



More than 1,000 attend grand finale of celebrations in Taipei

By Vukoni Lupa-Lasaga

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In a speech that extolled the power of friendship and service, Taiwanese President Chen Shui-Bian welcomed the more than 1,100 Rotarians who attended the last of the seven official centennial celebrations this Rotary year and invited them to enjoy "the diversity, prosperity, and beauty" of Taiwan.

"An ancient Greek philosopher once said that each person has a seed of goodness buried deep in his heart, and that the value of life lies in allowing this very small seed to germinate and grow strong and robust," he noted at a welcome dinner at Taipei's Grand Hotel on 6 May. "Rotary International's spirit of service is the rain and sunshine that has irrigated and provided nourishment for this seed to grow."

Chen said he was pleased that Taiwan was hosting an international Rotary event for the fourth time since 1991.

RI President Glenn Estess Sr. said in a keynote address that Rotary's first century has been marked by success and many achievements to celebrate.

"Rotary has not just endured for that long; it has grown and thrived and blossomed in ways no one could ever have predicted a century ago," he said.

As examples, the RI president pointed out the phenomenal increase in membership from just four men to 1.2 million men and women in 168 countries and the goodwill and fellowship that Rotarians have spread throughout the world.

"[Rotary has] brought help where it is needed in a way no other humanitarian organization is able to do," he said. "Because, in most cases, Rotarians don't need to be sent to where the need is. They are already living and working in 32,000 communities in every part of the globe. And every one of those Rotarians knows what putting *Service Above Self* really means."

Estess said that the vision and reach of Rotary's initiatives, such as the eradication of polio, is sustained through the generous giving of its members to The Rotary Foundation. The Every Rotarian, Every Year initiative's goal, an average annual contribution of US\$100 to the Foundation per Rotarian, will go a long way toward enabling Rotary to achieve even more in its second century of service.

"I believe we will do even greater things if we continue to focus not only on our work but on the strength of every individual club," he said. "In order to secure our future, we must work to retain current members, recruit new members, and create new clubs, so that we will have more hands to do Rotary's work with every passing generation."

In brief remarks, the celebration co-chairs, RI Director Yoshikazu Minamisono and Rotary

Foundation Trustee Gary C.K. Huang, invited attendees to enrich themselves with the opportunities for fellowship, friendship, and learning offered by the event.

The Taipei event was distinguished by choreographed Taiwanese dances staged by Rotary clubs and several open forums in which attendees discussed a variety of topics with the RI president and senior Rotary leaders.

In addition, Major Donors and 100% Paul Harris Fellow clubs were recognized and Taipei City Mayor Ma Ying-Jeou and Foreign Affairs Minister Tan Sun Chen hosted banquets in honor of Rotary.

The Taipei celebration attracted a large number of RI directors, past directors, directors-elect, directors-nominee, and Foundation trustees.

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