



Rotary
Garden Reach



IMAGINE
ROTARY



LIGHT

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President - Rtn. Abinash K Singh • Secretary - Rtn. Debasis Das • TREASURER - Rtn. Chiranjib Sha • Editor - PP Tanu Roy

The Celebrated Polymath

On the 134th birth anniversary of celebrated polymath Sukumar Roy, a long thread on his powerful satirical commentary on World War I recruitment efforts using the medium of his signature nonsense verse



While he was a double Honours in Physics & Chemistry, a pioneer of photography & lithography in India and a skilled illustrator, Sukumar Ray is best known for his body of literary work. This includes humorous stories, plays, scientific essays and most importantly his nonsense verses in *Abol/Tabol* (Bengali - আবোলতাবোল) which are unparalleled.

While these verses are an enduring favourite for children & adults as a medium of unfettered humour, what is not so commonly known is that many of his poems were also allegorical & contained commentary on important social and political events of the time. One such poem is *Woody Old Man* (Bengali - কাঠবুড়ো).

This is a poem about an old man who boils different kinds of wood and tastes them while sitting under the sun, making complex calculations at the same time.

He claims that each type of wood has its unique character, and only he can discern their true merit. The British colonial policymakers had started profiling the different native communities' right after the 1857 mutiny. The Jonathan Peel commission was formed with the sole purpose of identifying a resource pool for recruiting soldiers for internal and potential external battles.

By the 1880s, it had divided the population into two categories, martial & non-martial communities.

Certain communities were considered racially brave and loyal, hence suited to serve the British military. Soldiers were majorly drawn from certain communities in the North West, the hilly regions and certain Muslim communities. The Southern and Eastern people were deemed political, effeminate and generally unsuitable for combat.



Predictably caste also played into the equation, various scheduled castes and tribes who formed the bulk of the army prior to 1857 were gradually replaced in favour of the 'martial' people. The poem, written in 1915, is believed to provide a satirical commentary on the World War I recruitment efforts, which predictably had an exclusionary principle in keeping with these theories.

The following poster clearly indicates who can enlist in the infantry - Muslims (Shaikh, Saiyyid, Mughal, Pathan), Brahmin, Rajput,

Bhumihar, Ahir, Kurmi, Pasi, Lodhi and Gaderiya. It also specifies that the artillery would only accept someone from whom Hindus would accept water.

The old man and his absurd classification of woods mocks this policy of classifying people based on racial and caste identity into who can join the army & who can't. Following are excerpts from the original & the translated versions which will help make the connection. This poem would be equally relevant today as these caste-based divisions continue in Indian society more than 100 years since the poem was written.

কাঠে কাঠে ঠুকে করে ঠকাঠক শব্দ ।
বলে, "জানি কোন্ কাঠ কিসে হয় জন্ম ;
কাঠকুঠো ঘেঁটেঘুটে জানি আমি পষ্ট,
এ কাঠের বজ্জাতি কিসে হয় নষ্ট ।
কোন্ কাঠ পোষ মানে, কোন্ কাঠ শান্ত,
কোন্ কাঠ টিমটিমে, কোন্টা বা জ্যান্ত ।
কোন্ কাঠে জ্ঞান নেই মিথ্যা কি সত্য,
আমি জানি কোন্ কাঠে কেন থাকে গর্ত ।"

Today is our 2197th

Members attended last RWM: 15

Birthday Greetings :

Nov 12th PP Sanjay V Bhatt

Nov 14th Suhit, Son of Rtn. Tanmoy Mahapatra



Anniversary Greetings :

Nov 8th Spouse Sabina & Rtn. Abbas Haldar

Nov 10th Spouse Rajshree & PP Capt. DK Rao

My Path to Peace

A Harvest Season message by Barbara Muller, Chairwoman, Rotary Action Group for Peace



My Path to Peace might give you hope and inspiration

To look at your own path to peace.

Thank you for reading and sharing.

TO ME PEACE IS:

Living fully in the moment,

Waking up with gratitude!

Walking down the hall to the kitchen,

Saying, "I am alive today".

Looking forward to what the day may bring,

As Chair of the Rotary Action Group for Peace,

President of the UNA-SOCAL.org, and

Member of the Rotary Club of World Peace.org.

When my husband, United Nations Robert Muller

Passed, we still did not have world peace so I worked

On my book Revolutionary Conversations to be sure

Those words create peace in our conversations.

My peace secrets have served me well:

Saying yes, with enthusiasm,

Saying no, with grace and best wishes.

Hosting Peacepodcast.org, with over 100 peace builders, who share how peace is working

In their lives, their books and their work.

Over and over I heard my guests say:

PEACE is possible and it begins with each of us.

But it does require a vision and a frame of mind.

Peace is now, a living substance,

Something unto itself, and

Peace is like software to be shared.

Peace is not the absence of problems or conflict.

Peace is NOW!

I know it, speak it and take actions accordingly.

I live in gratitude for joys and challenges,

Knowing what I dream and think about today may

Help create our peace future:

A world that is fully supportive of all humans and all

Life in a bountiful nature and a

World in lasting peace and harmony.

In Peace!

From Trees to a Forest

Ian HS Riseley, Foundation Trustee Chair

Many of you will recall my –challenge to Rotary clubs when I was RI president in 2017-18: to plant one tree per member to help the environment. Thanks to you, we estimate over 4 million trees went into the ground — quite a forest indeed.

This month, as we celebrate TRF, let’s remember that each Foundation project is much like planting a tree. With each sapling of hope, health, and peace, we make an investment in the future that will one day grow into something even greater.

Such a tree was planted by Rotary in Sri Lanka, where more than 2,000 children born annually with a congenital heart defect can now get corrective surgery allowing them to survive to adulthood. Local Rotarians saw a need to make the surgery more accessible, and rallied 17 Rotary districts to contribute District Designated Funds. After the Foundation matched those funds, a total global grant of \$365,000 was used to create the first human heart valve tissue bank in Sri Lanka, with the government providing the building, staffing and supplies to ensure its sustainability.



Visiting this life-saving facility in 2017 was an unforgettable experience for me. But I have seen countless other great “trees” planted across our seven areas of focus. We planted PolioPlus in 1985 and it has grown into one of the greatest public health initiatives in history, helping reduce cases of wild poliovirus by 99.9 per cent. Seven Rotary Peace Centers around the world have also taken root and are now bearing fruits as scores of peacebuilders and community leaders go forth with the skills to make the world more safe and secure.

Charity Navigator, an independent agency, has given The Rotary Foundation its highest ranking for more than a decade. Why? Our overhead expense level is much lower than most similar organisations — 89 per cent of gifts to the Foundation went to programmes and operations in Rotary year 2021-22. Not only are we efficient stewards, but Rotary’s requirement of a community-needs assessment for global grants helps ensure the

sustainability of our projects. And the Foundation, run by your fellow Rotarians, is a charity you can trust.

However, only about 38 per cent of members actively support our own organisation’s great charity. We can and should do better. Just as I challenged you to plant trees as president, as Foundation trustee chair I would like to challenge each club to make a giving plan for our Rotary Foundation this year.

Imagine our impact — Rotary’s great forest of hope and peace that will flourish — and please give today.

Mumbai Rotarians help Kashmir villagers at behest of Indian Army

Rasheeda Bhagat

About 7 months ago, when Arun Bhargava, DGE of RI District 3141, got a call from a “top army person posted along the Indo-Pak border in Kashmir, I was puzzled about why he was calling me, a person located a couple of thousand km away in Mumbai.” It

was a long call and the officer on the other end, Col. Pranay Pawar, explained to him in detail that representing the Indian Army as a top Army officer, he was seeking Rotary's help to improve the lives of villagers staying in a group of remote villages located barely 8-10km from the LoC, in Kupwara district, Kashmir.



In that conversation, the colonel explained the GoI's initiative launched a few years ago in Kashmir to combat the alienation of Kashmiris, end their enchantment with Pakistan, and reassure them that they were Indians and the rest of India was interested in their welfare. "He needed the help of some NGOs, had identified Rotary, and offered to take a flight to Mumbai and explain the whole initiative of the welfare measures the Indian Army has been asked to take in that area to win the hearts and minds of people." This initiative was connected to incidents of stone throwing by the locals in the Kashmir valley, and controversies connected to the Army's response.

True to his promise Col. Pawar flew down to Mumbai to meet a group of about 70 senior Rotarians from various clubs identified by DGE Bhargava. "I deliberately chose seniors and Rotarians from a mix of professions to watch the presentation by the colonel on how Rotary could help the GoI and the Army in their initiative in Kashmir. The gist of his presentation was that in order to prevent the locals from being sympathetic either to the militants or Pakistan, the Army is trying to win over their trust by taking care of their basic needs such as education, healthcare, women's empowerment by enhancing their livelihood opportunities through adequate training, etc."

During the last 5-6 years the Army personnel posted in this region are working on the mantra that by using love and affection, rather than the bullet or force, the Army can build a personal rapport with the villagers. Towards this end, the Army has been building Army Goodwill schools, with some of the jawans even contributing the children's monthly fees of Rs. 150 from their pockets. Many of these villagers, who live close to the LoC, provide a lot of support and services to the Army, including acting as their eyes and ears and passing on vital and timely information on infiltration attempts from across the border.

"But, as he explained, the primary job of the Army is to protect the country, and hence it was trying to forge partnerships with voluntary organisations, corporates and other civilian groups to help win over the hearts of the people in those villages," says Bhargava. In the Army this project is called 'national integration' as it aims to give the alienated Kashmiris a feeling of belonging to India.

To establish a "personal rapport with the bunch of villages along the LoC, the Indian Army has now established the practice of undertaking every week a goodwill or khairiyat tour to the villagers' homes. They inquire after the family's health, ask if



someone is sick and a doctor also accompanies them to treat sick members of the family, if any. In some places Army goodwill schools have been built and here quite often the teachers' salaries are paid by the Army personnel themselves, Col Pawar explained in his presentation to the Rotarians.

It has also set up a women's empowerment centre where training is given to women to enhance their skills in making handicrafts, food products, etc.

The Rotarians who form the core team of DGE Bhargava for his year as governor in 2023-24, were so enthused with this presentation and the Army's invitation to help it improve people's life in this region of Kashmir along the LoC, that several of them, including Anand Ramnani, past president of Rotary Mumbai Parleshwar, volunteered to take up this cause. "We got immediately interested as the Army, in collaboration with NGOs, wants to develop the villages close to the Indo-Pak border in Rotary's core focus areas such as education, healthcare, women's empowerment, etc," he says.

So on April 30, 16 Rotarians, including Bhargava and Ramnani, from Mumbai set off to Kashmir to visit the remote villages, located about 45km from Kupwara. "We wanted to understand the needs of the villages and what kind of support was required, and thought it could be done best by visiting and staying in that place for a couple of days. We landed in Srinagar and after a 5-6-hour drive in the hilly terrain, reached the village Machhal, which is barely 10km from the LoC," says Ramnani.

What they saw in those villages literally melted away the 2,300-odd-km distance between Mumbai and Kupwara. As the group was there even as the villagers were celebrating the end of Ramzan and the arrival of Eid, not only did the Rotarians participate in the Iftar party but on Eid day they went to the home of the top military commander who had hosted an Eid-Milan for the villagers to celebrate Eid. "We took some gifts for the Sarpanch and the Maulvi of Machhal, and on receiving these gifts, they became very emotional and said: "Look at this miracle; people come to our village from thousands of km and give us Eid ka tohfa... imagine Mumbai se Rotarians aatey hei aur hamein Eid ka tohfa detey hei." They felt a sense of belonging to India, and we all sang Jana gana mana together." Later they learnt that some of these villagers had sung the Indian national anthem for the first time ever!

For the Rotarians themselves there was a first! "***When they performed the namaz, they invited us to join them, and meine meri zindagi ki sabse pehli namaz us din padhi. (I performed my life's first ever namaz on that day),***" says an excited Bhargava. Needless to say, he was guided by both the sarpanch and maulvi, who prayed on either side of him!

When he asked the top officer in charge, Maj. Gen. Abhijit Pendharkar, YSM GOC, Vajr Division, what more the Rotarians could do for the villagers, he said that when there was a medical emergency, as the terrain was hilly and narrow, an ambulance could not reach the villagers' homes. "They needed a motorcycle ambulance, at the back of which is attached a stretcher on which a person can be carried." The power and influence of Rotary came into play; some calls were placed to clubs in Mumbai, and on the spot Rs. 8 lakh were raised to buy two such ambulances for the villages.

Subsequently, the officer presented the two motorcycle ambulances to the Sarpanch and Maulvi of Machhal village in the presence of the 16 Rotarians from Mumbai.

Later this news was carried on the Facebook page of Voice of Kalaroos, a local Kupwara media group, describing how the Army and Rotary had collaborated to provide two motorcycle ambulances for the Machhal sector of Kupwara district. The post explained how located about 45km from Kupwara, "the entire population is spread all over the mountains with limited accessibility to healthcare services. The roads are narrow and during bad weather, cannot be accessed by four wheelers. Hence these two motorcycle ambulances will improve the Machhal bowl's accessibility to medical assistance in this far-flung area."

The Rotarians stayed in the accommodation provided by the Army for three days, and

gauged for themselves the kind of help the locals need, said Ramnani. “We were also taken by the Army personnel to see the women’s empowerment centre built by the Army. Here the local women make shawls, gloves, carpets etc and the Army is trying to establish channels to market their products at a good price, and has sought help from Rotarians for this venture as well. And we will now explore options to help market these products,” he said.



His club, Rotary Mumbai Parleshwar has been doing projects for the Indian Army since 2014. “We were first introduced to the 36 Maratha Regiment and every year since 2014 we’ve been doing fundraising of around Rs. 3 lakh for them. This money goes into the Army Welfare Fund and is used to help the families of veteran soldiers for paying their children’s fees, home repairs, marriage expenses, etc.”

With the Army having established a good rapport with these Rotarians from Mumbai, on July 30, the club received a request from the 56 Rashtriya Rifles for 300 solar lamps to be distributed by the Army to the Bhakarwals, a nomadic tribe who rear cattle in remote mountain areas and “collect information to help the Army keep a check on the infiltration of militants from across the border,” he says.

The amount required, just about Rs. 2 lakh, was raised by Rotary Mumbai Parleshwar and the club took the responsibility of arranging and transporting the solar lamps to Machhal immediately, as they were to be distributed at an event on the eve of Independence Day by the Area Commander. As Aug 11 was Raksha Bandhan, the club also organised 300 rakhis for the jawans and the goods were loaded on the Jammu Tawi Express. Fortunately, a jawan from the same regiment was travelling by the same train to Jammu, so he took responsibility to reach the solar lamps and rakhis, says Ramnani. He adds that a Rotary club from Chennai, RID 3232, sent an additional 200 solar lamps.

True Richness

Someone asked Bill, Is there any person richer than you?

He said, yes, only one. Many years ago, I had been dismissed and I had gone to New York airport. I read titles of newspapers there. I liked one of them and I want to buy it. But I didn't have change (coin). So abandoned the idea, suddenly, a black boy called me and told me, “This newspaper for you.” I said, but I don't have change. He said, “No problem, I give you free”.

After 3 months, I went there. Coincidentally, that story happened again and that same boy gave me another free newspaper again. I said, I can't accept it. But he said, “I give you from my profit.”

After 19 years, I had been rich and I decided to find that boy. I found him after one and half month's search. I asked him, do you know me? He said, “Yes, you're famous Bill.”

I said, you gave me free newspaper 2 times many years ago. Now, I want to compensate it. I am going to give you everything that you want. Black young man replied, “You can't compensate it!”

I said, why? He said, "Because I gave you when I was poor. You want to give me when you are rich. So, how do you compensate?"

The Rich man said, I think that black young man is richer than me. You don't have to be rich or wait to be rich to give....

Moral:

True richness is when you are able to give when someone needs rather than when you want to give - Give and help all celebrate abundance of Joy & Happiness!!!

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION'S BEGINNING

Some magnificent projects grow from very small seeds... The Rotary Foundation had that sort of modest beginning!

In 1917 RI President Arch Klumph told the delegates to the Atlanta Convention that *"it seems eminently proper that we should accept endowments for the purpose of doing good in the world."* The response was polite and favourable, but the fund was slow to materialize.



A year later the "Rotary Endowment Fund" as it was first labelled, received its first contribution of \$26.50 from the Rotary Kansas City, which was the balance of the Kansas City Convention account following the 1918 annual meeting.... Additional small amounts were annually contributed, but after six years it is reported that the endowment fund had only reached \$700.

A decade later, The Rotary Foundation was formally established at the 1928 Minneapolis Convention. In the next four years the Foundation fund grew to \$50,000. In 1937 a \$2 million goal was announced for The Rotary Foundation, but these plans were cut short and abandoned with the outbreak of World War II.

In 1947, upon the death of Paul Harris, a new era opened for the Rotary Foundation as memorial gifts poured in to honour the founder of Rotary. From that time, The Rotary Foundation has been achieving its noble objective of furthering "understanding and friendly relations between peoples of different nations." By 1954 the Foundation received for the first time a half million dollars in contributions in a single year, and in 1965 a million dollars was received.

It is staggering to imagine that from those humble beginnings, The Rotary Foundation is now receiving more than \$85 million each year for educational and humanitarian work around the world.

“Bijoya-Deepawali Utsav”

PP Mousumi Bhattacharyya



On behalf of Bijoya-Deepawali Utsav committee, I thank all those members who joined the celebration with family & friends yesterday. Heartfelt thanks to PP Dr. Arabinda Ray, the undisputed MC for any occasion.

Thank you President, Rtr. Ifrah Murtaza, for diligently assisting with the Registration.

Awesome performance by our R'let Peter & Rtr. Chayanika Chandana. Proud of my Rotaractors!

'Shrutinatok' was performed by Rtn. Samiran Das, Spouse Moumita & R'let Sampurna. It added a different colour to the celebration.

The very special attraction was the Musical Quiz!! Planned & coordinated by PP Dr. Sharada Ray of (IWGR)! It was immensely enjoyed by everyone, participated by & happily absorbing every bit of it. Thank you so much!!

The guest performer made almost everyone to sway with her tune. The accompanying band & musicians, all was perfect match to the mood.

The fire crackers were an added feature in the event! Food was sumptuous and very much appreciated by all!

In entirety, it was a very enjoyable evening organised by President Abinash & Secretary Debasis with Team RCGR.

Would like to add a note about attendance - in a club having 41 members, only 15 attended with family/friends; not encouraging.

Minutes of the 2196th RWM held on November 5th, 2022 at BNR Officers' Club, Garden Reach

1. President Abinash called the RWM to order and requested to rise for the National Anthem.
2. It was announced that on October 26th, Clothes distribution at Madhyakalyanpur, Baruipur to 40 elderly and needy women. PP Dr. Arabinda, President Abinash, Secretary Debasis, PP Ranjit, PP Kumud, PP Mousumi & Rtn. Sudip attended the project.
3. PP Dr. Arabinda Ray briefed about the project at Madhayakalyanpur to the members present.
4. Medical Project at Daspur will be held on November 13th, 2022. Beneficiaries are small child & elder women.
5. Sports items and blankets will be distributed to 55 under-privilege students at Daspur.
6. Club Secretary, Rtn. Debasis conducted Club business.
7. Minutes of the last RWM were confirmed. President terminated the meeting and requested members & guests to join the event