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**PPP**

The title of the editorial consists of three P's taken from the initial letters of PEOPLE, PARTY, and PARLIAMENT. We wish to find how intimately and how constitutionally the concepts behind the three P's nay, three words are related. In a democratic country like ours first comes PEOPLE. People constitute different Parties with different ideologies but with the single aim of bringing the country prosperous and powerful in so many different ways. To fulfill the aim there is the PARLIAMENT where from emanates the power required for.

A party is a ladder to arrive at the decision making premises i.e. Parliament. Once in parliament a person's view should be invariably National. But in more cases and more often than not, the parliament's personalities prefer party politics above the National interest. A present instant is the land requisition Act 2015 (precise name is Right to Fair compensation and Transparency in land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR) Bill 2015). It is not a new one. An act known by "Central Land Acquisition Act 1894" was introduced by the then British Government. To remove the British legacy as well as to equip with present day requirement and situation that was replaced by previous UPA government in 2013. So the present bill is not a new avatar. The British phrase "Public Purpose" is replaced by more distinctive and unambiguous terms for acquiring land from farmers. Land will be acquisitioned for purposes of industries for national security, defence, rural infrastructure including electrification, social infrastructures including the PPP (Public Private Partnership) projects etc. While acquiring a plot of land the following points are taken into account (i) consent of 80% of the affected farmers for acquisition of land for private projects, and of 70% of them in case of the PP projects, (ii) non-implementing of the proposed project within five years may lead to reoccupation of the land by the original farmer (owner). Also for compensation for village land four times of the present market value and twice in case of town land plus resettlement and employment to effected families, are provided.

So far so good. Now the present form of the bill is to be discussed threadbare to make it foolproof. The prime minister has hinted that alteration, addition to it is welcome so long as these are considered above party constraints and biased attitude of opposing on opposition's sake.

In other democratic countries we see all parliamentarians come together on national issue. Why not or delayed that temperament in a democracy in India ie Bharat of more than sixty years of standing. Let a outstanding result of come out from our PPP Parlour.

Editor

## The Woman's Retreat

What is the function of laws against domestic violence?

- Bhaswati Chakravorty

It is not as if people do not know the law. Sometime in July last year, the landlady of a two-room tenement glanced across the yard to see the man of the house dragging his wife by the hair from the kitchen to the outer room, while continuously clubbing her back - from which her blouse now hung in tatters - with the wooden stand of a *bonti*. He was drunk in the middle of the morning and ceaseless in his abuse. The bleeding woman was desperately trying not to make a sound. The landlady immediately shouted for the neighbours and called the police.

In the insufficiently urbanized stretches along the eastern fringes of the city, neighbours are almost as important as in a village. They were sympathetic to the woman. Attached to a hiring centre, she worked as an attendant for homebound patients, and I came to know her a couple of months after this incident when I was confined to the bed. Her work - and an unending cycle of loans and repayment - accounted for the schooling of her three daughters, their clothes and food, the house-rent, electricity and whatever else was needed in the house.

The man, who earned quite a bit as workman and sub-contractor, did not contribute anything to the family; earlier, he would put in a hundred rupees a month, making it clear, with blows and abuses, that he was paying for his food. He spent his money on drink, on serial affairs -

occasionally vanishing with a woman for months - and hid the rest of his money. Usually he came home to eat and to punch his wife. She now has swellings on her head where he has hit her repeatedly. He beat the girls too, till they grew up and either turned on him or escaped.

There is nothing unusual in the scene. We have no count of women who live this kind of life or similar ones. Often, as in this case, they have their neighbours' support, for they fit notions of 'goodness': this woman was seen to be honest, struggling, devoted to her daughters and trying to educate them, faithful to her husband, patient and meek. In this story, the police were helpful too. Although the man managed to run away and hide with his aunt in a nearby village, the police, through a couple of men in the station who knew him, forced him to come back.

The State's machinery for the punishment of domestic violence had worked smoothly at each step, from the landlady and neighbours through the police to the moment the law would be applied. The semi-rural society that surrounded the woman was not, of course, a formal arm of the State, but it replicated collectively the ideals of order, safety, gender, duty and morality that the State would find convenient. Now the law would take over. The police assured the battered wife that they would teach the man a lesson. They could hold him up to three months.

The woman reacted with terror. What would happen after three months, if that? Could the police save her from him then? They could, but she would have to let them know. But only she, not her daughters, let alone the police, knew what he was capable of. The memory of excruciating pain in every part of her body, of repeated blows with unceasing abuse, the unreasoning fear of more hurt accompanied by equally unreasoning shame - all these were hers alone. He would be more enraged when freed. She did not want the law 'to take its course'.

The fear of the justice that the State was willing to offer her sprang from her rejection of the accepted notion of correctability. Violence cannot be cured by more violence, whatever official guise it comes in. But if the woman knew this, as do thousands of other women like her, certainly the State, the true specialist in violence, knows it too. What is the function, then, of the laws against domestic violence?

There was another angle to the woman's retreat. Her neighbours, who had acted as her protectors, had wished to ensure that her husband got a slap on the wrist. Had the man been locked up, and the case gone to trial, the situation would have changed subtly, gradually bringing out the woman's agency. When, instead of protecting his wife, a husband is seen to hurt her, the good folk next door take up the task of protection. They 'stand in' for the husband, exercising the mastery that

comes with protection. They are not just saving the woman, they are also saving the marriage; they are imposing control. For her, they are 'society'. It is not expected that the woman would wrest this control from them, and she, too, knows that their goodwill, which she thinks she needs, depends on her continued 'goodness'.

Their hands tied, the police asked her to get the neighbours to talk to him - conduct a *shalishi*, in other words, that peculiar phenomenon in which the State comes to the doorstep in plain clothes - and to report to the station about his behaviour after three months. She had to go rushing back to them with a fresh complaint before three months were over, while she was working for me. But once again, she stopped them from taking action.

What I am looking at is a tiny segment of time in one woman's life among thousands of similar ones. The women I am referring to can, most of them, drop their violent husbands and set up house on their own. If they pay for their children's schooling as well as house rent, electricity and so on, what is to stop them?

Much of the terror of having an enraged husband return from a lock-up springs from the fact that the woman keeps living in the same house. True, it is her legal right; a violent husband cannot be allowed to drive her away. But rights are less palpable than daily battering. Yet the woman, although capable of living on her own, often holds on to this other right unknowingly and stays on. She fears that a woman on her own with children, maybe with growing daughters, is unsafe in any locality - if she gets a place

for rent at all. Can society or the law prove that such a perception is ill-founded? On the contrary, this perception is reinforced by social attitudes towards - and unashamed exploitation of - an underprivileged working woman bringing up her family alone. The fear that a husband addicted to violence will vengefully seek out the relocated family is actually less keen than this other fear. It is better to have the man come home drunk and uncontrollable than have no man at all.

This, of course, is not the whole picture. It is heartening to know that society is changing in spite of fears, attitudes and resistances, that the tireless efforts of activists are bearing fruit. Yet violence in the home is still widespread. (I am not bringing in rape outside the family or the intricate relationship of violence with the ordering and self-expression of a society.) Just looking at violent husbands, we need to ask, could I go to the law so that my husband is cured of his violence, maybe bringing about a penalty after trial, and then live happily ever after with a 'corrected' husband after his release from a correctional home? To go back to the earlier question, what is the function of laws against domestic violence?

For many women who survive their spouses' reckless battering from day to day, following the law to the culmination of its procedures would mean losing the marriage, the State-sponsored shelter without which she is virtually banished with her children into a vast grey hinterland of frightening possibilities. Activists and organizations may help her, of course, but we need to look at

those without access to either. The law against domestic violence is double-edged in effect. Can the State, assuming its good faith, achieve anything here more than a slap on the wrist of the unrepentant offender?

Marriage is sustained by laws, but a supposedly affective relationship between two individuals at its core is expected to take the sting out of its economic, legal, social, and generally quietly coercive aspects. Violence in the home is peculiarly intimate; it is a terrifyingly personal act. It shows up the irreconcilability of law and personal relationships, and, paradoxically, becomes more intractable when protected by the institutional armour of marriage. A habitually violent spouse exposes the carefully arranged contradictions on which society balances itself. The informal and formal protective arms that the State extended to the woman who looked after me also imprisoned her.

To confront the elephant in the room: how can we stop sexual and domestic violence? Can we? Is it that the State has failed in its duty of education, hence it is now failing to protect its most treasured first unit, marriage? But are violence and education mutually exclusive? And what about violence itself? Where does it come from?

This reflection is not on violence, but on violent husbands. To stop them, perhaps we have to address the sources of violence in ways that will help make the implementation of laws against domestic violence less ambiguous, and protection less imprisoning.

(The Telegraph - 10.02.2015)

## Heritage Building

Dr. R.D.Choudhury

The demolition of the historic building of Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti (KAS), Guwahati has indeed given a blow to the researchers of history, archaeology and culture. The KAS (Assam Research Society) was set up at Kamakhya on 21st April, 1912, subsequently, an Assam type building was constructed in the plot of land between the GNB Road and the Railway Colony. The purpose of this voluntary research society was to carry out research in the field of history, art, archeology and culture of the undivided state of Assam nay, North-East India. Late Ananda Chandra Agarwala lamented by writing an article and also through his presidential address delivered in a session that there was no museum to preserve the historical, archaeological and cultural objects in the State. The people of Assam had no vision for a museum to preserve our heritage. So, he highlighted the need to set up a museum in the state and Anusandhan Samiti should do this job and start a museum.

The KAS started the move to set up a museum in Guwahati. Pressure was mounted on the state government to start a museum. The government did not say 'no' but it said it would take some time. So, the members of the KAS took initiative themselves for the job. They started collecting various cultural, historical and archaeological objects from different corners of the State.

Late Sarbeswar Sarma Katak, the assistant secretary was in the charge of the collection of the objects. He and other members collected the objects from forests, archeological sites, temple sites, residences of villagers etc. The objects so collected were brought to the building of the KAS. The western most room of the Assam type house was selected to keep the objects systematically. Accordingly the walls were strengthened and improvement was done to the building. Late SK Barkatoky arranged the objects systematically. Ultimately Lt Col PRT Gurdon, the then Commissioner and Provincial Director of Ethnography, Assam in a public meeting opened the door of the room with a silver key and declared it as the museum of the KAS. In the meeting he also presented a paper on the rock-cut inscription on the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra which used to be submerged during rainy season. It was not an easy task to take an impression. The museum was the first museum, a museum of the society in Assam. Since the KAS was the oldest academic institute or society run by the most learned persons of Assam, it was regarded as the only learned organisation for taking any academic decisions or programs. 'It is gratifying to note that in those days no educational program was initiated by the state government without the knowledge and approval of the Samiti.' Even it paved the way

for establishment of a sister organisation like Asam Sahitya Sabha, (1917), Department of Ethnography, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, the department of Archaeology and so on and so forth. The museum established by KAS was re-designated as Assam Provincial Museum and finally government took over the museum and it came to be known as Assam State Museum. Thus, the KAS was a centre for learning and for a band of scholars it was a place of discussion on serious matters and even British administrators like Edward Gait, Col. PRT Gurdon and others used to discuss on academic matters here. Amongst Indian scholars mentioned may be made of Mahamohopadhatya Dhiresvar Bhattacharya, Padmanath Vidyavinode, Dr Surya Kumar Bhuyan, Dr Banikanta Kakati, Kali Ram Medhi, Kanak Lal Barua, Umakanta Goswami, Rajmohan Nath, Hem Chandra Goswami, Dr Maheswar Neog, Dr Birinchi Kumar Barua, Dr Satyendra Nath Sarma, Dr PC Choudhury and many other renown scholars of Indology and history and culture. The major academic decisions were taken by these scholars at different point of time. But to-day the old building which carried the memories of its golden past has been demolished. It was a building of the British period. The building of KAS was used by the staff of the Assam State Museum, as there was no place

*Contd. to Page 25*

## Culturally Vibrant Kaliabor

Dr. Nripen Chandra Das

The 73rd session of the Asam Sahitya Sabha is being held at culturally vibrant Kaliabor from January 31 to February 4, 2015. Kaliabor, a subdivision of Nagaon district on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, is situated in the middle part of Assam. This place dotted with hills and tea gardens is rich in natural beauty. Here at Pandit Atmaram Sarma Samanway Kshetra of the Mauchanda field near Kaliabor Tiniali beside the National Highway 37-A this session of the Asam Sahitya Sabha will be held. One integral part of every session of the Asam Sahitya Sabha, the Buranjee Sanmilan of this session is going to be held in an ambience of history and culture of Kaliabor. Even in ancient period Kaliabor seems to be an important place. Probably the capital of the Shalastambha kings of Kamarupa kingdom was at Kaliabor. During the period from 9th to 13th century A.D. several tribes and communities like the Bodo-Kacharis, Bhuyans, Tai-Ahoms, Muslims, etc., came to Kaliabor in search of fertile land on the banks of river Kolong and enriched the culture of this place. Kaliabor is a melting pot of different cultural elements throughout the history of Assam. In ancient times the place was a Sakta pitha, the fact of which is substantiated by Sakta temples situated here. Among the Sakta temples Kamakhya temple of Silghat which is known as 'Second Kamakhya', and Durga temple of Hatimura are famous all over Assam. In the medieval period Kaliabor was strategically very important and was a witness to a

few deciding battles between the Ahoms and the invading foreigners coming from the west. The cultural history of medieval Kaliabor is moulded by dominant cultural traits like Neo-vaishnavite religion and 600 years rule of the Ahoms. It is brilliantly evident in the extant cultural reminiscences of that glorious history. Many age-old temples, satras, mosques and church are till now standing with pride. Many prevalent customs and traditions speak about nothing else but rich and composite culture of Kaliabor. Majuli is known all over India as the most important seat of Assamese Vaishnavite culture. Kaliabor can be considered as 'Another Majuli' of Assam as far as the satriya culture is considered. Almost in every nook and corner of this place there is a satra or namghar. The Vaishnava culture has given Kaliabor an identity and special status. Among the Chhnaara akhan or 25 satras in Kaliabor a few names are Daulgovinda or Jakhalabandha satra, Nrishingha satra, Bholaguri satra, Karatipar Purani-satra, Karatipar Na-satra, Madhatari satra, Gonamara satra, Bagajan satra, Bali Satra, Chamaguri satra, etc. Jakhalabandha satra, which was established in 1558 A.D., is the oldest one among them. It is noteworthy that these satras are the repositories of a rich corpus of old sanchi manuscripts written on the Neo-vaishnavite religious tradition. Among all the namghars of Kaliabor, Bharali namghar is famous among the devotees all over Assam. People from several places of Assam visit this namghar of Kaliabor particularly

at Maghipurnima. The namghar and the surrounding area then wear a festive look. Many satras and namghars bear testimony to the once domineering impact of Vaishnavite culture on the people of Kaliabor. Although at the onslaught of globalization and electronic media, some of the Vaisnavite traditions disappeared, Vaishnavite culture as a whole is effervescent in Kaliabor. Regular performance of bhaona, borgeet, holding of Hazari bhaona keeps alive an aura of Vashnavite tradition in Kaliabor. As far as Ankiya bhaona is concerned Kaliabor can be regarded as a stronghold. Hazari bhaona tradition of Kaliabor is analogous to the Baresaharia bhaona of Jamugurihat. It is even said that Baresahariya bhaona of Jamagurihat evolved out of Hazari bhaona tradition of Kaliabor. This Hazari bhaona tradition is now in a dormant state. This bhaona is a unique kind of presenting Ankiya dramas of Vaishnava tradition where thousands of people are involved. Though the history of Ashokastami mela held at Silghat is not much old, but it is very famous at least in Nagaon district. For more than one week Silghat town attracts a huge gathering. Such a big fair is rare in Assam. Lakshmi Puja mela is another fair held at Sonarigaon, near Jakhalabandha. Burah-Burhir mela near Ambagan and Manavdharma mela at Solung are other two important fairs of Kaliabor. Manavdharma mela or Sadbhavna Sanmilan held in the last week of December is the largest crowd puller in Kaliabor. A good number of festivals are

observed by the people belonging to different castes and creeds of Kaliabor throughout the year. All the three Bihus very close to the hearts of the Assamese are celebrated here with much fervour and festivities. Durga Puja, and Rath yatra observed at Ambagan are two important festivals among the Bengali community. Thousands of people gather at Ambagan to see the spectacle of Rath yatra. Bol Bam is becoming more and more important festival particularly among the Bihari

community people of Kaliabor The people of Kaliabor frequently face the menace of wild animals like monkeys, tigers, elephants, etc. Wherever a tiger creates havoc people from nearby villages come with nets and spears; as long as the tiger is not trapped and killed they do not leave the place. Many people from far-flung places come to the site to have a close look. The site becomes like a mela or fair. This is here popularly known as the Baghbheta mela. This tradition is almost extinct as the

law prohibits killing of wild animals and is now a part of the heritage of Kaliabor. Hazari bhaona, Ras festival, and Bihu of Kaliabor are refined and possess a few features characteristic to the place. Kaliabor in a nutshell can be termed as a true miniature representation of the cultural mosaic of Assam. A few glimpses of rich cultural heritage of Kaliabor can also be seen in the Cultural Museum of Kaliabor College.

*(The Assam Tribune, 01.02.2015)*

## INDIA, US SEAL CIVIL NUCLEAR DEAL

**NEW DELHI, Jan 25** – India and the US today broke the seven-year-old logjam in operationalising their landmark civil nuclear deal besides deciding to jointly produce military hardware, including advanced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Barack Obama, reports PTI.



*US President Barack Obama shakes hands with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as First Lady Michelle Obama stands beside them, upon arrival at the Palam Air Force Station in New Delhi on Sunday.*

In what Obama called a “breakthrough”, the two sides resolved key hurdles pertaining to the liability of suppliers of nuclear reactors in the event of an accident and the tracking of fuel supplied by the US.

“We have broken the logjam of the past few years. We have reached an agreement. The deal is done,” Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh announced after extended discussions between Obama and Modi lasting more than three hours, marked by great bonhomie.

The two countries renewed an enhanced Defence Framework Agreement for the next 10 years

and identified four key “pathfinder projects” for joint development and production, including the next generation Raven mini UAVs and specialised kits for C-130 military transport aircraft.

Both countries also agreed on a Working Group to explore aircraft carrier technology, besides designing and development of jet engine technology.

The warm relationship between Modi and Obama, meeting for the second time in

four months, was on full display when they had a long stroll in the lawns of Hyderabad House where the Indian leader personally served tea to his guest while they were seated in the open.

Modi good-humouredly refused later to disclose as to what they talked about. “Parde main rehne do (let it remain a secret),” he told reporters.

The nuclear deal was the centrepiece of Obama-Modi discussions given its contentious nature and both sides later declared that the hurdles in the implementation of the 2005 agreement have been resolved.

After the talks, the US said the understanding on the civil nuclear programme resolves the US concerns on both tracking and liability.

“In our judgement, the Indians have moved sufficiently on these issues to give us assurances,” US Ambassador to India Richard Verma told American journalists.

*(The Assam Tribune -26-01-15)*

## Me Dam Me Phi: its Intrinsic Humanism

On the auspicious occasion of Me Dam Me Phi, let us once again fill our hearts and thoughts with profound reverence and gratitude for our ancestors for whom we happen to be where we are today. Me Dam Me Phi is a commemoration and acknowledgement of our inextricable relationship with our past. As TS Eliot has reiterated in his writings on the 'Presentness of the Past and the Pastness of the Present', here is a ritual wherein the Ahom community offer their prayers, devotion, reverence and offerings collectively to their ancestors, the dams and the phis for the total well-being of all the families, the society and the kingdom or nation. Incidentally 'nation' in Tai terminology would imply the 'family nation' suggesting that the nation consists of a conglomeration of families of which the King or Swargadeo is the head who shoulders full responsibility for the complete welfare of his subjects or his children. Ancestor worship carries within it the elements of a civilization which developed in comparative isolation in the far eastern world and evolved to one of the oldest and richest civilizations of the world. As many historians who had penetrated into the precious realms of the different civilizations had observed, in reality the civilizations of the Occident and the Orient are so interwoven that education built on the exclusion of one or the other can hardly be

called education at all for it ignores half of human experience. Let us now retrospect on a few common quotes and beliefs regarding ancestor worship extant among the people in Assam like 'Saale nerakhe, bere nerakhe nerakhe tridosor deo, ghoror dam dewe nerakhile rakhuta nai keo' or Jaar mora mritok hohai, hape nekhai, baghe nekhai, ikora pate ga nekate, jomeu thake dorai. Since the vital aspect of the religious beliefs of the Tai community was ancestor worship, the 'family' was the nucleus of the society. Therefore, religion did not get a



scope to become institutionalized and so the society remained comparatively free from religious intolerance and bigotry. Here was an eastern culture which drew the attention of scholars from all over the globe because of the profound humanism inherent in its culture and philosophy. Many universities throughout the world have centres on Tai studies and research which engage in research works, organizing seminars and workshops in which participants from the North-east have been joining and can try to increase the numbers of joining and engaging

themselves in research. It appears to be a very fascinating area for study as features and aspects of this ancient and rich civilization are practised by us in our day to day lives, yet we are ignorant of their subtle significance. Me in Tai means 'to worship', dam implies the spirit of the immediate dead who are believed to be, yet not totally, detached from the earthly world and are at a stage when they are the protectors of the family and the society. Phi denotes the angelic state of becoming a devata which the spirit attains after the complete detachment from the worldly or earthly bonding. It is believed that a dam can attain the state of phi only when their offspring and successors in this world offer their devotion and reverence through worship and offerings. The Tai manuscripts mention that when our predecessor Lord Lengdon of the Heavens sent his two grandchildren, Khunlung and Khunlai, to rule the earth, then the Goddess of Learning Jasingpha offered them the following advice: 'Your grandfather, Lengdon is sending you from the heavens to the earth for good governance. When the Phin-ha month comes and the sacred 'cinkara' flower will bloom, you fix a day and offer your prayers and special offerings to him and all other gods and goddesses. Then Lengdon along with eight crore gods and goddesses will come from the heavens and offer their blessings.' Based upon this myth, all the Tai



communities of the world offer their worship to their ancestors. Incidentally, this topic as to how this worship is offered by the different Tai communities can be a subject of research. The phis or angels worshipped during Me Dam Me Phi are ' Khao Kham (lord of the ocean and waters ), Ai Lengdin (lord of the earth), Lengdon (lord of the heavens and thunder), the seven sons of Lengdon, Langkuri, Sit Lam Sam (base of the seven energies), Mut Kum Tai Kum (light and heat), and Jasingpha (Goddess of Learning). Besides, offerings are also rendered to Ra-khin and Ba-khin for protection from all ills and evils. Histories have records of Me Dam Me Phi being celebrated by different Swargadeos on different

occasions like seeking blessing for the kingdom before a battle, after victory in a battle, for the well-being of the kingdom, etc. History also mentions that when Swargadeo Joydhwaj Singha was defeated by Mir Jumla, he regretted that as he had not offered his worship to his ancestors by performing Me Dam Me Phi, perhaps he had not received their blessings and lost the battle. His brother Chakradhwaj Singha, after consulting his counsellors, organized the rituals of Me Dam Me Phi in a royal manner before making preparations for the war against the Mughals in which the Ahoms were able to chase them out of the kingdom. Therefore, this worship appears to have profound

significance for the well-being of a society, a kingdom or a nation. The worship has connotations of divine blessings, good will and positivity. The Swargadeos who had organized this grand ritual were men who needed to have the highest integrity of character. At this point, we need to recall the name of the great humanist philosopher from the East, Confucius (551-479 BC) who reiterated that the first duty of the king is to set a proper example of sound ethical conduct. This is only the tip of an iceberg. Studies in these areas which have already been started will perhaps help to add another string in the musical lute of North-east India and the Indian culture and civilization.

(The Assam Tribune, 31.1.2015)

## **Tribal Society Provides Base for Indian Culture Mitbhakh Divas, Observed**

DIBRUGARH, February 11: "The kind of dancing of a country can be traced from its social and cultural history. In India, sources of history are literature and texts, architecture, sculptures and paintings."

With this opening statement, Dr Sruti Bandopadhyay, danseuse, researcher and professor in Manipuri dance at Visva-Bharati Shanti Niketan, went on to trace the origins of ancient Indian dance to myths, literature and people in her lecture at the celebration of *Mitbhakh Divas* at Rangghar, the auditorium of Dibrugarh University (DU), here on Wednesday. The birthday of Dr Nagen Saikia, the former president of Aham Xahitya Xabha and creator of the genre, 'Mitbhakh', is celebrated as Mitbhakh. Divas by the Prof Nagen Saikia Saraswata Nyas

Parishad (PNSSNP). He turned 77 today. The programme was organized by the Paris had and Dr Bhupen Hazarika Centre for Studies of Performing Arts (DBHCSPA) of DU.

Dr Sruti Bandopadhyay also touched upon her long association with Dr Saikia and shared with the audience how she calls him up whenever she needs any information on Assam or its culture. Speaking on the philosophy and practice of Indian dance, she talked of the divinity attributed to its foundation and how Indian myths are replete with tales of Shiva and Parvati, Kartik. Ganesha and Krishna dancing. While speaking on the anthropological aspect, the Manipuri dancer, who was awarded the Lalit Kala Award in 2009 and a Fullbright Fellow in

2007, stated that tribal society provided the base for Indian culture wherein the rituals, magic art, collective emotion and myth were basic issues in which the origin laid dormant.

Earlier, the wife of Dr Nagen Saikia, Labanya Saikia, lit the ceremonial lamp while the Vice-Chancellor of DU. Prof Alak Kumar Buragohain, delivered the inaugural address in which he specially spoke on Dr Saikia's latest book about the history of Assamese people. The Director-in-Charge of DBHCSPA, Prof Karabi Deka Hazarika, welcomed the gathering. The meeting was chaired by the chairman of the PNSSNP and VC of Srimanta Sankardeva University, Prof KK Deka. Various persons also wished Dr Saikia on his birthday.

(The Sentinel 12-02-15)

## Why did not Europe Anticipate Terror Attacks?

- Saeed Naqvi

It challenges credulity that Europe did not anticipate terrorist attacks after its involvement in direct and indirect military action against the people of Libya, Syria, ISIS and so on.

In March 2011, I wrote: Have President Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister David Cameron ever paused to consider how the 20 million Muslims in Europe will react to their military action in the Arab world?

I shall never tire of repeating the signal truth: the global electronic media was born when Peter Arnett of CNN brought Operation Desert Storm into the world's drawing rooms in live telecasts from the terrace of Al Rasheed hotel in Baghdad.

That day in February 1991, the world was divided into two ever growing sets of audiences diametrically opposed to each other - millions and millions of them. For the West and its friends it was triumphalism, doubly impressive after the collapse of the Soviet power. For Arabs and the Muslim world in general, it was humiliation, defeat and anger.

It was in the shadow of the West's triumphalism that the correlation of forces altered in India too. Remember, there were no multiple channels to cover the demolition of the Babri Masjid Dec 6, 1992. They mushroomed soon thereafter in celebration as globalized capitalism arrived in India too.

After Desert Storm, the global

media had an orgy: the two Intefadas, the four-year-long brutalization of Bosnian Muslims, occupation of West Bank, invasion of Afghanistan, the droning of Pakistan's northwest, occupation of Iraq, Darfur, Mali, Yemen, the 50-day bombing of Gaza. There was no end.

During my journey from Bosnia to Turkey I saw the boost the siege of Sarajevo gave to Islamists in Turkey.

The expanding conflict between the West and Islam has been given a tactical twist. The conflict being promoted now is between Sunnis and Shias, with Riyadh and Teheran as the two poles. This did accelerate attacks on Shias in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Pakistan without in any way diminishing the danger of anti-Western terrorism.

Not only did the West help halt the Arab Spring, in doing so it ended up doing something much more dangerous. Countries with a majority of their populations in their 20s, the youth bulge, had come out on the streets waving banners of freedom. These are now angry young Muslims headed to other parts of the world, including Europe. Did Europe imagine it was exempt from Arab anger after the bombardment of their lands?

The Saudis are the spider in the web in conflicts in Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen

controlling Islamist militants as a strategic asset.

Islamic Madrasas along the Afghan-Pakistan border since the 80s are commonly known. Not so well known are the Jihadist hatcheries set up by the late Prince Naif bin Abdel Aziz, as the Saudi interior minister, in Yemen. In those days the Jihadists were being trained as a bulwark against Soviet influence in South Yemen. It is these Jihadis who mutated into today's Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The name of this militant outfit was mentioned in the Paris outrage too.

France has worked out convoluted arms deals with the Saudis. For example, \$3 billion worth of French arms were diverted to the Lebanese Army. The transaction was financed by Saudi Arabia. Chemical weapons in Saddam Hussain's arsenal came from France. France has its hands in many tills. It was neck deep in supporting the opposition in Syria. All this mayhem Europe has helped manufacture just the other side of the Mediterranean. The surprise is that retribution has been so late in coming.

Is it retribution at all? The parallel media is replete with conspiracy theories. A question that pops up frequently concerns Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's presence in the front row of world leaders in the march of solidarity in Paris. What qualifies him to wear the

*Contd. to Page 15*

## Prayers for Breakfast Diplomacy

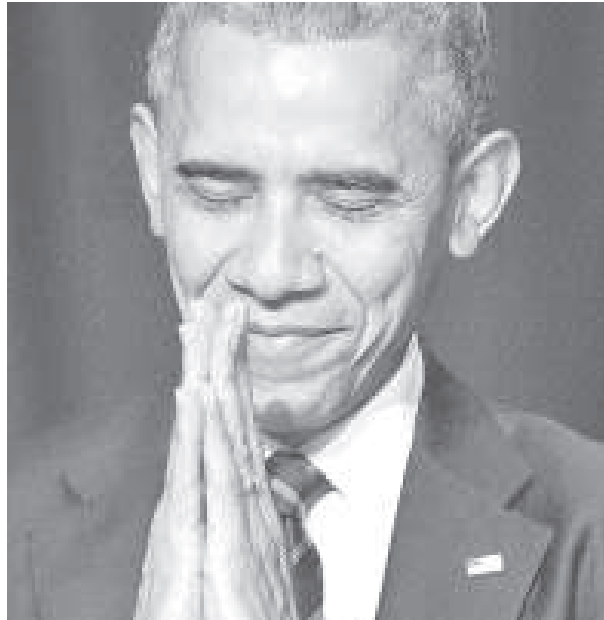
K.P. Nayar

Barack Obama's remarks about religion and tolerance in India, made in New Delhi last month and reiterated in Washington a few days later, resurrected slices of my experience as a Hindu living in the United States of America. Because I practised journalism on the east coast of the US, for several years in a row I was inundated by e-mails and other communication from Hindu Americans in New York campaigning for parking exemption in the city on Diwali day. I usually read the mails and promptly discarded them.

I did not live in New York, so the campaign was of no direct concern to me. In Washington, where I lived, successive Indian ambassadors made exquisite parking arrangements for Diwali celebrations at the embassy residence. The sprawling parking lots of the National Zoo near the residence were reserved for the ambassador's guests on the night Diwali was observed; from these lots, vans belonging to the zoo and embassy vehicles ferried guests to the residence and back to the parking lots after dinner.

But one year, in 2005 (as far as I recall), I sat up when I received an e-mail about the campaign in New York from Udai Tambar, then at Princeton as an assistant director at the Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs Policy Research

Institute. The city council unanimously voted, 45 to 0, for the parking exemption on Diwali day, but the mayor would have none of it. He announced that the legislation would invite his veto. For those unfamiliar with New York City's parking regulations, it is necessary to explain what the Diwali exemption means. In the Big Apple, where every square metre of space is big money and



parking lots charge huge amounts, most people resort to street parking. But if you park your car on the street, on every alternate day, the vehicle can only be on one side of the street in order to allow cleaning trucks to clean the other side of the road.

In 2005, on 39 days in a calendar year, city regulations allowed cars to remain parked on both sides of the road, exempt from the one-side parking restriction. These included 10 Christian festival days such as

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, nine Jewish observances like Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, two Muslim (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha), and the Chinese Lunar New Year. There were no such exemptions for any Hindu celebratory occasion. Yet, the mayor was ready to go on a course of confrontation with the city council, which was unanimous that Diwali should be the 40th day when cars could be parked undisturbed while Hindus observed their festival.

To be fair, New York's mayor at that time, Michael Bloomberg, was not a bigot. Quite the opposite. But he is his own man. A Democrat to start with, he became a Republican before seeking the mayor's office only to run for a successful third term as city father as an independent. There is nothing in his record to suggest that Bloomberg was against Hindus or their heritage and religion. Bloomberg's spokesperson at that time said that the mayor opposed the legislation only "because it means another day when the streets don't get cleaned". That much less swachh New York!

It is interesting for today's India with its emphasis on economy, growth and good governance that the real reason for Bloomberg's opposition was that changes to parking regulations would have also meant free parking on yet

another day of such exemption. It entailed loss of revenue for the city in parking fees on one more day. The loss, at the rates 10 years ago, was estimated at \$306,000. Conversely, not many Hindus really needed to park their cars somewhere in order to celebrate Diwali. The vast majority of them, by popular reckoning, used public transport in New York. But recognizing Diwali alongside other major religious festivals was psychologically important for Hindu Americans. It made them feel equal in their adopted society.

This was especially so for Hindu immigrants from Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Malaysia, Fiji and other locations. For them, the US was the second country they opted for as home. They campaigned vigorously with the city council and eventually won their battle. Parking on both sides of the road is now allowed on Diwali day in New York. Tambar told me at that time, "New York City has been at the vanguard of what the rest of America will do. If New York takes this step other cities and municipalities throughout the country will have the precedent to do the same."

Many other similar incidents spring to mind. The long struggle to allow a Hindu priest by rotation to say the opening prayer in the US Congress, which finally happened during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's prime ministerial visit to Washington in September 2000, is one more example. It was resisted intensely by Judeo-Christian lobbies. The very visible campaign in recent years against commercialization of Hindu religious symbols by American marketing wizards is another.

The conventional wisdom is

that Indian Americans - Hindu Americans, in this context - have now acquired a level of organization and strength to be able to assert their identity and seek their place in the stateside sun. But that only partly explains the circumstances surrounding these episodes, which are typical of a Hindu resurgence. Such a resurgence is taking place not only in America but in the entire diaspora.

It is undeniable that in the new millennium, religion has acquired a greater stake in diplomacy. This is a worldwide phenomenon. It is a spin-off from the influence that theology now exercises over domestic politics in more countries than before. India cannot be immune from this global phenomenon. That such a trend has taken deeper roots in this country is borne out by instances daily from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. However, what is ignored in Manmohan Singh's infamous declaration of "love" for George W. Bush is that it is equally true of the US. Bush won his presidential elections - especially his re-election in 2004 - on precisely the planks Obama cautioned Indians about last night. I recall scenes from the 2008 US presidential campaign that made John McCain, Obama's Republican opponent, cringe - scenes of religious hatred of the very same variety that Obama condemned in his White House speech last week.

It is to Obama's credit that he has tried - and with considerable success - to change quite a bit of it. That is what Indian leaders who can think big must do instead of pointing fingers at American society as the fringe Hindu

religious Right in India has done. Nor is any boast about India's traditions of tolerance and assimilation an answer that anyone in the business of realpolitik will buy.

There is an insufficient recognition by Western leaders like Obama that the values of the Treaty of Westphalia, which were embraced by post-colonial governments in Asia and Africa, have broken down not only in these continents but also in Europe: the Balkans and the crisis in immigrant segments of Western Europe are testimony to such a breakdown. The Treaty of Westphalia ended 30 years of devastating war in Europe from 1618 to 1648, when Catholic rulers attempted the re-conversion or ghar wapsi of Protestant subjects. That treaty was the starting point of the separation of Church and State. In State after State from Egypt to Tunisia to Iraq - and Syria with only partial success to date - regime change meant getting rid of leaders who practised the separation of Church and State.

Globalization has meant that India is feeling the effects of these changes. The best example is the radicalization of educated and technically qualified young people in Bangalore, not the underclass from ghettos. Obama's prescription in Siri Fort and at the National Prayer Breakfast only addresses the symptoms. Treating the cause of the disease requires a bolder and more visionary leadership at the global level that is ([telegraph\\_dc@yahoo.com](mailto:telegraph_dc@yahoo.com) 11-02-15)

## Commemorative coins on 100th birth anniversary of Rani Gaidinliu to be released

New Delhi January 24: Government of India is going to release coins to commemorate 100<sup>th</sup> birth centenary of Rani Gaidinliu, which falls on January 26. The denomination of coins is Rupees 100 and Rupees 5. The five Rupees coin will be for general circulation.

Rani Gaidinliu from Manipur was a fearless Indian freedom fighter who joined the agitation at the age of 13 and headed the movement against the British in the Manipur and Naga belts. The Government of India honored her with the prestigious Padma Bhushan in 1993.

Rani Gaidinliu, who was born on 26th January, 1915 at the Nungkao village in Manipur, was an active freedom fighter of India who joined the agitation at the age of 13. She spearheaded an inspiring socio-political movement to cast the British out from the Manipur and Naga belts.

It was in 1932 at the age of 16 that Rani Gaidinliu was arrested and put behind bars for life. She could be freed from the jail only after India's independence in 1947.

That Rani Gaidinliu was a charismatic girl was apparent from a very early age. While she was just 13, she grew restive witnessing the prevailing social and political ambience in the hills of Manipur under the British influence. It was at this time that she met prominent local leader Haipou Jadonang at Pulton Village and swayed by his ideas and principles, she launched the revolutionary movement against the British in 1927. However, just when this agitation was beginning to assume enough height to strike, Haipou was arrested by the British and put to death in 1931.

It was from this moment onwards that the responsibility of directing the agitation in the Manipur and Naga hill regions fell

on Rani's shoulders. Following this incident, Rani Gaidinliu immediately went underground. Though the British announced a reward of Rs 500 to anybody who would inform them about her whereabouts, the entire village stood together in support of Rani. But she was finally hunted down in October 1932. Rani Gaidinliu was put under life imprisonment for waging war against the British.

Rani Gaidinliu continued to work for the welfare of her people even after her release from jail in 1947. She even set up a resistance agitation against the Naga National Council (NNC)-led insurgents in 1966 and had to go underground due to this. Gaidinliu was respected by everybody for her role as a freedom fighter and was also honored with the prestigious Padma Bhushan in 1993.

*(The Sentinel 25-01-15)*

*Contd. from Page 12*

## Why did not Europe anticipate terror attacks?

badge of liberty?

While one verifies every side of the Paris attack, one statement can be made with certainty: the carnage in Paris has clearly diverted attention from a crucial campaign launched by the ISIS against Saudi Arabia.

Just before the Charlie Hebdo attack, ISIS sent a suicide team across the border into Saudi Arabia. General Oudah al-

Belawi, in charge of the Saudi northern border, was killed. The kingdom has dispatched 30,000 additional troops to guard the border with Iraq. The suicide squad clearly had inside information about the general's location.

In the current incredible line-up, Saudis are Israel's close allies. Their vulnerability to ISIS would be a matter of greater anxiety to Netanyahu than

terrorism in Paris.

Postscript: A mild example: Were the world statesmen assembled in Paris conversant with Charlie Hebdo's wit? Should there not be some distinction between smut and humour?

*(A senior commentator on diplomatic and political affairs, Saeed Naqvi can be reached on saeednaqvi@hotmail.com. The views expressed are personal.)*

*(The Sentinel 18.01.2015)*

## GARO VILLAGE ENTERPRISE CHANGING LIVES

- Biplab Kr Dey

TURA, Jan 25 – In an inspiring story of innovation, a remote village in West Garo Hills – Rangmangre has used the rich fruit diversity in the area to produce juice under its own brand name “Chengga” to bring about a change in the lives of the villagers.

Taking advantage of the rich variance in seasonal fruits and wild berries, the village since 2010 has been producing juices which has become a rage not only within the West Garo Hills district but also in other parts of Garo Hills.

The villagers of Rangmangre under Gambegre development block, about 50 kms from Tura, conceptualised the idea of producing the juice in 2010. The village consists of 55 households and borders Bangladesh. The project was promoted under the Ministry of DoNER’s North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCOMP).

The idea was first mooted by Rozillar M Marak, a member of Natural Resource Management Group (NaRM-G) during its group meeting for production of juice.

“We have a vast area under orange and pineapple cultivation. We felt that if we could start processing juices, it will be viable and mooted the idea to NERCAMP. They provided us the technical assistance and we started the juice processing unit”, said Marak. The unit is a small one run by NaRM-G and women self help group (SHG) in the village. The village produces about 1,500 litres of juice every month.

“In different seasons, we produce different varieties. The juices are made from available fruits in the village. We also produce juice out of wild berries, like mulberry”, he added.

Marak explained that juice of Indian gooseberries is a hot favourite in the market, as it has medicinal value. “Over the years,

we have been able to reach out to almost all markets in Garo Hills”, he quipped.

The NaRM-G of Rangmangre manages a sustained income by selling the juices in the local market. A 500 ml bottle of juice is priced at Rs 100 in the local market.

Though the management of the juice production is handled by NaRM-G, the women SHGs makes an extra income by selling the juice. “We get Rs 20 as commission on sale of each bottle”, said a member of women SHG.

The juice processing unit has given the villagers a reason to smile. It is their sheer willingness, which has given them a space of their own and pride in their produce. Their brand is also being promoted and marketed by NERCAMP as “Neat Chengga Juice”, which is now going beyond the Garo Hills. (The Assam Tribune 26-01-15)

## IAF gets its first ‘Made in India’ fighter aircraft

Bengaluru, January 17: Thirty-two years after the project was sanctioned, the first indigenously –built Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) was on Saturday handed over to the Indian Air Force by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar. The handover signals the start of a process of induction of the fighters being built at home under a project which has already cost the exchequer nearly Rs 8,000 crore. The entire project by the



DRDO and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited is estimated to cost over Rs.30,000 crore. The aircraft that has been

handed over has got Initial Operational Clearance–II, which signifies that Tejas is airworthy in different conditions, sources said. The version of the Tejas handed over to the IAF incorporates the latest electronic warfare suite, mid–air refuelling and long–range missile capabilities among other things, which were integrated into one of the LCAs two weeks ago.

(The Sentinel 18.01.2015)

## Patharughat complains of neglect on massacre anniversary

GUWAHATI: The 140 unarmed peasants who were gunned down by British soldiers 121 years ago at Patharughat, a village in Darrang district about 70 km from here, were remembered on Wednesday.

J R Berington, officiating commandant of the military police, ordered the firing on January 28, 1894. Locals and descendants of the martyrs demanded that the place be regarded as a symbol of harmony and brotherhood.

They rued that the incident, which had sent shockwaves through the country much before the infamous Jallianwala Bagh

massacre, has not got the kind of national attention it deserves.

“It was a major incident, which had set the tone for the freedom movement. The peasants were gunned down when they were protesting against the British government’s policy of imposing exorbitant taxes. The unique feature of the uprising was that both Hindus and Muslims had joined the movement. We demand that the place be recognized as a centre of peace and harmony,” said Samsuddin Ahmed Hazarika, a retired teacher and great grandson of Patharu Sheikh, alias Patharu Hira, who was a martyr.

Hazarika said the tradition of harmony and brotherhood still continues.

“We feel proud to live in a place of complete harmony. We often go to the Naamghar or other temples and donate funds. Hindus also do the same,” said Hazarika.

Locals blamed historians for not highlighting this part of India’s history. “It is important for the future generation to know about the sacrifices of the peasants,” said Haren Kalita, a local.

The All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) also observed the day.

*(The Times of India -29-01-15)*

## Pakke Paga festival of Nyishi

Itanagar, January 17: The maiden Pakke Paga Festival began at Seijosa in East Kameng district yesterday.

The festival has been initiated primarily to popularize the role played by the local Nyishi people in conserving hornbills in Pakke and surrounding areas.

The festival also seeks to focus on the importance of conservation of hornbills and wildlife in the state as well as to create interest and awareness among urban Indians and foreign visitors about the cultural and wildlife heritage of Arunachal Pradesh especially of Pakke Tiger Reserve and its surrounding areas.

Paga means hornbill in the Nyishi language.

It is also to focus on the importance of conservation of hornbills and wildlife in Arunachal Pradesh (the need to reduce hunting and logging and come up

with policies to provide alternative source of income).

Aparajita Dutta of Mysore-based Nature Conservation Foundation which has played a pioneering role in conservation of hornbills in Pakke had earlier said “We hope that through this festival there is increased pride and support for the conservation efforts in and around Pakke tiger reserve”

The Boro Students Union, All Assam Students Union, and members of Nyishi Elite Society appreciated the initiative to conserve the precious hornbills and to maintain the brotherhood feelings with the neighbouring state.

Takum Nabam of the Ghora Abhe Society which is working with various organizations to host the event appraised audiences and villagers how the concept of the festival emerged.

Yesterday’s inaugural

programme also included war dance, play, screening of short films, 10 km race, local games and sports like segia ganam (arrow-shooting), local shot put, stick wrestling, sight-seeing and drawing competition.

State PHED minister Takam Pario while gracing the occasion said, “Arunachal Pradesh is blessed with abundant fauna and flora, wildlife and unique species which need to be globalised”.

Pario added that “we need to popularize our resources and we should conserve by maintaining peace and brotherhood with Assam”.

“Conservation and preservation of natural resources will also boost the economic development of the state and will help the culture and traditions of the state grow globally”, he added.

The festival will conclude on Sunday. (The Sentinel 18-01-15)

## Tamla Du festival of Mishmi

ITANAGAR, February 11: The Mishmi community of Wakro circle in Lohit district is all ready to celebrate their ethno cultural festival Tamla Du.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Rajesh Tacho is expected to grace the festival as the Chief Guest while Chow Zingnu Namchoom, Namsai MLA cum Chairman APBRDA will be the Guest of Honour.

Local MLA cum Parliamentary Secretary Environment and Forests CT Mein who is the chief patron of the fest would also be attending informed Chairman of the Festival Celebration Committee, Sanjay Ngadong.

The festival held for peace, unity and well being will be held

from the February 12 to 15. The chief guest and other dignitaries would be gracing the festival on the final day.

Competitions in traditional games and sports during the day cultural activities at nights have been scheduled from the February 12 to 14 next. To add more excitement to the fest, this edition will be featuring the super moms contest for the first time and it would be held on the night of February 14 next.

On February 15, after the reception of the guests, customary rituals would be held followed by cultural display.

Lohit valley also gearing up to celebrate the festival which is scheduled to be set off from

February 13 and end on February 15.

Union MoS for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju and Horticulture parliamentary secretary Muchu Mithi have consented to grace the occasion as chief guest and guest of honour respectively.

Rich traditional cultural fusion of Mishmi would be showcased in their own unique way.

“Tamla Du this time have a distinctive flavour and an entirely different aura altogether. Miss Tamla Du pageant, super mom / father and exchange of cultural mosaic would be the major attraction of the three days of celebration”, informed Bakrim Chikro Chairman TFCC.

(The Sentinel 12-02-15)

## Neanderthals and humans may have interbred 55,000 years ago



**Washington, January 29, 2015:** A newly discovered ancient partial skull provides the earliest evidence that modern humans lived alongside Neanderthals and could have interbred 55,000 years ago.

Modern Europeans have inherited about 4 per cent of their genes from Neanderthals,

meaning the two groups mated at some point in the past, researchers said.

The discovery in Manot Cave in Israel's West Galilee challenges a previous hypothesis that the two species potentially met 45,000 years ago somewhere in Europe.

“It has been suspected that modern man and Neanderthals were in the same place at the same time, but we didn't have the physical evidence. Now we do have it in the new skull fossil,” said Bruce Latimer, from Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) in US.

The finding of Neanderthals

living at other Levantine sites in the eastern Mediterranean region places the two species in the same area at about the same time.

The Manot cave is located in the region where Neanderthals periodically lived, perhaps when ice sheets in Europe forced them to migrate to warmer locales, like the Levant region.

The cave is situated along the only land route available for ancient humans to travel out of Africa to the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

“Modern humans and Neanderthals likely encountered each other foraging for food,” Latimer said.

(The Assam Tribune 30-01-15)



## A Report on VISION 2020

This three day (6-8 Feb 2015) event on VISION - 2020 of Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (ABVKA) was held with association with and Rambhau Mhalagi Prabodhini in the premises of Rambhau Mhalagi Prabodhini at Uttan near Bhainder in Mumbai. The valedictory function was held on 8th February 2015.

Presiding on the occasion of valedictory function of the Seminar on Janjatis, Choudhary Shri Vidya Sagar the Honourable Governor of Maharashtra assured to exercise the special powers he is enjoying as the Governor in connection with Janjati sector. For this purpose, a special Janjati cell has been, already, established in his office. He was attuned with the organizers while expressing his feelings and worries about the problems prevailing in the Scheduled areas.

Shri J.K. Bajaj presented the recommendations, which are the essence of discussions held in the seminar, in front of the participants during the concluding session.

Following recommendations were made by the group that discussed on Natural Resources and economic Development

1. to formulate an integrated National Mineral Policy
2. to put an end to all illegal mining which are widely discussed in the national media.
3. to close all mines in a secured way after completion of mining activity.
4. to provide the dividend to displaced and mining affected

people.

Recommendations of Group discussed on Forest regulations are

1. Identifying the Community Forest Right (CFR) with a mission mod by organizing a social campaign.
2. Recognising and treating the Pattas given to Janjatis under Forest Right Act(FRA) as revenue documents.
3. Effective Planning of processing, value addition and Marketing of Minor Forest Produce.

Janjatis are lagging behind the other sections of society in the entire index related to Education. Recommendation of group discussed on this topic are:-

1. A special campaign should be initiated to improve the literacy rate in Janjati areas particularly among the women folk.
2. The primary education among Janjatis should be conducted in mother tongue throughout the country.
3. Education must be connected to skill development. The school education system should be based on skill development in general. Priority should be given to Janjati area on this subject.
4. Special programmes should be arranged for capacity building in higher education and also to take part in the competitive examinations.
5. Measures should be taken to protect and patent the special skills, bio-diversity, and other technology related Intellectual

Property.

Following suggestions were forwarded by the group discussed on Governance

1. A permanent secretariat should be established to each and every Tribal Advisory Council(TAC) to strengthen the role of TAC in the states that come under 5th Schedule.
2. A national campaign should be initiated to ward-off all hurdles in the functioning of Gram Sabhas and make it effective as per Pachayatiraj Extension in Scheduled Area (PESA) Act.

3. National Policy on Janjati is being discussed for more than 15 years. But this work has been paused at present moment. The efforts to finalise the policy should be taken up with immediate effect.

Chief Guest of the function, Shri Juel Uraon, Honourable Union minister of Tribal Affairs, expressed hope that the recommendations of the seminar would prove very much effective to safeguard the rights of entire Janjati Society. He assured to make all efforts in finalizing the long pending National Policy on Janjatis and making it a reality. He expressed hope that this vision document would be contributive in this exercise.

Shri Dattatreya Hosbale, Sah Sar Karyavah of RSS and also the distinguished guest in the valedictory function, said that the joint effort of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and Rambhau Mhalagi Prabodhini is need of the hour. He said that the liveli hood of Janjati

is not only aimed to production and employment, but it is their culture. Any Development which causes damage to this basic nature of janjatis would be an injustice to them. Shri Jagdeoram Uraon, the President of ABVKA expressed gratitude to all participants and said that Janjatis are also maintaining distinct values in their life. We have to see that this wealth is intact while marching towards modernity. Shri Ravindra Sathe conducted the concluding function and Shri Vishnukant expressed vote of thanks.

Threadbare discussion on Janjati vision document 2020 is, thus, concluded. 112 representatives from 16 states took part in these discussions. Many renowned leaders of Janjati communities, many scholars who are engaged in research studies on the subjects related to Janjatis, representatives of many NGOs and many workers were present in the sessions. Shri Dilip Singh Bhuria, Former Chairman of Tribal Commission, Shri Arjun Munda, Ex Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Shri Sudarshan Bhagat, Minister of States, Shri Dinesh Uraon, Speaker of Legislative Assembly, Jharkhand, Ministers of Tribal Affairs in Maharashtra and Goa Shri Vishnu Sawra and Shri Ramesh Tavadkar respectively, Shri J.B. Tubid, IAS were present in the seminar, and enriched the discussion with their active participation and experience. Many educational and research scholars were also present from different areas of our nation.

Three groups had been formed to discuss various issues related to Janjatis. Issues related to social development were

discussed in first group. Education and health sectors were the major topics covered in this group.

Second group discussed about Natural resources and economic development. Major topics discussed in this group were protection of Land, water and forest & mining.

Third group discussed issues of governance. 5th and 6th Schedule of Constitution, reservation policy and land acquisition were discussed in this group.

Shri Vishnukant in his introductory speech said that ABVKA has experienced and understood the problems and challenges, facing by the Janjati Communities, from very close angle while undertaking various service activities among them. It is understood that the policies framed so far are prevalent in its original form. There is a need to frame National Policy. Even though various commissions formed after independence have submitted their report in between 2002 and 2012, finalizing the Janjati policy is still in pending. No National Policy has come into existence. We have to discuss on the subjects of our major concern like Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement, half-hearted implementation of Forest Right Act and PESA Act, worrying condition of Education, health & other infrastructure development in the Janjati areas etc.

Shri Arjun Munda, Chief Guest of Inaugural function said that janjati Society should be viewed through the mirrors of constitutional provisions and growing extremism. Many people have made efforts to deal with this

at different levels. There are many good results in various field which could be achieved by the efforts of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and its founder President Balasahab. Good infrastructure, good administrative missionary and social environment should be made available to all Indians so that the country can be strong with equability in development.

Shri J. B. Tubid, distinguished guest on the occasion and also former Chief Secretary of Jharkhand stated that the Janjati society is self sustained. Governments of those days were compelled to be in defensive by heroic acts of the leaders like Birsa Munda and Budhu Bhagat. The influence of national parties in the Janjati areas has, at present, been marginalized and the regional parties do not promote the national feeling keeping issues of their local vested interests alive. Society is disturbed by the Exploitation of minerals and as a result, the Naxalists are taking grip of the areas. Non Janjati Communities under rate the janjatis. Exploiters encourage janjatis towards corrupt practices. We have to think on all these issues during the seminar.

Shri Dilip Sing Bhuria, in his presidential address said that In Independent India the challenges are getting much complicated instead of being resolved. He appreciated the efforts of the organizers for finding out solutions to the Janjati problems, but until and unless the policy makers themselves do not involve in this efforts, he expressed his doubt in achieving the desired result.

Shri Atul Jog Conducted the inaugural Function and Shri Ravindra Sathe expressed vote of thanks.

## **THE RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE Kendriya Karyakari Mandal (KKM) of AKHIL BHARATIYA VANVASI KALYAN ASHRAM (ABVKA) held on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb; 2015 at Jashpurnagar (CG).**

Considering the widespread unrest against the Land Acquisition Ordinance, 2014 in the Tribal area, the Central Govt. must review it.

Recently the Central Govt. has amended some laws by issuing Ordinances. Of these, the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 and Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 are directly related with the tribal areas. Main changes which have been brought by the Land Acquisition Ordinance, 2014 are as under:

1- Total exemption from the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to the projects of five classes mentioned in Sec. 10A of Chapter IIIA of the Ordinance.

2- The mandatory requirement of prior consent of project affected families [80% in the cases of private companies and 70% in the cases of PPP) in these five classes of project has also been totally repealed,

3- Total repeal of the provisions relating to the food security of the country in the principal Act in the cases of the land acquired under any of the five classes mentioned above.

4- Under the principal Act the Government was competent for acquisition of land for itself/private companies. Because of the changes by the ordinance now for any private entity (in which Sole proprietary concern, partnership, company, corporation, non-profit earning organizations/trusts or

such other entities may be there which are non-governmental) may acquire the land. It must be taken back.

5- Under five classes the projects related with the security of the nation, rural infrastructural projects which includes electricity also, projects of affordable housing and housing for poor people projects, Industrial Corridor (no definition whereof as to its length and width given) and infrastructural and social infrastructural projects which includes Public Private Partnership (PPP) wherein ownership of the land continues to vest with the Govt., are also included (now no consent required for these five categories). Requirement of prior consent for PPP projects 60% and for remaining projects 70% may be prescribed as has been proposed by Rajasthan and the defense related projects may be given complete exemption.

For defense related projects these all exemptions may be granted but for remaining projects giving such exemptions will be merely abuse of sovereign powers which cannot be permitted. Industrial corridor is merely new and improvised version of infamous SEZ which cannot be given any place.

6- The Government will have power to acquire land for private educational institutions and private hospitals which is very unfortunate. It must be taken back.

7- There was provision for return of land to land owners or

their legal heirs if the acquired land is not utilized within 5 years of taking possession which has now been extended for indefinite period. Meaning thereby the prospects of getting back such unutilized land has been minimal.

Make amendment in it, the projects like steel and mining may be granted maximum relaxation of 2 Years, for remaining projects 5 years as the existing provision is there.

8- By amending Sec. 24 of the principal Act, the provision of retrospective effect of this law has also been relaxed. The provision of deposit of compensation amount in separate bank account be taken back.

9- By omitting Sec. 105 (4) which provided that before amendment in this law a notice of minimum 30 days shall be laid before each house of Parliament, the transparency has been given a go by. Now in future any Govt. will make any amendment clandestinely. It be kept for future in its original form.

10- Before all these changes and issuance of Mines and Mineral Ordinance no consultation was done with the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes which is mandatory for Central and State Governments under Art. 338-A (9).

Without Social Impact Assessment no Government or administration can discover as to whether the projects really requires the requisitioned land, whether any baron land or land

compelling lesser displacement is anywhere or with Land Bank or Govt., how many people will be displaced, how many infrastructural properties will fall in the area of acquisition etc..

Doing this will be leaving poor farmers-tribes at the mercy of cruel nexus of giant industrial groups and land mafias and will be great injustice to them. Barring defense projects remaining projects should not be given any exemption from it.

In terms of food security our ranking is poorer than our neighbor Bangladesh and Myanmar. Per person per year 200 Kg. food stuff is required whereas in year 2011 we had this figure of 235 Kg. whereas Bangladesh had 289 Kg. and Myanmar 492 Kg. As exception giving exemption to defense projects, remaining projects should not be given any exemption, original provisions be as it is. To discourage acquisition of such land even in exceptional cases the compensation amount of land should be enhanced as Rajasthan has proposed.

10- By this ordinance 13 other laws specified in Schedule 4 of the principal Act have been brought in the purview of this Act since 1st of January, 2015 which is a commendable step but above 12 points with negativity will be applicable on them also. In these Damodar Valley Corporation Land Acquisition (Mine) Act, Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons (Land Acquisition) Act and Coal Bearing Area (Acquisition and Development) Act are such 4 laws by which tribal areas will be most affected.

The KKM had deep deliberation on all above issues

and has reached to this conclusion that-

1- There is intense resentment and it is being fuelled against these two ordinances in the entire tribal area across the country.

2- This belief is gaining ground that present Govt. is blindly favoring large industries and Industrial Houses and neglecting even justified interests of tribes and farmers.

3- Because of this unnecessarily there will be an atmosphere of grave agitation and confrontation and further delay will occasion in commencement of the projects whereas this Govt. is claiming that it bringing changes only to avoid delay. Fundamentally it will be against the inclusive and sustainable development.

Underlining that we are not against the development of the country- we also want development but not at the cost of tribes and farmers, The KKM of ABVKA demands the Central Govt. that:-

1. All above provisions of the Land Acquisition Ordinance, 2014 be reviewed and be made all-inclusive. Its concern is to remove delay in the projects- keeping this in mind only that limited amendment may be brought as has been demanded above.

2- As has been said in the 12th Five Years Plan Vision Document, a National Land Use Policy be drafted and National Land Use Authority be immediately constituted which should be given constitutional status. A promise has been made in this behalf in the election manifesto of BJP.

3- The Central Executive Committee gives a call to all

leaders of Schedule Tribes specially elected Members of Parliament that they should place the real ground situation fearlessly before the Govt. in collective voice so that the interest of tribes-farmers does not suffer, the danger on the food security of the nation could be avoided and guarding the nation from the danger of industrial unrests, its prosperity could be ensured.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 8.**

Improve Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) - MMDR Amendment Ordinance, 2015 and incorporate provisions for safe closure of mines after mining operation is exhausted.

Recently the Central Govt. has amended some Acts by ordinances. Out of these the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 and Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 are directly related with tribes and tribal areas.

By Mine and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Ordinance, 2015 the Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 has been amended. In this, among others, the provision for establishment of District Mineral Foundation in the mining affected district has been made which will work for the benefit and interest of the mining affected area and people in the district. For this purpose the mining units in the State shall give so much sum of the Royalty to the State Govt. as shall be determined by the Central Govt. and which shall not be more than one third of the amount of Royalty.

This is first step towards the sharing of profits of mining with the people who are affected by the mining work which is laudable. The most adverse impact of mining, which includes displacement, rendering of nearby land barren and pollution of forest and water sources, is on the tribal society. This step has been taken in consonance with the judgment of the Supreme Court in Samta case 1997, National Mining Policy 2007 and the established policy of sharing profits with affected people in many major mining dominated countries, which was being demanded for last 15-20 years.

The KKM of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram applauds the Central Govt. for taking this step though belated but in right direction.

The Group of Ministers (GoM) of the then Central Govt. in the year 2011, headed by the then Finance Minister and present Hon'ble President Shri Pranab Mukherjee, had recommended that all the mining units shall have to part 26% of their net profit with the affected people. Later on by making change in it for coal mining and captive coal block 26% of the net profit and for rest of mining units the amount equivalent to Royalty was recommended for this purpose. For this all the mining companies were also agreed. Now after four years it is being implemented that too after reducing it to one third. By this the tribal community feeling itself cheated and because of it there is feeling of resentment in place of pleasure in the people.

Principally the affected people should be made share holder for getting share in the profit, giving

share on the basis of Royalty is not share holding or partnership, underling it, the K.K.M. of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram strongly demands to the Central Govt. that following amendments be incorporated in this Act:

1. All mining units, except coal mines, for this purpose shall apportion the amount equal to Royalty to the District Mineral Foundation as sharing in profit, for which they had agreed. Coal mine units (including captive coal block) should part 26% of their net profit for this purpose.

2. The District Mineral Foundation shall deposit every year 30% amount directly to the bank Account of affected-displaced people, 60% be spent on social infrastructural development and its maintenance, 5% be spent on administrative head and 5% be saved for future.

3. Changing the form of proposed District Mineral Foundation, which is proposed as Government Trust, it should be consisting of affected people and their elected representative and reputed social leaders working for the welfare of the tribal Community.

4. In the MMDR Draft Bill 2011, the provisions for safe closure of the mine (SDF/SCM) were given in Sec. 6.15 to 7.5. In the ordinance it has been completely neglected. It is necessary for safety of the people of the area, development of forest and environments and reutilization of the land in productive activities. Thus the provision for return of land of safely closed mines to their original land owners or their legal heirs should be incorporated.

## **We belong to one Earth family of Mother**

- Dattatreya Hosabale

“To attain a Universal Wellbeing every human being on the planet should realise that all of us belong to one family called the Mother Earth,” said RSS Sahsarkaryavah Shri Dattatreya Hosabale, while speaking on last day of the Conference.

He said innumerable cultures and traditions exist all over the globe, and it is our responsibility to preserve, practice and propagate those cultures. “If we do not practice our culture and traditions, they will vanish and after sometime they may be seen only in museums or find a place in the history books,” he warned.

He said the people lived with Nature, learnt with Nature and dealt with Nature for thousands of years with harmony, love and care for the Nature. “For the last few decades we are going against the Nature and inviting problems. Now we have to pass a resolution to preserve the Nature. First, we have to stop arguing that, Your God is false, our God is true; Your path is wrong, our path is right; Your religion is inferior, our religion is supreme. When we start saluting the same God, which is in you and me then there is no scope for animosity and bitterness,” he added. He suggested that proper documentation of culture and tradition would help immensely for the future generation to grasp the wisdom of ancient people.

## Full Text of the Mysore Declaration

'Resolve for Eternal Peace and Universal Wellbeing'

We recognize the divinity and cosmic unity of all beings and value all the various expressions and manifestations of this divinity and unity by humans throughout history.

We pledge not to disrespect, dishonor or disturb the ancient principle that all the different paths and traditions lead to the same Truth and we can worship the Truth in any form whatsoever.

We realize the importance of all traditions and cultures walking together and working in unison for ensuring global peace and harmony which are necessary for human progress.

Humans are capable of the highest thinking and noblest action. We pledge to do all we can to keep the focus of humanity on simple, sustainable living and enlightened thinking.

We pledge to strive ceaselessly to find the right balance between advancing of human intellect to satisfy material needs and achievement of inner peace and sanctity in all human beings.

We promise to continue our earnest efforts to eradicate feelings of division and discord between people of different castes, creed, races and communities.

We pledge to do everything in our capacity to defeat and stop

forces of destruction and violence that are wreaking havoc in the world.

We pledge to increase our efforts to promote healthy and balanced living in the world.

We pledge to participate in efforts to meet the basic needs of the poorer sections of people.

We recognize all human society as one family and will strive to reflect this ethos in our actions.

We pledge to develop and promote intercultural initiatives including heritage research, education and interpretations, encouraging dialogue between communities of different regions worldwide fostering shared mutual enrichment.

## PRAYERS BY THE ELDERS OF VARIOUS TRADITIONS

Following the welcome note, Elders of various traditions led the gathering in prayers of their cultures. They also explained the meanings of their prayers. Extract of few of those who led the prayers is as follows:

- An Elder from Lithuania said they worship agni which they call Ugnis. He said India is their motherland.

- Eia Erkashi from Roba tradition spoke about how they worship the nature.

- Gilbert Saenz, an elder from Oklahoma, representing the Choctaw nation tradition from present USA spoke on the importance they give to nature in their culture.

- An Elder from Krygyz culture spoke about their prayer, which says the nature of their ultimate God.

- The elder from Hungarian

native tradition said their ancestors are from Bihar in India.

- Budhri Tathi, an elder from the native tribe in Bihar spoke about their prayer to their gods and goddesses for the wellbeing of their tribe and all people.

- An Elder from Slovenia said India is like their mother and we both are like brothers and sisters. He also chanted the Gayatri Mantra.

- Tabby from Germany, a representative of the pre-Christian German tradition, sang their confession prayer, which invokes the various gods.

- Kenya elder from the Khamba tradition spoke about their prayer for humanity, wellbeing of all and the divinity of everything in nature.

- George Ngatai from Maori culture of New Zealand recited a traditional Maori prayer. He spoke

about the Kiola tradition where 'kio' means well and 'la' means being.

- Yezidis representatives spoke about the nature of their prayer and the similarities with the Hindu culture. Their prayer was about their worship of Fire, Earth, Water and Wind.

- Andras Kereszty from Mojova tradition of Hungary spoke about importance of love in their tradition. His prayer was about love of each other and universal wellbeing.

- Ista Pulu, from Arunachal Pradesh recited a prayer to their gods asking for good health and happiness.

- Reinaldo Estepa from the native tradition of Columbia led their prayer which asks for peace, tranquility and wellbeing of one and all. He gave an introduction to their culture.

As part of global Yezidi delegation 15 of us attended the conference. We are working to preserve our ancient culture and to save our community from the ISIS jihadis. The conference helped us immensely in developing the positive frame of mind and approach the problem with a clarity. We are meeting all the global leaders to extend their support to save at least the very few Yezidis remaining in the world. We hope for the best.”



- Darvesh Khoudeida and Husham Milhim from Iraq and Laila Khoudeida from USA.

I am a Korean translator and for the first time attended the conference. I have learnt a great lesson in my life about keeping the mind relaxed even when things go against the wishes. Just go with the flow.



- Jenny Tedesco from South Korea

I work as a Director of Communications in a company in San Francisco. Though we are Christians, we have high regard for Hinduism. All our family members are influenced by the wisdom given in Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and other Hindu scriptures. We even perform puja, mediation and - follow religious practices.



- Katie Kelly from USA

I am the Apprentice of Master Ken Ludden. I enjoyed every minute here by learning real knowledge in the field of ‘Meditation’ which is my lovable topic. I was thinking that Tarot reading, Mystic healing was every-thing but this conference has taught a lesson that Upanishads and other spiritual knowledge is ultimate.



- Damen Liebling from Boston

I work as a site manager for a construction company in Latvia. My Grandmother is a Pagan and Grandfather a Catholic. This conference helped me understand various cultures and traditions from close angle. The one important lesson I learnt is that our mind is like a mirror. If we hate somebody, it (mind) provokes us and if we love someone the mind will guide the path towards harmony.



- Mara Zutkure from Latvia

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## Heritage Building

to sit for them. The eastern most room of this tin roofed building was occupied by late PD Choudhury, the Curator of the museum, the middle room was occupied by late Kamini Kanta Goswami, followed by late Girish Chandra Lahkar, while the last room viz. the eastern most room was occupied by late MC Das, the assistant curator. After I joined the post of the assistant curator of the Assam State Museum, one day I went to meet late Dr PC Choudhury, director

of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. He then advised me to re-organise the KAS as it was functioning like a one man show without any election. Accordingly as per his advice I contacted senior scholars of Guwahati and organised a meeting. In the meeting late Dr Choudhury took the initiative. Late Dr Bisvanarayan Shastri was elected the president, while late Dr Satyendra Nath Sarma became the vice-president, late Dr Prafulladatta Goswami

became the secretary and I as an young member became Joint Secretary. Dr SK Barpujari was appointed the treasurer. The responsibility of the editing of the journal i.e., the journal of the Assam Research Society was taken by Dr Choudhury himself. Of this group of the newly set up office bearers except Dr SK Barpujari and my humble self all have left for heavenly abode.

(The Assam Tribune,  
02 Feb 2015)

## The Foolish Sage



Once upon a time, there was a sage called Deva Sharma who lived in a temple in the outskirts of a town.

He was widely known and respected. People would visit him, and offer him with gifts, food, money and garments to seek his blessings. The gifts that he did not need for himself, he would sell off, and got rich on the proceeds.

And by nature, he trusted nobody.

He never trusted anybody. So, he kept all his money in a bag which he carried under his arm all the time. He would not part with the bag for a single moment.

One day, a swindler came across the sage, and he became sure that the bag this holy man was so possessive of, must surely contain a lot of treasure.

He planned on stealing the bag from the sage, but could not think of a way to do so. He thought, "I cannot make a hole in the temple wall, or jump over the high gates. But I can charm him with sweet words to accept me as his disciple."

He wondered, "If I can stay with him as a disciple, I can win his confidence. When I get an opportunity, I will rob him, and leave this place."

Having planned so, the swindler approached the holy man with reverence, "Om Namah Shivaya! (I bow before Lord Shiva, the God of Destruction)"

With these words, he fell on the sage's feet and said, "O Guruji, Please guide me to the right path

of life. I am fed-up with life, and want to seek peace."

The sage kindly replied, "My son, I will surely guide you. You are blessed because you have come to me to seek peace at this young age".

This was the opportunity the swindler was seeking, and he at once touched the feet of the sage for blessings, "O Guruji, please accept me as your disciple. I will do whatever you ask me to do."

The sage accepted the swindler as his disciple, but only on a condition. He said, "A holy man as me is recommended to spend the night alone without company. This helps me to meditate also. So, you will not be allowed to enter the temple at night. You will sleep in a hut at the gate of the temple."

The swindler agreed, "I shall willingly serve your wishes in every way that you ask me to."

In the evening, the sage initiated the rituals and formally took the swindler as his disciple.

The swindler in return proved himself an obedient disciple. He massaged his hands and feet, wash his feet and helped him with all the rituals along with cleaning the temple. Although the sage was happy with his disciple, the swindler could not gain enough confidence for the sage to part with his bag when he was around.

As days passed by, the swindler started getting frustrated, "He does not trust me enough to leave the bag with me. I can gain access to the



bag if I kill him with a knife or feed him with poison."

When he was thinking all this, the swindler saw a young boy visit the sage. He was the son of one of the sage's followers. He invited the sage, "O Guruji, I have come here personally to invite you to our house for the ceremony of sacred thread. Please accept the invitation to sanctify the ceremony with your kind presence."

The sage accepted the invitation, and after some time started off for the town with the swindler. On the way, they came across a river, where the sage thought of relieving himself. He folded the bagful of money in his robe. He asked his disciple to look after it, "My child, Look after the robe until I return".

This was the opportunity that the swindler was seeking all the while. As soon as the sage went behind the bushes, the swindler ran away with the bagful of money.

When the sage returned, he did not find the disciple around but found his robe lying on the ground. Shocked and anxious, he peered inside only to find his bag of money was gone.

At once he knew what had happened, and began to shout, "Oh. Where are you, you rascal. You have robbed me."

The sage then started trailing the swindler's footsteps, but he reached town. He knew he will not be able to catch hold of him. He stayed the night in town to return empty-handed to his temple next morning.

The wise indeed say:

***Do not be taken in by the sweet words of a swindler.***