

HOW LEGENDS COME ABOUT BY LIES

A letter of C.K. Bliss printed in Life International of
December 26, 1966.

On many pages in my many writings I have stated that "The History of Mankind is a History of Lies" and "Historians are paid by their political Masters to falsify History". And "Whatever happened only yesterday is already distorted in today's newspapers", and similar remarks.

Now here is an amazing story which tells of a lie told all over the world and repeated in many books and articles, magazines and newspapers for nearly 200 years. I learned of this lie when I arrived in China in 1940. I read a lot of books about China and the History of the International Settlement, and I found many times a scandalous remark against the British who came to China for trade, then settled there in the International Settlement, and did the same thing in other parts of Asia. The story goes that the British were so contemptuous of the Chinese that they had the temerity to put up signs outside their own parks and gardens saying CHINESE AND DOGS NOT ADMITTED.

I was furious about this because the more I learned about the culture of the Chinese, the more did I become convinced that their's is superior to our Western culture and with good reasons. I remember that in my letters which I wrote from Shanghai to my friends I told the same story with the same disgust. I remember too how I asked Chinese people high and low whether they have seen such a sign, and when and where. But nobody could give me a definite answer. Everyone told me that the British have really done this, but they themselves have not seen such signs with their own eyes. This gave me enough doubts to search for the truth - and I found it.

Now, it happened that the illustrated magazine Life International brought a story about Burma in its issue October 3, 1966. And there the lie was told again but this time as referring to Burma. There were signs around, the article writer said, which signs warned BURMANS AND DOGS NOT ALLOWED. Enraged I wrote the following letter and was jubilant when the magazine printed it on page 6 of their issue of December 26, 1966, and here it is - another story on the semantics of words. The editor brought my story under the heading:

A LEGEND EXPLAINED

Sirs,

You commented (Life International Oct. 3) on the story about the sign "Burmans and Dogs not allowed" that this story has cropped up in several former British colonies, but has never been confirmed.

Well, I found that legendary sign in Shanghai, overgrown and almost illegible, but the true story is different from that legend...

The racecourse of Shanghai is within the city, an oasis of fresh and cool air. On racing days Chinese and foreigners mingled freely on the stands. On Sundays the grassed area within the racecourse was devoted to football games, hockey games, and others. During the terrible summer months the whole area was occupied by bamboo tents where the various clubs of different nationalities could sit in the cool evening. The ground was privately owned, and the owner dedicated it to the public. The sign then erected, which I found, contained not the five words, but many lines as by-laws. I cannot remember the exact wording but the top lines read somewhat as follows:

This Area is dedicated to the Recreation of the foreign Communities of
Shanghai

By-Laws

And then followed line after line reciting when the park will be open, and when closed. When it cannot be entered after the racing. What can be brought into the area, and what not. That paper and food must not litter the grass, but put into the containers provided, where to make application for summer tents, and where to apply for games on Sunday, etc., etc. And among these numbered By-Laws there was also No. 9 (if I remember rightly) "Dogs must not be brought into this "recreation area".

Nowhere was there a word about Chinese people. But that point 9 of the by-laws, and the top line that the area was dedicated for the recreation of the foreign communities was shortened maliciously to the lie about the sign "Chinese and Dogs not allowed"....

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The End.