p. 298.
362 Elected on 26 October 1825. Carl Smith Index MO/AH/CS/INDEX/ 31301a.
Rosa Pereira de Azevedo. Ana Joaquina’s father would have considered this a good match. The bridegroom was a member of a notable family who had made their mark in Macau throughout the eighteenth century. His father, Simão de Araújo Rosa, in addition to his commercial interests, was prominent in public life in Macau. He was Mestre de campo-de-Terço de Auxiliares, Secretary of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia and adopted the title of cavaleiro da Ordem de Cristo.  

‘A Prospect of the City of Goa’, from Herman Moll, A map of the East-Indies, 1719. A Dutch view in the margin of the map. It omits most of the grand ecclesiastical edifices, while emphasising the tower of the imposing Senado do Goa. 

National Library of Australia, RM 285

365 J. Forjaz, *Familias Macaenses*, vol. 3, p. 298. The names of Ana’s parents’ were obtained by Forjaz from the baptismal record of her son João Vicente; J. Forjaz and J.F. de Noronha *Os Luso-Descendentes da Índia Portuguesa*, vol. 1, p. 299. Researched and published later than *Familias Macaenses*, this work added the name de Azevedo.

In Macau and later in Hong Kong, the descendants of Simão d’Araújo and Ana would use the names Rosa, Rosa Pereira, Rosa Braga, and later simply Braga, reverting to a name which had earned distinction in Goa.\(^\text{367}\)

Fernandes was the original name of this family, but its members had, since the arrival of Félix Fernandes in Goa in 1739, adopted the surname Braga. Like many of the eighteenth century Portuguese who went to the Far East and Brazil, the forebears of the Braga family came from the most northerly province, Minho e Douro. Nothing is known of the Braga antecedents beyond sketchy details of marriages in two generations in the later seventeenth century. The first to be identified was António Fernandes, who married a Senhorina Pires.\(^\text{368}\)

They were residents of the parish of Santa Maria Madalena at Chaves, 10 km south of the Spanish border.\(^\text{369}\) Chaves had been a town since Roman times, and the great sixteen-arched Roman bridge across the river Tâmega survives intact. This river crossing was seen as a key to northern Portugal; the town’s name is Portuguese for ‘keys’. Chaves was never large, being the centre of a farming community tightly packed into a small fertile valley. In this mountainous area, good agricultural land was scarce, and smallholdings were common. However, large families were the general rule, so there was every incentive for younger sons to emigrate.\(^\text{370}\)

\(^{367}\) ‘Mestre de campo-de-Terço de Auxiliares, escrivão da Santa Casa de Misericórdia de Macau e cavaleiro da Ordem de Cristo, e de Maria Ana de Liger Lopes da Silva. C.g em Macau que usará os apelidos Rosa, Rosa Pereira, Rosa Braga, e mais tarde só Braga.’ J. Forjaz and J.F. de Noronha, Os Luso-Descendentes da Índia Portuguesa, p. 299.

\(^{368}\) All of the personal details concerning people in eighteenth century Portugal and Goa are taken from J. Forjaz and J.F. de Noronha, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 297-299. The authors gave considerable attention to those whose careers they regarded as particularly significant, including Félix Braga and his son António Félix Braga.

\(^{369}\) The parish register described them as ‘moradores da freguesia de Santa Maria Madalena das Alturas, comarca de Chaves’, J. Forjaz and J.F. de Noronha, op. cit., p. 297.

\(^{370}\) C.R. Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, p. 56.
António’s son, Sebastião Fernandes, was born in Chaves, and baptised in his parents’ church. On 29 December 1706 he married Maria Marques, a citizen of Braga, at, the splendid new baroque church of St Vitor in this ancient and prestigious city, distinguished for its archiepiscopal see, the oldest in Portugal. Sebastião and his wife settled in Braga, where their son, Félix Fernandes, was baptised at St Vitor, on 10 October 1712.

371 Following the repulse of the Muslim invasion in the 11th century, Braga was the first Portuguese diocese to be restored. The Archbishops of Braga then held primacy over all other Portuguese sees for several centuries. In the mid-eighteenth century, two royal archbishops gave the see and the city of Braga added prestige. These were José and Gaspar de Braganza, both natural sons of Portuguese kings, who held office between 1741 and 1789. López Bardón, Tirso. ‘Archdiocese of Braga’, The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 2. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02728a.htm. Accessed 26 December 2011.
Some 2,400 young Portuguese men went to the Far East each year, but few returned. Félix was among them; there is no indication that he or any of his descendants returned to Portugal until the mid-twentieth century. In 1739 Félix sailed in the ship Nostra Senhora da Conceição (Our Lady of the Conception) to Goa, where he took the surname Braga after the place of his birth.

The name Braga carried considerable prestige – even gravitas – which he was able to adopt. He at once became a leading member of the community, and was elected a Brother of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia in 1743. Goanese archives record several other civic appointments during the next twenty years. The culmination of a significant public career was his appointment as President of the Senado do Goa in 1766. The date of his death is not known, but he was still living in 1779.

From 1510 to the early seventeenth century, the first of four and a half centuries of Portuguese occupation, Goa had been ‘Golden Goa’. The triumph of the Dutch and
later the English brought that era to a sudden end. There remained numerous splendid baroque churches, convents and associated religious edifices such as an orphanage and an asylum for the poor, for Goa had been thought of as the base from which heathen India would be evangelised. All these buildings gradually fell into decay. The Senate House had been particularly magnificent, standing on a high point in the centre of the city. It was here that Félix Braga presided in the 1760s, but this was a period which coincided with the greatest power of the Maratha Empire which all but surrounded Goa and frequently threatened it. This was a ‘period of trouble and disaster’ for what had once been the axis of Portuguese power in Asia. 376 Félix Braga had some wealth and influence; he was a poderoso, a great man, but in a city that had almost ceased to function. His descendants would leave Goa at the earliest opportunity.

Félix married twice. His first wife, whom he married before 1743, was Felícia Dias da Costa, and they had two children: António Félix Braga and Maria da Costa Braga. Following the death of Felícia, Félix married Josefa Maria da Silva; there were no children. Félix settled at Ribandar (now

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376 J.N. Fonseca, *An historical and archaeological sketch of the city of Goa*, pp. 113, 180. Yet this was a period during which those who considered that they were entitled to them scrambled for royal honours. (Maria de Jesus dos Mártires Lopes and Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Centro de História de Além-Mar, *Tradition and modernity in eighteenth-century Goa, 1750–1800*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 136-137). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the French orientalist A.H. Anquetil Duperron found Goa in ruins and almost abandoned, though the Senate continued to hold its meetings in the old Senate House for many more years. A Dutch visitor in 1831 noted that it was used as a hospital for the sick of the Misericórdia, and was ‘going fast to ruins’ (D.L. Cottineau de Kloguen, *An Historical Sketch of Goa*, p. 88). Less than forty years afterwards it was ‘merely a heap of ruins’ (J.N. Fonseca, op. cit., p. 210).
Ribander), a town on the banks of the Mandovi River in the Portuguese colony some five km east of the city of Goa itself. Along the river bank, as seen by Anquetil Duperron, was ‘a row of elegant buildings which together with the distant turrets and cupolas in the city and its suburbs presented an extremely charming sight’. Even though it was impoverished, Goa still had a select area, and the law courts were situated at Ribandar.

Félix’s son, António Félix Braga, was born at Ribandar, date unknown, and also died there on 8 May 1785. Like his father, António Félix Braga became a Brother of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia, elected on 10 August 1765. That higher standing gave the brothers something to live up to. They must be ‘men of good conscience and repute, walking in the fear of God, modest, charitable and humble’. It would be asking too much of human nature to expect that all brothers lived up to such a standard, but at least the expectation was there. In Goa and Macau, much smaller in the mid-eighteenth century than they had been in the prosperous times of 150 years earlier, and with comparatively few homens de maior condição, men of high standing, the irmãos of the misericórdia were necessarily a small and elite group. That led to a greater expectation within the community that their job would be conscientiously and effectively done. So it was for a very long time. These men were respected community leaders.

António Félix Braga married Ana Rosa Pereira de Azevedo on 28 August 1769. They had four children: Ana Joaquina, Mariana Antónia, Manuel António and José Vicente. The last two became priests, both entering the Convent of St Augustine in

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377 J.N. Fonseca, op. cit., p. 113.
379 J. Forjaz and J.F. de Noronha, op. cit., p. 297. He does not appear to have been elected to the Senate. Charles Boxer has pointed out that in both Goa and Macau, council members usually came from the leading families in the community, and it was a mark of honour to be one of the vereadores (councillors) of the câmara or an irmão (brother) of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia. The poderosos were expected to be active both in municipal affairs and in charitable work (C.R. Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, p. 289).
381 She was born at Goa, and died at Ribandar on 12 February 1830, outliving her husband by almost 45 years. She was the daughter of António Vicente Rosa, a native of Tancos in Portugal. It therefore seems likely that she was connected with the Rosas who went to Macau in the early eighteenth century. Forjaz and Noronha added that António Vicente Rosa was a merchant from Macau, who died when his ship Nostro Senhor da Penha de França was wrecked when he was returning from India. ‘comerciante em Macau, que faleceu num naufrágio em local desconhecido a bordo do seu barco Nostro Senhor da Penha de França, quando regressava da India’. J. Forjaz and J.F. de Noronha, op. cit., p. 298.
Goa in 1789. They then had long and notable ministries at Goa until the 1820s.\textsuperscript{382} The two daughters married at Ribandar, Ana Joaquina leaving with her husband for his native Macau, while Mariana, who married twice, lived at Ribandar for the rest of her life. Both daughters had large families and a vast progeny. All four adopted the surname Rosa as well as Braga, following the Portuguese custom of using the surname of both parents, the mother’s surname usually following the father’s.

Ana Joaquina Rosa Braga, as she became, was born at Ribandar in 1770, and died in Macau on 21 June 1823. Following their marriage, Simão d’Araújo Rosa Jr. took his wife’s surname and henceforth used, but not invariably, the name Rosa Braga.\textsuperscript{383} Over the next three generations, most of their descendants reverted to the surname Rosa. However, the descendants of one son, João Vicente, dropped the patronym Rosa. This will be discussed in the following chapter. Between 1792 and 1803 five children were born to Simão and Ana. None was named Simão, a name which had held for three generations. Instead, all three sons were given the second name Vicente, recalling the family’s era of prosperity, now a distant memory. Indeed, the eldest son was named Manuel Vicente after his illustrious great-great-grandfather.

\textsuperscript{382} J. Forjaz and J.F. de Noronha, op. cit., p. 298.
\textsuperscript{383} J. Forjaz, \textit{Famílias Macaenses}, vol. 3, p. 298. In noting this circumstance, Forjaz added rather opaquely that ‘he was the first of this family to use the surname Braga, and it ends, but with the passing of time, and in certain cases, for preferring the proper names of the original family’. Forjaz, although he was an indefatigable and skilled genealogist, often expressed himself poorly.
The son to be followed in this study is the third son and the last of the five children: João Vicente, who was born in Macau on 25 October 1803 and died in Hong Kong on 21 October 1853, four days before his fiftieth birthday. Little is known of his life; he lived in hard times when there was little to record. On 15 August 1825 he married Priscila da Trindade Noronha, who was born in Macau on 8 June 1800, and died in Hong Kong on 18 March 1883. She was a member of a well-connected and long-established Macanese family with roots in the Far East reaching back to the sixteenth century, indicating that they were not by the early nineteenth century considered to be reinóis. However, the Noronhas were certainly regarded as one of Macau’s leading families.

João Vicente’s father and grandfather had been irmãos, brothers, of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia, and João Vicente, following in their footsteps, was elected a brother on 28 October 1830. It is apparent that he inherited little or nothing from his father, who died in 1835, so that there was little to hold him to Macau.

384 J. Forjaz, Famílias Macaenses, vol. 3, p. 298. Forjaz noted that the information was gleaned from the Casa’s Livro de Termos das Eleições, Cod. 144. His two elder brothers, Manuel Vicente and José Vicente are not shown to have been Brothers of the Casa.

George Chinnery, Santa Casa de Misericórdia, Macau, ca. 1830, the year in which João Vicente Rosa Braga was elected a brother.

Toyo Bunko, Tokyo, published in the catalogue of an exhibition, George Chinnery – Macau, Macau, 1985
Between 1828 and 1841, eight children were born to João and Priscila. They were:

- João Joaquim, born on 10 January 1828; died at London on 27 May 1876
- Pulquéria Maria, born on 17 October 1828; died at Macau on 28 July 1911
- Francisca de Paula, born on 5 March 1831
- Francisco Maria, born on 7 August 1833
- Vicente Emílio, born on 12 February 1834; died at Shanghai, 21 March 1911
- Engrácia Maria, born on 23 April 1835; died at Macau on 30 April 1916
- José Francisco, born on 13 August 1836; died at Manila before 1908
- Carlos José, born in 1841.

The lives of three will be discussed in the following chapter. Within a few years after the British took possession of Hong Kong, João Vicente, like others, had decided that there was no future in Macau for himself or his children. The decision to leave Macau was courageous, perhaps even desperate. João Vicente would have been aware that in his forties, then considered well on in years, he had nothing to offer any employer in Hong Kong.

Only one of his sons had reached employable age at the time of the family’s move to Hong Kong. João Joaquim turned seventeen in January 1845. Francisco Maria was twelve; Vicente Emílio was eleven, while the other two sons were infants. Their father wisely realised that it was essential to get in at the beginning. Opportunities do not present themselves twice. It is not known whether the boys were sent to Hong Kong when they were old enough, the rest of the family remaining in Macau until later, or whether the whole family emigrated together. João Vicente Rosa Braga must remain an obscure figure, for no record has been found of his activities in Hong Kong. Lists of Hong Kong residents between 1846 and 1850 do not include his name and no will has been discovered. Nevertheless, it was he who took the leap in the dark, and gave his family opportunities that he himself never had. It was up to his

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386 He was not among the very few who could bring capital with him, but according to his great-grandson, J.M. Braga, ‘Joao Vicente was interested in the trade in lead and silver, at the place which came to be called Silver Mine Bay, Lantao Island, and in the Mirs Bay area, principally in Lin Ma Hang.’ J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/7.2/88 – Rosa, Manuel Vicente. Lin Ma Hang is a village close to the border between Hong Kong and mainland China.
387 *Hongkong Almanack*, 1846-1850; a search in the Hong Kong Public Record Office did not locate a will.
sons to start afresh. He did not live to see that two of them did better than he could ever have imagined.

João Joaquim became a shrewd businessman and investor in property. Having done well in this respect, he was one of only a few Macanese of his generation to emigrate to England, where he and his family remained. His brother Vicente Emílio had a rather chequered career in Hong Kong until 1870 when he received a magnificent offer from Japan that he could not refuse. Leaving his family behind, he too never returned to Hong Kong. The careers of these two émigrés, João Joaquim Rosa Braga and Vicente Emílio Rosa Braga are discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 5

The Rosa Braga family in Hong Kong, 1844-1900

Part 1 – The first Portuguese in Hong Kong

Three months after Pottinger’s proclamation of the city of Victoria on 25 June 1843, with its firm direction for the future of British rule in the Far East, another of Macau’s periodical turmoils occurred, demonstrating yet again its insecurity. Elijah Bridgman, editor of the *Chinese Repository* succinctly reported the incident.

A serious disturbance occurred in Macao between the Chinese and the Portuguese troops on the 25\textsuperscript{th} ult. [September] at a fire outside the San António gate. It is said that the poor people who lived in these mat sheds got the impression that their hovels had been set on fire by the Portuguese, and when the troops appeared, as they always do at fires, some of them made a desperate onset and mortally wounded a soldier. The guard thereupon fired, killing three and wounding others. A row arose on 1\textsuperscript{st} inst. [October], from a Chinese attempting to pick a soldier’s pocket, and another native was killed. A Portuguese soldier was also found dead two nights after. The excitement was very great among the Chinese.\footnote{Chinese Repository, vol. 12, no. 10, October 1843, pp. 555-556.}

It was yet another indication, if one were needed, that Hong Kong was a more secure place to live in, even if its climate was perilous to life. However, there was no sudden rush of refugees. Portuguese emigration from Macau to Hong Kong in the rest of the nineteenth century took place in several waves.\footnote{Especially in 1849 and 1874 to 1875, as discussed in Chapter 3.} From 1843, the pace quickened of British businesses moving to Hong Kong, taking their Portuguese clerks with them.

Chief among them were Leonardo d’Almada e Castro and his brother José Maria. The elder, Leonardo, first entered the service of the British Government in 1836, in the office of the Superintendency of British Trade in China at Macau. His younger brother, José Maria, was Second Clerk in the Superintendency. Both were transferred from Macau to the Colonial Secretariat in Hong Kong.
Leonardo arrived on 27 February 1842 as one of three members of staff of the infant Colonial Secretary’s office, at first located in a tent. With ten years of experience in British administrative procedures, he was appointed clerk of the Hong Kong Executive and Legislative Councils in May 1847. He acted briefly on two occasions as Colonial Secretary, the highest civil service post in the colony, and thereafter claimed the right to act in that capacity whenever the occasion arose. This claim led to much trouble, with the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Colonies, eventually ruling against d’Almada, but noting that senior officers of the service ‘appeared to be set against him’. It did not help when d’Almada then applied for British citizenship, but it may have made Newcastle change his mind. In 1854, he directed Sir John Bowring, newly-appointed as governor, to appoint d’Almada Colonial Secretary on a local salary, a large saving on the sum paid to a British appointee. This was solidly and successfully opposed in Hong Kong, W. H. Mercer, who would have been ousted, observing sourly some years later in 1862 that he was ‘a Portuguese of the better class’, ‘but hardly eligible for higher appointment’. Not until after his death in 1875 at the age of 61 would a generous comment be made.

The Chief Justice, Sir John Smale, then referred to him as ‘a very dictionary of public events, transactions and correspondence received during an official career of thirty-four years’. His death was also marked by a warmly appreciative minute in the proceedings of the Legislative Council, but the British Empire would continue to deny equal opportunity to outsiders for many years to come.

A decade later, in telling a group of Portuguese community leaders in Hong Kong of Newcastle’s recommendation, a later governor, Sir John Pope Hennessy, wisely refrained from telling them of the ensuing fracas. Leonardo’s brother, José Maria, became private secretary to Pope Hennessy, and was Chief Clerk in the Secretariat and Clerk of Council when he died in 1881. J.P. Braga, a much later leader of the Portuguese community, paid his own tribute to the manner in which these two had risen far above the position of the rest of their compatriots:

There can be no disputing the propriety of assigning the premier place among the Portuguese pioneers of Hongkong to these young men, both of whom were subsequently raised to positions of honour and distinction in the service of the Government of Hongkong.

By late 1845, there were four clerks in the Colonial Secretary’s office, the 4th clerk being another Portuguese, Alexandre Grande-Pré, who later became official interpreter in Malay, Bengali and Portuguese. Another named in the Official Establishment was João de Jesus, Portuguese interpreter in the Chief Magistrate’s Office. Two other clerks, J. dos Remédios and F. Noronha, occupied junior positions in the Post Office and the Police Rate Assessment Office – a total of six Portuguese among 36 named clerical staff.

In the early 1840s, the young clerks had no choice but to accompany their employers. To remain in Macau meant unemployment and the loss of the English-language skills they were in the process of acquiring. Everyone knew that without

393 Ibid.
395 Ibid., p. 123; Hongkong Almanack, 1846.
397 Ibid., p. 123; Hongkong Almanack, 1846, p [5].
British commerce, Macau would revert to the bleak poverty into which it had earlier fallen. Following the clerks – who may have numbered twenty to thirty in the first few years – a few others ventured into the British colony. They needed to have skills to offer and a service to provide. An essential skill was English, and all these early arrivals must have spoken English, without which they could not hope to get a job or start a business. Closely allied to it was their knowledge of Cantonese. Conspicuous among these early arrivals was the printer Delfino Noronha, the subject of the next chapter.

**Part 2 – João Joaquim Braga 1824 - 1876**

Others had less to offer the British community, and had to cast about for a means of providing the British with something they needed. Among them were the sons of João Vicente Rosa Braga, Delfino Noronha’s brother-in-law. They did not have far to look, for as well as their entrepreneurship, the British brought a degree of susceptibility to tropical diseases greater than that of the Portuguese in Macau.

*Victoria Dispensary, Queen’s Road, Central. The business had been established on Pottinger St by 1846, and moved to Queen’s Road about 1848. It was still located there in 1906 when this card was posted. J.J. Braga began his successful career as a druggist with this firm.*

*Courtesy of Mr Wang Gang*

By autumn 1845, the earliest date on which information is available, in the *Hongkong Almanack for 1846*, most British firms had moved from Macau and Canton to Hong Kong, but the extensive Parsee community and most American firms remained in Canton. Few businesses were listed as still having any presence in

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400 The family relationship is explained by the Macanese Families website. João Vicente Rosa Braga [#5676] married Priscila Trindade de Noronha [#5675], the daughter by his first marriage of Manuel José dos Remédios de Noronha [#5522]. Delfino Noronha [#3002] was the youngest son of his second marriage.
Macau. One was the Victoria Dispensary, a pharmacy, a business then known as a ‘druggist’. Its proprietors were Thomas Hunter in Macau and George K. Barton, who ran the Hong Kong branch on Pottinger Street. The Almanack named Barton’s three assistants: João Braga, Miguel de Rozario and Jozé Leão. João Vicente’s eldest son, João Joaquim, was then aged 17. It is possible that the family knew Hunter in Macau, and that Hunter agreed to take the promising youth into the business in Hong Kong. There were two other European druggists, as well as 18 listed Chinese medicinal druggists, besides five wholesale opium dealers and eleven opium retailers listed among the numerous Chinese traders. Of the 312 listed ‘foreigners’ (i.e. non-Chinese) in Hong Kong, 41 were Portuguese.

From the Hongkong Almanack, 1849.

The form of all the Portuguese names is rendered phonetically, using ‘z’ rather than ‘s’.

The other druggists were the short-lived English partnership of James Welch and Charles Stocker and the more substantial Hongkong Dispensary. This was run by James H. Young, M.D., who also had two Portuguese assistants. Much later, J.P. Braga observed that ‘for a number of years at the beginning, [the Portuguese] maintained nearly all the pharmacies of Hongkong’. Two years later, the 1848 Almanack listed by occupation 455 foreigners in Hong Kong, of whom 68 were Portuguese. Most were clerks, and the second largest group were compositors, followed by ‘mercantile assistants’. By then there was a fourth druggist, Alexander Taylor, running the Medical Hall. Perhaps competition obliged the Victoria Dispensary to trim its staff. There was only one assistant, his name now being given

401 Hongkong Almanack, 1846, pp. [8-15].
402 Ibid., p. [14]. J. Forjaz, Famílias Macaenses, following J.P. Braga, indicated that its proprietor was João Vicente Braga. This is inaccurate.
in full as ‘Sr João Joaquim Roza Braga’. By the following year, 1849, the business had moved to the more central location of Queen’s Road, and J.J. Rosa Braga, then aged 21, was manager.\footnote{Hongkong Almanack, 1849. J.P. Braga mistakenly took this entry to mean that he was the ‘Managing Proprietor’. The Portuguese in Hongkong and China, p. 141.}

He was obviously an able and trustworthy young man. The Medical Hall was by then being managed by José L. Pereira, his cousin.\footnote{Hongkong Almanack, 1849. J.M. Braga inaccurately stated that José L. Pereira set up the Medical Hall. (J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/7.2/88 – Rosa). ‘José L. Pereira’ appears to be the name by which Manuel Luís Rosa Pereira [#1344] was known, to give him his full name. He was the son of Maria Joaquina Rosa Pereira (née Rosa Braga), sister of João Vicente Rosa Braga, father of João Joaquim Rosa Braga. The two young men working in competing pharmacies were therefore cousins.} During the next few years, his name was to be found in the press and various official records as João Joaquim Rosa Braga. He began to do well for himself. His connection with Victoria Dispensary came to an end when on 24 August 1857 he re-opened the Medical Hall Dispensary, described by the \textit{Hongkong Daily Press} as an ‘apothecary shop’ in Queen’s Road.\footnote{Hong Kong Public Record Office, Carl Smith Index. Hereafter CS. CS/1021/00200755, from \textit{Hongkong Daily Press}, 24 August 1857. Other mentions were on 3 November 1858 and 17 November 1859.}
Two of his younger brothers, Carlos and Vicente, briefly joined the business, but soon left to start an enterprise of their own.\textsuperscript{407} In 1859, there were three other employees as well: João L. Britto, Francisco da Roza and J. Jesus. By 1861, J.J. Braga’s Medical Hall (known in Cantonese, following euphoniously its proprietor’s name as ‘Pa-la-ka Yeuk fong’), was employing a staff of five.\textsuperscript{408} Braga had succeeded phenomenally well, reversing three generations of declining family fortunes as Macau’s economy deteriorated.

There were many adjustments to be made by Portuguese people in the British colony. One was a cultural difference in the use of family names. Put simply, it was frequently a Portuguese custom to use the surnames of both parents, with the father’s name taking precedence. The British practice was to use the patronym only, unless the wife was a wealthy heiress, in which case the two surnames were hyphenated. In early colonial Hong Kong there was no understanding of the Portuguese practice. An example is to be found in the reporting of the actions of the Governor of Macau during the first opium war, Adrião Acácio da Silveira Pinto. To Portuguese writers and the editor of the \textit{Chinese Repository}, he was, correctly, Silveira Pinto.\textsuperscript{409} To the first historian of Hong Kong to write in English, he was, incorrectly, Pinto.\textsuperscript{410} Over time, many Portuguese families in Hong Kong were obliged to accommodate themselves to the majority culture. Thus ‘Rosa Braga’ gradually became ‘Braga’, and by the 1860s, that was the name by which this branch of the family was always known.\textsuperscript{411}

\textsuperscript{407} The \textit{Hongkong Directory}, 1859, shows them on p. 24 as associated with the Medical Hall, but the same issue shows them on p. 42 running their own soda water business.
\textsuperscript{408} João L. Britto, Francisco da Roza and J. Jesus had been joined by two more ‘apothecaries’: A. Botelho and F. d’Azevedo. \textit{China Directory}, 1861.
\textsuperscript{409} \textit{Chinese Repository}, vol. 12, no. 10, October 1843, p. 555.
\textsuperscript{410} E.J. Eitel, \textit{Europe in China}, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{411} An enduring myth is that the change came from the contretemps in the 1750s between Simão Vicente Rosa and the Bishop of Macau over the legacy of Manuel Vicente Rosa. The bishop is said to have cursed the whole Rosa family ‘with bell, book and candle’. To escape the curse, the Rosas changed their name to Braga. The myth was orally transmitted. Some myths have a small element of fact embedded in them; this one does not. Not only did the name change occur a century later, but the name Braga did not appear in Macau until after the marriage of Simão de Araújo Rosa to Ana Joaquina Braga in 1792. Moreover, most of the Rosa Bragas eventually reverted to the name Rosa or Roza. The myth was probably concocted when a child asked why the name Rosa had been dropped. It was, no doubt, embarrassing to admit that the dominant British culture had again prevailed over Portuguese tradition as it had so often done. Like all such tales, it asserts that the family took the initiative in the situation, which was not the case. They had simply bowed to the inevitable. The name ‘Rosa’ that had once been famous in Macau meant nothing in Hong Kong. The myth was seldom committed to paper, but was recounted by James Braga, in an outline of family history to a distant cousin, Ann Blake, in Singapore. James Braga to Ann Blake, February 1986. He sent a copy to this writer.
João Joaquim was married in 1856 using the name Braga. Unlike most of his forebears, he did not marry young. His single-minded application to building a new life for himself precluded domesticity. Many young men went to Hong Kong alone, returning to Macau to find a wife. This man who had assimilated so well into the British colony went back to Macau, like others, to find a wife. He married Vicência de Paulo Calado on 10 June 1856. They had one son, João Francisco, born on 21 September 1858 and baptised at the Hong Kong Catholic Cathedral on 3 October.

Coming from a well-connected family, Vicência Braga brought a dowry that helped her husband to set up in business a year later. His nephew would later relate that ‘his business throve and he put his savings into property, choosing for his investments land and houses in Lyndhurst Terrace, Gage Street, and Arbuthnot Road’. It was a wise selection, for these were just above the densely settled streets of the Portuguese community, and would soon become an extension of that residential area. Various records indicate land purchases in Macau and Hong Kong from a small beginning in Macau in 1856 to larger purchases in Hong Kong between 1854 and 1863.

He also made a substantial contribution to the rebuilding of the Catholic Cathedral in Hong Kong following its destruction by fire in 1859. In 1865, following the completion of the new building, he presented the cathedral with a splendid baroque altar of Italian marble. It has a Pieta in the upper shrine and an image of Jesus
A cartouche in the centre of the pediment above the pietà of what was originally ‘Our Lord’s Passion Chapel’ records the donation of the altar in 1865 by J.J. Braga.

Photographs by Stuart Braga,
23 March 2012

carrying the cross in the lower shrine in a traditional Portuguese style known as the ‘Merciful Jesus Statue’. In recognition of this donation, he was awarded a knighthood in the Papal Order of St Sylvester, the sword, appropriately enough, being made in Portugal. When the cathedral was rebuilt in 1888 at Caine Road, closer to the area to which the Portuguese community had moved, the altar was moved there. Marble plaques set into the base of the building’s great granite columns record the names of major donors. Among them are J.F. Braga, son of J.J. Braga, and D. Noronha, the subject of the next chapter.

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419 *Hongkong Daily Press*, 3 September 1870, reported the presentation of the insignia to ‘Mr John Braga …for many services rendered to [the] Catholic Mission in Hong Kong’. CS/1021/00200755. The insignia are in the possession (2012) of John Patrick Braga, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, great-great-grandson of J.J. Braga.

420 *The Rock*, vol. 1, no. 1, October 1920, p. 32.
In the mid-1860s he returned to Macau, where he became a community leader. In 1871 he was appointed Treasurer of the Administrative Commission for the recently established Association to Promote the Education of the Macaenses, an important community initiative to provide much-needed educational opportunity. He subscribed $300 of the $11,000 raised to establish the school. The next year he was appointed Captain in the Macau National Battalion, an honorary appointment accorded to a man recognised as having merit and distinction. In 1872 he became a member of the Commission for Administration of the Misericórdia. Although the old system of irmãos had been modified, he was still the fourth generation of his family to have had this honour.

However, by then he had set his sights elsewhere. Another successful Macanese had already left Hong Kong for England. This was Eduardo, now Edward Pereira, certainly the most completely anglicised of all the Macanese who had come to Hong Kong in its early years. English-educated and wealthy, Pereira had become a partner of Dent & Co., one of the largest mercantile operations in the colony. All of his fellow partners retired to Britain; so too did Pereira, living in a mansion on Grosvenor Square, London. He was the only member of the Portuguese community to be accepted as an equal into British society in Hong Kong. He was a member of the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society, China Branch in 1848. He was one of the ninety-nine members of the Hong Kong Volunteers when the Corps was raised in 1854.

Returning to England where they had been educated, the Pereira family at

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421 He was included in the Macau census of 1864. CS/1021/00200762 – Parish Sé [Cathedral], pharmacist, aged 38, married, Hong Kong.
422 CS/1021/00200761 – Boletim Eclesiástico, 2 October 1871; M. Teixeira, Liceu nacional Infante D. Henrique jubileu de oiro 1894-1944, p. 15.
425 CS/1021/00200761 – Macau Gazeta, 18 November 1872.
426 China Directory, 1861.
427 Hongkong Almanack 1848.
428 Nine of the ninety-nine original volunteers were members of the Portuguese community. They were Luiz Barros (# 36819), Joze Felippe Borges, Ricardo Homen de Carvalho, Alexandre Joaquim Grandpré (#24770), João José Hyndman (# 25402), Richard Marcwick (#27812), Domingos Pio Marques (# 27923), Edward Pereira (# 31257) and Stefan Yvanovich (# 2710). I am grateful to J. Bosco Correa for carefully researching these names, principally from Philip Bruce, Second to None, the story of the Hong Kong Volunteers and various issues of the Hongkong Almanack. Later, in the twentieth century, the Portuguese members of the Volunteers would be segregated into a separate Portuguese Company. Marcwick appears to be a local spelling adopted in the Hong Kong Portuguese community by the descendants of Richard Markwick (#27808), an English hotelier in Macau (L. & M. Ride, An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao, p. 186), who had three natural children with a local woman, Maria Quiteria Angela Vidal (# 27809). These were brought up
once moved into genteel society. In 1862 Edward married into the titled Stonor family.\textsuperscript{429}

Even the most successful owner of a chemist’s shop could not hope to achieve such eminence. However, he could hope to set the feet of his son on the road to success in Britain. João Francisco Braga, henceforth John Francis, was fourteen when he and his parents left for England in November 1872.\textsuperscript{430} The move was carefully planned. A Certificate of British Citizenship, dated 13 March 1872 and signed by the Governor of Hong Kong, was obtained for the boy.\textsuperscript{431}

His father made his will before leaving Hong Kong. J.J. Braga left his mother, then aged 72, an annuity of $660 per annum. He wanted his son ‘to have [a] first class education such as will qualify him for any of the learned professions’.\textsuperscript{432} He died less than four years later on 29 May 1876, aged 48.\textsuperscript{433} He had done well in business, but by his mid-forties was burnt out, perhaps through overwork. The boy who had arrived almost penniless from Macau thirty years before had made it possible for his son to enter the medical profession in England. His Hong Kong properties continued to provide for his widowed mother.

\textsuperscript{430} CS/1021/00200761 – \textit{Macau Gazeta}, 18 November 1872.
\textsuperscript{431} The certificate is in the possession (2012) of John Patrick Braga, and is identified in the owner’s records as JFB1.
\textsuperscript{432} CS/1021/00200761-2.
\textsuperscript{433} Probate File No. 1019 of 1876. Hong Kong Public Record Office HKRS No. 144/4/329. CS/1021/00200761 – Hong Kong Probate Cal. 1876, July 12, João Joaquim Braga, died London, 29 May 1876. Probate was granted to his executors, João Joaquim dos Remedios and Januário António de Carvalho [his brother-in-law], the estate being valued at $38,000, then a substantial sum. The two executors were among the most prominent members of the Portuguese community of Hong Kong, as had been the testator. His English estate was quite minor, being declared at less than £1,500 (England & Wales, National Probate Calendar, Index of Wills and Administrations, 1861-1941).
John Francis Braga did indeed follow the career his father intended. He qualified as a medical practitioner in 1881, adding in the next ten years two diplomas in Public Health to his initial Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries. In addition he joined several medical societies and gained fellowships in other learned societies: the Linnaean Society, the Geological Society, the Chemistry Society and the Royal Geographical Society. When the new cathedral was built in Hong Kong in 1888, he became one of the major donors to the building fund.

He died aged 46 of tuberculosis in London on 7 January 1905, leaving a widow, Sophia, and four children in comfortable circumstances in the south London suburb of Penge. The local view in Hong Kong was, inevitably, tinged with a little envy.

An agent was appointed to look after their Hongkong properties while they were able to live comfortably in England on the income from their fortunate investments.

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434 John Patrick Braga, commented: ‘The picture is arguably that of a young man of independent means acquiring diplomas in what might be described as a dilettante fashion in London, Dublin and Edinburgh, rather than that of the normal dedicated and impoverished medical student ... It is very likely that he worked hard to appear truly English – to ‘fit in’ to the class-conscious and race-conscious Victorian society in which he found himself. To our eyes now, society at that time was snobbish and racist. An ‘English Gentleman’, i.e. someone of English extraction with a private income and preferably an English Public School education was seen as the pinnacle of society. Dr John, if he was at all ambitious, would have sought to emulate this model.’ John Patrick Braga, email to this writer, 19 April 2009, citing the 1902 Medical Directory.

435 His name is incised on one of several marble plaques set into the granite bases of the columns separating the nave and the aisles. These men were thus memorialised as pillars of the church.

436 As far as Hong Kong was concerned, the end of the story came some time later. The families had not kept in touch, and the name of João Joaquim Braga had not been correctly remembered. J.P. Braga incorrectly remembered him as João José Braga. He added: ‘On the death of their parents, the grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. João José [i.e. Joaquim] Braga paid a visit to the land of their forefathers. In Hongkong, they discussed with their agents the matter of their property ... In due
Part 3 – Vicente Emílio Braga 1834 - 1911

While João Joaquim, the eldest of the five brothers, had gone out on his own, three of the younger sons of João Vicente Braga attempted a joint enterprise when they reached adulthood, after a brief time in the late 1850s working with their elder brother. If the British community needed druggists, it also needed soda water suppliers. This was a community much given to whisky and soda. In 1861, there were four suppliers, three of them Portuguese businesses. One was a short-lived partnership of Carlos José and Vicente Emílio Braga at 404 Queen’s Road, with F. Braga as assistant. This was probably their brother [José] Francisco, who appears in no other record in Hong Kong, but who may be the F. Braga employed as a clerk by Smith, Archer & Co., Shanghai, in 1870.

It is hard to imagine a business selling soda water in a nineteenth century British colony not succeeding, but it seems that this enterprise failed. Only C.J. Braga was still there in 1862. Their other brother, José Francisco, went to Shanghai in the 1850s as a clerk with the P. & O. Steam Navigation Co., later moving to Manila.

course the properties in Arbuthnot Road, Lyndhurst Terrace and Gage Street were sold at the height of a land boom, bringing in a pretty figure. The same plots of land, which the far-sighted old gentleman had acquired from Government for a mere pittance, and on which he had built, had soared fantastically in value within the span of only two generations!” (J.P. Braga. The Portuguese in Hongkong and China, p. 191).

Information received from John Patrick Braga in June 2010 was that the proceeds were invested largely in Chinese railways, then considered a very good proposition, with the Kowloon-Canton Railway soon to open, and with a large railway network planned or under construction throughout China. However, the political turmoil of the next forty years wiped out the investment. His English estate was valued at £2,213. His Hong Kong estate was far larger. The Probate (No. 16 of 1916) could not be located, but the Hong Kong Probate Duty, noted on a copy of his English Will filed in Hong Kong, amounted to $25,500. Hong Kong Public Record Office HKRS No. 144/4/2865.

438 The Crime Return for 1869, a few years later, revealed 620 cases of drunkenness, an increase of 27.2%, or 169 cases over the previous year. The offence was, added the Superintendent of Police, ‘almost entirely confined to foreigners’. R.L. Jarman, Hong Kong Annual Administration Reports, 1841-1941, vol. 1, p. 345.
439 China Directory, 1861.
440 China Directory, 1861. It was not listed in the China Directory, 1860, but the Hongkong Directory listed them in 1859, p. 42.
442 China Directory, 1862.
V.E. Braga appears to have given up the attempt to run the soda water partnership, and by 1864 his name was on the Jury List as a clerk. A small soda water business could not support a family, for he had married and needed a regular income. His marriage on 13 May 1862 was another link between the Braga and Noronha families: Carolina Maria Noronha was the eldest daughter of Delfino Noronha, the government printer, and a leading member of the Portuguese community. It was more a matter of Vicente Braga marrying into the Noronha family than Carolina Noronha marrying into the Braga family, for Vicente moved into the Noronha family compound at Oswald’s Terrace.

There were eight children of the marriage, all born in Hong Kong. All the sons carried the matronym ‘de Noronha’, and Delfino Noronha or his wife were godparents as well as grandparents to all the children. The Noronha ménage was a patriarchate as much as a household. The children were:

Francisco Xavier de Noronha, 24 January 1863
Maria Teresa, 19 December 1863
João Vicente de Noronha, 26 April 1867
Umbelina Maria (‘Bellie’), 12 March 1868

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444 CS/1021/00200934.
446 The marriage register noted, ‘consanguinity to the second degree’. The Italian priest used an Italianised Latin name in the register: ‘Vincent Emigidus Braga’. CS/1021/00200930.
447 CS/1021/00200934.
During the 1860s, Vicente did his best to establish himself in Hong Kong. His elder brother João Joaquim was highly successful in business in these years, but in 1868 Vicente had a promising career snatched from him. At the end of the decade another golden opportunity was offered to him, but in accepting it he paid a heavy price.

After the failure of the soda water business, he appears to have been employed in a bank, possibly the Oriental Bank, the oldest and largest in the colony, though others had been established within the previous decade, notably the Hongkong and
Shanghai Banking Corporation in 1864. His first real break came in 1866, when his brother-in-law, Januário Carvalho, 1st clerk of the Treasury, recommended his appointment as 1st clerk of the newly established Hong Kong branch of the Royal Mint. It appears that a local appointment was made to this senior position to save costs, as it was by no means certain that the opening of a Mint in Hong Kong would be successful. The Mint was indeed unsuccessful from the beginning, more through trading circumstances than any shortcomings with its operations or the quality of its coinage, though both were inevitably criticised.

450 CS/1021/00200934. ‘Auth. 43 – Mint – 13 April 1866 – Recommend Mr Braga, chief clerk, $120.00, recommended by his relative Mr Carvalho of Treasury. Will not require them until opening of Mint’. The appointment was included in the Blue Book for 1866. CS/1021/00200933.
451 Its problems were fully reported by the governor, Sir Richard Macdonnell, to the Earl of Carnarvon, 13 December 1866. CO 129/116, reprinted in G.B. Endacott, Eastern Entrepôt, pp. 212-221.
The Mint opened on 7 April 1866, ceased operations in the summer of 1867 and finally closed in April 1868.\textsuperscript{452} The attempt to impose a European system of coinage was both a commercial failure and a disastrous administrative error. Chinese merchants preferred to weigh silver rather than to trust coinage, too often found to be debased, and this antipathy could not suddenly be changed.\textsuperscript{453} However, there was no condemnation of the Mint’s staff. On the contrary, Vicente quickly won the esteem of Major William Kinder, the Master of the Mint. Known to be an exacting employer, Kinder was a hard man to please; some of his Japanese employees a few years later were truly afraid of ‘Kaminari san’, ‘Mr Thunder’, as he was called.\textsuperscript{454}

With the Mint under threat, Vicente found employment as a temporary clerk in the Colonial Secretary’s Office as early as 1867.\textsuperscript{455} He gained rapid promotion, and the next year became 5\textsuperscript{th} clerk.\textsuperscript{456} While a secure position, it did not compare with the responsibility he had enjoyed at the Mint. The Mint seemed to have offered a splendid opportunity, and its closure must have been a cruel blow to Vicente. He already had four children, and another three were born in the next two years including the birth in June 1870 of twin sons, one of whom died in infancy. With a large family, he needed a fresh opportunity and a secure income. Moreover, the economic outlook in Hong Kong at the time was bleak; besides the closure of the Mint, six of the eleven banks in Hong Kong failed in 1867.\textsuperscript{457} As has happened so often, Hong Kong’s future seemed doubtful. Then in August 1870, out of the blue, came the offer of a senior and responsible position in Japan.\textsuperscript{458} The Japanese government, keen to establish a new currency, purchased the machinery of the Hong Kong Mint and employed its Master to set up the Imperial Mint at Osaka. Kinder,
now Director of the Japanese Imperial Mint, was keen to take with him experienced and capable staff from Hong Kong, and recommended his former clerk for appointment to the position of Chief Accountant.

Map 16 – South-East Asia

*A steady trickle of Portuguese left Macau and Hong Kong for better employment opportunities in Japan and the Treaty Ports along the China coast and the Yangtze River.*

*From António M. Jorge da Silva, The Portuguese Community in Hong Kong*

Unlike the Hong Kong Mint, this venture could not be allowed to fail. For more than two centuries until the 1850s, foreign trade had been all but prohibited by the Japanese government, though sufficient contact was kept with the Dutch for the government to be aware of the vast growth of Western power and influence in the first half of the nineteenth century. Matters came to a head in 1868, when a small group of samurai seized power in the name of the young Meiji Emperor, who had recently ascended the throne. They began a thorough-going overhaul of the Japanese political and economic system. One of the leaders of the new Japan was Ito Hirobumi, who as a young man of 26 was sent abroad in 1870 to study Western
currency systems. Returning to Japan in 1871, he established a new taxation system and was the prime mover in currency reform.\(^{459}\)

In 1871 a new currency adopting the gold standard system was promulgated, in line with international practice. The new Mint was an essential first step in ensuring its success. Ito was fortunate that both plant and personnel were available in the Far East. To keep the accounts of the Mint, Kinder recommended the appointment of two men who had worked under him in Hong Kong. They were Vicente Braga as Chief Accountant and his brother Carlos as assistant accountant.\(^{460}\) The Mint was an enormous project for the new Japanese government. It went much further than the regulation of the Japanese currency, and was one of the key institutions of the government’s effort to modernise Japan. Braga, who remained at the Mint until 1875, was one of three Westerners who filled crucial roles in the early development of double-entry book-keeping in Japan.\(^{461}\)

Braga hesitated for some time before accepting the position offered to him in Japan. He initially accepted Kinder’s offer on 5 September 1870, but then withdrew. He had six small children, and leaving them in Hong Kong was initially too much to contemplate. It is not known whether he intended moving them to Japan, but taking his large family to a strange country without modern medical care was too great a challenge, to say nothing of the expense. However, in October 1870 he changed his mind and wrote two letters to Kinder, already in Osaka, seeking to withdraw his refusal. Kinder sent the letters on to the Minister of Finance, strongly recommending Braga’s appointment.

\(^{459}\) Ito realised that a firmly-founded monetary system is one of the necessary conditions for the development of industry and the progress of trade. At the time of the Meiji Restoration the monetary system of Japan was in a hopelessly confused state, there being then in currency over sixty kinds of gold, silver, copper, and iron coins of heterogeneous forms, sizes, and qualities. Besides these there were as many as 1,600 kinds of coins current only within the dominions of various daimyo clans. This unsatisfactory situation was made still worse by the fact that the Imperial Government coined pieces of inferior quality to meet its pressing need for money during the War of the Restoration when troops had to be paid to fight daimyo who resisted the new order.

\(^{460}\) Notes by K. Nishikawa, evidently from the records of the Imperial Mint, sent to J.M. Braga, October 1959. J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/4.4/22. V.E. Braga was employed by the Mint from 15 June 1871 to 13 March 1875, and C.J. Braga from 18 July 1872 to 11 January 1875.

\(^{461}\) The others were a young Englishman, Alexander Allan Shand (1844-1930), who was in Japan from 1867 to 1877, and an American, William Gogswell Whitney (1825-1882), in Japan from 1870 to 1875. K. Nishikawa, *The Early History of Double-entry Book-keeping in Japan*, p. 380.
Well knowing the intricate and difficult accounts you will have in your department of the Mint I cannot too strongly advise you to accept his services as I am certain his special knowledge gained partly in Banks and partly under myself in the Royal Mint, Hong Kong, will be of great advantage to you. 462

Mr and Mrs Kinder and three of the foreign staff. Vicente Braga is behind Mrs Kinder’s left shoulder. The body language of the young man on the right leaves no doubt about her role in the group of foreign staff.

From R.S. Hanashiro, Thomas William Kinder and the Japanese Imperial Mint, 1868-1875

Braga was not yet in Japan by 25 November, 463 and appears to have left Hong Kong for Osaka at the beginning of December 1870, when he resigned from his position in the Colonial Treasury. 464 He was in Yokohama by 19 December, when he signed a contract with the Oriental Bank, later renegotiated with the Japanese government on 1 August 1871. 465 He was paid a good salary of $200 per month; the Prime Minister received 800 yen, the yen being then in parity with the dollar. 466 He was also provided with a ‘suitable Japanese home furnished in the vicinity of the Mint’, plus a passage for himself and his family. He was entitled, as were expatriates generally in the Far East, to a year’s salary after three years’ service. 467 Moreover he was accorded recognition that he could never have gained in Hong Kong, nor could any other Portuguese have done so for the greater part of another century. He was regarded, as a foreign employee of the Mint, as equal to the British senior staff.

462 K. Nishikawa, Nihon boki shidan, p. 82.
463 R.S. Hanashiro, op. cit., p. 126.
464 CS/1021/00200934, Auth. 1 December 1870. Appointment of Kraal, 5th clerk, Col. Secretary Office, vice Braga, resigned.
466 R.S. Hanashiro, op. cit., p. 115.
467 Ibid., pp. 213-214.
Indeed Kinder was instructed that all his foreign staff had to be British subjects.\textsuperscript{468} The Braga brothers were two of only a few exceptions.

Vicente’s family never joined him, and he may never have returned to Hong Kong. Whether he deliberately left them for good, or whether his wife refused to leave Hong Kong for the uncertainties of Japan can never be known. He left his wife newly pregnant with another child; José Pedro Braga, their eighth and last, was born on 3 August 1871. There can be no doubt that she was deserted, and felt deserted, with seven small children to be cared for, not by their father, but by her father.

In Japan, Vicente Braga did not disappoint his employer. He proved to be a valuable employee who performed his duties with diligence and competence.\textsuperscript{469} He kept all the books of the Mint in English; these were then translated into Japanese, thus making complete sets of books in each language. There were two contrasting views of his influence. One was that his behaviour was manipulative, and that he created an unpleasant atmosphere in the Accountant’s Department, with the result that his three year contract, which ran until August 1874, was not renewed, but continued on a short-term basis. He eventually left the Mint on 13 March 1875.\textsuperscript{470} The other view, not irreconcilable with the first, was that his personal influence was so great that his style of penmanship was practised in the Mint long after he had gone.\textsuperscript{471}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Japanese Imperial Mint, Osaka, 1899. \newline National Diet Library, Tokyo \newline \[Source [Tabi no Iezuto No.23] \newline 旅行の家つと 23 号 \newline Call Number (請求記号)YDM22666\]}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{468} Ibid., p. 129. \\
\textsuperscript{469} Ibid., p. 129. \\
\textsuperscript{470} Ibid., pp. 148-149, 213. Most other foreign experts had also gone by that time. \\
\textsuperscript{471} K. Nishikawa, op. cit., p. 381; Notes by K. Nishikawa, evidently from the records of the Imperial Mint, sent to J.M. Braga, October 1959. J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/4.4/22.
His influence ran well beyond that. His assistant, Mishima Tametsugu, became well versed in double-entry book-keeping, which attracted the attention of officials of the Ministry of Finance in Tokyo. Some were sent to study at the Mint, and were placed under the supervision of Mishima. Other ministries followed, and many students were placed under Mishima’s direction. Within a few years, western book-keeping methods became general throughout Japan, and Vicente Braga, Mishima’s mentor, was acknowledged as the father of modern book-keeping in Japan.473

Although he remained at the Mint for fewer than four years, he left with a glowing testimonial.474 He had trained his successors well. A group of them knew of the English practice then in vogue of recognising achievement with a formal, sententious address. This they adopted for a man who was obviously held in esteem. Some months later they wrote:

Osaka 26th January 1876
Dear Sir,

At the present time you are most distinguished for imparting and for so kindly giving your instruction that we have learned that useful art of book-keeping which you have established for us ... Although we are far away off we hope our friendship will continue for ever ... and we shall never forget your services as the introducer of the useful art of book keeping into our country.475

[Nine signatures follow]

474 K. Nishikawa, Nihon boki shidan, p. 108.
475 Ibid.
The Imperial Mint had an immediate and profound effect on the Japanese system of currency.476 A British visitor to Japan in 1877, Anna Brassey, left an impression of the Mint’s successful impact, emphasising the powerful Western influence in the way it operated.477

Vicente Braga’s role as both accountant and instructor was by 1875 well known in Tokyo. This led to his appointment on 19 December 1875 as Instructor of Book Keeping in the Okurasho, the Finance Ministry at the excellent salary of 400 yen per month, plus a ‘suitable residence in Tokio’.478 It was a most significant appointment.

476 A special silver coin, similar in quality and weight to the Mexican dollar then in general use in Asian countries, was coined as the medium for trading, and was circulated, under the name of the ‘trade silver yen’ as legal tender within the limits of the ports already opened to foreign trade. Over time, it proved impossible for the Japanese government to maintain the gold standard adopted in 1871, and from 1878, the silver yen was circulated freely throughout the country. T. Masuda, *Japan: its commercial development and prospects*, p. 46.

477 The Imperial Mint of Japan is a large handsome building, in great force just now, for the whole of the old money is being called in and replaced by the government. The contrast between the two moneys is very great. The ancient coinage consisted of long thin oval obangs and shobangs, worth from two dollars to eighteen pounds each, square silver itzeboos, and square copper pieces, with a hole in the centre; while that which is taking its place is similar to European coinage, and is marked in English characters, and ornamented with Japanese devices, such as the phoenix and the dragon. It did not seem worth while to go minutely over the Mint, as it is arranged on exactly the same principle as the one in London, and the processes are carried out in the same manner. A. Brassey, *A Voyage in the ‘Sunbeam’*, p. 348.

478 A copy of the Official Translation of the letter of appointment is in the Braga file at the Hong Kong Heritage Project.
Among the Ministries of Finance in the world’s developed states, that of Japan, the Okurasho, is like no other. The Okurasho was the hub of real bureaucratic power in Japan’s economy, and an intellectual and political force as well as an economic one.\footnote{Its roots run deep into Japanese history. In the seventh century the ruling imperial court was said to be made up of three parts: the focal (inner) shrine of the kami (gods), the outer shrine of the tenno (emperor) and the okura, or treasure-store. From the okura, the Ministry of Finance derives its name, ‘great storehouse ministry’. P. Hartcher, The Ministry: The Inside Story of Japan’s Ministry of Finance, reviewed by Raymond Lamont-Brown, Contemporary Review’, August 1998.} For this ancient and prestigious Japanese institution to appoint a foreign instructor was remarkable, even astonishing. It is a reflection both on the desire for radical reform on the part of the Meiji government, and on the calibre of the consultant chosen. Braga drafted an accounting and book-keeping system for the Japanese Government, and gave courses in accounting which were attended by several pupils who later became teachers and writers on book-keeping.\footnote{Japan Chronicle, 28 March 1911. Notes taken by H.S. Williams. H.S. Williams Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 6681/3/7, Box 35; R.S. Hanashiro, op. cit, p. 130.}

It appears that during this time he became personally known to Marquis Ito, who later referred to him as ‘my old friend, Mr Braga’.\footnote{J. Forjaz, Famílias Macaenses, vol. 3, p. 323.} His appointment to the Ministry of Finance continued until 31 July 1878, after which he joined a British firm.\footnote{Japan Chronicle, 28 March 1911.} This was probably Cornes & Co., a leading commercial house.\footnote{Japan Chronicle, 28 March 1911. Cornes & Company Limited was established in Yokohama in 1861 and became the oldest international trading house in Japan. Under the leadership of its founder, Frederick Cornes, a young English textile merchant, the company began trading in silk and tea but soon expanded its activities to include other merchandise, and then shipping and insurance. http://www.cornes.co.jp/eng/about/ Accessed 30 April 2009.} His commercial ability and government contacts would have been invaluable in this firm’s varied trading activities. Between 1887 and 1895 he was the first Portuguese Vice-Consul in Kobe.\footnote{CS/1021/00200931-2. Hongkong Daily Press, 23 March 1911, quoting an obituary in the Japan Chronicle, 22 March 1911.} This was usually an honorary appointment, given to a leading national resident in the city.

Vicente Braga seems to have left Hong Kong with hardly a backward look. Did he ever think of the family he left in Hong Kong? We shall never know, but his eldest son, Francisco Xavier, followed his father to Japan in 1880, married and settled there, working with Cornes & Co. at Kobe.\footnote{Japan Times, 24 May 1961.} In July 1911 he went to Shanghai to
establish a branch of the business, but the next year contracted cholera and died aged 48 on 17 September 1912.486

Vicente’s younger daughter Umbelina (‘Bellie’) married António Hugo dos Remédios in Hong Kong in 1890. She moved to Shanghai where she brought up a family of ten children.487 It is clear that there was no breach in this relationship, for in 1891 Vicente was godfather to her eldest daughter Maria.488 About 1897, he left Japan to join her in Shanghai.489 He died there on 22 March 1911.490 His death passed unnoticed and unrecorded by the family in Hong Kong whom he had last seen forty years earlier, though a brief obituary appeared in the Hongkong Daily Press.491 His youngest son, José Pedro, had nine sons, several of whom were named after their father’s forebears and siblings. These included both his grandfathers, three brothers who died young and his brother-in-law Hugo Remédios. None was named after his own father. His last two children were daughters, born in 1911 and 1914. Both were named in memory of their grandmother, who had died on 11 January 1906. The first was Carolina Maria, the second, Maria. His father and his elder brother Francisco who had joined Vicente Braga in Japan were firmly excluded from those held in honoured memory.

Yet Vicente Braga had created a career that was highly distinguished. He had the strong advantage of being present at the beginning of what became a great commercial revolution in Japan, and there establishing modern accounting practices *ab initio*. The success he achieved and the esteem in which he was held would not have come but for the competence he plainly possessed, recognised by the

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489 *Japan Times*, 24 May 1961. A newspaper cutting kept by his grandson, Paul Braga. The Will of Delfino Noronha, drawn up in 1897, indicated that V.E. Braga was then in Shanghai. Hong Kong Public Record Office, Probate File No. 1019 of 1876. Hong Kong Public Record Office HKRS No. 144/4/1011.
490 *Hongkong Daily Press*, 23 March 1911. Carl Smith, CS/1021/00200931. It appears that his body was returned to Japan for burial in Shogahara Cemetery, Kobe. His grave there is notable for its unique decoration. It bears an open ledger in recognition of his important role in the introduction of double-entry book-keeping to Japan (K. Nishikawa, *Nihon boki shidan*, p. 113). Much later, a drawing of the grave appeared in Ripley’s *Believe it or not*.
491 K. Nishikawa, op. cit., p. 117.
government, his employers and his students. Curiously, the son he never saw, José Pedro, had a career even more distinguished. The common ground between them, though J.P. Braga despised his father for his desertion, was that their careers were built entirely through their own endeavours and their conspicuous merit.

Part 4 – Carlos José Braga, born 1841

Carlos José Braga, the youngest of the five sons of João Vicente Braga, represents another aspect of the endeavours of this aspirational family’s attempt to break out of the strait-jacket of the ‘Portuguese clerk class’ in Hong Kong. Two of his brothers succeeded in doing so; Carlos did not. He tried to emulate the success of his brothers by emigrating. The fragmentary details known of his career serve chiefly to indicate how hard it was for an ambitious man to succeed if he did not have early breaks. His efforts did not lead to the long-term success towards which he obviously worked hard, and to which two of his elder brothers had attained. His attempts at a successful business career met with three failures before he reached the age of 34, and he is likely to have become, as so many of his compatriots did, an obscure clerk, his name unnoticed in any published records.492

492 He married in his teens, and had a son, born in Macau in 1859, the year in which he briefly worked in his brother João’s pharmacy (CS/1021/00200661. Baptisms Sé – José Calisto Braga leg. son of Carlos José Braga and wife Filomena Maria Braga, b. 14 October 1859. Bapt. 21 October 1859). The soda water business mentioned earlier was set up jointly with Vicente when he was twenty, practically the age at which João Joaquim had become the successful manager of the Victoria Dispensary. Following the failure of their venture, he and Vicente joined in real estate speculation that seems to have ended badly as economic times worsened during the straitened 1860s (CS/1021/00200659-70. Memorial 2326, dated 27 March 1862, Inland Lot 699, Section A in consideration of $5,000, Carlos José Braga and Vicente Emigdio [sic] Braga, Victoria, trader, to Chun Ah Sing, trader. Registered: 28 March 1862. Memorial 2330, dated 27 March 1862, Section B, Inland Lot 679 in consideration of $2,000, Carlos José Braga and Vicente Emigdio Braga, trader to Joaquim Caldeiro, trader. Registered 29 March 1862. Memorial 2685, dated 1 August 1863, Inland Lot 679 – remaining part in consideration of $5, Carlos José Braga and Vicente Emigdio Braga to Joaquim Caldeiro. Registered: 4 August 1863). He again tried his hand as a chemist and joined the staff of the French Dispensary, which had been set up at 118 Queen’s Road in 1853. In 1866 he bought into the partnership, and it became C. Braga & Co., but it seems that it did not prosper. In September 1869, it was taken over by J.L. Britto, a former long-standing employee of J.J. Braga’s Medical Hall, who then ran the business in his own name (CS/1021/00200657. The following information seems to have come from the Hongkong Daily Press. 1866, 19 June – Mr Carlos José Braga admitted partner in French Dispensary – in future Figuereido, Braga and Co. (108 Queen’s Road, Central). 1866, 25 August –
João Vicente Rosa Braga and his family had set off for Hong Kong about 1844 with high hopes for a bright future in the British colony. It is remarkable that at the end of the nineteenth century, as the year 1900 drew to a close, not one living member of his family in the male line remained in Hong Kong. All five of his sons appear to have left Hong Kong permanently, for Britain, Japan, Shanghai and the Philippines. In the following generation, his youngest grandson, J.P. Braga, also planned to leave Hong Kong for what he hoped would be a brilliant career in Britain. However, in 1900 he left Hong Kong, not for Britain, but to go into exile in Macau, apparently a ruined man. As it turned out, he returned to Hong Kong two years later, then to build in the next forty years a public career of far greater distinction that his grandfather could ever have imagined. It was a splendid vindication of João Vicente Braga’s courageous leap in the dark.

C.J. Braga has taken over French Dispensary, Mr Figuereido’s interest ceased 21st [instant] – i.e. 21 August. 1869, 17 September. Int[erest] of Carlos José Braga ceased 15 September – and João Luciano Britto admitted partner, C. Braga & Co., French Dispensary – in future firm conducted in name of J.L. Britto. 1869, September 29 -. Int[erest] of Carlos José Braga in French Dispensary ceased 15th, and João L. Britto adm[itted] partner, business in future under style J.L. Britto, 17 September 1869). Carlos may have felt that his brother João Joaquim had let him down. Carlos followed his brother Vicente to Japan not long after the Imperial Japanese Mint commenced operations, and was employed there as Assistant Accountant. (R.S. Hanashiro, op. cit., p. 113.). His background does not suggest any experience in this occupation, so he must have been under his brother’s close supervision. Vicente was in charge of the valuable Bullion Office, while Carlos did the accounts for the far less important Copper Department (K. Mochizuki, Japan To-day. A Souvenir of the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition held in London, 1910, p. 219). The foreigners employed at the Mint were regarded as very status conscious, and this was particularly true of Carlos Braga (R.S. Hanashiro, op. cit., p. 148). In Japan’s very hierarchical society it was decided to assign ranks for all the foreign staff, akin to the Japanese civil service ranks. Vicente, the Chief Accountant, was placed in the sixth rank; Carlos, his subordinate, was in the eighth rank. This he flatly refused to accept, as did several other junior foreign staff, though the government did not budge from its determinations (R.S. Hanashiro, op. cit., pp. 113-115). They felt that their social status as gentlemen had not been appropriately recognised. Naturally, this stand did nothing to endear them to their employers. As soon as the Japanese authorities felt that they could dispense with foreign staff, they did so. Whereas Vicente went on to become a senior adviser to the Japanese government, the services of Carlos were dispensed with early in 1875 after less than three years (Notes by K. Nishikawa, evidently from the records of the Imperial Mint, sent to J.M. Braga, October 1959. J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/4.4/22. Carlos José Braga was employed by the Mint from 18 July 1872 to 11 January 1875). Thereafter, he dropped out of sight. Whether he returned to Hong Kong is not known.
Table 3
Leading members of
the Rosa Braga family in Hong Kong
1840s to 1900

João Vicente Rosa Braga
b: 25 October 1803 Macau
d: 21 October 1853 Hong Kong

Priscila da Trinidade Noronha
b: 08 June 1800 Macau
d: 18 March 1883 Hong Kong

Vicente Emílio Rosa Braga
b: 12 February 1834 Macau
d: 21 March 1911 Shanghai, China

Carolina Maria Noronha
b: 02 December 1843 Macau
d: 11 January 1906 Hong Kong

José Pedro Braga
b: 03 August 1871 Hong Kong
d: 12 February 1944 Macau
Chapter 6

Delfino Noronha and the Portuguese community, 1844-1900

Portuguese emigration from Macau to Hong Kong in the nineteenth century took place in several waves. The first was in the early years of the British colony as British merchants moved from the uncertain Portuguese presence in Macau to the far more stable British jurisdiction some 60 km away. It was backed, not only by a treaty wrung by force from the reluctant Chinese government, but reinforced solidly by the presence of the Royal Navy and a substantial garrison. Naturally, British merchants took their staff with them. This included young Portuguese men from Macau, who in recent years had been taken on in junior clerical positions and as translators.

The British brought with them to Hong Kong two characteristics: their love of order, of carefully-prepared lists, newspapers, almanacs, books and pamphlets. They brought, too, a degree of susceptibility to tropical diseases that seemed greater than that of the Portuguese in Macau. The old Protestant Cemetery in Macau bears mute witness to the high mortality rate already suffered by members of the British, American, Danish and Prussian communities between 1821 when the cemetery was opened until 1857 when it was formally closed.493 The Colonial Cemetery at Happy Valley in Hong Kong was thereafter used even more intensively as the British garrison, as well as the growing mercantile community, suffered grievously from malaria and other tropical diseases. In 1843, 24% of the garrison died. One regiment, the 55th, lost 218 of its 491 men. ‘The lives of the remainder were only saved by the prompt, judicious and humane conduct of General D’Aguilar [the commanding officer] in immediately embarking the men for England’, reported Sir John Davis, the governor of Hong Kong.494

493 L.T. Ride, A Protestant Cemetery in the Far East, p. 275. A marble tablet above the entrance to the cemetery bears the date 1814; this refers not to the opening of the cemetery, but the year in which letters-patent were granted, permitting the East India Company to acquire church property, resulting in the acquisition of the site in 1821. The tablet, therefore, affirms the right of the Protestant community to own the property. Ride, op. cit., p. 65.
494 Davis to Lord Stanley, 2 August 1844. R.L Jarman, Hong Kong Annual Administration Reports, 1841-1941, p. 5. A row of small houses built here in 1842 were soon unoccupied, their occupants soon dying of fever (W. Tarrant, op. cit., p. 45).
These two British characteristics, one industrious, the other tragic, provided opportunities for a small group of young Portuguese men whose emigration arose from their aspirations rather than from the circumstance of their employment. Among these were members of several families, notably the d’Almada, Rozario, Remedios, Noronha and Rosa Braga families. Because of their significance, each family is discussed in this study, principally members of the last two: Delfino Noronha and the sons of João Vicente Rosa Braga. This chapter is concerned principally with Noronha. Already closely related, the two families were again connected by marriage in 1862.

Delfino Noronha was born on 30 June 1824, and not yet 20 when in 1844 he set up in Hong Kong what would eventually become the colony’s leading printery. His grandson, J.P. Braga, later averred that he was possibly the first Portuguese to establish his own business in the new British colony.495

Noronhas had been eminent in the Portuguese empire in the East since the sixteenth century,496 but little is known about the Noronha family in Macau other than their genealogy. Delfino Joaquim Noronha was born on 30 June 1824, the sixth and youngest child of Manuel José dos Remédios de Noronha and his second wife, Ana Rita do Rosário. Manuel de Noronha was also the youngest child in his family. He was the seventh son of João de Noronha, thought to have been born in Macau about 1735 to Baltazar de Noronha, born about 1710.497 It is likely that the family arrived in Macau in the early eighteenth century from Goa. Thus by the 1830s, the family had been established in Macau for perhaps a century.

496 C.R. Boxer, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, pp. 72, 325-326.
Delfino was thirteen when his father died on 7 December 1837. The numerous and perhaps reasonably well-off Noronha family must have been in a position to send a boy who showed promise to the well-regarded St. Joseph’s College. Education was one of the pillars of the Portuguese occupation of Macau in its early days. The renowned St. Paul’s College had been founded in 1565 but was closed in 1762 under Marquis Pombal’s decree dissolving the Jesuit Order throughout Portuguese territories, and the premises were occupied by the military garrison. Its splendid church, built between 1620 and 1637, lay neglected and steadily deteriorating until its destruction by fire in 1835. Only its facade survived, to become an enduring symbol of Macau’s vanished glory.

The west front and north elevation of the chapel of St Joseph’s College, 1762.
Photographs – Stuart Braga, 14 March 2012

In addition to St. Paul’s, St. Joseph’s College was established in 1730 by the Jesuits. It had a fine and grand set of buildings which took more than a quarter of a century to complete, finishing with a splendid rococo chapel in 1758. However, in 1762 it too was closed, when its Jesuit community was swept away along with that of St. Paul’s. St. Joseph’s remained closed until 1784, when it was re-opened by the ‘Congregation of Missions’, Lazarist Fathers from the Seminary of Chorão in Goa. The Portuguese Crown, acting under the abiding principle of the Padroado, met the expenses of repairing, provisioning, staffing and furnishing the college,

501 L.G. Gomes, Efemérides da História de Macau, p. 147.
which was now able to claim royal patronage, as ‘the Royal College of St. Joseph’. It was almost the last remnant of this fifteenth century arrangement between the papacy and the Portuguese Crown. The next twenty years saw the college at its height, training both Chinese priests and the sons of local citizens who, as Ljungstedt would term them, were of ‘the first rank in society’. In this, it took the place of St. Paul’s College, which never re-opened.

During the Napoleonic Wars, St. Joseph’s College had great difficulty in obtaining staff from Portugal; as a result, the college struggled on with difficulty. Nevertheless, in 1831, Ljungstedt wrote warmly of it:

The priests belonging to this Royal College are all Europeans, men of exemplary conduct and benevolent dispositions, and are esteemed by the public not less for their virtues as for their talents. These Professors are six in number, one of whom is the Superior. The principal aim of this institution is to provide China with evangelical teachers.

During the 1830s, a definite decline set in. A somewhat jaundiced view in 1835 was that the college ‘has seen its best days’. The subsidy from the Portuguese Crown evidently ended during three years of civil war in Portugal from 1832 to 1834, which left the nation bankrupt. By 1836, Ljungstedt had withdrawn his warm praise of the staff of St. Joseph’s, replacing it with a non-committal remark:

The priests belonging to this college are all European Portuguese, commonly six: their superior is appointed from Europe. Of this institution, the principal aim is to provide China with Evangelic teachers.

He gave a detailed description of the curriculum that young Delfino Noronha would have studied, though not as a candidate for the priesthood. He was one of thirteen

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504 A. Ljungstedt, in *Canton Miscellany*, no. 5, 1831, p. 358. The word ‘evangelical’ refers, of course, in this context, to the work of missionary priests, not to a school of churchmanship. This description was repeated in 1905 by J. Dyer Ball, *Macao the Holy City, The Gem of the Orient Earth*, pp. 22, 23, without attribution, apart from the comment, ‘So much for an old account of St. Joseph’s’. Did Dyer suppose that nothing had changed in 70 years?


506 ‘Extracts from a private journal’, *Chinese Repository*, vol. 4, no. 6, October 1835, p 293. The anonymous writer, familiar with Macau, was either British or American.

local Portuguese boys.\textsuperscript{508} Even allowing for the fact that education was then the prerogative of a tiny elite, this seems small, given a Portuguese male population of 1,202 in 1830.\textsuperscript{509} St Joseph’s had a precarious existence during the mid-nineteenth century. Seminary teaching ceased in 1836, but the college continued to function until 1845, when it closed, part of the general collapse of activity in Macau following the British occupation of Hong Kong in 1841 and the subsequent removal of British merchants there in the next few years. It eventually reopened in 1862, but was briefly closed again in 1870 when the Jesuits were expelled for the second time.\textsuperscript{510}

Although the college may have been in decline as an academic institution, its reputation suffering as a result, it nevertheless turned in these difficult years to a new form of training that proved to be of enormous importance. With dwindling opportunities available, even to the sons of the elite of Macau, the Lazarist Fathers adopted a new strategy that proved to be highly successful for the boys and of cardinal significance for the future of the Portuguese community throughout the Far East. This was to acquire a disused printing press in Macau to train their students as printers. The idea that Portuguese people would ever engage in manual work in the Far East was out of the question, but the ‘craft’ of printing was a different matter. It followed that its practitioners would strive to ensure that their work was excellent. So it proved. Printing had only recently arrived in Macau, but in the late 1820s and 1830s, a thorough grounding in the ‘craft’ of printing was given to the boys of St Joseph’s through the work of an outstanding man, Fr Joaquim Gonçalves.\textsuperscript{511}

The families of these boys were obviously as forward-looking as the priests who taught them. A small group of people who had for decades dominated the albeit

\textsuperscript{508} A. Ljungstedt, \textit{An historical sketch of the Portuguese settlements in China and of the Roman Catholic Church and Mission in China and description of the city of Canton}, p. 31. The figures are the same as those he gave in \textit{Canton Miscellany}, 1831. He also detailed the curriculum: ‘The Professors give instruction in the Portuguese and Latin grammar, arithmetic, rhetoric, philosophy, theology etc. Many children of the inhabitants participate in them, though few of them are made priests. The Chinese language is taught, and English and French occasionally. Parents, who can afford to pay for their children a small remuneration monthly, for food and cell, fix them at college, where the students learn to speak genuine Portuguese, and acquire sometimes, a taste for the improvement of their minds. Some children dine at the College and join their families at night; others attend the lectures delivered ‘gratis’ by the Professors at distinct hours. In 1815 eight young Chinese, two Malays, and sixteen boys, born at Macao, were settled in the college. In 1831, seven young Chinese, two boys from Manila whose fathers were Portuguese, and thirteen born at Macao.’

\textsuperscript{509} \textit{Canton Miscellany}, no. 5, 1831, p. 356.


\textsuperscript{511} The work of Fr Gonçalves is discussed in detail in Appendix 16.
limited commercial life of Macau watched helplessly as business opportunities slipped away. They now grasped the new opportunity of what in later generations would be termed technical education. It gave their sons what seemed to be the only chance of a good career in what was clearly going to be a very different world.\footnote{512}

Printing was still seen as a craft, rather than a trade. Over a long period of time the Portuguese, like all Westerners in Macau, refused to have anything to do with manual work.\footnote{513} The day of universal literacy lay well into the future, and the market for printed materials in Portuguese or English was in the 1830s and early 1840s still quite small, though growing rapidly. High standards were \textit{de rigueur} for the well-educated British and American merchants these technically educated boys hoped would be their clients.

Although there are no contemporary records to indicate this, it is clear that local people must have been employed as compositors to put out the growing volume of printed material, particularly at Canton. The only ones with any knowledge of printing were the Portuguese boys trained at St. Joseph’s, who found ready employment in nearby Canton in the 1830s, and a few years later in Hong Kong.

In effect, St. Joseph’s College became for a few years the forerunner of technical education in the Far East. It was heir to the long tradition of Catholic endeavour in Goa and Macau that began with the Jesuit mission in the 1560s. Nor did that tradition of technical education end there. A century after Fr Gonçalves’ most praiseworthy efforts, Delfino Noronha’s grandson, J.P. Braga, would initiate a comparable endeavour in Macau to provide technical education for Portuguese youth who had sought refuge in neutral Macau during World War II, their chance of education in Hong Kong having been snatched from them in wartime.\footnote{514}

Let J.P. Braga tell the story of his grandfather’s experience at St. Joseph’s. His account leads directly to a discussion of the role of the Portuguese in the printing

\footnote{513} A correspondent in the \textit{Hongkong Telegraph} in August 1895 observed: ‘there are no Portuguese carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, cabinetmakers, blacksmiths, journeyman engineers … Why not? … [The Portuguese] must turn their attention to trades and handicraft and eschew clerkships. There is a pride of race among them that is out of place in this Free Trade generation.’ Cited by J.P. Braga, \textit{The rights of aliens in Hongkong}, p. 44.
\footnote{514} Its records are in the J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/8.1/20.
industry throughout the Far East. He traces its origin to the farsighted decision of the Lazarist Fathers in Macau to give the cream of the colony’s youth a new direction in life.

The explanation for the steady increase in the number of Portuguese compositors in Hongkong can be found in the fact that there had been a printing press at St. Joseph’s College in Macao at which Portuguese lads were given training as compositors and printers. Some of the young type-setters upon completing their apprenticeship migrated to the neighbouring British colony as the demand there for men skilled in this class of work increased with the growth of the settlement.

The priests of the well-known school had adopted the idea of giving instruction in the art of printing as a means of providing the youths of Macao with a desirable profession when the older calling of the mariners’ career no longer offered the rewards which could be had by them in older days. During the second and third decades of the XIXth Century increasing numbers of foreign ships had appeared in Far Eastern waters, competing for China’s trade, and sharing in the trade between Macao and a number of other places. The wealthy trading concerns of Britain, the United States, and other countries had greater resources than the Portuguese, and this had the effect of reducing the number of Portuguese vessels engaged in commerce in the East. This meant fewer opportunities at sea for Portuguese youths in Macao who were seeking employment. For some of such youths the printing press at St. Joseph’s College, at Macao, offered a training in a new craft which provided a remunerative living, as it proved, in Hongkong and elsewhere in China.

The young Portuguese compositors trained at that institution were the ones who staffed the printing works not only of the British and American missionaries and other foreign printing establishments at Macao, Hongkong, Canton and other places, but also the composing rooms of Hongkong’s newspaper offices for several decades. But for these Portuguese compositors, the newspapers in Hongkong could not have functioned, as the expense of engaging compositors from England or elsewhere would have been prohibitive.\(^515\)

One such who set out on his own in Macau was F.F. da Cruz, obviously aiming at American patronage with the business name ‘New Washington Press’. Félix Feliciano da Cruz was born in Macau about 1810, and died on 1 March 1879 in Hong Kong.\(^516\) He is known to have printed the important Portfolio Chinensis, edited by Jehu Lewis Shuck (1812-1863), Shuck, one of the earliest American Baptist

missionaries to China, arrived in Macau in 1836, moved to Hong Kong in 1842, and subsequently settled at Canton. Like Elijah Bridgman and some other early American missionaries, he was also a scholar who sought to improve understanding of relations between China and the West. Da Cruz’s work indicates that a high standard in printing both European type and Chinese characters had already been achieved, the Chinese characters evidently having to be individually hand cut. By 1849 he had moved to Canton and was operating the Armenian Press.

Delfino Noronha is likely to have gained experience in one of the printing establishments in Macau. It was one thing to learn the ‘craft’ of printing, quite another to learn how to run a printing business. He was fortunate to have a family who could set him up as an independent printer in the early days in Hong Kong. He was married in Macau, but the date is unknown, having not been located in the surviving registers of any of Macau’s parishes. It was possibly in 1840 when he was sixteen and his bride eighteen. She was Umbelina Maria Basto, the natural daughter of António Teixeira Machado Basto, a member of the Macau Council, and Carolina Dober, perhaps the child of a visiting Dutch seaman.

Early marriages were common, and it seems that Umbelina was brought up in an orphanage until she was eighteen and then married off. Despite her background,

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518 *Hongkong Almanack*, 1849.
519 However, the records of St António were lost in a fire that broke out during the Great Typhoon of September 1874 (M. Teixeira, ‘The Macanese’, *Review of Culture*, no. 20, 2nd series, July/September 1994, p. 119.
522 The opinion of Alberto Guterres, well versed in the traditional culture of Macau. He has for many years closely examined the history of the Noronha family, and concludes, ‘Let us assume that Umbelina’s own mother Carolina Dober returned to her native Holland since being a single mother in Macao would have been unbearable and thus requiring Umbelina’s father Antonio Teixeira Basto to assume full responsibility for her upbringing. He would have sent Umbelina to the Orphanage of Santa Rosa de Lima to provide her with a proper education and did not take her into his home. Umbelina would have been educated until her 18th birthday. Umbelina was then required to make a choice either to remain in the orphanage and study to be a nun or to leave the orphanage as required under the rules (I am here relating to the orphanages in Goa in respect to decision making at 18th year of age, and I assume the same for Santa Rosa de Lima in regard of the same rules). She probably left to marry Delfino around her 18th birthday.’ (Email to this writer, 25 January 2011).
she was the daughter of a vereador, a member of the Council, and one of the homens
de maior condição, men of higher standing, respected community leaders.523

Three children were born to Delfino and Umbelina in Macau in the next four years:

Henrique Lourenço de Noronha, 9 August 1841

Carolina Maria, 2 December 1843

Diocleciano Lúcio, date of birth unknown, but probably in 1845.

A further ten were born in Hong Kong between 1847 and 1859, including at least
one set of twins. Besides Saturnino António and Secundino António, it seems
probable that Maria Clotilde and Leonardo were also twins.524 The ten were:

Maria Clotilde, 25 February 1847

Leonardo, 1847

Capitolina Maria ‘Lily’, 5 August 1848

Henrique Delfino, 1849

Saturnino António, 9 June 1850

Secundino António, 9 June 1850

Lídia Maria, 22 August 1851

Maria das Dôres ‘Quita’, 13 April 1853

Maria Antónia ‘Avonina’, 8 June 1856

Carlos Henrique ‘Charlie’, 22 January 1859.525

Two of them were to become particularly significant in the story of this family:
Carolina Maria, the eldest of six daughters and Charlie, the youngest of seven sons.

523 C.R. Boxer, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, p. 289; C.R. Boxer, Portuguese Society in the Tropics:
the Municipal Councils of Goa, Macao, Bahia and Luanda, 1510-1800, pp. 45, 50.
524 J. Forjaz, Famílias Macaenses, vol. 2, pp. 821-822. Twins were common in the Noronha family.
Alberto Guterres (email to writer, 20 January 2011) disagrees with the list given by Forjaz, regarding
Secundino as the younger twin brother of Saturnino, both born on 9 June 1850.
525 J. Forjaz, Famílias Macaenses, vol. 2, p. 821, gave the date 17 January 1859, but his grandson,
Ernest Morrison, Looking up, looking down the road, p. 201, preferred 22 January 1859.
All but one, Lídia Maria, survived infancy. The survival of all the others is a tribute to the remarkable improvement in public health in the British colony, in the generation that discovered modern hygiene in the mid-nineteenth century.

As Delfino’s sons grew up, some were taken into the business, and acquiring their father’s skill and attention to detail, became in due course successful printers in Shanghai, Singapore and elsewhere in the Far East. It does not seem that any of them remained in their father’s business in Hong Kong. It may be that they, like their father, were keen to head out on their own, and were encouraged by him to do so.

It seems that Noronha moved to Hong Kong some time in 1844, despite a claim in the China Directory, 1871, that his firm was founded in 1841, right at the beginning
of British settlement. This is improbable, not only because of his youth, but because continued British occupation of Hong Kong was by no means certain until 1843. Moreover, his second child was born in Macau in December 1843. Soon afterwards, as his grandson observed, ‘he dared to face the rigours of the climate and the social uncertainties of young Hongkong without the assurance of a fixed salary’. Macau, though close to Hong Kong, was cooled by sea breezes, and had a more equable climate in summer. Hong Kong soon gained the reputation of being a most unhealthy place, and many young British men, not only soldiers, died soon after arriving. Moreover, any Portuguese subject going to Hong Kong was venturing into the unknown. Would he be able to make his way in this new British colony, in which there might be no place for foreigners?

The maker of the printing press available to Noronha when he set up business in 1844 in Hong Kong is not known, but initially it may have been one of the presses earlier established in Macau, bereft of its clientele on the departure of the British community to Hong Kong. In that case, Noronha and his backers, presumably his uncles, may have been able to acquire a press relatively cheaply. J.P. Braga mentioned that his grandfather brought a small press with him from Macau. A comparison of the early printing done for the British and American communities in Canton and Macau suggests that there may have been several identical presses, with much the same array of fonts. Suppliers of printing presses in England probably sent

526 A. Cartwright, Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong Kong and Shanghai, p. 354. The 1841 claim is contained in an advertisement for Noronha and Sons in the China Directory, 1871. I am indebted to Mr Wang Gang of Hong Kong for this reference.
similar equipment to clients around the world. The name of one early Canton press, the Albion Press, suggests that its equipment came from this famous maker.

Noronha set up business in Hong Kong in Oswald’s Terrace, Wellington St, a little to the west of the new English settlement. It was close to what had already been designated as the Chinese quarter of the town, where buildings were crowded close together and rents much cheaper than the Central Business District. He remained there for more than twenty years. Given that the occupation of Hong Kong was still uncertain, all arrangements were temporary and makeshift for the first two years. Early paintings show a little settlement clinging to the coast of a rocky island with a towering mountain behind it. Here developed the community in which Delfino Noronha lived, worked and eventually prospered.

The earliest example of his work known to survive is the Hongkong Almanack for 1847, the first issue in 1846 having been printed by Shortrede at the China Mail

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528 W. Tarrant, *A history of Hongkong Part I, 1839-1844*, p. 45. ‘West of Cheung-wan [i.e. Sheung Wan] came some China houses built by Mr Oswald (Noronha’s Printing Office now)’. [i.e. 1861, when Tarrant’s book was printed.] This appears to have been Richard Oswald, a shopkeeper who ran a business named R. Oswald & Co. (*Hongkong Almanack*, 1846). Tarrant, describing the town in detail, commented that before this part of it was reached, ‘civilization, in the shape of bricks and mortar stopped’. (p. 43). An obituary of Noronha in the *Hongkong Daily Press*, 8 February 1900, claimed that this was then the Central Business District. In fact that has always been Queen’s Road Central.


530 Copies of the *Almanack* for 1846 to 1849 are held by Hong Kong University Library, of the 1848 *Almanack* by the Library of the Hong Kong Legislative Council, and copies of the 1849 and 1850 issues by the National Library of Australia. It is not known why the archaic form ‘Almanack’ was used.
The 1847 issue, a modest booklet of 14 pages, bears Noronha’s colophon at the foot of the title page, and was printed for William Tarrant. Tarrant held a senior government position as Clerk of the Registry Office, a position that eventually evolved into Registrar-General.

A *vade mecum* such as the *Almanack* would have been an essential reference in his work, and the following year he expanded it ambitiously. As well as a monthly calendar, it contained a complete listing of the officers of the Establishment, of British, American and European business houses and an alphabetical listing of all non-Chinese residents in Hong Kong, Canton and Shanghae (sic).

The *Almanack and Directory for 1848* was comparable to similar publications issued at much the same time in the Australian colonies, but was not as elaborate as English provincial directories of that period, which were commonly illustrated with small steel engravings of major features of the town described. Nevertheless, it was a formidable undertaking, apparently done in his spare time. The Hong Kong market for such a publication was very limited; indeed, in the issue for 1849, Tarrant admitted that more than half of the previous issue had remained unsold.

The Price of the present Almanack and Directory is fixed at ($1 ½). One and a half Dollars. If the Editor was obliged to pay only a moderate rate of wages for the labour of compilation and correction of the press (instead of doing it himself unassisted) the publication even at this price, (which in English Money is large,) would prove an absolute loss. This remark it is hoped will have the effect of urging the Public to patronize it to a greater extent than heretofore, and not allow *more* than half an edition to remain on hand – waste Paper.

Victoria, Hongkong, December 1848. WILLIAM TARRANT

By 1848 Noronha was employing a compositor, L. do Rozario, and again printed the *Hongkong Almanack and Directory for 1849* for Tarrant, his compositor by then being Antônio Fonseca. Besides listing all the official establishments, the early Hong Kong almanacs carefully listed all the non-Chinese adult population. Most were

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531 Like most mid-nineteenth century pamphlets, it was issued in blue paper wrappers. A copy was offered for HK$70,000 at the International Antiquarian Bookfair, Hong Kong, in January 2009 by Picture This, Hong Kong.

532 e.g. Tunbridge Wells: *Clifford’s Descriptive Guide for Tunbridge Wells, with Rules for Drinking the Waters*, Tunbridge Wells, n.d. [1837].

533 *The Hongkong Almanack and Directory for 1849*, p. 3. Tarrant signed and dated the preface, indicating that his work was as up-to-date as possible.
employees of the large English merchant houses, or of several German and other European traders. The European staff of each firm was listed; they included 35 Portuguese.\textsuperscript{534} Most of the British concerns employed Portuguese staff from the first, but never in managerial roles. This became a settled pattern both of employment and social stratification. However, the clerks in the various merchants’ offices, many of them Portuguese, were listed only in their place of employment, and not in the alphabetical listing of residents. What came to be called the ‘Portuguese clerk class’ had already emerged by 1848, and its members effectively dropped out of sight as far as the British businessmen and government officials were concerned.

There was also a substantial Indian mercantile community initially composed of Bohras from Mumbai (then Bombay). Thirty-eight Indian traders are listed in the nineteenth century Hong Kong directories, beginning as early as 1841, with Abdoolally Ebrahim & Co, still in business towards the end of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{535} In 1849 there were only three independent Portuguese businessmen: José Lourenço Pereira, who managed the ‘Medical Hall’, Delfino Noronha, printer and António Luiz d’Encarnação, auctioneer. All three conducted service businesses rather than the far more profitable mercantile enterprises. All seized the opportunities offered by the new British settlement. Hong Kong was notoriously unhealthy, and the mortality rate, especially among the hapless troops, was high for several years.

As well as these three, João Joaquim Rosa Braga was employed at the Victoria Dispensary for more than a decade in these early years of the British colony, soon becoming its manager, and eventually purchasing the Medical Hall. His success has already been discussed. The varied fortunes of other members of the Braga family for the next three generations form a large part of this thesis and their story will be taken up in later chapters. The Noronha family too would have a significant role in the business history of Hong Kong for several generations, the printery being still in family ownership in 1941, when the Japanese Occupation brought all European business activity to a sudden end. Delfino Noronha’s successors maintained the high standard established by their distinguished forebear.

\textsuperscript{534} S. Bard, \textit{Traders of Hong Kong: some foreign merchant houses, 1841-1899}, p. 106. They are included as employees of the various ‘hongs’; their identity, indeed the chief reason for their presence in Hong Kong at all, was bound closely to their employment.

\textsuperscript{535} S. Bard, op. cit., pp. 90-92.
Following the first three, several successful Portuguese mercantile enterprises emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. M.C. Rozario & Co. was perhaps the most successful of these. Marcos Callisto do Rozario was at first a partner of James Stevenson, one of the many who came from Canton to Hong Kong where he established the firm of Messrs. Stevenson & Co., shipping agents and merchants trading with Australia. In 1857 Rozario established his own firm, and became a substantial exporter of many kinds of valuable commodities, mainly to the USA and Australia. Rozario & Co. was seen as ‘a large and profitable business’.536 Its founder was regarded by the Portuguese community as one of its leading members, like Noronha, with whom he formed a close friendship. He was among the first to send his sons to England for their education; a small trickle would follow. ‘He left a large estate at his death’, observed J.P. Braga regretfully in 1943, having himself lost everything in 1941 when Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese.

Another early Portuguese settler in Hongkong did very well in business. João José dos Remedios ‘took with him a fortune’ from Macao in the 1850s and continued to prosper in Hongkong. He was an enterprising man and among his ventures was a shipping service, J.J. dos Remedios & Co. By 1867 he had a staff of six, and set up a subsidiary company, Remedios & Co., both companies trading as merchants. ‘It is

said that at the time of his death his estate exceeded a million dollars – a vast fortune for that time’, sighed Braga.537 By the 1870s, the well-to-do of all communities were looking to escape the crowded confines of the praya district. Remedios was the first Portuguese resident to buy land in a locality then regarded as far from town. He acquired a Farm Lot at Pokfulam, where he built his family residence, with enough spare land for a sizeable flower and vegetable garden from which the family table was supplied with fresh produce daily. Pokfulam, high above the western extremity of the city, was well beyond the reach of the only public transport at that time, the sedan chair.538 Braga added that ‘Mr. Remedios must have had considerable enterprise to build a home in such a far-off suburban district. But he was one of the fortunate few who could afford the upkeep of a small buggy and pony to provide the means of quick transport to the city and back for his ordinary daily business.’539

There were few other Portuguese-owned joint stock companies in the nineteenth century. One that survived for more than forty years until 1905 was Brandão & Co., with offices in Wellington Street, Hong Kong, and also in Macau. José G. Brandão began as a bank clerk, and in 1863 set up in business with several related partners. These were José M. V. de Figueiredo and his two brothers-in-law, the sons of João Baptista Gomes, regarded as ‘an old and well-to-do Macao family’. All the partners, says Braga, took an active part in Portuguese community life.540

Three more were short-lived: Francisco Paulo Soares set up as F.P. Soares & Co, general merchants, at 525 Queen’s Road between 1861 and 1867. Figueiredo & Co. was in Stanley Street from 1872 to 1876, and Ribeiro & Co. in Graham Street, also from 1872 to 1876. All were located in the small area near the Catholic Church. Concentration close to the focus of community life was a characteristic of the Hong Kong Portuguese until their departure in the 1960s and 1970s.

More than once in his seminal book written during World War II, J.P. Braga commented on the Portuguese lack of initiative in early Hong Kong, deploiring the

538 Pokfulam was one of the ten smaller villages on Hong Kong Island described by Tarrant in A history of Hongkong Part I, 1839-1844, p. 3. Romanisation was haphazard before the Wade-Giles system was adopted. The names are recognisable, but are now somewhat changed. The ten, as rendered by Tarrant, were: Sookunpoo, Hoong-heong-lao, Sow-ke-wan, Sai-wan, Shek-hoe, Tai-tam, Wong-nau-kok, Kong-lam, Shek-pai-wan and Pok-foo-lum.
fact that they had drifted into the subordinate role of an unenterprising underclass, while others prospered, including not only the British, Americans, Germans and Jews, but also Indians and, conspicuously, some Chinese compradors as well. He saw how well the British and Americans in particular, had made use of what was still a new development in the Far East, the limited liability joint stock company. His severe criticism of his own community was wholly justified, given that so few Portuguese had exploited what for many others became a golden opportunity.

If the Portuguese pioneer settlers in Hongkong had recalled the lessons of the past they might have repeated the success of their forefathers. The changing nature of trade and the greatly increased cost of ships created new problems, it is true, but the difficulties of the newer age could have been overcome had the Portuguese been willing to club together in joint stock enterprises. Unfortunately, however, the peculiar jealousy they harboured of one another’s

541 The word *comprador* has a remarkable history in the Far East. A Portuguese word meaning ‘buyer’, it came from Goa, originally referring to the native servant who went to market to buy supplies for his master’s household. His role, both in Goa and Macau, grew to encompass the keeping of household accounts. In nineteenth century Hong Kong, the word evolved to refer to the intermediary between a European trading house and its Chinese suppliers. A successful comprador had to have an excellent command of both English and Chinese. H. Yule & A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 243. Possibly the most successful comprador was Robert Ho Tung, Head Comprador of Jardine Matheson & Co. in the 1880s. This important role and his outstanding business acumen made him fabulously wealthy and influential. His support of the Braga family, sustained for half a century, is discussed in Appendix 14.
success proved to be an impediment to any attempt at Portuguese
collective enterprises. The children of those who did succeed seldom
inherited the thrifty and business-like traits of their fathers, and great
fortunes were lost by the second or third generation. 542

Noronha produced work of a high standard from the beginning. An example of his
early work is striking proof of this. It is a theatre programme printed on silk in
1849. 543 It indicates several things. It shows skill in dealing with a difficult medium.
The inking is even and the execution shows a good grasp of the aesthetics demanded
by an elite clientele and, importantly, it reveals that the printer had a good press and
an extensive range of font and other devices available to him. He was in a position
to compete for the top end of the colony’s business.

His grandson’s memoirs, written with filial pride, provide an insight into Noronha’s
work practices:

Mr Noronha was himself an expert compositor. Until his business
justified the larger staff which he came to employ in later years, and
sometimes even after then, he would often set up the type himself
for the more important of his publications, a practice which he
dropped, however, in the last decade of his life. Nor is it generally
known that in the first years his wife used to help with the inking
and the working of the printing press, thereby proving herself to be
a true woman pioneer who was willing to share the hardships and
the work of the men who ventured forth into new fields of
endeavour.

By dint of hard work and thrift, and in spite of the ravages of the
climate and other handicaps of life in Hongkong’s early days, Mr
Delfino Noronha brought up a large family of children and
grandchildren and built up a prosperous business. 544

The first printing in Hong Kong was the Hongkong Gazette which appeared on 1
May 1841, later becoming the Hong Kong Government Gazette. From 1843, it was
printed by Andrew Shortrede, a well-established Edinburgh printer who apparently
came to Hong Kong to exchange a cold climate for a tropical one.

542 J.P. Braga The Portuguese in Hongkong and China, p. 150.
543 An example was offered by Charlotte du Rietz Rare Books, Stockholm, at the Third International
Antiquarian Bookfair, Hong Kong, December 2009. The Amateur Dramatic Club had been formed in
December 1844, but soon languished, and was revived in 1848. This was one of its early productions.
Historical and Statistical Abstract of the colony of Hongkong, 1841-1920, p. 4.
182
The terrace houses to the right are on Zetland Street, close to the Anglican cathedral and the premises of Augustine Heard & Co., later the French Mission. Noronha lived and worked on Zetland Road from the late 1870s until his death in 1900.

Map 17 – Location of the premises of Noronha & Co., 1846 to 1900

From Tsai Jung fang. Hong Kong in Chinese history: community and social unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913, Map B.

Noronha had three competitors, the chief of whom was Shortrede, who also produced a newspaper, the China Mail, first published in 1845. The Hongkong Almanack and Directory for 1846 shows that Shortrede had ten employees, seven of
whom were Portuguese compositors. Shortrede was one of the inner circle of English businessmen and public servants, and of the elite group who founded the Hongkong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, established under vice-regal patronage in 1847. He drafted its rules and printed its journal. He is likely to have been a member of Zetland Lodge, the Masonic Lodge, which almost immediately became a significant and very prominent part of the Hong Kong social and commercial scene. Like all freemasonry at the time, it excluded Catholics, and was thus part of the intentional system of exclusion of non-British communities from the governing and social elite of the colony.

Noronha’s next competitor was John Carr, who started the colony’s first newspaper, the *Friend of China and Hong Kong Gazette* in 1842. By 1845 he had a flourishing business, employing five Portuguese. Carr ran this paper until 1859, when it was purchased by Tarrant. The third was John Cairns, who in 1843 took over the *Hongkong Register*, which continued until 1863, was the successor of the *Canton Register*, first published in 1827.

For Noronha to compete with Shortrede, Carr and Cairns was both courageous and daunting. Not only were they already well-established on the scene, but they were also well-known in the small community. In the three or four years since they set up their businesses, it had become established that in the printing industry the Portuguese were employees, not proprietors. There would scarcely have been room for another printer, and Noronha struggled for some years to gain a foothold in the limited market.

545 They were: Jozé M. de Silva, Manoel Luiz Roza Pereira, Francisco C. Barradas, Vicente F. Barradas, João Braz Garcon, Simão V. Roza and Joaquim da Silva, with two Englishmen, Andrew Dixon the overseer and J.W. Warren, the book-keeper. Athanazio de Fonseca joined the firm in 1847. *Hongkong Almanack* for 1846, p. 43; *Hongkong Almanack* for 1847.


547 They were a book-keeper, Jozé P. Souza, and four compositors, Luiz M. de Azevedo, António de Azevedo, António R. Vidigal and Roque R. Vidigal. *Hongkong Almanack* for 1846, p. 38; *Hongkong Almanack* for 1847, p. 38.


550 Shortrede and Cairns were members of a jury enquiring into the deaths of three Chinese seafarers in an altercation with Hong Kong police. *Straits Times*, Singapore, 4 November 1849.
Yet within 15 years, Noronha had proved himself the best of the four. Andrew Shortrede died in 1858, and his firm, Shortrede & Co., was taken over by its long-time overseer, Andrew Dixon, from whom Noronha was able to wrest the government contract. Noronha had successfully set himself a huge challenge in beating such strong opposition. Shortrede, a peppery Scot, had troubled relations with several early governors. By contrast, the able young Portuguese printer, with a workforce comprising his own compatriots, was an attractive alternative to the incoming governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, in 1859.

It must have given Noronha immense satisfaction to sign the following memorandum:

Memorandum of agreement between H.E. Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor of Hong Kong and Delfino Noronha, printer: Delfino Noronha agrees to carry out printing etc. for the Hong Kong Government including the publishing of a separate sheet or sheets called 'the Hong Kong Government Gazette' and shall be at his liberty to insert advertisements in such gazette.

By 1860 his business had expanded to such an extent that he employed six compositors. The government contract gave Noronha public standing as well as assured business, which increased when a Chinese edition of the Government Gazette was published from 1 March 1862 onwards. As the writer of an obituary expressed it on Noronha’s death in 1900, ‘the printing business of Mr. Noronha continued to prosper and in 1868, now greatly assisted by his sons, was then the most important in the colony.’ A family tradition, proudly recounted by J.P. Braga, was that Robinson’s successor, Sir Richard MacDonnell, assured Noronha that so long as

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551 Information from Mr Wang Gang, Chief Editor, Petrel Publishing House, Hong Kong, 14 March 2008.
552 G.B. Endacott, A Biographical Sketchbook of Early Hong Kong, pp. 150-151.
553 HKRS 149-2-133 and HKRS 149-2-216, both 10 December 1859, Public Records Office, Hong Kong.
554 All were Portuguese. They were: J.J. da Silva e Souza, Vicente Barradas, H. Rodrigues, L. d’Azevedo, C. Sanchez and H.C. Pereira. China Directory, 1861.
555 Historical and statistical abstract of the colony of Hongkong, 1841-1920, p. 12. The Chinese edition was discontinued after about fifteen years.
556 An unsigned obituary in the Portuguese weekly, O Porvir, Hong Kong, 24 February 1900, possibly written by his son Henrique.
his firm continued to give satisfaction, they would remain government printers in perpetuum.\textsuperscript{557}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{great_fire_hong_kong}
\caption{Great fire at Hong-Kong’ Nearly 200 buildings were destroyed in the vicinity of Queen’s Road West, including Noronha’s premises. Illustrated London News, 22 December 1866.}
\end{figure}

In 1860, Noronha’s business was still located at Oswald’s Terrace, Wellington St. He continued to use the business name, ‘Noronha’s Printing Office’ in 1864, but by 1867, it had become ‘Noronha & Sons, printers to Hongkong Government’, or ‘Noronha e Filhos’ for Portuguese publications. By 1874, the name ‘Noronha & Co’ had been adopted, and the firm would continue under this name until 1941.\textsuperscript{558}


\textsuperscript{558} A small select bibliography of the firm’s output was recorded by J.M. Braga, J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/7.2/72 – Noronha & Co. This was printed in his father’s book. J.P. Braga, \textit{The Portuguese in Hongkong and China}, p. 153.
A disastrous fire on 30 October 1866 nearly destroyed the business. However, as the obituarist expressed it, ‘Mr. Noronha was able to minimize his losses and create a better establishment that remains the best up to today with no other firm able to surpass it in present Hongkong’.  

He moved to two large houses nearby at the corner of Pottinger St and Hollywood Road opposite the Central Police Station.  

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China Directory, 1871

| 羅耶也印字館 |
| Lo-long-yah-yum-tsz-koon |

Noronha & Sons, general printers and stationers, and printers to the Government of Hongkong and to H.B.M.’s Legation and Consulates in China; the “Hongkong Government Gazette” and Chinese issue of same published every Saturday. “Chinese Gazette” published every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, I, Hollywood Road, opposite the Hotel d’Europe  
Noronha, Henrique L.  
Noronha, Leonardo  
Campos, B. P., foreman  
Pinna, F. F. de, compositor  
Xavier, F., do.  
Pereira, A. A., do.  
Perpetuo, A., do.  
Pereira, A. S., do.  

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By 1879 he had moved again to 5-9 Zetland Street. This was a particularly salubrious address, slightly above the waterfront, but in the Central Business District where the English firms were located. Importantly, it was across the road from Zetland Lodge, the stately headquarters of Hong Kong’s leading Masonic Lodge. Noronha had become well-established, and he remained in residence and in business there for the rest of his life. Noronha & Co. was the largest of a number of Portuguese printing firms, and survived longer than the rest.  

For some years between the 1860s and the 1880s his sons Henrique and Leonardo were in the business. In 1870, the mid-point of this period, he employed six others,

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559 O Povir, Hong Kong, 24 February 1900.  
560 Hongkong Daily Press, 8 February 1900, referenced by Carl Smith, CS/1017/00165937-8. Smith also mentioned an obituary in the China Mail.  
all Portuguese.\footnote{562} None had been with him ten years earlier, and all those there in 1860 had moved on. Some who had been with Noronha for several years set out on their own. In 1865, J. de Souza advertised that he had ‘established himself in this Colony’, citing ‘five years manager in Noronha’s Printing Office’ as his credential.\footnote{563} Having had excellent training himself, Noronha was now training the next generation of printers.

Over the years, some of his sons went to Canton, Shanghai, Manila and Singapore, where their father assisted them to launch out on their own, as he himself had done. The first was Henrique Lourenço, who had become his father’s right hand man. In 1879 he was invited to Singapore to take charge of the Government Press, accepting a twenty-year contract. Here he produced the \textit{Straits Settlements Government Gazette}, in much the same way as his father’s role in Hong Kong, eventually retiring to Hong Kong in 1899.\footnote{564}

In 1880 Delfino bought an established Shanghai printing business, ‘Celestial Empire Press’, following the death of its owner, António H. Carvalho, and renamed it ‘Noronha & Sons’.\footnote{565} Carvalho had been the Portuguese consul in Shanghai, an indication of the importance of printers in the Portuguese community there as elsewhere in the Far East.\footnote{566} It was initially managed by Henrique Hyndman, a member of the Portuguese community, and later by one of Noronha’s sons, possibly Leonardo.\footnote{567}

Other sons stayed in Hong Kong, but it seems that they did not remain in their father’s business. It appears that there was a rapid turnover of staff, perhaps because of the owner’s exacting standards and punishing deadlines, with the \textit{Government Gazette} to be produced each Saturday. There was also a \textit{Chinese Gazette} produced

\footnote{562} They were B.P. Campos, foreman, and five compositors, F.F. de Pinna, F. Xavier, A.A. Pereira, A. Perpetuo and A.S. Pereira. \textit{China Directory}, 1871. However, Henrique, like most Portuguese youths, had earlier started his career as a bank clerk, with the Oriental Bank. \textit{China Directory}, 1861.
\footnote{563} \textit{Hongkong Daily Press}, 20 March 1865.
\footnote{565} J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/7.2/21 – Carvalho, António; MS 4300/7.2/72 – Noronha & Co.
\footnote{566} \textit{Hongkong Daily Press}, 8 February 1900.
three times weekly, on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. The nature of such publications suggests that copy must often have reached the printery with very little notice and that hours were long.

Whereas others did not stay long, several grandsons joined the firm. Noronha’s eldest daughter, Carolina Maria, had married Vicente Emilio Braga in 1863, and had five sons. Three of them died of smallpox in 1887 and 1888, still in their teens. Their youngest brother, José Pedro, a very promising boy, had been sent to Calcutta to further his education, but at his mother’s urgent behest, returned to Hong Kong in 1889 to take his brothers’ place. The next chapter will discuss this family tragedy.

Young J.P. Braga had the opportunity to observe his grandfather closely in the last decade of his life. He found, not merely a busy and successful printery in which high standards were set and expected, but also a centre of intellectual activity. He could see and emulate the personal qualities that had made the older man a successful businessman and a respected community leader. Nearly half a century later, he wrote,

Of him I cherish fond memories, with his gentle ways and courteous manners. He was small and slight, and was always immaculately dressed, and he was my ideal of a perfect gentleman. He was popular not only in Hongkong but he also enjoyed a wide circle of Macao friends.

As a significant community leader, Noronha was one of the principal founders of the Portuguese community club, Club Lusitano, the foundation of which in 1865 was discussed in Chapter Three. By 1904, it had 195 members. In the next half century other clubs, sporting and charitable organisations would follow.

In the eyes of Austin Coates, the only Hong Kong historian to bother with the Hong Kong Portuguese, Noronha was the outstanding figure in that community. His business success enabled him to invest in property, albeit in a much smaller way than the large British mercantile establishments. In 1865 he took out a mortgage for $1,500 on a Chinese temple property, described in the records as ‘Inland Lot 257

568 China Directory, 1871.
with Joss House, dwelling house and building erected thereon'. The mortgage remained unpaid, and in 1869, as mortgagee, Noronha sold the temple to a committee of three representatives of the Chinese community.

Marciano Baptista, Kowloon Point, Hong Kong, ca. 1870-1875

J.M. Braga collection, nla.gov.au/nla.pic-vn3294981

J.P. Braga also wrote of his grandfather’s role in developing Kowloon on the north side of Hong Kong harbour. Added to the colony of Hong Kong in 1860, it remained unoccupied by Europeans for some years. Noronha was a co-founder of the Hongkong Horticultural Society, and developed a ten acre estate at Yaumati, on the western side of Kowloon.

Mr Delfino Noronha was the first Portuguese to invest in land across the harbour … at Yaumati. The first plots of land sold in the area were not originally building lots; they were known at the

572 Researched by the distinguished local researcher Carl T. Smith, and described by him in the ‘Notes and Queries’ section of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch, October 1973, p. 136.
beginning as ‘farm lots’ and were sold by public auction. Two of the first lots, namely F.L. 2 and 3, of a total of five acres, were bought by Mr Delfino Noronha from the original owner, and he subsequently acquired an additional lot consisting of a further five acres of land adjoining his first purchase. He then invited his friend Mr Marcus Calisto do Rozario to become joint owner with him of this land. Mr Rozario agreed, and as a distinctive name for the property, the partners adopted the initial syllables of their Christian names. Thus it came about that the estate came to be called ‘Delmar’.574

Twelve lots were sold in this first auction in 1869, at least three of them to Portuguese, including José d’Almada e Castro. Chinese villagers were understandably hostile to what was taking place, so no development could take place without the prior construction of a police station. This was done in 1873, and what was described as ‘a fine house’ was then built on the ‘Delmar’ estate. ‘Many of the shanties are being removed’, added the Hongkong Times.575 The rights of Chinese villagers who had been there for centuries counted for nothing.

Keen to develop the area further, Noronha commenced an irregular ferry service to Kowloon, running between Central and Yaumati, the main centre of population in Kowloon in the 1870s.576

This early form of transport did not last long. A Parsee opium merchant, Dorabjee Naorojee, commenced operations with a regular service between Central and Tsimshatsui, naming the business the Star Ferry Co. in 1898. By 1897, the population of Yaumati had grown to 8,051 compared with 218 in Tsimshatsui,577 but the rest of Kowloon still remained largely undeveloped. It took vigorous action by an early twentieth century governor, Sir Matthew Nathan, to hasten its progress.

574 Ibid., p. 228. F.L. – Farm Lot. Kowloon was then entirely rural.
576 ‘The service began with a single-deck steam-launch called Blanche, which, after its name, was all painted white. At the beginning, a single fare amounted to less than one cent, and so fares were collected in cash (a cash was worth 1/10 of a cent). There was no regular timetable. A long blast from the boat’s whistle announced the impending departure of the ferry, which took place when the Chinese coxswain thought that the launch had a sufficient complement of passengers on board.’ J.P. Braga, The Portuguese in Hongkong and China, p. 230. Further details are given by Luff.
His role as Government printer made Noronha more politically aware than most members of his community. He became a classic nineteenth century liberal, and must have followed the struggle for manhood suffrage in Britain with keen interest, but Hong Kong did not share in the constitutional developments of other parts of the British Empire. The chief outlet for a liberal was to take an interest in events abroad, although he permitted his young grandson, José Braga, to publish a philippic attacking the injustices of British rule in Hong Kong. José became friendly with the Filipino radical José Rizal. However, it was a liaison that may have disturbed some members of his family, leading to difficulty after his death. The execution of Rizal in 1898 enraged young Braga, already seen as a hothead, and perhaps the elderly Delfino as well. That can be inferred from the grandson’s reminiscences, written nearly fifty later.

I still recall the horror and indignation which filled the Portuguese community in Hongkong when the news reached the British colony of the treacherous manner in which the beloved leader of the Filipino people had been done away with.578

If J.P. Braga’s recollection is correct, this ‘horror and indignation’ felt by the Portuguese community in Hong Kong is perhaps a reflection of their own feelings towards the British. It is significant that they identified themselves, not with fellow Iberians, the Spanish, but with the Filipino nationalists. There was the same sense of common purpose against a perceived injustice, the antipathy of a suppressed group towards those in power.

Noronha’s 67th birthday on 30 June 1891 was celebrated in fine style with a musical soirée at which members of his family did him honour.579 In his community, Noronha was pre-eminent among perhaps half a dozen respected leaders. By the time of his death, he was the last survivor of the group of pioneers who had come from Macau almost at the beginning of British rule in Hong Kong. Unlike most of the others, he had prospered and became a man of substance, with property on Hong Kong Island and a large estate in Kowloon, then still largely undeveloped, but with unlimited future prospects. However, the estate was not retained by his heirs.

579 The programme, presumably printed by Noronha & Co., and listing the music and recitations as well as the names of the participants, is in a photograph album compiled by J.P. Braga’s daughter, Caroline Braga, now in the possession of this writer. The event is further discussed in the next chapter.
To the Portuguese community, he was ‘Prestimoso e benemesto macaense’ – ‘the most prestigious and benevolent Macanese’.

However, from the British point of view, he was not impressive. A small, sallow man, he would have fitted well into the British stereotype of the qualities they sought in members of the Portuguese community, who were required to be inconspicuous, quiet, hard-working, dependable, and subservient. Like most other members of the Portuguese community of Hong Kong, he did his job ably and reliably. However, while the Portuguese printers, some of whom were descendants of *fidalgos*, the Portuguese gentry, saw themselves as craftsmen, their British clients saw them as tradesmen. As such, in the values of the nineteenth century, they belonged to an inferior and menial social order, described generically as ‘service’.

Noronha died at the age of 75 on 6 February 1900, and was buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery, Happy Valley, next to his wife, who had predeceased him in 1894. A fluted column was raised over the grave, an apt metaphor for strength and continuity. The firm of Noronha & Co. was taken over by his sons Henrique, who

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**Delfino Noronha, O Porvir (The Future), Portuguese weekly newspaper in Hong Kong, 24 February 1900**

*Print from microfilm in Macau Public Library*

**Noronha’s grave, Catholic Cemetery, Happy Valley, Hong Kong**

*Photograph by Stuart Braga, 23 March 2012*

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580 A headline in an obituary in *O Porvir (The Future)*, 24 February 1900.

581 As menials, they were poorly paid. The *Chinese Repository* had observed in 1834 that ‘a European printer would require as much salary as ten Chinese put together’. *Chinese Repository*, vol. 3, no. 6, October 1834, p. 254.
died in 1905, Leonardo, who died in 1913, and Secundino.\textsuperscript{582} Leonardo had married Maria Joséfa de Castro Basto, whose brother José Maria ‘Jeje’ de Castro Basto, managed the company after Leonardo’s death. Eduardo ‘Edo’ Noronha (Leonardo’s son and Jeje’s nephew) then ran the company until his death in 1921.\textsuperscript{583} The exclusion of J.P. Braga from this management team of family members will be discussed in the next chapter. Noronha and Co. moved again from Zetland Street to No. 3A Wellington Street, not far from where it had begun, on the western fringe of the Central Business District. It remained there until the fall of Hong Kong in 1941.

\begin{center}
\textit{Wellington Street, Hong Kong, early twentieth century.}

The premises of Noronha & Co. are on the right, behind the gas lamp post.

\textit{Courtesy of Mr Wang Gang.}
\end{center}

Delfino Noronha was one of a small group of Portuguese immigrants in mid-nineteenth century Hong Kong to create a significant niche for themselves as senior government officers, in the legal profession or in successful businesses.\textsuperscript{584} Most others entered clerical employment, becoming for several generations an under-class of bank clerks, racially disqualified from gaining managerial rank. Noronha was among a few whose aspirations went much further; moreover many of his descendants were distinctly aspirational too. His obituary, published in \textit{O Porvir (the Future)}, a Portuguese community weekly, was clearly written by one of them. Referring to that family, the writer noted:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{582} Probate File No. 19 of 1900. Hong Kong Public Record Office HKRS No. 144/4/1011.
\item \textsuperscript{583} \textit{The Rock}, vol. 2, no. 7, April 1922, p. 338; J. Forjaz, \textit{Familias Macaenses}, vol. 2, p. 835.
\item \textsuperscript{584} An obituary appeared in the \textit{Hongkong Daily Press}, 8 February 1900. The English press seldom noticed the passing of members of the Portuguese community.
\end{itemize}
Delfino de Noronha was a true patriarch and in his life was fortunate to share his life with 10 children, 59 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren, with 8 children, 48 grandchildren and 27 great-grandchildren living at the time of his death.\footnote{O Porvir, 24 February 1900.}

The twin towers of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (1859-1888) dominate the foreshore of this crowded scene. The small terrace houses in the foreground were the homes of the Portuguese community until the mid-1870s when rising rents forced most of them to move higher up the hill. Oswald’s Terrace, where Noronha’s printery was located, is immediately in front of the left tower. Hong Kong harbour was always crowded with shipping, and even more so after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

The photograph was taken from Caine Road in the Mid-Levels, ca. 1870.

The cathedral was rebuilt here in 1888.

*Hong Kong Museum of Art, Historical Pictures*, p. 71.
Noronha’s achievement, like that of several other heads of eminent families, was based on unflagging personal drive, a passion for excellence, and a strong sense of public duty. His place in the Portuguese community in Hong Kong was that of a patriarch both in his family and the Portuguese community he had done much to support. While politically sentient, he was not an activist, realising that it would serve no purpose. However, he blazed a trail that his grandson, who held him in high esteem, would follow with determination in later years.
Chapter 7

Printer’s devil – J.P. Braga, 1871-1900

Many people in public life have a chequered career. One has only to think of great figures such as Churchill, Napoleon and Roosevelt to be aware of the heights to which they ascended and the severe crises they endured. Much the same is often true in quite minor positions of leadership. Success is seldom uniform, seldom unaccompanied by serious reversals and even tragedy. This was certainly true of J.P. Braga, described by a later community leader as ‘the community’s biggest champion for a long period of years, one who was a keen fighter against discrimination’. As a boy he had shown great promise, but a potentially brilliant career was denied him. A decade later, at the age of 29, he was exiled, rejected by his family and his career again apparently ruined. Recovering, he built an increasing public reputation over several decades, but never gained a strong financial position and died a poor man. He married young and had thirteen children, but the marriage was consistently unhappy. In his last years, he was overwhelmed by the catastrophe of war and was forced to abandon all that he had worked hard to achieve, fleeing from once prosperous Hong Kong to the comparative safety of nearby Macau, which his grandparents had left behind them a century before. He died in 1944, before victory was in sight. Yet he was to leave his mark in a distinguished record of disinterested public service. Another lasting contribution was a substantial portion of a written record covering over a century of his community’s contribution to Hong Kong.

He was born on 3 August 1871. It seems that he never saw his father, Vicente Emilio Braga, who left Hong Kong for Japan in December 1870, never to return, leaving his wife newly pregnant with her eighth child. Naturally, this led to gossip, the kindest of which was that he had fled to escape a loveless marriage. In the absence of José’s father, a kinsman, Januário A. Carvalho (1830-1900), came to have a large

587 According to his grandson, A.M. Braga, in South China Morning Post, 31 May 1987. However, Tony Braga, a bachelor, was always something of a misogynist. The comment may say more about Tony Braga than about his grandfather.
role in the boy’s life. Carvalho was a close friend of his grandfather and, as Chief Cashier in the Colonial Treasury, was the most prominent leader of the Portuguese community at that time. ‘Was Carvalho more than just a good friend?’ asked the rumour-mongers. The gossip concerning J.P. Braga’s paternity lingered and may have been a contributing factor to his serious reversal of fortune in 1900.

In 1878, Carvalho was the first Portuguese nominated to the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. This nomination arose from his position in the Treasury rather than his leadership in the Portuguese community. The imaginative initiative of the Governor, Sir John Pope Hennessy, it outraged the British ruling class of merchants, bankers and senior public servants. They were relieved when it transpired that he could not take his seat, as he was an alien, a Portuguese subject, and therefore unable to take the oath of loyalty to the Queen. Carvalho continued to take a keen interest in the boy’s welfare as he grew up.

Writing in 1943 as an old man of 72, José Braga gave a glimpse of childhood in a traditional Portuguese home in Hong Kong in the 1870s.

No attempt to delineate an average Portuguese family in Macao or Hongkong would be complete without a description of the family prayers and devotions which are an important part of life in most Portuguese homes – and especially of the old-fashioned homes. The family group assembles in the parents’ room, as a rule after the evening Angelus. The senior feminine member generally leads the prayers, and the responses are said by the others in unison before the little family altar (no matter how humble, each home has its family altar). The whole of the five mysteries of the rosary are recited. At the conclusion, upon rising, the children in turn take the right hand of their parents and kiss them “Good-night”, invoking their blessing in a single word: “benção”, to which the parents reply: “Deus dei graça” (“May God bless you.”).

He added that ‘this formula is the Macao patois for corrupted Latin. In Portugal, the correct reply is “Deus te abenço” ’.

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588 The brother of Januário Carvalho (#14446), Geraldo Carvalho (#29160), married Capitolina (‘Lily’) Noronha (#29159), sister of Carolina Maria Rosa Braga (#14475), J.P. Braga’s mother. Thus Januário Carvalho was J.P. Braga’s uncle’s brother.

589 Naturally, this rebuff humiliated not only Pope Hennessy and Carvalho, but the entire Portuguese community as well, who presented an adulatory address to Pope Hennessy (read by Carvalho) when he left the colony in March 1882. Reviled by the British community, Pope Hennessy was viewed by the Chinese and Portuguese in a far more favourable light. G.B. Endacott, A History of Hong Kong, pp. 181-182; J.P. Braga, The rights of aliens in Hongkong, pp. 89-95. A photograph of Pope-Hennessy adorned the frontispiece of this pamphlet.

The boy was fortunate to be the youngest in his family. Educational provision for the youth of Hong Kong, Portuguese or Chinese, had been indifferent since the founding of the colony thirty years before his birth. However, since 1850 there had been a Portuguese Boys’ School in Wellington Street, in the Portuguese enclave, and close to Noronha’s printery.  

There had been little provision for schooling in Macau a generation before, but the Portuguese community in Hong Kong was now beginning to embrace the greater opportunities now available to them. José’s four brothers who survived infancy, Francisco Xavier, João Vicente, Braz Maria and António Manuel, are likely to have had their schooling here or at the Italian Convent School before being taken into the family printing business as junior compositors. The Canossian Sisters, an Italian order, opened a school, usually known as the Italian Convent School, in 1860. J.P. Braga would later aver that three generations of his family had been taught there.

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591 A. Sweeting, Education in Hong Kong, pre-1841 to 1941, p. 146. J.P. Braga gave the foundation of this school as ten years later. ‘In September 1860 the first Catholic school for European boys was opened in a very small house in Staunton Street with two teachers’. St. Joseph’s College golden jubilee celebrations: brief historical retrospect. Being an Address delivered at the College by Mr. J.P. Braga, a former pupil, on the 17th May, 1926, p.1. This pamphlet bears no printer’s colophon, but is set in type similar to other work known to have been printed in his printery. It is likely that he had some copies of his address run off. Braga identified his source as ‘the Paper from Hongkong presented to the Imperial Education Conference in 1911’.

The growth in the Portuguese community led to the establishment of another school. Both were ‘supported by the scholars’, but the authorities seem to have taken little notice of them (G.B. Endacott, History of Hong Kong, p. 142. Dr James Legge, the noted sinologue, who was at the forefront of Chinese and English education in Hong Kong for thirty years, ignored the Portuguese community entirely. Shortly before he left Hong Kong to take up the position of inaugural Professor of Chinese at Oxford University, Legge delivered a lengthy lecture describing in detail Hong Kong when he arrived in 1843. The Portuguese community, already present in some numbers, was not mentioned then or later. China Review, 3, 1874, pp. 163-176, reprinted in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch, vol. 11, 1971, pp. 172-193).

592 A. Sweeting, op. cit., p. 150.

593 Fragment of an autobiographical note written ca. 1943. J.M. Braga Papers, MS4300/13.1/1.
There was no provision for Catholic secondary education until a commercial college, St. Saviour’s, was established on Wellington Street in 1865, combining the two earlier schools. It began with 152 boys, but enrolments fell away, as the school was simply not preparing boys well enough for commercial life in Hong Kong. It was taken over by the French Lasallian Brothers in 1875, completely re-organised, along lines that had already proved effective in Agra and Colombo and renamed St. Joseph’s College.

St. Joseph’s College commenced with 75 boys, and grew rapidly to 256 by 1879. Although it catered entirely for the Portuguese community, its instruction was in English, since boys with good English stood far better chances of employment. The

595 Its leading apologist, Fr S.J. Ryan, saw it as ‘the equal of any boys’ school in the Colony’. S.J. Ryan, The Pontifical Foreign Mission Institute in Hong Kong, 1858-1958, chapter 17. A government report in 1876 presented a different view. It ranked St Saviour’s sixth of nine schools inspected, and reported that ‘arithmetic was very weak indeed’. Kennedy to Carnarvon, 24 August 1876, R.L. Jarman, Hong Kong Annual Administration Reports, 1841-1941, vol. 1, p. 430.
596 The Anglican Church, aided by the government, had established St. Paul’s College as a high quality secondary school in 1849 (A. Sweeting, op. cit., p. 146). Its founder, the Rt. Rev. George Smith, the Anglican bishop, chose the same name as the famous Jesuit College in Macau, established three centuries earlier. Its name was chosen for the same reason: it was planned to be the spearhead of an evangelistic thrust into China (A. Sweeting, op. cit., p. 325). However, few if any Catholics would ever go to an Anglican School at this time of deep division between the Catholic Church and all Protestants. The Portuguese community was clearly at a disadvantage at a time when the provision of secondary education was rapidly expanding throughout the world, including Hong Kong and Shanghai. Like the establishment of St. Francis Xavier’s College in Shanghai in 1874, the reorganisation of St. Saviour’s as St. Joseph’s College in 1875 in Hong Kong was both a major endeavour to remedy the situation and a strong response to anti-Catholic sentiment following the Vatican Council of 1870 which promulgated the dogma of Papal Infallibility (Saint Francis Xavier’s college diamond jubilee souvenir album 1874-1934; St. Joseph’s College, Hong Kong: diamond jubilee 1875-1935; A. Sweeting, op. cit., pp. 209-211).
Portuguese community was deeply divided about this, as immigrant communities tend to be. Those who stood for cultural maintenance saw this as ‘an act of hostility to the Portuguese’. There were, however, Portuguese classes for those who wanted to study the language. In May 1883 these were suspended because of the small number enrolling in them. José Braga, who entered the school that year, and his nine sons in later years had an English education.

José was fortunate to attend St. Joseph’s during a period of experienced administration, strong growth and a vigorous building programme. From 1884 to 1889, while José Braga was a pupil, Brother Ivarch Louis was Director and consolidated a growing

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598 This led to an outburst of bitter hostility towards the French brothers and Bishop Raimondi (an Italian) who supported them. While the critics’ cultural concerns were genuine, this was yet another example of the small-mindedness that had so often wracked the Macanese community in days gone by; the critics did not then set up their own language classes. The realities of life in Hong Kong demanded English education, and parents knew it. The next year, 1884, enrolments grew to 382, and Raimondi’s opponents gradually fell silent. S.J. Ryan, op. cit., chapters 18 and 19.

599 An able Director from 1880 to 1883, Brother Cyprian, had been a distinguished teacher in New York and Quebec and had held the directorship of several schools in his native land, Canada. In order to cater for the needs of the fast-growing school, he bought a block of land in the Mid-Levels on Glenealy below Robinson Road and a two-storey building was built in 1881, a third storey being added ten years later. A contemporary handbook called it ‘a large and handsome building’ (B. Shepherd, The Hong Kong Guide 1893, p. 80).
reputation for excellence. The curriculum was what had by the 1880s become the standard Modern curriculum, fairly recently introduced in England, and replacing the traditional rigid emphasis on mathematics and the classical languages. Young Braga was introduced to English literature and history and world geography. He kept for the rest of his life the programmes for the 1884 and 1886 annual distribution of prizes at St. Joseph’s.

In 1884, Master J.P. Braga, aged 13, was given an unusually early opportunity of public speaking, which may well have been formative in his thinking and in his public career many years later. Then in the ‘Special Class’, he delivered an extract from a speech in the House of Commons by William Pitt the Elder on the American War, a classic statement of British policy in the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763) from the man chiefly credited with the rise of Britain as a world power in the mid-eighteenth century.

Two years later, in 1886, at the end of the proceedings, he gave the closing address at what was also the close of his school days there. He played the lead role in a play described as ‘A Farce’, ‘Mr Handsome’s Private State Letters’. He also had some private tutoring from a Mr Hart-Milner. He had excelled at school and received the reward for the conspicuous distinction he had attained. This was the award of the Belilios Scholarship, ‘the highest and most coveted prize, with the exception of the Queen’s Scholarship.’

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602 Press cutting, possibly from O Extreme Oriente, a Portuguese newspaper published in Hong Kong, 6 April 1889.
603 St. Joseph’s College, Annual Presentation of Prizes, 27 December 1884 and 22 December 1886. Both programmes were printed by Noronha & Co.
604 It had been endowed not long before, in 1883, by E.R. Belilios in memory of his wife (E.J. Eitel, op. cit., p. 564). A sum of sixty dollars was paid to the headmaster of the school, to be paid to the
It was already an established practice for some Portuguese families to send a promising boy to Calcutta to complete his education. 605 Delfino Noronha had already done this for his youngest son Carlos Henrique. 606 He now sent his youngest Braga grandson too. Whether his grandfather, Delfino Noronha, or J.A. Carvalho, or both in combination, paid for him to go to school in India is unknown, but one thing is certain. As José left Hong Kong, Carvalho gave the boy two copies of a photograph of himself, one of which was inscribed: ‘A meu caro José. J.A. Carvalho, Hong Kong 2 de Dezº. de 1886’ (‘To my dear José ...’). He kept them on his desk for the rest of his life. Both still exist, scratched, faded and marked with a couple of ink splashes. 607

Carvalho’s example of community leadership, his encouragement and practical support were a life-long inspiration for the fifteen-year-old boy venturing into the unknown. José also kept another important document. Before he left, Delfino Noronha made sure that his grandson’s citizenship was clarified. To put his status beyond doubt, José was granted a Certificate of Nationality under the Governor’s seal attesting to his British citizenship. 608

prize winner at the rate of $5 a month so long as he remained at the school (Letter from A. Lister, Secretary of the Trustees of the Belilios Scholarships Fund, to J.P. Braga, 23 December 1886. However, it does not appear that José Braga received any of this; he received the accolade but not the money. J.P. Braga Papers, MS 4380, MS Acc08/113). South China Morning Post, 16 January 1929, interviewing J.P. Braga, who had just been appointed to the Hong Kong Legislative Council.

605 Writing in 1943, J.P. Braga instanced ‘João Maria Silva [who] received his early education in Hong Kong, but continued his studies in the Jesuit College of St. Xavier in Calcutta where several Portuguese lads from Hong Kong also went for their studies in the last quarter of the 19th century.’ J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/13.3/3.

606 E. Morrison, Looking up, looking down the road, p. 9.

607 Pictorial collection, National Library of Australia, nla.pic-vn3597099.

608 J.P. Braga Papers, MS 4380, MS Acc08/113.
On 13 January 1887, José entered St. Xavier’s College, as one of 146 boarders. St. Xavier’s was India’s leading Jesuit school, located at 10 and 11 Park St, Calcutta. The Jesuits had followed their tradition of aiming at the top level of society, and opened their school in 1860 in two properties on Calcutta’s best street, close to the fine Regency mansion built in 1808 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, effectively the Athenaeum of Bengal. St. Xavier’s rapidly won the reputation of being the best Catholic school in the Far East, a distinction that St Paul’s College in Macau had once boasted. Its staff was almost entirely Jesuit. As early as 1862 it was granted
affiliation with Calcutta University. This was primarily an elite academic institution, and Fr Armand Neut, S.J., the Rector, was strongly opposed to an attempt made in 1886 to introduce technical education. Among a few mementos of his school days, José Braga kept the school calendar for 1887 and the programme of the school’s prize-giving on 13 December 1887. Both were substantial and well-printed booklets, the calendar being of 60 pages and the programme of 16 pages. The expert printer’s grandson would have cast an approving eye over both, noting that they were printed at the Catholic Orphan Press. Another generation of youngsters was being trained in the craft of printing. The two booklets reveal much about the school’s curriculum and organisation.

It was a big school. In 1886 the enrolment was 741 boys, considerably larger than St. Joseph’s in Hong Kong. However, this figure included the ‘School Department’, largely composed of Indian boys in primary and lower secondary classes. The ‘College Department’ had 206 boys, in four upper secondary years. St. Xavier’s was modelled on the English Public School of the mid-Victorian era. A flattering English visitor termed it ‘the Harrow on the Hooghly’. The school calendar indicated close supervision of its students, its fussiness and attention to detailed and prescriptive rules which governed daily routine, the Reading Room and Billiard Club, the Savings Bank and the Literary Society. Many pages of

609 Wikipedia article, St. Xavier’s College, Kolkata, accessed 30 August 2010.
610 R. Kochhar, Seductive Orientalism: English education and modern science, ‘Social Scientist’, 36:45-63, 2008. However, Fr Neut, a Belgian priest, presumably educated at that great centre of learning, Louvain, was no dry academic, but a distinguished scholar and humanitarian. In the year that J.P. Braga attended his school, Fr Neut spent part of the summer holiday visiting the Dutch Leprosy Hospital in Ceylon. He was impressed with what he saw, and the schoolmaster’s eagle eye is evident in his comment, ‘the neatness and cleanliness of the place was remarkable’.
611 Calendar of St. Xavier’s College, 1887 and St. Xavier’s College, Distribution of Prizes, 13 December 1887, National Library of Australia, J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/13.1/1.
612 D. Berwick, A walk along the Ganges, p. 43.
the calendar were devoted to prescribed texts, which generally dictated the curriculum, the textbook being followed meticulously. Fr Neut informed parents:

unceasing care is taken to form the character of the pupils; to inspire them with a love of Religion and Morality; to accustom them to gentlemanly manners, to habits of cleanliness and order, in short to prepare them for their various duties in afterlife.

The Calendar printed the names of prize winners in each subject and the names of the next eight boys were printed in *accessit* order. Pencilled markings alongside the names of boys in Standard VII indicate that these were José Braga’s class mates.

His name appeared twice in the prize list. He had excelled at St. Joseph’s in Hong Kong, but at St. Xavier’s was ninth in English. Newly arrived, he had not yet achieved his potential, and here he was in stiffer competition with English boys. Not surprisingly, the accomplished young orator from Hong Kong won the prize for Elocution and Delivery. In the contemporary British manner, there was a monthly examination, with the names of the top eight boys printed in rank order. ‘Joe’, as his British contemporaries called him, pencilled in the rankings for the next month’s examination. This was a fiercely competitive school, where expectations were high, both of the boys themselves, and the scholarly Jesuits who taught them. The only indication of co-curricular activities was that there was a school band. Here too, bandsmen would compete for one of two silver medals. The most glittering and presumably the most coveted prize, was a gold medal for English Composition, presented by a Maharajah, who held the exalted decoration of KCSI – the Imperial decoration of Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India.

There were few Indians in the upper classes, and most of the few had Parsee names. This was the enterprising and ambitious community who had set up prosperous businesses throughout the Far East, including Hong Kong. In José Braga’s day,

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613 The school’s organisation was complex. The ‘School Department’ had four upper classes, grouped as the ‘Middle Department’, divided into Standards V, VI, VII and Preparatory Entrance. Above this was the much smaller ‘College Department’, preparing students for further studies. In each ‘standard’ there was a silver medal for the dux and general proficiency prizes for the next three students. In José’s copy of the prize list, a pencilled number 14 may indicate that this was his overall ranking. In addition, there was a prize for each subject in the Modern curriculum as adapted to Catholic education – Religious Instruction, Latin, Mathematics, English, History, Geography and finally, Elocution and Delivery. *Calendar of St. Xavier’s College*, 1887.

614 *Calendar of St. Xavier’s College*, 1887, p. 9.
Indians had little access to St. Xavier’s. 615 St. Joseph’s had an almost entirely Portuguese enrolment, but the boys at St. Xavier’s were mainly English, with a scatter of Portuguese names. The Calendar for 1887 has the names of all the boys enrolled the previous year. In Standard VI there were 64 boys in 1886; this was the group that Braga joined the following year. Four had Portuguese names, thirteen Indian, one Chinese, while the remaining forty-six had English names. José Braga did well to perform towards the top end of this crème de la crème of colonial youth.

Despite the obvious advantages of St. Xavier’s, José and his family – his grandfather and his mother – were ambitious for the boy. Rather surprisingly, he moved at the beginning of 1888 to another school in Calcutta, Roberts College, which lacked the cachet of St. Xavier’s College, but had its own particular advantage.

Apparently named in honour of the eminent soldier, Lord Roberts of Kandahar, Roberts College boasted several of the appurtenances of a thoroughly modern school – a cadet corps, and an ‘athletics department’, which played other schools in cricket and football. By the 1880s, sport was a regular part of the late Victorian regime of ‘mens sana in corpore sano’, even in a small school, though not yet at St. Xavier’s College. Roberts College was non-sectarian; perhaps not the obvious place for a devout Catholic family to send their youngster. He was one of sixteen boarders, who lived with the Principal’s family, ‘cared for as members of a Christian household’. 616 There were 108 pupils at the school, then in its fourth year of operation. 617

It was run by one G.S. Gasper, who was quite direct in his methods of compulsion: ‘Every boy over five feet in height is considered a member of our Volunteer Rifle Company’. 618 Gasper’s school was outside the grant-in-aid system that had done much throughout the British Empire to open educational opportunities, but which in his view had lowered standards. ‘Our curriculum of studies will show that the amount of work done in our seven classes is more than we could do in nine if we worked for government money. We are thus able to offer superior work while saving

615 This was just over a year after the foundation in December 1885 of the Indian National Congress (initially led by an Englishman, A.O. Hume), seeking better opportunities for Indians in their own country. A little later it would spearhead the push for Indian independence.

616 Roberts College, Distribution of prizes … 15 March 1890, p. 17.

617 Ibid., p. 5.

618 Ibid., p. 17.
two years’ schooling. In short, Gasper was a crammer, and aimed to get his boys through the Calcutta University Entrance Examination in the shortest possible time. Gasper’s institution apparently outlasted other small schools in an era when there was no regulation of educational establishments, and anyone could put up his shingle, hoping to attract students by advertising good results. ‘Joe’ Braga’s performance would have given Roberts College a huge boost.

An informal group photograph shows that he was on good terms with the other boys, one of whom wrote a warm letter of congratulations to Joe and ‘Mrs Joe’ when he married seven years later.

Doubtless he exceeded the expectations of his family, the school and perhaps himself. Every school hoping to gain public standing offered a gold medal to its best student in the top class. José Braga won the medal in 1888. The Entrance Examination to Calcutta University was set at a high bar, as was the fee charged: 10 rupees, the same as a month’s fee at Roberts College. The examination was held on 11 February 1889, and Gasper sent up twelve candidates, but only two were

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619 Ibid., p. 17. He claimed neither a university degree nor a military commission and gave no references, though he secured a distinguished man to present the school’s prizes. Over time, he developed an international clientele: Lee Toon Tock, and Quah Beng Kee, both from prominent Penang families, attended Roberts College roughly a decade later. (http://www.peranakan.org.sg/Resources/Oct-Dec%202005e.pdf, Accessed 16 October 2009).
620 J.P. Braga kept the receipt. J.P. Braga Papers, MS 4380, MS Acc08/113; Roberts College, Distribution of prizes ... 15 March 1890, p. 17.
successful. J.P. Braga, who had already won the gold medal of Roberts College, was awarded a First Class pass, and won the only scholarship available to a European in the Province of Bengal. The news was greeted with satisfaction in a Portuguese-language newspaper in Hong Kong:

We are delighted with the news that our fellow-countryman Mr. José P. de Noronha Braga was awarded the gold medal, the highest prize of the University Entrance Class of Roberts College of Calcutta. The medal was presented to Mr. Braga by Sir Alexander Wilson at the distribution of prizes at the Dalhousie Institute on 5th of March [sic. The date was actually 15 March]. Mr. Braga did his course of studies here at St. Joseph’s College and with some private lessons with Mr. Hart-Milner.

José Braga, scion of a hard-working family who had already made good in Hong Kong, now seemed set for a stellar career, and planned to study law in England. It is significant that the newspaper chose to add his matronym Noronha to his name in the old Portuguese manner, no longer used in Hong Kong. This was a family which had given him quite literally a golden opportunity, with whom he had a very strong identity and to whom he was unfailingly loyal. Both identity and loyalty were about to be tested in a very cruel way.

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The success of his grandfather’s business had sent José Braga to school at St. Joseph’s, then to St. Xavier’s and Roberts Colleges. The firm was no longer named Noronha & Sons, as by 1880, Delfino’s sons Henrique and Leonardo had left the colony. In their place were three sons of Vicente Braga, who had departed in 1870 for Japan. His eldest son, Francisco, followed him some years later. The next three sons, João Vicente, Braz Maria and António Manuel may have worked for a time in

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621 Roberts College, Distribution of prizes ... 15 March 1890, p. 6; ‘At the University Entrance Examination in 1889, he won the Scholarship awarded to the European section of scholars of the Province of Bengal.’ Fragment of an autobiographical note written ca. 1943 by J.P. Braga. J.M. Braga Papers, MS 4300/13.1/4. The medal is inscribed, ‘Albert Memorial College, Entrance Class’ (in the possession, 2012, of his granddaughter, Mrs Angela Ablong). Gasper had perhaps purchased the remaining stock of gold medals from another small school that had closed its doors.

622 Press cutting, possibly from O Extreme Oriente, 6 April 1889. I am indebted to J. Bosco Correa for his translation from the Portuguese. John L. Hart-Milner was sub-editor of the Hongkong Telegraph, a newspaper with which Braga would have close connections in later years. Born in Macau in 1848, he died in Hong Kong on 11 July 1889. (Transcription by Patricia Lim of memorial in Colonial Cemetery, Happy Valley. Gwulo.com).
their grandfather’s business, where their work supported their youngest brother in India, apparently on the threshold of a brilliant career.\textsuperscript{623} Whether they envied his success can never be known, for in a disastrous 18 month period all three died of smallpox. There is no record of the anguished letters that must have passed from Hong Kong to Calcutta as first Braz, then António and finally João died between 15 May 1887 and 29 October 1888.\textsuperscript{624} They were three casualties in a serious epidemic that reached its height in March 1888 when it claimed 100 casualties each week and overwhelmed medical facilities.\textsuperscript{625} Admissions between 1884 and 1888 to the Smallpox Hospital, a hulk inaptly named \textit{Hygeia}, which was moored off-shore, tell part of the story.\textsuperscript{626}

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Another unknown is the way the crisis was discussed in Hong Kong. Delfino could not bring his sons Henrique and Leonardo back to Hong Kong. Henrique had the government printing contract in Singapore, while Leonardo was running Noronha & Sons in Shanghai. He may have considered bringing employees into partnership. That did not happen. After running a demanding business for more than 45 years, he may have become difficult to work with, but it would be rash to make this

\textsuperscript{623} Though Braz Maria was an assistant in the New Oriental Bank at the time of his death. CS/1021/00220639.
\textsuperscript{624} J. Forjaz, \textit{Familias Macaenses}, vol. 3, p. 324.
\textsuperscript{625} \textit{New York Times}, 11 March 1888, quoting an article from the London paper \textit{Figaro}.
\textsuperscript{626} Frederick Stewart, Acting Governor, to Lord Knutsford, 2 September 1889, 27 August 1891, R.L. Jarman, \textit{Hong Kong Annual Administration Reports, 1841-1941}, vol. 2, pp. 37, 100.
assumption. A fairer conclusion is that this was a family business, and Delfino was resolved that it should remain so.\textsuperscript{627} In the event, there was only one outcome to the family tragedy. Perhaps after exhausting all other possibilities, his mother prevailed on her youngest son, José, to return to assist his grandfather. It seems to have taken a long time before this decision was reached, because he did sit for the university entrance examination, four months after the death of his brother João.

It was a shattering blow for the young man. Still only 17\,\textfrac{1}{2}, he was not old enough, and lacked the means, to stand on his own feet and go to England to pursue the legal studies on which he had set his heart. His duty was clear; he must return to his family’s aid. It was a very courageous thing to do. There was no way of knowing whether the epidemic had run its course. If he went back to Hong Kong, was he facing a death sentence? Smallpox, now eradicated from the world in the greatest single triumph of modern medicine, was fatal in about 30\% of cases, but it had wiped out three of his brothers. It was endemic in the tropics, and had proved a serious scourge in Hong Kong in the 48 years of British occupation. It was a horrible way to die, and José would have known that. Those who survived were scarred for life with deep disfiguring weals on their faces and bodies. Perhaps this was the best he could hope for.

On 15 March 1889 he received his gold medal at Dalhousie Institute in Calcutta, applauded by the whole school and their guests. Less than two months later, he was back in Hong Kong, working in the printing office of Noronha & Co. as a junior compositor, a ‘printer’s devil’. His disappointment was profound. Delfino Noronha did what he could to help his grandson deal with it. He contacted a Portuguese lawyer of his acquaintance, Valentim Rozario, who wrote to ‘Mr Bragas’ seeking to dissuade him from a legal career, describing the law as ‘nothing else but humbug’\textsuperscript{628}. The young man, no fool, must have regarded this letter for what it was: ‘nothing else but humbug’. Rozario went on:

\begin{quote}
If you were to article yourself to a Solicitor practising in this Colony you will have to undergo much drudgery in the Office for 6 long years! and put up with any amount of nonsense; for it is his interest to hinder and retard your progress for fear of competition and cutting him down.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{627} He made this plain in his Will, executed in 1897.
\textsuperscript{628} Valentim A. Rozario letter to J.P. Braga, 9 May 1889. Paul Braga Papers.
José knew that working in the printery could well turn into a lifetime of drudgery, not just six years of it. Curiously, he kept the letter, and it was discovered a century later in the papers of his youngest son, Paul. Perhaps Paul too had hankered after a legal career that did not eventuate.

José Braga did not succumb to a deep depression. The ferocious pace of Noronha’s printing office ensured that; the never-ending deadlines kept him on his toes. Moreover, he may have seen himself as Noronha’s heir apparent. At all events, he threw himself into his work, and into developing a warm relationship with the much older man. He had left Hong Kong in December 1886 as a boy, returning two years later as a young man with poise and with a very substantial accomplishment to his credit. He determined not to allow this unrealised potential to atrophy. The printing press would be the means by which he could make his mark as a publicist and journalist, but a decade later, this proved to be his undoing.

His time in India left José Braga with two important legacies. Firstly, he had rubbed shoulders with English boys, and had proved himself to be their social equal and intellectual superior. Secondly, he learned from this British community how to work with people, and not against them. In his own career as a businessman from 1910 onwards, he was an effective company director and chairman, but never collaborated with other members of the Portuguese community except on the boards of social clubs.

In Calcutta he saw the huge social gulf between the British and the Indians, powerless in their own land. As a schoolboy at a British school, he had for two years adopted the superior social attitudes of the ruling class. Returning to Hong Kong, he was thrown sharply back into the position of social and economic inferiority that the Portuguese were obliged both to occupy and to expect.

José Braga had too much drive to keep his head down for long. An opportunity came in 1891 for him to organise a family celebration that was to have important personal consequences. His youngest uncle Carlos Henrique (Charlie) Noronha, only twelve years older than himself, had met a visiting Australian, Corunna Louisa Pollard, in Calcutta in 1884. Corunna, known to her family as ‘Crun’, was a member of a large family theatrical troupe, the Pollard Liliputians, who had won acclaim in Australia, New Zealand and India.
**PROGRAMME.**

1. SONG & CHORUS, "A Birthday Wish." (Dedicated to M. O. Noronha, by W. L. Noronha, Miss E. Cardoso, Mrs. C. H. Noronha and M. H. Noronha and Masters K. "P." Loyola.)


3. VIOLIN SOLO, "Schumann." (Masters K. "P." Loyola.)

4. TRIO, "Home Sweet Home," (A. Rossini, O. Mendelssohn.)

   Trio of Violins.

5. PIANO SOLO, "Il Trittico," Rossini, "La fanciulla." (Miss E. Cardoso.)

6. SONG, "Zion's Walls," (Mrs. C. H. Noronha.)

7. SONG, "A Mother's Last Will," (Mrs. C. H. Noronha.)

8. VIOLIN SOLO, "The Swan," (Mrs. C. H. Noronha.)

9. RECITATION, "The Raven." (Mr. J. A. B. Loyola.)

10. SONG, "Orchelles," (Mr. J. A. B. Loyola.)

11. SONG, "Winter in April," (Mr. J. A. B. Loyola.)

12. RECITATION, "The Mother of the Moonborn," Callaway, (Master Joe Noronha.)
between 1881 and 1884. Not herself a performer, but more a wardrobe mistress and dresser, Corunna returned with Charlie to Hong Kong where they married. Another Pollard sister, Eleanor (‘Nellie’), was also married in India that year, to an English engineer, Daniel Chester. A third sister was Olive, a violinist, who as a child prodigy had already been to India. A few years later, possibly in 1888, it appears that Olive again came to Calcutta to visit her sister Nellie Chester. Here she met Joe Braga. Joe, a year younger than Olive, was a fine-looking boy of 17, and a confident member of a group of English lads.

Three years later, in 1891, she went to Hong Kong, probably to visit her sister Corunna Noronha. The visit of this famous young artist, whom José had already met, was an opportunity not to be missed, and he put together a ‘Soirée Musicale’ to celebrate his grandfather’s 67th birthday. A beautifully printed little card also honoured the old printer. This was a large family gathering, in which Olive Pollard was the only outsider, but she was centre stage.

She had written a song, ‘A Birthday Wish’ in honour of Delfino, and played her violin in three of the twelve items. ‘Joe’, as she called José, used his gifts of oratory in the recitation of Edgar Alan Poe’s ‘The Raven’, a darkly mysterious piece of verse. She was as captivated by him as he was by her. Born on 18 January 1870 in Tasmania of English parents, she came from the English culture that Joe had

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629 The variant spelling ‘Liliputians’ rather than ‘Lilliputians’ was intentional.
630 The location of the marriage is given as Calcutta in the birthday book of yet another sister, May Pollard, in the writer’s possession. However, J. Forjaz, *Familias Macaenses*, vol. 2, p. 822, indicated that the marriage took place in Hong Kong. This record is to be preferred, as Forjaz had consulted church records. It seems likely that the family were told that they were married, but that happened some time later.
632 I am indebted to Peter Downes of Wellington, New Zealand, who has carefully traced the movements of members of the Pollard family, corroborating a family oral tradition. Peter Downes’ *The Pollards* is the definitive study of this remarkable family.
633 According to her daughter, Mrs Maude Franks, *South China Morning Post*, 11 April 1962.
634 The others taking part, in order of appearance, were Edith Maria Carvalho (Delfino’s great-niece), Carlos Henrique Noronha (son – Corunna’s husband and thus Olive’s brother-in-law), António Hugo dos Remedios (José’s brother-in-law. His wife, Umbelina ‘Bellie’ dos Remedios, was thus Delfino’s granddaughter), Eugenio José Lopes and Francisco Xavier Lopes (Delfino’s grandsons), Clara Maria Noronha (granddaughter), Edmundo Artur Carvalho (husband of Delfino’s granddaughter) and José Maria ‘Joe’ Noronha (grandson). Besides having married into the Noronha family, the two Carvalhos were the children of Januário Carvalho, Delfino’s old friend and José Braga’s mentor. J. Bosco Correa and Emeritus Professor Henrique A. d'Assumpção AO have kindly identified all those taking part from the names on the programme. The card does not bear the imprint of Noronha & Co., but could not possibly have been printed elsewhere. It is in the possession of the writer.
imbibed in Calcutta, and after which he still hankered. If he could not become an English-trained lawyer, he could still marry an Englishwoman. Nearly four years later, she returned to Hong Kong to marry him on 5 May 1895.  

Meanwhile, the busy life of the printery went on, with its unremitting schedule of deadlines for the Government Gazette. José Braga and Carlos Noronha seem to have taken particular responsibility for the major jobs that came the way of Noronha & Co. During the 1890s, these were:


J.W. Norton-Kyshe, *The History of the Laws and Courts of Hong Kong*, 2 vols, 1898. These two huge legal tomes were flawlessly produced, and included several high-quality photographic portraits and illustrations.

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635 The marriage certificate is in the J.P. Braga Papers, MS 4380, MS Acc08/113.


637 This group is extracted from J.P. Braga’s own list of the major productions of Noronha & Co. *The Portuguese in Hongkong and China*, pp. 129-130.
Stewart Lockhart’s book may have been the job that required the greatest care, attention and expertise. The author was the Colonial Secretary and Registrar-General, the most important person in the colony after the Governor. Stewart Lockhart had collected Chinese coins and tokens for many years, and had become an authority on the subject. This book was the first part of what would now be termed a *catalogue raisonné*. It contained many illustrations including full-sized images of early wedge-shaped tokens from pre-Han civilisations. A book like this had to be error-free, both because of its outstanding scholarship, and also because of the author’s prominence in Hong Kong. More than a century later, the catalogue is still regarded as an important reference work.638

Unusually, the book contains a ‘Printers’ Note’:

*Currency of the Farthest East* affords an excellent illustration of the art of wood engraving as practised by the Chinese. While photogravure is rapidly replacing this ancient art in Europe, the conservative Chinaman still adheres to the old method of illustrating his book by means of woodcuts.

Owing to the peculiar custom, which is usual among the Chinese, of printing from boards of irregular thicknesses, great difficulty has been experienced in dealing with these blocks on a modern press. Though the result obtained, as shown in the accompanying volume, may not be perfect, it is hoped that the illustrations may prove interesting as examples of wood engraving among the Chinese.639

In his introduction, Stewart Lockhart went out of his way to acknowledge the work of Mr C. Noronha and Mr J. Braga of Noronha & Co. ‘for the skilful manner in which the plates have been printed’.640

Commendation like this from the Colonial Secretary was a significant reward. However, old Delfino Noronha was a man who rarely gave praise. His grandson

638 Shiona M. Airlie, ‘Lockhart, Sir James Haldane Stewart’ in M. Holdsworth and C. Munn (eds), *Dictionary of Hong Kong Biography*, p. 285. This article should be entitled, ‘Stewart Lockhart, Sir James Haldane’. Scottish double-barrelled surnames are not hyphenated, but the author has not noticed this.


640 Ibid., p. viii. When Delfino Noronha died in 1900, Stewart Lockhart attended the funeral (*Hongkong Daily Press*, 8 February 1900). This was a remarkable sign of esteem. For such a senior government officer, a Protestant, to attend the funeral of a member of the Portuguese community, in the Catholic cathedral, was certainly counter-cultural at that time.

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treasured a note scribbled on a scrap of paper in printer’s blue pencil.\textsuperscript{641} It happened
to be written on the younger man’s 26\textsuperscript{th} birthday, but there is no indication of that.
The first sentence appears to refer to a job well done. Written in Portuguese, it read:

José

It is very explicit as far as the last condition – it is one more
[illegible] of your character which I highly praise.

Your affectionate grandfather

D. Noronha 3/8/97

It was not an easy time to be a foreigner in the British Empire. The last two decades of the nineteenth century
were the high point of British imperial expansion in which the map of the world was be-spattered by Imperial
red. The Indian Empire, ‘the brightest jewel in the Crown’, was proclaimed in 1876. In Hong Kong, the
Kowloon peninsula on the north side of the harbour was added to the Crown Colony in 1860, and in the 1880s, a
push began which resulted in the acquisition of the New Territories as a 99 year lease in 1898.\textsuperscript{642} The British government effectively did as it
pleased in China. So too did the British community, in China and in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{643}

By the 1890s, the racial divide in Hong Kong was particularly marked, and was
accentuated in 1894 by what the Governor termed ‘an unexampled calamity’, a

\textsuperscript{641} J.P. Braga Papers, MS 4380, MS Acc08/113. I am grateful to J. Bosco Correa and Fernando
Menezes Ribeiro for their translation of this difficult fragment.

\textsuperscript{642} Fully discussed in P. Wesley-Smith, \textit{Unequal Treaty 1898-1997: China, Great Britain and Hong
Kong’s New Territories}.

\textsuperscript{643} In Hong Kong, a spectacular example was the punitive action taken against the walled village of
Kam Tin, which stubbornly resisted the British take-over of the New Territories in 1898. The
Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Henry Blake, had the iron gates of the village removed, and when he
retired, took them with him to his estate in Ireland. His action was widely condemned, but the days of
military plunder had not yet ended. However, after his death the gates were returned in 1924, by
which time plunder was unacceptable. This incident became a long-lasting part of Hong Kong folk-
serious outbreak of bubonic plague. Drastic action was required to deal with public health issues that had been neglected for far too long in the rapidly growing city. Troops using aggressive cleansing measures moved through Taipingshan, the location of the largest number of fatalities. It was the worst Chinese slum, and in the next few years, there would be wholesale slum clearance, fiercely resisted by the Chinese population. Antagonism and contempt between the two communities were intense, and took many years to abate. The next year, 1895, the Portuguese community found itself caught in an outburst of withering scorn for non-British people publicly expressed in the newspapers. A few highly publicised cases of the failings of Portuguese clerks led to an outpouring of racism in letters to the editor that would be not only unthinkable but also illegal in most parts of the world a century later. The Siam Free Press, an English-language paper in Bangkok, blandly observed that ‘Hongkong is passing through one of its periodic fits of jingoism which generally takes the shape of a denunciation of all aliens.’

One pointed observation seems to have provoked an outburst by young José Braga, still smarting from what had happened to him six years before. ‘Another Victim’ described the Portuguese as ‘the degenerated descendants of a once mighty race’.

Not all the correspondence was anti-Portuguese. One letter, from ‘An Old Resident’, put in plain terms the socio-economic deprivation that the Portuguese suffered in a capitalist system in which there were few constraints limiting the rich and powerful.

If instead of being a poor community the Portuguese were powerful and influential like the Germans, who are absorbing the bulk of trade in the Colony, and who are supplanting the English merchants in every branch of commerce, or wealthy like the Jews, they would not be subjected to so many indignities.

The nineteenth century was a great age for the publication of pamphlets, usually replete with bombast and prolixity. J.P. Braga’s Rights of Aliens in Hongkong is a good example of it. At first, he participated energetically in the newspaper dialogue with a letter to the Hongkong Telegraph:

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646 Hongkong Telegraph, 27 August 1895, quoted in J.P. Braga, The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong, p. 3.
647 Hongkong Telegraph, 14 September 1895, quoted in J.P. Braga, op. cit., p. 54.
At the outset let me state that I am not posing myself as the champion of the community to which I belong, but being a factor of that community, I share in the wrongs so patiently endured by it, and must, of necessity, raise a voice, however feeble, in vindication thereof.\footnote{Letter to the Editor, \textit{Hongkong Telegraph}, 28 August 1895, quoted in J.P. Braga, \textit{The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong}, pp. 22-23.}

He followed this up in December 1895 with a 95 page pamphlet that reprinted much of the correspondence that had erupted in August and September.\footnote{The lengthy discussion is set out in full in \textit{The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong}, pp. 25-40.}

Naturally, the Macau and Hong Kong Portuguese press took a great deal of interest in what was going on in Hong Kong. Braga’s pamphlet reprinted, in Portuguese, 15 pages of the reports of \textit{Echo Macaenses} and \textit{Extremo Oriente}. Some were long-winded, some perceptive and far-sighted. The \textit{Echo}, in a long article on 11 September, commented on the inferior status of the Hong Kong Portuguese, and offered a way forward:

\begin{quote}
Three measures as follows suggest a swift way to prepare a better future for the Portuguese of Hong Kong:-
\begin{enumerate}
\item Technical education
\item An association
\item Emigration
\end{enumerate}
\end{quote}

It would eventually be the last of these, emigration, that proved to be the way in which most of their descendants, three generations later, would find a better life.

The \textit{Echo} concluded its lengthy discussion with a comment on the young man of 24 who had taken up the cudgels on behalf of the otherwise silent and submissive Portuguese community. He had pointedly remarked that he did not see himself as the champion of that community. The \textit{Echo}, just as pointedly, did so. The rest of its article was reprinted in the original Portuguese, but Braga translated the last paragraph.

\begin{quote}
We hope the young writer will continue to defend the just and sacred cause of his compatriots and exert himself for their well-being, by promoting an association, great or small, to watch over the general interests of the Portuguese community at Hongkong, by repelling unjust aggressions, and by discussing measures for securing a better future for the rising generation.\footnote{\textit{Echo Macaenses}, 11 September 1895, reprinted in \textit{The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong}, p. 72.}
\end{quote}
It was a challenge that ‘the young writer’ would indeed take up in later years, in action, as well as word.

It is hard to see for whom the pamphlet was written. It would certainly have been ignored by the British community. There were few if any activists in the Portuguese community, almost all of whom had to keep their noses to the grindstone to survive in the Hong Kong mercantile economy. Any suggestion of radicalism would surely threaten their employment, almost all of which was with British companies. Senior members of the community would have been alarmed at this outburst from a young hothead. This was no time to foment trouble in the middle of the serious depression then gripping capitalist economies and stultifying international trade. Hong Kong suffered severely. A petition to the Governor in May 1893 had warned that ‘there has been experienced a condition of local depression previously undreamt of’.651 The serious epidemic of bubonic plague in 1894 then added to the colony’s woes. There is no doubt that J.P. Braga had his grandfather’s permission, perhaps even his blessing, to go ahead with what others would have seen at best as a very young man’s polemic, but at worst, a reckless and foolish publication. It bears the colophon ‘Printed and published at Noronha & Co.’ José would surely have had to pay for it himself, but the company’s name was there for all to see – if anyone bothered. One who did notice the little book was J.J. Francis, who wrote:

My dear Mr Braga

I congratulate you on the appearance of your little volume. It is, if you will permit me to say so, very well arranged and very effective for the purpose you had in view. I read it through with great pleasure. I am very glad the Telegraph was able to give you such support.

Happy and prosperous new year to you and all yours.

Very truly yours

Jno J. Francis

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651 Odds and Ends, May 1897, p. 66.
This was powerful affirmation from the owner of the *Hongkong Telegraph*.\textsuperscript{652} There may have been a few others who bothered, but they were not Portuguese. There was one other community – if that is the term for a small group of people ostracised even more completely than the Portuguese. These were the Eurasians, the product of a union between a European man and a Chinese woman. Marriage between the races was a very rare circumstance, so a Eurasian was more commonly the result of a *mesalliance*. Eurasians were commonly held to have all the vices and none of the virtues of both parents, and in the thinking of the time, that made them tend towards crime and perversion, usually homosexuality. If the Portuguese were down-trodden, Eurasians were pariahs to both the British and Chinese communities.\textsuperscript{653}

There was but one outstanding exception, a man so remarkable as to rise far above all prejudices. He came to figure prominently in the affairs of the Hong Kong community generally and in particular in the affairs of the Braga family, the beneficiaries of his far-sighted philanthropy on several occasions. This was Robert Ho Tung, born in 1862, one of several children fathered by an English businessman with Dutch ancestry, Charles Henry Maurice Bosman, who took a Chinese mistress.\textsuperscript{654}

Ho Tung – the name by which he became generally known, but there are many variations – joined the comprador’s office of Jardine, Matheson & Co. in 1880 through his father’s business connections with the firm. This was a position usually held by a well-connected Chinese. By the early 1880s he had through sheer ability become Head Comprador. It was a position of unique importance in Hong Kong. In any European set-up, from a domestic ménage to a great trading corporation, there had to be a go-between fluent in both English and Chinese, because few of the British bothered to learn Chinese. In household terms, this was usually the cook who

\textsuperscript{652} Undated, but December 1895 or January 1896. J. J. Francis, QC, a barrister, was the owner of the *Hongkong Telegraph*, founded in 1881 by Robert Fraser-Smith, who died in 1895, when Francis purchased the paper. Francis continued its tradition of being an irritant to the government of the day. Braga’s pamphlet was very much in tune with the stance taken by this paper, of which he would become manager seven years later. However, a careful reading of the *Telegraph* for the period indicates that the paper itself made no reference to Braga’s pamphlet. J.P. Braga kept Fraser’s letter among his most precious personal papers. J.P. Braga Papers, MS 4380, MS Acc08/11.

\textsuperscript{653} According to Sir Reginald Stubbs, the Chinese habitually referred to Eurasians as ‘bastards’ – as did the British. N. Miners, *Hong Kong under imperial rule, 1912-1941*, p. 128.

supervised domestic arrangements and purchased supplies, ensuring a tidy profit for himself in the process. This was accepted practice, regarded by nobody as dishonest or corrupt. It followed that the larger the organisation, the greater was the expectation both of excellent performance and profit to the man holding this position. There was no more powerful or profitable business undertaking in the Far East than Jardine’s, and its Head Comprador had to be a person of immense skill as a manager and negotiator, with superb fluency in written English and Chinese, together with command of several dialects. Such skills were almost unknown at that time, but Ho Tung possessed them.

In less than ten years, he acquired very considerable wealth, retiring from Jardine’s in 1889, and then setting out in business on his own account. He quickly became Hong Kong’s first millionaire, at a time when $1,000 was a small fortune. In a place where money talks, Ho Tung earned admiration, not the contempt and derision usually meted out to a Eurasian. Taller than most Chinese, and with blue eyes, he cut a striking figure dressed in the robes of a mandarin, though he had not been through the exacting process of the Imperial Examinations that continued until 1905. In a sense he possessed an excellence that transcended the wisdom of the Imperial viceroys and the business acumen of the Western merchants. Yet as a youth, he would have experienced in full measure the treatment handed out to Eurasians.

Ho Tung was one of the leaders in a protest by the Chinese community against the Light and Pass Ordinance, which effectively placed a curfew on the Chinese community. Ho Tung kept his finger on the pulse of Hong Kong, and it seems certain that he had read Braga’s pamphlet which also protested against racial discrimination. Others might dismiss it as a youthful and intemperate outburst, but to Ho Tung, it revealed Braga’s considerable skill with words and his preparedness to pursue an issue with determination. These were qualities that Ho Tung valued. Perhaps even more, Braga’s obvious potential appealed to Ho Tung, who over the next sixty years would go to considerable lengths and would donate large sums to give opportunities
for a better life to people who showed promise. Ho Tung already had contact with
the Noronhas, as Corunna Noronha, José Braga’s sister-in-law, was his children’s

Braga must have been aware that in writing and publishing \textit{Rights of Aliens} he was
like a soapbox orator fulminating to an empty park. His next foray into publishing
was directed to what he hoped would be a wider market. There had never been a
successful magazine in Hong Kong comparable to numerous British and European
magazines catering for an intelligent, well-educated readership, but he might find a
clientele for a pastiche of non-political local comment, short stories, historical pieces
and an occasional feature article.\footnote{The first literary magazine in the Far East was the \textit{Canton Miscellany}, an elegantly written and
well-produced magazine printed on a press owned by William Jardine. That was more than sixty years
earlier, in 1831. Braga could never hope to create a local version of the superb and internationally
renowned \textit{Illustrated London News} or \textit{The Graphic},
\textit{Odds and Ends}, no. 1, November 1896.} If his pamphlet \textit{Rights of Aliens} had been
abrasive and confrontational, his bi-monthly magazine \textit{Odds and Ends}, first
published less than a year later in November 1896, sought to be bland and inclusive.

If it were to find a market, that was essential. Perhaps he had been told to soften his
public image. This time, J.P. Braga was the publisher, not Noronha & Co., but he
gave the well-known Noronha address, 9 Zetland Street. Inaugural issues of
nineteenth century magazines usually proclaimed their intentions, and \textit{Odds and
Ends} was no exception. Braga referred to several short-lived predecessors, the \textit{China
Magazine}, the \textit{China Punch} and the \textit{Maggie}.

\begin{quote}
For a time they seemed to fulfil the hopes of their promoters ... [but] after a short career all three papers have disappeared from
circulation.\footnote{Copies of all of these are rare. Two copies of the \textit{China Magazine} were offered at the International
Antiquarian Bookfair, Hong Kong, in November 2009 by John Randall (Books of Asia). Each has a}
\end{quote}

He did not ignore the technical challenge he faced:

\begin{quote}
The conditions in regard to printing which prevailed in
Hongkong twenty years ago are not materially changed today
... progress in Europe and progress in the East in this respect
have not been concurrent. [In Europe] graphic art has
approached a state of perfection ... [in the Far East] the
primitive methods of the inventor Fungtau, who lived in the
tenth century, are still employed at the present time.\footnote{Copies of all of these are rare. Two copies of the \textit{China
Magazine} were offered at the International Antiquarian Bookfair, Hong Kong, in November 2009 by John Randall (Books of Asia). Each has a} \end{quote}
Five numbers of Odds and Ends were published between November 1896 and August 1897.

This was too self-deprecatory. His first issue contained two well-executed photographs and the second, five. The third issue should have been a winner. It was graced by seven photographs, printed using half-tone technology, then the latest development, and produced as expertly as could be achieved anywhere in 1897. They included five fine studies of the newly completed Gap lighthouse, perched spectacularly on a rocky islet 26 miles south of Hong Kong. It had taken six years to build at the enormous cost of $150,000, was a huge boon to shipping approaching Hong Kong, and a very important step forward. The fourth issue, in May 1897 posed studio photograph of two Chinese merchants set onto the front cover. J.P. Braga was aiming high to compare his magazine with this fine production.

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contained a superb photographic study of the Filipino patriot Rizal, but more of this a little later. However, it was all to no avail. The real challenge was not technical, for Noronha had kept abreast of changing technology, and possessed the most modern printing press in the colony. Instead, the real challenge was to find a readership. He sought subscribers and advertisers in each issue, but advertisements appeared only in the first. The little magazine, on which so much care, journalistic skill and printing expertise was lavished, did not take off. The fifth number, August 1897, was the last. In his memoir of the Portuguese in Hong Kong, written more than forty years later, Braga briefly mentioned it, in passing, as ‘a short-lived magazine which I edited and printed in my grandfather’s printery’.

Apart from his forays into publishing, José Braga had been part of a small group of people who had become keenly interested in events on the other side of the South China Sea in the Philippine Islands, under Spanish rule for more than three centuries. An independence movement grew there during the 1880s, led by a Filipino physician, José Rizal. The little group of Hong Kong Portuguese activists gave passionate support to the Filipinos in their struggle for justice, for they too saw themselves as the victims of injustice.

Rizal lived and practised medicine in Hong Kong from November 1891 until March 1892. He lodged with the family of José Maria Basa in the Portuguese district, next door to Lourenço Pereira Marques, a member of a distinguished and once-wealthy Macanese family who had studied medicine in Dublin and there gained British citizenship. Returning to Hong Kong to practise, he found himself consigned to a position he felt was far below his capabilities: medical officer at Victoria Gaol, a dead-end job from which there was no prospect of promotion. Basa and Marques introduced Rizal to some of their friends among the small group of professionals in the Portuguese community. Rizal found himself among a group of like-minded radicals – a discontented group of potential trouble-makers. Among these, according to Austin Coates, were Dr Wençeslão Cesário de Silva, Delfino Noronha and José

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Pedro Braga. Braga confirmed that he did indeed meet Rizal at his grandfather’s home.

At his table I met many interesting figures of the day. Among these was the Filipino patriot, José Rizal, while on his last visit to Hongkong, not long before his arrest and murder by the Spanish in Manila...I still recall the horror and indignation which filled the Portuguese community in Hongkong when the news reached the British colony of the treacherous manner in which the beloved leader of the Filipino people had been done away with.

Rizal returned to Manila in June 1892, was soon arrested, and after a protracted delay, was tried for treason, found guilty and immediately executed by firing squad on 30 December 1896. Though he was not a practising Catholic, Rizal’s last spoken words were ‘Consummatum est’. The Filipino people would treasure them as they did the Saviour’s last triumphal cry. They would treasure, too, his last written words. The night before Rizal died, he wrote a farewell poem, ‘Ultimo Adiós’, to the Filipino people, which was to become a rallying-cry as they honoured their martyred hero. It was smuggled out of his prison cell inside the fuel tank of the spirit lamp by the light of which it had been written. The melodramatic tale continues.

Together with a photograph of Rizal, a copy was sent to Hong Kong, where it came into the possession of J.P. Braga, who was putting together the next number of *Odds and Ends*. Braga, who greatly admired Rizal, resolved to print it, with the photograph. Wanting to make the best possible job of the photograph, he sent it to

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London. It was printed on a superior card and inserted into the issue for May 1897. It was accompanied by Rizal’s poem, printed in Spanish, entitled *Mi Ultimo Pensamiento*, by which title it was known for several years.\(^{665}\)

To Braga this may have been a gesture of remembrance, but to others, it might have seemed an act of defiance. It was a time when discretion seemed prudent. The international situation in the Far East was tense throughout the 1890s, as war broke out between China and Japan in 1894, followed by often-competing demands from all the Great Powers for further concessions in China. Following the death of Rizal, protracted unrest in the Philippines led to American intervention there. Filipino nationalists declared independence, and after the Americans took effective control in 1898, there was talk of a Philippine Republic being organised in Hong Kong. The British government warned Sir William Robinson, the Governor, against allowing this.\(^{666}\) Yet here was a publication, emanating from the Government Printer’s office, which seemed to be overtly encouraging these dissidents.

The death of Delfino Noronha at the age of 76 on 6 February 1900 gave José Braga’s enemies the opportunity they sought. By the end of the year, he was out of the business and out of Hong Kong. There is no documentary evidence for what happened, but it does not take much imagination to apply to this situation an observation that Braga made on more than one occasion. It weighed heavily on his mind, because he had borne the brunt of it.

> It has regretfully to be admitted that the failure of the Portuguese to combine their material and intellectual strength for the common weal has been due principally to their inherent jealousy of one another’s success ... These traits have been markedly evident all through the history of the Portuguese in Hong Kong.\(^{667}\)

Other members of the Noronha family had been concerned about the direction of events for some time. Young José had been acting for years as though he were the heir apparent to the business. Perhaps the last straw was that on 31 December 1898

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\(^{666}\) G.B. Endacott, op. cit., p. 227.

he was admitted to partnership in Noronha & Co. Printers & Publishers. His own account of it was that he had become joint manager with his uncle, Leonardo Noronha, but subsequent events indicate that it was not a satisfactory relationship. Braga’s son Jack related his version many years later.

My father, José Pedro Braga, eventually became the manager, greatly to the disgust of his uncles and when old man Noronha died, the uncles decided to sell the business for a sum, something like $HK350,000 in the year 1901, which at that time was a tremendous amount of money for a purchase of that kind.

While the amount mentioned is likely to have been greatly exaggerated by years of disappointed hopes, the memory of tensions between nephew and uncles is undoubtedly accurate. In his will Delfino Noronha made careful provision for family members who seemed to him to need it most. His estate was divided into nine parts, only one of which went to one of his sons, Leonardo. All the rest went to women. However, there were four trustees, including his sons Henrique and Leonardo and his son-in-law, António Basto. The fourth trustee was J.P. Braga. He may have been the apple of his grandfather’s eye at the beginning of the year, but his fall from grace was swift. Faced with the united hostility of the other three, he was no longer able to sustain the prominent position that he had come to enjoy with his grandfather’s goodwill.

José’s uncles, Henrique, Leonardo and Secundino Noronha took charge. The first two at least were experienced printers, and had been part of ‘Noronha & Sons’ when the business was known by that name in the 1860s. By 1900, both Henrique and Leonardo were themselves elderly, having retired from their businesses in Singapore and Shanghai, so the firm was run, first, by Leonardo’s brother-in-law José Maria de Castro Basto, and later by Leonardo’s son, Eduardo Noronha. The firm retained the government contract and remained in family ownership in succeeding generations until World War II, but J.P. Braga was excluded, never to return.

668 *Hong Kong Government Gazette*, 7 January 1899, CS/1021/00200845.
669 Interview in the *South China Morning Post*, 16 January 1929.
670 Interview with J.M. Braga, 11 June 1972.
672 One episode in this difficult situation throws light on what was to be an abiding facet of his public career for the rest of his life. His sister-in-law, Corunna Noronha, had separated from her husband Carlos, José’s uncle, who had gone to Shanghai. She and her three children were in difficult circumstances, and José did what he could to secure her portion of the inheritance. Her gratitude was still remembered by her grandchildren a century later. E. Morrison, *Looking up, looking down the road*, p. 202.
Why did his Noronha uncles and cousins want to be rid of him? Even before Delfino Noronha died, the knives were out for J.P. Braga. He had pushed the limits too far. As others might see it, *The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong* had attacked the British. His enthusiastic support of Rizal ran counter to Hong Kong Government policy. These rash actions seriously compromised the firm’s government contract, which might be revoked. The government contract provided a cash flow that was almost immune from the wild swings of boom and bust in Hong Kong’s economy. Week in and week out the *Gazette* appeared, so say nothing of other government work. Nothing must be allowed to jeopardise this golden tide.

Braga ascribed some actions of others to ‘inherent jealousy’. In this case, ‘malice’ might be a better word. There was the old gossip about his suspect parentage. More recently, his marriage was a source of adverse comment. It was an unsuitable marriage, outside the Portuguese community, to the sister-in-law of Carlos Noronha, whose marriage was seen as a failure. He had his grandfather’s ear and made too much of that connection, to the exclusion of others. Even in the celebration of his grandfather’s 67th birthday, this young man had taken centre stage. There was no senior member of the family whose name appeared on the program to act as chairman for the evening or to deliver a speech, *de rigueur* for formal Portuguese gatherings. Calcutta-educated, he had become too self-important, as they saw it. It seems to have counted for nothing that José had returned to Hong Kong in 1889, obedient to his family’s call in a crisis, or that he had been responsible for several of the firm’s best productions in the ensuing decade. There was no job for him in Hong Kong, and within a few months he had been banished to Macau by his family.

If Macau had so little to offer his grandparents in the 1840s that they left, it had less in 1900. There had been several more waves of émigrés in the intervening half century. The first was in 1849, following the murder of the Governor, João Maria Ferreira do Amaral. On that occasion, the Governor of Hong Kong sent a warship to

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673 This was still to be heard in the 1990s.
ensure Macau’s survival. Macau again seemed in peril in 1864, and there was more British sabre-rattling and more Portuguese emigration. Far worse was the Great Typhoon in September 1874, which devastated Macau, leaving at least 2,000 dead. In the next few months several hundred people fled to Hong Kong from Macau. Its historian sadly commented that ‘the disastrous typhoon consummated the ruin of the Macanese’. A few nostalgic émigrés would sometimes return at weekends. A modern vignette of their impressions gives some understanding of the sleepy backwater to which J.P. Braga came.

In the lobby of the Hing Kee Hotel, the aroma of jasmine tea added pleasantly to the murmur of that Sunday morning. The space was ample and comfortable, devoid of luxury. Around the small rosewood tables where teapots were steaming, portly weekend clients reclined on worn Victorian sofas and armchairs, speaking in English. The majority, who had arrived the night before, came from Hong Kong and Canton to drink and play fan-tan, a Chinese betting game. In their conversation, which was always animated, they invariably contrasted the decline of old Macau, with no port or infrastructure, with the charm and wealth of the young and vibrant Hong Kong.

It seemed an ignominious end to what had once been a very promising career. The parallel with Joseph in the Old Testament is striking. José Braga even bore the name of the patriarch whose brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt. In 1929 he told the Press that ‘his state of health calling for a change of climate, he went to Macao where he taught English in the Commercial Institute for two years.’ Then and now, the phrase ‘state of health’ is often a euphemistic subterfuge for concealing something untoward. More than a century later, an unpalatable truth need no longer be concealed. This young man was seen by his family as an upstart printer’s devil. In plain language, they kicked him out.

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678 C.A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao*, p. 429. By 1885, even Lourenço Marques, the head of what had once been Macau’s leading family, owners of the palatial mansion at one time occupied by the President of the Select Committee of the East India Company, was forced to sell up. ‘The family was not able to maintain the big house at that time’, commented a collateral descendant (Patrick Rozario, in *South China Morning Post*, 20 September 2010. According to Rozario, Marques sold the mansion and its large grounds for only 35,000 patacas ).
679 Amadeu Gomes de Araújo, chapter ‘Caminhos Cruzados’ (‘Crusaders’ Paths’) in *Diálogos em Bronze: memórias de Macau*. Translated by Pureza d’Eça and Henrique d’Assumpção.
680 *South China Morning Post*, 26 January 1929. However, he did tell his son Noel in 1924 that he had to battle with ill-health as a young man.