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Editorial Perspective

India: Shocks and Controversies

When one hears about the sad demise of a life just beginning to bloom, and yet another made dead while living by robbing her childhood and future dreams, both displaying extreme beastliness. The shock and surprise which the nation experiences, knows no bound. Usually such sad happenings are followed by angry protests, rallies, dharnas and bandhs, which is quite natural. Recent incidents, which have shocked the nation, are the murder of a young, just 19 year old, boy and the rape of a 13 year old girl in the capital city of this unfortunate country. The boy, Nido Tania, was from Arunachal Pradesh and the girl from Manipur. The question is: how long this nation of 120 crore people shall tolerate the beastliness of say, a few thousand goondas? And again, why such heinous acts of murder and rape continue to recur even after repeated resolve, at the highest level, to control the deviants?

While tackling the crimes, especially those related to violence and sex, it is always said that law alone is not enough. Yes, law alone will not do. Moreover, in spite of the stringent laws, crimes recur. But, as one knows, many of our laws are obsolete, have loopholes, and the criminals get the benefits; the court procedures too are very slow. But the major weakness, undoubtedly, lies with the law and order machinery. The question is, should the civil society allow continuous malfunctioning of the law making, and law and order maintaining machineries? If not, then what must we do then to bring the desired changes?

The twin sufferers of the crimes mentioned above belonged to the North-East region of the country. It is here that the failures of our system of education come out most glaringly. The students of one region of the country are never informed about the other regions. This results into the communication gap; even the normal query about the identity of an individual leads to misunderstanding. In the case of the assault on Tania, this communication gap was also responsible, apart from the criminal bent of mind of the persons who attacked the boy, leading ultimately to

his death. The question is, why should the NCERT and the Social Sciences departments of the Universities of this country not be subjected to Civil Society Audit for their failures to provide proper knowledge content in the curricula? Why the University Grants Commission not be held responsible for the poor quality of research, especially in the fields of humanities and Social Sciences? In fact, UGC should be asked to publish 'White Paper' on what it considers to be the path-breaking researches, and how much public money is wasted in the name of the research.

The nature of Indian history is exclusive and colonial; our history-writing follows colonial historiography. Marxists, for whom 'nationalism' is a dirty word, dominate the arena of scholarship in history and other social sciences. Perhaps, this is the reason that the history of North-East India is not included in the country's history. Needless to say that such irresponsible intellectual act generates the sense of alienation and 'otherness' in the minds of the young ones, which they carry throughout their lives. It is time we go for inclusivist history; say goodbye to Delhi-centric or Aggressor-centric history of India, developed as a part of colonial historiography.

A further fact, needing mention here, is that we teach our students, even today, what our colonial masters wanted us to learn. Gait's *History of Assam* is the only authentic history of the North-East even today, and Gait gave racist and isolationist twist to the history on two assumptions that the epithet of the 'Asura' for the kings of Assam (Narakasura) indicates that Assam was non-Aryan territory; and the river names of the region has the syllable 'Di' (water), and therefore, the region belonged to the Bodos. Gait did not care to know that in Rigveda, Asuraghna, Vritraghna and Brahmaghna is the same Indra, and therefore, Asura, Vritra and Brahmana is the same. And again, there are numerous related words in the languages of the region, and even Sanskrit word 'toy' means water. I may cite numerous examples citing such failures of our academic community, which has created national problems. For Valmiki, Ravana was 'Rakshasa-jatiya' Brahmana. Indians were never racists, nor is the caste race, which the deconstructionists with anti-India agenda want to prove. But the protesters against the killing viewed it from racist angle, due to obvious reasons.

The failures of the universities of Delhi – JNU and Delhi University – are numerous. At least one of their failures have come to light, that they have failed even to inform about the basic facts about the country to their students, who shamelessly address the North-Eastern students as 'Chinkies'. Of course, I do not expect Delhi University vice-chancellors

and professors to endeavour to cultivate spiritual discrimination (*viveka*) among their students, so that they free themselves from *Prajna-dosh* and *drishti-dosha*, for which they are thoroughly incapable, but atleast they should try to generate proper ethos in the campuses.

It is unfortunate that handling of the education of this country was mostly placed in the undeserving hands. They lacked the understanding, and even the will, to initiate the desired changes to decolonize the system of education. The system of education, which this country inherited from her colonial masters, encourages competition; declares most of the youth coming out from the universities and the colleges, unworthy of any work; except for the few. Thus it leads to immense wastage of human resource leaving no space for the rejected majority. It, thereby, leads to aggression and violence not between the individuals, but also in the society at large. It is the same vulgar behavioral aggressiveness of the students, which shows its ugly face during the ragging of the juniors by the seniors in the educational institutions.

Usually, when the issue of deep public concern crops up, the public anguish finds its expression in the form of angry protests, as happened a year ago when a young girl was gang raped, badly injured and thrown out from the running bus, or when there was Anna Hazare's movement against corruption. Usually, under such highly surcharged emotional atmosphere, the pious advices are often misunderstood, and many conscientious persons remain silent. But the parties with agenda enter and take over the movement, leading to its eventual collapse, as it happened many times in the past. When the intellectuals of the country, being consumers of imported ideas, rely heavily on them, as well as, on borrowed research themes, techniques and models, develop heavy reliance and collaborate with Euro-American scholars, then they become source of confusion for the country. It needs mention here that the deconstructionist study of Indian society by the American Universities is not without agenda; but it is fashion for our social scientists, who follow them blindly, get confused and transfer their confusion to the society through the channels of education and media.

We find a dangerous tendency among many established intellectuals of India, and move of mediemen, that they, very often, enter into the area of the darkness of their so among knowledge. As for example, an established scholar of economics talks assertively about history, culture, religion, and everything. Such trespassers, often, become highly dangerous, especially when they have 'scholarship with agenda' or are scholar agents, as they unknowingly become sources of confusion, and at times catalyze division in the society.

Again, a new factor, which has emerged is globalization, which is a source of deculturization in this country; it is robbing a section of the neo-rich of their traditional values. The wealth acquired, in many cases by the pilferage from the public wealth, combined with the loss of values due to defects of education, and the media inputs has created a mismatch producing persons with criminal bent of mind. A close examination of the crimes, such as rape, shall bring out the fact that the rapists are more from the non-traditional families with the mismatch due to wealth required and traditional values lost or those pushed to the margins due to defective education, and value system degrading women. Needless to say that there is need to bring desired legal change and the change in education system to ensure that such crimes do not recur.

The incidents are still fresh in our minds, when due to the sad developments some time back, our young countrymen from the North-East were leaving their jobs and departing from some cities of the South and West India; a large number of the persons tried to persuade them to stay back, and on the failures to do so, they were extremely sad and full of tears. Thus we can't bracket them with the lone criminal, who has killed Tania. It is injustice against them and the whole country, if such incident leads one to label the entire society as racist. Moreover, India was never racist as Al-Beruni and Hiuen-Tsang attest. It needs reiteration that neither the country, nor the caste system has racist content as the deconstructionist scholars and anti-India lobby in the West propagate under their interventionist agenda.

I will end the write-up by mentioning about the controversy about the withdrawal of Wendy Doniger's *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. Many of our so-called intellectuals are very sad that the Penguin has withdrawn the book. But it is not for the first time that they have done so. The question is: why the same intellectuals were silent when Penguin declined to publish Bhargava's book on 'Air India' accusing Praful Patel for Airlines decline. As is known, the Penguin had an out of court settlement with Mr. Patel and did not publish the book even when Bhargava stood for what he wrote. Our intellectuals are sorry that the book of such a great scholar like Doniger was withdrawn, forgetting the fact that hardly 500 copies of the book were sold in the last three years. Of course, those who opposed the book have aroused the curiosity of thousands, who will read it on internet. Here it needs mention that the book provides disorganized data to the Indians, denied access to the traditional knowledge. It does not cohesively put the data with due empathy and therefore haphazardly informs; it does not educate. Here, even if we

discount the motive and bias of the author, we must remember the limitations inherited by her due to her background. For proper understanding of us, the concepts of transcendence, non-attachment recollectedness, *samatā* (equality), *mokṣa* (liberation), *Bhūmā* (the vast), *ananta* (infinite), *karunā* (compassion), *Nickam-karma* (detached action), *avatāra* (incarnation), and *punarjanma* (re-birth), apart from *rta*, *seela*, *Samādhi*, etc. should be properly conceptualized, which we may not expect from the author with Western background. Besides, such books should either be controverted by scholastic writing or ignored as unworthy of notice. Sanatana Dharma in its own right cannot be affected by ignorant criticism or praise. It stands on its own and needs no defence by its adherents.

Perceptual Haziness in Understanding Central Asia

Indians have very few scholars who properly understand India-Central Asia relations in time-depth and proper perspective. Our scholars follow uni-track medium; most of them know only English, which is their medium of expression and writing. But for in-depth study of Central Asia, and its relations with India, the knowledge of many languages, especially, Russian, French, German, Chinese, Tibetan, Persian and Turkish, is needed. This can be done by dedicated team work. This is necessary because Russian, French and German scholars have done commendable work in the field of exploration and study of Central Asia and their works are available mostly in their respective languages; the Chinese and Tibetan languages, apart from huge material on history and culture of the region, have preserved vast treasure of the translations of the Sanskrit texts hitherto lost. Moreover, as discussed below, the original local literature about the region, was lost. But, the task of the study of Central Asia is necessary for India, because there is so much of India in Central Asia and the vice-versa. Needless to say that, the proper study of the region is needed for proper understanding of India's history, culture and religion, and obviously for India's self-portraiture.

In the Arena of knowledge, we had clearly two traditions. One was the tradition of collecting the knowledge from anywhere and everywhere, putting it in the wide frame of one's experience, then synthesizing and accepting it. Indians did it; they acquired knowledge the *Yogic* way; accepted it. This tradition leads one to acquire the sources of knowledge; The Chinese took the extreme steps of acquiring the sources of knowledge even by the use of force. They attacked the State of Champa in Central Vietnam for acquiring Sanskrit texts; fought war with Khotan for *Buddhist*

Sutras. China wanted to have the Great Buddhist scholar, Kumarajiva, and on denial by the king of Kuchi (*Kuchimaharaja*, the then king of present day Kuchar of Chinese Turkistan) waged war, in which Kuchi was defeated and the king was killed. Yet another Central Asian scholar was also taken to a State of China by force.

Yet the other tradition, rather than acquiring the sources of knowledge, believed in the destruction of the same and to replace them. Either blind faith in one's assumed historic role, as we find in the case of Alexander, or acceptance of the given ideology or belief system or dogma, with closed mind, as we find in the case of the Arabs and Kutaib, their General and Governor in Central Asia, leads to such situation. Central Asia witnessed the loss of its treasure of knowledge at least twice due to them. This phenomenon was repeated a number of times, the books and institutions, like Navabahar, were not only destroyed in Balkh, Bukhara and Merv, but even up to the far east in Tarim basin, and the scholars were killed..

Alexander was the first to destroy the intellectual wealth of Iran and Trans-Oxiana (Central Asia). He 'allowed most of the literature of Iran to be destroyed and Greek was substituted as the official language during the four centuries of Parthian rule. These kings considered themselves philhellenes and suppressed official expression in Iranian terms. But with the outburst of Iranian nationalism fostered by the Sassanid dynasty, the Old Persian, which had always been the language of the people, reappeared in the form of Pahlavi (Pehlevi), or Middle Persian. One of the main documents is the great inscription found at Paikuli (dated about 293 A.D.). There were dialects such as the Middle Parthian in the north, Middle Sogdian in the northeast (which had a revival in the 9th century AD.), and the Middle Sacian in the east.' (*Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 15; 1965 edition; p. 306)

The next was the Arabian General Qutaiba ibn Muslim, who conquered Khorezm, Soghd, Tukharistan and Ferghana in the beginning of the 8th century AD. Not only the old writings of the Central Asian people were destroyed, making the investigation and research on various aspects of the society and culture of the people extremely difficult, but even the scholars were killed. Eminent Central Asian scholar Abu'l-Rayhan al-Biruni writes about the same: 'And Qutaiba killed the people that knew well Khorezmian writings and knew their legends and taught (the sciences) that existed among the Khorezmians: he inflicted on them many torments and (these legends) became so secret that it was impossible to learn for sure what had happened even to the Khorezmians after the

rise of Islam' (Quoted by M. Asimov in his paper, *Science in Central Asia and the Method of Studying it*, in *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, Calcutta (1970), p.18.)

India, Central Asia and Iran formed part of a composite religious, cultural, linguistic continuum since remotest past. Ethnic, political, economic and trade links between them also used to be equally intimate and deep. The suppression of the Iranian language, which started from the very beginning of the Arab rule, had negative impact on intellectual climate of the region. It needs mention that either Iranian or its dialects – which were also the dialects of Sanskrit – as Niya or Gandhari Prakrit in the Tarim basin and Chulika Paisachi Prakrit in Sogdiana – were spoken in Southern Central Asia. As is well-known, 'The Arab conquest of 641 A.D. imposed Arabic upon Iran, except where heretical groups persisted in the preservation of the old literature in secret. A colony of Persians who refused to accept Islam migrated to India, taking their religious books with them, and thus preserved a mass of literature which probably would have been lost in Iran. These Parsis still utilize the Avestic or Pahlavi for their ritualistic devotions.' (Ibid) During the Samanid period (a native Persian dynasty; 874-999 A.D.), however, the great counter reaction to Arabic brought renaissance of Persian. In the aftermath of the same great literary pieces, such as Firdausi's *Shah Nameh* were written. (Encyclopedia, op. cit.) It was this kind of the fear of the destruction of the intellectual treasure that thousands of books were hidden in Tunhuang.

As we know, thousands of texts, mostly of Sanskrit and Prakrit in Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts, were discovered during last two centuries in Central Asia. 20,000 manuscripts of different languages in Brahmi, Kharosthi, Persian, Tibetan, Turki, Uighur and Tokharian scripts, walled up for 900 years for protection against invaders, were found from Tunhuang alone. (B.N. Puri; *Buddhism in Central Asia*; pp. 23-24; Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism* III, p. 189)

At least one more such example of hiding the texts due to fear of destruction, a phenomenon parallel to Tunhuang, may be cited here. In December 1945, a Jar, containing Coptic translations made more than 1600 years ago of the texts of 120-150 A.D., and even of 50-100 A.D., written in Greek, was discovered on the cliff of the Jabal al-Tarif, near Nag Hammadi, in Upper Egypt, by a peasant, Muhammad Ali. His mother, thinking it useless, burnt some of the papyrus to make a fire in the evening, but enough still remained. These remaining manuscript finds of Egypt were the texts of the 55 Gnostic Gospels; Elaine Pagels, Weidenfeld

and Nicolson based their *Gnostic Gospels* on these hidden manuscript finds.

As we know, Christianity was Judaic in origin. In its efforts to enter the Gentile, it had to seek a new idiom; made an alliance with the *Gnosticism*, the then religion of the Greco-Roman elite in one form or the other. But the Christianity and Gnosticism differed in their basics. Unlike Christianity, the soul of Gnosticism was spiritual and philosophical, rather than apocalyptic, millennial, historical and literalist; it did not believe in the otherness of God. Unlike Orthodox Christianity, which was organizational, the Gnostic Christianity was subversive of any authority. Obviously, the alliance was a mismatch and tolerated till orthodox Christianity became powerful. Ultimately, when Emperor Constantine became Christian, Christianity became a State religion, the Gnostic books were banned and destroyed; In 367 AD, Athanasius, the powerful Archbishop of Alexandria, sent out orders for purging all apocryphal books with heretical tendency. Serapeum, in Alexandria in Egypt, which preserved treasures of ancient learning and housed the famous Alexandria library, was reduced to ashes when destroyed by Theophilus, a saint, and a friend of St. Xerome. Naturally, under such circumstances, some Gnostic Christian monks hid the texts to save them, what the others did later on in Tunhuang, thousands of kilometers away. All such developments resulted in India and Central Asia spending centuries in forgetfulness of the self as well as each other. And it is only now the two regions are discovering their self, as well as their mutual relations.

Apart from the loss of literature, the colonial myths, such as 'Aryan Aggression Theory' (now Aryan Migration Theory); over-emphasis on race, migration and conflict between nomads and sedentary people; Euro and Middle-East-centrism and other biases of the Western scholars, disorganized facts, anarchy even in nomenclature of place and personal names, etc., come in the way of our proper understanding of the subject, and thus create perceptual haziness. It is not possible to cover these topics in a short write-up; It needs elaboration and detailed study.

Nomadism in Central Asia, as elsewhere, was a way of life dictated by nature and geography. It is not correct to term the nomads 'savage' and 'barbaric', as they had developed metallurgy. It is also not correct to say that nomads and sedentary people of the region always fought wars with each other. After all, Alexander found towns and even villages unprotected and without protective walls. One of the reasons of massive

migration was the climate change due to prolonged desiccation. Some people migrated; a section was absorbed in the in-coming hordes.

The discovery of Sanskrit gave new identity and historical time-depth to Europe. Euro-American scholars were enchanted; searched their roots in India. The first category of scholars, as they were, emerging after India's encounter with the West, was mainly concerned with seeking the knowledge. But a second category also emerged, whose only concern was the promotion of the colonial Euro-Christian interest; they wanted colonization to grow and get strengthened; they also wanted to win India for Christ. This was the reason that they indulged in myth-making. As Central Asia was also colonized, the region must have some impact of the same, as we have in India. Taking history in time-depth and freeing the historical and cultural discourse from colonial myths and at new intellectual height shall help us in getting rid of much confusion.

In India, our history and literature does not support westward migration. The direction of phonetic changes between two intimately linked languages – Vedic Sanskrit and Old Irani – is from the former to the latter. This sets the direction of migration from east to west.

A particular difficulty, which every student of Central Asia faces, crops up due to multiplicity in the names of the places, persons, etc. The situation here is almost anarchical. As for example, Khotan, the most important outpost on southern Silk Route, and perhaps the oldest one in Central Asia, established at the time of Ashoka with the blinded prince Kunal as its ruler in about 240 BC., has as many names as given hereafter: It figures in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Chinese, Manchu, Mongol and Tibetan records with names, such as, Sanskrit – Kutsana and Kutsanaka; Prakrit – Khotamina, Khotamna, Khodana and Khotana; Chinese – Chien-tun, Chu-sa-tan-na, Chutan, Ho-tien, Huan-na, Huo-tan, Yo-tien, Yu-tien, Yutun; Manchu – Ho-thian; Mongol – Hu-t'an, O-duan, Wa-duan, Wu-duan; Tibetan – Li-yul, U-then, Ho-then. Even the name of famous Chinese pilgrim and scholar Hiuen-tsang is variously written as Swen Chang, Jvan Jvan, Hsuan-tsang, Hiuen Tsang, Hiuen tsang, Hiuen Tsiang, Yuan Chuang, Jwan Jwan and Xuanzang. This clearly shows that there is a lot of anarchy in the nomenclature. However, in spite of the perceptual haziness, which comes in the way of a scholar in understanding Central Asia, the endeavour becomes highly rewarding.

– B.B. Kumar

The Forthcoming issues of the Quarterly Dialogue

We are going to bring the Special Issues of the Dialogue on the following topics:

1. Globalization, Modernisation and National Identity
2. Understanding North-East

North-East Scan

Let not Racism Spread

D. N. Bezboruah*

On January 29 this year, Nido Tania, a 19-year-old student from Arunachal Pradesh studying in Delhi was beaten up with iron rods by some traders of Lajpat Nagar after an altercation with a shopkeeper who had made fun of the young student's hairstyle. The post-mortem report shows that his death was caused by severe head and lung injuries. The police have arrested six people whose bail applications have been turned down. Considering the crime rate in Delhi, this would probably have been written off as just one of those things. After all, India's capital city is witness to several murders, rapes and robberies every day. However, the brutal killing of Nido Tania cannot be dismissed as just one of those things simply because one cannot run away from the fact that he was killed because of the accident of his birth—because someone from Arunachal Pradesh did not look like someone of his age from mainland India. And yet there could be no question of denying his Indian nationality and citizenship.

What happened does not indicate that the nation's capital has suddenly become a racist city. Such crimes are committed by small groups of criminals and deviant people that give our country a bad name. One cannot overlook the fact that globalization and related developments have suddenly put a lot of money into the hands of many irresponsible people who are inclined to pursue arrogant and unlawful urges largely due to a sad mismatch between desirable values and inclinations stoked by an abundance of easy money. They also tend to draw inspiration from the wrong kind of political and social leaders who have legitimized law-breaking by flouting the rule of law. They regard themselves as being above the law due to the power that money can buy. The gang-rape and murder of a young girl on a moving bus in

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Delhi in 2012 obviously does not indicate that everyone in Delhi is a rapist. We tend to forget the humanism of lakhs of Delhiites who readily played direct and indirect hosts to millions of refugees from West Pakistan immediately after the partition of the country in 1947.

However, what happened on 29 January is of great concern to the nation because if such acts of crime are not nipped in the bud, they have a way of inciting more people to crimes that appear to have a racist colour. And every time the police force in Delhi is tardy about taking action, a few more people are added to the number that believes law-breaking will go unpunished. This is of great concern for everyone in the North-East considering that so many students from the this region routinely go to Delhi for higher studies. This trend is of greater concern for the people of Assam not only because Assam's population is greater than the populations of the other north-eastern States taken together, but also because Assam has a larger number of students in Delhi than the other States of this region.

The poignant tragedy was motivated by the kind of deviant racism that one associates only with South Africa and a few other countries. A 19-year-old Indian student who had the best part of his life before him was brutally murdered simply because some shopkeepers identified him as someone from the North-East, did not like his looks, and took the liberty of squashing the life out of him with iron rods just as casually as one would swat a fly or a mosquito. However, the kind of racism that resulted in the killing of Nido Tania is far more despicable because racism is alien to our ethos. True, we have long had a caste system that in its pristine form was no different from the guilds of Europe because the caste divisions arose from what one did rather than who one's parents were. It was much later that we corrupted the system and made caste dependent on ancestry. At some stage we brought in a perversion that brought in its wake many evils. There are legitimate fears that if such deviant cases of racist attitudes are permitted to go unpunished, there may be many more uneducated people who might let their prejudices against Indians from the peripheral States get the better of them. There are fears that this may be beginning to happen. The *khap* of Munirka is reported to have instructed house owners in the area to evict all tenants from the North-East and not to rent out their houses to people from the North-East. The Munirka *khap* has denied this, but householders and landlords of the area know what to believe. It is significant that in a part of India where the caste system is not too rigid (in fact, it is under attack, going by the large number of inter-caste marriages that we have had in

the last two decades) there is every reason to believe that the caste system is on its last legs in Assam. As such, any form of racialism can virtually be ruled out in the North-East. Among the North-Eastern States, there are three predominantly Hindu-majority States: Assam, Manipur and Tripura. Of these, Assam is on the point of becoming a Muslim-majority State, thanks largely to the government's policy of encouraging and orchestrating large-scale illegal migration from Bangladesh mainly for electoral gains. Three of the North-Eastern States—Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland—are Christian-majority States. Large-scale conversions in Arunachal Pradesh have led to a significant increase in the Christian population there in recent years. And Sikkim has a fairly large Buddhist population as well as a Hindu one. There are no signs of racism in any part of the North-East.

For once, Nido Tania's killing has given rise to protest rallies against racism in Delhi as well as in the States of the North-East. This time even the Lok Sabha took up the issue of racism in India's capital and there have been suggestions that Parliament should legislate an anti-racism law to curb such racist practices. However, those who are familiar with the scant respect shown to the laws of the land realize that merely enacting new laws for such crimes is unlikely to make any difference to the situation or the mindsets of people. The Delhi Police is already uncomfortable about having to take on the entire group of Lajpat Nagar traders who are understood to be totally opposed to any kind of action against the traders responsible for the killing of Nido Tania. Therefore, it is probably a good move that the government has entrusted the task of probing Nido Tania's death to the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI). What is certainly very important in tackling stray acts of racism in Delhi is that Nido Tania's killers should be swiftly tried and those proved guilty should be given the maximum punishment for murder. Likewise, those police officers who have dilly-dallied in investigating Tania's murder should also receive appropriate punishment for failing to take the group of Lajpat Nagar traders head on. At the same time, it is clear that taking punitive action against a strong united group of bigoted traders of the same locality is not going to be easy. Yet the Prime Minister and the Lok Sabha have promised action, and this promise has to be honoured because no civilized government can allow the killing of innocent people merely for the accident of their birth and refrain from taking action against the killers.

Students from the North-East should exercise greater caution in their movements in Delhi. They should preferably move in groups so

that if there is an attack on any one of the group, there are others to get help and report to the police. However, there is something else that they need to do as a long-term measure. They need to work harder than ever to get as many administrative jobs in government and opt for Delhi postings. They should also work hard to get as many of the senior positions in the police in due course so that there are enough senior police officers in Delhi to look after the safety and security of students from the North-East in the years to come. Unlike Uttar Pradesh where the police force is almost entirely filled up by Yadavs, Delhi Police cannot become the exclusive preserve of just one community. Over the years, there should be enough senior police officers from the North-East in Delhi so that the accident of one's birth cannot be held against a person. Where laws fail us because the very custodians of the law turn their backs on it, we must undo the failure of the law with crusades supported by thousand and millions (eventually). For that change in the present scenario let us all work and pray.

North-East - Victim of Unimaginative, Trite Responses

Patricia Mukhim*

At a time when the discourse among North-Easterners in Delhi is centred around the death of Nido Tania, a student from Arunachal Pradesh, and sharp remarks of racism are flying thick and fast, a central government limping on its last legs has responded with a typical knee jerk reaction by setting up a Committee to look into this so called 'racial prejudice' that visits people from the region regularly like the measles. The Committee comprises an all-male team of retired bureaucrats as if all the wisdom about social and racial prejudices resides with them. That the Home Ministry could notify those names of people of privilege

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who have never walked in the shoes of the ordinary North- Easterner shopping in the crowded sabzi mandi of Delhi is scandalous. In retrospect this seems like an attempt to quickly shut up the protests and assuage the anger of the people of the region studying, working or living in Delhi.

Like the New York or the California of today, Delhi is nobody's city and everybody's habitat. People come to Delhi to look for better opportunities. I may be forgiven for saying this but it has been my experience that the majority of young people working in the malls of Delhi, in hotels, restaurants, spas etc. come from the Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur and from Churachandpur. This informs us that Manipur offers no employment opportunities for its young people. Under the pretext of tackling militancy which today is reduced to several armed militias nurtured by politicians and surviving off extortion, the State has simply abdicated its primary duty of creating opportunities for its teeming youth and building their capacities for entrepreneurship. In Delhi, these young people try and find a footing but often skid on the slippery slopes of a culture shock. Within the region young men and women enjoy a fair amount of social mobility minus gender prejudices. In churches and other cultural spaces women and men socialise without any taboo.

In Delhi, this liberal behaviour is looked at askance, maybe not in the swanky malls where young couples hold hands and are considered 'cool' but in the gallis and mohallas where street vendors are given to passing lewd comments at the way the girls dress or the boys streak their hair. In the region, these are common sights. We see young men and women in technicoloured hair all the time. In the classroom teachers tell their students that in the west, only members of rock bands and freaky singers streak their hair *a la* Nido Tania, as part of showmanship. They tell them that the bands live in communes and would not usually be walking around the market place. But the young people of today have minds of their own. 'It's my life,' is the common refrain of the young and parents just have to shut up.

Coming to the point of racism, I read through Prof. Susan Tufts Fiske's work on social cognition, stereotypes and prejudice. Fiske is Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs at the Princeton University's Department of Psychology. Her research centres on how stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination are encouraged or discouraged by social relationships such as cooperation, competition and power. She begins with the premise that people easily categorize other people, especially

based on race, gender and age and that bucking the stereotype to learn about the individual person requires motivation. Her study finds that social relations supply one form of motivation to individuals and being on the same team or depending on another person makes people go beyond stereotypes.

Fiske also discovers that people in power are less motivated to go beyond their stereotypes. Laboratory studies by Fiske and her team have shown how a variety of relationships affect people forming impression of others. Interestingly cultural stereotypes and prejudices also depend on relationships of power and interdependence. Group status and competition affect how groups are (dis)liked and (dis)respected.

Robert M Sapolsky of Harvard University's Biological Sciences, talks of a deep structure inside the brain called the amygdala which plays a key role in fear and aggression and the formation of emotional memories. When subjects are presented with the face of someone from a different race the amygdala gets metabolically active, is aroused, alert and ready for action. This happens even when the face is presented subliminally or very rapidly so that the subject does not consciously see it. An interesting learning from this study is that in a person who is exposed to people of different races, the amygdala does not get activated. Sapolsky concludes that while humans may be hard-wired to get edgy around the other but our views on who falls into that category are decidedly malleable.

In a country as racially diverse as India is, some in-depth understanding of how to deal with 'difference' and 'othering' which are not necessarily racist reactions but an extreme response to self-preservation, is integral. But since India's political organisation is regional and the North-East is an ethnically secluded space that is little known to the average 'mainland' Indian, this task requires some intelligent social engineering. It has to work in multiple ways. Those from the North Eastern region who wish to move into the so-called 'mainland' – a construct that is hard to jettison, need lessons on social adjustment as opposed to the colonisation of social spaces by creating insular ghettos. There is virtue in the saying, 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.' To revel in the idea that 'we are different but we are also from India, so you better respect us', is asking for too much from a society where not all have transcended social and emotional prejudices.

There has been a lot of pontification from newspaper pulpits about how the larger Indian society should treat its periphery and how mainland

Indians should fraternise with people from the North-East. Some have proposed a curriculum that includes studies about the seven States of the North-East from the upper primary sections. It's reassuring to read wonderful pieces extolling the virtues of the North-Eastern people, although, I dare say many are patronising. They have homogenised the people of this region as being incapable of 'othering.' This is not the truth. There is a fair amount of racial prejudice against the non-tribal residents in the tribal states of the North-East. They are treated as non-citizens and have virtually no rights, no matter how long they have lived in the region. Communal flare-ups are common and ethnic cleansing is part of the history of the region. Racism is therefore a two-way street. Perhaps the only remedy for this social malaise is to create spaces for greater interface in the metros of Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Chennai, Pune etc., and hope that the amygdala in all of us humans behaves better and does not react as it would to a different face and we would not need a Committee to dissect our DNA.

We Get as Much as We Give to the Society

Pradip Phanjoubam*

The New Year 2014 is already a month old. The important question for beleaguered Manipur is, would this new beginning have ushered in the start of a fresh year in the true sense of the word? Or would the same vested interests who today have a vicelike grip on the affairs of Manipur, ensure that the dreadful Limbo of the past few decades continues to determine and define life in the State?

For anybody who has lived in Manipur long enough, it is difficult not to be pessimistic, and in all likelihood, the status quo would not be broken on at least most of the fronts. Life in Manipur will continue to be measured from one bandh to another, one blockade to another. Corruption at practically every level of the official power hierarchy

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will continue to determine who gets what job and which government officer gets the preferred posting and promotions etc.

Just as the Nira Radia tapes revealed a deep-seated and unholy camaraderie between corporations, politicians and the media, Manipur's version of such a nexus, the minister-bureaucrat-contractor triumvirate will continue to decide what percentage each should keep of the official booty from developmental funds. That is, whatever developmental fund is left untouched by various shades of armed extortionists posing, pretending, or self-appointing themselves to be the executive of the will of the people.

Indeed in a peculiar way, the adversarial positioning of the State and those avowedly fighting the State, share a deeply entrenched vested interest. Since both represent power and its equation in the State, there is little anybody else can do to effect a change in this structure. The revolution which once sought to dismantle this structure has been effectively absorbed gradually, although discreetly, into the structure itself. The adversaries have in an undeclared yet profound way, begun to complement each other. One cannot anymore prosper without the other.

Although the end or the beginning of a year is just an arbitrary man-made marker, there is no denying everybody has come to be conditioned into believing this point in the annual calendar is where the old is rung out and the new is rung in. There is also no denying that this psychological tuning is important, after all, the mind is what colours up and motivates our lives. In the few days ahead, before the old year ends and the new year begins, it is important for all to sit back and do a mental listing of what each of us as individuals and then what each of us as social beings want rung out. The important point is to see if there is a discrepancy between the two sets of desires – what we want for ourselves as individuals and what we want for the society.

The dysfunctional nature of aspirations in Manipur being such, it will not be a surprise at all if in many cases it is discovered that the popular vision of individual welfare and societal welfare are diametrically the opposite. The duality that exists between corruption and peace is an apt example. In what has become the universal pursuit today in the State, everybody is after easy money, right from those at the top of the hierarchy of the social ladder to those at the very bottom. In getting their hands at money, the outlook today is, the end justifies the means.

Therefore, from petty officials who take petty bribes to make files move from one desk to another, to the bosses who ultimately pass the content of these files who take percentage cuts of the monetary values promised by the files, everybody think their ways are legitimate. Petty traders to big time merchants do the same. Even the onlookers have come to buy this argument, and therefore would even admire lifestyles of the rich who live far beyond what their legitimate incomes would have afforded them.

What is not realised is, corruption is a zero sum game, and not a regenerative and creative one in which everybody can win together. Whatever money is pocketed by anybody through corruption, and luxury or vanity he buys with it, is also the value that would deplete from the public fund meant to ensure quality life for everybody. It is also a thumb rule that injustice and deprivation ultimately would come to be translated into violence. So when somebody who has aggrandised himself through corrupt and unfair means, wish the murderous turmoil in this land came to an end so that Manipur can become the paradise it was once fabled to be, let him also realise that he is more responsible for what Manipur is today than anybody else.

If the State and its people are able to acknowledge this disparity between individual and societal concerns, there cannot be a more relevant resolve for the coming year than to attempt bridging this gulf. There cannot be a better and quicker route to peace for all than this either.

The most important resolution of our society for the coming year then should be first and foremost, find a way to curb corruption. Since when we talk of corruption we usually mean official corruption, and understandably too, for corruption by and large is about of misuse of public office and public exchequer, the task must to a great extent be the responsibility of those in power. So many people have said this, and the people in power must be in cognizance of this too, that the root cause of most of the vexed social problems in the State is official corruption.

Above everything else, even more than the creation of a widening disparity between the rich and poor, corruption has ensured the demise of all sense of justice. There would have been hardly any justification in anybody complaining somebody growing in stature because of merit, but all would be given to disillusionment and despair at consistently seeing corruption changing the rule of the game and relegating enterprise and merit into the background. Indeed, corruption has destroyed almost

unrecognizably the old, universal faith that there is no substitute for honest hard work to success. The chaos all around in Manipur today is the manifestation of the despair and cynicism resulting from this destroyed faith in the fundamental orderliness and fairness of the system.

Corruption however is not solely about those in the government. It is also very much a mindset of the whole society. A culture of narcissism has descended on our society, and few ever see outside of their immediate interest. However, no individual exists in a vacuum and the overall welfare of the society is also ultimately very much in the interest of his own welfare. Neglecting this unwritten rule therefore can only be to the detriment of everybody. Manipur's predicament is adequate proof of this. As the saying goes, when the tide rises, all the boats will rise, and by the same logic, without the tide rising, no individual boat can rise, no matter how privileged its occupants are. Everybody has to think of giving back something to the society for the social mechanism to always stir clear of malfunctions.

This also evokes the familiar thumb rule of the traffic. If everybody on the road were to drive as he thinks fit, there would be chaos and jams on the road, and nobody would be able to drive. Everybody therefore has to give up some freedom to drive as he pleases by observing traffic rules and regulations for everybody to benefit from the pool of freedom each sacrificed and contributed. In the end, we get only as much as we give to the society.

Corruption has been the cause behind most of the problems faced by the State today. But sometimes, as in some of the most dreaded diseases, the prime example being HIV/AIDS, the causes as well as the symptoms can become equally life threatening. A patient can die of the infection, but he also can die of secondary infections to which his depleted immune system cannot offer resistance. So even if corruption, and therefore the denial of a just social order has been the cause of the social disorder in the State, today the social order too has become life threatening. This being the case, while the old strategy of tackling the cause must be pursued relentlessly for a long-term solution to the problem, it has also now become essential to tackle the symptoms.

Let the fight against corruption continue, but Manipur's immediate problem is also the absence of peace. This New Year, let us all then resolve to contribute to peace initiatives and a conclusion to all the conflicts in the State. In this too, it is not just the government, but every individual who must shoulder the responsibility.

Insurgency and Sub-Federal Reorganisation of Assam

H.N. Das*

From the beginning of human existence people have moved in groups in search of food and also for ensuring security. Groups have expanded into ethnic communities with separate identities, then into races and ultimately into nations. People have come to distinguish themselves by the colour of their skins; the different languages they speak, faith, religion or regions they inhabited. As civilization advanced, people became more attached to one community or another. Particular territories were carved out as the habitat of particular communities or races. Even within universal empires sub-divisions became discernible. Sometimes racial conflicts arose. The imperial powers had to intervene and mediate in such disputes.¹

By the nineteenth century the trends crystallized into the concept of nation states. The universal empires started the long process of their decline and nation states first emerged in Europe. The process began with Germany and Italy becoming nation states in the middle of the nineteenth century through a process of consolidation. During the next hundred years this concept of nation state became a potent force. Many new countries made their appearance specially in the wake of the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian, the Ottoman and the British empires. In fact, the aspiration of self-determination of different nationalities was one of the main causes of the breakup of these universal empires. The latest instances of break-up of the erstwhile composite countries are those of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia. This happened by the end of the twentieth century. During recent decades ethnic problems have again become prominent as evidenced by the several uprisings in Asia,

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Africa and Europe. Some of these have been patched up but others (Chechnaya in Russia, for instance) have been causing much concern.²

In India, political divisions based on language and race have always been there side by side with universal empires which embraced many linguistic and racial communities. Waves of immigration from outside the sub-continental boundaries had added complexities to this problem. This led to a continuous change in the racial composition of different regions over the centuries. Such changes have been more prominent in the border areas of Punjab and in the North Eastern Region.³ Soon after independence the States of India were reorganized mainly on the basis of language. Further sub-divisions took place during the past half a century.⁴ There are today as many as 28 States in India constituted mainly on the basis of ethnicity along with six Union Territories and the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT).

The North Eastern Region of India is inhabited by many tribal and linguistic groups. Some of these groups had independent existence in the pre-British period. During British times most of these areas were included in the province of Assam to which was tagged the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), which later became Arunachal Pradesh. Only Tripura and Manipur had separate existence as native States. These two States were ruled by native princes under British suzerainty. After independence, Assam was sub-divided and four other States emerged in the course of time. So the NE-Region now has a total of 7 States: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Manipur. The North East Council (NEC) was formed to ensure speedy development of these States and to achieve co-ordination among the States. Sikkim, which is geographically outside the NE Region, was admitted as a member of NEC because it has certain problems which are similar to those of the other seven States.⁵

In rump-Assam ethnic problems seem to be inscrutable due to the existence of a large number of tribes, sub-tribes, linguistic and other groups. The problems are also varied and no 'fit all' solutions are available. The framers of the Indian Constitution recognized some of these problems and made provisions for Autonomous District Councils, under the Sixth Schedule at the Sub-Federal level. Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao (formerly North Cachar) districts have such Councils. When Bodoland was constituted 4 separate administrative districts were formed – Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baska and Udalguri. However, only one Bodoland Autonomous District Council (BTC) under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution was formed for all the four districts. Wide ranging

powers have been conferred on all the Autonomous Councils. They also have legislative powers.⁶

In addition to the six Autonomous Districts 18 Development Councils (non-Constitutional, non-Statutory) have been set up in Assam in order to satisfy a number of tribal and ethnic groups.⁷ Most of these are not confined to any definitely demarcated territorial area. Quite often the tribal or the ethnic group for whom the particular Council has been set up is not a majority within the jurisdiction of that Council. Again, all the people of the particular group do not reside within the area of a council even where the territories are demarcated. This factor is discernible in the case of the Bodos, the Rabhas, the Tiwas and others. This has given rise to various problems. In BTC areas, for example, non-Bodos and Bodos had several riots over land rights. The Koch-Rajbongshis of Lower Assam and the Bodos have been living in the same areas for centuries. The Koch-Rajbongshis have been demanding tribal status for quite some time. They had been given tribal status by GOI by an Ordinance at one time. But the Ordinance was never transformed into an Act. and was allowed to lapse.⁸ It is learnt recently that the Koch-Rajbongshi's demand for tribal status has been rejected by the Registrar General of India. Similar demands of quite a few other ethnic groups have also been rejected.

It is necessary to enquire why such demands for tribal status had arisen and had proliferated in the NE Region. Scheduled Tribes in India have various preferential rights. The various tribes also feel that they are different from the Indo-Aryan people. They wish to retain their separate identity and to seek their socio-economic development in their own way. During the past five hundred years a quiet process of assimilation, started by Srimanta Sankardeva, had been working in the Brahmaputra valley. Known as *Sarania Pratha* this process had converted a large number of tribal people to Sankardeva's *Ek Sarania Naam Dharma*. But in the early twentieth century this process was disrupted when influences of other religious sects swayed the people of the valley. One of the principal leaders of this new trend was Guru Kalicharan Brahma who inspired the Bodos to join the Brahmya Samaj movement of Bengal.⁹ Besides, a large number of Bodos and other tribes were proselytised by Christian missionaries adding another significant dimension to the politics of ethnicity and identity.

In the political arena the Nagas were the first to raise the standard of revolt. Ever since 1918 when the Naga Club came into existence the Nagas have been demanding autonomy. In 1929 they submitted a

memorandum to the Simon Commission pleading to the British Government 'to leave us (Nagas) alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times'¹⁰ Just before India's independence they started a revolt under the leadership of A. Z. Phizo. This has not abated completely even after 65 years. Meanwhile, Nagaland was the first unit in NE to achieve Statehood outside Assam. The Nagas inspired the other tribes and similar political and socio-cultural movements were started in different parts of the Brahmaputra valley. The States Meghalaya and Mizoram were created as a result of such movements.

In the past few centuries Assamese language was the cementing force which had been used as a *lingua franca* in the entire NE Region. In recent decades Assamese has lost its usefulness and importance mainly as a result of it being edged out by Hindi in the post-independence era. There was also some amount of resentment against the Assamese. In their perception the tribal people conceived the Assamese to be rather overbearing.¹¹

The British always tried to keep people of the hills and the plains separated and disunited. After independence the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru followed a similar policy influenced by the anthropologist Verrier Elwin.¹² This policy of isolating the hill tribals had some positives, like preventing exploitation specially by up-country businessmen, and Bangladeshis and others were prevented from occupying tribal land. Moreover, economic development programmes taken up exclusively in the tribal areas resulted in at least some improvement in the material conditions of some of the tribal people.

However, the feeling that tribals are different and their urge for independence and self-rule gave rise to insurgency in many areas. The Naga insurgency was followed by the Mizos and the other tribes including the Bodos. Even the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) followed the Nagas and got their cadres trained by Naga insurgents. In both the hills and the plains of the NE Region almost every tribe spawned some kind of insurgent unit. A few of these became very violent. Even small tribes like the Dimasas, with a total population of less than 2 lakhs, gave birth to one of the most violent insurgent units called Dima Halong Daogah (DHD) or Black Widow which at one time kept an army, police and para-military force of more than 10,000 engaged in controlling insurgency in Dima Hasao district.¹³ It was, therefore, ethnicity which was generally responsible for insurgency in the NE Region.

In course of time these insurgencies degenerated and deteriorated. In place of ethnicity, money became more important. In the case of ULFA, for example, they abandoned their opposition to Bangladeshi immigrants. Thus they lost their main motivating factor. What is surprising is that ULFA took shelter in Bangladesh and aligned themselves with the Khaleda Zia Government. ULFA lost all ideology and virtually became a force for extortion through threats, kidnapping and murders. They adopted these methods to collect money for their normal expenses and for purchasing weapons. The other insurgent outfits adopted the same methods and tactics.¹⁴

In order to ease the insurgency situation the Government started taking a number of steps. The Government realising that ethnicity was the main source of insurgency; tried to control insurgency by tackling the problem of ethnicity. As already mentioned in Assam, the Autonomous District Councils of Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and Bodoland have Constitutional status under the Sixth Schedule. Beside these, Government created 6 Autonomous Statutory Councils for the tribes of Rabha Hasongs, Misings, Tiwas, Sonowal-Kacharis, Thengal-Kacharis and Deoris and as many as 18 Development Councils in recent years for 'socio-economic development of different communities in the state'. These various institutions have brought power to the middle-level leaders of the concerned communities. Beside power, the political leaders now handle significant amount of cash. They are therefore, busy with the affairs of their respective Councils and have no time for agitations and insurgency.¹⁵

The formation of these various Councils have, however, left many problems unresolved. In Bodoland, for example, at least 50 percent of the people are non-Bodos. These people cannot take equal part in the running of the administration as 30 out of 40 elected seats in BTC are reserved for tribals only. For how long such a skewed system can be allowed to remain is now being debated in all civil society meetings and seminars. This system is surely undemocratic. On many occasions the Bodos have attempted 'ethnic cleansing' in the same pattern as in Bosnia and Kosovo. The objective is to drive out the non-Bodos. These attempts resulted in riots and displacement of Bangladeshis and many indigenous communities. Quite a number of the displaced people are still taking shelter in refugee camps and elsewhere. The people of Bangladeshi origin have suffered the most as a result of the Bodo initiative for ethnic cleansing. The Bangladeshis have now become violent and are creating trouble for the Bodo leaders.¹⁶ In order to

provide territorial link-up many non-Bodo villages were included in Bodoland. The non-Bodo residents of these areas are agitating to come out of Bodoland. It is mainly the Koch-Rajbangshis who demand that these non-Bodo villages should be taken out of Bodoland and included in their proposed State of Kamatapur consisting of areas of Assam and North Bengal. Then there are a large number of Bodos outside Bodoland who do not get any share of the benefits provided to their compatriots in Bodoland. Some out of these Bodos who inhabit the hill districts are not even recognized as scheduled tribes. These problems and the issue of relationship with the Panchayati Raj Institutions are begging for solution.¹⁷

Similar problems are discernible in the other areas also. While so many of the tribal and ethnic communities have been given special status and benefits there are many other communities who are also demanding such benefits, for themselves. Their demands cannot be easily brushed aside. But if their demands are accommodated Assam will be further sub-divided. The middle level apparatchiks of the ruling party have monopolized the plum positions in these councils. Elections are still pending. Actually, elections are difficult to hold because territorial jurisdictions are yet to be settled. Since the habitats of many ethnic groups are not fixed nor homogenous definite boundaries are well nigh impossible to draw. But the opposition leaders are not satisfied. They demand elections to share in the loaves and fishes of office. These problems defy solutions. Meanwhile, more and more communities are demanding tribal status. In the majority of these cases it is the middle level leaders of the political parties who have instigated the agitations. Their objectives are political power and financial advantages. That is why the Bodos are demanding Statehood, the tribal Councils are demanding Sixth Schedule status and the ethnic Councils are demanding Statutory status.

In such demands, the financial advantages are quite substantial. Assam's Budget is full of divisions and sub-divisions showing financial allocations for different Constitutional, Statutory and Executive units. Beside the usual tribal sub-plan and the scheduled caste component plan, special allocations are available for others also. In the Budget for 2012-13, for example, the annual plan size has been proposed at Rs. 314.66 crores for Karbi Anglong and at Rs. 143.03 crores for Dima Hasao districts. Added to these will be 'administrative grants' of Rs. 12 crores for Karbi Anglong and Rs. 15 crores for Dima Hasao. In the case of Bodoland the plan size proposed is Rs. 330.47 crores during

2012-13. In addition, an amount of Rs. 15 crores has been proposed as administrative grant. For the six Statutory Autonomous Councils, a total of Rs. 169.77 crores have been allocated with the following break-up: Rabha-Hasong Rs. 32.31 crores; Mising Rs. 45.90 crores; Tiwa Rs. 31.31 crores, Sonowal – Kachari Rs. 19.72 crores; Thengal-Kachari Rs. 19.70 crores and Deuri Rs. 20.83 crores. For the 18 Development Councils a lump sum amount of Rs. 40 crores has been proposed. These are very large amounts. Beside these there are separate allocations for STs, SCs, OBCs, Minorities and Tea tribes. In many cases these grants are overlapping. Again, GOI makes large grants for various special purposes. On many occasions special packages are also announced, when VIPs visit the state.

In the Budget for 2013-14 a sum of Rs. 180 crores have been provided for the six Autonomous Councils and another Rs. 49 crores have been provided for the 18 Development Councils under plan. Substantial amounts have been allocated to each of these Councils on the non-plan side. For the Bodoland Territorial Council a total of Rs. 344.75 crores have been provided. The break-ups have been given in a separate Budget document under the relevant heads, both on the plan side and on the non-plan side for each of the councils.

Media is full of allegations of misuse of political powers and financial allocations by the functionaries of the different tribal and ethnic Councils. Beside fraud, misappropriation and siphoning off Government funds substantial amounts are believed to be transferred to insurgent outfits. Most of such allegations go un-enquired. Even where inquiries are made prosecutions are not easy. Where prosecutions are ultimately launched obtaining conviction becomes a difficult task. It may be pointed out that the first two cases handed over by GOI to the National Investigation Agency were those of recovery of Rs. 1 crore while being handed over to DHD insurgents on behalf of the Chief Executive Member of the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council on June 1, 2009. These cases have not been settled as yet although about Rs. 14 crores more were recovered later from the concerned officials of the Council and some more properties were recovered in Nepal. The Chief of DHD, Jewel Garlossa, was arrested from his luxurious apartment in Bangalore.¹⁸

What should worry all right thinking persons is the virtual disappearance of such significant amounts from the public coffers. The number of cases is baffling. The number of wrongdoers is equally large. Audits are pending for long periods. How and when these cases

will be taken up is anyone's guess. It is time that civil society leaders wake up to the danger of allowing such cases to be ignored any further.

Among the countries I have visited so far I could generally observe similar situations in Russia, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Myanmar. In Russia most of the ethnic minority areas were separated when the Soviet Union broke up and 17 independent countries emerged in the 1980s. Whatever areas remained in Russia were given some autonomy as in Chesnaya. Earstwhile Yugoslavia broke up in the same manner. But there was much violence and bloodshed in that process. In China the communist party is following the age-old imperial policy of absorbing the minorities into the mainstream. Tibet is a glaring example. This policy has failed in China only in the Muslim dominated areas of the West. Vietnam follows China. There are 54 'fraternal ethnic groups in the community of Vietnamese nationalities' including the Tays, Haas, Hmongs, Muangs and Nungs. The Tays have a population of over one-and-a-half million. There is a Department of the Communist Government looking after ethnic affairs. Since there is neither democracy nor autonomy these groups are not allowed to form or run any local government. There are museums and institutions which showcase the minority culture and languages. But no systematic effort to preserve, protect and promote the ethnic and tribal people are discernible.¹⁹ In Indonesia the 38,91,428 Hindus form a majority of 92.29 percent of the population of the Bali island, although the vast majority of (86.1 percent) the total population of 237,641,326 in the country are Muslims. Bali has some autonomy²⁰. In Myanmar the problem seems to be more acute. The country is now run by the Bama community which has a majority embracing over 60 percent of the population. But there are other important ethnic groups such as Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Chin, Pa-O, Palaung, Mon, Rakhine, Shan and Naga. The interests of these minorities have been sought to be safeguarded at the federal level by formation of seven States while the majority community of Bamas are organized into seven Divisions. This has not, however, satisfied the different minority communities and demands for reorganisation at the sub-federal level have been raised. Another problem is the lack of homogeneity in any of the States. In the Shan State, for example, while the Shans are a majority there are significant numbers of people belonging to the other communities such as Kachin, Wa, Lahu, Palaung, Padaung, Pa-O, and many hill tribes. The situation has been complicated by the presence of some of these communities in other countries as well. The Nagas, for example, live not only in Myanmar but also in the

Indian States of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. They are demanding an independent 'Nagalim' covering all the Naga areas. The Shans, who have been fighting for independence since 1958, have large populations in China and Thailand beside Myanmar.^{21 & 22} Meanwhile, a new development has been an important meeting of the 50 odd groups of 'frontier people' or 'ethnic minorities' of Myanmar at a place called Laiza, where they finalized an eleven point common charter of demands. These included formation of a federal army, withdrawal of the Central Government Armed Forces from the ethnic areas, equal rights for all and grant of autonomy. They put up this charter of demands at a meeting with the Central Government representatives in Myitkyiana, capital of the Kachin State, on November 4 and 5, 2013. As against this, the Central Government advanced a ten point proposal which included allegiance to the 2008 Constitution by all ethnic groups and holding of further political dialogues and meetings. Representatives of the United Nations Secretary General and the Chinese Government attended this meeting as observers. But Indian representatives were absent probably due to ignorance of the developments, although vital interests of integrity and solidarity of the North Eastern Region were involved.

This narrative will show that the problem is complex, that the Government of India does not fully appreciate the developments and that many unscrupulous persons have made fiduciary gains out of public funds allocated to different Councils formed in Assam beside misuse of political powers. Formation of these Councils have no doubt curbed the intensity of insurgency based on ethnicity but have left many of the emerging problems unresolved. In their hurry to gather vote banks and to make political capital out of ethnicity, the Indian political leaders have not either found time to resolve the endemic issues and problems or are afraid to change the terms of engagement. That is why economic development has not achieved the momentum it should have commensurate with the large amounts of funds allocated to the Councils. Immediate steps must be taken to find lasting solutions.²³

Notes:

- ^{1.} Any of the text books on World History may be referred to for details on human immigration and human settlement. One recent publication has given brief introduction to this subject in an easily comprehensible manner: *Atlas of World History*. Edited by Kate Shantor and Liz Mekay. Parragon, Bath, U.K. 2005.

- ² J.M. Roberts. *History of the World*. Helicon. Oxford. 1992. Also see: Arnold Toynbee. *A Study of History*. Oxford University Press. London. 1972.
- ³ Majumder, R.C., Raychaudhury, HC and Datta, Kalikinkar. *An Advanced History of India*. McMillan India. 1978.
- ⁴ Percival Spear. *The Oxford History of Modern India*. The Oxford University Press. 1992. Also see Paul R. Brass. *The Politics of India Since Independence*. The New Cambridge History of India. Vol. IV. Cambridge University Press. 1990.
- ⁵ Das, H.N. *Beyond North-East. Insurgency – History – Development*. Manas Publications. New Delhi. 2011. See the chapter on *Ethnicity and Insurgency in the North-Eastern Region* for detailed statewise treatment of the subject matter.
- ⁶ Das, H.N. *Sub-Federal Political Re-organization of Assam*. Marginal Frontier. *Select Essays on North East India*. Edited by Arupjyoti Choudhury and Dilip Gogoi. Bhabani Offset Pvt. Ltd. Guwahati. 2012.
- ⁷ Government of Assam. Budget Speech (2012-13) of Finance Minister. Guwahati March 12, 2012.
- ⁸ Das, H.N. *Beyond North-East*. See the chapter on *Demographic Transformation and Insurgency in Assam*.
- ⁹ Das, H.N. *Beyond North-East*. See the chapter on *The Resurgence of Bodo Society*. About Srimanta Sankardeva see Neog, Maheswar, *Sankardeva*. National Book Trust of India. New Delhi. 1967.
- ¹⁰ Kaka D. Iralu. *Nagaland and India. The Blood and the Tears*. September, 2000. Also see C.L. Imchen. *Naga Politics : Regionalism or Non-State Nation*. In *Regionalism in India*. Ed. B.Pakem. Har Anand Publications. New Delhi. 1993.
- ¹¹ This is based on the author's experience of working in the NE Region for the past half a century (1961-2013).
- ¹² Verrier Elwin *A Philosophy for NEFA*. Published by the NEFA Administration. Shillong. 1957. Also see Verrier Elwin. *The World of Verrier Elwin*. Oxford University Press. 1989. And Nari. K. Rustomji. *Enchanted Frontiers*. Oxford University Press. Calcutta. 1971.
- ¹³ Saikia, Jaideep. *Dima Halam Daogah: Fire in the Abandoned Hills*. In Arpita Anant edited *Non-State Armed Groups in South Asia*. Pentagon Security International. New Delhi. 2012.
- ¹⁴ The writer has seen ULFA's rise, transformation and decline both from inside and outside the Government. As Chairman of the Unified Command, first set up on November 27-28, 1990 in the wake of Operation Bajrang against ULFA, he was responsible for control of insurgency in Assam. During his tenure as Chief Secretary, Assam for five years (1990-95) he

had to deal with many insurgent outfits. The Unified Command consisted of Army, Police and the Para-military forces of CRPF, BSF etc.

- ¹⁵. About corruption in the various Councils media reports have been relied upon. Quite a number of such reports have appeared in recent times.
- ¹⁶. Islamist terrorism has been on the rise in the NE Region specially in Assam. See Saikia, Jaideep. *ISI Reaches East. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. USA, 25 No.3 (May-June, 2002). Also by the same author *Terror Sans Frontiers : Islamist Militancy in North-East India*. Vision Books. New Delhi. 2004.
- ¹⁷. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have similar powers and functions under article 243 of the Indian Constitution read with the Eleventh Schedule. It is necessary to examine whether PRIs could have served the functions now entrusted to the various Councils. A retired IAS Officer, Bhupinder Singh, had been asked to examine the tribal and ethnic situation and to recommend measures for solution of the problems arising out of different and opposing demands. His report was never publicly debated nor considered by the Government. He had recommended village-centric contiguous areas to form village councils. Beside village councils he had recommended regional and apex councils. But for establishment of the Councils no reports were examined nor any studies made. Government decisions were taken as the situations emerged. These decisions were taken entirely on ad hoc basis.
- ¹⁸. Das, H.N. *Beyond North-East*. See the chapter on *Why Dima Hasao is Burning?*
- ¹⁹. Das, H.N. *Lands and Peoples*. See chapter on *Ethnic Minorities of Vietnam*, APPOCUS, 2011.
- ²⁰. Das, H.N. *Lands and Peoples*. See chapter on *The Balinese Hindus*.
- ²¹. Bertil Lintner. *Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's Struggle for Democracy*. Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 2011.
- ²². Maung Htin Aung, *A History of Burma*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1967.
- ²³. Das, H.N., *A New Paradigm of Economic Development*. See Chapter on *Challenges Before Tarun Gogoi*. Pages 581-585, APPOCUS, 2013.

Vedic Shaivism

David Frawley*

Shiva as the Supreme Reality of Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Sacchidananda) represents the great Unknown beyond the senses, speech, and mind. This formless reality cannot be reduced to any particular historical depiction, description, or nomenclature. Shiva in Sanskrit is not a name but a description of that which is auspicious, indicating something beyond words. One needs a deeper vision to understand the Supreme Reality that both contains and transcends all things, and is beyond speech and mind. The vision of the Supreme Shiva takes us beyond all dualities and contradictions, and remains forever a matter of paradox and mystery that cannot be reduced to any linear time-space coordinates such as characterizes physical reality. Even quantum physics, with its ability to deconstruct time and space realities, is just beginning to approach or to emulate the language of Shiva.

There are scholars who claim that Shiva is a pre-Vedic or non-Aryan deity, and who would not connect Shiva's origins with Vedic teachings or practices. They point out that the name 'Shiva' for a deity as occurs in Shaivite texts is not found in any obvious way in Vedic texts. Such statements are made, even though Shaivism is an integral part of the Vedic teaching throughout India and has been historically for many centuries, or for as long as the literature can be found.

We must not forget that mantric texts like the *Vedas* cannot be understood through a superficial vision, by semantics, or through mere word comparisons. It is the deeper or mystic meaning that matters, not simply the outer name and form that is always subject to variations. The deeper yogic teaching remains dynamic and changes with time in outer expression. We need to understand this power of transformation

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behind the teaching, not simply the visible forms it may leave behind as it manifests through the movement of time.

Shiva as Om̐ and Primal Sound, the Deity of Sanskrit

Let us examine the connections of Shiva with the *Vedas*. Shiva's drum is said to be the origin of the Sanskrit alphabet, starting with great Sanskrit grammarians like Panini. Shiva is the prime deity of the Sanskrit language, which relates him to the Vedic language that is the oldest form of Sanskrit. Shiva is said to be *Om̐kara*, the sacred syllable Om̐, which is called the essence of the *Vedas* in texts from the *Upanishads* back to the *Yajurveda*. The *Rigveda* similarly states that its comprehension rests upon the imperishable syllable (akshara) of the chant in the supreme ether, which indicates a similar mantric foundation for it.¹

As *Pranava* or primal sound, Shiva's expression is the *Vedas*, which arises from Om̐. To try to separate Shiva from the *Vedas* is to try to separate Om̐ or the Sanskrit language from the *Vedas*. Shiva is the great lord of mantra, and the *Vedas* are the oldest Sanskrit expression of mantra. The *Vedas* are the expression of Shiva as mantra, which means that Shiva in his totality is the *Vedas*.

Shiva and Rudra

Shiva as *Rudra*, which means 'the maker of sound,' is an important deity in the *Rigveda*, who is approached with great reverence as an awesome power. There are not very many hymns in the *Rigveda* specifically addressed to Rudra, but his roles and those of his children and companions (which include Indra, Agni, and Soma) are significant. Rudra is the father of the *Rudras* or *Maruts*, the Vedic storm Gods, who are led by Indra who is *Marutvan*, and who between them have many hymns of their own in the *Rigveda*. The twin horsemen or Ashvins are also called *Rudras* and have a number of hymns of their own. Rudra can be regarded as the great father of all the Vedic Gods.

Rudra and the Maruts reflect both the wandering Yogis and the power of *pranayama*. The *Vedas* speak of the *munis* or silent sages or *keshis* (who have matted hair), who control the breath (*vāta raūana*) as connected to Rudra,² and as associated with other Rishi groups.³

The munis who control the breath wear unclean clothes. They move by the course of the wind, which the Gods have developed.

*Ecstatic by our muni-power, we ascend the winds, our body is all that you mortals see.*⁴

Munaya Vatarashana, Rigveda X.136.2-3

The Maruts are also lauded as having human forms as sages and are not simply deities or personifications of natural forces like lightning and the storm.

*Who have spotted horses, Maruts, whose mother is Prishni, who move with beauty and are visitors to the sessions of knowledge. Men who have the tongues of fire and the eyes of the Sun. May all the Gods come to us with their grace.*⁵

Gotama Rahugana, Rigveda I.89.7

The *Rigveda Tryambakam* or *Mahamrityunjaya* mantra to Rudra remains the main verse used to worship Shiva today and is the most commonly used Vedic verse chanted after the Gayatri Mantra.

*We worship the three-eyed one, who has a pleasant fragrance and who gives nourishment. Like a cucumber from its stalk, may he release us from death but not from immortality.*⁶

Maitrivaruni Vasistha, Rigveda VII.59.12

Rudra becomes the predominant deity worshipped in the *Yajurveda* or the later Vedic period. Most notable is the famous Rudram chant of the *Krishna Yajurveda*, which remains the most important long chants use in Shiva worship throughout India today as it has been for centuries, and is the first text in which the famous ‘*Namah Śivāya*’ mantra appears.⁷ In this *Yajurveda* text one can find most of the names of Shiva that are worshipped in later times like Rudra, Shiva, Shankara, Shambhu, Bhava, Sharva, Pashupati, Kapardi, and Nilagriva.

Shiva as Rudra has a prominence earlier in the Vedic texts than either Vishnu or Brahma, the other two deities in the Hindu trinity, which similarly to Shiva gradually come into prominence in the late Vedic era. Rudra is also honoured in a number of names and forms in the *Atharvaveda*, including Bhava, Sharva, and Manyu.⁸

Shiva as the All Vedic Deity

Shiva appears as the essence and integration of all the main Vedic deities, which represent his diverse manifestations. Shiva is said to be *Agni-Somatmakam* or ‘composed of both Agni and Soma,’ the fire and nectar that are the main factors of the Vedic mantras and their inner

and outer rituals. Agni, or harsh forms of Shiva, include Rudra and Bhairava; Soma, or soft forms, include Shiva, Shankara, and Shambhu.

Shiva is *Tryambakam* or 'he who has three eyes,' which eyes are Sun (Surya), Moon (Chandra or Soma), and Fire (Agni). These three eyes of Shiva reflect the three main deities of the *Vedas* as Agni, Surya, and Soma (Fire, Sun, and Moon). Vedic Indra is the Vayu or Vidyut (lightning form), which can be added to these three as the fourth and their underlying power. Shiva represents all four primary Vedic light forms as Agni, Soma, Indra/Vayu, and Surya – Fire, Moon, Lightning, and Sun, which are the four lights of Shiva or the four forms of Shiva's light.

Shiva is strongly connected to the Vedic Deity Soma, which remains a name of Shiva in later times. Soma and Rudra form a pair in Vedic thought. Both are related to the healing process that in later times is associated with Shiva. Rudra is the foremost of doctors in the *Rigveda*⁹ and Soma is the magical elixir of immortality.

*Soma and Rudra grant to our bodies all medicines. Release and remove whatever bondage or sin committed that is in our bodies.*¹⁰
Bharadvaja Barhaspatya, Rigveda VI.74.3

Shiva is similarly closely connected to Agni and with all aspects of fire. Agni is called Rudra in the *Rigveda*. Rudra, which means red, is associated with the colour of the fire. The fierce nature of Rudra correlates with the dangerous energy of fire.

*Your king of the sacred ritual, Rudra, the invoker, for the truth sacrifice for heaven and earth, Agni, before the thunder of the ignorance, in golden form for grace, bring into manifestation.*¹¹
Vamadeva Gautama, Rigveda IV.3.1.

The eight names of Shiva in the famous *Shiva Mahimna Stotra 28* – perhaps the most important hymn to Shiva in classical Sanskrit literature – are Bhava, Sharva, Rudra, Ugra, Mahadeva, Pashupati, Bhima, and Ishana, which are largely Vedic. In the *Shatapatha Brahmana* for building up the fire altar, nine forms and nine names of Agni are mentioned. These include Rudra, Sharva, Pashupati, Ugra, Ashani, Bhava, Mahadeva, Ishana, and Kumara. Seven of these names are identical with seven of the eight names of Shiva in the *Shiva Mahimna Stotra*, another name, Kumara, is a name of Shiva's son Skanda who is identified with Agni.¹²

Shaivite yogis and ascetics – such as continue to exist in the Himalayas today – are devoted to fire and maintain their own undying

fires, which they worship along with Vedic mantras. They collect and anoint their heads and bodies with the *bhasma* or sacred ash from the fire, with which Shaivite ascetics are identified. This fire form of Shiva worship reflects Vedic fire worship and appears as its continuation. Shiva as Agni is one of his most important manifestations. The Agni worship of the *Vedas* and the Shaivite Agni worship are part of the same sacred fire tradition.

The Sun is the great deity of the *Vedas*, which have many forms of the Sun God. Sometimes as Rudra he is identified with the destructive and transformative aspect of solar energy; but often he is identified with the Sun overall. Shiva is said to be pure light (Prakasha) in later Tantric philosophy, whose outer manifestation is the Sun, which symbolizes the light of the spiritual heart.

Shiva is a deity of *prana* and *ayus*, the life-force, which is ultimately the energy of consciousness. He relates to Vayu or the cosmic wind, spirit, and breath. This association of Shiva with *prana* (*prāṇa*) connects him to Yoga traditions of Prana Yoga and pranayama. Most Yogic *pranayama*-based teachings are largely Shaivite in origin, like the Hatha Yoga tradition that goes back to Adi Nath, Lord Shiva.

The Unity of Indra and Shiva

Of the four main Vedic deities and their connections with Shiva, Shiva has the most in common with Indra. Vedic Indra and Puranic Shiva share many of the same names and functions, making them almost inseparable. In the *Mahabharata* one of the first names of Shiva is *Shakra* or Indra.¹³ The following information is based on the work of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni.¹⁴

Indra as a Sanskrit term means the ‘Lord’ or ‘ruler’ as does ‘Ishvara,’ an important name for Shiva. In Vedic hymns the term Indra is used as a general term for Lord, just as Ishvara is used in Puranic hymns. Both Indra and Shiva are lauded as the Supreme Deity and the ruler of all the other Gods. Puranic Shiva is the great God, *Mahadeva*. Vedic Indra is the king of the Gods, *Devaraj*.

Shiva is the destroyer among the trinity of Puranic deities, along with Brahma, the Creator, and Vishnu, the Preserver. Indra in the *Vedas* is a destructive God, a destroyer of obstructions. ‘Vritra,’ the enemy of Indra, literally means ‘obstruction.’ Indra is the destroyer of cities. *Purandara*: Shiva is the ‘destroyer of the three cities,’ *Tripurahara*, which he actually accomplishes for the benefit of Indra in the Puranic stories.

Indra and Shiva both have a consort named power (Shakti in the case of Shiva, Shachi in the case of Indra), who herself is a fierce Goddess. Indra's consort Indrani is in fact the Goddess of the army in the Vedic tradition. The martial role of Shiva's consort as Durga or Chandi, the destroyer of all enemies and opposition, and the leader of the Divine army, is well known. Indra and Shiva are both renowned as destroyers of demons and have terrible or wrathful forms. Indra in the *Vedas* is frequently called *Ugra*, *Ghora*, and *Bhima*, meaning fierce, terrible, and frightful, which are common epithets for Shiva in later times.

Shiva is said to be a non-Vedic God because he fights with Vedic Gods like *Bhaga* and *Pushan*, and destroys the sacrifice (yājña) of *Daksha*, who is the son of Brahma or *Prajapati*, from which he is excluded. Yet this Puranic myth is not entirely new. A similar story occurs in the *Brahmanas* as Rudra slaying *Prajapati* or Brahma with his arrow,¹⁵ which story is echoed in some hymns of the *Rigveda*.

Indra kills the son of *Tvashta* in the *Rigveda*,¹⁶ who symbolizes the sacrifice. *Tvashta* is identified with *Prajapati* or Brahma in Vedic and Puranic thought. After slaying the son of *Tvashta*, *Tvashta* tries to exclude Indra from the drinking of the Soma, much like Shiva's being excluded from getting any share of the sacrifice. Indra elsewhere destroys his own father (who is *Tvashta*) and fights against the Gods.¹⁷ Ultimately all the Gods abandon Indra and he has to slay the dragon (*Vritra*) alone. By *Brahmana* and Puranic accounts, *Vritra* is a Brahmin and Indra commits the great sin of slaying a Brahmin by slaying *Vritra*, for which he must seek atonement.

Indra, like Shiva, is a fierce God who transcends good and evil, going against social customs and doing what is forbidden. Indra does things like eats meat and drinks wine (sometimes in enormous quantities), and goes into various states of intoxication and ecstasy. Indra is born as an outcast and in some hymns in the *Vedas* he grants favor to outcasts. Shiva similarly is a deity of ecstasy (Soma) and transcends all social customs.

Indra, like Shiva, is called the dancer¹⁸ and is associated with music and song. The letters of the Sanskrit alphabet come forth from Shiva's drum. Indra in the *Vedas* is called the bull of the chants, and all songs go to him like 'rivers to the sea.'¹⁹ Shiva is identified in Tantric thought with the vowels of the alphabet. Indra in the *Chandogya Upanishad* is identified with the vowels among the letters of the

alphabet.²⁰ Shiva is identified with the mantra OM. Indra in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* is also identified with the OM.

Shiva is a mountain God, similarly Indra is a God of the mountains.²¹ Shiva allows the heavenly Ganga to descend on his head. Indra's main action is destroying the clouds (mountains, glaciers) to allow the rivers to flow from the mountains into the sea. Both deities are interwoven with the myth of the descent of the heavenly waters. As Shiva is identified with the Ganga, Indra is identified with the Sarasvati River, and Sarasvati in the *Vedas* is lauded as Indra.²²

Shiva is worshipped by the linga or standing stone. Indra, Soma and other Vedic Gods are worshipped by a pillar (stambha, skambha). The pillar and the linga are the same, symbols of the cosmic masculine force. Both Shiva and Indra represent the cosmic masculine force. Shiva's vehicle is a bull. Indra in the *Vedas* is frequently called a bull (*vr̥ṣa*, *vr̥ṣabha*). Shiva's bull is also identified with the rain cloud. Indra as the bull is lauded in the *Vedas* as the bringer of rain. The bull is also a symbol of the cosmic masculine force. OM, which is identified with both Indra and Shiva, is identified with a bull.

Shiva is identified with the Vedic deity Rudra, and most of the sacred chants to Shiva, like the Rudram from the *Yajurveda*, are Vedic chants to Rudra. Vedic Rudra is lauded in the *Vedas* in hymns to Indra.

*That power of Rudra appears in the primal abodes, where those wise in consciousness hold their minds to it.*²³

Narada Kanva, Rigveda VIII.13.20

Both Indra and Rudra are deities of the middle region or the atmosphere (Antariksha). Indra is the wielder of the thunderbolt, just as is Rudra. The Vedic sons of Rudra are called the Maruts. The Maruts are the companions of Indra, who is their leader. Shiva travels with his host of Bhutas or ghosts. The Maruts are also spirits or Bhutas and in the *Vedas* they travel with Indra. Indra is the main deity of the Vedic Rishis. Shiva is the main deity of the yogis. The yogis are usually Rishis and Rishis are usually yogis. In fact, the Maruts, the sons of Rudra and the companions of Indra, are sometimes lauded as Brahmins, Rishis, or Yogis.

Rudra-Shiva is propitiated to overcome death: the same is the case with Indra in the *Vedas*. There are Vedic prayers to protect us not only from the wrath of Rudra, but also from the wrath of Indra. Both Rudra and Indra are propitiated to grant us fearlessness and for defeat of our enemies.

The early *Upanishads*²⁴ identify Indra with Paramatman, the Supreme Self, just as the later *Upanishads*²⁵ identify Shiva with Paramatman. Indra is called prana or the life force in the *Upanishads*.²⁶ Shiva is also identified with prana. The Maruts, the sons of Rudra-Shiva and the companions of Indra, are identified with the pranas.

Shiva is a God of time, Kala. Indra is also a deity of time and eternity, and rules the year in Vedic thought. Both Indra's and Shiva's roles of destroying Prajapati or his son relate to eternity (absolute time) destroying time or the year (relative time) represented by Prajapati and the sacrifice.

The members of Shiva's family have Vedic equivalents, which is a topic in itself that will be mentioned only briefly. Skanda, the son of Shiva, is born of Agni or fire and is clearly identified with Agni.²⁷ Agni in the *Vedas* is called Kumara and Guha, which are later names of Skanda. Ganesha, the other son of Shiva, is commonly lauded by a chant to Brahmanaspati from the *Rigveda* (*Ganāṇām tvā gaṇapatim*).²⁸ Brahmanaspati and Brihaspati are considered to be the same deity in the *Vedas*.

The conclusion that we must draw is that Indra and Shiva are essentially the same deity, according to a shift of language. The two are so close in function that they must have arisen from a common source as part of a common tradition. This does not mean that Indra and Shiva are identical. According to Ganapati Muni, Indra refers more to the light aspect of the atmospheric force or the lightning and the power of perception. Shiva is more the sound aspect or thunder, and more specifically indicates the power of the Divine Word OM. The symbolisms of Indra and Shiva can also be different at times. Indra is equated with horse and chariot symbolism, while Shiva is portrayed as a hunter, though they both share the symbolism of a bull.

Vedic deities like Indra, Agni, Soma, and Rudra are as freely identified with each other just as are Puranic deities like Shiva, Vishnu, and Devi (the Goddess). The Hindu approach has always allowed devotees to regard their chosen form of the Divine for worship as the supreme – whether Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, or other deity forms. Yet at the same time it insists that devotees of one form allow devotees of another form to have the same freedom of view.

Shaivite Dharma

When we study or chant the *Vedas*, we should try to connect to their essence (*rasa*) or central meaning (*sāra*), found in their sound vibration

(*svara*). This is not merely a material or human sound but a vibration of consciousness. Look for the presence of Shiva in that. As the *Upanishads* eloquently state:

He who is lauded as the essence of sound (svara) in the Vedas, and is established in the Vedanta, who is beyond mergence in primal nature, he is Maheshvara (Shiva).²⁹

Mahanarayana Upanishad, Dahara Vidya

Shiva does not represent the outer form of the Vedic terms but their inner essence of sound, meaning, energy, presence and power, which is *svara*. This ultimately takes us back to primal sound or Pranava and to Om̐. The Upanishadic statement here reminds us of the *Yoga Sutras* that identifies Ishvara with Om̐. It suggests the older Vedic Yoga that was based upon the power of sound, which in the later Vedantic Yoga became more philosophical in language.

Shaivism reflects the eternal tradition of Yoga, which is the practice of the Vedic Rishis. Many great Vedic Rishis were also proponents of the Shaivite Yoga, not as a literal worshipping of Shiva in his Puranic form, but as understanding that same primal reality of consciousness, vibration, sound, and light. The Rishi Yoga and the Shaivite Yoga are not different. The Rishi is one who knows how to work with all the light and sound forms of Agni, Soma, Surya, and Indra, and on all levels from the body to the highest awareness, which are all the forms and manifestations of the supreme Shiva.

Vedic Rishis that are important in Shaivite dharma include Vasishtha, from whom the Tryambakam Mantra arises,³⁰ his son Parashara, whose Rigvedic hymns are among the most mystic in the text, Vamadeva, which is also a name of Shiva in later times, Vishvamitra, who is a personification of Agni, and Agastya, who connects the northern and southern Shaivite traditions. Vasishtha and his followers like Rudra-Shiva are called *Kaparda* or who wear their hair in a special matted lock at the top of the head.³¹ The Indus Valley seals contain several depictions of the three-headed, lord of the wild animals, in siddhasana, a prototype for Rudra-Shiva.

The *Kena Upanishad* prominently mentions Uma Haimavati, Shiva's consort.³² Shvetashvatara, of the name of the *Upanishad* ascribed to him, taught the Vedic-Shaivite Dharma, weaving in Vedic deities of Agni, Soma, Vayu, and Surya into his explanations of Yoga and Vedanta.³³

The older Shaivite teachings, such as found in the *Mahabharata*, are called the *Pashupata Dharma* from Shiva's name as Pashupati, the Lord of the wild animals, which is his main Vedic name after Rudra. Pashupati on a deeper level means Shiva as the lord (pati) of souls (pashu), or the seer as the lord (pati) of perception or the seen (pashu). This in turn connects to the Rudra and Marut traditions of the *Vedas*.

The *Mahabharata*, Upamanyu who praises Shiva and the sage Tandī, who taught the *Thousand Names of Shiva (Śiva Sahasranāma)*,³⁴ show that all the main aspects of Shiva and Shaivite Dharma were well known at the time of that text. The great Yogi Lakulish from Kayavarohan in Gujarat revived the Shaivite Dharma in the late ancient period, at least two thousand years ago. The great Nath Yogis, most famous of which is Gorakhnath, did so again around a thousand years ago, with important disciples and followers in Kashmir, Maharashtra, Nepal, and Bengal. The great Shankara not only revived the Vedantic teaching some fifteen hundred years ago, but also promoted all aspects of Shaiva and Shakta Yoga, and recognized Hatha Yoga as well.

Medieval Tantric Hinduism is dominated by the role of Shiva, but echoes a Vedic symbolism. Shaivite and Vedic Dharma rests upon a cultivation of the sacred fire of awareness or Agni, a development of the cosmic prana or immortal life-force or Indra, a flow of the nectar of bliss or Soma, and the dawning of the supreme light or Surya, the inner Sun of the heart. Later Shaivite Tantric Yoga centers on drawing the Agni or Kundalini Fire up from the earth altar of the Muladhara to the Soma vessel of the thousand petal lotus of the head, reflect the inner aspect of the ancient Vedic Yajna. There is a continuity of Shaivite Dharma from the Vedic Rishis to modern times.

The Universal Dharma

One basic and universal teaching can be found in India from early ancient times and characterizes the essence of the tradition. This Vedic presence of Shiva, however, does not mean that there are no other revelations of Shaivite Dharma apart from the *Vedas*, either before or after them. The higher teachings are always unlimited and even one great guru can produce many great volumes of teachings. But to understand the *Vedas*, we need to recognize the light and sound of Shiva behind them, not Shiva as a separate deity, but Shiva as the great unknown, Absolute pure awareness.

Throughout the ancient world, and in most indigenous and pagan traditions today, we find a similar worship of the sacred fire (Agni),

sacred plants, trees, forests, and groves (Somas), sacred grottos, streams, lakes, and waters (Somas), sacred animals (particularly wild animals), the worship of the Sun (Surya), Moon, stars, and constellations, and the worship of Wind God (Indra), lighting, and the thundercloud. They worship that supreme pervasive power or Shiva as the sacred mountain, sacred rock, standing stone, or pyramid; as they worship his feminine counterpart Shakti as the sacred valley, river, cave, ring stone, or altar. Shaivite and Vedic Dharmas reflect the same teaching that arises out of nature and the cosmic mind, and is present for all those who are willing to embrace the deeper spirit. Whether one calls that Shiva or uses another name, the same teaching can be known by its insights and its practices.

As a closing note relative to Shiva and other deity forms, Vishnu can be identified with the Sun Gods or Adityas of the *Vedas*, among which his name first arises. Vaishnava Dharma, like Shaivism, forms an integral part of the Vedic Dharma. Vishnu is associated with the Vaishvanara form of Agni. He is said to be *Upendra* or the ‘companion of Indra’. The iconic worship of Vishnu arose through the image of the solar Purusha. This would be the subject of another extensive article, but I did want to propose that subject, so that the approach to Shiva here is not looked at in a sectarian light.

References

1. *Rigveda I.164.39. ṛco akṣare parame vyoman.*
2. *Rigveda X.136.7*
3. *Taittiriya Aranyaka Aruna Prashna 91* connects these Vatarashana Rishis to other Vedic Rishi groups like the Arunaketavas and the Vaikhnasas.
4. *Rigveda X.136.2. munayo vātaraśanāḥ piśaṅgā vasate malā, vātasyānu dhṛjīm yanti yad devāso avikṣata, unmaditā mauneyena vātām ā tasthivān vayam, śarīredsmākam yūyam martāso abhi paśyata.*
5. *Rigveda I.89.7. pṛśadaśvā marutaḥ pṛśnimātarāḥ śubhyāvāno vidatheṣu jagmayaḥ, agnijihvā manavaḥ sūracakṣaso viśve no devā avasā gamaniha.*
6. *Rigveda VII.59.12. tryambakam yajāmahe sugandhim puṣṭivardhanam, urvārukam iva bandhanān mṛtyor mukṣīya māmṛtāt.*
7. *Krishna Yajurveda, IV.5.8. Rudram*
8. This includes such *Atharvaveda* forms as Bhava, Sarva, Manyu, and the Vratya.
9. *Rigveda II.33.4. bhiṣaktamam tvā bhiṣajām.*
10. *Rigveda VI.74.3. Somārudrā yuvam etānyasme viśvā tanūṣu bheṣajāni dhattam, ava syatam muñcatam yanno astri tanūṣu baddham kṛtam eno asmat.*

11. *Rigveda IV.3.1.* ā vo rājānam adhvarasya rudram hotāram satyayajam rodasyoḥ, agnim purā taniyitnor acittād hiraṇyarūpam avase kṛṇudhvam.
12. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa IV.1.3.10-18.* Names of Agni as Rudra, Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Aśani, Bhava, Mahadeva, Īśāna, Kumāra.
13. *Mahabharata Anushasana Parvani Dana Parvani 14, 287-288*
14. Vasishtha Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, *Collected Works, Volume Five, The Book of Aphorisms, Part One, Indreśvarābheda Sūtram.*
15. *Aitareya Brahmana III.33*
16. *Rigveda X.8.7-9*
17. *Rigveda IV.18.12-13*
18. *Rigveda VIII.24.9,12*
19. *Rigveda I.10.11*
20. *Chandogya Upanishad II.22.3.* sarve svarā indrāsyātmānaḥ.
21. *Rigveda III.53.1,* Indra-Parvata.
22. *Rigveda VI.61.5 13*
23. *Rigveda VIII.13.20.* tad id rudrasya cetati yahvam pratneṣu dhāmasu mano yatrā vi tad dadhur vicetasah
24. *Aitareya Upanishad I.3.*
25. *Shvetashvatara Upanishad IV.10*
26. *Kaushitaki Upanishad III.2*
27. *Mahabharata Vanaparva 125*
28. *Rigveda II.23.1*
29. *Mahanarayana Upanishad 12, Dahara Vidya,* last verse. yo vedādaḥ svarah prokto vedānte ca pratiṣṭitah tasya prakṛtilānasya yah parasya maheśvarah.
30. *Rigveda VII.59.12.* Tryambakam mantra of Vasishtha.
31. *Rigveda VII.33.1.* Vasishthas as Kapardas.
32. *Kena Upanishad III.12.* Uma Haimavati.
33. *Shvetashvatara Upanishad III.2.* There is only one Rudra not a second, who rules over these worlds with his ruling powers. eko hi rudro na dvitīyāya taṣthur ya imaḥllokā Īśata Īśanībhiḥ.
34. *Mahabharata Anushasana Parvani Dana Parvani 17, Shiva Sahasranama.* Note this and the previous sections for more information on Shiva 14-17.

Sanskrit on the Silk Route

Prof. Lokesh Chandra*

Sanskrit was the mind of Silk Route, at one with the sky-void and the spring mist, the live hues of sensibility dyed in eternity, a bridge of dreams floating across cloudless skies of the sands, a symbol system that made the heart pure, the spring blossoms of the devout. It was the realisation of Truth, and the very being of Values. Sanskrit was to enter the profound, the inner depths. Today, torn Sanskrit fragments from the silk Route reflect the savagery of fundamentalism, the furious wrath of apostasy. They remind me of ten million Buddhist Sutras being ruthlessly committed to fire in Buryatia, Mongolia, Kalmykia, and Tuva. As Lama Sandaa related to me with tears flowing across his withered face of eighty years: 'I was forced to destroy what I revered, admired and had faith in. There's no torture more terrible than that'. Likewise, these Sanskrit fragments are tears of time. Scholars sit in their silence, forgetting the hours that follow each other, to identify tiny and large fragments as if perfecting a diamond. They are *ratnakūṭa* or heaps of jewels in the words of Prof. Karashima. We are pilgrims to amazing centuries that have flourished and vanished.

1. Discovery of the Earliest Sanskrit Manuscripts.

The so-called Silk Route was really the Path of Sūtras over the centuries. This is clear from the decline of this international highway when śramaṇas, sūtras and sancta were annihilated by fundamentalist

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terrorism, the route lost its glorious heritage as well as its flourishing economy. Prof. Takayasu Higuchi says that the desert and oasis became an embodiment of Buddhist teaching. The desert symbolised hell and the oasis paradise.

The discovery of Sanskrit and its close nexus with European language at the end of the 19th century was a major sensation of an emerging new world of Europe of fundamental discoveries that raised human thought and life to unprecedented heights. Sanskrit came to be taught in all the major universities of Europe and Russia. Oxford came to be a famous seat of Sanskrit learning due to Prof. F. Max Müller. At the same time Japan was emerging as a modern nation after the Meiji restoration in 1868. In 1879 the most influential and liberal Jodo Shinshu sect sent two monks, Bunyū Nanjō and Kasawara to learn Sanskrit at Oxford. Max Müller used the palmleaf manuscript preserved at the Hōryūji monastery that had come to Japan in 609. It was then the oldest known Sanskrit manuscript in the world. Lt. H. Bower had gone to Kucha in quest of a murderer on a confidential mission from the Government of India. A Kucha man took him to a subterranean town to dig treasures but found only a book. Some merchants excavated a house to find treasure, 'but found only the bodies of some cows, which on the first touch, crumbled into dust. On that occasion they found also the above mentioned book' (Hoernle 1893:vi). The Bower manuscript contains an ayurvedic text *Nāvanīta*, *Pāśaka-kevalī* and *Mahāmāyūrī*. The manuscript must have belonged to a medical practitioner who looked into the astrology of his patients to administer the correct medicine. His books must have been placed in a cow so that he could carry on his medical profession in heaven. The cow was the *Vaitarṇī* cow that transports a deceased person over the *Vaitarṇī* river (Greek Styx) that flows between the earth and the abode of departed spirits presided over by Yama. Within two years, Dutreuil de Rhins and Grenard discovered in 1892 a birch bark manuscript of Dharmapadas in Gandhari Prakrit from Kohmārī Mazar, 21 km from Khotan, identified with ancient *Gośṅga-vihāra*. The remaining pieces of the manuscript were acquired by the Russian Consul-General in Kashgar N. Th. Petrovskii that reached S.F. Oldenburg in 1897. John Brough dates it to the first or second century AD. These discoveries led to the whole movement of the exploration of Central Asia.

Sanskrit was the glory of the Yüeh-chih. One of their monks shih-li-fang brought a number of Sanskrit manuscripts to China during the reign of Ch'in Shih-huang-ti (221-208 BC) who built the Great Wall of China. Unwilling to accept the new doctrine he imprisoned the monks. The Sanskrit name *cīna* for China originated with the Yüeh-chih. These manuscript were buried to save them from burning. Later on sixty scrolls were discovered by Liu Hsiang.

The King of the Yüeh-chih ordered the Crown Prince to teach Sanskrit to Ching Lu of the Imperial Academy of China who had gone to them on mission.

Mātanga Kāśyapa and Dharmaratna came to China in 67 AD on Imperial invitation from the court of the Yüeh-chih. They wrote the first Buddhist work in Chinese. Thus the very first steps of Chinese Buddhism are rooted in a kingdom of the Silk Route which had rich traditions of Sanskrit learning.

2. Translation of Sanskrit Works by Central Asian Monks

The first translator of Sanskrit texts into Chinese was the Yüeh-chih Laugākṣin who worked at Loyang from 167 to 186 and introduced Mahāyāna. He translated 23 works of which 12 are preserved in Chinese Tripiṭaka. The texts translated by him are an indication of the Sanskrit literature studied in the monastic universities of the Silk Route. Some of the works translated are: Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā (T 224, Nj 5), *Tathāgata-viśeṣana-sūtra (T 280, Nj 102), Akṣobhya-vyūha (T 313, Nj 28), Kāśyapa-parvīarta (T 350, Nj 57), Sukhāvātī-vyūha (T 361, Nj 25), Bhadrāpāla-sūtra (T 417, Nj X, T 418, Nj 67), Mañjuśrī-paripṛcchā (T 458, Nj 112), Druma-Kinnararāja-paripṛcchā (T 624, Nj 161), Ajātaśatru-kauṛṭya-vinodana (T626, Nj 179), and Lokānuvartana-sūtra (T 807, Nj 386). These texts pertain to five different genres: Prajñāpāramitā, Avataṃsaka, Ratnakūṭa, Mahāsannipāta and Sūtras. The Silk Route monasteries were centres of advanced learning, and held rich collections of Sanskrit works.

The second great translator of Sanskrit texts is again from the Silk Route. He is An Shih-kao, a Parthian prince who ceded the throne to his uncle to enter the Saṅgha. He came to Loyang in 148 (variants 147, 149) and worked till his nirvāṇa in 170. He translated 176 Sanskrit works into Chinese. Out of them 54 exist in the Taishō Tripiṭaka. They represent Āgamas, Avadāna, Ratnakūṭa, Sūtras, Vinaya, Abhidharma,

and historic traditions. I shall enumerate his extant works to show the extensive Sanskrit holdings of monastic libraries of the Silk Route.

- T 13, Nj 548 Dīraghāgama Law of Ten Rewards
- T 14, Nj 553 Mahānidānasūtra
- T 16, Nj 555 Śrgāla-vāda-sūtra
- T 31, Nj 559 Sutra on the cause of sins
- T 32, Nj 598 Catuḥ-satya-sūtra?
- T 36, Nj 601 Sutra on Fundamental relationship
- T 48, Nj 565 Sutra on the true and false law
- T 57, Nj 567 Sutra explaining Āśrava?
- T 91, Nj 582 Sutra addressed to a Brāhmaṇa
- T 92, Nj 583 Sutra addressed to a Gṛhapati
- T 98, Nj 586 Artha-vistara
- T 105, Nj 743
- T 109, Nj 741 Dharmacakra-pravartana-sutra
- T 112, Nj 659 *Aṣṭāṅga-samyak-mārga-sutra
- T 131, Nj 617 Sutra on a Brāhmaṇa who wished to avoid death
- T 140, Nj 649 Sutra on the conversion of Anāthapiṇḍada's seven sons
- T 149, Nj 633 Sutra on Ānanda's fellow-student
- T 150a, b Nj 648 *Saptāyatana-tridhyāna-sūtra
- T 151, Nj 687 *Āgama-samyak-caryā-sūtra
- T 167, Nj 220 Mūka-jātaka? Avadāna
- T 348, Nj 54 Maitreya-paripṛcchā-dharmāṣṭaka Ratnakūṭa
- T 356, Nj 251 Ratnakūṭa-sūtra
- T 492, Nj 635 Ānanda's question Sutras
- T 506, Nj 695 *Gandhāra-deśa-rāja-sūtra
- T 525, Nj 694 Sutra on a śreṣṭhiputra's causing three places to be harassed
- T 526, Nj 227 *Śreṣṭhiputra-Jeta-sūtra
- T 551, Nj 643 Mātangī-sūtra
- T 553, Nj 667 *Āmarapālī-jīva-nidāna
- T 554, Nj 668 Āmrpālī-jīva-nidāna
- T 602, Nj 681 *Ānāpāna-dhyāna-sūtra
- T 603, Nj 780 *Skandha-dhātva-āyatana-sūtra
- T 604, Nj 724 *Dhyāna-caryā-saptatrimśad-varga
- T 605, Nj 683 *Dhyāna-caryā-dharma-sañjñāna-sūtra
- T 607, Nj 1326 Yogācāra-bhūmi

T 621, Nj 451 *Buddha-mudrā-samādhi-sūtra
 T 622, Nj 282 Sutra on the samādhi called Vow.
 T 684, Nj 762 Sutra on the kindness of parents which is
 difficult to be returned
 T 701, Nj 387 Sutra on inviting monks to a bath-house
 T 724, Nj 706 Sūtra on the teaching of hells as the recompense
 of sinful actions
 T 729, Nj 685 Sutra on the origin of goodness and evil
 T 730, Nj 684 Sutra on several objects
 T 731, Nj 688 *Aṣṭādaśa-naraka-sūtra
 T 732, Nj 682 Sutra on the mind of reproaching
 T 733, Nj 731 *Sthiramati-sūtra
 T 734, Nj 675 Question addressed by pretas to Maudgalyāyana
 T 779, Nj 512 Sutra on the eight understandings of great men
 T 791, Nj 686 *Abhiniṣkramaṇa-nidāna
 T 792, Nj 689 *Dharma-saṅjñāna-raja-sūtra
 T 1467, Nj 1112 Sutra on the lightness and heaviness of the
 sin of transgressing precepts (śīla) (Vinaya)
 T 1470, Nj 1126 *Mahābhikṣu-tri-sahasra-karma
 T 1492, Nj 1106 Triskandhaka?
 T 1552, Nj 1287 Abhidharma-sāra-pratikīṛṇaka-[śāstra]?
 (Abhidharma)
 T 2027, Nj 1363 Sutra on Kāśyapa's collection of the Tripiṭaka
 (historic tradition)

The lack of Sanskrit titles is due to the loss of immense Sanskrit literatures on the Silk Route during the political upheavals.

Treatise on logic or philosophy do not seem to have been popular on the Silk Route.

Over twenty ācāryas from the Silk Route were busy translating Sanskrit originals into Chinese, from the mid-second to the seventh century. The greatest of Yüeh-chih masters was Dharmarakṣa who came to Loyang in 266 and ninety translations of Sanskrit sutras by him survive in the Chinese Tripiṭaka. He integrated Buddhism in the spiritual life of China. A Khotanese, a Yüeh-chih, two Kucheans, a Sogdian and Indians were his collaborators. He translated the Mātāṅgī-sūtra during the years 307-313. It had been written in Sanskrit in Samarkand. It had been translated (K 759) earlier by an Shih-kaio (148-170), by Chu Lü-yen and Chih-ch'ien in 230 AD (K 766),

and a fourth time by an unknown translator in 317-420 AD (K 762), Mātāṅgī is the presiding deity of music, the pure innate spirit of woman. There is a large modern temple to her in the suburbs of Delhi at Chhatarpur. The Parthian An Hsüan translated two sutras and at the same time he was commander of the cavalry. The Parthian shot is well-known. K'ang Sêng-hui from K'ang or Kambuja (Sogdiana) gives a brief version of the Rāmāyana in his Ṣaṭ-pāramitā-sūtra (251 AD).

Chinese undertook arduous trek to obtain Sanskrit originals from the Silk Route. Chu Shihhsin went to Khotan in 260 AD to get the Pañcaviṁśati-sāhasrikā- Prajñāpāramitā copied on birch bark. The Sanskrit manuscript was preserved in a Chinese monastery till the sixth century.

In 284 Dharmarakṣa got a manuscript of the Avaiartika-cakra-sūtra from the Kuchean envoy, and in 286 he obtained the Pañcaviṁśati-sāhasrikā from the Khotanese monk Gītamitra.

In 307-312 Śrīmitra and Crown Prince of Kucha gave up the kingdom and became a monk. He translated three sutras including the Mahāmāyūrī.

Among those who opened Abhidharma literature to the Chinese were Dharmanandin from Tukhāra, and Kumārabodhi the ābhidhārmika who was the *purohita* of King Mi-ti of Turfan. The latter had been a member of the tribute mission to the Chinese Emperor in 382. They brought Abhidharma texts which were translated into Chinese.

In 402 Kumarajīva arrived in China from Kucha. He was the son of a Kuchean princess and Kumārāyaṇa of Kashmir and became 'the greatest translator of all time' in the words of Arthur F. Wright (*Buddhism in Chinese History*, 1959:62). He transcreated a new literary style that continues and Chinese became the vocabulary of wonder. Kucha had a Hindu temple. Kumarajīva studied the Vedas and their six auxiliary disciplines in Kashgar. A chart of the recensions of the Yajurveda mentions the recensions prevalent in Śvetadvīpa which is Kucha. In Chinese Po 'white' is the ethnicon for the people of Kucha. Varāhamihira mentions Kucika (var. Kuśika) along with the Cīna.

Fa-hsien is the first pilgrim who wrote an account of his visit to India from 400 to 414 AD. He makes an interesting observation that in Shanshan, just on the border of China, the Indian script was used for all language of the Silk Route, and the Buddhist monks studied

Sanskrit and Indian books. The Lop Nor desert separates the Tun-huang area from Shanshan (Haiyan Au-van Hinüber, *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* for the academic year 2010, no.22: 224, 240).

In 422 AD Buddhahadra of Khotan translated the Avatamsaka-sutras. Among them is the Gaṇḍavyūha (Gv.) which has survived in original Sanskrit. Its main Tathāgata is Rocana or *abhyuccadeva* as a colossus. The Gv. has inspired the Borabudur and the Daibutsu of Nara. In the 7th century Empress Wu Tsö-ts'ien (r. 684-705) wanted to legitimate her reign and she sent a special envoy to Khotan for the Sanskrit text as well as the Khotanese master Śikṣānanda to translate the text into Chinese. Khotan was an important source for Sanskrit manuscripts throughout the centuries. A Khotanese-Sanskrit conversation scroll from Tun-huang, the only one of its kind, indicates that the transmission of Sanskrit sutras to China from Khotan was an ongoing process. The conversation centres around the books the Khotanese monk was carrying on his pilgrimage to Wu-t'ai-shan:

“Have you equipment for the road or not?

I do not like equipment for the road. A horse or two and I shall go.

Have you books or not?

I have some.

What is the book?

Sūtra, Abhidharma, Vinaya, Vajrayāna.

Among these what book (i.e. title) is there?”

Indian music was in vogue in Kucha. Prince Sujiva of Kucha introduced the seven notes of Indian music to China in 568 AD.

Bhagavaddharma translated the hymn to Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara at Khotan, as per the colophon of the Stein scroll 3793 from Tun-huang. It is a grabbed version of a Nilakaṇṭhastotra, and has been popular in China ever since the T'ang dynasty. Bhagavaddharma's transliteration of the Sanskrit text is recited to this day every morning, noon and evening in the Buddhist monasteries of East Asia. The inauguration of the World Olympics at Shanghai began with a thousand young girls dancing with the Sanskrit hymn set to powerful modern music.

A Kharosthi inscription has been found in China (John Brough, *A Kharosthi Inscription from China*, BSOAS 1961:24.517-530).

3. Sanskrit Texts from the Silk Route

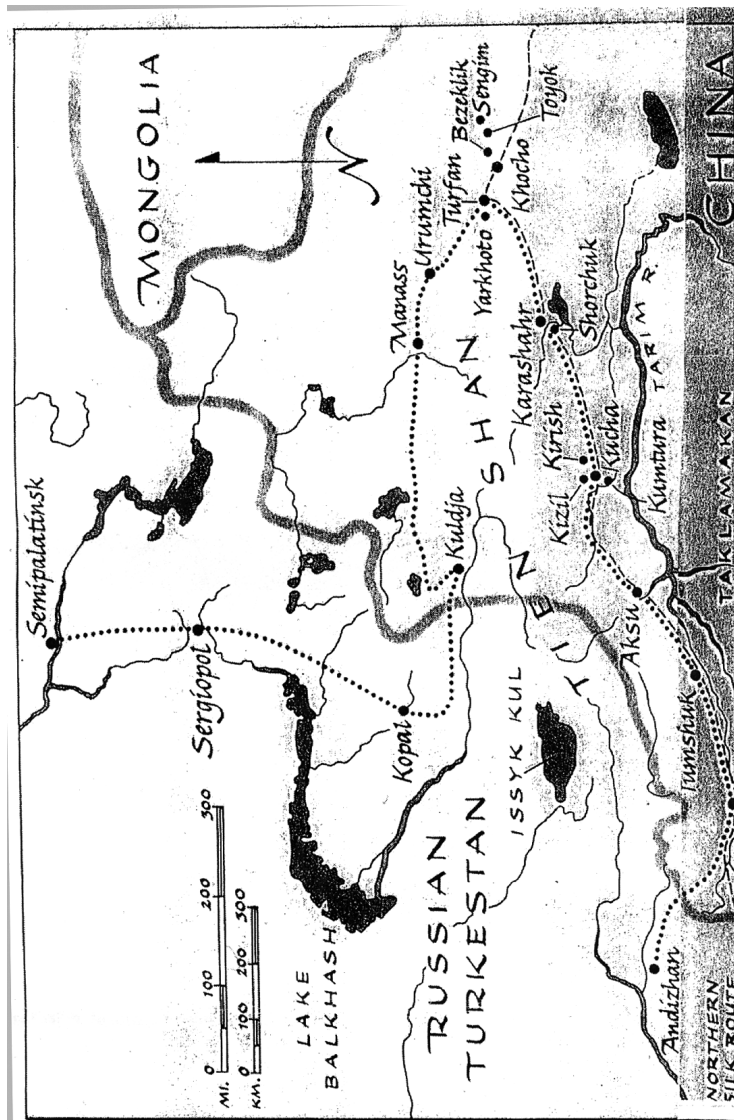
The Russian botanist Arbert Regel reported 'numerous idols'. He was the first European to see ruins of Khocho near Karakhoja. From 1902 to 1914 German expeditions to sites on the northern Silk Route discovered folios and fragments of Sanskrit texts. In the Cave of the Red Dome at Kizil Grünwedel found 'the remains of a liberty of very old manuscripts on palm leaf, brich bark and paper, together with inscribed wooden tablets. This cave was also the souch of leaves from the oldest Sanskrit manuscripts, which at the same time is one of the oldest Indian manuscripts ever found' (Härtel et al. 1982:41). One thousands and fourteen items of Sanskrit manuscripts have been catalogued in the four voulumes of the *Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanbunden* under the editorship of Prof. Ernst Waldschmidt. These manuscripts come from four areas:

- (a) Tumshuk
- (b) Kucha region (Kizil, Kumtura, Kirish, Achik-ilek)
- (c) Shorchuk
- (d) Turffan oasis (Khocho, Yarkhoto, Murtuk, Senginm Toyok).

The Kucha region has yielded the largest number of manuscripts (nos. 15-375) of Buddhist texts. The most interesting are the fragments of three dramas of Aśvaghōṣa from Kizil, written on palm leaves in the Kushan script (no.16). The first drama is a dialogue between Buddhi, Dhṛti and Kīrti. The second is Śāriputra-prakarāṇa, and the third pertains to a hetaera. Another fragment of the Śāriputra-prakarāṇa written on palm leaves in Turkistan Brāhmī from the Cave of the Red Dome of the Ming-öi of Kizil has the colophon of the last and ninth act. It reads:

॥ śāriputraprakaraṇe navamo=ñkaḥ 9
āryyasuvarṇṇākṣiputrasy=āryy=
āśvaghōṣasya kṛtīs=śāradvatīputraprakaraṇaṃ samāptam
[sa]māptāni
c=āñkāni nava gyam=anuf[ṣṭubhe]ccha...

The name of the mother of Aśvaghōṣa is given as Survarṇākṣī, but his father's name is conspicuously absent. Another work of eighty stories and ten parables by Kumāralātā found at Kizil, written on palm leaves in the Kushan-Gupta script is Kalpanā-maṇḍitika Dṛṣṭānta-pāṅkti. It is the only Sanskrit work that shows the travel of Indian merchants to China. The third German expedition found fragments



Itinerary of the German Expeditions

of Kumāralāta's grammar with a commentary, written in the Kushan-Gupta script on palm leaves, from the Cave of the Red Dome of the Ming-öi of Kizil. It pertains to the sandhi chapter (no.22).

Manuscripts (nos.376-531) from the Manuscripts Cave of Shorchuk include the Buddhacarita of Aśvaghōṣa (no.432) written in North Turkistan Brāhmī. Fragments of the Saundarananda kāvya written in North Turkistan-Brāhmī on paper (no.515) were also found. Why did Aśvaghōṣa become popular in this region? Did his father come from Central Asia as a trader or pilgrim and gave birth to him as the son of Suvarṇākṣī while he remained unknown? Japanese iconographic treatise Besson-zakki by Shinkaku (1117-1180 AD, TZ 87.148) shows him six-armed, sitting on a horse and with a retinue of six. The second part of his name ghoṣa can be a sanskritisation of kuṣa in Kuṣāṇa and Kuśadvīpa 'Kushanshahr'.



Aśvaghōṣa in the Besson-zakki

The mural of a brahman was found in temple 9 of Bezeklik. It has been dated to 7th-8th century, but could not be identified (Härtel & Yaldiz 1982:146). The third eye on the forehead identifies him as Nīlakaṇṭha, the great Siddh. The hymn to Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara translated by Bhagavaddharma has *siddhāya svāhā/ mahāsiddhāya svāhā/ siddha-yogeśvarāya svāhā/ nīlakaṇṭhāya svāhā/*

(Lokesh Chandra 1988:268). The two opening verses show that it was originally a hymn to Nīlakaṇṭha recited by Avalokiteśvara and not a hymn addressed to Avalokiteśvara:

*sarva-bhaya-trāṇakarāya tasmai namaskṛtvā imāim/
āry-Āvalokiteśvara-stavanāim Nīlakaṇṭhānām/
hṛdayāim vartayisyāmi sarvārtha-sāadhanāim śubham/
ajeyāim sarva-bhūtānām bhava-mārga-viśodhakam ॥*

Bhagavadharma translated the work at Khotan which means that Nīlakaṇṭha was popular in the Silk Route monasteries.

The most important site in the Turfan region are the temples of Bezeklik ('place with paintings' in Eastern Turkish). These paintings have Sanskrit captions. For example the praṇidhi scene in temple 9 is captioned in Sanskrit, evidently written by an Uigur master:

*upasthito brāhmaṇena mahendro lokanāyakaḥ
jyētākakarmanā gandhai kālenaguruṇā tathā
vihāraim kṛtvā sarvai ca upasthanai nimantrita*

(Albert von le Coq, *Chotscho*, 1979 reprint, Tafel 17)

The Sanskrit tradition can also be seen in the ruins of free-standing Stūpa Y in Khocho, the ancient Karakhoja. It is a three-storeyed structure with niches for statues on all sides. It rests on a square base with stepped tiers for circumambulation. On every tier there are 24 niches (6 niches in each direction), totalling to 72 on the three tiers. It is a *śata-dvāra* or Tib. *sgo.man* 'many doors'. It must have enshrined 72 images of a Buddhist sutra, for paying homage. A similar structure exists in Hauz Khas known as Chor Minar. It has eleven niches on the base and one large niche on the first tier. It reflects an earlier sacred structure whose twelve niches could have held the statues of the Twelve Light Buddhas of the Amitābh cycle. The present structure is Islamic derived from an earlier type prevalent on the Silk Route.

Sanskrit fragments from the Khotan region on the southern route in the British Library in the Hoernle and Stein collections consist of more than 4500 items. Prof. Seishi Karshima started the Brahmi Club at the Soka University which convenes every two weeks to read Sanskrit fragments from the Silk Route (Kara-shima/Wille 2006:273). These items have been edited and compared with Chinese and Tibetan versions in vols. I, II.1, II.2 of *The British Library Sanskrit Fragments* (Tokyo, Soka University). The crystal clear photographs of the fragments and the excellent and painstaking scholarship of the distinguished editors make these literary treasures of the Silk Route

part of the Literary heritage of India and other countries. The identified titles are listed in vol.II/1.31-33. The dedication of young Japanese scholars like Tatsushi Tamai 'transcribing joyfully (!) and enthusiastically every day from eight in the morning until seven in the evening' evokes our admiration. Prof. Karashima's enthusiasm for the boxes with Sanskrit fragments is 'For me, these boxes truly contained a ratnakūṭa 'a heap of jewels'. The Japanese discovered a fragment of the Sukhāvati-vyūha on the Silk Route, the very first outside Japan. On 23 December 1900 Sir Aurel Stein dug a manuscript of the Vajracchedikā from the ruins of a small dwelling place in Dandān Uiliq. Prof. F.E. Pargiter dated it to the fifth century on palaeographic grounds (Hoernle 1916:176f). It reminds me of a Japanese in Koyasan reading the Vajracchedikā every day. The Dandān Uiliq manuscript is a hallowed sutra of a devoted Buddhist.

Manuscripts from the Trufan Oasis come from Turfan, Khocho, Yarkhoto, Murtuk, Sengim and Toyok (nos.532-648). Fragments of Kātantra grammar from the stupa on the right side of the river flowing by the Nakṣatra Temple at Sengim Agiz contain the chapters on taddhita, stripratyaya and ākhyāta (no.633). From the Toyok monastic ruins the second German Turfan expedition found the fragments of Āryaśūtra's Jātakmālā and Kumāralāta's Kalpanā-maṇḍitikā Dṛṣṭānta-pāṅkti (no.638). Toyok yielded fragments of Bheḍa-saṁhitā, written on paper in the Gilgit script (nos.641, 642). The metrical text Chandovicitī (no.654) written on birch-bark in the Turkistan-Gupta script comes from an unknown site.

All the manuscripts are Buddhist texts of vinaya, sutra, gāthās, avadānas, abhidharma, yoga and commentaries, dhāraṇī, mantra, nāmāvalī, stotra, and other genres.

4. Sanskrit as the Language of Learning and Identity of the People of the Silk Routes

Sanskrit was the language of refinement and thought, of religion and philosophy, of poetry and prose of the different peoples of various ethnicities who spoke several tongues. While the media of conversation and administration were vernaculars, written in Indic scripts, Sanskrit was *the* idiom of higher domains of intellection. The Yüeh-chis gained prominence in trans-national contacts by selling horses to the Ch'in and Han dynasties of China which had embarked on a major programme of expansion, and created four military commanderies in Central Asia. They considered the Yüeh-chis barbarians, but the

Yüeh-chis were wise to point out their higher culture of philosophic texts and linguistic sophistication of Sanskrit. They taught Sanskrit to a Chinese prince, the first Buddhist monks went to China from their court, and they were the first translators of Sanskrit texts into Chinese. The first Buddhist monastery in China was the White Horse Monastery, redolent of the horse trade of the Yüeh-chis. Monks came on white horses of Ferghana should really be called the 'Sutra Route'. The Yüeh-chis later became the Kushans. Sanskrit manuscripts in the Kushan script in its grand lapidary style of imperial monumental inscriptions with a head-line (*śirorekḥā*) over the letters, are wearing a crown so to say. The Chinese Emperor sent Chang Ch'ien to Bactria (Da-hsia) in 128 BC to find out the Yüeh-chis who by then were no longer horsedealers. The Chinese envoy took the Mahātukhāra rāga of Sanskrit, on which martial tunes were created for the Chinese armies treading long un-inhabited terrains. Sanskrit was the proud heredity of the Yüeh-chih. The seventh century poet Li Po wrote:

The horses of heaven come out of the Kushans

The divine horses and Sanskrit sūtras were the *śāstra* and *śāstra* of the Yüeh-chis.

5. Pre-Buddhist Evidence

Tura, Turan, Turakvāḥ, Turk. The Turks are reflected in Firdawsi as Turan (-an being a toponymic suffix as in Bamiy-an). Tūra is the name of a people in Yasht 17.55 who are *āsu-aspa* 'having swift horses'.

Rgveda 10.61.1 speaks of a prince of the Pakthas named Tūrvāyaṇa. Tura Kāvāṣeya is mentioned in a list of teachers in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10.6.5.9. He is the family priest of Janamejaya Pārikṣita in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 4.27, 7.34, 8.21. He is a sage in the Kāṇva Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.5.4. Tura is a sage of the gods (*deva-muni*) in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa 25.14.5. Turva and Turvaśa people are mentioned in the Rgveda along with the Yadu.

The Sanskrit term *Turuṣka* for the Turks is found in the lexicons *Medinī*, *Trikāṇḍa-śeṣa*, *Abhidhāna-cintāmaṇi* of Hemacandra, *Rājataranṅiṇī*, and *Kathā-sarit-sāgara*. The variant forms are *Turakāḥ*, *Turakvāḥ* (compare Greek *Tourkoi*). *Turakvāḥ* is *tura* 'fast' + *akva* 'horse' (compare Tocharian *yakwe*, Lat. *equus* 'horse'), keeping in view their epithet *asu-aspa* in Avesta. The form with *-šk-* has a parallel in the Kushan names *Kaniṣka*, *Huviṣka*, *Huṣka* (Manfred Mayrhofer, *Kkurzefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen* 1956:1.515). The Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa speaks of *uruṣka taila* for

petroleum. The Turks were one of the North Asian or Altaic nomads who were constantly attacking the settled agricultural peoples. They were present in Central Asia and the frontiers of India from very ancient times.

Sogdians. *Śūlikāḥ* in the plural is the name of a people in the *Bṛhat-saṁhitā* and *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* 57.41. They are Sogdians, known in Chinese as Su-lê or Sha-lei (in the Chinese text of the *Candragarbha-sūtra*). The *Mahābhārata*, *Purāṇas*, *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*, besides Buddhist *sūtras*, also contain extensive and early references to other Central Asian peoples.

The main cities of Sogdiana were Varaksha, Samarkand, Burkhara and Panjikant. The Sogdian cities were centres of cultural excellence and artistic skills. The Sogdians translated several Buddhist *sūtras*. Their ethnonym K'ang in Chinese is the initial syllable of Kām-boja. Five Sogdian translators are K'ang Chu (AD 187), K'ang Meng-hsiang (AD 194-99), K'ang Sang-k'ai (AD 252), K'ang Sêng-hui (AD 251), K'ang Tao-ho (AD 396), and Saṅghavarman (AD 656). The *Śaṭ-pāramitā-sūtras* of K'ang and Sêng-hui has a resumé of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Their endeavours in translating the *sūtra* into Chinese show their deep knowledge of Sanskrit and their devotion to Buddhism. The *Mātaṅgi-sūtra* was composed in Samarkand and is extant in its Chinese translation done in the third century. Amoghavajra was born in AD 705 as the son of a brahmin of Sogdian. He travelled to Java and thence to China with Vajrabodhi. He is one of the Eight Patriarchs of Mantrayāna in Japan. He translated several *sūtras* into Chinese, of which one hundred and eight are extant in the Chinese *Tripitka*.

Tashkand. Pāṇini 3.2.20 says that *kantha* is *suffixed* to names of cities. It is neuter in general, but is feminine in the Uśīnara region. The *Kāśikā* commentary thereon gives the following names: *Sauśamīkanta*, *Āhvarakantha*, *Vīraṇakanthā*, *Dākṣikanthā*. The *Kāśikā* on *sūtra* 4.2.142 adds *Mahīkīkanathīyam* to them. *Kāśikā* has more names on Pāṇini 6.2.124, 125: *Capyakanthā*, *Cihaṇakanathā*, *Maḍarakanthā*, *Maḍurakanthā*. *Dākṣikanthā* is Tashkent, and *Āhvarakantha* can be Yarkang. The works on Central Asia do not refer to this valuable evidence. *Kanthaka* was the white horse on which Gautama Buddha left his father's palace. It refers to a Ferghana horse from *Kantha* or Samarkand. It was not understood and the spelling was altered to *Kaṇṭhaka*. The Pali texts show the variant *Kanthaka*, but in Sanskrit only the *Mahāvīyutpatti* has the spelling *Kanthaka*.

Kanka is the name of a people in the *Mahābhārata*, *Varāhamihira's Bṛhat-saṁhitā* 14.4, and *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* 2.4.18, 9.20.30. In Tocharian *kānk* means 'stone'. It can refer to Tashkand, which is

from *tāś* 'stone'. In the Mahābhārata they occur with Śakas and Tukhāras (*śakās tukhārāḥ kaṅkās ca*). The ethnonym *aśmakāḥ* occurs in the Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata-purāṇa. The Kalpanā-maṇḍitikā mentions that a painter from Puṣkalāvātī visited Aśmaka to decorate a monastery (Sylvain Lévi, JA 1908:88). Foucher (*L'Art gréco-bounddhique du Gandhara* 2.644) identified this place with Tashkand. In the Bṛhat-saṁhitā 14.22 Aśmaka is a north-western country.

From the Ṛgveda to the Śatapathā, Aitareyā and Pañcaviṁśa-brāhmaṇas, to the Kāṇva recension of the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad, to Pāṇini, to the Mahābhārata and Purāṇas, to the Bṛhat-saṁhitā, Kathā-sarit-sāgara, lexicons and Rājatarāṅgiṇī there are continuing references to the peoples of the Silk Route.

6. The Globe Vision of Aśoka and the Silk Route

Emperor Aśoka gave up war at Kalinga or *bherīghoṣa*, which was substituted by *dhammaghoṣa*, the drums of war were silenced into drums of peace. His Rock Edict XIII mentions the Hellenic kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia, and Epirus to which he sent missionaries to preach Dhamma. These missions embrace the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. In 251 BC he sent his son and Saṅghamitrā to Srilanka. He sent gifts to King Devanāmpiya Tissa including a *nandyāvarata* which has been interpreted as a gold vessel or a gold flower. It must have been a six-storeyed palace (as described in the architectural text Mānasāra 24.24), in keeping with the Imperial style of Aśoka (273-232 BC). The Kandahar Inscription in Greek and Aramaic (Dated to 258 BC) says that as a result of Aśoka's activity 'everything prospers over the whole earth'. All the four Chinese and Tibetan accounts of the foundation of Khotan associate it with the son and ministers of Emperor Aśoka. Aśoka thus initiated the presence of Sanskrit and Indian influence on what was to become the Silk Route. A collection of coins bearing Prakrit legends on the reverse and Chinese legends on the obverse from Yotkan the ancient capital of Khotan belong to the first centuries AD. Khotan was a major centre of Mahāyāna and has yielded the earliest Gandhari Dharmapada. The Nidana of the Eye-destruction of Dharmavardhana? (Chin. A-yu-wang-hsi-huai-mu-yin-yuan-ching) mentions Kucha as 'one of the parts of his great empire which Aśoka proposed to give over to his son Kuṇāla' (Watters 1904:1.59). The grand international far-sightedness of Aśoka in Buddhist literature made a great impression in China. The search for 'relics of Aśoka' is a regular phenomenon from the fourth century

AD. By his devotion and compassion for all mankind (*hita-sukha* of his inscriptions) he was able to extend his sway over the whole continent of Jambudvīpa. The Chinese concluded that China being a part of Jambudvīpa had belonged to the empire of Aśoka and if investigated some traces would be found, even some holy relics themselves (Zürcher 1972:1.277-280). So the ancient sites of Aśoka-temples and Aśoka-stupas were being identified. On 25 March 394, a statue appeared near the city wall of Chiang-ling with a Sanskrit inscription. Dhyāna master Saṅghānanda from Kashmir told the monks that it had been made by Aśoka (ibid 279). Aśoka became a legend and the King of the Sogdians in the Tonyukuk epitaph near the capital of Mongolia is named Aśoqa. The Turks have the name *Aşuq*. The Russian chronicles mention the Prince of the Voguls in Northern Siberia under the name *Asyka*. The epic folk songs of the Voguls sing *Ōšx* even today. The Beloved of the Gods is immortal among the farthest people (*Journal de la Société Finno-Ourienn*e 1958:60.59f.)

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ICAF Expedition Through Central Asia

K Santhanam*

Introduction

In a global milieu where traditional interstate diplomacy is often forced to underplay critical dynamics such as the role of culture, education, entrepreneurship and tourism in bilateral ties, there is a need to establish other channels of communication and interactions between States. These are not seen as alternatives but as complementary modules for enhancing cooperation between States. The India Central Asia Foundation's (ICAF) expedition through Central Asia covering the three countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan qualifies as a worthy endeavour premised on this principle of *Track II* diplomacy. The driving expedition was organised by the ICAF during September 18 – October 05, 2013. The 16-member expedition covered 5700 km in three countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan in 18 days. The team brought various skills to the venture, from knowledge of the history of the places to politics and economics. It included people who could speak the local languages. The members left New Delhi on September 18, 2013 by Air Astana and reached Astana via Almaty the same day at 21:30 hrs (Kazakhstan time). During the seven day expedition in Kazakhstan, the destinations covered were Astana, Karaganda, Balqash, Taldyqorgan, Jarkent, Khorgos (including Khorgos in Xinjiang province

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of China also) and Almaty. The next three days (Sept 25-27) were spent in Bishkek and Osh in the Kyrgyz Republic. We covered Andijon, Ferghana, Kokand, Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva (Khwarizm) and Urgench in Uzbekistan during the next 8 days.

Generally, we covered from 300 to 500 km between two destinations, covering the distance within five to six hours. The journey between Balqash and Taldyqorgan (800 km), however, took about 12 hours, and that between Bishkek and Osh (700 km) also took the same time. The scenic beauty, however, between Balqash - Taldyqorgan, and between Bishkek - Osh was most enchanting and captivating. The expedition drove on several national and international highways that dotted the ancient Silk Road connecting important cities and offered an insight into their historical, cultural and economic development. In the return journey, we travelled from Urgench to Tashkent by air. The air journey from Tashkent to New Delhi by Uzbek Airways took about three hours, and we reached Delhi on 06 October 2013 at 03:30 hrs.



Khorgos, China

The route of the expedition was:

Astana – Karaganda – Balqash – Taldyqorgan – Jarkent – Khogos (Kazakhstan) – Khorgos (China) – Almaty – (Kazakhstan) – Bishkek –

Osh (Kyrgyz Republic) – Andijon – Ferghana- Kokand – Tashkent – Samarkand – Bukhara – Khiva (Uzbekistan)

Interactions

Meetings were held with the following institutions to gain insight into the business and educational potential of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan.

- I. Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan
- II. Centre for Military and Strategic Relations, Astana, Kazakhstan
- III. Mittal Steels, Karaganda, Kazakhstan
- IV. Kazakh-China International Boundary Centre, Khorgos, Kazakhstan
- V. Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Kazakhstan
- VI. Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan
- VII. Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences, Almaty, Kazakhstan
- VIII. Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
- IX. Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
- X. Osh State University, Osh, Kyrgyz Republic
- XI. Babul International Foundation, Andijon, Uzbekistan
- XII. University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- XIII. Al-Beruni Institute of Oriental Study, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- XIV. Mahatma Gandhi Indology Centre, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- XV. Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- XVI. Mamun Academy, Khiva, Uzbekistan
- XVII. Urgench State University, Urgench, Uzbekistan

ICAF organised the Round Tables (RTs) with important Institutes/Universities/Think Tanks. These RTs were focused to understand Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek perspectives on bilateral relations, international terrorism, drug trafficking, religious extremism, State-building & self-governance premised on democratic institutions in Afghanistan with special relevance to the post- US/NATO withdrawal by December 2014. A conscious effort was also made to ensure impromptu exposure of the expedition team members to local people in the regions travelled, enriching

and enlivening the journey. The landscape through which the expedition travelled offered immense variety from modern cities and towns to barren deserts, steppe, mountains and villages. The vast tree-less steppe, lakes (Balqash), rivers and hills and the Kyzyl Kum desert kept us spellbound and captivated. Of course, Kyrgyz Republic had no thirsty soil and had abundant greenery full of trees. This was especially so in the Kyrgyz and Uzbek parts of the Ferghana valley.

The expedition attempted a sharp focus on promotion of people-to-people contacts between India and countries of Central Asia, assessment of importance of transport corridors, a study of the current interests of India in Central Asia and vice-versa along with promotion of activities towards realization of such interests and increase awareness and initiatives to expand relations between the two regions.

Kazakhstan

The engagements at Astana encompassed both a ceremonial element as well as the professional and academic ones. The official flag-off of the expedition at the Baiterek Monument followed up by a Round Tables in the Eurasian National University and the Centre for Military and Strategic Relations. Director of the Centre for Military and Strategic



The Official Flag-off of the Expedition at the Baiterek Monument in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Relations pointed out that the issues of regional security include religious extremism, food security, situation in Afghanistan (post 2014), cyber security and nuclear proliferation by Iran. It was pointed out that Kazakhstan is keeping a close eye on the Afghan scenario and lauded India's efforts as the biggest investor in infrastructure development and healthcare. Kazakhs believe that it is post-2014 Afghanistan that poses a threat with a substantively younger population that has to contend with illiteracy and an uncertain future.

The stay in Karaganda brought two indelible imprints. One is the identity that steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal's Arcelor Mittal Industry has established for the old town of Temirtav; and the second, is the possibility that India could fruitfully engage with Central Asia through entrepreneurship. The visit to and detailed presentations at the Arcelor Mittal factory at Temirtav, and the contribution that an integrated steel plant like the Arcelor Mittal enterprise can bring to the local economy was abundantly clear to the delegation at this seemingly sleepy town. One could be accused of a misplaced sense of national pride in considering Temirtav a case of Indian success in Kazakhstan, given the



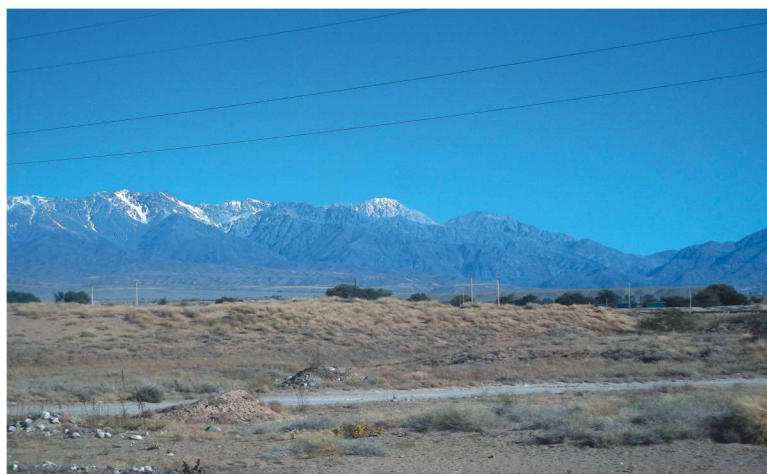
ICAF Team at the Al-Farabi University, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

act that Mittal's presence and approach has been far more European than Indian and also the fact that barring the top rung of the plant it is essentially a success story crafted by the presence of nearly 26 other

nationalities, yet the delegation left Temirtav with a palpable sense of upbeat optimism in the potential of Indian presence in Kazakhstan.

Beyond Temirtav and Karaganda, the expedition continued along to the town that has developed along Lake Balkhash and then Taldyqorgan. To the Indian delegation, the value of Balkhash town comes from the vast deposit of uranium that the region is known to possess – an interest that is being actively pursued by India. However, there was a quiet around this town. It may not be too farfetched to suggest that it was the solemn silence of a town that had both, failed to capitalize on its value as a tourist locale and had also not managed to diversify its identity and economy in time.

At Khorgos the international border constructed between Kazakhstan and China was a lesson in foresight and a pragmatic appraisal of the demand-supply dynamics between two countries. Khorgos has developed as an international zone of border trade between the two countries. The twin construction of a gas pipeline and a cement factory outside the gates of the Centre turned out to be an extraordinarily modest precursor to the story that China is scripting beyond the check-post. The delegation entered the Xinjiang Province of China, briefly, to



The Mountains across Khorgos in Xinjiang in China

showcase the leaps of development that the International Cross Border Cooperation Initiative between China and Kazakhstan has been making in this project whose completed version, in 2018, is expected to

encompass the international space built through the pursuit of business opportunities in the two countries.

The trade center is aimed at developing economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation between the two countries by attracting foreign and domestic capital. The team had an opportunity to witness, first hand, the kind of developments China is ensuring in remote border towns in return for peace and resources. Khorgos is the only example of a joint Special Economic Zone (SEZ) by Astana and Beijing, where citizens of both countries can work without a visa for 30 days. It is being built at a cost of 5 billion US dollars, mainly contributed by China. Such a model needs to be carefully looked into by India. As part of our border resolution, China could propose such a model across our northern borders. It's economic implications, however, merit an in-depth study.

Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies (KazISS) under the President Office of Kazakhstan was an introduction to the pragmatic conduct of foreign policy which addresses the values of realpolitik and contemporary economic and strategic realities over the traditional affinities and historical orientations. The very succinct enumeration by Dr Bulat Sultanov, Director, KazISS, qualified in no uncertain terms that New Delhi's lack of a cogent and sustained policy in dealing with Kazakhstan in the real figures of FDI had all but lost the match as a participant in the Kazakh economy. The advice, warranted or unwarranted, was exemplary in its clarity – India needs no longer waste its resources in attempting to break into the Kazakh hydrocarbon sector. It is a game that New Delhi has lost in no uncertain terms. India has to propose high-tech investments (IT and other fields) to be considered seriously. These are the sectors in which India may still enjoy an advantage and it should invest more immediately.

The Round Table with the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences and the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University was co-chaired by Indian ambassador to Kazakhstan Shri Ashok Kumar Sharma. The focus on Indian studies, cultural and social aspects was far more pronounced in these institutes and that explained the differing approach to the delegation's visit. A remarkable event was the celebration of Hindi Divas at the Oriental Study Centre of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The students not only introduced themselves in Hindi but also organised a dance-drama and poetic shows in Hindi.

The meetings with various research institutes and think-tanks gave us insights into the thinking of the Kazakh intelligentsia/policy community.

There is concern on India's side over the increasing economic and strategic influence of China on Kazakhstan. China is making increasing investments in Kazakhstan and continues to build partnerships across various industries including sizeable investments in the energy sector. China has been successful in building pipelines through very remote regions and barren deserts in order to ensure its access to neighbourhood energy. The peace dividend from such projects is too valuable to be missed.

In such a scenario, it is important for India to enter certain sectors in a timely manner even though it might not get a big chunk of the cake. Reasonably sized opportunities continue to exist for India in civil nuclear energy and uranium industry. There is ample potential for collaboration in agriculture, education, medicine, public health, information technology, culture and defence.

Scarcity of water is a common problem for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan. Resolution of the water-sharing issue between Central Asian countries will determine peace in the region in future. With major lakes drying up and water salinity, their options are getting restricted.

Kyrgyz Republic

Kyrgyz Republic is a land-locked country bordering Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It is the second poorest country in Central Asia. It has significant deposits of metals including gold. Because the country's terrain is predominantly mountainous, less than 8 percent of the land is cultivated. Given the state of the Kyrgyz economy and government's aim towards improving socio-economic standards, there is ample scope for India to explore profitable opportunities in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Discussions at the Diplomatic Academy proved effective in establishing India's goodwill in the Kyrgyz Republic. The role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the viability of CASA-1000's extension to India and the creation of a trans-national transmission grid formed the mainstay of the discussions at the Academy. The presence of academics and practitioners of foreign policy – both, serving and former – added comprehensiveness to discussions at Bishkek. The takeaway from the Round Table which the Indian Ambassador to Kyrgyz Republic Jayant N. Khobragade co-chaired was that the Kyrgyz

Republic, contra-distinguished to the impression given by Kazakhstan about its expectations, looks forward to India's active involvement in the country's attempted growth trajectory. The Kyrgyz Republic has an explicit interest in the creation of job opportunities for its large youth population. India's expertise in skill development, language training and the services sector were specifically sought out in interactions.



A Yurt in the background of the Mountains on Bishkek-Osh Route

A visit to the Osh State University reiterated once more the sustaining ties that India and the Kyrgyz Republic share through sinews of culture and literature. The need for a greater interest in the translation of Kyrgyz literature into Indian languages, as also the need for a more concerted effort in sharing of recent additions to the literary portfolio of India was conveyed. The visit to the University and the gracious attention that the Head of the Institute to answering the query of the delegation, on matters varying from the Kyrgyz Republic's strategic orientation to the implicit and explicit differences between the capital and the rest of the country, offered valuable insights into the internal dynamics and international ambitions of the country. The unambiguous position of the Institute's faculty in saying that the Kyrgyz Republic is not a Eurasian State but a Central Asian one was a significant building block to developing an understanding of the county's world view.



The Team Members in Osh State University

There are exchange programmes in place where Kyrgyz students visit India to study on scholarships. However, our meeting with the India Studies Centre at Osh State University revealed that the University would like to increase the number of students to visit India. Even though providing more scholarships might not be possible, the discussion clearly did reflect potential scope in the education sector between the two countries.

India was the first country to establish an India Study Centre at the Osh State University. Indian scholars used to teach there. Discussions indicated that a lack of proactive initiative, may be responsible for a stagnating state of affairs at the Indian Study Centre. The faculty was vociferous in inviting a greater interest by India in the functioning of the Centre and exploring the possibility of meaningful collaboration. It was perhaps an exercise in establishing a comparative point that the delegation was intimated about the interest being taken by the Chinese, Korean and US governments in the spread of their respective languages and literature in the institute.

The post-2014 Afghan situation is perceived as a quagmire that Kyrgyz Republic needs to prepare well. Any instability in Afghanistan is expected to have a spillover into a Kyrgyz territory which is rendered

vulnerable due to persisting economic weaknesses and religious extremism.

Kyrgyz Republic seems to be way ahead of the rest in Central Asia in terms of freedom of expression. At the Diplomatic Academy RT in Bishkek, there were sharp differences of opinion on the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. There were different perceptions of the situation in Afghanistan as well. One of the speakers staunchly supported re-integration of Taliban in Afghan society and a role for them in the Afghan government after US withdrawal next year. The Rector of the Osh State University was candid in expressing his uncertainty about the future relevance of the Manas Facility Centre after the USA leave Afghanistan, they would not need to transit through the Manas.

Uzbekistan

There was apprehension about crossing of the border into Uzbekistan since the very start of the expedition. However, when it finally did happen there were no glitches and it was once again an instance of the idea of exotic-old-friend-Hindustan working in our favour. The tandem of history and the legacy of a cultural heritage with India is taken very seriously by Uzbekistan. The goodwill for India and the idea of the Indian civilization was overwhelming right through Andijon, where the final leg of this expedition commenced, to Khiva where the expedition concluded.

Uzbekistan is one of the two doubly land-locked countries in the world. Its economy relies mainly on commodity production – cotton, gold, uranium and natural gas. It has the fourth largest gold deposits, tenth largest copper deposits and twelfth largest uranium deposits in the world. The bulk of the nation's water resources are used for farming. The region near the Aral Sea sees high salinity and contamination of the soil with heavy elements. Heavy use of pesticides and fertilizers for cotton growing further increases soil pollution.

There already exists a reasonably favorable export-import trade relation between India and Uzbekistan (cotton, leather, pharmaceuticals etc). There are possibilities to enhance Indian investments in Uzbekistan in the fields of tourism, agriculture, trade, textiles and pharmaceuticals.

While discussions at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy did focus primarily on the days of yore and the connect through Babur and Mughal dynasty, there were substantive discussions about Uzbekistan's regional role as a large State and the threat to its

stability in the face of rising concerns about the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. The naturally expected concerns that stem from the withdrawal of US/NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014, formed an important area of discussions. Significantly, despite the substantial amounts of goodwill exuded by the populace and members of the academia and the policy community towards India, in an exposition about Uzbekistan's foreign policy priorities both in terms of potential and problem India did not find a place.



*ICAF Expedition Team at the
Shashtri Monument in Tashkent on 2nd October 2013.*

Uzbekistan seems to have brought the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) problem under control. But Andijon, Namangan and Ferghana provinces adjoining Kyrgyz seem to be more conservative than the rest of the country. So any turmoil in Ferghana Valley will again have a cascading effect in Central Asia.

A visit to the South Asian Studies Center and the Mahatma Gandhi Indology Center was impressive in terms of the interest shown in the study of India and Indian languages. The faculty, while speaking of the great fondness for all things Indian, did lament the lack of a pro-active involvement of New Delhi in the furtherance of Indology. It would

perhaps not be misplaced to suggest that it was a feeling of negligence that led the faculty at the Center to draw a comparison with involvement and grants the Chinese government was consistently making towards the study of their country in Uzbekistan.



ICAF Team at the Urgench State University, Khwarizm, Uzbekistan.

The expedition attended a public function commemorating the birth anniversary of late Indian Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri at the Shastri Park on 02 October before leaving for Samarkand. At Samarkand a visit to the Afrasiab excavation sight was quite educational. The nearby Afrasiab museum has some of the world's renowned paintings in the 'Hall of Ambassadors'. The last leg of the expedition was conducted at the World Heritage Site of Ichon Kala at Khiva and to see the Khans of the Khiva Khanate, the madrassas have turned into handicraft centres, various palaces decorated with majolica tile work and the beautiful minarets of the township.

Conclusions:

Even though semi-regular talks and meetings continue to take place between governmental and non-governmental organizations from both India and Kazakhstan, there needs to be a dedicated effort by the

Government of India to increase focus on this region and support *Track II* organizations in order to increase the frequency of dialogue between the two nations. The current scene of events, though promising, lacks consistency. Meetings to discuss opportunities need to take place more often and delegations should be sent out at regular intervals to follow up and explore newer opportunities. Efforts should be made towards decreasing the time gap between each face-to-face follow up. Expeditions as this one should be a regular feature and be undertaken at least every alternate year.

The trade center established primarily by China at Khorgos on the Kazakh-China trade corridor at a cost of 5 billion US dollars is ostensibly aimed at developing economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation between the two countries by attracting foreign and domestic capital whereas it certainly will ensure dumping of Chinese goods into this region and even Europe through the east-west transit corridors. The team had an opportunity to witness firsthand the ongoing construction of trade centers, shopping malls, hotels, casinos etc. Khorgos is the only example of a joint Special Economic Zone (SEZ) by Astana and Beijing, where citizens of both countries can work without visa for 30 days. China could probably propose such a model across India's northern borders during border resolution talks e.g., at Nathula for trade through Sikkim and on to Bangladesh and Bay of Bengal. Its economic implications, however, merit in-depth study.

Given Kyrgyz Republic's significant metal deposits, mineral exploration and development opportunities could be a rewarding avenue for India to explore. Additionally, Information Technology, Science & Technology, healthcare, tourism, education and culture are also sectors that should be explored by India. Keeping in mind that the Kyrgyz Republic is in need of an economic revival, the public and private sectors are expected to be on the lookout for opportunities to set up industries in the country. With the hope of employment creation, the Kyrgyz government might be open to providing trade benefits to countries that make investments in the nation.

After US withdrawal from Manas Air Base in Kyrgyz Republic, it is likely for economic reasons to be made into an International Facility Centre and diplomatic hub including embassy locations. India may find it pragmatic to establish substantial presence at the Manas Facility Centre because of its strategic location for gathering of intelligence and proximity to an alternate air field. The difference in the perception that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic have, at least in their avowed positions, about China's influence and involvement is an area that substantive academic and policy research needs to concern with.

Uzbekistan has grave concerns on the post-2014 situation in Afghanistan. Though its own border with Afghanistan is well guarded by its army, it is worried about the indirect threat via its borders with Tajikistan that are mountainous and difficult to guard. However, it publically articulates an approach (in fact all the CARs do the same) that it shall interact with the post-2014 elected governments in Afghanistan to resolve emerging problems. This suggests that the pre-US involvement alliances may be necessary once again to check the Taliban from spreading northward into Central Asia.

There is a declining interest on India in Central Asia as depicted in various museums and discussions. Linkages with Indian history courtesy Babur and others though a significant issue in discussions, find nearly nil representation in the Museums and historical publications. So much so that the Silk Route configuration to India seem to be hijacked showing prominent China linkages and ignoring that Pakistan has come up as a land barrier only in the recent past. Government may like to strengthen the Centres dedicated to study Indian society, culture, history, economy and politics at Almaty, Bishkek, Osh and Tashkent to reinforce our cultural and historical linkages.

The teachers of the Mahatma Gandhi Indology Centre in Tashkent highlighted the need for undergoing refresher courses in India. The genuine requirement of the Centre and other facilities that concern itself with a serious focus on Indology must be taken up by the Government of India.

Discussions with the local community and academic indicates an interest and receptiveness to involving India in the sectors of agriculture, pharmaceutical, tourism, water system sciences, the service sector and skill development. It is an opportunity to be availed.

The Bollywood magic is universal in these countries. In the remote town of Taldygorgan in Kazakhstan, a birthday party was celebrated with a disco dance on the tune of 'I am a disco dancer'. At the Al-Farabi Kazak National University, the students celebrated *Hindi Diwas* by singing Bollywood songs, dancing on Bollywood songs and enacting a Hindu wedding to the tune of a Bollywood song complete with seven rounds of an electric fire and throwing money at the newlyweds. At the Lal Bhadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture in Tashkent, we were welcomed by Uzbek young men and women in Indian clothes who later performed dances on Bollywood songs. We must exploit this source of our soft power to the fullest. That, of course, should not take away from our efforts to introduce and project our other performing and visual arts, crafts and literature.

Religion and Cult Syncretism in Central Asia

B.B. Kumar*

The famous Nicolo seal with a four-armed deity, having in his four hands a wheel, a mace, a ring like object and a globular thing, with a devotee standing by his side in respectful pose with folded hands, was described by Cunningham in the *Numismatic Chronicle* as Vishnu, the deity and King Huvishka, the attending devotee. The Kushana identity of Huvishka was identified because of the affinities of headdress and garment.¹ Right interpretation of the seal, however, was possible only after correct decipherment of the inscription by R. Ghirshman.² The inscription, according to him, was in Tokharian script and in Tokharian language; it contained the names of Mihir (the Sun God), Vishnu and Shiva. But the devotee, according to him, was some unknown Hapthalite Chief, rather than the Kushana King Huvishka. Any way, irrespective of the identity of the devotee, the use of Tokharian script and language made it clear that composite cult of Shiva (*Siva*), Vishnu (*Visnu*) and Mitra was popular in Central Asia.

The Russian scholar, A.N. Bernshtam, in 1956, discovered in Tajikistan a fragment of Kharosthi inscription. J. Harmatta translated it as *Nârâyana, be victorious*. The inscription, on palaeographic grounds was to be attributed to second-first century BC. The explanations of the statement, however, differ, as to whether *Nârâyana* is *Visnu*, as in Hindu mythology; or Narayana (*Nârâyana*) the Buddha, as mentioned in the Khotanese-Saka documents; or Narayana, the *deva*, as in Soghdian documents.³ Before elaborating the matter further it is

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necessary to mention that Hinduism accepts Buddha as an incarnation, the *avatâra* of Narayana, the Vishnu. Interestingly, we find example of such cult syncretism even in distant Java in Indonesia, a region on other end of the zone of India-centric religious-cultural continuum. In Java, the Sun was identified with Siva (perhaps also with Visnu) R.C. Majumdar writes:

Dr. Goris has given detailed account of the rites, ceremonies and *mantras* used in connection with *Surya-sevana* or the worship of the Sun. It may be noted at the outset that the Sun was identified with Siva (perhaps also with Visnu) and *Surya-sevana* really means the worship of Siva in the form of the Sun.⁴

Conceptual Frame-work: the Roots

For the roots of such cult syncretism, we may go back to RigVeda, which says that 'the truth is one, the learned speak it variously' (*Ekam Sad Viprâ Bahudhâ Vadanti*) (*Ekam Sad Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*)⁵ It further says that 'the word is of four kinds; the learned know it; its three parts are unknown; the fourth men speak. That (*Brahmâ*) is called Indra, Mitra or Varuna; the same is the Sun in the sky, the same is Agni (Fire), Yama and Matarishva (*Mâtrivâ*).⁶ In Hindu conceptualization, the Gods synchronize; One reflects the other; All reflect the Supreme, i.e., Brahma. We find the echo of the same in *Mâtri Upanishad*. It says 'He is Brahma, He is Visnu, He is Rudra, Prajapati, Agni, Varuna, Vâyu, Indra, Moon, Yama, Earth, He is all.'

The RigVeda re-states the same truth, as given bellow:

'Kindled in numerous places the fire is one,
Lording over all the sun is one,
The dawn that illuminates this all is one, And forsooth one is it
that variously
Appears as this all.'⁷

It is evident from the above that the concept of the Supreme was the same, at least at the level of the learned society from South-East Asia through India to Central Asia. The knowledge encashed in Sanskrit literature was shared even by the nomads of Central Asia. Dr. Raghu Vira, eminent scholar of world level, writes:

And the life in the gers and yurts was sanctified by the humming of *Tântric DharaGis* and *Mantras* in soft melodious Sanskrit strains.⁸

Syncretism Reflected in Art

An attempt of amalgamation of Buddha and Vishnu is visible in a Buddha image with auspicious Vaishnavite symbols found in Balawaste in the Domoko region of Xinjiang, in which Buddha's image is adorned with *shrivatsa*, diamonds, *mandara* as churning rod, horse *Uccaishrava*, the sun, the moon, *vajras*, manuscripts, triangles, and circles. The Uccaishrava horse and the churning rod, in this case reminds us of the Hindu mythological story of the churning of the sea. Paintings of the Tantric type Buddhist God at Balawaste exhibit Hindu Tantric influence in Central Asia.⁹

The Shaivism was popular in Central Asia, is evident from the fact that Shiva appears on certain coins of Central Asian kings like Gondophares, Maues and many others; Shiva's images and that of the members of Shiva family – Ganeśa, Kārtikeya – is found on the wall paintings and wooden panels discovered in Central Asia. Professor A.M. Belenitsky, during his excavation in 1962 at Piandjikent, situated on the river Zervashan in Tajikistan, found Shiva, as represented on the fragment of a wall painting. Shiva was painted there with a circular halo and a decorated *yajñopavita*, standing in *alidha mudra*. Clad in tiger-skin and with a trident (*trishūla*) and terrible look, Shiva has been depicted in Indian style and two attendant figures in Soghdian style. Needless to say, the artist depicting the image was accomplished in both the Indian and Soghdian traditions of Art.¹⁰ Aurel Stein's discovery from Dandan-Uiliq in Xinjiang included a wooden panel with depiction of Shiva, about which he wrote: '...we see a three-faced and four-armed divinity, seated cross-legged on a cushion, which is supported by two couchant bulls. The flesh of the divinity is shown dark blue throughout, excepting in two side heads of which one on the right proper coloured white, bears an effeminate look, while the other is dark blue with the expression of a demon. The rich diadem of the central head with its side ornament resembling a half moon, the third eye on the forehead, the tiger-skin forming the *dhoti* or loin-cloth and finally the bull represented as *vahana* – are all so many emblems, recalling to one's mind the Brahmanic Siva.¹¹ provides evidence of the prevalence Shakta cult, along with Shaiva cult, in Central Asia. The other Hindu deities adopted in the Central Asian pantheon, and occurring on Central Asian art, are Brahmā, Indra, Ganesha, Kumāra-Kārtikeya, the Sun, the Moon and the Lokpālas.¹²

Coomaraswamy has taken notice of the Brahma in Kucha caves of Xinjiang.¹³ A figure of Indra, occurring on a fragment of a Wall painting from Balawaste, is preserved in National Museum, New Delhi.¹⁴ Indra's

figure is identified by the eye figuring on the back of the hand. It needs mention that Indra's figures were found on some other places of Central Asia also.

Paintings of many Hindu deities – Ganeśa, Kârtikeya, the Sun, the Moon, Garuda carrying nectar, and the Mahâkâl – have been found in Tun-huang caves and Bezeclik. Ganeśa depicted on wooden panel have been found at Dandan-Uiliq, Endere, and Khadalik also. Among the Lokapâlas, the four, known as 'Caturmahârajas' – Dhritarastra, king of Gandharvas and Piûâcas guarding the East; Virûdhaka, king of Kumbhandas, guarding the South; Virupâksa, king of Nâgas, guarding the West; and Vaicravana or Kubera, king of Yaksas, guarding the North – have found place in Buddhist pantheon. These Lokapâlas, considered to be warrior kings, were popular not only in Central Asia, but also in China and Japan. They have found their due place in wall paintings and sculptures of Dandan Uiliq, Kucha, Karashahr, Turfan and Rawak.

Besides the deities mentioned above, the Rama legend and the other epic stories were also known in Central Asia. Though, the Ramayana story differs, as we also find in South-East Asia, epic heroes – Rama, Laksamana, Sita, Dasaratha and Parasurama – used to be significantly referred; The Kharosthi documents record such epic names like Arjuna and Bhima.¹⁵ The Krishna cult was also found to exist in Armenia in the second century BC.¹⁶

Amalgamation of Buddhism and Tantric Hinduism is evident from the Buddha's figure from Balawaste, now in the Harry's collection of the National Museum, with the Tantric symbols of the sun and the moon, the two flaming jewels on lotus flowers, the two books drawn on the upper arms, also surrounded by flames and standing on lotus flowers, together with the *Vajra* on the forearms.¹⁷ Other Tantric symbols, as B.N. Puri notes, 'include a chain ornament, a central motif alluding to life and immortality, a galloping horse and a crown alleged to be the Sassanian type symbolizing royal powers. The base has radiating lines running down from the junction with body to foot. Round the junction is apparently wrapped a snake with a part of its body protecting like a cord on each side and each part terminating in a snake's head.'¹⁸ He further remarks that the 'whole of the device is perhaps a rendering of the churning of the ocean.'¹⁹ In that case, the art depiction synchronizes Buddhist, Tantric and Puranic themes.

The amalgamation of Shaivism and Buddhism in Central Asia is attributed to well-known Buddhist philosopher, Asanga of about 400 AD. Rhys Davids' opinion in this connection is worth quoting:

He (Asanga) managed with great difficulty to reconcile the two opposing myths by placing a number of Saiva gods, both male and female in the inferior heavens of the prevalent Buddhism as worshippers and supporters of Buddha and Avalokiteswara. He thus made it possible for the half-converted and rude tribes to remain Buddhists while they brought offerings to their more congenial shrines and while their practical religion had no relation at all to the truths or the noble Eightfold path. They busied themselves wholly with obtaining magic phrases (dharanis) and magic charms.²⁰

Yet another reason of reconciliation is given by Banerjee: 'Another reason of the amalgam of Buddhism and Saivism may be due to certain factors common to them. Both Buddhism and Saivism were originally ascetic religions and both of them were patronized largely by the merchant classes. Whatever it may be, the Saiva pantheon held the imagination of the Central Asian people over a wide area for a long time.'²¹

Religion-wise, India and pre-Islamic Central Asia had three-way linkages through (i) Buddhism, (ii) Hinduism and (iii) Vedism-Zoroastrianism routes. All the communities of Central Asia – Sakas, Tusharas, Turks, Uighurs, Soghdians, Wusuns, Kangs, Mongols, etc. were Buddhists at one time or the other. Hiuen Tsang has written about Buddhist Turk kings and others in Central Asia. Many Central Asian scholars – Parthians, Kuchians/Tusharas, Khotanese and Soghdians/Kangs went to China from Central Asia and translated Sanskrit Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese.²² Buddhist texts in Uighur, Khotanese, Tokharian, Tibetan, etc. translated from Sanskrit texts have been discovered during the excavations in Central Asia.²³ Vambery in his History of Bukhara writes that Turanians were idol worshippers; their king was called Pegu nezad, i.e., derived from Pegu, by which he meant 'of Buddhist origin.'²⁴ Of course, he also writes that the Turks residing north of Tien Shan were fire-worshippers in the seventh century AD.²⁵ But both the religions were in conflict situation to each other.²⁶ Here, it needs mention that the worship of Fire and Sun are shared by both Zoroastrianism and Vedic religion. The very first *shukta* of RigVeda is in praise of *Agni* (Fire God). Vedic 'Mitra' and Zoroastrian 'Mihir' is the same. The languages of RigVeda and Zendavesta only phonetically differ. Therefore, Vambery rightly terms 'Zend' as 'Bactrian Pali.'²⁷ Moreover, Vedas were not unknown to the people of Central Asia. Kumarjiva learnt Vedas, in his return journey from Kashmir to Kucha with his mother, in Central Asia.

There are ample proof of the prevalence of Hinduism in Xinjiang²⁸ and western Central Asia.²⁹ After all the people migrating from Central Asia to India – Kushanas, Hephthals and others – remained the same, what they were there. It is a myth that they got converted to Hinduism after coming to this country. Hindu Hephthal monarch constructed Sun temple at Gwalior.³⁰ As reported earlier Kushanas worshipped Hindu gods. In reality, Hinduism preceded Buddhism in Central Asia.

Synchronization by Islam and Christianity

The fact needs emphasis that not only Hinduism and Buddhism worked under the overall frame of synchronization, but even the Semitic prophetic religions – Islam and Christianity – also attempted at synchronizing. Sufism was one such attempt, about which the Dictionary of Islam wrote that Sufism 'is but a Muslim adaptation of the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophers.' Rabia, belonging to the second century of Islam, represented an old pagan Arab tradition. Al-Hajaj and Abu Yajid Bistami, belonging to the third century of the Islamic era, represent mainly Hindu-Buddhist tradition. The grandfather of Abu Yajid was a Zoroastrian and his teacher, Abu Ali, was from Sindh.³¹ Out of four sects of Islam, Hambalis – followers of Ahmad ibn-Hambal, recognize the importance of *kayās* (opinion based on logic) and *ijmāh* (opinion of majority) also apart from Qur'an and Hadis. Ibn- Saba propagated the concept of Halul (merger of soul in the identity of Allah). The Barmaks belonged to the family of Nav-Vihār of Bactria, which was the most famous centre of Buddhist learning in Central Asia. Abbasid Khalifas appointed Burmak prime minister; they shifted capital to Bagdad (Sanskrit, *Bhag-datta*; God gifted). It needs mention that Bagdad was established by Khalifa Mansur in 762 AD; it became capital in 768 AD. Sanskrit books, especially of mathematics and medicine, were translated in Arabic. There was a more positive opening towards Persian during their regime.

Although Buddhism was rooted in the soil of Central Asia, it was the most prominent religion there; Nestorian Christianity was also quite prominent there in the seventh century AD. Fragments of the 'New Testament' of the ninth century found in Turfan, and one of the fifth century, along with a Nestorian stone inscription are important finds in Central Asia. The inscription throws light on the doctrines and history of Nestorian Christianity; uses many Buddhist phrases. A point to be noted here is that these documents did not mention about the crucifixion of Christ.³² It was under the spirit of understanding and

trust that the Buddhist monks took with them the Nestorian Christian missionaries of Central Asia from Tarim basin to Ladakh to save them from the Islamic sword.³³

Christianity was Judaic in its origin, but it became necessary for it to enter Gentile by acquiring new idiom of Gnosticism, which was the real religion, in one form or the other, of the Greco-Roman elite. The word 'gnostic' derived from 'gnosis' (Sanskrit, jñāna; knowledge, wisdom) means knowledge obtained supernaturally. The Gnostics, called 'monachos' or monks as in the *Gospel of Thomas*, lived solitary lives, sought mystical enlightenment through reflection and ascetic self-discipline. The alliance between Zudaic Christianity and Gnosticism could not last long, as both differed organizationally as well as thematically. The conflict became bitter; Gnostics were declared heretics. Christianity became the official religion in the fourth century after the conversion of Emperor Constantine; Gnostic books were banned and destroyed. In 367AD, Athanasius, the Archbishop of Alexandria, sent out orders for purging all apocryphal books with heretical tendencies. The Gnostic texts in an earthen jar, which were found by a peasant, Muhammad in 1945 Ali in a cliff of the Jabal al-Tarif, near Nag Hammadi, in Upper Egypt, were the ones buried by the Gnostic monks due to fear of being destroyed. These contained Coptic translations of the Greek New Testament dating back to 129-150 AD, and some of 50-100 AD. Elaine Pagels' *Gnostic Gospels*, brought the same to light.³⁴

There are many points where there is fundamental difference between Orthodox and Gnostic Christianity, and similarity between the latter and Hinduism. Denying the 'Otherness' of God, the Gnostics, and Vedantis also, hold that seeker and the sought are at heart one; that the self and the divine are identical; self-knowledge is the true knowledge of God. Gnostics, like the Hindus, speak not of sin and repentance but of illusion (*avidya*) and enlightenment. Hippolytus included Brahmanism as a source of Gnostic heresy. It needs insight and study in depth as to how Gnostic Christianity and Sufi Islam interacted with orthodoxy.³⁵

Manichaeism and Buddhism

Manichaeism or the religion of Mani arose in Babylonia in the third century AD. Fragments of the literature of this religion have been found in Central Asia. It is admitted that there was admixture of Buddhism in Manichaeism. As B.N. Puri has noted: 'The discoveries made in Central Asia seem to support the Chinese edict of 739 AD accusing Manichaeism of falsely taking the name of Buddhism and

deceiving the people. This is not surprising since Mani is said to have taught, as pointed out by Al-Biruni, that Zoroaster, Buddha and Christ had preceded him as apostles and in Buddhist countries his followers naturally adopted words and symbols familiar to the people.¹³⁶

Puri further writes: 'Thus, Manichaeans deities are represented like Bodhisattvas sitting cross-legged on a lotus. Mani receives the epithet Ju-lai or Tathagat as in Amida's Paradise. There are holy trees bearing flowers which enclose beings styled Buddha, and the construction and phraseology of Manichaeans books resemble those of a Buddhist Sutra.'¹³⁷

Manichaeans accepted the Bodhisattva Ksitigarva as one of the 'Envoys of light'. This suggests impact or action of Buddhism on Manichaeism. In popularity, he is equal to Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the Far East.¹³⁸ Although, development of Ksitigarva's cult was a regional phenomenon, its spiritual content and overall framework remained under Buddhism. In this case, it needs to be remembered that the cultural and spiritual soil of Central Asia was fertile enough to produce a Manjuśrī – he was Tokharian in birth -, a Ksitigarva, and a towering scholar like Kumārajīva.

To conclude, it needs mention that there was constant movement of men and ideas within India, Central Asia and Iran; many of their gods were common; their Sun God (Veda, *Mitra*; Avestā, *Mihira*) travelled even travelled up to the far west corner of Europe. The spiritual tradition, unlike the Semitic one, was open, and conducive for the cult syncretism.

Notes and References

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Madan Mohan Hardatt: Indelible Memories of an Unforgettable Teacher

Surat Myrkasymov*

Introduction

Let me frankly admit that reminiscences about one of those sultry, summer evenings in India drove this author once to hark back to the year 2013, when a television show was on in Tashkent. The programme was too interesting to take away eyes from it. It was a special programme devoted to the life and work of Amrita Pritam – one of India's most celebrated poets and writers. Pritam is no more; but her immortal works are very much vivid in Indian minds was evidenced by the television show. It reminded me of the last meeting I had with this great Indian personality at the fag end of the year when 1996 was bidding adieu to the world. It was at her home in Delhi. It was an extremely friendly ambience in the evening and I do vividly remember the interesting discussions we had together along with her family members. In that memorable evening we talked about various aspects of Indo-Uzbek relations, particularly in the fields of culture, literature and people to people contacts between India and Uzbekistan.

Amrita Pritam had visited Tashkent several times earlier and had established close and friendly relations with many Uzbek writers, especially with great poetess, Zulfiya. Some of Pritam's poems and short stories have been translated to Uzbek and published in Tashkent. However, a more interesting event was yet to follow in that dinner evening. At the end of the dinner she presented me a precious gift – a book she wrote and titled *HardattkaJindaginama or The Life History of*

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*Madan Mohan Hardatt.*¹ Madan Mohan Hardatt was the first Indian I had ever met in my life. He was my first teacher who introduced me to the domain of knowledge about India. He was our first teacher at the Oriental faculty of the Tashkent State University. And he was our first teacher who taught us two Indian languages – Hindi and Urdu. He was that gentleman whose mission changed our vision about India. It did change the attitude of many contemporary students in those distant years, who studied with me. Ever since then we looked at India differently as if amazing India, its people, its versatile culture and unfading traditions all changed for us. It was in the bygone Soviet yesteryears. The person who changed all this was Hardattji – my beloved teacher.

I was beholden to Amrita Pritam for her hospitality, for her unforgettable gift and for her contribution to writing a biography of Hardatt and I promised her to translate that book to Uzbek language on my return from New Delhi to Tashkent after completion of my tenure as the first Ambassador of sovereign Uzbekistan to India. I carried the book with me with fond memories of my teacher. It was a memorabilia I still preserve in my heart as a tribute to Hardattji and tribute to Pritam – two great Indians, who have done incredible spadework to strengthen Indo-Uzbek ties. Future generations of Uzbeks and Indians would forever remain grateful to them for what they have done to promote Hindi and Urdu in the land of Babur, for the immortality of their vision, for envisioning the idea that India and Uzbekistan espoused together camaraderie in the same cultural space and continue to share bonding affinities in many areas of human endeavour.

Methodology

Upon return to Tashkent, I shared my feelings with friends and colleagues and invited all to cooperate so that we translate and publish *Hardattka Jindaginama* in Uzbekistan. The response from all quarters was overwhelming. Many people, both scholars and students, liked to go through the book and the book shuffled hands many a time. Then, one day, sometime after my return to Tashkent, I met a man, also an Indologist, who had considerable experience in translating different literature from Urdu to Uzbek. I was sure of his ability to translate the book and requested him to do so – an offer he gladly accepted and took the book from me. But alas! few days later he informed me that the book was lost. All my efforts to get a new copy of the book since then had gone in vain.

I felt lost in the wilderness of mistrust and misfortune and the loss was alone not mine. It was indeed a loss for Indo-Uzbek ties. It was a

personal loss too because I could not pay tribute to my teacher. The misplaced book was never traced to this day despite best of efforts. Sometimes, I have shared this loss with many friends but my efforts did not yield fruit to lay my hands on a new copy of the book. However I continued to work silently in the line of my promise, collected materials and photos and details of my many meetings with Hardattji in Tashkent in my student years and in Delhi in 1985, when I was working in the Soviet Embassy as First Secretary.

Finally, when I met Professor P.L. Dash at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent in 2012, where he was holding the Professorial India Chair, he was impressed with my level of Urdu language, just as I was about his excellent Russian. I knew him from my Delhi years and he asked me where I mastered such immaculate Urdu and Hindi. In reply I told him that it was thanks to my Indian teacher, Madan Mohan Hardatt, who gave such great knowledge of the tongue and whom students of the Oriental faculty of the Tashkent State University, including me, hold in high esteem. We discussed many things, Hardatt included. Professor Dash cheered me up and promised help to get a copy of *HardattkaJindaginama* – the book I had lost. He persuaded me to write an article on the whole episode associated with Hardatt's life in the former Soviet Union and leave it to the posterity to judge.

To my utter amazement a Xerox copy of Amrita Pritam's book came a month later and my joy knew no bounds when Professor Dash gave me that piece of information. He obtained the book from Punjab University through his friends, Dr. Rashpal Malhotra and Sucha Singh Gill of the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development in Chandigarh, India. While the book is getting currently translated, I decided to pen down an article narrating my whole experience relating to Hardatt's legendary life. This short article focuses on half a dozen of questions associated with Hardatt's life, which I am sure, would be interesting to Indian and Uzbek readers, young and old alike.

The article is based on facts obtained from three tangible sources: from mnemonic recollections by the author, meetings with Madan Mohan Hardatt and his family and discussions with Amrita Pritam. Pritam once averred that for long two weeks, while she was in the process of writing the book, Hardatt himself shared many details of his life he lived with in the past. That was in fact a rich source of information for which we all remain grateful to that Indian writer. I heartily thanked her and promised to do everything in my capacity to ensure the book reached the Uzbek community.

I decided to implement this promise based on my own facts and information which I collected during my personal contacts with Hardattji, first when I was his student during 1957-1960 in Tashkent, and then two and half decades later in 1984, when I was Director of the house of Soviet Science and Culture in Delhi. In addition to that I used the data that I gathered from my teachers – Rakhmonberdi Mukhamedjanov, Rano Kayumova, colleagues Tashmirza Khalmirzaev and Azad Shamatov and, of course, Amrita Pritam. I regret that I could only look through the book of hers due to paucity of time. As I bode farewell to my Ambassadorship in India, a great number of farewell parties and meetings were lined up. In the midst of all that not even for a day did I forget my promise to Amrita Pritam and my devotion to my erstwhile teacher. The following few questions always haunted me wherever I went and answer to them may assuage to a great extent my feeling of guilt for losing that precious book.

Why did Hardatt Come to the Soviet Union?

In 1939, Madan Mohan Hardatt crossed the Afghanistan borders and entered into the Soviet territories. What was the need for him to do so was the moot question. After completing the Lahore University in undivided India, (now in Pakistan) Hardattji decided to join the freedom movement with the aim to participate in the struggle for the independence of his country from the British colonial regime. However, at the same time, he felt that his experience and knowledge weren't enough to battle with the powerful British Empire. That was why he decided to visit the Soviet Union to fill in these gaps in his inadequate knowledge. The young man's decision might have been presumably based on his presumptions of the anti colonial foreign policy of the former Soviet Union. Secondly, speeches and interviews of Jawaharlal Nehru after his visit to Moscow with his father, Motilal Nehru and their participation in the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution in 1927, and Rabindranath Tagore's *Letters from Russia* published after his historical visit to the Soviet Union in 1930 greatly influenced the thoughts of Hardatt. Thirdly, he might have heard about the school for young Indian Muhajirs that was established in 1920 in Tashkent by an Indian communist leader M. N. Roy. Although, the school functioned for a short period and was soon closed down by the Soviet government, it served the purpose of creating and raising the Indian Liberal army.²

When Hardattji crossed the Afghan-Soviet border without any official permission, he was stopped on the Soviet territory by border guards. The intruder tried to explain the reasons of his border trespassing, but the commander didn't believe him and officially registered him as a British spy. I am pretty sure that Hardattji did not have any knowledge of international rules, governing official relations, namely the rules of the USSR those days, which limited all possible contacts with foreign countries, except official delegates and diplomatic exchanges, although the communist country nonetheless it allowed leaders and members of the left oriented political parties of various states to come to Moscow.

How Long Was He in Political Prison Camps?

The Second World War began in September 1939 and rapidly spread to various parts of the world. In June 1941 the Soviet Union was attacked. It was a time of great suspicion and slightest doubt on the activities of person elicited instant punishment of Stalin years. During his prison term, Hardattji had witnessed the onset of World War II, its tragedies and consequences. It should be mentioned here that he took part in the heavy battle of the Soviet people against fascism, but in the rear, by working in factories, plants, mines and so on which provided supplies to the Red Army. Thus Hardattji spent approximately nine years from 1939 to 1947 in camps for political prisoners in different parts of the Soviet Union. He had the opportunity to get acquainted with all kinds of prisoners such as politicians, men of art, literateurs, scientists from an array of fields and so forth. These people were jailed due to their non-conformity with Stalinist ideology. During these harrowing years, Hardattji got to know a Russian girl Yevgeniya by name and became close to her and married her. He lovingly called her 'Zhenya', learned Russian, who helped him to read daily newspapers and Russian literature as well as orally communicate with other inmates in jail and outside. Zhenya used to say that Hardatt used to spend his time with a book and that the library was his beloved place.

How did Hardatt Come to Tashkent?

1947 was the year when the third stage of Madan Mohan Hardatt's life began anew. It was a historic year for India, when the country got independence. On 15th of August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru raised the national tricolor and announced India independent. The British, led by Governor General, Lord Mountbatten, left the country 'with a kiss' as

his Indian colleague Chakravarty Rajagopalachari who replaced him wrote in his letter to Mountbatten.³

After this momentous event the Soviet government decided to establish Hindi and Urdu learning centers in many universities and schools of the large country. For example, the Oriental faculty of the Tashkent State University had inaugurated the chair of Indian literature and languages. Madan Mohan Hardatt, prisoner of the Jambul prisoner's camp – now in Kazakhstan – was invited as a teacher of Urdu language. Moreover, Hardattji and his family members, wife Yevgeniya and daughter Shanti, were provided with all facilities in the center of the new Chilanzar district of the Uzbek capital, Tashkent. Here we can observe the fact that freedom for India brought freedom for him and independent Motherland helped him gain freedom.

When I became a student of the Urdu language group of the Oriental faculty I had the chance to see and meet Hardatt the persona. He was a tall, affable and suave man with big eyes and dark black hair. His attire was always a modern suit without a necktie. In fact he never wore a tie. His shoes were always neat and polished. After a few months, when I got to know him closely, I understood that he was looking modern from outside only, but remained a pure Indian inside. He loved his culture, music, literature, traditions and customs and food. During free hours, he used to teach us to sing different classical, political and folksongs. For instance, we sang the famous song of Iqbal 'Sare Jahan Se Achchha, Hindostan Hamara' (India is the best country of the world) or Panjabi folk song 'Paharon wich nikli antre nadian, do sukh gaei kvagdi nehin, jerivagdi nahin, o de koltretaru, do dub gaeik dekhata nahin...' (From the mountains come three rivers, two of them dry and one doesn't flow; on the river that doesn't flow there are three swimmers, two of them went down, the third is out of sight...).

What Was Hardatt's Role in Bonding Uzbek and Indian people?

Once, the first Prime Minister of the independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru had said: 'There can be no friendship without mutual understanding, but in order to understand each other it is first and foremost necessary to know each other.'⁴ In the 1950s cultural relations between India and the Soviet Union shaped up and began to develop. Under Nehru's initiative and support of the Soviet side Uzbek artists visited India in the beginning of 1954. So did the Indian artists on a return trip to the Central Asian country, Uzbekistan, and organized the

first festival of Indian films in October, 1954. Then drama theaters of Uzbekistan began to stage plays written by Indian playwrights. In 1956, the Uzbek State Drama Theater presented 'Daughter of Ganga' based on the novel of Rabindranath Tagore 'The Wreck'. Five years later the Russian Drama Theater staged the spectacle 'Depraved Child' written by Probbi Das. In 1956 Tashkent school No. 24, now named after L.B. Shastri, started to teach Hindi as a subject. Of course, Hardattji helped directors, costume makers with the stage settings and pupils with a textbook written jointly with colleagues of the Oriental faculty of the Tashkent State University.

With great pleasure and interest, Hardattji accepted the suggestion to join the foreign broadcasting department of the Tashkent Radio, which started broadcast in Urdu language on 1st of March 1957 for the listeners of the Indian subcontinent. He worked as a translator and an announcer. The program became popular in the area soon was evident by the huge flow of letters from the listeners. Sometimes Hardattji was inviting us students to Tashkent Radio to translate those letters and some news too. It was a memorable experience for all of us. All these activities are testimony of Hardatt's personal contribution to strengthen Uzbek-Indian relations at the very inception phase. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was the founding father of these nascent ties.



Teachers of Indian Philology Chair at the Oriental faculty of the Tashkent State University (from left to right): R.M. Mukhamedjanov, Madan Mohan Hardatt, R. Kayumova and A.I. Kosonovskiy.

Hardatt's Jindaginama would remain incomplete without the mention about his students, who achieved stellar heights in their career in subsequent years. His contribution to his numerous disciples was his unstinted support to prepare them to face the real challenges of life. Many of these students later became well-known scientists, professors, officials and diplomats. They did a good job in their field of activity to bring closer the two nations, especially when Uzbekistan became an independent State on 31st August 1991. It must be underlined that the relations between the two sovereign countries based on friendship and collaboration have been raised to the highest level of strategic partnership.

How Did He Locate His Family After the Division of India?

A very rare event helped him find his family, which he had left behind in Lahore. Hardatt's Hindu Indian family was based in Lahore. But partition changed everything. Lahore became a Pakistani city and many Hindus migrated to India. Hardatt's own family migrated to Delhi – a fact he was unaware of. When Jawaharlal Nehru along with his daughter, Indira Gandhi, came to Uzbekistan on a State visit in June 1955, there was a great fanfare with large number of journalists accompanying them. No doubt, they came to know about the legendary life of Hardatt Saheb. One of the journalists, presumably from the *Indian Express*, decided to write and publish an article in his paper. There the journalist mentioned that Madan Mohan Hardatt's relatives were living in Delhi. Very soon Madanji found them out in Delhi and subsequently undertook a couple of visits to the Indian capital.

Back in Tashkent, he and his family with Zhenya as wife has had a very comfortable stay in Chilanzar's convenient ambience. Yet Hardattji always yearned to go back to his motherland to join all his relatives and work there for the benefit of his beloved India. Finally, this momentous turn in Hardatt's life came in 1961, when he shifted to Delhi and reassembled the threads of life.

How Was His Life Back Home?

Answer to this question could have been found in Amrita Pritam's *HardattkaJindaginama*. But many things remain either translucent or opaque. It was my bad luck that I found my Guru only in 1984 when I was working in the Soviet Embassy. My Indian friends helped me in locating him. I invited him to my residence and we met in an extremely cordial atmosphere. In those distant years, I found Hardattji rather

strong and healthy inspite of his eye problems. He had plans to have an operation on them. According to Hardattji he had a very absorbing project connected with the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the victory over fascism. He was invited to participate by the Research Institute of History in Delhi. His mental éclat was still very high; yet I offered to help immediately by providing any literature if he required. Subsequently in line with my promise, I provided him with a number of books, newspapers and materials related to this subject of his research.

Our short meeting was a happy moment for me. We were together alone for a brief period. Sadly, that was my last meeting with Hardattji and the powwows we had left a lasting impression on me forever. After a short period I left Delhi because my tenure in the embassy came to an end. In my homeland I was told that Hardattji had successfully undergone eye operation, completed his research project and moved to a new flat.

In 1993 I came back to India as the first Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan. I had the opportunity to get acquainted with Guruji's daughter, Shanti. According to her, Hardattji had passed away in the late 1980s. Before his death he ensured that his wife Zhenya returned to Russia. She too died in Russia, where she was living with her relatives. Shanti got married to a businessman and lives in Delhi.

Controversy and Legal Battle

In the evening of Hardatt's life, Amrita Pritam's work on communist freedom fighter Madan Mohan Hardatt ran into a legal battle with another writer claiming that the title of *Hardatt ka Jindaginama* published in 1983 was a plagiary. Another book written by Krishna Sobti and published earlier in 1979 under title *Jindaginama* contested the title which was already in the domain of public knowledge. Between 1979 and 1983 there were four years and both literary figures Krishna Sobti and Amrita Pritam were professional rivals. When a near similar title was devoted to the life of Hardatt by Pritam, Sobti did not take it easily, could not digest the publication and filed a case in the Delhi High Court. Legal luminaries such as Ashoke Sen and L.M. Singhvi appeared for Sobti and Pritam respectively, but the case dragged on for more than 25 years by which time the lawyers had died but justice was still awaited.

Pritam's *Hardatt ka Jindaginama* addressed a wider audience because it was published in three languages— Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi. There was clearly a perceptual difference: Sobti thought that her 1979 title has been hijacked and plagiarized by Pritam, while Pritam considered that Hardatt the hero was more important than the word 'Jindaginama' that any writer

could use. The court did know well the reputation of both writers and did not take side with anyone. As a result 26 years after filing the case there was no final verdict upcoming. Meanwhile Pritam passed away and Sobti in her 80s is in frail health and waiting for justice.⁵ With all concerned parties slowly withering away from the scene by old age and death, the contestation about *HardattkaJindaginama* fizzles out to nothingness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one could say that the life story of Hardattji was a fabulous saga – a journey studded with accolades and achievements, pangs and pathos intertwined all along. What had started in Lahore ended in New Delhi. Russia was circumscribed with Red Letters of life – a devoted wife who accompanied him wherever he had gone. That was his devotion to Indo-Soviet and Indo-Uzbek friendship. That was his vision of our countries and their peoples. This eventful life consisted of 4 periods: life in the British colonial system, life in the terrible Siberian prisons organized by the Bolsheviks against their political enemies, followed by an unexpectedly happy life in Tashkent in the surroundings of very friendly and kind people, and finally, the last days of life in his beloved motherland, free and developing India. He was a man who never lost his courage and human qualities through the vicissitudes of destiny. He adored and respected the culture, traditions and language of other nations. But never for a day did he forget his own nativity, where he was rooted, nourished and fostered by the milk of his mother. He has rendered an appreciable contribution to the formation of Indology in Uzbekistan. He was the founding father of Indian studies in Tashkent and rendered yeoman service to strengthening people to people contacts between our two countries. A praiseworthy example of human accuracy and neatness, Madan Mohan Hardatt was an embodiment of reality. He was a real Guru-Ustad personified.

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Security Challenges and Multilateral Relation in Central Asia

Dr. Prof. Mirzokhid Rakhimov*

1. New geopolitics and security

Central Asia faced considerable political, social, and cultural changes throughout the whole of the 20th century; since the beginning of the 21st century, the region is confronted to new steps of the geopolitical transformation. Some experts say that Central Asia is returning to the Great Game of the 19th century but with new players. It is well-known that Central Asia historically was in the center or important aspects of interest of different empires and one could say that the region was more or less in Great Game situation during all periods of its history.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newly Independent Central Asian republics tried to form new bilateral and multilateral relations and within a short time the Central Asian nations were formally recognized by many countries, which established with most of them diplomatic ties and exchanged diplomatic missions. The region's countries have joined the main international and regional organizations.

The geopolitical situation in the Central Asia changed considerably in the second part of the 1990s and at the beginning of the millennium, when China activated bilateral and multilateral relations in Central Asia with the establishment of the Shanghai process in 1996 and when Russia re-established its position and sphere of interest in Central Asia together with increasing the coordination between Russia and China. In addition, Taliban's access to power in Afghanistan and its influence on the regional security had to be taken into account. Then, in 2001 after the terrorist action in the U.S., the U.S. established military bases in

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Central Asia, NATO stationed a contingent in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan and started its counterterrorism operation in Afghanistan. Besides the terrorist challenge the importance of Central Asia grew because of its natural resources, its significant geoeconomic potential, and the role of its energy deliveries to the world market. Although the beginning of the 21st century finds a heightened interest of Europe in general and the EU in particular in Central Asia, but still the EU does not yet have a unified strategy toward the region.

At present the Central Asian nations are confronted by complex threats including that from international terrorism, religion extremism, illegal drug trafficking, transnational criminal activities, economic, and environmental problems.

It is well-known that the issues of nuclear disarmament is one of the most important one for security of the international community. This issue is also relevant in Central Asia. Thus, by 1991, the territory of Kazakhstan was a huge arsenal of weapons of mass destruction with 1040 nuclear warheads for intercontinental ballistic missiles and 370 warheads for cruise missiles airborne. It was the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal after the U.S., Russia and China. However, despite all sorts of offers to leave this arsenal, Kazakhstan had voluntarily chosen the path of complete nuclear disarmament¹.

The initiative to establish a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone in Central Asia was for the first time proposed by the President of Uzbekistan, I. Karimov, at the 48th session of the UN General Assembly on September 1993 and supported by all Central Asian nations. This initiative to establish a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone in Central Asia has immutably received support within the framework of General Assembly resolutions and decisions, as well as in the documents of the Nuclear Weapon Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conferences. In September 2006 in the city of Semipalatinsk (Kazakhstan), Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the five Central Asian countries signed the Treaty on establishing a Nuclear-Weapon-Free- Zone in Central Asia. This document has become a result of the many years long joint work of the States of the region alongside the active assistance and participation of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and of the 'nuclear five' countries – Great Britain, China, Russia, United States, and France. In this treaty, the participants have specially underscored the support of this initiative on the part of all United Nations member-states, including those, which posses nuclear weapons, as well as the UN role, which for the first time has taken a direct part in elaboration and approval of the Treaty draft. Further, the Treaty on the Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone in

Central Asia envisaged the signing of an additional Protocol by the 'nuclear five' countries. During the ceremony of signing the document in Semipalatinsk the representatives from the countries, party to the Treaty, expressed readiness to continue the work on preparation of the relevant Protocol with countries possessing a nuclear weapon.

The security challenges is a wide topic, which includes boundary issues and the Central Asia Nuclear-Free-Zone initiative. After the disintegration of the USSR the State frontiers of the former Central Asian Soviet Republics, which can be considered as the most significant attribute of the State sovereignty, constituted the nominal administrative lines for dividing the territory of the new independent republics. The new Statehood persistently required from the republics an official forming of territorial frames for sovereignty and establishing a regime providing the sufficient level of security throughout the country. National and territorial delimitation in the 1920s and 1930s and ensuing years of the Soviet power left a number of territorial problems in Central Asian countries unsolved, what became the source of conflicts. Thus, the Ferghana valley, which is distributed among the Kirghiz, Uzbek, and Tadjik republics, broadly illustrates how the formal lines of boundaries, replenished by an emerging number of enclaves and areas due to landscape peculiarities and structure of communicative ways, actually developed into an enclave or semi enclave position. Further examples are the Tadjik enclave Vorukh in Kyrgyzstan and the Uzbek enclaves Sokh and Shakhimardan in Kyrgyzstan.

New threats to State security have become a serious motivation in the process of constructing administrative barriers on the new Central Asian borderlines, in particular, the Taliban coming out to the Southern boundaries of the CIS in 1997, the acute activation of the Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan, which committed raids throughout Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, as well as the activation of religious extremist organizations and drug trafficking via the region. It has become obvious that new threats to security vis-vis the transparent boundaries, and the fact that four out of five Central Asian States border Afghanistan threaten the rapid dissemination of armed conflicts throughout the region. One of the forms of response has become the efforts of countries to put up frontier barriers and to strengthen immigration control and thorough customs examination and clearance of goods. This has forced the processes of delimitation and demarcation – sometimes unilaterally. However, the border delimitations process is completed between China and Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, Russia and Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. But still a more

complicated situation exists in the cases of normalizing and arranging the Uzbek-Kyrgyz, Tajik-Uzbek, and Kyrgyz-Tajik boundaries due a large number of contended land plots located on the boundaries' regions.

To sum up, the post-Soviet newly independent Central Asian nations faced considerable geopolitical transformation and are confronted by transnational complex threats. Therefore national and regional security is interdependent and interconnected. Strong regional integration and international cooperation is essential for solving security problems in Eurasia and Central Asian nations have to create a necessary regional security system, which should have all the dimensions – political, military, economic, ecological, and others.

2. Challenges of Regional Cooperation in Central Asia

It is well-known that in the post-Soviet period, Central Asian and other republics have been cofounders of regional organizations including the Central Asian Cooperation Organizations (CACO), the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which show different effectiveness.

From the beginning of the 1990s the Central Asia States have sought a new model of development and integration. The countries of the region have common social, economic, environmental and political problems and cooperation is necessary to solve these challenges. The process of Central Asian interstate cooperation began in 1994 when the presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed a treaty creating a common economic space between the two countries. Later Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan joined them, and in 1998 this cooperation was named the Central Asia Economic Forum. In February 2002 the Central Asia Cooperation Organization was officially created at the meeting of the presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

There are many problems in the processes of Central Asian regionalization and integration; among them is the prevalence of national interests over the regional and the different customs policies in Central Asia; in addition there are no information exchange programs on publications, TV programs, etc. In the recent year the transboundary water sharing got more importance for interstates relation in Central Asia. Historically the water issue and its sharing were important aspects of agriculture of the region in particular and of economic and political relation in Central Asia in general. During the Soviet time in whole Central Asia new areas of steppe had been transformed into agricultural land and in the middle of the 1980s more than several thousand irrigation

systems – including 900 in Uzbekistan as main cotton producer of the USSR had been built up in the region. This included hundred thousand kilometers of irrigation channels, dozens water reservoirs, and several hydro-power stations, including the Charvaq reservoir (Uzbekistan), Nurek (Tajikistan), Toktogul (Kyrgyzstan), and many others.

Among all the regional challenges the transnational water sharing issues have become the most important for Central Asian nations in recent years – first of all for downstream countries such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Upstream countries Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan tried to build new huge hydro-station for internal use and to export electricity to other countries to make economic profit. The upstream and downstream countries have different position to this issue. In particular Uzbekistan requesting international expertise for new hydro-stations of Rogun (Tajikistan) and Kambarta (Kyrgyzstan) because of its possible effects on water sharing and on the ecologic situation in Central Asia, which was supported by Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. For instance in June 2013 during the official visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Uzbekistan an agreement on a Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan was signed. This agreement sets out the basic principles and priority areas of bilateral cooperation in political, economic, trade, transport and communication, water and energy, environmental, cultural, humanitarian, military and other areas. There the parties have confirmed a common position regarding the regime of water sharing in Central Asia, based on the solution of the water and energy problems solely through the strict observance of norms of international law and taking into account the interests of all countries in the region. It was also underlined that any hydroconstruction planned in the upper reaches of the rivers, should be required to pass an international independent expertise under the auspices of the UN and be agreed with the countries in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya.

In addition, the position of Russia in this issues and its formal support of downstream countries is important – particularly, in regard to investments in the construction of the hydro-station in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The EU and other international actors tried to be more balanced. For instance, the president of World Bank, Robert Zelik and Special Representative of the EU to Central Asia Pier Morrell also expressed the need for a careful international expertise of the new construction and suggested the building of small-size hydro power stations. Meanwhile the government of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan expressed their willingness to continue with the building of Kambarta and Rogun.

The problem with water sharing in Central Asia is that there is no legal framework of the status of regional rivers. Here, it is necessary to find common approaches and acceptance in the framework of the UN and the SCO and to establish a legal framework for the main regional or transnational rivers – Amu Darya, Syr Darya, and Zerafshan – as well as a dialogue between Central Asian nations themselves and to use international experiences in the solving water sharing problems in different parts of the world such as for instance the status of the Danube river in Europe.

In the last two decades, Central Asian republics do not consider each other as their main political and economic partner. For instance, a sociological survey in Kazakhstan shows that neighboring regional countries are not among the priority economic partners². My interviews and sociological surveys among experts from Central Asian republics showed the main problems for regional cooperation is different national interests and economic development, rivalry between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan for leadership, fear of sub-national structures.³

In November 2005, at the meeting of leaders of CACO in St. Petersburg, it was decided to include the CACO in Eurasian Economic Community. EEC was founded in 2000 to establish an economic zone comprising of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan; Moldova, Ukraine, and Armenia have an observer status in the group. The official media stated that the main reason for CACO joining EEC and the creation of EEC was that both organizations had similar purposes and their merger would increase effectiveness. In January 2006 Uzbekistan became the sixth member of the Eurasian Economic Community in the summit in St. Petersburg. But in October 2008 Uzbekistan paused its membership; the main reason was probably the attempt of other member countries to build new hydro-energy stations in Central Asia, which might possibly have negative effects on the ecology and most importantly – on the agriculture as well as making downstream countries including Uzbekistan more dependent.

In January 2010, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia created the Customs Union with aim to create a single customs territory with common boundaries and customs tariffs. Since July 2010, entered into force on the Customs Code and the following years, customs were eliminated between Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus.

During autumn of 2011, Vladimir Putin proposed the creation of 'Eurasian Union.' In May 2013 in Astana, the presidents of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan held a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the main body of the Customs Union. The main

outcome of the meeting was the decision to start since January 1, 2015 the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC) regime without exceptions and limitations.

At a meeting in Astana, the leaders of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan decided to grant the status of an observer in the Customs Union to Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. According to experts, for Ukraine it is merely an extension of its games on the opposition between the Eurasian and the European Union; for the Kyrgyzstan, it is perceived need in the difficult economic conditions.

In October 2013 a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council was held in Minsk, at the level of heads of state – first in the 'narrow' part of (the leaders of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan), then – in the extended presence of the President of Armenia S. Sargsyan, the President of Tajikistan E. Rahmon, President of Ukraine the V. Yanukovych, first Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan D. Otorbaeva. According to official information, during the Supreme Council were considered current issues that determine the dynamics and prospects for further development of Eurasian integration. In particular, the heads of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia signed a package of documents: the decision 'On the main directions of integration and the progress of work on the draft Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union'; decision 'On the accession of the Republic of Armenia to the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space' and others.

With the possible consequence of the formation since January 2015 the Eurasian Economic Union may discontinue the EEC, as all its institutions merge into the Eurasian Economic Union.

Consequently, the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union member countries perceived positively, however, there are different views from CIS and foreign countries on perspective for the future of the organization.

Former Soviet republics also became founding members of the Commonwealth of Independent (CIS) States during the meeting held in Alma-Ata on December 21, 1991. Representatives of the CIS member states meet regularly to discuss economic, military, political, and social issues of common interest. More than 2.000 agreements on various aspects of intra-CIS relations have been signed, but most of these agreements exist only on paper. But both its lack of a clear purpose and different perceptions on the part of its members have called into question the future viability of the CIS as a supranational entity. Nevertheless the Commonwealth can add to its credit that the dissociation of former Soviet republics took place in good order and did not cause profound geopolitical upheavals. Providing institutional and legal conditions for

dialogue of equals and cooperation in complex issues, it has performed thereby an important historical mission of promoting sovereign independent states, which choose their own foreign policy, their model of economic reform, and their ways of nation building. In 2008 CIS agreed on a concept of development and a plan for its implementation in which all States of the Commonwealth confirmed the priorities of the CIS. Some of the problems were discussed at summits of the CIS Council in 2009-2013.

In May 2013 in Minsk a meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government and the business forum of the Single Economic Space, was held, which drew more than 600 participants from over 15 countries. In the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the CIS in Minsk attended by representatives of all the eleven countries, more than 30 documents have been signed. It included in particular, the Protocol on the application of the agreement on Free Trade Area between the parties and the Republic of Uzbekistan. As a result, Uzbekistan became the ninth member of a free trade zone within the CIS. In countries that have signed an agreement on the establishment of a Free-Trade-Zone, it cancelled duties, taxes and fees. Cancellation shall also put quantitative restrictions in mutual trade. Thus each member country retains the right of self-determination and independent trade regime in relation to third countries. But between the participating countries will keep the customs and border posts to control crossing goods.

Meanwhile, there is good reason to hope that in the future the CIS and other organizations can be opened to new opportunities for deepening economic and humanitarian cooperation and strengthening security across the region and around the world.

In 1996 the presidents of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan established the 'Shanghai Five' in order to resolve border disputes and to reduce the armed forces along their borders. The process started in 1996 and at a meeting in Shanghai on June 15, 2001, these countries founded the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Uzbekistan also joined the organization. India, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan received observer status in the SCO.

The SCO passed through a number of interesting phases in its institutional and political evolution and at present, it represents an international instrument to coordinate areas of multilateral cooperation. Nonetheless, there are certain problems in the development of the SCO. It is obvious that we need to develop cooperation between SCO and leading European, Asian and American

countries, and international institutions. In the long view, the SCO may open up new opportunities for cooperation and integration among member countries, as well as in cooperation with other international organizations to strengthen regional and global security.

Conclusion

Central Eurasia is an important region in the world because of its geopolitical location and rich energy resources. Regional cooperation in general has very weak institutional frameworks and is still in the stage of formation. But prospects of economic and political cooperation in Central Eurasia as well as the speed and scale of these processes will depend on the readiness of nations to work together in regional projects, to carry out the proper reforms, and to introduce the forms and methods of economic regulation adopted in the world practice and definitely it is a matter of political will of the governments of the member-states. Regional cooperation in Eurasia can become an important factor in the maintenance of peace and security in the region, which are necessary for stable economic growth and development. Regional organizations need to concentrate first of all on further regional integration in Central Asia itself and to be adequate to the increased processes of globalization. Also Central Asian nations' necessity is to create a regional security system in Central Asia, which should include all the dimensions – political, military, economic, ecological, and others. The stability and security in Central Asia affect the direction of integration, the patterns of regional cooperation, and the building of institutions.

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Environmental Issues in Central Asia and Regional Co-operation: A Case Study of the Aral Sea

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Environmental security has become an integral component of human security. An ecological balance is essential for people to be able to lead a normal and a healthy life. Today the issue to lead a normal life has acquired global significance and nations are discussing climate change, global warming and its likely impact on human beings, food security and biodiversity. In this regard the Central Asian States (CAS) are no exception. Since independence these States have been grappling with several issues of concerns to them. Among the environmental issues of Central Asia the most catastrophic one is the desiccation of the Aral Sea, which has now shrunk to dangerous proportions causing enormous socio-economic and health problems. At the crux of this issue is water and its inefficient management. Water management problems are also at the centre of regional politics and tensions. The Aral Sea basin encompasses all the CAS and Afghanistan. A solution to this grave problem has to be, therefore, found in a collective and a collaborative manner before it becomes worse. Is such a co-operation possible? The article examines the status of the Aral Sea and explores the possibility of a cooperative approach.

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Aral Sea

At one time the Aral Sea was counted as the fourth largest lake on the earth and by 2007 it had shrunk to 10 percent of its original size. The Aral Sea had not only shrunk, but in the process had badly disturbed the ecological balance. The source of the Aral Sea has been the two life giving rivers; the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya. By the 1960s the volume of water discharged by these perennial rivers had started to decrease. In due course the Syr Darya got separated from its tributaries; the Chu, Talas, Assa and Bugun and by the end of late eighties it did not reach the Aral Sea. It had got lost in the Kazakh steppes. Similarly the tributaries of Amu Darya the Kashkadarya, Zerafshan and Tedjen did not reach the main river, and now a trickle flows into the Aral Sea. It was Mikhail Gorbachev who acknowledged in 1986 the Aral Sea catastrophe. In the Soviet period attempts to divert the waters of Siberian rivers to the Aral Sea were considered, but before some progress could be made on this problem, the Soviet Union broke up. The Aral Sea has split into two parts; the small Aral Sea in the north and big Aral Sea in the Southern part. The big Aral Sea in turn has split into eastern and western parts. Reportedly the island of Vozrozhdeniye has disappeared. Today the Aral Sea is dust laden with high levels of salinity and toxins and bare.

With the shrinking of the Aral Sea its basin also came within the disaster zone. Since the region has become arid, sustainable agriculture and industries are not able to survive. This is largely because of high degree of salinity, toxins and reduction in ground water levels that is unsustainable for development. Fishing industry collapsed because fish species have gone down from 32 to 6 and those that have survived are unfit for consumption because of salinity. Bird species have fallen from 319 to 160 and mammal species from 70 to 32.¹ In Turkmenistan the Kara Kum desert is expanding thereby reducing the area for agriculture. Economically these adverse developments have led to unemployment. Importantly the impact on the population has been equally disastrous. It was found that a large number of people suffer from high levels of respiratory illness, throat and esophagoel cancer, liver and kidney ailments. Badly affected by this environmental hazard are Uzbek regions of Karakalpakstan, Khworezm, Nukus. In Kazakhstan it is its province of Kyzl Orda and in Turkmenistan it is the province of Dashoguz.

With increasing population and rising expectations, this problem is impinging on governments and is one of the causes for ethnic tensions, which needs to be addressed by all the CAS on a priority base. The issue of Aral Sea, though difficult is not a hopeless one.

Crisis in the Aral Sea

The environmental degradation of the Aral Sea began during the Soviet period. In an attempt to expand the agricultural base large scale irrigation was introduced. According to Beatrice Mosello 'Under the Soviet regime and directed by elaborate engineering. Moscow spent billions of roubles building dams and canals in Central Asia so as to increase the area of irrigated land without concern about environmental damage' 2. Soviet General Secretary Khrushchev's hair brained schemes of converting the Kara Kum desert in Kazakhstan into irrigated land led to immense wastage of water. Massive amount of water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya was diverted for the cultivation of cotton. The Soviet agricultural policy for Central Asia was focused on cotton cultivation, as cotton was necessary for the textile mills of Moscow and other cities, and as is well-known cotton requires lots of water. At that time water resource of Central Asia was managed by the Centre in Moscow. The quotas were fixed in such a manner that it favoured the downstream countries because cotton cultivation was the priority. Moreover, water was managed in a, rather, wasteful manner. Another aspect is that, irrigated practices require plenty of water. Being a centralized system, local views did not receive due attention. Consequently the discharge of water into the Aral Sea by these two main rivers began to decrease.

Besides the island of Vozrozhdeniye was used for testing biological weapons, anthrax and the animals in the region such as horses, monkeys, goats, donkeys etc. were used for experimenting new drugs.² Although the island of Vozrozhdeniye has disappeared, it is believed that weaponised organisms have survived which can inflict untold harm on human beings. By the time these problems were acknowledged, the Soviet Union had broken up in 1991.

Secondly, after gaining independence the CAS launched the process of transforming their social, political and economic order. In the economic sphere agriculture is the mainstay of the economy in which cotton occupies the prime position even today, as it is a prime cash crop of the region. Immediately after independence the five CAS's agreed to continue the Soviet arrangement of water allocation as the Amu Darya and Syr Darya are transboundary rivers. This agreement was formalized in the Almaty Agreement of 1992. However the issue of Aral Sea did not figure in the Almaty Agreement. With the passage of time all the CAS's witnessed a rise in population, rising expectations and with that arose the issue of ensuring food security. The downstream States, that is, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan needed more

water so as to expand their irrigated land. Over the years the downstream States are reportedly drawing over and above the quotas of water allotted to them. Whereas the upstream States Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are keen to harness their water potential for generating hydel power. These conflicting approaches have added to the tensions among the countries.

The fertile area in Central Asia is the Fergana Valley, where the density of population is so high today, that it is unable to ensure adequate food for the people. The Uzbek part of the Fergana Valley is the main food bowl of the country, while the density of the population here has gone up, agriculture is not able to keep pace with the rising population. This has caused many to migrate to other countries adding to the existing tensions between the countries. Hence the focus has fallen upon irrigated land as an alternative. Experts are of the opinion, as mentioned earlier, that irrigated land consumes more water and the return flow into the river is polluted especially in the lower reaches of the two rivers. '...The large scale development of water resources mostly for irrigation has changed the hydrological cycle in the region and caused serious environmental problems in the Aral Sea Basin'.³ Besides salinization and water logging on the irrigated area is a problem. A World Bank Report of 2009 highlighted the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides that finds their way into drainage water and back into the river.⁴ Hence irrigation practices have affected the two rivers and their flow into the Aral Sea.

Thirdly, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are endowed with water resources, but are deficient in energy resources—oil, hydrocarbons and natural gas—unlike the other States. These two States have adopted policies to harness their water resources by way of constructing mega hydel power plants for domestic purposes as well as to export it to neighbouring countries. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have revived the Soviet era hydroelectric power projects of building huge dams; Kambar-Ata 1 and 2 (Kambar-Ata-1 is already operational) in Kyrgyzstan and Rogun in Tajikistan. It is estimated that Kambar-Ata would generate 2260 M.W of electricity. While Rogun is expected to generate 3600 M.W of power. These dams are going to lead to winter flooding in down stream States when agriculture is not possible, while affecting summer cultivation and causing soil erosion.

Fourthly, climate change has affected the two perennial rivers. The glaciers that feed into these rivers are shrinking and the smaller ones have reportedly disappeared. According to one source 'Over the last thirty-five years the average temperature has increased by 1° C and the

size of glaciers in the Pamiro-Alay system has been reduced by 22 percent'.⁵ Other scenarios similarly indicate that the region will gradually become warmer and receive more precipitation. More water will infiltrate the soil due to increase in evaporation and fewer days of frost in the ground as a result of the increased temperature.⁶ Modernising the irrigation system and increasing the effectiveness of each water drop in agriculture is needed to cope with the climate change. Moreover production system should be prepared to incorporate new crops that are more suitable to new conditions of warmer climate.

The above mentioned factors in combination to various degrees have impacted on the Aral Sea leading to its desiccation. The crux of the problem is the management and distribution of the water resources of the two main rivers that feed into the Aral Sea and are transboundary in character. Hence the issue of Aral Sea should be treated in an integrated manner which requires sound regional arrangements with essential legal framework. In short, regional cooperation is an issue of cardinal importance for all.

Regional Co-operation

At the time of independence the CAS were aware of the environmental dangers posed by the shrinking Aral Sea. However, as mentioned, the Almaty Agreement did pay due heed to the emerging of Aral Sea. The countries were eager to see the continuation of water allocations fixed during the Soviet era.

As part of the Almaty Agreement an Interstate Commission for Water Co-ordination (ICWC) was set up with the task of overseeing water allocations and to control the activities of the river basin enterprises. The ICWC also manages a Scientific Information Centre (SIC) which trains water officials, assessment of proposals among other things. Subsequently, in 1997 the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) was set up. The IFAS and ICWC are supposed to work in tandem but are not functioning effectively. The work of the ICWC is hampered because its not an independent body and neither does it have enforcement capability in case of violation. In the past during the era of States such as Merv, Sogdiana, Bukharo Khworezm and others their irrigation system was considered as one of the best in the world. Institutions such as 'mirabs', 'aryk' or 'aksakals' were set up as independent bodies enjoying immense power on water resources. They had the power to appoint officials, seek community help in repair works and to oversee all aspects relating to water management. While it is

true that the population in those days was small it is important to remember that water was managed efficiently. In contrast the ICWC's mandate is limited and does not enjoy independence.

Moreover the irrigation practices even today are old and archaic causing immense wastage of water and poor drainage that pollutes the water. Besides, the IFAS faces a financial crunch. All the States do not contribute regularly to IFAS. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have, however, not defaulted on their payment. For the other States, it is possible that economic difficulties due to the nation building process and other factors have put pressures on their economy and hence unable to contribute to the IFAS.

Since the Central Asian economies are agrarian based for which they overwhelmingly depend on irrigation, the stand of the leadership is nationalistic. Their focus is on water and they are making consistent effort to increase their respective quotas of water allotments. This could be explained partly because their economies are still in the process of transformation which entails difficulties for the people, and partly because they are aware of the potential role water can play in aggravating ethnic tensions. Hence all the five Central Asian countries have declared that water is a sovereign right of their country and it is their duty to protect the river water that flows through their country. Water is considered a strategic asset and very much a part of their respective security agenda. Linked with rising population and national competition the CAS have failed to come up with a viable regional approach to replace the Soviet system of management. A multilateral regional approach is needed that addresses energy, agriculture and demographic aspects of water use. So far the emphasis has been on bilateral agreements that lack political weight and cannot resolve what in reality is a regional problem. Consequently as rightly observed by Beatrice Mosello that by placing water in the threat-defence sequence the space for cooperation has narrowed down.⁶ For instance at the Summit Meeting of the IFAS in Kazakhstan in 2009 the Kyrgyz President was more concerned about the melting glaciers as his State had placed great emphasis on hydropower, while the Uzbek President, keeping the Russian pledge to assist Kyrgyzstan in its Kambrata 2. hydel power project, was more concerned about the role of the third parties would like to play in these discussions. In the process the issue of Aral Sea received cursory attention. The CAS should realize that Aral Sea is a disaster waiting to happen, and, if it happens, it will impact all.

Mention must be made, however, of Kazakh efforts to reclaim the Aral Sea. In 2005 it constructed a 13 km earthen dyke with gated concrete to prevent the Syr Darya from getting lost in the Steppes and thereby, wasting a precious resource. These efforts have paid off and the volume of water in the Aral Sea has risen. It rose from 40 to 42 meters. In the process the biodiversity has improved—fish species, vegetation etc. The United Nations Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia located in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan organized the first regional conference in Dushanbe on the issue of Regional Cooperation on water related problems. However no satisfactory solution emerged.

In the present situation attempts at national level can be undertaken in the initial stages. These measures include modernizing irrigation practices especially ensuring efficiency of every drop of water, change over from intensive water consuming food produce to those items that need less water. In this way food security can also be ensured. Such measures at the national level would in due course pave the way for regional cooperation. Another aspect is the growing nationalism and expectations that have led to ethnic tensions and the role of water in such tensions cannot be discounted. In the Fergana valley the potential for such conflicts is indeed high. What has further fuelled such tensions/ conflicts is the absence of border settlement in the Fergana Valley.

Hence we find that the water issue is the crux of the issue and the environmental hazard posed by the shrinking Aral Sea has not so far received due attention it deserves. According to the Regional Water Intelligence Report '— No interstate agreement for the Aral Sea Basin is in place that addresses the cost sharing operations and maintenance, rehabilitation and modernization of infrastructure —'.⁷

A factor that could facilitate regional cooperation is the discovery of oil in the Aral Sea region. Perhaps this discovery could push for a solution to the vexed issue of Aral Sea.

Concluding Observations

From the perspective of environmental security the Aral Sea has emerged as serious hazard to human life as well to the ecology. At the centre is the reduced water supply from the two main rivers of Central Asia. However, the solution to the problem, though difficult, is not impossible. Since Central Asia is greatly dependent on irrigation for its agricultural needs, it is essential that wastage of water is avoided, every drop of water is efficiently used. At the same time irrigation reforms should be

undertaken, encouraging the cultivation of those crops that require less water, and yet are able to ensure food security. Search for non-conventional sources of energy should be encouraged so that water for power generation is utilized to the minimum. These efforts can be undertaken at the national level and benefits are evident, and regional cooperation would follow. Moreover, the leadership is aware the potential role water can play in fuelling ethnic tensions or even conflicts. The nature of environmental security is basically transnational in character and hence has to be tackled in a collective and a collaborative manner. That is how a long-term solution can be found. Given the cooperative spirit there is no doubt that the two perennial rivers would regain some of their earlier vitality. The Central Asians are familiar with the age-old adage that 'Water is Life' What is required is to generate the requisite political will.

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Hydro-Conflict and Integration Process in Central Asia

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Tensions around water distribution and consumption has assumed such proportions that experts have started talking about hydro-conflict and hydro-war in Central Asia . No other region in the world has faced such security peril linked to water.

Crux of the matter is that water resources of the countries of Central Asia are not distributed equitably. The region is clearly divided into water-rich States like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on the one hand, and countries like Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan dependent on them for water, on the other. While Kirgyszstan controls the river-basin of Syrdaria, Tajikistan controls water resources of Amudaria.

Syrdaria is the longest and second largest in terms of water resources in Central Asia. Syrdaria with a length of 3019 km covers an area of 219 thousand square km. The major part, 75.2 percent of water resources of Syrdaria is formed in Kyrgyzstan, 15.25 percent on the territory of Uzbekistan, 6.9 percent in Kazakhstan and 2.7 percent in Tajikistan .

Amudaria river has a length of 2540 km, with a basin of 309 square km. Like Syrdaria, Amudaria loses much of its water resources for irrigation purpose in the downstream. The major portion of water resources of Amudaria (74 percent) is formed on the territory of Tajikistan, while 13.9 percent of the water is formed in Afghanistan and Iran, and only 8.5 percent on the territory of Uzbekistan.

Tajikistan occupies third place in the world and second place in the CIS after Russia in terms of meeting water requirements. For example, the annual hydro-energy potential of the republic constitutes almost 600 billion kilowatt hrs. Apart from that, Tajikistan has significant

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reserves of drinking water in the ice-bed (more than 60 percent reserves of Central Asia). Nurek hydro-electric station built during Soviet Union with 3 million kw hrs regulates nearly 4 percent of water necessary for Uzbekistan.

Afghanistan which uses so far not more than 2 billion cubic meters of water for irrigation purpose in its part of Amudaria basin affects the issue of the water resources in the region. Potentially, it can use up to 10 billion cubic meters of water which could have negative consequences for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The water-energy issue of Central Asian region is fraught with high conflict potential. Up to 90 percent of water resources is primarily used in agricultural sector. With growing population the demand for water by 2015 could rise by 20 percent compared to first half of the current decade. In other words, water resources in Central Asia in coming years would decrease in absolute terms, and preservation of contemporary level of annual consumption of water around 5-6 thousand litres per head could become impossible. Simultaneously, owing to even distribution of source water formation, 80 percent of regional water reserves and some large hydro-technical installations are located in the territory of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Each of the mountainous countries use less than 10 percent of total volume of water for their own consumption, striving to get significant material compensation from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan that need more water. As a result of growing demand for more hydro-energy and water for agrarian purpose, trans-border water consumption complicates transition to rational exploitation of water resources.

Hydro-plants of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, regulating the main water supply system, are oriented as before towards meeting requirements of agrarian sector of neighbouring countries. If they favour more energy production rather than water consumption for irrigation, that would lead to most intensive water consumption not in summer but in winter. In that case, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan would have significant growth in energy production that would facilitate their energy export. Maximum water exploitation in summer is profitable neither for Kyrgyzstan nor Tajikistan. However, it is vitally necessary for their downstream neighbours to receive water from the territory of upstream countries practically free of cost. Uzbekistan is in the focus of main contradictions of regional water consumption to whom the main complaints of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are addressed. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan trying to resolve their problems through unilateral steps are also slowly being drawn to the conflict.

Water and energy balance issue of Central Asia has spurred serious debate about use of market mechanisms for resolving the water issue in the region. However, this has not been able to resolve the contradictions between agrarian and energy interests of regional economy. All questions concerning water-energy balance – accumulation of hydro-resources for their further use during irrigation season, use of water for electricity production and potential projects for expansion of water use in each of the Central Asian countries are used as levers of pressure on neighbours .

For example, the press release by Tajik embassy in Kyrgyzstan in February 2009 blamed Uzbekistan for stopping the transit of energy supply from Turkmenistan under the pretext of 'technical' reasons. Speaking in December 2009 in the 15th conference on climate change in Copenhagen, Tajik president Emomali Rahman proposed to conduct complex expertise of influence of the system of water use on ecological situation of the region.

Uzbek Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziev on 3rd February, 2010 demanded from Tajikistan to conduct detailed independent expertise on construction of Rogun hydro-electric station, because building of such huge object could do damage to the fragile ecological balance existing in the region in the back drop of Aral sea catastrophe.

S. Mirziev declared that the threat increases in connection with increasing number of accidents taking place in Toktogyl and Nurek hydro stations, built more than 35 years back and where no planned repair work has been done, which presents a real threat for the entire region. He gave the example of the accident that took place in Sayanoshushenskoi hydro-electricity station long back.

Delay in reaching agreements between Central Asian countries is linked to political context of the ongoing conflict. On the back drop of low level of life standards of the population systemic crisis of water consumption is not viewed as direct threat to political stability by the ruling circles of Central Asian States. Hypothetical variants of aggravation of situation as a result of water or electricity scarcity would always be 're-addressed' to neighbouring countries. Strategic risks, particularly accelerated reduction of all kinds of natural sources of water, unprecedented loss in the sphere of water use lead to deterioration of ecology. Energy price rise and some other related problems, are taken into accounting in decision making but have not been given serious attention. According to international assessments in 2005, total loss of all the countries of Central Asian region resulting from ineffective water management constituted 1.7 billion usd or 3

percent of GDP. In other words, the contemporary hydro-issues in Central Asia do not seem to be serious enough for the regional elite, requiring quick solution .

Thus, water resources of Central Asia form complex challenges of strategic and tactical nature, whose resolution demands significant material cost and principled change in approaches towards water consumption. So far the situation continues to develop in the regime of 'deferred catastrophe'. The possibility for resolving the crisis lie in the domain of management related issues.

Sustainable development of hydro-electricity and irrigation system in countries of Central Asia require huge capital investment. Considering social-economic situation in the countries of the region, it is improbable that they can resolve the problem individually. That is why the necessity for common efforts to meet the challenge is obvious, notwithstanding the contradictions and difficulties.

Indeed, energy and water can form objective basis for integration in Central Asia. Interstate cooperation in this sphere is a necessary condition for strengthening food security, energy, self-reliance, expansion of export potential and concentration of investment resources. However, decisions taken in the framework of Eurasian Community and Central Asian regional integration initiative on formation of mechanism for interaction in tapping the potential of Syrdaria and Amudaria and rational management of water-energy system of the region, have not been so far realised.

Along with acute competition for water between Uzbekistan and Kyrgstan; Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, there are serious differences of opinion between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan on various issues. Difference of opinion surfaces between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan from time to time. Reduction of difference in the opinion between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, also between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is important but not an absolute condition for bringing progress in multi-lateral agreements. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, poor in hydrocarbon, constantly demonstrate readiness to reduce volume of water for agriculture. All the countries of the region claim their right to water, which remains so far free resource, while there is no solution to the issue of energy equivalent.

The interstate dynamics on energy supply remains a major hindrance in the resolution of water issues in the region. Here Uzbekistan maintains a hard position. It goes for compromise with its neighbours with difficulty. Contradictions between key water suppliers (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) and its main consumers (Uzbekistan,

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan) did not lead to the formation of steady coalitions on the water issue, which compounds its conflict potential. Orientation of countries of the region towards different legal models of resolution of water resources is a path to nowhere. While Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan give emphasis to Dublin Convention of 1992, Uzbekistan stresses on the integration principle on regional level.

It cannot be said that leaders of Central Asian countries did not make any effort for resolving the issue of water management in the region. The international conference held at Nukuse declared its support for the ideas of equal rights and interstate cooperation on water issues. The five presidents of the region confirmed their 'obligation for full cooperation at the regional level on the basis of mutual respect, good neighbourliness and decisiveness' on the water resources issue in the Nukus declaration. It was followed by Bishkek Declaration of heads of the States from 6th may, 1996, in which the necessity for 'accelerating the drafting of new strategy for water distribution and economic methods of management in the sphere of use of water and energy resources' was recognised.

The agreement on 'cooperation in the field of preservation of surrounding atmosphere and rational use of nature', signed in 1998 emphasizes the necessity for creation of water-energy consortium in Central Asia. However, formation of water-energy consortium of countries of Central Asia has not taken place so far. Differences about shares in the consortium, lack of desire for compromise, trust deficit and regional political competition obstruct the realisation of the project.

Fifteen years were required for the working group of four interested countries– Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – for their meeting at Bishkek in April 2006 to present the draft of interstate agreement on joint use of water-energy resources of Naryn –Syrdaria cascade of water reservoirs of which Toktogulski is the largest. Participants have not made any progress on the issue so far.

In September 2006, a non-formal summit of leaders of Central-Asian States was held at Astana where the issue of water resource management was discussed. No practical decision was taken there. Participants once again emphasized the need for joint decision on the issue of water distribution and consumption at the interstate level.

Removing contradiction between countries of Central Asia through multi-party coordination seems to be improbable. To achieve a balanced agreement while preserving existing volumes of water consumption is impossible. At the same time, any project to change natural or economic factors require not only large investments but minimum three to five years of period for realisation.

In the mid-term perspective, contradictions in water use of Central Asian region would remain as a political factor. Moreover, continuation of existing uncertainties promotes competition between different groups of national elite. Part of ruling circles preserve negative attitude towards Russian investment resources. In other words, conflict potential of water consumption unites internal political and external political challenges of development in Central Asia.

Obstacles in the Way of Taking Strategic Decisions

Experience of multi-lateral cooperation on issues of water consumption among Central Asian countries bears contradicting character. Some of the experts think that certain issues concerning fair distribution of water resources of trans-border rivers of Central Asia could be resolved at bilateral level, and resolution of rest of the issues would be achieved in the near future in the framework of Eurasian Economic Community. In reality, the situation is not all that optimistic.

Water-energy issue is quite relevant for Eurasian Economic Community. In the Sochi summit of Eurasian Economic Community held in August, 2006 a decision was taken for drafting a concept of effective use of water-energy resources of Central Asian region. A high level group has been formed for working out a mechanism in the sphere of water-energy resources and a road map has been approved.

The 'roadmap' for perfection of mechanism of interaction between member-states of Eurasian Economic Community on the issue of water-energy resources offers a stage by stage plan for creation of joint market conditions in the process of integration of sectors of water and energy management within the community.

The main principle of cooperation should be continuity of water-energy regimes of river basins. Strategy drafted in the framework of Eurasian Economic Community stipulates the following objectives and tasks:

- Drafting and realisation of coordinated measures in the sphere of rational use of water-energy resources;
- Taking measures for fulfilling interstate agreements and accords, also agreements between member-states of Eurasian Economic community on issues linked to use of water-energy resources;
- Ensuring optimal co-relation in irrigation and energy systems of water reservoirs;
- Attracting investments for realisation of existing water-energy objects of interstate significance ;

- Creation of stimulates for attracting investment;
- Creation of conditions for production cooperation in water management and energy spheres.
- Formation of new interstate management and executive bodies with the status that permits executing decisions in the framework of Eurasian Economic Community is the key task.

Creation of a regulating body is required for streamlining investment in the sphere. Russia is the largest investor in the hydro-energy sector of Tajikistan and is considering the possibility of investment in Kyrgyzstan. Of late, participation of Iranian companies in hydroenergy sector of the above countries has significantly increased.

Regional tension caused by water consumption, closely linked to energy issues, creates potential political risk for investors. In this connection arrival of foreign investments should be linked with regulation of water-energy regime of trans-border rivers in the framework of agreed structures.

Formation of coordinating body for management of water-energy resources stipulated creation of the following structures: high level groups for preparing mechanisms for water-energy management and international water- energy consortium.

The High Level Group has been Constituted and had Several Sessions.

However, international water-energy consortium has not been formed so far. There are objective reasons for that. Creating water-energy regulating body is no easy task. The main obstacle for forming permanently functioning and effective structure in the framework of Eurasian Economic Community is lack of political will on the part of Central Asian leaders to overcome the differences. Nevertheless, trans-border character of water resources and close interlinks between water and energy supply in the region dictates the necessity for working out coordinated regional policy in the sphere of energy and water use.

The difficulties in multilateral resolution of Central Asian water management issue include differences in the positions of external-political partners of the countries of Central Asia on investment issues. Investment projects, proposed under the patronage of US and European Union do not reflect the requirements of building 'horizontal' trade-economic links between neighbouring countries.

In the framework of the partnership project on development of greater Central Asia, advanced by US State Department, Washington

strives to get involved in the process of energy issue resolution in the region. US companies participate in building of electro-transmission in the southern direction (Afghanistan and Pakistan), and provide consultation service to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The forum on electro-energy regulating bodies formed under the Programme of Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) is engaged in implementation of projects, directed towards formation of common energy network of the region. Programme of CAREC is initiated by Asian Bank of Development in 1997 for realisation of projects in the sphere of energy, transport and trade in Central Asia .

Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan Mongolia and international donors such as Asian Development Bank, European Bank of Development and Reconstruction, IMF, Islamic Bank of Development, PROON and World Bank participate in CAREC programme. One of the major priorities of CAREC is to support effective and rational use of energy and water resources in Central Asia. Apart from this, World Bank and investors from EC, US, and Japan are ready to take part in the creation of water-energy consortium (WEC) of countries of Central Asia. Experts of World Bank have prepared their concept of creation of WEC.

It cannot be ruled out that further institutional strengthening of WEC would lead to its transformation into full-fledged regional organisation, and could be a significant resource for penetration of outside countries to the markets of Central Asian countries.

Difficulties in resolving issues in the sphere of water-energy balance of Central Asia through the framework of Eurasian Economic Community, bear long term character. More than that, many things linked to their challenges would appear in the agenda and for intensification of search for multilateral agreements within the framework of SCO. Nevertheless, initiative of Uzbek President Islam Karimov, advanced by him in the Bishkek Summit of SCO (2007), first of all, significantly prolong the status-quo on the water issue; secondly, transfers the hydro-energy issue into the domain of national resolution. New negotiation process with the participation of China brings in the issue of investment for modernisation of irrigation systems. On the one hand, the conditions for restraining extensive growth of regional water use are strengthened, on the other hand – weight of arguments in favour of conservative variants of transferring hydro-energy of mountainous countries to the sphere of export. However, growth of SCO involvement in the process of establishment of water-energy balance of the region is not a decisive step towards achieving strategic

breakthrough. Orientation of ruling circles and export community of the countries of the Central Asia towards different legal models of resolution of trans-border water consumption remains serious formal as well as informal obstacle for achievement of multilateral agreements in the short-term perspective.

Scarcity of water resources and competition in the sphere of water consumption in Central Asia has of late obtained special significance. Serious efforts for resolving the water issue in the multilateral format permitted preventing escalation of local conflicts, but did not lead to overcoming major interstate contradictions on water issue, in spite of projects of linking it with energy issue.

Central Asian water issue has a Russian dimension. Russia as the leading country of Eurasian Economic Community and the country whose companies are planning to build large hydro-energy plants in Central Asia, is a participant of regional water management process. In order to resolve practical issues in the sphere, particularly linking water-energy regimes of the river basins with regimes of energy consumption and investment, Russia is keen in finding political consensus among countries of the region.

It is clear, Russia with these objectives in mind should distance itself from the functions of single arbitrator of the regional contradictions, facilitating involvement of foreign investment into the sphere of water consumption and ecology, keeping aside expensive forms of cooperation with Central Asian States. It is important to pursue a policy for stage by stage achievement of bilateral agreements between States.

It is high time to work out a project of joint balance of water-energy resources of the region for complex development and use of hydro-energy resources of the river basins of Syrdaria and Amudaria. It is important to confirm coordinated regimes of water consumption in basins of Syrdaria and Amudaria rivers.

Joint construction of hydro-electro stations, interstate electricity transmission lines, modernisation of energy equipments and irrigation systems in the region also would facilitate reduction of conflict potential in the sphere of water use.

Experts, specialists not only in the sphere of hydrology and ecology but also in the field of international relations can make positive contributions to mutual understanding and building real cooperation. Russian experts community highly assessed the outcome of the international conference 'Euro-Asian Economic Community : Issues of food security' held in Moscow on 19-20 May, 2009.

Water Problems in Central Asia's AMU Darya Basin

Umida Khalmatova*

The problem of water supply and share of trans-boundary water resources today are particularly acute in Central Asia. Disruption of earlier economic relations between the former Soviet republics of Central Asia led to widespread drop in production and reduced production of energy resources. Streamlined operation of reservoirs and delivery systems of energy resources began to falter. Central Asian States are faced with the problem of the joint use of water resources in the region, which in the past were controlled from a single centre, Moscow. Changes in the political and economic situation in the region led to the sovereign States using water resources, primarily in their own national interest¹.

Water resources in Central Asia have always had and continue to have a significant impact on economic activities of the region, as all major rivers are trans-border i.e. cross the territory of two or more countries. Any change in water use by one of the countries that share common water ecosystems, or impact on water-course through construction of water facilities will inevitably affect the interests of others. Moreover, the lack of coordination can lead to a conflict, because the effects are often unfavourable for downstream countries, both for economic development and socio-environmental conditions.

Trans-border water management in the Amu Darya river basin is characterized by a very specific transition from centralized planned approach to the situation in which the States vie with each other in this basin for the same vital water resources. Water is a key valuable asset for economies of all Central Asian countries, and the rivalry between the countries stems from the different approaches to use of water: for

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hydropower generation – in countries located in the upper reaches of the river; and for intensive irrigation – in countries located in the lower reaches of the river. Moreover, such a rivalry is going on in such surroundings, in which ecosystems are under adverse pressure caused by excessive intake of water as well as widespread water pollution.

In this regard, issues around sharing the largest river of the region – the Amu Darya reflect the full range of issues in Central Asia in the field.

Amu Darya is the largest river in Central Asia. Its length is 2540 kilometres, and the basin area is 309 square kilometres². After merging of Vakhsh with Panj the river is called Amu Darya. In the middle reaches of the Amu Darya, three major right tributaries (Kafirnigan, Surkhandarya and Sherobod) and one left tributary (Kunduz) join it. Then up to the Aral Sea, it does not receive any influx. The river is mainly composed of melted snow and ice water, so maximum flow is observed in summer time, and the lowest - in January and February. Such intra-annual flow distribution is very favourable for the use of the river water for irrigation. Flowing across the plains from Kerkyto Nukus, Amu Darya loses much of its flow through evaporation, infiltration and irrigation. Amu Darya is the most feculent river in Central Asia and ranks high in the world for turbidity. The main flow of the Amu Darya is formed on the territory of Tajikistan. The river then flows along the border between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, crosses Turkmenistan and returns to Uzbekistan and flows into the Aral Sea.

To date, one of the issues that are largely discussed in the Central Asian region is the intention of Tajikistan to build the Roghun hydroelectric power station. The Roghun hydropower plant would be built on the Vakhsh River, a tributary of the Amu Darya. This, along with Kyrgyzstan's Toktogul dam, is the largest hydroelectric project ever planned in Central Asia, with potential generating capacity of 3,600 megawatts. Roghun was designed by the Soviets to improve water management and electricity production in Central Asia. The Roghun hydro power plant, which has been designed to generate 3600 megawatt electricity, is also the world's highest dam standing tall at 335 metres and should become one of the largest hydro power plants. Construction of this project will lead to greater water regulating ability on the flow of river Vakhsh to 25 cubic kilometres, which is 1.25 times more than mean annual value of water drained by the river³.

This huge project has long been opposed by downstream countries of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as they fear that loss of water in

constantly reducing Amu Darya will badly affect their water-dependent economies and give Tajikistan a leverage to blackmail these countries. These countries are also worried that if the dam is built, Tajikistan will hoard water in reservoirs during the summer months (when the downriver agricultural regions need it most) so the upriver country can release it in the winter to generate hydroelectric power. In September 2012, Uzbek President Islam Karimov declared that if Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan use water as leverage in the region, war could begin.

Uzbekistan is especially vulnerable to water shortages because of its economic reliance on cotton, irrigated with the waters of the Amu Darya, for export. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Global Agriculture Information Network, the 2013-2014 market year for Uzbek cotton experienced a few difficulties, including the need to replant 10-15 percent of the crop due to April storms and problems with the availability of irrigation in the southern growing region during hot summer months. The total area harvested decreased by 2 percent (in part due to using the land for other crops), while total production decreased by 5.5 percent when compared with the 2012-2013 market year⁴.

On the other hand, Tajikistan says there is no other alternative to build these huge hydro-power projects in order to secure energy independence of the country. Moreover, authorities in Dushanbe have always been quick to blame Uzbekistan for its heavy use of Amu Darya water to irrigate its large cotton fields.

It must be acknowledged that water of Amu Darya are heavily used for irrigation in the river basin. Large-scale irrigated agriculture in the basin of Amu Darya is mainly based on a well-developed system of irrigation and drainage facilities⁵. However, sometimes difficulties may arise in the river basin of Amu Darya related to the problem of head works located on other country's territory. For example, headworks of the Karshi Canal, which transports water from the Amu Darya to the territory of Uzbekistan, is located on the territory of Turkmenistan. The same situation is with the Tashauz canal that originates in the territory of Uzbekistan, and then flows into Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have signed a special bilateral agreement. A committed political will by both sides is needed to ensure uninterrupted supply of water.

Yet, the region's irrigation and canal systems are extremely inefficient and in need of maintenance, which has been lacking in both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Additionally, improper use of irrigation has led to increased salinity in the ground, which decreases the quality of the soil and can lower crop yields. However, the political and economic situations in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan could prevent widespread improvement in the water distribution system. Improvements to the system would likely require both foreign funding and expertise to implement⁶.

Until recently, particular disagreements and conflicts between States in the Amu Darya river basin were not observed. However, in recent years risks related to water provision have grown and it is more explicitly felt especially in dry years. In this regard the lower reaches are the most affected by water shortages and are an indicator of successes and failures of the Amu Darya basin countries in co-management and use of water resources.

All the problems mentioned above have resulted in one of the world's worst environment catastrophes – the decline of the Aral Sea. The Aral Sea, once one of the four largest lakes in the world, is located on the border of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. It is fed by Amu Darya and Syr Darya, Central Asia's two main rivers.

Large-scale production of select crops, especially cotton, became a staple of the region under Soviet rule. The heavy use of the waters of the two rivers for crop irrigation reduced the flow of the rivers into the Aral Sea, reducing water levels starting in the 1960s and increasing salinity. By 1990, the lake had separated into two halves as the water levels dropped. The declining water levels and increased salinity effectively eliminated a once vibrant fishing industry, and much of the population around the lake left to find work elsewhere. For example, the population in the areas surrounding the former harbour city of Aralsk, Kazakhstan, decreased by 12.5 percent in just 10 years.⁷ Those who remain face some of the highest unemployment rates in the region, and the area is one of the poorest of Kazakhstan.

Partition of the Aral Sea into two separate reservoirs (the Northern and the Southern) occurred in 1989. By the early 1990s it has lost about 50 percent of its water resources and by 1995 about three quarters of the water and the shoreline moved by 100-150 kilometres.⁸ This contributed to the beginning of a process, which has been linked, on the one hand, to emergence of dry soil – a new desert called Aralkum. Salinity and water logging on the other hand led to deteriorating climate: summer has become drier and hotter than earlier and the winter – colder and more prolonged. In turn, increased salinity has led to disruption of the ecosystem. The number of microorganisms reduced, making many species of flora and fauna extinct.



Source: Stratfor

The decrease in the water level of the Aral Sea formed a number of new islands which opened landline access to the *Vozrozhdenie* (Rebirth) island. During the Soviet era, the island was used as laboratory for creating and testing bacterial weapons. Due to the on-going shrinkage of the Aral, it became first a peninsula in mid-2001 and finally part of the mainland.⁹ Since the disappearance of the Southeast Aral in 2008, *Vozrozhdenie* effectively no longer exists as a distinct geographical feature. The area is now shared by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This resulted in a potential risk of spread of dangerous viruses all around the periphery to human body.

With winds from the dry parts of the former Aral Sea, dust containing sea salt, pesticides and other chemicals is spread along the basin area which is home to nearly 35 million people. It has become clear that it is not feasible to restore the Aral Sea in its present form. To partially solve this problem, heads of Central Asian States met in March 1993 to sign an agreement on joint actions to address the Aral Sea crisis. At the same time the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) was created. Each year, the Central Asian States allocate 0.1 percent of their GDP to finance the IFAS.¹⁰

In conclusion, it must be noted that above-mentioned problems of the Amu Darya are inherent to Central Asia's other challenges in this regard: be it issues of water management on the Syr Darya, the region's second largest river, or political leaders' willingness to cooperate on addressing mutual problems of Central Asia. Without close cooperation and mutual concessions, it is impossible to solve the existing environmental problems having a direct impact on the population of Central Asia.

Notes:

- ¹ Kurtov A., *Vodniekonflikty v TsentralnoyAzii* (Water conflicts of Central Asia // *Obozrevatel*– 2004. - No 7. – pp. 23-35
- ² UN Economic Commission for Europe, Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resources management in Central Asia, *Water Resources of the Amu Darya River Basin*, Almaty, December 2011.
- ³ U. Khasanov, *Intricate Specifics of Regional Water Security in Central Asia*, in Malhotra et al, ed. *South and Central Asia: Quest for Peace and Cooperation* Chandigarh: India, 2013.
- ⁴ Stratfor, January 2014, *Central Asia's Troubled Waters: Resource Allocation Stokes Tensions*.
- ⁵ They include such giant facilities as the Karshi pump station, Amu-Bukhara canal to carry water to lands in Uzbekistan, and Karakum canal to southern parts of Turkmenistan.
- ⁶ Stratfor, *Central Asia's Looming Conflict Over Water*, 13 November 2012
- ⁷ Deutsche Welle, *To Save the Aral Sea* (Russian), 9 August 2005
- ⁸ Public Technologies Center: *Problemy regionalnoy bezopasnosti TsentralnoyAzii* (*The Problems of Regional Security in Central Asia*)
- ⁹ NASA Visible Earth Project: at <http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/view.php?id=55941>
- ¹⁰ L.N. Kalinichenko, N. N. Semenova, *Ekonomika Kazakhstana: Krupnye Problemy Krupnoy Strany* (Kazakhstan's Economy: Big Problems of a Big Country /in *Post-Soviet Central Asia: Loss and Gain*, Moscow, Russian Academy of Sciences, 1998, pp. 78-79.

Central Asia: Politics and Economy Between Chaos and Conundrum

P. L. Dash*

Introduction

In 2011-2012 all Central Asian countries have celebrated 20th year of their independence. They have achieved commendable progress in all spheres of their life during these years. Getting over from the monolithic ideology of communism, they have shifted to something that is not similar to any system. However, three areas are clearly discernible in the transition process of the last two decades: economy, society and ideology. The economy is no longer the command socialist economy. It is opening up, in some areas rapidly and in others slowly. Predominant private economic activities are visible in the market places. In laying the foundation of modern industry they are less visible. Foreign Direct Investment has been steadily flowing with varying degree of success in each country depending how investment savvy the FDI rules have been. The State has retained control over all spheres of economic activities. The society is no longer the communist one with free education and kindergarten, full employment guarantee to all, free housing, free medical care and many other benefits. All these have vanished. Everyone has to fend for himself and his family. This is where it has created a schism between the haves and the have-nots thereby polarizing the society into rich and the poor. In the ideological realm, the Marxist-Leninist ideology has been completely given up. Even in academic libraries it is hard to find the works of Marx and Lenin that once adorned the shelves. Instead, works of incumbent presidents occupy the stacks. There is an irony: what the people wish to preserve, the presidents do not desire to protect.

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As a result there is apparently a growing gap between the rulers and the ruled. The more this gap would widen in coming years, the bitter will be the taste of power for the rulers to keep their flock together. Kyrgyzstan is a good example of this irony when the rulers are speaking a different language that their subjects fail to understand. The Zhanaozen oil township riots in Kazakhstan in December, 2011 is yet another reminder of social discontent, coolly simmering beneath the glossy contours of Central Asian reforms.

Democracy Building

The post-Soviet destiny of Central Asia would have been different had Britain won and Russia lost in Central Asia in the process of geopolitical jockeying and the Great Game at the end of the XIX century. Developments in the region would have taken a different course from what it did under Russian colonial rule. English language would have opened up windows of opportunities and vistas for progress for Central Asians to freely globalized today. The encumbering factor of language would have dissipated. The Central Asian space would have been closer to India or may have thrown open a different system of governance – an amalgam of Turkish, Indian and British models. Even now, if hypothetically, Russia and China would dominate the region in the process of the New Great Game, the developmental process would be slow, Central Asia's integration to the globalizing process would not take rapid steps forward, and ultimately progress trammled. Finally democracy and economic development would definitely and immensely suffer and globalization would take a back seat.

Far too long Central Asia has been a space for geopolitics and nobody has thought about indigenous economic progress that would help the region sustain itself, economically develop, use its own resources for the benefit of its citizens and come up with creative ideas of Mirzo Ulugbek, Al Beruni, Alisher Novoi, Sultan Sanjar and several others. The political system that colonial Russia had evolved is bereft of two major pillars of democracy – a strong judiciary and a free press. In the process of state building through the post Soviet two decades, what the Central Asians have today is a strong legislative mechanism through regular elections; both presidential and parliamentary. The countries are however not considered democratic because they function with a subservient judiciary and an extremely muzzled press. Press freedom and independence of judiciary are apparently stymied by the executive to be pliant to the desire of the incumbent president, who is

synonymous with the state. As a result state building has taken a definite shape, nation building process has taken a step forward, but building a modern and democratic state has faltered; rather failed. Free press and independent judiciary as a prerequisite of democracy is grossly absent in Central Asia as much in those countries where presidents have continued since independence – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – as in those countries where presidents have changed like in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan.

On a positive note the countries have effectively dismantled the centralized command system of the Soviet era in economy. But in the sphere of governance the central grip is rigidly tightened. While people are allowed by the state to engage in private trade, their activities are controlled and stringently monitored. They have built institutions that effectively manage safety of the system and security of the country. However this effective management system is ineffective to ensure the prerequisites of building a modern state, or a democratic system. This is why while the short term goal of dismantling a repressive Soviet system has been achieved, and the medium term objective of ensuring the process of building a new system has been assuring the people for a prospective future, the long term goal of building a democratic society is sidestepped by many ad-hoc measures to overcome day to day problems rather than devising a permanent way to resolve issues pertinent to democracy. India has passed through all these phases and could set an exemplary model for all Central Asian countries to emulate. An inter-regional dialogue process called ‘democracy and state building’ ought to start between India and the Central Asian countries with provisions for parliamentary delegations from Central Asian countries to exchange visits and learn democracy building in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society like India.

The presence of NGOs to encourage democracy and ensure transparency in governance is also absent in Central Asia. Typically, the operational NGOs are funded by the government, owned by influential politicians, often by members of the president’s family; and yet their activities are controlled by the State. As a result their contribution to State building process is diluted and they serve as models of institutions echoing the voice of the government on issues affecting the society. Divergence of opinion has failed to emerge to help the countries build sustainable democracy. Many things are to be learned by experience, but the experience of others in different parts of the world is also important to learn. Should Central Asian countries ever

wish to learn from Indian experience, India in the neighbourhood alone could share its rich experience with these countries in State and democracy building. A mutual platform is required to bring the two sides together for which exchange of parliamentary delegations on a bilateral basis ought to serve as a baby step in fostering democratic ethos among the political elite of each individual Central Asian country.

Real Dilemma

When new political parties, still not very strong to stand on their feet, toe the line of the president who has unlimited power, nascent democracy becomes a mockery because everybody enjoys office at the mercy of the president. The Central Asian political situation grew dilemmatic within a triangular circumference involving three clear pressure groups: 1.the president and his cronies, comprising a couple of thousand bureaucrats, military generals and top policemen, 2. the old Soviet apparatchik, disheartened and disoriented, normally counted a spent force, but sometimes yet to be reckoned with because they still wield residual influence of bygone years. They do not side with the president, but favour the people; and 3.the masses, grassroot populace of millions of people who have esoteric political inclination to serve their motherland. Aside from the three pillars of democracy, these three segments reinforce a political system hard to be recognized as democratic. The president is located at the upper tip of a triangle, thereby administering political pressure in the system of governance. At the base of the triangle sit the people at one corner, while old apparatchiks occupy the other. The pressure from above is invariably heavy on the base due to the cycle of policy implementation that may be liked or disliked. The quality of pro-people policies assuages political pressure to a great extent. Alternatively, the wider the schism between the rulers and the ruled, the heavier is this pressure of the grassroot on the rulers.

Across Central Asia, on two spectrums of a parallel triangle the corners are occupied by three differing elements: the pro-Russian elite, the pro-native nationalists and the globalization Gurus. Each of them remains preoccupied with their respective agendas that tangibly affect the polity and politics. All these elements in the society are normally watchful about the way the government conducts itself from the top. They are disappointed with the growing pace of corruption, the malfeasance of the government to meet the increasing demands of the people. All these elements tend to side with the people with socio-

economic demands to ameliorate the societal conditions in favour of the people.

One could observe a series of contradictory tendencies evident in the democratization process in Central Asia in the last two decades. First of all there is a discernible divide between the capital and the countryside. This could otherwise be called the urban-rural divide that authorities in every country try to ignore, sidestep or to render lip sympathy. Secondly, there is a certain degree of difference between the past Soviet political system and the present new political system. For instance, what Yeltsin wanted to preserve was a unified economic zone with a singular defence and currency system to be overseen by the Kremlin. The Central Asians wished to obtain sovereignty in all spheres of governance and management including defence, diplomacy, economic development and social progress without Russian mediation. This clearly implied that Russia wanted an integrated system/space to prevail, while the Central Asians endeavoured to devise a governance style of their own.

Thirdly, past emotions of clinging to a union that existed for centuries clashed with present political dispensation that yearned for increasing autonomy and independence. Although it has been hugely difficult for the Central Asian to bid adieu to Russia and embrace capitalism, they have preferred independence to Russian meddling. However, when the debate over a strong State verses a soft State took centre stage and a Central Asian political model was searched for in the periphery and beyond, it was finally observed that Central Asians preferred their native national model to slowly evolve to aping any other model, whether Turkish, Chinese, Indian, American or Russian.

Fourthly, all countries of the region looked beyond Russia and found that all countries in their neighbourhood have been undergoing economic reforms: India, China, Turkey, Russia et al. Most interestingly, if these countries do not tend to change their political system, why should Central Asians? This very thought convinced the leaders and the led alike that there is little urgency for political leadership change. The system would evolve slowly over the years and what must be the focus of the moment are economic reforms to salvage the countries from doldrums. This thought was further corroborated by another prevailing idea: there is no democracy in the surroundings. China, Russia, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the three Caucasian countries do not necessarily pass the standards of Western democracy. Then, logically, why should Central Asia? The existing regimes and system

could mutate gradually, evolve a country specific, people savvy model of democracy over a period of time and lead Central Asia to prosperity.

Fifthly, the essence of the economic clash in all countries of Central Asia was between a deep rooted public sector bequeathed from the Soviet era and a fragile private sector slowly emerging in the jungle of misrule and maladministration. There was no rule of law in place to regulate private economic activities, no proper taxation laws to regulate profit repatriation, no knowledge to open a letter of credit, no clear rules on ownership issues, no proper banking mechanism and so many other lacunae. It was incumbent upon the political leadership to devise rules and regulations to control the country, its economic activities and face the challenges of globalization. While intra-republic rivalry prevailed on chalking out regional regulations for an integrated approach to challenges of globalization, country specific rules gradually emerged to regulate internal and international conduct of each state. And we see many of them do well over the recent past in projecting themselves in the international arena. In this respect, all countries are different, their approach to resolving issues are different too, their outlook into the future varies from one another. Even among such bigger countries as Kazakhstan, one could find forward looking policies and in Uzbekistan inward looking tendencies to corroborate native nationalism. This brings us to the platform of debating a strong State versus the soft State and it is but common knowledge to gauge where both these countries stand internationally.

Economic Woes

In terms of economic development, the Central Asian countries could be divided into two groups. The first group is the rich and territorially big countries such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The second group is small and poor countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. For economic progress of the nomads once living in these five countries, nature had knitted them together with two rivers called Amu Darya and Syr Darya with scores of small streams and tributaries flowing into them. These tributaries have cut across boundaries of these States and today they are transnational in nature. They have also many cross-border dams to share electricity, water and aquatic resources. However post-Soviet differences and disputes among these five countries are too nagging to provide any concrete solutions to pending problems of water sharing and economic commonalities. The outcome is catastrophic for the region, but it is happening and repeatedly happening

with no political will to settle regional disputes. As a result all tangible potentials of the region for cooperative peace and development are going waste. Surface communication is restricted, rail lines are lying non-operational, regional electricity supply system is in shambles, trade is trammled, commercial links severed and so many other undesirable things happening.

Take for example Uzbekistan. It has plenty of cotton, but no developed textile industry. It has Uranium, but no processing or nuclear industry. It has juicy fruits but no proper agro-processing industry. In capital Tashkent peaches and cherries rot in street side trees in summer months because there is no body to collect them for human consumption. If that happens in the capital one could imagine what overtakes the rural areas. Uzbekistan has oil and gas and no developed petrochemical industry. They have gold, but few refineries. They have iron ore but no indigenous iron and steel industry and so on. All these mean that the country lacks indigenous and native industrial base. Technology transfer had not taken place during the Soviet rule to make Uzbekistan and other countries of Central Asia industrially developed. Six Soviet era textile factories in Tashkent itself are lying dysfunctional. Apart from technology, Uzbekistan does not have adequate number of textile engineers and technicians to man and run the factories. Human resource development is a major capital investment area in the country, where India and Uzbekistan could find solid grounds for cooperation with Indian educational institutions training Uzbek cadres. The Tashkent aviation factory is shut down permanently because they do not have research and development facilities all of which are located in Russia. Therefore the impending challenge for all Central Asian countries is to start anew building their industrial base preferably in such a fashion that they would lay the foundation of their native industrial base with developed R&D of their own for which getting out of the Russian shadow is essential.

There are two possible ways of doing it. First and the easiest is through joint collaboration with industrially developed foreign countries for which taxation, profit repatriation and visa regime have to be liberally reformed to accommodate Foreign Direct Investment. Promulgation of laws in these spheres ought to be the precursor to economic liberalization. However it is not happening. What has been happening is through bilateral deals, where one side is the government and the other side is a private business partner. In course of a few years cracks develop within this bilateral mechanism where the private party has

piles of complaints against the government, particularly on profit repatriation. The government accuses the private partners of violating visa and taxation laws and not following the banking norms of the land. The banking system is too inadequate to address the requirements of private business. Therefore it is not one side to blame. When one side is stringent, the other searches for avenues to get out of stringency. Both sides however could work jointly to fix the problems and sort out bilateral differences. This is however not happening because there is rampant corruption in every sphere of commercial activities and the private partners do not wish to grease the palm of bureaucracy to get their work done. Lack of transparency in governance and weak judiciary further compound the issues related to bilateral ties.

In such a situation, the countries are certainly far away from integrating themselves into the process of globalization simply because they do lack the attributes of modernity to globalize. Three parameters are essential to consider a country modern: a developed industrial base, developed and indigenous military industrial complex and developed, indigenous satellite and communication technology. The Central Asian countries have none of these. More strangely, no signs of efforts are visible to ensure indigenous development of these attributes in the near future. Therefore the dependence factor on other developed countries for economic development is a sure prerequisite for all countries of Central Asia. Thomas Freidman in his book *The World is Flat* has appropriately said: 'countries do not change when you ask them to change. They do change when they feel they must.' That feeling has not yet come to Central Asia to seek genuine change for indigenous development.

Similar Content

When primarily agrarian countries declare themselves industrial without putting adequate thought over their declaration, it impacts the population and the country in the long run. Declarations tantamount to negation of the reality and Central Asian countries have not taken into consideration their industrial predicament. They have not even thought for a while where they stand among the industrially developed countries. Political declarations by the presidents however raise crimson hopes among the youth to feel good and aspire for the moon. But when hopes are dashed by naked reality, disillusionment overwhelms the youth. For instance the first Kyrgyz president AskarAkayev had declared his country to be the Switzerland of Central Asia. However, few years of reforms in that

country had landed Bishkek to witness only regime changes and coloured revolutions with penury wrecking the lives of common man to naught. The hopes for turning Kyrgyzstan into a Switzerland in Central Asia vanished into nothingness; the country never repeats the refrain of Switzerland any more. However, the hopes raised are hopes not dead. The youth dream about a day when they could equate their country to a developed State like Switzerland – a hard task to achieve in foreseeable future in a country that does not produce anything worthwhile.

Prominent countries of Central Asia – Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan - are no different. Kazakh President NursultanNazarbayev had declared a few years ago that his country was going to be one among the top ten industrially developed states in the world. Everybody was staking high hopes on these pronouncements, expecting their country to be industrially prosperous and its people living rich. Kazakhstan is the richest country in Central Asia. However, the episodes of December 2011 in Zhanaozen revealed that Kazakhstan was far from the portals of industrialization. The oil industry has boomed in Kazakhstan; and that too thanks to foreign direct investment. Minus foreign participations Kazakhstan would have landed itself in the limbo. However, the benefits of the FDI in the economy have failed to benefit the lower segment of the population, resulting in social discontent, which the government tried to suppress through repression. But who would restrain a president from making political pronouncements to win support of the people. Winning political support is one thing and piloting the country into a modern industrial State is visibly another. When political pronouncements do not materialize year after year, election after election and the same president is saddled in power for years through legitimate electoral process, things deteriorate to a point of no return.

Uzbekistan is a country in point. Its President has declared that his country has been transformed in recent years from agrarian industrial to industrial agrarian. These pronouncements came at a time when the Uzbek industry was neither developed; nor its agriculture highly mechanized. It is a country that does not have a steel factory, nor any indigenous computer or IT industry. Despite being one of the largest cotton producing nations in the world, and the most populous country in Central Asia, Uzbekistan is not industrially developed. Factories that have come to help stabilize the textile and other industries in the country have been axed due to bureaucratic highhandedness. The case of SpentexIndia is a telling story of arbitrariness and Spentex has sued the

Uzbek government and the case continues. Without creating conducive environment for foreign direct investments, and not having indigenous capabilities, unwise political pronouncements are made to pull wool over the public eyes to garner support to perpetuate the regime's hold on power. In reality, however, absence of industrial base in conjunction with a desire to consider the country industrially developed, when it does not produce any worthwhile industrial goods, is a lethal combination to lag the country further. Complacency is no solution to native industrialization.

Tajikistan is in no better predicament too. It is a poor and mountainous country in Central Asia. Its adjacent location to Afghanistan has created an unstable situation. Islamists, communists turned democrats and moderate representatives of various groups have been sharing power for one and half decades now. Due to lack of jobs within the country its workforce is forced to migrate to Russia and other more prosperous neighbouring States for earning livelihood. At any given point a larger Tajik workforce lives abroad than within the country. Nearly same number of Tajiks – five million or so – live in Uzbekistan. Yet Uzbekistan and Tajikistan do not see eye to eye on many issues – Rogun water sharing, border disputes, cross country settlements, illegal migration, narcotic trafficking, regional security problems created by Islamism and so on. To talk about industrialization and modernity in this country is a far cry. In Tajikistan too there is no talk of changing the Rakhmonov regime that has ruled the country since the end of the civil war in 1997. Perpetuation of one man rule negates the tenets of democracy and erodes the base of a civil society, which is what has been happening in Tajikistan.

Turkmenistan is industrialized but in a lopsided manner. Only its gas and oil industry is developed through various foreign collaborations and FDI. Other sectors of the industry lag far behind. Over the post-Soviet years, it has witnessed a regime change due to the unexpected death of its president, Niyazov. It has maintained a policy of positive neutrality in foreign policy and has effectively isolated itself from rest of the countries in Central Asia. The isolation continues. However, greater interaction with Turkey, Iran and Russia has given the country a modern edge. Capital Ashgabat is not the same, old, supine, Soviet era city as it is now. None of the other Central Asian countries has transformed their capital city into a modern marble city as Turkmenistan. It has built mosques, hobnobbed in the past with the Taliban and yet avoided radicalization of the society. It has miles to go before its

periphery keep pace with the capital and before other segments of industry and agriculture keep pace with the growing gas and oil industry.

Quest for a Model

All through the two decades of triple transition practising dictatorship/ authoritarianism in the name of democracy has been the hallmark of governance in post-Soviet countries of Eurasia. Similarly, on the economic front, advocating decentralization and practicing recentralization has been the hallmark of economic development. This is a highly contradictory process laden with loads of flip-flops and ups and downs that has given many twists and turns to post-Soviet experience of transition. The only field that has not been marred by controversy is the arena of ideology. While final exit from Marxism has remained the ideological fore-post and Marx and Lenin are nowhere remembered, the leadership in all post-Soviet Eurasian states has failed to chart out a clear path to capitalism. While wild capitalism is pervasively prevalent, the humane face of capitalism in terms of social security measures for the poor is largely absent.

Thus we see a set of four different countries offering four different models in the post Soviet space: Belarus that follows the old Soviet model, Russia that has been trying to portray the semblance of capitalism, while at the same time trying to preserve and restore state control where it had been lost. It has shown to other countries a duumvirate effectively alternating in power for many years now. The countries of the coloured revolutions are a third set of States that have experienced regime changes and revolutions engineered from outside, whose scheme of things have little native relevance. Hence, Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, following dethronement of post-Soviet presidents, have pushed themselves to the precarious precipice of west slant orientation, which visibly clashes with their native Slavic, Caucasian and Central Asians specificities in these three countries. Other countries of post-Soviet Eurasia could be clubbed into a fourth group of transition countries that have passed through a tumultuous two decades of transition, essaying to eke out a niche for themselves. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan belong to this group. All have specifics of their own and attributes of their political system that cannot be gainsaid without proper systemic analyses.

In the realm of foreign relations, priorities have varied from country to country and from region to region. The Russian priorities have shifted focus from blind Atlanticism of the Yeltsin years to a more balancing

phase of Eurasianism under Putin and Medvedev. However, nothing is constant in foreign policy and things continue to change rapidly. Who had expected a few years ago that Russia would be hosting the G-8 summit or Kazakhstan presiding over OSCE or Uzbekistan playing the CSTO card against Russia? The chairmanship of OSCE going to Kazakhstan has underscored the important role of regional organization in framing and shaping the foreign policy of post-Soviet Eurasia. No other region has so many regional organizations as has Eurasia – all working at cross-purposes for ensuring political and economic stability in their respective regions and facilitating their access to the process of globalization.

Politically, the romance with any specific model – whether American or western model of democracy, Chinese model of progress or Turkish model of State building by combining democracy with Islamic credentials has evaporated. A pragmatic approach to statecraft by the leaders of post-Soviet Eurasian States has driven them to really assess their native political dough before making any final choice of the loaf, and necessarily this has helped them to sustain a more rigid form of governance akin to authoritarianism as in all Central Asian countries. Political proselytizing in Caucasian countries, overt demarcation of national interests in Russia and Belarus and ambivalence of such interests in rest of post-Soviet Eurasia are well known facts to every analyst. In final appraisal of the existing political dispensation in Eurasian States, it is hard to conclude in favour of any model specific prescription. The journey of each country, strewn with efforts at model emulation on the altar of overloaded ethnic, regional, religious, political and economic specifics, has made the leadership invariably egregious, but largely they have withstood the litmus test of time, whether in Belarus under Lyukashenko, or Turkmenistan under late Turkmenbashi Niyazov and Gurbanguli Berdimukhammedov or Uzbekistan under Islam Karimov. Elsewhere in post-Soviet Eurasia the situation is not radically different.

On the economic front, the transition epoch was event specific in a broad sense that it was evidently a transition phase for all countries of the region. And in this transition process, big and powerful countries such as Russia and the Ukraine enjoyed the same amount of chaos as did smaller and less powerful countries of the Caucasus or Central Asia. The metropolis Russia was in no position to extend economic help to its erstwhile prefectures as it did earlier. However it did whatever it could, but smaller countries were in no position to reward Russia correspondingly. Russia's own precarious predicament deterred it to

retain the same control over and clout with the States it once ruled. Throughout the transition period post Soviet States of Eurasia looked to Russia for substantial help, far more than what they had received, but alas! their desire drove them to disappointment and the transition took a definite course to make independent countries independent of Russia – a process most countries did not seek, but were forced to undergo. This was their real test in democracy and state building.

Conclusion

The countries of Central Asia are not yet modern; they are not yet democratic too. Swinging between the decadent Soviet legacy and modern state building process, their priorities rest on ensuring stability in the society and security of their countries in whatever way they consider it worthwhile and appropriate. The rigidity of the system not to liberalize activities of the civil society primarily rests on the apprehensions that emulation of any foreign model may jeopardize their native nation building process. As a result we see concrete evidence of giving up various models of development thrown open to them in immediate post Soviet years. After two decades all Central Asian States realize that they have two ways before them: get away with chaos and instability or work hard to evolve native models of eastern democracy with authoritarian presidents as symbols of power to forge their way farther into the future. They are busy in the second direction, unmindful of what overwhelms the world. They are not afraid of failures; they are rather afraid of achieving too much of success too quickly.

India, Kazakhstan and the Uranium: The Issues of Nuclear Cooperation

Yelena I. Rudenko*

For nearly two decades, the representatives of the official authorities as well as public and private business entities from both Kazakhstani and Indian sides used to talk about the possibility and even the necessity of trade in strategically important types of raw products, including uranium. However, despite throughout the whole of this period, basic goods constitute the lion's share of Kazakhstan's exports to India, but bilateral trade in uranium still remains open to question.

An old saying goes: 'The more you know your counterpart, the easier it is for you to deal with him', which is crucially applied to India and Kazakhstan suffering from the lack of mutual awareness. In this regard, it seems quite important to outline main economic, legislative and other aspects related to the uranium industry in Kazakhstan.

Uranium Constituent of Kazakhstan's Development

Kazakhstan is one of just few global producing centers, which with an increase in the uranium prices are limited by neither resources nor the political factors¹. In terms of natural uranium reserves, the country ranks second in the world. According to the European Nuclear Society, these reserves average 378,000 tons, according to the World Nuclear Association – they exceed 817,000 tons, thus, from 11 percent to 15 percent of world uranium resources are concentrated here.

All the uranium deposits in Kazakhstan were discovered during the Soviet era, when starting from the late 1940s, the extensive

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explorations for uranium were conducted on the territory of the republic. As a result, there has been created a unique uranium resource base represented by deposits of various geological structures, as well as establishment of the full cycle of uranium processing – from extraction to production of finished fuel. Since the moment Kazakhstan gained its sovereignty and hence the right to independent use of its natural resources, in respect of raw uranium it faced the task of entering the international primary commodity market as a rightful member.

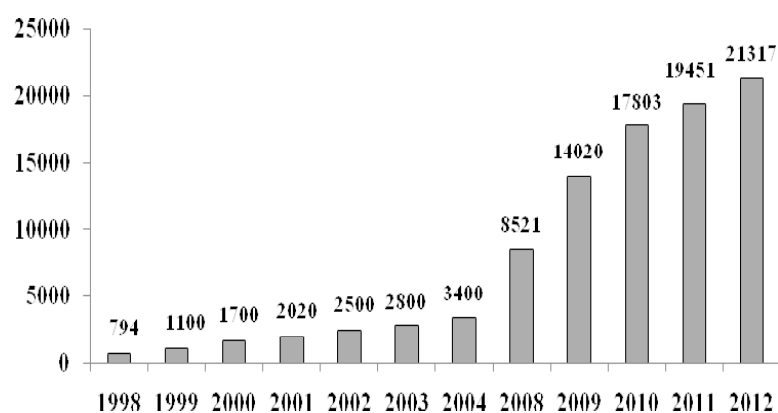
Kazakhstani uranium has always been competitive in the world market, so that in the early 1990s on the initiative of the United States and the European Agency for Nuclear Supplies, they have introduced even the anti-dumping measures against its global exports. Among the reasons for these measures was the Agency's apprehensiveness that the European importers would fall into dependence on the export of Kazakhstan's uranium, which would give the Kazakhstani side an opportunity to dictate its conditions over the nuclear market of Europe. The Agency allowed each company to buy in Kazakhstan no more than a quarter of the total amount of its purchases of uranium products. However, before long the anti-dumping measures were lifted and the European Agency for Nuclear Supplies allowed European companies to freely buy uranium from Kazakhstan. At that time, the decision to reconsider the attitude towards Kazakhstani uranium and to allow its purchase in unlimited quantities was due to the increase of uranium prices by Kazakhstan's two main competitors among the CIS countries – Russia and Uzbekistan.

Overall, the world economy shows increasing interest in Kazakhstani uranium. The main advantage of uranium deposits in this country lies in the fact that during its production application of relatively cheap and environment friendly method of underground leaching, which does not require burial of production wastes and costly reclamation of operated territories. It is low in Kazakhstan compared to other countries' uranium production cost, which attracts major foreign companies which create joint ventures in this sphere.

The growing demand for uranium in world markets promotes the increase in production of uranium ore in Kazakhstan. The volume of uranium production in the republic since 1998 increased more than 25-fold – from 794 tons in 1998 to over 22 thousand tons in 2013 (refer to Diagram). According to the data of 'Kazatomprom', in 2014 the uranium production in the country is expected to grow to 24 thousand tons, in 2015 to 24.8 thousand tons, in 2016 to 25.6 thousand tons, and in 2017

to 26.5 thousand tons. Thus, Kazakhstan's share in the world uranium production is about 40 percent. It is projected that the growth of uranium mining would be achieved by intensive production methods: increase of labour productivity through the introduction of modern technologies into the production of chemical concentrate of natural uranium.

Dynamics of Growth in Uranium Production in Kazakhstan in 1998-2012, Tons



Source: 1998-2004 – Kazakhstan's Industry Journal, No. 2, 2004; 2008-2012 – WNA Market Report, 2013

The development of uranium industry and atomic power engineering in the country is regulated by a series of governmental enactments, including:

- (a) Decrees of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 1430, dated November 22, 1996 'On Measures to Deepen the Reform and Further Develop the Uranium Industry and Nuclear Power Engineering in the Republic of Kazakhstan'
- (b) No. 189, dated February 10, 1997 'On Follow-Up Measures to Deepen the Reform and Further Develop the Uranium Industry and Nuclear Power Engineering in the Republic of Kazakhstan' (with further amendments)
- (c) Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 1659, dated November 26, 1997 'On Approval of Statute on the National Operator in Export and Import of Uranium and

Its Compounds, Nuclear Fuel for Atomic Power Plants, Special Equipment and Technologies, Dual-Purpose Materials' (with further amendments)

- (d) Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 768, dated July 30, 2010 'On Approval of Technical Regulations of Nuclear and Radiation Safety'
- (e) Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 958, dated March 19, 2010 'On Approval of the State Program on Forced Industrial-Innovative Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2010-2014'; and,
- (f) Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 728, dated June 29, 2011 'On Approval of the Program of Development of the Nuclear Industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2014, with the Prospect of Development till 2020'

Export operations are regulated by a series of Decrees of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan 'On Export of Processed Uranium Production'².

The national operator for import and export of uranium is JSC National Atomic Company 'Kazatomprom' – the only company with exclusive rights to sales the uranium from Kazakhstan, which was established in 1997 by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Today, 'Kazatomprom' is a holding company consisting of 3 mine groups and 26 enterprises engaged in geological exploration, extraction, processing and enrichment of uranium. It acts as a subdivision of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The activities of 'Kazatomprom', which is one of the top ten of the world's leading uranium-mining companies, are subject to the rules and regulations of the IAEA. The company is a member of the World Nuclear Association and the International Tantalum-Niobium Association, and Kazakhstan is a member of the International Uranium Institute.

The major uranium-mining regions of the country include Shu-Sarysu (60.5 percent of the total uranium reserves and resources of the country), North Kazakhstan (16.5 percent), Syr-Darya (12.4 percent), Ili (6 percent), Mangyshlak uranium mineralization (1.8 percent) and Kandyktas-Chuili-Betpakdala, or Balkhash, area (0.4 percent).

In the past years, all Kazakhstani uranium enterprises were focused on the output of production, which had the uranium concentrate content of about 30 percent. This half-finished product was transported to Kyrgyzstan for further processing.

In 2005 Kazakhstan launched a refinery under 'Kazatomprom'. The technology used in this factory covers the further processing of uranium-bearing production and its upgrading to marketable condition of yellow cake with uranium content of 87 percent. In perspective, it is planned to build several more refining factories near the existing mine groups. They propose applying even newer technology that gives the opportunity to create a shorter processing cycle aimed to produce uranium protoxide-oxide of higher quality at a lower prime cost.

Thus, the present-day Kazakhstan's uranium industry on both domestic and foreign levels along with respective legal systems has proceeded on a successful path of evolution and formation.

The Sanguine Prospects for Bilateral Cooperation...

Since the late 1990s, the representatives of Kazakhstani side have raised the issue of further diversification of range of Kazakhstan's goods exported to India with respect to the certain types of strategic raw materials. Thus, it was stated that uranium holds a special place among Kazakhstan's minerals in which India is interested, since it is needed by the Indian nuclear industry. However, although the Kazakhstani side has expressed its willingness to supply uranium fuel to India yet in the mid 1990s, it remained just at the free offer level.

It is a received wisdom that the large reserves of uranium and monazite were discovered in Indian States of Bihar/Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh as well, but in general, India is among the countries whose requirement is directly dependent on the global uranium prices, while the possible increase in its domestic production is limited by its insufficient natural reserves and internal politics of the States. The Indian reactors use natural uranium, which is in large quantities available in Kazakhstan. It is also important that since the moment the Nuclear Suppliers Group granted India the opportunity to enter the free uranium market, it represents 'yet another major player with instant demand for at least two thousand tons, which is to actively become engaged in buying-up of uranium'¹³. Consequently, there was expectation of considerable rise in raw uranium prices, a favorable factor for Kazakhstan.

Moreover, nuclear technologies on the whole present an important sphere for expansion of potential Kazakhstani-Indian cooperation, similar to the case of marketable uranium as a raw commodity. As far back as the early 1990s Kazakhstan had offered India potentially beneficial cooperation in the field of technology. In its turn, India

welcomed this proposal, as some believe, it meant to develop own nuclear weapons with the help of Kazakhstan. As is known, the exploratory activities in this area were pursued in India for several decades and have primarily been associated with the use of nuclear energy to produce cheap electricity, as well as its prospective utilization in agriculture, biology, medicine, physics, chemistry, mechanical engineering and metallurgy. In this regard, by the 1970s India had developed almost all types of engineering and equipment to meet the country's needs in handling of atom.

During the international conference 'Kazakhstan-India: Opportunities for Cooperation' held in January 2009 in Almaty, a number of Indian speakers reiterated the specific prospects for cooperation between the two countries in the field of nuclear energy. Thus, a Member of the Planning Commission of the Government of India K. Parikh noted that as of today India possesses nuclear reactors which are unique and unparalleled in the world. In this regard, according to the representative of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, G. Balachandran, the Indian side may offer Kazakhstan the projects on joint construction of various kinds of such reactors⁴. Subsequently, this topic has been discussed many times by the medium- and high-ranking representatives of the two states.

As for the actual Kazakhstani-Indian cooperation in this area, it has been documented at the end of January 2009 during the visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to India. In the course of this visit, the state enterprises 'Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd' (NPCIL) and JSC National Atomic Company 'Kazatomprom' have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Nuclear Cooperation. This document, in particular, proposed the supply of uranium from Kazakhstan to India, the joint peaceful nuclear research activities within the entire process chain, up to the production of finished fuel for atomic power plants and its marketing, with the attraction of Indian investments in uranium mining in Kazakhstan, as well as the feasibility study development for the construction in Kazakhstan of a nuclear power station with pressurized heavy-water moderated and cooled reactors of Indian design. The last provision was perceived as particularly important given the fact that 'Kazatomprom' aims at products with high added value and nurtures great plans for the implementation of projects in this area. It was also stated that according to the provisions of agreements between 'Kazatomprom' and NPCIL, the Kazakhstani company would supply to India 2,100 tons of uranium within the period

of six years, 300-400 metric tons per year, of which Kazakhstan has already delivered 200 tons⁵.

At that time, the president of 'Kazatomprom' has stressed that 'for us India is a very attractive market, and there is already an agreement that new nuclear power stations to be built in this country would use fuel supplied from Kazakhstan'. He also made special mention of the multidimensional character of the package of proposed partnership with India, which, among other things, included the mining and supply of natural uranium, the supply of Kazakhstani uranium products (fuel pellets and assemblies), the training of personnel, etc.⁶ However, the representatives of both sides noted that it will take up some time before the immediate cooperation takes off.

In April 2011, following the talks between the Prime Minister of India and the President of Kazakhstan, in Astana, a Framework Agreement has been signed between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of India on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, which provided for conduct of joint research, exchange in nuclear technologies, as well as geological exploration activities on the territory of Kazakhstan – all in strict compliance with their obligations under the signed international treaties in the nuclear sphere. This Agreement was ratified by the Kazakhstani side in January 2012. At that time, numerous Kazakhstani media in unison highlighted the words of President N.A. Nazarbayev that '...we have signed an agreement on cooperation in peaceful use of atomic energy. India plans to increase nuclear power stations capabilities fivefold and import from Kazakhstan over 2000 tons of uranium per year by 2014. The following agreement on uranium enrichment is of prime importance to us, we are ready to support this'⁷. This statement was an extremely promising and even a breakthrough step in the development of strategic and trade-economic partnership between the two countries.

Moreover, as noted by the 'Jamestown Foundation' issue dated May 11, 2011, 'as in the case of China, India also looks to uranium-rich Kazakhstan to feed its growing nuclear industry as it seeks to satisfy its immense energy appetite. India may in fact need up to 8,000 tons of uranium per year as its demand for nuclear fuel is expected to grow tenfold by 2020. The agreement to supply India with more than 2,000 tons of Kazakh uranium by 2014 could not be more timely for New Delhi. India and Kazakhstan also discussed joint construction of nuclear reactors, a highly sought-after objective for Kazakhstan, keen to become

a major global supplier of nuclear fuel and reactors as it pursues nuclear cooperation with Russia, Japan, China, and India⁸.

In March 2013, the Chairman of the Board of 'Kazatomprom' again had a meeting with the Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy of India and the Executive Director of NPCIL for discussion on possibilities to further develop bilateral cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, in particular, the supply of natural uranium from Kazakhstan to India. As was highlighted, 'India looks to increasing the share of nuclear energy to 20 percent. This means that Kazakhstan could become a permanent and reliable importer of uranium [to this country]⁹'.

However, despite all spectacular semblances of actual promotion of such cooperation, it pretty much still makes no headway. Unfortunately, to date there is little information on what progress has been achieved or at least what physical and not paper-and-pen steps have been taken in this direction. Therefore, although in this area one can expect some concrete results, in general, at the moment the interaction between the two countries in the field of both trade in uranium and exchange in nuclear technologies has not advanced actively and successfully enough.

... And The Actual Situation Not to Turn a Blind Eye to

In consideration of such a stalling in Kazakhstani-Indian cooperation in the field of bilateral trade in uranium as well as difficulties with the development of interaction in the area of nuclear technologies in general, it seems appropriate to point out a number of problematic aspects that impede such cooperation. (It should be noted immediately, that the official representatives of Kazakhstan are unlikely to recognize the existence of the following problems and may even allege the contrary; nevertheless, as the analysis of the actual situation proves, such problems do indeed exist).

Firstly, the representatives of public, private and mixed business structures in Kazakhstan lack overall adequate experience of full-scale cooperation with similar structures in India, including in the sphere of strategic trade partnership and raw materials production/processing. What is more, the available experience – be it regularly criticized Ispat Karmet / Mittal Steel Temirtau of Lakshmi Mittal, whom the people of Kazakhstan without going into too much detail unequivocally and exclusively associate with India, or domestic scuffles that several times occurred between the 'courteous' Kazakhstanis and the 'uncivilized'

Indians within the oil-operating enterprises in the Caspian Sea – is largely negative. This, unfortunately, creates at various levels of society, business and the government though not quite justified, but none the less not very positive impression about Indians as either current or potential partners in the commodity sector.

Secondly, people in Kazakhstan at large do not have sufficient knowledge about the remarkable achievements of India in various fields of modern character¹⁰, including in the processing of uranium and nuclear technologies. As a result, there is not enough confidence in the expectations of cooperation with India in these areas – both through trade in uranium and involvement of its technologies and joint projects in the field of peaceful uses of the atom.

In this regard, unfortunately, there exists certain neglect of Indians as potential trade partners, including in the area of strategic raw materials, and as a consequence, there is no perceivable interest in the development of such trade relations with Indian side. Many in Kazakhstan just sincerely believe that their country will always be able to find better, more 'reliable and beneficial' buyers of its uranium (especially due to the fact that Kazakhstan's nuclear industry appeared to be one of those occasional industries that were practically not affected by the global financial crisis because of its orientation exclusively on demand and high competitiveness on the world arena, as well as previously mentioned forced positive outcome of European policy towards Kazakhstani uranium), and do not pay any attention to Indian suggestions and requests. Moreover, the Kazakhstani authorities also lacking serious interest, do not make any attempts to correct such an image of India and do not give themselves the trouble of promoting and encouraging that particular aspect of trade-economic cooperation with this country.

Thirdly, the very fact of trade in uranium being a raw material for potential creation of nuclear weapons also creates an ideological set of problems in cooperation. Here one can mention, in particular, a somewhat negative attitude on the part of representatives of Kazakhstani society, whose state a little earlier initiated nuclear disarmament and closed the test site on its territory, to the testing of nuclear weapons by India. As was once noted by the former chairman of the Kazakh Society of Friendship with India, 'our countries' positions on nuclear disarmament are fundamentally different, and the nuclear tests conducted by India in 1998 negatively impacted our bilateral relationship – we had a cooling-off period'. Of no small importance here is also the

factor of still ambiguous attitude of official and unofficial parts of the world community towards the Indian nuclear issue; Kazakhstan, not wishing to undermine its image in the eyes of global community, does not hasten to promote cooperation with India in this area including through the sale of uranium to the latter. Although Kazakhstan has generally supported India in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and expressed a desire to join the trade in nuclear materials and technologies, even despite the fact that New Delhi had not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but as was said in this regard by the chairman of the Kazakh Society of Friendship with India, 'it seems justified that the UN has adopted several resolutions condemning the nuclear tests in South Asia, and India's position in this respect was not supported by the overwhelming majority of the UN member states'¹¹. Thus, no matter how far is this ideological question from the Realpolitik and 'real-economic', but it still exerts certain negative impact.

Fourth, another factor that combines both the 'moral and real' aspects, is the fear of Kazakhstan to become a raw materials appendage of 'what is worse' India (in addition to the developed countries and China). In this connection, it should be noted that the perception by Indians of Kazakhstan as nothing more than a purely resource state, which can be observed not only in the statements of experts and scientific literature, but even within some official internal documents, and formulations of the Indian side in its proposals regarding raw materials trade cooperation; – often too unambiguous and unpleasant with their frankness – also play a negative role. In other words, according to Kazakhstani specialists well-informed on this issue, the representatives of India should more skillfully and deeply formulate their proposals for cooperation, including in the area of strategic trade in uranium raw stock.

Thus issues related to transport, payments (including some questionable yet pending issues), discrepancies in trade legislations and practices, and other – problematic aspects, shape rather significant package of obstacles on the way to bilateral nuclear cooperation.

In sum, although it seems that in general the issue of selling of uranium by Kazakhstan to India can be solved quite naturally and easily within formal strategic and trade relations between the two countries, a number of problems including those listed above impede such a trade. Some of these problems are of 'versatile' character, i.e. generally cover the entire scope of Kazakhstani-Indian trade-economic relations, while others are specific to only nuclear cooperation; the

impact of some problems can be considered as direct and unequivocal, while others bear just indirect and mediate negative influence. Nevertheless, in any case the Indian side should take into account the whole range of these problems and try to untie at least some of them, and on this basis to build further relations with Kazakhstani side, including in the field of nuclear technologies and trade in uranium raw stock.

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School Education Reforms in Uzbekistan: Pitfalls and Accomplishments

Mahbuba Hamroyeva*

Introduction

After gaining independence, Uzbekistan created favourable conditions for development of education. Legal framework for working out a national education policy was the imperative of the day. Only on the basis of a strong cadre policy could the country look forward to development and choose its own path. Adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan was the first step in this direction that guaranteed all citizens the right to education. It provided that the State shall guarantee free secondary education to all children. Schooling is under the State control.¹ Subsequent reforms were undertaken in a phased manner and these reforms have helped in improving the structure and content of education. This paper deals exclusively with the school education at a time when the country transited from decadent Soviet system to a new system of school education.

Phases of Development

Broadly there are four phases of educational reforms in Uzbekistan. The first phase began in 1991 and continued up to 1997. This was a preparatory phase devoted to comprehending and defining the basic problems and contradictions in the system of education bequeathed

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from the Soviet era, which clearly did not match with the new ethos of economic and political transformations then under way in the society.

The second phase began in 1997 and continued up to 2001. This was the inceptive phase for formation of a new national cadre training policy. New cadres were required in all spheres and training them was a difficult job. Training people in various branches of science and technology was essential and the state had to concentrate on a wide array of issues associated with cadre training in Uzbekistan.

The third stage of educational reforms continued for five years during 2001-2005. An active stage of full-scale reform of the system of continuing education ushered in. From work places employed cadres were sent for enhancement of qualification, who obtained further training in various branches of knowledge. They came from industry and agriculture, medicine and education, police and taxation; and from among university and college teachers, primary and higher secondary school teachers and so on. Furtherance of skill in a given profession was the priority of this phase. The fourth phase began in 2005 and is currently continuing, emphasizing on the same principles of improvement and development of continuing education.

Shortcomings in School Education

However, the preparatory phase of systemic reforms in education could not begin immediately after independence due to a number of objective reasons. Three of which are most important.

- First, this stage had not yet developed an explicit concept of economic and political development of a new society that was bound to be reflected in the education system. As a result there is widespread feeling that the old Soviet system continued to impede the reform process in education. And the new system was struggling amid remnants of the old system.
- Second, it requires time to identify problems that contradict the current educational system, explore and choose the world's best education model and take into consideration while formulating national idea and national Uzbek model of education.
- Third, the country lacked the financial wherewithal to reform the education system during periods of deep economic recession taking place worldwide anterior to 1996 in the region and posterior to 2008 that affected the world.

Thus attempts at partial reforms of the educational system in Uzbekistan were undertaken in 1992. In the preparatory phase the new Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On education' has provided universal free and compulsory basic nine year secondary education to all children in the country.² The law made room for educational opportunities in public as well as private educational institutions, encompassing even foreign and external students. For the first time in the history of the country higher educational institutions had the right to choose their own curricula, textbooks and teaching methods, albeit at every stage approval of the concerned ministry is a prerequisite and the guidelines are mandatory to be followed.

Unfortunately, independent Uzbekistan's new 'Law on Education' adopted in 1992 heavily rested on the Law on Education prevalent in the former USSR; hence the consequences were really catastrophic. In particular, it duplicated the system of nine-year compulsory and two-year voluntary general and secondary education. This 9+2 approach was flawed because in many countries worldwide, the existing school education system is 10+2 or 9+3. Uzbekistan subsequently shifted to the 9+3 system and introduced it throughout the country when it realised the negative impact of 9+2 system on the quality and comprehensiveness of the high school education process.

After completing 9+2, school graduates did not have either adequate professional qualification nor their age limit below 16 years allowed them to take up employment. Since employment of children under the age of 16 years is illegal and proscribed by law, school graduates after 9 years of general education were not allowed to begin fulltime employment. As a result, about 10 percent of the population aged 15-16 years were pushed into the street without any job. There was no job guarantee for them. This led to serious problems in the labour market where illegal child labour flourished and a lot of young people joined work. They were unwilling to work because they lacked education, professional skill and competence; they really could not acquire them because they were still considered underage children; not mentally prepared to take up a job. In 1997, the Uzbek labour market was flooded with 103 thousand school graduates after 9th grade without any job training. This figure was 21.5 percent of the total labour force in that age group, while this figure in 1991 was 5.4 percent.³

Increasing number of young school graduates, who failed to find a job, became a menace to public safety. Unemployed teenagers became the source for the growth of juvenile crime, which was further compounded by drug addiction. Serious problems in the education

system in this period were associated with significant lack of financial resources – major reason of brain drain from the education system that brought about declining quality, nonchalant attitude of teachers, and a lack-lustre education system. During the first phase all disadvantages of the State ideology of the Soviet education system manifested and unfolded in a vivid fashion in the Uzbek education reforms. Major disadvantages of the Soviet system that plagued the new education system in general across the CIS were:

- It was highly ideological and intolerant of what did not fit into the dominant ideology;
- Inaccessibility to many values of world science, literature and culture; declaring them harmful to young people or removing them from libraries and reserving the right to judge what the youth need and do not need;
- Intolerance to the West, to capitalism, to wealth, to religion and to truth, if they did not meet their ideological assumptions;
- Denigrating and negating in whole of the country's past and the people inhabiting it, forgetting that history of the people with all its contradictions is a national treasure;
- Inculcate in the youth numerous examples of life in order to enslave minds, depriving independence of thought and objectivity of worldview on society.

A country, which builds on the principles of indoctrination, cannot prosper long. This is the lesson of history that we need to remember.⁴

At the IX session of the OliyMajlisin 1997, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov gave a critical analysis of the accomplishment in the Uzbek education system. His speech defined the strategic direction of fundamental reforms in this area. President Islam Karimov said: 'The content of education and the educational process as a whole is not completely free from ideological bias that existed in the field of education during the Soviet era. This problem was particularly acute in the teaching of social sciences and humanities, their aesthetic cycle, content and organization of educational and outreach activities.'⁵ In addition, controversy arose at the secondary education level in 10th and 11th standards.

One of the major drawbacks of the previous system of secondary education was poor training of the younger generation for self-employment or independent professional engagement. Such a provision was originally incorporated in the 11-year general secondary education system. This system did not provide training to students for self-employment and their adaptation to the market economy. There were

shortcomings in the organizational structure of secondary education and continuing education. Continuity and change in educational and training programs at the secondary level seemingly disturbed the general secondary education. As the National Report on Human Development in Uzbekistan emphasized, it deteriorated the quality in two stages—vocational primary and secondary special education.

Low professional level of teachers could not provide adequate quality of teaching in the educational process at this stage. Students received deficient knowledge and narrow specialization. Qualifying graduates and educational institutions in general were out of date and continued to teach what was incompatible with the need of the time. Serious contradictions existing in the education system from 1991 to 1996 reinforced *the second stage of reforms* - the initial stage of reforming the national training policy.

Salience of Reforms

The Government of Uzbekistan was the first country in post-Soviet era to have introduced radical reforms to overhaul the education system in the country. In 1997, on the initiative and under the leadership of the President, it had developed and adopted a law on National Program for Personnel Training, the salience of which was:

- Establishment of a system to provide continuous education of a person throughout his life, starting with pre-school and until retirement age;
- Compulsory and free medium nine-year school education;
- The introduction of a radically new system of three-year free, compulsory universal secondary and vocational education for those completing 9th class.
- Introduction of two-stage system of higher education itself includes undergraduate and graduate programs;
- Maintaining two-stage system of postgraduate education, including postgraduate and doctorate;
- Declaration of the need to organize a continuous system of education, vocational training and skills development.

By introducing a three-year, free and compulsory secondary, specialized vocational education, the National Program of training for the first time introduced institutional framework for preparing trained cadres in various fields. This was the logical continuation of general secondary education to train people in special skills. This created the conditions for filling up the existing gap between theoretical knowledge

gained in schools and a practical experience and skills gained at laboratories and workplaces. In accordance with the concept of reforms, two types of secondary specialized educational institutions were put in place: 1. Vocational colleges, along with general subjects, provided professional knowledge in their specialties; and 2. Academic high schools that provided in-depth knowledge of the subjects that were of scientific and practical import.

In the inceptive phase of implementation, the National Program for Personnel Training has done extensive work on the formation of legislative bases of its activities. The graduates of academic lyceums and professional colleges got the opportunity to get a solid professional knowledge and skills in the chosen specialty along with general subjects. They gained in-depth knowledge of the profession, and tried their hand at applied science. Development of educational and vocational programmes, inextricably linked with the general secondary and professional education, in accordance with the logic of the reforms was to ensure preparedness of graduates to real life, active involvement in the labour market and educational services. The school education system at this stage was actively working to increase the level of support to pupils to have good textbooks, while the transition from Cyrillic to Latin script was going on in training schools with dominance of the Uzbek language.

Armed with the experience of implementing the National Programme for Personnel Training, the Uzbek authorities launched the third stage of education reforms; they introducing improved and revised curricula and new courses in professional colleges and academic lyceums, which the State thought was in tune with the changing times. In higher education, there have been variety of forms of learning financed not only by government grants, but also contracted on a fee basis, and the number taken on a contract basis was prevalent in the total number of students accepted to universities. Students at the level of specialized secondary education were benefitted and a new middle rung cadre base was created that dispersed in various fields to work in their respective specializations. The fourth stage of education reforms in Uzbekistan aimed at fundamental changes in the system of continuous education. The State adopted a national programme of school education to be implemented within five years beginning 2004, which provided for:

- improving the curriculum of school education, producing revised, modern textbooks and teaching aids;
- wage increases and changes in incentives to teachers of secondary schools, the establishment of special schools from the director's fund of material incentives;

- strengthening the material – technical base of schools, build new school buildings, repair and reconstruct the old buildings, the overhaul of the school system with widespread introduction of computer classes and English language teaching and make provision for students to have unhindered access to modern equipments and teach them how to use it.
- Development of sports for school children, including the same for students of secondary schools.⁶

In order to implement provisions of the school education reforms, a Special School Education Fund was created along with a Foundation for Children's Sports. By 2009 it was realized that at this phase of education reforms many tasks of reform concerning development of the school system and secondary specialized vocational education have been achieved.

Conclusion

It is important to emphasize here once again that the concept of reforming education as developed in Uzbekistan, provided for reorienting the education system to a market economy as the most important goal. The associated objectives were, ensuring open access to free and universal secondary education, and creating equal opportunities for all citizens to have good education. The overall improvement in living standard of the Uzbek population is a paramount parameter for improving a high quality education system where private-public partnership would ensure⁷ accessible and affordable education at all stages and in all disciplines. This has improved resource efficiency in education sector management although the overall scenario has become expensive for the public to afford.

Notes

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- ² Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of 19.07.1999, Number 352 'On Additional Measures for the Effective Use of Educational Improvement of Secondary Schools.'
- ³ National Human Development Report 2007
- ⁴ Human Development Report. Uzbekistan, 1997
- ⁵ I.A. Karimov. Harmoniously Developed Generation - the Basis of Progress in Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1997, p. 17.
- ⁶ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of 14.08.2001 Number 338 'On measures for further development of material and technical baseacademic lyceums and professional colleges.'

The Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan

Svetlana Shakirova*

The level of development of women's entrepreneurship is an eloquent indicator of the level of business development in Kazakhstan.

Currently, women's contribution to GDP in Kazakhstan is 40 percent and the share of SMEs run by women is 41 percent. According to the Statistics Agency of Kazakhstan, the proportion of small and medium business in the country's GDP is 17.8 percent. It is expected that by 2020 the proportion of SMEs in GDP must be no less than 40 percent.

State Support of Women's Entrepreneurship Development: A History and Present

First Presidential decree on the development of women's entrepreneurship in independent Kazakhstan was issued in 1997. By it, within eight years women entrepreneurs received loans totalling nearly \$ 2 billion tenge.

In 1999, due to the efforts of international, governmental and public organizations in support of the poorest people in Kazakhstan were allocated 16,207 micro-credits totalling 510 million tenge (USD 400 each). 63 percent of those who received microcredits were women.

In 2000, upon the initiative of the National Commission on Family and Women Affairs under the President of Kazakhstan, the second-tier bank 'Temir Bank' launched a credit line to support women entrepreneurs in the sphere of production. The bank granted loans from own resources worth more than \$4 million, each loan up to 250 thousand tenge.

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In 2005, Government approved *Strategy of Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016*. Section titled 'Achieving gender equality in the economy' contains many objectives including the following:

- . 'Develop a programme for vocational retraining, administration and business management for women. The programme will be focused on the business management, increasing self-confidence and professional competence.
- . To establish a wide network of centers for economic education to improve measures on developing small and medium-size businesses through financial support for entrepreneurship and development of consultative and marketing services.
- . To work out mechanisms promoting women's involvement in business and providing development assistance to their business. To take into consideration women's need for employment in the process of further economic reforms. To pay special attention to women's employment in the agricultural sector, including areas of processing of agricultural products¹.

National Action Plan for achieving gender equality in Kazakhstan for 2006-2016, designed to flash out the tasks of the above strategic aims, in particular to create conditions for the development of social entrepreneurship from a gender perspective, aimed at:

- strengthening of humanitarian work and motivation of the business, investment in human capital;
- the dissemination and development of family business, strengthen the institutions of the family;
- create a wide network of jobs 'at home' with a free schedule of work and new forms of division of labour;
- replacement of power and team problem-solving techniques in business management through economic methods to the development of social partnership and a spirit of mutual assistance².

As a part of measures to overcome the effects of global crisis, soon Kazakhstani government adopted and implemented *Micro-credit programme of women's entrepreneurship in 2009-2015*.

In order to stimulate economic activity of women entrepreneurs and women planning to start a self-employment, DAMU Entrepreneurship Development Fund has developed a special

Programme due to placing funds in banks for future micro women entrepreneurs (2010 – 2015). The maximum amount of financing is up to 8000 MCI, loan term of 3-5 years, the effective rate was set at a level not exceeding 14percent per annum.

The programme is financed through the allocation of funds due to the five second-tier banks for subsequent micro-credit: Bank Center Credit, Eurasian Bank, Temir Bank, Cesna, Delta Bank. Total funding of the programme is 1,748 million tenge. Of the total number of borrowers of DAMU Fund 27 percent were women. As per General Statistics of female entrepreneurs, more than 2,70,000 borrowers were funded \$ 40 billion, creating more than 1,70,000 jobs. Regionally the largest share of loans to women entrepreneurs is in Atyrau, Almaty and Kyzylorda areas. The smallest proportion is in Almaty, North Kazakhstan and Kostanai region.

According to analytics of DAMU fund, the programme is implemented quite successfully; demand for the product among women entrepreneurs remains stable. Up to DAMU fund plans to continue the microcredit programme of women's entrepreneurship; to increase the share of women entrepreneurs in the programmes of the fund to 15 percent, and to advocate for women entrepreneurs participation in the financial and non-fund programmes.

Programme 'Business Advisor' under the State programme 'Road Map of Business-2020' is carried out by Ministry of Economic Development and Trade in cooperation with the DAMU Entrepreneurship Development Fund. Its duration is from 2011 to 2020. The programme's aim is to provide a complex unified and accessible knowledge on the creation of effective business to entrepreneurs and people with entrepreneurial initiative in all regions of Kazakhstan. In 2011, the scope of the programme 'Business Advisor' was 15 thousand people in 209 district centers. The total programme's cost is 208 million tenge³.

Women have expressed great interest in participating in the programme: at the first stage, they accounted for 51 percent of the participants, at the second stage, it is already 61 percent. It is expected that the programme will help to cope with the shortage of skilled executives in an environment of SMEs, to win the global fight against competencies and become a catalyst for Kazakhstan's joining the developed world.

Program 'DAMU-Komek' to help disabled entrepreneurs during 2009-2013.

In Kazakhstan, there are more than 4,10,000 disabled, which is about 3 percent of the total population. Women constitute about half of the people with disabilities, and only 3 percent of them are employed. In comparison with developed countries, employing up to 40 percent of disabled of working-age population, this is very small. Running own business provides a good chance for persons with disabilities to lead independent lives, improve their welfare, and to integrate themselves into society.

Although 'Damu-Komek' programme launched in May 2011 did not focus on women, it provided remote training to people with disabilities. The programme did not provide funding, instead it helped to link disabled entrepreneurs with potential sponsors and lenders.

Projects of Women's NGOs to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship

Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan is training women from year to year in entrepreneurship and the basics of market-demand professions.

Primarily, courses were organized as free training for unemployed women from socially vulnerable groups. Financial support was provided by Chevron company. In Astana, Almaty, and Ili district of Almaty oblast women obtained skills of nurse, maid, hairdresser, baker-confectioner, accountant, and account executive. Courses were organized at the base of hotels, restaurants, beauty salons and educational centers in Almaty and Astana.

During 2009-2012, more than 2,500 women were trained, 80 percent of them were employed, 10 percent started business (cafes, workshops, crafts centers, mini-kindergartens).

In 1999, the Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan held the first National Fair of ideas and products 'šanatty Üyel' (Inspired woman) in Almaty city, which was attended by more than 2 thousands of women entrepreneurs from all over of the country. The second fair was held in Almaty in 2005, third in Pavlodar in 2010; the Regional Women's Fair of ideas and goods was held in Kokshetau in 2010.

Women's Association 'Mélidir'(Almaty) supports unemployed women since 1993. Their programmes motivate women to engage in business activities, to take courses on the basics of entrepreneurship, on job search, work with the client, retraining for popular specialties, employment agency; issuing interest-free unsecured loans, and loans under the simplified scheme.

One of the programme participants opened the company, making clothes for the actors and singers. Another woman created traditional Kazakh souvenirs, which are sold in large shopping centers of Almaty.

In total the organization granted 2,230 loans to 1,124 people. As a result, women participating in micro-credit schemes demonstrate the need for larger loans. Training of qualified specialists to work in microcredit organizations must be introduced at the universities, said head of 'Moldir' Mrs. Lyazzat Ishmukhamedova.

One more successful women's NGOs dealing with women entrepreneurs is an Almaty-based *Feminist League*. In 2009-2010, they carried out a project 'Boosting a Culture of Women's Rights in Kazakhstan' which was aimed at reducing social marginality and empower vulnerable women in the cities of Kokchetau, Shymkent, Taraz and Enbekshi-Kazakh rural districts. By this project, four women's non-governmental organizations using the methods and experience of the Italian network of crisis centers 'Differenza Donna', opened counseling centers for women's micro-businesses. Eighty women were trained at the seminar 'Business Incubators for women' and 'Time Bank'.

Challenges and Barriers in the Way of Women Entrepreneurs

In 2012, Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan held a nationwide sociological study on women's entrepreneurship which identified a number of problems that women face in their entrepreneurial activities. These are related to:

1) Property. Firstly this concerns the office and industrial premises as well as providing land to rural entrepreneurs.

2) Information on the programmes, opportunities for the implementation of business ideas, the development of a particular industry, market demand, product sales opportunities. Information is often supplied in complicated form which is incomprehensible for ordinary women.

3) Education. Due to the lack of expertise needed for starting a business, many entrepreneurs face problems even when registering their business.

4) Finance. Many women do not have start-up capital, while entrepreneurs with the experience face difficulties to find funds for further business development. Existing programmes of concessional lending are inaccessible, and the requirements of second tier banks or investment funds are very strict.

5) Infrastructure. Women noted that in remote areas access to information can be limited, while experienced entrepreneurs have concerns about the functioning of the internal and external markets and the sale of goods and services.

6) Interaction with government agencies and foundations to support entrepreneurship. There is no clear lines of cooperation between government agencies (particularly regional) and budding entrepreneurs. Government representatives and various Funding agencies are not interested in the successful implementation of the projects; their work is a mere formality.

7) Checks: There is great number of regular inspections, monitoring, including that of the beginners in business without considering a ban on the check up to 3 years⁴.

Mrs. Irina Unzhakova, member of the 'National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan', chair of the Federation of Women Status from Ust-Kamenogorsk town, in her analytic paper 'Gender Architecture of the crisis management measures of the Government of RK' observed moments of concern and barriers to the successful implementation of government programs, including support of women's business.

Traditionally, the vast majority of female business is limited in access to economic resources (property, land, credit, etc.). According to the Ministry of Agriculture, in 2008 only 2 percent of women farmers were able to obtain loans.

It is common knowledge that women's business is small businesses or sole proprietorship with a modest capital assets and working capital. Large companies and businesses which are able to meet the requirements of banks' lending and refinancing, are usually headed by men.

A content analysis of programmes due to allocation of funds in the STB for further micro women entrepreneurs at 2010-2014, unfortunately, allows experts to question the effectiveness of planned actions. Firstly, all acts to support women are reduced to microcredit. It becomes apparent that the programme was designed more for the survival of women's businesses than for their full participation in the plans of forced industrial-innovative development of Kazakhstan.

Secondly, the budgetary support of the programme was limited. Third, the proposed fee rates (14 percent) are high enough to promote innovation in the industry (not commerce), on whose support they are properly designed.

Like everywhere, in Kazakhstan there is a problem of unequal conditions for access of men and women to public resources. A common view is that the main earner of the household is man and his constant and high income guarantees welfare of all family members. But an objective examination of contemporary economic status of men and women reveals the opposite. Man's income usually works for the capitalization of male property through a consolidation of the ownership of movable and immovable property of the family. Woman's income is the main source of household maintenance (paid and unpaid work).

One of the socio-demographic trends in Kazakhstan is the growth of divorces. According to statistics, every fourth family is a family with a single parent, 91 percent of them are female-headed, and 2/3 are headed by mothers with two or more children. Often the mother's income is the only source of the family income, as imperfection of the legislative and procedural rules allow fathers to avoid paying alimony. Therefore, role of breadwinner often is played equally by men and women.

One of the renowned members of Parliament of Kazakhstan, Mrs. Meruert Kazbekova started her business in 1991; it was tailoring firm 'Tlektes' in Kokchetav town. Then she opened a network of cafes, shops and parking lots. Later she established the 'Union of Women Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan' and became the head of the National school of women's political leadership. In her view, only 6-8 percent of people in the world have talent for business⁵. Due to lack of start-up capital, the illegal checks, corruption, extortion by government officials, lack of knowledge, many women face problems in developing their business from small to medium size.

By the opinion on experts, for the development of female-headed SMEs, the government should create special department in the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade; open training centers for women entrepreneurs; create a series of TV programmes about women's business implement preferential micro-credit schemes for women to provide tax incentives for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Finally, it is necessary to adopt Law on the development of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan, following the example of the United States, says R.Sarsembayeva.

In 2014, the Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan will host the World Forum of Business Women, which aims to develop a

successful women's entrepreneurship, investments and innovation, as well as a systemic preparations for the participation of women entrepreneurs in the World EXPO 2017 in Astana.

Notes

- ¹ Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016. Approved by decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 1677 of 29 November 2005. http://legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/3402/file/KZ_Strategy%20Gender%20Equality_2006-2016_en.pdf
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- ⁵ Karimova, D. 'Business - it's talent that has only 6-8% of people around the world.' - *Biznes i visit*. 20.08.2010. <http://www.and.kz/322/dzhamilyal>.

Sino-Indian Engagement of Central Asia- An Asymmetric Narrative

Cauvery Ganapathy*

In the Sino-Indian dynamic, there are several theatres of play – thematic and geographic. One such crucible in this competition is the Central Asian space. There is much Indian diplomacy could learn from the Chinese pursuit of Central Asia. There is, however, also many allowances that those scrutinising India's position in Central Asia need to make before announcing their final verdict on the subject.

The compulsions of a formalised structure of education, often trumps the catholicity in the pursuit of knowledge. So attuned does the understanding of an area become to the straightjacketed contours of the academic training imbibed, that it threatens a rightful appreciation of the myriad variables which define a subject. The study of India's relations with Central Asia has variously been the interest of academics who study it through the prism of a singular domain of expertise – economic, political, social, anthropological, and historical, among others. Such focused attention undoubtedly ensures a level of expertise that a multidisciplinary approach cannot guarantee; and yet, it is perhaps equally true that it is well-nigh impossible to gauge the value of India's engagement with the Central Asian States on the basis of a single discipline. An almost natural tendency to do this portrays India's Central Asian story as abysmal when compared with China's. Such a narrative overlooks the possibility that China and India's stakes in the Central Asian region are far from being equal, much less the same.

It is a fair point to make that India has not been as proactive as it should have been in Central Asia. Even a cursory reading of energy

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security options would elucidate in great details India's wasted opportunities in Central Asia's oil and gas fields. An introduction to ONGC Videsh Limited's tribulations in the oil and gas field explorations would reflect very poorly on the brand of energy diplomacy pursued by the Indian establishment. The trade balance sheets would suggest that in terms of making inroads into the Central Asian markets, India has whittled her chances several times over when compared to Chinese development on that front. Even worse perhaps, is to consider the fact that India is now failing at several instances to capitalise on the one advantage it had over China in the region, viz., a traditional affinity which could translate into opportunities of social and cultural interface building on historical ties.

While all of these are valid observations substantiated by comparative analysis of trade data, it is perhaps not wildly preposterous to inquire if the indices for comparison between Indian and Chinese roles in Central Asia are at all fair. In considering a narrative which suggests that India's Connect Central Asia Policy is perhaps too little too late, it is equally important to highlight a fundamental difference between China's approach to Central Asia vis-a-vis India's – namely, that Central Asia qualifies as a 'Core National Interest' to the PRC while it serves as a 'very important near-abroad to India'¹. It would be erroneous to interpret this difference as one resting only in the realms of nomenclature, for the identification of an area as a 'Core National Interest' as against 'a very important near-abroad', determines the degree of resource allocation to its pursuit. If this particular difference were to be factored into preparing India's report card on its Central Asian engagement, it would perhaps induce a modicum of sympathy for the efforts the Indian establishment has been making in the five countries, however belated it may be.

China's role in Central Asia vis-a-vis India's needs to be considered against three distinct backdrops:

Firstly, China shares a natural border of nearly 2800km along Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. The Xinjiang province serves as the focal point of China's conduit into and out of Central Asia. There exists an impressive infrastructure of pipelines, power lines, and transport networks which China has been able to build to connect the Central Asian States with the Xinjiang Province, wherefrom Chinese goods have inundated the local markets. More pertinent is China's urgent need to insulate Xinjiang from the fallout of the Afghan quagmire². The

Xinjiang Autonomous Region has for long now been a flashpoint of ethnic conflicts, the manifestly violent expressions of militant Islam and the demand for autonomy. Such conditions accord it an extremely volatile character and it is vital for the cause of Chinese national interest that this Province bordering the three Central Asian States be secured³. This fact of geography explains one of the factors for Central Asia qualifying as a Core National Interest in the PRC's scheme of things.

Secondly, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) owes its locus standi in many ways to Beijing. When the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks of the creation of a 'community of interests' between Beijing and the CARs through the SCO, it has a self-explanatory logic because geographic and economic realities have rendered Beijing and the five Central Asian States as stakeholders in the same issue areas⁴. Issues of narco-trafficking, endemic corruption, the possibility of civil strife, the spread of terrorism, and water security are among issues that plague China and the CARs in equal measure and have an immediate spillover effect between each other⁵. Again, barring Uzbekistan, China today is the largest trading partner and the main source of foreign investment in the Central Asian Republics. In the span of a decade starting 2000, China entrenched the cause of the Central Asian economies with its own by taking bilateral trade from a meagre \$1bn to \$46bn⁶.

In comparing the Sino-Indian roles in Central Asia, such fantastic figures of Chinese successes are often employed to point out New Delhi's lacklustre performance. There are two ways in which this difference in 'fates' could be explained – One could either argue that because the Chinese entered the fray early, they have a sizeable stake in the CARs economy, or alternately, one could also explain the difference by suggesting that because geographical conditions permitted an easy movement of goods and people, the Chinese were able to make that early foray. This second perspective explains another difference in the Indian and Chinese circumstance pertaining to Central Asia. Again, SAARC and its circumstance would, perhaps, serve as a more appropriate replication of 'a community of interests' for India, for reasons similar to the ones that exist between China and the CARs.

Thirdly, so intensive has Beijing's engagement of the CARs become that it has assumed scales similar to the erstwhile Soviet 'Clientelism' which countries of the region were accustomed to⁷. The invested stake is far greater when compared to India's interest in Central Asia. There are, of course, historical and cultural moorings that India finds binding

with the CARs – Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, in particular – yet the stake in each other’s day to day welfare is perhaps not as fundamentally ingrained as is the case between China and the region. India’s present interest in Central Asia has much to do with the containment of the Afghan situation and a recognition of the fact that the CARs occupy a crucial position since they border Afghanistan and could be a hub of either regional security or, on the contrary, destabilization through networks of international terrorism and drug supply for the region and beyond. The possibility of partaking in the new currency of Central Asian importance, namely, its rich energy resources, also evokes the contemporary interest of a resource hungry country like India⁸. All of these Indian interests together, however, cannot compete with the kind of importance Central Asia holds for China.

These three different contexts have not been cited to indicate an absence of Indian interest in the CARs, much less validate any shortcomings in the rightful efforts that should have been made by the Indian establishment towards the region. The purpose of drawing these distinctions is to situate the priorities of foreign policy based upon the specific nature of interdependence between States and the concomitant levels of engagement. It is a cardinal principle of foreign policy that every possible option and avenue be explored by a nation for the cause of its growth and development. Equally important, however, is another precept, viz., that in the pursuit of national interest, investments should mirror, if not return, the perceived relevance of a region or a cause. An appreciation of the three enumerated backgrounds, helps contextualise the difference in Sino-Indian approaches to Central Asia on the basis of the second precept and in so doing, allows a more objective assessment of what India’s approach needs to be in the future.

While establishing the difference in the importance accorded to Central Asia by China on the one hand and India on the other, it is necessary to record the region’s value to New Delhi in no uncertain terms. India’s legitimate aspiration to emerge as a global player in world politics renders it imperative for her to unfailingly cultivate all possible avenues of geostrategic and economic interests. As opportunities abound for India across regions, positioned as her ‘near-abroad’, Central Asia qualifies as an area of vital significance. In the past, India’s approach to the Central Asian countries has been based more on symbolic interpretations and representations of engagement. The policy pursued has chiefly been in the form of a reaction or response to Central Asia’s engagement by other regional or extra-regional powers, thereby

betraying the lack of comprehensive initiative. As India pursued an overall caution in her foreign policy matrix, seldom striving for strategic engagement based on a realist appreciation of national interest, it lost the chance to forge close partnerships with its neighbours. India can no longer afford this oversight, especially in Central Asia. As the region gains ground as the theatre of the New Great Game and in the aftermath of the Afghan situation and as India's energy security interests steadily rise, the traditional tenor of India's Central Asia policy needs to be replaced with a pro-active approach. It is precisely this result that the Connect Central Asia policy aspires towards. Among all the major powers that are aggressively attempting to cultivate the region, India has a natural advantage. A colossal entity in the order of democratic states, India offers the added incentive of being a giant market bestowed with sound financial moorings. The most significant shift in India's engagement of Central Asia is to move beyond historical ties, emphasize on establishing tangible processes of economic engagement and facilitate the process of democratic-developmental advances in these nations. Taking her technical prowess and sharing her knowledge base with the Central Asian nations will serve India's cause more effectively than attempts to draw its successes in comparison to China in areas where the latter enjoys a natural and traditionally cultivated advantage. While India has not been able to break in to the energy market or the commodities market in the manner it would like, there is huge potential for New Delhi to make forays into the construction and service sector. It is very important that India's Central Asian tandem move beyond energy politics alone. Skill development is another area which India could more effectively vie for in Central Asia when pitted against China. The construction industry, hospitality industry and organisations working on skill development modules, are chiefly private players in India who would find it easy to make inroads into the sectors in Central Asia given their expertise and the relative lack of Chinese involvement in these areas presently. Another significant area of interest for New Delhi in the region should ideally be cultivating its possible membership of the SCO⁹. SCO's intent to create a Free Trade Area by 2020, would translate into an economically integrated area of 1.5bn people, offering a lucrative market for its services and industries, and importantly, these would also include countries beyond China's natural boundaries¹⁰.

Sino-Indian efforts would naturally step against each other in a region which has been identified as the theatre of the New Great Game through the grand theoretical constructs of 'China's "Dingwei"

(Lebensraum); The beginning of the New Great Game (Peter Hopkins); 'The Emergence of the Grand Chessboard' (Zbigniew Brzezinski); 'The start of the final clash of civilizations' (Samuel Huntington) et cetera. Considering, however, that the Central Asian countries now are sovereign entities that cannot be pushed around the chessboard and do indeed pursue a multivector policy by which most interested and qualifying players are allowed access, the CARs need no longer be considered merely as a theatre of conflict between regional and extra-regional powers but may also be thought of as a space of complements and negotiations¹¹. Under the circumstances, Sino-Indian competition in the region appears somewhat exaggerated, particularly upon recognition of the possibility that the interests of both the countries are not always identical nor always equally critical in the region. In the fields of education, processes of democratic institutions culture, arts and sciences, as also the service and skill development industries, India has a natural advantage and it is a valuable investment to make.

Similarly, however, there are several sectors – greater in number too, perhaps – where the Chinese enjoy an advantage and an early outreach and it is important that India's performance in those sectors be studied in that light by students of the Central Asian region. Allegations have been rife about environmental depredation by Chinese mines, bad working conditions in Chinese industrial plants, and Chinese businessmen squeezing out competitors with liberal bribes to officials. While much of this qualifies as allegations alone, the stereotype of China as the new economic imperialist is indeed taking root. The Indian establishment and the Indian commercial concerns, on the other hand, though have been consistently targeted for a lackadaisical attitude and lack of foresight, the goodwill for them remains intact among the Central Asian States.

A clear recognition of their respective fields of expertise would enable China and India to cooperate in the Central Asian arena. It is an implicit demarcation that Russia and China have effectively drawn in Central Asia whereby the PRC steers clear of any real security and military role and issue in the region while competing with Russia in all other arenas of its competence. Competing strains would reap benefits in the form of energy resources and strategic partnerships, yet China and India – the latter, in particular – would gain more by not expending scarce resources on improbable successes, when so much more could be gained by establishing a cooperative mechanism. It is nearly impossible that Central Asia's relevance to India would ever diminish;

however, it is also sufficiently improbable that its relevance would increase beyond its natural significance to China. Scholarship on the subject which is quick to point out India's failures in Central Asia, could offer a more comprehensive view by considering the difference in the Chinese and Indian contexts in the region. The pursuit of a region needs to correspond to the peculiarity of a country's stake in the region and it is necessary that the narrative of Sino-Indian engagement of Central Asia factor this compulsion in.

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Growing Stature of India-Tajikistan Strategic Partnership

Mohammad Samir Hussain*

'Tajikistan is a key partner of India in the Central Asian region'
- Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, September 2012

Introduction

The end of the Cold War, witnessed a dramatic transformation in the world order. India has concluded strategic partnership agreements with various regional and global partners such as the United States, Russia, France, Japan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan etc. Tajikistan became the latest country to have concluded the strategic partnership agreement with India and the third among the Central Asian Republics (CARs) after Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The post-Cold War global strategic developments have brought India and Tajikistan closer to one another. Strategic partnership agreement makes a lot of sense when Tajikistan is considered India's gateway to Central Asia.

Strategic partnership agreement is part of India's foreign policy goals to strengthen its presence in areas of interest to India and gaining more strategic space. The agreement was signed during the visit of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon to India in September 2012. It was important in a way that it elevated the old close normal bilateral ties to strategic level. With this, both sides can now engage in a robust manner. The strategic importance of this partnership lies in sharing common perspectives on several international

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and regional issues. In the 21st century, both sides would like to establish qualitatively new and mutually beneficial relations in the political, economic, military, development cooperation and in other areas.¹

Understanding Geo-Strategic Location of Tajikistan and its Significance From the Indian perspective, Central Asia as a region is crucial owing to its close proximity and strategically from energy, security and economic interests. Among the five Central Asian Republics, Tajikistan is just 20 kilometers away from Greater Kashmir of India. This way Tajikistan can serve as a useful foothold in the region, from which New Delhi can protect its energy interests and possibly expand its influence further into Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Map Showing Geo-Strategic Location of Tajikistan



India has energy, security, and commercial interests in the region. In recent times, strengthening relations with each of the Central Asian States has been one of the foreign policy goals of India. However, after the end of the cold war, Central Asia was not of the immediate interest of India. The main constraints to India expanding its influence in the region included lack of access, plus difficult market conditions.

Another strategic reason compelling interest in the region is the fact that any event in Central Asia has a spillover effect in India.²

Tajikistan is central to strengthening India's Connect Central Asia policy, energy security and counterbalancing China's and Pakistan's influence in Central Asia. Moreover, Tajikistan is strategically important because of its close proximity to Afghanistan and Pakistan, which has been one of the safest havens for terrorism.³ Tajikistan is separated by Afghan territory from Pakistan. Tajikistan offers the way for India to counter the negative moves of Pakistan with the support given by China. From the Indian perspective, Tajikistan occupies an important position by virtue of its strategic location. India and Tajikistan together can play a key role in ensuring stability and security in the region by countering terrorism abetted by outsiders.⁴

Conceptualising Strategic Partnership

Although the word strategic partnership is increasingly being used both by the scholars and experts of international relations, there is no commonly accepted definition on concept of strategic partnership. The origin of the concept can be attributed to the US-USSR talks in 1990 on the post-Cold War European security architecture. The term strategic partnership should not be construed as strategic alliance. Unlike strategic alliance, strategic partnership is flexible and goal driven and is aimed at working closely for their mutual benefit on multidimensional aspects encompassing, political, economic and security interests. It provides enough room for both parties to work and serve its national interests in the challenging world order without coming under the pressure of the other country. According to the Former Indian Ambassador to the US, Lalit Mansingh, for a strategic partnership to blossom, the presence of three factors is necessary: a) long-term vision, b) volume of exchange, and c) defence and security part or understanding.⁵

Political Understanding

Ever since India and Tajikistan established the diplomatic ties in February 1992, both sides enjoy close and friendly ties. Strategic partnership agreement would never be possible without a close understanding. During the last few years, there has been frequent high level visits by the officials of the two countries, opening up more avenues for cooperation in multi-dimension areas. There emerged a political understanding that their cooperation would further the cause of peace and security in Asia and globally.

Former Indian President, Pratibha Devisingh Patil visited Tajikistan in September 2009. Her visit came after Prime Minister, Vajpayee

visited Dushanbe in November 2003. During this visit, both sides made a joint declaration on friendship and cooperation. The Joint declaration (JD) underlines a roadmap for future course of action. The JD committed itself to the following issues:

- Combating the menace of international terrorism and its related crimes such as money laundering, drug trafficking, etc.
- Widen cooperation in the fields of culture, mass media, sports, tourism and in the fields of science and technology.
- Continue providing economic and other assistance to contribute to peace, stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan.⁶

While from the Tajikistan side, President Rahmon visited India in August 2006 during which both sides made a joint declaration to further strengthen the already existing bilateral ties. Both sides underlined the close inter linkage between stability and security of the Central Asian region and the Indian sub-continent and the need for maintaining a secure and peaceful environment for development of the countries in the region. During this visit, India announced rehabilitation and modernization of Varzob-1 Hydro Power Station worth approximately US \$ 17 millions through Indian companies BHEL and NHPC. Work on the project started in August 2008 and is expected to be complete very soon.⁷

Outcome of the President Rahmon's Visits to India

This (Sept 2012) was the fifth visit of Tajikistan President Rahmon to India. Unlike previous visits, the recent visit assumes significance not only in terms of strengthening the existing ties but has resulted in building a long-term strategic partnership. According to the joint statement issued during his visit, India and Tajikistan have 'decided to elevate their bilateral relations to the level of a long-term strategic partnership.'

Six important documents, inked during the visit in the area of Culture, Education, Sports, Textile, Labour and Family Welfare are indicative of the continued effort on the part of the two countries to further cement their relationship.

Economic, Trade and Investment Partnership

Trade relations between India and Tajikistan are still short of the actual potential. Lack of easy access has been the main hindrance to economic and trade partnership in the past. Both sides understand the fact that

expanding the volume of trade would be for the mutual benefit. On the basis of which, both sides have decided to set up the Joint Commission on trade and the first Indo-Tajik Joint Commission on trade took place in New Delhi in 2001. To further strengthen the trade ties, both sides have concluded three major agreements. They include agreement for bilateral investment protection, air services agreement and agreement on long term cooperation in trade, economy and industry.⁸ Besides, the recent initiatives in transportation links such as resumption of the direct air link between the Delhi and Dushanbe would give way to greater economic and trade exchange in the coming years. The major items of India's exports to Tajikistan are knit apparel, pharmaceutical products, meat, plastics, spices, coffee and tea. While India's major items of imports from Tajikistan are cotton, silk, essential oils, perfumes, cosmetics, etc.⁹

The total volume of the bilateral trade between the two countries has been comparatively low, valued at US \$ 41.33 million in 2010-11 in which India's exports to Tajikistan were valued at US \$ 18.31million and its imports at US \$ 23.02 million. Tajikistan ranks last among the five Central Asian Republics when it comes to trade exchange with India, reflecting the need for economic dialogue. However, to expand economic and trade cooperation, both countries have established an inter-governmental commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation and have encouraged investment and trade in hydroelectricity, transport, mining, food processing, construction and tourism.¹⁰ Besides, they are working on several projects in different fields and the new proposals for further cooperation. The stronger the level of economic engagement, the better will be for both sides. Tajikistan is one of the least developed nations among the Central Asian states; India can help them by supporting several development oriented projects in Tajikistan.

**Table 1: Merchandise Trade Between India and Tajikistan:
2000-01 to 2010-11 (Apr-Dec) (in US \$ millions)**

<i>Year</i>	<i>India's Exports to Tajikistan</i>	<i>India's Imports from Tajikistan</i>	<i>Trade Turnover</i>	<i>Trade Balance</i>
2000-01	03.55	00.54	04.09	03.01
2001-02	01.22	01.34	02.56	-00.12
2002-03	08.65	00.08	08.73	08.57
2003-04	04.47	03.95	08.42	00.52
2004-05	06.59	04.09	10.68	02.50

2005-06	06.24	05.89	12.13	00.35
2006-07	07.46	07.95	15.41	-00.49
2007-08	12.40	09.81	22.21	02.59
2008-09	16.71	17.47	34.18	-00.76
2009-10	15.71	16.85	32.56	-01.14
2010-11	18.31	23.02	41.33	-4.71
2011-12	21.28	07.09	28.37	14.19

Source: Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, available at <<http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/default.asp>>.

From the above table one can observe that there is lack of consistency in the improvements of export and imports of items from both sides. The trade balance was in favour of both sides, reflecting the need for serious dialogue to expand the existing level of trade ties both countries share. The percentage of the growth rate is another area of concern. But the good thing is that there is tremendous scope for improvement in economic and trade relations between the two countries.

Investment is another area where there is tremendous scope for cooperation between the two countries. India can become an important investment partner for Tajikistan by investment in the fields of infrastructure development,

Defence and Security Partnership

With both sides having concluded the strategic partnership agreement, there is a need to expand the already existing defence and security ties. Defence and security cooperation between the two countries holds the key to ensuring stable peace and security in the region. Defence and security cooperation between India and Tajikistan is in tune to the changing security and strategic environment in the world in general and Asia in particular.

Defence and security cooperation is evolving in response to changing role of India as a regional and major power that has a role to play in the twenty-first century world via-a-vis combating terrorism, ensuring regional and global security and stability, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions (WMDs), etc. Terrorism and its related activities pose serious threats to India and Central Asian States, reflecting significant scope for cooperation between the two sides. Central Asia's security environment continued to be influenced by developments within and its immediate neighbourhood where rising instability remains a matter of deep concern. India is seriously concerned

about security and stability of this region because any insecurity in this region will have its implications for India. New Delhi cannot ignore the major security challenges facing Central Asia. Lasting security in Central Asia is important for Asian Security in general and India in particular.

Initially, the defence and security cooperation between India and Tajikistan was limited to holding discussion, exchange of visits. Later, it was expanded to include exchange military training and even arms supplies and purchases. However, by the turn of the twenty-first century, owing to the number of significant measures taken by the administration of the two countries, defence and security cooperation reached a new level where the two countries witnessed increasing number of military-to-military exercises of multi-dimensional activities. Since the September 11 incident, both security understanding and military-to-military exercises involving all the branches of the armed forces have improved significantly.

Since 2001 counter-terrorism initiatives between the two countries have gained momentum, and transfers of military equipments from India have increased significantly. India has not only developed Ayni facility in Tajikistan's but also supported the Tajik military by providing military equipments and training etc. So far, 35 Tajik military cadets and 67 young officers have undergone training at National Defence Academy and Indian Military Academy and in other training establishments. 381 Tajik personnel have been trained under the ITEC scheme.¹¹ (India Technical and Economic Cooperation).

With gaining understanding, we can see increasing number of high-level official visits. Chief of Army Staff, General V. K. Singh visited Tajikistan from 10-13 November, 2010 and met the Tajik Defence Minister, Sherali Khayrulloev and called on President, Mr. Imomali Rahmon. General Singh also visited Kulob and interacted with the Governor there.¹² Vice Chief of Air Staff, Kishen Kumar Nakhor, visited along with a delegation where he met Defence Minister, Sherali Hairulloev, Foreign Minister, Zarifi, and Prime Minister, Oqil Oqilov. Minister for Defence, Shri A K Antony, accompanied by senior officials visited Dushanbe, on 3 October, 2011 and met Tajik Defence Minister, Sherali Khairulloev. They discussed issues of mutual interest.¹³

Ensuring Regional Security

One of the prominent common interests between India and Tajikistan lies in ensuring regional security. Both sides share common concerns

on regional security scenario. Both sides have developed an understanding that lasting peace and security in the region can only take place if all the nations in the region cooperate to deal with the exiting security challenges facing the region. The issue has assumed a critical importance owing to sharing their borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Central Asia is concerned about these two countries that have become the launching pads for terrorism.¹⁴ Tajikistan shares a lengthy border of around 1400 km with Afghanistan and traditionally the Tajik-Afghan border has been an open one with Tajiks on either side of the border crossing it freely. Tajikistan is also physically proximate to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) which lies on the other side of Wakhan Corridor. Training camps for terrorists and their infrastructure is located in POK. Earlier Tajikistan played a geopolitically crucial role in the defeat of the Taliban.

Both India and Tajikistan strongly believe that regional security is linked to developments in Afghanistan. Sustained peace and stability in Afghanistan is essential for regional security as any instability in Afghanistan has the potential to destabilize the region. Both the countries supported Afghanistan's efforts to build an independent, peaceful, democratic and a prosperous Afghan state.¹⁵ India alone has committed to invest US\$ 2 billion (including US\$ 500 million which the Indian Prime Minister has committed during visit to Afghanistan last year) to the Afghanistan's reconstruction and development programmes. India has been active in investing in diverse sectors such as infrastructure development, education and healthcare, building roads, schools, civil aviations, hospitals, agriculture and power and communication networks in Afghanistan.¹⁶ Besides, India has taken the following steps to ensure lasting peace in the region:

- a. Establish a joint working group on terrorism with the CARs.
- b. Evolve mechanism on sharing of information and intelligence cooperation.
- c. Provide the training to CARs forces and equip them with advanced arms and equipment.
- d. Helping them meet the root causes of terrorism by bringing down unemployment, economic underdevelopment, poverty, etc.¹⁷
- e. Develop an understanding with the CARs over the stability in Afghanistan that would definitely have positive implications

on the issue of terrorism as security and stability in Afghanistan holds the key to peace, security and stability in Central Asian Republics.¹⁸

In a bid to help Afghan forces tackle the sophisticated terrorism and other security related problems, India has provided US\$ 8 million worth of high-altitude warfare equipment to Afghanistan, shared high-ranking military advisers and helicopter technicians from its clandestine foreign intelligence and counter-espionage organization, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).¹⁹

Concluding Remarks

Having examined the post-Cold War India-Tajikistan Strategic relationship, one thing is very clear that the relationship has seen up red curve band there is no way of looking back. There are significant avenues for cooperation between the two countries at the strategic, defence and economic level. The strategic partnership agreement is a landmark agreement in the history of India-Tajikistan relations as it has opened up the way to expand the existing cooperation and explore future prospects. The time has come for India to adopt a pro-active approach in its dealings with the Central Asian Republics.

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Revisiting Tenancy Reforms in India in the Light of the Draft National Land Reform Policy

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1. Introduction

Tenancy reform has long remained an unfinished agenda in Indian agriculture. Although, all the States passed their respective tenancy legislations after independence, except for a few States like West Bengal, most of the States have failed in achieving their goals of efficient and equitable use of agricultural land. This has been recognised in the Draft National Land Reform Policy (DNLRP) which was put in public domain for discussion purposes and comments on 24th July, 2013 by the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Though the issue of tenancy reform was almost relegated to the history, at least in the policy arena, the DNLRP has again enthused some interest on the issue. In light of the DNLRP, the present paper revisits the long pending issue of tenancy reforms in India.

The draft of NLRP contains 18 chapters excluding the introduction. Each of the chapters deals with a critical issue. Some of the major issues that the DNLRP dealt with, among others, are i) protection of lands belonging to Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and other Marginalised Communities, ii) Land Rights to Women, iii) Tenancy and iv) Modernization of land records. Chapter 10 of the DNLRP presents the recommendations related to tenancy.

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The chapter on tenancy starts with the admission that the idealistic policy of land to the tillers implying either a complete ban or imposition of very stringent condition on tenancy could not deliver the desired outcomes. Rather, the tenancy reform measures in States like West Bengal and Kerala, where tenancy was allowed and was complemented with statutory rights of the tenants, have been more successful. The draft seems to have taken cue from the success of these States in implementing tenancy reform programmes, while formulating the recommendations on tenancy in the DNLRP.

The DNLRP has suggested five recommendations with regard to reforming the institution of tenancy. These recommendations have been formulated keeping in view the contemporary discourse on tenancy reforms that is being deliberated in the policy and academic circles. In fact, the 11th Five Year Plan Document recommended reforms in the tenancy policy mostly on the same line with these recommendations. The proposed recommendations are good in spirit and take into account not only the changing realities in the countryside but also consider the lessons derived from the experience of the States that have reaped some success from the implementation of the tenancy reforms measures. However, there are some crucial issues which have not been addressed in the draft policy and the present note is an attempt to highlight these issues.

The present paper has been organised into five sections. The second section summarises the tenancy reform measures adopted after independence and presents an assessment of the implementation of these tenancy reform measures. This section also reviews the contemporary discourse on tenancy reform. The third section assesses the experiences of tenancy reforms in the States of West Bengal and Kerala which are hailed to be successful models of tenancy reform. While acknowledging the successful facets in the implementation of the tenancy reforms in these States, this section reinforces the need to also understand the loopholes entailed in the tenancy laws of both these States. The intent is to highlight the fact that even though there are lessons to be learnt from the experiences of West Bengal and Kerala, they cannot, however, be taken as the yardstick in the implementation of tenancy reforms. The recommendations of the DNLRP and the lacunae in them have been discussed in the fourth section. Section five concludes.

2. The Tenancy Reform Measures Adopted post-Independence: Their Impacts and the Contemporary Discourse in India on Tenancy Reform

The land reform policy in general and tenancy reforms in particular initiated after independence had two specific objectives. First, to remove all impediments inherited from the pre-independent agrarian structure so as to create conditions conducive to raise efficiency and productivity in agricultural production. The second objective was to deal with the issue of social injustice and inequality within the agrarian system (Third Five Year Plan, Government of India, 1961).

The purpose of tenancy reform was to regulate certain aspects of tenancy relations as opposed to the outright transfer of land under land reform. Tenancy reform in India basically included i) providing security of tenure to the tenants, ii) regulation of rent to a reasonable level usually 20 to 25 percent of gross produce and iii) conferment of ownership rights on the tenants subject to certain restrictions (Chandra et. al, 1999). Given the socio-economic conditions of the small and marginal land owners, the policy also intended to protect the interests of these landowners while implementing the tenancy reform measures.

Agriculture being a State subject, all the States after independence passed their respective tenancy legislations. The States being at different level of economic and political development, the nature of implementation of the State tenancy legislations varied largely. However, the policy of tenancy reform in all the States aimed at addressing the above-mentioned three objectives. Although all the States passed the tenancy legislations; most of them lacked the political will to implement the tenancy reform measures properly. Besides, it is a well-known fact that these laws had many loopholes. Hence it is not surprising that the tenancy reform programmes in India could hardly accomplish their stated objectives.

An overall assessment of the tenancy reform measures in India with respect to the aforementioned objectives would reveal a very disappointing picture. In so far as the first objective is concerned, though a substantial proportion of tenants acquired security, there were however, still large numbers who remained unprotected (Chandra et. al, 1999). With respect to the second objective, rents to be paid by the tenants to the lessors fixed by the State legislations varied across States. In some States, rent was much higher than what had been recommended in the Five Year Plans. Again, on the pretext of personal cultivation and

voluntary surrender, the lessors evicted the tenants on a large-scale. Hence, the objective of conferring ownership right also met with only limited success. Most importantly, tenancy being oral or informal in most of the cases, all the reform measures remained only on paper without much effect. Appu (1975, p.1) summarized the status of the implementation of the tenancy reforms programmes in India as follows: 'Even after two decades of tenancy reform, the position of tenants – particularly of the sharecroppers – continues to be precarious in several parts of the country. Insecure tenures have not merely resulted in the perpetuation of social and economic injustice; they have also turned out to be formidable stumbling blocks in the path of the modernization of India agriculture. High priority should, therefore, be given to the plugging of loopholes in the existing tenancy laws and the better implementation of the enacted laws.' The fact that the situation has not improved even today is indeed a sad testimony of India's policy making process.

While the tenancy laws were never implemented in true spirit except in a few States, many unwarranted outcomes surfaced consequent to the ban on tenancy or formulation of many restrictive provisions in these laws. Not only in the States where these laws were implemented like West Bengal and Kerala, but in other States also such undesired outcomes had surfaced. These undesired outcomes however, went unnoticed for several decades after independence.

One of such unwarranted outcomes that emerged owing to the ban on tenancy or very stringent conditions with regard to tenancy in the existing tenancy laws of the States was the emergence of concealed tenancy. The 10th Plan Document observed that: 'Several states have either banned tenancy completely or have imposed such restrictive conditions that land leases are virtually impossible. Studies by the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration indicate that this has only resulted in concealed tenancy. The ban on tenancy, which was meant to protect tenants, has only ended up hurting the economic interests of the tenants as they are not even recognised as tenants. As a result, they are denied the benefits of laws that provide security of tenure and regulate rent.' (p.301, Tenth Five Year Plan Document, Vol. 2, 2002)

Besides concealed tenancy, the restrictive tenancy laws also resulted in the underutilization of the agricultural resources. Lessors, in the fear of losing the ownership did not lease out their land. Either they continue to remain in agriculture sector even if it is unmanageable or prefer to

keep their land fallow. As a result there is a serious dearth in the supply of land in the land lease market which in turn restricts the access of the tenants to land. Hence it can be observed that the objectives of the land and tenancy reform, i.e. to promote efficiency in agricultural production and equity in terms of access to land could not be achieved to a significant extent. It has also been recognized that banning tenancy is not an achievable nor a desirable solution in view of the mismatch in the endowments of factors of production namely land and labour across rural households. Moreover, the situation in the countryside today is not the same as it was before. There is evidence to show that lessors in many parts of India today are different from those at the time of independence when many among them did not have any interest in agriculture (Sharma, 2006).

Apart from concealed tenancy and underutilization of agricultural resources, another undesired outcome resulting from the restrictive provision in tenancy legislation is that of shortening of the duration of tenancy contracts. A recent study by Goswami (2012) in the context of Assam Plains has found that due to the restrictive provision in the existing law wherein a tenant can become an occupancy tenant and consequently take over the possession of the land if he holds land continuously for three years, the lessors do not want to lease out land for more than two years even when the tenancy contracts are concealed from the law. The study has found that more than 60 per cent of the sharecropping and fixed rent contracts in the survey area of Assam plains are for less than three years.

The short duration of the contracts may have adverse implication for the sustainable use of land. The tenants may not be interested in undertaking any investment for the development of the land. Besides, they may not have any incentive to use the land sustainably. Rather they may only be interested in maximizing the returns from land during the stipulated short period by making excessive use of chemical fertilizers and such inputs without caring for the natural quality of land. This tendency may particularly be strong among the fixed rent tenants as after paying the rent the only objective that they have is to maximize the returns from land. In fact, Goswami and Bezbaruah (2013) have found that the fixed rent tenants tend to apply more chemical fertilizers than even the owner operators. According to them, the tendency among the fixed rent tenants to apply more chemical fertilisers may, at least partly, be attributed to the short duration of the fixed rent contracts. The tenants intend to increase the returns from the leased land as much

as possible during the short period of the contracts. Consequently they do not have hesitation in using chemical fertilizers at liberal doses without caring much for the soil health. In other words, the short duration of the contracts provides incentives to the tenants to maximize the use value rather than balancing it against the asset value of land (i.e. the future flow of returns from land which an owner operator should ideally consider).

Thus, in view of the unwarranted outcomes of the earlier provisions of tenancy reform and the changing realities of the countryside, the 11th Plan called for a revision of the existing tenancy laws. The 11th Plan suggested that although security of tenure was necessary for producers to have the incentive for investment and for enhancing productivity, it should not be confused with ownership rights. The Plan suggested that the use of right should be distinguished from the ownership right.

3. The Experiences of Tenancy Reform in West Bengal and Kerala

While most of the States failed to implement the tenancy legislations properly or lacked the political will, the tenancy reform experiences of West Bengal and Kerala received much acclaim. The tenancy reform experiences of West Bengal and Kerala were hailed as successful at least at the time when they were implemented. In so far as tenancy reform is concerned, the DNLRP also acknowledges the tenancy reform models of these States as successful and suggests that one needs to learn lessons from the experiences of these States. However, it is important to understand that while there are lessons to learn from the experiences of West Bengal and Kerala, their models have some serious shortcomings and hence cannot be considered as the ideal models of tenancy reform.

3.1. Operation 'Barga' in West Bengal

Operation 'Barga' itself was not a tenancy reform measure. The Left Front on coming to power in West Bengal in 1977 launched a programme called Operation 'Barga' with the objective of implementing the hitherto ineffective tenancy laws which sought to regulate rents and provide security of tenure to the sharecroppers. A campaign was launched under the programme to help and encourage the sharecroppers to register with the Department of Land, Revenue of the Government of West Bengal. The registered sharecroppers would then have permanent and inheritable

tenure on the leased in land, provided they paid the legal share of crop to the lessors as rent. The provision of security of tenure and regulation of rents was present in the tenancy laws of almost all the States. The only difference between the case of West Bengal and the rest was that while in the former the government implemented the laws rigorously; in other States the political will to implement them was missing.

Theoretically, as Banerjee et al (2002) have shown, the impact of a measure or programme like Operation 'Barga' on agricultural productivity can be decomposed into two effects: i) bargaining power effect and ii) security of tenure effect. The bargaining power effect comes from the fact that after the implementation of the programme, tenant's bargaining power vis-à-vis the lessor with respect to the share of output increases. The tenant may settle for a higher crop share which may incentivise him to put in more efforts. Increased supply of efforts may ultimately result in higher productivity or greater efficiency. The security of tenure may impact agricultural productivity from two opposing directions. While, on one hand, the threat of eviction may be used by the lessors to induce the tenants to supply adequate effort, on the other, banning of eviction or alternatively security of tenure would encourage the tenants to put required effort as the tenants become the virtual owner of the land. Which effect dominates is, however, an empirical question. Again, on the equity ground, while banning of eviction would increase the welfare of the incumbent tenants, getting land on lease will be increasingly difficult for the potential tenants. Thus, intra-generational equity may be attained at the cost of inter-generational equity (Ray, 1998).

Empirically, there is evidence to suggest that Operation 'Barga' did have positive impact on productivity. Banerjee et al (2002) have shown that Operation 'Barga' has resulted in productivity improvement by 28 percent. However, question has been raised whether Operation 'Barga' could contribute to the improvement in the living standard of the bargadars. Dasgupta and Pellegrini (2009) have shown that consumption expenditure of the tenants in West Bengal do not show any significant differential increase in comparison to non-tenants in the same period for which Banerjee et al (2002) claim their result. Further, Haque (2001) has shown that the notion that tenancy rights would enable tenants to access institutional credit seems to have been belied.

Thus, in view of the above, it may be concluded that a programme like Operation 'Barga' which stressed on sharecroppers

having permanent and inheritable tenure on the leased land cannot provide permanent or at least a long-term solution to the problems surrounding tenancy.

3.2. Full Transfer of Property Right through a Ban on Tenancy

The Kerala Land Reform Act (1969) which came into effect from January 1, 1970, vested in governments all the rights, titles and interests of the landowners and intermediaries over the holding held by the cultivating tenants (Nair and Menon, 2006). The act envisages conferring security of tenure and allows compulsory transfer of ownership rights to all tenants including the sharecroppers. Thus there was full transfer or redistribution of property rights in favour of tenants and they became the owners of the land. Besides this, the act prohibited the creation of future tenancy and made it illegal. Even for the defence personnel there was no exemption. Thus land redistribution in Kerala was primarily via the abolition of tenancy (Herring, 1980).

Since 1970, 37 percent of the net sown area in Kerala has been transferred to 1.3 million former tenants most of whom are small farmers (Nair and Menon, 2006). However, 64 percent of the transferred area went to the relatively big farmers (Herring, 1983). Thus, the effect of tenancy abolition in Kerala has not been conducive to social justice contrary to popular belief. A study by Indian School of Social Sciences (1976) pointed out that, a small section of tenants who were already better off could obtain ownership right by purchasing the lands they had leased in, while a large number of poor tenants got evicted on legal and illegal grounds. Thus the benefits of land reforms accrued only to the rich tenants. Moreover the small farmers who leased out to medium and big farmers lost their ownership rights.

A few independent studies revealed that consequent to the ban on tenancy, concealed tenancy surfaced which made the law irrelevant (Oomen, 1971; Nair and Menon, 2006). In cases, where tenants happen to be small or marginal farmers or landless labourers, concealed tenancy was forced upon them. Lessors would often change the tenants every year so that the tenancy might not get registered and the tenants might not get the ownership right. Besides, the big lessors made use of the loopholes in the tenancy reform legislation to evade the ceiling law. They conferred the tenancy rights of their surplus land to some of their poor relatives, friends and farm servants, although practically such

lands belonged to them only. In other words, this was simply a new form of concealed tenancy (Haque and Sirohi, 1986).

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that while the tenancy reforms programmes in West Bengal and Kerala might have achieved their objectives of giving security of tenure and conferring the ownership right upon the tenants to a large extent; they did have some serious lacunae which resulted in these programmes falling short of achieving a long term solution. These programmes might have been very useful during the time of their formulation. However, given the fact that many unwarranted outcomes had surfaced in both the states consequent to the implementation of these programmes, the experiences of West Bengal and Kerala cannot be regarded as a perfect solution to the complex issue of tenancy arrangement. At this point it must, however, be recognized that whether or not the examples of West Bengal and Kerala are viable, the lesson that one can learn from the experiences of these two states is that political will and a detailed records of land are essential to implement a land or tenancy reform programme. In both the States, government implemented the reform measures vigorously and laid emphasis on tenants registering with the relevant State institutions. Accordingly, the tenants who registered with them received the benefits of tenancy reforms (NCAP, 1995-96).

4. A critique on the recommendations of the Draft National Land Reform Policy

The recommendations of the Draft National Land Reform Policy on tenancy are listed below.

- Restrictions on land leasing within ceiling limits should be removed to help improving poor people's access to land through lease market and also for improved utilization of available land, labour and capital. However, there should be legal safeguards in the lease contracts that would protect the small and marginal farmers, and a clear recording of all leases, including sharecropping.
- Encouragement to the women for group leasing, as far as possible.
- The clause of adverse possession in some tenancy laws should be removed because it acts as a dis-incentive to the landholder to lease out land. Further, this would improve rural poor's accessibility to land through leasing, discourage land being kept fallow and increase much needed occupational mobility of the rural people.

- There should be automatic and *suo-moto* resumption of land on the expiry of the lease period. The rent should operate as per the lease market. The State should not fix the lease rent. The market rent as agreed upon by the lesser and the lessee should prevail.
- All tenants and sub-tenants including sharecroppers/under-raiyats should be recognized by law and assisted with institutional support/finance and rural development schemes to overcome poverty and indebtedness.

In substance, what these recommendations suggest is the liberalisation of the land lease market. The recommendations call for removing the restrictive provisions in the tenancy laws in order to make leasing in and leasing out hassle free. Removing such restrictions would mean the following: i) legalising tenancy; and ii) abolishing the provision of tenants becoming the occupancy tenants or finally the owner of the land if they hold land continuously for certain number of years and any such stringent provisions.

The scrapping off of the provision of tenant becoming owner of land if he holds land continuously for certain years would in turn mean distinguishing the use right of land from the ownership right as had already been suggested in the 11th Plan Document. Distinguishing the use right from ownership right means that while the owners of land will have the ownership right even if the land is leased out for a long time, the tenants will enjoy only the use right. Leaving the ownership right with the lessors has further been justified on the ground that most of the land owners like the tenants are small and marginal or at best medium holders.

On the other hand, in order to safeguard the interest of the tenants, the draft suggests recording of the tenancy contracts. In fact, if the owners of land do not have the fear of losing the ownership right, they may not resist the recording of the tenancy contracts. If the tenancy contracts are recorded, it will allow the tenants to get the benefits of the tenancy law especially with respect to the protection against whimsical eviction by the lessors and the payment of higher rent. Further, tenants' access to land will also improve as elimination of the fear of losing the ownership right would incentivise the owners of land to lease out. Thus, it may be expected that scarce land resource will not remain underutilised. Rather more land will be supplied in the lease market which is likely to have a moderation effect on the rent in the long-run. Besides, occupational mobility of the owners of land should also improve as those who cannot manage agricultural activity may lease out land and move to the non-farm sector.

Distinguishing the use right from the ownership right may even help in overcoming the problem arising out of the short duration of tenancy contracts. If land can be leased in for a long period of time, i.e. if the lessees have security of tenure, they may have the incentives to make investment for the development of the land and also to use the land sustainably. Thus the problems arising out of the short duration of tenancy contracts may be avoided and thereby efficient utilization of the land that will come to the lease market will be ensured. Thus, it may be concluded that given the experiences of tenancy reforms in the country and the unwarranted outcomes that had manifested thereafter, the recommendations of the DNLRP are well envisioned and pragmatic.

The DNLRP, however, has two important lacunae that need to be addressed. **First**, the DNLRP recommendation of leaving the rent to be fixed by the market forces is highly misleading. The DNLRP suggests that the State should not interfere in the fixation of the rent; rather it should be left to the market. The decision of leaving the rent to be fixed by market forces would have been a welcome step, had the market been perfect. Markets for the inputs of agricultural production or more precisely the markets for their services, including the land lease market is far from being perfect. Under such circumstances, market arrangement may not necessarily be efficient and equitable.

The underpinning of this recommendation may be the fact that in most of the cases the lessors are also small and marginal landholders like the tenants. This puts both the tenants and the lessors on an equal footing in so far as the bargaining power in the lease market is concerned. However, it would be misleading to think that it is always small and marginal tenant versus small and marginal lessors, when it comes to agreeing upon the rents and other conditions of the tenancy contracts. Rather it is more often the resource rich versus the resource poor who come into negotiation in the land lease market. While in case of reverse tenancy caused by distress situation the lessors may be at a precarious situation, the position of the tenants may be weak in some other situations.

Second, the DNLRP is silent on the duration of lease contract. However, given the substance of the recommendations, what transpires from them is that the length of the lease contract should be long enough so as to incentivise the tenants to make efficient and sustainable use of land. Given the harmful effects of the shortening

of the duration of lease contract as discussed in section two, designing a long term contract is desired. Therefore, it is very pertinent that the DNLRP makes some specific suggestions with regard to the duration of the lease contract rather than just indicating that it should be long.

5. Conclusion

Land being fixed in supply, the only way for satiating the ever increasing appetite for land of an increasing population is by developing the land lease market. Towards that end, the recommendations of the DNLRP are a welcome stride.

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