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GENERAL ELECTIONS

Parliamentary system of government is also called Prime Ministerial system because of the enormous power and prestige enjoyed by the Prime Minister. As long as he or she is supported by a majority, wrote an expert, there is nothing the Prime Minister cannot do except making a man woman and woman a man. From Walter Bagehot's classic on the English Constitution scholars quote such famous words as the cabinet being the keystone of the political arch and the Prime Minister being the keystone of the cabinet arch in the parliamentary system. Even a little known leader becomes strong once he is elected as the Prime Minister. Clement Attlee, for instance, was no match to his charismatic predecessors Winston Churchill and Lloyd George in demeanour and oratory. But with concealed ruthlessness he presided over cabinet meetings and took many momentous decisions. In our own country Indira Gandhi literally danced to the tune of king-maker Kamaraj in 1966 when she was chosen to succeed Lal Bahadur Shastri. What she became a few years later and how she exercised power is too well known to need mention here.

Atal Behari Vajpayee, brimming with confidence, went on January 27 to the President of India and recommended the dissolution of the Lok Sabha seven months in advance. The same Vajpayee was asked by the President six years ago to seek a fresh mandate when his coalition government failed to secure a majority in the Lok Sabha. The coalition outfit that tried to avoid a general election then, is today seeking an early poll. Vajpayee today is not only the keystone of the coalition (cabinet) arch but also the undisputed master of the entire system. His political skill and style of functioning have kept the 'flock together' and more importantly, given the polity, stability and direction in difficult times. His peace initiatives, with Pakistan in particular, have aroused hopes of a new climate of peace in the sub-continent and of solutions to nagging problems between neighbours in the region.

Still, the BJP would only be emulating its arch rival, the Congress party, if it focuses all the attention on Vajpayee and asks people 'to adore him'. If the United States has in the recent past (before 9/11) claimed to

"have never had it so good" the BJP has thrown up a new slogan/cliche "the feel good factor" as the main reason for advancing the elections. Some of the achievements of the NDA government are impressive though the BJP led NDA government is taking credit for every good thing that has happened including the favourable monsoon last year! Euphoria generates such myths as invincibility and indispensability.

What causes concern is the fact that the ruling coalition and the opposition parties do not seem to have an ideology or a coherent plan of action for the future. There are more important issues and concerns that need to be urgently addressed than putting up for national debate the credentials, or the lack of it, of the Congress President for becoming the Prime Minister of India. Poverty and unemployment continue to be the main challenges before the nation. Corruption has destroyed the efficacy and credibility of almost all institutions at every level of our public life. The causal relationship between poverty, corruption and violence is too serious a matter to be ignored for long. Gender injustice and marginalisation of the disadvantaged sections of the society are equally serious and urgent matters that need to be addressed. Nobody grudges the massive investments for the development of national highways and airports. But neglecting education and health will be disastrous for the future. Investment on education and research in universities has not received the attention it deserves.

President APJ Abdul Kalam has wisely raised such issues for the consideration of the people and political parties in his Republic Day message. He has gently reminded our leaders and parties of their responsibilities towards the nation and its groaning millions. A general election is an occasion for stock-taking, not for muck-raking and mud-slinging. Winning the trust of the people is far more important than securing certificates and testimonials from foreign countries and international agencies. A healthy and informed debate on major issues is the need of the hour. Moderation and restraint should be the governing principles of such a public discourse.

- The Editor

"Economic development makes democracy possible; political leadership makes it real."

- Samuel Huntington

"SADDAM HUSSEIN'S CAPTURE - IMPACT ON WAR AGAINST TERRORISM"

Cmde C. Udaya Bhaskar

(Summary of a lecture delivered at CPS on 20 Dec. 2003)

War against terrorism is not new. It was going on at a global level for years. But the US led war against terrorism begins with the September 11 incident when US declared "if you are not with us, you are with terrorists". There were three objectives laid down by US before the war. 1) capture of Saddam Hussein, 2) elimination of Al Qaeda, and 3) ensuring change of military regime.

The capture of Saddam Hussein was dramatic. With his capture, only the first objective was realised by US, the two other objectives were not realised. So, after the capture of Saddam Hussein, the focus was on WMD. The focus became so tense that if one has a book on Nuclear Physics, he is considered guilty of having an atom bomb and he was also treated as violator of human rights. The whole world became empathised and there was much solidarity after 9/11. The world rallied around US within 48-72 hours of the fall of WTC. The interlinked domains of the capture of Saddam Hussein are the political fall, diplomacy, strategic and military related issues and more than that the socio-cultural fall.

Civil society became very uncomfortable with the American war on Afghanistan. The US decision was strongly deplored and pressure was mounted on US to call off the war. There was pressure within US also as there were many followers of Islamic faith in US. It became an uphill task for US to control the situation and the immediate impact of War against Terrorism is that it is leading to greater degree of turbulence. But with surplus military power, the objective of 'regime change' is realisable. US should not stop with regime change, but it needs to redefine its objectives by ushering in a socio-political rhythm change.

Cmde. C. Udaya Bhaskar said America being a superpower it looked as though what was good to America was good for the rest of the world. The reality was that the superpower could do what it wanted and if one wanted to sustain in such an atmosphere, one had to find a balance. When asked whether tyranny could be justified as 'ends would justify the means', he was emphatic in saying that US was not justified in waging a war to remove a dictator. No doubt the tyranny and brutality of Saddam Hussein were extreme, but the world is not a better place after the capture of Saddam Hussein.

"Iraq adventure may cost US dear" :

The United States, which has succeeded in capturing the former Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, should not stop with bringing about the regime change in that country but aim at ushering in a socio-political rhythm change.

So observed the deputy director of the Delhi-based Institute for Defence and Strategic Analyses, C. Udaya Bhaskar, while speaking on the theme, 'Saddam Hussein's

capture - impact on the war on terrorism', under the aegis of the Centre for Policy Studies here on Saturday.

He doubted whether the objective of the US policy makers - he described them as "neo-conservative advisers of the President, George Bush" - to restore democracy in Iraq would be achieved by this capture, and was apprehensive that this might lead to a greater degree of turbulence, with the anti-US sentiment spreading all over the world.

Comparing this with the anti-Vietnam sentiment of the 1970s and describing such a popular sentiment as the "second super power", Commodore Bhaskar felt that it would be appropriate if the US at least now went in for a multi-lateral approach towards rebuilding the shattered Iraqi economy by involving the United Nations.

He emphasised that it would be misleading to think that Iraqis would be pacified by Saddam's tame-end and said that it would also be a mistake to blow out of proportions the so-called Shia-Sunni discord in that country.

Another major drawback in the US-UK invasion on Iraq, he said, was the total lack of rectitude in the policy execution, turning the state (authority) itself a terrorist.

He agreed with the remark of the Centre's Director, A. Prasanna Kumar, who was in the chair, that though the end of fighting terrorism on a global scale was noble, it could not justify the means of achieving it through such invasions.

(Courtesy : The Hindu, December 21, 2003)

'POLICY MAKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr. Amrik Singh

(Summary of a lecture delivered at
CPS on 23 January 2004.)

In higher education Vice-Chancellors play a crucial role and at college level, the principals play that role. In the case of aided colleges, the managements play important role. The turnover is quick in government colleges due to the presence of DPI. But in reality, the politician and the bureaucrat have more to say in policy making. Truth is that the mandarins of the Human Resource Ministry are ruling the affairs of higher education.

Till 1973 teaching was not given the importance it required. We failed in both our legal system and education system. The change that ought to have been made was not made. Today a feeling has come to the common man's mind that university education is not meant for us. It is for the elite class.

There is a mushrooming of professional colleges without adequate infrastructural facilities and faculty. The two crucial problems confronting the higher education system are : 1) The teachers are not upto the mark and 2) The number of colleges multiplied enormously. All these maladies are due to the fact that our society is a soft society and we don't take hard decisions. Besides,

there were many loopholes in policy making. Policy making is not done on the basis of merits of the issue but on other grounds known best to us.

Another important point is that there is total neglect of our teaching at all levels. At every level of teaching, we are running short one or two levels. Half of what is being taught at university level, could have been taught at college level itself and what is being taught at college level, could have been completed at school level. In the process we have diluted the concept of university education. There is astonishing lack of coordination in our research. In reality universities are to be built on what has been taught earlier but it is not done so. Today we are in a situation where the politician has no interest other than making money and the bureaucrat is disinterested.

Added to these is the important problem of lack of leadership among teachers. They are a hopelessly divided lot with a pronounced trade union mentality of promoting sectional interests.

The teaching community should rise to the occasion and must be involved in policy making. Politicians and bureaucrats should shape the policy matters in line with the thinking of the academic community.

Excerpts from his latest book : 'FIFTY YEARS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA' : Sage Publications, New Delhi 2004.

On UGC : The UGC at present is so toothless that it cannot blame anyone else except itself. What it therefore needs is strong statutory support from the Ministry of HRD. (P-21)

UGC Act needs to be amended to rectify the chronic problems confronting UGC. The union government should make more funds available to the UGC. UGC must be vested with greater statutory powers. (P-24)

The role of accreditation must not only be strengthened, it must also be expanded. Student assessment of teachers needs to be given a big push. Academic reform will not receive the right kind of attention unless two things are done. One is to establish more autonomous colleges and the other is to introduce a new mode of testing in universities and colleges. (P-25)

The task before the UGC, therefore, is now to establish its bonafides as a professional body. Everything so far has worked against it. To assume that a change of direction can take place overnight is to fly in the face of experience. The process by which the UGC gradually lost its professional character was a slow one. Miracles do not happen in the realm of public policy. They have to be worked for, slowly and systematically. The choice before the UGC therefore is how and when to start this reversal of direction. (P-212)

On Post Graduate Education : Even if the students were not as well trained as they are today, they were still able to get their Master's degrees. It was suggested that if someone who had completed his Master's course found it difficult to write his Ph.D. thesis, there was certainly something lacking in the training that he had been given. (P-143)

In future only autonomous colleges will undertake post-graduate work would be strongly resisted. (P-149)

A working paper should be prepared and should be circulated to the universities and discussed by the vice chancellors, both at the university level and the academic community level. The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) too should be involved and so should be some of the other professional councils in case they wish to be involved. (P-150)

On Ph.D. Degree : There should not be the slightest impropriety in the award of a Ph.D. degree. This is the highest degree conferred by a university and its 'chastity' must be zealously and consistently protected.

The UGC must be able to ask to see any thesis which it may pick at random. While doing so complete office record giving details about the steps taken should also be summoned.

A system should be evolved whereby any thesis approved by a university is picked out for a second reading by an independent set of examiners. Two new experts may be consulted each time and they may be asked to re-assess the thesis. (P-164)

On VCs : A good deal depends upon the kind of vice chancellor who heads the university. Almost every degree has to pass through his hands at some stage or the other. If he is demanding and careful, the message goes around and others become careful. If he is not demanding and trends to be casual, and the number of such people has been growing of late, the alarm bells should ring. He is the one person who handles the award of Ph.D. degree at some stage or the other and therefore it is he, more than anyone else, who should be held responsible for what happens. (P-166)

On Teacher Leadership: Lack of accountability in the teaching profession, it needs to be recognised, virtually destroys the profession of teaching. Something along these lines has been happening in the last few decades. If things have not collapsed, it is basically owing to the sense of commitment of those 15-20 per cent of teachers in the profession who, despite so many things happening to the contrary, have continued to do what was expected of them. (P-236)

Decision making, such as it is, has got into a rut largely because of the apathy of teachers and teacher administrators who are vested with the responsibility of running universities and colleges. In certain cases, they do manage to impart a touch of excellence. But it needs to be acknowledged that their number is very small. (P-242)

There is also a positive reason why the teacher leadership should encourage participation of teachers on a much larger scale than what is happening now. A large number of teachers are dissatisfied about these decisions. But, over the years, because of their unabashed apathy, they have allowed decision making to slip out of their hands and go into hands which are not always sympathetic or well informed. In any case it is highly desirable to promote better standards of performance. (P-252)

In plain words, the teacher leadership will have to change both its mode of thinking and its style of functioning. (P-253)

VAVILALA GOPALAKRISHNAYYA A VISIONARY AND ACTIVIST

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Vavilala Gopalakrishnayya, known all over Andhra Pradesh as 'Vavilala', was a popular leader admired by many for his rare qualities. As an individual, as a political representative, as a keeper of conscience of society and as a humanist Vavilala played his role to perfection. No wonder he became a role model. Even the persons who were ideologically in the opposite camp appreciated his ideals. The possession of and adherence to such qualities was not uncommon during the freedom struggle but very few continued in the post-Independence era to live with the same commitment, enthusiasm and active participation as Vavilala did. The credit for staying long as an independent member elected to the State Assembly for about 20 years rightly belongs to Vavilala. He was a Gandhian in thinking and living but not an imitator or blind follower. He may not have often been seen spinning the *charkha* but he was always seen wearing the hand-washed coarse khadi (kurtha, dhoti and hand bag with a picture of Gandhi on it and another pair of dress in bag when on tours). There was no movement or public meeting of major concern in his native district or state in which he did not participate. Understanding fully Gandhi's life as multi-dimensional, Vavilala chose to play his role in a multi-faceted manner. He was an activist not just in political matters but in all socio-economic, educational and cultural matters; he was not just a protester but also social conscience keeper, debater, and consensus builder. He was known for his ready wit and repartee. Once in the State Assembly the moment Vavilala got up to speak the mike he had before him lost its functioning and immediately a voice from the Treasury benches echoed in the house: 'Vavilagaru lost his voice'. Vavilala shotback: 'yes, what else can happen in the Congress rule!'. He had a literary taste and used to convey the message in the form of couplets he composed in Telugu. For example.

1. Seela jaarite bandi padipotundi (Cart crashes when axle breaks)
Seelam jaarite manishi padipotadu (man falls when character fails)
2. Panta chedite samvatscharam nastam (year goes waste when corp fails)
Chaduvu chedite taram nastam (generation suffers when education declines.)

Vavilala's active participation in the freedom struggle and also in the movements relating to the states is in no way opposed to each other. Though he preferred to confine his role to the state, his concern and the concomitant efforts in national issues were not secondary. The documentation of his participation in the major movements would run into several thousand pages. To give an overview of it, Vavilala started his public life at the age of fourteen or fifteen in 1920 by joining the

procession arranged in his native place, Sattenapalli in Guntur district, to mourn the death of Lokamanya Tilak. Vavilala continued to be active in public life with the same spirit, enthusiasm and committed action till the last years of his life. He took active part in all the stages of freedom struggle - in the Non-Cooperation Movement (1921), in the Salt Satyagraha (1930), in the Civil Disobedience (1932) and in the 1942 Quit India Movement. He was arrested eleven times and he suffered jail imprisonment for about seven years in different places. Vavilala's participation in the movements relating to the issues of Andhra people was almost continuous in one way or the other till he became physically immobile in 2003. He started participating in the agitations for separate Andhra (from Madras Presidency) from 1930s and played key role till the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956. His conviction about an integrated Andhra made him oppose both the movements, one for separate Telangana (1969) and the other for separate Andhra (1972). His socialist learnings made him to be active in all the issues relating to the strengthening of the agricultural and cooperative sectors, the development of the irrigation facilities, the rise of wages, remuneration and other facilities for the toiling working classes and artisans. His study and proposals for strengthening the economic sector in particular and every aspect of human life in general were so thorough that one could find a committed researcher in him. No wonder Vavilala was called 'a walking encyclopaedia on Andhra life'. He had to his credit forty-six small booklets in English and seventeen in Telugu. Vavilala continuously took active part in the Library Movement which formed part of freedom struggle in the Andhra area. He played a key role in the creation of a separate ministry for the public libraries. In the movements against caste and creed Vavilala was always in the forefront. He made relentless efforts towards the making of Telugu language the 'official' language and the medium of instruction in schools and colleges though several hurdles have yet to be overcome in the implementation. As noted above the problem of space compels me to chronicle facts that speak about Vavilala's active participation in different areas of human suffering.

Adding lustre to his activism was his visionary perception. Though not a conceptualist, Vavilala was clear in his mind, forthright in expression and had a vision of inclusive nature. In occasional interviews (which the author had the opportunity of holding, in connection with the Minor Research Project granted by the Andhra University during 1999-2000) Vavilala expressed his strong and deep convictions about certain key (political) conceptions and institutional arrangements. A few of which are mentioned hereunder.

- 1) Vavilala was clear and precise when he said that 'freedom' in any field in general and in politics in particular means 'responsibilities'. Boldness in exercising such freedom would be the first step for social action.
- 2) Leadership, in his view, emerges from the masses/grass-roots and shall become an all-inclusive force. The leader shall be the last individual to earn or enjoy

or raise his/her status more than the last person of the group does.

- 3) Openness as a policy, Vavilala asserted, shall be the protective shield literally and metaphorically. It can bring people's support from different quarters. Open politics is as good as 'morality based politics'.
- 4) That a society/state in which political parties digest the spirit of 'pluralist' way of life and practise it with commitment would certainly pave the way to the development of democratic and constitutional system, was Vavilala's firm belief.
- 5) In Vavilala's view a movement shall be the product of wide discussions, deliberations and public opinion rather than the product of sudden upsurge or revolt or parade of one's mass appeal.
- 6) Vavilala had such a modern (or post-modern?) outlook that he was always patient to wait for a proper understanding of any new trend, be it in politics or social life.

The vision of Vavilala transcends time and space. It encompasses the larger goals of social well being and human progress. The inspiration for social action and dedicated service comes from Gandhi's ideas and pragmatism. The spirit of Gandhi continues to be a source of inspiration and strength while some of his programmes can be fine-tuned in accordance with the demands and aspirations of people in the post-industrial society. Vavilala may be the last Gandhian but his vision will last forever.

IT : THE 'IDIOT' TECHNOLOGY?

Dr. T.V. Sairam

Chief Commr. of Customs and Central Excise

In this life, nothing comes free without paying a price for it. Even in respect of those freebies, one pays a price overt or covert.

Economists acknowledge the theory of opportunity cost. Any gain would mean an opportunity lost elsewhere! The popular saying in the French language that 'to gain something, one should lose some (other) thing' stems from such a philosophy.

IT the so-called 'smart technology' could be no exception to this.

Though it is an immensely valuable tool, intended to make us all more efficient in our own spheres of work, by catering speed, accuracy, convenience and whatnot, there is a sablest lining to this silvery cloud!

Hand-in-hand with the emergence of new technologies, one comes across a steady erosion of skills - inherent or cultivated. We are now aware that with the increased use of electronic gadgets such as calculators, digital diaries, memory pads, note books etc. our mental faculty has started losing its inherent capacity to problem-solving, such as calculating ability, arithmetic skills, memory retention and retrieval etc. As we are becoming more and more computer-savvy and getting tuned with the way the computer's binary logic works, we are unconsciously but steadily losing our natural patterns of thought processes moving away altogether from the way our human ancestors used to respond to a situation.

In other words, the time-tested methods of pattern making, sense-making and cognition, which are closely linked to our very natural being and self have all started giving away slowly but exclusively to the computer logic, totally based on the rational mind, associated with the left-hemisphere of our brain by the neurologists.

In physical terms, as we spend more time with the monitor rather than with fellow-humans, it is observed that we lose our communication skills in face-to-face situations, losing patience and tolerance - the very hallmark of the human civilization. Besides, there's every chance that social norms, etiquettes and obligations etc getting thrown into winds, thanks to our increased dependence on the machine-logic.

According to Gary Klein, author of *Intuition at Work*, IT inflicts three levels of damage; (a) it can disable those who have certain skills; (b) can slow their rate of learning so that it takes much longer for people to build up their intuition and expertise; and (c) can lead one to 'dysfunctional' skills, which interfere with the people's ability to achieve expertise in the future. Thus an IT expert can no longer remain an expert for ever, particularly with the threat of speed with which tools and technology would turn him out to be out-landish. A genius can overnight be turned into a madcap, thanks to the technology change, as computers get better and smarter.

The worst part of this technology is in war-like situations. A remote, nuclear switch-box placed in a safe and septic environment is capable of making us quite insensitive to the miseries caused to a multitude of our own fellow-species. All one has to do is, perhaps, to touch softly a 'delete' key coolbloodedly and say 'good bye' with a chuckle!

In spite of its tremendous 'productivity', man-made computers can nowhere come near the human genius! Failing to become aware of the innate intuitive and creative potential hidden in us and allowing us to be led by the computer logic blindly would be the greatest mistake every one of us will be committing. In all probability, the right hemisphere of our brain is likely to turn out to be as a vestige in a few generations from now if not earlier!

Considering its tremendous impact and ramification in all activities around us, IT is at the same time, a necessary 'evil', which has come to stay with us. We cannot simply re-trace our selves from its influence. Can we bomb our home and hearth, because we find rats playing there? Can we close down the hospitals because there is a fear of infections being spread from its portals?

All we have to do is to become aware of such dangers and take preventive measures.

Thanks to IT 'revolution', the generations that follow us, when we are long dead and gone, should not be allowed to end up as the 'left-brain oriented' morons, losing entirely the creative and intuitive skills offered to them by the Nature in the right hemisphere of their brain. Thus, there is a dire need now that our artists, musicians, dancers, spiritualists and the like enter this arena of IT in a big way so as to take up cudgels against this dreadful vacuum being created by the IT revolution.

Unless we exercise our full brain, the unused part, over a time, can turn out to be a nonfunctional vestige, resulting in the birth of a suicidal society of analysts and dividers who can never experience the joy hidden in love, compassion, intuitive creativity, giving and sharing, without which no human society can ever remain human! All IT professionals should be compulsorily made to undergo training in at least in some of the subjects that prepare us for using the right hemisphere of our brain faculty viz., drawing, painting, singing, playing instrument, prayer and meditation that lead us to causeless love and endless joy.

This could prevent us from being taken for a suicidal ride by the upcoming Idiot Technology. After all, when you ride a tiger, the caution is more important than the glory to be followed!

PYTHAGORAS

- Sri Challa Sivasankaram

The English to Telugu Dictionary of Charles Phillip Brown vividly states that Pythagoras was a sage that followed Brahmanical discipline. Swami Vivekananda could see traces of Indian thought in Pythagoras. The Swami again had to say while dwelling on Sankhya philosophy that Pythagoras got the rational thought and its importance from this system whose propounder is Kapilacharya. Kapila was a perfect Siddha whom Sri Krishna demed as his own divine personality. Almost all philosophies of the world are indebted to Kapila's Sankhya philosophy. The Swami with sure authority declares in no uncertain terms that Pythagoras came to India and studied diligently this unique and forward system.

According to Apuleius, Pythagoras got instruction in the noble branch of Vedanta from Brahmins. Without hesitation claim we can lay that Pythagoras was influenced by Kapila's Samkhya Yoga. Swami Vivekananda, the acknowledged legislator of World Religious opinion thus spoke of the Mystic of Greece.

Iamblichus the biographer of Pythagoras writes that he travelled widely and studied the teachings of Brahmins to whom Brahma entrusted the vedas which were materialised by him. Professor H.G. Rawlison writes that almost all the theories, religious, philosophical and mathematical, taught by the Pythagoreans like the Jains and Buddhists, refrained from the destruction of life and eating of meat and regarded certain vegetables such as beans as taboo.

Pythagoras was a votary of Indian theological assertion of transmigration of souls and metempsychosis. Similarities might be there due to borrowing or a result of parallel intellectual evolution. History does not repeat itself except with variations. Whether it was Greece or Indian Brahmin that influenced him the philosophy of Pythagoras stands as a monumental confluence of Eastern religion and Western thought. Greek influences are evident in Indian astronomy of Romanaka Siddhanta.

Pythagoras flourished about 582-500 B.C. He was a native of the island of Samos. Tradition enunciates that he was the son of Apollo the God of sunlight and

fine arts. The Greeks and later Romans believed in Apollo as the God of Astronomy and the science of prophecy. Samos was a prosperous commercial Island ruled by tyrant Policrates. As things prevailing in Samos were in conflict with his spiritual bent Pythagoras migrated to Croton in southern Italy.

Italy was the hub of intellectual and religious activity of the Western World and the country was not in imminent danger of aggression from Persia. Croton offered the atmosphere congenial for development and evolution of the quick-silver-minded Pythagoras. Protected by prosperity and enough liesure the philosopher could carry on his empirical life, perils of penury and absence of calm were far off.

The world famous mathematician and philosopher of twentieth century Bertrand Russell said that Pythagoras was a curious combination of Einstein and Mrs. Eddy. Mrs. Mary Monse Eddy (1821-1910) was the founder of Christian Science Church. Albert Einstein was world's most celebrated scientist with a soft corner for Indian Vedanta.

Pythagoras founded a society of disciples in Croton. The influence and credibility of the society were not insignificant. Aristotle (384 B.C.) says of the geometri- cian Pythagoras that he first worked at mathematics and arithematics and arithmetic and afterwards at one time, condescended to the wonder-working practiced by pherrcydes.

The contemporaries of Pythagoras were Confucius (551-479 B.C) of China, Zoroaster (sixth Century B.C.) of Persia, Gautama Buddha (563-483 B.C.) of India. Although the countries where the four mystic giants lived were geographically divided and distant from one another there had been felt a common current underneath of the four religions vigorously flowed. The Upanishadic Mes- sage that lays ceaseless accent on austerity, simplicity, detachment, truthfulness and nonstealing had been ab- sorbed by the said four religions. In the Philosophy of Pythagoras there are striking parallels of the teachings of Taittiriya Upanishad.

With Pythagoras the history of Western Philoso- phy began if I am not censured for inaccuracy.

Pythagoras is one of the most interesting and puz- zling saints of metaphysical annal. His saintly nature obliged him to lay certain rules to be invariably observed by men. They are

1. Not to eat Beans.
2. Not to pick up what has fallen.
3. Not to touch a white cock.
4. Not to break bread.
5. Not to step over a cross-bar.
6. Not to stir the fire with iron.
7. Not to eat from a whole leaf.
8. Not to pluck a garland.
9. Not to sit on a quart measure.
10. Not to eat the heart.
11. Not to walk on highways.
12. Not to let swallows share one's roof.
13. When the pot is taken off the fire not to leave the mark of it in the ashes, but to stir them together.
14. Do not look in a mirror beside a light.
15. When you rise from the bed clothes, roll them together and smooth out the impress of the body.

Pythagoras was aligned with mysticism, but it was

paradoxically intellectualism. Like the seer of upanishad he attributed the existence of all to God and his immortal energy. The systems inspired by him were all otherworldly, putting all value in the unseen unity of God and condemning the visible World as false and illusive, a turbid medium in which the rays of the heavenly light are broken, and obscured in mist and darkness. He recognised that men and women were equals and so they were admitted in the society founded by him on equal terms. Pythagoras is a prophet. His foresight, his pure soul purged of all mortal designs could courageously tell the World that World's progress, ultimate destiny and equilibrium were in the joint enterprise of men and women. As long as women were debarred from the World's collective urge to live in harmony, peace and tranquility in its march towards man's highest ambition of founding kingdom of God on earth would be delayed or forever deferred. It was the call and resolve of the prophet who lived like God beyond time and space. He was unaffected by the three phases of Time-past, present and future. His intuitive genius visualized a World where Adwaita Vedanta and Buddhistic equality and solidarity will prevail without bickering. He advised the man who strives for release from the wheel of birth must do so with utter disinterested spiritual grasp and philosophical maturity. In action born out of wisdom and consciousness of the eternal immanence and transcendence of Self lies the truth of man's inexorable clamour to get rid of births for ever through absorption in Brahman. The man that adheres to the formula of seeing action in inaction and inaction in action is the knower of truth.

The greatest discovery of the sage Pythagoras was the theorem about right angled triangles, that the sum of the squares on the sides adjoining the right angle as equal to the square on the remaining side the hypotenuse. The religion derived from ecstasy and the theology deduced from mathematics are meaningfully found in Pythagoras. Mathematics was the science that sustained the mystic mathematician in his increasing striving towards that which is the source of all that is visible. No tangible reason, no material cause would be able to convince him to believe that the World is self-existent. Though the World seems apparently limited to time it has its source in God, the subtle Energy. God is a geometer, a fine principle parrying the grasp of senses. To attain the Supreme, he says the seeker has got to transform himself to be an ascetic and pure advaitin, jealousy, desire and presence of ego have to be got rid of.

Persian belongs to Indo-Aryan family of languages. The learned Brahmin conversant with the language of the Vedas, Sanskrit could forge cultural links with his Iranian counter part of person keen on getting acquainted with Indian religion. Pythagoras by frequent visits to Persia, Egypt was able to hit on the learned Aryan, surrendered to him body and soul to obtain that knowledge which could remove illusion and drive away ignorance. Wedded to poverty, with intellect as property, scriptural learning as ready asset the Brahmin roamed the length and breadth of Egypt, Sparta and Persia. The Brahmin's attitude was that of a recluse. By example and precept

he could veer the nations round the Upanishadic message. Spiritual seeker looks upon himself as a pilgrim who knows his inhabitation on earth is a sojourn and yet many more sojourns he had to take before the fragmented river mingled with the boundless universal sea. The countries said above were inundated by the sacred knowledge sprang from the Himalayan Forests voiced by the emaciated sage.

Pythagoras, imbued with all that was eternal both of West and East, left behind a powerful legacy a strong ground of spirituality along with geometry, mathematics, arithmetic besides other-worldly philosophy which was to father great philosophers as time coursed forward. He was followed by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, quite a galaxy to shed divine light to find path for the generation to come. His mission, his message and his formulae found their shrill echo in the philosophies of Kant, Leibniz, Spinoza, John Dewey and a host of others. It did not end there. It permeated the soul of Mahatma Gandhi and it was imbibed by Christian saints and apostles. Thus his life and mission shine like Apollo, the luminous World Eye.

"THE THREE FAMOUS WOMAN PAINTERS OF THE WORLD"

- Dr. N. Krishna Murthy,
Retd. Professor, Andhra University.

From the times immemorial man is the master who dominated all fields of activities of life. The world will speak of many of the great men in various sectors of Fine Arts. Yet it is to be admitted that women are the majority in number when compared to men who take interest and pursue the field of Fine Arts. They show greater inclination and effort towards the arts like music, dancing, art, sculpture, graphics etc., Possibly in the past because of the restrictions of the society women could not become famous as many in number as men did. We come across very rarely the great woman painters who were famous over the world. Even in our country the history speaks very little about reputed woman painters. A work of art is primarily the result of one's creative instinct, and a search for arrangement, selection, order and equilibrium. Such equilibrium or harmony invariably produces pleasure, whether it is in nature or in work of art.

The chief classical painters of the 18th century were Jacques Louis David (1748-1825) and Jean-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867). David who was born in Paris founded a school and had many distinguished pupils. His influence is seen in the work of the famous portrait woman painter Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun who was a student of him. The characteristic femininity of the 18th Century enabled women to become painters such as Rosalba Carriera Lebrun and Anglica Kauffmann. These painters and their models suited each other perfectly. The serenity of the classical art and its tendency to apply rigid cannons derived from the past were unsuited to expression of the individualism that was one of the characteristics of the 18th Century.

The most notable fact regarding the development of the miniature painting in the 18th Century was Rosalba Carrier's (a Venetian woman painter) introduction of miniature painting on ivory, probably derived from the oval lids of the ivory snuff boxes that were so popular in Venice. Among the many men artists who specialized in portrait miniatures in Italy mention should be made of Giovanna Fratellini Bianca, Mathilde Festa, and Sofia Giordano. But Carriera who executed her first miniature on ivory (Fondelli) achieved distinction over all others. Her influence was most strongly felt in France where she worked in 1717 at the court of Louis XV. In France her portraits in pastel were popularized very much, especially "PORTRAIT OF A MAN" (22 3/4" x 18 1/2") which is at present in the National Gallery of London won great admiration. The background was toned in a bluish green colour, which is in a good colour balance with the beautiful skin colour and the violet colour of the dress. From France, miniature painting on ivory spread rapidly to all the European courts and thus Carriera enjoyed great fame. Her portraits are pictorially vivid and full of animation in part because of skilful use of transparent colours on ivory. Her influence was a source of production of great miniature portrait painters like Nicolas de Lirgiliere, Jean Baptiste Masse, Lampi etc., The highly esteemed portraitist Lampi had many followers and worked for a long time in various courts of Europe. The influence of Carriera was also quick to reach England. Among the first affected were Bernard Lens and Richard Cosway. English fans were having some what greater artistic interest in originality and grace and only some Venetian fans can be compared to French and Rosaltea Carriera was one amongst them.

Anglica Kauffmann (1741 - 1807) was a Swedish woman painter who was born at Chur, in Switzerland. She spent most of her successful life in Italy with a stay of a few years in London. She was a follower of David and she too aimed at retaining the effects of the painterly late Baroque classical methods of expression, but on the whole succeeded in doing so, only in portraits for example those of ladies depicted as virgins or sibyls. In her classical mythological and biblical scene little trace of old classical baroque methods remained. In her period together with men artists like Benjamin West and Hamilton she took Achilles, Hector Priam, Pylades and other Homeric items as favourite themes. The painting of "Telemachus and Hecuba at Tomb of Hector" is a famous one. The French empire saw Kauffmann decorated and lavishly painted some graceful square Planos (Tafelkeoviere). In the constructions of Robert Adam (the great innovator in England) the reliefs of the interiors (which are the most beautiful examples of neoclassical style in whole of the Europe) were constructed in collaboration of Anglica Kauffmann.

Her water colour painting with white lead on paper by name "Lament for dead Maiden" (7 1/2" x 9 1/2" in Rome) is very appealing. A man on the side of the feet of the dead maiden, explaining something to the other two maiden near him and a woman sitting besides her with a lowered head feeling sorry and another woman with bursting gesture in the woods in clearly depictive.

The self portrait of Anglica Kauffmann is an evidence of her taste in hair styles which was decorated with fruits, leaves and flowers. In her period a certain interest in some forms of allegorical representation still persisted as in the work of Daniel Chodowiecki who was influenced to certain extent by Hogarth whose allegorical themes for engravings were suggested by Kauffmann. In her portraits the models, rather than being faithfully portrayed are dramatized through gesture, ornament and clothes. The self portrait of A. Kauffmann (canvas 29 1/8 x 24") kept in Berlin Statliche Museum can be seen in a tricolour painting.

In the second half of the 18th Century painting returned to a more natural simplicity and reality. The artist had put his realistic art at the service of the sentiment and philosophy, interpreting the taste of the old style in moral scenes in a fresh style inspired by reality. The works of Lebrun and Drowais family pointed to the abandonment of the rococo tradition. They brought change to French miniature painting by introducing the broad style a substitute for that designate as the 'free style'.

Elisabeth Vigee - Lebrun was a pupil of David and was a very famous portrait painter. She was born in France in 1755 and studied in the school of David with Creuze, Guerin Prudhon, Ingers, Gros and other eminent artists. She was a favourite painter in the court of Louis XVI. At the time of the revolution she left France and travelled widely. She spent a longtime in Italy, three years in Vienna, six years in St. Petersburg and three years in London. She was well received in every country and painted many portraits. In St. Petersburg alone, according to her memoirs, she painted no less than forty seven portraits. Her manner of arranging her sisters for portrait painting was charming and she had a remarkable ability to catch them at their best moods. She kept away herself from ideologies and from all artistic problems of the period and specialized in an ideal of feminine grace in portraiture which pleased every body.

This and a competent routine of painting made her a great success in several European courts first that of Marie - Antoinette and then after the French revolution those of Home, Naples, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Dresden and London. She has painted her self-portrait in a posture when she was at work and is very striking to speak her abilities as a portrait painter. She closed her eyes permanently in 1842 leaving a very valuable portrait work to the world. The self portrait of Vigee-Lebrun can be seen in oil colour painting which is at present kept in "Louvre" Paris.

Thus the three women painters Rosalba Carriera, Elisabeth Anglica Kauffmann and Vigee Lebrun earned fame as distinguished persons in painting all over the world and are the examples of the women painters of proven abilities at international level, even upto the twentieth century.

A WRITE UP ON VIKRAM SETH'S 'AN EQUAL MUSIC'

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Vikram Seth's works reflect talent flowing creativity, and versatility. His works are touching, honest, and intimate in tone, where human emotions are articulated to reflect the inner most thoughts of his characters that are portrayed with truthfulness and candour.

Vikram Seth's 'An Equal Music' is a story about love, about passion for music that encompasses the life of the protagonists woven intricately and enchantingly through myriad details in to one whole delicious theme that unravels both the mystery of human emotions and transcendence of Music.

The novel is narrated in first person singular by Michael the protagonist and almost has a distinctly autobiographical touch to it. It dwells deep into Western Classical Music which reflects the author's thorough and in-depth fathoming of the subject. The narrative technique is at once interesting and intriguing as the author recalls his experience with people places and music entangled as they are in quotidian pursuit. These flashes of recollections and memories when pieced together form a wonderful story, that opens up part by part almost imperceptibly the gateway of perfect joy and wondrous pleasure of knowing the innermost thoughts, emotions, psyche and soul of the protagonists.

Michael loves music and is obsessed with his love for Julia. They both meet at Vienna as students of Carl Kall, an eminent teacher of Western classical. Both Julia and Michael start liking each other. To him a violinist, she is "the voice of his fingers". One day Michael discovers a numbness setting into his fingers. Carl, he feels is humiliating him for his dismal performance on the violin. Michael unable to cope with the pressure, rather egoistically leaves Vienna, Carl, and Julia, who tries to persuade him to stay on. Michael too absorbed in his own musical expectations is unaware of the anguish he inflicts on Julia by this decision. Julia, thus abandoned, becomes an emotional wreck.

Michael moves to London, tied to music, and queerly though, tied up to Julia emotionally. He misses her every second moment of his life. His attempts to get back in touch with her fail, and he loses her for James, whom she marries to get over the void left by Michael's departure.

One day he spies Julia reading a book in a London bus next to his. He, is now a Londoner and a second violinist of a quartet comprising Helen, Piers and Billy. Julia is oblivious of Michael in the other bus. The buses go their different ways. Just as he had done in the past ten years, he again tries to trace her in vain.

Providentially, one day after the performance of the Quartet, Julia comes back stage to meet Michael and

revives his hope in their relationship. They start seeing each other and start making music together once in a while during their many meetings. But he observes a certain aloofness in Julia who sometimes is inattentive, sometimes pensive and preoccupied and never completely herself in his company. Luke, her son inadvertently blurts out his mother's in-capacity to hear. Michael shocked by the revelation pieces together the incidents and gets a better understanding of her strange behaviour. Despite this they manage to make music together soulfully, playing Bach, Vivaldi, Mazart, and Schubert - he on his violin and she on her piano.

Destiny brings them together on stage with his quartet, whose knowledge of her deafness plays emotional havoc on Julia and she finally decides to give up group concerts and remain a soloist, in a tour they undertake. After their tour of Vienna, she also promises to join Michael in his Venice tour though she is not playing there. In Venice she reveals having seen Michael's letters in her father's trunk. The letters had been withheld from her by her father. They both stay in her friend's apartment for a couple of days reliving their dream of idyllic togetherness. Julia due to leave that Tuesday, writes a letter to her husband James. Michael happens to read it. Consumed by uncontrollable envy, possessiveness, and fury inflicts physical and emotional injury on her. Appalled at his behaviour she considers his reading her letter an intrusion of her privacy. Disillusioned and disconsolate, she leaves for London.

Michael realizes to his utter dismay that he cannot make music with the quartet any longer, so he quits. He tries to get in touch with Julia who refuses to have any thing to do with him - now that James has come to know of their relationship. He is devastated by her disappearance and is unable to cope with the resultant vacuum in his life. There is also a crisis professionally - he is unable to make music as he did previously, and also is on the verge of losing his much loved Tonini-his violin, his soul. Mrs. Formby (she has given him the violin and taught him the basics of music) realizes what his violin means to him and gifts it away before she expires. To thank her he wants to drive down to her grave at Rochdale, to play violin. But his love overcome by temptation to listen to Julia's solo concert, he gives up his trip to Rochdale. At the concert he is spellbound by Julia's inner strength and steely grit in overcoming her handicap. The fact that she could surmount physical, emotional and personal odds and was able to possibly make such divine music - what the author calls "an equal music" is what fascinates Michael and proves to be a revelation that nothing should overshadow the creativity of an artist. He realizes how he glorified his personal anguish at the cost of his passion for music and vows to his desire to metamorphose into a musician par excellence.

A riveting novel this, where all characters stand out for their value system and moralities. Vikram Seth takes us through a musical journey into the souls of characters who are sensitive, upright, truthful and more than anything else, human - with conflicting desires, passions, love, obsession and emotions.

BOOK REVIEW

DYNASTIES OF INDIA AND BEYOND - PAKISTAN, SRI LANKA, BANGLADESH, INDER MALHOTRA Harper Collins Publishers India a joint venture with India Today Group, New Delhi 2003 pp 363 Rs. 495

Inder Malhotra is one of India's best known journalists with a career spanning more than fifty eventful years. Entering the Fleet Street at a young age during a momentous period he rose to become the Editor of two leading dailies - The Statesman for seven years and The Times of India for eight years, besides being the correspondent of The Guardian for thirteen years. Inder Malhotra is a scholar - journalist who combines scholarly thoroughness with journalistic sharpness. He was both a Nehru Fellow and Woodrow Wilson Fellow and has ably and successfully functioned in two different fields, one that is quiet and relaxed and the other known for speed and sensationalism, steering clear of the numerous pitfalls of both.

His latest book DYNASTIES OF INDIA AND BEYOND has aroused considerable interest in India and abroad. The subject is complex and anyone attempting a study of the dynasties of the sub-continent would be entering a political minefield. Yet the veteran journalist handles the subject and many controversial issues in it with extraordinary skill and laudable objectivity. He raises in the introduction the basic question : Is dynastic phenomenon a passing phase or is it here to stay? and seeks to answer it with the support of theoretical inputs from eminent scholars like Dipankar Gupta and Ashish Nandy. Parallels between political dynasties in the sub-continent are pointed out focusing on similarities and dissimilarities. Though the Nehru - Gandhi dynasty, writes Malhotra, has hogged the world's attention, the Senanayakes and Bandaranaiques were entrenched in Sri Lanka much earlier. The Nehru-Gandhi dynasty ruled India for thirty seven of the first forty years of India's independence. Interestingly Asia's roaring tigresses defeated the tigers and tiger cubs.

Two important revelations, among others, need to be mentioned here. Perpetuation of dynasties is not confined to politics only. In art, music and dance too several

instances are cited like in trade and industry. Secondly though Indira Gandhi was often accused of seeking to perpetuate dynastic rule, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram whose collective age was 235 were equally keen on promoting their dynasties. These three grand old men who came to power after Indira Gandhi's defeat in 1977 turned prosecution against her into persecution. It is in the blood of Indian politicians to promote their dynasties and Madhu Limaye, the veteran leader, was so upset with it that he said : "Politician's progeny is a curse. No politician with a son or daughter should be allowed to become a minister."

A book by a seasoned journalist must also have room for humour and anecdote. There is no dearth of it in this work. There are quite a few references some of them hilarious and amusing, to the vanities and frailties of political leaders and the hypocrisy and sham that surround them. The 'doons' of Rajiv (Doon School products) and the 'goons' of Sanjay and the sycophants who were ever eager to shower praise in choicest phrases make interesting reading. Indira was India to some, Rajiv was 'the sole leader' to his supporters and Sanjay was to his flatterers Christ, Adi Sankara, Vivekananda, Karl Marx and Einstein! Poor Anjaiah the then AP Chief Minister confessed his ignorance when he was unceremoniously thrown out. Said Anjaiah : "I came because of Madam. I am going because of Madam. I don't know why I came!" PV Narasimha Rao considered inaction to be a form of action while his successor Deve Gowda thought of India as one of Karnataka's districts! The author points out how caste has become "the most potent force of political mobilization, formation of political alliances and emergence of political dynasties." The example of the Jet-set Ajit Singh becoming Jat-set proves the point.

This is a fascinating study of an important aspect of the society and politics of four countries of the sub-continent. Its value lies in the authentic manner in which facts are collected, analysed and explained to enable not only the general reader but the scholars and the students of history and politics to understand better the forces that shape the political and social institutions. Inder Malhotra deserves the grateful appreciation of the reading public for placing at their disposal a work of outstanding worth.

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