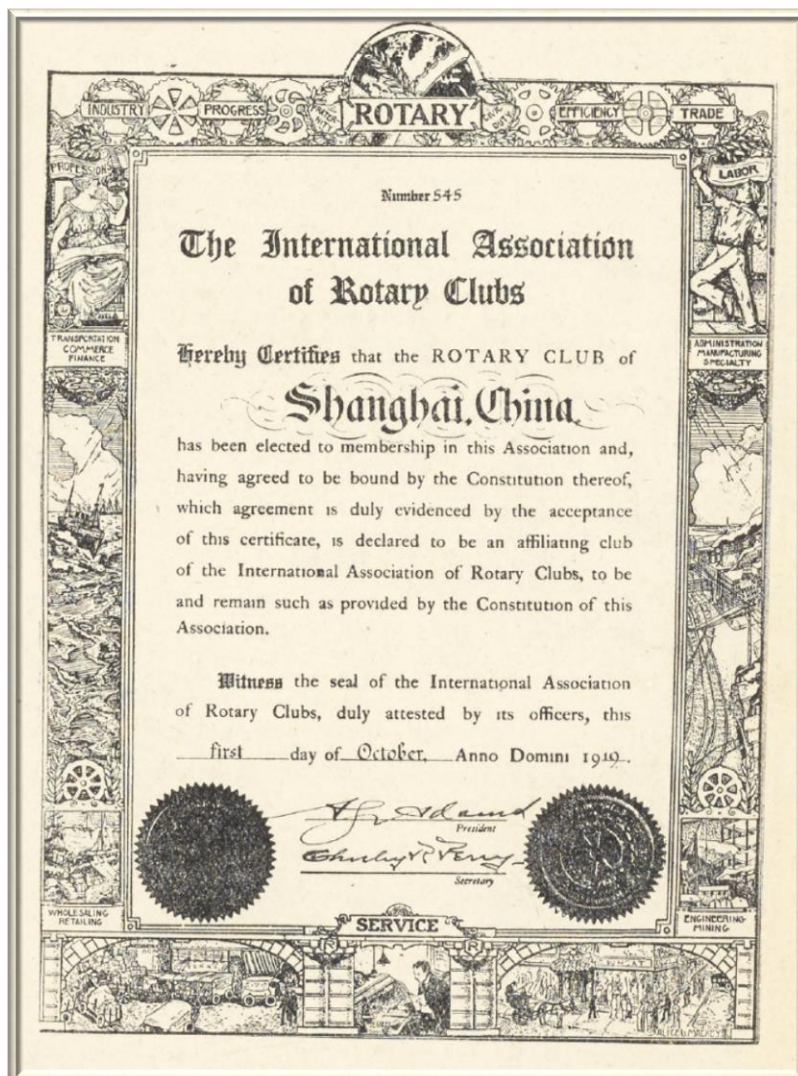


Rotary in China commenced with The Birth of the Shanghai Rotary Club in 1919

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

1 July 2014

The Rotary Club of Shanghai (上海扶輪社) was the “father” of Rotary in China, and was the first Rotary Club formed in The Republic of China (中華民國) in 1919, and also the second Club formed in Asia. That was 95 years ago. The Club was formally admitted to Rotary on 1 October the same year. Here is an image of the Charter No. 545 (*see picture below*). That means the Club was the 545th member of The International Association of Rotary Clubs (IARC) (forerunner of Rotary International until 1922).



Why Shanghai was chosen?

Though Manila Rotary Club (1919) was the first Rotary Club in Asia admitted to the membership of the IARC, it was not the first seed. The story has to be traced back to June 1918. In his annual report to the Board of Directors of IARC, Secretary Chesley R. Perry wrote: “We have recently received word 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.” This gives the proof the first prospected was the British Crown Colony Hong Kong.

Perhaps, there was that Mr. Coombes took the advantage of his business connection between the both then British colonies, Calcutta and Hong Kong, to offer the effort in the Rotary extension to the Orient. Both cities of Calcutta in India and Hong Kong at the south China coast were close business partners, with banking in particular.

But, a year later in June 1919, Chesley R. Perry, Secretary of IARC 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 of the United States Protectorate, Roger Pinneo planted another Rotary tree successfully on the land of the prominent commercial city of the Orient -- Shanghai -- in the Republic of China.

To the Honorable John Barrett, Committee Chairman on Foreign Extension, IARC, Roger gave his opinion: “Shanghai is in many respects the key city of the whole Asiatic coast. Everybody who goes to the Orient must pass through it or visit there. There is, moreover, a wonderful opportunity for achievement in working out the ideals of Rotary. The Club may have a profound influence in that way upon the future of China and the development of that kind of civilization for which Rotary stands.”

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 (孔子) 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, the International Settlement (上海公共租界), 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 an American believing in Rotary International.

The Birth

The idea of having a new Rotary Club organized in China could be dated back to 1918. However, Rotary was introduced and organized in Shanghai, Republic of China, in July 1919 through the efforts of Roger D. Pinneo, Past President of Seattle Rotary Club, Washington, U.S.A., who was touring the Far East as the general representative of Admiral S.S. Line, and Dr. Julian Petit, M.D., A.B. (貝久齡醫學博士) (*surgeon – medical missionary*) was elected the Club's first president.

In early 1919, Roger D. Pinneo 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 IARC and sought permission to establish a club at Manila, The Philippine Islands (United States Protectorate), 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.

In June 1919, Roger arrived Shanghai. 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, having come with authority to organize such from the IARC, Roger met with Julian Petit, W. S. Fleming, A. B. Rosenfeld, J. J. Gorman and “Walt” W. L. Johnstone at The Palace Hotel (匯中飯店) (*i.e. the same building today of The Swatch Art Peace Hotel 斯沃琪和平飯店藝術中心*), Bund 19, to discuss the possibility of organizing a Rotary Club in Shanghai. Julian was designated representative for the purpose of organizing and Walt was made provisional secretary.

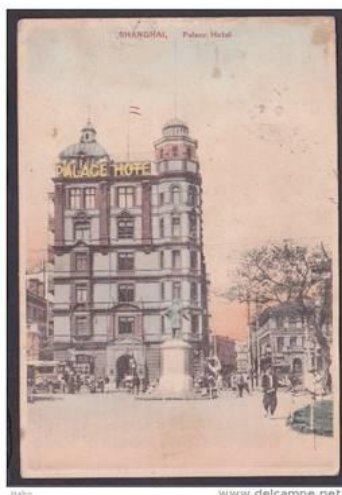


Photo of The Palace Hotel (匯中飯店) in 1919 at Bund 19

Two days later, 11 July 1919, the above gentlemen met at the same place to discuss the matter further and also present there were: American Consul-General Thomas N. Sammons, R. Buchan, E. H. Dodge, Dr. N. L. Downs, E. O. Baker and F. J. Raven. At this

meeting, the Club was duly organized with Dr. Julian Petit as provisional chairman, and W. L. Johnstone as provisional secretary. Then, the following cable was sent by organizer Roger to IARC: “Interotary Chicago: Shanghai organized. Julian Petit chairman, mailing particulars. Pinneo”.

A motion, duly seconded, was carried that Shanghai Rotary Club be international in its character, i.e., in its membership and objects.

17 July 1919, the third meeting was held at the Palace Hotel when the following additional charter members were present on invitation: T. C. Britton who acted as secretary of the meeting, G. F. Ashley, C. B. Perkins, A. B. Hensler, Carl Crow, Nathaniel Pfeffer, R. W. Gilmore, George L. Treadwell and A. H. Jennings. The report of the Committee on Constitution and By-Laws was read and adopted.

20 July 1919, Roger submitted report of the organization of Shanghai Rotary Club. He wrote to International Rotary Secretary in Chicago: “You already know the results while at Manila last February and March. Since that time I have been roaming around the Far East ... while at Shanghai in June 1919 ... At our first meeting on July 9th, at which I presided ...”

21 July 1919, International Secretary’s Office advised the chairman of the Foreign Extension Committee and members of the International Board of Directors of news received regarding organization of Shanghai Rotary Club. Extension Committee Chairman, John Barrett, considered the work done by Roger a most important step in the history of Rotary.

24 July 1919, at the Palace Hotel, the report of the Committee on Permanent Organization was unanimously adopted and the following Officers and Directors were elected: President – Julian Petit; Vice President – A. B. Rosenfeld; Secretary – E. O. Baker; Treasurer – R. Buchan; Directors -- Thomas Sammons, F. J. Raven, and W. L. Johnstone. The Membership Committee then proposed a complete list of 35 charter members and the list was closed.

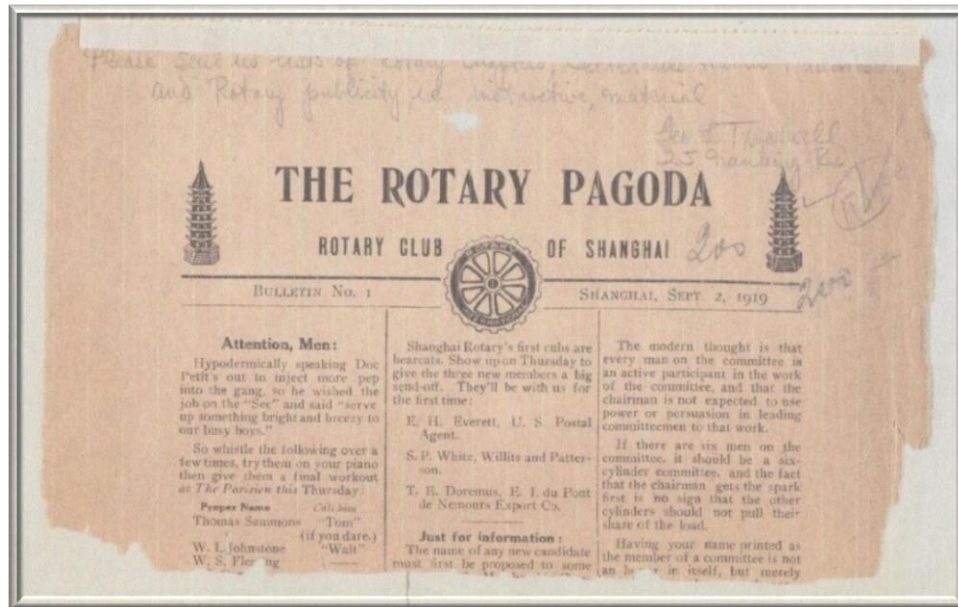
At the next meeting held on 31 July 1919 at The Palace Hotel, President Julian appointed George L. Treadwell as the provisional Secretary. This was made permanent a few meetings later.

After several meetings, the Club ultimately approved the first Club Constitution and By-laws, with a final charter membership of 37 -- all United States citizens working and residing in the International Settlement of Shanghai, China.

9 August 1919, Letter of Membership Application was submitted to IARC including a check to cover affiliation fee and list of officers and charter members. Because of the amount of time required for exchange of communications, the officers of IARC decided to accept this letter as the application of the Club and to excuse the Club from filing one of the standard formal applications.

The Club kept moving on with regular weekly meetings in accordance with the provision of the Constitution.

2 September 1919, the Club's first weekly newsletter *《The Rotary Pagoda No.1》* was published (see photo below). George L. Treadwell, club secretary, concurrently served as the editor. (Note: This weekly publication of *《The Pagoda》* is still published, in full colours, without delay by the modern Shanghai Rotary Club today.)



18 September 1919, Roger urged that International Charter be granted to Shanghai Rotary Club at the earliest possible date. He also explained why it was necessary to start out with a membership composed entirely of Americans rather than having a mixed membership of foreigners and natives: “While talking with Mr. Snedecker in Portland last Tuesday, he thought that possibly the matter was not properly started there by shutting out the natives. This matter was talked over thoroughly before organization and it was decided that they would have to start out with Americans and then the others could be brought into the fold later. Things were in such an unsettled condition between the different nationalities, that I do not think it could have been organized except on the basis it was.”

Official Ballot by Mail was conducted by the IARC Board of Directors. As the result of Roger's work, Shanghai Rotary Club was elected membership to the International Association of Rotary Clubs (Later in 1922, the organization changed the name to Rotary International.) on 1 October 1919. That was the Date of Admission as well as the Date of Charter. Club No. 545 started its career with 37 charter members, practically all of them were professional and businessmen in Shanghai, who met first at the Palace Hotel there. Hence, Shanghai Club became the second Rotary Club in Asia, and made the Republican China the 9th country (or territory) that joined the Rotary world.

In the early years, the birth of a Rotary Club might be regarded to the earliest organizing meeting. For the case of Shanghai, sometimes the record shown the date “July 1919”. However, if one is talking about the full membership to Rotary International, the birthday should better be referred to the Admission Date “1 October 1919”.

In the Report 1920 of Committee on Foreign Extension, IARC, 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.”

The Club Emblem and The Pagoda

Before Rotary International was officially re-formed in 1922, there was no restriction on the designs of club emblems by members of IARC. However, the “wheel” as decided by Chicago No. 1 should have to be the basic feature. For the first Shanghai Rotary Club emblem created in 1920, the Club put the then Shanghai landmark “Loong Hwa Pagoda (Longhua Pagoda) (龍華塔)” in front of the wheel (see pictures).



The Loong Hwa Pagoda is best well-known with as icon of The Loong Hwa Temple (龍華寺, literally "Lustre of the Dragon Temple") which is a Buddhist Temple dedicated to the Maitreya Buddha (彌勒佛) located in Shanghai. Though previous pagodas existed on the same site, the current brick base and body of the Pagoda was built in 977 A.D. under the Wu Yue Kingdom (吳越王朝) (907-978 A.D.), with continuous renovations of its more fragile wooden components on the exterior. Because of its age, the Pagoda is fragile and is not open to the public. The Temple with The Pagoda is the largest, most authentic and complete ancient temple complex that still stands within the Shanghai municipality.

Because of this pretty image, the Club chose “The Pagoda” on the emblem and also to name its weekly newsletter since 1919 until today.

Club Name in Chinese

The Club did not have Chinese name when it was born. Until in 1920-1921 after Dr. Chengting T. Wang (王正廷博士) and Dr. Fong Foo-Sec (龐富灼博士) had joined the Club, respectively, they proposed and decided to borrow the term “*Fu Lun*” (扶輪) from the ancient books in matching the ideal and meaning of “Rotary” and to name this new organization “Rotary Club” as “扶輪社”. The Chinese ancient books, over 20 centuries old, said: “*Fu Lun -- Put your shoulders to the wheel and make it rolling along.*” (扶翼車輪) (漢代王逸《楚辭章句》：「俊鳥夾轂而扶輪也」) (唐朝高彥休《唐闕史序》：「皇朝濟濟多士，聲名文物之盛，兩漢纔足以扶輪捧轂而已。」) The Chinese name was then approved by Rotary International in 1922. Since then, the Chinese name “扶輪社” was officially adopted for “Rotary Club” by Rotary International until today.

Multi-national Membership Development



The first Club President Dr. Julian Petit (貝久齡醫生), and his business card showing his name in Chinese with clinic address at No. 2, Kiu Kiang Road (Jiujiang Road), Shanghai Bund.



George L. Treadwell “Tread”, began his Rotary career in 1919 as a charter member and first Club Secretary of Shanghai Rotary Club concurrently the first editor of 《The Rotary Pagoda》.

List of 37 Charter Members with Classifications – all United States citizens

1. Thomas N. Sammons (*Consular Service*) (*USA Consul General*)
2. W. L. Johnstone (*Transpacific Passenger*) (*Pacific Mail S. S. Company*)
3. Julian Petit (*Surgery*)
4. A. B. Rosenfeld (*Cotton*)
5. R. Buchan (*Banking*) (*Asia Banking Corporation*)
6. George L. Treadwell (*Books*) (*The Chinese American Publishing Company*)
7. W. S. Fleming (*Law*) (*Fleming, Davies & Bryan*)
8. J. J. Gorman (*Transpacific Freight*) (*Admiral S. S. Line*)
9. Carl Crow (*Advertising*) (*Chun Mei News Agency*)
10. Nathaniel Pfeffer (*Newspaper*) (*China Press*)
11. F. J. Raven (*Trust Company*) (*Raven Trust Company Ltd.*)
12. R. W. Gilmore (*Glass*) (*Thos. W. Simmons & Co.*)
13. J. Rosenfeld (*Cotton Seed Oil*)
14. H. G. Simms (*Marine Insurance*) (*North China Insurance Company*)
15. G. F. Ashley (*Architect*) (*China Realty Company*)
16. C. B. Perkins (*Paper*) (*Standard Products Company*)
17. B. A. Hensler (*Retail Drugs*) (*American Drug Company*)
18. A. H. P. Jennings (*Surgical Instruments*) (*Allen & Hanbury's Ltd.*)
19. E. O. Baker (*Provisions*) (*Connell Bros*)
20. A. M. Hicks (*Machinery*) (*A. F. Mane & Co.*)
21. S. B. Stevenson (*Accounting & Auditing*)
22. T. C. Britton (*Fire Insurance*) (*Raven Trust Company Ltd.*)
23. N. L. Downs (*Dentistry*)
24. S. F. Jones (*Coffee*) (*Grace China Company*)
25. G. W. Brush (*Nuts*) (*United States Trading Corporation*)
26. J. B. Powell (*Magazines*) (*Millard's Review*)
27. H. B. Lane (*Electrical Engineering*) (*Andersen, Meyer & Co., Ltd.*)
28. George R. Coleman (*Watches*) (*Gaston, Williams & Wigmore*)
29. A. S. Goldsmith (*Packers Supplies*)
30. B. A. Roberts (*Printing Inks & Supplies*) (*Ault & Wibore Company*)
31. I. M. Busch (*Laces*) (*Bardwil Bros*)
32. B. Atwood Robinson (*Woolens*) (*Chinese American Company*)
33. E. H. Dodge (*Hardware*) (*Thos. W. Simmons & Co.*)
34. J. Harold Dollar (*Lumber*) (*Dollar Lumber Company*)
35. W. A. B. Nichols (*Paints*) (*Fearon Daniel & Co.*)
36. E. W. Bauckham (*Office Appliances*) (*Office Appliances Company*)
37. V. Meyer (*Carpets*) (*Andersen, Meyer & Co., Ltd.*)

The list of charter members were all 37 United States citizens, and 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.

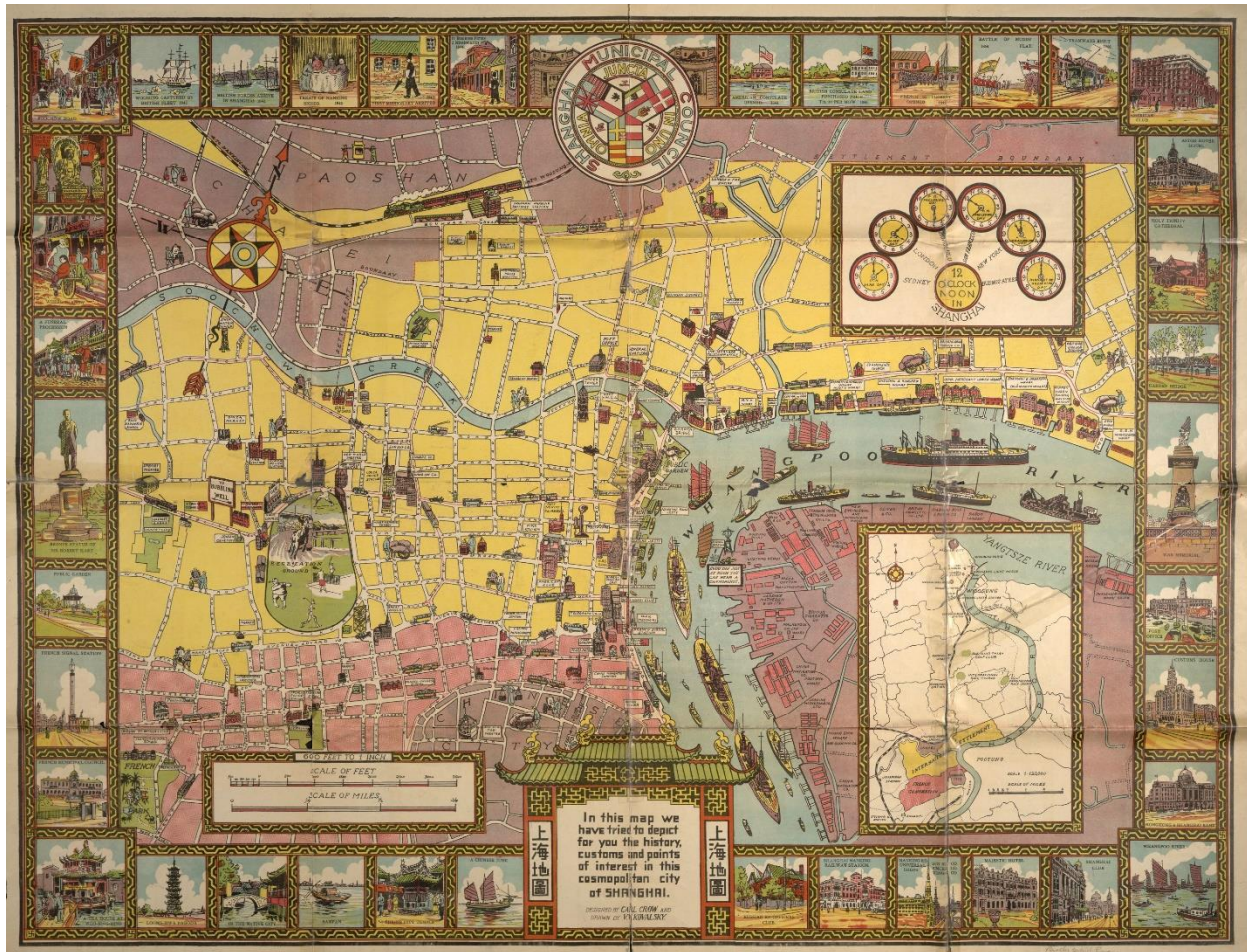
Shanghai Rotary Club was located in an International Settlement, so-called, the only internationally governed settlement in the world, with a Municipal Council composed, as in 1920, of eight British, one American, and one Japanese. The next higher governing power was the consular body, composed of the 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.

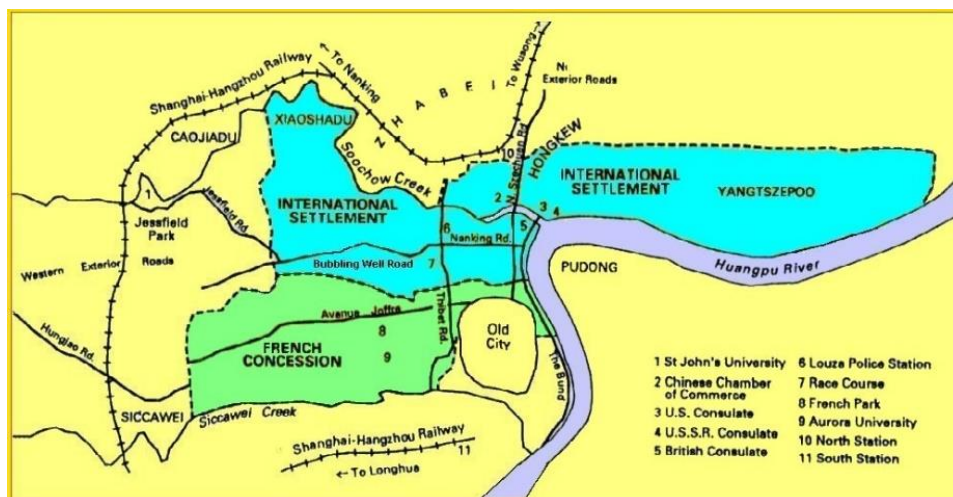


1919 – Avenue Edward VII (愛多亞路) of the International Settlement.

Today - Yan'an Road East at Huangpu District, Shanghai Bund (上海外灘黃浦區延安東路)



The Loong Hwa Pagoda is shown at the bottom left corner of this 1935 historical map of Shanghai International Settlement designed by Shanghai Rotary Club charter member Carl Crow, an American journalist and Ad man who lived in Shanghai for over 25 years. Crow was a ceaseless promoter of China in general, and of Shanghai in particular. The map illustrates his vision of a “cosmopolitan” city where the American, French, British, and Chinese cultures mixed.





THE ROTARY CLUB of Shanghai was founded in 1919 and is celebrating its twenty-first anniversary this year. It was the first Rotary Club to be organized in China and has taken an active part in sponsoring many other clubs which are now functioning in this great country. The Rotary Club of Shanghai has at present an active membership of 115, comprising 18 different nationalities, and is well known for its community work here. Shanghai Rotarians meet every Thursday at 12.15 p.m. at the Metropole Hotel and have their own publication, "The Pagoda."

The above image was the Shanghai Rotary Club page printed inside the souvenir book of *《The Diamond Jubilee of the International Settlement of Shanghai》* published in 1940. This book was remarkable and quite scarce tribute by and for the foreign denizens of two of Shanghai's three foreign settlements grouped into one administrative district, the International Settlement, soon to be scattered by the Japanese occupation and the Communist revolution.

Due to the Pacific War, the Rotary Club was disbanded on 31 December 1943. After the Victory, the Club was admitted again to Rotary International on 27 March 1946. However, the Club was terminated on 16 October 1951 due to unfavourable social and political environment in the Chinese mainland. In this new century, the modern Shanghai Rotary Club was organized in the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国), and was admitted to Rotary International on 8 February 2006.



Rotary International Charter -- Dated 8 February 2006

Rotary Club of Shanghai, People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国 - 上海扶轮社)