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HERITAGE EXPLORER

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

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Great Belgian playwright, poet and essayist, wrote in French and received the Nobel prize for literature in 1911; his play 'The Blue Bird' was twice made into a film.



1862-1949

Count Maurice Maeterlinck

Have we not here the whole of **Darwinian evolution** confirmed by geology and foreseen at least **6,000 years ago**? On the other hand, is this not the theory of **Akasa** which we more clumsily call the **ether**, the sole source of all substances, to which our science is returning? Is it true that the recent theories of Einstein deny **ether**, supposing that radiant energy — visible light, for example — is propagated independently through a space that is an absolute void.

But the scientific ether is not precisely the Hindu **Akasa** which is much more subtle and immaterial being a sort of spiritual element or **divine energy**, space **uncreated, imperishable and infinite**.

Source: *The Great Secret* - by Maurice Maeterlinck



The greatest French mathematician, philosopher and astronomer, contemporary of Napoleon, best known for his Nebular Hypothesis of the origin of the Solar System.



1749-1827

Pierre Simon de Laplace

It is India that gave us the ingenious method of expressing all numbers by ten symbols, each receiving a value of position as well as an absolute value, a profound and important idea which appears so simple to us now that we ignore its true merit. But its very simplicity, the great ease which it has lent to all computations, puts our arithmetic in the first rank of useful inventions, and we shall appreciate the **grandeur of this achievement** the more when we remember that it escaped the genius of **Archimedes** and **Appollinius**, two of the greatest men produced by antiquity.

Source: *India and South Asia* - by James H.K. Norton

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THE RIO AND THEREAFTER

The just concluded Olympics at Rio were truly shocking for a country of 1.20 billion people, for our elite players could secure only two medals, one Silver and one Bronze, whereas countries having the size of one our states with a fraction of our population, could win much more than us. It is true that in sports winning is not all that matters, but it also cannot be denied that securing the 50+ position, as was done by one of our long distance runner, does not certify our competition-worthiness.

We all know that in today's world a country is not evaluated on the basis of its economic growth or literacy rate alone. Intellectual growth, growth of happiness and excellence in competitive games and sports are also considered as markers of the holistic growth of a nation. It goes without saying that we have achieved considerable success in economic front, trade and industry, science and technology, public and international relations but we have failed to promote sports and games which is a pure form of entertainment for people of all ages. In past we were happy with our national game Hockey and now that it has failed to bring us joy of wining, we have shifted our loyalty to Cricket. Big and small sponsors pour in crores of rupees for promotion of Cricket, while the other formats remains utterly neglected.

It is a common knowledge that in rural and semi urban India there are some sporting activities that are integral part of life of the people - swimming, boat racing, archery, wrestling and so on. Ideally India should have produced champions on regular basis in these fields but unfortunately, there exists an unfathomable gap between the raw talents from the rural areas and the city based sporting infrastructure. Consequently genuine and natural talents remain hidden forever or simply wither away and those with mediocre talent living in cities, having easy reach of whatever little sporting infrastructure we have, steals the show and gets empanelled in our national contingents.

Excelling in games and sports demands a very tough and regimented life. It demands a very strict and disciplined life style. There are restrictions in food, live as you like style of life, rising from bed at day break to go for intensive practice sessions, going to bed early to rest the body and mind without enjoying the late night TV serials. Neither the youth of the present generation covets such a regimen nor do their parents inspire them to follow them since most of them feel that active participation in games and sports is sheer wastage of time and money and consider it as chasing a wild goose. They think that studies guarantee a gentlemen's future, but games & sports guarantees nothing.

The time is perhaps ripe to have a relook at our priorities so far as games and sports are concerned. Our educational system should be remodeled judiciously, bringing sweeping changes in the system so that raw talents get a chance to be noticed. Our sporting federations and the Government should be true and committed to the sporting goal of our nation and consider appointing head hunters to locate the real talents and guide them, nurture them and allow them to develop themselves spontaneously. If possible Sports should be made a subject of study like crafts, music, computer science etc. and the students having an inner urge to upgrade their talent in the sporting field of their choice, should be allowed to take up the same and given state support and guidance to excel.

Editor

Social Security for All

- Purnima Sharma

P. Srinivasa Rao, an agricultural labourer, lived in Ullipalem village of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh. Being a poor daily wage labourer and having no fixed assets in his name, he could barely manage two square meals for his family. Srinivasa never thought of opening a bank account till he was convinced by Saptgiri Gramin Bank about the benefits of having an account with them. Finally, he opened his bank account in March 2015. With some persuasion from the bank, he also opted for the Union Government's Life Insurance Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojna (PMJJBY) and paid the premium amount of Rs. 330 in July 2015. Suddenly, in August 2015, he got a massive heart attack and died leaving behind his wife and two small kids. His wife knew about the insurance cover her husband had taken under PMJJBY.

She approached the bank for information asking for financial assistance, the bank officials were helpful and assisted her in submitting the death claim to insurance company which settled the claim in favour of the nominee, wife of the deceased and credited the amount of Rs. two lakh into her saving bank account in November 2015.

With the timely support from the bank and PMJJBY Scheme, the deceased's family got much needed, financial support and his children could continue their education. We can well imagine the plight of the poor family, had the deceased not opted for the

PMJJBY. This is an example where a poor family having no assets and fixed income out of the scheme. This is the aim of many other social security schemes of the Union Government to provide financial security to the common man in case of any untoward and unforeseen situation in life.

We have made immense economic progress but India is still an uninsured society as a whole. A large segment of society has been living without any social security or rather an uninsured life. After any untoward incident, i.e. accident or death, every poor family needs financial and social security the most. Social Security is an aspect which the present Government identified as a primary need. In order to achieve the objective of social security for common man, the Government has launched many schemes.

These Social Security Schemes have been launched with the objective of providing insurance services to the economically weaker section of society. Keeping in mind the lower income group, premium of these schemes have been kept fairly low, so that the benefit of these schemes can reach far and wide to the unreached. The schemes can be availed via bank accounts only. The Union Government is making tremendous efforts to universalize banking facilities through its financial inclusion scheme i.e. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).

Under the Pradhan Mantri Surksha Bima Yojana

(PMSBY), 9.61 crore policies and under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojna (PMJJBY), 3.03 crore insurance policies have been issued till 21st July, 2016. Nearly 36,000 claims were registered under PMJJBY of which more than 31,200 claims have been disbursed. Similarly, of the 7,025 claims registered under PMSBY, 4,551 have been disbursed till 21st July of this year.

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojna (PMJJBY) is a one year Life Insurance Scheme, which is annually renewable, and it provides coverage of Rs. 2 lakh in case of death due to any reason. The scheme is available to people in the age group of 18 to 50 years at the annual premium of Rs. 330.

Pradhan Mantri Surksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) is one year Personal Accident Insurance Scheme. It is annually renewable at a premium of Rs. 12 only. The policy offers coverage of Rs. 2 lakh in case of death or permanent total disability and Rs. one lakh for permanent partial disability due to an accident. It is available to the people in the age group of 18 to 70 years. So far (till 21st July, 2016) over 4,500 claims had been disbursed and provided financial relief to the families of affected persons.

The Atal Pension Yojna (APY) provides income security, for old people. Under this Scheme, the Government guarantees

(Contd. to Page 22)

Spirituality and Me

- Shindhu Kashyap Borpuzari

When I decided to write something this time around, a lot of things crossed my mind, after a bit of pondering I decided to pen down on something which I feel is an integral part of our being, "Spirituality". I am by no means a Spiritual Guru or a Learned Scholar in this field, however someone who feels strongly about it, in terms of its need in our daily lives. There can be a number of connotations of Spirituality. For some it can be "Praying", for others it can be "Meditating" and so on. In my humble opinion Spirituality can be attributed to something which gives "Peace of Mind" to an individual, it can be Praying, Meditating, reading, singing, playing an instrument and anything that gives you Peace of Mind which can lead to positive vibes.

Talking about my experiences, I would like to share one of my ways of achieving spiritual ecstasy. Our next door neighbour

has a year old boy child named Ayush, he is like a baby angel for us, and not a single day of ours goes without seeing him. All of us take time out to play with him, this very involvement of spending time, laughing and having fun with the tiny tot is nothing less than Spirituality for me. As it gives serenity of mind which is of fathomless and inconceivable magnitude.

Many have a feeling that people are more spiritually inclined in the later part of their lives, but I reckon one should be more spiritual when he or she is young. The reason being, when you are young, there is rush of adrenaline in the body, you are aggressive, fierce and ready to take on new challenges, there are a lot of distractions too that one faces and this age of competition doesn't help either. There is that fire in your belly to excel and constant pressure and stress to outperform your peers and colleagues. Even if you attain what you want, there is that

perpetual vie to uphold it and reach even further heights in your professional pursuits. Not to mention your personal ambitions. All these may lead to agony, distress and even depression .

Being spiritual can help people to prevent these woes and tackle the stress. It gives you that moment of calmness

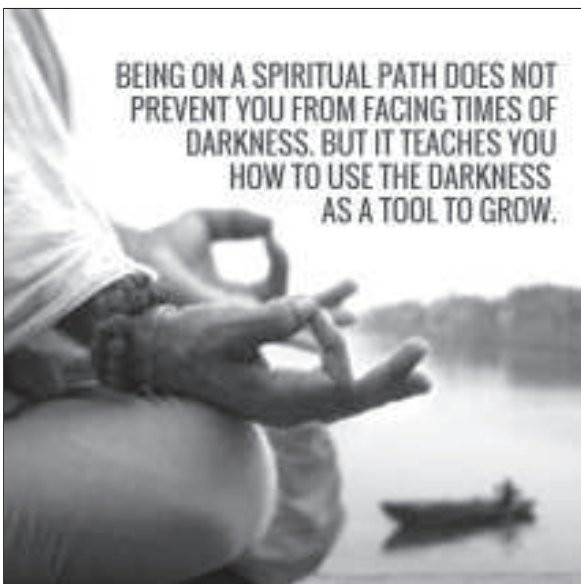
which is very necessary when everyone is in such a hurry. It helps you to attain 'Aplomb' which is a requirement when things are so demanding. These are some of the things that substantiate the fact that Spirituality is something that is not only divine but very much pragmatic and has practical implications.

People talk about 'Spiritual Awakening' - A shift in consciousness, an apperception of reality which had been previously unrealized. The culmination of such realizations is in the recognition of oneness with all of existence.

For me Spiritual Awakening is when I am one with 'The Almighty' for that I need not go in to a frenzy, I can achieve that by simply praying the Lord for some time with my mind and soul. Everyone should be spiritually disposed irrespective of their age or for that matter religion, and not to prove to anyone but for their own soul.

Through Spirituality we can be one with 'The Divine Source' which we all call 'God' .This very angelic source makes us imbibe the confidence to choose the right path and the strength, valour to fight out the negative energies that are within and around us.

At the end I would like to offer my sincere prayers to "Maa Durga" to bless us all and help us in getting rid of all our pains, sorrows, hardships and pessimisms and show us the light towards Spiritual Bliss.



To be an Independent Indian

- Azing Pertin

Itanagar, Aug 15, 2016: As we celebrate the 70th Independence Day, the idea of being an Indian is tested every day for people from Arunachal Pradesh and similar places. The conventional Indian portrayed in mainstream mass media is almost always either a jolly Sardar, a pious Tamil Brahmin, a skull cap-wearing Muslim with a mole on his cheek, a middle-parted Bhadrolok Bengali but never a lady wearing a galey or a bopya wearing man.

TV commercials, print advertisements and even the government-run Doordarshan miss out on faces that would be representative of the state.

For instance, the famous 'Mile Sur Mera Tumhara' national integration video only had a fleeting glimpse of a person attired in an Arunachal tribal costume. Amusingly the Arunachalee with various other persons representing different communities of North East is clubbed together in the video for a quick moment for the sake of inclusivity.

In the name of assimilation and integration, unfortunately the independency of being recognised as a distinct people with distinctive culture and ethos has been blurred and obscured.

This parochial view and the prism through which we are seen by other Indians is not only confined to the mass media, but also spills over to the larger policy level on all fronts.

A scheme that might do wonders in Assam would be futile

in Arunachal considering the diverse factors. However, North East is always considered as a single unit with the same problems by the powers that are in New Delhi.

Time and again leaders and bureaucrats from the state have pointed out the need for a separate state-specific policy, but the issue has lingered on without any correction. While our politicians are often guilty of failing the expectations of the people, on this front they cannot be faulted as state-specific policies are shut down by the Centre for the sake of convenience.

A simple solution to regain more independency on policy making could be consolidating more political power. Taking into account that the state has only two Members of Parliament in the Lok Sabha, Arunachal Pradesh is literally a non-entity in the equations of the larger political theatre.

Since there is a notion that Arunachal is a buffer state, the state and its people will be continued to be viewed through the same prism. A way forward

can be to stop the idea of being an integral part of India (as is often said whenever the China transgress into the state) and rather become an indispensable part of India. This can be achieved by actively involving and being equal partners in the development of the nation. Resources at our disposal need to be sustainably and responsibly harnessed.

Responsible development plans for the state could involve re-thinking and rewinding the earlier policies of selling rivers and other resources to private entities from outside. Harnessing the hydro power potential responsibly and sustainably is critical and crucial for the state to gain currency, both tangible and intangible, so that Arunachal will be looked upon as equal partners of New Delhi. Same applies to other potentials of the state.

Until these and several such ideas are fulfilled, independence and self-determination will simply remain a utopian dream for the state in the greater milieu of India.

<http://www.nelive.in/arunachal-pradesh/opinion/be-independent-indian>



Bir Bikram, the Greatest among the great kings of Tripura

- Tapas Dey

History and how it is shaped have been variously defined by scholars down the annals of history though an authentic consensus on the issue is still elusive. Marxists with their accent on collectivism attribute the making of history to masses, a huge anonymous entity that remain for them the eternal fountainhead of energy and inspiration. However, Karl Marx himself made a significant observation on history in his celebrated treatise 'The eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon'.

According to Marx 'men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past'. The observation continues to provoke lively and fierce debates as the rival school of scholars and historians ascribe the making of history to powerful individuals who with their personality and charisma can impose their will on the people and lead them.

Had there been no Jesus Christ, would Christianity have come into being or had there been no prophet Mohammed, would Islam have made such an impact on the course of world history? These questions remain unanswered by proponents of Marxist concept of history. Be that as it may, we are here concerned with the fact that history has always been an embattled arena, subject to conflicting

interpretations depending on ideological propensities of scholars.

This loaded preface may seem an exercise in redundancy in the context of what this article is all about but, nevertheless, a fine thread bonds the preface with the core of the article. Tripura, a political bastion of the Marxists over the past three decades, has been singularly indifferent to its history and heritage. Marxism, as it was been practiced since the days of Lenin in erstwhile Soviet Russia, has been a totalitarian ideology that seeks to control every aspect of human life and thinking. Even though the limitations of this ideology now lie exposed, those schooled in hardcore Marxist political culture in Tripura remain steeped in the hallucination that Tripura's history had commenced from the inception of 'Jana Shiksha Samity', a literacy movement launched in 1945 by late Marxist stalwart and former chief minister Dasharath Deb.

Such aberrations may be tolerable in a democratic polity but at a time when the state prepares to celebrate the centenary of Tripura's most enlightened king and greatest moderniser this Marxist intellectual baggage becomes unbearable.

Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya (1908-1947) had been born a year before his illustrious grandfather, king Radhakishore Manikya (1896-1909) died in an accident. Bir Bikram Kishore's

early life under the benign care of his father and king Birendra Kishore Manikya was not significantly different from his illustrious predecessors. Even in his boyhood Bir Bikram had shown promises of future greatness with his innovative ideas, drive and initiative and an inherited love for his subjects. Even according to contemporaries linked with the royal family Bir Bikram had exhibited his talents for ideas on architecture and engineering designs when still a boy. Even as the young prince was preparing himself for the challenges of the future, tragedy struck in the form of the death of king Birendra Kishore who had pioneered the tea industry in the state by allowing a number of British companies to go for planting and had also laid the foundation of a civil service besides continuing efforts to spread education among his subjects.

Shortly after monarchical responsibilities had thrust upon his broad shoulders in 1923 following the death of Birendra Kishore, young and dynamic Bir Bikram appeared in full glory to his subjects. The year was 1924 when Agartala was a very sparsely populated capital town exposed on all four sides to paddy fields, thickly wooded uplands, lakes and marshes. Depredations of large herds of elephants on human habitation and paddy fields were regular events and life used to be paralyzed after dusk. On one such night when people were shivering

with fear in homes, the noise of a motor vehicle in which stood a gun-wielding, handsome man accompanied by followers with torches in hand. The man standing on the vehicle fired a few rounds from his gun and shouted to assure his subjects of protection from danger. The few people who had dared to come out of home immediately recognized their new and young king Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya.

This small incident was however a significant pointer only as the king came into his own after his formal coronation in the year 1926. Having donned the mantle of king, Bir Bikram made a point of touring the length and breadth of his kingdom including his zamindari in Chakla Roshanabad encompassing the entire Comilla district and part of Noakhali and Sylhet districts of Bangladesh to see for himself the condition of his subjects as well as to make a proper assessment of the steps needed to be initiated to improve their lot. A series of measures followed and the results started showing in better services of the royal government to the people. The litany of major events that marked Bir Bikram's eventful twenty four year rule (1923-1947) has figured and will continue to figure in academic histories of Tripura. There are certain highly positive aspects of his rule which this article will focus on.

The Marxist parties and their leaders in Tripura always criticize the state's royal family for failure to promote and protect the interests of their tribal subjects. How valid and legitimate is the criticism? Traditionally the Manikya dynasty rulers of Tripura

had encouraged settlement of non-tribals including professionals like priests, barboys, washermen and farmers within the state since the days of Ratna Manikya (1464-1468) in order to introduce plainland cultivation which would yield higher revenue. The second purpose was to wean the tribal subjects away from primitive shifting cultivation as well as to pave the way for their development through close interaction and contact with relatively advanced non-tribals. This well-intentioned attempt



Maharaja Bir Bikram With Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi

taken at a time when historical realities were altogether different has been subjected to grossest possible misinterpretation.

As a far-sighted ruler and visionary king Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya had foreseen that unchecked migration and settlement of non-tribals within Tripura might spell trouble in future and the interests of the backward tribals needed to be protected. Keeping this in view he had set aside about large tracts of land in the hilly areas as reserved for his indigenous tribal

subjects in three installments between 1931 and 1945. That the post-independence rulers of the state failed to protect the land from encroachment and interests of the tribals is an altogether different issue. He had sensed the upcoming changes in the political wind and took steps to democratize the administration. It is a recorded fact that it was at Bir Bikram's initiative that the first elected municipal council had been formed at Agartala. In the pre-independence days king Bir Bikram was in an unenviable position: as a native king he could not antagonize the British rulers of the country but in his heart of hearts he was sympathetic to the freedom fighters. He therefore turned a blind eye to freedom fighters and revolutionaries taking refuge in his exclusive domain in Tripura but, nevertheless, Pandit Nehru in a letter had cast aspersion that the royal government was ill-treating freedom fighters. The charge was totally baseless and the king refuted it. Bir Bikram had realized well in advance that India would be partitioned and decided that his royal domain would join the Indian union and that is why he had signed the appointment of barrister Girija Shankar Guha as Tripura's representative to the constituent assembly on April 28 1947 on nineteen days before he was to expire prematurely at the young age of thirty nine.

Apart from this, Bir Bikram was the first king of Tripura to go on long tours in Europe and America thrice during his lifetime between 1931 and 1939. In the course of these sojourns he came in contact with political

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Cyber crime and women

- Nandita Dowerah

As technology makes our lives convenient, it also empowers those unscrupulous minds that are always on the lookout for easy prey. Cyber crime is a global phenomenon. With the advent of technology, cyber crime and victimisation of women are on the high and it poses a major threat to the security of a person as a whole. A rapid increase in the use of computer and internet has given rise to new forms of crime like publishing sexually explicit materials in electronic form, video voyeurism and breach of confidentiality and leakage of data by intermediary, e-commerce frauds like impersonation commonly known as phishing, identity theft and offensive messages through communication services. India is one of the very few countries to enact IT Act 2000 to combat cyber crimes. The said Act has termed certain offences as hacking, publishing of obscene materials in the net, tampering the data punishable offences, with the IT Act 2000, Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure is also there to cope up with these offences. In cyber space, women are found to be victims of harassment via e-mail, cyber-stalking, cyber defamation, morphing, email spoofing, hacking, cyber pornography and cyber sexual defamation, cyber flirting and cyber bullying.

There are many laws under which the perpetrators of such crimes can be booked, under IT Act of sections 66 C (which

prescribes punishment for identity theft), 66A (which prescribes punishment for sending offensive messages through communication services), 66D (which prescribes punishment for cheating by impersonation) and 67 of the IT Act (which prescribes punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form). They can also be booked under IPC Sec. 499 (which defines defamation), Sec. 120B (which prescribes punishment for criminal conspiracy), IPC Chapter XVI Sec. 354 (Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty shall be punished with imprisonment which shall not be less than 1 to 5 years + Fine), Sec. 354 A (Sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment): A man committing any of the following acts –

(1) Sexual harassment of the nature of unwelcome physical contact and advances or a demand or request for sexual favours or showing pornography shall be punishable with imprisonment up to 3 years or Fine or Both. (2) Sexual harassment of the nature of making sexually coloured remark shall be punishable with imprisonment up to 1 year or Fine or Both.

IPC Sec. 354 B (Assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe shall be punished with imprisonment which shall not be less than three years but which may extend to seven years and shall also be

liable to fine), IPC Chapter XVI Sec. 354 C (Any man who watches, or captures the image of a woman engaging in a private act in circumstances where she would usually have the expectation of not being observed either by the perpetrator or by any other person at the behest of the perpetrator or disseminates such image shall be punished on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than one year, but which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine), IPC Chapter XVI Sec. 354D (Stalking).

(1) Any man who – (i) follows a woman and contacts, or attempts to contact such woman to foster personal interaction repeatedly despite a clear indication of disinterest by such woman; or (ii) monitors the use by a woman of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication. Whoever commits the offence of stalking shall be punished on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine; and be punished on a second or subsequent conviction, with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.

There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a great revolution in the history of women. The evidence is everywhere; the voice

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Why India wins only a few Olympic medals

- Amulya Ganguli

The joy felt by Indians over the successes of P.V. Sindhu in badminton, Sakshi Malik in wrestling and Dipa Karmakar in gymnastics is understandable.

At the same time, the question needs to be asked, as has been done earlier, as to why India, a nation of 1.2 billion people, second only to China in population, could win only two medals, which is one of its worst performances in recent years? India won six medals at the 2012 Olympics and three in 2008.

The usual explanation for such a dismal record is known — poor infrastructure, poor physique, poor diet and the lack of the so-called killer instinct.

Our sportsmen and women are rarely up to the mark, therefore, compared to their better-prepared opponents who have had the advantages of state-of-the-art training facilities and dedicated coaches, along with a balanced diet regimen. Some of them are also selected at an early age by talent-spotters who instill in them a desire to win at major events.

Where Indians are concerned, cricket is the only game where they routinely do well, as in hockey earlier. But cricket does not require as intense a schedule of training as do disciplines like athletics or swimming and does not have the kind of global competition that others sports have as its playing is limited to a handful of largely Commonwealth countries.

One possible reason why India lags behind is that it has always relied more on individual talent as in the cases of Sindhu, Sakshi Malik and Dipa Karmakar than on organisations devoted to nurturing potential winners.

This is true of cricket as well where the team is heavily dependent on a single player for success — whether it is Virat Kohli today or Sachin Tendulkar yesterday.

Diet is another factor why India's deficiencies show up. As Kapil Dev once said, Indians cannot be top-grade pace bowlers because they eat too much fried food.

Besides, it is undeniable that virtually all the winners from European, American, African and even Asian countries like China are meat-eaters, including beef. Vegetarianism, which often leads to protein deficiency, is not exactly the road to sporting success.

The inadequacy of food habits is compounded by the generally slight build of the Indians as well as the lack of stamina which is why they are nowhere near the top in, say, football, let alone rugby.

An improvement in training facilities may bring in a few more medals, but the numbers are likely to remain in the single digits in the foreseeable future.

Since sports do not rank as high in the priorities of most families as studies, children regard playing games as a spare-

time activity rather than as a prime objective like coming first in class.

As the Chinese media has patronisingly pointed out, the insistence of Indian parents on making their children doctors and engineers is one of the reasons why India does not produce world class sportspersons.

Among other reasons mentioned by the media are poverty and girls not being allowed into sports. For instance, Sakshi Malik's parents were ridiculed in Rohtak for allowing their girl to become a wrestler, supposedly a men's sport.

Ironically, the emphasis on studies does not fetch us too many Nobel prizes either. Evidently, the intellectual faculties of Indians remain as undeveloped as their sporting skills.

The explanations for the deficiencies in both mind and body are the same — diet and infrastructure. It is generally not recognised that studying hard requires as much stamina and concentration as playing games.

Not surprisingly, chess players like Bobby Fisher kept themselves physically fit through regular exercises. The mind cannot be at its peak if the body is weak.

If the sporting infrastructure is rudimentary, as television pictures of Dipa Karmakar's "gymnasium" in Agartala showed, the groves of academe are no

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Well Done, NBCC; but are you ready?

- Dr Valson Thampu

A couple of years ago, I ventured to travel by road from Imphal to Kohima. It is a journey that I shall remember for long. Traveling with me was a fellow Christian and a Stephanian, John Dayal. Half an hour into our bumpy journey, he began to feel nauseated. In another ten minutes he began to throw up. John, I knew, had a history of cardiac disease. I was worried that we might not complete the journey.

The highway, upon which John, nearly died, is of supreme importance as the main link between the two capital cities of states dominated by the Christian community. Hailing from the South and having lived, for the most part, in the North it is a special to verify experience for me to visit the North East, where one is surrounded by fellow Christians, who are not ashamed to confess their faith, much less allow themselves to be inhibited in this respect in the public sphere. But between the effervescence of spontaneous verbal enthusiasm and the condition of the roads and other civic amenities including schools and colleges, there is a disturbing disconnect.

It is as though Jesus' insistence that there be an integration of words and deeds (St. Matthew 7: 24-27) did not reach many parts of the NE. Or, to be specifically biblical, it is as though the Word had not become flesh and dwelt in the midst of human beings! The worst form of anti-witness is this divorce between the Word of God and the deeds of men, who profess the

Word.

Now, if the NBCC wants to call the people of Nagaland to be part, frankly, of its own repentance (a reason, as Jesus would say, for heaven itself to rejoice! See, St. Luke 15) it is a good enough occasion for celebration! Compartmentalization -the secular split between religion and politics- is the genius of the world. It is a strategy for paralyzing spirituality and of fortifying the world against the will of God. It is a de facto rejection of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is given. . ." It is a rejection of the mandate given to us, "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world" (St. Matthew 5: 13-16). It is an implied flight from our missional mandate and the sentness it implies. We are to go and be in engagement with the world, even if it entails being "sheep among wolves".

The alternative to being sheep among wolves, is being wolves among sheep. In secular terminology this is called 'corruption'.

Corruption (of which the most powerful metaphor in the whole of world literature is "whited sepulcher") is nothing in itself. It denotes an absence, not a presence. Corruption is like a shadow, which denotes the absence of light, which pretends to be a presence. Where the shadow is, is the absence of light. But from where the shadow is, the entity the shadow of which is seen, is utterly absent. Also, there would not be a shadow if light were to be wholly absent.

Corruption among Christians would not be as serious a spiritual issue as it is now, if Jesus were not the "light of the world" (St. John 9:5). The profound paradox is this: the very idea of corruption cannot exist except in a society or consciousness that is illumined, one way or another, by the light of God. Animals know no corruption.

To "know" corruption, in a biblical sense, is to go far, far beyond a mere factual and quantitative recognition that dishonesty chokes our collective life. To recognize corruption is also to remember the height from which we have fallen. For the prodigal son, remembering who he was meant to be is the heart of his "repentance". "In my father's house. . ."

Return, now, to contemporary politics. The appalling gulf between our profession of faith on Sundays (as well as the display of religious fervor in faith meetings) and our doings on week days is facilitated by the vivisection of our life into two compartments: the religious and the secular. The life God has made is indivisible! Hypocrisy, the evil that Jesus denounced most uncompromisingly, issues from this divided existence.

Of course, there is this argument -advanced mostly by those who fear a shrinking of their scope for evil-doing in public life- that the biblical faith is apolitical. The text, "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's..." is quoted in support of this convenient argument. The point is that we have to "give to God, what is

God's". What is it, indeed, that we have to give to God? Is not our loyalty in respect of our life as a whole? Or, it is only its one-half? Is not the sovereign God, who wields all authority in heaven and on earth, also sovereign above man-made politics? What is it that we, as a people of faith, are to give to Caesar, or to secular political authority? Is it not also, "the fear of God that makes people wise?" Is not the statement, "Where there is no vision, people and nations perish" a political statement? Doesn't it highlight our mission in the sphere of politics as well? The fact is that the biblical faith is a redemptively political faith. The difference is that it understands "politics" not as the world understands it. Take the case of "peace," as an instance. I don't have to argue that peace holds religion and politics together. Jesus gives peace, but not "as the world gives". Enunciating this difference and bearing witness to it, in season and out of season, is the primary duty we owe to Caesar. This is not, alas, understood. It is on this ignorance that the allergy to authentic Christian participation in politics rests. Seen aright, participating in politics, but as "light of the world," is a Christian duty.

For me, the core text on the political character of the "way of Jesus" is St. John 10:10. Jesus came that all may have life, and life in its fullness. It is not clear as to how Christians can pursue this mission, without participating in politics as the disciples of Jesus. Church as church has little to do with this agenda. As of now, it is politics that impinges the life of the people in a radical way. It affects the life of the people very

substantially. Pretending to pursue the mission to secure "life in all its fullness" for all people (and not merely those within our fold), dodging the challenges and opportunities afforded by politics, is like trying to catch fish by staying away from all water bodies.

It is appropriate that the NBCC has cast mission this in the format of "Clean India". A profound insight underlies this formulation. "Cleanliness" or "uncleanliness" is a matter of "choice". Democratic election puts the spotlight on choice in the world at large. The spiritual profundity of "choice" resonates in Crucifixion. Pontius Pilate did call upon the people to exercise their franchise, as it were. Did they want Jesus? Or, would they choose Barabbas? How can Christians stay away from the dynamics of this choice and abandon it wholly to the logic of the world, which makes it no choice at all. Keep the light of Jesus out of our politics, you can rest assured that we shall be ruled only by Barabbases. Why should it surprise anyone that our politics is mortally criminalized and a large proportion of our law-makers are hardened law-breakers? Is that not, really, a problem for us to address? The core issue is not whether NBCC should spearhead this very timely movement, which, if managed properly and in unwavering obedience to Jesus, can be a powerful witness to the nation. The only issue is if the Church has the credibility to "preach to the nations".

The NBCC is, I am glad to notice, human enough to confess its inadequacy, which, I'd like to believe, augurs well. May the

launching of the clean India campaign in politics prove an opportunity for the Church to repent and, like the Church at Ephesus, to regain its "first love" for the Lord.

There are cynics everywhere. Nehemiah, who went to repair and restore the broken walls of Jerusalem, had to encounter opposition and ridicule. He pursued his mission, typically, with working tools in the right hand and a sword in the left! It is a touchingly modern image! Something that the NBCC can derive some inspiration from.

Gandhi's words hold good in this context. The NBCC must become the change it advocates in politics. The "hidden treasure" of the Church is its purity. If there is a power, an authority, higher than that of Caesar's, it is that of purity. It is the refiner's fire, in which the dross shall burn away. Purity must be grammar that lends coherence to the words of its advocacy of cleanliness in the public, political domain. The worst the NBCC can do is to get into this spiritual battle (for it is not against principalities and powers that we fight but against corruption in high places) under-prepared.

Nothing can demoralize a community more than becoming a public display of the feebleness and inadequacy of its faith solely through its alienation from the Lord. As Jesus would say, "Physician, heal thyself." Or, "first remove the beam from your eyes, that you may see clearly" and be able to "remove the mote" from the eye politics.

(<http://morungexpress.com/well-done-nbcc-ready/>, August 2, 2016)

Preacher or Predator

- Sultan Shahin

What makes Zakir Naik so dangerous? How does he encourage terrorism, and why should Muslim Ulema confront him?

“If Osama bin Laden is fighting the enemies of Islam, I’m for him. If he is terrorising America, the terrorist, biggest terrorist, I’m with him. Every Muslim should be a terrorist. The thing is that if he is terrorising the terrorist, he is following Islam. Whether he is or not, I don’t know. Now, don’t go around outside saying Zakir Naik is for Osama bin Laden. If he is terrorising the terrorist I’m with him.”

This is the quote of the week. Here Dr. Zakir Naik, the controversial but popular Islamist tele-evangelist is reacting to a question about Osama bin Laden, the terrorist mastermind of 9/11 that killed 3,000 innocent Americans. He doubts Osama bin Laden’s role in 9/11, as many Muslims and even American conspiracy theorists do. They think 9/11 was an inside job. Dr. Naik plays on this sentiment. He clearly supports terrorism, and goes on to say, every Muslim should be a terrorist in the sense of terrorising “enemies of Islam.” Now the question is: Who gives Naik the authority to sanction “terrorising” any one? Also: who are these “enemies of Islam” today?

To find an answer any follower of Zakir Naik would go to the literal words of the holy Quran. Naik is a Wahhabi-Salafi-Ahl-e-Hadeesi who has full Saudi financial and logistical support. He recently

received Saudi Arabia’s highest civilian award, the Shah Faisal Award consisting of \$200,000 and a gold plaque. Wahhabis consider themselves ghair-muqallids, i.e., Muslims who do not follow any of the five mazahib or schools of thought like, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’i, Hanbali and Ja’fari. Muslims on the Indian sub-continent used to follow the most broad-minded and moderate school of thought, the Hanafi, before the advent of Saudi Wahhabism in full force 40 years ago. The distinguishing feature of this sect is literalism. They read the Quran literally and consider all verses equally relevant, universal and eternal in their applicability to Muslims of all ages and all places.

So any Muslim who accepts Naik’s exhortation that Muslims should terrorise “the enemies of Islam,” would consult the Quran. The Internet has made it much easier to access various renderings of Quran, as well as tafasir (exegesis and interpretations). The spirit of Quran, the overall sense of what the Quran is saying, a holistic view that the Sufis and moderates take, is completely missing in Wahhabi-Salafi Islam that Zakir Naik propagates.

Now what would a victim of Naik who takes him as a great scholar on the basis of his rote memory find in the Quran? Before we go into this question, we should acquire a little background of the advent of Islam, otherwise we are likely to be misguided in the same way the Indian Mujahedin or the Dhaka youth were. The Islam that came in

Mecca with its foundational verses was a spiritual path to salvation of mankind. It taught honesty, integrity, equality of all humanity in the dominion of One invisible, formless God, patience and perseverance in dealing with other human beings and in the face of adversity, co-existence of all religions, good neighbourliness, gender equality, etc. However, the Meccan elite could not accept equality of all human beings, which brought them at par with the lowly, the poor and the slaves. They started persecuting Muslims and eventually planned to assassinate the Prophet. The prophet and most Muslims left and took refuge in another town, later called Medina. The Meccans followed them. A point reached when the only way for Muslims to survive was to defend themselves.

Who is Zakir Naik?

1. Dr Zakir Abdul Karim, an international orator on Islam, was born on October 18, 1965, in Mumbai

2. He is a medical doctor started working in the field of Dawah and founded the Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) in 1991

3. He is notorious for his views and answers which often hurt the sentiments of believers of non-Islamic religions

4. Dr Zakir is a hardliner Salafi who preaches other streams of Islam are not true

5. IRF website suggests that in the last 20 years Dr Zakir Naik

has delivered over 2,000 public talks across the globe.

It is natural for the Quranic revelations, that were guiding the Prophet and his followers, to ask Muslims to defend themselves, fight and kill, terrify, put panic in the hearts of their enemies in those wars. So when a follower of Dr Zakir Naik, who has heard that "every Muslim should be a terrorist for the enemies of Islam," goes to Quran and finds war-time, contextual verses like 9: 5, 3:151, 8:60, 33:35-36, etc, and takes them literally as an exhortation valid for even today, he is likely to go astray, particularly in the absence of any contrary opinion.

Muslims have already dismissed as obsolete many verses whose instructions can no longer be followed. Take this verse of Sura Hajj: "They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, (to perform Hajj)." (Quran 22: 27) Now, who goes for Hajj on foot or on a lean camel today. Even the nearby Salafi-Wahhabi Arabs come to Mecca for Hajj in their air-conditioned cars and buses. Clearly even Salafi-Wahhabis consider this verse obsolete.

So these later Medinan verses ask Muslims to fight in the way of Allah, as they were engaged in an existential battle for survival. But what was the message of Islam that these Muslims were fighting to safeguard? Obviously, the spiritual message they had received in Mecca. Early Meccan Islam represents the foundational, essential, constitutive, eternal, universal teachings of Islam, valid for all times. Not the instructions given later at Medina to fight to safeguard Meccan Islam in an

existential battle.

Islam is now safe. It has 1.6 billion followers. We no longer live in the 7th century when at one time in Medina if just 313 people had been killed in the battle of Badr, Islam would probably have ceased to exist. Special instructions are always given to protect an infant. But these instructions are no longer followed as the infant grows strong with age. These contextual verses of war are no longer applicable to us as we live in the 21st century in a world governed and protected by the UN Charter. Islam is not faced with an existential crisis like the one in seventh century Medina. Just as we have discarded the instruction to go for Hajj on foot or on camels, we should discard the instructions related to war.

But the problem is this. No, mainstream, peaceful, Sufi, Barailwi, Eiteqadi ulema who claim to oppose Zakir Naik are willing to say this in so many words. And, of course, you can't expect Salafi-Wahhabi literalists to say so. And this explains why our youth is turning to Zakir Naik and other Jihadi ideologues and running away from the mainstream, peaceful Muslims. Zakir Naik is wrong, maybe evil, but he is not mincing his words. Youth is always attracted to honesty and courage of conviction, and repelled by hypocrisy.

Our focus should not be so much on Zakir Naik as on the question: why and how has he so easily succeeded in radicalising millions. Only a few of these millions may go on to join terrorism, but radicalisation of the

millions is the real problem. Saudis and ahl-e-hadis have only provided him logistical support. In my view the reason he has succeeded is that he is not saying anything new, or vastly different from what other clerics say. He is using the theology of consensus, the same theology that is taught in universities and madrasas. His distinction is in the presentation, using modern means of communication. He is reaching those who did not have access to this theology before. That is why ulema cannot oppose him in a meaningful way. Sufi-Barailvis and even some Deobandis have tried. They are angry because Naik has exposed their hypocrisy. But they will find it impossible to oppose him and others effectively unless they decide to let go of their hypocrisy and clarify their stand on Jihad, particularly offensive Jihad.

You cannot say in the same breath that instructions in all verses of Quran and narrations of Hadees are applicable to us Muslims even today in the 21st century and that those who are following these 7th century war-time instructions to fight and kill are wrong. If ulema indeed wants to save the community from further radicalisation, they just have to introspect on their own hypocrisy and help evolve a new and coherent theology of peace and pluralism based on the foundational, universal verses of Quran.

Ulemas in Dilemma

As the controversy surrounding Zakir Naik is flaring up, the Muslim community seems to have divided on whether to

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Mercenaries of the Devil

- James Yaden

LONGJANGLEPZUK AO of Merangkong village was Baptized from Sibsagar Baptist Church on September 7, 1851 by Rev. S.W. Whiting. He was the first Christian from amongst the Ao tribe and the second Naga convert after Hobe-Konyak who was earlier baptized on September 12, 1847. Unfortunately, Longjanglepzuk became a victim of a hostile attack on Merangkong by a combined force of 9 villages.

It was in the early part of October 1871, Supongmeren from Molungkimong village was baptised at Sibsagar and enrolled as an American Baptist Church member. He became the bridge between the American Baptist Missionary E.W. Clark, Evangelist Godhula and the headhunting Ao Nagas. The Kosasanger Council of Molungkimong Village (Dekahaimong) dispatched 60 warriors to escort Dr. E.W. Clark to escort him. It took almost three days from Sibsagar to reach Molungkimong.

Clark arrived on 18 December (Wednesday) and baptized 15 new converts on 22nd (Sunday) December 1872 at a Village drinking well called 'Chungli Tzibu' which was permitted by the Village council. Another miracle for Clark after which they had a worship service and celebrated the first Lord's Supper. Thus, on this day, the first Naga Church was founded with 28 Baptized members. They were Dr. Clark, Godhula and his wife, Supongmeren, 9 converts

baptized on 10 November at Sibsagar, and 15 converts baptized at Molungkimong on 22 December 1872 (Wikipedia), after which they all partook the Lord's Supper at the chapel hall.

This first baptism in Naga Soil marked the establishment of the first Church in Nagaland at Molungkimong. Godhula Rufus Brown or Gandhela Barua an Ahom from Sibsagar, Assam, was the 1st Missionary to set foot in the Naga Hills in October 1871. It is pertinent to make a mention that he lived at Merangkong village during 1881-1885, & 1887 to 1900 as a preacher, teacher and evangelist.

The seed of God's words in erstwhile Naga Hills (Nagaland) was first planted more than 144 years ago. Hence in 6 years time, we will be celebrating 150 years of the establishment of the church in Nagaland. In 144 years of Christianity in the state, the question comes to one's mind - have we progressed positively? What can we show to the rest of the world about our faith and religion for the past 144 years? A hundred thoughts crosses the mind when we see the present situation and conditions of our state.

The Nagas in general and the Ao's in particular, do in fact; have a great responsibility and even greater accountability before God. The accountability before God will be too severe and heavy to pay and the consequences

would be truly disastrous if we do not "introspect" and change our mindset and attitude towards each other. It is a brave man and a hero who is able to change his life and those around him.

The past 30 to 40 years in every General election, the people have resorted to violence, caused death, and captured polling booths. Masterminded bogus and proxy voters, abduction, enforced curfew on those who differ on the choice of candidates just to satisfy their political lust. Feasting, free use of alcohol, compounded shamelessly with the sale and purchase of votes. This is a common practice indulged in every election in our Christian dominated state. The disease or virus has rapidly spread over the decades to every nook and corner of the state.

Today, this has become a common practice in every General Election in Nagaland which has compromised our faith, culture and traditional values. Is this our inheritance?

Where are we heading today? Is this the will of God? To unwittingly become the Mercenaries of the Devil? The NBCC's clarion call for a "Clean Election Campaign" is noteworthy. The question is - should a different yardstick be applied for different folks? Ex-communication by the Church should have a much broader area for application rather than just

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Decline in Christianity in UK reversed: Survey

LONDON: The decline over the past few years in the number of British citizens identifying themselves as Christians has been reversed, according to a report today.

The as-yet-unpublished results of the 2016 British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, seen by the Sunday Telegraph, reveals that the overall proportion of Britons who described themselves as Christian rose one percentage point in the last year from 42 per cent to 43 per cent.

The rise corresponds with a one-point fall in the number of so-called "nones" - those who describe themselves as having no religion - from 49 per cent to 48 per cent.

The variations may be fairly small to be regarded as

statistically significant in themselves but indicate a reversal of a trend over the years which has seen a decline in Christianity.

Ian Simpson, senior researcher at NatCen Social Research, which carries out the annual BSA survey, said the findings did indicate at least a temporary "halt" in the decline of religion in Britain.

He told the newspaper, "The proportion of people saying they have no religion peaked at 51 per cent in 2009 and has plateaued since then.

"It appears that the steady decline of religion in Britain has come to a halt, at least for now. This is partly due to a stabilisation in the proportion of people describing themselves as a Christian of some kind,

since 2009.

"However, this also appears to mask a small increase in the number of those with a non-Christian religion offsetting a small decrease in the number of Anglicans," he said.

There was a three-point fall in the number of adults under 25 identifying themselves as non-believers, the new survey found.

"No religion" became the biggest faith group in the survey seven years ago, when it reached 51 per cent of respondents but has since drifted lower.

The proportion describing themselves as Christian now stands at the same level as it was seven years ago.

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/uk/Decline-in-Christianity-in-UK-reversed-Survey/articleshow/53586041.cms>, Aug 7, 2016.)

Freedom fighter label for local hero upsets Mizos

AIZAWL, Aug 18, 2016: Two Mizo student organisations - Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and Mizo Students' Union (MSU) - faxed a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday in protest against the Centre's move to portray Mizo warrior Khuangchera as an Indian freedom fighter.

Khuangchera is often regarded as the first Mizo warrior to die fighting the British. He was killed in 1890 for trying to resist the advancing British troops which went on to conquer what was then called the Lushai Hills (now Mizoram).

The students specified in their

letter to Modi that while Khuangchera did indeed fight the British, he was not defending India as the idea of a unified country didn't exist then. "During that time, Khuangchera or any Mizo did not know anything about India, let alone fight for its freedom," the organizations said and added that Khuangchera, a tribal warrior, died defending the Zo people, not the country.

"Our respected hero is being wrongly portrayed. Khuangchera fought against British expansion and occupation of Zo country, not for the freedom of India," reads the letter signed by L Ramdinliana Renthlei and Lalremruata

Chhange, general secretaries of MZP and MSU, respectively.

The Centre, which faced criticism from sections of Naga society over its attempt to appropriate Rani Gaidinliu as an Indian freedom fighter, has deputed Union MoS for railways Rajen Gohain to Mizoram on August 18.

In a function organized by the BJP state unit, Gohain is expected to commemorate Khuangchera in his native village of Ailawng near Aizawl. State art and culture minister R Romawia reportedly declined to attend the function.

(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/Freedom-fighter-label-for-local-hero-upsets-Mizos/articleshow/53748864.cms>)

Naknyulum the festival of the Changs'

- Ngakhu Thungti

The Chang' believed that the entire Human Race emerged from Changsangmongko. It is considered as one of the oldest settlements for the Changs' and many primeval stories of Changsang are unique in its essence. Of all the festival's Chang revered NAKNYU LUM the most since it was believed that the whole world was engulfed in utter darkness for three days and three nights. The darkness was so much so that the people of Changsang were stranded in the field, some in the jungle, some at the journey and many were held up in their homes. Because of this intense darkness, it was considered Nakshou Naknyu or mother of all darkness. At such a time, when the people were striving hard to overcome the darkness, a man named Namo Moyan happened to kill a double tailed Tiger amidst the darkness. Therefore, he was renamed

Namo Molo (meaning Namo the great). At that point of time, the entire world suddenly burst into day light. Since then, in order to celebrate the victory over darkness, the forefathers' at Changsang resolved to please the Heavenly God by celebrating Naknyu Festival signifying 'The conquest of darkness by light'.

Naknyu Festival is celebrated every year in the last week of July between the dark moon and the new moon, the festival is firstly pronounced by the elderly person from the Oungh Clan and is celebrated for three days. In this festival, people offer to the Gods to invoke their blessings. Special prayers are also said that darkness does not rule over them again. Naknyu festival is marked by many rituals and restrictions. For instance, if a guest happens to visit the home he/she is expected to visit the following year to avert falling ill.

On the first day of Naknyu, the women folk prepare flour from sticky rice and freshly harvested millet to make steamed biscuit. The selected animals especially mithuns and pigs are killed. The aged males get busy making Yan's (tops) and Kongkin (mouth flute made of bamboo) for all. On the remaining hours, the members of the whole village starting from the first house which locates on the upper side to the last of the village put Ngounam (Ezhehozea, a scented plant used in ritual) by decorating the surrounding of the house, at the

water well, inside the house and outside the house. It is believed to ward off evil spirits. At night after dinner and before sleep, three pieces each of Wei (Saponaria, a wild nut which was used to shampoo the hair in ancient days) is placed at the front doorstep and the back door covered with hot ash and wait until it burst of the heat. If the seed burst and split inside the house, it is considered as a bad omen and that the family would see famine and destruction but if the seed burst and split outside the house, it is considered as a good sign for the year ahead.

The second day of celebration is marked by activities. It is a day of celebration, games competition, sharing and giving. In the morning, the women folk offer rice beer to their elder brothers, cousins, relatives and dear ones. The youngest in the family gets busy distributing steamed biscuits made of sticky rice and millets and cooked meat to relatives, neighbor and friends.

At the same day, Ezhehozeas' were also wore as a kind of an ornament by man and women of different ages-especially by those who have their ears pierced to ward off evil spirit, the women folk plays Kongkin and the male plays the Yan. Biscuits made of sticky rice and millet is hung high on a pole and the young and old alike compete to reach with their mouth with hand folded behind their back. The competitors are

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Some aspects of Indigenous Knowledge System in the North East

- Dr Ranga Ranjan Das

The term 'indigenous' is deeply associated with one's mind and heart if he/she is native to a particular place or locality. In a global context, the word 'indigenous' is frequently used. In the changing global scenario where frequent migration, displacement, process of re-settlement has taken place, often raise the issue: who are the indigenous people? In common parlance, who are the autochthonous or the local people? According to New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary the term 'indigenous' signify 'belonging to a particular place rather than coming to it from somewhere else'. It is often difficult to ascertain who are the early settlers? It is revealed that every place across the globe come into existence due to prolonged process of migration and resettlement. History may provide clue about the early settlers and distinguish native people from the others. Various indigenous communities emerge through the process of racial admixture, interaction and cultural adaptation over the centuries. Scholars opine that the term 'indigenous' develops through internal initiatives within a local community itself. Indigenous knowledge system (iks) is part and parcel of indigenous groups or local communities of a particular habitat. It refers to the entire knowledge of a local community which they developed as a part of survival mechanism based on man-nature relationship. 'Indigenous

knowledge system' often described as traditional knowledge, ethno-knowledge, ethno-science generally reflect a wide range of its members' perceptions, world view, knowledge, skills and technology gathered through centuries of experience and transmitted across the generations orally. The north east is the home of various ethnic groups with their diverse socio-cultural practices evolved due to close nexus with the surrounding environment. Literally and practically, they are rich in 'indigenous knowledge' reflected in their traditional way of life, viz indigenous system of cultivation, irrigation, soil conservation, fertility management, indigenous knowledge on bio-diversity, indigenous health care system, dyeing, weaving and indigenous designs with motifs, house building, basketry, bamboo and wood craft and pottery. Self-sufficient economy and sustainable livelihood is the by-products of indigenous knowledge system as seen among various indigenous communities. In a situation where modern economy captures, penetrate and influences nook and corner across the world and raises challenges for survival for indigenous culture, some of them are still maintaining indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous knowledge is always considered as a valuable resource for the Developmental agencies. The indigenous communities all over the world have their own indigenous

knowledge and skills, on the basis of which the communities could survive and develop. In recent decades, the traditional communities worldwide are increasingly using their intimate knowledge of plant, soil, food and other resources for sustainable and holistic approach. Indigenous knowledge may be considered as important natural resources that can facilitate the development process in cost effective, participatory and sustainable way (Barua, 2015: 2).

The north east is bestowed with rich natural resources of land, water, vegetation, etc. It is well known for its floral and faunal diversity, land use patterns, agricultural practices and traditional knowledge base. Traditionally, the management of natural resources including land-use, land protection, forests, planting, harvesting and distribution practices were based on their perception of man-environment relationship. They met their needs through a long tradition of carefully maintaining forest resources. The cultural beliefs of the various ethnic groups of the region have in fact contributed a lot to biological diversity and environmental protection, along with materials such as food, shelter, medicine, plants and many social customs and religious rituals (Aier and Changkija 2003). Traditional knowledge is community specific. It is that part of knowledge system which their forefather supplemented as a successor.

The uniqueness of every group or region is reflected in their traditional knowledge system. It helps them to lead a sustainable livelihood. They have developed the art of symbiotic co-existence and build a harmonious relationship with nature. There are various such examples in the north east. Some of them are associated with plants used in soil conservation and fertility management, crop rotation, use of legumes, forest litters, residual material of households, ashes, lime and salt application, shifting cultivation, utility of plant resources as bamboo, cane, medicinal plants, wet terraced paddy cultivation of Angami, Zeliangrong and Chakhesang tribes of Nagaland; Apatani and Nysihi tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, Khasis of Meghalaya, water management system among the Apatanis, Champai valley of Mizoram, bamboo dip irrigation among the Jaintias, dong system among the Bodos in Bhutan foot hills, Zabo farming in the Phek district of Nagaland (ibid Aier and Chankija). The Lisu of Arunachal Pradesh has a good knowledge of agriculture and horticultural crop production. The technique of grafting horticultural plants developed by them beget them fruits which they grow in a short duration of time is a brilliant instance. Thaj a fruit tree commonly grown by them bears rich traditional and technical knowledge (Giri 2014:125-126).

The significant aspect of indigenous knowledge system of the north east is association with various religious beliefs and practices. Various scholars pointed out close nexus of iks and religious beliefs and practices.

Such practices often help in the preservation of forest resources. An interesting feature in the Angami area is that a tree is never cut and uprooted completely. Two or three feet of the tree trunk are usually left. Often such a trunk grows branches and the growth of these branches is fast because of the strong trunk with its deep roots. This practice is probably an adaptation of pollarding alder trees which symbolize their sustainable forest management (D Souza 2001: 48).

The concept of 'sacred grooves' among the Khasis is interesting so far as forest conservation is concerned. In a religious context, the Khasis belief that sacred grooves are the places where spirits dwell, a spirits who look upon the activities of the different life forms in the natural world, and these spirits are called in different name as ki lei kyntang (gods of the forest). The Khasi seek permission by offering prayer before cutting down the tree, or even before hunting any animals from the forest. There is a mutual respect that exists between man and nature in the traditional beliefs of the Khasi. Religion helps in fostering ecological consciousness in the people, so the Khasi traditional wisdom helps them in preserving their nature (Bareh 2014: 252-253). Further Nyishi tradition says that a person who destroys any culturally restricted plant species or killing any traditionally prohibited animals, he or she is believed to be carried away by a yapam-sangpam or nyobii-yachum (a miraculous human-like creatures) to distant land for many days. It acts as deterrent for the people

(Ramya 2014:110). Among the Karbis of Assam, it is found that they prohibit for felling the mango, jackfruit and pearl trees locally known as Thabir Arot, Jhongphong Arot and Air Arot respectively. These trees cannot be destroyed without the sanction of the village councils authorities. The Karbis refer to these trees as Thengpi Asar which means old man and old women. If someone destroys these trees one is likely to fall ill and might die also. They never use these sanctified trees for the construction of their houses (Athparia 2002: 226-227).

Every indigenous groups of the region is self sufficient. The existence of self-sufficient economy is the outcome of traditional knowledge system. They are leading a sustainable livelihood that needs no elements of outside agencies. Even in cases of diseases and ailments, they are utilizing indigenous medicines. There are various community specific experts who possess the knowledge of various plant and animal parts that are useful in curing various diseases. It is still functioning at the nook and corner of the region. Traditional knowledge, often exist in the domain of a respective community. But there are some traditional knowledge holders who are asset of the community.

In the north east, various traditional groups are residing in the interior of part of difficult terrain. There are some areas which are difficult to access. People are maintaining eco-friendly lifestyles. It is their compulsion to develop their own method of survival. They have built various bamboo, cane and wooden objects needed in their

day to day life. However, things are changing rapidly due to establishment of better road connectivity, advent of modern education, and spread of scientific knowledge. A few people have got the benefit of such incorporation. Most of the other people are still relying upon indigenous knowledge system.

India's North East is rich in biodiversity. The region is blessed by nature. But the region is still backward in comparison to the other parts of the country. It is due to step motherly attitude and lack of interest on the part of central government as revealed by many scholars. However, the traditional knowledge system of the various groups has attracted various planners and policy makers. It is believed that systematic utilization

of traditional knowledge may play an important role in economic development of traditional communities.

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INDIA into the ferocious jaws of 'freedom of expression'

- Salil Gewali, Shillong

What will the parents do if their children start badmouthing their own family? What might happen to the family if the children start hating the family's norms and ethics? Could any parent allow the freedom of expression to their riotous children who condemn their own family but praise the hostile neighbors? Could that family ever have a feeling of joy, and a sense of security and peace? Absolutely not.

Needless to say, exactly the same kind of situations are being witnessed in India now. Firstly, it was noticed in JNU, Delhi, when Kanhaiya Kumar rallied the crowd and shouted anti-national slogans. Thereafter roared Jadavpur University with such

anti-national screams. With the total failure of the Government to deal with such treacherous cowboys the Amnesty International is now having a field day. It has seemingly chummed up with our strayed youths who with impunity shouted anti-India slogans in Bengaluru just the other day. This International agency for Human Right is dangerously selective. It expressed its sympathy for the terror brigand and separatists, but keeps quiet when hundreds of innocent civilians and army personnel are massacred in cold blood. Where is the most sensible award-wapsi group now when the mission of academia is jeopardized and the seat of

knowledge desecrated?

What is so disgusting here is that all these anti-national activities are like a shower of opportunities for a certain section of top media houses and intellectuals of the country. They take delight over such ominous development. Hardly they hesitate to piece together the stories to defend such venomously diverse terror modules. One strongly feels that those who speak for the terrorists are more dangerous, they are no less than terrorists. Thanks to the 'freedom of expression' which is now widening its ferocious jaws to devour the major chunk of the Nation. Please wake up before we see the dawning of the darkness of frustration and horror.

(Contd. from Page 5)

Social Security for All

minimum monthly pension ranging from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000 from 60 years onwards to the subscriber. After subscriber's death, pension would go to his/her spouse for life and thereafter, the pension corpus as at the age of 60 years of subscriber, is returned to the nominee. It is specifically focused on all the citizens in the unorganised sector. Over 28.71 lakh subscribers are enrolled till date.

These Social Security Schemes are leaving a positive impact on society. State Governments and district administration have been made partners in the implementation of these schemes. There are several success stories of these schemes from the villages and cities. People are not only becoming financially strong, but their life is changing for good. Their ambitions are growing. This is true financial inclusion in letter and spirit. Corruption is declining as the money is coming directly in the beneficiaries' bank accounts. And this is one of the prime objectives of these schemes. The horizon of a new dawn of social security has set in and more and more people are getting connected to it.

(Author is an independent journalist and TV anchor)

(<http://www.sentinelassam.com/editorial/>. August 04, 2016)

(Contd. from Page 9)

Bir Bikram, the Greatest among ...

heavyweights of the two continents including the king and queen of England, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, The King of England, the King of Spain and Franklin Roosevelt in USA and was treated with great honour his position deserved. In the course of his tours he had gathered invaluable knowledge and experience which he subsequently put into effect while planning his capital Agartala with a brilliant lay-out. Even now the heart of Agartala remains beautifully planned though the king's untimely death in 1947 and the emergence of gigantic socio-economic problems in the post-partition days considerably unsettled the plan.

King Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya's name will perennially shine brightly in Tripura's history because of his just and equitable treatment of all sections of his subjects. He had protected the interests of his tribal subjects by reserving but what he did for his non-tribal subjects is unique in history. In the wake of riots at Raipura near Dhaka in 1941 thousands of terror stricken Hindus sought shelter in Tripura. King Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya provided them not only relief in the form of food and cash doles but resettled them within his state. By this single act of magnanimity Bir Bikram earned universal respect and kudos across India. But his greatest achievement lay in his contribution to higher education in Tripura. Agartala's Maharaja Bir Bikram College,

built on sprawling and picturesque landscape in southeaster part of the town and personally designed by him, is a towering testimony to Bir Bikram's commitment to education in the state.

King Bir Bikram was the torch-bearer of a great dynasty that had always extended liberal patronage to art and men of art. Following in the footsteps of his three illustrious ancestors from his great grand father Bir Chandra Manikya (1863-1896) Bir Bikram liberally helped poet Rabindranath Tagore and his institution 'Shanti Niketan' with annual financial grants including special sanctions for setting up a hospital and a library. The king had ordered proper observance of the poet's eightieth birth day through statewide programmes and the entire state celebrated the birth day. Only a few days ahead of the poet's death king Bir Bikram conferred the honorific title of 'Bharat Bhaskar' on Tagore in a special function held at Shanti Niketan and the poet also liberally acknowledged the debt of love and affection he had received from four successive kings of Tripura. In his centenary year king Bir Bikram will be remembered for all his great achievements but the people of the state who continue to reel under an ethnic divide will recall his magnanimous role as a great catalyst for unity among all sections of his subject.

<http://www.nelive.in/tripura/history/bir-bikram-the-greatest-among-great-kings-tripura-tapas-dey>

(Contd. from Page 10)

Cyber crime and women

of women is increasingly heard in Parliament, courts and in the streets. While women in the West had to fight for over a century to get some of their basic rights, like the right to vote, the Constitution of India gave women equal rights with men from the beginning. Unfortunately, women in this country are mostly unaware of their rights because of illiteracy and the oppressive traditions. Some of the rights which are guaranteed under Constitution are—

Article 14 (the right to equality), Article 15 (the right to non-discrimination), Article 15(A) (e) (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth), Article 16

(equality of opportunity in matter of public employment), Article 19(1)(g) (the right to practice one's profession), Article 21 (the right to life), Article 11 ([State] takes all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment), Article 24 (State shall undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realization)

To tackle the issue of cyber-crimes, CIDs (Criminal Investigation Departments) of various states opened up Cyber Crime Cells in different cities. The Information Technology Act of India states clearly that when a cybercrime has been com-

mitted, it has a global jurisdiction and hence a complaint can be filed at any cyber cell. They will take up the case and traced the IP address from where a cyber stalker was operating. On March 8, 2016 a new Women's Cyber Security Cell Programme was organized to mark International Cyber Security Awareness Programme.

Cyber Crime is a curse and it should be curbed as soon as possible, it makes victim of those who are afraid to fight against it and the only solution to erase it from the society is to fight against it, so that it cannot make any one it's victim.

(The Assam Tribune 21.08.2016)

(Contd. from Page 11)

Why India wins only a few Olympic Medals

better.

From primary schools with their absentee teachers and lack of toilets to colleges which are seen by most students as unavoidable waiting rooms till they get a job, the education system is in a shambles.

Its dismal condition can be gauged from the observation of the Nobel Laureate, Venkataraman Ramakrishnan, that the last science congress was a "circus". Bharat Ratna recipient C.N.R. Rao has also described the education scene as depressing.

More than any other sporting occasion, the Olympics denote a country's progress or the lack

of it. It isn't only the swanky stadia or the crystal-clear, blue water bodies designated for boating, water polo and other games which show the level of economic advancement but also the upscale cities where major events like cycling take place.

India organised the Asian Games in 1951 and 1982, the Afro-Asian Games in 2003 and the Commonwealth Games in 2010. But these could not match the razzmatazz of the Olympics.

Unless a country can hold the Olympics, it will be seen as lagging behind. Like the bullet train, the hosting of more than 200 countries in a sporting extravaganza has become a

symbol of development.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of modernising India will not be achieved if the country remains embroiled in cow politics and ministers splurge taxpayers' money on junkets.

Instead, the focus should be on enabling more Sindhus, Sakshi Maliks and Dipa Karmakars to come to the fore. (IANS)

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(http://www.sentinelassam.com/op_ed/)

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Preacher or Predator

support the televangelist or not. Shedding more light into the appeasement policy of Congress, Baghpur MP and former Mumbai Police Commissioner Satyapal Singh revealed that Mumbai Police had forwarded a report of Zakir Naik's activities to the then UPA government in 2008, but no action was taken on it.

Many Islamic clerics have come against the controversial preacher. "Zakir is no messenger of peace. Far from peace, his TV channel promotes contempt, if not hatred, towards other religions and its followers," secularist-activist Javed Anand said at a news conference.

Prominent Shia Muslim cleric Maulana Kalbe Jawad Naqvi

demanded a complete ban on Naik's books, speeches and lectures. "Zakir Naik is spreading terrorism," he said, "Naik is a part of the Saudi Arabia-funded Wahhabi terror network, which creates scholars and clerics who in turn brainwash young Muslims." A Shia group, Hussaini Tigers, went so far as to declare a Rs 15-lakh bounty on the head of Zakir Naik by saying that he is not Naik but a 'khalnayak' (villain).

Surprisingly, Darul Uloom Deoband of the Deoband has issued a series of fatwas against Naik since 2007. They reiterated that he was a self-styled preacher unaffiliated to any of the four schools of Sunni Islamic thought. Supporting Zakir Naik, Samajwadi Party leader Abu Azmi said that

Naik has known him for a long time and that he can't be involved in any kind of terrorist activities or indoctrination. In Kashmir, the Jamaat-I-Islami and Jamiat-ul-Ahlihadees have condemned what they called a campaign by the government and media against Naik. In Kerala, Indian Union Muslim League came in support of Naik and passed a resolution condemning portraying him as a terrorist. MP and IUML national secretary ET Mohammed Basheer lashed out against BJP-led central government's attempts to check freedom of expression and propagation of religion.

(<http://english.eibela.com/article/zakir-naik-%3A-preacher-or-predator/> 21-07-2016)

(Contd. from Page 16)

Mercenaries of the Devil

immorality. Extortion and robbery are both anti-development and anti-progress as it is also a form of corruption. Despite the significant role of the Christian church in everyday life, the church seems to stay out of politics. The Church (the heart of the Naga people) is not moving actively towards the degree of their involvement in the fight against various modes of corruption amongst the political class and the bureaucracy, who controls much of the state's purse strings (source). A message often quoted to the good people, who are complacent and do not vote –

remember "Bad Politicians are elected by Good Citizens, who do not vote."

Every Naga should now "be the change" to deliver the land from every form of physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, financial and material corruption. Nagas are now sitting at the threshold of a major decision to truthfully and honestly introspect about our own personal lives, before we try to emulate Christ without a change of heart. Let us not take pride that we have celebrated 144 years of the establishment of the Church in Nagaland. Let us not make big budgetary provisions for the 150

years celebration in 2022, let us look at the sick affairs of the state and be that precious medicine to bring the desired change which the people are crying to the Lord for justice and deliverance.

Let us not ignore the writings on the wall which are loud and clear. Let "good will towards all man" prevail. Nagas must rise up and build Nagaland into a New Jerusalem, a city of peace in Asia. That the world may see and experience that; Christ indeed lives in Nagaland

(<http://morungexpress.com/mercenaries-of-the-devil/> July 28, 2016)

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Naknyulum the festival of the Changs'

rewarded with hordes of rice cakes and many goodies. It is believed that the Gods during Naknyu come down to collect the Yans and Wei. Hence, one piece of Wei is placed at the entrance of the house at night for the Gods.

The third day determines the fate of the villagers. On the third day, to conclude the consecutive days of celebration young men beat the log drum from dawn till morning. It denotes 'The declaration of people coming out of darkness and ushering dawn of light'. The old men too sit together in the morning waiting in utter silence to listen to the chirping of the first bird of the morning. They wait in attention for the pronouncement by the birds as it was believed that the kind of bird to chirp first would define the future. If it is the Aumishou (A small bird with blue spots) to chirp first, it is considered a good omen, since it signifies the

harvest of the year will be plentiful and an abundant crop is predicted.

If the bird is black with white spot, it confirms that there will be birth of many warriors in the village. But if the first bird chirp is the Shopangshou (A small bird with red spots) then it pronounces misfortune for the people and the village. On the dawn of third day, a chicken is released by an elder of the Oungh clan at the gate of the village to signify the conclusion of the festival. After day break, the first thing the villager's do is to clean up their respective traditional wells and ponds, followed by cleaning of foot-paths which led to their fields. The rest of the day is spend clearing the roads and renovating the bridges from one village to another. In short, it symbolize the approach of new season ie, winter, as it is being based on ancient days with deep underlying meanings. This festival of celebration is compulsorily marked by all family irrespective of status to avert falling ill/ to ward off evil spirit, because it is believed that, if any family or villagers failed to observe this feast the then Heavenly God punished that particular family which caused to sickness or that the family would see famine.

The festival is signified by the rituals and many ghenna has to be observed.

1. Changs' do not dance (folk dance) during the festival
2. If a guest visits the home, then it is expected of him/her to

visit during Naknyu Lum the following year as well

3. Animals booked for this festival are not spared

4. Matrimonial arrangement during this month is avoided

5. If a rain pours during Naknyu Lum, it brings harvest and fills the granary

6. No house or granary is built during the season

7. People are restricted from even trimming ones hair

8. It was said that any mistake in observation of the rituals will cause famine and pestilence in the village

9. It is assumed that on the last night of the Naknyu festival, the soul of the man or woman who is destined to die the coming year leaves the person

10. Weaving, handicraft, knitting, cultivation of farms or fields should not be left incomplete/half done during the season

11. Exchange of uncooked meat during this festival is not allowed

12. Ahead of the time of this festival, ones' own belonging such as, household properties and cultivating tools from their respective fields or elsewhere are recollected and kept at home, failing which is believed a bad omen for the family.



(<http://www.easternmirrornagaland.com/naknyulum-festival-changs/> 25/07/2016)

The Thief and the Brahmins

There was a Brahmin in a certain town, who was a thief. It was believed that he had become a thief due to ill actions in his previous life.

One day, four Brahmins arrived in this town from a far-off place, to sell some wares. They had a successful business and earned a handful of money.

The thief watched them making money, and thought of stealing the money from them. He approached them as a friend, and soon won their confidence by quoting eloquently from the Holy Scriptures. He requested them to appoint him as their helping hand, to which they agreed.

One day, the Brahmins had sold all their wares. They decided that it would not be proper for them to travel with all the money. So, they purchased jewels with all the money that they had earned. Then, they cut open their thighs and hid the jewels inside. With the help of a special ointment, they healed their cuts.

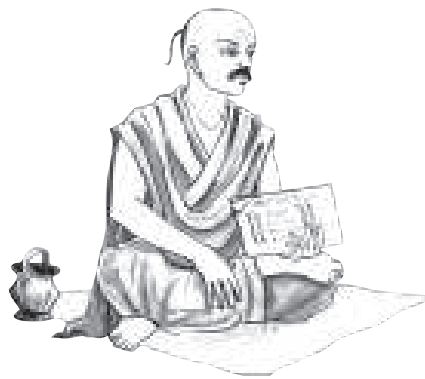
In this manner, they concealed all their jewels. But, all this happened during the time that the thief was in service. So, he knew where they had hidden all their earnings. The thief wondered, "I have not got a chance to rob them till now. If I can accompany them when they travel homewards, I may be able to get a chance to steal them on the way. I can poison them on the way, and take away the precious jewels."

Later, when they started preparing to leave, the thief

started weeping. He said, "Dear friends, the very thought of your departure makes me sad. After so many days that we have been together and shared a bond of love, I will be left all alone after you depart. Please take me along with you."

The Brahmins were moved by his emotions, and decided to take him with them, and the five of them started the journey.

On their way, they were going through the jungle and were crossing an area controlled by a



wild tribe. The chief of the tribe had a magical crow as his pet, who could foresee many things.

As they came near their place, the crow screamed, "Quick! They have treasure! Kill them and take their treasure!"

When the tribesmen heard this, they captured the five friends. They searched them and their belongings, even removed their clothes, but found nothing.

The chief said, "You certainly have some treasure with you. The crow has never been wrong before. Hand over your treasure to us, or we will kill you, as the

crow suggests. You may have eaten the treasure, and we may have to cut open your stomachs to recover them. Tell us the truth."

The thief, who was also a Brahmin, thought, "If they kill any of them, and search their bodies, they will recover jewels from the body. They will not believe me, and kill me too! They will not find any jewel, is another matter, but I will die anyway."

Thus, the Brahmin-thief made a firm resolution and said to the chief, "O Chief, you believe we have treasure hidden in our bodies. But it will be a mistake to kill all of us to pay for the crow's misunderstanding! I offer you myself. You may kill me, cut open my body to the very bones and see if you find any treasure."

The chief agreed, and thus, the Brahmin-thief sacrificed himself. The tribesmen looked into every bit of his body, but found nothing.

The chief was very confused; he believed that the crow must somehow have misunderstood. He humbly said to the remaining four Brahmins, "O travellers, it was a mistake to kill your friend, for he did not have any hidden treasure. I will not further my mistake by killing any of you. I release you from my captivity, please continue your journey."

In this manner, the four Brahmins, and the jewels were saved and continued their journey.

The wise indeed say: Better an intelligent enemy than a foolish friend.

Dear Readers,

*May Maa Durga
Empowers you
with Her
9 blessings of
Name,
Fame,
Health,
Wealth,
Happiness,
Humanity,
Knowledge,
Devotion &
Power...*

*Happy & Blessed
Durga Puja.*



*With Best Wishes From
Heritage Explorer*



*With Best Wishes
of*

DURGA PUJA 2016

Durga Puja Dates 2016

Mahalaya	= 30th September
Maha Panchami	= 6th October
Maha Shashti	= 7th October
Maha Saptami	= 8th October
Maha Ashtami	= 9th October
Maha Navami	= 10th October
Vijaya Dashami	= 11th October

