

## **Remarks at the IEEE Hong Kong Section's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

(As Prepared)

Gordon W. Day  
President and CEO

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)  
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Secretary Tsang, it is a pleasure to join you again in a great celebration. I think I'm now starting to understand the Lion Dance.

Professor (CY) Chung and Prof. (Henry) Chan, we congratulate you and the IEEE volunteers in Hong Kong on achieving this milestone. Thank you for what you are doing here for the IEEE and for the engineering community. And thank you for inviting the IEEE leadership to join you in this celebration. We are delighted to be here.

The Asia-Pacific region is very important to us. From Japan, South Korea, and China in the north, around the Pacific Rim to India, and including Australia and New Zealand, what we call IEEE Region 10 is our second largest region by area and our largest by membership. It includes the countries where our membership is growing fastest. And it includes the countries where the use of our products and services is growing fastest.

You here in Hong Kong, the IEEE Hong Kong Section, are literally in the middle of that growth and opportunity. And that is why the IEEE Board of Directors decided, over a year ago, to hold a meeting here. You are important to us for what you are doing right here in Hong Kong, and also because you provide us with a window to understand the rest of the Asia Pacific region, including especially mainland China.

But I would like to encourage you to think beyond what we do together as members of the IEEE. I would like you to think about the importance of the profession we share and what we can do together for our profession and for the world, more generally.

Think back over the engineering achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Start with electricity, which began to reach homes and businesses at the beginning of the last century. Think about lighting, refrigerators, electric machinery, labor-saving devices. Electricity made life easier, safer and more pleasant.

Think about how communications technologies – telephones, data communications, radio and television – increased the velocity of information to the fundamental limit, while they expanded our access to knowledge, education and entertainment, building businesses and communities, and improving safety and security.

Think about how computers process vast amounts of information and control complex systems, and how microprocessors are now ubiquitous, present in even the most mundane products.

And think about health care. Recognize that most diagnostic procedures are enabled by electronics, that drugs and other therapies are developed using electronic instrumentation and computers, and that advanced prostheses are electronic and mechanical marvels.

These were extraordinary achievements, and they are just parts of the story. But they are enough to claim that, in most parts of the world, quality-of-life in the last century was defined by the creativity and ingenuity of engineers.

But now we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and some say that the great engineering innovations are behind us, that we can expect further advances to be incremental.

To them, I say think about what the world still needs. Think about providing secure, reliable, and inexpensive energy without damaging the environment. Think about making sustainable energy available everywhere, including the 20% of the world that still doesn't have electricity from any source. Think about the things that can be done through the continuing convergence of computing and communications. And think about what technology can do for health care. These are big opportunities for dramatic innovation.

May I suggest you start by reading the January issue of IEEE Spectrum. Read the moving story of how engineers used an exoskeleton, an external skeleton, to make it possible for a paralyzed woman to walk. Read about how engineers made it possible for a blind woman to see, after 16 years of complete blindness, to see well enough to navigate her neighborhood and find her way home. Read about new batteries, and new types of lighting, and new manufacturing processes. These are just some of the advances we can foresee now, and there will be more to come.

Ours is the profession that can make these kinds of advances happen. We can improve quality-of-life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as much as our predecessors did in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

And IEEE is the professional society that can support the technologists who will imagine those big advances, and turn their ideas into products and services that will change the world. We provide technologists with the information and support they need to be successful. And we are a community that can help multiply their effort.

You do those things locally, here in Hong Kong. You understand what is needed here, you respond, and you help us support your community. With your continued assistance, and that of the other 330 or so IEEE sections in over 160 countries around the world, IEEE can respond to the needs of engineers globally. And together we can address more opportunities more quickly.

Thank you again for inviting us to join in this delightful celebration. Congratulations on your achievement, and our best wishes for your next 40 years.