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HERITAGE EXPLORER

"LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES"

A Monthly News Bulletin

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India's
contribution
to the rest of
the world

This facsimile is from the Pancha-siddhantika (Five Principles) dated around the 5th century. This text graphically shows how eclipses are to be calculated. Thus this text foreshadows what Western Astronomers propounded nearly one thousand years later



Courtesy : <http://www.slideshare.net/jitenbraadhikari/indias-contribution-to-the-world>

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Join forces to annihilate drug addiction

As usual, this year's 26 June, the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking came and went by leaving behind the lofty messages and sermons for prevention and control of the vicious cycle of drug addiction. This practice of observing the anti drug movement with increasing participation of the people in general is going on for years but success appear to have eluded to a very large extent. The honest efforts of the world body of UNO, the central and state governments of India, the national and international NGOs and well intentioned individuals failed to achieve any perceptible success, rather the menace continues to be on the rise. The United Nation's latest report on drug use in India revealed a 30% increase on 2009 with regard to the consumption of narcotics with some 35 million people worldwide suffering from drug disorder. The Indian survey was based on interviews with 5,00,000 people across the nation. The scenario is horrible.

It is a common refrain amongst the drug menace observers of North East that the main cause of drug addiction is the easy availability of drugs by illegal drug trafficking and the close proximity of these states to the Golden Triangle, the second largest site of opium production. Easy availability of drugs may be one of the reasons but it is definitely not the only reason. There must be some other reasons behind the rising surge of Drug Abuse, HIV/AIDS and Human Trafficking menace in this resource-rich, infrastructure-poor, conflict-scarred region.

The apparent causes behind the upsurge of the drug menace are perhaps modern day glare of material acquisitions, lack of parental guidance and control, lack of knowledge about the consequences of drug addiction, unconcerned attitude of the teachers of schools and colleges, and last but not the least – lack of the societal supervision. This unfortunate combination of apathy and negligence is making it easier for the people engaged in peddling of drugs and narcotics to poach our juveniles. The government attaches much importance to catching the poachers of Kaziranga and Manas forest reserves, but pay least attention to the poachers who are snatching away our school and college going youths.

There is another section of youths, mostly of non-assamese origin, who play a vital role in the supply chain of drugs and trafficking. They identify the victims, lure them to the dens of the drug peddlers, and ensure that they never slip away. It is not that these denizens of darkness are always invisible, but the police and the people who can play a positive role in identifying and eliminating these villains, do not have the time or the will. A society can never flourish if its constituents, the conscious citizens, do not exercise their guardianship responsibilities. This is what is happening in and around us. It is very sad to say that the most unfortunate and disastrous role in the matter of drug addiction is being played by the parents and the elders of the families. The behaviour, the demeanour and the unreasonable monetary demands of their wards never spur them to look deeper.

We should give a rethink to what we are doing to combat the rising trend of drug menace. It has already been proved that the present remedies of celebrating the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking once in a year with pomp and grandeur, arranging rallies and processions, organising awareness campaigns, distributing pamphlets, booklets and posters are not helping us in achieving our objective. Since the attitude of our people is generally passive the remedy must be found elsewhere otherwise more of our youngsters will fall prey to the drug abuse and their happy homes will be destroyed. At the same time, without wasting money on unproductive pompous celebrations and publicity, which never reaches the eyes and ears of drug addicts, the government should order compulsory lessons on drug addiction in schools and colleges, highlighting the consequences of drug use. Simultaneously the government should prepare educative literature on drug addiction for parents and flash them on TV and mass media. The Theme of the literatures should be DRUG DESTROYS THE PRESENT AS WELL AS THE FUTURE. DRUG DESTROYS THE ONLY ONE LIFE THE GOD HAS GIVEN TO US. Above all, we all must unite to fight the menace.

Editor

Eco of A Hill

Dr. Ranga Ranjan Das

Hills and sacred places have a close relation in Indian context. Most of the devotional places are located in the difficult terrain of hills whether it is Amarnath or Kedarnath! Ethos of Hinduism often reveals 'essar or Bhagwan vaktou ke hamesa parixa leta hein'. It epitomizes that gods cannot be approached at ease. One has to crack hard nut to reach the feet of the gods. Devotees are also ready for the test. They access in one way or the other. This endeavor is an attempt to conceptualize a vibrant temple and one of the most popular devotional festivals of the country that held every year in the vicinity of a hill.

The word 'toponymy' first appeared in English in 1876 to replace place names in professional discourse among geographers, seems accurate observation and explanation of the term 'Gauhati' now Guwahati, to assert the presence of caves ('guha' in Assamese) in the hills located in the midst of the city. One of my colleagues in Chennai while coming to Guwahati for the first time by train exclaimed with wonder, 'it's a hill station'. I said no. There is much reason of such assertion as his train passes through the side of the hills from Maligaon to Paltan Bazar and caught eye many hills and hillocks in and around. In an aerial view one come across as many as hills within the city which is encroached as many as people and arrange permanent settlement. Names of some hills come in this moment are Chitrasal, Narakasur and Nilachal. There perhaps as many names but two hills come to limelight since times immemorial. One 'Nabagraha' temple situated in Chitrasal hill depicting 'sit of eastern astrology' and other 'of course-the pilgrimage hotspot and place of 'sakti piths'- one and only the Kamakhya temple located in the Nilachal hills. It is the prime attraction of the devotees believing in sakti cult across the globe. Not a single day of the year where devotees avail smooth passage to make a glance of mother Goddess. They must be part of long queue to cherish devotional aspiration. Gatherings become huge in a most significant occasion- Ambuvachi in every year. It is recently concluded in this year. The eco of which is still resonating. Intra-state, interstate and foreigners' movement during the

mega event also testify presence of saints, yogis (sahas, sanyasis) of different range, skill and temperament. Different innovative techniques and skill of 'yog' and worshipping caught the attraction of the on-looker. One of emerging trend of religious tourism in this part of the country is due to Kamakhya temple. Tourists, researchers irrespective of caste, creed and religion show inherent tendencies to visit the Nilachal hill to fetch the blessings of Maa Kamakhya. Ambuvachi mela shows increasing number of religious tourists over the last three years. In a data revealed by Directorate of Tourism, Government of Assam, it reveals 11, 51, 493 in 2016; 22, 51, 526 in 2017 and 16, 25, 696 in 2018.

The devotional attachment is really a matter of concern. Feelings, sentiment and desires of people outside the region are unexplainable. There is a small anecdote. I was working for an international non-governmental organization dedicated to folklore activism during my early days. We organized a folk painting workshop of Buddhist painting of Nepal known as Thangka painting in the heart of Chennai city. Many people from the city and other parts of Tamilnadu participated. One of the ladies somehow learns that I am from Assam. She rushed to me and narrates her tour to Assam. But she missed to pay visit Kamakhya. She had seen the pictures of the temple in the website. She admits, 'many a time I have seen the temple in dream. I must visit'. After one month the lady come to our office located at Velacherry area to meet me. She revealed she visited Kamakhya temple with her family members one week ago and showed her deep sense of devotion and satisfaction aftermath. Interestingly, she arranged a lunch only for being a resident of Guwahati where the temple is located.

The eco of Kamakhya can be interpreted in triangular contexts: mythology, history and religious context. The Kamakhya devi pranam mantra enshrined in 'Kamakhya Tirtha' written by DK Sarma reflect Nilachal hill and abode of goddess Kamakhya: "Kamakhya' varade' devi nilaparvatavasini, Tvam-devi

jagatam matathoyonimudre' namo'stute". The preface of a research based compilation¹ of VKIC (2010: xii) reveals, "Goddess Kamakhya of Kamrupa is represented as a svayambhu stone yoni on the top of the Nilachala or Nilaparvata (the blue hill) in Guwahati, Assam. Sanctified by Her presence, the entire range of hills is considered as Her sacred abode—a manifestation of the Supreme cosmic energy. Since it is a vibrant saktipitha with many incarnations of the Mother, the hill abounds in temples including rock-cut images and sacred spots. These, coupled with narratives from traditionally recounted history, pervade this hilly region making it a religio-spiritual site of great importance." There are interesting mythological narratives associated with Kamakhya temple. One of them assert about origin of Kamakhya temple. Sati is the daughter of Prajapati Daksha, a king. Shiva accepted her as wife due to her eternal prayer which is at all not considered by her king father. King was actually unaware of Shiva's divine power and energy as a supreme god of adoration. He always try to avail an opportunity to criticize Shiva. He organized a large yagna where all the gods, goddess and deities were invited except Shiva. Sati went there and faces fathers' criticism and insult of her husband Siva. Insults of her husband in front of large heavenly invitees' were intolerable and compel her to commit suicide. Hearing this Shiva rushed to the spot and took Sati's dead body on his shoulders and performed deadly dance (tandav nritya). Shivas' anger and dance would have destroyed the universe if not consolidated by Lord Bishnu's trick of cutting the body into 51 pieces by sudarshan chakra. Every space transform into a piths (holy shrine) where each part fall. One of the important parts was felled in Nilachal hill. It is further revealed that the place where the uterus of Sati fell was not known till Kamadeva, the God of love, searched it out to get rid of a curse by Brahma. He regained his original form rupa (beauty) here after worshiping in this pitha. Regaining original rupa by Kamdeva make the place known as Kamarupa (Kamrup) and deity, known as Kamakhya or one worshipped by Kama as revealed.

In a popular legend Narakasur, the demon king of Pragjyotishpur (ancient name of Guwahati) charmed by extraordinary beauty of Devi Kamakhya proposed her to marry him. Devi Kamakhya tactfully put a condition before him so that she abstained from tying nuptial knot. She would marry him if he constructed

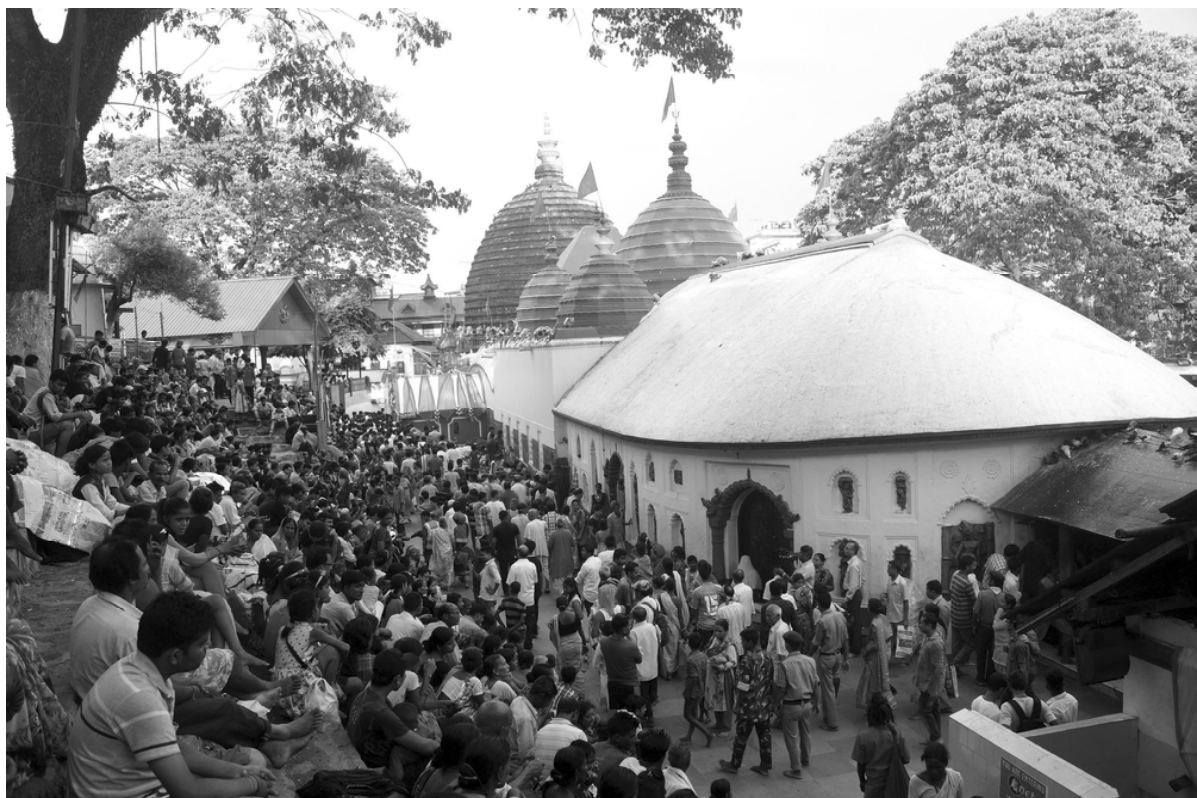
a road for safe passage for the devotes to the temple within a span of one night. Narakasur accepted the condition and about the accomplished this impossible task. Realizing the probable threat, Kamakhya introduced a hen for announcing the dawn before time. It was done accordingly. He also realized the truth and chased to kill the hen. The most interesting facet of this narrative that epitomizes mythology is still significant in contemporary times due to presence of remnants. A passage prepared out of stone (perhaps now rebuild) from the foothills of Nilachala connected midway to the main road is still exist. It is popularly known as mekela ujuwa. Apart from this which is situated at eastern direction, there are three other route approaches the temple. In northern direction, there is another route known as svargadvara from Pandunath, a place in Pandu (a few km from Maligaon) and believe it the way to fetch salvation. Another route is situated in western direction. Popular believe assert taking this route is blessed with rajya lava (help in to get territory/property/kingdom). Massive congregation during ambuvachi compels people to take these routes as vehicles are not allowed beyond a certain limit.

The saga of ambubaci also referred as an ambuchi mela has both religious and commercial connotations in the contemporary period. It is a huge concourse of economic activities in terms of transactions of merchandise goods and products associated with religious beliefs and faiths. There is overwhelming impact of this particular event cutting across the political boundaries. During empirical observation among the Tripura tribes, it is found that some groups follow certain specific taboo associated with it. Beliefs and practices associated with it in Assam are perhaps known to all. Highlight of the event is signified by rituals associated with 'Maa' that prescribes the closing and opening of main entrance due to process of life cycle. There is specific time frame for the entire process known as 'prabriti' and 'nibriti'. The recently concluded ambuvachi was set within the time frame: begin at 1.33 am (night) on 22.6.2019 and conclude at 1.55 pm (day) on 26.6.2019².

The origin of Kamakhya temple is nicely enshrined in mythological narratives. It asserts that one of the most vital part of Sati Parvati falls in this hill, transforming the place a sacred one and recognized as one of the most vibrant and significant pith among

51 religious piths. It is revealed that it is the main temple within temple complex dedicated to ten Mahavidyas of Saktism: Kali, Tara, Sodashi, Bhuvaneshwari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi and Kamalatmika. Further, it also asserts that Tripurasundari, Matangi and Kamala reside inside the main temple whereas there are separate temples of other seven goddess. As revealed³, in Austric language, 'ka' means female and meikha one who give birth. VIKC⁴ compilation explores categorical interpretation regarding the term Kamakhya citing different resources: "Rg Veda regards kama as essentially a process of creation; while Atharva Veda sees it as a procreative process. Dr B.Kakati's The mother goddess Kamakhya states, 'as the innumerable names of the goddess are mostly names of local goddess, both Aryan and non-Aryan, it may be suspected that the formation kama in Kamrupa is of extra-Aryan origin'....for Bodo-Kacharis She is Kham-Maikha-the old/ancient mother, to the Garos, Nuting, Muring-the energy behind creation....the name derives from the Khasi Ka-meikha...prefix ka is for the feminine, ka-meikha should mean mother power. Kha also means 'one who brings forth'; hence ka-meikha is the primordial female principle" (2010: XV-XVI).

Scholars and historian bring forth various important facts and events associated with Kamakhya. The temple from the architectural evidence cannot be placed earlier than the eighth century. This temple was destroyed in the mid-sixteenth century. The traditional account ascribes the destruction to Kalapahar, a renegade general of Suliman Karrani, the Afghan Nawab of Bengal. However, history is silent about the destruction of the temple. The Yoginitantra, a work composed in Assam in late sixteenth century tells that the temple of Kamakhya was destroyed due to natural calamities. King Naranarayana of the Koch dynasty rebuilt the broken temple in 1565 A.D⁵. Sastri's observation is also validated by historian of contemporary times. Prof. B.P. Mishra ⁶ exploring various sources states, "the worship of Kamakhya was possibly formalized and systematized within the Hindu fold over a long period of time and therefore was likely to have undergone considerable transformation. The famous quote from the Yogini Tantra II.9.13- Siddhesi yogini pithe dharmah kairatajah matah- is an indicator of absorption and Sanskritization of what was originally a Kirata practice. The Koch King Naranarayana built (was it for the first time?) the Kamakhya temple in 1565; whether the temple was rebuilt or not is doubted because the



tradition of a campaign by Kalapahar, the general of Sulaiman Karrani of Bengal, resulting in the destruction of the Hindu temples is not supported by historical facts. According to tradition the Koch kings were responsible for reviving the Kamakhya complex that was almost forgotten and lost within the forests. Also they were the first to settle the Brahman priests from Bengal for the purposes of regularly worshipping the deity according to scriptures. There is a legend that a priest of goddess Kamakhya named Kendukalai had allowed king Nara Narayana to stealthily witness the joyous dance of the goddess herself at night in the temple premises because of which the goddess became angry with both of them. Kendukalai lost his life and the king Nara Narayana and his descendants were permanently debarred from visiting the temple which interestingly enough they had restored back to life. The name Kendukalai and the evening dance sequence (or, orgy?) may be a remainder of the Kirata origin of things some of which must have persisted in the sakta-tantrik rituals that are characteristic of the Kamakhya". There are many legends and historical events associated with Kamakhya. Many scholars have interpreted in a different manner. It is difficult to trace reliable source. Mishras' observation and citation perhaps help to penetrate real genesis.

Socio-religious and devotional implications of ambuvachi possess overwhelming significance as enshrined in religious scriptures. Underlying the meaning of fertility cult, ambu means water; vachi signify to speak or to talk. So, it means invocation for water for this earth for growing vegetation. It is often observed that rain occurs during the period. Socio-religious life of the people of Assam possesses close nexus with ambuvachi. There is a popular term to refer this specific period. It is known as xath. The time period as calculated and mentioned by Khargeswar Goswami⁷ is of seven days that includes last three days of the month of jeth (second month of Assamese calendar) plus sangkranti (the days in between two month) and added by first three days of Ahar (third month of Assamese calendar). The surface of the earth is quite hot and there are many taboos related with it. Most of the taboos though nestle in the domain of religious ethos, it is scientific orientations. In an open assertion, Goswami (ibid) pointed out many facts and associated taboos pertaining to Kamakhya pith. Besides, 51 no of piths, he disclose the existence of panchapith of Shiva (the supreme god of adoration).

Referring to Yoginitantra, he asserts the site of the temple is sacred and auspicious and existence of seven kundas for salvation. Power and energy embedded in the soil of the site has been attracting sages since past. Their presence during ambuvachi is extremely important to derive maximum output of their supreme concentration (dhan or tapashya). Regarding taboos, digging and ploughing soil is prohibited according to Matsyapurana. During the period, people abstain from doing religious acts. No earthen lamp, intense stick is lit in the temple. Widows should not eat cooked food rather opt from fruits. Even in the deceased parents' family of the same year, they should not take cooked food and choice for fruits. Raw milk is preferred to get pain related diseases. Food cooked by those who fast for ambuvachi should not taken. Hair and nail cut is prohibited during the period. Delivery of child is not expected. There are various legend associated with ambuvachi. Among them one interesting legend cited in VKIC compilation 8 (ibid, p. 60): "According to this pauranic legend, there are 51 sakti pithas in India and among these, the Kamakhya pitha on the Nilachala hill contains the genitalia of Sati which was severed by Lord Vishnu from the sava of Sati. In fact the object now enshrined in the cave within the Kamakhya temple is a lithic form symbolizing this organ of Sati. During ambuvachi, Sati or Ma Kamakhya is considered to be menstruous and therefore, the door of the temple is closed and ritualistic activities during these days are also prohibited. It is said that during this period, the natural stream of water flowing through the yoni mandala of the garbhagrha of the temple turns red. It is also believed that symptoms of menstruation of the mother earth become visible in the Kamakhya temple".

Researchers also have shown keen interest for penetrating diverse aspects of temple as sacred complex. Various publications have come out. Rajatananda Das Gupta (1960) book on An Architectural Survey of the Kamakhya Temple; Banikanta Kakati's (1989) work on the Mother Goddess Kamakhya, Kali Prasad Goswami's (1998) work Kamakhya temple are significant. Among recent works, Nihar Ranjan Mishra (2004)'s Kamakhya: Socio-cultural study is a comprehensive work on the temple complex reflecting the complex processes of the deity's sanskritization and the temple's role in

(Contd. to Page 23)

Red fox!

Partha Pratim Mazumder

Now, every Bharatiya clearly understands what is doing fake Marxist in India. The left organisation is a factory of production only anti national leader in India. In the time of Congress government, the Left-leaning historians with pseudo-secular moorings distorted Indian history. The history of ancient India was erected on false foundations during the colonial period. Many scholars have attempted to expose the fallacy of this distorted Indian chronology with reference to Puranic chronology. Even India's intellectual elite continue to promote this pre-colonial history by portraying India as feudalistic and pre-rational nation. The country had ancient knowledge systems in the domain of mathematics, astronomy, pure science and medical sciences. Indus valley civilisation had the world's best planned cities with underground drainage, civil sanitation, hydraulic engineering and air-cooling architecture. "Ornamental buttons were used by the Indus valley people and Indians had made high quality crucible steel about 2,500 years ago. Indians even used scales made of ivory 3,500 years ago. This magnificent history does not figure in pseudo-secular historiography. India was not a developing country, but a redeveloping country which was slowly waking up with the ruins of colonial invasion that destroyed a magnificent past. India's Left has not been famous for original ideas or deep thinking. It has mainly served to imitate and repeat worn-out leftist thought from Europe and China. It has failed to appreciate, much less understand, India's profound philosophical traditions that go back thousands of years with numerous enlightened sages.

Communists are never exhausted of harping on lofty ideals like democracy and democratic institutions yet they are the worst destroyers of those very values and institutions raised to protect and nourish them. They are the worst tormentors of civility and culture and why not? The Gods they worship and hang photoframes thereof in their offices are Karl Marx/Lenin/Stalin who espoused violence of every conceivable order/nature to realise

their goals and the Doctrine of Violence happens to be very close to their hearts and souls. Founder of Marxist cult, Karl Marx declared religion to be the opium of masses intoxicating them into artificial / superficial joy. However, does Marxist cult do anything other than poisoning / destroying masses after intoxicating them into false glory of equality?

There is a new coalescence of Left parties in India today, such as we see with Congress allying itself with the Communists or Mahagathbandhan, which some may regard as a resurgence, or at least persistence, of the Left. But these Left parties have always aided one another in the background, sharing a common worldview. This new coming together of the Left is happening out of defeat. It is a desperate alliance of disparate parties, not a visionary inspiration for the future. We cannot look to the Congress and Left parties today for any new insights in the political or economic realms. Their rhetoric seldom goes beyond slogans, innuendos and insults, except to populist promises they have no intention or ability to fulfill. The Congress Party long ago farmed out its educational wing to the Marxists to provide demeaning history books about India's extraordinary civilisation. These read more like socialist propaganda items rather than any serious rendering of the national heritage. This leftist view of history is called "deconstructionism", meaning, you destroy someone else's view of history, removing culture and spirituality, leaving only your own take on politics and economics as the main factor.

The Left continues to follow its old agenda of class and caste warfare to divide the country and keep the masses afraid, insecure and mistrustful of one another. Repeating old attitudes, they criticise the rich as dangerous, though Left and Congress leaders belong to the wealthy elite of the country. The Left continues to claim that it wants to protect the poor, but so far has only succeeded at protecting poverty. Left leaders have no positive national agenda, ignoring the fact that the country can only go forward as a whole, not while split into hostile camps. They don't believe in a comprehensive national

development, but encourage each social group to pursue its own interests as if they were not part of the nation.

Left leaders treat economic advancement in the country with suspicion, hoping that the country will be unable to progress. They would rather see India fail than succeed under the stewardship of their opponents. They consider a failed India to be a better target for their self-serving agendas, rather than a successful country confident of its national identity. The Left is only concerned with lowering the image of India on the world stage, not promoting any new productive foreign policy or joining the world economy, as the Narendra Modi government is so effectively doing. The Left approach to global terrorism is to downplay and excuse it, blaming it on India and Hindus rather than on anything Islamic. They have no insights on how to combat terrorism, but are only interested in using it for political gain with minority vote banks, as if terrorists were the victims. In their view of the world, terrorists are often freedom fighters, even if their aim is to break India or destroy Europe. They treat India's military as the enemy rather than as the protectors of the country.

The Left has little by way of new ideas with respect to economic development or technological innovation, no new plans to improve how the country operates and raise the standard of living. It has no new agenda to develop the country's infrastructure or improve its education system. The Left is mainly an obstructionist force in Parliament, not proposing but blocking legislation. It is not concerned with good governance but, rather, with bringing governments down. The numerous Left-oriented state and national governments that have been formed in India over the decades, with their endless committees and regulations, have never succeeded in their projects to raise the poor and backward classes from their condition – though the bureaucracy flourished and became the new aristocracy. Look at what the Left has done to Kerala and West Bengal, or Uttar Pradesh today, where Left parties are claiming to deserve to come back into power. Other hand in the 2004 Maoist document gives more clarity on another thread of India that call urban naxals. It explains that the focus has to be on organising the working class, which is "the leadership of leftist revolution". "It is the task of the party in the urban areas to mobilise and organise

the proletariat in performing its crucial leadership role," the document reads. It adds that the main focus of the Maoists' urban work is to organise the masses, including the working class, students, middle class employees, intellectuals, women, dalits and religious minorities. It explains on the need to create front organisations for extending the reach of the organisation. Now a days CPI (maoist) and others banned organization are in a fox hole like duryodhana. they only come forward by changing their original face, that is call Urban naxal. it is very difficult for a society to find out them.

Meanwhile, the Left-dominant media is more respectful in its communication with tukre tukre gang leaders and hurriyat leaders than it is with leaders of their own elected government, who they treat almost as criminals or pariahs. Having failed at the polls, the Left is trying to use the media to keep itself visible on the national scene. It is trying to create outrage against the government on cultural issues, as the development aspect does not favour them – anything to confuse the voter from recognising India's progress over the last two years, compared to the incompetence of the previous Congress administration. Fortunately, India has a tradition of seers and yogis spreading their light of knowledge and wisdom across the ages, and does not need to imitate superficial political ideologies from the West. This tradition of Dharmic visionaries is still alive, and needs to be honoured and followed once more. India's contribution to world thought is vast, but very little of it is from the Left. That mind of India can lead the country and the world into a new era of science and spirituality, but needs to be awakened in the new generation that has aspirations for a positive future. That inner light of eternal India shows the way forward for the country, not the shadows of leftist political aggression.

They are cunning jackals ever prepared to howl and cry for being the worst victims. They have never been known to undertake any nation-building activity/social work, never in any relief/rehabilitation exercise ever they participated when natural calamity strikes, never supportive when nation's integrity had been at stake or ancient cultural heritage religion is really opium of masses as vouchsafed by Marx, is not Marxism cyanide pill of the same masses?

Holy Wars: Sacred geography in transition

B.S. Harishankar

In 2015, at the Biennale art festival in Venice, Swiss artist Christian Büchel transformed the ancient Catholic church of Santa Maria della Misericordia into a mosque. Büchel decorated the baroque walls with Arabic writing, covered the floor with a prayer rug, and hid the crucifix behind a prayer niche indicating the direction of Mecca, the sacred city of Islam. It was much more than a provocation. Christoph Büchel's installation, titled "The Mosque: The First Mosque in the Historic City of Venice", as he claimed, was intended to promote religious tolerance.

Vittorio Zappalorto, Venice's acting mayor, said the Biennale organizers asked permission for an artistic exhibit, but created a mosque. The local Muslim population offered prayers in the church turned mosque. This led to huge public protests in Venice, and ultimately it was closed down by the authorities.

On 15 April 2019, a fire destroyed much of the 800 year old Notre Dame Cathedral in the heart of Paris. Noted writer Emil Cioran once cast a prophecy that, "the French will not wake up until Notre Dame becomes a mosque". A Russian author has already foreseen an Islamic France. Written by Elena Chudinova, a Russian, who is a traditionalist Catholic from Moscow, the book titled, *The Mosque of Notre Dame, 2048*, lays out a dark future when France has become a Muslim nation and the famous cathedral has been turned into a mosque.

Rapid migration of Muslims into Europe is tremendously increasing, following the disastrous wars in Syria and Iraq. Simultaneously, conversion of churches into mosques and attacks in Europe has alarmingly escalated every year. In the French region of Vierzon, the Church of Saint-Eloi was turned into a mosque. The diocese of Bourges put the church on sale, and a Muslim organization offered to buy it. At Quai Malakoff, in Nantes, the old Church of Saint Christopher was converted into the mosque of Forqane. More than 800 churches were attacked in France during the year 2018 alone.

Muslims at Duisburg in Germany are now clamoring to turn empty churches in the city into mosques. At Hamburg, a Lutheran church was purchased by the Muslim community. Recently, the Islamic Al-Nour centre started the conversion of the Capernaum church into a mosque.

Islam is set to displace Christianity in Britain. The Hyatt United Church was bought by the Egyptian community to be converted to a mosque. St Peter's Church has been converted into the Madina Mosque. The Brick Lane Mosque was built on a former Methodist church. The Fatih Camii Mosque in Amsterdam once was the Saint Ignatius Church. A synagogue in The Hague was turned into the Al Aqsa Mosque. "History teaches us that these transformations are rarely innocent", observed Bertrand Duheil de La Rochère, an assistant to Marine Le Pen, leader of the National Front party, in the context of ongoing conversion of churches into mosques.

In recent years, the pace of Muslim migration to Greece has also increased alarmingly. The head of the Orthodox Church of Greece, Ieronymos II, said in 2016 that the government's outreach to Muslim migrants posed "a danger of Islamization" and was part of a plan to "de-Hellenize and de-Christianize" the nation. In 2017, Abbot Gregory of Dochariou Monastery of the Orthodox Church was quite apprehensive that Greece would soon become a Muslim country. Already there are unpleasant memories of conversion of Orthodox churches in Greece as mosques, such as Fethiye Mosque in Athens, during the Ottoman Period.

The church, which once owned one-third of the soil of Europe by the thirteenth century, as Will Durant rightly put it, is fast selling its land and buildings to a resurgent Islam which they ousted from Spain though Reconquista in the twelfth century. Polish forces also stopped the advance of Ottoman armies at the siege of Vienna (1683). Europe dominated every Muslim country in the world and

violently curbed anti-colonial resistance of Muslim populations. Travel writer William Dalrymple, in, *From the Holy Mountain*, charges the west and its repeated humiliation of the Muslim world for the rise of Muslim fundamentalism. Now a belligerent Islam is back to settle scores with Christianity.

The city of Antioch in Turkey is considered the cradle of Christianity. It became a thriving centre of Mediterranean Christianity and one of the five major Apostolic Sees, the others being Constantinople, Jerusalem, Rome and Alexandria. The recent terrorist attack on the Temple of the Apostles Peter and Paul at Antioch also claimed the lives of innocent children. The bombings and destruction of ancient Coptic churches by Islamic militants at Alexandria has been on massive scale.

Constantinople, which bestrides Asia and Europe, and was capital of the Byzantine empire is hailed by Thomas Madden, author of *Istanbul*, as the greatest Christian city in the world. It was renamed Istanbul after the Ottoman conquest of the city in 1453. When Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, virtually all of city's surviving cathedrals and churches were, after being desecrated and thoroughly plundered, converted into mosques. Its renowned Hagia Sophia Byzantine cathedral was changed into a mosque.

Since 1935, this cathedral is a museum, but Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has now announced that it could be again reconverted into a mosque. Nine other former Hagia Sophia churches are either being used as mosques already, or are in the process of being renovated for this purpose. The youngest of these, in Trabzon, was converted into a mosque in 2013, according to senior Turkish journalist Uzay Bulut. President Erdogan took control of churches in the war-torn southeastern city of Diyarbakir in Turkey in 2016, and declared them state property.

The escalating violence against Christians and Biblical heritage sites by Islamic militants is not a post-colonial phenomenon, but has a history going back to the Crusades. It turned worse, and according to Karen Armstrong, writer and Catholic nun, in her study on Islam, Christian crusaders from western Europe attacked Jerusalem, the third holiest city in

Islam after Mecca and Medina, massacred its inhabitants and established states in Palestine, Lebanon and Anatolia. Graham Fuller in his work, *A World Without Islam*, highlights that the first Crusade also marked the first vigorous call for Jihad against western invaders.

Jerusalem is now virtually bleeding due to frequent attacks by Islamic and leftist groups. The latest was in 2017 when Marxist-Leninist sponsored Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Islamic Sunni fundamentalists, Hamas, attacked Jerusalem. Noted historian Simon Sebag Montefiore in his classic, *Jerusalem: The Biography*, has rightly observed that the unending struggle for Jerusalem - massacres, mayhem, wars, terrorism, sieges and catastrophes - have made this place into a battlefield.

The Islamic State has pledged to wipe out Christian identity in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Canon Andrew White, the "Vicar of Baghdad", says Christianity is over in Iraq. The Islamic State destroyed St Elijah's site at Mosul, the ancient Christian monastery believed to have been constructed by Assyrian monks in the late 6th century. They also destroyed a 7th century church in Tikrit, considered one of the oldest and the most renowned in the area. Militants also demolished the Assyrian Green Church, first built in 700 AD, continuing their devastation of religious shrines in the provinces of Kirkuk, Nineveh and Salahuddin. Hundreds of Christian heritage churches have been destroyed by Islamic State, such as the Cathedral of St. Simon dating to the fourth century AD and the Mar Takla monastery in Maaloula.

In medieval period, Vatican marshaled campaigns to capture mosques and convert them into churches, especially in Spain. The Great Mosque of Córdoba in Spain is the second largest mosque in the world after Mecca. After King Ferdinand III of Castile captured it in 1236, the mosque was converted into a cathedral. Later, a cathedral was built at the center of the old mosque, configuring the current Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba.

The minaret of the Great Mosque of Seville, compared to the one at Cordoba, was turned into a church bell tower. The mosque at Jerez was

converted into a church after Reconquista in 1526. Al-Dabbagin Masjid was converted into a church after the 1085 Christian conquest. The Church of Santa Maria de Tarifa was built in the 13th century over the remains of a mosque. Al-Mustimim mosque was converted into a church. Al-Dabbagin Masjid and Mezquita Bab-al-Mardum mosques in Spain were also converted into churches.

The ongoing capture of sacred pilgrimage sites, their destruction and conversion of churches into mosques has caused much animosity and hatred between Islam and Christianity.

The Christchurch mosque shootings were two consecutive terrorist attacks at Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre, New Zealand, on 15 March 2019, killing 50 persons. According to Professor Douglas Pratt, University of Auckland, an international expert on religious terrorism, the attacks are a form of "Christian terrorism" and white supremacy. Sri Lankan State Defence Minister Ruwan Wijewardene observed that the ghastly Sri Lanka Easter bombings on 21 April 2019 were retaliation for the Christchurch attack.

Southeast Asian churches in Indonesia and Malaysia have also been constantly attacked by Islamic militants. In Southwest Asia, the 2017 Quetta church attack blasts at Roman Catholic Church and Christ Church at Youhanabad town of Lahore in 2015 and suicide bomb attack at All Saints Church in Peshawar in 2013 are few instances also claimed the life of hundreds in Pakistan.

In Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia, the situation of Christians has reached an alarming stage, close to genocide and mass exodus. An estimated 700,000 Christians have fled Syria since the start of the civil war in 2011. In areas seized by the Islamic State, Christians have been ordered to convert to Islam, pay jizya or face death. Melkite Greek Catholic

Patriarch Gregorios III Laham said thousands of Christians have been killed, entire villages cleared, and dozens of churches and Christian centers damaged or destroyed. But, the secular western world is incapable of fully understanding the threat of a reawakened Islam in the Middle East, according to Iraqi Archbishop Louis Sako of Kirkuk.

Currently, Africa is virtually torn due to religious riots and massacres between Islam and Christianity. Religious violence plagues the Central African Republic.

Contemporary historian Niall Ferguson wrote about Europe's future as "the creeping Islamization of a decadent Christendom". One of Christendom's most prominent atheist advocates is the Italian philosopher and politician Marcello Pera. In 2004, he delivered a series of lectures along with then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger that presented their shared view of the need to restore the fast diminishing Christian identity in Europe to counter both intellectual degeneration and Islamic fundamentalism. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow warned that Europe must not lose its Christian roots. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Europe and European culture have Christian roots. Since 2012, the country's constitution has officially recognized "the role of Christianity in preserving nationhood".

Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn, also Archbishop of Vienna, earlier warned during a special celebration for the Holy Name of Mary Church festival, that Muslims wanted to eradicate Christians and conquer Europe. The Cardinal said, according to the Archdiocese of Vienna: "Will there be an Islamic conquest of Europe? Many Muslims want that and say: Europe is at its end". In a recent interview, Cardinal Robert Sarah cautioned that Islam is a threat to the existence of Europe and if Europe disappears, Islam will invade the world and will completely change culture, anthropology and moral vision.

Padmashri Rong Bong Terang bags Lummer Dai Award 2019

Asom Sahitya Sabha (ASS), the apex literary body of Assam, presented the prestigious Sahitya Surya Lummer Dai Award 2019 to former ASS president Padmashri Rong Bong Terang.

The Asom Sahitya Sabha presented the award to noted litterateur Terang at a function organized in connection with the 80th birth anniversary of Sahitya Surya Lummer Dai at Lummer Dai Bhawan in Tezpur on Saturday.

Terang received the award from ASS president Paramananda Rajbongshi in presence of several

strengthening the ethnic-fabric among different communities living in the region. He urged ASS to keep the contributions of Lummer Dai alive through such programmes.

In the programme, Terang gifted Karbi traditional attire to Lummer Dai's son Mibom Dai and other dignitaries accompanying him as a symbol of love and integration. In his speech, Terang also termed the Assamese language as a convenient link language. He also mentioned that Assamese language is the easiest language in the world.

Speaking on the occasion, ASS president Rajbongshi said, "Assamese language will always remain acceptable as the Asom Sahitya Sabha has been doing hard work for its upliftment. We will combat every evil force which always tries to stand against Assamese language."

The day-long function started with unfurling of Sabha's flag by the working president of Sonitpur Sahitya Sabha, Ramen



other dignitaries including former Assam minister and Tezpur MLA Brindaban Goswami. Receiving the award, ex-ASS president Terang said that he was overwhelmed with the award conferred on him in the memory of a great figure like Lummer Dai. Expressing his gratitude towards Asom Sahitya Sabha, Terang also said it was not simply an award for him rather a noble mechanism initiated by ASS, to bridge the gap between the people of Karbi Anglong in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh and thereby

Goswami and it was followed by paying homage to late Lummer Dai by his son Mibom Dai.

The open session was inaugurated by local MLA Brindaban Goswami and it was graced by Tokong Partin, vice-president of Arunachal Pradesh literary society; deputy commissioner, Sonitpur, Narshing Powar; Abang Dai, president, Adi Baney Kebang, Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh and Debendranath Basumatry, adviser, Prasar Bharati and former additional director, All India Radio and Dooradarshan.

Conrad K Sangma launches Meghalaya Muga Mission

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, while launching the “Meghalaya Muga Mission” at a function held at the State Convention Centre in Shillong on Tuesday, said that the northeastern region has a rich history and culture attached to ‘muga silk’ and the identity of the region as a silk-producing province goes back centuries.

He said that with the launch of the Muga Mission, muga silk production in the State would receive the much-needed leverage and direction with funding of close to Rs 130 crore from multiple sources over a period of five years. “Right until now, our farmers have been producing the raw silk, which is mostly sold to our neighbouring State of Assam. Increasing the production and ensuring value addition to the available resources in the form of finished products will greatly improve the economic status of muga farmers and also fuel growth in the State’s GDP”, he said. According to the Chief Minister, market tie-up with industry partners, fashion houses and designers would give a major fillip to muga farmers with the increase in demand of muga silk from Meghalaya.

Acknowledging the importance of agriculture and the allied sector as a major source for economic growth, Conrad said that the government is keen to implement the right policies and programmes for the progress of the primary sector. “All the mission mode programmes such as the Jackfruit Mission, Milk Mission and other initiatives have allowed us to focus on specific targets to be achieved in a time bound manner. Most of these initiatives have already started to bear great results”, he added. Speaking at length about the importance of branding, the Chief Minister underlined the need to embark on a “massive branding exercise” to market the muga silk and also other locally produced goods to make into a unique proposition to buyers and come out on top in the face of stiff competition. He also informed the gathering that the government would soon roll out “MeghaMart”, an online platform, to facilitate the sale and purchase of products sourced from local entrepreneurs.

The government has already prepared a database comprising 2,000 enterprises and more than 10,000

products that will be available through the website. “It will be the ‘Amazon’ for Made in Meghalaya products”, the Chief Minister added. Stating that the government will soon come out with the procurement policy making it mandatory for government departments to source certain amount of their supplies from local entrepreneurs, Conrad said that the online platform would provide easy access to locally produced goods for buyers.

Earlier, during his address, Additional Chief Secretary KN Kumar said that of the 108 metric tons of muga silk produced in the country, Meghalaya with an annual production of 30 metric tons, accounted for a fifth of the total national production. He informed that most of the raw silk is sold to neighbouring State of Assam which has over the years positioned itself as the geographically indicated region for muga silk leading to a huge price mark up for the same in Assam. “The value realization is very small in our State with most of the muga farmers living on subsistence while huge profits are pocketed by the middlemen and the retail marketers. It is a loss of opportunity for Meghalaya and its farmers,” Kumar added. He said that the government has charted out a roadmap for implementation of the Mission and an investment of around 130 crores will be made in the next five years for area expansion, development of critical infrastructure, the building of human capital and significant inputs for developing final finished products including its sale and marketing.

He said that the target output in the next four to five years would be 43 metric tons a significant increase of 13 metric tons with monetary production value of the raw resources valued at around Rs 50 to Rs 70 crore. Value addition to the raw silk would increase the production value to around Rs 200 to Rs 300 crore, he further added. The Additional Chief Secretary also informed the gathering that a Muga Farmers’ Training Centre would be set up at Resubelpara, North Garo Hills to facilitate scientific training and equip the farmers with the necessary skill sets.

The Meghalaya Muga Mission Document was also released by the Chief Minister during the function.

Celtic Vs Hindu ancient Vedic cultural links

S.N. Mathur

Introduction

I had the privilege of working with ICCS, US (International Centre for Cultural Studies) since Feb 2006. I met many cultural groups in Europe like Celts, Helens, Baltic people, Slovaks, Transylvanians, Scandinavians, etc. I have visited them and been in touch with them ever since. Finding their culture like Vedic culture was most fascinating. Their cultural scripts are available in ancient Vedic sacred scripts. I found that the festivals of Celts are like Hindu festivals as per the Lunar calendars.

Celts

Celtic influence in Europe

The Celtic festivals of Eightfold Solar Year of The Tuatha De Dana (the children of the goddess Dana), are celebrated in Europe, North America, New Zealand and Australia and many other countries. The Eightfold Solar Celtic calendar is also Hindu Vedic Lunar Calendar and so are the related festivals and their celebrations

Danube Culture of Europe is influenced by Vedic culture. Danube is an Old European river name derived from a Proto-Indo-European *dānu. In Rigvedic Sanskrit, dānu means “fluid, drop”, and in Avestan, the same word means “river”. Danu in Vedas is goddesses of rivers and ponds. The Danube is Europe’s second longest river, after the Volga. It is in Central and Eastern Europe. The Danube river flows through 10 countries, more than any other river in the world. Originating in Germany, the Danube flows southeast passing through or bordering Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine before draining into the Black Sea. Its drainage basin extends into nine more countries. Since ancient times, the Danube has become a traditional trade route in Europe, its total length being navigable. The river is also an important source of energy and drinking water.

Celtic Migration

The Celtic migration is a vast subject by itself, but

it appears that the first migration was from Hindu-Kush to Austria, which became a powerful Celtic nation. There is a world heritage site there at Hallstatt. They spread out in other parts of Europe from here. Historians in India also trace back their routes from North East of India. They further moved towards Gaul (France) through Alps and settled in Spain and Portugal. They finally moved up to Ireland and parts of United Kingdom.

Celtic Countries

The ten Celtic countries are (Eire) Ireland, Alba (Scotland), Ellan Vannin (the Manx-language name of the Isle of Man), Cymru (Welsh), Kernow (Cornwall), Breizh (Brittney), Asturias (an autonomous community in north-west Spain), Cantabria (an autonomous community in northern Spain with Santander as its capital city), Galiza (an autonomous community of Spain and historic nationality under Spanish law. Located in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula), Norte Portugal

The six Celtic countries as of today are Ireland, (Brittney) France, (Scotland, Wales, Cornwall) UK and Isle of Man. Celts are spread out in many European countries. Out of these six Celtic countries, they are divided in two traditional groups called Brythonic (Welsh, Cornish, Breton) and Goidelic (Irish, Scottish Gaelic, and Manx)

Celts and Hindu: Similarities

Social structure

The social structure of Celts and Hindus are almost similar and are in India too.

Festivals

The Hill of Tara complex is a legendary sacred site, and ancient capital and sacred seat of the High Kings of Ireland. It contains several ancient monuments and, according to tradition, was the seat of the High King of Ireland where he gave judgments to the people guided by the Druids. Tara was a Royal Pagan City, a sacred city. Proto-druids developed megalith

building culture and this period saw the rise of great mounds like Newgrange and circles of stone like Stonehenge at the same time also a Solar, Moon, Planet and Star Observatory which was used by the Druids to monitor the astronomical events. Transforming these events to festivals and thereby evolving a culture has been a milestone in development of society. These festivals are also the festivals of Hindus and therefore the Hill of Tara is one the most important astronomical and archeological sites for many societies and cultures. Newgrange is a world heritage site, but we must view the entire Hill of Tara Complex on larger perspective, a place of cultural evolution. There are many such important Megalithic and archeological sites which need to be identified and studied to know the remarkable work done by our ancestors.

The Hill of Tara, a Solar Observatory:

The observations are made through the alignments of various objects which are in and around the Hill of Tara. The alignment of the four bright stars* in the zodiac with the rising Sun over Lambay Volcano (island in Dublin Bay) and a sacred temple gives the timing for four of the eight Solar Festival days and the other four solar festival days by aligning star group # in the zodiac with the rising Sun over Lambay Volcano and Megalithic object or a Mound or a Hill top, on or near the Hill of Tara. This was very ancient method but coincides with the festivals. Druids even today celebrate these festivals on Hill of Tara. Some Megalithic objects have been disturbed or destroyed but the festival celebration is planned and celebrated as per the ancient Lunar Celtic Calendar.

Gods and Goddesses

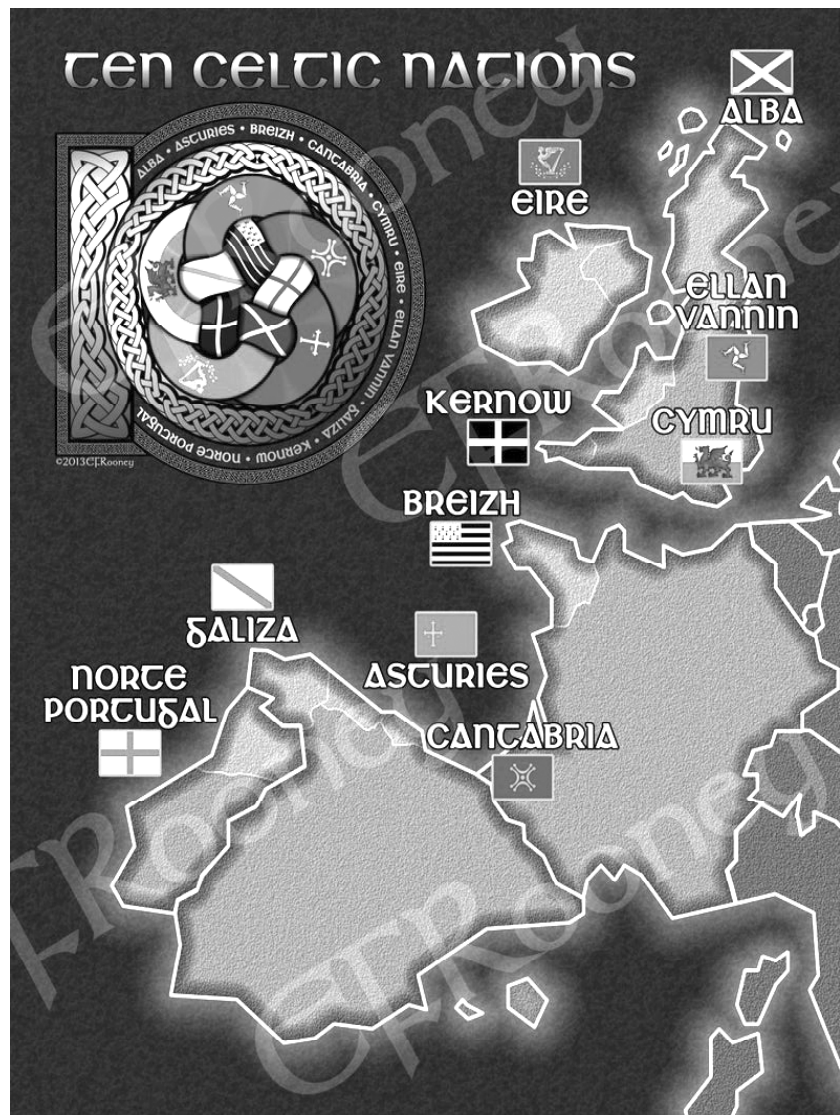
The horned God of the forest Cernunnos , Dagada , Belarus, The

Turtle God and Spring goddess Calan Maia, Enpona , Dana or Danu etc. are Celtic Gods and Goddesses and they are also Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

Summery

The most important discovery of this study would be, establishing the ancient link between the Celts and Hindus, based on Eightfold Calendar, beliefs and related festivals. We would like to understand the importance of the Hill of Tara and Eightfold Celtic Calendar.

In this study, I shall work exclusively on Celtic and Vedic culture similarities. Find the similarities of social structure, Gods and Goddesses, festivals and beliefs as per Ancient sacred Vedic scripts.



Knowledge must for society to progress

Nagaland governor, P.B. Acharya on Monday inaugurated a one-day media seminar on social media organized by North East Press Service (NEPS) at Raj Bhavan.

Addressing a one-day media seminar, the governor said knowledge was essential for any society and nation to progress and should empower the society and bring benefit to the people. He called upon the people to wake up and work harder to become economically strong and develop state.

Acharya, who also spoke on the challenges of handling social media, said that for every new invention or introduction in the society, there will be problem and difficulty to handle, but one cannot run away rather should be able to fix the problem. Citing an example, he said when mobile phone was first invented facilities like landline, telegram, typewriter became outdated. On the negative points of social media raised by various speakers at

programme, the Governor said social media was a blessing as it disseminates information quickly. But the problem arises when people do not use it for right purpose, he said. Emphasizing on the need of knowing positive and negative aspects of social media, the Governor suggested introducing it as a subject in the school and college syllabus so that it could be used in the right manner.

Speaking on “traditional mass media and social media” as one of the resource persons, Nagaland Press Association president, H Chishi, said social media and other online news sources, also known as the “new media” have become an integral part of modern society and the presence of such new media has threatened the existence of newspapers. He said the effect was witnessed on the circulation of print newspapers, especially in United States where the average daily circulation of newspapers declined by 7%, according to the data from the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Dr Minu Tadang to attend 59th International Session for Young Participants

Dr Minu Tadang from Arunachal Pradesh has been selected to represent India in the 59th International Session for Young Participants (ISYP), scheduled during June 1 to 25 in Ancient Olympia, Greece, according to a letter issued by International Olympic Academy resident Isidoros Kouvelos.

Thrilled by this achievement, members of Arunachal Olympic Association (AOA) led by president Padi Richo, secretary Abrham K Tech and treasurer Sehan Likha Tara have congratulated here for her achievement to fly Arunachal flag high in Greece. Dr Minu is also the joint secretary of AOA. She is the second person from India to be invited by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to represent the country in the said programme, informed AOA in a release.

The two-week IYPS is run by the International Olympic Association (IOA) and is designed as an introduction to Olympism and the Olympic

movement.

The session brings together a large international group of young people, Olympians and people active in sport.

The aim of the IOA is to educate and motivate young people to use their experiences and knowledge gained from the session to proactively promote the Olympic ideals and educate others in their own countries. Serving as the assistant professor of physical education department in Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), Dr Minu is the first woman from State to be awarded PhD in Physical Education from Visva Bharati Santiniketan in West Bengal.

The AOA also congratulated Chief Minister Pema Khandu for taking oath for second term and also AOA vice president Taba Tedir on his induction as cabinet minister following his unopposed election from Yachuli assembly seat.

Indian women hockey player Lalremsiami misses father's funeral to play for team, wins FIH series

19 year old hockey player Lalremsiami, from Mizoram played in the FIH Hockey Series semi-final against Chile, a day after being informed of her father Lalthansanga Zote's death. He died of a heart attack on 21st June, 2019, Friday morning. She returned to her village in Kolasib district on 25th June, 2019, Tuesday.

She was given the option of flying back home for her father's funeral by the team coach, Sjoerd Marijine, but she decided against it.

According to a report in news website DNA, she said that she had wanted to make her father proud and so she decided to play on and ensure that her team qualified.

The young player, nicknamed Siami by her teammates, played an integral part in India's match against Chile which they won, 4-2. The Indian team



not only won the Hockey Series Final which took place in Hiroshima but also managed to secure a spot for India in the FIH Olympic qualifiers.

"Indian women hockey player Lalremsiami's father expired when India was to play a crucial semifinal at Hiroshima that would determine if India's Olympics dream would be alive. She told the coach, 'I want to make my father proud. I want to stay, play and make sure India qualifies,'" tweeted Kiren Rijiju, Youth Affairs and Sports minister.

"I salute Lalremsiami and Congratulations to Indian Women Hockey Team," Rijiju added.

The win adds to the Indian women's hockey team's successful run which started with them qualifying in the Rio Olympics in 2016 after a 36-year break.

Meghalaya Education Minister urges research on traditions

Meghalaya Education minister, Lahkmen Rymbui urged academia to explore the use of scientific method of enquiry and do some research on the rich traditions, myths and superstitions among the tribal cultures of the Northeast.

Addressing the valedictory session of the two-day National Seminar on 'Contesting the Site of Sights: The Discourse of Visual Media Cultures with Special References to Northeast India' held at the English and Foreign Languages University, Shillong Campus on Tuesday, Rymbui suggested that those studies should be presented in public domain for public good. Giving the example of 'thlen' and 'taro', he stressed the need to explore these cultural superstitions scientifically and stressed that media consumers and media itself, should

shoulder the responsibility while addressing viral stories on social media platforms. He also cautioned against the menace of fake news that deceived the masses and urged everyone to very careful, and should not be trapped by these social and visual media.

The seminar was organised jointly by the Departments of ELT and Mass Communication and sponsored by the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute for Asian Studies, Kolkata and ICSSR-NERC. The seminar had 76 participants from across the country.

During the function, former Director of the Shillong Campus and Pro Vice-Chancellor of EFL University, Prof. K.C. Baral, was felicitated.

Artsy_Naga organizes art exhibition in Dimapur

Artsy Naga, together with its IT partners, CONCLAVE, organized its first ever art exhibition based on the theme & quote;Redefining” at Hotel Lake Shilloi on June 12. SDO (Civil), Kikato Chishi, graced the occasion as the guest of honour, where he acknowledged Artsy Naga and Conclave for boldly organizing such remarkable event that would greatly benefit the artist community and further promote growth of art in Nagaland. He was later presented with an artwork created by Buddhi Thapa, an internationally renowned artist.

Founder, Artsy Naga, Tunavi Achumi, also spoke about how he decided to take up art as a profession and the struggles he went through in choosing his field.

Vote of thanks was delivered by member of CONCLAVE, Toka Kits, who expressed heartfelt gratitude to their sponsors, DMC, Chabou & Co., WJ Decors, event host, Hotel Lake Shilloi, media partner, Nagaland Post and printing partner, KT Printing Press.



Buddhi Thappa, in his speech, also acknowledged Artsy Naga for organizing the event and hoped that the event would serve good purpose in show casting the talents of the upcoming Naga artists in Nagaland. In a short interview, the renowned artist stated that currently there more than 40 upcoming artists in the state, while 22 are already in the professional level. He further appealed state government and NGO's to open a permanent art gallery for the artists in Nagaland to show case their talents and display their art works. He viewed that there are many more young and talented artists in the state itself who can easily come under professional level, however, with lack of opportunity and platforms they are unable to show cast their talents.

The exhibition ran for 4 days, from June 12 to 15 and was open from 10 AM to 8 PM. Artsy Naga was curating for 15 select prominent artists from Nagaland.

Artworks and Sculptures of varying genres and mediums were on display with costs varying from Rs.3000 to 7,00,000. The organizers and partners also extend cordial invitation to all art lovers and enthusiasts to come and visit the exhibition.

The event began with an invocation by Pastor Ahoto Chophi of Ikishe Baptist Church.

Yoga as a Science of Consciousness

David Frawley

In Vedic and yogic thought Consciousness is the supreme reality, not matter, energy or mind. Consciousness is all-pervasive like space, self-effulgent like light, unit-ing everything in the universe in the highest awareness and bliss as the Self of all.

A recognition of universal Consciousness is now becoming accepted in modern physics. How can all the laws of nature function, from vast galactic to minute sub-atomic particles, if there is not some overall guiding intelligence behind it, not as some deity apart, but woven into the very fabric of existence?

While not impossible to theorize, the difficulty is how to approach, cognize and realise that supreme Consciousness within ourselves and see it in the world around us. Such a path to unfold the supreme Consciousness has yet to be formulated by modern physics. Yet it has not only been formulated, but has been explored from every possible angle in the meditation traditions of India. A practical philosophy and psychology of Consciousness is the basis of Vedanta and the tools to realize it are part of Yoga.

Limitations of the Human Mind

In our ordinary human nature we do not directly experience this supreme Consciousness, though many people have intimations. We are creatures of the mind, which is an embodied or individualized consciousness. We have a limited identity, limited intelligence, limited energy and limited will power far removed from this inner state of knowing.

The individual mind holds the reflection of Consciousness, which is the source of its light of knowledge, but is not itself Self-aware. The mind's limited awareness is colored by the gunas and forces of nature at biological, psychological and social levels. As such, much of what we call mind is unconscious or only partly conscious. This lack of true awareness in the mind gives rise to karma, duality, conflict and all the misunderstandings of life.

The mind is like a half-light that illumines the

surface of things but veils the depth – which draws us into the waves but causes us to forget the sea. In order to find the cosmic reality of existence we must go beyond the conditioned patterns of the mind to the light of Universal Consciousness hidden behind it. This going beyond the mind is not easy to approach as we are by habit and karma only mental beings caught in our own mental formations, not spiritual beings beyond any personal or cultural prejudices. We take the opinions of the mind, unreliable and shifting though they are, to be truth when they are just the limited perspective of a particular individual or group. This results in the clash of beliefs and cultures that characterises our society, with their related conflicts of religion, politics and competing power centers.

Science of Controlling the Mind

Yoga arose originally in Vedic thought as a means of moving beyond the mind, or mere creaturely awareness to transcendent awareness – such as we see in the Upanishadic search for the Self. This requires control of the mind and detachment from it.

Yoga Sutras defines Yoga as *chitta vritti nirodha*, the mastery, calming or concentration of the movements of the mind. The practices of Yoga serve to make the mind still like a mirror so it can reflect the cosmic reality, while for most of us the mind is like a turbulent lake that distorts the light of Consciousness that filters through it.

Mind moreover is a product of ego, or limited self-identity (*ahamkara*), and of ignorance (*avidya*) or lack of unitary awareness. It provides only a partial knowledge that can show us the surface of things but not the inner depths and truth.

Such meditative control of the mind is not simply part of Yoga but is essential in all educational pursuits in which we need to develop focus, attention and clear observation beyond our mental conditioning. To gain this we must question the opinions, preconceptions, fears and desires of the mind.

Moving to the Higher Levels

Today Yoga is most known for asana or its calming and healing of the body. This is very important for physical health and wellbeing and can extend to deeper psychological levels, gradually freeing us from the limitations of body consciousness. Yet Yoga must extend to deep meditation in order to understand and master the mind. Asana should be a seat for meditation, not an end in itself. Pranayama should help us draw our prana into our inner awareness. Pratyahara should turn our senses within into the light beyond the mind. Once the mind is brought into a state of silence it can reflect the Universal Consciousness and grant us direct knowledge of the cosmos itself, not as a mere mathematical formulation but as a manifestation of Consciousness that we are an integral part of. We can see this in the yogic science of Sri Vidya. The silent mind can become the tool for a higher knowledge beyond name, form and number that can resolve all conflict and duality. In this regard the silent mind is more important than any other scientific instrument or computer, however important these may be in their respective spheres. Reviving the Yogic Science This yogic science of consciousness is India's greatest contribution to human knowledge and probably the most important science we have as a species because it alone grants true knowledge of

the Infinite and Eternal. Dharmic education requires a yogic approach to the mind through meditation. This higher state of yogic awareness is called samadhi, deep absorption or unity consciousness. All dharmic traditions, Vedic or not, require samadhi as the ultimate pramana or means of knowledge. Such direct perception provides us not with just facts and information but the knowledge of Being itself beyond the partialities of ideas, concepts or beliefs. It takes us from the shadows of darkness to the unbounded Self-effulgent light. This Yoga Day 2019 let us remember Yoga as a science of Consciousness with a central place in education, research and spiritual aspiration. Only through such a higher awareness can we transcend our individual and cultural limitations that are the basis of all the conflict and misunderstanding that plagues our material world. We live in an unbounded reality of Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Sat-chit-ananda). Experiencing that should be the heritage and birth right of every person, not just outer social or political rights. This is where Yoga leads us but we must follow the way in our daily lives.

(Courtesy : Organiser, 22/06/2019)

(The writer also known as Vamdev Shastri. He is US-based Vedic scholar)

Free dental and general medical camp organised by AVP

A ten day free medical camps conducted by Longding district unit, Arunachal Vikas Parishad ended today on 31st May in Wakka. The medical camps led by dental surgeon Dr. Protibha Athawale from Gujarat and General Doctor Dr R B Mishra (a doctor of AVP) were organized from 21st May to 31st May in different Blocks of Longding district. The camps were conducted in Kamhua Noknu village of Khakam Block, Chanu village of Chubam Block and Wakka village of Wakka Block. This was the first ever dental health camp in the district by AVP. However general medical camps had been conducted several times in the district. 328 Dental patients and 970 general patients were benefitted in the camp. People were very happy with the camp and grateful to AVP. They were satisfied with the treatments provided especially by Dr Athawale. They provided

every logistic support to the team for the smooth conduct of the camp. "I am a poor man and I don't have money for my treatment. Going to Dibrugarh would have cost me thousands. I am very grateful to the Doctors and AVP Longding for this free treatment." A villager told the team after his tooth was removed. As per the records, the most common problems of the patients were Tooth problem, back and joint pain, headache and stomach problems. The team was accompanied by Sunilji (Sah Sangathan Mantri AVP state unit), with the Doctors. President Longding Unit AVP Chanwang Wangsa and General Secretary Phochoi Wangsu thanked the AVP state Unit and the Doctors and appealed for further medical camps in this area as advanced medicals are a far dream for these poor people.

Tagang Taki Bags Lummer Dai Literary Award 2019

Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Saturday presented the Luminous Lummer Dai Literary Award 2019 to Tagang Taki of Siang district for his enormous contribution in the field of literature during the NEFA days. The award, instituted by Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society (APLS), was given during the 79th birth anniversary celebration of doyen of Assamese literature Lummer Dai, at Jawaharlal Nehru Museum, here. While recalling the contribution of Dai in the field of literature, Mein said that he is the pride for the State and a 'Sahitya Surjya' in the world of Assamese literature.

The Deputy Chief Minister exhorted the youths to draw inspiration from Dai and carry forward his legacy.

"Our State has a large number of tribes having distinct variant cultures and heritage, for a writer there is so much of subjects in offer to write," Mein pointed out and advocated for preservation of oral literature in digital format and in written form.

While lauding the effort of APLS, the Deputy Chief Minister called upon the members of the society to encourage more literary activities in the state and assured his help to them in their endeavour.

Earlier, Mein paid floral tribute to image of the literary icon. APLS president YD Thongchi, general secretary Batem Pertin and Tagang Taki also spoke on the occasion.

(Contd. from Page 8)

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integrating the people of this region with the mainland. The most accomplished work that I have referred to is Heritage of Kamakhya on the Nilachala hill, an outcome of empirical study under the aegis of Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture, Guwahati. The book itself is rhetoric of a hill containing 12 valuable chapters: the Nilachala hill, kamakhya episodes in traditional history, facts from history, Dasamahavidya or ten incarnations of Devi, rites and rituals relating to Kumari puja, durga puja, kali puja and manasa puja, fairs and festivals, vratas on the Nilachala hill, sevaitis of Kamakhya temple, sculptures, art and architecture, historical inscription and others. Every chapter is so meticulously developed so that it covers entire aspects in a holistic manner. It is a wonderful handbook for further research. Kamakhya has been considered as an important area of folkloristics. Mythology, legend, fairs, festivals, rites and rituals, being key component of folklore are the key for consideration. During 2018, two significant empirical research works came out. Prabalika Sarma focuses on mother goddess Kamakhya and the role of panda; at the same time, Mamata Thakuria examines the women based folk custom at Kamakhya from socio-cultural perspectives. It is observed that there are many unexplored areas regarding the Nilachal hill.

People's devotional and enthusiastic participation during ambuvachi makes the eco of the hill spread for global listener and spectator.

End Notes

1. See Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture, VKIC (2002) 'Heritage of Kamakhya on the Nilachala hill', Guwahati: VKIC, directed by Pradip Sarma, edited by GN Bhuyan, Sujatha Nayak
2. Khargeswar Goswami (2019, June 11), 'Ambubachi', The Axomiya Pratidin, Guwahati
3. Rupleka Devi (2019, June 11), 'Janabiswakhe ki koy?', The Axomiya Pratidin, Guwahati
4. Ibid VKIC, p. preface XV-XVI
5. 'The mother goddess Kamakhya' written by Dr Biswanarayan Sastri, published in ISANI
6. He was formerly Professor and Director at the centre for Himalayan studies. He delivered Lecture-IV, on a topic 'Early History of Pragjyotisha-Kamrupa: Some reconsideration' at North East Regional Centre of Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), Guwahati. It is published as booklet on 2007. See p. 55, in the Notes.
7. Ibid note 2
8. Ibid note 1, p. 60

75 years of 'that great, bitter battle of Kohima'

Capt. Deepam Chatterjee

Seventy-five years ago, two island nations from opposite sides of the world fought the Battle of Kohima, one of the bloodiest combats in history, thousands of miles from their homelands and across a tennis court.

In a battle largely forgotten by Indians, the charming hill station of Kohima, nestled on a thickly forested ridge 5,000 feet above the sea level, became the scene of "Britain's greatest battle", as voted by the National Army Museum in London, edging out D-Day and Waterloo. The fighting was so intense that the Battle of Kohima is often referred to as the "Stalingrad of the East". It was one of the most decisive battles of the Second World War, thwarting the Japanese invasion of India and helping turn the tide in favour of the Allies.

The world at the time was preoccupied with Nazi Germany, and the Allies' invasion of Europe had steered the spotlight away from Southeast Asia. The Battle of Kohima, which went on from April 4 to June 22, 1944, was overshadowed by news of the D-Day landings at Normandy, which began on June 6. In Kohima, a tiny garrison of less than 1,500 British and Indian troops faced 15,000 soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army. Outnumbered 10 to 1, the defenders fought the invaders hand-to-hand in a savage battle and prevented a Japanese victory that would have proved disastrous for the British. It would be 13 blood-soaked days before reinforcements arrived, and another 67 days of hellish fighting until the Japanese would finally be driven out of British India, sealing the fate of Tokyo's imperial ambitions in South Asia.

India's Thermopylae

The rough terrain and dense forests of Manipur and Nagaland were important frontiers of what popularly came to be known as the Burmese front. In December 1941, Japan, already at war with China, attacked British, Dutch and American territories in Asia and the Pacific. On February 15, 1942, the British forces in Singapore surrendered to the Japanese. Then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill would later call the surrender "the worst disaster... in British history". By June 1942, Japanese conquests

encompassed a vast area of Southeast Asia and the western Pacific. In 1943, the Fourteenth Army, formed in India under Lieutenant-General William Joseph Slim, was tasked with retaking Burma from the Japanese.

In early March of 1944, the Japanese launched the U-Go offensive, and the first units of the Japanese 15th Army invaded India. As part of operation U-Go, the Japanese planned to split the 31st Division into three columns that would cut off the Kohima-Imphal Road and surround Kohima. The failure of successive British offensives in the Arakan (now Rakhine state in Myanmar) had reinforced the Japanese high command's low opinion of its opponents' proficiency as jungle fighters. U-Go had twin aims: to pre-empt the Allies' plans to retake Burma and to break into India through the isolated town of Imphal in the then princely state of Manipur. A Japanese colonel, Kuniji Kato, later accurately called the fighting in Kohima "that great, bitter battle". Lord Louis Mountbatten, India's last Viceroy, described it as "the British/Indian Thermopylae", comparing it to the heroic resistance a vastly outnumbered Greek army had offered the invading Persians in 480 BC. For the British, the battle was critical since Kohima was the key to Imphal and the crucial supply depot at Dimapur, whose capture would enable the Japanese to consolidate and replenish their starving troops and kick off a campaign into India's interior, towards Delhi.

The battle of Kohima took place in two stages. From April 3 to 16, the Japanese 31st Division attempted to capture the Kohima Ridge, but the small garrison held out against fierce and repeated attempts to destroy it. The deputy commissioner's bungalow on the ridge was used as one of the main lines of defence. After 13 days of resistance, elements of the British 2nd Division, the 161st Indian Brigade and tanks from XXXIII Corps fought their way in and relieved the garrison, finally balancing the strength of the two sides. For the next two and odd months, the British and Indian troops counter-attacked the Japanese. The battle ended on June 22 when the British and Indian troops from Kohima and Imphal met at Milestone 109, ending the siege. The deputy commissioner's

bungalow had been destroyed by heavy artillery and mortar fire and infantry assaults after witnessing some of the closest and grittiest fighting. Officers' diaries recount how sniping duels seemed like "unending snowball fights", how grenades were lobbed at point-blank range across the tennis court as if it were a tennis match, and how soldiers dug holes like beavers, burrowing or tunnelling themselves forward using plates, mugs, bayonets, entrenching tools and anything else they could find.

Today, white concrete lines denote the boundaries of the historic tennis court. The names of nearly 1,500 Allied soldiers who died are etched on the war memorial, the Kohima War Cemetery, with the famous epitaph: "When you go home/ Tell them of us and say/ For your tomorrow/ We gave our today."

The governor of Nagaland, P.B. Acharya, recently suggested building a separate memorial for the Japanese soldiers.

Fallout for Bose

Kohima handed the Japanese army its worst defeat in history. Thousands lay dead on a devastated landscape while tens of thousands more Japanese starved during a catastrophic retreat eastwards. They called the journey back to Burma the "Road of Bones", where men committed suicide or dropped dead from hunger along the jungle paths. The Japanese defeat came as a crushing blow to the hopes of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the Azad Hind Fauj or Indian National Army (INA). The strange irony of the Battle of Kohima was that Indian troops fought on both sides. Among the British forces were Jats, Rajputs, Sikhs, Marathas and Gurkhas whereas leading the Japanese advance were soldiers of the "Subhas Brigade" of the INA. Bose had arrived in Southeast Asia on May 6, 1943, after a perilous 90-day submarine voyage to resurrect and lead the Azad Hind Fauj. "Only when the blood of freedom-loving Indians begins to flow," he declared in a broadcast in June 1943, "will India attain her freedom." Assuming the command of the INA he proclaimed, "Give me your blood, I will give you freedom" and sounded his famous battle cry, "Delhi Chalo (Onward to Delhi)", which was echoed by the Japanese as "March on Delhi".

The March to Delhi started on March 7-8, 1944. Two Japanese divisions attacked Imphal. On March 15, another Japanese division, the 31st, attacked Kohima.

In the preceding two weeks, a small group of Japanese and INA soldiers had combed the whole area. Their information was vital and, according to historian A. Swinson, "must rank as one of the most brilliant feats of reconnaissance in the history of war". In April 1944, fighting alongside the Japanese, the INA secured the first Indian victories in parts of Arakan, Manipur and Nagaland. The advance, though, had a major flaw. The Japanese had brought 5,000 oxen with them to provide meat for the troops for 50 days but the tough terrain and the incessant rain killed a large number of the animals, triggering a food shortage. The superior air power of the Americans aiding the British forces, and the rapidly degrading international situation for the Axis Powers, forced the INA to reluctantly retreat from the Indian front along with the retreating Japanese troops. Would a Japanese-INA victory have led to Bose unfurling of the Indian flag at the Red Fort, and would it have prompted the Indian sepoy to switch loyalties and ignite a revolt within the British Indian army? Hard to say, since Japan's imperialistic plans were inscrutable. The Japanese had amply demonstrated their cruel methods of dealing with local populations while marching into Burma, and later into Nagaland, killing and pillaging with utter disregard for Bose's ideals. The Japanese had sidelined the INA throughout the war and "foreshadowed" their intent when they supposedly gifted "Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep" — the Andaman and Nicobar Islands — to Bose's men but only allowed them limited governance.

The Kohima defeat may be seen as an "if only" moment that denied Bose his rightful place in history, albeit one achieved while riding on Japanese shoulders. He, however, was not a man who would have been content seeing one empire replaced by another in India. Although the INA's role in the Battle of Kohima could never have been militarily decisive, given its limited numbers and equipment, it had fervently wanted to spearhead the Japanese advance and, as Bose had hoped, oust the British from Indian soil. But that was not to be.

(The author is a former army officer and can be reached at deepamchatterjee@yahoo.co.in)

(Courtesy : <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/75-years-on-that-great-bitter-battle/cid/1692935>)

Preserving 200-Year-Old Living Root Bridge

The people of Nohwet village set themselves the task to save the nearly 200-yr-old living root bridge which has been the symbol of the close relationship that exists between the local people and nature.

In the past, people had lined the root bridge with large stones to help ease walking but these same stones are proving to be the bane for the bridge as they slowly put stress on the roots, damaging them in the process. On June 22, 2019, the entire village under the leadership of headman Bose Swell Khongthohrem, came together and removed the stones to allow the bridge to recover. In their place, dead wood from jackfruit trees mixed with a light layer of soil was used, which according to the locals, is a great source of nutrients for the roots. On top of this, areca nut trees are laid so that people could walk on the bridge without stepping directly on the roots

to prevent further damage. This entire exercise was done as part of the village's cleaning drive and saw a number of tourists and visitors participating in the activity. Along with this, the community also planted a number of new Ficus elastic or Dieng Jri as it is locally called, with guidance from Drunkwell Khongkrom, Lahshwa Khongsni, Koneda Khongtiang, Orin Tham and Kumarbha Khongknaw who are some of the few local people who are knowledgeable on growing root bridges. The village hopes to see these new plants grow into amazing bridges one day which would be used by their children and grandchildren.

Nohwet, which is situated in the southern slopes of East Khasi Hills district, is home to a wide range of indigenous knowledge which has been passed down through multiple generations.

Yoga to reach the tribal people

Urging people to make yoga an integral part of their lives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, the June 21 said that it hadn't reached the poor people and tribal belts of the country as much as it should have. He also gave the motto "yoga for peace, harmony and progress".

Modi performed yoga, along with around 30,000 people, at Prabhat Tara grounds of Ranchi on the occasion of the fifth International Yoga Day. Addressing the participants, Modi said: "Modern yoga has not reached the poor and tribal people. We have to make yoga an integral part of their lives. Poor people suffer more from diseases and it makes them poorer... Yoga is a medium to come out from poverty." He said in the changing world, "we have to take preventive measures for illness and focus on wellness". "Yoga is discipline. Yoga is beyond age, rich, poor, caste, religion, region and boundaries. 'yoga sabka hai aur sab yoga ke hain' (yoga is of everyone, everyone is of yoga)," he said. In the last five years, Modi said, yoga has been linked with preventive healthcare measures by the government. He insisted on adopting yoga for heart care. Modi gave four 'P mantras' for healthy lives — pani (Drinking water),

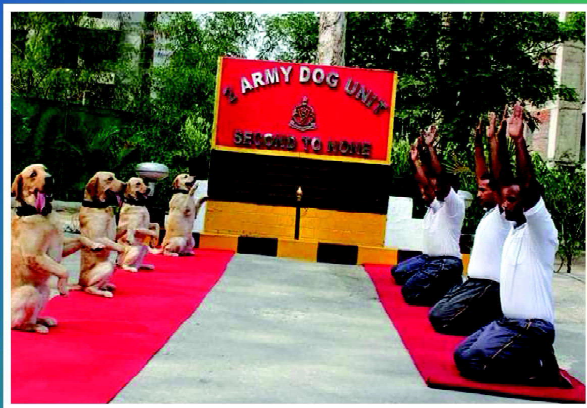
poshan (nutrition), paryawaran (environment) and parishram (hard work). "I urge you all to embarrass yoga and make it an integral part of your lives. Yoga is ancient and modern. It is constant and evolving. For centuries, the essence of Yoga has been the same - healthy body, stable mind, spirit of oneness. Yoga will make every individual better in thoughts, action and sprit," Modi said.

"Yoga has always been associated with peace and harmony. On the fifth International Yoga day, let our moto be — yoga for peace, harmony and progress." Modi also stressed on the need for research in yoga so that the world could be updated about benefits of Yoga. The 45-minute session was conducted by M. Baswa Reddy, Director of the New Delhi-based Morarji Desai National Yoga Institute.

After the session was over, the Prime Minister spent time with the participants, where children and youth even clicked selfies and shook hands with Modi. Modi was accompanied by Jharkhand Governor Draupdi Murmu, Chief Minister Raghubar Das, Ayush Minister Sripad Naik, state Health Minister Ramchandra Kesari, along with other senior government officials.



Arunachal Vikas Parishad (AVP) Conducts Free Dental And General Medical Camp In Longding District.



International Day of Yoga 2019