

**The Diaries of Sir Ernest Satow,
British Envoy in Peking (1900-06)**

In Two Volumes (Paperback, hardcover and download)

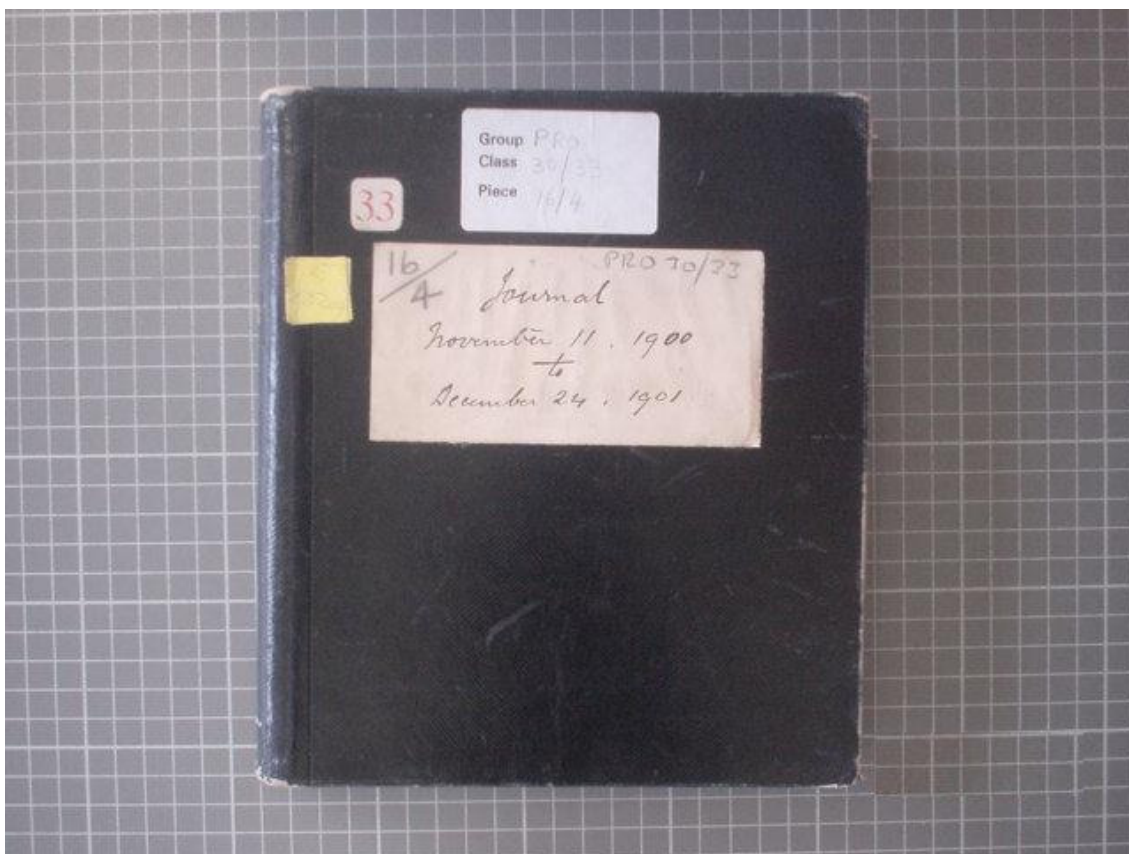
[Volume One](#): 1900-03

[Volume Two](#): 1904-06

Edited and Annotated by [Ian C. Ruxton](#)

With an Introduction by James E. Hoare

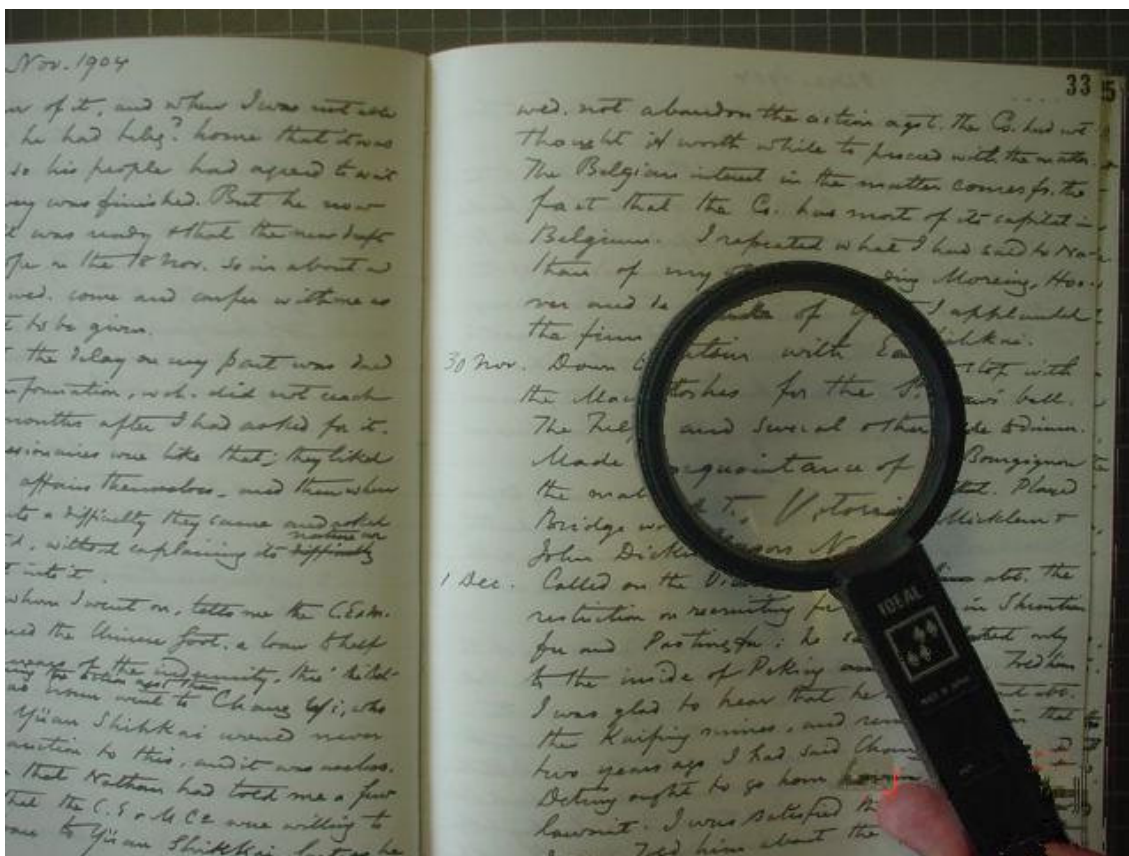
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PRO 30/33 16/4. Satow's Journal (diary) from November 11, 1900 to December 24, 1901. All of the Peking diaries are splendidly preserved in this way.

(Photograph by Ian Ruxton with permission of the National Archives, UK)

[Note: This photo appears in black and white in the book.]



A magnifying glass was needed for the parts which were hard to read.
(Photograph by Ian Ruxton with permission of the National Archives, UK)
[Note: This photo appears in black and white in the book.]

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DIARY EXTRACTS:

January 1904

- Jan. 1 Li Shêng-tê and Ch'ing-kuan called, but I said I was not receiving. [General] Chiang Kuei ti came at nine o'clock, but I said that I was not up.
- Went to Mme. Cárcer, Mme. Uchida & Mrs. Conger, also left cards on the Rogestvenskys. No other New Year calls.
- “ 2 Mr. Walter E. Southcott of Forbes & Co. Came to ask whether there was an opposition on the part of the Chinese Govt. to coolie emigration to South Africa. His firm is acting for Wernher Beit & Co. with whom is associated a brother of Lord Milner. He has talked to Hopkins & Tang Shao-yi, and framed scheme on the lines of the Hongkong ordinance. The Chin: Auth: say there would be no difficulty in getting 10,000 or 20,000.
- I told him that Chinese Govt. had written to propose the regulations being drawn up in London, instead of in China betw. myself and the Provincial Auth: I had reported this home and recd. a reply that H.M.G. had as yet come to no decision as to allowing the engagement of Chinese for service in the Transvaal, and read to him the F.O. teleg. of Nov. 11. He said a story was going abt. that the Chinese Govt. wld. not allow it, because of the opposition in Canada to the immigration of Chinese there. I said I had seen some telegs. abt. Viceroy of Liang Kuang having declared his desire to prohibit, but I thought these were “lies”, unfortunately too common a problem in journalism.
- In the afternoon Prince Ch'ing, his son, Natung, Wu Ting-fang, Lienfang, Chü Hung-chi, Ku, Hu Yü-fên and a host of other officials, to make New Years calls. They had fixed 4 and 4.30, but the first batch arrived at two, the rest shortly afterwards. I had them at a long table in the dining room, set out with plate, flowers, cakes & fruit & gave them champagne & pale green tea. Prince Ch'ing drank to the health of the King and the members of the Legation, & I drank to that of the Emperor & Empress-Dowager and China. We wore frock coats & they had on furs.
- 3 Jan. Kuei-chun 桂春 nominally gov. of Tingchow called by apptmt. to make a new Year's call, but really to talk politics. He is 47 & intelligent, knew all about the Russians striving towards an ice-free port, and that Ambassadors were supposed to be entitled to have audiences of sovereigns. I told him Russia was not contented with Port Arthur and Talienwan Bay, but now wanted Masanpho [the coaling station on Korea's South coast], and that she talks of annexing Mongolia and Kashgaria. He thought that these annexations wld. do her no good, but cost her a great deal of money, as they are not self-supporting territories, and would distract her attention from getting to the sea, besides Port Arthur &

other places of the kind made her very vulnerable. Manchuria was regarded as of vital importance by the Court, because Kirin was the cradle of the dynasty and Mukden is where their tombs are.

Bishop Scott and his niece Miss Scott, a pleasant, bright girl, who has come out to teach in a school for foreign children at Tientsin, lunched.

Kuiei-chun also asked whether it was true that England & France had given urgent advice to Japan not to go to war. I replied that war was always an inconvenience to neutrals, as it interfered with their commerce, and so of course they always expressed a sort of platonic hope that war wld. be avoided, but we had not gone further than that.

4 [Jan.] Conger came. He told me very confidentially that [U.S. Minister in Tokyo Lloyd] Griscom telegd. that he has it on excellent authority that Japan wld. send an ultimatum shortly after the 4th, & asked if I had the same news. I said no, but Kurino [Shinichirō, Japanese Minister in St. Petersburg] went to see [Russian Foreign Minister Count] Lamsdorf the day before yesterday & [entrepreneur A.M.] Bezobrazoff had given it out that whether Russia retired or remained in Manchuria, other Powers wld. not be allowed to have equal rights with her there, wch. I said was a denial of our m.f.n. clause wch. we had always maintained. Acc[ording] to Uchida, said Conger, neither China nor Corea wld. be regarded as a 'third power' in the sense that their participation wld. oblige France to join Russia. And he felt certain that considering the recent exchange of friendly visits betw. the King & M. Loubet, the French wld. be very loath to fall out with England. I reminded him of what I had told him of Dubail's language, & said that no doubt France felt less dependent on Russia since she had now a friendly understanding with England & Italy; and I told him what was reported from Paris as to Lamsdorf's visit there.

Went to [Freiherr] Czikann [von Wahlborn] with whom I found Mumm & arranged with him that he shld. put the question of the rate of exchange adopted by the Commission of bankers for the remittance of the indemnity on the agenda for the next meeting of the Dipl. Body. All three of us were agreed that the way in wch. they have acted in the past throws a present loss on the Govts. of the Powers, and on the Chinese Govt. hereafter when the account is ultimately wound up.

To Dubail abt. the same matter. He has asked for instructions. But his Govt. takes the view that what they are entitled to receive is as much sycee as represents their share of the indemnity in gold, and that they are not likely to be able to accept bills for the amount. The Banque de l'Indo-Chine is a small affair and will prob. not have much interest in the matter; by its constitution, wch. is too narrow, it can only buy & sell exchange.

Abt. Hwangpu, he said he had not been able to find the note wch. the Chinese Legn. addressed to the Fr. Govt. but he left the room and at once came back with a decypher of

the telegram that was handed in at the Quai d'Orsay, and his instructions, wch. he read to me. They were to the effect that if the Chinese offer were unanimously accepted by his colls: he might do the same. I fancy the date was not later than May. He said he had written home by Siberia & asked for a reply by teleg. I observed that there were two objections to leaving the matter in the hands of the Chinese 1°. the necessity of improving the approaches to S'hai had been mooted in 1866 (5 is correct), & the Chinese Auth: & I.M.C. had always opposed anything being done, hence it was not safe to entrust them; 2° only an international board wld. have authority to prevent encroachment by private owners on the waterway. He responded that the water was deep in front of the Fr. settlement, so there was no likelihood there of encroachment, not seeing that this must necessarily weaken his grounds of opposition.

He gave me copies of the Fr. Municipal Council rules & constitution, & I asked him if he knew why the Fr. had split off from the others. As he asserted that they never had worked together I told him what I had discovered in a desp. of Sir H[arry] Parkes that it was owing to the refusal of the Engl. Auth: in 1854 to protect the Fr. settlement, wch. he evidently did not know.

We talked abt. Manchuria. He said the Chinese cld. not turn the Russians out by force, & therefore they must save all they can by giving way on some pts. He had told them it was no use relying on Japan wch. wld. be satisfied if she had a free hand in Corea. Nobody was going to fight the Russians for Manchuria. I objected that 1°. the Chinese said they cld. not trust the Russians to carry out any new convention as they had broken the first, & 2°. the Russians now say they will not admit other nations to equal participation there, whilst the Powers went on telling China that they insisted on the m.f.n. clause. E.g. the Russians wld. not allow any other nations to carry on mining enterprises, and it was possible they might interfere with missionaries. They had annoyed ours a good deal, and prob. disliked the Catholics as much. He replied that they were hostile to the Catholics no doubt. In his view Russia had made a mistake in spending such vast sums in Manchuria. Possibly they might therefore consent to let the Chinese continue the administration, if they gave way on other points. They shld. send some one on a special embassy to Russia. When one is the weaker il faut être le plus malin ["one must be the more cunning"]. I said that Lamsdorff apparently had no power in the matter, but he replied that for the past two months he had been regaining favour. The man to influence was Bezobrazoff who has so much influence over the Emperor. I observed that the Emperor had apparently not a very strong character, and easily let himself be influenced. There was a strong party in Russia that disapproved the enormous expenditure on the Manchurian enterprise. Mongolia & Kashgaria were notoriously not self-supporting, & their acquisition wld. bring on profitless expenditure.

Yes he said, I have told Lessar this over & over again: what the Chinese ought to do however is to get the moderates in Russia on their side, & so overcome the forward[?] party. I did not say what I thought, namely that the Chinese are also playing a waiting game, believing that the money will not last. Asked about the rumour of a £20,000,000 loan talked of at Berlin; he said the Germans could not do it, for they had a deficit on their budget of nearly £2,000,000; also he did not believe that the commercial treaty had been signed. In Paris the Taiyuenfu line had been subscribed 7 times over, but it was difficult to get money from financiers fr. China without a guarantee. There was the Yünnan rlwy., another case in point. But he never encouraged concessionaries unless he knew the thing was good. I alluded to Souffart's Honan[-]Kaifêng rlwy: on this he said it had been promised before the troubles, & it was he who had taken it down fr. the hook where it had hung. The 6% guarantee was of course to be paid out of capital, until the line was finished, but he had not undertaken to Souffart that the money shld. be forthcoming in Paris, there was no Cie. d'Orient[?] in the matter, the real concessionaries were a tramway Co. in Paris. The same he said was the case with the Szechuen rlwy. fr. Ichang. The money had to be found. He had told the Fr. group that their only chance was in allying themselves with the Engl. group; for it was as easy for me to checkmate him as for him to checkmate me in the matter of a railway concession. Asked if he knew what tracé wld. be followed, he replied that it must be carefully examined. I hazarded the opinion that a line along the river bank wld. be impossible, and that in any case the amount required wld. be huge. He observed that Szechuen was surrounded on all sides by lofty ranges of mountains. I asked abt. Monteau's[?] coming here, but could get nothing definite. Wonder whether he knows of Manifold's expedition. Prob. he has heard fr. the Waiwupu of the passports being issued. It wld. be interesting to see his journal of our conversation, and amusing to see what he gets out of it!

Went on to Citters.¹ He has no theory as to what shld. be done to prevent the foreign banks making as much as they do out of the Chinese indemnity payments, but some live entirely on it, the Italian & the Austrian. He has asked Van Wahre's opinion on my proposal. The fact is most of the colleagues are afraid that the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank wld. tender for the whole amount, but I told him they were not strong enough for that. The bank that offered to take a certain amount at the highest rate wld. get all it tendered for, & so on in proportion.

Dubail also said that Tsen the Viceroy of Liang Kuang was 'dans le marasme' [in a slump]. He had been trying to borrow money from French people, who wanted the provincial guarantee, but that was refused. I laughed & said, they did not want to give you

¹ Jonkheer Adolf Jacobus van Citters, Dutch Minister plenipotentiary at Peking, 1903-08.

a mortgage on the province. He said that the Hgkg & S'hai Bank had failed for the same reason (wch. is not the case, but I did not tell him so). Then he went on to say that Germans had lent money to Chang Chih tung on his personal guarantee, and were very much troubled how to get it back. I told him that in 1900 the Hgkg & S'hai Bank had lent him money, but on the security of certain revenues.

5 [Jan.] Albert W. Bash an American, representing the Chinese Investment & Construction Co. came. He gives himself out as the repres've of a new and wealthy Syndicate, wch. wishes to work with us for the construction of railways. His idea is to work fr. the Pingshan miles [sic. mines?] towards the coast, preferably to Amoy, or at any rate to Hangchow, & also by way of the Meiling pass down to Canton, in wch. he has been encouraged by G. Jamieson or Brenan, & also into Szechuen. Does not think much of the proposed Fr. line S. of Yangtze fr. Ichung. The best line is that of the Han river. As to the Canton Hankow line, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the capital is Belgian, only $\frac{1}{3}$ American, but the concession is still American. Prob. the Belgians are to build the $\frac{2}{3}$ to the N. wch. completes that line from Peking down to Hunan. They got hold of Shêng by stuffing his pockets. He showed me a private letter of Townsend of July last fr. Hgkg & S'hai bank in London, in wch. he speaks of the B. & C. Corporation having been laggards. I told him that I wld. not oppose him, unless he interfered with the interests of the B. & C. Corporation and Peking Syndicate, wch. I had to protect.

Major Picton came abt. the rebuilding of the barracks and officers quarters in the hornwork.¹ I got hold of Ottewill, and ascertained that I could, when the Assts. get into their new house, say in March, lend 4 sets of quarters temporarily for the accommodation of officers.

Hillier brought me a teleg. fr. Kinder saying that a Russian officer had been yesterday at Hsing-ming-ting to say that a hundred Russian soldiers would shortly come there. Also we discussed the possibility of revoking the option of taking bonds or being paid off, offered to British claimants, and so defeating the Russo-Chinese Bank, wch. has a lien on the claims of Bandinal of Newchwang & Ward & Co. of Tientsin, who insist on bonds. We talked about the Bankers commission & the rate of exchange they fix for the indemnity; he says prob. the Hgkg & S'hai Bank could take the whole of the successive instalments, if it were put up to tender.

¹ A hornwork was a type of advanced fortification traced with a bastion front consisting of two demi-bastions connected by a curtain.

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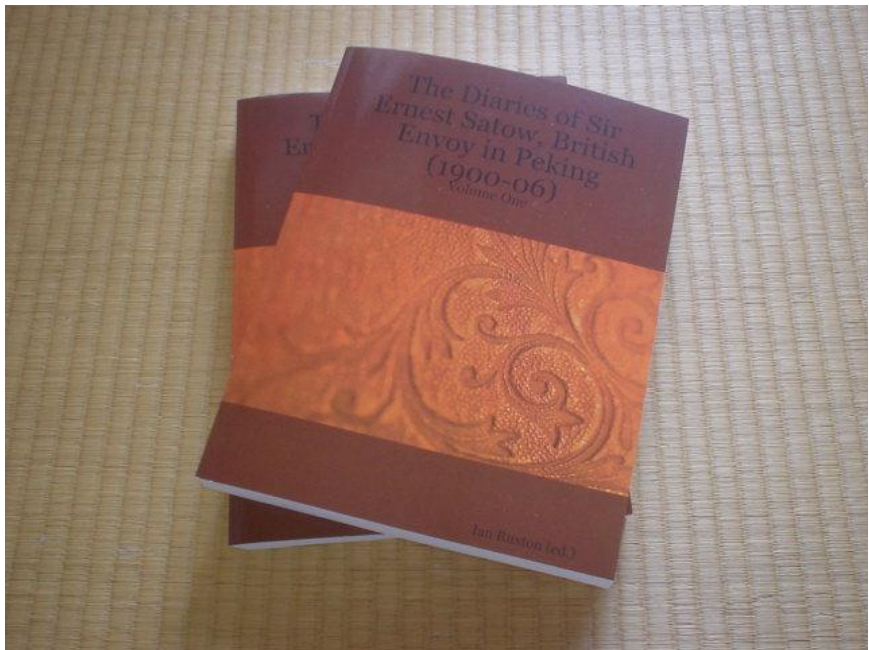
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Index of Personal Names (EXTRACT)

Notes

- 1) This index is for both volumes of this book, indicated by I and II as appropriate.
- 2) Satow was not always consistent in his spelling of names: e.g. 'Mochidzuki' and 'Mochizuki' both appear for the same person. But this may chiefly be explained with reference to point 4 below.
- 3) Sometimes Satow recorded Chinese characters, including those for the names of certain persons, and I have also included these.
- 4) Some of Satow's romanisations of Chinese names may be considered peculiar or unusual, but it should be remembered that the Wade-Giles romanisations did not reach settled form until the Chinese-English dictionary published by Herbert Giles in 1912. Similar issues exist with the romanisation of Japanese and Russian names.
- 5) One ship name (Askold) and one law case (Supao) are included. These do not strictly belong in an index of personal names, but having inserted the information it was felt better to leave it in the hope that it may prove useful to some readers.

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