

The Rotary Club of Shanghai as in 1950

By Herbert K. Lau (劉敬恒) (Rotary China Historian)

1 July 2015



There is always the misunderstanding, misconception and also inaccurate reference by many Rotarians that: “Rotary in China *was disbanded* by the socialist and communist state, The People’s Republic of China (中華人民共和國), since its establishment on 1 October 1949.”

This is NOT the truth. Archives show that Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社) carried on running smoothly as usual with regular luncheon meeting on every Thursday. Weekly newsletter “The Pagoda” was published as usual (*see Page 7 for Issue #1186 dated 5 July 1950*). The Club’s secretariat was located at The Great Northern Telegraph Building, 34 Chung Cheng Road (E), Shanghai (上海中正東路 34 號大北電報公司大樓)(現今延安東路).

On 29 June 1950, the Club held its hand-over meeting at the Sino-British Cultural Association Club Room at 12:30 p.m. The meeting was attended by 33 active members out of 62, plus 3 visiting Rotarians: 2 from Nanking (南京社) and 1 from Hankow (漢口社).

The meeting commenced with the reading of the proposal by President “Dicky” R. von der Crone, as submitted by the Board of Directors: “It is recommended that the Trachoma Mobile Clinic be handed over to the St. Luke’s Hospital.”

Incoming President “F. S.” Tsang answered several questions relating to the technicalities in handing over, as submitted by “Maxcy” Smith. Motion to pass the proposal was put by “Sam” Smith, seconded by “Bill” Hines, and unanimously passed by all members.

Dicky then read his last report covering the first 6 months of 1950 (*read the text on Pages 2-4*), and this was followed by the installation ceremony for the new president. Dicky handed his badge of office over to F. S. who then spoke his presidential address (*see the text on Pages 5-6*).

“Hawks” Hawkings, being a past president and a senior active member, represented the Club in delivering his vote of thanks to Dicky and all past officers.

“Judge” Allman---with Sunshine “Sam’s” assistance---then challenged all Rotarians to the accuracy in naming from memory the nicknames and full names of all past presidents. He misquoted a few, and several members did not hesitate to jump on him and correct his mistakes.

Before the meeting adjourned, “Vic” Allington apologizing for not conducting any singing since he was elected song-master, suggested all members sing “For he’s a jolly good fellow” to the immediate past president Dicky.

Report by “Dicky” R. von der Crone, President 1949/1950

I beg to submit to you herewith my report of the period 1st January to 30th June 1950.

Membership— With the continuous exodus of people from Shanghai, not only foreigners but also Chinese, and some regrettable resignations due to the difficult economic times we are passing through, our membership has gone down further and the position is now as follows as compared with six months ago.

Shanghai	42	as against	56
on leave	16	as against	32

Making total	58	as against	88

One ray of sunshine we had was when “Steve” Mills came back and when “Mac” MacDonald decided to take his seat after having been elected in 1941! We should, of course, also not forget Paul Wiant, who joined us as A. M. to Ralph Ward and immediately gave us a much appreciated talk.

Your Directors have on many occasions discussed the advisability or otherwise of opening the Club to new members. Also the Classification and Membership Committee, in a special meeting, considered all aspects of the case. The result of these deliberations was to the effect that temporarily no new members would be accepted except additional members to present members of the Club. It was, however, decided to invite all Rotarians of outport Clubs in China, whether functioning or not, and irrespective of their present standing in these Clubs, to attend our meetings and join in our activities. I am glad to say that several such outport Rotarians are attending every Thursday and we are happy to have them with us. If members know of other outport Rotarians they are requested to please inform Telly so that an invitation can be extended to them.

It is with the greatest regret that I have to record the long illnesses of two of our fellow Rotarians: K. T. Lee and Sandy Gordon. Our sincerest wishes go to them for a speedy recovery. It will be up to the new President and the 1950/51 Board of Directors to review the membership problem; personally, I am of the opinion that in view of our present small number something will have to be done to try and increase our membership again.

Attendance— With so many members on leave, it is not surprising that the Club has not reached a 60% average attendance. In spite of our efficient Chairman of the Attendance Committee, Walter Woog, there are still in-excused absentees which, of course, should not happen in a Rotary Club.

Our programs have on a whole been very good. Not only did our hard-working Program Chairman, John Wilson, manage to get good outside speakers and some very interesting films, but also some of our own Rotarians gave us excellent talks; I would like still to mention T. T., Ralph Mortensen, and Bob Henry. John Wilson is retiring from the Chairmanship of the Program Committee which he held since 1941 and all our thanks are due to him for his many years of hard and successful work.

The Board of Directors, as a rule, met twice a month, but on one or two occasions only once a month in the absence of urgent business. The Board has been most of the time under strength due to temporary absences of some of the directors.

Our major object, the Anti-Trachoma Campaign, was at the beginning of this year handed over to the Church World Service, and we are all very pleased at the excellent job which is being done by Bob Henry's organization. Congratulations, Bob. With the fall in the membership it was no doubt a wise move to hand over the Campaign to another body because the financial burden which would have fallen upon us would have been unbearable for many of us. Members will be interested to hear that in order to put it to some good use and in order to save insurance charges, the Board will propose today that the Mobile Clinic be given by the Club to the St. Luke's Hospital.

No new major object has been adopted by the Club in the meantime and the incoming Board will have to consider this matter in the light of circumstances existing.

In the absence of a major object, finance has not caused any problem during the six months under review.

No District Conference took place this spring, because it was felt by our Directors, and their opinion was shared by the District Governor, that with so few Clubs functioning no purpose would be served by such a conference.

We had the pleasure of having the District Governor with us on several occasions. He has been re-nominated to his position for another year, and let's hope that his family of Clubs will grow bigger again in the Rotary year 1950/51.

The 《Pagoda》 continued to be well liked by members and fills an actual need. The editors Ralph and Vic, foreign news editor Ben, proof-reader Telly, and also the weekly reporters who now get the pencil from Sam in alphabetical order, are doing an excellent job. Many thanks, to them.

《The Rotarian》 is conspicuous by its absence! The fault probably lies with postal authorities in USA.

The 《Roster》 made its appearance in February. It is a neat little booklet, which I am sure will be treasured by all Rotarians. Telly and Vic gave a great deal of thought to the creation of it and they have every reason to be pleased with their work. Much to everybody's regret many of our former good Rotarians whose pictures grace the Roster are, as mentioned before, absent or are no longer members of the Club.

Hawks and Mrs. Hawkings kindly invited us again to their lovely estate in Hungjao. As last autumn, the weather and all arrangements were perfect and a good time was had by all. Thanks again, Hawks.

The semi-annual golf match was resurrected and the big event took place on Wednesday, 31st May. Winner of the cup was Bill Hines, a well-deserved win.

News were received from several of our old members, f.i. the two past Presidents George McCarthy and Cossy Cosgrave. George joined the ELKS and became Secretary to their most exalted ruler. What a come-down from being President of the Shanghai Rotary Club!

Meeting Place— Our weekly meetings are taking place in the rooms of the Sino-British Cultural Association which are well suited for the purpose. When bombings were at their worst, the question of moving our meeting place to mid-town and possibly changing the time to evening was discussed, but with the melioration of the situation we stayed where we were.

In connection with the bombings referred to, our Club signed together with a great number of other Shanghai organizations, two telegrams appealing to U.N.O. to stop them. Whilst it looks that these telegrams did some good, the reaction to our appeal to Chicago as disappointing.

Our appointed representatives at the Convention at Detroit which took place in June were Jack-Foy Wu and Jay Oliver and alternates Merlin Bishop and Shrimp Scott. We have no report yet, so we do not know who attended.

The Annual General Meeting took place on April 20th; and the following were elected as officers for 1950/51: President: “F. S.” Tsang; Vice-President: “Bill” Hines; Hon. Secretary: “Telly” Thellefsen; Hon. Treasurer: “Jack” Turner; Directors: “Bob” Henry, “J. C.” Hsia, “Julius” Lieu, “F. W.” Poate, “Sam” Smith, “Robert” Ting, “Walter” Woog; Sergeant-at-Arms: “Sam” Smith.

Singing— The Club decided that some singing might help if not practiced too often and “Vic” Allington was elected Song Master. Since then nothing has been heard, whether in an ordinary, Tenor or Baritone voice, and I have a feeling we have to make old Captain Tippin a member to give support to Vic.

There is very little to be said about the activities of our Committees. But I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board, all the Chairmen and members of the Committees and last but not at all least our enthusiastic and untiring Hon. Secretary Telly for all the work they put in for Rotary during the last six months and the support they have given me as President. About the Sergeant-at-Arms who does his job with gusto, I can only say that I shudder to think what would have happened to poor me if he had not been fond of Dicky’s cigars and I had not been able to supply them.

On a whole, and I hope members will agree with me, we have been a happy family where give and take and good honest humour reigned. It always gave me a great deal of pleasure to come to our meetings and my year as President has been a most pleasant and inspiring one. I always deeply appreciated how members were friendly towards me and spontaneously extended a helping hand when I got stuck somewhere and somehow. I would like to assure members that I shall never forget this fine experience in the Shanghai Rotary Club amongst members of so many nationalities during a period which certainly was not easy for any of us. Thank you very very much indeed.



Address by Dr. F. S. Tsang, President 1950/1951

To some of you and to me particularly your electing me to the highest office in our club must have produced no small surprise, for it was to be expected that one of the outgoing cabinet members should take over the post. This unexpected departure from our customary procedure in giving me this 'flying leap' may be viewed as my personal triumph. Nay, I would only consider it as the greatest honor and unconditional confidence that you have bestowed on me. To this I offer my sincere thanks and deep appreciation.

Personal ambition did not move me much but the ambition to be given this opportunity to lead this Crusade of Service moves me mightily. When the happy news of my election at a closed meeting about a month ago, I said Rotary in China was sailing on a rather stormy and unchartered sea, for the situation at that time was fraught with uncertainty. However, that period of uncertainty seems to have given place to a small gleam of hope, as here and there one may reckon with some encouraging news. Just like our Rotary wheels the turn is a definite move forward, toward something brighter. So let us one in all and all in one imbued with a spirit of optimism and redouble our effort to encourage and foster the ideals of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and in particular, to encourage and foster the four great tenets of Rotary.

Rotary International was organized about a half century ago. In spite of the two ugly World Wars the Rotary movement has become world-wide and has gained great momentum until today Rotarians are holding key positions in the world organizations, in helping, shaping and directing the destiny toward a better and peaceful world. It must go on and on. It must not stop.

In accepting this gavel, the signal of authority, from President Dicky, I am accepting the responsibility and challenge. In looking up to me for leadership and in like manner and in greater measure I am counting on your hearty support. No matter what the future is being stored for us we shall face it calmly, boldly and wisely.

It is needless for me to point out that we are passing through a period of great change, so much so that our mode of living and thinking needs to be adjusted. As a club we may have to alter the conduct of our activities to a certain degree with the hope that such a change will not seriously affect our fundamental objects. Under such circumstance we should emphasize the first object of our Rotary ideals, namely the development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service. We should create opportunities for one another to meet more frequently than our Thursday luncheons. In other words we should endeavor to cultivate better understanding among ourselves and develop a stronger tie of fellowship.

In the last thirty years the Shanghai Rotary Club had made contributions to the betterment of life and conditions in this community. We can feel justly proud of the number of projects which we had inaugurated, relieving people's physical sufferings and bringing them cheer. Thus Rotary ideals are being propagated and the Rotary movement grown. This good work we must continue, for without that our existence as a club is not only meaningless but also precarious. Therefore I believe strongly the necessity of selecting one major object for the coming year---a project planned so to accomplish the greatest good within the ability of the size of our present membership.

Although our membership has shrunken lately due to obvious reasons, there is every hope that opportunity may soon present itself to refill those vacant classifications. In the meantime let us not be troubled by the figures, for Rotary is not merely measured by advance of figures but

must advance by the standard of value, and quality, in things of the spirit which make Rotary stronger and better, finer and truer Rotarians.

In the ensuing year we may be confronted with difficulties but we must not be afraid. Armed with the high ideals and emboldened by fine fellowship and a united consecrated will to serve, we shall not be afraid. And by your unstinted support we shall succeed. So let us march on, “like the stars without haste, and without rest.”

Dr. F. S. Tsang, M.D. (張福星醫學博士)

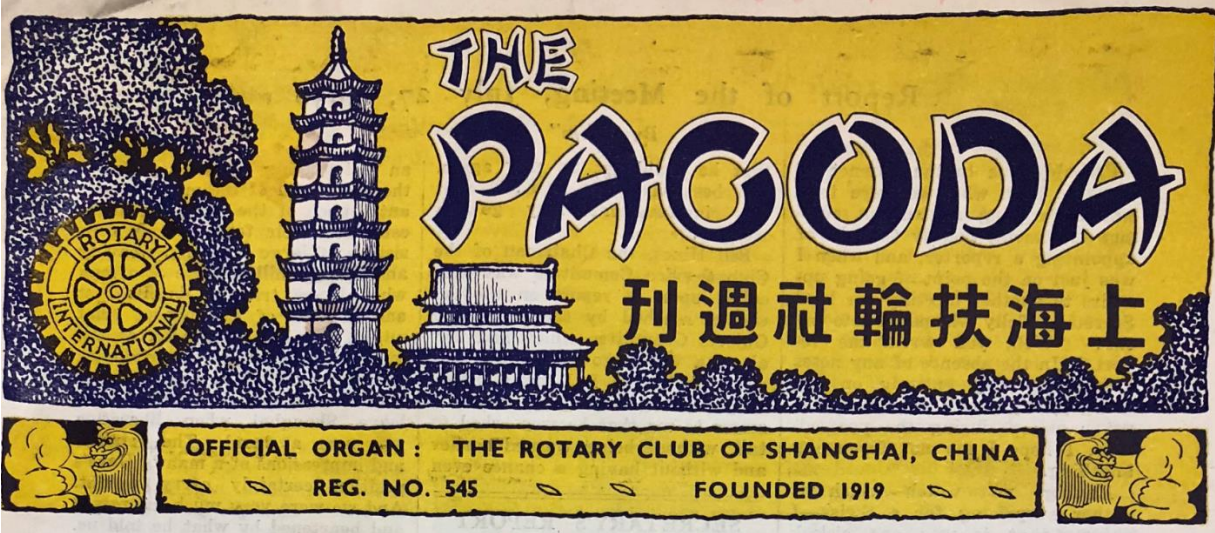


Dr. F. S. Tang (1902-1975), an Amoy (Xiamen) (廈門) native, received his early education at the Anglo-Chinese College, Amoy (廈門英華書院). After the high school, he studied at St. John's University, Shanghai (上海聖約翰大學), graduating with Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in 1925; and Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) in 1929. Tsang went to the United States for advanced study in Ophthalmology, by entering the University of Pennsylvania, and graduated with the degree of Master of Medical Science in 1931. Returned to China in the fall of 1931, Tsang took up the appointment of Chief of the Ophthalmology Department of St. Luke's Hospital (同仁醫院). In 1935 he was made Professor in Ophthalmology of St. John's University. At the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 he was appointed Honorary Superintendent of St. Luke's Hospital, and concurrently appointed by the Swiss Consulate to serve as the Medical Consultant for the Allied Internees. In 1947 he attended as the chief delegate of the Chinese Ophthalmology Society at the Third Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology in Havana, Cuba.

Tsang joined Shanghai Rotary Club on 5 September 1939 representing the classification of “Medicine - Ophthalmology”. When Tsang was President in 1950/1951, he was Superintendent and Head of Ophthalmology Department, St. Luke's Hospital; Professor in Ophthalmology, St. John's University; Consultant for St. Elizabeth's Hospital (廣仁醫院) and Margaret Williamson Memorial Hospital for Women and Children (西門婦孺醫院); and was also President of Shanghai Y's Men's Club (上海聯青社社長).

After the re-organization of the Health Ministry in the Communist China, Tsang served as the Director and Professor of Ophthalmology Department, Fourth Military Medical University, as well as the Director of the Ophthalmology Department of the People's Liberation Army General Hospital (第四軍醫大學眼科教研室主任、教授；解放軍總醫院外科部主任兼眼科主任).





ROTARY CLUB OF SHANGHAI

OFFICERS 1950/1951

President : - - - F. S. TSANG
 Vice-President : - W. E. HINES
 Hon. Secretary : - E. S. THELLEFSEN
 Hon. Treasurer : - J. A. TURNER

Directors :

R. VON DER CRONE (Past President)
 R. T. HENRY F. W. POATE, JR.
 J. C. HSIA S. C. SMITH
 N. N. LIEU R. T. C. TING
 J. W. WOOD

Sergeant-at-Arms : S. C. SMITH

Secretary's Office :

9.30 -- 12.30

E. S. THELLEFSEN

GREAT NORTHERN TELEGRAPH CO.
 34 Chung Cheng Road (E) Tel. 16450

"PAGODA"

Honorary Editor : R. Mortensen
 Tel. 13193

Honorary Associate Editor :
 V. M. Allington
 Tel. 11655

THIS WEEK'S MEETING

July 6th
 at the Sino-British Cultural
 Association Club Room
 12.30 p.m.

Speaker :

Dr. Frank Price

Good Luck "F.S."



"F. S." TSANG

What have the closing months of 1950 and the first six months of 1951 in store for our Club? Judging from the spirit of last Thursday's meeting, Rotary in this city though small in membership is very far from showing a decline in spirit. We hope our new president sensed from the meeting that we are as one behind him as he commences his year of office. We shall do everything we can to fulfill the year's program as outlined in our new president's speech (see page 3).

In "F.S." we have a Rotarian who will give patient thought to our progress during the coming year and we are fortunate to have his leadership and his willingness for service. We have the will and the four Objects of Rotary to show the way.

NOTE: Our new President, "F.S." Tsang, was born at Kulangsu, Amoy, in September 1st, 1902; early education at the Anglo Chinese College, Amoy; studied at St. John's University, graduating with B.Sc. degree in 1925; and M.D. in 1929. Entered at the University of Pennsylvania, for advanced study in Ophthalmology and graduated with the degree of Master of Medical Science in Ophthalmology in 1931. Returned to China in the fall of 1931 to take up the post of Chief of the Eye Department of St. Luke's Hospital. In 1935 he was made Professor in Ophthalmology of St. John's University. At the outbreak of the Pacific War he was appointed Hon. Superintendent of St. Luke's Hospital, and appointed by the Swiss Consulate to be the Medical Consultant for the Allied Internees.

In 1947 he attended as the chief delegate of the Chinese Ophthalmology Society at the Third Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology in Havana, Cuba.

Present positions held by him are: Superintendent and Head of Eye Department, St. Luke's Hospital; Prof. in Ophthalmology, St. John's University; Consultant, St. Elizabeth and Margaret Williamson Hospitals; President, Shanghai Y's Men's Club, and many other important posts which space does not permit us to add.