



## PRESIDENT'S VIEW



*Dear Fellow Rotarians,*

I am part of the first generation to grow up in Japan after a terrible war. I think it is natural that my countrymen now place a great priority on peace. We saw where militarism brought our country, and we also saw the great economic growth that came when our nation made the choice to embrace peace.

This was the decision that allowed Japan to grow and thrive. It allowed generations of children to grow up in safety, to become educated, to improve their lives. It fundamentally changed the Japanese attitude toward other countries and cultures. It caused us to open our minds, to become more tolerant, to seek greater understanding.

And it allowed us to redirect our energies toward positive goals. In Japan, it is traditional to prioritise the needs of the society over the needs of the individual. This has always been part of our culture. In the weeks and months following the great earthquake and disaster of March 2011, this was what helped us to survive and rebuild.

This is a lesson that I think the whole world can learn from, in a positive way. When we see the needs of others as more important than our own needs — when we focus on a shared goal that is for the good of all — this changes everything. It changes how we relate to the world. It changes our priorities. And it changes how we understand the idea of peace.

In the 2012–13 Rotary year, peace will be our focus and our goal, and I will ask all Rotarians to actively work for *Peace Through Service*.

A belief in the power of service lies at the very heart of Rotary. By making service our priority, we put the needs of others above our own. We empathise more deeply with the difficulties of other people; we become more generous with our time and resources, and more open to new ways of thinking. Instead of trying to change others, we recognise that everyone and everything has something to teach us.

Through service, we become more tolerant of our differences and more grateful for the people in our lives. Our sense of gratitude drives us to understand others better and to see the good in everyone. Through better understanding, we learn to respect others. With mutual respect, we live with others in peace.

And so I ask you all to put *Peace Through Service* at the forefront of your Rotary work this year, and to commit to a Rotary goal of a more peaceful world.

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*Sakuji Tanaka*  
*President, Rotary International*

