

Mission 21 Webinar (16/03/2023)



MISSION & COLONIAL VIOLENCE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Iris Leung Chui-wa

Today's Presentation

- The Basel Mission's global ministry & Effects of WWI
- The BM China ministry & Hong Kong's strategic position
- Hong Kong colonial government's attitude towards German missions

Why the Basel Mission a German mission?



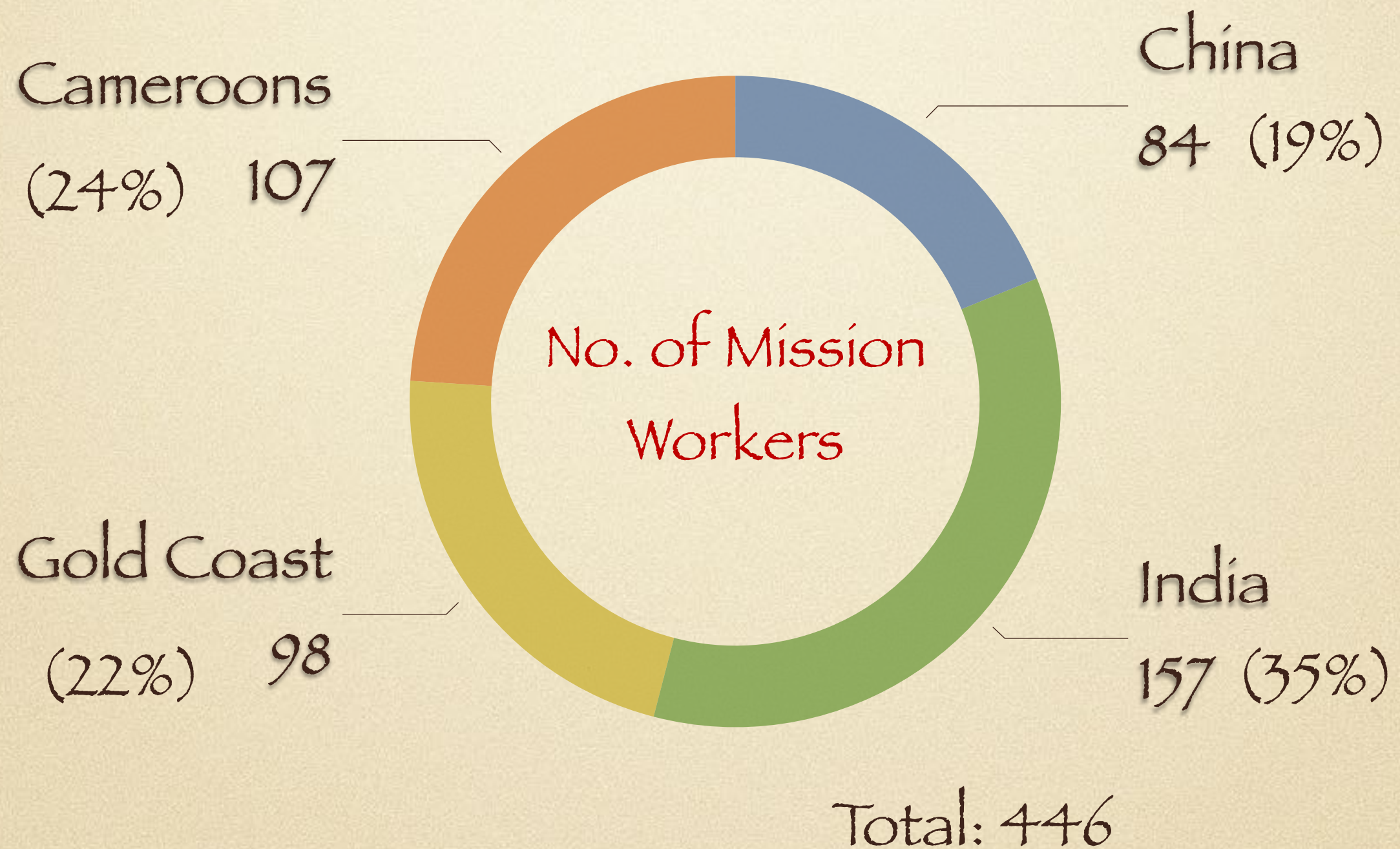
Why a German mission?

- German elements in BM's source of funds, management, workforce and supporting community
- BM workers helped German army in Cameroons
- BM seminary students fought for German force
- BM directors' pro-Germany sermons

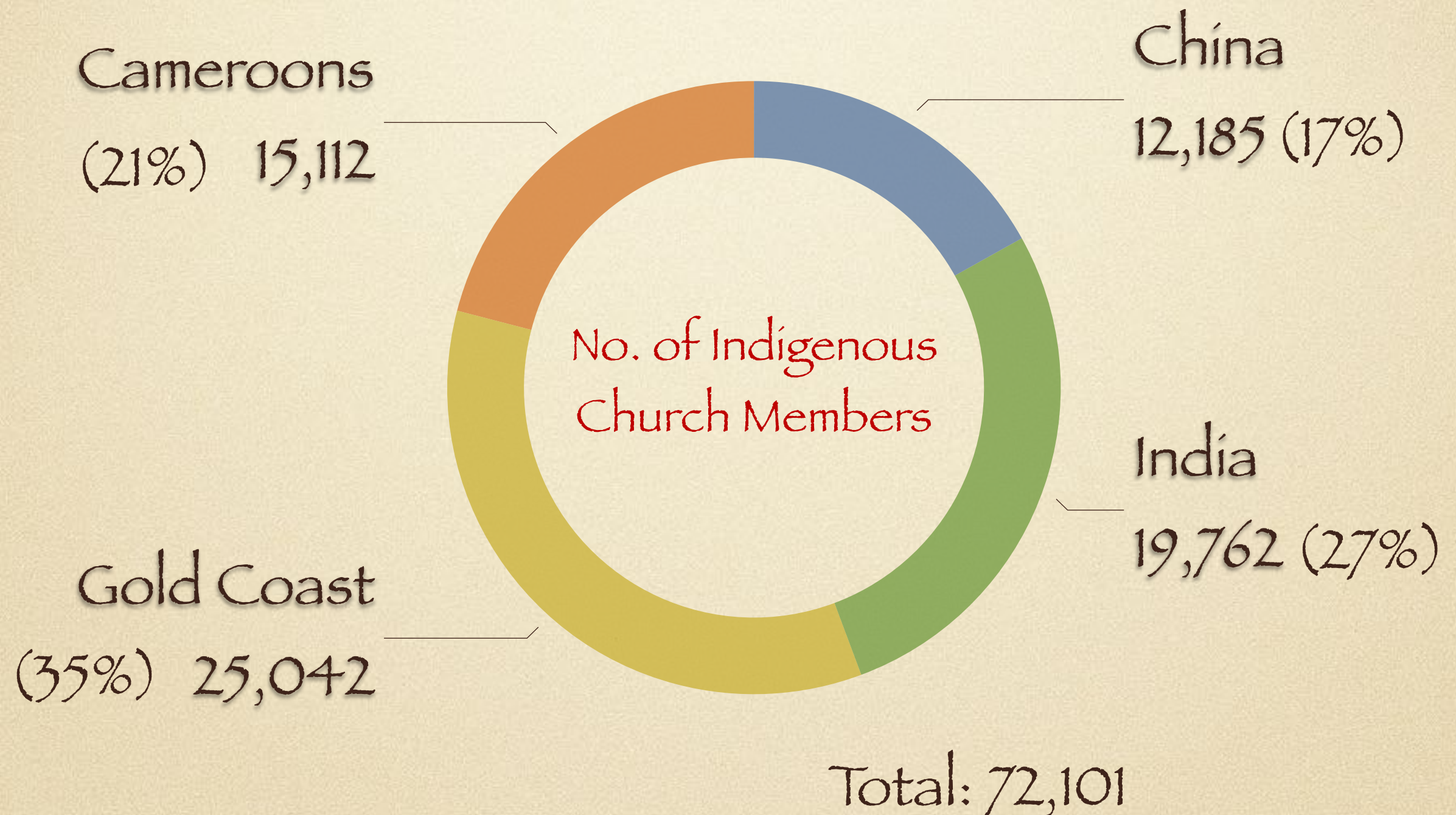


A German institution under a
Swiss cloak!!!

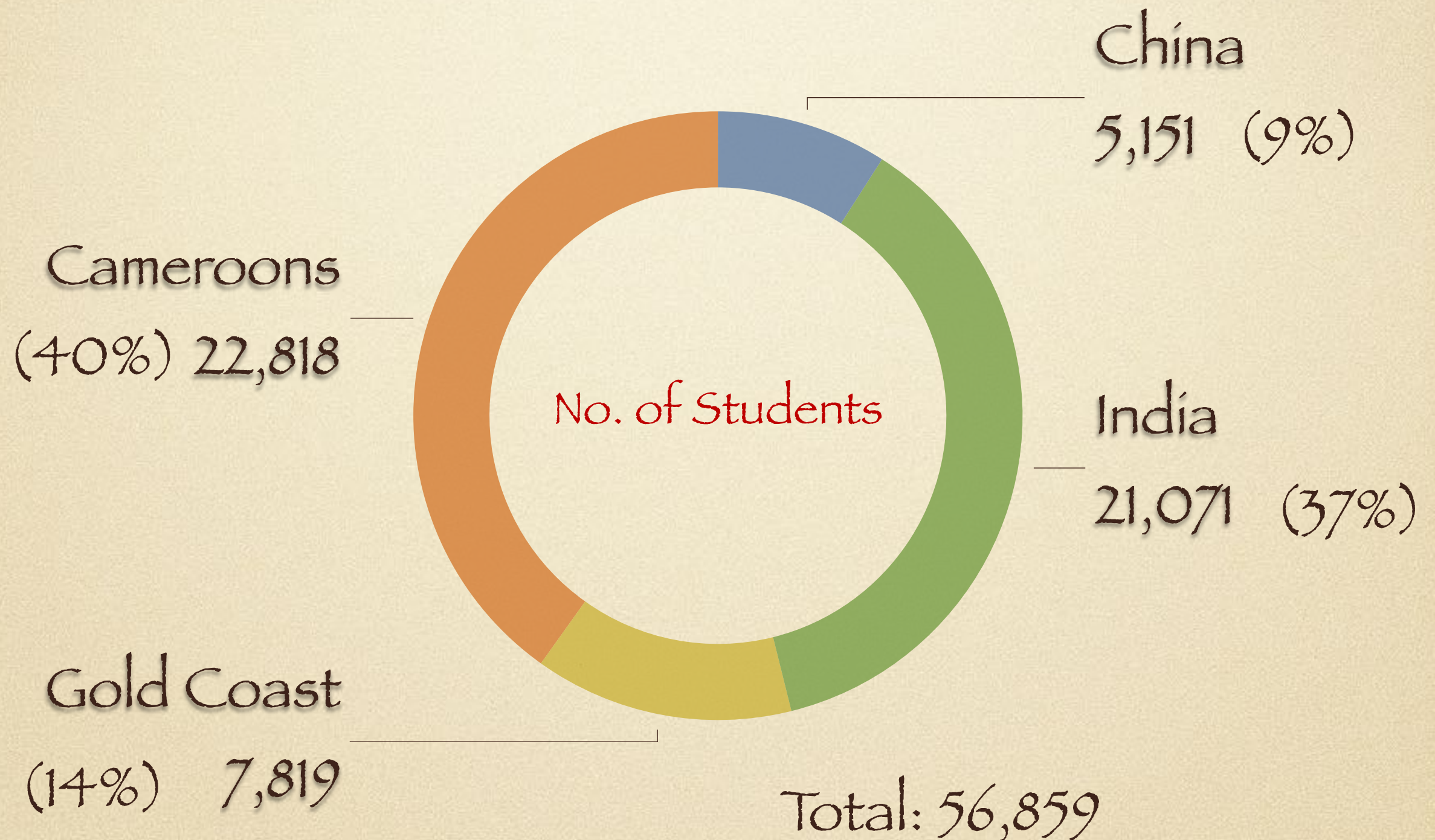
Global Mission Work of the Basel Mission, 1914



Global Mission Work of the Basel Mission, 1914



Global Mission Work of the Basel Mission, 1914



Expulsion from British Territories

- Missionaries expelled or interned
- Mission assets acquired by British authorities
- Ban on the return of German mission to British territories

BM: A robbery of assets and missionary rights!
A violence of the world power!

International Efforts

- Financial aids to orphaned German stations
- Supervising and caring indigenous congregations
- Government lobbying and public defending
- Sponsoring German missions' return

BM: The help of the LMS would be inscribed for all time
on the pages of the Basel Mission History!

Reference Materials

- Keith Clements, *Faith on the Frontier - A Life of J. H. Oldham* (Edinburgh and Geneva: T & T Clark and WCC Publications, 1999).
- Wilhelm Schlatter & Hermann Witschi, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1914-1919* (Basel: Basileia Verlag Basel, 1965).
- Samuel Prempeh, "The Basel and Bremen Missions and Their Successors in the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1914-1926: A Study in Protestant Missions and the First World War," PhD dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 1977.
- Frieder Ludwig, "Die Basler Mission im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 117 (2017): 63-83.
- Margaret Gannon, "The Basle Mission Trading Company and British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast, 1918-1928," *Journal of African History*, 1983, vol. 24, 4 (1983): 503-515.
- Michael Kpughe Lang, "World War One in Africa: Implications on Christian Missions," *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, vol. 4, 2 (2017); 37-65.
- Michael Kpughe Lang, "The Plight of German Missions in Mandate Cameroon: An Historical Analysis," *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 2, 3 (2017): 111-130.
- Jayabalan Murthy, "The First World War and Its Impact on the Leipzig Mission Society in India," in *The First World War as a Turning Point - The Impact of the Years 1914-1918 on Church and Mission*, ed. Frieder Ludwig (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2020), 213-232.

Barriers for German Missions After WWI



Barriers for German Missions After WWI

- Three-year ban on access of German subjects to British territories
- Custodianship of mission assets in British territories
- New control regime on foreign missionaries in British territories

Resumption of Mission Work depend on the
approval of colonial authority !!!

Mission Work in China

BMA - A-30.1.39



Basel Missionaries at the Peak of Hong Kong, 1905

The Beginning



Karl Friedrich August Gützlauff
(1803 - 1851)

Arrival in Hong Kong, 19 March 1847



Guangdong province, China



Theodor Hamberg
(1819 - 1854)



Rudolf Lechler
(1824 - 1908)

HAKKA (客家) = Guest People



BMA, A-30.006.0026



BMA, A-30.53.030



Hakka Walled Villages, built to keep the community safe



Life Changes of Hakka Girls



BMA, A-30.74.014



The first Basel Mission girl school, Hong Kong



Missionaries and Hong Kong students (1881 - 1912) BMA, A-30.01.017

The building of the Longheu Girl School became the
P+V Gallery, Shenzhen in 2016



The P+V Gallery, Shenzhen



A Public Facility and Museum



Basel Mission Hospitals in China



Meixian Hospital (1893)

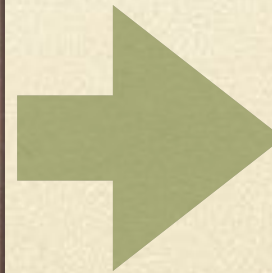


Meizhou People's Hospital

Basel Mission Hospitals in China

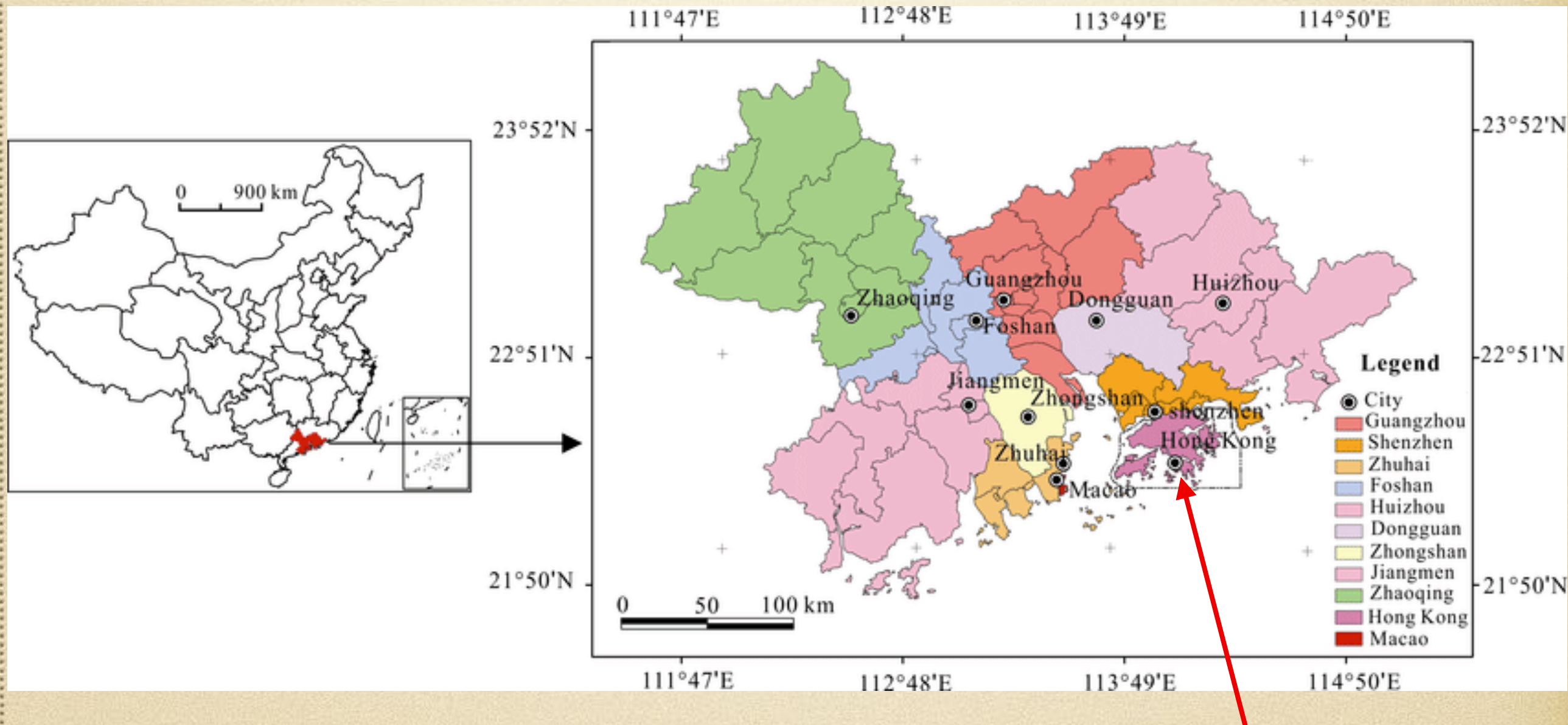


Huyen Hospital(1908)



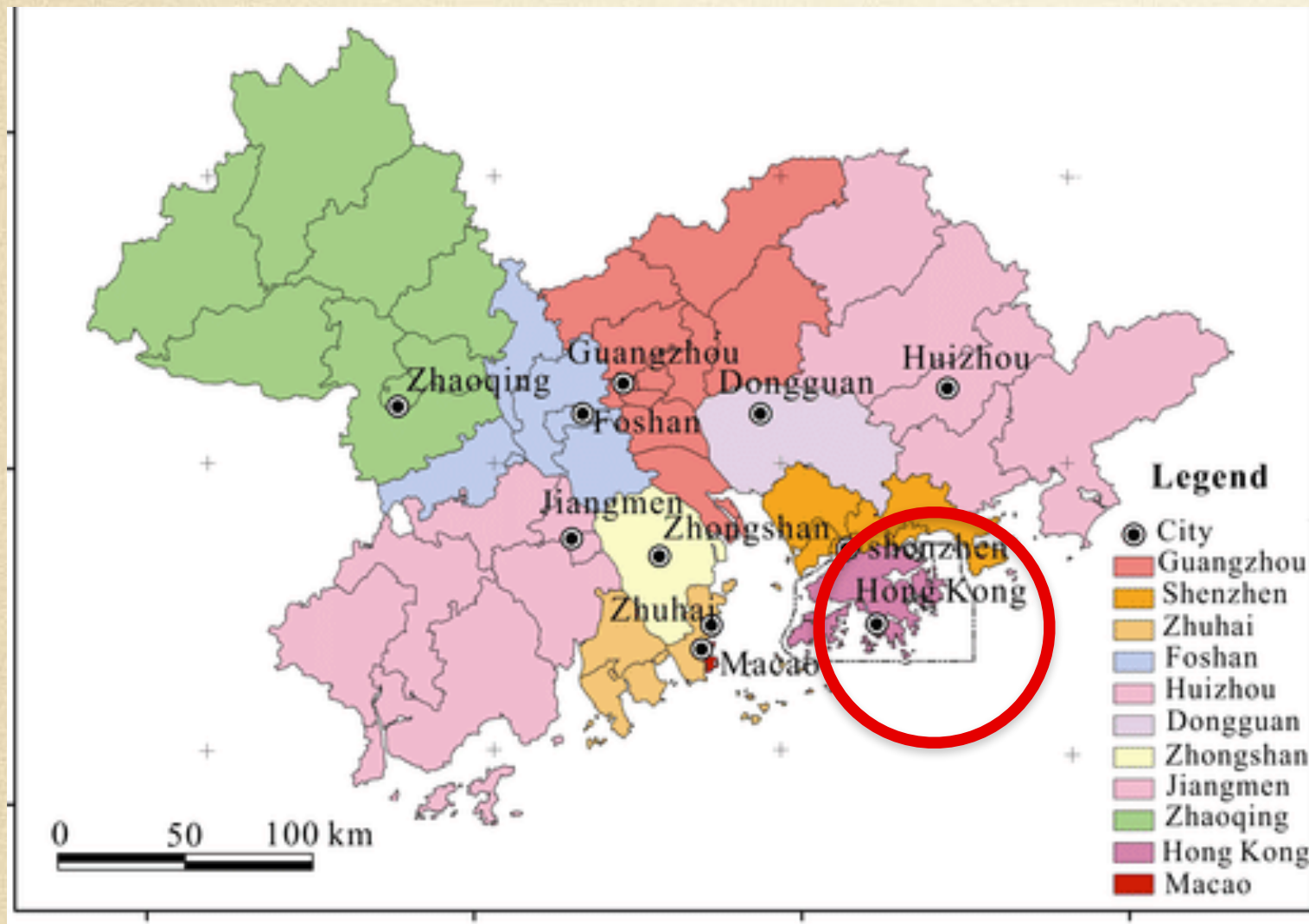
Huyen People's Hospital

Hong Kong's Strategic Importance



Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Strategic Importance



- Gateway to China
- Safe house
- Management centre
- Income generating source

Berlin Foundling Home



Basel Mission House and Church



Mission Properties in Hong Kong



Hildesheim Mission's
Blind Girl School



Rhenish Mission Church



Rhenish Mission House

Table 2: Properties Owned by German Missions in Hong Kong

| Name of Mission | No. of property | Total Area (sq. ft) | Total Estimated Value (\$) | % of all German Missions Property's value | Total Estimated Value if Held on Ordinary Lease (\$) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Basel Mission | 23 | 213,892 | 179,420 | 45.8% | 267,510 |
| Rhenish Mission | 3 | 71,870 | 57,230 | 14.6% | 187,870 |
| Hildesheim Mission for the Blind | 2 | 89,912 | 40,000 | 10.2% | 42,362 |
| Berlin Women's Mission for China | 1 | 46,125 | 115,312 | 29.4% | 115,312 |
| Total | 29 | 421,799 | 391,962 | 100% | 613,054 |

Source: Severn to Andrew Bonar Law, 7 April 1919, CO 323/793/33, TNA.

German Missions in Hong Kong

| Missionary Society | Year of Establishment in Hong Kong |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| The Basel Evangelical Missionary Society | 1847 |
| The Rhenish Mission (Barmen Mission) | 1847 |
| The Berlin Ladies Mission for China | 1852 |
| The Hildesheim Mission for the Blind | 1890 |



Foundlings and their care-takers, Berlin Foundling Home

A-30.9.8



The foundlings of the Berlin Women's Mission



The older foundlings and their caretakers



Blind girls of the Hildesheim Mission, Hong Kong



BMA, QQ-30.027.0164



BMA, A-30.09.040

4 August 1914 :

Proclamation of War between Britain and Germany

No. 41.

Vol. LX.



The Hongkong Government Gazette Extraordinary.

Published by Authority.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1914.

PROCLAMATIONS

No. 3.

[L.S.] FRANCIS HENRY MAY,
Governor.

By His Excellency Sir FRANCIS HENRY MAY, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Hongkong and its Dependencies and Vice-Admiral of the same.

I, Sir FRANCIS HENRY MAY, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Hongkong and its Dependencies and Vice-Admiral of the same being satisfied thereof by information received by me do hereby proclaim that war has broken out between His Majesty and Germany.

Given under my hand and the Public Seal of the Colony at Victoria, Hongkong, this 5th day of August, 1914.

By Command,

CLAUDE SEVERN,
Colonial Secretary.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

A Sympathetic Governor (1914-1918)



Sir Francis May,
Governor of Hong Kong

- Male missionaries permitted to go to China
- Female missionaries stayed in the colony
- Foundling Home and the blind facilities funded by the government
- Chinese churches supervised by British missionaries
- Mission assets professionally managed

Successors of May



Sir Claud Severn,
Acting Governor of Hong Kong
(1918-1919),
Colonial Administrator, Hong Kong
(1919 - 1925)



Sir Reginald E. Stubbs,
Governor of Hong Kong
(1919-1925)

Housing Shortage in Hong Kong



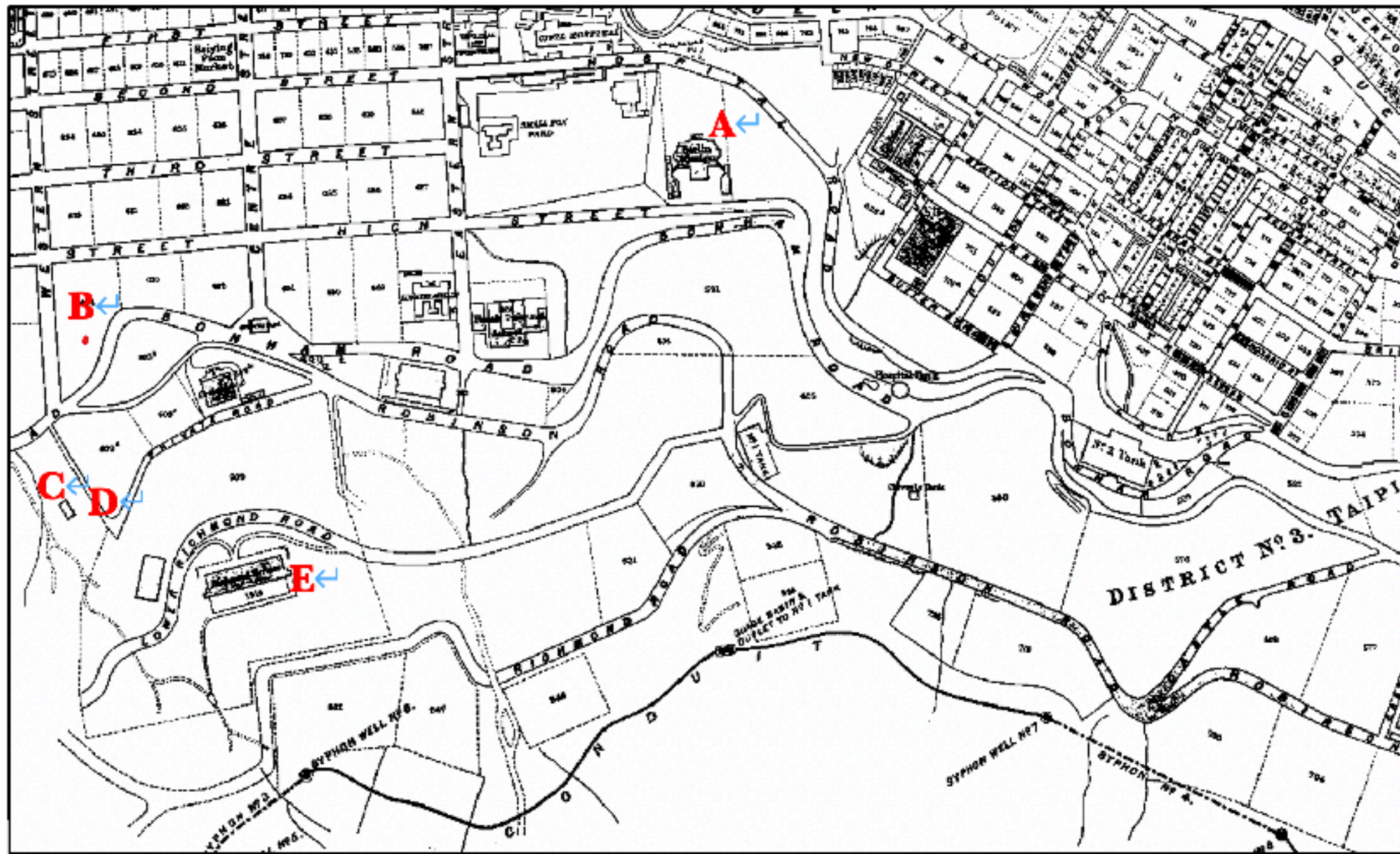
BMA, A-30.1.50

Housing Shortage in Hong Kong

BMA, A-30.86.1



Map of the Mid-Levels, Hong Kong, 1888



A: Berlin Foundling Home

B: Basel Mission House and Sai Ying Pun Church

C: Rhenish Mission Chinese Church

D: Rhenish Mission House

E: Basilea, Basel Mission's properties for rent

May's Submission (1916)

- Excluded all mission properties for religious, educational and philanthropical purposes in the value estimation
- 'very old' and 'could only be sold at a loss!'
- Over a hundred Chinese foundlings and blind girls staying there

Re-submission by Severn (1919)

| | Basel Mission | Berlin Women's Mission for China | Rhenish Mission | Hildesheim Mission for the Blind |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|--------------------|--|
| No. of Properties | 23 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Estimated Value (\$) | 179,000 | 115,312 | 57,130 | 40,000 |

Hong Kong Government: "There has been a large increase in the value of the land since 1916."

Problem of Foundlings and Blind Girls

- Expulsion of German female missionaries in April 1919
- Moved the small blind girls to Guangdong
- Moved the foundlings to the blind girl school, Pokfulam

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BMA,QA-30.09.002



The Berlin Foundling Home

Foundlings removed,
building vacated,
converted to a married
police quarters



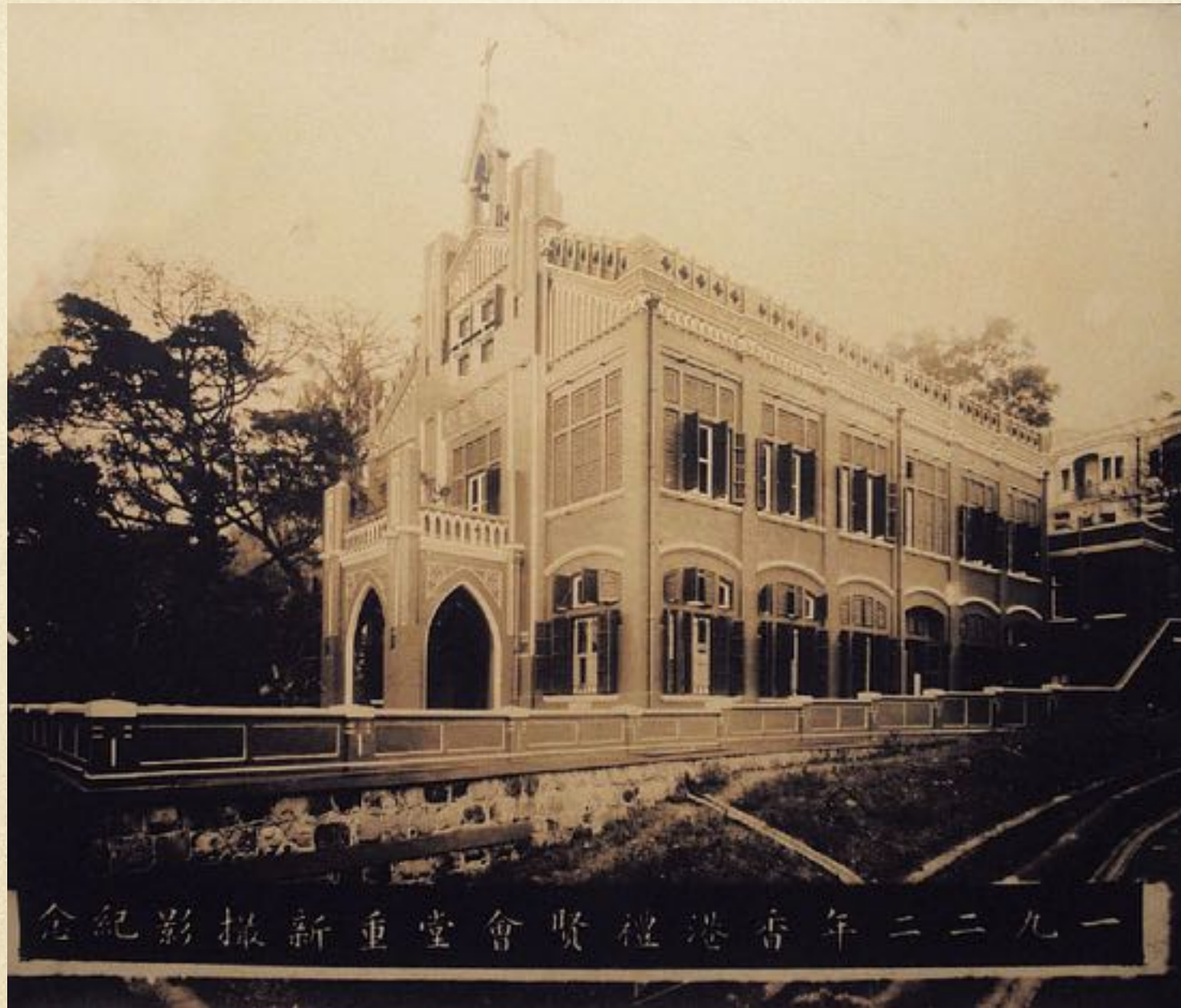
QA-30.113.0016

“The government reserved the right to further remove the children,
if these properties should be required for other purposes ! ”

German Missions Trust

- Established by the German Missions Trust Ordinance, 1923 to hold and manage German missions property in Hong Kong.
- Trustees included the Anglican bishop of Hong Kong, Hong Kong representatives of the Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society, English pastors of the Kowloon Union Church and the Methodist's International Church.

Multiple attempts to acquire GM properties



Proposal to grant the RM church to a Catholic mission in exchange for a leased land in 1920

Multiple attempts to acquire GM properties



Proposal to purchase the Berlin Foundling Home for residential development in 1920

Multiple attempts to acquire GM properties



Initial drafts of German Missions Trust Ordinance suggested empowering the Governor to order the Trustees to surrender properties!

Colonial Office's Interventions

Rejected Hong Kong's proposals:

“It seems to me contrary to the spirit of the Peace Treaty and wrong in itself for State Power to compel trustees to surrender trust property.”



Sir Gilbert Edmund Augustine Grindle
(1869-1934)

Source: National Portrait Gallery

Disposal of All German Mission Properties

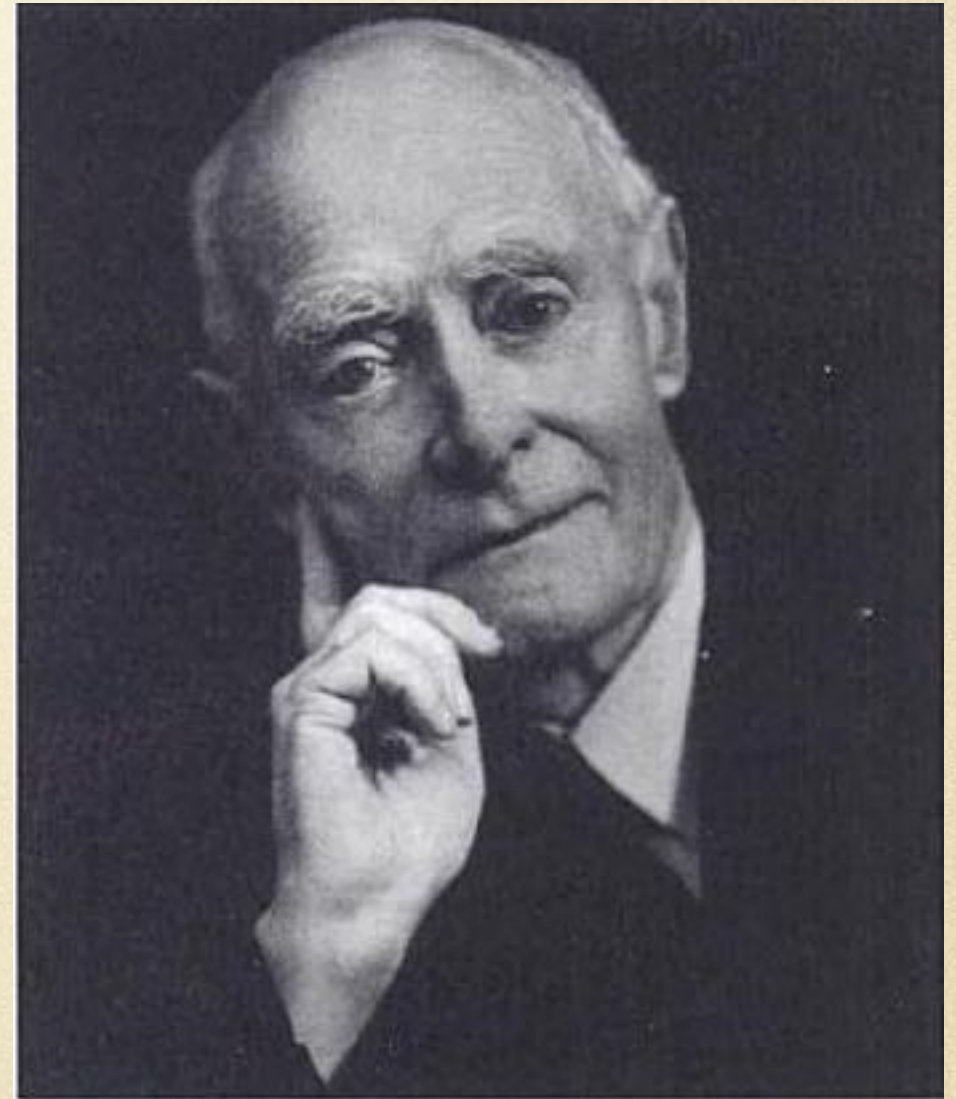
In July 1925, the Hong Kong government:

- Sell all German missions properties in Hong Kong
- Return the proceeds to the four missions
- Only the Basel Mission wished to return to the colony
- 'Significant opposition' to the Basel Mission's resumption of work in Hong Kong

Opposition by International Missionary Council

**Violate the principle of
missionary freedom!**

**Rhenish and Hildesheim
missions also wanted to
return!**



Joseph Houldsworth Oldham
(1874–1969)

Return of German Missions

- Colonial Office did not approve Hong Kong's proposal to remove German missions permanently from the colony
- Stubbs and Severn left Hong Kong in late 1925
- Cecil Clementi as the new governor
- Hong Kong property market collapsed
- Negotiation for the return of German missions assets and resumption of work began in 1926
- Settlement in 1929, a decade after the end of the War

Thank You !

leungchuiwa@gmail.com