

## **Last Week's Proceedings – 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2006**

President Eddy called the meeting at 1:30 pm. He further asked any members returning from overseas. PP Andrew raised his hand that he had traveled around other countries in the past months. President Eddy also informed the members that he also went to USA for business meeting last week and just returned to Hong Kong.

President Eddy also welcomed our good friend, Rotarian Benny Ratnani from RC of HK Northeast, to attend this Rotary luncheon. After that, he reminded all members that the 2006-2007 District Installation would be held on 22 July 2006 (Sat.) at Hong Kong International Trade & Exhibition Centre in Kowloon Bay. If any members are interested in joining this event, please contact PE Paul for further details. He also informed the members that our Sister Club, RC of Makati North, would like to invite us to attend their Change over Ceremony on 26 July 2006. He asked whether PE Paul would like to lead a delegation to attend and PE Paul noted that he would do so if members were interested to go.

After Acting SAA Henry reported that we have collected HK\$800 for the red-box donation, President Eddy invited HS Andy to introduce the Guest Speaker, Ms Rebecca Chung, and her topic was "My Perceptions of Iran".

Ms Rebecca Chung was born and raised in Hong Kong. She was the Office Manager of The Citco Group in Hong Kong and Toronto, Canada since 1989. The Citco Group comprised of international banks, trust, and fund administration, brokerage, data processing services as well as international pension services. From mid 2003, Rebecca took time off and started traveling around Asia, Europe, Africa, South America, Antarctic Peninsula and most recently Iran in April 2006. Ms Chung showed more than 100 beautiful photos and gave us a tour of Iran from one city to another. All the scenery spots were charming and interesting. Our impression to Iran is no more a war countries, but a culturally rich country with peaceful citizens there.

The following are excerpts from her speech:

“We’ve heard a lot about Iran thru Media recently. It’s all about Nuclear Power, Earthquake, Oil Wealth or International Terrorism. How about Persia? The image shifted to certain fascination: The land of flying carpets, part of The Silk Road and the longhaired Persian cats. I’ve visited Tehran - the capital, Shiraz and Esfahan which are rich in architectural gems and other cultural delights and the major historical sites - Persepolis and Pasargadae in April and would like to share with you my perceptions of Iran during this trip.

Iran has existed in its present region since Cyrus the Great established the first Persian Empire in the mid-sixth century B.C. His dynasty eventually built a vast empire that included much of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Israel and Egypt. Iran is part of the Middle East, although not an Arab country. Almost 99% of the Iranian population is Muslim, and 90% of these Muslims are Shi’ite Muslims (investing final and absolute authority in a spiritual leader) and practice a distinctly different form of Islam compared to other Muslim countries. Other officially recognized religious minorities are Christians. This Vank Cathedral was built between 1606 and 1655. It is the historic focal point of the Armenian Church in Iran. The interior is richly decorated and shows the curious mixture of styles – Islamic tiles and designs alongside Christian figures. The other religious minority is Zoroastrians. Zoroastrianism – the ancient religion of Persia. It is the world’s first monotheistic religion (doctrine that there is only one God). Its fire temple where the fire is said to have been burning for 4000 years) Zoroastrian symbolism is evident everywhere as it has gained importance as a nationalistic symbol.

– **Pasargadae, Persepolis, Esfahan, Shiraz, Tehran** were introduced in details.

My favorite spot in Tehran is the former US Embassy. On the walls outside there are highly photogenic paintings that demonstrated the feeling of Iranian people towards US after the 1979 Revolution.

It is true that Iranian women are forced to wear all-concealing clothes: scarves covering the forehead, chin and neck; a mid-thigh length, long-sleeved, shapeless coat, trousers and socks, but unlike the women in certain Arab countries, women in Iran do not cover their faces. They are to be seen socially in public both with their families and with other women friends. Women drive cars and even travel together on trips. They are able to sit in parliament, to vote, to buy property and have been active in most fields of professional employment and education both before and after 1979 Revolution. In fact, upon my arrival in Tehran airport, 3 out of 4 Immigration Officers are women.

Officially, men and women are segregated on buses, women at the back, and men at the front. Tehran has the first Metro, the first wagon is reserved for women only, and the others are mixed. Therefore, women in Iran can travel comfortably in extremely spacious public transportation system.

Iranians are the most amazing people; they are charming, friendly, beautiful, warm, welcoming and endlessly curious. Iranians take their role as hosts very seriously; this comes from a genuine desire to put others’ needs first and please where possible. The young people of Iran are particularly curious about foreigners and they love practicing their English and will want to bombard you with inevitably questions such as: “Where are you from?” “What’s your name?”

The places that I’ve visited in Iran are fascinating and it is very safe. It’s much safer than India, Egypt, South Africa and South America. I generally met with curiosity and welcoming

enthusiasm. As far as I know, it's a wonderful, exotic and interesting place to visit. An image is totally different from what I've learnt from CNN or BBC."

After Ms Chung's speech, President Eddy invited PP Stephen to formally thank her for such an informative and interesting talk in the usual Rotary manner.

Finally, President Eddy declared the close of the meeting with a toast to RI coupled with the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Northeast.

  
**Rotary Information**  
**The 97<sup>th</sup> Annual RI Convention (2006)**

The official opening of the RI Convention kicked off on schedule (11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2006) in two countries, Sweden and Denmark. The event drew more than 14,700 registrants (including 45 participants from district 3450 headed by D.G. Peter Wan) from about 140 countries.

There were 3-seating started by a parade of national flags each seating, followed by a welcome address by convention committee chair Peter Bundegaard.

RI President's grand daughter Sophia offered flowers and a Royal welcome to Crown Prince Frederick and Princess Mary who enjoyed the opening session festivities.

The first day (11<sup>th</sup> June 2006) concentrated on activities by Rotaractors, GSE teams, Rylaraians, young generations and PolioPlus.

Convention goers were treated to rides, food and fun during Tivoli Day at the Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens theme Park on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day. The House of friendship was always full of people.

As usual, there were the Hon. Secretary's report and the Hon. Treasurer's report, plus keynote speech by economist Jeffrey Sachs who highly praised Rotary grassroot's contributions in the fight against poverty, (The full text of his speech will appear in the coming issue of this Bulletin.)

Another keynote speaker in the person of Sister Ethel Normoyle which set the tone for discussion about Rotary's role in breaking the cycle that connects poverty, diseases and illiteracy.

An unusual challenge was brought to the Convention for arbitration on the election of future RI President for the year 2007-2008. After voting, RI President Nominee Will Wilkinson was declared the winner.

William Sergeant was honoured at the Convention . He retired from his position as chair of the International PolioPlus Committee after 20 years of PolioPlus service.

The 2006-2007 RI President Bill Boyd and family were introduced on stage when Bill is ready to "Lead the Way" for the ensuing Rotary year.

Apart from thanking all those who helped to organize this Convention, a vote of thanks should also go to the Army of Sergeant-at-Arms who rendered excellent service to make this Convention successful and enjoyable. This includes PDGs Johnson Chu and Jones Wong from district 3450.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2006, the Convention was closed with a Viking legend of war and peace. Salt Lake City mayor and Rotarian Rocky Anderson extended an invitation to the 2007 RI Convention in his city.

See you all again in Salt Lake City, U.S.A. next Rotary year.

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LAUGH FOR THE WEEK

**Subject:** Fw: THE TWO DOCTORS LOL

Two doctors opened an office in a small town and put up a sign reading "Dr. Smith and Dr. Jones, Psychiatry and Proctology." The town council was not happy with the sign, so the doctors changed it to "Hysterias and posteriors."

This was not acceptable either, so in an effort to satisfy the council they changed the sign to "Schizoids and Hemorrhoids." No go. Next, they tried "Catatonics and High Colonics." Thumbs down again. Then came "Manic Depressives and Anal Retentive." Still no good. Another attempt resulted in "Minds and Behinds." Unacceptable again. So they tried "Lost Souls and Butt Holes." No way. "Analysis and Anal Cysts?" Nope. "Nuts and Butts?" Uh uh. "Freaks and Cheeks?" Still no go. "Loons and Moons?" Forget it. Almost at their wit's end, the doctors finally came up with: "Dr Smith and Dr. Jones, Odds and Ends."

Everyone loved it

