

# English Story



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## Mr. Ghosh

Ours was a reputed missionary school in Kolkata and I was then in the junior school. Mr. Jayanto Ghosh was a tall and upright person who was somewhat in his early 50s, dark in complexion, and was an exact representative of a Neolithic-age man in today's time. He was our physical training teacher and his periods were labeled on the routine as "PT".

When Mr. Ghosh walked down from the gate to the main school building, he was not someone to be noticed; a few of the students who would cross his way wished him unwontedly, while some didn't even bother to do so. It never made much of a difference to this man because he was accustomed to such ignorance and deliberate negligence while he walked down to the school building – all these 24 years he had spent in this school. The handful like us who would notice him unintentionally used to search in our memory book to find out whether we had PT classes on that day, sighed with dejection if it was and exclaim, "*Today we have Ghoooooosher PT period*". It was quite a bad mannerism with the Bengalis in a missionary school to shear the names of teachers of our dislike so that it sounds as horrible as the person himself.

Mr. Ghosh was quite aware of such likings in the spheres of students and junior school teachers. I often used to find Mr. Ghosh hanging around the senior school library or chatting with the sweepers since he never made it to the junior school staff room. The junior school staff room was a market of posh teachers whose topic of discussion ranged from high priced items in the malls to their husbands' recent promotion. Actually it was no different than in any English medium school, and a poor man like Mr. Ghosh never had a corner in that room.

Both attire and look-wise he was displeasing amongst students. A bad habit of taking snuff which he had developed had again made him the target of sniggers from teachers and students amongst whom polished-ness was the code. Mr. Ghosh resided in the outskirts of Kolkata and came to school by train. Though his shirt might have got smudged in the crowded train, but he was never late to school. He was always seen near the main gate between 7:15 to 7:20 am.

Mr. Ghosh's PT class was not of much interest to us; yet a vested interest worked for it. The class was designed in such a manner that we could have some

recreation, yes we did, and we exploited it to the maximum extent. The routine procedures, if I could remember, was that we used to stand in two rows each consisting of twenty students and then those wild terms of “stand-at-ease”, “Attention” and “on the right about turn” were followed day after day. Monotony at that age was the synonym of boredom and we lost interest soon. March past was also on the chart and it was a terrific task doing that in the summer. Very rarely, that too upon repeated requests, did he give us some relaxation to play games, but definitely something which would involve the whole class and nothing of groupism. And since we had a fantastic playground, football was a unanimously decided game. But this man never took rest when the wildest game on earth was played. He used to monitor us and the game and constantly yell comments to rectify the errors like a coach. Truly he was a coach. After such an exhaustive match of 40 minutes, he used to come up to us and point out the follies we had committed during the game. He wanted us to play and behave like professional players. He wanted us to imbibe professionalism when we literally didn't understand its true meaning. The period was over, we had enough fun; it was time for us to go back to the class. So again the orderly row was formed and we used to march back. This was followed year after year batch after batch.

But why is it that I have taken up writing about such an insignificant person whom I have myself never paid much respect during my school life? Now after so many years, when I have passed out of school, the significance of such an insignificant man torments me a lot. There was definitely something that he had given us for which I was not able to delete him out of my list. I don't know where this man is today, because he had already retired from his duties when I hadn't yet passed out of school. Neither do I know whether this man is alive or not.

All such things that I had done in this period was stored in some subconscious corner of my memory box. But today when I think of his contribution like any of our physics or English teachers, I find in it volumes of value. He was the second person in my life, or ours, since the first one was our parents, who taught us the code of discipline. He taught us what it is to be organized and co-ordinate in a team-spirit.

The seeds of discipline that were sown in the younger days of our school life started to harvest when we grew up. Today we have established ourselves well and forgotten his contributions, but truly he was a hero who was misinterpreted. The respect which he deserved was not remunerated to him.

*Those days were gone.....*

*Lost are those words .....*

*We should have said .....*

*Sir,... Thank you*