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Ka Jingshai

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"The mind of the yogi is always fixed on God, always absorbed in the self. You can recognize a man by merely looking at him. His eyes are wide open, with an aimless look, like the eyes of the mother bird hatching her eggs. Her entire mind is fixed on the eggs, and there is a vacant look in her eyes. Can you show me such a picture?"

- The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna



WHO'S WHO



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Dr Esther Syiem: A professor of English at the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong and habeen working on research in the oral dimension of Khasi folk traditions. Some of her publications include *Oral Scriptings*, of wit and wisdom, of follies and frailties, *Ka Nam*, *Memoir in Water: Speaks the Wah Umkhrah*. A member of the National Editorial Collective of the PLSI.



Bah P S Lyngdoh: Long association with the Ramakrishna Mission, Sohra. Translator of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and various works of Swami Vivekananda in Khasi.



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Photo by Wann Majaw

Come out into the broad open light of day, come out from the little narrow paths, for how can the infinite soul rest content to live and die in small ruts? Come out into the universe of Light. Everything in the universe is yours, stretch out your arms and embrace it with love. If you ever felt you wanted to do that, you have felt God. - Swami Vivekananda

Is it a mere soliloquy that I hear in the breeze, rustling through the pines or does it echo the voices of thousands winding their way through Lum Sohpetbneng?

We cannot say unless we delve deep into the annals of the vast peninsula that stretches below the Himalayan range into the confluence of three oceans. The land has been a home for thousands of races and fostered cultures for centuries together. The immense cultural diversity is evident from changing dialects or even the language in every couple of hundreds of kilometres. Scholars were left to wonder how despite this diversity the Indian nation thrived, whereas the Soviet Union was shattered to pieces. There were times when dark shadows hung over the land, bloodshed - with pen and sword - swept across it and burnt it to ashes. Internal rifts moved towards full-blown crises. Pandemics, just

like the ongoing COVID-19, pushed the country into depths of peril. But again, the nation lifted itself just as Phoenix rises from ashes.

This points to some elixir that the nation has dearly held to its bosom. What is that? Though it may sound paradoxical, it is nothing but religion, pure and simple, that has been running through the veins of this nation. Questions may arise, how can the element which has caused much strife in societies, be held responsible for breaking the barriers. We admit that what went by the name of religion has allowed differences to fester and divisions to run deep. In spite of that, we know that those will be regarded by posterity as mere aberrations than precedents. Religion, stripped off its non-essentials, is universal and is synonymous with spirituality. The innate human goodness cannot be buried eternally. The shadow that looms over human nature can only be shattered with the light of spirituality. In the times when storms blur our vision, threaten to uproot us from the holds, we need the light evermore, the light - that engulfs without drowning, cheers without inebriating and enlightens without burning.

Ki Kyntien Ba Kyntang

La pynkylla da I Bah P S Lyngdoh

SPRING 2020

THE LIGHT ज्योति
Ka Jingshai

U Ramakrishna

U Kynrad bad u Nongbud
Rymphang 1882

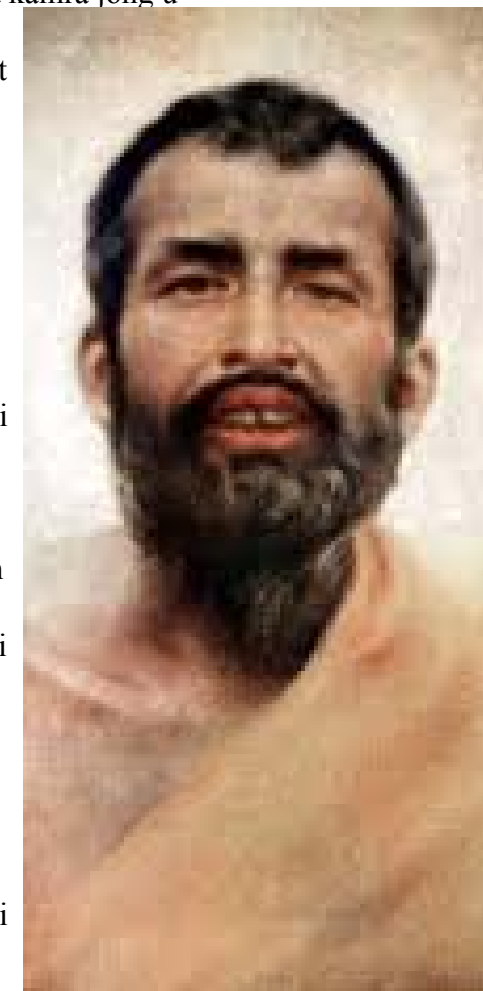
Ka la long ha ka sngi Robibar(Sngi U Blei) ka Pyrem, khyndiat sngi hadien ka sngi kha u Ramakrishna ba u M (Mahendra Nath Gupta) u la iakynduh nyngkong eh iä u. U Ramakrishna u la shong ha Kalibari ka kper kaba don sawdong ka iingmane Blei Kali, harud ka wah Ganga ha Dakshineswar. U M u ba ju kylluid kam ha ki sngi Robibar, u la leit bad la u paralok jong u, u Sidhu ban leit jngoh iä shibun ki kper ha Baranagore. Katba ki dang iä iäid ha kper jong u Prasanna Banerji, u Sidhu u la ong; Ka don ka jaka ba pyngngad harud ka wah Ganga ha kaba shong u kynja riewkhuid ba ha khlieh tam. Phi sngew kwah ne em ban leit shata? U M u la mynjur bad mar kumta ki la iä mih ban leit sha ka kper iingmane kaba don ha Dakshineswar. Ki la poi ha khmat jingkhahng ha ka por janmiet ba la sdang kem dum, bad ki la leit beit beit sha ka kamra jong u Ramakrishna, bad ki la lap iä u ba u la shong haka shuki-dieng ba pynjahthait kaba phai sha mihngi. Da ka khmat ba phuh samrkhie u ba dang kren ha ki iä ki kyntien Blei. Ka kamra ka la khapngiah da ki briew kiba la iä shong ha madan da ka ba ngam jylliew ha ki kyntien jong u ha ka jing jarjar. U M u la ieng bad peit sah hangta khlem nang ban kren eiei. Kala ktik iä ka jingmut jong u kumba u la ieng haki jaka kyntang ba iä kynduh lang baroh bad i kumba u Sukadeva dalade hi u dang kren iä ki ktien jong u Blei, ne u i kumba u Chaitanya u dang rwai iäroh bad burom iä u kynrad ha Puri bad u Ramananda, u Swarup bad kiwei pat ki nongbud.

U Ramakrishna u la ong: Da kaba iöhsngew iä ka kyrteng u Hari ne u Rama tang shisien phi jaw ummat bad u shniuh jong phi u ieng kum u iuh treng, te to tip tikna ba phim da donkam shuh ban da ngam jylliew haki jingduwai jong phi, kumta phin hap

pyrshang iä ki jinglehniam (Sandhya), tang da kumta, te phin ioh iä ka hok longkynti ban leh iä ki jinglehniam ne kham palat iä kata, ki kyndon jinglehniam kin jah hi noh kumta. Te haba kumta, kala biang lada phi iäi khot ne kynnoh iä ka kyrteng u Rama ne u Hari ne wat tang kaba pynmih sur 'Om'. Da kaba iäi ban, u la ong, "Ka jingngam jylliew jingmut ka iärap lang haka Gayatri bad ka Gayatri ka iärap lang haka sur 'Om'. U M u la peit sawdong iä u da ka jingphylla bad u la ong halade, haduh katno kane ka jaka ka long kaba ithiang! Haduh katno u long u briew ba i don main! Haduh katno ki ktien jong u ki long ki ba sngewieid. Ngam sngew don mon shuh ban mih na kane ka jaka. Hadien katto katne minit u la pyrkhat, "To ngan da khmih shwa iä kane ka jaka, te ngan sa wan phai pat hangne bad shong khop."

Ynda haba u la mih na kamra bad u Sidhu, u la

iöhsngew iä ki sur jingtem jingput ba sngewtynnad ba sawa na ki baje bad jing tied bapher bapher ha ka jinglehniam por janmiet. U la iöhsngew ruh iä ki sur jingtem jingput ki ba mih na ka nahabat ka ba don shaba kut ka kper sha phang shathang. Ka sur sawa ka iäi sawa kham bun ban iä ka wah Ganga bad katba nang iäid jnai nang duna ka jingsawa. U bnai u la mih, ka lyer pyrem ba jem jai jai ba iäi beh ka ba kit lang iä ki iwbihi jong ki syntiew bapher bapher. Ka la long kumba ka mariang ryngkat bad u briew ki dang pynkhreh iä ka jinglehniam duwai por janmiet. U M bad u Sidhu ki la leit peit iä ki khatar tylli ki iingmane jong u Blei Shiva, ka iingmane u Blei Radhakanta bad ka iingmane jong ka Blei Bhavatarini. Bad katba u M u peit-thuh iä ka jingduwai lehniam hakhmat ki durblei ka mynsiem jong u ka dap tang da ka jingkmen.



Ki Kyntien Ka Kmie Bakhuid:

Sarada Devi

Sayings of Holy Mother

• Katba u brieve u dang don ka jingangud, ym don jingsuk ha ka dohnud. Ka dei ka jingangnud ka ba la pynlong ia u ban shim na kawei ka dur sha kawei pat. Ia u brieve yn kha pat wat lada u kwah ban bam wat tang shiIyngkhot u kpu ruh.

• Ka kham bha ban khot ia u Kynrad da la ka dohnud baroh tang shisien ban ia ka ba shu iai pyrta ia ka kyrteng jong u da ki spah sien khlem pynleit jingmut eiei. Kan myntoi aiu ban shu khot ia ka kyrteng jong u baroh shisngi ha ba ka jingmut pat kam don? Ngï donkam ban da pynleit jingmut bha khnang ban ioh ia ki jingkyrkhu U Blei.

• Shibun ki ba kyrpad Blei tang ha ba shem jynjar. Hynrei u ta u ba la aiti mon sngewbha ha u kynrad naduh dang khynnah un ioh ki jingkyrkhu.

• Naduh ki por hyndai hynthai baroh, ki brieve ki ju ioh jinglaitluid da ka ba mane Blei. Kim khein kumta? U Sri Ramakrishna um ju sngewbha ia ka jingiapher

para brieve. Ki Brahmon lane ki lyngdoh ki don kylleng sawdong. Hynrei phi dei ban kynmaw ba ia ki riewkhuid la kha khnang ba kin long ka lynti ia ki para brieve bad uwei pa uwei na ki un kren ha ki sur ki ba pher. Don bun ki rukom ba ngi lah ban sngewthuh ia ka jingshisha bad kine baroh ki long ki ba dei suda. Ngï lah ban ai nuksa kum u dieng u ba don bun bha ki sim ki balieh, ki baiong bad ki ba saw ki ba dem ha u bad ki ba pynmih la ki sur bapher bapher. Hynrei wat la ngi iohsngew ia ki sur bapher pynban ngim ju ong ba kata ka sur ka long ka jong kata ka sim bad ban iehnoh ia kawei pat hynrei bunsien ngi shait ong tang kawei bad kata ka long ba ngi ong ba ka dei ka jingpah ki sim.

• Ka jingniew ha ba ngi khot ia ka kyrteng u Blei ka long tang ban pynleit ia ka jingmut jongngi sha u. Ka jingmut barobor ka ju iaïd kylleng kylleng. Kumta lyngba katei ka lad, ngi lah ban leit ha jan u Blei. Ha ka ba iaï ialap ia ka kyrteng jong u Blei. Wat la ym shym la iohi ia ka dur jong u, kane ka pynlong ia u ba ia ka sur jong u lah ban iohsngew.



KA JINGKREN

U SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

HA KA DORBAR BAH KI NIAM

HA CHICAGO HA KA 11 TARIK, NAILUR 1893

KA JUBAB IA KI JINGPDIANG BUROM

Ki Hynmen bad ki Para ka ri Amerika,

Ka pyndap ia ka mynsiem jongnga da ka jingkmen ka bym lah ban batai ban ieng hangne ban kren ai khublei ia ka jingpdiang burom basbun jong phi ia ngi. Nga ai khublei ia phi na ka liang jong ka Seng ki riewniam barim tam ha ka pyrthei; nga ai khublei ia phi ha ka kyrteng ka kmie ka niam, nga ai khublei ha ka kyrteng ki phew million ki Hindu na baroh ki jaid ki kynja. Ki jingai khublei jongnga ruh ka long ia ki to ki nongkren ha kane ka rymsan ki ba la kren shaphang ki nongmihkhmat na sha ki ri mihngi ki ba la iathuh ba ki brieve na sha ki to ki ri ki ba jngai ki long ki ba la pynphriang ia ka mynsiem iaï-shah sha ki ri bapher-bapher. Nga sngewsarong ba nga dei na ka niam ka ba hikai ia ka pyrthei ia ka jingiaishah bad jingpdiang salonsar ia baroh. Ngï ngeit ym tang ha ka jingpdiang salonsar, hynrei ngi ngeit ruh ba baroh ki niam ki long ki ba shisha. Nga sngewsarong ba nga dei na ka niam ka ba ai jaka rieh ia ki ba la shah lehbein bad ba iaïd wir na la ki niam bad ki ri bapher bapher. Nga sngew sarong ban iaïthuh ia phi ba ngi kdup ha ka shadem jong ngi ia ki saphrong bakynsai tam jong ki Israel ki ba la wan phet shnong ha ka shathie jong ka India, ha ka por ba ia ka Temple jong ki la pynjot thiaw da ka hima Rome. Nga sngew sarong ba nga dei na ka niam ka ba la ai jaka rieh bad kaba dang kdup haduh mynta ia ka tnat jong ka jaidbynriew Zorastrian. Ngan pule khyndiat ia ki lain na ka jingrwai ba nga ju bang ban rwai naduh ba nga dang khynnah bad ka ba ju iaï rwai da ki million kibrieve man ka sngi “Kumba ki wah bapher-bapher ki mih na la ki tlong bad ka um jongki ka ia khleh lang ha ka duriaw, kumta ruh, A Trai kynrad ki lynti bapher bapher ba ki brieve ki bud lyngba ki jingngeit ki jong ki, wat la ki bun, ki kyllain ne beit, baroh ki poi sha Me”.



Kane ka jingialang ba mynta ka long kawei na ka jingialang bakhraw ba la lum, ka long da lade hi ka jingpynshai bad jingpynpaw sha ka pyrthei ia ka ta ka jinghikai bakhraw jong ka Gita; “Uno-uno u ba wan sha Nga lyngba kino-kino ki dur, nga pdiang ia u; baroh ki brieve ki iaï ialeh lyngba ki lynti ki jong ki ki ba khatduh ki ialam sha Nga.” Ki Seng ia pait niam ba khim mynsiem, ka jingngeit skhem tang ha la ka niam, khamtam ka Seng niam ba sngewhok tang la ka jong ki la synshar ia kane ka pyrthei. Ki la pynshlei ia kane ka pyrthei da ki jingkulmar ba ishyrkhei bad pynlyngkien ia ka da ka snam brieve, ki la pynduh ia ka jinglong riwshai bad pynpoi ia ki ri sha ka jingduh jingkyrmen. Ban nym dei na kine ki ksuid kynsha, ka pyrthei kan jin da la iaïd shaphrang ban ia ka ba ka long mynta. Hynrei ka por ka la poi, nga kyrmen ba ka baje ka la tied mynhynne mynstep da ka burom ia kane ka jingialang, ka lah ruh ban long ka baje iaï kine ki Seng khwan lade, ia ki jingpynshitom bein da ka wait ne u khulom bad ia baroh ki jingsngew sarong hapdeng ki brieve ki ba ia leit sha ka juh ka lynti.

KA JINGIM KA SARADAMANI DEVI

Dr Biloris Lyndem

Ia ka Sarada Devi la kha ha ka 22 tarik u Nohprah, 1853, ha kawei ka shnong ka barit la tip kum ka Jairambati, Bankura District ha West Bengal. U kpajong ka u Ramachandra Mukhopadhyaya bad ka kmie ka Shyama Sundari Devi ki dei ki Brahmin ki long ruh ki ba riewblei ki ba bah bha ia ka niam ka rukom. Baroh arngut ki wan na ka longiing ka ba duk, hynrei ki im ka jingim ba suk ba shida, bakhuid bad ba long shisur ha ka jingmut jingpyrkhat.

Hadien ka jingashongkurim, ki la iohi paw ba kin sa ioh khun kynthei bad kata ka khun kan long ka ba kyrpang bad ba riewblei. Kumba ki la phohsniew, ki la ioh bad hadien la kha sa san ngut ki khun shynrang bad kumta baroh ki la ia don hynriew ngut shipara.

U Ramachandra kum u kpa u pyrshang kat ba lah ban pyndap pynbiang ia ka iing ka sem, bad baroh arngut ki la bsa ia la ki khun da ka jingieit katkum ka jingioh. Kumba la kdew haneng kim dei na ka iing ba ioh ba kot, u la pyniaid ia ka jaka rep ka ioh nongkynti na la iing, hynrei ka ba kongsan ka long ba u dei u briew u ba hok, ba shida bad ba ki briew ruh ki tip ia u ba u dei u ba riewblei. Ki para nong shong shnong ha ba ki donkam ha ka dwai ka phirat ki ju khot ia u ban lehniyam, bad da ka jingiarap ia kiwei ki briew ki ju burom ia u da kino-kino ki jingaisngewbha. Kumta ki sngi ki snem ki la nang tyllun na ka por sha ka por bad ki khun jong u ki la nang san nang rangbah.

Kat kum ki jingthoh ki pyni ba ka Sarada Devi ka khun phrangsngi jong u ka long ka ba kham kyrpang na kita ki san ngut ki khun shynrang. Naduh dang khynnah ka pyni ia ki sap ki phong ba kyrpang kam ju ia nia lane ia pher jingmut badno-badno. Ha ba don kano-kano ka khep ba don ka jingania ne ia saitnia ka long ka

nongpyniasuk (peacemaker) kumjuh ha ba ki para jong ka ki iatyngkhuh ha ka saitnia ne iadom. Ka ju iarap ban pyniasuk ban pynjem.

Kum ka hynmen ka ju ia rap ia la ka kmie ha ka pynkhuid pynsuba, ka sait ka khlieng, ban pyndap umbam umdih ha iing bad kino-kino ki kam ba dei ban iarap. Ka ju leit iarap ia u kpa ban sumar ia ki jingri jingdup. Ka long ka ba smat ba sting.

Ha ba ki para shynrang jong ka, ki leit skul ka ju bud ia ki bad pyrthuh ba ki pule ia ki kot bad kumta ka la nang ban pule ia ka Ramayana bad Mahabharata ki kot niam ba kongsan ki Hindu.

Ynda ka la dap san snem ka rta la pynshong kurim ia ka bad u Ramakrishna u ba ha kata ka por u la dap 23 snem la pyniateh shongkha bad ka khynnah ba dang san snem ka rta.

Khyndiat ngin wad jingmut shaphang une u Ramakrishna da kumno u leit paw ha ka jingim ka Sarada Devi. Ha ba wad bniah shaphang u Ramakrishna u dei u briew ba phylla, naduh dangrit u sngewtynnad ban kmen ban don ha ka jingiaseng niam, u long u ba maian ha ka jingmut, u phai sha ka mariang Bad kylli bun ki jingkylli ia ki jingthaw ba don sawdong bad kat nang mih ki sngi u pynlut por ban wad ia ka jingshisha jong ka jingdon u Blei . Ha ka por ba u iarap ia la u hynmen, u Ram Kumar ban pyndep ta ka jingmane ka Blei kali, u ju pynkhreh shibunshaphang ka jinglong Blei bad u da kwah ban iohi hi da lade. Ban shu pynlyngkot ka la poi ka por ruh ba u la I kumba u duna ka jingmut jingpyrkhat, um thikna ka bam ka dih, mietsngi, I kumba u la lamwir. Ka kmie u kpa bad ki ba ha Iing jing u ki la kulmar ka jingmut jingpyrkhat yn leh kumno? bad da ka wei ka lad ki la ia rai ban pynshongkurim noh ia u, lehse ioh u lait na kata ka jingtah ia ka khlieh bad jingmut jingpyrkhat. Ki la rah ia kata ka khubor ban pynsngew ha u Ramakrishna bad



Frank Dvorak

ka ba phylla ba u la kohnguh ia kata ka jingtyrwa. U Ramakrishna u la ai jingmut ia ki ba un shongkurim ia ka briew ba kyrteng ka Sarada Devi ka ba shong ba sah ha Jairambati. U la batai thik ia ka jaka sah bad kumba la kdew haneng ki ba ha iing ki la leit bad iashem ia ka longiing ka Sarada Devi bad la pynshongkurim da ka jingpynkhat ba un lait na ka ta ka jinglehmlawir. Hadien phra snem, u Ramakrishna u la leitphai sha Kamarpukur bad lehse dei ka sien ba nyngkong ba u la iakynduh bad ka Sarada Devi. Dei ha kane ka por ba u Ramakrishna , u la hikai bad batai bniah ia ka ba ka dei ban burom ia ki niam baroh khlem da niew shilliang iano-iano, ban long adkar ha ka rukom kren ban minot ha ka jingdwai katkum ka jingngeit bad u la sneng bad pyni ruh kumno ban pyniaid ia ka ing ka sem, ban burom ia ki ba la san bad long ruh ka basbun bad kloï ban iarap. Ka Sarada Devi ka la kmen bad buh khop ha ka jingmut ban long ka briew ka ba janai kane ka la nang pynshkem shuh shuh ia ka tynrai ka longiing longsem jong ka.

Bunsien ka Sarada Devi ka ju leit sah kai bad la ka kmie, u kpa bad ki para, ka pynlut por ban sneng lem ia la ki para. Dei ha kane ka por ba bun na ki nongshongshnong, ki la pynmih ia ka khubor ba u Ramakrishna, u lok ka Sarada Devi u la ioh ia ka jingpang duna jingmut jingpyrkhat u la sdang ban kren lamwir. Ka Sarada Devi ka la iohsngew ia kine baroh bad ka la rai ba kan leit hi sha Dakhineswar - Kolkata ban tip ia ka jingshisha. Ka la mih na iing bad la u kpa, bad ha ka jingiaid shiteng lynti ka la iohkem pang bad ka la phohsniew ruh ba ka jingshitom jong ka kan sa jem bad bteng Ia ka jingleit ban iakynduh bad u Ramakrishna. Ynda ka la poi u Ramakrishna u la pdiang sngewbha bad u la pynbiang ia ka jingsumar Baroh u pynpaw ia ka jingieit, ka sbun bad pynlong ruh ia ka jingdwai ba kyrpang na ka bynta jong ka.

Katba nang iaïd ki por ha kawei ka sngi ka Sarada Devi ka la kylli ia u Ramakrishna “Phi sngew kumno ha ba phi iakynduh bad nga?” ka jubab ba mih na u Ramakrishna ka long ba “Ym don jingsngew pher eiei, u ong ha ka nga iohi ia phi nga iohi ia la ka kmie bad ia ka blei Kali.” U la ong “Nga dwai ba ngan lah na baroh ki jingpynshoi jong ka doh, ka ba lah ban pynthame

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ia ka jinglongkhuid ka mynsiem bad pynjot ia ka long briew man briew.”

Kine ki long ki kyntien u riewkhrav. Ha ki jingkren jong u baroh u pynpaw ba ka jingkhuid bad jingsngur ka dohnud ka pynpaw ia ka dur u Blei ha ino-ino i jingthaw ba don sawdong ka pyrthei.

Ka Sarada Devi ka la pynsngew ruh ha u ba kam don khun, ka jubab ba mih na u Ramakrishna ka long “Wat khulai, phin sa ioh bun ki khun ia ki ba u la pynkyntang ban phriang ia ka khubor ba baroh ki jait niam ne hikai ki thew beit sha u wei u ba synshar ia ka pyrthei bad ka long briew man briew.

Ka jingkren jong u ka phalang ba ynda um don shuh ha kane ka pyrtheidei ma ka, ka kmie ban lum ban lang ia kine ki khun ba kysai ban bsa ia ki khunbynriew. Ha u snem 1885 u Ramakrishna u la ioh pang jur bad kat nang mih ki sngi u la tlot ha ka met ka phad. Ka Sarada Devi ryngkat bad ki nongbud ki la iarap ban sumar bad tang khyndiat por u la khladnoh. Ha ka por ba u pang ka Sarada Devi ka ju diaw bad iam, u da ong ia ka “balei phi jaw ummat bad sngewsih” “phin ym kynjah ka jingim ba bha kan bteng ia phi” u da thew ruh ia u Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda) bad kiwei kiwei ki riewniam ba la pynkyntang kin ai jingshngaiñ bad snohkti ha ki kam ban leh bha ia kiwei ia ka ba ka Ramakrishna Mission ka ieng skhem haduh kine kisngi.

Hadien katto katne por u Ramakrishna u la khlad noh ka Sarada Devi ka la leit phai sha Kamarpukur (shnong trai). Ka la iashem bun ki jingeh hynrei ka kynmaw kyndiang ia ki jingsneng jingkrawjong u Ramakrishna, ban len lade, ban shaniah ha u Blei, ban iaishah ia ki jingeh, bad khuid ka dohnud ban iohi ia ki kam bah jong u Blei. Ban leh bha ia kiwei khlem da khmih lynti ban ioh jingioh ne kino kino ki nong.

Ki jingthoh bad ki jingiakynduh jong ki riewkhrav bad ki jinghikai u Ramakrishna, ki pynshisha ba ka Sarada Devi ka don ki sap ki ba kordor tam, ka jinglong hok (truth lane Satya) ka jinglongkhuid ka jingmut jingpyrkhatbad ka jingsbun ban iasam ia kiei-kiei ki ba bha kine ki long ki mawkordor ba bha tam ba lah ban iohi ha kane ka longkmie ba kyrpang.

KA SAKHI

JONG KA

JINGKIENG KSIAR

Bah Sumar Sing Sawian

The Golden Ladder of Life that formed a connecting link between man and God upon the foundation of truth, righteousness and oneness, demanded us to walk along with God every day. Explains the genesis of the Khasi race where the heavenly umbilical cord connected seven huts on earth and nine huts on heaven where the Khasis could ascend and descend daily.

Painting by Banteilang Hynniewta

jingthew bad 91.55, pynieng ka jingthew, ha kane ka Ri Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum, ka Ri u Hynñiaw Wasung, u Hynñiaw Wasa. Dei u Hynniew u ba la hiar ban long u nongshynshar jong kiwei kiwei pat ki jingthaw u kynrad, halor ki khlaw ki btap, ki mrad ki mreng, ki jingthung jingtep, kum ki phlang ki rnem, ki syntiew ki skud, ki um ki wah, jong ka Mei Mariang ka Mei Ramew. Kane ka long katkum ka rai jong ka Dorbar Blei ka ba nyngkong, ba la pyniaid da u Blei u Nongbuh U Nongthaw, ka Blei Nong-Hukum.

Ka jingkieng ksiar, ka long namar kata ka daw ka sakhi, ia ka jinghiar u Hynniewtrep, hapoh ka jingialam jong u Syiem Lakriah. Hapoh ka pyrthei pyllun, u Hynniew u la saiñ dur ia ka long kur ka long kha, ka synshar khadar, jong ki dong ki hula, ki shnong ki thaw, ki raid, ki muluk bad ki hima ki sima, ba u syiem u Kmie, un

pyniaid, na ka bynta ka jingbit jingbiang jong ki khun ki hajar, kum ka kmie ia la ki khun la jong khlem da don kano ka kheiñ peit shilliang ia u bariewspah, ne ia u paid knup paid trap, u sem shilliang, u kup shilliang. La seng ia kane ka tynrai, ka tyllong, bad ka thymmei u khun Hynniewtrep u Hynniewskum, ha ka shlem jong ki lai tylli ki Mawbyrsiew, kata U Lum Sohpetbneng, U Lum Shyllong bad U Lum Diengñei, ki lum ki ba long ki rishot lane ki chrot, ki paia, ki rijied jong ka jingngeit tynrai, ha kaba la mih ki shnat jong kijingleh ia ki longniam longrukum, ki riti ki dustur, bad ka Lariti jong u paid Hynniewtrep, kata u Khynriam, U Pnar, U Bhoi, U War, u paid khasi ba-iar. U Lyngngam, U Nongtrai, U Muliang, U Maram u paid khasi donnam, u ba baroh ki ieng ha kaju bad kawei ka tynrai jong ka Tipbriew Tipblei, Tipkur Tipkha, Tiphok Tipsot bad ka Tip-hukum.

Ia kane ka tynrai bah, ia ka ba la suh ia la ki phniang, ki thied, kshaduh ki syrtap jong ka Mei Mariang ka Mei Ramew, la sakhi da ka “Jingkieng Ksiar”, wat la ka dkut noh, hynrei ka dei mynta ka “Mynsiem Ksiar” jong ka longbriew ka manbriew, ia ka ba u Khun Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum, u pyniasnoh ia

lade, lyngba ka jingngeit jong ka Jingkiew, ia ka ba u Hynniewtrep u kiew sha la u Kynrad U Blei ka Mei Hukum, lyngba ka Nguh ka Dem, ka Duwai ka Phirat, ka Kyrpad ka Kyrpon, ka Iasaid ka Iapan, bad bahiar pat na ka Mynsiem Jingkieng Ksiar, ka Kyrkhu ka Kyrdoth, na ki Blei-Long-Blei u ba Buh u ba Thaw, u ba Lah u ba Iai, Ka Blei Mei Nong-Hukum.

Ia kane ka tynrai bah tynrai san jong kaei ka ba ka Jingkieng Ksiar ka Sakhi, da ki ba stad ki ba tip jongki stad ki nang, ha Law Nongthroh. Ha syntai jong u Lum Sohpetbneng ia ki ba u Khun Hynniewtrep, u seng ia ka thymmei ka shong ka sah, bad ruh ia ki tiar ba pyndonkam naduh iingshet ja, haduh ki tiar rep tiarriang, ia ki ba la oh bad stah na ki maw, (Archaeological findings and evidence). Ha kane ka shnong tynrai jong u khun Hynniewtrep la lap bad shemruh ha ki mawbynna, ki ba iathuh bad iai sakhi ruh ia ka juk jong ka jingkieng ksiar, kata ka ba ki mawbynna ki ieng ban khana ban purom shaphang ki longshuwa ki manshuwa, na kawei ka pateng sha kawei pat, haduh kine ki sngi ki por ki ba mynta. Kine keiñ ki Maw nam, Ki Maw Shynrang, ki Maw Kynthei, ia ka ba la bsap ha kine ki maw, ia kaei kaba ka Jingkieng Ksiar ka sakhi, ha ba shit ha ba shai.

Ha kane ka Law Nongthroh, ki dang don ruh ki Hynniew tylli ki Kpep, ki ba kdew ia ka jingpyndep rukom, ha ka ba thang ia kito ki longshuwa manshuwa. La lap bad shem ruh ia ki mawshyieng jong ki kur ki jaid ki ba pher ba pher. Ha ka ba ia ka trei ka ktah ka khih ka khan, la shem bad lap ruh ia ki Mohkhiew Khasi, ki bym ju don ne ioi ha kiwei kiwei pat ki bynta jong ka Ri India, lane ha ka pyrthei hi baroh kawei. La lap ruh ia ki dak, jong ka jingdon jong ki shlem ki ba la saiñ, ia shibun ki tiar ki tar, kiba la pyndonkam haduhmynta.

Ki paid nongshongshnong, kham hadien ki la kynriah noh na 'Law Nongthroh, bad seng ia ka Hima Mawbuh ha Umroi, hapoh jong ka jingsynshar jong u Syiem bad ka Dorbar jong ki Saw basan, ki jong ki kur Rangslang, Shylla, Mannar, bad ki Shadap. Ka raij Mawbuh, ka long mynta ka bynta jong ka Hima Mylliem, hadien ba la dhkat noh ia ka, na ka Hima Shyllong.

Kumta wat lada wan lyngshop, ki erlangthari, u kyrtiah, u lyoh, u palam bad ka um, hynrei ki Hynniew rong ka Tangnub, ka Tangjri, ka Tangngiah ka Tangchrai, jong ka Jiengkieng ksiar kin ia long ka kular, ka jutang, ka jubat, ba u Blei, Nongbuh Nongthaw un lam lynti.

U Diengĕi u dei u diengbah diengsan, u ba mih ba san ha kliar lum Diengĕi. Katkum ka khanatang, une u dieng, u long uba heh haduh katta katta, ki tnad bad ki sla jong u, ki long ki ba piar ki ba ĩar, u don sha shiliang jong ka Wah Umĭam, lah ruh ban ĩohi kyndiang ĩa u ne u lum na kliar u lum Sohpetbneng.

Ha ba ngi ong ka don ka khanatang. Te nangno keiñ ngi ĩoh ban lum ban lang ĩa kine ki khanatang. ĩa ki khanatang la shu ĩathuh pateng da ki kmie ki kpa tymmen jongngi na kawei ka por sha kawei pat. Te ha ba ngi pyrkhat ngi pynshong nongrim bha, kumno keiñ la pynsaphriang ĩa kine ki khana jong kata ka mynnor ym pat nang ĩa ka pule ka dangle. Ym pat tip ĩa ka kot ka sla. Pynban dei ha kata ka juk, ba ki khun u hynĭiewtrep ki dang ĩaid da ka kjat na kawei ka jaka sha kawei pat ban leit ĩapeiñ (lane leit ĩa die ĩathied) ĩa ki mar ki mata. Bad dei da kumta ki hap ban sah miet ha ki iingbasa ha man la ki shnong dei hangta ki brieve na ki thaiñ bapher-bapher, ki ju ĩakynduh lang khruĭ, bad ĩashong sawdong ka lyngwiar dpei barhem. Hadien ba la dep bam jamiet, ki ĩa bam kwai ĩa dih duma bad dei hangne ki sei ĩa ki ta ki khanatang na la ki jong ki jong ki thaiñ bapher-bapher katkum ki khanatang, la sngewthuh ba ka don kata ka Sotti juk mynnor ha ka ba u khun bynriew u pynkren brieve ĩa ki mrad ki mreng, ki sim kidoh, ki lum ki wah, ki syntiew ki skud, ki dang ĩasngewthuh kawei ka ktien.

Te ka khanatang u lum Diengĕi ka long kumne. Ba ha kata ka mynnor, u ne u Dieng u la heh la ĩar, ki tnad ki la piar bad ki sla ki la nang rben, haduh ba la kah dum ĩa ka pyrthei, wat ki kjat sngi ruh kim lah shuh ban sam lyngba, la shu dum bad miet bad sngi. Ki jingthung jingtep kim long shuh u kba u khaw u krai, u soh u pai, ki la duhlut.

U khun bynriew, u la poi ha ka shaong ha ka dum, ka lyngngoh. Balei ka wan jia kumne. Hynrei u khunbynriew u long u bastad, u bakhraw ka pyrkhat ka pyrdaiñ ki la ĩatylli lang kawei ka buit ka bor bad ki da lum dorbar ban leh kumno ban wan rah biang ĩa ka jingshai. Te kumta da kawei ka jingmut ki la rai ban daiñ noh ia ka Diengĕi. Kumta ki Tymmen ki san ki la pynĭeng ka duwai ka phirat ha u nongbuh nongthaw, ban ĩarap ban ai bor ĩa ki ban daiñ noh ĩa kata ka diengĕi. Kumta Dangngir dangsaw ka tyngab baroh ki Rangbah shynrang bad kynthei, ki la ĩamih bad rah la ki wait ki sdie bad ki la ĩa kiew artad ĩa u ta u lum ban pom ĩa ka Diengĕi baroh shisngi ki la ĩatrei shitom ban pom ĩa

Halor U LUM DIENGĖEI

Kong. Silbi Passah

**Conflicts in the path of righteousness:
Men forsake God for greed only to
realise there's no meaning to life
without God**

kata ka dieng, pynban ha ka step ka ba bud ynda ki la ĩa poi ban pom biang ĩa kata ka dieng, ki la ĩalyngngoh bad shaong ngaiñ ha ba ki la ĩohi ba ka Dieng ka la dapdoh biang. Kumta ka long mynshwa. Hynrei ki khlem kynran-dien, ki trei borbah ban daiñ biang ĩa kata ka diengĕi thop baroh shisngi. Hynrei ha ka sngi ba bud ka la long biang kumjuh.

U khunbynriew u la lynga pisa, ki la ĩashong pyrkhat ban ĩaleh kumno? Kumta ki tymmen ki san ki la pynlong biang ka nguh ka dem ba U Blei u nongbuh nongthaw un plie ka lad ka lynti ban pynshai ha u, kumno yn leh ban lah ban pynkhylllem ia ka Diengĕi.

Te ha kawei ka sngi ki khynnah samla ki dang ĩa jied ĩa tam symbol kba (Ngan ĩathuhĭa phi) lawan

poi iwei i phreit hangta, i ta i phreit i la ong ia kita ki khynnah, lada phin ai nyngkong ĩanga ĩa u symbol kba ngan ĩathuh ĩa phi, kumno ban leh ban lah ban pynkhylllem ĩa ka Diengĕi. Ki khynnah ki nguh ĩa i phreit ki la ong ngin kular? i Phreit i ĩathuh ba dei u khla u ba wan jliah mynmiet mynmiet, ba sa dap dohbiang kata ka dieng. Kumta i phreit i la batai, ba ki dei ban pynap da ki wait ki sdie, ha uta u dieng, khnang

ba u khla ha ka por ba u wan jliah un phot u thylliej, kita ki khynnah ki la nguh arti ĩa i phreit, ki da ong ruh. Kane ka khanatang kan ĩai sah junom, ba dei i phreit ba wan ĩarap ĩa u khunbynriew ban lah ban pynkhylllem ĩa ka Diengĕi. Ki khynnah da ka jngkmen ki la ĩamareh sha lum ki pyrta, ban leit ĩathuh ĩa ki rangbah ĩa ka khubor ba wan ĩathuh i phreit. Ha ba ki la ĩohsngew ĩa ka khubor ba la ĩathuh ki khynnah, baroh ki Rangbah ki la dap da ka jngkmen bad ka jngkyrmen, ki la ong kat kata ka kyntien hok ka ba i phreit i la ĩathuh, ngin kular keiñ ban ai symbol kba nyngkong ĩa i. Kumta ki la leh kumba la bthah i phreit, ki la pynap da ki wait ki sdie bad ha ba u khla u wan jliah ĩa ka dieng u sa phot u thylliej. U khla u la mareh sakma kylleng-kylleng. Hynrei u khunbynriew, u la thang sawdong ka khlaw da ka ding ban lah ban thang syndon ĩa u ta u khla.

Dei shisha ka jngĭarap i phreit ba u khunbynriew u la lah ban pynkhylllem ĩa ka diengĕi, ban wan pat ka jngshai ha ka pyrthei. Naduh ba la khylllem ka Diengĕi, la shai biang ka pyrthei ka jngsuk ka la synshar biang ĩa u khunbynriew, u kba u khaw, u soh u pai ki la mih kyrhai. Baroh ki ĩashongsuk shongsaiñ ha pneh ka meimariang.

Riti Academy of Visual Arts



The Cup

Swami Vivekananda

This is your cup – the cup assigned
to you from the beginning.
Nay, My child, I know how much
of that dark drink is your own brew
Of fault and passion, ages long ago,
In the deep years of yesterday, I know.

This is your road – a painful road and drear.
I made the stones that never give you rest.
I set your friend in pleasant ways and clear,
And he shall come like you, unto My breast.
But you, My child, must travel here.

This is your task. It has no joy nor grace,
But it is not meant for any other hand,
And in My universe hath measured place,
Take it. I do not bid you understand.
I bid you close your eyes to see My face.

Understanding

Dr Robin S Ngagom

I can understand on this virtual day
even without smelling,
let alone touching it. So,
I’ll not say a word
about the sea giving up a toddler.
I can even understand
this groundswell of pity
as if humanity was testing the waters of feeling,
after adapting a short brackish tragedy,
despite pleas from the gentlest mourner not to use
the image of drowning
but only remember a child’s smile,
in an age whose only metaphysical worry is,
“what can be saved?”,
trees, animals, or children, for instance,
late after the mocking, “ecstatic destruction”.

Ka Khuri

Da u Swami Vivekananda
(La pynkyl la Khasi da I Bah P S Lyngdoh)

Kane ka khuri jongphi – ka khuri ba la sam bynta
Haphi naduh nyngkong ka sngi
Ia kata ka jingdih ba iong dei ba la milai maphi hi
Na ka pap bad jingshah naduh mynkulong
Ha ka ñiamra ki por ka hynnin, nga sngewthuh.

Kane surok jongphi – ka surok ba shitom bad kynjah
Nga la thaw ia ki mawlynnai bym ai jaka thiah ia phi
Nga la buh ia u lok jongphi da lynti ba sngewtynnad
bad bashai
Bad un sa wan kum phi, hapoh shadem jongnga
Hynrei phi, ko khun jongnga, phi dei ia id hangne

Kane ka kam jongphi – kam don jingkmn lymne
jingisynei
Hynrei kam mut ia u no u nouwei pat u nongtrei
Bad ha pyrtnei jongnga la don lypa jaka ba la thew
Bat ia ka, ngam hukum phi sngewthuh
Nga hukum iaphi, khap la ki khmat, ban io hi ia dur
khmat jongnga.

Hills Of Slow Time

Dr Ananaya S Guha

There was a time
when the hills denuded
scattered out of myth
origin and ash
came tumbling down
with waterfalls, lakes and rivers
to give succour to incarnadine hues.
The hills I have known, paraded with
my destiny, the hills that moulded clay
into mythic dolls. Yes these were the hills I knew.
Molten clay, shrapnel hirsute legs the hills were
not man made. Man. Woman
and in the Sacred Groves the hush could be heard.
Not felt, only scatter of rains.
with a wild myth of flowers
heaping mounds of love.
Prescient hills you shoot out the future
and supinely lie on the past
in eternal rest.

मूल खासी संस्कृति : उद्भव एवं विकास

डॉ अनीता फंडा



मूल खासी समुदाय अपनी संस्कृति, आस्था, मिथक, लोकगीतों आदि में बहुत धनी रहे हैं। डॉ पी. चौधुरी ने अपनी पुस्तक ‘The Antiquity of Khasi & Jaintiya People*’, ए.रॉय ने मासिक पत्रिका (बंगाली) 1993 में लिखा है । खासी समुदाय की अपनी असंख्य कहानियाँ, मिथक, लोककथाएँ उनके समाज में प्रचलित हैं, जो बहुत रुचिकर और विस्तृत हैं। अगर उन्हें सुनाया जाए तो ये कथाएँ पूरी रात भर सुनाई जा सकती हैं। इनका वर्णन इतना खूबसूरत है और घटनाएँ इतनी क्रमबद्ध हैं कि ये मनुष्य के दिल और दिमाग को छू जाती हैं। इन कहानियों और लोककथाओं द्वारा यह कल्पना की जा सकती है कि संभवतः खासी समुदाय में भी अपना साहित्य रहा होगा परन्तु दुर्भाग्यवश आज उसका कोई नामोनिशान नहीं है । खासी समुदाय में पहाड़ियों, पर्वतों, नदियों, जलप्रपातों, फूलों आदि के इर्द-गिर्द कहानियां बुनने और रिकार्ड रखने की परम्परा रही है लेकिन इन मिथकों तथा लोककथाओं में समयानुसार परिस्थिति के अनुरूप परिवर्तन भी आता रहा है। ऐसे में ये कथाएँ वास्तविकता से दूर भी लगती हैं। खासी लोक कथाओं का विश्लेषण और अध्ययन उनके पौराणिकता का एक भाग है, जिसने खासी धर्म, रीति-रिवाज और खासी संस्थाओं आदि को काफी प्रभावित किया है। इतने वर्षों के बाद भी आज तक वे इसे पूरी तरह से मानते आ रहे हैं। इनमें विशेष बात यह है कि ये खासी समुदाय की विचारधारा, धर्म, नैतिकता और सामाजिक तथा उनकी जीवन-शैली पर आधारित है।

खासी समुदाय के पूर्वजों के अनुसार। आरम्भ में पृथ्वी पर कोई नहीं रहता था। ईश्वर, जो कि जगत का निर्माता है, उसने ‘का राम-ऐव’ (पृथ्वी) और उनके पति ‘उ बासन’ को बनाया। वे दोनों बहुत सुख पूर्वक रहते थे। उनके सुखी जीवन में उन्हें अकेलापन अक्सर सताता था क्योंकि उनका कोई संतान नहीं था। समय बीतता जा रहा था। वे अपने अकेलेपन से ऊब गए। ‘का राम-ऐव’ दिन-रात सृष्टि के निर्माता ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करती कि उसे वारिस चाहिए, जो उसके वंश को आगे बढ़ा सके। ‘का राम-ऐव’ की सच्ची प्रार्थना ईश्वर ने स्वीकार कर ली और उन्हें पांच संतानें प्रदान किये। ये संतानें थीं । सूर्य, चाँद, पानी, हवा और आग। इनमें सूर्य पहली संतान तथा आग आखिरी संतान थी। आग, आखिरी संतान होने के कारण उस पर घर के सारे काम और देखभाल करने की जिम्मेदारी थी । पांच संतानों को पाकर ‘का राम-ऐव’ बहुत खुश थी। उसे अपने फलते-फूलते परिवार पर गर्व था। अब धरती पर सूरज, हवा और पानी था। अतः वृक्ष उगे, सुन्दर-सुन्दर फूल खिले, भांति-भांति के फल लगे। सारी प्रकृति ही सुन्दर दिखाई देने लगी। ‘का राम-ऐव’ धरती पर कई मौसम और उनके विभिन्न रंगों आदि को देखकर प्रफुल्लित थी। यह देखकर कुछ समय बाद ‘का राम-ऐव’ ने ईश्वर से विनती की कि वे दया करके किसी को भेजें, जो संसार पर शासन करे और उसे अनुशासित करे। ईश्वर को ‘का राम-ऐव’ के अनुरोध में सच्चाई नजर आई और उन्होंने वादा किया कि वह उसकी इच्छा अवश्य पूरी करेंगे । खासी मतानुसार उस समय स्वर्ग में सोलह परिवार ईश्वर के साथ सुख, शान्ति

और भाईचारे के साथ रहते थे। ‘का राम—ऐव’ की इच्छा पूर्ति के लिए स्वर्ग में एक विशाल सभा का आयोजन किया गया कि संसार पर शासन करने की जिम्मेदारी किसे सौंपी जाए?

इस पर गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार करने के बाद यह निर्णय लिया गया कि स्वर्ग में ईश्वर के साथ रहनेवाले सोलह परिवारों में से सात परिवार, जो ‘की ह्यू त्रेप हन्यू स्कुम’ या ‘सात झोपड़ियाँ और सात घोंसले’ कहलाते थे, वे धरती पर जाएँ, खेती करें और उसे आबाद करें ।

वे ईश्वर के आदेशानुसार धरती पर जाएँ और माँ की तरह ही धरती के विकास और उन्नति के लिए कार्य करें। वे प्रशासनिक दृष्टि से हर चीज की देखभाल करें। इस प्रकार ईश्वर ने ह्यू त्रेप हन्यू स्कुम और पृथ्वी को आशीर्वाद दिया। साथ ही यह कहकर अपनी बात समाप्त की कि अगर लोग स्वयं सही रास्ते पर चलेंगे। सच्चाई के रास्ते पर रहेंगे तो ईश्वर उनके साथ रहेंगे। उनके और स्वर्ग के बीच बिना किसी बाधा के आना—जाना होगा। वे एक पेड़ के द्वारा ‘जिन्किंग क्स्येर’ अर्थात् सोने की सीढ़ी जो ‘उ सॉपेतब्नेंग चोटी पर स्थित है, उससे स्वर्ग में आ—जा सकेंगे ।

सात झोपड़ियाँ अपना वचन निभाते हुए शांति और भाईचारे के साथ स्वर्ण युग में रहने लगे। उस समय स्वर्ग में निवास करने वाले नौ परिवारों और पृथ्वी के सात परिवारों के बीच सम्पर्क था और ईश्वर स्वयं भी धरती पर अक्सर आते—जाते रहते थे। वे उनसे मानव भाषा में ही बात करते थे। धीरे—धीरे कुछ समय बाद जीवन की हर दिन की व्यस्तता के कारण ये सात परिवार अपने दिए गए वचनों से दूर होते गए और उन पर कम ध्यान देने लगे। एक महत्वाकांक्षी व्यक्ति ने इस स्थिति का लाभ उठाया क्योंकि उसे मानव के ऊपर ईश्वर और सच्चाई का राज करना अच्छा नहीं लगता था। अतः वह पृथ्वी और स्वर्ग से जोड़ने वाली सीढ़ी को काटने में सफल हो गया। परिणामस्वरूप धरती पर रहने वाले सात परिवार हमेशा के लिए बिछड़ गए। इस प्रकार ईश्वर के प्रभाव से भी हमेशा के लिए दूर हो गए। ईश्वर ने उनसे मानव—भाषा में फिर कभी बात नहीं की। ईश्वर को अपनी रचना अर्थात् मनुष्यों पर बहुत दया आई। यद्यपि वह उनसे इंसानी भाषा में बात नहीं कर सकते थे परन्तु वे उनसे अपने संकेतों आदि द्वारा बात करते थे ।

वे सातों परिवार इस विषय में कुछ नहीं किया केवल ईश्वर की आज्ञा का पालन करते रहे, वे बस टालमटोल करते रहे। कुछ समय बाद सपेटब्नेंग (पर्वत की चोटी) से पांच किलोमीटर दूर डेंगेई पीक या चोटी पर एक पेड़ उग आया। वह पेड़ कुछ ही समय में तेजी से बढ़ गया। उसकी शाखाएँ चारो ओर फैल गईं और इसकी पत्तियों ने पूरी धरती को ढक लिया। ऐसा लगने लगा कि दूसरी बनस्पतियाँ उसकी छाया में नहीं पनप सकेंगी। उस समय सारमो और सोराफिन नामक दो जिम्मेदार व्यक्ति डेंगेई चोटी की ढाल पर खेती कर रहे थे। उन्होंने इस घटना की जानकारी दरबार को दिया। उनकी बात सुनकर दरबार ने निर्णय

लिया कि पेड़ को तुरंत कटवा दिया जाए क्योंकि अगर देर हो गई, तो उस पेड़ की जड़ें और भी मजबूत हो जाएँगी और उसकी शाखाएँ इतनी फैल जाएँगी कि काटना मुश्किल हो जायेगा। उन्होंने अपनी कुल्हाड़ी और दराती धार की और पेड़ काटना शुरू किया। दिनभर कठोर परिश्रम करने के बावजूद वे उस पेड़ का छोटा हिस्सा ही काट पाए। यह देखकर दरबार ने यह निर्णय लिया कि हर परिवार से कम से कम एक आदमी आएँगे और पेड़ काटने में मदद करेंगे। दूसरे दिन हर घर से एक—एक व्यक्ति पेड़ काटने चल पड़ा। जब वे उस स्थान पर पहुँचे, तो आश्चर्यचकित हो गए क्योंकि उस पेड़ पर कटने के कोई निशान नहीं थे। इसके बाद भी उन्होंने फिर से पूरे दिन काम किया परन्तु अगले दिन भी वैसा ही हुआ। वे परेशान और भयभीत हो गए ।

जब वे आपस में बातचीत कर रहे थे कि दूसरे दिन क्या किया जाए, तो उस समय एक छोटा पक्षी ‘रेन बर्ड ’(चीतमज) वहाँ आया। सबका उदास चेहरा देखकर उसने एक वृध्द व्यक्ति से उनकी उदासी का कारण पूछा। पूरी बात जानकर रेन बर्ड ने कहा । मैंने चीता से सुना है कि जब डेंगेई बड़ा हो जाएगा और इसकी शाखाएँ चारो ओर फैल जाएँगी, इसकी पत्तियाँ और मोटी हो जाएँगी, तब चारो ओर गहरा अँधेरा छा जाएगा। तब मैं चारो ओर घूम सकूँगा और इन्सानों को कह सकूँगा। अतः रात में बाघ इस पेड़ पर पड़े कटने के निशान को चाट लेता है, जिससे यह पेड़ फिर से वैसा का वैसा हो जाता है। इसलिए तुम लोग कितनी भी कोशिश कर लो, इसे नहीं काट सकते। तुम लोग अपना काम करते रहो और घर जाने से पहले अपनी कुल्हाड़ी और दराती को कटे हुए भाग पर उल्टा करके रखना। उसकी धार सामने की ओर होनी चाहिए। जब बाघ उसे चाटने की कोशिश करेगा, तो उसकी जीभ कट जाएगी और वह फिर से चाटने की कोशिश नहीं कर सकेगा ।

अतः रेन बर्ड की सलाह से लोगों ने फिर से पेड़ काटना आरम्भ किया। उस रात हमेशा की तरह बाघ आया और उसने कटे हुए निशान को चाटना आरम्भ किया, तो उसकी जीभ धारदार हथियार से कट गई और वह दर्द से चिल्लाता हुआ जंगल की ओर चला गया परन्तु उस समय से उसने मनुश्य से बदला लेने की प्रतिज्ञा की। इस घटना के बाद से उसे जब भी मौका मिलता है, वह उस पर आक्रमण करता है।

लगातार कई दिनों तक पेड़ काटते—काटते और रात में धारदार हथियार को कटी हुई जगह पर रखते हुए उन्होंने अंततः पेड़ को पूरी तरह नीचा कर लिया। डेंगेई चोटी में क्रैटर की तरह एक गढ़ढा बना हुआ है। मिथक के अनुसार यह वही जगह है जहाँ पर पेड़ खड़ा था। इस प्रकार मनुष्य अपनी युक्ति से पेड़ को सफलतापूर्वक नीचा करके बहुत प्रसन्न हुआ परन्तु यह काम बिना ईश्वर के सम्भव नहीं हो सकता था। अतः उसने उनका आभार प्रकट करने के लिए पृथ्वी के सभी प्राणियों के लिए नृत्य का आयोजन किया।

The Light & Jingshai

तैलचित्र स्वामी विवेकानंद का: एक संस्मरण

विक्रम वीर थापा



भारतवर्ष में ऋषि—मुनियों ने जन्म लेकर अपने आध्यात्मिक चिंतन—मनन से रजनीगंधा के सौरभ की तरह आध्यत्मिकता को सुरभित किया, वेदों और पुराणों आदि की रचना कर इस भूमि में आध्यत्मिकता की सरिता बहाकर भारत को ही नहीं वरन विश्व को आध्यात्मवाद से सिंचित किया। सनातन धर्म भारत भूमि पर प्राचीन काल से ही अपना सीना ताने सगर्व खड़ा है। सनातन धर्म और हिन्दू धर्म में अन्योन्याश्रित सम्बन्ध है। उपनिवेशवादियों ने इसे मिटाने के लिए षडयंत्र रचे परन्तु वे विफल रहे क्योंकि इसे अक्षुण्ण रखने के लिए हमारे संतों ने अतीत में निरंतर प्रयास किया।

महर्षि दयानंद सरस्वती ने ‘आर्य समाज’ की स्थापना की। वे वेदों के प्रकाण्ड पंडित थे यद्यपि मूर्तिपूजा के विरोधी थे। उनका ध्येय सनातन धर्म अर्थात् ‘आर्य समाज’ को भारतवर्ष में जीवित रखना था, विश्वव्यापी बनाना नहीं। वास्तविक अर्थों में सनातन धर्म या हिन्दू धर्म विश्वव्यापी तब बना जब वेदांत दर्शन के प्रकाण्ड विद्वान स्वामी विवेकानंद ने ‘विश्व धर्म सभा’, शिकागो में 11 सितम्बर 1893 में अपना कालजयी वक्तव्य हिन्दू धर्म के परिप्रेक्ष्य में दिया था। वक्तव्य में ‘अमेरिकी बहनों और भाइयों’ इन शब्दों को अद्यपर्यन्त विश्व स्मरण करता है। ष वे मूर्ति पूजा को महत्त्व देते थे। अस्पृश्यता और जातिवाद से दूर वे मानवतावाद में विश्वास और आस्था रखते थे। इसका ज्वलंत उदाहरण हैं —भगिनी निवेदिता, जो ईसाई लड़की थीं और उनका नाम मार्गरेट एलिजाबेथ था। वे ब्रिटिश—आयरिश थीं। स्वामी विवेकानंद ने उन्हें भगिनी के रूप में स्थान दिया। फलस्वरूप इनके द्वारा स्थापित ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन’ आज तक पश्चिमी देशों में सुचारु रूप से संचालित हो रहा है।

भारत में ही नहीं वरन विश्व की महान विभूति स्वामी विवेकानंद का तैलचित्र ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन, शिलांग’ के अनुग्रह से चित्रांकित करने का सौभाग्य मुझे प्राप्त हुआ। यह तैलचित्र सन 2002 के अप्रैल माह में ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानंद कल्चरल सेंटर, कुइंटन रोड, शिलांग’ में लगी है। इस तैलचित्र का निर्माण मैंने कैसे किया, इसका वर्णन मैं संक्षेप में कर रहा हूँ और साथ ही शिलांग के लिखित एवं अलिखित इतिहास का भी उल्लेख कर रहा हूँ जिससे आपको षिलांग के बारे में जानकारी प्राप्त हो।

19 फरवरी 1824 में 8 गोरखा रायफल्स की पहली बटालियन कैप्टन पैट्रिक डजन ने बांग्लादेश के सिलहट नामक स्थान में स्थापित किया। इस पलटन का नाम ‘16 सिलहट लोकल इन्फैंट्री बटालियन’ था। उस समय भारत में ईष्ट इंडिया कंपनी का शासन काल था। कालान्तर में इस पलटन के नाम में समय—समय पर परिवर्तन होता रहा और बाद में यह 1/8 जी. आर. के नाम से प्रसिध्द हुआ। परमवीर चक्र विजेता मेजर धन सिंह थापा इसी बटालियन के थे। सन 1980 के दशक तक यह पलटन 58 गोरखा ट्रेनिंग सेंटर, शिलांग के अधीन थी। अब इस बटालियन को मैकानाइज्द में सम्मिलित किया गया है।

इसका नाम है — 3 बटालियन मैकानाइज्द इन्फैंट्री रेजीमेंट (1/8 गोरखा रायफल्स) । यह पल्टन सिलहट में रहने के पश्चात् सन 1835 से 1866 तक चेरापूँजी में रही। 1867 में शिलांग को मुख्यालय बनाने के लिए इसने शिलांग में प्रवेश किया। इसके प्रवेश करने से एक वर्ष पहले ही असैनिक प्रशासन विभाग शिलांग आ चुका था। साथ ही अंग्रेज अधिकारियों के साथ गोरखा समुदाय सैनिकों के रूप में, शिक्षित बंगाली समुदाय प्रशासन विभाग कार्यालयों में क्लर्क के रूप में, मारवाड़ी समुदाय एवं मुसलमान समुदाय व्यापारियों के रूप में, तथा सिख हरिजन समुदाय के लोग शिलांग में आए ।

उस समय शिलांग घने जंगलों से परिवेष्ठित था। सभी समुदायों ने अंग्रेजों के साथ मिलकर इस जनशून्य, जंगली इलाकों को शनै: शनै:

शहर के रूप में विकसित किया। इस स्थान को मात्र शिलांग ही नहीं अपितु ‘स्कॉटलैंड ऑफ द ईस्ट’ के नाम से भी जाना जाता है। ये सभी समुदाय यहाँ के खासी समुदाय से भी घुलमिल गए। मैत्री सम्बन्ध स्थापित हुआ। इस प्रकार इस समुदायों का यहाँ उद्भव हुआ।

बंगाली समाज ने कुइंटन रोड के समीप सन 1890 के दशक में एक क्लब की स्थापना की। इसी क्लब में स्वामी विवेकानंद ने 27 अप्रैल 1901 के दिन शिलांग के उपस्थित जन समुदाय को प्रवचन दिया था। जब वे अपनी माताजी को कामख्या माँ के दर्शन कराने हेतु 1901 के अप्रैल माह के प्रथम सप्ताह में गुवाहाटी आए थे। गुवाहाटी में 17 अप्रैल तक रहे। वे उस समय घोड़ागाड़ी से शिलांग आए थे क्योंकि उस समय शिलांग—गुवाहाटी मार्ग में घोड़ागाड़ी चलती थी।

सन 2002 के मार्च माह के अंतिम सप्ताह में स्वामी एकार्थानंदजी और स्वामी अकल्मषानंदजी मेरे घर पधारे। वे मुझसे स्वामी विवेकानंद का तैलचित्र बनवाना चाहते थे। मैंने सहमति दे दि । ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानंद कल्चरल सेंटर’ के स्वामी अच्युतशानंदजी की कृपा से मुझे स्वामी विवेकानंद का तैलचित्र बनाने का अवसर मिला। वे चाहते थे कि तैलचित्र की पृष्ठभूमि में शिलांग का दृष्य हो। मैंने चित्रांकन शुरू करने के पूर्व, सन 1901 में स्वामी विवेकानंद के शिलांग आगमन का फोटो प्राप्त करने की कोशिश शुरू की।

स्वामी अच्युतशानंदजी से सामान खरीदने के लिए रुपए मिलने के पश्चात मैं रंग आदि सामग्रियाँ खरीदने के लिए पुलिस बाजार चल पड़ा। खरीदने के बाद मैंने दूकानदार से सन 1901 के स्वामी विवेकानंद के शिलांग आगमन के फोटो की बात की। दूकानदार ने मुझे अफजल हुसैन से मिलने की सलाह दी। उनके परदादा शिलांग के पुराने वासी थे। दूकानदार से अफजल हुसैन का पता लेकर मैं उनके घर पहुँचा। अभी वे 83 वर्ष के हैं। बातचीत के दौरान मुझे मनवांछित फोटो तो नहीं मिली पर एक महत्वपूर्ण बात पता चली कि सर्वप्रथम शिलांग—गुवाहाटी मार्ग पर घोड़ागाड़ी चलाने का शुभारम्भ 6 नवम्बर 1887 में गुलाम हैदर और उनके पुत्र कासिम्मुद्दीन द्वारा हुआ। इसी परिवार ने सन 1906 में सर्वप्रथम इस मार्ग पर मोटरगाड़ी चलाने का आरम्भ किया।

जो भी हो, तैलचित्र के लिए रंग, तूलिका, अलसी का तेल अर्थात् लिनसीड ऑयल आदि खरीदने के बाद मैंने 1 अप्रैल में ही ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानंद कल्चरल सेंटर’ के खुले प्रांगण में स्वामी विवेकानंद का तैलचित्र चित्रांकन करना आरम्भ किया। खुली जगह पर चित्रांकन करने के कारण मेरे कार्य को कोई भी देख सकता था। मुझे 14 फीट लम्बी और 8 फीट ऊँची आयतन वाली कैनवास में स्वामीजी का तैलचित्र पृष्ठभूमि सहित चित्रांकित करना था। मुझे मनोवांछित फोटो न मिलने के कारण पृष्ठभूमि के दृश्यों के लिए अपनी कल्पना का ही



सहारा लेना था।

तैलचित्र निर्माण के लिए रंगों के मिश्रण में लीनसीड ऑयल की एक—दो बूँदें मिलाई जाती हैं जो एक महीने तक नहीं सूखता और कभी—कभी तो इससे भी ज्यादा समय लग सकता है। ऐसे में अगर कोई रंग को स्पर्श कर दे, तो तैलचित्र का सत्यनाश हो जाता है।

27 अप्रैल को ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानंद कल्चरल सेंटर’ का उद्घाटन होना था और निर्माण कार्य युध्दस्तर पर चल रहा था। मुझे भी युध्दस्तर पर ही तैलचित्र का चित्रांकन करना था अतः मैंने निश्चय किया कि मैं पन्द्रह दिन के अन्दर ही तैलचित्र चित्रांकित कर लूँगा। और शेष समय मैं में रंग सूखने के लिए रखूँगा। मैं प्रातः 5 बजे ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानंद कल्चरल सेंटर’ पहुँच जाता और संध्या 6 बजे तक अनवरत चित्रांकन करता था। तीन दिन के अन्दर मैंने स्वामी विवेकानंद का चित्रांकन पूरा कर लिया। अब पृष्ठभूमि के लिए कल्पना का सहारा लेना था।

तैलचित्र में सूक्ष्म दृश्यों का चित्रांकन करने से अधिक समय लगता है जबकि बड़े दृश्य कम समय में पूर्ण हो जाते हैं। मैंने सोचा कि अगर मैं स्वामी जी के चित्र की पृष्ठभूमि में छोटे—छोटे दृश्यों का चित्रांकन करूँ तो पन्द्रह दिन में पूरा नहीं कर पाऊँगा इसलिए मैंने पृष्ठभूमि में बड़े—बड़े दृश्यों को चित्रित करना आरम्भ कर दिया। ये दृश्य थे बड़े—बड़े पत्थर, पेड़ और झरने।

साँझ की बेला थी और मैं अपने कर्म में तल्लीन था। लोग मेरे चित्र को मेरे पीछे से देख रहे थे। उसी समय किसी पुरुष के ये शब्दांश मेरे कानों में पड़े— ‘पेंटिंग अच्छी नहीं है’। सुनते ही मैं स्तब्ध हो गया। लोग तो चले गए परन्तु मेरा मन रुआँसा—सा हो गया। मन ही मन मैं सोचने लगा कि ‘कहीं यह अपूर्ण तैलचित्र रामकृष्ण मिशन द्वारा अस्वीकृत हुआ तो...?’ और मैं निराश हो गया।

लोगों के जाने के बाद स्वामी अच्युतेशानंदजी मेरे समीप आए और तैलचित्र को निहारते हुए कहा दृ स्वामीजी के ऊपर पृष्ठभूमि का दृश्य हावी न होने पाए। स्वामीजी दृश्य से बिल्कुल अलग दिखने चाहिए। उनकी बातें सुनकर मेरा मन उदास हो गया और मेरी आँखों में आँसू आ गए। मेरे क्लान्त मुँह को देखकर मुझे उत्साहित करने के लिए उन्होंने कहा ‘स्वामी विवेकानंद कहते थे कि जो मनुष्य अपने कर्म में मनोयोग लाता है, वह कभी भी असफल नहीं होगा। थापाजी, आपको भी इस पेंटिंग में प्रकाश लाना है। प्रकाश लाने में परमहंस रामकृष्ण आपकी जरूर मदद करेंगे।’

मैंने उनसे कुछ नहीं कहा। मैं वहाँ से घर की ओर चल पड़ा। मेरे कानों में स्वामी अच्युतेशानंदजीके शब्द ‘पेंटिंग अच्छी नहीं है’ गूँज रहे थे जिसके फलस्वरूप मेरे मन—मस्तिष्क में अंतर्द्वंद्व चल रहा था कि मैं तैलचित्र के पृष्ठभूमि के दृश्यों में क्या परिवर्तन करूँ जिससे स्वामी विवेकानंद का स्वरूप उभरकर बाहर आए। इसी अंतर्द्वंद्व में मुझे ज्वर चढ़ गया। आते समय मौखार में मेरी मुलाकात मेरे एक मित्र से हुई। उसे मेरे हालत के बारे में नहीं पता था। मेरे मुँह पर लगे रंग देखकर उसने पूछा, ‘विक्रम, तुम्हारे मुँह पर रंग क्यों लगा है?’

मैंने उत्तर दिया, ‘सिंघानिया टाकीज की जगह रामकृष्ण मिशन का जो भवन बन रहा है, वहाँ मैं स्वामी विवेकानंद की पेंटिंग बना रहा हूँ इसलिए बनाते वक्त मुँह पर रंग लग गया होगा।’

उसने कहा, ‘आते समय मुँह धोकर आना चाहिए था। कपड़ों पर भी रंग लगा हुआ है। तुमको ऐसा देखकर लोग क्या कहेंगे।’ मुझे उसकी बातें अच्छी नहीं लगीं। एक तो पेंटिंग करते करते मैं थक गया था, दूसरा मानसिक द्वंद्व चल रहा था इसलिए मुझे क्रोध आ गया और मैंने गुस्से में कहा, ‘मुझे शाबासी देने के बजाय तुम मेरे कपड़े, रूप—रंग की चिंता कर रहे हो। मैं स्वामी विवेकानंद की पेंटिंग बना रहा हूँ, यह मेरे लिए बड़ी बात है। अगर मैं अमेरिका में होता तो वहाँ के लोग मेरे पेंटिंग की प्रशंसा करते। मेरा इंटरव्यू लेते और मेरी तस्वीर टाइम्स मैगजीन में छपती।’

मेरे मित्र ने कुछ नहीं कहा। मैं घर आया और प्लास्टिक बोतल लेकर एक लीटर मिट्टी का तेल बाजार से खरीद लाया। उसके बाद दर्जी के दुकान से बचे हुए बेकार कपड़ों के टुकड़ों को इकट्ठा किया। यह दोनों चीजों को लेने का उद्देश्य था कि प्रातः काल जल्दी उठकर ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानंद कल्चरल सेंटर’ पहुँचूँ और कपड़े के टुकड़ों को मिट्टी के तेल में भिगोकर स्वामी विवेकानंद की

पेंटिंग की पृष्ठभूमि में चित्रांकित सम्पूर्ण दृश्यों को मिटा सकूँ। उस रात मैं चिंता से सो नहीं सका और ज्वर और बढ़ गया था। मेरा शरीर तप रहा था। प्रातःकाल जल्दी उठकर मैं पाँच बजे ‘रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानंद कल्चरल सेंटर’ के गेट के बाहर पहुँचा। उस समय सेंटर में रहने वाला कर्मचारी सो रहा था। गेट के बाहर से चिल्लाकर मैंने उसे उठाया। उसने गेट खोला। मैं प्रांगण में पहुँचा और कपड़ों के टुकड़ों में मिट्टी का तेल लगाकर पृष्ठभूमि में चित्रांकित सम्पूर्ण दृश्यों को मिटा दिया। उसके बाद पेंटिंग के ऊपरी भाग को आकाश की तरह नीला कर दिया। जैसे दूर से क्षितिज में पहाड़ नीला दिखता है, उसी तरह मैंने नीला पहाड़ का चित्रांकन करना आरम्भ किया। इससे स्वामी विवेकानंद का स्वरूप पीछे के दृश्यों से अलग होकर प्रस्फुटित हुआ। सुबह के सात बज रहे थे। उस समय चौबीस—पच्चीस साल की एक विवाहिता बंगाली महिला दिखाई दी। उस समय मैं चित्रांकन करना छोड़कर, स्वामी विवेकानंद का स्वरूप कैसा दिखाई देता है, यह देखने के लिए तैलचित्र से करीब बीस फीट दूर से अपूर्ण चित्र का अवलोकन कर रहा था। वह महिला भी बड़े मनोयोग से तैलचित्र को देख रही थी। कुछ देर देखने के बाद महिला बोली, ‘आप बहुत बड़े आर्टिस्ट हैं।’ बीते हुए कल की घटनाओं के कारण मुझे उनकी बातों पर विश्वास ही नहीं हुआ। मैंने महिला से पूछा, ‘आपको कैसे पता कि मैं बड़ा आर्टिस्ट हूँ !’ उत्तर में उन महिला ने कहा — ‘लिंसीड आयल से पेंटिंग बनाना बहुत मुश्किल काम होता है। इसके लिए हाथों में कंट्रोल होना चाहिए, नहीं तो आयल की वजह से पेंटिंग का ब्रश फिसलता है। आपके हाथों में कंट्रोल है इसलिए स्वामीजी की इतनी सुन्दर पेंटिंग बन गई।’

मुझे बहुत आश्चर्य हुआ कि उन्हें लिंसीड आयल के बारे में कैसे पता है ! मैंने पूछा ‘आप लिंसीड आयल के बारे में इतना कैसे जानती हैं?’ उन्होंने कहा ‘मैं लाइतुमुखरा में एक प्राइवेट आर्ट स्कूल में पेंटिंग सीखी थी इसलिए मुझे इसके बारे में पता है, लेकिन मुझे लिंसीड आयल से पेंटिंग करनी ठीक से नहीं आती।’ अपने आपको परखने के लिए मैंने फिर पूछा — ‘आप सच बताइए कि क्या यह पेंटिंग सुन्दर बनी है?’

‘सचमुच सुन्दर बनी है। मैंने अपनी जिन्दगी में इतनी अच्छी पेंटिंग इससे पहले नहीं देखी। ऐसा लग रहा है कि स्वामीजी अभी बोलने वाले हैं।’ उन्होंने उत्तर दिया। महिला और मेरे बीच काफी देर तक बातें होती रहीं। बातों—बातों में पता चला कि उसका जन्म शिलांग में हुआ और विवाह सिलचर में। वह अपने बेटे की पढ़ाई के लिए शिलांग में रह रही थी। उनके सुबह—सुबह आने का कारण था की उन्हें वहाँ के पुष्पवाटिका से रामकृष्ण परमहंस की पूजा के लिए फूल लेना था। फूल लेकर वह चली गई पर साथ में मेरा ज्वर भी चला गया। उनकी उत्साहवर्द्धक बातों से मेरे मन में स्फूर्ति आ गई फलतः— मैंने तेजी से चित्रांकित करना आरम्भ किया। उस दिन मैंने दिनभर पूरे उत्साह के साथ पेंटिंग किया। एक सप्ताह के बाद रंग खरीदने के लिए रंग लगे कपड़े और मुँह लेकर पुलिस बाजार गया। रंग खरीदने के पश्चात् मैं उस महिला से मिलने उनके घर गया और साथ में अपनी बनाई हुई पशुपतिनाथ (नेपाल) की फ्रेम की हुई पेंटिंग उपहारस्वरूप लेकर गया। मैं उन्हें यह तैलचित्र इसलिए देना चाहता था क्योंकि उनकी प्रेरणादायक बातों ने मेरे मन में उमंग एवं आशा का संचार किया था।

उनसे मुलाकात होते ही मैंने उनसे कहा ‘आपको बुरा तो नहीं लगा मैं रंगों से सने कपड़े पहनकर आया हूँ, और मेरे कपड़े साफ भी नहीं हैं। उन्होंने बड़े शालीनता से कहा — ‘आदमी की पहचान कपड़ों से नहीं वरन उनके कार्यों से होती है।’

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अफजल हुसैन से जानकारी

THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE EDUCATION

The Contribution of

Jeebon Roy and Radhon Singh Berry Kharwanlang

Bijoya Sawian

Education is derived from the Latin word educatio which means ‘bringing up, rearing.’ It is a holistic experience in which a teacher is expected to nurture a child’s mental growth like a parent. True education is not merely cramming from books, going through exams and getting brilliant results . It is a complete experience in which one’s intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual growth and development are addressed and tackled with focus, understanding and in harmony. Jeebon Roy and Radhon Singh Berry Kharwanlang, along with the Khasi literary stalwarts of that era, realized the importance of true education and worked zealously towards its realization with their writings and publications.

The Khasis had no alphabet until Reverend Thomas Jones a Welsh Methodist missionary introduced the Roman alphabet in mid 19th century. Radhon Singh Berry Kharwanlang, Jeebon Roy Mairom and Rabon Singh Suka, in order to keep the pronunciation intact, dropped c,z,f,v,q and x and added Ĩ,Ñ and Ng. The letters in the Khasi alphabet are A, B, K, D, E, G, NG, H, I, Ĩ, J, L, M, N, Ñ, O, P, R, S, T, U, W, Y. The next collective decision they took was the establishing of a printing Press. This was done by Jeebon Roy in 1899. The Ri Khasi Press the oldest printing press in these hills was established in 1896 in the compound of his residence in Umsohsun and he employed his eldest daughter, Lakheitmon Sawian, in order to encourage other Khasi women to come out of their homes and work.

Jeebon Roy had studied only up to Class 6 because that was all that was available in these hills. His education continued at home under his father, Ram Sing Jaid Rani and tutors. As his mind imbibed and expanded and he realized the importance

of literacy and good education he knew that his mission in life was the spread of higher education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. In 1875 he started corresponding with the Provincial Government about setting up a High School. The Government refused on the grounds that Shillong had just undergone the trauma of the plague and there were no funds available. Jeebon Roy was disappointed and started negotiations with Rev T. Jerman Jones of the Welsh Methodist Calvinistic Presbyterian Mission. Reverend Jerman Jones refused and remarked that Khasis were not ready for education



Babu Jeebon Roy

Courtesy: Ri Khasi Press

beyond Class 6! The two responses alarmed Jeebon Roy and made him more determined. He approached the Assam Government with his proposition with the promise that all deficit would be borne by him. His plea fell to deaf ears. Eventually, he donated a sum of nine hundred rupees and constructed and started a school known as the Zilla High School, in the area where the Telegraph Office stood till a few years ago, near the Raj Bhavan. The school was inaugurated on September 2, 1878 and registered fifty students. Seeing the success of the school Rev Jerman Jones realized his mistake and directed that from the following session the Mission Minor School at Mawkhar should be converted to a Proceeding High School and amalgamated with the Zilla High School and liberal funds should be sanctioned. In 1880 this was completed and the Shillong Government High School, the gateway to higher education in our

hills, was established. Jeebon Roy's perseverance and determination paid off. He lived up to his motto ïaiminot - persevere.

Jeebon Roy wrote and published the first three Khasi Readers, Ka Kitab Khasi Pule Nyngkong in 1899 followed by Kitab Khasi Ba Ar and Kitab Khasi Balai. The first book is orthography and also contains many wise sayings on ethical themes, a precursor to the moral science and value education books of today. He was keenly aware that ethical and spiritual illiteracy are stumbling blocks for intellectual development. He wrote in his First Reader, "I want you to learn not only to read and write but also how to think." And by that he meant to think correctly, make wise decisions and avoid all diversions from the path of Truth. The Readers were followed by Ka Niam Jong ki Khasi(1897),ka Kitab Shaphang U Wei U Blei (1898)) and Ka History Ka Ri India (1900) .Shaphang U Wei U Blei is a beautifully expressed treatise on the belief that there is only one God, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, imageless and formless, the Super Consciousness that pervades the entire universe. Explaining to people who asked how could they be convinced of the existence of God when they cannot see Him he wrote, "If you are flying a kite and it climbs higher and higher till you can no longer see it don't you know it is there because of its pull?" And in another chapter he wrote, "Just as water, fire, the moon, the sun, we human beings, too, and all the creations, animate and inanimate, have come into this world with a purpose according to God's will. Therefore, we should bow to and worship only that one Creator. We should not look right or left. We should walk on the path that is straight, the path that will lead us to this one God. The more paths you seek the more you will stray. Just as we Khasis believe, that if we have little knowledge of too many things we reap no benefit. So if we err in this way in our worship, imagine how detrimental it will be!"

Jeebon Roy, with the hope that the people of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills would connect with the rest of India and gain from the immense wisdom of the ancient sages, also did a lot of translation works with the help of scholars and published them in the Ri Khasi Press. Among them are Hit-Upodesa (1898), Ramayana and Chaitanya Charitra (1900),Buddha Charitra (1901). His eldest son ,translated the



Radhon Sing Berry Kharwanlang

Bhagvad Gita. Unfortunately, by then Christianity had taken root in these hills and the books all remained unstudied in their first edition till now.

Simultaneously, Radhon Singh Berry Kharwanlang worked on many books including a Khasi dictionary and the teachings of the elders which had been handed down orally from time immemorial. In 1902 the first edition of Ka Jingsneng Tymmen was published in the Ri Khasi Press. This is a compilation of the Khasi code of ethics and etiquette penned down by Radhon Singh Berry Kharwanlang in exquisite Khasi. It comprises of a hundred and nine verses. This literary masterpiece encapsulates the Khasi philosophy of life that we come into this world to earn righteousness, to do our duty towards our kur (maternal side) and kha (paternal side) and to live a life that which will be guided by our constant connect with the divinity within each one of us, Tip-Briew-Tip Blei (Know Man-Know God). Etiquette, for the Khasis and Pnars is not mere social grace but a form of worship. If one respects all God's creations animate and inanimate we worship the Creator. I had the privilege of translating this great literary work with the invaluable assistance of Rangbah RT Rymbai and the first edition was published in 1997 in the Ri Khasi Press. It is now in its fourth edition and published by Vivekananda Institute of Culture, Guwahati. The teachings are perennial and secular and relevant to this day. I quote a few verses :
In the house you are born these you must learn-
How to sit and how to stand;
How to walk and cross your feet,
How to drink and how to eat;
How to talk and how to glance,
How to move, how to advance;
How to work and how to labour,
How to cope with the work you shoulder;
How to dress, how to attire;
How to be modest, how to cover;
How your turban, you will wear,
How to comb and make your hair;
How to give, how to accept,
How you'll live and your life will direct;
All superficial pomp and ostentation
Undermines Truth and is the root of destruction
Once your character is destroyed
Whatever you achieve
No one will applaud.

In front of elders any time any place
Speak with humility and grace
When they enter the room when you are alone or with friends
Stand up your seat, never feel shame or offence.

The act of revering and worshipping God
Is a discipline we must all accord
Religion is the foundation that strengthens your aura
The clan is the foundation of your being, the Mother.

Jeebon Roy and Radhon Singh Berry wanted the people of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills to be confident and forward thinking armed with knowledge and wisdom so that they will stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the country and the world. There is, indeed, a difference between being merely literate and being truly educated. A literate person has learned enough to read and write and collect degrees and attain high positions because of brilliant results attained from bookish knowledge. In true education it is not only the result that is important but also the entire journey, step by step, towards your goal. Education is the foundation of character, of courage and of understanding. It does not begin and end with books, results, lucrative jobs and high positions. Education is a vast experience, a never ending journey of discovery into the world of knowledge, wisdom and Truth. A truly educated man is one who can think and act correctly no matter where he studied, what marks he scored, what career he chose and how much he earns. He stands out by his ability to differentiate between right and wrong and by his strength of character to be able to ride the storm in times of crisis; he makes the right decisions and contributes in a positive way to his family, his community and his country. That both Radhon Singh Berry and Jeebon Roy were aware of this is obvious in their commendable endeavours in the field of education. Radhon Singh Kharwanlang also did not have formal education and not much is known about his childhood and parentage. All that was recorded was that he was born in Mawmluh near Cherrapunjee in 1850 and was married twice and had five children.

Our present educational system, archaic, dismal and in desperate need for change, is based on Lord Macaulay's Minute on Education which he formulated in 1835. Macaulay's Minute was later perfected in Sir Charles

Wood's Dispatch in 1854. This concept of education was introduced mainly to make the Indian officials learn adequate English and be literate and efficient enough to be able to function in the administration. The minds were geared to cram and swallow information, transfer it to paper and follow orders. This inadequate and simplistic system of education was only to serve the purpose of the British rulers. Changes are slowly being introduced for a totally new concept of education. A lot of stress is being put on the concept of a happy child growing up into a successful individual. In the Jingsneng Tymmen, The Teachings of Elders, one can clearly see that the underlying ethos is that if one lives a life free of evil and corruption one will, automatically, live a life of peace, joy and abundance.

There is so much of talent and promise among the youth in Meghalaya. What they lack is focus, the right guidance to tap their inborn talent and most of all their lack of confidence. It is encouraging to know that a few institutes which focus on diverse potentials of the young and honing their communication skills and personality development have started in Shillong. The strong sense of knowing who you are, with full respect for all other communities, helps in building up confidence. Confidence and self esteem are the precursors to growth, progress and evolvment. The young live in a brave new world. They can even rewrite the rules and redefine themselves. They are the masters of their destiny and infinite possibilities. They should not fritter these precious years away.

Coming to careers: every single job, no matter how big or small, is important and has to be done and completed properly for the smooth running of society. We must learn to accept dignity of labour because not everyone can get government jobs and get into institutes for the different professions and not everyone can reach the top as conventionally perceived. Actually, reaching 'the top' simply means having done one's best. One should also be confident of what one is doing and say, "I am a peon/a carpenter/a mason/an electrician/a domestic help/a taxi driver, (whatever you are). I am the best in town. I am not a wastrel. I contribute towards my family and community. I live a life of virtue and correctness. Therefore I am a success." This is very important. That is why value education has to be included in the syllabus of schools, and right values and 'sanskars' have to be taught. The concept of success has to be redefined for

society to be cleansed of superficiality and regain its luster. That is the essence of life and living. As Radhon Singh Berry Kharwanlang puts it

Whatever you know, whatever you gain
It's useless if not by Truth sustained.

You may reach the top, sit on horse, elephant
If your reputation is sullied what use is it then ?



Meghalaya Pony Livelihood Project

The Meghalaya Pony Livelihood Project is being conceived to inspire, encourage and motivate the passion for ecological activities and conservation of environment and its habitats through sustainable economic enterprise. The primary exponent of horse rearing at Mawmahwar, Bitali Kharsyiemiong have had decades of experience in taming and domesticating wild ponies, breeding and nurturing of calves and in caring and catering to the wellbeing of the young ponies until they grow up into matured adults. At the tender age of twelve, Bitali Kharsyiemiong was fascinated with ponies and initiated for tending a few of them, even as they were used for domestic carriage of agricultural produces

from the field into the granary; and subsequently shipping the finished products to the nearest vehicular road on the way to the market.

The self-acquired expertise of Bitali Kharsyiemiong is a lifelong involvement with immense knowledge in folk animal husbandry and veterinary sciences. He has tamed and domesticated the wild, bred and cared the young calf, taught and trained the matured ponies. The most significant aspect of his profession is that he has developed an emotional attachment with the animals; they communicated and understood each other at every stage of their growth. Certain middlemen acquired the ponies and smuggled to Bangladesh and later he learned that they were used as the beast of burden and most of them died prematurely due to the overloaded stuff they were made to carry. He discontinued the trade with them and always mourned at the unfortunate demise of any pony. Further, when he is away busy with farming and other works, he would engage relatives and close friends. At present, there are more than twenty ponies with few mothers in the process of breeding young calves. There is a dire need of a proper stable and a farmhouse to sustain the livelihood of both humans and animals.

The primary motive is to venture for a permanent cultural and eco-tourism destination at Mawmahwar and diversify the undertakings to other prospective areas in the region. The project have identified certain locations with enchanting landscapes that are prevalent with ponies and appraised the local inhabitants about the need for proper care of the animals, even as they are being used in various livelihood activities for generations. The project shall initially facilitate for a feasible seasonal event to cater the tourists and other local visitors within the State of Meghalaya. Thereafter, the activities will expand with various cultural performances and amusement for visitors.

Riti Academy of Visual Arts



Art and poem by Raphael Warjri

Milestone

Treading through the valleys and dales
In search of food and shelter
A giant leapt across mountains
With milestones of megaliths
At the apex of every peak
To follow the path back home
Traversing through villages
To listen to the narrative
With chants, songs and tales
Around the hearth of fire
And finally taking a nap
At the bosom of a dear mother

The feathers that crafted the wings
To fly beyond the horizon
While the buzz of the bee
Is sending a message
That all is not well
With the incursion of modernity
Cemented with concrete jungle
The road ahead to reach at
The gigantic heap of garbage
And waves of towers that haunt
From vantage point to prey
On all the creatures of the earth

The himalayan blunder now
Demands a huge task
To look at the past, and create
A vision for the future
To replenish and heal
The sore of mother nature
To care and venerate
The kindness of mother earth
Let the fragrance of fresh air
And the savour of pure water
Restore the vibrant life
That the world needs today

RAPHAEL WARJRI: born on 14th March 1961, has been painting and filmmaking since 1983. Founder of Riti Academy of Visual Arts in 1991. Curator, THOH-SHUN Art Camp: an annual art event, and in 2007 held at Dhaka under the aegis of the Indian High Commission, Dhaka. Participated various art camps all over India. Founding Member, North East Film & TV Producer-Directors’ Association, Meghalaya Film Makers’ Guild, MTDF (tourism sector), and Meghalaya People Environmental Rights Forum. Life Member, INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage), Meghalaya Adventure Association, Khasi Authors’ Society, East Khasi Hills District Art and Culture Society and Advisory Member, Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Directed several films with two nominations at Film South Asia 97- Katmandu, Nepal and 6th International Short Film Festival 98- Dhaka, Bangladesh, Pacific Asia Tourism Fair 1996- Singapore, National Tourism Festival- New Delhi 1995. Theatre Playwright- nominated at the 1st International Indigenous Theatre Festival Dhaka 2015. Writer of art books and fiction. Founder, television news channel Media Plus and favourite past time is adventure. The Thoh Shun and Thwet Art camps have generated a platform for exposition of the art that originated from the region. Riti Academy of Visual Arts started the MAD Gallery in the heart of the city and within a short span of time it has helped to throw colour, created an impact and caters to the taste of the people. Even as MAD is an abbreviation for Make-A-Difference, it has an in-built and integrated idea of a taste, which in the Khasi language is MAD; liberal and free-wheeling interpretation and usage may ascribe a certain lunacy, a classically held belief of “a touch of the gods’ to the gallery - that would also be appreciably tolerated! This metaphor is an apt name for a confluence, an ensemble, a matrix of creativity brought together through a conflation of passion and art..



In memory of **H KERIOS WAHLANG**

Dr Moushumi Dey

Meghalaya, the picturesque and bountiful land surrounded with green hills, magnificent dales, gushing waterfalls, meandering streams, along with its colourful and vibrant people presents a vivid spectrum like the colours of rainbow. This pristine land is not only home to a rich and abundance of flora and fauna but also an abode of culture, festival and lifestyle of the people inhabiting the land. Since time immemorial this land had a unique tradition and culture that has stood the test of time and over the years, despite the onslaught of westernisation and modernisation the ethos and values of the land continues to add to its ethnicity and vibrancy. This has been particularly possible because of untiring

services of many of its people and their love for their land and culture. Among all the people, there are a few however who have always played a gigantic role in upholding the rich and vibrant culture and tradition. One such luminary that stands tall in the midst of all in relentlessly progressing, propagating and proliferating the enriching original folk tunes and singing style of the Khasis is H Kerios Wahlang. Known as the face and the voice of Khasi folk music, H Kerios Wahlang's passion for music began since his early childhood years. He lived a simple life that came full circle in more than one way. Music was his elixir of life and for as long as he survived, he practised and propagated it with passion and enthusiasm. H

Kerios Wahlang briefly educated himself under the care of Ramakrishna Mission, Sohra and during those early years he nurtured his love for football and also occasionally engaged himself in singing in various local functions. He however could not complete his schooling and initially became a bus driver. He later engaged in coal trade with late K M Diengdoh, a renowned local entrepreneur. He married early and occupied himself with transportation and trading on market days all over the Khasi Jaintia territories. Despite his obligation as a family man, he always kept himself engaged with his passion for music. Later when he settled at Mawngap, Kerios Wahlang was fascinated with theatre and some of his songs even featured in the drama performances. It was in 1978-79 that he ventured into a professional singing career through the platform of All India Radio, Shillong and later even in Doordarshan Shillong. Almost all of his songs were based on nature and culture of the people, though he also composed a few love songs and philosophical compositions as well. It was also since his school days that he had composed and sung his own songs. His soulful singing style endeared him to many and soon he was invited to perform on many prestigious events outside the state. Kerios Wahlang also picked up the skill of playing the Duitara, a two stringed musical instrument which he henceforth always played while singing. He was known to have made his own musical instruments including the Duitara, Marynthing and other accompanying folk instruments. Expressing his love for instruments he once stated 'I made the instruments and performed them my way, because I am not educated in music and I do not acquaint with other folk musicians.'

Over the decades Kerios Wahlang had composed hundreds of songs and few of them were featured in certain films by some reputed filmmakers. In-fact almost sixty lyrics were also found from his hand written manuscripts. H Kerios Wahlang was one of the respected elders of the organisation called 'Seng Khasi' a socio-cultural organisation of the Khasis. H Kerios Wahlang was a great nature lover and this love was so strong that it permeated his very existence. Till a few years ago he would be found roaming around the Mawphlang sacred grove and even walked upto the summit of Sohpetbneng peak during the annual pilgrimage festival.

For his remarkable contribution to Khasi folk music and the cultural upkeep of the land, he was felicitated by a number of organisations and institutions including the Raj Bhavan Shillong, Doordarshan Shillong, traditional institutions such as the Seng Khasi, Seng Kmie, National

Institute of Technology, Meghalaya, Riti Academy of Visual Arts etc. Despite his frail health H Kerios Wahlang never failed in upholding his passion for singing about his land and its cultural ethos. Though we lost this great legend on 11th January, 2020 at the ripe old age of 94, he has left behind a legacy to cherish through generations. He is survived by four children comprising two sons and two daughters and blessed by sixteen grandchildren.

It is said that the highest tribute that we can pay to those gone away to another world is not grief but gratitude. H Kerios Wahlang's husky, muffled and melodious voice will be forever etched in every mind and resonate sweet music in every ear. Though in his passing away, the deep sense of loss to the cultural ethos of this land is palpable; we are sure that his tremendous contribution to the folk music of this land will be gratefully remembered for generations to come and hopefully in the years ahead his footsteps will also be emulated by the true music lovers of this land and people.

Ka Jingshai pays its humble tribute to this benevolent legend. May his soul rest eternally in peace.

YOUTH SPEAK

WAKEFULNESS

Cocooned in the dark
The silence is deafening
I stay awake
My soul yearning
For Sleep

While the world
Slumbers around me
I write with pen in hand
The dreams I ought to be
Dreaming

The moon is my witness
In this nightly sojourn
Into the depths
Of my fractured psyche
Lost and alone

As the first rays of light
Herald the new day
I stand up and face
The sunrise
Blinding me
Lavinia Chyne



Music and Mynah in Gramercy Park

Diane Marshall

Swami Vivekananda’s life has been well-studied, but details about some of the things he did continue to surprise us. Can you picture him conversing in English with a hill mynah in the middle of New York City—or singing in Norwegian?

One of Swamiji’s very devoted friends and supporters in New York was Emma Cecilia Thursby (1845–1931). She was a classically trained singer, and she had a very successful career as a concert soloist during the 1870s and 1880s, traveling throughout Europe and North America. She had an incredible three octave range and she could sing difficult arias by Mozart such as “Der höllerache” and “Ma che vi fece, o stelle” with ease. After her London debut in 1879 The Times wrote:

“Her voice, a high soprano, is sympathetic, and her method singularly free from all mannerisms... the production of the voice, especially in the higher registers, is remarkable for its ease and absolute purity of intonation.” ¹

During the winter of 1895 Miss Thursby and her close friend Sara Chapman Bull (1850–1911) arranged several lectures for Swamiji in New York City. It was an intensely busy period for him, teaching classes in the morning and giving lectures in the evening. It was also a busy and fruitful period for Miss Thursby, as her biographer noted:

“The Vedanta philosophy of Vivekananda had, indeed, aided her in at last reaching a strong conviction in her usefulness. She would henceforth devote her life to teaching of that art of singing in which her achievements had been so brilliant; to that art of friendly intercourse in the spirit of which her “Fridays” had already been established; and to that art of kindness and compassion and sacrifice to which so much of her life had already been dedicated.” ²



Courtesy: Nafis Ameen

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Miss Thursby formerly sang at the Broadway Tabernacle, a large church close to Swamiji's rented rooms at 54 West 33rd Street. In later years, between 1905 and 1911, she was a professor of music at the Institute of Musical Art (now Juilliard School) in New York.³

On Monday 28 January Swamiji gave a talk in Miss Thursby's drawing room. She lived at 34 Gramercy Park East. Gramercy Park was the first planned residential development on Manhattan, begun in the 1830s. It resembles the green squares of London where elegant terraced houses surround a small park bound by a wrought iron fence. Gramercy Park is Manhattan's only private, gated park. The neighborhood has long been popular with actors and performers. No. 34 still stands at the corner of East 20th Street and Gramercy Park East, and its distinctive facade remains original. Built in 1883, it was New York's first co-op apartment house with its own Otis elevator. The original elevator, the one that Swamiji would have used, was replaced in 1995.

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle featured Miss Thursby and her most famous student, Geraldine Farrar, in an article on 27 July 1924. It described her concert career, her voice, and the cultured life in her Gramercy Park salon:

In her home in Gramercy Park, one of the few remaining spots in Manhattan that retain the charm of old New York, Miss Thursby holds a salon, which is said to represent more truly than any other in the whole country the salon of the Beau Monde, Paris. In a spacious, low-ceilinged drawing room that is filled with art treasures, souvenirs, gifts from all over the world, Miss Thursby and her sister, Miss Ina Thursby, receive on Fridays in January. At one end of this big room hangs a life size portrait of Miss Thursby by George P. A. Healy, an American painter who received important recognition in Paris. At these at homes one meets a cosmopolitan company, among whom are stars of the opera and the theater, authors, painters, sculptors, scholars, diplomats, statesmen, social leaders and persons of distinction in different activities from all over the world...

Also among the guests from the Far East were Tagore, Das Gupta, Suami Viva Kananda[sic], the Begum of Janpira and her sister, the Princess, who are thoroughly familiar with Hindu music, in which Miss Thursby also takes a keen interest. One of her most diverting experiences, musically, was in teaching Viva Kananda to sing the songs of Grieg with the quality of voice in which he recites his Sanscrit[sic] chants, which, she says, is rarely beautiful.⁴

Lillian Edgerton, the journalist who interviewed Miss Thursby, wrote of Swamiji in the present tense, as if he were still alive in 1924. It is quite possible that Miss



Vedanta Society of St. Louis

Thursby gave her that impression, and it indicates that Swamiji remained a living presence in her life.

Emma Thursby and Sara Bull were bonded not only as friends but also as artists. They were like musical sisters. In the early 1870s Miss Thursby and Norwegian violinist Ole Bull had performed in concerts together. Ole's young wife, Sara, would have accompanied them on the piano, perhaps not on the stage, but certainly they spent many hours making music together in rehearsal and at home. Swamiji was frequently a guest at Sara Bull's home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In that pre-electronic era the piano played a fundamental role in middle-class homes. It was as important as the hearth. Although Swamiji sometimes complained of "thumping" on the piano when he stayed with people who merely played pop songs, the music that filled the homes of Mrs. Bull and Miss Thursby was artistry of the highest order.

It is fascinating to contemplate the musical exchange between Swamiji and Miss Thursby. He taught her the theory of Indian music, and she taught Swamiji to sing some songs by the Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg. Ole Bull had mentored Grieg when he was a teenager. After Ole's death, Sara Bull kept in touch with his Norwegian compatriots and fellow artists. By 1895 Grieg had established a high reputation as Norway's leading composer. His style was Romantic and



Nationalistic—probably a very good musical choice for Swamiji. There is no mention of which songs Swamiji may have practiced, but the dignified, meditative "En Svane" is a good example to listen to. Swamiji's voice, according to written descriptions, was rich and deep—probably in the baritone range.

It stands to reason that Swamiji visited 34 Gramercy Park East many times. And during his visits there he must have met Mynah because "Mynah ruled the household."⁵

Mynah was a remarkable bird and personality. "He spoke grammatically and often with disconcerting fluency in five languages: English, French, German, Malay and Chinese."⁶ He could sing songs, mimic the banjo, and play melodies on the piano by stepping on the keys. "This Mina (sic) was loquacious, weirdly knowing, vain and snobbish."⁷ Mynah had his own room and was treated more like a child than a pet. Swamiji especially liked animals, and I can imagine him



Library of Congress

conversing with Mynah like he was an old friend. Thursby had adopted him in Ems, Germany about 1887. The German ambassador to China, who had acquired the bird in India, gave him to Miss Thursby and instructed the bird to stay with her.⁸ Henceforth, Mynah called Miss Thursby "Mamma."

Mynah travelled wherever Miss Thursby went. She would let him fly free when they went to places like Green Acre, Maine. Sarah J. Farmer was very fond of Mynah, and she wrote a letter praising the bird.⁹ It is possible that Swamiji first met Mynah at Green Acre in 1894, as did Swami Abhedananda in 1898. Mynah was surely welcome at Sara Bull's houses

at Green Acre and in Cambridge. Mynah loved to play in Gramercy Park. He would watch the children from the window and would beg, "Mamma, mamma, I want to get out! I'll come right back." This, however, Miss Thursby seldom allowed because Mynah had once been stolen from Gramercy Park, and she had had a terrible time getting him back.

An article in the Washington D.C. Evening Times stated that both Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda admired Mynah.

“It is a marvel,” said they; “a fit bird to perch upon the sacred finger of Lal Rao. Peace be unto it.”¹⁰

While it is good to have confirmation in print that Swamiji appreciated Mynah, it is bizarre to think of him reverencing a deity called Lal Rao. Either the journalist misunderstood whatever he was told or clearly fabricated this “sacred finger of Lal Rao” business. Who was Lal Rao? In the 1890s the only Lal Rao known to Americans was a fictional character, the Indian butler in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s second Sherlock Holmes mystery, *The Sign of the Four*. Although this journalist got his facts scrambled, I think it can be assumed that on separate occasions Swamiji and Swami Abhedananda said nice things about Mynah.

On 1 December 1898 Mynah made a celebrity appearance at the New York Ornithological Society show, delighting the crowds. Later, at home, he gave his last interview to a journalist from the New York Herald who declared him the “Smartest Bird in the World.”¹¹ On 30 December, he entertained a group of underprivileged children.¹² Shortly after that, Mynah, who was about fifteen years old, became ill and died 27 January 1899, pitifully crying in French “au revoir.”

Mynah’s strange existence soon got even stranger. Postmortem, the bird was autopsied by three physicians—

none of whom were veterinarians or ornithologists. They determined that Mynah died of spinal meningitis and that his brain and vocal chords were unusually large. Then Mynah was stuffed by a taxidermist and he was exhibited under a bell jar in Miss Thursby’s apartment. In time, she apparently relinquished her attachment to Mynah’s feathered form. When she was interviewed in 1924, she said that Mynah was buried under a willow tree in Gramercy Park.¹³

The story of Mynah’s death was reported in newspapers all over the country. It gained a lot of attention in Hawaii. South Asian mynahs were introduced to Hawaii in 1865 to control an infestation of army worms. This worked as a temporary measure, but as the birds thrived, the environmental balance was upset—as often happens with the introduction of non-native species. By 1899 Hawaiians were agitated because mynahs were accused of spreading another invasive species, lantana, by eating and excreting its fruit. The mynahs of Hawaii were common mynahs (*Acridotherestrictistristis*). It is believed that Miss Thursby’s Mynah was a hill mynah (*Gracula religiosa*), a bird that is currently endangered in Meghalaya, India.¹⁴

Problems of conserving wildlife now confront every country on the planet. In Swamiji’s day, bird populations in America were being decimated to provide feathers for the fashion industry. During the mid-1890s ladies hats were often decorated with entire birds. Such ostentatious display was everywhere that Swamiji went. Even Mynah must have noticed it. Especially hard hit by this greedy



slaughter for feathers were the Florida snowy egrets, members of the same family of birds that inspired Ramakrishna’s first samadhi as a boy. Little Gadadhar went into ecstasy when he saw a flock of beautiful shadabak flying freely against dark rain clouds. So much depends upon the beauty of birds!

In February 1896 two Boston women organized the Massachusetts Audubon Society to stop the killing of egrets for hat decoration.¹⁵ (One of the Vice-presidents was Mrs. Louis Agassiz who had helped arrange Swamiji’s lecture at Radcliffe College.) Protective laws such as the Lacey Act of 1900 began to change the exploitative mindset of the culture. The sale of wild bird plumes was outlawed in 1910. Eventually, women—aided by the apocalypse of World War I—ended the fashion for feathered hats.

Worldwide, the hill mynah is not considered threatened, but locally there is cause for concern. They are “virtually extinct in Bangladesh due to habitat destruction and overexploitation for the pet trade.”¹⁶ This scarcity has now spread to north-eastern India. Hill mynahs live and breed in the upper forest canopy. They are very difficult

to breed in captivity. If hill mynahs were easily bred in captivity, then there would be no incentive to capture them from the wild. Therefore current suppliers to the pet trade need to abide by sustainable practices or there will be no future for them.

The extinction of the passenger pigeon is a cautionary tale. Native to North America, it was once the most abundant bird population in the world. The birds traveled in flocks so large that they blotted out the sun when they flew overhead. People killed them by the thousands—partly to eat, but mostly just for “sport”. They did not believe that such a plentiful creature could disappear from the earth. Yet a population counted in the hundreds of millions in 1871 had shrunk to just dozens by 1895. The last passenger pigeon died in 1914. When Swamiji was at the World’s Fair in Chicago, Americans shocked by their own wastefulness were trying to explain to themselves the near extinction of the buffalo.

Miss Thursby’s pet Mynah was beloved, but in one important respect he had a lonely existence. Mynah never had any relationship with his own kind, and that is the fate of most birds sold into the pet trade.

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Culture and Social Values

The underlying fundamental challenge facing every society is to create political, economic and social situations and systems that promote peace, human welfare and the sustainability of environment upon which life depends. To even begin to understand and meet this challenge is to acknowledge that achieving the above is a task beset with problems and the only realistic way to engage with them is to work on issues and in spaces where these problems are located. It has been the human experience that the preeminent approach to social problems is to help build common understanding, enable people to improve their lives and reinforce their commitment to society, enhance excellence, and to assure committed participation by men and women from diverse communities and at all levels of society. Culture should be appreciated and used as a very important means of finding promising approaches to modern problems and to usher in new intellectual agendas. As individuals who rejoice in the benign influences of culture, we need to define and employ public values related to fairness and tolerance, respect for knowledge and pluralism, upholding and protecting rights including language rights, freedom of expression and sexual preference. Culture is about participatory decision making, and broad access to asset creation and dependable livelihoods.



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Desmond L. Kharmawphlang

Education, the arts, religion, culture and more recently, media play vital roles in the life and vitality of communities and nations. All of these domains help us understand who we are, what we know, what we can imagine and how we function as diverse groups and as individuals trying to make sense of our place in a rapidly changing world. They help us express what it means to be human, and they provide commentary and a critique on human events. They also illuminate differences and similarities, and can serve as forces for positive social change by promoting democratic values, human achievement, pluralism and respect for diversity. Concerns about poverty and equity are also growing in the environmental field. Many groups have recognized that the protection of natural resources must take into account economic activity — hence the over-used phrase ‘sustainable development’. Environmentally sensitive economic development often ignores the concerns of poor communities. In response, some of the most innovative thinkers about these problems have begun to place concerns about poverty at the center of environmental strategies.

History

The antiquity and all-pervasive nature of the market-driven economy in human history can perhaps best be demonstrated by the fact that the Inca Empire, in pre-Columbian America, may be the only advanced civilization in history to have no class of traders, and no commerce of any kind within its boundaries. Rich in foodstuff, textiles, gold, and cocoa, the Incas were masters of city building but nevertheless had no money and thus they remained until the decline of this great empire was brought about at the hands of the Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth century.¹

Therefore, the change in the nature of the world’s economies has been at the heart of many of the ebb and flow of civilizations. Subsequently, the idea that the market economy may have

a detrimental effect on moral values has long been debated in the social sciences, ethics, and philosophy, although there has not always been a consensus as to the exact scale of this effect. This can be seen in sharp relief when we look back on how a fundamental disagreement on some aspect of the market economy has resulted in some of the most significant historical upheavals within modern societies. For example, the abolishment of trading human beings was a major issue in the American Civil War. Martin Luther’s critique of the trade of indulgences, in which buyers and sellers exchanged money for the freedom from God’s punishment for sin, was a key element of the Protestant Reformation. Karl Marx’s idea that capital stock should not be tradable, that it must belong to the workers themselves, is a cornerstone of communist ideology.²

Culture and Sustainability

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted 17 goals as part of its “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. UNESCO affirmed that one of these core goals was to “ensure that the role of culture is recognized through a majority of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those focusing on quality education, sustainable cities, the environment, economic growth, sustainable consumption and production patterns, peaceful and

inclusive societies, gender equality and food security.^{3”}

In light of this statement, we shall briefly delve into the role of culture, as both an enabler, and a driver of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It is a pervasive feature of market interaction to impose costs on uninvolved third parties. Producing and trading goods often creates negative externalities, such as detrimental working conditions for workers, possibly associated with reduced life expectancy, child labor, suffering of animals, or environmental damage. People who participate in markets by buying such goods often seem to act against their own moral standards. The risk of moral decay through market interaction has been discussed in politics, ethics, and in the social sciences.

Many people express objections against child labor, other forms of exploitation of the workforce, detrimental conditions for animals in meat production, or environmental damage. At the same time, they seem to ignore their moral standards when acting as market participants, searching and buying the cheapest electronics, fashion, or food, and thereby consciously or subconsciously creating the undesired negative consequences to which they generally object.



Until recently, economists have been reluctant to rely on culture as a possible determinant of economic phenomena. Much of this reluctance stems from the very notion of culture: it is so broad and the channels through which it can enter the economic discourse so ubiquitous (and vague) that it is difficult to design testable (i.e., refutable) hypotheses. Without testable hypotheses, however, there is no role for culture in economics except perhaps as a selection mechanism among multiple equilibria. In recent years, however, better techniques and more data have made it possible to identify systematic differences in people’s preferences and beliefs and to relate them to various measures of cultural legacy. These developments suggest an approach to introduce cultural-based explanations that can be tested and are able to substantially enrich our understanding of economic phenomena.

Through the socialization process, by which it is maintained and transmitted, culture affects individual’s values. We distinguish between values that influence economic preferences (such as fertility or labor participation preferences) - which can be thought of as parameters of a person’s utility function - and political preferences (such as preferences for fiscal redistribution). Culture, thus, can affect economic outcomes through both these channels.⁴

Folklore in the Formation of Khasi Ethics

Ethics plays an important role in the life and history of every people. It shapes their minds and hearts and ensures the continuity of a civilization. Man is a moral being and therefore he is governed by moral laws in his personal and social life. Because he is also a relational being, he is also guided in his relationship with others by these rules of ethics. Ethics makes social life possible and gives integrity to a person in his or her personal life. Barnes Mawrie, in his book *Introduction to Khasi Ethics* makes the case for the Khasis as being a group of people in possession of a very sound system of ethics.

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According to him, they are governed by a great sense of justice and righteousness. The Khasis believe that it was in the Second Divine Assembly Durbar-Blei Baar) that God assigned to them the moral code of conduct. Khasi Ethics has been preserved through oral tradition in the form of narratives which have passed on from one generation to the next. Therefore, we can see the tremendous power and relevance, and the subsequent influence of Narrative in Khasi Ethics.⁵

Other authors including Hamlet Bareh⁶ and Soumen Sen have also argued for the central role that folklore plays in shaping the ethics — and by extension — the culture of the Khasi-Jaintia people and how the same continues to serve as a commentary on the configuration and direction of the changes in their society, even in modern times, despite the influx of an ever- increasing array of other cultural forces.

Conclusion

Values — judgments about what is right and important in life — help steer our lives and institutions. Without explicit attention to values, we may run the risk of relying on notions and systems that have become fossilized and consequently fail to appeal and motivate people. Values serve as anchors in a rapidly changing world and that mobilize people around such problems as poverty, injustice, lack of education, intolerance and all kinds of authoritarianism including curtailment of freedom. No single set of values from the past is likely to serve us well in all circumstances but, at the same time, we should not assume that tradition has little to contribute to the solving of today’s problems. We must find fresh combinations of old and new. And we should recognize the challenge the all-too-common notion that modernization necessarily brings secularization.

Aspects of Orality
in Literatures from North-East India

Dr Esther Syiem

I begin by specifying the area that comes under the purview of this article, which is, what may be termed as, literature transcribed from the oral. I go back to referencing from my own Khasi literature, therefore, and quote from one of my essays in which R.S. Lyngdoh the famous Khasi historian in his book *Ka Histori ka Thoh ka Tar Bynta I & II* (1979 &1983)(A History of Writing, Part I&II) talks about the oral beginnings of Khasi Literature. I quote thus:

Chapter One sets in motion the foundational discourse of Khasi thought as it begins its language making process in collusion with nature in the symbolic take from a “leaf”, from which draws breath – the unblemished word: “*Kane ka jingmaia jong ka rukom lum jingstad u Khasi ka long kaba da phylla shisha. Ha iwei-pa-iwei i syntiew, ne i dieng i siej, ne i phlang i kynbat, u Khasi u la pynkhamti ba kan long ki nongkynshew ia ki jingstad barim bajah baroh.*” (The mystiques of knowledge accumulation for the Khasi is truly incredible. In every flower, every tree, bush or bamboo leaf, grass or herb does the Khasi perceive an accumulated wealth of knowledge that is the storehouse of wisdom from time past). [Writer’s own translation]

Having established this, R.S.Lyngdoh moves on to the mystiques of hill and valley, river and mountain, tree and animal that relinquish themselves to the semiotics of the oral. (p 14). As he chalks out the history of Khasi written literature, he indicates the existence of this vast store of oral resource that existed prior to the written. And it is at this early point in Khasi literary history, at this juncture of the imagination as it were, that I would like all of us to pause for a while to understand the germ of the oral that forms the core of much of the written literature in many hill communities of North-East India (I am differentiating them from communities like the Assamese and the Meiteis which already had a rich history of writing). From Mizoram comes the story of Pi Hmuaki the “first known composer,” singer of songs, tragically buried alive by a chief and his village elders “for fear she would finish composing all the songs and leave nothing for posterity.” Seven days after she was buried alive, her

singing accompanied by her gong could still be heard before it was finally “stilled.” (Misra 207). It is in the Mizo songs and chants and oral narratives that she lives on unhindered in spirit, vocal in voice. In Nagaland near the village of Chungliyimti comes the story of the six stones of Lungterok from which the clan lineage of the Aos may be traced. Temsula Ao’s stone-people “Were Born/Out of the womb/ Of the earth.” These are the stones that signify upon a reality compounded by nature and its natural ally, the human imagination with its uncanny sense of the “Savage and sage”. (Book of Songs 109 & 111) Elsewhere in these communities, the narratives are birthed in figures and characters that form the symbolic parameters that unequivocally strap the present onto an unwritten past. In Meghalaya, the lore of the land rings out with the stories that permeate the interstices of a society that is now governed by technology yet paradoxically, charged by the proverbs and maxims that originated around the hearth in the aura of traditional fireplaces. This aura though severely eroded continues to fire lives



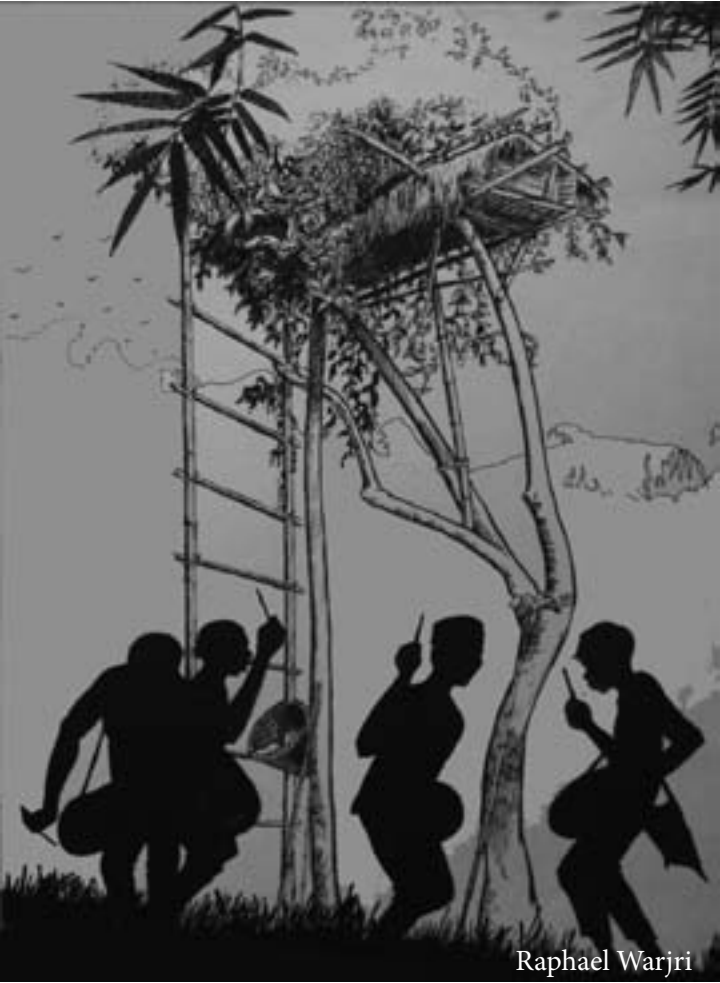
Raphael Warjri

and emotions: many still are governed by its ethics. Take for example a tale that I have always used as a guiding post: the ‘Tale of the Lost Script.’ This tale is common to the Khasis, Garos, Nagas, and Mizos amongst other communities. There are variants to the tale in all these communities. The Nagas tell about the script that God handed over to them on an animal skin. When they hung it out to dry a dog came and ate it up. Thus was their script lost to them. The other communities have similar versions; except for the one told by the Khasi, about the messenger who inadvertently swallowed his script, as he struggled to cross a flooded river. He had put his into his mouth whilst trying to swim across a swollen river. The “wily” plains-man, however, had his securely knotted up within his ponytail, which is the reason why people from the plains have been able to retain the script that they received from God.

The contentious point as folk-history points out lies in the act of swallowing; which ironically, becomes an important factor: that of empowerment, other than disempowerment. Having ingested the script the Khasi messenger must seek to justify his own action. This, his descendants have quickly been able to do by pursuing a discourse that has emphatically privileged the spoken over the written. Bevan Swer the Khasi poet and thinker, speaks about this at length in his book *Ka Matïong ki Khanatang* (1968). He examines the oral lore as being potent with latent meanings for the now “literate,” meaning writing Khasi, who has benefited from Western education and learnt to transcribe words into script. The benefits of being conversant with the oral resource seemed to have fired the writings of people during the Khasi Renaissance. The oral finally seemed to have found home within a new medium. What had happened within the Khasi community was something that had also happened to all the other hill communities as they were brought face up with the fact of their so-called ignorance in light of the Western civilizer. All of them were in a hurry to get to the point where the writing communities had reached, which for the oral communities all over North-East India meant the algebra of reading and writing.

Easterine Kire’s novel *When the River Sleeps* (2014) encapsulates the narrativising potential of the oral retrieved by memory and imagination. She goes back in time to recast a narrative from days gone by, about the quest for the “heart-stone” as told by village elder or matriarch. In permitting the narrative to enter a new medium, that of the written, she enables it to take

on formations that on one hand traps it within the formulated structure of the flat pages of a book and on the other, retrieves it through memory and protects it from loss. Either way, the re-telling becomes an act of commission that will attempt to stay the omissions of memory; a conscious act of the imagination, an act of political will that reiterates that a river does sleep and a man can claim the forest as his wife. She is an important writer for not only does she recast the speaking universe within the confines of the written but also takes up the challenge to re-invoke dimensions of erased oralities that are intertwined with erased histories; joining the historiographical efforts made on the part of other indigenous and women writers today. Reading some of the reviews on the *When the River Sleeps*, one is slightly taken aback by the polarising responses of readers from outside the region; some suggesting improvements to the book, some glossing over it, tossing off flattering observations and some actually likening it to a fairy tale. And fairy tale it will be if the mystiques of nature as represented in the book remains unperceived by the reader. This is the reason why I have called Easterine Kire’s novel seminal to our understanding of what constitutes the oral aspects of



writings from North-East India, for it sets the gauge for the kind of aesthetics that a writer from this region can and has come up with. By definition, it may be seen as a novel for it has all the ingredients of one, but if it is to be stamped by the legalities and legitimisations of literary criticism, then literary criticism must expand its boundaries of thought or revise categories and sub-categories to incorporate the oralities that are constantly being transcribed or alternatively resisting transcription so as to open up other avenues of exploration. To this observation I add another, that it is not only writers from North-East India but indigenous writers from across the world that are grappling with their own specific oralities:

indigenous formulations that have never fallen under the purview of the written [interweaving] the physical world with the spirit world in a mode that western schools may categorise as magic-realism. But the question is: can they be labelled thus? – valid issues from North-East India which clearly demands that the accepted parameters of traditional literary history [and literary theory as well] can no longer remain untested. (Margins p.139)

Keeping this in mind I refer to an essay, “Head-Hunting: Some Thoughts” taken from *On Being a Naga Essays* by Temsula Ao. (2014) She re-visits a cultural site that was declared forbidden by the powers that be. She enters it with the expectation of a retrieval that begins with an important take from the past, that the head is an inviolate part of one’s self. She cites the example of the Konyak tribe who collected the heads of their dead by “putting them into individual pots and burying them”. The practice of headhunting had social sanction and the “rightness or wrongness” did not enter the minds of the ones practising it until such interventions came that questioned the very foundations of their society. She reminds us that this was a practice that had more to do with “peace-time activities.” tribal honour and

(Based on a lecture delivered at Cotton University, Guwahati)
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the generation of specific discourses and rituals that interpenetrated the lived life, making it distinguishable from other communities. The discourse surrounding head-hunting became an important attribute of a society that lauded its warriors for bringing heads back. Young women favoured these warriors over and above all the others, and in time sheaves of songs and sayings accumulated around this institution.

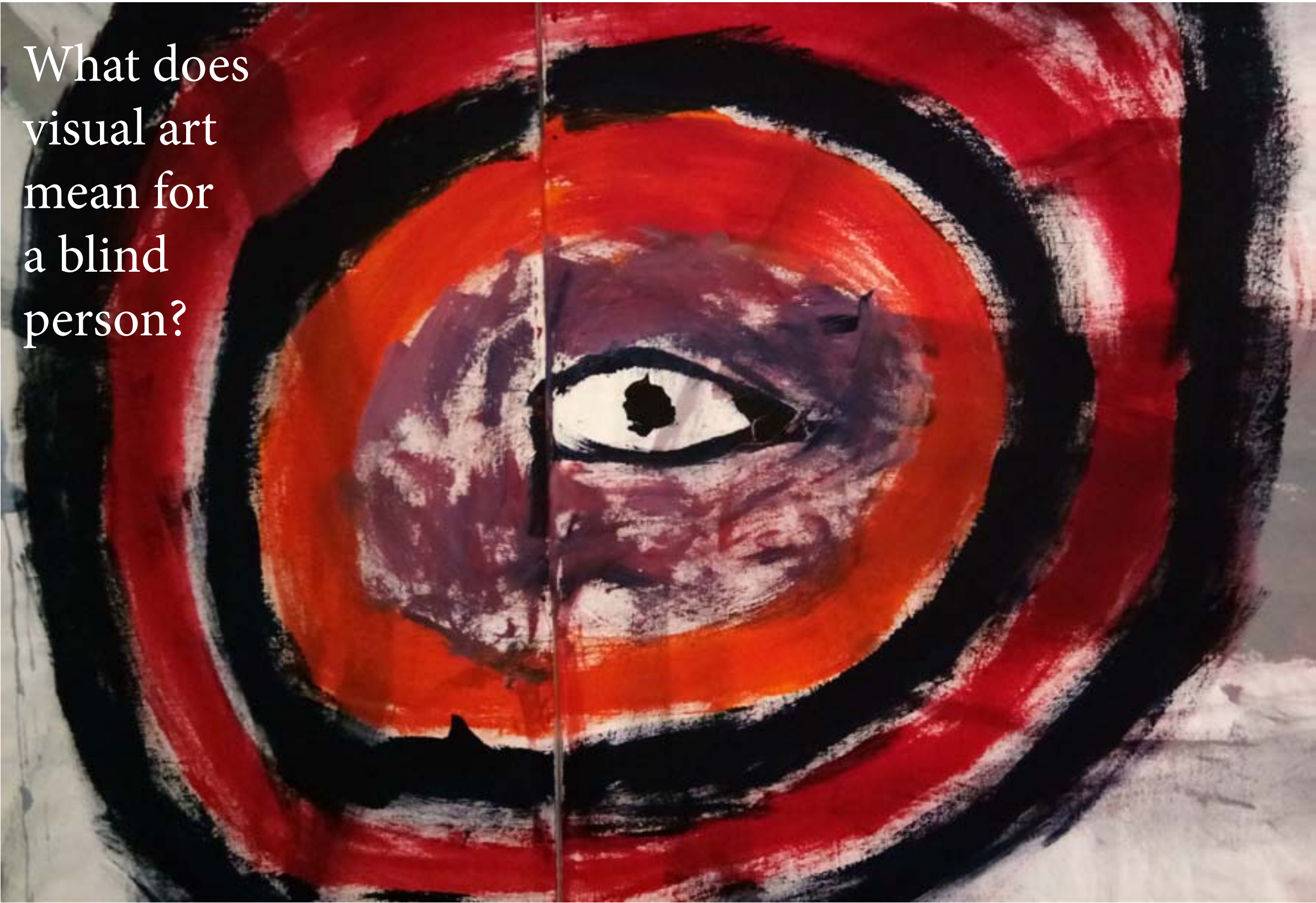
These interruptions and assumptions of history that Temsula Ao interrogates lift the veil that had hitherto shrouded it in criminality. And as she does this, she is also throwing up questions and queries pertaining to other narratives that refuse to allow themselves to be hardened within time-slots and bounded-spaces even though they have been overlaid by an overweening present that tries very hard to discard them as being unintelligible because they are unrecognisable. In doing so she elicits empathetic voices from others who are also intent upon finding a home-grown aesthetic that would inclusively filter stories and songs, art forms and rituals in a space free from the encumbrances of prescriptive literary proscriptions.

And so it is within the pensam-space of Mamang Dai categorically explained in *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) that these find fruition within a circle of people, alive and knowledgeable, living in what was then considered to be the “excluded” or “semi-excluded” hill tracts of what is now called North-East India, but which have an entity separate and well-defined, coded in orality:

In our language, the language of the Adis, the word ‘pensam’ means ‘in-between’...it may also be interpreted as the hidden spaces of the heart where anything can happen and everything can be lived; where the narrow boat that we call life sails along somehow in calm or stormy weather; where the life of a man can be measured in the span of a song.

(to be continued)

What does
visual art
mean for
a blind
person?



From a workshop - “Blind Spot” - organized by Reiko Shimuzu, a Japanese artist and a devotee of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, as a part of a year long “5 Million Incidents’ projects at Goethe Institut/Max-Muller Bhavan, Kolkata. This project started with the necessity of organizing art classes for the Blind Boys Academy, Ramakrishna Mission,

Narendrapur. The idea generated from the question - “What does visual art mean for a blind person?” which gave rise to creating a space for blind boys and others to explore a creative process together. The project was about openly experiencing a creative process together with the visually impaired and visually unimpaired people.

THE SUPERMOON



On the way back from the brink of Nohkalikai falls on Sunday 3rd December, 2017 the sun was about to set and before reaching Khliehshnong, Sohra, the skyline bade farewell to mother sun, when suddenly we were awestruck by the huge celestial wonder, the Big Full Moon. Till that moment, we were never aware of the phenomenon of a big moon and casually got excited with the visual treat. It was around 5 O'clock in the evening that we clicked a few pictures until nightfall. As soon as I reached home I downloaded the pictures and posted on Facebook, when comments started pouring in as I was about to finish the caption. We received some information and for the first time came to know about the particular instance of the moon being nearer to the earth. The full Moon is a supermoon coined in 1979 by Astrologer Richard Nolle, as he refers to either a new or full Moon that occurs within 90% of perigee, its closest approach to Earth in a given orbit. There was prediction that this year the supermoon will appear on 7th April, 2020, but it was disheartened that the full Moon was normal, even on the subsequent days as it waned. Nevertheless, it was informed that there will be more occurrences in the subsequent months and for that we are anxiously waiting. In the Khasi mythology, the Moon is the only male element among the five primary elements of the creation myth. The other four female elements are the Sun, Air, Water and Fire, which serve as the sources of energy for every life on earth. Interestingly, the myth is one of the principles of the Khasi matrilineal system. The other cultures of the world did not recognise the Moon as an element with a primary source of energy, but in Khasi culture Moon is of vital importance for all beings on earth pertaining to their relations with nature.

The workshop sought to provide creative answers to questions like ‘How is it like to not have a visual sense in this visually overloading world that we live in now? What is the visual sense doing to us as individuals? Or as a society? And how about other senses?’

CHIAROSCURO



Dream offering {far left} by Benedict S Hynñiewta is the manifestation of the mother as the custodian of an inclusive matrilineal family and her fecundity for the sustenance of mankind. Sigmund Freud puts it “The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.” The Khasi folk archery is the pastime for social amusement, even as the serious involvement of the archer in his bid against the intruder as narrated through the tale of lamentation about ‘U Sier Lapalang’ reflected through the artwork by Skhemlang Hynñiewta ‘On Target’ {above}. Although in the contemporary situation a dream in the urban folklore would predict the number for betting in the game of archery for fortune hunters. Fortune and destiny is something that an angler never dreamt of, but Harata caught a fish of fortune that became the Royal Mermaid {left}, the ancestral mother of the Sutnga royal clan emerged through another artwork by Skhemlang Hynñiewta. Riti Academy hosted a colloquium on Dream, Folklore and Art for folklorists, cultural exponents, scholars of humanities, shamans, artists and any mindful practitioners of transcendental folk knowledge, with more deliberations in the offing.

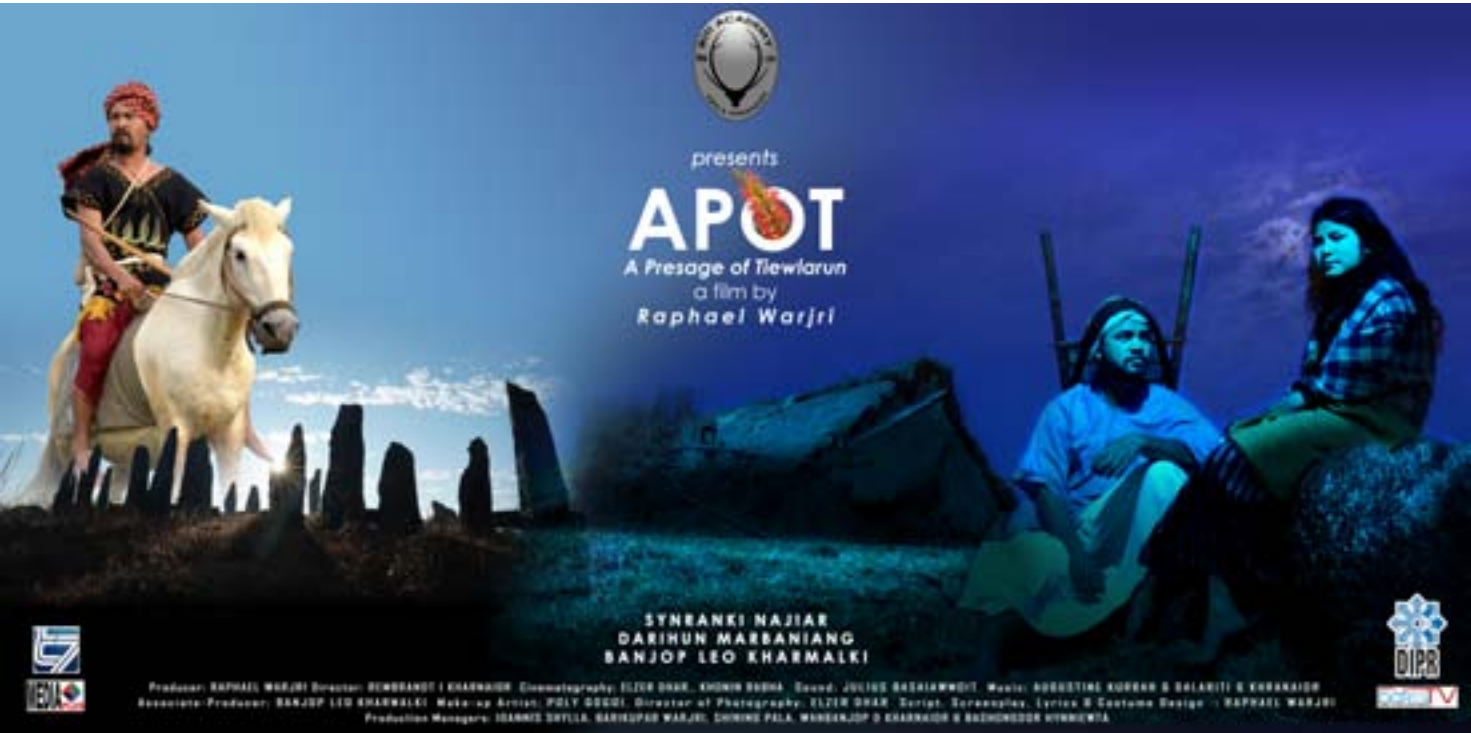
COVID 19 Stormed Meghalayan Age Festival



Painting by Denis Marbaniang

In the geologic time scale, the Meghalayan is the latest age or uppermost stage of the Quarternary. It is also the upper, or latest, of three subdivisions of the Holocene epoch or series. Its Global Boundary Stratotype Section and Point (GSSP) is a Krem Mawmluh Cave formation in Meghalaya, Northeast India. The most recent age in Earth's 4.54 billion year history began 4,200 years ago and has officially been designated the Meghalayan Age, after the Indian state of Meghalaya. Earth's recorded history is divided into eon, era, period, epoch and age, with the age being the smallest unit of geologic time. Meghalaya is now part of geologic history thanks to a stalagmite found in the Mawmluh cave in the state. Located at an elevation of 1290 meters, Mawmluh cave is one of the longest and deepest cave in India, and conditions here were suitable for preserving chemical signs of the transition in ages that an analysis of the stalagmite has now highlighted. The demarcation is significant for multiple reasons. It is the first formal geological subdivision of the Holocene epoch that began 11,600 years ago and extends to the present, into three ages Greenlandian, Northgrippian and Meghalayan.

Cherishing the millennial legacy, the Meghalaya Tourism Department invested crore of rupees for the extravaganza 'Meghalayan Age Festival' from 7 to 15 March, 2020, which was disrupted with the sudden outbreak of corona virus (COVID-19), the disease that has devastated the entire globe. The festival witnessed a spectacular travellers' logistics, and lavish fiesta for a large contingent of foreign glitterati, while an exposition of folk and contemporary art expression was put up adjacent to the well protected luxurious fortress, even as COVID 19 has been more familiar with the European guests. The Exposition displayed contemporary and cultural artworks, handloom weaving garments, folk ornament curios and other folk cuisines and beverages by Daisy G Momin, Iba Malai of Kiniho and Raphael Warjri of Riti Academy. The geological memory is nothing short of a relevant mortal human reminiscent of the potential hotspot for natural resources and aesthetics, which ironically were destroyed by a wide stretch of economic exploitation through electrical power generation and cement factories. The nostalgia of the cascading Iale waterfalls and the Leshka hot spring was already submerged into oblivion, while the visual replica was executed by a young artist, Denis Marbaniang at an Art Camp conducted as part of the celebration of the Meghalayan Age.



A MEMIOR OF ARCHBISHOP REV DOMINIC JALA, SDB

Most Rev Dominic Jala, Archbishop of Shillong Archdiocese and Fr Mathew Vellankal passed away in a fatal road accident on 10 October, 2019 when the car they were travelling crashed with the truck at Colusa County, Oakland, California, USA, while Fr Joseph Pareckatt survived with serious injury. Rev Jala was the Chairman Catholic Conference of Bishops in India Commission for Liturgy from 2015 and the member Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments from 2012 to 2019 September, besides some vital religious responsibilities in the local, national and international congregations of the Catholic Church. Rev Jala was born on 12 July 1951, he professed liturgical devotion on 24 May 1969, and ordained a priest on 19 November 1977. After serving the church in various capacities including the Provincial of the Salesian of Don Bosco, Guwahati before his episcopal ordination on 2 April, 2000, even as he was appointed the Archbishop of Shillong Archdiocese on December, 1999.

At the peak of militancy in Meghalaya, Rev Dominic Jala played a pivotal role in the Khasi Jaintia Church Leaders' Forum and was instrumental in pacifying with the rebel cadres on certain occasions. Although as an apex church leader in the region, he was known for his secular outlook, humility, versatile scholarship and intellectual acumen. Among the trivial but significant religious traditions, he was remembered by every faithful for the synergy between the ordinary faithful, laity and clergy in various religious issues. Till the other day, it has always been a conventional practice among the Catholic faithful to pay homage to the bishop with a kiss on his pontifical ring, but it ceased to continue during the tenure of Rev Dominic Jala. He was also a connoisseur of fine arts when he related the famous sculpture of Michael Angelo, the Pieta with the matrilineal custom of the Khasi people.



Teisuklang Chyne

Rev Jala indicated that the sacrifice and passion of Christ for mankind found solace in the compassion of his mother, Mary. Many astounding and thought provoking deliberations on wide range of topics were elucidated in simple oral narrative and that was the forte of his genius. Rev Archbishop Jala had visited the Vivekananda Cultural Centre on 21 December 2016 where he was enthused by the 'fruit of dedicated service by RKM.' He will be remembered for his ever pleasant smile and affectionate gesture to every person he met on the way.

COVID-19 Relief by Ramakrishna Mission in Meghalaya

The Shillong centre distributed 10165 kg rice, 10165 kg potatoes and 1727 face masks among 2033 families in and around Shillong City and in remote villages of East Khasi Hills district from 1 to 18 April.



The Sohra centre distributed 3,74,575 kg rice and 74,915 kg dal among 14,983 families at their homes in East Khasi Hills, West Jaintia Hills, South West Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, North Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South West Garo Hills districts in Meghalaya, and Dhubri district in Assam from 26 March to 12 April. The centre distributed 18,018 face masks, essential medicines to 852 patients and is transporting patients from villages to health centres.

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