

Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral History

Ramen Chakrabarti Interview

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Interviewer (I): Good morning Mr. Chakrabarti. I'm Mantra Roy from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library of San Jose State University, and thank you for giving the time to interview for the oral history project called "Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral History."

00:00:20.600 --> 00:00:21.990

I: Thank you for your time.

00:00:22.890 --> 00:00:26.400

Ramen Chakrabarti (RC): Hey Mantra. Many, many thanks for interviewing me.

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RC: I'm very happy to be with you this morning to talk about the Silicon Valley. Now, whatever you call a Silicon Valley, then, when I came here in 1970 with my wife, we came here in 1970, there was no Silicon Valley. It was called San Francisco Bay Area.

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RC: And the only place, there were some new work going on, that near Palo Alto there are two persons. One is Steve Jobs and the other one is Bill Gates. They are doing something,

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RC: and nobody knew exactly what they are doing, but we heard that there are going to be a personal computer or something like that. At that time there are a huge computer, big computers which are being done by Hewlett-Packard (HP) and IBM. So on one part of the Silicon Valley, which is called the San Jose area, there was this new company called

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RC: Hewlett-Packard

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RC: and

00:01:19.520 --> 00:01:35.890

RC: IBM. Now, some of the friends we have in that area, they were, hey were high nose because they Sunday working computer and we were in, I was an engineer. I was working in like building power plants, building cement plants, and building all these things, like big things like that.

00:01:35.900 --> 00:01:49.929

RC: But they were doing something which is like computer and all these things like that. So they are kind of high nose. They're all, oh, you know, we are in a big business, and you are in the "golla" (ordinary) business, what we call is the normal business like that.

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I: Okay.

00:01:51.200 --> 00:02:04.850

RC: But, slowly things started changing. Since Steve Jobs made a big change in the San Francisco Bay Area. And we see engineers coming with the experience like

00:02:04.860 --> 00:02:12.680

RC: computer science, computer engineering, and all these things like that, from all over the world in that area, like that.

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RC: So, now the whole Silicon Valley started. Now, there was one company. Then there was another company, and then there was subsidy of these companies, and so on, and so forth, like that. But that's why I

00:02:23.970 --> 00:02:37.190

RC: the name Silicon Valley, because it is associated with the syllable which was used for making the small computers for people, and also the new things which find out them, like cell phones and things like that.

00:02:37.200 --> 00:02:38.260

I: Mhm.

00:02:38.360 --> 00:02:46.189

I: Right. So you have, you started with a very good point, that you know, that you were here before this place was Silicon Valley.

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RC: That is correct.

I: Right. So I would like you to also go back a little further and say around what, like you came in 1970, but if you were to describe your journey from before 1970, before you came here, and then up until now, professionally, and how you got involved with the community, with the Indian community or the Desi community.

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I If you could tell us a little bit about that.

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RC: Well, 1970,

00:03:14.450 --> 00:03:25.350

RC: would you believe that if you have to buy some Indian spices, there was no shops in entire sanctions of Bay Area,

00:03:25.360 --> 00:03:35.689

RC: unless you go to Clement Street, there was an Iranian store, or I think it was an Armenian store where you could buy chili powder, haldi (turmeric), and things like that.

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RC: That was the amount of Indian community in the Bay area at that time. Now, I came here in 1970. Before that, I was in, I was born and brought up in Calcutta.

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RC: I had my school education in [inaudible] school like Ballygunge Government School. Finally, I finished my matriculation, I went for inter-science or intermediate science. I went to Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandir.

00:04:02.810 --> 00:04:10.989

RC: And then after that, I went to B College to start with civil engineering. But I left civil engineering, I joined the other cohort to study mechanical engineering.

00:04:11.000 --> 00:04:24.499

I: I see.

RC: I finished mechanical engineering in 1954, and then I worked for one year with a company called Titagarh Paper Mill. In India, everybody knows Titagarh Paper Mill, that was the elephant brand paper.

00:04:24.510 --> 00:04:25.410

I: Okay.

00:04:25.420 --> 00:04:43.189

RC: I worked there for one year, and then I decided to do some hard studies. At that time, IIT Kharagpur has just started. I: Okay.

RC: IIT Kharagpur started in '51. Before we...I mean, before we started our engineering, there was no IIT Kharagpur at that time.

00:04:43.200 --> 00:04:56.639

I: Wow.

RC: So, IIT Kharagpur offered master's degree in mechanical engineering. So I went there, and I did my master's from IIT Kharagpur. Then I went to England for a couple of years, then I came back to IIT Kharagpur again as a teacher.

00:04:56.650 --> 00:04:57.290

I: Okay.

00:04:57.300 --> 00:05:12.350

RC: And I taught there for a couple of years. But I thought that teaching was not the right job for me, and I wanted to go back to the industry. And I still have some of the students when I taught there for two years in the Bay Area.

00:05:12.360 --> 00:05:15.139

I: Hmm.

RC: And some of the students

00:05:15.340 --> 00:05:27.839

RC: sons are in the Bay Area also. Now the students' grandsons are in the Bay Area also, like that. So you can see that how much my, my

00:05:28.310 --> 00:05:39.130

RC: influence spread all over the Bay Area like that way. So anyway, when I came to Bay Area, I mean, after that I went to industry. I worked for

00:05:39.140 --> 00:05:52.010

RC: Deep's Cotton. Then I work for Jardine Henderson. Then I worked for Bengal Enamel. And then I started my own business of engineering. But I did not like the business in India, because it was very

00:05:52.020 --> 00:06:09.439

RC: there were a lot of problems with that, there was, I mean, we have to give money and all these things like that. So I decided, I heard that America is taking people with something called a green card, a job shop--job application.

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RC: And we didn't know what a green card was. So everybody went to the American Consulate, got the form, filled out the form, sent the form.

00:06:17.660 --> 00:06:36.499

RC: And then some of the people, they went for interview, and they came back and they gave a horrible picture of the interview. Said, the Americans speak in an American way. They could not understand what they are speaking, because they are, I mean, we are Indians. I mean we are not-- we are familiar with the British accent, but not with American accent like that.

00:06:36.510 --> 00:06:45.149

RC: And then, of course, they started giving what you call the job shopping allowance and the job allowed to do job shopping.

00:06:45.660 --> 00:06:53.989

RC: And then they asked me that unless you come for an interview, your card will be over. So we can, well, I'll take a chance.

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RC: So I went for an interview. They asked me, do you have any money in the U.S.? I said,

00:07:00.020 --> 00:07:16.010

RC: nothing, I have nothing in U.S. And then they said, do you have any property in U.S.? I said, no, I don't have any property in U.S., but somehow they gave me the permission, and I had the medical exam, and they gave me a whole bunch of papers. Said, go to any place in U.S. and we can look for a job.

00:07:16.100 --> 00:07:22.980

I: Wow.

RC: So I decided to come to San Francisco, because most of the friends went to New York and the East Coast.

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RC: The reason for coming to San Francisco was that I had my cousin. She lived in San Francisco since 1950.

00:07:31.100 --> 00:07:46.220

RC: I asked her that, would you be kind enough that if I come and stay with her for a couple of months to look for a job in the San Francisco Bay Area, so that if I don't find a job then I'll come back to India.

00:07:46.220 --> 00:08:04.569

RC: And then of course, she said, no, not just for a month, you can stay here for six months, you can stay here for a year and all this. So she gave me the comfort of coming to San Francisco. Now, I made a list of all the companies who can be interested in my background. And with that information, I started from Kolkata, and now which is, it used to be Calcutta. And bought a first-class ticket from Kolkata to St. Louis, United States.

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RC: Why the people ask you, why did you come to St. Louis, you are going to San Francisco? I said, well, this is the maximum distance they will allow.

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RC: Now, they did not allow any return ticket. Those who are going as an immigrant. They said, either you go there and stay, or you cannot come back.

00:08:38.750 --> 00:08:55.689

I: Wow.

RC: So what I did, I got down in Bangkok. I got down, first stop was in Bangkok. I went to Japan Airline's office, change the money, [inaudible] economy class and got the voucher, so that if there are no jobs I can come back to Calcutta again

00:08:55.700 --> 00:08:57.530

RC: with that voucher, like that way.

00:08:57.540 --> 00:09:07.810

RC: And in that way, I arrived in San Francisco on 070770.

I: Oh, wow!

RC: July 7, 1970, so I'll always remember that day.

00:09:07.960 --> 00:09:25.089

I: Sure.

RC: And my cousin, she was there at the airport. She picked me up from the airport. She took her at her home. She had a beautiful home in San Francisco, near Mill Valley. It is up on the hill, and you could see the entire city from her living room.

00:09:25.100 --> 00:09:31.479

I: Wow.

RC: So I came to the living room, and I asked that, and then she had an apartment in that building, in that house,

00:09:31.490 --> 00:09:55.170

RC: and she said, you can stay in the apartment there. The apartment was linking, so I stayed in that apartment. It was a one bedroom apartment, with a one bedroom, living room, kitchen, and then the bathroom like that. But I did not need the kitchen, because she said you can eat with me and I'll make food for you like that way. So that was the first day of my arrival, and I kind of slept through the whole day.

00:09:56.530 --> 00:09:59.149

RC: Well, just one second, please.

I: Sure.

00:10:05.130 --> 00:10:18.079

[pause in interview, skip to 10:19]

00:10:19.860 --> 00:10:39.579

RC: Okay. So, I kind of took the whole day as rest, slept the whole day. And then in the afternoon, I got up and I went to the living room, and I looked into the living room and saw the very quiet outside. There is no sound or anything like that. So I asked my cousin,

00:10:39.590 --> 00:10:58.849

RC: where is the job? She said, I don't know anything about engineering. My husband is a closter, but I know that that you can see the downtown. We did not know the meaning of the word downtown.

I: Hmm. RC: Because downtown we thought it was a bad neighborhood. So, but she said, no, no, no, it's like your Dalhousie Square.

00:10:59.000 --> 00:11:16.489

I: Okay.

RC: So I said, where is that? They said, well, look through my window. You look through the window and you can see that big buildings there, and then you can see the bay there, which is called the bay, San Francisco Bay Area. Because when you land, actually, you think that in San Francisco you are landing on the water.

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RC: You reach the runway. So people think that I am going to drown.

00:11:23.620 --> 00:11:36.340

RC: So that was the bay. So I, and then she said, that's called the downtown. That's like the Dalhousie Square, and that's where the jobs are. I mean that if there is jobs, that will be the jobs there. I said, okay.

00:11:36.350 --> 00:11:48.820

RC: So next day I put on my Indian suit, and with my briefcase, with a resume telling my father was this, my grandfather was this, my religion was like this, and that kind of a resume.

00:11:48.830 --> 00:11:58.390

RC: I start, I got down at, I took the streetcar, got down at Van Ness and started walking from there, from

00:11:58.440 --> 00:12:02.289

RC: what you call the employment agents to agents.

00:12:02.300 --> 00:12:18.730

RC: And everywhere I went they said, well, there is no job. So finally, I ended up in near the Beale Street. There was a small agency house and the lady in the front, she said, I'm going to give your resume to the boss,

00:12:18.740 --> 00:12:22.710

RC: and she came back and said that, okay, leave your resume here.

00:12:23.110 --> 00:12:28.050

RC: That was a Thursday. Then Friday, I got a call.

00:12:28.110 --> 00:12:39.050

RC: I got a call, my sister-- my cousin said that you got a call from someone, and then I got a call. I answered the question, and he said, well, you have an interview in Alameda.

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RC: I asked my cousin, where is Alameda? She said, well, you see that bridge, you cross that bridge, and then you go to the right, and then there is Oakland, and then after that is Alameda. I said, how do I go there? She said, well, you can go by transport, public transport. But don't worry, I'll take you for the interview.

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RC: Because she was a very excellent driver. So she, next day, she took me to Alameda for the interview. And I asked her to come inside the building, she said, no, no, you have your interview. I'm sitting in the car.

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RC: So I went for the interview, and the first of was the personal manager. He said, okay, I'll take you down to the engineering manager, and he took me down to the engineering manager. The engineering manager says that I'm going to take you to the chief engineer.

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RC: And the chief engineer looked at me, says, do you have any American experience? I said, yes, for three days.

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RC: Well, what kind of engineering experience? I said, no, I just arrived only three days back. I have never been to United States before.

00:13:33.420 --> 00:13:40.689

RC: [inaudible] I noticed that the interview was not going in favor of me. I just kind of took a chance, I said,

00:13:40.700 --> 00:13:44.340

RC: by the way, whose book did you read is a staple for engineers?

00:13:44.450 --> 00:13:47.389

RC: And he said, well, I did Timoshenko. I said, oh my goodness, I did Timoshenko too!

00:13:47.400 --> 00:13:49.279

RC: And question went like that and he realized that I'm not just a "golla" (ordinary) engineer.

00:13:49.570 --> 00:14:03.520

RC: So the manager, the manager took me to the personal manager, and the personal manager said you got a job!

00:14:04.150 --> 00:14:11.589

RC: I said, what's the salary? He said, well, this is the salary. I said, is that a good salary or a bad salary? He's said, it's neither a good nor a bad, it's in between.

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RC: I said, okay, I'll take that one. And I took one month off. I said, I'll have to get my wife here, and then I'll job after one month. And within one month, of course, my wife arrived. And of course, I got my driver's license-- permission for

00:14:26.140 --> 00:14:28.089

RC: learner's license.

00:14:28.100 --> 00:14:37.129

RC: And I started commuting from San Francisco to Alameda.

I: Oh. RC: Work started at 8 o'clock, but I had to leave my home at 5 o'clock.

00:14:37.140 --> 00:14:54.660

I: Oh, wow. RC: Yeah, because I had to take the street car to come down to Transbay Terminal, where the Sales Force Tower is now.

I: Hmm. RC: And from there, I had to take the AC Transit, go to Alameda, get down at the street crossing, then walk for 15 minutes to be at the office at 8 o'clock.

00:14:54.660 --> 00:14:58.230

I: And this is 1970.

RC: This is 1970.

00:14:58.230 --> 00:15:13.019

RC: So it went on for like that and then I start getting driving lessons, and I got the driver's license. And of course, the driving, it only took me about 25 minutes from my home in San Francisco to Alameda.

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I: Wow. RC: So 3 hours took 25 minutes like that.

I: But 25 minutes, I mean, that distance. RC: That distance, yes, because the Bay Bridge was empty. There was nothing on the Bay Bridge. There was no I-280.

00:15:26.930 --> 00:15:43.170

I: Wow.

RC: There's was only (Route) 101, only 101. And we heard that there was a new way, highway coming called 280, and another one coming called highway 5. So this was how the entire San Francisco Bay Area was.

00:15:43.170 --> 00:16:07.400

I: Right.

RC: Then, of course, after staying that house in one year, in my cousin's house, I went to a new apartment in, near the Kaiser Hospital in San Francisco. And of course, my wife got a job with USF, University of San Francisco. Not state university, not UCSF, but USF which is a Catholic university.

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RC: She was a librarian, so she got a job in the library.

00:16:10.000 --> 00:16:18.719

I: Nice.

RC: We selected a house very close to her USF, on the top and the corner of Turk and Masonic.

00:16:18.990 --> 00:16:33.870

RC: And it would take her only about five minutes to walk down. I used to get down from the apartment, take the bus to AC Transit. No, I used to take my-- the bus was gone. I used to get down, yes, I used to get down to bus, and I changed my job.

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RC: I did work there for three years, then they were asking me that maybe you may have to go to down for Mississippi. I said, no, I'm not going to move to anywhere, so I got a job with a company called Bechtel.

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I: Okay.

00:16:44.940 --> 00:16:52.220

RC: There are two well-known engineering companies in the Bay Area. One is Kaiser Engineering, and the other one is called Bechtel Corporation.

00:16:52.230 --> 00:16:54.490

RC: Both were engineering companies,

00:16:54.500 --> 00:16:57.850

RC: not, nothing to do with Silicon Valley. Nothing to do with Silicon Valley.

00:16:58.600 --> 00:17:09.190

RC: Big engineering that means building power plants, building cement plants, building what do you call, anything under this-- aluminium plants and all these things like

00:17:09.200 --> 00:17:23.610

RC: nuclear power plants, of course. And at that time, in Kaiser Engineering there are about 8,000 people working, and in Bechtel there were 24,000 people working in the downtown, 24,000 engineers working there.

00:17:23.619 --> 00:17:29.930

I: Wow.

RC: So I got a job there and started working in the engineering company building power plants.

00:17:29.930 --> 00:17:58.130

RC: And in that way, I settled down in the Bay Area. From 1970 to 1973, I settled down in the Bay Area like that. I got my own apartment. And then of course, I had my own car. It was a Toyota car. That time Toyota was a famous car, so I had a Toyota car. And then of course, we decided to move to buy a house. But we could not buy a house in San Francisco because it was very expensive.

00:17:58.130 --> 00:18:04.340

RC: So we bought a house in Daly City, in the year 1973.

00:18:04.340 --> 00:18:10.000

I: Okay.

RC: No, 1975. Sorry, 1975.

00:18:10.000 --> 00:18:20.190

I: Wow, that's wonderful. But then, and tell me something about how you saw the Indian community gradually growing in size.

00:18:20.200 --> 00:18:21.790

RC: Indian community,

00:18:21.800 --> 00:18:34.939

RC: there was hardly any Indian community in the Bay Area, except those who are working in Bechtel and Kaiser. They were mostly young engineers, and there was a group of Gujaratis. They were running this, what do you call this

00:18:34.970 --> 00:18:36.040

RC: ...

00:18:36.440 --> 00:18:38.289

RC: Patel Hotels.

00:18:38.300 --> 00:18:52.800

RC: Patel Hotels. I mean, that was the, that was the only Indian community in the Bay Area because those who were working in Kaiser, in Bechtel, and also in the motel business like that way.

00:18:52.800 --> 00:19:00.990

RC: But there was a group of engineers that were working in the San Jose area. They are in IBM and Hewlett-Packard.

00:19:01.000 --> 00:19:05.760

RC: So their collar was always high. Oh, yeah, we are doing

00:19:05.960 --> 00:19:19.749

RC: what do you call that, sophisticated thing compared to your large plants and things like that. So that was the only thing we knew about that something was going on in the Silicon, I mean what you call now, the Silicon Valley.

00:19:19.760 --> 00:19:20.790

I: Mhm.

00:19:20.800 --> 00:19:33.720

RC: So there was no Indian grocery stores. There was no Indian restaurants, and there was no that much of an Indian community. Most probably, the total Indian community at that time would be about 500-600 people.

00:19:33.720 --> 00:19:37.439

I: Oh.

RC: Starting from San Jose to up to Petaluma.

00:19:38.240 --> 00:19:57.110

I: Oh.

RC: That was the, that was the Indian community. And in San Francisco area, when we decided to do the Durga Puja in 1973, we started to do the Durga Puja at my cousin's home, because she had a very large home. And the first time, we had only about 50 Bengalis.

00:19:57.250 --> 00:19:58.879

I: And which year was this?

00:19:59.580 --> 00:20:01.729

RC: That was in 1973.

00:20:01.740 --> 00:20:03.620

I: '73. Okay.

00:20:03.800 --> 00:20:21.750

RC: There were 50 Bengalis. And the club was next year. They, we heard that there were more Bengalis coming, So we said, okay, we cannot do the Durga Puja in somebody's home. We went to Cultural Integration Fellowship. They had an auditorium for about 100 people, and we started doing the Durga Puja there.

00:20:21.950 --> 00:20:35.739

RC: And then, of course, there are more, more Bengalis coming. They said, well, there are more Bengalis coming. So that auditorium was good for a 100 people, so we said, no, we cannot do that, and we formed a club called Prabasi.

00:20:35.750 --> 00:20:44.190

I: Hmm. RC: Then they hear about the Prabasi club.

I: Yes. RC: [inaudible] first and form in 1970, I think it was '75.

00:20:44.310 --> 00:21:06.660

I: Okay.

RC: [inaudible]. Now, the Durga Puja it could not bring the pratimas (clay sculpture-idols) from India, because we did not have enough money. But, we had an excellent architect and painter, his name was Uday Sengupta. Those who know about the Bartaman newspaper, run by Barun Sengupta. Barun Sengupta's cousin was Uday Sengupta.

00:21:06.660 --> 00:21:25.680

I: Mhm.

RC: By profession Uday was an architect, but he was also a great artist. So when we asked Uday to paint the picture of Durga, he said, yes, I'll be able to do that one. He got a door which was from Don's Business. He used to do remodeling of the houses,

00:21:25.690 --> 00:21:29.029

RC: and on that one he put the paper and painted the

00:21:29.430 --> 00:21:32.269

RC: picture of what is Durga, with asuras (a class of beings).

00:21:32.280 --> 00:21:42.150

RC: That's how I started with the puja at my cousin's house. And then of course, the next year, she got two other door panels and painted the picture of

00:21:42.680 --> 00:21:45.189

RC: Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Kartikeya (goddesses/god) on it.

00:21:45.200 --> 00:21:57.359

I: Okay.

RC: In that way the Prabasi, and then of course, we said that there are more people coming. We cannot do the puja in somebody's home, at some small auditorium, so let us form a club.

00:21:57.580 --> 00:21:59.839

I: Mhm.

RC: Let's form an organization.

00:21:59.850 --> 00:22:03.709

RC: And we decided the name of the organization will be Prabasi.

00:22:04.110 --> 00:22:24.050

I: Nice.

RC: And Bimal Sarka, who was the son-in-law of Satyen Bose, he started I think the constitution. And there were several people in that one, Satya Ray, myself, Jnanen Tarafdar and all this like that. So, they decided to make somebody as the president of Prabasi.

00:22:24.090 --> 00:22:28.429

RC: And who can be the best person, they may be the president of the Prabasi.

00:22:28.440 --> 00:22:48.289

RC: I was the first president of Prabasi. If you look at the history of Prabasi you find out, I'm the first president. Jnanen Tarafdar, he was senior to us. Quite a few were senior to us, 6 or 7 were senior to us. He was the Vice President. Satya Ray was the secretary, and of course, there are a few other members who started with Prabasi.

00:22:48.320 --> 00:22:49.589

I: That's wonderful.

00:22:49.600 --> 00:22:58.089

RC: If we went to, in a church in El Cerrito, where you had people like about 200 people.

00:22:58.089 --> 00:23:00.089

RC: But we used to make a mess after Durga Pujas,

00:23:00.900 --> 00:23:02.490

RC: so they said no more.

00:23:02.500 --> 00:23:11.690

RC: They just shut, and slowly and slowly we moved from one place to another place, like that way. And it went on for 19 years, like that.

00:23:11.700 --> 00:23:15.140

I: Oh, wow. Mhm.

00:23:15.510 --> 00:23:19.890

RC: And on the 19th year, this, we decided that we'll bring some pratima (clay sculpture-idols) from India.

00:23:19.900 --> 00:23:39.119

RC: And we brought the pratima from 19 years and we did the puja. And on that year I had my hard bypass. I got up on the stage, and I said, we are very happy that we still have one club to do Durga Puja in the Bay Area, which is called the Prabasi.

00:23:39.130 --> 00:23:41.839

RC: I think I did a bad job,

00:23:41.870 --> 00:23:46.190

RC: because the next year they have another club formed which is called Sanskriti.

00:23:48.900 --> 00:23:50.750

RC: But there is only one priest.

00:23:51.040 --> 00:23:57.389

RC: I was the only priest. So they both Sanskriti and Prabasi came to me, and said, whose puja are you going to do?

00:23:57.670 --> 00:23:59.160

RC: I said, well,

00:23:59.440 --> 00:24:14.380

RC: if you do it in two weeks, two different weeks, I can do the puja. But then, of course, they decided that they will do like that, and it went on for like about 5 or 6 years. And then after that, when they suddenly decided that

00:24:14.580 --> 00:24:30.030

RC: no, they will do on the same weekend, I said I cannot do that. So there was another gentleman, his name was Dr. Alok Chatterjee. And he was waiting to get an opportunity to do the Durga Puja and he started doing the puja for Prabasi. And I was doing the puja for Sanskriti.

00:24:30.030 --> 00:24:37.590

RC: So this was the entire Bengali community, and you can say about the

00:24:37.680 --> 00:24:56.289

RC: two times was the Indian community, maybe three times the Indian community.

I: Hmm. RC: So you can see there was no Silicon Valley. There was no large Indian community.

And then of course, from that store in San Francisco where we used to get haldi (turmeric), and jeera (cumin), and all these things like that,

00:25:11.780 --> 00:25:13.090

RC: in the Bay Area.

00:25:13.100 --> 00:25:14.789

I: And this was around what year?

00:25:14.800 --> 00:25:19.490

RC: And that was, most probably it was about '75, '76 or '77, something like that.

00:25:20.520 --> 00:25:21.900

I: Wow.

00:25:22.160 --> 00:25:42.529

I: And now we have Indian grocery stores everywhere.

RC: Almost everywhere like that, Indian grocery stores, Indian sweet stores, Indian clothing stores. But if you go to University Avenue now, that has been captured by all the Indian store people. There are grocery stores, there are restaurants,

00:25:42.540 --> 00:26:01.439

RC: there are sari stores and all this. If there's anything you want to buy, you go to the University Avenue in Berkeley.

I: Right. RC: And of course, University Avenue was a mad crowd there at that time, because all the hippie movement was going on, and you go to the corner of where the university's main gate was,

00:26:01.450 --> 00:26:10.290

RC: or I forgot the across street, and somebody will come and say you want to smoke bidi? I said, what's bidi? somebody said, hey this is bidi, bidi, bidi.

00:26:10.300 --> 00:26:24.790

RC: No, no, no, I don't want to smoke bidi like that. And this was going on in the Berkeley area. So most of the Indian community was within the San Francisco area, in Oakland area, and in Berkeley area.

00:26:25.910 --> 00:26:43.519

RC: [inaudible] if you were in the what you call in the San Jose area. Now, at that time I-280 was first started. So people started going back and forth from San Jose area in a much more civilized way than 101, which 101 was basically a 4-lane highway.

00:26:43.890 --> 00:26:47.009

RC: Two for going and two for coming like that.

00:26:47.780 --> 00:27:04.879

RC: And then of course, we heard that Steve Jobs and Bill Gates started making their computer. I remember using the first computer in 1985 or something like that, but to get into the personal computer you have to know 10 passwords.

00:27:04.960 --> 00:27:10.200

I: Wow.

RC: You have to go through some passwords or something like that. It was miserable.

00:27:10.870 --> 00:27:12.190

RC: It was miserable.

00:27:12.200 --> 00:27:20.940

RC: But anyway, things started changing and we heard that, we had a couple of engineers, those who came from Jaitapur also.

00:27:21.010 --> 00:27:23.999

RC: They were working in the

00:27:24.070 --> 00:27:41.090

RC: computer area. And they were kind of secretly and they had their collars raised. That was a big job for them that they are doing something which is, and then of course, as I said, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates came and the whole picture changed.

00:27:41.100 --> 00:27:42.100

I: Right.

00:27:42.440 --> 00:27:52.109

RC: Then, of course Intel came, and then there were so many other companies started doing this business and all these things like that. That's how the Silicon Valley started.

00:27:52.500 --> 00:28:10.490

I: Right. So my another, very related to this is like I have been describing, that gradually more and more people were coming from India. Like if the Bengali community was a size, then about trice that size was the larger Indian community.

00:28:10.500 --> 00:28:26.700

RC: Well, yeah, go ahead.

I: And so more, so did you see a change in the professional like profile, like more engineers for the computer industry were coming in here?

RC: Yes. At our time it was mostly civil, electrical, and mechanical engineers.

00:28:26.710 --> 00:28:36.689

RC: But then we started seeing what is called the computer science. We never heard of computer science in our engineering case. The one we heard was electrical engineering,

00:28:36.700 --> 00:28:58.420

RC: and that's, we came to know that there are computers coming, computer science, and computer engineering, and so many people started coming. But most of the people who came at that time, we came with our green cards. Now, people say did the green cards look green? No, it didn't look green. It was blue.

00:28:58.420 --> 00:29:12.369

RC: And then of course, some of the people started getting their citizenship after five years. Or I don't know, what was it? I did not get my citizenship for a long time. I did not get my citizenship for a long time. I think I got my citizenship after

00:29:12.790 --> 00:29:14.990

RC: maybe fifteen or twenty years.

00:29:15.000 --> 00:29:15.689

I: Okay, mhm.

00:29:16.400 --> 00:29:20.910

RC: But the people started getting green cards,

00:29:21.080 --> 00:29:30.709

RC: and then of course, the green card had no time limitations. It's for all the time. Once you have the green card, you can come and go to India.

00:29:30.730 --> 00:29:34.390

RC: And come and go from India to USA, like that way.

00:29:34.390 --> 00:29:45.149

RC: But a lot of people, they thought that it was not the good thing. They started to bring their family members from India, brothers and sisters like that. So they started getting their citizenship.

I: Right.

00:29:45.149 --> 00:29:54.179

RC: And once you get your citizenship, you can sponsor your family members.

I: Right. RC: That's how the whole Indian community started growing.

00:29:55.420 --> 00:30:11.990

I: Yes. So, now when the Indian community started expanding because more family members were coming in, and then there was the need for community that was growing, right? So, of course in response, restaurants were increasing in number, grocery stores were increasing in number.

00:30:12.000 --> 00:30:36.040

RC: Yes. I: So my question is, so from the time that you are describing and then, like you know, almost 30, 40 years later, right? The community is so huge and there are so many different art forms, like music and dance, and you know, painting and festivals.

RC: One thing I should say, I'm going to stop you for a second. One thing I should say,

00:30:36.050 --> 00:30:42.289

RC: for the music and art form and all these things, the person who was responsible was Ali Akbar Khan sahib.

00:30:42.300 --> 00:30:54.990

RC: Ali Akbar Khan sahib started his school, Ali Akbar College of Music in the San Rafael area. When we came here we heard, we saw Ali Akbar Khan sahib. He was a very good friend of ours.

00:30:55.000 --> 00:30:55.890

I: Oh, okay.

00:30:55.900 --> 00:31:04.790

RC: And Zakir Hussain was a young boy. I think he was 16 or 17, and he was playing tabla with Ali Akbar Khan sahib.

00:31:04.800 --> 00:31:20.829

RC: And boy, Zakir Hussain had a head full of hair, he would shake his hair like that, and of course that's how the Indian music started going in the Bay Area like that way. And then of course, there was Punil Amal and his wife, they were teaching

00:31:20.900 --> 00:31:36.410

RC: Kuchipudi dance, and then started coming Bharatanatyam and Kathakali-- and they were doing Kathakali dance, and then came Bharatanatyam and this like that. And then of course, Chitresh Das.

I: Yes. RC: He started the Kathak dance here.

00:31:37.660 --> 00:31:46.589

RC: So now you see, the Indian culture has started expanding, and it's, it went to the music, and then of course, went to the

00:31:46.600 --> 00:31:56.429

RC: restaurants, went to the grocery stores. And now of course, you can-- even now, there is not that many Indian grocery stores

00:31:56.870 --> 00:32:14.199

RC: 'til about San Mateo Area. After you go, after San Mateo area, after you go up to San Mateo, and like Sunnyvale, Santa Clara and all that, you find all the grocery stores and switch, I mean, Indian sweet meat stores and all these things like that.

00:32:14.460 --> 00:32:15.990

I: Right, right.

00:32:16.000 --> 00:32:31.290

I: So I have another question related to this. So this is how the community was expanding in this area, right? You know, through different, so it's kind of the...we can say that the Desi community was putting down its roots in this area over time.

00:32:31.300 --> 00:32:34.009

RC: Yes, starting with the Durga Puja, and then of course,

00:32:34.020 --> 00:32:51.610

RC: the other pujas in all these things started. And they, oh, of course, the first thing of course, very important is to know about the Livermore temple. The South Indian people, they decided to do a temple, the form of a, like a Tirupati temple, like that way.

00:32:51.620 --> 00:33:09.639

RC: And they started raising funds and all. But there are, there are a lot of South Indians at that time. Even now, there are lots of South Indians in the Bay Area now. But not many Bengalis join the community at that time, in that South Indian community, except Sulata Sarkar, Bimal Sarkar,

00:33:09.650 --> 00:33:21.320

RC: and then there are a couple of other guys, Chitu Chatterjee and his wife, and there's a couple of other guys that joined the South Indian community for the Livermore temple.

00:33:21.320 --> 00:33:26.090

RC: And of course, we got more people, started growing and growing and growing, and it has become huge now.

00:33:26.100 --> 00:33:28.289

RC: Now, after there were more temples,

00:33:28.300 --> 00:33:37.110

RC: they decided the North Indians, they said, well, we should have our own temple also. So they bought the, a church in Fremont,

00:33:37.420 --> 00:33:40.080

RC: and then they converted it to a Fremont temple.

00:33:40.090 --> 00:33:41.790

I: Oh, okay.

00:33:41.800 --> 00:33:45.029

RC: So from Livermore to Fremont temple,

00:33:45.040 --> 00:33:46.740

RC: then came the Sunnyvale temple.

00:33:46.750 --> 00:33:48.590

RC: More and more, because they find out that

00:33:48.600 --> 00:33:50.079

RC: it's a good business.

00:33:50.490 --> 00:34:03.130

RC: And you can make good money with the, with the temple business like that way. And of course, they are bringing the priest from India, and of course, they're trying to use the local priest and all that.

00:34:03.420 --> 00:34:28.320

RC: I got a job. Which one was that, which temple? That they said if you want to be-- oh no, Livermore Temple. If you want to be a Hindu priest, Bengali priest, you can join Livermore temple. My wife said, if you join the Livermore temple, I'll divorce you. You do whatever you are doing. But don't think of joining the Livermore temple at all, this like that way.

00:34:28.320 --> 00:34:44.449

I: But the Livermore temple was the first Indian temple?

RC: The Livermore temple was the first, official Indian temple, yes, in the Bay Area.

I: Oh, okay. Okay, so another question I think related is, I mean, now in across the country, right? There are so many Indians almost everywhere,

00:34:44.460 --> 00:35:00.199

I: right? Because of different industries like, since the 1970s, and if you look at today's the numbers are, you know, they have expanded so much. But and you have, of course, traveled widely. You have, you know, visited different places in the country.

00:35:00.210 --> 00:35:12.349

I: What, I mean, a lot of research has shown that and I have, you know, from my little experience, I've noticed that the Indian community in the Bay Area is very vibrant.

00:35:12.360 --> 00:35:27.060

I: And vibrant in a way that is very different than other Indian communities. You know, Houston has a huge population. New York area has a huge population, for example. They are very active and all communities. Bengalis, South Indian. They are all very, very active. But

00:35:27.070 --> 00:35:36.759

I: there is something very unique about the Bay Area Indian community, whichever subcommunity you notice. Why do you, why is that so? Why is that so different?

00:35:36.770 --> 00:35:42.489

RC: It's all, it goes to Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.

00:35:43.210 --> 00:35:50.040

RC: Because they started with the small computers and all these cell phones and all these things like that.

00:35:50.050 --> 00:36:08.519

RC: Even now in the East Coast, there are still people working in the basic industries like that way. And-- but, but you shouldn't say like that, because there is a very large community of Indians and Bangladeshis and Pakistanis in the New Jersey area,

00:36:08.770 --> 00:36:28.560

RC: in the New York area. And if you say whatever you are telling me, if you say it to a New Yorker, they will say, oh, no, no, no, you haven't seen our community here. It's much larger than your's. Someone, if you say that in New Jersey area, they will say the same thing, and Houston is coming up also like that way.

00:36:28.570 --> 00:36:34.400

I: Yes, mhm.

RC: So every community, everywhere there is a large city, it is growing like crazy.

00:36:34.590 --> 00:36:54.040

RC: Growing like crazy. But of course, the main industries were like, what do you call this? Facebook, Twitter, and all these things being in the San Francisco Bay Area. They think that they are better, or they are more sophisticated engineers than compared to the other parts of

00:36:54.050 --> 00:37:10.409

RC: the country.

I: Mhm. So do you think the nature of the profession makes the community more ambitious, which also influences their work outside their professions? That's where they're so vibrant, like whatever they do, they do with a lot of

00:37:10.420 --> 00:37:16.709

I: you know, finesse with a lot of ambition, and that's why it looks very different than other places.

RC: I should say, I should say [inaudible] in the computer. But, you know, this puja I used to do and the temple and all these things, these are money making machines.

00:37:28.800 --> 00:37:30.740

RC: They are money making machines. I tell somebody also,

00:37:31.170 --> 00:37:51.900

RC: please don't, then everybody will be angry. See, I used to do the Durga Puja, and the tradition used to be that after you do the pushpanjali (offering of flowers), the people used to give some money as [inaudible]. And that was given to the priest, who does the, help you to do the pushpanjali, like that way.

00:37:51.900 --> 00:38:14.050

RC: But nowadays, they said, no, no, no, no, you don't give that money in the plate. You put it in a box, a sealed box, like that way. Because we need that money for our running the club and all these things like that. And they just give the priest some, some money. Some money, but nothing compared to what they used to get by this pushpanjali and all these things like that.

00:38:14.050 --> 00:38:19.910

RC: So in that way, I said, yes, the people have got very much business minded.

00:38:20.210 --> 00:38:25.039

RC: No question about that. Everywhere you find that the business, the temple is a big business.

00:38:25.430 --> 00:38:27.929

RC: The grocery store is a big business.

00:38:27.980 --> 00:38:30.530

RC: The sweet meat store is a big business.

00:38:30.840 --> 00:38:33.129

RC: The restaurants are a big business.

00:38:33.150 --> 00:38:37.000

RC: So everywhere there is big business, the Indians are jumping on that one.

00:38:40.250 --> 00:38:42.090

I: Interesting, very interesting.

00:38:42.100 --> 00:38:43.240

I: Yeah.

00:38:45.090 --> 00:38:58.589

I: Do you think being an Indian has helped the kind of work you have done your entire life? Not only as an engineer, but as such a respected and active community member.

00:38:58.980 --> 00:39:05.559

I: How does being Indian help you in your work in the Silicon Valley, what is today known as Silicon Valley?

00:39:07.270 --> 00:39:09.470

RC: Well, as I said that

00:39:09.900 --> 00:39:23.969

RC: we did not have the Durga Puja 'til 1973. And of course, when Durga Puja started, the Indian community came to know about the Durga Pujas and they started coming there, and all these things like that.

00:39:24.410 --> 00:39:27.790

RC: So Durga Puja became quite a popular thing in the Bay Area.

00:39:27.800 --> 00:39:28.290

I: Mhm.

00:39:28.300 --> 00:39:33.089

RC: And of course, seeing that one the Marathis, Maharashtrians they started their Ganesh Puja.

00:39:33.100 --> 00:39:36.890

RC: And the others started their other pujas and things like that.

00:39:36.900 --> 00:39:38.489

RC: The Ganesh Puja is now going on.

00:39:38.500 --> 00:39:39.439

I: Mhm.

00:39:39.520 --> 00:39:42.920

RC: So there started doing the other pujas like that way.

00:39:43.900 --> 00:39:48.290

RC: But these things are getting a little bit more professional.

00:39:48.300 --> 00:39:51.060

RC: They're also, they look into the business part of it.

00:39:51.900 --> 00:39:57.440

RC: Not the spiritual part of it. I'm not sure how much is the spiritual part in these things.

00:39:57.800 --> 00:40:14.150

RC: You see the people going to the temple, but the first thing they ask, give me money, God, give me money. Give me money, give me money. How many times you say that, God, I'm so happy that I come to see you. I'm so fortunate that I've come to see you. I've been able to see you.

00:40:14.150 --> 00:40:37.000

RC: How many people do that, say that? How many people you have seen that go to the temple and say, God, I have come to see you. I do not want anything from you, you have given me everything. You have given me everything. But I have just come to see you and say hello to you. How many people say that, (in Bengali). "Give me, give me, give me, give me money, give me this, give me that" and these things like that.

00:40:37.000 --> 00:40:40.929

RC: So actually, spiritually, we have not improved very much.

00:40:42.000 --> 00:40:44.280

RC: You're always asking for something.

00:40:45.400 --> 00:40:49.810

RC: You're always asking for something. You're always looking into the business part of your life.

00:40:49.820 --> 00:40:54.030

I: And do you connect that with the spirit of Silicon Valley?

00:40:54.100 --> 00:40:55.390

RC: Yes.

00:40:55.530 --> 00:41:01.790

RC: Yes, there are, I understand there will be about 25 or 30 Durga Pujas in the Bay Area, now Silicon Valley area.

00:41:01.800 --> 00:41:09.599

RC: And also, of course, the bigger Bay Area, going up to like Manteca and Mountain House, or something like that.

00:41:10.100 --> 00:41:12.650

RC: Why are they doing so many Durga Pujas?

00:41:12.710 --> 00:41:24.200

RC: Well, they said, every community want to have a puja. What is the benefit of doing the puja, because you know, I mean, it's a big job. And unfortunately,

00:41:24.200 --> 00:41:49.290

RC: the pratimas, the deities are being recycled.

I: Mhm. RC: You know, this is one thing I learned that they recycle the deities. So if a community of like 10 people said, we do not have enough money to buy a deity, but they say, okay, Prabasi is giving their, they're giving a new murti (statue of a deity) from Murtuli, so they want to get rid of the old murti. So I said, you can't take this.

00:41:49.290 --> 00:41:57.619

RC: And that's how the pujas have started. Now, I think there are about 19 or 20 pujas in the Bay Area now. Or 25, somebody says they are 25 pujas.

00:41:57.920 --> 00:42:00.910

RC: But there is only the commercial part of it now.

00:42:00.920 --> 00:42:04.119

RC: I'm not sure how much is the spiritual part of it.

00:42:06.230 --> 00:42:24.809

I: Mhm. So do you think the, because the Silicon Valley is widely known for its, you know, innovation, right? Every, almost like on an everyday basis, they're creating new things, new technology, new features, new gadgets, you know, new ways of connecting.

00:42:24.820 --> 00:42:35.759

I: Do you think that feeds into the identity of the Indian community, because the tech sector employs so many Indians? Do you think that is affecting the identity of the community as well?

00:42:35.770 --> 00:42:49.910

RC: Yes, it is. It is, of course. Of course, I mean, it's like when you, when you put an ice ball on an ice, it starts gathering ice like that when it starts getting bigger and bigger.

00:42:49.920 --> 00:43:03.020

RC: So the credit goes to, as I said, we Bill Gates and Steve Jobs and all that to start the Silicon Valley. And more and more industries, they are coming here because they are finding out, they are easy to find out good engineers in the Silicon Valley.

00:43:03.050 --> 00:43:11.590

RC: And that's why they are moving to Silicon Valley. There are small businesses. They are intermediate businesses and large businesses. They are coming here.

00:43:11.600 --> 00:43:14.790

RC: And similarly, things that are happening in Los Angeles area also.

00:43:15.500 --> 00:43:18.399

RC: And similar things are happening in Houston area also.

00:43:18.540 --> 00:43:23.190

RC: Similar things are happening in the New York area also like that. Everywhere there is now

00:43:23.380 --> 00:43:35.380

RC: they're trying to make computers, computer chips, and computer things, and all these things like that way. Because they find out that this is where you can get more money. Instead of doing-- America is losing their big business.

00:43:35.380 --> 00:43:38.289

RC: They are not making any big plants nowadays.

00:43:38.360 --> 00:43:44.689

RC: You see, I can tell you one thing that, you know, that one part of the Bay Bridge collapsed during the earthquake.

00:43:45.640 --> 00:43:50.359

RC: And that part has been demolished, and they put a new bridge.

00:43:50.420 --> 00:43:54.299

RC: Now, you know, that none of these parts were made in the United States.

00:43:54.340 --> 00:43:56.779

RC: They all came from China,

00:43:57.200 --> 00:44:08.499

RC: because there is no competent manufacturing business and competitive manufacturing business in the United States now.

00:44:08.510 --> 00:44:16.169

RC: They're all coming from China. All the crates you see, container crates you see in the port of Oakland and all this like that, they're all coming from China.

00:44:17.300 --> 00:44:26.389

RC: So the basic engineering in the United States is forgetting about that. Not only that, where are all the cell phones and computers and all these things are coming?

00:44:26.400 --> 00:44:39.489

RC: They're either coming from Korea or from China or from Taiwan, and now of course, Indonesia and Vietnam, and all these places like that. Unfortunately,

00:44:39.860 --> 00:44:43.490

RC: unfortunately, India could not capture that business. They've only captured what you call the robocall business. You know that I get about 60 robocalls in a day, everyday, and all these calls are coming from India. Because I can see from their voice as soon as they ask them, where

are you calling from? He says, Florida. What part of Florida? I said, Miami. What part of Miami you are? Are you in Boca Raton?

00:45:05.060 --> 00:45:14.030

RC: The voice stops. Because he's calling from Kerala, he's calling from Madras, or he's calling from Bangalore, or he's calling from-- I don't know what part of India they're calling from.

00:45:14.030 --> 00:45:16.159

RC: This is what India is doing now.

00:45:16.170 --> 00:45:27.300

RC: India is in bad shape. They're doing all the robocalls, they lost the business of manufacturing. There is nothing manufacturing going on India.

00:45:27.300 --> 00:45:41.700

RC: Nothing manufacturing. Even now, the power plants are coming from Dongfang, China, or some other places like that. What happened to our bepcore, what happened to our combustion, engineering, and all these things? They're all, they're all gone.

00:45:42.540 --> 00:45:43.970

RC: They are all gone.

00:45:47.810 --> 00:46:04.280

I: Yeah.

RC: But I'm not giving you a very good picture about India, but it is. It is not a good picture about India. I went to India, the people are getting, lots of people are getting lots of money, but there are lots and lots of poor people. Lots and lots of poor people.

00:46:04.280 --> 00:46:05.549

I: Yes.

00:46:06.630 --> 00:46:24.029

I: Sure, and I think you know, given your years of experience, you know, both here as well as you know, you've spent a considerable amount of time in India, and you visit, you know, you're in touch with India. So I think, I think of you as more of a very

00:46:24.040 --> 00:46:26.700

I: global citizen, because you

00:46:27.090 --> 00:46:30.569

I: experience both these countries so well, even today.

00:46:30.670 --> 00:46:40.190

RC: Yes, I have. I have seen India, and I have seen the United States, and I have seen also many parts of the world, because of working for Bechtel, I've traveled all over the world.

00:46:40.200 --> 00:46:43.759

RC: I've been to China, I've been to Turkey, I've been to

00:46:44.390 --> 00:47:00.980

RC: Somalia, including a place called Somalia. I've been to many, many places in this-- in Japan, and all these places like that. And I think that India has lots of potentials, but it is not focused in the right direction.

00:47:00.980 --> 00:47:11.300

RC: Because the politics of India...I don't know, when Ambedkar wrote the constitution, he didn't that it would be such a big problem.

00:47:11.300 --> 00:47:14.770

RC: That it cannot, nobody can form a stable government.

00:47:14.880 --> 00:47:20.269

RC: They have to depend on many other peoples to form a stable government, and the government can collapse any time.

00:47:21.680 --> 00:47:32.589

RC: So that's why there is no stable government like United States or some of the countries. Now, I would say like Russia is a stable government, or China is a stable government, because they are one-party government.

00:47:34.410 --> 00:47:35.590

RC: But, you know,

00:47:35.950 --> 00:47:40.349

RC: India has so much things to do. They can do so many things.

00:47:40.950 --> 00:47:42.559

RC: But they are not doing it.

00:47:42.640 --> 00:47:51.370

RC: I'm sad to say that they're not doing it.

I: Mhm. RC: Their focus is only on the, how can I get a Tesla car?

00:47:51.370 --> 00:47:53.679

RC: Where are you going to get the electricity?

00:47:55.570 --> 00:48:01.690

RC: My question is, in this country they are talking about, well, we'll have all electric cars and all these things like that.

00:48:01.700 --> 00:48:07.299

RC: Where is the electricity coming from? Is it just you ask like that and it comes from the sky?

00:48:07.430 --> 00:48:10.589

RC: The electricity has come from some power plants like that way.

00:48:10.720 --> 00:48:19.279

RC: Now, what do you do? Actually, you're shifting the problem from one part to the other part? One second, just one second.

00:48:20.920 --> 00:48:30.589

[pause in interview, skip to 48:33]

00:48:33.020 --> 00:48:38.319

RC: So, actually, we are shifting the problem from one part of the world to the other part.

00:48:39.620 --> 00:48:50.819

RC: I mean, we are you said we are, well, of course we are seeing that we are getting solar power. We are getting windmill. But solar power and windmill cannot provide all the power requirements of this country or the world.

00:48:51.819 --> 00:49:14.410

RC: If you want solar polar and windmill power, they'll be a windmill all over the world, everywhere, every house will have a windmill and solar power like way. But even then, even

then we will not be able to provide the amount of energy using in world nowadays. Because I used to work in the energy field. I know the energy field very well.

00:49:14.410 --> 00:49:32.760

RC: And the people are talking about, well, we'll have windmill, we'll have solar power, and all these things like that. We will not be able to provide the power required for us by windmill and solar power. You'll still need nuclear power, and you'll still need oil and gas power, you'll still need coal fire power and things like that.

00:49:35.010 --> 00:49:53.620

I: Mmh, right. So I guess, before coming kind of concluding this, this great conversation, I just want to bring you back to what is Silicon Valley today. And I mean you have, you have been saying about, generally, about the community and the area. But

00:49:53.630 --> 00:50:05.790

I: is there something else that you would like to share about, you know, what you hope for the Indian community at large, and its relationship with Silicon Valley as it stands today, and as you see it going forward?

00:50:07.000 --> 00:50:13.760

RC: You know, we are very proud of our culture and our traditions. We always say that, spiritually, we are an improved group of people in the world, because we Indians think that we are, spiritually, we are a

00:50:24.150 --> 00:50:27.730

RC: good, good group of people like that way.

00:50:28.550 --> 00:50:32.019

RC: But slowly you are losing our spirituality part of it.

00:50:32.320 --> 00:50:45.920

RC: All you're asking is "give me, give me, give me" (in Bengali) that's all it is. And that thing you can see everywhere in the world, even in the Silicon Valley. I mean, give me that, you have a house,

00:50:45.920 --> 00:50:52.189

RC: you said, well, somebody I saw some friend. He has got a bigger house, I want to get a bigger house. Even though I don't need a bigger house.

00:50:52.200 --> 00:50:58.720

RC: Or he has got the biggest house I want to live in, biggest house like that. That kind of competition and all these things like that.

00:50:59.450 --> 00:51:00.790

RC: But

00:51:00.930 --> 00:51:03.759

RC: spirituality, I don't know how much it is.

00:51:06.070 --> 00:51:12.600

I: Mhm. So you think that, with all the privileges that Silicon Valley offers us,

00:51:12.600 --> 00:51:18.739

I: we can probably do more with those privileges than just, mhm.

RC: Oh, of course.

00:51:18.900 --> 00:51:22.209

RC: Of course. Of course we can do more.

00:51:22.450 --> 00:51:24.110

I: Like you have.

00:51:24.120 --> 00:51:28.680

I: You have been a grounding for the community.

00:51:28.710 --> 00:51:41.159

RC: I don't think I've done anything...nothing important. But yes, I felt that we need to have some kind of a getting together,

00:51:41.280 --> 00:51:58.820

RC: and I have helped a little bit on that one. Not much, little bit on that one, in the initial state. But not now, because I have done, of course, 'til recently I used to do pujas if anybody is buying a new home, having a new born baby,

00:51:58.830 --> 00:52:01.840

RC: or any other occasions, and all these things like that.

00:52:01.950 --> 00:52:16.479

RC: I used to do that. I used to do that, and I used to tell all these things to them also, that just don't get stuck with puja asking for this thing and that thing. Think about how you can improve the world where we are, in this universe we are the only place we have.

00:52:16.770 --> 00:52:29.549

RC: They talk about Star Wars. If somebody can come from one star, distant star, they can destroy this Earth in a second. Not even in nanosecond they can destroy it, because they have got so much technology.

00:52:30.780 --> 00:52:33.940

RC: Their, somebody coming from another star,

00:52:33.950 --> 00:52:39.329

RC: there is no Star Wars. Somebody coming from that star, he will, they can describe this Earth in a second.

00:52:39.490 --> 00:52:58.190

RC: Not even in nanosecond they can destroy this Earth. So there is no war. So think like that when the God has given us a nice place to live. Make it a nice place, so that when we leave, people will say that, well, our ancestors did a good job of leaving the place as a nice place. A good place, not physically,

00:52:58.200 --> 00:53:00.250

RC: but spiritually and mentally.

00:53:00.340 --> 00:53:01.379

I: Right.

00:53:03.250 --> 00:53:12.560

I: Thank you. Thank you very much Mr. Chakrabarti, for sharing your views about the valley and the Indian community in general. I'll stop the recording now.

00:53:12.570 --> 00:53:13.390

RC: Okay.

00:53:13.400 --> 00:53:15.580

RC: Thank you.

I: Thank you.