

THE BREAKFAST CHATTER

The Weekly Bulletin of the **Rotary Club of Kathmandu Mid-Town** - Volume No. 10/01 for # 833 April, 24th 2006

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DEAR MIDTOWNERS ► FRIENDS IN **ROTARY**

Last week we had the lucky number three of anniversaries. Our president Komal and our first lady Sharada, PP Hartmut and Promila and last but not least Suresh Lal and Rita. We wish all of them the opportunity to go on for many more years to come and to continue to grow together. Our sunshine reached NRs 2000 (helped by sounding mobiles, oh how we love them) and additional donations for Govinda's project for the injured during the Andolan, which reached another NRs 100000. (exclusive his own contribution of NRs 25000).

But it's not only Govinda who got the fame, also Hartmut was applauded, when he announced that the new AMN project seems to be ready to start with US\$18000 secured. That's great, so let's give them what they deserve, a big mental applause.

Last Friday we had our Dr Rokaya as speaker. He was hesitant to speak. So thanks to the president who gave him the second push to come forward. On what did he talk? Well in short on the interconnection of human rights and state, as human rights basically concern the relation between the ruled and the ruler. While earlier the main topics of the Nepali Human Righters were concentrated on HR now it's peace. Let's hope they will be successful on these efforts soon.

What has been weak in this country has been the influence of the intellectual community and the guidance connected with it. While nobody doubts that, we have enough intellectuals in Nepal the elaboration of visions common for a widespread group of people has been left behind.

Therefore, this time our Rotary International chapter is focused on the topic of famous Rotarian intellectuals, which have influenced their communities via their critics and visions. One of the leading figures in this context is Thomas Mann. The other topic is the second and last part of "Democracy what's all about?"

As we have said earlier, we targeted to offer for April to June each month one fellowship. April had to be sacrificed due to the events known to all of you. This time it will be on 5th May 17.30 in Dhokaima Café, Patan Dhoka. Details you will find below. These exhibitions are always an interesting event. So please come.

After Navyo is back, he is also back in his cooperation with BC. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Rabi, who has done during his absence a wonderful job.

Thank you very much Rabi.

Hope you will enjoy reading. Until next time

Walter

SPEAKERS OF THE WEEK ► WE ALL IN THE CLUB ASSEMBLY

THEME On coming Friday, 5th May we will have **club assembly**, where everyone is cordially invited not only to be present but also to participate in the discussions.

UPCOMING **SPEAKERS** ► PREVIEW

DATE	SPEAKER	THEME
5 th May	CLUB ASSEMBLY	The last for this year
12 th May	DR RR Koirala	Ayurveda, chances and limitations
19 th May	Shrijana Thapa	Entrepreneurship a challenge in Nepal from the perspective of a woman
26 th May	Sangeeta Thapa	On the art scene in Kathmandu

5th May (Friday) 17h30

Fellowship will start with the opening of the exhibition organized by Jonathan Edou and Siddharta Gallery in Dhokaima Café and afterwards we will meet for a cool beer or whatever at Yellow Maya the connected restaurant. The exhibition "Khulla Dhoka" is an exhibition of doors painted by children and artists of various cultures and backgrounds. The exhibition will be opened by Mrs Bloomfield (wife of UK ambassador) and Mr Lechuga Jimenez.

Picnic on May 6th 2006 or any other date, maybe in this running Rotary year.

(our motto should be "netts" (never take things serious) don't mix up with "nuts")

Our ladies had kindly taken over the initiative to organize, but were hampered by the recent political developments. So their meeting to prepare the show couldn't take place up to now. According to our president our ladies are now expected to meet this Monday (hopefully) and according to their interchange they will fix the date.

Up to now 25 participants for our picnic are confirmed and with some efforts we should get more on the table. So let's continue to hope that the yearly picnic will be soon.

Since our spouses like to organize this as a fund raising event they will organize different games and would also like to hold an auction for which contributions are requested. While this request has been put to you twice already, none of you has volunteered up to now. Please wake up ladies and gentlemen and look what is possible to contribute.

As soon as the date is fixed we will let you know.

Rotary World Peace Fellowship candidates for 2007-09

Please begin the process of selecting Rotary World Peace Fellowship candidates for Class VI (2007-09). Submission of applications for the Rotary World Peace Fellowship should be forwarded to Evanston by July 1, 2006. It is targeted to get overall a pool of 500 applications which will enable the Rotary Centers Committee to select the top 60 applicants with superior qualifications.

For more information please refer to the Rotary Centers website for a timeline:

http://www.rotary.org/foundation/educational/amb_scho/centers/application/timeline.html

Ramkot Clinic Visit: kindly check the Ramkot Roster for your turn.

If you have any question, contact Rtn. Dr Rabindra Shrestha (4469063, email: drsr@wlink.com.np)

The doctor is Dr. Khagendra Gurung. Mobile No : 98510- 83044 Phone: 4287899

If you have any question, kindly let our fellow Ramkot Coordinator Rtn. Rabindra know.

Doctor is Khagendra Gurung mobile: 98510-83044 phone: 4287899 call him Friday latest.

A WORD ON ROTARY ► WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Famous Rotarians

This time Paul Thomas Mann (6.1875 to 8.1955)

Last Friday we had the starter of a discussion concerning the duty of the intellectual elite of a country to give a lead for the direction of a nation. Looking for famous Rotarians in this field, we find good examples. One of them is a German.

Thomas Mann was a novelist, social critic and a Nobel prize laureate, for stories noted for their insight into the psychology of the artist and intellectual as well as for their analysis and critique of the European and German soul in the beginning of the 20th century.

Thomas Mann was born in Luebeck, Germany as the second son of a senator and grain merchant and his wife a born Brazilian. The combination of a protestant politic oriented businessman father with a catholic, apolitical, highly cultural oriented mother seems to have been very impressive for him and his intellectual activities.

After the death of his father in 1891 the family moved to Munich.

At the University of Munich he studied history, economics, art history, and literature. He lived in Munich from 1891 until 1933, with the exception of a year-long stay in Italy. At that time members of the German well to do class had to spent at least one year in Northern Italy, which was famous for its culture. (something for our Navyo) His career as a writer began when he wrote his first short story for *Simplicissimus*, at that time the leading political caricature magazine.

In 1905 he married the daughter of a prominent, secular Jewish family of intellectuals. Genes must play a role, as all his six children became later literary and artistic figures in their own right.

Thomas Mann emigrated from Nazi Germany to Switzerland in 1933. Six years later when WWII loomed he went to the United States, where he taught at Princeton University along with other émigrés from Germany like Albert Einstein. In 1942 the family moved to California, where they remained until after the end of WWII. In 1944, he became a naturalized citizen of the US.

In the end it didn't keep him in the US. In 1952 he returned to Europe where he resided near Zurich in Switzerland. While he never lived in Germany again, he traveled regularly to and fro and became highly celebrated in a country widely destroyed and badly in need of help to give a direction for live. His most important visit to Germany was in 1949, at the occasion of the 200th birthday of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, where he attended celebrations in both Frankfurt am Main (western part of Germany) and Weimar (eastern part of Germany) making a clear statement that German culture extends beyond disasters. In 1955, he died in Zurich.

Political Views

He made quite a political round trip in his live. During WW I (1914/18) he was a strong supporter and follower of Kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1923 as a semi-official spokesman for parliamentary democracy, he called upon the German intellectual circles to support the new Weimar Republic. Afterwards, his political views gradually shifted toward liberal and democratic principles.

In 1930 Thomas Mann gave a public address in Berlin titled "An Appeal to Reason," in which he strongly denounced Nazism and encouraged resistance by the working class. This was followed by numerous essays and lectures against the Nazis. At the same time, he expressed increasing sympathy for socialism and communism. In 1933 when the Nazis came to power, Mann and his wife happened to be in Switzerland and this was big luck for him. Due to his very vociferous denunciations of Hitler's policies his books were burnt instead of him

Work

One of his major novel was "The Magic Mountain" in 1924, in which an engineering student who had planned to visit his tubercular cousin at a Swiss sanatorium for three weeks finds his departure delayed for seven years and encounters a variety of characters who play out ideological conflicts and discontents of contemporary European civilisation.

Mann was a humanist who valued the cumulative achievements of Western Culture and believed in the necessity of upholding civilization against the dangers of decay and barbarism. His work is the record of a consciousness of a life of manifold possibilities, and of the tensions inherent in the more or less enduringly fruitful responses to those possibilities

For him a man lives not only his personal life, as an individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries. He strongly advocated that intellectuals have a duty to their nation, to offer directions even though some may be discussable.

Mann was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1929.

His most famous books in that field are:

Reflections of an Unpolitical Man (1918), The German Republic (1922), Disorder and Early Sorrow (1926), The Problem of Freedom (1937), The coming bictory of democracy (1938), Listen Germany (1942)

OTHER TOPICS

Democracy, what's all about? (Part 2)

Democracy has inherent advantages and disadvantages, both in practice and by its very nature. In the following let's have a look at different aspects of democracy.

Democracy and Ethnic / religious conflicts

Democracies especially liberal ones assume a sense of shared values in the "demos" otherwise political legitimacy will fail. But many states including Nepal lack cultural and ethnic unity. A democracy, which allows mass participation in decision-making, also allows the use of the political process against the "enemy". That is visible during democratization see our own latest developments, but it is also visible in established democracies, eg in the form of anti-immigrant populism.

While the change from another governing form to democracy might be "bloody" the increase in the number of democratic states in the past 50 years was accompanied by a dramatic decline in total warfare and a decline in the number of refugees and displaced people.

Short-term focus of politicians

Modern liberal democracies allow for regular elections. That has led to a short-term oriented policies, as the focus of a government is on how to win elections. In democracies we see therefore often a preference for short term benefits to the electorate or to self-interested politicians, rather than unpopular policies with longer term benefits.

Public choice theory

As each voter has little influence he/she we often find very limited interest in politics. This allows special interest groups to gain subsidies and regulations beneficial to them but harmful to society.

Plutocracy instead of Power of the people

The cost of political campaigning in representative democracies favors the rich, a form of plutocracy who may be a very small minority of the voters. Modern democracy may also be regarded as a dishonest farce used to keep the masses from getting restless, or a conspiracy for making them restless for some political agenda. It may encourage candidates to make deals with wealthy supporters, offering favorable legislation if the candidate is elected - perpetuating conspiracies for monopolization of key areas.

Ownership of the media by the few may lead to distortions of the electoral process, since the media are themselves a vital element of that process. Critics of special agendas tend to be suppressed by such media cartels, to protect their own self-interests.

Constitutionally protected freedom of speech gives a certain counterbalance, but there is no question that mass media play a leading role in influencing masses for the good or the bad.

Democracy and Tyranny of majority

It implies that a government elected by a majority can take action to oppress a particular minority. What is worse, sometimes this "majority" is only a relative majority means in fact a minority. In those cases, one minority can tyrannize another minority.

The politically dominant majority might decide that a religion, a political belief, or minority views, will be criminalized, either directly or indirectly, undermining the idea of democracy as empowerment of the electorate as a whole.

An often quoted example of the 'tyranny of the majority' is that Adolf Hitler came to power by legitimate democratic procedures. No doubt he gained the largest share of votes in the Weimar Republic in 1933. However it's human rights violations took place after the abolishment of the democratic system. This was possible because the Weimar constitution in an "emergency" allowed dictatorial powers and suspension of the essentials of the constitution itself without any vote or election, something not possible in most liberal democracies nowadays.

The presence of a constitution in many democratic countries acts as a safeguard against the rule of the majority and most countries require a qualified majority of representatives, or other procedural standards which make it difficult to change the constitution.

The separation of powers into legislative, executive and judicial branch also makes it more difficult for a small majority to impose their will. This means a majority can still legitimately coerce a minority, but such a minority would be very small. As a practical matter, it is harder to get a larger proportion of the people to agree to such actions.

Political stability

The introduction of elections in the political system allows the public to remove administrations, without changing the legal basis for government. Democracy aims at reducing political uncertainty and instability, and assures citizens that however much they may disagree with present policies, they will be given a regular chance to change those who are in power and then change policies with which they disagree.

Democracy and Corruption

Research by the World Bank suggests that political institutions are extremely important in determining the prevalence of corruption: parliamentary systems, political stability, and freedom of the press are all associated with lower corruption

Democracy and Terrorism

Democratic nations have the least terrorism, as more democracy correlates with a higher score on the human development index and a lower score on the human poverty index.

Democratic Peace Theory

Studies found that liberal democracies have never made war with one another. More recent research has extended the theory and finds that democracies have few Militarized Interstate Disputes, that those disputes have caused few deaths, and that democracies have few civil wars.

"one man/ one vote Democracy

may be dangerous in a country where the bulk of the inhabitants is poor, little educated and with no tradition for individual responsibility and accountability for public or private relations. It usually results in a scramble, among potential demagogues, to manipulate their followers among the least qualified and least able to reason analytically. Looks we have seen this already in Nepal, when such demagogues filled their pockets.

Needed for the smooth functioning of a democracy

1. Democracy requires a reasonable level of general prosperity. People who have to struggle to survive do not have the leisure time, or inclination, to acquaint themselves with all the issues that may be vital to their social order, with respect to an election for which they enjoy suffrage. They will tend to trust others to advise them, whether those are political bosses or interest groups

2. Belonging to the most important issues are education and social justice An intelligent electorate is essential, because even those with the prosperity and the time to acquaint themselves with vital issues and the candidates for office, must have the ability to rationally employ that time.

3. A largely homogeneous society is important. Ethnic factionalism may lead to physical victimization of minorities, or it may lead to manipulated voting blocks.

4. People must be able to act responsibly; to make decisions with an eye towards long term goals and principles. Democracy needs a sense of self-respect, an incentive to live up to an honored standard set by respected role models. There is no substitute for individual responsibility in politics, any more than there is in economy, education, law enforcement or other sectors of society. And with responsibility goes accountability for one's actions, public or private.

NOW READY FOR A HEALTY LAUGHTER?

Grandpa Hymie Goldberg went to see his doctor. "What is the problem?" asked the physician "Well, doc," said Hymie, "it is like this: after the first I am very tired; after the second I feel all ill; after the third my heart begins to pound; after the fourth I break out in a cold sweat; after the fifth I am so exhausted I feel I could die."

"Incredible," said the doctor. "How old are you?"

"Seventy-six," replied Grandpa Hymie. "Well, at seventy-six don't you think you should stop after the first?" said the physician. "But doctor," said old Hymie, "how can I stop after the first floor, when I live on the fifth?"

Danny discovered that his wife was cheating with another guy, so he went to the guy's wife and told her about it. "I know what we will do!" she said. "Let us take revenge on them." So they went to a motel and had revenge on them.

She said, "Let us have more revenge." So they kept having revenge and more revenge. Finally Danny said, "That's enough revenge. I don't have any more hard feelings."

"**You** must help me, doctor," said Hymie to his psychiatrist. "I can't remember anything for more than a few minutes. It is driving me crazy." The psychiatrist asked gently, "How long have you had the problem?" Hymie paused, then said thoughtfully, "What problem?"

A man lost his hat. He decided to go and steal one from the entry of a nearby church. When he arrived at the church, a sermon on the Ten Commandments was in progress. At the end of the service, he approached the minister and said, "Thank you, Reverend. You have saved me from committing a crime. I came here with sin in my heart -- I wanted to steal a hat...." "That's very good, my son!" said the minister. "But tell me, what did I say to make you change your mind?" "Well," explained the man, "when you got to the part about 'Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery,' I remembered where I left my hat!"

That's for today and see or hear from you soon. **Walter** and **Navyo**

SEE YOU ALL **COMING FRIDAY** ► YOURS IN ROTARY - CSD RTN. **WALTER** DILLER

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