

# Rotary in Formosa

## – The early years of Rotary Taiwan 1931-1960

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

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The early history of Rotary in Formosa or Taiwan (臺灣) can be described in 2 separate and different era: (1) When the territory was in full sovereignty of the Japanese Empire 1895-1945; and (2) when Taiwan became a province of The Republic of China (中華民國) commencing 1945.

The island of Formosa (or Taiwan), along with Penghu Islands (澎湖列島) and Liaodong Peninsula (遼東半島), were ceded in full sovereignty to the Japanese Empire according to the 《Treaty of Shimonoseki》 《馬關條約》 in 1895, as a result of the Imperial China (*Ch'ing Empire*) was defeated in the First Sino-Japanese War (甲午戰爭) (1894–1895).

While Formosa was under the Japanese governing, the Ch'ing Empire (大清國) was overthrown by the Xin Hai Revolution 1911 (辛亥革命) and the Republic of China was established on the Mainland on 1 January 1912 to repeal and replace the government. After the Pacific War in 1945, following the Japanese surrender to the Allies, Taiwan (Formosa) was returned to the full sovereignty of the Republic of China.

### (I) The Japanese Territory Era 1931-1941

On the island of Formosa, as Taiwan was commonly described in those years, 3 Rotary clubs had flourished due to the Rotary Japan extension from Tokyo of 1920: (1) Taihoku Rotary Club (台北ロータリークラブ) (1931); (2) Takao Rotary Club (高雄ロータリークラブ) (1934); and (3) Keelung Rotary Club (基隆ロータリークラブ) (1937).

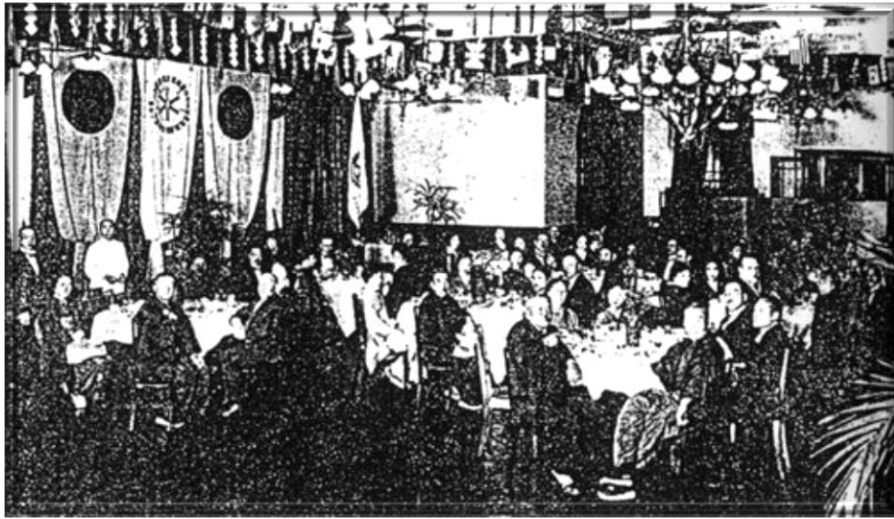
The story began on 21 January 1931, Past R.I. 3rd Vice President James Wheeler Davidson (禮密臣) (*Canada*), well known as “Marco Polo of Rotary”, in the capacity as “Honorary General Commissioner for Rotary International in the Near and Far East”, was invited by District 70 Governor Yoneyama Umekichi (米山梅吉) to visit Taipei. The next day, Davidson gave an introduction lecture to 28 new recruits. On 27 March 1931 at 6 pm, the first organizing meeting of Taihoku Rotary Club was held at the Railway Hotel Formosa (臺灣鐵道ホテル/臺灣鐵道飯店), presided by District Governor Yoneyama. On 28 April 1931, the Club was admitted membership to Rotary International with Charter No. 3450, grouped under 70th District. Charter President was Shidehara Taira (幣原坦) (President of Taihoku Imperial University) (台北帝國大學總長 - 朝鮮史學家). This was the first ever Rotary Club located at the northern Taiwan.

On 17 February 1934, the second Rotary Club located at the southern Taiwan was admitted to Rotary International -- Takao Rotary Club.

On 17 March 1937, another Rotary Club -- Keelung Rotary Club -- was formed at the major sea port located at northern Taiwan.



*Taihoku Rotary Club (台北ロータリークラブ) (1931)  
with 28 charter members of overseas Japanese and local native Taiwanese*



*Taihoku Rotary Club (台北ロータリークラブ) Charter Presentation on 26 September 1931.*



*Railway Hotel Formosa (臺灣鐵道ホテル/臺灣鐵道飯店)*



The Japanese Empire launched full-scale aggression to the Republic of China in 1937, together invading Southeast Asian countries to meet the demand for military supplies. In 1940, Japan formed an Axis with Nazi Germany and the Kingdom of Italy. Thus, relations with the Great Britain and the United States deteriorated day by day, and the United States imposed economic sanctions on it. On 31 December 1940, within the Japanese Empire (including the Japanese proper, Manchuria, Korea, and Formosa), membership of all the 40 plus Rotary clubs were terminated by Rotary International.

## *(2) The Taiwan Province Era since 1948*

Since 1945, Taiwan became a province of The Republic of China. This gave the opportunity of Rotary extension from the Mainland to this beautiful island. Commencing from 1948, Taipei, (臺北) capital city of the Province, was the only site of Rotary activity in Taiwan until 1953, when clubs were chartered in Keelung (基隆) and Tainan (臺南) respectively.

The organizing of Taipeh Rotary Club (later renamed as *Taipei*) (臺北扶輪社) in 1948 was not a beginning but rather a continuation of Rotary movement in the Republican China since 1919 from Shanghai. Rotary Taiwan was started anew in Taipei with the assistance from former members of Kunming Rotary Club (昆明扶輪社). The club members, who had found refuge from the civil war in Taiwan, began meeting again in February 1948, and encouraged new men of multi-nationalities to join their group. On 9 October 1948, Taipeh Rotary Club was admitted to Rotary International, Charter No. 6968, but was non-districted and under the direct supervision of the Rotary International Secretariat in Chicago, U.S.A.

The Taipeh Rotary Club Charter President Yen Chia-kan (嚴家淦), affectionately known as “Rotarian C.K.”, was Finance Commissioner of the Taiwan Provincial Government (臺灣省財政廳廳長) and concurrently President of the Bank of Taiwan (臺灣銀行董事長). In 1966 the National Assembly elected Yen as Vice President of the Republic and re-elected him in 1972 (中華民國第4、5任副總統). He succeed as the 5th Republican China’s President (中華民國第5任總統) (1975-1978) following the death of President Chiang Kai-Shek (蔣中正總統). The Club Secretary was Paul P. J. Lee (李申稜), a former Rotarian of Kunming Rotary Club (昆明扶輪社), Manager of Taipeh Guest House (臺北招待所主任).



*President Yen Chia-Kan and Lady Yen (嚴家淦總統伉儷), Republic of China (1975)*



*In the Year of 1949-50, Taipeh Rotary Club has 50 members of Chinese, American, Briton, French, and Belgian.  
President James Dickson was sitting behind the Rotary wheel to the left.*

On 1 July 1949, Rotary International decided re-numbering of all districts world-wide. Next year, the Korean War began on 25 June 1950 that made China Mainland was no longer either socially or politically feasible for the normal function of Rotary activities. Effective 1 July 1951, Rotary International decided that District 57 (South China; Hong Kong; Macao) and Districts 58-59 (Central & North China) should be dissolved and any remaining Rotary clubs were considered as non-districted clubs to be supervised by an Administrative Adviser to the Board appointed by Rotary International President. Ultimately, as in January 1952, the remaining were only 4 clubs altogether in Taiwan (臺灣) (1); Hong Kong (香港) (2); and Macao (澳門) (1).



Rotary in Taiwan went on its own development. In November 1953, Keelung Rotary Club (基隆扶輪社) was admitted to Rotary International. In January 1954, Tainan Rotary Club (臺南扶輪社) was admitted, and of which the Charter President was Tainan Mayor Yeh Ting-kuai (臺南市市長葉廷珪).

The above Map of Taiwan shows in 1956 -- 10 cities/counties were having 11 Rotary clubs with 433 members: Taipei (臺北) (1948); Keelung (基隆) (1953); Tainan (臺南) (1954); Kaohsiung (高雄) (1954); Hsinchu (新竹) (1954); Pingtung (屏東) (1955); Chiayi (嘉義) (1955); Taipei West (臺北西區) (1955); Ilan (宜蘭) (1955); Taichung (臺中) (1955); and Changhwa (彰化) (1956).

Rotary clubs in Taiwan were non-districted until 1960. The minimum number of clubs required to form one district was 15. As in 1956, there were already 11 clubs in Taiwan. On the other hand, across the Strait, there were altogether 5 clubs in the British Crown Colony Hong Kong and the Portuguese Territory Macao: Hong Kong (香港) (1931); Macau (澳門) (1947); Kowloon (九龍) (1948); Hong Kong Island East (香港東區) (1954); Hong Kong Island West (香港西區) (1954).

Petition initiated by Taipei Rotary Club to the reinstatement of the district status formerly enjoyed by the Chinese clubs was proceeded. However, the Rotary International Board of Directors decided in 1956 that in view of geographical and financial consideration, “the Rotary clubs of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao shall not be constituted into a Rotary district at this time.” There was no discouraging. The 16 clubs reiterated their petition in 1957, 1958, and 1959. In the meantime, 3 more clubs joined the group: Taipei North (臺北北區); Fengshan (鳳山) and Taipei Northwest (臺北西北區).

In January 1960, Rotary International granted district status with No. 345 to the 19 Rotary clubs of “China-that portion including Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao”. The inaugural District 345 Governor 1960-61 was Kwo Keh-Ti (郭克悌) (*Taipei*) (*photo below*) (*Professor in the Department of Hydropower Engineering, National Taiwan University 國立臺灣大學*). Kwo was formerly a member of Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社) since 8 January 1935. On 3 March 1948 he chartered the Mukden (Shen Yang) Rotary Club (瀋陽扶輪社) in the northeastern China, and served as president until 1949 before he moved to Taiwan. Kwo joined the Rotary Club of Taipei and served as its president in 1952-1953. In 1958-1959, Kwo was appointed by Rotary International to serve as Administrative Advisor to the Board responsible for the supervision of all non-districted Rotary clubs located in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.



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《Report from Formosa》 - Wife of George Ashmore Fitch (費吳生) (Shanghai Rotary Club President 1930-31; Chungking Rotary Club President 1942-43), Mrs. Geraldine Fitch, who had observed the early 3 clubs in Taiwan wrote a 《Report from Formosa》 published on the June 1954 Issue of 《The Rotarian》 magazine. Readers may gain a general picture by going through the full article on the next page.



# Report from Formosa

**KNOWN** as a "woman of three countries"—the United States, China, and Korea—Geraldine Fitch is the author of numerous magazine articles and the recently published book *Formosa Beachhead*. She is the wife of Rotarian George A. Fitch, veteran YMCA executive in the Far East. By the time this her report sees print she herself will have followed it across the Pacific—to spend the Summer in the Fitch home in Leonia, New Jersey.—Eds.

**TAIPEI, FORMOSA**—The typhoon season is starting on this lush and hilly island. As every year, residents of Formosa are bracing themselves for the fierce winds that can descend quickly to lash the camphor and cypress trees and drive rivers from their banks.

In recent years, though, a new kind of typhoon has come to this island. It is not at all an ill wind. For *Typhoon* is the name of the weekly bulletin published by the Rotary Club of Taipei. This name seems to me a symbol of the strong way Rotary is sweeping across Formosa.

In less than a year, Rotary has grown here from one Club in the capital city to three: in Taipei, in the port of Keelung, and in the Southern city of Tainan. At least that is the momentary score; before you read these words, the list may be longer. Enthusiastic extension work promises to bring Rotary to more men and cities soon.

Lately I have had the opportunity to watch Rotary's progress here. Traveling over this island and meeting the families of Rotarians, I have shared in the fellowship of charter nights and ladies' programs. The experience has been a rich one.

Formosa is beautiful. That is the visitor's immediate impression. The first Westerners to behold these craggy cliffs and green slopes were Portuguese mariners in the 16th Century. "*Ilha formosa!*" they exclaimed—"Beautiful island!" And for Westerners, this apt name became permanent.

The Chinese name is, of course, Taiwan. It is a tribute to the staying powers of the local culture that this name has endured through invasions and occupations of the centuries.

Today, refugees from mainland China have swollen the island's population to more than 9 million people, congesting all urban districts. Fortunately, Formosa is larger than the casual observer might think. On the map, this island is dwarfed by the vastnesses of the Pacific

Ocean and continental China 90 miles away. Actually, Formosa is 225 miles long and 60 to 88 miles wide. Its cities and towns are separated by rich tropical forests, rice paddies, rivers, and mountains that reach up to 14,750 feet. There is, in short, room for Rotary.

And there is the desire for Rotary, too. Take Keelung, for example. A city of some 100,000 people, it is Formosa's chief Northern port. My husband was on hand in Keelung for Rotary's charter night not long ago. This meeting was held in the Hsin Loe Theater. In the theater were gathered a large dele-

ing programs are generating great interest. For speakers, Keelung draws heavily upon the embassies and international missions in the capital city just 18 miles away. Committees are hard at work to provide scholarships for students and free hospital beds for the needful sick.

The same spirit quickens the new Club in Tainan. Earlier this year my husband and I boarded the southbound night train here with a party of local Rotarians. Next morning we were welcomed to Tainan—officially welcomed, since the Charter President of this new Club, Yeh Ting-Kusi, is also the city's Mayor.

Following breakfast, we made a quick tour of the environs. Located on the Southwestern coast of Formosa, Tainan is an ancient capital of the island. It fairly bristles with spots of historic interest: temples and tombs from the Ming Dynasty, ruined fortifications built by the Dutch in the 17th Century.

Today Tainan, a city of 150,000 population, is the fishing capital of the island. Instead of fishing in the sea, however, Tainan's fishermen raise their catches in artificial ponds.

The charter presentation came that noon. Seated at banquet tables decorated with the island's richly perfumed roses, we visited with members of the young Club. Like other Formosa Rotarians, these men have "Club names." Since the Chinese lack the custom of nicknames in the Western sense, they give each other informal titles for Club use. On charter night I talked with "Plastic," "Tooth," "Oil," "Tenor," and others. The names suggest the owners' businesses or special talents.

Just 20 miles from Tainan is the port of Kaohsiung, a city of more than 150,000 people. Our Rotary party visited here, too, talking with Kaohsiung businessmen who are deep in the work of organizing still another Club. Thus Rotary rolls!

Providing the momentum are the Rotarians of the capital, Taipei. A cosmopolitan group, they include mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, and many occidentals on special missions. These 88 men have demonstrated what Rotary can do. Whether they are raising funds to build a clinic for trachoma treatment, or singing songs in Rotary fellowship, or surveying other communities for extension possibilities—to them must go the credit for setting a Rotary example that others want to follow on this beautiful isle.

Photo: Paul Cheng



On Formosa Rotary grows. Here R. C. Chen, President of the Taipei Club, addresses Kaohsiung group. Seated is H. G. McConeghey, a chief organizer.

gation from the sponsoring Taipei Club, the new Rotarians of Keelung—and a large part of Keelung's general public. The public had come to see a performance of a four-act Chinese opera. Rotary speeches and the presentation of the charter simply took place on stage before the opera performance began. An unusual charter night? Yes—and what an excellent way to acquaint the public with Rotary!

"We promise," said Keelung Rotarians, "that our Club shall not remain a new-born babe, but that by the end of 1954 it will qualify in the heavyweight division of Rotary."

The Club is living up to this promise. Already a lively bulletin and challeng-

By Geraldine Fitch



# 開啟台灣扶輪的第一頁

## 日治台北扶輪俱樂部創社經緯

台北中山社／李博信



米山梅吉油畫像

有「扶輪的馬哥字羅」稱譽，曾於1894年以紐約論壇報記者身份來台，並擔任美國駐台總領事長達八年，而與台灣有深厚淵源的禮密臣 (James Wheeler Davidson)，於1931年1月正在為香港扶輪社主持創社授證典禮

的時候，忽然接獲曾經同為國際扶輪理事之米山梅吉的電報，要求他前往台北為正在籌組中的台北扶輪俱樂部說明會演講。禮密臣立即答應，並即攜帶妻女搭船前往台灣。

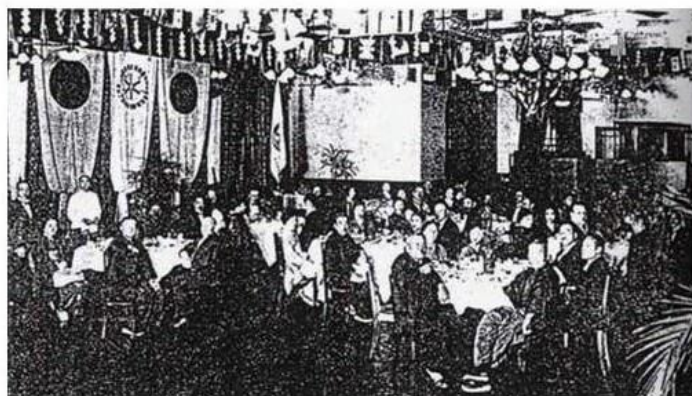
此次說明會是由台灣日日新報社社長河村徹主辦，於1月22日假台北鐵道飯店舉行，計邀請官紳58位參加，實際到場者共28位。禮密臣在說明會上詳細說明扶輪的旨趣後，立即獲得所有來賓的熱烈響應，當天這28位官紳均簽署入會成為創會會員。本地人應邀入會者，有林熊光（大成火災海上保險常務取締役）、林柏壽（林本源產業社長）及許丙（日星商事副社長）等三人。



台北扶輪俱樂部成立典禮新聞報導



台北鐵道大飯店



台北扶輪俱樂部創社授證晚會

1931年3月27日下午6時在台北鐵道飯店所舉行的成立晚會，由當時正擔任剛成立之70地區總監米山梅吉親自渡台主持，他在晚會前的預備會中很滿意地表示該社是他所成立的第11社。並依照他的意思推選出七位理事與四名職員：理事有荒木正次郎（台灣銀行理事）、河村徹（台灣日日本新報社長）、小寺新一（三井物產台北支店長）、林熊光（大成火





米山梅吉



林柏壽



三卷俊夫



禮密臣



林熊光青年時期



芝染太郎



許丙



幣原坦

災海上保險常務取締役)、幣原坦(台北帝大總長)、高須時太郎(三井合名會社台北支店長)及山中義信(台灣電力會社副社長)等；並公推幣原坦任會長、山中義信為副會長、森新一為幹事、林熊光為財務，此時米山即宣布森新一雖非理事，但是由於職權之故應成為理事會成員。並表示依照扶輪規章應指派一名會場監督(糾察)，即以他的慧眼遴選了幽默靈巧的三卷俊夫(台灣倉儲會社社長)擔任糾察，並詳細解釋了糾察的任務。

晚會一切準備就緒，惟獨欠缺臨場經驗，因此由米山親自兼任司儀，同時邀請隨同來台的東京社資深幹事芝染太郎入席，他雖然一再謙辭，但是在三卷糾察的推拉之下終於上台致詞，芝染太郎是英文日本時報(Japan Times)社長，他在做結語時強調英文日本時報是秉持扶輪的服務精神在營運，因此業務鼎盛，所以若在該報刊登廣告，勢必效果更大。語畢，他自動表示他之所以故意以此種不符合扶輪模式的商業宣傳方式致辭，是為了讓大家瞭解扶輪精神之所在而自我犧牲，並立即接受了三卷糾

察所課的 50 錢罰金，此舉贏得了滿堂哄笑，拍案叫絕。成立儀式在一團和氣靄靄的輕鬆氣氛中圓滿完成。此後，台北扶輪俱樂部即於每週二 12 時 30 分在台北鐵道飯店舉行例會。當天所接獲的各方賀電包括芝加哥國際扶輪總部、東京社、大阪社、名古屋社、神戶社、京都社、橫濱社、京城社(漢城)、奉天社(瀋陽)、哈爾濱社及大連社等，台北扶輪俱樂部亦立即對扶輪總部及各社回電表達感謝之忱。

1931 年 4 月 28 日台北扶輪俱樂部(台北ロータリー俱樂部，Rotary Club of Taihoku)獲得國際扶輪認可，頒發證書 3450 號，隸屬國際扶輪 70 地區。

回首過去 85 年，再看現在扶輪社之運作方式，從例會的時間場所，乃至於職員執行的手法等等，與目前的例會情況相較絲毫不變，不得不讓我們懷念，也讓我們嘆服扶輪精神之傳承是多麼令人感動。

(註：「禮密臣」係台北城富紳李春生為其所取之台語發音之漢字名字，日治時期之史料均使用此漢字名稱。)



## 戰後台灣扶輪第一社

李博信（台北中山扶輪社）



日治時代的台北扶輪俱樂部於 1940 年退出國際扶輪之後，台灣扶輪就進入了空窗期。

直到 1948 年才由台北士紳成立了台北扶輪社，於 1948 年 10 月 9 日在台北招待所舉行成立儀式。典禮當天時任財政廳長的創社社長嚴家淦先生正巧滯滬公幹，未克親自主持盛會，倒是當時的台灣省主席魏道明先生（前排左 6）特別出席道賀。

台北扶輪社的成立，並沒有輔導社，也沒有國際扶輪指派的輔導代表，而是由幾位大陸時期的前扶輪社員所自行籌組，主其事者為擔任台北招待所主任的前昆明社社員李申穰先生（Paul Lee），他於成立後擔任第一屆秘書。

台北扶輪社向國際扶輪申請認證時，提出的創社發起人（創社社員）名單包括國內外官商人士共有 28 位，均為學養俱佳的一時碩彥：

嚴家淦：台灣省政府財政廳長（創社社長）。

Kenneth C. Krentz（克蘭史）：美國駐台北總領事。

陳清文：台灣省交通處長。

陳樹人：台灣電信管理局局長。

謝 惠：台灣紙業公司總經理。

瞿荊洲：台灣銀行總經理。

李申穰：圓山台北招待所主任。

陳德坤：中國招商局輪船公司經理。

Bernard Ernest Bolton (鮑魯敦)：英商怡和洋行 (Jardine Matheson & Co.) 駐台代表。

周紹曾：中央信託局局長。

James Dickson (孫雅各)：台灣神學院院長 (第二屆社長)。

Charles Vyvyan Lavers Eckford (艾克福)：Jardine Engineering 駐台代表。

費 驊：台灣鐵路管理局副局長。

Szewa Wallace Fok (霍思華)：台灣汽車公司經理。

徐人壽：基隆港務局局長。

華壽嵩：台灣省公路局局長。

經利彬：台灣化學製藥公司總經理。

顏春安：東方香料公司總經理。

林挺生：大同股份有限公司董事長。

劉青藜：台灣化學工業公司協理。

劉晉鈺：台灣電力公司總經理。

牛天文：中國航空公司 (CNAC) 經理。

Paul John Harland：洛克菲勒基金會駐台代表。

沈鎮南：台灣糖業公司總經理。

王求定：台灣工礦公司總經理。

汪心汾：台灣省立台北醫院院長。

王哲甫：台灣火柴公司總經理 (第三屆社長)。

葉明勳：中央通訊社特派員兼台北分社主任。

以上所介紹之創社社員之中，外籍社員都是傳統外商的駐台代表或外交官；而華籍社員中，無論是大陸來台人士，或是台籍仕紳，無論入社當時的職務為何，其實大都是曾任台灣省行政長官公署時期的高級官員，或參與接收工作的要員。而且大都是曾經赴歐美留學，接受高等教育的菁英。因此由此可以看出整個社員的結構，似乎都與創社社長嚴家淦先生具有深厚的人脈淵源。

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