

Rotary Conference in the Pacific 1935

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

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Since 1926, every two years, representative Rotarians from shores washed by the Pacific Ocean gathered at a common meeting place. Here, these men of many nations and varied races and creeds discussed not only as a melting pot for ideas on matters of purely Rotary concern, but many major problems affecting the peoples of the Ocean. The purpose of such regional conferences was to bring together the Rotarians in which Rotary clubs were located in order to develop and promote acquaintance and understanding; to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and the discussion of such topics as fall within the Object of Rotary. These conferences were organized and conducted in accordance with rules of procedure adopted by Rotary International. These conferences were not legislative body but it might adopt resolutions as recommendations to the Board of Directors.

The first Pacific Rotary Conference was held in May 1926 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Since then, delegations had assembled at biennial periods:

1926, May	Honolulu, Hawaii	1928, October	Tokyo, Japan
1930, March	Sydney, Australia	1932, June	Honolulu, Hawaii
1935, February	Manila, Philippine Islands	1937, March	Wellington, New Zealand
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1981, November	Melbourne, Australia	1986, November	Adelaide, Australia

The Fifth Pacific Rotary Regional Conference which was held at Manila, The Philippine Islands, on 18-20 February 1935, was a great success. It was attended and officiated by Rotary International President “Bob” Robert L. Hill on his way to visit Rotary clubs in the Far East and the Eastern Mediterranean region. President Emeritus Paul and Mrs. Harris, who were on their way to attend the Joint Australian Conference (76th and 65th districts held in one) and to visit New Zealand clubs, were present at the Manila Conference to the great delight and benefit of all those in attendance.

With international understanding and goodwill – Rotary’s Sixth Object – as its keynote, the Conference closed with a record attendance of delegates from Japan, China, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Java, the Philippines, Hawaii, and the United States. The attendance ran to 237 Rotarians and members of their families, from 35 different Rotary clubs.

The various sessions were marked by an earnest and wholesome exchange of experience and opinion on such problems as youth work, creating an international mindedness in the Pacific, and the challenge of Pacific economic problems to Rotarians.

Acting Governor General of the Philippine Islands, J. R. Hayden (*former Rotarian of Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A.*), at the opening session, spoke of the peculiar responsibility of Rotary

in the East and the desirability of maintaining a mutuality of understanding among the nations. Paul Harris, founder of Rotary, later enlarged upon the theme of Rotary's opportunities. The meaning and implications of the Sixth Object, in view of world changes since its adoption in 1921, were discussed by Dr. Fong Foo-Sec (龐富灼博士), of Shanghai (上海), a past director of Rotary. Japanese and Chinese representatives reported on Rotary's growth and its activities in the Pacific area.

Senate President of the Philippines, Manuel Quezon, stressed the faith of the Filipino people in the triumph of the Rotary ideal. He declared that the Sixth Object was embodied in the new constitution, mentioning the precept renouncing war as an instrument of national policy.

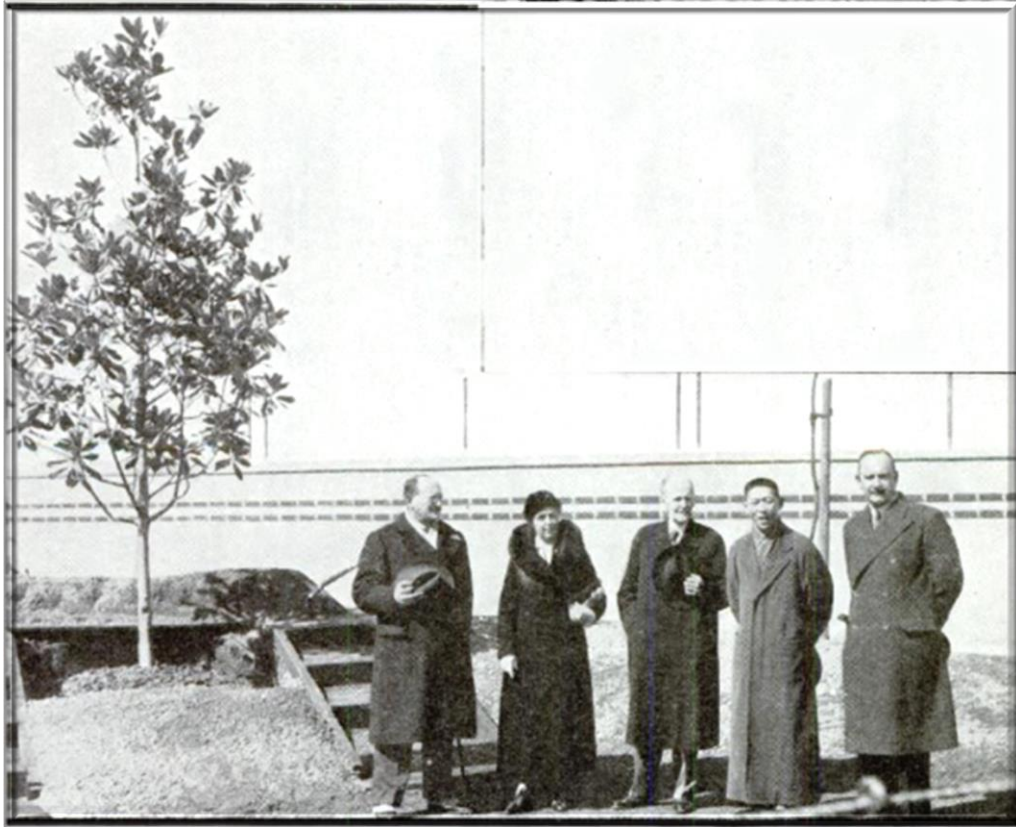
The Conference's high point was reached in a discussion of opportunities for community service by Rotarians in the Pacific basin, during which the vocational guidance work of the Manila Club was reviewed.



*1935 -- The Presidential Party and some of the Conference participants
(L-R) #1. Mrs. Harris; #2. Paul P. Harris; #6. Mrs. Hill; #8. President Robert L. Hill
#5. (back roll) George Ashmore Fitch (費吳生) (Shanghai Rotary Club President 1930-1931) and the front roll
taller boy holding a pineapple at right is his son John.*

30th Anniversary of Rotary Celebrated in Shanghai by Paul Harris

The month of February 1935 was the 30th Birthday of Rotary. Prior to the arrival to Manila, Rotary International President Robert L. Hill joined together with President Emeritus Paul P. Harris to visit Shanghai and Hong Kong. The proposal on the establishment of a new Rotary District was discussed in putting together the 15 clubs located in the Republic of China (11), British Crown Colony Hong Kong (1), and the United States protectorate Philippine Islands (3).



February 1935 in Shanghai -- Group photo after the Friendship Tree Planting by Paul Harris (L-R) Harry Edward Arnhold, Chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Council; Mrs. Jean T. Harris; Rotary's Founder Paul P. Harris; Percy Chu (Shanghai Rotary Club President 1934-1935); Ernest F. Harris (R.I. Honorary Commissioner for China, Hong Kong, Philippines 1933-35, Shanghai Rotary Club President 1932-33).

The Conference Experience Reported by Ginarn Lao (Hangchow)

Certainly, in attending this Pacific Rotary Conference in Manila, there were representative Rotarians from every club of China and Hong Kong except one.

“Gin” Ginarn Lao (勞傲安), Hangchow Rotary Club (杭州扶輪社) Charter Member and President 1932-1933 (owner of Lakeview Hotel 西湖旅館, West Lake, Hangchow), and his wife attended the Conference. In April 1935, he delivered a long address in reporting his trip to Manila.

Here below in the following pages is the story told by Gin in his own words. Photo, sub-headings and captions in Chinese words are inserted by the Rotary China Historian.

My Trip to Manila

The Fifth Pacific Regional Conference of Rotary International

By Ginarn Lao (勞傲安) (Hangchow Rotary Club) (杭州扶輪社)

April 1935

My trip to Manila was for two purposes: first, to attend the Fifth Pacific Regional Conference of Rotary International, held at Manila February 18, 19 and 20, 1935, and secondly, to give myself and Mrs. Lao a rest. Thus we combined this business trip with pleasure.

Our schedule was to sail from Shanghai on February 12, 1935, but on account of the rough weather the boat was one day late. This did not alter the arrangements previously made by the Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社) in giving a wonderful dinner reception at the Astor House (禮查飯店) to all the Rotary delegates, men and women, passing through Shanghai, on the evening of February 12th, and a luncheon meeting at the Metropole Hotel (都城飯店) on the following day noon so as to give the Rotarians of the China clubs an opportunity to get acquainted with the founder of Rotary, Mr. Paul Harris, and the President of Rotary International, Bob Hill. Both gave some very impressive speeches and were invited to the Kiaochow Road Park (膠州路公園) where a friendship tree was planted in the presence of many distinguished residents of Shanghai.

Bon Voyage Manila via Hong Kong

We left Shanghai by the “President Coolidge” on the afternoon of February the 18th, with a great number of Rotarians and their families – four from Hangchow (杭州), four from Nanking (南京), one from Peiping (北平), fourteen from Shanghai (上海), two from Tientsin (天津), one from Tsinan (濟南), and one from Tsingtao (青島). On board the steamer we had about fourteen members from the United States and Honolulu besides founder Paul Harris and President Bob Hill and their wives, and about sixteen members from the Japan clubs.

When we reached Hong Kong, we picked up five Rotarians from the Amoy (廈門) Club, five from Canton (廣州), one from Foochow (福州), and eight from Hong Kong (香港), making a total of forty-six members and their families from all the China clubs. Out of the twelve clubs in China with the exception of the Hankow (漢口) Club, eleven clubs were represented at the Conference, which included was an excellent record.

When in Hong Kong, a special program was prepared by the Hong Kong Rotary Club (香港扶輪社) for the delegates. They were taken for a ride around the Island and wound up with a tea party at the Hong Kong Hotel (香港大酒店), where founder Harris and President Bob again addressed Rotarians and guests.

From Shanghai to Hong Kong, the weather was marvelous and the sea was very calm. Every passenger on board the steamer was naturally a good sailor. Deck games, Mah-jong, dances,

movies, tea and cocktail parties were in full swing both day and night. Everybody was having a wonderful time.

But from Hong Kong to Manila the story was different. The undercurrent of the mighty sea did its trick. Although our beloved captain tried very hard to keep his boat balanced, yet the rolling and shaking of the boat seemed to be worse than a 'Hula Hula' dance. We left Hong Kong at 9 p.m. of the 15th, and on the following morning we hardly found 30% of the members at the breakfast table. Fortunately, I was able to keep myself on my feet so that I could make my usual calls on my fellow members. Mrs. Lao was comparatively not so bad. Though she had to remain in bed, yet her appetite was not a bit poor. Steak, fried fish, pies and ice cream were brought to her in our cabin. Judging from her appetite, she was decidedly a much better sailor than many of our fellow men passengers!

But you should see Rotarian Bob Fan (范文照). Poor Bob, he was vomiting even the last drop of water from his stomach, not to say the wonderful dinners and cocktails he had the day before. I could feel that he wanted to tell me how badly he was suffering, but he was so sick that he could not speak a word to me. My Cantonese 'Salt Ginger', equivalent to a sea-sick pill, could not help him.

There was also Mrs. Fong Sec (龐富灼夫人). She was forced to get out of her bed merely to say 'how-de-do' to the quarantine doctor. But instead she said: "Oh! You wicked doctor, you make me feel worse." The doctor had to stand up and apologized for saying with a smile: "Very sorry, Madam."

Discussions on forming a New District and other Club Affairs

On the morning of the 16th, at ten o'clock Rotarians of the China clubs met President Bob Hill informally in the writing room of the "President Coolidge" to discuss certain problems confronting the China clubs. The agenda was prepared by Honorary Commissioner Harris from replies received to a previous questionnaire sent out by him, containing the following items: club dues, classification, translation of Rotary literature into Chinese and possible appointment of a District Governor. Every item was thoroughly discussed by the members with President Bob, who in closing the interview with a most sympathetic and inspiring talk hinted that no hard and fast rule was attached to the classification list and that some elasticity was permissible to meet particular cases. With regard to the appointment of a District Governor, he emphasized that the only logical outcome of our position was the formation of a district, and surely the time has arrived for China, Hong Kong and the Philippines, to study seriously this question in the light of the progress wished for and expected of the clubs in this part of the world.

During the discussion with regard to the translation Rotary literature into Chinese, one member reported that Mr. Miyaoka (宮岡) of Tokyo, a Director of Rotary International, had raised an objection to the Chinese translation 'Fu-Lun-Hsia' (扶輪社) for Rotary Club as not being permitted by a resolution of Rotary International and that instead Mr. Miyaoka suggested that the word 'Rotary' should be translated according to the sound such as 'Lo-Da-Lic' (路得力). Your club's representative Gin emphatically pointed out that the Chinese translation 'Fu-Lun-Hsia' was an ideal one and indeed a perfect one; because the Chinese character 'LUN' (輪), meaning 'wheel', implies the idea of the 'wheel of progress', the 'wheel of prosperity', the 'wheel

of friendship' and the 'wheel of peace', which were known in the Chinese literature for centuries ago. On the other hand, the Chinese characters 'Lo-Da-Lic' (路得力) do not give any sense at all. To a Chinese, especially and knowing anything about the Rotary organization, 'Lo-Da-Lic' might seem to be another American fancy item such as 'Hot Dog' or 'Eskimo Pie'.

A sub-committee, consisting of Dr. Yen Te-Ching (顏德慶博士), F. C. Fetti, James M. Henry (香雅各), M. F. Key and myself, was then appointed to study and to report on the classification difficulties affecting Rotary clubs in China and Hong Kong. After careful deliberation, we presented the following report: --

"The undersigned having been appointed by a meeting of Rotary Clubs in China and Hong Kong held on S.S. "President Coolidge" en-route to the Fifth Pacific Rotary Conference at Manila to report on classification difficulties affecting Rotary clubs in China and Hong Kong, on account of the fact that local circumstances differ from those contemplated in the 《Outline of Classifications》 present the following report for the information of President Bob Hill of Rotary International.

"That the attention of Rotary International be called to the fact that conditions in the various Rotary clubs in China present problems of classification which are not covered by the 《Outline of Classifications》 .

"For meeting of this situation, new major and minor classification have to be made from time to time. Otherwise the various clubs would be unable to enroll many of the most desirable and important members of the community. Notable amongst such clubs are Nanking, Peiping, Hangchow, Hong Kong and Canton.

"Insofar as these new classifications do not in the opinion of Rotary International clash in any way with the existing classifications elsewhere, we recommend that they be added from time to time to the publication entitled 《Outline of Classifications》 ”.

Manila Arrival

Our boat arrived at our destination on the 17th and docked at Pier No. 7 at 8 a.m. With smiles on their faces and goodwill in their hearts and exuding fellowship as warm as the typical Philippine sunshine on a February morning, these eighty Rotarians and RotaryAnns were given a most royal welcome. The noted Philippine courtesy and hospitality were extended to us right from the moment of our arrival, not only by our fellow members in Manila, but also by the highest government officials as well as by the citizens of Manila. Custom inspectors were sent to our cabins to examine our baggage instead of it being examined on the pier as is the usual practice. Passport examination was just a matter of form, no difficulty at all.

We were 'whisked' into twenty horse-drawn motive 'Carretelas' from the water front and paraded on the New Luneta, led by the red-trousers band of twenty-four musicians from Samarico, Malabon, playing queer bamboo instruments. The scene was really picturesque. Our first impression of Manila was of the Philippine people and it will be an everlasting memory in the minds of us all.

“I certainly got a kick out of it,” declared Bob Hill, “For the first few moments I thought the horse might get moody.”

Mrs. Fong Sec, was no exception. She was also taken for a ride and said: “We women are expected to get into and come down the vehicles gracefully. I doubt if we did that. Anyway it was perfectly enjoyable between entering and leaving the ‘Carretelas’.”

After resting from the ride, we boarded Meralco bus at 10 o’clock for the Paco Station, where a special excursion train was engaged to take us to Los Banos College on Mt. Makiling, arriving there at about noon. We were shown around the beautiful campus and finally halted at School of Forestry, of which President “Art” Arthur Fischer of the Manila Club is the director. Army food was served, besides several delicious ‘Lechons’ and other Filipino dishes.

After luncheon, Mrs. Lao and I together with Dr. Yen Te-Ching and several others took the bus instead of the train back to Manila. On our way we stopped at Las Pinas to look at the Bamboo Organ, which was built by Padre Diego Cera over one hundred years ago with 714 pipes, the largest pipe being eight feet by five inches. It is the only one of its kind in the world. We also went to see a cock fight, which, I was told, is the national game of the Filipinos.

Manila is a city of contrasts and a city within another city. It is the largest city in the Philippine Islands with a total population of almost half million, about 20% of which are foreigners including approximately fifty thousand Chinese. The wall of two and three quarter miles of the old capital of the Philippines with thick and heavy gates and draw-bridges is still standing. There is a church and convent, St. Augustine, 350 years old, which is the only structure in the Philippines that withstood the earthquakes that wiped out entire cities. Formerly it was an unhealthy tropical port, mosquito and disease ridden, but has developed into a modern city with clean paved streets, beautiful residence districts and sub-divisions, great office buildings, costly government edifices, a twentieth century university and up-to-date transportation. In fact, the Philippine Government has developed a wonderful educational system throughout the islands and a network of well paved highways.

There was decidedly a strong Chinese influences in the early inhabitants of the Philippine Islands. Their ways of farming and living, their old agricultural implements and some of their garments are very much similar to those of the Chinese. There was a story about the Filipino lady’s dress with the shoulders sticking up. I was told that this was simply due to a mis-application of a pair of Chinese trousers in the early days.

The Philippine Islands consist of six thousand islands, eleven of them being large ones, with a total area almost as big as the British Isles. They have a population of approximately twelve millions, depending almost entirely upon agriculture for a livelihood and speaking over eighty languages or dialects. English, which is taught in all schools, is the language of the younger generation, but Spanish is still spoken by some of the older people and Europeans. The islands are generally mountainous and in all sections rainfall is abundant. The average temperature for the entire Archipelago is about eighty degree Fahrenheit. The nights are quite cool and comfortable. December 1st to April 1st, is considered to be the best season of the year for travelers, while the rainy season is from June 15th to October 1st. The main products of the Islands are: sugar, timber, rice, tobacco leaf, copra, coconut, mango, etc.

Highlight of the Conference

The Fifth Pacific Regional Conference of Rotary International was formally opened at 9:30 a.m. on February 18th, 1935, in the auditorium of the School of Hygiene on Calle Herran. The meetings lasted three days, every day from 9 a.m. to noon and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Addresses of welcome were delivered by the Acting Governor, General J. R. Hayden, Senate President Manuel L. Quezon, Mayor Juan Posadas, Jr., and Arthur F. Fischer, President of the Rotary Club of Manila. The response was given by Honorary Commissioner E. F. Harris.

There were about two hundred fifty delegates including ladies, attending the Conference, representing the Philippine Islands, China, the United States, Australia, India, Hawaii, Japan, Java and several other countries. Economic problems in the Pacific Region, problems that have upset and disturbed political and social relations of races and society, the solution of these problems through the promotion of better understanding between labor and capital and the effecting of a change in the ethics of buying and selling among individuals as well as among nations, and the role played by the Rotary International in solving these problems, were the topics of speeches delivered at this Conference. Since a full text of the addresses and discussions will be published in the 《Far Eastern Review》, I shall not attempt to give details here. True to the tradition of Rotary, a spirit of friendliness and understanding reigned during the discussions. It was, indeed, a wonderful experience for me and for many others.

Special mention must be made here of two papers, namely, Honorary Commissioner C. T. Wang's (王正廷) review of the China clubs, which contained a very complimentary reference to Hangchow as the first club to conduct most of its business in the Chinese language, and Dr. Fong Sec's deep and thoughtful paper on the Sixth Object of Rotary with particular application to nations in the Pacific Region. "Friendship and goodwill is the supreme need of the world today," he declared.

The following are the three resolutions passed at the Conference:

1. The light of the Sixth Object of Rotary, which is the advancement of understanding, goodwill, and international peace through a world fellowship of business and professional men united in the ideal of service, also in view of the delightful fellowship we have enjoyed in the Fifth Pacific Regional Conference, we here pledge ourselves to continue and extend every possible effort through friendship, goodwill and understanding to the end that peace may reign among the nations both East and West, now and always.
2. Whereas, the development of Rotary in the Pacific area is a matter of great importance to Rotary International, and whereas, the proper understanding of various problems facing the Rotary clubs in the Pacific can be reached more readily of large delegation from the oriental countries participate in the International Convention, and whereas, the holding of a convention of Rotary International in the Pacific area will facilitate such participation, therefore be it resolved, that the Fifth Pacific Regional Conference of Rotary International recommends to the President and the Board of Directors of Rotary International, that a convention of Rotary International be held in the Pacific area within the next five years, preferably in 1938 at Honolulu, Hawaii.
3. That this Conference held in the city of Manila wishes to place on record its great appreciation to the host club and its ladies, the Government, the press, and to all others

who have contributed, with charming hospitality and friendship, to make the Fifth Pacific Conference such an outstanding success.

Apart from the serious speeches, we were also busily engaged in social entertainments. Receptions were given by the Acting Governor, the Senate President and the Mayor besides the previous arrangements made by the Rotarians of the Manila Club. Tiffins and dinners at some of the prominent clubs, such as the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, the University Club, the Polo Club and the Spanish Club, were among some of the main features. There was also a Rotary Ball and Pageant at the Philippine Carnival, where we were guests of Rotarian Arsenio N. Luz, and a formal dinner dance was given at the Manila Hotel in closing the Conference.

Our RotaryAnns were particularly taken care of by the RotaryAnns of Manila. They were accompanied to visit the beautiful shops, to see Manila of all its contrasts of old and new, and to call on prominent society people at their gorgeous homes. I would not be surprised at all that a greater part of their time was spent in the shops; because most of the ladies came back to China with extra pieces of packages. In fact, some of them were very much worried, wondering how they could get through the Customs.

After the three days' successful Conference, we made up a party of eight to go to Baguio.

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Manila in 1935