

The District Governors Father and Son
George Ernest Marden & John Louis Marden
of The Rotary Club of Hong Kong

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George Ernest Marden (馬頓) (1892-1966)



George Ernest Marden, affectionately known as “Gem” in Rotary, was the first Hong Kong citizen served Rotary International as Director in 1951-1952, and concurrently the Chairman of The Rotary Foundation Fellowships (*i.e. scholarships*).

In the early 1920s, Gem joined the Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社), and later was elected Club President in 1928-1929. After the World War II, he moved to Hong Kong and joined the Hong Kong Rotary Club (香港扶輪社) as a Senior Active Member (資深社員). In 1949-1950, Gem was elected Governor of the 57th District of Rotary International -- the territories composed of South China (the portion of the provinces of Taiwan 臺灣, Fukien (*Fujian*) 福建, Kwangtung (*Guangdong*) 廣東, Kwangsi (*Guangxi*) 廣西, Kweichow (*Guizhou*) 貴州, Yunnan 雲南); and the British Crown Colony Hong Kong 香港 as well as the Portuguese Territory Macao 澳門. In late 1951, all of the 3 Rotary districts 57-58-59 in China were dissolved by Rotary International. To supervise the remained functioning clubs as well as extension of new clubs in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, an Administrative Advisor (*equivalent to today's Special Representative*) was appointed by Rotary International in lieu of a district governor. In 1953-1954, Gem held the appointment.

Other than service in Rotary, Gem was the President of The Boy Scouts Association, Hong Kong Branch (香港童子軍總會會長) from 1953 to 1959. The Chief Scouts at the time were the Hong Kong Governors Sir Alexander Grantham (香港總督葛量洪爵士) and Sir Robert Brown Black (香港總督柏立基爵士), respectively. Formerly, Gem was Mason, member of Lodge Cosmopolitan and Rising Sun Royal Arch Chapter; Member, Shanghai Club; Shanghai Race Club; Cercle Sportif Francais; Royal Air Force Association.

Gem was born in July 1892, at High Beach, Essex, England. He was the son of Louis William Edward and Fanny Margarett (Bush) Marden. He married Miss Dorothy Scales at Marylebone, England, on 28 September 1916. He passed away in Hong Kong in 1966.

Gem received his education at Loughton School, Essex. He was employed by Sharpe, Ross & Co., Ltd. of London and Singapore, and first came to the Orient in 1912. In Canton (*Guangzhou*) of China he entered the service of the Chinese Maritime Customs and, returning for them to Shanghai after the World War I. Engaged in business on his own account, Gem organized G. E. Marden & Co., Ltd., of which he was managing director, and was associated with the general management of Wheelock & Co., Ltd., and the Shanghai Tug & Lighter Co., Ltd. All three firms were operated extensively in the general transportation field.

Gem was the founder of Wheelock & Marden Company Limited (會德豐馬登股份有限公司). Shanghai Tug and Lighter Limited was a British firm founded as 1857 in Shanghai by Captain Thomas Reed Wheelock. Gem founded Marden & Company in 1925 and then merged with Thomas Wheelock's tug company to form Wheelock & Marden Company Limited in 1932. The new company operated other ships and later moved their operations to Hong Kong following World War II. Today, the corporation is transformed into Wheelock & Co., Ltd. (會德豐有限公司) – a Hong Kong stock listed company diversified from transportation to custom's clearing, container delivery, warehousing and travelling. Gem's son John L. Marden was once the head of the company. But Wheelock was acquired by local tycoon Sir Pao Yue-Kong (包玉剛爵士) in 1985.

Gem served in the World War II with the Middlesex Regiment, Essex Regiment, and the Royal Air Force, and was decorated the Military Cross. He had been a Major in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps Reserve of Officers in the Shanghai International Settlement.



November 1951

Rotary International Director Gem addressed to the Hong Kong Rotarians at his Home Club

John Louis Marden (馬登), CBE, JP (1919–1999)



John Louis Marden, a Past President of the Hong Kong Rotary Club, was the 8th Governor of District 345 of Rotary International (1967-1968) with the global theme: “Make Your Rotary Membership Effective” (發揮你們扶輪的效能). The then District 345 territories were composed of China’s Taiwan, the British Crown Colony Hong Kong, and the Portuguese Territory Macao.

John in 1919 was born as the only son to George E. Marden, a former China’s Maritime Customs officer in Canton and Shanghai and chairman of the Wheelock & Marden Co., Ltd., the Far East conglomerate ranging from property and retailing to insurance and aviation. John was educated in Shanghai and England and graduated from the Gresham's School and the University of Cambridge in economics and law.

After his education, John joined his father's firm in 1946 as a trainee on secretarial and shipping division before he was transferred to the insurance department. In 1952, he became the director of the company. He succeeded his father as the chairman of Wheelock & Marden, as known as "taipan" in 1959. As the chairman of one of the leading firms in Hong Kong, he sat on the boards of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Dairy Farm, the Cross-Harbour Tunnel and Hong Kong Electric Company, among many others. He was called "the taipan among the taipans" by former Acting Hong Kong Governor Sir David Akers-Jones (鍾逸傑爵士). He was also an Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (香港立法局非官守議員) for a brief period of time in 1971, and held a life appointment of the Justice of Peace for Hong Kong (JP) (香港太平紳士). In recognition of his distinguished public services, John was decorated Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1976 by Queen Elizabeth II.

John passed away at his home in Shek O in 1999, aged 80. John was survived by his wife Anne with one son and three daughters.





The couple founded the Marden Foundation (馬登基金) for the charity works in Hong Kong. Mrs. Anne Marden is a dedicated philanthropist who, for the past 70 years, has been committed to supporting education in Hong Kong and creating educational opportunities for children with disabilities and from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 1960, Anne was appointed Director of the Hong Kong Red Cross and led the building and running of the Princess Alexandra Red Cross Residential School (香港紅十字會雅麗珊郡主學校). During the 1970s, three Marden Foundation Schools were built, with Anne working closely with Caritas and the then Education Department of the Government. As a member of the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation (香港復康會), Anne worked to establish the Rehabaid Centre and has remained as a Governing Committee member of the Rehabaid Society. She is a Founding Member of two charitable organizations dedicated to supporting the developmental well-being of children – TREATS and Playright Children's Play Association (智樂兒童遊樂協會). She is the Honorary President of Playright which recently celebrated its 20th Anniversary.

At the University of Hong Kong (HKU), Anne actively and long-standing supports the Faculty of Education. She funded an annual Marden Foundation Visiting Fellowship in Education from 1991 to 2004, which brought distinguished visitors to HKU and significantly enhanced their research and community profile. In 2007, Anne was conferred an Honorary University Fellow.

Anne has been a Justice of the Peace for Hong Kong since 1973. She was decorated a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1991 by Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, and was decorated Bronze Bauhinia Star in 2006 by the Hong Kong SAR Government of China.

... more about George Ernest Marden

Rotary International President Visited Hong Kong & Canton (57th District) in 1949

George Ernest Marden was the 57th District Governor in 1949-1950. Rotary International President Percy Hodgson and his lady Edith (U.S.A.) commenced their global visits in August 1949. In September-October, they travelled to the Orient including the 57th District (South China). After the visit to Hong Kong, the presidential couple dropped into Canton (*Guangzhou*) for a one-day visit with Governor Gem and Rotarians. At the time, Guangzhou 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 (廣州扶輪社) was still alive. Here 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, our next stop, 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, which numbers 22 clubs, is still functioning and that our fellows there are continuing to meet.”



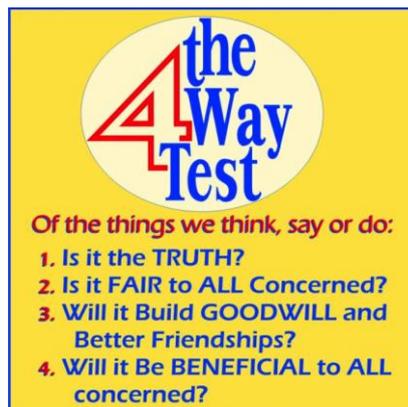
October 1949, Guangzhou – RI President Percy Hodgson (bow tie) and lady Edith accompanied by Canton Rotarians laid wreath at the Huanghuagang Mausoleum of the 72 Martyrs (黃花崗七十二烈士墓) (the Revolutionists of 1911)



October 1949, Hong Kong – R.I. President Percy Hodgson (at podium) and lady Edith (at his right) visited The Rotary Club of Hong Kong

[George Ernest Marden \(Hong Kong\) – 57th District Governor \(1949-1950\)](#)
[Addressed at the 42nd Rotary International Convention, Atlantic City, U.S.A., 1951](#)

Vocational Service – The Four-Way Test



It is some years since it was first suggested to Rotary clubs that they encourage their members in the use of what was called the Four-Way Test and you will all by now be familiar with its simple emphasis on truth, justice, friendliness, and helpfulness, presented by means of the desk plaque or the framed card

Many of us have launched independent business careers and please God men ever will, with a little capital, much hope, some doubts, and a determination to spare neither time nor effort to

succeed, and I doubt whether we have (by and large) in the beginning, consciously added to this the thought that our success shall be attained honestly or ethically. Indeed, we are more likely to have intended to get there by hook or by crook than by any planned adherence to copy-book maxims.

But we will quickly have learned that a business needs something more than capital, more than staff, plant, or material or stock, more even than that “know-how” which is nearly indispensable – it needs the germ of that yeast of goodwill which will in a favourable climate multiply and increase so that it becomes the very business itself.

There are perhaps some substitutes for goodwill. In fact, they sometimes masquerade so successfully under its name that auditors and accountants mistake them in balance sheets and appraisals. Such things as favourable locations, monopoly in its various forms, or even the personality of the operator himself, but consider how vulnerable they are. Where the public is bound to the business only by the galling tie of necessity, immediately an alternative source of supply or service is uncovered the fatal lack of goodwill becomes apparent and the downgrade is reached.

But if profit is an essential, don't be misled into believing that there is a God-given right to a minimum of customers. Nothing has ever been written into a free constitution, or grown up with the experience of centuries to give anyone an inalienable right to sell his goods to people who don't want them. He must earn the sale not only with adherence to those fair-trading practices which certain developed economies have made necessary, but by reputation, quality standards, and honesty of dealing and purpose. The small man has not the protection and advantage of trademarks and brand names, essential though they are both to seller and purchaser in the wider field and he must offer something in their place – the certainty in the minds of his customers that they are getting a fair deal.

Is it the TRUTH, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? There is an old proverb used by the business man of my youth and earlier, some of you may have heard it. “Don't cry ‘Stinking Fish’”. This belongs to the era when every apprentice was expected to learn what were called “the tricks of the trade”.

Rotary encourages its members to scorn any tricks in any trade that are not to the direct advantage of the customer and the Rotary form of the old proverb is very different from the original. It is “Don't sell stinking fish”.

Is it FAIR to ALL concerned? Your goodwill and your reputation for honesty depends upon your treating your customers or clients or constituents – call them what you will – your readers or your public if you are an author or a journalist – with impartial fairness. Don't overlook that it says all concerned; that includes your employees – the girl who may have to stand too long and the commuting assistant who must wait over for a later train.

Will it build GOODWILL and better friendship?

Will your customer appreciate it even if he won't want to come right around and thank you for it there and then?

Will it be BENEFICIAL to ALL concerned?

Do you know deep inside you that it will be good to happen?

Ask yourself these four questions in relation to your customer or client, your employee or partner, your stockholder or banker.

Remember that the number of men who got themselves or their business out of trouble by worry and concealment in the hope of better days is not ten percent of those that got deeper and deeper in that same trouble. Realize that frankness brings the help and assistance of all interests concerned and you will be convinced as I am, that *honesty is still the best policy!*

International Service



When I accepted the invitation to speak to you today on International Service, my mind went back to some remarks made in discussion at an earlier International Convention by an experienced Rotarian, who is actually present at this meeting, when he warned us of the danger of confusing international service with international affairs and it is, I suggest, particularly necessary at this present time that we keep that distinction in mind.

Our object – our sole object – is service, and the international avenue to that service is at the same time most likely to be fruitful in results and most likely, if approached in a thoughtless manner, to lead to misunderstandings.

Your present Board has given much consideration to this Fourth Avenue of Service and has set forth anew to the plainest of language our united aim and the responsibilities, both of the individual Rotarian and of the Rotary Club. Our aim is simple and we should remember that it grew spontaneously within Rotary as we developed to international status – the simple wish to advance understanding, goodwill, and peace through the fact that you and I and all of us all over the world, united in thought as we are by our common membership in Rotary, might direct that united thought towards the common good of all communities. Nothing more. The individual, the loyal citizen which we expect every Rotarian to be, will help to create a well-informed public opinion. That is the gist of it – the removal of ignorance and prejudice follows logically and with knowledge most come understanding and from understanding can come what we all desire – Peace.

The Rotary Club will inevitably take cognizance of international matters, indeed it should seek to insure that its members are correctly informed upon them, but it is the very negative of international service to be drawn into action on international affairs which are the provinces of governments. Even discussion, particularly if it is likely to be reported in the press, should stress those points on which a measure of agreement seems possible, leaving criticism to other agencies than Rotary. Remember that what may seem to be just and reasonable comment – not even criticism – can easily be removed from context and distorted so as to create rather than to eliminate points of disagreement. Please do not imagine that I recommend any sacrifice of principle. I merely suggest that a Rotary Club should deliberately refrain from aggravating an international situation in any way whatever.

The individual as such will take whatever action and make whatever statements his conscience and his convictions may impose upon him but the association of the name of Rotary with one side of a controversial international question can only weaken our aim of service. When an utterance by Rotary cannot reasonably be expected to ease an existing tension Rotary will remain silent. Indeed Rotary International itself will neither take action nor express opinion on

political subjects and it seeks to insure that its position be not prejudiced by one of its constituent clubs.

There will be many amongst us advocating action or pronouncement – some will remind us that he who is not for us is against in – all in absolute conviction and good faith – and we may even be charged with appeasement. It is perhaps unfortunate that an ugly connotation has attached itself to the word “appeasement”, but I suggest that notwithstanding the changes of nearly two millenniums, peacemakers are still blessed.

I have recently attended conferences in Rotary districts where the very existence of Rotary is evidence of international service. In one of them four distinct races – many more actual nationalities – work together in Rotary fellowship. It was most impressive to observe the complete harmony and friendship and more – the ability and the will to discuss without embarrassment and without diffidence, in perfect good faith, problems of inter-racial and international goodwill affecting deeply and vitally the very clubs and members discussing them. And don't miss the importance of this close contact of differing nations – not the grandiose sweep of power conferences – any sovereign rights and high contracting parties which the word “International” conjures up before our eyes, but the simple contact of the heart between Rotarians of differing races – the same contact that you and I and all of us are enjoying at this very moment. Is there diffidence between us? Feelings of superiority inferred? No, there is only the trust and friendship which Rotary gives to us and which it is our simple aim to engender in all the world.

But most of our clubs do not provide ready-made opportunities for international service – it is but once a year that we meet in international convention and, although all of us here will take back to our clubs something that we have gained from our contacts, thus continuing a leavening started by participants in earlier gatherings such as this is and that is all to the good, nevertheless only a small portion of our number is privileged to receive such inspiration and we must plan for the instruction of those others in our program – a worldwide association of men engaged primarily in seeking their living but motivated by a common ideal of service. That is our Object. There is no mention of the foreigner in it and how often do we find that word “foreigner” used in a bad sense? The hated foreigner, the dirty foreigner – all the derogatory adjectives in the dictionary are applied to him – all the prejudice which ignorance has fostered is apparent in the general use of the word.

Your club will ask you “But what shall we actually do to promote our Fourth Avenue of Service” and “But do these simple letters to Rotarians in other countries and such things on observance of their national festivals actually accomplish anything.”

You may inform them that our Object is Service and when we consider the slow transformation in the meaning of the word “service”, connoting as it did for centuries and still does in the dead languages of the world “slavery”, to the glorious meaning now given to it world-wide reminding those of us who live in the East of the Confucian illustration of the lotus flower with its root in the slime of the pond growing steadily upward until its blossom expands to the sun – I am led to believe that humble insistence by Rotary on serving will accomplish the same glorious results.

I recently heard a rebuke from the platform given at a Rotary meeting to a questioner who had asked about the special function of “foreigners” in the Club. “There are no foreigners in Rotary” said this member of a young nation, “We are all Rotarians” and that is the thought I hope to leave with you today – no foreign parts or foreign ways or foreign dress, but merely other Rotarians living differently from you, of course under conditions necessitated by their geographical places in the world but actuated by the same spirit and seeking opportunities to co-operate with you in reaching our common goal.