

Bridging Culture Lecture Series

Katya Beisel, Staff Writer

PVCC students and faculty welcomed Ray Garman as the latest speaker in the Bridging Culture series.

A well establish entrepreneur, inventor, he holds a Guinness World Record, several technology patents, and is currently working on another book. However, Garman's experience in post-conflict Vietnam and Cambodia was the subject of his lecture.

In Vietnam, political turmoil erupted due to growing discontent, leading to the creation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1945; decades of isolation followed.

According to Garman, in the 1970s, just as Vietnam was opening up to foreign interaction and trade, the Khmer Rouge slaughtered over two million Cambodians in a period now remembered as the Cambodian Genocide.

In detailing his experiences in the region, formerly Garman realized that using the threat of violence to encourage a predicted reaction in people is not always effective.

He emphasized an appreciation of identity and dignity as well as abandoning our preconceptions and assumptions about other people and cultures.

And that idea of otherness was the heart of Garman's message about his experiences in conflict-torn Vietnam and Cambodia.

According to Garman, this "us vs. them" mentality is "an affront to dignity" in its oversimplification of the differences between humans. Humanity is diverse, and the world is enriched by that diversity of culture, ideas, and beliefs.

To Garman, using those differences to divide humanity into two distinct categories is to vilify those who are different from us, and to degrade their inborn dignity beholden to them as people.

Separating humanity into these two groups, as Garman pointed out, also contributes to atrocities such as the Cambodian Genocide.

Garman also championed the younger generation, which he believes has the power to bridge preconceptions and forge a human community and to transform – not transition – the world.

International Culture Speaker

Ryan Winkler, Staff Writer

Professor Sadhan Kumar Ghosh, head of the Mechanical Engineering Department at Jadavpur University in Kolkata, India, visited our International Club here at PVCC.

Ghosh comes from West Bengal, one of the 29 states of India. He presented a lot of interesting information about Indian culture and his personal history.

Ghosh helped found the UK/India Educational Research Initiative, which started in 2006, and serves to enhance the educational ties between the two countries.

Ghosh particularly stressed the geography, number of Nobel Prize winners, and the fact that India is a secular country with numerous religions. The secularity of India is one of the major driving factors behind her successes and

progress.

India has numerous notable Nobel Prize winners. The most pertinent are Mother Teresa for peace, CV Raman for Physics, Amartya Sen for Economics, Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar for Physics, and Venkratraman Ramakrishna for Chemistry.

Ghosh delved into the cultural facets of India, which include eating and marriage traditions. There are many marriage ceremonies in traditional Indian culture and most weddings take place over the course of three days before the bride and groom are officially married.

As for traditional eating habits, most Indian meals are eaten either sitting on the floor or on low cushions or chairs, and most food is eaten with bare hands.

Professor Ghosh is clearly one of the proudest Indians.