

上海扶輪社理事 1926-1930--李元信
Shanghai Charity Innovator William Yinson Lee
Shanghai Rotary Club – Director 1926-1930

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1 August 2014



*Mr. and Mrs. William Yinson Lee, 1916
(Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia)*

William Yinson Lee (李元信), Australian Chinese, was elected an Active Member of the Rotary Club of Shanghai (上海扶輪社) on 20 September 1924 when he was the Sales Advisor of Cathay Motors, Ltd., with his classification as “Automobile Industry – Trucks Distributing”. Yinson had served the Club in various positions: Director 1926-1930; Bursary & Prizes Committee Chair 1928; Program Chair 1934-1935.

The first president of the Chinese Mission to Lepers

Addressing the leprosy concern in China, Yinson joined-hands with several Shanghai Rotarians---Dr. Fong Foo-Sec (龐富灼博士), Percy Chu (朱博泉), Han Yu-Lin (韓玉麟), Rev. Wu Ts-Chien (鄔志堅牧師) ---and some other community leaders to form the Chinese Mission to Lepers (中華麻瘋救濟會) in Shanghai (上海). Established on 18 January 1926, Yinson was elected to serve the Mission as the first President in 1926-1933, and then Director 1934-1935.

It was the result of a visit in 1925 from Mr. William M. Danner, Secretary of the American Mission to Lepers. This Mission had no independent program in China but planned to cooperate with a Chinese mission, and made its program as effective and far reaching as possible.

The Chinese Mission to Lepers had adopted its motto as: “Ridding China to Leprosy”

The aims of the Mission may be summarized as follows:

1. To give medical advice and treatment to patients suffering from leprosy.
2. To direct such patients where to go to secure the best possible results.
3. To publish literature on leprosy for the enlightenment of the public.
4. To advocate scientific methods in combatting the damage of leprosy throughout China.
5. To supply and distribute the chaulmoogra oils and their derivatives and other drugs used in the treatment of leprosy.
6. To give financial aid to existing leprosaria and assist in the erection of new ones.
7. To secure Government co-operation and legislation in the campaign against leprosy.
8. To uplift the moral and spiritual life of the lepers by reaching the Christian Gospel to them.

With its headquarters in Shanghai, the Mission had its auxiliaries in the British Crown Colony Hong Kong (香港), Foochow (福州), Amoy (廈門) and Nanchang (南昌). It was proposed to have branches located in all big cities throughout the Republic of China (中華民國).

In addition to the general objects and work of the Mission as outlined above, the following immediate objectives were being sought:-

1. The calling of a National Leper Conference.
2. The organization of a National Leprosy Council.
3. The enactment of Leprosy Laws.
4. The opening of leper clinics in cities and rural areas in all districts where leprosy was prevalent.
5. The establishment of a modern leprosarium in each of the provinces where leprosy was endemic.



1931 – The Chinese Mission to Lepers receives the visit of Dr. W. Wade (L3), Director of Pathology, Leper Hospital of The Philippines, by President William Yinson Lee (R3) and Vice President Dr. Edward S. Tyau (L2).



1931 – Dr. W. Wade (L1), Director of Pathology, Leper Hospital of The Philippines, visits the Shanghai Hongkew Clinic for Skin Disease of The Chinese Mission to Lepers, accompanied by President William Yinson Lee (middle) and Vice President Dr. Edward S. Tyau, M.D. (R1).



William Yinson Lee was born in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, in 1884. His ancestral home being in Chung Shan Hsien, Kwangtung Province (*now: Zhong Shan City, Guangdong Province*), China (中國廣東省香山縣). He was the eldest son of William R. G. Lee, well-known merchant of Sydney, the British Crown Colony Hong Kong (英國殖民地香港) as well as Kwangtung (廣東), China.

Yinson received his education at Stott's College, Sydney, and under private tutors in Hong Kong. He went to Hong Kong in 1903 and joined Johnson, Stokes & Master (孖士打律師行), a leading legal firm in Hong Kong and became closely associated with Sir Boshan Wei Yuk (韋寶珊爵士), CMG, JP, and Sir Hormusjee Naorojee Mody (麼地爵士).

In 1909, as representative of an influential group of Hong Kong merchants, Yinson accompanied Admiral Li Tsun upon a visit and survey of Yulinkan, Hainan Island (海南島榆林港)(the southernmost point in China, at that time proposed as a naval base), also visiting and surveying the Paracels, a group of islands lying between Hainan and the Philippines. He spent from 1910 to 1922 in commercial pursuits in Australia, Hong Kong and Canton (*Guangzhou*) (廣州), located principally in Sydney, New South Wales, but paying frequent visit to China.

Yinson was a vigorous writer and was a frequent contributor to the leading press of Australia *The Defence* of Chinese matters. During the War, he was instrumental in securing the sanction of the Commonwealth government, the State government of New South Wales and the Municipal Council of Sydney for the inclusion of the Chinese flag among those of the principal allied nations when officially displayed, which example was followed by the general public in the principal cities, the Chinese in Australia greatly appreciating the recognition.

Yinson was a life governor of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital---the principal hospital in Sydney; and was one of the two Chinese members of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce; a prominent member of the Millions Club of New South Wales and the Masonic Club of Sydney; a Mason holding the highest degrees in the New South Wales, Scottish and American Constitution and a Shriner of Aleppo Temple, Boston, Massachusetts. Yinson held the distinction of being the youngest Mason ever initiated in Australia, being only 18 years and 3 months old when he received his initiation by special dispensation of the M. W. Grandmaster for New South Wales, Admiral Sir Harry Rawson, State Governor.

Yinson made a tour of the South Sea Islands, Australia, Europe and America in 1922-1923 securing business connections and went to China to open the China Branch of Brewer & Co., Inc. of Worcester, Massachusetts, of which he was co-director, in January 1924.

Yinson was a partner in Associated Life Underwriters, Shanghai, Life insurance consultants and agents for several life insurance companies. He was also connected with The Tai Ping Insurance Company, Shanghai; and a director of several commercial concerns.

Yinson came to Shanghai in 1924, since which time he had been engaged in commercial pursuits and associated with numerous social activities including the following, in addition to the Rotary Club of Shanghai, and the Chinese Mission to Lepers:

- Founder of the Y's Men's Club of Shanghai, and served as its president in 1924-1927 and 1932-1933, its chairman of the board of directors for various terms;
- Appointed by the International Association of Y's Men's Clubs in the United States as its Regional Director For China, 1931-1935;
- Founder and director of the Shanghai Y's Men's Free Baby Clinic, 1927-1935;
- Founder and director of the Y.W.C.A. Free Baby Clinic, 1928-1932;
- Director of the Shanghai Chinese Y.M.C.A., 1924-1932;
- Director of the National Committee, Y.M.C.A.'s of China, 1926;
- Member of the governing board of the Shanghai Community Church (Inter-denominational), 1928-1933;
- Director of the National Child Welfare Association of China, 1929-1931;
- Director of the Shanghai Dental College, 1930-1933;
- Director of the Kwangtung Guild and Cantonese Schools in Shanghai since 1929, and the Cantonese Residents' Association since 1934;
- Member of the Shanghai Bankers' Club; Kwangtung Club; Kiangwan Country Club; Pan-Pacific Association; China Institute of International Relations; Royal Asiatic Society; Numismatic Society of China; The Connoisseur's Club; Phi Lambda Fraternity; American Returned Students' Association; and various other social organizations;
- A golf enthusiast; a connoisseur of Chinese art and possessor of a unique collection of antique Chinese porcelain and pictures and ancient Chinese coins.

