

第一章 Chapter One

前言：“中國之牛”的故事

Introduction: “The Cow of China”



“在香港島上，我們建築了大批穩固的食品儲藏庫，儲滿了米、花生油，小量肉和燃油，還有大豆。關於購買大豆作為蛋白質來源的建議，最初我在定期例會提出時，遭到一些華籍同袍的反對，說它只適宜餵豬。不過，一位華人工業家羅桂祥博士卻很早便理解到豆類食品的價值，後來他更基於這種理解而作出很大的貢獻。”

——〈司徒永覺回憶錄〉

關於香港一九四零年代的戰前防備

“We built many rugged food warehouses on Hong Kong Island to store rice, peanut oil, small quantities of meat and fuel, and soya. When I first proposed to buy soya as a source of protein at a regular meeting, the idea met opposition from some Chinese colleagues who said soya was only good for feeding pigs. However, one Chinese industrialist, Dr. K. S. Lo, had long recognised the value of soya food products. Driven by this knowledge, he went on to make great contributions.”

—— Hong Kong Prewar Preparations in the 1940s in
Footprints : The Memoirs of Sir Selwyn-Clarke

一種成功的商品往往有一個特色，就是它的商標已成為日用詞彙中界定某類產品的名字，或者乾脆自成一種類別。例如“花奶”源於〈三花〉牌淡煉奶，但已成為所有淡煉奶的代號，正如“鷹粟粉”一樣，本來是一種以鷹為商標的粟米粉，但現在已成為所有粟米粉的代號。至於以商標自成一種類別的，最明顯的例子有可口可樂、好立克、阿華田等等。維他奶這個牌子的飲品，就正好具備了這個成功商品的特色。對於在香港生活的人來說，維他奶不只是某種牌子的豆漿；事實上，人們飲維他奶的時候很少會想到它是豆漿，因為對飲用者來說，維他奶就是維他奶——它本身就是一種飲品類別。

除了是一種形象鮮明的飲品之外，維他奶對很多人來說也是與自己一起成長的事物，故此自然而然地對它有一份感情。如果說可口可樂代表美國文化，同時也代表年輕和活力的話，那麼，維他奶很清楚是香港土生土長的事物，所代表的是香港的生活，就像扯旗山、獅子山，或者是渡海小輪一樣，都是身在異邦的香港人會不時想起的東西。



難民營一角。
Inside a refugee camp.
(相片來源 Image source:
Hong Kong Director of
Medical Services, *Annual
Reports*, 1938-39)

Successful commodities have a common feature. Popular trademarks often become everyday synonyms for their product groups or emerge as new product categories altogether. One vivid example is Carnation Evaporated Milk which is so popular that “Carnation Milk” has become a synonym for all evaporated milk. Another example is Kingford’s Corn Starch with its eagle logo that gave rise to “Eagle Powder” (*Ying-suk-fan* in Cantonese), an equivalent of corn starch. As for famous trademarks transformed into new product categories, outstanding examples are Coca Cola, Horlicks and Ovaltine. As a beverage brand, Vitasoy has what it takes to become a successful commercial product. To the people of Hong Kong, Vitasoy is not just a brand of soya milk. As a matter of fact, consumers have almost forgotten that Vitasoy is soya milk. Vitasoy is Vitasoy. It is a category all of its own.

A beverage with distinct image, Vitasoy is also something many people grew up with; an object that commands special feelings. If Coca Cola is an icon of American culture, youthfulness and vitality, then Vitasoy is clearly something born and bred in Hong Kong. Just like the Peak, Lion Rock and the cross-harbour ferry, it symbolises the Hong Kong way of life. To Hongkongers away from home, all these impressions of the city evoke emotions of yearning.

維他奶：昔日與今天

令人產生親切感的事物大多數是有較長歷史的，維他奶也不例外。生產維他奶的公司是香港荳品有限公司。荳品公司創辦於一九四零年，到今天剛好是五十年的光景。它的故事，也就與香港從淪陷於日軍的前夕一直到今天所經歷的變化息息相關。

維他奶誕生的那一年（一九四零年），香港約一百八十萬的人口中，竟有七千二百二十九人死於因營養不良而引起的腳氣病，其中估計有不少是從內地逃避日軍而來的難民。這時候，日軍不但已經侵佔了華北，而且已經從大鵬灣及大亞灣登陸，攻入廣州及珠江三角洲。每一次日軍大舉“清鄉”之後，便會有數以萬計的難民從內地湧入。香港的街頭睡滿了鶉衣百結的人，要勞煩醫務處的救護車把他們載到新建的幾個難民營去。人口的驟升，使工資與生活水平大大地下降，而生活的艱辛，也令主要疾病如肺結核的發病率增加。再者，難民的湧入也誘發了各種疫症，如霍亂、天花等。在江河日下的社會和軍事形勢之中，如何提高市民的營養水平和加強他們的抗病能力，就成為一個重要的課題。荳品公司在這個時候創立，生產一種用大豆製的新飲品——維他奶，其創辦的用意很清楚：要生產一種既便宜又有營養的牛奶代用品——一種“窮人的牛奶”，以供應在貧窮綫上下掙扎的人。在往後的二十多年之中，一直到七十年代初期，維他奶都是以普羅大眾的營養飲品這個面貌出現。



Vitasoy: Past and Present

Warmth and familiarity tend to grow with time. Vitasoy is no exception. The Hong Kong Soya Bean Products Co., Ltd (HKSBP), the manufacturer, was founded in 1940. The company is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Its story is interwoven with the changes that shaped Hong Kong from the eve of Japanese Occupation to this day.

The year Vitasoy was born (1940), Hong Kong had a population of approximately 1.8 million. Alarmingly, 7,229 died of beriberi caused by malnutrition. The majority of the deceased were refugees fleeing from invading Japanese troops. By that time, the Japanese had captured northern China and the advancing forces landed on Mirs Bay and Daya Bay to take Guangzhou and the Pearl River Delta region. After every major Japanese mop-up, Hong Kong was inundated with mainland refugees in their thousands. Ragged and miserable, they slept on the streets of the city. Several refugee camps were built and the Medical Services had to transfer the homeless to these quarters. Sharp population increase seriously dragged wages and living quality, while frugal living conditions led to higher morbidity rates of major diseases such as tuberculosis. The influx of refugees also sparked off epidemics like cholera and smallpox. Faced with the toils of deteriorating social condition and military developments, Hong Kong had a major challenge to contend with: how to provide better nutrition for the people and build resistance to diseases. It was at this time that HKSBP was founded to produce a new soya drink — Vitasoy. The founding purpose was clear: to offer an affordable and nutritious substitute for milk; a poor folks’ milk for those with income barely over the poverty line. In the twenty years that followed, right up to the early 1970s, Vitasoy preserved its image as a nutritious beverage for the common people.



可是，七十年代的香港，跟一九四零年以至五、六十年代的面貌已經完全不同。戰後三十多年間，社會生產與生活水平大大提高，營養對一般人來說已經不虞匱乏，是以一些因缺乏營養而產生的病症，如腳氣病與癩皮症等早已消聲匿跡。當社會逐漸步入富裕階設的時候，新生的中產階級反而擔心的是營養過多的問題。荳品公司了解到這個社會變化，於是便把維他奶的市場定位改變，由營養飲品變成一種消費品。昔日的牛奶代用品，不但在這富裕社會失去了意義，而且在今天香港的高生產水平之下，生產與推銷費用的比重增加，大豆原料就算十分便宜，也不能使維他奶的售價低於牛奶多倍，所以維他奶再也不能以“窮人的牛奶”為標榜了。

更有甚者，在荳品公司正在開僻的美國市場裡，維他奶更以“天然食品”的面貌出現，取其有牛奶所有的養分，卻沒有牛奶這麼多有害的脂肪。唯其是“天然食品”，維他奶的定價比牛奶高，與一九四零年所標榜的比牛奶便宜的形象剛好相反。再者，從前維他奶強調自己跟牛奶一樣，今天卻要突出自己與牛奶不同的地方。我們可以看到，隨着經濟的發展與社會的轉變，維他奶的性質及其意義已經完全不同。社會的遞嬗，使這種商品無可避免地要改變它的社會意義和市場定位。

By the 1970s, however, Hong Kong was a far cry from her old self in 1940 or the 50s and 60s. Nutrition was no longer a concern as social and living standards improved throughout the three postwar decades. Diseases stemming from malnutrition, such as beriberi and pellagra, had long disappeared. People became affluent and the emerging middle-class began to worry about excessive nutrition. In wake of this social change, the soya company adjusted Vitasoy's market positioning, transforming it from a nutritious beverage into a consumer product. The former milk substitute lost its significance in a wealthy society, while modern Hong Kong's high production standard meant higher production and marketing costs. Despite the low cost of soya, it was simply not possible to market Vitasoy at a fraction of the price of cow's milk. Vitasoy could no longer flag the idea of being the “poor folks' milk”.

Meanwhile, in the newly opened up US market, Vitasoy was marketed as a “natural food” that could substitute all nutrients provided by milk without the harmful fat. As a “natural food”, Vitasoy is priced at a higher level than milk today. This is antithetical to the image it built back in 1940 — a low cost alternative to milk. Even more interestingly, while Vitasoy stressed its similarity to milk in the old days, it is now working hard to highlight the difference. The ramification of economic development and social progression is evident. The nature of Vitasoy and its significance in local culture have changed totally. As Hong Kong evolves, it is inevitable for this commodity to hold new social significance and market positioning.



一九三四年度香港大學聯會評議會與校長韓惠和爵士合照。後排最右者為羅桂祥。前排左二為簡悅強，二人均為香港荳品公司董事局成員。

The 1934 HKU Union Council pictured here with Vice-Chancellor Sir William Hornell. Both K. S. Lo (far right, back row) and Kan Yuet Keung (second from left, front row) were Board members of HKSBP.

中國民族資本家與香港企業家的更替

維他奶的始創人是羅桂祥。他是梅縣客家人，小時候隨父羅進興及家人到南洋吉隆坡生活，讀了兩年中文，就進入一所教會辦的英文中學讀書。一九二九年中學畢業後，得到父親的東家余東旋（藥行余仁生堂東主）資助，在香港大學攻讀商科。不過這不是羅桂祥本來的志願。這位華僑青年原先的理想，是進入中國交通大學修讀土木工程，俾能對積弱的祖國有所貢獻。可是，家裡兄弟姐妹多，雖然交通大學的費用比較便宜，只不過每年四、五百塊錢，但是父親也無力支付，惟有接受東家余東旋的條件，到港大唸商科。不過，羅桂祥對中國的身份認同和責任感始終沒有改變；差不多六十年後，在本書作者進行的一次訪問之中，羅桂祥仍然毫不遲疑地說，他的國家民族認同是中國和中華民族——“在感情方面我肯定是中國人。”



From Chinese Nationalistic Capitalist to Hong Kong Entrepreneur

Vitasoy was founded by Lo Kwee Seong (K. S. Lo). A gentleman of Hakka descent from Mei County, he emigrated to Kuala Lumpur in his childhood with his father Lo Chun Hing and the family. After studying Chinese for two years, he was admitted to an English secondary school run by the church. After graduating in 1929, he studied business and commerce in the University of Hong Kong (HKU) with financial support from his father's boss Eu Tong Sen (Owner of Eu Yan Sang). This was not something K. S. Lo had bargained for. Aspiring to make contributions to his weak and degenerated country, this young overseas Chinese wanted to study civil engineering in Jiaotong University of China. Regrettably, the annual tuition fee, adding up to four or five hundred dollars, was beyond the means of his father, who had to bring up a large family. Eventually he took Eu Tong Sen's proposition to receive business training in the University of Hong Kong. However, his sense of identity and responsibility for China never changed. Sixty years on, during an interview with the author, K. S. Lo said with no reservations that his national identity rest with China and ethnically he identified himself as a Chinese. He said, “From an affective angle, I am undoubtedly Chinese.”

對大戰以前居於海外的華人來說，這種民族認同和情感是很典型的。無論離開家鄉多久，也無論已經接受了多少西方的文化（羅桂祥讀了多年的英文，已經習慣了用英語來交談和思考），這一代華人仍然會覺得他們是不折不扣的中國人，而這種主觀意識更會影響或甚至塑造他們在工作及其他方面的抉擇。羅桂祥之創辦荳品公司，以及日後在中國大陸的投資，都或多或少源自這種民族情感。

在三十年代長大的中國人（包括海外華人），大概在客觀和主觀兩方面都影響他們最大的，是中國的八年抗日戰事。到了八十年代末期的今天，羅桂祥還清楚地想起少年時代的一些感受。他在大概十四、五歲的時候，在吉隆坡的家養了隻小雞。小雞常常被隔壁的一頭大公雞追趕，後來小雞漸漸長大，就開始跟公雞對抗，但通常打了十多二十分鐘後，還是要落荒而逃。可是終於有一天，他看着小雞跟公雞打了差不多四十分鐘的架，最後竟然打退了素來是強者的敵人。少年的羅桂祥高興極了。他當時的想法是日本人欺負中國人太厉害了，終於會有那麼一天，弱者的中國會反敗為勝的。從這個保留了幾十年的回憶可以看到，強烈的民族認同和屈辱感是塑造羅桂祥的思想和價值觀的一個重要因素。



Such national identity and sentiment were typical amongst overseas Chinese before the war. No matter how long they had been away from the home country, how much western culture they had been exposed to (having studied English for years, K. S. Lo had a habit to speak and think in English), that generation always saw themselves as 100% Chinese. This subjective awareness affected or even shaped their career paths and other decisions. K. S. Lo's founding of HKSBP and subsequent investment in China were partly driven by this national sentiment.

The 8-year Anti-Japanese War had unparalleled impacts, both objectively and subjectively, on the generation of Chinese (including overseas Chinese) who grew up in the 1930s. Today, at the turn of the 1980s, K. S. Lo can still recall some of the feelings in his youthful days. He remembers keeping a chick in Kuala Lumpur when he was 14 or 15 years old. Often chased and bullied by his neighbour's cockerel, the little chick began to fight back when it grew bigger. The resistance usually lasted nothing more than 20 minutes, always ending with the chick beating a hasty retreat. One day, however, the chick fought with the cockerel for nearly 40 minutes, and eventually it was the strong invader who tasted defeat. The young K. S. Lo was overjoyed. He felt Japan had treated China with a high hand for too long; someday the table would turn for this weak country. This piece of memory has endured for decades. Apparently this strong sense of nationality and humiliation are important building blocks of his ideas and values.



一九三四年，羅桂祥從香港大學畢業後就開始替余東旋做事，當他的私人秘書；兩年後，升任香港余東旋有限公司的經理，同時任余的私人法律代理。一九三六年底，羅桂祥到上海替余氏辦理一些私人業務，在一次偶然的機會中聽到美國派駐中國的商業參贊雅諾氏的一個公開演講，題目是“大豆——中國之牛”，大意是說大豆營養豐富，是中國人數千年以來的主要食糧之一；價錢雖然便宜，但營養豐富，價值跟西方的牛奶一樣高，所以可稱為中國之牛，就跟竹子可稱為中國之鋼一樣。這番說話給羅桂祥留下很深的印象。



Graduating from the HKU, K. S. Lo began working for Eu Tong Sen in 1934. Starting out as Eu's personal secretary, he became manager of Eu Tong Sen (Hong Kong) Company two years later, with a dual role as Eu's personal legal assistant. In late 1936, while attending to some private business for the Eu family in Shanghai, he heard a public speech given by Julian Arnold, the US Business Chancellor to China. Titled "Soya Bean: The Cow of China", the speech generally presented soya as a highly nutritious staple food for the Chinese people for centuries. Arnold said although soya was cheap, it was packed with goodness which compared favourably with cow's milk of western countries. It was "the cow of China". Just like bamboo was China's answer to steel, soya was the cow of China. K. S. Lo was very impressed by the speech.



羅桂祥於一九三四年從香港大學文學院商務系畢業。

K. S. Lo graduating from the Department of Business, Faculty of Arts, the University of Hong Kong, in 1934.



一九三八年底，珠江三角洲地區淪陷，大批農民被趕到新界。這時候，羅桂祥與其他熱血青年參加了由國民政府左派官員陳丕士在香港所組織的救亡工作。他們得到了本地機構，尤其是九廣鐵路的幫助，成立了深圳農村福利中心，以鼓勵和幫助農民返回深圳重建家園為目的（詳情記載於陳丕士著，郭濟祖譯，〈中國召喚我〉，北京商務，一九八三）。在這時候，羅桂祥有機會看見赤着膊操練的日本軍人。他第一個印象，是他們的身體魁梧，與香港所見的也是赤着膊的華人苦力比較，前者肌肉豐滿，後者面黃骨瘦，簡直有天壤之別。他當時的想法，是中國人一定要改善體質，才可以在世界上立足。如何在貧窮落後的中國，用極低的價錢生產有高度營養的食品，就成為羅桂祥常常思考的課題，也更加鞏固了他要為勞苦大眾提供一種便宜的牛奶代用品的意願。

In late 1938, the Pearl River Delta region fell to Japanese occupation. Farmers in great numbers were forced to flee to the New Territories in Hong Kong. K. S. Lo and other hot-blooded youths joined the Hong Kong rescue team organised by the leftist official, Percy Chan, of the Chinese Nationalist Government. With assistance from the Kowloon Canton Railway Company and other local organisations, they set up the Shenzhen Rural Welfare Centre to encourage and help farmers to re-establish homes in Shenzhen (Percy Chan, *China's Call*, trans. Guo Ji Ju; Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1983). Lo had a chance to see Japanese soldiers in training. They were stripped to the waist and Lo's first impression was that they were very stalwart. Well-built with good muscles, they struck a stark contrast with the Chinese coolies in Hong Kong who also worked bare-chested. The latter were thin and small. A thought arose: Chinese people must improve physically if we wanted to secure a position in the international arena. He often thought about how to produce highly nutritious food to market at extremely low prices in undeveloped and backward China. This notion hardened his will to provide an affordable milk substitute for the struggling working classes.



這個時候，羅桂祥與一些朋友也有給設立於九龍亞皆老街的兩個難民營按時送去一些日用品，如毛巾、牙刷、牙膏等。據他們的觀察，難民營的伙食很差，（根據一九三九年醫務處報告，難民營的伙食供應費用是：七歲以上的人每天十一仙零三分，七歲以下的八仙二分），很多人都有因營養不良而引起的腳氣病。羅桂祥想起了雅諾氏關於大豆的演講，於是與朋友集資購買了大豆、鍋、石磨，以及用蚊帳布造的紗網，帶入營中，教難民自製豆漿，以補充營養。一個多月後，患腳氣病的人居然可以行走，可見豆漿果然能夠補充營養，從此也引起了羅桂祥把豆漿大規模生產成為廉價而有營養價值的飲品這個念頭。



香港政府在新界八鄉蓋搭的臨時難民營。

Hong Kong Government transit refugee camps in Pat Heung, the New Territories. (Image source: Hong Kong Director of Medical Services, *Annual Reports*, 1938-39)

During that time, K. S. Lo and some friends delivered everyday supplies like towels, toothbrushes and toothpaste to two refugee camps in Argyle Street, Kowloon, regularly. They noticed that the refugees were eating poorly and many suffered from beriberi due to malnutrition. (According to the 1939 Medical Services Annual Report, mess in refugee camps had a budget of 11.3 cents per head for refugees aged above seven and 8.2 cents for children under seven). K. S. Lo remembered the speech on soya by Julian Arnold. He raised some funds with friends and bought some soya beans, pots, stone mills and gauze which was usually used to make mosquito nets. They brought these things into the camps and taught the refugees to make soya milk to nourish themselves. In just over a month, those with beriberi could walk again. It was evident that soya was an excellent nutrition supplement. That gave Lo the idea to get into mass production of a highly nutritious soya beverage.

一九四零年誕生的維他奶，就是出現於這一個國家危難、餓殍遍野的局面，與創辦人的救國意願有很大的聯繫。當然，維他奶日後在香港社會的商業成就，是和羅桂祥與荳品公司的高層人員對市場規律和現代生產及管理技術的掌握有關。可以說，羅桂祥在一個現代西方資本主義的架構中工作，遵從着一套抽象的、非人情化的商業規律，也追求着資本主義制度下的個人成就，但又恰恰同時以此來體現他深厚的民族感情、救國意識，和一種中國傳統士大夫階層獨有的經世濟民的取向。維他奶故事中所表現的這些好像是互相矛盾的現象，其實是近代中國面臨強大西方（也包括日本）挑戰的其中一個典型回應。



Vitasoy was born in 1940 to a country in plight where hunger was everywhere. Its founding was closely linked to the founder's will to save the country. Of course, Vitasoy's later commercial success in Hong Kong was essentially attributable to the insights of K. S. Lo and Vitasoy senior executives in market rules, modern production and management skills. One can say that K. S. Lo worked within the framework of modern western capitalism, abiding by abstract and impersonal rules of the business world and questing for personal attainments under the capitalist system. At the same time, however, he used this platform to manifest his profound national feelings, his awareness for saving the nation, and his belief in governing the country for the benefit of the people. The latter was an attitude unique to the traditional Chinese literati. While these phenomena in the Vitasoy story seem somewhat contradictory, they represent an emblematic response in a period when China was challenged by western powers and Japan.



近代中國史學（尤其是官式歷史）往往錯誤地把傳統與現代、中國與西方、集體與個人等等概念與現象對立起來，這其實對我們了解歷史真象是沒有幫助的。要是我們認真地研究近代中國城市階層，包括傳統的士人、買辦資本家和華僑等等，我們不難發現他們的各種商業和社會活動中，有很多傳統和現代、中國和西方的有機結合。其中最具代表性的，是十九世紀末著名的廣東籍買辦資本家鄭觀應的一句話：“…初則學商戰於外人（洋人），繼則與外人商戰，欲輓利權以塞漏卮”（見鄭著〈盛世危言〉，後編）。這句話表示，作為買辦資本家的鄭觀應相信，中國人可以通過靈活運用完全是西方的制度和手法去增強國力，甚至超越外人。繼鄭觀應之後，一直到二十世紀中期，中國沿岸都先後出現了不少當時稱為“實業家”而今天可稱為“民族資本家”的人物，其中比較著名的如江蘇的張謇和沈曾植；也有“實業教育家”，如黃炎培等。“實業救國”與“教育救國”是中國共產主義革命興起以前，在中國的城市階層之中十分流行的想法，而所謂“實業”，就是建立一如西方所有，而中國還缺乏的新式工業生產，其最終的目標，就是使國家富強，人民安居樂業。



Quite incorrectly, modern Chinese history (particularly official history) often places concepts and phenomena in dichotomy, such as tradition vs modernity, China vs the west, groups vs individuals. This does not help at all when we attempt to understand history in its full reality. An in-depth study of social classes in modern Chinese cities — traditional bureaucrats, comprador capitalists and overseas Chinese — will reveal that organic integration of east and west or tradition and modernity is common in commercial and social activities. Testifying to this was well-known Cantonese comprador capitalist Cheng Guan Ying of the 19th century who remarked, “... Initially one learns the game of business from foreigners (westerners); then one plays the game of business with foreigners to retrieve declining interests and power.” (Cheng Guan Ying, Epilogue of *Warnings in Times of Prosperity*). Obviously, Cheng Guan Ying, the comprador capitalist, believed it was viable for the Chinese to strengthen the nation or even overtake foreign countries by employing western systems and practices. From the days of Cheng Guan Ying to the mid-20th century, many prominent figures emerged in China's coastal regions. These industrialists can be called “nationalistic capitalists” today. Amongst them, Zhang Jian and Shen Zengzhi from Jiangsu were better known; another example was Huang Yanpei, the industrialist-educationist. Prior to the rise of communism in China, “saving the country by industry” and “saving the country by education” were popular social advocacies in metropolitan China. “Industry” meant developing a new westernised way of industrial production which was absent in China. The ultimate goal was to make China strong so people could lead stable and happy lives.

羅桂祥在抗日戰爭中創立香港荳品有限公司，用大豆生產維他奶作為一種廉價的牛奶代用品，希望藉此對改善國人體質方面有所貢獻。在這個動機上，他很明顯地是繼承了近代中國“實業救國”的心理取向，也體現了這取向背後的國家民族情感。與第二次大戰以前的其他旅居香港和海外的華人一樣，羅桂祥接受和嚮往西方的制度與文化，同時又嘗試通過這些來體現他強烈的民族認同；在這個意義上，他可以說是民族資本家這行列的一分子。

不過，個人的主觀願望跟客觀環境的發展往往是不配合的。一九四九年以後，政治形勢的發展把香港從中國大陸割裂開來。香港荳品公司所面對的，是本港的市場，而這個市場的發展，到起碼七十年代初期為止，是與大陸扯不上關係的。所以，羅桂祥的“實業救國”之夢沒有得到實現的機會。一直到了七十年代末年，中國共黨統治下的大陸第一次實行經濟開放政策，羅桂祥才有機會在大陸發展一些業務。不過，到了這時候，荳品公司已經在香港發展成為一個完全是面對本港和逐漸開拓海外市場的商業結構；而且，自從一九七八年羅桂祥從董事總經理的職位退休後，荳品公司的日常業務已經交由繼任的兒子羅友禮處理，故此公司的取向有了一定的改變。羅友禮屬於戰後長大的一代，所處的政治與文化環境與父親的完全不同，因此在國家民族認同與處事動機兩方面都明顯地與父親相異。

K. S. Lo founded The Hong Kong Soya Bean Products Co., Ltd. during the Anti-Japanese War. Producing Vitasoy with soya to offer a low-cost substitute for milk, he was doing his part to improve the physical well-being of the Chinese population. Such motive was clearly a bequest of the modern Chinese mentality to “save the country with industry”; it also manifested the national feelings that fueled his ideology. Just like other Chinese living in Hong Kong and overseas before the Second World War, K. S. Lo embraced and aspired after systems and culture of the west. He also attempted to express his strong national identity through these media. In this sense, he belonged to the league of Chinese nationalistic capitalists.

However, subjective wishes seldom go hand in hand with the objective environment. As political developments would have it, Hong Kong was cut off, politically and socially, from Mainland China after 1949. As a result, HKSBP operated in the Hong Kong market which was totally disconnected with the mainland until the early 1970s. So K. S. Lo did not realise his dream to “save the country with industry”. It was not until the late 1970s when the Communist Party introduced the first ever open-door economic policy for China that K. S. Lo had the chance to engage in some business activities on the mainland. By that time, the business of HKSBP was structured to serve Hong Kong primarily while gradually opening up overseas market. Moreover, since K. S. Lo’s retirement as Managing Director in 1978, his son Lo Yau Lai Winston (Winston Lo) has taken over day-to-day business operation and he is steering the company towards a somewhat different direction. A member of the post-war generation, Winston Lo grew up in political and cultural settings that were not experienced by K. S. Lo. This background explains the striking difference between father and son both in political identity and motives.

Winston Lo bases his business decisions almost entirely on company profit and market rules; whereas his father gives some weight to patriotic considerations. This mental baggage has little meaning for Winston Lo, the post-war Hong Kong entrepreneur. He is typical of a new generation of capitalists in Hong Kong. Their most obvious difference from the older generation is that they have abandoned the moral baggage of a strong nationalistic duty. Unlike the older generation of capitalists, these young entrepreneurs have clear secular inclinations, and their actions are totally and rationally guided by market rules. One cannot ascribe this divergence between father and son to different psychological factors of two individuals, because it is actually a reflection of evolving history.

羅友禮做生意的取向，可以說是完全取決於公司的利潤與市場的規律，而他父親則在此之上，多了一重國家民族的考慮。這個思想包袱，對羅友禮這位戰後成長的香港企業家來說，是沒有多大意義和影響的。羅友禮可以說是典型的香港新一代的資本家，他們與上一代最明顯的分別，在於他們拋卻了強烈的民族責任感這個道德包袱；與上一代資本家比較，他們有明顯的“世俗化”的傾向，在處事方面完全取決於市場規律這個理性的原則。羅氏父子兩代之間的差異，不是個人心理因素所能夠解釋的，因為這其實是歷史的遞嬗在個人身上的反映。

家庭，家族，與公司

一些研究海外華人社會的學者指出，華人企業的成功因素之一，是家庭主義應用到工商業活動的結果。在一個企業初創的時期，家庭與家族成員在資金、技術和勞力的集中方面都會有很大的促進作用。家庭和家族本身的結構，也會發揮一定的向心力，幫助維護企業的完整性。不過，從另一角度來看，家庭與家族成員之間的血緣關係，與企業科層組織所要求的專業及非人情化關係有基本矛盾。此外，家庭企業還要面臨兩代之間交替的問題，而其中最重要的，是創辦人的家長權力，也即是企業的領導權，如何能夠順利移交的問題。



Family, Clan and Company

Scholars studying overseas Chinese communities have pointed out that Chinese businesses are successful partly because they apply familism in commerce and industry. In the early days of a company, family and clan members provide vital impetus on fronts of capital, skills and labour. They also create a certain centripetal force to safeguard the company’s integrity. Yet, reading it through another lens, the blood relation between family and clan members is in fundamental conflict with the professional and non-sentimental relationship required by a commercial bureaucratic organisation. In addition, family-run businesses have to face the issue of business succession from one generation to the next. Most importantly, the parental power of the founder, i.e. company leadership, must be handed over smoothly.

羅家四兄弟合照（時維一九三五年與三六年之間）。由左至右：羅桂祥、羅騰祥、羅芳祥、羅階祥。

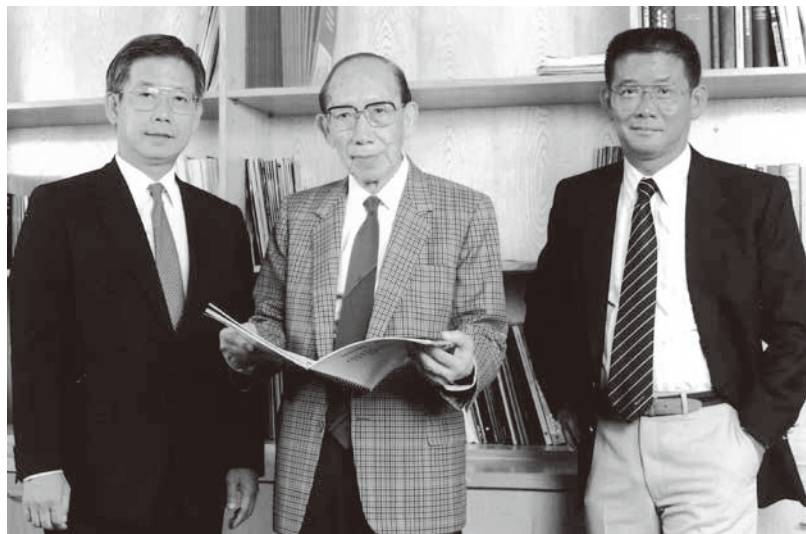
Family photo of the four brothers (circa 1935-36)
From left to right:
Lo Kwee-seong,
Lo Tang-seong,
Lo Fong-seong
and Lo Kai-seong.

During the first years of HKSBP, the company recruited many relatives of K. S. Lo from Mei County. On one hand, they satisfied the great labour demand in that era of labour intensive operations; on the other hand, it allowed K. S. Lo to fulfill his duty of looking after fellow clan members (see Epilogue I). His blood brothers also became key figures of management, and more than 30 years later, K. S. Lo handed over leadership to his two sons. All these facts demonstrate that HKSBP is a classic example of traditional family business. Nevertheless, right at the outset, K. S. Lo made a point to optimise the company’s production technologies, market development and organisational structure by introducing western and modern innovations. The Vitasoy story is all about the marriage of such contradictions. Existing traditional factors like parental power, blood relation and personal responsibility towards the family cross paths with modernised features. Perhaps this marriage of contradictions is inevitable in the development of any society.

香港荳品公司創辦之初，起用了不少羅桂祥在梅縣鄉下的親戚，一方面滿足了勞力密集時期的大量勞力需求，另一方面也讓羅桂祥承擔了照顧族人的責任（見本書代後序一）。此外，他的親兄弟都成了公司的主要負責人，而差不多三十年後，羅桂祥更讓他的兩位兒子繼承公司的領導權。從這些事實看來，荳品公司是一個典型的傳統家庭企業。可是，在生產技術、市場發展和公司組織方面，羅桂祥卻從一開始就刻意地引入西方的、現代化的元素。維他奶的故事，就是這個矛盾的結合：既有傳統的因子——家長的權力、血緣關係、個人對家族的承擔等，同時也有現代化的特色。這種矛盾的結合，大概是任何社會發展過程中必然出現的現象。

維他奶的故事，香港的故事

第二次大戰結束、國共內戰、以及四九年中國政權易手等相繼給香港的歷史揭開新的序幕，一九五零年韓戰爆發和對中國禁運，香港首次與中國大陸脫離了一向緊密的社會關係，而且在一個前所未有的與大陸割裂的情況底下，逐漸發展了自己獨特的現代社會結構和自足的本土文化。這一段歷史，正好覆蓋了維他奶的發展。在這半個世紀以來，香港經歷了很大的變化：從貧窮到富裕，從文化上依附到文化上獨立，從僅僅是一個方言區域到一個國際大都會。也是在這幾十年光景中，維他奶從“窮人的牛奶”變成一種消費品，甚至變成一種富裕階層享用的“天然食品”；與此同時，維他奶也從“中國之牛”所製造出來的、面向中國的產品，變成了一種道地的、以本地市場為主的香港產品。維他奶創業的故事，就是香港成長故事的一部分。



羅桂祥與兩位兒子攝於1990年：
左為羅友禮，右為羅友義。

Photo of K. S. Lo and his sons in 1990:
Winston Lo (left); and Frank Lo (right).

The Vitasoy Story: A Hong Kong Story

The end of the Second World War, the civil war in China and the change of political leadership in 1949 opened new chapters for Hong Kong history. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and the resultant embargo on China secluded Hong Kong from the mainland. For the first time ever, Hong Kong detached herself from this long-term and close political and cultural link. This unprecedented separation from the mainland gave rise to a unique modern social structure and a self-sufficient local culture. The development of Vitasoy fell within this episode of history. Over half a century, Hong Kong has sailed through significant changes: from poverty to affluence; from culturally dependent to culturally independent; from a dialect region to an international metropolis. In a few decades, Vitasoy has evolved from the “poor folks’ milk” to a consumer product, or even a “natural food” enjoyed by the wealthy class. At the same time, Vitasoy has progressed from a product made from the “cow of China” targeted at the mainland market to an authentic Hong Kong product serving mainly the local market. The founding story of Vitasoy is part of Hong Kong’s growth and development.



第二章 Chapter Two 第一個十年：一九四零至一九五零 The First Decade: 1940-1950



香港荳品公司剛好座落在號稱“大公司”的牛奶公司對面，
在銅鑼灣記利佐治街二三一地段。
與歷史悠久、規模龐大的牛奶公司比較，荳品公司當然是小巫見大巫。

Situated at Lot 231 on Great George Street, Causeway Bay, HKSBP stood opposite to the Dairy Farm. Up against this historical giant popularly known as the “Big Company”, HKSBP was naturally pale in comparison.