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HERITAGE EXPLORER

"LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES"

A Monthly News Bulletin

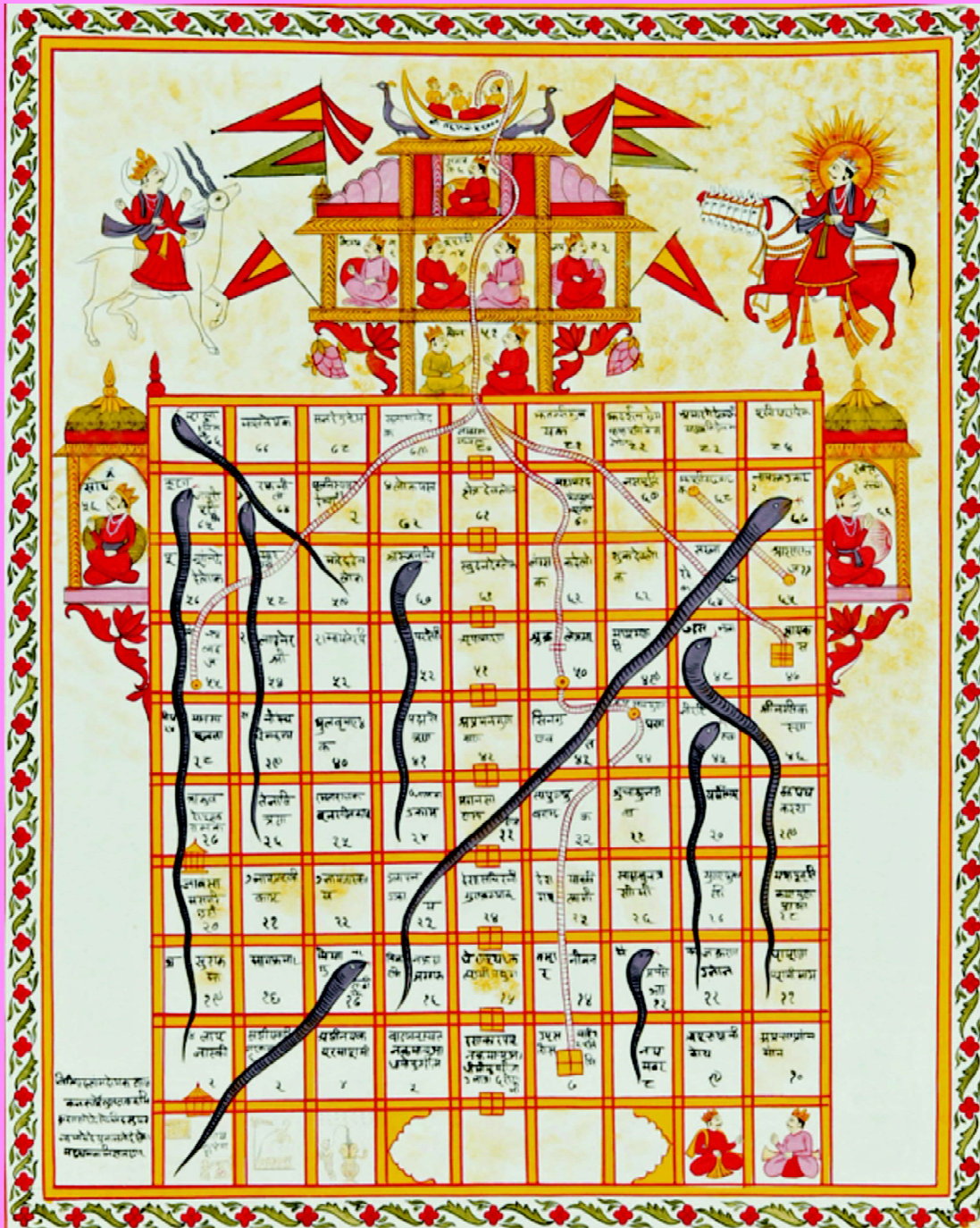
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**INTERESTING
FACTS ABOUT
INDIA**

The game of Snakes & Ladders was created by the 13th century poet saint Gyandev. It was originally called 'Mokshapat'. The ladders in the game represented virtues and the snakes indicated vices.

The game was played with cowrie shells and dices. In time, the game underwent several modifications, but its meaning remained the same, i.e. good deeds take people to heaven and evil to a cycle of re-births.



Courtesy : <https://knowindia.gov.in/my-india-my-pride/interesting-facts-about-india>

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e-mail: ourheritage123@gmail.com,
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Let us reenergize our environment

Covid-19 pandemic has shown us that we the human beings are nothing but playing for it. This extremely tiny and invisible to naked eye virus has given us to understand that we are no match for it. Through this pandemic nature perhaps wanted to send us a message 'enough is enough'. It also told us sans ambiguity that we should not mistake her tolerance as her weakness or incapability. Nature's resilience is like mother's indulgence and we took it for granted for too long. Along the way we forgot that everything has a limit and we crossed that limit long back.

It is not that we did not know what we are doing. All along we knew that; we knew that for too long we have been exploiting and destroying the planet's ecosystems. Every three seconds, the world loses enough forest to cover a football pitch and over the last century, we have destroyed half of the wetlands. As much as 50 per cent of the world's coral reefs have already been lost and up to 90 per cent of coral reefs could be lost by 2050, even if global warming is limited to an increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius. Ecosystem loss is depriving the world of carbon sinks, like forests and wetlands, at a time when humanity can least afford it. Global greenhouse gas emissions have grown for three consecutive years and the planet is facing potentially catastrophic climate change and consequent annihilation of life on this earth.

From the early nineteenth century the weather scientists and environmentalists started foreseeing our mad rush to our doom. They also understood the machinations of the all powerful self appointed lords of the world motivated by greed for more wealth and supremacy over others. They felt that if we continue to allow what is going on for decades, the destruction of the only habitable planet in the universe is inevitable. These scientists and some enlightened souls and the member countries of the United Nations therefore felt the need for an institution that will act as our conscience keepers as also keep us reminding all the time to fundamentally rethink our relationship with the living world, with natural ecosystems and their biodiversity and work towards its restoration. The World Environment Day is the outcome of these pious wishes of the saner elements of the world.

In 1972, the United Nations General Assembly established the World Environment Day on 5 June, the first day of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and in 1974 the first WED was held in

Rwanda with the theme "Only One Earth". 'Many Species. One Planet. One Future', was the theme of 2010. The world environment day of 2011 was hosted by India and the theme was Forests—Nature At Your Service. World Environment Day 2012 was hosted by Brazil and theme was Green Economy. WED 2013 was themed on the footprint of food, under the slogan "Think, Eat, Save". The UN reminded us that one third of all food produced fails to make it from farm to table, which means 1.3 billion tonnes of food, worth 1,000 billion dollars, are wasted. This amount would be enough to feed the 870 million people suffering from hunger around the world, as well as reduce CO2 emissions significantly. 2014 was dedicated to the sea, under the theme "Raise your Voice not the Sea Level!" in order to raise awareness on the problems island nations are facing due to rising sea levels. In 2015, WED was hosted by Milan, Italy, under the theme "Seven Billion People. One Planet. Consume with Care". "Zero tolerance for the illegal trade in wildlife" was the theme of the 2016 edition, hosted by Angola, whilst the 2017 edition, was held in Canada under the slogan "Connecting People with Nature" to highlight the crucial role we play in protecting the planet, to which we are closely linked and depend on. The 2018 edition, hosted by India, aimed to "Beat Plastic Pollution". In 2019, WED focussed its efforts to "Beat Air Pollution", an issue chosen by China. Colombia hosted World Environment Day 2020 in partnership with Germany on the theme 'Celebrating Biodiversity'. "Reimagine. Recreate. Restore.". Restoring ecosystem and raising awareness is the theme of this year's World Environment Day 2021.

We must understand that celebrating World Environment Day once in year with great pomp and grandeur will not save this earth. Our first priority should be to know the value and importance of nature and remind ourselves that the environment should be taken care of. We can restore our ecosystem including forests, farmlands, cities, wetlands, and oceans to a great extent by removing pressures on our ecosystem so that nature can recover on its own. Our first step in this direction should be to go from exploiting nature to healing nature. This year we should commit us to "Reimagine our lost ecological glory, Recreate the congenial conditions and Restore what is lost."

Romen Chakraborty
Chief Editor

Sikkimese Bhutia's Culture Perspectives

Dr. Jigmi Wangchuk Bhutia

Introduction

The sacred hidden land Beyul Dremojong lies at an elevation of 5,500 feet above sea level and at a distance of slightly more than 100 kilometers from Siliguri, West Bengal. This splendor 22nd State of Republic of India is very much known to the entire nation but rare in case of its deep rooted history¹. Thus, this land was constantly affirmed and praised Beyul Dremojong 'Sikkim' in many literatures of treasure texts by Guru Padmasambhava² If you wonder why Sikkim is called Beyul Dremojong? It is called Beyul Dremojong because the Second Buddha the great teacher Padmasambhava explored, marked, and blessed the land, mountains cliffs, and hills as solitude and hidden environment for beings to practice meditation.³ I do not want to go further regarding the disseminations of Buddhism in this land but at the same time want to stress on its sacred link with Buddhism.

Culture means the art, customs, ideas, etc, of a nation, people, or a group⁴. Thus, Bhutias' Culture and Religion are indispensable part of Bhutia society in Sikkim as an instance, the culture permeates every corner of the state, the

monasteries, the sounds of flute or Gyaling⁵, fusses with the repetitive swelling prayers emanating from the Mani prayer wheels all around the monasteries. The smell of sangs 'burning medicinal substances' drifted out from the sacred enclosure hovering in and around. The repetitive echo's of mantras fills the air and in the shadow of the central hall 'Dukhang' monks hold prayers in front of the alter with clouds of fests, butter lamp and electric lights dispel the darkness where they offer their respects to Buddha the man who was born 2600 years ago, achieved awakening through profound meditation. So these monks meditate as he did in the hope of achieving the virtues of goodness and ultimate wisdom.

The culture of the Bhutias of Sikkim is powerfully interlinked with Buddha Dharma and one can visualise the influence of Buddhism on the culture of the people. The Sikkimese Bhutias depend on the Lamas for all their day to day activities starting from birth, marriage, household rituals and death which are very important that nothing gets started unless the Lamas gives the instructions. For an instance, the worship of deities on the auspicious occasion of Pang-Lha-Sol

¹Mullard, Saul, *Constructing the Mandala: The State Formation of Sikkim and the Rise of a National Historical Narrative*; p. 53, *Early Sikkimese history, and by this I mean the period up to British involvement in the Himalaya, has not been studied in any depth. Prior to 2003, most western historical works on early Sikkimese history were based on the later secondary historical accounts of the History of Sikkim, The Gazetteer of Sikkim or local oral accounts.*

²Popularly known as Guru Rinpoche (Lotus Born), an 8th century yogi who introduced Vajrayana Buddhism to the Trans-Himalayan region.

³Rinpoche, H.H. the 4th Dodrupchen, *The Sacred Hidden Land of Dremojong, Chorten Gonpa, Deorali, Gangtok, Sikkim*

⁴Soanes, Catherine with Sara Hawker and Julia Elliott, *Paperback Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition, Oxford University Press, p.178, 2012*

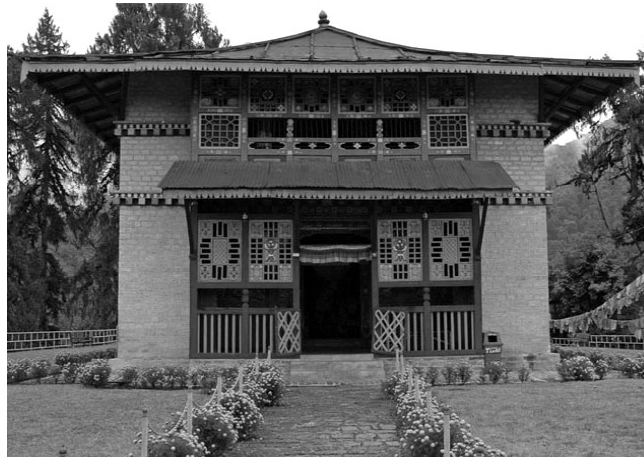
⁵A Tibetan Buddhist, reed musical-instrument like a clarinet but slightly larger and used chiefly by monks during religious ceremonies. It gets its name because it is a 'Chinese-style'.

celebration and so on. The addition of elements like worship of local deities, propitiation of local evil spirits which is a must for nature worshippers has made it look different.⁶

The Bhutia superstitions and beliefs can be said to have originated from Tibet and such superstitions and beliefs have been passed down to the people by the High Lamas. The traditions, customs and usages of the Bhutia have remained more or less intact thanks mainly due to the rule of 300 years reign of Namgyal Dynasty but now if these practices are not put down in writing than there is a possibility of vanishing precious gems.

Sikkim

Sikkim is the second smallest state in India but with full of incredible culture and traditions. It was blessed by Avaloketasewara “the Buddha of compassion”, Je-Tsun Drolma “Tara Devi” and five divine Bodhisattvas “Sprul pa'i mi nga” in primordial time. In the 8th century Guru Padmasambhava accompanied by his 25 disciples in an entourage paid a visit to this land, blessed and consecrated it as the most sacred land among others hidden lands in an around the Himalayas. Later, in the year 1269-1275 the direct descendent of Kham Minyak king named as Khye-Bumsa along with his followers travelled to this land and settled here, then afterward people entitled them as a Bhutias/ Drejongpos. Subsequently, in the year 1373 C.E. onwards many accomplished Buddhist masters visited and blessed this land in a profound way, erected many monasteries and stupas,



Dubdi Monastery

propagated Buddhism for the benefit of sentient beings. Later, in the 17th century four incarnated Lamas paid a visit from four different directions as mentioned in the spiritual text expounded by Guru Padmasambhava in 8th century. They consecrated and enthroned one among them as the first Dharma King of Sikkim. So, the disseminations in the early, the middle and the modern period saw a tremendous migrations of Bhutias in this beautiful land, where, they committed to preserve and conserve their own mother tongue and literatures, due to these amazing people, we are enjoying all kinds of privileges in present. The Sikkimese Bhutia language was developed from 8th century onwards but, literature came into its existence since 17th century only. So, this paper intends to reveal the history and authenticity of Sikkimese Bhutia herein.

The History

According to the Great Tertön Rikzin Godemchen, after having established Buddhism in Tibet under the patronage of the Dharma King Trisong Deutsen, Guru Padmasambhava, accompanied by his entourage of twenty-five disciples, paid a historic visit to Beyul Dremojong, Sikkim, in the 8th century and declared it as the most sacred amongst his seven hidden lands.⁷ He consecrated every part of the land without exception and concealed a vast number of textual and material treasures in the region. At the same time he entrusted Kangchendzodnga as the protector of the upper region of the sacred land, Pawo Hungri as the protector of middle region, and Tsomon Gyalmo and Yab-Dud as the protectors of

⁶Gyamtsö, P.T. *The History, Religion, Culture and Traditions of Bhutia Communities*, p. 17

⁷Godemchen, Tertön Rikzin, *The Guide Book to The Sacred Hidden Land of Sikkim*, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim and Amnye Machen Institute, Dharamsala, H.P. 2008, pp. 146-147

the lower region to protect all the treasure texts and the sacred land as a whole. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that the visit of Guru Rinpoche and his entourage initiated the migration of the Bhutias to Sikkim for both spiritual as well as worldly ends. This group of people became known by Tibetans as Lhopos, which means ‘the People of the South.’ However, in their inter-ethnic interactions within India, over the course of time they have come to be more commonly known as Sikkimese Bhutias. During Guru Padmasambhava’s visit to Sikkim, he encountered the Lepcha chieftain Yogi, Thekong Mon Salang, and his mistress, and instructed them in the Buddha Dharma whereupon they attained the power over their lifespan. He then asked the Lepcha couple to protect and nurture the spiritual environment of Beyul Demazong and all its hidden treasures until the arrival of the great treasure revealer, Gyalwa Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed (1597-1652 C.E), who would come to open the hidden land, Beyul, for coming generations of his devotees in the 17th century.⁸

The manuscript of Kalsang Lodon mentions that the Mi-Nyag Au-Dong clans were descendants of Devas from the heavenly realms and reigned as sovereigns over a large part of eastern India before migrating to Kham Mi-Nyag and later, after many generations, eventually came to settle in Beyul Dremojong.⁹ This happened in the year 1268 C.E, when the direct descendent of the incumbent 25th king of Minyak (name unrecorded) who, along with his five sons (the eldest of whom was Khye

Bumsa) and the rest of his entourage, journeyed to Sikkim via Sakya, Pagri and Chumbi, in accordance with the holy vision of a local deity who told him that he and his sons and descendants were prophesied by Guru Rinpoche to leave Kham-Minyak and settle in Beyul Dremojong which would be to the great benefit of future generations of his followers.¹⁰ The king accordingly left for Lhasa, the then capital of Tibet, where they made a pilgrimage to the Jowo-Khang¹¹ and offered their prayers there. On that occasion, the Jowo Rinpoche himself also admonished the king to go to Beyul Dremojong. Then, in the year 1269 C.E, they reached Sakya, where the main Sakya Monastery was being built under the guidance of Panchen Sakya Zangpo. There they came upon the lamas struggling unsuccessfully to erect four giant pillars in the main hall of the monastery. With Herculean strength, the eldest son of the Mi-Nyag King erected all the pillars which were how he came to receive the name, ‘Khye Bumsa’- meaning ‘Strength of a Multitude.’ In recognition and gratitude of this miraculous feat in his service, the Panchen offered his own daughter, Sherap Drolma, in marriage to Khye Bumsa before the party journeyed on towards their destiny, crossing many high mountain passes along the way. After becoming settled in Chumbi, the couple remained childless so Khye Bumsa took the advice of several high Lamas and oracles who told him to seek the blessings of the Lepcha chieftain of Beyul Dremojong at that time, Thekong Tek and his

⁸Rinpoche, H.H. Yangthang, ‘The Opening of the Sacred Hidden Land and Catalogue of the Sacred Idols of Kathog Monastery,’ *Yuksam Retreat Centre (Chamkhang)*, 2006, pp. 12-13

⁹Loden, Kalsang, *Unpublished Manuscript, The History of Sikkim, Written in the year Water-Bird corresponding to the 1657 C.E.*

¹⁰Mullard, Saul, ‘Opening the Hidden Land,’ *State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese History*, Brill’s Tibetan Studies Library, USA, 2011, p. 39

¹¹One of the major Monasteries in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, it was built by the Chinese prince Wencheng Kungjo, who was the Chinese wife of the Great King Songtsen Gampo. The temple gets its name from the fact that it was built to house the Jowo statue. The Jowo statue was part of the princess’s dowry. It is a particularly famous statue of Shakyamuni Buddha, said to be created in the Buddha’s time at the instigation of Kaushika, chief of the desire realm gods.

mistress, Nyokung Ngal, who had the spiritual power of bestowing children to barren women. Khye Bumsa, therefore, left Chumbi for the Beyul, along with a large entourage, traversed the Chola range, and was received by the Lepcha chieftain at Rintsom in North Sikkim, and who performed the rites accordingly. Returning to Chumbi, Sherap Drolma did indeed give birth to a child, a boy. In profuse gratitude to the Lepcha chieftain for the boon he had bestowed upon them, the couple journeyed back to the Beyul to felicitate them. This historic meeting took place in 1275 C.E at Kabi Lungtsok, North Sikkim, where the two chieftains solemnized their vow- that they and their communities would maintain a peaceful and harmonious coexistence in the Beyul until the dissolution of Mt. Meru at the end of the present world epoch. The chieftains' bloodoath was witnessed by all the local protector deities of the Beyul, with Khangchendzodnga presiding as the chief protector of the upper region of the land, Pawo Hungri as the chief protector of the middle region, and Yabdud as the chief protector of the lower region. To this day the blood-oath of spiritual brotherhood and kinship of the two chieftains, their descendants, and their peoples is re-solemnized by performance of the Pang-Lha-Sol propitiatory offering rites to all the protector deities of Beyul Dremojong in all three regions of the land, and which occurs every year on the 15th day of the 7th month of the Tibetan lunar calendar.

As prophesized by Guru Padmasambhava, in the year 1373 C.E, the great treasure-revealer, Terchen Rikzin Godemchen (1337-1408 C.E), along with his entourage opened the sacred door to the hidden land for the first time after the Maha Guru had consecrated it, after performing lavish propitiatory offering rites to all the protector deities of the land. He sent fragments of

information, regarding the sacred land, attached to vultures, back to Tibet. Likewise, in the year 1568 C.E, the second incarnation of Rikzin Godemchen, Ngari Rikzin Legdenje (1500-1613 C.E) also travelled to the sacred hidden land with his followers, also performing lavish propitiating rites to all the protector deities of the land before entering it. He revealed a treasure text for the accomplishment of Amitayus (Wyl. tshesgrub bdudrtsi 'khyilba) from the Northern Cave, Jang-Lhari Nyingphug¹², and built a meditation centre at Pawo Hungri in West Sikkim where we can still see some of its ruins. The migration of Tibetan practitioners and devotees of Guru Padmasambhava to Beyul Dremojong continued with the arrival of Mon Karthok Sonam Gyaltzen and many other high Lamas and their families. This steady migration of the Bhutias over the century's years resulted in their settlement in each region of the land.

Over the period of the Bhutia Diaspora, i.e. from the 8th century till the 13th century, the spiritual bond between the settler Bhutias and the native Lepchas grew strong and became formalized by the ritual swearing of the Blood Brotherhood oath between Khye Bumsa and Thekong Tek, as mentioned earlier. This virtuous occasion was key to the process of the formation of a unified Sikkimese identity and nation under the sovereignty of the Namgyal dynasty, which was initiated by the crowning and consecration of the Great Chogyal Phuntsog Namgyal, as the first Buddhist Dharma-king of Sikkim, by the three Yogis, namely; Gyalwa Lhatsun Chenpo Namkha Jigmed, Ngadak Sempa Chenpo Phuntsok Rikzin and Kathok Kuntu Zangpo, in the year 1642 and 1646 C.E at Yuksam, West Sikkim, respectively.

(Contd. to next issue)

¹²Tshering, *Khenpo Lha, Clear Understanding & Wish Fulfilling History of Sikkimese Treasure Lineages, Bulletin of Tibetology, Special Volume on the History of Buddhist Logic, Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, 25th November 1994, Vol. 3, pp. 20-21*

Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma – a Sainly Role Model

Dr. Ajit Boro

Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma was born on 18th April 1860 in the morning at 3:00 A.M. to Khowla Mech and Randini Mech at Kazigami in the district of the then Goalpara under Dhubri Police Station now Kokrajhar district. Earlier he was known as Kalicharan Mech, as Bodo people used to write Mech as their surname. He was also known as Laojong Bwrai and Lantha Bwrai. Laojong means taller, Bwrai means old people and Lantha means people having less hair on the head. Kalicharan Brahma married Khanshri Mech in the year 1875 while he was only 15 years of age. He was reverently named Gurudev in the year 1906 and Mech Gandhi in the year 1934 by the local people. Kalicharan Brahma studied upto class V only because no educational institutions were available near his home. He had to walk miles barefoot to the nearest school which became very difficult for him. So he could manage to obtain formal education only up to class V.

Although Gurudev had to give up his formal education, but he continued to struggle for the education of the Bodos in particular and the local people as a whole. He strongly believed that education is the only medium through which all round development of individuals and the society can be ensured. He strongly believed that education is the only property which can never be taken away or stolen by anybody. Gurudev's struggle was not confined to religious issues only. It covered all aspects-education, economy, politics, linguistics, literature and culture. He worked hard for women empowerment as well as youth empowerment. Gurudev was not only the spiritual and religious leader but also a great political thinker. His most commendable

contribution was in the field of political issues related to the Bodos.

On 4th January, 1929, Gurudev led a six member delegation including himself and Baburam Brahma, Karendra Narayan Mandal Brahma, Jadav Chandra Khaklary, Subedar Sardar Bahadur Belbungram Kachary, Mohammad Giyasuddin Ahmed (Advocate) to appear before the Simon Commission at Shillong and submit a memorandum. The memorandum cited altogether 12 issues all of which were of vital importance for the Bodos. The memorandum was drafted by Advocate Mohammad Giyasuddin Ahmed in English and is reproduced below.

To: Indian Statutory Commission

(Known as the Simon Commission)

We the undersigned, on behalf of the Bodo Community of the district of Goalpara of Assam, beg to submit the following memorandum. Some of important points touching the enquiry with the special reference to the district of Goalpara and to the Bodo Community of the said district.

1. That the community forms a considerable portion of the population of the district of Goalpara and its numbers are about 1 lakh 50 thousand. In the whole province of Assam its numbers are almost eight lakhs. A large number of Bodos live in the district of Jalpaiguri and Coochbihar in the province of Bengal. Out of one lakh and fifty thousand, some thousands have been treated as Hindus which is the cause of decrease in number of the Bodos population of the district of Goalpara. The Bodos have a distinct civilization of their own. There should be a separate category as 'the Bodos' in the Census

Report. The history shows very clearly the part of this community has been playing in the history of Assam since the time of Bhagadutta who ruled over Assam during the time of the great Epic, the Mahabharata. Many kings who ruled over Assam belonged to this race. Bhisma Raja, Bali Raja, Ban Raja and Viswa Singha all belonged to this race and history will prove how influential once they were.

2. The people of this race are born warriors and even now many people have listed their names in the military under the British Government. The original proprietor of the Bijni Estate and Coochbihar Estate were people of this race. But in the course of time, they styled themselves Hindus. Their Estates are still existing but are totally ignored. We being backward, failed to project the opinion of our community before. So we could not submit the

memorandum in time and we hope that you will be pleased to accept it and consider it favorably because your decision in regard to Indian constitution, will make a distinctly new stage in our political life.

3. Electorate: In our opinion, there should not be mixed electorate. Each section of the people should have the liberty of sending in their representatives in the local councils. The peculiar position in which we are placed offers us practically no change of sending our representatives in which, though there is a large number of voters from our community. Out of

the total population of the whole district of Goalpara which numbers about six lakhs eighty five thousand eight hundred and eighty two, three lakhs sixty-nine thousand three hundred ninety seven fall under the heads of non Mohammadians. Non mohammadians means Hindus, Christian, Jains, Sikhs and the like. A liberal view of the things shows that we cannot enjoy the advantages of the reform that are being

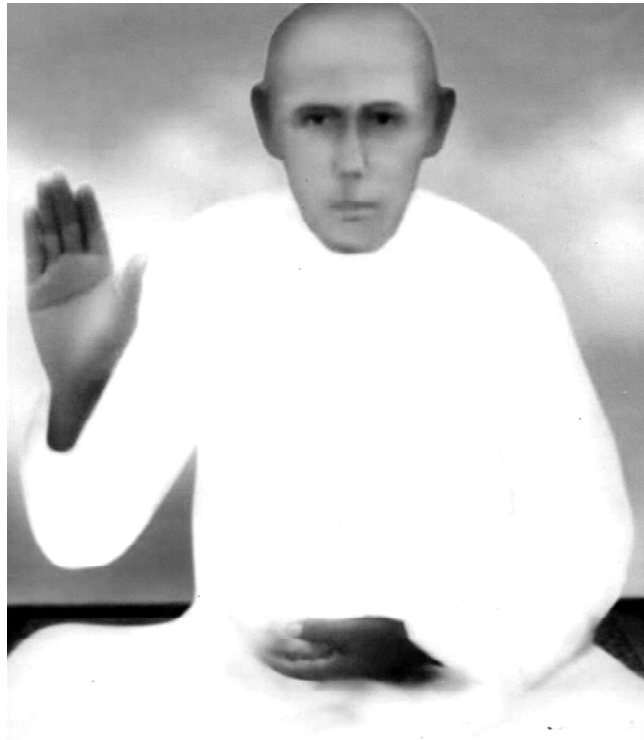
enjoyed either by the Brahmins or by the Khatriyas or by the Sudras. So in order to safaguards the interest of our community we would have a separate representative in the council.

4. In our opinion, there should not be a second chamber in the local council.

5. At present there are certain restrictions which debar many to exercise their right of franchise. This should be removed and more liberty be given for that

purpose. There should be four seats in the central legislature. One for Mahammadians and three for non-Mahammadians; and one of the three non Mohammadian seats should be reserved for Bodos of Assam.

6. Territorial pre-distribution-some interested persons of our district are agitating for the transfer of the district of Goalpara over to Bengal. So far as we are concerned, we opposed to it. Goalpara is a part and parcel of Assam and history will prove what part she has been playing since the time immemorial. The habits and customs of the people



of this district are more akin to Assamese than to Bengalese. We the Bodos can by no means call ourselves other than Assamese. The transfer of this district to Bengal will be prejudicial to the interest not only of this community but all the other communities, and this transfer will seriously hamper our progress in all directions.

7. We also desire to put it before you that there be a sub-division either at Kokrajhar or at Haltugaon within sub-division of Dhubri. This community should be benefitted as “listed community” and more opening of employment opportunities be given.

8. Education and appointment – we the undersigned beg to lay before you that this community should receive special treatment at the hand of the Government in matters of education and appointment. Our community is most backward in point of education. Such being the case, our people are always misled. They cannot save themselves from hands of the foreign money lenders. To remove this drawback there should be compulsory per-primary education and special scholarship for fiving facility for higher education to Bodo students be provided for. As stated before, a large number of our people are serving the military and thereby rendering loyal service to the British Government.

We claim certain provincial and executive posts for some of our people who are getting higher education.

9. A large number of Bodo Sepoys are included in the Gorkha-regiment and are generally known as Gorkha. To our opinion, there should be a separate regiment as the ‘Bodo-Regiment’ for the Bodo-people of Assam.

10. Local Boards – The Chairman of the Board during the term of their office – Big land holders should not be allowed to stand for election from general constituency. There is objection if they are

given special seats in the Boards.

11. In matters of Board election under the Dhubri Local Board, our community should have separate electorate just like the Mohammadians-under the thanas of Bilasipara, Kokrajhar, Bijini and Dhubri. The Bodo people who are in the majority in those areas should have separate seats at the Dhubri Local Board. As stated before, our peoples are illiterate and ignorant. So they are easily misled by others at the time of elections and consequently, the people of other communities are elected. In view of the illiteracy, ignorance and influence of other communities we earnestly pray so that we get separate seats in Dhubri Local Board. Such is also the condition of Goalpara Local Board. There too we want separate seats.

12. In conclusion, we beg to lay before you that if required, any one of us is willing to appear before you and to give evidence. (This was read out before the commission while the commission sat at Shillong on Friday, January 4th 1929 at 2:00 p.m.

Conclusion:

Almost all the major issues were touched but it was a pity that major issues and demands were neglected by the British Government except few. The revolution started by Gurudev was for the all-round development of the Bodo community. It really has given the present shape of the Bodo society. However materializing the dreams of Gurudev now rests with the present younger generation of the Bodo society. Gurudev was not only a Bodo leader but a universal leader of both tribal and the non-tribal communities. His philosophies were- ‘Unity in diversity’, ‘Non-violence’, ‘Belief in God’, ‘Service to the society’ and “Live and let live”.

(The author of this article is the Principal of, Gossaigaon B.Ed College and can be contacted at 8638077413)

The Wanchos of Arunachal Pradesh

Dr. Modang Reena

(Contd. from Previous issue)

Arts and Crafts

Wanchos have their own distinct cultural and traditional identities and are displayed through various forms of art prevalent in the form of weaving, basketery, beadwork, wood carving etc. These forms of arts have a great potential in the international market because of its beautiful vibrant colour combination and sensibility and authenticity. The Wanchos are the expert craftsmen.

Weaving

Earlier weaving among the Wanchos was a traditional occupation of the chief's family only and they are expert in this art. Why the craft was confined to the women of the chief's family is difficult to say because of the restriction of art to the women of the chiefs family only weaving has not become a general occupation of all the Wancho women. But this perception is gradually changing with the coming of modern education. Many women are taking weaving as a means of earning livelihood irrespective of the clan.

The designed weaved is generally of arrangement of bands and lines sometimes making them into elaborate pattern of diamond.

Beadwork

Like weaving, beadwork is also confined to the women. Earlier it was confined among the chief's families only. Today it is not like that, every Wancho women knows how to do bead work. It is a glassbead locally called 'lik' which is generally procured from the plains of Assam. Women make very attractive ornaments of coloured beads for personal decoration. One can easily identify the class whether one is from the chiefs family or from the family of commoner i.e. Wangpan by just looking at the ornament he or she wears. Some ornaments which are worn by the chief families are not entitled to be worn by the commoner. For example, if a girl wears

a head gear studded with coins, it represent that she belongs to chiefs family.

Wancho women are very expert in the making of beads ornament. Bead making is a very tedious process. It needs days of needling small coloured beads into intricate design, combining various strands of the threads according to the breadth. They weave variety of designs like diamond, human figures etc. Of late, Wancho beads are gaining much popularity in the outside world, because of its beautiful design and vibrancy. It demands is globally increasing. In late 70s, a Wancho woman received the national award from then Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi, for her outstanding work in the field of beads making.

The beads generally used for plaited work are glass beads and the colours choosen are mainly red, blue, green, yellow and white. Bead work is highly complicated and time consuming.

Wood Carving

Wood carving is a specialized craft of the Wanchos. There are experts in almost all the Wancho villages who can carve on wood. They carve different figures like tigers, snake, human etc.

Nowadays, however, this craft is assuming an almost commercial character. The objects of carving and conventional types and designs, wood carvings dolls are much in demand in the marke. It is commercially viable and has been found to be more beneficial economically.

Decorated pillars of carvings in house of the chiefs house are invariably found in almost all the the Wancho villages. In the chiefs house one can find various pattern of wood decorated with carvings of the various human and animals figure.

The Wanchos donot have sophisticated tools and implements for wood carving. The wood generally used for carving is locally called Pomo. It is a kind

of soft wood. This particular species of tree is locally available.

Although there is no special status for the wood carver yet they are respected by the people as their services are inevitable in the socio-cultural life of the people. There is no separate class of people for the art. Anybody having interest in the art can become a wood carver. He may learn the art by association with the expert. Woodcarving is however confined to menfolk only. It is not done by women.

Bachelor Dormitory or PAA

The Wancho have well institutionalized bachelors' dormitory system which is called 'Paa'. But this institutionalized system is declining and almost become non-functional. In the good old days bachelor dormitory system was part of life. The bachelor dormitory was an important educational institution for the youth of the village. The custom and tradition have been transmitted from generation to generation through folk music and dance, folk tales and oral tradition, carving of figure on wood. It was also called as a guardhouse during times of war.

The bachelor dormitory is decorated with wood carvings and skull of buffaloes and other animals sacrificed on various occasion.

There is a qualification for admission to Paa. Generally children do not stay in the Morung as member though they may enter it. But females of any age are prohibited from entering it. Only on the

day of construction of 'Paa' young girls and women may serve food in the feast given on that day.

Each Paa has a big long log drum called 'Kham'. Different rhythm produced by log drum beating indicates different meaning. These are known and people on hearing the rhythm or sound act according to the message conveyed.

Like the boys dormitory, the girls dormitory was also prevalent among the Wachoos. They were known as 'Noi' where the girls would stay in the dormitory after attaining puberty till they choose their life partner and settle in the family life. During her stay in the dormitory she would learn weaving, cooking etc. Apart from this, she would get lessons about manner, morality, and ethical code of conduct. But, unlike Paa the males are allowed to enter into the 'Noi'. But strict exogamy is maintained. The boys and girls of same clan cannot enter or stay in the dormitory of the same clan.

In dormitory, they not only learn cultural values and warfare techniques but also provided the structure for working principle of the village council. In short it is the fulcrum of democracy.

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Beating of Log drum

Measurement of Time: East vis-a-vis West

Suresh Soni

(Contd. from Previous issue)

Fortnight - When the moon, while going around the earth, moves 12 degrees it is known as a *tithi*. On the new moon night (*amavasya*), the moon lies between the sun and the earth. This is called zero degree. When the moon moves 12 parts and is at a distance of 180 degrees from the sun. It is called full moon (*Poornima*). The fortnight from the first day after Amavasya to *Poornima* is called the *shukla paksha* and the fortnight from *poornima* to *amavasya* is called *Krishna paksha*.

Month- For the purpose of calculations, 27 constellations (*nakshatras*) have been accepted:

1. *Ashwini*
2. *Bharani*
3. *Krittik*
4. *Robini*
5. *Mrigashira*
6. *Aardra*
7. *Punarvasu*
8. *Pushya*
9. *Ashlesha*
10. *Magha*
11. *Poorva Phalguni*
12. *Uttar Phalguni*
13. *Hast*
14. *Chitra*
15. *Swati*
16. *Vishakha*

17. *Anuradha*
18. *Jyeshtha*
19. *Moola*
20. *Poorvasharab*
21. *Uttarasharab*
22. *Shravana*
23. *Dhanibtha*
24. *Shatabhisha*
25. *Poorva Bhadrapad*
26. *Uttar Bhadrapad*
27. *Revati*

Each of the 27 constellations was divided into 4 quadrants thus there is a total of 108 quadrants. According to the shapes of 9 of these quadrants, the 12 zodiac signs were given their names:

1. Aries
2. Taurus
3. Gemini
4. Cancer
5. Leo
6. Virgo
7. Libra
8. Scorpio
9. Sagittarius
10. Capricorn
11. Aquarius
12. Pisces

In Hindu names are

1. Mesh
2. Brisha
3. Mithun
4. Karkat
5. Singha

6. Kanya
7. Tula
8. Brischik
9. Dhanu
10. Makar
11. Kumbha
12. Meen.

The lines of these signs on earth were determined. It was called *keranti*, The lines are believed to be 24° north and south of the equator. Hence, the name of the sign which the sun reaches during the rotation of the earth is given to that solar month. These months generally neither increase nor decrease.

Lunar Month - The lunar months got their names from the star (*nakshatra*) that is visible throughout the month from evening to morning and in which the moon acquires completeness:

1. *Chaitraa*
2. *Vishaakhaa*
3. *Jyeshthaa*
4. *Ashaadhaa*
5. *Shraavan*
6. *Bhaadrapad*
7. *Ashwini*
8. *Krittikaa*
9. *Mrigashira*
10. *Pushya*
11. *Magha*
12. *Phaalguni*

Hence, on this basis, the months were named *Chaitra*, *Vaishakha*, *Jyeshtha*, *Aashadha*, *Shraavan*, *Bhaadrapad*, *Ashwin*, *Kartika*, *Maargasheersha*, *Pausa*, *Magha* and *Phalgun*.

Summer solstice and winter solstice - The earth is tilted $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north—westward on its axis. Therefore, $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north and south of the equator are the places, where the sun's rays fall vertically. This is called *Sankranti*. The line which is $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north is called the Tropic of Cancer or *Karka Rekha* and $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ South is called the Tropic of Capricorn or *Makar Rekha*. The line with 90° (the equator) is called the *Visu Vritt* *Rekha*. The *Karka Sankranti* is called *Uttaraayan* or summer solstice and *Makar Sankranti* is called *dakshinaayan* or winter solstice.

Measure of a Year - At a speed of about one lakh km per hour, the earth completes one revolution around the 966,000,000 kms path around the sun in $365\frac{1}{2}$ days. This period is considered to be one year.

Measure of an Age - In 432,000 years, all the seven planets leave their Longitude and Latitude and fall in one straight line. The time of this conjuncture is *Kaliyug*. When two conjunctures take place it is *Dwaapar*, when three take place, it is *Treta* and when four conjunctures take place, it is called *Satyayug*. In the *Chaturyugi*, all the seven planets, along with

their Longitude and Latitude, lie in one direction only.

The present *Kaliyug*, according to Indian calculations, started 3102 years BC, on the 20th of February at 2 hours, 27 minutes and 30 seconds. At that time, all the planets were under one zodiac sign. In this context, it is worth making a note of what Bally, the famous astronomer of Europe, has to say:

“According to the planetary calculations of the Hindus, the present age, that is kaliyug, started 3,102 years ago on the 20th of February at 2 hours 27 minutes and 30 seconds. As such, these calculations were made even to the second. The Hindus further say that all the planets were under the same zodiac sign at the time of kaliyug and their tables also say so. The calculations made by the Brahmins prove absolutely correct according to our astronomical tables. This is only because the results have been obtained by direct observation of the planets.”

(Theogony of Hindus by Bjornstjerna, Page 32)

According to the Vedic sages, the present universe is made of five *mandalas* (orbits) — the moon orbit, earth orbit, sun orbit, *parameshthi mandala* and the *swayambhu mandala*. They are progressively moving round the higher orbits.

Manvantara - The time that the sun takes to complete one orbit of the centre of the Milky Way (*Parameshthi mandala*) has

been called a *manvantara*. It measures 30, 67, 20,000 (30 crore 67 lakh 20 thousand) years. The difference between two *Manvantaras* (*sandhyaansh*) is equal to one *satyayug*. Therefore, the measurement of one *manvantara* along with its *sandhyaansh* is 30 crore 84 lakh 48 thousand years. According to modern measurements, the sun completes one orbit of the centre of the Milky Way in 25-27 crore years.

Era — The *parameshthi mandala* is going round the *swayambhu mandala*. This means that our Milky Way is going round the Milky Way above it. The period it takes to do that has been called an era (Kalpa) and measures 4 billion 32 million years (4320,000,000). This has been called one day of Brahma. The day is as long as the night. Hence, Brahma's *abaraatra* is 864 crore years and Brahma's year is 31 *kharab* 10 *arab* 40 crore years. Brahma's age is 100 years. Therefore, the age of the universe is 31 *neel* 10 *kharab* 40 *arab* years (31,10,40,000,000,000 years).

Studying the calculations of the Indians, Carl Segan, the famous Cosmologist of Europe has, in his book “Cosmos” said,

“The Hindu religion is the only one which is dedicated to the belief that a particular sequence of the creation and destruction of the universe is

going on and this is the only religion which has made calculations from the ordinary day and night to Brahma's day and night of 8 *arab* 64 crore years. Which by coincidence is close to the modern astronomical calculations. This calculation is older than the age of the earth and the sun. Besides, they possess measures for even larger calculations."

Carl Segan has called it a 'coincidence' but in fact it is based on solid planetary calculations.

Amazing Discovery of the Sages

Our ancestors not only measured time on the basis of astronomical move-ments. They also formulated an amazing system to join the unending journey of time to the present and for the common man to know about it. We do not generally pay attention to it. In our country, we perform some religious procedures or ceremonies before doing any work-whether it be the beginning of manufacturing something, entry into a new house, birth, marriage or any other work. For this, one first has to take a *Sankalp* (resolution). The *Sankalp mantra* tells us about the state of time from ancient times to the present. So, if we concentrate on the meaning of the mantra, everything becomes clear.

In the Sankalp mantra, we say

**Om asya shri
vishnoraagyayaa
pravartamaanasya
Brahmanaam
dwiteeye raardhe.....**

The mantra means that in the unending wheel of time pioneered by Maha Vishnu, the age of the present Brahma has completed 50 years. *Shweta varaab kalpe-kalpa* means that it is the first day of the 51st year of Brahma.

Vaivasvatamanvantara - There are 14 *manvantaras* in one day of Brahma. The 7th of these is the *vaivasvat manvantara*, which is going on.

Ashtaavinshatitame

kaliyuga- There are 71 *chaturyugis* in one *manvantara*. Of these, the kaliyug of the 28th chaturyugi is going on now a days.

**Kaliyuga Pratham-
acharane -** The beginning of the kaliyug.

Kalisamvate or Yugaabde - At present, the kalisamvat or yugaabd is 5114 (2012 AD).

**Jambu dweepe,
Brahmaavarta deshe,
Bhaarata bhukhande**

Names of continents, region and country.

In such and such place - Place of work.

In such and such *samvatsar* - (Name of the *samvatsar*.)

In such and such *ayane* - (*uttaraayan* or *dakshinaayan*.)

In such and such *ritu* or season- There are six seasons including the spring season.

In such and such month- There are 12 months like *Chaitra* etc..

In such and such *paksha* or fortnight - Name of the fortnight as in *Shukla paksha* or *Krishna paksha*.

On such and such date or *tithi*—Name of the *tithi*,

On such and such day - Name of the day.

At such and such time-At what time of the day.

Such and such person-YOU take your name, then your father's name, then gotra and what work you are going to do and with what purpose- And then, you do the *sankalpa*.

It is with this system that remembering time from the time the *sankalp* is taken to eternity, has been easily brought into normal practice in the Indian way of life.

Relativity of Time :

Einstein established the relativity of time in his 'Theory of Relativity'. He said that the concept of time on the various planets varies. Time is related to the movement of the planet. Hence, the measurement of time

(Contd. to Page 26)

The Dorbar System in the Jaintia Tribal Community

Dr. Rikil Chyrmang

This paper attempts to expound the Dorbar system in Meghalaya with a focus on the Jaintia tribal community. The Dorbar system is a form of traditional self-governing institution functioning like the democratic political institutions based on the age-old traditions of the people. The study is based on focused group discussion conducted in Jalaphet village in the East Jaintia Hills District and on participant's observation. Jalaphet village falls under Saipung Block situated about 114 kms from the State capital Shillong, and 20 kms from Khliehriat, the district headquarter. Around 12 people participated in the discussion. Some of the participants are teachers and some are members of the village council. Jalaphet has two parts that falls under the jurisdiction of two Dollois namely; Jalaphet Bri-Sutnga is under the control of the Dolloi (chief) of Elaka (province) Sutnga, and Jalaphet Bri-Sumer by the Dolloi of Elaka Raliang. The village is inhabited by seven clans and is spread over 10 localities; five localities belong to the Bri-Sutnga and five to the Bri-Sumer. The majority of people living in the village belong to the Scheduled Tribes (99.56%) which are called *pnar* (tribal) community. The number of permanent residents was 2945 in Jalaphet Bri-Sutnga in 492 households, and about 2292 in Jalaphet Bri-Sumer in 371 households. Thus the total population of the whole of Jalaphet village is about 5239 with 863 households and the literacy rate is just about 30 % according to the Indian Census 2011.

The Genesis of the Dorbar System

Meghalaya has had deep-rooted traditional institutions of local governance since time immemorial and they still function today. They include: i) the *Nokmanship* system is the traditional institution of the Garos and the leader of the Garo clan used to be designated as the *Nokma* (leader), ii)

Syiemship is the distinctive traditional institution of the Khasi tribes. Syiemship is rule of a Khasi state by a leader called the *Syiem* (King). Finally, among the Jaintias, is found the system of *Dolloiship*. It is a system of judicial administration based on the principle of social disapproval of wrongful activities and actions, with a *Dolloi* (chief) acting as the administrative head of each territory. All these three popular traditional institutions of local self-government continue to work under the over-all control of their respective District Councils. During the British period the village people of the Jaintia community began to use the word *durbar* or '*dorbar*' (committee) in *pnar* language to what had previously been referred to as the village tie (the informal meeting of the villagers). Firstly, the British adopted the Mughal term '*darbar*', which referred to any sort of meeting, and used it to refer to the meetings in which the people settled such dispute of wrong doing person within their village administration. All rules and regulations are oversee and incorporated within the dorbar system.

There are Dorbars at different levels like the village dorbar, the elaka dorbar, and the Syiem dorbar. The power of the Syiem and the Dolloi were checked by the Dorbars of their respective areas. The Dorbars provide opportunities to people to take part in and charge of in their own affairs. Therefore, consent is the basis of political authority. Historically the Jaintias have had a fairly organised three-tier system of governance under a Syiem which was the highest level in the hierarchy. The Jaintia system was divided into 12 elakas (consisting of groups of villages) under a Dolloi, the second level. The next and lowest level of territorial/geographic entity was a village represented by a Waheh Chnong constituting the third level, who was selected from amongst the male adults. Each of these three levels had councils

or dorbars. Each village was usually organised along clan lines with a Village Headman (Waheh Chnong) concerned with basic administration and justice (Meghalaya Vision Document, 2011).

This old political system of government continues to exist except for the Syiem. When the British took over the Jaintia administration in 1835, they abolished the office of the Syiem. However, they retained the other two traditional institutions, the Dolloi and Waheh Chnong. The three-tiered system of administration which was in existence during the pre-British era was reduced to a two-tier system. After Independence, the formal institutions at work in the first level called Autonomous District Council (ADCs) were established under the Sixth Schedule along with the existing two-tier system (See Table 1).

The other structure of organisation of the traditional institutions from district to the village level are – i) Ka Dorbar ki 12 Dolloi (Full District Committee of 12 Dolloi), ii) *Ka Dorbar Elaka* (Committee of the head and the village members who coordinate the affairs of a group of villages, i.e. larger area in an elaka comprising of several villages), iii) *Ka Dorbar Chnong* (a village committee, which is the smallest council of people at the village level). They each meet frequently, and has administrative, financial and judicial functions to discuss a variety of subjects related to their respective jurisdiction or province.

A Case Study on the Traditional Functions of the Dorbar System

In the olden days people have some title in their village to perform ritual (puja) that would be given to some clan, the people of the village used to decide which clan would performs which type of puja and etc. so, after times pass by people migrate to other village after having some village they called it a Raid. That Raid falls under one roof, one social organisation, and they used to elect the head, called as a Dolloi. Only man has a right to elect that head, in Jaintia hills they called that head a Dolloi and in Khasi Hills they called that head as Syiem (King).

The Syiem is used to appoint U Langdoh (religious priest). U Langdoh is used to look after the administration of the village also. At that time they don't have the headman service; they use to have a Langdoh. From Dolloi to Langdoh and the Langdoh to perform that service he uses to have a team, with him there is a Langdoh Kynthai (Female), Chutia, Kitkhoh, Syngot, Maji. The team has their own specific thing to help the Langdohs in performing the puja and the main head of any functions, Dolloi used to be the head, give order, fixed the date etc. and those team used to help him. This system was practiced for a long time, when there was only one type of belief, one type of cultural practice and when the time passes by then people start adopting other type of belief, so they don't go to the Langdoh for their daily needs of supervision, so people started thinking that why not elect one old man of the village who is a good man to look after the village administration because some are believing in some types of religious performance some are followed other types of belief, so to make a neutral man they used to choose a very old and honest man to be the Headman. So now the duty of the Langdoh is to look after the indigenous religious faith only not to interfere another new belief of the people, so the village Headman now he is a neutral man. He don't have any right to do that religious, but he used to look after the administration of the village only not quarrel so on and so forth, so that to maintain peace and harmony in the village. There is no election process to elect the village members; they are unanimously named with consensus of the community. However, today, election to the post of village headman is conducted by the district council if the community or people object to the proposed Headman.

The Dolloi was elected for life from the senior clans through an election process, in which only men are allowed to vote. The services of the Dolloi and Waheh Chnong are unpaid. The Dolloi is the chief in hierarchy form to look after the Elaka and below the Dolloi it is called a Pator as the Elaka is bigger and pator will look a smaller area under the Dolloi

of the same Elaka. Below pator comes Waheh Chnong. Waheh Chnong duty and responsibility is to look after the work/help of the pator and Dolloi. This is the earlier situation. But now the situation of the Waheh Chnong is to look after the poor people and to look after various development schemes available with the government office for the village welfare and development. Earlier village headman was elected from a particular locality by only male members as per the custom and tradition and female have the right to participate in the dorbar but have no power to choose headman.

In the earlier situation only men have the right to sit in the dorbar to elect the village headman but after introducing the district council, it has become an election issue and the situation has entirely changed. If two person stands for that post the district council have to conduct the election both men and women were allow to vote.

Role and Functions of the Dolloi

Dolloi is the head of an Elaka function like a King. There may be some Elaka who is having 50 villages, some have 40 villages and can be an Elaka of only one village. So the Dolloi during the olden days used to be the Rajah (King) of that area and whatever his decision was final, he was the Magistrate and everything and below him in each village they have the village headman and the Langdoh. The Langdoh is covering all those villages under that Elaka where there are people who are still in indigenious. But the role of the Headman is limited to only one particular village. In the present-days the position of the Dolloi is entrusted by the District council just to verify the land property of the people give recommendation. And in case if there are any conflicts or land dispute the Dolloi has to report in the dorbar. There are some cases of dispute in the olden days where customarily the victim have to pure full of the pot like a cucumber with what they have called rice bear (local wine) then handed over to the Dolloi. The village will report to the Dolloi by saying that this man created some problem (e.g. petty conflicts or claiming land etc.). As soon as the Dolloi got the rice bear after two to three days the Dolloi summon the second party to

report to him then the Dolloi will call a Dorbar that consisted groups of people's gathering to hear the judgment of the case. The one who lost the case he has to pay some fine. Those time people who don't have money they have to pay a fine by giving one bottle of rice bear, or one Cock or a Pig.

The Dolloi was elected by the people in the Dorbar by raising hand (voice vote) or by making a queue. If there were more than two candidates then the people will stand in the queue of that particular candidate whom they want to elect. Like this then they will count the number of people standing in the queue for the respective candidates. The candidate who got the highest number declare elected. The participant said that there was some setting among people to elect a Dolloi by standing in a queue system. This system changed much later by secret ballot only after the setting up of the District Council and only male were allow to cast vote as followed since time immemorial and even now female were not allow and not possible. Money power also played a big role in the Dolloi election.

Role of the Dolloi on land allotment after land became register private property. He had limited role, only to give recommendation to the District council that this land belongs to that person. Now a day Dolloi doesn't have land. All the land now private property, his recommendation required that this land is belong to a person and selling it to another person.

The Dolloi dorbar is called the Elaka dorbar. From some villages they elect or nominate the headman to be the Elaka member and they used to attend the Elaka dorbar and to get information only regarding how to give No Objection Certificate (NOC) to any company, otherwise they don't have any role to play now a day. Earlier days the entire dispute was settled by the Dolloi and he used to be the final. Now a day the Dolloi doesn't have many role and power to play due to the setting up of the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC). The need of the Dolloi is to perform the traditional puja because he is the chief and had to do with the Langdoh and act as the main head of the puja.

Role and Functions of the Village Headman

Figure 1 show that the Village Headman and other members explained about the working of the dorbar system at Jalaphet village as per people custom and tradition (i.e. Dorbar Chnong). He said firstly, a dorbar was called to elect the Waheh Chnong by raising hands through voice vote. Those who can participate in the dorbar were 15-18 years of age earlier. But now is being raise to 18 years old to be able to participate in the dorbar election. There is no such restriction for the girls/women but mostly only for male. To elect only male can become the members of the dorbar system. The one who secure the majority is elected as village headman from that date and then elect other members following the same procedures like the secretary, chairman and other executive members.

Traditionally the tenure of the dorbar election depends from village to village. The dorbar system is from the previous to the presents days is same what you have seen. Before, the time was not fixed for the elected headman but if he is not doing much or bringing some development to the village community in 1 or 2 years the public will ask the secretary chnong to convene a meeting to recall him. Previously to elect a headman first they look at a person who is working hard and can have a close relation to the public and able to bear all the responsibility. The village headman has the power to issue the residential certificates and the no objection certificates.

Traditionally the village headman has a lot of power as far as land allotment is concern. But now at present-days in some villages they have misused their power by giving land to other then the district council interfered. Now the power and position of the headman also very limited.

The Village Headman also elected by the people in a particular village after they elect the Headman then they has to send his name to the Dolloi's for recommendation and then forwarded to the District council for appointment. The participant said that when the District Council was set up they have changed many things such as by passing the "appointment and succession of chief/headman Act

1959". From those times onwards the District Council kept the power of the Dolloi and Headman with them.

As per their old customary practices the participant explained about that the non-inclusion of women in the dorbar. The men felt that being a lady if she gets a power on par with man then quarrel will be always. Their duty and responsibility was restricted only to look after family affairs and the men collect the property and give in the ladies name to maintain them. Because the men have to fight a war always and can increased their Kingdom by fighting with the help of spear and sword. This property will be kept to her for maintaining because the men may die in the war. Regarding fighting the women is nothing they were powerless. Though we are same rank both men and women but we are separate. To think, manage, hold, control and share of the property women got strong power but regarding doing business and fought a war women are nothing they are powerless. So the Gentleman has to do these things. So for administration purpose men direct the women no need to worry. Men arrange in such a way that women do not bother to involve themselves. Once they are doing like that and accepted then became their custom and tradition and continued to practice. And slowly what men felt that if the women gets chance like men then in can be dangerous also.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Dorbar System

The dorbar system also called as the village courts or customary law courts in the present-days under the purview of the District Council as the members of the dorbar in a particular village automatically becomes the members of the village courts recognised by the District council. Table 2 shows some of the advantages and disadvantages of the dorbar system.

Conclusion

The purpose of the dorbar is to secure the welfare of the village community in a democratic manner. But the village members headed by Waheh Chnong have a high potential to fall prey to bribery as they

are rendering their services free of cost. There are instances where the systems including X, Y, and Z, have misused their power when issuing of residential and no objection certificates to the non-tribals. Identifying some of these loopholes, the local government proposed a bill for codification some of the customary laws by way of implementing the Village Administration Bill, 2014 that was passed for the Jaintia hills. Also, the traditional institutions

are subjected to poor auditing, the lack of monitoring, uneducated members, and the complete absence of women members in the village dorbar. These are some of the drawbacks. With careful monitoring of the village activities, proper auditing the village funds from time to time with proper documentation, and regular meetings to see if schemes are implemented correctly, dorbar system can be a very effective measure.

Table 1: Three Tier System of Traditional Institutions and Local Self-Government

Levels	Before Independence	After Independence
1 st Level	Syiem	ADC
2 nd Level	Dolloi	Dolloi
3 rd Level	Wahch Chnong	Wahch Chnong

Source: Meghalaya Vision Document 2011

Table 2: Advantages and Disadvantages of the Dorbar System

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) If there is any dispute, hearing of the case proceeds very fast. ii) Before judging, the property in question is visited and properly scrutinised, with strong witnesses and village community representation. iii) It allows females member to hear the trial cases. iv) The case can be dis solved in the village courts or at the disputed site and if both parties compromise, the case can be dissolved on its own then and there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Females are not allowed to be a member of the village dorbar (village court). ii) There exists a gender gap. In some cases, the judgment of the village dorbar can be partial. iii) The village headman is very powerful, and has influence over the decisions that are made. There is the possibility that he may exert some influence to favour a party win the disputed case over land or delay the trial case in the village court. iv) The system is not free from bribery. v) The dorbar can't imprison any person.

(Dr. Rikil Chyrmang, Assistant Professor, Centre for Economic Studies and Policies, School of Social Sciences and Policy, Central University of South Bihar and can be contacted at E-mail: rikil@cusb.ac.in, rikilenator@gmail.com or Mob: 9471669379, 09089207021)

The Writer

Dr Ranga Ranjan Das

In contemporary times, attempt has been made to find out the real contributor in the context of Assam. In various areas there is only a single entity whom we can recognize as significant. During the second week of May, 2021 Assam lost the writer, in real sense who enriched the literature of Assam by his untiring efforts over the last five decades or so. Yes, it is none but Homen Borgohain who took his last breath at the age of 89, leaving the earthly existence on May 12. Germination, growth and development of various scholars have taken place in the soil of Assam- there is magic in the wind, water and sky, many intellects were born in the valley of Brahmaputra, who made remarkable contributions in different fields like religion, arts, culture, music, literature, etc. Such genius includes right from Sankardeva, Madhavdeva, Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Bishnu Prasad Rabha, Bhupen Hazarika, Birinchi Kumar Barua, Maheswar Neog, Prafulla Dutta Goswami, and many others. In the field of writing there are many names since the re-establishment of Assamese language during colonial period. Efforts of various scholars and writers during various periods like Jonaki, Abahan, Ramdhenu (magazines of different periods) has made the strong foundation of Assamese language and literature. We know the importance of a language in the identity discourse. Assamese language and literature has been always in the safe hands since colonial period and its' momentum never stopped during post-colonial period. While going through the innumerable publications of various genres of creative literature of Homen Borgohain, it is observed that he is 'the writer' of Assam - who not only brought a new wave in Assamese prose narratives and at the same time redefined 'the ethics of true journalism'.

It is revealed that his narration possess as revealed 'easy flow with elegance, writings shine with the brilliance of realism and progressive liberalism'. His

writings depict multiple issues, subjects and real incidents apart from thought provoking essays pertaining to socio-political life of Assam. His associations with various magazines, weekly and daily newspapers as editor have been instrumental in the field of bold journalism. His life, works, contribution is really a source of inspiration for the new generations of Assam. Apart from editors of the magazines like Nilachal (1968), Samakal, Sutradhar, Kishor (1991), Satxari (1997), GNRC Health, he has been associated with newspapers such as editor Saptahik Nagarik, Lokayat (1980), Ajkal (as north east correspondent), Asom Bani (1993), Dainik Batori, Amar Axom (1997), Niyamiya Barta (2015), and Asomiya Pratidin (as column writer). His voice and wisdom disseminate through the course of print media, though, he raises various contemporary issues and challenges in the platform of electronic media. Interviews as an encore in the popular talk shows 'Kotha Barta' reveal his concern over the burning issues of the north east in general and Assam in particular.

How much one writes in one's lifetime? There are limitations for any human being. Homen Borgohain was really the exception. The quantum of publications of his creativity in different genres of Assamese literature transform him 'the writer' *per se* in extraordinary discourse. His ways of narration, articulation, diverse subjects covered in creativity make him one of the most read authors over the last five decades. His collections of short story, poems and articles, edited volumes, novels, children literature, autobiographies have enriched the volume of Assamese literature. Short story collections include Bivinna Corus (1957), Prem aru Mritiyur Karone (1958), Galpa aru Naxya (1966), Swapna, Smriti Bixad (1967) and Astityar Jyotirmoy Chetana (jointly with Tirtha Phukan). He wrote award winning novel. Besides, Assamese films are also made on the

basis of his novel. His novels include Subala (1963), Tantrik (1967), Kuxilab (1970), Puwar Purabi Nixar Bivaxh (1971, jointly with Nirupama Borgohain), Halodhiya Choraye Baodhan Khai (1973), Pita Putra (1975), Timir Tirtha (1975), Astarag (1986), Matsyagandha (1987), Sauder Puteke Nau Meli Jai (1987), Nixangata (2000), Bixannata (2002) and Adinar Diary (2003). Jahnu Barua, renowned film maker made an Assamese film on his novel Halodhiya Choraye Baodhan Khai that fetch national award in 1988. Besides, he got Sahitya Academy award (1978) for his novel Pita Putra. This novel depicts the scenario of conflict between two different generations. Jumi Das (2020) while bringing a critical discussion on this novel in the 'Journal of Critical reviews' (Vol 7, Issue 6) asserts, 'the wave of western civilization has brought in the clash. The novel has incorporated not only the rural life of pre-independent period but also has shown the political, economic transition of life in the post-independent era. Through the central character, Sivanath, a rich aristocrat, the novelist has laid bare the naked truths and natures of society during the independence. Concerned about caste system, Sivanath is a strong character. The novelist has shown the nature of society during the post-independence period...'. Homen Borgohain is quite conscious about his immediate society. Regarding his another significant novel 'Astarag', Purbalee Gohain (*Reflection of Psychological Naturalism in Homen Borgohain's Novel*) asserts, "Astarag is one such sensitive novel which includes physical, psychological and social directions of aging. In general it is very rare to find such novels in Assamese literature. It is a fine creation which is composed with western ideologies and own experiences of the novelist...the novel is so much rooted to our society and our ideas that it completely loses the essence of western ideologies. Though the subject matter of the novel is naturalism, it primarily focuses on the implementation of the different sides and conflicts of our psychology or the inner world. Author tried to picturize the scenario of the villages of Assam, the struggle of people, their simple lifestyles in a compassionate and sympathetic way in this novel."

His wonderful thought also came as poetic verse.

Haimanti (1987) is the lone collection of poem depicting diverse inner thought. He has been engaged in number of works of narrative discourse emanated from periodic situation and personal experience. His thought provoking essays are streamlined in number of volumes: Bivinna narak (1966), Dhukhar diganta (1970), Jibanar mansitra (1979), Jiggasa (1980), Ananda aru bedanar xandhanot (1981), Swarga aru narak (1987), Etihakhor sakhi (1988), Saptam daxak (1989), Sukh dukh (1992), Pathakar tukabahi (1993), Prayggar sadhana (1994), Jibanar sadhana (1994), Atmadeepo vaba (1996), Kotha barta (1999), Bicitra avigyata aru anuvuti (1999), Jibanar para ami ki bisaru (2001), Ashir dakhakar dastabez (2001) (with Aminur Rahman), Bipadar bandhu (2003), Jiban jiggasa (2003) (with Gitimalika Neog), Kothar murar kotha (2005). Another work is Call girl, Ushyakangkha and Prathom Kalam (2015). Life teaches us a lot. Sharing his experience on life has immense value for the people. He can easily communicate with his readers through his flow of narrations. He suffices the inquisitive mind of the people of Assam by writing his own autobiographies: Atmanuxandhan (1988), Mur Khangbadik jiban (1989), Dhumuha aru Ramdhenu, Part 1 (1997) and Dhumuha aru Ramdhenu, Part 2 (1998). His works as we know in Assamese language. But his work has universal appeal. In order to make his work available for readers world wide, attempt has been made to bring out translated volume. His son Pradipta Borgohain translated some of his short stories and Novellas into English and made a volume: *The Collected works of Homen Borgogain*, published by Amaryllis, an imprint of Manjul Publishing House, New Delhi. Two novellas: the Fisherman's Daughter and the Merchant's son sets sail, apart from short stories like the Storm, the Homecoming, a Servant of the people, Despair, Heroism, the Curtain, the Cowherd, Youth, the Familiar village, the Elephant, Spring in hell and fear is included. The volume describe his work as 'he has built up a corpus of work which is astonishing in its range and variety. Handling urban and rural themes with equal dexterity.....he has pioneered new trends in Assamese literature'. A few lines from the English translation of Fisherman's Daughter: "After the two

men crossed the river to set foot on the path leading to the village, the prowling bands of decrepit mongrels- self-appointed sentinels of the village – started an awful racket with their baying. The village folk who were warming themselves near their own hearths at home, hazarded the following guess for the din: ‘Must be folks from the south bank, visiting kin in all likelihood’”. This piece of translated work reveals how he visualize the rural life near a river bank. His short stories touches diverse colours of life. In the *Homecoming*, he provide a realistic glimpse into the mind of a married man and his stifling existence, and how he slowly learns to cherish what he had always had, provide readers an insightful look into sustaining relationships. In another short story, an aspring politician in his attempts to cheat people is force to have a taste of his own medicine (a Servant of the people), the heart wrenching details of the lonely existence of an old woman (Despair) are of high standard.

The writer has endless contribution to his credit. He has edited several books: Binxha satapdir Asomiya sahitya, Roudra nilima (jointly with Nanda Talukdar), Axomiya galpa sankalan, Part 1, 2 and 3, Malik, Asomiya sahityar buranji, (Part 6), Gaddyar sadhana, Binxha satabdir sandhanot, Asomiya premor kabita (jointly with Karabi Deka Hazarika), Sarat Chandra Singha, Sresta Nirbasita Asomiya prabandha, Part one and two, Sahitya aru Language of Asomiya biswakosh by Prakasan Parixad. He had a clear thought for child and teenage. He had a tendency to provide them necessary support for proper upbringing. His magazine ‘Kishor’ was meant for teen age people. Besides, he wrote several other books: A Aa Ka Kha, Kitap parhar ananda, Amak kitap lage, Manuh huwar gourav, Mur priya manuh, Socrates, Antahin prerona utsa: Lui Pasteur, Adhunik jugar janma kahani, Prativer sangya bisara manuhjan and Benjamin Franqlin. Besides he had taken the initiative for forming Karunadhara, a public charity fund and also establishing branches of Asom Sahitya Sabha in the interior char-chapori areas of Assam.

His immense contribution in the field of literature and journalism made him the President of Asom

Sahitya Sabha in 2001 and fetch a number of awards like Assam Valley Literary award (1992), Lakshinath Phukan award (2000), Jaikrishna Ramdayal Samanya award (2002), Nilamoni Phukan award, Srimanta Sankardev award, Matsendra award and Life time achievement award by Sadin-Pratidin (2019).

The blessed soul was born in December 7, 1932 at Dhakuakhana, the then Undivided Lakhimpur. His father was Indradhar Borgohain and mother, Aita Borgohain. He had early schooling at Lakhimpur. He passed Prabexika exam in 1950 from Dibrugarh Sarkari Balak High School. Later on he came to Guwahati for higher education. In 1952 he passed IA pass from Cotton College. He got degree from the same college taking English as Hons’ in 1955. He cleared Assam Civil service, started service life. Later on he resigned from the service. He got married but last for nine years only. After leaving service, he devoted fully on journalism and writing.

On his heavenly departure, his contribution and irrevocable lost for the state of Assam is remembered and expressed in a editorial entitled ‘*A colossus departs*’: “Writer, journalist and thinker Homen Borgohain passed away, creating a void in the state’s literary and social spheres that would be impossible to fill. The celebrated intellectual strode the state’s social life like a colossus for over five decades, nurturing it with his liberal and progressive humanism. Among the most prolific and successful authors of Assam, he enriched literature with his exceptional creativity and style, creating a niche for others to follow. Indeed he weaved magic with his words in creating a prose style that was as lucid as it was captivating. He often drew from his varied and unique personal experiences to tell tales that shone with the poignancy of humanism, truthfulness and candour- sometimes delving deeper into the innermost recesses of the human mind. A multifaceted writer and critic, he left an indelible imprint on many genre including short story, novel, poetry and autobiography. The inherent beauty which he believed was ingrained in life in spite of its struggles and pains was something that found an outlet through his creative proficiency” (*The Assam Tribune*, May 13, 2021).

The Old Man and the Tiger

Dr. Uzzal Sharma

Once upon a time there was an old man living near a dense forest. One day, when he was cutting reeds for his fence in the jungle, he heard a tiger growling close by. It so happened that at that moment a bird also flew away overhead. The old man, though he was extremely frightened, called after the bird - "Ah! if you had only stopped, I would have taught you the secret of the *ghughu ban*."

And this saying he kept on repeating, so that the tiger said to himself - "What is it that the old man is saying? I must get him to tell me; and in that case I won't even eat him." So he called to the old man - "Look here, old man, what is that about the *ghughu ban*?" But the old man, said not a word and kept on chopping his reeds. The tiger slowly crept up quite close to him, and said to the old man - "If you don't tell me what you are talking about, I will eat you!" But the old man, for all his fear, only said - "You come to my house tomorrow, and I will tell you."

Very early the next morning the tiger went to the old man's house, and when he got there, it being still early morning, the old

man said - "How can I help you, please let me know?" And the tiger replied - "I want to know what you were talking about *ghughu ban* yesterday." In reply the old man said - "I cannot possibly teach you alone. You had better go and get two or three other tigers." And so the tiger went away and returned with two or three of his brethren. In the meanwhile the old man had spread his unthreshed paddy in the yard. Putting his earliest acquaintance first, he tied all the tigers to the post, round which the cattle revolve when they are treading out the grain, and set them to work to tread. But the one in the middle, which was unaccustomed to such labour, cried out in a piteous voice that his head ached, and that he was getting very giddy. But the old man said - "Wait a bit, my friend; you haven't learned yet." And when the tiger complained again, the old man fetched his goad and pricked him sore, so that, giddy and stumbling, he had to go round and round, and when the tiger said - "I shall die at this rate," the old man replied - "You wanted to learn the "*ghughu ban*" yesterday, and unless you endure this trouble, you cannot possibly

learn;" So saying, he pricked the tiger more cruelly. Finally, the tiger said - "If so be, I must be in pain, I must be. But I don't see what it is all about."

Then the old man replied - "This is precisely what they called the *ghughu ban*." Then the tiger said - "I see, I see, now let us go. We have learned our lesson." But the old man said - "Wait a bit, the paddy is nearly trodden out," He however did not stop pricking the tigers for all their entreaties. And when the paddy was all threshed out, the old man began untying their bonds. But before he had finished, the tigers were in such pain that they tore the rope out of his hands and ran away. When they stopped to rest, they saw the old man's rope, and said to one another - "If we do not give the old man his rope again, we shall get into further trouble."

So, after much debate, the first tiger was deputed to take it back.

Trembling with fear and pain in every limb, the first tiger went close to the old man's house and offered him his rope. But the old man said - "It is night, and I am in bed. I can't come out. Put the

rope in at the window.” So the tiger put it on his tail and thrust it in at the window. But the old man was waiting with his knife ready in his hands and cut the tiger’s tail off. On which the tiger howled with pain and ran away as far as he could.. But the old man shouted after him - “You may run as far as you like,

but my brother is after you, and will catch you soon.” Hearing this the tiger ran faster than ever. At last, he stopped to rest near a cool pool of water, and, not seeing the old man’s brother, dipped the wounded stump of his tail into the pool. But a crab, which dwelt in that pool, nipped the stump of his tail; and

the tiger cried out and thought that the old man’s brother must have caught him. He again ran for his life through the jungle. He continued to run till the crab got knocked down by the trees and shrubs on his path. Only then he felt relieved, regained his breath and rewsted.

(Contd. from Page 16)

Measurement of Time: East vis-a-vis West

on various planets is different.

Time is large and small. We get indications of this in our scriptures. There is a story in the *Puranas* that *Rewati*, the daughter of King *Raimataka*, was very tall. So, it was difficult to find a suitable bridegroom for her. For a solution, the king took her to *Brahmalok* with the power of yoga. When he reached there, a *Gandharva gaan* (Diving Song) was going on. So, he waited for some time. When the *gaan* was over, Brahma saw the king and asked him how he had come there? The king asked him if he had made any groom for his daughter. Brahma laughed out aloud and said, “While you were here, listening to the *gaan* 27 *chaturyugis* have already passed on earth and the 28th,

Dwaapar is about to finish. Go back and marry her off to *Balaram*, the brother of Krishna.” He also said that it was good that he had brought *Rewati* with him because now, she had not grown older. This story shows the difference in time if one goes at great speed from the earth to *Brahmalok*. Even the modern scientists have said that if a person travels in a vehicle which runs at a speed a little less than light, then the process of ageing will be virtually still.. If a 10-year-old human being goes in such a vehicle to the Andromeda Galaxy and returns, then his age will increase by only 56 years, whereas 40 lakh years will have elapsed on earth during that period.

In the *Yogavashishtha* and other

scriptures, one finds descriptions of going back into time and experiencing previous births and going into the future too, through *Yoga sadhana*.

In this context, George Gamoa of the Western world has written an interesting poem in his book “One, Two, Three, Infinity”

“There was a young girl named Miss Bright,

Who could travel much faster than light.

She departed one day

In an Einstein way

And came back on the previous night.

(Source: From the book ‘India’s Glorious Scientific Tradition’ authored by S Bri Suresh Soni, Delhi.)



MASKED DANCES OF SIKKIM

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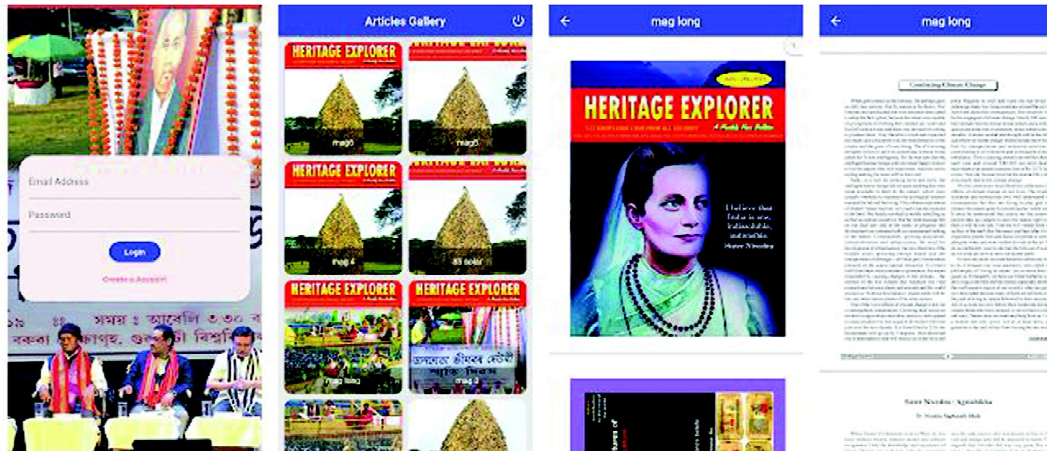
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