

Editorial

Imphal Thursday, March 30, 2017

Connected catalyst

As far as one would care to remember, there has been a disconnect between the public and the representatives who were elected by the same public right after the elections. While the reasons or compulsions for such a behavior has so far escaped the collective imagination or comprehension of the perplexed public, there is no doubt that such an attitude have always created a divide which has been the bane to effective and progressive administration. Ideals like transparency and expeditiousness in public governance have been relegated to mere wishful thinking and a tantalizingly unattainable concept. And to make matters worse, developmental projects and activities have been hijacked by opportunists and portrayed as 'Pride Projects' without the intention or the wherewithal to see things through. Hope floats- and as if to re-emphasize the adage, things might just take a radically different turn- for the better. The present Chief Minister of Manipur, before taking over the most coveted post in the state has been interacting with the public through social networking sites on various issues regarding the developments in the state and quite frankly one would have assumed that these social interactions and discussions would be curtailed or even put to a halt owing to the aforementioned inexplicable reasons or compulsions. The general public was however pleasantly surprised when Nongthombam Biren continued to share his views, opinions and vision through the social networking sites in a frank, candid and uncomplicated manner which shows his commitment to putting the development of the state above everything else.

The intention of the present state government for ushering in a more effective and efficient governance and administration cannot have been any clearer. In its first cabinet meeting, the BJP-led Manipur government decided to do away with interviews in recruitment to government services to "help curb corruption" and form an anti-corruption cell in the state to allow locals to lodge complaints of corruption directly with the government. In an effort to ensure transparency and accountability, the government also launched a dedicated number - 9402150000 - to receive public grievances, or information related to incidents of corruption. Experience has however taught us otherwise. Almost every step which looked too good to be true so far proved to be just that. While the alacrity of the decision promises much, the actual implementation and effectiveness of execution of this decision is still yet to be seen. There is also the question of whether the new decision to open an anti-corruption cell replace the pressing need to introduce the Lokayukta Bill which the state assembly unanimously passed as the 'Manipur Lokayukta Bill 2011' after intense debate on the last day of the last session of the 9th assembly with the primary objective to check corruption and probe into allegations raised against public functionaries. There is also the need to improve upon the various pride projects initiated by the previous congress government and to bring them to a fruitful conclusion. The most important task at hand, however is to see that every single instance of wrongdoing during the previous regime is made public and dealt with in accordance with the law of the land. Only such an action will not only set a precedent for the future but also act as a mechanism for introspection and restraint- a powerful reminder that the law does eventually catch up sooner or later.

Will we be proven wrong in raising our undying hopes once again? Only the actions of the Biren led government will ultimately answer the question.

Admit Card lost

I, the undersigned, have lost my Admit Card issued by Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur of the year 2004, bearing Roll No. 1269 on the way between Pukhao to M.G.Avenue on March 28, 2017 at around 2 pm.

Finders are requested to hand over it to the undersigned.

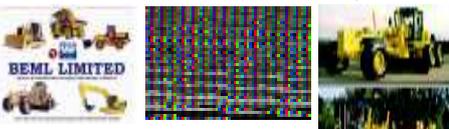
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'Chanu creation' - a hope for Manipur

By: Hijam Jiten Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) comes under the scheme of "Skill India" which was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 15th July 2015. It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). This scheme aims to provide aptitude to the Indian youth towards major skills and raise the standard of working and the efficiency to complete the job. The enrolled students are motivated by giving monetary rewards to increase them and providing them with quality training.

Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**. RPL aims to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the NSQF. Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs), such as Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) or any other agencies designated by MSDE/NSDC, shall be incentivized to implement RPL projects in any of the three Project Types (RPL Camps, RPL at Employers Premises and RPL centres). In short, RPL is a process of assessment of an individual's prior learning to give due importance to learning as an outcome rather than learning as process. Under PMKVY, special focus is given to RPL by recognizing prior competencies of the assessed candidates and provides a certificate and monetary reward on successful completion of assessments.

Under this scheme, **Textile Sector Skill Council (TSC)** a Project Implementing Agency (PIA) of Textiles sector has been approved to train 8200 Nos. of candidates to **Chanu Creations** of Thangmeiband, Imphal West, lone training partner of TSC from Manipur provides the training of RPL in Manipur & Tripura. Chanu Creations has been providing skill training to Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishunupur, Thoubal and Kakching of Manipur and Nayagram, Lalsingmura, Rashwariapur, Baidyardighi and Sadarm Hati of Tripura under this scheme. The total number of candidates to be trained in Manipur is 7100 Nos. and 1100 Nos. in Tripura as per RPL Project Manager Mr. W. Joyshankar Luwang.

Some of the key persons of the team are **Smt. Chirom Indira (CEO)**, **W. Joyshankar Luwang (RPL Project Manager)**, **Ph. Kangjamba Meitei (RPL Co-ordinator)** & **Y. Bobby Singh (Head of RPL ToT)** of Chanu Creations can be named. Under her leadership the team has always looked ahead and moving towards newer challenges. Their natural instincts and foresight have always led her team to the next frontier. They have always maintained a very positive and friendly attitude towards all the section of peoples. The team of Chanu Creations work round the clock to bring about a change of socio-economic conditions of the weavers and weaker sections of the region at large. It is truly gratifying that their efforts, especially in development of handloom sector and providing



skill training are bringing smiles to thousands of people. The enthusiasm with which she has been promoting the handloom sector of the Northeast Indian region, Chirom Indira has achieved great recognition and we hope that in future, the Northeast will be able to exploit its potentials and make a name for itself all over the world. Her hard work moving towards the fruitfulness tomorrow's generation with a new identity. Activities such as social works, development of handloom sector, women

empowerment were always close to her heart. Perhaps, She is a role model of the Handloom & Textiles of the North Eastern Region of India. She was conferred "National Award 2015" in "Design Development of Handloom Products" by O/o DC Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles for her philanthropic work in the development of Indian Handloom sector. She is also a member of "All India Handloom Board (AIHB)" under O/o DC Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India.



Contd. from previous issue

The Buddha Advised The People to follow the Moderate Way (the Middle Way) of Life - Part II

The original idea of the Agama Sutra is to indicate that both impermanence and egolessness mean emptiness. This is the nature of Dharma. The nature of Dharma is emptiness. It is not permanent. Thus, the Dharma is ever-changing. If the Dharma has a permanent identity and is not empty, why do phenomena change all the time? It is because of the nature of emptiness in Dharma that ego is unobtainable. If there was a real Dharma that existed permanently, whether in physical or spiritual form, it could become a place for the ego to reside. "The eyes (and all senses) are empty;

The law of permanency and change is empty;

I and mine are both empty.

Why is it so?

Because this is the nature of things."

(Samyuktagama, Chapter 9)

Isn't it very clear that the main theme in the Agama Sutra is to explain the concept of impermanence and egolessness from the standpoint of emptiness? Emptiness is the nature of all things. However, most people cannot see the truth and become ignorant and perverted, and they become attached to permanency and egotism and hence become entangled in the cycle of life and death.

From the rising and falling, existence and extinction of conditioned phenomena, one should eliminate the idea of an absolute, independent, permanent identity. Once we are able to realize the nature of emptiness, we will be liberated. To realize the nature of emptiness through the understanding of Dependent Origination is a penetration to the core of things. It is not a superficial understanding only. This is the truth of the Buddha's explanation of the Circulation and Cessation of human life. It can be used to identify our own religion, and to distinguish it from the other religions. This is the speciality of Buddhism. Besides, there is another type of

Middle Path. This is the Noble Eightfold Path that emphasizes good practice. The Noble Eightfold Path also corresponds to the Law of Dependent Origination. It does not explain why the deluded life can be liberated and does not talk about "What this is, that is; this is arising, therefore that arises." It tells us about the Middle Path that those who wish to be liberated should follow. It is a path that avoids both the extremes of suffering and of luxury.

Some heretics in India during Buddha's time encouraged extreme luxury and desire. They regarded extreme enjoyment as the purpose of life. Others concentrated on meaningless asceticism and tortured themselves. All these things do not help, nor do they bring us liberation. It was to counsel avoidance of these extreme behaviours that the Buddha taught us about the Middle Path. This is also a theme that is commonly found in the Agama Sutra. The Noble Eightfold Path teaches us to be normal and reasonable in our speech, action, emotion, determination, ways of living and so on. Everything we do should be fair and right. This is the Middle Path. All Dharma is conditioned. All Dharma is empty by nature. There is no exception rightness of one's behaviour whilst following the Noble Eightfold Path. How does such right behaviour whilst following the Noble Eightfold Path coincide with the nature of the emptiness of Dependent Origination?

One should know that "practice" is also conditioned. In the Parable of the Seven Carts, in Chapter 2 of the Middle Agama (Madhyagama), King Prasenajit departed from Sravasti. It was a long journey. However, the King was able to reach his destination within one day. This was because he set stops on the way. At every stop there was a new, fresh and healthy horse. Thus, when he reached a stop, he did not need

to rest. He changed to a new cart and horse and started his journey again. Hence he was able to reach his destination in a very short time. The travel from one place to another was not the hard work of one cart and one horse only. It was the co-operative effort of many carts and many horses. It was the co-operation of many causes and conditions.

To practice Buddhism is a similar journey, from the time we begin to practice, to the time of final attainment. We cannot rely on one Dharma only. We must rely on the co-operation of many Dharmas, many causes and conditions. Since the ways of practice depend on the coincidence of favourable causes and conditions, they are thus also empty in their nature.

In the Raft Parable the Buddha says, "We should let go of the Dharma, and the non-Dharma".

"Dharma" refers to moral behaviour. "Non-Dharma" refers to immoral behaviour. In the process of practising the Middle Path one should first use moral behaviour (Dharma) to correct immoral behavior (non-Dharma). This Dharma that emphasizes moral values arises due to causes and conditions. It is empty in nature. If we cling to a perverted view, becoming attached to images and things as real, then we will not realize the nature of emptiness and we will not be liberated.

The Sata Sastra says, "We should first rely on merits in order to get rid of sin.

Secondly, we should rely on equanimity and let the merits go. Then we can attain the state of formlessness or Nirvana."

Chapter 7 in the Samyuktagama says, "If I feel that nothing is obtainable, then there is no sin. If I am attached to form (and to other things), then it is sinful....

If one knows this, then one will not be attached to anything in this mundane world". Sin means defilement and obstacles.

As long as we constantly become attached to various things as real, we will not see the truth of emptiness. This is an obstacle on the way towards liberation. Therefore it is clear that we should not become attached to the merits of good deeds, as these are also empty in nature. The Nagarjuna Bodhisattva once said, "Merit is like a hot, burning gold coin, although it is valuable, it is unobtainable".

Thus, the nature of the Noble Eightfold Path is also empty. It coincides with the wisdom (theory) of the Middle Path. Under the truth of emptiness, theory and practice merge into one.

The Middle Path that emphasizes emptiness and Dependent Origination avoids perverted views. The Noble Eightfold Path avoids the two extremes of suffering and luxury, and emphasizes non-attachment. These two main themes of the Middle Path supplement each other and lead us to perfection. If there was only theory to explain the Law of Dependent Origination without the emphatic proof of personal practice and experience, the Path could not fulfil religious faith in helping followers disentangle themselves from suffering, thereby attaining ultimate freedom.

On the other hand, if the Path only taught us the ways of practice without theoretical or intelligent guidance, it might be defeated by our lack of wisdom, and we might become a theistic follower. The Noble Eightfold Path of the Middle Path fulfils human religious expectations by encouraging moral practice. In addition, it has the intelligent guidance of the Law of Dependent Origination and of Emptiness. The Middle Path emphasizes the unity of wisdom and faith. This is the special characteristic of Buddha's teaching. The writer is a lay Buddhist & a Social Activist. He can be reached at thangjamsanjoo42@gmail.com

(Concluded)