

RI SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO CHINA
Christopher Bo Bramsen



**Report to RI President Wilf Wilkinson
on Rotary in China.**

Rotary China



16 Dec. 2007

Dear President Wilf Wilkinson,

In June 2007 the Board requested the RI Special Representative to China to provide a report at the January 2008 meeting that will

- a. detail the number of Rotarians in China
- b. detail the training provided to those Rotarians
- c. provide the status of possible legislation regarding NGOs in China.

I am please to submit the following information.

A. The number of Rotarians in China

In the PRC we are still in a special situation. There are many Rotary clubs in the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao. Because of the lack of legislation on international NGOs, Rotary has not yet been formally extended to mainland China. It has been agreed with the Chinese, however, that two Rotary clubs – in Beijing and in Shanghai - are permitted to function as chartered Rotary clubs in China, provided that the membership is limited to non-PRC nationals and that they take a low profile until Rotary is formally registered.

The two clubs were chartered on 8 February 2006. They are both doing very well, setting a good example for the functioning of new Rotary clubs, once we reach that stage.

Today the Rotary Club of Beijing has a total of 62 members (incl. 10 women) from the following countries: Germany 21, USA 17, Britain 9, France 3, Switzer-

land 2, Hong Kong 2, Canada 1, Chile 1, Japan 1, Luxembourg 1, Ireland, 1, Ukraine 1, Rwanda 1, Brazil 1, Italy 1 and Belgium 1.

The Rotary Club of Shanghai has a total of 66 members (incl. 9 women): Germany 15, USA 10, Australia 7, Hong Kong 5, Canada 4, Singapore 4, Britain UK 3, Ireland 2, Malaysia 2, Switzerland 2, Austria 1, Belgium 1, Finland 1, France 1, India 1, Italy 1, Netherlands 1, New Zealand 1 and Spain 1.

This gives a total of 128 Rotarians from 25 different countries. Since the chartering of the two clubs in February 2006 the total number of Rotarians in mainland China has increased from 92 to 128. A number of the Rotarians are ethnic Chinese.

The classification categories of the two clubs include manufacturing, banking, education, communication, real estate, computer, tourism, transportation, accounting, photography, medical service, consulting, property, engineering, law, trading and diplomacy,

It should be noted that each of the two clubs are active in a number of matching grants projects. They are both exceptionally good in fundraising activities and they cooperate in a number of fields, including in GSE. This year, the first Rotary ambassadorial scholar from mainland China has been sent abroad.



At a “district level” the two clubs are guided by the Rotary China Team, here seen together with PRIP Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar at our meeting in October 2007 in Beijing.

B. Training of Rotarians in mainland China.

We continue to organize two training sessions per year for the Rotarians from Beijing and Shanghai. The first of these sessions in 2007 took place in Beijing from 10 to 11 March. We call it the Rotary China Assembly, and it includes a PETS seminar for the new club leaders.

Our second training session in 2007, which we call the Rotary China Conference was held in Beijing in October. This is a training weekend for all Rotarians in Beijing and Shanghai as well as a forum for a general discussion of Rotary matters,

much like a District Conference. We were very fortunate to have Trustee and PRIP Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar with us in Beijing at the conference this year.

The next the Rotary China Assembly is set for 7-9 March, 2008 in Shanghai.

The training activities are organized by PDGs Gloria Cheng from Hong Kong and Andrew Cheng from New York. We are looking into the possibilities of appointing a Training Coordinator in each of the two clubs and setting up a specific "Club Trainer Program".

C. The status of possible legislation regarding NGOs in China.

There has been no progress in the legislation process. After the Communist Party Conference that was held in October, we might see some movement.

In our talks with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing, we have continued our discussions on how the PRC can join an international organization where Taiwan is already a member. Our guiding principle in these discussions continues to be that the extension of Rotary into the PRC should not be done at the expense of the continued successful development of Rotary in Taiwan. With the current stand-still in the NGO legislation process, there is no hurry to settle this question for the time being.

At our talks in October with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chinese side understood that we cannot aim at a solution on the questions relating to Taiwan, (name, flag and anthem) as long as we don't know the details of the long-awaited NGO legislation. Everything has to be solved together, as a package. Nevertheless, the Chinese side insists that an agreement between Rotary International and the PRC on the Taiwan issue, possibly in a Memorandum of Understanding, is a prerequisite for Rotary's registering in China. Once this issue is solved and the legislation is in place, the Chinese see no problems in the registration of Rotary as an international Non-Governmental Organization.



On this background I suggest that the Chinese points of view relating to Taiwan be conveyed in confidence to the Rotary leadership in Taiwan in order to ascertain if there are any major problems seen from the Taiwanese

side. I therefore suggest that I – in my dual capacity as chairman of the RI China Extension Committee and RI Special Representative to China - together with Assistant Special Representative Serge Dumont – pay a visit to Taiwan in order to conduct an early, confidential and exploratory exchange of views. Understanding

the Taiwanese views would be very useful for our preparation of the formal registration of Rotary in China. Only by having such informal contacts with the Taiwanese Rotarians will I be able to fulfill the role as a credible RI interlocutor on Rotary matters that the Chinese side expects me to be.

These contacts could take place in Taipei in April 2008, in connection with a planned visit by PRIP Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar to Taiwan.

Another issue: We are also looking into the possibility of establishing a TRF representative office in Beijing, which might pave the way for an expeditious entry of Rotary into China, once the formalities are in place.

Finally, let me convey to you that the members of the Rotary China Team strongly believe that the present Rotary setup in China, with an RI Special Representative who deals directly with the Chinese authorities and a Rotary China Team that coordinates Rotary matters in China at "district level" continues to be the best solution for the near future. This way of organizing our presence in Mainland China - with one direct channel - provides the continuity, the credibility and the measured approach that is needed until a formal registration can take place.

In March and April, I intend to meet with senior Rotarians in Hong Kong and Taiwan, including Trustee and PRID Gary Huang in Taipei, who is the vice chair of the RI China Extension Committee. Having solicited their views we should be able to write an updated report in May from the Extension Committee to the RI Board of Directors.

Yours in Rotary,

Christopher Bo Bramsen

RI Special Representative to China