
Rotary Family Values Series 9

About Tolerance

Talk about a Rotary Giant.

PDG Dens W. L. Shao, D3520 (1999~2000)

“We are in an global community, we can no longer approach today’s problems in the same narrow nationalistic way. We must have an international outlook, because this is the challenge we all face.”

The 1993~94 RI President Robert Bass issued the above challenge in his essay “Rotarians and End of History”. How do we combine our forces to improve the interaction between people? How do we peacefully coexist with others in this diverse world? The then District Governor Philip suggested Tolerance as the key. He believed that the Rotary philosophy is based on meshing different human beings that viewed diversity as strength. The Rotary movement utilizes the various social activities and the ideal of service to others, to rally its members to achieve the interest and cause of the Rotary movement. In reality, it is impossible to eliminate all the differences between people, therefore PDG Philip called on all Rotarians to have an open heart to deal with and to serve others.

Tolerance is one of the most important virtues in the Rotary spirit. As early as 1911 our founder Paul Harris in his essay “Rational Rotarianism” said: “If by interposition of Providence I some day were to find myself standing on a platform in some great Coliseum looking into the eyes of every living Rotarian, and were to be told that I could have one word to say, without an instants hesitation and at the top of my voice, I would shout ‘Toleration!’.” Because it was in pursuit of it that the Pilgrim Fathers embarked in their frail craft upon the stormy waters. It was from the chrysalis toleration that lustrous winged liberty. The existence of Rotary resulted because of you and I – our understanding and toleration we have for each other’s weakness.

Our founder Paul Harris has repeatedly iterated: “Rotarians respect each other’s opinions and are tolerant and friendly at all times. Catholics, Protestants, Moslems, Jews, and Buddhists break bread together in Rotary.” And it is this tolerant attitude that prompted the Rotary International to adopt the following statement in 1933:

“Rotarians in all countries should recognize these facts (differences) , and there should be a thoughtful avoidance of criticism of the laws and customs of one country by the Rotarians of another country.” The policy also cautions against “ any effort on the part of Rotarians of one country to interfere with the laws or customs of another country.” In “the Hidden three H’s of Rotary” the 1996~97 RI President Luis Vicente Giay also said: **“Tolerance, as a key to understanding among different peoples and nations”**. Therefore, as members of an international organization dedicated to world understanding and peace, it behooves Rotarians to exercise restraint in judging our Rotary friends and citizens from other countries when their behavior seems unusual to us.

Thirteen years of participation in the Rotary movement made me realize and share the view of our founder Paul Harris, that Rotary is a school, a dojo for building character, a melting pot of diversity. How do we resolve our differences? How do we refrain from selfish and arrogant behavior? How can we foster and build friendship? How to achieve Rotary Unity for the 1.2 million Rotarians with different race, sex, religion and culture? How can we expand this Rotary unity to every corner of the globe? I firmly believe that Tolerance and Mutual respect, like that of PDG Philip, are the keys to harmonize our differences, reduce selfish and arrogant behavior, further our friendships, and eventually unit the 1.2 million Rotarians, and go on to harmonize the world. Together with past RI President Giay we must use this perseverance as a key to open the door to a world where there's understanding and peace for all Mankind.



PDG Dens 於 1998 年泰國曼谷扶輪研習會榮獲國際扶輪基金會保管委員會主委 PRIP Robert Barth 與 1999-2000 年度之 RIP Carlo Ravizza 共同頒贈之鉅額捐獻獎
