Rotary in China the First 30 Years

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This article aims to give a brief description on the Rotary development in China during the first three decades, from the inception of the first Rotary Club organized in Shanghai in July 1919, until the fall of 1951 when Rotary International decided to dissolved the 3 Rotary districts in the People's Republic of China (中華人民共和國), followed by the ultimate decision to terminate all remaining clubs in China Mainland by resolution of the January 1952 Board Meeting of Rotary International.

Rotary Movement in the Greater China was first commenced in July 1919, when The Rotary Club of Shanghai (上海扶輪社) was organized and was admitted to Rotary International on October 1st the same year, and was the second Rotary club formed in Asia. Since then until 1949, 43 Rotary clubs have been established across the entire Chinese territories (including Manchuria and Formosa under the Japanese Empire's regime), in 39 cities, supervised under 4 Rotary districts. However, these 43 clubs had never been existent altogether simultaneously due to various adverse political and social environments, and were disrupted by civil wars and Imperial Japan's aggression. One of the districts, the 70th District, was dissolved by Rotary International during the Pacific War of 1941-1945, while the rest 3 were on 1 July 1951, perhaps, resulting from the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950. Ultimately until January 1952, 39 Rotary clubs' membership of all these 43 were gradually terminated, respectively in different periods, by Rotary International in accordance with the provisions of the Rotary International Constitution and Bylaws. There are only 4 of them still carried on functioning until today: (1) & (2) The Rotary clubs of Hong Kong (1931) (香港扶輪社) and Kowloon (1948) (九龍扶輪社) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (香港特別行政區); (3) The Rotary Club of Macau (1947) (澳門扶輪社) in the Macao Special Administrative Region (澳門特別行政區); and (4) The Rotary Club of Taipeh (*Taipei*) (1948) (臺北扶輪社) in Taiwan (臺灣), Republic of China (中華民國).

The Beginning of Rotary in China – Shanghai 1919

Though Manila Rotary Club (1919) was the first Rotary club in Asia admitted to membership of the International Association of Rotary Clubs (I.A.R.C.) (former organization of Rotary International), it was not the first seed.

The story has to be dated back to June 1918. In his annual report to the Board of Directors of I.A.R.C., Secretary Chesley R. Perry wrote: "We have recently received words that the Rotary Club of Hong Kong, China, has been organized through the efforts of Mr. Coombes of Calcutta, who when in Chicago recently accepted the assignment to organize a Rotary Club in Calcutta." So, the first prospecting was the then British Crown Colony Hong Kong (英國殖民地香港).

But, a year later in June 1919, Chesley R. Perry, Secretary of I.A.R.C. wrote in his annual report: "Last year we have the pleasure of reporting the organization of a Rotary Club in Hong Kong, China. ... ... And now we have to report the good news of the organization of a flourishing Rotary Club at Manila in the Philippine Islands, organized by Past President Roger D. Pinneo of Seattle."

Ultimately, there was no fruit grown in Hong Kong before the 1930s as the history has told us. Following the successful seed sown on the Philippine Islands, Roger D. Pinneo planted another Rotary tree successfully on the land of the prominent commercial city of the Orient – Shanghai International Settlement (上海公共租界) --- in the Republic of China (中華民國).

In the Report 1920 of Committee on Foreign Extension, I.A.R.C., the Honorable John Barrett, Chairman, wrote: "China can well be proud of the Rotary Club of Shanghai. George. L. Treadwell, its enterprising secretary, has told you something what has been accomplishing there. The club was organized during the past year with a membership and enthusiasm that is most gratifying. ... ... and let us send back across the Pacific Ocean to them, and to Shanghai, our best greetings, by telling them we are happy that they were here. The movement in Hong Kong, the British possession on the coast of China and one of the leading ports of the world, has been somewhat handicapped but eventually there will probably be organized in that city a powerful club."

Among the influences (and there are many of them) working for the better relationship of nations is Rotary, which, having secured a foothold on the east coast of China bided fair to carry its message throughout the land. That this condition should exist, despite the natural difficulties of language, was really not so surprising when one took everything into consideration. For the principles taught by Confucius some thirty centuries ago have much in common with those proclaimed by Rotary: "Service Above Self"; "High ethical conduct and human relations" --- a fact too often overlooked by those who all too often seek the differences among religions rather than the similarities. So it happened that the first Rotary Club in China, established at Shanghai in what was practically foreign territory with a predominance of American and British members --- found a great opportunity ready at hand. The story of its establishment was rather a diversion from the usual history of Rotary clubs, for the Shanghai Rotary Club was founded in a territory where there was no district governor --- an outpost far from other established clubs. It was a pioneering effort by a man believing in Rotary International.

In early 1919, Roger D. Pinneo, Past President of the Rotary Club of Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., went abroad on an extended business trip undertaken in the interests of the Pacific Steamship Company. Interested in the possibilities of Rotary extension he conferred with the Secretary of Rotary Headquarters and sought permission to establish a Club at Manila, The Philippines, when in the Orient. The successful organization of the Manila Rotary Club inspired him to further efforts, so he turned his effort to Shanghai in China. Within the community of the Shanghai International Settlement, Roger D. Pinneo called upon the American citizens who worked and lived there to join the ideal of service in Rotary. On 9 July 1919, Rotarian Pinneo presided at the first organizing meeting of the Club.

As the result of his work, Shanghai Rotary Club was elected to membership to International Association of Rotary Clubs (Later in 1922, the name was changed to Rotary International.) on 1 October 1919, Club No. 545, and started its career with 37 charter members, practically all of them were American businessmen in Shanghai, who met first at the Palace Hotel (匯中飯店)

there. Hence, Shanghai Rotary Club became the second Rotary Club in Asia, and made the Republican China the ninth country (or territory) that joined the Rotary world.

Dr. Julian Petit (貝久齡醫生) (surgeon - medical missionary) was elected the first president, and did yeoman service in getting the Club away to a true start, as well as his later work as successor to George L. Treadwell (acting manager of the Chinese-American Publishing Company), the latter having been elected the first secretary. A. B. Rosenfeld (cotton merchant) was elected vice-president, R. Buchan (manager of the Asia Banking Corporation) was treasurer. The Club promptly issued《The Pagoda》, its weekly news bulletin, and began first to create the groundwork for fellowship within itself. George L. Treadwell, Club Secretary, concurrently served as the Editor.

The list of charter members did not reveal a single Chinese name. The first question Shanghai Rotary Club faced, therefore, was what should be the Club's objects and membership, in view of this situation? And, although composed for the most part of Americans, the Club decided promptly to waive purely selfish, national considerations, and made the Shanghai Rotary Club a common meeting ground for members to be selected from various nationalities. Hence in succeeding years Shanghai Rotary Club has purposely acquired a cosmopolitan character, so that its membership in 1924 was 80% American, 10% British, and 10% native Chinese.

Shanghai Rotary Club was located in an international settlement, so-called, the only internationally governed settlement in the world, with a municipal council composed, as in 1920, of eight British, one American, and one Japanese. The next higher governing power was the consular body, composed of the consuls and the consul-generals of various nationalities residing in the Settlement; thus, by being on foreign soil, internationally administered. It was readily seen that practically every question of public or private interest that came up affected all nationalities.

So the Club formed its Rotary League of Nations, and dedicated it -- from the points of view of community and Rotary interest -- to the fostering and maintenance of better international relations in China. Ninety five years later today, Shanghai Rotary Club still maintains such elegant tradition of multi-nationalities in membership.

Rotary Districts and Clubs in China Before 1951

When the first Club in China, Shanghai Rotary Club, was admitted membership to International Association of Rotary Clubs on 1 October 1919, it was non-districted. The extension of clubs within China went on. Until 1935 there were already 11 clubs. So, Rotary International decided to establish the 81st District of the Rotary world, composing of 11 clubs in the Republic of China, 1 club in the British Crown Colony Hong Kong, and 3 clubs in The Philippine Islands (United States protectorate), making total number of 15 clubs.

Soon after the 81st District was created on 1 October 1935, Governor Dr. Chengting T. Wang (王正廷博士) gave a strong vision on the Rotary development in this ancient country China bearing a vast piece of land. Very quickly, Rotary International President 1936-37

William Manier, Jr. and the Board of Directors gave a positive decision to establish 3 new districts in China commencing the Year 1937-1938, with the respective territories like these:

96th District –

China [that portion including the Provinces of Fukien (*Fujian*) (福建), Kwangtung (*Guangdong*) (廣東), Kwangsi (*Guangxi*) (廣西), Kweichow (*Guizhou*) (貴州), Yunnan (雲南)]; and Hong Kong (香港); Macao (澳門).

97th District –

China [that portion including the Provinces of Kiangsu (*Jiangsu*) (江蘇), Chekiang (*Zhejiang*) (浙江), Anhwei (*Anhui*) (安徽), Hupeh (*Hubei*) (湖北), Hunan (湖南), Kiangsi (*Jiangxi*) (江西), Szechwan (*Sichuan*) (四川)]

98th District –

China [that portion including the Provinces of Hopeh (*Hebei*) (河北), Honan (*Henan*) (河南), Shantung (*Shandong*) (山東), Shansi (*Shanxi*) (山西), Shensi (*Shaanxi*) (陝西),Kansu (*Gansu*) (甘肅)]

[Note] Italic names in brackets are the nowadays spelling on the Map of China.

Commencing 1 July 1937, Dr. Fong Foo-Sec (鄺富灼博士), President 1931-1932 of Shanghai Rotary Club and Rotary International Director 1933-34, was appointed District 96-97-98 Governor to supervise all these three newly created districts until he passed away in October 1938. Since then, 2 to 3 governors were appointed to supervise these 3 districts separately and independently. On the other hand, the 81st District was wholly allocated to the Commonwealth of the Philippines.

On 11 June 1948, The Rotary Club of Taipeh (*Taipei*) (臺北扶輪社), Club No. 6968, was admitted membership to Rotary International. However, the Club was kept non-directed and was directly supervised by Rotary International Secretariat in Chicago. Commencing 1 July 1949, Rotary International decided re-numbering all districts in the Rotary world. Therefore, 3 new numbers were then allocated to the 3 districts in China, Hong Kong and Macao as No. 57, 58, and 59.

There had been 4 dedicated Rotarians extended most of their effort in the Rotary China development across the country during these three decades: (1) Dr. Fong Foo-Sec (鄺富灼博士) (*Educator*); (2) Dr. Chengting T. Wang (王正廷博士) (*Diplomat*); (3) George Ashmore Fitch (費吳生) (*Head of International YMCA in China*); and (4) Bishop Ralph Ansel Ward (黃安素主教) (Bishop for China, Methodist Episcopal Church).

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After the establishment of The People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949, the environment for Rotary activity was not favourable in China mainland. Rotary International decided effective on 1 July 1951, District 57 (South China; Taiwan; Hong Kong; Macao) and Districts 58-59 (China) should be dissolved and any remaining Rotary clubs were considered as non-districted clubs to be supervised in Hong Kong by an administrative adviser, Dr. Chengting T. Wang (王正廷博士). Ultimately, the remaining were only 2 clubs in Hong Kong; 1 club in Macao; and 1 club in Taiwan.

This sketch map of The Republic of China (national and provincial territories before 1950; Mongolia was China's protectorate) illustrates the geographical territories of the 3 Rotary Districts from 1 July 1937 until 30 June 1951:--

Blue -- District 96 (57)   Green – District 97 (58)   Yellow – District 98 (59)

35 Clubs that had been formed in these 3 Districts before 1951:

District 96 (57) -- 12 Clubs

Hong Kong (香港) 1931; Canton (廣州) 1932; Foochow (福州) 1933; Amoy (廈門) 1933;
Swatow (汕頭) 1936; Wuchow (梧州) 1936; Kunming (昆明) 1937; Kweilin (桂林) 1944;

Kweiyang (貴陽) 1945; Macau (澳門) 1947; Liuchow (柳州) 1948; Kowloon (九龍) 1948

District 97 (58) -- 16 Clubs

Shanghai (上海) 1919; Hangchow (杭州) 1932; Hankow (漢口) 1933; Nanking (南京) 1934;
Wuhu (蕪湖) 1936; Kaifeng (開封) 1936; Ningpo (寧波) 1936; Soochow (吳縣) 1936;
Wuchang (武昌) 1937; Chinkiang (鎮江) 1937; Wusih (無錫) 1937; Changsha (長沙) 1937;
Chungking (重慶) 1937; Chengtu (成都) 1939; Nanchang (南昌) 1948;
Shanghai West (滬西) 1948

District 98 (59) -- 7 Clubs

Tientsin (天津) 1923; Peking/Peiping (北京/北平) 1924; Tsingtao (青島) 1932;
Tsinan (濟南) 1932; Sian (西安) 1937; Lanchow (蘭州) 1943; Mukden (Shen-Yang) (瀋陽) 1948

Chinese Cities where Rotary Clubs were Chartered   1919 – 1951

This map shows the national and provincial territories of The People's Republic of China today

During the years from 1919 until 1951, in these 39 cities of the greater Chinese territories, there had been totally 43 Rotary clubs chartered, including:

(1) 2 in Shanghai City   (Shanghai Club 1919-1951 ; Shanghai West Club 1948-1952)
(2) 2 in Shenyang City   (Mukden Club 1929-1941, Japanese, District 70;
  Mukden (Shen-Yang) Club 1948-1950, English, District 98)
(3) 2 in Hong Kong   (Hong Kong Club 1931-- ; Kowloon Club 1948--)
(4) 2 in Taipei City   (Taihoku Club 1931-1941, Japanese, District 70;
  Taipeh (Taipei) Club 1948--, English, non-districted)

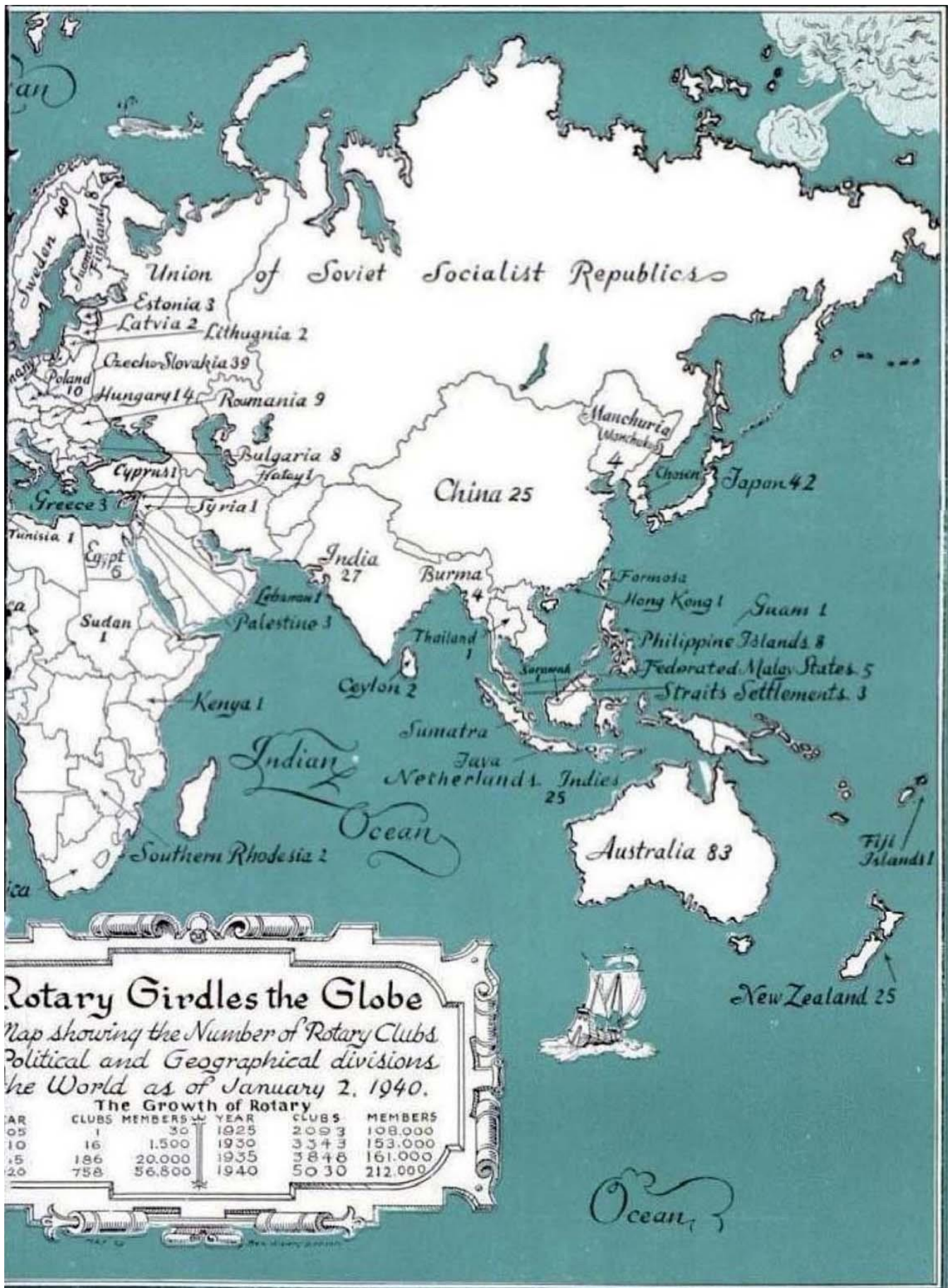## *Rotary in Manchuria and Formosa – the Chinese Territories*

(1) When the Imperial Japan's invasion to China, Manchukuo (滿洲國) was formed as a puppet state of the Japanese Empire in the northeastern China during the years of 1932 to 1945. Four Rotary clubs (Dairen, Mukden, Harbin, Hsinking) had been formed within this region.   The Name of State registered with Rotary International was [Manchukuo (Manchuria)]. On the other hand, three Rotary clubs (Taihoku, Takao, Keelung) had been formed in Formosa (Taiwan) (臺灣) before 1940 when Formosa was a dependency of Imperial Japan from 1895 to 1945. The Name of State was registered as [Formosa]. All these 7 clubs were terminated by Rotary International during the Pacific War. Formerly, these 7 clubs were members of the 70th District which was composed with the Japan proper, Chosen (Korea) (朝鮮), Manchukuo and Formosa. Majority of the members were Japanese with meetings conducted in Nippon language. These 7 clubs were not counted as part of the [China Rotary] on the Rotary World Map (*see attachment on next page*).

(2) Mukden Rotary Club (奉天ロータリークラブ) was originally formed in June 1929 as a member of the 70th District. It was terminated during the Pacific War. In March 1948, Mukden (Shen-Yang) Rotary Club (瀋陽扶輪社) was re-chartered as the youngest member of District 98 (59) (North China).

World Leaders

During these three decades, there were 4 outstanding Rotarians served Rotary International in the world leadership team: (1) Dr. Fong Foo-Sec (鄺富灼博士) (*Shanghai*) (*Books Publishing*) – Rotary International Director 1933-1934; (2) Dr. Yen Te-Ching (顏德慶博士) (*Nanking*) (*Railway Specialist*) – Rotary International Director 1941-1942; (3) Dr. Chengting Thomas Wang (王正廷博士) (*Chungking*) (*Banking*) – Rotary International Director 1944-1946, and concurrently the 2nd Vice President 1945-1946; responsible for the Eastern Hemisphere Rotary rehabilitation after the War; and (4) Mr. George Ernest Marden (*Hong Kong*) (*Tug & Tow Service*) – Rotary International Director 1951-1952.

Dr. Chengting T. Wang joined the Rotary Club of Hong Kong in 1950 for the rest of his life, until he passed away on 21 May 1961.

Sweden 40
Finland 8
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Estonia 3
Latvia 2
Lithugnia 2
Poland 10
Czecho-Slovakia 39
Hungary 14
Romania 9
Bulgaria 8
Cyprus 1
Italy 1
Greece 3
Syria 1
Tunisia 1
Egypt 6
Sudan 1
Lebanon 1
Palestine 3
India 27
Burma 4
Thailand 1
Ceylon 2
Kenya 1
Manchuria (Manchukuo) 4
Chosen 7
Japan 42
China 25
Formosa 1
Hong Kong 1
Guam 1
Philippine Islands 8
Sarawak
Federated Malay States 5
Straits Settlements 3
Sumatra
Java
Netherlands Indies 25
Indian Ocean
Southern Rhodesia 2
Australia 83
Fiji Islands 1
New Zealand 25
Ocean

Rotary Girdles the Globe

Map showing the Number of Rotary Clubs
Political and Geographical divisions
the World as of January 2, 1940.

The Growth of Rotary

YEAR	CLUBS	MEMBERS	YEAR	CLUBS	MEMBERS
05	1	30	1925	2093	108,000
10	16	1,500	1930	3343	153,000
15	186	20,000	1935	3848	161,000
20	758	56,800	1940	5030	212,000

Rotary Clubs with Charter Numbers in the Republic of China 1919-1952

Club Name		Charter No.	Charter/Re-admitted Date	Termination Date
1. Shanghai	上海扶輪社	545	1919-10-01	1943-12-31
			1946-03-27	1951-10-16
2. Tientsin	天津扶輪社	1444	1923-05-10	1943-12-31
			1946-09-17	1952-01-24
3. Peking #	北京扶輪社	1814	1924-08-30	
Peiping #	北平扶輪社		(1928)	1943-12-31
			1946-08-14	1951-06-26
4. Canton	廣州扶輪社	3509	1932-04-25	1943-12-31
			1946-12-27	1950-12-21
5. Hangchow	杭州扶輪社	3525	1932-06-23	1943-12-31
			1947-06-30	1950-12-21
6. Tsingtao	青島扶輪社	3563	1932-12-05	1943-12-31
			1946-12-27	1950-12-21
7. Tsinan	濟南扶輪社	2158 b	1932-12-09	1943-12-31
			1947-05-24	1950-12-21
8. Foochow	福州扶輪社	1913 b	1933-07-31	1950-12-21
9. Amoy	廈門扶輪社	3627	1933-10-23	1943-12-21
			1948-06-02	1950-12-21
10. Hankow	漢口扶輪社	2276 b	1933-12-20	1943-12-31
			1946-05-25	1950-12-21
11. Nanking	南京扶輪社	3642	1934-01-19	1943-12-31
			1946-12-24	1952-01-24
12. Wuhu	蕪湖扶輪社	3915	1936-02-06	1943-12-31
13. Kaifeng	開封扶輪社	3971	1936-05-13	1943-12-31

14. Swatow	汕頭扶輪社	3973	1936-05-21	1943-12-31
			1947-11-07	1950-12-21
15. Wuchow	梧州扶輪社	3977	1936-05-22	1950-12-21
16. Ningpo	寧波扶輪社	4015	1936-09-02	1943-12-31
			1946-10-21	1950-12-21
17. Soochow	吳縣扶輪社	4053	1936-11-11	1943-12-31
			1947-02-26	1950-12-21
18. Wuchang	武昌扶輪社	4146	1937-03-08	1943-12-31
19. Chinkiang	鎮江扶輪社	4217	1937-04-02	1943-12-31
			1947-03-28	1950-12-21
20. Kunming	昆明扶輪社	4298	1937-05-28	1950-12-21
21. Wusih	無錫扶輪社	4321	1937-06-16	1943-12-31
			1947-04-08	1950-12-21
22. Changsha	長沙扶輪社	4336	1937-06-28	1950-12-21
23. Sian	西安扶輪社	4382	1937-08-30	1950-12-21
24. Chungking	重慶扶輪社	4471	1937-11-18	1950-12-21
25. Chengtu	成都扶輪社	4916	1939-01-09	1950-12-21
26. Lanchow	蘭州扶輪社	5689	1943-11-11	1950-12-21
27. Kweilin	桂林扶輪社	5793	1944-06-16	1946-06-04
28. Kweiyang	貴陽扶輪社	5963	1945-04-23	1950-12-21
29. Nanchang	南昌扶輪社	6886	1948-03-29	1950-12-21
30. Mukden #	瀋陽扶輪社	3116	1948-03-31	1949-06-30
Shen Yang#	瀋陽扶輪社		1949-07-01	1950-12-21
31. Taipeh (Taipei) #				
	臺北扶輪社	6968	1948-10-09	(still active)
32. Shanghai West				
	滬西扶輪社	7097	1948-11-16	1952-01-24
33. Liuchow	柳州扶輪社	7126	1948-12-14	1950-12-21

(1) Clubs #3, #30 and #31 –
Club name changed due to the city name changed.

(2) Club #3 – Peking (北京) / Peiping (北平)
"Peking" is a spelling created by French missionaries of the 17th and 18th centuries. "Peking" literally meaning "northern capital" was the English name of the city until the adoption of *pinyin* "Beijing".
The city was called "Peiping" (literally meaning "northern plain") from 1928 to 1949, when the Republican China's capital was located at Nanking (*Nanjing*) (南京) (literally meaning "southern capital").

(3) Club #30 –
Mukden Rotary Club (瀋陽扶輪社), attaching the 98th District (northern China), was given the original charter number 3116 of the former Mukden Rotary Club (奉天ロータリークラブ) (established in 1929, terminated in 1940) which was located in the Japanese occupied territories of Manchuria, attaching the 70th District of Rotary International (Japan Proper and overseas territories).
"Shenyang (瀋陽)" is formerly known by its Manchu name "Mukden", or in Chinese "奉天" during the Japanese occupation and Manchoukuo (滿洲國) era from 1895 to 1945. After the victory of the Pacific War, the entire Manchurian territory was recovered by the Republican China as portion of the state. The city name "Mukden" (奉天) was then changed back to "Shenyang" (瀋陽).

(4) Termination in 1943 and re-admission in later years was due to war time condition.

(5) The Civil War was at its peak in 1948-1949. Clubs were not functioned effectively, followed by the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 that made the United States and the People's Republic of China in the status of hostility. So, in 1951, Rotary International dissolved the 3 Districts in China. Hence, ultimately in January 1952, Rotary International terminated all clubs in the Chinese mainland. The decision on "People's Republic of China as a non-Rotary country" was carried on until the end of the 20th Century.