

Editorial

Imphal, Monday, May 31, 2016

Reacquaint with reality

With the increase in reach and dependence on information technology in the present world, detailed descriptions and knowledge on any subject matter can be had at the touch of a button. The virtual world has shrunk to such an extent that anyone can receive and relay information on someone or something as it happens, anywhere in the world. This has led to an unexpected broadening of one's views and opinions of other people, places, religions, beliefs and customs. A more tolerant temperament is the result of the ever shrinking virtual world today. The world as we know now is ever evolving and changing, and it is upto us to adapt and make the best of it. But just as everything that is continually changing, there emerges a breed of hardliners who are insisting on carrying on with the traditional way of life, and even thinking. While the concept of preservation of culture and tradition for posterity and more importantly, for the preservation of one's own identity and those of the community is without doubt, a vital part of our responsibilities to the future generation, yet the insistence on keeping up and following the traditional way of thinking, to restraint ourselves to the set dogmas and beliefs is nothing short of denying ourselves the freedom to grow- spiritually and intellectually, to think and use our rationality and to pursue our dreams. It is basically denying ourselves the freedom to life as we see fit, so long as our beliefs and practices does not infringe on that of others. Change is inevitable, and the sooner we accept and embrace it, the better will we be prepared to face the future, uncertain and unpredictable as it will be. Resisting change and attempting to cling on to the old ways of thinking which at one point of time would have served its purpose or even prove vital for survival would prove futile and even regressive. Our way of life changes with the changing times. What was once a necessity, like the caste system which was vital for preservation of communities and races, becoming more rigid to keep the increasing intruders and invaders from mingling and diluting a particular race, has now become a major roadblock in the effort to integrate the nation which is intrinsic to its progress. The time to walk the line without questioning the rationale behind the diktat is well and truly past. It is time to develop and encourage a scientific temperament which questions and provides a reason for the things we do and think. Tolerance and understanding other's point of view, while, at the same time, retaining the liberty to follow and practice one's beliefs and principles will pave the way for a more inclusive society bound by trust and understanding. How one lead one's life should not be a subject of discussion, it should rather be an accepted personal judgment that needs to be respected. There are more important and pertinent things to occupy our minds and collective concerns in these volatile times. Progress is not made by adjusting the changes to suit our needs and beliefs. It is through accepting facts and adjusting ourselves to the best we possibly can to these changes that we can prepare for a better future- our true gift to mankind.

International News

6.1-magnitude quake rocks Taiwan's capital, parts across country

AN **London, May 31:** A 6.1 magnitude earthquake hit Taiwan on Tuesday, with tremors felt in capital Taipei and across the country. The U.S. Geological Survey issued an alert saying the earthquake's epicentre was around 90km off the coast of Taiwan, at a depth of more than 240km, reports the independent. Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau

initially put the magnitude at 7.2. There were no immediate reports of injuries or significant damage so far. Though there was no immediate alert or advisory from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, the USGS's initial analysis suggested some 30 million people lived near enough to the earthquake epicentre to experience some shaking. Residents were seen tweeting about the tremor.

ADMIT CARD LOST

I have lost my Admit Card of Class-XII, Roll no. 12204 of 1998 issued by Council of Higher Secondary School Education Manipur on the way between my home to Empl. Exchange Lamphelat on 23rd May 2016. Finders are requested kindly handover the same to the undersigned.

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M.U. is not situated in the tribal inhabited area - S. Bhubol

Manipur University is neither situated in the tribal inhabited area nor in the 6th Schedule area and so the Joint Committee of the Sixteen Clubs of Thongju Part-I and Part-II strongly refutes any form of misinterpretation and manipulation in the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission), Act, 2006 and its Amendment Act, 2012.

But unfortunately irresponsible statement liable to cause unwanted situation is found artfully highlighted in the Manipur University official letter written by Prof. N. Lokendrajit, Former Registrar of this University to the Governor of Manipur bearing No.MU/6/14/2008 dated the 23rd July, 2014 in connection with the Charter of Demands submitted by

the so called Manipur University Tribal Students' Union. Manipur University being a Central University should strictly follow the norms of reservation as specified by the UGC under the enacting Central Educational Institution (Reservation in Admission) Amendment Act, 2012 and if any demand as local adjustment is arisen, that should be equally beneficial to all the students of all the inhabiting brethren communities in the state and there should not give a place of sectarian outlook in it. All the Manipur Communities irrespective of hill and valley locations are truly indigenous people that have been living together for hundreds of years with a common history since the state formative period of 33AD.

It is time for all sections of the Manipuri society to continue living with equitable shares of all available opportunities instead of indulging into Tug-of War like attitudes to gobbling things in the name of quota or reservation without thinking of other brother communities. The so named as Tribals branded by the Constitution of India should actually learn to live away from any act of tribalism as they are no more tribal at all. The Reservation Amendment Act, 2012 clearly defines "specified north-eastern region" as the "areas comprising of States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and the tribal areas of Assam referred to in the sixth Schedule to the Constitution" and in this regard Manipur University is not located

either in the tribal area or the sixth schedule and so any kind of reservation policy based on such connotation misinterpreting the mother contents cannot be accepted by the localities who are really proud of having this university and felt of having responsibility to keep its peaceful and progressive functioning. The former, registrar, the Deans and the EC members of the university who were having nexus in the making of such chaotic situation should be booked and rebutted for their intellectual poverty for tarnishing the image of the university and the Joint Committee with the support of all surrounding localities will extend fullest cooperation at any areas that might usher in progressive venture of the university.

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Manipur Government's use of water cannon against school

If the abundant duty of the State of Manipur is to aid the powers of the state police to aid in curbing the exercise of right to freedom of speech so that the control and stability of law and order in Manipur is to be given utmost primacy, then that very act of the State Government of Manipur goes against the judgment of the Court and also shows that the Government of Manipur is still yet to fully understand and implement the "comprehensive sense" mentioned in the judgment. Then, there is a question - "Why do school students come out to protest?" The reply to this is also given in the Court judgment. The school students, who are not only juveniles and citizens but also are the people of this democratic country, according to the judgment, have "a right to raise their voice... to express their resentment over the actions of the government on any subject of social or national

importance." The argument is - "Was the resentment nationally important?" The reply to this argument is: even if the resentment expressed by the school students is not of national importance, the resentment is deeply imbedded with social importance. The argument to posit that their resentment is nationally important could also be established as they - the school students - are worried about the future of their own home state Manipur, and if the future of Manipur, is in a potentially worrying situation, as it could be according to them, then the future of India, which comprises Manipur too, is also not impossible to be considered as free from any future worry and tension, and therefore, the national importance of their resentment is also difficult to be ruled out because the future of India also lies in the future of Manipur. Even if the "national importance" fails to

impress the argument, there is "social importance" as the judgment observes "social or national importance" and not "social and national importance", therefore by using the operational part of "or", there is an option to choose either "social importance" or "national importance". Had there been "and" instead of "or", the argument could have been different, but since there is "or" the function of "or" allows the argument of "social importance" to bring forth to justify the resentment of the school students. It would be extremely complex to reject the "social importance" in this case. The other question is - "Why are the school students, instead of studying books and learning in their classrooms, participating in dharnas?" The reply to this is also found in the judgment as it says that **holding dharnas is one of the basic features of a democratic system.** Nowhere in a democracy there is a legally approved and

constitutionally accepted statement stating that school students are debarred from holding or participating in dharnas. Has the Parliament enacted Code of Conduct for the school students with regard to dharnas and peaceful demonstrations? Not yet, so far. The question to be raised against the State of Manipur is - "Where is the criminality committed by the school students in holding dharnas in a democratic system of India's Manipur?" From these aforementioned arguments, the act of Manipur Government, through its police action of using water cannon and the police arrest of two school students, amounts to the dishonour and rejection of the Apex Court judgment, and therefore, both the police action and arrest shall be declared as illegal because the State of Manipur has miserably failed to uphold the judgment, passed on 23rd February, 2012 by the Supreme Court, even in 2016.

Contd. from yesterday issue

Our common crisis : What are we to do?

In such a situation it is important that we the people get involved, acknowledge where and how we too have contributed to what has gone wrong; and work together to restore the things that must not be lost in a struggle; and to reject the things that should have no place in it. This involves transparent expression of our deepest fears and doubts through honest conversations. When people thus begin to breathe freely again, vital spiritual dynamics also start to function that heal and restore relationships opening the way to unexpected solutions. Of course all this is beautiful theorizing only unless we will dare to step out, be still, and be true to our deepest thoughts and questions and be led by what they say to us. This is the missing factor in our crises. I believe the Naga leaders did the right thing before the British left in stating clearly what they believed to be the right stand for their land and people in the given situation of the day. They did not count the costs involved when they decided to fight to defend their position. I believe if Nagas had not taken the stand they did, the damage that would have been done to their identity and spirit as a people would in the long run have produced a far more dangerous problem than what we have today. The price the Naga fighters ended up paying was brutal and heavy beyond words. The villagers across the Naga homeland bore the brunt of the sacrifice. We can only be humbly grateful for the costly legacy they who suffered so greatly have given to us. Our part is to learn to selflessly build our future on the foundation they have laid. But today some harsh realities rebuke and challenge us to wake up to what we are doing to ourselves. **Why have the Naga**

struggle "underground" and the State Government "overground", started to destroy themselves and the people for whom both were supposedly launched? This is our most baffling question and we dare not ignore it. After almost six decades of struggle the early vision still beckons, but the struggle has become a nightmare. The vengeful divisions within the struggle have paralyzed our whole society. At a time when we urgently need to start to develop our economy, ruthless opportunists exploit our slogans and our dividedness to enrich themselves, behaving like leeches, making it impossible for our business community and entrepreneurs to create wealth. Much cash has flowed down the pipe from Delhi to Kohima. We are told more is needed. Perhaps that is true? But the fact that in the last Nagaland Assembly election, the candidates who contested for 60 seats spent more than Rs.500 crores clearly shows that the greed and irresponsibility of our society has become unmanageably destructive. Has not destructiveness become the "Common Minimum Programme" of our society, and we do not seem to be bothered by the inescapable long-term consequences because we are now so used to it, or a part of it? **"It is not that they do not see the solution, it is that they do not see the problem"**. G. K. Chesterton thus once described a group of people in a crisis. It seems this applies to us also and our crisis, jointly created by the "underground" and "overground" of our society. We think the solution to our crisis is simply a matter of more cash for economic development, and "giving peace a chance" as we so blithely say.

Of course we need all these things. But how can reconciliation, unity, peace and development be achieved if our selfish thoughtless ways prevent them? It is said **"A nation's thinking is in ruins before a nation is in ruins"**. In our case it will be, **"A society cannot be developed if the people are irresponsible and their thinking is shallow, irresponsible and limited to instant success and gratification"**. What do we do with the **struggle, the vision and the nightmare of our society?** This is the most difficult question for us. And we must answer it together with mature wisdom and unquestionable transparency where there is no room for blaming of others and treating one's own wrongs and failures lightly. The nightmare of lawlessness, corruption, extortion and all other forms of selfishness presently paralyzing our society is too familiar to need detail discussion. The problems we are wrestling with are the problems of a people who have just started their journey. We need this perspective is needed. We need to know from history that problems and challenges become the common strength and wealth of a people or nation if they are clearly identified, acknowledged and tackled adequately. This challenging responsibility is always understood and accepted only by a few individuals at first. In many cases this battling to solve society's problems by individuals can go on for years, even generations, without visible results, often actively opposed by those in positions of power and influence. But if the individuals who see the roots of the problems do not give up and fight on, wanting nothing for themselves, the soul and conscience of the public are impacted, and opinion changes.

Finally the tectonic shift of society for constructive change takes place. The fight to abolish the Slave Trade and slavery started in Britain in the 18th century. The victory won there under the leadership of Wilberforce powerfully shaped the thinking and fight of Abraham Lincoln and others in the USA. The difficult, costly fight has now culminated in an African-American entering the White House in triumph for the first time with his wife and their two daughters, to be the President of the most powerful nation on earth in the 21st century! This historic non-violent change would not have come about if individuals had not accepted the challenge to their soul and conscience down the generations. Alexander Solzhenitsyn of Russia said what is called for is individuals who will say **"The lie may come into the world and even dominate it, but not through me"**, and stay true. Mahatma Gandhi's own fight and the triumph that followed are of course the most powerful example in modern times of how a nation's toughest problems become its strongest assets if the methods and means adopted to solve them are free from selfish motives of any kind. Mankind finding hope in the changes his life demonstrated is his triumph. On the other hand problems ignored, denied or selfishly exploited multiply into more intractable problems which eventually bring total destruction. **"Hurts not transformed are always transferred"**. History is full of such examples. So God and Satan are both intensely interested in how we respond to challenges that life brings to us. **(To be contd.....)** *(The write up was presented by the author on 4th Annual Arambam Somorendra Memorial Lecture held at Imphal on 10/06/09)* **(To be contd.....)**