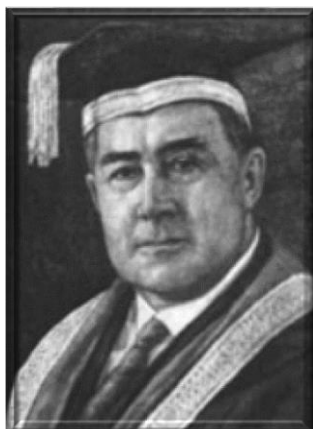


## Sir William Woodward Hornell

### The First Rotary Club President in Hong Kong

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

15 October 2016



Sir William Woodward Hornell (康寧爵士), Kt, CIE, *Hon*LLD (*HKU*), MA (*Oxon*), (1878-1950), Knight Educationalist, was the first president of The Rotary Club of Hong Kong (香港扶輪社) from 1930 to 1932, when he was the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong (香港大學校長). Though Hornell was the “Charter President”, practically speaking he was not the “founder” of Rotary in the British Crown Colony Hong Kong. The credit should be given to his immediate superior, Hong Kong Governor and Chancellor of the University, Sir William Peel (香港總督兼香港大學監督貝璐爵士), jointly with Rotary International’s Honorary General Commissioner, James W. Davidson (禮密臣), who was on his oriental mission of Rotary Extension in 1930. It is very likely Hornell was invited by Sir William Peel to join the organizing meeting where the Classification List required a member of “Education – University Administration”. Previous examples shown by Rotary clubs formed in China of which many of the university/college presidents were invited to join the local Rotary clubs.

#### Birth of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong

It was 85 years ago when the Rotary Club of Hong Kong was admitted to Rotary International on 20 February 1931. Then it was a non-districted Club. The Charter was delivered from the hands of Sir William Peel, when no district governor was available in the nearest territories. Later in October 1935, the Club joined the 11 Rotary clubs in China and the other 3 in The Philippine Islands to form the 81st District of Rotary International.

The birth of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong was given by the voluntary mission of Rotarian “Jim” James W. Davidson of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and was the 3rd Vice-President of Rotary International in 1926-1927, with the assistance of his wife Lillian and daughter Marjory. Jim was an explorer, writer, United States diplomat, merchant and philanthropist. He is remembered for *《The Island of Formosa, Past and Present》* (1903) on the history of Taiwan and also noted for greatly aiding the oriental network of Rotary in the capacity as “Honorary General Commissioner of Rotary International for Near and Far East”. Here is his photo of travelling around the Southeast Asia in 1930:



*James W. Davidson with daughter Marjory and wife Lillian*

Invalided out of the service as the American Consul General in Shanghai, China, in 1905, Jim returned to the United States to convalesce, subsequently migrated to Canada once he had recovered. Jim was an enthusiastic member of the Rotary Club in Calgary, and when Rotary wanted to extend its reach throughout the Mediterranean, Middle East, Southeast Asia and Australasia, he was the logical choice as envoy to the region because of his prior international experience. He bridged the Rotary gap between the Caspian and the China Sea, travelled 25 countries establishing 20 plus Rotary clubs in Melbourne, Sydney, Wellington, Auckland, Athens, Cairo, Jerusalem, Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Colombo, Thayetmyo, Rangoon, Penang, Seremban, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Singapore, Batavia (*Jakarta*), Bandoeng, Malang, Semarang, Medan, Klang, Malacca, Bangkok, and the last stop in Hong Kong. Rotary International had given Jim US\$8,000 to fund his extension mission; in the end, Jim also spent a quarter-million dollars of his own money. Jim was well known as the “Marco Polo of Rotary”.

In overcoming the previous experiences of failure by others, Jim’s first approach to each new country would be contact of the government officials for whom he had letters of introduction. In many cases, these same gentlemen, convinced of the excellence of Rotary,

would become members of the first small committee. They would suggest names from the ruling, professional and business groups for Jim to interview. Jim's remarkable good-natured diplomacy brought together many persons from very diverse political, religious, business and cultural sectors. For example, in Bangkok, two of the organizing committee were princes, one of whom became the first president of the Bangkok Rotary Club. The more often Jim was told that it was impossible to bring all these different cultures and races together, the more determined he became. One of his clubs had members from eight different races, and several new classifications had to be devised, such as one for "Malay chief".

Regarding the organization of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong, the story is better to be told by James W. Davidson in his own words written in 1932:

*"I am glad to reach Hong Kong because I would be approaching that part of the world in which I had lived thirteen years, nine of them in Formosa, across the way, although I had little hope of finding out here many whom I had known, for changes in this part of the world are very numerous.*

*"Furthermore, I was looking forward with pleasure to the task of organizing a Rotary Club here. There had been many previous efforts made to organize, all of which had failed. I was convinced and still am that a Rotary Club can be started in any city with sufficient population providing one knows his Rotary and is in a position to spend the time necessary to do the work. There is the occasional group who have become interested in Rotary through some favorable contact with Rotary elsewhere made by one of their number which will welcome anyone who will come along and help them, but it was not my good fortune to find such a situation in any of the larger cities.*

*"Though working in an honorary capacity, I considered that it was my particular business at the time to organize the club regardless of opposition and I was not attempting it as some had done before me who were unable to give sufficient time to the task or whose primary object in the city was either business or sightseeing. I approached the difficult problem in Hong Kong without any fears of failure. I was fortunate in the fact that the new Governor, Sir William Peel, had come to Hong Kong from Kuala Lumpur and that he had attended the official inauguration meeting there. As he was seated next to me at this dinner meeting, I was able to tell him much about Rotary.*

*"I had explained to Sir William that the gentlemen I wish to meet were such as would be representative of the official business and professional community and include representative Chinese. For I believe the greatest service that Rotary can render in these Asiatic communities is that of developing friendship among the different races and nationalities resident there, so often antagonistic toward each other, and I feel that if Rotary rendered no other service it would be well worth while.*

“Among the eight letters of introduction received from the Governor, three were to representative Chinese who stood high in the confidence of both the Chinese and European communities. They very kindly volunteered to divide the Chinese list among them and to have a preliminary interview with prospective members. Such of these as displayed interest were then brought together at one of the Chinese social clubs in groups of four to six. I enjoyed those meetings very much. They were a fine type of Chinese, cultured, advanced, and capable. Nearly all spoke perfect English. Many were university graduates, all very hospitable and interested in the ideals of Rotary, the primary object of which is a development of a better understanding and friendship among different nationalities. The Chinese ladies were no less delighted and Mrs. Davidson, Marjory, and I were the recipients of hospitality from them which we appreciated very much.

“Regardless of pleasant features, the organization of the Hong Kong Club was a difficult task, requiring a month’s stay which included two meetings of the board of directors following the organization. The inaugural dinner was held on 8 December 1930, with over eighty present including guests. All of the press were very kind in their efforts to help the movement, one of which in commenting upon the meeting stated that perhaps never before had there been brought together in Hong Kong a group representative of so many different vocations, officials, businessmen, educationalists, engineers, scientists, important men in their respective lines and representing both European and Chinese communities.”

The inaugural dinner meeting of the Hong Kong Rotary Club was held on Tuesday, 8 December 1930, at the Lane Crawford restaurant (The Café Wiseman) in the basement of the newly built Exchange Building (*aka* Telephone House 電話大樓), the center of industry and finance in Hong Kong. The charter members included 79 of the leading citizens: 31 Chinese, 46 Americans and Europeans, 1 Indian and 1 Japanese. The Club was granted Charter by Rotary International on 20 February 1931. It was, perhaps, the “double happiness” for Hornell because he was just bestowed “Knight Bachelor” several weeks ago in January by King George V, King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India.

### The first office bearers of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong 1930-1932

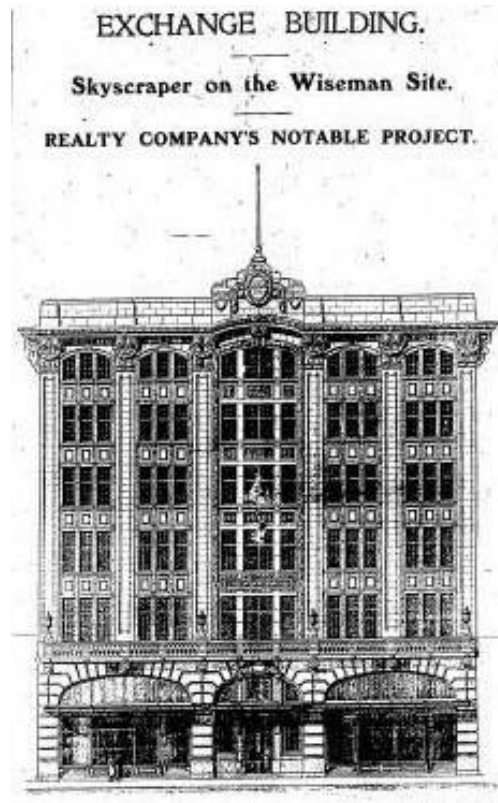
President – Sir William Woodward Hornell, Kt, CIE, MA (康寧爵士)

Vice President – Dr. The Honorable Ts’o Seen-Wan (議員曹善允博士), OBE, LLD, JP

Joint Secretaries – (1) Lieutenant Leonard Charles Fenton Bellamy, MC, AMIEE, MInstT; (2) Benjamin Wong-Tape (黃炳耀太平紳士), JP

Treasurer – N. J. Perrin

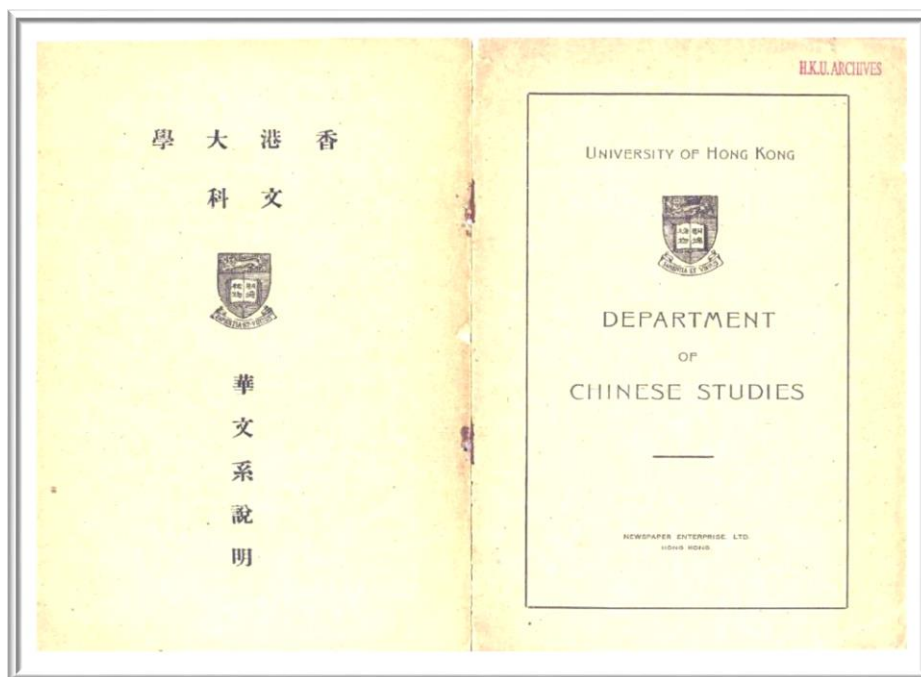
Directors – The Honorable William Edward Leonard Shenton; Allan Cameron; Chau Yue-Teng (周雨亭太平紳士), JP; J. M. Wong; Wong Kwong-Tin (黃廣田); Benjamin Wylie



*Exchange Building, No.14, Des Voeux Road, Central District.  
Venue of the Inaugural Meeting of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong on 8 December 1930.*



*The University of Hong Kong in 1930s*



1928年 -- 香港大學向社會發起勸捐，為華文系的營運籌募資金。這是提案的說明小冊子。  
 1928 – The University of Hong Kong launched a campaign in the public community to raise fund for the running of the Department of Chinese Studies. This was the booklet of proposal.



1930年香港大學中文學會成立，馮秉芬任主席，師生合影。  
 前排左五為馮平山(馮秉芬父親)，左七為馮秉芬，左八為周壽臣爵士，左九為大學校長康寧爵士。  
 A group photo of teachers and students in 1930 when the Chinese Studies Society of the Hong Kong University was inaugurated. Front row from the left, (L5) Fung Ping-Shan (Kenneth's father), (L7) Chairman Fung Ping-Fan, (L8) Sir Shouson Chow, (L9) Sir William Hornell, University Vice-Chancellor.



1931 年— 中華民國考試院戴季陶院長應中文學會之邀，到香港大學公開演講。

會後合照，照片中（左 7）大學校長康寧爵士；（左 8）戴季陶院長；（左 9）中文學會主席馮秉芬。

1931 --- Mr. Tai Chi-t'ao, President of Examination Yuan, Republic of China, was invited by the Chinese Studies Society to deliver a public speech at the University of Hong Kong. In this photo (L7) Sir William Hornell, University Vice-Chancellor; (L8) Mr. Tai Chi-t'ao; (L9) Kenneth Fung Ping-Fan, Chairman of the Chinese Studies Society.



香港大學鄧志昂中文學院正門

The main entrance of Tang Chi Ngong School of Chinese, University of Hong Kong.

## Visit to the inaugural meeting of the Rotary Club of Canton

Hornell was quite active in Rotary, not only in his home Club in Hong Kong, but also close with the Rotary extension in the Chinese mainland particularly in the neighbouring Kwantung (*Guangdong*) Province (廣東省). In 1931, there was the proposal to form a new Rotary Club in the provincial capital Canton (*Guangzhou*) (廣州). The first formal meeting which gave birth to this Club was held at Hotel Asia (亞洲大酒店), 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 (上海扶輪社): George A. Fitch (費吳生), Sponsoring Club's Special Representative; (2) From Hong Kong Rotary Club: Sir William Hornell, 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 given by George A. Fitch, William Hornell and James M. Henry (香雅各), and it was unanimously agreed to apply to the Rotary International for a charter. In calling upon Sir William Hornell to address the meeting, James Henry said the example of Hong Kong would stimulate them to friendly emulation. 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.”

The Rotary Club of Canton (廣州扶輪社), the 4th Club formed in the Republic of China (中華民國), was elected membership to Rotary International on 25 April 1932 with Charter #3509 granted. Since then, the Rotary Club of Hong Kong has a very close neighbor. Both clubs has agreed to hold frequently joint meetings with either to be the host in own city. The two clubs even had joint meetings on board of a steamer which was scheduled sailing between the cities of Hong Kong and Canton along the Pearl River (珠江).

### Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong 1924-1937

Hornell was an old boy of Radley College in Oxfordshire. After received his Master of Arts degree from the Trinity College, Oxford University, England, Hornell joined the educational service in both India and England: (1) 1902 – Professor of Presidency College, Calcutta; (2) 1903 – Inspector of Schools, Bengal; (3) 1906 – Assistant Director of C. I. Bengal; (4) 1908 – Junior Examiner, Board of Education, England; (5) 1913 – Director of Public Instruction, Indian Educational Service. His service was recognized by the British monarch with decoration of Companion of The Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire (C.I.E.).

Later, Hornell was selected to the British Crown Colony Hong Kong to serve the University of Hong Kong as Vice-Chancellor in 1924. After 13 years of service, the establishment of the Department of Chinese (華文系) which was later developed into the School of Chinese Studies (中文學院) was praised as one of Hornell’s greatest contributions. In the Congregation of 1933, Hornell was conferred a degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* by the Hong Kong Governor and University Chancellor, Sir William Peel, in recognition to his exceptional contribution to the University of Hong Kong.



The story of Hornell’s tenure is quite interesting and amazing. There is the comprehensive account of these 13 years written in a special chapter of this paper: 《The Development of Higher Education in a Developing City: Hong Kong, 1900-1980》 by Pui Wing Fung, MBA (*Oklahoma City*), MA (*CUHK*), BA (*CUHK*), being a thesis submitted in September 1988 for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Hull, England.

The entire chapter is now transcribed in the following pages. Please note the Chinese terms in brackets are inserted by Herbert K. Lau for the benefits of quick reference to readers.

## Sir William Woodward Hornell

William Woodward Hornell arrived in Hong Kong in February 1924 to assume office as the third Vice-Chancellor of the University. He was no stranger to education or to the East. At the age of forty-six, he had spent ten years in service in Bengal as Director of Public Instruction and had wide experience of teaching.

Hornell was a comfortable-looking man and he engaged his charm to impress his students immediately; the editor of the Union Magazine was able to say of him only two months after his arrival, that unlike his predecessor, Mr. Hornell was very accessible to students. He was a man used to a long day. He was accustomed to rising before six to inspect the University gardens, carrying with him a stick with a pointed ferrule on which he impaled loose paper lying under bushes, depositing it into a basket carried by a gardener who was instructed to follow him. He was often accompanied on his early morning expedition by the Registrar, Finnigan.

In February 1924, the two previous vice-chancellors, Sir Charles Eliot and Sir William Brunyate, both attended the University Congregation and were presented for the degree of Doctor of Laws by the new Vice-Chancellor, in recognition of their respective contributions to the University.

Although some progress had been made, the financial situation of the University remained precarious. The work of all faculties was hampered by lack of proper facilities for teaching and research. But Hornell insisted that a high standard of study and discipline had to be maintained and enhanced. In this respect the University's popularity and influence would grow and then there would be no doubt of the increasing demand for its services in Hong Kong, if not in China.

Unfortunately chaotic and unstable conditions in China still persisted and these affected the enrolment of students from the mainland as well as the recruitment of teachers from China. The University, however, soon began to develop a new task relation with China by chance. Henry Lester (雷士德), a rich British merchant in Shanghai (上海), had died in 1927 and by his will formed a trust with funds to be used for medical research and the founding of a hospital and a technical institute. In the 1840s the Chinese had founded a hospital on Shan Tung Road (山東路), Shanghai. This was conducted from its opening by British interests and management. Lester's Bequest included one million taels for the rebuilding and modernisation of the hospital. Professor Earle from the Faculty of Medicine was invited to report on the use of the fund for medical research. The recommendation then emerged that an Institute of Medical Research and Preventive Medicine be formed which would be associated with the new hospital and a number of departments and would embrace a library and a museum organised along the lines of Manson's London School of Tropical Medicine. It was recommended that the Institute would be affiliated to the University of

Hong Kong, where in due course Diplomas of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and Hygiene were to be developed. The Senate welcomed the proposals as a supplement to the work of Hong Kong University and of extending the interests of British education in China. The affiliation of the Institute when established was formally approved in December by Council under the statutes.

As with all his predecessors, Hornell had to face the same critical issue of University finance, although his arrival had been accompanied by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation of \$250,000 to endow a chair in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. At this time the inadequacy of University salaries was causing grave concern. The Chancellor appointed a committee under Sir Henry Gollan, the Chief Justice, to look into the position. When his committee reported Hornell was in London pleading the University's case for the Boxer allocation and Gollan was standing in as Vice-Chancellor. Gollan was thus, in a particularly favourable position to press for an increase. However a fall in the value of Hong Kong currency not only upset a recommended increase in salaries but also confronted the University with a fresh financial crisis. An appeal was made again to the Hong Kong Government for an increase in endowment to HK\$350,000. This increase, augmented by the interest on a grant of £265,000 received in April 1931 from the Boxer Indemnity Fund (庚子賠款), enabled the University Council to give effect to revised salary scales and to authorise a limited programme of development.

In 1930 addressing a Congregation, Clementi (金文泰爵士), the Governor, criticised the British Colony on how little had been done for the University. He went on to press endowment from the Boxer Indemnity for the University. From the moment he became Chancellor, he believed that the University had a special task to keep the balance in its studies, between Chinese antiquity and modernity, although it ought not to allow itself to be distracted by the political and social upheavals taking place in China. The Hong Kong University was the only educational institutions in China where the reality of this conflict was really understood and was trying to do something to blend the old China with the new.

In 1931, Hornell was knighted and later appointed by the Chinese Government to be a member of the Indemnity Board of Trustees. On 3rd March, 1931, the allocation of Boxer Indemnity was finally settled, the result was discouraging for the University. A sum of £200,000 was to be paid out to the University's China Committee in London and £265,000 handed to the University. Investment of the Boxer money in government bonds generated £12,000 a year. With the new injection of financial provision the University made possible the enlargement of the Chinese section of the library. A new building was made possible by a further \$20,000 of endowment from Fung Ping-shan (馮平山) early in 1929. The allocating of the rest of the Boxer income had to await the formation and report of a special committee on Chinese studies.

In December 1932, the University acquired a section on China of the Hankow Club

library, a valuable and rare collection of about 3,000 books. It was suited to the sort of were granted to two University's graduates, Dr. Woo Kai-fun in Medicine, and Lai Po-kan (later Mrs. Katherine Whitaker) in English Literature. Speaking at the January 1935 Congregation Sir Andrew Caldecott (郝德傑爵士), the Chancellor, announced that he had been mediating in regard to the University's chances of securing further endowments and had decided that, as Governor-in-Council, he would appoint a committee to advise on staffing, organisation and finances. The committee was chaired by the Governor himself. The report came out in March, 1937.

The affiliation of the new Institute of Medical Research and Preventive Medicine in Shanghai had effects on the future development of the Medical Faculty. During Hornell's term of administration there were some important changes and building developments in the Faculty. A small area of accommodation for research work was made available for the departments of Medicine and Obstetrics, but more laboratory space was needed for Surgery. To solve this difficulty a small plot of ground between the Anatomy School and the Government pumping station on Pokfulam Road (薄扶林道) was reserved as a site for the University Department of Surgery if and when money could be collected for the building. Professor Digby's efforts to collect the necessary funds, however, were to fall short of the amount required, and eventually the University agreed to supply the balance. The building was opened in September 1934. More appointments were expected to be made in order to fill vacant positions. With all these developments in the clinical and pre-clinical branches of the Faculty, the need for expansion in the neglected Biological Sciences became more and more acute. Biology was still without full-time staff or a department of its own. A new readership in Biology was instituted and a department was reopened in September 1930. Although the University's medical degrees had been recognised by the General Medical Council of Great Britain since 1912, a representative of the Council did not visit the University until 1933. After the visit of the Council's representative, a system of external examiners was recommended to be established for the degree examinations. Greater consideration was also given to the teaching of Public Health and allied subjects in the University. The founding of a chair of Public Health and an Institute of Hygiene and Public Health were proposed.

The year 1929-1930 brought a new period of comparative prosperity for the University, and the Faculty of Engineering, in particular, looked forward with new hope to the future. The student numbers in the Faculty steadily increased, reaching an all-time peak of 145 in 1934. From 1929 John Swire and Company (太古洋行) had provided a number of the engineering graduates of the University with passages to Britain, where they underwent paid industrial and engineering training in British firms. The Board readily accepted a similar scheme put forward by the Federation of British Industries in 1935 and extended it to cover advanced studies and engineering research. On 7th December, 1934, the opening of new

Peel Engineering Laboratory marked the end of the first stage of an engineering development plan and the creation of a thriving and compact school.

The young Faculty of Arts was just about keeping pace with the needs of the schools for professional school teachers, whether in Hong Kong or in Malaya or the Straits Settlement. In 1925, almost half of the 126 students in the Faculty were engaged in the undergraduate education group of studies. In 1934 Hornell warned that "one of the great dangers against which the University of Hong Kong must ever be on its guard comparatively humanist studies that Hornell sought to cherish and it arrived in 1933 as a symbol of the University's coming-of-age."

In 1933, when the University came of age, it was possible to celebrate the occasion with real, if restrained, enthusiasm. The centre-piece of the University's twenty-first anniversary was a souvenir account written by Hornell with financial support for its publication from Tang Shiu-kin (鄧肇堅). It reviewed the University's development and its future needs, placing the main emphasis -- once again on Chinese Studies. Among other notable happenings in that year was the discussion of a full professional dental curriculum as requested by the Government. However the proposal was hastily withdrawn when the extent of the funds required was revealed. The year's highlight was the visit of George Bernard Shaw (蕭伯納), playwright and critic who succumbed, somewhat reluctantly, to an invitation to speak to the students in the Union.

In 1934 the University was once again in financial crisis. A decision had to be taken to reduce by 10% the salaries of the university teachers in the coming year, to suspend the increments of the clerks, and postpone the making of new appointments. In the midst of all these difficulties, Eu Tong-sen (余東璇), a University benefactor, who had emigrated from Canton (廣州) to Singapore where he had emerged as a tin magnate, and had then returned to Hong Kong to live in 1927 was ready to celebrate the arrival of an old friend from Singapore, Sir Andrew Caldecott. As Governor of Hong Kong and Chancellor of the University, Caldecott constructed a new gymnasium for the University.

The University harvested some practical benefit from the Boxer Indemnity. In April 1936 Boxer Indemnity scholarships is the tendency to starve its humanistic studies for the development of its professional and technical training. "The faculties of Medicine and Engineering must be kept efficient and up-to-date", he said, "but the Faculty of Arts and its Chinese Department, even though they attract fewer students, cannot be neglected without prejudice to all that the University stands for."

In 1931, the Tang Chi Ngong Building (鄧志昂樓) was completed and it relieved congestion in the main building by providing quarters for the Chinese, Education, History and Geography departments. In the same year there were 97 undergraduates in the Faculty. In 1939, with a new Faculty of Science instituted, the departments remaining in the Arts Faculty were English, Chinese, History, Economics and Education; and to the teaching

programmes of these departments were added courses in Geography, Psychology, Ethics, Logic and French, all conducted by part-time lecturers. But before any real development could take place in the work of the Faculty as a whole, war had intervened.

One of the greatest contributions Hornell had made to the University was the establishment of the Chinese Department in the Faculty of Arts. In November 1925, Sir Cecil Clementi (金文泰爵士) returned to Hong Kong and took up appointment as Governor of the Colony. No stranger to the local community or to the University, he had been a member of the preparatory committee in 1908 and retained a great interest in the work of the University. His arrival coincided with a time at which the Government could not have increased aid to the University even had it felt an increase to be justifiable. Hornell found in his new Chancellor a scholarly man with a ready ear for the University's plans for development, especially in the field of modern Chinese studies, and for acquiring the money it needed for their implementation from the Boxer Indemnity.

The environment and the conditions for the formation of a new Chinese Department seemed ripe. This was largely on account of three factors: the University's optimism in the matter of the allocation of the Indemnity; the difficult and tendentious problem of adjusting to the results of the Hu Shih Movement (新文化運動) and the new official ways of speaking and writing Chinese; and a persistent belief among teachers then, and since, that a new building and some equipment were all that were wanted to make a new teaching department.

The first steps towards the organisation of a new department were taken in 1926. Given the Government's policy of encouraging bilingualism in the Anglo-Chinese school system, the Governor wanted the Faculty of Arts to produce a supply of talent to meet China's need for good translation services and for good interpreters of West to East and East to West. A special committee was appointed to advise on the teaching of Chinese and it recommended that Chinese Studies be developed on modern lines as part of the University curriculum. In fact, Chinese Studies formed the basic humanities curriculum in most of the Chinese universities and were well supported in the way of library and staffing. There were therefore difficulties in establishing anything viable in Hong Kong. When students could move into China for classical studies, and do so more cheaply than could be provided at home, students were unlikely to be attracted from China into a situation in which they would be pursuing Chinese Studies in a more costly and essentially English-speaking ambience. Moreover, the classics were to some extent associated with the idea of Chinese backwardness, not only because the methods of study had never progressed in the same way as had the study of other subjects but because they had been required in the provincial and metropolitan examinations and carried pre-revolution connotations. Unless Hong Kong could offer something quite different, such as 'comparative' studies, they could only fail.

Within this end in view, Hornell and Lai Tsi-hsi (賴際熙太史) visited the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and the Chinese Settlement Overseas. Their trips

were fruitful. In October 1926 Lai Tsi-hsi suggested the founding of the Chinese Department. This proposal was accepted by the University. Of the forty thousand dollars contributed by the overseas Chinese, two thousand was spent on the renovation of classrooms, ten thousand on the purchase of Chinese books, and the remaining twenty eight thousand was to be used for the remuneration of Chinese teachers and staff of the Department.

Being advised that a Chinese Indemnity delegation (the Willingdon Delegation with R.F. Johnston as its Secretary) was to visit China in 1926, Hornell made his first preparation in December for an assault on the Boxer Funds by publishing a pamphlet outlining the origin and growth of the University up to 1925. The faculties presented the developments they considered necessary for the University to make further headway and improved standards. The development programme was to include a scheme of establishing a Faculty of Chinese with comparative studies as its central purpose offering Chinese and Western law, history, philosophy, and literature, and a school for the teaching of the Chinese language to those non-Chinese people who were to spend their working lives in China. In the same year, the Hong Kong Government opened a Chinese Vernacular Middle School (官立漢文學校), in which there was an attempt to combine practical English with an intensive study of Chinese; the ultimate aim was entry to the University, where the study of Chinese might be continued. However Vernacular School students were unable to matriculate as the standard of English was low. The University had therefore to adjust its approach to the problems of Chinese Studies to form a concerted attack on the front and on both flanks. The funds collected in Malaya were used to extend the Chinese courses offered in the Arts Faculty to degree level. On one flank they opened a class in Cantonese for a group of missionaries and non-Chinese officers in government service. The attack on the other flank was to be the continuation at university level of the course offered in the new Vernacular School. The new graduating examination organised for this school was also to be open to students from China. The University's plan was, given money, to admit selected students who passed the examination into a separate school of Chinese, in which a four-year course in Chinese Studies would lead, not to a degree but a diploma, and the hope was that this school might in the course of time develop into a separate Faculty of Chinese. To strengthen the University's plan the Government asked it to undertake the end-of-school examining from December 1927. In the same year the Chinese Department was formally under the headship of Lai Tsi-hsi.

In January 1927 Clementi addressed the Congregation at the opening ceremony of the Department and he clearly pointed out that the founding of the Chinese Department in the university was closely linked to the mission and aim of the early founders:

*"...if the sole subject of a man were to become a good doctor or a good engineer, it might be contended that these subjects could well be taught in two special schools entirely independent of each other and situated in widely separated localities. But the aim of a university is not merely to make one man a*

*good engineer or another man a good doctor; and the special aims of this university are declared by the Ordinance which constituted it to be the promotion of arts, science, and learning, the provision of higher education, the conferring of degrees, the development and formation of the character of students of all races, nationalities and creeds, and the maintenance of good understanding with the neighbouring country of China..."*

The Chinese Department began in a small way, but with the help of Government and private personages in Hong Kong its curriculum was gradually expanded and its teaching staff strengthened. The Chinese Department was at first without its own buildings and library because of lack of funds. The University Library possessed some nine thousand volumes of Chinese books contributed by the Chinese community through the influence of Lai Tsi-hsi. In 1927 a sum of ten thousand dollars from the funds contributed by Chinese overseas was used to buy Chinese books. However the new Chinese Department in the University was not as popular as had been hoped. A leader in a local English newspaper reminded its readers that

*"...What we appear to have attempted is the altruistic task of presenting to the Orient, from our own resources, the perfect incubator of knowledge -- no small gift. We have not called upon the beneficiaries to help us maintain it: they may not want to... A share of the Boxer Indemnity would solve the problem; but in view of the Commissions' recommendations, that cannot be expected with any confidence... The university has no natural advantages. The old belief that it occupied a favoured position, and that it had a start over all possible rivals, must go. If there was an advantage, it has been lost. The university must labour for its position."*

When the Malayan donations were rapidly consumed, the new department was threatened with financial crisis. Mr. Robert Kotewall (羅旭蘇) and Sir Shouson Chow (周壽臣爵士) were asked to raise money to help while the University awaited the announcement of the Boxer allocation. They succeeded in raising \$200,000 in cash, and promises for the endowment of Chinese studies from Fung Ping-shan who also gave a building for the Chinese Library and \$50,000 for the purchase of Chinese books. The building was opened in 1932 by the new Governor of Hong Kong, Sir William Peel. Clementi himself contributed an important collection of Chinese books and urged the community to contribute funds for the construction of buildings for the department. A committee of fifteen under W. T. Southorn (修頓), the Colonial Secretary, was set up to advise on the future development of the young department, and it was reflected that the old 'Hanlin type' (翰林) of teaching should be replaced by modern methods. As a result of the committee's report Kuoyu (國語) was officially adopted from 1932 as the medium of teaching in the department; but the teachers were still the Hanlin readers, teaching in the old methods, Wenli writing continued in the school system, supported by teaching in Cantonese. Another outcome of the committee's recommendation was the closure of the School of Chinese opened three years before.

Because of lack of interest among pupils for a full degree course in Chinese alone; the Faculty of Arts decided to introduce two new groups of studies for the degree, one consisting of Chinese and English studies running in parallel and associated with special translation courses, and the other more specifically concerning upon Chinese Studies, but with some English and translation. The diploma course in the School of Chinese was discontinued but against the bitter opposition of those of the older generation who mistrusted the new learning.

In 1934, the University sought advice from Hu Shih (胡適), the contemporary great modern Chinese scholar. With his recommendation, Professor Chen Shou-yi (陳受頤) was sent to visit the University and made a thorough study of the possibility of future growth of the Department. In his report Cheng recommended that all the teachers in the department should be replaced and a modern scholar appointed to head it. On Hu Shih's advice the University appointed Hsu Ti-shan (許地山), a full professor at Yenching University (燕京大學), educated in America and England, and still only forty years old. Professor Hsu was a specialist in Buddhism and a student of Sanskrit and Tibetan. He was the author of many important publications and had collected a large and interesting library. In 1936, Ma Kiam (馬鑑), a professor from Yenching University also joined the Department. The curriculum of the Department of Chinese was further developed in three groups of subjects: Chinese literature, history, and philosophy. A few months before his retirement, the Vice-Chancellor was quite happy with the growth of the Department.

However Clementi considered the Department had a lot to do in order to fulfil its true mission. Speaking at the Royal Empire Society in London towards the end of 1935, the former Chancellor said:

*"...the University of Hong Kong should become during the course of the twentieth century a famous seat of Chinese learning, to which men throughout the eighteen provinces would look -- as Englishmen look at Oxford and Cambridge -- for authoritative guidance in the study of their language, their religious beliefs, and the whole fabric of their civilisation..."*

The number of women students in the university steadily increased. In 1928 there were 38 women students (22 arts and 16 medical), but the number dropped to 31 in 1931 (23 arts and 8 medical). In 1932 there was a record number of eight girls in the first year of arts. In 1933, of a total student body of 364, there were 37 women (10.2% - 23 arts and 14 medical). The Hong Kong University Ladies Club was formed in the autumn of 1934.

At the end of 1935 Hornell decided to retire after thirteen years of untiring devotion and of struggle against what he saw as overwhelming difficulties in achieving the objects set by Lugard. Speaking at his last Congregation in January he confessed that his whole tenure of office had been a period of frustration - but related specifically to the situation in Hong Kong where, he said, *"there are so many dominating factors, so many influences vital to the very life of the University, over which one seems to have no control."* *"I have often,"* he confessed, *"been sorely puzzled and very lonely."* The Vice-Chancellor left over 1,300 volumes as a personal gift to

the University Library. He had made the care of the University grounds his special concern: *“it was due entirely to his untiring zeal and affection for the property that the University compound was made good to look upon and to live in.”*

His successor, D. J. Sloss, spoke at the Congregation ceremony in January 1938 of Hornell’s *“zeal for sound university standards and his unfailing goodness of heart”*. *“He fully realized and insisted,”* he said, *“that a university must stand for the spirit of original investigation and research as well as for teaching.”*



*Second Marriage -- In 1946 on their wedding day, Sir William Woodward Hornell married Kathleen Veronica Walker while living in Nottingham, England. Four years later, Sir William passed away in September 1950.*