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In life, sometimes the experiences that matter the most are the briefest. They pass in the blink of an eye: a few days, a few hours, a few moments. They are the experiences that illuminate the landscape of our memory, shining brightly even years later. They are the moments in which we see, suddenly, something we had not seen; we understand something we had not understood; we forge a connection we had not expected.

For me, this has been a Rotary year like no other. I have been around the world, traversing countries and continents. I have been to places I had never seen before, and I have returned to familiar places and seen them, as for the first time, through the lens of Rotary.

When you travel for Rotary, you travel with a different sense of perspective and a different sense of purpose. There is an awareness of being part of something larger than yourself. When you board a plane or a train, or leave your home in the dark hours of early morning, you may be leaving for lands unknown – but at your destination, there will be no strangers. There will be Rotarians, waiting and welcoming. There will be work to do, something to learn, and perhaps something to teach.

There will be connections to forge, friendships to build, and memories to carry for a lifetime.

This year, I have been the traveler, and I have been welcomed by Rotarians around the world. A few months from now, from 28 May to 1 June, I invite you to step into my experience: allow me to welcome you to Seoul for our 107th International Convention.

The Koreans have a saying: 사람이 나면 서울로 보내라. In English we would say, "When a person is born, send them to Seoul." For Seoul is a city of opportunities: a wonderful destination with rich traditions, modern conveniences, and a culture unlike any other. But I ask you to join me in Seoul not only for all of this, but also for the experiences you will have there with your fellow Rotarians.

For a brief moment in time, you will experience Rotary as I have experienced it: in all its diversity, all its warmth, and all its potential. You will be greeted as an old friend by people you have never met; you will share your thoughts, even without a shared language. You will learn with wonder of what Rotary has achieved, and leave inspired to achieve even more.

Before this Rotary year comes to its close, I ask you to do what I have done: to leave your homes, to board your flights, to travel toward the unknown with an open heart and an open mind, confident that Rotary will welcome you. Join me, and your fellow Rotarians, as we *Connect with Korea – Touch the World*.