

Sunday Poetry

Sweet sixteen

By- Dr. Nunglekpam Premi Devi
Independent scholar

Sixteen isn't a number counting;
Sixteen! As I remembered most is,
Wonderful tricky sensitive and painful indeed;
I feel loving all that I embraced,
I feel alive fresh surrounding;
Blooming and sharing million emotions all I care,
Trees and birds and animals and grasses;
Friends and family and sisters and brothers;
River and ponds and leirak and leikai;
That lampak and that narrow street Chingkhei;
Fields and greenery paddy when in rain;
All airy and all calm and all poised.

I hear birds chirping,
I hear the sound of unseeing breeze;
I hear the echoes of the water brimming;
Overflowing and eloping with the freshest;
Spurting and spouting, cascading and rivulet ting;
So touchy and so engaging itself;
I profoundly kissing the air,
Tuning immensely through the woods;
Carrying enormous smiley textures,
Winning every soul pretty,
Fetching hundreds of appealing codes;
Knowing not what secret and what evil;
All's happy, happy and loved.

Sixteen isn't a number counting;
Sixteen! As I remembered most is,
Wonderful tricky sensitive and painful indeed;
I hate being watched over attitude;
I hate being followed after fascination;
I hate being saying 'NO NO, You can't';
I hate being focus surrounding where I am?
I hate being 'distanced' from love ones;
What a chance I ever had?
All securing and all watched over my moves;
Safer the best I could ever indoor.

I culture well, 'behave' along as I engaged;
Early to bed and early to rise,
I fashioned passionately 'having' lesser sharing;
No mistake counted for younger doors,
I sweep and I clean and I dance in the rain;
I sing in the tune of moos, echoing again and again;
And I breathe along the ducks, flapping wings;
Every dawn I start at peace mesmerizing,
Captivating distance temple bell sounds,
kang-kang, kang-kang, kang-kang, kang-kang
I enjoyed collecting 'yongchak mapal' adoring morning dew.

Oh! I hate when 'he' scolded,
Oh! I hate when 'he' beat me;
Misunderstanding and blaming, dos and don'ts;
I hate when I am unloved;
I am sick when I am in pain;
I hate when 'he' controls me most;
I hate when 'he' defines my dresses;
I hate when 'he' stare with uncause;
Remembering! I deserving erasing all,
Sweet sixteen! lives' a consoling beauty;
Still I loved most whatever his Brotherly care.

LOVE IN CAR

By: Parthajit Borah

I reach you by
reducing the adverse distance,
I feel you by climbing the highest
mountain of emotions,
I touch you when the sun
winks his eye.
I travel from feelings to longings,
warmth to your breath,
Moving sights of the outside
enrapture us to eye
each other for a while,
Fallen smile of your face
awakes thousands of hope
for a rhythmic dance in heart.
Enchanting whistle of the forest
echoes unsung song of the spring.
We only meekly scribe a new
poem in the remote Horizon.

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Present Human Rights Issues and Challenges in India

By: Jyoti Sharma

All throughout the ages people have been governed by rulers who followed different system and forms of government and used their power and authority to suppress the common people. It was only in 1947 when India got its independence from the British rule and adopted democratic form of government which encouraged India to get its new face. Now even after 70 years of Independence, India still continues to suffer from significant human rights violations, despite framing many laws and policies and promising and making commitments to tackle the problems.

Human Rights in simple sense refers to the certain basic or fundamental rights which are universal for humanity and is entitled to each person of our society irrespective of Caste, creed, color, race, origin, sex, religion etc. The Principle Objective of human rights for protection of human life and liberty, to preserve the dignity of people, promoting healthy development, maintaining equality etc. In India the violations of human rights is equal to the violations of the democratic principles which is enshrined in the constitution of India. Human rights are no longer the concerned of any particular country and became an international issue. The United Nations has adopted a charter of Human Rights for the respect of people and on 10th December 1948, the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for the protection of Human Rights. India was a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but the violations and atrocities are still prevalent. Due to this wide scale violation of human rights like extra-judicial killings, custodial deaths and atrocities by the security force particularly in Kashmir, the Indian Government set up the NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) in 1993. People basic and fundamental rights are denied due to the economic and political interest of politicians, big

industrialist and power-drunk people. There are numerous incidents of the violations of human rights and some of them are described below.

Issue1: With the rising crimes, violations, scams and scandals human rights are being violated and taken for granted and in the recent years conditions have become worst and deteriorated in India. Violence against women is increasing at an alarming rate and they are at a high risk of sexual harassment, trafficking, and forced labour including violations of equal participation in political, economic and social life. In fact the recent molestation case in Bengaluru was shocking and condemned by all sections of our society. Such horrifying incident took place on the night of 31 December 2016 where many people gathered on the streets and started molesting the women's. And just after the New Year incident another molestation case occurred in Bengaluru which was triggered by two hooligans nearby East Bengaluru. The circumstances for women rights and their freedom seems to have deteriorated, with not only people committing women rights violations but also powerful politician and police who are easily compromising with the security of women. This unfortunate incident reminds about the Nirbhaya Case, one of the most heinous crime of gang rape of a young woman which took place on 16th December 2012. Despite the various strong laws and acts framed by the government, women across India still continue to suffer from domestic violence, acid attacks, rape and murder etc.

Issue2: Another incident which violated the right to security of people was Indore-Patna deadliest train accident which took place on 20 November 2016. This accident took the life of more than 150 people and over 200 people got injured. This accident was one of the deadly derailment of the year. It was one of the worst rail accident in 6 years. The main reason of this deadliest accident was because of

the casual behavior of the politician of our country who are accountable to the people security. Because of their casual behaviour and lenience towards their work, the outcome was that the innocent people who have voted for such politician to be their representative had to sacrifice with their life. Although the Union Rail Minister Suresh Prabhu presented a fancy rail budget for the year 2016 but the bitter truth lies in the fact that Indian Railway which carries more than 13 million passengers daily still has a very poor safety record, with thousands of people dying in accidents every year.

Issue3: Then widespread protests erupted in the month of July 2016 after the killing of Burhan Wani, a militant leader of Kashmir in an encounter with the Indian Security forces. In this incident more than 85 people lost their lives and over 13,000 civilians and 4,000 security personnel got injured. This incident created high turmoil and continuous unrest in the state. Another major attack took place on 18 September 2016 at an army base in Jammu and Kashmir's Uri near the Line of Control, killing at least seventeen soldiers. It was one of the deadliest terrorist strikes on security forces.

Issue4: In June, Security forces who were operating against Maoist insurgents were accused of serious human rights violations like sexual harassment and killing of innocent tribal villagers. According to a report given by National Commission of Scheduled Tribe, security forces in Odisha killed five tribal villagers including children and claimed that they were killed during anti-Maoist operations. A tribal woman of Chhatisgarh's Sukma district was forcefully abducted by security personnel and was gang raped and ultimately killed and it was alleged that she was killed in gunfire with armed Maoists.

Issue5: A violent protest erupted in the month of January 2016 after the suicide case of a 25-year-old Dalit student named Rohit Vemula and this

case sparked nationwide protests which entrenched caste based discrimination. Many students and activist stormed on the streets and protested for reform in higher education.

Not only this several issues and challenges have occurred and ended with the violations of human rights. It is just because the politicians of our country have got the habit to play with the life of the people. It seems that Government have lost their moral compass and needs to be reminded again that are accountable to the people as well as towards the security of the people. Now given the growing crime nature and extent of violence there is an immediate need to specially address the women issue including the dalit and other marginalized communities issues more strongly. Now the issues of Women empowerment have been taken up as a Human right issue. It is high time that women in our society should be treated at par with men in all the field of our society. In the recent years the government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken important strides especially with the legal reform with respect to the treatment of women, dalits and various vulnerable groups. Some of the initiatives launched by PM Narendra Modi are "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao", UJJAWALA - a comprehensive scheme for the prevention of trafficking and Rescue, "Stand-up India" scheme for Women, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and many others. Apart from the various schemes, laws, Acts launched by the Government but still in many areas the government continued to fall short, both with respect to legal reform and implementation. Government still needs to pay more attention towards their laws and policies and check whether it is properly carried out. There is a dire need to sensitize the women, children, youth and various other communities of the people to spread about human rights and different ways to break its shackles.

THE DALAI LAMA WAS A BIG MEAT EATER LIKE MOST TIBETAN BUDDHISTS BUT LATER ON HE BECAME A VEGETARIAN

By Sanjoo Thangjam

I am a human being and I am not perfect. So, please kindly read the message and not the messenger

According to the Buddha's principle, a Buddhist monk or nun have to accept a gift of food if it is offered to them, whether it has meat in it or not. The monks can refuse it if they know that the creature was killed especially for them or will be killed for them. It doesn't matter even if the monks are offered shrimps or many whole creatures in the meal. It's not to do with the number of creatures if the monks eat a whole one or a part of one or many but whether it was killed for them. It is because the main thing is to encourage generosity of others.

As a Buddhist, I am not on a campaign to try and save all living beings from death. Animals, birds, insects, fish etc., they are all going to die anyway. And we can't do anything about that. So, when I take the vow of not killing, it is not particularly to try to stop other people and creatures from killing. I am not taking a vow to stop dog from killing a chicken or to stop a spider eating flies. The focal intention indeed is to bring under control myself from killing other people, if that is something I might be inclined ever to do. So when Buddhists take the vow of not killing; I also do my best to avoid killing animals and even insects. Nevertheless, for example, a Buddhist can be a gardener. When digging the soil he or she will kill many small creatures certainly but can't be helped. However it is not killing on purpose and that's not one's aim when gardening. When you walk around and breathe just to stay alive, then according to modern understanding there are many tiny creatures that go through their life cycles and that technically, we are killing all the time. But again there is no intention in any of this, so it doesn't even go against the vows.

There are plenty of examples of societies and cultures where killing animals is normal and done in a good way. The American Indians are mostly hunters and they have a respectful way of dealing with the animals they hunt. But a Buddhist cannot just look at them and say that they are wrong just because they kill animals. They just have a different way of working with the world. It is very much a personal thing also. In Buddhism, the vow of not killing is one of the five lay vows, which are not obligatory. You have to take these vows as a Buddhist monk or nun, but only some lay Buddhists take these vow. Thus, it is not as central to Buddhism quite as people generally think. The idea behind is (karuna) compassion and (metta) loving-kindness for all sentient beings, even animals and insects. The Buddha taught that some of the monk's and nun's vows are major and others are minor therefore and you don't need to follow all the minor rules because there is a trifle here that we actually do not know which are the major and which are the minor rules? But most Mahayana monks and nuns, especially treat these as minor rules and accept the realities that in the modern world you have to do things such as handle money and buy food for yourself. So it is fine for them to carry money and buy meat and that is not going against their main vows such as not killing. So, paradoxically there is no harm at all when Buddhists buy meat from shops for themselves to eat. But what about the vow taken? It is about mindfulness for one's own conduct and not about trying to save all beings from death in the ordinary sense which is impracticable. Nor one is attempting to prevent other humans from killing animals either. We are just working on our own conduct. Therefore, when we live in a society where meat is available as a result of other people who kill animals and then sell the meat for food then it is absolutely fine to eat that meat. It is not as central and important in Buddhism as many may think, especially for other religious groups that there is no need at all to judge others and say that they are a "Bad Buddhist" just because they eat meat or even kill animals

for food as a hunter. However, some Buddhists do become vegetarian. Many Theravadhan Buddhists especially most probably because they come from warm countries where vegetables are found with bulk. The Dalai Lama even did his best to be a vegetarian though he comes from Tibet originally where for many generations the people have eaten large quantities of meat, as is natural for a people used to living in a very cold climate with little agriculture. So he used to be a big meat eater like most Tibetan Buddhists. But later on he became a vegetarian. He accepted meat of course though at one point of time tried to be a vegetarian but as he got ill and thereby was advised by his doctor that it was because he wasn't eating meat so he had no other options but to eat meat to be healthy. And of course as others have pointed out that becoming a vegetarian doesn't mean that no lives were killed in order to create your food. Even if you only eat carrots, nuts and rice, you should not forget that many living beings were killed in the processes of agriculture used to grow these vegetables for you. So from a Buddhist point of view, there isn't really an enormous difference between buying carrots from local shops and buying a turkey. In both cases many beings died so that you could get your food.

There is nothing we can do about that. But we can develop compassion and love as best we can for all beings. And starting with the practical situation we are in, realizing what we can and can't do is part of that compassion. It is then realistic compassion rather than wishful "pink puffy clouds, rainbows, and bunny rabbits" type compassion. And if you want to take a vow of not killing as part of your practice, that's a personal decision. Many Buddhists are vegetarian but at the same time, many of them are also not as well. So even if you are a vegetarian Buddhist, there may well be situations you encounter where the most compassionate thing you can do is to

accept meat when offered to you. And as for alcohol, the main problem is not the alcohol itself or its effects but whether it causes you to break your other vows or harm others. So this is something you can learn as an individual. And for many a small amount of alcohol where what counts as small depends on the individual may be no harm at all but in fact very useful. You can take a Buddhist vow to not take any intoxicants. If you do that you will probably refrain from taking alcohol at all in your ordinary life. But still there may be situations where you take a bit where it becomes a part of what is expected. Perhaps at a wedding ceremony and it all depends on the tradition. When you take the vow, you might find that they advise you it is not wrong to take alcohol in small amounts because the main problem is not the alcohol but what other things might happen as a result of taking it. And some Buddhist have learnt to deal with alcohol and even take large quantities without it leading to harmful action. This is the path of the "crazy yogin" where a Buddhist practitioner may drink a lot of alcohol and the idea is that it helps them relate to a kind of uninhibited wisdom we all have but this type of situations may be difficult to access because we are so caught up in our ordinary cosy comfortable conceptual divisions of the world that particular path though one is for very few people to follow and only done with many precautions and such preparation, e.g. long retreats and such like. For obvious reasons, it is easy to fool yourself and to think you are connecting with this uninhibited wisdom when instead all that has happened is that your critical judgement has become impaired so that you don't realize how much harm you are doing. Therefore, to deal with it is important that you have a good teacher in the tradition who is able to recognize when this happens so as to help you keep on track. (The writer is a Lay Buddhist and Human Rights Activist for People Who Use Drug)