Dharma
The Order of Life

- Values Now and Then
- Gaia Theory
- Tyagaraja
TREE OF THE ISSUE

BANYAN TREE

Bargat, bor, ber (Hindi), Ala (Tamil), Peral (Malayalam), Mari (Telegu), War (Marathi), Indian Fig Tree (English).

Branching so broad and long that in the ground
The bending twigs take root and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillared shade...
High over-arched with echoing walks between.

I remembered a picture once seen of a whole village settled beneath the canopy of a banyan tree. Other memories came - legend of folklore which told of ghosts and dark spirits inhabiting old banyan trees. Later in the day, I came again that way. The sun was well below the horizon and this time I saw an evil old giant, his snake-like arms extended, waiting to crush some helpless victim.

There are those for whom this tree, with its ability to support its growing weight by an ever-widening circle of root-like branches, represents eternal life. By this it is worshipped and special prayers are offered to it in Vaisnavism.

The banyan is an outstanding example of epiphytic growth. A seed may come to rest among the leaves of a palm or another tree. Here roots appear which soon thicken and strengthen and eventually streets. To the Hindus this is Holy Union - to others, probably, another story of beauty and grace!

The bark is grey and smooth. From every branch hang clumps of brown, eventually white and on reaching the ground take root and grow into separate trees and the tree widens and covers an ever-increasing area. One famous specimen was reputed to have a circumference of 600m, so great that 20,000 people could shelter within its columned shade! The leaves are large and leathery and glossy green.

The tree appears to bear no flowers, only fruit. Actually, the flowers are concealed in the fleshy receptacle commonly referred to as the fig. The figs ripen between February and May, when they become bright red and are then much sought after by birds.

The name 'Banyan', according to one authority, was given to a tree growing in the Persian Gulf, under which some Banyas or Hindu traders had built a pagoda. To Hindus, the tree is sacred.

Banyan timber is porous and very durable. The aerial roots, though, provide stronger timber and are used for tent poles and cart yokes. From the bark and the young hanging roots, a coarse fibre is obtained, used for rope making. Bird lime is made from the sticky, milky sap which also has medicinal qualities and the leaves are used as plasters and poultices. The original home of the banyan is South and Western India and among the sub-Himalayan tracts.

(Flowering Trees and Shrubs in India - D.V. Cowen).

SAVE INDIA'S TREES!
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BOOK REVIEW
Dear Editor,

I had read about SPIC-MACAY. However, I had the fortune of experiencing it last week when the local chapter hosted my lecture on New Light on Geeta Govindam.

Truly, this is a wonderful movement. Later, as I read the complimentary copies of your magazine, THE EYE, I was thrilled to see so many like minded souls writing on topics close to my heart. My work here in the United States, covers not only the teaching of dance and music but also educating and encouraging the practice of Indian crafts and promoting the study of the scriptures and philosophy. I pray that this movement may never lose sight of its original goal as it grows.

Vasanti Gopinath Jayaswal
7867, Yorktown Avenue
Los Angeles
California 900045.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the last issue of THE EYE in which tourism is the focus. It is a very interesting and enlightening issue and one can see the bright and dark side of tourism. We are working for Hazaribagh to be declared a Green District, as an eco-cultural reserve. The Hazaribagh region is, as you know, very rich in natural and cultural heritage. We have discovered and highlighted several important Paleochronological and historic sites including important Buddhist sites, of note being the Sitagarha Buddhist Complex which is being badly bombarded by the Border Security Force in an adjacent area of the hill. The ASI has come and filed a report but to no avail. The bombing continues.

Bulu Imam
Human Ecology Centre
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Bihar 825301.

Errata: The illustrated chart in 'Cough 'Nap'ping' (Vol. II No. 4-The Last Periphery: Tourism in Asia) was conceptualised by Ms. Usha Ramanathan. The omission is sincerely regretted.

Dear Editor,

I read Mr. A.G. Krishna Menon's article in THE EYE on Pg.37 of your issue on Tourism. Below the photograph of Parwaon Ki Haveli on pg.38 it has been mentioned that 'the photograph has been taken from a place where another haveli stood and it was broken to facilitate viewing by tourists'. This statement of the writer is absolutely wrong, false and not based on facts.

I was the District Magistrate, Jaisalmer, during 1980-81 and all the encroachments falling on the way leading to the haveli and those around the haveli were removed by me. No haveli had been broken either in Jaisalmer or at the above place. All the unauthorised constructions etc. were removed and the place was made even. The removal of these constructions were praised in all quarters.

The writer has not got complete information and in his enthusiasm has stated that the other haveli has been demolished to facilitate viewing by tourists.

I hope you will correct this mistake and inform the writer that it is one. I have tried hard to maintain the beauty of old monuments in Jaisalmer and have removed encroachments to facilitate good transport systems. It is true that by the removal of encroachments, viewing of monuments has been facilitated.

Satyanarayan Singh
Member Secretary
Rajasthan State Backward Class Commission.

REJOINER

Dear Editor,

Apropos to the reference made to the alleged error in my article, this is to confirm that I stand by my statement and that a couple of old homes were indeed demolished to create space in front of Parwaon Ki Haveli. I understand from reliable sources that this was done in connection with Shri Sanjeeva Reddy's visit to Jaisalmer and may have occurred before the incumblency of the writer who brought the matter to your attention.

A.G. Krishna Menon
N-84, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110017.
In the whirligig of living in the post-modern amusement park, not many of us are inclined to walk the quiet outer edge of the park and ponder on a word that has cropped up all too often - dharma. Now, this word is not as mystifying or intimidating as it is made out to be. In fact, as we read article after article which we put together for this issue, the meaning got clearer, and what do you know, simpler too.

What emerged first of all was that the quintessential nature of the culture of India seemed to lie not so much in the visible evolutions of its art forms, dress or food, but in the unique process of enquiry into the human condition, or the order of life, as it were. It also seemed that the people who lived near the Sindhu river, now categorised as Hindus, as one of our authors, Vishnu Bhat reminds us, had all the time in the world to create not so much an ordained or prescribed religion called Hinduism, but to stand at the edge of life's mysteries and look for secrets beyond.

The simple truth of the word 'dharma' is that it has elements of concepts of law, righteousness, duty and basic morality. Chaturvedi Badrinath in his essay, links dharma to universal responsibility which also includes a state of answerableness. This answerableness to oneself, as opposed to a central god-figure in the Semitic tradition, is unique to Buddhism and the so called 'Hindu' tradition.

Naturally, an enquiry into dharma would behoove an examination into the nature of adharma. What is their relationship to citizenship? A.S. Rangarajan asks whether citizenship is mere patriotism to the nation-state or does it entail a development of the human self?

Sir Thomas Taylor said, "There are, of course, moral duties which the law will enforce. But beyond the sphere of duty which is legally enforceable, there is a vast range of significant behaviour in which the law does not and ought not to intervene....Now this feeling of obedience to the unenforceable is the very opposite of the attitude that whatever is technically possible is allowable....This power of self-discipline is the very opposite of the fatal arrogance which asserts, whether in government, science, industry or personal behaviour, that whatever is technically possible is licit...."

The summary of Taylor's words is....dharma.
The lotus is much esteemed by the Taoists and is held to be a symbol of mathematical perfection or openheartedness. This delicate silk painting is one of a set of album leaves by Yun Ping (1670-1710)
The Tao that can be told is not the Eternal Tao. These are the opening words of Lao-Tzu’s Tao-te-ching. In other words, the concept of ‘Tao’ cannot be explained at the level of the mind. On the other hand one has to go through the process of unification with the unknown, although it literally means ‘The way to go’. (Before I proceed I must state that ‘Tao’ is a concept full of paradoxes and that one must necessarily bear this in mind in order to avoid confusions of any kind.)

Tao is that elusive, invisible force which is responsible for the functioning of the universe. All earthly and heavenly harmony is achieved because of the power of Tao. What then can one attribute disharmony to? Simply this: the absence of Tao. Therefore it is said that Tao is ever inactive and yet there is nothing it does not do.

The most important aspect of Tao however, is the fact that it is an extremely quiet entity, one that requires a highly trained intuition in order to grasp it.

What is intuition? Intuition is one’s capability to sense, and therefore grasp that which is invisible to the senses. This particular power originates in the right brain, which is the seat of one’s creativity. Therefore a direct relationship can be drawn between Tao and creativity. One, of course, must take care not to forget that it is Tao, the ultimate and the unknown, which designs and creates all things. Therefore we can see that it is a very closely linked chain.

If Tao is the ultimate power of perfection, then one might wonder why we cannot or rather do not associate ‘prayer’ with it. Yes, Tao is the ultimate godhead. There is, however, just one problem. It being merely a concept, the human mind is incapable of relating to it. Our compulsive need to personify a concept and therefore be able to relate to it is one of many human limitations. For what is ‘god’ but the personification of the ultimate power of perfection? The minute one personifies, there comes into existence a duality of ‘you and I’ which becomes irrelevant in relation to the Tao because it associates, essentially, the unification or oneness with the unknown.

Because the eye gazes but can catch no glimpse of it
It is called elusive
Because the ear listens but cannot hear it
It is called raredisf
Because the hand feels for it but cannot find it
It is called infinitesimal.
These three because they cannot be further scrutinized blend into one
Tao begets one; one begets two; two begets three; all things
Therefore the sage embraces are one

Nanditha Ramprasad, 18, is doing Journalism at the Mount Carmel College in Bangalore.
He filled his free hours reading Malayalam novels. Baffled by the fact that all evil characters in fiction were Muslim, when his own father and uncles

I arrived in Beyapore with a sense of awe. I stumbled through the dark lane that stopped abruptly at a grill gate. I clanged it, eager to enter.

A young boy emerged and bade me in. Instead of taking me up to the house he turned into the garden that seemed more like a primeval forest. A light flashed on my face leaving me unnerved. All around was silence, sharpened by the chipped sounds of cicadas. Where are we, I exclaimed, stumbling over a pile of books. “This is my office,” said a man’s hoarse voice. The torch flashed again. Crouched in a canvas chair was Bashir, shirtless, a fragile old man with a stark lived-in face. Around him scattered, were books, a pile of newspapers, a table lamp with a long cord that curved under my feet like a still snake sending a chill up my

spine, and in the distance, a cassette recorder playing softly a ghazal of Mehdi Hassan. “I do not understand the words but I understand the tune,” he said in a manner of explanation. “I cannot see you in the dark,” I mumbled. “Could we go into the house?” He spat on the ground, cleared his throat, coughed for a long time. “There are cobras in the forest,” he said heightening my discomfort. Then picking up his books and the torch, he led the way towards the house, a small unpretentious structure with a broad verandah and a parapet where he settled down, his legs crossed. I saw his frail frame silhouetted in the half light that trickled out of an inner room. As he talked, the frame gained dimensions, became larger than life.

“I believe in happiness,” he began. “It is a condition without pain.” And it comes, I realised, only after knowing the nature of pain which Bashir had

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**TRIBUTES**

**Passage of a Pilgrim**

ANEES JUNG

When I heard the news of his death I was not surprised. For Vaikom Muhammed Bashir was an old man, an ill man. But I sensed an infinite sadness, the kind I would not have felt even at the passing away of someone bound to me mechanically by blood or lineage.

I met Bashir only once. He was not what I expected - a sedate Muslim gentleman, spouting respectable inanities. There was something wild about him - his appearance, his manner, his unconventional but true understanding of life. He was as different from the Muslim men of my background as the coconut palms of Kerala are from the sturdy tamarind trees of the Deccan.

He talked about things that were true, that are part of every life but are never articulated. He gave them a voice, wrote what he saw with his heart, in a language that came to him naturally, that everyone around him claimed and lived by. Unlike his great grandfather who came from Arabia, but never read or wrote Malayalam despite marrying a local woman from Vaikom, or his father Sheikh Abdul Qader, who when angry swore in Arabic, not in Malayalam. In those days Muslims did not study Malayalam which they felt was the language of kafirs. Bashir was among the first of his generation who read it at school.

were such good men, Bashir decided that he would grow up to be a writer. He first wrote some 50 years ago - beginning with political pamphlets, then short stories. I have not read Bashir in the language he wrote and dreamed. Yet, even in translation his voice rings loud and clear. Reading his early classic, Childhood Friend, I have wondered if Majid, the young hero who lost Suhra, his childhood love, was not Bashir himself. And the prisoner in Adoor Gopalakrishnan’s film based on his short story, Walls, where Bashir so poignantly evokes the dilemma and glory of love that, like a slow bud, flowers gently between a man and woman, both prisoners, separated by a prison wall. Was the man who wrote these simple tales of love a romantic? Nursing fragmented images of the writer, I went to meet the man whom everyone lovingly called the Sultan of Beyapore.
Appukuttan Nair

RADHA SEKHAR

Indian classical theatre and its connoisseurs bemoan the death of Appukuttan Nair, a true upasoka, a perfectionist in aesthetics and a silent doer. By profession an engineer (he retired as Public Health Chief Engineer), this scion of the aristocratic Ambalapatt family of Central Travancore, was literally born to the accompaniment of the chenda, maddalam and ilathalam. He later lived his life entirely for the development and promotion of the Indian classical theatre of Kerala - Kathakali and Kutiyyattam.

Kutiyyattam, the forerunner of Krishnattam, Ramanattam and Kathakali, is the only living classical theatre where the actors speak in Sanskrit according to the Sanskrit traditions of centuries ago, when it was the spoken language of the country. It later merged with the local vernacular language, Malayalam, but still retained its classicism.

When Appukuttan Nair was a member of Kalamandalam in Cheruruthuruthy in the sixties, Kutiyyattam was on its last legs. He started Kutiyyattam there with just two students. Gradually, more schools were opened with stalwarts like Ammanur Madhava Chakyar and Mani Madhava Chakar as teachers. But Nair’s greatest achievement was MARGI, the gurukulam started by him for the traditional imparting of Kathakali and Kutiyyattam. MARGI has produced gems like Vijayakumar, Madhu, Inachakkadu Ramachandran Pillai, polished by teachers like Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair and Mankulam Vishnu Namboodiri. The dying art of Nangiarkoothu, the female ‘wing’ of Kutiyyattam was brought to life again by Appukuttan Nair. Sati and Usha, both of MARGI are outstanding artistes today.

Engineering and aesthetics, a rare combination, found their paramount blending in this supremely artistic personality. He delved deep into ancient texts like the Tantrasamuchaya and Shilpa Shastra and translated into reality our priceless theatre construction heritage. The koothambalam at Cheruruthuruthy and later, at Kalakshetra, Madras, in association with Rukmini Devi Arundale, bear testimony to the genius and dedication of this self-effacing and extraordinary personality. He was elected to the executive council of the Kendra Sangeet Natak Akademi.

He added new dimensions in the stage presentation of Nalacharitam, Banayuddham, Nararakshavravadham and so on. Old plays which had vanished from the performance schedule for over half a century, like, Vichinnabhishekam and Kharavadham were being revived by him. Appukuttan Nair did the same thing with Kutiyyattam. The Archeryachukkam Acts, acknowledged to be the last word in acting and histrionics were honed to perfection. The prevailing Kutiyyattam repertoire which could hardly span twenty five nights of performance was extended to more than a hundred nights.

The bearded, ochre-clad figure with sparkling eyes, explaining Sanskrit verses every Friday at the satyagraha at Vallisala will be sorely missed.

Will there ever be another like him?

Centre: Appukuttan Nair

Anees Jung is a well known columnist and writer. She has travelled extensively in India and many of her stories are about simple, rural women. She lives in Delhi.

Radha Sekhar works for INTACH (The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural heritage) and is their Convenor for Thrissur and Alappuzha, Kerala. She is actively involved with and writes on the arts.
Krishna Chaitanya

RAGHAV A R. MENON

Krishna Chaitanya used to be likened in his lifetime to men like Thomas Mann and Aldous Huxley and for good reason too. For, while it is true that he was a writer of forbidding erudition and penetration, forty books in as many years, during which he also worked as a government employee on the usual nine to five basis and much beyond regimen until he retired, it was not his books alone that give us a rounded view of this extraordinary man and his work.

In his books he pondered on several facets of the human predicament, from the nature of freedom... from its physics and chemistry to the transcendence and splendour which is the true destination of its seeker. He roamed freely in the widening empire of the human condition from every direction of the compass. For example, he believed that it must be possible to call your ideas and thoughts to account for in their application to life as lived. For, he used to say, that if a man lived on the salary and perks of service to an institution, however exalted, he has lived in vain. For in that protected womb of his service rules, he can never know the nature and order of the universe of which he is inhabitant. The good householder, in the meaning of Gurdjieff, can come to exist only as a free-lancer. He lamented this fact of life, even as he lived it. He believed that only a freelaencer knows that there is a beneftice that supports and helps it on to a true finding. He pointed out that when you have an insurance, you never grow to accept the risk of life and interpreted the Draupadī vastrahāran episode of the Mahābhārata as the development of Draupadī in those few moments of the assault on her modesty, from the fearful service officer to the courage of the freelaencer when she abandoned the grip on her garment and let Krishna do the rest.

Krishna Chaitanya’s prodigious reach into science, Greek, Latin and other languages gave him a startling penetration into man’s ground state awareness of himself and the world around him. This awareness and its incompleteness bothered him. For example, he used to say in the fifties, that modern physics is already grazing the outer membranes of the Upanishads and one day, very soon, it will collide headlong with it or be absorbed in it. This was twenty years before Fritjof Capra and Isaac Asimov and the authors of The Life Of A Cell and the Wu Li Masters brought a new angle and language into modern physics.

Chaitanya was as much a master of Malayalam literature as he was of English. He used to wonder why traditional societies were shy with prose, preferring poetry to the hard slap of prose. Plato went so far as to say that the art of writing would atrophy the brain’s power to retain and keep fresh the direct grasp without mediation of the reality around. Krishna Chaitanya believed that prose developed in communities at the terminal stage of the evolution of the human species. For, when you write prose, you call a witness. You can be pinned down to what you wrote. You were suddenly made responsible for what was merely a creative act of the moment. In the old days it was bad enough that people wrote always in poetry which distanced the writer from the meaning of his writing, but they would make one more transfer of responsibility by making a parrot say the piece or make Ganesh the stenographer of a dictation. Richard Burton mentions somewhere, how as a young man launched into acting, he found it difficult to play his role unless he was buried under wig and beard and moustaches. In his street clothes he was always tongue tied and fluffed his lines. Chaitanya was prolific in his writing besides his basic contribution in the Trilogy of Freedom, The Mahābhārata and the Bhagavad Gīta, the moral predicament and the predicament of truth. The realpolitik that many people perceive in the buried throb of the Gīta was the issue of truth and the kerbside morality of man in his social and moral continuum.

It was a rich life he lived, a life that had been hijacked by a mind that was as fecund as a piece of earth after the rains, bustling into bloom. There is a great stillness and an eerie quiet after his passing. It will take some time before we are able to take stock of his rich contribution to the world of the mind.

Dr. Raghava Menon is an eminent musicologist, critic and writer. He has written several books on music and is a scholar on several other subjects as well. Dr. Menon lives in Delhi.
Ustad Zahiruddin Dagar

RUKMINI SEKHAR

I used to learn from him, but much more than music. Bamaji, as Ustad Zahiruddin Dagar was affectionately known to both his students and family, taught me about sacrifice and familial love. When the door closed behind us for an hour of music lesson, Bamaji would take me into a charmed world of the most austere music, ascending step by step up the ladder of notes till the raga waved and meandered its way through our beings. He would weave a spell and create an aura of sheer musical devotion. My mind, often flitting like a mad monkey, would be tugged to attention by a gentle cough. For most part of the session, Bamaji’s eyes would be closed and finally, when they did open, it was to announce the end of the class.

Suddenly, we lost contact. I got busy with new work and pressures were high. Yet, we somehow never lost musical contact. Every time we met after one of his concerts, we would pick up where we left off, he with a pat on my head and me with a slight sense of guilt at not going for my riyaz.

Thus to see Bamaji lying there in his final shroud, grey and frail, gave me a sense of disconnection. The musician had ceased to be but more importantly, was the cause of Dhrupad whose dying burden the man had shouldered bravely in the face of so much opposition. The musical form of Dhrupad was Bamaji’s life force - a force so powerful that he stayed single, never having married lest his attention got divided. He wedded himself to his brother Faiyazuddin’s family with whom he lived, nurturing them gently and firmly. After the latter’s death in 1989, Bamaji became everything to them. So, the heart-wrenching grief with which the family mourned him was not surprising.

The Dagars are going one by one. Theirs is a priceless legacy of devotion and determination, namely that of sustaining an ancient and powerful system of music that was all too ready to join the ranks of extinct art forms. Dhrupad is a demanding task master who enjoins its practitioners to a certain austerity of attitude and style, relinquishing the more populist mien that khayal enjoys. A dhrupadgat is a very special person who having endured the angst of rejection, still performs with dignity, for Dhrupad is all dignity.

Zahiruddin and Faiyazuddin performed together in the jugalbandhi style, that is they sang as a duo. While Faiyazuddin had a sweeter, more mellifluous voice, Zahiruddin’s was slightly gritty and rasping. Yet, sweetness of voice has never been the prime ingredient or requirement in Indian classical music. This has always been subservient to wisdom and devotion, style and technique, all of which were the distinguishing features of Bamaji’s music.

Zahiruddin Dagar represented the nineteenth generation of the Dagar dynasty. He had to do justice to the reputation of such distinguished musicians like his grandfather, Allah Bande Khan, father, Nasiruddin Dagar, his uncles, Rahimuddin and Husainuddin and brothers, Moinuddin and Aminuddin.

Bamaji had a soft and gentle approach towards people, not to mention humorous. Very often, he would, in the middle of riyaz, juggle with a musical phrase so that it appeared awkward and funny. Cricket was another love of his and discussions of scores would occupy the post riyaz hour.

Zahiruddin Dagar will remain in our memories as a bhakta, a teacher and a pujari of Dhrupad.
Order of Life & Essence of Indian Civilisation

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how wrong words, if used regularly, cut us off from that deeper energy which runs through the lives of individuals and makes them cling together in one large society called humanity. For reasons of space this article will be published in two parts. Part II will be in continued in the next issue.

VISHNU BHAT

PART I

India is unique in so far as it provides an excellent example of how invading foreigners have, for purposes of their own understanding, created a set of words to describe a people as well as a world view that was alien and incomprehensible to them. When, in the course of time, the natives adopted those words, the same words gave them an identity which was the very opposite of the one that their own traditions had given them. It was an identity that changed not only their perceptions of themselves but also their perceptions of others. Gradually, their methods of contemplating the world also seem to have changed. As a result, the only intellectual framework (a framework in which they would now have their social, religious and political perceptions) that the modern, educated, thinking classes came to possess was the one that had been created for them by a set of people who had nothing to do with their culture and world view. All these constitute the successive chapters of medieval and modern Indian history and affect Indian life more today than ever before.

In recent years, there have been assumptions that there is something called Hinduism, that Hinduism is the national form of Indian religion, that Indian civilisation is purely Hindu civilisation, that in all its movements it is primarily religious and that, its chief direction being other-worldly, it is radically world-denying. These have been the assumptions behind practically the whole of Western thinking on India. Each one of them is a huge misconception. What is, however, astonishing is that they have also become the assumptions behind much of the modern Indian thinking on India. Given a proper understanding of what the founders of Indian civilisation were talking about, one must say that these modern assumptions (or rather misconceptions) have succeeded in concealing from our view, the main issues that arose in Indian life - issues which could be seen as reflecting the main issues of human life almost everywhere.

The notion that Indian civilisation is Hindu civilisation carried within itself a reversal of the main direction of Indian thought which flowed from one centre - the concept of Dharma. Of all the consequences that subsequently followed that reversal, three may be mentioned.

First, whereas in all its movements the evident concern of Indian civilization was with the human condition, it now came to be portrayed as a religion of the people called Hindus and, therefore, something limited, one of the religions among the various religions of the world.

Secondly, though essentially secular in their nature, and demonstrably universal, the ancient Indian perceptions of the human condition now came to be seen as a particular form of theodicy; and since the theodicy was seen as
‘Hindu’ and ‘Hindus’ as ‘a majority’, it followed that any group that did not accept the elements of Hindu theodicy was ‘a minority’ and a religious minority at that.

Thirdly, starting with the wrong premises - which were not resisted - that Hinduism is the religion of the majority in India, the British soon worked out their political implications, which were uncritically accepted by persons like Gopalkrishna Gokhale, so much so that the notion of ‘minority’ was firmly established in a society where the main concern was always with the universal order enfolded human destiny and, as such, where the question of ‘majority’ in modern India can be directly traced.

The above argument is tenable, for if it were true that Indian civilisation was Hindu civilization, would it not be a legitimate question for Indian Muslims to ask: ‘Have we made no contribution at all to the growth of civilisation in India?’ The Indian Christians of the Marthomite order can also legitimately raise a similar question. Muslims have been an integral part of India for nearly eight centuries, and the Syrian Christians (who are also the most ancient Christians of the world), for nearly nineteen centuries. How, then, will their question be answered? Moreover, the Buddhists and the Jains of India are not Hindus, and, of late, the Sikhs have begun asserting that they also are not.

The most interesting irony of it all is that those who are called Hindus are not Hindu either. The concept, if we rightly understand the character of Indian thought, is a remorseless product of what were, from the time of their inception, ‘wrong words’ leading, by a series of wrong steps as well as by insensible degrees, to a false consciousness.

The true identity of Indian civilization has been Dharmic and not Hindu. The word ‘Hindu’ itself is not to be found in any of the ancient or even medieval Indian texts. The word was coined, perhaps, for the first time by the

The truth, however, is that the thinkers of ancient India were addressing themselves not to the ‘Hindus’; instead they were concerned with ‘mankind’, with the ordering of human life. It is a fact of profoundest significance.
Some well meaning modern thinkers are likely to argue that the words ‘Hindu’ and ‘Hinduism’ have been in use for a long time and cannot be abandoned overnight without inviting confusion. The question here is not one of words but that of substance. Rather, the question is whether these words have not, besides obscuring from our purview, the ancient Indian understanding of human life, also altered our political and moral perceptions today. We seem to have moved away from dharma at a time when we need it most. Even Vivekananda and Gandhi spoke of ‘Hindu dharma’ as the essence of Indian civilisation, which, moreover, they considered to be religious in nature. Further, they saw religion as the true genius of India. There is no misunderstanding more serious in nature than the supposition that Indian culture is fundamentally religious in the sense in which the words ‘religion’ and ‘religious’ have been understood in the West—belief in God, a central revelation of God, a messenger of that revelation, an ‘authentic book’ containing the life and sayings of that messenger, a central code of commandments, a corpus of ecclesiastical laws meant to regulate opinion and behaviour and a central priesthood to supervise that regulation. Dharma is evidently none of these. It is, on the contrary, profoundly secular.

The word ‘secular’ has however, been misunderstood. It conveys either an attitude of anti-religion or that of equal respect for all religions. The first attitude has been mindless as the second has been insincere. Indian culture is essentially secular in the sense that its views of man as well as of the world are derived not from anything outside the world but from the inherent nature of man, which carries within itself both ‘immortality’ and ‘death’ and the human privilege to choose the one or the other. All Indian explanations of man are evidently located in man himself, in the very structure of his being. The concept of dharma enshrines the totality of human personality that was worked out for centuries not by Hindu thinkers, but by dharmic thinkers.

The concept of dharma is indisputably a secular view of life and not a religious one.

The questions that ought to be asked are: What is dharma? What is the nature of human order? What are the origins of adharma?
of those explanations, and dharma is indisputably a secular view of life and not a religious one.

Dharma, in actual fact, cuts across the very polarity that exists, according to the West, between religion and secularism. This polarity has deeply affected and still continues to affect, the history of the modern west.

It must be observed that in the wake of the Enlightenment, the religious-secular controversy had aroused such disturbing passions that if a view was secular, it was considered to be fiercely anti-religious. A secular view of life, which was diametrically opposed to the view of Christianity, in turning into an "ism" soon became an ideology from which every human striving that was not of the material world alone was resolutely eliminated. This is not the case with the dharma thought of India. The Indian mind never thought in terms of contesting polarities of the 'either-or' order. Therefore, it would be yet another instance of misunderstanding if the statement that dharma is profoundly secular is taken to mean that it is, for that reason, anti-religion.

The real problem is that of conveying a fundamental concept of one culture to the followers of another. Presenting the first half of this problem, Macro Pallis, in his book entitled, A Buddhist Spectrum, says, "The word dharma which the Indian traditions have rendered familiar, has no really adequate counterpart in the terminology of European languages......Today, one is feeling this lack more than ever, because the truths to which dharma corresponds in the field of metaphysical ideas and spiritual and even social applicability are among the ones which, by the questions they raise, are troubling peoples' minds most acutely at this moment'.

Those questions range from the most physical to the most spiritual parts of human life. For many it is a question, in the first place, of life itself, of keeping oneself alive, of escaping the deadly spasms of hunger, disease and the killing of one man by another. For some, the question is that of freedom from fear for fear debases human worth. For yet others, the question is that of obtaining knowledge of the structure of being, of the relationship between self-love and love of others, of the ends of life. For some, it is bringing these into relationships with law and political power. For some others the question is that of standing, if that were possible, at the edge of the universe and looking into the mysteries beyond to take full measure of human life itself and its meaning.

For some the question is that of standing, if that were possible, at the edge of the universe and looking into the mysteries beyond to take full measure of human life itself and its meaning.

Dharma turns out to be a discussion of these and many other questions. But after these questions are discussed, debated and answered, one more question still remains, namely that of overcoming the human condition. This is to be achieved in transcendence through numerous acts of daily living and relationships. This is the ultimate dharma.

The Mahabharata defines dharma in the following ways:

- 'Dharma is so called because it sustains, upholds the people; hence, whatever sustains is dharma.'
- 'Dharma is propounded with the aim of securing the good of all living beings; hence, whatever fulfills that aim is dharma.'
- 'What comes from love of all beings is dharma; this is the criterion to judge dharma by dharma'.

(To be continued in the next issue).

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What is responsibility? Is it a commandment of God? Or a concept of moral ought in some ethical theory? Or an idea extracted from a particular view of human history? Or is it simply a state of answerableness to the given laws of a society, that is nothing more than legal accountability, and that too, not as answerableness to the human other with whom one is in relationship of one variety or another, but as answerableness to the authority of the state? Do these, either differently or in some kind of combination, constitute responsibility?

CHATURVEDI BADRINATH

Taking its own idea of answerableness, religious or secular to be the only true one for the whole mankind, each has tried to bring all the rest into obedience. Nazis on Parade, 1937.

Is Holiness the Dalai Lama is in today's world undoubtedly a great moral force for human dignity and freedom. If, like those who in their times were likewise a moral force, he often speaks in the tone of anguish; he always speaks in the voice of compassion. His thoughts are on that sense of universal responsibility which alone can provide a firm foundation for individual freedom and social peace, for a world where conflicts are settled not by the force of weapons, but by the awareness of one man's responsibility for another. His extended essay on that subject reflects that concern.

But what is responsibility? Is it a commandment of God? Or a concept of moral ought in some ethical theory? Or an idea extracted from a particular view of human history? Or is it simply a state of answerableness to the given laws of a society that is, nothing more than legal accountability, and that too, not as answerableness to the human other with whom one is in relationship of one variety or another, but as answerableness to the authority of the state? Do these, either differently or in some kind of combination, constitute responsibility?

If they do, then not only can there be in the idea of responsibility little that is genuinely universal except in the formal sense of answerableness;
but that, on the contrary, it would provide a most fertile ground for discord, hatred, and violence. That is because the question: ‘answerable to whom, or answerable to what?’, has been settled so very differently in the different religions of the world, and no less differently in modern law and political thought, that it has only divided mankind into mutually hostile religious faiths and political ideologies. Taking its own idea of answerableness, religious or secular to be the only true one for the whole mankind, each has tried to bring all the rest under its obedience, mostly by force, but quite often also by persuasion and genuine conversion. As a result, if there has been moral progress in human living, there has been also, in the very name of answerableness, the killing of countless men, women and children down the centuries.

Or is the idea of man’s responsibility a product of good-natured but lazy minds given to dreaming idealistic, utopian dreams? If it is that, then it is that only—a utopian dream. Its outcome can be hardly anything more substantial than finely crafted sentences, sounding very nice, often moving in their appeal, beautiful and—empty. It has no more force than dreams have.

Two conclusions can unquestionably be drawn as much from the social and political history of the Semitic religions as from their theology. The same two conclusions follow also from the actual history and philosophy of the secularist Western political ideologies. From the very beginning of their career a clear distinction is inherent, in the first place, running like a deep stream underneath, between answerable to and responsible for; one a legalistic idea, the other a profoundly ethical one. Their internal history is one of struggle between the two. The legalistic idea prevails, as much in secular thought as in theology, but the ethical one does not disappear.

For example, a decisive break from the ‘answerable to’ of Judaic theology and law and the teachings of Jesus and his life are centred in the ‘responsible for’, or the ‘responsible towards’, of redeeming love. In their deepest essence they substitute love for law.

This is manifest, dramatically, in his response to the woman taken in adultery and about to be stoned to death, and, poignantly, in his response to those who were putting him to death. In one case, he maintains that no one, himself touched with sin, has moral authority to judge others; and who he is above sin, as he himself, would not judge. In the other case, he invokes forgiveness on the ground that they did not know what they were doing. Likewise, within Islam, Sufism is a most radical shift from the fear of God to the love of God, which, together with the belief in a divine unity pervading the universe, is a shift also from the narrow answerableness in Islamic theology to the universal responsibility of love. That shift was influenced by Christian mysticism, Neo-Platonism, Buddhism, and the Vedanta is an undeniable fact, as Reynold Nicholson shows. What is also undeniable is the fact, as remained rooted, as the Church did, in the idea of being answerable to. The two differed as regards the question: answerable for what?

The same conflict shows up in secularist thought, more especially in the competing political ideologies of the west, and, within them, in the ideas of law. The way to write a far more meaningful history of them than has been done so far is, I think, to raise a question concerning their thinking on one man’s responsibility for another. There is in them very little of that. However, the problem remains as fundamental to them as it is to Semitic religions—they share it alike. The idea of answerableness prevails. The only difference is that the answerableness to God and to his revealed commandments is replaced by man’s answerableness to the State and its laws, or to History and its materialistic telos. The ways of the State, like the ways of God, lie in regulating, judging, punishing, and rewarding, bringing all to its obedience. The secularist ideologies, on the question of responsibility for others, wear the same garb as the Semitic religions do. They put forth the same argument, “Yes, we are responsible for others: to bring our enlightenment to those that are deep in ignorance; to those who live by tradition, bring our rationality, the only possible rationality; to those who live in the fear of nature, bring our science that can control nature; to bring to the less civilised, a more superior civilisation.” The secularist ideologies brought to mankind as many wars, and as much suffering, as religion did.

Yet, that is not all that they did. The doctrine of one’s absolute answerableness to the State and its laws is resisted, especially in Britain.
Because dharmic thought evolved a very different method of understanding the human condition, the ideas of dharma and bodhisattva arose not from any prior suppositions of theology or philosophy, but from the essence of man's being. Their sweep contains all living beings.

and America, on the ground that the individual has a prior moral right against the State, a moral right to disobey unjust laws. Ronald Dworkin

The secularist ideologies on responsibility wear the same garb as the Semitic religions do.

is an eminent advocate of that view. But it is not exclusively a secularist view, although its setting is undoubtedly modern. It has a long lineage which can be traced to early Christianity. However, a most central issue in political thought and law today, it does not move towards the idea of universal responsibility, even if it moves away from the idea of any absolute answerability.

The second conclusion that can be drawn from the interrelated histories of Semitic religions and modern secularism is that, surrounded by numerous presuppositions as regards man and society, they do not yield an idea of one man's responsibility for another that can be genuinely universal. That is because those presuppositions are not shared universally. For that very reason, not only do they not provide a common ground where one man is united with another, regardless of their faiths and beliefs and ways of life, but that they cannot.

This is increasingly realised by western thinkers. David Bohm and Alasdair MacIntyre are two notable examples. Bohm maintains that the deeply-rooted habit of fragmenting what is unified, manifest in all intellectual disciplines of the modern west, in the natural sciences above all, will only produce a false world view, and then unhappiness and violence. Macintyre argues that the moral defects and failures of Marxism and liberal individualism arise from the ethos of the distinctively modern world; and that nothing less than a rejection of a large part of that ethos will provide us with a rationally and morally defensible standpoint from which to judge and act. But that is still far away from obtaining a genuinely universal idea of responsibility.

This, then, is the background with which we can approach Indian thought, of which Buddhism is an integral part. It is there, in dharma and in the idea of bodhisattva, that we find a most systematic expression of the idea of man's universal responsibility for others.

It may first be mentioned that, because Dharmic thought evolved a very different method of understanding the human condition, the ideas of dharma and bodhisattva arose not from any prior suppositions of theology or philosophy, but from the essence of man's being. They depend neither on faith in the existence of God, nor on His revealed commandments, nor on the given laws of society. Their sweep contains all living beings. They are not limited to the faithful, the virtuous, and fellow-believers. For that reason they are truly universal.

But those two ideas are, even today, surrounded by several misconceptions as to what they are. Dharma is perceived as 'religion', which clearly it is not. And bodhisattva is often perceived as a likeable do-gooder, if a little pompous, often like the idiom, Prince Mishkin, of Dostoyevsky, himself good but unable to change a cruel and unjust world.
While dharma and bodhisattva will require a series of detailed, and patient, reflection, it will suffice for the moment if we consider the following two points related to them.

In asking "what is dharma?", and "what is bodhisattva?", we are seeking not their definitions but their attributes. Western thought asks for definitions of things. To define a thing is to set boundaries to it. Dharmic thought asks for the attributes of things. Attributes are real, concrete, and practical. The bodhisattva, moved by the sufferings of others, works to secure their happiness, resolutely putting aside his own. His responsibility for others originates not in the idea of 'duty' or 'obligation', but in compassion, from the knowledge of an indissoluble bond between him or her and the other. The Mahabharata says, again and yet again, that the highest state of awareness is gained only by him who saw all being in himself and himself in all beings. Thus, 'Even gods are unable to trace the footsteps of a man who, aware of his unity with all beings, and having no goal for himself, works ceaselessly for their good.'

The bodhisattva in contrast to the absolutely detached man of the Bhagavadgita takes one to the very heart of this matter. The one feels deeply, for compassion is a feeling, and forever acts for others: the other does his duty with detachment, and feels nothing.

Secondly, as an essential part of this discussion, we have to explain the following. Ironically, it was the concept of responsibility that divided the Buddhist Sangha into two: those who believed in withdrawing from all relationships so as to concentrate on their own nirvana; and those who believed that not until every human being is free from suffering and pain that one is entitled to seek one's own deliverance. The sastraic world was not free from that tension either — the tension between the need for relationship and the need for solitariness, between universality of feeling and the caste-mind, though resolved in theory, has remained unresolved in actual social practice. To that can be traced the paradox that nowhere in the world as in dharmic society is there a greater insistence upon universality as the true basis of human conduct; but also nowhere is there a greater narrowing of human interests as in dharmic society.

Irresponsibility in relation to the other has been as manifest in Indian history as responsibility.
Self-Development & Citizenship

A.S. RANGARAJAN

Citizenship is a politico-legal, economic and social concept. A 'citizen' is a member of any state or nation, especially one with a republican form of government, who owes allegiance to it by birth or naturalization, and is entitled to all civil rights as per the ground norm, if any, and the law. The term 'subject' is appropriately used when the government is headed by a monarch or sovereign.

It is not so well known that when we had only a monarchical form of government and no elective or conscious effort had been made to build into it the idea of a welfare-state in the modern sense, a quintessence of democratic values existed, as we see from a few Palitaxes and inscriptions of the Ashokan period. Ministers, representing various interests in our pluralistic society, with its religious denominations, varnas and jatis, met as a council to advise the king on formulations, of major policies and decisions on issues of public importance. The mode adopted was consensus rather than by majority, thus avoiding the tyranny of a majority over the minorities. Repeated references were made by the king to his council of ministers in respect of new proposals of public importance, so that all practicable concessions could be made to those holding views which differed from the majority from time to time.

Before discussing citizenship in a culture-specific modern context, I would like to analyze relevant sociological insights which are comprehensively called the 'institutional vectors for modernity'. The current interest in exploring 'modernity' is largely due to its linkages with economic development. A typical instance is a study by a team of interdisciplinary scholars who worked together, holding group discussions spread over a period of five years, to produce The Modernisation of Japan and Russia. For the first time, a task ordinarily beyond the capacity of any individual scholar was undertaken successfully to compare societies undergoing change from a base of widely differing cultures. It studied two late-comers to modernization: Russia in Europe and Japan in Asia. Dissimilarities were only to be expected; but similarities, despite their sharp and deep cultural differences, were also significant.

Jawaharlal Nehru, as chairman of the Planning Commission, defined planning as follows:

Planning under a democratic system may be defined as the technical co-ordination by disinterested experts of consumption, production, investment, trade and income distribution in accordance with social objectives set by bodies representative of the nation. Such planning is not only to be considered from the point of view of economics and the raising of the standard of living, but must include cultural and spiritual values and the human side of life.

Subsequently in his letter of 23 September 1953 to chief ministers he said: "Shri Visvesvaraya objected to this wider approach, felt frustrated and re-

Blockages to inspired leadership? The road to the Prime Minister’s residence in New Delhi

signed from the National Planning Committee. And, yet, I cannot conceive of planning except on this wider basis and always with a view to the advancement of human welfare in the widest sense of the term."

He had no doubt that while democracy meant political equality 'it also meant a progressive economic equality'. The philosophical concept implied by these words seems to have anticipated what the greatest legal philosopher I have known, John Rawls, explained in his Theory of Justice. Rawls supplied, in conceptual terms, the much needed corrective to the time-honoured (utilitarian) maxim of the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' visualized by the doctrine, benefiting only too few, as against too many, have-nots. On economic equality, however, Rawls acknowledged that, while conceptually it could not be lim-

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Due to a constellation of circumstances our colossal positive gains have been seriously impaired. This makes it imperative for us to pay greater attention, on an urgent basis, to the development of our citizenry.

Unfortunately, our professions of equality—as, indeed, of any major social, economic or political concept—sound as hollow as they are rhetorical, making it evident to any sensitive observer that it is merely indulgence in romanticism. Consequently, loss of credibility in the process seems colossal. Such loss of credibility under the motto of satyameva jayate harms our effort towards citizenship development.

Political consciousness, overarching the Indian sky, despite discontinuities throughout our long history, was dominated by the fact that the quality of the subjects depended largely on that of the king. Our mythology is full of such examples; for instance, of the philosopher-king Janaka. National wisdom was: Yatharaja tatha praja ("Like king, like subject"). I can recall an old Tamil saying which emphasized the pre-condition before subjects would follow the king. If the king was capable and served his subjects, they would follow him.

Indian literature, particularly Tamil, is replete with the great deeds of legendary kings. I regard this as an essential part of our volkgeist ("genius or spirit of the people"). Wilful, even thoughtless, actions or omissions by those who rule or man important instrumentalties of government lead to loss of credibility. Without realizing the importance of age-old and time-tested wisdom, we allow serious liberties to be taken with public welfare now taken up by new strategies like public interest litigation. An apt allusion is the need to remove dissonants before constructing consonants to produce melody. For this, however, a highly developed and expanded musical consciousness is necessary.

While much has been attempted to promote public wellbeing of which we could be legitimately proud, at the same time there have been serious shortcomings in almost every field, leading to negative results. Most of these shortcomings might be eliminated or minimized if a knowledgeable and alert public actively and unfailingly participates.

If we were able to make a dent on our population problem, we would not be facing such serious problems in spite of our achievements in diverse fields. If we examine the national balance sheet from 1950 onwards, we will notice that due to a constellation of circumstances our colossal positive gains have been seriously impaired. This makes it imperative for us to pay greater attention, on an urgent basis, to the development of our citizenry.

Many perceptive foreigners from early times singled out for mention the well-bred Indian who usually seeks the maximum power over himself and the least over others. They also admire our tradition of spirituality. But others point out that our so-called religious way of life has its drawbacks, perhaps the most serious among them being fundamentalism, which has led to extremism. All these pose challenges which we have to face today.

Chaturvedi Badrinath in his work on Max Weber questions Weber’s theory that Indian culture was basically religious. Arguing that there is “no greater source of a wrong understanding of Indian culture than that”, he asserts that dharma civilization was ‘profoundly
secular', hence 'universal', 'enshrining the totality of Indian understanding of man', and that 'the Indian explanations of man were located in man himself'. In support of his ideas he cites 'the non-theistic or atheistic temper of the main system of Indian philosophy'. He further states that the Hindu social order constituted 'a rational system of thought in which all its essential propositions were deduced from the main premise that every act, if done with a motive, binds the doer.'

A study of citizenship, in my view, cannot be complete if we do not profit from contributions on the theme of man and human destiny. Sri Aurobindo and other sages of India were not merely idealists; they were wise enough to search for the most practical, easy and reliable solution for human problems, however complex. Summing up his views in *Synthesis of Yoga* Sri Aurobindo says that 'All life is yoga.' He propounds the dynamic *sadhana* of surrender, enabling man to act spontaneously, anchored in his higher nature (the divine) in a collectivity based on the divine. A similar exposition has been given in the first verse of the *Isavasya Upanishad*. Adi Sankara who came in the wake of a grave inner confusion (similar to the one in which we now seem to find ourselves) asserted boldly that one should go by his *pratyaksha pramana* or what we could clearly see for ourselves and be free to discard a hundred tests opposing it.

During Sri Aurobindo's incarceration as an undertrial prisoner, he received the divine mandate that he should devote the remaining span of his life to work for man's supramental ascent, development from within. Taking full advantage of each nation's efforts for such free development, the universal law is to harmonize life with that of the human aggregate and strive to reach for perfection. The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the discovery and expression of the divine. When it has succeeded in unifying itself it should still respect, aid and be aided by free growth and activity of its individual and constituent aggregates.

Man advances as he traverses a tangle of truths and errors, rights and wrongs. The human situation today is that man has neither the breadth of knowledge, nor the purity of temperament, which would enable him to follow the law of liberty and harmony. He has no option but to know himself truly, to find the ideal law of being and development, and if he cannot do so, he should hold this ideal before him and find out gradually the way by which it can be the guiding principle of individual and social existence.

Sri Aurobindo noticed that, due to pressures of modern life, which are worsening today, the vital core of the human race is changing. He had no doubt that mankind was just half-civilized. With all the pretensions of a civilized existence and the plethora of appurtenances we are enjoying, we are still not really human beings. The intelligence and will of man is not entirely rational; there is a deeper, more intuitive, and powerful, but much less clear, much less developed, inner light and force for which we have no name. Its character is to illuminate our being; not the daylight of reason nor the mist of suffused sentiments of the heart.

Sri Aurobindo said that human experience has shown reason to be often inadequate, even a stumbling or partially enlightened guide for humanity in its great endeavour. He noticed that the supra-rational, rational and infra-rational are always present, but with an infinitely varying prominence in all our activities. Efforts to create a rational religion, though well-intentioned, had no appreciable effect, and had vanished like dispersing clouds. Such attempts failed to impart vitality and permanence to our civilization, for they were contrary to *dharma*, the natural law and the spirit of reason. Unaided
reason had to be lifted beyond itself by the power of the spirit and irradiated by it. From then onwards it would be dominated by the intuitive mind, which was to be the passage to a yet higher principle of knowledge. Spirituality did not exclude or discourage intelligence or human activity, but worked to lift them out of their imperfections and ignorance and transform them, making them the instruments of the light, power and joy of the divine being and divine nature. Tracing the rise and fall of Indian culture, including the decline of Buddhism and the unsuccessful efforts to rejuvenate it, Sri Aurobindo noticed the unfortunate coincidence of its collapse along with the emergence of yoga and bhakti movements. In the present environment, spirituality and divine experience could not bear their natural fruit, though they prepared for such a feasibility in the future. If Indian culture has to survive and maintain its spiritual basis and innate character, it could be possible not through a revival of the puranic system but by giving it a new direction.

Sri Aurobindo compared this development with the Teutonic mind taking possession of Western Europe, which made the European pragmatic, dynamic, kinetic and vital to the very marrow of his thought and being. He described European industrialism as a giant asuric creation.

Sri Aurobindo clarified the Indian capacity for selective assimilation. At no time, he said, did Indian culture exclude external influences altogether. He was conscious of one's life being modified by the influences it had to encounter. But he also stressed the need to preserve the basic ideas governing Indian and Asian civilization.

Sri Aurobindo did not, however, regret that much had been lost in Indian culture. He believed that it could be recovered eventually, though not with ease. Once restored to its movement, the inner life of man would gain materially in depth, wideness and power of plasticity. We would then acquire a healthy habit of multi-dimensional thoroughness and sincere endeavour to shape our collective life into an adequate image of our highest ideal.

What was to be most helpful to us was to look forward from our past and present towards our own—not foreign

—ideal for the future. Western nations sought, until now, only unity among people by accommodation of conflicting interests and force of mechanical action. Sri Aurobindo had no doubt that this would not be practicable or lasting; in his own terse and forceful way he declared that 'it will either not be founded at all or will be founded on sand'. Each nation seemed to look down on other cultures, as if its own were the only truth or the whole truth of life. India's first duty would be to resist such assaults, so that she could successfully affirm this deeper truth against heavy odds and against all newcomers. If India could help preserve this and preserve it with all her might, it would be the best bet against mankind marching into a new cataclysm.

Any plan and strategy for development of citizenship cannot ignore these aspects. We cannot afford to ignore our cultural background, perhaps the most crucial for mankind today. We have to steer clear of many pitfalls ahead, the worst of which is undoubtedly religious fundamentalism, now raising its ugly head in the country. Since nature has its own way, succinctly termed as lila, Indian spirituality, despite our founding fathers framing a secular constitution for us, has to survive these onslagts. But to succeed in this formidable task, we have to look forward, drawing our strength from the deep wells of the past in their widest amplitude, for a living organism can grow not by mere accretion but by 'self-development and assimilation', referred to in Bengali as aimasakarana.

In her own inimitably simple style the Mother stressed sincerity as the required fundamental virtue. She said: 'Before doing anything, ...be sure first of all that you are not only as sincere as you can be, but have the intention of becoming still more so...For that is your only protection.'

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Values
Now & Then

SHIVARAMA KARANTH

The prices that we pay for things cannot remain the same throughout our lives. While some of these prices change rapidly, it may be hard to notice the changes in others.Today, I have sat down to write about values; values that keep changing. I was born in 1902. So when I say ‘then,’ I really mean the time of my childhood. My references to ‘now’ are, of course, to modern times. I will not be able to predict the values of tomorrow, because I have seen how unpredictably values tend to change. For example, I have been through times when a sovereign of gold could be bought for 15 rupees. Those were the times of Queen Victoria. But I will not glorify the past. I have always been an optimist; to me, tomorrow is something that will be better than today.

Let me begin with ‘then’. I was born in a village called Kota which is located on the sea shore of South Karnataka. Kota was like a miniature of India; carpenters or potters. It was hard for many villagers to get a square meal every day. People from the so called lower castes would occasionally leave the village to find employment in other villages. Brahmins, my own family for example, would go hungry several times a week, but not leave the village. But this changed slowly; some Brahmins violated their tradition and went to other towns to become cooks and owners of eateries. A lot of traditionalists were then unsure if it was all right for a Brahmin to sell food for money. As a compromise, people who wore the sacred thread stayed away from such chores as cleaning dishes in the eateries.

My father started his career as a school teacher. This job used to fetch him a whole eight annas a month. He soon became dissatisfied with his salary, quit his job, and started farming. In addition to his farms, my father owned a cloth shop. He lived to be seventy, and I must say he lived a successful life. He provided education to all his children; there were six of us.

LIFE STYLES

Let me tell you about social life in those times. As I have said earlier, people were then poor. About 80 percent of people suffered from poverty. But they lived a satisfied life in spite of the poverty. They were careful spenders and saved their earnings. The most respected currency of that time was the silver rupee. It equalled 16 annas. Each anna was worth 12 paisa. The quarter anna coin and the paisa were made of copper. The two anna and four anna coins were silver.

If you paid a single paisa, you could buy a box of matches imported from Japan. You could buy eight coconuts for a quarter of a rupee. A pound of rice Brahmins, would go hungry several times a week, but not leave the village. But this changed slowly; some Brahmins violated their tradition and went to other towns to become cooks and owners of eateries.
cost only two annas. A dhoti, which was the main attire of the village men, cost two annas and a half. If you paid a rupee, you could buy a dhoti made of superior cloth. Cotton sarees were only two rupees a piece.

In 1918, we faced a great famine. Rice had to be imported from Burma. 80 pounds of this rice could be purchased for two rupees and a half. Until the thirties, it was true that things would cost the same, be they local or imported.

It was unnecessary to have written transactions for lending or borrowing; people relied on word of mouth. At my father’s shop, if a customer were to discover that he had insufficient cash to make a purchase, he would promise to make it up by a certain date. Most people did keep their promise; it was general belief that violating a promise of debt is an utter sin.

Such practices may seem stupid and idiotic in modern times. When our country gained independence in 1947, the financial structure of the entire world was in poor state, due to the two world wars that had preceded the event. With our freedom, we also gained the power to deny several social responsibilities.

**DENYING DEBTS**

Our leaders placed new idealisms in front of us. When Iran nationalized their oil industry, Nehru sent them a word of praise. When the Egyptian government took charge of the Suez canal, we forgave them for denying the national debt. When the United States of America sent us a big loan in the form of food supplies, we demanded there be no terms or conditions. We were so smart! We taught our farmers to refuse making loan payments. Whoever be the borrower, it became his birthright to refuse repayment of loans if he was found to be 'poor'. Irresponsible became the foundation stone for a life free of worries!

Today, it has become necessary for all nations to slacken their loan policies when they deal with third world countries! How else can we explain our national debt of thousands of crores? In the early days of independence, the central government had a budget of 1,200 crores. Caw was no problem, we were a generous lot! It does not scare us when we hear that today’s budget shows thousands of crores in expenditure. There is an ongoing competition between the national population figure and the national expenditure figure.

All this became possible thanks to our modern economics. During 1947-1948, the population of India doubled and as a result the national productivity rate increased. In addition, we increased the prices of basic commodities to further increase the national income. In 1918, a unit of sugar (39 kilograms) cost two rupees and a half. Today, a kilogram costs four times that much. Look how much increased income this would bring to the government! The stupid people of my generation set the value of a sovereign of gold to Rs. 15. During my youth, this increased to Rs. 35. Today, it is a staggering Rs 4000. Just think, we could do this only because we became independent!

Our financial crisis has led to several changes in our social values. Take marriage, for example. In those days, when I was still young, a marriage had to be first approved by an astrologer. Next, the parents of the bride and the groom must approve of the marriage. The financial status of the families played a big role in this approval. The villagers were poor, and they were tight fisted. They had to think twice before making any large expenditure. Marriage meant a blow to the finances of the bride’s family. Over time, the value of a groom has risen relentlessly. Talking about myself, I married a girl from a different caste; I did not give or receive a single paisa in my marriage. Now, thinking back, I feel cheated! I could have made a big fortune just by marrying!

Talking about myself, I married a girl from a different caste; I did not give or receive a single paisa in my marriage. Now, thinking back, I feel cheated! I could have made a big fortune just by marrying!

**CULTURAL VALUES**

The cultural values are related to the religious faiths and beliefs of a society. These values stem from the kind of picture a society has about such things as birth, death, life, soul, rebirth,
heaven and hell. Both today and yesterday, people have been attracted to places of worship. My elders believed that everything is controlled by a god who created this world. They believed in the sayings of sages and holy men. Even to this day, we are religious and philosophical to our core. We are unable to shed our religious garbs even though our country is a secular state. I will not elaborate on this further; I will drop the subject considering it a digression.

Over time, our people have forgotten several customs and rituals. In my days, a marriage used to last four to six months too valuable. I remember an uncle of mine who walked all the way to Kashi in his old age. It took him several months to complete his pilgrimage. Later, I travelled to Kashi also, except that it took me only three weeks!

Coming back to the subject of religion, I feel that many things have not changed since I was young. Even today people believe that their wishes are granted by an almighty god. The phrase ‘God’s will’ was popular in those days and is still used. But in those days people were poor. They were also greedy, a quality that I do not admire.

their furs to the lord of Tirupati, he may be called Lord Bowlers (curiously rhymes with Bowler).

ARTS AND SUCH

As have been useful forms of expression. My villagers used a form of art called Yakshagana. They were crazy about it. This art form has a history of three centuries. There were five or six groups which played Yakshagana. These groups were nurtured by temples. They would play in the open field, all night long. Everyone was welcome to these shows, and no one had to pay. The stories which the troupe played were drawn from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Indian history. In these stories, truth would always win in the end. In some sense, art forms such as Yakshagana influenced our people to think religiously.

Tastes have changed today. This is true in a literal sense. In my days, people relished sweets such as laddus. Today, people enjoy omelettes, ice creams and alcoholic cocktails. The change in taste also relates to the arts. In the turn of this century, when movie pictures were introduced in our country, directors such as Phalke chose their stories from our religious texts. When our country became free and the monarchies were gone, things changed dramatically. Social drama dominates the movies being made today.

How can Yakshagana be an exception to this rule? This art form also changed. The artists began to imitate actors from the movies. Humour and slapstick appeared in Yakshagana plays. What is more, people began to enjoy them as well.

Not that the Ramayana and other puranas have entirely disappeared from the arts scene. Ramnand Sagar has modernized the epic of Ramayana into a Mararaya. He has redefined the characters of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. He has applied the Darwinian theory of evolution to Ramayana. Did you know Sugriva

Gandhari, the mother of the hundred Kauravas, decided to remain young and beautiful. It did not occur to her that she could have worn goggles instead of the black cloth across her eyes.

days. Today marriage is a breeze; it is limited to an exchange of garlands and a walk around the fire. But an enormous amount of money is spent on this simple ritual.

THE VALUE OF TIME

We used to walk or use a bullock cart to travel. Today, time is Today, gods demand a lot more bribes than our ministers and officers. Just look at the number of people who visit temples and go on pilgrimages. In Tirupati, people wait in long lines for hours to get a glimpse of their favourite god. Tirupati’s god makes crores of rupees a year in the form of bribes. Inspired by the way people bow on all
married a beautiful human girl. Hisrother Vali fell in love with her and
attempted to kidnap her from Sugriva.
Similar reformatory measures have been applied
to Mahabharata as well. Today's Indian
audience does not like to see women
dressed in simple clothes. So the director
has to dress them up in plastic jewellery
and synthetic sarees. Gandhari, the
mother of the hundred Kauravas,
decided to remain young and beautiful.
It did not occur to her that she could
have worn goggles instead of the black
cloth across her eyes.

When India found independence, it
became necessary to wipe out monarchy
entirely. The ministers in our parliament
began to miss the royalty terribly. Is it
any wonder that they wanted to see the
Pandava and Kaurava brothers wearing
large crowns?

Talking of the Mahabharata reminds
me of gambling. Once upon a time,
gambling was a favourite sport among
Indian kings and princes. Today we
have made this royal sport available to
every citizen in the country in the form
of lotteries. We dare not forget our age
old customs; it is absolutely necessary
to preserve them and we are doing a
superb job of it. Given these
circumstances, it does not surprise me
one bit that Indians are glued to the
celluloid version of the Mahabharata.

When the Kauravas and Pandavas ruled
Indraprastha, there was a fellow called
Shakuni who plotted the destruction of
the kingdom. Today there are hundreds
of Shakunis in our capital. Will these
Shakunis enact the Mahabharata for an
eager audience?
The thought leaves me cold.

Article contributed by
C.P. Ravikumar

Dr. Shivarama Karanth is a stalwart of Kannada literature. In fact, Karanth
is a multifaceted genius — a novelist, poet, dramatist, painter, actor, film
director, and above all, a great thinker and humanist. His contributions to
Kannada culture are innumerable. He revived the Yakshagana art form in
Karnataka. He contested in the general elections as an independent
candidate to represent the issue of the environmental crisis. He has always
been an independent thinker and a man who sticks to his principles. Karanth
is over 90 years old today and has received several awards including the
Jnanpith Award.

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From Gaia Theory to Deep Ecology

STEPHAN HARDING

“We shall affirm that the cosmos, more than anything else, resembles most closely that living Creature of which all other living creatures, severally or genetically, are portion; a living creature which is fairest of all and in ways most perfect”

Plato

“The notion of Gaia, of a living Earth, has not in the past been acceptable to the main science stream and consequently, seeds sown in earlier times would not have flourished, but instead would have remained buried in the deep mulch of scientific papers”

James Lovelock
in GAIA, A New Look at life on Earth

For a long time now the word ecology has been used by scientists to refer to the branch of biology concerned with understanding of the interactions which determine the distribution and abundance of living beings. Ecologists go out into the field to quantify nature, to break it down into numbers which are then placed in computers to tease apart the complex inter-relationships in the living world. To do this we use quadrats, transects, tracers, transmitters and all manner of technological devices. All this has taken place within the by now familiar and increasingly beleaguered concept of Universe as Machine. In fact, one of the most brilliant popular expositions of the conclusions of this research enterprise is called ‘the Blind Watchmaker,’ referring to the blind unconscious process of natural selection which, we are told, has made all the wonderful creatures, or rather ‘mechanisms’ around us.

But running parallel to this mainstream mechanistic view, which, as we all know, stems from the genius of Descartes, has been another, increasingly marginalised view, of universe as organism, as living being. In this view, the machine model is seen

THE LEGEND OF GAIA

In the beginning, Hesiod says, there was Chaos, vast and dark. Then appeared Gaia, the deep-breasted earth. She first bore Uranus, the sky crowned with stars, ‘whom she made her equal in grandeur, so that he entirely covered her.’ Then she created the high mountains and Pontus, ‘the sterile sea’ with its harmonious waves. The Universe had been formed. It remained to be peopled. Gaia united with her son Uranus and produced the first race, the Titans. Uranus, son and husband of Gaia, is the starlit sky. This conception of the earth and the sky, considered as two primordial divinities, is common to all the Indo-European peoples. In the Rig Veda, the sky and the earth were already called the ‘immortal couple’ and the ‘two grandparents of the world’.

Gaia has well defined features. According to Hesiod she was the great deity of the early Greeks. Like the Aegeans and peoples of Asia, the Greeks must have worshipped the Earth in whom they beheld the mother-goddess. This is again confirmed by the Homeric hymn in which poet says, ‘I shall sing of Gaia, unive mother, firmly founded, the oldest of vestures’.

Gaia, the ‘deep-breasted’, whose nourishes all that exists, and by whom benevolence men are blessed with children and all the pleasant fruits of earth was thus acknowledged not only by the Gods but by the Gods themselves. Later, with the victorious dynasty of the Olympian was established, Gaia’s prestige was lessened. It was still she whom the Gre invoked when they made oaths: ‘I swear Gaia and the vast sky above her’. He proclaims when in the Iliad, she answers Zeus’ accusations.
Gaia, the omnipotent not only created the universe and bore the first race of Gods, but also gave birth to the human race. The power of Gaia was also manifest in her gift of foretelling the future. The oracle of Delphi, before it passed into Apollo’s hands, had originally belonged to Gaia.

Later, as other divinities rose in the estimation of men, the role of Gaia gradually became less important. Her cult, however, always continued in Greece. She presided over marriages and at Patras, the sick came to consult her. She was particularly venerated at Aegae, Delphi and Olympia. She had sanctuaries at Dodona, Tegea, Sparta and Athens. She was first offered fruits and grain; but when she was invoked as the guardian of the sanctity of oaths a black ewe was immolated in her honour. She was commonly represented in the form of a gigantic woman.

*(New Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology)*

Scientific orthodoxy has rejected the strongest forms of the theory, which suggest that Gaia ‘herself’ is doing the regulating, for the benefit of life as a whole. This imputes intent and purpose to what scientists consider to be the blind, unconscious forces which have made the universe. Lovelock and his colleague Andrew Watson, developed a mathematical refutation of it in the form of a computer model called Daisyworld.

Daisyworld is a simplified planet, which like our own, circles around a sun whose output of energy is ever-increasing. Scattered on the rich, moist soil of Daisyworld are millions of seeds of the only two species found on the planet - black daisies and white daisies. At first, Daisyworld’s sun is so cold that it can’t warm up the planet to the point where its soil is hot enough to trigger the germination of daisy seeds. But after some time, the critical temperature is reached, and the daisies germinate in large numbers. The pigmentation of the black daisies enables them to absorb the sun’s energy more effectively than the white daisies, which reflect heat. Darwinian natural selection takes over, and the black daisies spread because they are able to produce the largest number of offspring. In dominating the habitable portion of the planet, the black daisies help to warm the atmosphere, thereby making conditions more suitable for life. As the sun heats up further, white daisies begin to do better, since by reflecting heat they are able to avoid overheating. By reflecting heat back to space, the white daisies cool the planetary atmosphere.
When the sun is middle-aged, Daisyworld is populated by a mix of black and white daisies, respectively found at the equator and towards the poles. When the sun is even hotter, only white daisies survive, and when the sun nears the end of its life, it is so hot that all life on the model planet is extinguished.

The important point about Daisyworld is that the temperature of the planet is automatically regulated over a long period of time merely by the differential absorption and reflection of solar energy by the black and white daisies, competing according to the laws of classical Darwinian natural selection. By this example Lovelock and Watson hoped to show that Gaian self-regulation can emerge completely automatically from a model biosphere, without needing to invoke mystical forces or some sort of Gaian consciousness, pre-cognition, or any sort of goal-directed behavior on the part of the system. Critics point to the over-simplicity of the model, which they say can't tell us much about the vastly more complex real world. They ask for real-life examples of Gaian self-regulation.

Here problems also arise for the theory, because as yet, there aren't any good water-tight examples, only some interesting possibilities. Two worth mentioning are the carbon dioxide pump, and cloud formation by oceanic algae.

It is well established that the only natural source of atmospheric carbon dioxide (the notorious greenhouse gas) is volcanic eruption, and that the only natural sink is the weathering of certain kinds of rock. The weathering happens when water reacts with the rocks in the presence of carbon dioxide. In the reaction, carbon dioxide

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**"Does the dog have the Buddha nature?"**
Zen Master Joshu.

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"What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

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It can be argued that truly great scientists had this connection, this sense of the greater whole of which they were a part. Without educating this sensitivity, we churn out scientists without philosophy, who are merely interested in their subject, but not thoroughly awed by it.
tact with rock and water that would be the case without the intervention of living organisms. Once in the sea, the resulting carbonates are used by various minute marring algae (in particular the Coccolithophores) to make exquisitely chalky shells. These rain down to the bottom of the sea when their tiny occupants die, thereby safely locking away the carbon dioxide as massive deposits of chalk and limestone. In this scenario there is scope for the existence of Gaian temperature regulation. As the planet warms up due to increased output of solar energy, microbial action should be stimulated, which in turn should pump out more carbon dioxide, thereby cooling the planet. As yet there is no firm evidence for this sort of regulatory feedback loop, but it may be forthcoming in the future.

The other possibility involves the tiny Coccolithophores mentioned above. When they die, they emit a sulphurous gas called dimethyl sulphide (DMS), which floats up into the air above the ocean surface. Here it undergoes a series of chemical reactions giving rise to minute acid droplets. These find themselves in a zone of air above the ocean which is super-saturated with water vapour. The myriad little drops act as nuclei for the condensation of the water vapour, which precipitates out the air to form massive clouds, which could help to cool the planet by reflecting solar energy back to space. A regulatory feedback loop is also required here if this sequence of events is to act as a Gaian temperature regulator. We would need to demonstrate that DMS emissions by Coccolithophores increase with planetary temperature, leading to the production of more energy reflecting clouds. Unfortunately for the theory, the evidence so far suggests that a contrary effect has taken place - more clouds seem to be produced by algal DMS emissions as the planet gets cooler. Thus, rather than stabilising global temperatures during a cool period, such as an ice age, cloud formation by oceanic algae could tend to drive global temperatures even lower. This interpretation of the evidence is not accepted by all scientists, some of whom suggest that the apparent lack of a regulatory feedback loop is due to unusual stresses impinging on the system in geologically recent time.

These examples demonstrate that, mechanistic, compartmentalising conditioning imposed on us since childhood by our society. From an early age nearly all Westerners (and especially young scientists) are exposed to the concept that life has come about due to the operation of blind, meaningless laws of physics and chemistry, and that selfishness underlines the behaviour and evolution of all plants and animals.

A Gaian approach opens new doors of perception. Whether the theory is right or wrong, not even the most die-hard mechanist denies the utter interdependence which operates within the natural world.
The links in the global system are too huge to tease apart, and controlled experimentation is clearly out of the question...

The sound person's mind becomes totally ensnared by this style of intellectuality, so that the intuitive, inspirational qualities of the mind, which are its deeper substratum, are totally ignored. The mind’s intuitive ability to see each part of nature as a subwhole within greater wholes is destroyed by this sort of education. The result is a totally dry, merely intellectual ecology, not a genuine perception of the dynamic power, creativity and integration in nature.

A Gaian approach opens new doors of perception. Whether the theory is right or wrong, not even the most die-hard mechanist denies the utter interdependence which operates within the natural world. There is a symphonic quality to this interconnectedness, a quality which communicates an unspeakable magnificence. When you stand on a sea-cliff in winter, watching masses of grey cloud rolling in from the Atlantic, a Gaian view helps you understand the cloud in its global context. It has formed due to massive climatic forces and has manifested within a small part of the whole - the part you happen to be standing in. The water in the cloud is circling through the water cycle, from rain to river to sea to cloud again. As you experience this dynamic, ever shifting reality, you may suddenly find yourself in a state of meditation, a state in which you lose your sense of separate identity, and become totally engrossed in the life process being contemplated. The contemplated and the contemplator become one.

From this oneness there arises a deep appreciation of the reality of inter-dependence, and from this comes the urge to be involved in opposing all sorts of ecological abuses. Here arises the feeling that what is happening in evolution has great value and a meaning impossible to articulate or to detect via scientific methodology. This highly developed sensitivity, this experience of radical interconnectedness is the hallmark of supporters of the deep ecology movement, and is the basis for the elaboration of any ecological philosophy, such as the pioneering work of the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, who first coined the term deep ecology.

Buddhism, and indeed other religions and pre-industrial cultures, have used various methods to bring people in touch with this oneness. One well known in the West is the use of koans in Zen Buddhism. For Western minds, so totally caught up in intellectuality, I would like to suggest that a new discipline can be used to uncover the experience, which involves contemplating and meditating on statements made by scientific ecology. One can focus the intuitive faculty on the fact, or 'koan' about the role of coccolithophores in cloud production or one can focus on the 'koan' that plants produce oxygen, which we aerobes breathe in to combust food (often plants), breathing out Co2 which is used by plants to make sugars (a food
for aerobes). The realisation can often arise more easily when the discipline is carried out in an appropriate setting, such as an extensive area of free nature, where the environment has experienced as little negative human interference as possible. Ample time must be given for the experiences to arise, and careful contemplation of nature is considered to be at worst a waste of time, at best something to do during one’s spare time.

It can be argued that truly great scientists had this connection, this sense of the greater whole of which they were a part. Without educating this

SHALLOW (REFORM) ECOLOGY

Natural diversity is a valuable resource for us

It is nonsense to talk about value except as value for mankind

Plant species should be saved because of their value as genetic reserves for human agriculture and medicine.

Pollution should be decreased if it threatens economic growth.

Developing nations’ population growth threatens ecological equilibrium.

“Resource” means resource for humans.

People will not tolerate a broad decrease in their standard of living.

Nature is cruel and necessarily so.

DEEP ECOLOGY

Natural diversity has its own (intrinsic) value.

Equating value with value for humans reveals a racial prejudice.

Plant species should be saved because of their intrinsic value.

Decrease of pollution has priority over economic growth.

World population at the present level threatens ecosystems but the population and behavior of industrial states more than any others.

Human population is today excessive.

“Resource” means resource for living beings.

People should not tolerate a broad decrease in the quality of life but in the standard of living of overdeveloped nations.

Man is cruel but not necessarily so.

massive social and environmental mistakes of Western style development. Trained to shut down our perception of the world so that we see it as a mere machine, we are perfectly free to improve the clockwork for our own ends. We are perfectly free to build huge dams which flood vast areas, perfectly free to log old growth forests, perfectly free to sanction economic growth at all costs, or to alter the genetic make up of any organism for our own ends.

Gaian perception helps to remedy this great mental and spiritual plague, a malaise which has arisen in the West and which is now claiming millions of victims, human and non-human, throughout the world. Whether right or wrong, whether Gaian self-regulation is going on or not, Gaian perception connects us with the seamless nature of existence, and opens up a new approach to scientific research based on scientific intuitions arising from the scientist’s personal, deeply subjective ecological experience. When the young scientist in training has sat on a mountain top, and has completed her first major assignment to ‘think like a mountain’, that is, to dwell and deeply identify with a mountain, mechanic thinking will never take root in her mind. When she eventually goes out to practice her science in the world, she will be fully aware that every interconnected aspect of it has its own intrinsic value, irrespective of its usefulness to the economic activities of human beings.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to James Lovelock and Arne Naess for their generous help in developing my appreciation of these ideas and experiences - of Gaia theory and deep ecology.

Dr. Stephan Harding has a Ph.D. in Ecology from Oxford University, UK. A committed scientist, Stephan has always groped at the core of science, searching for a more intuitive and abstract understanding of phenomena. He teaches Ecology at the Schumacher College in Devon, an institution given to the study of ecology and spirituality.
The Banyan Tree

CHRISTINE GOMEZ

We celebrate the banyan tree with this touching short story.

You are invited for the *sashthiabhipooorthi* of Reverend Father Antony Bashyam.

The gilt edged invitation card was shown to him only after most of the cards had been despatched to his friends, admirers, former students and colleagues. The organisers knew that if Father A.B. got wind of it, he would quash the idea right at the beginning. That's what he had done two years ago, when an abortive attempt had been made to hold a public function to honour him at his retirement.

But this time the organisers had planned in secret, leaving no room for loopholes. The Rector and even the Father Provincial had given prior permission. The latter would be the guest of honour at the function. Ministers and Vice - Chancellors of universities and all former students were to grace the function. Having taught English for more than three decades in one of the most famous Christian colleges in Tamil Nadu, Father Antony Bashyam, a gifted teacher and orator, was a well known and much admired person. Hailing from a Brahmin family converted to Christianity, Father A.B. had acted as a bridge of goodwill between Hindus and Christians. He counted many Hindu religious and social leaders among his close friends.

When Father A.B. found that his protests against the celebration were of no avail, he gave in gracefully. But he decided to switch off his mind during the eulogies. As a college principal who had to attend many meetings, he had perfected the art of sitting with a look of rapt attention during long dull speeches.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach.....

He had pretended not to understand her meaning. She had accused him of running away from life and reality. He had not even paused to analyse his feelings, but consciously and deliberately killed whatever it was that had grown between them. He didn't even bother to give it a name. But one thing he still remembered. He had clutched desperately at Hopkins' 'terrible sonnets' and read them repeatedly as he paced up and down under the same tree for many nights after that.

No worst there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs,
Wilder wring.
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?....

My own heart let me have more pity on; let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable; not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

out of the window at his favourite tree.
He had been drawn to that tree, under
which he had sought and sometimes
got enlightened, during his morning
meditation before mass and vespers
before returning to his room at night.
It was under this tree that his M.A.
classmate, Menaka Menon read out
louder, the poems of Elizabeth Barrett
Browning in her deep, husky voice.

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Once he had crossed that crisis, there was no faltering. He felt free, liberated from the human need for emotional props. Menaka discontinued her studies soon after that.

Father A.B. remembered secretly comparing himself to that same banyan tree. Once, after he had taken over as Principal, the Botany professor told him that the prop roots of the tree never could reach the ground and take root because the students were constantly swinging on them. He had even gone so far as to suggest that a watchman be employed to catch the students and fine them. "The prop roots are absolutely essential to bear the tree’s weight. Without them the tree may die or be uprooted prematurely", he had warned. Father A.B. smiled and said, "Oh, boys will be boys. We can’t fine them for that".

Personally he thought that the Botany professor was making too much out of nothing. "Haven’t I got on well without props? My tree will too", he said to himself.

During his rounds he had often noticed that the tree was a favourite haunt of students during their free hours. So he built a circular cement bench all around the tree. Furthermore, he shifted the college canteen to a new building near its tree, opposite the auditorium. The students were thrilled. "No one understands us as much as Father A.B." they commented.

He found them sipping tea on the bench, both in small groups or in pairs. Sometimes, lovers sat there too. "This after dinner. He felt strangely unsettled in his mind. He couldn’t really pinpoint the cause of his unease. Suddenly he heard Menaka’s voice. This time she wouldn’t be silenced.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

After all the years of studiously avoiding thoughts of her, feelings came rushing back and overwhelmed him.

I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! and if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Around eleven that night there was a loud crash. Some said they felt a tremor. The Fathers rushed out in their night clothes. The banyan tree had fallen down. Later in the day, the Botany professor would endorse his opinion about the prop roots and the single weakening tap root which was unable to bear the strain and weight.

Dr. Christine Gomez did her Ph.D from M.S. University, Baroda, in English Literature. She has taught at the Holy Cross College, Tiruchirapalli, for twenty six years. She has an impressive list of publications to her credit, both fiction and non-fiction. Her short stories have been published in leading newspapers of the country. Ms. Gomez lives in Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu.

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A.C. PART I

The world is going crazy
Succumbing to the heat
Electricity goes missing
And there isn’t any meat.

I wouldn’t have believed it
if I hadn’t lived to see
A company of grown up men
In love with an A.C.

She was dying, she was sparking
and complaining all day long
But they wouldn’t leave couldn’t
pry praying she’d be strong.

They fed her water on a drip
They prayed and coaxed and cried
But finally,
God rest her soul
She just gave up and died.

The doctor came with hopeless eyes
pronouncing she was gone
But love is blind, they still believed
She would go on and on.

We came on Sunday just to mourn
to sweat and try again
There wasn’t any business
and there wasn’t any rain.

Oh my oh my, why do they try
try my idea instead
And wake up in September
when the days are cool

the tourists rich
life is sane
this nervous twitch
is past and gone
and Sundays are designed to stay in bed!

A.C. PART II

The story follows
sad to tell
With days spent in the fires of hell
Of restless days
and sleepless dreams
Of perspiration pouring ceaselessly in streams.

Tormentors came to watch them cry
with helpful hints for keeping dry
And promises today by noon
A brand new A.C. was coming very soon.

But every hour the heat went on
And hope was nearly all but gone
What to do? then... no power
A muddled voice said
I’ll be at my cousins’ for an hour.

And Tuesday passed and Thursday passed
And Friday came and would they last
Then finally they said, enough!
The time has come my friend
And now we’re getting tough.

Despatched into the midday sun
The desperate salesman swore
This battle would be won.
They tore the A.C. man from his rest
And challenged him to die or do his best.

He came within an hour, or was it two?
And set to work, not much else could be done
He drilled and screwed and filled at a pace
Till finally the great machine was ready in place.

We switched it on
We held our breath
A threshold that was life or death.
She purred and hummed without a doubt
the fires of hell did slowly start
to melt and fizzle out.

Their joy grew bold their hopes grew strong
Then suddenly... Oh no I heard a cry
The damn thing’s going wrong!

Take me to your leader!
someone yelled
As joys and hopes and all that stuff were quelled

At once the crowds were gathered
for the fray
Would this thing work
Or would there be another death today?

The A.C. man had quite a lot to lose
He hastily returned and changed a fuse
As cousins, colleagues, friends and half
the town
Waited with low voices and deep frowns.

But slowly as the air began to chill
The frowns and consternation left until
The voice I had been waiting for all day
proclaimed the time has come we’re going home

to shower eat and pray!

Karen Thomas
Devon, England.
THE RHYME OF PASSION

Ibn Batuta, a friend and I
Sat in Batuta’s well-stocked library
Sipping hot tea lethargically.

"Is there any justification", asked we
“To study the history of Delhi?
Of course, if there is one, for that is a point to consider,
For to study anything at all, would be, I’d say, quite silly”.

Batuta said not a word, just got up,
Went to the shelf, picked up a fat dusty book
Came back and handed it to us
And said softly, “Go on, take a look”.

We opened it to make sure with not a little twinge of envy
We could appreciate the history of the city.

At first, all we saw was a blank white sheet,
But then - who was that scurrying along the page,
bathed in a glow?

Ah, ’twas Maya Danav, rushing to the
Of the beloved Indraprastha of Panurgus
“Hurry up”, bellowed he to all,
To the workers carrying stones by tons.

Batuta flipped the page to 329 B.C
“Watch thee, haunt me!” said he.
Prince Delu was pompously pontificating,
“Let this golden earth be called DILLI after me!”

Page 4 A.D? Vikramaditya holding the key
With a benign look at the city.
“I want to make it a legend of art,
A city of joy, close to my heart”.

Abracadabra....the pages flipped fast.
A glimpse of Lallot flashing....
The incense of twenty seven temples wafted past,
Then came the slave kings lashing.

Six hundred years of Islamic reign
Evened out the rocky terrain.
Turks, Khiljis, Tughlaks, Sayyads, Lodis, Mughals and Afghans.
Shahenshahs’ names blazed past, words in fire.
What were their dreams, for what did they aspire....

Batuta intoned, Greater Delhi I, 14th century
Tughlakabad and Jahanpanah bridging the gap,
Coalescing Siri, merging Mehrauli,
Three centuries later...Greater Delhi on the map.

We saw the Raj in all its grandeur.
Delhi Municipality, Civil Lines, Raisina Municipality,
New Cantonment Area
Where Curzon held Dilli Durbar, it created quite a stir,
But he’d Cheers thrown in the room, Delhi is the capital of India!

The Book closed magically; as we in a daze
Heard Batuta’s voice reverberating, he himself in a haze.
Left alone in the room, now in no doubt
The past has shown the way, we wanted to shout.

We saw our heritage,
Imprints the future,
There was a lesson on each page,
Our roots, tradition would be our tutor.

Our Delhi, it had quite a past.
Make sure we’ll hold up the mast!
We’ll understand the follies and appreciate the wholeness,
The key to our planning, we must confess.

Centre of political intrigue, seat of power,
Not into necropolis this metropolis we’ll make
Repair what is there with conservative surgery,
Prune Delhi gently, make it into a blossoming tree.

“The changing kings and kingdoms pass away,
The gorgeous legends of a bygone day.
But thou dost still immutably remain
Unbroken symbol of proud histories,
Unaging priestess of old mysteries” — (Sarojini Naidu)

Hark now, fear not! there is still time.....

Reshma Singh and Swapna Sundaram
T.V.B School of Habitat Studies
New Delhi
The CHIPKO movement which literally means the ‘movement to embrace’ is well known throughout the world. It is a non-violent, highly principled struggle to save the Himalayas from eternal damnation due to deforestation and land abuse.

The Movement was born in March 1973, when a team of representatives from a sports goods factory reached Gopeshwar, a tiny hamlet in Chamoli in the Garhwal region. They were told to cut down ten ash trees allotted to them. The villagers protested and hugged the trees to save them from the axes. Thus they ‘hugged’ or ‘embraced’ the trees, and the name CHIPKO came to stay.

The CHIPKO movement is famous for the incident at Rent, some 22 kms from Joshimath. One day all the men folk of this village were away and the contractor, taking this opportunity, began felling trees. The women were undaunted. Under the leadership of Gaura Devi, an illiterate woman, they marched into the forest singing, “The forest is our mother’s home, we will protect it with all our might”.

Chandi Prasad Bhatt is the principal catalyst of this movement. I met him in Dehradun. He struck me as having all the necessary characteristics of a leader - an imposing personality, a very pleasant, smiling face and the quiet assurance born of conviction. Added to this was a large dose of humility. He spoke simply and truthfully. This ticket clerk for a bus company in Rishikesh had come a long way as a peoples’ leader and was given the Magsasay Award for community service.

The CHIPKO movement in its conception and execution has remained a rural mass movement, practical and personal, not hypothetical. It clings not only to the trees but to the manifold aspects of life in this region. The CHIPKO movement has sprouted branches in most of the districts of Uttar Pradesh.

In this conversation which is rather general in nature, I have tried to probe into the psyche of younger people who are leaving the mountains in large numbers for the quick money and lifestyle of the plains.

Rukmini Sekhar: Your love for the Himalayas and your work to preserve them is well known. What was your inspiration? Anyone in your family?

Chandi Prasad Bhatt: Not really. I grew up in a conventional family. When I was a year old my father passed away. My widowed mother somehow managed to bring me and my sister up. We were financially comfortable as we were a typical Brahmin family.

R.S: Where did you study?

C.P.B: I studied Sanskrit in Gopeshwar and Rudraprayag in the Garhwal Himalayas. I finished my school and didn’t study further.

R.S: We hear it said often, that life in the mountains is very
hard and that people are very poor. I am inclined to believe that poverty is a very relative thing. How do you judge poverty in the mountains? Is it that what appears to us to be poverty is actually sound ecological living?

C.P.B: As far as the question of land is concerned, there is not much difference in how much a person holds. Only a family that doesn’t get even one meal a day is considered really poor or one whose entire harvest is destroyed by frost or hailstones. Those families whose average livelihood is buttressed by money from outside, say, from someone working in the army, are, of course, considered better off than the others who are entirely dependent on farming. Work, such as carrying firewood or cooking on it was a way of life and not indicative of poverty. Farming is essentially an activity of an extended family and most work is not only thus distributed but earned more income as well.

The mountains have a way of dealing with the lesser privileged, like the Harijans. They had very little land and so became blacksmiths who made hoes for the farmers. The latter, in turn, gave them grain. Now the self-sufficiency chain is direly threatened. Ever since companies like the Tatas have come in, the concept of poverty has changed.

R.S: What do you have to say about the ‘money-order economy’ of Garhwal and Kumaon? In the sense that more and more able people are working away from the mountains in the plains and send their families money. These people, mostly young men, take on just about any jobs that they can lay their hands on, like domestic service and restaurant assistance. What about cultural continuity?

C.P.B: Cultural continuity demands ecological continuity. I agree entirely that the economy of the Himalayas is largely funded from the outside. The reasons for this are complex and are an outcome of modern pressures, not the least of them being the necessity to possess the objects of material comfort that the plainspeople enjoy. In fact, there is a joke that the government needs to open more post offices in the mountains to receive those money orders! As I said earlier, life in the mountains is perceived to be difficult and young people don’t have that much patience any more.

R.S: Is it difficult?
C.P.B: To go up and down is difficult, isn’t it?

R.S: But isn’t that up and down an integral part of mountain life?
C.P.B: I’m not talking about going to the plains and back up again - it’s within the mountain area itself. A person works for about ten hours and hardly earns much money which he can by doing two hours of work in the plains. The other thing is that the quality of life in the mountains is fast deteriorating because of ecological mismanagement. Deforestation is rampant and kills the entire ecology of the region. People would rather work as road labourers than farm.

R.S: Is this phenomenon here to stay?
C.P.B: No, I wouldn’t say so. People are returning gradually, disillusioned by the rat race in the plains. If a person has half an acre of land, he has realised that with efficient water management he can grow fruit trees for commercial purposes as well as garlic, ginger and onions for home consumption.

R.S: Are you saying that cash cropping has helped?
C.P.B: It does help as long as it doesn’t spoil the land. If one variety of tree grows well in a certain area, then people assume that the same land will take any kind of tree. This will naturally deplete the soil. For instance, it was a tradition to grow walnuts and villages have been named after it. But if this is done with hazel nuts, then it becomes a futile experiment.

We used to get special vacations during harvest time, but now schools get their usual June vacations. In fact, students get to come home more because of strikes and closures!
In the CHIPKO movement we encourage people to grow fruit trees and we did see sudden improvement in their income. Hay increased and so the cows gave more milk.

R.S: Bhatt Ji, I'm sorry to keep stressing on this point, but do you think that the young people of the mountains are demoralised and will shun what they consider this 'old style of living'?

C.P.B: Even in the mountains the old style has changed. When we were young we ate chapatis with salt and dal only on special occasions. Now, vegetables and dal are a regular feature. If young peoples' aspirations are met, then the mountains are as good a place as any. However, living in the mountains requires a special mind set and if we try and ape a plains-style of living, it will be disastrous.

The mountain people were well known for their excellent physique and that used to get them into the army. Now, malnutrition levels are quite high and so, their bodies are not fit enough for the army. Even education does not get them in. There was only one inter college in my time. In the last forty years, colleges have multiplied greatly and students can do their M.A here. They finish their degrees and go away and parents have to deal with a great deal of disappointment. As I said earlier, this trend is slowly changing and young boys are returning if only to open small restaurants and tea shops and become tourist guides.

R.S: Talking of education in Garhwal, is it a practical system? Do students get vacations at the time of year when they can join hands with their family occupations?

C.P.B: Like everything, this too has changed. We used to get special vacations during harvest time, but now schools get their usual June vacations. In fact, students get to come home more because of strikes and closures!

R.S: What is your overall view of agriculture and development in the hills?

C.P.B: Land has become very fragmented in the Himalayas and the whole aspect of cultivation has to be approached in a different way. The first thing that the hill development enthusiasts should understand is that fruits and vegetables cannot replace cereals. Cereals do not reach the mountains so easily, especially where roads are bad. So people must cultivate cereals for subsistence.

Then there is the whole issue of mixed cropping. All the basic subsistence products were grown at the local level, namely, wheat, sesame and lentils. Now, development technologists are urging the villagers to grow soyabean for commercial purposes. The value of soyabean is entirely in the hands of the market, say that of Rudrapur, and villagers have no control. Unlike in the case of urad dal which was grown anyway for local consumption and the surplus was then given to the market.

The other aspect of development is power. Chamoli boasts of several small rivers from which electricity can be generated. Instead of doing that, we are still debating about the Tehri dam which will take about twenty to thirty years to complete. With smaller projects risks are minimised and they can also be dismantled when their utility is over, if at all.

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CHIPKO’S CHARTER

- The major objective of the forest policy should be to emphasise the function of forests in the conservation of soil and water resources. Forest policy should change from exploitation to nurturing of forest wealth. Hence commercial felling should be entirely halted in major river catchments of the Himalayas.

- There should be a proper survey of forest land and crops. Proper provision should be made for the fulfillment of minimal needs of the local population.

- Attempts to afforest barren lands should be launched on a war footing and villagers should receive every encouragement to take up farm forestry.

- The contractor system should be completely abolished in the forestry sector; the local population should instead be made partners in all forestry operations. The young people and uneducated unemployed in the villages should be constituted into co-operatives for this purpose.

- Forest based industries should be set up in the small sector in rural areas and supported by the raw material harvested through minimal exploitation of wood.

- There is an unfortunate trend towards the imposition of fast growing exotics of commercial importance when raising new plantations. Instead, the emphasis should be on species appropriate to local ecology and the needs of the locals.
Have we not wasted so much time all these years? We could easily get a hundred megawatts if we build a dam every half kilometre. This experiment has been done by the Gram Seva Sansthan Parishad. Enough electricity is being generated through windmills to run oil and flour mills. The government is not really inclined to go for smaller projects and implement change at the grass root level. Officials get transferred before they are able to do anything. And then, of course, bigger projects mean more money to all concerned. Today, any so called ‘development’ is closely tied up with vested interests.

R.S: What is the CHIPKO movement’s chief focus these days?
C.P.B: The problems that face the Himalayas are faced by the rest of the country too. What is the capacity of the land to produce? What is required for subsistence? There are people who cannot even have one square meal a day. We don’t want to get into commerce just yet. Our focus is the source, namely the environment. We want to look at proper watershed management and simultaneously, hand over responsibility of forest management to the villagers. This applies to reserve forests as well. We say that the Joint Forest Management instituted by the government is not the best thing since government officials are usually the first breakers of the law. On the other hand, the villagers have been subsisting on the forests for centuries and so realise their importance and are concerned about its preservation. Greening through forestry projects is one of the chief aims of CHIPKO.

R.S: Have you been successful?
C.P.B: Success in such things is a slow process with no miracles to show for it. The first visible element is faith in themselves and in peoples’ movements. Fruits are growing well and there seems to be enough fodder. CHIPKO’s biggest strength is its women. Milk dairies are now run entirely by women and and the money comes straight to the village. Earlier, when the men were handling it, a lot of the money was spent in alcohol. Less time is now used for fodder collection, so women can devote more time to their children and overall health has improved.

Smaller valleys of the Alakananda are getting greened, say, almost two thirds. This is not our own assessment, but that of scientists from outside agencies. Credit for this greening rests not only with the people, but with nature herself. If people have put in a hundred trees, then nature has contributed several hundreds. For the Himalayas are fertile.

The government Forest Department is authorised to cut only dead trees. But we all know what the reality is. The villagers are not allowed to go into certain portions of the forest, so they really can’t monitor tree felling or stop the killing of musk deer which is also attributed to the forest officials. CHIPKO is fighting for entry of villagers into the forest and to be allowed to monitor things.

R.S: For years you have been working in the mountains. Obviously, your love for nature has kept you going. What are your deepest feelings about it?
C.P.B: My relationship with nature is very simple, yet deeply emotional. I feel that I can have a very personal dialogue with the mountains. Every time a tree is cut or an animal slaughtered, I feel that my own back is being broken. Every time I walk along, I dread the fact that I will be inadvertently crushing a tiny flower or ant. The mountains are everything to me.

R.S: Among the readers of THE EYE are several young people. What do you have to say to them?
C.P.B: Needless to say, most change is in the hands of the currently dynamic generation, that is the youth. Young people have always come forward to make this happen. Look at the independence movement. All that brimming energy needs to be channelised. Lack of direction is a big problem these days. The only one seems to be that of competition. I appeal to the young to use their education to think independently and carve out their own path irrespective of popular opinion.

Transliteration and translation from the Hindi by Manshi Jalan
Photographs: Ripin Kalra
In our section on Tributes we have paid homage to the author who is no more with us. The following article is almost breathless in its child-like enthusiasm. Although he was a scholar and could well expound on the subject like an academic, he has chosen, in this article, to let his inspiration bubble up and wallow in the more poetic aspects of Kathakali. Here was a man infused by the fervour that makes a Kathakali bhrantan or Kathakali maniac.

The horizon where the blue sky merges with the blue sea assumes a golden-yellow colour, the clouds appearing like burning parchment with the mountains and trees making a silhouette. The birds fly to their nests, the cows return home after their daily grazing in the green pastures, and nature is gradually engulfed in darkness. The day bids farewell with twilight heralding the arrival of night with its mystic darkness and pregnant silence.

We suddenly hear the sound of the conch, the gong and the cymbals. The sound of the chenda and maddalam proclaims in an atmosphere of blurred vision and muted sounds, the unusual arrival of a mystical aesthetic creation. You are invited to stay in this magic world until the cool hours of the morning. The world in which the characters of Indian mythology will live again.

The vision of the mundane world is cut out by the darkness of the night. The blaze from the huge solitary bronze lamp takes you to a new world of mysticism... all worldly sounds gradually fade out and the body settles down. A new world of sound is created by the chenda, maddalam, gong and cymbals. You are strictly within the confines of an illusory atmosphere. And from this transcendent darkness, there emerge phantasmal forms in bright colours of red, gold, green and black, their radiance enhanced by the wavering golden red flame of the bronze lamp. A world of disbelief in conception, perception and communication is about to unravel.

Themes drawn from Hindu mythology, which are concrete forms of abstract concepts said through stories—these themes are transformed into familiar yet miraculous forms and communicated by symbolic and stylised gestures far removed from literalness. This is an incredible world created by extravagant imagination or bhava. It aims at providing a contra-positive presentation in a venue strictly confined by darkness superimposed by the wavy light of the solitary lamp and also the silence superimposed by the loud rhythm of the chenda and cymbals.

This confinement and limitation of area tends to increase the intensity of the performances. This principle of confinement seems to extend to the principle of facial makeup in Kathakali. The face, which is the field of expression, is bounded by a thick, large white chhuti. The lustrous green face on which the red eyes, elongated and enlarged by lines, stand out like sparkling rubies; the lips are elongated and painted cherry red and are a dark contrast to the green face. Thus the focus of facial expression, namely the eyes and lips are made vitally conspicuous.

Every item in the makeup, costumes and ornaments is aimed to hyperbolise the movements of the organs, sub-organs and the whole body of the performer. The expansive skirt amplifies the slightest tilt of the feet, the bell-mouthed cloth hangovers suspended from the neck maximise the swing of the body. The silver nails of the fingers, when depicting the lotus, make the quivering of the petals lengthy and lustrous. At the same time, in ferocious moods, these same long nails look like claws. The reddened eyes convey intense passion in sringara but a ferocious look in raudra.

The brilliant colours of Kerala’s landscape, are they not the colours of Kathakali? Is not the predominant green of the tropical forests and paddy fields of Kerala the fundamental colour of the face of the paccha (green) character? In the fringes of red laterite drawing designs on the lush green landscape, do we not find a replica of the face of the kathi (lit. knife) character? The red laterite earth in midland Kerala, is it not the predominant colour of the dancers’ jackets and the face of the chuvanna tadi (red beard)? Is not the golden sand of the beaches in lowland
Kerala the colour of the face of the mimikku (lit. shiny) and the extravagant golden ornaments? And the black colour of the huge granite rocks in highland Kerala, is it not the colour of the kari (black) character?

The merging of the abstract blue of the sea with the abstract blue of the sky - abstract because the sea blue and the sky blue are illusory colours of the colourless water of the sea and the colourless air in the sky. Against this backdrop, Kerala’s solid landscape with her brilliant hues of green, red black, yellow and white come to life in Kathakali and Kutiyattam.

HISTORY OF KATHAKALI
When and how did Kathakali originate? It is a question that cannot be answered with complete precision.

It evolved as an art form over a length of time, drawing inspiration from Kerala’s landscape, painting, sculpture, the folk arts, rituals and kalaris (a place where the military heritage of the Nairs were sustained).

Originally, Patayani and Mudiyettu in the erstwhile Travancore State inspired the Kottarakara Tampuran to write eight Ramayana plays as Ramanatam. The performances were virulent, action packed and dance dominating, with a rather crude sense of costume and unrefined singing by the performers themselves. This was improved upon by Vettath Raja and more substantially by Kottayam Tampuran in north Kerala. The fast and violent rhythmic movements were replaced by subtler movements which included rasabhinnaya and charming little kolasams or dance punctuations. He wrote and staged four Mahabharata plays. This was again improved upon by a school of actors called Kalladikonadan and later by Kalpingadan and Kartika Tirunal Maharaja. Now, rasabhinnaya and other poetic elements were introduced with ideas from the highly refined Kutiyattam, the Sanskrit theatre of Kerala. Kathakali began to acquire a certain form and stability at this stage.

As mentioned earlier, Kerala’s landscape provided inspiration to the solid colour scheme in Kathakali while its traditional painting and sculpture as seen in the Kalamezhuthu (dhooli chitro), murals and sculpture provided its form, shape and ornamentation. Folk arts and rituals, particularly themes like Darika Vadham by Bhadrakali, provided the ‘vadham’ or concept of ‘destruction of evil’, which is very prominent in Kathakali themes. The kalaris developed the body culture, stamina and mind-discipline of the performer. The social fabric fitted Kathakali into the folds of the royal families, Nair taravads and Nambudiri illams. They were part of the Sanskritised elite. Kathakali thus became very refined and acquired a halo of Sanskritised culture. In fact, it became the younger, more popular, free for all sister of Kutiyattam.

In his book, Kathakali, Professor Clifford Jones wrote in 1970, ‘While Kathakali has now a broader, more popular patronage, it is still the descendants of the families of the traditional patrons who form the inner core of the real aficionados of this very special art form’.

The world of Kathakali has its fervent devotees. The extremely devoted Kathakali bhrrant, or those whom the ‘Kathakali madness’ has touched, will seriously sit through nine-hour long performances for several days in succession. After the marathon of an all-night performance, they will discuss, point by point, the actors’ interpretation and technique of the previous night until high noon of the following day, only then bestirring themselves for a bath and a quick something to eat. They will then hurry on to the next night’s performance. One must be very hardy - the playing seasons last for months until the cycle of monsoons returns.

The Kathakali bhrrant is a maniac. And Kathakali mania is an intense excitement, almost insanely passionate! Imagine, there were people like Mahakavi Vallathol’s father, who used to keep awake the nights watching Kathakali continuously for forty one full nights without a break! The word, ‘balletomaniac’ is used in the
The brilliant colours of Keralas's landscape, are they not the colours of Kathakali?

same way to describe a person addicted to ballet in the West!

How and why does Kathakali create such a maniac? Because in Kathakali you are transported to an entirely different world of fantasy, where the mundane world disappears. The fantasy of Kathakali takes you to the ultimate in poetry with the attakatha (performance manual), a recreation of the myth as the manana kavya for cogitative or contemplative delight, the rhythmic music. the padams, the sravya kavyas for auditory relish and the actual performance as a drsyay kavya for visual rapture. Thus it is a three dimensional poem covering contemplative, auditory and visual viscera.

KATHAKALI AS POETRY ULTIMATE

If we observe and experience a Kathakali performance on stage and link it to the theories, definitions, nomenclatures, classifications and instructions in Bharata's Natya Shastra, we can see that the prayoga or stage practice does not strictly follow the canons laid by Bharata. Kathakali gives more emphasis to Natya Dharmi whether in vachika, angika or the aharya aspects of abhinaya. The costumes, setting and abhinaya technique make a Kathakali stage performance ineffective in terms of the eight satvika bhavas of the Natya Shastra. So also, the Natya Shastra interpretation of satvika abhinaya as being the complete involvement of the 'mind' of the performer in the portrayal of the character in question. The Kathakali approach to satvika abhinaya runs counter to Bharata's theory. The performer should never get mentally leaves, good natured one). All these are literary poetic expressions, which are intended to be exposit as visual acting with the face, hands and the rest of the body. Thus, the enactment of even a single line of the text takes a long time. This can be achieved only if the actor is a poet endowed with qualities of erudition (vyupatiti) and imagination (pratibha) and has a sound training (abhyasa) in technique. Further, all these time consuming poetic descriptions lead to consummation of love which takes no time at all, involving as it does, only a quick spiral movement.

The musicians and drummers transform the musical passages in the text to bring in bhava or emotion. The drummers even create the humming of the bee and the singing of the cuckoo.

The Kathakali savant is a unique type who contributes to the creation of rasa and thus is a poet oneself, a poet who is sahredya. The attakatha, the text of the performance, is a poem and its author a poet. The performer on the stage who recreates the attakatha as a drsyay kavya is a poet. The accompanying drummers and musicians who recreate the attakatha as a sravya kavya are also poets. And the sahredya, the rasika who recreates the performance on the stage for assimilation to generate rasa for aesthetic rapture is also a poet.

And that is Kathakali. A congregation of poets who transform and recreate a theme from Indian mythology.
Tyagaraja

KRISHNA CHAITANYA

The life of Tyagaraja (1767-1867), who was born in a Telugu family settled in Tamil Nadu, has no external highlights. But over eight hundred songs remain today, (out of the far more legend claims he composed), as the unique achievement of a rich and eventful inward life.

Tyagaraja was born with a temperament which recalls that of Francis of Assisi. It spontaneously accepted the world and accepted it as the bounty of God. The Chola country is the bounty of Kaveri, as surely as Egypt is the bounty of the Nile. We see the river in his songs. “This lady Kaveri gloriously proceeding to the place of her lord, the sea; fulfilling the desires of all, without difference; now speeding fast, now angrily thundering, now placid, gracious; with cuckoos singing on either bank; touching shrine after shrine and worshipping deity after deity...Look at her!” The river becomes a symbol of life, and both are the bounty of God.

He did not want many gifts from life. He had the rich capacity for happiness which can transmute the little into a plenitude. “Though you may have tens of thousands of money, what you actually need is a handful of rice. You need only one garment for wearing and only three cubits of space to lay your body to rest.” That is why he rejected the patronage of the ruler of Tanjore. He was not prepared to flatter “mere men stuck up in their petty egoism”. He did not withhold homage where it was due. But those whom he praised were “the noble souls who roved the deep forest of their hearts and found the Lord’s image”. The man who asked God—“Is it fair for you to trick me by giving me boons when what I want is devotion?”—could not be tempted by any gifts which mere men could offer.

Tyagaraja sharply distinguished religiosity from real religion. With a love of pun as unabashed as that of Shakespeare he laughs at the overfed preceptor, for Guru also means the heavy. He rejected all external formalisms of religion which lacked the religious spirit. “Crows and fish dive, does it become an ablation in sacred waters? Cranes close their eyes, does it become divine contemplation? Goats eat only leaves, does it become fasting? Monkeys residing in forests do not become saints and unchild children are not naked ascetics.” He showered ridicule on the saint “who goes about like a bull eating at any place anything he can get”. And in a virulent idiom that recalls Jerome, he condemned men who ran after women like dogs after bitches, and those dishonest men of religion who prostituted their mother, the mind, to the libertinics called senses, for earning a little money.

Tyagaraja’s religion was a religion of pure joy. “He alone is blessed who is cheerful, frees himself of all worries and keeps himself joyful.” It was also a religion of responsibility. He rejected the widespread belief in astrology and the belief in a predetermined destiny. In a series of puns, justifiable by its contribution of assonances and dissonances to a lyric meant to be sung, he claims that the tyrannical power of the planets (grahas) is really the effect of being seized (agraha) by one’s own transgressions and the remedy is the subjugation (nigraha) of passions, the contemplation of the image (vigraha) of God and obtaining his blessing (amigraha). His own favourite deity was Rama, but he condemned sectarianism and in the last analysis, Rama to him was the perfect being, the man who incarnated godliness by his idealism. Metaphysically he was a monist; but he was also a poet and the poetic sensibility needs the polar confrontation and attraction of two spirits—Martin Buber’s I and Thou—even though they may form ultimately the same identity. He resolves the apparent dualism between monism and dualism in a way only a poet could manage it. “To realise ‘I’ that is best. To realise that You are the whole universe is the greatest happiness.”

Dualism often goes with the doctrine of grace and this creates an initial difficulty because of its apparent opposition to the doctrine of responsibility. But that dilemma is also solved finally, again by a poetic resolution. “Does the child go to the mother or the mother to the child? Does the cow go to the calf or the calf to the cow? Do the paddy fields go up to the clouds for water or the rains come down? Does the lover go after the beloved or the beloved after the lover?”

“Intimacy is the heart’s joy in the Beloved,” said Al Maristani, a Sufi of the Arabic tradition. Intimacy can lead to boldness. And Tyagaraja becomes very bold. “Who has been whispering
evil about me in your ears? Your mind has changed...Have you no loyal attachment? When I approach you fondly, you become stuck up, like the king of Ayodhya you are. Is there none to question you?" Then he chides himself for uttering such things, and God for provoking him. "Having affectionately sung your praises, should I, in the end, have to say all these things?"

We should now be able to accept Tyagaraja as a philosopher and, since he expressed his philosophy in lyrics, as also a philosopher-poet like the Thomas Aquinas of *Pange lingua gloriosi*. But this poet is a singer, the lyric is a song and we have still to understand his greatest contribution. Music, for him, was the ideal means of God-realisation. In one of his songs, he asks us to place God on the bejewelled pedestal of musical sound. Elsewhere he says that God is the bird of beautiful plumage caught within the cage of musical sound. Music is not perfect unless it has both melodic form (*raga*) and devotional ardour (*anuraga*). In another song, he defines the perfect song. "It expounds the truths of the exalted Upanishads, is distinguished by correct placements of notes, rhythmic turns and pauses, reflects true devotion, is sweet outside and inside like grapes and is rich in the entire gamut of feelings."

It is a simple definition, but it meant a great resolution. For, just prior to Tyagaraja, musical performances had become tremendous displays of virtuosity and the treatment of a single *raga* sometimes lasted two days. The lyric was drowned in the musical elaboration. This happened in Europe also, in the sixteenth century, and the Council of Trent decided grimly to save the devotional hymn, by abandoning music if necessary. Church music was saved by Palestrina who showed that melody could be elaborated without destroying the lyric. Tyagaraja's achievement was as great a landmark.

Yet another European analogy would be even more fruitful because it clearly reveals the difficulties of the achievement. There was a fine fusion of poetry and music in the English lutenists of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. It was a perfect marriage where the lyrical line and the melodic line were equal partners. Not only were the words of the lyrical text not blurred or distorted, but the music was able to ebb and flow with the poetic feeling. Composer theorists like Thomas Morley (1558-1603) make fascinating reading even today. "If the subject be light, you must cause your music to go in motions which carry with them a celerity. When interior dialogue of man and God, Tyagaraja consistently uses the lower notes when he refers to himself and the highest notes when Rama is mentioned. A subtle humour is also seen sometimes. He uses the *raga* *Sarasangi* which itself means a beautiful woman to decry feminine blandishments. The *raga* *Pratapa Varolfi* which denotes valour is used when he teases Rama with the question how, distinguished warrior that he is, was routed by Sita in a game of chess. A very difficult modal shift of the tonic is achieved from *Bhairavam* to *Taman Kalyani* when Tyagaraja accuses Rama of discriminating between his favourites and strangers.

Three major dangers confront the endeavour to wed lyric and song. The first is that the lyrical text may be massacred to meet the demands of music. A.E. Houseman had to voice his protest frequently about this. "Vaughan Williams has cut two verses out of my *Is My Team Ploughing?* I wonder how he would like me to cut two bars out of his music." When the composer himself is a gifted poet, as in the case of the English lutenists and Tyagaraja, this difficulty is sensitively solved. The second danger is that the melodic line may assume a greater importance and
even poor quality lyrics full of cliches may be used if they are flexible for musical handling. Many specimens of the German, Elizabethan and Tudor fute songs are rather poor reading as poetry. Here again, if the composer is an inspired poet, gems will be produced like Dowland's In Darkness Let Me Dwell. The intense devotion of Tyagaraja guaranteed a uniformly high literary inspiration of his compositions.

The third danger is the greatest. The demands of the lyric may peg the musical texture at a bare, simple level. This happened in the case of the English song, and its later evolution tried to weld a rich polyphonic accompaniment to the line of the lyric. Some of the English madrigals managed this superbly. Purcell went still further but did not quite escape the danger that music and lyric would part company and the lyric would ask for a divorce on the grounds of ill-treatment by the music. Tyagaraja's greatest triumph lies in his solution of this problem. A simple way of maintaining the integrity of the devotional lyric would have been to go back to the recitative style of temple worship. But that would have been musically bare. On the other hand, to imitate the virtuosity of the great classical singers would have yielded rich musical tissue, but the lyric would have been completely drowned. Tyagaraja solved this problem by evolving a form, as clear as that of the Petrarchan sonnet, for this type of song and fixing a style for its rendering. The elements of this form (pallavi, anupallavi, charanaam) demanded and satisfied the architectural inspiration by allowing the exposition of a melodic mould or raga through opening, progression and further development. The main device for enriching the musical tissue was the sangati or the variation. The variations start with a simple melodic statement and go on to their progressive elaboration. The treatment thus becomes fugal and just as the great organ fugues of Bach grow out of simple thematic cells, the kirtan of Tyagaraja develops out of simple lyrical ideas into complex but integrated musical patterns.

Just as the great organ fugues of Bach grow out of simple thematic cells, the kirtan of Tyagaraja develops out of simple lyrical ideas into complex but integrated musical patterns.

But he is ever alert to hold together feeling, lyrical text and musical elaboration. "Every variation should be justified by emotional propriety and contextual relevance," he says in a song. And he himself brilliantly exemplified his own precept. Take the song, Why do you not listen to my lament? Every musical variation here expresses a different shade of the feeling of agony and despair and they build up a gradual crescendo, like a Bach toccata. The emotion in the toccata is not verbalised. Here it is. Therefore, the crescendo is one of both the poetic content and the musical development.

This article is an extract from a larger article called Two Great Composers, published by Konark Publishers in a book called — Krishna Chaitanya — A Profile and Selected Papers.

Krishna Chaitanya was a great scholar and prolific writer on many subjects. We acknowledge his recent death in our section on Tributes.
The Bangalore Pub Crawl

MARK FINEMAN

Michael Jackson’s ‘Black or White’ was blasting through Pub World the other night, and Rocky the bartender was drawing his 100th or so pitcher of draft as Ramjee Chandran, Bangalore’s self-described ‘Pusher of Pubs’ and ‘Booster of Beer,’ led an American visitor through yet another stop along what surely ranks as India’s most incongruous guided tour: The Bangalore Pub Crawl.

“Let’s see,” the swarthy and urbane Chandran began, squeezing through plaid-cushioned bar stools, high-backed booths and the oak-barrel tables that fill Pub World. “These four guys against the bar here are definitely junior execs with one of the high-tech firms in town. Those guys dancing over there, by that mural of the New York city skyline, they’re definitely students, probably at one of the city’s science institutes.”

Pointing toward a bearded European seated across the bar and chatting with a South Indian in a suede jacket and wire-rimmed glasses, Chandran continued: “That’s probably one of the resident foreign collaborators, discussing profit margins or some such thing with his local joint-venture partner. And there, through the Wild West saloon doors over there, those are a bunch of the ad boys.”

And this was just the beginning.

Pub World is just one of the 150 or so Western-style watering holes on the pub circuit in this most extraordinary South Indian city. Just around the corner from Pub World, for example, on a street choked with motorized rickshaws, wandering cows, men in loincloths and women in saris, there is the Black Cadillac, complete with al-fresco tables, garden umbrellas and restrooms labelled ‘Elton John’ and ‘Olivia Newton John.’

There’s the Take Five pub with live jazz on weekends a few miles away, not far from a hamburger joint called Indiana Fast Foods and just down the street from an old colonial theatre that screens Hindi movies about Hindu myths and gods. And then there’s the 19, Church Street Pub, with videos of Madonna writhing half-naked on a giant-screen television, next door to a cabaret with a live Show Chandran describes as “Sonny Liston in a bikini.”

All of it is just a few doors from one of the city’s oldest Catholic churches, a holdover from the era of British colonial domination that gave Bangalore its first taste of the West more than a century ago.

Taken together, the scene is a dizzying blend of American glitz, British kitsch and Indian nouveau riche, all against the backdrop of the impoverished, medieval and mystical Indian nation.

But behind Bangalore’s bar scene is a cultural phenomenon with few parallels, in a world careening madly into the strange new era of the ’90s. Fuelled by India’s emerging middle class—a new generation that experts now say includes as many as 12% of the nation’s 850 million people—the pubs of Bangalore dramatically illustrate the enormous social and physical impact of consumerism and disposable income on traditionally socialist India.

The pubs mirror Bangalore itself—a multicultural oasis of suave sophistication, urbanization and high-tech science that has come to symbolize what many modern Indians hope for the future of their vast and strife-torn nation as a whole. Nicknamed the ‘Silicon Plateau,’ the city draws so many upwardly mobile migrants from throughout India that it has been one of the world’s fastest growing metropolises during the last two decades.

“Really, Bangalore is unlike any other city in this country — maybe in the world,” said Ramjee Chandran, who conceives he is a shameless promoter of his city, as well as his own slick, bimonthly entertainment guide, ‘Bangalore This Fortnight.’

“On one level, OK, the reason for the pub culture here is that the country’s
largest brewery is located right in the heart of the city, which means that when a pub is running out of beer, the bartender just makes a local call and, within minutes, a little guy on a bicycle comes riding up with another keg in tow.

But it is more than that. In many ways it is like an urban laboratory. Bangalore's growth as a centre for computers, electronics, management institutes, satellite technology, defense research and the lot has attracted linguistic groups all over India. High-tech means the West. So now, you've got this weird mix of East and West here - not just in the pubs but everywhere in the city."

Take Chandran himself. He is a Hindu Brahmin of traditional South Indian upbringing, a 33-year-old entrepreneur who has traveled often to Europe and America. Now, in addition to publishing the entertainment guide to Bangalore's burgeoning industry of pubs, cabarets, restaurants, shops and luxury hotels, he also serves as the Indian sales representative for a Florida-based manufacturer of state-of-the-art phototypesetting machines.

Writing in his own guide, Chandran described his hometown as a place "where high-tech research coexists with braided plaits and silk skirts, where ancient rituals performed by a priest precede the opening of a new aeronautics research laboratory.

That same column went on to describe how a group of Banglorean scientists with doctorate degrees from the West recently used a computer to select the inauguration date for a high-tech research laboratory in the city. The software: a locally designed astrology program. The title of the inaugural speech: 'How Superstition Retards the Scientific Mind.'

Such contradictions, though, run deep in Bangalore, where it is equally easy to find street beggars on the very same corner that advertises the 'Indian Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics;' where rapid growth has filled the city with satellite-TV dishes but made water so scarce, that each resident gets less than a tenth of the international daily standard for drinking and bathing.

Clearly, Bangalore's boom abounds with complications and setbacks.

"The blending of East and West is good, of course," said P. Ramiah, the lifelong Banglorean who runs the city's regional edition of the prestigious national daily newspaper, The Hindu. "The key is to find a judicious mixing of Western civilization and our own culture."

Bangalore Mayor Kalasappa Narayana Swamy speaks of "the price we're paying for paradise." The institutes and industries that are the high-powered magnets for India's new generation of entrepreneurs have overtaxed the government's meagre resources to such an extent that he now wonders whether ultimately they will be the ruin of the city they helped create.

"Already, Bangalore's water must be pumped in from a river 100 miles distant, as part of a continuing multibillion-dollar supply project that will still satisfy only one-fifth of the city's current water needs.

Traffic is a nightmare. Due largely to Bangalore's nouveau riche, the city of 4.6 million now boasts 640,000 vehicles - just 10,000 fewer than the entire metropolis of Bombay and its 10 million residents. Pollution is fast destroying the idyllic climate that contributed heavily to Bangalore's draw. So are skyrocketing property values, which have increased 100-fold in just 10 years."

"We have now reached optimum growth," said Bangalore's veteran publicity director, Jayarama Reddy. "Any future growth is not fair or safe or healthy for our people. It's just not humanly possible."

Editor Ramiah is concerned about more than the physical impact of the city's rapid urbanization.

"You see, in a metropolis like Bangalore, where so many cultures have come together, it is the Western culture and the desire for all things Western that has become the only, common, cementing force," Ramiah said. "It is the one common denominator of all these cultures that have migrated here from all over India. Even the language - many of the Indians here can only communicate with each other in English because their native tongues are so different.

"But you can't just dream of what progress should be and then do nothing to accommodate it. There is the widening gap between rich and poor, a city literally bursting at its seams and, of course, a whole new generation losing its roots and values.

For example, when there is a natural calamity in India, we say: 'OK. This is the will of God.' But in the West, you go rush to a psychiatrist and get some treatment and pay out hundreds of dollars. We have a lot to learn from the West. Yet, the fact remains, you might have material wealth, but, you don't have the internal strength and the personal will to handle life's calamities, the wealth is just not enough."

Ramiah's argument brings to mind the warning of the man who founded the city in 1537 - a Hindu prince history describes as "a visionary chieftain." Kempe Gowda, or Gowda I as he came to be known, ordered four ornate, granite pillars to be erected on widely scattered sites far outside his new village of Bangalore. Together, the pillars formed a huge, imaginary square - the boundaries, said Gowda I, beyond which the settlement should never be allowed to grow.

Today, far beyond those pillars, there are dozens of factories and research institutes, a sprawling 500-acre compound called Electronics City, scores of high-rise apartment blocks and, yes, a few of the better sights along the Bangalore Pub Crawl."

Contributed by: Sylvia D'Cruz

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ASHISH
KHOKAR

The 1 or the ego has crept all pervadingly into our culture. Perhaps nowhere else in the world has the human race become so insecure about its own identity that it needs to constantly remind itself of its greatness. "What is your good name, please?" is an often heard question. Implicit in its application, it contains the meaning, "What is your bad name, otherwise?"

Ultimately, it is all a matter of name, fame, highflying, climbing, moving, shaking, of joining the ranks... all to what end? Fame is but ten minutes under the sun. We celebrate birthdays after a dear departed has been buried and buried well. I have never understood these 114th birth anniversary celebrations in the 40th year of death. It can only happen here.

Culture. That great word encompasses more than the human mind can contain. Eliot wrote a whole treatise on the subject - Towards the Meaning and Understanding of the Word Culture. In 1994 in India today, what does it mean? Sensitivity, breeding, substance? Less of these and more of money and power. We may have celebrated five thousand years of our great heritage through countless tamsahas, Festivals of India, Utssavs, but is there a living culture other than the packaged one? Yes, it lives when thousands gather in Puri to pull and push the raath or sacred chariot during the Jagannath Yatra. Has our culture degenerated to paan spitting and peeing democratically?

The new Maharajas of India are the bureaucrats. Look at their style, outreach and pomposity. Politicians, at least, have to go through the grind of games, elections and survival. What does a babu do? Slog and sit through an exam, which, with Mandal recommendations, has been made easier. There are categories and categories of the privileged but nothing to beat these learners by rote who get into the civil service (at the nth attempt) and rule the roost forever. Ensnconced in their Shastri Bhavans (poor Shastri, to have to suffer this disgrace), they drive around on tax payers' money when they are not driving you mad with their rule iv, section 66, subhead vii jargon. Their sole purpose is to protect their areas of influence, increase it by the time they retire and provide for at least three generations thereafter, by the time they become nobodies.

And we celebrate culture. The great glory of this heritage of ours, which in fact, died with the Guptas in the early part of this AD. No, not with the Guptas and Aggarwals and other baniyas but Chandragupta. The last inking of this greatness continued down south, through the Cheras, Pandyas, Cholas, whose power reached Malaysia, Indonesia and Bali. After the 11th century, okay 12th to be generous, there has been little culture to show, for then the barbarian influence eclipsed all. Certainly, outward manifestations in architecture continued and many important and beautiful specimens arose; but in free India today, anyone can break or demolish, if not claim or take credit, for reversing history. Ayodhya is a reminder of what we are capable of.

In the land of Shantiniketans there is very little shanti. On a visit to this celebrated campus, I ask the university bookshop for an English copy of Geetanjali. And the paan chewing Bhadralok said, "Out of print, dada". Tagore, in his own setting, is in short supply or the system has shortchanged Tagore. We talk of the Information Age. The sole purpose of the custodians of information is to sit in custody; the less anyone knows, the better. Ignorance is bliss and bliss is moksha. You stand delivered.

Today, in a country of nine hundred plus millions, there are not even nine truly greats. Really, count the number of people you can look up to. Look up to not in the sense of height of an Amitab Bachchan, but in the stature of substance and significance. Mother Theresa is first and foremost with her personal example of selfless service; the Shankaracharyas of various peethams (?), Kiran Bedi...who else? Khairnar today, Seshan now (where were his values all these days, when he served the government gloriously?) Who else on a national level? Remember that the Satyajit Rays and Zubin Mehtas are gone, either permanently or physically stationed out. Our list cannot go beyond the magical number of mystery: multiply anything by nine,
the total of the end number will be nine (9 x 3 = 27, 2 + 7 = 9). So please write in your choice of nine living greats, so we can learn if they are among those who live in the Andamans or Mauritius.

It is thus, this paucity, because we have become a mediocre race today. We have the talent but we have abused it. Subservient to self interest, we have forgotten the larger good. India, once the light of Asia, now the world, with figures like Vivekananda, has little to offer today, hence the packaging of culture. When real education is dismal, then, excuse in the form of historical reasons become an important tool for justification. VIP culture thrives and amongst the mail I received, there was an invitation to attend a ‘VIP Meditation Camp’ by one Bharat Nirman Society. Societies like these need to meditate on the issue. VIP. Why does one need to be an important person? What is importance about? I remember someone once said, ‘For a human to be important, it is more important to be human’. Peoples’ representatives today, need protection from people themselves.

India is a country of great potential and most people find their potentialities utilised outside the country. The brain drain was not a simple population explosion problem. It was more a question of attitudes. How do you function in a system that is basically dishonest? Judges are for sale, then, where is redressal? That is why when ‘Run For Your Country’ kind of sports events are organised, most say, ‘Run from your country’. And Mera Bharat is not only mahaaan but beimaan too!

He Ram! or Rahim or whatever you will.

Ashish Khokar is a critic and commentator on the arts. Ashish lives in Delhi.

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TO OUR LONG SUFFERING (BUT FAITHFUL) READERS...

You have no doubt realised, by now, that we are way behind schedule. As an essentially voluntary enterprise, we work against many odds to bring out this magazine. This has resulted in delays in our bi-monthly schedule.

We are however, working hard at ironing out these problems.

We’d like to thank you for your patience and faith in us. And to promise you that despite the delay, you will receive all issues due to you.
One Vishnusharman shrewdly gleaning
All worldly wisdom’s inner meaning,
In these five books the
charm compresses
Of all such books the world possesses.

Panchatantra

It is said that an ounce of sense contained in the Panchatantra is better than a ton of scholarship. Most of us are familiar with it from our childhood as ‘once-upon-a-time’ stories and have read them in abridged forms or in comics. Rarely have we encountered a literal translation in verse form. Indeed, these wise verses, often epigrammatic in style, go to make the real character of the Panchatantra. The stories are charming when regarded as pure narrative, but it is the beauty, wisdom and wit of the verses which lift the Panchatantra above the best story books.

The Panchatantra is a ‘niti shastra’ or textbook of ‘niti’. The word ‘niti’ roughly means the ‘wise conduct of life’. It is witty, mischievous and profoundly sane. The word, ‘Panchatantra’ means, the ‘Five Books’, the ‘Pentateuch’. Each of the five books are independent, consisting of a framing story with numerous, inserted stories, told by one or another of the characters of the main narrative. The device of the framing story is familiar in oriental works, as in the Arabian Nights. The large majority of the actors are animals, who have, of course, a fairly constant character. Thus, the lion is strong, but dull of wit, the jackal, crafty, the heron stupid, the cat, a hypocrite. The animal actors present far more vividly and shrewdly, undeceived and free of all sentimentality, a view, that piercing the humbug of every false ideal, reveals with incomparable wit, the sources of lasting joy. And this is how it happened...

In the southern country is a city called Maiden’s Delight. There lived a king named Immortal Power. He was familiar with all the works dealing with the wise conduct of life. His feet were made dazzling by the tangle of rays of light from jewels in the diadems of mighty kings who knelt before him. He had reached the far shore of all the arts that embellish life. This king had three sons. Their names were Rich-Power, Fierce-Power and Endless-Power and they were supreme block-heads.

Now when the king perceived that they were hostile to education, he summoned his counsellors and said: “Gentlemen, it is known to you that these sons of mine, being hostile to education, are lacking in discernment. So when I behold them, my kingdom brings me no happiness, though all external thorns are drawn. For there is wisdom in the proverb:

Of sons unborn, or dead, or fools,
Unborn or dead will do:
They cause a little grief, no doubt;
But fools, a long life through.

and again:

To what good purpose can a cow
That brings no calf nor milk be bent?
Or why beget a son who proves
A dunce and disobedient?

Some means must therefore be devised to awaken their intelligence.”

And they, one after another, replied: “O King, first one learns grammar, in twelve years. If this subject has somehow been mastered, then one masters the books on religion and practical life. Then the intelligence awakens.”

But one of their number, a counsellor named Keen said: “O King, the duration of life is limited, and the verbal sciences require much time for mastery. Therefore let some kind of epitome be devised to waken their intelligence. There is a proverb that says:

Since verbal sciences have no final end,
Since life is short, and obstacles impede,
Let central facts be picked and firmly fixed,
As swans extract the milk with water mixed.

“Now, there is a Brahmin here named Vishnusharman, with a reputation for competence in numerous
The Blue Jackal

There was once a jackal named Fierce-Howl, who lived in a cave near the suburbs of a city. One day he was hunting for food, his throat pinched with hunger, and wandered into the city after nightfall. There the city dogs snapped at his limbs with their sharp-pointed teeth, and terrified his heart with their dreadful barking, so that he stumbled this way and that in his efforts to escape and happened into the house of a dyer. There he tumbled into a tremendous indigo vat, and all the dogs went home.

Presently the jackal - further life being predestined - managed to crawl out of the indigo vat and escaped into the forest. There all the thronging animals in his vicinity caught a glimpse of his body dyed with the juice of indigo, and crying out: “What is this creature enriched with that unprecedented color?” they fled, their eyes dancing with terror, and spread the report: “Oh, oh! Here is an exotic creature that has dropped from somewhere. Nobody knows what his conduct might be, or his energy. We are going to vamoose. For the proverb says:

Where you do not know
Conduct, stock, and pluck,
’Tis not wise to trust, If you wish for luck.”

Now Fierce-Howl perceived their dismay, and called to them: “Come, come, you wild things! Why do you flee in terror at sight of me? For Indra realizing that the forest creatures have

THE STORY OF THE LAST EPISODE...

Victor the Jackal, seeking every avenue to poison his master Rusty the Lion’s mind against Lively the Bull, told him the story of Creep, a house who lived with her large family in the corner of a king’s bed, prospering on his royal blood. One day, a flea named Leap chanced upon the bed. Rejoicing in its exceptional comfort, he came upon Creep, who forthwith ordered him out. Leap, however, desired to stay on and partake of the royal blood too. He prevailed upon her sense of hospitality:

The Brahman reverences fire,
Himself the lower castes’ desire;
The wife reveres her husband dear;
But all the world must guests revere.

Reluctantly, she agreed, warning him to bite the king’s feet only when he was fatigued or asleep. But the famished flea bit the king too soon, whereupon the latter awoke in a rage. Servants searched the bed for the offending insect. Leap hid in a crevice, but hapless Creep and her family were found and exterminated instantly. Thus did Victor caution Rusty against the perils of sharing house with strangers.

Warning Rusty further of the danger in neglecting his old, trusty servants in favour of strange, new ones, Victor told the story of:

THE BLUE JACKAL

scienses. Entrust the princes to him. He will certainly make them intelligent in a twinkling.

When the king had listened to this, he summoned Vishnusharan and said, “Holy sir, as a favour to me you must make these princes incomparable masters of the art of practical life. In return, I will bestow upon you a hundred land grants.”

And Vishnusharan made this answer to the king, “O king, listen. Here is the plain truth. I am not the man to sell good learning for a hundred land grants. But if I do not, in six months’ time, make the boys acquainted with the art of intelligent living, I will give up my own name. Let us cut the matter short. Listen to my lion roar. My boasting arises from no greed for cash. Besides, I have no use for money; I am eighty years old, and all the objects of sensual desire have lost their charm. But in order that your request may be granted, I will show a sporting spirit with reference to artistic matters. Make a note of the date. If I fail to render your sons, in six months’ time, incomparable masters of the art of intelligent living, then His Majesty is at liberty to show me His Majestic bare bottom.”

When the king, surrounded by his counsellors, had listened to the Brahmin’s highly unconventional promise, he was dumbstruck. He entrusted the princes to him, and experienced supreme content.

Meanwhile, Vishnusharan took the boys, went home, and made them learn by heart, five books which he composed and called

(i) The Loss of Friends
(ii) The Winning of Friends
(iii) Crows and Owls
(iv) Loss of Gains
(v) Ill-considered Action.

These the princes learned, and in six months’ time they answered the prescription. Since that day this work on the art of intelligent living, called Panchatantra, or the Five Books, has travelled the world, aiming at awakening the intelligence in the young.
no monarch, anointed me - my name is Fierce-Howl - as your King. Rest in safety within the cage formed by my resistless paws."

On hearing this, the lions, tigers, leopards, monkeys, rabbits, gazelles, jackals, and other species of wild life bowed humbly, saying: "Master, prescribe to us our duties." Thereupon he appointed the lion prime minister and the tiger, lord of the bedchamber, while the leopard was made custodian of the king's betel, the elephant doorkeeper, and the monkey, the bearer of the royal parasol. But to all the jackals, his own kindred, he administered a cuffing, and drove them away. Thus he enjoyed the kingly glory, while lions and others killed food-animals and laid them before him. These he divided and distributed to all after the manner of kings.

While time passed in this fashion, he was sitting one day in his court when he heard the sound made by a pack of jackals howling near by. At this his body thrilled, his eyes filled with tears of joy, he leaped to his feet, and began to howl in a piercing tone. When the lions and others heard this, they perceived that he was a jackal, and stood for a moment shame-faced and downcast, then they said: "Look! We have been deceived by this jackal. Let the fellow be killed." And when he heard this, he deavored to flee, but was torn to bits by a tiger and died.

"And that is why I say:

Whoever leaves his friends... and the rest of it."

Then Rusty asked: "How am I to recognize that he is treacherous? And what is his fighting technique?" And Victor answered: "Formerly he would come into the presence of my lord and king with limbs relaxed. If today he approaches timidly, in obvious readiness to thrust with his horns, then the king may understand that he has treachery in mind."

Hereupon Victor rose and visited Lively. To him, also, he showed himself sluggish, like one penetrated by discouragement. Therefore Lively said: "My good fellow, are you in spirits?" To which he replied: "How can a dependent be in spirits? For you know

They see their wealth in others' power
Who wait upon a king;
They even fear to lose their lives:
A doleful song they sing.

Again:

With birth begin the sorrows which
Forever after cling,
The never ending train of woes
In service of a king.

Five deaths-in-life sage Vyasa notes
With well-known epic swing:
The poor man, sick man, exile, fool,
And servant of a king.

His food repels; he dare not say
An independent thing:
Though sleepless, he is not awake
Who hangs upon a king.

The common phrase 'a dog's life' has
A most persuasive ring:
But dogs can do the things they like;
A slave obeys his king.
He must be chaste, sleep hard, grow thin,
And eat meager dinner;
The servant lives as lives the saint,
Yet is not saint, but sinner.

He cannot do the things he would;
He serves another's mind;
He sells his body. How can such
A wretch contentment find?

According to the lesser distance,
A servant uses more persistency
In watching for his master's whim
And trembling at the sight of him:
And this because - fire, a king,
Are double name for single thing,
A burning thing that men can stand
Afar, but not too close at hand.

What flavor has a tidbit, though
It be as good as good,
Soft, dainty, melting in the mouth,
If brought by servitude?

To sum it all up:

What is my place? My time? My friends?
Expenditure or dividends?
And what am I? And what my power?
So must one ponder hour by hour.

After listening to this, Lively said,
perceiving that Victor had a hidden purpose in mind: "Tell me, my good fellow, what you wish to imply." And Victor answered: "Well, you are my friend. I cannot help telling you what is to your profit. Here goes. The master, Rusty, is filled with wrath against you. And he said today: 'I will kill Lively and provide a feast for all who eat meat.' Of course, I fell into deep dejection on hearing this. Now you must do what the crisis demands.

To Lively this report was like the fall of a thunderbolt, and he fell into deep dejection. Yet as Victor's words were always plausible, he grew more and more troubled, fell into panic, and said: "Yes, the proverb is right:

Women oft are tricked by scamps;
Kings with rascals oft agree;
Toward the skinflint money drifts;
Rain on mountains falls and sea.

Ah, me! Ah, me! What is this that has befallen me?

"Comrade," said Victor, "kings love to injure without reason, and they seek out the vulnerable spot in an adversary." "True, too true," said Lively. "There is wisdom in the verse:

The serpent sandal-trees defiles;
In lotus-ponds lurk crocodiles;
The slanderer makes virtue vain:
No blessing lacks attendant pain.

No lotus decks the mountain height;
From scoundrels issues nothing right;
To saints no change of heart is known;
Rice never sprouts from barley sown.

Nobility's constraints
Are felt by gracious saints,
Who bear good deeds in mind
Forget the other kind.

"Yet after all, the fault is mine, because I made advances to a false friend. As the story goes:

Harsh talk, untimely action,
False friends - are worse than vain:
The swan in lilies sleeping,
Was by the arrow slain."

"How was that?" asked Victor. And Lively told the story of

PASSION AND THE OWL

THE WORLD

It burns in the void,
Nothing upholds it.
Still it travels.

Travelling the void
Upheld by burning
Nothing is still.

 Burning it travels
The void upholds it.
Still it is nothing.

Nothing it travels
A burning void
Upheld by stillness.

Kathleen Raine
SAVING DELHI’S GREEN AREAS
A CITIZENS’ ACTION GUIDE
(DELHI 1994)
BY GITANJALI SINGHAL
KALPARYIKSH,
C1/A MUNIRKA,
NEW DELHI 110067
PRICE RS. 30/-

NARAYANI GUPTA

In 1980 the D.D.A. was hosting a seminar on The Future of New Delhi. At one point in the afternoon, in that pleasant post-lunch hour, when pious platitude followed pious platitude, someone asked a simple and sensible question, in the manner of the child in The Emperor’s New Clothes. The audience turned to look and - horrors! it was a child - a schoolboy. The senior officials were disconcerted - Ye bachche yahan kya karda hein? (What are these children doing here?) - and the little group was told gently but firmly that they could not participate in this ‘adults only’ ritual. But the children did not give up their interest in the future of Delhi. They became college students, and many of them are now busy professionals. But the little group they founded, Kalparyiksh, has not disappeared, and has gone from strength to strength. Starting with a small but excellently compiled newsletter, they have since published a series of clearly written and useful books on green areas, birds and the Sardar Sarovar Project, all reflecting the research and activist work being done by a group that is alert, well-informed and, most important, prepared to give time for worthwhile causes. Respect and concern for the environment was a way of life in India. No longer. In this world of ‘developers’ and ‘promoters’ who develop their sense of greed and promote their own interests, those who talk of the Indian tradition would do well to emulate Kalparyiksh and think nationally and act locally.

The Pioneer on 24th July, 1994, carried a fairly prominent piece on the Delhi government’s ‘massive drive to green Delhi’ — 60,000 saplings, ministers deliberately toying with spades, and the rest of the annual ceremony...which reminded me of a comment by Mr. G.S. Khosla some years ago that if all the saplings planted at each vanamahotsav in Delhi had grown into trees, there would be no room for us to walk in the dense jungle of Delhi! That has not happened, because the same ministers who planted the saplings go on to inaugurate with the same kar-kamal, flyovers, wider roads, stadii...for all of which hundreds of full-grown trees are cut. There was a pleasant bus stop at IIT Crossing, with monghaliswalas (pearl vendors) and lovely shady trees. Today, there is a flyover, and a tiled pavement so hot you could bake a cake on it. The breeze, the shade, the under-growth has gone forever, buried under tar and concrete. And we shrug and take it all as something inevitable.

This superb book tells us it is not inevitable. Vigilance and prompt action can save the trees. In less than 100 pages of well-laid out text, the authors explain the urgency of the problem, the rules of the government which we should be aware of, and use to our and the trees’ advantage, and who to contact in which department. Delhi is so overlaid with many departments of government, national, local, military, with the boundaries between New Delhi Municipal area and Municipal Corporation of Delhi not very clear, that many citizens may be put off from acting simply because they do not know which office or official to address themselves to.

This book should be read widely available in schools, colleges and in the offices of residents’ associations. It would be a good idea to have a Hindi translation, and to have similar books prepared for other towns, particularly places like Bangalore which have a heritage of trees which any city in the world would be proud to own.

Dr. Narayani Gupta teaches at the Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. She has been the Past President of the Conservation Society of Delhi and one of its most active members.

ARNOLD TOYNBEE AND DAISAKU IKEDA

CHOOSE LIFE
A DIALOGUE

EDITED BY RICHARD L. GAGE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
RS. 125.00

DAISAKU IKEDA
THE MAN AND HIS MISSION
N. RADHIKRISHNAN
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION
RS. 200.00

A.P. RAMANAN

"T he horror! The horror!
shouts the dying Kurtz in
Conrad’s Heart of Darkness (1899). It
is an existentialist cry anticipating the
horror that is to follow in the present
century. It is a horror which Conrad
confronts in the darkness of African
jungles, an apocalyptic vision that sig-
nifies a negation of human existence and
singularly identifies the pathetic
incapacity of man to survive against
the onslaughts of nature’s fury.

Choose Life purports to underline
the very same desperation that Conrad
so graphically depicts in his novellette.
Through lively dialogues between two
great minds, the engrossing and pro-
covative exchange of views bring to
focus the modern world’s predicament.
Daisaku Ikeda, the Oriental pacifist and
Toynbee, the Occidental historian
effectively complement each other in
pointing out the infirmities plaguing
the modern world and the necessity
for a more just and humane society. From
sex to salvation, from nature cure to
nuclear threat, the dialogue develops
into a valuable treatise, covering a
wide canvas. The book is divided into
three main sections: Personal and
Social Life, Political and International
Life and Philosophical and Religious
Life. These broad categories are fur-
ther divided into subsections which
concern themselves with one particu-
lar subject.

The spirit of humanism pervades
the entire book. The reader discerns in
it the philosophy of non-violence prop-
gated by Mahatma Gandhi and Mar-
tin Luther King. It has been a long journey from the time the bullets riddled through the bodies of these paragons of ahimsa to the present day. Yet the question still remains relevant and that is what Ikeda and Toynbee have strived to hold our interest on.

While Ikeda comprehends the travails of the modern world through the Buddhist tradition, Toynbee, with his deep sense of historical perceptions analyses the ills that plague mankind in the present time. Both have a steadfast conviction that the ultimate triumph would be that of mind over matter. Ikeda's fervent appeal for the preservation of unity of life and nature, as enunciated in the Buddhist concept of Esho Fumi, is supplemented by Toynbee's idea of 'reality-in-itself'. The emphasis is that man has a consciousness, bestowed by life and this grows in an ambience of equilibrium, which cannot be tampered with. It goes to the credit of the conversationists that they are able to strike a harmonious tone insofar as the ultimate solution to the problems faced by mankind is concerned. Both have underlined the importance of the role of intellectuals and creative writers in the society. There is no dichotomy between individual sensitivity and social obligation. As Toynbee observes, while science can only analyse the 'universal' and the 'common', artistic sensibility is able to comprehend the 'particular' and the 'unique' and fuse this particularity to the universality of oneness of all.

In choosing a political system, emphasis has been laid on having a good leader with proven qualities. The appeal is to safeguard human dignity through social justice. However, there is no clear solution expostulated to rectify the evils besetting our society.

In analysing the role of religion in the building of civilizations, Toynbee and Ikeda differ in their views. The former believes that the production of a surplus of food and other material commodities has made possible the creation of 'non-economic works' such as architecture, visual art, literature, philosophy and science. Ikeda however, states that religion is the main spring that stimulates man to put his surplus time and energy to meaningful use. Both are in agreement that with the decline of Christianity, the vacuum created has been replaced by three other 'religions' namely, the belief in progress through the application of science to technology, nationalism and communism. Ikeda points out the basic flaw in these 'religions', that whereas the older religions strove to control human greed, these newer ones seem to be employed for the liberation and fulfilment of that very greed. They conclude on the need for a new religion, one that combines the positive aspect of science with philosophy.

Daisaku Ikeda - The Man and His Mission gives a clear portrait of the man whose mission in life has been to bring about social transformation, by using culture as an instrument for going unity between the peoples of the world. He is a leader of the socio-cultural organisation Soka Gakkai, based on the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. He firmly believes in the cultural richness of individual groups. According to him, exchanges between the different groups would certainly lead to a stronger relationship amongst the communities of the world. He has been termed the 'Ulysses of the twenty-first century' by the author for his prolific writing and service to humanity, not only in the world of religion, education and international understanding but also because of his imitable contribution in the field of civilization, literature and philosophy.

His vision of life proffers an end to the malaise of mistrust that continues to persist not only amongst different nations but amongst individuals as well. Truly Ikeda has carved out a niche for himself in the world of human understanding. His life is an inspiration, no doubt for every one. To quote his own words

I go forward
Because I know that to look lightly on reality
may mean disaster
I work hard at my faith
I will be a beacon light,
a small and yet a great light
that the people can trust and take ease in.

In both the works under review, the topicality of the subject matter and its eminent suitability for the modern generation to revitalize the sagging spirit have tremendous appeal. One remembers the worlds of T.S. Eliot at this juncture when he wrote:

We are hollow men,
We are stuffed men,
leaning against each other,
our head piece filled with straw.

The void, the deafening silence which we confront in the world today due to lack of values and crumbling of ethical props, have been dramatically put forth by Ikeda and Toynbee. It is a timely reminder of the impending catastrophe, if mankind does not listen to the admonitions signalled by natural and material disasters occurring in regular succession. If mankind turns a deaf ear, it would be a great tragedy and the day will not be far off when the zephyr blowing from yonder would write an epitaph on the desolate shores of eternity - 'Here lies the species that annihilated itself'.

Dr. A.P. Ramanan is a member of the Indian Railways Traffic Service and works in the Ministry of Railways. He has special interest in colonial literature and topics of contemporary relevance.
DECENTRALISATION OF POWER IN MADHYA PRADESH DEMOCRACY AT THE DOOR STEPS.

People's participation in development works was so far only a slogan. But by providing to the panchayats, city corporations, municipalities, town panchayats and cooperative institutions an effective popular base, powers and resources we are going to make it real.

Digvijay Singh
Chief Minister

DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS GOVERNMENT OF MADHYA PRADESH
There is one common glow, one common breathing,
all things are in sympathy.

— Hippocrates