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ourheritage123@yahoo.com

HERITAGE Explorer

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

A Monthly News Bulletin

Pages 28, Size A4

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Chalo-Loku Festival, the main harvest festival of the Nocte Tribe of Arunachal



PODI-BARBI, the main festival of the Ramo, Boh-Ao & Bokar Adi Tribes of Arunachal



Garos in Nagaland celebrated their post-harvest festival Wangala



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Subscription may be sent by M.O./ Cheque / Demand Draft to :

Heritage Foundation,

30, F.C.Road, Uzan Bazar

Guwahati-781001, Ph: 0361- 2636365

e-mail: ourheritage123@yahoo.com, Website: www.heritagefoundation.org.in

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Value Education: Need of the Hour

- Dr Gagan Ch Baruah

The vast and rapid development in the scientific and technological fields has changed the life-style, attitude and social outlook of the common people today. The information explosion brought about by the Information Technology has shrunk the whole world into a small global village. As a result we are put into acute global competitions in almost all spheres of our life. We now like to be recognised as a citizen of the global village rather than as a member of a particular place or a society. We are hankering after development with some ambitions that are too much vulgar. Our aim in life frequently changes with changes in the global development scenario. As a result we have become so much materialistic and self-centred that we do not have leisure to even peep to our neighbours if they are by some way hit or affected by our race for progress and development. We have least concern for the nature and the environment around us. Such a development sought for by the individuals at the cost of the comfort and well-being of others can in no way be termed as a real development. Moreover, in the race for development, the softer human qualities are pushed backward. Love, compassion, regard, friendliness, brotherhood and tolerance are slowly vanishing now. Such a life enriched by so called development will be a crude one devoid of basic requirements and mental peace and charm of life will never be obtained.

Man is a social animal. We, the human beings, always need a society to live in. A society has some definite customs, rituals, traditions, ideals and most important a sense of brotherhood. We can share our sorrows and pleasures with other members of the society to make our life enduring and peaceful. The society in turn expects every member of it to possess a sense of belonging

to the society so that each and every member can lead a peaceful life and can contribute something to the betterment of the mankind. If we can educate ourselves with these qualities and inculcate in us the requisite norms of the society, our life on this earth will definitely be flourishing and peaceful.

Education is one of the most important tools to bring about socioeconomic and cultural progress of the people. Education provides us with lots of information about the world, about many things. Education helps us to mould our lives according to our capability and aim. But simply imparting coaching to get through different examinations with good results to get some good jobs is not proper education. Use of the information we gather from different sources within the framework of a spectrum of ethical values is the proper education. This may also be termed as value education, which includes human values, social values, professional values, religious values, national values, aesthetic values and environmental values. It induces awareness about national pride, national integration, community development and environment.

Formal value education may be imparted in different phases. The basic phase is awareness. In this phase the students should be made aware of different values to be inculcated and the role of these values in making our life suitable, comfortable and sustainable in this world. After being apprised of the values, the students will orient themselves towards these values and try to analyse critically the role of the values in their own lives. This phase of analysis followed by the next phase of selection of values are the most crucial phases in value education. The students should have a positive outlook for different values and then only they will be able to associate their day-to-day or overall

activities and thoughts with these values. After properly analysing the values, a student will select those values which are most suitable and effective in his/her activities, behaviour and life. Once the values are selected properly, the students will be closely involved in them and all their activities will be governed under the preview of the values. Thus they will be committed to act within the framework of the values only to make their lives decent.

In olden days value education was basically verbal. Every person in the society had ample leisure time and almost all the families had some elderly persons well experienced in life. The elderly persons, grand-father, grand-mother etc., imparted these values to the youngsters by way of story-telling in the leisure time. Moreover, respect and regard to the seniors prevailed in those families. The youngsters followed the activities of the seniors and the moral reflected by their activities without much hesitation and contradiction. In this way value education passed from generation to generation informally and verbally.

Now, most of the families have few experienced elderly persons due to the compact and individualistic pattern of the family. Every person in the present society is so busy in his own life that nobody finds any leisure time to attend to such smooth verbal communications based on value education. Moreover, lack of regard to the seniors has put some hindrance in following some of their value-based activities by the youngsters. Hence book-based system of value education should be adopted for our new generation either formally in schools and colleges or informally by social workers or organisations.

In our childhood days, there was a subject '*Neetisiksha*' in school curriculum. This was an effective step

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Gita and the Caste System

- Dr Jyotsna Bhattacharjee

Indian society has been divided into many castes and sub-castes and they have caused many ethnic clashes frequently. In elections, castes often play a major role in the selection of candidates belonging to various parties. The unity of the Indian nation has been shattered by caste conflicts. The Quota politics have caused havoc in the country. Reservation policy has granted several privileges to certain castes and sub-castes. Yet the discontent of various castes has made the situation very grave and the discontent is spreading far and wide.

Some people blame the Hindu religious scripture and philosophic text Bhagavad Gita for introducing caste distinctions. In the Kurukshetra war, while getting ready for the battle, the third Pandava Arjuna asked his charioteer Lord Sri Krishna to move the chariot to the middle of the war zone so that he could see the enemy line clearly. To his dismay, Arjuna saw his relatives, friends and preceptors in the opposite side. On seeing them, Arjuna felt very much dejected and told Sri Krishna that he could not fight and bring disaster to the kingdom by killing all those people. On hearing him, Sri Krishna tried to dispel his illusions by explaining about the duty of human beings on earth as well as the relation of soul and body, besides telling him that one should do his allocated duty according to his 'Varna', in a detached manner, by surrendering all the actions to the Supreme Reality. The teachings of Lord Krishna to Arjuna comprise Bhagavad Gita, which is incorporated in Maharishi Vyasa's immortal classic 'Mahabharata'. The Bhagavad Gita is a sacred book of the Hindus, but besides its religious implications, the great and deep philosophy of the Gita stirs the heart of every philosopher in the world.

It is true that Bhagavad Gita has

divided human beings into four 'Varna's', which are Brahmin, Kashatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. According to the traditional interpretation, 'svadharma' denotes duty allocated to any particular individual by virtue of his or her belonging to one of the four Varnas mentioned above, into which the Indian society was divided in ancient times. In course of time, four Varnas degenerated into caste system, which became associated with narrow attitudes of loyalty to small sub-groups rather than to society as a whole. Then for the lower castes, the conditions of poverty and occupational immobility practically constituted a vicious circle, and to escape from this circle one had to break tradition. Taking into account the drawbacks of the present day caste system, many critics of the Gita rebel against the concept of "svadharma" (the duty of a person belonging to a particular Varna).

Caste discrimination has caused havoc in India society. So many heinous crimes have been committed in the name of caste and now reservation policy of the government has brought various conflicts amongst the castes and sub-castes. Some people blame the Gita for the caste problems. Various criticisms have been leveled against the Gita by the anti-caste scholars. But the "svadharma" issue should not be judge in the light of the evils of the present day caste systems. Gita states that 'guna' (quality or aptitude) and 'Karma' (function) constitute the basis of the 'Varna' systems.

According to Radhakrishna, the Gita puts emphasis on 'guna' (aptitude) and 'karma' (function) and not on 'jati' (birth). In his view, the 'Varna' or the order to which we belong is independent of sex, birth or breed. A class determined by temperament and vocation is not a caste

determined by birth and heredity. The present morbid condition of India, broken into castes and sub-castes, is opposed to the unity taught by the Gita, which advocates an organic as against an atomistic conception of society.

In chapter 18, the verses 41–47 explain the duties of each Varna determined in each case by 'svabhava' (nature or character) and efficacy of 'svakarma' or 'svadharma' (again determined by character or nature of a person). So far 'Varna' seems to be determined by the aptitude and the nature of person. But in verse 48 in the 18th chapter the expression used is "saham karma". The literal meaning of 'sahajam' is "born with". This single word 'sahajam' is picked up by the critics of the Gita to denounce this 'svadharma' doctrine. The translation of this particular verse is "Every Endeavour is covered by some fault just as fire is covered by smoke. Therefore, one should not give up the work born of his nature, O son of Kunti; even such work is full of faults".

Some critics of the Gita in modern times take the view that, since the term "svadharma" essentially represents the duty of each 'Varna', which was an easy form of caste system, the work-ethics of the Gita is too compartmentalized and narrow. K.K. Pillai said: "Even in a philosophic text like the Gita, the "Varna system" based on birth has acquired undue importance. The Gita simply accepted the age-old blind and cruel system of caste and gave it divine authority". Pillai remarked that we should reject Gita's teaching on "Varna dharma". For him, such rejection is justified, since Krishna did not impose his will on Arjuna and only told him to do as he chose after having reflected on the teachings.

Did Gita advocate caste system? The Gita-commentators do not agree with the critics. Gandhi said even if

'Varna' is determined by birth, and 'svadharma' is linked with 'Varna', it does not represent a weak point for the Gita. He said that several reserved saints in the ancient times were from different classes. There were potters, butchers, barbers, cobblers, and others among them. None rejected his hereditary function, but worked for his salvation by means of a detached and sincere performance of it, which was dedicated to God. The implication of performing some action in accordance with his 'Varna' (svadharma) may be that when a man gives up his ancestral trade and takes up a new job, many years are wasted on learning the new job. The father's profession and the environment help a person immensely, if he takes up the same profession. In this age, we see that a film actor's son usually becomes an actor, a politician's sons is made politician, a lawyer's son becomes a lawyer, a doctor's son becomes a doctor, a businessman's son often takes up his father's profession. The same is the case with other professions as well. There is nothing derogatory about it. That may be the implication of 'sahajam' used in the Gita.

Radhakrishnan remarked that 'Varna' in the Gita depended not on birth, but on qualities and functions. He said that "svabhava" (nature) is given more importance than "svadharma" (functions in accordance with 'Varna') in the Gita. In this context, it can be said that the word 'sahajam' can be translated as "suited to one's nature". In the opinion of Radhakrishnan, the concept of "svadharma" linked with such none—hereditary 'Varna' was designed for human evolution. He stated "the four fold order is designed for human evolution. There is nothing absolute about the caste system, which has changed its character in the process of history. It cannot be regarded as anything more than an insistence on a variety of ways in which the social purpose can be carried out".

Actually by giving a narrow

interpretation to the expression 'svadharma', one is doing great injustice to the Gita. It is one of the remarkable features of the Gita that it strikes an extraordinary modern note in its clear and unmistakable recognition of the influence of natural dispositions on the individuality of man.

Aurobindo's detailed analysis of the Gita gives "svabhava" (nature) a bigger role than "sahajam" (birth). He interpreted "svabhava" not only as "phenomenal nature", but also as "spiritual nature". According to Aurobindo the word "sahajam" means what is born with us, i.e. whatever is natural, inborn, innate. It seems to be something like Descartes' innate ideas, with which a man is born. The work or function of a man determined by "guna" (quality or aptitude) and the work originates from his 'svabhava' (nature), which is also the regulating factor. This emphasis on an inner quality and spirit, which finds expression in work, function and action, is the whole sense of the Gita's idea of 'karma'. We can attain spiritual perfection if we turn action of the 'svadharma' into a worship of the inner deity, the universal spirit, the transcendent "Purushottama" and eventually surrender all the actions into his hands. The individual's ignore is removed when he works according to his "svabhava" in a detached manner. He should regard his action as the work of the "Divine Shakti" and the may reached as much perfection as is possible for a human being.

Tilak said that "karmayoga" can be dissociated from "varna", because the 'varna' system has nothing to do with the central message of the Gita. Tilak summarized his view of the 'universality' of 'svadharma' based on "karmayoga" and its linkage with "Lokasamgraha" (universal welfare). He said that in any society, if the arrangement of four 'varnas' applies to that society, then according to the arrangement, the duty which falls on one's shoulders, or which may have been taken as the duty of one's

choice, becomes a moral duty. On the other hand, taking up some activity which is proper for some one else, on some pretext or other, is wrong from the point of view of public good.

Tilak's justification of 'svadharma' (with or without its link with varna) rests on the contribution that 'svadharma' can make for the preservation of morality and to the advancement of "Lokasamgraha" (public good). 'Varna' and 'Svadharma' do not have any inseparable connection, according to Tilak. Despite its advocacy of hereditary professions, Gita makes no mention of intrinsic superiority of any profession. It rather emphasizes that man attains perfection by doing his duty devotedly.

The above mentioned views of the scholars represent possibilities to interpret "svadharma" in ways appropriate to the present age; there is also the possibility of combining 'svadharma' with "Lokasamgraha". All forms of perfection do not lie in the same direction.

From the idealistic point of view, it can be said that service of neighbours would naturally become a visible part of one's duty as grows in full awareness of one's role in the community. 'Svadharma' comes naturally, no one has to search for it the services of the parents to whom a person is born, the service of the neighbours amongst whom he finds himself, are the duties which comes to him naturally. Thus a person's obligations are matters of everyday experience. We feel hungry, we feel thirsty. So to give food to the hungry and water to the thirsty become our duty.

Tilak used the analogy of small wheels in a machine to draw attention to the important role of ordinary "svadharma—observers" in bringing about "Lokasamgraha". He said that just as wheels are necessary along with large wheels in order that any machine should work properly, so

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What is in a Name?

- M V Kamath

These days one can never say what is right and what is wrong. Everything depends on the context and it is like Rahul Gandhi's damming the Ordinance on convicted legislators. There is an endless argument going on, on why he said what he said and when and how, but in the end the general opinion at least among the public has been that he has served his country, but not his party. The other day a point was made by one high up in the Catholic hierarchy that was it not quite acceptable for the Church to see a Catholic 'christened' with a 'Hindu' name. But what is a 'Hindu' name? There is no such thing as a 'Hindu' name. For that matter, it is important to point out that there is no such thing as a Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist or Parsee name. There are Sanskrit names, Hebrew, Yiddish, Arabic, Latin, Persian and Chinese names. Names cannot be associated with religions.

There surely was a Krishna (meaning dark blue) before the arrival of Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Peter and Paul before Christ's disciples was born and to say that no Catholic should bear a 'Hindu' name makes no meaning. Names should have nothing to do with religion. Names reflect a culture and it is wrong to confuse culture with religion. As Major Archbishop Cyril Mar Basilio, while serving as the chairman of a Catholic Bishops' Conference once maintained, **Indian Christians are Indians by birth, Hindus by culture and Christians by faith.** One named Kamal Nayan, for instance, can be as good a Christian name and any similarly named can be a Hindu. But there are small minded people. What is pleasant to note these days is that many Catholics are resorting to Sanskrit names and are even accepting their ancestral Hindu identities like Lobo Prabhu or D'Souza Kamath. That indicates they want to

get accepted within the larger Hindu community, which, happily, they are. But there is nothing special about it. In Indonesia for instance, we have had Muslim leaders like Sukarno and Suharto and even Sastramidjojo (Shashtra+amita+Vijaya in Bhasha Indonesia) and this is common. They are just as Muslim as any Muslim elsewhere can be, even if Wahabis may object to it. The point was well made recently by one Tarek Fatah, described as "a secular Muslim anti Islamist activist" who had the dubious distinction of being jailed by every dictator of Pakistan and was finally compelled to leave Pakistan and has finally ended up in Canada. In an interview to Bharatiya Pragna (June 2013) he pointed out the Muslim anomaly (he calls it Islamo-fascist) that feeds on what he called the "culture of victimhood". Fateh asked: "Why would Muslim parents not name their children after indigenous Indian names? Why do they constantly have to borrow from the Arabs or the Persian" There was a time when Catholic hierarchy was against the practice of Yoga and I remember how a catholic priest and a friend of mine who was popularizing yoga in churches and was having a large number of devotees including a few other priests and nuns was shunned.

The belief, obviously, was that Yoga is 'Hindu' and teaching yoga to Christians was, to say the least, unfair. At the same time we now find nuns wearing saffron saris, having given up the old Europeanized wear which easily identified them as true blue Catholics. Protestant Christians, happily, have no such inhibitions. But what has now become a cause for argument in a Christian village not far from Ranchi is a statue portraying Virgin Mary in a sari: The statue shows St Mary in a white sari with a red border, her hair in a bun, wearing bangles on wrists carrying the infant Jesus as a tribal woman would. Is that

right? Sculpting St Mary like an Indian tribal or a Hindu? It seems various tribal organizations in Bihar have taken out rallies in June on grounds that if Virgin Mary is shown wearing a sari, the time might come when Christian tribals might want to get re-converted to Hinduism. No, Virgin Mary surely is not of European origin. She is from Israel in the Middle East and there are reports that Jesus Christ Himself had spent some time in India., especially in Kashmir and that the Church has no right to make Virgin Mary 'European' in style. But one can be sure that if St Mary is depicted wearing a sari, Hindus would feel more empathetic towards Christianity which today has clear and distinct European overtones. The point is that religion should not be associated with one geographic region. But to go back to Yoga, would it come as a surprise to learn that Yoga is gaining immense popularity in, of all countries, Uzbekistan, a cent per Muslim country? An article in Asian Age 23 Sept) claims that Uzbekistanis regard yoga "not as a physical exercise only, but accepted it as a way of life".

One understands that. What attracts Uzbeks to Yoga? An Indian official in Tashkent is quoted as saying that Uzbeks think it is "a streets-buster". But the important thing is that in a totally Islamic world, yoga has become acceptable, especially in yoga class 80 percent of the 282 attending it, all of them are between the age group of 16 to 70 years. Support is given to them by the local Indian Cultural Centre renamed as Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture. Perhaps people elsewhere in the world especially in Europe should take note of this. Yoga is by no stretch of imagination 'Hindu'; besides, the so called 'Hinduism' is not a proselytizing religion but one respecting all religions. St Mary is respected and honored as the 'Mother'

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Glimpses into Sabin Alun: The Karbi Ramayan

- Dhaneswar Engti

In the days of old, there was no song and terminology in the Karbi social order. Therefore, the *Hemphu Arnam*, the Creator of the whole things, was very upset and disappointed in his mind by witnessing the Karbi way of life without having any song and music to entertain in the Karbi province. The essence of human existence was missing, sadistically deserted from the splendor of humanity and it was being vanished from this world. The Karbis were living a wild life in the forest in those days without any source of enjoyment. There was no song and culture to amuse and entertain the human being.

Thus, we can easily understand from the following verses of a well-regarded 'Lunsepo', while recounting in a religious occasion about the origin of 'Sabin Alun', the Karbi Ramayana, in the days of old. It goes like this:-

*"Hacheng pirthe thavi-ih
Ilikarbi alongri
Sabin pu nangplang mati
Sabin alun pu nangphi.
Hakow kangduk purthimi
Itum karbi alongri
Ave lun-kan atiri."*

Meaning:-

In the beginning of creation/
Mother earth was pulpy/
In karbi longri/
How Sabin subsists/
How song of Sabin exists/
In the Karbi province/
There's no song and dance tutor."

One day, the Hemphu Arnam had invited Guru Rangsin Sarpoo to his court and said; - "Oh the learned Guru Rangsin! I am very upset to believe in my mind, because, till now no tree of song and music has been planted in the Karbi ethnicity. Therefore, I would like to beseech you to go to the earth and plant 'the Tree of Music' in the Karbi ethnicity without more ado."

As per good advice of the Hemphu

Arnem, Guru Rangsin Sarpoo had decided to come down to this earth along with the Mirjeng brothers. Sing Mirjeng and Long Mirjeng who became the disciples of Rangsin Sarpoo, the Guru of Music, of this beautiful mother earth. They came down to this earth by taking the form of human beings. They had decided to build a hut on the bank of 'Telehor River' and finally settled there for preaching music intended for the Karbi people. As the days passed by, the news of Rangsin Sarpoo and Mirjeng brothers' coming to this earth had spread like wild fire and the news of preaching for music also came to well known by everybody very quickly. Along with Rangsin Sarpoo, the names of Mirjeng brothers also became very popular and well known to all the Karbis in those days.

It was a winter season. The sons of Karbis were busy harvesting paddy from the jhum fields. Sing Mirjeng and Long Mirjeng, the two brothers had set off for that place to witness the paddy harvesting carried out by the sons of Karbis, as per instruction of their Guru, Rangsin Sarpoo. Finally, they had reached to a place where paddy harvesting was going on. Village youths of the Karbis were busy harvesting paddy there. When they saw Sing Mirjeng and Long Mirjeng in their village, they wanted to know about their identity and purpose of their coming to their village: -

Then, the two brothers replied; - "We have come here to witness the harvesting of paddy by the sons of Karbis."

Then two youth Chedu and Longbi of Karbis accorded warm reception to the Mirjeng brothers very nicely. They had cleaned the mat with the 'Tulsi' water and asked them to take seat there. The Mirjeng brothers were very much satisfied with their reception and said to Chedu and Longbi smilingly; - "My dear sons! You have to bring a

'Bongkrok' (a gourd) with rice beer for us. We want to sing a few songs for you." So, Chedu and Longbi had brought a 'horbong', a bottle of wine, and offered them with due respect. After that, Mirjeng brothers murmured some prayers and then started to teach one thousand songs to Chedu and Longbi at a stretch. The Mirjeng brothers had blessed both Chedu and Longbi and said; -

"My dear sons; we have taught you how to sing songs. You have to concentrate on the art of singing; you have to practice for singing songs from today onwards. From today itself, we have recognized you both as the teachers of songs and music for the other sons of Karbi. You have to teach songs and music to the sons of Karbis and then only they will be able know how to sing song from today onward. But, one important thing you have to remember is - before singing of a song of Hemphu, you have to offer us a 'Bongkrok' with rice beer (a gourd) as a mark of respect to the 'Lunsepo', the guru of song." After saying so, both the Mirjeng brothers returned to their abode in Heaven.

After that, both Chedu and Longbi, the two saintly souls, blessed by the Mirjeng brothers, instructed them to preach song and music, and asked them for teaching music and songs to the sons of Karbis. Mirjeng brothers appointed Chedu and Longbi as the teachers of songs and music to educate the sons of Karbis. As per their blessings and good counsels, both of them had begun to travel from one corner to another in search of the sons of Karbis. They had traveled in the entire areas inhabited by the sons of Karbi in those days. Thus they had started to teach the art of singing to the sons of Karbis very sincerely. After traveling on foot for several days and months, finally, they reached to a beautiful kingdom. The ruler of the

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Salutations to Lachit Barphukan

- Dr B K Gohain

"Peace to all: The Barphukan of Namjani (Lower Assam), who is famous as the son of the great (Momai Tamuli) Barbarua attained glory after defeating the Yavanas (Muslims) who were equipped with various war-weapons, elephants, horses and the generals. The person of the Barphukan was adorned with various ornaments and he was endowed with great qualities and knowledge, and was free from the vices of the Kaliyuga. He is the greatest in valor. He was ocean like with great patience, self respect, dignity, valor, prowess and gravity. Saka 1589".

These salutations cited above was for Lachit Barphukan, the great patriot, great leader of men and the greatest general of the Assamese army were found written on an inscription on a stone pillar in Sanskrit and this stone pillar was found in Fatasil, Guwahati and has found its place in the State museum of Assam in Guwahati. This is no mean achievement for this greatest national hero as such recognition of the valor of a general is rarely found in history. Such eulogies were always reserved for the king alone. An inscription on a cannon found at Silghat near the Simaluguri fort in Nagaon district refers to the recovery of the weapon by King Chakradhwaj Singha after having 'destroyed the Yavana in battle in Saka 1589'.

These eulogies were well earned by Lachit Barphukan who displayed his military acumen by defeating the relatively powerful Mughals in men and equipments of war in the decisive battle of Saraighat. It will be interesting to study the military strategies of this great general which led to the expulsion of the Mughals from Guwahati and the lower Assam and to the final victory in the historic battle of Saraighat.

King Chakradhwaj Singha who

succeeded Jaydhwaj Singha showed sagacity in appointing Lachit, the Koliabaria Phukan as the Barphukan and the Commander-In-Chief of the royal army. As the forts near Guwahati on both banks of the Brahmaputra were under the occupation of the Moghul commanders consequent to the defeat of the Assamese by the Moghuls under the command of Mir Jumla during the reign of king Jaydhwaj Singha, Lachit's first and foremost duty was to wrest out these commands from the enemy. Hence he directed his commanders on both the banks of the Brahmaputra to attack these forts and recover them. Accordingly, his commanders attacked the enemy camps. The Bahbari fort near the Barnadi on the north bank of Guwahati was attacked. Then the fort of Kajali was also captured. After that, two stockades were raised at Shahburuj or Manikarneswar hill opposite Guwahati aimed at capturing the most powerful Moghul fort at Itakhuli on Sukreswar hill. There was deployment of the Moghul forces to attack an Ahom garrison at Shahburuj. However, the engagements on the north bank were not favorable to the Ahoms but the commanders stuck to their position.

Then Lachit Borphukan aimed at capturing the strongest Moghul fort at Itakhuli or the Sukreswar hill which is a small hill on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in Guwahati from which one can command a panoramic view of the river from Agiathuti hill on the west to the Kurua hills on the east. All the commanders pledged complete faith and confidence in Lachit Barphukan's command and unitedly fell upon the Itakhuli fort during the late hours one night by boats. The spies had, in the mean time rendered the Moghul canons ineffective by putting water in their muzzles. They killed Syed Babar and many others. The Moghuls, after four days, came on boats and attacked the Assamese

army stealthily but the Assamese commanders fought the naval battle to the finish and the Moghuls had to retreat and were unable to stay at Guwahati and fled away via Rangamati to the west. Our forces accosted them at Mansamukh and captured Syed Firoz, his younger brother Syed Salah, Mirboxi and killed many others.

On hearing of the capture of Guwahati from a messenger from the Barphukan, the Ahom king at Gurgaon was overjoyed. There were beating of the big drums to convey the good news to the people and he also rewarded the messenger with his earrings.

The recovery of the Itakhuli fort from the enemy was the turning point in history with regards to the conflicts with the Moghuls. Lachit Barphukan now decided to fortify his position by getting many a fort constructed or repaired. He surveyed in and around Guwahati to find suitable sites for construction of the forts, on the plea of going on hunting and fishing and discussed the security scenario with the commanders in Guwahati saying these words: "The Bongals (Moghuls) can see us as we can see them. It is, therefore, advisable to fortify our positions by constructing some forts. it will be like fighting as if sitting in our own homes." Lachit Borphukan decided to fortify Guwahati by constructing forts at strategic locations. He sent a message through an envoy to the king with the request. The king, after having consultations with the three Dangarias (Ministers) deputed the ministers Buragohain and Barpatragohain to Guwahati. The Buragohain and the Barpatragohain consulted the Barphukan who had the practical experience of defence of Guwahati. He also held consultations with the commanders.

It is noteworthy that almost all the forts in and around Guwahati on both

banks of the river Brahmaputra were constructed during the period of Commander-in-Chief of Lachit Barphukan (1667 to 1671 AD). Earlier there were two forts in Guwahati, one at Pandu and the other at Saraighat. The fortification in Guwahati on the south bank started from the Sukreswar or Barphukan-Ghat towards the west by the side of the river Brahmaputra to Bharalumukh, Udmari, Amarajuri up to Pandu. From Pandu the fortification ran towards south and to the east-north in a curved way like a bow meeting Tumani hill, Duargorilla, Parghopa, Dhenukhirua, Gotanagar, Asur Ali, Ushaharan hill, Gotanagar and Ubhutasimalu. From Asur-ali the fortification ran to Gog hill, then to Dhopguri (in Beltola area.) The other two fortifications were raised on the east-south side in Guwahati. Another fortification was raised from Pandu in the west to the present Garigaon along the bank of the Brahmaputra. Opposite the Agiathuri hill on the bank of the river Brahmaputra, two parallel fortifications were raised towards the south from Garigaon to the Lankeswar hill. Out of these, one in the west extended to Khonajan (Deepar beel) and the one in the east ran from the present Engineering College premises to the east to Gotanagar.

The fort constructed on the north bank started from Aswaklanta to Juria hill along the side of the river Brahmaputra. It extended to Saraighat and the length of this portion was about 1800 feet and 1200 soldiers were posted. From Saraighat it extended to Chillapahar through Kekurilathia. This portion is commonly called Momaikota gar. It extended to Garurphakhi (present Gauripur), Kalpai, Silbharal, Tikori hill and then ran to Sangsari hill. Another fort was constructed from Garurphakhi at the foothill of Chillapahar to the east to Baralaparbat and Khatia in the Rangmahal area. The fortification from Manikarneswar to Kanai barashi bowa met the other fort at Rangmahal. The southern part of this fortification was called Shahburuj fort. There were

two fortifications up to Dirgheswari and Mandakata hill one of which was called Phulangar-gar. From the Phulang-gar a fortification ran up to meet the fortification from Aswaklanta and Sangsari.

Then the entire Kamrup (including Nalbari and Barpeta) which was under the occupation of the Moghuls was reorganized and the administration of the Paraganas was entrusted to 16 commanders. Choudhuries and Patowaries were appointed to realize the stipulated jaigir- dhan or land revenue.

When Ram Singha, the Commander-in-Chief of the Moghul imperial army reached the frontier garrison of Rangamati, Lachit took up a vow to cut off the head of any commander or soldier who neglected his duty and this had the desired effect. Then he formed the contingents of soldiers under the commands of able officers and posted them on both banks of the Brahmaputra. The Raj-Mantri Atan Buragohain was in command on the north bank of Guwahati camping in the Lathia hill. He posted teams of spies with each command to report of the movements of the enemy.

In addition, four commanders were detailed to guard the waters of the Brahmaputra on the south bank. On the north bank, a commander was posted to guard the waters of the river.

Lachit's strategy was to lure the Moghul army to the fortified war-zone of Guwahati. However, when he saw personally the large Moghul army from the top of his fort, tears rolled down his eyes and he said to himself, "It is a tragedy that my country is facing this dire catastrophe during my Barphukanship. How will my king be saved? How will my people be saved? How will my posterity be saved?" He however, decided to fight the enemy to the finish. Lachit realized that defeating the imperial army on land would not be possible. Hence he delayed his offensive. Unfortunately, King Chakradhwaj Singha became impatient at this long drawn war and

ordered Lachit to attack the imperial army at Alaboi. Ten thousand Assamese soldiers were massacred at this battle.

Chakradhwaj Singha died in April 1670 and was succeeded by his brother Udayaditya Singha. Lachit Baphukan showed great sense of diplomacy by a series of diplomatic missions to Ram Singha's camp and thereby gained time for preparation of the naval battles. The misinformation campaign of Ram Singha against Lachit was also fully exposed. In the meantime, Ram Singha continued to demand evacuation of Guwahati by Lachit. But although Lachit sent the proposal of Ram Singha to his king, he was personally opposed to the proposal and delayed the process by deputing the Assamese envoys to Ram Singha for negotiation of peace several times.

Ram Singha had already realized the futility of peace negotiations and decided to attack the Assamese forces taking advantage of the illness of Lachit Barphukan and seeing the possibility of entering Guwahati by the reported breach at Andharu bali which was of course repaired and rebuilt in the meantime. The situation became critical in the absence of the leadership of Lachit who was seriously ill. He received the report that some of the Assamese commanders had already loaded their boats with a view to retreat. Lachit got very angry and came out of his sick bed and boarded his boat with the help of his attendant and was aghast when he found his boatmen taking his boat upstream in retreat. He became so enraged that he hammered four oarsmen of his with the blunt edge of his sword (Hengdang) and threw them into the water. The news spread like wild fire amongst the retreating commanders and soldiers that the Barphukan had begun to kill his men indiscriminately with his own hands. The Barphukan shouted at the top of his voice to his retreating men: "Let the Bongals (Moghuls) capture me alive and let my

(Contd. to Page 19)

Mandela Moments: Meeting South Africa's Gandhi

- Devaki Jain

One aspect of the South African experience of struggling for freedom, and of building a post-apartheid order, not widely known is that there were many other significant heroes and heroines who took that long walk to freedom, with and before Nelson Mandela. Oliver Thambo, who was perhaps the most important of them all, proved to be a guide for many. Walter Sisulu, whose family still participates in governance, was another. Govan Mbeki, the father of former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, is a less visible character but a great mentor nevertheless.

There were others, too – Ahmed Kathrada, who shared a prison cell at Robben Island with Mandela, and was almost a brother to him; Durban-based Ismail Meer and his wife Fatima; Mac Maharaj, who secreted Mandela's manuscript out of Robben Island; Helen Suzman, a white woman who played a critical role in conveying messages from the prison and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, anchor of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose sermons provided courage even as they brought peace during a difficult period of struggle.

So it can be argued that Nelson Mandela was one of many but was accepted across the spectrum of leaders as the person most suited to be the first president of post-apartheid South Africa. Many of the men and women who helped in that transition to democracy were still around when my late husband, Lakshmi Jain, was appointed as the Indian high commissioner to South Africa in 1997, the last year of Mandela's presidency.

We had the joy and privilege of striking friendships, not only with Nelson Mandela but almost all of the veterans. The conversations we had with them revealed not only the

extraordinary viciousness of the earlier regime, but also the amazing stamina, brilliance and variety of the freedom fighters themselves. Their accounts of torture and resistance only added to our respect for the people of this beautiful nation.

Our first exposure to the South African political process and its leaders was at a 50th national conference of the African National Congress (ANC), held at Mafikeng Stadium on December 20, 1997. Thabo Mbeki was elected on that occasion as the next president of the country, even as Mandela demitted office. In a historic speech made on that occasion, Mandela described the situation in South Africa as well as outlined what the ANC should really aspire to achieve in the immediate future. Every sentence he uttered was greeted with a hugely enthusiastic response from the stadium, which was bustling with ANC cadres from all over South Africa, each province with its own colour reflected in the garments people wore. The word 'Amandla!' (power) constantly rent the air and each time it was pronounced, the crowd responded with a hearty "Awethu!" (to us).

Nelson Mandela, as we know, had a stentorian voice and spoke more like an army commander than a politician. When he finished and officially handed over charge to Mbeki, there was a tense, unforgettable moment. Mbeki – who was different in every way from Mandela, short of stature, severe looking and with a clipped accent – came to the mike and alarmed the participants by saying, "You can be sure I will not step into the shoes of Madiba." Madiba, or teacher, was the name popularly used for Mandela. At this, an ominous silence descended on the audience. After a minute's pause during which the suspense only grew, Mbeki added, "Have you

seen his shoes? They are the ugliest, dirtiest old shoes that I have ever seen!"

Laughter and a big round of applause greeted his words, with Mandela himself wearing a very big smile. In fact, that big smile was typical of the man and was commented upon internationally. It exuded warmth and empathy and brought a twinkle to his eyes. Every leader claims to love his or her people. But to translate this connect into reality needs an extraordinary warmth – what is called the desire to include – and Mandela had that quality in abundant measure. His unique attribute, one that makes him stand tall amongst the world's leaders, is the genuineness of his love for his people. They in turn respond in equal measure, as we saw in the messages that poured in during the weeks during which he lay critically ill at a Pretoria hospital.

Having seen him at the African National Congress convention from a distance, our next encounter with him was when my husband presented his credentials as high commissioner. Mandela welcomed us warmly but could not resist observing, right to our face, how much he missed Gopal Gandhi, who was the earlier Indian high commissioner to South Africa. We took this remark in our stride because we could well understand what it meant to him to have somebody representing India in South Africa who was not only as gentle and thoughtful as Gopal Gandhi, but also who happened to be Mahatma Gandhi's grandson.

But after the formal ceremony, during which my husband delivered a speech entitled 'Africa, The Continent Of Hope', Mandela smiled and said to me, "You are Graca's only friend in South Africa!" Indeed Graca Machel – whom Mandela later married – and I had worked together in an Eminent

Persons Group at the United Nations that dealt with children in armed conflict. When the couple got married, we were invited to their wedding and into an inner room where the special guests and family were present. Later, when the time came for us to leave South Africa, we were invited to have tea with Mandela and Graca in their home.

Mandela is often compared with Gandhiji, as an 'apostle of peace'. As leaders of freedom struggles there are indeed some striking similarities between them. While Mandela is remembered for surviving his 18 years in punishing conditions on Robben Island, what is important to note is that those years proved to be the incubator for thought and action that translated eventually into one of

greatest freedom struggles the world has ever known. Gandhiji, too, had incubated his ideas with fasts and then came out with strategies like collecting a fistful of salt on the beaches of Gujarat, an act that electrified the nation.

Mandela, like Gandhiji was, is an extremely informal man, totally at ease with 'common folk'. They both shared an ability to love the people and transmit that love to them. Both men had clarity of mind and the ability to arrive at answers to very complex challenges by using their reason, even as they carried their constituents along. Intuition complemented by intellectual strength marks the work of both men, who excelled in evolving innovative ideas and road maps. Also, the stamina needed to withstand

assault and pain was also evident. Gandhi put up with a great deal of personal pain – conflict with his son, the loss of close friends, extraordinary differences with colleagues in the movement – but his grit to march on for a larger political agenda remained undiminished. Similarly, Mandela had to reckon with the pain of conflict with Winnie Mandela, who was a real comrade. Such tension may have crushed a lesser person, but Mandela continued to stride across South Africa with his mission to rebuild the country after decades of repression.

India and South Africa are certainly destiny's favoured countries for having given birth to two of the most outstanding figures in modern history.

Mangalyaan Leaves Earth's orbit for Tryst with Red Planet

Chennai: In a major milestone in India's space history, ISRO's Mars Orbiter mission on 5 Nov. ventured out of Earth's sphere of influence, beginning its 300-day journey to the Red planet.

The critical manoeuvre to place the Mars Orbiter Spacecraft or 'Mangalyaan' in the Mars Transfer Trajectory was successfully carried out almost an hour past midnight and marked the first step in its 680 million-kilometre-long voyage to its destination.

"Following the completion of this manoeuvre, the Earth orbiting phase of the spacecraft ended. The spacecraft is now on a course to encounter Mars after a journey of about 10 months around the Sun," the Bangalore-headquartered Indian Space Research Organisation said in a statement.

During this manoeuvre, which began at 00:49 hours, the spacecraft's 440 Newton liquid engine was fired for about 22 minutes providing a velocity increment of 648 metres/second to the spacecraft.

ISRO performed the trans-Mars injection, a "crucial event" intended for

hurling its Mars Orbiter spacecraft into the planned orbit around the Sun.

It has planned four mid-course corrections in case of any deviation along its path to the Martian orbit before its expected arrival in the orbit of the Red planet in September 2014.

It had performed five orbit-raising manoeuvres on its Mars Orbiter, raising the apogee (farthest point from Earth) of the spacecraft to over 1.92 lakh kilometres, before it performed the "mother of all slingshots."

The spacecraft is being continuously monitored from the Spacecraft Control Centre at ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) in Bangalore with support from Indian Deep Space Network (IDSN) antennae at Bialalu here, the space agency added.

ISRO's PSLV C 25 successfully injected the 1,350-kg 'Mangalyaan' Orbiter (Mars craft) into the

orbit around the earth some 44 minutes after a text book launch at 2.38 PM from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota on November 5, marking the successful completion of the first stage of the Rs 450-crore mission.

(<http://www.newsyps.com/mangalyaan-leaves-earths-orbit-for->



A Note on the Memorandum from Arunachal Vikas Parishad

A three Member delegation of Janajati leaders from Arunachal Pradesh under the banner of Arunachal Vikas Parishad (AVP) urged the Higher Authorities of govt. of India, policy makers and political leaders including Sh. Hameed Ansari, Hon'ble Vice President and Sh. A.K. Anthony, Hon'ble Defence Minister, Sh. Arun Jaitley and Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Hon'ble leaders of Opposition in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha respectively, to apprise the threat posed by China in the frontiers of Arunachal Pradesh and to share the experiences of Seemanta Darshan Yatra which was conducted by Arunachal Vikas Parishad-

To contemplate the living conditions of the residents of these villages,

To comprehend the pivotal pre eminence of Indigenous faith and culture in the daily life of the residents of these areas of Arunachal Pradesh,

To verify the assertions of Chinese intrusion in Indian Territory,

To exchange the emotions and sentiments of Indianness with the inhabitation of the border area of India and Tibet (China) and

To enrich the confidence about India's strengths and capabilities in the minds of the residents of these villages.

The delegation included AVP President Sh. Pratik Potom, V/P of AVP Sh. Techu Gubin, AVP Gen Secy. Sh. Tarh Takia, Anjaw district Youth Secy. of AVP Sh. Sohan Krong, Sh. Gyati Rana, Publicity Secy. of Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh, Smt. Joram Anya Tana, State President ABVP, Sh. Jagdeoram ji Oraon, National President Akhil Bharateeya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Sh. Vishnu Kant, Jt. Gen. Secy. ABVKA, Sh. Ramesh Babu, Shradha Jagaran Pramukh, N.E.Kalyan Ashram, Sh. Ranjit

Bhattacharya, President Purvanchal Kalyan Ashram, Smt. Ratna Bhattacharya and Smt. Anjali Ramesh.

The latest violation of LAC committed by Chinese troops in Chaklagam circle of Arunachal Pradesh just after four months of 'People's Liberation Army' (PLA) of China intruded in Ladakh's Depsang plains of Indian Territory. On 11th August 2013, about 200 soldiers of PLA entered into Indian Territory, intrusion was detected on 13th August 2013 and Indian side asked them to quit the area. They left the area on



16th August as reported by the locality. Though the Defense Minister down played the matter in front of media; Army sources privately confirmed that an armed troop of PLA comprising around 200 soldiers had crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and erected their camps 20 to 30 km inside our Territory for at least 5 days.

Within no time, on 14th August 2013, the team of Arunachal Vikas Parishad visited Chaklagam and interacted with the villagers; it was confirmed by the locals about the recent but frequent intrusions by the Chinese Army into Indian Territory.

It is learnt that our counterpart, China has established permanent infrastructure in sufficient no., large number of observation posts, advanced surveillance equipments,

good roads for fast communication, a vast number of defense forces are posted by them in border areas. The Defense Budget of China is around 20 Billion Dollars whereas of India it is just 4 Billion Dollars. Further they dared to object to increase the military and infrastructural development activities of Indian government.

Taking into account the situation prevailing on the border areas of North frontier, AVP submitted the memorandum with following Major Demands for the immediate redressal to ensure safety and security to the people living on the frontiers as well as protecting the entire nation from external threat:-

Deployment of Army in border places replacing ITBP.

Construction of motor able roads in the border area with top priority.

Better infrastructural development of the border area at war foot.

Increase number of surveillance and patrolling posts all along the China Occupied Tibet and it must be nearest to LAC – protecting all civilian settlements and villages along the border,

Regular and supporting interaction of the security forces with the civilians to boost up their morale.

Regular Welfare Activities like medical, awareness camps and similar activities by the defense forces for border area villagers.

Improve and strengthen the ITBP and BSF in all respects.

Raising Arunachal Scouts Regiment at par with the Ladakh Scouts for better co ordination with the local people, effective patrolling and surveillance and to cope up with the situation as per local needs.

Use of the Border Area Development Funds (BADF) more effectively and piously increasing the BADFs.

Constitution of Border Village Security Committees in the border areas for active involvement of the local people.

Drug trafficking from Myanmar to A.P. (Lohit and Anjaw districts) should be checked and stopped immediately.

Focus and improve the activities of SSB, NCC and Home guard type organisations in the area.

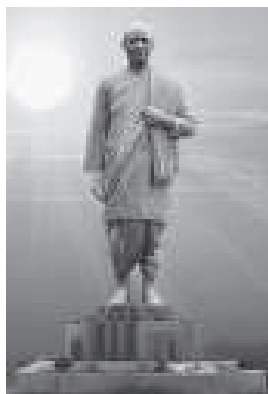
Substantially increase the Union Defense Budget to meet the challenges.

We have to compel China to issue regular Visa to the people of Arunachal Pradesh as it is a major hurdle in the carrier of Sports persons of Arunachal and to prove their talent in the international competitions held in China, looking to the Staple-Visa policy of China. To reciprocate to their stand, people of Arunachal feel that we should stop sending other members of our Sports Contingent to express our uncompromising stand on this issue. This will send needed signal not only to China or to rest of the world, but it will help to taking the people of Arunachal Pradesh into confidence, which is utmost need of the hour.

Initiate, motivate and promote the activities of Nationalist NGOs by carrying out joint task in the area for establishing smooth relationship with the local people and keeping regular touch with other parts of the nation and building up the feeling of ONE NATION and INDIA FIRST.

All the concerned authorities and the leaders expressed their solidarity with the sentiments of the people of Arunachal Pradesh and assured to do all the needful to check the intrusion and to keep the entire region peaceful. Shri A.K. Anthony termed the patriotism of Arunachalis as "Superb". Mohd Hameed Ansari, vice President of India said that the entire nation is equally concerned about the growing intrusion of China. He assured that the govt of India will do all the needful to consolidate and strengthen our position in the north east frontier.

The Statue of Unity – the Tallest Statue in the Memory of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel



The Statue of Unity to be built in the memory of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (Sardar Patel), will be the tallest statue in the world. The Iron Man of India, Sardar Patel, is

known for his contribution in reuniting India after independence. It was a difficult task to pursue the rulers of 550 independent and divided states to join India; however, it was due to Sardar Patel's earnest efforts that helped in building today's India. The statue is a tribute to this great architect of modern and united India. The statue is expected to be the source of inspiration for the upcoming generations and also remind the great works of Sardar Patel.

Location of the Statue of Unity

The statue will be located at Sadhu Bet, an island situated 3 kilometers away from the Sardar Sarovar Dam in Gujarat. The Sardar Sarovar Dam is gravity dam built on the river Narmada and is a part of Narmada Valley Project. The height of the statue is 182 metres which makes it the tallest one in the world. It is also one of the largest projects of the country. Tourists have to embark in a boat to reach the statue.

The project plan of the Statue of Unity

The Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi had announced this grand project in a press conference in Ahmedabad's GLS auditorium on the last day before completion of his 9 years as Gujarat chief minister. The statue is going to be built by Turner Construction of US who is reputed for building many famous and giant structures such as Burj Dubai, the Yankee Stadium of New York etc. The project cost is estimated to be Rs. 2500 crore and will be completed in 36 months (approximately three years). Turner will

be monitoring project management activities right from pre-design phase, floating of tender documents for engineering, procurement and construction. The consultancy fees of Turner itself will be to the tune of Rs. 61 Crores.

According to the plan it will be double the size of 'Statue of Liberty' in the US (the height of the Statue of liberty is 93 meters) and four times higher than the statue of 'Christ the Redeemer' located in Rio De Janeiro. It has been rising with public corporation through a registered society or trust under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Modi who invited suggestions of the adept across the world. The project is owned by Gujarat government's sponsored trust, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Rashtriya Ekta Trust (SVPRET).

Other matters of attraction at Statue of Unity

Among other things of attraction, this memorial will have a museum on the life of Sardar Patel and also a research centre. This research centre will promote research on matters such as good governance, agriculture technology and development for the tribal population which were core matters of importance Sardar Patel. There will be the facility of lift for the visitors to go to the top of the constitution and able to enjoy eye catching sight of the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

Message of the Statue of Unity

The Statue of Unity is a symbol of harmony and integrity of the country. This is a way to commemorate the efforts of Sardar Patel which will foster the message of nationalism and unity among the young generation. Sardar Patel was able to make unity among people through his great leadership qualities. Likewise the statue will be able to make strong bonding among the people of India and make feeling of nationalism. It will remind the great history of India and also great patriotic leadership who sacrificed their lives for their motherland.

Balasahab Deshpandeji- A Life Dedicated to Tribal People

- Ramesh Babu

Birth centenary celebration of Balasahab Deshpande, the founder President of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (Later Known as Akhil Bharatiya Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram) is being celebrated at prominent cities and district headquarters of our country. Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram is dedicated to strengthen patriotism and ensure national integration among the various tribal communities spread throughout the length and breadth of the nation. Thousands of workers of this organization are engaged to run various projects in the field of education, socio-economic development, health, sports and culture for their all-round development keeping their cultural identity and self-respect intact. They have established the units of Kalyan Ashram in 14000 villages and they are in regular touch with 60000 tribal hamlets.

Balasahab Deshpande had not only established this organization but he had sacrificed his entire life for its cause till his last breathe to guide the janajati communities through Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. The birth day of Balasahab and the establishment of Kalyan Ashram were coincidently on 26th December. Therefore, the concluding of 60th year celebration of Kalyan Ashram (established in 1952) will be followed by birth centenary celebrations of Balasahab Deshpande in grand manner throughout the year 2014.

Balasahab was born in Ramtek near Nagpur in the year 1913. He completed his studies in law in 1937 and started practicing in Nagpur. He was a born nationalist. He was in close contact of Dr. Hedgewar, the founder of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Shri Guruji Golwalkar, the second Sarsanghchalak of RSS. These two great personalities have made a great influence on Balasahab to contribute his whole life for the cause of tribal people. The people of Ramtek got the young leadership of

Balasahab during the quit India movement. Because of his rare leadership quality that he was selected by Pandit Ravishankar Shukla the Chief Minister of Central Province and Berar for the task of motivating and integrating the tribal people of Jashpur Nagar (presently in Chhattisgarh) who had been swayed away by Christian Missionaries against India.

Pandit Ravishankar Shukla had taken the matter of anti-nationalism prevailing in the Jashpur area to Pandit Nehru. Nehru consulted the matter with Takkar Bappa, a Gandhian and a pioneer social activist among tribal people. As a result, Balasahab was appointed as district in charge of Backward Area Development Scheme at Jashpur in 1948. Balasahab proved his selection right within a period of just one year by establishing 100 primary schools and 2 middle schools in such a tough situation brushing aside all the opposition from missionaries.

He could demonstrate a different scene of shouting slogans "Bharat Mata Ki Jay" during the visit of Thakkar Bappa in 1951, contrary to the visit of Pandit Ravishankar Shukla when the people had shouted anti-Indian slogans on his first visit in 1948. Villagers gathered over in large number to greet Thakkar Bappa. The strong commitment of Balasahab brought this sea change within a short period of one year. Thakkar Bappa praised his efforts by saying that he could not find such an enthusiasm in implementing the Scheme anywhere in India.

But unfortunately Balasahab had to quit this post owing to the political compulsion arisen out of the declaration of elections. His strong affection towards Jashpur and the people over there forced him to stay back at their service. Balasahab in consultation with Shri Guruji Golwalkar launched an independent

socio-cultural organization on 26th December 1952 for the all-round development of tribal people in the name of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. He then took up various programmes to awaken the self-respect of janajati communities. He arranged constant religious awakening tours to tribal villages to make them aware about their age old tradition and to keep full faith in their indigenous religion and culture. He managed to arrange ambulances and fulltime doctors to conduct medical camps at remote areas. He organized primary schools in the village to boost up the children and youths to instill confidence among them. He was totally assimilated himself with tribal life style. He represented the genuine Vanavasi sentiments by core of his heart.

The Govt of Madhya Pradesh ordered an inquiry of the proselytizing activities of Christian Missionaries under the Chairmanship of Bhavani Shankar Niyogi. Balasahab and his colleagues worked day and night and presented various evidences to establish the fact. As a result 11000 evidences had been brought in front of the enquiry committee. It is noteworthy that the copies of report submitted by the commission were entirely purchased and burnt by the missionaries to stop the facts of unethical means adopted by the churches, fearing from getting exposed, to convert the innocent tribal people.

Kalyan Ashram slowly started gaining ground in the nearby areas of Jashpur, adjacent areas of Sundergarh district in Odisha and Gumla District of the then Bihar till the end of 1975. The efforts of Balasahab, Morubhau Ketkar, Bhimsen Chhopara, Mishrilal Tiwari and Prasanna Sapre were behind the success of these achievements.

Kalyan Ashram was elevated up to national level soon after the withdrawal of emergency in 1977.

Balasahab Deoras, the then Sarsanghchalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh promptly provided some experienced and dedicated workers in most of the states. With the help of these workers Kalyan ashram grew throughout the length and breadth of the country including northeastern states. Janjati workers from all over India participated in the first ever national conference of Kalyan Ashram held at Delhi in 1981.

The life of Balasahab and the Kalyan Ashram work were equally expansionist. He made extensive tour programme to spread the message and objectives of Kalyan Ashram.

Balasahab strongly believed that the values of Bharatiya Sanskriti are still prevailing in the tribal area in its totality. He thought the nation cannot become a super power without the all-round development of 8 crores of Janjati people of our country.

He visited some of the northeastern states like Nagaland, Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and Manipur. He had fruitful dialogues with the leaders there. The question asked at Meghalaya while he was touring the state whether Kalyan Ashram also have come to convert the people of Meghalaya into Hindu as Christian often converts our people into Christianity. Balasahab answered, "You are ours as you are. Would you oppose if we want to help you in protecting your faith and culture?" His counter questions forced them to think them in a new dimension and this genuine approach of Balasahab became the base of the future Kalyan Ashram activities in the Northeastern states. Because of this all-inclusive approach of Balasahab the work of Kalyan Ashram could spread in the nook and corner of the north eastern states. During his tour programme in the north east Balasahab interacted with prominent

leaders like Padmabhooshan Ranima Gaidinliu, N.C. Zeliang, Hipson Roy, Onderson Mawri, Mijulung Kamson, Ajay Debburman etc.

Deshpande possessed a strong personality. He never compromised with values of life. Missionaries had been running a parallel government in Jashpur since 1947. He had to



confront all hurdles created by Christian Missionaries in the initial stage of his work at Jashpur Nagar. He met with success in overcoming all those threats. But inner core of his heart was inclined towards spirituality. He was a disciple of Ramakrishna Mission. He was closely associated with Hanuman Prasad Poddar of Gita Press Gorakhpur. He used to visit Geeta Vatika whenever he got some occasion to spend his time in a highly spiritual atmosphere. His life among over tribal people was quite cordial and he dealt them with pure love and spirit. His entire life was spiritually inspired. He maintained a deep association with Ramakrishna Mission till his last breath.

Balasahab's wife and children were also very much inspired by his vision and life mission. They had to sacrifice a comfortable life to adjust with Balasahab's financial constraint and to adjust themselves within the limitations. Two former Prime Ministers Shri Morarji Desai and Shri V.P. Singh visited Kalyan Ashram Jashpur Nagar to boost up the work done by Balasahab. Their visits were to acknowledge the great work done by Balasahab.

Balasahab submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister P.V. Narasingharao in 1992. Through this memorandum he objected the concept of "indigenous People" and explained how it would be harmful and divisive in the context of India. Existence of Indigenous people and invaders are there in the context of America, Africa, and Australia etc. But there is no such division existed in the Indian society as all people of our country are indigenous. He strongly believed that the concept of indigenous people will be destructive and counter productive. Our Indian representatives in UNO also expressed the same stand and till now this is our official stand

on the issue.

Balasahab had a global vision though his feet were strongly rooted in tribal villages. His last journey was marked on 21st April 1995 in his "Karma Bhoomi", Jashpur Nagar itself.

This great Vanyogi's birth centenary is celebrated in both urban areas as well as in remote tribal areas. He has envisioned a tribal society with all prosperity which is not only integral part of our nation but the mainstream itself. Hundreds of youths have to come forward to dedicate themselves for the cause for which Balasahab had sacrificed his entire life. That will be the genuine tribute to this great patriotic who lived and worked 47 long years for the cause of Janajati people.

Janajati Conferences to Commemorate the Works of Balasahab Deshpande

The centenary celebration of the Late Balasahab Deshpande, the founder President of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram has been organised in grand manner in the various parts of Brahmaputra valley of Assam with large number participation of Janajati people.

Balasahab Deshpande was born on 26 December 1913. He dedicated his whole life for the welfare and all-round development of Janajati people of the Country until his last breath on 21st April 1995.

The programme for the people of upper Assam was held at Moran Commerce College ground on 22nd December. Sri Sri Janardan Dev Goswami of Kamalabari Xatra in Majuli was the chief Guest in the function. He appealed the Janajati people to join hands to confront the anti national threats in protecting the religion and culture and there by strengthening the nation. He wished for a healthy and problem free society. He said that Srimanta Sankardev has shown us the path to organise the society basing upon strong character and deep knowledge. A renaissance in this line has to be brought, once again, to confront the present day problems. Both the Janajati people and the other

sections of the society must join hands to achieve it. Other dignitaries who spoke on the occasion were Sri Baloram Phangchu, President Hemptu Lakhiman Sangha, Sri Nareswar Brahma, Gen. Secy. Kalyan Ashram Assam, Sri Jogeswar Oraon of Dibrugarh, Sri Shibu Botara, Smt. Heera Devi and Dr. Kameswar Tiwari.

Another programme was held at Kajal Gaon High School ground in Chirang District. Shri Basistha Bujarbaruah, Assam Pranta Pracharak of Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangha was the main speaker. He emphasized the need to face the challenges posed by Bangladeshi Nationals by illegally occupying land of Janajatis. He said our objective is to protect our Dharma, Land as well as Nation. He appealed the youth to come forward to take up the challenge. We cannot achieve development when the tense situation is prevailed all over. The all round development can only be possible when the law and order situation is brought into normalcy and ensuring the safety and security of life and property of the people. Others who spoke on the occasion were Sri Chukhendra Nath Brahma, Sri Viswanath Narzary and Charumohan Rabha. Sri Riju Kumar Brahma (IAS)

presided over the function.

The third programme was held at the ground of JB Hagjer Memorial high School, Rowta on 26th December 2013. Programme was held under the chairmanship of Sri Raksheswar Brahma, the MLA of Mazbat. Colourful cultural programmes were demonstrated by various cultural troops on the occasion. Sri Raksheswar Brahma, praised great work done by Balasahab Deshpande. Sri Thumbui Zeliang, Secretary, Zeliangrong Heraka Association, Nagaland explained the various achievements of Kalyan Ashram since its inception in 1952. He expressed his anguish on the Missioanary activities to covert the innocent Janajati people using fraudulent means such as temptation, allurements and even at gunpoints. Sri Baloran Phangcho, President, Hemptu Lakhiman Sangha said indigenous faith of India is popularly known as Hindu Faith. We are all part and parcel of Hindu Society. Others present on the Dias were Sri Bagiram Boro, Smt. Jonaki Boro, Sri Nareswar Brahma, Sri Sushil Saraf and other prominent personalities of the districts. About 10,000 janajati people altogether attended in these three functions.

Birth Centinery of Balasahab Deshpande Celebrated

Meghalaya unit of Kalyan Ashram celebrated the 100th birth anniversary of Balasahab Deshpande founder President of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. Kalyan Ashram has branches in all the states of India like Arunachal Vikas Parishad, Janajati Vikas Samiti Nagaland, Kalyan Ashram Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam.

Balasahab dedicated his entire life for tribal people. He was born and brought up in a Brahmin family of Ramtek town Maharashtra. After

completion of his law degree he was practising Nagpur. He went to Jashpur where he estblished Kalyan ashram in the year 1952 and he spent his entire his life working in that remote area for the welfare of the people. He visited to Meghalaya, Nagaland all the other northeastern states to take the message of Kalyan Ashram to tribal people. He inspired them to be self respected in their faith and cultural identity.

The programme organised to celebrate the birth centenary was

attended by around 250 people of around 50 villages. Shri Rinumo Sungo, President, Kalyan Ashram Meghalaya presided over the meeting. The dignataries who present on the occasion were shri K.S. Marbaning, Shri Ba Klor, Smt. D. Kharkongor and Smt. Mira D'kar and Dr. Vishwamitra. Shri Ramesh Babu, Shradha Jagaran Pramukh of N.E. Region spoke on Balasahab Deshpande on the occasion.

- Ramesh Babu

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Value Education: Need of the Hour

towards value education. Later on this course was abandoned. Now-a-days also, in most of the English medium schools Moral Science is included in the course of study. It is some sort of value education. But in vernacular medium schools there is no such subject like Moral Science.

This negligence on the part of our policy makers has caused big harm to the society and a chaotic situation is coming up in our society. So, it is high time to give proper attention to value education in order to prevent social degradation or to eradicate social pollution.

(<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/details.asp?id=oct1009/edit3>)

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Gita and the Caste System

also it is necessary that the authority of common people should be exercised properly and fully in the same way as the authority of the superior persons in order that the mechanism of the cosmos should continue to work in a properly regulated manner. If the potters do not manufacture pots and weavers do not weave cloth, the maintenance of society, that is, lokasamagraha can not be satisfactorily carried out.

The Gita assures the attainment of perfection through the performance of one's duties, that is, 'svadharma', when it is done as a worship of the Supreme Reality. The Gita states that by being devoted to his own duty, a man attains perfection. Another term used in the Gita to convey the idea of "worshipping the divine through svadharma", is "Karma samarpanam", which literally means "dedicating one's actions to God". In order that actions are fit to be dedicated to God, one has to be pure, unselfish and conducive to the good of society.

The Gita proclaims to everybody through Arjuna, "Perform life-long your wordly duties according to your respective positions in life (svadharma) with a self-identifying vision, and enthusiastically, and thereby perpetually worship the deity in the shape of Paramatma, because there in lies your happiness and in the next".

Tilak believed that in times of social crisis, one's choice of 'svadharma' could not be determined by varna rules. Gandhi also believed in working not only according to one's "svabhava", but also in the light of changing social needs. For himself, he chose as his 'svadharma', the service of his country and humanity, but he viewed it as the "road to salvation".

In the Gita, it is stated that in the battle field of "Kurukshetra", Sri Krishna told Arjuna that he should not have any desire for selfish gain, and also said that he should maintain even mindedness, irrespective of achieving success or failure. That is the way Arjuna should act. A few verses in the Gita contain the teaching that one should stick to his 'svadharma' (even if there are shortcoming in it) and avoid 'paradharma' (some one else's duty, even if it looks more attractive). It has been stated in the Gita. "Better one's duty, bereft of merit, than another's well-performed, better is death in the discharge of one's duty, another duty is fought with danger".

We may conclude that the Gita never approved of caste system as we see today. Lord Krishna advised people through Arjuna that one should perform his 'svadharma' without any selfish desire. All actions should be dedicated to God. Only then one can attain perfection and true happiness.

(The writer is a former Head, Department of Philosophy, Cotton College, Guwahati)

(The Sentinel 17.11.2013)

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Religion and Culture

and that is as it should be. True religion is that which lets one dress whichever way one wants to or carries whatever identity one opts for. Today the young Hindu female dresses in a style far removed from the 'bara-hathi' (of 12 hands) sari of another age. Would she be less Hindu for all that? Is anyone ostracized for turning 'modern'? Yes, there are a few who feel upset with 'modernization' but the world keeps moving on; in the end it is reflective of the Marxist concept of thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis, which goes on unrelentingly, not just in India but all over the world, to the point that one American weekly, commenting on the way Hinduism is getting noticed and even acceptable in the U.S. was to run a cover story saying "Now We Are All Hindus" (August 15, 2009 Newsweek).

(The Sentinel 30.11.2013)

(Contd. from Page 8)

Glimpses into Sabin Alun...

kingdom was none other than Rukasen, the great. Rukasen belonged to a very wealthy and aristocrat family in those days. He built his castle with much artistic creations and it was looking awfully beautiful and amazing one. In the court of Rukasen, the wise and learned people including the common people always thronged collectively and listened carefully to all good counsels from Rukasen every day in those days. He never discriminated to any one to attend his court and he loved all sections of people poor and rich alike in the society. He believed that every human being was the son of God, the Hemphu Arnam. He believed that he should not hate them but to love them without any discrimination in his mind. His love for the common people was unsullied.

One day, Chidu and Longbi brothers had decided to visit the beautiful court of Rukasen. The king was surprised to see Chidu and Longbi brothers in his court and he immediately received them with high esteem to both of them. Then King wanted to know from the most honoured two holy souls about the purpose of their coming to his court out of the blue. Then Chidu and Longbi brothers gave him details about the purpose of their coming to his court. Rukasen was highly pleased to know about their mission

and he invited all his subjects including boys and girls, old and young and children to his court. He went on to say these words:

"Oh my aged men and women of my kingdom, the young boys and girls and all the children of my realm, you are invited to my court. Because, the teachers of music have come to our kingdom, and, they are going to teach us how to sing a song; so, let us learn the art of singing from them."

Then Chidu and Longbi brothers, the teachers of music, invited Rukasen near them and said to him:

"Oh the holy soul of man, Rukasen, you have to bring a bottle of wine and betel nuts and leaves and offer us as a mark of respect to the teachers of music first. After that, we are going to sing for you the song of Sabin. It will take a long time to complete the song of Sabin. It will take almost twelve days and twelve nights to complete it. Therefore, a bottle of wine, betel leaf and nut and one red cock will be required. We have to perform a rite for redemptions of our sins after the completion of singing of Sabin's song. This song is the song of 'Hemphu arnam'. It prohibits singing at any time without offering rites to Him. It cannot be sung without his permission. Therefore we have to perform a rite after the completion of singing of this song."

After learning the proposals from the teachers of music, Rukasen and his subjects had agreed to offer whatever they required and requested them to start the proceedings of Sabin's song immediately. All the men and women, young boys and girls, were eagerly waiting for the start of the proceeding of Sabin's song by the 'Lunsepo', the teacher of music, right way. The 'Lunsepo', the teacher of music, had started to perform some prayers (mantras) from his mouth as an abeyance to the holy soul of Sabin. He prayed him to sanctify his mind, so that, he could sing the song of Sabin properly and able to complete it with highest satisfaction to the music lovers of Kasen's subjects. Then, he had very humbly said to the subjects of Rukasen:

"Oh my dear sons and daughters, all the mothers and fathers, all the children of this kingdom, here, I am going to sing the holy song of Sabin before you. You are hereby invited to listen to it with proper attention." Thus the 'Lunsepo', the revered teacher of music, had started to sing the most sacred song of 'Sabin Alun', the song of Sabin, with much dignity and honour to bestow upon the kingdom of Rukasen, the wisest king of this world...

(To be continued.)

(Contd. from Page 10)

Salutations to Lachit Barphukan

people go home in peace!" Having fired volleys from his guns he rushed with seven boats towards the enemy. These actions of Lachit electrified the Assamese commanders and soldiers and they began to turn their boats to rush towards the enemy and attacked the Moghuls from the banks as well as from the boats. A Moghul commander was so confident of entering Guwahati through the breach at Andharubali that he was enjoying his hookah on his boat with his back turned towards the Assamese. He was killed by a bullet. The Assamese warships rushed into the thick of the Moghul fleet. A terrible war was fought to the teeth by the Assamese. The Assamese defeated the enemy decisively killing a large number of enemy soldiers and the commanders. The few that survived were chased to Pandu, some three miles from the scene of the battle that is, the triangle between Kamakhya, Itakhuli and Aswaklanta. The Barphukan wanted to pursue the enemy further but was dissuaded by the royal astrologer. This victory came to be known as the victory in the battle of Saraighat.

Thus it was the courage and determination of Lachit Barphukan that enthused the Assamese to come back from their retreat and fight the enemy to the finish. This was the turning point of history and Saraighat will always be remembered for the personal courage, determination and heroism of this great patriot whose loyalty to the throne and love for freedom for his countrymen were unparalleled.

(The Sentinel - 24.11.2013)

Follow the Path Shown by Vanayogee Balasahab Deshpande

- Tarh Takia

Itanagar : "Vanyogee Balasahab Deshpande has shown us the way to protect and preserve and promote our age old rich cultural heritage and faith, we should follow it in letter and spirit by putting efforts restlessly," said Dr. Joram Begi, Director Technical and Higher Education, govt. of A.P. Dr. Begi ji is serving the society as Prant Pramukh of Vivekananda Kendra, Arunachal Pradesh and Chairman of Research Institute for World's Ancient Traditions and Cultural Heritage (RIWATCH). He was speaking as Chief Guest in the Inaugural function of the Birth Centenary of Blasahab Deshpande, Founder of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, parent body of Arunachal Vikas Parishad.

The colourful programme was organized by AVP at Vivekananda hall, R K Mission, Itanagar. He further appealed the audience to join the social activities and it would be the real tribute to Balasahab Deshpande. Vanyogee Balasahab was a visionary, he studied and came to the conclusion that there is a need of the organisation who will serve exclusively in tribal communities of Bharat and founded Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram in 1952, in Arunachal Pradesh it is called as Arunachal Vikas Parishad.

The programme started with lighting of lamp followed by local prayer song by the team of Kargu Gamgi, Naharlagun. Sh. Jomny Siram, President AVP, Capital Complex explained the aim and objectives of the programme in his

wel come address.

Sh. Talom Dupak, EAC, Yupia was guest of honour in the function; in his speech he appealed AVP to support his innovative ideas to consolidate the Movement of Donyi



Poloism .He said organisations like AVP are doing best for our society and we all should take initiative in such noble work. He also chanted some mantras for the well being of everyone.

Sh. Shaktipada Thakur, Akhil Bharateeya Khel kud Pramukh of Akhil Bharateeya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (All India Sports and Games Incharge, ABVKA) was the speaker on the occasion. He narrated the situation of the tribal communities before 1952; foundation of ABVKA was the need of the hour and Blasahab Deshpande done it at the cost of his govt. job and worldly enjoyments. He was a professional lawyer, serving as Area Officer at Jaspur nagar, but inspired by Thakkar Bappa and dedicated his whole life in the service of the tribal communities of Bharat. He had visited Assam, Nagaland, and Manipur also and met Golgi Bote

Talom Rukbo, Rani Maa Gaidenlue, N. C. Zeliang, H. Mawri and many other prominent tribal leaders of N. E. India.

SH. Tech Gubinji, Vice President, AVP, Sh. Y.D. Thongchi, President IFCSAP, Sh. Tony Koyu President Sanskar Bharati, Sh. Gichik Taaza, Gen. Secy. IFCSAP, Sh. Bengia Augung, President DPFS AP, Sh. Gyati Rana, Medar Nello Council were the dignitaries present on the occasion.

The teams from Kargu Gamgi, Medar Nello, displayed traditional dance and prayers in the function. Traditional fashion show was one of the main attractions in the programme in which the little champs from AVP Balwadis came on the stage in the dress of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Neharu, Rani Laxmibai and delivered few patriotic dialogues, the audience appreciated and congratulated the teachers of Balwadi for the innovative programme.

In his Presidential speech, Sh. Pratik Potom informed the house about the activities of AVP and appealed to extend their full hearted support in this noble work. Sh. Tarh Takia, Gen Secy. AVP informed the house about their latest visit to Hon'ble Vice President of India, Hon'ble Defence Minister, and Leaders of Opposition in New Delhi on China issue. He offered vote of thanks and the programme concluded with prayer by Kargu Gamgi, Itanagar.

More programmes of the Birth Centenary were celebrated at Namsai, Changlang, Yinkinong and many other places by local units of AVP in the state.

Balasahab's 100th Birth Anniversary Celebrated

Daporijo : Upper Subansiri Unit of Arunachal Vikas Parishad celebrated the birth centenary of Poojya Balasahab Deshpandeji in a grand manner. About 500 workers and well-wishers of Arunachal Vikas Parishad attended the function organized in the Art and Cultural Hall at Daporijo on 26th December 2013 to commemorate the life and works of Poojya Balasahabji. People from far-flung villages arrived to attend the function representing 11 out of 12 circles in the Upper Subansiri District.

Er. Lardik Kare, Secretary General of Tagin Cultural Society was the Chief Guest of the function. He spoke on the great work done by Arunachal Vikas Parishad for preservation of the Cultural identity of the Janajati people of Arunachal Pradesh and also praised the various service activities conducted by Arunachal Vikas Parishad. It is note-worthy that Poojya Balasahab Deshpandeji is the founder President of Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram that is the national body of Arunachal Vikas Parishad.

Shri Taya Ekke, E. A. C, Nacho was the guest of honour on the

occasion. His long association with the activities of AVP and the indigenous faith movement along with



Drama demonstrated on the occasion

his presence in the function has contributed to glorify the occasion. He said, "The contribution of workers of AVP is tremendous and it has helped to reach the far-flung areas of the district to awaken the general mass about their distinct cultural heritage.

Shri Shreekrishna Bhide, the organising Secretary of Kalyan Ashram North East and also the special Guest on the occasion illustrated the life of Balasahab. He said, "Balasahab established Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram for the all-round development of the janajati people. He

found how janajati people are culturally exploited by the Christian Missionaries in the name of development. He dedicated his life to check the anti-national activities carried out by Christian Missionaries in converting the innocent people of the Jashpur Nagar Area of Madhya Pradesh, presently in Chhattisgarh. Kalyan Ashram has now grown like a Big Banyan tree spreading its braches all over India wherever the Janajati people inhabited. It has contacts in more than 60000 tribal villages and more than 14000 projects are being run by the organization in about 11000

villages. Kalyan Ashram is working in the various aspects of Janajati Communities like education, health care, sports and culture, economic development and for the protection of their tribal rights".

Participants displayed several folk dances and dramas on the occasion. An extempore speech competition also organized on the occasion participating higher Secondary and high school Students. Ms. Osi Bayor, Sambhag Mahila Pramukh played the major role to organize the function in a grand manner.

Chalo-Loku Celebrated in Befitting Manner On 25th Nov'2013 at Deomali Town.

- Nokte Panka

The Chalo-Loku the main harvest festival of the Nocte Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh was also celebrated in befitting manner on 25th Nov'2013 at Deomali Town.

The Honourable Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Sri Nabum Tuki was invited as a Chief Guest. The Local MLA Sri Wangki Lowang, Loku committee President and Secretary received him in Nocte Traditional manner. The Chief Guest performed Rangtam(Prayer) to "Rang-o" God at chaam and Rangsom Hum

(Worshiping place of Nocte). Our honourable Chief Guest addressed the public present in the Cholo- Loku festival. He appealed the entire Nocte people to preserve its heritage and culture in very proper manner as the heritage and culture are the identity of the tribal.

On this auspicious occasion the honourable local MLA Sri Wangki Lowang, Loku president Sri Jangkha Lowang and the Loku Secretary Sri Ngonglin Boi also spoke and appealed the people to celebrate the

Cholo- Loku festival in befitting manner.

All the community people participated in the said festival and enjoyed every moment of the festival. They danced together sung together and had a common community feast.

Last but not the least, the Loku committee members got together at Loku committee president Sri Jangkha's resident and performed special Rangtom to "Rang"- O the almighty God for happy and prosperous New year-2014.

Arunachal Pradesh 'An Integral Part of India': Pranab Mukherjee

Nov 30, 2013: President Pranab Mukherjee on Saturday said that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and important part of India

President Mukherjee, while addressing the Arunachal Pradesh assembly, said that the Centre and the state government should build the infrastructure linkages and connectivity with the rest of India, and appealed to the people of Arunachal to extend their assistance to this venture

He further asserted that the development of border areas in Arunachal Pradesh is extremely important since it has common borders with three countries, and added that it must receive utmost attention

He also said that the northeast of India has the potential to become an important investment destination, and a trade and business centre, owing to immense natural resources, and human resource quality

Meanwhile, China's state-run Xinhua news agency repeated Beijing's territorial claims on Arunachal Pradesh, and noted that China saw the state as being 'currently under Indian illegal occupation'

In a report, Xinhua said: "The so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh' was established largely on the three areas of China's Tibet — Monyul,

Loyul and Lower Tsayul — currently under Indian illegal occupation.

"These three areas, located between the illegal 'McMahon Line' and the traditional customary boundary between China and India, have always been Chinese territory,' the report added

Earlier on Friday, a report issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry said: "China's position on the disputed area of the eastern section of the China-India boundary is consistent and clear-cut.

The report further said: "We hope India can work with China to protect the overall relationship, preserve peace and tranquillity on the border."

Women's Seminar at Tura (Meghalaya)



On 150th Birth Centenary of Swami Vivekananda, a women's seminar was organised at Natyamandir Tura on 12.12.2013 by Kalyan Ashram Meghalaya on the theme: "Women - Indian Concept, Thoughts and Present Day Scenario". The seminar was presided over by Mrs. Mriduchanda Dev and conducted jointly by Mrs. Tandra Hajong and Ms. Birala Basumatary.

Advocate Jahnabi Chetri of Tura inaugurated the seminar with lighting 150 earthen-lamps to commemorate the 150th Birth Day of Swami Vivekananda. Along with Vivekananda

the seminar paid homage in memory of Pa Thogen Nengmenja, the freedom fighter from Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Mrs. Pramila Baruah in her inaugural speech spoke high of the hero of the Hill. Then she spoke on Swami Vivekananda and then about the theme and purpose of the seminar.

In the seminar Prof. Bina Bora spoke on the theme. Mrs. Pramila Baruah elaborately dealt with different aspects of women empowerment and the hazards of social evils against women throughout the century. Mrs. Baruah suggested some ways and means to safeguard the women dignity. She urged upon the teaching of human values taught to us by our ancestors. Advocate Mrs. Chetri enlightened the seminar with information of legal and judicial assistance available in the constitution for the womanhood of the country. She urged everyone to be aware of law and rules. Shri Arnab Hajong delivered a thought provoking speech on dowry system and ill motives against women that have

entered in to tribal communities, which were quite unknown to them some ten years back. He said that almost all are educated now but not wise towards their customs and human values. Other speakers, who made the seminar a successful one were Mrs. Suprabha Simsang, Mrs. Sanhita Das, Golamani Koch, Saruma Hajong, Debajani Koch and Ratna Bhattacharya.

The seminar time was divided into four sessions. B.K. Manisha Behn of Brahmakumari conducted the last session. Mrs. Shukla Ghosh, president of the town committee offered vote of thanks. Mrs. Ghosh particularly thanked Sri Phulmai Swargiary, Birala Basumatary, Mahua Koch, Santila Hajong, Amarawati Koch and Tandra Hajong for their tireless work and dedication to make the seminar a success. She specially thanked the audience for their patient hearing and cooperation.

Nearly 200 ladies of the Tura town participated in the seminar. They were all praise of the seminar as it was the first in Tura of its kind.

Garos Celebrate *Wangala* Festival

DIMAPUR, November 21: Garos in Nagaland celebrated their post-harvest festival *Wangala* on Thursday at Samaguri village in Dimapur district with former MLA of Dimapur—III Assembly seat, Azheto Zhimomi, as chief guest.

The chief guest in his address said that since the formation of DAN Government in 2003, the State government has introduced numerous policies for overall development in Nagaland, especially promotion and preservation of culture and tradition of indigenous tribes and communities of Nagaland.

Citing the “Road shows” and consequent “Tribal festivals—cum—youth Expo” sponsored by the State

government, Azheto said such events were held not for the mere sake of feasting and merry making alone. He said the primary objective of such events was to promote and propagate the unique culture and traditions of various Naga tribes and other communities living harmoniously in Nagaland.

Referring to the Garo community in Nagaland, Azheto said that Garos are one of the pioneer settlers in present Dimapur district and that one of their oldest village Darogapathar dates back to 1811.

The chief guest however commented that despite the Garos being one of the pioneer settlers of Dimapur district, the community has

not been able to make much headway in terms employment in the State government services.

According to Azheto, part of the problem lies with the Garo community not being able to identify the right leader or leaders who can lead them to the road to prosperity.

“Festival time such as *Wangala* is a time for the community to come and reason together, to forgive each other and to forge a better future”, Azheto said.

Highlights of the *Wangala* celebration included vibrant dances and traditional Garo games presented by Samaguri cultural troupe, Garo Cultural Society Dimapur and Garo Students' Union Nagaland Zone.

(*The Sentinel* 22.11.2013)

The Bizarre Nose Plugs of the Apatani Women

Body modification is nothing new in the world of aesthetics and individuality. With more and more people getting tattoos and piercings each day, body modification is becoming an accepted practice in our society. Apparently, though, we're a little late in jumping onto the body modification bandwagon, because the women of the Apatani tribe have been using massive nose plugs since ancient times.

The Apatani, also known as the Tanni, is a tribal group of approximately 26,000 in numbers, based in Ziro, in the Apatani Plateau of Arunachal Pradesh, in India. The Apatani are one of 26 tribes in the region and have no written history. The story of the Apatani tribe is passed on from generation to generation through their oral traditions. Declared a world heritage site by UNESCO, the Ziro area is known for the conservation and cultivation techniques of the Apatani tribe. The tribe practises several different varieties of wet rice cultivation using methods whose energy efficiency is notably high. Furthermore, they are able to attain this agricultural system without the

use of machinery or animals. The high productivity of the Apatanis remains constant by means of a system which recycles waste and matter and a simple irrigation system.

But perhaps the most famous asset of the Apatani tribe is the massive nose plugs the women sport. Nowadays the plugs are mostly worn by the elderly women, but there was a time when all the women in the tribe were required to wear the bizarre accessories. Tradition holds that the Apatani women were considered the most beautiful in the land, resulting in the Apatanis constantly being raided by other tribes and their women kidnapped. Thus, the nose plug was born in order to protect the women from neighboring tribes. In order to make themselves less attractive to other tribes, the Apatani women began wearing massive nose plugs and tattooing their faces. In the middle of the 20th century, with modernization taking hold, this tradition began to die. In fact, no Apatani woman born after 1970 practises the nose plug custom.

The Apatanis have also come into the spotlight because there has been

an urgent need to document the various customs and traditions of the tribes in the Arunachal Pradesh area. The Center for Cultural Research and Documentation has taken it upon themselves to head the effort in producing audio-video documentation of the tribes. Fortunately within three years the CCRD has been able to create a public profile, a process of dialogue among tribe members regarding change and adaptation, and a cross-region of understanding among all the tribes. Furthermore, the CCRD has been able to emerge as a political platform in order to document the tribal traditions.

Due to globalized change and the modernization many of the customs and traditions of the Apatani, the tribe is in danger of disappearing. And with the tribe's elders holding the only keys to indigenous knowledge, it could only be a matter of time before the world misses out on an incredible culture and society. (*The Sentinel* 22.11.2013)



Muslim Girls' Marriage Age Becomes Political Fodder in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, September 28, 2013: It has been a free-for-all this week with every leading political party in Kerala declaring in one voice that the marriageable age of Muslim girls should not be reduced from the present 18 years.

The trigger was nine frontline Muslim organisations deciding at Kozhikode last week to approach the Supreme Court for reducing the marriageable age from 18 but didn't specify what it should be.

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy,

as is his wont, brushed aside the issue, saying the law of the land would deal with this. Many were surprised that the CPI-M took a few days to react and when it did, it slammed the IUML, naming it as the villain in the decision to approach the Supreme Court.

Leader of Opposition VS Achuthanandan, known for his biting reactions, did not disappoint when he said that it would be best not to mention the "culture" of the IUML, which would prefer the marriageable

age of Muslim girls to be 14 and not even 16.

Congress spokesperson MM Hassan, a Muslim, also took on the nine organisations. He condemned their decision to approach the Supreme Court, asking them to drop the idea because it did not augur well for the community as a whole when it was trying to come into the mainstream...

(<http://www.ndtv.com/article/south/muslim-girls-marriage-age-becomes-political-fodder-in-kerala-424906>)

Manipur's Sankirtana in UNESCO List

NEW DELHI, Dec 5 – Even as inscription of Majuli Island is awaiting approval as a World Cultural Heritage Site, "Sankirtana: ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur" was among 14 elements inscribed on the Representative List of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Manipur Government sources said Sankirtana nominated from India figured at the ongoing Eighth session of the UNESCO Inter-governmental Committee in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The Inter-governmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage consists of 24 representatives from

the States Parties elected by the General Assembly of States Parties.

Sankirtana is included in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage maintained by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, and extensively documented by the Akademi and other institutions.

Sankirtana encompasses an array of arts performed to mark religious occasions and various stages in the life of the Vaishnava people of the Manipur plains. Every Manipuri of Vaishnava faith is involved with the form, either as a performer or patron.

(The Assam Tribune 06.12.2013)



Inspiring Heroism

On Wednesday(04.12.2013) afternoon, a kidnapper hijacked a school van carrying children of Nazira Kendriya Vidyalaya from the heart of Simaluguri town in Sivasagar district when they were returning from school. The driver of the van displayed courage and presence of mind by driving the vehicle into a drain and thus immobilizing it. The kidnapper then left the ten other children and took off on foot a 14-year-old student Gunjan Samah as a hostage. Gunjan agreed to be the lone hostage in order to save the other ten younger children

after extracting a promise from the kidnapper that he would not harm her. This is a part of the episode that strains our ability to suspend our disbelief. Apparently the kidnapper told Gunjan that he too had children and would not harm her. In a sense, Gunjan could have merely served the function of being a temporary cover for his flight than anything else. The kidnapper took off towards the hills of Nagaland and at one point left her alone in a dense jungle. When he did not return for quite some time, Gunjan started walking back towards the

plains in the evening. After some time she saw the house of a tea garden worker and sought shelter there. Then they informed the police and Gunjan was rescued after a 14-hour search. The police had cordoned off the entire forest area for about 14 hours. Gunjan had showed bravery beyond her tender years in seeking to protect the other ten children. This is the kind of bravery and courage that one does not find even in grown-up men. Hers was an act of inspiring heroism deserving a bravery award. We salute this young heroine. (The Sentinel 07.12.2013)

Meghalaya Society Warned for Sending 20 Minor Girls Outside State

Shillong, Dec.17: A Meghalaya minister on Tuesday warned of legal action against a state-based society, which sent 20 minor girl to Tamil Nadu earlier this year without the knowledge of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in violation of the Juvenile Justice Act.

Twenty girls, aged between 8 and 13 years from West Khasi Hills, East Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills districts were taken by officials of the Lei Shynshar Cultural Society to the Sri Nivedita Seva Trust in Tamil Nadu six months ago.

"We are examining the legal action to be taken against the Lei Shynshar Cultural Society for sending the minor girls outside the state without the knowledge of CWC which is a violation of the JJ Act," Social Welfare minister Deborah C Marak told reporters here.

Denying allegations that the girls were being trafficked, she said that under section 51 of the Juvenile Justice Act no child below the age of 12 years could be taken outside the state without the consent of the CWC.

The matter came to light when the district administration of Krishnagiri and the CWC there rescued the girls and accommodated them at the Narendra Nambikkia Natchathiram, a children's home registered under the JJ Act in Tamil Nadu.

Officials from the state had met the chairperson of Krishnagiri CWC and sub-collector of the district who informed them that the Sri Nivedita Seva Trust had appealed to the high court which ordered for maintaining status quo.

Marak said the girls would be brought back only after the Madras

High Court gave the transfer order. The next hearing was on January 2, 2014.

Stating that the government was concerned about the safety, health and education of girls, she assured that a formal inquiry would be set up to investigate the matter.

The minister said that the parents of the girls were against them being brought back according to a report by the District Social Welfare Committees of Shillong, Jowai and Nongstoin to the state government.

She said that the parents claimed that the girls were were happy there.

A child protection officer who had met the girls had informed that 15 of the girls were eager to return home while the rest were hesitant, she added.

(<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-meghalaya-society-warned-for-sending-20-minor-girls-outside-state-1936864>)

B'desh High Commission Official Deposits Fake Currency Notes



NEW DELHI, November 20: A Bangladesh High Commission official in New Delhi was found depositing Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) with a face value of Rs.8,500 in the State Bank of India (SBI)'s Chanakyapuri branch.

Police said that a case was registered by the branch manager of the Chanakyapuri SBI with the local police station.

According to police, the high

commission official, K Islam, went to the Chanakyapuri branch of SBI along with some other colleagues to deposit a sum of Rs 15,89,315 on November 14. But when the SBI official started counting the cash, they found fake notes with a face value of Rs 8,500 (seven notes of 1,000 denomination and three notes of 500 denomination).

The police station at Chanakyapuri referred the case to the Parliament Street police station.

The Parliament Street police station has registered 36 cases related to FICN till September this year. The sleuths have also recovered fake currencies having a face value of Rs 1,00,774.

Deputy Commissioner of Police SBS Tyagi, when contacted, said that on the basis of the complaint registered by the bank manager, they have registered a case.

"The manager stated that the officials who came to deposit the

money worked at Bangladesh High Commission. We are yet to contact the Commission. We have taken their details from the bank and the investigation is on," Tyagi said.

When this correspondent tried to talk to the Bangladesh High Commission, an official said that they are not aware of the incident. "As it has come to our notice, we will certainly take up the matter," the official said on condition of anonymity.

The issue of FICN has always been a centre point of discussion whenever security agencies of both the countries meet each other. In fact, the last BSF-BGB meeting in Dhaka also explored ways to fight the menace of FICN. Both sides even decided to share real time intelligence to stop the flourishing market of FICN.

Now, the latest recovery of fake notes will certainly send the security agencies into a tizzy.

(The Sentinel 21.11.2013)

A Festival to Reckon: PODI-BARBI FESTIVAL

The Mythology of RAMO, BOH-AO & BOKAR COMMUNITH

- Maling Koje

The RAMO, BOH-AO & BOKAR Adi Tribes, Rich Cultural fabric, proud and independent in charater the tribe maintain and express our sense of joy and harmony in the form of festival celebrated in different parts of the region. The three communities of Adi tribe that in habits the lush green mountains district of West Siang and their as one of the descendent of ABOTANI, the ancestor of many tribes of the Arunachal Pradesh.

The orgin of PODI-BARBI

PODI –BARBI, the main festival of three communities is celebrated from 5th Dec. to 7th Dec. every year. MEDONG-ABO (Heavenly Father) Siching Ane (the mother earth) known as spiritual mother of all origin of man kind, evil sprit and all deity in this universe.



SICHING – CHINGTUNG – TUNI
(Our Ancestor)

SICHING – CHINGRI – RIKI-KIBO
& RAMBO (Evil Spirit)

SICHING – CHINGDONG –
DONYI (SUN)

SICHING – CHINGPONG – POLO
(Moon)

SICHING – CHINGPO – POLING
(Mountains/ Stone)

SICHING – CHINGMIN-MITI &
METANG (Producers of all Seeds/
Crops)

Out of all above Deity SICHING-
CHINGPO-POLING SOBO. The son

of SCHING ANE, had a huge spiritual body which almost covers the universe, so it was difficult to exist other spiritual deities of universe. So the other spiritual deities hatch conspiracy to kill and divide the body of POLING SOBO into several parts and they called a powerful deity namely OPONG TALONG and accordingly they killed POLING SOBO and divided his body into several pieces and a part of POLING SOBO was given to DONGJENG & YANGPOM.

An animal called SINING RINGYING had always damaged the agricultural field of MITI and METANG. So one day the two Dogs TELO & RELO of MITI & METANG chased SINING RINGYING up to DITE-GE-DEHONG LOPONG, the palace of DONGIENG & YANGPOM and killed and eat the meat of SINING RINGYING. SINING RINGYING'S last desire was that, they will take re-birth in

the form of PODI & BARBI and help the offspring of ABO-TANI for better life, prosperity and rich agricultural and healthy crops. Accordingly pice of meat of SINING RINGYING was stuck on the body of POLING-LINGPO and POLING-LINGBAR and they took re-birth in thr form of PODI & BARBI (Flies) in the palace of DONGJENG & YANGPOM. So the son of ATO-RAMO, ATO-BOH & ATO-BOKAR Recognised as POLING-LINGBAR-BARBI (Female) and POLING-LINGPO-PODI(Male).

After Re-Birth as PODI-BARBI Male & female deities, they start their journey toward ANE-GE-MITI



MONGYING, the palace of MITI & METANG through the mother earth in the month of December every year and stay upto April. During their Migration on the Mother land of mankind became dry and mountains became naked, in the meantime PODI-BARBI hatch their eggs on this earth as blessing. And accordingly we the three community RAMO, BOH-AO & BOKAR of meachukha sub-division welcome PODI-DEBE (male) and BARBI DENE (female) with traditional way, IT-TING & TAAKE (Rice powder etc) and with colourful traditional dresses to get more blessing from them for rich cultural heritage and fertilization of our agricultural field for healthy crops.

In the month April PODI & BARBI usually go back from ANE-GE-MITI MONGYING with lots of ALI-AMO (Seeds/Crops) for mankind of this mother earth as a token.

Moto of logo of podi-barbi festival

Accordind to our ancestor settlements in terrain and mountainous region, our ancestor did not practice cultivation of other crops, they mainly cultivate only MAZE & MILLET. It symbolized the agriculture cultivation system of olden days of our ancestor.



Balasahab's 100th Birth Anniversary celebrated at Moran, Kajalgaon & Rowta of Assam



Balasahab's 100th Birth Anniversary celebrated at Itanagar



Balasahab's 100th Birth Anniversary celebrated at Daparijo



Balasahab Deshpande birth centenary celebration held at Shillong on 26th Dec 2013



Cultural Programme held on the occasion Birth centenary celebration at Shillong

Balasahab's 100th Birth Anniversary celebrated at Shillong



Women Seminar at Tura, Meghalaya on 12.12.2013