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# HERITAGE EXPLORER

"LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES"

*A Monthly News Bulletin*

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over 5000 years ago, Indians established Harappan  
culture in Sindhu Valley (Indus Valley Civilization)**

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e-mail: [ourheritage123@gmail.com](mailto:ourheritage123@gmail.com), Website: [www.heritagefoundation.org.in](http://www.heritagefoundation.org.in)

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## Should the violence rule our protests

The way the gravity and the grandeur of the last Republic Day was demolished compares only with the vandalism let loose by Nadir Shah's army on 22 March 1739 in Delhi. The atrocities of Nadir Shah's army, who came all the way from Persia to loot India, is quite understandable because they were pure invaders and had no affinity with the people of India. But the farmers who vandalized the Red Fort, our prized possession and the symbol of our sovereignty, were our own. How could they behave like enemies and plunderers? To understand this we need to go little deeper.

After the Narendra Modi led nationalist government came to power, the corrupt, greedy and power-seeking politicians as well as anti Indian elements could very well visualize the writings on the wall. Being unscrupulous and cunning they could foresee their future and understood that unless they annihilate this government, their future will be hopeless. As birds of same feather flock together, all the disparate elements gave up their past rivalries and joined forces to discredit and oust the Modi government from power. They hatched plans to cause internal strife, religious disharmony amongst Hindus and the Muslims and any and every smaller causes that may serve their purpose. They tried the anti-CAA stir, Ant-NRC revolt and anti integration of Jammu and Kashmir movement but could not achieve their goal because the true sons and daughters of mother India have woken up and do not want to remain a silent spectator of the disintegration of their motherland any more. The proof of their strong and unconditional support can be seen in the victories of BJP in state after state. The combined forces of Mahagatbandhan led by Rahul-Sonia Gandhi, Kezriwal, Akhilesh Yadav, Mamta Bannerjee, pseudo intellectuals et al aided and abetted by the Indian communists were forced to bite the dust. The anti Indian foreign countries, especially those ruled by the Islamic zealots spent millions to finance their paid servants in India. The present anti farmer law movement is also one such attempt by vested interest groups, especially the Canada based Indian capitalist farmers, for if the enacted laws come into force, their hegemony over the farm produce will be at peril. Mandis cannot

be ruled anymore by the middlemen and loan sharks cannot fleece the poor farmers in future. This is why the farmers of Punjab, Haryana and UP are so adamant about their single point agenda of repeal of the three farm laws.

As we all know perfection is the other name of god and all human being are less than perfect. There may have been some shortcomings and lacunas in the farm laws but these could have been sorted out amicably for which the government had shown enough goodwill. Taking out tractor rallies on a day of national importance and damaging and vandalizing the Red Fort, our nation's most revered heritage site is not the right way to solve a problem. The Red Fort is a symbol of Independent India and thousands of people had laid down their lives for the country's freedom and to see the national flag flying atop the historic fort. Wielding sticks, clubs and swords and holding the tricolor and farm union flags in one hand, tractors breaking barriers, attacking police, entering the city from unauthorized entry points to lay siege of the Red Fort can only be termed as the most shameful act on their part. The actions on the part of those who claim themselves as farmer have brought shame to the country. The farm leaders at the forefront of the agitation must own the responsibility of the agitation going astray and atone for their failure, willful or unintended. The so called farm union leaders allowed the Khalistanis to hijack the so far peaceful protest rallies. The leaders allowed the frustrated opposition political leaders to flaunt solidarity with them. They have done great harm not only to the farmers they are supposed to lead, but also badly dented the image of their own states. They deliberately avoided striking a respectable deal with government in their eleven rounds of talks to appease their inflated egos and have thus stalled the future investment and economic progress of their states. This is not the way for democratic protest and the good of many.

Let us retrospect and try to find a peaceful and decent path for an amicable and respectable settlement of the Farmers Bill imbroglio.

**Chief Editor**



# Religious Rites of the Tribal People of Tripura

Naresh Ch. Dev Varma

## HISTORY

Tripura was the abode of tribal people. The kings of this State also belonged to a tribal community. According to the RAJAMALA (The Chronicle of the kings of Tripura) a king of Tripura who was the contemporary with Yudhisthir, the eldest of the Pandavas of the Mahabharata era, was defeated by Sahadev, the youngest of the Pandava, during the time of the sacrificial rites (yajna) performed by Judhisthir. The Sanskrit Rajamala, the chronicle of the kings of Tripura written in Sanskrit state thus :-

*“Yudhisthirasya Yajnarthe Sahadevena Nirjitah.”*

However, this Royal Dynasty of Tripura recognized themselves subsequently as descendant of the Lumar Dynasty having endowed by the Hindu Brahmins.

There are good number of temples built by the kings of Tripura in the olden days, and temples built in the remote past have been found out by excavating mounds in different parts of the State. Moreover, there are engravings of different gods and goddesses on the slopes of rocky hills. There are also stone-idols of gods and goddesses lying here and there made by unknown sculptors in the remote past. These are all the signs of the cultural and religious heritage of the State.

Queen Hiravati, widow of the king Tripur, had founded the presently famous temple of fourteen gods and goddesses and started worshiping them with the heartiest desire to have –a worthy son. It is said that, with the blessings of the fourteen gods and goddesses, she gave birth to a very handsome male child with all the auspicious marks. That male child was named Trilochan (three-eyed), since an eye-like sign was visible on his forehead.

Since then, the above mentioned fourteen gods and goddesses were being worshiped as hereditary

deities of the Royal family of the State. These gods and goddesses are now being worshiped by the mass people in a temple at old Agartala. The Chief Priest of these gods and goddesses is called “Chantai”. The names of these gods and goddesses were named in Sanskrit as—

*Haroma Harima Bani Kumaroganko Bidbih.*

*Riddhi Ganga Sikhee Kamo Himadrishcha Chaturdashah.*

(Sanskrit Rajamala)

But the tribal people of Tripura call these gods and goddesses with the names in their own language Mwtai Kotor, Burasa, Kaleya, Garia, Katharog, Banirog, Thumnairog, Ikhitra, Bikhitra, Mailuma, Khuluma, Twima, Hachukma, Sangrangma.

It is believed that religion is commonly understood as a belief that has some invisible controlling power with a related emotion and a sense of morality. The basic features and nature of religious belief of the tribal people’s religion are no exception. It is true that these common features are present as much in the simplest beliefs and practices of the tribal people as they exist in the civilized people.

Here in Tripura, a section of the tribal people has two types of priests, eg. Brahmin priest and Tribal priests— Ochai or other appellations. It is significant that a section of the Tripuris, Jamatias, Noatias, Reangs, Kolois, Uchois and others have two kinds of the priests. Presently it is found that they engage Brahmin priests during the three main events of birth, marriage and death. The remarkable point is that the tribal people living in the inaccessible areas of forests, hills and hill-slopes have their own priest only and all religious ceremonies are performed by follows their traditional beliefs and practices.

It is to be stated here that a section of the tribal people of Tripura has already assimilated with the Hindu religious sects and worship some of the Hindu gods and goddesses according to their norms since long. In Tripura, according to the Census Report of 1931 onwards (during the British period) all tribal people are described as animist. In this connection, it may be mentioned here that the previous Census Reports of 1891, 1911 and 1921 had already enumerated the tribal people in the fold of Hinduism and it was not a possible task to segregate Hindu Dharma from the Tribal's Dharma. In case of Tripura, Hinduism takes different shape where indigenous faith is deeply influenced by the "Sanatana Dharma." The Hinduism practiced by the tribal people of Tripura is a curious mix of Hinduism, because the traditional tribal gods and goddesses have not been ousted by them, and the tribal gods and goddesses are worshiped side by side with those of the Hindus by the tribal priests—Ochais or Chantai or others. Obviously, all the tribal people except the Christians and Buddhists may be called Hindus in a wider sense. Significantly, the tribal people have identified themselves as Hindus and a good number of them do not feel any necessity for Brahmin priest to perform religious ceremonies for them in time of birth, marriage and death. Indian culture finds no exception to this and no Hindu raises any objection to their self-identification as Hindus. The observations made by renowned Anthropologist Prof. N.K. Bose are applicable here. He observed that "They have their own priests, and the ceremonies are also their own. Even if such people call themselves Hindu, no other Hindu objects, for Hinduism is spread over a wide spectrum encompassing tribal beliefs at one end and the highest forms of philosophical freedom at the other. Hindu society has moreover a built-in arrangement, the caste system, by means of which communities can preserve their distinctive identities, even when they are federated in a common hierarchical system. The change that takes place under the influence of Christianity or Islam, both religions of Semitic origin, is however

of a different order. For a man cannot become a Christian or Muslim merely if he claims to be one."

### **Tradition Based Practices And Systems Of The Religious Rites:**

The Tribal people of Tripura are worshipping a good number of gods and goddesses according to their indigenous faith. But there is no any written scripture for worshipping these gods and goddesses. For worshipping the gods and goddesses, they are following practice and systems orally inherited from their forefathers. The mantras or incantations spelled by their Ochais or others (Priests) at the time of worships also are not in \_written text. The Ochais or others acquire the incantations by practice orally from their spiritual guides. Even, there is no written text of the incantation for worshipping the fourteen gods and goddesses. Traditionally, the Chief Priest— Chantai of the fourteen gods and goddesses teach the incantation to his principal associate, — Naran alone. Generally, the senior most Naran becomes Chantai after an acting Chantai demised or relinquished this religious seat. Only one complete manuscript under the title "Surchya Pujar Khonaimani" (worship of the Sun-God) is available. There are forty verses containing eight lines in each verse. Some Research scholar presumed that it was composed more than thousand years back, thought there is no proven document about the time of its composition. However, it may undoubtedly be said that the manuscript is very old. Though the manuscript was composed in Kokborok language, it is almost unknowable to the educated Kokborok speaking people of the day. Now-a-days, some writers and scholar are quoting words and phrases of the incantations spelled by the Ochais in their writings, but no complete text of the incantations for worshipping the particular god or goddess is yet to be written. Therefore, it is rightly be said that the religious activities and rituals prevalent in the tribal society of Tripura are solely based on the oral traditions. Now, some of the religious activities and rituals being performed by the tribal people of Tripura are precisely mentioned hereunder.



## Indigenous Faith

It is not incorrect at the present stage to say that the term 'indigenous faith' is taken in a wide sense to denote the belief in the existence of spiritual beings. Most of the tribal people of Tripura, viz. Tripuris, Jamatias, Reangs, Noatias, Kukis and Uchois, believe that high mountains, hills, trees and bamboos are the abodes of spirits and ghosts. Similar belief is found among the Hindu Halams also. The Tripuris call the soul of human body "Fala". They believe that when a man falls asleep the soul goes out from the body temporarily and returns to the body. The belief in spirit is an important aspect of the religious life of Tripuris. They believe that on the "Chharua bufang" (a kind of tree) the spirits dwell. The meeting place of three-four, paths or the road-crossing which they call "Lampwra" is supposed to be hunted by evil spirits. Some of them believe that very old pond is also an abode of the evil spirits. The dominating belief is that if a particular plot of land, be an abode of evil spirits, then it is very harmful to cultivate it. Even more, some of the hills and big trees are indicative to them as the dwellings of the spirits. "Lampwra" as stated above bears a social significance in the tribal people's belief in Tripura. The Tripuris and some other tribal people of the State worship "Lampwra Wathop" customarily before any ceremony, rites and rituals. "Wathop" means symbol of deities made of bamboo. It may be called high philosophy of the tribal people that "Lampwra" is a symbolic of the worldly place where human and living beings meet together for the time being and leave for their respective directions after completion of the worldly duties. The principal motto of the worship is "Kubui, Kwthar, Kwkwrrwk" resembling the thought of the Hinduism "Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram" (Truth, well-being, graceful).

In case of the Jamatia tribe, primitive faith is a unique factor. They worship the supernatural spirits and forces. Although they are devoted to Hinduism, but the essence of indigenous faith is one of the

characteristic feature of their religion like that of the Tripuris, Riangs and others.

The tribes of Tripura have no idol for their deities. While performing the rites and rituals, the tribal people of Tripura erect symbols made of bamboo for their deities, and pebbles in case of "RANDAK" worship performed by Tripuris, Riangs and Others. However, it is a unique feature of religious cult of the Jamatia tribe that they have the face of the "Garia" god made of gold which they fit with bamboos and decorate with varied colours of cloths at the time of festival. There is a number of controversial opinions how the Jamatias had got this face of the "Garia" God.

The Riangs believe in soul and its separate existence. Like Tripuris, they also call it "Fala". They also believe that sleep implies temporary departure of soul "Fala" and death means permanent departure of the same.

The Halams strongly believe in the existence and activities of soul in men, animals and plants. In the Halam society, the soul is called 'Ratha'. They also believe that soul is capable of leaving the body while a person is asleep. They believe in re-birth which is supposed to take place after seven days' of death on the basis of Karma (action) in the previous life. It is also believed that the soul returns home immediately after death in the form of either a kite or a dove.

The Garos believe that the soul after death takes a form of a ghost or insect or beast. The high spirit of the Garos is "Tatara Burunga". The Kukis of Tripura are said to worship the deceased's soul. The Kukis along with the Lushais believe that the good spirit is "Parthian" who created this universe and "Huais" are the powerful devil spirits. Both these tribal communities believe that the soul of the deceased keeps prowling around his mortal abode and "Thong- chhuah" puja offered by surviving relatives can bring it repose. Otherwise a restless spirit can do harm to living men.

*(Contd. to Next Issue)*

# Rani Gaidinliu

Ramkui Newme

Rani Gaidinliu was born on Thursday, 26th January 1915 in Rongmei Naga village of Lungkao in the Trans-sarah basin in the western district of Manipur state. She was the third child among eight children of shri Lotthonang. Her family belonged to an influential ruling clan of the village. From childhood Gaidinliu was an independent and strong willed girl. She was very robust and manly in executing tasks that used to raise eyebrows of the womenfolk of the village. At the age of thirteen, she was associated with Hepou Jadonang (1905-31) who tried to drive away the British from Manipur.

Gaidinliu soon became trustworthy lieutenant of Jadonang in his social, religious and political movement. However, before launching his movement, Jadonang was arrested and hanged by the British on 29th August 1931 in Imphal. Jadonang gave the idea and it was left to Gaidinliu to translate it into action.

After the execution of Jadonang, people looked to her for leadership and Gaidinliu assumed the leadership of the movement for independence against the British Raj. Gaidinliu concentrated her rebellion in the Trans-Barak basin. Her movement had socio-religious and political aims. The British had let loose a reign of terror in the Manipur hills. They imposed collective fines on the villages that refused to obey British orders. The British rule in Manipur hills was arbitrary and oppressive. They confiscated all weapons and guns belonging to villagers to shut up any protest. Gaidinliu told her followers, “we are free people, the white man should not rule over us, we will not pay any house tax to the Government, we will not obey their unjust laws like forced labor and compulsory porter subscription.” The political program of Gaidinliu was inspired by Jadonang. Jadonang had earlier come to know of Mahatma Gandhi, but it was Gaidinliu who pursued Father of

the nation in her political propaganda. She told her followers about the agitation launched by the congress under the leadership of Gandhiji. She led the people politically along the teachings of Gandhiji, and religiously along the reformed form of traditional faith and customs.

Her religious movement was not a complete departure from the traditional religion and practices. It is known as the “HEREKA” meaning PURE. The HEREKA believes in God who is the creator of the universe. The idea of kingdom of God where there will be no wants and sufferings is also visualized by the Heraka. Hereka also believe life after death if no sin is committed on the earth.

Socially, Gaidinliu’s movement aimed at the integration of the three Naga kindred tribes (Zemi, Liangmei and Rongmei) known as Zeliangrong. She wanted to preserve the traditional Naga culture and customary practices. The practice of Naga customs is always praised in her speeches. She never parted with any piece of Naga customary item from her body. The people believed in what she said and their love and reverence were so enormous that she was sort of goddess incarnate who was going to deliver them from the life of bondage and misery. Gaidinliu always denied she was a goddess. It was because of over enthusiasm of her followers that the British authorities and many writers following them, out of ignorance, say that she installed herself as a goddess which is far from the truth.

After the execution of Jadonang, the whole affected area comprising the present Manipur west District, Southern Nagaland and North Cachar Hills of Assam were alive with rebellion. And the British Government was greatly alarmed at this unprecedented uprising under the leadership of a “surly girl” of seventeen. It was not a mob action of every “crook and gangster,” as Ursula Graham Bower



(‘Naga path P- 46) thought, nor of “ruffians”, as Stephen Fuchs (Rebellious Prophet, p. 151) writes, nor was Gaidinliu “the hub of a money spinning God racket” (Naga Path). It was a well organized and popular political rebellion. The people gave money for the cause and a large number of fighting men volunteered for the fight against the British authorities of Manipur and Naga Hills. Gaidinliu was the only hope for their freedom. Then the British Government decided to suppress the rebellion and capture Gaidinliu, the hunt for whom was, in the words of Bower, “Apprehending the grave danger of this rebellion, the Assam Governor in- council ordered that operations against Gaidinliu were to be centralized under the direct control of Mr. J.P. Mills, the Deputy commissioner of Naga hills, who could utilize the service of the men of the 2rd and 4th Assam Rifles. The S.D.O of North Cachar Hills and an officer of Manipur state were directed to assist him.

Troops were sent out to all three districts, outposts were established at strategic points in the centers of more active areas of Manipur and Assam. Searches for Gaidinliu were instituted; her photos were widely distributed throughout the three districts. All the girls having the name of Gaidinliu were interrogated and it is said that many girls having similar names had to change their names. Even Gaidinliu had to adopt the name of ‘Dilenliu’. Mr. Harvey, the president of Manipur state Darbar, offered reward of Rs.200/- for the arrest of Gaidinliu; this amount was subsequently raised to Rs.500/- and any villages giving the information about her were promised a remission of ten years taxes. But every man and woman in the area was a sympathizer. Gaidinliu went into hiding in North Cachar Hills and Masang of Kepeilo, her agent did his best to keep her movement and whereabouts a complete secret.

The Manipur Government meted out serious punishment to supporters of the rebellion. Several villages were burnt down. The sepoy of the Assam Rifles had an encounter with the rebels in North Cachar Hills on 16th February 1932, a large force

Nagas attacked in broad day-light the Assam Rifles outpost at Hangrum. Unfortunately, they were using Daos and spears which were no match at all for the rifles of the defenders. The outpost opened fire which caused seven spot death and injuries among the Naga warriors who had to ultimately retreat. The casualties were 1. Pauditrangbe Riame 2. Rangneckambe Riame 3. Lungsangying Pame 4. Zinbuing Pame 5. Kerujuing Pame 6. Nramraing Kuame 7. Namkebuing Riame. For this attack the villages of Hangrum, Hejaichak and Guilong in N.C. Hills and Bopunggwami in Naga Hills were burnt down. A good numbers of her followers were also tortured. Gaidinliu moved eastwards and reached the edge of the Angami country. Her influence also reached the Maram Nagas of Mao area in northern Manipur. Even in Kohima, the head quarters of the Naga Hills, her sympathizers were many. The Gaidinliu WATER was sold at high prices to Angami villages. Mr. J.P. Mills, the Deputy Commissioner who reported earlier that the real danger of the movement is the spirits of defiance now abroad, had to act promptly to prevent any alliance between Gaidinliu and the powerful Naga villages of Khonoma which staged a great uprising in 1879. Many spies of Gaidinliu were working at Kohima itself to check the movements of Assam rifles.

In October Gaidinliu moved into Polomi village and started the construction of an amazing wooden fortress after the pattern of the Assam Rifles palisade at Hangrum. Gaidinliu told her followers that the next two months would be crucial period; either she or the British would win. She was prepared to make the last trial of strength between the Assam rifles and her army. The fortress, which was being constructed, would accommodate, when completed, four thousand warriors and would be a formidable one. In the meantime, Mr. Mills getting the intelligence reports, dispatched a strong force of Assam Rifles under the command of Captain Macdonald, accompanied by Mr. Hari Blah to Polomi. The fortress was not yet ready and the rebels did not take any precautionary measure. Captain Macdonald made a surprise attack on Polomi village

at dawn October 1932. The rebels were completely taken by surprise and could not offer any effective resistance. They surrendered and Gaidinliu was arrested from a house. On the way she was taken to Kohima. Few Angami youths attacked the British officers in favour of Gaidinliu for being humiliated by the army by fettering her on her waist. After that she was brought to Imphal for trial. Mr. Higgins, the political Agent, sentenced her to life imprisonment. She spent fourteen years in British Jail, one year at Gauhati, six years in Shillong three years in Aizawl, Mizo Hills, and four years at Tura, Garo Hills.

All of her followers were arrested and imprisoned. However, Gaidinliu imprisonment was more popular than Gaidinliu at large. The movement was continued by other followers in subsequent years. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru learnt about Gaidinliu and her movement when he visited Assam in 1937. He was impressed by her activities and at the same time was shocked after learning that a young girl of twenty should suffer so much. He described her as the Rani of the Nagas. Since then the title of Rani has been popularly appended to Gaidinliu.

In 1937 the congress Government tried to release her but failed as Manipur was not directly under a British rule. Pandit Nehru requested Lady Astor, the famous Lady member of the British parliament to take up the case of Gaidinliu. In her letter to Pandit Nehru in May 1939, Lady Astor stated that the secretary of state for India had turned down her request to release Gaidinliu. The British felt that the movement had not yet died down, and would break out if she was released as she still was considered a potent source of danger to the peace of Manipur state and the province of Assam. Pandit Nehru well publicized the case of Gaidinliu and commented; "Perhaps she thought rather prematurely that the British Empire still functioned effectively and aggressively, it took vengeance on her and her people. Many villages were burnt and destroyed and this heroic girl was captured and sentenced to transportation to life. And now she lives in some prison in Assam

wasting her bright young womanhood in dark cells and solitude. Six years she had been there. What torment and suppression of spirit they have bought to her, who in the prime of her youth dared to challenge an Empire".

She was ultimately released from Tura Jail when India became Independent in 1947. She was not allowed to return to Manipur and had to stay at Yimrup village in Tuensang district of Nagaland. She was given some pension by the Government. She retired from active political life for about fourteen years. But the Naga troubles started in 1956. She and her religious cult (HEREKA) was attacked and criticized by the underground Nagas who spread all kinds of insinuating rumors through their agents. So, in 1960, her followers took her underground and she created a private army of one thousand men with 400/500 Rifles to defend her demand and religion, ensure her own security and press her demand for a Zeliangrong Administrative area, comprising the Zeme, Liangmei and Rongmei Naga areas of Manipur, Nagaland and Assam.

After six years of hard underground life, she was called out by the Government from her hideout on 16th Jan 1966 at Tening, Nagaland and she was brought to Kohima on 20th January 1966. Thereafter she had been devoting herself for peace and development of her people for many years. Her recognition had spread nationwide. She started visiting many places outside Manipur and Assam. Her visit to Haflong via Lumding and Maibong once created a history. She was accorded a royal welcome in Lumding junction by the (Hindus) Bengalees- especially the Subhash Badi Janata Group. Even two trains were delayed and the travelers vied with each other to have a glimpse of the great patriot. Slogans in honour of Rani Ma, "Rani Mai Ki Jai, Rani mata Amar rahe" filled up entire skyline. The escorting party received a big surprise at Maibong where a very big crowd- representing all communities accorded their revered Rani Ma an unprecedented welcome. A healthy competition was visible among the people for offering "PRANAM" to the "Joan of Arc" of India.



Rani Gaidinliu attended the second world Hindu conference in Allahabad in the year 1979 where she was appointed as President of Matri Sammelan. She was the vice president of All India Freedom Fighters Association since 1986 and also the president of All India Freedom Fighters Nagaland unit from 1986 till her death. Rani Gaidinliu was a patron of Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad since 1974, the founder of Zeliangrong Council, Adviser to Vishva Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council).

In her later life she came to Assam in North Cachar Hills and stayed a Hejaichak village for about two years, then one year at Hangrum village, the place where she fought against the British forces in 1932. From there Rani left for Luangkao, her native village in Manipur and breathed her last after brief illness at noon on 17th February 1993 in her residence. It was auspicious day of Shiva Ratri (Bhubon Mela) and a heavy storm started after her death. Rani Gaidinliu was given the state honor. Governor of Manipur state Shri Chintamani Panigrahi was present during her funeral function. Many Zeliangrong leaders were present at the funeral ceremony. Rani Gaidinliu was a nationalist. She was a personal friend of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Her life is a good example that in an independent and democratic India the Nagas have a place of honour and respect.

The Head office of Indian National Fellowship Centre, Juhu, Mumbai has named this Head office as Rani Gaidinliu Bhavan in honour of Rani Ma Gaidinliu and a statue of her been installed in the campus of Information Technology Institute for Tribal's of India (ITTI) at Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

The Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has nominated five Women emancipation program. They are Padmabhusan Rani Gaidinliu, Lok Mata Devi Ahilya Bai Holkar, Jeeja Bai, mother of Chhatrapati Shivaji, Jhansi ki Rani Lakshmi Bai and Rani Kannagi of Kerala. In their memory of award "STREE SHAKTI PURUSHKAR" has

been created by the Department and has been presenting annually since 2001, to women who have made outstanding contribution for the society and the nation.

Rani Gaidinliu was awarded with the Tamra Patra by the Prime Minister of India for her contribution and role as a Freedom Fighter in 1972. In recognition of her contribution for the upliftment of the down-trodden and weaker section of the people, the Government of India awarded her the Padma Bhusan in 1982. Rani Ma received Swami Vivekananda Puraskar on 31st January 1987.

In honour and memory of the departed leader, the Ministry of Post and Telegraphs, Government of India has released a one rupee post stamp with the picture Rani Gaidinliu on 12th September 1996. The Anthropological Survey of India conferred Rani Gaidinliu with the award of "Birsa Munda" posthumously in 1996. A Martyr column was erected by the Assam Govt. at Hangrum village, N.C. Hills District on 19th February 2003 which is dedicated to the memory of martyrs who laid down their lives during Zeliangrong Revolt 1931-32 against British Empire. The battle of Hangrum was fought in March 1932 between the Freedom Fighters under the command of Rani Gaidinliu against the Assam Riffle (a British army then). Rani Gaidinliu was a freedom fighter, Patron saint of Hereka cult, social worker, leader of Zeliangrong people and a firm believer in indigenous tribal culture and Indian Nationalism.

The exemplary life of Rani Gaidinliu, her sacrifices, her sufferings and her contribution to the cause of freedom, independence, development and progress prove beyond doubt that she was indeed a person of Great Spirit, sympathy and intelligence. She can be called a true nationalist, a pioneer in many aspects, a social reformer and a freedom fighter. Rani Gaidinliu is widely regarded as the mother of all. So, she is called "Ranima" or "Ranipui". Rani Gaidinliu was really a gifted lady. We are fortunate and proud for having a personality like Rani Gaidinliu. ■

# Tracing Roma Roots

Major Surendra Mathur

Roma sounds like people from Rome. This word has no familiarity in India, the country of their origin. The word is common in Europe or other parts of the world. In India they are called Gadulia Lohar or Labadi etc., depending upon their original group. They are the nomadic people, well known for travelling on their bullock carts with their bag and baggage. One can find them in any part of India migrating from one place to another for their living. They are mostly seen with blacksmith work, making and sharpening knives or other metal artifacts. Of late, with less demand of their local products due to modernization, they are also seen with scraped or discarded metal parts of automobiles. Most of them have no land of their own and would prefer to lead a nomadic life. They go through great hardships due to uncongenial climates.

In India most people connect Roma history with the state of Rajasthan and especially with the Kingdom of “Maharana Pratap”, of “Sisodiya” dynasty, who ruled “Chittor”. He fought against the Muslim rulers to protect his kingdom. He is acknowledged as one of the bravest of all Hindu Kings of India who not only defended his kingdom but also fought bravely the foreign invaders. He is the only king titled “Maharana” in India, which means the greatest of all Kings. The Roma’s in India were amongst the bravest fighting clans called “Rajput” and were the most loyal towards the “Sisodia” dynasty. Chittor is even today the place of inspiration for all Indians. The fort of Chittor has been acknowledged as the largest fort of the world and a world heritage site by UNESCO. Legendary stories of King “Maharana Pratap”, fighting Mughals, can even be heard in folk lores and songs. The kingdom that was established by king “Bappa Rawal” was most democratically ruled and lasted longest in the Indian history. The statue of king “Maharana Pratap” can be seen in almost every town in India. The legendry history of Rani (Queen) Padmini, the noble women

and thousands of loyal mates, immolated for dignity and honour is unparalleled in the world history.

The Roma’s in “Sisodia” dynasty were not only fighting soldiers but were equally skilled in making armours for the army. They were the best metal workers to make swords, lances and all kinds of weapons and artifacts used by the army. The Indian swords made by them were amongst the best in the world and were much in demand from other rulers. Their skill in metallurgy attracted many and may have been the reasons of migrations to the other parts of the world. But the most prevalent historical evidences of their migration were after the defeat of their King at Chittor. Being loyal to their King and the Kingdom they took vows for dignity and decided to return only after the fort of Chittor was taken back from the enemy. Those who had faster means to travel, travelled fastest and farthest and others, perhaps made homes on bullock carts and looked for safe shelters. The vows were the main reason that they travelled like nomads and were then called Gypsy. The territorial boundaries were of no consequence for them for travelling far and wide. Even today we can see them in India along the roadsides in villages, doing metal work for their earning. Knowing the historical background, they are not looked down upon by the Indian society, but at the same time they also avoid mixing around locally. They still celebrate festivals and perform marriages as per their traditions.

My parental organisation works for the tribes in India and we are aware of the fact that the Roma’s have the ST “Scheduled Tribes” status in many states in India and therefore we run many welfare schemes for them. The government has tried to settle them down, to prosper and lead a happy and dignified life. They are spread all over India. We run schools and hostels for their children. At Sitargang in Uttarakhand they are called Tharu, settled along the Indo Nepal boarder and the place is called “Bara Rana” and it means a place of twelve knights. They must have



come and settled here. Their living style and traditions are that of royal clans. On 15 Feb 2015, our organisation gathered Eighty thousand (80,000) Tharu tribes at Sitargang. This was a great event. We run many projects for their welfare in Andhra Pradesh too. There they are called Labari or Banjara etc.

My first interaction with the European Roma came when I met a British couple and the lady was Roma. We invited them to India and took them to a village near Chittor, where around a hundred families of Roma are settled. The villagers made very special traditional dresses for them. People welcomed them and dressed them up like a bride and a bridegroom and took them to the village temple of God “Baba Ramdev” and ceremonies were performed. There was a big gathering in the village. They were served traditional food. The lady then confirmed with pride that her ancestors left India five generations before. She was most excited and happy to be amongst her own people.

Couple of years later a Spanish Roma visited and was keen to know their roots. I offered them to travel to Chittor with me and he happily accepted. At Chittor while moving up to the main fort we could show him a board at the foothills on which the ten vows taken by the Roma’s are written. We showed him the temples of deities worshipped by Roma’s and offerings are made to them. The palaces, historical monuments, the place where the noble women immolated themselves for dignity attracted him the most. We also narrated him the stories of bravery of their King “Maharana Pratap”. In the evening we were welcomed by the Roma villagers. He spoke to them in the local dialect which is still prevalent in Spain. He spoke words like Aak (Eyes), Kaan (Ears), Naak (Nose), Chora (Boy), Chori (Girl), Tato Hai (it is hot) etc. And were understood by us all. We, at home use the same words like, “Pani Tato Hai”, which means “water is hot”. The most important of all was when Vicente mentioned that they always prayed to the goddess “Aae Lacha Matta” in Spain. This came as a surprise to most of us. The village elder confirmed that their Kul Devi (Goddess of Roma) is “Aae Lacha Matta”. The village elder was also surprised to know that a person from Spain was asking about their goddess, whereas Roma’s in

India have almost forgotten this goddess. The elder said that this goddess is our “Kul Devi” and there is a very ancient temple of this goddess on top of the Chittor fort. The elder also mentioned that this temple existed even before the Fort was constructed and we had always been worshipping this goddess. Roma’s in India come from far flung places to worship this goddess but they have forgotten the ancient temple location. This created lots of curiosity in me to know more on goddess “Aae Lacha Matta”, the goddess of Roma.

Having known the Elders in the Roma village, they invited me as chief guest during their annual gathering of Indian Roma’s on 6th Apr 2015. After the colourful social evening, big rally was organised next day on vehicles. First of all, they took us to the statue of Maharana Pratap located at a main city circle in the town and the leaders garlanded the statue and then proceeded to the Chittor fort and the offering were made to all deities. At the foot hill was the board which mentions the ten vows taken by the Roma’s. At Rana Kumbah Mahal (Palace), there is a big courtyard. This was the main historical place for them. Firstly, they showed us an Iron piece which was more like an anvil. They offered prayers here. The leader narrated the stories of these places. He said that this Iron piece is also our goddess. We call it goddess “Aaeran Matta”. The word Iron has been derived from the name of this goddess. He further explained that this is like an anvil and used to shape the metal pieces like swords etc. And this Iron piece does not rust. They worship everything that was used by their ancestors. Next was a small stone embedded on a small platform and is also worshipped. It was used for sharpening the weapons. In the same location was a big platform and they performed ceremonies and was the place to hold “Panchayat”. We then moved to the famous temple of “Aae Lacha Matta”. Most of the Roma youth had not seen it before. There is a dry pond in front of the famous goddess Kali temple and there lies the temple of “Aae Lacha Matta”, but in ruins. The temple stands and speaks of the glories past of the Roma’s. This was a new discovery for us all.

I Understood the discrimination and atrocities faced by the Roma’s in Europe. I was made to

*(Contd. to Page 23)*

# Death Defying Bear Hug: Major (Dr) Laishram Jyotin Singh, Ashoka Chakra (Posthumous)

Lt. Col. L Manongba

In this article, the war veteran author narrates the story of a young martyr from Manipur, who was trained twice over to save lives – One on the Hippocratic oath as a Doctor; the other as a Soldier with a formal promise and covenant for loyalty and allegiance to the country. “The vower agreed to obey all commands of the President of the Union of India and from any officer set over him, even to the peril of one’s life”.

Major Laishram Jyotin Singh’s ‘train ride with us on Planet Earth’ began in Nambol, a small but prosperous town astride the Tiddim Road in Manipur. This satellite township had witnessed the last stand of the Japanese Army at Red Hill (Maibam Lokpa Ching) in the Second World War in Manipur, before the tide turned against them. Today, Nambol is home to the Symbol of Reconciliation & Peace - India Peace Museum, sponsored by the Japanese Foundation. This cocktail of a borough cum countryside environs was home to a young boy, Jyotin, son of Laishram Markando Singh and Laishram Ibeyaima Devi. Born on May 14th, 1972 at Nambol Awang Leikai, he was blessed with two kind ladies as elder sisters Dr. L. Binakumari Devi & Smt. L. Ragini Devi (Lecturer in Mathematics) & a younger brother Professor L. Boeing Singh (Civil Engineering Professor at IIT Guwahati). Children of humble parents (father a State Govt Agriculture & Horticulture Department employee and a home maker mother) they all grew very tall in their own worlds as very highly accomplished professionals.

Jyotin, the third child surpassed them all. ‘Ibungo’ as he was fondly called, did his schooling from Manipur Public School (MPS). He was the Placard holder of the MPS boy’s contingent during state Republic Day Parades at Imphal. This was a position of pride for any teenager. Ibungo was very conscientious and diligent; he would reach Imphal at daybreak for tuitions, rest at a friend’s place,

and then attend school. He loved playing football, athletics, bodybuilding and trekking. He was destined for competition right from childhood. He did his MBBS from the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal in 1996. His love for sports made him pursue and complete a two year Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Medicine from Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports in 2001, under Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Patiala.

To quote a friend, “He would always wear a suppressed smile which would explode into a grin occasionally. He was always ready to help a friend in distress.” The desire to reach out far beyond the lovely meadows of his birthplace Nambol, the self imposed disciplined life that he inculcated as a young boy struggling through his schooling days, brought him to the portals of Army Medical Corps (AMC). He was commissioned into the AMC on 15th February 2003. Reminiscing about his initial days after joining the army, his colleague Lt Col (Dr.) MKK Maring narrates “Four of us, Capt Ch Keishing, Capt L Jyotin Singh, Capt M Athikho & self, all from Manipur & alumni of RIMS joined the AMC in the same month. Fresh from medical college and with no army background in the family, we were a big humour in uniform. There were hiccups galore - sudden changes in our daily routine from civil lifestyle to military discipline, coping with mess etiquette, etc. During our pre-induction training in the hospital, the unit Company Havildar Major taught us drills and

saluting. One day, the drill master gave a command 'Baiye Salute'; Jyotin promptly lifted his left arm and saluted in style. The drill master nearly fainted!! We then went for Medical Officers Basic Course at Officers Training School, AMC Centre & School, Lucknow.

After completion of training, Jyotin was posted to Arunachal Pradesh in High Altitude Area with a medical unit of Border Roads Organization. We were all young, handsome but clumsy men. At the end of the course, because of hard and rigorous training we all became refined gentlemen & probably better Doctors. We then parted ways on postings, to meet again for a brief while at Leimakhong / Silchar in 2009. Little did one realise that, this was the last time we would meet. I pulled his legs to get married". One of his colleagues Major (Dr.) N. Jiten Singh (Retd) recalls that Major Jyotin was looking after not only the GREF personnel but also provided medical care to civilians and their families in that remote area of Arunachal Pradesh. The local populace was so happy with him that one of the local elders wanted him to marry a girl from the village and settle down there.

While serving at the Military Hospital at Agartala, Major Jyotin at times wore several hats as a Medical Officer cum Quartermaster cum Adjutant & sometimes as officiating Commanding Officer of the unit. Apart from routine hospital duties, Jyotin shared his Sports Medicine expertise with his troops. Jyotin, an excellent football and badminton player, would spend most of the evenings playing football with the Jawans of the unit or badminton with the officers of the garrison. This gave him an opportunity to interact with all ranks and he was indeed popular. The shy young lad from Nambol, Major L. Jyotin had transformed into a dedicated soldier, officer and doctor. In September 2007, Jyotin was

asked if he was keen to go to Hyderabad for the World Military Games in Oct 2007. Maj L Jyotin was advised to volunteer for such events as he had the qualification and experience to deal with athletics and sports medicine. This exposure would widen his horizon and earn him a life time experience dealing with armies of the world. Major L Jyotin Singh reached Hyderabad for the World Military Games from 14 Oct to 21 Oct 2007. There he worked hard, especially in the anti doping cell of the games, to the satisfaction of all and got a certificate of appreciation from the International Military Sports Council. Due to his competence and previous performance at World Military Games he was again detailed to provide medical cover for one of the disciplines at Pune during the Delhi Commonwealth Games in October 2008.

In December 2009, Jyotin reported to Delhi to undergo training for the Indian Medical Mission to Afghanistan. The night prior to departure for Kabul, Afghanistan, Dr. N Jiten and Jyotin met up at Delhi Haat, a favourite spot for North Easterners based in Delhi. He confided that an engagement was expected soon after his return from the Afghan Mission, with a girl of his parent's choice. He had not informed his parents about going to Kabul, as they might get worried. As destiny would later unfold, the two friends had their last meal together that evening. A few days after he landed in Kabul, he sent some



photographs of the snowy residential compound to Jiten.

On 26th February 2010, news flashed that six Indian nationals had been killed in a terrorist attack in Kabul. The name of Major (Dr.) Laishram Jyotin Singh headed that list. Kabul at an elevation of 1791 metres is pretty cold in February with average temperature normally below 0 Degrees Celsius. Major Laishram Jyotin Singh had commenced looking after patients thronging the Indian Mission Hospital as part of the Indian Medical Mission team to Kabul on 13 February 2010. On 26th February at about 06.30 a.m. three Burkha clad terrorists and a driver tried to drive their car past the concrete mobile barriers placed at the entrance to the Noor Guest House in Shar E Naw, an upscale place in Kabul where Jyotin and other Indian staff were lodged. The neighbouring guest house had other international guests. When the Afghan Security guards and private armed security personnel challenged the car, three of the terrorists alighted and rushed away. The driver then detonated the car and himself about 60 metres short of the entrance to the guest houses. The blast left a 12 feet wide and 6 feet deep crater. Two of the terrorists then entered the neighbouring guest house. The third terrorist (whose 'Joridar' had blown himself up with the car bomb) rushed into the Noor Guest House. All the four terrorists wore explosive laden suicide vests. Of the two terrorists who had rushed towards the neighbouring guest house, one of them blew himself up with the suicide vest. Later it was confirmed that the terrorist accompanying him had escaped from the site through a blast hole in the wall. The terrorist who entered Noor Guest House was searching every room for Indian residents. He started firing and hurled grenades while looking for The Fateful Morning 'Hindi Speaking' residents / guests. This terrorist found himself standing in front of the door of Maj Jyotin Singh with the AK 47 Assault Rifle in his hand. He had probably exhausted his grenades. Maj Laishram Jyotin Singh was now standing face to face with the courier of death itself, clad in a deadly suicide vest who was about to lift

his AK 47 Rifle for a 'Deathly sweep in front of him'. The next rooms few feet away were occupied by other Indian colleagues and officers, who too were unarmed, as per the diplomatic protocol and agreements with the Afghanistan Government.

The instinctive response of the hero would leave many dumbfounded. Probably he had no time for thinking about actions and reactions. It was sheer instinct of the Saviour, a split second action driven by the desire and mental focus to save lives. The sportsman in the Doctor too triggered the auto-motor action to react in the best possible defensive manner. Major (Dr) L. Jyotin Singh pounced upon the terrorist standing just a foot or two away from him. The terrorist dropped his assault rifle on being surprised by this most unexpected reaction of the gallant doctor, and wrestled with Jyotin. The strong physique of the sportsman in the doctor ensured the terrorist didn't get the better of him. In desperation, the terrorist detonated the suicide vest that he wore. In milliseconds, both the bodies were blown into smithereens by the powerful RDX. Young Jyotin gave the Bear Hug of Death and saved further killings and annihilation that the terrorist would have brought down upon the others in the adjacent guest rooms. As eyewitnesses and a senior official described, the abdominal parts of the martyr were completely blown apart; it was only his serene face and appendages which had burn marks but no severe injury was seen. He achieved martyrdom in the highest traditions of the country and armed forces – That of Unsurpassable Gallantry in the Face of the Enemy. A Doctor, an Officer and a Leader of men, trained twice over to save lives – who saved his dozen odd unarmed colleagues. What more could one ask from such a valiant leader.

From eyewitness accounts it was also learnt that these terrorists spoke "Urdu" and not 'Pashto or Dari' which are in use as the lingua franca of the Afghans. It was believed that these terrorists were from Lashkar -e- Taiba who had carried out a joint operation with the Taliban. The mortal remains of late Major L. Jyotin were brought home by a special



flight of the Indian Air Force (IAF) on 28th February 2010. The IAF aircraft landed at Imphal airport at around 2:30 pm. Family members, relatives, friends and the Army Divisional Commander, Army officers and troops were at the airport to give a befitting Military Funeral to the Hero. The funeral cortege wound its way to Nambol for the last rites. Late Major Jyotin's mother had one lament that her son never informed her that he was going to Kabul, thinking that they might object to his assignment and probably get him married early to change his mind from flying away.

But he had already scripted his own destiny – to return home a hero. On 26 January 2011, Late Major Laishram Jyotin Singh (MR-08609) was awarded the Ashoka Chakra, posthumously, by the President. Professor L. Boeing Singh, the youngest sibling of the hero, received the Nation's highest gallantry award from Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, the Honourable President of India on behalf of the martyr. He is the first AMC officer to be awarded with this highest honour. Ashoka Chakra is the peacetime Equivalent of Param Vir Chakra, awarded only for the "Greatest of the Ultimate Brave". Since inception of the award in 1952, only 83 individuals have been bestowed this prestigious Gallantry Award. The parent organisations, AMC and the army have ensured that the sacrifice of Jyotin Singh is not forgotten. AMC Centre & College, Lucknow has honoured this bravest son of India by dedicating its main auditorium in his name – 'Major Laishram Jyotin Singh, AC, Auditorium'. In addition, a prominent 'Chatuska' at the sprawling campus of AMC Centre has been named as 'Maj L.J. Singh, AC, Chauraha'. In December 2016, all ranks of Military Hospital Hissar, Haryana, contributed and installed a life size bust of the brave Doctor at a prominent crossroad of the Military Hospital. In Dec 2011, Leimakhong Military Garrison in Manipur ceremonially installed a bust of the 'Doctor', made by Sculptor Shri L. Phonindro Singh of Nambol. then Divisional Commander also commissioned a

park in his name – 'Jyotin Memorial Park'. On 14th August 2020, the Manipur State Government instituted a new scheme called 'Major Laishram Jyotin Singh, Ashoka Chakra (Posthumous) Ex Gratia Scheme for Natives of Manipur killed in action' while serving in the Armed Forces or Assam Rifles or CPMFs. An amount of Rs 5 Lakhs as Ex Gratia would be paid to the Next of Kin of any martyr.

The youth and society needs luminaries & heroes. Here is a lionhearted knight, from amongst us, who has proven beyond doubt his bravery, dedication & loyalty to the country and humanity. The state of Manipur, the society, the youth & parents alike, all must use this tale of heroism as an inspiration for the young and capable minds. There is much more that needs to be done in the state, to salute the heroism displayed by the Doctor – Trained twice over to save Lives. He gave the monumental Bear Hug to Death itself. As a veteran & as parents of Soldiers & Warriors of the country, one wished to visit the 'Altar of the Brave in Manipur', where the least that we could do is to light a candle, a joss stick and lay a flower of love. Jai Hind. ■

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**(About the Author :** Lt. Col. L. Manongba (Army Veteran) was commissioned into 11 GR on 07 June 1980, and took premature retirement in November 2003. In his second innings he was witness to epochal events, where he saw the birth of a new nation, i.e. South Sudan. At that time he was working as General Manager of a Petroleum Company in East Africa (South Sudan). He was elected as an Executive Member of the 1st Commercial Association of South Sudan (Petroleum Association of South Sudan). Since 2016, he has been overseeing the ECHS Polyclinic in Imphal, and is in the forefront of ESM activities in Manipur. He is available at e-mail ID – colmanongba@gmail.com)

# History of McMohan Line : Bogus Chinese Claims

Group Capt. M. Panging Pao, VM (Retd)

India & China has an acrimonious relationship over last 60 Years. The major conflict was the Sino-India war of 1962 where Chinese forces entered almost 100 km inside India. The main axes of penetration by the Chinese forces were Tawang-Bomdila-Rupa, Taksing-Limeking, Mechuka/Manigong-Tato, Gelling-Tuting and Kibithoo-Walong Axes. Thereafter frequent border clashes/skirmishes have occurred including at NathuLa in Sikkim in 1967 which led to more than 150 Indians & 340 Chinese killed. This was followed by the tense standoff in 1987 at Sumdorong Chu in Arunachal and the 73 Day confrontation over Doklam in Sikkim in 2017. There have been Chinese incursions in Asaphila, Tuting and Chaklagam areas of Arunachal Pradesh in 2017-2018.

Recently Indo-China conflict flared up in the last few onths starting with the clash at Pangong Tso lake in Ladakh on 05 May 2020 wherein many soldiers on both sides were seriously injured followed by skirmish in North Sikkim on 20 May. The skirmishes finally led to the violent clashes at Galwan Valley during the night of 15/16 Jun. Since there was a protocol of not carrying weapons, the violent clashes witnessed soldiers attacking each other with swords, iron rods, stones and sticks studded with nails. The violent clashes left 20 Indians soldiers killed including the Commanding Officer. In fierce reprisal attacks by Indian soldiers, 40 plus Chinese soldiers were also killed. It is reported that many soldiers from both sides crashed into the Galwan river in the deep ravine. Tense situation exists all along the Indo-China border.

Chinese still claim Arunachal Pradesh as 'Southern Tibet', issues stapled visas to Arunachal citizens and uses maps depicting Arunachal as part of China. They object to visits by senior Indian officials, Ministers to Arunachal and uses rivers originating in China to arm twist India. The source

of all these conflicts is the non-acceptance of McMahan Line which demarcates the Indo-China border along Arunachal Pradesh.

The McMahan Line demarcates the eastern border between India and China. About 890 km in length, the McMahan Line followed the watershed principle and runs along the highest ridges of these eastern Himalayan ranges running from east of Bhutan to the tri-junction of India, China and Myanmar.

The McMahan line was created during the Shimla Agreement of 1914. The British Indian representative was Sir Henry McMahon, then Secretary in the Indian Foreign Department. The Tibetan representative was Lama Lonchen Shatra and Chinese representative was diplomat named Ivan Chen. After almost a year of negotiations, the McMahon line was initially presented on 22 April 1914 along with an attached map. On 25 April 1914, the Chinese submitted a memorandum with number of objections to the boundaries between Inner Tibet & Outer Tibet and Inner Tibet & China. There were no objections between Tibet & India! Thereafter on 27 April 1914 the Chinese representative initialled both the documents and the map without any objections. However, the actual agreement documents were kept secret till 1937 when the McMahon line was first published in a Survey of India Map. In the western sector the border in the Ladakh and Aksai Chin area was laid by the Macartney-MacDonald line.

If the Chinese representative had no objections to the border between Tibet & India and have initialled the documents & map during Shimla agreement of 1914, why are the Chinese still claiming Arunachal as 'Southern Tibet'? This claim is bogus, hegemonic and not supported by documents & facts.

It is a known fact that people of Arunachal Pradesh comprising of many tribes are culturally,

traditionally, linguistically different from Chinese. The Chinese are unitarily claiming Arunachal Pradesh without taking the opinion of Arunachali citizens! Arunachalese are proud Indians and do not want to be part of China!

Considering all these historical facts, Indian govt

must run a campaign to rebut the Chinese claims amongst major nations of the world. The other way to counter the bogus Chinese claims over Arunachal Pradesh is by putting up prominent voices from Arunachal itself among the major world & national media. Time to call the Chinese bluster!! ■

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## Netaji's birth anniversary celebrated at Chesezu Village of Nagaland

For the first time, the village of Chesezu under Phek district of Nagaland commemorated the birth anniversary of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose on Saturday. It is claimed that Netaji camped here for almost two months during April-May during World War-II in 1944. Altogether 43 locals attended a small ceremony held in the village. Vesezo Ringa, a member of the 'Committee on Netaji Heritage' informed that the ceremony recollected the legacy of Netaji and his visit to the village.

While a drawing competition for all ages on the theme 'Netaji in Chesezu' was conducted, nonagenarian Vezo Swuro, who was associated with Netaji during his stay in the village, shared the historical accounts when Netaji camped in the village. According to Ringa, many reasons prove why Netaji might have stayed back in the village. Ringa added that as per the oral accounts, Netaji reached the village through the route from Manipur—Jessami—Phek—Thuvopisu—Runguzu—Chesezu. He said that villagers have Netaji riding a horse. "As per their description, Netaji had a red belt, a pistol, and a grenade," he said. Ringa added that Netaji is believed to have entered the village through the mule tracks.

He also said that as the village is at a higher altitude— even higher than Kohima— it is believed that Netaji visited a viewpoint (watchtower) in the village to monitor the battle that took place in Kohima. "Vezo Swuro used Netaji's binoculars, but it seems it was a blurry vision as he did not know how to use it," Ringa said about the nonagenarian.

He goes on to say that at the time, Chesezu village

was one of the strongest villages and 27 villages were under it. He said that these 27 villages paid tax to Chesezu village every year and required permission to sow seeds for cultivation. "The village was economically and politically stable at that time. So, that may be one reason why Netaji chose to come to the village," he said.

According to Ringa, it is also believed that Netaji's clarion call 'Delhi challo' last camp was in the village. He further added that he chose a thick bamboo grove at the village to camp as the site was not visible from above. A pond where Netaji fetched water during his stay in Chesezu is preserved as a historical site.

Vezo Swuro, 93, is the only surviving associate of Netaji from the village related his personal accounts with Netaji. Rapra Swuro and Theyeveyi Nyekha presented a folk song telling the story of Netaji and the Japanese at Chesezu.

Another song which told the story of Netaji and his legacy at Chesezu was sung by Nuvetalu Nyekha and Nukhrutalu Nyekha during the ceremony. On the occasion, Muleyi Khesoh, former chairman of the Chesezu Village Council acknowledged the India Tourism for choosing the village to observe the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji. He also urged the younger generation to carry forward the legacies and history of Netaji. Kejaroko Pieru, a tour operator by profession and proprietor of Pier Tours, in his address to the locals expressed that Chesezu village has the potential of becoming an eco-tourism destination and further expressed his willingness to support the village in the years to come. ■

# Transformed for self-protection

(Birth anniversary of Guru Govind Singh - 20<sup>th</sup> January)

E. Rajesh Pathak

Historical accounts of transformation of Sikhism as a life philosophy is instructive, and an extremely eye-opening ever more. Initially who drew towards Sikhism of Guru Nanakdev by instinct they were peace-loving, and religiously devotional. But latter the way with heart rending cruelty first Guru Arjundev was killed by Jahangir and then Guru Tegbahadur by Aurangzeb the course of Sikhism changed. This was no longer untenable for Sikhs to have learnt that bhajans[devotional songs], keertan [prayers] and fast may bring spiritual peace to mind; but as far as security of community is concerned that can't be achieved without arousing the spirit of organisation, fearlessness and martialism among the people. And to fulfil that aim the 'Khalsa-pantha' came into existence, founder of which was none other than Guru Govind Singh. First five who came forward to fulfil the resolutions of Khalsa were venerably known as 'Panj-pyare'. One among them was from Dhobi-community; second, Bhisti; third, Darji; fourth, khatri; fifth from Jat community. As also three among them were from Beedar, Dwarkapuri and Jaggannathpuri; and other two from Punjab. Having been initiated in Khalsa it was mandatory to keep kesh[long hair], kataar[dagger] and kangri[comb] ; and wearing kachha[small-piece of loin-cloth] and kada[bracelet], which are popularly known as five 'kakaar'.

It was the time when people were subject to bear insult and atrocities in the hands of Mughals on the basis of religion. Guru Govind Singh resolved to change the prevailing estate of affair. Then what there began a sequel of battle after battle against Mughal commanders, and against those kings who were indulged in appeasing Mughals in order to anyhow save their respective territories. He successfully won First, Second and Third battle of Anandpur and that of Nirmohgarh prominently. Increasing influence of Guru Govind Singh forced

Aurangzeb to change his strategy. He issued order to the Commanders of Sarhind, Lahore and Jammu to jointly launch attack on Guru Govind Singh. Consequently war broke out first at Anandpur, and then at Chamkore. Foreboding the ferocity of war Guru Govind Singh sent his mother and his sons, eight years old Joravar Singh and five years old Fateh Singh, with his trusted servant to his native village . Here in famous battle of Chamkore with Guru Govind Singh were 40 dedicated fighters led by the rest of his two sons , Ajit Singh and Jujhaar Singh, to face 700 Mughal soldiers. In the fierce battle lasted only for one day both the brave sons martyred. With remaining fistful soldiers Guru Govind Singh receded from here to take refuge in Khidrana. On the other side the servant despatched for the native village turned traitor, and handed over his sons [Joravar and Fateh Singh] to the Commander of Sarhind, Vazir Khan. He called the meeting of Kaazis and Ulemaas, in which order was issued to both sons to either, adopt Islam or embrace death. Sons preferred death to leaving their Dharma, consequently they were buried alive in the wall.

Latter one more battle was fought with Mughals in Khidrana, in which Guru Govind Singh emerged victorious. Meantime Aurangzeb died, and there broke out fighting among his sons to grab power. Guru Govind Singh supported eldest son, Bahadurshah , and even killed his brother Azam Khan in one of the battles. As Bhadurshah elevated to the post of Moghal king peace prevailed in Punjab. However to recover from the setbacks received from the hands of Rajputs in North-west and in South from Marathas, Bahadurshah sought the help from Guru Govind Singh. But he refused to respond the proposal, probably taking it as the betrayal against those fighting for the common cause. Then what, treading on the path shown by his shrewd ancestors, Bahadurshah, hatching conspiracy, put his two men



behind Guru Govind Singh, who first won Guru's confidence and then slayed him.

Martyrdom of Guru Govind Singh went not in vain. Following the path shown by him, his descendent, great Maharaja Ranjit Singh later fulfilled his dream. Though Marathas liberated Punjab in 1755-56 from Mughals but credit for strengthening of Indian sovereignty in the region actually goes to subsequent Sikh rule there. Not only this, breaking the dominance of truculent foreigners, invading

army of Mahahraja led by Harisingh Nalwa even entered deep inside Afghanistan up to Kabul and earned the glory of bringing back after centuries the jewel studded Gate of Somnath temple back to India and establishing it to its original place. Likewise Harimandir sahab gurudwara of Amritsar that was once burnt down by Ahmad Shah Abdali was renovated and as well as embedded with the gold, giving it the form of 'Swarna Mandir'. Cow-slaughter also was prohibited in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. ■

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## **Tripura's Tripurasundari Temple' sanctioned Rs 37.8 Cr. for development**

Under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme of the ministry of tourism, the Centre sanctioned of Rs 37.8 crores for the 'Development of Mata Tripurasundari Temple' in Tripura.

Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb taking to his Twitter handle wrote, "On behalf of the 37 lakh people of #Tripura, express deepest gratitude to PM Shri @narendramodi ji & Tourism Minister, @prahladspatel ji for ensuring the sanction of Rs 37.8 crores for the 'Development of Mata Tripurasundari Temple under PRASAD scheme' at Udaipur."

Under the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India launched the PRASAD Scheme in the year 2014-2015. The full form of PRASAD Scheme is Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spirituality Augmentation Drive. Like the PRASAD Scheme, there are various other schemes launched by the Government of India in order to address the social and economic welfare of the citizens and the nation. Tourism secretary Kiran Gitte said that the ministry had accorded sanction for development of temples following the DPR of the state government under PRASAD scheme.

Meanwhile, a total of 33 works will be carried out under the project to develop the temple which will further boost tourism in the state, Gitte added. The secretary further stated that Tourism

Development Corporation Limited (TTDCL) would implement the project in a time-bound manner and the state government has undertaken several initiatives for face lifting of tourism in Tripura. The Tripura CM who is in New Delhi at present also met Union textiles minister Smriti Irani. Irani assured Deb of providing full support from the centre for developing handloom clusters in Tripura.

Tripurasundari temple located on a hill-top 5 KM from the main town at Udaipur. Maharaja Dhanya Manikya constructed the temple in 1501 A.D. Tripurasundari temple occupies a place of distinction among all the Hindu religious shrines as it earns special veneration on account of being one of 51 Peethas of Hindu Centre of worship and submission.

Goddess Tripurasundari is an avatar of the Goddess Parvathi, the consort of Lord Shiva. The temple consists of square-shaped sanctum designed in the model of typical rural Bengal hut.

The placid lake Kalyansagar situated in backside of the temple has added an aura to the total environ of the temple complex. The lake is home to tortoises that are deeply revered by the devotees of the temple. This venerable temple is also referred to as the Koorma (tortoise) Pith. It is a popular religious shrine where thousands of devotees across the country assemble to celebrate Diwali Festival with great pomp. ■

# The Rituals of Tingkao Ragwang Chapriak (TRC)

Chaoba Kamson

In the event of sudden or prolonged ailment or regular or annual ritual worship, the devotees of TRC pray and seek the blessings of Tingkao Ragwang, the Supreme God and other lower realm gods for early recovery from illness through the performance of rituals as per belief. In order to execute these rituals, the role of a priest in TRC religion is very important to play as he negotiates with gods on behalf of the worshipper. The purpose of every ritual is for prosperity, welfare, success, longevity of life, good luck, grant of child etc.

The great priests who are known as Tingkao Ragwang Mucharakhandinmujungpu are

(i) Tingpurengsonnang (ii) Tenglam (iii) Tingngalapu (iv) Tingcheiren (v) Ramngampou (vi) Hao Sakipu etc.

## 1. Rituals performed in the rites of passage

(i) First ritual to a still born child to propitiate the evil spirits (Penbam Reimei)

(ii) Birth Ceremony (Najum Gaimei) to Dampapu and Dampapui

(iii) Propitiation to the evil spirits (Duikhun Laman)

(iv) Ritual for avoidance of mud eating by child (Pung Hunmei)

(v) Ritual for prevention of diarrhoea (Dampa Khonmei)

(vi) Ritual for quick growth of child (Ganrao Rarei)

(vii) Ritual for prevention of early sexual lust (Purumkhang Purumlu Rarei)

(viii) Holy Marriage Ceremony (Laangdai Mhailak)

(ix) Marriage Ceremony of elopement (Noujai Mhailak)

(x) Reconciliatory ritual of marriage (Dui Luiduk Loukeimei)

(xi) Ritual after marriage (Noukao Mithaopuitang Rarei)

(xii) Ritual of bridal price of marriage (Nouman Mhailak)

## 2. Ritual performed in the worship of Tingkao Ragwang and other gods and goddess

(i) Calling of soul (Bukaomei)

(ii) Calling of paddy (Napkaomei)

(iii) Calling of wealth (Lankaomei)

(iv) Worship for protection of soul and body (Punkanmei)

(v) Worship of Tingkao Ragwang with a cock (Tingkao Ragwangjang Lamei)

(vi) Worship of Tingkao Ragwang without sacrifice (Ragaizou Jangmei)

(vii) Worship of all gods of TRC pantheons (Raren Loumei)

(viii) Calling of soul from the land of the dead (Taroi Jaimei)

(ix) Ancestors worship (Kairao Kalummei)

(x) Erection for village pillar gate (Rangteng Khunmei)

(xi) Digging of village pond (Duikhun Khumei)

(xii) Entertainment of goddess of foodgrain (Ginkimei)

(xiii) Erection of Tripod (Laibu Sommei)

(xiv) Erection of main pillar of dwelling house (Kairaoteng Sommei)

(xv) Ritual for erection of jumping ground of stepping stone (Daanpan Sommei)

(xvi) Ritual of Coronation (Bamsonmei)

(xvii) Ritual on formal accommodation in traditional Institution (Thian Thammei)

## 3. Ritual of Sanctification

(i) Ritual for curing of sister's curse (Luchuk)

(ii) Ritual for curing of misdeeds and exaggregation (Chalungchuk)

(iii) Ritual for clear sight (Mongchuk)

(iv) Ritual for reconciliation after killing (Richuk)

(v) Ritual for curing of ill-talk (Mundai)

(vi) Ritual for sanctification of cursed words (Chakemun Danmei)

(vii) Ritual for recovery of paralysis (Ragwang Kangdanmei)

(viii) Ritual for prevention of witchcraft (Daan Kalanmei)

(ix) Ritual for last chance to save to patient (Ragwang Pumlin)

(x) Ritual for non-recurrence of earthquake (Bangla Kalanmei)

(xi) Ritual for eradication of jealousy (Ra Kangdanmei)

(xii) Ritual for non-recurrence of burning of fire (Mhaimik Danmei)

(xiii) Ritual of watering (Duigan Chaakmei)

(xiv) Ritual of redemption of sin for murder (Rimanjan Tumei)

From time immemorial, TRC followers firmly believe in the concept of priesthood. There are four types of priesthood. They are as follows:

**(i) Mujungpu** – means official priest who performs Raren Loumei ritual which means worship of all gods and deities. They are believed and worshipped.

**(ii) Raitu Muh** – means unofficial priest who is

non-performer of Raren Doumei ritual but becomes a priest.

**(iii) Pubu Daansaanmei** – means priest who cures diseases through medicines or Mantra etc. For example a man suffers from stomach pains which can be cured and relieved by drinking water in which the priest chants mantra or magic hymns. Besides, other treatment of lunacy, stone-case, diabetes, biting of rabies, snakes etc. can also be cured by applying the traditional heating methods.

**(iv) Mangtatmei** – (Dream Diviner) whenever anybody has a frightful or evil dream, he approaches to a dream diviner how to overcome his bad dreams. The dream diviner will advise the victim to perform a suitable ritual for his redressing. So, the priest plays a great role in TRC religion. Without priest, the TRC religion is not perfect. However, in the case of self worship and meditation, there is no role for a priest.

**(The author is the General Secretary Tingkao Ragwang Chapriak Phom Assam, Manipur and Nagaland)**

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*(Contd. from Page 13)*

## Tracing Roma Roots

understand that they were forcibly grounded in Europe after a ban on use of bullocks by them. They were also barred from metal work and therefore crisis was created. They were landless and were left with no means to earn a living. The people, who loved to live with dignity, were forced to adopt unfair means for survival. They were in a drone trap. They live in groups in isolated areas and fight for survival. A message of hatred for them is in rise due to bad publicity. People do not want to socialize with them and always look down upon them. Many European countries do not allow them to even enter, whereas they are the legal residents and citizens of European Union. While travelling through Transylvania we saw many Roma women begging. They live in pathetic state. We also met Roma youth in Budapest and also attended a meeting organised by the H.E. The Indian Ambassador at Budapest, to understand the situation of Roma's in Europe. There are political

parties in European Union, whose political stand on Roma's deciding their fate.

It is evident from the above facts that their roots lie mainly in Rajasthan. Their spoken dialect is similar to Rajasthan and the temple of their goddess "Aae Lacha Matta", still stands high on top of the famous fort of Chittorgarh and the goddess is worshipped by the Roma's of Spain too. The word Iran has been derived from the name of Roma goddess "Aaeran Matta".

Roma's have made great sacrifice for their King and Kingdom and were the most loyal soldiers. All Indians are very proud of them and are concerned of their state in other countries, especially in the European Union. It is time that we restore back their pride and honour, for the sacrifices they made for India. Let us all extend a helping hand to them to lead a dignified life and for the brighter future of their children. ■

## Books, book fair and post-covid era

Dr Ranga Ranjan Das

This particular endeavour will briefly focus on the contemporary situation assuming post-covid era, gross significance of books in spite digitalization and globalization where new generation prefers e-books than printed version as well as narratives related to a recently held book fair in Guwahati city.

The situation is yet to normal. But we pretend to be normal. Time is yet to come to refer as post covid era as still people are getting affected in numbers and there are still active cases across the world. It is easily noticed if someone goes to the figures brought forth by worldometer. The beginning of the first week of January 2021, reveals 1 crore 40 lakhs so far infected in India as compared to 8 crore 78 lakhs in global context, making India 2nd highest infected country after United States of America. During that period 1.50 lakhs people died in India while world death toll touching approximately 19 lakhs. There was also report of new mutant variation of corona in Great Britain resulting complete lockdown. In Indian context, there are some cases. But, country is trying to move on and broke the shackles of confined life to mitigate adverse effect of gross domestic product (GDP) that showed negative inclination. Under such circumstances, it is more important to assign as post-lockdown era than the post-covid era. Our PM and telephone ringtone, still providing the message: 'we should not be relaxed. Our health directives, using mask, proper sanitization and mode of social distancing should be maintained'. Whatever, it is observed in the context of my city in Assam, it is completely opposite. People turn out as we have reached into a post-covid era. Apart from a few people started appearing without mask and showed tendency of complete freedom.

It is our human nature we like to live in the present and not worry about future until there are urgent external influences. What are the lessons we have

learnt from such a pandemic. There are various forms of narratives that our ancestors told. Diseases, diagnosis and treatment are inter-related. With the advances of molecular sciences, virology and microbiological science, organic chemistry, advanced biomedical research, scientists across the globe quickly developed new vaccine to get rid of fatal diseases. Same situation is also found in the race of developing covid vaccine across the world. Our country is also among the forerunners. Development of vaccine is almost complete. Perhaps trial process is also accomplished. Steps have been taken for vaccination among the country men where the front line workers, medical professionals, and health workers are supposed to provide priority. There are three crore such workers. It should be wonderful gesture and acknowledgement for their untiring efforts. It is their efforts that minimize the numbers of causality in terms of death. During middle of January, government purchased 1.10 crore vaccine in the first phase from Serum Institute of India. Our country has huge populace. The process of vaccination seems to be complicated. However, government of India is trying to make it as simple as it can in the context of the country. Discussion and road map has been shorted out with different stake holders. In this regard the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) prepared a detailed strategy paper recently (during December 2020) pointing out synergy between public and private partnership. The paper entitled 'Protecting India-Public-Private partnership for vaccinating against Covid-19' focuses on the role and need of support of private sector including healthcare for effective execution of vaccination drive. It was submitted to the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for covid 19 (NEGVAC). The paper pointed out that country need 1.3-1.4 lakh vaccination centres, 1 lakh healthcare professionals and 2.0 lakh support staff



or volunteers to support government's mass inoculation programme. Hope, the government's good will for its countrymen become a reality and drove away the virus from the territory, soil and air of the country. On 16th of January, it has already started. It produced good result so far.

Common masses are also aware of the present situation and try to settle in a normal life. The cases of infection and deaths goes down, people senses a new life in the open air. It is observed in a recently concluded Guwahati Book Fair, held from 30th December, 2020 to 10th January 2021, under the aegis of Axom Prakaxan Parixad. Books, book fair, authors or writers, organizers, readers, onlookers are part of a civilized society. Books are considered as a mirror of society. The advancement, development, progress of society is reflected in the books depicting contemporary society, culture, literature, science and technology. Lets' have a basic understanding of the term 'fair'. Definition and concept of fair has universal acceptability as it provides opportunity for mental retreatment. We are living in the midst of the knowledge economy where one's knowledge and intellect has special significance. The architect of progress of human civilization is reflected in the books. With the advent of digital platform, brought forth by globalization and technological advancement, raise a serious question about the future of published book. It is argued that the present generation has developed the habit of reading books in digital platform irrespective of time and space. Deliberations and discussions on the future of print media and published book are held in various platforms. The visits on book fairs, quantum of new released books, readers' interest and markets provide phrase lease of life pertaining to the future of books.

The lockdown period asserted reading habits of published book come back to the track. Among the masses, we can categorized two sections of people: one who is professionally compel to read book; two who by hobby and interest read books. With the advents of smart phone with internet connectivity people hardly had time to read books and newspaper either. Need is mitigated by a gentle touch of the

screen in the cell phone. Self-confinement during lockdown period, people redeveloped the reading habits if it is a printed newspaper or a book. Various scholars across the world reveal that 'we should be worry about the future of book, it will remain unaffected as long as mankind survives'. They believe that technology may change the way of reading habit. I remember a reply by a celebrated writer in a literary meet, held in the premises of book fair, (Rita Choudhury and Anurahda Sarmah Pujari was there). One of them said, (adjectly), I could not remember, "yes with the technology, our way of reading may change. As we are too busy in our life and unable to make time to read a book, we may say 'alexa', read the book for me. We will lie in the bed taking rest. Somebody is reading. We accomplished reading by listening". Books will be there and it will also be published in print and digital form, human being never quit reading habits. Some people rightly observes, 'books are the true friend, it never misguide and misleads (exception)'. I purchased some books for my official library and personal interest. I have gone through some of the pages of a fiction-novel Ariwa written by young but extremely talented author Anuradha Dutta. It is really a well-crafted novel based on imagination explicitly expressed on high literary standards. Last year it was published by Annk Bank, a publishing house from Guwahati. Being a postgraduate in Business Administration, the thought process of the representatives of new generation like Ms Dutta brings lots of positivity in vernacular literature in one sense or the other. New generations also have lots of emphasis in creative literature. One of the promising and very budding authors that I came across in recent times is Srinjana Sarma. She writes short stories. One cannot imagine and correlates her writings and age. At present she is in her higher secondary level in a city based school. In her opinion, 'new generation writers need freedom for creativity and cannot confine to watertight compartment. Writer has the capacity to build a society and also rebuilding, in case of conflict situation with the society; society should not only support writers but also provide freedom, results positive impacts'. Present generation need more freedom in terms of

expression. Turning back to book fair, my professional interest pushed to fetch books on the tribes like Thengal Kacharis, Hills and Plain Tiwas, Marriage Customs of Tripura tribe, Law and Society-the Indian stories, etc. In the fair various books are released and appreciated such as Life of a driver-Cabinor Epare, Rita Choudhury's Morey Asom Jiye Kon, Aailoi Chithi, etc. New released include: Nayan Jyoti Bhattacharya's Buranji Likha Taruwal, Ambika Dutta's Bibah padhati aru biya nam, Ananta Kumar Sarma's, Jug avatar Debmodar, and translated book of Deepa Bezbarua's Klara aru alekjender dristire nari mukti. It is pertinent to mention here that on first January there was a literary meet on 'Sahityar prasara aru praxarot anubador vumika' (Role of translation in dissemination of literature). In the world literature, translation plays an important role. Much literary exercise is accomplished in different foreign and other Indian regional languages. It is important to study that creativity in order to maintain parallel growth and development. Books of different genres of literature is released during the event: Rumi Saikia's Uttar purbanchal aru eyat baxabax kara janajatixamuh (tribes of north east), Mamoni Das 'h to o r pisorkhini' (poem), Namrata Datta's compilation Mur priya desh baxi' (man ki baat), PM Modi's; Letters to Mother, like a diary, translated by Utpal Datta as Ailoi sithi (stated earlier), Mrinal Kumar Bora's Commerce point, Rupam Datta's Life of a driver (supra), Ranjit Patgiri's Priya Barna (Poem), Induma Saikia's Akuki sishu galpa, Dhirumoni Gogoi's Nixidha yodha-the untold story, Rubi Katakis' Andolon, Sashank Krishnatriyao's Sukhar Annexon, Binata Rabha's Oi jhel mach mariba jangso, Bijit Talukdar's Kukuha deuka (Poem), Urmilla Pathak's Prabandha Malika aru Gunjaran, are a few among others. Some earlier published works are also accepted by new generation readers. A well read novel Aximat Jar Heral Seema, is one of them apart from collection of poems of Hiren Bhattacharya. Late Bhattacharya popularly known as Hiruda, a well known Assamese poet left us eight years back. But his presence in every book fair is felt by many in the form of his creature. Bipuljyoti Saikia, nicely accomplished the task

assigned under the aegis of Axom Prakaxon Parixad to bring out a 954 pages volume entitled Hiren Bhattacharya Rosonabali exclusively dealt with the poems, songs, penned by Hiruda over the years. Hiruda's notable work include Xugandhi Pakhila, Roudra Kamana, Kabitar roud, Tumar bahi, Vinna dinar Kabita, Mur dexh mur premor kabita, etc.....and popular poems like Kabi moi nasilu kunukale (Never been a poet), Barthatar andhare muk mathu (Darkness of failure), Satyak xahaje loboli xikale' (Truth is accepted easily). Truly Hiruda remains in the heart of the people of Assam.

The fair not only epitomizes the books, but it also raises various issues through various stalls. While in one stall, it takes back to our childhood, the different indigenous games enjoyed by many, at the same time it also reveal the sentiment over Tibet. In a temporary stand, there is an arrangement depicting 'Free Tibet-Voice from Assam' where different photos of Tibet, Dalai Lamas and exhibited books like Ladakhot param pabitra Dalai Lama pradatta prabachanar xangkalan, Punaytma Dalai Lama atma jibani - Mur desh aru mur manuh, Punaytma Dalai Lama Dharmar urdhat, Dalai Lama xandhanot, etc books.

The book fair virtually announces a pre-covid era through its' various literary meet, poet meet, interactive sessions and discussions. The huge number of new publications in Assamese testifies the bright future of the Assamese language and literature. The post covid issue is raised in various platforms while discussing film and book industry. The show must go on-How we prepare in spite of threat of Covid', -impact of covid in film industry specially the Assamese films as well as 'Uttar covid kalot granta uddyog: challenges (pratyhaban) and possibilities ( xambavana). Regarding book, it is revealed that quality books came during lockdown period, that we can take as positive. Another positive impact is that book available in Amazon and Snapdeal also. The importance of published work never diminished rather it will increase as times move on. Hope, we will all get vaccine in the days to come. Besides, we also hope post-covid era will bring more smiles among the publication houses, authors and readers. ■



TRIPURI COMMUNITY IN THEIR TRADITIONAL ATTIRE



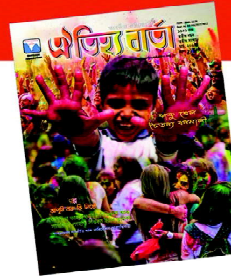
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