

## 伍德海--天津扶輪社 1924-1925 年度社長

Henry George Wandesforde Woodhead, CBE

Journalist / Author / Tientsin Rotary Club President 1924-1925

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

15 March 2020



Henry George Wandesforde Woodhead (伍德海), CBE, (27 November 1883-1959), Briton, was one of the 24 charter members and then later President in 1924-1925 of the Rotary Club of Tientsin (天津扶輪社), Republic of China (中華民國).

The Tientsin Rotary Club was a member club of Rotary International, Charter No. 1444, and in point of seniority came next to the Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社). Informally founded late in 1922, it was officially elected a member of Rotary International on 10 May 1923, as the second Rotary Club formed in the Republic of China. Its origin was quite spontaneous. Two leading Americans, a doctor and a lawyer, first talked the matter over and later eight Americans, one Briton, and one Chinese met and agreed to organize a Rotary Club. As the years passed the Club became more and more cosmopolitan. Its headquarters were at the Astor House Hotel (利順德大飯店), at Victoria Road (維多利亞道) (now Jiefang Lu 解放路) in the British Concession, where the Club met every Thursday at 12:30 p.m.

During the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), the Club was once terminated on 31 December 1943, and then was re-chartered on 27 March 1946. Regrettably, the Rotary Club of Tientsin was ultimately terminated on 16 October 1951 due to unfavorable social and political environment.

## Brief Biography

Henry George Wandesforde Woodhead was born on 27 November 1883, in Devonport, England, son of Lieutenant Thomas Wandesforde Woodhead, R.N., and Jessie Leith (Weir) Woodhead. He married Miss Florence Louise Hamlin in Shanghai of the Ch'ing Empire (大清國上海), on 30 September 1908. Other than Rotary Club, Woodhead had been former Chairman of Tientsin Club; Chairman of the British Residents' Association; member of Committee of China Association; member of Shanghai Club and Shanghai Country Club, and the Thatched Hose Club, London.

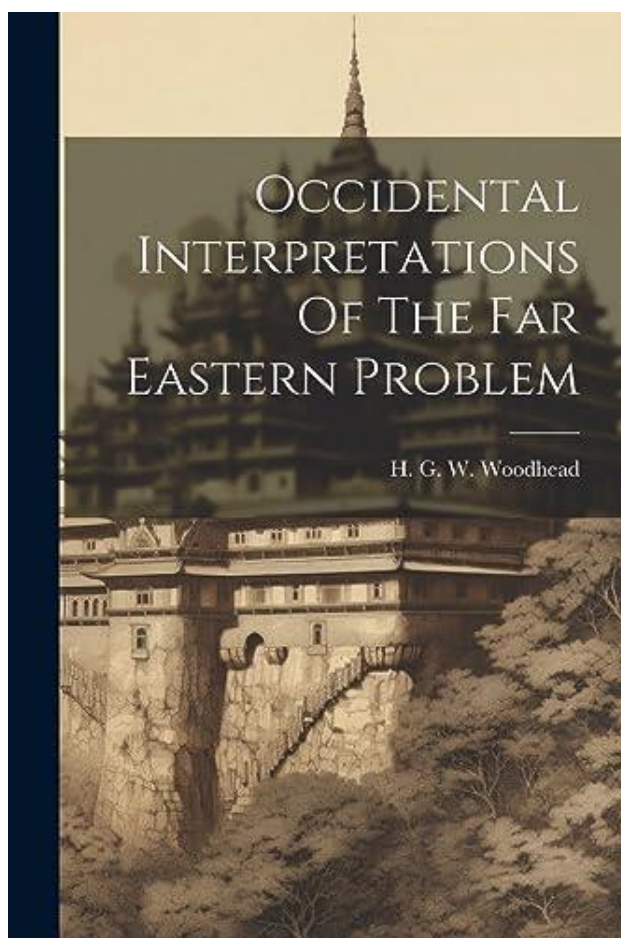
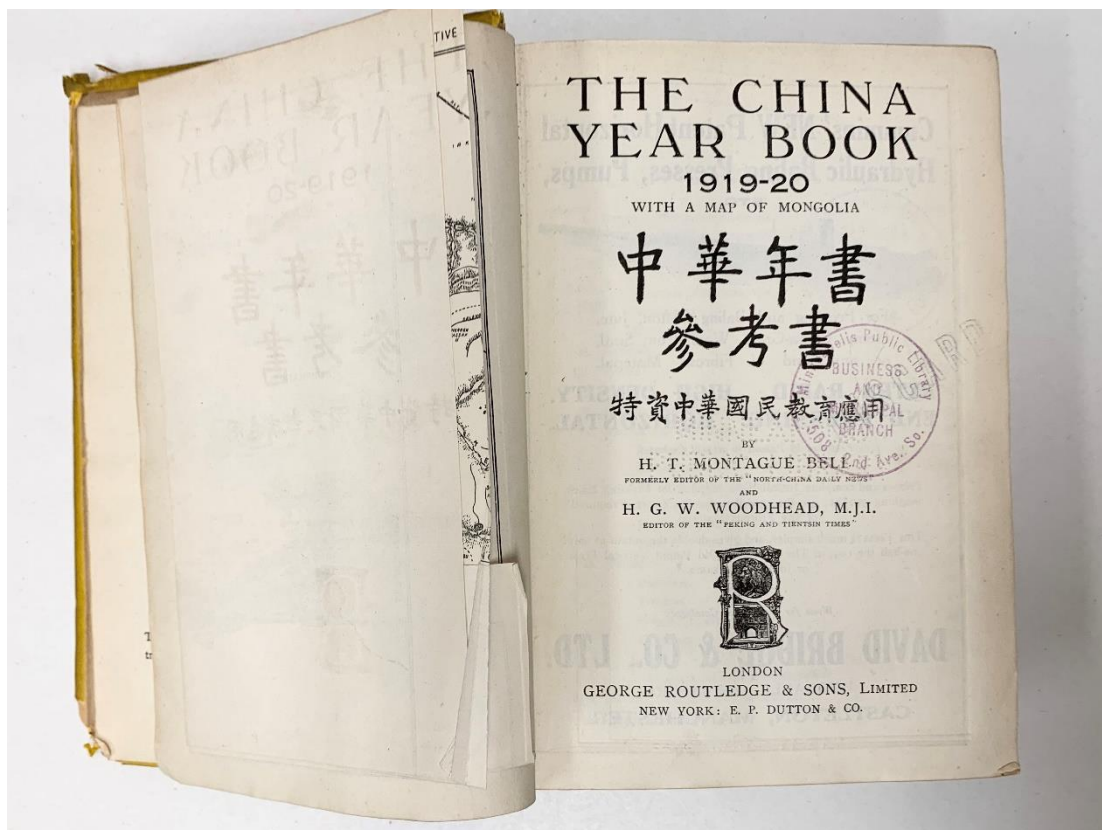
Woodhead was educated at Brighton College, East Sussex, England, and went to the Ch'ing Empire to join the editorial staff of the 《North China Daily News》 in December 1902. During his long journalistic career he was on the staff of the 《North China Daily News》, in 1902-1911; acting correspondent for Reuters (路透社) at Peking (*Beijing*) (北京) from May to November, 1911, during the Xinhai Revolution (辛亥革命); Editor of the 《Peking and Tientsin Times》 (京津泰晤士報) in 1911-1912, and in 1914-1930; joint founder and Editor of 《China Year Book》 (中華年書參考書) in 1912.

In the February 1925 Issue of 《The Rotarian》 magazine, there is such an introduction about this 《China Year Book》 :

The China Year Book (1924-25), edited by H. G. W. Woodhead, C.B.E., president of the Rotary Club of Tientsin, and published by the Tientsin Press Limited, is literally packed with information. This is the eighth issue of this book and contains many new features. Practically every branch of knowledge receives attention in these pages, and the result is a collection of expert opinion and observation invaluable to all whose business or professional interests call for authoritative knowledge of things Chinese.

There are statistics on trade, railways, finance, education, military, and postal conditions; the texts of the new construction, trade-mark laws and regulations, criminal procedure regulations, the Sino-Russian agreements and declarations, and the Washington treaties and resolutions. Special articles deal with international issues, the gold franc controversy, Waihaiwei rendition, Canton customs, the Chinese Renaissance, labor in China, and Chinese politics.

This general survey of Chinese conditions and regulations will be most helpful to travelers and business men of other lands, since there are many cases in which such data cannot be secured from any other source. Governmental statistics are not yet fully developed in China, and even the taking of a census is a matter of considerable difficulty.



Woodhead was the inaugural Editor of the 《Peking Gazette》 (京報) in 1913-1914. The 《Peking Gazette》 was an official bulletin published with changing frequency in Peking until 1912, when the Ch'ing Empire fell and the Republican China was born. The translated name, as it is known to Western sources, comes from Ming Empire-era Jesuits, who followed the bulletin for its political contents. The 《Peking Gazette》 became a venue for political grievances and infighting during the reign of the Wanli Emperor (萬曆帝) in the late Ming Empire (大明國), when literati factions would submit politicized memorials that the Emperor often abstained from reviewing. From around 1730, the publication was in Chinese called Ching Pao (京報), literally “the Capital Report”. It contained information on court appointments, edicts, and the official memorials submitted to the emperor, and the decisions made or deferred.

Author J. C. Sun in his book 《Modern Chinese Press》, published in 1946, said the Gazette seemed to have been designed entirely for officers of the Chinese Government, and its publication to the people was merely by connivance contrary to law, as was formerly the case with regard the publication of parliamentary speeches in England. The recommendation of individuals for promotion, the impeachment of others, notices of removal from office and of rewards or degradations---these were the chief topics which filled its columns.

Contrary to a sometimes voiced belief, the 《Peking Gazette》 was not a newspaper, but a government bulletin, although it might be considered a distant precursor:

《The East Asian Press》 was studied relatively late in the West. One of the reasons is that newspapers did not exist in China, Japan, and Korea until these countries opened to Western influences. There were certainly forerunners of newsprint also in the indigenous tradition, like the famous 《Peking Gazette》 (Jingbao) which is often claimed to be oldest newspaper of the world. We find numerous little articles in Western papers on the Jingbao, usually from secondary or tertiary sources; they do not take into account that this gazette had limited circulation and that it just contained edicts and decrees---thus it does not fit the modern definition of newspaper. But it definitely was a forerunner of newsprint.

After leaving the 《Peking Gazette》, Woodhead served as North China correspondent for the 《London Morning Post》 in 1913 until 1930, and Editorial Associate of the 《Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury》 (大美晚報).

Woodhead was a productive author. Publications by Woodhead include 《The China Year Book》, fourteen issues; 《The Truth About the Chinese Republic》, 《Occidental Interpretations of the Far Eastern Problem》 (Norman Waite Harris Memorial Lectures at the

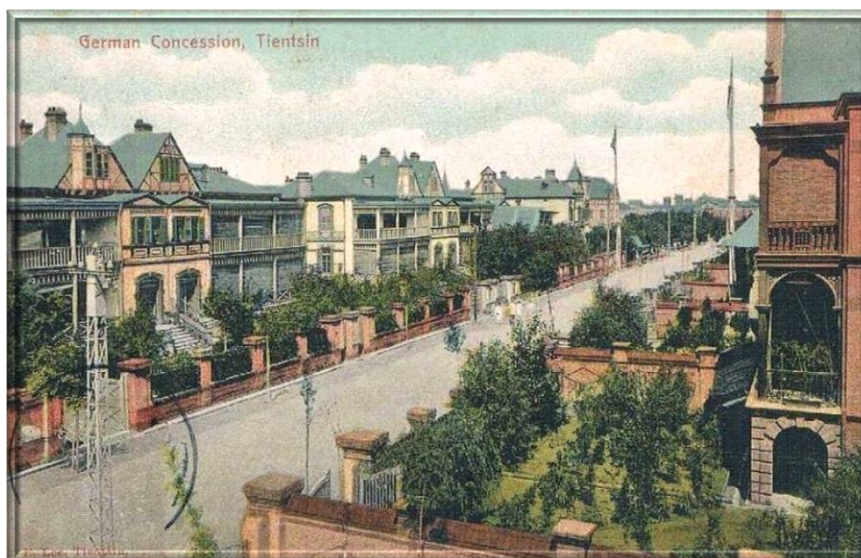


University of Chicago); 《Problems of the Yangtze》, and numerous pamphlets on China's international problems. He was regarded as one of the foremost authorities on political conditions in the Far East.

During 1903-1904 Woodhead was a member of the Shanghai Volunteers and Fire Brigade and during 1915-1917 he was a member of the Tientsin British Volunteers. For services rendered to the Allied cause in the First World War he was appointed Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (C.B.E.) by George V, King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India. Woodhead was decorated Chevalier of the Order of Leopold II by King of Belgium; and also was conferred Medaille de la Reconnaissance Francaise (d'argent) by the French Government.

### List of some publications by H. G. W. Woodhead

1. 《The China Year Book》 14 issues / 1921-1939
2. 《Oriental Affairs: A Monthly Review》
3. 《The Present State of China: Being a Series of Articles》 1923
4. 《The truth about the Chinese Republic》 1925
5. 《Missionary, Merchant, and the Treaties》 1926
6. 《Extraterritoriality in China: The Case Against Abolition》 1929
7. 《A Visit to Manchukuo》 1932
8. 《A Journalist in China》 1934
9. 《Adventures in Far Eastern Journalism: A Record of Thirty-three Years' Experience》  
1935
10. 《Shanghai and Hong Kong》 194x
11. 《My Experiences in the Japanese Occupation of Shanghai》 1943



## H. G. W. Woodhead – Opinionated and Prolific

Paul French / 1 August 2019



I have written about H. G. W. Woodhead a few times, most expansively in my history of foreign correspondents in China between the Opium Wars and 1949, 《Through the Looking Glass》 (Hong Kong University Press, 2009). But I'd never seen a photo of him---now I see that the Historical Photographs of China web site has at least two. So I thought it worthwhile offering up my short biography of Woodhead's adventures in the Chinese treaty port media in the first half of the twentieth century...

Henry George Wandesforde (“H.G.W.”) Woodhead arrived in China in 1902. He obtained a position as the editor of the 《Peking Daily News》 (which included the old Chinese Public Opinion) whose header stated “Impartial But Patriotic” and always started with the latest imperial edicts. Woodhead was to rule the roost at the 《Peking and Tientsin Times》 as well as becoming the most well-known and influential foreigner in Tianjin for several decades.

The paper invariably reflected his strident opinions on China and the world and from the start promised to “... be essentially British”, a virtue Woodhead staunchly upheld. Much later, in 1936, 《Time》 magazine described him as “hard hitting” and “suave”, though J. B. Powell's 《China Weekly Review》 opted for “die-hard”, which was not meant in an overly complimentary way. Woodhead was a long-time friend of former 《London Times》 war correspondent Henry Thurburn Montague Bell, who had covered the Boer War and then became a long-standing editor of the 《North China Herald》 and the 《North- China Daily News》 . He was also a prolific editorialist, was well known as a China Hand in Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin and wrote the 1929 book 《Extraterritoriality In China: The Case Against Abolition》 , which was really just a collection of his articles expressing his trenchant views

on the subject from the paper. This title also pretty much summed up Woodhead's political attitude to both China and the Chinese which accounted for the uncomplimentary opinions of people like Powell who were anti-extraterritoriality. H. T. Montague Bell was also well connected in London due to his being the brother-in-law of the editor-in-chief of the Times.

In the 1920s Woodhead launched a campaign to try to stop Britain from spending its Boxer Indemnity monies (the reparations forcibly paid by the Chinese government to Britain and other foreign powers after the Siege of the Legations) on promoting education in China as he believed that the schools and colleges of the country were little more than breeding grounds for revolutionaries and anti-foreign, anti-extraterritoriality sentiment. When it was reported that a Chinese mob had stormed the British Concession in Hankou and that the British government had seemingly caved in and handed the territory back to China, Woodhead fumed that "The principle of extraterritoriality is at stake" and urged Britain to remember the 《Treaty of Tianjin》 that guaranteed the treaty ports system and to oppose the government. On another occasion, he declared that Britain should have conquered China rather than India in order to ensure the country was well run. He regularly fulminated against America for its "Open Door" trade policy towards China which, he believed, would undermine Britain's "Most Favoured Nation" status---a status it has to be said which had been forced at gunpoint on the Chinese. Brian Power, a young boy in Tianjin at the time recalled in his memoir 《Ford of Heaven》 : "When Woodhead spoke Washington trembled ... By the time Woodhead's outbursts reached England, Whitehall, too, must have trembled".

This was probably overestimating Woodhead's influence somewhat but, on the other hand, he was equally tough in criticising many foreign businessmen, accusing them of becoming wealthy off the back of child labour and low wages. He also had a major influence on Tianjin's civic life. He had urged the formation of the Watch Committee, an ad hoc group that sought to patrol and protect the foreign concessions, and he was a founding member of the Tientsin Club, which provided him with a lavish send-off dinner when he finally left the city.

Woodhead remained a vibrant and dedicated editorialist, moving on in the 1930s to be an editorial associate of the 《Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury》 and editor (from 1934) of the quarterly journal 《Oriental Affairs》 . Power recalled that foreigners in the city were "stunned" when Woodhead announced his departure to Shanghai. Tributes to the great editor, which resembled obituaries, poured into the paper. Power believed that, despite his "Bully Pulpit-style" of editorialising, Woodhead's lasting impression on Tianjin was his defence of the rights of car drivers. He accused the Chinese of being "primitive" for opposing the rise of the car. It seems that an unresolved incident between Woodhead and a rickshaw puller after a collision was the cause of his repeated diatribes against Chinese car drivers.

Woodhead and the Times did provide work for some young reporters who would later become better known. In 1921 a young Owen Lattimore passed through. His parents were

living in Tianjin but were about to move back to America. Lattimore met Woodhead who offered him a job at the paper which the young American accepted as he thought it would give him an opportunity to develop his literary interests. However, he was to be disappointed as he was given few opportunities to investigate and write stories of his own, spending most of his time proofreading. He lasted a year before returning to work for his old employers, the traders Arnhold and Company, on a larger salary and at their Tianjin branch before becoming one of America's foremost China Hands and experts on Mongolia. After Lattimore, a young Israel "Eppie" Epstein, later to become a senior member of the Communist Party of China and remain in Beijing supporting Mao and the revolution, started his journalistic career on the paper in the 1930s when he was barely 15 years old. Epstein had been born in Poland but his family escaped from the Russian Revolution and fled to Tianjin where he attended American-run schools before becoming a cub reporter.

Woodhead appeared all-powerful in Tianjin between the world wars, though he did have some competition. The 《North China Commerce》 newspaper was established in 1920 as an English-run weekly but didn't last long while the American-owned 《North China Star》 was also published in Tianjin. This was real competition---the American State Department estimated the paper's daily circulation in 1921 as 2,500, more than double Woodhead's 《Peking and Tientsin Times》, but also noted that the *Star* was far less influential than Woodhead's paper which to men like Woodhead was what really counted.



*Woodhead (right), with other fire brigade volunteers, Ladder Company Number 1, Shanghai, c.1902-1907.*





September 1903--George Woodhead with bicycle on Zekawei Road, Shanghai.

**Peking & Tientsin Times.**  
 Comptes Inter-Grates  和 協 報 萬  
 Vol. I.—No. 1 TIENTSIN, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1st, 1902. Price 10 cents.

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《Peking and Tientsin Times》(京津泰晤士報)

