



Anjali

Japanese Section

昔からの言い伝え スデブ・チャットパダイ

世界事情は混乱を極めているこのごろ、占いは静かなブームとなっていると聞くが、インドでは昔から、星占いは盛んに行われている。一年間の毎日を、星の位置関係から分析し、どのような事を行うにはどのような時間帯が最も適しているか、事細かく書かれている本の「ポンジカ」は、こういったことに敏感なベンガルの家庭には欠かせないものになる。大変保守的なヒンドゥ教の家庭生まれの小生には「ポンジカ」はとても馴染み深いものだ。毎年内容は変わるが、変わらないのは、昔からの言い伝えの「コナル・ボチョン」という部分の数ページ。複雑で分り難い星の位置関係と違って、庶民が日常生活で身の回りの素朴な事柄で判断できる縁起ものに関する伝えだ。ここで、その2-3件について説明しよう。

数字に対する縁起の判断は各国でさまざまだ。たとえば、日本では四とか九の数字は縁起がよくない、中国では八の数字は大変縁起ものなど。数字の縁起に対する「コナル・ボチョン」はこういうのだ。サトパチュティンクシヨルバト、ノイエエケハテハト、キコルベチョテチョテ、カルジョナシュデュエアテ。つまり、七、五と三は一番縁起がよい、九と一はそこそこだ。六はやや悪い方で、二と八はとても悪いというのだ。ということで、誕生日、受験番号や部屋番号などに縁起のいい数字が並ぶととりあえず一安心とうことでしょうか。数学的に見ると偶数は縁起がよなくて、奇数の方は縁起がよいとされている。現代人には気にしない人がほとんどだと思うが、小生は、理由はわからないが、昔からの言い伝えだからとりあえず覚えていくか、といった感じで日ごろ数字に接している。

次は、週の曜日だ。ヒンドゥ教では曜日ごとに行われる行事が異なる例が多い。たとえば、ロックシミプジャは木曜日、ショニプジャは土曜日にのみ行われるなど。遠くへ出かける用事がある場合、適した曜日をどう判断するかに関する「コナル・ボチョン」はこうだ。モンゴレルウシャブデェパ、ジョテヤイツチャトテヤジャー、ロビグルモンゴレルウシャ、アルソブファシャフシャ。つまり、火曜日の朝と水曜日は最適だ。日曜はその次で、それ以外は避けるべき。小生のカルカッタの実家では、こればかりは忠実に守られていて、小生はいろいろと大変だった記憶があり、何かと気になることのひとつであるには違いない。

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最後にくしゃみに関する「コナル・ボチョン」に関して述べよう。本文はこういうのだ。ショヨネヴォジョネウポバショネバダネ、ビバヘビバデアルボストロポリデャネ。要は、一般的にくしゃみは縁起がよくないが、寝る前、食事前、断食する前、寄付する前、けんかする前、結婚式前や新服を着る前のくしゃみは縁起ものだ。寝る前くしゃみすると、呼吸系の整えられ、なんとなくぐっすり眠れる気がするので、まあ、いいことかなと思うが、けんかする前は、なぜいいのだろうか。気道がすっきりして大声を出せるからだろうか、疑問に思うことが多い。くしゃみに関しては、小生もなんとなく敏感で、東京の家庭でも、家を出た直後に家族の誰かがくしゃみをするとうち家に戻るようにしている。このためくしゃみのことに関しては、息子からのひんしゅくをととてもかっている。

このような言い伝えは多分、昔の知識人からの代々の伝えで広がり、庶民はそれに疑問を抱くことなく信じてきたことだ。現代人の、何でも納得のいく説明がつかないと信じないこととは、ほど遠いのだ。でも、昔から信じてきた家庭では些細な事ながら、今でもそのトラディションは受け継がれている。

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**RAJNI RAKYAN
ASHISH RAKYAN**

*Durga Puja 2003
Tokyo*





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「金色の蛇」

東京ヨガセンター理事長

羽成孝

‘ Believe it or not ’

世の中には信じられない事が沢山ある。それを「迷信」とか「気のせい」とかで片付けてしまう人は世の中に多い。私は、この世の中に何か起こる時は必ず予兆というのがあると信じている。これは総べての事に就いてあてはまる。例えば病気を例に取っても、それは突然やってくるのではない。必ず前以て、お知らせがある。されを人は気が付かないだけなのである。「ポックリ病」というのがあるが、あれだって必ず前以てお知らせがある。体の内部の変調、意識の低下、不活発性、等々。でも多くの人はその結果を見てその病気を治そうとする。だが、そうなった原因を探ってそれを取り除こうとする人は少ない。ストレス、悩み、苦しみなども不必要に自分で、どんどん作っていつて苦しんでいる。人は外の事象にだけ捕われて、内を見つめる事をしない。自分のうちを見つめると、内なる自分が色々な事を教えてくれる。ヨガは自分との対話である。リラックスをしている時に自分の内部を見つめていると、色々な事が見えてくる。肉眼で見えるものを見るのは誰でも出来る。肉眼で見えないものを感じとる力はある程度、訓練が必要である。訓練する事によって、そういう感覚が発達してくる。人が何かを思った時、その人から想念の波が出て来る。一般には、そういう念波は感じられないが、訓練する事によって感じてくる。世の中に「グル」と呼ばれている人は、その様な鋭い感覚を持っている人に違いない。私の出会ったグルも鋭い感覚の持主であった。当時（1980年ごろ）私にはグルが必要であった。「カンテラ」を下げた導いてくれる師を求めていた。それは期せずしてやってきたのである。南インドのカタルナカの椰子の林をさまよっていた時、突如金色の蛇に出会ったのである。多分それは黄土色をしていたのであろう。それが鎌首をもたげてこちらを見た時、丁度、朝日が椰子の葉陰から、その黄土色の蛇の首にあたり、まばゆいばかりの金色に輝いたのである。其の時、私の心の中の迷いがふっと消えていた。気がついたら私はその蛇の後を追いかけていたのである。そのうちその蛇を見失ってしまった。ふと前を見ると、アシュラム風の建物が見えてきた。それは「シャンティ ギリ アシュラム」という名前のアシュラムであった。案内人に誘われるままアシュラムの中へ入って行った。そこで私を待っていてくれたのがカルナカラ グル という名前のグルであった。彼は私が来るのを以前から予知していたと思われる。というのは、そのアシュラムのアーチの様な門の鴨居に20人位の信者の絵が書かれていたのであるが、その中の一人がどうしても私の似顔絵としか思えないのである。その絵の信者たちは、すべてインド人風の僧侶であり、一人だけ日本人の風貌なのである。これは本当に驚きでであった。後日グルに尋ねるとニヤニヤし、

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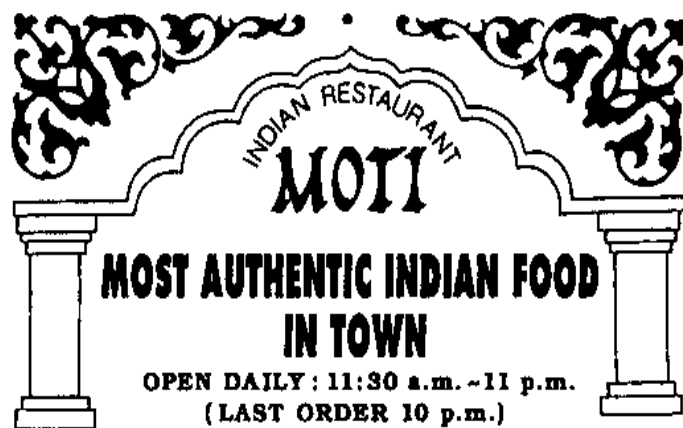
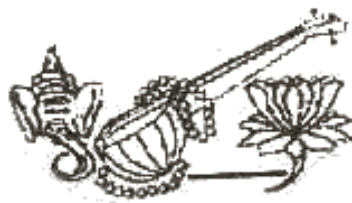


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確答をうる事は出来なかった。グルは自分の予知能力を誇るような人ではなかった。

それからずっとグルとの交流が続いていたのであるが、2000年に他界された。亡くなる1ヶ月前に主だった信者たちを集めて最後のレクチャーがあった。その中で特に印象に残った言葉がある。「今の物質主義の世の中が進んでいけば、必ずこの地球に Chaos (カオス) がもたらされる。人間は少し位の罰では今の生き方反省する事はないであろう。地球上の人間が半減する位の大災害が起きないと気がつかないであろう。そうなったら大変な事になる。早く気がついてほしい。」と切実に訴えていました。イラク戦争のことを予言していました。

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子連れインド留学体験から思うこと

ラキット工藤昭子

1999 年度インド政府奨学金留学生に選ばれ、1999 年 9 月から約 2 年間インド西ベンガル州シャンティニケタン市に滞在する機会を得た。当時 4 歳の双子の男児を連れ、夫なしで 3 人だけの暮らしを始めたわけである。

夫はベンガル人である。しかし夫は仕事のため東京に残り、親子 3 人だけの暮らしとなった。インドに住んだ経験はない。夫なしで双子の幼児を連れて、どうやって現地の生活に慣れればよいのか。こんな挑戦をしようとした事自体少し無謀であったかもしれない。

日本のある国立大学院で日本語教育を専攻している私は、言語習得を研究対象としている。そのデータを収集するためインド留学に踏み切った。

1999 年 11 月、ビスババラティ大学のベンガル語 2 年サーティフィケートコースに私は籍を置き、その傍ら同大学の日本語学科で日本語教育に携わった。そして子供たちは同大学付属幼稚園「アノンドパーシャラ」に通学することになった。

幼稚園の使用言語はもちろんベンガル語であった。朝 7 時 15 分にはじまり午前 10 時半には終わる。朝、外に整列しお祈りのロビンドロナート・タゴールが作詞作曲した歌を歌う。授業は外のマンゴーの木陰で行われることもあれば建物の中で行われることもあった。雨が降れば休みになった。授業は 2 コマあり、1 コマ終わると軽食をとる。もちろん自宅から持参したお弁当。そして自由遊びをした後 2 コマ目の授業。そしてまた整列しお迎えの父兄に連れられて帰る。西ベンガルの人々は詩、歌、踊り、演奏会鑑賞をととても好む。季節毎の花々を好む。子供たちもまた、幼稚園で詩の暗唱、数を覚えるためのナーサリーソングを振り付きで覚える。春を喜ぶ踊りを覚える。毎朝、庭の花を子供たちが持っていき、先生に渡す。先生はその花々の名前を教え、子供たちはどの季節にどのような花々が咲くのが自然に覚えていく。子供たちは授業の後半、瞑想をさせられる。心を落ち着け、耳に入ってくる鳥の声、車の音、人の声などに耳を傾け、20 まで数を数える。途中すこし目を開けてしまう子供もいたりするが、そうやって瞑想をし、心を落ち着けることを覚える。授業ではお絵描き、ベンガル語のアルファベットの学習、歌、踊り、詩、お話しなどが行われた。子供達が幼稚園に慣れるまでは大変であったが、自然に現地の文化を獲得しながら学ぶことができて良かったと思っている。先生方もよく配慮してくれ有り難かった。

始めの頃、活動範囲が狭く留学生や大家、使用人、留学生や大家から紹介され知り合った人々とつきあう程度であった。外国人の私に近づいてきたり、よくしてくれる人々は多くの場合、何かその見返りを暗に求めている場合が多かった。しかし生活するためには現地の社会と関わるので、どうしても周りの人々と接しなければならない。その頃の私は申し訳ないがインド人全員に対し不信感を抱いた。常に損得を考えた人間関係ばかりで疲れることが多かった。こちらはせっかく縁があり出会ったのだから良い人間関係を築きたいと思っていても、相手のインド人達が教養のあるなしに関わらずそういう姿勢ではなかったからだ。友人はたくさんできたが、損得なしの信頼できる友人関係を築くことが非常に難し

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かった。夫の家族や留学生達と話しても、インド人とはそういうものだ、という始末だ。しかし、教養のあるなしに関わらず「癖」のように常に隙あらば自分の得を考え平気で行動するインド人達には閉口した。嘘など平気でつくインド人つきあわなければならない毎日が、正直言ってとても辛く感じた。

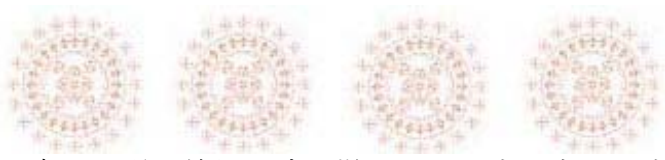
その頃、私達は大学に一番近いロトンボッリというマーケットによく行った。学生たちが新しくやってきた子連れの日本人の学生だということで、ちらちら見られた。女子大学生達や、地元の店主達、マーケットによく来る人達は私達の存在が珍しいようで「子連れで勉強しにきたんだってよ」というようなことをささやきながら見ていたものだ。

使用人や大家、店主達やリキシャを引く人など人々は毎日よく大声を張り上げていた。私も現地流に従い、困ったら「（口で）喧嘩」の姿勢で大声を出すようにした。インドに来てよかったことの一つは、周りを気にせずに大きい声で怒れたことかもしれない。（笑）しかしそれが時々子供たちへも向けられた時には災難だったに違いない。心から反省している。

インドでは野良犬がうようよしている。予防接種がなされていないので、子連れの人は特に注意が必要だ。良く行くお茶屋にも客の残り飯を狙う野良犬達が住みついていて、その野良犬の一匹がある冬の日、小犬を産んだ。子供達は初めて見る本物の小犬をとてかわいがり「カムレデベ（噛まれるよ!）」と現地の人に叱咤されながらも、よく遊んでいた。小犬は夜の寒さのため死ぬものもあった。翌朝、子供を連れて遊びにお茶屋にいくと「エクタモレガチェ（一匹死んだ）」といつも小犬をかわいがっていることを知る近くの店主たちが教えに来た。心ある人々が生き残っている小犬をもらっていったりした。一匹一匹と徐々にもらわれ、とうとう最後の一匹がのこった頃、ついに私たちも一匹飼うことにした。子供達はククールチャナ（小犬）にその名の通り「ククールチャナ」と名づけ遊び仲間のメンバーとして可愛がった。帰国した今でも絵を描くとその犬の絵を描く。きっと今頃は母犬や仲間の犬たちと生まれたお茶屋に居ることと思う。

動物、昆虫類、植物は我々を楽しませた。子供達はインドの大きいカタツムリ、かえる、美しい蝶々、とんぼを見てとても喜んでいて、雨上がりは大きい蛇を見掛けた。「蛇見たかった!」と見れない時は悔しがったりした。草むらで子供達を遊ばせていると、関係のない人々から「シャープアスベ」（蛇が出るよ）といって止めさせる様注意をよく受けた。ホヌマンという種類の猿の親子がよく家の庭に現れ、じゃがいもなど子供達が恐る恐る上げたりした。牛、山羊、ロバに家庭からでた生ごみを餌として与えた時もあった。マーケットにいた牛に子供達が大き根の葉をあげると、長い舌をペロッと出しその葉を食べた。親子3人で「おー!。」と感動したりした。料理は現地の材料を使い、とにかく工夫し手間暇かけて日本風の料理や中華風、イタリア風の料理を作らねばならなかった。毎日ベンガル料理ではどうしても子供達が飽きてしまうのだ。海水魚が入手しにくい、輸入品は品数が少ない。とにかく作りたい料理の材料はないものが多い。小麦粉を使って手打ちうどんを作ったりもした。もちろん小麦粉は虫がついているので予めざるで虫取りをしなければならない。ラズマと呼ばれる小豆を大きくしたような豆で煮豆を作ったりもした。ばらばらした現地米で巻き寿司も作った。病気になった時は現地の米で作った御飯はどうしても喉を通らなかった。少しばかり持っていった日本の米も、2年間の暮らしの中ではあっという間になくなっ





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た。約3ヵ月に1度、出張を兼ね私達の様子を見に来る夫が日本の食品も持ってきてくれた。日本からの食品は現金並みに鍵付きの大きいロッカーに保管された。インスタントラーメンは超貴重な食品であった。ここで救われたのは韓国人留学生たちの作ったキムチを時々もらったことである。あれはおいしかった。とは言え、ベンガル料理もおいしかった。季節毎に出る野菜でトルカリー（野菜カレー）やバジャ（野菜炒め）を作って食べた。ダールスープは貴重な蛋白源なので毎日食卓に上った。生きた鶏を目の前で裁くので何だかかわいそうだったが、鶏肉も食べた。魚はルイ（鯉の一種）を子供達がマッチバジャ（魚フライ）にしてよく食べた。私は、どうしても現地の魚の臭いが好きになれず食べられなかった。

隣の一人暮らしのおばあさんは、よく私達に窓越しに話し掛けてきた。「ケーカデチェ（だれが泣いたの？）」など、双子の我子たちが喧嘩して泣いていると、聞いてきた。静かな所なので生活音が筒抜け。私達の生活ぶりをすべてお見通しのようなだった。窓越しに気さくな隣のおばあさんと世間話をよくした。

泥棒に入られそうになった時、心ない大家との金銭トラブル、大学関係者の政治的な動き、犬に噛まれた時、子供が蜂にさされたり高熱がでたりしたとき、使用人とのトラブルなど、困ったときには、現地の知識がないので、信頼できそうな誰かに相談するようにしていた。そのうち、誰が心から私達のためによかれと思い、アドバイスをしてくれているのか判断がつくようになっていった。数は多くないが、信頼できる友人が出来た。異国で暮す私達にとって彼らの存在は心強い支えになった。彼らは、損得なしに私の話しを親身に聞いてくれ、解決策と一緒に考えてくれ、困った時だけでなく平素から、変わりなく暮しているか気に掛けてくれた。彼らのおかげで私達は無事、2年間過ごすことができたようなものだ。

2000年のデュルガプジャはシャンティニケタンの近くボルプールへ双子の我が子を自転車の前後に乗せ見に行った。我々に比べ、娯楽の少ない人々は老若男女、貧富を問わず思い思いのおめかしをし、路上に仮設された数々のデュルガ像を見歩き、今年のデュルガ女神像についてお喋りし、お参りし歩いていた。何だかいつもより楽しそうな人々の活気に触れ私達も楽しい気分になったものである。現地の人々の信心深さには日ごろから感心していたがデュルガプジャともなると格別であった。7日間にわたるデュルガプジャ、後に続くカーリープジャなど一連のプジャが終わるとようやく町は静かになって行く。しかしその後も約1ヵ月間は余韻に浸る人々も多くあり、プジャのための音楽が夜中2時、3時まで奏でられるところもあった。

今年のデュルガプジャも各地で盛大に行われ、皆様にとって心に残る素晴らしいものになるようお祈りしている。



*It is not how much we do,
But how much love we put into what we do.
Mother Teresa*

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日本の結婚式にまつわる、ほんのチョツとしたお話

サーカー 美紀

今年も例年どおり“夏休み”は、実家への帰省となりました。今年の発見は、結婚写真！弟にそっくりな紋付袴の男性と白無垢に白塗りの女性が写っているものでした。その女性に妹曰く、『どこの誰かさえ、わからない！“ホントの顔”を見てみたい。』と一言。両親の結婚写真にそんな文句を言っちゃう妹も、私に言わせると『あ・な・た・も・ね！』なのですが・・・。

いろいろな儀式を4～5日かけて執り行う“インドの結婚式”も私にとっては、大変興味津々なのですが、実は“日本の結婚式”もけっこう意味深なものだと思うのです。そこで今回は日本の結婚式でよく見かける事について、ほんのチョツとですが、お話したいと思います。

♪衣装編♪

①：文金高島田（Special hair style for a wedding :

Bunkin-Taka-Shimada)

江戸時代と違い、自分の髪の毛で、この結い方をして 式に臨む人は、どの位いるのでしょうか？！100%に近い女性が、カツラ（wig）を使っていると思います。妹も前もって衣装合わせの時に、カツラ合わせも行なったという事です。この結い方について、ほんのチョツと。

髷（まげ）の根元＜後ろ＞と髷を高く結うのが、**島田髷**と言うそうです。また**文金**とは、“文金風”という江戸時代の男性の髪型で、髷の根元を上げて前に出し、月代（さかやき：時代劇でよく見る、おでこから頭のトップにかけて半月型にそり落とした場所のことだそうです。＜Most Samurais in Samurai drama are in same hairstyle, who has totally shaved from top of his head to his forehead just like a half moon shape. It's called “sakayaki”＞）に向かって急傾斜させた髷の形だ

そうです。今までは結婚式の女性の髪型と言えば、“**文金高島田**”！と呪文の様に唱えていましたが、次回（！？）は近くで、じっくり見てみたいですね。

②：角隠し（Horns Hidden clothes)

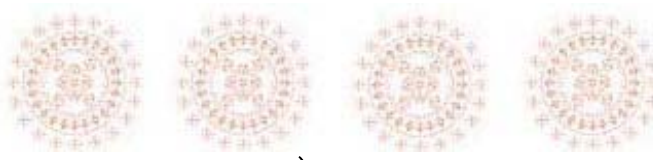
文金高島田髷を飾る、一枚の帯の様な白い布を言います。文字どおり『角を隠して、従順に仕える』という意味が込められているらしいです。“角を持った花嫁”なんて！？どういうことでしょうか？何か物語がありそうですね。この他に、右の写真では被っていませんが、**角隠し**ではなく花嫁の顔全体を覆い隠す、個別のフードの様な**綿帽子（Head covering cotton-clothes-Hood）**も被る事があります。妹は、**綿帽子**を想像し、それを“**角隠し**”という名前と勘違いし、当日は期待していたものと違い少しブルーだったそうです！実は私も、今まで**角隠し**も**綿帽子**も同じものだと思っていました・・・。

この**綿帽子**は、インドの花嫁が、“**Ghumta（グウムタ）**”を被るのと同様に、またウェディングドレスの時の“**ベール**”もそうで、『婚礼の儀式が終わるまで、花嫁の顔を見せない』という意味の被り物だそうです。似ているところがあるのですね。



My sister&her husband, the parents of my lovely niece Renee





③ : 白無垢 (Pure white wedding Kimono)

この着物が“白”なのは、「あなた色に、どんな色にも染まります！」っていう事だと疑いなく思っていたのですが、本来そうではないようです。真白な気持ちで神の前に立つ、神聖な色としての『純粋無垢』の象徴であるようです。打ち掛け、掛け下（中の着物）、帯そして小物に至るまで、全て“白一色”に揃えた装いなのです。またよく見かけるのですが、写真で妹の着ている打ち掛けの裏は、“紅梅色”になっています。これは吉事の証しということだそうです。“色が象徴する物・事”は、それぞれの国で違っていたり、また同じだったりします。とても興味深いことだと思いませんか。

④ : 末広 (Holding Fan of bottom spreading for Bright future)

言葉どおり、「末広がりに、幸せになれるように。」という思いの込められた、扇子 (Sensu : Holding Fan) です。花嫁と花婿、両者とも必ず“右手”に持つのだそうです。（なぜでしょう?!）花嫁は、やはり白一色に因んで、房飾り（扇子の持ち手の所から垂れている飾り）も白いものを使うのだそうです。

⑤ : 紋付羽織袴 (Gown, Kimono and Pants with Family Symbol)

これは花婿の結婚式の正装です。紋服や紋付袴など呼ばれていますが、上記の“もんつきはおりばかま”が正式名称だそうです。それらは、まず染め抜きされた五つの家紋（背紋・袖紋＜二ヶ所＞・抱き紋＜：両胸に二ヶ所＞の合計五ヶ所）がついた、黒羽二重の着物と羽織。そして仙台平（宮城県の仙台平で生産される最高級の袴地）の細めの縦縞で、グレーの袴。他に右手に末広で、足元は畳



表の草履を履くものだそうです。義理の弟は、よくは覚えていないが実際はプラスチック製の草履だったと思うと話してくれました。当日の彼が着ていた和装の紋は、よく見ると“水戸黄門様の葵のご紋”に見えませんか？彼曰く、『結婚式の着物の紋？アレって、“結婚式場”の紋じゃん？』だそうです！？ということで妹家族の紋は分からないのですが、右側が実家の家紋 (The Family Symbol) の“丸に五七桐”です。

機会がありましたら、♪儀式編♪（三三九度）も、お話し出来ればいいですね。

子供の頃から数えたら数十回は“幸せな時間”に、ご招待いただきました。やはりその形は様々で、お相手のご親族の方々が見えない位の大規模な披露宴から、子供の頃に花笠音頭を踊った叔父の自宅披露宴（本式は、都内で。郷里の親族へのお披露目）などなどありました。最後に私の理想の日本式の結婚式は、“自宅結婚式・披露宴で、両家親族と今まで、またこれからもお世話になる方々を集め、新郎新婦が出席頂いた全員の名前を呼べる、そんな式がいいですね。日本で結婚式に、ご招待された折には、是非花嫁&花婿の装いをじっ〜くり、ご覧になって見てください。

I'd like to introduce my hometown AOMORI, which recently has a direct bullet train connection of just 3 hours. Nearby there are Lake Towada, Mt. Hakkouda, Hirosaki Castle, Asamushi Hot Spa Resort and more! For the people who need tastiest oxygen to take and fine greenery to see Aomori's the best place for you. Please do visit in this beautiful autumn.





Anjali



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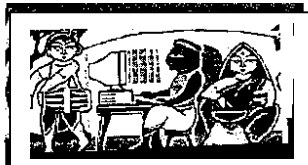


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English Section

Durga Puja in Kashi

Swami Medhasananda

(President of the Vedanta Society of Japan, Zushi)

The Durga Puja has become an important festival of present-day Varanasi in which both Bengalees and non-Bengalees take part with equal enthusiasm. We do not know, however, when and how this puja was introduced to the City. In Kashi Parikrama, written in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, it has been recorded that the Durga Puja was celebrated with great grandeur at the Satra established by Rani Bhavani and also at different locations throughout Bengali Tola. Durga Puja was performed twice a year at this Satra, in autumn and spring.

The local Mitra family, have claimed that it had introduced the Durga Puja into Kashi. Again, the Mukhopadhyay family of Madanpura has put forward the same claim. It stated that Kaliprasanna Mukhopadhyay of this family lived in the City around 1800, and it was his father (name unknown) who is said to have performed the Durga Puja as early as 1768. A stone tablet with the inscription Puratan Durga Badi, meaning old site of Durga worship, has been set up in the house of this family to indicate the antiquity of the Durga Puja at this site.

The performance of Durga Puja at Rani Bhavani's Satra also suggests that the Rani may have introduced this worship to the City much earlier than the Mukhopadhyay's or Mitras claim, since she lived here before either of these families had arrived in Kashi.

The Puja in those days was generally performed by individual families though their doors were kept open to common visitors. Reports of the Durga Puja being celebrated with great grandeur in private houses and creating tremendous enthusiasm in these localities were published in the Kashivartaprakashika in 1851. Various entertainments like singing, dancing and competitions in verse on popular topics by amateurs and professionals were special attractions during these celebrations. Durga Puja at the Mitra house in the Chowkamba area was especially famous for elaborate arrangements and recreational activities. On these occasions distinguished

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persons from the City, including the Kashi Naresh and some Muslim princess and British officers stationed in Varanasi, were invited to the house. Durga Puja in the house of Harasankar Gupta was also held with great élat.

We get a rare glimpse of the Durga Puja in mid-nineteenth century Kashi from the following verses published in the Kashivartaparakashika, referred above:

সুখ শরৎ ঋতুঃ মায়েৰ আগমন হেতুঃ আনন্দ উৎসব সভে করে ।
বস্ত্র অলংকার : পরিবার পরিবার : নানা আয়োজন ঘরে ঘরে ॥
ঘর দ্বার পরিস্কৃত : সাজান বিবিধ মত : নিজ নিজ বৃত্তি অনুসারে ।

At the advent of the Mother Durga during the happy autumn season, all and sundry busied themselves in a gay festive mood. Preparations started for buying new clothes and ornaments. People in all stations of life cleansed and decorated their houses according to their respective professions.

[Adapted from "Varanasi At The Crossroads",
-Swami Medhasananda. PP 766-767, 654
1st edition: 2002 3rd print April 2003]

Thus spake Sri Ramakrishna

God is one, but many are His aspects. As one master of the house appears in various aspects, being father to one, brother to another, and husband to a third, so one God is described and called in various ways according to the particular aspect in which He appears to His particular worshipper.



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India's Enduring Ties With Japan Through The Ages

Biren Nanda

(Deputy Chief of Mission, Indian Embassy, Tokyo)

India's civilization links with Japan go back 15 centuries. These links were born in an exchange of knowledge, a meeting of minds and beating together of hearts, which led to enduring exchanges and influence between these two ancient civilizations and got reflected in the art forms, architecture and literature of the two countries.

The earliest Indian theme in Japanese literature can be found in the story of Rishyashringa that found place in the Japanese folk tale, *Konjaku Monogatari* in the 11th century. Buddhist literature, when it was introduced from India into Japan, also brought along with it, various Indian legends, folk tales and stories from the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. The story of Rishyashringa is very popular in India as parents narrate this to their children depicting him as an ideal man, known in Japan as *Sennin*. Rishyashringa was a child, brought up in the hermitage of his father. In the process, he never got to see a woman and acquired supernatural magical powers. As the kingdom of Anga was suffering an unprecedented drought, the king was advised to seek the help of Rishyashringa. The king, duly following the advice and sent beautiful women to Rishyashringa to make him to visit the kingdom. Although aware of the design of the King, Rishyashringa decided to help the people of Anga with his powers. As soon as Rishyashringa entered the kingdom, it was blessed with rains and the drought ended. This interesting story can be found in Japanese literature in several versions.

Similarly, Indian legends of various *apsaras* found their place in Japanese literature and theatre. The standard formula being an *apsara*, who otherwise lived in heaven, would come down to the earth, to atone for her mistakes or offences or to seduce a sage with a view to disturbing his meditation. One such popular legend is *Tsuru no Ongaeshi*. Although this story has several versions, the broad outline is that an *apsara* once flying in the sky in the form of a crane gets injured by a hunter's arrow. A farmer finds the injured crane and takes pity on it and treats its injury. The crane flies away. In the evening, a beautiful girl comes to his home and requests him to allow her to stay with him. He takes her as his wife and lives happily. The wife prepares

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a wonderful dress for the farmer for the New Year. It is so wonderful that it attracts everybody's attention and admiration. His friends and neighbours make inquisitive inquiries about the source of the dress and advise him to get more dresses made by his wife, so that he could make big money selling them. The wife accepts the request, greedy though it was, on the condition that he should not attempt to see her while she weaves the dresses. Unable to resist the temptation, the husband peeps into the weaving room only to find the crane, he had earlier treated, doing the weaving. While he was surprised to realize that the same crane had come back to him as his wife to repay his kindness, the crane quickly takes the form of an *apsara*. She explains that she had to spend sometime on the earth as a result of a curse and now it was time for her to return to the heaven. This story has become the recurring theme of several theatrical and musical productions, including the popular *Noh* play by a renowned playwright *Zeami*.

There are several such *apsara* stories throughout Japanese literature. However, when these were introduced into Japan, they were modified to highlight certain attributes and values considered desirable in the Japanese cultural context. For example, in the earlier story, compassion and the obligation to repay kindness or a favour received have been underlined. These stories and legends have played a significant role over generations to teach children the dynamics of inter-personal relations and desirable contact. *Panchatantra*, the Indian compilation of stories for children has also been translated into Japanese against this background.

The first Nobel Laureate in Asia, Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore, extensively interacted with the literary personalities in Japan and helped introduce Japanese influences into Indian literature through his various writings and teachings at the Shantiniketan. In his earlier writings, while Tagore had also portrayed 'another world' beyond this material world, one discernable influence after his various visits to Japan was that he had come to underline the need to have greater faith in this life. Tagore was also responsible for promoting exchanges in the field of art and it was he who encouraged Okakura Tenshin and Yokoyama Tohu to visit his University at Shanti Niketan, to learn about the techniques being employed by the Bengal Renaissance, which was then in full swing. Taikan and Tenshin returned to Japan and helped to bring about a confluence in art techniques and philosophies, inspired by what they saw and learnt in India. It was around this time that Okakura Tenshin founded the Japan Arts Academy, which like Tagore's Shanti Niketan, was devoted to the preservation of the pristine and beautiful art of Asia, which was something that both Tenshin and Tagore fervently believed in.

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Amazing Mother Nature

Sushmita Pal (Ph.D.)

*"Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher."*

-William Wordsworth

When we look, feel and think about Nature deeply, sometimes in our fast paced lives, we are amazed to see her rhythm, her beauty and uniqueness and many unsolved queries are solved which no spoken words could otherwise solve. Even today, upon important occasions of happiness or sorrow, we feel the futility of words and resort to nature's symbolic language.

The great mystic and philosopher of the sixteenth century, Paracelsus, said that: *"He who wants to study the book of Nature must wander with his feet over its leaves. Books are studied by looking at the letters, which they contain; Nature is studied by examining the contents of her treasure-vaults in every country. Every part of the world represents a page in the book of Nature, and all the pages together form the book that contains her great revelations."*

The wonder of Nature is a very vast subject and writing in details is out of the scope for the magazine; let me share some of the observations, which have an impact on my mind.

When we look at the natural world around us, the sunrise, the sunset, the mountain, shining in the white coats of snow in winter and the rippling streams, colorful flowers and greenery in spring and summer, changing red and yellow leaves in autumn, the blue sky and fluffy clouds, the oceans sweeping endlessly wave upon wave, we are overwhelmed by the beauty and variety with which Nature has surrounded us.

The rhythmic behavior of Nature is seen in a day as sunrise and sunset, and then through the seasons in a year. The four seasons of the year are repeated and so the four quarters of the day, and every rising of the sun bring with it a renewed life. Nature is the same, yet always changing. There is one outstanding fact that cannot escape our attention, that the Nature is governed by laws. The laws of Nature are eternal, they have always been thus and they always will be thus. In day-to-day life the rhythm is responded by living beings; birds sing their morning and evening songs, plants open and close flowers and we get ready for another day in our life.

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One of the Nature's most wonderful creation and Science's great mystery is seen in form of tiny creatures, the honeybee. When we observe deeply it is interesting as they are well organized and highly developed social creatures. The productivity and activity that goes on within the beehive and outside of it is extremely interesting and amazing to behold and the proverb "busy as bees" is very appropriate. They produce honey and wax; honey being the wholesome food, which includes all the substances necessary to sustain life. In the **Bible**, this sublime nectar is called "the heavenly food." Amazing fact about honey is that it never spoils. No need to refrigerate it. It can be stored unopened, indefinitely, at room temperature in a dry cupboard. If we compare the bee colony to an organization we can learn something from Nature's social structure in beehive. The whole colony works because of its organized structure and in order to function the colony properly, each one has their particular function in the survival of the colony and there is a leader, in this case the queen bee.

Let us now move to Nature's beauty. In Robin Williams words, "Spring is the Nature's way of saying; Let's Party". In the Land of the Rising Sun-Japan, the blooming of the cherry trees signals the arrival of spring. Because of the fleeting beauty of the bloom, it is a reminder to take time out to appreciate



life. Family and friends gather together for picnics and *hanami*, or cherry blossom viewing. Cherry trees flower all over the country, and their numbers are so extensive that the masses of blooms can be seen from space in a wave of color called *sakura zensen* (literally "cherry blossom front") headed from the south to the north as temperatures begin to warm. Everywhere you look is a sea of color. The millions of pink and white blossoms give the Nature a gorgeous look.

Now coming to autumn, Nature puts on one of its most spectacular displays as native trees and shrubs finish out the growing season in a brilliant display of colors. Autumn in Japan means an exceptionally clear sky, pleasant days, with a hint of winters chill in the early mornings and evenings. The changing of the leaves color is known as *momiji*. It has inspired many of Japan's great poets to put pen to paper and attempt to catch the beauty of the landscape in Haiku or Tanka (poetry). Color changes are usually noticeable when temperatures are around the 10 degrees Celsius mark; leaves begin to change from green to red or gold. With each new frost, the colors deepen into brilliant yellows and crimsons, with just a hint of green. Many people





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venture out of the cities and participate in autumn foliage viewing or *momiji-gari*. It is a time for picnicking.

Many of Japan's traditional arts and crafts are often created to reflect the seasons, and spring and autumn produces a palette of colors and designs, which are reproduced on items such as fans, tableware, and ceramics.

Now moving towards the mountain ranges, Mount Fuji or **Fuji-san**, as it is respectfully called, stands majestic in the heartland of Japan. On a clear beautiful day one can view Mount Fuji from Tokyo and Yokohama. The

beauty of Mount Fuji as a snowcapped symmetrical cone, ringed by lakes and forests are a treat to eyes. With its 12,388 feet (3,776 meters), it is the highest peak in Japan. Mt. Fuji consists of three volcanoes

- Komitake Volcano, Ko-Fuji and Shin Fuji, the youngest one. The last

eruption took place from December 1707 until January 1708, when the ashes were thrown as far as Tokyo. Geologists see Fuji-san as a dormant volcano.

The Japanese see Mount Fuji as a sacred mountain. Therefore it was and still is a destination for pilgrims. Under the old Shinto religion it was a kind of a once in your life religious obligation to ascend the sacred mountain - in white clothes. Practically, the official mountaineering activity is only from mid-July to the end of August. Hardly anyone climbs it during the off-season because of the harsh weather. There are 4 trails leading to the summit. Most climbers go up to the 5th stage by bus or car. From there they climb on the Kawaguchiko trail to the summit in about 5 hours and descend on the Subashiri trail in about 3 hours.

People climb for the sunrise and for the great view from the summit - and to have been on the top of Mount Fuji once in their life.



The Nature welcomes the climbers with a magnificent view and pleasant feeling which takes away all the pain and the hard work one goes through by climbing. Only Mother Nature can give such peaceful life to its children without expecting anything from them.

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

~William Shakespeare

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Experiments with the truth

Carolena Frausto Kundu

My decision? I wanted to make it on my own, breakout and search for the *truth*. This brought me to the Land of the Rising Sun. Japan seemed geographically far enough from influence of the Americas. I was escaping, yes, escaping from all the stereotypes that satiate American minds through the media. I was tired of the aggressive attitude of American culture, the selfish nature of the people.

As a young girl growing up in the desert state of Arizona, I thought I had it all figured out. But once in a while, I didn't understand what made me different. Why did people approach me in rapid-fire speech that was incomprehensible? Why was it incomprehensible to me?

When my parents were young students, they were punished with a soapy mouth washing for speaking Spanish. So it was decided on my behalf, that I would suffer no such trauma in my upbringing. Thus, the acculturation began. Spanish became a secret code of my parents that I longed to decipher. My world was to be the language of English and all of its perceptions and limitations, much to the glee of mainstream American society. But no matter how hard I tried; "Mexican" was the label given to me from society, no matter how well I spoke English.

During the early 1970's, the US Government granted additional funding to schools - earmarked for bilingual programs. Because of my last name, it was assumed that I could not speak English well. I was placed in a special class, segregated and boxed in. Imagine my mother's horror upon this discovery.

Later, an epiphany came to me during the time of my grandmother's passing. It happened just before I was about to start at the university. As the family streamed in to bid her farewell on her journey from this world, half the "Spanglish", was inaccessible to me. I was determined to not let it happen to me anymore. I was determined to learn Spanish once and for all, only to find that the layers of truth were much deeper, beneath the surface. I was in search of history.

The very land, *mi tierra*, of the American Southwest had been settled many times by diverse cultures. This area is mythical origin of the Mexican

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people, *Aztlán* Mexican Americans, or *Chicanos*. Chocolate, potatoes, tomatoes, avocados, corn, and many other foods are native to the Americas. Thick chocolate, for example was a cherished drink for Aztec royalty.

When the Aztecs descended south in search of a new place to build, one of their priests saw a living vision: an eagle perched on a cactus, in the process of consuming a snake it held in its claw. (Today this image is on Mexico's flag.) Even though this sign was on a small island in a marshy area, the people proceeded to build. By 1500, *Tenochtitlan*, today's Mexico City, was one of the largest cities in the world, a teeming metropolis as yet unseen by European eyes. With broad avenues, magnificent temples, bridges, and marketplaces, *Tenochtitlan* in its day was more advanced than Venice, its contemporary European counterpart.

By 1519, *Héran Cortés* arrived searching for "Glory, God, and Gold" for the Spanish crown. Montezuma was the Aztec leader of the Nauhatl speaking people that inhabited *Tenochtitlan*. Montezuma was troubled by his dreams. He knew that empires rise and fall like the setting sun. He feared the inexorable prophesy of a pale God that would soon arrive from the east sea and reclaim leadership. *Cortés'* impeccable timing of his arrival on the coast coincided with the prophecy. Hoping to placate them, Montezuma welcomed the Spaniards from afar with treasure and lavish ceremony. This gesture only encouraged the Spaniards. It was a deed that was to have unintentional consequences.

A mere three years later in 1521, *Tenochtitlan* fell under European domination. It lost much of its grandeur as the Spanish razed its great buildings. Smallpox and other foreign diseases soon after ravaged the population. Pyramids were destroyed; the same materials were used to build Catholic churches on the same site.

Three hundred years later in 1821, Mexico had just won its independence from Spain. Mexico was in the midst of a bankruptcy, reeling in political chaos, and struggling to rebuild. The sparsely populated northern territories were to soon fall into American hands.

The US succeeded in attaining these lands through the 'Mexican-American War' of 1846. The USA reasoned that it was their mission, through the idea of Manifest Destiny, to expand into the western territories. Mexico remembers it as 'The American Invasion'. Traces of the past are

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remembered through the city names of Spanish origin . . . *Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, El Paso, Las Vegas.*

Pobre de México, tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de Los Estados Unidos.

Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States.

-Mexican Proverb

The Mexican people are the descendants of the Spanish and the Indigenous peoples of the Valley of Mexico. They are a blending, a *mestizo*. If I were to call myself Hispanic, I deny all indigenous blood. It is half a truth, half a lie. I am not only Spanish, but also a lost tribe. I am the conqueror and the conquered.

Prophecy holds that one day the Mexican people will return to their native lands of *Aztlán*. . . as they do today. The American people label it illegal immigration. The Mexican people believe that, 'we didn't cross the borders, the borders crossed us'.

It is so much easier for mainstream US society to forget, to rename and to divide things on a whim for future generations. That's why I sometimes struggle with my identity today. It's crucial to know who you are and where you are from, to give strength, a foundation, and direction.

The Tokyo Bengalee community is to be admired for its dedication. The language is spoken. The songs are cherished and sung from the heart. Despite all the present obstacles of the hectic Tokyo lifestyle, this community has persevered and not forgotten its roots.



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Journey to Hell

Meeta Chanda

Our journey started from Haneda airport, Tokyo. The flight took one and a half hours to reach Oita airport in Kyushu. Kyushu is the third largest island and situated in the southern part of Japan. At airport arrivals, we noticed that the pre-arranged taxi driver was waiting for us with a placard bearing my name. First we visited Kunisaki Hanto, the place that is famous for its old temples and stone statues of Lord Buddha. After lunch, we headed towards Beppu, the city famous for its colorful nine Jigokus. From ancient times, people in Beppu called the onsens Jigoku or “Hell”, because, it violently spurs fumes, water and mud from deep in the earth to the surface. As nobody can control these violent energies, people could not live near the hells. It was during the Showa period, local people started going there and made sightseeing trips called “Jigoku Meguri” or “Hell Pilgrimage”. Now these hell-tours have become a major sightseeing place in Beppu. These onsens are not for taking bath – these are only to see and feel the breathtaking beauty of nature. The color of water and soil depends on the chemicals and minerals present in the mud.

Our “Hell tour” started with Chi-no-ike Jigoku (pond of blood). We were spellbound to see the rich red colored boiling water pond, surrounded with greenery. The red color is actually due to the red colored clay and not the water. Depth of the pond is around 90 feet.



Next we visited Tatsumaki Jigoku (geyser hell), where the water with temperature up to 105 °C is thrown out in the air every 20-25 minutes interval for 5 minutes. It is like a volcanic eruption of boiling water instead of lava. On the way to Umi Jigoku (sea hell), we were amazed to see huge lotus leaves floating in nearby hot springs. Sea hell is very beautiful cobalt blue in color, just like an ocean. Here also, boiling water gushes out with full force and sounds like ocean waves. This pond emerged 1200 years ago after a volcanic explosion.

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Next hell was Oniishibouzu Jigoku (Oniishi monk's hell) where the ash color clay and mud are boiling and making big bubbles that looks like the shaven heads of monks. After that we visited Yama Jigoku (mountain hell), where steam in large quantity comes out of mountain of mud having lot of sulphur deposits on them. It also has a small zoo containing hippos, chimps, elephants, birds etc.



We got a close look inside the throat of a hippo when it happily accepted the potatoes. Thereafter we visited Oniyama Jigoku (demon hill hell), also known as Wani Jigoku (crocodile hell). The steam has so much of force that it can pull one and a half cars of train easily. From the 12th year of Taisho era, Japan started using the heat of this onsen to breed crocodiles.

At present it has around 100 crocodiles and alligators. The seventh hell was the Kamado Jigoku (cooking pot hell). This area has many red, blue, white, ash colored small ponds of boiling water and mud. A bright red "demon" standing on an enormous cooking pot is the mascot of this onsen. Next one was Shiraike Jigoku (white pond hell). It is so called because the colorless water that spouts from the ground turns creamy white. The ninth hell was the Kinryu Jigoku (the golden dragon hell). A dragon stands and guards the spring in front of the images of deities from the Oriental calendar. It has a hot house full of tropical plants. In the evening we stayed at Yufuin, the gorgeous valley full of lush greenery. Yufuin is well known for its natural beauty and onsens.

Next morning we headed towards mount Aso through Yamanami highway. The highway drive is one of the best scenic drives we experienced in Japan. Mount Aso in Kumamoto prefecture is an active composite volcano famous for the largest calderas in the world and rich pastoral scenery. We had a glimpse of boiling water inside the crater amidst dense fumes emanating from the crater.



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Our tourist bus boarded a huge ferry to transport us from Kumamoto prefecture to Shimabara port in Nagasaki prefecture.

That night we stayed at Unzen, which is much similar to Yellowstone National Park in the US. At Unzen Jigoku there are around 30 volcanic hells from where volcanic gas gushes out in the rocky field, spreading abundant sulphur fumes in the atmosphere. Mount Unzen is one of the most active volcanoes in Japan with a history of eruptions dating back to some 300,000 years.



Having completed the tour of hell, next morning we visited Nagasaki where the second atomic bomb was dropped. On the final day, we enjoyed the atmosphere of a Dutch village at Huis Ten Bosch (means "House in Forest" in Dutch), which is a theme park with canals, windmills and 17th century Dutch houses. From Huis Ten Bosch a tourist bus dropped us at the Fukuoka airport from where we took the flight to Haneda. The extreme diverse experiences at Oita, Kumamoto, Nagasaki City and Huis Ten Bosch brought a feeling of visiting four countries in a span of just four days !!!!

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Open Source Movement

Anirvan Mukherjee



Though the term "Open Source" is related to Computers and sounds a bit technical, this isn't intended to be a technical article. Especially for young readers, who these days are very familiar with Computers – let me reassure you – when I was of your age - I didn't even know what a Computer was, let alone its usage!

For the technically challenged, all you need to know is that – the various icons that you see on your Computer screen (e.g. Excel, Word) can be called Software Applications. More often than not, these Applications are comprised of several lines of instructions. These lines of instructions (lets call them "Source Code"), tell a program how to behave. Therefore if you can understand the Source Code of an Application – it is very likely to assume that you would be able to understand the behavior of an Application in its entirety.

But what if you are not allowed access to the Source Code? In that case, can you understand the inner workings of an application? Most likely the answer is: "No".

Here is another question – suppose I have developed a Software Application and you purchased it from me. As far as you are concerned, the Application works fine – but am I, the producer – required to hand over the "Source Code" to you? In other words am I supposed to tell you how the Application was designed? The title of this article – refers to a twenty-year old popular

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movement initiated by hackers – that deals with this question. The issues dealt here have more to do with “ethics” and “openness” rather than any arcane aspect of technology.

Perhaps this term “Open Source” would not have come into existence – had it not been for an incident that occurred in the late seventies. Till 1979, Xerox Corporation used to provide Printers to the famed Artificial Intelligence Lab (A.I) at MIT. Along with the Printer, Xerox also provided free access to the Source Code. Since Researchers at MIT had free access to the Source Code, they knew in great details how it functioned. And since they knew how it exactly worked, they could customize the working of the Printer to suit their own needs. However since the start of the 80’s something unusual happened. Xerox Corp stopped supplying their Source Code anymore. In other words, how their newer Printers worked suddenly became a trade secret (lets call it “proprietary”). As a result the researchers at MIT had no way of knowing how the new Printers worked and because of that – they were unable to customize it any more. In other words any further request to customize the Printer would be handled only by Xerox.

In fact Xerox was not alone in restricting access to their Source Code. Due to the rapid growth of the Computer Industry in the 80’s, many Software Vendors realized the financial benefits of enforcing “control” over their own Source Code. That led to more and more vendors – developing Proprietary Software.



Richard M. Stallman

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An extraordinarily gifted Computer Scientist named Richard M Stallman, used to work at the A.I Lab (MIT) during that time. He got so concerned with the behavior of corporations – in denying access to Source Code that – he decided to single-handedly launch an intellectual movement against this practice. A self confessed “hacker”, Stallman felt that this disturbing practice of “proprietary software” as practiced by corporations – was destroying the free spirit of exchange that is the essence of any free society.

To fight back against the growing proprietary nature of software, Stallman founded the “Free Software Foundation (FSF)” in 1985. The objective of the Free Software Foundation was to promote the idea of "open and non-proprietary" software, sometimes-called "free" software. Here "free" refers not to the cost of software, but to the free “access” to the source code. Vendors can charge (and some do) for software but they need to release the source code – from any internal controls.

In an interview he commented:

“Part of what I wanted was to make another hacker community with the same virtue as the previous one, and that virtue, to me, was the freedom to cooperate. You have a certain way of life when you have freedom in a free society. In a totalitarian, non-free society, every aspect of how you deal with people is shaped by your fear. In proprietary society, your dealings with other people are shaped by fear of the information police, currently in its incarnation of the Software Publishers Association.”

A medical analogy of “Free Software” would be that a doctor charges a fee for a Surgical Procedure, but he tells everybody how he did it in the minutest detail including all tricks. (This would not be possible in medicine, but in software, the program tells everything.) The advantage of this approach is that everyone has the opportunity of understanding and improving the procedure advocated by the Doctor. For the Medical Profession this is in fact done in the scholarly journals such as JAMA, Lancet, etc.

What happened next was extraordinary – operating out of a single room at the AI Lab in MIT, Richard M Stallman – started developing free versions of popular Operating Systems, Editors, Compilers etc. This concept of “free software” was such an intellectually profound thought, that suddenly Stallman had followings among fellow hackers worldwide. Suddenly

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thousands of hackers started collaborating with Stallman on a worldwide project (called GNU), mostly on a voluntary basis with a vision to develop "Free Software".

While the idea of 'open source code' was acquiring cult status - a young student called Linus Torvald was writing a flavor of an Operating System (called UNIX) at the University of Helsinki. Once he wrote the basic code (called 'kernel') he released it on the Internet (public domain) as Linux. Programmers worldwide had a look at the Source Code, loved it, fixed the bugs, added more features and sent back to him for upgrade - all free of cost. Gradually Linux development took an organic life of its own with contributions from everywhere. Today Linux is a very popular Operating System.

The success of the "Open Software Movement" is really the struggle of thousands of programmers (led by Stallman) who stood up for a cause, worked in the larger interests of the society and achieved a certain degree of success.

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If Walls Could Talk

Sohini Kar

To the modern visitor, Vaux le Vicomte is but one more château that dots the French landscape, but the tranquility of the château today is deceptive of its tumultuous history. Built in the mid-seventeenth century, the château is the setting of the infamous downfall of Louis XIV's financial secretary to the state Treasury Nicolas Fouquet.

After rising to power, Nicolas Fouquet commissioned the building of Vaux le Vicomte and hired three young talents: Le Vau, the architect, Le Nôtre, the landscape gardener, and Le Brun, the painter decorator. On August 17, 1661, Fouquet and guests including the 'Sun King', Louis XIV officially opened Vaux le Vicomte with festivities to celebrate the remarkable and architecturally ingenious new château. Yet only three weeks later, Fouquet was arrested and charged with embezzling and financial scheming- his party had been proof of his hidden wealth.

However, over the years, scholars have argued that corruption was not an extraordinary crime within the nobility and that it was Fouquet's audacity to build such an extravagant and splendid residence, incomparable even to those of the King's that led to his demise. Le Vau's architecture was a model of Classicism, while Le Nôtre's garden was a masterful work of engineering. Within the château, Le Brun had inscribed the family emblem, the squirrel in all the rooms and Fouquet's motto, "What heights will he not scale?" emphasizing Fouquet's ambition. In the end, Fouquet's ultimate vice was to outdo his own king and following Fouquet's arrest, Le Vau, Le Nôtre and Le Brun were all commissioned by Louis XIV to build the palace of Versailles.

The story of Nicolas Fouquet reminds us of the symbolic power of architecture. Over the course of history architecture has been an expression of man's scientific, artistic and creative skill as well as a sign of political and economic prowess. In today's modern world, as cities, from New York to Kuala Lumpur race to produce the world's tallest building, skyscrapers have become signs of technological and financial success. As choices for a new World Trade Center in New York were being mulled over, the question of what the new building would represent was constantly asked. What Nicolas Fouquet learned the hard way, is now part of the modern mindset: that architecture is more than a hollow building- it is the manifestation of a country, a city or a person's power and status.

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The Warmth Of It All

Sougata Mallik

I was sitting next to her. A petit lady, bespectacled in rimmed glasses, her anxious eyes glanced out of the window every now and then. She looked around as though to fathom something. As I turned towards her, I saw her quiet, composed nature. She was an elderly lady, probably in her sixties. We looked at each other and greeted with a nod. A veil of softness covered her dainty smile.

Minutes and hours rolled by as we remained bound in our respective seats. The airhostess of the aircraft had already served the meal and was preparing its passengers for the rest-cum naptime. Most of them had snuggled themselves into the blanket, intending a comfortable retreat.

The lady next to me too covered herself with a blanket. In a quiet, soft tone she said, "You know, time doesn't pass quickly when you are waiting anxiously to see your loved one." She was a mother who was travelling from New Delhi to Tokyo to help her daughter give birth to the third generation. She felt that she had to be next to her daughter at her special time of need. There is so much to tell her, so much to share with her now. How can any doctor explain the joys of a would-be-mother; how can he diagnose her inherent anxiety at this time; how can he prescribe the dosage of comfort and reliance? A mother had to be next to her to wade her smoothly through and anchor her at the beginning of another age. Her daughter too is eagerly waiting for the next day's sunrise that will bring her mother to her all the way.

I too have a daughter. I delved at her sleeping, nescient, nine-year old face. I realized again that nothing can hold me back, when my child needs help-- however far that may be.

The tune of thought was broken by a little boy in the aisle. He was just over a year in age. It was his first stage of excitement when he was learning to walk. A relentless effort of stumbling, falling, walking was his sole goal of life. Behind him was his father, helping him in his endeavour. The little kid continued his movement from one end of the aircraft to another. He went backward and forward without a halt. Looking at him, I felt that he was perhaps the first kid who had walked across the entire Pacific Ocean. As he continued in his movements, one could see the dash of joy on his father's

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face as he watched his progeny take his first lead in the path of life.

We headed closer to our destination; night had also rolled itself away into its veil. The warm rays of a beaming sun streamed in from every corner. As I looked around, I saw the mother and the father with their sole hope of love and joy. Here was the mother to instill the thoughts of courage and love in her daughter. Here was the father to propound the thoughts of hope and strength in his son. It was another glimpse of life - the lasting doctrine of love and care.

"The road to this goal may perhaps not be the same for all. For some, it may be an easy ascent, for some an unsure descent." But eventually we all embrace its charm and its uncertainty.

For at the end what counts to us, is the warmth of it all.



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Anjali

From Being to Becoming

Sourav Kundu (Ph.D.)

"In nature, there are neither rewards nor punishments -- there are consequences."

During the last century, and part of the one before, it was widely held that there was an irreconcilable conflict between knowledge and belief. The opinion prevailed among advanced minds that it was about time that belief should be replaced increasingly by knowledge. Belief that did not itself rest on knowledge was superstition and as such had to be opposed. According to this conception, the whole purpose of education was to open a way to thinking and knowing. Schools served as an outstanding organ for the people's education, to serve this end exclusively. Faith, being belief that isn't based on evidence, is considered by proponents of science as the principal vice of any religion. Given the dangers of faith - and considering the accomplishments of reason and observation in the activity called *science* - I find it ironic that, whenever I lecture publicly, there always seems to be someone who comes forward and says, "Of course, your science of evolution is just a religion like ours. Fundamentally, science just comes down to faith, doesn't it?"

One reason I receive the comment about science being a religion is because I believe in the fact of evolution and I study Evolutionary Biology with a passionate conviction. To some, this may superficially look like faith. But the evidence that makes me believe in evolution is not only overwhelmingly strong; it is freely available to anyone who takes the trouble to read up on it. Anyone can study the same evidence that I have and presumably come to the same conclusion. But if you have a belief that is based solely on faith, I can't examine your reasons. You can retreat behind the private wall of faith where I can't reach you.

Science is actually one of the most moral, one of the most honest disciplines around - because science would completely collapse if it weren't for a scrupulous adherence to honesty in the reporting of evidence. There are other professions (no need to mention lawyers specifically) in which falsifying evidence or at least twisting it, is precisely what people are paid for and are famous for doing. People tend charge that science is just a faith. The more extreme version of that charge - and one that I often encounter as both a scientist and a rationalist - is an accusation of zealotry and bigotry in scientists themselves as great as that found in religious people. Sometimes there may be a little bit of justice in this accusation; but as zealous bigots,

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we scientists are mere amateurs at the game. We're content to argue with those who disagree with us. We don't kill them.

But Science has its limits too. Scientific methods can teach us nothing else beyond how facts are related to, and conditioned by, each other. It is equally clear that knowledge of what *is* does not open the door directly to what *should be*. One can have the clearest and most complete knowledge of what *is*, and yet not be able to deduct what *should be* the goal of our human aspirations. Objective knowledge provides us with powerful instruments for achieving certain ends, but the ultimate goal itself and the longing to reach it must come from another source.

This brings us to the title of my essay – *From being to becoming* – which relates directly to my research in Evolutionary Biology, which attempts to explain scientifically to a large extent, what are the ultimate goals behind what we aspire to *become* and how certain selfish or altruist (selfless, unselfish) acts by us may help achieve those goals. It shows how in social evolution, by strategically using a mixture of conflict and co-operation – we achieve our goals – which themselves are genetically evolved.

Evolutionary Biology is a huge subject. There are two ways to approach it: to find out what actually happens, and to find the mathematical rules that can explain why and how it happens. Obviously, the ultimate theory encompasses both but, like I said, it's a huge subject and everyone has to start somewhere. And most attempts will fail on one side of the mountain or the other. Richard Dawkins, the most respect evolutionary biologist today and his friends started from the mathematics. They began with population genetics - the study of how gene frequencies alter in ideal populations - and from game theory. This approach made a huge strides in the 1960s due to the mathematical advances made by W. H. Hamilton, who died recently and an American journalist named George Price, who was so horrified by Hamilton's discoveries that he checked them, reformulated them even more clearly, had some sort of a breakdown, and killed himself.

Both George Price and W. H. Hamilton were theoretical biologists, a discipline about as mathematical and abstruse as may be imagined yet it was Price's own discoveries in the field, which let to his despair and his death. He had reformulated a set of mathematical equations that shows how altruism can prosper in a world where it seems only selfishness is rewarded. The equations had been discovered ten years before by Hamilton, but Price's reworking was more elegant and of much wider application. He had provided a general way in which to measure the direction and speed of any

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selection process that makes possible, in principle, a Darwinian analysis of almost anything.

When Price had first found them, he was so shocked that he set himself to do the work again, sure that there must be a flaw. He ended up reformulating those equations more generally and more powerfully. When his work was completed, he went mad. So shocked was he by his success in this, and the darker truths about human nature implied by the equation, that he embarked on a desperate career of service to the outcast, and finally killed himself with a pair of nail scissors in a London squat in January 1975.

Though the “Price Equations” showed that truly self-sacrificing behavior can exist among animals and even humans; it also seemed to show that there is nothing noble in it. Only those behaviors, which help to spread the genes that cause them, can survive in the very long term. Since man too is an animal, the human capacity for altruism must be strictly limited. Our capacity for cruelty, treachery and selfishness are impossible to eradicate. Through algebra, George Price had found the proof of original sin!

Price made three fundamental contributions to population genetics and social behavior. His first contribution was a mathematical expression of natural selection known as the *Price Equation*. This equation shows how a certain human character will evolve over time, depending on the characters’ association with the fitness of the individual and the fidelity with which the character is transmitted to the offspring. These equations showed how an individual human being may behave in an altruistic way towards his/her relatives who benefit from this altruism to produce offspring with genes (characters) similar to the individual.

In his second contribution, Price developed a model for how an animal behaves when in conflict with a neighbor. The puzzle is why animals often settle fights in a ritualized way rather than inflicting serious or deadly wounds. For example, male deer often fight furiously by crashing antlers in head-on battle, but they refrain from attacking when an opponent turns away and exposes an unprotected side. Price solved this problem by recognizing that fighting is a strategic game in which the best strategy of each individual depends on the strategies of its neighbors. If everyone else escalates the fights to the death, it would be best to value life over the gains of the battle and yield quickly against the escalating aggression. In our everyday experiences we commonly come across people who give up fighting for a losing side and quickly change sides, thereby raising their chance of survival. We condescendingly call them *traitors*, but Price proved that this behavior is more by design than by choice. Populations therefore settle into

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mixtures of aggressive and yielding interactions depending on each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Price's third contribution solved the mystery of R. A. Fisher's fundamental theorem of Natural Selection, perhaps most widely quoted theory of Natural Selection.

The *Price Equations* show how human genes for self-sacrificing behavior can spread through a population even though they harm some carriers of the genes in question. They demonstrate how animals can develop astonishingly selfless behavior: how bees can evolve that sting fearlessly even though they must die in consequence. The secret is to ensure that altruistic actions also benefit relatives of the altruist - who are they likely to share the gene in question.

This helps to clarify why a mother may lay down her life for her children. But how much should she risk for a third cousin twice removed? The Price equations produce answers to such questions for every living thing on earth. When Price first read Hamilton's equations he recognized that they raised a terrible problem. He saw that altruism in this biological and equation-bound sense is limited. It cannot supply the absolute and universal commandment of Christianity or the other global ethical and religious systems. The Hamilton/Price equations may tell us we must love our neighbors, but in ways that are about as far from the religious sense of the words as possible. They are descriptive, not prescriptive. There is no "*should*" about their command to love. We love our neighbors because our genes built us that way, the equations say; and because the neighbors have probably been built the same way, too, and so will love us back. This insight so shocked Price that he set out to check Hamilton's work himself and find the flaw he was convinced must be there.

Instead, he ended up with a more elegant and general way to express them. This new formulation made even clearer a worrying implication that he had already grasped: that the same equations that demand the spread of altruistic behavior may sometimes demand its opposite. He recognized that a fondness for torturing and murdering your neighbors is just as heritable and may be as easily spread as the urge to love them.

What Price saw was that in a world in which unselfishness really is rewarded can be even more horrible than one in which only the ruthless survive. The torment is that we want to be genuinely unselfish: gratuitously good. Humans are naturally idealistic and altruistic. Some part of everyone

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wants to make that leap to God and so-called *Religion*. Yet our only test of whether we have succeeded in being good is our intuition, which is genetically produced, adaptive and can no longer be relied upon. It is not a new dilemma. It applies well to the difficulty of trusting our animal minds with metaphysical or mathematical speculation. Our emotional constitution does more than direct us. It also orients us. It tells us what our goals - want to behave well, or lovingly, is one of the things that tell us what good behavior or what love is. That is why it can seem threatening that these desires have evolved, for our wants and dispositions are much a product of Darwinian forces as our eyes and our fingers, perhaps our instinct for what is goodness, or love will be as fallible as our eyesight or our muscles. What is very tormenting, then, is not just the idea that our acts are fundamentally selfish; it is the thought that our ideals are selfish too.

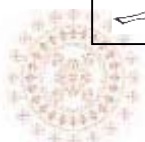
The discovery that there might be a genetic basis for human idealism – which is what the Price equation amounts to – appears to provide conclusive, final proof that all our best efforts are directed to illusions of idealism and goodness. For one thing, as Price saw clearly in extending the scope of the equations to cover “spiteful” or “selfish” behavior, it showed that we could have evolved to be just as passionate about hatred and destruction as we are, most of the time, about love and construction. Indeed when we look at Hitler’s atrocities or the Muslim fanatics and fundamentalists of today, we know how true this is.

But Price seems to have heard the sayings of God as directly and unarguably as a bee feels the imperative to defend its nest. "Sell all you have and give to the poor." - he said. The derelicts he entertained stole from him and caused chaos. He was forced to leave his apartments, and ended up dosing on the floor of the lab at University College, London, where he worked. Not even that lasted. An alcoholic whose wife he had tried to help started to harass him at the lab, and finally took to shouting at him from the street below. So he had to leave there, too, and descended by degrees to the squat in Tolmers Square, Euston, where he killed himself.

His funeral was attended only by three or four tramps, and two of the most honored and influential biologists in the world, John Maynard Smith and W. D. Hamilton. Did his death, show the triumph of Science over Religion?



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Reminiscences of Hawaii

Sulata Maheshwari

We landed in Hawaii with a BANG! Literally, since I fell on the staircase of the airport. In Japan everyone would have politely looked away but not so in US – there were half-smiles probably at my abashed and stupid face as I sat bewildered for a while. My husband was most amused and had a big grin all over his face. So do you find it surprising that the whole situation produced rainbow colors on my face? My torment continued till the time I could get out of airport – my mind imagined all the 1000 people there has not only seen but was also continuously thinking solely of that scene where I lay huddled into a lump at the bottom of the staircase.

Well, so much for my “Aloha”(welcome) into Hawaii. Things cooled down considerably since we were ushered into a lovely limo (Taxi in Hawaii). Unlike in Japan where I was completely disappointed at the sight of a plain vanilla bus which was termed ‘limo’ – this was a proper limousine I have always seen in English movies like God Father and other such mafia stuff - as in it was long and had enough leg space for 10 of my legs and it had wine glasses with napkins decorated at the side chamber. I felt much better (though there was no wine).

Our taxi driver was Chinese with limited English skills and we had a short period of déjà vu as we tried to explain the direction to our hotel. The limo drove into Waikiki beach, which was really picturesque – however I suddenly realized why Rick (my boss) had used the term “pretty” and not “beautiful” when describing this place. It was a strange blend – when I look through the right window of the limo there were the lovely blue sea waves splashing onto the white-sand beach lined with shining green coconut trees whose leaves rustled in the breeze. On my left was an array of high-end brand outlets, Louis Vuitton, Takashimaya (or was it Mitsukoshi?), Prada, Gucci – you name it and they are there. It evoked a strange feeling of natural and artificial in me. Other than our one-day visit to Hanauma Bay I did not greatly enjoy Waikiki – I found it perfect for active surfers and shopping (Ala Moana is good!) but that’s about it. Hanauma Bay is a paradise for beginners in snorkeling. The day we went to Hanauma – the sea was very rough due to the hurricane hitting a nearby island, but it had its own charms since the sea was wild – the waves were huge and they lashed around like an angry sea-monster.

Next we landed in Maui, which did true justice to the Hawaii fame! The beauty of the place impressed me. I could never have imagined so much beauty could be concentrated in a place had I not visited Maui. Mind you – if you are looking for crowd, activity and hectic life, Maui can be boring. However, if

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you are looking for lovely, quiet, serene beauty coupled with some amount of activity like snorkeling (at Molokini), sunrise tour on a volcanic crater (Haleakala), driving through a rain-forest (Road to Hana)– this place is unparalleled. For those who have traveled the road from Mumbai to Nasik – Maui has similar beauty but a shade better due to sprawled out golden sea beaches.

My best memory of Maui is the “Road to Hana”. The tour pamphlet had an apt quote “It is not the destination, it is the journey.” The place Hana, has nothing much but the road to it is adventurous and charming. The guided tour took us through a great rain forest, which was flush with fruits (esp. guavas), flowers (white-ginger flower), streams trickling down the lava vents of this extinct (or was it dormant?) volcano, double-canopied bamboo groves, etc. However, the local flavor to the whole tour was not given by any of these – it was our tour guide, Sam. His vivid descriptions of the historical background of the place (including why and how Captain Cook was killed), the numerous anecdotes, stories of his family, were what charmed us. There is a particularly rough patch on that road where the van jolts up and down and suddenly we came across a “bumper”(speed-breaker) in that patch - we could hear Sam thinking aloud “Man! Me always wondered why they put that bumper in this road!”

We left Maui cherishing lovely memories of golden sunrises, fiery-red sunsets, deep blue ocean, lush green mountains, sweet fragrant “Plumeria” flowers and above all the warm, fun-loving local people. Even today while sitting at my office desk when I close my eyes to rest for a while, I have a smile thinking of how Wordsworth’s few words have transcended time in expressing human feelings....



*“I gazed-and gazed-but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:
For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils”*

Tidbits:

1. Hawaii is full of Japanese and everyone can understand, if not speak, the language. But it is not Japan – since I lost my travel book Lonely Planet within 5 minutes of leaving it behind – could not find it at the same spot.
2. Hawaiians still feel they are ‘occupied’ by USA, not really part of USA. We heard that slight resentment in the words of every Hawaiian we spoke to.
3. It looks like either it is a custom and honor if a Hawaiian is sharing his family information with you, or all tour guides are trained to tell you that. Both the local tour guides we had, told us about their family. “You know my little boy plays soccer and my girl goes to a Polynesian school – no English there!” It was interesting to notice the last was told with lot of pride in his voice.

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Shopping centers in Tokyo

A Japanized Gaijin's perspective

Soumendu Mukhopadhyay

I started out with strong and very good intentions to contribute towards Anjali this year. I brainstormed with me and myself for close to 3 hours thinking of a good topic to write about. One of my brilliant ideas was to write about places I have been to in Japan. I started out, but, halfway through, felt a sense of déjà vu – I had read almost everything I was writing about. I am planning to sue Lonely Planet for plagiarism (they stole my idea to write about things to see in Japan), but that would come later.

Halfway through my intense brainstorming session, I was reminded of a more mundane matter, which very few people have written about, unless you count the millions of Japanese who have written about this. I am talking about shopping centers in Japan – little islands of paradise, or examples of Dante's vision of hell, depending on demographic parameters like your gender, your age group and so on.

Come the weekend, and you rise and shine around noon on the Saturday, looking forward to two days of full-time residence at the place you woke up. However, all good things must come to an end – one must go shopping. I understand shopping is one of this country's most favourite hobbies, the other being eating.

However, just like the preamble to our hallowed Indian Constitution, this preamble must also come to an end. In this short article I have made an attempt to provide a Japanized gaijin's perspective on 3 of these so-called shopping complexes that I have encountered on my way to oblivion. I would highly welcome your comments and suggestions, but please do not expect any credits when my book comes out.

Costco – If you have a car, you have got it made. Costco is located in a remote area somewhere in Chiba prefecture. Going to Costco is like making a pilgrimage to one of our holy places – do carry enough water, lunch, dinner, etc (if you are coming from Yokohama area or beyond, please carry next day's breakfast as well).

Costco is a parking paradise. It has about 4 times the parking space as shop-floor space. In fact, if you are looking to buy a car, you do not need to go to

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Toyota's showroom – just visit Costco's parking lot. You have to go down several floors of high-tech walk-alators to get to the shopping area. The shopping area is rather huge by Japanese standards – you can fit in 4 apartment complexes, a kennel, a children's school, an amusement park, and almost anything you can imagine into the space. There are 2 floors, one of which is dedicated to food (in keeping with this nation's hobby). The other has anything you may need, and many more things you never thought you would need. It also has many things you would never ever need, but you have this uncontrollable urge to lighten the contents of your wallet. In fact, this urge seems to get into you the moment you enter any of the shopping centers – I think SARS is a rather mild allergy as compared with this infection. You could buy tents (in case your landlord throws you out of your house), gardening equipment (in case you feel a tractor is a better option than a car on the streets of Tokyo), and pretty much everything. The first floor has bags of chips, which you could also use as pillows, cartons of Coca-Cola (I believe Coca-Cola is a dirty word nowadays), and so on.

Anyway, I have to move on – I have to eat dinner.

Takashimaya / Tokyu Hands Shinjuku – This is an extremely nice place to visit, especially during the Christmas season where they light up the place. This is located just outside Shinjuku Station (go to the south exit, Shinjuku station can probably make money promoting the station as a maze, with the number of exits it has). Fortunately, I have never taken a car to this place, as I believe you would need to get into the line for parking somewhere near Shinagawa station (approximately 7 stations from Shinjuku).

Takashimaya has maybe around 10 floors. The floors are organized as -

Floors 1 – 8.5: Women's clothing and accessories

Floors 8.5 – 8.625 – Men's clothing

Floors 8.625 – 9 – Children's toys

Floor 9: HMV Music shop

Floor 10: Food

I think I have missed out the IMAX 3D studio – it is somewhere between Floor 9 and 10 (possibly 9.5, for the mathematically inclined).

Personally, I cannot tell you much about Floors 1 – 8.5 – I was mainly an accessory in these sections. The HMV music shop is very nice – it has all sorts of CDs, DVDs, AVDs, BVDs, etc. You may find the occasional





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foreigner browsing the largely English section – the rest of the crowd is entirely Japanese in nature, colour of hair and habit.

The building adjoining Takashimaya has a Tokyu Hands Outlet. This is a famous DIY store (DIY stands for do it yourself, though I believe there are several expansions floating around that one cannot put into this magazine). You would find bicycles, birthday stuff, and all sorts of things you can fill an already overcrowded house with. It also has a large selection of jigsaw puzzles – though if you buy one of the larger ones, you may need to buy a house to go along with the puzzle.

There is also a nice bookstore called Kinokuniya next to Tokyu Hands – there is 1 floor full of English books (the other floors have mainly women's magazines). It is a nice place to spend time – you could possibly complete reading one of the smaller books while in the store (unless the management throws you out).

Odaiba – This is one of the islands of paradise I told you about somewhere in this article (I normally do not read what I write). There is a very large children's toy store here (Toys 'r Us) – you could get one week's worth of exercise running after your child once he or she is let loose in the store (in case you do not have a child, you can get this exercise running after your better half). There is also a very nice place that comprises an artificial beach and other things. To get there, you would probably need to take the Rainbow Bridge, which is a popular landmark in Tokyo. I understand some people actually walk across the 2 km stretch of the bridge – I would not advise this unless you intend to get into the Olympics.

There are any numbers of places to visit around here. One could easily spend 1 day going round the place – in fact, if you visit here with your family, you probably do not have an option. You could go to the Toyota showroom where you can take a simulated drive in a car of your choice. However, as I mentioned earlier, you could always go to Costco to choose your car.

I believe I am running out of space and inane things to write about, so I will close this chapter here. For those who are interested, or not interested, please wait for the coming year for the next edition of this saga. If you do not intend to wait that long, you can always buy my book.

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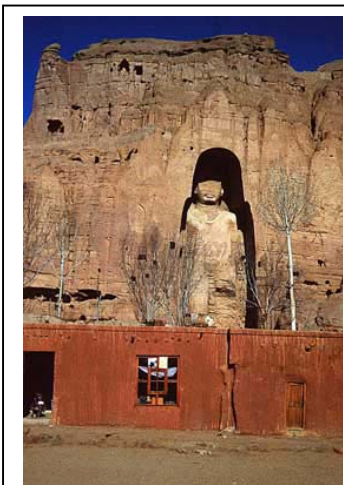




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Bamiyan Buddha in Japan?

B N Pal



Summer of 2003 in Tokyo. It was beginning of July, but no sign of arrival of summer. We had preplanned long ago to visit a beach near Tokyo before we take our yearly summer pilgrimage cum home tour to get used to similar weather prevailing in our home city of Mumbai. This time why not drive to a beach at the tip of Tateyama of Chiba prefecture? As planned and ignoring the advance weather notice, we woke up little early and started preparing for the journey. It was a long Journey via Tokyo Wan Aqua line expressway – 10 Km under the sea drive and then follow the state highway. Due to plenty of over enthusiasts like us, we were getting very much upset realizing that we can

reach to the beach only in the evening. The state highway sometime was passing through small towns, sometime the Tokyo bay at the right, sometime passing through agricultural land and sometime through deep forest and mountain range. When we were passing through a mountain range midway between Tokyo and Tateyama, we suddenly noticed huge plane (completely vertical) surfaces in the mountain range. Not one! but many !!! Anyway due to heavy traffic, I was driving slowly and started wondering, this can't be natural, at the same time it was impossible to believe the human being can cut the mountain so much at the top of the mountain. I was curious to really know what is this – natural or manmade? Suddenly, we noticed a gate with an arrow – “ Welcome to Nihonji ”.

Immediately I took a left turn, at least some relief from the traffic jam and some rest after 6 to 7 hours continuous drive. We drove almost to the top of the mountain, purchased the ticket and entered into the mountain top valley complex. We saw a small arrow, reluctant to take a deviation. Suddenly we noticed someone has hand-written in Sanskrit “OM” (ॐ) on the direction of arrow. We took a try and when we crossed a small very tall manmade tunnel, we were surprised to see so huge tall Buddha, curved out of those mountain tops made plane by chisel and hammer using human hands. The same one, which we were noticing from the road, but couldn't realize, Lord Buddha are curved out of these mountains. I couldn't measure the height of Lord Buddha, but I was told it is more than 30 meters tall. Almost half of Bamiyan Buddha. This made me to think whether there is any relationship with this architecture and the Bamiyan Buddha in Afghanistan. Did they get the inspiration from Bamiyan Buddha or is it a totally isolated art, or did the same group travel to Japan after finishing their task at Bamiyan?

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Rocks first cut to plain surface and then create this type of Statue

We then took a complete mountain up and down tour, to see plenty of Buddha's in different form, all are rock cut. The biggest one is **NIHONJI**, which is the most impressive historical Daibutsu in Japan. It is 31m tall and 200 years old. Furthermore, there are 1500 statues of Buddha's disciples (rakan) scattered through the forest on the adjacent mountainside, and they have nearly 1500 different facial expressions.



31 meters tall Nihonji cut out of Mountain



Small Buddha in open caves

As I said just now, it is only 200 years old, so how it is compared with Bamiyan Buddha which is a 5th Century 53 meter tall statue. Before destruction in March 2001 it was the tallest statue in the World. While doing this research, I got little bit inclined towards finding out Buddhism in Japan and how Indians played a role. There was another reason because at Nihonji, we found lot of Indian connections – a pipal tree in front of Nihonji was donated by our then Vice President (who later became President of India) Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma. Also a white marble Ashoka Pillar presented from India reminds us the deep rooted spiritual and cultural relationship between these two great Nations. While we were walking in the complex, Shoubhik, our son suddenly shouted Baba see I was surprised to see lot of modern day writing in Devnagari script giving us the message that even today Indian artists and sculptures are coming here to maintain our old spiritual and religious togetherness.

Let me comeback to my old topic of my research on how and when Buddhism came to Japan from India. Most of you know but for those who are keen to know this, here is some information –

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Besides silk, paper and other goods, the Silk Road carried another commodity, which was equally significant in world history. Along with trade and migration, the world's oldest international highway was the vehicle, which spread Buddhism through Central Asia. The transmission was launched from northwestern India to modern Pakistan, Afghanistan (the place of Bamiyan Buddha), Central Asia, Xinjiang (Chinese Turkistan), China, Korea and then to Japan in 6th century. Buddhism not only affected the lives and cultures on those regions but also left us with a world of wonders in arts and literature.

Buddhism went through several different periods before it became Japan's most popular religion. Buddhism was imported to Japan via China and Korea as a gift from the friendly Korean kingdom of Kudara (Paikche) in the 6th century. While the ruling nobles welcomed Buddhism as Japan's new state religion, it did not initially spread among the common people due to its complex theories.

According to a study on "*Understanding of Buddhism in Japan*", Buddhism entered Japan on October 13, 538 AD. The ruler of Kudara (Paekche), a small kingdom in southwest Korea presented the imperial court with a bronze image of Shakyamuni (The Buddha), banners, and several manuscripts of Buddhist scriptures. The Paikche ruler told Emperor Kimmei how Buddhism came to China and Korea from India, and that it was always looked at with the highest respect wherever it went.

Emperor Kimmei was pleased with the Buddha image and wanted to accept this new religion. However, at that time, there was a debate over whether or not the Japanese should accept Buddhism. The Buddha image was given to *Soga-no-Iname* because he supported accepting the new faith. There were others, such as *Mononobe-no-Okoshi*, who felt that since olden times, the Japanese court had worshiped the national gods that protected the country, and it should stay that way. This controversy started a feud between the two clans.



Within the next century, the Buddhist faith rapidly became established as the state religion. The successor of Kimmei, Bidatsu, was not a supporter of Buddhism. Yomei, the successor of Bidatsu, became the first emperor to believe in Buddhism. After becoming ill, he desired to have an image of Bhaisajyaguru Tathagata or Yakushi-Nyorai made. His will was carried out by his younger sister, Empress Suiko, who placed the image at Horyuji Temple after his death. Her reign (592-628) marks a high point in the development of Buddhism in the pre-Nara period. Prince Shotoku, the son of Emperor Yomei took over the reign and Buddhism flourished in this Shotoku Era. Temples were built and a sixteen-foot bronze image of the Buddha was built. According to *Nihongi (Annals)*, there were about

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46 Buddhist temples, 816 priests, and 569 nuns by the year 623. Prince Shotoku encouraged industry and saw that the sick and orphans were cared for. He also promoted transportation and communication and set rules to protect animals.

Prince Shotoku did not found a school of Buddhism nor was he ever a priest of any kind. He did, however, establish and spread Buddhism in Japan through his devotion. Because of this, he is considered the real founder of Buddhism in Japan.

Timeline on the Buddhist Activities Along the Silk Route: -

Periods	Events
560s BC	Buddha's birth
484 BC	Buddha's death
484-494	The First Council in Rajagriha.
350-300	The second Council in Vaishali.
272-231	Buddhism flourished in India under king Ashoka.
272-231	Missionary activity started under Ashoka's reign.
272-231	The first known carving of monumental shrines into the sides of mountains appeared in Bihar, India
250	The Third council of Buddhist monks met at Patna in Ashoka's reign.
100BC-200AD	Buddhism flourished in Kushan.
100 AD	Gandhara art school flourished. Art form of Buddha images introduced from Gandhara. The site was destroyed by Hephthalites in 6th century.
144-172	Kushan ruler, Kanishka disseminated Buddhism.
148-181	Shih-kao & Hsuan, Parthians and Chu-sho-fu, an Indian missionary arrived China. Buddhist Scriptures and Translations in Chinese.
200s	Buddhist shrine at Giaur Kala (Merv).
223-253	Che K'ien Yueh-chih missionary translated several Buddhist writings into Chinese.
300s	Buddhist stupa at Merv.
300s	Buddhist settlements at Hadda, Afghanistan. Destroyed by the Hephthalites in 450.
300s	Buddhist community established and the world's largest statue of 53-meter Buddha created at Bamiyan. Genghis Khan destroyed the site in 1222, but the statues remain.
300s	Sassano-Buddhic art seen Kabul valley and penetrated into the Tarim basin.
344-413	Kumarajiva, Indian pilgrim, built the largest Buddhist text translation bureau in China.
395-414	Fa-hsien's pilgrimage to India.
494	Buddhism again adopted by Toba Turkic King Hung II. Buddhist crypts of Longmen started. Gupta kingdom in India. Strong Buddhist faith and art development.
500s	strong Buddhist faith in the Tarim basin, especially Kucha - religious culture developed.
520	Sung Yun's pilgrimage to India. passed through Lob Nor, Khotan, the Pamirs, and Hephthalite Huns in Badakhshan, Udiyana and Gandhara.
520	Persecution of Buddhism in Gupta empire by the invading Hephthalites
538 AD	Buddhism comes to Japan via Korea

बुद्धम शरणम गच्छामि ।

धर्मम शरणम गच्छामि ॥

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