

Canton and Swatow

Rotary Clubs in the former Kwangtung Province

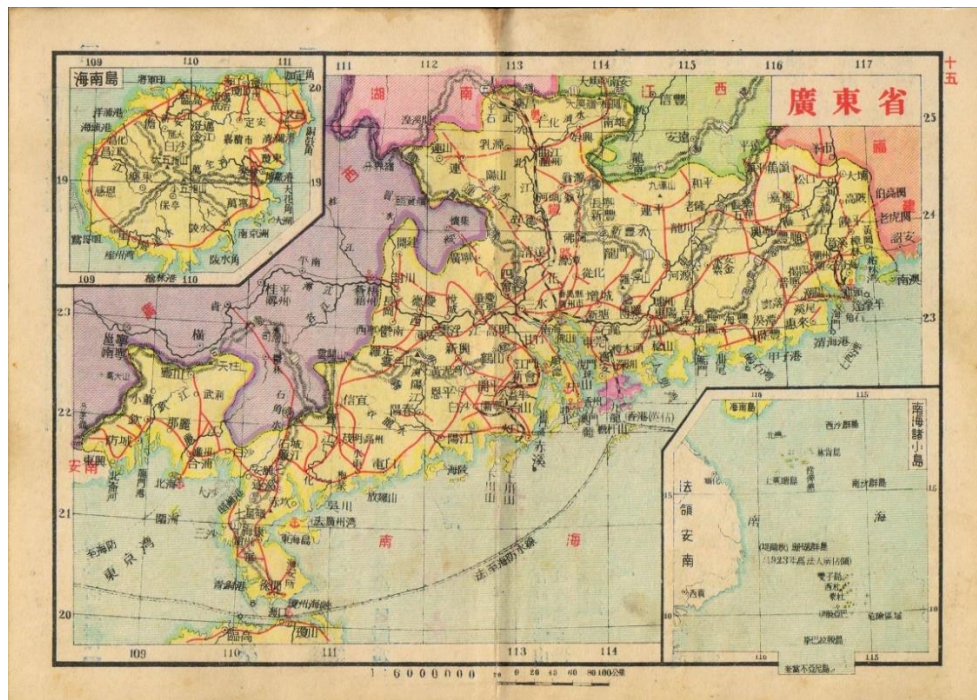
By Herbert K. Lau (劉敬恒) (Rotary China Historian)

1 August 2015



中華民國廣東省 (1911-1949) 版圖

The provincial map of the Republic of China showing the territory of the Kwangtung Province in 1911-1949



Map of the Kwangtung Province showing the locations of Canton (廣州) and Swatow (汕頭)

Kwangtung Province (廣東省) or in the modern spelling as “Guangdong Province” was a provincial-level administrative region under the Republic of China (中華民國) jurisdiction in 1911-1949. It was one of the 22 provinces established during the Ch’ing Empire (大清帝國) era. The provincial capital was Kwongchow (廣州), but was commonly called by the foreigners as “Canton” while nowadays the spelling is “Guangzhou”. “Canton” was the name in English given in the 19th Century. “Canton” derived from Portuguese “Cantão” or “Cidade de Cantão”, a muddling of dialectical pronunciations of “Kwangtung”. Although it originally and chiefly applied to the walled city, it was also used in English in reference to the entire province of Kwangtung generally. It was adopted as the Postal Map Romanization of “Kwongchow” and remained in common use until the gradual adoption of *pinyin* “Guangzhou”. As an adjective, “Cantonese” is still used in describing the people, language, cuisine and culture.

Swatow (*Shantou*) (汕頭) locating at the northeastern coast was opened in 1860 for foreigners and became a trading port according to the Treaty of Tientsin (天津條約) signed in June 1858. The Ch’ing Empire signed the Treaty with the opposite parties of the Russian Empire, Second French Empire, British Empire, and the United States of America. People in Swatow speaks their own dialect which is completely different from the Cantonese.



During the 1930s, 2 Rotary clubs were formed in the 2 major international trading ports of Canton and Swatow in South China, since the first Rotary Club of Shanghai (上海扶輪社) was introduced from the United States in July 1919:

- (1) Canton Rotary Club (廣州扶輪社) was admitted to Rotary International on 25 April 1932, Charter No. 3509, but was terminated on 21 December 1950; and
- (2) Swatow Rotary Club (汕頭扶輪社) with Charter No. 3973 conferred on 21 May 1936, but was finally also terminated on 21 December 1950 during the “Campaign to Suppress Bandits in Northern Kwangtung” (鎮壓反革命運動) from September 1950 to January 1951.

Canton Rotary Club 廣州扶輪社

There have been 5 Rotary clubs of Canton existing in the Rotary World. They are 4 of them all located in the United States of America and are still active today:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Rotary Club of Canton, Ohio (1915) | (2) Rotary Club of Canton, Illinois (1919) |
| (3) Rotary Club of Canton, Georgia (1937) | (4) Rotary Club of Canton, Michigan (1977) |

It is the pity that the Rotary Club of Canton formed in the first republican nation in Asia – The Republic of China – had a rather short life in the history. The Club was organized at the year end of 1931 and was later admitted to Rotary International in spring 1932, but was regrettably terminated in late 1950 due to the unfavourable political and social environment.

The Oriental Rotary Extension to South China

The story can be dated back to Saturday, 15 November 1930. “The Marco Polo of Rotary” James W. Davidson (達飛聲/禮密臣) (diplomat/journalist), Honorary General Commissioner of Rotary International, visited Canton of the Republican China together with his wife Lillian and daughter Marjory. That was Jim’s earnest desire to organize a Rotary Club there in Canton as the plan of his Far East Rotary Extension Mission assigned by Rotary International. Jim had been touring the Orient for the previous two years, organizing Rotary clubs at different places in the Far East. Speaking of the ideals of Rotary, in Canton, Jim told the local press 《*The Canton Gazette*》 :

“... its success is probably due to the fact that it is perhaps the first great movement that has had the world as its field, that has shocked no faith or creed, offended no custom and aroused no greed. Its appeal ignores all international boundaries: it has no mystic rites; it places methods, its aims and objects frankly before the world and is open equally to the member and non-member; it can never be wrecked on the rocks of political argument since it demands of its members first of all good citizenship; it can never be accused of disloyalty since it stands for the rights of nations and believes in patriotism. It is not even a pacifist organization.

“Rotary does not feel that there is anything in loyalty to one’s country that is incompatible with developing friendship with men of other lands. In fact Rotary believes that the citizen who best serves his country is the one who wishes to know the truth about its neighbours, and who desires to replace hatred between nations and peoples with friendship. With the exception of Russia and Canton, the world is truly well covered with Rotary Clubs. It is to be hoped that the leading citizens of Canton will welcome this opportunity to link with the rest of the world.”

The next day, Jim and family went southward to visit the British Crown Colony Hong Kong (香港). At the moment a good start had already been made in Hong Kong which offered an ideal city for a Rotary Club on account of its cosmopolitan population. Prior to this visit, Jim had already established in 1930 the Rotary Club of Singapore in the British Straits Settlement.



James W. Davidson with daughter Marjory and wife Lillian during the Oriental tour

The City of Canton in the 1930s

Canton, the great commercial metropolis of South China (25° 11' N., 115° 14' E.), was the original capital and outlet of the Basin of the Sikiang (*Xijiang*) (西江) or West River which is the focus of the life of South China, separated from the Yangtze Basin, the heart of Central China, by a broad highland zone. Canton, one of the foremost cities of China during the era, situated on the Pearl River known to the Chinese as Chu Kiang (*Zhujiang*) (珠江), was the capital of the province of Kwangtung and the seat of government of the province. By the Chinese it is often referred to as the City of Rams (羊城) which name has come down from an ancient legend of "Five Rams". Canton was, by the way, the Western misnomer for Kwangtung, the real name.

Because of its favoured situation, Canton at an early date drew European traffic. As far back as 1516 the Portuguese found their way to this port and as early as the 10th Century Arab navigators had made regular voyages between here and the western ports of Asia. After them came the Dutch, the Briton and other Western traders.

The city which was fast expanding stretched along the river front for a length of four miles, with a depth of two miles. Formerly it was enclosed by a wall 43 feet thick at the base and from 25 to 40 feet high. This had been demolished in order that a motor road from 80 to 100 feet wide could be constructed. Modern buildings, wide streets and handsome parks adorned the city. Much had been done in recent years to develop home industries. Factories had sprung with mushroom-like rapidity, especially at Honam (河南) (South Bund). A cotton spinning factory equipped with up-to-date machinery had been erected by a local concern at an outlay of \$5,000,000 (Chinese currency). Locally made matches were exported as far as the Straits Settlements (*Malaysia and Singapore today*) and the Dutch East Indies (now *Indonesia*). Five factories and several hundred workshops for producing hosiery and underwear might be counted among other industries. The silks, ivories, and jades of Canton were too well-known to require mention. The population of Canton City itself was estimated at one million.

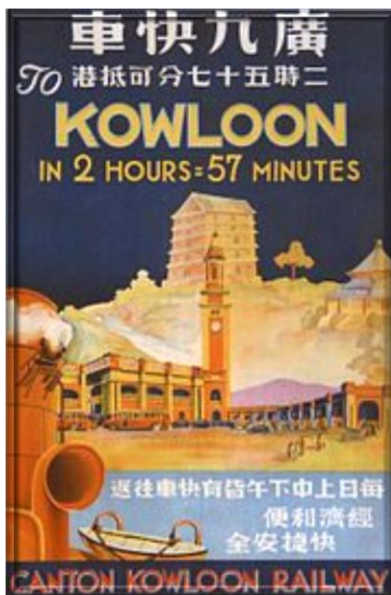
There was ample means of communication between Canton and the British Crown Colony Hong Kong (英國殖民地香港), a distance of 111 miles by rail and 95 miles by water. Other than by aeroplane, daily express trains took about 3 hours to run on the Canton-Kowloon Railway (廣九鐵路) between Tai Sha Tau (大沙頭) of Canton to Tsim Sha Tsui (尖沙咀) of Kowloon (*see pictures on Page 5*). There was regular steamboat services between this port and Hong Kong, Macao (澳門), Wuchow (梧州), West River ports, Kwongchow Wan (*Guangzhouwan*) (廣州灣), Shanghai (上海), etc. Real work had been begun on the uncompleted section of the Canton-Hankow Railway (粵漢鐵路) so that in the near future rail travel would be possible between the two cities. A branch line of this railway ran from Canton to Shamsui (*Sanshui*) (三水), making the West River ports within easier reach. An extension line to Shiuqing (*Zhaoqing*) (肇慶) and from there to Kwangsi (*Guangxi*) Province (廣西省) was being planned by the authorities who were also contemplating the construction of an east-bound line to link up Canton with Swatow and Amoy (*Xiamen*) (廈門) of Fukien (*Fujian*) Province (福建省). On 1 September 1931, long distance telephone service was opened between Canton and Hong Kong.

No description of Canton, however brief, was complete without a word on Shameen (*Shamian*) (沙面), which was an artificial island towards the west of Canton City, on which foreign interests were centered. Shameen comprised the British and French Concessions and

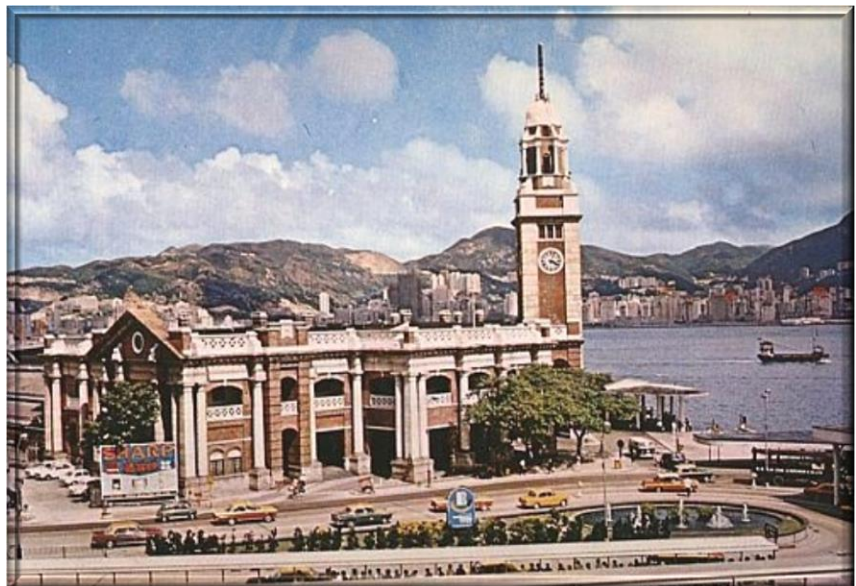
was well laid out with paths shaded by handsome trees, gardens and tennis courts. From there foreign nationals conducted their business activities and there the majority of them have their homes. Trading companies and banks from the Great Britain, the United States, France, Holland, Italy, Germany, Portugal, and Japan built stone mansions along the waterfront. Shameen was also the consulates district for Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Soviet Union, as well as the United States of America. Certainly, no doubt, the Canton Rotary Club's secretariat was also located at Shameen.



廣州大沙頭火車站 Tai Sha Tau Railway Station, Canton



(L) Canton-Kowloon Express Train Advertisement



(R) Kowloon Railway Terminus



Inception and Birth of Canton Rotary Club

There was no further action in Canton after James W. Davidson's visit in 1930. But with the organizing effort by Jim, the Hong Kong Rotary Club (香港扶輪社) was admitted to Rotary International on 20 February 1931. When Dr. Fong Foo-Sec (鄺富灼博士), a Kwangtung native, took up the presidential office of Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社) on 1 July 1931, there was a wish from the Club to sponsor a new Club in Canton. Taking the opportunity that Dr. James McClure Henry (香雅各博士), Provost of Lingnan University (嶺南大學教務長) visited Shanghai in the fall of 1931, James was persuaded to undertake the organization of the new Club. Very soon, the Shanghai Rotary Club decided and appointed its immediate past president George A. Fitch (費吳生) to serve as the Special Representative to take up this mission of Rotary extension.

The first meeting, taking the form of a luncheon at The Hotel Asia (亞洲大酒店), to discuss the organization of a Rotary Club in the city of Canton was held on 13 November 1931 with the presence of Dr. James M. Henry, Dr. Chien Shu-Fan, Patrick T. Carey, Huang Kuang, George William Greene, Edward Shim, Lee Ying-Lam, and Lo Po-Shue. The second meeting to continue the discussion was held 10 days later on 23 November 1931, with a few more in attendance than previously. A provisional committee was appointed consisting of James M. Henry, Huang Kuang and P. T. Carey to arrange for an inauguration meeting.

The first formal meeting which gave birth to this Club was held, again at Hotel Asia, on Tuesday, 15 December 1931, from 7 to 9:30 p. m., with 29 charter members and the following 4 visiting Rotarians present: (1) From Shanghai Rotary Club: George A. Fitch, Special Representative; (2) From Hong Kong Rotary Club: Sir William Hornell (康寧爵士), President; Maurice Frederick Key, O.B.E., Secretary; and Rotarian D. M. Maynard.

At this inauguration meeting, charter membership cards were filled in, election of officers made, appropriate speeches were given by George A. Fitch, William Hornell and James M. Henry. It was unanimously agreed on motion by James Henry and seconded by P. T. Carey to apply to the Rotary International for a charter.

Address by George A. Fitch (費吳生), Past President & Special Representative of Shanghai Rotary Club (Head of Y.M.C.A. in China)

In his address, Fitch spoke on the objects and organization of the Rotary Movement which represented on September last a total of 3,463 clubs and an approximate membership of 155,000 business and professional men throughout the world. He brought out the significant fact that Rotary appealed especially to those who live in the great port cities of the East because of the work it was doing in building up a great world fellowship.

Fitch said, "We know that friendship between nations cannot be achieved by treaties, or by the kind words of diplomats: international amity can only come through the world desiring friendship, and it is not brought about by the acceptance of it as an ideal, but by contact." Fitch also pointed out: "International-mindedness and friendship were not the only aims of Rotary, which sought also to carry out community and vocational services."

Fitch then explained in detail the pitch of organization to which a Club like that in Shanghai—twelve years old---had been brought about. This part of his speech was rather strong meat for

babies, and one-year-old like the Hong Kong Rotary Club. He concluded by reading the Objects of Rotary.

Advices by Sir William W. Hornell (康寧爵士), Charter President of Hong Kong Rotary Club (Vice-Chancellor of Hong Kong University 香港大學校長)

In calling upon Sir William Hornell to address the meeting, James Henry said the example of Hong Kong would stimulate them to friendly emulation. Sir William Hornell gave a few words of advice that were timely and appropriate to the occasion. He said:

“I will give you a few words of advice, based on my very short experience of Rotary. To succeed, you have to make your meetings a success—something you look forward to attending. Don’t ‘grouse’ when the room is hot, or the speaker dull, or the lunch indigestible. Make a point of coming regularly to the meetings and don’t dun the directors with application for leave of absence. First establish a real bond of friendly feeling between yourselves and then you will be able to go out and make Canton a better and a happier place.

“After hearing about the magnificence of the organization in Shanghai and the wonderful things they do there, I feel about the Queen of Sheba after a memorable interview with King Solomon—‘there is no life left in me.’ (*laughter*) But after a year of considerable difficulties and some disappointments, I say unfeignedly that I do not regret having accepted office as the first President in Hong Kong. I sincerely congratulate Canton on having taken this step, because I believe that the primary thing in Rotary is that it offers the opportunity for its members to become socially-minded, to find joy in the society of their fellow human beings.

“Shanghai is a very rich town, an international town they seem to have most marvellous ways of screwing money out of each other! They wouldn’t stand it in Hong Kong! (*laughter*) In Shanghai, where Rotarians sing, they must meet in a padded room—(*laughter*)—at least, a sound-proof room, and so they can sing as much as they like. We have to hold our meetings in Hong Kong in a section of a restaurant, and if we took to singing it would soon be a question whether Lane Crawford’s would not have to raise the price of lunch to the other people—unless they had to lower it! (*laughter*) However, Rotary flourishes where use of the first name or a nickname is not prevalent, where there is no singing, no horseplay and no so-called stunts. These are incidentals and not part of the Constitution. I believe the reason why Rotary is a world movement to be found in the joy which men who are socially-minded find in working together for a common purpose. The man who is a good citizen, who is fond of his own country, is much more likely to be acceptable to people of other countries.”

Remarks by Dr. James McClure Henry (香雅各博士), Charter Member & Vice-President (Provost, Lingnan University 嶺南大學教務長)

When President Chien Shu-Fan was compelled to leave the meeting on account of indisposition, James Henry took the chair and congratulated the members on having a president who was one of the leading citizens of Canton and remarked that this new-born Club was grateful to the Shanghai Rotary Club for sending so able and inspiring a representative as George A. Fitch. James Henry dwelled on the organization of the Club and the part Shanghai and Hong Kong took in it. He further said that a good deal of the enthusiasm for Rotary in Canton was due to the interesting reports in the papers of the meetings of the Hong Kong Rotary Club and that Canton Rotary Club was going to succeed and make itself felt for international friendship, better

understanding and a better Canton. It might be added here that James Henry was more instrumental in bringing into being the Canton Rotary Club than any other person.

Greetings from Rotary International

Canton Rotary Club was elected membership to Rotary International on 25 April 1932 with Charter #3509 granted. It was the 4th Club formed in the Republic of China. The charter did not arrive until the latter part of May 1932. In a letter of the 27 April 1932, the Rotary International at Chicago wrote to every charter member in brief as follows:

“These few words of welcome may surprise you, but with them I am expressing the fraternal greetings of all Rotarians to you as one who has recently come into the fellowship of Rotary. This fellowship opens to your association with approximately 155,000 business and professional men who are wishing and working for the welfare of all peoples and nations. Just as you are welcomed in your own Rotary Club so will you be received and welcomed in the Rotary Club of any city in the world.”

List of Charter Members with Classifications

- (1) [President] Chien Shu-Fan (*General Law Practice*)
- (2) [Vice President] James McClure Henry (香雅各) (*Education-Universities*) (*Lingnan University 嶺南大學*)
- (3) [Secretary] Alfred Elliott Quin (*River Shipping*) (*Deacon & Co.*)
- (4) Walter F. Arndt (*Ocean Shipping*) (*The Robert Dollar Co.*)
- (5) Benjamin Bennett Anthony (*Lubricating Oil Distributing*) (*Standard Oil Co. of New York*)
- (6) George Bodiker (*Metal Mining & Refining*) (*Bodiker & Co.*)
- (7) Patrick T. Carey (*Electrical Supplies Distributing*) (*China Electric Co., Ltd.*)
- (8) Chang Hua-Ling (*Newspaper Publishing*) (*The Canton Gazette*)
- (9) Tso H. Chen (*Silk Brokerage*) (*Silk Bank*)
- (10) Chu Yu-Mai (*Electric Light & Power Service*) (*Kwangtung Electric Supply Co., Ltd.*)
- (11) Deane Tsung-Yao (*Telephone Service*) (*Canton Municipal Telephone Administration*)
- (12) Paul Kwong Fu (*Silk Testing*) (*Raw Silk Testing Bureau*)
- (13) George William Greene (*Real Estate*) (*Asia Realty Co.*)
- (14) E. R. Hill (*Piece Goods Distributing*) (*Dodwell & Co., Ltd.*)
- (15) August Hoffmeister (*Raw & Waste Silk Distributing*) (*U. Spalinger & Co.*)

- (16) James C. Hung (*Government Administration – Engineering*) (*Canton Municipal Government*)
- (17) Henry Laffond (*Raw Silk Exporting*) (*Mandier Ribet & Co.*)
- (18) Lau Tai-Chi (*Dentistry*)
- (19) Lee Ying-Lam (李應林) (*Young Men's Associations*) (*Young Men's Christian Association*)
- (20) Li Lu-Chao (*Government Advisor*) (*Kwangtung Provincial Government*)
- (21) T. Kai Liang (*Banking - Savings*) (*Shanghai Commercial & Savings Bank*)
- (22) Y. M. Lin (*Trust Company*) (*Canton Trust Co., Ltd.*)
- (23) Lo Po-Shue (*Insurance – Fire*) (*China United Assurance Society Ltd.*)
- (24) Loo Ien-Ming (*Banking – Domestic*) (*The China State Bank Ltd.*)
- (25) S. C. Mok (*Water Service*) (*Canton Municipal Water Works*)
- (26) Edward Shim (*Agricultural Chemistry*) (*Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd.*)
- (27) Girault T. Thach (*Banking – General*) (*National City Bank of New York*)
- (28) Tong Hsuan (*Government Administration – Salt Revenue*) (*Salt Revenue Service*)
- (29) Samuel Wong (*Theatres*) (*Chung Hwa Theatre*)

Regular Weekly Meeting Venues

Since inception, Canton Rotary Club had already decided to hold its regular meetings at 2 alternative venues, which were stated clearly in the Official Directory of Rotary International:

Option (1) -- Indoor Venue:

The Hotel Asia (亞洲大酒店) located at the West Bund (西堤二馬路 34 號) which was close to the Club Secretariat at Shameen.



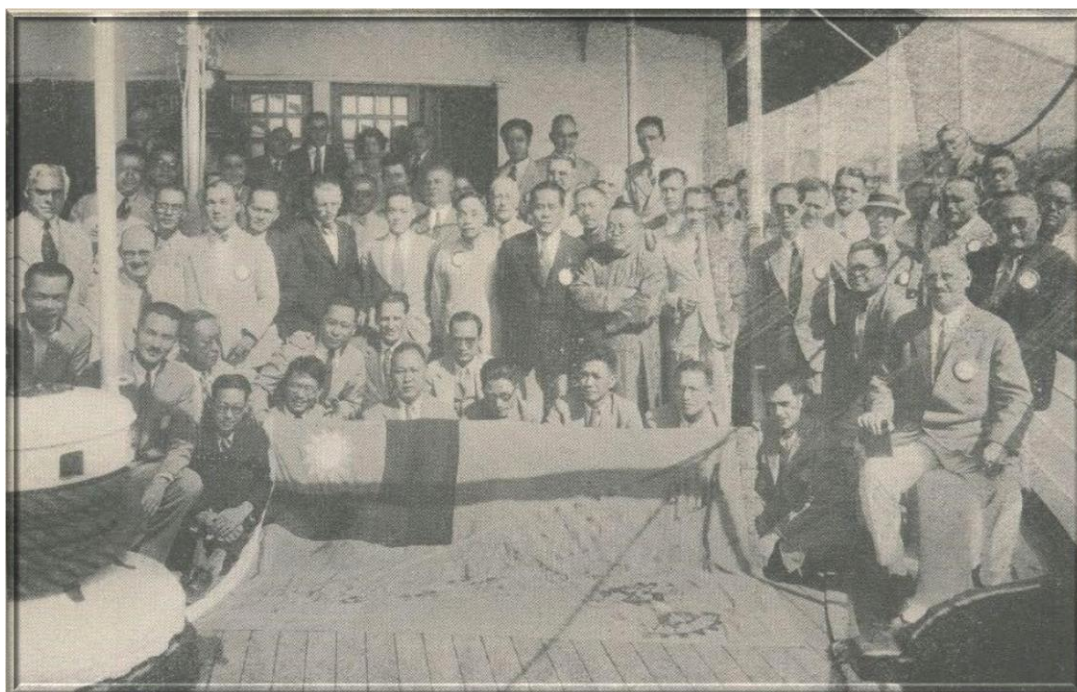
Option (2) -- Floating Venue:

On board one of the vessels of the “Hong Kong, Canton & Macao Steamboat Co., Ltd.” (省港澳輪船公司) which offered scheduled traffic between Canton and Hong Kong.

(This proved to be a smart decision in the later days as an attraction to good attendance when the 2 clubs of Canton and Hong Kong held their regular inter-city meetings, alternatively. Canton and Hong Kong Rotary clubs were the closest neighbours and brotherhood to each other.)



The official Directory of Rotary International reveals that the Canton (China) Rotary Club has two meeting places. One is at the Hotel Asia; the other is more unusual—a steamship used in river service.



Occasionally, Canton Rotary Club held regular meetings on board a steamboat sailing on the Pearl River. The lower photo was taken in November 1934.



Canton Rotary Club celebrated its 5th Anniversary in 1937.

Imperial Japan's Invasion

In the late evening of 7 July 1937, outbreak of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, also known as the Lugou Bridge Incident (盧溝橋事變/七七事變) in Peiping (*Beijing*) (北平) was used as an excuse by the Imperial Japan to launch full scale aggression to China. Very soon, the Japanese military forces speared down south to Kwangtung. By the end of the year, the Canton Operation (廣州戰役) was to blockade China to prevent it from communicating with the outside world and importing needed arms and materials. Control of Canton and the Pearl River Delta provided a base to make the blockade of the Province more effective by seizing southern China's major port and isolate the international port of the British Crown Colony Hong Kong. Prior to the Canton Operation, the Imperial Japanese Navy conducted an aerial and naval interdiction campaign against China's communication lines to neighbouring regions. Japan believed that the blockade would hasten the end of the war. Disruption of the Chinese logistics network was the primary Japanese objective in Kwangtung Province from August 1937 until October 1938. With Chinese air power in the south largely destroyed, the way was clear for the invasion of Canton. The landings were unopposed, and a mood of panic quickly came over Canton as the population realized that the city was doomed.

The city fell on 29 October 1938, as Western gunboats watched on. Further landings to capture other coastal cities occurred in February 1939, when the Special Naval Landing Forces landed on Hainan Island (海南島), not far from the Chinese border with French Indochina, and in June 1939 when the city of Swatow (汕頭) was taken. These operations completed the blockade of Chinese ports and effectively left the Burma Road and the 'Hump' air route over the Himalayas as the only way to get supplies into the Chinese Mainland.

Unfortunately, outbreak of the Pacific War on 7 December 1941 resulted the hostility between the Imperial Japan and United States together with her Allies. Many of the American and European Rotarians in Canton and Hong Kong, respectively, were arrested and interned by the Japanese military forces, including Dr. James M. Henry. Canton Rotary Club was not able to function normally that led to be disbanded on 31 December 1943, so likewise by the Rotary Club of Hong Kong.

After the War Victory in 1945, Canton Rotary Club was re-organized and re-admitted to Rotary International on 27 December 1946 with 30 old and new members, weekly meeting on every Tuesday, 12:30 p.m., at the American Returned Students' Club.

Change of District

When the Club was established in 1932, it was still non-districted and was supervised by an Honorary Commissioner appointed by Rotary International President. On 1 October 1935, Canton Rotary Club was one of the 15 founding members of the newly established 81st District of Rotary International. Territory of the District was compiled with 3 different nations: (1) Republic of China; (2) British Crown Colony Hong Kong; and (3) The Philippines Islands (United States Protectorate).

Later on 1 July 1937, the Club was re-districted again with all other clubs in South China to form the 96th District. However, commencing on 1 July 1949, all Rotary International districts were re-numbered. The 96th District was replaced by the 57th District which was compiled with clubs located in these geographical territories: Southern provinces of the Republic of China (中華民國)---Fukien (*Fujian*) (福建省), Kwangtung (*Guangdong*) (廣東省), Kwangsi (*Guangxi*) (廣西省), Kweichow (*Guizhou*) (貴州省), Yunnan (雲南省); plus the British Crown Colony Hong Kong (英國殖民地香港) as well as the Portuguese Territory Macao (葡萄牙領地澳門) located at the south China coast.

There were 12 Rotary clubs, in chronological order: 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).

Home of District Governors

Canton Rotary Club had provided 2 Rotarians to serve Rotary International as District Governors:

(1) Dr. James McClure Henry (香雅各博士) --- 96th District Governor

October 1938 – 30 June 1939; 1 July 1939 – 30 June 1940; 1 July 1940 – 30 June 1941

(2) Huang Kuang (黃光) --- 96th District Governor --- 1 July 1948 – 30 June 1949

Presidential Visit to Hong Kong and Canton

In 1949-1950 “Gem” George Ernest Marden (*Hong Kong*) (*Shanghai Rotary Club President 1928-1929*) was the District Governor but the District was re-numbered as 57. During the year, Rotary International President Percy Hodgson and his lady Edith commenced their global visits as scheduled. In September-October, they travelled to the Orient including the 57th District. In the Far East, the couple spent 16 days in Japan and met Rotarians of 16 clubs in several cities. All clubs in Japan were re-admitted to Rotary International gradually after the World War II since 1947. Hodgson was happy to present some of the charters during his visit.

Then, the couple flew to Hong Kong. Upon their arrival on October 6, it so happened that was the Mid-Autumn Festival (the 15th Day of the 8th Lunar Month) (中秋節) which was a public holiday in Hong Kong. The couple was first welcomed by the Rotary Club of Hong Kong President Kenneth Fung Ping-Fan (馮秉芬), in a reception held in his residence. That was a gathering of joy and happiness.

One of the American guests described in his book 《The Chinese Journals of L. K. Little》 :
“... to cocktail party at Mr. Fung Ping-Fan’s house for Mr. and Mrs. Percy Hodgson of Pawtucket. Percy is President of Rotary International, and is making a world tour. Mrs. Hodgson is very pretty, and looked most charming under the glare of the photographers’ lights (a barbarous custom!). They are a good-looking couple, and I was proud of my fellow Pawtucketeers ...”

No doubt, on the days after the presidential couple paid the official visit to meet the 104 members of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong:



October 1949, Hong Kong – Rotary International President Percy Hodgson (at podium) and lady Edith (at his right) addressed The Rotary Club of Hong Kong where President Kenneth Fung Ping-Fan was presiding (in front of the club banner), and District Governor George E. Marden appeared at the right margin of the photo.

After the visit to Hong Kong, the presidential couple dropped into Canton for a one-day visit with District Governor Gem and Rotarians. The state power in China was already controlled by the China Communist Party (中國共產黨) and the People’s Republic of China (中華人民共和國) was declared established on 1 October 1949. At the time, Canton was not yet practically “liberated” until 14 October 1949 -- though the People’s Liberation Army was already in the outskirts and ready to battle into this ancient city, and the Canton Rotary Club was still alive.

Here below is what President Percy Hodgson, after the global travel, reported on his visit:

“In the past eleven and a half months, Edith and I have travelled approximately 200,000 miles. We have visited 79 different countries, and have contacted, directly or indirectly, thousands of Rotary clubs. We estimate that I have spoken to about 75,000 Rotarians, in addition to those who may have heard me on the radio.

“Hong Kong was jammed with refugees from war-torn China. Business was booming, rentals were sky high. After meeting with the 104 Rotarians of the teeming port, we took off, with District Governor “Gem” Marden, for Canton an hour away by air. With the Red Army circling the port city, we met with Canton Rotarians for a Chinese luncheon that I shall never forget. What would happen that next day was anybody’s guess, but for the moment the one thing these keen men wanted to talk and hear about was Rotary.

“How could one appraise accurately the full significance of that incident in China, when members of the Rotary Club of Canton listened intently to the Rotary story, and stayed afterwards as long as we could remain, in order to ask intelligent and forward-looking questions about Rotary -- while, at the very moment, a conquering army was at the gates of the city -- and within 24 hours after we left Canton the city fell?

“Canton fell that night, a few hours after we were back in Hong Kong. I am happy to report, however, that at this writing Rotary in China, which numbers 22 clubs, is still functioning and that our fellows there are continuing to meet.”



13 October 1949, Canton -- Rotary International President Percy Hodgson (bow tie) and lady Edith accompanied by District Governor G. E. Marden (L-5), and Canton Rotarians laid wreath at the Huanghuagang Mausoleum of the 72 Martyrs (the Revolutionists of 1911) (辛亥革命黄花崗七十二烈士墓).

Amid the closing months of the Chinese Civil War, and before the state capital Nanking (*Nanjing*) (南京) was captured on 23 April 1949 by the People's Liberation Army of the Communist Party of China, the Central Government retreated to Canton as the provisional capital of the Nationalist Republican China. Though on 1 October 1949 there was the establishment of the People's Republic of China proclaimed in Peking (*Beijing*) (北京), the Civil War was not yet ceased completely in the southern and western provinces.

On 14 October 1949, the Communist Army defeated the Nationalist Army in Canton and controlled the city. The communist People's Government was soon established. The Canton Rotary Club carried on their activities as usual. But until 10 February 1950, the Club wrote to District Governor Marden telling the Club was suspended from meetings due to the pending of the completion of the registration with the local authorities. This was in accordance with a Government notification to the effect that all organizations should so suspend. While the non-Chinese members were leaving the country gradually, the local Chinese citizens were not much interested to carry on due to the change of the political environment. The Rotary Club was in loss of members and was ultimately terminated by Rotary International on 21 December 1950.



Swatow Rotary Club 汕頭扶輪社

Swatow is today one of the three prefectural-level cities of the Teochew region, the other two being Teochew (*Chaozhou*) (潮州) and Gek-yor (*Jieyang*) (揭陽). Swatow, a city in the northeastern Kwangtung Province, lies on the coast of the South China Sea a short distance west of the mouth of the Han River (韓江), which, with its tributary, the Mei River (梅江), drains most of the eastern Kwangtung. The Han River forms a delta, and Swatow is on an inlet that extends about 10 miles (16 km) inland on the southwestern part of the delta. The city stands at the narrow seaward end of this inlet, where the delta on the north shore approaches the rocky promontory to the south. The harbour is impeded by a sandbar and is subject to irregular weather and typhoons. In spite of these disadvantages, Swatow is the regional centre and chief port for the eastern part of Kwangtung. The Han River is navigable by shallow-draft boats to Meichow (*Meizhou*) (梅州), some 35 miles (55 km) above Hingning (*Xingning*) (興寧).

Until the 1850s Swatow was a nondescript settlement of only 5,000 people, many being fortune-seekers attracted by a European smuggling post on the islet of Masoo (*Mayu*) (媽嶼). With the aid of willing native agents, the foreigners not only sold opium here, but also carried away thousands of men---mostly victims of clan wars, kidnap, gambling and deception, to work in the sugar plantations on Cuba or the guano pits on the Chincha Islands. Raw anger against the Westerners was contained only by the protection of the corrupt Ch'ing Empire officials.

In 1860, Swatow was opened for foreigners and became a trading port according to the Treaty of Tientsin. Subsequently an American consulate was established in Masoo. The British followed to set up a diplomatic office in Swatow 6 months later. It then developed rapidly into a major port and centre of transportation and commerce. By the 1880s Swatow was no longer just a port, but an emerging industrial centre with factories producing bean-cakes, oil extractions, flour, canned food, milled rice, matchsticks and fabrics, and heavy industry plants for ship-building and iron melting. Foreign missionaries introduced embroidery to Swatow and Teochew, helping a poverty-stricken region and endowing the diaspora with a distinct profession. Delicate, elaborately patterned Swatow embroidery and lace items continue to be popular purchases in Hong Kong, especially among Western tourists. Following connected with electricity and public water supply, as well as by railway to Teochew, light-rail to Changlim (*Zhanglin*) (樟林) and modern ferry services to other major towns, Swatow attained city status in 1919. Swatow thus depended on the Han River and on a reasonably good highway system to give it access to its considerable hinterland, which includes parts of southern Kiangsi (*Jiangxi*) (江西) and southwestern Fukien provinces, as well as eastern Kwangtung. In 1922 a typhoon wrecked the port and killed some 50,000 people. Against the odds, the city recovered almost instantly with the generous support of Teochews abroad.

By the beginning of the next decade, Swatow was host to 10 foreign consulates, 2 major hotels, 6 foreign banks and a list of big name trading and petroleum firms – amongst them being British American Tobacco (英美煙草); Jardine Matheson (渣甸洋行); Butterfield & Swire (太古洋行); Brunner, Mond & Melchers (卜內門洋行); Royal Dutch & Asiatic Petroleum (亞細亞火油); Standard Oil (標準石油); Socony-Vacuum Oil; and the Texas Co. Stepping up to become an international centre of commerce, it commenced the construction of its first airport in 1929 and it became one of only 9 Chinese cities equipped with automated telephone system in 1932.

Despite the Great Depression overwhelming the rest of the world, Swatow was now in a golden age. Between 1932 and 1937, it trailed only Shanghai and Canton in foreign cargo throughput handled and was China's third busiest port. At the same time financial contributions from Teochew relations in Southeast Asia continued to pour in. In 1936 the Swatow Post Office handled overseas remittances totaling \$40 million (Chinese National Currency). The money provided livelihood for almost two-thirds of the households in Teochew and supported also a vibrant entrepreneurial culture. Although its population was only 280,000 in 1943, Swatow had 66 business and industry associations and 2,836 companies registered in 1949.

Swatow was also one of the principal ports from which Chinese emigrants went to Southeast Asia. Being the Teochew people's gateway to the world in the early 20th century, it was the port where the Chinese embarked on their migratory journeys. It has been calculated that some 2.5 million emigrants left Swatow in 1880–1909.

During the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), the port was seriously damaged by Japanese bombardments in 1938. On 21 June 1939, Imperial Japanese troops invaded Swatow. Japanese military authorities occupied Swatow until 15 August 1945. In the Second Civil War, the Chinese Communist Army captured Swatow on 24 October 1949, 23 days after the People's Republic of China was proclaimed establishment in Peking.



Imperial Japan's Bank of Taiwan, Swatow Branch, established in 1907.



The former Bank of Taiwan building is now the Cultural Museum of Shantou.



Various banknotes issued and circulated in Swatow



Swatow street scenes in the 1920s



Imperial Japan's Consulate in Swatow completed in 1922.



The Swatow General Chamber of Commerce took group portrait on steps in front of the United States Consulate.



Shipping and wharf services in Swatow provided by Butterfield & Swire (太古洋行).



Swatow City Government Office Building completed in 1933.

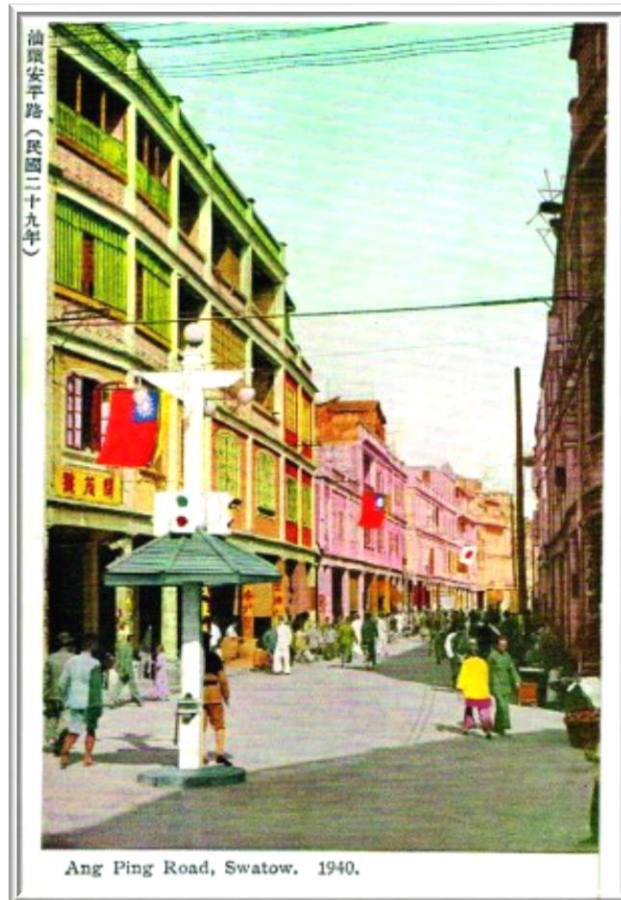


新加坡胡文虎和胡文豹兄弟于1933年在汕頭所建的「虎標萬金油」永安堂製藥廠舊址。

The Tiger Medical Hall, Eng Aun Tong Swatow Branch (Singapore) in 1933---the largest building in the city.



The commercial business district of Swatow in 1933



Swatow in 1940

Birth of the 14th Rotary Club in China

The first idea of having a new Rotary Club to be formed in Swatow can be dated back to July 1933 after the oriental visit of Honorary General Commissioner James W. Davidson to Kwangtung. The issue has been discussed by the Extension Committee of Rotary International. There was not much progress until October 1934 the Committee Chairman requested “Peter” Ernest F. Harris (Shanghai Rotary Club President 1932-1933), Honorary Commissioner to China, to consider the possibility of organizing Rotary clubs in several cities including Swatow, and to identify the sponsors. However, there was not much progress with Swatow.

Since Swatow is located in Kwangtung, the nearby clubs of Hong Kong, Canton, and Amoy (in the neighbouring Fukien Province) were invited to be “sponsor”. It was August 1935. Rotary clubs in China were still non-districted but a brand new 81st District would be inaugurated two months later on 1 October 1935---compiling the territories of the Republic of China, the British Crown Colony Hong Kong, and The Philippine Islands (United States Protectorate), with only 15 clubs. The first District Governor was Dr. Chengting T. Wang (王正廷博士) of Shanghai Rotary Club, and his first priority of mission was to extend more new clubs in the District.

Progress with Swatow was still quite slow for the vacancy of a suitable person to act as the District Governor’s Special Representative to supervise the new club formation. In October 1935, the record of Canton Rotary Club showed: “Amoy takes a keen interest in the opening of new clubs. They have pushed along the opening of a Club at Swatow. This matter, I understand, has now been entrusted to Hong Kong, thanks to Amoy for a great part. I must say that, Swatow being in Kwangtung and our Looksee having been there long ago and told us upon his return that there was no club. Jim also being a regular visitor, that I felt somewhat sorry that we never took an interest in this. Is it not part of the duty of the Board of Directors, or a certain committee to study the possibility of opening new Rotary clubs, and suggesting same to the District Governor?”

But the outcome was not Hong Kong. On 30 October 1935, District Governor Wang wrote to Professor L. Forster, Hong Kong Rotary Club President: “I appreciate your efforts to get some member of your club to be your special representative in organizing a club in Swatow, although your efforts do not result in finding such a representative. Rotarian E. H. Munson of Foochow Club has finally consented to act as such. He has had a good meeting with the leaders there, and will return to Swatow again in the near future. So the honour of sponsoring Swatow will now go to Foochow.”

Formation of the new Rotary Club in Swatow had then been brought about largely through the good work of Edward H. Munson, YMCA Secretary, of Foochow Rotary Club (福州扶輪社), Fukien Province. Dr. Peter Pan, who had been elected president of this new club, was the most active man in Swatow to cooperate with Munson. Through their joint efforts sufficient number of charter members were secured and an organization meeting was held on 15 March 1936. District Governor Dr. Chengting T. Wang recommended, on 13 April 1936, the election of this Club as a member of Rotary International. With 16 charter members, the Club met on every Thursday, 12:30 p.m., at Swatow International Club (汕頭國際聯歡社)---the clubhouse of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

List of Charter Members (with Classifications)

The Rotary Club of Swatow was admitted to Rotary International on 21 May 1936, Charter No. 3973, and became a member of the 81st District.

- (1) [President] Dr. Peter Pan Tsoh-Chen (潘作琴醫生) (Physician) (T. C. Pan Consulting Office)
- (2) [Vice President] Chang Ching-Hui (Customs Service) (Public Revenue Service)
- (3) [Secretary] Frits. George Huygen (Embroidery Supplies Retailing) (G. E. Huygen)
- (4) [Treasurer] H. T. Lee (李華材) (Shipping) (Butterfield & Swire)
- (5) [Sergeant-at-Arms] Chia C. Huang (Railroad Transportation) (Chao-Chow & Swatow Railway Company)
- (6) Ben Louis Baker (馬便磊) (Social Service) (Swatow Christian Institute)
- (7) Clifton T. Chang (張智) (Banking) (Kwangtung Provincial Bank, Swatow Branch)
- (8) Daniel S. K. Chang (張嵩高) (Education) (English Presbyterian Mission Middle School)
- (9) William C. H. Chen “Bill” (Life Insurance) (Asia Life Insurance Co.)
- (10) Dr. J. C. Hsu (徐仁傑醫生) (Clinics) (J. C. Hsu Clinic)
- (11) Kenneth G. Hobart (Christianity - Protestantism) (American Baptist Mission)
- (12) Fred Maloof (馬祿孚) (Drawing Work & Embroidery Retailing)
- (13) Pang Shao-Hsien (彭紹賢) (Young Men’s Associations) (Young Men’s Christian Association)
- (14) Ernest Henry Scott (Mission Administration) (English Presbyterian Mission)
- (15) Tam Shau-Wing (譚壽榮) (Postal Service) (Post Office Swatow)
- (16) Tong Wen-Fu (唐煥勳) (Salt Revenue Service) (National Government Salt Revenue Department)

Message from District Governor Dr. Wang to Charter President Dr. Peter Pan

“It is a great pleasure to welcome the Rotary Club of Swatow as a member of Rotary International. May I offer my congratulations, first, to your Club and, secondly, to you for having been elected as its first president. Your Club has the honor of being the third to be admitted to membership in Rotary International from your district, and the one hundred and thirty-second in the whole Rotary world in this Rotary year.

You and your fellow members will enjoy many interesting contacts with Rotarians from other clubs. These I am sure will be a source of mutual inspiration and will give rise to the formation of enduring friendships. The organization of your Rotary Club should keen much to your community and to the individuals who stake up your Club. Rotary is far more than a name, and it certainly is not an inanimate object. Instead, it is a dynamic organization of individuals, its success or accomplishments depending entirely on the activities of its individual members.

To a large extent you will think of Rotary in terms of your own Rotary Club, your contact with it, and its activities. But I trust you will not overlook the fact that your Club has become another link in a chain of nearly 4,000 Rotary clubs scattered over the face of the earth. In other words, you have affiliated yourself with a world-wide organization.”

Invasion and Occupation by Imperial Japan

In the late evening of 7 July 1937, outbreak of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, also known as the Lugou Bridge Incident (盧溝橋事變/七七事變) in Peiping (*Beijing*) (北平) was used as an excuse by the Imperial Japan to launch full scale aggression to China. Very soon, the Japanese military forces speared down south to Kwangtung. By the end of the year, the Canton Operation (廣州戰役) was to blockade China to prevent it from communicating with the outside world and importing needed arms and materials. Control of Canton and the Pearl River Delta provided a base to make the blockade of the Province more effective by seizing southern China's major port and isolate the international port of the British Crown Colony Hong Kong. Another international trading seaport Swatow was first seriously damaged by bombardments in 1938. On 21 June 1939---the Dragon Boat Festival (端午節) of the year---Imperial Japanese troops invaded Swatow. Within one day, on June 22 the entire city was captured and occupied, until 15 August 1945 the Japanese Empire was defeated.

Certainly, during the wartime the Rotary Club activity was greatly disturbed and interrupted. Here below are some report excerpts from Swatow Rotary Club to Rotary International Secretariat. On 12 August 1938, Ben Louis Baker, Co-Secretary of Swatow Rotary Club, wrote to Rotary International Secretary Chesley R. Perry:

“The delay in getting this check forwarded to you is due to the war conditions. We were severely bombed at the beginning of July. This caused a suspension of our meetings for a while and the temporary removal from Swatow of some of our members, among them our Secretary. ... Following the bombing of this port last September, our Club discontinued meetings for quite a while. Later we get together again, tho not all of our members could return. Meetings kept up, tho alarms were frequent and planes visiting us. The bombings in June and July were much worse than our experience in Sept., but still we were meeting again before end of July, which shows how the morale of our people picked up. We are now going strong, and, as you will note from the list of our members, have added to our numbers despite the horrible time in which we live. Not only we are going, we are doing not a little social service the while, which I will mention elsewhere.”

Dated 2 February 1939, Baker wrote:

“You will note on the list of members, several are marked ‘dropped’ (maybe reinstated later). These are members who have left Swatow temporarily on account of war conditions. We are unable to know when they can return; we are not in a position to secure others of the same classifications to take their places. It has been difficult to keep in touch with these members, some of them, and we are not sure of their desires. So we have dropped their names tentatively from the list; but in the event of their return to Swatow and wish to keep up their Rotary membership, they will be reinstated.

The continuance of war conditions and the recent visits of the Japanese planes keep us in more or less unsettled state. It is difficult to keep our Rotary attendance and spirit. But we are not giving up, and we are hoping for better days ahead in the months before us. We enjoy the reports of Rotary successes in other parts. We wish Rotary International the best year yet during 1939.”

Dated 4 August 1939, Baker wrote:

“The material which, under date May 28, you sent out for the President- and- Secretary -elect of our Club has come to me. I am sorry for the delay in acknowledging your communication; but I am sure you have noted in the papers that our City was occupied on June 21, and that is reason sufficient for a great deal of things unaccomplished that ought to have been done.

Briefly the situation with us is as follows. Swatow was severely bombed over a fairly long period in May and June even before occupation, and the Club found it inadvisable to continue meetings. Most of our members and all of the officers had their businesses, their families and themselves to look after and no one was able to care for the responsibilities of the Club. I was myself ill in a hospital in Hong Kong for 6 weeks of that period. A number of the members left Swatow before occupation. Just now our President, our Treasurer, our Secretary, our Sergeant and a number of members are away, and there will be no return until things take out on a new aspect.

The International Club building where we held our meetings has been occupied, and despite protest and request is still held. The City is dead. Those of our members who are here are finding it requires all their time and strength to look after their own affairs. Even our coming and going is subject to some limitation. Our Vice-President is now our Postmaster, and has to care for his job under the new control, and is not in a position to push Rotary matters. You know the Japanese banned the Rotary as did the Germans. So our Club will not be lovingly looked upon.

Since my own return to Swatow, just a few days ahead of occupation, I have not been able to confer with other members; but I am fairly sure the suspension of meetings in May came before the new elections, so we do not have new officers. For the time those on this letter head will have to be considered our officers until we get where we can begin meetings again. For the present I am unable also to make any payment on our dues. But just as soon as it is practicable to do so will take the matter up with such of our members as remain here. Just now it is getting to be a very real question as to our supply of rice and fuel. And if there comes a shortage, as now threatens, we may have some very hard times here. In normal times Swatow sees tens of thousands of bags of rice, 300 lbs each, imported each month for the local and inland population. None has come in since June 30. And there has been no shipment of exports either. So you can appreciate we are in the midst of terrible times. As I find it feasible I will confer with other members remaining here and we will come to some decision as to what is to be done under existing circumstances. All will be wanting first to see how things will go here under the new regime before committing themselves, I am sure. Just as soon as I have anything definite to write you will do so.

I regret most deeply to have to send such word as this from our Swatow Club. I hope sincerely I can improve on this information shortly, but the future looks dark for us for some time to come. I am glad to say that so far as I have heard none of our Rotarians have suffered personal harm or harm to their families, tho all have suffered terrible disruption of business affairs, disruption that threatens to engulf some of them.”

Dated 27 February 1940, Baker wrote:

“Our members remaining in Swatow following occupation by the Japanese in June got together, but decided not to attempt regular meetings. There is no International Settlement in Swatow so we are directly under the authority of the ‘powers that be’. This is of especial significance to our Chinese members, who might easily be subject to very much undesired attention on the part of those who are none too fond of Rotary. Hence the decision not to hold meetings or function as an organization.

After months of waiting, the situation, on the surface at least, seems a bit more favorable. Recently the members of the Club remaining in Swatow got together again, also an informal meeting in the home of one of the members. There are only seven all told, three of them being Chinese. It was felt we might attempt regular meetings if not too frequent and if they were held in the homes of the members. We are going to try every two weeks until we see how things come to pass.

.....

Mails here are censored and are very uncertain and delayed. We have had no advice from our District Governor since ‘occupation’ of Swatow in June. So I am sending this communication to you direct.”

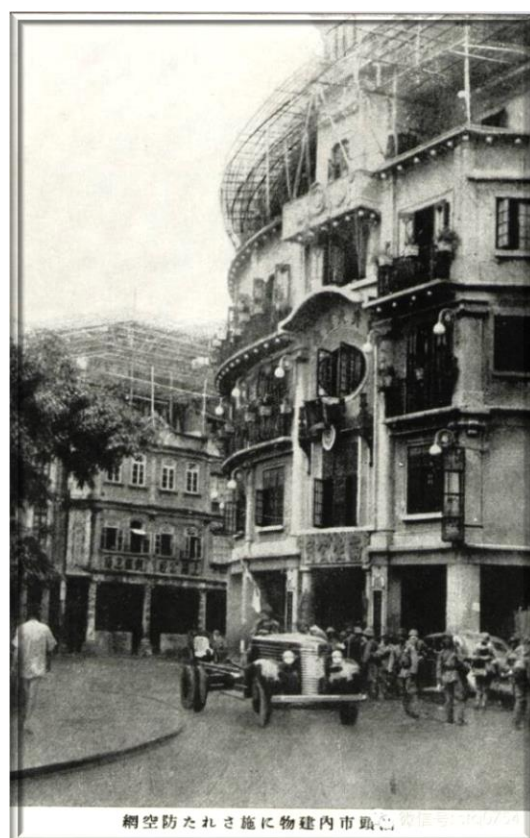
In the September 1941 Issue of 《The Rotarian》 magazine, there was such a piece of news:

Hats Off to Swatow, China!

Just a letter, but read between the lines! From the Rotary Club of Swatow, China: “We have at present seven members here ... trying to further the Object of Rotary ... Attempts were made and failed to organize somebody for relief work. Through the tireless effort of two Rotarians, with backing by the rest of our members, an organization called International Relief Association was formed ... A grant of \$60,000 (Chinese currency) was secured from the American Advisory Committee ... All missions put their hands to the pumps and some 30,000 people were benefited.”

Communications with the United States were disconnected after the outbreak of the Pacific War on 7 December 1941. In view that the Swatow Rotary Club was not functioning normally, not able to communicate, and also not able to pay the membership dues for the last 7 members, Rotary International decided to terminate on 31 December 1943 the Club’s membership.





During the Imperial Japan's occupation in 1940, many buildings in Swatow had air raid defense nets on their rooftops. The building on the right was the Nansheng Company 南生公司 (department store) in the downtown.

Reorganization after the World War II

After the War Victory and the Fall of the Japanese Empire in August 1945, District 96-97-98 Governor Dr. Chengting T. Wang (王正廷博士) wrote on his Governor's Monthly Letter dated 15 April 1947:

“From information on hand I am glad to be able to announce that definite steps are being taken to revive our Hangchow, Swatow and Wuchang clubs. I am still awaiting words from Hong Kong regarding Amoy and from Nanking about Wuhu. I am sure I will be able to make an announcement on the last-mentioned two clubs in my next letter. In spite of frequent enquiries I have not been able to get any news about Changsha in Hunan, Kweilin in Kwangsi and Kaifeng in Honan. I will deeply appreciate to hear from Rotarians in any club who are able to give me a lead in contacting old Rotarians in those three places.”

In June 1947, former Rotarians of Swatow Rotary Club put effort to re-organize the Club. With 15 members, Swatow Rotary Club was re-admitted to Rotary International on 7 November 1947. Former Charter President Dr. Peter Pan served again as the Club President.

Notable Rotary progress was indicated for the various Districts in China, if the Annual Conference of the 96th District held in the spring 1948 in Hong Kong could be used as measuring sticks. District Governor Dr. Li Shu-Fan (李樹芬醫生), of Hong Kong Rotary Club, reported the largest attendance in history, with the Wuchow Club sending half of its members, and the newly re-established Rotary Club of Swatow being represented by nearly one-third of its membership. Every Club in the District agreed to undertake the organization of a new Club during the next year. Unfortunately, battle fire went on everywhere in the Chinese Mainland due to Civil War between the Nationalist Party (中國國民黨) and the Chinese Communist Party (中國共產黨).

Finale

In the end period of the Second Civil War, the Chinese Communist Army captured Swatow on 24 October 1949, 23 days after the People's Republic of China was proclaimed establishment in Peking. Without favourable political and social environment, Swatow Rotary Club finally decided to disband and was terminated on 21 December 1950, together with Canton Club, during the “Campaign to Suppress Bandits in Northern Kwangtung” (鎮壓反革命運動) which was from September 1950 to January 1951. The Campaign was a counter-guerrilla / counterinsurgency military action the Communists fought against the Nationalist guerrilla that was mostly consisted of bandits and nationalist regular troops left behind after the Chiang Kai-Shek Administration moved its seat to Taipei of the Taiwan Province.

