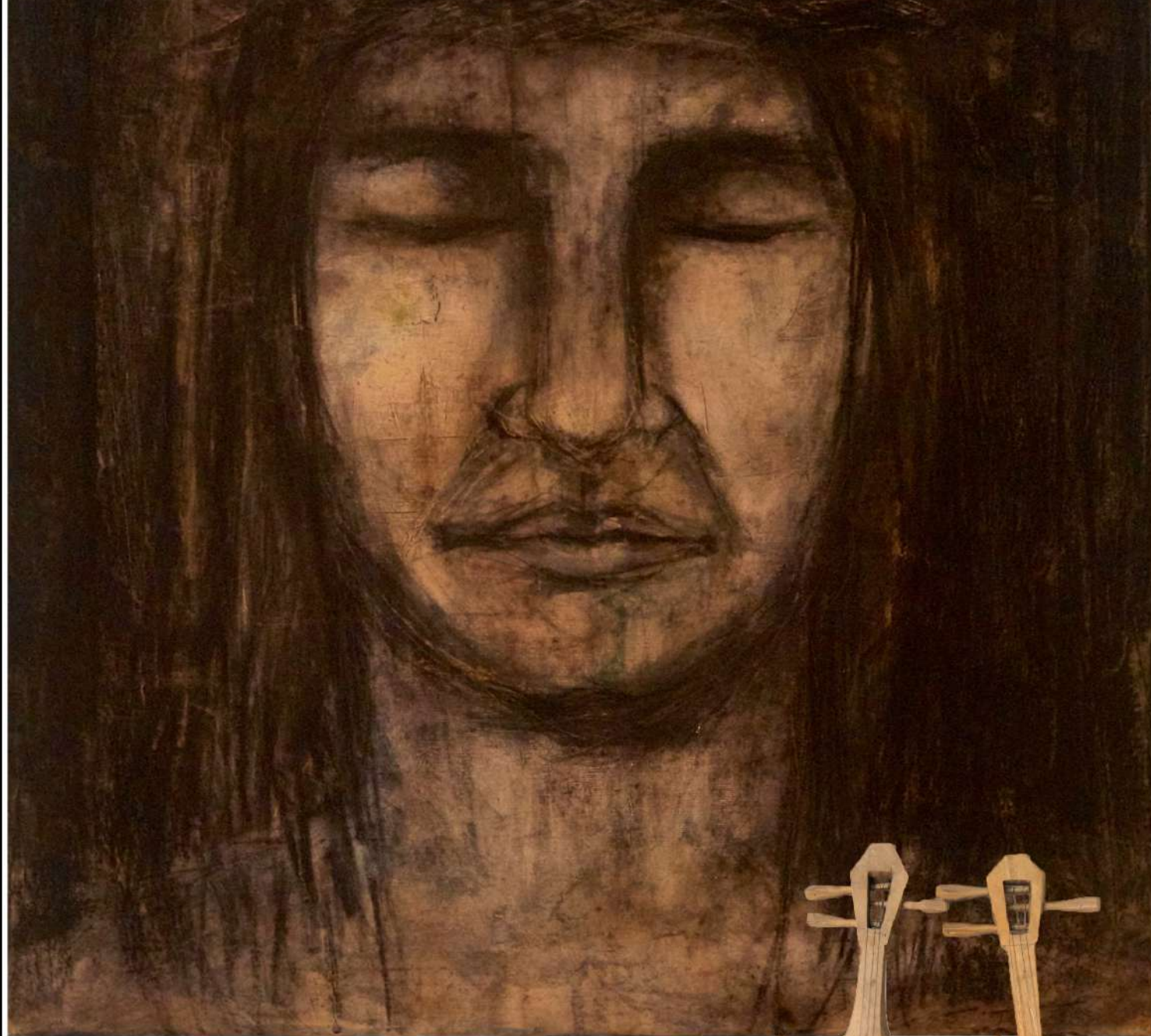




THE LIGHT ज्योति *& Jyotsnai*

Volume- 1 : Issue- 2 AUTUMN 2020



THE LIGHT ज्योति
Ka Jingshai

Volume-1 : Issue -2 AUTUMN 2020



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SHILLONG



THE LIGHT *Ka Jingshai* ज्योति

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"What is spirituality? It is to be engaged in
eternity within."

These words are the inspiration of this work.

This work expresses inner journey towards the
eternity, trying to remember it, struggling to
see it and be in tune with it. Eyes closed, mouth
shut, without ears, senses are withdrawn in total
silence invite viewers to the journey."

Reiko Shimizu



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Bah Sumar Sing Sawian: Veteran journalist and well-known Khasi writer. Recipient of U Tirot Sing Award for Art and Literature. Author of several books including Khanasmari-u khun u hajar ka ri Hynñiewtrep, Golden vine of Ri Hynñiewtrep : the Khasi heritage, Ki khun ki hajar na jingkieng ksiar etc.



Dr Ananya S Guha: Accomplished poet. Has been writing poetry for more than thirty years. Anthologized in several anthologies including the Harper Collins Book of English Poetry. Retired as the head of IGNOU, Shillong. Holds a doctoral degree on the novels of William Golding



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Dr Avadhesh Kumar 'Awadh': Avadhesh Kumar 'Awadh' is a writer and poet living in Chandauli (UP). He is presently an Engineer in Meghalaya and is well known throughout the country with his best works and poems. He is also the editor of magazines like Sahitya Dharohar, Sawan Ke Jhule, Kunj Ninad etc.



Karl Whitmarsh: Karl Whitmarsh has been associated with the Vedanta Society of Southern California (VSSC) since 1970. Until recently, Karl served as President of VSSC's Board of Directors. He and his wife Jamie moved to Ireland in March of this year (2020).



Dr Ibabet Hynñiewta: Presently the faculty of William Carey University, Dr Ibabet Hynñiewta is Doctorate in Geography. She is the present secretary of Seng khasi Shillong



Dr. Streamlet Dkhar: is a Professor of Khasi and is teaching in the Department of Khasi for 34 years; presently she is a Dean, School of Humanities, NEHU, Shillong

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CERTAINLY UNCERTAIN, OR IS IT?

Ka lynti ka kylluid
Ka mon ka laitluid
La me kwah ban long briew
Ne me kwah ban long ksuid

The path is wide, the will is free, whether you wish to be a human, or you wish to be a demon.

Mawphlang, 27 May 2020

They were playing outside their hut, and little Daphi was dangling from her father's arm. It had been pouring for days. The picturesque village of Madan Bitaw was gloomy beyond words, but still, the joy of a father and a daughter filled the atmosphere with an air of lightness. It rained incessantly, and the rumbling of clouds muffled some unmistakable omens. Suddenly they heard a massive thud and turned back to discover that a part of their house, was lying in the gorge below.

Beirut, 4 August 2020

Merged in himself, Zuhair was gliding his fingers through the piano. Initially, he did not notice that the clock was unusually jittery, and the small statue of Buddha on his table came to life with a sudden shudder. As the eerie movements continued for a few more seconds, he fell back on his musical mood and tried hard to ignore them. But soon, he failed not to see the curtains blowing up, and the room strewn with glasses with a bang and a dazzling light, only to be cursed to darkness right after.

If we struggle to go beyond the confines of certainty,

we reach an elusive expectation of regularity. The rhythm of life that we have got used to over the years of going through the ruts, with our repetitive thoughts, actions, and even dreams, gets a jolt when something unusual happens. It happens in imperceptible forms in our daily lives, but seldom does it take the shape of the present crisis humanity has been going through. The pandemic has made us stand in front of the precipice of uncertainty. With everything slipping from our hands, we are clenching our fists against anything floating by. Is it in anger or desperation? We do not know.

Heisenberg tells us that the basis of the universe is uncertainty at the micro-level. But still, even at the cosmological scale, Nature displays perfect regularity. As if it is testifying to an oxymoron! Being the conscious centres of it, we have an immense opportunity to explore the mysteries and to find ways through the mire of incongruence - an incongruence that bewilders us.

Standing in front of the yawning chasm of death we wonder what this inchoate life means. We turn our eyes inwards, and as we go towards the centre of the revolving wheel, we start discovering a peace that permeates all our actions. We open our eyes, wondering how we missed the underlying symphony in a world full of apparent discord and in this flux of events, we learn to hold on to the stream that flows steadily through us.

Tip brien, tip blei. To understand man is to understand the Great Divinity beyond. The One who is beyond the world of sorrow and uncertainty.

LETTERS

Ki sakhi bad jingthoh ba la ai ha ka magazine Ka Jingshai, ki long shisha ki ba sngew tynnad bad ai jingmut iangi, ki jinghikai lyngba ka jingim jong ka Sarada Devi, U Ramkrishna bad Swami Vivekananda kin long ki nuksa bakhraw ki ba lah ban wanrah ia ka mynsiem jing sngew kawei ha baroh ka jaidbynriew. Iaid shaphrang.

Miss Ladianghun Tymmeniang

I am very delighted to learn that the Ramakrishna Mission Shillong has been able to bring out an ezine, "Ka Jingshai The Light" that aims to serve as a cultural bridge between Meghalaya and other parts of the country and reach readers across the globe which will be a source of information, knowledge and wisdom and to highlight the rich culture, custom and heritage of the indigenous inhabitants in this part of the universe.

**Rbh Donkumar Dkhar, President
Seng Khasi Kmie, Shillong**

Khublei shibun ia ka Ramakrishna Mission Shillong, ka ba la lah ban pynmih ia ka ne ka lyngkdop kot (magazine) Ka Jingshai. Kyrmen ba kan ai ka Jingshai ia ki briew jong kane ka thain jongngi baroh kawei lyngba ki skit ba kit jingmut bad ai jinghikai ba la bsut ha kane ka kot. Kan long ka jingmyntoi kaba khraw ym tang ha ri Khasi hynrei ia ka jylla baroh kawei lyngba ki jingshakri ba khraw jong ka Ramakrishna Mission Shillong

Smt Anita Tang, Sohbar

Thank you so much for providing me with a copy of your e-magazine "Ka Jingshai - The Light". reading through the magazine I have come to learn so much more of the Ramakrishna Mission and I am looking forward to associating myself and the Seng Khasi much closer to the Mission.

The Editorial was very interesting. The insight as reflected in the editorial that quote "Religion, stripped off its non-essentials, is universal and is synonymous with spirituality" and "Ka Jingkren U Swami Vivekananda on the 11 tarik Nailur 1893" are so profoundly truthful.

Once again Khublei Shibun.

**P.D.Nongrum, General Secretary
Seng Khasi Kmie, Shillong**

सबसे पहले मैं magazine की पूरी टीम की मैं आभारी हूँ, जिन्होंने हिन्दी में भी article छापे. इसके माध्यम से हमें खासी, english में तो जानकारी मिल पा रही है साथ ही साथ हिन्दी में भी खासी समाज के बारे में सही जानकारी मिली है. उम्मीद करते हैं कि आगे भी हिन्दी के लेख पढ़ने को मिलेंगे.

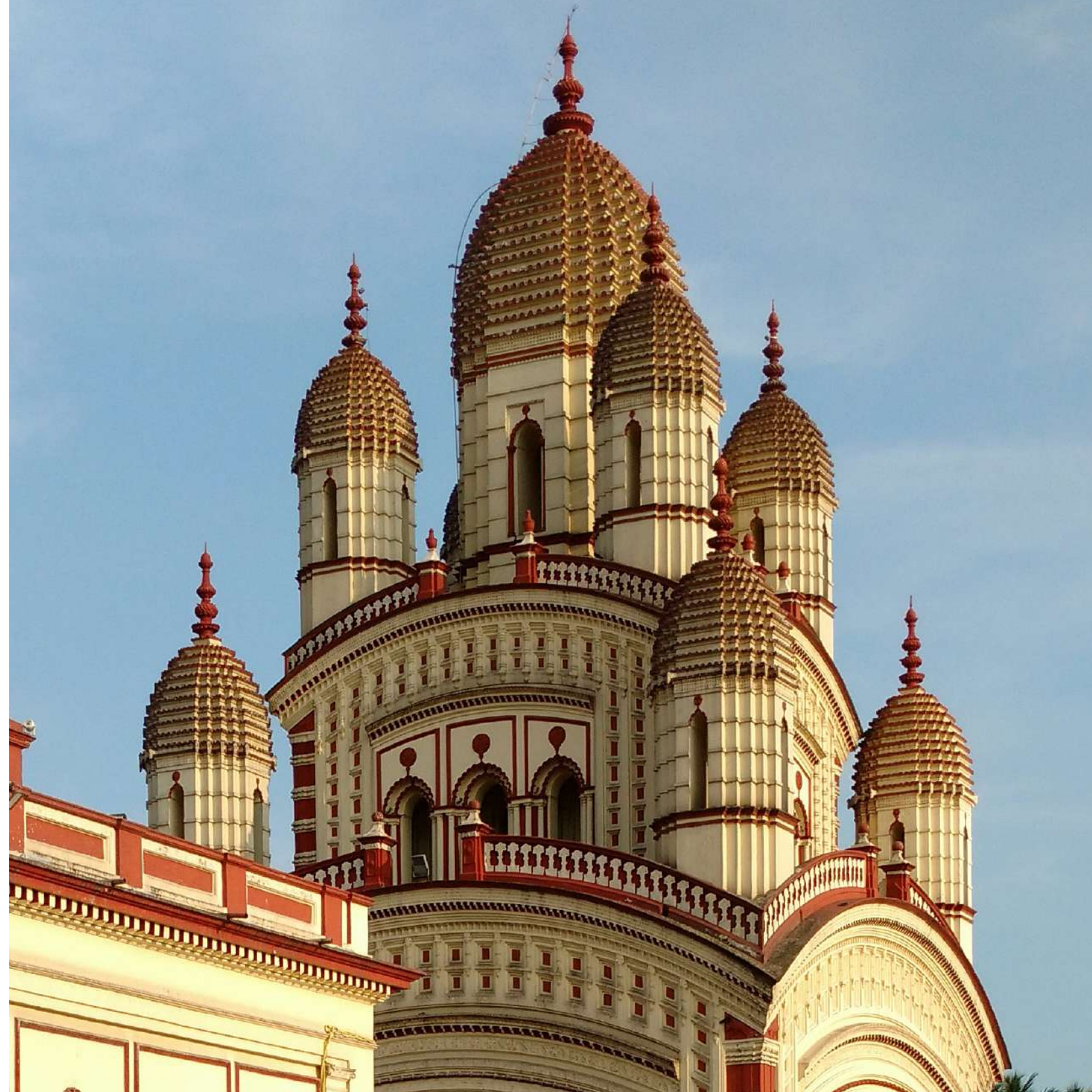
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AUTUMN 2020

THE LIGHT ज्योति
Ka Jingshai

THUS SPAKE

From the pages of Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna
KI KYNTIEN BA KYNTANG
La pynkylla da I Bah P S Lyngdoh



U RAMAKRISHNA



U Kynrad bad u Nongbud

Rymphang 1882

Haba ki la leit phai pat haka kamra u Ramakrishna baroh arngut kila iathuh khana. U Sidhu ula iathuh ha u M ba iaka kper iingmane la shem daka Rani Rasmani. U la ong ba ia u blei la mane hangta man ka sngi kum ka Kali, Krishna bad Shiva, bad hapoh kut kata ka khyrdop bun ki Sadhu bad ki nongkhong bala ai bam. Haba kila poi pat hakhmat jingkhang u Ramakrishna, ki shem ba kala khyrdep bad ba ka Brinda ka nongsumar iing ka dang ieng habar. U M uba la ju mlien haki rukom im ki phareng un ym rung hapoh khlem da ioh jingbit, ula kylli iaka, “La u riewkhuid u dong ha iing?”

Ka Brinda kala jubab, “Hooiid, u don hapoh kamra”.

U M: “Katno por u don hangne?”

Ka Brinda: “Ula don la kham slem bha”

U M: “U ju pynpule bun ki kot?”

Ka Brinda: “Ki kot; O! Em, em. Ki don lut ha u thylliej jong u.”

U M uba dang shu pyndep ki jingpule ha kolej. Kala pyn-lyngngoh ia u ban iohsngew ba u Ramakrishna um ju pule kot.

U M: “Lehse kala dei ka por duwai lehniam janmiet. Ngi lah ban rung shapoh? Phin pynong lem ia u ba ngi da thrang/sliang ban iohi ia u?”

Brinda: “Rung rung, khun, rung shapoh bad shongkhop.”

Haba ki la rung hapoh kamra, kila shem ba u Ramakrishna u don

marwei ba u da shong haka shuki dieng. Dang shu dep thang ia ki jingthang pyniwbihi bad la khang lut ki jingkhang. Mar ia rung hapoh kamra u M da ki kti ba khylliap u la nguh ia u kynrad. Te, haka jingpynidak u kynrad, ma u bad u Sidhu kila shong ha madan. U Ramakrishna ula kylli ia ki. “Hangno phi shong, hangno phi sah? Phi trei phi ktah aiu? Balei phi ia wan sha Baranangore?” U M ula jubab iaki jingkylli, hynrei u la iohi teng teng ba u kynrad ym i kren tip brierw kumno re. Haden ula sngewthuh ba ia kane ka rukom jinglong la khot ka jingpyrkhat blei(bhava), ka jingieid buaid blei. Ka long kum ka jingpynleit jingmut ba peit shlip u nongkhwai uba la shong sah bad peit shlip hala u ryngwiang, baka dohkha ka wan bad nguid ia u khwai, bad ba u ksai u sdang pyrkhing bad u nongkhwai ula pynleit jingmut shlip, u bat bha ia u ryngwiang bad u peit sani bha kumno u ksai u iaaid jai bad u da thrang ba ym kwah kren iano iano ruh. Kum kata ka ju long ka ju jia ha u Ramakrishna man ka teng hadien ka por prem miet. Teng teng ym ju tip brierw ei ei ia kane ka pyrthei sawdong.

U M: “Lehse, phi kwah ban duwai lehniam prem miet. Tangba ka lap kumta, ngan mih noh shuwa.”

U Ramakrishna: (u dang don sah haka jinglap buaid blei) “Em, ka duwai lehniam por prem miet? Em’ kam dei thik kumta!

Haden ka jingjubab ktien ba shipor, u M ula nguh ia u kynrad bad ula mih noh. Sa wan biang “ong u Ramakrishna.”

Ha lynti haba u la wan phai sha iing, u M ula lyngngoh: “Uei une u brierw ba jar jar jinglong, uba la khring ia nga sha ia u? Ka lah ban long ba u brierw u bym don jingnang jingstad ym long uba khrav? Haduh katno ka long kaba phylla! Nga dei eh ban ia kynduh pat ia u. U la ong dalade hi, ‘Sa wanbiang,’ ‘Ngan da leit khnang lashai ne la shisngi.’”

(yn sa bteng...)



KI KYNTIEN KA KMIE BAKHUID:

SAYINGS OF HOLY MOTHER SARADA DEVI



Ki jingangnud ki dang iai sah katba u briew u dang pyrkhat shaphang ia lade. Hynrei kita kiei kiei kim lah ban pynsniew iaphi. U Kynrad da lade hi un iada iaphi. Lada um iada ia kita kiba la phet bad aiti lut ia lade ha u kiba da kwah ka Jingim hok, kan long ka pop kaba khraw ia u.

- U wei pa u wei u dei ban aiti ia lade ha u. Aiba un leh katba u mon lada u pynbha ne pynsniew ruh. Hynrei phi dei ban leh tang ia kaba bha kat kum ka bor ba la ai iaphi. U wei pa u wei u dei ban shim bynta ha kita kiei kiei kiba bha.

- U tnga, ka tnga lane mano mano ruh ki long ki juh bad ym don jingiapher ei ei. Lynda phi sngew kumta, phin ym lait na kane ka pyrthei. Ka jingsngew na ka jingbit ia lade baroh dei ban pynduh. Khun kaei kane ka met? Ka long tang u dpei u ba khia tang lai pound (hadien ba iap). Hato balei ngin niew kor ia ka? Ka long tang lai pound u dpei wat la ka long kaba heh katno katno ruh. La katta ruh pynban ki briew ki pyrkhat tang shaphang jong ka.

- Ka jingmut ba skhem kam pher na u hati, uba runar. Ka her ha ki saw lyer. Namarkata u wei pa u wei u dei

ban trei khlem khein ia lade khnang ban sngewthuh shaphang U Blei.

- Kin iohi ia ka kam ba la jied na ka bynta jong ki lada ki pyrkhat shaphang u Kynrad. Da shisha kin iohi bad kin ioh tip wat la ka long ha ka khyllipmat jong ka jingiap ruh.

- Ka jinglong ba kynja mynsiem kaba janai ka mut da kaba ngi aiti lut ia lade ha u bad ngi pyrkhat tang shaphang ki kam babha jong u. Iai kyrpad ia ka kyrteng jong u. Phin jop da kaba iai kyrpad wat ia phi sngew ba un jngai na phi ruh, lada phi rynsied ha um lane shah khynniad hangta da shisha ki jain jong phi kin jhieh. Kam dei kumta? Duwai ha la ka sngi, haduh ba ka jingmut jongphi kan da shai. Ka jingiai duwai kan pynsngewthuh ia phi. Barobor ia leh ban pyniapher ia ka jingshisha bad ka bym shisha. Haba phi sngewwit jingmut shaphang kano kano, puson shaphang jong ka, bad da shaniah ha u Blei. U briew u dang iai khwai. Ka kynhun ki briew ka dang iaid bad ka put ka tem ha surok. Hynrei ka khmat u nongkhwai ka peit bniah thik tang ia u ryngwiang.



Joyrambati: Jaka kha jong I Sarada Devi

KA JINGKREN U SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

15 TARIK, NAILUR, 1893



BALEI NGI IAPHER JINGMUT



N gan iathuh ia iwei jingiathuh khana lyngkot. Phi la ioh sngew ia u nongkren ba dang lah kren myntan bad u ong, “To ngin ia sangeh noh kaba ia bein iwei ia iwei pat,” bad u sngewsih shibun ba don barabor ka jingiapher. .

Nga tharai nga dei ban iathuh pat ia phi sa kawei ka khana ka ban pyni nuksa balei ka don haduh katne ka jingiapher. Kawei ka jakoid ka shong ha kawei ka pung. Ka shong hangta la slem bah. La pynsan pynrangbah, hynrei ka long tang ka jakoid barit, bapli, ym lah ban ong ba ka long kaba don ne-em ka jinganna, ka bam ka dih baroh ka ioh nangta. Ha kane ka rukom ka bha met bad sngaid bha. Ha kawei ka sngi ka jakoid bashong ha duriaw ka la wan poi hangta hapoh pung. “Phi dei iba nangno ?” “Nga dei kaba na sha duriaw.” “Ka duriaw! Katno ka heh? Ka heh kat kane ka pung jong nga? Ka da ryngkang na shiliang sha shiliang jong ka pung. “Ko lok,” la ong ka jakoid duriaw, “kumno yn ia nujor ia ka duriaw, bad ine i pung barit jong phi.” .

Hangta ka jakoid ka sa ryngkang sa shisien bad ka la kylli, “ka duriaw jong phi ka heh katne?”

“Phi kren lamwir aiu, ban ia nujor ia ka duriaw bad i pung jong phi’.

“Lada kumta,” la ong uta u jakoid bashong ha pung, “ym don kano kano ka ban kham heh ban ia ka pung jong nga, ym don ka ban kham heh ia kane. Une u dei u shukor, kumta beh ia u shi syndon.”

Kata ‘ka long ka jingeh baroh shi katta. Nga long u Hindu. Nga shong ha la i jong i pung barit’; nga pyrkhata ba ka pyrthei baroh ka long ha i pung barit jongnga. U Kristan u shong ha la i pung bad u pyrkhata ba ka pyrthei ka long ha i pung barit jong u. U Musulman u shong ha la i pung barit jong u, u pyrkhata ba kata ka long ka pyrthei baheh-baiar. Nga ai nguh ia phi ki nong Amerika na ka bynta ka jingpyrshang bakhraw jong phi ban pynduh noh ia ine i jingker ia i pyrthei barit jong ngi, nga kyrmen ba

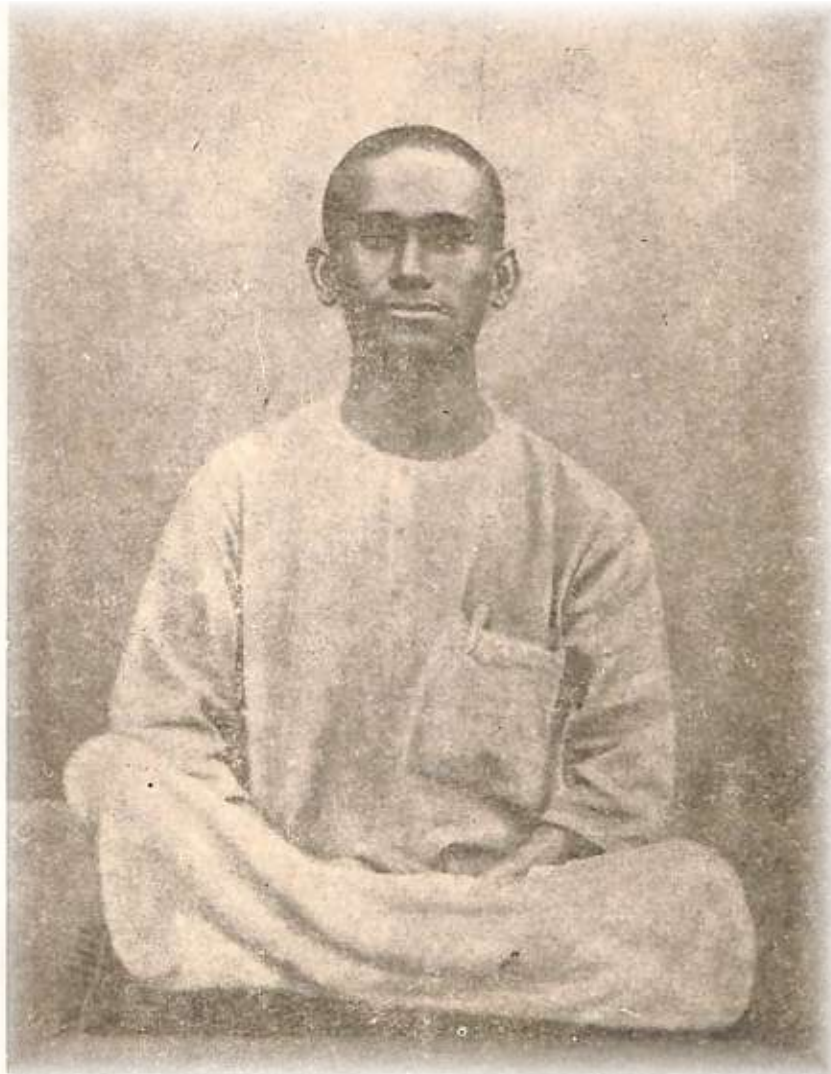


U NONGPRAT LYNTI HA RILUM KHASI: U SWAMI PRABHANANDA



U Swami Lokeswarananda

Ha ki sngi ba dang jur bha ka jingiakhih paidbah hapoh Ri India, pyrshah ia ka Sorkar Bilat, kaba la jia ha ka snem 1920-21, la don arngut ki samla ki bym pat pass B.A., ki la wai kawei ka iingshong ha Dacca kaba don mynta ha Bangladesh. Kine ki samla ki la don ka jingthmu ban pyniong ki jingialang barieh da kaba thaw lad kumno ban pynkyllon ia ka jingsynshar Bilat hapoh ri India. Khnang ba ki pulit kin nym suba sniew ei ei ia ka kam jong ki, ki la buh ha iing da ka korthirksai kum ka dak ban pynpaw lalade ba ki dei ki nongbud jong u Mahatma Gandhi. Uwei na ki pat, u la pynlapsngi lapmiet ialade tang ha kaba tem jingtem bad rwai jingrwai. Kumba la ju jia ha ki sorbah, ki paramarjan kim shym la suidñiew ia ka jingleh jong kine ki samla,



kawang maw halor iing ha kano kano ka por ka bym dei shuh ban rwai.

La don ruh wei u sahep (shiteng jaid) napdeng jong kita ki paramarjan uba la uyor ym tang ia ka jingrwai ne jingtem hynrei wat ia ka jingwin jong ka kor-thirksai ruh, wat lada kiwei kim da sngewsalia eh lada ka sawa ruh, ki dei ban suidñiew na ka bynta ka jingbha jong ka ri. Une u saheb nyngkong u la phah ong ha ki shakri ba ka jingthirksai ruh ka dei ban sangeh. Kane ka shu long tang ban kham pynduna ia ka jingsawa. Hynrei haba kine ki jingmaham kim

tad haduh ba ka jingrwai bad jingtem jong ki ka la khywin jlang bad ka la pynsngewsalia bad pynthut ia ki baroh, kumta ki la leit ban mai ia ki. Nyngkong ki la ialeit tang uwei ne arngut, hynrei ynda hadien pat ki la ialeit kynhun ban maham ia ki ba kim dei ban leh ha kane ka rukom, ki la ia kyrpad ruh ba ki dei ban ia sngewlem ia ki khamtam lei lei ha ka por miet, namar ba, ynda ki la trei shitom baroh shisngi, dei ban ioh pynjah thait ialade ha ke por miet. Hynrei haba ka jingong jongki kam lerkam ei ei; kila

shym la myntoi eiei, u sahep da lade hi u la leit ha iing; jong ki. Da kaba bat ia ka pistol ha kti ula byrngem ia ki ba lada kim pynsangeh noh ia ka korthirksai ruh un siat iap ia ki. Uba kham rangbah na kine ki samla, uba kyrteng u Ketoki u la sied thrait ha khmat jong u, da kaba pynshah ia la ka shadem u la ong, "Siat ia nga lada phi nud, hynrei ngan ym pynsangeh ia ka kor-thirksai da lei lei ruh." U sahep pat ba u la sngewthuh ba kine ki samla

ki long kiba kheĩn duh wat lada iap ruh, u la mih noh nangta da kaba tim bad thnum iia ki artat artat lynti. U Ketoki u la sngewthuh ba ki la dei ban phet noh nangta namarba u sahep un sa leit mudui khlem pep iia ki ha ki pulit, kiba la ju syntiat iia ka kam saiĩn hima sima jong ki; bad ka lah ruh ban paw pyrthei kyndit kyndit da ka jingphlan dusmon jong kiwei ki-ar bad ka lah ruh ban pynpoi phatok iia ki.

Kumta, ki la phet noh nangta. Kyndiat sngi hadien kane, ki la im ka jingim ba lyngkar, khlem iing khlem sem, khlem kam khlem jam bad ki pulit ruh ki iia wad iia ki khlem sangeh. Hynrei ki long ki briew kiba ieit bad bud iia ki Jinghikai jong u Ramakrishna bad u Vivekananda bad ka paw ruh ha ki kam bad ki jingoren jong ki bad ba ki don ruh ka jingthrang bajur ban trei na ka bynta ka ri. Dei ha kane ka kynti ba ki la sdang ban leit peit iia kawei ka mission rit jong u Ramakrishna kham bunsien ban iia kaba mynshuwa. Bad ki la sngewthuh ba ka jingieid hok iia la ka ri ka long ka babha hynrei kaba kham khraw ka long ban shakri iia la ki para-briew baroh. Kumta u Ketoki uba la kham rangbah u la leit iasoh bad ka Mission mar mar, u la iehnoh jyndat iia ki kam saiĩn pyrthei baroh ha ka ban pynleit jingmut ialade ha ki jingpule bad jingim ba kynja mynsiem kumba ka Mission ka kyntu iia la ki nongtrei baroh.

Katba u Ketoki u dang leit pyntbit ialade ha kawei ka mission kaba don ha Dacca la wan poi ka khubor ba don bun ki briew kiba shong ha ri lum Khasi bad Jaintia kiba la thrang dik dik ban don kino kino ki seng ki ban seng skul ha ri lum jong ki khnang ba kin dup phah iia la ki khun jong ki khlem jingma ei ei hapoh ka jingpynbeit jong ki khlem da ktah iia kano kano ka niam jong ki, kumba la jia ha kito ki khynnah kiba leit ha ki skul kiba la don lypa ha ri lum kiba la tei da ka Sorkar jylla bad la pyniaid da ka Balang Khristan. La don ka jing iia ai jingmut na baroh ki dong jong ka ri ba ka Ramakrishna Mission kan shimti iia kane ka kam, bad ka kam ruh kan nang iaid shaphrang da ka jingiakyrshan lem jong ki briew baroh khlem da pynbor iia kano kano ka niam. Hynrei ka long ka kam kaba eh ba ka Mission kan pyntrei iia kano kano ka jingthmu khlem da lap sabut ba biang la ka long kaba shisha ne em. Kumta la rai ban phah da uwei u Maharaj ban leit peit iia ka jaka bad ban wad jingtip kaba kham bniah; bad yn sa sdang iia ka jingtrei bad jinghikai

ha ka rukom badei lada i donkam, lymda kumta, ka jingthmu kan shu sep ei lada kam don ka jingiabeit lang. Kumta la rai iia u Ketoki ban leit. Ka jinglong jong u ka la pynlyngngoh iia ki briew baroh namar ba u long uba kham phylla. U long uba satar bad ba eh, pynban uba khiih jingmut, bakhuid jingmut, ba nep jabieng, uba iia ialeh pyrshah iia ki jingeh baroh da la ka mon ba skhem bad uba don shibun ki jingthmu ba u dei ban iarap iia la u para-briew. U ruh u la pdiang sngewbha iia kane ka jingkhhot da kaba kloĩ ban ioh kum kane ka kabu ban iarap lem iia kito ki briew kiba dangdum bad kiba la shah iehnoh marwei lyngba ki spah-snem ba la leit.

Ha Ri lum Khasi

Kumta ha u Nailur (September) jong ka snem 1924, u Ketoki u la mih na Dacca bad u la wan poi ha kawei ka shnongrit, ha Ri Khasi kaba kyrteng ka Shella. Kum u nongwei shisngi, khlem pisa tyngka bad khlem nang shi kyntien ruh iia ka ktien jong ki ha kaba un leit ban trei bad tip iia ka rukom im jong ki. Da kaba iaid kylleng kylleng ka shnong u la iakynduh ryngkhat iia uwei u Bengali uba kyrteng u Mathuranath Deb Nath—uba iarap ai dawai ha ka Dispensary Sorkar hangta. Tang mar shu tip iia ka jingthmu jong ka jingwan u Ketoki, une u rangbah u la khot sngewbha iia u bad u iia ai jaka shong jaka sah ha iing jong u hi wat la un sah hangto katno katno sngi ruh. U Maharaj ruh u la pdiang sngewbha iia ka jingkhhot jong u hynrei u la sah bad u tang ar sngi. U la iathuh lin ha u iia Ia ka jingthmu baroh ba ka jingwan jong u ka long ban iarap lem iia ki Khasi bad kaba u kwah eh ba ka long ban pyniadei ialade bad ki nadong shadong, kum ha ka shong ka sah, ka bam jong ki. Da kaba kim lah ban kiar ne ialeh pyrshah namarba kim don la ka jong ka seng, ki la khot noh da ka Ramakrishna Mission. La ka long ka seng rithor ruh, pynban haba bishar bha ki shem ba kam lah ban ialam bakla ha ki rukom im rithor lane ban phngian ha ki iia ka jingim ba kynja nongwei. Katto katne na ki kiba kheĩn ialade kum ki Hindu ki kmen shibun haba kin ioh iia ka seng jong ka Niam Hindu kaba long ka Ramakrishna Mission ka ban wan trei hapdeng jong Ki. Kiwei pat kiba kheĩn ialade ba ki long ki jaid bakyrpang na ki Hindu, na kata ka daw ki la khot iia ka Ramakrishna Mission thymmai namarba kim mon iia ka rukom leh jong ki nongtrei Balang Khristan kaba ki la mut ban kyrshoiĩ iia ka rukom im tynrai jong ki.



(yn dang bteng...)

KI SUR MYLLUNG KA JAMLU

Dalariti Gratel Kharnaioir



Ha kata ka Ri ka Raij ka ba ym don jingpang ym don jingiap, ym don sngewsih ym don jynjar, ym don tymmen ymdon kro; don tang U Blei Nongbuh Nongthaw u Thakur Bamon Uba ker Uba da na ka khlam ka rup bad baroh ki ba sniew ha kane ka pyrthei. U bynriew u khie samla bad noh tymmen, nangta u khie samla biang bad noh tymmen; kumta shi kumta, ym don ka pang ka jhia ka iap ka duh. Kumta u Syiem Nongklung uba synshar ha kata ka hima, u la btai kum kata ka jingim bad u kwah ban mad sa kiwei de ki jinglong jingman ha ka jingim briew. Namarkata, haba u kwah ban mad ia kata ka sngewsih, u la leit sha U Thakur Bamon ban iathuh ba la iap noh ka khun. U Thakur Bamon u la lyngngoh bad u la ong haba u lah iada na baroh ka jingpang ka jingiap ka jingtymmen, ka khlam ka rup; kumno ba dang iap kata ka khun u myrlem. Hynrei u Syiem Nongklung u la pynskhem ba la iap ka khun bad kumta de u Thakur Bamon u la leit ban sakhi hi dalade ia kata ka jingiap kata ka khun u myrlem, u Syiem Nongklung. Ynda u lah poi ha iing u Syiem Nongklung u la kylli hangno kata ka metiap? U Syiem Nongklung u la pyni ia kata ka met ba la pynthiah ha ka krong ba la tap lup da ka jaiñ. Ynda

haba u Thakur Bamon u la plied ia ka jaiñ, u lap pynban ba dei da u ksew. Hangta U Thakur Bamon Uba long U Nongthaw Nongbuh jong u bynriew u la bitar lep bad u la kynjat noh ia ka kor kaba u la ker ban iada ia u bynriew na ka pang ka shitom, na ka iap ka duh bad na baroh ki jingshitom jingjynjar jong kane ka pyrthei. Naduh kata ka khep u bynriew ha pyrthei u sa mad ia baroh ka pang ka jhia, ka iap ka mynsaw, ka sngewsih ka jynjar bad baroh ki jingsniew ki lanot ba suhsat ba syrtok jong kane ka pyrthei. Hynrei u Syiem Nongklung um shym la ioh ban thang ia uta u ksew bad uta u ksew u la kylla maw bad u dang don haduh mynta mynne ha nongbah jong ka Raij Nongkhrah.

Haba la jia ka jingiap ha u khun bynriew kumta la sdang ban mih sa ka diaw ka pangnud ba tmang na ka bynta ki ba iap bad ha kum kata ka khep don ki kaitor ki duhalia ki ba kynud sur sngewsih kumba sngewlem ia ka longiing longsem bad dukha ba la duh ei ka jingimbriew. Ha ka sngewbha ka sngewmiat ha ka rong ka taw la don lypa ki sur jingrwai jingtem ki ba dei na ka bynta kata ka rukom, hynrei ym pat ju don na ka bynta ka ba iap. Kumta naduh kata ka por la shna thymmai ki sur bad tiar put tiar tem na ka bynta ka sngewsih ia ki ba iap. Hangta ki beh mrad ia ka shrieh, ki khoh snieh; ki khud ia ka dieng bad ki thaw da ka maryngod bad naduh kata ka por la thaw ka sur sngewsih na ka maryngod bad la pyndonkam beit tang ha ka ba sngewsih ha ka ba iap briew; ia kata ka sur iam briew ki khot ka 'jamlu'. Ka maryngod ka dei thik tang na ka bynta ka sur iam briew, bad haba iam ba sngewsih ruh baroh bad kynthei bad shynrang ki iam briew. Kumta ka maryngod ruh ka don kawei ka kynthei bad kawei pat dei u shynrang; kata ka maryngod kynthei bad maryngod shynrang. Ka maryngod shynrang ka mih ki tympha ki reng kiba ieng sha neng haba buh ia ka maryngod, bad ki tympha jong ka maryngod kynthei ki dem sha rum.

Hadien habud, haba baroh baroh la pyndonkam kata ka jamlu ha ka iambriew; ym tang u bynriew uba kwah ban tem ka sur iam briew, wat ki ksuid ki khrei ruh ki kwah bynta lang ha kata ka blaw ka diaw kum u bynriew. Ha kawei ka sien uwei u nongrep u la rah ka maryngod sha lum haba u leit ap kba bad u la thiahkai ha rynsan diengiri ban tem kai hangta da kata ka maryngod. Kyndit kynsan la wan mih ka thabballong na kata ka diengiri namar ba

ka iöhsngew ia kata ka jingtem sur
ba myllung. Hangta ka la kop ka la
aireng ia uta u bynriew ka da ong ba
un tem na jrong rynsan bad kan shad
ha tbian. Kata ka jingiakop ka long
ba kat ba thait shwa kin shah jop
ha kata ka thong. Ka la ong ba lada
un rem te kan sa bam doh noh ia u.
Kumta uta u nongrep u la tem bad
ka thabballong ka la shad bad katba
ka shad ka shad u nongrep katta
u dang shitrhem ban tem. Hadien
shislem bha ka thabballong ka la
thait iar, hynrei u nongrep u dang iai
tem kata ka maryngod haduh ba ka
thabballong kan da kyllon lyngktar
hangta ha madan. Mar kumta u
nongrep u la hiar na rynsan bad u la
sei la ka wait tasam ban dung jrak na
shadem hynrei kata ka thabballong
kam iap. U la dung sa dung kylleng ka
met jong ka namar ba ka la thait palat
bad kam lah khie khieh shuh, katta
ruh kam man iap. U nongrep u la
ialeh tynggeh ban pyniap hynrei haduh
ban step phyrngab ruh um lah ban
pynjah mynsiem ia ka. Ha kata ka por
la wan her ka paitpuraw bad ka la pah
sa pah bad u nongrep u la iathuh ba
u lah iakhun baroh shimiet shi ia ruh
um man lah ban pynduh mynsiem
ia ka thabballong. Ka paitpuraw ka
la ong ba lada un kohnguh ia ka te
un sa lah ban pyniap ia ka. Kumta ka
la pah kum ban bthah ia u nongrep
kumno ban pyniap ia ka thabballong;
ka la ong ba un dung da u kdait
kasing na shadem bad thoh ka snam
jong ka thabballong na tdong jong ka.
U nongrep u la kohnguh kumba lah



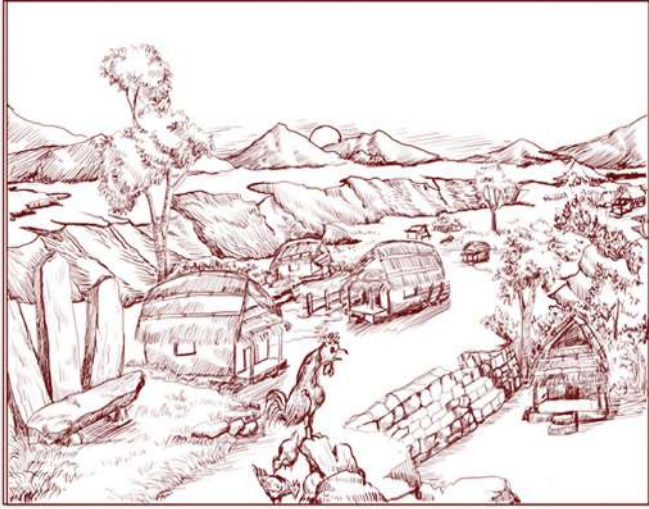
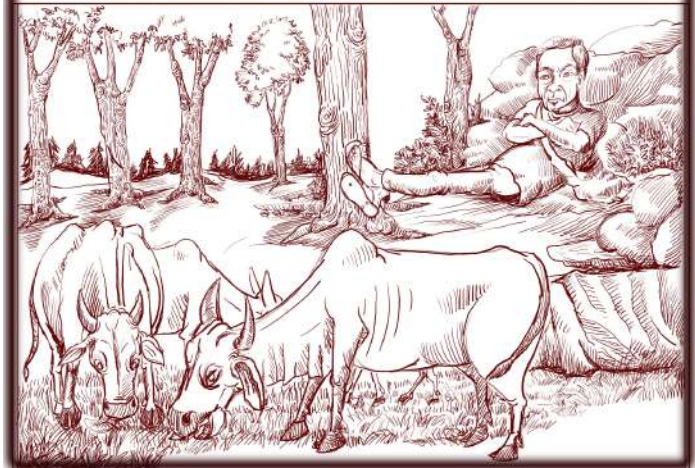
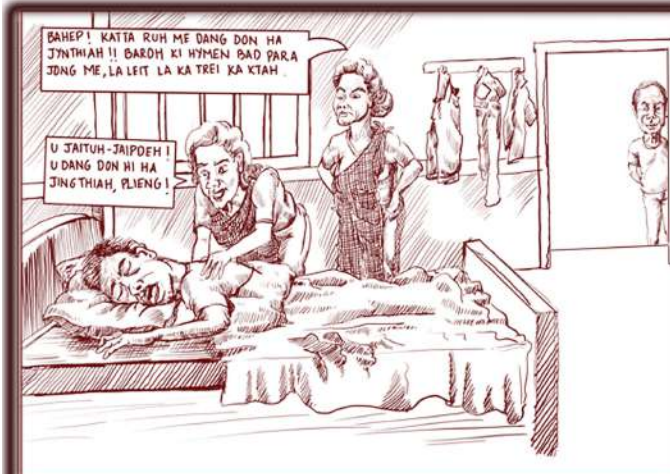
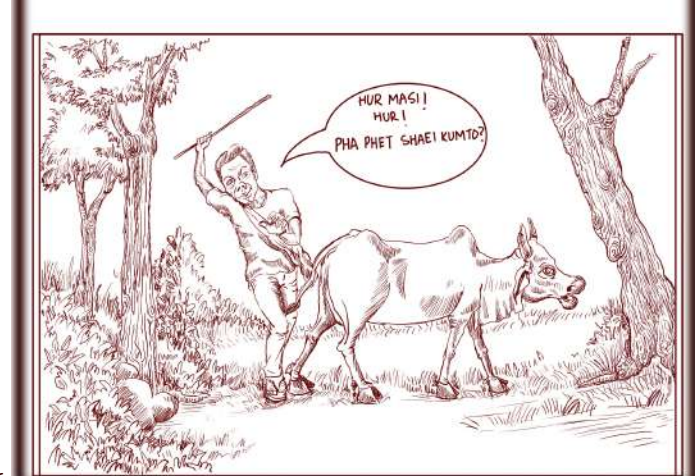
batai ka paitpuraw ba un khet da u kdait kasing bad lit
pynnep; nangta sa dung na shadem bad hangta kan sa
iap. Hynrei u da kynmaw ruh ban hap tah da ka snam
na uta u kdait kasing ha lyeit jong ka paitpuraw. Uta u
nongrep u la kohnguh bad leh thik kumba la bthah kata

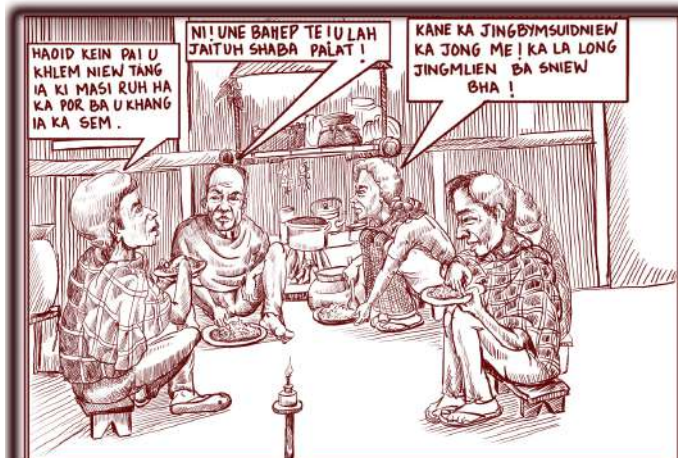
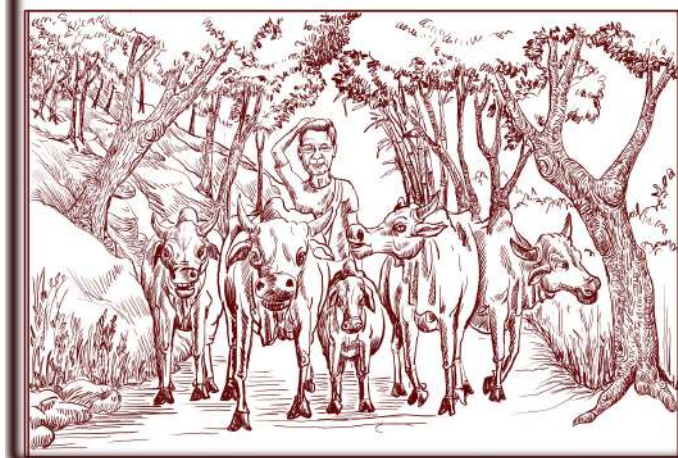
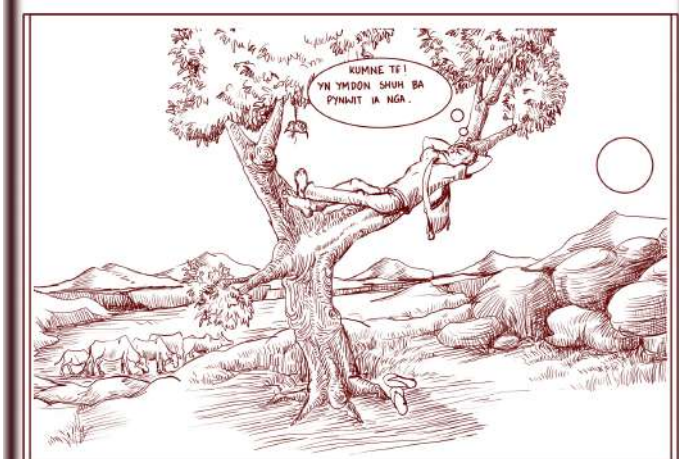
ka paitpuraw bad ynda lah dep dung haduh ban da phlei
snam na klongsnam kata ka thabballong u la thoh kata ka
snam ha tdong jong ka paitpuraw, bad tang kumta hi ka la
iap kata ka thabballong. Naduh kata ka por ka paitpuraw
ka la saw sah ka tdong bad ki kynja ksuid kynja khrei kim
nud shuh ban wan shad lang bad u bynriew.

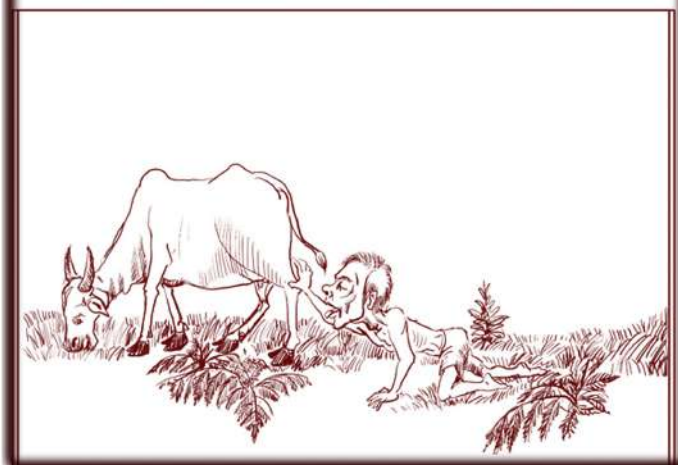


LARGER
THAN LIFE

U Thliem (The Leech)







Wat ju mlien jaituh la mynmiet mynsngi;
 Wat mlien shong lyngseit ba kylla jaituh,
 Ha kaleit ka wan ruh kylla khadduh;
 Ha ban leit jingleit ruh baioh lap sngi;
 Wat marmlien thiahsngi ne marmlien
 thiah-sniang.

Kane ka jingiathuh khana puriskam ka la
 pyniasoh bha bad kine ki ktien jingsneng

balah shim lyngkhot na ka kot: KA
 JINGSNENG TYMMEN –Lynnong I sla 6
 & 7

Ha ban leit jingleit ruh baioh lap sngi;

Wat marmlien thiahsngi ne marmlien thiah-
 sniang.

THE LEECH¹ (A KHASI FOLK-TALE)

Dr (Mrs) Ibabet Hynñiewta

Once there lived a young cowherd, in the rolling lush green hills of the Khasis. As in olden days, and even in today's village life, every member of a family are allotted certain duties to perform on a daily basis². U Bahep (a nickname given to the cowherd by his family and known to everyone in the village) was a very lazy young man. Every day by sunrise, there would be hustle and bustle in the village, as most of the people would be up and about doing their daily chores. All, except for Bahep; who even after being roused several times by the shrill voices of his mother and sisters; though awake, would still laze in bed. He was always the last person to get out of bed, and also the last one to start his daily chores and this was known to everyone in the village.

It would almost be noon, by the time he took his cattle out to graze in the open pastures. Upon reaching, he would let his cattle loose and climb onto a nearby tree branch to have a bird's eye view of his cattle grazing. On more than one occasion, he would have to climb down the tree, to look for a cow that had strayed, and he knew he would be held accountable for any missing cow, which bothered him, as he intended to relax and nap on a tree branch without any disturbance.

He pondered over the same, and came up with a solution that if one did not see a thing happen, then one cannot be held responsible for such incidents. Therefore, to maintain a clear conscience, he devised a way to remove his eyeballs from his eye sockets, which he then wrapped in a leaf, and tied with a length of vine and hung them on a nearby branch. This became a daily habit of his, and at dusk, satisfied with his nap would reach for his eyeballs and put them back in his eye sockets. He would then round up his cattle, and drive them back to their shed.

On many occasions, when one or more of the cattle would be missing, and he would be scolded by his father, Bahep would delegate the task of looking for the lost cow(s) to his younger brothers and cousins by bullying and threatening them.

One afternoon, 'U Khlieng' a kite, perched upon the tree Bahep was napping on, looking for insects to feed on, and spotted the eyeballs in the leaf hanging by the vines on one of the branches. Thinking it was some sort of insect; the kite picked them up and flew away. When the dusk set in, U Bahep started to grope in the dark for the vines in which he had strung his eyeballs in, but alas!! it was all in vain. Bahep, frantic, fell off the tree on the ground below, and desperately kept on groping around in the hope of finding his missing eyeballs. Days, nights, weeks and months passed, and his search continued amongst the pastures and the trees he used to frequent. In this search he strayed and was lost in the middle of nowhere. As time passed, he shrunk in size little by little, as he had little or no food to sustain him, and this took a heavy toll on his entire being, which to adapt, evolved and metamorphosed into a leech without eyes and only a mouth, which he used, to attach himself to the cows to feed on their blood when they grazed in the pastures.

Moral of the story: Don't be lazy! The cowherd was a strong, healthy and able bodied young man, but due to his laziness he shunned all his responsibilities and was completely careless. His irresponsible and irrational behavior reduced his whole being from a full-fledged human who once herded cows out to graze on the green pastures, to being a leech, which clings to the grasses and latches onto the same cows to feed himself. According to Khasi Folklore this is how a leech, one of Nature's Creations, came into being.

¹The word is used as a pun here, which refers to (i) a man's laziness compels him to become a parasite to one's family and as a result a non-productive youth of society at large. (ii) a blood-sucking insect a menace to livestock.

²The father and his elder sons work in the fields as farmers, the younger sons are allotted other duties such as running errands, tend to livestock, collecting water from a source and collecting firewood. Whereas the women (mother, unmarried sisters, wife and daughters) tend to domestic house work and sometime collecting seasonal mushrooms, vegetables, fruits & berries and firewood from the forests.



POESY

**U Riew Bneng Ha
Ka Jingkyndit***-La pynkylla khasi da I**Bah P S Lyngdoh*

U briew u dang dem ngun
shapoh lem bad la ka jingkit ha
ka jingim—

Kaba mut khlem jingkmien,
hynrei ka jingshitom kaba eh bad
kaba khain

Bad da kaba iaid la ka lynti
lyngba ka jingdum bad ki lynti ba
dum tliw tliw

Khlem thaba jingshai na ka
jabien ne na ka dohnud

Ban ai ka jingduhoi shi khyllipmat, haduh ki khun ki
ksiew

Ba pynsah dak jingpang na ka jingsngewbha, ka jingiap na
ka jingim,

Bad kaba bha na kaba sniew, ba la buhrieh bha noh na
kaba iohi

La iohi, ha kawei ka miet bakhuid, ka kjatsngi ba ai
jingshai byrngut byrngut bad ba itynnad

Ba wan hiar sha u, um tip ka dei kaei ne kaba na shaci,
Hynrei la khot ia ka u Nongthaw bad la mane.

Ka Jingkyrmen, uwei u nongwan shongbasa u la iathuh, la
wan ha u bad pynphiang

Naba kut shaba kut la ki bor baroh, bad ka jingim ha u ka
la mut shuh shuh

Ban ia kaba shu iai phohsniew bad buhrieh ia baroh ba u
la tip,

Ym tang katta, u la jngoh ngoid ngoid sha palat pud ka
pyrthei. U Nonghikai mynsiem

Ba la khrip khmat bad la rkhi bad la khot ia ka 'ka
jingngeit bieit'.

Hynrei u la iohsngew ia ka bor bad ka jingsuk jong ka
Bad ba la pynphai ktien noh mian mian—

'Ko Jingngeit bieit Bakhuid!

Angels Unawares*Swami Vivekananda*

One bending low with load of life--
That meant no joy, but suffering harsh and hard--
And wending on his way through dark and dismal paths
Without a flash of light from brain or heart
To give a moment's cheer, till the line
That marks out pain from pleasure, death from life,
And good from what is evil was well-nigh wiped from
sight,
Saw, one blessed night, a faint but beautiful ray of light
Descend to him. He knew not what or wherefrom,
But called it God and worshipped.
Hope, an utter stranger, came to him and spread
Through all his parts, and life to him meant more
Than he could ever dream and covered all he knew,
Nay, peeped beyond his world. The Sages
Winked, and smiled, and called it "superstition".
But he did feel its power and peace
And gently answered back--
"O Blessed Superstition!"

**बेहिसाब
जिन्दगी**

अनीता पंडा

ओ जिन्दगी देखा है मैंने अक्सर,
तू नहीं चलती हिसाब से,
परोस देती है ,
दुःख - सुख बेहिसाब
बेतरतीब,
लाखों नम आँखें,
कृशकाय जर्जर
क्षुधित उदर
आँखों की कोटरें
याचित पूँजीपतियों के द्वार
मूँगाफली बाँटते
दुःख पीड़ा से
बेपरवाह
मुस्कुराते, खिलखिलाते
व्यवस्था चलाते
मृत शरीर का
बोल लगाते, घोषणा करते
छीन उनकी जिंदगी
ए जिन्दगी, तू क्यों है
इतनी बेहिसाब?

Shadows In Hope...*Dr Ananya S Guha*

It is a must this winter
otherwise how will the cold happen
or the frost lining thin icy fields
drawing wedge of summer and winter
creating cleavage of warmth?

How will the surprise happen
of rooster calling in blackened
morning, when the sun does not
whisper? This winter preys on deathless
shadows, and the hour glass measures
time in vapid movements of colourless skies.
Winter happens in myths of time
And denuded forests, when hills
shiver in quaking cold.
When streams gurgle fearlessly.
Winter is primordial. Ancients know
How it eclipses summer's moon
And drinks a mouthful of wine till eternity.
It's insignia is a thumb sketched
ray of shadows in hope.

बाल्पक्रम - एक खोज सनातन संस्कृति की

सी. टी. संगमा



मेघालय के गारो जिले के दक्षिण-पूर्वी पहाड़ियों में बाल्पक्रम पठार में राष्ट्रीय उद्यान और वन्य पशु अभयारण्य है। इसकी ऊँचाई समुद्रतल से 2,831 फीट है। यह ऊपर से मेज की तरह सपाट है और दक्षिण गारो पहाड़ियों के मुख्यालय बाघमारा से लगभग 90 किलोमीटर की दूरी पर है। यहाँ का सूर्योदय और सूर्यास्त का दृश्य अद्भुत होता है। इसके उत्तर में रोंगचेन पठार और दक्षिण में

छोटी-छोटी पहाड़ियाँ हैं, जहाँ से बांग्लादेश दिखाई देता है।

सन 1988 में बाल्पक्रम पहाड़ी को राष्ट्रीय उद्यान ओए वन्य पशु अभयारण्य घोषित किया गया था। स्वर्गीय प्रधानमंत्री राजीव गाँधी ने इसका उद्घाटन किया था। तब से जैव विविधताओं के कारण इसने लोगों का ध्यान अपनी ओर आकर्षित किया है। इस छोटे से पठार पर भिन्न-भिन्न प्रजाति के दुर्लभ पशु-पक्षी, जीव-जंतु, पेड़-पौधे और जड़ीबूटियाँ मिलती हैं। इनमें से कुछ ऐसी दुर्लभ जड़ीबूटियाँ हैं जो चिकित्सा के लिए बहुत उपयोगी हैं। दुःख की बात यह है कि इनमें से कई जड़ीबूटियाँ समाप्त हो रही हैं। निःसंदेह यह स्थान वैज्ञानिकों, बनस्पतियों और प्रकृतिवादियों के लिए आकर्षण का केंद्र है क्योंकि यह शोध के लिए उपयुक्त स्थान बन गया है लेकिन गारो जनजाति में इस जगह को लेकर अपना दृष्टिकोण और अपनी मान्यताएँ हैं।

यहाँ तक कि स्थानीय लोग का मानना है कि बाल्पक्रम की दुर्गम घाटियों में कुछ ऐसे स्थान हैं, जहाँ चट्टानों की छतों से पानी के बूँदें टपकती हैं। इनमें रोग-निवारण क्षमता है। जिसका पता कुछ समय पूर्व चला। यह बात तब सामने आयी, जब एक पक्षाघात से पीड़ित रोगी पूर्णतया स्वस्थ हो गया। वह रोगी लम्बे समय से इस बिमारी के कारण बहुत कष्ट में था। उसके परिवार वालों ने दवाइयों के साथ-साथ उसका देशी इलाज भी करवाया परन्तु उसे कोई लाभ नहीं हुआ। उसकी दशा देखकर उन लोगों ने सोचा – क्यों न अलग तरीके से इलाज करवाया जाए? अतः वे लोग उसे बाल्पक्रम पठार पर ले गए, जहाँ से वे खड़ी ढलान से रस्सियों के सहारे नीचे उतरे। वह इलाका बहुत उबड़-खाबड़ और बहुत ही कठोर था। रास्ते में कई मोड़ मिले; वे चलते गए और कैसे पहुँचे? उन्हें पता ही नहीं चला। खोजते-खोजते उन्हें उस गुप्त स्थान का पता चल ही गया, जहाँ से बर्फ के समान ठंडी पानी की बूँदें टपक रही थीं। रोगी को अच्छी तरह से सहारा देकर उस स्थान पर बैठाया गया। वह उस स्थान पर बिना हिले-डुले काफी देर तक बैठा रहा। अचानक बर्फ की तरह ठंडी एक बूँद उसके सिर के दाहिनी गिरी। वह लगातार हिलाने लगा और तुरंत की हिंसक-सा हो गया। थोड़ी देर बाद वह बेहोश हो गया और उसका सारा शरीर ऐँठ गया। उसके बाद वह पूरी तरह से ठीक हो गया और खुद चलता हुआ अपने घर लौटा। इस पठार में लगभग 50 ऐसे स्थान हैं जो पौराणिकताओं और विचित्र रहस्यों से भरे पड़े हैं, जो अवर्णनीय हैं। अब तक तीन व्यक्ति, जो पक्षाघात की बीमारी से पीड़ित थे,

वे स्वस्थ हो गए हैं। हालाँकि इन तीन व्यक्तियों का नाम, पता आदि किसी को ज्ञात नहीं है। इसके सत्यापन हेतु इनकी खोज करना आवश्यक है।

ध्यातव्य है कि बाल्पक्रम न केवल गारो जनजाति के लिए ही अपितु हिन्दुओं के लिए पवित्र स्थान है। ऐसा माना जाता है कि बाल्पक्रम वह स्थान है, जो हिन्दू पौराणिकता से भी जुड़ा है। श्री एच.ए. मराक ने अपनी विवरणिका शीर्षक “बाल्पक्रम” में लिखा है कि हिन्दुओं के कई पौराणिक स्थानों में भगवान शिव ठाकुर का एक निवास स्थान यहाँ था और लिंग के रूप में वह पत्थर महादेव नदी की घाटी में थी। इनका यह भी विश्वास है कि बाल्पक्रम एक पवित्र पर्वत था। जहाँ संजीवनी बूटी उगती थी, जो जीवन की रक्षा करती है। जब लक्ष्मण लंका में मेघनाद से युद्ध करते समय गंभीर रूप से घायल हो गए थे और उनके प्राण संकट में पड़ गए, तब वैद्यराज सुषेन के कहने पर लक्ष्मण के प्राण बचाने के लिए हनुमान जी को संजीवनी बूटी सूर्यास्त से पहले लाने के लिए कहा गया। पुराण के अनुसार हनुमान जी ने पूरे विश्व क्व चक्कर लगाया परन्तु उन्हें संजीवनी कहीं नहीं दिखाई दी। अंत में बाल्पक्रम के पहाड़ में उन्हें संजीवनी बूटी जंगलों में दिखाई दी। उस समय सूर्य डूबने लगा था और समय बहुत कम बचा था। अतः शीघ्र ही उन्होंने पहाड़ का ऊपरी भाग तोड़ लिया और मूर्च्छित राजकुमार को बचाने के लिए वापिस लौट आए। इसी कारण बाल्पक्रम की पहाड़ी का ऊपरी भाग एक सपाट मेज या पठार के समान हो गया।

डॉ. जुरियस एल. आर. मराक, संग्रहालय वैज्ञानिक, निदेशक कला, संस्कृति, मेघालय सरकार के अनुसार रामायण में वर्णित ‘गंधमादन पर्वत’ और कहीं नहीं बल्कि गारो पहाड़ियों में बाल्पक्रम छोटी है। पुराने ज़माने में हिन्दू तीर्थयात्री दूसरे देशों और पड़ोसी देशों से यहाँ वर्ष में एक बार श्रद्धा से आते थे। कुछ वर्ष तक मयमनसिंह के राजवंश (आज बांग्लादेश में) शाही परिवार साल में एक बार यहाँ तीर्थ के लिए आते थे और कुछ दिनों के लिए यहाँ रुकते थे।

इसके अतिरिक्त यहाँ कुछ ऐसे साक्ष्य मिलते हैं जिससे यह ज्ञात होता है कि यहाँ कभी हिन्दू धर्म के अनुयायी रहते थे। आज जहाँ आस-पास कोई हिन्दू परिवार नहीं रहता है, ऐसी जगह में महेशखोला मंदिर गारो, खासी पहाड़ियों और बांग्लादेश के बीच स्थित है। इस वीराने में हिन्दू मन्दिर का होना कई सवाल पैदा करता है। वहाँ बहने वाली पाँच समानांतर नदियाँ, जो कि बाल्पक्रम में बहती हैं, उनमें से

चार नदियों के नाम हिन्दू धर्म से सम्बंधित हैं। उन चार नदियों के नाम हैं – महादेव नदी, जो महादेव भगवान पर आधारित, महेशखोला नदी – भगवान महेश पर आधारित, उसके बाद गणेशवारी नदी, जो शिव के पुत्र गणेश पर आधारित और कनाई नदी, जो नागों के देवता नाग कन्या पर आधारित है। इनमें से केवल एक नदी है जिसका नाम स्थानीय नाम “चिमिते” है। यह ना’वा के नाम से भी जानी जाती है, इसका अर्थ है – देव नदी।



इससे यह अनुमान लगा सकते हैं कि वहाँ किसी समय हिन्दू रहते थे या पूजा करते थे और यह एक पवित्र क्षेत्र माना जाता रहा होगा।

बाल्यक्रम के उत्तर-पश्चिम से थोड़ी दूर पर सनितमंग या विमोंग की पहाड़ियों पर हिन्दुओं की श्रद्धा है। वे इसे भगवान शिव के घर कैलाश के नाम से पुकारते हैं। श्री हेल्सिंग एस. संगमा ने ईसा पूर्व गारो पहाड़ियों के जनजातियों पर पूर्वी बंगाल (अब बांग्लादेश) के हिन्दुओं का ऐतिहासिक एवं सांस्कृतिक प्रभाव का वर्णन किया है। श्री देवानसिंग एस. रोंगमुल्ह ने गारो जनजातियों की सांस्कृतिक, सामाजिक और धार्मिक दृष्टिकोण के प्रति अपने विचार व्यक्त करते हुए लिखा है कि बाल्यक्रम और उसके आस-पास का क्षेत्र मादी-रोंग-कुची (महादेव नदी का स्त्रोत) में प्राचीन गारो समुदाय रहता था। मादी-रोंग-कुची बहुत ही उन्नत और समृद्ध क्षेत्र था। यह उस समय की बात है जब स्वर्ग और पृथ्वी अलग-अलग नहीं थे और धरती पर साधारण मनुष्य का नहीं अपितु देवताओं का निवास था।

हिन्दू विश्वास के समान गारो समुदाय की मान्यता के अनुसार जीवन-चक्र अनन्त है और आत्माएँ अजर-अमर हैं। उनका पुनर्जन्म होता है। मृत्यु के बाद और जन्म के पूर्व जीव आत्मा के रूप में रहती हैं। इनकी मान्यता के अनुसार जीवन-मृत्यु एक अनन्त काल तक चलने वाला एक चक्र है। बाल्यक्रम मृत आत्माओं का घर है, जहाँ आत्माएँ पुनर्जन्म लेने के पहले अस्थायी रूप से रहती हैं। जब किसी व्यक्ति की मृत्यु हो जाती है तो वह इस धरती पर आत्मा के रूप रहता है। इसे स्थानीय बोली में 'मंग' (Me.Mang) कहते हैं, जिसका अर्थ है – मृत व्यक्ति की आत्मा। साधारणतया आत्माएँ बाल्यक्रम की ओर जाती हैं, जो आत्माओं का अस्थायी पड़ाव है। जहाँ आत्माएँ कुछ समय रहने के बाद पुनर्जन्म लेती हैं। वे अपने पूर्व जन्म के कर्मानुसार मनुष्य या किसी रूप में जन्म लेते हैं। जन्म लेने से पहले वे आत्माएँ क्योंकि वे अदृश्य रहती हैं अतः उनकी बात कोई नहीं समझ सकता है। आत्माओं के रूप में इस क्षेत्र में चारो ओर घूमती हैं परन्तु मनुष्यों को दिखाई नहीं देती हैं। दुनिया जो कुछ भी होता है, वे देख सकती हैं परन्तु बता नहीं सकती हैं। श्रीमद्भगवतगीता के द्वितीय अध्याय, सांख्ययोग में श्री कृष्ण आत्मा के पुनर्जन्म को व्याख्यायित करते हुए कहते हैं –

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत।

अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ 28 ॥ (सांख्ययोग)

अर्थात् हे भारतवंशी ! समस्त प्राणी जन्म से पहले अप्रकट रहते हैं, बीच में (स्थितिकाल में) प्रकट होते हैं और मरने के बाद पुनः अप्रकट हो जाते हैं। अतः इसमें शोक करने की क्या बात है। इसी प्रकार आत्मा के अजर-अमर होने, शरीर के नाशवान होने एवं कर्मानुसार विभिन्न योनियों में पुनर्जन्म लेने की अवधारणा प्राचीन गारो मान्यता सनातन दर्शन के साथ अपने संबंधों सुदृढ़ बनाती है, जो सुदूर पूर्वोत्तर के राज्य मेघालय के गारो पहाड़ियों की गारो जनजातीय आस्था को मुख्यधारा से जोड़ती है।

कहा जाता है कि एक सूक्ष्म आवरण (कोहरे की तरह) आत्माओं को संसार से अलग करता है। मान्यता है कि आमतौर पर पशु-पक्षी की आत्माएँ बाल्यक्रम में ही रहती हैं लेकिन खास अवसरों में वे दूसरी जगहों में भी घूमती हैं। कई शिकारियों के अनुभव इस बात की पुष्टि करते हैं। जब वे बाल्यक्रम में शिकार करने जाते हैं तो उनका सामना ऐसी आत्माओं से हुआ, जो चकित करने वाला है। शिकार करने के दौरान जब वे किसी पशु-पक्षी पर निशाना साधते हैं तो पलक झपकते ही वे आँखों के सामने से अदृश्य हो जाती हैं। अगर एक झलक में उन्हें देखें तो वे सामान्य पशु-पक्षी की तरह दिखाई देते हैं। यह अंतर तब पता चलता है जब इन पर निशाना लग जाता है तो इनके शरीर से खून नहीं बहता है।

इन्हें मारा नहीं जा सकता है क्योंकि वे एक पल में जीवित हो जाते हैं या दूसरे पल में अदृश्य हो जाते हैं। मारे गए स्थान पर खून के निशान नहीं मिलते। कहा जाता

है कि वे आत्माएँ पशु-पक्षियों की हैं, जिनके शरीर में मांस नहीं होता केवल कंकाल मात्र होता है। सत्य है आत्माओं का रहस्य मानव कल्पना से परे है, जिसे नकारा नहीं जा सकता है। श्रीमद् भगवतगीता में भी श्रीकृष्ण ने सन्देश दिया है –

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ 20 ॥ (सांख्ययोग)

अर्थात् यह आत्मा न कभी जन्म लेती है और न कभी मरती ही है; अथवा ऐसा भी नहीं है कि यह एक बार जन्म लेकर पुनः नहीं जन्म लेती। यह जन्म रहित, नित्य, शाश्वत तथा संतान है; शरीर के नष्ट होने पर भी यह नष्ट नहीं होती। आत्मा एवं पुनर्जीवन सम्बन्धी मूल गारो जनजाति की यह अवधारणा हिन्दू दर्शन के अत्यन्त ही निकट है। दुर्भाग्य से इस समुदाय के लगभग सारे लोगों का धर्म परिवर्तन (ईसाई धर्म) हो चुका है। कहीं-कहीं दूर-दराज के गाँवों में कुछ लोग अपने मूल आस्था का अनुसरण कर रहे हैं और अपनी मान्यताओं के प्रति जागरूकता के प्रति उदासीनता ने इस जनजातीय संस्कृति के अस्तित्व पर प्रश्न चिन्ह लगा दिया है। इस पर गंभीर शोध आपेक्षित है।

प्रस्तुति एवं अनुवाद – डॉ अनीता पंडा



धूमन्तू

ऋता सिंह 'सर्जना'

‘मुझे तो मानव शरीर चाहिए ...’

प्रयोगशाला में खुशी का माहौल था। क्योंकि नए प्रयोग के बाद पहली बार के लिए उसे दुनिया की सैर करने की आजादी मिली थी। वह एक संक्रमित जीव था, जिसका सबसे ज्यादा पसंदीदा काम था, मानव शरीर में प्रवेश कर दुनिया की सैर करना। उसे न तो रंगभेद से मतलब था, न किसी लिंग भेद से पर उसे तलाश रहती थी बेहद कमजोर और लापरवाह लोगों से क्योंकि वह इसमें आसानी से प्रवेश कर निशाना बना लेने में सक्षम हो जाता है। दुनिया में हाहाकार मचाने में सफल जीव घूमते घामते भारत में भी पहुँच गया। उतावले जीव पर भारत की पहले से ही नजर थी लेकिन उसे नई भूमि में आकर खूब उधम मचाने का मन था। कुछ यालियों की मदद से वह आया मगर तभी... उसने महसूस किया -

“अरे यह क्या लोगों को क्या हुआ है? सड़के इतनी सूनसान क्यों है? हमने तो सुना था इस देश में लोगों की बड़ी भीड़ रहती है। पर यहाँ तो लोग दिखाई नहीं दे रहे है! कहाँ दुबक गए? जीव सोचने लगा। उसे कहाँ पता था कि भारत ने चेन तोड़ने की पूरी बंदोबस्त कर लिया है। कुछ पल के लिए निराश होकर जीव कुछ मायूस हो गया मगर थोड़ी दूर पर जाकर उसका चेहरा फिर से खिल उठा। वहाँ कुछ लोग इकट्ठा होकर नारे लगाने में व्यस्त थे।

“बेवकूफ इंसान! तुमने मुझे अभी तक नहीं पहचाना है। अच्छा है तुम्हारी बेफिक्री ही मेरी जीत है। जब तुम्हें मेरी ताकत की कोई अन्दाज़ा नहीं है, तो मुझे उड़ान भरने में क्या हर्ज है? लड़ो, आपस में मेरा क्या? मुझे तो मानव शरीर चाहिए... तुम चाहे कोई भी हो। जीव कुटिलता से मुस्कुराया और चुपके से एक नए शरीर में घुस गया।



पूर्वोत्तर में आध्यात्मिक सूर्योदय के अग्रदूत

डॉ अवधेश कुमार 'अवध'



‘स्वदेशे पूज्यते राजा विद्वान् सर्वत्र पूज्यते।’ जी हाँ, राज की पूजा उसके देश में होती है, वो भी भय से, इसके विपरीत विद्वान् की पूजा दुनिया भर में होती है, वो भी पूरी श्रद्धा से। उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी का अंत और बीसवीं शताब्दी की शुरुआत एक ऐसे परिवेश में हुई जिसमें अधिकांश दुनिया परतन्त्र थी। न केवल भौगोलिक अपितु धार्मिक, आध्यात्मिक, सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक रूप से हमारा देश भी गुलाम था। धर्म के नाम पर पाखंड, कुप्रथाएँ और रुढ़ियाँ मनुष्यता पर भारी थीं। अतीत कालीन विश्वगुरु और सोने की चिड़िया के रूप में संज्ञा प्राप्त भारत की गुरुता मृतप्राय हो रही थी और सोने की चिड़िया से सोना नदारद था। बहुमुखी समस्याओं से जूझते भारत में समय-समय पर जागरण अभियान एवं आन्दोलन चलाए जाते किंतु सब ऊँट के मुँह में जीरा साबित होते..... अपर्याप्त थे। इसी बीच कलकत्ता में 13 जनवरी सन् 1863 को एक शिशु ने जन्म लिया जिसका नाम नरेन्द्र नाथ दत्त रखा गया। ज्यों-ज्यों नरेन्द्र नाथ दत्त बड़े होते गए, उनकी यशोकीर्ति बढ़ती गई। रामकृष्ण परमहंस उनके गुरु हुए और नरेन्द्र नाथ दत्त स्वामी विवेकानन्द बन आए। इस सपूत के पाँव पालने में ही परिलक्षित होने लगे। स्वामीजी ने अपने गुरु के नाम पर रामकृष्ण मिशन की स्थापना की जिनकी संख्या दुनिया भर में अब बढ़कर 177 से अधिक हो गई है।



11 सितम्बर 1893 को शिकागो, अमेरिका में धर्म सम्मेलन रखा गया था जिसमें सनातन धर्म का प्रतिनिधित्व स्वामीजी ने किया। इसमें तीन प्रमुख बातों को बताना आवश्यक हो जाता है। अमेरिका यात्रा के दौरान 30 वर्षीय स्वामीजी से 54 वर्षीय टाटा जी की मुलाकात हुई। बातों के दौरान स्वामीजी ने उन्हें भारत में स्टील फैक्ट्री और रिसर्च यूनिवर्सिटी स्थापित करने का सुझाव दिया। टाटा जी ने दोनों कार्य करके दिखाया। कहना नहीं पड़ेगा कि भारत की उन्नति में इन दोनों संस्थानों का कितना योगदान है! दूसरी प्रमुख घटना हार्वर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी के प्रोफेसर जॉन हेनरी राइट से मुलाकात की है। जब जॉन हेनरी को पता चला कि धर्म संसद में स्वामीजी को प्रवेश की अनुमति परिचय पत्र के अभाव में नहीं मिल पा रही है तो उन्होंने कहा कि, “आपका परिचय मांगना ठीक उसी तरह है जैसे सूर्य से स्वर्ग में चमकने के लिए उसके अधिकार का सबूत मांगना।” तीसरी घटना धर्म संसद में अप्रतिम सम्बोधन से जुड़ी है। स्वामीजी ने अपने सम्बोधन में कहा, “अमेरिका के बहनों एवं भाइयों, मैं आपको दुनिया की सबसे प्राचीन परम्परा की ओर से धन्यवाद देता हूँ। मैं आपको सभी धर्मों की जननी की ओर से धन्यवाद देता हूँ और सभी जाति, सम्प्रदाय के लाखों, करोड़ों हिन्दुओं की तरफ से आपका आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ...।” इसके साथ ही पाखंडरहित और वैज्ञानिक अवधारणाओं पर आधारित सनातन धर्म और वेदांत से स्वामीजी ने पूरी दुनिया को भली-भाँति परिचित कराया। स्वामीजी का प्रवचन न केवल स्वामीजी के लिए बल्कि सारी दुनिया के लिए अविस्मरणीय बना। भारत की धार्मिक साख का लोहा विश्व ने माना। भारत माता फूले न समायी अपने विलक्षण सपूत के वैश्विक उन्नयन पर। गिरते स्वास्थ्य पर भारी असीम जोश ने स्वामीजी को सदैव सकारात्मक एवं आशान्वित रखा। उन्होंने एक बार कहा भी था कि, “खुद को कमजोर समझना सबसे बड़ा पाप है।”

धर्म के प्रति स्वामीजी की राय सदैव बहुत व्यापक और समभाव की है। धर्म/सम्प्रदाय को उन्होंने सद्भावना और दुर्भावना का सबसे बड़ा और प्रबल कारण माना।

समाज को नियन्त्रित करने में धर्म की भूमिका सर्वाधिक है। सच्चा धर्म वही है जिसमें सबको अपनाने की क्षमता हो। किसी का कोई आराध्य हो सकता है, हमसे पृथक् धर्म ग्रंथ हो सकता है किन्तु उसको उसी रूप में स्वीकार करना ही सर्वोत्तम धर्म है और मानवता भी। जब धर्म में अविवेकी और बौद्धिक रूप से अंधे लोग सशक्त हो जाते हैं तो यही धर्म समाज में अविश्वास और अराजकता फैलाने का साधन बन जाता है। स्वामीजी धार्मिक सहिष्णुता को सीमित अर्थ में देखते थे। सहिष्णुता में दया के साथ स्वीकारोक्ति का आशय निहित होता है अर्थात् जब हम अपने से पृथक् धर्म वाले को सहज होकर नहीं अपनाते बल्कि दया करके या एकता की मजबूरी में अपनाते हैं तो वहाँ धार्मिक सहिष्णुता प्रभावी होती है। यह धार्मिक सद्भाव की अपेक्षा बेहद संकुचित अवधारणा है। उन्होंने यह भी बताया कि, “सत्य को हजार तरीके से बताया जा सकता है फिर भी हर एक सत्य ही होगा।” इसका आशय है कि सबकी मंजिल एक होनी चाहिए, रास्तों की परवाह मत करो। चलने दो सबको पसंदीदा रास्तों से, चुनने दो मनवांछित तरीका। अंत में सबको पहुँचना है एक ही गंतव्य पर।

भारत का पूर्वोत्तर भू-भाग सांस्कृतिक प्रयोगशाला के रूप में आज भी जाना जाता है। इसका सम्बंध प्राचीन काल में महाभारत के प्रमुख पांडव पात्रों से रहा है। अर्जुन और भीम की शादियाँ यहाँ भी हुई थीं। महावीर घटोत्कच और महात्मा बर्बरीक इसी पावन भूमि की पैदाइश थे। बाणासुर-कृष्ण के महासंग्राम के उपरान्त उषा - अनिरुद्ध की प्रेम कहानी जीवंत हुई। शक्तिपीठ कामाख्या और जयन्तिया देवी का सम्बंध भी शेष भारत से अटूट रहा है। यहाँ ब्रह्मर्षि वशिष्ठ का आश्रम होना भी धार्मिक भावना के उत्थान का द्योतक है। मुगलों से हर बार यद्यपि यह भू भाग विजयी रहा तथापि संग्राम ने विकास को अवरुद्ध किया। परिणाम स्वरूप उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी का चरणांत पूर्वोत्तर को कई अर्थों में कमजोर कर रखा था। जाति, भाषा, बोली, क्षेत्र, उपक्षेत्र, कबीले आदि में असंगठित तत्कालीन बड़ा असम राज्य की राजधानी शिलाँग (शिवलिंग) थी। हिंदू, मुस्लिम और ईसाई धर्म के लिकोण पर अवस्थित लिशंकु पूर्वोत्तर भू भाग पर स्वामीजी का चरण पड़ना नितांत आवश्यक था। सुप्तप्राय सनातनी आध्यात्मिक/सांस्कृतिक चेतना के पुनर्जागरण हेतु स्वामीजी अप्रैल-मई 1901 में सर हेनरी कॉटन के आमन्त्रण पर शिलाँग आना स्वीकार किए। इसका एक कारण यहाँ की स्वास्थ्यप्रद जलवायु का होना भी था।

स्वामीजी की शिलांग यात्रा पूर्वोत्तर के लिए एक क्रांतिकारी कदम थी। श्रीमंत शंकर देव के बाद मूल सनातन अवधारणा से जनता विमुख हो रही थी। श्रीमंत का आधार केवल भक्ति था और भक्ति से वही प्रभावित हो सकता है जिसके भीतर इसका प्रादुर्भाव हो, वैज्ञानिक सोच रखने वालों को वैज्ञानिक आधार चाहिए। पाखंडवाद के चंगुल में वेदांत दम तोड़ रहा है। स्वामी दयानन्द का “वेदों की ओर लौटो” के आह्वान से भी पूर्वोत्तर अछूता ही था। स्वामीजी अपने परिजनों एवं शुभचिंतकों के साथ 18 मार्च 1901 को जलमार्ग द्वारा ढाका के लिए प्रस्थान किये। तदनन्तर 5 अप्रैल 1901 को ढाका से कामाख्या के लिए चल दिये और कामाख्या में एक पंजा के घर रुके। यहाँ उनकी मुलाकात पद्मनाथ भट्टाचार्य से हुई और गुवाहाटी में स्वामीजी के तीन अनमोल प्रवचन भी हुए।

तदुपरान्त स्वामीजी गुवाहाटी से शिलांग के लिए चल पड़े। अस्वस्थ थे लेकिन यहाँ आने का मोह संवरण न कर सके। घोड़ागाड़ी पर उनके साथ उनके घर वाले भी थे। उनकी गाड़ी के अगल- बगल पैदल चल रहे थे शिलांग के जमींदार राय साहब कैलाश चन्द्र दास और ज्योतिन्द्रनाथ बसु। शायद समय को इंतजार था एक विशेष अध्याय लिखने का या संचेतना क्रांति के बीज- रोपण का। स्वामीजी के ही शब्दों में, “उठो, जागो और तब तक मत रुको जब तक लक्ष्य की प्राप्ति न हो जाये।” इस तरह स्वामीजी शिलांग में जमींदार केसी दास के आग्रह पर उनके घर ठहरे।

27 अप्रैल 1901 का दिन स्वर्णाक्षरों में अंकित है। इसी दिन तत्कालीन असम के मुख्य आयुक्त सर हेनरी कॉटन, अंग्रेज हुक्मरान और स्थानीय जनता के समक्ष क्विंटन मेमोरियल हॉल में स्वामीजी के प्रवचन ने इतिहास रचा। अब वह हॉल रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानन्द सांस्कृतिक केन्द्र के नाम से सुविख्यात है।

पूर्वोत्तर में 20-25 दिन रहकर स्वामीजी पुनः कोलकाता वापस हो गये। उनका यह कथन विचारणीय है कि, “आत्मा से अच्छा कोई शिक्षक नहीं। दिल और दिमाग के टकराव में दिल की सुनो।” कमजोर स्वास्थ्य के कारण फिर बड़े स्तर पर प्रवचन करने में असमर्थ रहने लगे। 4 जुलाई 1902 को बेलुर मठ, हावड़ा में स्वामीजी नश्वर शरीर को त्यागकर परब्रह्म में विलीन हो गये। इन्होंने अस्पृश्यता का सदैव विरोध किया तथा साथ ही मानवता का पोषण किया। उनकी विचारधारा पूर्णतः वैज्ञानिक थी। उनका कहना था कि ‘तर्क की कसौटी पर कसकर किसी तथ्य को परखो, फिर मानो। आँख मूँदकर सुनी-सुनाई बातों पर विश्वास न करो।’ आत्मबल पर विशेष बल देते हैं। एक बार उन्होंने कहा था कि, “जब आप खुद पर विश्वास नहीं करते, आप भगवान पर विश्वास नहीं कर सकते।” स्वामीजी स्पष्ट विचारधारा और दृढ़ी व्यक्तित्व के स्वामी थे। महाप्रस्थान के 118 वर्षों के बाद भी स्वामीजी सबके मन मस्तिष्क में बसे हुए हैं। उनकी 150वीं जन्म वर्षगाँठ और शिलांग में प्रवचन की 112वीं वर्षगाँठ पर भव्य आयोजन का किया जाना उनके प्रति असीम श्रद्धा का परिचायक है।

देउतार मैना (पिता की बेटी)

वाणी बरठाकर ‘विभा’



जनवरी का महीना, धीरेन्द्र छुट्टी खत्म करके वापस अपनी कार्यरत जगह अरुणाचल जाने के लिए तैयार हो रहा है। तभी चुमकी आकर धीरेन्द्र से कहती है, “देउता, आप फिर घर कब आओगे?” धीरेन्द्र ने बेटी से कहा, “देखता हूँ, फिर कब छुट्टी मिले। वैसे तो तुम जानते ही हो, हम आर्मी वालों को छुट्टी मिलना इतना आसान नहीं है।”

चुमकी पिताजी के जवाब पर बोल उठी, “ना देउता, आपको इस बार ‘बहाग बिहू’ में आना ही होगा। बहाग बिहू के पाँच दिन बाद मेरा जन्मदिन भी है। इसबार आपके साथ जन्मदिन मनाऊँगी और बिहू भी। आपको आना ही होगा।” धीरेन्द्र भी कान पकड़ कर घुटनों के बल बैठ गया, ठीक है मेरी माँ, इसबार अवश्य आऊँगा और हम सभी एक साथ बिहू और तुम्हारा जन्मदिन मनाएँगे।” धीरेन्द्र चला गया।

फरवरी/मार्च बीत गया, अप्रैल आया। बातों बातों में हमेशा चुमकी सबको कहती कि इसबार बिहू और जन्मदिन वो पिता के संग मनाएगी। वह उस दिन की प्रतीक्षा बहुत उत्साह से कर रही थी क्योंकि उसे जबसे होश आया, उसने कभी भी पिताजी के साथ बिहू और जन्मदिन नहीं मनाया है। एक दिन चुमकी माँ को बोली, “माँ, सब बता रहे हैं कि कल से बहाग बिहू है!” माँ के ‘हाँ, कहने पर उसने पूछा, “देउता कब आ रहे हैं?” माँ उसको बताया, “अभी सम्पूर्ण भारत में लॉकडाउन चल रहा है। ऐसे में तेरे देउता कैसे आएँगे!” चुमकी कहने लगी, “ये लॉकडाउन क्या है माँ? इसके लिए स्कूल भी नहीं भेज रही हो, बिहू के लिए नए कपड़े भी नहीं दे रही हो। सब कहते हैं, लॉकडाउन लॉकडाउन लॉकडाउन...।” माँ उसे समझाने लगती है, “लॉकडाउन यानी ताला बंद। कोरोना महामारी फैलने के कारण सबको घर में रहना है, ताकि कोरोना की शृंखला टूटे और लोग बच जाएँ। हम भी इसलिए घर में हैं और तुम भी घर में हो और सम्पूर्ण देशवासी अपने-अपने घरों में हैं।” इसी बीच चुमकी बोलने लगी, “तब तो देउता को भी घर में रहना चाहिए। अभी आप देउता को भी घर बुला लीजिये।” तभी माँ उसे समझाने लगती है, “अगर देउता घर आएँगे तो देश की रक्षा कौन करेगा?” तभी चुमकी बोली, “हाँ माँ, बिहू और जन्मदिन हर साल आएगा लेकिन हमारा देश चल जाए तो हमारा क्या होगा? है न माँ!” बेटी को प्यार से गोदी में उठाकर माँ बोली, “इतनी बड़ी बात तुझे किसने सिखाया है?” चुमकी मुस्कराते हुए बोली, “देउता तो मुझे अक्सर कहते हैं कि देश चले जाने से हम भी नहीं रहेंगे।” माँ उसे गले लगाकर कहने लगी, “सच में तुम अपनी देउता की सच्ची बहादुर बेटी हो।”

*देउता- पिता

*बहाग बिहू- बैसाख महीने में असम वासी मनाने वाले जातीय उत्सव।

LINEAGE SYSTEM IN KHASI MATRILINEAL SOCIETY: TRADITION AND CHANGE



Dr. Streamlet Dkhar

Matrilineal society has a system in which lineage is traced through the mother and maternal ancestors. All the members of the clan who trace their descent from the common ancestral mother practise their lineage system in the matrilineal society. The line of descent in all prevailing generations that comes from the mother is known as matrilineal descent¹. The Khasis also practise the matrilineal system. Khasis include the *Khyntiam*, *Pnar*, *Bhoi*, *War Khasi*, *War Jaintia*, *Maram*, *Lyngngam* and *Dyko*¹. These are all known by the generic term the “Khasi”. On this, H. Lyngdoh wrote: “*Ka kyntien Khasi ka kyntiup ia ki Khasi baroh - ki Khasi ne Khyntiam, ki Pnar ne Synteng, Ki Bhoi, ki War bad ki Lyngngam - kiba shong hapoh ne shabar ka ri lum Khasi bad Synteng*” (H. Lyngdoh, 1937, 1). A number

of eminent Khasi writers such as, R.S. Lyngdoh, H.O. Mawrie, R.T. Rymbai, D.T. Laloo to name a few, were of the opinion that the Khasis are the descendants of the sixteen families or the *Khathynriew Trep* from heaven out of which seven families were sent to earth through *Ka Jingkieng Ksiar Sohpetbneng* or the golden ladder of Sohpetbneng. This creation myth is deeply rooted in the Khasi belief system. The Khasis have been practising the cultural customs and practices of the matrilineal system from time immemorial. These traditional systems, which are still practised till today have made the Khasis as one of the unique tribes of the world. As far as the kinship system of the Khasis is concerned, it may be viewed that the clan system characterises the structure of the society.



Raphael Warjri

¹Dyko- is a term that is still questionable by many whether or not they could be considered as Khasis.

Helen Giri said of the clan system that “it is the first social entity around which other social institutions revolve” (Helen Giri, 159). When one talks about the practice of the lineage system in the Khasi matrilineal society, one will have to go first to the root of the clanlineage.

As far as Khasi society is concerned, the ancestral mother is known as “*Ka Īawbei*”. “*Ka Īawbei*” means the first ancestral mother of the clan. She is always known as “*Ka Īawbei Tynrai*” or ‘the root/original ancestral mother’ who is the first mother of the clan. The husband of “*Ka Īawbei*” is known as “*U Thanlang*” who is the ancestral father, the progenitor, whereas “*U Suidnia*” is the ancestral maternal uncle of the clan. There is also “*Ka Īawbei Tymmen*” literally meaning ‘the old ancestral mother’ and she is the ancestral mother in the second generation. “*Ka Īawbei Khyinran*” or ‘the young ancestral mother’ is the ancestral mother in the third generation and “*Ka Kpob*” or the ‘womb’ is a mother from one’s own generation. Throughout generations all children, grand-children and great grandchildren take the lineage of their clan as originated from “*Ka Īawbei Tynrai*”. Thus, whenever a Khasi meets another Khasi, not known to one another, they will first enquire about each other’s clan that they belong to.

As the descent is through the mother’s side, only the children of the daughters can become members of the clan. The children from the sons cannot be the members of their father’s clan as they cannot take their fathers’ clanname. Therefore, females belonging to the clan shall continue the lineage and wives of sons and of maternal uncles cannot take the clan lineage of their husbands’ as they have their own roots of their respective clans.

To uphold the clan lineage, the Khasis have their own tradition to assure that the laws of consanguinity are maintained. Thus there are prohibitions in marriage to evade incest as each clan is a matrilineal exogamous group and no one could marry within the clan. Any transgression in this matter by any member of the clan involves ostracism from the other members of the clan. An offence in this matter or the sin of incest is considered an unpardonable sin. The perpetrator would be turned into an outcast from the clan to the extent that no funeral rites for him/her would be performed by the clan and his/her bones and ashes after his/her demise would not be placed in the clan ossuary called “*Ka Mamab*”.



The scope of “*Ka Kur*” or the clan in the Khasi society is widespread. The clan is not restricted only to a particular area or village, but is spread throughout the length and breadth of Meghalaya and Bangladesh, other places of the country and even outside India. In tracing the matrilineal consanguine kin group at different levels, one would first trace the nearest clan relation called “*Ka Kpob*” which means the same mother from whom children are born. This is followed by tracing cousin brothers and sisters known as “*shipara arkmie*” who are the offsprings of the elder or younger sisters of one’s mother. After this, the children from the grandmothers who are the sisters of one’s own maternal grandmother are traced. In this way, the kin relationship is traced from one generation to the other as long as one could remember. The other members who belong to the same clan yet distant from the ones one could trace are known as “*shi kur*” or simply, one belonging to the same clan and not necessarily the same “*kpob*”. The lineage system remains alive within the Khasi society. If a Khasi mother converts to another religion, she, alongwith her children, are still considered Khasis as long as she continues to practise “*ka khein kur*” or knowing the kith and kin of her cognates as this is a significant part of the matrilineal system since it indicates the blood relationship. As per custom and tradition, “*ka kur*” or the clan is the main identity of every Khasi.

The kinship system, also called the kinship terminology system, has a kind of social norm which uses a set of particular vocabulary to indicate the blood relationships among the Khasi people. The matrilineal kinship system of the Khasis is used within their matrilineal blood groups of “*kur*” or clan. It includes certain terminologies which are: *Mei Īawbei* or the great-great grandmother; *Mei*

Dot or the great-grandmother; and *Mei Ieit* who is the grandmother. The mother's elder sister is known as *Mei San/Mei Heb* and the mother's younger sister is known as *Mei Deng/ Mei Rit/Mei Dub/ Nahnah*. The mother's sister's daughter (older than ego) is known as *ka hynmen arkmie* and the mother's sister's daughter (younger than ego) is known as *ka para arkmie*.

As is the custom, the maternal uncle plays a vital role in the clan. The Khasis have great respect for all maternal uncles of the clan and they have different terminologies for each one of them, such as *Madot* for mother's great maternal uncle and *Mabah* for mother's maternal uncle. The eldest brother of one's own mother is a maternal uncle known as *Maangbah*; the middle one is known as *Madeng* or *Makhynnah* and the last maternal uncle is known as *Madub* or *Marit*. All elder sisters from one's own mother known as *hynmen kynthai* are referred to as *Kongthai* or *Kongkong* or *Kongieit*. *Kongdeng* is the reference for the middle one and *para kynthai* means the one younger to herself and is called by specific names as *Heplung*, *Heprit*, *Hepdub* or simply *Dub*. The Khasis call their elder brothers as *ki hynmen shynrang* and the prefix "*Bah*" is always added such as *Babbeh* or *Babrangbah* or *Babbah* for the elder brother; the middle one is *Bahdeng* or *Babkhyannah*; and the youngest brother is called *Bahdub*. The children are known as "*ki khun*" with daughters as *ki khun kynthai* while sons are known as *ki khun shynrang*. Grandchildren as known as "*ksien*" with granddaughters being simply called *ka Ksien* or *ka Ksien Kynthai* and the prefix "*ka*" denotes the feminine gender. Grandsons, on the other hand, can be simply referred to as *u Ksien* or *u Ksien Shynrang* and the prefix "*u*" is indicative of the masculine gender. The great-granddaughter or *ka Ksien-tun* and the great-grandson or *u Ksien-tun* alongwith the great great-grandchildren are known as *ki Ksien-jiap*. The ego calls the sister's daughter or the niece *ka Khunruit* and the sister's son, *u Khunruit*. The brother calls the sister's daughter *ka Pysa Kynthai* (niece) or simply *i Pysa*; the word "*i*" in Khasi indicates the mark of respect that is given to anyone. On the other hand, the brother refers to his sister's son as *u Pysa Shynrang* or simply *u Pysa*. Therefore, the terminologies used for the kin relations are important to adhere to since the essence of *ka kheih-kur* plays a vital role in the lineagesystem.

Malwin Stone Passah, a researcher, said that "on account of the matrilineal system among the Khasis, the mother is the person entrusted with the important duties of performing family rites and ceremonies and occupies a position of family priestess." (Passah, 9). His view goes

in line with Hamlet Bareh's opinion that "the mother is the custodian of family rites and a family priestess" (H. Bareh, 290). However, Bareh also wrote that "the task of sacrifice and other religious ceremonies of the house devolves upon the male inmates" (H. Bareh, 290). A woman is only *ka nongri iing* (keeper of the house) and the custodian of family property. Though the Khasis trace their lineage to the mother and holds the position of the keeper of the trust yet, the control and decision making functions in the family and society are mainly concentrated in the hands of men. There has always been an assumption that *ka Khatdub* or the youngest daughter inherits all the property and that she is the sole heir and she enjoys the advantage of her position in the Khasi family. However, by tradition, that is not the real truth. In most of the cases the youngest daughter is only the custodian of the family property and whatever decision to be taken is always done by the maternal uncle. Tradition implies that the house of the youngest daughter is "*Ka Iing Seng Iing Khatdub*" or the sacred and religious house where all religious performances of her clan within her "*Kpoh*" are performed. Management and decision making authority on ancestral property rest with the male members be it the maternal uncles or the elder brothers. Traditionally, female members cannot dispose of such property at their own will. Women are expected to abide by the decision of the male members who act as their counsellors. Though the Khasi woman plays an important role in family matters and prepares the things required for religious rites and rituals, however, despite playing all these roles, she has to be guided by the counsel of her maternal uncle (s) "*U Kñi*" and herbrothers.

A Khasi male has a dual role to play as a maternal uncle in his sister's or mother's house and as a father in his children's house. The father is the executive head of the family and he is revered as the bread winner and the provider. The eldest maternal uncle is generally the head of the clan. There is a Khasi proverb for a Khasi man and the role that he plays which is, - "*U Kpa uba lah baiäi, uba ai äa ka longrynieng, u Kñi uba tang ha ka iäp ka im*" which generally means that the father is the one who is able to provide and protect, the one who gives stature to his children and as the maternal uncle he is present only in matters of life and death.

In the matrilineal system of Khasi society, the head of the household is not the women but the men. It is the male members who take decisions regarding household matters. The symbolic act of "*Ka bam ja khlieb khliew ka dei ka jong u rangbah*" is the practice of having the top most portion of cooked rice from the pot designated

only for the father as he is the head of the family. In a matrilineal society, though the descent is through the females, yet, the sole authority in decision making lies in the male members not in the females. Even though the *Syiem Sad* or the eldest sister of the ruling clan prepares things for the ceremonies however, *U Syiem* or the ruling chief, who is her brother, performs all the rites and rituals.

Though the Khasi society witnesses the woman's primary role in maintaining the continuity of the family, the lineage and the clan yet, today, we are witnessing some changes in the system. The increasing establishment of neo-local residence leads to the increasing authority of her husband or the father of her children resulting in the declining power and authority of the maternal uncle (s) or her brother (s).

With respect to the changing status of the youngest daughters of today, it is seen that, in most cases, the youngest daughter wants to be independent and she moves from the ancestral house to her neo-local house with her husband. She has her own viewpoint of having her own aspirations and so why not let her older sisters take the responsibility of looking after the aged parents. The responsibility that the *khatdub* has to handle as per tradition seems a burden to her now and she prefers avoiding it if she could. In some cases "the youngest daughter today has become the sole owner of the ancestral property and also claims ownership over the whole ancestral property" (Passah,11). This is due to the declining power of her maternal uncles and brothers and the rising power of husbands and fathers.

Transition is witnessed in the Khasi matrilineal society due to the changes in the overall set-up. Such changes can be the result of the different factors such as intermingling with other neighbouring patriarchal communities, the coming of Christianity, impact of colonial mindset, forces

of urbanisation and modernisation, and emergence of nuclear families. Among other factors, the most important one is marriage outside the Khasi community when women leave behind their tradition. Moreover, the increase in higher education today, perception of the elite class in the urban setup, and migration of educated people from rural to the urban setup have, to a large extent, brought about a change in the Khasi Society.

Despite the changes that are witnessed in the Khasi matrilineal society at present, yet, the lineage system is still prevalent and strong because the clan organisation or *Seng Kur* is actively strengthening the power of the clan to uphold the traditional lineage system of the Khasis. In exceptional cases, there is only a handful of Khasi women who have changed their lineage, like those who study or work outside the state as per the requirement of the place they are compelled to give the father's title instead of the mother's. Not also forgetting those who have followed the patriarchal system after marrying a non-Khasi man leaving her mother's lineage and giving the husband's surname.

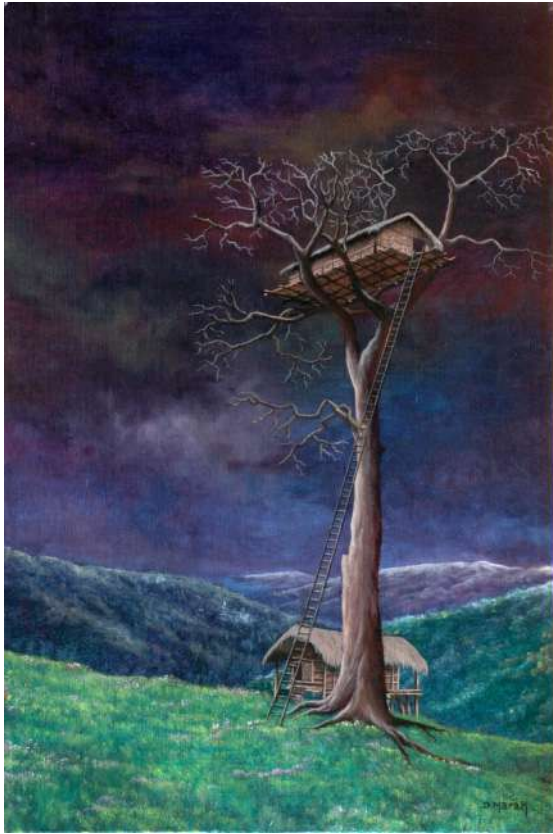
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GARO ART TRADITION

Daniel Marak



The collection of artworks of Garo artists depict Garo mythology, legend, history and folk life of the people. Among the significant folk concepts and images are the Dókakku, Nokpante, Borang, Narikki, Bugarani and other cultural traits of the Garo people. The Nokpante is a popular cultural image that represents the Garo people and their land. It is a bachelors' dormitory where all the discussions about human and social values are deliberated. One of the most significant components of the Nokpante is the Dókakku. It is a treasure trove of ancient Garo culture and tradition. It is believed that Dokakku are being brought from the land of the ancestors at the Tibetan region and installed at any vital post of the Nokpante that is being built. The Narikki is an earring wear by the ladies, believed to be the protective gear from demons in the afterlife. It is like the cylindrical series of rings that mersmerise the evil spirit while the departed soul is on the way to the abode of the ancestors. The other cultural images that affect the sentiment of the artists are the folk mermaid and merman known as Bugarani and Bugaraja; the So're believed to be the most beautiful maiden that caused many mighty warriors to lose their life for her; the Borang or a tree house, that serves as a watchtower at the cultivation field; the Sarendra, a folk musical stringed instrument and few other folk elements.

it started to rain...

Ruchira Gupta

On the glistening green leaves,
On the stones ruining grey,
On the roofs, rusting it red,
On the nest, spoiling their dreams.

The tea seller drooling
Undisturbed by the thunders
Relishing on his wooden couch
Stalled under the raining roof.

At break of the day,
He saw two sparrows
Shading near his kettle
Alas! Their broken home.

Miles away from home,
Still drenched with memories
Of the meadows, ponds
And their huge Neem tree.

By and by he told the sky
To bring those days that had gone by,
No more a foreign in this city
Yet an unrecognized soul.

Stories sweet or sour
Over a cup of tea or two
Mattered nothing to him,
For all he cared was to earn a living.

Round the corner of the year
The festivals knocking
The only thoughts hovering
This year, things will be changing.

"While trying to make a house,
I forgot to live in that house." He thought
The sun came out
Leaving behind the steamy soil.

A month and a half left,
To return to the dwellings
The old ones once more
But not as cosy as before...

Sound of the drum beats
And Catkins all the way home,
Was what he wanted to see
Apart from the smoke's hazy sight.

The autumn's golden sky
The scattered clouds at night,
Yet he could only embrace
The embers from the dark coal burns.

Summers come and go
While Autumn's flower bloom,
Somewhere deep within
He knew he forgot about the rain.

YOUTH
SPEAK



Seema Kohli

Born in 1960, Seema Kohli has created her own niche in the world of art. She has exhibited her work in New York, Dubai, Singapore, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, London, and many more. Her work is displayed in the International/Domestic Airport, the Defence Ministry, Tata Residency, and many more.



contemporary art since past 35 years. Seema Kohli has had over 30 solo show in Venice, Brussels, Melbourne, London, and alike. Her work can be seen as public art as murals of 10' x100' at the T3 Delhi International Airport, Mumbai City, Manipal University, ONGC, Tata Center of Excellence, Park Hyatt, Chennai, Lila Hotel-Delhi, Bangalore and



She says. "When I paint, you see not what I have made but what you want to see." "I," Seema Kohli, painter and teller of stories, "am both myth and reality. Pick the one you want, but remember, the mirror distorts, and so the myth might be reality, and reality myth."

The present one is an item from her Hiranyagarbha Koham (golden womb) series. The Artist obliged 'Ka Jingshai- The Light' by letting it publish this painting, the concept of which seemed to be similar in connotation with the Khasi legend of creation.

The Flight Within

When the night was talking to me
telling me the stories of stars and breeze

I flew across the bright moon
as many long-winged stories
sliding surely through the unknown paths
opening up the secrets of the clouds and
waters
penetrating deep inside the earth
sitting underneath the red lamp
filling it with the yellow light

A VEDANTIST VIEW OF IRE

ACROSS
BOUNDARIES



ELAND

Karl Whitmarsh



Saturday, March 28, 2020

I can hear the church bells ring for noontime Angelus from our house in Connemara. They are a reminder to repeat a prayer:

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,

And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art Thou . . .

Now and at the hour of our death.

The Divine Mother everywhere is the remover of obstacles and affliction. But in Ireland we pray to Mary in particular to intercede with Jesus her son and with God the Father in times of distress. If there has ever been a time to ask for her help, it is during this Covid-19 pandemic, for those who are sick or facing destitution or otherwise in fear.

The bells of this Catholic church are virtual. Their machine-generated tones, broadcast from loudspeakers, reverberate over the unnaturally still streets of the village.

The following day (Sunday)

Only one or two parishioners are allowed inside the Catholic church to assist the priest for Mass. I am not one of them.

But I can see the priest in my mind's eye. I can hear him repeat Christ's words, 'Do this in memory of me.' And I ask – is it merely memory? Is not the Last Supper being recreated at this moment? Does not the remembrance by even a single worshipper usher the Lord's Lila into existence?

Meditating on the Eucharist through the lens of the Gita, we understand the Mass as the eternal sacrifice. The sacramental host, the act of its offering, he who consecrates the host in the inner flame of his being – if you realize the Divine in each of these, you will reach the Divine.

Meanwhile – the little village where I live has eight rumored cases of Covid-19, which, relative to its tiny

size, implies an astronomical rate of infection. Naturally people here are fearful. They accept lockdown without reservation. As recent arrivals from abroad, my wife and I are more restricted than the other villagers – we may not enter shops or any public building.

Sunday, April 26, 2020

Now the church is live-streaming Mass with an iPhone for camera. It is reassuring to watch, to picture myself there, though the priest sings off key and his words are difficult to make out as they echo across the near-empty cavern of the church.

A month ago the villagers were just afraid of the virus. Now they are restless to boot. Emotions are raw and ever on the verge of multiplying like uncontrollable audio

the populace, reduced it to serfdom, burned its churches and banished or killed its priests. They cynically offered conversion to Protestantism as a way up and out for those who would repudiate their Catholic faith – but few accepted the offer. Instead, mistreatment by the English bound the Irish forever more tightly to their church.

But the Catholic church in Ireland isn't what it used to be. I think for Irish society at large that is actually a good thing. Years of unjust persecution conferred immense moral authority on the Irish Catholic church. Subsequent years of arrogance and complacency have effectively squandered that authority. The Church has slid increasingly into irrelevance, causing pews to empty out, vocations to thin, and young people to tell the reporters from Irish Television that the Church means



feedback. Still, these Irish are practical people. In their hearts they are calm, they view the pandemic as one more passing thing. Life will return to the old ways sooner or later. Shops and pubs will reopen, crowds will watch the Galway races elbow-to-elbow, and churches will fill up on the major feast days. This is a conservative place where tradition dies hard, if it ever dies at all. Famines and wars have devastated this part of Ireland, forcing half the population to emigrate and decimating the rest. Those who remained passed down to their descendants a stubborn identity as Catholic Connemara Irish.

For seven centuries, the English colonial rulers suppressed the native Irish and their Catholic religion. They starved

nothing to them.

But you wouldn't know it out here in the country. Most people here identify themselves with a parish – there are several in the area – and go to Mass at least monthly. Though no longer its unrivalled heart, the parish church remains a vital organ of the community.

Catholicism is the de facto religion of the west of Ireland to a degree unimaginable to most twenty-first century Americans. Newspapers and radio stations keep their audiences up to date with local parish services and holy day activities, and host opinion columns by local clergy. In the shops you will find cards for novenas and

Holy Communion mixed in with the birthday cards. The ubiquitous Catholic ‘national’ schools are funded by the State.

A half block up the main street is another church in my village – the Church of Ireland, as the Anglican Church in Ireland is called. All over the Republic, the Church of Ireland is struggling, because Protestants are nowadays few, less than one in twenty among the populace. Also, Protestantism is a reminder of the English occupation, though the Irish for the most part no longer bear any ill will toward the English. Once upon a time this was the established church in Ireland, meaning that all Irish, including the Catholic majority, had to tithe in its support. Two hundred years ago on any Sunday morning this little church would be filled with dozens of soldiers from the local British garrison, their bright scarlet uniforms standing out among the plainer clothes of the local landowners and merchants. Now the church is lucky to have a dozen souls in attendance on a given Sunday. But those who attend are committed. The silver lining in the decline of organized religion is that the parishioners who would come to church mainly to be seen have fallen away. Only the dedicated are left in the nearly empty pews.

This is the church I look forward to attending regularly when services are allowed to resume. Its small but ardent numbers call to mind the words of Jesus: ‘For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’

.....

I was profoundly touched on reading a conversation between Swami Ramakrishnananda and an Irish monk who had converted to Buddhism, disavowing the Catholic faith in which he was raised. To the monk Swami said, ‘God can be attained through all paths. You could have got liberation by following your own religion. You have made a blunder by giving up your own [Catholic] religion and accepting another.’ For the swami, the monk’s blunder lay not in his embracing of Buddhism, but in his rejection of his native religion, where everything he would need to realize God was already at hand.

It would be splendid to see a Vedanta Society grow up in the west of Ireland, bringing

to light in this region the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, all the while seen as a unity with the traditional Catholic faith. There already are wonderful spiritual riches all about here – people here only need to be awakened to them. If Vedanta can be propagated in such a way as to breathe new life into the ancient Catholic traditions, it will surely catch fire among the latent Irish spiritual seekers now disaffected from their country’s religious past.

Every Indian child growing up is exposed to the stories and myths surrounding such divine figures as Krishna and Rama. The Irish too have access to a vast treasury of spiritual legends, made tangible in the stone crosses, holy wells and monastic ruins from Ireland’s glorious past. I will mention just two places of pilgrimage near where I live that I am fond of visiting: Balintubber and Knock.

Across the lake from my village and some miles to the north is Ballintubber Abbey, where Mass has been said without interruption for eight hundred years. Norman invaders burned the Abbey in the 13th century, English



kings further suppressed it, and Cromwell’s soldiers burned down the Abbey roof and surrounding buildings in 1653 – but the Abbey walls remained standing, and Mass continued to be celebrated in the apse of the church. A short walk from the Abbey is St. Patrick’s well, where the legendary fifth-century patron saint of Ireland is said to have baptized his converts (and from which Balintubber,

“village of the well”, gets its name). A nearby stone is said to bear the imprint of the saint’s knee.

Several times each year, beginning on Easter Monday, pilgrims assemble here to walk an ancient 22-mile route known as Tóchar Phádraig, or St. Patrick’s Causeway. Their destination is Croagh Patrick, the sacred mountain on whose summit the great founder saint of Ireland fasted for forty days in 441 AD. The priest leading the walk is in high spirits as he points out dozens of spots along the way, each with a story of its own. There is, for example, the ‘Dancora’ (bath of the righteous) where medieval pilgrims, in ritual expression of being cleansed of sin, washed after their pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick before their return home. Hot stones kept the water in the Dancora warm.

It is said that when St. Patrick ended his fast on the mountain summit, he threw a silver bell down the mountain knocking Corra, the mother of all demons, out of the sky and into Lough Nacorra where she drowned. He then banished all the snakes in Ireland into the sea. Some believe that snakes were regarded as symbols of the druids, the high priests of the pre-Christian Celts.

There is no paved path up the steep mountain, only sand, mud, rocks and gravel. In days gone by the especially devout would sometimes climb the mountain on their knees. Halfway up the mountain is a cairn of rocks, atop which you will find a small informal shrine. Coming close you will see it is devoted to the twentieth-century Italian saint Padre Pio, who was known for his extreme piety and service to the sick, and for the stigmata which he tried to conceal but could not, much to the consternation of his superiors in the Church.

Twenty miles to the northeast of Ballintubber is Knock, where in 1879 fifteen villagers had a vision of Mother Mary on the outer wall of their parish church. Wearing a crown and dressed in white, she was flanked by the Lamb of God, Saint Joseph and St. John the Evangelist. For two hours the villagers were transfixed by the vision as they recited their rosary on bended knee. When Pope



St. John the Evangelist, Mother Mary, St. Joseph, and the Lamb of God surrounded by angels

years later, he was greeted by a throng of nearly half a million - about one in ten inhabitants of the country.

Over the years Knock has become a major center of pilgrimage, with a modern basilica that dwarfs the original parish church. It even has its own airport. Nonetheless, in the off-season Knock can be surprisingly quiet and intimate. On one of my visits to the town I was graced with the company of an American sannysin, who toured the site enthusiastically. Naturally outgoing and spontaneous, he entered into spirited conversation



John Curry (d. 1943), last living witness of the apparition



with one of the many shopkeepers along the main street that sold statues and other memorabilia of the Shrine. I was skeptical that such a shopkeeper would have any interest in a place of pilgrimage beyond the purely mercantile. But how delighted I was when our swami emerged with several mementoes of Padre Pio presented to him as gifts. The shopkeeper was in fact a sincere devotee of Padre Pio and a devout Christian – as doubtless are countless other merchants and hoteliers at pilgrim centers, grateful for the privilege of dwelling and making their living in a holy place.

Friday, May 29, 2020

Walking home the other day from the village, we noticed the front entrance to the Catholic church was open. Almost on tiptoe we approached and opened

the inner door. The apse was empty and still, save for three or four votive candles burning near the main altar. We sat and prayed and meditated awhile. It had been two months since we had last been inside of a place of worship – how cooling was the relief we felt, how soothing the knowledge that we could come back again to sit where the Lord was especially manifest.

Saturday, June 19, 2020

The lockdown continues to lift. We expect services to resume in our Church of Ireland Sunday after next. It will be joyful to see again the little band of parishioners whose acquaintance we had just begun to make earlier this year. The Catholic church in the village has been raising funds for, among other things, repair of the church bells so that we can hear their living musical tones once again. Yet the church will not be able to resume its services for some time in order to respect social distancing. And when it does, how soon will the choir sing together again? When will congregants join together again in the body and blood of Christ?

Nowadays the word ‘together’ evokes hope and fear and anxious caution. The realization is dawning on us all that even after the pandemic has become a distant memory, its impact on our lives will be lasting and disruptive. Things cannot and will not go back to as they were before.

Old forms are dissipating, new forms are in creation, yet the Divine and our relation to Him stay the same, at all times and in every place.



CHIAROSCURO

'Escape to the Blue Sea' is a 30x40 cms large original expressionist seascape painting of a blue sea with a boat in the middle of it. The colours are blues, lilacs and pinks and the scene shows a small boat sailing amidst the blue sea, as a wave breaks on the beach from the calm sea. My aim in painting this was to limit my usually very bright colour palette to just a few colours as I wanted the scene to be relaxing and contemplative. The sky above is extremely dramatic symbolizing as though the calm may end soon. I think the sea speaks to all of us and I often paint seascapes in order to have bit of a reminder of that holiday feeling you get when looking out over an ocean. It is painted on deep edge canvas, white edges, ready to hang, no frame needed.



Akangsha Chakraborty

An artist based in Delhi and I paint large original landscape and seascape paintings in oil on canvas. In her words...

"My painting style is a fusion of Expressionist, Semi-abstract, a little Art Nouveau and whatever mood I am in that day. I am inspired by the patterns of nature and the energy, colours and spaces of the landscapes and animals around me. I like to think that paintings have 'little souls' woven into them by artist's and that these are what call to a viewer (or not as the case may be) and give a painting presence and desirability. My aim is to make art that offers a glimpse of spaces and possibilities where people can escape the manic pace of life and imagine themselves somewhere better – even if just for a little while."





LEGENDS



SNGI: A MYSTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Raphael Warjri

I heard of him several times from my father before, but that was the first time when I got to see and hear from him directly. He was there for a talk on Khasi Literature for a documentary film that was made for Doordarshan. His words were so warm that I slowly started to take a keen interest in knowing about him.

I studied the books, he wrote and translated, and his journey to the West. What captivated me more was his will-power. Belonging to a small village in Ri-Bhoi district, he travelled across the world, learning new languages and treading unknown paths.

When Autumn came to an end and the January cold was to settle, Rev. Sylvanus Sngi Lyndoh, a man of excellence, was born to light the night's sky. He was the eldest son of the fifteen children of Ka Mon Lyndoh Thaiang and U Michael Ram Sten, from the Thaiang village of Meghalaya.

The year 1907 came as a thorn in a bed of roses. People suffered from malaria and leprosy. Being anxious of the heart-wrenching situation, the great-grandmother of Rev. Sylvanus Sngi Lyndoh, Tyngab Lyngdohsad, suggested one of her sons, Ajir Lyngdoh Thaiang, along with nine other men from the village to seek help from the town. The journey to Shillong was not an easy task. Vehicles were not readily available and, as a result, they had to walk down nearly a hundred kilometres to reach Shillong. They met Monseigneur Christopher Becker from whom they borrowed some money and who they promised to repay. The kind-hearted priest agreed to their request and, that is how, they helped the village folks recover with that money. On certain occasions, Monseigneur Christopher Becker also visited the village.

In 1911, during Easter, Monseigneur baptized some of the village folks, including the grand-uncle/father of Rev. S. S. Lyngdoh. He was rechristened as Ajir Thomas Lyngdoh. Seeing the priest's passionate love for the poor village men, the great-grandmother of Rev. S. S. Lyngdoh, Tyngab, who was a high priestess of the Thaiang traditional province, donated a vast land at Pamkdait for charity and missionary work.

A significant event took place during World War I. The Salvatorian deported in 1921, and Jesuit Congregation had taken over the missionary work. The congregation of Salesian of Don Bosco arrived in the Khasi Hills on 13th January, 1922.

The family of Rev. S.S. Lyngdoh soon shifted from Thaiang to Umtyrkhang. The village was situated near a sacred Grove, and many ceremonies were performed there. On one such occasion, he came in contact with an old priest, and the priest swayed the lad's heart. Rev. S.S. Lyngdoh and some other village men were baptized by the old priest, Rev. Constantine Vendrame. Rev. S.S. Lyngdoh was a very passionate and intelligent boy. He travelled on foot to Shillong to enrol himself at the Don Bosco Institute as an artisan of the printing press. Simultaneously, he started to

study at St. Anthony's School in Shillong. To pursue a higher education in Philosophy and Theology, he was required to learn Latin, and he soon mastered the language.

In 1942, he studied at the Salesian High School, Sonada, Darjeeling, and subsequently at the Sacred Heart College, Mawlai, Shillong, in 1947, for his novitiate. In 1954, deacon Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh was sent to Europe for further studies. He started his voyage to the West to explore, learn, and carry back with him a part of it.

His voyage to Europe was a little difficult as he fell sick on the way. He took no notice of these petty situations and dedicated his life to studying Theology. His hard work paid him good results as he topped not only his class but the whole of Europe. He officially took priesthood on 1st July, 1958, at the Church of Mary Help of Christian, Turin in Italy, built by Don Bosco himself. Soon after the ordination ceremony, he and seven other deserving students were selected to study further in Rome. Thus, a new vista of opportunity was waiting at his doorstep. He initially had been entrusted with studying Canon Law, but his interest lay somewhere else. He opted to study Biblical Studies at Biblicum, the Biblical Institute.

He took great interest in learning languages as well. He could speak nearly thirty languages. Like his mother tongue, he paid equal attention to each language which he spoke with perfection. As a part of his missionary work, he visited Venice, Yugoslavia, Greece, Istanbul, Turkey, Lebanon, Damascus, Syria, Palestine, and Jerusalem in 1961. He was chosen to study Hebrew and completed the course within five months, along with five other scholars. He extended his journey to many different places and, finally, he returned to Bombay after a long time.

He was a devoted son and, on reaching India, he traced his route back to his village Mawbri, where his mother was. Both were delighted to see each other after 20 years. He wanted to give back to the soil he was born on. He plunged into social activities in Smit, Nonglyput, Khliehriat, Ladrymbai, Laitkynsew, Mawlong, Ichamati, Tyllap, Diengrai, Saikarap, Nongriat, Umwai, Thieddieng, Nongsteng, Shella, Nongtrai, Kynshluit, Lyngkhom, Mynteng, and several other villages across the Khasi and Jaintia

Hills, including Ri-Bhoi. Apart from social activities, there were instances when others experienced strange and unbelievable incidents in his presence. He was believed to be blessed and had a very positive vibe. He even performed exorcism and spiritual healing on local people. He conducted a cross-cultural matrimony commonly known as 'Tangjait' in Khasi. He introduced a collective term, 'Hynñiewtrep Hynñiewskum', to represent Meghalaya's indigenous communities, in which the Garos were not included. During 1978, however, when there was a political crisis, he led from the forefront to unify three parties to form a coalition government.

He worked for the betterment of the people. His knowledge in Hebrew and Greek enabled him to write a dictionary that was translated to Khasi. Another remarkable incident of his life took place, in 1975, when he was strolling near a temple in Jerusalem. A group of tourists had come to visit the area and, on their way, they came across Rev. S.S Lyngdoh. While talking to them, he told them about his motive and his native place. He confided in them his grievances and told them about his financial constraints that stopped him from publishing his translated dictionaries. They heard him all and bade him farewell without any commitment. Within two weeks, he received a letter from one of the women tourists, Sue Ann Bentz Altman, and, to his utter amazement, he found a cheque of six thousand dollars, which was precisely his estimated amount. Rev. Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh published the Hebrew-Khasi, Aramaic-Khasi, and Greek-Khasi dictionaries within a short period of time and dedicated this success to the generous lady who donated the money. His research and accomplishments

saw a new dawn. Three thousand copies of his books were shipped to Shillong.

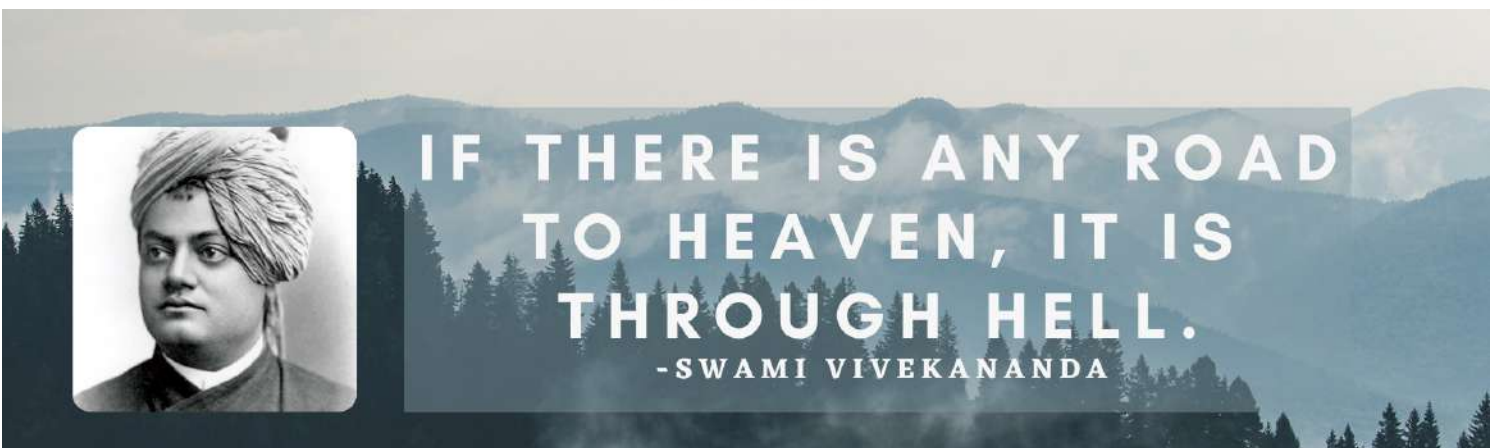
He authored 28 books in his life, mostly on Biblical commentaries, Khasi philosophy, and Khasi folk tales. He was one of the pillars of the Khasi Department's foundation in the North-Eastern Hill University in Shillong in 1978. He was a member in selecting the faculty members of the Department.

He never let time go. Whenever he would sit for talks, he would continue for hours. Every listener would be engrossed by his words. His love for the Khasi culture knew no bounds. He published a Khasi newspaper, called 'Ka Sur Shipara', from 1976 to 1990, which contained both secular and religious information. When Pope John Paul II visited Shillong, Rev. S. S Lyngdoh was a part of the delegation. He adorned himself with the Khasi traditional turban and committed to keeping its respect and heritage until his last breath.

He lived his life as an exponent on cultural, political, and social growth, environment conservation, educational progress, the well-being of humanity, economic prosperity, and commanded the trust and confidence of the authority with sheer humility and clarity of thought. Rev. Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh never remained inactive for a moment of his mortal being until five-past-ten, in the morning of 28th May, 2016, when he took his last breath. He was a legendary icon who will live in our hearts and dwell in people's minds across the globe as an inspiration.

REFERENCE

Lyngdoh, Sylvanus Sngi, Kharkrang, Roland, Ka Jingim bad Jinghikai jong U



MARGARET POHRMEN: THE TRAILBLAZER OF KHASI MODERN MUSIC

Archive picture

The chaos and commotion of social life in Shillong and the frequent political turmoil around the years 1980 onwards have more reasons to cherish the patriotic songs as the genre of ethnic enthusiasm and passion. Those were the days when melody is the source of solace for the society in the midst of the regular social disorder that prevailed, particularly in the Shillong city. Among all creative pursuits, music has the power of motivation for excitement. This is the vocal force of the Pohrmen Sisters, Margaret and Mary that have overwhelmed the entire Khasi land with their mellow voices to discover the essence of modern Khasi music. Both Margaret and Mary Pohrmen were part of the Jingkieng Ksiar music album, led by renowned music exponent Rana Kharkongor, for the first ever Khasi music album in 1982. They were the only female vocalists of the group, which included the veterans like Heading Son Ryntathiang, Tom Taylor Mukhim, Amio Lyngskor and Snarwell Syiemlieh, the younger brother of another folk music legend, Skendrowell Syiemlieh.

Rana Kharkongor is considered as the pioneer of Khasi modern music declared that the Pohrmen sisters, Margaret and Mary were the ideal choice for female Khasi voice of that era to record in the popular Khasi modern music album for public distribution 'Ka Jingkieng Ksiar'. 'Their scintillating voices have captured the sentiment of the youth through the ages', Kharkongor opined.

One of the finest Khasi musicians and a folk thinker, Phyrnai Marbañiang opined that the popularity and versatile performances of the Pohrmen Sisters have facilitated the emergence of modern Khasi music that has evolved through western fusion and other innovative pop music techniques. This was endorsed by few eminent local artistes of western music. On the one hand Lou Majaw termed fusion music as the noise of confusion, while Rudy Wallang acknowledged the tremendous influence and attraction of Khasi modern music at every occasion of local entertainment through the duet performance of Margaret and Mary Pohrmen. Along with few other versatile artistes of the era, they have

set the benchmark of modern Khasi music genre, that has developed in to the tradition.

Margaret Pohrmen was born on 29th March, 1962, the middle sibling among three daughters; Elizabeth the eldest sister and her musical companion, Mary the youngest sister. Their parents, Mr Everest Jitem and Mrs Lawrence Pohrmen have always been the source of inspiration and encouragement for their passion in music. Mary Pohrmen stated that her father was in constant support for every musical assignment and their debut performance took place in 1980 at Don Bosco Hall, Laitumkrah. Their proficiency and enthusiasm in the field of music was further endorsed with a commendable gradation at the All India Radio on 22nd November, 1982 and the production of the super hit audio album 'Namar Jongphi' in 1986 composed by Mr. Ores Thangkiew. Thereafter, Margaret joined Air India service in 1989 and the legacy is being continued by her youngest sister Mary Pohrmen, when she subsequently produced a solo album of her own lyrical composition 'Jingkyrmaw' in 1987. It was a short journey of the music career for Margaret Pohrmen, but it had created incredible impact as some of the numbers from the album still echoed in certain households even today in Shillong opined some of the ardent fans of Khasi modern music. Shillong being the haven of Western music and the duo is equally adept with English music, and Rudy Wallang stated that the Pohrmen Sisters dominated the prestigious entertainment functions for nearly a decade. They used to be the guest singers for few reputed pop bands of that time and they were popularly known in the region as the ABBA of Shillong.

After almost three decade of service, Margaret desired to take care of her ailing mother, but destiny proven otherwise as she breathed her last on 2nd August, 2020; leaving several fans in shock and despair. She will be remembered in the annals of Khasi music archives.



THE QUINTESSENCE OF SOULFUL MUSIC

The glory of classical music has soared to the pinnacle of the creative arts, with the timeless amalgamation of age, melody, and harmony, echoing through the scintillating voices of several exponents in the vast expanse of the global sphere of fine music. Recently, people mourned the demise of an outstanding Indian classical musician, Pandit Jasraj, who passed away on 17th August, 2020. His voice will live in the memory of the succeeding generations. The people of Meghalaya were exalted when they witnessed him perform in Shillong a few years ago. The indelible expressions of his spectacular performance enthralled the souls of all artists and music lovers who came that day to witness an epitome of the Hindustani classical tradition.

Incidentally, a local Khasi-folk legend, Kerios Wahlang, was invited on the same occasion when Pandit Jasraj came to create an eternal realm of blissfulness and divinity. As a witness, it brought back my memory of their meeting in the city of Shillong. The Asian Confluence and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) had entrusted on me the responsibility of arranging a solo programme of the old man, Kerios Wahlang, before the beginning of the classical recital of Pandit Jasraj. Primarily, Kerios Wahlang did not take the assurance of a token fee into consideration as he was more enthusiastic about his performance. He even refused the organizers' offer of conveyance but promptly arrived at the venue by a local taxi from his village at Mawngap.

Meanwhile, all the security and stage gear arrangements for Pandit Jasraj's performance were put in place under the supervision of a prominent media person and veteran newsreader from New Delhi. As I escorted Kerios Wahlang to the stage, we discovered that his performance was not properly arranged for and he was asked to sit on the floor at a corner of the stage. I immediately disagreed. His grandson and music accompanist was also hesitant, when the old man intervened and said softly, "It's alright. I can sing and it is fine for us."

I was too embarrassed and felt humiliated with the expert's shocking professional attitude from the so-called section of mainland India towards a local folk artiste. They were, nevertheless, committed to their expert arrangement of the sound-system. They argued that the plan for the stage gear for Pandit Jasraj is never disrupted anywhere in the world. I resigned and went back to the auditorium. When the old man, Kerios Wahlang, was about to begin his performance from a remote corner of the stage, none other than the occasion's highest dignitary rose in

disapproval. Kerios Wahlang and his musical accompanist were requested to rise to the podium earmarked for the performance of Pandit Jasraj, at the behest of the maestro himself.

Kerios Wahlang acknowledged that his performance on that day was the best in his lifetime. It was a proud moment for Kerios Wahlang that the world-renowned Indian classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj applauded, with sincerity, as he stood up followed by a standing ovation from the audience, for a few minutes, including the technicians. Meanwhile, Kerios Wahlang descended from the stage and bowed to pay homage to Pandit Jasraj, and, the maestro lifted him up. Both exchanged glimpses of heartfelt tribute that they paid to each other.

Now was the turn of Kerios Wahlang to sit in the audience and witness the performance of Pandit Jasraj. The chief of the Asian Confluence, Sabyasashchi Dutta, gave me and my colleague, Benedict Hynñiewta, the privilege of painting on canvas while the maestro performed. Before the much-awaited show began, Pandit Jasraj gestured a namaste to the audience, while there was an evident eye contact between him and Kerios Wahlang. Adjacent to the stage, we were performing a jugalbandi of painting on canvas. When I just happened to look back at the audience, I saw tears rolling down the cheeks of the old man, Kerios Wahlang, which he wiped with his handkerchief. I was extremely touched and tried to spontaneously translate the candid moment, on canvas, with my brush strokes. However, the old man was tired and had to return to his village, and, so, he could not stay back for the maestro's entire performance. I took a brief moment, as I saw him off. When I went to hand over the envelop given by Mr. N. Munish Singh, the Regional Director, ICCR, he refused and instead thanked everybody for the opportunity given to him.

Nevertheless, I persuaded him to accept the envelop as a token of gratitude and appreciation to which he embraced me. The cab, thereafter, that he travelled by drove away as if to infinity. As I resumed the Jugalbandi with Benedict, we were overwhelmed by the performance of Pandit Jasraj when the flexibility of his voice, in rhythm with the music, transcended our minds giving solace to our hearts. It led me to reminisce the emotional encounter that I had with the legendary Kerios Wahlang. Both Pandit Jasraj and Kerios Wahlang are an epitome of sheer simplicity and beauty of character. This narrative is a humble tribute to the colossal stature of a global celebrity, Pandit Jasraj, and to a home-grown genius, Kerios Wahlang.



MILES TO SEE MASS MoCA AND THE CLARK

Anindya Banerjee

MASS MoCA stands for the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. It is located in an old town called North Adams in the north-western corner of the State of Massachusetts in the United States of America. My visit to MASS MoCA was clubbed with The Clark Institute – a paradise for art lovers – in Williamstown, an area adjacent to North Adams. An additional day, 29th February, of the year 2020 (which happens to be a leap year), gave us an opportunity to access the connotations of life imbued in the art objects placed in the two museums. We could immerse ourselves for the day in an ocean of creative thoughts.

Our team was comprised of five members, most of whom were academics. Starting from the town of Amherst, we meandered through the villages, towns, forests, and the hairpin turns on the hills (much like the roads of the outskirts of Shillong), for more than two hours, to reach MASS MoCA. It was as if the beauty of the snow-clad nature of the late winter was waiting to welcome us cordially to enjoy it throughout our journey. Perhaps, it even decreed the sun not to shine much on the snow and indicated the snow not to melt away quickly until we get to our destination. In the way, we stopped at a small and quiet town called Buckland.

The town of Buckland

By tracing its history, we easily reached a time when, two hundred years ago, the British colonizers started a hub of manufacturing industries at North Adams, in the region which came to be known as New England in America. The information that can be found on the website says: 'The 16 acres of grounds in North Adams, Massachusetts, encompass a vast complex of 19th-century mill buildings and occupy nearly one-third of the city's downtown business district.' Its journey from the mills to a museum is not only a part of the eventualities of history, but also is indicative of the economic, industrial and architectural changes that remained as factors of paramount influence. The trend towards a globalized world contributed to the shift of capital investments from America and Europe to Asia, more specifically to China, Japan and South Korea, mainly to avail cheap labour and raw materials, for setting up new manufacturing units.

Galleries in MASS MoCA

Major contemporary artists have created their art works using various forms and materials. Colourful designs with glass, murals or frescos and graffities on the walls are remarkably attractive.

Linear graffities on the wall

A large sculpture of a human figure surrounded by a thousand small things

The act of measuring the eternal values hidden in the immortal objects of art often proves to be baffling, as the element of time drives man to discover vistas where he can fulfil his unquenchable desire of gaining as much meaning as possible in life. Spending only two-and-a-half hours at MASS MoCA can seldom justify the merit of the treasures it is endowed with. Still, a special reference, as this less-educated onlooker feels, must be made to the works of Louise Bourgeois who 'was intrigued by the subconscious, and her work is often understood as an expression of repressed feelings'.

'PASS', 'Nature Study' 'The Couple' and 'Untitled' sculptures are her available creations that unfailingly engage the viewer's imagination.

UNTITLED

The Clark Institute, in short, The Clark, is another



museum situated in a nearby place called Williamstown, as I've mentioned above. Today, under the aegis of Williams College, the museum is jointly administered by The Clark and the College, and offers one of the world's most respected graduate programmes in the history of art. It was developed by Sterling Clark and his wife Francine Clark. Sterling Clark had a distinguished career in the U.S. Army and was also an heir to the Singer sewing-machine fortune. Francine Clark was an actress of repute

in Comédie-Française in Paris. 'The two shared a passion for art and quietly began building a remarkable collection of paintings, sculpture, silver, porcelain, drawings, and prints.' With their private collections of the pieces of art, that they collected over forty years, The Clark Institute offers an ensemble of the works of some major European and American masters. But, even before entering the gate of The Clark, we were humbled by some of the inscriptions on it and the picturesqueness of the Institute's surroundings.

'Am I ready to get in to have a inside', I asked myself, 'or shall I remain outside forever to be enamoured by nature?' I was completely in a fix. However, it is perhaps the rational mind that always wins. I tried my best to appear like other so-called 'smart guys' to hide my awe and entered the precincts of a treasured island, slowly.

Impressionism flourished during the later half of the



nineteenth century. Like many other styles of painting, it has germinated from the avant-garde and the norm-breaking spirit of the French artists. Leading among them were Claude Monet, Alfred Sisley and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. In most of their works, the artists have depicted nature not as it is but 'as is seen' by them. The emphasis on the 'accurate depiction of light', 'relatively small, thin yet visible brush strokes', 'ordinary subject matter', and 'the effects of the passage of time' are

'Green Landscape', 1886, oil on canvas by George Inness

some of the characteristic features of Impressionism. In America, George Inness, a follower of the Swedish philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg, believed that the spirit of God was present throughout the natural world. Inness's nature paintings display an array of impastos of impressionistic style. In The Clark Institute, Inness's paintings are exhibited in a considerable portion of the galleries, along with the masterpieces of Monet, Renoir, John Constable, Vincent Van Gogh and several other impressionistic painters. A self-portrait of Pierre-Auguste Renoir drew my attention for some reasons unknown. I took a long time to observe the creation of the artist's own bodied self.

Here I also found Monet's Cliff at Étretat and Rodin's famous sculpture The Thinker.

'How was your trip?' An aged professor in our team asked me when we all came out in the afternoon.

He is an American but he is acquainted with India and its culture for he has been visiting the country for the last thirty years. It was basically his plan to show us something memorable in his country before we go back to India. In my reply I asked him, 'Do all visitors to the US come to see this place?'

He gave a silent smile.

I said, 'It should be made mandatory'. Indeed, I believe, no institution in the world can offer a better form of education or, in other words, an aesthetic education, to humanity than such places of excellence as these art museums that I had the opportunity to have an experience of. Before bidding adieu, I looked up to see the place once more. The sun god had initiated his routine proclamation of the end of the day. We set out on our journey back to the town of Amherst.



ASPECTS OF ORALITY IN LITERATURES FROM NORTHEAST INDIA

Dr Esther Syiem

Mamang Dai the writer from Arunachal plumbs the depths of the so called unrecorded and, therefore, unknown. In another book *The Black Hill* (2014) she has done exhaustive research on the agency of the coloniser in the hills of Arunachal Pradesh. At this level the book is all about tangible, linear history. The warp and weft of the book, however, is in the undergrowth of the forest, the playing field of her characters who weave into the narrative stories of obligations to clan and fealties to the spirit world. Kajinsha's struggle with his own people, his inner turmoil and the combinations and permutations that emerge from communities on the throes of urgent changes, wraps his and Gimur's love story within the intangibles of an oral community that, for one, places importance upon dreams and dreaming, as signifiers of other realities and truths more profound and powerful. Thus the intersection of the human and spirit world speaks about the acceptance of parallel worlds in communities that profess to access the spirit of the forest and the universe itself. Magically real perhaps, reminiscent of the novels of the Columbian novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez who made famous his grandmother's story-telling habit of subverting the rules

of linearity, but the question is, is magical an appropriately complete enough word to hold the wealth of knowledge that has been sustained by an oral paradigm upon which the speaking imagination was whetted and sustained?

There are no easy answers to this, only attempts to follow or understand the serrated course of the oral, such as the flight of the released arrow or the lime-marked forehead indicating favour from the gods or the defiant howl of the sentinel-dog in the dark. And as writers have to depend upon memory, another question that follows is, can one hold the oral paradigm in place when it has already been so eroded? Orality within modern paradigms is a subject of much discussion and many induced sessions. But orality as forming the "resistant" (Syiem 22-34) bedrock of indigenous world-views is a cryptic issue. The wrestle with orality and for orality, is indeed an important dimension for writers from North-East India, who are groping, within the shadow areas of their own oralities, with imported tools that have no apparent connection with the oral mindscape of their ancestors. What has been thrown up, however, is a rich assortment of, so called uncategorised material that springs directly from those who are attempting to bridge

the gap between the writing and the speaking, self-appointed oracles affiliated to the truth of the ancestor.

He is the ancestor who has provided the foundational logic for an oral paradigm that has freed the dynamic of time and space from sequential reality. Within the context of story-telling from North-



Rapheal Warjri

East India then, there is no dearth of non-linear and non-sequential narratives that resist containment within the material boundaries of existence. Experiential reality within these narratives navigates a journey that has as its starting point the physical universe; the here and now. However, transformations and interventions from other worlds form part of the natural order of a world-view that is porous enough for collisions and juxtapositions to take place with these other worlds. The unbridled imagination at work is able to balance multiple realities and multiple worlds together. The sleeping river in *When the River Sleeps* is only part of one order, that of the spirit world. There are multiple time-cycles, multiple generations of humans and non-humans, and multiple tellings within the narrative. Vilie's walk is through the natural cycle of human time. But in the course of experiences that enhance his perception he penetrates physical walls and enters dimensions other than his own. This constitutes the substance of stories in these parts. They may seem unintelligible and unfamiliar to the uninitiated but through generations in time, they have worked themselves seamlessly into the telling. The structured dimensions of reality and linear time are non-existent and non-functional entities. To the "educated" reader these stories subvert life as they would understand it. In actual fact they portray the very reality that has pervaded every nook and corner of life in the region. Perception of this reality lies in the inner eye of the beholder who has been taught to hone his/her sight to the intangibles beyond the self, greater than any individual self.

The overriding vision thus sets it apart as a story of many encounters; for Vilie the native, to be apprenticed further in the ways of the forest; for the reader from the region who identifies familiarly with innumerable encounters; for the perceptive reader from elsewhere, who encounters new levels of thought and reality and for the un-perceptive reader from everywhere whose encounter with the narrative is purely at the superficial and mechanistic level.

The dependence upon memory is very strong, but memory being what it is with its own redactions, also has a large role in shaping narratives and stories. What emerges from this scenario seem to be repetitive versions of the same stories much like an oral storehouse of narratives that tell the same story with a variety of renditions, twice, thrice or even four times over. Dramatists and poets from Meghalaya for instance, have scripted the story of U Sier Lapalang according to their own renditions. The suicide of Ka Likai is another story that has had different takes. The rationale of the oral exerts an influence stronger than time for there are presences and absences,

resonances and dissonances within the written narratives that follow instructions from the oral. This does not in any way indicate a lack but rather holds the light up to an imagination that has derived its ethics and aesthetics from oral groundings. The ingrained habit of the telling and re-telling is a throwback to an imagination uninhibited by alien notions of selection and order. And if one were to compare the body of work from North-East India one would find a surprising number of thematic and structural parallels systemic to the imaginative framework of stories. *When the River Sleeps* has surprising links with the belief system of Kajinsha's community in The Black Hill, which finds echoes in Nini Lungalang's poems and short stories or even in the Mizo stories collected and edited by Margaret Zama in *Contemporary Short Stories from Mizoram* (2017). Further corroboration of these stories may be found in the lore of the Khasi and Jaintia communities. The landscape seems familiarly grounded upon the individual's or community's ability to negotiate existence through the intangibles of life in a concentration of energy and resource that perceives a universe that communicates only through the axiom of the spoken.

In her essay, "Writing Orality", Tamsula Ao explains the cardinal necessity of taking that one extra step to carry orality further on to the written medium, if it is to survive at all. Her poetry and other writings reconstruct the feats of warriors, the journey to the land of the dead or the story of the lost script amongst others. This has been a good alternative and a successful endeavour too for at all levels, the scripting and archiving and documentation has fast forwarded orality into a twenty-first century avatar. For indigenous writers from Australia and America, however, this is taking on complex dimensions involving the unevenness of the oral; whether its integrity can at all be retained within the physical frontier of the written. Where this will take writers from the region is an important question; but as of now, they are compulsively bent upon the act of "bearing witness" (Nongkynrih ix): scraping evidences from the past, breaking up the encrustations of fossilised time, following closely on the heels of an elder who is still in communion with the universe and generally capturing the un-captured in the written medium. The end result is this vast quantum of narratives and art-work, songs and chants, ballads and sayings that are cumulative representations of the indigenous imagination. These writers form the frontline of those who are seeking to bring in linkages from an interrupted past, interrupting themselves as it were to access ancient imaginings in a very conscious way. The outpouring of writings reflect well upon oral world-views of particular communities; but when all of them

have put their tags upon this oral universe by attempting to connect to it, the resultant representation becomes graphic in its involvement with the spirit of the spoken word in all its broken but intimate manifestations.

I have chosen the book *When the River Sleeps* as being representative of this oral-aesthetic because the protagonist – to use an accepted western category – who is not really the protagonist because the forest is the actual protagonist, authenticates existence on a razor-edge of experiences that challenge his perception of what is appearance and what is reality. There are many climaxes in the book sustained by Vilie's extraordinary capacity of foreseeing the immediate future which determines further missions. He dies in defence of the "heart-stone", killed by evil in the form of the murderer who had also killed the Nepali couple at the beginning; who is in turn devoured by a "weretiger". The narrative underplays the individual episode. Each episode, however, stands out as a veritable example of the many realities that Vilie encounters in the larger scheme. This is the reason why there are so many climaxes within the book as it follows the oral course of a story that comes from a world-view intimate with the intricacies of the land. By this I mean the overarching presence of other presences within it. Courage to face them can only be measured in terms of the confrontations that have been met. Seasonal time and cyclic time sets the chronometric measure for these stories coming from unknown villages from the region. Death is contained within a larger vision of life. Hence Vilie's death, though tragic is part of the larger pattern that facilitates life for Ate who now has possession of the "heart-stone". There are a surprising number of heroes and heroines who live together in a universe resonating with narratives comprising small nations with small narratives that connect to each other through their perception of similar connotative realities. This becomes difficult for the foreign born and city bred which is the reason why the old storyteller in Tamsula Ao's short story "Apenyo's Song" in *These Hills Called Home* (2006) insists upon an initiation into the mystiques of the waiting and watching, and the listening:

Storyteller and audience strain to listen more attentively and suddenly a strange thing happens: as the wind whirls past the house, it increases in volume and for the briefest of moment seems to hover above the house. Then it resumes its whirling as though hurrying away to other regions beyond human habitation. The young people are stunned because they hear the new element in the volume and a certain uncanny lilt lingers on in the wake of its departure... 'You heard it, didn't you? Didn't I tell you? It was Apenyo's last song'... (32)

That night the tragic song rides the wind as it makes itself audible to all, more articulate than the teller herself who knows that she is a mere tool in the larger scheme of a speaking universe. The storyteller's place is a hallowed one because of an unwarranted sense of mission. She is not any pedestrian performer but someone with the linguistic proficiency and perceptive power of the seer; a characterising feature of poetry from the region, lyrical, dramatic and profound as has been the lifeblood of generations of people embedded within the land.

The multiple worlds of Easterine Kire's novel are not invented ones. They have come down from the earlier generations that have cut their teeth upon the edifices of orality. They bear the sense of an existence "that can't be written off/ can't be written over." (*Many Sides* p32) for, orality will continue to have its say. The writer from the region who maintains affiliation to the oral, as opposed to the latter day writer who has found greener pastures in cityscapes, will need to grapple with the very identity of the oral as it still inheres within reality. Therefore, maintaining integrity to the oral as Easterine Kire has attempted to do must result in an aesthetics that signifies more than what is found within the printed pages of a book. This would in one way point to a kind of reader-response paradigm. The audience, in this case the reader, must be able to source out hidden signifiers from within the signified dynamic of the oral as represented within a written text. The onward flow of meaning can happen only in the intertwining of symbol and issue, landscape and inscape which are threaded together by a language that is nuanced by a deep sense of larger realities prevailing within the story. The end invariably lies in the beginning; in the acknowledged presence of a reader who maintains connection by sustained navigation through the narrative. Otherwise it will continue to remain only a fairy-tale.

(Based on a lecture delivered at Cotton University, Guwahati)

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AUTUMN 2020

CHIAROSCURO

Two Birds



Reiko Shimizu

Born in Japan as a grand daughter of a Buddhist monk she studied art in New York, built a family in Brazil, 2012. Her cross-culture background spanning three remarkable different cultures (Japan/Brazil/India) has led her to develop a set of conceptual tools to connect and give meaning to the environment around her. Continuously drawing from her belief in Indian and Japanese spiritual mythology, her multi-disciplinary practice is a delightful chaotic mix of conceptual, performative, spiritual and musical expression. Her sensibilities as a visual artist are strong and her strength is her performance work.



and living in India since
as given her a unique set
m her knowledge of and
mix of visual, sculptural,
poetic, however her real

Tears in April are the sudden snow out of season and
falling petals of cherry blossoms
Transformed into the countless stars and melted away
beyond the milky way
Innumerable waves of heavenly Gangaa
Carried away my friend in silence
Embraced in the mantle of white darkness
Gently dissolved away...Far beyond the eternity

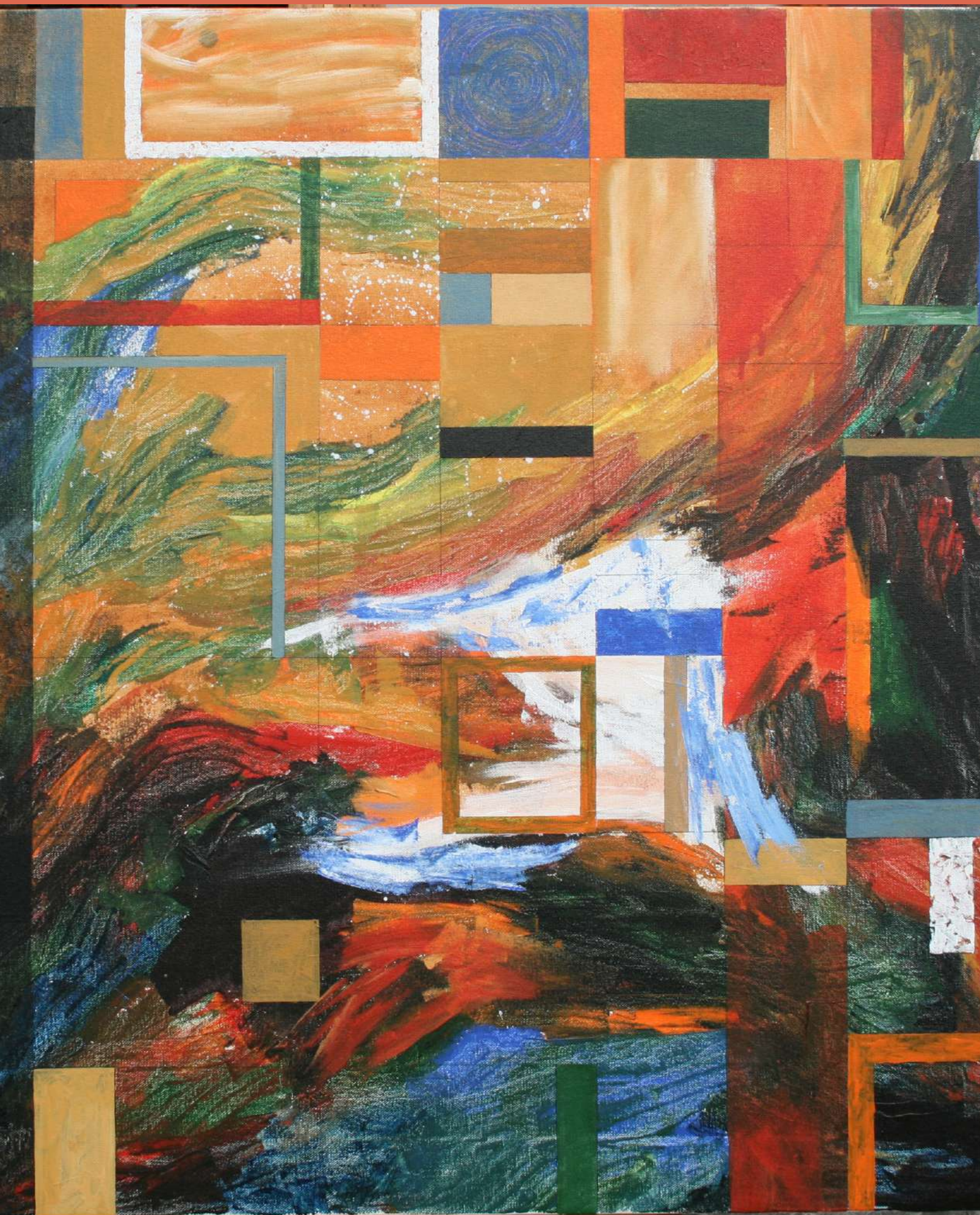


Benedict Skhemlang Hynñiewta is a Lecturer in the Centre for Cultural and Creative Studies, North Eastern Hill University pursuing PhD in the Folklore Department. He is also a versatile flautist performing in various prestigious international music arena. He has been the member of Lalit Kala Akademi and the North East Zonal Cultural Centre and associated with the local musical band 'Na la Rympei'.



Benedict has a new series of paintings entitled 'Destiny', which comprise of visual representation of sound in the square blocks that reflect the melody of his musical composition embedded in each and every block of the artwork. His consistent involvement in visual arts and music has brought about this new dimension of aesthetic expressions.





MARIO PATHAW, ALUMNUS OF IIT, BOMBAY BAGGED CRYSTAL AWARD 2020

Shillong: August 15, 2020:

The Crystal Award 2020 for Excellence in Visual Arts was conferred upon Mario Pathaw by the State Governor, Mr Tathagata Roy at Raj Bhavan today after unveiling the portrait of Sardar Vallabhai Patel and the cultural paintings unveiled by the First Lady, Mrs Anuradha Roy. The Governor appreciated the effort of Riti Academy of Visual Arts for promotion of art and lauded the relentless pursuit of its Chairman, Raphael Warjri for the outstanding artworks that have adorned the Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan. The

award was conferred in memory of Crystal Gayle Kharnaïor, the theatre artiste that had passed away in 2017. The ceremony was conducted by Raphael Warjri in the presence of Secretary to the Governor, Mr Pravin Bakshi, officials and staff of Raj Bhavan. In his address, Warjri expressed gratitude to the Governor for considering the Award function at Raj Bhavan in spite of the current fragile situation due to the COVID 19 pandemic. He wanted to place on record that the pictures at Raj Bhavan were painted along with his talented apprentices, Skhemlang Hynñiewta and Denis Marbañiang.

The meritorious award received by Pascal Mario Kmenlang Pathaw is the outcome of his dedication to art that he had grasped enormous amount of folk knowledge on Khasi cultural heritage and is well versed with the various elements of the contemporary society. It is observed that the family legacy is instrumental to nurturing and cultivating positive vibes that have motivated and inspired his works to attain



commendable impact and excellence. The creative and original presentation of his graphic novel, film and other visual storytelling assignments is a testimony of his passion, dedication and distinction of his performance. Mario Pathaw is an IIT, Bombay Post-Graduate Degree holder in Master of Design and Bachelor's Degree in Architecture and is an ardent expert of innovative and aesthetic deliverance.

In recognition of his outstanding role to the growth and progress of the prospective entity of Khasi visual culture and folk heritage, Riti Academy shortlisted his name among few nominees to honour his contribution with the Crystal Gayle Memorial Award 2020 for Excellence in Visual Arts.

In commemoration of the auspicious event, an Art Gallery and Exhibition of Mario Pathaw artworks was inaugurated by Mr F R Kharkongor, IAS, Commissioner Secretary Arts and culture at the newly opened MAD Gallery, Jaiaw Langsning. In his inaugural speech,

Kharkongor spoke at length on the various aspects of visual art as a cultural expression and suggested for the formulation of the Art and Culture policy. As part of the exhibition, Mr Frederick D Hynñiewta, an expert of Art History delivered the lecture on the relevance of art with society and acknowledged the significance of the

new National Education Policy, which stressed on the importance of art and culture in academic education. The MAD Gallery of Riti Academy is being patronised by Mrs Saihun Phanbuh of Kay Eem Dee Children Centre. The Exhibition is open to public till Saturday next, the 22nd August, 2020.



KHASI AUTHORS' SOCIETY : 41ST FOUNDATION DAY OBSERVED

The 41st foundation day anniversary of Khasi Authors' Society was observed on 11th September, 2020 at the Arts and Culture Hall, State Central Library. The small but impressive occasion was graced by Mr A L Hek, Minister, Arts and Culture etc., as Chief Guest and Mr T Chyne, Chief Executive Member, Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council as the Guest of Honour. In his address, the Chief Guest Mr A L Hek reminded the Khasi authors about standardisation of Khasi words for every literature, in order to avoid any confusion from the aspiring students and conflict among the scholars. He acknowledged the role of his officials in the department for providing an office space for the Khasi Authors' Society at the State Central Library complex. The Guest of Honour, Mr T Chyne emphasised on the need for a comprehensive dictionary in Khasi and announced the support of the Council towards the project initiated by the Khasi Authors' Society. Adhering to the tradition in the Khasi Authors' Society, book release is always held every year and this year three books were released by both the dignitaries along with Mr W Nongsiej, Director of Arts and Culture. The books are 'Ki Sur Mieng Ka Ri Umsnam' by Andreas Sun, a quiz book 'Ka Jingkyntip na Kotbah' by Hamles Myllemumlong and two books by Kitbor W Nongrum, 'Ki Khun Samla, Ki Longkmie Longkpa' and 'Ka Sor Shillong'. The keynote address was delivered by Dr D R L Nonglait, President, Khasi Authors' Society, poetry recitation by

Andreas Sun and folk song performed by veteran folk singer, Mr Chosterfield Khongwir. In view of the prevailing situation of the Covid 19 Pandemic, the attendance of members of the Khasi Authors' Society was restricted to around fifty including invitees and media persons.



EDUCATION RELIEFF BY RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

The Sohra and Shillong centres of Ramakrishna Mission in a joint venture successfully demonstrated the technological capability of conducting online classes in a no-internet zone. On 14 September 2020 online academic classes of HIKAI (Hybrid Interactive Knowledge Assimilation Initiative) from classes 1 to 12 were inaugurated at Ramakrishna Mission Secondary School, Sohbar by Bah A S Mukhim, SDO, Sohra Civil Subdivision and other dignitaries. Esteemed guests witnessed the demonstration of the software and part

icipated in the teaching learning process being students themselves. Android tabs were distributed among the students. All the prerecorded sessions were well

conceived, designed and presented through the blend of slides, audio-visuals and animations.

Moving away from the popular trend of sending notes and videos over social media platforms, RKM has come up with quality contents and a hybrid platform of their own that enables students to have a two-way communication in realtime and through an Android App even without an active internet connection, with the help of a WiFi zone and a local server.

The HIKAI project is free for all the students of MBOSE. They can register at <https://rkmhikai.online>. The project has the potential of helping lakhs of students across the state.



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YOUTH
OPPORTUNITIES

Sony World Photography Award

Eligibility: Open to all

Deadline: January 07, 2021

Link: bit.ly/sonyphotographyaward

Photography Guidebook -
bit.ly/photographyguidebook

Participants are invited to submit images that communicate a visual narrative and portray excellent technical and creative skills. Submissions can be made in categories ranging from Architecture and Culture to Lifestyle and Street Photography. The grand prize winner will receive \$5,000 in cash prize and 10 category winners will receive digital equipments from Sony.

Animayo Poster Contest

Eligibility: Open to all

Deadline: January 07, 2021

Link: bit.ly/animayopostercontest

A Brief Guide to Poster Making -
bit.ly/posterprep

MIT's Guide to Essentials of Design -
bit.ly/mitdesignessentials

The contest invites students to submit a poster on the theme of creativity and imagination. The poster should represent one or several of the following aspects: animation, visual effects and virtual reality. The poster could be created using any technique including Drawing, Animation or 3D creation. The grand prize winner will receive 500 Euros in cash prize.

NSS Space Settlement Contest

Eligibility: Grades 1 - 12

Deadline: February 15, 2021

Link: bit.ly/nssspacesettlementcontest

NSS Space Settlement Journal -
bit.ly/spacejournal

Space Settlement Guidebook -
bit.ly/spacesettlementguide

This annual contest by the National Space Society of the US invites students to develop space settlement designs and related materials. Designs, original research, essays, stories, models, artwork or any other orbital space settlement related material may be submitted. The grand prize winner will be awarded the Herman Rubin Award of \$5,000.

Science Without Borders Art Challenge

Eligibility: 11 - 19 years

Deadline: March 01, 2021

Link: bit.ly/scienceartchallenge

MIT's Guide to Essentials of Design -
bit.ly/mitdesignessentials

Students are invited to submit artwork that inspires others to preserve, protect, and restore the world's oceans and aquatic resources. The theme for this year's contest is "Mangroves Matter". The winning entry will receive \$500 in cash prize and runners-up will receive \$350 and \$200 respectively.

Powered by DexConnect

Global Wildlife and Natural World Photography Competition

Nikon Small World Photography Contest

Eligibility: Open to all

Deadline: April 4, 2021

Link: : bit.ly/globalwildlifephotographycontest

Photography Guidebook -
bit.ly/photographyguidebook2

NatGeo's Guide To Wildlife Photography -
bit.ly/wildlifephotographyguidebook

Students are invited to submit photographs in one of the following categories: Overall Best Environmental Photo, Wildlife in Peril and Human Impacts on the Environment. Participants can submit upto 3 photographs in each category. The grand prize winner will receive \$1,000 in cash prize and two runners-up will receive \$250 each. All winners will be interviewed for articles on Earth. Org and will be given a chance to showcase their work on the website.

Eligibility: 11 - 19 years

Deadline: March 01, 2021

Link: bit.ly/scienceartchallenge

MIT's Guide to Essentials of Design -
bit.ly/mitdesignessentials

Students are invited to submit artwork that inspires others to preserve, protect, and restore the world's oceans and aquatic resources. The theme for this year's contest is "Mangroves Matter". The winning entry will receive \$500 in cash prize and runners-up will receive \$350 and \$200 respectively.

OUR PATRONS

Abhijeet Dutta, Abhiraj Dutta, Ajit Mohan Paul, Arindam Chowdhury, Ashish Anand, B K Bose, Biprajit Bhattacharjee, Biresh Nath, Biswajit Paul, Biswajit Paul Chowdhury, Biswajit Roy, Bivash Sikidhar, Debashish Debnath, Debasish Baidya, Debasish Dey, Dipak Sutradhar, Dr Jayanti Biswas, Gnanavel S, Himadri Chowdhury, Jagadish Choudhury, Jaiyoti Dhar, Jaya Gupta Choudhury, Kabita Mitra, Kollol Dutta Roy, Krishnendu Das, Lucy Malngiang, Manashi Sen, Manindra Chakraborty, Munna Prasad Yadav, P Venkatesh, Papiya Ramanujam, Partha Paul, Pradip Chatterjee, Pranab Sikdar, Priyanshi Das, Probir Das, Probir Kumar Sen, Prosanto Kumar Saha, Puspen Dey, Rajashekar K N, Rajib Paul, Ranjit Dutta, Ratnadeep Das, Rhyma Datta, Ritangshu Mukherjee, S P Deb, S Ramalingam, Sabyasachi Mitra, Sandipan Chakraborty, Sanjay Sikaria, Shivu Chowdhury, Sridhar Banerjee, Subharthy Deb, Subhendu Maity, Subiman Ghosh, Subrata Malakar, Subroto Bhattacharjee, Sudip Kumar Dutta, Sujit Kumar Roy, Suvra Kanti Chakraborty, Swagata Chowdhury, Swati Chowdhury, The Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank Ltd., Tibrojoyoti Roy, Trideep Banerjee, Tridip Chandra Roy, Tridip Chandra Roy, Uttam Kumar Saha, Vidhya Vibha and Vishnu Prasad.



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GANESH: THE EARTHQUAKE STONE OF JAINTIA HILLS

Mookhmie is the stone carving art at Syndai with the prominent image of the Hindu deity Ganesha. However, the local Pnar people of Jaintia Hills claimed that it is the stone image of earthquake or KHMIE in the local dialect, whereas in Khasi language it is known as JUMAI. The patronisation of Hindu culture and faith by the ancient Jaintia chiefs could be the factor that has persuaded and influenced the tradition of ethnic art among the Khasi Pnar. The carving on wood or stone and some metal works with artistic designs were executed by the artisans from the adjacent region of Bengal, even as they maintained the ethnic elements related with Khasi culture. The Khasi folk technology is more pronounced in certain ethnic skill of natural craftworks that are native to the people, particularly in terms of utility. Any craftwork is devoid of any decorative designs because Khasi perception of revered entities are strictly prohibited from creating images.

U MOOKHMIE

U Mookhmie u dei u mawrasong ba la shtah bad ohdur ha ka dur bleithaw Hindu ka ba don da ka khlieh hati ba la ju tip kum u blei Ganesh. Hynrei ki paidbynriew Pnar na Jaintia Hills khamtam naki thain Syndai ki jer da u Mookhmie lane u Mawjumaiha ka ktien pdeng Khasi. Lehse, ka jingaili thanjong ki Syiem Jaintia ha ki spahsnem ba lah leit ka la pynlong ba ki barikor na Bengal kin wan ban shtah ban ohdur ha kylleng ki thain War Jaintia. Kine ki barikor Bengali ki pyrshang ban kynthup ia ki snap tynrai jong ki Pnar, pynban ki snap shynna jong ka riti dustur Hindu kapaw tyngkrein ha man la ki kam thohdur ha ki mawramsang. Ka jingtbit saindur jong ki barikor Khasi ka ju long beit tang ban bit ban biang ka rukom pyndonkam bad kham niar ban don kino kino ki dur ohshrong ohshrup, namar ba ka riti dustur Khasi salonsar ka mana ban thaw ne shna dur khamtam ia ki longshwa manshwa ne ki blei ki dken.

Text and Picture by Raphael Warjri