

# NEWSLETTER

from

**Christopher Bo Bramsen**  
**RI SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO CHINA**



**Rotary China**



9 January, 2007

Dear fellow Rotarians

As we leave 2006, the charter year of the two Rotary clubs in Beijing and Shanghai, I am sending you this Newsletter in order to inform you of the developments of Rotary in China during 2006.

As newly appointed RI Special Representative to China, I visited Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong in January 2006 in order to explore the organization of the new administrative setup for Rotary in China that had been decided on by the RI Board of Directors in November 2005. I was accompanied by Assistant SR Serge Dumont from Beijing and Manager, Club & District support, Cliff Chan from the RI headquarters in Evanston.

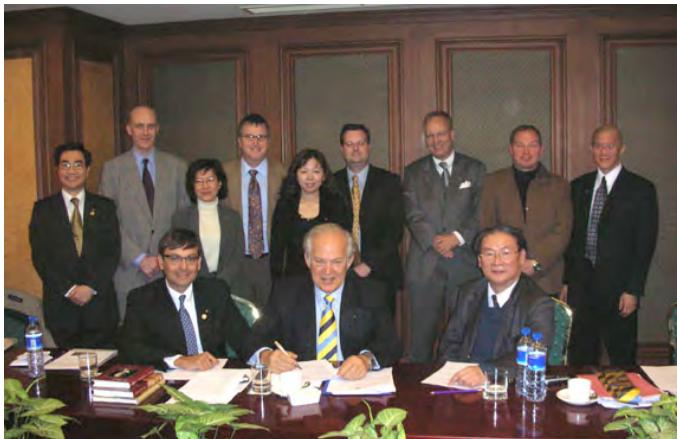


Meeting with the  
Ministry of Civil  
Affairs in Beijing  
January 2006.



Meeting with the leaders of Rotary District 3450 in Hong Kong, January 2006

The formal chartering of the clubs, that took place on 8 February 2006, gave the clubs and their members a valuable recognition of the Rotary work they have been doing in China during the last 10 years. The chartering provided the two clubs with their club numbers (Beijing 60724 and Shanghai 60725) which has improved considerably their possibilities to draw upon various types of Rotary funding,



Meeting with the leadership of the Rotary Club of Shanghai, January 2006

In March 2006 the first Rotary China Assembly was held in Beijing, with the aim of providing a training forum for the incoming club leadership. We also established the Rotary China Team, which functions as a mini-scale district leadership team, and a Rotary China Advisory Committee.

In May RIP Carl Wilhelm Stenhammar visited the two newly chartered clubs and celebrated the 10 years of their work in China. Many senior Rotary leaders participated in the visit and in the festive events, including large fund-raising dinners in Beijing as well as Shanghai, organized by charter club presidents Carl Dorwald and Dr. Lee Wah Hin.

During the Rotary International Convention in Malmö-Copenhagen in June 2006 I was pleased to organize get-togethers in my home city, Copenhagen, for the



RIP Carl Wilhelm Stenhammar visits Beijing and Shanghai in May 2006. Here with visiting Rotary leaders in ASR Serge Dumont's residence in Beijing

visiting Rotarians from China. At the convention I also had the privilege to give a speech on the theme "Bridging the World" where I gave a short account on the developments of Rotary in China, and how the two clubs - in line with the theme of the upcoming Rotary year 2006-07 - were leading the way for Rotary in China.

Rotary China trainers, PDG Andrew Cheng from New York and his wife PDG Gloria Cheng from Hong Kong with SR Christopher Bo Bramsen and his wife Gudrun Islandi Bramsen. At the Rotary International Convention in Copenhagen, June 2006.



On 1 July 2006, Mike Furst in Beijing and C.C. Wu in Shanghai took over as presidents of the clubs with their new club leadership teams. Membership of each club has grown to around 50 – 60 Rotarians. As PRC nationals cannot (yet) become Rotarians, both clubs are very international in their expat membership composition, with members of many different nationalities. English is spoken at their weekly meetings - on Tuesdays at 12.00 noon in Beijing, and at 5.30 pm in Shanghai - and these meetings are usually attended by a several visiting Rotarians from abroad.



Assistant Special Representative Serge Dumont with the two current club presidents in China, Mike Furst, Rotary Club of Beijing, and C.C. Wu, Rotary Club of Shanghai. October 2006. Shanghai.

Both clubs are engaged in a number of Rotary service projects. They are good fund raisers and are functioning as a good example to the Chinese as to what Rotary is all about and what Rotary can do to help those in need. The clubs are also into new areas in China such as Ambassadorial scholarships, GSE, Interact and Rotaract.

From a visit to the Fan Xing School outside Beijing, where the Rotary Clubs of Beijing and Copenhagen have established a joint literacy project aimed at giving Chinese students a better knowledge of English.



The two clubs are not yet part of any Rotary district, but our Rotary China Team takes care of issues that are normally dealt with at district level (with the “district number” 0052). This team is also truly international, with members residing in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Evanston, New York and Copenhagen. Most communications within the team are done by e-mail, but we also meet several times a year in Beijing or Shanghai.

We have encountered some problems in transferring earlier accumulated DDFs back to the clubs, and we have run into restrictive ceilings on the number of matching grants the clubs can draw upon, but we are looking into ways of solving these issues.



Members of the Rotary China Team, meeting in Shanghai in October 2006

As our second training session in 2006 we organized a Rotary China Conference in Shanghai in October. This was 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. It was a very successful meeting with an evening of fun fellowship on the Bund. The next training session for Rotarians in China will be our spring Rotary China Assembly on 10 -11 March, 2007 in Beijing.

One of the major tasks of the Special Representative to China, is to liaise with the Chinese government to pursue the official registration of Rotary clubs in China and address other governmental issues with Chinese officials as needed.

In our talks with officials from the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs we have continued to ask for clarification on status of the NGO legislation. The NGO draft law was submitted by the Bureau of Legal System to the State Council (the Central Government) in the month of July for consideration and approval. The draft was a clean paper, without any divergent views among relevant government agencies. The two ministries were optimistic and gave the signal that 2006 could be the year for preparation of the registration of foreign NGOs. However, a standstill in the legislation process can now be noticed, which seems to be based on the uncertainty of the consequences of opening up for a large number of foreign NGOs into China.

In order to make a visible impact in China we have discussed with the Ministry of Civil Affairs a major project aiming at producing artificial limbs for the many handicapped people in China. We are currently making a feasibility study in order to ascertain the scope of the project and how to finance it.



Meeting with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing, October 2006

In our talks with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing, we have also discussed how the PRC can join an international organization where Taiwan is already a member. The guiding principle for our discussions with the Chinese authorities continues to be that the expansion of Rotary into the PRC should not be done at the expense of the continued successful development of Rotary in Taiwan.

From the 2006 Jakarta Rotary Institute, December 2006: SR Bramsen, RI Director Noraseth Patmanand (Convenor of the Institute), RI President Bill Boyd and RI Director Ian Riseley.



Although the two clubs are not yet districted they do belong to Zone 4 B. On that background I participated in the 2006 Jakarta Rotary Institute which took place on 1-3 December. It was useful to meet with leaders from RI and from Zones 4B, 6B and 7B, in particular from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.

All in all, the two clubs and the Rotary China Team continue to lead the way for Rotary in China.  
Happy New Year!

Christopher Bo Bramsen

RI Special Representative to China