

# Ferenc Hopp, Josef Haas and the Making of the Moongate in the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Budapest

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**O**n entering the interesting summer home, we immediately notice the garden, the like of which exists nowhere else in the capital, or even in the country. It is as if a part of smiling-heavened Japan had been wafted here by magic to the very centre of the capital. Exuberant Oriental climbing plants and rare flowers, competing in rich, colourful splendour, capture our attention, while peeking out to surprise us from between the bushes and the flowers are Hindu idols, Chinese and Japanese vases and sculptures, among them a remarkable elephant carved out of sienite and a stone monument weighing down upon a tortoise. At the entrance is a round-portalled Chinese ornamental gate, full of beautiful statuettes. There is even a Japanese bamboo bridge, and in one corner of the garden, a little Japanese garden hut. ... The exotic garden is itself one of the most fascinating attractions of our capital city.<sup>1</sup>

The article from which this paragraph was taken was published in a popular Hungarian weekly in 1911. It clearly demonstrates that the Oriental Garden of the wealthy globe-trotter Ferenc Hopp (1833–1919), bordering the main avenue in Budapest, was popular and well known in the capital before the First World War. The garden was

immediately celebrated for its special atmosphere.<sup>2</sup> Hopp filled it with exotic plants and curious objects which were the wonder of the contemporary press.

The largest and most spectacular object in the villa garden was the Chinese moon gate which was erected by the founder of the museum, Ferenc Hopp, with the help of Josef Haas (1847–1896) who was the vice-consul and subsequently consul of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Shanghai between 1883 and 1896. Their surviving correspondence and related pictorial and written documents (16 items in the Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts) are remarkable not only for the way they show us the “nuts and bolts” of how such a monument was constructed, but also for the insight they give into cooperation between peers in the late 19th century. They also prove that there was direct contact between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and China.

## Ferenc Hopp, the Founder of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Budapest

Ferenc Hopp was a patron of the arts, an art collector and photographer as well as one of the most travelled and well-to-do men in Hungary during the age of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

1 *Vasárnapi Újság* [Sunday Times] 1911, 28.

2 Bagi, Fajcsák and Válóczy 2023.



Fig. 1: Mór Erdélyi (?): Ferenc Hopp in front of the moon gate in his garden, Budapest, c. 1895. Photograph Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts.

(1867–1918).<sup>3</sup> He was born in Fulnek (now Czech Republic) and in 1845 was sent as an optician's apprentice to the company of Stefano Calderoni in Pest. Later, he worked for Weinberger Opticians in Vienna (1853–1855) and Benoit Kahn Opticians in New York (1857–1861). In 1862, after returning to Pest, he became a partner in the Calderoni Company, which he took over in 1864. The company, which first traded in optician products, soon became the best-equipped photography shop in Budapest. Ferenc Hopp not only bought in the newest models, but as a photographer himself, gained a detailed knowledge of the equipment he sold through his experiments in domestic photography. In 1871, Calderoni and Company joined in the booming production of school equipment that responded to the Eötvös educational reforms enacted by the Hungarian politician József Eötvös (1813–1871) and began to sell a wide range of teaching tools and visual aids for schools. This proved highly profitable for the firm. Hopp organised the Hungarian production of school visual aids, and, commissioned by the state, supplied schools with these and with optical instruments.

Hopp attended the World's Fairs in Paris in 1867, 1878, 1889 and 1900, in Vienna in 1873, and in Chicago in 1893. The items that featured in the exhibitions, especially the Paris World's Fairs of 1867 and 1878 and the Vienna World's Fair (*Weltausstellung*) of 1873—such as woodcuts, small (lacquer) objects, enamelled metal objects, textiles and pieces of furniture—served many as a starting point for appreciating East Asian art, and gave Ferenc Hopp and other Hungarian travellers the impetus to set off for East Asia and discover other cultures and civilizations.<sup>4</sup> The *Weltausstellung* in Vienna in 1873 marked a breakthrough for Japanese representation at the World's Fairs, for this was the first time that Japan exhibited in its own right and according to a home-grown concept. The new Meiji government made its first official appearance in Vienna, and this event played an important part in determining the way Japonisme

developed in Central Europe, changing forever Japan's place in the world and the way the nation was viewed by outsiders.<sup>5</sup>

There were numerous Hungarians among the globe-trotters who were driven by a desire to get to know East Asia and the world in general. The Hungarian Geographical Society (established in 1872) played a crucial role in helping them prepare for their journeys, and frequently published their accounts of them afterwards. From 1876 on, Ferenc Hopp travelled extensively (North and Central America, 1876; Western basin of the Mediterranean Sea, 1878; European tour, 1880, etc.). Between 1882 and 1914, he travelled around the world five times (1882–1883, 1894, 1903, 1905, 1913–1914).

Japan was his favourite destination in Asia. He was not alone in his interest in the island country, which had recently been forced to open its borders: there was a general pursuit of encyclopaedic knowledge about the Meiji period (1867–1912), while at the same time, Japonisme was extremely fashionable and the purchase of Japanese art works had become feverish. Hopp visited Japan and China three times (in 1883, in 1903, and in 1913–1914). He regularly selected artefacts from the *curio* shops in Asia.

In the second half of the 19th century, Japanese art served as an artistic example for European collectors of Oriental artefacts. Japanese objects were appreciated for their technical perfection, in particular their use of material and modelling. As Japan underwent the process of modernisation, European interest in China cooled; Chinese art lost some of its value in comparison to that of Japan. However, as soon as attention turned towards the traditions and historical origins of Japanese art—namely, Chinese art—the situation took a radical turn.

Hopp stepped on Chinese soil for the first time in March 1883. Hong Kong, the southern seaport founded under British colonial rule, was his first station. After visiting Macao, he sailed up the Pearl River to Canton (Guangzhou), taking

3 For his life and activity, see Ferenczy (2008).

4 Fajcsák 2007a.

5 Yoshida 1990; Nagamatsu 2008; Fajcsák 2020.

in the sights of this truly Chinese city on foot and by palanquin in two and a half days.<sup>6</sup> Canton enchanted him. “I would like to stay here longer,” he wrote home.<sup>7</sup> He found it much more interesting than he had been led to expect. On his return to Hong Kong, he bought his first Chinese keepsakes (including carvings and ceramics) and sent home a box of curiosities, before leaving on 22 March to sail north along the coast of China aboard the Douglas steamer.<sup>8</sup>

After a stopover in Amoy (Xiamen), he put into port in Foochow (Fuzhou), the capital of Fujian Province, on 25 March 1883.

I arrived here at one yesterday by way of Swatow and Amoy, and sail on to Shanghai tomorrow aboard the China Merchants Steamer, the *Hal-Shin*, arriving on 31 March, hopefully in good health. Today I went to the Chinese city and was taken on a five-hour tour by palanquin. I am very pleased with my guide. I have been able to observe real Chinese life in this city.<sup>9</sup>

He arrived in Wenzhou on 28 March and on 30 March reached Shanghai, where he stayed at the Hotel de Colonie. He met a number of foreigners in the city: “... I had lunch with Min-Youg-Ilk,<sup>10</sup> a Korean prince, with ministerial counsellor Li Tau-Yuan, as well with our consul, Mr Haas, the Japanese head consul, Mr Shimigawa,<sup>11</sup> and the Korean foreign minister, Mr T. [sic] G. v.

Möllendorff.”<sup>12</sup> A few days later he sailed north to Tianjin and from there he travelled to Beijing and the Great Wall.<sup>13</sup>

According to Hopp’s letters, he arrived in Beijing on 9 April 1883, where, besides seeing the important sights, he bought a considerable number of objects. In the Beijing guidebook<sup>14</sup> found in his library Hopp marked the places he saw. He visited the Great Lama Temple (雍和宮 *Yonghegong*), the Confucius Temple (孔廟 *Kongmiao*), the Drum Tower (鼓樓 *Gulou*) and the Bell Tower (鐘樓 *Zhonglou*), the Temple of Heaven (天壇 *Tiantan*), the Marble or Marco Polo Bridge (盧溝橋 *Lugou-qiao*), the Astronomical Observatory (古觀象台 *Guguan xiangtai*), and the embassies of every nation. He probably also visited the Buddhist shrines of Fragrant Hills (香山 *Xiangshan*). According to his journal, he made his purchases in the bazaar and in curio shops, and availed himself of the services of P. Kierulff, as advertised at the end of the guidebook. He bought, among other things, porcelain Buddhist altar ornaments (Hopp Museum inv. nos. 1303 and 2100, for 60 and 72 crowns), a 17th-century late-Ming blue and white flask vase (inv. no. 2397, for 60 crowns) and a pair of cloisonné enamel vases (inv. nos. 1519 and 5961, for 40 crowns). He also found in curio shops objects such as a jardiniere from the Qianlong period (inv. no. 1249, for 150 crowns) and a tile with the eight Buddhist fortune signs and swastikas (inv. no. 5369),<sup>15</sup> which have survived in his collection. In another letter, dated 20 April, he mentions that he brought

6 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.144 Letter of Ferenc Hopp to his colleague, Julius Singer from Canton on 19 March 1883.

7 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1678/1 Postcard of Ferenc Hopp to Emil Reichardt from Canton to Budapest on 19 March 1883.

8 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.164 Letter of Ferenc Hopp to Calderoni Company from Hong Kong on 22 March 1883.

9 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.165 Postcard of Ferenc Hopp from Fuzhou on 26 March 1883.

10 Min Young-hwan 민영환, 閔泳煥 (1861–1905).

11 Shinagawa Tadamichi 品川忠道 (1841–1891).

12 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1524. Letter of Ferenc Hopp dated Peking, 20 April 1883; Paul Georg von Möllendorff (1847–1901) was a German linguist and diplomat. In 1869 he joined the Imperial Maritime Customs Service in Shanghai. From 1882 he acted as adviser to the Korean government.

13 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.199. Greeting card of Ferenc Hopp to his nephew, Ferenc Lux from Beijing on 20 April 1883; Fajcsák 2008, 116–35.

14 *Guide for Tourists to Peking and its Environs* 1876. Key to the Plan of the City of Peking. P. Kierulff advertises his hotel, his shop selling travel accessories, and its services in acquiring curios.

15 Fajcsák 2007b, Cat No. 135.



Fig. 2: Anonymous: Ferenc Hopp at the Great Wall of China and his attendants. China, 1883. Illustration from the Jubilee Album Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFA\_A. 383.

away a large brick<sup>16</sup> from the Great Wall. “I already packed my purchases yesterday, in two days I am returning to Tientsin and Shanghai.”<sup>17</sup> In addition to these purchases, now in the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, we know from written sources that Hopp also bought pieces of Chinese attire (women’s shoes, child’s dress) and other cloisonné enamels, bronzes and pieces of porcelain.

Hopp returned to Shanghai at the beginning of May. “I spent the whole day on Monday in Hotel

Keller packing so I could send home the curiosities I bought in Peking...”<sup>18</sup> On 4 May he left Shanghai for Japan. One object is a reminder of his last days in Shanghai. Josef Haas, Austria–Hungary’s vice-consul at the time, gave him a white-glazed tile from the famous “white tower” of Nanjing as a gift, with the following inscription: “Present from Josef Haas, Austro–Hungarian vice-consul, to Ferenc Hopp, 2 May 1883.”<sup>19</sup>

16 It is preserved to date in the Chinese collection of the Hopp Museum, Inv. no.: HFM\_713.1-2.

17 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A. 199.

18 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.146. Letter of Ferenc Hopp to his colleague Julius Singer from Shanghai on 1 May 1883.

19 Fajcsák 2011, Cat. No. 133. The Porcelain Tower of Nanjing was one of those Chinese historic buildings that became exceedingly famous in Europe. The Da Bao’en monastery

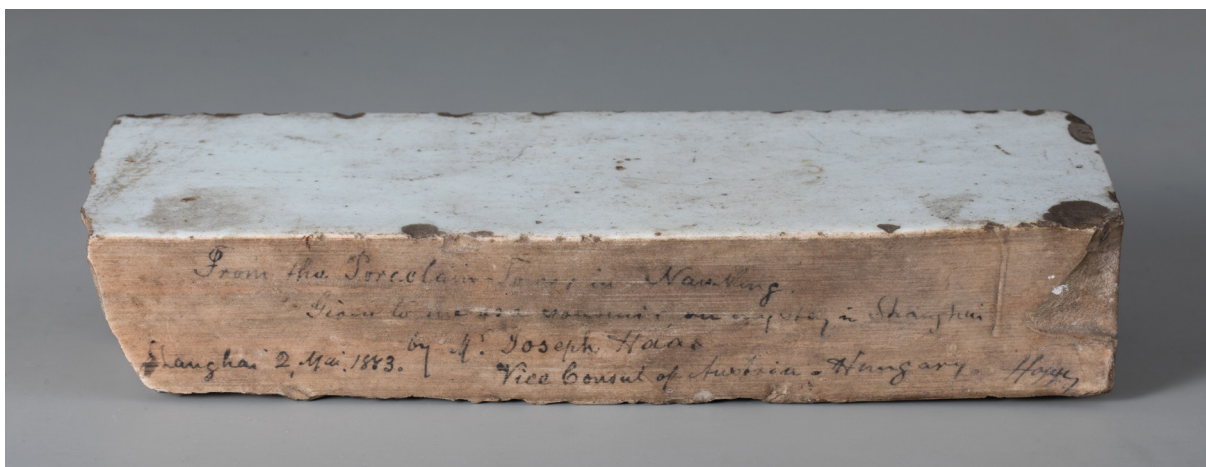


Fig. 3: Rectangular porcelain tile from the porcelain tower in Nanjing and its inscription. Porcelain with white glaze, China, Ming period, 1420s Nanjing, from the pagoda of the *Da Bao'en* monastery. L.: 23.7 cm, W.: 7.7 cm. Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFM\_584.

Ferenc Hopp completed his first trip around the world in 1882–1883. In 1885, needing more and more space for his ever-expanding collection, he bought a villa with a garden on the Andrassy Avenue in Budapest. From this time on, he started to transform his garden into one of the most magical sights of the city. Nowhere in his surviving correspondence or papers does Ferenc Hopp ever mention where he first encountered monuments or statues such as those he put up in his garden. However, his decision to build an ornamental Chinese garden gate and purchase a stele standing on a tortoise must have stemmed from personal experience. Probably his first trip to China gave him the main inspiration. On his first tour of the globe,

Hopp had visited the famous botanical gardens in Buitenzorg (now Bogor, Indonesia), a Dutch colonial city on West Java. It seems more than probable that the experience moved him so deeply that he decided to create similar surroundings of his own in Budapest.

### Josef Haas, a Diplomat of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and China officially established diplomatic relations in 1869. Until 1883, however, it was held by British diplomats and then by the German ambassador Max von Brandt (1835–1920), who was Germany's ambassador to Beijing from 1875 to 1893. China did not send a representative to the capital of the Monarchy, Vienna until 1902,<sup>20</sup> the Monarchy soon sent a diplomat to the Heavenly Kingdom (Consul General Heinrich Freiherr von Calice 1831–1912), using the opportunity provided by the treaty and the administration of foreign affairs to establish a consulate in Shanghai in

(大報恩寺 *Da bao'en si*) stood on the Zhubao Mountain, outside the walls of Nanjing, China's capital in the early Ming period. It was Emperor Yongle (reigned 1403–1424) who ordered the pagoda of the Buddhist monastery to be built in commemoration of his parents.

The pagoda had been destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion (1853–1854). Numerous foreign travellers took home larger or smaller pieces of the ruins as souvenirs. L-shaped porcelain tiles, coated with white glaze on one side, constituted the characteristic casing material of the pagoda. This gift piece is a glazed part of such an L-shaped unit. White porcelain was exceedingly expensive, and, as such, was rarely used as building material in China. The tiles were made in the Zhushan Imperial manufacture, Jingdezhen. For analogies, see Harrison-Hall (2001, Chapter 18, Items 9 and 10).

20 Józsa 1966, 48. Li Fengbao 李鳳苞 (1834–1887) appointed to Ambassador of China in Berlin and from there he represented the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1878 to 1884. In 1884 Xu Jingcheng 許景澄 (1845–1900) became the Ambassador of China who also based in Berlin.

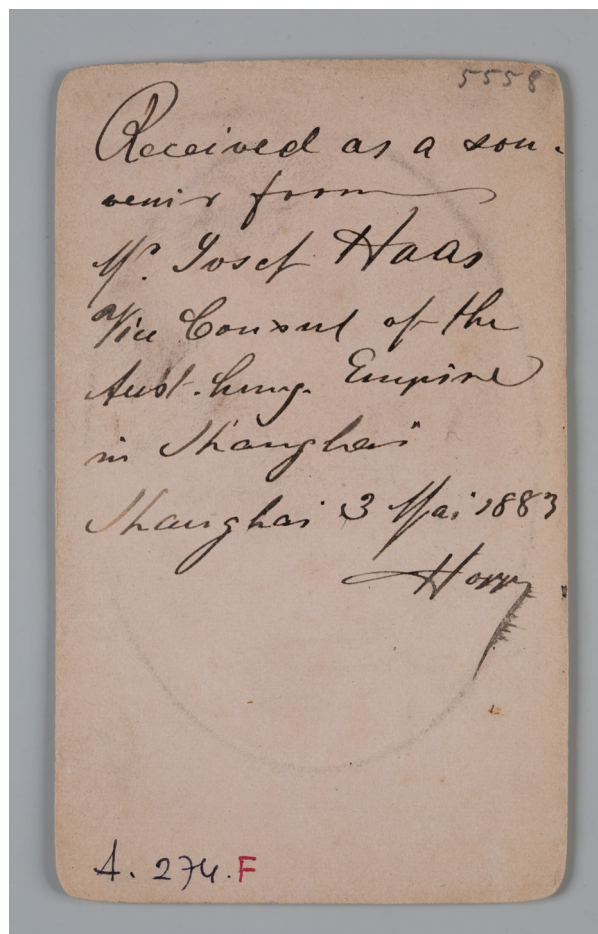


Fig. 4: Portrait of Josef Haas. Photograph. Shanghai, around 1880. Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFA\_A.274.

December 1869. At the Vienna *Weltausstellung* in 1873, the Chinese government offered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs two appointment certificates for maritime customs officers.<sup>21</sup> The Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service, which had been established in 1854, was controlled by the Chinese central government, but at senior levels the Service was largely staffed by foreigners. Its main aim was to collect maritime trade taxes,

but its responsibilities included domestic customs administration, postal administration, harbour and waterway management, weather reporting and the like, operating in the southern Chinese ports such as Shanghai, Canton, Ningbo, Xiamen and Fuzhou. Officers from the Monarchy served in Shanghai.

Austro-Hungarian consular representation in Hong Kong had deeper roots: Baron Gustav von Overbeck (1830–1894) was given a consular commission as early as 1864, when he was charged with representing the Monarchy in this important city of the British Empire.

In Shanghai, Rudolf Schlick (1837–1902) was the Consul of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

<sup>21</sup> The Hungarian representative of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was Ödön Faragó (1853–1925), a Hungarian customs officer who had worked at the service of the Chinese Empire for several years. He travelled extensively in the region of the Yangtze, and visited major cities (Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin). He wrote reports of his experiences on a regular basis (Faragó 1874; 1877; 1879; 1880; 1882).

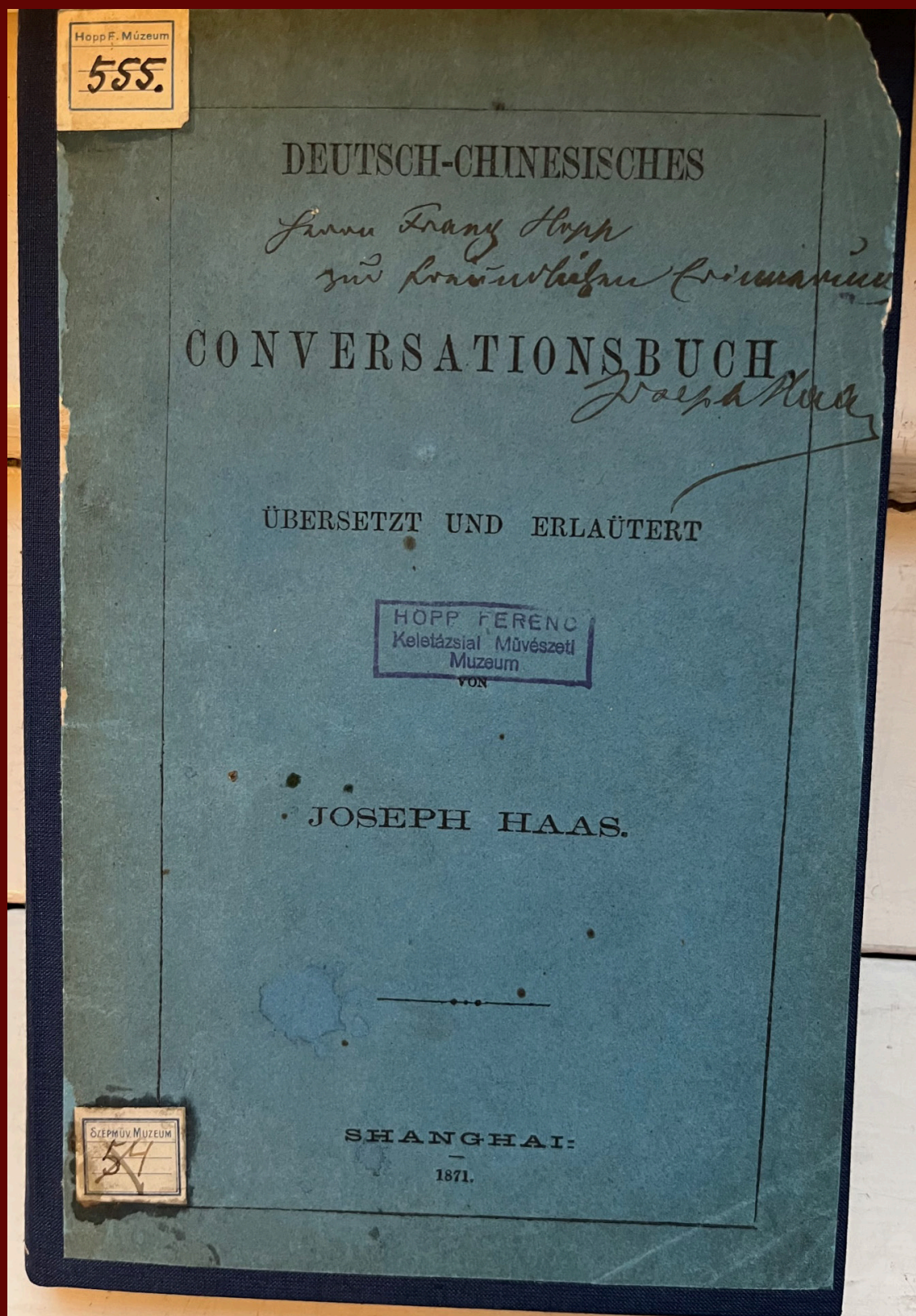


Fig. 5: *Deutsch-Chinesisches Conversationsbuch* with dedication of Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp, Shanghai, 1871. Library of Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Inv. No.: 484.

between 1868–1872.<sup>22</sup> It was in this last year that he was joined there by a compatriot who was to spend long decades as a diplomat in China: Josef Haas.

Josef Haas was born into a diplomatic family in Tokat (Anatolia) in 1847. The son of a diplomat, Josef studied in the Theresianum in Vienna, graduating in 1865. In December 1866, aged just nineteen, he arrived in Hong Kong, where he seems to have enjoyed the patronage of Baron Gustav von Overbeck. Haas studied Chinese in Canton, Beijing and Shanghai and, while still in his early twenties, started to work as an interpreter and linguist in the diplomatic service of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. He served in Shanghai from 1872 and later became the vice-consul of the Monarchy in Shanghai. He was charged with the establishment of the Korean Customs Service, and in 1882–1885 had close contact with Paul Georg von Möllendorf (1847–1901), who served as a Deputy Minister at the Korean court. Möllendorf invited Mr Haas to Korea where he worked at the Korean Commissioner of Customs in 1883–1884. After returning to Shanghai, he was appointed consul of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in August 1885, which office he held until his death in 1896.

Haas was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and supported the Natural History Museum in Vienna. He was the translator and editor of the *Deutsch-Chinesisches Conversationsbuch* (German Chinese Conversation book) which was published by the Presbyterian Mission-Press in 1870 and later by Kelly und Walsh<sup>23</sup> in Shanghai in 1882. (One dedicated copy was given to Ferenc Hopp.<sup>24</sup>) His monograph, *Über den Handel Chinas* (About China's Trade) was published in Vienna in 1895.

Haas had close contact with travellers who visited China, and he offered to assist Ferenc Hopp in ordering the Chinese stone slabs and architectural ceramic elements he needed for the moon gate.

## Correspondence of Ferenc Hopp and Josef Haas

Ferenc Hopp met Josef Haas in Shanghai in the spring of 1883. From this time on, they remained in contact and the history of the moon gate and other monuments of the Hopp garden can be followed in their German-language correspondence (see list of all letters and documents in the appendix). Josef Haas's help was crucial in enabling Mr Hopp to bring his ideas for the garden to fruition.

Mr Hopp must have written about his wish for a moon gate and sent draft sketches in 1887. This letter has not survived, but Josef Haas's response, dated 28 January 1888, is housed in the Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts.<sup>25</sup> Concerning the gate, Josef Haas wrote:

... I immediately set to work dealing with your request for materials for the construction of a Chinese garden gate. Based on the dimensions given in your sketch, the cost of procuring the materials would be as follows: roof tiles \$ 20; ornaments \$ 10; 4 dragons and 1 sphere \$ 10; 2 lions 2' high \$ 20; stone slabs A B C \$ 20; 1 Buddha \$ 30; the latter is available only in wood at a height of 4 feet; model wheelbarrows \$ 4. The work would require around 4–5 weeks—after the interruption of the Chinese New Year. I therefore believe that I can send the objects no later than the beginning of March.<sup>26</sup>

22 For more about his appointment, see the document in the Hungarian National Archives (MNL), Budapest, inv. no. 1872-3/1145/.

23 Shanghai-based publisher of foreign- (mainly English-) language books. Founded in 1876.

24 Library of Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 484 (inv. no. 555). The dedicated copy was published in 1870 or 1871. Both dates can be found in the book.

25 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1671/75. Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai on 28 January 1888.

26 "... Bezüglich Ihres Wunsches wegen Materialien zur Anfertigung einer chines. Gartenpforte habe ich mich sofort in Arbeit gesetzt. Nach den in Ihrer Skizze gegebenen Dimensionen würde die Anschaffung der Materialien wie folgt betragen: Dachziegel \$ 20; Ornamente \$ 10; 4 Drachen und

This implies that the elements of the moon gate were manufactured by early March 1888. There is no written evidence from 1888 for their shipping, or their delivery, but a delivery note from August 1890 has survived, listing three crates of ceramics that Haas had dispatched to Ferenc Hopp in Trieste.<sup>27</sup> We also have a letter written by Josef Haas<sup>28</sup> which mentions three trunks of Chinese objects which arrived in the port of Trieste from Hong Kong. Payment was to be made in Trieste through Ritter von Peruzzi, the father of Haas's wife, through whom accounts were often settled.

These crates may well have contained the ceramic and stone decorations used on the moon gate (especially the roof tiles, ornaments, dragons, lions, stone slabs and the sphere) because no other objects were registered in the Hopp collection as coming from Josef Haas.

The correspondence between Ferenc Hopp and Josef Haas also fills us in on the acquisition of another East Asian monument for the garden.<sup>29</sup> In a letter of 1890 (in which he complained that many of his letters did not receive a response) Josef Haas asked Ferenc Hopp to choose between the designs submitted to him by Emil von Hirsch (1837–1917), deputy consul of the Monarchy in Yokohama (1889–1890). Two slightly different designs, signed by Yokomizo Toyokichi (1865–?), a stonemason and engineer from Yokohama, were posted to Mr Hopp. Both drawings show a carved stone statue of a tortoise carrying on its

back a stone stele with three Chinese characters, although they differ in form and inscription.<sup>30</sup> One was approved by Hopp's seal and executed with minor modifications (with the three Chinese characters *Penglai kui* 蓬莱龜) in the early 1890s. The carved stone statue of a tortoise can still be seen in the rear garden of the Hopp villa. An old photograph shows that it once carried on its back a stone stele inscribed with three characters: Turtle carrying the Island of the Immortals (Penglai). Unfortunately, the stele disappeared in the Second World War. The surviving tortoise base is testimony to the dedicated assistance Mr Haas gave Ferenc Hopp with his purchases of East Asian art.

Ferenc Hopp further decorated his garden with Chinese drum chairs, vases and ceramic flower holders which were also ordered through the consul. Another document probably related to the furnishing of the garden is a price list of Chinese vases sent by Josef Haas in November 1890.

The last traces of their correspondence are two cards from Josef Haas: one with Happy New Year wishes from Shanghai dated 1894<sup>31</sup> (see fig. 8) and greetings sent from Graz, dated 29 December 1895.<sup>32</sup> Josef Haas died on 26 August 1896 while swimming near the coastal city of Ningbo (China).

## Chinese Moon Gate

At the entrance to the garden, Mr Hopp planned to construct a moon gate (月亮門 *yueliangmen*), modelled on the round gateways he had come across in gardens when he travelled in China. The name derives from the round opening which recalls

1 Kugel \$ 10; 2 Löwen 2' hoch \$ 20; Steinplatten A B C \$ 20; 1 Buddha \$ 30; letzterer ist nur aus Holz zu bekommen 4 Fuss hoch; Schubkarren Modell \$ 4. Die Arbeit wird circa 4-5 Wochen in Anspruch nehmen – nachdem das chinesische Neujahr dazwischenkommt. Ich glaube daher spätestens Anfang März die Objekte senden zu können."

27 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1679/20. Delivery Note of David Sassoon about three chests of Chinese goods which were sent by Joseph Haas to Trieste.

28 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.84 Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp on 11 September 1888.

29 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.84. Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp on 11 September 1888.

30 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.88; A.89. Two drawings of the stone tortoise stele sent by Joseph Haas in his letter dated 11 September 1888

31 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts A.271. Folded New Year's greeting card with photo glued on the inside, sent by Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp in 1894. The photo shows a wide street decorated with lampions, with passers-by in warm clothes.

32 Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts A.87. Postcard from Graz to Budapest.



Figs. 6 and 7: Two drawings of the turtle stele. Drawings, late 19th century. Seal of Mr Hopp on one drawing (HFA\_A.89). Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; HFA\_A.88; HFA\_A.89.

the full moon. In traditional Chinese architecture, moon gates are built embedded into walls, as openings to gardens and houses. Legend has it that there was a belief in ancient China that there were two moons in the sky. When these moons perfectly aligned with each other, a portal would open and form a connection between the Heavens and the Earth. In the past, these spherical gates were normally found in upper-class homes, to make them look more inviting for visitors, though later moon gates built in the West were often free-standing structures. The earliest description of the Budapest moon gate comes from 1895,<sup>33</sup> but it was built in 1890–1891 by the Hungarian architect Géza Györgyi (1851–1934)<sup>34</sup> who subsequently played

a part in designing an extension to the villa in 1906. He and Ferenc Hopp had known each other for decades. It was also Györgyi Géza who installed the embellishments on the moon gate.

The main structure is of brick, with a base of several rows of facing bricks below a section of wall which is plastered and painted yellow, with inset stone tablets. The round central opening in the wall is faced by a circle of bricks, topped by a ceramic tile decorated with a flower motif and the Chinese character for long life (壽 *shou*).<sup>35</sup> The carved and painted wooden bracket set on top of the gate, which

33 *Jubilee album* 1895, 8.

34 *Ibid.*

35 According to archive photos, the rear of the moon gate opening also once had a ceramic tile at the top, like the one visible on the front today (see, e.g., the *Jubilee Album* 1895), whereas the front was originally adorned with a polyhedral keystone, which—for reasons unknown—Hopp replaced in the early 1900s with a new ceramic decoration.



Fig. 8: Postcard from Shanghai, around 1890. Paper, 10 x 14.9 cm. Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFA\_A 271.

consists of multiple sections, recalling the ornate roofs of Chinese buildings and gates, is covered in decorative green-glazed tubular tiles.<sup>36</sup>

For the transition between the gate and the roof, Hopp commissioned a long colourful ceramic frieze consisting of five parts (see fig. 10) which was made at the Shiwan kilns and ceramic manufacturers (石灣窯 *Shi wan yao*). The symmetrically structured, multi-figural composition, depicting stage scenes from Cantonese opera, is arranged so as to be viewed from one main perspective. The actors are modelled wearing elaborately decorated costumes, and their faces are partly painted. Canton was a prosperous centre of trade and culture in this period, and cornices decorated with dynamic, figural scenes often show episodes of Cantonese operas or other popular pieces of literature. By the 19th century, Cantonese stage performance had become highly stylised: gestures were determined by strict choreography and facial expressions were supplanted by masks or make-up. The face made up in conformity with stage rules revealed the personality of a character: black is a sign of a coarse and violent person, white denotes an evil one—as does

a goatee—while a man with a moustache is a noble-minded hero. Comic figures have a white spot on their noses and a curling moustache. Female characters and heroes in love, however, do not have mask-like make-up. The rich details of costumes and the great variety of strictly regimented gestures are strongly emphasised by the architectural elements on the frame and the colourful carpet of flowers on and around it.

The Shiwan workshop which made the ceramics for the moon gate is situated southwest of Foshan, in the vicinity of Guangzhou (Guangdong Province), South China. This workshop started to produce its heavy-bodied, thickly glazed ceramics as early as the Tang period; large quantities were manufactured from the Ming period onwards. Originally, it made gigantic vessels suitable for transporting food, mainly for export to Southeast Asia and Korea (Martabani ware). In the 18th and 19th centuries, production of ceramic roof figures and sculptural decorations increased in importance, and Shiwan's name became closely associated with architectural ceramics, enjoying a heyday from the end of the 19th century until the 1920s.<sup>37</sup>

36 Bagi, Fajcsák and Válóczy 2023, 82–85, 78–81.

37 Till 2006, 105–08.



Fig. 9: Moon gate in the garden of the Ferenc Hopp Museum, 2020. Digital photograph. Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts.



Fig. 10: Ornamental mouldings of cornice: stage scenes. Earthenware, coloured glaze and cold painting 19th century; Shiwan, Guangdong province, China. Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFM\_64.61.



Fig. 11: Ornamental mouldings of cornice: stage scenes. Earthenware, coloured glaze and cold painting, 19th century; Shiwan, Guangdong province, China. H.: 70 cm, 69.5 cm; W.: 29 cm. Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFM\_9596. 1–2.



Fig. 12: Ceramic roof figure: dragon fish with tail. Moulded earthenware, green, yellow, white, blue glaze (damaged), late 19th century; Shiwan, Guangdong province, China. H.: 29.5 cm; L.: 39 cm (head); H.: 37 cm; L.: 45 cm (tail). Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts; Inv. No.: HFM\_781.

The local clay is exceedingly easy to shape; consequently, in terms of plasticity and richness of detail, Shiwan ceramics excel those produced in other Chinese workshops, as the composition and modelling of these ornamental cornice mouldings vividly illustrate.

Figural stage scenes in the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts storage depict six figures in splendid stage costumes, some with make-up in conformity with their operatic roles. The collection of Chinese ceramics contains two more figural stage scenes which were intended for the decoration of the moon gate cornice<sup>38</sup> (see fig. 11). With the help of some contemporary photographs and surviving ornamental ceramic elements, including fish-dragon profiles<sup>39</sup> (see fig. 12), which were never incorporated into the structure, we can form an idea of Hopp's original design—sketched out in a letter to Haas, but never fully realised—which was to top off the ridge and edges of the roof with ceramic fish dragons and buttons.

The museum storage also houses four dragon heads and several units of body and tail which were ordered for the decoration of the moon gate. The heads are of two sizes. The dragon-like creatures have enormous mouths, bulging eyes and tentacles above their eyes. Their scaled bodies resemble those of fish; they have side fins and high tails. In the end, the ceramic ridge was replaced with carved wooden beams, presumably because there was not enough knowledge around in Budapest at the time about how to fix the ceramic profiles safely to the roof.

Three stone tablets are built into the wall of the moon gate. The horizontal tablet above the opening

is inscribed with Chinese characters which are read from right to left:

佛蘭士哈樓 (*Fo lan shi ha lou*)  
'House of Ferenc Hopp'

The two symmetrically installed vertical stone tablets bear a traditional Chinese couplet (對聯 *duilian*) consisting of two sentences with a parallel structure. The good wishes on the right-hand side are read before those on the left (see fig. 13):

門前喜氣三千丈  
戶外春光十二時 (*Men qian xi qi san qian zhang / Hu wai chun guang shi er shi*)  
Around my gate may joy flow to infinity,  
And may good cheer flourish for eternity.<sup>40</sup>

The moon gate is flanked by a pair of stone *fó* lions<sup>41</sup>, which Ferenc Hopp obtained from China together with the elements of the moon gate.<sup>42</sup> These are the traditional guardians of the entrances to Chinese shrines and palaces; the lion and lioness are always shown together. The lion rests one paw on a magical sphere, while the lioness is shown with her cub climbing on her.<sup>43</sup>

38 An interesting comparison can be found in the roof of the Mak Po Temple, which still stands in Hong Kong today. Taking this as a basis, it is possible to reconstruct the arrangement of the roof decorations on the moon gate in the gardens of the Hopp Museum. Both multi-figural stage scenes and the fish-dragon outlines were intended to adorn the ridge of the roof. See the ceramic friezes: Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, inv. nos. HFM\_9596.1–2.

39 Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, inv. no. HFM\_447, HFM\_498, HFM\_507, HFM\_508, HFM\_509, HFM\_529, HFM\_781, HFM\_1347, HFM\_4300.

40 This is the English version of the Hungarian text translated from the Chinese by Prof. Barnabás Csongor.

41 Inv. no.: HFM\_64.89.1 (lion), HFM\_64.89.2 (lioness); China, second half of nineteenth century; height: 56.6 cm; width: 23 cm; depth: 31 cm.

42 See letter written by Joseph Haas (HMA 1671\_75). The price of the two lions was 20 US dollars.

43 Bagi, Fajcsák and Válóczy 2023, 82–85.



Fig. 13: Pair of *fo*-lions and the Chinese couplet (Chinese: *duilian*) with good wishes on the moon gate. Photograph, late 19th century. Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts.

## List of Documents Related to the correspondence of Josef Haas and Ferenc Hopp in the Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts<sup>44</sup>

Inventory number	Type of document	Title and date	Material/ Technique	Dimension
HFA_A.81.	Letter	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai 15 July 1890	paper, handwritten	1 sheet, 4 pages
HFA_A.82.	Document	Appendix to the letter of Josef Haas Price list 13 November 1890	paper, handwritten	height: 20.5 cm width: 11.2 cm
HFA_A.83.	Letter	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp 9 May 1890	paper, handwritten	1 sheet, 3 pages
HFA_A.84.	Letter	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp about sending three crates of Chinese wares and a stone tortoise 9 November 1890	paper, handwritten	1 sheet, 2 pages
HFA_A.85.	letter	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp about everyday matters 6 November 1890	paper, handwritten	1 sheet, 4 pages
HFA_A.86.1.	letter	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp about sending consols 27 November 1890	paper, handwritten	1 sheet, 4 pages
HFA_A.86.2.	letter	Envelope 27 November 1890	paper, handwritten	height: 9 cm width: 14 cm
HFA_A.87.	postcard	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Graz 29 November 1895	paper, handwritten	height: 9 cm width: 14 cm
HFA_A.88.	drawing	Drawing of the stele on a tortoise 11 September 1890	paper, graphical	1 sheet
HFA_A.89.	drawing	Drawing of the stele on a tortoise 11 September 1890	paper, graphical	1 sheet
HFA_A.271.	postcard	Josef Haas New Year Greetings from Shanghai 1894	paper, handwritten	height: 10 cm width: 14.9 cm
HFA_A.274.	photograph	A. E. Mortl (?): Josef Haas, 1883	albumin, photograph	height: 9 cm width: 5.8 cm
HFA_A.1671.75.	letter	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai 28 January 1888	paper, handwritten	1 sheet, 3 pages
HFA_A.1679.20.	document	Delivery Note of David Sassoon about three chests of Chinese goods which were sent by Josef Haas to Trieste 18 August 1890	paper, document filled with handwritten notes	1 sheet, 2 pages
HFA_A.4060.	letter	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai 28 May 1890	paper, handwritten	1 sheet, 4 pages
HFA_A.4237.	postcard	Josef Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Vienna 13 November 1895	paper, handwritten	height: 14 cm width: 9.1 cm

<sup>44</sup> I would like to thank Judit Bagi for compiling the list.

For Chinese designers, moon gates play an important role in the organisation of space, for they expand the boundaries of the different sections of a garden, each of which is usually of modest size and separated from the others by walls. Thanks to a moon gate, the view and the plants on the other side of the wall, seen through the circular frame, are partly “brought over” to the side where the observer is standing. In the garden of the Hopp Villa, the view along the axis of the moon gate leads the eye to a Jain shrine. This is entirely unique: only in Budapest, in a garden dedicated to admirers of Asiatic art, can a Chinese moon gate and an Indian shrine be seen together.<sup>45</sup>

Ferenc Hopp died in 1919 in his villa. By the terms of his will, he bequeathed to the Hungarian state his valuable collection of Asiatic art and his villa with its oriental-style garden. The special feature of his collecting activities had been the oriental plants (e.g. ginkgo and bamboo) and Asian artefacts, mainly stone sculptures. They are clear evidence for the intensive interest in the Orient in the late 19th century, as well as testifying in spectacular fashion to the international communication and trans-border cooperation that characterised the era of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy.

## Archival Sources

### *Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts*

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.144 Letter of Ferenc Hopp to his colleague, Julius Singer from Canton on 19 March 1883.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1678/1 Postcard of Ferenc Hopp to Emil Reichardt from Canton to Budapest on 19 March 1883.

<sup>45</sup> Another moon gate was later built in Budapest, in the Chinese-style fence surrounding the Simonyi–Semadam Villa (13 Bolyai utca, 2nd District, Budapest, constructed in 1931) which belonged to a former prime minister of Hungary, Sándor Simonyi–Semadam (1864–1946). Simonyi–Semadam’s interest in Asia, his journeys to that part of the world, and his taste for Asian art, were just as much a part of Hungary’s complex system of connections with oriental art in the interwar period as the fence, with its distinctive Chinese architectural flavor. Cf. Fajcsák (2017).

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.164 Letter of Ferenc Hopp to Calderoni Company from Hong Kong on 22 March 1883.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.165 Postcard of Ferenc Hopp from Fuzhou on 26 March 1883.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1524. Letter of Ferenc Hopp dated Peking, 20 April 1883.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.1671/75. Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp from Shanghai on 28 January 1888.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.84 Letter of Joseph Haas to Ferenc Hopp on 11 September 1888.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, A.88;

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Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection, inv. no. HFM\_2397.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection inv. no. HFM\_1519 and HFM\_5961.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection, inv. no. HFM\_1249.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection, inv. no. HFM\_5369.

Archive of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Chinese Collection, inv. no. HFM\_713.1-2.

### *Library of Ferenc Hopp Museum*

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Hungarian National Archives, Budapest, inv. no. 1872-3/1145/.

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