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A Monthly News Bulletin



Karbi Janajati from Karbi Anglong of Assam



'Karbi Anglongar Janajati Sakalar Dharmiya Achar aru Sanskriti'

- A book on Faith & Culture of the janajatis living in the Karbi Anglong District of Assam, Edited by Sri Lunse Timung & Dr. Ramchandra Deka, Published by Heritage Foundation released by Sri Chandra Sing Kro, President, Karbi Culture Society on the 39th Karbi Youth Festival 2013 at Taralangso, Karbi Anglong on 26.02.2013.

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Articles on Eternal Faith and Culture and different Socio-Cultural movements in Northeast are invited for publication.

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A Report on Tour of Kalyan Ashram Team to Goalpara Dist. of Assam on 15th Feb.2013



Members in the Team:

Shri Jaleswar Brahma, Guwahati
 Shri Takeing Zeme, Haflong
 Shri Nikhil Rabha, Agia
 Smt. Manguli rabha, Agia
 Shri Suryanarayan, Guwahati
 Shri Shivajee Rao Pawar, Udalguri
 Shri Sudhir Rabha, Dudhnoi

The Panchayat Election was held in Goalpara District of Assam on 12th Feb. 2013. There was a clash in between State Govt. and the Rabha people, who were opposing the Panchayat election in favour of their demand for Sixth Schedule in the Rabha Hasong area. Police fired blindly on the people opposing the election at different polling booths, which claimed 13 lives and several injured were admitted in the Guwahati Medical College.

Later it turned into unexpected attacks by Muslim mobs on tribal villages (belong to Rabha, Hajong, Koch, Boro, Adivasis, Nepali and Bengalese) on 12th Feb.2013 night itself shouting Allah-Ho-Akbar. Muslims were opposing the Rabha Hasong demand and were in favour of the Panchayat Election. The houses of those people were burnt down to ashes in about 30 villages. People runned away bare handed to save their own lives and took shelter in safe places.

On 12th February afternoon, the very day of election, 500 houses were

burnt down in Raksyashini Hills which were belongs to Koch, Hajong and Garos. Their only mistake was that they had supported the Rabhas movement for their Sixth Schedule demand.

The indigenous people of the district are being crushed in between the politicians and the Bangladeshi Muslims. The police firing was a cruelty upon he people which they had not even imagined of! Of course it was planned in advance by the State Govt. and the administration to deal with the situation. No Govt. has the right to exhibit such a cruelty upon its own people!

The visit of the Team:

The team visited 5 relief camps in the district

- (1. Nakatipara,
2. Rangagora,
3. Bhalukdobi,
4. Makori and
5. Garoumari)

to study the real happenings on the election day and prevailing conditions of these camps.

It is a matter of great relief that people of the nearby villages provided food and other materials to the inmates of the camps on 13th Feb. 2013 whose houses were burnt to ashes by the Muslims. The Govt. administration has started its supply line for providing food materials (rice, dal, salt, and water) from the next day the 14th Feb. 2013.

The people of nearby villages were providing vegetables etc. Medicines were also being given to them. A good cooperation has been observed among the victim families and the people supporting them and serving them from the nearby villages.

- | |
|--|
| 1. Total no. of Relief Camps: 18 |
| 2. Total no. of families : 6,000 Approx. |
| 3. Total no. of Inmates:18,000 Approx. |

List of affected villages

1. Dhakurpita, 2. Futoripur, 3. Paharsingpara, 4. Milonpara, 5. Kochpara, 6. Udaypur, 7. Rakshashini Bazar (Chandan Bazar), 8. Orangpara, 9. Leba bazaar, 10. Govindpur, 11. Dobapara, 12. Makori, 13. Bekipur

Persons died during police firing

Sl.	Name	Sex	Village	Age
1	Amiya Rabha	F	Okhaibari	45
2	Dharani Rabha	M	Gohainburi	50
3	Amrit Rabha	M	Kathalguri	52
4	Kamini Rabha	F	Ghilamara (Amtali)	55
5	Bichitra Rabha	F	"	50
6	Patan Rabha	M	"	18
7	Panchami Rabha	F	Kachadol	45
8	Prabin Rabha	M	Pitandara	40
9	Binoy Rabha	M	Letekubari	16
10	Prafulla Rabha	M	Bekipool	
11	Aloka Rabha	F	"	46
12	Jare Rabha	F	"	
13	Nikon Rabha	M	Siluk	

Names of Persons who were burnt by attackers in Futoripara village of Rakshashini area

Sl.No.	Name(All Males)
1.	Madan Rabha
2.	Ramen Rabha
3.	Lakhindra Orang
4.	Kancha Nepali
5.	Haworia Rabha
6.	Haso Rabha
7.	Rabi Orang

Followers of Lord Lokhimon Assembled at Diphu

Over twenty thousand devotees of Lord Lokhimon religion assembled in the KASA stadium of Diphu, Karbi Anglong and glorify the convention of Religious solidarity which was held on 11/02/13. The programme was started early dawn at 3 am while the town was still asleep by performing yagya by the Brahmin. After that at 5.30 am guest from every nooks and crannies of Karbi Anglong and outside have been welcomed by the youth of all the four ashram by standing in a two queues of both side of the main entrance which was performed by offering flowers as reception. At around 6.30 all the welcomed guest or devotees from every holy shrine of Lord Lokhimon benga to sing a song of praising the holy prophet and clapped altogether in a rhythm in the entire ground of the

stadium by sitting rows and rows. And thereafter a 8.15 Sar Boloram Phongcho the president of Lokhimon society central Committee flew the esteem flag of the Lokhimon religious. And at 9.00 am under the supervision of all the Brahmins and Sar Joising Teron the inevitable of holy march or procession. The procession was accompanied by taking part by all the young and old putting their traditional costume and waking on bare feet throughout the marching of 8 km and such procession of more than 20 thousand walking on bare feet on a burning highway could be a historic procession as such has never been heard, seen or shown by anymore before. And next in the afternoon at 23.30 a public meeting held under the chairmanship of Sar Boloram

Phangcho. And in the meeting many eminent guests were present. So as a chief guest Mr. Birensing Engti (MP), and guest of honour. Mr. Bhubam Ch. Terang, EM, KAAC, i/c Forest etc. and Mr. Jagat Engti, MAC, KAAC and likewise as a special guest Sar Longki Phangcho Rtd. IAS cum President of Purbattar Janajati Shiksha Samiti and invtd guest Sri Janardhan Deva Goswami, Satradhikar, Kamalabari Satra, Majuli, Sri Bahistha Bujor Barua Prantiya Pracharak, Rastriya Swyam Sevak Shangha Assam Pranta. And also the Royal Karbi King Harsing Ronghang and Dimoria King many prestigious invited guests were presented and by the presences of those formidable figure has made the meeting weightful and grateful.

Holy Tree at Gita's Birthplace Awaits Healing Touch - Rahul Chhabra

There is relief in sight for a decaying 'holy tree' at a spot in Haryana's Kurukshetra town where Lord Krishna is believed to have given the message of the Gita to Arjuna, with forestry experts exploring ways of reviving the nearly century-old banyan tree.

Pathologists and botanists from the 107-year-old Forest Research Institute (FRI) in Dehradun have prepared a blueprint to revive the holy tree at Jyotisar, employing the expertise acquired by them through similar tasks at the Mahabodhi Temple Complex in Bihar's Gaya district, the Shirdi Saibaba temple in Maharashtra and the Ta Prohm Temple in Cambodia, according to officials.

"Our team has visited the spot and chalked out a revival strategy on the request of the Kurukshetra Development Board," FRI Director P.P. Bhojvaid told IANS.

According to NSK Harsh, head of the forest pathology division of FRI, an institution under the union environment and forests ministry, the holy tree at Jyotisar, over 150 km from Delhi, is suffering the most due to a marble stone structure around its root.

"The marble flooring and platform around the tree are not allowing water

percolation and gaseous exchange, suffocating the roots," he said.

We have informed the Kurukshetra board authorities about the threat to the tree due to lack of free space for root expansion, he said.

The tree, which stands beside a pond, is also the focal point of a popular sound and light show at the spot and is suffering due to the wires, speakers and the lights strapped around its branches, he said.

"Chains, bells and signboards that have been tied or nailed to it are causing injuries. Plucking of aerial roots and bark and etching of names by unscrupulous devotees are also causing damage," said Harsh.

The ignored holy tree's stem gives hollow sound, on being struck with a hard object, indicating the spread of fungal decay from base upwards, the pathologist said.

But things may soon start looking up for the ailing banyan tree.

"We plan to offer a micro-nutrient treatment for the tree, besides the removal of the marble structure around it for allowing its aerial prop roots to get a footing for longevity," Harsh told IANS.

Chains wrapped around the tree's branches and a net covering its canopy

may also be removed for allowing natural growth.

"The tree is leaning on one side and is not balanced as a result of improper growth of the canopy," he said.

The rescue act may also involve treating leaves for diseases that have caused premature defoliation, he said.

Bhojvaid said similar rehabilitation tasks were performed by FRI experts at Gaya to rescue a stressed 100-year-old pipal tree at the Buddhist temple close to the spot where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment.

The 25-metre-high tree at the temple, dating from the 5th or 6th century, was rescued by Harsh and his colleagues from decay caused from plucking of leaves, disease and stress on roots.

A neem and a pipal tree at Shirdi where Saibaba offered prayers have also got a fresh lease of life under FRI experts' supervision.

In Cambodia, over 120 trees that had grown on walls and roofs of ancient temples in Ta Prohm were rehabilitated by FRI experts and protected from the wear and tear caused by the presence of over 10 million tourists who visit the spot in a year, Harsh said.

(<http://www.dnaindia.com/india>)

Spiritualism to the Rescue

- Dr. Jyotsna Bhattacharjee

It is common knowledge that the world is going through a crisis, which may lead to the extinction of the entire planet "Earth". All sorts of evils have struck the world. Evils are of diverse types. Usually they are called natural evils and physical evils. Natural evils are beyond our control. Earthquakes, floods, storms, volcanic eruptions may be cited as some of the natural evils. But most of the other types of evils are usually man-made. It has been stated by some philosophers that God created this world, because it happened to be the best of all the possible worlds and man is supposed to be His highest creation. But unfortunately the world today is going through a crisis due to the machination of man himself.

The world has been bogged down by various man made evils like terrorism, violence, corruption etc., which have caused untold suffering to mankind. But the greatest risk to the world comes from environmental pollution, which has become the prime issue for the philosophers, scientists, environmentalists and others. If we go by epics and ancient literature, we find that once upon a time man lived in perfect harmony with Nature and wild life. From those books we learn that in that age man treated nature with humility and reverence. Nature was considered as a gracious deity bestowing all her bounty on human beings. This anthropomorphic notion had great impact on man. In that age man was friendly with natural flora and fauna. Forests were of great value, not for material benefit, but for spiritual enlightenment. In Ramayana we find that Ramchandra, along with his wife Sita Devi and brother Lakshman went to the forest for 12 years exile, in order to fulfill his father's pledge to his step mother Kaikeyi. In Mahabharata too it has been staged that the Pandavas with their wife Draupadi went to the forest to serve 12 years exile after being defeated in that infamous game of dice in the royal court of Hastinapur. The householders, after reaching a certain age, went to the forest for practicing

'Vanprastha' and 'Sanyas'. When Sakuntala was on the point of departure to her husband's home, the trees of the hermitage gave her gorgeous dresses and ornaments as the bridal gifts. The plants also served as witness to her wedding with King Dushyanta. These incidents might have been pure fib but they did demonstrate the fact that man treated nature with great respect. Animals, birds and other beings were held in high esteem by the people. There was peace and happiness in the earth and no question of ecological imbalance ever arose. But now this menace has posed a threat to the survival of the planet Earth.

Once man venerated nature, but with the passage of time he became arrogant and ruthless. With the advancement of science and technology human beings have learnt and discovered a great many things. He started to think that the world was created for human usage. For his personal gain he started exploiting nature. By cutting down forest all over the world man has ruined the ecological balance. We hear of global warming almost every day which might lead to earth's destruction. It is true that science and technology have done a wonderful job, making man's life easier. For benefit of human beings science has offered innumerable things like television, telephone, aeroplanes, computers etc., which are of great value to human beings. The world has become smaller due to the scientific discoveries. The astronauts have frequently gone to the space to solve the mystery of creation. The scientists have even claimed that they can increase the longevity of man.

The scientists have explored nature and have brought out precious things from the ocean, land, animals and various other things. Now we have petrol, diesel, coal, kerosene, as well as diamond, gold, pearls and other things from the bosom of the earth. It is true that we have gained a lot due to the contributions of science and technology. But science also has given

us destructive weapons which have caused havoc on this good earth of ours. Man's insatiable greed has brought the earth to the verge of extinction. Belatedly people have become aware of the danger to earth and various types of seminars, discussions, debates etc. have been organized to find ways and means to save the earth. Hence preservation of environment has become a prime issue with philosophers, scientists as well as intellectuals. Alan Marshall's category of ecologic extension places emphasis not only on human rights, but on the recognition of the fundamental interdependence of all biological entities and their essential diversity. Hence all environmental studies should include an assessment of the increasing values of non human beings. It is time human beings realized their relationship with environment.

Pollution and depletion of natural resources have not only been the concerns of the environmentalists; dwindling plants, animal bio-diversity, the loss of wilderness, the degradation of ecosystems, and climate change are all part of a raft of 'green' issue that have implanted themselves into both public consciousness and public policy over subsequent years. Humanity has moral obligations in the face of such concerns. We have duties regarding environment in order to find means to save the earth. The crisis of earth has arisen mainly due to the anthropocentric attitude, which means "human centredness" of human beings. All the actions are based on human benefit, without any concern for the environment. Unless the human beings show concern for nature and natural resources, as well as for wild life, the end of the world is imminent.

Besides that, man has become morally bankrupt. Terrorism has caused havoc on this earth as well as on individuals. We hear of all these bomb blasts and killing sprees all over the world. No country is safe from terrorism. In Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and some other Asian countries

we see terrorism at its worst. In India too, the same situation prevails. Assam too has been suffering from terrorism for decades. Once our country had peace; even during the British rule the situation was not so bad. At least there was trust and good will amongst the people, which is now nonexistent.

Today love, compassion, sympathy and all other higher values have disappeared. Earlier a single case of murder would have shocked the entire nation. But now they occur almost every day. The people have become used to these heinous crimes, since they have become commonplace. The newspapers report these incidents regularly, yet we feel nothing –no compassion, no sympathy at all. This fact clearly demonstrates that man has lost position as the greatest creation of God.

Even a few decades back crimes were not such universal phenomena. But during the present period not a day passes without some crime being committed somewhere by somebody. The greatest tragedy is that man, supposed to be the greatest creation on earth, has lost his humanity along with the highest values of life. The world, which God created for the good of his created beings, has turned into the worst kind of hell, due to selfishness and greed of human beings.

If we look around we see nothing but the all pervasive suffering. Every morning the media feed us with the news of terrible crimes like murder, extortion, abduction, corruption, rape and so on. And the horrible part is that we go through all these news with indifference without a trace of feeling for those unfortunate victims. This shows how callous we have become regarding the sufferings of fellow human beings. If at night somebody's home is broken into, neighbors do not rush to that home to help the family in distress. There is no feeling of neighborliness anymore and that highly acclaimed statement "love thy neighbor" has become obsolete in the present context. And you cannot blame them, since nobody wants to risk his life for somebody else, even if

he happens to be a friend or a neighbour.

There was a time when all these criminal activities were almost nonexistent. People were God fearing and value conscious. They could not even imagine such terrible activities. One could move around freely without fear. The news of such horrible incidents, which are occurring today, would have shocked the people to the core. But now life has become cheap and no one feels for others. The whole world is wallowing in crime and we are no exceptions.

In our country crimes have become a rule rather than exception and our state which was a haven of peace till some years back, is steeped in crimes up to its neck. The value based Indian people have lost their cherished values. Morality has become unknown to the present generation and they seem to be following that adage of "eat, drink and be merry", which is ruling the modern man. This kind of Egoistic Hedonism is slowly but surely leading the society to utter destruction. Little girls are being raped by men old enough to be their fathers or even grandfathers. You dare not walk across a dark lane in the evening, lest somebody lurking behind the bush is waiting to take a shot at you.

Some years back we could not imagine locking our doors during the day since guests used to come anytime till late in the evening. But now nobody dares to keep the front door open even during the day. If somebody rings the bell late in the evening, we get shivers down the spine, as we fear that some criminal may be at the door.

Corruption is another malady, which has done irreparable damage to our nation. Some decades back very few persons indulged in corruption and they were treated as social outcasts. But now honest people have become a rarity and you may not find such a person even if you scour the entire length and breadth of the country or may be outside even. Jobs are sold and bought like any other commodity and merit does not count. There is no question of educational proficiency or ability. It is only money that counts.

There is no end to our sufferings. Adulterations of various food products have posed a great threat to the health of the nation. Rice may be mixed with little stones, sugar may be mixed with glass particles and mustard oil may be mixed with burnt mobile and so on. Even that life saving capsule may contain nothing but chalk powder, the saline bottle may contain plain water. Even baby food is not spared.

Religious and ethnic violence have erupted as never before. It seems that all these fanatics do not understand the true meaning of religion. No religion ever recommends violence and all religions preach love and tolerance. But these fanatics kill people in the name of religion, thereby tarnishing the image of their own religion. It is greed, and not need, that is ruling the modern man.

All these factors have brought a crisis to the world. If we consider these forces, we can see that the main factor behind all of them is our materialistic outlook. As Lord Buddha had stated, ignorance is the root of all our sufferings. People do not seem to realize that life is not eternal and pleasure and pain do not touch the soul, which is the only reality. India was once the land of 'Rishis' and these great sages taught men to practice spiritualism. In Indian philosophy it has been stated that the true goal of a human being is to attain liberation and a liberated person becomes free from bondage. Western materialism has caused havoc in our society. Greed for money has warped our judgment. We should realize that money cannot give us happiness rather it brings suffering. If we are rid of the materialistic point of view and concentrate our minds on God or Brahman we will be able to attain perfect bliss. Then will realize that there is no difference between 'mine' and 'thine', since the same 'paramatma' is present in every 'atma'. This kind of realization needs the determination to sacrifice physical comforts in order to achieve eternal happiness. If spiritualism is given due importance and materialistic outlook is discarded, only then the crisis to the earth might be minimized.

(The Sentinel 03.02.2013)

Vivekananda House in Chennai; a Source of Inspiration

- V. Shanmuganathan

Tamil, stands majestically on the busy Kamarajar Salai, on the Marina beach, very much nearer to seashore. Swami Vivekananda stayed here for nine days between 6 february 1897 to 14 february 1897, after his triumphant return from the west. Swami Vivekananda landed at Colombo on the afternoon of January 15, 1897 and was given a royal reception by the Hindu community there. Then he visited Rameswaram Temple, Pamban, Ramnad, Paramakudi, Manamadurai, Shivaganga, Madurai, Kumbakonam and then he reached Chennai.

Welcome address in Madras: When Swami Vivekananda arrived in Madras an address of welcome was presented to him by the Madras reception committee. At the railway station, there was a huge audience surging with emotion to see a glimpse of Swamiji. Hearty welcome address was read out by the devotees. It said, "When you undertook to represent Hinduism at the Parliament of religions, most of us felt, that the cause of Hinduism would be ably upheld by its representative in that memorable religious assembly. Your representation of the doctrines of Hinduism at once clear, correct, and authoritative, not only produced a remarkable impression at the Parliament of Religions itself, but also led a number of men and women even in foreign lands to realize that out of the fountain of Indian spirituality refreshing draughts of immortal life and love may be taken so as to bring about a larger, fuller and holier evolution of humanity than has yet been witnessed in this globe of ours." After the welcome address was over, Swamiji was requested to sit on a decorated chariot. Owing to the intense enthusiasm of the large crowd assembled to welcome him, Swamiji was only able to give a short reply."The wonderful kindness, the

fervent and enthusiastic joy with which I have been received from Colombo to Madras, and seem likely to be received all over India, have passed even my most sanguine expectations; but that only makes me glad, for it proves the assertion which I have made again and again in the past that as each nation has one ideal as its vitality, as each nation has one particular groove which is to become its own, so religion is the peculiarity of the growth of the Indian mind. In other parts of the world, religion is one of the many considerations, in fact it is a minor occupation. Here in India, it is religion that forms the very core of the national heart. It is the backbone, the bed-rock, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built. Politics, power and even intellect form a secondary consideration here. Religion, therefore, is the one consideration in India."

What makes one nation to survive? At this stage the joy of enthusiasm of the crowd became more intense and it was a challenge to manage them. Swamiji raised his voice, shortened his speech. "I do not know whether my voice will reach all of you. I never before had an opportunity of addressing a large open-air meeting"...Then Swamiji continued his speech.. "Two great problems are being decided by the nations of the world. India has taken up one side and the rest of the world has taken the other side. And the problem is this.: Who is to survive? What makes one nation survive and others die? Should love survive or hatred, should enjoyment survive or renunciation, should matter survive or the spirit, in the struggle of life? Our solution is renunciation, fearlessness and love; these are fittest to survive. Giving up the senses makes a nation survive. As a proof of this, here is history, today telling us of mushroom nations rising and falling, almost every century –starting up

from nothingness, making vicious play for a few days and then melting. This big, gigantic race which had to grapple with some of the greatest problems of misfortunes, dangers, and vicissitudes such as never fell upon the head of any other nation of the

world, survives because it has taken the side of renunciation; for without renunciation how can there be religion?" Then Swamiji concluded his speech, pleased at the people's warmth and show of tremendous enthusiasm. It was indeed a marvelous show of strength of people ready to follow the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. Then Swamiji was taken to Vivekananda house earlier known as ice house or castle kernan at Chennai.

History of the building: This building was originally used by the British to store ice brought from great lakes in north America for about 30 years. Then this building was sold to one Mr. Biligiri Iyengar of Madras who was a famous advocate in the Madras High Court and was fairly well to do in those times. He remodeled the house, renamed it Castle Kernan after his friend, justice Kernan in the Madras High court and used it as a residence. Biligiri Iyengar, being a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, made him stay at the ice house. Later When Vivekananda was about to depart, he agreed to his disciples request to set up a permanent centre at the ice house.

Jayalalitha government's gift: In 1963, during the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda, the government of Tamil Nadu renamed the Castle Kernan as 'Vivekananda House'. In 1997, on the eve of the centenary of Swamiji's return to

India and his stay at this house, the government of Tamil Nadu at the request of the Ramakrishna Math leased out the Vivekananda house for few years. In the 150th year of Swami

Vivekananda's birth anniversary, the Ramakrishna mission in Chennai has got a gift from the Jayalalitha government. The state has extended the lease on Vivekananda house on the marina by 99 years, i.e. till 2111.

Experience Vivekananda: The Vivekananda house structure is distinctive and has several unique features. This is reflected clearly in its distinct architectural features such as the circular core, the semicircular corridors, the hemispherical dome and the square plan. 43 paintings of exquisite artistry trace the evolution of our culture from vedic times to the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. These paintings are colourful commentaries on the secret of the longevity of our culture. They illustrate the reach and range of india's spiritual heritage. The Vedas, the Epics, and the Puranas come alive in these paintings. The large circular verandah exhibits 120 photographs relating to Swamiji from his days as a travelling monk to his spiritual conquest of the west, which has become a part of world history. Rare photos are on display, elegantly laminated, with sub-titles and footnotes. Swami Vivekananda's room is on the second floor that Swamiji stayed in February 1897. This room, full of sacred memories is now maintained as a meditation room. Anyone who sits here even for a few minutes cannot but feel the peaceful

understanding of the power of God. Meditation can be done

here comfortably seated. Sri Ramakrishna Math conducts lot of spiritual programmes to experience Vivekananda. Thus, Vivekananda house is inspiring because of his personal stay. It is also interesting not only for the displays on the famous 'wandering monk' but also for the semicircular structure in which it is housed. In centuries to come, Swami Vivekananda will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world.

Surya Namaskar Held at Maligaon School

It was absolute new challenge for Saidul, Nikhil, Poulami Gayatri and other 500 odd children who gathered at the playground of Netaji Vidyapith Railway Higher Secondary School to practice and project the lessons of self-development on Saturday morning.

The mass 'Surya Namaskar was taught to these children for their mental, physical and spiritual development for a grater cause as a project undertaken by the Swami Vivekananda Sardha Shati Samaroh' -a social body formed under the aegis of Vivekanda Kendra, Kanyakumari to spread consciousness and learning of Swami Vivekananda, in Assam. For this, trained experts have been teaching the children the pros and cons of 'Surya Naynaskar' over the last one month under this project at different schools and institutions across the state.

"We are teaching the process of 'Suiya Namaskar' to students studying between class six (6) and class twelve (12) from various school across the state and our aim is to train over a lath children and enlighten them towards their physical, mental and spiritual growth through yoga in the state." said, Meera Kulkarni, Prantiya Sangathak of the organisation.

All together 200 (200) such camps have been arranged across Assam on 18th February 20-13 which also happens to be the birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. The organisation has arranged two hundred (200) such camps on the same day which would cater to over two (2) lakh children covering every nook and corner of Assam, bringing them under one common through 'Surya Namaskar'. As a part of this event, eleven (11) camps have been organised in Guwahati alone in which, several schools are taking part." said an official bearer.

"'Surya Namaskar' has lot of good and positive impact on children. Hence we have encouraged the students of our school to take part in it and altogether 500 children have taken part at our school Campus in today's morning session," informed Purabi Bannerjee, Principal of Netaji Vidyapith Railway

Higher Secondary School at Maligaon in Guwahati.

As part of the year-long activities of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, this attempt of overall development of children through 'Surya Namacakar' in Assam, with over two lath students participating, is sute to make a huge positive impact, not only in young minds of the future generation, but their parents at large for a better tomorrow.

ple, it was found that most of the machineries and tools were lying in bad shape" Biswajeet Saikia, a member of Northeast Economic Development Society told the Seven Sisters Post.

"The Sanrakhita Sishu Krira Kshetra project is the only water supply project functioning in the area. Therefore, we are heavily dependent on this project for our daily requirement of water," said an irked Saikia. Bishnujyoti Juba Sangha general secretary Hemanta Thakuria said; "When the Water supply project first started in the area there was much enthusiasm among the locals who had been facing the shortage of drinking water in the, area but that has waned down in recent times." Though the water supply project has the installed capacity of providing 200 liters to around 100 household units, the actual demand is 'much more, Thakuria added.

Stressing the need for increase in capacity, Thakuria said: "To meet with the extra demand for water in the area, the installed capacity of the water supply plant needs to be increased!"

Locals have also decided to move the local MLA on the issue, Saikia said.

(Seven Sisters Post - 10.02.13)



Tuki Announces Sops for Organizing Ethnic Festivals

The Idu-Mishmi community residing in Lower Dibang Valley, Dibang Valley and Lohit districts on Friday began the celebrations of Reh-an agro-based festival with gaiety and traditional fervour.

Idus believe that they are the sons and daughters of the divine mother 'Nani Intaya' and no one can get her blessings and keep alive the bond of brotherhood and social feeling strong unless one performs the rituals during the festival. The celebration will continue for the next three days with community feasts and merrymaking.

Meanwhile, addressing a public gathering as the chief guest of the three-day Reh Festival organised at Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Nabam Tuki urged for preservation of the ethnic culture of various communities of the state.

The chief minister also said the state government will help the communities in organizing various festivals so that the rich culture of the various communities of the state can be preserved.

Tuki announced that the state government has decided to allot a

budget of its 5 lakh towards the organisation of each festival of the various ethnic communities of the state.

The Reh festival was earlier celebrated as an individual festival for peace and prosperity was celebrated for the first time on community level at Roing in February, 1968 under the leadership of Late Ita Pulu. Since then the momentum has picked up gradually and now that every Idu Mishimi take it as a matter of pride to celebrate the festival wherever they are with whatever the number they may be.

(Seven Sisters Post - 02.02.13)

Tangsa Tale Rets a Boost from Assam-Born German Scholar

- Anami Talukdar

BEFORE the last fluent speaker of Tangsa dies and the language disappears into oblivion, a Germany-based researcher of Assamese-origin has come to their rescue.

Dr Meenaxi Barkataki Ruscheweyh, a research fellow from department of anthropology at Gottingen University in Germany, has been busy documenting the endangered aspects of Tangsa tradition and culture. Her endeavour started following a Documentation of Endangered Languages (DoBeS) project that studied the imperiled aspects of the Tai Phake, Singpho and Tangsa communities of upper Assam. The project, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (largest private research funder in Germany), was taken up in 2008.

"Though the project was completed in November last year, it's very sad to know that just one family of Kadoi group (sub-tribe of Tangsa) is surviving in India, while only a handful from Tangsa tribe remember their rituals, songs and poetry. These findings have made me continue my work on Tangsa tribe," says Barkataki-Ruscheweyh. The DoBeS project was led by

Australian linguistic, Dr Stephen Morey, followed by a musicologist from Vienna, and a Tai language expert from Thailand. The team also tied up with the linguistic department of Gauhati University. The project was initiated to provide a comprehensive documentation of the traditional songs, and poetry of the Singpho, Tangsa and the Tai Phake tribe, including a study of Tai traditional manuscripts, which are highly relevant for language and culture maintenance among the Tai people.

"Tangsa implies a large collection of tribes and it could not be studied merely taking the base of one linguistic aspect. When these three groups of linguistic varieties of Tai Phake, Singpho and Tangsa - were studied, the Tangsa tribe was found to be slowly losing their cultural identity. The most unfortunate part is that Tangsa people possess only oral languages, there are no written documents. As a result, the rich cultural tradition of Tangsa is facing a serious threat of extinction," she says, adding that the youngsters have shifted to speaking another language, as most of them adopted the Christianity for a better living.

Many languages are dying at an unprecedented rate in this world which is also true of the myriad tribes and sub-tribes in Arunachal Pradesh. When a language dies, a piece of the cultural diversity of our world also dies with it, rues Barkataki-Ruscheweyh.

Barkataki-Ruscheweyh, who hails from Assam, joined the DoBeS team to study aspects of Tangsa life and culture. She is in the city to participate in an international conference on 'Genres of Belief from Polkloristic Perspective' organised by the University of science and Technology, Meghalaya (USTM) in collaboration with the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Estonia. Tarigsas are culturally similar to the Naga tribe in Eastern Nagaland, including some inhabiting upper Sagaing Division in Myanmar. This is a primary reason behind the inclusion of the tribe's area in Changlang in Greater Nagalirn, which is a demand placed before the Centre by the NSCN(IM) and it envisages bringing all Nagainhabited areas in the Northeast under a single administrative mechanism.

(Seven Sisters Post - 05.02.13)

NE Tribe Rooted to 1000 Years Old Written Tradition

The written tradition of Northeastern tribes like the Monpa, Chakina and Mog is much older than what is generally believed and may have started as early as 937 AD), a new study shows.

Researchers at the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) have discovered scores of manuscripts in the Northeast and other parts of the country that provide glimpses of the rich tribal knowledge and culture, though only a few people can decipher them today.

The manuscripts of Chakmas in Mizoram, Monpas in Arunachal Pradesh, Mogs in Tripura and Gonds in Andhra Pradesh bear testimony of the tribal people's written literary tradition. It was earlier believed that the tribal writing is a new phenomenon.

"The NMM readjusted its emphasis in recent years to include the unexplored areas and communities in its search for manuscripts, and the result is astonishing," said Mrinmoy Chakraborty, editor, NMM.

"There is a manuscript available in Kok-Borok, a tribal language of Tripura. It was copied by Krishna Vallabh Devsharma during the reign of Maharaja Mahendra Manikya in 1699 AD. This shows that besides Mog

manuscripts, there are manuscripts written in other tribal languages of the state during that period," he said.

He added that a large number of rare Tai manuscripts written on sanchi tree bark are still lying scattered in the Tal villages and Buddhist Monasteries of upper Assam that not only bear testimony to the 600-year rule of the Ahom, but also the rich cultural heritage of the region at that time. The Tai groups of the Northeast include Ahom, Aiton, Khamyang, Khamti, Kabow, Phake and Turung. Of these, Aitons, Khamti and Phake still retain the Tai language as their mother tongue.

In addition to the Tai Ahom manuscripts, there are a number of manuscripts written in other Tai languages like Aiton, Khamti, Khamyang, Phake and Tunmg. Scholars are aware of the Assamese language, script and manuscripts. But little attention was given to the manuscripts available in tribal languages, he said.

In 2010, the NMM had set up a Manuscript Resource Centre (MRC) in Moranhat in Assam. It plans to document, conserve and digitise the Tai manuscripts. The work is in progress.

In Arunachal Pradesh, many monasteries and households are in possession of manuscripts, which are called peichas in local Monpa language and are preserved in tightly wrapped yellow silk or cotton cloth.

The Monpa tribe not only possesses manuscripts, but they are also adept in paper making following indigenous methods. There are other tribal scripts in the state that are yet to be studied.

Conservation of would help understand the region and its people better, scholars believe.

The study of tribal manuscripts will clear misconception about tribal history. Sonic scholars even believe that the Harappan script can be deciphered with the help of Gondi script. Scope of studying tribal manuscript can be assumed from this studying tribal culture on the basis of oral sources is not enough. Both written and unwritten sources are important said Chakraborty

According to the NMM a manuscript is "a hand-written document, which is of scientific, historical, literary or aesthetic value and which has been in existence for not less than 75 years". .

(Seven Sisters Post - 07.02.13)

Army Officers Visit Donyi Polo Dere

ITANAGAR, Feb 26: Lt Gen AK Sahni, GOC, 3 Corps accompanied by a host of army officers visited Donyi Polo Dere at Aalo in West Siang district and sat with believers of Donyi Polo faith at their prayer session today.

Addressing the gathering, Lt Gen Sahni said, nestled in beautiful nature with bountiful resources; the tribal people in this part of the country have a reason to nature worship, official sources informed.

"I am happy to be a part of it," he said.

The army will always come up for the cause of hill people whenever needed, he said.

The dignitaries including Lt Gen Sahni and his better half, Maj Gen RPS Bhadauria, GOC, 56 Infantry Division and his wife, and Brigadier Ajay Verma also planted locally needed plants in front of the Donyi Polo Dere.

Earlier, Pakjum Ete, president of

Donyi Polo Trust Committee said, "that we all look forward to the sentinel of the mountain as our friend and protector."

The tribal people are nature worshipers and we try to preserve our culture through orally transmitted literature from generation to generation, he said adding, "we have superstitions and taboos and we are reforming some of those to suit the present day world." (www.sentinelassam.com.)

Sinister Chinese Propositions

Report about China's plans to divert the Brahmaputra and eventually connect it with the Yangtze have been met with considerable alarm in the Northeast.

Water has become a valuable public good and needs to be conserved. With climate change, induced by global warming, as a result of rampant deforestation and environmental pollution, and accentuated by a break-neck pace of industrialization, inter-state water conflicts have become commonplace. Recent reports of the Chinese plans for the development of three new dams at liexu, Jiacha and Dagu just north of Arunachal Pradesh have caught everyone by surprise. This proposal was approved as a part of China's 12th Five Year Plan (2001-2015), in January 2013, by the State Council or Cabinet. It comes in addition to the 510 megawatt (mw) Zangmu dam which has been under construction since 2008. China terms all these projects as run-of-the-river type, which means that these dams would have limited or little water storage facilities and are dependent mainly on seasonal water flows. But the secrecy with which it has been moving ahead with these projects has left others anxious in India's Northeast and Bangladesh.

Let us begin with an overview of China's water scarcity in its northern and central provinces. It is home to seven of the world's most polluted rivers. The growth of mega cities in the north of China has drained the underground aquifers to dangerous proportions. Elizabeth C Economy states (The Diplomat, January 22, 2013) that there are 10,000 petrochemical plants along the Yangtze and 4,000 along the Huang He rivers, which makes their waters too toxic. This causes 60,000 premature human deaths annually. Sadly enough, the average Chinese citizen has little idea whether the water one drinks is potable or not!

The South-to-North Water Diversion project (refer www/water-technology.net) was first mooted by

Mao Zedong in 1952 to ease water shortages in Beijing, Tianjin and the northern provinces of Hebei, Henan and Shandong. On August 23, 2002, after much deliberation and research, China's state council approved this project worth \$62 billion to eventually connect the Huang He, Huai He, Hai He and the Yangtze rivers through three corridors (eastern, central and western). But critics point out this would not solve the water woes; instead, it would cause serious ecological problems, even desertification, in the lower riparian areas.

Tibet is often referred to as the 'third pole' for its pristine environment. It is home to some of the major river systems of Asia, such as the Nu-Salween, Yarlung Zangbo-Brahmaputra, Lancang-Mekong, Yangtze, Huang He etc. Originating in the Himalayas, in the Angsi glacier near the sapphire-blue Manasarovar lake (Tibetan: Mapham Yumtso i.e. Victorious Lake) in Tibet, the 1800 mile long Brahmaputra river takes a sharp bend, near Motuo (China), to enter India at Bone, a small hamlet near gelling in Arunachal Pradesh. This bend, between the two Himalayan peaks, Namche Barwa (7,756 metres), creates one of the world's deepest gorges through which the river drops nearly 2,00 metres as it enters India.

This fall near Motuo (850 metres) has been identified by Chinese authorities as conducive to build a 38,000 mw hydropower station. Some analysts say that this capacity is equivalent to all the oil and gas reserves in the South China Sea! This comes in tune with China's plans to increase its total power capacity from 10,60,000 mw in 2011 to 15,00,000 mw by 2020 in a bid to reduce dependence on fossil fuels (David Stanway, www.internationalrivers.org, November 19, 2012). China announced at the 2009 Copenhagen Summit on climate change that it would reduce its carbon emissions by at least 40 per cent in the same period of time.

The Brahmaputra is the file-line of

the socio-economic, cultural and religious milieu of Northeast India and Bangladesh. The Brahmaputra basin accounts for 57 percent of India's total hydropower reserves. Reports about China's plans to divert this river and eventually connect it with the Yangtze have been met with considerable alarm in the region. India and Bangladesh, being lower riparian countries, have much to lose from such a diversion. The dry months of March and April could see the river reduced almost to a stream. It would also accentuate the silting problem, thereby raising the riverbed.

This region's high seismicity (Zone 5) is a legacy of the Indian tectonic plate ramming against the Eurasian plate millions of years ago which resulted in the emergence of the Himalayas (the youngest fold mountain range of the world). Any major dam holding a huge amount of water could cause a disaster downstream in the event of an earthquake. Sadiya and Dibruigarh are sad reminders of the 1950 earth-quake. The 760 mw Zipingpu dam in the Min river is supposed to have caused, analysts say, the 7.9 Richter scale earthquake in Sichuan on May 12, 2008, killing 69,197 people and rendering 4.8 million people homeless.

In 2002, China and India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the provision of hydrological data on the Brahmaputra during floods from China to India. This MoU expired in 2007 and was replaced with a new one valid for five years, which was signed on June 5, 2008. Chinese officials have categorically denied any plans to divert the river to the north and emphasized that the current projects have dealt with only one percent of the Yarlung Zangbo's total hydro-potential (Ananth Krishnan, the Hindu, March 2, 2012). The joint communiqué between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, during the latter's India visit in December 2010, reiterated the promotion and enhancement of co-operation on the sharing of flood

season hydrological data and assistance in emergency management to be provided by the Chinese side.

However, given the veil of secrecy maintained by either party on this issue, it gets very difficult for the common people of Northeast India to sift the grain from the chaff. As mentioned above, the building of three new dams announced last month by China's state council caught everyone by surprise. Beyond saying that the Chinese government takes a responsible attitude in developing its cross-border water resources, China's foreign ministry has not been too forthcoming in its purported plans. While the government of India is trying to dispel fears about China's intentions to the general public, it is quietly trying to assert its own claim over the Brahmaputra. It has planned the setting up of a huge network of 168 dams to generate 63,000 mw of power in Arunachal Pradesh. The Government of India has stated that it is imperative for India to establish these dams in order to assert its right over the Brahmaputra. Moreover, it must try to engage China to draw up a water-sharing settlement on the lines of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty that it had signed with Pakistan.

Whether it is China's river diversion plans alone or both India and China's dam-building projects put together, it must be seen that the local people do not suffer. China should make concerted efforts to clean up its rivers first. Asymmetrical power relations, together with being the upper riparian country, may put China in the advantageous position. However, any potential conflict in the future would be detrimental for both China and India. Both are nuclear powers and are the leaders of global economic growth.

This sub-region is also home to a fragile but valuable ecosystem, and home to a lot of ethnic minorities. Therefore, it is prudent not to fight over this scarce resource.

The writer is a doctoral candidate at the Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Thousands Throng Tathagatha Tsal's Unveiling Ceremony in Sikkim

- Vishnu Neopaney, Rabong

Thousands of devout on Monday thronged Tathagatha Tsal (Buddha Park) here in South Sikkim, some three hours drive from Gangtok, to witness the historic Dzung ceremony (curtain raiser) before the place's formal unveiling. This was a prelude to formal consecration of the Tathagatha Tsal by the Dalai Lama between March 24 and 26.

Chief minister Pawan Chamling unveiled the name of the park which was given by the Dalai Lama. Relics presented by nine countries for the park were also installed in the central hall under the statue of Lord Buddha by Goshir Gyatshab Rinpoche on Monday.

The relics were taken in a procession from Karma Thekchenling Donkun Duppai Gatshal Monastery at the Mane Choekerling complex to the present venue. The procession was led by Goshir Gyatshab Rinpoche and Chainling, who also attended puja along with his cabinet colleagues, Speaker Karma Tempo Gyaltsen and MLAs.

The total cost of the project has been estimated at Rs 39.20 crore. The Buddha face is coated with 3.5 kg of pure gold.

The state government had announced to construct Lord Buddha's statue to include Sikkim's rich Buddhist traditions in the Buddhist Circuit of Southeast Asia to attract a large number of pilgrimage tourist on the eve of 2,550th birth anniversary of Lord Buddha in 2005. A decision of building a statue of Lord Buddha to commemorate the event was then conceived.

With this Buddha Park, Sikkim is all the set to attract up to 14 lakh tourists from Nepal, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Maldives and other foreign countries annually, state's tourism secretary KS Topgay told Seven Sisters Post.

Headed by the chief minister himself, the state government had constituted a core committee with former minister DD Bhutia as vice-chairman and former chief secretary

TT Dorji as member. The government also constituted technical and religious committees to provide assistance to Mane Choekerling Development and Management Committee.

Along with the relics offered by nine countries, the most precious relics of Lord Buddha were presented to the Sakyamuni Project by Somdet Phra Nyanasaamvra, the 19th supreme patriarch of the kingdom of Thailand. A delegation of monks from Thailand led by master Jamnain Seelaseetho arrived in Rabong in 2009 to hand over the relics.

The relics were kept at Rabong Karma Thekchenling Donkun Duppal Gatshal Monastery at Mane Choekerling till the completion of statue.

The Tathagatha Tsal is spread over an area of around 23 acres with the height of Buddha's statue measuring more than 137 feet. The walls of the central hall and interior areas below the main statue have been decorated with paintings depicting the various stages of Lord Buddha's life, Tungshak and paintings depicting 108 Buddhas. The painting depicting the founders and great scholars of the four sect of Tibetan Buddhism can also be viewed inside the inner shear wall.

The congregation hail is of composite structure comprising steel frames and RCC work and has a capacity to accommodate 600 people. Ten souvenir shops, a guest house with 17 rooms, a cafeteria and a reception block are other main facilities available within the complex. Over two thousand people can be accommodated in the hall and also has photo galleries and a lounge. The red dome on the top of the hail signifies the elements, while the fountain nearby signifies the water element too. Yin and Yang (balance of nature) concept is highlighted by the pathways.

The high standard of lighting systems installed by energy and power department adds to the beauty of the project and a beautiful and captivating light and sound show can be witness in the evening.

(Seven Sisters Post - 26.02.13)

A Train Runs Where the Buddha Walked

- Rosamma Thomas

IT'S a trip down the Buddha's lane, into antiquity and serenity. Tracking the Buddha's path, the Mahaparinirvana Express is for the historian, the tourist and, of course, the pilgrim seeking salvation in retracing the footsteps of the man who walked this land some 2400 years ago.

The special train dedicated to Buddhist pilgrims does the circuit twice every month in the cooler months of the year - beginning from New Delhi and taking the travellers to places like Varanasi and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh before getting into Gaya in Bihar.

Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first sermon, is just 13km from Varanasi. From Gorakhpur, travelers are taken to Kushinagar, where he died and attained mahaparinirvana (death, and ascent to deathlessness) and Lumbini, where he was born. And Gaya is where he attained enlightenment.

The train, which has been running for six years, takes week to complete the tour. It is named after the mahaparinirvana Sutra, the Buddha's sayings in days preceding his death. (The association with death makes some people think Indian Railways should change the train's name!)

It's a train ride to history for some, spirituality for others. At Sarnath, a solitary man sat chanting in a nook among the ruins. Other visitors peeped into bottomless wells, and wandered looking and what remains of Emperor Ashoka's famous Sarnath pillar, the capital of which is the four-lion emblem of modern India.

The lone pilgrim sat hidden from sight by what, over 2,000 years ago, was the corner of a room. These days, the brick walls are just high enough to shield a man squatting on the ground from intrusive, photograph-seeking tourists.

A group of Thai pilgrims on the

Mahaparinirvana ride sat cross-legged at the Mulagangha Kuti, the site in Sarnath where the Buddha is believed to have sat in meditation.

Only 200 years after he died, when Emperor Ashoka had converted to Buddhism, did many of these spots become sites for monasteries.

From Gorakhpur, the travellers take the bus to Kushinagar, about 50 km away, where the Buddha died after a brief spell of diarrhoea.

He is believed to have had a premonition of death, and travelled to this spot on the banks of the Hiranyavati River to make it convenient for followers to converge for his last rites.



At Kushinagar, an over six-metre terracotta statue of the Buddha lying on his side tells of a peaceful death. The Buddha died when he was nearly 80, but not a wrinkle mark is on the face of the statue, which has since been painted golden. (The red of the terracotta peeps through from the base.)

The Mahaparinirvana pilgrims then ride a bus nearly 160 km from Kushinagar into Lumbini, across the

border with Nepal, where the Buddha was born. A large stone sculpture here shows baby Buddha emerging from his mother's side. (Yes, side. That was where he was believed to have emerged from.)

Last month, the train for the first time made a trial run into Odisha, where there are ruins of ancient Buddhist monasteries, all constructed between 3rd and 5th century AD, at Udaigiri, Ratnagiri and Lalitgiri.

The cells of the monks are typically arranged around a central courtyard, and resting against the wall across the main entrance is a large, imposing statue of the Buddha. There are clear signs of vandalism on the statues - one large Buddha figure has the nose hewn out roughly, and sharp edges mark the hollow where the nose was.

Alexandar Cunnigham, known as the father of the Archeological Survey of India, was renowned for excavating Buddhist sites in India in the mid-19th century. The Mahabodhi Temple in Gaya, about 95km from Patna, Bihar's capital, was among the important sites that Cunningham unearthed.

This temple marks the site where the Buddha gained nirvana or enlightenment.

There are many reasons to take the Mahaparinirvana ride. It's not just about religion - there are 350 million Buddhists in the world — it's also about delving into the ancient past.

And one's orientation would colour what one sees. "What tourists on this circuit see are only ruins of great antiquity. For those who have not witnessed it, it's hard to imagine the awe and devotion that pilgrims feel when they see these ruins," said Joginder

(The writer travelled on the Mahaparinirvana Express from January 20 to 27 on an invitation from IRCTC and the Odisha Tourism Department. The train's next trip will begin February 9)

(Seven Sisters Post - 3.02.13)

Hardliner Who Gave in to Age

Pope Benedict XVI will remembered as a staunch defender of Roman Catholic orthodoxy and a diehard traditionalist

Pope Benedict XVI, who on Monday announced his intention to resign this month, will be remembered as a staunch defender of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, a diehard traditionalist and a lightning rod for controversy.

The German intellectual succeeded the long reigning and popular John Paul II in April 2005 aged 78 after serving nearly a quarter-century as the Church's doctrinal enforcer, earning himself the nickname "God's Rottweiler."

The 85-year-old, who blamed his age for preventing him from continuing at the head of the papacy, will be the first pope to do so in centuries. "I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me," the head of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics said as he would step down on February 28.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's hardline approach, his nationality and his age were all seen as handicaps to his becoming pope, and Benedict had famously said in a 2010 interview that he would resign if he felt he could no longer carry out his papal duties.

As head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and then as pope, he rejected the ordination of women and marriage for priests. He opposed homosexuality and communism and was never afraid of upsetting political sensibilities.

In 1984, he said "communist regimes which came to power in the name of the liberation are one of the disgraces of our times."

Ratzinger has also attacked rock music, calling it the expression of basic passions".

As pope, Benedict championed Christianity's European roots and showed his conservatism by repeatedly stressing family values and fiercely opposing abortion, euthanasia and gay marriage.

He also reintroduced the long-discarded Latin mass under certain

conditions.

Above all, Benedict will be remembered for a disastrous public relations record that got him into hot water with Muslims, Jews, gays, native Indians, Poles, AIDS activists and even scientists. Memories are still fresh of the fury the German pope unleashed in the Muslim world with a speech in September 2006 in which he appeared to endorse the view of an obscure 14th-century Byzantine emperor that Islam is inherently violent.

The academic lecture sparked violent protests in several countries as well as attacks on Christian targets. In 2009, the pope struggled to mollify Jews after he invited a breakaway ultra-conservative faction back into the fold of the Roman Catholic church by lifting the excommunication of four bishops, including one who insists that no one died in Nazi gas chambers.

Just weeks later Benedict added AIDS activists to the list of groups he has angered.

On a trip to Africa, the region hardest hit by the AIDS pandemic, he said that condom use could be aggravating the crisis.

Born on April 16, 1927, in Markt am Inn, in the predominantly Catholic southern German region of Bavaria, he was the son of a policeman.

Ratzinger gravitated gradually towards the priesthood, entering a seminary in 1939, the same year he was required to join the Hitler Youth movement.

He was ordained priest at the same time as his older brother Georg in 1951, and began teaching theology at Freising College in 1958.

Ratzinger went on from there to teach at several other German universities, notably in Bonn, Meunster and Regensburg.

The brilliant scholar caught the eye of Cologne Archbishop Joseph Frings, a cardinal who brought him to Rome to work as an advisor to the Second

Vatican Council, hampering out modernisation reforms from 1962 to 1965.

Pope Paul VI named Ratzinger archbishop of Munich in 1977 and made him a cardinal the same year.

The four-year stint in Munich was his only real pastoral experience before he became pope.

Dear Brother,

I have convoked you to this Consistory, not only for the three canonisations, but also to communicate to you a decision of great importance for the life of the Church.

After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry. I am well aware that this ministry, due to its essential spiritual nature, must be carried out not only with words and deeds, but no less with prayer and suffering. However, in today's world, subject to so many rapid changes and shaken by questions of deep relevance for the life of faith, in order to govern the bark of Saint Peter and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary, strength which in the last few months, has deteriorated in me to the extent that have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me. For this reason, and well aware of the seriousness of this act, with full freedom I declare that I renounce the ministry of Bishop of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter, entrusted to me by the Cardinals on 19 April 2005, in such a way, that as from 28 February 2013, at 20:00 hours, the See of Rome, the See of Saint Peter, will be vacant and a Conclave to elect the new Supreme Pontiff will have to be convoked by those whose competence it is.

Dear Brothers, I thank you most sincerely for all the love and work with which you have supported me in my

(Contd. to Page 14)

Sankardeva to be Part of NCERT Curriculum

THE National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) may have finally woken up to include lessons on Vaishnavite saint Srimanta Sankardeva in school curricula but the “dream” is far from realisation, at least not anytime soon, if sources in the council are to be believed.

The NCERT has sent a letter to the Society for Srimanta Sankardeva (SSS) in which it has promised to include the life and teachings of Sankardeva. The society had appealed to the council to include chapters on the life and teachings of the great Assamese Vaishnavite saint, social reformer, litterateur and cultural maestro.

Talking to Seven Sisters Post, SSS president Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti said the message had been communicated to them via a letter by Chandra Sadayat, professor and head, department of education in languages (DEL), NCERT.

“The NCERT will include Srimanta Sankardeva in the curriculum when the next revision is carried out. Sadayat also informed us that teachers in orientation programmes will also be taught about the great social reformer,” he said, adding that Sadayat has been designated as a public relations officer of NCERT.

However, if NCERT sources are to be believed, it could be years — if not decades — before the “promise” materializes.

An NCERT official from New Delhi told this newspaper that the entire process could be a long-drawn affair. And perhaps not without reason.

Consider the gaps between each revision. While the last curriculum revision was done in 2008-09, prior to that the NCERT revised the curriculum in 2001-02, for which the process was initiated in 1999.

And prior to that, the NCERT last revised the curriculum 1986, 15 years before the subsequent revision.

The NCERT official said that no process has been initiated either by the council or the Union Human

Resource development HRD) ministry so far to revise the existing curriculum to include Sankardeva. ‘So, no one can say when the Vaishnavite’s life and works will make their way into the textbooks,” he added.

The matter assumes significance as former HRD minister Kapil Sibal had announced at a public meeting in New Delhi in September last year that the teachings of Sankardeva would be part of NCERT textbooks.

The NCERT official, however, sounded optimistic that the entire process could be initiated “even within three years, provided the government makes the move”.

The SSS had recently demanded inclusion of life and works of Srimanta Sankardeva at both the state and national levels. The society had also held a press meet in Guwahati and severely criticized the government agencies for failing to teach the students about Sankardeva.

The SSS had sent an appeal to NCERT director P Sinclair, where the contributions of the great social reformer were pointed out. The NCERT earlier included only one paragraph about Srimanta Sankardeva in the history textbook for class XI—“Themes in Indian History”, Part II, First edition, 2007, page 165.

But since history is an optional subject, only a limited few students of the Arts stream get to know about Sankardeva. “This has not helped much in making the medieval social reformer known among the students and thereby among the general people of the country,” the SSS pointed out in the appeal to the NCERT director.

“We at SSS had pointed out that Sankardeva was the first playwright among all modern Indian languages. The saint had created the classical Sattriya dance form, a new school of classical music with his own ragas and, above all, he integrated people of all castes and tribes. It is in the fitness of things that life and works of such a genius should be taught to pupils at all levels,” explained Borkakoti.

As per the decision at its second

annual general meeting, the Society for Srimanta Sankardeva has taken up the issue of incorporating the life and works of Srimanta Sankardeva in school curriculum at both national and state levels.

The SSS president said they were ready to assist and extend their support to the NCERT, whenever the revision of curriculum is done. This may be in the form of reading materials or other services as required by the officials in revising the syllabus.

(Seven Sisters Post 15.03.2013)



Srimanta Sankardeva

(Contd. from Page 13)

Hardliner Who Gave...

ministry and I ask pardon for all my defects. And now, let us entrust the Holy church to the care of Our Supreme Pastor, Our Lord Jesus Christ and implore his holy Mother Mary, so that she may assist the Cardinal Fathers with her maternal solicitude, in electing a new Supreme Pontiff. With regard to myself, I wish to also devotedly serve the Holy church of God in the future through a life dedicated to prayer.

From the Vatican, 10 February 2013, (A reproduction of the speech that pope Benedict delivered in Latin to members of a consistory, or church council, announcing his planned resignation on Monday. It was distributed by the Vatican in a statement)

(Seven Sisters Post - 12.03.2013)

Church Forum Accused of Stifling Democracy

Mizoram People's Forum bars Independents from speaking at public platforms

- Zodin Sanga, Aizawl

The powerful Church in Mizoram has been accused of stifling "independent voices" in the state quite literally through its election watchdog Mizoram People's Forum (MPF).

Floated by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church to ensure clean and low-profile by election", independent election watchdog MPF has not allowed political parties or their candidates to hold public meetings except on the 'common platform' arranged by the MPF while campaigning for the by-poll to Chalfilh Assembly constituency scheduled on Saturday.

Candidates were allotted equal time to highlight their policies and programmes and replied queries from the audience on the common platform', which was introduced before the 2008 Assembly polls. Common platform was held in each village of a constituency.

However, the MPF has barred Independent candidate and those representing small political parties, which have no office in Mizoram from the common platform, prompting many critics to term it "purely undemocratic".

Asked how it felt not to be allowed to participate on the MPF's common platform, lone Independent candidate R Lalrohlua said: "It's really embarrassing. It's like depriving you of your freedom of speech."

"Independent candidates need common platform the most as they do not have any base, unlike political parties which have units in every village. With house-to-house campaign and separate public meetings banned by the MPF, there was no other way to campaign for me," the first-timer added.

DK Thanga, who is contesting the by-poll on Bihar-headquartered Lok Janshakti Party (UP), is the other victim of the MPF's diktat.

"It is a discriminatory practice. All candidates, no matter how small one's party is, are equal in the eyes of the

Election Commission of India. Barring a candidate from speaking before the public is a clear violation of democratic norms," Thanga said.

"I had policies and programmes for the development of the constituency and I was not allowed to share those with the people," he rued.

The MPF's move has also drawn criticism from various quarters. Northeast Students' Organisation vice-chairman and prominent social activist Lalmuanpuia Punte remarked: "Such practice is purely undemocratic and violation of freedom of speech. If the MPF does not allow a candidate to speak on its platform, then it should allow him to hold his own public meeting."

'A good politician, who has the highest chances of getting elected, may not necessarily represent a political party. Why should he be prevented from speaking in a public meeting?" he asked.

M Lalmanzuala, retired bureaucrat and a popular radical social thinker of the state, seconded Punte. "Who are the MPF to discriminate candidates whose candidature had been okayed by the Election Commission of India? Does the MPF think that it is above the highest authority for elections in India?" he questioned.

Various students' organisations under Chalfilh constituency had boycotted the MPF's common platform in protest against the discrimination.

The MPF, however, justified decision, Forum secretary Upa (church elder) Lal ramthanga said that this was one of the provisions of pre-poll agreement signed with all political parties in Mizoram for the next Assembly polls due for this year-end.

He claimed that major political parties in the state insisted that Independent candidates and political parties not having office in the state be barred from the common platform.

(Seven Sisters Post-23.02.13)

Christians urged to lead 'coherent' life

Vatican City Feb. 27 : POPE BENEDICT XVI called on Christians to lead a life that's "coherent" with their beliefs in his last public address before becoming the first Roman Catholic pontiff in six centuries to leave power.

The German-born Benedict, 85, addressed a general audience of tens of thousands of pilgrims in St. Peter's Square on Wednesday. Entering the 17th-century square in the "Pope-mobile" for a final blessing, he spoke from a stage in front of St. -Peter's Basilica. Benedict will become the first pope on Thursday to leave office since Gregory XII in 1415.

"Loving the church means knowing how to make hard and difficult choices with the good of the church, and not oneself, in first place," Benedict said. Calling on Christians to feel joy and live a life that's "coherent" with their beliefs, he said that he'd decided to resign for the "the church's good."

Benedict's last public address comes as cardinals gather in Rome to decide when to start the secret conclave to elect his successor amid scandals over clerical sex abuse and Vatican intrigue. The pope used a February 13 sermon to speak out about the church's "sometimes disfigured face" and a February 23 message to the Curia to lament the "evil, suffering and corruption" that has defaced the centuries-old institution.

(Seven Sisters Post - 28.02.2013)

BHUTIAS OF SIKKIM HIMALAYAS

Dr S.Paljor, Executive Member,
Janajati Faith & Culture Protection Forum

The state of Sikkim is bounded in the north by the vast stretches of the Tibetan plateau (China) and to its west lies the kingdom of Nepal. In the east, the state is bounded by Bhutan and the Chumi valley of Tibet (China). The Darjeeling district of the state of West Bengal stretches along its southern boundaries. Geographically Sikkim lies between 27 degree 4'46" N to 28 degree 7'48" North latitudes and between 88 degree 55'25" to 88 degree 0'58" E longitudes extending approx. 114 km from north to south and 64 km from east to west.

Risley (1894) has given a vivid account of Bhutia and other tribal population of Sikkim. During the period three main tribes existing then in Sikkim had been identified, these are Lepchas (Menres), Limbus (Tsong-rees) and Bhutias (Ihorees or lhopos), the details are as follows:

* The oldest and perhaps aboriginal inhabitants of Sikkim were the "RONG" or as we know from the Nepalese title, "the Lepchas" (Dr. Waddell in a separate article has shown that the Lepchas are probably Indo-Chinese cognate with the tribes of the Naga Hills and entered the Sub-Himalayan via the Assam Valley).

* The next importance, if not in antiquity, comes the Kham-pa or Kham-ba, the immigrants from the Tibetan province of Kham, commonly called Bhutias.

* The Sikkim Limbus ranks as last and least, these belong to what Mr. Risley styles the Lhasa Gotra, as they are believed to have migrated to Sikkim from Shigatsi, Penam Norbu, Khyongtse, Samdrupling and Gyamtse, places in the Tibetan province of Tsang, south of the Tsanpocognate with the tribes of the Naga Hills and entered the Sub-Himalayan via the

Assam Valley).

All the families in Sikkim according to Risley (1894) belong to one or other of these strains or to an admixture of them, as inter marriages are allowed. The Royal family belongs to the second of the above.

Different clans of Bhutias or Lhopos

According to Ramble (1998) etymological, the name Bhotey is innocuous enough. The term Bhotey is derived from the Sanskrit Bhotah, which comes from Bod, the Tibetan name of Tibet. A Bhotey is therefore quite simply a Tibetan. The term Bhutia or Bhotey is misleading (Denzongpa 2002) as Bhutia of Sikkim call themselves Lhorees or Lhopos or Sikkimese or Denzongpas. There is no doubt that the Lhopos of Sikkim are descendants of Tibetan immigrants who came to Sikkim in different waves from the 13th century onwards and established their own kingdom in the 17th century till the kingdom merged with the main stream in 1975.

Today the Lhopos of Sikkim proudly call themselves Indian. India is considered by this people as a sacred land of Gautama Buddha. Over the years the Lhopos of Sikkim has maintained distinct identity in terms of tradition, culture, religion etc. in the Himalayas. The Lhopos or Bhutias of Sikkim are said to have descended from the followers which are said to have consisted of eight tribes hence called (Beb-tsan-Gyat) of the great ancestor of the Maharaja of the Sikkim (*Gye - Bum - Sar*). The descendants of Khye-bum-sar are divided into six families:

1. *Yulthenpa*
2. *Tshe-Gyu-tar-pa*
3. *Lingzerpa*
4. *Nyim-Gye-pa*
5. *Zhan-Tar-pa*
6. *Guru-Tashe-pa*

The names of different clans of Sikkimese Bhutias are given below. The list is incomplete and may cover only 60% of the clans:

1. *Gangya-pa*
2. *Nang-Tsang-ko-pa*
3. *Dyo-Shob-pa*
4. *Gen-Sa-pa*
5. *Shyar Kaleon*
6. *Shyar Bendok*
7. *Shyangderpa*
8. *Shyar Addsm-pa*
9. *Tse-Chyu-Dhar-pa*
10. *Bhyonpo Lha-soong*
11. *Tyodh-pa*
12. *Bhyonpo Nadik*
13. *Shengpa*
14. *Bhyonpo Yo-chya*

Lamaistic Buddhism

The Tibetan Lamaistic Buddhism has spread all over the Himalayan belt right from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh including Sikkim. The Buddhism was introduced in Sikkim in the 8th century AD by Guru Rinpoche known as Guru Padmasambhava. Guru Rinpoche consecrated many of the Sikkimese sacred landmarks and blessed Drakar Tashiding as the main spiritual centre. Guru Rinpoche exercised the land of all evil spirits, and get rid of all obstacles that would tend to obstruct or disturb the course of devotional practices in Sikkim. The legend claims that Guru Rinpoche not only spread Buddhism in far and flung areas of Sikkim but also hid various sacred religious books in the caves of Sikkim for religious instruction for future generation. Guru Rinpoche also known as Guru Pema Jungne by the Bhutias of Sikkim anticipated that Sikkim would become one day a citadel of Buddhism and that learned lamas would discover this hidden treasures for the spread of Buddhism. Another sage whose memory has always been held in high esteem by the Sikkimese

Bhutia is Sage Lhatsum Chhenpo who travelled all over Sikkim spreading Buddhist teachings erecting monasteries, shrines and stupas. The activities of Sage Lhatsum Namka Jigme can be traced to 1597-1650, a lama of Nyingma Buddhist order. He also helped to establish Bhutia kingdom known as Namgyal dynasty. The concepts of god, soul, mind, salvation, etc. are given below.

Basic concepts and terms:

Concept of supreme god: The Buddhist as a whole do not accept the concept of god as a creator of the world but it accepts the concept of Karma.

Concept of soul: There is a soul because of we trust our past, present and future of life. The nature of soul is pure but, temporarily it is covered with the afflictive emotions and ignorance. We do need to purify our soul, but for that we need to practice three ways of purification of soul. They are: 1. Hearing, 2. Thinking/imagine and 3. meditation.

Concept of mind: Within the human body there are six major or six main cognitive acts or consciousness and fifty one minor mind (but if we carefully examine them, there we will find more than that). The six major minds are: 1. Eye (main) consciousness. 2. Ear consciousness. 3. Nose consciousness. 4. Tongue consciousness. 5. Body consciousness. 6. Mind consciousness.

Concept of intellect: Intellect is familiarization of practice. In order to develop our mind as much as possible, we need to practice continuously, because our capacity of mind is innumerable. Even we can develop our mind life after life, for example, some people do learn very fast the new knowledge because he/she has practiced much in his/her previous life.

Theory of salvation: There are two different kinds of salvation they are 1. temporary salvation and 2. ultimate salvations. Temporary salvation is: liberation from the six

classes of beings (*Lokas*). And the ultimate salvation is enlightenment.

Life after death: After death, normal people would take 49 days for next rebirth. Until the rebirth, the (dead) persons remain stays in the intermediate state (*bardo*). Then after 49 days he or she will take rebirth according to the collected *Karma*.

Concept of hell: There are eighteen regions of hell depending on whatever Karma the person had made during his/her present life time. After the death of the person, he or she will (if they had bad Karma) born in one of the regions of hell accordingly to their action.

Concept of the heaven: According to the action done in person's past life, they will be born in one of the heavenly realms.

Paap and Punya: Paap is made according to person's motivation. For example if someone killed a person, it is not definite that he has made the paap. There has to be investigation of the killer's motive. If a person had intentionally killed, he will definitely get full paap or punishment. But if the person accidentally killed (someone) he will get half punishment which can be almost purified.

Revitalization of traditional institute: Denzong Sheda, Taktse Sheda produces number of scholars in Buddhism. They come out from these institutes mastering the Buddhist philosophy only. Then they give their service towards the welfare work and preservation of religion and culture. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology has received the great number of scholars. The institute has benefited from their lectures and teachings to students and scholars from here. These scholars have formed an intellectual group or *tshogpa* which in turn gives direction and helps to preserve old tradition, culture and religion. In addition Sikkim Buddhist development trust has been set up at Rinchenpong to embark training to young lamas. The trust has also proposed to establish higher institute

of Buddhist learning centre for lamas.

Worship of clan or lineage deities and spirits

The Lhopos believe that there are many spirits and deities inhabiting the environment and nearly every Mountains, Hilltops, Prominent Rocks, Mountain Passes, Old Trees, Lakes and Streams are the abode of some supernatural beings. The Bhutias offer prayers to the supernatural powers before passing through these areas. The Lhopos or Bhutias of Sikkim also worship clan or lineage deities (Balikaci 2008).

Bhutias and Lepchas of Sikkim worship Mount Kanchernjunga which is called Panglhabsol, during the month of August or September main day falling on the 15th of the 7th month of the lunar calendar. This is one of the very important community festival. Before the merger of Sikkim to the main stream of India the national ritual/warrior dance used to be performed with great pomp and grandeur in the palace monastery. This ritual of the land was essentially a celebration of Sikkim's guardian deities.

In addition the Bhutias of Sikkim consider *bum chu* ritual and worship of Kanchenjunga deity very sacred. The *bum chu* ritual is held on the 15th day of the first Tibetan month every year at Drag Kar Tashiding and this ritual attracts many pilgrims. The importance of *bum chu* and its sacred water is well documented by Rigzin Ngodup Dokhampa (2003). The *Bumchu* and its sacred water are kept in miniature mansion (mchod bsham) under lock and seal of Chogyal of Sikkim and the lama committee of Tashiding. Every year, a special recitation is conducted and the seal is checked by the high officials and the lamas before the *Bumchu* is taken out of its mansion. The *Bumchu* is opened during the night of the 14th day of the first month of the lunar calendar, and three cups of water are taken from it. The first cup is for the royal fam-

(Contd. to Page 19)

“The Traditional Method of Soft Drink & Special Chatanies preparation by Rongmei Tribes in North East India from cereal and fruit crops and vegetables”

- Philip Kamei

The Rongmei Tribes are lead a well civilized and well cultured life; the political way of life is village republic. In this paper I would like to write down the Traditional method of soft drink preparation in cereal and fruits crop. Rongmei tribe since time immemorial knew the art of brewing or making nutritional rich and indigenous soft drink made from cereal(rice) and from fruits crop like banana, jackfruit, goose berry, pineapple etc. Locally made soft drink from rice is called joungao. This has extraordinary taste and flavour when drink in large amount got hike. This drink is served to children, woman, lady, young and old alike, despite of gender and age limitation. People manufacture this by human power and muscle, and they take extra-effort to produce better beer. This beer is used in most of feasting and important ceremony of the tribes and is an energy drink for those who goes to work in field for farming and Jhuming, when taken they are revitalized and know no tiredness despite the whole day they work. They also normally consume as source of recreation and share a moment of happiness among friend, relative, close and near and dear ones. Continuous habitual intake of this beer help them stay healthy and fitness to do manual work and live a very strong and long live.¹

Material required for preparation

A wooden jar, a wooden pistle, a wooden mortar, a shieving made of cane and bamboo, soaked riced, germinated or sprouted paddy, water and a vessel or jar to mix and stored it. The wooden mortal is made of Ingai(a local name of a tree) a tree reddish in colour were felt down and used, a pistle also were made of the same wood with attachment of bronze ring at the tip or end of the pistle.

Procedure or method of preparation

Rice (de-husked paddy) is soaked in water in a vessel or pot for half an

hour or one hour for the rice to swell up in order to make it easier for making a powder. Now, the germinated grain or sprouted paddy is mixed with soaked rice and taken out to make powder. Germinated grain were prepared and take some days to let the paddy germinated, they used to keep the paddy and sprinkle some water and kept it in air tight container or sometimes store it in banana leave and kept on top of the Kitchen oven in fire smoke then, they preserved this germinated grain for preparation of the beer.

Now sprouted paddy and soaked rice were taken out for making powder using mortar and pistle mainly done by womenfolk and youngster, its involve muscle power to make the powder, the powder after crushing in mortar and pistle were shieve over again and again till all the rice were made a fine powder. This procedure is called Joungao soumei(pounding or grinding of rice beer). When these is being done so now water is boiled up to 100 degree Celsius, and then mixed thoroughly and stir it in a wooden jar with a spoon made of bamboo or wooden stick. Then, it is kept for some 10 to 15 minutes for cooling. And, now the stuff is ready for storing in a container usually called Mu (a container made from mature long and big gourd. This is being kept for 5-6 days in winter and 2-3 day in summer. This way the beer becomes ready for drink and can be served in the daily chores of every Rongmei house and family. With the passage of time and time consuming procedure, this beer is occasionally made and serve in very specific and important occasion as of now. But in the past, this is just like a tea and coffee being served in the entire village. Children preferred when it is sweet yet the old people wanted the sour and sweet flavour when beer attain maturity and full fit. When drinking in large quantity it gives some kick like that of strong drink like rum

and whisky. So the very method they invented is a necessary prove that they also applied scientific thinking and knowledge to prepare such a peculiar and best beer ever known to their people and a way of life for them.²

Soft Drink from Goose-berries

The mature gooseberries are plucked down from the tree. Then; the fruits are separated from stalk, leaves and small branches, removing the spoiled ones and then it washes it thoroughly in a vessel or any container. Now, this are put in airtight aluminium pot, then some amount of sugar is kept (necessarily not compelled), than some litres of clean water are pour up-to the brim of the pot. It is packed with air-tight and then stores it for 2-3 months. Then, the soft- drinks are ready for serving. But necessarily has to sieve away the solid part of fruits, and to add more flavour and for it smell some people keptSo this very method of soft-drink preparation also were known to the Rongmei tribes since times immemorial.³

Soft Drink from Banana

A bunch of banana fully ripe ones were completely peeled off the cover, this has been slice or cut into smaller pieces and then store it in a pot. Some amount of water is also kept. Now this is again preserved in air tight container or pot. So that it might get decomposed. The preparation is kept for some 2-3 weeks then, the banana drinks is again ready to serve for children, young and old alike.

A chatani of green long chilly (Bangtam)

These is traditionally served and eaten with meals in times of emergency and hardship in field or work place by women folks of their times. The long green chillies are slices in pieces and a piece of ginger is kept too, with addition of some little salt. The chatanies is ready for meal and this has a very nice and refreshing taste and very much delicious.

A chatani from banana stem

A softer part and inner part of eatable part of banana trees collected from the jungles is crush and cut into smaller pieces, look like some threat being a fibrous part of the banana. Now the banana stem so prepared is mixed with locally prepared Khui(a substance made from seed of the sour leaves of a vegetables. Then, some king chillies or long chillies fresh ones are kept and mix it. Now the chatani is already good and ready to serve, this also one peculiar method usually done by Rongmei tribes.

The preparation of Khui(a substitute for Ngari as chatani)

Khui is in local dialect, it is a substance prepared by the seed of the sour leaves of vegetables. These vegetables crops are largely grown in Jhum field or in Kitchen garden. The matured seed are collected from the sour trees, these seed are boiled for some 2 hours, afterwhich, and some small quantity of ash is kept as soda from the kitchen fire after removing dirt by shieving .when it is cool and the seed are taken for grinding or pounding on wooden motor by wooden pistle, after this procedure. It is time to make a package using small banana leaves that is collected from the forest. The small packaged are tighten up with rope of source leave plants or from canes and bamboo ropes. Then, all the packages are dry on fire in kitchen for 1-3 days. Then the substance is ready for a making chatani. This is also very delicious items and the art of manufacturing is known only to them.

(Endnotes)

¹ Meigeini Kamei (2012)

'An interview by an author during December 20-25, 2012 at Nungba in Tamenglong District, Manipur

² Author interview with Nungba Village Chairman, dated January 20th 2012 in Nungba, Tamenglong District Manipur

³ Interview with Lucy (2012), an interview conducted on 10-20 November 2012 at Nungba Subdivision, Tamenglong, and Manipur

(Contd. from Page 17)

BHUTIAS OF SIKKIM...

ily, the second for the lamas and the third is distributed among the pilgrims on the day of the full moon. The three cups are replaced with water brought from Rathong Chukha, which is also considered to be a blessed river. The water of which is considered holy.

In some years, the Bumchu's sacred water is increased by 21 cups while in others it decreases or remains at the same level. It may also be found to be clear or cloudy, states that are interpreted as predictions for the country. When the water level increases, it is the sign of prosperity when it decreases; it predicts a bad year of drought and diseases. Cloudy water indicates conflict and unrest.

It is said that the seed of enlightenment may be obtained by drinking a mere drop of *Bumchu* water. By this action, all distress, malevolent beings and untoward happenings are removed, prosperity and fulfillment are awarded in this life, and one may attain Buddhahood or be born in the Riwo Potala (ri bo po ta la), the heaven of Chenresig or Zangdopalri (zings mdog dpal ri), the heaven of Guru Rinpoche, in the following life.

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(Article is taken from the book - 'Socio-cultural and Spiritual Traditions of North-east Bharat')

'Soccer god' hails Latin America's papal glory

Just when the world was taking note of a soccer-loving Argentine as the new Pope, a legendary player and a fellow countryman linked him to another historic episode that brought glory to the Latin American nation.

In a letter to Rome's *Il Messaggero* newspaper on Wednesday from his base in Dubai, Diego Maradona — considered to be one of the greatest football players of all time — said that the same "hand of God" brought the papacy to his country Argentina that

helped it to win the 1986 World Cup. Maradona's famously illicit, handled goal against England still excites passions at home and abroad.

In the letter, Maradona (52) described himself as a devout Roman Catholic and said he rejoiced at the election of his compatriot Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio as Pope Francis. "I am truly very happy and I am certain that my enthusiasm is shared by the whole Argentinian people," he wrote...

(Seven Sisters Post 15.03.2013)

Trace the Root

Maoism has already made inroads in the Northeast, especially in Assam. This has been made possible due to underdevelopment in the areas that the Maoists have targeted. But our politicians seem to ignore the root of the problem. It will be recalled that last year, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had confirmed the entry of the Maoists in the Northeast and their association with several militant outfits of the region. The MHA document said that the Maoists “are making incursions into Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, which will have serious long-term strategic implications”. To a question whether the Maoists had links with other terrorist organizations and foreign agencies, the document said, “The CPI (Maoist) has close fraternal ties with many insurgent groups of the Northeast, mainly the PLA of Manipur. Most of these outfits have links with external forces inimical to India. The CPI (Maoist) has also frequently expressed its solidarity with J & K terrorist groups. These strategic ties are part of their ‘Strategic United Front’ against India. The outfit has close links with Maoist organizations in Philippines and Turkey and is also a member of the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA), which includes Nepal Maoists.” The MHA document discussed the steps an ordinary citizen can take against Left-wing extremism. This includes launching an attack on social networking sites like Facebook. The ministry had asked the people to condemn the violent and brutal atrocities of the CPI (Maoist) and other Left-wing extremist groups on innocent civilians through any available media like social networks; learn to recognize propaganda against the

country by Maoist front organizations, ideologues and sympathizers; sensitize fellow countrymen on the dangers of Maoist ideology; and cherish and nurture the democratic way of life as enshrined in the Constitution. According to the MHA, front organizations that are offshoots of the parent Maoist party profess a separate existence to escape legal liability and carry out propaganda for the party, raise funds for the militancy, assist the cadres in legal matters and also provide shelter to underground cadres. “Functionaries of front organizations provide intelligence veneer to the inherent violence in Maoist ideology. They sanitize the bloodletting and attempt to make the Maoist world-view palatable to urban audiences and the media,” said the ministry document. The MHA document adds that the Maoists are in the business of brainwashing and indoctrinating young children, as well as of threatening the poor Adivasi parents who usually prefer to part with their girl children.

The fact of the matter is that the tea garden areas of Upper Assam are one of the most cherished ones for the Maoists by virtue of these areas being in the quagmire of chronic poverty and backwardness. The tea garden labourers — Adivasis — here lead a

primitive life. Education and health facilities are terribly short of the need. The children of these labourers have nothing to look for in the future. Decent employment is a very, very far cry. In these circumstances, it is only too natural that the poverty-stricken Adivasi youth, with nothing to alleviate their suffering and them having nothing to fall back on in terms of decent means of livelihood and a secure future, should not have any qualms at all about graduating into Maoists. It is a huge tragedy that the Adivasis of Assam, who form the tea garden labour populace of the State, should face appallingly primitive situations even after 65 years of Independence. Non-education, poverty, heavy addiction of males to country liquor (every year, many die due to spurious country liquor consumption), lack of proper health facilities and their exploitation by tea planters continue to make their lives hellish. There is virtually no sign of the State coming to their aid and rescuing them from the morass they have been in for decades. Is this not what the Maoists look for as they venture into Assam? The only way out is development. It is here that our political executives will be tested. But do they have the will?

*(<http://www.sentinelassam.com/>
editorial, 16.2.13)*



Greeting you all the forthcoming Rongali Bihu



पोप के त्यागपत्र से उठे सवाल

— देवेन्द्र स्वरूप

११ फरवरी (सोमवार) की प्रातः रोमन कैथोलिक चर्च के २६५ वें पोप बेनेडिक्ट सोलहवें ने अनायास लैटिन भाषा में यह घोषणा करके कि, 'मैं इस दायित्व से त्यागपत्र दे रहा हूँ और २८ फरवरी को मैं पोप पद से निवृत्त हो जाऊंगा', अपने निकट सहयोगियों एवं विश्व भर में फैले कैथोलिक चर्च के एक अरब बीस लाख अनुयायियों को चौंका दिया। पोप परम्परा में सन् १४१५ में गिगोरी बारहवें के ६०० वर्ष बाद यह पहला त्यागपत्र था। गिगोरी पोप पद के तीन प्रत्याशियों के झगड़े में फंसे थे। गिगोरी से पहले १२९४ में सेलेस्टीन पांचवें ने इस्लामी विस्तारवाद द्वारा उत्पन्न राजनीतिक और आर्थिक समस्याओं से हार मानकर त्यागपत्र दिया था।

पर बेनेडिक्ट सोलहवें के सामने ऐसी कोई समस्या नहीं थी। अतः उनका त्यागपत्र चौंकाने वाला सिद्ध हुआ। अपने लिखित वक्तव्य में उन्होंने कहा कि 'मैं भली भाँति समझता हूँ कि महत्वपूर्ण पांथिक प्रवृत्ति के कारण पोप का कार्य केवल शब्दों और पूजा कर्म तक सीमित नहीं है। मैंने कई बार ईश्वर के समक्ष आत्मालोचन करते हुए अनुभव किया कि इस दायित्व को निभाने के लिए जो मानसिक और शारीरिक शक्ति चाहिए, वह मेरे पास नहीं है। अतः अब मैं इस दायित्व से मुक्त होकर अपना शेष जीवन पूजा अर्चना में व्यतीत करूँगा।'

कौन हैं बेनेडिक्ट सोलहवें ?

जर्मन मूल के जोसेफ रतजिंगर को केवल आठ वर्ष पहले १९ अप्रैल २००५ को पोप चुना गया था। उस समय उनकी आयु ७८ वर्ष थी। पोप पद के लिए १००० वर्षों में चुने गये वे पहले जर्मन थे। २४ वर्ष की आयु में वे पादरी बन गये थे। वे अपनी

अध्ययनशील प्रवृत्ति के लिए जाने जाते थे और बेवेरिया विश्वविद्यालय में दर्शन शास्त्र के प्रोफेसर थे। उन्हें बिल्ली पालने और प्यानो बजाने का शौक था। पोप चुने जाने के पूर्व २५ वर्ष तक वे पिछले पोप जान पाल द्वितीय के निकट सहयोगी के नाते वेटीकन में ही रह रहे थे और अपनी कट्टर सिद्धांतवादी छवि के लिए चर्चित थे। पर पोप के नाते उनका आठ वर्ष का कार्यकाल अनेक विवादों से घिरा रहा। चर्च में बढ़ रही शिथिलता, नैतिक क्षरण और अनुशासनहीनता को रोकने में वे असफल रहे। चर्च के अनुयायियों की संख्या लगातार घटती गयी। फिर भी, इस समय विश्व में रोमन कैथोलिक ईसाइयों की कुल संख्या एक अरब बीस लाख के आसपास आंकी जाती है, जो विश्व की पूरी जनसंख्या का छठवां भाग कही जा सकती है। पोप के प्रधान कार्यालय वेटीकन को एक स्वायत्त राज्य का दर्जा प्राप्त है इसलिए पोप को राज्यप्रमुख का सम्मान भी दिया जाता है। कुछ पहले तक अन्य देशों की कैथोलिक सरकारें वेटीकन के सामने थर-थर कांपती थीं और आंख मूंदकर उसके आदेशों का पालन करती थीं।

पोप बेनेडिक्ट सोलहवें यह विश्वास लेकर मैदान में उतरे कि कैथोलिक चर्च ही सच्चे मार्ग पर चल रहा है, बाकी सब उपासना पद्धतियां अपूर्ण हैं। उनकी धारणा है कि आधुनिक सेकुलर विश्व आध्यात्मिक दृष्टि से बहुत दुर्बल है। उन्होंने इस्लाम को अपने मुख्य प्रतिद्वंद्वी के रूप में पहचाना। उनके पोप बनने के बाद वेटीकन ने २१ नवम्बर, २००५ को समलैंगिकों के पादरी बनने पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया। अगले वर्ष २००६ में सितम्बर ९ से १४ तक उन्होंने अपने जन्म प्रदेश बेवेरिया का भ्रमण किया।

वहां १२ सितम्बर को रेगेनबर्ग विश्वविद्यालय में अपने भाषण में उन्होंने १४वीं शताब्दी के एक बाईजेंटॉइन सम्राट के इस कथन को दोहराया कि इस्लाम दुनिया में शैतानी शक्ति बनकर आया है और उसका विस्तार तलवार के बल पर हुआ है। इस भाषण से मुस्लिम जगत में गुस्से की लहर दौड़ गई और पोप पर चारों ओर से हमले शुरू हो गये। इन हमलों का ईसाई जगत में तो स्वागत हुआ पर पोप बेनेडिक्ट घबरा गये। वे क्षमायाचना की मुद्रा में आ गये। उन्होंने कहा, मेरे भाषण को गलत समझा गया है। मुस्लिम आक्रोश को शांत करने के लिए उन्होंने २८ नवम्बर से १ दिसम्बर, २००६ तक तुर्की का दौरा किया और इस्ताम्बूल के मुफ्ती एवं अन्य मुस्लिम उलेमाओं के साथ वहां की नीली मस्जिद में नमाज पढ़ी।

पोप बेनेडिक्ट सोलहवें कैथोलिक चर्च में कट्टरवादी एवं उदार पक्षों के बीच करवट बदलते रहे। कट्टरवादियों की मांग पर उन्होंने ७ जुलाई, २००७ को प्राचीन लैटिन प्रार्थना को अपनाने का आदेश दिया। ५ फरवरी, २००८ को गुडफ्राईडे की परम्परागत लैटिन प्रार्थना में से यहूदियों को निकलवा दिया। इंग्लैण्ड के एक कैथोलिक पादरी विलियम्सन ने यहूदियों के सामूहिक नरमेध (होलेकास्ट)की ऐतिहासिक घटना को पूरी तरह नकार दिया जिस कारण उसे चर्च से निकाल दिया गया। किन्तु पोप ने २०१० में इंग्लैण्ड का दौरा करके विलियम्सन को चर्च में वापस ले लिया। लेकिन इन सब निर्णयों से यहूदी समाज और चर्च के बीच दूरी बढ़ गयी।

पल-पल बदलते पोप

पोप बेनेडिक्ट के सामने कैथोलिक चर्च

में बाल यौनाचार की समस्या विकराल रूप धारण कर गयी थी। यह समस्या पोप जान पाल द्वितीय के समय ही प्रकाश में आ गयी थी। अमरीका में कई महत्वपूर्ण पादरियों को इस पाप में लिप्त पाया गया था। उनके विरुद्ध मुकदमों में भी दायर हुए थे। किन्तु पोप और उनके सहयोगी जोसेफ रेतजिंगर ने इस पाप के बारे में चुप्पी साधना उचित समझा था। अब जब जोसेफ स्वयं पोप की कुर्सी पर आसीन थे तब उनके समाने समस्या थी कि आयरलैंड, स्पेन, पोर्लैंड जैसे देशों से बाल यौनाचार की शिकायतों की बाढ़ का सामना कैसे करें। उन्होंने आयरलैंड की शिकायतों की जांच के लिए एक समिति नियुक्त कर दी। आयरिश पार्लियामेंट ने इसे आयरलैंड के आंतरिक मामलों में हस्तक्षेप कहकर उसकी निंदा की। कुपित होकर वेटीकन ने आयरलैंड से अपने प्रतिनिधि को वापस बुला लिया। २०१० की नवम्बर ६ को पोप स्पेन में दो दिन के दौरे पर गये। वहां अपने भाषणों में उन्होंने भ्रूण हत्या और समलैंगिक विवाहों की भर्त्सना की। स्पेन की कैथोलिक मतावलम्बी सरकार ने इन दोनों कार्यों को कानुनी मान्यता दे दी थी। पोप ने कहा कि स्पेन लौकिकवाद के रास्ते पर तेज गति से दौड़ रहा है। चर्च में यह विवाद भी चल रहा था कि क्या पादरी होने के लिए ब्रह्मचर्य पालन अनिवार्य है? महिलाओं को पादरी बनने की मनाही क्यों है? पोप बेनेडिक्ट का इस प्रश्नों पर सुनिश्चित मत था, पर वे अपने मत का दृढ़ता से पालन नहीं करा पाये।

चीन की सरकार ने चीनी पादरियों पर दबाव डाला कि वे वेटीकन से अपना सम्बंध विच्छेद करा लें। वेटीकन ने १८ मई २०११ को विश्व भर के कैथोलिकों को आह्वान किया कि वे अपने-अपने यहां प्रार्थना करें कि चीन के पादरीगण अपनी सरकार के

दबाव में आकर रोम से सम्बंध विच्छेद न करें। पोप ने परिवार नियोजन के एक तरीके के प्रयोग को निषिद्ध ठहराया था जबकि चर्च अनुयायियों में इसकी मांग बढ़ रही थी। अंततः पोप झुके और एड्स से बचने के नाम पर अनुमति दे दी। संक्षेप में कहना हो तो पोप बेनेडिक्ट कैथोलिक चर्च के नैतिक क्षरण को रोकने में असफल रहे। इस काल में उनके व्यक्तिगत बटलर पर वेटीकन के महत्वपूर्ण गोपनीय दस्तावेजों की चोरी का आरोप लगा, उन्होंने उसे क्षमा कर दिया और मुक्त कर दिया, पर वेटीकन से निर्वासित कर दिया। इस बटलर ने वेटीकन में चल रही गुटबंदी और षड़यंत्रों को सार्वजनिक कर दिया। उसने वेटीकन में व्याप्त भ्रष्टाचार और विलासिता का सार्वजनिक भंडाफोड़ कर दिया।

इस प्रकार पोप बेनेडिक्ट सोलहवें कैथोलिक चर्च के आंतरिक पतन को रोकने में पूरी तरह असफल रहे और युरोप तथा अमरीका में अनेक वर्षों से घटते आ रहे चर्च के प्रभाव को आगे बढ़ने से नहीं रोक पाये। कैथोलिक चर्च की शक्ति के हास का अनुमान इससे भी लग सकता है कि **इंग्लैण्ड और वेल्स में १९६० में चर्च जाने वालों की रविवारीय संख्या १८ लाख थी, जो २०१२ में घटकर आधी रह गई। अमरीका में १९६० की तुलना में यह संख्या घटकर एक तिहाई रह गयी है। फ्रांस में केवल ५ प्रतिशत और इटली में केवल १५ प्रतिशत कैथोलिक नियमित रूप से चर्च जाते हैं। पादरियों की औसत आयु ६७ वर्ष से बढ़कर ५२ वर्ष पहुंच गयी है।**

गैर-युरोपियन पोप क्यों नहीं ?

यद्यपि विश्व की कुल जनसंख्या का १६.८५ प्रतिशत अंश अभी भी कैथोलिक है। किन्तु कैथोलिक जनसंख्या का केवल

२५ प्रतिशत भाग यूरोप और अमरीका में है, ४२ प्रतिशत भाग लैटिन अमरीका में है, १६ प्रतिशत भाग अफ्रीका में है और १५ प्रतिशत भाग एशिया में है। इस गणित के अनुसार विश्व भर में कैथोलिकों की एक अरब जनसंख्या में से यूरोप व अमरीका में मात्र २२ करोड़ ७० लाख, अफ्रीका में १७ लाख, एशिया में १३ करोड़ ७० लाख लैटिन अमरीका में ४५ करोड़ ३० लाख कैथोलिक जनसंख्या है।

इन आंकड़ों के आलोक में क्या यह आश्चर्य की बात नहीं है कि आज तक एक भी पोप गैरयुरोपियन नहीं चुना जा सका? इसका कारण पोप के चयन की वेटीकन द्वारा निर्धारित विधि है। इस विधि के अनुसार १२० कार्डीनल नये पोप का चयन करते हैं। चयन के लिए मतदान में भाग लेने वाले कार्डीनलों की दो तिहाई संख्या का समर्थन मिलना आवश्यक है। इन कार्डीनलों की नियुक्ति पोप स्वयं करता है। इस अधिकार का उपयोग करते हुए पोप बेनेडिक्ट ने ६७ नये कार्डीनलों की नियुक्ति की है, उनमें से कुछ नामों को छोड़कर अधिकांश नाम यूरोप के हैं। मतदान की विधि के अनुसार मतदान बंद कमरे में होता है। यदि बहुमत किसी एक प्रत्याशी के पक्ष में जाता है तो वेटीकन की चिमनी सफेट धुआँ उगलती है, यदि परिणाम अनिर्णीत रहता है तो काला धुआ। मतदान के पश्चात मतपत्र जला दिये जाते हैं यानी उसका कोई प्रमाण शेष नहीं रहता। इस जटिल मतदान विधि और कार्डीनल समूह की रचना के रहते यदि इस बार पोप पद यूरोप के बाहर चला गया तो वह एक सुखद आश्चर्य ही होगा। यद्यपि अफ्रीका, लैटिन अमरीका और यहां तक कि एशिया के भी कुछ नाम उछाले जा रहे हैं। ३१ मार्च तक पोप का चयन होना है, ऊंट किस करवट बैठता है, यह चयन विधि के पूरा होने के बाद ही पता चल पाएगा।

मातृभाषा कभी विलुप्त नहीं होती: इमरान शाह

असम साहित्य सभा के नव निर्वाचित अध्यक्ष इमरान शाह को आज गाजे-बाजे के साथ निकाले गए एक भव्य सांस्कृतिक जुलूस के साथ सभा स्थल तक स्वागत कर लाया गया। सुबह के साढ़े १० बजे स्थानीय बरपेटारोड स्टेडियम से हजारों की तादाद में निकाले गए इस सांस्कृतिक जुलूम में शामिल विभिन्न समूदायों के लोग अपने-अपने पारंपरिक वेशभूषा से सज्जित थे जबकि नव निर्वाचित अध्यक्ष असम साहित्य सभा के प्रतिक चिह्न से विशेष रूप से सज्जित वाहन में सवार थे।

आज आयोजित अंबिकागिरी राय चौधरी स्मारक खुली सभा को संबोधित करते हुए श्री शाह ने अपने लिखित भाषण में कहा कि मातृभाषा कतई विलुप्त नहीं हो सकती। हमें मातृभाषा से लगाव होना ही होगा। व्यक्ति दूसरी भाषा का भी ज्ञान रखे लेकिन सभी कार्य मातृभाषा में ही किए जाने चाहिए। उन्होंने कहा कि विदेशी भाषा कभी भी किसी की मातृभाषा के अस्तित्व पर संकट पैदा नहीं कर सकती।

इससे पूर्व जाने-माने कन्नड साहित्यकार बारागुरू रामाचंद्रप्पा ने असम साहित्य सभा के ७२ वें अधिवेशन के आज दूसरे दिन आयोजित पहली खुली सभा का उद्घाटन किया। इस मौके पर उन्होंने कहा कि साहित्य के प्रति असम के लोगों का लगाव व प्रेम देख

वे अभिभूत हुए हैं। अरुणाचल से आए जाने-माने असमिया साहित्यकार येसे दोरजे थोंगसी ने अपने भाषण में कहा कि असमिया भाषा-संस्कृति के विकास के लिए सभी समूदाय के लोगों को आगे आना चाहिए। जिस तरह से असम और अरुणाचल की भाषा-संस्कृति में कोई अंतर नहीं है उसी तरह हमारे बीच कोई भेदभाव भी नहीं है। हम सभी को असमिया होकर ही रहना चाहिए।

खुली सभा में अरुणाचल के शिक्षा मंत्री बछिराम सिकाम, साहित्यकार अर्जुन देव, विशिष्ट साहित्यकार अरुण शर्मा, साहित्य सभा के पूर्व उपाध्यक्ष जतीन गोस्वामी भी उपस्थित रहे। सभा के नव निर्वाचित प्रधान सचिव प्रह्लाद तासा ने साहित्य सभा को अधिक सक्रिय और गतिशील बनाने के लिए राज्यवासियों का सहयोग मांगते हुए इस मंच को छोड़कर गए प्रबुद्ध वर्गों को भी फिर से वापस आकर सहयोग देने की अपील की।

इससे पूर्व रविवार की सुबह डा. माइल्स ब्रोनसन की दो सौवीं जयंती और असम साहित्य सभा के पूर्व अध्यक्ष गिरिधर शर्मा की सौवीं जयंती के उपलक्ष्य पर असमिया अभियान : **गति आरु प्रकृति** शीर्षक विशेष संगोष्ठी का आयोजन हुआ। संगोष्ठी का उद्घाटन किया असमिया दैनिक **आजि** के मुख्य संपादक डा. मधुराम बोडो ने। शाम को विशिष्ट कवि

अनिस-ऊज-जमान की अध्यक्षता में हीरेन भट्टाचार्य स्मारक कवि सम्मेलन का आयोजन हुआ जिसका संचालन किया डा. करबी डेका हजारिका ने।

आज आंग्रे मुख्यमंत्री : अधिवेशन की दुशरी खुली सभा में भाग लेने के लिए मुख्यमंत्री तरुण गोगोई सोमवार को यहां पधार रहे हैं। कल दोपहर १.३० बजे से नव निर्वाचित अध्यक्ष इमरान शाह की अध्यक्षता में होनेवाली खुली सभा में ज्ञानपीठ पुरस्कार विजेता उड़िया लेखिका डा. प्रतिभा राय मुख्य अतिथि तथा गुजराती साहित्यकार डा. सीतांशु यशचंद्र सम्मानित अतिथि के तौर पर उपस्थित रहेंगे। मुख्यमंत्री के साथ साथ डोनर मंत्री पवन सिंह घटवार, बीटीसी के मुख्य कार्यकारी हाग्रामा मोहिलारी, सांसद मौलना बदरुद्दीन अजमल सहित अन्य कई विशिष्ट व्यक्ति भाग लेंगे।

नगांव और पाठशाला को श्रेष्ठ शाखा का सम्मान: अन्य वर्षों की तरह जिला और शाखा साहित्य सभाओं के बीच आयोजित प्रतियोगिता में इस बार नगांव जिला और बरपेटा की पाठशाला शाखा सभा को वर्ष की श्रेष्ठ शाखा का दर्जा दिया गया है। साहित्य सभा के विदाई प्रधान सचिव परमानंद राजवंशी ने बताया कि सोमवार को अधिवेशन की दूसरी खुली सभा में इन दो गुटों को श्रेष्ठत्व का पुरस्कार दिया जाएगा। (दैनिक पूर्वोदय - 4-02-13)

मातृवत् परदारेषु

जिस समय रावण सीता को हरण कर ले जा रहा था, उस समय सीता ने अपने सारे आभूषण उतार-उतार कर फेंक दिये। यह सोचकर कि जब श्रीराम इधर से गुजरें तब उन्हें इन आभूषणों के माध्यम से पता लग सके कि मुझे इधर से ले जाया गया है। श्रीराम को जैसे ही पता चला कि सीता का हरण हो गया है तो वे व्याकुल चित्त होकर इधर-उधर भटकें। वन, पर्वत कन्दराओं में वे सीता को खोजने लगे। जैसे ही उनकी दृष्टि आभूषणों पर पड़ी वे लक्ष्मण से बोले

‘लक्ष्मण देखो ये आभूषण सीता के दिख रहे हैं?’ लक्ष्मण ने कोई उत्तर नहीं दिया। श्रीराम ने लक्ष्मण को एक-एक करके मुकुट, हार, कुण्डल आदि बहुत से आभूषण दिखाये, पर लक्ष्मण ने कोई प्रत्युत्तर नहीं दिया। अचानक दृष्टि एक ‘बिछुए’ पर पड़ी, वही बिछुआ, जो सुहाग के चिन्ह के रूप में पैर में पहना जाता है तब, लक्ष्मण एकदम उछलकर बोले-
नाऽहम् जानामि केयूरे नाऽहम् जानामि कुण्डले।
नुपुरे त्वभिजानामि नित्यं पादाभिवन्दनात्।

हे भैया! मैं मुकुट को नहीं पहचानता, मैं कुण्डल को भी नहीं पहचानता, मैं ये भी नहीं जानता कि ये हार कंगन आदि किसके हैं, पर मैं इतना अवश्य जानता हूँ कि यह नूपुर/बिछुआ माता सीता का है, क्योंकि मैं प्रतिदिन सीता माता के चरण स्पर्श करते समय इसे देखता था।

मातृवत् परदारेषु पर द्रव्येषु लोष्ट्रवत्।

आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु यः पश्यति सः पण्डितः॥

(प्रकाश-पुञ्ज)

देसी दुल्हा व विदेशी दुल्हन ने हिंदु रीति-रिवाज से रचाई शादी

जापान की कियोको से आस्ट्रेलिया में अनिल सेठी का प्यार परवान चढ़ा। लेकिन उसकी शादी श्रीगंगानगर में हिंदु रीति-रिवाज व भारतीय परंपरा के साथ हुई। नेशनल हाईवे स्थित गौरव रिसोर्ट में गुरुवार रात हुई इस अनुठी शादी का दूल्हा था हिंदुमलकोट का अनिल सेठी और दुल्हन जापान की कियोको कोजिमा। दोनों की शादी इसलिए भी खास थी कि अमूमन बैंड-बाजे के साथ घोड़ा-बग्गी में केवल दूल्हा ही आता है लेकिन यहां दूल्हे के साथ दुल्हन भी बग्गी में आई। प्राप्त समाचार के मुताबिक जिसने

भी यह नजारा देखा, वह जोड़ी को निहारने लगा और इस दृश्य को अपने मोबाईल कैमरे में कैद करने लगा। इससे कुछ देर तक हाईवे पर ट्रैफिक भी बाधित हुआ। दूल्हा बने अनिल सेठी ने बताया कि २००९ में वह स्टडी वीजा पर आस्ट्रेलिया गया था। वहीं उसकी मुलाकात जापान की कियोको कोजिमा से हुई। दोनों में पहले दोस्ती, फिर प्यार हुआ और उन्होंने शादी करने का निर्णय ले लिया। कोजिमा व सेठी परिवार में फोन पर ही शादी को लेकर बातचीत हुई और तय हुआ कि शादी सात फरवरी को हिंदु

रीति-रिवाजों के अनुसार भारत में ही होगी।

कोजिमा परिवार पांच फरवरी को ही श्रीगंगानगर आ गया था और दो दिन से वहीं हिंदुमलकोट में रुका हुआ था। वहीं दोनों परिवारों ने एक साथ पंजाबी रिवाजों के अनुसार घड़ोली व मेहंदी की रस्में की, फिर शादी में भी स्वागत, मिलनी, जयमाला, रिंग-सेरेमनी, आशीर्वाद के बाद अग्नि के समक्ष सात फेरे हुए। शादी की इन रस्मों को दुल्हन के माता-पिता ने जहां अपने कैमरे में कैद किया, वहीं दुल्हन को इनकी जानकारी अंग्रजी भाषा में दी गई।

दैनिक पूर्वोदय-११.२.१०१३

तंबाकू छोड़ने वालों की संख्या बढ़ी

मिजोरम को देश में सर्वाधिक तंबाकू सेवन करने वाले राज्य का दर्जा प्राप्त है लेकिन पिछले कुछ वर्षों के दौरान यहां तंबाकू उत्पादों से तौबा करने वालों की संख्या में तेजी आई है। आधिकारिक सूत्रों के अनुसार मिजोरम में तंबाकू उत्पादों का सेवन करने वालों में से ६.९६ फीसदी ने जुलाई २०११ से दिसंबर २०१२ के बीच यह आदत छोड़ दी। यह आंकड़ा तीन फीसदी के राष्ट्रीय औसत से भी अधिक है। मुख्यमंत्री ललथनहावला की पत्नी लाल रिलियानी द्वारा छोड़ी गई व्यापक तंबाकू विरोधी मुहिम के फलस्वरूप तंबाकू सेवन छोड़ने वालों की संख्या बढ़ी है।

श्री ललथनहावला की अध्यक्षता में आयोजित को गई मिजोरम तंबाकू मुक्त समूह की बैठक में बताया गया कि तंबाकू उत्पाद नियंत्रण अधिनियम (कोप्टा) के तहत ३७०८ लोगों को प्रतिबंधित इलाकों में धूम्रपान करते पकड़ा गया और उनसे एक लाख १७ हजार १८७ रुपए का जुर्माना इकट्ठा किया गया। मिजोरम में तंबाकू निरोधक अभियानों के बावजूद अब भी यहां की ६७ फीसदी आबादी तंबाकू का सेवन करती है जो कि देशभर में सबसे अधिक है। वैश्विक वयस्क के मुताबिक यहां के ७२.५ फीसदी पुरुष तथा ६१.६ फीसदी महिलाएं तंबाकू का

सेवन करती हैं।

इस बीच मिजोरम के तंबाकू नियंत्रण समाज द्वारा जारी किए गए आंकड़ों से पता चलता है कि ७३.१ फीसदी तंबाकू सेवनकर्ता इस आदत को छोड़ना चाहते हैं। मिजोरम के तंबाकू निरोधक कार्यक्रम की अधिकारी डाक्टर जेन रेल्ट ने बताया कि ८९.६ फीसदी धूम्रपान करने वाले इस बात से अवगत हैं कि धूम्रपान स्वास्थ्य के लिए हानिकारक है जबकि ८५.३ फीसदी ने बताया कि उन्हें मालुम है कि सिगरेट बीड़ी का धुआँ भी उतना ही हानिकारक है जितना इनका सेवन।

दैनिक पूर्वोदय-७.२.२०१३

नींव के पत्थर का अनुकरण

एक बार लालबहादुर शास्त्री से उनके एक मित्र ने पूछा, 'शास्त्री जी, आप हमेशा प्रशंसा से दूर रहा करते हैं और स्वागत-सत्कार के कार्यक्रमों को टाला करते हैं। ऐसा क्यों?'

शास्त्री जी ने हँसकर जवाब दिया, 'इसका कारण यह है मित्र, कि एक बार लालाजी (लाल लाजपतराय) ने मुझसे कहा था, 'लालबहादुर, ताजमहल

बनाने में दो प्रकार के पत्थरों का उपयोग हुआ है-एक बहुमूल्य संगमरमर पत्थर, जिसका उपयोग गुम्बज के लिये और यत्र-तत्र किया गया है तथा दूसरा एक साधारण पत्थर, जिसका ताजमहल की नींव में उपयोग किया गया है और जिसकी ओर किसी का ध्यान नहीं जाता। लालबहादुर, हमें अपने जीवन में इस दूसरे प्रकार के पत्थर का ही अनुकरण

करना चाहिए। अपनी प्रसिद्धि, प्रशंसा और आदर-सत्कार से हमेशा दूर रहकर सत्कर्म करते रहना चाहिए।' बस उनकी यह सीख मेरे मन में बैठ गयी है और मैं उस नींव के पत्थर का ही अनुकरण करता रहता हूँ।'

बड़े बड़ाई न करें, बड़े न बोलें बोल।
रहिमन हीरा कब कहें, लाख टका मेरा मोल।।



Visit of Kalyan Ashram Team to the Relief camps in Goalpara district
The Rabhas and others were attacked by Bangladeshi infiltrators on 12th February, 2013, the day of Panchayat Poll. (Relief activities by Kalyan Ashram Workers for the victims)



Assembly of the followers of Lord Lokhimon in the KASA stadium of Diphu, Karbi Anglong on 11th February, 2013.

