

Governor's MONTHLY LETTER 2021

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Rotary

District 2750



Rotary Opens Opportunities
ロータリーは機会の扉を開く

January 2021



Governor's Message

Rotary International
District 2750 2020-21 Governor

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The Day that Robots Perform Service Activities

Happy New Year. 2021 is the Year of the Ox in the Chinese zodiac, which interestingly has a completely different Chinese character set than those conventionally used to indicate the same animals. Those characters have been in use for as long as 4,000 years since the time of China's oldest dynasty—the Yin dynasty—and were apparently used at that time to indicate the twelve months of the year, with a variant of the character for "rat" indicating January, a variant of the character for "ox" indicating February, and so on. It would take until the Han dynasty for those unconventional characters for animals to be adopted for use in the Chinese zodiac in the manner that they are today so ordinary people would find it easier to develop familiarity with them, and even that was 2,000 years ago. Yet, it would seem that the reason why completely different Chinese characters were used to express those animals as opposed to their conventional character equivalents has yet to be explained.

Now, on to the title topic. With the advent of a digital society becoming a hot topic as of late, I was personally curious as to the extent to which robots could approach humans, a subject that I had decent familiarity with through Japanese animated works such as "Astro Boy" by Osamu Tezuka and "Doraemon" by Fujiko F. Fujio. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to touch upon this theme of "a digital future," an issue that feels appropriate to start off 2021 with. Digitalization can be defined as work that had been sufficiently conducted through "analog" (re: non-digital) means up to this point making the transition to computer-based processing. Examples of that change are the transition

from landlines to mobile phones, from manuscript paper to iPads, and from letters to emails. Automatic driving is another example as well. Buses will soon traverse our streets without being manned by drivers. Moreover, The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan announced that it would eliminate gasoline-powered automobiles from available options for new cars by the mid-2030s with the aim of realizing a carbon-neutral society.

Amid such change, what concerns me the most is the humanization of robots. Do robots have the ability to comprehend service activities? Do they feel the enjoyment that comes with fellowship? I feel that the act of thinking about robots is actually the act of thinking about people. That is to say, as I pursue Rotary activities, a question that often occurs to me is, "Where do the qualities that make us human come from?" Are we outfitted with those qualities from the very start? Or are they cultivated through education? Can you picture a scene where robots congregate to talk about service activities and fellowship?

From the perspective of A.I. experts, the difference between A.I. and humans is that the latter has a will. Experts explain this difference as humans possessing the will to live as people and addressing the question of how they will discover their own value. What is it that we seek to become? Having such a will, experts say, is proof of one's humanity. At the Rotary Club, we pursue activities with people who possess the same will. We leave evaluations of ourselves to people on the outside, and go beyond simple words to actually lend a hand to people around the world who are less fortunate than ourselves or are suffering from illness or poverty. This, I believe, constitutes our collective "will."

Another thing that I think robots are incapable of doing is being empathic or emotional. An experiment that addressed how empathy, emotions and so forth affect the human heart apparently yielded the following positive result: people who have regularly experienced empathy and emotion through theatergoing and the like cease to place emphasis on the past and become future-oriented.

Rotary activities are unquestionably a reflection of our will to exist in a way that reflects our humanity. Moreover, the empathy and emotions that underpin that will doubles as energy for us to make our way towards a brighter future. Society may undergo rapid change in 2021, but my hope is that our activities will continue to take certain steps forward one at a time—just like an ox.

District 2750 Membership Report November 2020

Club Name	Regular meeting	Member quantity			Club Name	Regular meeting	Member quantity			
		July 1, 2020	End of Nov. 2020	Variations			July 1, 2020	End of Nov. 2020	Variations	
Chiyoda Group					Yamanote West Group					
Rotary Club of Tokyo-South	3	184	190	6	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Jiyugaoka	4	16	17	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Shiba	4	56	59	3	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Yoneyama Yuai	3	35	36	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Shimbashi	2	56	55	-1	Rotary E-Club of District 2750, Tokyo Yoneyama	3	34	34	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Akasaka	4	45	47	2	Rotary Club of Tokyo Daikanyama	2	28	28	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Minato	2	32	32	0	Tama South Group					
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Azabu	2	15	16	1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Hachioji	4	63	64	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Global	3	20	20	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Machida	2	57	57	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Sunrise Shiodome	2	16	16	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Hino	4	34	34	0	
Ginza/Nihonbashi Group					Rotary Club of Tokyo-Hachioji West	3	111	111	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Ginza	3	180	181	1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Machida-Naka	2	28	28	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Nihonbashi	3	204	207	3	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Hachioji East	4	32	34	2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Tsukiji	4	69	69	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Hachioji South	2	78	78	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Nihonbashi East	2	41	42	1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Machida-Salvia	4	35	36	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Chuo	4	203	207	4	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Tobihino	2	22	22	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Nihonbashi West	3	45	45	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Machida East	4	30	30	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Ginza New	3	79	80	1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Hachioji North	3	43	43	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-City Nihonbashi	2	38	38	0	Tama Middle Group					
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Chuo Shin	4	56	60	4	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Tachikawa	4	119	122	3	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Akebono	4	20	20	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Koganei	3	38	37	-1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Sanno	3	36	37	1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Kokubunji	3	32	33	1	
Keihin Group					Rotary Club of Tokyo-Mitaka	3	42	40	-2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Haneda	2	55	55	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Akishima	2	55	53	-2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Shinagawa	4	41	42	1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Kunitachi	3	47	47	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Omori	4	35	39	4	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Tachikawa Kobushi	4	87	89	2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Shinagawa Chuo	2	30	30	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Inokashira	3	23	24	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Denenchofu	2	48	48	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Akishima Chuo	4	48	48	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Konan Marine	3	18	18	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Musashi Kokubunji	3	42	42	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Osaki	3	24	25	1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Koganei-Sakura	4	25	27	2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Kamata	2	59	64	5	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Kunitachi Shiroume	3	17	17	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Keihin	2	26	26	0	Rotary E-Club of Tokyo Peace Wing	4	23	23	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Denenchofu Midori	2	18	18	0	Tama East Group					
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Shirokane	4	24	28	4	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Fuchu	3	55	55	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Takanawa	1	23	22	-1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Chofu	3	64	64	0	
Yamanote East Group					Rotary Club of Tokyo-Tama	4	20	21	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-West	3	197	197	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Komae	3	14	13	-1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Josai	4	67	70	3	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Inagi	4	28	28	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Seinan	2	44	45	1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Musashi Fuchu	3	39	37	-2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Harajuku	3	17	16	-1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Tamagawa	3	20	19	-1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Suginami	4	41	40	-1	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Tama Green	2	29	29	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Jingu	4	24	24	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo-Chofu Murasaki	3	66	67	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Ebisu	3	117	117	0	Rotary Club of Tokyo i City	3	18	18	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Hiroo	4	24	24	0	Pacific Basin Group					
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Shibuya	1	35	37	2	Rotary Club of Guam		*52	53	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Roppongi	4	53	53	0	Rotary Club of Saipan	4	*40	42	2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Atago	2	31	31	0	Rotary Club of Tumon Bay		*59	59	0	
Yamanote West Group					Rotary Club of Northern Guam		*31	31	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Setagaya	3	44	45	1	Rotary Club of Pohnpei		*18	19	1	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Meguro	3	33	34	1	Rotary Club of Palau	2	14	16	2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Seijo	1	17	17	0	Rotary Club of Guam Sunrise		*15	15	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Setagaya South	2	97	94	-3	Rotary Club of Truk Lagoon		8	8	0	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Jonan	2	13	16	3	Rotary Club of Pago Bay Guam E		*23	25	2	
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Yamanote	4	70	69	-1	Total in Japan - 89			4,364	4,416	52
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Seijo Shin	4	31	31	0	Total in 2750 dis. - 98			4,624	4,684	60
Rotary Club of Tokyo-Aoyama	3	16	15	-1						

* shows the provisional data.