

Editorial

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

Spirit of Hijam Irabot still runs in Manipur Journalists Media will resume to play its part

Almost every section of the Manipuri society including the Government today started recognizing Lamyamba Hijam Irabot as the leader of the state. Every Manipuri today realize that Hijam irabot is a multifaceted leader of the erstwhile reason who had sacrificed his entire life for the future of this erstwhile nation. He was communist and have always stand for the poor and deprived section of the society.

September is a significant month, as everything happened was in this month. He was born on September 30 of 1896 and left for heavenly abode on September 26. He went underground on September 21 of 1948, he was declared terrorist as he was considered a threat to the ruling capitalist class.

Well apart from other activities, Irabot's contribution to this erstwhile nation is the introduction of journalism for the first time. He was the first to edit and publish a newspaper in the soil of this region. It was during Manipur's pre-independence and post independence that the legend had light up the foundation of journalism.

The journey of Manipur press began and from cyclostyle to letter press then offset machine and now there are 12 to 16 page full colour newspaper published every day. Besides, addition of Cable news and now with the beginning of a new era the print and electronic mass media have reached beyond expectation. The importance of the media being understood by the people across the country and globe considered "Media today is the fourth estate of democracy".

Now, the question that we are putting up is " Is media still a fourth estate in today's democratic India"

The dream that the new information age would be one of greater enlightenment, of a rational discourse and greater participation has not come true.

Understanding the power if media, every ruling government in today's India are trying every means to put media under their control using every means is not directly.

The fourth estate, however, is more powerful than ever. It is shaped by two dominating principles - sensationalism and simplification, which the American sociologist Robert McChesney, in his book Rich Media, Poor Democracy, defines as the consequence of "hyper commercialisation". It has led to ever fiercer ratings and circulation wars, which inevitably leads to what is called "dumping down". To succeed, the media industry tries to appeal to the lower instincts of people.

Analyst today said that the 2014 Indian election which give rise to the popularity of Narendra Modi and made a swiping win in the election is because of the tactful utilization of all form of media including the social media.

After coming to power, the government didn't let go the media while strict surveillances are also conducted to the social media.

Veteran politician , Yaswant Sinha, in an interview with a web site channel had stated that the Narendra Modi government is doing marvelous in utilization of media. The one time BJP leader speaks volumes when he said so. But what is more interesting is how the Modi government took interest in media.

As per his assessment , in four years the narendra Modi Government spend over 4000 crores of rupess on personalize publicity.

Modi leadership knows the power of media and is using it with a purpose.

And it is sure that in 2019 parliamentary election, media will be a battle ground. The one which have no respect for media will be defeated.

Now, when it comes to the state of Manipur, N. Biren Singh understood well on how to handle media will do all the needful. One thing his government failed to understand is the importance of small media which will also certainly play its part.

In the age of internet, what the Chief minister of Manipur and his colleague should understand is that there will be no such thing as big media or small media as the tools invented by Mark Zuckerberg and other software expert has enable to reach out what has been published to as a many people across the globe and the state even more than those of so called big media whom they gave more priority.

September is the month of the father of Manipuri Journalism Hijam Irabot , and every September each of us will remember the spirit of the "Father of Manipuri Journalism", media will play its role to remain as the fourth estate to make the democracy a successful , as the spirit of Hijam Irabot still runs in our blood.

MEITEI-NAGA RELATIONSHIP

By - Amung Hungeyo (A Naga Public) Ukhrul

Having observed all the hues and cries in both the print and electronic media about the slogans of bandhs, strikes, dharnas and blockades, I find that "the Meitei community is really very proud to say that they have 2000 years of history." I appreciate their love for their land and history. I have no objection to the Meitei's having 2000 years or 7000 years history. What I wonder most is their objection to other people having that long, say longer or shorter period of history. Sometimes, their claims sound childish- seeing everything so fine on their side and ugly on the other's side. Anything which a Meitei does is beautiful, laudable and admirable and whatever a person from another community does is intolerable to them. For example, the Meiteis struggled and got Meitei/Manipuri language or Meitei's mother tongue admitted as one of the Major Indian Languages. None of the Meiteis objected to that on the ground that it is sectarian or ethnic line/based privilege.

Secondly, sometimes it is quite confusing to guess why the Meiteis are objecting to the Nagas' claims to their legitimate rights. They keep the 6th Schedule and Article 371 C of India's constitution for the minorities/hill areas defeated. They are now objecting extension of the Article 371 A which is being in vogue with the counterparts of the Nagas in the present states of Nagaland. The government of India knows these parts of the Supreme Law of the land being defeated by the Meitei-dominated state of Manipur. The so called "People of Manipur" without the hill people is trying to defeat the Article 3 of the constitution or to rewrite the said article with words/phrases they want. Is the government of India not convinced of the Meitei Society's desire to overlord the Nagas forever?

So much so, the narrow plains comprising 20% of the geographical area have 40 MLAs while the rest 80% of the total land area is given just 20 MLAs. Only in this state, mob is the ruler and authority in any matter. One cannot easily forget the incident like the one which happened in December, 2012 popularly known as Momoko Incident of Chandhel which shook the entire state and rocked the State Assembly affecting the hill people, mainly the Nagas who had gone to Imphal for purchase of things for Christmas and New Year festival. Another mob rule was witness in December, 2016 when the Meitei public declared a counter-blockade at Imphal against the UNC's economic blockade. The Nagas were mainly targeted. Many vehicles and properties belonging to the Nagas were set on fire while the Meitei-dominated Manipur government remained a mute spectator who only intervened after so much damage was already done by the unruly Meitei mob. The Congress government led by Mr. O. Ibobi Singh had to obey the mob. Mob rule still continues in the state. The recent problem at the Manipur University is a sufficient proof. Here too, the Congress led by Mr. Ibobi and Mr. Gaikhangam have hurled the blame on Delhi (see The Sangai Express, 4th September, 2018). Again, the Meiteis, as they prefer, the Manipuris, seem so fond of advocating their pre-merger status by referring to their long years of history which show at the end the exact size of their territory (in the Merger Agreement) as 700 Sq. miles or 26,500 paris clearly excluding the hills from the Sanaleibak or Kangleipak. To which, the government of recently independent India arbitrarily

severed Naga's land to make the present state of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Keep in mind, the compact and contiguous Naga country was never allotted by the Government of India nor was loaned by any Manipur Rajas. So, India cannot manipulate the Nagas' fate like this. Among many others, we are narrating just a few common domineering and chauvinistic mentality of the Meitei society leaders. They hold in high esteem of their feudal kings, their history and their domain, but feign ignorance about the Nagas whose history could have been even longer, further back, like that of the Aborigines of North America. They feign ignorance about Nagas political struggle for the last 60-70 years; they feign ignorance about why the infamous Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1951 was enacted by the first Parliament of India. The Nagas have unwritten history. They lived in isolation and in primitive village state for too long, even longer than the so-called history of Manipur. It is sheer nonsense on the part of the Government of India to believe the Nagas respecting its (India's) Constitution being trampled by the Manipuris. The Nagas too are humans and have sentiments. The Government of India shall one day pay for what it has done to the Nagas, that is, for keeping Nagas in the hands of the Manipuris for so long. If the Government of India cannot do justice, admit now. The Nagas need not talk with it. The Nagas have every right to go to the world communities for finding justice right now. We have trusted the wrong entity for twenty long years.

Will Naga Political Solution negatively impact Sanaleibak?
The Meitei's Manipur or Kangleipak or Sanaleibak will lose nothing by removing Naga territory from the present Map of Manipur. It can be still larger than Goa. There are independent countries in the world whose geographical areas are smaller than Imphal Valley, but are super rich countries. I am sure Imphal will remain an important principality not only for India but also for the continent of the entire Asia. Sanaleibak is indeed a beautiful place with salubrious climate and panoramic landscapes and fresh water lakes. Their valley is fertile and it will continue to produce surplus food grains.

The Meiteis are hard working. In medicine and health, the Meiteis outshine the rest of India. In motor and electrical engineering, the Meiteis shall continue to provide workmanship to all its neighbouring communities. Thus, the Meiteis will lose nothing in doing justice to the Nagas which is long overdue.

The Nagas on the other hand shall continue to struggle even harder than before to make both ends meet. They will continue to require the Meiteis to teach Maths and Science in the hills, to run electricity and to keep their vehicles running. The Nagas, though somehow emancipated with political autonomy, their inhospitable terrains will not change and shall continue to depend on the Meiteis and the valley to meet their food grain requirements, medical and health services and what not.

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IF BUDDHISM IS NOT A RELIGION OR PHILOSOPHY THEN WHAT IS IT WAY OF LIFE

By - Thangiam Sanjoo Singh

Though we called the teaching of the Buddha 'Buddhism', thus including it among the 'isms' and 'ologies', it does not really matter what we label it. Call it religion, philosophy, Buddhism or any other name you like. These labels are of little significance to one who go in search of truth and deliverance. Some prefers to call the teachings of the Buddha a religion, others call it a philosophy, still others think of it as both religion and philosophy. It may, however be correct to call it a 'Way of Life'. But that does not mean that that Buddhism is nothing more than ethical code. Far from it, it is a way of moral, spiritual and intellectual training leading to complete freedom of mind. The Buddha himself called his teaching 'Dhamma-vinaya', the Doctrine and the discipline. But Buddhism in the strictest sense of the word cannot be called a religion, for if by religion is meant 'action' or conduct indicating belief in reverence for and desire to please, a divine ruling power; the exercise or practice of rites or observance implying this...; recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny and as being entitled to obedience, reverence and worship. Buddhism certainly is not such a religion.

In Buddhist thought, there is no awareness or conviction of the existence of a Creator or God of any form who rewards and punishes the good and ill deeds of the creatures of his creation. A Buddhist takes refuge in the Buddha but not in the hope that he will be saved by the Master. There is no such guarantee. The Buddha is only a teacher who points out the way and guides the followers to their individual deliverance.

A sign-board at the parting of the road, for instance, indicates directions and it is left to wayfarer to tread along the way watching his steps. The board

certainly will not take him to his desired destination.

A doctor diagnoses the ailment and prescribes; it is left to the patient to test the prescription. The attitude of the Buddha towards his followers is like that of an understanding and compassionate teacher or a physician. The highest worship is that paid to the best of men, those great and daring spirits who have with their wide and penetrating grasp of reality, wiped out ignorance and rooted out defilements. The men who saw Truth are true helpers, but Buddhist do not pray to them. They only reverence the revealers of Truth for having pointed out the path to true happiness and deliverance. Happiness is what one must achieve for oneself; nobody else can make one better or worse. 'Purity and impurity depend on oneself. One can neither purify nor defile another.'

While lying on his death-bed between the two Sala trees at Kusinara the 80 year old Buddha seeing the flowers offered to him, addressed the Venerable Ananda thus : ' They who, Ananda, are correct in life, living according to the Dhamma - it is they who rightly honor , reverence and venerate the Tathagata (the Perfect One) with the worthiest homage. Therefore, Ananda, be ye correct in life, living according to the Dhamma. Thus, should you trained yourselves? This encouragement of the Buddha on living according to the Dhamma shows clearly that what is of highest importance is training in mental, verbal and bodily conduct, and not the mere offering of flowers to the Enlightened Ones. The emphasis is on living the right life.

Now, when a Buddhist offers flowers or lights a lamp before the image of the Buddha or some sacred object and ponders over the supreme qualities of the Buddha, he is not praying to anyone; these are not rites, rituals or

acts of worship. The flowers that soon fade and the flames that die down speak to him and tell him of the impermanency of all conditioned things. The image serves as an object for concentration, for meditation, to gain inspiration and to endeavors to emulate the qualities of the Master. Those who do not understand the significance of the simple offering, hastily conclude: 'This is idol worship.' Nothing could be more untrue.

As to where Buddhism is a philosophy that depends upon the definition of the word; and whether it is possible to give a definition that will cover all existing systems of philosophical thought is doubtful. Etymologically philosophy means to love wisdom. 'Philosophy has been both the seeking of wisdom and the wisdom sought' In Indian thought philosophy is termed *darsana*, vision of truth. In brief, the aim of philosophy should be to find out the ultimate truth.

Buddhism also advocates the search for truth. But it is no mere speculative reasoning, a theoretical structure, a mere acquiring and storing of knowledge. The Buddha emphasizes the practical aspect of his teaching, the application of knowledge of life—looking into life and not merely at it.

For the Buddha, the entire teaching is just the understanding of the unsatisfactory nature of all phenomenal existence and the cultivation of the path leading away from his unsatisfactoriness. This is his 'philosophy'.

There are many instances where people gained enlightenment and release from taints by merely watching a leaf fall, the fall of water, a forest fire, the blowing out of a lamp. This struck a chord in them and realizing the impermanent

nature of things, they gained deliverance. Yes, the lotus opens its sunlit and no sooner does the sun shine than the lotus opens and brings delight to all.

Here in this teaching no attempts made to probe into the ultimate origin of man and things – to inquire into the question: 'Is the universe eternal or not? Is it finite or infinite?'

The Buddha was not concerned with such metaphysical problems which only confuse man and upsets his mental equilibrium. Their solution slowly will not free mankind from misery and ill. That was why the Buddha hesitated to answer such questions, and at times refrained from explaining those which were often wrongly formulated. The Buddha was practical teacher. His sole aim was to explain in all its detail the problem of dukka, suffering the universal fact of life, to make people feel its full force and to convince them of it. He has definitely told us what he explains and what he does not explain.

Some scholars, however, do not appreciate this attitude of the Master, they even doubt his enlightenment and label him as agnostic. Scholars will ever argue and speculate. These are not questions of today or yesterday, they were raised in the time of the Buddha. Even Sakuludayi the Wanderer, for instance, asked about the past and the future and the Buddha's reply was categorical: 'I get the past, let be the future, I will

enjoy Dhamma.

"When this is, that comes to be, With the arising of this, that arises, When this is not, that does not come to be,

With the cessation of this, that ceases."

This in a nutshell is the Buddhist doctrine of conditionality or Dependent Arising. And this forms the foundation of the Four Noble Truths, the central conception of Buddhism.

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