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*Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw
(3 April 1914 – 27 June 2008)*

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We also invite writers and the intellectual community to come forward with their articles and share their ideas, experiences with the readers of TRIVENI.

HOMAGE



Sri B.N. Murthy

(07 Oct 1949 - 16 May 2025)

In loving memory of our Father and Grandfather A Scholar, Professional, and Beloved Family Man.

Our beloved father and grandfather was a man of deep wisdom, boundless curiosity, and unwavering dedication. His life was a reflection of his profound love of learning, tireless work ethic, and steadfast devotion to family.

A voracious reader and lifelong learner, he found joy in the quiet pages of books, exploring subjects from ancient Indian scriptures to modern world affairs. Knowledge was his constant companion—

never bound by time or place. Fluent in many languages and a seasoned world traveler, he didn't just collect stamps in his passport; he carried cultures within him. He respected traditions, embraced diversity, and connected deeply with the world around him.

Music was another of his great passions. Whether it was a soulful keertana or the timeless melodies of the Beatles, he found joy and meaning in every note.

Professionally, he was a principled and hardworking banking professional, respected for his integrity and quiet diligence. Following in his father's footsteps, he played

an active role in the Triveni Journal and Foundation, contributing meaningfully to India's literary and intellectual dialogue.

But above all his accomplishments, what defined him most was his role within the family. He was a loving father—a steady hand, a quiet source of strength, and the foundation on which our lives were built. As a grandfather, he was truly in a class of his own. He provided us, his grandchildren, with a safe space, a sense of freedom, and a deep feeling of being seen and understood. His heart was the kindest, and his presence was our comfort.

Growing up surrounded by a close-knit family, we felt the love of many. But the love of a grandparent—his love—was something else entirely. He inspired us endlessly, and we looked up to him from the earliest days of our childhood. We didn't know the full story of his life before we met him, but as we listened, we learned. His journey was like the sun rising through clouds and storms—shining brightly for all to admire. And just like the sun setting into dusk, his passing feels less like an end and more like peace, fulfillment, and the quiet promise of return. “We will never forget the evenings spent by his side. The way the light faded gently outside the window, as he sat in his

favorite chair. In one of those moments, as darkness settled and the leaves whispered in the breeze, he turned to us and said, “Goodnight, kids. Remember everything I told you. We will talk once the sun returns again.”

He worked diligently to provide opportunities for his family, and through his efforts, we were given the chance to grow, dream, and thrive. As his grandchildren, we will carry his legacy forward—with pride, with purpose, and with love.

As we remember him, we hold close the words that resonated so deeply with his spirit:

*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever."*

— Mahatma Gandhi

He truly lived by these words—always growing, always giving, always guiding. His wisdom has shaped generations, and his values will continue to echo in our lives forever.

Children & Grand Children

LEADERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE

FIELD MARSHAL SAM MANEKSHAW

Commandant, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am fully conscious of the privilege, which is mine, to have been invited here to address the college.

A while ago, I was invited to a seminar where the subject was youth, and people said that the youth of this country was not pulling its weight, that society generally was not satisfied with how the young were functioning. When I was asked what I thought about it, I said that the youngsters of this country are disappointed, disturbed and confused. They cannot understand why all these untoward things are happening in this country. They want to know who is to blame. Not them. If they want to study at night and there is no power, they want to know who is to blame. Not them. If they want to have a bath, there is no water; they want to know who is to blame. Not them. They want to go to college and university and they are told there are not any vacancies; they want to know who is to blame. Not them.

They say - here is a country which was considered the brightest jewel in the British Crown. What has happened to this Bright Jewel?

Lecture delivered at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, 1998. Source Internet

No longer are there excuses with the old political masters saying that the reason why we are in this state is because we were under colonial rule for 250 years.

They turn around and say that the British left us almost fifty years ago. What have you done? They point to Singapore, they point to Malaysia, they point to Indonesia, and they point to Hong Kong. They say that they were also under colonial rule and look at the progress those countries have made.

They point to Germany and to Japan who fought a war for four and a half years- whose youth was decimated and industry was destroyed. They were occupied, and they had to pay reparations; Look at the progress those countries have made. The youngsters want an answer. So, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thought I should give you the answer. The problem with us is the lack of leadership.

Commandant, Ladies and Gentlemen, do not misunderstand me, when I say lack of political leadership. I do not mean just political leadership. Of course, there is lack of leadership, but also there is lack of leadership in every walk of life, whether it is political,

administrative, in our educational institutions, or whether it is our sports organizations.

Wherever you look, there is lack of leadership. I do not know whether leaders are born or made. There is a school of thought that thinks that leaders are born.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a population of 960 million people and we procreate at the rate of 17 million – equalling the total population of Australia - each year, and yet there is a dearth of leadership. So, those of you who still contribute to the

fact that leaders are born, may I suggest you throw away your family planning, throw away the pill, throw away any inhibiting factor and make it free for all. Then perhaps someday a leader may be born.

So, if leaders are not born, can leaders be made? My answer is yes.

Give me a man or a woman with a common sense and decency, and I can make a leader out of him or her. That is the subject which I am going to discuss with you this morning.

What are the attributes of leadership?

The first, the primary, indeed the cardinal attribute of leadership is professional knowledge and professional competence. Now you will agree with me that you cannot be born with professional knowledge and professional competence even if you are a child of the Prime Minister, or the son of an industrialist, or the progeny of a Field Marshal. Professional

knowledge and professional competence have to be acquired by hard work and by constant study. In this fast-moving technologically developing world, you can never acquire sufficient professional knowledge. You have to keep at it, and at it, and at it. Can those of our political masters who are responsible for the security and defence of this country cross their hearts and say they have ever read a book on military history, on strategy, on weapons developments? Can they distinguish a mortar from a motor, a gun from a howitzer, a guerrilla from a gorilla, though a vast majority of them resemble the latter.

Ladies and Gentlemen, professional knowledge and professional competence are a sine qua non of leadership. Unless you know what you are talking about, unless you understand your profession, you can never be a leader. Now some of you must be wondering why the Field Marshal is saying this, every time you go round somewhere, you see one of our leaders walking around, roads being blocked, transport being provided for them. Those, ladies and gentlemen, are not leaders. They are just men and women going about disguised as leaders – and they ought to be ashamed of themselves!

What is the next thing you need for leadership? It is the ability to make up your mind to make a decision and accept full responsibility for that decision. Have you ever wondered why people do not make a decision? The answer is quite simple. It is because they lack professional

competence, or they are worried that their decision may be wrong and they will have to carry the can. Ladies and Gentlemen, according to the law of averages, if you take ten decisions, five ought to be right. If you have professional knowledge and professional competence, nine will be right, and the one that might not be correct will probably be put right by a subordinate officer or a colleague. But if you do not take a decision, you are doing something wrong. An act of omission is much worse than an act of commission. An act of commission can be put right. An act of omission cannot. Take the example of the time when the Babri Masjid was about to be destroyed. If the Prime Minister, at that stage, had taken a decision to stop it, a whole community – 180 million would not have been harmed. But, because he did not take a decision, you have at least 180 million people in this country alone who do not like us.

When I was the Army Chief, I would go along to a formation, ask the fellow what have you done about this and I normally got an answer, “Sir, I have been thinking... I have not yet made up my mind,” and I coined a Manekshawism. If the girls will excuse my language, it was ‘if you must be a bloody fool - be one quickly’. So remember that you are the ones who are going to be the future senior staff officers, the future commanders. Make a decision and having made it, accept full responsibility for it. Do not pass it on to a colleague or subordinate.

So, what comes next for leadership? Absolute Honesty, fairness and justice – we are dealing with people. Those of us who have had the good fortune of commanding hundreds and thousands of men know this. No man likes to be punished, and yet a man will accept punishment stoically if he knows that the punishment meted out to him will be identical to the punishment meted out to another person who has some Godfather somewhere. This is very, very important. No man likes to be superceded, and yet men will accept supercession if they know that they are being superceded, under the rules, by somebody who is better than they are but not just somebody who happens to be related to the Commandant of the staff college or to a Cabinet Minister or by the Field Marshal’s wife’s current boyfriend. This is extremely important, Ladies and Gentlemen.

We in India have tremendous pressures - pressures from the Government, pressures from superior officers, pressures from families, pressures from wives, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and girlfriends, and we lack the courage to withstand those pressures.

That takes me to the next attribute of Leadership - Moral and Physical Courage.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not know which of these is more important. When I am talking to young officers and young soldiers, I should place emphasis on physical courage. But since I am talking to this gathering, I will lay emphasis

on Moral Courage. What is moral courage? Moral courage is the ability to distinguish right from wrong and having done so, say so when asked, irrespective of what your superiors might think or what your colleagues or your subordinates might want. A 'yes man' is a dangerous man. He may rise very high; he might even become the Managing Director of a company. He may do anything but he can never make a leader because he will be used by his superiors, disliked by his colleagues and despised by his subordinates. So shallow—the 'yes man'.

I am going to illustrate from my own life an example of moral courage. In 1971, when Pakistan clamped down on its province, East Pakistan, hundreds and thousands of refugees started pouring into India. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi had a cabinet meeting at ten o'clock in the morning. The following attended: the Foreign Minister,

Sardar Swaran Singh, the Defence Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the Agriculture Minister, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Rao, and I was also ordered to be present. Ladies and Gentlemen, there is a very thin line between becoming a Field Marshal and being dismissed. A very angry Prime Minister read out messages from Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. All of them saying that hundreds of thousands of refugees had poured into their states and they did not know what to do. So the Prime Minister

turned round to me and said: "I want you to do something". I said, "What do you want me to do?" She said, "I want you to enter East Pakistan". I said, "Do you know that that means War?" She said, "I do not mind if it is war". I, in my usual stupid way said, "Prime Minister, have you read the Bible?" And the Foreign Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh (a Punjabi Sikh), in his Punjabi accent said, "What has Bible got to do with this?", and I said, "the first book, the first chapter, the first paragraph, the first sentence, God said, 'Let there be light' and there was light. You turn this round and say 'Let there be war' and there will be war. What do you think? Are you ready for a war? Let me tell you – "it's 28th April, the Himalayan passes are opening now, and if the Chinese gave us an ultimatum, I will have to fight on two fronts". Again Sardar Swaran Singh turned round and in his Punjabi English said, "Will China give ultimatum?" I said, "You are the Foreign Minister. You tell me". Then I turned to the Prime Minister and said, "Prime Minister, last year you wanted elections in West Bengal and you did not want the communists to win, so you asked me to deploy my soldiers in penny pockets in every village, in every little township in West Bengal. I have two divisions thus deployed in sections and platoons without their heavy weapons. It will take me at least a month to get them back to their units and to their formations. Further, I have a division in the Assam area, another division in Andhra Pradesh and the Armoured Division in the Jhansi-Babina area. It will take me at least a month to get them

back and put them in their correct positions. I will require every road, every railway train, every truck, and every wagon to move them. We are harvesting in the Punjab, and we are harvesting in Haryana; we are also harvesting in Uttar Pradesh. And you will not be able to move your harvest. I turned to the Agriculture Minister, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, "If there is a famine in the country afterwards, it will be you to blame, not me." Then I said, "My Armoured Division has only got thirteen tanks which are functioning." The Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Rao, a friend of mine, asked: "Sam, why only thirteen?" "Because you are the Finance Minister. I have been asking for money for the last year and a half, and you keep saying there is no money. That is why." Then I turned to the Prime Minister and said, "Prime Minister, it is the end of April. By the time I am ready to operate, the monsoon will have broken in the East Pakistan area. When it rains, it does not just rain, it pours. Rivers become like oceans. If you stand on one bank, you cannot see the other and the whole countryside is flooded. My movement will be confined to road to roads, the Air Force will not be able to support me, and, if you wish me to enter East Pakistan, I guarantee you a hundred percent defeat." "You are the Government", I said turning to the Prime Minister, "Now will you give me your orders?" Ladies and Gentlemen, I have seldom seen a woman so angry, and I am including my wife in that. She was red in the face and I said, "Let us see what happens". She turned round and said, "The cabinet will meet at four o'clock in the

evening". Everyone walked out. I being the junior most man was the last to leave. As I was leaving, she said, "Chief, please will you stay behind?" I looked at her. I said,

"Prime Minister, before you open your mouth, would you like me to send in my resignation on grounds of health, mental or physical?" "No, sit down, Sam. Was everything you told me the truth?" "

Yes, it is my job to tell you the truth.

It is my job to fight and win, not to lose." She smiled at me and said, "All right, Sam. You know what I want. When will you be ready?" "I cannot tell you now, Prime Minister," I said, but let me guarantee you this that if you leave me alone, allow me to plan, make my arrangements, and fix a date, I guarantee you a hundred percent victory". So, Ladies and Gentlemen, as I told you, there is a very thin line between becoming a Field Marshal and being dismissed.

Just an example of moral courage. Now, those of you who remembered what happened in 1962, when the Chinese occupied the Thagla ridge and Mr. Nehru, the Prime Minister, sent for the Army Chief, in the month of December and said, "I want you to throw the Chinese out". That Army Chief did not have the Moral courage to stand up to him and say, "I am not ready, my troops are not acclimatized, I haven't the ammunition, or indeed anything". But he accepted the Prime Minister's instructions, with the result that the Army was beaten and the

country humiliated. Remember, moral courage. You, the future senior staff officers and commanders will be faced with many problems. People will want all sorts of things. You have got to have the moral courage to stand up and tell them the facts. Again, as I told you before, a 'yes man' is a despicable man.

This takes me to the next attribute: Physical courage. Fear, like hunger and sex, is a natural phenomenon. Any man who says he is not frightened is a liar or a Gorkha. It is one thing to be frightened. It is quite another to show fear. If you once show fear in front of your men, you will never be able to command. It is when your teeth are chattering, your knees are knocking and you are about to make your own geography - that is when the true leader comes out!

I am sorry but I am going to illustrate this with another example from my own life. I am not a brave man. In fact, I am a terribly frightened man. My wife and I do not share the same bedroom.

"Why?" you will ask. Because she says I snore. Although I have told her, No, I don't. No other woman has ever complained".

I am not a brave man. If I am frightened, I am frightened of wild animals, I am frightened of ghosts and spirits and so on. If my wife tells me a ghost story after dinner, I cannot sleep in my room, and I have to go to her room. I have often wondered why she tells me these ghost stories periodically. In World War II, my

battalion, which is now in Pakistan, was fighting the Japanese. We had a great many casualties.

I was commanding Charlie Company, which was a Sikh Company. The Frontier Force Regiment in those days had Pathan companies. I was commanding the Sikh Company, young Major Manekshaw. As we were having too many casualties, we had pulled back to reorganize, re-group, make up our casualties and promotions. The Commanding Officer had a promotion conference.

He turned to me and said, "Sam, we have to make lots of promotions. In your Sikh company, you have had a lot of casualties. Surat Singh is a senior man. Should we promote him to the rank of Naik? Now, Surat Singh was the biggest Badmaash in my company. He had been promoted twice or three times and each time he had to be marched up in front of the Colonel for his stripes to be taken off. So I said, "No use, Sir, promoting Surat Singh. You promote him today and the day after tomorrow, I will have to march him in front of you to take his stripes off". So, Surat Singh was passed over. The promotion conference was over, I had lunch in the Mess and I came back to my company lines. Now, those of you who have served with Sikhs will know that they are a very cheerful lot - always laughing, joking and doing something.

When I arrived at my company lines that day, it was quite different, everybody was quiet. When my second-in-command, Subedar

Balwant Singh, met me I asked him, “What has happened, Subedar Sahib?” He said, “Sahib, something terrible has happened. Surat Singh felt slighted and has told everybody that he is going to shoot you today”. Surat Singh was a light machine gunner, and was armed with a pistol. His pistol had been taken away, and Surat Singh has been put under close arrest. I said, “All right, Sahib. Put up a table, a soap box, march Surat Singh in front of me”. So he was marched up. The charge was read out: ‘threatening to shoot his Commanding officer whilst on active service in the theatre of war’.

That carries the death penalty. The witnesses gave their evidence. I asked for Surat Singh’s pistol which was handed to me. I loaded it, rose from my soap box, walked up to Surat Singh, handed the pistol to him then turned round and told him, “You said you will shoot me”. I spoke to him in Punjabi naturally. I told him, “Have you got the guts to shoot me? Here, shoot me”. He looked at me stupidly and said, “Nahin, Sahib, galtee ho gayaa”. I gave him a tight slap and said, “Go out, case dismissed”. I went around the company lines, the whole company watching what was happening. I walked around, chatted to the people, went to the Mess in the evening to have a drink, and have my dinner, but when I came back again Sardar Balwant Singh said, “Nahin Sahib, you have made a great mistake. Surat Singh will shoot you tonight”. I said, “Bulao Surat Singh ko”. He came along. I said, “Surat Singh, Aj rat ko mere tambu par tu pehra dega, or kal subah 6 bajay, mere liye aik

mug chai aur aik mug shaving water lana”. Then I walked into my little tent. Ladies and Gentlemen, I did not sleep the whole night. Next morning, at six o’clock, Surat Singh brought me a mug of tea and a mug of shaving water. Thereafter, throughout the war, Surat Singh followed me like a puppy. If I had shown fear in front of my men, I should never have been able to command. I was frightened, terribly frightened, but I dared not show fear in front of them. Those of you, who are going to command soldiers, remember that. You must never show fear. So much for physical courage, but, please believe me, I am still a very frightened man. I am not a brave man.

What comes next? The next attribute of leadership is loyalty. Ladies and Gentlemen, you all expect loyalty. Do we give loyalty? Do we give loyalty to our subordinates, to our colleagues? Loyalty is a three way thing. You expect loyalty, you must therefore, give loyalty to your colleagues and to your subordinates. Men and women in large numbers can be very difficult, they can cause many problems and a leader must deal with them immediately and firmly. Do not allow any nonsense, but remember that men and women have many problems. They get easily despondent, they have problems of debt, they have problems of infidelity-wives have run away or somebody has an affair with somebody. They get easily crestfallen, and a leader must have the gift of the gab with a sense of humour to shake them out of their despondence. Our leaders,

unfortunately, our “so-called” leaders, definitely have the gift of the gab, but they have no sense of humour. So, remember that.

Finally, for leadership; men and women like their leader to be a man, with all the manly qualities or virtues. The man who says, “I do not smoke, I do not drink, I do not (No, I will not say it)”, does not make a leader. Let me illustrate this from examples from the past. You will agree that Julius Caesar was a great leader - he had his Calphurnia, he had his Antonia, he also had an affair with Cleopatra and, when Caesar used to come to Rome, the Senators locked up their wives. And you will agree that he was a great leader. He was known in Rome as every woman’s husband and he was a great leader. Take Napoleon, he had his Josephine, he had his Marie Walewska, he had his Antoinette and Georgettes and Paulettes. And you will agree he was a great leader. Take the Duke of Wellington - do you know that the night before the battle of Waterloo, there were more Countesses, Marchionesses and other women in his ante- chamber than staff officers and Commanders. And you will agree he was a great leader. Do you know, Ladies and Gentlemen, a thought has just struck me. All these leaders- Caesar, Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington- they had one facial feature in common. All had long noses.

So much, Ladies and Gentlemen, for leadership, but no amount of leadership will do this country much good. Yes, it will improve things, but what this country needs is discipline.

We are the most ill-disciplined people in the world. You see what is happening: you go down the road, and you see people relieving themselves by the roadside. You go into town, and people are walking up and down the highway, while vehicles are discharging all sorts of muck. Every time you pick up a newspaper, you read of a scam or you read of some other silly thing. As we are the most ill-disciplined people in the world, we must do something about discipline.

What is discipline? Please, when I talk of discipline, do not think of military discipline. That is quite different. Discipline can be defined as conduct and behaviour for living decently with one another in society. Who lays down the code of conduct for that? Not the Prime Minister, not the Cabinet, nor superior officers. It is enshrined in our holy books; it is in the Bible, the Torah and in the Vedas, it is in the teachings of Nanak and Mohammad. It has come down to us from time immemorial, from father to son, from mother to child. Nowhere is it laid down, except in the Armed Forces, that lack of punctuality is conduct prejudicial to discipline and decent living.

I will again tell you a little story about that. Some years ago, my wife and I were invited to convocation at a university. I was asked to be there at four o’clock. I got into the staff car with my wife, having chased her from about eleven o’clock in the morning. Don’t forget, darling, you have got to be on time. Get properly dressed; you have to leave at such and

such time'. Eventually, I got her into the car. I told the driver, "Thoda aayisthe, thoda jaldi", but we got to the university and the convocation address place at four o'clock. We were received by the Vice Chancellor and his Lady. We were taken into the convocation hall, and the Vice Chancellor asked me to get on the platform, asking my wife to do so, too. She gracefully declined, and said she'd much rather sit down below as she seldom had an opportunity of looking up to her husband. Anyway, on the platform, the Vice Chancellor sang my praises. As usual there were 2000 boys and girls who had come for the convocation. There were deans of the university, and professors and lecturers. Then he asked me to go to the lectern and address the gathering. I rose to do so and he said (*sotto voce*), "Field Marshal, a fortnight ago we invited a VIP from Delhi for the same function. He was allowed to stand on the same lectern for exactly twenty seconds. I wish you luck."

I said to myself, had the Vice Chancellor mentioned this in his letter of invitation, I wonder, if I would have accepted. Anyway, I reached the lectern, and I addressed the gathering for my allotted time of forty minutes. I was heard in pin drop silence, and at the end of my talk, was given a terrific ovation. The Vice Chancellor and his lady, the Dean, the professors and lecturers, the boys and girls, and even my own wife, stood up to give me an ovation.

After the convocation was over, we walked into the gardens to have refreshments. And I, having an eye for pretty girls, walked up to a pert little thing wearing a pair of tight fitting jeans and a body hugging blouse, and I started a conversation with her. I said, "My dear, why were you so kind to me? I not being an orator nor having the looks of Amitabh Bachhan, when only the other day you treated a VIP from Delhi so shamefully". This pert little thing had no inhibitions. She turned round and said, and I quote, "Oh, that a dreadful man! We asked him to come at four o'clock. He came much later and that too accompanied with a boy and a girl, probably his grand children. He was received by the Vice Chancellor and his lady and taken to the platform. He was garlanded by the Student Union President, and he demanded garlands for those brats too. So, the Union President diverged with the garland that was meant for the Vice Chancellor and gave it to the brats. Then the Vice Chancellor started singing the worthy's praises.

Whilst he was doing so, this man hitched up his dhoti, exposing his dirty thighs, and scratched away. Then the Vice Chancellor said, "This man has done so much for the country, he has even been to jail". And I nearly shouted out, 'He should be there now'. Anyway, when the Vice Chancellor asked him to come to the lectern and address the convocation, he got up, walked to the lectern and addressed us thus, 'Boys and girls, I am a very busy man. I have not had time to prepare my speech but I will now read out

the speech my secretary has written'. We did not let him stand there. Without exception, the whole lot of us stood and booed him off the stage." Now, you see, Ladies and Gentleman, what I mean by discipline. Had this man as his position warranted come on time at four o'clock, fully prepared and properly turned out, can you imagine the good it would have done to these 2000 young girls and boys? Instead of that, his act of indiscipline engendered further indiscipline. I thanked my lucky stars, having been in the Army for so many years, that I arrived there on time, that I had come properly dressed, that I didn't wear a dhoti to show my lovely legs, that I didn't exacerbate an itch or eczema, to hurt the susceptibilities of my audience, by indulging in the scratching of the unmentionables. Now, Ladies and Gentleman, you understand what I mean by discipline. We are the most ill-disciplined people in the world. So far, all of you have been very, very disciplined. Will you bear with me for another two minutes?

Having talked about leadership, having talked about discipline, I want to mention something about Character. We Indians also lack character. Do not misunderstand me, when I talk of character. I don't mean just being honest, truthful, and religious, I mean something more: Knowing yourself, knowing your own faults, knowing your own weaknesses and what little character that we have, our friends, our fans, the 'yes-men' around us and the sycophants, help us reduce that character as well.

Let me illustrate this by an example: Some years ago, Hollywood decided to make a movie about the great violinist and composer, Paganini. The part of Paganini was given to a young actor who was conversant, somewhat, with the violin. He was drilled and tutored to such an extent that when the little piece, the Cadenza, was filmed, it was perfect. When the film was shown, the papers raved about it, and the critics raved about it. And this man's fans, 'yes-men', sycophants, kept on telling him that he was as good a violinist as Heifetz or Menuhin. And do you know that it took eight months in a psychiatric home to rid him of his delusion? Do you know, Commandant, that the same thing happened to me? After the 1971 conflict with Pakistan, which ended in thirteen days and I took 93,000 prisoners, my fans, the 'yes-men' around me, the sycophants, kept on comparing me to Rommel, to Field Marshal Alexander, to Field Marshal Auchinleck, and just as I was beginning to believe it, the Prime Minister created me a Field Marshal and sent me packing to the Nilgiris. A hard-headed, non-nonsense wife deprived a psychiatric home (what we in India call a lunatic asylum), of one more inmate. I thank you very much indeed. Thank you.

Thank you Gentlemen, thank you for your kindness. Thank you for your patience and your discipline. I am delighted to see you all here.

HAIKU

DR, KUMARENDU MALLICK

Haiku is a short form of Japanese poetry. Generally, it consists of three lines, the middle line longer than the first and the last, with a total of 17 syllables, in a 5-7-5 pattern. However, haiku in English language departs from this typical form, often 3-5-3, pattern. Haiku often describes nature and captures a fleeting moment in time. It is like a painting, one can see and visualise it.

The first line in a haiku creates a situation and the other two lines form the idea behind the poem. It features nature and the seasons as subjects. A specific moment or experience is captured with a sense of directness.

Some write one line and two line haiku, but such haiku needs more skills and is not very prevalent.

A seasonal word (Kigo) is often included to indicate the time of the year - Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter. Kigo can be a flower, a fruit, an animal or anything else. If there is more than one image, a cutting word or phrase (kireji) is used. Haiku is singular, it does not have plural form. All the words are written in lower case.

To begin with haiku was written in present

tense. However, the English version of haiku now accepts past tense, too.

Example of Kigo words:

Spring - Sky lark, swallows, frog, chirping of birds.

Summer - rainbow, waterfall, flood, wild flowers, sun bathing, swimming, mosquito, cuckoo, snake, lotus and Lilly, sun flower and cicada

Autumn - moon, moon viewing, thunder, typhoon, cricket (insect), apple, grapes, coloured leaf, rice cropping, rice harvest, bonfire, folk dancing, thanks giving.

Winter - Cold, fog, dry leaves, snow, snow viewing, Christmas.

New year - first sun, first sparrow, first laughter

The sparrow and pigeons that do not migrate are non-seasonal words. The birthday cake, ocean waves, dawn and dog are non-seasonal words.

Bascho, Issa and Buson are iconic Japanese haiku poets.

Example of a few haiku.

the old pond,
a frog jumps in -
the sound of water

- *Matsuo Basho*

(the frog is the kigo for spring in this haiku)
a field of faceless pumpkins
autumn begins

- *Ed Mankowski*

(Pumpkin is the Kigo word for autumn)

The readers can imagine the scene and have
their own interpretation.

drizzle
in my palm the bundle
of her thoughts

little drizzle
I tilt the umbrella to get
her wet

Corona lockdown
my shadow too wants
a name plate

silted river
weight of silence too heavy
to ferry

abandoned track
the distant rainy day
now far behind

home visit
I search for father's foot marks

On village road

summer rain
my boat swings midway
in her eyes

sudden downpour
the fairies squeeze
their skirts

new moon
lead us from darkness to light
on the occasion of savitri brata

first shower
days of ponytails
and ribbons

every home visit
out of focus memories
get focused

burglary
the scripture full of
grandmas' tales

cobweb of dreams
hazards of being overley
beautiful

morning tea
I await the sun to take
the first sip

shades of love
fresh layer at each
dawn

fewness of wants
the lone star decorates
the twilight

rainforest
rustle of chirrups
in each leaf

raindrops night lamp
 the magician in search
 of an old song
 clouds part
 the sun rises on her
 lips
 life is like that
 child's cheerful brush
 sums zip zap
 first sight
 the morning glory blossoms
 on her cheeks
 first kiss
 another dot on the rise up
 of life's graph
 border river
 children sail paper boats
 to other bank
 first touch
 a thunder strikes
 my palm tree
 passing cloud
 the way my desert got
 first shower
 little smile
 on the cradle
 an inch of paradise
 morning breeze
 the chirrup tails
 the distant cloud
 beyond
 sand dunes
 sea of time

silent music
 I paint the path
 of the butterfly
 just
 before the storm
 she stomps in
 mother's cloth line
 the butterfly dries
 its woolens
 torn clouds
 trickle of crumpled
 sunshine
 journey of moth
 from darkness
 to light
 Monsoon air
 the egret wades
 through moonlight
 Storm in making
 waves of love
 yet to rise
 High wind
 tender thoughts lose way
 in my sky
 Swimming pool
 a butterfly leaves me
 in flutters
 Unknown tune
 someone's flute
 in bamboo bush
 Unknown place
 she steps back to hear
 unknown chirrup

A Page in History

Triveni Madduluri

It had not seen the light of day since 1947. The once crimson red, gold tipped mayan which held it was now faded and chipped around the edges. The gold that adorned its mayan had lost its grandeur long ago. But the saber itself glowed brilliantly as he pulled it out of the mayan. The burning hot sun of Delhi reflected off it; making it sparkle like a newly cut diamond. Major General Balbeer Chauhan looked into the shimmering saber and saw the reflection of his old but still fierce eyes; they glowed with forming tears. His age-beaten hands could no longer grasp the sword as they once had; when he had been a soldier in British Imperial Army. An army he had left a lifetime ago. Balbeer Chauhan held the saber across both his hands and glared into its shining metal. Just holding it seemed to rejuvenate him; he felt all of his eighty-four years melt away. He did not remember when his father had handed him the sword; he had only been four years old then. But the

nightmarish dreams of that day had haunted him all his life.

The Major General replaced the weapon in its mayan and hung it on the wall, below an old picture of his wife Kamala. She was struggling for her life in the hospital at this very moment. This night the dream that had always haunted him; came to him more clearly than it ever had before.

Balbeer Chauhan saw himself...as a child only four years old, tugging along, holding on to his father's kurta. They were at the Bagh. He saw himself as he was now; hovering in the air above the crowd. He saw himself as a child standing beside his father in the Bagh.... it was not really a bagh....Just an enclosure with four ancient looking walls....there was only one small entrance. The place was crowded with people; children, women, and men from all walks of life. Gathered in one common cause. To raise their voice against the British Raj. The child saw the troops block the entrance. Saw the people scrambling; but they did not waver

trivenim@hotmail.com

in the face of oppression. “Bharat mata ke jai!!” His father screamed. The people repeated this cry. The ancient looking walls reverberated with the force of it. The troops entered.

A silence fell on the crowd. People were trapped; there was only one exit. It was blocked. “Bharat mata ke jai!” the cry went up from somewhere in the crowd. The walls seemed to shake once more as everyone repeated the words. The British General stepped forward; his uniform glistened in the sunlight. The people did not stop clamoring the words that were to become the cry of millions across the subcontinent.

The troops marched in unison and formed a line; facing the crowd. His father pushed young Balbeer behind him; shielding him from the troops.

“READY!” The general ordered. The crowd showed no sign of silencing.

“AIM!” The soldiers raised their guns in one swift move. “Bharat mata ke Jai!” The thunderous cries continued. “FIRE!” General Dyer ordered.

Bullets rained, puffy white smoke rose from the troops’ guns as they spat death on the trapped crowd. Screams echoed. Bodies of men, women, and children fell around the child.

Including his father’s; the blood around the bullet holes made hideous patterns of crimson red on his father’s white kurta. The crimson red of spots on the white kurta matched the red colour of the mayan still slung around his fallen fathers shoulders.....

He awoke from the dream in a cold sweat! For the first time in his life he knew what that place in the dreams had been. Jallianwallah Bagh. On that fateful day in 1919. This dream had haunted him ever since. Balbeer Chauhan sat in the dark. Late into the night. All actions of his past swam to life around his memories. It had been this dream, he knew now, that had called him to join the Quit India movement at the age of twenty-seven....a lifetime ago....

....It was 1942....seated outside a tent somewhere in a Delhi cantonment of the British Imperial Army, a young brash officer named Balbeer Chauhan was cleaning his saber; the only symbol that remained of his family. The setting sun glinted off the shiny silver sword in a brilliant orange glow that matched the fire in the young officer’s eyes! Balbeer Chauhan knew that independence would become reality soon; the entire subcontinent was ablaze with the movement against the British Raj. He had joined the army to learn to fight. So he could fight against the very regime that commanded this

army he was in. And then he was drawn into that fight at that very moment. Suddenly a young Indian woman came running around the corner of the tent. She was out of breath, her hair untidy, one earring missing, her sari half fluttering in the air behind her; tears streaking her pretty face. She came to an abrupt stop at the sight of Balbeer. "What is wrong," he ran to her side. She was so out of breath that she could not form words. She just pointed around the corner.

Then the question answered itself. A British officer, whom Balbeer Chauhan immediately recognized; came running around the corner. His uniform half unbuttoned and in disarray. He smelled of whisky. Balbeer Chauhan's commanding officer Sir John skidded to a stop at the sight of him. It did not take long for Balbeer to surmise what the officer had tried to do. The women pointed to the officer "he tried to..," were the only words she could muster.

"Don't you have somewhere else to be soldier!" Sir John yelled. "You will leave this woman alone," Balbeer Chauhan said calmly.

The drunk officer, outraged at being talked back to; withdrew his sword. Balbeer Chauhan leaned down quickly and picked up his saber which he had dropped on the ground when he ran to the girl's side. Balbeer pushed the woman beside him with his left arm; bringing up his saber

with the right. He held the saber parallel to the ground, across his chest; in a defensive posture. It reflected the dim light of the torches on the hill far behind Sir John; darkness was falling on the village beyond.

Sir John lunged forward with his sword, going for Balbeer's neck. Balbeer made no such move. He lowered the saber, reached up with his left hand and grabbed the oncoming sword! Blood trickled down Sir John's sword as he tried to twist it out of Balbeer's iron grip with both hands. When he did not succeed in this, he reached for the revolver hanging on his waist. Before he could bring it up, Chauhan's saber was thrust through his midsection. A half deadly scream escaped Sir John's lips. Chauhan pulled the saber back with one jerk. Sir John fell back, dropping his sword. Blood poured out from his wound. Scuffle of boots on the dirt could be heard; other troops were running towards them, they had heard the scream. Balbeer quickly grabbed the mayan, slid the saber in it, took the girl's hand, and they ran towards the village in the distance.

Kamala had been at Balbeer Chauhan's side ever since. Balbeer had ended his career in the service of the British that day. He had joined the army of independent India few years later. He had lived to see India awake to freedom in

1947, with Kamala at his side. Their son, whom Kamala had proudly named Bharat, was born in August of that very year. Balbeer Chauhan had only wielded the saber twice more in his life; once in 1947 to protect his neighbour Jahangir Khan, who had wanted to go to the newly carved Pakistan. Second and last time Balbeer had used the saber was in the war of 1962. Though he had always kept it with him, until the day he retired from the army in 1969 at the rank of Major General.... There was a knock on the door. Balbeer Chauhan got up from the chair slowly, with the help of his cane, and went to the door. It was Manoj, his grandson. "Dad says come quickly we must go to the hospital now!"

He sat beside Kamala's hospital bed, holding her hand; she was taking her last breaths.

"Don't cry," she told him in a faint voice "it's been a good life. From the moment you first rescued me.... I have not regretted moments of life with you.... my page in history has come to an end..—" she did not complete the Sentence. She was gone. And Balbeer Chauhan knew that

there were fewer days ahead than behind for himself also.

A week later, as the nation was preparing for its 50th year of independence; Major General Balbeer Chauhan was drawing his last breaths on his deathbed. "Take this," he gave the saber to his 24 year old grandson with shaking hands. "Keep it with care.... but never draw it.... unless you must.... this is what I wrote my page in history with.... you must write yours in your own way...." Balbeer Chauhan closed his eyes with those words, surrounded by his family.

Manoj replaced the saber on the wall with the many family pictures his grandfather had hung there. As he was hanging the sword, he focused on a dusty old frame he'd never noticed before.... He wiped the dust away with his hand.... in the frame, written on a plain white canvas were the often forgotten words of a long forgotten shayar....

***"Hum laye hain toofan se Kashti Neekal
Kar Is desh ko rakhna mere Buchhon
sambhal kar"***

“QUEST FOR HUMAN VALUES IN TRIPLE STREAMS OF I. V. CHALAPATI RAO”: AN OVERVIEW

Rajamouly Katta

TRIVENI, India's Literary and Cultural Quarterly; deserves encomiums for its rich literary values and varied cultural interests. It attracts wide readership especially that of intellectuals across the world. Its kaleidoscopic concepts: culture and literature; arts and fine arts; history and heritage; tradition and civilization; values and virtues; justice and orderliness; science and technology; games and sports; education and enlightenment; scriptures and sculptures; faith and religion; etc present the confluence of diverse cultures with their snapshot details to represent the affluence of Indian renaissance. Dr. V.K. Gokak appreciates TRIVENI for its merits, "... it was indeed a step in the direction of federation of cultures, arts and literatures through identification of their similarities and a cross-fertilization of ideas." (Jan-Mar 2003) All literary pieces enshrined in the journal mark all literary values. 'The Triple Stream' excels the others with its lucidity for comprehensibility and variety for avidity and welcomes its voracious readers at its threshold to leave them enlightened for a great awakening.

The Chief Editor, Prof. I. V. Chalapati Rao

rajamoulykatta@gmail.com

has to his credit 'the triple streams' in TRIVENI to reflect his multisided genius and multi-dimensional learning like Francis Bacon. His triple streams aim at establishing cultural, moral and human values, building and rebuilding India to renew and revive her past glory and splendor; name and fame; recognition and reputation; crowning her the ideal and the model nation to other nations. He cannot think of the degeneration or decadence of values in India, "It looks as though the country has run out of intellectuals, men and women of true heroic stature and simple living" (Oct-Dec,2012). His 'triple streams', essays are real 'attempts' to preserve human values and moralistic standards in the world in general and in India in particular. They reflect his deep anguish for the downfall of human values as he is human in relation, humanistic in approach and humanitarian in feeling. His philosophy is humanity, and his essays are lessons in humanism. For him a good essay must have a lesson in human values for the revival and renewal of the past glory and splendor in India. He teaches humanity from the heart of his heart as he respects human and moral values. His readers are not just for knowledge but for enlightenment and awakening to human values. By virtue of such merits, his

essays have gained universal appeal. It is an undeniable fact and an open truth in the literary spectrum through the journalistic medium.

Prof. Rao's essays are characterized by lucidity for avidity. They are free from the obscurity and difficulty of Bacon's Essays. The reader finds in his essays the felicity of expressions due to his lightness and ease. His sentences are crispy in style, weighty in thoughts, moralistic in teaching and humanistic in spirit. They are conveniently short unlike those of Bacon. His essays, therefore, mark the terseness of expression and beauty in brevity. His grammatical compactness suits his terseness of expressions. Finally, his aphoristic style is remarkable for we find in it quotable sentences and knowledgeable maxims. For example, 'Life is not a celluloid world of make believe', 'Teachers should lead by example' (Oct-Dec 2011), 'Happiness is not a gift of accident', 'It is not chance but a choice' (April-June 2003), etc are at once crisp and aphoristic.

Apart from these values, his essays are within the reach of a common man in all respects. The titles of his essays are lengthy unlike those of Bacon, but they are as effective as Walt Whitman's titles. The reader is enabled to learn the gist of the essay by the title. He ironically passes comments on man with his questions and exclamations: 'Is not happiness within us?' (Oct-Dec, 2002), 'There will be second spring in old age!' (Jan-Mar, 2002), 'Wise men are happy even with small things but nothing pleases the fool!' (April-June, 2003), etc and finds the readers at ease and comfort. He aptly quotes

Tolstoy's story, 'How much land does man need?' to comment on the selfish and avarice attitude of man. His light humor presents the reader a pleasant mood to know life-truths and ground-realities. By all literary merits, he fulfills the objective of Bacon: "A good essay must have a grain of salt within it."

Bacon uses long sentences with parentheses and foreign expressions sometimes, unlike Prof. Rao for his use of small and crisp sentences. Both the essayists display their wide learning for different goals. He teaches humanism whereas Bacon teaches utilitarianism "the philosophy of fruits". Bacon gives importance to the subject with truths and facts related to domestic relations whereas Prof. Rao involves himself by virtue of his humanistic concern for man. Both are moralists with different outlooks. Bacon's essays with his great learning are mere recreations for utilitarianism whereas the triple streams are sheer lessons on humanism with open truths and accepted facts.

Prof. Rao composes various types of essays for his social documents, character portraits, biographical sketches, treaties on humanity, etc apart from his works: Indian Renaissance, Ancient Wisdom Modern Insights, Culture, Art of Living, Living through Changing Times, etc. For him, morals and ethics are very essential in all walks of life as they lead man to honesty, responsibility, humanity, orderliness, fairness, frankness, justice, etc. When one is committed to them, one will be away from the lures, temptations, and provocations of vices: corruption, deception and exploitation. Today's

newspapers are filled with the news of rapes, murders, moss-killings, thefts, robbery, ragging and kidnappings which are a few against their infinitude. Who and what is responsible for these inhuman acts? Cinemas, TV channels, etc are the root-causes and “weapons of mind pollution, mass distraction, rampant consumerism, casual sex and commodification of women” (Jan-Mar 2010). Selfish people think in terms of earning money, forgetting morals in any business or customer transaction. He rightly says, “Many people think that ethics and business are antithetical and mutually exclusive” (Jul-Sep, 2011). Business today is not free from deception and the falsity of advertisements. Now corruption is another evil which is much talked of and debated without arriving at a solution for it. He vehemently criticizes the clashes between the people of different religions, regions, castes, classes, sects or others in the realm of society. He rightly says, “Great men make small men painfully aware of their smallness. Puny persons are not at ease in the company of great men” (Jan-Mar 2006). For him, man-to-man relation should be healthy and harmonious for mutual encouragement and enlightenment. A gentle pat, charming smile, hearty hug, kind advice, etc., should motivate fellow citizens to do the right things to come up with flying colors in life since “it is human relations job” (Jan-Mar 2012). He feels that the teaching of morals and ethics is the most essential ingredient of his essays to promote humanity. Man’s thinking in the right way brings about right actions and righteous deeds “for

individual and social evolution.” (Apr-Jun 2008)

Whether mother is great, or the motherland is great is the question on the option of a citizen for integration. According to Prof. Rao, the worthy citizens say that Mother India is greater than Mother. He is a worthy citizen for his patriotic fervor and nationalistic zeal to the core. He quotes not only lessons from scriptures, sermons in stones and teachings of saints but also from the lives of great people and the Constitution of India to sow the seeds of patriotism and transcend “religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory the dignity of women; and to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture” (Oct-Dec 2011). He always reflects his woes and throes of Mother India for corruption, bribery, and indiscipline today.

According to Prof. Rao, man is the part of society, and he plays the most vital and pivotal role in the welfare of the society he lives in. The orderliness of society depends on man in the way the quality of a tree depends on the quality of a seed. Man-to-man relation should be pure and sure to promote the welfare of human society and ensure man’s well-being, but it is otherwise in the age of science and technology. Man’s intelligence is deliberately used in the fulfillment of coveted goals and vested interests. Prof. Rao opines, “Artificial intelligence will replace human intelligence.” (Apr-June 2005) and feels sorry for the most unwelcome change. He welcomes scientific advance and technological progress for constructive purposes in the promotion of human values. The

progress of science and technology goes meaningless and senseless “when the poor are denied their meager meal and aqua!” (Jan-Jun 2002). Man’s welfare is the key one to fulfill the prime objective of man in society.

Dr. Rao applauds science for its advances and inventions by looking at its positive side but criticizes its negative side reflecting on its destruction. All scientists start their invention with ‘doubt’ rather than ‘faith’. He reiterates, “It is plagued with several shortcomings: indeterminism, irreversibility, uncertainty, nonlinearities, etc.”. He supports the view of Prof. Planck: “Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature...” He further adds that it “is being used by the vested interests to exploit and further impoverish the poor.” He too looks at the destructive side of science, “It has become the hireling of politics and is destroying life and property by producing nuclear bombs and other of mass destruction.” (April-June 2005)

Prof. Rao is an out-and-out humanist as well as a lover of nature: flora and fauna to reflect his human touch. He emphasizes the need for ecological balance, environmental care and nature proliferation for human welfare. He ascribes the colossal losses of Mother Earth: deforestation, pollution, etc to man for he is the one “who commits matricide”. It is very essential on the part of man to conserve nature. He opines in ‘Nature Endangered’ that trees are to be grown as a remedy for pollution and other problems, the cure for the present ills is the study of scriptures of the past to learn lessons’ (Oct-Dec 2012). Man should forget his suicidal war

against nature with him as its integral part to prove his insightful wisdom in the preservation of humanity and biodiversity.

India is famous for its traditional and cultural varieties. It has a pluralistic society for its rich variety of social, ethical and religious values. Though it has diversity, it has unity intact to achieve harmony. The essayist is happy that some British scholars too appreciated India for the treasure of her literatures, cultures, customs, traditions, arts, games, laws, archaeology, wisdom, and so on, despite their hatred. In the age of globalization or the world becoming “a true global village-a mini multi-cultural world”, it witnesses all unwelcome changes in the name of modern fashions and cultures: “proliferation of vulgarity, unabashed luxury and commodification of women” (Jan-Mar 2010). All cultural values have become topsy-turvy due to various reasons without any way for solution by means of good thinking.

For the solution of ills, evils, entangles and riddles in society today, the preaching of scriptures helps the man today as they serve as a beacon light for the flight of life. Prof. Rao exhorts man to approach the scriptures for the solution of the cruel deforestation and ecological imbalance and for the salvation of mankind sans miseries. ‘Unity in diversity’ is the message of the Vedas. In the same way, sculptures in holy places are sermons and lessons in humanism. They shape the minds and the personalities of onlookers. Our culture and heritage, embedded in scriptures and sculptures, serve to be reservoirs of wisdom for the education of the

people today. Prof. Rao feels that apart from scriptures and sculptures, the teachings of great men and women retold in their biographical sketches stand as the compass for the voyage of life. He is influenced by the lives of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, etc. Vivekananda influences him by the spiritual concept of The Gita: “*Nishkama karma*”. He admits Tagore’s view of “the slavish system of education which encourages parrot-like repetition of lessons from the textbook.” For the student, the text serves as a pretext and the teacher is to quote many things from his wide knowledge and rich experience in the observation of the society around, “True education comes even from the companionship of trees and the presence of Nature” (April-June 2012). His essay, ‘New Winds Blowing in the Corridors of Higher Education’ presents an exhaustive list of Commissions and their obligations to improve the quality of education. His extensive reading and comprehensive understanding of the scriptures and the lives help him conceive triple streams for the readers to receive the fruits for assimilation.

Like Bacon’s essays, the triple streams reflect the multisided interests of Prof. Rao. He touches all subjects with equal dexterity. Arts and fine arts like music are to bestow on man indefinable experience and pleasant feeling. Prof. Rao says, “The queenliest of the fine arts”, “music soothes the frayed nerves and reduces

the level of metabolism” (April-June 2002). He talks of many Indian musicians and music lovers giving music spiritual status as it presents bliss and cures diseases as well. He refers to the art of letter-writing too, for it is very much missing with its warmth and gaiety in the modern scenario. He expresses his anguish over the vanishing of the art, “We lament the loss of many good things and positive features of the by-gone times.” The art of playing meant for health and happiness is in dire need of encouragement. Games and Sports are instrumental in the promotion of international understanding and mutual development. Now match-fixing and misunderstanding replace the values already established for games and sports. In a positive vein, he heartily encourages games and sports, giving room in his triple streams.

In the concomitant and convenient genre of compositions, Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao, as a humanist and true patriot has had vision and mission; objective and perspective of his own for the revival of the past glory of India in all respects to see it at the crest of the list of well-cultured countries. He does not mind much though it does not advance in respect of science and technology but, in his triple streams of TRIVENI and other writings, he minds much for its status as a nation of humanity. The concept of humanity dealt with fine dexterity has won universal appeal.

Lifestyle for sustainable development & Ethical values in contemporary India

S. Krishnamachari

Life style of an individual is the projection of his/her self, both inherent and or self imposed. The childhood influences and the environmental and social impact, create an inherent life style which gets imprinted in the individual, later in his lifetime. The self imposed life style is the result of neighbourhood life styles and the existing social values which tend to give him respect or prestige in the society. In general, we find the combination of both inherent and self imposed styles in an individual. But if we observe the life styles of great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, George Washington, Stalin, Maotse Tung, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Rabindranath Tagore and great sages, saints and prophets like Jesus Christ, Buddha, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sankaracharya etc, their life styles were natural and inherent, which had gone a long way to achieve their goals and to influence the commoners towards their ideals and aims. They had carried the society with them and their life styles were devoid of false values. Life styles developed on false values of opulent society put a strain on an individual

and retards his development, and also tend to retard the development of the society or a nation as a whole. Such life styles cannot be steady and productive for sustainable development. If an individual changes his life styles just for self prestige or for self projection it is both harmful to him and the society. A sustainable life style is one which restricts self projection, but is all pervasive and hence conducive to social welfare and development as a whole.

Tracing the history of the society from early ages, we find that life styles of an individual was the life style of the society as a whole in early primitive ages, in Aryan, Greek and Roman periods and even in middle ages before the advent of scientific and technological modern era. We rarely find differences in individual life styles during these periods and this life style had been forced on the individual and the society, just for survival amidst the then existing environmental conditions. Their dress, food habits, and living pattern reflected their tendencies for adjustment to cope up with environmental risks or hazards, to lead a happy and contented life. The question of false social values did not arise then. Those life styles were uniform in particular societies, tribes or sects as they were inherent in individuals and society,

solely because of environment factors. As such there were no divisions in a society generated, based on life styles and as such, there were less conflicts and contradictions in social structures. So these life styles did not retard the development or progress, though they did not contribute to rapid development. The process of development had been slow and steady. Though there were differences in society, based on respective occupations, for example, Kshatriyas, Brahmins, Vaisyas and Sudras evolved in Aryan society, their life Styles represented occupational necessities and they worked in cohesion and cooperation for livelihood and social welfare. There were no inter community rivalries as such in early days. These life styles, which might not have particular social goals, yet helped sustainable, though slow, social development. These life styles developed in a steady manner in each area or region, uninterrupted for ages, mainly because of lack of communications or transport between one region or the other. As such, clashes between life styles of different societies or groups did not come to the fore and create problems for steady growth of society by stages.

But during middle ages (medieval ages), the occupational divisions evolved in early civilizations divided the society into watertight compartments, restraining the scope of intermingling and inter cooperation. This, in turn, created caste differences. The Brahmins who had to really guide and educate the people with their wisdom and learning, became monopolistic in tendencies and began to exploit the illiterate

and innocent people for their selfish ends. They developed their own privileged and high-class styles, as a contrast to the simple and poor life styles of the commoners. Kshatriyas or Kings similarly began to lead a life of luxury and majesty. Royalty became hereditary. A separate life style for Kings, Queens and royal families came into being, and people, in general, living in poverty conditions took them for granted, and accepted their position as subordinates, in silence. All these factors which emerged in middle ages created different classes in the same society throughout the world, and consequently different life styles based on wealth, opulence and intellectual superiority. These different life styles in the same society created rifts and conflicts, later on. These put forth destructive tendencies on the surface, retarding or destroying the progress or achievements of the society, with the result the pace of real development became negative.

Then with the advent of scientific inventions and technological development, rather in unproportionally rapid stride, during 18th to 20th centuries, modern era ushered in, connecting different regions and nations of the world through transport and communication, enabling the inter mixture of races and communities, exchange of ideas and customs and also resulting in clashes of interests and life styles. Thus the modern era became responsible for rapid development of society in terms of comforts, luxuries, wealth, industrial production, and knowledge; but in its wake, it created different classes of society, rich and poor, rural and urban; the employers or bureaucrats as against

employees, subordinates and workers; developed and under developed nations and so on. Wealth and money power assumed importance over ethical or moral values. In pursuit of wealth, an individual developed the tendency to resort to corruption, malpractices and exploitation, throwing human values of compassion and cooperation to winds. Such individuals with their own self imposed superior life styles began to oppress the weaker sections and the down trodden for their own selfish ends. These had resulted in contrasting life styles which were always at logger heads with one another. In turn these had fanned violence, riots, revolts, wars and agitations, putting a break to all spheres of progress, development and achievements. False and sophisticated values entered the life styles of the opulent race; and disappointed forced uneasy life styles entered the poorer sections of the society. These life styles had become a bane to the society as a whole in modern days, and the very fabric of human progress and development is being crushed gradually. Ethical values have gone to the background in the modern life styles of the people.

For this pitiable state of life styles developed in modern era, the unproportionally rapid and uneven development of science and technology is predominantly responsible. In fact, the whole-range of scientific inventions and technologies was solely or mostly confined to Europe and America, and people took advantage of this, exploiting the other under developed nations to assume both political and social supremacy. They began colonizing the areas in under

developed countries. Consequently colonialism and Apartheid created a pitiable wide rift between life styles of people of developed and under developed nations. This racial and political supremacy led to discontentment and feelings of hatred and prejudice. These had virtually proved a stumbling block to sustained and uniform development of nations in the modern era. Industrial Revolution in Great Britain with widespread impact on other nations had resulted in sprawling up of factories in various spheres, which converted raw materials into finished products of consumer as well as other sectors. Transport and sale of these finished products to various areas at a profitable rate has created a new class of society, namely, Trading and business community which concentrated in urban areas. This community has assumed much importance in townships and cities. They have developed their own life styles. They rather lead a secluded life, not amenable to the needs of the people around and not mixing so freely with them. A distinct merchant class emerged. Their life styles have distinct feature, tending towards amassing of wealth. They combined both frugality and pomp. They are often dubbed as misers. The emergence of factories mainly in urban areas has created a new working class. Their life style reflects a desire to have all modern comforts with reasonable show off to the outside world, and a struggle for existence at home, with unrest looming large over them. This life style is particularly apparent in developing and underdeveloped nations like India and other Asian countries. Thus different classes of society with their own life styles have come to stay in

townships and cities. As a contrast, rural community with agriculture and cottage industries as main occupations where income is low and unstable live a life of poverty. Their life style is forced on them and reflect their poverty and hand to mouth living. They have chosen, unknowingly, to live in bondage, subjugation and fear, subject to oppression from exploiting community. It cannot be called a life style at all. It is a pitiable way of life. Thus with such contrasts of life styles and way of living which were the result of modern technical era, prejudices and hatred, suspicion and fear, oppression and revolts have come in the way of sustained development.

Under these conditions, it has become imperative on us to evolve and mould a healthy pattern of life style among individuals, which can be more or less uniform basically and is devoid of conflicts or contrasts. Such life style should be flexible and be capable of adjustment to changing environmental and social changes or conditions, so that it does not get a jolt all of a sudden, keeping individual at a fix. It should be free from false values and prestige, and be pervasive rather than concentrated. It should also be in cohesion with life styles of other individuals in the society. Such life style should develop inherently in an individual who also should not adopt different life styles at a given time towards different types of people with whom he comes in contact. Only then, it can be conducive to healthy development of society. Even change of life style to suit changing conditions of life and social environment should be a natural process, smooth and steady. The

evolution of this life style which only can pave way far sustainable development, is possible if we start from bottom to the top by stages and from a position of lack of comforts and opulence. It is always easier to adjust to affluent conditions later for a man starting his life in poverty conditions. But on the other hand, it is extremely difficult or rather impossible for a wealthy or high class society man to adjust to poverty conditions and low class society set up. Towards this end, a part of life time of such people should be spent among common people, absorbing or adjusting to their conditions of living, to promote mutual understanding of various problems in good faith. In ancient times, the royal children were sent to Gurukula Ashram where they had their education under a Guru, along with other common children with whom they mixed freely. This had enabled them to come out of secluded sophistication and gave them a broader outlook which changed their life style later on.

Many times, freedom struggle or national movements or need of the hour, bring people from all walks of life together towards a common goal. As a result, their life styles also change into one goal oriented, free from self prestige or false values. Our freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi with life style of simplicity and self dependence brought Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru of opulent family hand in hand with C. Rajagopalachari, and other leaders belonging to common ranks. This moulded their life styles later on, making them free from false prestige.

CAMBODIANS' RESPECT FOR TRADITION

N. Meera Raghavendra Rao

My dream of visiting Angkor watt came true when we boarded the MAS flight from kl to Siem Reap which we reached in less than two hours after a stopover at Phonm Penh, the capital of Cambodia. I was impressed by the cute little airport and the statue of the elephant and its rider which appeared to welcome the visitors. We did receive a warm smiling welcome the next minute from our prospective guide who was holding the placard high up with my husband's name on it



I am Shiya, you can call me Chi, he said, (a package tour certainly has its advantages). This is Mr Ra, he said, introducing the driver before ushering us into the air-conditioned Toyota. Soon Chi handed us two cute baskets containing small

towels as a souvenir and when we reached our hotel, Princess Angkor, (a four-star one) which was a short distance, a traditional welcome awaited us. The doorman greeted us with a namaste, Indian style, and the receptionist offered us a cool drink of lemon grass which was really refreshing. Another brought a tiny basket containing neatly folded colourful silk scarves asking us to pick up one each. Later, we learnt they were meant to cover our heads as protection from the scorching sun. Chi came exactly at 3 o'clock to pick us up and said our first visit was to Artisans Angkor. Pointing to the several hotels on the way which bore interesting names, he proudly informed us that Siem Reap boasted of many five-star hotels, adding "here the tradition/stipulation is the height of a building should not exceed that of the temple, Angkor Wat, and it is strictly followed."



* *meera45@gmail.com*

I marvelled at the respect Cambodians showed towards tradition and law. The Angkor Arts and Crafts showroom is housed in a cottage-shaped building amidst natural surroundings. The ambience reminded me of Kalakshetra back home. Taking a tour around the workshops we had a glimpse of how craftsmen master ancient crafts, such as lacquer work, stone and wood carving as well as painting on silk. They reproduce statues, paintings, bas reliefs inspired by original models with painstaking care. Here we see the rebirth of Angkor arts and crafts. Chi said, Artisans d' Angkor is a Cambodian limited company created in 1992 to help young rural population to find work in their home villages. It provides them with high-sk To Angkor Wat Atlast! I was struck by the magnificence and old world charm Angkor Wat presented from a distance. If you look straight ahead to the end of the causeway (built by sandstone blocks) over the moat only



three gopuras among the five of varying heights are visible. "The moat is to protect the temple from invaders, who are bad people," informed Chi. I was amused to see Chi clearly classifying people as good and bad, there were no shades of grey for him. Angkor Wat, which means "the

city which is temple" (Wat is a Thai name for temple) was built in the first half of the 12th century (1113 and 1150) for God Vishnu during the reign of Suryavarman II, who was a Hindu king. Some believe Angkor Wat was designed by Divakarapandita, the chief advisor and minister of the king, who was a Brahmin with divine dispensation. The Khmers attribute the monument to the divine architect Visvakarman. (Chi's information: 300,000 people, 5,000 carvers and 4,000 elephants were involved in building the temple. It was built as a tomb to bury Suryavarman II who was a good king. A king was believed to be the incarnation of God)

We entered through the western entrance gopura which is also the main entrance, for the temple faces west. Once inside we realized the complicated structure of the architectural plan with a series of elevated towers, covered galleries, chambers, porches and courtyards on different levels linked by stairways. A slight detour to the right took us to the shrine under the southern tower and there was an idol of Vishnu, tall and majestic with eight arms standing under a saffron coloured umbrella made of shining silk. The head gear was shaped differently from the one that adorned deities in South India. A few flowers were placed at the foot and a middle aged lady with tear filled eyes was sitting and praying there. You feel there is an aura in the whole atmosphere. There is just enough space to prostrate before the deity and to circumambulate. You look around for His consort, Goddess Lakshmi and you shrink at the sight of a headless figure nearby! When

I expressed my shock and disappointment , Chi observed “ the bad people caused all the destruction “

Architecture and Symbolism of Angkor Wat

Suryavaman 11 (reigned 1113-50) had a long reign in which he was besieged by invasions from neighbouring enemies –the Chams in South Vietnam and the Siamese (the Thais today) in Thailand. Despite waging wars with these two kingdoms , he built Angkor Wat , the greatest architectural achievement of the Khmers. The height of the temple is 213 metres (699 ft.) with three rectangular or square levels .Each one is progressively smaller and higher from the one below starting from the outer limits of the temple. Covered galleries with columns define the boundaries of the first and second levels.

The third level supports five towers —four in the corners and one in the middle which are the most prominent feature of Angkor Wat. Graduated tiers , one rising above the other ,give the towers a conical shape and, near the top , rows of lotuses taper to a point which makes the overall profile look like a Lotus bud . The ingenious plan of the temple is quite deceptive from the entrance which appears like a colossal mass with one level and you get to see all the five towers only from a certain angles.

Symbolism: Angkor Wat is a microcosm of the Hindu Universe in stone and represents an earthly model of the cosmic world. The moat represents the mythical oceans surrounding the earth and the succession of concentric galleries represent the mountain ranges that surround

Mount Meru, the home of the Gods. The towers represent the mountain's peaks and the experience of the ascent , to the central shrine is, may be intentionally , a fairly convincing imitation of climbing a real mountain. We were amply convinced of this after reaching the top puffing and panting , drenched in sweat , but with a great deal of satisfaction of having made it to “Mount Kailash” as Chi compared it to the ultimate experience of reaching God “which was not easy, “ he said.

Gallery of bas-reliefs: One of the most famous creations in khmer art , cover the exterior walls of Angkor Wat's third enclosure ,just above ground level . Except for two panels which depict the Historic procession of Suryavaman 11 and the Heavens and Hells, the source for themes for bas-reliefs is mainly our Hindu epics , the Ramayana and the Maha Bharatha. We were fascinated by the detailed presentation of the battle of kurukshetra along the south half of the western gallery and the churning of the sea of milk along the south half of the east gallery. In the north west corner pavilion we find a scene where Vishnu with four arms is in sitting pose surrounded by a bevy of Apsaras (here Chi enlightened us about their importance in Khmer art) . At the top of this scene we see the celestial beauties floating with lissome grace and underneath , Vishnu reclining on the serpent Ananta and floating on the ocean. His upper torso rests on His shoulder and His consort Lakshmi sits near His feet.

View of sunset eludes us

Finally after a tour of nearly two hours we emerged from the temple quite exhausted when

Chi said it was the right time to view the sun set in all its glory. We expectantly walked towards the moat from where we could also have a view of all the five gopuras but the sun set eluded us because the sky suddenly turned cloudy. The row of shops on our way out seemed to beckon us with over sized tender coconuts displayed prominently. “One dollar each” said the young girl and it didn’t appear too much of a price to pay at that moment !

Awe struck at Bayon

We set out early the next morning as Chi had chalked out a whole day itinerary for us which was visiting Angkor Thom , Preah Khan , Ta Prohm and Banteay Srei temples. On the way Chi explained to us that Angkor Thom which means “a great city” , built by Jayavarman Seven during the end of 12th. Century and beginning of the 13th. Century , was the last capital and it served as the religious and administrative centre of the vast and powerful Khmer Empire .

The five Gates which are similar have a triple tower and are carved with four faces that closely resemble the statues of Jayavarman seven. (I found their expression unfathomable) . We approached the city through the South Gate after crossing the moat .The wide and lengthy path is lined by an avenue of statues On the left and on the right , two rows of figures each carry the body of a giant serpent — a seven headed naga in the shape of a fan which extends from the beginning of the cause way. Just a glance at the figures show the contrast

— the almond shaped eyes with their placid faces are the Devas while the ones with a fierce grimace and disgruntled expressions are the asuras. The parallels with the churning of the Sea of Milk particularly as sculpted on the gallery of Angkor Wat are complete with their head dresses. The Devas wear a conical head dress and the asuras wear a military head dress.

I stood transfixed

The first impression when you set eyes on Bayon situated at the centre of Angkor Thom is its uniqueness . The architecture and grandeur of the temple reflects the dynamism and expansiveness of the King’s reign , (at the mention of Jayavarman 7 Chi’s face lights up and he starts reeling out all the good things he did for his people— building temples, schools and hospitals). Once inside, we were overawed by this architectural marvel and its symmetry which competes with Angkor Wat with its extensive religious and mythical bas-reliefs . It has two sets of bas-reliefs on the first two levels . The inner gallery is decorated with mythical scenes constituting Hindu mythology. The bas-reliefs on the outer gallery are a marked departure containing scenes of every day life—markets with motley crowds ,fishing activity , festivals with cock fights (etc, to be deleted) and jugglers and so on and historical scenes with battles and processions, which made me wonder at their juxtaposition. I stood transfixed at the workmanship of the reliefs in the eastern gallery

which are divided into three panels and depict a military procession with banners and a background of tropical trees .On the top tier warriors with their short hair , heads unprotected are armed with javelins and shields ,while those on the lower tier have goatee beards and wear exotic head dresses , which suggest they are Chinese. Musicians are seen accompanying the warriors .Horsemen riding bareback flank the musicians.

The commanders of the troops , including Jayavarman 7 , identified by parasols with tiers and insignias , are mounted on elephants and are preceded by women of the palace who follow the King. Towards the end of the procession , covered wooden carts carry provisions of food for the military . A woman is seen crouching blowing the fire for the food in the pot to cook.

The procession continues , the reliefs follow on with genre scenes of everyday life and include a coconut tree with monkeys perched on it. A tiered wooden building appears like a store . The headdresses , clothing and objects hanging from the ceiling suggest the inmates are Chinese.

Architectural climax

The third level comes as an architectural climax with the central sanctuary and the faces of Avalokiteshvara . The central mass is circular, something uncommon in khmer art. The expressions on the faces on four sides of the eight towers marking the cardinal directions are

rather intriguing. However, the iconography of the four faces has been widely debated by scholars and, although some think they represent the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, in keeping with the Buddhist character of the temple , it is generally accepted that the four faces on each of the towers are images of King Jayavarman 7 and signify the omnipresence of the King.

Even as we were emerging out of Bayon admiring what we had just seen , Chi reminded us that we were yet to visit the rest of the sights in Angkor Thom- The Royal Palace, Terrace of Elephants and The Leper King .

Disappointed and intrigued

Expecting to see atleast some portions of the Royal Palace with traces of royalty preserved, I was thoroughly disappointed to find only recognizable remains which start from the main road with two foundations, now known as The Terrace of Elephants and The Terrace of The Leper King .The two are only projections with steps evenly spaced along the terraces which lead to an open area that was a Royal Plaza used by Jayavarman 7 for reviewing troops , processions, hosting festivals and ceremonies.

The Terrace Of the Elephants (not exactly a terrace because you don't have to climb steps to see it) extends over 300 metres in length from the Baphuon to the Terrace of The Leper King. The main attraction of this Terrace is the facade decorated with elephants and their riders. When you examine closely you find all

the pachyderms looking very lifelike because of their huge size. They are seen using their trunks to hunt and fight while tigers claw at them .

The sight of the statue of the Leper King (a copy , the original one is in the courtyard of National Museum in Phnom Penh) in a sitting position on a platform, with his right arm placed on his raised right knee , left arm placed on his left folded leg and a yellow silk cloth running across his left shoulder arouses your curiosity about the subject. The origin of the name is shrouded in mystery and so is the reason for the missing left foot and fingers on the right hand of the Leper King. Chi had an explanation for the missing body parts . It appeared when the King killed a snake , its venom splashed on his body and some of it went into his mouth and he had died a year later.

Temples in the grip of nature

“From here we are proceeding to visit the “Father Temple” and later “The Mother Temple”, and after lunch the last one which the king built in honour of his teacher,” informed Chi who also assured us that there will not be much of climbing steps as in Angkor Wat or Bayon which came as a relief to me in particular

The “Father “ and “Mother” temples are Preah Khan and Ta Prohm , built by Jayavarman 7 and dedicated to his father Dharanindravarman and the second temple to his mother.

Shrouded in dense jungle the temple of Ta Prohm , is very much different right from its approach which involves a long walk. We came across a group of landmine victims

performing melodious music which was resonating the air. They were selling CDs of the killing fields costing 10 dollars each . Ta Prohm is certainly a nature lover’s paradise ! Centuries old trees — fig, banyan and kapok appear to be vying with the structures spreading their gigantic roots over stones, probing walls and terraces , as their branches and leaves intertwine to form a roof over the structures. Strangely these trees act both as protectors and agents of destruction in be it buildings or monuments. The plant takes hold in a crevice somewhere in the super structure of a building, usually where a bird had deposited a seed and extends roots downwards to the soil . In doing so , the roots work their way between the masonry , so that as they grow thicker , they gradually wedge open the blocks eventually becoming a support for the building. But when the tree dies or becomes a victim of nature’s fury , the loosened blocks collapse .

Scenes from life of Buddha

We entered through the Gopura 4 on the eastern side (the most important of this temple entrances) which has double rows of pillars inside. The interesting part here are the tall bas reliefs with scenes from the life of Buddha on the outer and inner walls.

As you walk along you find nature’s encroachment here too —the roots of an enormous silk-cotton tree enveloping part of the wall , one of them running vertically right next to a devata.

We didn’t spend too long over here as the

heat was enervating ,sapping our energy. Also we wanted to make it to Preah Khan before lunch. On our way back we were literally beseeched by two young lads holding out a set of picture post cards saying, “one daahler.” Though I had already purchased a set at Angkor Wat (having been duped by a young woman who charged two dollars for the set) I gave in looking at their innocent faces. Chi said these boys handover the money earned through selling these cards to their fathers who mostly were farmers and they used the money to buy uniforms for their school going children.

As we were leaving a framed board outside caught my attention. It read “India – Cambodia Co-operation Project for Conservation and Restoration of Ta Prohm temple.” Chi asked if I could read the script below . And I read out the Hindi script and told Chi it was a translation of what appeared above and found him smiling away.

Destruction by humans

In Preah Khan temple too nature coexisted with the archeological structure resulting in its protection and destruction as in Ta Prohm. The difference perhaps is , here the worst destruction took place by humans as part of a determined effort to transform the Buddhist complex into a Hindu temple .The walkway at the eastern entrance covers 200metres to the gopura of the fourth enclosure , the first part is lined with boundary stones. The faces of their square sectioned pillars have a carving of a monster with a human torso and hands

raised , the legs of a garuda , and a lion like face , this unusual combination was rather intriguing. Niches in the caps of the boundary stones originally had the image of Buddha which were disfigured in the return to Hinduism in the second half of the 13th. Century. At the centre of the central sanctuary is a small stupa , originally a statue in the likeness of Jayavarman 7’s father Jayavarmesvara stood there . Three small rectangular temples surround the Buddha temple :the north is dedicated to Shiva, the south to the deceased kings and queens and the west to Vishnu. The north temple west pediment shows Vishnu reclining and Lakshmi at His feet , a familiar scene in our temples, but I found their head dresses were different .The east has the Hindu trinity :Shiva flanked by Brahma and Vishnu .

Marvel in pink

Post lunch we headed to Banteay Srei temple which is a distance of 20 kilometres , all along the way Chi continued referring to it as a small temple but with rich architecture . Banteay Srei which means the “citadel of women” is indeed an exquisite miniature , its compactness and intactness presented a real contrast to the sprawling temples , (half in ruins) we had previously visited. Described as a “precious jem “ and a “ jewel in Khmer art” it was built in the second half of the 10th. Century by a Brahmin of royal descent who was spiritual teacher to king Jayavarman 5. The intricate pink sand stone carvings depicting the story of our epics, especially the Ramayana

are reminiscent of our own temples in India. There are three shrines situated side by side in a north to south line standing on a common low platform and opening to the east. The principal shrine contains a mounted Shiva Linga . Chi explained that the three represent Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva . After a detailed tour of this deceptively small temple with lots and lots of magnificent carvings, (no single space appears without a theme or a story from our epics) you emerge with an “aesthetic” satisfaction and feel amply rewarded for the time spent.

Fascinating Life on a Lake

The last day was a boat trip on the Tonle Sap , the largest permanent fresh water lake in South east Asia . We got to see “life on a lake “ —people permanently living in houseboats parked around and all their needs being taken care of . Supermarkets, schools, mechanic shops, restaurants, a Mosque and a Church , school for children , billiard table and what not , everything made available in the vicinity , not on land but on the lake. During rainy season the “whole village “ is towed to the mountains to return once summer sets in to continue life on the lake . We were attracted by the souvenir shop which had everything that was specific to this temple city—right from key chains with temple pictures to models of Tuk Tuks , rickshaws attached to a motorbike , a popular transport in the city . After purchasing one I found it was an older version as the rick was attached to a cycle and not a bike! .

My personal observations

I felt the Hindu and Buddhist temples we visited continue to have an aura and sanctity about them ,perhaps because they were once places of worship. A few idols remain , some are intact and others in different stages of destruction ..Nevertheless the temples are worth visiting as they provide not only a cultural and architectural feast but the extent of Indian influence the country and its people have had.

Though we do not find practitioners of Hindu religion as the majority are Buddhists , followed by Christians and muslims, it is heartening to find the Hindu temples are preserved and maintained albeit for tourist interest (I was delighted to watch tourist guides explaining stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata to visitors from the U.S. and other countries). Apart from the Government of India , the governments of China and France have extended co-operation in the temples’ conservation and restoration .

Food : The only vegetarian food you get is perhaps rice and boiled vegetables (I had difficulty in making the waiter understand what we meant by vegetarian food) because Cambodians are predominantly non-vegetarians . Chi spoke English fairly well but Ra, the driver was conversant only in Cambodian , which was a mix of Sanskrit and Pali said Chi.

Empowering Women in Assam: ADI and BBCI-TMC Collaborate on Breast Cancer Awareness and Early Detection Workshops

Fostering Awareness and Saving Lives through Community Engagement

HIREN SARMA

Introduction

Breast cancer, one of the most common forms of cancer affecting women globally, remains a significant public health challenge in India. Despite remarkable advances in medical technology and treatment, early detection continues to be the cornerstone for improving survival rates and quality of life for those diagnosed. In regions like Assam, where awareness and access to healthcare resources may be limited, proactive efforts are essential. Recognizing this need, Assam Development Initiative (ADI) facilitated two (2) workshops in Guwahati and two (2) in Jorhat in December'2024. While the Guwahati workshops were partnered with Dr. Bubaneswar Borooah Cancer Institute – Tata Memorial Centre (BBCI-TMC), the workshops at Jorhat were made possible by several local citizens and social organizations.

The Importance of Early Detection

· **Critical Survival Factor:** Early detection of breast cancer dramatically increases the

* *hiren_sarma2000@yahoo.com*

Hiren Sarma is a retired engineer currently residing in Houston, Texas.

probability of successful treatment and long-term survival. When identified at an initial stage, the disease often requires less aggressive therapy and presents fewer complications.

· **Barriers:** Cultural taboos, lack of awareness, and limited access to diagnostic tools have contributed to late-stage diagnoses, resulting in poorer outcomes.

· **Empowerment through Education:** Educating communities, especially women, about the warning signs, self-examination techniques, and the importance of regular screening is a powerful tool for combating breast cancer.

About ADI and BBCI-TCM, and the Guest Speaker

ADI: Assam Development Initiative

Assam Development Initiative (ADI) is an educational trust registered in Guwahati, Assam. The trust is engaged in supporting the operation of several primary schools in underprivileged areas in and around Guwahati. ADI's flagship project, Value-based Education (VbE) and Child Development, was initiated in 2018 to provide a holistic education for the school community (school management, teachers,

parents, and students). The team is currently engaged in implementing the project in three (3) government higher secondary schools in Guwahati and two (2) government higher secondary schools in Golaghat district. As part of the project, ADI regularly conducts workshops at schools, including consultations with the parents in various aspects of life skills.

BBCI-TCM: Dr.Bhubaneswar Borooah Cancer Institute (Tata Memorial Centre)

BBCI is a premier cancer institute located in Guwahati, Assam. The institute was set up by a local voluntary organization called 'Dr.B.Borooah Cancer Society Trust' and became operational in 1974. In 1986, it was handed over to the Government of Assam, and in 2017, it was taken over by the Department of Atomic Energy, Govt of India, as a Grant-in-Aid Institute and as a unit of Tata Memorial Centre (Mumbai).

The Guest Speaker: Dr. Deba Sarma, MD, FACS

Dr.Deba Sarma, after obtaining her Doctor of Medicine degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, completed her Surgical Internship at John Hopkins University and General Surgery residency at Yale University.

Dr. Sarma obtained her Fellowship of Colon & Rectal Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University and practiced as a Colorectal surgeon for 3 years before returning to Duke University to complete her Fellowship in Breast Surgical Oncology. She is currently a Breast

Surgical Oncologist and Site Director at Atrium Health Union West/Levine Cancer Institute, Charlotte, North Carolina. Dr. Sarma also serves as an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Atrium Health Department of Surgery.

Workshop Objectives and Framework

The primary objective of the workshops facilitated by ADI in association with the Tata Cancer Institutes is to bridge the knowledge gap regarding breast cancer and to encourage proactive health behavior among the people of Assam. The workshops were designed to be participatory, culturally sensitive, and impactful.

Key Objectives

- **Raise Awareness:** To inform communities about breast cancer, its risk factors, symptoms, and the benefits of early detection.
- **Promote Self-Examination:** To teach women and men how to conduct regular breast self-examinations and recognize abnormalities.
- **Demystify Screening:** To dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding breast cancer screening and diagnostics.
- **Encourage Medical Consultation:** To motivate individuals experiencing symptoms to seek timely medical advice and intervention.
- **Train Community Health Workers:** To equip local health workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to serve as advocates for early detection in their communities.

Workshop Structure

Since the workshops were conducted for different audiences, they were prepared

accordingly as discussed below:

Guwahati, Assam:

Workshop 1: This session was organized for the senior girl students from ADI VbE project-affiliated schools (3 schools from Guwahati) and their mothers (guardians). This was the primary target audience for ADI to engage the parents in the Value-based Education project, while benefiting the girls and the mothers in these very important health issues. The session was planned for 6 hours, which included presentations from Dr. Deba Sarma and the BBCI surgical oncologist, Dr. Pompe Buragohain, followed by screening and consultations for the willing participants. The screening arrangements were made by BBCI technical staff. This workshop was conducted in Assamese and was limited to women only to encourage participation. This was considered to be a huge success, and Dr. Sarma was highly impressed with the whole arrangement in general, but primarily with the efficiency of the BBCI staff.

Workshop 2: The second event was organized at the BBCI auditorium. The first hour was kept specifically for a scientific discussion between Dr. Sarma and the BBCI staff, as well as some external doctors invited by BBCI. This was a public event. The program started with ADI officials explaining their general activities and the objective of the workshop. ADI Chairman Hiren Sarma was available to welcome all the ADI staff, including some of the past presidents. BBCI Director Dr. Bibhuti

Bhusan Borthakur spoke about their activities, particularly about their community outreach program. A large number of cancer survivors attended the session and actively participated in the question-and-answer session following an interesting presentation by Dr. Deba Sarma. The audience benefited from the joint discussion session provided by Dr. Sarma and Dr. Buragohain from BBCI.

Jorhat, Assam:

While the sessions at Guwahati were well prepared with prior communication among ADI, BBCI, Dr. Sarma, and the schools, the workshops at Jorhat were somewhat hastily arranged due to last-minute requests from some of the local citizens, primarily Er. Uday Khound and some social organizations.

Session 1: The session was arranged at a nearby village called Bhatemara. The organizers were highly enthusiastic and did their best to make the event successful. Following talks from the heads of various organizations, Dr. Deba Sarma made a presentation in Assamese. Jorhat Cancer Centre, which is a unit of Assam Cancer Care Foundation, a joint initiative between the Government of Assam and the Tata Trusts, provided a physician, the scanning units, and their technicians. The village ladies participated very actively in discussions as well as took part in the scanning process.

Session 2:

Session 2 was organized for public

attendance. Since the Jorhat Cancer Institute could not host the event at their centre, ADI and the local organizers had to arrange for a rented auditorium from a local NGO. Despite the absence of any direct participation from the Institute in this event, many local prominent citizens, including physicians, attended the presentation and the lively discussions.

Community Engagement and Cultural Sensitivity

A unique feature of these workshops was their emphasis on contextual understanding. Assam is a culturally rich and diverse region, with its own beliefs and values influencing health-seeking behavior. ADI, with its local networks, ensures that workshops are adapted to the linguistic and cultural context of the communities. Female facilitators and health workers were engaged to build trust and encourage participation among women, who are the most affected demographic.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the Cancer Institutes in Assam are taking many proactive measures to take their initiatives to the rural areas. BBCI Guwahati has established a highly efficient 'Community Reach out Network' that periodically visits rural areas in Assam and other Northeastern states. BBCI proudly highlights their work in Arunachal in 2023, where they conducted a one-week Awareness and Scanning program. The program included training sessions for the local nurses and the community volunteers to continue

these self-testing processes within the community. BBCI sends out its Community Reachout workers to these places to ensure that the correct practices are being followed after the initial training.

Overcoming Challenges

- **Taboos and Myths:** Many participants harbor deep-seated fears and misconceptions about cancer, including fatalism and the stigma of discussing breast health. These kinds of workshops use respectful dialogue and evidence-based information to address these issues. The participants get the opportunity to have one-to-one dialogues with the physicians and the nurses in a more friendly environment. The experienced ADI office bearers and the Field Workers were also found to be very useful in encouraging the senior girls' students and their mothers to engage in asking questions.

- **Accessibility:** Rural and remote areas pose logistical challenges. ADI and the Cancer Institutes deployed mobile health units and collaborated with local organizations to reach underserved populations.

- **Language Barriers:** Educational materials and sessions were offered in Assamese to the school students and their parents, ensuring inclusiveness.

Impact of the workshops

Many school parents and the participants in the public forums expressed their gratitude to ADI, BBCI, and the organizations at Jorhat for this initiative. The local media also encouraged the organizers to come forward and hold similar events in other areas of Assam.

- **Increased Awareness:** Post-workshop surveys among the attendees are being planned by ADI to see the impact of the workshops among the school communities, in terms of following up on the early detection practices recommended.

- **Reduced Stigma:** Open discussions and survivor testimonies have helped to reduce the stigma associated with breast cancer, allowing more women to seek help without fear or embarrassment.

Partnership Synergy: ADI and the Assam Tata Cancer Institutes

The collaboration between ADI and the Tata Cancer Institutes is a model of effective partnership in public health. By combining ADI's expertise in community mobilization with Tata's medical knowledge and infrastructure, the workshops offer both credible information and compassionate support.

Looking Ahead: Sustainability and Expansion

The success of these workshops in Assam has set the stage for broader initiatives. Plans should be made to:

- Expand the program to neighboring villages and towns, adapting content to regional needs.

- Develop digital resources and radio broadcasts to reach even wider audiences.

- Establish a network of local champions and survivor groups to sustain the momentum.

- Incorporate screening for other women's cancers, such as cervical cancer, into future workshops.

Conclusion

Like anywhere in the world, the fight against breast cancer in Assam is a real and living issue. This was a baby step for ADI to embark on this effort, and thanks to Dr. Sarma from the USA, Dr. Bibhuti Bhusan Borthakur, the Director of BBCI Guwahati, and his physicians and staff members, and Er. Uday Khound and other local organizations for their support in this effort. ADI Management and all the project members deserve huge applause for their hard work and dedication in making all the events successful. Through well-structured workshops, dedicated outreach, and a deep respect for local culture, thousands of individuals can gain the knowledge, confidence, and support needed to take charge of their health.

However, ADI is still a budding organization, more engaged in inculcating value-education in a limited number of school communities. For ADI to continue to support these activities, the community, Government, and corporate resources will be required. That will be the next phase of ADI's endeavor in its pursuit of commitment and excellence.

An Exploration of Narrative Technique in Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra*

Dr. Mukta Gupta, N. Satishkumar

Gita Mehta is one of the well-known contributors in Indian English Literature. Indian English Literature has a long tradition of women writers such as earlier novelists Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, etc. Compared to these women novelists Gita Mehta's contribution is though quantitatively less but it is qualitatively significant because of her handling of the subject-matter and form. As a diasporic writer, she dedicated her writing towards Indian culture and society. Her first work is *Karma Cola: Marketing the Mystic East* published in 1979 and this first book is a series of interconnected essays weaving Mehta's impressions of India's mysticism. Her first novel *Raj*, published in 1989, is a thorough and colorful historical story that follows the progression of a young woman born into Indian nobility under the British Raj. The novel is a magnificent mixture of history and fiction. Later on she published another novel *A River Sutra* in 1993. The novel centers on India's holiest river, the Narmada. It is in the form of interconnected stories. She published

another non-fiction *Snakes and Ladders* in 1997 which is a collection of essays about India since Independence. She defines her India through insightful, intelligent and often witty eyes with a smattering of personalised anecdotes that define it not so much as a set of essays, but a collection of lives.

The present paper seeks to study the narrative technique of Gita Mehta's novel *A River Sutra*. The novel is a saga of interlinked stories which flows with same theme and same subject-matter. The writer situates the novel on the banks of the river Narmada. The river is associated with the religious faiths and beliefs of Indian people. People worship the river and get salvation in her company. The river is a motherly figure for them. Therefore, frustrated and nervous people come on the banks of the river for getting solace of mind. In this novel Gita Mehta uses intricate narration or metanarration technique in which there is not only one narrator but sub-narrators. Much of the variety and vitality of this novel is due to its having more than one narrator. A narrative contains story elements which are narrated by a narrator who is a speaker of that narrative but not always a character in the work. An

satishn033@gmail.com

author's choice of point of view influences the kind of narrator used. The ancient Indian tradition of story-telling helps the novelist to present a crowded world in the novel. In ancient times story-telling was a skill. These stories give moral lessons to the people. The novel may appear to be a didactic work on account of its content and narrative technique. On the surface level it seems to be a collection of short stories but after reading these stories, the reader cannot separate one story from another. The technique of the novel is partially similar to the epic *The Mahabharata*. Vyasa wrote *The Mahabharata* but he himself is not involved in it as a character. He plays a role of *Sutradhar* who narrates the stories from his point of view. In the same way the narrator of this novel plays a role of *Sutradhar* who narrates the stories sequentially and filled the gap between each story through his story-telling skill.

In the novel there are six stories: *The Monk's Story*, *The Teacher's Story*, *The Executive's Story*, *The Courtesan's Story*, *The Musician's Story* and *The Minstrel's Story*. These six stories are divided into sixteen chapters and the last chapter *The Song of the Narmada* is a sequel to *The Minstrel's Story*. Gita Mehta uses multiple narrative technique and at the same time she fills the gap between each story. The characters of each story appear only once and carry on the same subject-matter from one story to another. Each and every character of the novel represents a particular community. At the beginning of the novel, the nameless narrator

enters with the details about his life and career from the first person point of view. He is a retired bureaucrat and joins the post of a manager of the Narmada rest house. He is trying to get this job because he wants to escape from the humdrum of bustling city life and live a peaceful life. After getting a job in Narmada rest house, he becomes a close friend of Tariq Mia, an old Muslim mullah. The nameless narrator hears the stories and at the same time gives background to each story. He seems to be a catalyst who describes all the stories objectively.

The narrator while going towards Tariq Mia's ashram meets the monk. In *The Monk's Story*, the monk is a narrator who narrates his story in first person narration. As a representative of Jain religion the monk tells about the Jain principles and Mahavira, the pioneer of Jain religion. The narration of this story shifts from the narrator to the monk. The monk through his story explores the principles of Jain religion such as non-violence which is considered as a sharp weapon of Gandhian ideology. The monk, as a son of a rich diamond merchant enjoys every moment of life and thinks that life is a blessing of God. He travels all over the world for fulfilling the purpose of trading. He returns from his journey and decides to renounce the world because he observes and feels the depth of poverty and hunger. He thinks after returning from his journey, life is not a smooth path but it is full of difficulties and sorrows. He is confused when he observes his father's ill-treatment to his

miners because he is a strict follower of Jain principles and breaks those principles while treating his miners. Through the character of the monk, Gita Mehta builds the image of Mahavira in reader's mind. The monk is a mirrored figure of Mahavira and follows the footsteps of Mahavira. For making the narration reliable Gita Mehta chooses the monk as a narrator of this story.

Each story of the novel completes in another chapter and the writer before telling any story, first creates suitable atmosphere to the story. In *The Monk's Story* the monk says to the narrator, 'I have loved just one thing in my life', (p.14) but he forgets to answer him. The narrator after his departure thinks about it but he cannot get its answer therefore he asks Tariq Mia about it. Tariq Mia is a narrator of *The Teacher's Story*. He wants to tell the narrator the secret of human heart i.e. 'The capacity to love' (p.48). For explaining the secret of human heart, Tariq Mia tells *The Teacher's Story* which is experienced by him. Tariq Mia is an old mullah who is attached to the verisimilitudes of the human life. Compared to the narrator Tariq Mia is a philosopher and like a torch for those whose life is in darkness. The narrator looks at each story on a surface level at the same time Tariq Mia observes the details of each story and tries to explain the philosophy of life. The writer chooses Tariq Mia as a narrator of this story because he is a witness of this event. Master Mohan is a music teacher with unfulfilled desire of being a famous singer. He meets an

orphan Imrat and feels that he is his own self therefore he gives him music lessons devotedly. Unfortunately Imrat's murder leads him towards a path of madness and he comes on the banks of the river Narmada for the solace of the mind. Tariq Mia cures him from his madness but while returning home he commits suicide. Master Mohan is a sensitive man who is totally involved in Imrat and cannot imagine life without him. Tariq Mia tells the narrator, 'Perhaps he could not exist without loving someone as he had loved the blind child'. (p. 91) Tariq Mia narrates the story from third person point of view and makes the narration omniscient.

The Executive's Story is another story which is narrated through the diary of Nitin Bose, an executive. The writer uses a different technique for this story. Nitin Bose while staying in a tea estate falls in love with a tribal woman. His love for the tribal woman is a materialistic love so when he returns from the tea estate, every night he dreams of her. In this failure of love he loses his mental balance. He is attached to the tribal woman for fulfilling his sexual desires. His relation with her is immoral and he is afraid of the regulations of the society because according to the society his act is a sin which is not excused by the people. Therefore he buried his immoral act in his mind and the effect of his suppression resulted in his utter madness. Afraid of society's regulations he cannot confess his immoral act to anybody else so he confesses it in his diary. Diary is one of the means of confession through which one can get mental

relief. Nitin Bose after writing his diary gets mental relief and is cured from amnesia. The story reflects the Indian psyche and tradition in which these kinds of acts are not allowed and if someone did it unconsciously then he is afraid to confess it. Nitin Bose as belongs to the same tradition suppresses his desire and wants to hide the truth from people. The writer, before telling the story, describes the myth of Kama, God of Love which is very helpful to create a suitable atmosphere. No one can confess his sin before anybody else so this technique is uniquely used by Gita Mehta. Through diary Nitin Bose narrates his story in the first person point of view and makes the narration reliable.

In *The Courtesan's Story* the mode of narration is again changed from one narrator to another. The Courtesan narrates her story in the first person narration and also includes the information about her daughter's kidnapping by a murderer Rahul Singh. The writer wants to provide the detailed information about Courtesan's life through this narrator. The Courtesan represents the particular group of courtesans which is neglected by the society. The courtesans are not considered as human beings but they are used for entertainment only. In this story there is another narrator i.e. the Courtesan's daughter. She describes her life with the bandits to the narrator. She also tells the reason behind Rahul Singh's act that Rahul Singh kidnaps her because he thinks that she has been his wife in so many lives before that one. As a witness she describes the life of

bandits in the state of solitude. After marriage she and Rahul Singh live a happy life and he also decides to live a life of common man but the society may not be able to forget his deeds and he is killed in police encounter. At last the Courtesan's daughter commits suicide because as a murderer's wife she cannot return in society. Gita Mehta, through the character of the Courtesan's daughter, expresses the mentality of society. It also tells that many a times innocent person also becomes a victim of the regulations of society. Rahul Singh is not a murderer but society forces him to do the murder and at the same time the Courtesan's daughter who marries a murderer is forced to commit suicide. Both these are victims of social ethos. Even though the narrators are changed in the same story, the writer uses the first person point of view because no one can express the deep feelings and emotions of a particular person.

In *The Musician's Story* the musician's daughter describes her story to the narrator in the first person. Through her story she tells about her father and their popularity in the field of music. Her father is a devoted music teacher and cheated by his disciple. The disciple promises him to marry his daughter after learning the art of music but when the purpose is fulfilled he marries another girl. The musician's daughter is ugly that's why the disciple rejects her. His love is a materialistic love which gives importance

only to external beauty. The musician's daughter cannot tolerate his rejection but the

musician convinces her that beauty is a passing thing and it lies in the eyes of the beholder. In her narration she describes the details of every raga which can be told only by a person who has knowledge of music so the writer chooses her as a narrator of this story. The writer with the help of this narrator describes the selfish and materialistic world.

In the next, *The Minstrel's Story* the narrator is Tariq Mia. He meets Naga Baba a few years ago and get acquainted with him and a little girl who is saved by Naga Baba from the clutches of the prostitute. Tariq Mia who is well acquainted with Naga Baba describes the details of an ascetic's life. An ascetic is an alienated man who avoids the company of human beings and lives a lonely and peaceful life in the state of solitude. In the story Naga Baba is a representative of ascetics' community. The story also describes how people are victims of superstitions and religious faiths. The last chapter of the novel *The Song of The Narmada* is a sequel to the *The Minstrel's Story*. This chapter narrated by the nameless narrator in the third person narration which focuses on Naga Baba's reappearance in the role of Professor Shankar. Professor Shankar plays the role of Naga Baba because he is trying to change the bad practices in the society with the help of people's religious faiths and beliefs. The writer with the help of these two narrators tells that because of some beliefs the little girl is left in a brothel by her father and at the same time Naga Baba saves that girl from the clutches of

prostitute through the beliefs.

In the narrative technique the nameless narrator provides background to each story. The writer uses flashback technique in the novel. The writer's purpose of providing the background to each story is to create suitable atmosphere which captures the reader's psyche. The use of narrative technique in this novel is different from the regular concept of the novel. Generally the novel includes a saga of events related to the central character's life but the novel comprises different characters and different events. The novel highlights not only one character but with the help of various characters Gita Mehta expresses the psychology of human mind. Human mind cannot deny the influence of culture, religion, faiths and desires on him and at last surrenders before it. So, the technique of this novel is considered as unique one.

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THE WALL OF CLEMENCY

(AN ENGLISH RENDERING – K. S. N. MURTY)

Balu Dommeti

A large lettered caption “Pick up anything you require from here and leave whatever you would like to leave” is conspicuous on the rocky wall located in a busy center of a City, which was constructed for the safety purpose of a peaceful palace. The wall imbibed the message and emerged as a “Wall of Clemency”. It must have been the brain child of an anonymous person such stone walls appeared here and there in the City.

Daily number of passersby pass the said wall even without glancing, as if they don't have time. In recent times the wall received the feelings and greetings of different mentalities of philanthropists and the people who picked the essentials with happiness. With the greatness and kind heartedness of the public soiled clothes, worn out slippers, food packets and water bottles are serving the purpose of the needy.

One day the busy roads were so silent due to proclamation of curfew on the score of Corona pandemic. There is no hustle and bustle of vehicles on the cross roads. A lady eking out her livelihood by begging reached the signals with a kid on her hip safely tied with a coarse saree. She eagerly saw the red signal. No vehicle crossed the roads regardless of the

colour of the signal. This was continued till the darkness set in. Not even a single pie touched her palm as if the rays of luck mocked her ill-luck.

The infant in the axilla was crying at his top due to the unbearable hunger and intolerable chillness of the night. The mother was pained with the plight of her son and searched for options to fill the tummy of the tiny tot.

Then “The Wall of Clemency” figured in her memory which was a kilometer away. She started her walking on the footpath with a ray of hope that a person having human touch might have left something which may be useful for her son. She was a few yards away from the wall. By that time a black car dashed like a bullet splashing the stagnated water in the ditches which drenched them. Instantaneously the boy quivered and cried. By keeping her son close to her bosom “Rascal !...Can't you see?...” cried acidly.

She stayed in the darkness and picked up a dry cloth from shoulder bag and made him dry. The boy was still crying. While trying to console him she put forward her step and was suddenly stopped. The car which crossed her was stopped at a distance. Suddenly an unknown

fear gripped her. The baby's cry enhanced her fear two-fold. "Had they heard my abuses? Have they stopped the car to take vengeance against me? It is totally dark! I am alone with my kid! Will the mighty cause harm to me and my son?" These sort of ideas and anxieties totally engulfed her confused mind.

She did not dare to move. She was keenly watching the car with a suspicion that "What would be the unexpected disaster?" The car stopped close to the Wall and the door was opened. Two hands which tightly caught a packet came out of the door and threw it on the pathway near the Wall. The packet was slowly rolled out and blended with the darkness of the mid night. Suddenly the car gained speed, splattered the water and in no time vanished in the darkness. With that all the tensions were slowly released and she came to normalcy.

She opined that "One of the kindhearted wealthy man might have left a precious packet". With curiosity and anxiety, she reached the Wall with a brisk walk. She searched for the packet that was left by the party with her leg. After getting in contact with the packet she tried to take it into her hands with anxiety and murmured with joy "My dear son, we got something great and precious!"

She safely made her son squat on the footpath and while trying to unwrap the packet, an infant gasping for breath inhaled the air and his cry greeted her. At that moment her son also

started crying. She left the packet and took her son into arms and lulled him. For a moment silence reigned.

She does not know the meaning of the words on the wall "Pick up anything you require from here and leave whatever you would like to leave" but the words heavily weighed on the wall watching the pathetic situation.

What she desired was not there and what she got was not desirable. What to do? "How can I be useful to this baby when I am not in a position to feed my own baby?" Responsibility requires to be humane while the future cautioned to get away from the situation. Embarrassment made her topsy-turvy.

The infant who was not aware of the fact for whose thirst of lust he was brought into this world cried for the parents. The cry pierced the heart of the surroundings in such a manner that it even watered the eyes of darkness. That cry woke up her motherhood. Immediately, she took out a long loin cloth from the shoulder bag and tied it like a cradle from her neck to waist. She accepted the fruit of a rejected womb. With a bounden duty to fill the two bellies she vanished in the thick darkness in search of another such Wall.

If there had not been such mothers what would have been the fate of such crying orphans. "The height of the motherhood is supreme" opined the Wall of Clemency.

BOOK REVIEW: OCEAN BLUES BY MAHATHI

(TRANSLATED FROM SAGARA GHOSHA BY DR. GARIKIPATI NARASIMHA RAO)

A Annapurna Sharma

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars – Khalil Gibran

‘Sagar’ connotes ‘the ocean’. ‘Ghosha’ in Telugu means ‘roar’. The ocean owes its roar to the infinite, serpentine, minuscule ripples or waves. The ocean is Anantam or endless. So is His creation, his creation, His game, his life... Dr. Garikipati Narasimha Rao, a great spiritualist pens an epic poem ‘Sagara Ghosha’ in Telugu.

Mahathi (Sri Mydavolu Venkatesesha Sathyanarayana), a renowned poet proficient in prosody, winning the hearts of litterateurs in India as well as abroad, is well known for the excellent translation of ‘Sundara Kanda’ into English – ‘Finding the Mother’. In fact, Dr. Garikipati opines that Mahathi’s transcreation of ‘Sagara Ghosha’ as ‘Ocean Blues’ is not a mere translation but resonates with the original work. Mahathi states that this exhaustive Kavya is a poignant account of history of the world from the day of creation, till date. He feels Dr. Garikipati is bestowed

with the vision of the sacred, invisible form the innate energies. A great camaraderie is noticed between the two when one applauds the other.

A glimpse at this extensive poetical oeuvre makes one wonder if the maxim, ‘poetry is the spontaneous flow of emotion...’ stands true. If we were to keep aside tropes, metaphors, images, figures of speech etc aside, is it still possible to render 1116 verses in strict poetical parlance – making use of metrical meters, sonnets and other such devices? And to add to the daunting task of the poet is the subject – a non-poetical topic – the history of the world. The poet has taken more than a year to compile this eponymous epic poem.

The title Ocean Blues is apt as it all begins with the poet sitting on the shores of the colossal ocean and allows his thoughts to wander, his mellifluous emotions to flow and his heart to sing and dance to the tune of the minute ripples or wavelets that take the reader on a ride of history beginning at the beginning of creation and ending at the threshold of the technological era. The book eulogizes the relation between the poet and wavelet. However, this subtle connection eludes the reader.

mydavolu@gmail.com

The poet delves on various topics – ancient civilizations, Jainism, Buddhism, Greek invasions, Gupta era, Adi Sankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, Ghazni and Ghorī invasions, British brutality, changes in Europe, Indian politics, earthquakes, landmines, plastics and so on. The book lacks any chronological order of occurrence of events and some of the significant proceedings have not been covered, for instance the great Greek philosopher, Socrates or the great Indian mathematician-astronomer, Aryabhata. The poet in the Telugu version mentions episodes from the historical calendar in a random manner and the topics are solely confined to the poet's knowledge of the incidents and personal choice. However, that may not be of great relevance as the topics enclosed have been justified in content and form. With Mahathi's classical touch and footnotes wherever applicable these poems are a sheer delight to read, enjoy and reminisce the past till the present.

Poets have always been figures of great eminence minus the mint. Pothana, a 15th Century poet was one such poet who refused to succumb to royal pressure or the lures of regal life. And there were others like Srinathudu – "...vend the world sweet poetic mead/ but well ignore the vicissitudes of life! Thee spend/ The regal way...I saw such lives that ended miserable, O' friend!"

The world is a dangerous place to live, exclaimed a legendary. How bad? To be able

to take lives. India mourns says the poet –

What can I say my friend!? Alas, thy dove of peace was hunted down by honed arrows of horrendous religious intolerance! That light of India

Mahatma Gandhi, retraced his steps to heaven's high!

Shakespeare, the Bard of Avon, robbed the hearts of all. What can you not find in his plays? The versatility, the characters, the peregrinations – vivid and vital that Shakespeare sat in the audience watching his own plays unfolding the toxicity of life. Is it a suggestion that the King of Drama was mesmerized by his own works?

Was Hitler an Aryan? Isn't it an insignificant question when one is adorned in genocide and claims to be the monarch of the world, turning the country homes into factories – manufacturing weapons and warmongers? World War II was the worst conflict in the world

–
 "O' God, O' God, a huge fire ball like a blazing Sun, whence raised to sky from burning, boiling and roasting earth and there billows of poisonous smoke like maddened clouds,...alas, when humans lost their faith in human traits!"

The poet's sensitivity is noticed when on one hand he is concerned at the ways of the world: work of scientists is dubious – their zeal and

drive – to achieve mass human destruction...and on the other he deifies human love –

“Oh Taj...looks like a bowing saint to human love,

with silent muse! This glorious edifice defies

the dominance of death ov’r man it seems! She’s mead

of Mother Earth’s enamouring smiles and sprouted bloom

of Lotus white from tragic pool of bleeding hearts!

The book covers several topics ranging from the painting of utopia by communists to the barbarous invasions by Afghans or the divisiveness of religious fanatics. There is more for the inclined reader willing to devour history in poetics.

The Computer is a device instructed to carry out arithmetic and logical sequences via manmade programming. Since the advent of this modern gadget, life has become much easier in terms of physical as well as mental gymnastics. The poet’s fascination is evident when he calls it the Queen of all machines and King of continents six. He goes a step further by

rendering 75 lines of verse to the grand device and ascribes each part with a divine element: CPU – the universe; the keyboard – Krishna’s flute; the mouse – His gyrating wheel; the monitor – Krishna’s mouth displaying the grand microcosm to Yashoda. Amusing! The poet wishes – *human race preserves thy boons and shuns thy banes to earn eternal times of great benevolence....*

Towards the end, the poet is reminded of the axioms of pansophy (universal wisdom or knowledge). He reveals to the reader – the One who leads him through life and the poet bows reverentially to his eternal Guru – whom he calls the master of Advaita, Adi Sankaracharya. However, this aspect is obscure and needs further clarification from the composer. Deep in meditation the poet surrenders at the sacred force of Sakini (one of the six female deities or yoginis) who rules the Mooladhara wheel. The poet humbly prays to her irradiant form – that he know not any mystic wheels or yogic rules or mantras or traditions. He surrenders his energies and his graceful flowing muse at the Goddesses feet.

There is rapturous silence. In this end begins this temple of silence where all philosophy, wisdom of the purest form reigns. Silence. Mahathi’s Ocean Blues entralls the reader to an extent beyond mind’s eye.

The Autobiography of a ‘Known’ Indian, *Guruvayanam*
Dr. Guruva Reddy’s Life Journey that Sustains Love, Empathy, Zest
for Life and Beyond ...
Prof. Ch.A.Rajendra Prasad

Parliamentary Committee on MPLADS should make an in depth study of the working of the scheme in the background of the finding of the Audit and various other Reports.

The title of this write-up reminds one of the canonical, Nirad C Chaudhuri’s “The Autobiography of an Un-known India,” which obviously had transcended the mandate of being just an autobiography of an (un) known individual but that of the nation with avowed political convictions. However, the book under reference, *Guruvayanam* stands apart with its own merits, among which the most striking is its readability induced by its seamless blending of humour and perennial romantic view of life. The narrative, *Guruvayanam*, glories in the technique and perspective *a la* the tongue-in-cheek style of the combo of RK Narayan and Bapu-Mullapudi Ramana.

Guruvayanam, while being autobiographical in a way ends up, of being biographical of everyone with its universal concerns/themes like celebration of childhood, nostalgia for one’s youthful past and the challenge of growing up including gracefully ageing. Indeed it is an autobiography that belies its genre and successfully accomplishes the feat of ending up as a genre-bender—a book that borders on other genres, like, travelogue and anecdotal with great insights and diary-like and coffee book etc. However what stands out uniquely and bewitchingly about the book in two volumes in Telugu, *Guruvayanam* is its attempt to provide a 360 degree viewing and comprehending of Human Life.

The present attempt is an outcome of the near-compelling urge on the part of the author of the present write-up which he experienced via the two very short-lived interactions he has had when he accompanied a patient to call on the Dr. Guruva Reddy during a year’s time. Dr.

chilikiprasad@gmail.com

Guruva Reddy had gifted him instantly the two volumes of *Guruvayanam* when the latter had announced himself as a professor of English in a university, though factual but more out of the reason of impressing on the Doctor — the first volume in the first meeting and the second volume in the second meeting. The two volumes of *Guruvayanam* have left a very touching impact on the mind of the recipient for their rather revealing nature and engaging style. The author of the write-up must concede that his opinion echoes the opinions of many a celebrity who read the book and as incorporated in the two volumes of *Guruvayanam*.

Having met the Doctor, though for a few fleeting moments in person and also having met the author through the two volumes of *Guruvayanam*, the author of the write-up couldn't help sharing his impressions on Dr. Guruva Reddy's journey (*Guruvayanam* obviously, named, *a la* Ramayanam of course not at all to compete with the Lord Rama's journey but done in a self-parody self-satirizing mode in which act Dr. Guruva Reddy humbles himself and thereby endears himself with anybody and as well tricks him / her fall into his fold and remain stuck there. Understandably this act of self-parodying demands a great strength of personality in general and a mature understanding of human life in the times when

the lesser minions indulge in self-glorification.

The *Guruvayanam* has universal appeal as it attempts to celebrate universal childhood and the challenge of growing-up and perhaps the challenge of growing up in a profession and in life. The perennial touch of humour and zest for life as represented in the two volumes of *Guruvayanam* will **tempt** a reader to identify himself with Dr. Guruva Reddy. That is the magic and the charm with which Dr. Guruva Reddy would enthrall the readers to his fold.

In fact, Dr. Guruva Reddy is a 'known' Indian not only in two Telugu speaking states but also across the country as a medical doctor with star status and the accompanying fan following which obviously he cherishes with respect and dearness. Having specialized in orthopaedics with accomplishment in bone joints surgery, the Doctor, not to exaggerate, is a household name with his sought after presence in the several forms of media for his professional acumen and the otherwise multi-faceted personality with which he engages and socializes with the people of all walks of life and all classes perhaps on an equal footing and with a show of great interest and respect.

Guruvayanam grows though not exactly in a linear manner but in a criss-cross manner with a style that takes readers into confidence and thereby keeps the readers on a hook throughout

in an effortless style that is clothed in humour and honesty. Typical of the times of 70's and perhaps of 80's when the middle class families lived their lives far from luxury and when putting up with meagre incomes but still not explicitly feeling the pinch of it was very common, the *Guruvayanam* chronicles the pleasures of childhood a la Budugu of Bapu-Raman fame and attending school that may have a compromised existence and the growing up and graduating into college days (contextually speaking the Bapatla Agriculture College Days and subsequently the days of the Guntur Medical College) late 70's and early 80's and the attempts to make most of it with all the accompanying pitfalls and attractions.

Notwithstanding coping with the challenges of growing up, the way young Guruva Reddy copes with the rigours of the professional education and his ability to develop camaraderie in spite of or because of the nagging and teasing of the classmates ultimately he rises to the height of the entire batch of the students of being referred to "Guruva Reddy's batch." Perhaps the sterling quality that makes him survive against all the odds is his sense of gratitude for his benefactors including the teacher who has instilled confidence about English. In fact the last includes the names of the stalwarts like,

Varaprasada Reddy, Apollo Hospital CEO, Dr. Shantha, Dr. Sancheti and Dr. Kutty and many others who might sound as mere names for us. Obviously a person getting helped and supported is not uncommon but what makes it special is Dr. Guruva Reddy's sustained loving gratitude for them. In a similar fashion Dr. Guruva Reddy makes it a point to fondly recall all his benefactors and yet times his detractors.

The narrative *Guruvayanam* at places always make it a point to emphasize on the need of taking a holiday from one's own routine. Accordingly the narrative a time doubles up as a travelogue and documents his stay and visits, in countries like England, Australia, USA and Dubai. The travelogue aspect once again reveals his keen observations of the landscape and culture of the lands he visited, and more importantly his ability to feel at home in all those places with his innate ability to make friends and/or cementing the old friendships.

Among the many merits of *Guruvayanam* the most striking one is Dr. Guruva Reddy's out and out passion for the world of letters. In fact his ability to relish the aesthetics of the world of letters and entertainment perhaps keeps him young at heart and energetic enough in his profession.

GOD AND BLISS

C. Rajagopala Chariar

Maddened by love, I shall laugh and cry,
Shall float in the ocean of Divine Bliss,
Shall gladden others with my madness,
And shall disport for ever at the feet of God.

Love is the means and bliss the goal. Love is the master principle of the Universe and leads to Ananda—the highest bliss which is tinged with love.

Saint Yamunacharya, the Acharya of Sri Ramanuja, has in a single verse given us in his ‘Gitartha Sangraha,’ the substance of the first six chapters (‘Prathama Shatkam,’) of the Gita thus:

“Jnana Karmathmake Nishte Yogalakshya-Susamskrita

Atmanubhuti Sidhyarthe Purva Shatkena Choditam.”

That is, the first Shatka has laid down that the paths of Karma and Jnana lead to ‘Atma-sakshatkara’ which constitutes the aim of the Yogi. What is ‘Atma-sakshatkara’? It is the realisation of the Self. Experience is of two kinds—that of knowledge and of enjoyment, the former being metaphysical and the latter emotional. When experiences on the devotional side become real and there is communion with the Self, cognition in the higher plane of the spirit will follow eventually, which Yogis call ‘Atmasakshatkara’ or ‘Atmanubhava.’

According to Sri Ramanuja, this ‘Sakshatkara’ leads to God Consciousness—the ultimate aim of the Yogi, who is supposed to attain it in his Samadhi state. According to the Monistic school of Sankara—which does not recognise a separate existence of the Jeevatma,—the Atmanubhava becomes Brahmanubhava making one a ‘Jivanmukta’—the formula being ‘Aham Brahmosmi.’

Apart from any technicalities, it may broadly be stated that the largest human sympathy and an all-consuming love for all life in the Universe is the true basis of all spiritual life and there is authority for this. Chapter VI of the Gita deals with the principles and practice of Yoga. Sri Krishna concludes his description of Yoga to Arjuna with one *sloka* which gives the key-note of the whole philosophy in the plainest terms and which says that is His creed and which seems to be the acme of all God Consciousness.

“Atmaupamyena sarvatra saman pashyati yorjuna

Sukham va yathi va dukham sayogi paramomathah.”

(VI-32)

i.e., “The best Yogi is one who sees the pain and pleasure of another to be his pain and pleasure—this is my creed and such a man is a true Yogi.” Commenting on this *sloka* Sri Ramanuja has given the test of such perfection for every man to apply to himself and find out

for himself if he satisfies the test, viz., whether the depth of your sorrow at the death of your neighbour's son is as great as the father's, or if you can feel the same elation that your neighbour feels when he gets suddenly rich. The joy of the senses pulls man down, while the joy of the pure spirit raises one to a higher realm. The bliss of the Saints and the Alvars has been of the spirit and is the result of cosmic consciousness and response. It is the absence of this joy that Shelley, the Poet of Poets, deplures when he interprets the joy of the skylark, in words highly characteristic of him; he speaks thus of man:

"We look before and after and pine for what is not, Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught."

The bliss aspect of God has been dealt with in the 'Anandavalli' of the 'Taittiriya Upanishad' where the Sruti seeks to measure one of the numerous and glorious attributes of God, viz., the Ananda of Brahman, the nature and number of whose qualities are so finely portrayed in the following *sloka*:

"Ishu kshayan na nivartante
Nantariksha kshiti kshayan.
Matikshaya na nivartante,
Na Govinda gunakshayat."

"Not that space is exhausted but my quiver is emptied of arrows. Not that God is exhausted but my mind empty withdraws." So infinite are His attributes and Ananda is one such and is measured thus: The ideal state of perfect happiness of a man possessed of everything in perfection in this world (including perfect health) is taken as the unit with which to measure Ananda. Then we are taken through all the grades of beings, Gandharva, Yaksha, Raksha, Kinnara etc., and we are told the Ananda of

the one above is one hundred times that of the one below, and it goes on finally to that of Indra and then to the four-faced Brahma whose Ananda is said to be a hundred-fold that of Indra. Then taking four-faced Brahma's Ananda as the unit, the Sruti seeks to measure the Ananda of Brahman i.e. the Final Cause, but lo! it fails and cannot be reached by the mind as it is unthinkable and unutterable:

"Yato Vacho Nivartante Aprapya Manasa Saha."

According to Vedanta the soul partakes of the nature of the God-born in bliss, nurtured in bliss and losing itself in bliss. In the *Brahma Sutra*, He is spoken of as 'Anandamaya,' i.e., Ananda itself:

"Ananda Mayo Abhyasah,"

and also

"Raso Vai Rasaha Rasahyenam labdha Anandi Bhavati,"

i.e. having obtained a glimpse of his love he is filled with bliss.

The Vedas affirm that nothing could exist but for the joy of existence:

"Koh eva Anyat-kah-Pranayat

Yadesha Akasha Anando nasyat."

i.e. "If this all refulgent (God) bliss were not, what could live? what could breathe?"

What makes existence possible is the innate wish. Were there no will to be, nothing would or could be. The will to be can only subsist in joy, not in grief, as grief kills and joy generates. Sorrows pass; joy abides.

So if we are to have joy let us contemplate on Him who is the fountain-head of joy (Ananda). The Sruti says:

“Anandath-Khalu Yemani Bhutani jayanti.”—*Taitt.*

There is a very great principle and a fundamental one ‘Tat-Kruthu-Nyaya’—‘What you think you become’—which philosophers explore and discuss at great length. Because also of the existence of another quality in the Brahman that we, his creatures, can imbibe His ‘Yojas’ below,

“Esha-eva Anandayati.”—*Taitt* II-61-1.

i.e., He makes others blissful.

The study of the Vedas and the Sastras leads to an intellectual perception of God and such knowledge (Jnana) avails one and is fruitful only in so far as his Devotion (Bhakti) enables him to be in rapport and enjoy bliss. As to how far the Infinite can thus be cognised by the finite depends not only on the devotee but also on the possible existence of a personality in the Impersonal Infinite—a question that has exercised thinking minds much. Though perhaps the idea of a personal ultimate cause makes one shy a little, yet it cannot be denied that the Divine relations involve a number of ideas of a personal character. So long as God is conceived as being, “in relation with his creatures,” the unlimited nature becomes limited and gets clothed with qualities; otherwise, “we will be found to deny intelligence and will,” which in substance is personality in the conception of God.

In fact it is an age-long controversy whether the Brahman is possessed of attributes or not,—the apple of discord between Sankara and Ramanuja—the former holding that it has no attributes, which according to the latter borders on Nihilism—the essence of Buddhism. It will be out of place to dwell further on this knotty question except by pointing out that the last portion of the ‘Brahma-sutras’ deals with

Brahman having attributes.

It may however be stated that the philosophy of the Upanishads is a happy blending of both the Impersonal and the Personal aspects, and M. Thibaut in his commentary on the ‘Vedanta-sutras,’ favours the view of Sri Ramanuja. It is because of the existence of attributes that the Divine has relation to man and that conduces to meditation. A cursory perusal of the ‘Brahma-Vidyas’ of the Upanishads discloses various qualities attributed to the Brahman, upon one or two of which the ‘upasaka’ meditates. Space forbids dwelling in detail on each particular attribute which each of the various Vidyas point out as the object of contemplation, as the Vidyas are many, such as ‘Sat,’ ‘Dahara,’ ‘Sandilla,’ ‘Upakosala,’ ‘Panchagni,’ and others. Let us take the last case of the ‘Panchagni Vidya,’ where the ‘upasaka’ meditates on the Deity as being in the centre of the Sun and sits surrounded by four sacrificial fires and contemplates on the form and the attributes ascribed to the Vidya. The whole of God in its totality cannot be grasped by man, and hence the various Vidyas have been inculcated by the Maharishis, each having a particular quality, for contemplation. According to Vyasa, the Sutrakar, any one attribute of the Brahman is taken for contemplation and it is affirmed that it is enough, and will conduce to the result.

So we find the ‘Brahma Sutra’ saying

“Vikalpo-Visishtaha-Phalavat.”

Sri Ramanuja comments thus on it: “It matters not which of the ‘upasanas’ (vidyas) a meditator chooses, the fruit is whole and unlimited blissful Brahman.”

We find also Western mystics like B. Bosanquet stating that “some well-defined

attribute may be focused by the wandering mind to fix upon and utilised for securing a definite object “—it being well known that no achievement is possible without concentration.

But how are we to visualise even a speck of that ocean of bliss of which He is the embodied one? The following remarks of Francis Power Cobbe will be quite in point: “That which will truly constitute the blessedness of man will be the gradual dying out of his tiger passions, his cruelty, and his selfishness, and the growth within him of the god-like faculty of love and self-sacrifice: the development of the holiest sympathy wherein all souls shall blend at last, like the tints of the rainbow which the Seer beholds around the great White Throne on High.”

Sree Krishna prescribes perfect discipline and perfect renunciation as the only cure for all ills:

“Abhyasena-tu-Kaunteya Vairagyena-tu Grihyate.”

Hence also Sri Ramanuja says the six qualities of the Brahman are to be contemplated, viz. Jnana. Bala, Aisvarya, Veerya, Sakti and Thejas, the ‘Shadgunya Paripurna,’ as He is known in Vaishnava literature. In the *Saguna* state, the Monistic school of Sankara admits these qualities, though, at the final stage, according to them, everything vanishes including Soul and Matter. Dr. Mackenzie, in his *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*, considers the attributes of the Infinite and says:

“It is perhaps partly the difficulties involved

in the application of boundlessness to such attributes that has led some to postulate a finite God.” Even Sankara is forced to say “Bhaja Govindam.”

It is in a blissful state wherein all earthly loves, father, mother, son, daughter, wife, and all loves are re-discovered in God to which the ‘Brihadaranyaka’ refers:

“Atmanyeva priyam upasate

Nahyesha priyam premayatam.”

i. e., whoso loves the spirit alone, to him there is no mortality. “Happiness is ours by birthright but we have not had the good luck to use it. With infinite wealth hoarded at home we have gone out of ourselves to beg at the door of the five poverty-stricken senses.” So says the great philosopher James. Sree Krishna says: “Manayeva Manushyanam Karanam Bandha Mokshayoh,” i.e., mind is the root cause; discipline it and you are the master.”

When calmness of mind is secured we can realise ourselves as we are—only then is happiness envisaged, for all happiness is really inside and is enjoyed by a spiritual mind alone. For we find even in sense pleasures that they fail if the mind is withdrawn. The pleasures of thought are finer than sense pleasures, and moral happiness is infinitely higher. But the faculty of spiritual contemplation takes one to a plane of feeling which is all bliss—not mere happiness. It is what is known as spiritual bliss of which the intellect is no judge—but which is the birthright of all to attain and enjoy and which is unknown to the senses.



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