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JOSEPH BIDEN ‘MAKES THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY’

A hundred years ago American President Woodrow Wilson claiming ‘to make the world safe for democracy’ entered the First World War ending the policy of isolationism that the United States had adopted as enunciated by President James Monroe in 1823. The office of the American President grew in strength and stature since the first President George Washington, called the ‘Father of his country’ set the healthy convention by not accepting to continue in office for a third term. Of the 45 Presidents who succeeded him, ten were ranked high and five as the best. Thomas Jefferson, the author of the famous Declaration of Independence in 1776, who was greatly admired for his intellect and vision became the third President; Abraham Lincoln, rated as the greatest President, was hailed as the great Emancipator for making slavery unconstitutional and Saviour of the Union for his role in the civil war Lincoln delivered the famous Gettysburg Address in which he declared that “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” Theodore Roosevelt, the youngest to become American President, accelerated domestic progress through Square Deal. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the famous expounder of Four Freedoms played a major role in the victory of the Allied powers over the Axis Powers in the Second World War and in founding the United Nations in 1945.

Today India’s stability as a democracy is of immense strategic importance to the USA which is deeply concerned about the expansionist designs of China. After 9/11 American policy towards India has mellowed and undergone a noticeable change. The high point in Indo-US relation was the signing of the the U.S.–India Civil Nuclear Agreement or Indo-US Nuclear deal in 2005 and credit must be given to the then Indian Prime Minister Dr.Manmohan Singh and then U.S. President George W. Bush. The United States of America has welcomed India’s rise as a leading maritime power in the Indian Ocean region. The election for the 46th President was held on November 3, 2020 and the incumbent President Donald Trump who damaged the system and dented the image of America, was defeated by Joseph Biden. The New York Times described Donald Trump as ‘a great disrupter.’ Mark Landler wrote that “the triumph of Joseph R. Biden Jr. over President Trump provoked many emotions, but above all, a profound sigh of relief.”

The question now being discussed in India is how Joe Biden formulates his policy towards south Asia, India in particular. The reference to India as the ‘largest democracy’ and the USA as ‘the oldest modern democracy’ has become a cliché and it is common knowledge that while relations between the governments of India and America have never been either too warm or too cold, marked at times by mutually assured dislike (MAD), there is considerable goodwill between the peoples of the two countries. Among the reasons for that cordiality are the values, cultural and constitutional, shared by the two countries, exchange programmes for scholars and scientists and the role played by diplomats and ambassadors like Chester Bowles and J.K. Galbraith.

Joseph Biden will, of course, receive the Narendra Modi hug when the two leaders meet but it will certainly not be like the mutual admiration displayed by Narendra Modi and Donald Trump at their last meeting in February this year. Biden has quite a few hard tasks to resolve. Hillary Clinton, in an article written before the election and published in the latest November-December issue of *Foreign Affairs* said that “Americans are reckoning with long-overdue questions about racial justice, economic inequality and disparities in healthcare.” Climate change and terrorism are, of course, the biggest challenges confronting the world. For America and the world an era of darkness has ended with the defeat of Donald Trump. The question, however, is whether Biden’s victory heralds the advent of a new dawn.

- The Editor

This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln

INDIA'S MARITIME MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

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In the September 2020 edition of its annual report on China, the US Department of Defence (DoD) makes the stunning announcement that the PLA Navy (PLAN) is the largest in the world. With an overall battle-force of 350 ships and submarines, including 130 major surface combatants, PLAN has overtaken the US Navy, with its strength of 293 ships. China has never bothered to provide a rationale for its ever-increasing military muscle, and a bewildered neighbourhood wonders what it portends; especially in the light of its recent adventurism in the Himalayas.

The PLA Navy has not grown overnight, and remains the clearest manifestation of the grand-strategic vision of China's political leadership. Factors that bear on its growing strength may include China's 14,500 km littoral, which is more than double India's, its objective of 'reunifying' Taiwan and its irredentist maritime claims, in the South and East China Seas. An expansionist state which seeks eventual parity with the USA, China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative and the Maritime Silk Route also provide the perfect camouflage for its grandiose maritime strategy.

India, on the other hand, remains a quintessential 'status quo' power and has sought military force-levels adequate, only, to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Notwithstanding the low budgetary priority accorded to it, the Indian Navy (IN), has built itself into a modern and capable three-dimensional force, rated by other navies as professionally 'up to NATO standards' and eagerly sought as a partner, both for exercises, and for maintaining 'good order at sea.'

Although technology and professional competence are the yardsticks for combat-effectiveness, numbers do matter, and with the IN at sixth or seventh in the international pecking order, there is obviously a significant disparity between the PLAN and IN. Given the growing gap between the two economies, it would be foolhardy for India

to attempt an arms-race with China, but investing in maritime power would pay dividends in the long-run.

Faced with a difficult situation, today, it is incumbent upon India, as a significant regional power and a democracy, to stand up to its hegemonic neighbour. Regardless of economic asymmetry, India does have the military capability to inflict unacceptable pain in retaliation for any Chinese adventurism; certainly in the mountains, but also at sea.

However, as the nation cheers the army's tactical moves in Ladakh, there are misgivings about a strategic void in New Delhi. In this context, the above US DoD report, deserves close examination by our 'decision-making elite' as well as military leadership; because it shows that politicians – as much in a democracy like the USA, as in a totalitarian state like China - accord the highest importance to national security. It bears reflection, as to why India has remained an exception to this rule.

The US Congress believes that effective strategy-making defines national interests, objectives, and policies, along with the defence capabilities (and budgetary support) necessary to deter threats. The process provides a shared vision for all agencies and a common playbook to react in times of crisis. Starting with the US National Security Strategy, to be rendered by the President, US Congress demands quadrennial reviews - matching the Presidential tenure - by the Departments of Defence, State, Homeland Security and the Intelligence Community.

Where China is concerned, its political leadership has, since 1995, been issuing a defence white paper (DWP) every two years. The 11 DWPs issued so far – all public documents - clearly articulate China's vital interests as well as national security aims, objectives and challenges. Topics of discussion include force-levels and defence expenditure, the PLA's progressively changing roles and re-organization as well as its newly inducted equipment and platforms.

While the US template may be an 'overkill,' India has erred egregiously, by its disregard for national security. No government has formulated a strategy or doctrine so far; nor has Parliament ever

I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power.

- Mahatma Gandhi

demanded a defence review or sought a white paper. As a direct consequence, 'surprise' and 'intelligence failure' have become a leitmotif in most of India's post-independence conflicts. Our defence-planning has remained ad-hoc and under-funded and every crisis evokes confused and fumbling responses, including panic arms purchases.

Another important lesson that emerges from the US DoD document relates to China's 'maritime awakening' in the latter part of the last century. While the PLAN owes much to visionary Admiral Liu Huaqing, its commander during the 1980s, it could not have achieved its present status without the Communist Party providing steadfast political support. Every Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) from Deng Xiaoping onwards, has backed the phased growth of China's navy, from an inconsequential coastal-force, to a substantive blue-water navy.

The CMC leadership having astutely, grasped the reality that 'maritime power' is much more than just a 'fighting-navy', China is, today, the world leader in ship-building and its merchant marine ranks No.1 in the world. It also fields the largest coast-guard that protects the world's biggest fishing fleet. Chinese ports rank amongst the best world-wide.

As we watch the situation in Ladakh unfold, it becomes increasingly obvious that not only is a military resolution improbable, but a 'hot-war' may be unaffordable for both nuclear-armed countries. The answer lies in extended negotiations at the highest political and diplomatic levels. As the weaker power, India also needs to resort to 'power-balancing' and seeking like-minded friends and partners to send out a message of deterrence. Here it is worth remembering that India's attraction as a partner for the US, Japan or Australia, lies, not in its powerful army or professional air force, but in its navy's reach and ability to project maritime power.

In the approaching era of fiscal stringency, a sharper focus on its neglected maritime domain would garner immense benefits for India; not just in terms of enhanced maritime-security, but in many other ways. Giving a boost to shipbuilding, expanding the merchant fleet, modernising ports

and mechanising fisheries would have a long-term impact on the economy; through growth of ancillary industries, skilling of youth and massive generation of employment; all contributing to 'Atama Nirbharta.'

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INDIA AS TEACHER BY NEGATIVE EXAMPLE:

Chinese Perceptions of India During the British Colonial Period and Their Impact on India-China Relations

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Abstract

The history of ancient civilizational links between India and China, including the spread of Buddhist religion and philosophy from India to China, are often cited as the enduring basis for India-China friendship. However, contemporary India-China relations have been much more influenced by Chinese encounters with British imperialism, with Indians playing the role of subordinate instruments of British depredations in China, including the dumping of opium on China. India was held up by Chinese intellectuals as a teacher by negative example, its easy subjugation by the British being the result of its stagnant and stratified society, its fragmented and disunited polity and a slavish temperament among its people. China would need to avoid these dangers if it were to regain its full independence and modernisation. These perceptions persist and influence Chinese policy towards India in contemporary times and need careful analysis.

India and China enjoyed more than a thousand years of uninterrupted trade and cultural exchanges during the first millennium CE. This enduring engagement flowed across the Central Asian bridgehead, through the Tibetan plateau and the maritime links connecting peninsular India with the eastern seaboard of China. The spread of Buddhism in China became the prism through which China perceived India. India was the western paradise, the birthplace of Buddha and a centre of advanced knowledge and philosophy. This challenged the

There is no illness worse than desire, no foe fiercer than attachment,
no fire so ravenous as anger and no ally so reliable as wisdom.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

notion of Chinese centrality and was for this reason rejected by intellectuals at times as an alien influence but this did not prevent its embrace by the populace as a comforting faith. These inter-connections were often interrupted by political turmoil and transitions in both countries as well as in intermediary realms. However, during the second millennium CE, these interruptions became more extended and relations more distant. Engagement continued but at a lower pitch and often through their peripheries. Even during the 16th century Jesuit missionaries such as Matteo Ricci passed themselves off as monks visiting from India or Tianzhu guo (the western treasure country) since India was still esteemed in China as a civilized and sacred land. They even dressed in Buddhist robes. During the medieval era the port of Calicut maintained a flourishing maritime trade with China. It was described as a pivot point for the 7 voyages undertaken by the Ming dynasty admiral Zheng He who died in Calicut in 1433 at the end of the last voyage. There are interesting descriptions of Calicut and Cambay ports in the chronicles of Ma Huan, who accompanied Zheng He on the voyages, entitled "The Triumphant Visions of the Ocean's Shores". They are testimony to the great wealth and cosmopolitan character of these great cities. The Ming emperor then forbade further maritime expeditions and China descended into studied insularity which continued under the ensuing Qing dynasty under the Manchus. The Qing harboured inherited notions of India as a land of Buddhism lying to the west, but could not reconcile this with reports about a Mughal empire then ruling in that geography. So the geography itself was adjusted to locate India to the south of what was now the Mughal empire. The fall of the Mughals in mid-18th century and the emergence of British colonial rule in India, with all its implications for China, was only vaguely understood. This is covered in fascinating detail by Matthew Mosca in his landmark book, "From Frontier Policy to Foreign Policy, The Question of India and the Transformation of Geopolitics in Qing China". It is with the Opium Wars of 1839-42 and 1856-60 that the China was deeply shaken by its vulnerability to a British empire in the east which drew its power and resources from its colonial empire in India. The opium which drained China of silver and enfeebled its citizens and the

Indian soldiers who served as the shock troops during the humiliating wars, led the Qing court and Chinese intellectuals to examine the reasons behind Chinese weakness. Associated with this was an exploration of the Indian condition and its role as a springboard for the painful assault on China. There emerged, in parallel, a deeply negative popular perception of Indians from their role as street-side enforcers of British rule in the foreign concessions. There was also the deep resentment of the prominent Indian traders who flaunted the wealth gained mainly from the opium trade in cities like Shanghai.

Chinese intellectuals, whether conservative reformers like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao or more radical figures like Chen Duxiu, Lu Xun or Liang Shuming saw India as a "worst case scenario" for China. India's past as a brilliant and sophisticated civilisation was acknowledged but its more recent history was of special relevance to China if it were to be successful in confronting the powerful Western challenge. Interestingly, though Japan had defeated China in 1894-95, it was seen in China as having succeeded in becoming a modern nation and, therefore, a model to be emulated. Several Chinese students and scholars headed to Japan around the turn of the century to learn from its example. In contrast India was regarded as a teacher by negative example, a failed and fallen country which had been subjugated and enslaved virtually without resistance from its people. As pointed out by the Japanese scholar, Shimada, "reformers and radicals alike shared the anxiety that China not follow in the footsteps of India."

Kang Youwei was an advocate of constitutional monarchy with the Meiji Restoration of Japan as the model. He became an advisor to the Guangxu emperor and is associated with the "100 Days of Reform" but fell victim to the powerful reactionary clique around the Empress Dowager, Cixi. He went into exile to escape execution and it is during his exile that he visited India during 1901-03 and again later in 1909. It is from India that he criticised the move by some reformers for Guangdong Province to declare independence, adopt radical reforms and then seek to overhaul the reactionary Qing monarchy at the centre. He wrote to his student, Liang Qichao,

We must look to the future and work for it purposively and with faith and vigour, at the same time we must keep our past inheritance and derive sustenance from it.

- Jawaharlal Nehru

“My 4 million compatriots, if you wish to become a fallen nation of slaves, then quickly support the fight for independence in all provinces like the Indian people have done. But if my compatriots, you do not wish to become a fallen nation or an exterminated race, then you should deem useless India’s fight for independence in all its provinces.”

Here Kang sought to compare Guangdong with Bengal, which had fallen prey to the British because of the failure of various princely states of India to present a united front under a strong central authority.

Other Chinese intellectuals sought to explain India’s plight as a colonised country on the inherent character of its people. In his earlier writings, Zhang Taiyan argued that Indian people were especially susceptible to British occupation after the experience with the Mongols and then Mughals.

“By the time the Mughals unified the land the Indian people had already pledged their allegiance to a different people. To be owned by the Mughals and then to be owned by the British what difference did it make to them.””

The weather in India was also cited as reason for Indian laziness and lack of vigour.

“Don’t you know in the tropics people do not go cold and hungry therefore people become lazy and things go easily rotten. They are weaker than you (Kang) saw.”

These scholars did not see the irony of their blaming Indian’s supposedly deficient character for becoming prey to foreign rule and ignoring their own country’s history of being conquered and ruled by the alien Mongols in the 12th and 13th centuries as the Yuan dynasty and later by the Manchus during the 17th to the 20th century as the Qing dynasty. In fact for nearly half of its recorded history China was ruled by non-Han dynasties including the Liao, the Jin and the Xia before the advent of the Yuan and the Qing. The extensive territories it now claims as its own are mostly a legacy of its conquered past. It has been more expedient to bask in the reflected glory of the conqueror than to identify with those who suffered from conquest just as the majority Han people did. If the Indians were themselves responsible for falling

prey to alien rule then were the Hans during the Ming dynasty also responsible for falling prey to the Manchus? Were there similar character faults at play? These questions never surfaced in the Chinese discourse.

During this phase even the positive history of Buddhism as a factor of affinity between the 2 countries was re-interpreted negatively. Liang Shuming, for example, said that for the reinvigoration of China Indian influence must be eliminated and not a trace of it be allowed to survive in China. Some years later, Hu Shih took up this theme and argued in an address at Harvard University in 1937 that Chinese weakness in confronting Japanese aggression was due to the “Indianization of China.” Hu Shih said,

“India conquered and dominated China culturally for 20 centuries without ever having to send a single soldier across her border.””

But he meant this as a baneful influence on China to be exorcised rather than to be celebrated. It is often mis-interpreted in India as a grateful Chinese acknowledgement of its cultural debt to India when it is the opposite in intent. Rajnath Singh, the Indian Defence Minister in October 2017 approvingly quoted Hu Shih’s remarks as evidence of China’s cultural debt to India only to invite a prompt and angry refutation by the Chinese paper, Global Times!

Rabindranath Tagore’s visit to China in 1924 has been described as a milestone in India-China relations. The suggestion that it rekindled a sense of affinity between the peoples of the 2 countries and promoted solidarity in the struggle against Western imperialism is an exaggeration. He may have been received with polite courtesy and enjoyed respect as a Nobel laureate but his notions of a rejuvenated Eastern Civilisation prevailing over a materialistic and spiritually bankrupt West found no resonance. Eastern civilisation as the Chinese saw it, did not include India though perhaps it may include Japan. Left wing intellectuals such as Lu Xun, Guo Moruo, Shen Yanbing, Chen Duxiu and Qu Qiubai were all critical of Tagore’s ideas even though they admired his scholarship and poetry. Shen Yanbing said,

“We are determined not to welcome the Tagore who loudly sings the praises of Eastern civilisation,

In many ways, the fundamental conflict of our times is the clash between, no, not civilizations but doctrines—religious and ethnic fundamentalism on the one hand, secular consumerist capitalism on the other. - Shashi Tharoor

nor do we welcome the Tagore who creates a paradise of poetry and love and leads our youth into it so that they might find comfort and intoxication in meditating.”

Qu Qiubai was even more dismissive describing Tagore as a man of the past whose advice was irrelevant. The claim made by the Japanese scholar Shigenobu Okura had greater resonance among the Chinese, when he said,

“Of the nations of Asian civilisation today, I consider Japan to be the greatest. Next is China. As for the people of Babylon and India, even though their cultures could be admired in bygone days, now they cannot even be compared.” The Chinese audience might have contested the Japanese claim to be number one but would not have disagreed with his proposition on India.

Individual Chinese interactions with Indians sometimes produced a more favourable impression. Zhang Taiyuan became interested in Buddhism during the 3 years he spent in prison. His extended conversations with an Indian friend in Tokyo led him to believe that Indians and the Hans should work in solidarity to rid their peoples of British and Manchu alien rule and that China could draw inspiration from India’s own struggle for freedom. There were other Chinese individuals who were deeply influenced by Tagore and accepted his invitation to live and teach at Santiniketan. They included well known scholars like Tan Yunshan and Wu Xiaoling and artists like Xu Beihong.

The Chinese republican leader, Sun Yatsen avoided the open disparagement of India but argued that the British were a threat to China only because they had colonised India-”after occupying India they can enjoy the benefit of China which after occupying China they cannot enjoy the benefit of India at the same time.”

Chiang Kaishek, China’s wartime leader was sympathetic to the Indian independence movement but was disappointed that the Congress Party was not ready to support the Allied counter-offensive against Japan in China. When his Kuomintang (KMT) forces were defeated and Mao established the People’s Republic of China, India’s prompt recognition of the

new regime in Beijing soured whatever goodwill may have remained. And despite the Indian gesture, PRC leaders remained suspicious and initially dismissed India as remaining under western influence despite its independence.

Wherever there were opportunities for direct engagement and conversations the more prejudiced notions could be contested. Unfortunately much of Chinese and Japanese readings of India during the first decades of the 20th century were derived through translations of British colonial literature which were openly and crudely racist in their depictions of India and its people. It is these mediated perceptions which have remained entrenched in Chinese attitudes.

As pointed out earlier, Chinese popular attitudes to India and Indians during this period was influenced by the use of Indian soldiers and policemen in the British depredations in China. In a Chinese novel from 1904, quoted by T.H. Barrett, we have the following passage,

“Shibao looked closely at these people and they all had faces black as coal. They were wearing a piece of red cloth around their heads like a tall hat; around their waists they wore a belt holding wooden clubs. Shibao asked the old man: are these Indians? The old man said yes, the English use them as policemen. Shibao asked, why do they not use an Indian as the chief of police? The old man answered: Who ever heard of that? Indians are people of a lost country; they are no more than slaves.””

Later in the story some of those wearing red hats are seen to be Chinese and this was warning of what may happen to Chinese people were they to fall prey to foreign rule.

Another example of India serving as negative example.

Did things change after India gained independence in 1947 and China achieved liberation in 1949? Did these attitudes from the early decades of the 20th century persist or was there a change in the Chinese discourse on India? In reviewing India-China relations over the past 7 decades we see the following pattern. When India-China relations are in a positive phase, for whatever reason, there is

Independent India was blessed at its start with an inclusive and non-majoritarian, talented and forward-looking government.

- Rajmohan Gandhi

an invariable harking back to the shared Buddhist heritage and the history of dense trade and cultural exchanges. There may be references to mutual sympathy and support during the more contemporary period of India's struggle for independence and China's liberation though the evidence for this is more limited. However, whenever relations have become strained and contentious, the disparaging and negative narratives of the more recent past surface not only in Chinese media but also in records of Chinese leaders' conversations with foreign interlocutors. Negative media reports concerning India and Indian leaders are well documented. Before the Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai phase in the early 1950s, India was considered as an instrument of western imperialism. Its independence and non-alignment were said to be only in name. The Tibet crisis in 1959 led to another phase of very negative reporting on India including the infamous People's Daily article, attributed to Mao himself entitled "On Nehru's Philosophy". But it is in the record of several private conversations which Chinese leaders had with foreign interlocutors that the attitude of contempt against India comes out most clearly. I will cite here some of Zhou Enlai's observations about India and Nehru in conversations with Kissinger in 1972:

Zhou referred to Nehru's Discovery of India, saying that Nehru was thinking of a great Indian empire, but "actually India is a bottomless hole."

Zhou: "India is a highly suspicious country. It is quite a big country, sometimes it puts on airs of a big country, but sometimes it has an inferiority complex."

Kissinger: It has been governed by foreigners through most of its history.

Zhou: Yes that might be one of the historical factors."

Zhou:Nehru invited me to a tea party in his garden among the guests were 2 people in costume. There were 2 Tibetan lamas and suddenly there appeared a female lama. Do you know who she was?

Kissinger: Madame Binh?

Zhou: Madame Gandhi (laughter). She was dressed up entirely in Tibetan costume. That was something that Nehru was capable of doing.... I was

speechless confronted with such a situation. It was impossible for me to say anything."

For Zhou, Mrs Gandhi donning a Tibetan costume while he was present was proof that India coveted Tibet! That India, too, is home to communities who share Tibet's culture and way of life may have been difficult for Zhou to understand

This exchange just goes to show that it is not India which is a highly suspicious country but China.

During my second tenure in China from 1983-86, relations between the 2 countries had already taken a positive turn. There were exchanges of high level visits, a regular dialogue on the boundary issue and an expansion of trade and economic relations. It was in 1984 that the first ever visit to India by a high level delegation from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences took place. It was led by its then President Ma Hong, a most distinguished economist credited with the introduction of market oriented reforms in China. His delegation was in India for nearly 2 weeks visiting several cities. He also made a pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya. I had invited him and some senior members of his delegation to dinner on his return and sought to learn of his impressions of India. While he praised India's development and gave high marks for its economic self-reliance, he could not resist remarking that, on the surface, India appeared chaotic and disorderly. He and his colleagues were puzzled, he said, how the country was still functional. He narrated an incident that occurred on the delegation's car ride from Patna to Bodh Gaya. Their car had to stop as there was an angry demonstration blocking the road. The police in the patrol car accompanying the delegation begged and cajoled the demonstrators to give way to their vehicles and they grudgingly agreed because there was a foreign delegation travelling. The demonstrators were not at all afraid of the police. This, Ma Hong said was unthinkable in China. The authority of the state was indispensable to political stability and he wondered whether this was not a weakness in India. A more positive reflection was about the strength of Indian culture. Despite the fact that India, unlike China, had been open to the world, its classical music maintained

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Martin Luther King Jr

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deep roots and its women still favoured the elegant saree. With the recent opening up of China, there had been a wholesale rush towards Westernization, he complained. Chinese children wanted to learn how to play the violin and the piano, not the Pipa or the Qin.; Chinese women wanted to wear western skirts, not the traditional qipao. On India's economic prospects he conveyed scepticism because of its bewildering diversity and lack of community spirit. Even in these observations, politely conveyed, we see echoes of the earlier perceptions and critiques of India.

Post the clashes in eastern Ladakh we again notice a relapse into abusive language. One recent article, translated by our colleague at ICS, Hemant Adalakra, calls Indians "big time thieves". The author goes on to make blatantly racist comments:

"While talking their gestures such as shaking of head, gesticulating, touching mouth, shaking eyebrows, making signs etc and so on, however without harmful intentions these are no doubt unnerving".

The same article makes a strange and utterly false claim concerning the 1962 border talks:

"During the early negotiations in 1962, the Indian side even proposed Tibet belonged to India, that Sichuan province be declared a demilitarized zone and last but not the least they even demanded the Indian Army be permitted to be stationed at Chengdu in order to monitor the implementation of the demilitarized zone. The Chinese representatives were stunned."

Indeed so are the Indians!

We see that a line runs through the negative and derogatory perceptions of India and Indians that took hold during the British colonial period. While India's past glory as a great civilisation was conceded, in contemporary times it became an example of a failed and fallen country. The reason for this decline was said to be the slavish character of its people and the lack of a strong central political authority to mobilise the people to resist foreign aggression. The depictions of Indians bordered on being racist. These impressions were also derived by translations into

Chinese or Japanese of writings by British colonial authors who justified British colonial rule as a civilizational mission of redeeming a race which had lost any civilizational attributes it may once have had and lacked any ethics or scruples. India was thus held up as a teacher by negative example. India's present then was the future that would await China if it did not reform and modernise, if it did not unite and maintain a strong central authority. These negative attitudes persist and surface whenever relations start to worsen. During more positive phases, these attitudes are masked and the rhetoric harks back to the ancient period of civilizational engagement between the 2 countries though even in this case the spread of Buddhism in China from India was regarded by some as a baneful external influence which must be thoroughly exorcised to allow the true Chinese spirit to emerge. There are positive strains of thinking about India particularly among those who have had more sustained encounters with its people but they do not constitute the dominant category.

In dealing with the China challenge India needs to analyse these deeper strands in Chinese perceptions of India and the prism through which the Chinese mind interprets Indian foreign policy behaviour. These perceptions are mediated through third party sources not direct experience of India and Indians over an extended period of time. Indian perceptions of China are also coloured by images and imaginings purveyed by others but in the main the English language discourse on China. This is a discourse which has at times romanticised the China story and at times disparaged it. Currently we find that China is increasingly assessing India through the prism of its fraught and worsening relations with the U.S. India is not regarded as having independent agency. For the Chinese pessimist the future could relive the past in which India became the platform for an assault on China and hence needs to be neutralised well in time. Its people and leaders cannot be trusted because they are by nature (and not by calculation) given to petty intrigues and trickery. Sometimes, as we have seen, history may be rewritten or reinterpreted to fit preconceived notions about an adversary's character.

If Russia is an oligarchy, how long can we resist calling India one?

Raghuram Rajan

This points to the need for more intensive China studies in our country in particular on its history, its culture and society and the patterns of thought that are ingrained among its people. This exercise has 2 advantages. One it points the way to slowly but steadily removing the sludge of prejudice which animates much of Chinese behaviour towards India. Two, it opens the way for chipping away at our own prejudices and uninformed notions about China and the Chinese people thereby making a more productive India-China engagement more likely even if not inevitable. Both sides need to shed the stereotype images they harbour about each other.

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THE BIDEN PRESIDENCY AND INDIA-US TIES

The Biden presidency offers the hope that the US commitment to multilateralism will be back on track and here there are many areas where Delhi could be a relevant stakeholder in global load-sharing.

Cmde. (Retd.) C. Uday Bhaskar

Director of the Society for Policy Studies and
Former Director, IDSA & NMF

Hope has been rekindled in the participatory democratic process as the American voter has definitively chosen the Democratic candidate and former United States (US) Vice-President (VP) Joe Biden as the 46th President along with Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate. The latter's victory is particularly poignant for its many resonances — this is the first time that a woman, a person of colour, and an Indian-American will occupy the office of the vice-presidency. While it seems that Donald Trump will use every legal option to delay and defy the verdict of the Electoral College, the US is preparing for a new occupant in the White House on January 20.

President-elect Biden is no stranger to India and played a valuable role as a legislator in the rapprochement over the nuclear issue when it was being steered by the George W Bush-Manmohan Singh combine. He is familiar with the essential continuity in the India-US bilateral relationship. Hence the road map for the next four years with Biden at the helm

will, in all likelihood, strengthen ties in those sectors where progress was made (defence cooperation) on the Trump watch and repair the damage done in areas such as trade where restoring the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) would enable Indian exports.

Under Trump, the India-US bilateral track retained the structural orientation that had been envisioned in the Bill Clinton-Atal Bihari Vajpayee years. It is instructive to recall the Biden approach to Indian sensitivities about how to frame the relationship with the US, for Delhi is reluctant to go down the path of a formal alliance, for good reason. In his July 2013 visit to India, the then Vice-President Biden noted: "There is no contradiction between strategic autonomy and a strategic partnership. Global powers are capable of both."

The current collective global challenge is dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the figures are stark. The US and India lead the list in the total number of cases, and the scale of the economic-fiscal haemorrhaging is yet to be estimated accurately. The pandemic is one of the many critical global challenges where the US leadership would have been desirable, and this is where the Biden-Trump contrast is striking. The climate crisis and maritime pollution are huge (as Trump would put it) and some experts aver that the world has crossed the tipping point. It is irrefutable that sustained collective action based on credible scientific data and an equitable sharing of the mitigation effort is the way ahead but this is exactly what President Trump rejected.

The Biden presidency offers the hope that the US commitment to multilateralism will be back on track and here there are many areas where Delhi could be a relevant stakeholder in global load-sharing. It is encouraging to note that in his statements, Biden has promised to bring the US back into the World Health Organization (WHO)'s fold and focused on the need to give this challenge the highest policy priority in relation to Covid-19.

For all the opprobrium that the Trump presidency has elicited, his unpredictable China policy merits scrutiny from both the US and Indian perspective. Trump forced the US establishment

Democracy and human rights go together in ensuring good governance.

Fali S. Nariman

and the world at large to acknowledge the predatory nature of China's global aspirations and its corrosive impact. How this policy shift towards Beijing will unfold in the Biden years will be extremely relevant for the global strategic order and its regional/Asian implications will be even more acute for Delhi.

Post-Galwan, the China challenge looms large for India and the recent statement by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat is pertinent. In relation to the current military stand-off in Ladakh, General Rawat asserted: "Our posturing is unambiguous. We will not accept any shifting of the LAC. In the overall security calculus, border confrontations, transgressions, unprovoked tactical military actions spiralling into a larger conflict therefore cannot be discounted."

How the Biden team will frame the China challenge to Indian sovereignty in relation to abiding US interest will be a critical indicator for the Narendra Modi government in mediating the Delhi-Beijing relationship. The more recent defence cooperation traction accorded to the bilateral track, by way of Delhi signing the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement and inviting Australia to be part of the Malabar naval exercises, is illustrative of the potential that needs to be explored.

There are many areas/sectors in the multilateral basket relevant to India and paradoxically, China, that a Biden presidency could enable if it remains committed to a pragmatic and equitable global partnership. The post-Covid-19 era is yet to arrive and the immediate road ahead for the US President-elect will be to identify policy priorities and the manner in which they will be pursued. And in engaging with a new team in the White House, Delhi will benefit in prioritising the hi-tech sector namely core ICT (computing communications) and AI (artificial intelligence) for the long term. To maximise the possibilities of the "strategic partnership" that Biden referred to, India must be astute and overcome an inherent diffidence and institutional prickliness, as it defines its own modest relevance in a partnership that was estranged till 2005.

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SHAKESPEARE: THE SEER OF THE OCCULT

Prof. Manoj Das

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A talk arranged by the Department of English, Visva Bharati, at the Sri Aurobindo Nilaya, Santiniketan. Courtesy : Yearly Shakespeare edited by Goutam Ghosal and Shakespeare the Indian Icon edited by Vikram Chopra.

Shakespeare is not a person, but a continent rich with wondrous landscapes unfolding scenes and situations vast in their range and 1200 characters of different shades and hues, glorious and ludicrous, usual and unusual. Sri Aurobindo pays him a unique tribute when, from a certain point of view, he brackets him with Valmiki, Vyasa and Homer and called him elsewhere "a seer of life". He says further that Shakespeare's "way indeed is not so much the poet himself thinking about life, as life thinking itself out in him through many mouths, in many moods and moments..."

At the moment we focus on only one aspect of the enigma that is life as presented by him – the occult forces that exercise their influence on human life, even play with it, known or unknown to us. Alas, Shakespeare declares his faith in this in unambiguous terms through the enigmatic Hamlet, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy!" I further confine myself only to the darker drama enacted by such forces rather than the auspicious ones.

What is the modus operandi those ominous elements follow to infiltrate our life? One opening that they spy out easily is our ambition. What an irony lay concealed in the situation when the great self-styled lovers of Roman democracy killed the ambition-incarnate, Julius Caesar! What after that? Well, ambition has been dislodged from its prize mansion, but where does it go? It jumps onto and takes possession of those very noble Romans who slew him, "as he was ambitious". Nervous though after their bloody action, Cassius exposes this

The better we know our past, the better prepared we are for the future

- Shivshankar Menon

phenomenon when he jubilantly exclaims, “How many ages hence shall this our lofty scene be acted over in states unborn and accents yet unknown!” .

But the most striking example of the devastation that can be caused by ambition when it is exploited by the impish elements of the occult world, of course, is Macbeth. A castle generally remains well-guarded; but on a festive occasion the doors are thrown open to a multitude of guests. It is then that there is the possibility of some untoward and unwelcome strangers entering it, along with the invitees. The human personality too is like a castle - guarded by cautious intelligence and common sense. But when our emotions run festive, the caution is slackened. It is then that the weird and the strange trespass into our being. That is what happened to Macbeth, the able general and cousin of King Duncan. He is elated for his success in crushing a rebellion, when the three witches, the impish elements of the bizarre plane, ignite his dormant ambition and work havoc in his life. The moment of success could be a dangerous moment indeed!

In fact, Shakespeare displays an uncanny capacity for deciphering several supra-physical laws. Like our visible actions preceded by resolutions getting formed in the invisible domain of thought, every physical event is preceded by its invisible blueprint. The blueprint is alterable till a certain moment; Providence keeps ways open for a man to withdraw himself or retreat from a proposed action if it is something degrading for himself. Along the dusky passage of his castle, a little before he would assassinate his celebrated guest, the king, Macbeth is aghast to see an aerial dagger ready to guide him to his would-be victim. The spectre was a warning to him, giving him a chance to realize the horror of his proposed action and withdraw from it. But he lets the chance lapse. Next, he sees on its blade gouts of blood “which was not so before”. In other words the assassination has already become a fait accompli at the occult plane; Macbeth had voted against himself.

Belief in the supernatural was common in Shakespearian Literature and Education. But while the others employed it to arouse awe, Rasa Bhayanaka

as we call it in Indian dramaturgy, Shakespeare employed it as expository of unknown laws at work in our life.

But for letting us know the unknown he does not take recourse to the supernatural always. He knows that no man is a single entity. The pity is, one commits a blunder under the pressure of one part of his being, for which the whole man must suffer. “Glamis hath murder’d sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more! Macbeth shall sleep no more!” Needless to say, Glamis, Cawdor and Macbeth constitute the same person. While the name Macbeth represents the original individual, Glamis and Cawdor are titles – representing ambition and vanity. It is the superficial Macbeth that had committed the murder, but the real Macbeth has no escape from the consequences. Murder of King Duncan being described as the murder of sleep of course has its own significance. In fact, it is a multiple murder: murder of a guest, murder of a benefactor, murder of a relative and murder of one’s king; but the crime is most heinous because it is the murder of sleep – sleep symbolizing faith and trust, apart from its qualities listed by Macbeth himself.

Evil, Shakespeare knew, need not necessarily manifest through supernaturally embodied agencies like the witches. There are human beings who could serve as its perfect instruments. When Desdemona meets Othello in Cyprus after a turbulent voyage and the two lovers, safe from the agitated Venetian society, are in a mood to freely give vent to their ecstasy, Iago observes them quietly, standing in a corner of the stage. His simple and precise soliloquy says it all about the almost detached function of the entity that is mischief:

O you are well-tuned now!

But I will set down the pegs that makes this music,

As honest as I am.

What a statement on the destructive propensity of the evil! Pure wickedness can be honest to itself, for it does not suspect itself. Iago, the mischief-for-the sake of mischief-incarnate, cannot but be born of its author’s sure knowledge that there were infra-

Of all Gandhi’s associates Rajaji had been most solidly behind him in the campaign to abolish untouchability.

- Ramachandra Guha

logical forces at work through human beings, forces that find satisfaction only in shattering harmony, in ruining the beautiful. If such malevolence could be found in many in variant degrees, it could find its full embodiment once in a while in a rare phenomenon that was Iago.

Vast is the scope and function of the occult laws. Their role, in the ultimate analysis, like all other happenings in life, contribute to the growth of the consciousness of the characters concerned, sooner or later, provided we believe that life is a continuous progress passing through cycles of birth and death towards its goal fixed in the calendar of the unknown. Life is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury could be the experience of Macbeth who had pursued his agenda of ambition in a determined way, but the experience is an invaluable gain that his psychic, the indestructible core of his being, cannot but preserve so that he transcends the ambition in his next incarnation. This inevitability of the growth of consciousness, through disastrous state of affairs into which a confederacy of the evil and the wicked throws man, is clearly articulated by the poor old king, the gullible Lear, when he finds himself in the open in a stormy night. He realizes what he could never have realized had he died as the whimsical proud ruler that he was. His consciousness has expanded enough to embrace in it the misery of his subjects:

*Poor naked wretches wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed ruggedness, defend you
From seasons such as this? O I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.*

The king was not to get that chance to use his "superflux" for the needy in that life, but life goes on!

* * *

PRESERVATION OF TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE - I

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Art encompasses a variety of art forms such as literature, performing arts (music, dance and theatre), and visual arts (sculpture, painting, architecture and so on). Some art forms combine several artistic disciplines in a singular artistic experience. Thus, Kuchipudi dance ballet utilises sets (visual arts), costumes (fashion), acting (dramatic performing arts), story (literature), and vocal and instrumental music. Cultural heritage is the accumulated stock of creative expressions inherited from the Past. Cultural heritage is classified into two categories: intangible heritage and tangible heritage. . Intangible heritage includes literature and performing arts as well as knowledge about literary and artistic creation , and musical and theatrical performance. That knowledge could be codified or 'tacit'; tacit knowledge is transmitted through guru shishya parampara. (master-apprentice lineage). Tangible heritage comprises built or immovable such as buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, and moveable heritage such as artworks, archives, artefacts or other objects of cultural significance. Monuments are old structures which have survived more or less intact as say the Taj Mahal; ruins are remnants of monuments marred by the ravages of man and nature. the cultural heritage of a nation, or to use the more evocative French expression patrimony, is 'the manifestation of the individual and collective creativity of a people through all the stages of its history and [is] therefore the expression par excellence of cultural identity and of the essential individuality of nations'.

Interventions to protect and preserve tangible heritage are of long lineage. In India itself, Asoka conserved the sacred edifices enshrining the memory of the departed saints, and in the 14th century AD, Firuz Shah Tughlaq repaired the tombs and many other historical buildings of former kings such as the Jami Masjid (Masjid-i Jami) of Qutub-ud-din Aibak, the Royal Tank of Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji (at Hauz-

Ancient India was great because it was as enamoured of learning as
modern India is of petty politics.

- Nani Palkhivala

i-Khas complex), Jahan-Panah of Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, Sultan Ghari Mausoleum, the Madrasa (college) of Sultan Shams-al-Din Iltutmish, and the top two stories of the Qutub Minar, which were damaged by lightning in 1368. Museums, treasure houses of the moveable heritage, are of more recent vintage dating back to the 17th century. Systematic preservation of tangible heritage began during the Viceroyalty of Curzon. Earlier, the responsibility for protection and renovation lay with the Local Governments; even though considerable progress was achieved during the later quarter of the nineteenth century the progress is dwarfed by the scale of havoc that was being inflicted on monuments. Fergusson was the first to strongly denounce the vandalism of monuments and make a strong case for documentation and preservation of monuments His books, as Curzon rightly noted, ‘sound one unending note of passionate protest against the barrack builder and the military engineer’ who mutilated monuments and turned them into British garrisons at many places. An egregious example of such abuse was the use of the Diwan-i-Amin the Red Fort as a canteen with a bar to the left of the throne and a coffee shop on its left. To use the evocative language of Curzon, such abuses were examples of the ‘barbarian’ in the aesthetics of the official mind; sadly, there were far too many such examples. ‘Architectural monuments’, claimed H. H. Cole, the first and last curator of ancient monuments in the nineteenth century and fierce champion of conservation, ‘have suffered, and are suffering, more from the acts for which Government has been responsible than from natural decay produced by rain or vegetation in the jungle and deserted places’. The era of vandalism and desecration of historic buildings continued till Curzon assumed office; Curzon made a heroic attempt to evict the official occupants and restore the buildings to their original state. Even the imperious Curzon was not fully successful ; thus, under Curzon’s instructions the army handed over only the Mughal palaces in the Red fort to the Archaeology Department for proper maintenance and conservation; till as late as 2003 the Army was in possession of about 70 percent of the Red Fort, and even Indira Gandhi failed in her attempt to dispossess

the Army which continued to insist that its occupation of the Red Fort was necessary to meet the garrison needs of the national capital and to make fool proof arrangements for the safe conduct of the annual Independence Day celebrations.

Picnic parties were another menace. Fergusson bemoaned the damage the European picnic parties caused to monuments; the stucco and paintings of Ellora, Salsette and Junnar caves had entirely disappeared, and the sculptures would have met the same fate but for the fact that it was not easy to dislodge them. Regarding Ajanta, he observed:

A traveller who would now visit them, miss much that I saw a few years ago. It is sad to think that after standing for so many years an exposure to so destructive climate, after escaping the bigotry of Muslims, and the rough usage of the robber Bheel, they should be disappearing from the meddling curiosity of the Europeans who now visit them... few come away without picking off one or two of the heads he think most beautiful or interesting, and as most are reduced to powder before they reach their destination, they are lost to the world for ever.

Curzon rued the fact that ‘at an earlier date, when picnic parties were held in the garden of the Taj, it was not an uncommon thing for the revellers to arm themselves with hammer and chisel, with which they whiled away the afternoon by chipping out fragments of agate and cornelian from the cenotaphs of the Emperor and his lamented Queen’. After railways made their appearance in mid-nineteenth century a new species of vandalisers made their appearance. Many monuments and sites were vandalised by railway contractors to procure ballast for laying the railway lines; the famous Harappa site provided brick ballast sufficient for 100 miles of the Lahore-Multan line, and when Cunningham visited the site he found the devastation so extensive that there was very little worth preserving. No wonder that Abu Imam observed that ‘no invader of India had ever so ruthlessly and wantonly destroyed her ancient remains as did the railway contractors in the civilized nineteenth century’.

The first policy pronouncement in which the

For me the essential nature of reality is Love. Love is the essence of the
 Universe and the essential principle in human life.

- Subhash Chandra Bose (13)

Government acknowledged its duty to protect ancient monuments was Mayo's Note (1870); the Note laid down the conceptual framework within which the Government proposed to act in regard to ancient monuments. In 1873, the Imperial Government assigned the Local Government the responsibility for caring for all buildings or monuments of historical or architectural importance even though the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established in 1871. ASI was not entrusted with the protection of monuments, presumably because it was felt that if it were to undertake the responsibility for maintaining and repairing the myriads of monuments scattered all over the country the Imperial Government would have to set up a gargantuan machinery, and that therefore it would be prudent to entrust that responsibility to Local Governments who could use their Public Works Departments to attend to maintenance and repair of monuments along with other civil works. Even though the ASI was not entrusted with conservation, the Imperial Government occasionally sought the advice of Alexander Cunningham, Director General, ASI on matters of conservation. In 1874, Cunningham made the significant recommendation that all ancient monuments not actually in use as places of worship should be placed under the sole authority of the chief civil authority of the district in which they are situated, and that authority should be made responsible for their preservation. To use jargon, Cunningham drew a distinction between 'living monuments' (ie., those monuments which continue the purpose for which they were originally intended) and 'dead monuments' (ie., those which are not living monuments) as well as between 'living monuments' which continue to be used as places of worship and those living monuments which are not religious places. That distinction continues to be respected even today in the matter of declaring religious places as protected monuments as well as the preservation of monuments. As a rule the Raj abstained as far as possible 'from any interference with the management or repair of religious buildings' and did not declare any monument used for religious observances as a protected monument, except by the express desire of the owners or trustees. This policy continues to be followed even after Independence.

And further, the conservation policy allowed greater latitude to living monuments in the matter of restoration. The Raj practice was an offshoot of the lessons learnt from the 1857 Great Revolt which gave the Raj a real scare; by and large British officials gave up attempts to proselytise Indians and cast them in the British mould. And further, it followed the practice in Britain where successive legislations from 1882 to 2010 excluded places of worship from the purview of monuments which the Government could declare as a scheduled monument and assume responsibility for protection.

Another matter on which Government sought the advice of Cunningham was the proposal of a G. W. Terry, Superintendent of J. J. School of Arts, Bombay that the frescoes should be peeled off from the walls of the Ajanta caves by a special peeling-off method, and the peeled frescoes deposited in the safe custody of the Nizam in whose dominions the Ajanta Caves were situated or the Bombay Museum or the Imperial Museum Calcutta, or much better the Indian Museum, London. The ostensible reason was that in their present position, the Ajanta frescoes were accessible only to a few, and even to those few they were only dimly visible. In contrast, in a museum 'all the antiquarian and artistic world could see them'. The proposal was wholeheartedly supported by Cunningham who also expressed the view that the frescoes were liable to 'injury from percolation of moisture through the fissures in the rocks'. Mercifully the Government rejected the proposal as it felt that the process for peeling was very risky.

A comprehensive system for protection and preservation needs to address the questions what is to be protected, who is to protect, and how should protection be done. The Ajanta episode vividly brings out that the questions what should be protected, and how protection should be done are not just technical questions; they are questions whose answers vary depending on conflicting perceptions, beliefs and interests. For a museum professional or student of art the value of the Ajanta frescoes lies in their being art treasures of sublime beauty, and their interest is to ensure that the frescoes are located in a place of

The greatest aid to the practice of keeping God in memory is, perhaps, music. Even the minds of animals, such as dogs, lions, cats, and serpents become charmed with music.

- Swami Vivekananda

easy access where they could be preserved properly and displayed elegantly for public view as well as for study by archaeologists, artists and art historians. From this perspective, any good museum is a better locale than the relatively inaccessible dark caves; Terry was echoing this point of view. Cunningham saw preservation of the frescoes as a purely technical problem. Preserving them in the rock caves would be an unending, perhaps losing, battle against the unrelenting seepage of moisture, and that being so it is better that the frescoes are preserved in a place where the battle against nature would be less challenging. Neither Terry nor Cunningham saw the frescoes, the caves on whose walls the frescoes were painted, and the hilly landscape where the caves are located as a composite whole, and a heritage site to which the local people are very much attached by virtue of it being their patrimoine (an inheritance), and a manifestation of the individual and collective creativity of their ancestors. To peel off the frescoes and preserve and display them somewhere else would be to 'decontextualize' the frescoes; shorn of their cultural context their cultural value and significance would diminish. Study of a decontextualised object would necessarily be a partial, incomplete study. Whatever preservation in the sense of 'maintaining the status quo of a monument including its setting there by not allowing any changes, either through deliberate human interventions or due to action of natural agents of decay to its fabric or its immediate environment' (emphasis added) has come to be a universally accepted principle except in exigencies like the shift of Nubian monuments when the Aswan High Dam was constructed in Egypt, or nearer home when thirty odd temples were relocated to prevent their submergence under the backwaters of the Srisailem Hydrel Project dam.

A cause célèbre was the Amaravati Stupa which establishes that most of the archaeological excavation in India during the nineteenth century was no more than prospecting for antiquities and sending artefacts excavated/removed monuments to museums. When Colin Mackenzie visited the Amaravati Stupa in 1797 the Stupa, he noticed a huge construction built with bricks and faced with limestone, was more or

less intact. By the time he returned in 1816 much of the structure was in ruins because of random digging by a local Raja for treasures and building material. Mackenzie conducted excavations and made several sketches of the sculptures. He began the process of moving the sculptures piecemeal to far off museums. Mackenzie removed many sculptures to Masulipatam (Machilipatnam) from where a few were sent to the Asiatic Society Museum, Calcutta. In 1830, another lot of sculptures was removed by Collector of Masulipatam to beautify the marketplace of the town and later handed over to the Madras Museum in 1856. Walter Eliot, Collector Guntur, excavated the Stupa in 1840, he shipped the single largest haul of sculptures to Madras; they lay unattended and unexamined for fourteen years in the premises of the museum of the Madras Literary Society. Thereafter, the whole lot was shipped to England for display in the Indian Museum, set up by the East India Company. They lay abandoned for years in open craters in the docks and backyards, till they were discovered Fergusson in 1876, extensively photographed by William Griggs, and made the core of a display of photographs of Indian architecture that Fergusson organised for the Paris International Exhibition of 1867. With the disbandment of the East India Company the Indian Museum was disbanded and its collection of the Amaravati sculptures found their permanent home in the British Museum. A new sensibility about preservation of tangible heritage began to grow in England in the last quarter of the 19th century which emphasised conservation of monuments in situ (on the site). The conflict of the perceptions and interests of those engaged in archaeological and architectural investigations on the one hand and of the new sensibility of conservation on the other comes out in bold relief from the controversy over the preservation of sculptures and panels dismembered from the stupa by successive excavations. Burgess who, as Director of the Archaeological Survey of South India, visited the stupa and conducted excavations from December 1881 to January 1882, expressed the opinion that the stupa could not be restored and that the objects could not be relocated in the stupa at their original positions, and that being so, the best of the objects

Active public agitation, news commentary and open discussion are among the ways in which global democracy can be pursued even without waiting for the global state.

- Amartya Sen

should be sent to the Madras Museum. H. H. Cole, the first and last curator of ancient monuments in the nineteenth century and fierce champion of conservation, had a different view. The responsibility for preservation continued to rest with the Local Governments, and Cole's role was limited to offering professional advice. Cole brought to bear on his job a burning zeal and prodigious energy; in just three years he traversed the entire length and breadth of country meticulously documenting the monuments. The ten volumes of the series entitled Preservation of National Monuments are among the most beautifully produced documents of Indian archaeology and are a lasting legacy of Cole's all-too-brief career. He had a holistic and pan-Indian vision of the preservation. He did not confine his activities to British India and made concerted efforts to liaise with rulers of Native States, and encourage them to address conservation issues in a systematic way. Nor did he draw a distinction between monuments under Government control, and private monuments; thus, he offered advice on the preservation of the Srirangam temple in the Madras Presidency. He forcefully advocated in situ preservation, and unusual for his times advocated involvement of 'natives' in the preservation of heritage as such involvement contributed to the success of conservation effort. Yet for all his vision, capability and prodigious effort his tenure ended as a failure; his tenure was not extended, and even the idea of having a curator of ancient monuments was abandoned. As aptly summed up by Upinder Singh his failure was due to ' [his] ideas [being] too radical for his time, a desire to accomplish too much too fast, an impatience with bureaucratic procedure, and an inability to get along with people'. Whatever, at the insistence of Cole, the Imperial Government stayed the movement of the objects to Madras till Cole visited the site and gave his opinion. The Imperial Government consulted Cunningham and Robert Sewell, a Madras civilian who officiated as Superintendent, Archaeological Survey till Burgess was appointed in charge of the survey of South India. Sewell was of the view some objects were so out of place that they could be shifted to Madras while the rest could be preserved in situ in a building; Cunningham expressed the view that it

was best to shift the objects to Madras as no portion of the stupa could be restored. Cole did not agree with the proposition of Burgess and Cunningham that objects dismembered from a monument which could not be restored should automatically be sent to a museum for preservation. He put forward a strong case for in situ conservation; the remnants of the stupa could be railed-in securing as far as possible the existing masonry. The loose objects could be preserved in a museum on the site. While so recommending he outlined a great length the merits of in situ preservation. The outlying districts would be robbed of their heritage if all beautiful and valuable remains were to be ruthlessly torn from the ancient sites and moved away to far away museums. Inaccessibility of sites where objects were in situ preserved was no justification as India was being opened up by communications of different kinds; if travellers and scholars from different countries visited ancient cities and temples there was no reason why it was inconvenient for them to visit the objects preserved in situ. The desire of museums like the British Museum and the Madras Museum to acquire and display cultural objects could as well be met through plaster casts of the objects like the celebrated cast of the Eastern Gate of the Sanchi Stupa. Echoing the eloquence of Byron decrying the desecration of Parthenon and depositing of the Elgin marbles in the British Museums he thundered that it would be a 'suicidal and indefeasible policy to allow the country of being looted of original works of ancient art when there exist the means of making facsimiles which are indistinguishable from the original'.

(To be concluded)

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**THE HERO AS SCHOLAR:
Dr. V. RAGHAVAN**

Dr. (Mrs.) Prema Nandakumar

Dr. V. Raghavan was a familiar name in our house because he was a friend of my father, Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar. He became a symbol for me in 1958 when he sent his book of Tamil short stories, **Varalakshmi Vratam** (1950) as a wedding gift. Fifty

Indian history is like Himalayan geography. It is vast without being complicated.

- Nirad C. Chaudhuri

years have passed by but the book continues to have a cherished place in my personal library along with his other books like **The Indian Heritage** (a masterly anthology of Sanskrit literature) and **The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja** (for which he has written a brilliant foreword).

Though English was my chosen language of specialisation, I was no stranger to Sanskrit thanks to my father, and Prof. Kunhan Raja who was the Professor of Sanskrit in Andhra university when I was a student. Hence, each book of Dr. Raghavan was a welcome companion to adventure in the world of literature, for his scholarship transcended the parameters of Sanskrit. He wrote in simple English which was a boon for students like me. He brought the Raghavan touch to even seemingly casual publications. A daughter is getting married on 23rd August 1967 and he has decided to present his friends with a Tamil translation of **Sri Devi Mahatmya**. But he takes care to write a brief, gem-like introduction to the scripture. Just four pages: but the very essence of Devi worship is here, and the volume becomes an important addition to one's library.

The One without a Second was not able to stand the loneliness of the Absolute One and so it became Twain and then Many.

“The second that rose from the Brahman is Maya. *Mayam tu prakrutim vidhyat mayinam tu mahesvaram* says the Veda; this Maya which is the Power of the Supreme became the Cause of the worlds; It is She who projects on the sheer white screen of the Supreme the multitudinous sights carrying innumerable names. She is the One who through her powers of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas is engaged in Creation, Guardianship and Destruction.”

Certainly Mahasaraswati had been the presiding deity on the day when Dr. Raghavan was born. Soon, the gifts of the Goddess of Learning were made to blossom forth in several ways by his hard industry. He was truly a worker, for a scholar has to work hard physically, as hard as the tiller driving the plough in the field. The tomes to be read, compared, summarized, set down in notes; the physical act of writing hundreds of pages, often having to create more than a couple of drafts. Dr. Raghavan wrote in three

languages: Sanskrit, Tamil and English. Probably he was aided by a typewriter for English. But I guess he wrote with hand when it came to the Indian languages. Then, there was the need to get publishers, or find the money to publish it by himself. The hours of proof reading that cannot be wished away. There are hardly any printer's devils in the books published by Dr. Raghavan when he was alive. I am not surprised for after all he was a friend and coeval of my father who used to say, “you cannot read the proofs too often”! For Dr. Raghavan, almost all his books were bi-lingual. This meant additional work-load for the brain which has to change gear constantly between two languages. Dr. Raghavan did it all, with heroic self-confidence and patience.

Decades of immersion in great literature had given his style a rare lucidity with touches of sublimity even when dealing with exclusive subjects like Alankara Sastra. I can see the joy it must have brought to fellow-scholars. Here is his **Sanskrit Drama: Its Aesthetics and Production** heavily underlined by my father who had released the book on the occasion of Dr. Raghavan's 81st birthday celebrations at the Samskruta Ranga. The volume is a collection of essays, some of them in popular magazines like **The Illustrated Weekly of India**. But the Raghavan-touch is everywhere, noted by father's pen that has highlighted the sentences. A couple of them:

“In the realm of philosophy, in particular the philosophy of the beautiful, it is Drama that has provided the clue or set pattern for ancient Indian thought.”

“Natya is the imitation of action and each action has its characteristic mood or atmosphere or disposition, with respect to the man in action as well as to the Sahrdaya who sees the Natya. This mood or atmosphere or disposition is Vritti. So it is that Bharata says that dramatic action or drama is born of Vritti. Vritti is, so to say, the bed of drama.”

Father's speech on the occasion touched upon Raghavan the activist for Sanskrit drama (writer, translator, producer, actor) as also the scholar's strivings and pointed out rightly that “Raghavan was thus the one-man Ministry of Indian culture stationed

The arrival of the digital age and electronic media has given rise to what is now being described as a 'post-truth' society in which fact and fiction occupy the same space leaving it entirely up to the reader to sort out the one from the other. - Charles Allen.

in Madras". He was particularly delighted because Dr. Raghavan also went beyond the Indian borders:

"Along with the mastery of material and the play of an active and agile mind, there is here also a background of global comprehension. Dr. Raghavan refers with ease to authorities like Aristotle, Tolstoy, Goethe, T.S.Eliot and other Western Critics and there are besides apt references to modern European Drama including, the 'Theatre of the Absurd'."

The **Ramayana** from Valmiki onwards was Dr. Raghavan's field of studies. No retelling escaped his eye. He was the very soul of the Sahitya Akademi's **Ramayana** seminars. His **The Ramayana in Greater India** is priceless. He seems to have been born to speak and write on the **Ramayana!** For instance his Karnik Endowment lectures at the University of Bombay has him at the wheel, taking us on extended journeys in Ramayanaland, noting the Sakta orientation in **Adbhuta Ramayana**, the influence **Adyatma Ramayana** had on Tulsidas, and the astonishing tale of Dasaratha-Kausalya marriage in the **Ananda Ramayana**. The audience must have been entranced by the ceaseless pouring of informed critical information in a crystalline flow. Why 'Ananda' **Ramayana?** Dr. Raghavan says:

"It is the Ramayana which narrates especially the life of Rama after his coronation and as King, enjoying his rule and making all those around rejoice. There are specific sections devoted to Rama and Sita enjoying themselves; especially one whole Book, the IVth called Vilasa Kanda, is devoted to their enjoyment. Rama has excursions, expeditions, pilgrimages, marriages of his children etc. all this is in contrast to the well-known Ramayana, the greater part of which is involved in suffering, Duhka."

I have often wondered whether it was **Ananda Ramayana** that inspired Kavisamrat Viswanadha Satyanarayana give precedence to the happy life of togetherness led by Sita and Rama in his magnificent Telugu epic, **Sri Ramayana Kalpavrukshamu**.

Dr. Raghavan was certainly a Sahitya Prapoorna, since he not only spoke and wrote on Sanskrit dramas but had them staged too, leading to a revival of interest in the genre. For us who knew Sanskrit mostly as scriptural and serious, it was revelatory to come

across plays like Sundararajakavi's **Snushavijaya**, since Dr. Raghavan edited them. **Snushavijaya** has an introduction which is a role-model indeed. All available information is gathered and presented in a cogent manner so as to deepen the reader's interest in the work itself.

The avaricious mother-in-law Duraasa, the harmless father-in-law Suseelah, the son Suguna and daughter-in-law Satcharitra are the major actors and the contents have been enacted in a million households where the ageing mother-in-law is unable to accept the change in guard with the coming of the daughter-in-law. Dr. Raghavan's observation is accurate:

"The coarseness of the earlier Prahasanas is absent from this modern production, and the author is one endowed with a gift for minute observation and understanding, a sense of humour and a simple and pointed expression; the generosity of his nature and his practical outlook are evident in the finale which avoids the sacrifice of the peace and joy of young expectant life at the altar of a cantankerous, over-sensitive dotage demanding in its inferiority-complex the nursing of its imaginary grievances and increasing angularities."

If his mighty scholarship and editorial acumen has always overwhelmed me, his creative writing has been educative entertainment. Though I have read only **Varalakshmi Vratam**, I have returned to it for half a century. It has been unalloyed joy to take up the volume periodically and go through all the stories again. I have never tired of them. What a pity the exigencies of a scholar's life gave him no time to write more! His satire can be biting; his imaginative flights, exhilarating; his story-telling is ever absorbing; his realism, memorable. The typical Thanjavur Brahmin as the Witness of life around him in the village or in Chennai sees to it that there is never a dull moment in his writing. I have never had the opportunity to watch the Bhagavata Mela at Melattur but have heard about its great tradition. But the Bhagavata Mela is very real to me because of Dr. Raghavan's story, "Bhagavata Natakam" which opens the collection. He projects both the facets of the festival: the religious ecstasy which drives the idealists, and the human face where age is loath to give the centre stage to the

Individuals are not utility-maximizing machines that pursue material gain above all else.

- Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr

younger generation. We are no strangers to Kizhattu Nanu! How the “Mangalam” village comes alive through the writer’s words! The anxious ladies mourning the stoppage of dramas have been actually speaking to me! And how breathless I have remained going through the scenario after “Narasimha” began chasing Oldy Nanu for sowing schisms in the village, chasing him across the stage into the temple, in and out of all the houses in the village, across the village fields and following him by jumping into the well:

“Who dare go near that well? Who can save a man whom God has decided to punish? The sun rose in the east. Narasimham came out of the well, taking long breaths. Its hand was all blood-smearred, while around its neck hung intestines. Spreading its hands it drew to itself Hari who had acted as Hiranya and the little boy who had acted as Prahlada ...

Women prostrated on the ground. Others hailed the Lord to themselves. In that silent dawn full of devotion and fear, Narasimha held Hari in Hiranya’s make-up by one hand and the Prahlada boy in his other, and explained the significance of the Drama enacted by the Lord:

Whenever righteousness is on the decline, O scion of the Bharata race, and unrighteousness is on the increase, I appear.

To guard the virtuous, to destroy the iniquitous and to establish Dharma, I appear in each Yuga.”

The admirable charlatanism of Crook Paddu, the predicament of living in the ‘stores’ of Chennai, the tragedy of the Brahmin streets in Thanjavur villages sold to Muslims, the ways of Director Vas, triple-language formulas, the mushrooming kindergarten schools shelling out English medium, exchange of old clothes for glassware, the matrimonial problems for young men who swear by their tufts Nothing escapes Dr. Raghavan’s discerning eye. And the title story: you have to read and savour every line of this story to know how deep runs Indian faith and the correctives it holds in its hands for the benighted individuals in society. Yet another **Snushavijaya** but touched by the gold dust of a dream-vision.

* * *

PUBLIC RELATIONS: A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty

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What would be role of Public Relations in a post--truth world, the world, currently marked by media manipulation, paid news and open-ended digital highway?

PR must not be a blind worshipper of the State or the Market. It cannot be founded on the unbridled Statism of the collectivistic kind, or the reckless individualism of the capitalistic order. If PR were to build communities and empower people, then it must be founded on deeper ethical and spiritual principles that are the collective legacy of mankind

From birth to death each one of us goes through PR exercises: the mother coaxing a reluctant child to eat or sleep, the young adolescent persuading his/her beloved to walk hand--in--hand into the sunset, the candidate before the selection committee, or a professional beseeching a superior for a pay hike--all are engaged in PR exercises. The same can be said of all walks of life. Thus, we may reasonably say that PR is as inevitable as breathing.

PR is often called upon to strengthen democracy, governance, public opinion and corporate social responsibility. It addresses the important goals of economic, social, and participatory democracy, the latter a term that has been used and abused for much of the 20th century, absurdly even by totalitarian regimes like Bolshevism and Fascism.

Students of PR must be aware of the evolution of the discipline in historical terms. From Demosthenes and Cicero of the ancient world who stood for rhetoric and the art of persuasive speech, from Greek sophists to the modern lobbyists in the academia, media and the electoral domain, PR has indeed come a long way. It has become all pervasive and seemingly all

The world is as indispensable to God as God is to the world.

- S. Radhakrishnan.

powerful. From business houses to charity houses, from altruistic minded individuals to Missions beyond national frontiers--all must swear by PR.

Conventional Wisdom:

The most appealing and popular understanding of PR may stem from Dale Carnegie's iconic and widely noticed title: *How to win Friends and Influence People*. In today's world, however, PR is understood as a far more complex and far more intricate, multidimensional phenomenon, far more problematic than ever envisaged.

The traditional understanding of PR was that there was an objective, that this objective or goal was noble and honourable and that the art of persuasion could attain this goal. The best of such instances are found in the great works of World Literature from Sophocles to Shakespeare, from Kalidas to Karnard. Mark Antony's famous obituary address at the death of Julius Caesar to Hamlet's noted soliloquy: 'To be or not to be that is the question' - are instances of this kind. We see Hamlet's attempts quintessentially to persuade the audience to his deep-seated distrust of womankind, based on his mother's illicit relationship with his uncle, just as Antony in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar turns the table by his speech on conspirators like Brutus.

While rhetoric, persuasion and the effective speech--all carry a positive connotation, unfortunately Public Relations as we understand it today, seems to contain an element of artificiality, an attempt that suggests something spurious and dishonest. Despite the moral and semantic baggage it carries, all of us seem to fall prey to its fatal lure: the first sign of trouble in an organisation, the managers must turn towards the PR Unit for damage control or a PR exercise.

Does Public Relations sharpen our awareness to our fatal flaws and help us find effective and lasting remedies or does it, as commonly believed, help us tide over the problems and generate a more palatable and rosier picture of the reality?

If PR must strengthen democracy in a more

potent and more transparent manner, then it must give up its traditional approaches and mooring and discover a new *raison d'être*, a sense of purpose that must be rooted to good governance and communitarianism. It cannot blindly serve the interests of administration, business or political interests: PR as a blind worshipper of the State or the Market, public opinion in an abstract and value--neutral manner.

Individual Creativity and Public Good:

If PR were to build communities and empower people, then it must be founded on deeper ethical and spiritual principles that are the collective legacy of mankind. It cannot be founded on the unbridled Statism of the collectivistic kind, or the reckless individualism of the capitalistic order.

Such an approach to Public Relations must harness, the deeper springs of a third kind that must combine the virtues of individual creativity with the boons of public good--an ideal combination that has eluded us so far.

Public Relations must ideally cherish the notion of Truth, in how-so-ever an ambiguous and contradictory manner. What would be role of Public Relations in a post--truth world, beyond the current world of media manipulation, paid news and open-ended digital highway? The recent aberrations manifest in forums like the Facebook where electoral fortunes are decided at the click of the mouse, where data thefts are seen as more pernicious than the spectre of the Big Brother in George Orwell's dystopic novel 1984, are reasons for deep disquiet for the civilized world.

Public Relations is indeed at the cross - road today. It must find its meanings, purpose and role in the contemporary world, beset as it is by violence and turmoil. Behind all powerful human drives – be they good or evil – there were major acts of persuasion--the Nazi propaganda machine of Hitler that led to the extermination of Jews, or the equally destructive tyranny of Cheka, NKVD or KGB, or the more contemporary prison house of Guantanamo Bay of America – such instances seem to be endless !

If everyone would sweep their own doorstep the whole world will be clean.

- Mother Teresa

It is of course, no body's case that traditional wisdom has all the answers to contemporary problems of Public Relations. Indeed there is much in the earlier approach that needs to be forsaken or corrected for the greater good of society and mankind. Our understanding of children, women, the minorities and the dispossessed today is far deeper than what we had earlier. Call it politically correct or otherwise, PR must reflect this awareness in a more sensitive and nuanced manner to problem solving.

In whatever we do, our words, acts and behaviour must eschew the insincere and the dishonest. Flattery has never succeeded and will never do so in the long run.

Beyond PR: Abiding Truths of the Human Condition:

In Sophocles' immortal play Antigone, Creon, the king of Thebes, demands of Antigone absolute surrender to the State. Antigone refuses to yield and insists on the burial of her brother who was a rebel to the Throne represented by Creon.

Antigone did not engage in PR exercise or act of diplomacy to save her life. She stood valiant and truthful and sided with her brother: Loyalty to the family overrode loyalty to the king and the States. There is a lesson here that mankind has not forgotten and never will, especially given the powerful presence of the State in all walks of life today.

Thus when we speak of Public Relations for governance, democracy or corporate social responsibility, we need to carefully interrogate and unravel each of these categories and hold it up before the mirror of civilized conduct, marked by equality and fairness in political, economic, cultural and spiritual terms. Only then can PR hope to find its true calling, its real mission in life.

(The author was formerly Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Hyderabad, and Vice Chancellor, Central University of Orissa. Widely published, he is currently a Member of the Governing Board of Auroville Foundation administered by the MHRD.)

* * *

REMEMBERING Dr. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

Shri Ramakrishna Vithal Kunduri

A renowned teacher, an eminent educationist, a Vedic scholar, an orator of uncommon brilliance, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was one of the greatest Philosophers of the twentieth Century who enlightened the entire world with his illuminating intellect and his eloquent interpretation of our country's philosophic heritage.

Born on September 5, 1888 in a poor Telugu Niyogi brahmin family, he had a very humble beginning and went to a local primary school at Tiruttani. He went to a missionary school at Tirupati and Vellore for higher studies. A brilliant student, he received scholarship throughout. He completed his Post Graduation in Philosophy at Madras Christian College and was well-versed in Testaments and was trained in European philosophy.

His Master's thesis was titled "The Ethics of the Vedanta and its Metaphysical Pre-suppositions" and was intended to be a reply to the charges against Hinduism by the missionaries, who ridiculed the Hindu beliefs and practices, calling them as intellectually incoherent and ethically unsound.

Radhakrishnan secured an Assistant Lecturer's post at the Madras Presidency College in 1909. The challenges of the Christian critics led him to a thorough study of the Classic Texts of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist philosophies and he also learnt Sanskrit. He became an Assistant professor and taught Philosophy, Psychology, Logic, Epistemology, Ethical theory etc. and published many articles. His article titled, "The Ethics of the Bhagavad-Gita and Kant" appeared in the International Journal of Ethics and received excellent reviews.

Dr. Radhakrishnan also taught at the Government colleges at Anantapur and Rajahmundry, during 1916-17. In 1918, he was selected as a Professor in Philosophy and moved to Mysore University. He was highly respected and revered by his students for his exemplary teaching and matchless motivating skills. During his tenure at Mysore, he authored two books,

Over time, experts adapt to incentives, rooted in the authoritarian politics context, to alter or limit their advice.

- Calvert W. Jones

“The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore” and “Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy”.

In 1921 he was offered the King George V Chair of Mental and Moral Science at the University of Calcutta. He represented Calcutta University at the Congress of the Universities of the British Empire and the International Congress of Philosophy at Harvard University in 1926. His published his two-volume book titled ‘Indian Philosophy’ during that period which was hailed as a philosophical classic and a literary masterpiece and its recognition enabled Indian philosophy to be included for formal study in universities throughout the world.

He delivered Upton and Hibbert Lectures at Oxford during 1926-29 and was appointed Haskell lecturer in Comparative Religion at the University of Chicago in 1930. For his services to education, he was knighted by George V in the June 1931. He became the Vice Chancellor of Andhra University during 1931-36 and the Calcutta University affirmed his position in perpetuity while Oxford University also appointed him to the H.N. Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics, in 1936. He was elected as a fellow of the British academy in 1938. And in 1939, he became the Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University and served there till 1948.

Radhakrishnan was made the Chairman of the University Education Commission in 1948. The Commission’s report became the basis for the system of Education in India. Radhakrishnan viewed that if education has to be complete, it must include not only the training of the intellect but the refinement of the heart and said that the true sign of education is humility. He prescribed the study of the great classics to improve our taste and to civilize our behaviour. He felt that unless knowledge is transformed into wisdom and wisdom is expressed in character, education is a wasteful process and exhorted that one has to study literature, philosophy and religion that interpret the higher laws of the universe, to gain wisdom.

During 1946-52, Radhakrishnan led the Indian delegation to UNESCO and was the Chairman of its Executive Board for the period 1948-1949. Presiding over its General Conference at Paris in 1952, he sent a message to the discontented world saying, “Love

and not hatred, freedom and not fear, faith and not doubt, have in them the healing of the nations. If we carry out these principles in our daily life and in our international relations, out of the anguish of this world will be born a new unity of mankind, a unity in which the ideals of the spirit will find safety and security.”

Radhakrishnan served as a member of the Indian Constituent Assembly for a period of two years following our Independence and in 1949, was appointed as India’s Ambassador to the Soviet Union. He was elected as the country’s Vice President in 1952 and served for two successive terms. He displayed his masterly skill in conducting the affairs of the Upper House and established important conventions, valuable practices and secured to the Rajya Sabha a distinct and dignified place in our parliamentary system. The country honoured him with the title of ‘Bharat Ratna’ in 1954. He also acted as the Chancellor of Delhi University.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was elected as the country’s President in 1962, Welcoming the news, Bertrand Russell said that “It is an honour to philosophy that Dr. Radhakrishnan should be President of India and I, as a philosopher, take special pleasure in this. Plato aspired for philosophers to become kings and it is a tribute to India that she should make a philosopher her President.”

Radhakrishnan was quite disturbed at the distressing trends across the world and challenged the dominating character of organizations such as the League of Nations and emphasized on the need to create a spiritual unity among nations which will transcend and sustain the material unity of the world order. He said that in order to make the world safe for peace, our conscience must grow and our comprehension of human dignity must increase and that we must rid ourselves of racial pride and religious intolerance and the deep-seated lust for power.

He received the honorary membership of the British Royal Order of Merit in 1963. He was the first person to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi fellowship for his writing. And in 1975, he received the Prestigious Templeton prize for promoting the notion of “a universal reality of God that embraced love and wisdom for all people”.

During this pandemic the disease reveals where it has got to only in the daily litany of infections and deaths. Democratic politics becomes a kind of shadow boxing: the state doesn’t know which bodies are the really dangerous ones. - David Runciman

A literary genius and a person of amazing intellect, Radhakrishnan always spoke with supreme authority, clarity and universality, without ever pausing or pondering. The scintillating stream of knowledge and wisdom, cascades perennially in the shape of the spoken word from his lips. He authored many books on Philosophy, Religion, Ethics, Culture wrote commentaries on Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Bhagawad- Gita and expounded the highest spiritual intricacies in the simplest of terms, be it the Vedic wisdom or Christian theology.

Radiant in looks, resplendent in his traditional attire, Radhakrishnan was a majestic figure, full of grace and elegance. Cheerful and blissful in nature and impeccable and exemplary in character, he would cast a spell on everyone around. For those of us who have had the rare privilege of being in his presence on a few occasions, it was always an elevating experience! It is the great good fortune of this country to have given birth to such an illustrious son on its soil.

* * *

S.P. BALASUBRAHMANYAM

A TRIBUTE

A. Prasanna Kumar

S.P. Balasubrahmanyam's creative genius evokes attention and admiration wherever and whenever his voice is heard. And a day is incomplete without his voice being heard. Temples, Tirumala in particular, resonate with the melody of his devotional songs. As a playback singer, actor, music director, voice actor and mimic Balu was versatile and he won the Guinness World Record for rendering the highest number of songs in various Indian languages. He has immortalized the great singer Ghantasala by raising his statue in Nellore and through his most popular weekly TV musical show beginning with a famous Ghantasala song Padutha Theeyaga for talent promotion and value dissemination. It was a highly popular weekly programme watched by thousands of people and SPB was at his best in explaining the nuances of popular music. He has built a bridge between the past and the present for the benefit of the future generations. As a singer, composer and music director he has scaled towering heights. Still,

he remained an endearing embodiment of humility. How many forgotten singers and music directors he has honoured and how many worthy causes he has helped quietly is not easy to describe. SPB rose to eminence by dint of hard work allied to extraordinary intellectual sharpness. In the golden jubilee year of his career he raised a statue in his home town Nellore for his noble father the late Sripathi Panditharadhyula Sambamurthi, a renowned Harikatha Bhagavatar who followed Satguru Sri Tyagaraja's tradition of devotional music. "The message to today's youth is that they must remember their parents with reverence and gratitude and always try to walk in their footsteps" said SPB once explaining the quintessence of the popular programme. His father late SP Sambamurti literally and musically walked in the footsteps of the great Sadguru Tyagaraja, performing uncha vritti every morning. Sambamurti epitomized the Tyagaraja tradition of linking the human with the divine through music as it was aptly observed that Tyagaraja "classicized popular music and popularized classical music". S.P. Balasubrahmanyam was the finest exponent of this parampara having rendered the kritis of Tyagaraja, and the keertanas of Annamaya and Ramadas with amazing perfection, besides singing numerous devotional songs in many languages. Sambamurti was a seer-singer who gave gem of a gift to the world of music in the form of Balasubrahmanyam. As that celebrated duo Bapu-Ramana used to say "Balu is God's gift to us." On August 10 SPB sent me a message that he would go home in a few days from the hospital. Forty five days later he passed away. When a pall of gloom enveloped every house in south India, Chennai in particular A.R. Rahman, the master-composer of film music was reported to have said that 'we must honour Balu Sir's memory by hearing his songs and music and celebrate his achievements as he would have liked us to do.'" Nearly fifty thousand songs sung in different languages during fifty four years of hectic work including acting, music direction and other related activities by the ever-smiling S.P. Balasubrahmanyam who shed his mortal coil on September 25, leaving behind a rich legacy of melodious music, unforgettable songs and imperishable values that will be written in letters of gold in the history of cinema and remembered with grateful admiration by millions of people.

* * *

The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.

- Theodore Roosevelt

SOBHA NAIDU CZARINA OF KUCHIPUDI

Shri Velcheti Subrahmanyam

“Life, says Eckhart Tolle, is the dancer and you are the dance, czarina of Kuchipudi dance, Shobha Naidu perfectly fits into this frame. Dance, dance and dance, nothing else came anywhere near her heart and mind in her eventful life. Her striking persona combines an ace danseuse, choreographer and teacher, who has scaled dizzy heights in pursuit of her passion for dance. She firmly believed it is a carry forward from her lives previous a purvajanna sukruithi. On what did dance mean to her, she told me in an interview way back in 2001, it was not just very breathe of her life but a carry forward from her lives previous. Seeing is believing and one has to see to believe her exceptional talent that fetched her soubriquet boneless wonder. Her performance has always been an optimum combination of nritta, nritya and abhinaya. This judicious mix ensured not just riveting attention of the viewers but carried them along the mood of the moment being depicted. That she has grasped the import of rasa bhava in its entirety remained evident in every frame of her performance lending an indelible mark in her expression.

True, she excelled in portrayal of Satyabhama delineating emotional mindscape of possessive queen of exquisite beauty; however, it was Chandalika of Ravindranath Tagore that was dear to her heart for it is a character of flesh and blood. She breathed life into that character particularly in the scene where Chandalika questions why she is discriminated for no

fault of hers. She said that the realistic shades of the poignant character were touching.

Born in a conservative family in 1956 in Anakapalli Visakhapatnam district, she dabbled early; tasting the fruit of success with her debutant performance, she never looked back. Her father KV Naidu was initially reluctant to let her join the dance class but her mother Sarojini Devi, who noticed her proclivity for dance encouraged and got her tutored by PL Reddy in rudiments of Kuchipudi. Later, her tryst with Kuchipudi marked a turn in tide of her life when Kuchipudi maestro Vempati China Satyam took her under his wings. A quick learner as she is, she evolved into a danseuse of exceptional caliber in no time. She widely toured abroad giving performances in the maestro’s troupe doing female lead in the ballets such as Sri Krishna Parijatham, Padmavathi Parinayam and Chandalika of Rabindranath Tagore. Her uncanny ability to be in sync with the team yet strike out in a distinct way is something that made her primus inter pares in the maestro’s formidable troupe of consummate artistes.

She had established Srinivasa Kuchipudi Art Academy in Hyderabad in 1980 and groomed over 1500 disciple from India and overseas. She had 15 ballets and 80 solos under belt that bear an eloquent testimony to her choreographic acumen. A recipient of many an award including padmasri, she wore her celebrity status lightly on her shoulders and remained an unassuming and accessible guide to even new entrants in dance. May her tribe increase!

* * *

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