

MINUTES of MEETING on matters relating to the Chiu Yuen Cemetery (船遠墳場), Mount Davis, held on Wednesday, 26th September, 1956, in the Board Room of the Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation, at 5.30 p.m.

Present:

The Hon. M. W. Lo, C.B.E., O.B.E.
Mr. E. S. K. Ho-tung
Mr. A. John Bush
Dr. Irene Cheng, Ph.D.
Mrs. Jessie Chan
Dr. Gerald Choa
Mr. J. C. Fenton
Mr. W. A. Fox
Miss Kitty Fox
Miss Ruby Fox
Mrs. Emeline Ferdinands
Mr. S. C. Hung
Mr. M. C. Hung
Dr. Ho Hung Chiu
Dr. Ho Sai Man
Mr. J. M. Hall
Mr. Ho Kwong
Mrs. Edna Ho
Mrs. Doris Ho
Mr. Eric Ho-tung
Mrs. May Ho
Mr. Stanley Ho
Mr. Ho Shai Wa
Mr. L. Cyril Kotewall
Mr. Henry Lee
Mr. James Tsoi
Mr. W. A. Zimmern

Mr. J. L. Cotton of the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank, Hongkong (Trustee) Ltd., was also present up till the time the Hon. M. W. Lo, C.B.E., O.B.E., took the chair.

Mr. E. S. K. Ho-tung opened the meeting by addressing the gathering as follows:

"I am very happy to see so many of us gathered here today to discuss matters relating to the Chiu Yuen Cemetery. I thank you all for your presence, as that indicates your interest and concern in the matter. I sincerely hope you will express your ideas on the subject freely so that whatever we decide on today will be the start of a joint effort for the running of the Cemetery as we all would like it to be run.

I have enumerated to you the present state of affairs at the Cemetery in my second letter to you, dated September 22nd (copy of letter attached), and I will not waste your valuable time by repeating them again here. Before I sit down I want to thank you all for being here today, and I also wish to thank Mr. Cotton for allowing us to use this room.

by you all here. I need not stress on this point

- 2 -

(done as the original)

For the purpose of conducting today's meeting I would like to propose the election of a chairman. With your permission may I propose the Hon. Mr. M. W. Lo. Would someone present kindly second this proposal?"

Mr. Ho-tung's proposal was seconded by Dr. Ho Hung Chiu and it was unanimously passed that the Hon. M. W. Lo be elected as chairman to preside over the meeting. At this stage, Mr. Cotton left the meeting, and Mr. Lo made the following address:

"Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel honoured by being asked to preside at this meeting and I am gratified to see that this request meets with your approval, as I regard this meeting as one of the greatest importance and I am sure that this view is shared by you all here. I need not stress on this point because after what Eddie Ho-tung has said is sufficient that this point is made quite clear.

I do not think we have much time at our disposal at today's meeting, so I will now proceed to the next item on the Agenda, which is the matter of the passing of 5 resolutions. I have been asked to propose these resolutions and I understand that Eddie Ho-tung will second them. Before putting these resolutions to the vote, I would welcome anyone of you wishing to address the meeting on these resolutions. In order that everyone desirous of speaking should have the opportunity to do so, I would suggest that those of you who would like to speak would put up their hands so that I can call on them by turn.

The first resolution reads as follows:-

- (a) That it would be shameful to the good name of the living members of the community and a dishonour to the memory of the dead, if through the lack of adequate support, the Chiu Yuen Cemetery dedicated as the burial ground for the community and held by the late Sir Robert Ho Tung and the late Mr. Ho Fook under a Crown Lease for 999 years were to be surrendered to the Government.

I think this resolution goes to the root of the matter of the Chiu Yuen Cemetery. There may be in such a small community as ours, instead of unity, disunity; instead of harmony, discord; instead of co-operation, friction. We lack, unlike other communities, a binding force such as a common religion. There are amongst us, Christians, Roman Catholics, and non-religious; some of us with Chinese names, some of us with European names. But in spite of all this diversity of interest and loyalties, I feel that on this question of the Chiu Yuen Cemetery we are meeting on common ground. I feel we owe a duty to the dead who are buried in this Cemetery. I am sure you are all fully conscious of this obligation and you would not want to desert the dead and abandon this cemetery, and I have not the slightest doubt that this resolution expresses the feeling of all of us at this meeting.

And so I pass on to the second resolution:

- (b) That to obviate this possibility, it is essential that the management of the Cemetery be placed on a proper basis.

The implication of this resolution is, of course, that the past management was not as it should have been, but I would rather not dwell on the past history. This meeting is not called to criticise the shortcomings of the past. Let us forget the past and concentrate on the immediate problem before us. I understand that the current maintenance expenses are estimated at about \$6,000.00 per annum. If we are to have a new management and start with a clean slate, I think it should not be burdened with chronic financial difficulties. An Endowment Fund of \$100,000.00 invested in sound securities should bring in an annual income of \$6,000.00. I would suggest that each one of us should contribute to this fund in proportion to his means. As some of us are well off, it is my belief that this sum can be raised. But if on the other hand it cannot be raised, then

I can see no other alternative but to return the Cemetery to Government.

As regards the third resolution:

- (c) That it is desirable to form an incorporated association with a committee of management consisting of representatives from members of those families whose ancestors and relatives were buried in the Cemetery.

In order to run this Cemetery on a proper basis, two obvious steps would be required, i.e. to form an incorporate body so as to take over the Cemetery and then to elect a committee to manage it. This committee should be fully representative of those members who have their dead buried in the Cemetery.

The fourth resolution regarding the creation of an Endowment Fund is covered by my remarks on the 2nd resolution (b).

I think I have said sufficient on these four resolutions and I think it will be better if I were now to put them to the meeting formally, as unless we pass these four resolutions there is obviously no point to consider the last resolution, because the last resolution is to implement the other resolutions.

With these remarks I now formally propose the four resolutions (a), (b), (c) & (d) in the Agenda, and call upon Eddie Ho-tung to second them."

In seconding the four resolutions, Mr. Ho-tung said:

"I have much pleasure in seconding the four resolutions. I have only to add to the Chairman's remarks by saying that there has been some work done on the Cemetery in so far that we have got the Urban Council to request the removal of the squatters who live on the Fort, behind Heung So, and near the road, as they have been cluttering up the ground and using the foreground of the larger graves to store water during the water shortage. We have also made a survey, firstly as to how to put up a fence. You will see in my letter that a wall fence costs much more than a mesh fence. Another problem is the road belongs to the Government, and a little further down the road is badly in need of repairs

but nothing can be done for the time being as the present road does not run exactly according to the plan. We have also made some surveys whether it is possible to create more paths so that a more direct approach can be made to various graves, but we need capital for this development. There is also the question of further development in creating more graves. What we want to try is to make this a non-religious Cemetery, that anyone of our community can be buried there, whether they be Protestants, Catholics, or Buddhists, etc. As this Cemetery is so centrally located, I feel it would be a great pity to abandon it and give it back to Government. Mr. J. F. Grose has asked me to tell the meeting that if money is raised he will invest it for us in shares without charging any commission. Mr. Chairman, I now have pleasure in seconding your motion."

Discussion then arose as to the formation and function of the Committee of Management. The Chairman said that although the Committee of Management should be representative of those who have members buried in the Cemetery, the number of Committee members should not be too large and suggested seven as the maximum. Also if any member of the Committee should die or travel, then the remaining members of the Committee could nominate someone to take his place.

The Chairman mentioned that with the Chinese Christian Cemetery the Committee members were appointed for life, but if any member dies, then Government will appoint someone else.

Mr. Ho-tung suggested that the first Committee be formed, and if anyone should drop out to co-opt a new member, and then elect the Committee annually. However, the Chairman pointed out that it was not practical to elect the Committee annually, as if such a meeting were called annually to elect someone you will find that no one will attend the meeting. Dr. Irene Cheng suggested that one-third of the members retire every three years.

Dr. Ho Hung Chiu raised the question as to whether any member of the Committee could be removed before the expiration of his term if he were found to be unsatisfactory, to which the Chairman replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Jimmy Hall said it would be more desirable to have the members of the Committee of Management to serve during his or her life time or up to his retirement, and in case of death or retirement the remaining Committee members should have the power to elect or appoint someone to take his place; and if there is dissatisfaction felt by any member of the Committee, upon notice to the General Committee, a General Meeting should be called to displace such Committee member and appoint someone else.

The Chairman followed up by saying that if one-third of the General Committee decided that any member of the Committee of Management was unsatisfactory then such member could be displaced at a General Meeting, but he did not think such a step would be necessary as if any member of the Committee of Management should feel that he was unwelcome he would be bound to resign himself.

The Chairman then suggested that a list be drawn up of those who would be willing to serve on the Committee of Management, so that anyone who is willing to serve has a chance of serving, then from this list to draw lots to form the first Committee of seven members who, with the exception of a few old members like Dr. Irene Cheng, will retire by rotation every 2 or 3 years. Mr. Ho-tung suggested that 20 persons should be elected to form a General Committee, out of which seven members be elected to serve on the Management Committee.

The four resolutions proposed by the Chairman, and seconded by Mr. Eddie Ho-tung, were then put to the vote and passed unanimously.

The fifth resolution regarding the election of a working committee was then brought up for discussion. The Chairman explained that the duties of the Working Committee would be to draft out the constitution of the new body and to find out whether the Endowment Fund could be raised and report at the next Meeting, probably in about a month's time. This resolution was seconded by Mr. Eddie Ho-tung and passed unanimously. The following were elected to serve on the Working Committee:-

The Hon. M. W. Lo, C.B.E., O.B.E.
Mr. E.S.K. Ho-tung
Dr. Irene Cheng
Dr. Ho Hung Chiu
Mr. Willie Zimmern
Mr. Hung Mow Chiu
Mr. Stanley Ho
Mrs. Edna Ho
Mrs. May Ho
Dr. Gerald Choa
Mr. George Hall
Mrs. Jessie Chan
Mr. Cheung Shui Ning
Mr. Cyril Kotewall
Mr. Hung Shek Chiu
Mr. John Fenton
Dr. Wong Man
Mr. Amos Bush
Mr. Eddie Churn
Mr. Freddie Zimmern &/or Mr. Francis Zimmern
Mr. J. F. Grose
Mr. Edward Shea

Mr. Jimmy Hall was also elected but he declined for health reasons. It was agreed that members of this Working Committee be given the power to invite or co-opt someone else to join in the fund raising campaign without referring to the Committee.

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Eddie Ho-tung and Dr. Irene Cheng for all the preliminary work they have done to enable this meeting to be held today. Dr. Irene Cheng thanked the Chairman and said that she was only doing her duty and that the three generous donors who had each promised to contribute \$10,000.00 towards the Endowment Fund were the Chairman (the Hon. M. W. Lo), Mr. Eddie Ho-tung and Mr. Stanley Ho.

The Chairman remarked that to make the thing running we must have an Endowment Fund, and felt that those who could afford it should contribute liberally towards the Fund, as both from a sentimental point of view and a business point of view the Cemetery should not be handed back to Government. He pointed out that Government had decided years ago that no more land would be allowed for cemeteries in Hongkong (in fact, they may resume some in Hongkong), and all new cemeteries must be in New Territories, and even there the graves must be dug up after so many years. Therefore, if we say we cannot maintain the Chiu Yuen Cemetery, Government will surely take it back as it is very valuable building ground and it would be a great pity, as the site is for 999 years and is centrally located. Besides, the remaining sites can be made available and some income can come out of it.

Dr. Ho Hung Chiu asked whether "何莊" was included, to which he was given a negative reply by Dr. Irene Cheng.

The Chairman very kindly undertook to draw up some article of incorporation and circulate to members for approval, and also to make out a form of appeal to be circularised and see what is the response.

Messrs. Lo & Lo were elected Hon. Legal Advisers.

Messrs. George Hall, Richard Lee, & Frank Grose were elected Hon. Architects.

Mr. Wong Tan was elected Hon. Auditor.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Eddie Ho-tung proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for coming to the meeting and for the able way in which he had conducted it, knowing what a busy man he was and had to give up attending a very interesting lecture by the well-known historian, Prof. Arnold Toynbee, to come here today. (applause).

Meeting on matters relating to the
Chiu Yuen Cemetery (昭遠墳場), Mount Davis.

September 26, 1956.

Agenda

- 1) Report on present conditions at the Cemetery and reason for calling the meeting.
- 2) Elect a Chairman to conduct the meeting.
- 3) To pass, if thought fit, the following resolutions:-
 - a) That it would be shameful to the good name of the living members of the community and a dishonour to the memory of the dead, if through the lack of adequate support, the Chiu Yuen Cemetery dedicated as the burial ground for the community and held by the late Sir Robert Ho Tung and the late Mr. Ho Fook under a Crown Lease for 999 years were to be surrendered to the Government.
 - b) That to obviate this possibility, it is essential that the management of the Cemetery be placed on a proper basis.
 - c) That it is desirable to form an incorporated association with a committee of management consisting of representatives from members of those families whose ancestors and relatives were buried in the Cemetery.
 - d) That it is essential to create an Endowment Fund, the income from which will be sufficient to meet the annual expenses necessary to keep the Cemetery in good condition.
 - e) That a working committee be elected at this meeting to implement resolutions (c) and (d).
- 4) Elect Hon Legal Advisers
Hon Architects
Hon Auditors.
- 5) Other matters.
- 6) Place and Time of next meeting.

501 Victory House,
5-7 Wyndham Street,
Hong Kong.

6th Sept., 1956

Dear

Re: The Chiu Yuen Cemetery (昭遠墳場)
Mount Davis, Hong Kong

I am taking the liberty of addressing you on the matter of the Chiu Yuen Cemetery, Mount Davis. As both the original trustees, my late Father and my late Uncle, who obtained the crown lease from the Hongkong Government for the grant of this land to be used by our community as a cemetery, have passed away, and the Executors of my late father's estate, the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank, Hongkong (Trustee) Ltd. have indicated that they are not in a position to shoulder the responsibility of administering this cemetery, I feel that the time has come for our community as a whole to take it over and to run the Cemetery on a business footing.

I am appealing to you for your kind support and cooperation in this matter, failing which the Cemetery may have to be returned to Government. I am sure you feel the same way as I do that it would be most unfortunate if that were to happen. You are therefore earnestly requested to give the matter some thought and to pass the word round to other members of our community. It has been suggested that a Committee be formed to study the matter and to organise a corporate body to administer the Cemetery permanently. For this purpose I would like to propose that a meeting be held on Wednesday, 26th September, 1956 at 5.15 p.m. at the Hongkong University Alumni Association, 1st floor, Queen's Building, for all those who are interested to give expression to their ideas on this subject. Kindly fill in the attached slip to let me know whether you will be able to come. Should this circular fail to reach others who may also be interested, please extend my invitation to them also.

Thanking you for your kind cooperation,

Yours sincerely,

E.S.K. Ho-tung.

Reply Slip

Dear Eddie,

With reference to your letter of 6th September, 1956 re the Chiu Yuen Cemetery, I shall ~~shall not~~ be able to attend the Meeting on Wednesday, 26th September, 1956 at 5.15 p.m. at the Hongkong University Alumni Association.

Yours sincerely,

(Name) _____

Address _____

Date _____