



2013-14 PRESIDENT-ELECT'S KEYNOTE SPEECH

Gary C.K. Huang
Rotary International Convention
Sydney, Australia
4 June 2014

Fellow Rotarians,

Ni Hao! In Chinese, this means "How are you?" Now, please repeat after me: "Ni Hao!"

Good. Please give yourself a big round of applause.

Fellow Rotarians, I am honored to be here. My wife, Corinna, and I want to thank you and look forward to serving Rotarians worldwide during the 2014-15 Rotary year!

I am very happy to see so many of you here! Thank you for making the trip to Sydney.

It is important for us to come together, as the family of Rotary. These days, we can email or FaceTime, but there is nothing like meeting each other in person.

It is important to get to *know* each other, to build relationships across countries and cultures. That is what Rotary is all about. This is where President Ron did a wonderful job to *Engage Rotary, Change Lives*.

I would like to tell you a story. There was once an old man who had many sons. But they were always arguing with each other. One day, the old man grew tired of hearing them fight. So he told them to bring him a bunch of chopsticks. He tied the chopsticks together and told each son to break them. None could. Then he handed a single chopstick to each son and told each to break it.

Each one could break it easily.

Then the old man said, "My sons, if you stand together, you will be strong and no one will be able to break you. But if you are divided, you will break as easily as a single chopstick."

In Rotary we stand together. Like a bunch of chopsticks, we cannot be broken. We can do so much more together. That is why partnerships are so important to our work. That is why being here, with other Rotarians, making connections, is so important.

I know everyone here cares deeply about Rotary; otherwise, you would not be here. Maybe you love Rotary because you enjoy volunteering in your community. Maybe you love Rotary because you like making a difference around the world. Maybe you love Rotary because it is fun.

Whatever it is, you have a reason. I want to give everyone a reason to love Rotary. I want to make sure people know that we enjoy being together and working together. That is how we recruit new members and keep current members.

I think all of you know the Chinese philosopher Confucius. Sometimes I call him the world's first Rotarian, because even though he died 2,500 years before Rotary was founded, his ideas are very much Rotary ideas. And one of the things he said was "與其抱怨, 不如改變."

In English, you say, "It is better to light a single candle, than to sit and curse the darkness." That sums up everything that we think in Rotary. There are so many problems in the world, so many people who need help.

And many people say, "There's nothing I can do." They sit there. Do nothing. Everything stays dark. But this is not the Rotary way. The Rotary way is the Confucius way. The Rotary way is to light a candle. I light one. You light one. 1.2 million people all light one.

Together, we can light up the world.

And this is what I want you to do. I want you all to *Light Up Rotary*. This is our theme for 2014-15.

How do you *Light Up Rotary*? That is the fun part. You can do whatever you do best, by showing people what you love about Rotary. Whatever it is, it's OK with me!

I hope many of you will go home and encourage your clubs or districts to host a Rotary Day.

It can be anything you like. It can be a day to educate your community about polio, what Rotary is doing to fight polio and what others can do to help! It can be a service project or a celebration. Just make sure to invite members of the public, our families, and friends. Invite the young and old! Invite your town mayor and his family to join you!

You can make it simple, you can make it fancy, you can make it a whole day or just a few hours. Do something for your community to show your community what you do, both locally and internationally. Make sure your community knows that Rotary is there, Rotary is active, Rotary is fun, and Rotary is doing good work!

If you have a really good idea, make a video of your Rotary Day. We will show the best videos at the São Paulo convention next year. Also, send in your pictures of your Rotary Day. We will share them in *The Rotarian* magazine. You can inspire other clubs and districts. Hosting a Rotary Day is a perfect way to show off our theme, *Light Up Rotary*.

Light Up Rotary is a keyword representing our action to pursue the happiness of mankind. It encourages you to be proactive, positive, and powerful. It is telling you that your courage and sincerity can give happiness to many others.

Another one of my favorite sayings from Confucius is "Sincerity is the end and beginning of things. Without sincerity, there would be nothing."

If you are sincere, your Rotary light will shine. You will *Light Up Rotary* with your love of Rotary and everyone will be able to see it!

I am just calling this sincerity a light. It is this sincerity that is the source of our greatest joy. The moment you find your greatest joy through the growth of sincerity is the moment I call "light up." *Light Up Rotary* is our action for the happiness of ourselves and others.

Let us show our community that *what* we are doing is good.

Let them know that we are proud and happy to be Rotarians, and urge them to be a part of the Rotary family. The stronger our light, the better place the world will be. It is still true, what Paul Harris said, almost 100 years ago: "Friendship is the foundation rock on which Rotary was built."

How do we start? We start close to home, we ask our spouses into Rotary. My wife, Corinna, after attending Rotary events with me for 37 years, finally became a Rotarian in July last year. It made perfect sense. She was a great match for Rotary. Then, Corinna enjoyed it so much that our three children joined Rotary as well. They have been around Rotary their whole lives. They did not need to be convinced. It was a natural step for them. So we really are a family of Rotary now!

This is a true story. There was a small club in Taiwan. It had only six members left, five were past presidents! But three months later, they have 29 members. Why? First, they asked their wives to join; they did not realize that their wives had many more friends than they did!

I want to remind everyone that sometimes getting a new member is as easy as asking. Last year I was in Australia at a Rotary institute. I heard a great speaker. She is the CEO of Mizuho Bank in Australia. I invited her to join Rotary. No one had asked her before. At first, she said she didn't think she was qualified. The CEO of a bank! I said, "That's ridiculous! Of course you are qualified!" I took my membership pin off my jacket and inducted her that day! All I had to do was ask. I do this wherever I speak and you would be surprised at how many qualified people are happy to join!

Well, some of you may like my ideas, some of you may not. This is the beauty of Rotary. We hear many different viewpoints, from many countries, but I only hope that you will be open-minded and try it out.

We have a clear goal to reach 1.3 million members. In our year, we shall let our community see Rotary. We shall ask them to be involved. We shall ask them to become Rotarians. Confucius also said: "People are distressed by their inability to do it. The problem, however, is simply that they don't do it."

I am a businessman, same as many of you. And I like to think of Rotary as a business and Rotarians as the customers. A business can only succeed if the customers keep coming back. If you do not provide a good product for your customers, they will not purchase from you. If you do not provide good service, they will not come back again!

I want to give *you*, your co-workers, your friends, and your neighbors reasons to buy from Rotary, to stay with Rotary, and to bring more customers to Rotary.

As we close this wonderful convention, there are three words that help guide me in my life (3Hs): *hand*, *head*, and *heart*. Use your hand to help, give a helping hand. Use your head to make sure you are helping in the right place. And use your heart to make it sincere. Without your heart, nothing else matters.

My father always reminded us of these three words. Today, I would like to pass them on to you all. Please let your hand, head, and heart guide you in our year. I know we will have a great year together, as we *Light Up Rotary!*

Last but not least, I want to share with you the wisdom of "The Power of One":

One song can spark a moment
One whisper can wake the dream
One tree can start a forest
One bird can herald spring

One smile can start a friendship
One hug can lift the soul
One star can guide a ship at sea
One word can frame the goal
One vision can change a nation
One sunbeam lights a room
One candle wipes out darkness
One laugh will win over gloom
One step starts each journey
One word starts each prayer
One hope will raise our spirits
One touch can show you care
One voice can speak with wisdom
One heart can know what's true
One life can make a difference

That difference can be you, as you *Light Up Rotary*.