



# ASECA CHANNEL

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## Editorial

Image of a social group helps in deciding the social existence. Image creation and continuation, thus in a society, has become so important. The members of a particular community contribute together to make their respective space bold and beautiful. The image creation and development is not spontaneous rather it grows over a long span of time and considerable period. The contribution and commitment of some people contribute immensely in making their social group familiar with the contemporary or immediate communities and help develop a niche for themselves and a name and fame for their fellow community people. It is very common experience that the valued contributions of such great people do not go unnoticed and uncelebrated. The consciousness in the society greatly influences the intra as well as inter community thought process and development of fellow feeling. The commemoration, celebration and remembrance of great personalities collectively result in image creation and propagation. The image building exercise helps in finding an important place or space in the human social existence. People do value the good work of the forefathers and celebrate their good deeds with élan and elegance.

The occasion and opportunity come very rarely. Some let it go whereas others grab it to further their place and space. The spirited and special category people come together to organize and celebrate grand occasions. In the recent past, for the Santal community, three centenaries were organized in varied depth and spread. The centenary of Sadhu Ramchand Murmu was officially organized in West Bengal. The birth centenary of Pandit Raghunath

Murmu and Shyam Sundar Hembram was celebrated in the year 2005 and 2008 respectively. The occasions had given chances to think in a new dimension and direction. The orientation and organization had given the genX the examples to emulate and evaluate. The continuation of the legacy and consent of people go together and it makes a huge impact on the social milieu and co-existence.

The observance of occasion such as birth centenary points to a decent reality that there were people in the society who immensely contributed for the welfare and well being of the people selflessly and solidly. This very reality demonstrates that growth of a society is synonymous to the good work of some people. The realization and recognition come as part of the introspection and inspiration of the fellow members of the society. The introspection results in admiring the personality and inspiration shows the path to excel and experiment further. The resultant impact is the growth of good sense and development of social capital. This very sense of worshipping the good qualities and talent instill brotherhood and belongingness.

It is generally argued that a minimum level of development in the society is required to expect this kind of modern thought and moral emancipation. Otherwise life becomes miserable and thought process is limited in search of a square meal. But there are personalities in each community and they are either being remembered or worshipped as a matter of pride and purity. The existence and continuity draws much needed elixir from such formation and formulation.

Time has come to bring about new era of understanding and appreciation in all the

societies in the country. The educated and intelligentsia from among the societies should inspire and involve others to follow some good principles and practices. The best practices always results in best results and instill a sense of boldness, safety and security. The best practices should be documented in every society which in other words is called codification. Some alerted groups advocate on the importance of codification in each social formations/groups and expect that gradually this exercise will act as a harbinger of uniform civil code. It is not enough to talk about the uniform civil code rather emphasis should be given to make people understand the provisions proposed in the uniform civil code or principles adopted in formulation of uniform civil code. The views may differ in a democratic set up but quality works have always been appreciated and adopted. The allegation that uniform civil code is being mooted keeping in mind a particular groups is misplaced. The

founding fathers of our constitution might have expected virtues in adoption of equal principles in the matter of gender equality, emancipation, inheritance and personal freedom. The journey has started and one cannot stop the massive flow and dissemination of information. Uniform Civil Code should not be seen through the spectacle laced with parochial prejudices but should be understood through a mind full of freedom and free form any bondage and influence. Let us start understanding and evaluating the essence and ethos of uniform civil code rather to oppose it without having adequate knowledge and content. When majority educated people are ignorant about the process and provision what to talk about the plight of semi educated and illiterate persons. Good sense and urgency of enquiry must prevail for a resurgent mind and path breaking ideas.

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## Folklore of the Santal Parganas

Translated by **Cecil Henry Bompas** of the Indian Civil Service, 1909

**{ASECA CHANNEL intends to publish the stories in order to familiarize the stories among the general public for their better appreciation}**

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{Continued from September 2016 issue}

### **XLII. A Story Told by a Hindu.**

Once upon a time there was a Raja who had two sons and after their father's death they divided the kingdom between them. The two brothers were inveterate gamblers and spent their time playing cards with each other; for a long time fortune was equal, but one day it turned against the elder brother and he lost and lost until his money and his jewellery, his horses and his elephants and every thing that he had, had been won by his younger brother. Then in desperation he staked his share in the kingdom and that too he lost.

Then the younger brother sent drummers through the city to proclaim that the whole kingdom was his; the shame of this was more than the elder prince could bear, so he resolved to quit the country and he told his wife of his intention and bade her stay behind. But his faithful wife refused to be parted from him;

she vowed that he had married her not for one day nor for two but for good and all, and that where he went, there she would go, and whatever troubles he met, she would share. So he allowed her to come with him and the two set off to foreign parts. After sometime their path led them through an extensive jungle and after travelling through it for two days they at last lost their way completely; their food gave out, they were faint with starvation and torn with briars.

The prince urged his wife to return but she would not hear of it, so they pushed on, supporting life on jungle fruits; sometimes the prince would go far ahead, for his faithful wife could only travel slowly, and then he would return and wait for her; at last he got tired of leading her on and made up his mind to abandon her. At night they lay down at the foot of a tree and the prince thought "If wild animals would come and eat us it would be the best that could

happen. I cannot bear to see my wife suffer any more; although her flesh is torn with thorns, she will not leave me. I will leave her here; may wild beasts kill both her and me, but I cannot see her die before my eyes." So thinking he got up quietly and went off as quickly as he could.

When the princess woke and found that she had been abandoned, she began to weep and wept from dawn to noon without ceasing; at noon a being, in the guise of an old woman appeared and asked her why she wept, and comforted her and promised to lead her out of the wood and told her that Chando had had compassion on her and would allow her to find her husband again if they both lived.

So saying the old woman led the princess from the forest and showed her the way to a great city where a Raja lived. The princess went begging her way through the city to the Raja's palace and there they engaged her as a servant.

Now her husband had also escaped from the jungle and sought employment as a labourer but no one would give him work for more than a day or two, and at last his search for work brought him to the city in which the princess was; and there he was engaged as a groom in the palace stables. The prince had changed his name and he had no chance of knowing that his wife was in the palace, because she was confined to the women's apartments; so some years passed without their having news of each other.

At last one day the princess happened to go on to the roof and looking down at the stables saw and thought she recognised her husband; then she leaned over and listened till she heard his voice and at that she was sure that it was he, so she hastened to the Raja and begged to be allowed to meet her husband, and the Raja sent to call the syce with the name which the princess had given but no one came, for the prince would not reveal himself. Then the princess told their story and how her husband had gambled away his half of the kingdom. The Raja ordered any one with such a history to come forward, as his wife was in the palace; but the prince did not reveal himself.

Then the princess said "Let all the syces cook rice and bring me a bit of each man's cooking to taste." They did so, and when she tasted the rice cooked by her husband, she at once said that it was his; her

husband was unable to deny it and admitted everything. Then they took him away from his work in the stables and let him live with his wife.

After a time the Raja wrote to the younger brother asking whether he would restore the half of the kingdom which he had won; and the younger brother answered that he would gladly do so, if his brother would sign an agreement never to gamble any more; it was with this object in view and to teach him the folly of his ways that he had dispossessed him. The elder brother gladly gave the required promise and returned to his kingdom with his faithful wife and lived happily ever afterwards.

### **XLIII. The Raibar and the Leopard.**

Once upon a time a *Raibar* was going backwards and forwards between two families arranging a marriage and part of the road which he used to travel ran through a forest.

One day as he was going to the bride's house he took a sack with him intending to try and get the loan of some Indian corn from the bride's relations; but as he was passing through the piece of jungle he suddenly met a leopard; he was terribly frightened but collecting his wits he addressed the animal thus "Leopard; I beg you not to eat me; I am engaged on a work of great merit, I am making two men out of one." This address amazed the leopard and he at once asked the *raibar* whether he could make him into two, and promised that if he could his life should be spared. The *raibar* answered readily "Seeing that in pursuit of my profession I have made two men out of one all over the country, of course I can make you into two leopards if I try; all you have to do is to get into this sack and keep quiet; if you utter a sound you will spoil the charm."

"Well," said the leopard, "I will try and see; I undertake to keep quite quiet, and if you are successful I promise to tell the whole race of leopards to spare the lives of *raibars*." So saying the leopard jumped into the sack and allowed the man to tie him up tightly in it. No sooner was this done than the *raibar* took the sack on his head and carried it to the bank of a river and having given it two or three hearty whacks with his stick threw it into the water. The sack went floating down the stream and it happened that lower down a leopardess sat watching

the water and when she saw the sack coming along she thought that it was a dead cow floating down. So when it came near she jumped into the water and pulled it ashore.

She then proceeded to tear open the sack, when out jumped the first leopard; he soon explained how he came to be in the sack, and declared that the *raibar's* promise had been fulfilled and that she was his destined mate. The leopardess agreed and the two set to work to tell all the other leopards what had happened and what a kindness the *raibar* had done them; and so it came to pass that to the present day leopards never interfere with *raibars* when they are going about arranging a marriage; no one ever heard of one being injured.

Meanwhile the *raibar* went on his way rejoicing at having rid himself of the leopard. But the next year, while engaged on the business of another marriage, the *raibar* was passing through the same jungle when he came face to face with the very leopard that he thought he had safely disposed of; he at once took to his heels, but the leopard called out to him not to be afraid and to wait, as he had something to say to him. So the *raibar* stopped and the leopard asked whether he did not recognise him; the *raibar* stoutly denied all knowledge of him. "Well," said the leopard "I am the leopard of whom you made two out of one, and to show my gratitude I will give you any reward you like; would you like a cow or a deer or any other animal? I will kill you one and bring it to you."

When the *raibar* saw the turn that things had taken he thought that he had better take advantage of it, so he asked for a good large nilgai. The leopard told him to come to a certain tree at noon the next day and he would find the animal there. So they separated and the next day at noon the *raibar* went to the tree and

found a fine nilgai waiting for him, which he and his friends took home and ate with joy.

#### XLIV. The Ungrateful Snake.

There was once a Raja and his dewan and they each had one son; these sons were married in infancy but as they grew up they never heard anything about their having been married. When the boys reached manhood and found no arrangements being made for their weddings they began to wonder at the delay and often talked about it, and in the end they agreed to run away to another country. Soon after this resolve of theirs some horse dealers came to their home with horses to sell; the two youths at once saw that if they could each have a horse and learn to ride it, it would be easy for them to run away from home. So they hurried to their fathers and begged them to buy them each one of the beautiful horses which the dealers had brought. The Raja and the dewan did not like to disappoint their sons so they bought the horses, to the great delight of the boys, who used to ride them every day.

One day the Raja's son was out riding by himself and he passed by a tank where a number of women and girls were bathing and drawing water; as he came galloping along the women ran back in a fright; and as they could not draw their water while he was there, an old woman came up to him and told him to go away and not stay making eyes at the girls as if he had no wife of his own: "What wife have I?", said the prince, "I know nothing of having been married." "You were married sure enough when you were an infant," replied the old woman: "your wife is still in her father's house, but now that you have grown up they will probably bring her home to you this year."

(To be continued...)

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