

God's Own Thrissur

Still know this culturally beautiful town in Kerala as Trichur. Thrissur, as it is renamed now, is the cultural capital of the State of Kerala because of its cultural, spiritual and religious leanings. Built on a hillock called Thekkinkadu Maidan, which is the seat of the most religious Vadakunnathar Temple, the town has its famous Thiruvambady Temple and the most sought after Guruvayur temple is nearby. The town houses the Kerala Sangeetha Nadaka Academy, Kerala Lalit Kala Academy and Kerala Sahitya Academy. The most colourful spectacle, the Pooram Festival, is held here annually and the sight of hundreds of caparisoned elephants in one place with lakhs of people swaying to the deafening 'panchavadyam' is a 'must see' occasion for everyone. Of course, the all night firecracker show is a delight. The sound of the crackers, which reaches a crescendo initially, is not for the faint hearts. It is said that the Apostle Thomas came here during 51 AD.

The town is the headquarters for three major banks and has many non-banking institutions. Nearly 70 percent of the gold jewellery manufactured in Kerala comes from Thrissur. Rotary in Thrissur is very active and embraces neighbouring towns as far as Palaghat. The visit of a TRF Trustee, probably for the first time, for a TRF Seminar here was an occasion for the Rotarians from many towns to showcase their love for Rotary. The very well attended seminar, which was guided by PDG Babu Joseph in the absence of the DG, who had to be away due to bereavement in his family, was an eye opener on the potential this area has when it comes to supporting TRF.

Motivating the Rotarians to undertake projects for the benefit of the community, I emphasised the need to support the polio eradication movement even though the



State had been polio-free for over eleven years. I had been told that immediately after my speech there would be a Q&A session with an anchor bombarding me with the questions. It was a 'rapid-fire session' with questions posed to me on various topics which included topics on TRF, Future Vision, Rotary International, Membership Development and many more. I could see that the questions were well thought out and covered most of the doubts that the audience had. To a question about matching contributions with 'points' for making members as PHF, I said that this procedure did help in increasing the contributions. However, the best question that was put to me was, "When do you want to go for dinner?"

I was pleasantly surprised to see over 20 people raising to give their pledges towards polio eradication. It was made clear that these contributions will not count towards the APF collections and Rotarians knew that. They were more than willing to give for polio eradication drive since they know that in God's own country, God's own children must be saved from polio and nothing else matters more. They understood, when explained, that this alone will be the significant

achievement of Rotary that the world will talk for decades to come. They knew that every humanitarian project is a service to the God they worship and culturally they are inclined to support every good cause of Rotary.

It was no wonder that at daybreak, the District Governor B. Jayarajan, who was closely monitoring all the developments from his home, confirmed that a handsome contribution amounting to US \$500,000 would be given by the District to TRF. This town has produced top ranking political leaders for the State who developed the area as a top destination for education, medicine, industry and tourism. I am confident that from God's own Thrissur, Rotary will raise to greater heights.



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