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Indian

philosophical congress

52 nd session



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Souvenir

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52ND SESSION

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS

29 OCTOBER TO 1 NOVEMBER 1977

GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

Editorial Board

Dr D. P. Barooah (Editor)

Dr P. D. Goswami

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Gauhati University
Gauhati-781 014

Published on :

29 October 1977

MAMARAM COLLEGE LIBRARY
BANGALORE-29.

20 November

Editor :

Dr D. P. Barooah

Publisher :

Sri Narendra Nath Dutta
for Editorial Board

Printer :

Sri Prafulla Dawka

Printed at

Gauhati University Press,
Gauhati-781014
Assam

Cover design by

Sri Naba Kumar Choudhury

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*Press Secretary to the President
Rashtrapati Bhavan
New Delhi-110004
India*

No. F.2-M/77

September 30, 1977.

MESSAGE

Dear Shri Kutty,

Please refer to your letter of the 22nd September, 1977. The President of India desires me to convey his best wishes for the success of the 52nd Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- A. M. Abdul Hamid



Prime Minister's Office
New Delhi-110011

Information Adviser

September 29, 1977

MESSAGE

Dear Sir,

The Prime Minister thanks you for your letter. He sends his good wishes for the success of the 52nd session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, which is being organised by the Gauhati University, from October 29 to November 1, 1977.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/- H. Y. Sharada Prasad



*Minister of Education & Social Welfare
Government of India
New Delhi*

Dr. P. C. Chunder

September 30, 1977

MESSAGE

I am glad to learn that the 52nd session of the Indian Philosophical Congress is being held under the auspices of the Gauhati University, Gauhati from October 29 to November 1, 1977.

I send my good wishes on the occasion.

Sd/- Dr. P. C. Chunder



Ministry of Education
Government of India
New Delhi

Dr. K. R. Narayanaiah
September 20, 1957

MESSAGE

I am glad to learn that the 52nd session of
the Indian Philosophical Congress is being held
under the auspices of the Central University
Gowhat from October 22 to November 1, 1957.
I send my good wishes on its occasion.

Yours faithfully,
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar



RAJ BHAVAN
SHILLONG
October 13, 1977.

MESSAGE

I am glad to learn that the Reception Committee for the 52nd Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, to be held at the Gauhati University, has decided to bring out a souvenir on the occasion. The Congress will be a major event in the intellectual and cultural life of the north-eastern region, and it is in the fitness of things that there should be a memento of the occasion in the form of a souvenir.

Philosophy may not now have its wide original meaning, encompassing various intellectual disciplines and devoted to the pursuit of wisdom, and of knowledge, practical and theoretical of things and their causes, though the original concept is still reflected in a Doctorate in a variety of subjects continuing to carry the designation, Doctor of Philosophy. But even in the more restricted sense now generally accepted, philosophy continues to be concerned with much that is of fundamental importance in human life : with ultimate reality, and the working of the human mind ; with moral values, and with basic assumptions of social and political organisations. It still explores the nature and goodness, beauty, truth and knowledge.

We have a great tradition of philosophical thought and studies, and I believe that the ensuing Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress will contribute towards the further enrichment of that tradition. All the world religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, with their associated philosophies, are represented in this part of the country. There are, in addition, certain tribal religions and value-systems in this region which too are a precious part of our heritage, and deserve a degree of attention which they have not received so far, but in which I hope this Session of the Congress will stimulate greater interest.

While wishing the Session all success, may I express the hope that it will give some thought to the need for a critical examination of the assumptions and values of Indian life today ?

Sd/- L. P. SINGH



*Vice-Chancellor
Gauhati University
Gauhati-781014*

October 14, 1977

MESSAGE

I am glad that the authorities of the Indian Philosophical Congress have given us the privilege of receiving delegates to the 52nd Session on the Gauhati University campus. The Session is being held with the co-operation of the concerned State Governments and academic bodies. This Souvenir has been published to mark the happy occasion of the session of the Indian Philosophical Congress in this eastern part of our country. I extend my best wishes for the success of the deliberations during sessions of the Congress.

Sd/ Dr. H. K. Baruah



*Chief Minister
Manipur*

Imphal the 29th Sept. '77

MESSAGE

I am happy to learn that the 52nd Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress will be held under the auspices of the Gauhati University from 29th October to 1st November, 1977 along with the publication of a Souvenir on the Session.

My best wishes for the success of the Session.

Sd/ Yangmasho Shaiza



CHIEF MINISTER ASSAM

Assam Sachivalaya,
Gauhati-781 006,
October 26, 1977.

MESSAGE

Intellectual and imaginative power is the most precious of human qualities. We live in a world of ideas which have grown in course of the endless pursuit into the realm of unknown. The history of civilisation in fact follows the history of the development of ideas as a result of the endless interaction between the happening of history and social situations and the human thinking.

Philosophy, which has a prominent role in the growth of knowledge, does not lead to a denial of social responsibilities. New questions emerge in our forward march which demand new approaches. Our history is replete with climaxes in the world of thought and ideas and they are no less great milestones than the political, economic and social revolutions.

Philosophy is not assigned a passive role as a common notion indicates. Human history needs philosophical scrutiny. We cannot dismiss history as simply a chronicle of observed happenings nor human action can be brought under general formulas, historical happenings are unique events in unique situation.

The human plunge into the realm of unknown never ends. In the process of his ever continuing quest, man has definitely unfurled new frontiers but yet more remains concealed in the womb of mysteries. Great thinkers and philosophers all through human history have carried on with the stupendous and significant task of solving the mysteries and revealing the unknown. The role of our thinkers in enriching our store of knowledge is indeed great and noble.

I hope the renowned thinkers and philosophers of the country who have gathered in this ancient seat of learning for the Indian Philosophical Congress, will stimulate in this part of the country a meaningful love for knowledge and truth.

Sd/ Sarat Chandra Sinha

A message was also received from Assam's Education Minister thanking the organisers for the 'noble venture' of publishing the Souvenir.

—Editor

SOME ASPECTS OF ASSAM VAISHNAVISM OF SANKARDEVA

by

K. C. Das

Assam Vaishnavism, variously various forms of animism, fetishism called Mahapurusiya dharma, Eksha- and totemism. Such wide differences raniya dharma, Bhagavati dharma etc. in faith gave rise to differences in ethics was founded by Mahapurusha Sankar- cal ideas and ideals, social ethos and deva, who was born in 1449 A.D. in customs. Amidst such a social and spiritual Bardowa or Vatadrava in Nowgong ritual back-ground, Sankardava spent district. His parents Kusumbar Bhu- his early childhood, and despite all yan and Satyasandhya were Kayastha reverses coming upon his early career, by caste and descendents of the illus- his extraordinary genius and fore- tritious Barabhuyan. Thus Sankardeva sight, wisdom and devotism enabled was older than both Vallabhacharya, him to formulate a true religion of the founder of Shuddhadvaita in the humanity and to usher in an age of south and also Chaitanyadeva, the renaissance in Assam.

founder of Bengal Vaishnavism, other Sankardeva's towering persona- wise known as Achintyabhedabheda lity bridged, as it were, earth and or identity-in-difference. Bengal Vai heaven. He was at first householder shnavism is also called Madhava- and married twice without being sub- Gaudiya school, as it was said to be jected to the allurements of the flesh associated with Madhivism. The chie or mundane bondage. He had exqui- current of Assam Vaishnavism wa- site beauty, health and vigour of the formulated and worked out by San- physique and was gifted with rare kardeva and his worthy disciple Shr qualities of head and heart, and those Madhavdeva, while its minor branche sterling qualities of mind and body or sects were founded by Damodar- enabled him to live for about six score deva, Harideva, Bhattadeva and other years inspite of the life-long stress bearing the respective names of their and strain of mental and physical founders. It is evident from the gene- labour. Sankardeva's mission was to alogical and biographical evidences reawaken spiritual consciousness in that Sankardeva's forefathers were men, to teach dharma as the term con- followers of either Saivism or Shakt- notes, to recover social justice and ism, which were prevalent in this land equality and to liberate humanity from long time past. In this land of here and hereafter from ignorance and variety of people living in backward suffering. His prodigies of childhood, uncommon creative genius, inborn uncommon creative genius, inborn

spiritual power and experience, profound wisdom and knowledge made him worthy of his mission. He was well-versed in Indian thought and culture and was adept in various fine arts. He with a host of disciples headed by Sri Madhavdev rejuvenated and gave a new orientation to the linguistic and cultural life of Assam and established kirtanghars and village Namghar the centres of religious and social life of the people. These institutions are indeed unique in their kind.

Sankardev's mission was to formulate a practical religion for the people of the Kali age who are naturally unfit for the practice of higher religions demanding higher virtues of head and heart. He, therefore restrained himself from logical disputations and philosophical controversies showing his affiliation into any of the systems of philosophy. He appeared to have accepted the religious views of the Bhagavat purana and the essence of the upanisadic teachings presented in that purana. Unlike other sects of Vaishnavism the Mahapurusiya sect of Assam and Bengal Vaishnavism of Sri Chaitanya desisted from writing philosophical commentaries or building up any philosophical system or school. The works of Sri Sankardeva and Madhavdeva contain some of the essential ideas and tenets pertaining to Advaita Vedanta, Samkhya-yoga, the Gita etc. in relevant places to add to the weight and fertility of the discussion. It does not seem proper to call Assam Vaishnavism either Advaita Vedantic or Vishistadvaitic on the basis of scattered and occasional references under different contexts. The

reliability on the authority of the Bhagavat purana was stated clearly by both Sankardeva and Madhavdeva.

'cari veda astadasha
purana yateka Sastra
parama vedanta Bhagavata'.

(Sankardeva)

The Bhagavata is the highest vedanta among the four vedas, eighteen puranas and other scriptures.

In his 'Bhakti Ratnakara', Sankardeva further states clearly the essence of his view :

Ekam Sastram Devakiputra geetam
Eko devo Devakiputra eva'.

Karmapyekam tasya devasya seva,
Mantashyekah tasya devasya nama'.

(Sankardeva)

scripture is only one sung by the son of Devaki, God is indeed one, the son of Devaki, the work also is one i.e. his worship and chanting of His name is the only mantra.

Sankardeva's monotheism and his belief in the authority of the Bhagavata are expressed in the above verse in unambiguous term. Sankardeva did not think it worthwhile either to write a commentary on the Vedanta sutra or on the Bhagavata, but he showed his indebtedness to the commentary of Sreedharswami. He consciously desisted himself from philosophical disputations or logical argumentation because such mental attitude was considered detrimental towards religious belief and one-pointed devotion. He put into his religious philosophy most of the essences of Vedanta, Samkhya, yoga and upanisadic thoughts refraining himself at the same time from an attempt to develop eclectic philosophy. His devotional cult seems to combine

absolute surrender to the Lord as advocated by the Gita, association with the devotees as taught by Bhagavat-gita and nama-dharma from Padma Purana.

Sankardeva established superiority of whole-hearted devotion over the jnana (knowledge) and karma (religious rites and performances). Spiritual knowledge and fruits of vedic rites and religious performances are attained in due course through intense devotion and absolute surrender to the Divine will. The question of fitness (adhikaritva) is not there in devotion, and every individual irrespective of caste, creed and profession can be true devotee of God. Sankardeva wrote this in emphatically :

'yar yena mati kare vedak vyakhyan nija dharma bhakatik tyaji vaje an'. people interpret the Vedas according to one's own interest and predilections and devotes oneself to Something leaving aside his own religion of devotion. Madhavadeva also writes denouncing karma kanda that was highly prevalent during their time. He wrote thus :

'Karmata vishvasa yar hiyate thakante Hari atishaya dura honta tara'. God goes too far from him who has faith in religious rites (karma) leaving aside God as his indwelling spirit.

God as the supreme object of religion is truly transcendent, formless and devoid of qualities. But the devotees impose upon the nameless and formless Divine Being numerous names and forms and realise pure bliss and Divine mercy through devotion and self-surrender. This was clearly stated by Sankardeva thus :

'Tapa japa Sannyasa parama mahadane, napawe amak sakhi yoga mahajnane kewale bhakati eke moka kare vasya'.

'My friend, I am beyond reach of meditation, japa, renunciation, great charity, yoga and profound knowledge, but absolute devotion alone can conquer Me'. To Sankardeva devotion (bhakti) is the essence of religion, and pointed devotion to the supreme Being as the basis of religion was taught by most of the religious teachers of the world and the Bhagavat Purana and the Gita. Without devotion, knowledge becomes dry and impotent. Spiritual knowledge dawns in devotion and is sustained and nourished by selfless devotion to Godhead. Jnana-yoga, Karma-yoga and Bhakti-yoga all these have a common goal and their aim is to help self-realisation and attainment of the summum bonum. But for the people of our age with inadequate spiritual knowledge and with impure heart, there can be no other suitable and simpler religion other than chanting the names of God and serving Him with selfless devotion and absolute renunciation. It is written in Nama-ghosa by Madhadeva :

'Hari guna kirtana Kalir nija dharma, janivaha shamasta sastrara marma'.

The religion for the age of Kali is to devote oneself to chanting the qualities of God and this indeed is the essence of all religions scriptures. Sankardeva was against image-worship, but he did not prohibit either concentrating on mental image of Lord Krishna at the time of prayer by the

devotee or considering each and every living creatures outside as the living embodiment of Godhead. He was a believer in the incarnations of God and described the twenty four incarnates stating their respective missions, among whom ten were held to be the chief incarnates. Madhavdeva in his 'Namghosa' made a mention of them at the beginning of his work in the following verses :

'Matsya kurma Narasingha
Vamana Parasuram
Haliram Varaha Srirama,
Buddha Kalki Name dasha
akriti dharisa Krishna
pawe tayu karoho pranama'.

Oh, Lord Krishna, I offer my salutations at Thy feet, who incarnated in the forms of Fish, Tortoise, Man-lion Dwarf, Parasuram, Halirama (Volorama), Boar, Ramchandra, Buddha and Kalki bearing these ten names and forms respectively.

God incarnates for the good of the universe and for the maintenance of justice and order. Incarnation is said to be a sort of 'lila' on the part of the Divine Being to bring to light the real nature of the soul. This was expressed by Madhavadeva in his 'Namghosa' :

'Parama durvodha atmatattva
tara jnana arthe Hari yata
lila avatar dhara tumi Krpamaya'.

Oh Lord, you appear as so many incarnates as if through Divine sport to reveal the real knowledge of the soul which is highly difficult to attain.

Madhavdeva also writes in another context :

'Bhagavata bhaktiyakta
purusar atmabodha
Madhava prasade milay,

Krishna krpate tewe

gusay samsar bhaya

ehimana Gita nirnaya'.

The knowledge of the self is attained by a person devoted to God through Divine grace and the fear of mundane bondage is removed only through the grace of Lord Krishna is also the teaching of the Gita.

Assam Vaishnavism strictly prohibited worship of many gods and goddesses and taught only devotion to one Supreme Being. Sankardeva firmly believed that the Absolute Being only is pure consciousness, and the rest are all in a way material in character (jada). Whole-hearted devotion and absolute renunciation to one supreme Being that is pure consciousness is the essence of religion.

Vaishnavism of Sankardeva is indeed a religion in true sense of the term. It aims at spiritual progress of the individual and welfare of the society by awakening spiritual consciousness in man inculcating equality, fraternity and service to all living beings. Religion is not confined to the places of worship, but it is the truest way of thought, feeling and action.

Sankardeva's tenets of religion were applied to social reform and welfare of society. He fought time-worn prejudices of caste, creed and religion that brought about division among people and caused mutual hatred and ill feeling and tried to restore cohesion and good-will among men through the light of religion and spiritual consciousness. His disciples belonged to all castes, religions and various social strata. He had firm conviction in equality of all creatures and endeavoured to infuse into all men the sense of jus-

tice, desire for pursuit of truth and spirit of rendering services to God and men as citizens of a Divine kingdom. He emphasised divinity of all created beings in various ways :

'kukkura, gardabha chandaloro
atma Ram
Ehi vuli savakaho kariva pranam'.

Even a dog, an ass and a chandala's souls are forms of God and with this idea in mind, show respect to all. Again in another context it is written :

Isha rupe Hari Seva ghathe vaithapa

Yaishana gagana viyapi (Bargeet).

Like space pervading in every pot, Oh Lord, Thou residest in every being as the indwelling spirit.

As the mighty Brahmaputra is flowing with its tributaries through the heart of this state right into the sea, so also Sreemanta Sankara and his host of worthy disciples through words, deeds and writings brought down namadharma for the welfare of humanity and nourish mankind with spiritual consciousness, Sankardeva's towering personality, his creative genius, his spiritual wisdom and insight together with his mastery of various branches of fine arts enabled him to build up various religious and cultural institutions for individual and social progress.

Sankardeva and among his disciples Madhavdeva were the authors of large Vaishnava literature consisting of prose, poetry, drama, philosophical treatises, noble numbers (bargeet), etc. which possess unique style, technique

and mode of expression. Sankardeva himself was the author of large number of books, which are eloquent of his uncommon genius for creative art. His contributions to spiritual, cultural and social life of the people of Assam in particular are beyond measure. The Kirtanghars besides being the places of prayer and religious rites are the noble specimens of art and architecture. The village Namghars besides being religious churches indeed function as the nerve centres of the life of the villages. The Bargeets believed to be twelve score in number are so attractive in their rhythm and melody that they are in the lips of the cowherd children in the fields as well as the devotional prayers of the devotees. These celestial songs delight the devotees, console the sick and the grief-stricken, serve as lullabies and bring in serenity of atmosphere in religious, social and cultural functions.

The dramas and the Bhaonas are a class of unique piece of art in respect of their style, technique, dances, musical instruments etc. It was indeed the age of renaissance in the history of Assam. Vaishnava literature is considered as the crown of the literary heritage of Assam.

Sankardeva was indeed an epoch-maker and his period goes down in history as the Age of Sankara or of Vaishnavism. He is adored by the people of this state in general and by his disciples in particular as an incarnate.

Philosophically Speaking !

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FOLKLORE AND PHILOSOPHY

by

Praphulladatta Goswami

The Soviet author and thinker Maxim Gorki did not find pessimism in folklore, for him folklore rather held up an assurance of triumph. Folklore—tales, songs, sayings, to mention the chief types of it—has an oral existence and is the creation of rural folk, often illiterate. It has to be admitted, of course, that only the brighter few create these songs and tales, to be adopted later by the entire community. The tales are used to amuse, explain or to educate. The songs are suited to various occasions, like pujas, seasonal festivals and springtime yearning for a life partner. The sayings are a body of comments on aspects of conduct and life's various predicaments.

In folk or rural societies the pattern of culture is more harmonious than in large sprawling communities. The individual who participates fully in all co-operative activities in such societies also shows more clearly the signs of his group membership. Individual behaviour in a rural society is specially dominated by folkways—"customs held to with much momentum but with incomplete rationality".

It is because folklore is a typical product of rural societies—not that urban societies have no folklore—it is possible to draw certain fairly valid conclusions about the behaviour and

outlook of the people who nourish such folklore. It is from a consideration such as this that Maxim Gorki was led to make his observations on the virtues of folklore. Gorki stressed the fact that "pessimism is entirely foreign to folklore, despite the fact the creators of folklore lived a hard life : their bitter drudgery was robbed of all meaning by their exploiters, while in private life they were disfranchised among themselves".*

Gorki bolstered his argument by referring to heroes in folklores, where even the simpleton, despised by everyone, comes out triumphant in the end. On the other hand, the conquering hero, the trickster hero, he characterises as feudal and bourgeois. A facile explanation seems to come easy to a politically orientated mind.

One finds the simpleton as well as the trickster in Assamese folktales and both are equally relished by the child or the adult. Admitting that even a fool can be lucky and successful—in spite of the apparent irrationality of the situation, can we take the trickster to be introduced from the outside to set an example of exploitation dominance? The trickster is a universal character. "In South Africa it is the Hare whose cunning works bigger but duller-witted animals, in North America the part is assigned to Coyote, to

ing" (Robert Lowie). The trickster as folklorists point out, is sometimes a culture hero, teaching or giving people certain arts and crafts, though he is a type by himself. His trickery is amoral, but amusing, and even the most primitive social group has such a fictional character, either human or animal. Among animals, the fox is an Indian example. In Assam, the fox, the monkey, and the bat are all trickster characters. The tiger is a fool, but he does not triumph like Gorki's simpleton hero.

Because one happens to enjoy a trickster tale it is no indication that one has no sense of ethics. Do moral tales persuade people to be honest and fair? It is too easy to generalize. Tales, specially *Marchen* or wonder tales, lead us into a world where our daily troubles and conflicts no longer worry us. They depend for their inspiration in a fantasy world and are in a way product of the intellect, rather than the feelings. Songs, on the other hand, have their source in the region of feelings and are more revelative of social attitudes. Do they hold up ideals of hopefulness and confidence.

A fair number of folksongs have devotion as their motif. A sense of surrender to some god or goddess, like Vishnu or Mother Small-pox, characterise some of these songs. Whether such songs indicate a spirit of hopefulness and trust or abject surrender depends on how one interprets them. Perhaps a sense of fear is evident in the songs to the small-pox goddess.

Maxim Gorki, it is understandable, has not much to speak for religion which fosters such attitudes. These songs have no system of thought, they rather express just feelings.

Another class of religious songs, known as *deh-bichar* (consideration of the body), has the motif of life-negation, to use a term employed by the German thinker Dr. Schweitzer while discussing trends of Indian thought. These songs declare that the material body has no value, no permanence, therefore it is wiser to devote oneself to the pursuit of the Super-soul. These songs enshrine a system of thought, however simple it may be, but their spirit suggests a pessimistic outlook.

O my mind, you build a house and think of the door,

You haven't got a house but weep for others.

The idea is : it is no use working for one's property and family, it is more worthwhile to think of the resting place of one's soul (individual soul).

To come to songs which depend more closely on the feelings, songs that indicate yearning for a life-mate, and which hardly allow the intervention of the thinking mind, we have the well known *Bihu-nam**. These quadrains, sung at the springtime Bihu festival, constitute superb poetry, with striking images and considerable suggestive power. Bihu songs describe beauty and express a longing for the lover or sweetheart. The other aspect of yearning is sorrow and frus-

*Speech at the Congress of Writers, 1934; printed in India as *Problems of Soviet Literature*, undated, p.p. 12.

* See P. Goswami, *The Springtime Bihu of Assam*, 1966.

tration when the lover fails to achieve his objective. Some of these songs, obviously, reflect various aspects of domestic and social life. There are, however, few songs that clearly suggest a sense of assurance and hopefulness. The following song, striking for its poetic beauty, seems to be almost an exception :

In my heart I have cherished a desire for you
in my loins I have stored strength
to my feet I have tied the wings of the bumblebee
the outcome of my venture I leave to Fate.

As it seems, songs that enshrine feelings of assurance and confidence are fewer than other sorts. This is another instance which suggests an exception :

A flowered towel shall I weave for you, dear
you will go and take part in the Bihu festivity,
a waistband of silk shall I weave for you, dear
you will go and drive away the enemy.

If one wanted to draw up a 'philosophy' from these songs, the philosophy would veer more towards life-negation than life-assertion. The folk mind knows that love and marriage are not wholly in the hands of man. People are not unaware of the entity known as Fate. Fate and God are often indistinguishable, as in these two Miri songs :

If Fate does not mean our union,
then after death
he will grow two grasses in the cemetery and put us together.
If the forehead on which Fate writes

were like the slate
and pencil, I would erase the words
written by Fate
and myself write there.

In reverses Fate may serve even as a standby to console oneself with, as in this Bihu song :

Alas, O Fate, determiner of one's destiny
well did you determine,
I cannot convince my unconvinced mind

I myself have become my undoing.
Again :

It's Fate who creates, it's he who preserves
one depends upon him,
if you and I are fated to pair
he alone will make our nest.

Occasionally, however, a hedonistic attitude seems to be evident : if things are not under our control and if happiness is so uncertain, come, let us make the best of what we have :

First God created the world
then he created the creatures,
the same God make love
why should not we ?
Again and again do we sport
we sport as long as we live,
do we at death ?

Did not Omar Khayyam in the same vein argue ?

"Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend.
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer,
and—sans End".

This attitude can be construed as cynical as well ; what a life of perpetual struggle leads to can be illustrated by a song from the Chhattisgarh area :

"In hunger have we foregotten the dadariya and the karma

In poverty did we lose our dance,
Such a burden has life become to us
Even in youth we don't have cravings of love". *

Such a depressing feeling is not quite rare even in Bihu songs.

A pessimistic outlook is evident even in a ballad. In Kalikalar Geet, recorded in Upper Assam some four decades ago, the popular philosopher bemoans the evils of the age in this vein : The Iron Age is now grown up, many unnatural happenings are setting the world topsy-turvy, man has grown stunted, so quickly has the death-faced road (the railway) been laid that the temple of Kamakhya is now only a night's distance, one rope (the telegraph) has tied up the world. The balladist now turns prophetic : The living goddess (Kamakhya) will lose her potency, caste considerations will disappear, all the people will fight and destroy themselves, twelve (many) suns will burn up the earth, untimely rain will cause floods and men will drown.

The balladist's attitude is one of disillusion at the changes brought about by technology ; he seems to prefer the status quo, the past, and the prophecy that he makes about the future is almost of the nature of a curse. The attitude is negative but for the hope that he raises at the end—that God Krishna would once again establish the Truth and re-create the world. The silver lining, however, is faint.

Folklore is many-sided and it indicates attitudes which are also various. Even then, the general temper of most of the material seems to be rather the expression of a life which is hard and full of struggle. If the wonder tales of tricksters and simpletons regale us, we perhaps seek in them an escape from the hard realities of life and perform by proxy what we dare not do in actual life. The necessity of such tales is psychological.

Proverbs and maxims constitute a significant section of folklore. They have to say a lot on, for instance, fair play, truthfulness, aberrant character, value of hard work, and sufferings caused by poverty. They are the product of reflection and have considerable value in any social study. At one time rural folk were rather tolerant of the hard life they had to lead because they had been conditioned by circumstances to be such, but it is not true that they did not feel the disadvantages brought about by the want of means or know that many was a way to success and power. Look at these illustrations :

He who has money has strength.

Money is at the bottom of religion.

If you have no money, you have to lose your caste

If your money increases, your mind also thrives.

If one is poor one is dirty, one's wife does not see

any good in one, one's relative does not accost one

in the road lest he has to give something by way of help.

* S. C. Dube, *Field Songs of Chhattisgarh*, p. 33.

It is the poor that appreciate the misery of the poor.

To beg of the blood-sucker is to cry in the wilderness.

To conclude now, do rural people as evidenced by their folklore have any philosophy worth the name? I have derived directly from religious scriptures, but to such compositions that are entirely popular and live by word of mouth. As it seems, the folk have

a sense of reality and it is the realization of their hard life which prompts them to escape into the fanciful region of the wonder tale, or, on the other hand, make them console themselves with thoughts of Fate. They, however, possess a sense of ethical values, and trust in these values might be construed as something which is reassuring and which raises the expectation of the victory of truth and justice.

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A NOTE ON THE REAL ISSUE BETWEEN THE METAPHYSICIAN AND THE ANTI-METAPHYSICIAN

by
M. K. Kutty

Philosophy, whatever else it is, is a search for truth. In this sense philosophy and science are similar. Their main difference, however, is that while philosophy is concerned with absolute explanations, science is concerned only with empirical explanations of our experiences.

From the time man emerged as a rational being he has been in search of truth. The fact that this search still continues only shows that man has not reached the goal of his philosophising. The attainment of truth is the end of philosophy, literally and figuratively.

As the philosophical enquiry is conducted by individuals who are different in their intellectual endowments and attainments, it is natural that there are differences in their explanations. Man is not a machine producing identical results. Sometimes one man's explanation goes against another's. As thinking man cannot remain satisfied with apparently opposed solutions, he tries to find out the best of solutions. In this respect the philosopher is like a judge who cannot stop enquiring till he gets the correct explanation regarding a case before him which satisfies him. Of course another judge may find this explanation to be unconvincing. However

there is a finality in these decisions, in the sense that they are taken to be correct when they are made. The case is the same about philosophical solutions also. When a philosopher gives an explanation he accepts it as the best explanation. However a true philosopher must be willing to listen when another exposes the defects in his explanation.

When different philosophers give different explanations philosophical controversies arise. The presence of controversies is not a defect but a sign of the dynamism of philosophy. It is the business of the philosopher to resolve such controversies and suggest better solutions till we get the best.

One important controversy in contemporary philosophy is between the metaphysician and the anti-metaphysician. While metaphysicians accept the validity and meaning of metaphysics some anti-metaphysicians outrightly reject the contention of the metaphysician. They maintain that metaphysics is due to an illusion, linguistic or otherwise, having no genuine purpose to serve. Hence they want the elimination of metaphysics from philosophy.¹ The logical positivists come under this category. Their interest is not to have a rival metaphysical theory of their own

but to show that any attempt to have a metaphysical theory is bound to fail from the start. However the attitude of all the anti-metaphysicians towards metaphysics is not the same. Some so called anti-metaphysicians object to only specific doctrines of the metaphysician. There is no blanket rejection of metaphysics. While opposing metaphysics they propose their own theory. Bradley calls such anti-metaphysicians as brother metaphysicians having a rival theory of first principles. 2 The materialists can be brought under this group.

If we examine the issues involved in metaphysician-anti-metaphysician controversy we come across many apparently different problems. There is the problem of the meaning of meaning. The meaning of metaphysics is itself controversial. There is the question of the means of knowing etc. etc. But if we closely examine the controversy we can find that there is only one fundamental question at issue. The question is : Can intuition be a valid means of knowing ? If the question is answered in the affirmative, then metaphysics becomes valid. Otherwise it becomes meaningless.

This contention could be explained by one or two examples. Take the question of meaning. I will consider only the Logical Positivists' view here because they are the most consistent anti-metaphysicians. According to Logical positivists a statement is meaningful only if it is verifiable in experience, at least in principle. 3 By limiting the meaning of 'experience' to sense experience only, the Logical positivists can show that metaphysical statements are not verifiable and

hence meaningless. Now some questions can be raised against the Logical positivists. Why should we take 'experience' to mean only sense experience ? Is it philosophical to limit arbitrarily the meaning of a word to suit the convenience of any system or view-point ? If we allow one to use words as one likes, is it not proper that this right must be allowed to others also ? In other words, the metaphysician also must be allowed to use the word 'experience' in a sense to suit his purpose. If this is allowed then the metaphysician can show that metaphysical statements, though devoid of empirical meaning, can have some meaning. For example, the metaphysician can show that these statements refer to objects experienced in intuition and hence they have meaning to those who have these experiences. The Logical Positivists, by denying all experiences other than sense experience, summarily reject intuitive experiences on the ground that they are not genuine experiences and the claim to have intuitive experiences is not verifiable in sense experience. But they forget that intuitive experiences are entirely different from sense experiences and hence their verifiability in sense experience is out of question.

There is a tendency among some of them to identify intuition with imagination or hallucination. 5 But all these must be taken as wrong, for intuition is not imagination. What is imagined is not taken to be true ; but what is intuitively given is taken as true. It is certainty that makes an experience an intuitive experience. So the fundamental mistake of the Logical Positivists lies in their failure to

understand the real nature of intuition. Thus the fundamental problem is whether intuition can be accepted as a means of knowing or not.

The same result will be achieved if we examine the controversy about the meaning of metaphysics also. The anti-metaphysician defines metaphysics as something dealing with transcendent reality. ⁶ The precise meaning of 'transcendent realities' is not given. If we ignore intuition for the time being and confine our explanation to sense experience and thinking then transcendent realities may mean realities transcending sense experience or thinking. The latter meaning cannot be accepted because if something transcends thought there can be no talk about it. The alternative is to take it to mean realities transcending sense experience. Regarding the acceptance of this meaning there is no controversy between the Logical Positivist and the metaphysician. But when the anti-metaphysician tries to explain metaphysical entities as products of intuition or hallucination or even thinking only, then controversies start. The metaphysician cannot accept the Logical Positivists' interpretation of metaphysical entities because he takes them as real. As sense experience cannot be the source of our experience of these entities they are taken to be given in intuition. There is another problem related to this. From thinking alone we cannot explain metaphysical ideas. Thought by itself does not create a new idea. This will be clear if we try to formulate a new idea which has no reference to experience. ⁷ I think we cannot have such an idea. This shows

that metaphysical ideas must have a source in our experience. If sense experience cannot explain them then we have to accept some other experience.

This 'other experience' is what some metaphysicians call intuition. As the Logical Positivist — anti-metaphysician is not willing to accept this on account of his bias in favour of science, he brands intuition as hallucination or imagination, and metaphysical ideas, being the product of these experiences as nonsense. But there is a point which the positivists also must concede. They must accept that the metaphysical ideas have some meaning even if they cannot give literal meanings of them. Otherwise they also cannot use them. The central idea of the anti-metaphysician's view is the denial of intuition. When they find difficulty in denying intuition, they try to misrepresent the nature of intuition to cover up their difficulties. ⁸

We may examine any other problem in the controversy between metaphysician and the anti-metaphysician, but ultimately we will be led to the problem of intuition suggesting that the central issue in the controversy is intuition. Probably the anti-metaphysician knows that the acceptance of intuition is detrimental to his anti-metaphysical stand. It is interesting to note from a reading of the history of philosophy that there is a close relation between intuition and metaphysics. All those philosophers who accepted intuition as a valid means of knowing were metaphysicians and all those who denied intuition were anti-metaphysians, for example, Spinoza and Hume. Kant's position is unique because he cannot be brought under

any of the two categories. He was both metaphysician and anti-metaphysician and in another sense he was neither.

I write this because I think the anti-metaphysicians have not done justice to the case of the metaphysician. This can be done only by a proper evaluation of intuition. Similarly the metaphysicians are also divided among themselves regarding intuition.

This gives sufficient scope to the anti-metaphysician to attack them. I think it is the duty of philosophers in the interest of Philosophy, to re-examine the problem of intuition in its various aspects, so as to expose its nature and also its function in Philosophy. A clear understanding of the nature of intuition may solve many issues in philosophy. Hence the need for a serious study of intuition.

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A NOTE ON THE PLATONIC TRADITION IN FREUDIAN THOUGHT

by
D. K. Chakravarty

Between Plato and Freud here is a considerable leap in time but a narrower leap in doctrine. Freud carries the Socratic injunction 'Know Thyself' into new depths that comprise, in effect, a new continent, the continent of repressed, unconscious motives. 'Know thy hidden self' is the new Freudian dictum.

If one were to draw upon the previous history of philosophy for an illustration of Freud's concept of human self consisting of id, ego and super-ego, Plato's doctrine of the tripartite soul would come to mind. Plato distinguished between the rational and the non-rational part of the soul. He referred the non-rational impulses to two distinct elements of the soul—the 'appetitive' and 'spirited'. While reason is the essential part of the soul, the spirited part is the seat of higher emotions and nobler impulses. Appetite is the animal part of the soul. Plato's description of the appetite as the 'wild beast' in us reminds one of Freud's characterization of the id as a Chaos, a cauldron of seething excitement. Like Plato, Freud is concerned with the conflict between the imperiousness of instinctual urges and reason. Freudian ego is Platonic reason. Between reason and unreason

both the thinkers postulate a mediator, the super-ego or the spirited part of the soul. In the language of the Phaedrus, Plato's charioteer (reason) is akin to the ego, the unruly black horse (appetite) is akin to the id, and the noble white horse (spirit) is akin to the super-ego. The charioteer, aided by his good and tractable horse, fights a mighty battle to subdue the undisciplined fury of the bad horse. Freud uses this Platonic myth to describe the ego's relation to the id. He compares the ego to a man on horseback who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse. The horse supplies the energy that the rider directs along the path he wants to travel. But it often so happens that the rider is obliged to guide his horse on the direction in which it itself wants to go. In the same way the ego carries into action the wishes of the id as if they were its own. 1

Rieff says that there is an important difference between the two images of the charioteer. For Plato, the rational element which has the right to rule is also the source of moral judgment. But it is otherwise with Freud's ego which is kept separate from the moral agency embodied in the super-ego. "In Plato's image, the

rider is at once rational and moral. In Freud's, Greek reason is still the rider but is disengaged from any moral commitments".² We cannot agree with Rieff just as Plato attributed lower and higher impulses to the irrational side of human nature, so Freud attributes both id and super-ego forces to man's unconscious. The super-ego as the internalisation of parental and social mores contains the germ from which all morality and religion have evolved. While, on the one hand, Freud accounts for the 'higher' nature of man with the concept of the super-ego, he gives a violent shock to the moralists, on the other hand, by tracing its origin in the early introjection of parental standards. Freud's views is often misunderstood. He does not weaken moral principles. He exposes the foundations of our pseudo-morality. What goes by the name of morality is blind and irrational. It directs us to repress the instincts and produces conflict. A conflict-torn man would not have the energy for any higher striving. But Freud does not advocate triumph of instinct over 'moral' feelings. According to him, rational criteria must replace both the irrational indulgences of the id and the equally irrational aspirations of the super-ego. The aim of psychoanalysis is, he declares, "to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to widen its field of vision, and so to extend its organization that it can take over new portions of the id. Where id was, there shall ego be." ³ With the dawn of knowledge brought about by psychotherapy the ego gains mastery over the lost provinces of mental life. Knowledge of good and

evil implies that both impulses and the forces that control them are available to consciousness. It means further that the expression or renunciation of impulses would become a matter of conscious decision, made by the ego, rather than a matter of the triumph of blind forces of either desire or restraint. Freud wants that the ego itself must become the source of ethical prescriptions.

Freud not only advocates the Platonic struggle between appetite and spirit but also suggests a Platonic solution to the clash. The tripartite scheme is only provisional for Plato to describe the earthly experiences of the soul. Conjunction with the body entails the accretion of desires and emotions indispensable to mortal life, but these aspects of the soul disappear with purification by devotion to wisdom. As Taylor eruditely expresses, '..... in the man who achieves his eternal Salvation the elements of 'mettle' and 'concupiscence' are, so to say, transubstantiated, swallowed up in intellect".⁴ Freud's rationalist aim, 'where id was, there shall ego be' is now found to be a modern echo of an ancient message. The Freudian goal is utter transformation of the unconscious irrational id into a new form of wider conscious ego. Both Plato and Freud advocate freedom from irrational instincts and seemingly rational morality which is basically irrational. This freedom is gained not by control but by transmutation of the irrational. The message is ascetic in its tone and has a tendency to culminate in mysticism.

In the Symposium of Plato, the instinct of love, personified as the God

Eros, is depicted as the supreme motivating force of the human soul. The affinity with the Freudian concept is obvious. Neither to Plato nor to Freud is eros merely sex-behaviour. For them, it may activate behaviour which may be described as desexualized creative achievement. Morgan thinks that the eros of Plato and the eros of Freud are fundamentally different. The former is "Wholly telic, goal-directed, and moves toward the more-than-nature".⁵ The latter is a push from behind, a force coming out of chaotic instinctual sources. Morgan has emphasised the regressive aspect of Freudian eros to the neglect of its progressive aspect. Freud traces the origin of our striving for perfection in eros.⁶ Eros unites and binds, builds and blends, increases tension within us; and refers to the realms of possibilities. The so-called regressive character of the Freudian eros is due to repressive forces. The goal of psychoanalysis is to lift the deadweight of repressions so that the creative force may find spontaneous expression. Thus for both Plato and Freud, there is one creative energy-eros which manifests itself from its lowest form of biological satisfaction to spiritual creation. The transformation of love into a spiritually creative power arises out of widening of consciousness. It is not a mechanism of defence but a spontaneous free expression of the illumined ego.

In the Symposium Plato spoke of the earlier state of mankind, when their nature was still androgynous, that is both male and female. He described how the sexes became separated and the wholeness of man cut into two halves. It was a punishment of the gods because man had overreached himself and felt like one of them, knowing good and evil. From this time onwards Eros was implanted in the hearts of men, striving ever to bring them back to their original state, and to make of twain one being. The symbolism of the story is immediately apparent. The striving for wholeness is the work of eros. The profound truth behind the Platonic myth is fully recognised in Freud's doctrine of bisexuality of the human psyche.⁷

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7. The goal of the Tantras is to realise the androgynous unity of Siva and Sakti, to become identical with the original double-sexed Deity. If the Freudian view is interpreted, as Bakan does, in the light of the mystical tradition of Kabbala (see his 'Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition, Princeton, 1958), remarkable similarities can be shown between Psychoanalysis and the Tantras.

RELIGION IN PRE-BRAHMANIC ASSAM

by
S. Sarma

The history of ancient India is shrouded in mystery. The case is more so with Assam. In fact it can be said to be a Historians' Paradise. One constructs the past of Assam according to what appears to one to stand to reason basing on the meagre references in the Epics, some Puranas and the Tantric literature. "The stories called from the latter sources cannot of course be distinguished with the name of history".¹ This is primarily due to the doubt in the historicity and chronology of the Epics and the Puranas, especially the latter which are widely inconsistent among themselves. The case of Assam is special once again due to its location in India. When western India was a scene of Aryan settlement Assam remained fairly segregated and kept developing in its own way for quite a long time. We must distinguish, if not separate, at least three stages in the cultural history of ancient Assam. (a) Pre-Mongoloid Dravidian culture, (b) Mongoloid and contemporaneous culture and (c) Brahmanical culture. No culture in fact completely dies down. It can be said with some measure of certainty that the Mongoloid culture was built on the ruins of the Dravidian culture. Hence the Assam scene becomes a bit complex in this respect. For in western India the Aryans succeeded the Dravidians whereas in Assam first the Mongoloids succeeded the Dravidians and then they in turn were succeeded by the Aryans.

The ancient Assam comprised of the whole of Eastern Bengal down to the sea, as well as a part of Bihar and the rugged mountains of Bhutan.²

"Some three or four thousand years ago a number of tribes of Aryan race entered India from the North-West".³ "..... from the opposite corner of India; through Assam and Eastern Himalayas there was a similar influx of tribes of Mongolian origin".⁴ Stuart Piggot puts the time of the Aryan advent to India at the second millenium B. C.⁵ If it is so then the Mongoloid culture started in Assam at least the same time, if not earlier, when the Aryan culture started in western India.

Now coming to the people of that time we can say that they must have been the fore-fathers of Singpho, Mising, Abar, Miri, Dafala, Apatani, Ao, Angami, Shema, Konyak, Tankul, Meitei (Manipuri), Lusai, Boro, Chutia, Moran, Lalung, Hojai, Kachari, Mech

Rabha, Tipra, Garo, Khamti, Phakiyal Nara, Turung, Itania, Khasi, Jaintia, Mizo etc. 6, people of North Eastern Region of today.

The ancient name of Assam, Pragjyotisa, is highly suggestive. The term is widely interpreted. Scholars like Dr B. K. Kakati derive it from an Austric formation. 7 But since it is clearly a Sanskrit word used in the Epics for the first time, it follows that the name was given to this land by the Aryans and the meaning could be, among others, 'an already enlightened (land)'. (Prak=before, jyotih (=light)=knowledge). That is, Assam was already very much advanced in the field of knowledge before the coming of the Aryans.

This leads us to think when exactly the Aryans came. Historically Aryan kingdom started in Assam with Pusyavarman. Till then it was the Asura dynasty ruling over Assam though it had widespread contact with the Aryans to the west or other non-Aryan people to the North and North-East. This period, historians say, was the first century A. D. 8 At different stages Naraka, Bhagadatta, Pusyavarman, Shalastambha, Brahmapala, Durlabhnarayana, Visvasingha Naranarayana etc. kings brought Brahmins from outside Assam. 9 Taking the earliest time in account and placing Naraka at the juncture of Aryan and non-Aryan times, we can say that at this time the door of Assam opened at the west and there was a rapid intercourse between Aryan and non-Aryans in Assam. The most significant event of this period is stated by Dr S. K. Bhuyan in his studies in the History of Assam, "..... The first signifi-

cant feature of Assam's civilization is the part that non-Aryans have played in moulding and shaping it. Turning to the epical age we find the great hero Bhagadatta, king of Kamarupa, appearing in the Battlefield of Kurukshetra at the head of his kirata legions whose array and splendour caused terror and dismay in the hearts of the warriors". (page 5-6). Roughly to the same period belong the Kings of Sadia (Bhismaka), Tezpur (Bana), Dimapur (Hidimba), Manipur (Babrubahana) who were somehow or other non-Aryan chieftains.

Coming to the religious scene let us once again remember that historically Aryan kingdom started with Pusyavarman. 8 That is, till this period we can say that non-Aryan religion was in vogue in Assam.

Legendarily Brahmanisation of Assam starts with Naraka. But how far the process succeeds is doubtful because though in the beginning Naraka had faith in Brahmanism, gradually, due to the influence of Bana of Tezpur he became completely anti-Aryan. 10 That is Brahmanisation was not so smooth then. The case may be the other way round. Otherwise we do not see why Brahmanas had to be brought to Assam at several times in its history till the rule of the Ahoms. In fact the Brahmanas brought by Naraka, Bhagadatta etc. were de-Aryanised when they came over here and were face to face with the already existing huge cultural edifice. The tough stand taken by Bana, Hidimba, Babrubahana, Bhismaka etc. show the strength and stamina of the Pre-Brahmanic Assamese people. In such a strong non-Aryan kingdom it is un-

likely that Aryan religion flourished very easily. 14 The case of Assam highly conforms to this.

The history of religion is the history of mankind. Religion has been such an almost inseparable phenomenon in human history that one is tempted to say that religion is in the very making of man. Anthropologically animism, totemism, fetishism etc. are the most ancient religions. And giving them a philosophical sanction we can say that they were the first expressions of a deeper current of religious consciousness in men. As men developed in other fields so did develop their religion. So its course from in Assam which percolated down to subsequent ages was the cult of fertility, head hunting and human sacrifice, worshipping mountain and river spirits, ancestor worship etc. 11 Actually this was true in case of the Khasi people and thus true for Assam, for "the Khasi and allied people may be taken as one of the earliest inhabitants of Assam". 12 Talking about the non-Aryan contribution to the foundation of Brahmanism in Assam Dr P. C. Choudhury says, "The fetish worship supplied the materials for the foundation of Tantrikism in Assam with its centre at Kamakhya, the temple of the Goddess of the Yoni, developed by the Austriac and other elements". 13 That is phallus worship and worship of mother Goddess were pre-Aryan. Could not the worship of mother-Goddess be introduced by the Aryans themselves? Points against this are more :

(a) Legendarily Naraka was brought here and put in charge of the Kamakhya temple by Vishnu. (b) In agrarian countries which have risen above the stage of magic mother worship is a prominent feature. 14 The case of Assam highly conforms to this. (c) "It is not a characteristic of the religious ideas of the invading Aryans, whose gods.....were almost exclusively male". 15 Thus the worship of mother goddess was not introduced in Assam by the Aryans, rather it was already here from a remote past. Its process of development could be : fertility cult > mother-worship > worship of different female deities like Kamakhya, Kali etc. 16 > Saktism.

Gods like Siva, Ganesha etc. were pre-eminently non-Aryan Gods who were Aryanised subsequently. 17 If it be so, then it was not necessary for the pre-Brahmanic Assamese people to wait for the Aryans to introduce the worshipping of Siva in Assam. According to the Kalika-Purana Siva was regarded as the guardian deity of Assam even before Naraka had come here. 18 At subsequent times worship of Siva and phallus worship were identified in Assam as elsewhere. This concept of identity could have migrated from anywhere or might have, there is no reason not to suppose this, started in Assam itself, for Siva is mythologically connected with Assam very much, e.g. the story of Sati, Kamarupa etc. Historically phallus worship precedes Siva worship. Hence the process of development can be shown as : crude animism > phallus worship > Siva worship (Saivism). Similarly Ganesha worship also could be prevalent in Pre-Brahmanic Assam.

We have said, accepting the conclusion of Dr P. C. Choudhury that pure Brahmanisation of Assam was only in the beginning of the Christian era. This is a vital point. The age of

the Buddha is the sixth century B. C. Is it not possible that Buddhism came to Assam along with Brahmanism if not earlier and the influence of both these religions was rather kept in abeyance by the already existing cultural forces in the country ? "There are traditions in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Assam that the Buddha died in Kamarupa The main image at the shrine (at Hajo), called Madhava, is still visited by Tibetan Lamas, who take it as Mahamuni; the minor images are also known to them by other names. The rock which is pointed out by the Buddhists as the cremation ground of the Buddha, and where there is the figure of a four-armed Visnu, bears a Tibetan inscription with the famous Buddhist mantra: 'Om mani padme hum'. "This may be just folk-belief and hence wrong. But it cannot be altogether wrong that after Buddha's expiry his disciples must have tried to spread Buddhism in this part of India.

To sum up : In pre-Brahmanical Assam some form of Saktism, Saivism; a bit of Buddhism; and some underdeveloped religious forms like worship of rivers, mountains, trees and other spirits — were prevalent.

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ASSAM—AN ECONOMIC DESCRIPTION

by
U. N. Bordoloi

Situated at the north eastern Hima-banana, tobacco etc. In the hills dis-
layan sub-region of India, Assam tricts the soils are yellow and are
forms the core of north eastern part of good for growing paddy and fruit
the country comprising Arunachal, crops. In parts of Sibsagar, Lakhim-
Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizo- pur, Nowgong, Mikir Hills and Cachar
ram and Tripura. It is bounded by hills, laterite soils, deficient in nitro-
Bangla Desh on the west and south, gen, potash, phosphoric acid and lime
and is very near to Burma on the east are found.

and Tibet and China on the north. In-
ternally it has a common boundary

RAINFALL

with West Bengal. Nagaland, Manipur, Assam falls under heavy rainfall
Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal and zone and experiences copious precipi-
Tripura. tation ranging from 1900 mm to about

AREA

Assam at present comprises an The time distribution of precipitation
area of 78,461 sq. kilometres. The of rain water in Assam is uneven,
state can be divided into two physio- about 89 to 90 percent of the rainfall
graphical regions : occur between May and September

(1) The plains division (63, 236 sq. resulting in frequent and widespread
kilometres) comprising eight districts floods in the plains districts almost
in the Brahmaputra Valley and the every year. The same region experi-
Barak Valley district of Cachar; and ences acute scarcity of water during
(II) the hills division (15, 225 sq. kilo- the winter months.
metres) consisting of two districts.

POPULATION

SOIL

According to 1971 population cen-
The plains districts are covered by sus Assam has a population of
alluvial soils which are suitable for 14630422 with 7704328 males and
growing rice, wheat, sugarcane, cotton 6926094 females on 1st April 1971.

* Reproduced from the author's book 'Collected Economic Papers'.

The state has registered growth of 35.37 percent in the decade 1951-71. The rate of increase in males and females are 33.24 percent and 36.81 percent. The density of population is 150 per sq. kilometre and there are 901 females per 1000 males. In the plains district, 8.10 percent of the population are of scheduled caste and 8.03 percent are of scheduled tribe while in the hills districts scheduled tribe constitutes 74.59 percent in the Mikir hills district and 79.53 percent in the North Cachar district. Only 8.39 percent of the people live in towns, numbering 75 while 91.61 percent live in villages. The percentage of literacy in Assam as recorded by 1971 census is 28.8. The percentage of female literate is 18.9 while the same for male is 37.7. The work participation rate in Assam is 28.6 percent, according to 1971 census. Female workers constitute only 6.2 percent of the total female population. 56.4 percent of working population in Assam is engaged as cultivators and 9.4 percent as agricultural labourers.

STATE INCOME

The State Domestic Product of Assam was estimated to be Rs. 1,315.00 crores during 1974-75 and Rs. 1,421.00 crores during 1975-76 at current prices and Rs. 472.70 crores and Rs. 497.70 crores at constant prices during 1974-75 and 1975-76 respectively. The corresponding per capita income works out to be Rs. 810.70 and Rs. 850.50 during 1974-75 and 1975-76 at current prices and Rs. 291.04 and Rs. 297.90 at constant prices (1948-49 prices) respectively.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the base of the economy of State. It provides livelihood to about 72 percent of the population. Out of the states total geographical area of 78.4 each hectares only 27.3 each hectares or about 34.8 p.c. are cultivable. Of this only 2.41 million hectares constituting 83.82 percent of the total cultivable land were sown during 1968-69. On the per capita basis the net sown area per head comes to 0.162 hectares (1968-69). Agricultural operation in Assam is largely carried on monocrop system and only in 0.55 million hectares which constitute 22.68 percent of the total net sown area, crop is grown more than once.

Rice is the most important crop of the state and it accounts for more than 72 percent of the total gross area under crop. Maize is another crop which grows well particularly in the hills districts. Recently wheat has been introduced and encouraged, but its cultivation, so far has not been undertaken in any significant scale. Some varieties of pulses are also grown in Assam, but the area under pulses accounts for only 3 percent of the total gross under area crops.

Agriculture and allied pursuits account for 60.90 p.c. during 1974-75 and 60.10 p.c. during 1975-76 of the total income at current prices. The contributions of other sector to State income are (i) Mining, Manufacture and construction 19.00 p.c. during 1974-75 and 20.00 p.c. during 1975-76 (ii) Commerce, Transport and Communication 9.8 p.c. in 1974-75 and 9.7 p.c. in 1975-76 and (iii) other services 10.3 p.c. in 1974-75 and 10.2 p.c. in 1975-76.

Tea is the principal commercial crop in Assam and this accounts for more than 7 percent of the total net area sown in the State. About 76 percent of the area under tea cultivation is concentrated in the three valley districts of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Darrang, while Cachar district accounts for about 17 percent of the area. Jute, Sugarcane, Mustard and Potato are the other important cash crops grown in the state.

The average yield per hectare in the state of various agricultural commodities is low. The yield rate of rice, which is the principal crop, was only 1043 kg. in the year 1963-69. But there are wide fluctuations in the yield rate from year to year due to climatic and other natural factors like floods, droughts etc. The average yield of some other important commodities are (i) Jute—1598 kg. (ii) Sugarcane 47914 kg. (iii) Rape and Mustard—371 kg. and (iv) Potato—3573 kg.

The agricultural production in the state is still influenced by monsoon and other natural factors. Hence the rate of growth of agricultural production has been very slow. During the period from 1952-53 to 1964-65 the compared growth rate of agricultural production was only 1.17 percent per annum against 3.01 percent for all India. The index of agricultural production confirms this unsatisfactory trend.

Index of Agricultural Product

	Assam base (1956-57—100)	India base (1961—62)
1970-71	126.14	131.4
1971-72	128.51	130.9
1972-73	147.72	120.4
1973-74	140.65	133.3
1974-75	143.96	128.6

The absence of facilities for modernisation and diversification of agriculture is the main cause of tardy growth in agricultural production in the state. The new strategy with emphasis on high yielding varieties, increasing use of fertilizer and irrigation facilities, multiple cropping and improved agricultural practices etc. has very little impact on the state's agriculture so far.

FOREST

Assam is rich in forest resources. It covers nearly 26449 sq. kilometre of area of the state of which 15452 sq.km. are reserved forests and the rest unclassified forest. These forests abound in hard-wood species like sal, hollong, hollock, bonsoom etc. and offer excellent material for expansion and development of wood-based industries. Assam has also largest bamboo resources and according to the National council of Applied Economic Research, the annual yield of bamboo can be raised to 463 thousand tonnes—a yield sufficient to feed atleast three pulp and rayon grade pulp complexes. But unfortunately, the forest resources of the state are still in a very inadequate stage of exploitations. The state Government has undertaken to establish a paper-cum-pulp factory at Jogighopa of Goalpara district and the Central Government has also a proposal to establish another such mill in the Central Sector in the Cachar district.

INDUSTRIES

In spite of enormous potentials Assam still remains industrially back-

ward. Except tea, petroleum and forest resources, other resources are still unexploited. During the first decade of planning, the industrial sector remained neglected and stagnant. It was during the third five year plan, that industrial development programmes were initiated and arrangements were made to provide infrastructure facilities to facilitate industrial growth. As a result a number of small and medium size industries like a bicycle factory, a spun silk mill, two cotton spinning mills, some rerolling and fabrication units, a mixed fertilizer plant (remains closed at present), a sugar mill (co-operative sector), a hard board factory and fruit processing plant were set up. Moreover two major projects namely the Noonmati Refinery and the Namrup Fertilizer Plant, in the Central Sector, a Gas distribution Project under state Govt. sector were also established. During the third plan, the state Govt. also took over and expanded the Cherra Cement Project with a capacity to produce 850 tonnes per day (since handed over to Meghalaya Government).

During the fourth plan period, a Jute Mill in the co-operative sector was established at Silghat. Under the Central Sector schemes, works are in progress to establish a Refinery at Bongaigaon to produce Naptha, Kerosine, Diesel oil and low stock heavy sulphur and a Cement Factory at Bokajan with an initial capacity of 600 tonnes daily. Besides these, the Assam Industrial Development Corporation has undertaken steps to establish a Paper mill at Jogighopa with an initial capacity of 120 tonnes of pulp and 90 tonnes of paper daily, a

Caustic Soda-cum-Chlorine plant, a Petro-chemical Complex to produce methanol formaldehyde, urea formaldehyde, resin etc. Besides these a sugar mill at Cachar and another at Chariali (Darrang) (in the co-operative sector) are being established. Further the Central Government is investigating the possibilities of setting up one or two pulp mills within the state.

At the end of 1975, there were 1715 registered factories employing 79.78 thousand people in Assam. But Assam's share in the national net output is very insignificant being only 1.62 percent in 1968-69. Further Assam's industrial sector is still dominated by "miscellaneous food products" the most important of the group being tea factories which alone account for more than 60 percent of the net output from manufacturing industries in the state. It is seen from the reports of annual Survey of Industries that reporting registered factories in Assam accounted for 4.2 p.c. of All India in 1966. The corresponding percentages of productive capital employed were 2.2, those of employment 1.9, those of value of output 1.9 and those of value added by manufacture were 1.8 percent. In respect of value adds, Assam's position was as low as thirteenth in 1966.

TEA

There are 758 tea estates in Assam and the area under tea was estimated to be 179417 hectares in 1969. During 1970, 215 million kilograms of tea were produced. The average yield of tea is 1161 kg. per hectare, but in the Lakhimpur district the average yield is as high as 1465 kg. per hectare. The

average yield in the Cachar district is low, being only 735 kg. per hectare. Nearly 4 lakh people are employed in these tea estates and the average earning of a tea labourer was Rs. 1472.2 per head during 1968.

At the initiative of Assam Govt. a tea auction centre was established at Gauhati during 1970. At the initial stages the responses both from the buyers and the sellers was not discouraging. But the trend of price, supply and demand is not encouraging during the tea season commencing from May '72 in spite of several concession given to buyers and sellers by the state Govt. The state Govt. has also established a corporation to own and manage tea estates in the state. This corporation will also undertake manufacture, storage, blending, and transportation of tea. This corporation, when function properly will fill up the much needed void in rehabilitating the tea Industry in Assam.

MINING

Assam has rich deposits of a few major minerals such as petroleum, natural gas, coal and limestone. It is estimated that about half of the geographical area of Assam is made up of sedimentaries and can be considered as potentially oil bearing. At present nearly half of the country's total crude products is produced in Assam. The estimated proved reserve of natural gas in the Naharkatia and Moran fields is placed at 790000 million cubic feet. But only a very small quantity has so far been utilised by Namrup fertilizer factory and Namrup Gas Thermal project. The estimated resource of ter-

tiary coal is placed at 3800 million tonnes and the reserve of workable coal estimated as 722 million tonnes located in Upper Assam and U. K. & J. Hills and Garo Hills of Meghalaya. The rate of exploitation is very slow.

Coal from Assam fields are being utilised by the N. E. F. Railways and the Tea Gardens. Limestone occurrences in Assam are now confined to Mikir Hills districts. With the commissioning of the cement factory at Bokajan, lime stone extraction in these areas will receive momentum.

POWER

Assam is endowed with the largest power potentials of the country based on water, natural gas, coal and oil. Its hydropower potential is estimated at 12 million k.w. but power development in the state has not been satisfactory. The total installed capacity of projects now in commission is about 160 M. W. which is only 1.1 pc. of the all India total. During 1969-70, 309.5 million K. W. H. of power was generated in Assam from different sources i. e. gas, diesel and hydro. Assam is lagging far behind in matters of consumption of electricity power. During 1974-75, the states per capita consumption of electricity was about 28 K.W.H. Of the 250.00 million K.W.H. of electricity power consumed during 1969-70, 34 million K.W.H. consumed in domestic uses, 5.50 in commercial factory, 152.50 M.K.W.H. in industry, 0.50 M.K.W.H. in mining, 4.50 in street lights, 5.75 in public works and 47.25 M.K.W.H. in bulk supply.

Rural electrification in the state is

very slow. Upto March 1975 only 1516 than that of the broad gauge railway. villagers out of 22000 villages have Assam is considerably behind the rest been electrified. Recently a vigorous of the country in terms of both quan- programme of rural electrification by tity and quality of railway transport State Electricity Board has been un- systems. dertaken, to cover another 7000 villag- es during the 5th plan.

TRANSPORT

Assam is a land-locked State and her transport system consists of Rail- ways, Roads, Air and Inland water ways. The inadequate and undevel- oped transport system in Assam is largely responsible for its economic backwardness, especially its backward- ness in industrial development. Upto 1956, the Assam Rail link, provides the only railway connection with the rest of the country, through a metre gauge line which handled all transport to Assam. During 1965, the broad gauge line was constructed upto Jogighopa from New Jalpaiguri.

The length of railways in Assam is 2226 kilometre and accounts for 3.8 percent of the total route length in India. The metre gauge railway route length of Assam constitutes 8.2 p.c. of the metre gauge railway route length of all India. But the broad gauge rail- way route accounts for only 0.35 per- cent of all India broad gauge railway route length. Though the state's rail- way route length for every 1000 sq. k.m. of area is 18 k.m., its metre gauge route length per 1000 sq. k.m. area is 17.4 k.m. against 8.8 k.m. of all India. Again, the broad gauge route length per 1000 sq. k.m. area is only 0.8 k.m. against the all India average of 7.9 k.m. as the traffic bearing capacity of meter gauge railway is much less

The road system in Assam is pla- ying a vital role of strategic and eco- nomic importance in inter-state tra- ffic. It also provides link with the neighbouring states and territories. At the end of the third five year plan the length of motorable road in Assam was 21.2 thousand k.m. and by the end of 1969-70 it rose to 23.0 k.m. But still there exists a gap of about 12.2 thousand k.m. to be completed over the next 11 years if the all India Road development Plan target is to be achieved.

The roads in Assam suffer from many basic deficiencies. Assam is also lagging behind many states in respect of surfaced roads. The total length of surfaced roads account for only 1.8 of the total surfaced roads in the coun- try. Assam has only 4.0 k.m. of sur- faced roads per 100 k.m. of area against the all India average of 9 k.m.

Inland waterways also used to play an important role till September 1965 when the river route to Calcutta was closed. Prior to this, this route handled about 93 per cent of tea and 90 per cent of Jute grown and expor- ted from Assam. The internal water- ways of Assam are more than 9600 k.m. of which 1600 k.m. are navigable by steamers and large country boats. The Central Inland Water Transport Corporation has undertaken the work of re-organising the river service in Assam and the emergence of Bangla- desh has offered possibilities to re- open the water-route from Assam to Calcutta again.

UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

Unemployment is an All India problem and it persists with varying degrees of intensity throughout the whole country. But this problem has become acute in Assam due to its economic backwardness and slow economic growth. The various state Plans failed to create employment opportunities sufficient enough to meet the requirements and thus they left an increasing volume of backlog of unemployed. At the end of third plan, even technical personnel joined the rank of unemployed in the state.

There were over 3 lakhs unemployed persons in Assam at the end of the third five year plan. There after the position deteriorated due to decline in employment in the private and public sectors from 7.6 lakhs at the end of March 1966 to 7 lakhs at the end of March 1970. Another 3.75 lakhs of job-seekers entered the employment market during the interregnum between third and fourth plan. To remove the back-log of unemployed and to provide employment opportunities to new entrants during 1974-79, employment opportunities for nearly 16 lakhs people have to be created during the fifth five year plan period. The unemployment problem in the state is explosive as it is, yet still, it has been aggravated by unchecked inflow of job-seekers from the neighbouring states. Further inadequate representation of the local people in the industries and undertakings located in the state, has generated a sense of deprivation in the minds of the youths, which if not tackled early, may

create complication in the future.

PRICE SITUATION

The price situation in Assam cannot be viewed in isolation. It is essentially the manifestation of the All India trend. But rising trend in the price level in the state is more pronounced due to certain factors such as high population growth, transport bottleneck, and dependence on outside supply for the essential consumer goods.

The index of wholesale prices of Assam is given below.

Index of whole sale price		India
Assam	(base 1953-100)	(base 1970-71—100)
1973	291.1	158.0
1974	376.6	173.9
1975	382.9	162.6

This trend is still persisting in the later year. Assam is marginally surplus in rice. But all the other essential commodities she has to bring from outside the state. Taking advantage of the uncertain transport system the profit-hungry traders very often create artificial scarcities to push up the price level. The stabilisation of price level is essential for the sake of progressive economic growth and preventing social unrest.

CONCLUSION

Assam abounds in resources, both natural and mineral. But still even after two decades of planning, it remains underdeveloped. Though agriculture is the base of the economy, nothing significant has been done to modernise and diversify agriculture.

Further, agriculture in the state has been the victim of flood which occurs every year and flood-preventive measures so far undertaken have proved infructuous. The harnessing of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries is the only way to prevent or control flood but this can be undertaken only by the Central Govt. which unfortunately however, remains apathetic to this problem. Agricultural production in the state can still be improved by providing facilities for winter cropping. The State Government has to do a lot to this end.

Hence, no industrialisation. In such state the Central Government should have initiated measures to exploit the resources. But unfortunately the Centre is indifferent to Assam's problem. It appears that the Centre is interested in keeping Assam as an underdeveloped colony to feed the industries and markets of the other parts of the country.

Assam is the hunting ground of fortune hunters and profit-seekers. This powerful group, in collusion with self-seekers, always attempts to create obstacles in the way of economic progress. It has resources. But the Governmental machinery is inapt, the Centre is indifferent and the people are complacent. Hence it remains underdeveloped. If the resources of this state are properly utilised, it will become the richest state in the Indian Union.

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THE BEGINNINGS OF COLLEGIATE EDUCATION IN ASSAM

by
V. Venkata Rao

Sa vidya ya ca muktaye

That vidya is the only vidya which gives salvation to man. Education is that which liberates man. It trains not only the intellect but brings grace and beauty to life. It removes slums in the mind. Mental slums are far more dangerous than material slums. No university or no college is a university or a college if it cannot produce excellent human material for the service of the country.

College education is a transformer and transmuter of man. It transforms a cabbage into a cauliflower. It endows man with a special mental apparatus which enables him to make a distinction between what is relevant and what is irrelevant, what is transient and what is permanent and what is good and what is bad. It indicates the path of conciliation, compromise and moderation, which are the essential qualities of a human being. It develops the spirit of sacrifice, devotion and dedication. It enables him above all to conquer *moham* appetites and thereby develop in him *nischalatatva* (supreme peace) which in turn gives *nityananda*, eternal bliss. Hap-

piness does not mean enjoyment of material happiness. It is spiritual happiness, which is attainable only when one has knowledge, and that knowledge must be true knowledge which is acquired by one's own insight. It is by this knowledge that one can drink amritum nectar—God's drink. *Vidyaya amritum asnute.*

In Assam no provision was made for collegiate education till 1900. True that attempts were made, as early as 1865, to provide higher education. On 15 May 1865, Col. Hopkinson, the Agent to the Governor-General and the Commissioner of Assam requested the Government of Bengal "the establishment of a school in Assam for higher education, better than that obtained at the Government schools".

The Bengal Government supporting the proposal of Col. Hopkinson wrote to the Government of India "The want of educated men compel the Government to import into the Province for the Government offices natives of Bengal, who as a matter of course require to be paid at much higher rates than they obtain near

their homes. From financial point of view alone therefore the establishment of a really good collegiate school at Gawhatty would be advantageous to the Government.

But the political grounds for endeavouring to train up the native of the Province for offices of respectability and trust are still more cogent. It must have very depressing effect upon the people of the country to see natives of other districts brought in to fill nearly all the offices under the Government and this no doubt must tend to cause great dissatisfaction and heartburning; but it is impossible to employ Assamese until they are by education fitted for employment and as they cannot be expected to send their children to distant colleges out of the province, the only way of securing the desired object would be by the establishment of a collegiate school in Assam".

The Government of India accepted the proposal of the Government of Bengal. But Col. Hopkinson was not in favour of establishment of a college in Gowhatty. He said that "the idea of establishing a college in Gowhatty should be postponed sine die. He did not give reasons for this. But the Bengal Government insisted that college classes should be opened in Gowhatty.

In 1866, college classes were opened in the Gauhati High School, which was managed by the Committee of Public Instruction. On 31st March 1871, there were 254 students in the Gauhati High School. Of them 17 were in the college department and 15

in the law department and 222 in the high school. Of the 17, four passed the First Arts examination held in 1871. One of them joined the Presidency College with a senior scholarship.

Col. Hopkinson reported in 1871 that the Gowhatty College "has risen highly and deservedly so in the estimation of the people. Students from other districts of Assam enter the institution at no small inconvenience to themselves and only a short time ago it was under contemplation to stop admission as the building was already over crowded". Although the college classes were popular, the expenditure per capita in the collegiate department of the Gowhatty High School was excessive—Rs. 1086. Therefore, Col. Keatinge abolished the college classes.

Not only financial reasons, other factors also influenced Col. Keatinge to abolish college classes in the Gauhati High School. Keatinge thought that it would be advantageous to the youth of Assam desiring to pursue their studies beyond the standard of the university entrance examination that they resort to Bengal where they would come in contact with a higher standard of culture and wider interests. These advantages would outweigh the additional expense and inconvenience of living away from home. This was also the view of Sir Stuart Bailey, the successor of Keatinge. Similar views were held by the predecessors of Sir Henry Cotton.

A decisive step in the encouragement of Higher education in Assam was taken by Sir Charles Elliot who decided to award a scholarship of Rs. 20 a

month to all boys, the sons of the parents actually resident or employed in the Brahmaputra Valley who passed the entrance examination and went up to study for the First Arts and degree examination at any Bengal College. The number of scholarships awarded was not limited. It was 15 in 1882-83. It increased to 33 in 1886. In 1887, Sir William Ward the officiating Chief Commissioner decided to limit the number of scholarships to 14 for Brahmaputra Valley, three to the natives of the hill districts and eight to non-natives of Assam. The scholarships were awarded on the basis of merit—those who obtained the highest aggregate number of marks at the entrance examination. The scholarships were classified into two grades, junior and senior. Junior scholarships were awarded to those who were studying for the FA examination for a period of two years. All junior scholarship holders who passed the FA examination within two years of passing the entrance examination were entitled to scholarships for a further period of two years to enable them to read for their degree examination. They were then called senior scholars though the amount of scholarship was the same Rs. 20 per month. All the senior scholars were allowed at their discretion to convert their scholarships into medical scholarships tenable for five years in the Medical College or Engineering scholarships tenable in an Engineering College.

The number of Bengali and Assamese boys who passed the entrance examination from the Brahmaputra Valley districts schools and the number of those who had obtained scholarships for the years 1882 to 1899 was as follows :

Year	Bengalis		Assamese		Hill districts	
	Number Passed	Number of scholarships awarded	Number Passed	Number of Scholarships awarded	Number Passed	Number of Scholarships awarded
1882	6	4	8	8	nil	nil
1883	6	5	10	10	...	...
1884	11	9	8	8	...	...
1885	7	6	11	11	...	...
1886	7	7	11	11	...	...
1887	16	11	23	21	...	...
1888	16	8	18	14	2	1
1889	14	8	10	10	.....
1890	16	8	33	15	3	3
1891	16	8	16	14	2	2
1892	18	8	15	14	...	...
1893	27	8	34	14	1	1
1894	14	8	20	14	...	...
1895	19	8	18	14	1	1
1896	24	8	14	14	2	2
1897	23	12	28	21	3	3
1898	18	8	20	14	1	1
1899	20	8	31	14	3	3

From the above it is clear that since 1888 there has not been any material increase in the number of successful candidates. There was considerable fluctuation in different years. The average number of Assamese successful candidates in the six years from 1888 to 1893 was 21. The average for the six years from 1894 to 1899 was more less the same 21.8. The average number of scholarship holders in this period was 14. Now what about those who did not obtain scholarship ? How many of them continued their studies ? The Director of Public Instruction said that no Assamese valley native who had passed the entrance examination would continue his studies without a scholarship.

The following statement shows number of Assamese students who during the period 1894 to 1899 had passed the entrance examination and also the FA and B.A. examination.

Year	Number of those who passed the entrance Exam.	Number who obtained scholarship	Number who passed the F A Exam.	Number of those who passed the B.A. Exam.
1894	20	14	5	2
1895	18	14	9	5
1896	14	14	3	2
1897	28	21	6	4
1898	20	14	10	nil
1899	31	14	6	4
Average	22	15	6.3	3

If we take all the years together, nearly two thirds of those who passed the Entrance examination, got scholarships; while less than fifty per cent of the junior scholarship holders passed the First Arts Examination and a little less than one half of them passed the degree examination.

During the same period the average number of students from the Surma Valley who passed the F. A. examination was 21 and the B. A. examination 11. The principal cause for educational deficiency in the Assam Valley was the comparative absence of upper and middle classes which generally supplied the material to the colleges elsewhere. Thus, higher education in Assam languished and it was maintained artificially by State scholarships.

In 1899, Sir Henry Cotton considered the proposal to re-establish a Government college in Assam. Before this proposal was made, a college was already established in the Surma Valley, known as the Murarichand

College by Raja Girish Chand Rai. It was a second grade college and prepared students for the First Arts Examination. It provided limited courses for study. It was provincialised in 1911-12. It remained a second grade college till 1916. In 1916, degree classes were started in English, Vernacular, Mathematics, History, Philosophy, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic.

In 1899, there was a proposal for the reestablishment of a Government college in Assam. "But I do not think that it would prosper any more than when it was first established" wrote Sir Henry Cotton "more than 30 years ago unless the students were assisted by State scholarships". Cotton said further, "It would be impossible to go to the expense of maintaining a state

college and at the same time give state scholarships to students to induce them to attend it. The existing scholarships were awarded in substitution of a local college and were intended to compensate students for the expense and inconvenience to which they are put in leaving their own country and living in Calcutta. It was never contemplated and cannot now be seriously proposed to establish a local college and endow it with existing scholarships".

This was the first objection. Cotton also pointed out other objections. One of them was local jealousies. The centre of Assam influence was Sibsagar. The people of Sibsagar told Cotton that if a college was established at Gauhati, Dibrugarh, or even at Tezpur, it would be more convenient for parents to send their sons to

Calcutta than to a local college. A similar objection was raised at Dibrugarh and Gauhati to any proposal to establish a college at Sibsagar or Jorhat. There was no central place in

Assam where a college could be established which would be recognised in the same manner as Decca was acknowledged in East Bengal, Cuttack in Orissa and Patna in Bihar. This was a serious stumbling block to the establishment of a college in Assam.

Cotton also thought that it was very desirable that Assamese students should be encouraged to resort to Bengal for their higher education so that they might participate in a wider experience and get over provincialism. "I am not anxious to give" said Cotton, "any encouragement to the feeling of Provincialism which I find to be unfortunately too rife in the Assam Valley districts and would rather impress upon the educated Assamese of the present generation that they cannot be independent of Bengal in their language or association or in the advancement of their prosperity. They are as dependent on Bengal as the Welshman are dependent on England. Such dependence is not inconsistent with the true national sentiment. But the Province cannot prosper in isolation and attribute the slowness of progress, in a large measure to the unwise fostering by the Assamese among themselves of a policy of national exclusiveness. The establishment of a new college would I am afraid give a new lease of life to the existing tendency and any proposal for encouraging higher education lies therefore in the direction of helping successful students to continue their studies, not in Assam, but in the metropolis of India".

To the complaint made that the Assamese students in Calcutta were not looked after well, Cotton proposed

to establish an Assam Hostel in Calcutta. It would be in charge of a carefully selected superintendent. It would accommodate 40 students. Cotton also proposed to increase the number of scholarships from 17 to 25.

These proposals were published for criticism and comment on 28 June 1899. Public opinion was definitely against the establishment of an Assamese Hostel in Calcutta. It was in favour of a college established in Assam. Cotton accepted the proposal and decided to establish a second grade college. It was established in 1901. So at the beginning of the present century there was one college in the Surma Valley and another in the Assam Valley. Till 1930 this was the position. In 1931 the Jorhat college came into existence. But since 1940 a number of colleges came into being. In 1977, the position is as follows. There are 84 colleges under the Gauhati University, 49 under Dibrugarh University, 3 under the Assam Agricultural University and 28 under the North Eastern Hill University, and five colleges in Agartala. Altogether there are 170 colleges in the whole of North East India.

Statewise the position is satisfactory. There are 112 colleges of all kinds in Assam, 14 in Meghalaya, six in Mizoram, 8 in Nagaland, 1 in Arunachal Pradesh, and 20 in Manipur.

Districtwise there are 33 colleges in Kamrup and 30 in Sibsagar. In other districts the number of colleges is not great. In the two Hill districts there are only two colleges one in each.

We think that provision made for higher education in Assam is adequate.

THE INNER LINE

by

P. D. Gogoi

More than a century ago, the introduction of the Inner Line. British Government, under the Inner Line Regulation of 1873, established the Inner Line as the policy of isolation, Elwin wanted to show that the Inner Line was necessary to bring "under stringent control mainly the administrative and commercial relations of British Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA). It was sary to bring "under stringent control mainly the administrative and commercial relations of British

introduction of such a barrier line. The Inner Line might prevent the But it had its social impact, too. "The encroachment on tribal land, but it unrestricted intercourse which formerly existed between British subjects in Assam and the wild tribes" was restricted because such "unrestricted intercourse", as opined by Gait, led to "quarrels and serious disturbances". It was, virtually, the traffic in rubber and the opening of tea gardens beyond the border-line that led to "quarrels" and "disturbances".

The artificial severance of the "unrestricted intercourse", naturally, resulted in social isolation. The British might have, initially, caused such isolation with certain degree of inadvertence so far they were primarily motivated by other interests. The isolation of the hills people from the plains became a harsh reality and it was subsequently bolstered with subtle reasoning. Verrier Elwin in his 'A Philosophy for NEFA' apologetically wanted to plead that the British had no such socially injurious motive

During pre-independence period, the Inner Line Regulation was never intended to serve the purpose of development of the tribal people. Now the Inner Line is supposed to have certain aims connected with the well-being of the people beyond it. In the words of Elwin, "The Inner Line has enabled Government to ensure planned contact and scientific development". And it was thought that without economic or psychological damage the tribal people would be thus brought into the main stream of modern life. Though the Inner Line Regulation has, naturally, given rise to a concomitant policy of isolation, it has now been argued that such isolation can yield positive benefits to tribal people so far they are protected from the exploita-

tion of the money-lenders, merchants and landlords. Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA). The Sino-Indian conflict, too, did not bring forth the desired comprehension of the Inner Line barrier. Rather, more importance of its retention was given and it was thought that the relaxation or abolition of the Inner Line would endanger the defence of the country. Defence of the country cannot be neglected and the development of the people beyond the line has also to be promoted. But the Inner Line does not, paradoxically, help both defence and development. It was not due to the absence of the Inner Line barrier that our security was shattered. The defence of a country's borders and territory is the concern of the whole nation. If there is threat from fifth-column activities, the present artificial barrier is quite irrelevant and ineffective device to curb them, because there is no guarantee that the fifth-columnists would not rise beyond the line except within the rest of the country herself. The other plea of the protection of the tribals by the Inner Line barrier is equally unsound in the sense that legitimate rights and demands of the tribals cannot be best safeguarded by measures other than the present one.

After the Sino-Indian conflict, the justification of retaining the Inner Line within the same country separating her own people, has been seriously questioned. The Inner Line cannot be regarded as a kind of measure by which the tribal interests can be protected and exploitation prevented.

Close and frequent contacts, emotional attachment, integration, — all these are said to have been prevented by the Inner Line barrier. Such was the opinion of the Delegation of the Assam Legislative Assembly that visited NEFA in 1962. The Parliamentary delegation, in 1966, also held the view that the Inner Line should be abolished gradually to have greater association of the hills people with the people of the plains. Mr. Johri says "In NEFA the British erected an artificial barrier and segregated the locals from the main body of the Assamese". He further opines, "Nowhere else in India such measures had been undertaken as in NEFA". It may be quite flimsy to say that the defence of NEFA necessitates the re-emphasising of the prohibitions embodied in the 'Inner Line Regulations'.

The efforts to bring these people into the main stream of modern life may become sterile when the same old British isolation policy through the Inner Line barrier is persistently followed. The enlightened section of Arunachal has already realised this truth.

The retention of the Inner Line might be largely attributed to the influence of Elwin's philosophy of temporary protection of the people of

After all, NEFA (Arunachal) Pradesh) is now not an unadministered virgin land to be colonized and exploited by the so-called outsiders with uninhibited greed and freedom. The affairs of Arunachal are now managed by its own people. The process of the emergences of Arunachal Pradesh in a separate statehood may be completed soon. Such an important political development has rendered the Inner Line policy barren and bizarre.

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MONISTIC IDEALISM AND VAISNAVISM IN ASSAM

by

S. C. Goswami

The form of vaisnavism preached are more or less the same as they are and propagated in Assam during the based on the same source of the Shri-later part of 15th Century A.D. by the madbhagavata, the Srimadbhavadgita, great personalities and gurus Shri Visnupurana, Harivamsa, Brihadnara-Sankardeva, Shri Damodardeva, Shri diya Purana and so on. The form of Harideva and Shri Madhabdeva was vaisnavism in Assam is also known as known as Eka Sarana Bhagavatee Bhagavati vaisnava Dharma as it is Vaisnava Dharma. Vaisnavism is based on the teachings of the great monotheistic religion and Lord Visnu Purana Shrimadbhagavata. The Bhagavata Purana is said to be the supreme deity who is the creator, sustainer and moral governor of the universe, pervading all things and dwelling in every living being as its inmost self, ruler and lord. Bhakti or emotional service of love and devotion is the means of spiritual realisation and attaining the grace of God. The Bhagavata Purana is said to be the commentary on the Vedanta Sutra or Brahma Sutra by Vyasa and as the quintessence of the Vedic thought, the Bhagavata is thus the cream of the Vedic philosophy and culture explained and expounded in simple language with apt illustrations.

The form of vaisnavism preached by Shri Sankardeva in Assam is known as Mahapurusiya Dharma after his honorific title of Mahapurusa or great person alluded to him lovingly by his followers. Similarly the followers of the guru Shri Damodardeva are known as Damodaris and the followers of Shri Harideva are known as Haridevis. Shri Madhabdeva was the great disciple of Shri Sankardeva and preached the Ekasaran Namdharma as ordained by Shri Sankardeva. Though there are these three sects or Sampradaya of vaisnavism in Assam, the fundamental tenets, beliefs and practices of vaisnavism are based on the Vedas constitute the primary ground and final authority in Hindu religion. Hinduism is not based on the message of any single prophet or incarnation of God, nor on the teachings of any one saint or seer. It is founded on the varied religious and moral experiences and teachings of many ancient, mediaeval and modern saints and sages, reformers and devotees on the rock foundations of the fundamental principles handed down from the Vedas and Upanisadas, Puranas and Dharmasastras. Hinduism is thus a synthesis of different types of religious experiences and this explains

the existence of apparently different religions within the fold of Hinduism. As Hinduism believes in toleration of others' religious views and beliefs, the different religious sects like the Saiva, the Sakta, the Vaisnava, flourished and prospered and continued as living faiths till today on the common basis of Hinduism with the philosophy of one supreme God who is the all-inclusive reality. Hinduism is a unique form of monotheism which believes in the unity of gods in God and not so much the denial of gods for one God. While God is one, Hinduism believes in many different ways of reaching Him, just as the same destination may be reached by different paths. Vaisnavism believes in Bhakti or devotion to God and worship of God in pure body and mind and with complete self-surrender and self-abnegation. Bhakti is devotees' pure love of God unalloyed by any sort of selfish desire of worldly attachments, his service and sacrifice for God of which God's reciprocal love and blessed communion between devotee and God are the only objects of desire. Bhakti or devotion to God needs a good deal of preparation on the part of the devotee seeking grace of God for mitigation of the sufferings of the mundane thralldom and aversion to worldly pleasures and possessions is the first requisite of such mental preparation. A man cannot be devoted to God unless he has a firm faith and deep conviction in God who is kind and loving to the devotees and such firm faith cannot come unless the devotee is free from all impurities in body and mind. Purification of body and mind can arise only through performance of and constant insistence of morally right actions and abstinence from those that are morally wrong. He should

also perform the ordinary duties of his life with honesty, sincerity and with a sense of duty without lust, greed and infatuation. Faith in God is generated when the body and mind become pure through such performance of moral actions and duties and through teachings of Sastras and preceptors. An enlightened devotee may conceive of God as formless reality possessing all metaphysical and ethical attributes in unlimited fullness, the Purosottama or the highest person who is above the world of nature and of individual souls, the all-pervasive infinite or Visnu. But for the Prakrita and the Madhyama bhaktas or the devotees who have not yet attained such spiritual height of realisation of God as all-pervasive in all things and beings (Sarvabhutamayo Visnu), worship of God through Pratikas and Pratimas is also recommended. The worship of God in the forms of natural objects regarded as symbols is known as Pratika worship and worship of God in the form of images is called Pratima worship. Image worship or Pratima puja is really the worship of God as represented by means of images and the images are not looked upon as God nor worshipped as such. Worship of God through images according to Hinduism is not crude idolatry. They are treated only as symbols or concrete representations of God. Both Pratika and Pratima worship are symbolic worship of God and as a matter of fact all worship or devotion to God is symbolic in a sense. The symbol attains some amount of veneration in course of time and thus for ordinary people may become the object of worship itself, but this is not the significance of pratika or pratima. So a tendency has grown in some sections

of Vaisnaism to do away altogether is the liberation from sin, suffering with Pratima worship though there and bondage of the world. were pratimas of Visnu or Krishna in Vaisnavism is a devotional religion all the ancient and main shrines or and different modes of worship and Satras of Vaisnaism. ritualism were developed by the different schools or sampradays, different symbols and manifestations of God were preferred. But all schools of Vaisnavism agreed in exalting Bhakti as the heart of worship and sole religious attitude of love and devotional service to the personal god.

In the Bhagavata many ways and means have been recommended for inducing, maintaining and developing the attitude of bhakti or devotional love and service of God. Thus in the Prahlad Charita of Bhagavata, nine stages or means of inducing bhakti have been mentioned and explained and our Gurus of Vaisnavism in Assam have also recommended them in their writings, of the nine stages or means of bhakti, namely, Sravaṇa, Kirtana, Smarana, Archana, Vandana, Padasevana, Dasya, Sakhya, Atmanivedana, Sravaṇa and Kirtana are the easiest forms and these two means have the competence to generate bhakti and lead to obtain grace of the Lord. The different means of attaining bhakti are prescribed according to the different attitudes of the mind of the devotees and their progress in the path of spiritual realisation. According to vaisnavism, without God's grace neither knowledge of reality nor the highest end of man or liberation can be attained. The reality of the self, world and God cannot be realised by mere reasoning, study of sastras, meditation or austerity, charity or sacrifices, and only the person favoured by God is in a position to know God. While the grace of God is necessary for man's moral elevation and spiritual self-realisation, the devotee must prove himself worthy of God's grace by sincere devotion, constant meditation and complete resignation to God. The devotee continues to live in the presence of God and enjoys blissful communion with Him. This

The Vaisnava schools of Assam, as also in Northern India, adore Krishna as the centre of Vaisnava faith. Though Vaisnava religion is praised and exalted in the Mahabharata and the Puranas like Visnu Purana, Hari-vamsa, Padmapurana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana etc.; it has attained perfection in the Srimadbhagavata which mainly glorifies Bhakti and the lila or deeds of Shrikrishna. The Bhagavata identifies Krishna with the eternal Prahman or the Absolute and yet the personal character of Shrikrishna as eternal youth with the wonderful feats or lilas is retained through out. The Absolute of metaphysics is rendered the personal god of devotional religion in the Bhagavata and in the 1st chapter of the great Purana we have :

Vadanti tat tatvavidastam yajnanam
advayam
Brahmeti Paramateti bhagavaneti
Sabdyate.

The ultimate reality which is pure unicity of consciousness or knowledge is termed by the learned who knows reality as Brahma, Paramatma and Bhagavan. The same reality is apprehended by the Vedantins as Brahman, by the yogis as paramatma and by the devotees as Bhagavan. Thus the Bhagavata Purana which is said to be the commentary on the Brahma Sutra by

Vyasa reconciles beautifully the non-various degrees of qualified dualistic dual Brahma which is undifferentiated views.

and non-relational unity with the personal god of religion who is loved and worshipped, surrendered for solace and bliss by the devotee. The Gurus preaching Vaisnavism in Assam were very much influenced by the commentary of Shridharswami on the Bhagavata and practically followed the teachings of the Swami.

The Advaita school of Vedanta of the great saint and seer Samkaracharya preached the doctrine of spiritual non-dualism and world-illusion and the identity of Brahman and the jivas or individual selves. Realisation of this to the Advaita Vedanta School of Sam-identity or one-ness of reality through meditation is the highest objective or parama purusartha of the jivas. But this is not found to be conducive for Sankara's philosophy. Many ascetics the Bhakti cult with its dualistic meta-physical foundation. Though the jivas and the world do not possess independent reality apart from God, yet the world of becoming and the finite selves are not illusions. They have borrowed reality. Thus there was a great revival of devotional Vaisnavism as a reaction to the non-dualistic world-illusion theories of the Kevalad-Advaita School and different schools of Vaisnavism came into being. The main schools of Vaisnavism came to be known as Shri Brahma, Rudra and Shri Sankaradeva, Madhabdeva, Bhat-Sanakadi. Each school wrote commentaries on the Bhagavata and the Geeta to establish a theory of reality and cosmology suitable to the devotional attitude towards God. The Brahman of Kevaladvaita or non-dualistic monism without any attribute and characterisation, devoid of all associations of personality and communion with the illusive nature of the world and selves cannot satisfy the hankerings of the heart of the devotee. Thus there is no place of Radha nor is the Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Maddhaya-charya, Vallabhacharya and others expounded theistic interpretations of the Vedanta sutra or Brahma sutra with

Eka Deva Eka Seva Eka vine

nahi keva the highest reality or Absolute or
 —there is only one God, one mode of Brahman and the personal God or
 worship and there is none else but one Bhagavan Purosottama one and the
 —says Mahapurusa Sankardeva. In same.
 devotional religion the devotee finds

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ON THE POSITION OF PHILOSOPHY IN OUR UNIVERSITIES

by
Hiren Gohain

Sadly enough, one does not risk ruling class and the intellectual elite a major controversy in saying that held them in great esteem. Poets, the prestige of philosophy has suffered rhetoricians, moralists, artists showed a steep decline in our universities in familiarity with philosophical terms recent times. English is way ahead and theories. There was a brief re- of other subjects, mostly due to its vival of the prestige of philosophy snob-value. Economics is considered during the high-noon of the so-called by students both practical and academe 'Indian Renaissance'. But now, des- mically respectable. History too is pite the presence of competent philo- managing to hold its own. But phi-sophers in the campus, the subject losophy is considered by the ordinary arouses apathy.

student both unpractical and academi- Philosophers, it may still be held cally woolly. Those who take it up in the teeth of the new orthodoxy of for study are vaguely associated with linguistic analysis, are concerned with other-worldly qualities and intellectual the basic premisses and concepts of all flaccidity. Indeed, most of the stud-the sciences and branches of learning. ents, and some teachers will register The examination of such concepts and blank surprise if told that philosophy premisses cannot merely be a matter requires great mental concentration of internal consistency and coherence. and precision in thought.

It necessarily brings into play a certain Philosophers are hardly public world-view, a certain 'philosophy of figures in India. Their concerns and life' in the accomplishment of its des- pursuits are comically abstract in the timed task. Since in ancient India the opinion of the average educated man. dominant concern of the ruling elite, In the West a Russell or a Wittgen-the ruling ideology, was salvation, phi- stein, not to speak of Sartre, is looked losophers sharpened their analytical up to in a way unthinkable here. The tools only with a view to promoting educated man there will be ashamed the ultimate end of salvation. Even- to reveal ignorance about their work. tually the intellectual preparation for Things were not always like this. In salvation was overwhelmed by the ancient India philosophers enjoyed en-tide of emotionalism known as the omous prestige. The members of the 'Bhakti movement'. This was in spite of

the undoubted intellectual distinction in India nor in the world outside. of some of its exponents. The popular character of the Bhakti movement in the end swamped the intellectual element, for cultivation of the intellect, of logic and dialectics, was the privilege of the elite. *Bhagavat Gita* foreshadowed the confusion of categories, the high-sounding but facile compromises and the slide-back into quibbles and mere verbal points that marked the later stages of Hindu ideology. The appeal to faith and the heart not only put an end to an intellectualism that had become sterile but more or less suppressed the intellect. Philosophers became champions of facile synthesis and emotional surrender to a vague conception of the Deity. No wonder, even today philosophers are regarded as navel-gazing characters, utterly other-worldly and even archaic.

But we must beware of opportunist short-cuts. The exercise of the intellect has its place. There are some who parrot Marx : 'Philosophers have so far interpreted the world. The point is to change it'. But Marx did not mean that you could change the world without understanding it. He only pleaded that there could be no real understanding away from the world of practice. Hence while philosophers should return to the

We cannot quite claim that our contemporary philosophers have got out of the rut. Implicitly the idea of salvation away from this world dominates philosophy still. The philosophers are not yet consciously committed to the study of the problems of nation-building, social reform and ideological revolution. The other sciences like History, Sociology, Economics are groping painfully for a re-orientation in thought, in tune with the aspirations and struggle of our people. But philosophy has kept aloof from this effort. Hence its present listlessness and slackness. Hence the contempt it suffers among the educated. Unfortunately, its complacency has been helped by the mood of weariness in the West, the premonition in the capitalist world that something has gone wrong, that the ethic of exploitation of men and things has failed to ensure well-being. But such a mood is defensible neither

real world of struggle and change, there is no need for them to abandon the precious heritage of intellectual discipline, the various techniques of philosophy, the procedures for detecting fallacies, for laying bare the implications of an argument, for examining the consistency of position, etc. The philosopher must once again become a man of this world. He must once again participate in those processes that embody man's struggle to change the world. He must also examine his own role and his own tools from the point of view of the common man, who bears the brunt of the struggle. Wittgenstein, who has been at times derided as a Tolstoyan, was trying precisely to do this. He thought that the traditional snobbery of philosophy stood in the way of a correct diagnosis of its malady. But he did not go far enough. You cannot understand 'ordinary language' without par-

ticipating in the struggles and aspira- philosophers need not wear these sack-
tions of the common man. There is cloth and ashes. But he must train
no 'ordinary language' in abstraction himself to examine his ideas and ends
from the historical processes in which from the point of view of the common
these struggles go on. Because of his man, who always belongs to a parti-
mistake here Linguistic philosophy has cular time and place, and struggles
become an obscurantist regression, within given circumstances. These
One is sardonically amused at the will also help the common man to out-
spectacle of British dons trying des- grow his intellectual infancy and par-
perately to adjust to ordinary speech, ticipate in the high adventures of the
which in most cases is a fantasy like mind, which must be restored to the
adults trying to imitate children. No, world.



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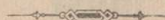
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THE LAW OF KARMA

by
J. Sarma

The law of Karma is one of the most distinctive features of the religious and philosophical thought of the Hindus. It is not only a well established doctrine of the Hinduism, it has also been recognised as one of the fundamentals of both Buddhism and Jainism although both of them do not accept the authority of the Vedas, the main spring of Hinduism. There is no vital difference in between these religions so far as the ethical part is concerned. The Law of Karma so to say constitutes the main spring of the entire ethical world. Mackenzie in his Hindu Ethics has observed "There is no other single conception which has had anything like the same importance as the law of Karma, and there is probably nothing in which Hindu ethical thought is more sharply distinguished from the ethical thought of the west than by the ways in which it has applied this doctrine."¹

The word Karma is derived from the root Kri 'to do' and therefore Karma means an action, a deed, and as a matter of fact the law of Karma

has been used to signify that every action has its fitting results or appropriate reaction. But, however, the word has been used to mean different things at different stages of our cultural heritage.

In the Vedic literature it means sacrifice, in the Dharma Sastras it means rites and ceremonies and the author of Bhagavad Gita has used the term in the sense of one's own duty.

The doctrine of Karma is a moral law corresponding to the physical law of causation. The present is the result of the past. The past appears as present or the present will appear as future in a different garb, in a different condition. As the physical world is regulated by the law of nature so is the moral world by the law of Karma. In the physical world there is the law of cause and effect, in the moral world there is the law of Karma. If the physical world is regulated by the scientific laws of causation, the moral world is governed by the laws of ethical causation. As in the physical world every cause

1 Mackenzie, John : Hindu Ethics, p. 217

produces its effects so also in the moral world every action good or bad produces results of allied nature. Every action done by an individual will inevitably lead to some result good or bad. There cannot be any action which fizzles out without producing any effect nor can there be any effect which has no antecedent in the form of action. In the physical world we see if we put our finger in the fire, it will burn whereas in the moral sphere, we find if a man does something contrary to human conduct, his character is affected for the worse, but if he performs some meritorious deeds, his character is affected for the better. The doctrine of Karma is a law of ethical causation and it cannot be subject to mutation of mechanical causation. While explaining the doctrine of Karma, Durant Says "Life can be understood..... only on the assumption that each existence is bearing the penalty or enjoying the fruits of vice or virtue in some antecedent life. No deed small or great, good or bad can be without effect ; everything will out. This is the Law of Karma..... But Karma is not fate ; fate implies the helplessness of man to determine his own lot ; Karma makes him (taking all his lives as a whole) the creator of his own destiny".²

While we say the law of Karma in the term of ethical causation there is a deeper significance in it for there is a perfect justice in the operation of

the law and it is for this reason that it can explain the inequalities and diversities in life. It explains why some one is good or bad. Why some one is happy or miserable. The law of Karma teaches that man himself is the maker of his own destiny. He can make or mar his own fortune. He himself is the architect of his own life. He can mould his character by his thoughts and deeds. It has been said in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka : "A man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad. He becomes pure by pure deeds, but bad by bad deeds, and here they say that man is made up of desires and as is his desire so is his will, as is his will, so is his deed ; and whatever deed he does that will he reap. And here there is a verse— 'To whatever object a man's mind is attached, to that he goes together with his deed, and having obtained the end (the last result) of whatever he does here on earth he returns again from that world (which is a temporary reward of his deed) to this world of action'.³

Therefore, it is clear that the law of Karma vindicates the truth that the individual himself is solely responsible for the present condition of his life.

Our present condition is the result of what we thought and did in the past and our future will be the result of what we think and do at present. The law of Karma explains that there is no use of laying our miseries

2 W. Durant—The story of Civilization Vol. I, p. 514

3 Brhadaranyaka 4.4.5-6

at others' doors. We ourselves are responsible for our present condition. Thus the Doctrine of Karma is said to have both retrospective and prospective aspects.

But what is Karma? It is the collective aggregate of the individual's thoughts, deeds and desires performed during his journey through life.

The Devi Bhagavata has proclaimed that the course of Karma is not easily comprehensible (कर्मा गहना गतिः).⁴ The fruits will be exactly accordingly to the Karma performed. The effects of the Karma done must be borne whether they be good or bad.

So the result of the actions is inexorable, it knows no exceptions and all are equally governed by it. So it can be seen that the law of Karma does not favour the view that God rewards the virtuous and punishes the sinners. The virtuous and sinners are themselves responsible for their respective experiences in life. In fact, rewards and punishments are but the reactions of one's own actions by body, senses and mind. As it has already been mentioned that the law of Karma is the law of ethical causation so it is seen that the good action produces good results and bad action produces bad results. There is no room for caprice, chance or accident but there is a perfect harmony between the cause and effect in the ethical world. There is nothing arbitrary. The law of Karma explains the inequalities and diversities and differences in the lot

of individual beings that we see all around us. We see how men born and brought up under similar circumstances differ from each other in their success or failure in life. It explains why a man is strong, healthy, enjoying life and happy while another is weak, sickly, suffering and miserable even under the common circumstances of their lives. Well, we also find some wicked people are prospering in life whereas some virtuous are suffering a lot: then how to reconcile this anomaly? Moreover the objection has been raised that the Devi, the Divine mother who has been recognised as the creatrix of the Universe cannot reasonably be called the cause of its origination for she makes some one to enjoy happiness and others to suffer miseries. If the world with an unequal dispensation be the creation of the Devi then it will be no more than that of a creation by an ordinary mortal of love and hatred. So there arises the contingency of contradiction of Her Nature of *Sat*, *Cit*, *Anand* and *nityatripta* and passionless.

Nilakantha the celebrated commentator of Devi Bhagavata has advanced the following argument to meet this contingency.

The Devi who is of the nature of *sat*, *cit* and *anand* and who is ever self-content has no necessity of creating the world to serve any useful purpose for Her own self. It is only out of mercy that the Devi has created this world for the salvation of the

embodied souls, as in the absence of the world the embodied soul will remain unliberated as ever. They can attain salvation only after enjoyment of the fruits of their actions. So without the world the embodied souls will not get the field for the fructification of their actions and without the fructification of their action they cannot be liberated.

But, however, she creates this world together with its inequalities after showing consideration of the merit and demerit of the creatures about to be created. The Devi like the rain which constitutes the common cause for the production of the crops, but as regard the differences in the crops it is the peculiar potencies inherent in the various seeds. So the Devi is the common cause for the creation, while as regards the inequalities among the individuals, it is the actions appertaining to the various souls that serve as the special causes for the same. Therefore, the Devi is not to be arraigned for inequality and cruelty. The inequalities of life are due to embodied soul and not to Devi. So the scriptures: "It is indeed He alone who makes that man do a good action whom He desires to lift up to these higher world and it is He likewise who makes another man do a bad action whom He desires to drag downwards".⁵

"Good does one become by good action, bad by bad action."⁶ Smṛiti

also shows that the Lord metes out rewards and punishment only in consideration of specific actions of beings as in the Bhagavadgītā "whatever people in whatever manner betake themselves to me, them in that very manner I accord treatment".⁷

So the law of causation is Universal and inviolable and every event must have some causes for them. When we fail to ascertain the real cause of an event we like to say it is accidental which is not correct.

Now in view of the pronounced declaration in the śruti about the non-difference prior to creation as in the text "Existence (Being) alone my dear was all this in the beginning, one and without a second."⁸ There does not exist any Karma out of consideration for which there might ensue inequalities in the creation. For Karma came into existence only at a time subsequent to the creation. But we cannot have a body unless there is Karma and there cannot be Karma unless there be a body. So there arises the logical defect of a mutual interdependence. If on the other hand we assume a beginninglessness there can be offered an explanation in conformity with the maxim of the seed and sprout and so there would be no defect of any kind. So runs the scriptural passages.—

জীব ইশো বিত্ত্বাচিৎত্বা জীবেশয়োভিদা ।
অবিদ্যা তচ্চিন্তোভেদঃ ষড়স্মাকমনাদয়ঃ ॥

5. Kausitaki Upanisad. 3-8

6. Brihad. 3 2. 13.

7. Bhagavadgita. 4. II

8. Chandhyogya, 6-2-1.

By this Jiva (self) shows that transmigratory existence is beginningless: By the scriptural mantra passage "The creator created the sun, the moon, as before"⁹ shows the existence of a prior Kalpa. That the transmigratory existence is beginningless is also mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka.

In the smritis also we come across the beginninglessness of the transmigratory world as in "There is not to be perceived here any form of it: neither any end, nor the beginning, nor the support".¹⁰ And in the Puranas it has been established that there is no measuring of the world creations that have gone before or that are to follow hereafter. Thus the law of Karma explains the inequality of condition in life in the world. God is no doubt the dispenser of the fruit of action but He does so in relation with the Karma of the individual being and not out of his own accord. The inequality of condition in life is due to the merit and demerit earned by each individual being in each birth.

"Each new action is a link in the chain of causation adding with each link of the same kind and finally resulting into what constitutes the character of the individual".¹¹ It has also been nicely stated. "It (the Doctrine of Karma) points out that the cause lies in the effect and the effect is also latent in the cause. A seed contains the whole tree potentially and produces the tree and the tree produces the seed

again. Every action thus produces its effect on the doer of that action and the effect it produces physical, mental and also moral. An action affects the tendency, disposition and ultimately the character of the agent. Each character or personality is the result of the previous action and also the cause of future changes in the personality."

The Devi-Bhagavata points out that every thing in this universe is composed of three qualities viz; Sattva, Raja and Tama. In other words these qualities are the primary elements which combine in varied proportions to constitute all the objects of the world. An individual in whom Sattva predominates is called Sattvika and is characterised by such attributes as virtuous, etc.

An individual in whom Rajas is prominent is called Rajasik and is swayed by the desires, passions and is engaged in all sorts of activities. The individual dominated by Tamas is called Tamasik and is characterised by such qualities as vice, ignorance etc.

The Karmas performed by the individual are also of three kinds viz; auspicious, in-auspicious and mixed of which the auspicious is Sattvik Karma the in-auspicious is the Tamasik Karma and the mixed is the Rajasik Karma.

The auspicious acts produce merit, while evil actions produce demerit in the individual soul. There are three types of Karma which naturally follow the individual viz; the bodily, the mental, and the vocal. Virtue and

9 Rg Veda X 109.3

10 Bhagavadgita XV.3

11 L. B Nath—Hinduism Ancient and Modern, p. 249-50.

vice as moral qualities arise out of the good and bad deeds, thoughts and words of the individual. It is through the seed of Karma that the individual beings begin their life's journey and they cannot remain for a moment without having any connection with Karma and it has got no beginning nor any end. They go on often and often incarnating in various forms and then go to dissolution. This process goes on through several lives till the soul attains liberation.

All actions done in the previous lives are not remembered by the individual being in his subsequent life, although they leave some resultant impression upon the mind called Vasana and this is what is responsible for the operation of the law of Karma. It is this Vasana whose accumulated load determines one's future and moulds his character to undergo happiness or misery.

Now one may argue what will happen to those actions good or bad which do not fructify within the span of an individual life. No action as we have noticed before can, according to the law of Karma vanish like a smoke. So another life is necessary for the individual soul during which he may experience the results of his past actions. It is only the past that determines the present but the present also determines the future.

It has been said "Attached where his mind is to, there he goes according to his Karma. Having enjoyed

the fruit of his Karma there, he comes back again to this world for performing Karma. But this is for the person of desire. For him who has no desire, who is free from desire, whose desire has been fulfilled, and whose desire is in the self, his vital airs do not leave the body. Being Brahma Himself he attains to Brahma"¹². The soul is undecaying and immortal and the birth and death can be predicted only of the body and not of the soul; so says the sruti "verily this body dies when bereft of the soul the soul dies not". "জীবা পেতং বা কিলেদং ত্রিয়তে ন জীৰো ত্রিয়তে" (Chandogya 6.11.3). The Svetasvatara upanisad further declares that "The Jivas (souls) assumes many forms gross or subtle according to its attributes. By the qualities of its actions as well as from attributes of its body, it appears, though it is without any difference, to be the cause of the Union of these forms."

The immortality of the soul is as universal as the infallibility of the law of Karma among the Hindus. The soul of man is eternal and the laws governing the activities of embodied soul will equally be eternal. Thus the law of Karma becomes a continuous process, it carries the past and leads on the future. Every embodied soul will be required to go through a series of births and deaths till its Karma and the seed of desire is consumed by the fire of knowledge and attains salvation. The law of Karma serves a bridge leading to immortality.

So the cycle of birth and death will continue till the ultimate goal of life which is spiritual realisation is reached. Thus the theory of transmigration or rebirth stands as a necessary corollary to the law of Karma. "The theory of rebirth in fact rests in the law of Karma. They may well be said to be the obverse and reverse of the same coin." As Swami Vivekananda says "Life is another name for death, and death for life. One particular mode of manifestation is which we call life, another particular mode of manifestation of the same thing we call death."¹³ The immortality of the soul is a fundamental principle of the Hinduism and is the logical basis of developing the law of Karma. So the doctrine should be understood with reference to the individual's entire span of life which passes through various stages of existence and not by a single birth however long or short his lease of life might be.

The law of Karma thus offers an explanation why an individual rises and falls in the scale. The rise and fall of an individual come in accord with the action he does in life. The individual is not left as a mere tool in the hands of fate rather he himself is the architect of his fortune. No doubt the result of past Karma is there, but it lies within ourselves to modify them by good Karma in the present. Man's will is ever free, else moral life would be impossible. But its scope is somewhat limited by his birth, environment and

natural tendencies. "Every soul is like a farmer" observes Sarma "to have a plot of land is given. The extent of the land, the nature of its soil, the changes of weather to which it is exposed are all pre-determined. But the farmer is quite at liberty to till the ground, to manure it and raise suitable crops or to neglect it and allow it to run to waste."¹⁴

In order to make the law of Karma operative Hindu scriptures have divided a man's Karma into three parts—*anarabdha*—the action which has not yet begun to bear fruit; *arabdha* or *prarabdha*—the action of which has already begun fruit. It is like an arrow which has already been discharged and cannot be recalled and consequently the archer is bound to reap its result. *Anarabdha* Karma is further subdivided into two classes, viz, *Praktana* or *Sancita* and *Agami* or *Sanciya*mana. *Sancita* Karma is that which has been accumulated from past lives while the *Agami* Karma is that which is being accumulated in this life which is going to produce some effect in this or some other life. It is entirely in our control. If our thoughts, action and desire are pure, righteous and unselfish we can create for ourselves conditions which can lead us towards perfection.

'According to Hindu conceptions,' observes Sarma, 'God is not a judge sitting in a remote heaven. Meting out punishments according to a penal code or waiting to mete them out till the last day of judgement, but an

13 Complete work vol II, p. 235

14 D. S. Sarma—What is Hinduism p. 86.

indwelling Spirit whose law is wrought into our natures. At the same time He never abdicates in favour of His law... .. Further if a man surrenders himself entirely to God and totally forgets himself and his nature, His grace can lift him away from the realm where the law of Karma operates. For behind the moral universe

there is a spiritual universe where all differences are reconciled, all conflicts between good and evil cease and all our sins melt away in the Grace of God... If we take refuge in Him and act in concert with Him in everything we do, we can escape from the realm of the law of Karma or retributive action."¹⁵

15 D. S. Sarma—What is Hinduism, pp 89-90

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THE ASSAMESE TRADITION ABOUT KUMARILABHATTA

by

Acharya Manoranjan Shastri

Kumarilabhata, also called Tuta- Once Dharmakirti being involved tabhatta, simply called as Bhatta or in a grave social offence had to face Bhattacharya, and more respectfully, great persecution from social leaders as Bhattacharya was such a personality including his elder brother Kanada- of extra-ordinary genius that modern bhatta. Ultimately due to that social scholars of different fields dealing with offence Dharmakirti was expelled from the history, philosophy, sociology, society and being so humiliated he polity, religion, culture and literature gave up his Brahminhood and got him- of ancient and mediaeval India appear self proselytised to Buddhism, which to be greatly attracted to and are curi-prevalled at that time throughout ous to know about that great scholar India and abroad. At last he had to and the foremost philosopher of India. leave his birthplace and started to live

An attempt is being made in the in Magadha, where Buddhism was following pages to draw the attention greatly patronized by the ruler as well of modern scholars towards the tradi- as the people. Afterwards, Dharmak- tion about Kumarilabhata, which has kirti became a strong supporter and been orally current down to the pre- devout expounder of Buddhism.

present century amongst a few aged per- On many occasions Kumarila- sons of Assam. The tradition runs bhatta the great exponent of Brah- thus :— Once there lived Kanada- minism debated with Dharmakirti re- bhatta, alias Kanai and Dharmakirti garding the superiority between Bud- alias Dharmakirti two brothers near Mani- dhism and Brahminism but he could kuta (modern Hajo) in Pragjyotisa or not substantiate his arguments as he Kamarupa kingdom. Kanadabhata, was not well versed in the Buddhist the elder brother was a very pious Philosophy. In order to remove the Brahmin but was not so much learned drawback he went to Magadha and as his younger brother Dharmakirti. took admission in a Mahavihara (Bud- The former (Kanadabhata) had a son, dhist Monastery) there in the guise of Kumarilabhata or Kumarila by name a Buddhist monk. Kumarila was so who learnt all the Vedas and Sastras sincere, intelligent and honest a stud- under his uncle Dharmakirti and be- ent that the Acarya (teacher) of the came well-versed in all branches of Mahavihara was greatly pleased and learning. taught him, without reservation, all

matters of Buddhism and its philosophical background.

His fellow students observing the peculiarities in his behaviour and way of living, suspected him to be a Brahmin and made it secretly known to their teacher.

One day the Buddhist teacher with a desire to discover his real identity began to indulge in vilifying the vedic religion and arguing against the authority of the Veda, this afflicted Kumarila so much that tears began to flow from his eyes. He could not remain silent but raised objection against the indulgence of the teacher and eloquently refuted his arguments.

The Buddhist teacher being extremely annoyed with Kumarila angrily proposed to hold a debate with the precondition that whoever of the two debators would be defeated must either give up his own religion and get converted himself to the opponent's community or be demolished by burning himself in a fire of husk. Kumarila accepted the challenge. The agreement of term and conditions had been made and sensational debate started in time. It continued for a long period, more than a week and ended with the Buddhist teacher's defeat and Kumarila's Victory. In spite of all opposition from the part of Kumarilabhata the Buddhist teacher preferred the second alternative of the precondition, and immolated himself in a fire made of husk.

Kumarila lost one of his eyes while he was living in the Buddhist monastery. The self immolation of his Buddhist teacher deeply aggrieved him and that affliction led him to believe himself to be guilty of sin. Under this belief Bhatta towards the end of his life, atoned for the sin by burning

his mortal body in a fire of husk at Tribeni in the holy Prayaga.

After having vanquished the great Buddhist teacher of Magadha, Kumarilabhata set out on a tour of conquest all over India and vanquished all opponents who stood against the Vedic religion in disputations held in different parts of the country. He travelled from Northern India to the South and stayed there for a long time. During that time Sri Sankaracharya in his tender age got upanayana sanskara (performance of taking sacred thread) and made vedadhyayana (learning of the Vedas) under guidance of Kumarilabhata. For that reason afterwards Bhattapada had been called as Bhattacharya. Kumarilabhata was so much effulgent with his talent and was surrounded by such a number of brilliant pupils around him that the people looked on him as an incarnation of the God Kumara (Kartikeya—the commander-in-chief of the Gods), since he had vanquished all enemies of the vedic religion. The great Sankaracharya met Bhattacharya for the last time at the holy Prayaga while the latter was performing atonement by getting burned in the fire of husk. Here Sankaracharya showed him his treatise 'Sariraka Mimamsabhasya' and requested him to write a commentary on it. Bhattapada highly appreciated his work but expressed inability to comply with his request as he had already undertaken the vow of making atonement for his sin and advised Sankaracharya to approach Mandanamisra for that purpose.

Further, in this connection the following funny and interesting legend about Kumarilabhata traditionally carried on among the people of Assam deserves mention.

On certain occasion Kumarilabhattacha had to a foreign country at the request of his patron king for some political reason, while in a hurry, he went out straight from the capital and could not meet his family members at the time of his departure.

After the departure of Kumarilabhattacha, the king sent a messenger to his house in order to inform his family about the sojourn of Bhattacha. The king sent with the messenger a cart loaded with goods and materials for the maintenance of the family during the absence of Bhattacha. The messenger informed Bhattacha's wife all about her husband and presented the goods and articles sent by the king.

Visvavara, the consort of Bhattacha received the messenger with pleasing words and said that there were sufficient goods already stored in her cottage and she had no more space to keep the goods sent by the king. She advised the messenger to take returned the goods and store them in royal store-house.

At the words of the wife of Bhattacha, the messenger became afraid supposing that the king would not believe his oral statement and might be angry with him by mistaking it for his dishonesty without any written document.

Thinking in this way the messenger humbly and respectfully stated that he would be obliged and remain greatful to her if she would kindly communicate His majesty all about the situation in writing so that His majesty would not be dissatisfied with his actions. Visvavara, the consort of Bhattacha complied with his prayer and had written the following verse in a Bhurjapatra addressed to the king.

Dravyani santyeva bahunī rajan

Kva va katham va khalu raksa-
metat;

Na me'sti kascit paricarako'nyo
Bhattasya katyam sakatah pravi-
stah.

"There are plenty of goods and articles stored in my cottage. O gracious lord, how and where shall I store such a huge stock of goods in my cottage? I have no servant to wait upon me. A cart has penetrated into the waist of Bhattacha".

Then the wife of Bhattacha handed over the message to the messenger who respectfully received it and went back to the capital with the loaded cart. He deposited all the goods to the royal store-keeper and handed over the letter to the door-keeper in order to deliver it to the king. The king received the letter while he was sitting in the royal assembly. He immediately opened the letter and looked surprised and full of sorrow, while going through the message. Being overcome with grief His majesty expressed the sad news to the house with trembling voice that Bhattacha had been seriously wounded by an accident—"a cart unfortunately penetrated into the waist of Bhattacha. Proper and necessary arrangement for his treatment should be made immediately" saying in this way he summoned the royal physician and ordered him to go to Bhattacha's house for his treatment.

The news immediately spread over the capital and the wife of Bhattacha came to know it from some persons and being extremely overpowered with grief she fell down on the ground and lost her senses. Hearing this sad news all the kith and kins of Bhattacha including his friends rushed to his house and being assembled there they

began to weep and cry aloud while waist".

the royal physician arrived. He told them that the king sent him for treatment of wife of Bhatta he contemplated what actually happened and said—seriously wounded by an accident. "yes Madam, those men who came Hearing his words, the crowd became from the palace and the physician more afflicted and agonised with sorrow so that none of them responded had been known to me from the letter, his presence and received him. Ob- you had written to me and sent thro- serving the situation the physician pre- ugh the cartman messenger. Please sumed that Bhatta had already been find that letter and see whether writ- expired, otherwise the people assem- ten by yourself or not" and saying this bled there would have not become so he produced the Bhurjapatra.

much aggrieved and the people would The wife of Bhatta carefully exa- pay heed to his presence. Thinking in mined the letter and plunged into this way the physician returned to the shame while she found in the letter palace and intimated the king that the reading "Bhattasya Katyam (In Bhatta had already died before his the waist of Bhatta)" instead of "Bhat- arrival at his house and rendering any tasya Kutyam (in the cottage of Bhat- medical aid. ta)" which was intended to write but

The sad news of demise of Kuma- due to her inadvertence and slip of pen rilabhatta caused His majesty deeply the Ukara (u) was dropped. For this moved. The king, then, started for unexpected mistake she became ex- the house of Bhatta to express perso- tremely ashamed and said with trem- nally his condolence to Bhatta's family bling voice that it was intended to in their bereavement. When he arri- write "Kutyam" instead of Katyam. ved at Bhatta's residence he saw all She was so much overpowered with the members of his family and rela- shame that she could not say more but tives weeping aloud, overwhelmed with hanging head she entered into with sorrow and wife of Bhatta was her apartment to hide herself. lying senseless on the ground.

The king felt extremely relieved when he knew that Bhatta was safe Bhatta while she came to her senses and sound and free of danger and peo- and inquired how and where Bhatta ple assembled there jumped with joy suffered the accident and who had in- in cheers.

formed it her ? Then she replied thus Thus a sorrowful event unexpect- —"It was your majesty who knew the tedly turned into a pleasing and joyful actual fact. I heard about the acci- one and it became happier as soon as dent said by many persons who came Bhatta arrived at his house.

from the palace and it was confirmed This story of the bygone days, is when the royal physician came and in- still floating up-til now in the field of formed us that he had been sent by reminiscence and carries a reference to your majesty for the treatment of it in the following proverb in Assa- Bhatta who had been known to be mese :—

seriously wounded by an accident as Bejir jalat hati somal kalahat somal a result of penetrating a cart into his nava ;

Bhatar katit gadi somal bhateni mention in support of the authenticity of the tradition.

"An elephant passed through the In support of the tradition it neddle's hole, a boat entered into a should be pointed out that Udayana-pitcher, a cart penetrated into the carya the most prominent writer on waist of Bhatta and the wife of Bhatta Nyayavaisesika who flourished between 850—950 A.D. informs us that wailed aloud".

More over, it is traditionally ex-Dharmakirti and Prajnakaragupta, two plained among the followers of the prominent Buddhist Philosophers, had Kaulism (a subsect belonging to Tan- been expelled from their original tricism) that the three corner lands of Brahmin society due to some grave India namely, (1) Kamarupa (modern offence and helplessly took refuge in Assam), (2) Kerala, and (3) Kashmira Buddhism. (2)

being abbreviated are called Kakara- An indication of the offence, due traya or Trikakara — three 'ka's. to which Dharmakirti had to be expelled from the society appear to be pre-

age the kaula vidya (knowledge and served in current through the following rites of Kaulism) and the Brahmanical ing Assamese proverb :

tradition would be slided from their Haladhia cakari gharar dhokari rightful paths indicated in the vedas. Yor yova makhi phet kaurar pakhi. In order to protect and re-establish Alaniya lata kanat them on their right place three padas Dharmai paril phanat. (parts) of the supreme Reality (Brah-

man or paramasiva) would reveal in of a horse, a pair of fly engaged in the form of three incarnations in three sexual intercourse and a feather of a kakaras respectively as Kumarilabhat- blue crow, —colltction of these 4 tapada in Kamarupa, Sankarabha- things was put on so as an earning by gavatpada in Kerala and Acarya Abhi- which Dharmai (Dharmakirti) being navaguptapada in Kashmira. The ver- spell-bound fell in love with her".

ses quoted gelow (1) noticed in an old The following lines quoted from manuscript of the yoginitantra deserve an Assamese folk-song deserve mention

1. "Mamaivamsa mahamaye brahmana rsayasca ye,
Papapaṅkanimagnanam naranamuddidhirsaya.
Dharmasansthapanartham ca sambhavanti yuge yuge,
Tasmattan brahmanan devi ma'vamamstha kadacana.
Srautamarga cyutam vidyam raksitum paramesvari,
Tripadastrikakaresu tryavatarah kalau yuge.
Kramenavirbhavisyanti divyanghadvaratah sive,
Bauddhapasandanasartham sampradayarthameva ca.
Sampradayasamkaranam rodharthamiha sankari,
Sampradayasthapanartham brahmanya raksanaya ca".

—Yoginitantrottararddhe Kamarupadhikare Sodasapatale.

- 2 "Traivarnika vahiskrtairanadhikaribhirananya gatikatvat kirti Prajnakaravat."

Atmatatvaviveke, banddhagama Parigrahe yuktih. P. 431.

in support of the tradition which inform that Kanadabhatta (Kanai) and Dharmakirti (Dharmai) were two brothers of whom the former was a faithful follower of vedic religion (Brahminism) while the latter being a reasonable person did not believe on religious or social customs, without reason :—

Ahe murukha tor no i ki acar,
Bhai pandita tor no i ki vicar.
Pandita kanaik murukha dharmai,
i katha puchila yai,
Bamunar bidhavai machmamsa tejila
pani top kimate khai. 2
Eke col jalate dui matsya upajil
sal saul dui bhai.
Saulak dhari ani bhakate bhunjai
Salak no kiya nakhai. 3. etc.

— O foolish one, what is this your conduct ?

O brother, wise one, what is this your consideration ? 1

Dharmai (Dharmakirti) the fool, came to wise kanai (kanada bhatta) and asked him that why the widows of Brahmins used water (which is origin and abode of the fish) to drink while they give up to take fish and flesh for food ? 2

The fishes Sala and Sakula, born and brought up in the same water of the same pond are two brothers. Between them the Sakula used to be taken for food by religious men and why not the sala is accepted by them for food ? 3 etc.

Though in the beginning of the song Dharmai is presented as the fool and kanai as the wise one yet the questions raised by Dharmai suggest him (Dharmai) and foolishness of Kanai.

Besides this it is well known to the scholars that the aforestated tradition is found in part on record in Biographies of Great Sankaracarya, i.e. Sankaravijaya of Anandagiri and Sankaradigvijaya of Madhavacarya.

Laksminath Bezbarua relying only on the aforesaid tradition very confidently and boldly introduced Kumari-labhatta to be an Assamese and as a Guru (spiritual guide) of great Sankaracarya in his poem Asama-Sangita. 2

This legend about Kumarilabhatta is traditionally known not only in Assam but it was, once for a long time current all over India. We are told that some traditional scholars of Mimamsa philosophy prior to the present century, even in South India, knew this legend and believed Bhatta-pada to be a Brahmin from Kamarupa (modern Assam). Relying on this tradition Prof. Krishnasvami Aiyar made a reference to this belief in his work "Three Great Acaryas". 3

Vincent A. Smith, a noted historian for an recognising authenticity of this tra-

2. "Sankaracaryar guru asamiya Kumarilabhatta nam, Jagadgururo guru hava pari bhattai dekhele kam".

3. "He is believed to have been an Assamese Brahmin by some, while others profess to set in his *Vartika* conclusive proof of his connection with the land of Tamil, and the following account is mainly taken from what Madhava says of him : Three Great Acaryas, by C.N. Krishnasvami Aiyar P. 27.

dition calls Kumarilabhatta an Assamese Brahmin, without hesitation. 4

There are some evidences on record available in the works of Kumarilabhatta himself and other contemporary or latter authors and in the inscriptions of Kamarupa-king deserving mention and to be explained in order to support the above-mentioned tradition.

Moreover the traditions prevailing in other parts of our country and abroad which appear as contradictory to it should be reconciled or assimilated with it. But it is not possible for us to proceed so far for the paucity of space in this short paper.

Not only from the Assamese tradition but from the Biography of Sri sankaracarya also it is known that the people, all over India, looked on Kumarilabhatta as an incarnation of God Kcmara (Kartikeya — commander-in-chief of the Gods).

Siddha Matsyendranatha alias Minanatha, the revealer (Avataraka) of Kaulajnana, flourished in Kamarupa or its neighbourhood (between 750-850 A.D.). He had been initiated into the kaula system of Sadhana (ritualism) by a Bhairavi in Kamarupa, attained spiritual achievement (Siddhi) in Kamarupa and revealed secret knowledge of Kaulagama (canon of kaula system) to his disciples in the same land. 6

The revealer of Kaulajnana while speaking of his different incarnations as siddha identified himself with the ultimate truth. Sadasiva, Isa, Srikantha, Rudra, Dhivara (Matsyendranatha), Viresvara and so on. Further more he says — "O my beloved, I am the honourable and venerable one among the Gods as well as the demons, therefore, O beautiful one, this well-known name Bhattapada is also my name". 7

4. "The Hindu reaction against Buddhism was carried further early in the eighth century by Kumarilabhatta, an Assamese Brahmin....." "The Oxford students History of India' by vincent A. Smith, 15th Edition, p. 74.

5. Yatah sa tarakarajirajanista mahitale
Bhattapadabhidha yasya bhusa diksudrsamabhut.

Sankaradigvijaya 1.60.

Ityucivamsamatha bhattakumarilam ta,
misad vikasvaramukhambuja mahamauni.
Srutyarthe Karmavimukhan sugatan nihanum
Jatam guham bhuvi bhavantamaham nujane.

ibid ; 7-106.

6. (a) Dr P. C. Bagchi — Introduction to 'Kaulajnananirnaya' pp. 25-32.
(b) K. L. Barua's paper on 'Kamarupa and Bajrayana' 'Studies in the early history of Assam'. pp.46-55.

(c) Dr K. C. Pandeya — Abhinavagupta. pt. I. ch. V pp. 144-45.

7. Aham tat paramam tatvam aham sa bhairabah priye

Aham sadasiva isah srikantho rudra eva ca.

Aham so dhivaro devi aham viresvarah priya.

Asuranam suranam ca aham bhattarakah priye,

Bhattapadeti vikhyato namedam mama sundari.

(Kaula. Nir, 16/11, 12, 18)

We have seen that many writers Brahmin student (Brahmacarin). Being latter than Kumarilabhattacha including under the influence of nescience the Medhatilhi the commentator on Manu- latter stole the sastra which contained samhita, Umbekacarya who lived between 700—750 A.D., and Madhava- the mystic knowledge and threw it craya the author of Sankaradigvijaya into the sea. Then a fish had eaten up the sastra. The Bhairava (incarnate respectfully mention Kumarilabhattacha Matsyendranatha) went to the sea cauas Bhattachapada 8 and none except him ght the fish which had gulped the sas- (Kumarilabhattacha) we find being men- tra, cut open its belly and recovered tioned or understood anywhere by this the sacred canon of the kaulism. The surname. From this reason it may be thief being enraged dug an under inferred that Bhattachapada's fame and ground passage, stole it again and extra-ordinary influence over the threw it into the ocean. It was eaten realm of philosophy and religion was up by a fish of immense size. This so well known to him (Siddha) that he action infuriated the Bhairava who was tempted to be called by this name prepared a net with his spiritual power (Bhattachapada). (Saktijala) caught the fish and began to drag it to the shore. But the fish would not come as it was as much strong as the Bhairava. Besides it was possessed with spiritual power and

Apart from this the very chapter of his work (i.e. 16th chapter of Kaulajnananiranaya) contains the following legend :

The Bhairava (Matsyendranatha) was not to be easily conquered even by the Gods. Then the Bhairava abandoned his Brahminhood and assumed the character of a fisherman to be able to fight with the fish better. "O Devi Kamarupa. It was the knowledge of I am the fisherman who did the act of the kaulagama (the canon of the Kaulas) of which he (Matsyendranatha) a fisherman". The fish was then dragged by the net of spiritual power and was the repository at Candradvipa, the kulagama was recovered from it. Then he relates the incident which by cutting open its belly. "Though I happened there in respect of this secret knowledge. While he was residing am a Brahmin I have become a fisherman. This Brahmin is called Matat candradvipa with his consort karti- syaghna (killer of fish) as he killed the keya came to him in the guise of a fish and he is fisherman (Kaivarta),

8. (a) "Taduktam bhattachapadaih" (Mam. Medhatithi bh. 11/18).

(b) Bhavanaviveka tika umbekacarya krta; p. 43.

(c) "Bhattachapadabhidha yasya" (Sankara Dig., 1/63)

Atha giramupasamhrtyadarad bhattachapadah,

Sama dhanapatina sau bodhitadvaitavadah.

Prasamitamamatah samstat prasadena sadyo,

Vidaladakhilabandho vaisnavam dhama pede.

ibid, 7/12.

the lord of Brahmins — because he acted as a fisherman". 9

This legend found in Kaulajnananiraya reminds one of the tradition introduced in the Sankaradigvijaya which relates kumarilabhata as an incarnation of kumara (kartikeya) the vanquisher of all enemies of the Vedic religion as well as the Puranic legend which informs that the God Fish (Matsya incarnation of Visnu) was the repository of Vedic knowledge and had received the vedas from the deluge at the dissolution of the world.

While these three legends are considered together the account of kaulajnananiraya may however suggest the following secondary meaning (dvan-nyartha) that young Brahmachari (Vatuka) and kartikeya indicate Kumarilabhata; the repository or teacher of kulagama is suggested by the word Bhairava; Vedic faith and philosophy characterized as sea or ocean which was overflowing then in the land of Kamarupa; the protectors and followers of Vedic religion introduced (styled) as fish (Matsya) so that the following facts may be deduced.

Kumarilabhata, an incarnation of kartikeya learned kaulagama under certain Bhairavas, but he did not faithfully follow the kaula system and under the influence of nescience (in view of the Siddha) took the essence away from Kaulagama as a thief and threw it into the Vedic religion and Philosophy (showed them to be the property of the vedas and exploited them in expounding the vedic religion). The kaulajnana being drowned in the Vedic faith had lost its own distinctive feature, viz., black magic, sorcery, spells, etc., and was accepted by the followers of the Vedic religion as if something drowned in the sea to be eaten by the fish.

Then some one Bhairava (the exponent of kaulagama) by his spiritual power charmed the followers of the Vedas so that they became attracted to kaulism while Bhattapada, who was believed to be the incarnation of kartikeya, again stood active against the aboriginal kaulas, free from vedic influence. He took somehow again the possession of it, away from them and restored it to the control of the followers of the vedas, while they regained it. It was as if a thief or a mouse making an underground passage takes the valuables away from its owner and throws into the ocean and a fish devoured it for the second time.

Afterwards the Siva (Bhairava) incarnated here in guise of a Brahmin who being initiated into the kaulism by a yogini or Bhairavi at kamarupa attained supernatural power through the practice of the kaula system. Then by his spiritual power he triumphed in restoring the secret knowledge of kaulism, which was distinctly derived from the vedic faith and system, resting under the regulation of the Vedas. It was as if a fisherman with his net rescued something valuable from the belly of a fish, which had been caught and dragged by his net out of the sea.

Thus he owns the name 'Matsyaghna' for recovering the Kaulajnana by killing a fish. In course of recovering the secret knowledge of Kaulagama in this way he had to give up his Brahminhood and had to act as a fisherman. His name Matsyendranatha

indicates also that he overpowered in a neighbouring region, where the Matsyendra — the incarnation of God latter lived for a long time, and that Visnu, the protector of the vedas, was, most probably, Manikuta (modern Hajo near Gauhati) in the ancient

This legend indirectly suggests that Bhattapada was prior to Matsyen-Kamarupa or Pragjyotisa kingdom as dranatha and flourished in the same or stated in the aforesaid tradition.

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ASSAM, GAUHATI : 1

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE GAUHATI UNIVERSITY*

by

D. P. Barooah

About sixty years ago, certain sections of the people of Assam floated suggestions for the establishment of a University in Assam for Science, 11 for Arts, 1 for Commerce, 1 for Law, and Persian (being matured into a popular movement for a University to fulfil the distinctive cultural aspirations of the people of this eastern part of India. It was on the significant date of 26 January that the Gauhati University began functioning in 1948. As stated in the State-ment of Objects and Reasons appended to the Gauhati University Bill of 1947, 'Assam offers great opportunities of study in many fields—linguistic, historical, ethnological, archaeological, geological, scientific and agricultural.It will be the aim of the proposed University to intensify the study of the age-long spirit of Assamese life and character, and to bring in them the necessary adjustments in relation to Indian civilisation, and to the different and new impulses of the West'.

The Annual Report of the University for the year 1968—69 stated that there is a sense of fulfilment which should gladden the hearts of the founding fathers. The University is an affiliating, teaching and residential University. Starting with 17 Colleges, 8 Post-graduate Departments and 13 Under-graduate Departments besides imparting instruction in Law, the Uni-

versity has grown to respectable dimensions with 127 Colleges, 24 Post-graduate Departments including 10 for Science, 11 for Arts, 1 for Commerce, 1 for Law, and Persian (being established); other Departments include the Department of Modern Indian Languages, Department of Folk Lore Research, Department of Linguistics, Departments for professional courses in Library Science, Journalism, Foreign languages (Russian and French), and the Diploma course in Statistics. There is also the Department of Method of English Teaching. The total number of Departments stand at 33 including Business Administration which is being established. It has been additionally decided to establish a post graduate Department in Library Science.

A word about the University Law College. The former Earle Law College, established in 1914, became the University Law College with the establishment of the University. This was the only constituent college of the University and its Diamond Jubilee celebrations were held in January 1976. Yet, during 1975-76, the State Government decided to take over the University Law College and the Executive Council of the University 'decided to hand over the University Law

* While the views are of the author, grateful acknowledgement is made of the help rendered by several University Departments and offices in the form of facts given on request.

College to State Government with selves. , assets and liabilities'. During that period, the University also decided to abolish the B. T. classes run by itself. It was, however, decided to establish the Law Department with post-graduate and under-graduate classes. Incidentally, the University manages directly a number of under-graduate Departments.

Faculty	Enrolment
1. Arts	... 48,172
2. Science	... 10,052
3. Commerce	... 3,965
4. Medicine	... 591
5. Engineering	... 636
6. Law	... 3,227
<hr/>	
Total	65,643

In 1949—50, the number of students attending classes in Departments directly run by the University totalled 808. This figure rose to about 3,000 for several years preceding 1975 when a fall in numbers had been registered due mainly to the policy of selective admission adopted from 1975—76. Further, the University Law College has been taken over by the Government. At present the number of students in Departments directly run by the University is about 1450. In the changed situation in the country brought about by the lifting of the Emergency, certain relaxations in the rules have been made and this has contributed to some increase in the number of admissions. This is yet to compare favourably with the figure of enrolment of students in the post-graduate Departments which stood at 1861 in 1975.

In the interest of students belonging to weaker sections of the society, twenty percent of total seats in each Post-graduate Department has been reserved for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste candidates with effect from the 1975—76 academic session ; further, while selecting students under this category, relaxation of 5% marks is given on the qualifying marks prescribed for general students, and candidates for the reserved quota are selected on merit amongst them-

In the previous year, the number of students in the Colleges including those that were not affiliated but permitted to send up candidates at the examinations conducted by the University stood at 73,669. It deserves to be examined as to why this fall in numbers was registered for the year under report.

Incidentally, the Dibrugarh University with jurisdiction over two districts of Assam started functioning in 1965, while the Assam Agricultural University came into existence thereafter with jurisdiction over the entire State of Assam in respect to education in Agriculture and allied sciences.

In certain respects the academic programmes of the University bear the impress both of expansion and consolidation of gains achieved. For several years past there has been an impressive output of research work in the University. Since the inception of the University to date, the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy has been awarded to 255 research scholars. Work in connection with two research projects sanctioned by the North-Eastern Council in the Departments of Zoology and Botany is in progress.

Certain student welfare programmes have received the attention of the University. The National Service Scheme, sponsored by the Government of India, is being promoted at the College level.

In line with the national policy, the University took steps to change the medium of education from English to the regional language at the collegiate level. "The Gauhati University Co-ordination Committee for Production of text-books in the Regional Language has so far produced 62 text-books for the Pre-University level, 112 text-books for the Degree level and 19 supplementary books including glossaries on Science and Humanities containing about 70,000 terms. It has published subsequent editions of 39 Pre-University level text-books". 18 books are now under print, 6 books are ready for print while about 60 books are under various stages of preparation. The Committee also undertook the publication of an Atlas on Assam with maps depicting history, philosophy, climate, forest, minerals, agriculture, industry, demography, trade and transport. The compilation work of a Sanskrit-Assamese dictionary is approaching completion.

The University Library has registered a remarkable growth over the last quarter of a century or so. Starting with 5,243 books, and 150 current periodicals in 1949-50, the stock for the period ending September of the current year stood at 1,65,922 books and 934 current periodicals.

This University is one of the dozen selected by the U. G. C. for implementing the Plan of Action in examination reform. The U. G. C. approved scheme for the establishment of an Examination Reform Unit in the Uni-

versity during the current Plan period at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,40,000.00 has been in operation since 4 February 1976.

Some scientific innovations have recently been introduced in the University. A space Research Station was established in collaboration with the National Physical Laboratory and the Indian Space Research Organisation. The University Computer Centre began functioning with its inauguration on 13 June 1977 by Chancellor Shri L. P. Singh. It was declared that it would be utilised for purposes of legitimate research. It is an "ECIL TDC-316 computer system having 28 K memory storage capacity". It was acquired with a financial grant from the U. G. C. amounting to Rs. 25 lakhs. It is stated that "besides helping scientific researches of the University and its affiliated Colleges, the Computer System TDC-316 with its 1.2 micro second cycle time and memory expansion provision up to 128 K. will be able to cater to the data processing need of the growing industrial complex around the city of Gauhati".

It has been the privilege of the University to associate some eminent sons of India with the growth of the University. The first President of our Republic, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, opened a science building of the University on 21 February 1954 while Jawaharlal Nehru opened another science building on 29 August 1955. The University is perhaps the first in India to have established Chairs to perpetuate the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, based on donations by a teacher of the University, Dr. V. Venkata Rao, now Professor Emeritus. The late Lal Bahadur Shastri inaugu-

rated the Jawaharlal Nehru Professorship in Assamese. Dr. Zakir Hussain in his capacity as President of India inaugurated the Gandhi Chair.

A number of University Departments organised Summer Institutes in their Departments from time to time with financial help from the U. G. C. Seminars and symposia are also organised. Notable among them were a workshop on History, Seminar on Women's Education sponsored by the U. G. C., and the Seminar on the Relevance of Gandhi for Our Time as

financed by the University and held at the request of the National Committee for Gandhi Centenary. It is proposed to hold another Seminar on Gandhiji's life and thoughts towards the end of this year at the request of Assam Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. The Prime Minister of the country, Shri Morarji Desai, has been invited to inaugurate the Seminar.

The University was founded to "illumine the banks of the Lauhitya", as expressed in the opening line of a song which has acquired popular fame as the University anthem. The ideal is to promote the healthy growth of a community life among the members of the University in the true spirit of national integration. As such, the members of the University community were not found wanting when dark forces sought to violate the sanctity of the University campus. More than once, the members and authorities of the University including the Executive Council and the Court protested against the entry of the police force into the Campus without lawful authority. They also protested against damage done to University property and the atrocities committed.

Addressing the 15th Convocation of the University in 1976, Vice-Chancellor Dr. H. K. Baruah made the point that "the University is today facing a serious financial crisis which if I may be permitted to say, is about to paralyse its normal activities". This need not happen and must not be allowed to happen. It is duty incumbent on the State Government to raise the statutory grant substantially and also to provide adequate funds to meet the growing needs of the University.

At certain times there had been pitfalls, aberrations and mistakes. And during the period of internal Emergency, the University was also a victim of authoritarian practices in many matters. The University Act was amended in a highly authoritarian direction with serious curbs on University autonomy: the distortions are yet to be corrected. The Service Conduct Rules imposed on the teachers and other employees have since been kept in abeyance. May the problems faced by the University be resolved satisfactorily in the changed situation prevailing in the country today.

It has been the privilege of the University to invite the nation's accredited academic bodies to hold one of their annual sessions on its Campus. The 53rd Session of the Indian Economic Conference was held here in 1970. It is now our proud privilege to receive delegates to the 52nd Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress. More sessions of other bodies are in the offing. The Executive Council of the University decided to invite the Indian Science Congress to hold its annual session at the Gauhati University in January 1980.

Report by Secretary, Reception Committee 52ND SESSION OF THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS

It took only less than a year for the Indian Philosophical Congress to move about 3500 kms, from the place of Samkara to the place of Samkara Deva, but it took about ten years for the idea of holding a session of the Indian Philosophical Congress at Gauhati to become a reality.

In 1967, the Department of Philosophy under the able guidance of Dr. K. C. Das thought of initiating actions to have a session of the Congress here. When the idea was placed before the University authorities, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University, Dr. M. N. Goswami readily agreed to the proposal. The Congress authorities were contacted and the Secretary of the Indian Philosophical Congress agreed to have the next session at Gauhati University. A Reception Committee was constituted for the purpose and all the initial preparations were made to hold the session. But then the unfortunate decision was communicated to us that that year's session could not be held at Gauhati. This was a shock to us and we decided to keep the proposal in cold storage.

Of course, as time passed, suggestions used to come from delegates attending the different sessions of the Congress, that Gauhati University ought to invite the Congress to Gauhati. The enthusiasm of the delegates was too much and the delegates from this University attending the Congress found it too difficult to ignore the request. Again, Dr. K. C. Das, Professor of Philosophy, took up the matter with our Vice-Chancellor, Dr. H. K. Baruah, who readily agreed and persuaded the Executive Council of the University to accept it. As a result of this, the 52nd Session of the Congress is being held here.

Gauhati University took sufficient care to make the session a memorable event. The University was magnanimous in giving a substantial grant to the Reception Committee. Dr. H. K. Baruah, our Vice-Chancellor, has been the constant guide of the Reception Committee. Shri K. C. Bhattacharyya, Registrar of the University, has been the brain behind the administrative planning of the Congress while Shri S. C. Goswami, Treasurer of the University, is the source behind the financial management.

Thanks are due to the Governments of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh for their financial help to the Reception Committee. Thanks are also certainly due to the U.G.C. But for their co-operation, the Reception Committee would not have been able to hold the Session.

I must also thank all the institutional and individual donors who helped us.

Further I thank the Conveners and members of the various Sub-Committees, who have done quite a job in managing very well the work of their Sub-Committees. I must also thank the editorial board of this Souvenir for taking extra care to expedite its publication.

I thank all the members of the Reception Committee who helped us a lot. I also thank the employees of the University and the volunteers who helped us in holding the session. Thanks are also generally due to the Philosophy teachers of the Colleges under the University for valuable suggestions and help. I owe an obligation to Shri N. Sharma, Deputy Registrar, Gauhati University, who helped the Reception Committee in corresponding with the Governments.

Words are not sufficient to express my thanks to my colleagues in the Department, Dr. K. C. Das, Shri D. K. Chakravarty, Mrs N. Dutta, Dr. N. Sarma, Shri S. S. Singh and Shri S. Sarma. We worked as a team. The success of the session is due to the work of the Reception Committee as a whole, and for the lapses I may be excused.

M. Krishnan Kutty

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Gauhati University Press

GAUHATI-781 014

ASSAM : INDIA

Editorial

PHILOSOPHY AND IDEAS

Has Science made philosophy redundant ? In conditions of widespread illiteracy, what relevance philosophy has ? What role philosophy plays in the development of society ? These are some of the questions that have been raised and answered again and again.

Science provides us with knowledge and philosophy is one of the oldest of sciences, older than any of the natural sciences like physics, chemistry, life sciences and the like. This serves to show that philosophy serves one of the most basic needs of man. It is the merit of every science to provide knowledge about a special part or aspect of reality. But no single science is able to give us knowledge about the world and nature as a whole. Philosophy does use the data of particular sciences. Yet it deals with larger and general questions that are not put up for solution by any individual science or all the sciences put together. Philosophy deals with what is called world outlook and the scientific temper has only promoted its further development. Science has not made philosophy irrelevant any more than the computer can be accused of making the human brain irrelevant.

Since ancient times philosophical schools have been created by different sections, classes or groups of society in several countries and in widely different conditions. The study originated with the 'educated' classes or the elite. True it is that a microscopic minority of the population was able to read and digest the fruits of labour of the philosophers. Yet the fact that love of *sophia* or wisdom or knowledge was systematised, that certain beliefs were erected into a coherent structure, had their own impact. Masses of people came to be moved by one or the other work of the philosophers. They may never have read the learned works of the philosophers. Yet they were influenced by them since everybody has some kind of philosophy, some kind of world outlook, although it may not have been subjected to the rigours of the formal learning process. Hence illiterate masses as well have been influenced by philosophical views. Hence philosophy is relevant for all without exception.

This points to the road to development and the role of ideas therein. Ideas can either promote or retard development. These could be either progressive or reactionary, benign or malignant or with 'motiveless malignity', depending on how one looks at them or considers them. Those ideas only stand the test of time which on a correct scientific basis portray the actual requirements of the society and meet the interests of the people. Ideas that help in the abolition of the old system and establishment of a new social system are to be regarded as progressive. Men imbued with such spirit and influenced by such progressive ideas could be a tremendous social force in the field of solving social problems of a fundamental nature.

Understanding the phenomena and the world is not enough, the real need is to understand it in order to be able to change it to give shape to and realise man's destiny therein. 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways', Karl Marx wrote. But 'the point, however, is to change it'. Change is from lower to the higher and change for a better way of life. If there be unity in things essential, society could make rapid strides forward on the path of progress and development.

May we thank :

- ▲ The contributors of papers, articles, and messages for publication in the Souvenir.
- ▲ The Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, and Treasurer of the University for taking a keen interest in a very material sense in this publication.
- ▲ The members of the Reception Committee and all officers and officials of the University for enabling us to acknowledge their help and support.
- ▲ The members of the University Press for seeing to the timely publication of the Souvenir with speed and urgency.
- ▲ Dr. K. C. Das who first mooted the idea of inviting the Indian Philosophical Congress to hold this session on Gauhati University Campus.

APPENDIX-I

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