



VOL. XV, NO. 12
DECEMBER 2016

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HERITAGE EXPLORER

LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES

A Monthly News Bulletin

Pages 28, Size A4 RNI.Regd.No.ASSENG/2002/6981 Postal Regd.No.RNP/GH-094/2015-17

Rome's church compound is in a shape of Shiva Lingam

VATICAN CITY

SHIVA LINGAM



HAS VATIKA (वाटिका) BECAME VATICAN ?
CHRIST CAME FROM KRISHNA ?
IS IT ALL ONE BIG PLAGIARISM BY THE WEST ?



Great French writer, dramatist, critic, historian, Nobel Laureate, who significantly influenced the works of renowned psychoanalyst *Sigmund Freud*.



1866-1944

Romain Rolland

Religious faith in the case of the Hinduism has never been allowed to run counter to scientific laws, moreover the former is never made a condition for the knowledge they teach, but there are always scrupulously careful to take into consideration the possibility that by reason

both the agnostic and atheist may attain truth in their own way.

Source: *Vivekananda* - by Romain Rolland



Great German romantic poet, essayist and journalist. Best known for lyric poems, his essays on German literary, political, and philosophical thought contain remarkable prophetic insights.



1797-1856

Heinrich Heine

The Portuguese, Dutch and English have been for a long time year after year, shipping home the treasures of India in their big vessels. We Germans have been all along been left to watch it. Germany would do likewise, but **hers would be treasures of spiritual knowledge.**

Source: *Eastern religions and western thought* - by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

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Edited by : Amarendra Brahma, C/o. Heritage Foundation, K.B.Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati-781008, Published & Printed by : Narayan Dev Sarma on behalf of Heritage Foundation, K.B.Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati-781008, Published at: Heritage Foundation, K.B.Road, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati - 781008 (Assam). e-mail: ourheritage123@gmail.com, Website: www.heritagefoundation.org.in, Printed at: Arindam Offset & Imaging Systems, Rajgarh, Guwahati - 781003 and Angik Press, GNB Road, Guwahati - 781001 and Saraighat Offset Press, Bamunimaidan, Guwahati - 781021

India's agony

The recent happenings in our country can be described in one word. It is agonizing and painful. The parliament is non functional, the educational atmosphere in Kashmir is volatile and crumbling, the opposition parties are harping on their one point agenda for recall of demonetization, the media is playing with fire, sometimes supporting the Government and at other times heaping damnation on it. The only silver line amongst this chaos is that the public in general is patiently bearing the brunt of cash crunch. If we call it their voice minus cacophony, they have unequivocally expressed their opinion about the functioning of and the actions taken by the Government, by voting for the BJP candidates in the recent By polls.

In it's near 70 years of independence, India has been ruled by no less than 13 Prime Ministers, Modiji being the 14th. Like Narendra Mody, they took hard decisions for the country and most of the time they received support from the opposition parties and the common people alike. If we concentrate only on economic issues and exclude all other deviations, we may perhaps cite the case of Morarji Desai, who later became the Prime Minister of India, was Finance Minister in the Jawaharlal Nehru Cabinet. He with the consent of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru came out with the Gold Control Act, 1962 which recalled all gold loans given by banks, banned forward trading in gold and banned production of gold jewelry above 14 carat fineness. The decision caused great loss to many but the opposition and the public stood by the Government. In 1991, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi permitted sharp depreciation of Indian Rupee within a matter of three days (1st July and 3rd July, 1991) against major currencies, causing great loss to investors and national economy. Shortly thereafter, when Chandra Sekhar took over the reins as Prime Minister, he allowed airlifting of 47 tons of gold to the Bank of England and 20 tons of gold to the Union Bank of Switzerland from the national Gold reserves as a pledge to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for a loan. National sentiments were outraged and there was public outcry but ultimately the opposition as well as the public accepted it as a national compulsion. Last but not the least, Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao aided by the then Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh surrendered to IMF in camouflage of Economic Liberalisation to obtain loan from it and committed to several reforms, the fact being that the IMF required those reforms as a condition for loaning money to India.

The reason behind my above narration is to stress that all the Prime Ministers mentioned above had to take unpalatable decisions, but their intentions were pure and motivated by the national good. The law of our land says that anything done in good faith and without any bias is not punishable. They were therefore exonerated of all aspersions and accusations.

The sane and the politically unpolarised public has a right to pose a question to the learned and the veteran politicians of our country as to why they are trying to crucify PM Modi and opposing his decision to demonetize 500 & 1000 Rupee notes, when it is clear like daylight that this intended to inflict a death blow to the financial hoarders, blackmarketeers, antinational extremist elements and the countries that were deliberately crippling our economy by pushing counterfeit currencies into our country? Does they have any proof or reason to believe that Prime Minister Modi has done it in bad faith or for any ulterior motive. People will appreciate their answers.

Editor

Was the Christian Vatican Originally a Temple to Lord Shiva?

- Dr. Subramanian Swamy
Jun 14, 2014

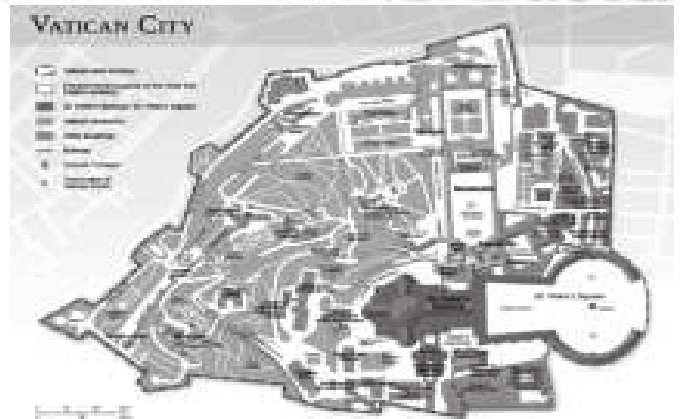
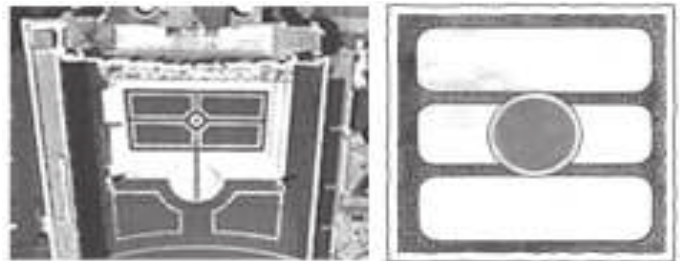
All religions are one and are derived from Vedic Sanatana Dharma. Famous historian P.N. Oak claimed that the word Vatican originally came from the sanskrit word "Vatika", that "Christianity" came from the sanskrit words "Krishna-neeti", ("ethics of Krishna" or "the way of Krishna"), and that "Abraham" came from the sanskrit word "Brahma". He further claims that both Christianity and Islam originated as distortions of Vedic beliefs.

Vatican Church Compound Shaped as a Shiva Linga

Compare the two pictures below and you can see a striking similarity between the shapes of a shiva linga and the vatican church compound. Further if we look closer, we even see a perfect tripundra and bindu incorporated into their design.

The word 'Vatican' itself is derived from the sanskrit word Vatika or Vatica, which means vedic cultural or religious centers. In sanskrit the word Vatika is used to describe a place, such as Ananda-Vatika, Ashrama-Vatika, Yagna-Vatika, etc. Such words and discoveries prove that the Vatican was a Hindu (Vedic) religious center before its incumbent was forced to accept Christianity from 1st century AD. Also, according to some reports, a Shiva linga was found during the excavation and is kept for display at Gregorian Etruscan Museum in Rome (details below). Hindustan indeed was Virat.

In the following pictures let us compare the tripundra (three lines worn by Lord Shiva as tilak).



Rome's church compound is in a shape of Shiva Lingam

VATICAN CITY	SHIVA LINGAM

HAS VATIKA (वाटिका) BECAME VATICAN ?
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IS IT ALL ONE BIG PLAGIARISM BY THE WEST ?



This Siva Lingam is exhibited in Gregorian Etruscan Museum, Vatican City. This has the most important Etruscan collection in Rome, starting with early Iron Age objects from the 9th century BC. Encyclopedia Britannica mentions under the headings "Etruria" and "Etruscan" that between the 2nd and 7th centuries BC, northern Italy was known as Etruria. During archaeological excavations many such "meteoric stones mounted on carved pedestals (Siva Lingas on bases)" have been discovered in Italy. This Siva Lingam was dug-up from Vatican City itself. Many more must be lying buried under the Vatican's massive walls and numerous cellars.

P.N. Oak's Theories on Vedic Roots of World Religions

P.N. Oak claims that Christianity and Islam are both derivatives of Hinduism, and that the Catholic Vatican, Kaaba and the Taj Mahal were once Hindu temples to Shiva. In his book, "Some Missing Chapters of World History", Oak claimed that the first civilisation was developed in India

from which all world civilisations grew. He wrote books on this subject in three languages.

Intent on rectifying what he believed to be "biased and distorted versions of India's history produced by the invaders and colonizers", Oak has written several books and articles on Indian history and founded the "Institute for Rewriting Indian History" in 1964. According to Oak, modern secular and Marxist historians have fabricated "idealized versions" of India's past and drained it of its "Vedic context and content".

Oak claims that Christianity was originally a Vedic religion following Krishna and claims that Christianity was originally known by either the names Chrisna-nity or Krishna-neeti (with Oak stating these meant "The way of Krishna" or "The ethics of Lord Krishna"). These generally follow in line with Oak's other theories and claims that the Vatican was originally called Vatika and that the Papacy was originally a "Vedic Priesthood" until Constantine the Great around 312 A.D killed the "Vedic

pointiff" and installed in his place a representative of the tiny Christian sect. Oak also makes the claim that "Jesus went to India between ages 13 and 30 to learn Krishna-neeti (Christianity) from sages."

Amen comes from Aum

When the Christians say "Amen" at the end of their hymns or to emphasize something, what they are saying is a corrupted form of "Aum" or "Om," which is the standard Vedic form of addressing the Supreme Being through sound.

In the bible it is said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That primordial divine word, which is one with God, is the Vedic syllable "Aum". God manifests in creation as the Cosmic Vibration, which expresses itself as Cosmic Sound and Cosmic Light. The Cosmic Sound or Aum is the synthesis of all the sounds of the universe.

(<http://www.indiadvine.org/was-the-christian-vatican-originally-a-temple-to-lord-shiva/>)

The Probable Love Story Behind the Name 'Kaziranga'

Although the etymology of the name Kaziranga is not certain, there exist a number of possible explanations derived from local legends and records. According to one legend, a girl named Ranga, from a nearby village, and a youth named Kazi, from Karbi Anglong, fell in love. This match was not acceptable to their families, and the couple disappeared into the forest, never to be seen again, and the forest was named after them.

According to another legend, Srimanta Sankardeva, the sixteenth century Vaisnava saint-scholar, once

blessed a childless couple, Kazi and Rangai, and asked them to dig a big pond in the region so that their name would live on.

Testimony to the long history of the name can be found in some records, which state that once, while the Ahom king Pratap Singha was passing by the region during the seventeenth century, he was particularly impressed by the taste of fish, and on asking was told it came from Kaziranga.

Kaziranga also could mean the "Land of red goats (Deer)", as the word Kazi in the Karbi language means

"goat", and Rangai means "red".

Some historians believe, however, that the name Kaziranga was derived from the Karbi word Kajir-a-rong, which means "the village of Kajir" (kajir gaon).

Among the Karbis, Kajir is a common name for a girl child, and it was believed that a woman named Kajir once ruled over the area. Fragments of monoliths associated with Karbi rule found scattered in the area seem to bear testimony to this assertion.

(<http://www.nelive.in/assam/relationships/did-you-know-probable-love-story-behind-name-kaziranga>)

INDIGENOUS BELIEFS, PRACTICES AND DEITIES OF NORTH EASTERN INDIA

- Dr Ranga Ranjan Das

Beliefs, practices and folk gods and goddesses are part and parcel of traditional communities across the globe. In the north east, there are various ethnic groups possessing their own beliefs and practices pertaining to supernatural power. Do doubt, there are intermingling of diversified communities with their specified and prescribed religious beliefs and practices. The followers of such major religion like Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikhs, Jain, do the work according to the set of rules and regulation prescribed under such religions. These are observed with pomp and gaiety among them. It is visible in the context of Assam as they have wider circulations. All the major religious practices have prescribed certain specific beliefs upon different powers known under different names. They are followed and worshipped differently under different religion. Besides, there are a large section of people who are the followers of various sects and gurus. The Sikh community follows 'Guru Nanak', likewise the Jains, while the Muslim follows the supremacy of 'Allah' likewise the Christian are the followers of 'Jesus Christ'. All these religion are the manifestation of modern religious practices that reflect tremendous faith of the people on supernatural power. Under Hindu pantheon, there are 33 crore deities. Among them Krishna, Shiva, Ganesha, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Durga, Kali, Kartiken (also known as Murugan), Narayana (under different names Tirupati, Balaji)

and others are widely worshipped under different names across the country. They are included in the classical tradition in India and worshipped in different forms and shapes. There are various myths and legend connected with various gods and goddess. They are narrated in various classical texts. In India we found the admixture of all the major religion of the world. Every religion is adhered and respected by all. Further, the word 'secular' in the Preamble of the Constitution is very significant for a multi-religious country like India. The beauty of multiplicity of religion is further glorified and added by existence of various indigenous beliefs and deities across various tribes and communities across the country. As stated, in the north east we also come across various indigenous beliefs and deities among different groups. Often, the term other religion or tribal religion is used to signify such practices.

Tribal religion has always its own significance in the context of Hindu religion. 'Over the millennia, Hinduism has incorporated numerous ideas and elements from the indigenous, non-Hindu, so-called tribal or folk religions. The Great Traditions of Hinduism have grown out of the Little Traditions of tribal cultures and communities by synthesizing and reinterpreting various ideas, beliefs and practices. The cult of the Mother Goddess, worship of Shiva, concepts of gods representing natural forces like rain and wind,

and the celestial bodies have nearly all been absorbed by Hinduism from the indigenous cultures'. Regarding, north east India, it is observed that 'the rise of shaktism or tantrism out of local shamanistic religions of the Indo-Mongoloids have been widely acknowledged by scholars. Tribal beliefs and practices provided the substratum for the growth and development of Hinduism as we know it today. In the same way, tribal religions have also been receptive of ideas and practices emanating from Hinduism. And yet, after all this reciprocal movement of ideas, beliefs and practices, there are many elements in the religions of tribal people, which are exclusive to them and remain outside the orbit of Hinduism. Each religious system is a unique configuration created in response to distinctive demands and requirements by different tribal societies'.

Indigenous beliefs and practices are the result of adjustment with the supernatural powers in an organised society. Out of such beliefs and practices, and their faith, they have included some deities in their religious pantheon. They are very concerned about the well being of their own community and itself. They developed and observe elaborate rituals in order to appease such gods and goddess. Such tradition passes orally across the generations.

It always helps to maintain own ethnic identity. That is another important issue which is not

highlighted in the discussion. Rather, attempt is made to focus on indigenous beliefs and practices and various gods-goddesses associated with it. Among the Bodos of Assam, Bathou is regarded as the traditional religion. Bathou is equivalent to Hindu god Shiva. They worshipped siju plant (*Ephorbia splendis*) in order to appease him. Bathou puja, kherai puja and Garja puja are part and parcel of Bodo culture. Among the Rabhas of Assam, we have found various indigenous gods and goddess. Various scholars and researches on Rabhas reveal that worship of goddess Baikho is an important festival. There is a legend associated with the origin of Baikho puja. It is associated with legendary hero Dodan. It is stated that once he with his two sisters crossed a stream. While crossing, they tried to catch fishes but could get only a stone-piece. As instructed in his dream, goddess advised to start worshipping the stone. It was the beginning of Baikho worship. The Rabhas use the term Khoksi as a synonym of Baikho. According to published book of VKIC on Rabhas (2014), 'Khoksi indicate combination of both male and female energies represented by Hasong and Baikho. In terms of Hindu mythology, they represent Siva and Parvati, in physical features as well as in dresses and in their favourite vessels'. The Rabhas observe two types of major pujas called Bay Thakai and Bay Dhangkai. It is performed to get rid of evil effects of malevolent gods and evil spirits through sacrificing of birds and animals and offering their blood to the deity. Bay, literally means God and Thakai means to sacrifice

(ibid, p. 39). Even in some places of Assam, the Pati section of the Rabhas worship *manasa* (snake goddess) for the welfare of the community.

Scholars have divided indigenous gods and goddess into two categories: malevolent and benevolent. Malevolent deities are harmful while benevolent deities have positive impact. People have to worship and appease both for prosperity and get rid of evil impacts. Among the Riangs of Tripura, Buraha (presiding deity of forests), Thunairas Matai (a male god of death) is considered as malevolent deities while Sibrai (a male god), Mai Nukma (goddess of paddy), Sungma (goddess of peace, prosperity) is regarded as benevolent deities (Dey 2004: 217). Further, JC Gan-Choudhury (2014: 232-233) has wonderfully explained the popular cults of Tripura that indicate polytheism and reveals that people have been continuing to worship a large number of deities and spirits for mundane purposes. He cites names of various deities like Kartikeya, Kshetrapala, Mangal Candi, Magmandaler Vrata for human fertility cult, Buda-Budi, Vel Bhatar vrata, Kali, Jagat Narayan as baby protection deities, Aoula Ghadini, Acambit, Acan Pir, Kaura Kauri, Kankhaila, Kal Bhairav, Jara Jari Maghini, Sitala as deities associated with various diseases, Kshetra Devi, Bhola Pora, Subha Candi, Tuima, Tui Pathan and many associated with agriculture. Besides, there are deities which can avert danger, restore missing property as well as remove poverty (ibid). Similarly, among the Mizos, khuana (a female spirit), Khuapa

(god of thunder and hailstorm), Vanchung Nula (rain goddess), Vanhrika (god of wisdom and craftsmanship) are benevolent. The evil spirits are either known as Ramhuai or Phung. As reported, Huai, Tau, Chawm, Inthumkar, Khawmu, Khawhring are regarded as evil spirits (Fanai 2014: 350-352).

It is observed that traditional beliefs and practices are part and parcel of socio-religious practices of indigenous communities of north east. They are part of their rich cultural heritage. Their world view is reflected through such indigenous religious practices. No doubt, Christianity has its own impact. But indigenous gods and faith are still functioning in the nook and corner of the north east. Again, the process of back to own traditional religion is very much prominent. To strengthen such process, often some religious movement has taken place in the north east.

NOTES: 1. See Traditional Customs and Rituals of Northeast India, Vol-II, edited by Dr. P.C.

Sarma, published by Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture, Guwahati, 2004

2. See Traditional Culture of the Rabhas of Assam, VKIC, 2014

3. See Ethnic Issues Secularism and Conflict Resolution in North East India, edited by

Bimal J. Deb, published by Concept publishing company, 2006

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(Contd. to Page 11)

IT's Up to Us

- Sri Shindhu Kashyap Borpuzari

Yes Indeed, It's Up to Us to decide what kind of future and Environmental Heritage we want to leave behind for the future generations. A lot has been said and written about air pollution and Global Warming, many steps have been taken but, do they really suffice?

There are innumerable environmental issues in this country. Air pollution, water pollution, garbage pollution and wildlife natural habitat pollution, so on and so forth. The situation was worse between 1947 through 1995. According to data collection and environment assessment studies of World Bank experts, between 1995 through 2010, India has made one of the fastest progresses in the world, in addressing its environmental issues and improving its environmental quality. In Spite of this, India has a long way to go to reach environmental quality similar to those enjoyed in developed economies. Pollution remains a major confront and also an opportunity for India.

Some consider economic development is leading to environmental issues. Others believe economic development is fundamental to improving India's environmental management and preventing pollution in India. Whereas some others suggest that India's growing population is the primary cause of India's environmental degradation. Systematic studies challenge this theory.

Pragmatic evidence from countries such as Japan, England and Singapore, each with

population density similar or higher than India, yet each enjoying environmental quality vastly superior than India, suggests population density may not be the only factor affecting India's issues.

Major environmental issues are forest and agricultural degradation of land, resource depletion (water, mineral, forest, sand, rocks etc.), environmental degradation, public health, loss of biodiversity, loss of resilience in ecosystems, livelihood security for the poor.

The major sources of pollution in India include the rampant burning of fuel wood and biomass such as dried waste from livestock as the primary source of energy, lack of organized garbage and waste removal services, lack of sewage treatment operations, lack of flood control and monsoon water drainage system, diversion of consumer waste into rivers, cremation practices near major rivers, government mandated protection of highly polluting old public transport, and continued operation by Indian government of government owned, high emission plants built between 1950 to 1980. India's water supply and sanitation issues are related to many environmental issues as well.

I can point out some of the recent instances that have caused alarming Environmental concerns in the North-East.

Those of us, who have travelled along the road from Shillong to Cherrapunji, will very well remember the picturesque landscape and the elegant greenery, but because of massive deforestation that heavenly abode

created by the Almighty has been obliterated to a large extent. There are some stone crushing plants installed which have denuded trees and forests from the hills for extracting stones. The State Government should take cognizance of the matter and act accordingly, so that such indiscriminate cutting of trees is brought to a halt.

Cherrapunji which is still holding the world record for the most rainfall in a calendar month and in a year as per record, is currently receiving very low rainfall and is on the verge of losing that badge for the evident reasons of unabated clearing of all types of vegetation there. If imminent steps aren't taken to curb this, there will be a catastrophic change in the environment of the region which will even adversely affect the 'Human Ecology'.

Similarly, deforestation on a massive scale has been going on in Arunachal Pradesh which has also jeopardized the ecological balance in the region.

North-East has always been referred to as an 'Environmental Utopia', but if such deforestation at an exponential rate is carried out than it won't take much time to mislay this elusive tag.

Delhi, the National Capital is the most polluted city in India and also the 2nd most polluted City in the World. It is certainly a matter of great concern as the pollution is making millions of people susceptible to physical ailments.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had introduced the odd-

(Contd. to Page 10)

Black Money for Salvation or Damnation

- Salil Gewali

It may not take long for one to understand that money could be the root of all evil. But it certainly takes sustained effort to come out of its evil effect. Well, the excessive greed to stockpile the riches has often blinded the eyes of the intelligence of many and thus prompted them to do what they should not do at all. Trading the soul for a wad of cash has become too commonplace in these modern times.

Is it not too weird that people keep hoarding the black money which they never could use — even .001 % of the total, in their lifetime? But, the very efforts and tricks in amassing it only corrupts their minds, corrupt their family and finally corrupt their nation.

Going by the reports, unlike other small denominations, Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 banknotes were not just kissed and stashed away but also duplicated and discreetly used for whole lots of illegal and anti-national activities. Indeed, hoarding the black money have immeasurably affected the country's economy. We have an endless list of scams that have virtually slowed down the developmental plans and missions in the country. It created an abysmally big gap between the rich and the poor!

Yes, it finally took the boldness of PM Modi, a poor *chaiwala* from Vadnagar of Gujarat, to pronounce this epoch-making decision to ban these two giant banknotes. The clear-headed public, leaders, economists et al are well convinced that this masterstroke by PM Modi is effectively capable

of weeding out corruption from the country. But these white truths are now being smothered by the blanket of black lies. Many opposition leaders are scrambling to misinterpret that the demonetizing currencies is an ill-conceived move by the present government which leads to more chaos in the society. Why can't these leaders understand that in order to treat a chronic illness we need to bear some pain initially? A diseased person is required to do a series of tests, maybe major surgeries even. After only following the prescribed medical steps one can expect that his chronic malady will be cured and he will become healthy once again. Therefore, the demonetizing the bigger banknotes are sensibly deemed as one of the remedies to treat the country afflicted with the money hoarding syndrome.

What is too unfortunate is that the previous successive governments, instead of addressing this issue, only contributed to aggravate the situation by even being the party to this evil jamboree. No wonder, many of the business tycoons and leaders have chosen to treasure up their fortunes in the banks of the foreign countries. They found the country's banks not strong enough to safeguard their loots. Does it not look as if all of them believed that they have to be monetarily well-armed before they take off from this mortal world? For them the virtues and the good deeds on this Earth are not worthy enough to carry along with them. It is only the truckloads of ill gotten booty that can help them buy their

tickets for salvation into the other world.

(The writer of this article lives in Gewali Cottage, Upper Mawprem, Shillong-2, Meghalaya and can be reached at Phone: 9774140451, 9863028358 Email: sgewali@gmail.com)

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IT's Up to Us

even formula for vehicles twice to check the pollution in the city but it's not in operation now. More concrete steps should be taken to check pollution not only in Delhi but also throughout the country.

We as the citizens of the country also have a major role to play in keeping our country clean and pollution free. Concerted efforts can only produce the desired results and just playing the 'Blame Game' will only hamper the cause. Campaigns like the '**Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**' will only work if general public cooperate and involve themselves, although in some parts of the country the common people have taken part but by and large there is apathy, ignorance and casual attitude towards the issue. There has to be a serious attitudinal change among the people of our country to keep it clean and free from pollution. I would like to mention the exemplary State from the Northeast, Sikkim and also our neighboring country Bhutan where the government and the public have acted together to maintain a pollution free and in fact a clean and a paradisiacal environment there.

Islamist Frenzy in Bangladesh

At least 15 Hindu temples in Bangladesh have been vandalized over allegations of disrespect shown to Islam on Facebook, triggering panic among the minority community in the Muslim-majority nation. Temples in Brahmanbarhia district's Nasirnagar were vandalised on Sunday; besides over 100 houses of Hindus in the area have also been looted.

After the mayhem for hours, two temples in adjacent Habiganj's Madhabpur also came under attack, police and witnesses said. Six persons were arrested for their alleged involvement in the attack.

Paramilitary Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) have been deployed in Nasirnagar and Madhabpur Upazila headquarters along with the Rapid Action Battalion, police and Armed Police Battalion, bdnews24.com reported.

The district's Deputy Commissioner Md. Rezwanur Rahman and Superintendent of Police Md. Mizanur Rahman inspected the area later in the afternoon but the leaders of the local Hindu community say the panic that has gripped them is not going away.

The attack was carried out in a style followed by the attackers of Buddhist community in Cox's Bazar in 2012 on a similar allegation of disrespect towards Islam through a Facebook post. Locals said Nasirnagar incident started with a Facebook post by one Rasraj Das from Harinberh village under Haripur Union

Parishad.

Police detained Rasraj on Friday immediately after the allegation of blasphemy had surfaced against him. He was sent to jail following a court order, Md. Mizanur Rahman said. Protests against Rasraj's post were called under the banner of 'Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat' in Habiganj district headquarters and Nasirnagar. Demonstrations were also announced in Habiganj's Madhabpur.

A group of madrasa students demonstrated on the premises of Brahmanbarhia Press Club while hundreds of people blocked Sarail-Nasirnagar-Lakhai road by torching tyres on Sunday. Md. Mizanur, quoting witnesses, said a group of the demonstrators, armed with local weapons, vandalised the temples at Duttubarhi, Namashudraparha, Ghoshparha, Jagannath Temple and Goura Temple. They also vandalised and looted the houses of the Hindu families. Several priests were injured in the attack, he said.

One platoon of the BGB was deployed first to bring the situation under control. The other forces joined them later. Md. Mizanur said preparations to file separate cases over the attacks were under way. Md. Rezwanur Rahman told the media that those responsible for the attack would get 'exemplary' punishment after investigation.

Nasirnagar Upazila Parishad Vice-Chairman Anjan Deb said, "The situation is apparently calm now but the Hindu community is

still panicked." Madhabpur Upazila Puja Udjapon Committee chief Sunil Das said the members of the religious minority community were pained by the attack, which was carried out a day after Kali Puja.

Mr. Mizanur blamed Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir for the attack. "The opportunist quarter carried out this attack to embarrass the government. Those behind it will be found out and dealt with in a tough manner," he said.

(<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/south-asia/15-hindu-temples-in-bangladesh-vandalised/article9288320.ece>, October 31, 2016)

(Contd. from Page 8)

INDIGENOUS BELIEFS, PRACTICES AND DEITIES OF NORTH EASTERN INDIA

'Traditional Customs and Rituals of Northeast India' – Keynote address, in Traditional Customs and Rituals of North East India', Guwahati: VKIC

Dey, S. 2004. 'The Socio-Religious Life of the Riang of Tripura' in Traditional Customs and Rituals of North East India', Guwahati: VKIC

Gan-Choudhuri, JC. 2004. 'Popular Cults in Tripura' in Traditional Customs and Rituals of North East India', Guwahati: VKIC

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Triple Talaq Travesty

Why a Uniform Civil Code could be advantageous to Muslims.

The unilateral triple talaq, which Muslims are made to believe is based on divine revelation, is nothing but a legal evasion devised by an acquiescent Muslim clergy at the behest of the Omayyad monarchs. This happened during the second century of the Muhammadan era much after Prophet Muhammad had passed away. It was done to bypass the true triple talaq as formulated in the Quran. Therefore, this sacrilegious triple talaq in one sitting is called talaq-ul-bidaat. - a heretical talaq. It ought not to have been on the statute of Muslim personal law.

The true triple talaq, as ordained by the Holy Quran, is one of the more humane therapies to deal with a downward spiraling marital relationship. Importantly, the most significant injunction in the triple talaq therein is that after each pronouncement of talaq, there has to be compulsorily a period of waiting or iddat that provides a timeout to reflect on the alternatives to a divorce. Therefore, the instant triple talaq as permitted by the Muslim personal law not only negates the road map of the true triple talaq laid down in the Quran but also gives Islam a bad name. Hence, as the heretical triple talaq is sanctioned neither by the Quran nor by the Prophet's precepts, it would be legitimate to remove it from the Indian laws and abide

by the one and only true triple talaq as set out in the Quran. Only this talaq should continue to remain as part of the Muslim personal law.

As a first step, even before the first talaq can be uttered, the Quran commends a meeting of well-wishers, representing both the sides, to try to save the marriage. However, if they do not succeed then the first of the three talaqs may be invoked. The Quran once again lays down the propriety for it when it says in Verse 65.1: "When ye do divorce



women, divorce them at their prescribed periods, and count [accurately], their prescribed periods: and fear Allah your Lord: and turn them not out of their houses." Once the first talaq is uttered, during the prescribed waiting period or thereafter, the separated couple can reconcile and resume their marital relationship with a fresh nikaah. However, if after a period of time, friction again arises between them, they can opt for a second talaq following the same sequence as the first.

After having gone through, over a phase, the process of

remarrying the same spouse twice, should further discord or strife arise between them, then the third talaq can be uttered. This time it is irrevocable. As the Quran says in Verse 2.229: "A divorce is only permissible twice: after that, the parties should either hold together on equitable terms or separate with kindness."

The Quran goes on further to say in Verse 2.231: "But do not retain them against their will in order to hurt [them]: for he who does so sins indeed against himself ... and remain conscious of God." Therefore, there is a certain code of compassion to be observed in the true triple talaq as laid down in the Holy Quran.

The next issue is the provision of maintenance for the divorced wife. The Quran says in Verse 2:241, "And the divorced women, too, shall have [a right to] maintenance in a goodly manner: this is a duty for all who are conscious of God." Muhammad Asad has interpreted goodly manner in his commentary in The Message of Quran as, "The amount of alimony - payable unless and until they remarry - has been left unspecified since it must depend on the husband's financial circumstances and on the social conditions of the time." When this Verse or Aiyat 241 in the Quran was pointed out to the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, this is what the then Chief

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China-Pakistan Corridor – A Threat to India

The much touted \$46 billion, 3,000-km-long China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) links Gwadar port in the troubled state of Balochistan to China's restive autonomous region of Xinjiang. The project, which is an extension of China's ambitious One-Belt-One-Road scheme, passes through Gilgit and Baltistan areas which are part of Jammu and Kashmir which is Indian Territory but illegally occupied by Pakistan.

Hence the CPEC is against India's geographical and strategic interests.

The official Xinhua news agency, in a clear departure from its past practice, mentioned in December 2014 about the closure of the Khunjerab Pass and also stated that Gilgit and Baltistan were parts of Pakistan.

Analysts claim that China, before taking up a project of this magnitude, wanted to reconfirm Gilgit-Baltistan as part of Pakistan and wanted to observe India's reaction which was not severe at that juncture.

China would be constructing several infrastructure and hydropower projects, industrial parks, railway lines and all-weather roads and highways in Gilgit-Baltistan as well as in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. CPEC will also reduce by 12,000 km the distance from Middle East from where China imports its crude oil.

Pakistani leaders describe CPEC, as well as the multifarious projects linked to it, as a great economic achievement for the country and claim that it will solve

the country's economic problems and expedite growth. Government agencies declare that more than 700,000 direct jobs would be created.

Nonetheless, the Pakistani leadership is worried about generating funds for the main projects, which have to be financed indigenously. The Economic Coordination Committee of the cabinet has set up a revolving fund to handle this, but analysts claim that Pakistan's economic condition is in a shambles and it will be difficult for the country to create funds for the construction of the mega projects.

There is severe criticism of the project by non-Punjabis as they feel that although the CPEC passes through their areas, the benefits of the project would be usurped by Punjabis.

The Tehrik-i-Taliban, Pakistani extremist outfit has already claimed the killing of some Chinese in Pakistan. Several separatist outfits in Balochistan are against CPEC and proclaim that it is against the interests of the state. They are saying that they would not allow this project to be implemented.

Residents of Balochistan also mention that through the CPEC project, the government would settle outsiders in the province, thereby changing the demography of the province, and the Chinese and the Punjabi-dominated federal government would exploit the natural resources of the state without giving it due compensation.

Pakistan has alleged that India is assisting Baloch and Sindhi militants who are creating hurdles in the construction of CPEC. They allege that in May 2016, one Chinese worker was killed in Karachi by militants of an India-supported outfit. India has denied such charges.

Both China and Pakistan claim that CPEC has only economic dimensions, but India and the United States appropriately feel that it has more strategic significance. Gwadar would be a future sea port from where China would acquire a stronghold in the Indian Ocean region. China would also get an access to the Arabian Sea and would minimize the distance to the Strait of Hormuz through which 35 percent of world oil transits.

The linking of Muslim majority Xinjiang province through CPEC would be dangerous for China too, as the Muslim fanatics of Pakistan would start assisting the suppressed Muslims of the Chinese province and the secessionist movement would be strengthened. Pakistani Jihadists would certainly spread Islamic extremism in China.

India also feels that China has already encircled it by inculcating commercial as well as defence relationship with several countries including Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Somalia. CPEC would further strengthen the encirclement.

After completion of the CPEC, the Chinese presence would

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Agenda of Radicalisation

Burning of schools, a part of a sinister bigger game plan of Pakistan

In the last three months, more than twenty schools have been burnt in South Kashmir. The separatists and the fundamentalists in the Valley are determined to turn the clock and take the Valley back to the medieval era where the Maulvis and Qazis ruled the roost and their writ was unchallenged. They want the common Kashmiris to remain ignorant, poorly educated and under-developed so that they continue to hold their sway over the masses. "Great minds are always feared by lesser minds," goes an old saying. It would answer the question as to why schools are being targeted. Schools are temples of learning. They impart knowledge. Through proper curriculum schools imbibe the quality of reasoning in young minds, cultivate the spirit of nationalism and inculcate the habit of acquiring knowledge through the process of learning. Knowledge allows one to decide what would be best for one to do. This is what the akas of radicalisation fear and hence want to deprive Knowledge to young Kashmiris.

As per Cambridge English Dictionary Radicalisation is defined as, "Process to make someone become more extreme in their political or religious beliefs." Radicalisation is one of the components of the "Bleed India through Thousand Cuts" strategy unleashed by Pakistan to avenge the humiliation suffered by its Army in 1971. Separatists, soft-separatists and fundamentalists are employed by Pakistan in furthering this agenda. Gradual easing out of Sufi Islam by radical

Wahhabism is part of this strategy. Unfortunately, rather than addressing the issue and attempting to catch the bull by horn political blame game has begun in the Valley. Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has blamed the Hurriyat leadership and State Administration. The irony is that the Hurriyat leaders who are reportedly responsible for these acts have also started issuing statements blaming the government. The intention of the current outburst is obvious and that is to criticise and defame the State Government. It hardly makes any difference to them because their own children are continuing with their studies uninterrupted in various Public Schools in the Valley, in other parts of the country and even in some foreign countries. The victim is the common Kashmiri. That is why the separatist leadership keeps issuing repeated bandh calls and ensures schools do not open despite the government having announced opening of schools for the last two months. The intention of the Hurriyat leaders is to ensure that common Kashmiri children are deprived of the opportunity of studying and gaining knowledge thus furthering their agenda of radicalisation.

Burning of schools abets the process of radicalisation. The children will be forced to join Madrasas being run by various radical outfits. These Madrasas will radicalise the young impressionable minds and act as the nurseries for the universities of terror. One does not mind if the children study in Madrasas which provide modern education and act

as seminaries of faith. But the ground reality is different. The Government of India under the "Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas" has spent more than 1000 Cr in seven years for modernizing Madrasa education. Surprisingly the Madrasas in Jammu & Kashmir have refused to accept grant under this centrally sponsored scheme, depriving students from Science kits, Maths kits and other essential pedagogical equipment intended to ease the labour of learning. They even refused to appointment of teachers for modern subjects. The reason for refusal is not known.

It is established beyond doubt now that the separatists, fundamentalists and their sympathisers are not at all concerned about the well - being and future of common Kashmiris. They are only exploiting them to further their own agendas and Pak-sponsored agenda of radicalisation. The Kashmiris have to realise that they are being systematically and gradually pushed back into the dark era of medieval times. The civil society of Kashmir has to rise to the occasion to save the future of Kashmir. The tender hands that should be holding pen and books are being forced into "Sang Bazi." The burning of schools has been more prominent in South Kashmir, a strong hold of Jamat (Jamat-e-Islami) and the current hub of jihadi terror in Kashmir. It has to be fought and eradicated as a social evil.

(The author is a Jammu based columnist, political commentator, security and strategic analyst)

(Organiser, November 13- 2016)

Repatriation of Reang Refugees

Amidst uncertainty of repatriation of over 31,000 Reang tribal refugees, living in Tripura for the past 19 years, Mizoram government officials began their identification on Wednesday, the 2nd November, 2016,

“A 30-member team of Mizoram government officials led by the State’s Mamit district Deputy Commissioner Mr Lalbiaksangi arrived in north Tripura on Tuesday, the 1st November, 2016 and from Wednesday started the identification process,” Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Kanchanpur Sub-Division Mr. Santosh Deb said over phone. He said: “The identification process would continue till November 21. After that the schedule of repatriation of refugees from Tripura to Mizoram would be finalised.” About 31,300 Reang tribals, who locally call themselves ‘Bru’, have been living in seven makeshift camps in North Tripura’s Kanchanpur and Panisagar Sub-divisions adjoining Mizoram since October 1997 after they fled their homes in Western Mizoram following ethnic violence in the northeastern state.

Despite several initiatives by the Mizoram government to bring them back, the refugees have been reluctant to go back to their villages unless their demands for food and security are met. Refugees’ apex body, Mizoram Bru Displaced People’s Forum (MBDPF), has been insisting that three teams of their organization want to visit three Mizoram districts — Mamit, Lunglei and

Kolasib - to see the situation there as the tribal refugees would be rehabilitated in these three districts after their repatriation.

“We have sent a letter to Union Home Ministry’s Special Secretary (Internal Security), Mr. Mahesh Kumar Singla, on October 18 to ask the Mizoram government to arrange the visit of the MBDPF leaders.

“We are yet to get any response from the MHA. How can the refugees return to Mizoram without seeing the local situation in those villages,” MBDPF General Secretary Mr. Bruno Msha said.

He said that the MBDPF has submitted 14 points demands to the MHA. The demands include allotment of five hectares of land to each tribal family, undertake special development plan for the backward tribals and provide adequate security to the repatriated refugees.

The refugee leader said the Home Ministry agreed to give each refugee family housing assistance of Rs 38,500, cash assistance of Rs 41,500, free rations for two years, blanket and utensils, while Mizoram would reimburse their transportation cost. The ministry also verbally agreed to extend Rs 1.3 lakh housing scheme under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana to each family, said the MBDPF leader, but added he was doubtful about the repatriation in the near future. Kanchanpur Sub-Divisional Magistrate said that the Tripura government would provide the logistical support when the

repatriation of refugees starts.

A high-level meeting held on October 17 at the Union Home Ministry in New Delhi, discussed in depth the repatriation of the tribal refugees. MHA’s Special Secretary (Internal Security) Mr. Mahesh Kumar Singla presided over the meeting where senior officials from the MHA, Tripura and Mizoram government and MBDPF leaders were present.

A Tripura government’s official said that the Mizoram government officials wanted to start the repatriation from January 2017 instead of pre-scheduled November, 2016 as the Union government had urged. The Mizoram officials also remained non-committal to the refugee leaders’ desire to visit the proposed sites where the tribals would be rehabilitated after being repatriated. The MHA officials recently visited Tripura and Mizoram and held a series of meetings with the officials of both governments and tribal leaders over the repatriation. The measures came in wake of the Supreme Court’s directives about the repatriation, and the roadmap submitted by Mizoram on how it plans to rehabilitate the displaced people.

Mizoram Home Minister Mr. R. Lalziriana said in Aizawl earlier this week that the State government would not concede the demands of the MBDPF as a pre-condition of the refugees’ repatriation. “It would also be impossible for the State government to allot the five hectares of land to each

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Seminar on Tribes of Asia - A Report

The two-day International Seminar on "Understanding the tribes of Asia" concluded at Synod College, Shillong on 4th November, 2016.

Organized by the Departments of Education and History of the Synod College in collaboration with the P.A. Sangma Foundation, the seminar saw the participation of various scholars and academicians from abroad and other States of India. Today's valedictory function was graced by Prof. Henry Lamin, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong as the Chief Guest, in the presence of Synod College Principal Dr. D. Wanswett, resource persons of the seminar, teachers and students.

During the two-day seminar, academicians and researchers from different countries presented papers on topics such as tribal rituals and practices, conflicts, social and cultural heritage, concept of indigenous people,

exposure to foreign culture, impact of globalisation on the tribals, sustaining tribal/minority languages in education, tribal in India and the role of education in empowering them, understanding the tribes of Laos, the tribes and their future status in India, indigenous people and their development, legal and constitutional safeguards, among others.

Delivering the valedictory address, Prof. Henry Lamin noted that such programmes provide an avenue for the participants to "know, understand, share, and learn" in order to build a "better place".

"I think you had an open mind when you came here. I think you wanted to know, to understand, to share, to learn and to build a better place. You must have done extensive work and shared your experience, views and opinions on how to understand and know each other," Prof. Lamin said. Speaking about the tribes of

Meghalaya – Khasi, Jaintia and Garo – Prof. Lamin said, "We are a matrilineal society. As a society, it is a challenging society because we are surrounded by patrilineal societies." However, he added that, "We are living in an egalitarian society, we are living in a society where there is no hierarchy system, we are living in a society where there is no distinction between king and the subjects, where there is common understanding, where honesty is very important, and where trust is relied on words and not on any written document. These are the things you got to learn from the society." It may be mentioned that the international seminar was inaugurated by Union minister for tribal affairs Mr. Jual Oram on Thursday in the presence of Lok Sabha MP Conrad Sangma and other dignitaries and a host of academicians.

(<http://www.sentinelassam.com/meghalaya/story.php?sec=2&subsec=8&id=286920&dtP=2016-11-05&ppr=1#top,>)

(Contd. from Page 12)

Triple Talaq Travesty

Justice of India YV Chandrachud said in his order in the Shah Bano case (1985): "Nor are we impressed by the shuffling plea of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board that, in Aiyat 241, the exhortation is to the 'Mutta Queena', that is, to the more pious and the more God-fearing, not to the general run of the Muslims." This contention of AIMPLB is, to put it mildly, an affront to the piety of the Muslim community.

However, beyond the

unwarranted stand of AIMPLB, lies a resolution to the larger issue of Uniform Civil Code. It is a fact that the marriage, according to Islam, is not a sacrament but a civil contract. Pakistan Supreme Court has said, "Among Muslims, marriage is not a sacrament, but is in the nature of a civil contract. Such a contract undoubtedly has spiritual and moral overtones and undertones but legally, in essence, it remains a contract between the parties."

This renders nikahnama (Muslim marriage contract) spiritual, secular and, above all, adaptable. Thus when the Uniform Civil Code comes to be written, it could be Advantage, Muslims. As Mr. Salman Khurshid, former Union Minister, has said in his foreword to Mulla's Principles of Mahomedan Law (20th Edition), "There is, for instance, much to learn from the contractual nature of nikah."

(<http://www.sampadkiya.com/news/editorials/triple-talaq-travesty-times-of-india/04-11-2016>)

‘Destination Northeast and Awesome Assam’

The books published by the NCERT should have more detailed information about the history, culture, people, lifestyle, destinations etc., of India’s vastly unexplored and vastly pristine but picturesque mosaic of ethnicity and bio-diversity hotspots — this was what was highlighted in a seminar on ‘Destination Northeast and Awesome Assam’ held as part of the on-going North East Festival organized in New Delhi on November 4, 2016

“The NCERT can play the role of an amplifier to promote the lesser known but magnificent Northeast region of the country among the young generation of pan India by incorporating detail information about the region in its textbooks. It will make the task easier for the governments and other stakeholders to bring the region into the thick of tourism sector in the country,” the speakers opined.

Distinguished speakers in the seminar including former Tourism Secretary of Government of India, Mr. M P

Bezboruah, Adviser to Bodoland Tourism Mr. Partha Das, Assam Tourism official Ms. Nibedita Hazarika, Human Resources Development expert Mr. Rajib Baruah, prominent tour operator from the Northeast Mr. Tridib Sharma made a clear statement that the region needed to be sold with more vigour through involvement of people especially youths. They said a huge pool of skilled manpower must be created to popularize destinations in the region through innovative ways as tourism is a very competitive industry.

“Tourism is no longer about selling beaches and sand. Future tourism is all about facilitating people experience life, culture of people of the destinations besides picturesque locations. The Northeast where the tourists don’t go to experience five-star lifestyle, have ample scope to offer the tourist to experience ways of life of ethnic people of the pristine region,” Mr. Bezboruah said adding that

tourism is a journey of imagination and cited example of Disneyland in this regard.

All the speakers and stakeholders participating in the seminar underscored the need to promote home stay and involvement of locals in selling destinations in the region.

The chief organizer of the North East Festival, Mr. Shyamkanu Mahanta while setting the ball rolling for the seminar said the region had everything like the scenic beauty, ample scope for adventure and nature tourism, wildlife and other ecological assets, homely people, lush green environment. He said the militancy is no longer a threat in the region and it was time for all the stakeholders in tourism sector to explore futuristic models, devices and strategies to tap the unexplored potential.

(http://e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=education.Education_Announcements.Edn_Ann_2016.NCERT_can_immensely_help_promote_NE_India_2016-11-05.)

(Contd. from Page 15)

Repatriation of Reang Refugees

repatriated tribal family. Authority to allot land is not vested with the State, but with the village councils. “The repatriated refugee families also would have to wait for allocation of land for construction of houses and for farming in accordance with the guidelines of their respective village councils,” the minister said while addressing a meeting of ruling Congress party workers.

Meanwhile, the Tripura government has been asking the Union and Mizoram government to repatriate the refugees at the earliest as serious socio-economic and law and order problems have cropped up in the state. (IANS)

(<http://www.sentinelassam.com/northeast/story.php?sec=2&subsec=9&id=286589&dtP=2016-11-03&ppr=1>)

Youth Festival in Arunachal Pradesh

On 4th to 6th November, 2016, an Youth Festival sponsored by the Indigenous Faith Movement of Arunachal Pradesh, was organised at Tezu in Lohit District where Smti Yvette Ram Rani Rosser delivered an eloquent speech on indigenous traditions and ancestral way of life of the Arunachalis. Her speech, verbatim, is reproduced below.

I'm here to tell you, to beseech you, and to urgently warn you to hold on to your ancestral way of life. You have come here this weekend to celebrate the uniqueness and importance of your indigenous traditions. But in today's world there are terrible pressures being exerted on Native peoples.

The lure of globalization can be a big distraction; however some of our modern toys such as mobile phones are very handy to have, life-saving sometimes. Mobile phones will not lessen your respect for your elders or separate you from the cultural teachings they are passing down to you. Even blue jeans that make you look cool at school or on a motor scooter, are just a passing fad, a mere outward expression of fashion. You can honor, respect and practice your heritage even if you wear blue jeans to the market or a t-shirt with a picture of Bob Marley. Fashion and practical gadgets are quite superficial things, and deep personal beliefs and shared spiritual understandings cannot be diminished by such superficialities. However there are sharks of a different type circling native cultures striving to attack and

destroy them. Your cultures' treasure and sustainability; the sharks would quickly end that !

My words of warning come to you today at this Youth Festival in Arunachal Pradesh, whether you are Nishi, Mishmi, or Khampati, or Galo or a descendant of one of the dozens of historical groups of peoples indigenous to Arunachal. It is imperative that you guard your traditions from cultural predators who would snatch the meaning of your lives away and leave you standing lost in a world of ruin and sorrow. It is essential that you maintain your ancestral connections and make it your duty to ensure that languages and rituals and culture are supported and maintained from decade to decade through the centuries.

This is a warning not to let predators from Abrahamic religions prey on your youth, or your poor, or the less educated members of your traditional societies. Protect your ancient cultures from Christianity's predatory strategies that seek to absorb, destroy, and control the remaining practitioners of traditional spiritual faiths. Do not allow any narrowly constructed religious tradition to tell you that you and other non-Christians are going to hell....walk away laughing or argue, it is an easy argument to win !

Christianity likes to pretend to dress itself in the garb of the modern world, luring the unknowing with promises of wealth and knowledge. However, hundreds of years ago, when the Sages and the Rishis of India had long before calculated the distance

from the sun to the moon and could predict eclipses and other astronomical phenomenon, the early Christians still thought that the Sun revolved around the earth. Christianity is anti-scientific. They do not believe in evolution. If there really was evolution, then there would have been no Adam and Eve. And if there was no Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, the famous apple that has caused all humans to be born with the black mark of "Original Sin"... if there was no Eve who sinned in the Garden of Eden, there is no need for God to send his 'one and only son' to save us from the eternal fires of hell. Christianity makes no sense. It is sheer belief in the nonsensical!

And just think about it, what kind of God creates beings and then punishes them for seeking wisdom? The Bible and Quran tell us that their God is compassionate and loving but he prevents his creation from the tasting from the tree of knowledge. Why their kind of God wants to keep his creation in ignorance and then punishes all the future generations for the supposed transgression of hoping to increase their intelligence? And mere punishment is nothing compared to what the so-called compassionate Christian and Muslim Gods have planned for those who do not believe in their particular point of view. For all eternity the accused sinner will be boiled in oil and hot molten lead poured down their throats constantly forever. The Abrahamic gods give a human being one chance, only one lifetime, to accept their incredible lies or to suffer indescribable torture day in

and day out for tens of thousands of years. Where is that compassion ? That is the description of a cruel, heartless god.

Do not let your friends be lured by the lies brought by missionaries. Christianity is unscientific, unfair, and anti-democratic. The Dharmic traditions, of which your indigenous faiths are a vital part, have always been open to investigating and learning new ideas and if they are appropriate, and proved correct, they have no problem of incorporating them into their own lives. Christianity, on the other hand rejects any new ideas that might challenge its narrow interpretations and punishes those who ask questions. Ironically, just in the last few years the Catholic Church finally pardoned Galileo for his discovery that the earth was round proving that it was not flat as the church taught for over a thousand years.

The famous astronomer Dr. Carl Sagan wrote: "The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond to those of the modern scientific cosmology. "

I speak to you as someone who was raised Christian, I grew up loving little Jesus. I loved the fact that the Catholic nuns wore wedding rings. They were married to Jesus. That seemed so romantic to marry Jesus! My mother was a Roman Catholic and my father was a Southern Baptist. If you know anything about

Christianity you know that Catholics and Protestants fought each other for hundreds of years of bloody wars in Europe. There is as much animosity between Roman Catholics and Southern Baptists as there is between Sunni and Shia Muslims. You may have seen on the news what the murderous group in Iraq, who are Sunni do to the prisoners they capture who happen to be Shia. Murdering them by the hundreds in mass graves.

As a small child I did not know that my father's side of the family thought my mother's side of the family was going to hell. I thought we just all loved Jesus ! I did not know that the Catholics on my mother's side thought the same of the Baptists on my father's side. I discovered this when I was twelve years old and spent the summer at my grandparents, attending Vacation Bible School at the Baptist Church where, one day, they passed a cup around to raise money to save the "souls of the poor little Papist children". Even at that age, I knew that Papist was a derogatory term for Catholic. What I didn't know until that very moment was that Baptists, who are Christians, thought that Catholics, also Christians, were going to hell. I didn't raise my hand and tell my new Baptist friends that I was a Papist, nor did I contribute to their cause: the salvation of my soul.

Later that summer I returned to my home where I attended Catholic school. One night I had a vivid dream about a village of Pygmies who lived in tree houses in deepest and darkest Africa. One of the Pygmies was very kind and generous and loving person who exemplified the qualities of Christ,

such as nursing fallen birds to health, taking care of the sick, helping the poor. At the next Catechism class, I described the Pygmies in my dream to Sister Philomena and asked her, "When my Christ-like Pygmy dies would he go to heaven or hell?" Sister asked me, "Is he a Christian?" I explained that he lived in a tree house in the middle of Africa with no roads and had never seen a Bible, but that he was very Christ-like in his life. However, Sister Philomena said that there are a lot of ways to get a Bible besides roads, and because my Pygmy was not Christian he could not go to heaven. When she said that I burst out crying. Feeling badly for hurting a child's feelings, the Sister assured me that when Jesus returns to earth at the end of time, all the souls caught in Purgatory would be freed to go to heaven with the second coming. I worried about that Pygmy for years.

Luckily, I had a very philosophical and wise mother and I told her about my very negative and personal problems with Christianity, essentially, that everyone I loved and respected seemed to be doomed to hell because they practiced a slightly different form of Christianity. I couldn't help but think that brilliant heroic beings like Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Einstein must be in hell since they were not Christian. My very open-minded and philosophical mother explained to me the concept of agnosticism, "when you believe that maybe there is a God or maybe not but there's no way for us humans to know for sure." She gave me permission to question authority.

Seven years later, in May of

1970, when I graduated from class 12,, I went to Europe to spend the summer with my mother's family in Belgium. I travelled around arriving in Afghanistan by September which was a peaceful, pleasant place not tortured by the Taliban as it is now. Then circumstances and my good karma took me to India by December where I stayed for four years studying meditation and learning about the Dharma. My ontological dilemmas were cleared and life and death made more sense. I never converted to the Dharma tradition, I just realized that it explained the meaning of life more clearly than the Christian tradition was able to do. I realized that I had always been at one with the Indic philosophical traditions. I didn't have to convert and I had already let go of the chains of Abraham.

For me personally and spiritually, 10th Mandala of the Rig Veda is one of the reasons I am a Hindu. In the ancient book, the Rg

Veda, the seminal original source of Hindu knowledge and beliefs, it tells the adherents, the seekers of wisdom who are listening to the poems sung by the sages, that in the end to truly know they must even question the highest authority, and seek for themselves. (Tat Tvam Asi)

The 10th Mandala of the Rig Veda concludes with the Hymn of Creation (hymn 129). After a poetic discussion of "existence and non-existence" and metaphysically lyrical descriptions of the origins of the universe in Vedic Sanskrit, this hymn known as Nasadiya Sukta (ná ásat "not the non-existent") ends with an ironic query in the seventh verse that gives permission to the practitioner to question even God, the ultimate authority. The seventh verse of The Hymn of Creation:

Who really knows what happened? Who can describe it? How were things produced?

Where was creation born? When the universe was created, the one became many.

Who knows how this occurred? Did creation happen at God's command, or did it happen without His command.

He looks down upon the creation from the highest heaven. Only He knows the answer – or perhaps He does not know.

Nasadiya Sukta (after ná ásat "not the non-existent") is the 129th hymn of the 10th Mandala of the Rigveda, it concludes with the suggestion that to understand ultimate reality, the seeker should question even God.

One of my theories is that we are all born in to Sanatana Dharma and then after birth, depending on where we are born, we get converted into another religion such as Christianity or Islam. Then when we die, we all automatically revert to Sanatana Dharma again.

(Contd. from Page 13)

China-Pakistan corridor – a threat to India

enhance manifold in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which would be detrimental for India.

India needs to chalk out a long-term rational policy concerning CPEC – nonetheless, it will not be easy as the Indian public is very emotional about its relations with Pakistan and China.

As the project is against the interests of the country, India must oppose it but it should not lead to open confrontation. Efforts can be made to

discourage China from going ahead with this ambitious project, but it will not be an easy task.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 summit (September 4-5, 2016 at Hangzhou in China), raised the CPEC issue.

Besides its all-weather friendship with China, Pakistan is also inculcating close relations with Russia. The closeness between Russia and China is

also increasing. Hence, the possibility of a China-Pakistan-Russia axis cannot be ruled out and Indian policy makers must keep this aspect in mind.

Besides, India's relationship with the United States is also growing at a fast pace and Russia may like to counter this by inculcating closeness with China and Pakistan.

(http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/china-pakistan-corridor-is-against-india-s-strategic-interests-comment-special-to-ians-116110100162_1.html, November 1, 2016)

Speech of Kristina Shakti in Youth Festival at Tezu

I was born a white American woman toward the end of the 20th Century, but I have a unique perspective of being raised Hindu, often visiting my Guru-Ji Neem Karoli Baba's only Western ashram in Taos, New Mexico, USA. I grew up in this same place.

Mexico, is also the home of the longest continually inhabited dwelling in all of North America. The Taos Pueblo people the Tiwa people have lived there on that land for thousands of years. When the Spanish came in the 16th century, they brought the cross and they brought the sword. The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 was the single most successful act of resistance by Native Americans against a European invader. The land is saturated with the blood of centuries of conquest, forced conversion and rebellion.

This story is the same all over the world. Indigenous peoples' rights, resources and cultural heritage have consistently been bulldozed in the name of the Christian God and greed. The people indigenous to the Americas were even in just the recent past being forced into Christian schools, given Christian names and told not to speak their native languages or practice their traditional spiritual customs. Cutting off access to their native traditions and languages, cutting them off from their roots, it cut out a piece of their identities, and it

cut out a piece of their hearts. These things are much more difficult to find once they are lost. Just ask my ancestors.

I stand here today and say this with full knowledge of the racist, xenophobic, misogynistic genocide that indigenous peoples worldwide have endured at the hands of my European ancestors. I also acknowledge the benefits and privileges that I get having had the lucky chance of having been born a white woman in America at the later end of the 20th century.

St. Augustine himself despised women and said that he could see no purpose for a woman except to bear children. St Augustine's brand of Christianity cast out the goddess, the Mother, the Feminine aspect of the divine and turned her into a whore, a prostitute. Augustine of Hippo and the other councilmen at the synod in Carthage in the year 418 CE placed the blame for everything that is wrong in the world, all the imperfection of human nature on the woman with the concept of Original Sin.

My ancestors were indigenous to Northwestern Europe and the British Isles. Many centuries ago, long before the Roman Empire conquered most of Europe and Britain, my ancestors had a spiritual tradition that would today be called Celtic Paganism. In this spiritual tradition both the Male and the Female, the Father and the Mother, were honored. It was a tradition that understood that Nature is sacred, the Earth is our mother and that we humans have the potential for true magic (not this hocus-pocus baloney, but real and rue magic) because the divine is within each of us, as it is

in all things.

Precious very little is known about this spiritual tradition because when the Romans came and conquered they swept my ancestors' gods and goddesses up into their own Roman Pantheon. By the time the Romans took up the Cross, the pagan deities of the Gauls had already long been assimilated and become Roman gods. My ancestors had already lost many of the ties keeping them linked to their spiritual roots. They had become "Romanized." Still, there

were other tribes, like the Vikings in Scandinavia, who held onto their ancient customs and religious traditions for centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire before they too submitted to the Cross and became Christians, disconnected from

their own ancient heritage. You see, with the Cross comes the destruction of the roots binding indigenous communities together and causing a separation from the Divine. St. Augustine of Hippo is known as the Doctor of the Church. Many of his writings were the basis of the doctrines of not only the Roman Catholic Church, but St. Augustine was also revered by Protestants during and after the Reformation. St. Augustine's brand of Christianity placed the burden of Original Sin squarely onto the shoulders of the Woman. It is a brand of Christianity that hates anything female. St. Augustine himself

despised women and said that he could see no purpose for a woman except to bear children. St Augustine's brand of Christianity cast out the goddess, the Mother, the Feminine aspect of the divine and turned her into a whore, a prostitute. Augustine of Hippo and the other councilmen at the synod in Carthage in the year 418 CE placed the blame for everything that is wrong in the world, all the imperfection of human nature on the woman with the concept of Original Sin.

As far as I am concerned, we come from both male and female— **we, each of us, contain within us aspects of masculine and feminine divinity ! We, each of us, have both Male and Female roots.** This placement of all that is unholy or wrong with mankind into the lap of the Woman, this cutting out the feminine from the divine, cutting out the Devi-Ma and banishing her, is like cutting off one of your legs and expecting to be able to run a marathon. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost leave no place for the Mother, Daughter or the Divine

St. Augustine's brand of Christianity spread with the Catholic Church throughout Europe like wildfire during the end of the Roman Empire and into the Middle Ages, otherwise known as the Dark Ages, a time in Europe when ignorance, fear, misogyny and violence ruled the land and the people cowered to their angry, jealous God. So, I want to go back to this Christian God. Jesus, whom I do believe, was a real person who lived about 2000 years ago, or so. Jesus, the man, the prophet and the rebel, did not have such problems with women

as Augustine from Hippo did. Jesus preached of love and harmony, meekness and generosity. He kicked the money lenders out of the temple and spoke against throwing stones at glass houses! Everything he stood for and spoke of, sounded more like a holy guru or a bodhisattva or a wise teacher, than most Christians sound today or even Christians from just a couple of centuries after Jesus lived.

The men who came together for the Council of Carthage including Augustine, altered the message of Jesus beyond recognition. Jesus taught to love one another and that greed is the worst of sins. But, the brand of Christianity born of the Council of Carthage and St. Augustine of Hippo that taught that women bear the burden of Original Sin, immediately went on to become the most power hungry and greedy church of hypocrites the world has known.

I had two Catholic grandmothers who were both loving and kind. I think that most Christians are good people. I believe that most Christians do what they do, because they think they are helping. Some denominations are crazier than others, but in the end, they think that spreading the word of their God is how they can help! They want to save people's souls from eternal damnation. They are not evil as much as they are misguided.

It is my belief that every human being is inherently good if you give them the opportunity be so. It is only through violence, abuse, trauma and ignorance, that we get

stuck in darkness. But, I believe that if you give anyone, no matter their religion, ethnicity or class, a chance to do good in the world for someone else, only those who are really sick with mental illness or are traumatized and therefore fearful and greedy, only those people will disappoint you. Only those who don't know any better will beat you and only those who are too scared about the difficulties of life will not help you in your time of need. The people who are abused often become the abusers and the cycle of violence and ignorance continues. So, no, I do not believe that Christians are inherently bad people. I do, however, have a problem with their God: The God of Abraham.

The story of Abraham is featured in the holy texts of all the three Abrahamic religions, playing a prominent role as an example of faith in Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The story is that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, and Abraham was going to do it too. He brought the knife up to Isaac's throat, but then, at the last minute, an Angel of the Lord came to stop the whole thing and provided a ram for the sacrifice, instead "Oh no, never mind ! That was just to test your faith." Many people consider the story of Abraham and his son Isaac to be a "beautiful" illustration of "faith before the fact" and obedience to God's will, but I think that any God who points at a human child and says "kill that for me" is a psychopath with a low self-esteem and an identity complex. We are told that this God is an angry God. This God requires you to fear him or that you should fear the fire and

brimstone of Hell. This God is a violent God. This God is a jealous God. Why would God need to be jealous in the first place? This angry, violent, jealous God has about as much love and compassion as a raging alpha male chimpanzee.

This is the patriarchal God that spread throughout Europe and murdered the Gods and Goddesses of my ancestors. It disconnected them from their personal relationship to the divine. It disconnected their hearts from the heart of the earth. Perhaps, that is how they could so easily try to claim dominion over the Earth and over other people who were different from them, systematically decimating indigenous cultures around the globe, rather than remembering that they are one with Mother Earth and all life on this planet. As I stand here today, the story of rights, resources, and the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples being bulldozed is happening still — around the globe. The methods may be different, but the end result is the same: Blood and death (either physical death or spiritual death, but does that difference really matter?) Blood and death, in the name of Greed and God. Christian missionaries are sent all over the world in a multi-billion dollar industry to convert the “pagan heathens,” using manipulation and fear-mongering to meet their ends. Greed and the lack of basic respect for different peoples’ cultural heritage is at it again.

Indigenous people have long been at the forefront of the battle to save the environment, to save this planet and have often been referred to as the “first

environmentalists.” Right now, and for the past several months, there has been a protest happening in the United States. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe in North Dakota has been joined by over 280 tribes from around the world — that’s more than ever before coming together and some of these tribes are historically enemies. But, over 280 tribes of indigenous peoples have come together in protest of a pipeline that would bring crude oil from Canada across the United States. The construction of this pipeline would cause the destruction of some of the tribe’s sacred sites and burial grounds, as well as, going through their river and water supply. These peaceful praying protesters are being brutally put down by militarized riot police wielding rubber bullets, sound cannons and attack dogs. Kelcy L. Warren, the CEO of Energy Transfer Partners, the company building the pipeline, said that “America’s freedom [in other words, the profits of the big oil companies] won’t be stopped by a bunch of dirty natives with their phony spirituality and dumbass ecological concerns.” This man managed to fit racism, unconcern for the environment, and a manipulative view of “America’s Freedom” all into one sentence. I speak to you about America, because that is where I’m from and that is what I know. But, I also know that India is the world’s biggest democracy and the Indian dream is similar to the American dream in that we all long for freedom to live our lives and provide for our families as best we can. This type of person, this CEO, is the same kind of disrespectful and hypocritical

person who would work within a multi-billion dollar evangelical industry to manipulate you with fear and shame, to convert you to Christianity, and then turn around and spit on your mother and condemn her to Hell for being a non-believer. It comes down to a difference in values. This Kelcy L. Warren, this CEO, his religion is money and power. This is the same religion that the Christian Church worshipped for so many centuries. This: money, power and subjugation is the true religion of the Christian God. But, there are people all over the world who have a different set of values. There are people all over the globe, of all nationalities and ethnicities, who believe that we are stronger together, that our differences can unite us, that true beauty lies in each of us being our authentic selves, that true self that is one with everything, and that love and compassion always overcomes fear and hate. Just as the excited flurry and rush of youth is needed to progress into the future, it is important to remember that true wisdom lies in the ways of the elders. I urge you to foster a deep understanding of your roots, to keep your oral traditions alive, to speak your native languages to your children, to remember your histories, and research traditional and sustainable ways of living, all the while embracing the new, modern technological age in which we are living. It is by remembering your roots and thrusting them deep into your hearts that you will be able to stay grounded in the sometimes blustering and crazy wind of the future.

Cherry Blossom Festival

On November 14, 2016, Meghalaya became the first state in India to start Cherry Blossom Festival, which is widely celebrated in Japan.

The four-day festival provides opportunities to showcase the unique beauty of pink and white cherry blossoms as well as Meghalaya's traditional arts, culture and cuisine to the naturalists and tourists.

Chief Minister Mukul Sangma inaugurated India's first Cherry Blossom Festival in this state capital of Meghalaya, where cherry blossoms are in full bloom in several parts of the city and the suburbs. He said that "This nature's gift of cherry blossoms to Meghalaya must be appreciated and is one of several elements that makes Meghalaya an attractive destination for tourists looking for a green destination and a short

break away from the hustle and bustle of polluted cities." He also appreciated the partnership with Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD) for joint conceptualisation and implementation of this humble yet successful start in putting Meghalaya onto the global tourist map.

The IBSD, a national institute of the Centre's Department of Biotechnology, said the festival would not only bring socio-economic development in the region, but also promote peace, prosperity and sustainable development, which are the United Nation's sustainable development goals. IBSD Director Mr. Dinabandhu Sahoo, who conceptualised the Cherry Blossom Festival in India, said the event would set the stage for 2017, which has been declared by the

UN as International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. "This festival would create a number of opportunities for the people of Meghalaya," he said, emphasising that collaborations should be developed with Japan so that more international tourists can visit the north-eastern states.

The Cherry Blossom Festival, popularly known as Sakura Festival in Japan, is held in April every year. Australia, Korea, China, the US and some other countries celebrate the festival which helps in creating a positive impact on the local economy.

The Washington DC Cherry Blossom Festival alone generates about \$126 million from tourists every year from across the world, Sahoo said.

(http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-s-first-cherry-blossom-festival-starts-in-meghalaya-116111401382_1.html)

Wangala Festival

Wangala Festival is also known as the "100 Drum Wangala Festival". It is a winter harvest festival that is celebrated by Garos in the honor of Misi Saljong (The Great Giver). Wangala Festival marks the beginning of winter and end of labour in fields, thus beckoning a period of relaxation and merry making. It is a weeklong festival celebrated in the second week of November every year. Music and dances are significant parts of the Wangala celebrations. The main attraction of the festival is the music and orchestra of drums, gongs and flutes, and an ancient traditional flute made of buffalo horn. The village chief, also known as the Nokma, performs a ritual a day before the festival. In this ritual, freshly brewed rice-beer, cooked rice, and vegetables are offered to the Misi Salong as thanksgiving for a rich harvest season. People of all age dress in colorful costumes with feathered headgears and dance to the tune of music played on long oval-shaped drums. (<https://www.tourmyindia.com/blog/top-festivals-north-east-india-november-december/> Jul 20, 2016)

Sangai Festival

Sangai festival is an annual cultural festival of Manipur organised by Manipur Tourism Department between November 21 to 30 every year. The festival was originally named as 'Tourism Festival'. However post 2010 this has been renamed as the Sangai Festival to stage the uniqueness of the shy and gentle brow-antlered deer popularly known as the Sangai (deer), which is also the state animal of Manipur. The festival is celebrated to promote Manipur as a world class tourism destination, thus during the fest, the best of Manipuri art and culture, handloom, handicrafts, fine arts, indigenous sports, cuisines, eco and adventure sports as well as the scenic natural beauty of the land is on a grand display.

(<https://www.tourmyindia.com/blog/top-festivals-north-east-india-november-december/>)

Dima Hasao Observes Chavang Kut

The people, belonging to the Kuki community celebrated the '28th CHAVANG KUT' (Autumn Festival of Kukis) with traditional fervour and gaiety on Tuesday, the 1st November, 2016 in all most all the villages inhabited by the Kuki people in Dima Hasao district.

At Haflong also, the 28th Chavang Kut was celebrated with daylong programme at Songpijang Play ground under the aegis of Songpijang Youth Club & VDP. The Day's programmes started with the unfurling of Kut's flag by the Chief Guest Mr. Henkam Haolai, Secretary to the Govt of Assam. This was followed by the felicitation of Chief Guest, Guests of Honour etc along with journalists by the President, SYC.

In their speeches Chief Guest Mr. Henkam Haolai and Guest of honour Ms Ruth Lamchin DOUNGEL LENTHANG appreciated the organisers for their efforts to preserve tradition and culture at a time when modernization has adversely influenced the tradition and culture.

The spectacular performances

of traditional dances by several groups from Haflong were the central attraction of festival. Traditional games and sports were also organized during midday where numbers of youths took part. In the afternoon, traditional couple show and Fancy dress competition were held along with musical performances which kept the audience mesmerized till late night.

The Chavang Kut is the major festival of the CHIN-KUKI community all over the world. This festival is celebrated specially in Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Chin state in Myanmar.

This festival is celebrated after most of the harvesting is over. The villagers show their gratitude to the Lord, who grants them strength and long life and all the good things to them. They sing and dance praising the Lord. In this festival, folk songs are sung with traditional dances. During the observance of the festival people try to show their expertise in playing Goshem, Selki, Phit, Dahpi, the traditional musical instruments. With the

urbanization, they also include fashion show competition like Mr. and Miss Kut, side by side with the traditional items. Apart from this, they also organize traditional games and sports. Though the modernization has impacted on traditional customs in some urban areas, but in villages, these traditional things are still in practice with some modification.

During the festival traditional dances like SAGOL PHEIKHAI, SELPANG LAM, LOMLAM, JANCHA LAM, VACOL LAM, PHEIPHIT LAM, SALU LAM, GAL LAM, SUHTA LAM, MOLKANG LAM, (stick dance) KHUL LAM were performed accompanying the tunes of musical instruments like – Gosem, Sumkon, Pheiphit, khong, Dahpi, Dahbu, selki, lhemlhei, theile etc. Though the Chavang Kut is considered to be the most prominent festival, other festivals like Chapphou Kut, Mim kut and Iholhum kut are also observed with similar enthusiasm and gaiety..

(<http://eastern-today.com/entries/blog/28th-chavang-kut-celebrated-in-dima-hasao.>)

Nongkrem Dance Festival

The Nongkrem dance festival is celebrated during Autumn season in Meghalaya. It is five day long religious festival of the Khasis and takes place in Smit, the cultural centre of the Khasi Hills. Also known as Ka Pemplang Nongrem Dance, it is performed to appease the Goddess Ka Blei Synshar for a rich harvest and prosperity of the people. During the festival, the high priest performs the Pemplang ceremony and offers oblation to a Lei Shyllong; the god of Shyllong peak by sacrificing a cock. Then offerings are made to the ancestors of the ruling clan to the deity of Shillong peak. In the dance performance, the unmarried girls participate wearing exotic costumes. The men's dancing is more vigorous and energetic. They hold a sword in their right hand and usually a white Yak hair whisk in their left hand while they perform on the changing beats of drums and of the tangmuri (pipes)

(<https://www.tourmyindia.com/blog/top-festivals-north-east-india-november-december,13-14-Nov-2016>)

TRADITIONAL TALES

The Heart of Acharya Ramanuja

ACHARYA RAMANUJA used to bathe in the Kaveri River every morning. He used to go to the river taking the support of his main disciple Dasharathi. 'While returning, he used to take the support of Dhanurdasa. Since Dhanurdasa was of a low caste, Acharya Ramanuja's brahmana disciples were offended by this act and openly criticised it. Acharya Ramanuja decided to tell every one of the divine qualities of Dhanurdasa and his wife Heramba. One night, when everyone was asleep, Acharya Ramanuja tore a piece of cloth, the size of a loincloth, from each of his brahmana disciples' clothes that were put up for drying.

The next morning, the disciples saw their torn clothes, became furious, and started quarrelling with one another, even calling names. Finally, Acharya Ramanuja had to intervene. That night he told his disciples: 'Today, Dhanurdasa will come here and talk with me for a long time. You would have to go to his house at that time. His wife would be sleeping. You would have to steal all her ornaments and bring them to me. Let us see what Dhanurdasa and his wife do upon this loss.'

Accordingly, the disciples went to Dhanurdasa's house that night. Heramba was sleeping and had kept the door open, expecting her husband. The disciples entered the house and stole her ornaments. Heramba could surmise what was happening. She did not move, lest the brahmanas run away. After the disciples had removed her ornaments from one side, she turned over, as if naturally doing so in sleep, to help them remove the ornaments from the other side. However, the disciples were afraid that she had woken up, and fled

with the ornaments that they had already removed.

They went to Acharya Ramanuja and secretly told him everything. Acharya Ramanuja told Dhanurdasa: 'O' child! It has become dark. Please go to your house: Dhanurdasa said: 'As you wish, my lord!'. He then prostrated before Acharya Ramanuja and left for his house. Then, Acharya Ramanuja told his other disciples: 'Now, all of you secretly follow Dhanurdasa, see what he and his wife do, and let me know: The disciples did accordingly.

On reaching his house and seeing his wife wearing ornaments only on one side, Dhanurdasa asked what had happened. Heramba said: 'My beloved! What shall I say? Those brahmanas should have been in truly straitened circumstances. That is why they have turned into thieves. At that time, I was repeating God's name, expecting your arrival. Thinking that I was asleep, those brahmanas removed ornaments from one side of my body. I turned to the other side to facilitate their removing ornaments on the other side. However, my bad luck, they fled.'

Hearing this Dhanurdasa felt sorry and said: 'Alas! Your turning to the other side was a big mistake. The idea of "I" has not left you yet. You probably thought: "These are my ornaments. I am giving them to these brahmanas" That is why you missed a golden opportunity to get rid of these ornaments that are a great cause of bondage. Had you surrendered yourself to Lord Ranganatha and had not moved, they would have removed all the ornaments, thinking you to be fast asleep. This incident shows that we have not

yet given up our egos: Dhanurdasa chided his wife thus.

Realising her mistake, Heramba held the feet of her husband with tearful eyes and said: 'My lord! Kindly forgive me graciously and bless me that ideas of "I" and "mine" leave me.' The brahmanas were watching all this. They saw that this couple were leading a life centred in God, devoid of egotism and desire. Then, they returned to the ashrama, told Acharya Ramanuja everything, and went to bed.

The next day, when all the brahmanas assembled before Acharya Ramanuja for their usual lessons, he said: 'All of you have studied the scriptures thoroughly. But all of you have the pride of being a brahmana, contradicting all principles. You ought to show who a brahmana is by your actions. Yesterday morning, how furious were all of you, just because your clothes were torn a bit! And how did Dhanurdasa and his wife act on losing their precious ornaments! Whose behaviour was better, yours or theirs? Who can be appropriately called a devotee or a brahmana?' Acharya Ramanuja posed this question to his brahmana disciples at which, all of them hung their heads in shame.

Acharya Ramanuja told them further: 'One does not become a brahmana by birth alone. Only thoughts and actions determine whether one is high or low. At least from now on, try to live with good qualities, giving up the ego of being brahmanas. There is no greater enemy for a devotee than caste distinction born out of egotism. Accept as a friend anyone who can save you from following an evil path.

(Prabuddha Bharata October -2016)



SANT ESHWAR AWARD

॥ अस्मिन् सेवाम् ॥

संत ईश्वर सम्मान

14 नवम्बर, 2016

सिविक सेन्टर, नई दिल्ली

संत ईश्वर सेवा सम्मान

हेरिटेज फाउंडेशन
गुवाहाटी, आसाम

असम के जनजाति बहुल क्षेत्रों की प्राचीन ऐतिहासिक परम्परा और इतिहास का संरक्षण करते हुए उत्तर पूर्वी अंचलों में जिला प्रकार से श्री पी. सूर्यनारायण और इनके सहयोगियों ने प्रयास किया है, यह निश्चित रूप से प्रशंसनीय है। हेरिटेज फाउंडेशन राष्ट्रीय एकता, जनजाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति वर्ग के सर्वांगीण विकास के लिए सुदीर्घ समय से कार्य कर रही है। जनजाति, परम्पराओं और उनके सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों के प्रति जन-जागरण करते हुए महान हिन्दु सभ्यता से उसके सह-सम्बन्धों का स्मरण कराना हेरिटेज फाउंडेशन का मुख्य कार्य है। संस्थान ने लागू, मिजोरम, मेघालय जैसे सीमावर्ती प्रदेशों में अन्य धर्मियों की बहुलता के बीच हिन्दु धर्म और समाज परम्पराओं का जिला प्रकार से संरक्षण किया है, यह अत्यंत प्रशंसनीय है।

देश के सर्वोददेशील उत्तर पूर्वी भाग में जिला प्रकार से देशप्रेम की बात करके विद्रोही वर्ग और अलगवादीवादियों की चुनौतियों को समुचित उत्तर देने हुए संस्था ने कार्य किया है, उसकी प्रशंसा करते हुए संत ईश्वर फाउंडेशन की ओर से संस्था को सेवा सम्मान से सम्मानित किया जा रहा है।

हमारी कामना है कि हेरिटेज फाउंडेशन इसी प्रकार साहसिक कार्य करते हुए समाज धर्म की धारा को फहराने में समर्थ रहे।

अभिनन्दनकर्त्ता

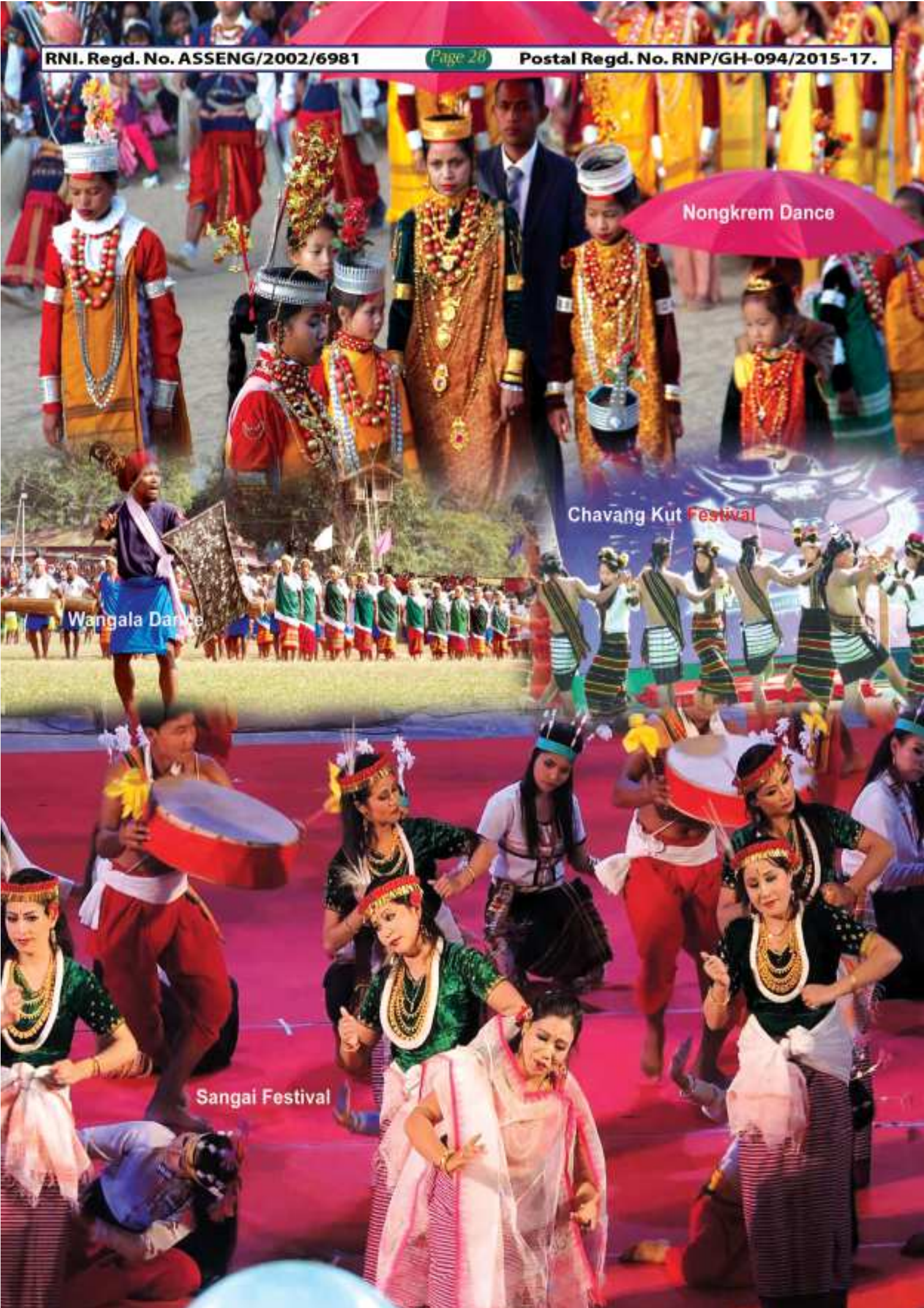
गुणवन्त सिंह कोठारी

गुणवन्त सिंह कोठारी (संयोजक)

कपिल खन्ना

कपिल खन्ना (अध्यक्ष)

संत ईश्वर सम्मान समिति



Nongkrem Dance

Chavang Kut Festival

Wangala Dance

Sangai Festival