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LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

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Birth Centenary Celebration Programme of Padmabhushan Ranima Gaidinliu concluded on 1st February 2015 at Iboyaima Shanglen, Palace Compound, Imphal



Birth Centenary Celebration Programme of Ranima Gaidinliu, Freedom Fighter of India
- Cum -

36th General Conference of Zeliangrong Heraka Association, North-East India
concluded successfully at Mpuilo (Boro-Haflong) on 24th - 26th January, 2015



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Once Bitten twice shy

The Assamese equivalent of the saying, "Once bitten twice shy", is "once bitten by a snake, (one) fears at a piece of rope." So, is felt by the general people of Assam at the latest news pertaining to sudden rise of Muslim population in the state as revealed from the census report, 2011.

Muslim population as it is nothing abnormal. But abnormality lies when this increase of numbers is used, utilised and manipulated by the hawk-eyed politicians of the state in general and of the dense pockets in particular.

Big big '*Samanvay Mantra*', replacement of the name of Madhavdeva of the historic and emotional and spiritual duo Shankardeva Madhavdeva by the name of a Fakir (Peer), granting political or in that matter economical concessions, all will go at one stroke of 'Muslim unity'. Ill motives of the political think tank are evident when this information of census report 2011 was deliberately suppressed.

Partition was the result of such 'muslim unity'. At one stroke of this all efforts of Congress, Khilafat Movement, Mahatma Gandhi, Ahimsa, 'Sare Jaha se assa Hindustan hamara', went down the sea of turmoil and the colour of sea water changed to blood-red. Hence the fear at the rope as revealed from the census report.

So what to do? An eagle will fly over your head, you cannot prevent it, but if it wants to make a nest, you can certainly prevent it. By now among the general muslim population, education as well as modern concept of family rearing have found advantageous acceptance. So the educated youth of the community should come up collectively with a vision and with a mission to have their brethren understand the present situation and act accordingly. The youths should educate them to come above the political attitude based on religion alone. One thing sure and certain, the common folk will understand and accept more easily from the educated youths of their community. It reminds an incident of the Ramayana. Hanuman put fire to his tail and with that burnt Lanka, the kingdom of Ravana. Next, he could not put off the fire from his tail. Rama advised him to use his (Hanuman's) mouth to put off the fire. So, he did so, having a burnt face. So the society following the faith should and invariably come out to do the needful for emancipation of the society from abrupt population growth and political addiction in the name of religion alone.

What the other part of the society of the country do? We prefer to mention one Akbar-Birbal story. In the Royal Court Akbar put a question before the pundits. He drew a line on the floor and asked them to shorten it without touching it. All pundits failed but Birbal did it by drawing a line alongside and longer to it.

For maintaining sex-ratio, of arguably birth of girl child is preferred and protected, why not then a measure be advocated for a balanced people-ratio?

In political magic a rope may turn out to be a snake.

Editor

How did Hinduism Change the West?

The famous book *American Veda* tells a story that needs to be told. It chronicles how the ancient philosophy of Vedanta and the mind body methods of Yoga have profoundly affected the world view of millions of Americans and radically altered the religious landscape.

Philip Goldberg, author of the famous book 'American Veda' was born and raised in Brooklyn and now lives in Los Angeles, USA. As a college student in the 1960s, he started searching for higher truths in his quest to save the world from racism and war.

Despite having been raised by atheists who disdained religion, he was drawn to the pragmatic mysticism of the East, through Alan Watts and Aldous Huxley and the classic texts of Taoism, Buddhism and Vedanta. This led him to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation and he spent a good portion of the 1970s teaching meditation and otherwise working for the TM organisation.

He was also the founding Director of the Forge Guild of Spiritual Leaders. He is still a member of the Forge Board of directors and serves as Director of Communication.

*His magnum opus, **American Veda**, published in 2010 covers the history and influence of India's spiritual teachings in America. The book reveals how the ancient wisdom of Vedanta took the US by storm in the 19th and 20th centuries and continues to do so today.*

Kerala based senior journalist

Pradeep Krishnan spoke to Philip Goldberg on various civilisational issues. Here are the excerpts:

How did you come in contact with Hinduism in general and Vedanta in particular?

I was raised by atheists, with no religion in my home but a strong sense of morality and ethics. I was a political activist in college in the 1960s. I was, however, personally unhappy and unable to find adequate answers to the important questions of life. During that period of personal and social upheaval, the essential teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism became more and more accessible to young people in America. Some of the thinkers we respected most were speaking and writing about Vedanta and Yoga and other Indian treasures. It resonated strongly within me. The teachings made sense, and were not in conflict with science or the known facts of history, unlike the religions I was familiar with. They seemed practical and nondogmatic. I wanted to know more and more. I read everything I could get my hands on, and eventually took up Transcendental Meditation and was trained by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as a teacher. My ongoing learning and my spiritual path as a yogic practitioner has broadened and deepened ever since.

In the book 'American Veda' you say that Indian spirituality has taken the US by storm and continues to do so even today. But many in India are of the

view that Indians, by and large, are embracing Western culture and tradition in a very big way. Your comments?

I think both are true. All the great swamis and gurus who came to the West, from Vivekananda onwards, have said that America has much to offer India by way of material progress, and that India in turn has spiritual treasures to offer America. That seems to be true; only what America received from India is not as visible as the technologies India imported from America. They are, however, far more beneficial and powerful, so Americans got the better deal.

I think it is important for the people of India—especially the young people—to be very discerning about what they import from America and what they choose to emulate about the American way of life. It would be a disaster, for example, if Indians adopt unhealthy eating habits, or materialism, or the tendency to substance abuse and workaholism. The irony is Americans have turned to hatha yoga and meditation largely to neutralise the impact of our high-stress lifestyle, at the recommendation of a growing number of physicians. I hope that as India advances materially, Indians don't make the same mistakes.

The rising Islamic fundamentalism is posing a major threat to our civilisation. How to overcome this threat?

The threat must be taken seriously, and each nation's

security experts must protect their citizens against terrorist violence. That said I don't see a future for fundamentalist ideologies of any kind over the long run.

Few people want to live under such regimes, and despots can rule by force and coercion for only so long. It's up to the great majority of sensible Muslims to stand up and refuse to be dominated by extremists, just as Christians in the West have for the most part rejected the extreme voices of that religion. I have confidence that the same is true of India. The country's tradition of pluralism and democracy is a powerful antidote to fundamentalism.

Hinduism is getting wider acceptance all over the globe. But there is a feeling that Hindus of India are in danger from Christian missionaries, Muslim fundamentalists and Marxists. How do you view this paradox?

I love India and consider it my spiritual home. But I am not Indian, and it is hard for me to comment on events there from a distance. However, it seems to me that if Hindus remain true to the deepest teachings of the dharma, no religious fundamentalism or secular ideology can pose a serious danger for very long. The truth has a way of winning out over lies and misconceptions and obsolete theories. Americans have embraced Hindu ideas and the methods of Yoga because they make sense and offer proven benefits. Perhaps Hindus in India need to be reminded of the practical value of their own traditions. That's the job of today's gurus, swamis, acharyas, scholars, and scientists.

How far the Gurudom has helped the ordinary American to get in touch with the higher dimensions of Hinduism?

The gurus who came to the US, beginning with Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda and then in 1960s and 70s with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Swami Muktananda, Swami Satchidananda and others, to Sri Mata Amritanandamayi and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar today, have been a mighty force in making Americans aware of the deepest and most practical dimensions of Hindu Dharma. Their impact has been far greater than that of academic scholars. Most of the dharma was taught in the name of Yoga and Vedanta, with the word "Hinduism" being downplayed to emphasise the universality of the Dharma. In the West, "Hinduism" is a religious term, and the gurus knew that people would not comprehend the universality of Vedic teachings if they were branded with religious language. The most successful gurus used rational, scientific language so the core ideas could be apprehended by the Western mind without bias.

You are of the view that due to centuries of distortions-Hinduism is widely misunderstood. Could you please elaborate?

As most people in India are painfully aware, the colonists' agenda was to dominate, rule and exploit, and the missionaries' agenda was to convert. Therefore, the scholars who served the colonists and the missionaries had an interest in portraying Hinduism as primitive, backward, superstitious and irrational. Their descriptions

colored the views of others, including many who were not part of the imperial and missionary enterprise. In addition, social scientists, journalists and ordinary travelers saw the external, colorful aspects of Hinduism—the temples, rituals, murtis, etc. and described it without penetrating the profound insights that underlie everyday Hindu practices. So it appeared even to sympathetic Westerners as exotic idol worship.

Any difference between Indian Yogis spreading their wisdom in other countries and Missionaries and Islam reaching out to other countries?

As I often tell my audiences when I speak, there is a vast difference between gurus, swamis and yoga masters taking their teachings outside of India and the missionaries who bring their religions to India. While many missionaries undoubtedly do selfless service to the poor and the sick, many of those who seek to convert the native population do not play fair. The record of coercion, manipulation, bribery and deceit is deplorable, and the truth is that most American Christians would be appalled if they knew about some of the tactics used in the name of their religion. The gurus, on the other hand, never asked anyone to convert, nor did they demand that anyone—even their closest disciples—renounce the religion of their own heritage. And the truth is gurus helped a great many of their followers become better Christians and Jews.

(Organiser, January 11, 2015)

Tripura Voters' Gender Ratio Pips National Average

- Sujit Chakraborty

With 964 females to 1,000 males in the voters list, Tripura's gender ratio is much higher than the national average of 640 per 1,000.

According to political analysts, in the country's lone left-ruled state, representation of women in local government bodies and other elected institutions was also better than in many states of India. The gender ratio among voters is consistently narrowing in Tripura, where tribals constitute a third of the 3.7 million population.

"The gender ratio in Tripura was 933 females to 1,000 males during the 2004 Lok Sabha polls. It increased to 954 in 2009 and has gone up further to 964 before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections," Chief Electoral Officer Ashutosh Jindal told IANS.

The gender ratio has further risen to 964 in the final electoral rolls that were published on Monday, he said.

The national gender ratio in the electoral rolls is 640 females to 1,000 males.

According to the final electoral rolls, published after a three-month special summary revision of photo electoral rolls with January 1, 2015 as the qualifying date, 2,422,764 voters, including 1,189,138 females, have been enrolled in Tripura. This shows an increase of 1.62 percent from last year's rolls.

In the last assembly election in February 2013, women cast more votes than men.

"In the 2013 assembly polls,

90.89 percent of the total of 1,198,970 males voted while 93.02 percent of the 1,156,476 females exercised their franchise," Jindal said.

Tripura made electoral history in the 2013 polls when a record 93.57 percent ballots were cast. The state recorded 92 percent polling in the 2008 state election.

"Since the first election in 1952, this was an all-time record in the electoral history of India," Jindal said.



According to the Election Commission, in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the states where voter turnout crossed 80 percent were Nagaland (87.82 percent), Tripura (84.72 percent), Sikkim (83.37 percent) and West Bengal (82.16 percent).

Renowned political analyst Tapas Dey said: "Political consciousness among both tribals and non-tribals in Tripura is very high. Unlike other states, male leaders in Tripura always try to empower women, both politically and economically."

According to an election commission official, 57 percent of

the electorate (2,422,764) in Tripura was below 40 years of age.

In the panchayat elections held in July last year, for the first time, more than 50 percent seats in gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zila parishads were won by women.

"Tripura is the only state where 50 percent seats were reserved for women – both in the three-tier gram panchayats and in village councils under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council," Panchayat Minister Manik Dey said.

Tapas Dey, however, said that though in the electoral rolls, women outnumbered men in four northeastern states – Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh – the number of women in the legislative assemblies of these states "is depressing, if not worse".

"Of the total 466 seats in the assemblies of seven northeastern states, only 24 members (5.15 percent) are women," he said. Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland have no women in the assemblies. Of the 60-member assemblies each in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, there are only three and two female legislators, respectively.

Assam has 14 women lawmakers among 126 elected representatives while Tripura has five women lawmakers in the 60-member house. IANS

(Sujit Chakraborty can be contacted at sujit.c@ians.in)

(The Sentinel 08.01.2015)

Ramdev Expands Empire Beyond Yoga to FMCG, Business Poised to Touch Rs 2,000cr This Fiscal

- Partha Sinha & Namrata Singh

It may be an unlikely combination - yoga for inner peace and FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) for external beauty - but Baba Ramdev appears to have struck the right pose in both. The guru whose 'easy yoga' has won him a mass following is also cornering the FMCG market with daily use products ranging from soaps and mustard oil to cornflakes.

Baba Ramdev's brands seem to have scaled up quite rapidly. For fiscal 2014, Patanjali Ayurved, the company that manufactures the products, clocked a turnover of about Rs 1,200 crore, up from about Rs 850 crore a year earlier and Rs 450 crore in fiscal 2012, company filings and industry sources said. And in the current fiscal, Patanjali is expected to clock a turnover of Rs 2,000 crore, according to Aditya Pittie, CEO, Pittie Group. This marks a 67% jump from the previous fiscal.

Pittie is the Mumbai distributor for Patanjali's general trade business and a pan-India distributor for its modern trade segment.

Currently, Patanjali is present in almost all categories of personal care and food products — soaps, shampoos, dental care, balms, skin creams, biscuits, ghee, juices, honey, atta, mustard oil, masala, sugar and much more. Going by current turnover projections of Rs 2,000 crore, Baba Ramdev's FMCG business could rival Emami's (Rs 1,700 crore), and be nearly half of Marico's (about Rs 4,000 crore).

This is despite the fact that most of Patanjali's products are priced lower than its competitors.

What gives the company an edge is its very low expenses on advertisements. In comparison, leading FMCG companies spend about 20-30% of their sales on advertisements.

With the Patanjali brand's growing reach and popularity among consumers, it's now being discussed in corporate boardrooms as well. This is in sharp contrast to its quiet beginning in 2007. At that time the existing FMCG brands didn't quite take note. Started through the franchise route in large cities, as the demand for his products grew, Baba Ramdev realized the huge scope within the FMCG sector and started building the range, taking on deep-pocketed multinationals. The franchisee model has grown exponentially: From about 150-200 dedicated outlets in 2012 to almost 4,000 now. The initial success of the franchise route also prompted Patanjali Ayurved to make its FMCG range available in the open market.

This opened up avenues for the company's distributors who were now allowed to sell to other kirana stores in general trade. Here, the yoga guru followed the same path that FMCG companies take.

After general trade, the time was ripe to enter the modern trade segment. Baba Ramdev struck a unique arrangement with Reliance Retail for an exclusive kiosk in its stores, a privilege no other company gets. "We initially piloted (Patanjali products) in five Reliance Retail stores in Mumbai and then took it to 45 stores in the city," Pittie said. Currently, Patanjali products are sold in 400 stores across India

and the plan is to take it to 1,000 by end 2015, he said.

It is also perhaps the only brand that charges the same margin for general trade and modern trade. Given the unique customer profile for Patanjali's products, modern retailers aren't complaining. "We wondered initially if there is some relevance of their products for supermarket customers. But, as a modern trade leader, our role is to democratize and celebrate wider choice for our customers. So we decided to work with the Patanjali team to pilot and discover," said Damodar Mall, CEO, value retail, Reliance Retail. "Reliance Fresh consumers have pleasantly responded well to our efforts, going by the level of traction Patanjali's products have received at our stores," Mall said.

Now some of the Big Bazaar, Hyper City and Star Bazaar stores in Mumbai are also stocking its FMCG products. In modern retail, the company's turnover has grown from Rs 5 lakh from five stores a month to roughly Rs 5 crore now, with same store closing annual sales growth of 20%. "Modern retail currently contributes about 3% of total Patanjali sales with only 30 SKUs (stock keeping units)," said Pittie. "The target is Rs 500 crore annually," he said.

The next step is online - Patanjali's products have just started retailing at e-commerce site BigBasket. "I am now talking to Amazon which has started a new food and grocery gourmet category," said Pittie.

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Ramdev-expands-empire-beyond-yoga-to-FMCG-business-poised-to-touch-Rs-2000cr-this-fiscal/articleshow/45861809.cms>)

Roads for the Future: Who will Build Them?

Dr. Manprativ Barooah

Sometime around the early part of the 13th century, the Tai prince Sukapha left his abode of Mong-Mau in the province of Yunnan along with a troupe of gallant men in search of newer horizons. After a long and arduous journey, he crossed the Patkai range of hills and following the course of the Dihing river arrived at Namrup, in the remote south-eastern corner of the Brahmaputra valley. Having found the soil there unfit for cultivation and the region inhospitable due to troublesome floods that harassed incessantly, he took upon the task of advancing further. The valley of the Brahmaputra during those days offered a geographically difficult terrain. Densely forested and teeming with wild animals, there were virtually no land routes available. So Sukapha and his men took the river courses on bamboo rafts and sailed tortuously along the Dihing, the Dikhow and the Brahmaputra to ultimately reach Charaideo ' a place nestled on the foothills of the Naga Hills and laid the foundation of the Ahom kingdom there.

This strenuous journey of almost 25 years from Namrup to Charaideo infused Sukapha and his successors with a unique topographical knowledge of the then Brahmaputra valley which spanned from the Patkai and Mishimi hills in the east to the Goalpara hills on the west. After Sukapha, the Ahom kings gradually started annexing regions inhabited by several

indigenous tribes across the length and breadth of the Brahmaputra valley. As the Ahom kingdom begun expanding, the rulers learnt that in order to consolidate their kingdom and to govern the vast land effectively they had to implement a uniform administrative system and connect far-flung areas by building an effective road communication system.

Thus the Ahoms, already quite knowledgeable in water travel and adept in making boats and rafts by then, started making roads and embankments to facilitate surface travel and transport. Road building works were successively undertaken by the successors of Sukapha with great ingenuity and dedication, under the supervision of the ministers ' the Gohains ' and carried out through a unique system of bonded labour called Paik! Swargadeo Sudangpha (1480-1497) first built a road that extended from the banks of the Dihing to Gargaon which came to be known as the Rajmao Ali (road). Around the 16th century, Swargadeo Suhungmung alias Dihingia Raja (1457-1573) conquered Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur from the Chutiyas in the eastern Brahmaputra valley while to the south-west, he defeated the indomitable Kacharis thus expanding his territory till Nagaon. He then established a temporary capital near present Khowang and built magnificent roads such as the Senchowa Ali and the Mariya Ali that extended from Nitai Pukhuri

near Demow to Haladhibari.

The rule of Swargadeo Pratap Singha further witnessed the construction of roads like the magnificent Bar Ali, which was then a wide, spacious embanked road that connected Gargaon with Dergaon. Chronicles mention about the road to be almost 40 feet wide constructed by an act of immense labour and technical precision. Lofty trees were planted on the sides to provide comfort to the weary traveller. Pratap Singha is also credited with other tremendous constructions like the Parbatar Ali and the Jabakar Ali that led from Gargaon to Charaideo through which were carried the dead bodies of the royal blood. Pratap Singha's successors too did not lag behind when it came to making roads.

The famous Dhodar Ali was the effort of Gadadhar Singha (1681-1696). Considered a work of social reform, Swargadeo Gadadhar Singha compelled the citizens, exempted from bonded labour to indulge in manual work. The result is the 212-km-long Dhodar Ali which ran parallel to the Brahmaputra from Golaghat on the eastern bank of the Dhansiri river to Jaipur. The period of the great Ahom king Swargadeo Rudra Singha (1696-1714) saw the then Brahmaputra valley flourish in trade, commerce and culture. Shifting his capital to Rangpur, Rudra Singha built a number of roads fanning from Rangpur outwards and connecting Gargaon. The stone bridge over the river

Namdang, the Kherkatiya Ali, the Dubariyani Ali, etc., are amongst the many works of the great Ahom king.

In fact, the Assam history is replete with such innumerable roads and bridges that the Ahoms had built during their heyday. These roads, embankments and bridges bear testimony to the fact that the Ahoms were a technically gifted lot which they supplemented with hard work and able governance, despite being geographically isolated. The roads and bridges they built, also aided in flood control as well as defence along with serving the purpose of connecting to a wide outer world by the end of the 17th century.

It was not that the roads and embankments were built in haste and whims. Proper surveys were carried out and measurement taken before every project commenced. The records chronicled say that the Paiks were instructed to work even

during the night by lighting lamps. All officers were part of the road making process and the supervisory act was carried out sometimes by the king himself. The jobs of overseeing the maintenance was also clearly earmarked and the minister (the Gohains) normally saw to that. Indeed, the Ahoms matched the illustrious Mughals when it came to road making, although they were nestled in an extremely difficult terrain and with limited external resources. Perhaps the self-sufficiency of the fertile and abundant Brahmaputra valley never made the great Ahom kings face a real dearth of raw materials and essential ingredients.

While our erstwhile Ahom rulers could gauge the importance of roads and linking regions for smooth governance and better trade and commerce, our present day rulers seem to have lost sight of that. The Ahom kings had a foresight and almost

each one of them along with their ministers carried out their responsibilities for the welfare of the state in the utmost diligent manner. However, the scenario of the 21st century Assam is different. Our roads would rank amongst the worst in the whole of the country. Maintenance job is a subject of laughing matter. No doubt in this age of technological advancement, connecting places through decent roads shouldn't be a Herculean task. It should rather be the first step every government ought to undertake. It is the bare minimum every government could offer. But we desperately long for a decent, safe road to travel today, don't we? No wonder considering our present condition, the great Chaolung Sukapha up above might as well be having a hearty laugh at our expense 'for the mess we have got ourselves into!

(The Assam Tribune, 05 Jan 2015)

101 Stories, Each Story in a Single Sentence!

A teacher from Jorhat has written a collection of 101 stories, each story strung into a single sentence. The unique book by 53-year-old Sunil Kumar Saikia is released by 101 kids at the 13th Sodou Asom Gyan Bigyan Samaroh at Cinnamora College in Jorhat district on December 29. The book named '*Dissoi Paror Etupula Golpo*' (A bunch of stories on the bank of Dissoi) is being published by Biswajit Saikia of Jorhat Bidya Bhavan. "The length of the stories varies. Some are of more than two pages while some sentences are of one page,"

Saikia, who took around six months to compile the book, said. "We always wanted to do something new and unique which would help promote our language and culture. We want to make Assamese language known around the world through record books," he added. He has included folklore, legends and anecdotes from history besides contemporary travesty in the book. His aim is to vie for a record. Axom Sahitya Sabha president Imran Shah, who has written a forwarding in the book, says the book is one-of-its-kind in the

world. Saikia has to his name a book written with 5,555 words strung into one sentence, a feat recognized by the Indian Book of Records 2013. The book named *Dissoi Paaror Mel* (A gathering on the bank of the Dissoi), has 5,555 Assamese words, 534 commas and 11 semi-colons. Saikia is a teacher of Jan Khona ME School. He has written another five children books including "Ketepdhenu", Padyor chalere.

(<http://www.sentinelassam.com/mainnews/story.php?sec=1&subsec=0&id=213060&dtP=2015-01-11&ppr=1#.VMczbtKUeOc>)

Japan's 'Arunachal' Stance a Tactic Against China: Daily

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida's remarks that 'Arunachal Pradesh' was an "Indian territory" is Japan's tactic of taking sides over a disputed territory, said China's Global Times newspaper.

The article Friday, based on an interview with senior researcher Geng Xin, also said that backing India showed that Tokyo's ambition went beyond merely strengthening its relationship with India.

Following a protest lodged by China, Kishida said he made the remarks taking into account the facts that "India basically and effectively controls (the region), and China and India are continuing consultations on the border issue", according to the article.

"Since tensions between Beijing and Tokyo have risen in recent years, especially fuelled by the escalation of the Diaoyu Islands issue, Japan has more than once deliberately stepped into China's territorial disputes with other countries," the article said.

According to the article, this represented Japan's intent of "uniting" the countries that have territorial disputes with China in order to create a strong impression that Japan, along with China's other neighbouring countries, is bullied by a rising China.

This way, Japan could put the blame on China instead of itself in the case of a conflict, it added.

The Global Times article pointed out that this was not the first time that Japan had cozied

up to India.

According to the article, when Shinzo Abe visited India for the first time as prime minister in 2007, he told the Indian parliament that Tokyo regarded New Delhi as a good friend, and spoke of the high respect in Japan for Indian jurist Radhabinod Pal, who was the only one to cast a dissenting vote against convicting Japanese officials of war crimes during the Tokyo trials.

"Such inappropriate remarks hurt not only the feelings of the Chinese people, but also the interests of Japan's ally, the US," the article said.

"But India is not going to fall for Japan's tricks easily. As an emerging power, India has made its political philosophy very clear when it comes to Japan's attitude toward history. Successive governments in India have all clearly expressed that Japan should reflect deeply on its wartime past," the article said.

It added: "New Delhi is well aware that it should seek a wise

balance in its relations with China and Japan."

The article pointed out that the existing Sino-Indian bilateral trade volume exceeded \$70 billion, almost three times the economic and trade volume between India and Japan.

"Not only that, China's experience of development is a positive lesson for India, and India has also showed its interest to learn from it," the article said, adding: "In this context, wrecking the relationship between China and India would only show that Japan is a country lacking noble manners, and that it will resort to any means in order to achieve its goals."

According to the article, China should not be too concerned about Japan's "improper" actions even though Sino-Japanese relations have hit a historical low at the moment.

(http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/japan-s-arunachal-stance-a-tactic-against-china-daily-115012300757_1.html)

My confidence in our shared future is grounded in my respect for India's treasured past - a civilization that has been shaping the world for thousands of year. Indians unlocked the intricacies of the human body and the vastness of our universe. And it is no exaggeration to say that our information age is rooted in Indian innovations - including the number ZERO.

-- **Barack Obama, The American President**

A Glimpse of Little Tibet in Southern India

- Debarati Dasgupta

It is the last prayer before lunch at the monastery and novice Buddhist monks are giggling and fidgeting with their bowls in a hall overflowing with maroon robes. Flatbread and vegetable soup are soon served, even to visitors, and the chatter dies down.

It's a scene not set in Tibet, but in a southern Indian town about 2,500 km (1,550 miles) from Lhasa, capital of the remote Himalayan region ruled by China.

Bylakuppe is an unlikely Tibetan nook in a countryside brimming with coffee plantations and dense jungles, a region British colonialists nicknamed the "Scotland of India".

The settlement came up on land set aside for refugees after Tibet's Dalai Lama fled into exile in India in 1959. While the spiritual leader stays in the hill resort of Dharamsala in northern India, an estimated 20,000 Tibetans live in Bylakuppe.

Here are tips for getting the most out of a trip to Bylakuppe and nearby areas from Reuters, whose 2,600 journalists in all parts of the world offer visitors the best local insights.

LITTLE TIBET

Sightseers get to Bylakuppe by road, travelling on State Highway 88 in Karnataka. The closest city airport of Bengaluru is 214 km (133 miles) from Bylakuppe, while the nearest railway junction at Mysore is a little over 80 km (50 miles) away.

Lush fields of maize on both sides of the road shepherd visitors towards ornate arches that mark the town's entrance.

The settlement is strewn with monasteries and nunneries, with rows of fluttering prayer flags everywhere. Monks on bicycles ride past swathes of farmland.

The best time to visit Bylakuppe is during Losar - the Tibetan New Year - celebrated for two weeks in February or early March. The town takes on a carnivalesque charm as monks



don lively masks and costumes for the Cham dance, swaying to music played on traditional instruments.

In a town dotted with monasteries, Namdroling is the most famous of the lot, home to a majestic gold-plated statue of the Buddha. Tourists can sit and meditate or admire the intricate wall paintings. Listen in during the early morning prayers; the synchronized chants give Namdroling an ethereal charm.

The monasteries of Sera Mey and Sera Jey, modelled on the original in Tibet, are the centres of Buddhist education. So is Tashi Lhunpo, a counterpart to the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama in Tibet.

Visitors with a penchant for holiday shopping can pick up Tibetan souvenirs such as rupas (statues), thangkas (paintings), and prayer wheels from handicraft shops. Keep in touch with the world at a tiny internet cafe, with monks typing furiously on adjacent computers.

Budget travellers can put up at guest rooms in monasteries, paying about 500 rupees (\$8) for a clean room with a double bed. The Paljor Dargye Ling is the only hotel in the area, not counting the ones in Kushalanagar, a town 13 km (8 miles) from Bylakuppe. Or opt for a homestay with a family.

Several families in Bylakuppe operate backyard eateries, serving thukpa (Tibetan noodle soup) and a plate of momos (steamed dumplings) for about a dollar each.

Foreigners need special permits to stay in Tibetan settlements in India. It can take up to three months to get the permit from the Indian home ministry, so plan accordingly.

DAY-TRIPPING NEARBY

The island of Nisargadhama is a 30-minute car ride from Bylakuppe. Tourists cross a rope bridge across the river Kaveri for a walk through bamboo groves, sandalwood and teak trees.

Madikeri, famous for its coffee plantations, is 40 km (25 miles) from Bylakuppe. Buy a 500-gram packet of coffee for about 300 rupees (\$5). Try the local speciality - a chilli pork dish.

(<http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/01/02/travel-india-bylakuppe-idINKBN0KB03W20150102>)

WW-II Veteran from NE who Became Envoy to Myanmar

Very few people in the North East are aware that Major Ralengnao “Bob” Khathing hailing from the region had served the Army with distinction in the Second World War ww-II as an officer of the British Army, and later, went on to become the Indian Ambassador to Burma (now Myanmar) in the 1970s. The 25th death anniversary of Major Khathing was observed at Valley View, Mantripukhri, Imphal, on 12 Jan. 2015.

As a young King’s Commission Officer of the Indian Army during World War-II, he was the Commissioner to the 19th Hyderabad Regiment (which became the Kumaon Regiment) but was soon deployed to ‘V’ force Ops as Local Captain, Manipur Sector, to operate behind enemy lines on the Burma front. Amongst the many gallantry awards he received, he was conferred Member of the British Empire (MBE) and the Military Cross (MC).

After the War following the desire of the Maharaja of Manipur, Maj Khathing resigned from the Army to join the Interim Govt of Manipur as Minister in charge of Hills Administration. In 1948, in the first election of the State, he was elected to the Manipur Assembly from the Sadar constituency and made Minister (Hills Administration & Manipur Rifles). However, the Assembly was dissolved when Manipur joined the Indian Union in October, 1949.

The year 1950 saw Major Khathing taking over as Assistant Commandant of 2 Bn Assam Rifles posted at Sadiya where he

experienced the great earthquake of Assam at its epicentre (15 August 1950). During this calamity, he was actively involved in bringing normalcy in the affected area.

The same year, he was appointed Assistant Political Officer of North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). On being posted to Sela Sub Agency, he was assigned the unfinished task of securing administrative control up to the McMahon Line. Taking two platoons of 5 Assam Rifles, he trekked all the way to Tawang and for the first time planted the Indian flag at Tawang, thus establishing Indian Administrative control of the town and area of Bumla on the McMahon Line.

With the setting up of the Indian Frontier Administration Service (IFAS), Bob Khathing was amongst the first two officers to be confirmed in the IFAS in 1953.

Thereafter, he was posted as the Political Officer of the Tuensang Frontier Division in 1954. During this term he was responsible for setting up the Village Volunteer Force. In 1957, he was posted as the first Deputy Commissioner of Mokokchung district.

In 1961, he joined the second course of the National Defence College, becoming the first citizen to do so. On completion of the course, he was posted to Sikkim as the Development Commissioner in 1962.

However, after a few months, when the Indo-China War took place, he asked for and was transferred as Security

Commissioner, NEFA, and was also Chief Civil Liaison Officer with the Army 4 Corps, Tezpur. He had an active role in the establishment of the SSB. In 1967, Khathing was posted as the Chief Secretary of Nagaland. During this term, the Nagaland Armed Police was established and he helped in the raising of the Naga Regiment.

In 1972, he was sent as Ambassador of India to Burma, becoming the first tribal to be appointed as Ambassador. Returning to India in 1975, he turned down offers of gubernatorial post. He, however, served as the Advisor to the Governor of Manipur, and on honorary basis as the Chairman, Tribal Law Commission and Administrative Reforms Commission, as well as the Chairman of the Administrative Commission, Nagaland.

In all his assignments, he never sought or asked for acknowledgment or recognition and considered his achievements as simply a result of commitment to his people and the country. He was conferred the Padmashree in 1957, in its second year of inception. He breathed his last at his home, Valley View Mantripukhri, Imphal, on January 12, 1990.

The function was attended amongst others by Rishang Keishing, MP and ex-Chief Minister of Manipur, Gaikhangam, Deputy CM of Manipur, MK Preshow Shimray, Deputy Speaker, Radhabinod Koijam, ex-CM, Gen Rajiv Chopra, IGAR(S) and others.

(The Assam Tribune 13.01.2015)

The Legacy of Maniram Dewan

- Jivraj Burman



There was a time when one talked about Assam tea one also took the name of the British-owned Assam Co. in the same breath, because both were then synonymous with each other. In the peak of its prosperity since it was founded in 1839, the Company had been a part of life, directly or indirectly, for a large majority of people in a greater part of Upper Assam. Established on the lines of East India Company, its status had reached such a level that, even in England, the children of respectable English families could not wait to find employment in the tea gardens it set up in Assam, in the manner that the excitement of working in an exotic land had taken a great many English young men to the Far East in the early 19th century, either to set up rubber plantation there or to work in them. To cite just one example, when the celebrated Hollywood actor of British origin, the late Sir Laurence Olivier, was a 16-year-old lad, his ambition, writes Curtis Bill Pepper in a biographical account of the great Shakespearean actor, was to work in a tea garden of Assam Co., where his elder brother, Richard, had already been working.

Though the employees of Assam Co. were mostly British, the man who helped the company stand on its feet in the initial years of its existence was none other than Maniram Datta, an

Assamese *dangaria* (noble man), who had then been the most resourceful person in Assam. At the time, his redoubtable presence was ubiquitous in the region because of the position he had held earlier as *Barbhandar Barua* (Revenue Minister) during the reign of the beleaguered Ahom king, Purandar Singha, and after the palace intrigues saw the latter being toppled, also during the short-term kingship of his successor, Chandrakanta Singha. By a quirk of destiny, when the sun at last set on the 600-year-old Ahom monarchy following the British taking over of the by then shrunken Ahom kingdom, ironically, it was Maniram whom they chose to be the first *diwan* (the administrative officer) of the company. Ironically, because as the king's representative, he had earlier pleaded with the British Deputy Governor General in Calcutta, Thomas Campbell, not to carry on his threat to take over Purandar Singha's kingdom for his inability to make good of the promise to provide the British government in India an annual tribute of Rs 50,000 in return for its help in retrieving him the throne he had earlier lost to Chandrakanta Singha. But his pleas fell on deaf ears of the Deputy Governor General, though the latter, in a manner of handing Maniram a personal sop, asked him to accept the post of Diwan in a company the government had then planned to float for commercial plantation of tea in Assam. He dangled the temptation before him because he realized that to be able to set

up tea estates in a land unknown to them, a resourceful local person would come in handy to them and that none would fit the bill than an astute man like Maniram. He was the only native to occupy such a lofty position in the fledgling company and that, gradually, overshadowed his earlier royal position, so that the people started referring to him as Maniram Diwan (spelt as 'Dewan' in Assamese). The epithet stuck to his name. Even today, he is known as 'Maniram Dewan' even though he worked in Assam Co. only for six years. He quit the company in a huff following a tiff with some junior English officials who could not swallow the "ignominy" of having a native as their boss. What followed since he resigned from the company is an important chapter in the history of Assam. In the meantime, so called Sepoy Mutiny broke out in Kanpur and its spark reached even Dibrugarh. Maniram grabbed the opportunity to thwart British rule from Assam. But the British charged him with indulging in "treasonous activities" and sent him to the gallows in 1858 at Jorhat Jail.

Maniram is revered today in Assam as one of the first Assamese martyrs following the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, which for the first time jolted the British Raj. However, his martyrdom diluted the pioneering efforts that he had put in alongside the British to establish India's first tea industry in Assam.

On Maniram's advice, the Company set up its first tea estate in Assam on a 213-acre

plot in front of the erstwhile Ahom royal palace at Gargaon and later built its administrative office at Nazira across the Dikhow River nearby. It was Maniram again who identified places like *Ligiri Pukhuri, Hatipati, Galeki, Thowra, Deopani* and other places around Sivasagar and Jorhat where tea estates could be set up. It was no less because of foresightedness and business acumen of Maniram, the Diwan, that the Englishmen-managed Assam Company could stand on a sound footing in the initial years of its existence and gradually grew itself to be a much admired company in Upper Assam owing to a number of steps it took for the socio-economic development of the region.

Although, Maniram Dewan worked for the company indefatigably, some English employees could never bear to see that a native should get an upper hand over them. So they lost no opportunity to create troubles and queer the pitch for him. The

matter, finally, came to such a pass that, after working as diwan of the company for six years, he had to resign in 1845.

Soon after he left Assam Co., Maniram, almost with a vengeance, took another pioneering step to become the first indigenous tea planter without any aid from the government and set up two tea estates, one at Cinnamara and another at Chingloul, near Safrai. Besides Maniram's two gardens, there was only one privately-run tea garden in Assam at the time and it was owned by an Englishman. While it took Assam Co. 25 years to break even financially, Maniram's two gardens yielded profits to him immediately. This was because, while Assam Co. exported the best of its tea to England, where tea was yet to become a popular brew, Maniram sold his produce locally and even went to the extent of opening a number of *haats* (local markets) to induce people to drinking tea. Naturally, Maniram's enterprising spirit posed a challenge to the

British-owned Assam Co. and so the British looked for alibis to rein him in. The 'treasonous activities' with which he was finally charged, quite possibly, also included his temerity to stand up to the English merchants, a horde of whom had then been scouting around Assam to locate places where they could set up tea estates with an obliging government to provide all the support they needed.

After he was hanged, Maniram Dewan's Cinnamara tea garden was bought over by Williams Magor Company and another company of Englishmen, which called itself Chingloul Tea Company, purchased the Chingloul tea garden.

Even before he became the diwan of Assam Co., Maniram, as Barbhendar Barua, had systematically made a complete list of locally-found products and materials and exhorted people to exploit those in order to be self-sufficient.

(*The Assam Tribune* 28.12.2014)

RGU Arunachal Pradesh of Faculty Attends International Conference

The Hong Kong based International Economics Development and Research Centre organised an International Conference on Sociality and Humanities in Phuket Island, Thailand on December 27 and 28 last. Altogether 49 papers were selected from all over the world for the presentation and to be published in the International Journal.

Assistant Professor of the Rajiv Gandhi University Bikash Bage presented his paper from

Arunachal Pradesh on the topic 'HIV/AIDS- A Social context in Arunachal Pradesh (INDIA)' at the Social Science and Humanity branch.

An expert in the fields of Sociology of Health, Environmental Sociology, Gender Studies, Tribal Studies, Sustainable Development and Community Mobilization, Bage dwelt at length on the ways in which HIV is transmitted and factors facilitating transmission. He said although we still do not

fully understand why the HIV epidemic has spread across India, estimates of HIV prevalence vary in quality but give some idea of trends in different countries and regions.

Of all regions in the world, the North Eastern States and Arunachal Pradesh is the hardest hit by HIV containing around 30 percent of people living with HIV/AIDS, his presentation revealed.

(<http://www.tntmagazine.in/arunachal-pradesh-rgu-faculty-attends-intl-conference/>)

Hinduism isn't a Country Club One Can Waltz in and Out of

- DEVDUTT PATTANAIK

In India, to convert people out of Hinduism is seen as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution. To convert people from Indian Islam to radical Islam, however, is a cause for concern. While to re-convert anyone into Hinduism is seen as a media joke. Do India-visiting aliens wonder about this confusion? Or are they too busy saving religious Indians (Hindus especially) from cult leaders, and encouraging them to convert: become rational, secular, liberal, scientific atheists? Is that the cosmic or the alien way?

To evangelise means to spread 'the good word'. To proselytise is to spread the good word using material benefits. To evangelise and proselytise has become a modern way of life, expanding beyond the religious sphere. Education has increasingly become about conversion -teaching children good habits like speaking, reading and writing English (or Sanskrit) rather than their mother tongue. Entertainment has become about conversion -civilizing Indians, and ensuring victory of the 'truth' by exposing social evils and shaming wrongdoers, in a spirit of smug self-righteousness. Democracy has become about conversion. Every few years, citizens are expected to reaffirm their faith, or convert, in the hope of 'good days' (achhedin).

Everywhere around us, in religious and secular markets, we find people following a seven-step process. Step 1: make fun of, or evoke fear of, the old (caste

excesses, demonization of blue-skinned multi-armed animal-riding deities, expensive washing powders). Step 2: extol the virtues of the new (one God, equality, cheaper washing powders). Step 3: offer deals (rice, job, medicine, education, prestige, discounts). Step 4: strike the deal (convert, make the sale). Step 5: ensure loyalty (regular congregations and ritual re-affirmation). Step 6: incentivise forward selling (you become an elder, if you get 10 converts in). Step 7: keep the flock together (stir anger, hatred by turning the other into villains and the self into victim).

Yet in an ecosystem of conversion, re-conversion into Hinduism is problematic. Hinduism is not designed as a community that you can enter by signing a contract (as in baptism, or communist parties) and exit (by refusing to follow the tenets of the religion, or a country club). You are born a Hindu. Or more correctly, you are born into a caste, and whether you convert or re-convert, you cannot shed your caste, just as you cannot shed the colour of your skin. Which is why Hindutva followers have spoken of Hindu Christians and Hindu Muslims when referring to Christians and Muslims whose ancestors converted to these religions centuries ago. Rather than indulging this feeble attempt to reconcile, there was a media outcry. And so Hindutva followers turned their attention from old rich converts to new poor converts, unleashing a new vocabulary - 'homecoming' (*ghar wapsi*), a very American term, which is not

surprising considering the massive NRI influence in shaping the current success of Hindutva.

The problem stems from the definition of God. In Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), there is the concept of 'false gods' and 'one true God'.

To follow the faith is to reject the false and embrace the true. This doctrine has expanded itself into left liberal, rational atheistic, thought where 'no God' has become the one true God.

Hinduism never had the concept of 'false gods'.

Every god is valid, which is why even *Shitala*, the goddess of smallpox and cholera, is worshipped, and not treated as a demon. It's also why Hindus have no problem praying in a church, synagogue or mosque. God is seen as limitless, ever expanding, inclusive of diversity. Hence God can be rock, plant, animal, male, female, neuter and even formless. Hence the words used to describe God are *bhagavan*, one who includes all portions (*bhaga*) and *brahman*, one who has infinitely expanded (*brah-*) the mind (*manas*).

How does this limitless God account for caste? This God appreciates that as long as humans are un-enlightened, they will discriminate, use hierarchy to indulge their insecurities and dominate as animals do. When the mind expands there is wisdom, and with wisdom, all structures with their inherent hierarchies will collapse. This is

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Vast 5,000 Year-Old Underground City Discovered in Turkey's Cappadocia Region



A 5,000 year-old underground city thought to be the largest in the world has been discovered in central Turkey.

The subterranean settlement was discovered in the Nevsehir province of Turkey's Central Anatolia region, in the historical area of Cappadocia.

Cappadocia is famous in archaeological circles for its large number of underground settlements.

But the site, located around the Nevsehir hill fort near the city of Kayseri, appears to dwarf all other finds to date.

Hasan Unver, the mayor of the city on those outskirts the discovery was found, said other

underground cities were nothing more than a "kitchen" compared to the newly uncovered settlement.

Mehmet Ergün Turan, the head of Turkey's housing development administration, said the discovery was made during the groundwork for a housing project meant to develop the area.

"It is not a known underground city. Tunnel passages of seven kilometers are being discussed. We stopped the construction we were planning to do on these areas when an underground city was discovered," Mr Turan told Turkish publication *Hurriyet Daily News*.

The agency has already spent 90 million Turkish liras (£25m) on the development project, but the organisation's head said he did not see the money spent as a loss due to the magnitude of the historical discovery.

The upper reaches of the city were first spotted last year but it was not until now that the size of the discovery became apparent. The organisation has so far taken 44 historical

objects under preservation from the site.

The area has been officially registered with Turkey's Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board and no further building work will be done.

The Cappadocia region, once a Roman province, is fertile ground for underground cities because of its soft volcanic rock which is easy to carve.

Nevşehir province's most renowned underground settlement



is Derinkuyu, a multi-level city large enough to house many thousands of people and their livestock. It lies within an hour's drive south of the new discovery.

Derinkuyu, believed to date to the 8th century BC, was most recently inhabited by Christians until 1923 when they were expelled during a population exchange with Greece.

It has since laid uninhabited and draws visitors from around the world.

(<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/vast-5000-year-old-underground-city-discovered-in-turkeys-cappadocia-region-9951911.html>)



How to Dial a Right Number?

- Dr. Munish Kumar Raizada

Rudyard Kipling wrote in his poem "The Ballad of East and West" more than 125 years ago, whose opening lines "East is East and West is West/And never the twain shall meet" have become legendary. Looking at the scientifically advanced life style in the western hemisphere routinely aided by machine and material, one might ask what is there that the East could have contributed to the West anyway! But, the way Yoga- the pristine science of India- has gradually become a part of American life, it suggests there lies something deeper. As Philp Goldberg rightly says in "*American Veda*", Vedanta-Yoga has been the biggest contribution of East to West flow of ideas. Not to say that Vedas and Vedanta have become popular as scriptures, but the essence of "*Ekam Sat viprah bahudhaa vadanti*" (Truth is one, the wise express it by many names) that originates in Rigveda has 'seeped into the collective awareness of the West' also.

Called by Mark Twain as the cradle of human race, India has a long cherished history of divinity, spirituality, and mysticism. The spiritual milieu of India was so vibrant that four religions emanated from its land: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Some believe Zoroastrian religion can also be linked to India. Scholars stress that the tenets of Sanatan Dharma (Eternal Religion) are conducive to proliferation of diverse thoughts, beliefs and sects.

Fast forward, is it a mere

coincidence that two recent movies- having a common theme- released in two different countries of the world are having different trajectories? A Bollywood Hindi movie "PK" is making waves in India and right from the beginning has invited protests from Right wing Hindu outfits. Well known for playing the religious minority card, the ruling Samajwadi party in Uttar Pradesh, was quick to declare the movie tax free and Janata Dal (United) in Bihar followed suit. Meanwhile, the movie "Awake: The Life of Yogananda" has been released in USA and is a pure bliss to watch. Both movies weave around the themes of religion and spirituality. Call it a sheer misfortune or fate of 'Karma', the movie 'Awake' is currently not being shown in India.

What is mysticism? The dictionary defines it as the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth, or ultimate reality can be attained through subjective experience (as intuition or insight). The esoteric manifestation of divinity cuts across human populations and cultures: they say a seeker can realize the Ultimate Truth through spirituality. But there are things that constitute exoteric manifestations of divinity. Various forms of religions, cults and practices including rituals and doctrines come under this. Swami Chinmoy rightly said: "Mysticism, poor mysticism! When it is underestimated and oversimplified, it comes down from its original sphere and stands beside religion". This adage sums up the way we – humans - are responding to the

two movies that are running in two countries separated by 8000 miles: India and USA.

Last month, I had the opportunity to watch the premier show of the movie "Awake: The Life of Yogananda" in Chicago. Based upon the biography of Swami Yogananda, the movie, directed by Paola di Florio and Lisa Leeman, narrates his life and teachings.

Paramhans Yogananda (1893-1952) is credited with taking Yoga to the West. At the age of 27, he landed in USA in 1920 on a spiritual mission (at the instructions of his guru Shri Yukteshwar). Yogananda used body and mind techniques of Yoga to teach divinity and spirituality to Americans. He aptly called: "We are not the body. We are the ocean of consciousness." He further said: "By the definite science of meditation known for millenniums to the yogis and sages of India, and to Jesus, any seeker of God can enlarge the caliber of his consciousness to omniscience to receive within himself the Universal Intelligence of God."

Today, words like meditation, *Yoga*, *karma*, *guru* and even *moksha* have become parts of the American lexicon. Swami Vivekananda must be given the credit of initiating a Hindu-inspired meditation movement in USA, says Lola Williamson, author of *Transcendent in America: Hindu-Inspired Meditation Movements as New Religion*. She argues her case by showcasing three significant movements in the

history of USA, which she terms as a new religion: Yogananda's Self Realization Foundation (SRF), Maharishi Mahesh Yogis's Transcendental Meditation (TM) and Swami Muktananda's Siddha Yoga. With Swami Vivekanad (1993 onwards) having sensitized the West to Sanatan Dharma, time was ripe for Yogananda to build upon when he touched the American shores in 1920. Yogananda spent much of his next 30 years in USA, giving significant impetus to the introduction of Eastern philosophy to the Westerners.

Yoganand rejuvenated and popularized Kriya Yoga to the world, and particularly to the West. The brown mystic from India used yoga as a tool to teach the science of soul and spirit to the West. After all, as modern science too concurs that even though Yoga is done through body, it is more about the mind! If today, a yoga center in USA is as easy as finding a coffee shop, credit must be given to Yogananda for the hard work he did decades back.

While Paramhans Yoganand was well received in USA, he had

his share of disappointments and challenges. Indians were not eligible for immigration to the U.S. until 1946 and for all practical purposes, significant arrival of Indians did not happen until 1965. In the times of Yoganand, India was under British rule and racism was a big thing in USA. With this background and xenophobia notwithstanding, it was not surprising that Yogananda faced stiff racism in the Southern parts of USA (part of the country which showed deep disdain for abolition of slavery in Abraham Lincoln's times). He was even put under surveillance by the U.S. government at the behest of British India. When he came to know that blacks were not allowed to attend his congregations in Washington D.C., he tackled the racial prejudice with aplomb! Yogananda announced creation of African-American center for his brothers and sisters of color. Similarly, he blessed a marriage between an Indian and an American as a political statement against racial barriers. Yogananda was a great supporter of Mahatma Gandhi for he believed if a man can reform himself, he can reform the world.

Yogananda visited Gandhi ji at his Ashram in Sewagarm, Wardha. It is said that he even offered him a class in Kriya Yoga and a tip about avocado as a rich source of proteins among vegetarian options. I am sure, had Yogananda been alive, Martin Luther King would have got a big moral support from Paramhans for his civil rights movement. Is it mere coincidence that the voice of these two evolved souls resembles?

In 1946, Yogananda's "Autobiography of a Yogi" came into the market. It is a spiritual classic and has been published in a score of languages and sold millions copies. Yogananda breathed his last in 1952 in USA.

The teachings of Paramhans Yoganada continue to be relevant today. Despite the comforts brought to us by science, the world continues to witness disparity, violence and conflict, thus, stressing the need of spiritual healing.

(The author is a Chicago-based medical doctor (Neonatologist) and a socio-political commentator. He can be reached at pedia333@gmail.com)

(*Eastern Chronicle 07.01.2015*)

Mahatma Gandhi an Integral Part of South Africa: Mashabane

Gandhinagar, Jan 7, 2015: **Mahatma Gandhi was an integral part of South Africa and the country shares an inseparable bond with India, South African Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane Wednesday told the Indian diaspora youth at the PBD here.**

Addressing a plenary session on "Gandhian Thought in Context

of the 21st Century: A Youth Perspective" at the Mahatma Mandir complex as part of the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas here, Mashabane said the youth of South Africa and India should take inspiration from the "battles" of Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi and defend the national interest of their country and be the best in science and technology.

She said Mandela and Gandhi

had "handed over the baton to us, and ours is to move on, defend the national interest of our country and be the best in science and technology".

She said both South Africa and India "have a vision for development of the future and are grappling with challenges"...

(<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/452133/mahatma-gandhi-integral-part-south.html>)

A New Coin for a New India, Finally Featuring a Business Icon

- Harish Bhat

The first new coin of the year was released this week, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is unique, being the first ever Indian coin commemorating an industrialist. It marks the 175th birth anniversary of Jamsetji Tata, founder of the Tata Group. At a broader level, the coin is an acknowledgment of the role of industry in building our nation.

Money, including coinage, is the primary store of value, hence treasured by kings and presidents alike. No wonder their images adorn coins globally. In modern India, our coins have depicted figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Mother Teresa and Rabindranath Tagore. Yet before this launch, we have never had a coin featuring an icon of business.

There are many lessons this coin can teach us. First, the impact of patriotism. Tata was more than just an entrepreneur. He was a nationalist who believed in the overall development of India. If the Tata Group is testament to his drive for economic growth, the J N Tata Endowment, established in 1892, reflects his belief in building intellectual capital. This endowment has funded thousands of Indian scholars, including names such as K R Narayanan and Raja Ramanna. The coin highlights what doyens of industry can achieve, if driven by a burning sense of patriotism.

The coin also reminds us of Jamsetji Tata's unwavering commitment to the industrialisation of India. More

than a century ago, he was set on building a steel manufacturing plant in our country, notwithstanding widespread scepticism, because he considered steel essential for progress. The then chief commissioner of Indian Railways, Sir Frederick Upcott, famously said, "Do you say that Tatas propose to make steel rails to British specifications? Why, I will undertake to eat every pound of steel rail they succeed in making." Yet Tata Steel produced excellent steel for railways within a few years. Today, the company stands tall globally. The new coin re-emphasises the need for renewed industrialisation of India, which is today an imperative for future growth.

A third lesson is the need for business leaders to work in partnership with leaders of

society. The former have wealth and ideas, the latter the pulse of their countrymen. When Jamsetji Tata needed help to establish a world-class Indian university, he turned to Swami Vivekananda, requesting him to lead a crusade supporting this venture. Swami Vivekananda responded with a stirring editorial. He urged Indians to support the project with funds, and ended: "Let the whole nation therefore, forgetful of class or sect interests, join in making it a success." The result: Indian Institute of Science, now globally renowned, was founded in Bangalore in 1911.

The new coin urges our industrialists to dream restlessly for India, and build strong partnerships with leaders of our society in pursuing these dreams.

(The Times of India 08.01.2015)

Contd. from Page 16

Hinduism isn't a Country Club....

liberation (moksha).

Yes, re-conversion does mean a return to caste inequality, for people are far from enlightened. But conversion does not mean entry into equality either. It merely enables entry into the tribe of the Chosen People, a member of a group that is now able to feel good about itself by separating itself from the followers of 'false gods' and positioning itself as higher and better, a trait seen in many secularists, terrorists, and card-carrying communists. Thus we are able to dominate those 'savarnas' who once dominated us, while proclaiming that we stand for liberty, equality and justice.

In conversations of conversion and reconversion, we forget a very human trait: it feels damn good to win an argument, and seduce (or force) people into our way of thinking. The limitless rainbow-coloured God, who is also Goddess, watches this and smiles.

The writer is a mythologist. (The Times of India Jan 04 2015)

Dear President Obama

- Balbir Punj

Congratulations on your highly successful visit to India. We are grateful to you for these words of wisdom: "The peace we seek in the world begins in human hearts, and will find its glorious expression when we look beyond any differences in religion or tribe and rejoice in the beauty of every soul. And nowhere is that more important than India. Nowhere is it going to be more necessary for that foundational value to be upheld. India will succeed so long as it is not splintered along lines of religious faith; so long as it is not splintered along any lines and is unified as one nation".

We in this country understand better than anyone else the havoc "splintering" on religious lines can cause to a nation. The beastly attack on the World Trade Centre (9/11) is not even a patch on what we have suffered in the last thousand years because of what you term "splintering" on religious lines. Starting with Muhammad bin Qasim's invasion of Sindh in the early 8th century, the war against India and its pluralistic traditions has since continued unabated.

The repeated onslaughts on our catholic and indulgent civilisation have left us with deep wounds and caused repeated amputations. A few hundred years back, we lost Afghanistan and in 1947, when Pakistan was created, we lost almost a third of our landmass, including the plains through which the Sindhu, the river that defines India's identity, and on whose banks our ageless civilisation evolved, meanders.

Today, there is hardly any

room for religious tolerance in Afghanistan or Pakistan. Ironically, Mr President, all these decades, the US has been a big prop to Pakistan — a country that has been a military dictatorship for most of its existence, exterminated its minorities, reared religious fanatics and exported them the world over to destroy global peace. And, your country had a major role in Talibanising Afghanistan in the wake of the Soviet invasion.

Of course, being next door neighbours, we are the biggest victims of Pakistan's resolve to prove itself a nation committed to Islamic theology and way of life. In the process, it has become a petri-dish of terror, using its home-grown terror groups as "strategic assets" against "kafir" India.

Pakistan's blind hate against India has its origins in its religious moorings. The hate war, with theological underpinnings, started by Qasim, has since been carried on by numerous successive "holy warriors" such as Mahmud Ghazni, Muhammad Ghauri, Tughlaq, Aurangzeb. Pakistan considers itself the successor state to this mindset. So it nurtures the likes of Dawood Ibrahim, Osama bin Laden and Hafiz Saeed. Its nuclear missiles are named Ghazni, Ghauri, Babur and Abdali, names that symbolise the victory of Islamic forces against the Hindus, with all the resultant consequences, including massive destruction of Hindu temples, forced conversions to Islam and the

genocide of non-believers. In contrast, Indian missiles are named after the elements: Agni, Akash and Prithvi.

Mr President, you quoted our Constitution (Article 25) and reminded us of our commitment to "secularism". We are a democratic and secular nation, not because of our Constitution. In fact, it's the other way round. The Constitution is secular because we have inherited the secular ethos of this ageless civilisation. If only a written Constitution could deliver a secular country, Pakistan too would be "secular", for its founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, had promised that all citizens, irrespective of their faith, would be treated as equals in the new state.

This proposition was destined to be doomed. There was a complete mismatch between Jinnah's vision and the dreams of millions of those who had waged a bloody battle for the creation of a "pure" Islamic state, sans the "kafirs".

Mr President, you were absolutely right when you said, "around the world we have seen intolerance and violence and terror and, too often, religion has been used to tap into those darker impulses, as opposed to the light of God".

For aeons, religion indeed has been used to trap innocent individuals and destroy unsuspecting civilisations. Christianity is 2,000 years old in India. For centuries, Christians



US president Barack Obama with President Pranab Mukherjee at the ceremonial welcome at the Rashtrapati bhawan in New Delhi on January 25, 2015.

remotely connected with the Sangh Parivar), in its issue dated February 7, 2004, had carried a detailed report about American evangelical agencies and then US President George W. Bush Jr joining hands and working out a plan to convert India to Christianity. Mr President, a section of your administration,

and the rest of the population, mainly Hindus, have lived in complete harmony with each other. Hinduism does not merely tolerate people of other persuasions, it accepts them in a natural way.

India's catholic character was sought to be destroyed first by Arabs and Turks in the name of Islam and, later, by the Portuguese and the British to "further" the cause of Christianity and "harvesting of souls". The atrocities the Portuguese committed on Muslims and Hindus after conquering Goa are well documented.

The East India company's charter act of 1813 incorporated a clause that opened the doors for the vilification of the local faiths in India by Christian missionaries. Subsequently, the British government established an ecclesiastical department and it disbursed considerable sums of money to support the activities of the church in India. British officials

came to accept missionaries as partners in that "noble" task of shouldering the "whiteman's burden". No wonder, during the 1857 uprising, the community of Indian Christian converts was the only Indian community to remain loyal to Europeans in affected areas.

The church in pre-Independence India was a handmaiden of the British Empire and made virulent attacks on Hindu religious and social practices. Among countless others, two great sons of India, Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda, took strong objection to these attacks by missionaries. Since you have mentioned the two great souls in your address, maybe you can find some time to see what they had to say on this subject.

This mischief on the part of a section of the church continues well after Independence, with subtle changes in strategy. Tehelka (a magazine not even

several European countries and churches of various denominations continue to work through a network of NGOs to "splinter" India on religious lines.

As per our catholic (read sanatani) traditions, all Indians are welcome to profess, practise and propagate their faith. But the right to propagate one's faith cannot be, by any stretch of imagination, extended to vilify the faith of others and convert them through dubious means. Please use your exalted office to end the sordid business of the sale and purchase of souls, which in part is carried out with the overt and covert help of your administration.

If there are no conversions through inducement, fraud and the use of force, I assure you there will be no need for reconversions (ghar wapsi) either. I hope you will take the call in the interest of global harmony.

(<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/dear-president-obama/#sthash.FE6O5wGH.dpuf>)

Assam Records Most Rapid Rise in Muslim Population

NEW DELHI, Jan 22 – In a development that is bound to stir controversy in the State, the Muslim population in Assam has recorded the highest growth rate of 34.2 per cent in the country up from 30.9 per cent recorded in the 2001 census.

According to a report in a national daily, though the overall Muslim population in the country has decreased to 24 per cent from 29 per cent, Assam has emerged as the only state in the country, which has witnessed an increase in population. However, Muslim population is still higher than the average national growth rate of 18 per cent.

The religion data of the census report of 2011, has so far been kept under wraps on the orders of the previous UPA Government. But the NDA Government has reversed that decision and cleared its publication. The figures are now expected to be released shortly by the Home Ministry. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh last week approved the proposal of the Registrar General of India and Census Commissioner C Chandramouli in this regard.

“The most rapid rise in the share of Muslims in the total population was witnessed in Assam,” the national daily reported, quoting sources.

The report said that Assam recorded the highest increase in share of Muslims, from 30.9 per cent of the state’s population to 34.2 per cent, while Manipur was

the only state to show a fall in Muslim population. Lowest rise was in Meghalaya, Odisha and Arunachal (0.1 percentage points).

Other states that showed high increase in share of population are Uttarakhand (2 percentage points), Kerala (1.9), West Bengal (1.8), Goa (1.6) and J&K (1.3).

Jammu and Kashmir (68.3 per cent), Assam (34.2 per cent) and Bengal (27 per cent) have the largest share of Muslims. Significantly, Tripura, another state bordering Bangladesh, has recorded a marginal growth of 0.6 per cent from 8 per cent in 2001 to 8.6 per cent in 2011.

The daily reported that the most rapid rise in the share of Muslims in the total population was witnessed in Assam. While no reasons were cited for the sharp increase of Muslim population in Assam, illegal infiltration from Bangladesh is expected to be the prime reason behind the unusual decadal growth rate.

The neighbouring infiltration-hit West Bengal has also registered a rise in the share of Muslims in total population from 25.2 per cent in 2001 to 27 per cent in 2011.

The latest census figures are likely to stir the hornet’s nest in Assam, as illegal migration from Bangladesh is a hotly debated political issue in the State. The matter has reached the Supreme Court as well.

The high growth of Muslim population in Assam has been intensely debated and has been a source of political confrontation. Recently the Supreme Court finalised the schedule of update of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), considered an essential tool for detection and deportation of the illegal migrants, who entered the State after the cut-off date of March 25, 1971.

Understanding the gravity of the situation, the Supreme Court has asked the Centre to curb the influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

“The Centre shall take all steps to complete fencing of the Indo-Bangla border. Vigil along the riverine boundary will be effectively maintained by continuous patrolling and installing floodlights. Such part of the international border, which has been perceived to be inhospitable on account of the difficult terrain, will be patrolled and monitored at vulnerable points, which could provide means of illegal entry.

The completed part of the border fencing will be maintained and repaired so as to constitute an effective barrier to cross-border trafficking,” the Supreme Court said last month.

Earlier, the Supreme Court while scrapping the controversial IM(DT) Act in 1998, had described the illegal migration as an external aggression.

(The Assam Tribune 23.01.2015)

Fight Against 'Islamist Extremism'

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday condemned the terror attacks in France earlier this month, which killed 20 people, and called for a fight against Islamist extremism.

"On behalf of the citizens of Israel, I would like to send our condolences to the French Jewish community and the French people who have suffered terrorist assaults in the last few days," Netanyahu said in a statement issued by his office on Saturday, according to a Xinhua report.

Netanyahu said that the attacks, on the offices of the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine, the killing of a French policewoman and the hostage situation in a Jewish supermarket in Paris, were the "continuation of extremist Islam's war against the West," and against "moderate Arab states".

"This is a wave of terrorism that is spreading a global net of hatred, fanaticism and murder. If the world

does not take action quickly, we will find this terrorism gaining momentum and increasingly striking others centres of the free world," he said.

The Israeli leader called on the international community to be "united" against Islamist terrorism, which, he said, "seeks to exterminate Western civilisation as a whole".

As a first step, Netanyahu suggested striking at the sources of financing of the "centres of incitement".

He also called on the Jews in France, as well as those in other European countries to view Israel as their home.

According to official figures, France is the leading source of immigration to Israel as of 2014, with more than 4,500 French Jews moving to Israel in 2014, which was the highest in 25 years.

Officials have attributed it to a weak economy and an increasing

sense of anti-Semitism in France.

Netanyahu will travel to France on Sunday to attend a solidarity rally, according to his office. Several international leaders, including British Prime Minister David Cameron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, have agreed to attend the rally.

On Wednesday, brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi stormed into the Paris-based office of the satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo, and shot dead 12 people, including 10 journalists and two policemen.

An apparent associate of the Kouachi brothers, Amedy Coulibaly, killed a French policewoman on Thursday and held people hostage in a Jewish grocery store in southern Paris on Friday.

Coulibaly was killed on Friday, as were the Kouachi brothers. Four hostages also died at the Jewish grocery store.

(The Sentinel 12.01.2015)

Meitei Manipuris Celebrate 'Lai Haraoba'

Agartala, January 12: The Meitei group of Manipuri people celebrated Lai Haraoba, a festival to appease traditional deities, with the aim to keep alive the cultural heritage of those residing away from their home state and let the new generation know about their cultural heritage.

An expert team from Manipur was invited to conduct the programme.

Lai Haraoba, which literally translates to 'Pleasing of the Gods' is the greatest single key to the religion, culture and history of the Meitei Manipuri.

It is celebrated through oral

literature, music and dance, ceremonial and ritual, that presents a unique pre-Hindu/Vaishnav religion of the Manipuri people. Some also believe it is the festival of Lord Shiva and her consort Parvati.

"We performed the traditional Manipuri dance and enjoyed it thoroughly. We very happy to witness such a large audience," a participant told ANI.

Manipuris believe that Lai Haraoba dance represents the concept of the beginning of the world. Hymns are narrated on the creation of this universe: the sun, the stars, the planets, the moon,

the earth, air, water, and so on, accompanied with dances shown through different 'khut-theks' or hand movements. According to folklore, the gods held the first Lai Haraoba on the Koubu hill so that their descendants will imitate them and perform the same rites. The organizers expressed hope that the festival will not only help in reviving their tradition by encouraging the Manipuri youths to know about their rich tradition but also bring them closer to people of other communities and spread the message of brotherhood and peace.

(The Sentinel 13.01.2015)

Monks Reprise Buddha's Walk Route After Enlightenment

Over 400 Buddhist monks 10 Jan. 2015 took part in a 13 km 'heritage walk' in Bihar in a bid to revive the ancient route between Jethian and Venuvan which Gautam Buddha took after attaining enlightenment.

Monks from over 30 monasteries in various countries took part in the first heritage walk. The ancient route was taken by Buddha more than 2,500 years ago.

The heritage walk from Jethian in Gaya district and Venuvan in Rajgir in Nalanda district was organised by the Bihar State

Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC), said tourism department official M. Sohail.

He said the heritage walk was part of the Rajgir festival to popularise the event by following the footprints of Buddha.

"The heritage walk will attract foreign tourists, particularly from Buddhist countries," he said.

Millions of Buddhists from across the world including in China, Japan, South Korea, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam,

Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia and in the US and European countries regard the route as the holiest one.

As per legend, Jethian was believed to be the place where Magadha king Bimbisara had received the Buddha during his journey from Bodh Gaya to Rajgir soon after he attained enlightenment.

Bimbisara offered Veluvana (now Venuvan) as a place to stay to Buddha.

(<http://www.newkerala.com/news/2015/fullnews-4103.html>)

Students' Corner

The Fall and Rise of a Merchant

In a city called Vardhamana, lived a very efficient and prosperous merchant.

The king was aware of his abilities, and therefore made him the administrator of the kingdom.

With his efficient and intelligent ways, he kept common man very happy, and at the same time he impressed the king on the other side. Such a person, who can keep everybody happy, is rarely found.

Later, there came a time that the merchant's daughter was getting married. He arranged for a lavish reception.

The merchant not only invited the king and the queen, who obliged by attending, but he also

invited the entire royal household and all respected people of the kingdom.

During the reception, he



ensured to provide his guests with the best of treatments. He gave out gifts to guests to show them respect for attending to his invitation.

A servant of the royal household, who used to sweep the palace, was not invited but attended the reception.

He took a seat which was reserved for royal nobles, not meant for common invitees.

This made the merchant very angry. He caught him by the neck and ordered his servants to have him thrown out.

The royal servant felt very insulted, and could not sleep all night. He thought, "If I can have the king to disfavour this merchant, I will have my revenge. But what can I, a common fellow, do to harm a powerful person as him". Thinking such, he suddenly had a plan.

Several days later, the servant

was sweeping the floor near the king's bed early in the morning. He observed that that the king was still in bed, half awake. The servant started mumbling, "Good heavens! The merchant has become so carefree now that he dared to embrace the queen!"

When the king heard this lying in his bed, he jumped up and asked the servant, "Is it true? Have you seen the merchant embrace my queen yourself?"

The servant at once fell at the king's feet, "O Master, I was gambling all night. I feel drowsy for I didn't sleep last night. I don't know what I have been mumbling, but I said anything improper, please forgive me."

The king spoke no more, but the servant knew he had sowed the seed of distrust. The king thought, "It can be true! The servant moves about the palace freely, and so does the merchant. It is possible that the servant has seen something."

The king was troubled with jealousy. From that day onwards, he withdrew his favours from the merchant and even forbade him to enter the palace.

One day, when the merchant was entering the gateway to the palace, he was stopped by the guards. The merchant was surprised due to this sudden change in the king's attitude.

The servant was nearby, and mocking shouted at the guards, "Ho Guards! That merchant is favoured by the king. He is a powerful person. He can have people arrested or released or even thrown out, just like he had me thrown out of his daughter's

reception. Beware, for you may suffer the same fate."

On hearing this, the merchant understood that the servant has caused all this trouble somehow. He felt dejected, and returned home upset over the incident.

He gave everything a second thought, and then he invited the royal servant to his house. He treated the servant with utmost respect, and flattered him with gifts and garments. He said kindly, "O friend, that day I did not have you thrown out due to anger, but it



was improper of you to occupy the seat reserved for the royal nobles. They felt insulted, and out of compulsion I had to throw you out. Please forgive me."

The servant was already flattered with all the gifts, and he was full of joy, "Sir, I forgive you. You have not only expressed your regrets, but also honoured me with utmost respect".

He ensured the merchant, "I will prove you how clever I am. I will have the king favourable towards you, like he was before". The servant went back home.

Early next morning, when he started sweeping the floors of the palace, he waited till when the king was lying half-awake.

When the opportunity came, he

started sweeping around his bed and started mumbling, "Our king is crazy, he eats cucumber in the lavatory!"

On hearing this, the king was taken aback. He got up angrily and shouted at the servant, "What nonsense do you talk about? Had you not been by royal servant, I would have punished you dearly. Have you ever seen me doing such thing yourself?"

Once again the servant fell on his knees and prayed, "O Master, please forgive me if I said something improper. I was gambling all last night and didn't sleep. I feel drowsy and I don't know what I have been mumbling."

The king thought to himself, "I have never eaten a cucumber in the lavatory. What he mumbled about me is ridiculously false. Surely then, what he mumbled about my trusted merchant the other morning must have been ridiculously false too. It was improper of me to mistreat the merchant."

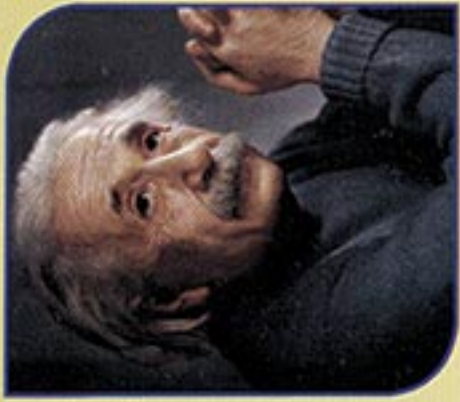
He wondered, "After all he has been so efficient in the whole administrative system, that without him it has become slack."

Thus, having considered carefully, the king invited the merchant to the palace and flattered him with gifts, jewels and garments. He re-appointed the merchant to his previously held position, and favoured his services as before.

The wise indeed say:

One should treat one and all, even the lowest, with respect.

(Source: http://www.talesofpanchatantra.com/shortstories_fall_rise_of_merchant.php)



1879-1955

German Nobel laureate, considered as one of the greatest scientists and philosophers of all time. His 'Theory of Relativity' is the greatest achievement of the modern times.

Albert Einstein

We owe a lot to the **Indians**
who taught us how to count,
without which no
worthwhile scientific
discovery
could have been made.

Source: *Ignited Minds : Unleashing the Power within India*
by APJ Abdul Kalam



1888-1965

Celebrated American-born British poet, philosopher, and critic of the twentieth century; received the Nobel Prize in literature in 1948. His 'The Waste Land' is considered to be one of the most important poems of the twentieth century.

T. S. Eliot

Indian philosophers' subtleties make most
of the great European philosophers
look like schoolboys.

* * *

Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit
under Charles Lanman, and a year in the
mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics under the
guidance of James Woods, left me in a state
of **enlightened mystification.**

Source: *After Strange Gods* - by T. S. Eliot

Eliot learnt Sanskrit and studied Vedas, Upanishads,
and the Bhagavad Gita



A Tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
on his 118 Birth Anniversary on 23rd
January 2015