

'THE LANGUAGE OF COMMON SENSE'

'Good governance' is today's buzzword. For long the term 'governance' remained obscure though political scientists and administrators were familiar with it. All of a sudden it came into prominence about fifteen years ago dominating public discourse in the post cold war era. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States became the most dominant power in world politics. Economic prosperity and military supremacy made America the sole super power. Globalization has widened the gap between the rich and the poor and between the advanced and the less developed countries. America and her European allies began to use the concept of good governance to evaluate countries and their performance.

What constitutes 'good governance'? Is it about procedures or transparency in administration or about the quality and processes of decision-making? What are the parameters by which good governance is determined? There has been neither clarity nor consensus among those who use the term. It is a policy metaphor, say some experts, that has many connotations. Like democracy, it means different things to different people. A critic has called it 'an overstretched metaphor' without any practical utility. Just a fad that has lost its appeal, say others, who are displeased with the semantic ambiguity that surrounds

Early in the last century the professor turned President of America, Woodrow Wilson, gave the world Fourteen Points and set an agenda for world peace and progress of democracy which prompted the French Prime Minister to quip that God was satisfied with just 'ten' but not Wilson with fourteen! If President Wilson wanted the world to be made safe for democracy, almost a hundred years later, an expert from the same country has recently suggested that now democracy must be made safe for the world. In 1941 Franklin Roosevelt pronounced Four Freedoms - Freedom of Speech and Expression; Freedom of Worship; Freedom from Want and Freedom from Fear - as essential freedoms. That was the time when Nazi and Fascist powers were threatening to conquer the world with savage attacks on Allied powers and also on innocent The Beveridge Report published in 1942 attracted wide attention for preparing a comprehensive 'cradle to grave social insurance scheme.' Five giant evils - Want, Disease, Ignorance, Idleness and Squalor - were identified as impediments to human welfare.

The spread of democracy to every part of the world and the consolidation of democratic culture were among the major gains of the twentieth century. The inspiration was, of course, drawn from the nineteenth century. Alexis de Tocqueville, the celebrated Frenchman, in his classic, Democracy in America, underscored the need "to educate democracy, to put, if possible, new life into its beliefs, to purify its mores, to control its actions...... to adapt government to the needs of time; and to modify it as men and circumstances require." He also warned against 'the wild instincts of democracy'. Another prophet of democracy of those times, Thomas Jefferson, declared that liberty was the core of democracy. Where the citizens have no right to control the government, he argued, the result is a society of wolves ruling over sheep and the "sheep are happier of themselves than under the care of the wolves". David Hume wanted "the normal thoughts of ordinary men" to be respected. Isaiah Berlin, who passed away a few years ago, called for the language of common sense in political inquiry and political understanding. Complex political reality cannot be explained by complex language says Berlin quoting Tolstoy's words that "simplepeople often know the truth better than learned men, because their observations of men are clouded by empty theories." An interesting coincidence was that around that time Swami Vivekananda said: "Bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated for the vanities of the learned are many!".

Before embarking upon good governance, let governments first of all fulfil basic human needs such as food, shelter, clean air and water, education and 'useful and satisfying employment' and as the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development stated meeting 'the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Editor

"Every man and every body of men on earth, possess the right of self-government" THOMAS JEFFERSON

London Workshop on LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Smt. Rajana Ramani, M.A. Mayor, Municipal Corporation, Visakhapatnam

The workshop mainly focussed on the role of political parties in Local Governments with reference to India and United Kingdom. Representatives from the United Kingdom and India had an opportunity to exchange views in an interactive session. Workshop groups have discussed the following focus areas:

- Art of Lobbying Government UK and Indian Experiences
- Local Government finance and negotiations with Government - UK and Indian experiences compared
- Communication between Local Government Association and its members and the outside world.
- Role of political parties in Local Governments.
- Services provided by the Local Government Association
- Visit to Brighton & Hove and Lewisham to study the Local Government practices.

The system of Local Government Association is to some extent comparable to the Indian situation, like local bodies having different style of functioning with different mode of management. In the context of United Kingdom the Mayoralty differes from borough to borough. Even indirect election to the mayoralty is in practice. However, in the cabinet system of local government, it is found that there is a collective responsibility and appeared to be powerful (Mayor + Council + Cabinet).

In the context of India, elections to the Local Governments are of different types such as direct elections, indirect elections and the term of the office also varies.

Cabinet system of Local Government would be a better choice for our country as it holds the collective responsibility with necessary powers and functions.

Local Government International Bureau is on par with the Indian Organisation of All India Council of Mayors and the Local Government Association is on par with the All India Institute of Local Self Governments in India.

The Local Government International Bureau acts as the European and international arm of the Local Government Associations for England and Wales, and also represents the Northern Island Local Government Association. Its also has members of Commonwealth Local Government Forum and performs the role of UK secretariat for the region.

Prestigious and innovative projects being implemented by the Local Government Associations in UK are inspiring. The Mega Solid Waste Management Project, Lewisham is worth mentioning. The management and maintenance of the project is of very high level and the results are encouraging under the total control of the Local Government Association. The Brighton & Hove's Mayoralty is majestic.

There are several things to be learnt from the experiences

of various boroughs in United Kingdom. There should be a collective effort at city level governance in India, which would result in good and strong position to reach its citizens at their doorsteps. Local Governments in India should be empowered with financial and decision-making powers on par with their counterparts in United Kingdom which would enhance the working capacity of the Local Bodies. This may require reforms in the government, which is inevitable.

Unless otherwise the Local Government Associations in India are strengthened, there is every possibility of sinking under their own weight. A serious thought needs to be given by the administrators to sort out the problems of the Local Governments in India and to ensure efficient and effective service delivery system to the citizens at their doorsteps. It should be a motto that if the Local Governments are strong the state level government will be good and the Central Government shall be powerful. In a democratic Country like India Local Governments can play an effective role in serving the city, state and the nation.

[Mayor Rajana Ramani attended the Workshop for Local Governments International Bureau and All India Council of Mayors / All India Institute of Local Self Government project - 19-22 July, 2004 (part of DFID/CLGF Good Practice Scheme) held in London.]

ELECTORAL REFORMS RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION TO REVIEW THE WORKING OF THE CONSTITUTION

Prof. R. Venkata Rao (Principal, A.U. College of Law)

After the commencement of our tryst with destiny, democracy has taken deep roots in our way of lives and allayed the apprehension of the cynics. The democratic institutions in our country have grown from strength to strength. The very fact that in this part of the world only in our country democracy has not only continued to survive but become a way of our lives speaks volumes about the inherent strength of our institutions.

The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution realizing that the electoral process is a very important process in nourishing the strength of the democratic institutions has made important recommendations to make the electoral process as clear and as transparent as possible. Realizing the need for preventing the system from being hijacked by the lumpen elements, the Commission came out with timely recommendations.

The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution consisting of eleven eminent persons drawn from different fields worked for a period of two years and one month and submitted the Report of 1976 pages containing 248 recommendations.

The National Commission observed that for reforming the electoral process, no major consitutional amendment is necessary and reforms can be made by ordinary legislation, modifying the existing laws. Rightly recognizing that the functioning of the democracy at the grass roots needs to be made foolproof, the Commission stressed the need for preparing the electoral role properly at the Panchayat Level Constituency of the voter. Likewise of foolproof I.D. Card which can also serve as multipurpose Citizenship Card should be prepared. Both these can be done in a single exercise. Electronic Voting Machines should be introduced all over the country at the earliest possible opportunity. (This was successfully done during the recent elections).

Regarding the measures for preventing the criminals from contesting for any political office, the Commission suggested the following :

1) Amendment of the Representation of People's Act in such a way that any person charged with any offence punishable with imprisonment for a maximum term of 5 years or more, should be disqualified for being chosen as/or for being a Member of Parliament or Legislature of State on the expiry of the period of one year from the date the charges were framed against him by the court in that offence and unless cleared during the one year period, he shall continue to remain so disqualified till the conclusion of the trial for that offence.

It means where a person is charged with any offence punishable with imprisonment for the maximum term of 5 years or more, he cannot claim that he should be presumed to be innocent till he is convicted and his disqualification starts on the expiry of a period of one year after the charge.

2) In case a person is convicted of any offence by a court of law and sentenced to imprisonment for six months or more, the ban should apply during the period under which the convicted person is undergoing the sentence and for a further period of six years after the completion of the period of the sentence

It means if a person is convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for 6 months or more, the candidate will be disqualified not only during the period of operation of the sentence but for a further period of six years after the completion of the sentence.

- 3) If any party puts up such candidate with a knowledge of his antecedents, it should be deregistered.
- 4) If a person is convicted for any heinous crime like murder, rape, smuggling, dacoity etc. he should be permanently debarred from contesting for any political office.
- 5) For an effective and speedy disposal of criminal cases against politicians pending before the courts, Special Courts at the level of High Courts should be constituted and such Special Courts should decide the cases within a period of six months. The Special Courts can take evidence through Commissioners.

All contesting candidates should be required to declare their assets and liabilities by an affidavit and such details should be made public. This has already become the law of the land. Besides, the legislators should be required to submit their returns about their assets and liabilities every year and a final statement in this regard at the end of the office. All this

should be audited by a special authority created specially under the law for the purpose.

To prevent wasteful expenditure the Commission recommended that the candidates should not be allowed to contest the elections simultaneously for the same office from more than one constituency.

An important change regarding the X Schedule of the Constitution (Anti Defection Law) has been suggested. Anti Defection Law should be made applicable both to the individuals and groups. The power to decide questions as to disqualification on the ground of defection should vest in the Election Commission instead of in the Chairman or Speaker of the House concerned.

To combat the menace of frivolous candidates from contesting the election as independent candidates, the Commission came out with some innovative suggestions. The Commission recommended that the security deposit for the independent candidates should be doubled progressively for every election for those independent candidates who fail to win and keep contesting. Likewise an independent candidate who fails to secure at the least 5% of total number of votes polled should be disqualified from contesting for the same office at least for a period of six years. More stringent is the recommendation that an independent candidate who loses election three times consecutively should be permanently debarred.

The Commission observed that, if the dirt is to be cleansed, the Election Commission should be empowered to deregister and derecognise the political parties if they do not comply with the norms.

Regarding the state funding of elections, the Commission, while deferring the issue, has observed that the question of granting exemption from payment of taxes to the amounts contributed to the political parties upto a specified limit should be seriously examined. Such tax loss to the state can always be shown as contribution of the state to the funding of elections.

The NCRWC observed that political parties should swear allegiance to the provisions of the Consitution and to the sovereignty and integrity of the nation, they should hold regular elections at an interval of 3 years at various levels of the party and they should provide reservation/representation of at least 30% of its organizational positions and same percentage of the party tickets for Parliamentary / State Legislative seats for women. If any party fails to do so, it would invite a penalty of the party losing recognition.

Regarding the adoption of the system of run off contest, electing the representative winning on the basis of 50% plus one vote polled as against the first-past - the post system, the Commission recommended a careful and full examination of the issue by the Government and the Election Commission of India which in turn should consult various political parties and other interests that might consider themselves affected by this change.

Where it has become a fashion for the higher strata of the society not to cast their votes, the Commission's recommendation that the duty to vote at elections and actively participate in the democratic process of the Governance be included in Fundamental Duties is timely.

Similarly on the contentious issue of the eligibility of non Indian born citizens to hold high office in the realm such as President, Vice-President, Prime Minister and Chief Justice of India, the Commission felt that a National dialogue should precede an in-depth examination through a political process.

The above is the summary of some of the recommendations made by the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution on Electoral Reforms. It is now time for the legislature to pick up the gauntlet.

MEET CALLS FOR ELECTORAL REFORMS

Speakers at a meeting felt the need for electoral reforms to correct the disparity between votes polled and seats obtained by different political parties to further strengthen democracy.

Addressing a meet on 'The 2004 Verdict', organised by the Centre for Policy Studies, the former Mayor, D.V. Subba Rao, said that the disparity was glaring in the Assembly elections in which the Congress got 185 seats with 38 per cent votes while the TDP polled 37 per cent votes but got only 40 seats.

Mr. Subba Rao felt that the 2004 election was dominated more by local issues than national issues in many States resulting in the defeat of the NDA.

He admitted that the 'India shining' campaign did not click because the benefits did not percolate to the poor people in rural and urban areas.

Politicians, who could not feel the pulse of the people, advanced the polls acting on their impulse and paid a dear price. He said that the media had failed to play its watchdog role.

Another speaker, K.C. Reddy, did not agree that local issues had dominated the election. He felt that the elections had clearly revealed that people had discarded the Hindutva and globalisation policies.

The fact that the Left parties got 64 seats highlighted the need to make the reforms pro-agriculture, pro-investment and pro-employment.

While welcoming the proposal to increase budget for education from three to six per cent, he cautioned that the delivery system should be toned up to ensure that the benefit would reach the common people. R.Venkata Rao hailed the people for delivering a clear verdict against the NDA Government which wanted to reap benefits from media hype and the advanced polls which smacked of political arrogance.

It was a case of offline people throwing away online people, he said. Director of Centre for Policy studies, A. Prasanna Kumar, who welcomed the gathering, said that the media hype, road-shows, campaign by film stars have trivialized the election campaign.

(Courtesy: The Hindu, 7-6-2004)

e-nglish!

Dr. T.V.Sairam

Chief Commissioner of Customs & Central Excise

Yahoo! English has become 'e-nglish' with the latest avatar of 'e-lectronics'. If u cn rd vat I rite, u'll b \odot ! The need for typing minimum number of alphabets to express maximum has revolutionized the English language and the language, which is adept to adopt changes has responded so well.

Now that the mobile phone has started displaying messages called SMS (Short Messaging Service) which has obviated the need for speaking to people and which has created couples 'conversing' stealthily while in the company of others and enjoying looking over others and have an infantile 'dig' at others thereby proving that as the communication technology advances, the humans are getting into cocoons!

Now that the SMS is the mantra of the day, the people communicate by telephone without actually opening their mouth; all they do is to simply tap in a text message that appears instantly on their 'interlocutor's screen. Vodafone, the largest British network is reported to handle over 60 million such messages every month.

There are of course, advantages in sending a text message. You call some one and pay through your nose; but when you use text message you save the time and as a result, the dough. The disadvantage? The text message has brought in discourtesy and rudeness. You dial someone and you are told: 'I'm on the airplane!' You are holding a parallel conversation with someone else when you are tete a tete with somebody in front of you. May be managing two affairs simultaneously! Call it e-whispers or e-diversion, it is the 21st century avatar of e-vil indeed!

With the arrival of SMS, the E-nglish is evolving so fast that shortly it would acquire yet another companion from Cambridge or Oxford, if not from Silicon valley or Cyberabad. The major reason for this new e-volution is the need for reducing the stress in typing and also to save the telephone bills.

ILU is already well-known in India, thanks to its popularisation by a Bollywood song. ILY seems to be more in use than ILU these days. PLS (Please) or TKY (Thank you) express that as a net savvy, you are still a gentle and considerate animal

NO1 (no one) is in the coming years to remember the archaic way of writing the modern u (you), r (are), 2 (to), b (be), c (see), ur (your) in their routine usage. Remember, typing in capital letters would mean that you are shouting through your hat from the root of your house !

A bit more complicated phrases are :

A/S/L (Age/sex/location) BAK (Back) BBIAF (Be back in a flash) BRB (be right back) CUL8R (See you later)

ENTERPRENERDS (People who start million-dollar e-business)

FLAMING (sending abusive messages)

GMTA (Great minds think alike)

IMHO (In my humble opinion)

NETIZENS (the internet devotees)

WAN2 (Want to)

IAF (In a flash)

ILMAO (I laugh my a*** off!)

LOL (Laugh out loud)

NERD (Originally an abusive term, now it is used to refer to the growing 'enterprenerds')

MSG (Message)

NP (No problem)

PPL (People)

ROTFL (Rolling on the floor laughing)

SPAM (Junk routine, colourless messages)

WB (Welcome back!)

WIRED (Switched on and plugged in)

WUD (Would)

XITED (Excited)

XLNT! (Excellent!)

Like the ancient Egyptian language, the new hieroglyphic E-gyptian expressions are typed (or, are they 'drawn'?) day in and day out by the internet and e-mai enthusiasts just manipulating the key board regulars ::,-,)), @, etc. Some examples are :

Uery happy! [This symbol comes out automatically in the Microsoft Word when you type the following one after another without spacing or commas::,-,).]

:@ = You pig!

:-& = (Speechless)

:-c = sad

 ${:---} = angry$

:-p = stick out the tongue

Word of wisdom of yesteryears is now replaced with 'word of mouse'! The spoken E-nglish is also slowly emerging. Your friend would no longer say that he's thinking about something and that he'll get back to you later. As a true e-devotee, all he would say is: "Hang on, let me down-load!", You may not be wrong if you rebuff at him: 'You can do it in your rest room!' Instead of saying 'keep it up', your mouse-trotting boss mutters: 'Get with the program!' If you don't understand him, he is going to flame you for the 'delivery failure'! So, better 'live in hypertext' with lots to hide.

'Wan2' master this lingo? Then log on to any chat room or a cyber cafe and see for yourself coming out richer in

expression. But before doing this 'pls' remember some ground rules: Never hurt the feelings of anybody in the chat room. Never disclose your telephone or identity as there are e-goons and e-thugs out in the cyberspace awaiting to exploit the gullible e-buffs. Never send any e-mail to unfamiliar or unknown destinations as your identity can be easily tracked. Never use your credit card and go for on-line shopping for there are hackers, the soOcalled spiders in the 'web' to 'net' small and big fishes that sport the plastic money. Never download any information without ensuring the availability of adequate antivirus packages to scan it. Along with your computer, you may also 'crash'! Never ever disclose your username and password to anyone (the word 'anyone' includes your overambitious colleagues in the office and the overcautious wife or husband at home.) For, they are your personal mantras not to be parted with.

These things should not dampen your 'e-nthu'. For, despite all such drawback the cyberspace is worth venturing! c-u later! Bi.

The Indian monsoon and its vagaries

Prof. D.V. Bhaskar Rao

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Indian economy modulates with rainfall due to its need for agriculture. Rainfall over India is seasonal with 70% of the annual rainfall occurring during the monsoon season, approximatesly from June 1 to September 30. Crop production in India is sensitive to monsoon rains, with the annual requirement of food grains estimated at nearly 200 million tons. India being a vast country with an area extent of 3.29 million square kilometers has high spatial variability. For example, west coast regions consisting of Konkan and Goa, coastal Karnataka and Kerala receive highest amounts of rainfall (250 cm), sub-Himalayan West Bengal (220 cm), Assam (150 cm) and lowest amounts over Rajasthan (25 cm) and Tamilnadu (30 cm). Correspondingly the temporal variability is about 20% on the west coast, 15% over Assam and 40% over Rajasthan. These statistics clearly indicate large spatial and temporal variability of rainfall over Indian subcontinent.

The importance of the rainy season from the ancient times is indicated through its descriptions from the writings of Chinese visitor Fa hsien during 4th century and in Meghadoot by Kalidas during 6th century. The word "Monsoon" synonymous with the rainy season is taken from Arabic word "Mausim" which means seasonal change. In meteorological nomenclature this signifies reversal of the wind. This feature is unique for the Indian subcontinent over which the wind flow is from northeast during winter and from southwest during summer. This seasonal reversal is due to the differential heating of the protruding landmass of the Indian subcontinent surrounded by ocean on the three sides. During summer the land mass gets heated more quickly than the surrounding ocean giving rise to a low pressure. As a natural consequence, winds converge from the oceans to the heat low, bringing in moisture

and subsequent rainfall. The Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) between the easterly trades of both the hemispheres also shifts northward along with Sun's movement substantiating the hypothesis. The high Himalayan moutain range (with peaks of 7-9 km) extending west-east on the northern side acts as a barrier to the monsoon flow thus confining it to the Indian subcontinent. This natural geographical location of Indian land mass is a boon to receive copious rainfall. With the northward shift of the ITCZ, southeast wind flow from the southern hemisphere crosses the equator, becomes southwest wind due to the rotation of the earth. This southwesterly stream flows over to the Indian subcontinent as two branches, one as the Arabian Sea branch and the other as Bay of Bengal branch. Both these branches pick up moisture while passing over the ocean and precipitate over the Indian region. The Arabian Sea branch touches the southern tip of Kerala coast around 1st June and then advances northward. The Bay of Begal branch touches Assam (northeast India) around 1st June and then propagates westward. This advancement of the monsoon, also known as "Onset", is phenomenal with a sudden spurt in the rainfall bringing relief from the scorching summer. This first signal of the rainy season is important for initiating agricultural operations. The two branches of the monsoon finally converge over north India completing the onset of the monsoon over entire India by 1st July. The establishment of the monsoon signifies the formation of convergence zone, extending from the northwest India up to the head Bay of Bengal along the gangetic plains, also referred to as "monsoon trough". This monsoon trough is also noted to shift northward sometimes due to interaction with mid latitude and upper air circulations. Topography plays an important role in the occurrence of rainfall. The western ghats extending north-south along west coast of India with an altitude of 1.5 km contribute for the maximum occurrence of the rainfall along the west coast due to the forced orographic lifting of the Arabian sea monsoon current. Similarly the Arakan-Yoma mountain range along the Myanmar coast contributes for heavy precipitation over Assam with Cherrapunji recording the highest point rainfall (1100 cm) in the world. The months of July and August show rainfall activity over the entire country with alternating dry and wet spells. The wet spells are mainly due to the formation of low pressure systems over the central and north Bay of Bengal, which move northwestward along the monsoon trough. These low pressure systems chiefly contribute for the rainfall over the central and eastern parts of the country. The dry spells are associated with northward shift of the monsoon trough and when these dry spells extend for more than a week they are called a "break" in the monsoon. This peculiar phenomenon is associated with the movement of seasonal trough towards north to the foot of Himalayas, which causes a shift in the rainfall regime towards north and break in the rains over most parts of the country. An extended break generally leads to drought conditions. The monsoon flow starts its retreat from north India around 1st September slowly southwards with its complete withdrawal at the southern tip around 1st December.

Attempts to predict weather, especially rainfall, were

evident at least since 6th century AD through its mention in "Brihat Samhita" by "Varahamihara". Prediction of rainfall ahead of one week to a season is important for planning agricultural operations. Due to its importance, two Indian Government agencies i.e. National Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) and Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issue medium range weather prediction (7-10 days) and long range forecasting of monthly and seasonal rainfall respectively. The technique of medium range forecasting is to use numerical models to predict the rainfall for 7 to 10 days ahead. The Government of India established NCMRWF specifically with the task of medium range forecasting of rainfall. Developments in atmospheric modeling processes along with technological advances facilitated the adoption of this methodology. The only super computer available in India was acquired solely for this purpose. The NCMRWF not only predicts the rainfall but also prepares district-wise forecast for entire India for its utility in agricultural planning. It is heartening to note that the medium range prediction of rainfall has good probabilistic success and utility. The present technique of long range forecasting of monthly and seasonal rainfall is different and is based on statistical methodology. Atmospheric tele-connections between monsoon rainfall and preceding global scale variations are to be established through spatial and temporal correlations. Due to the observations of large spatial and temporal variability in the occurrence of monthly and seasonal rainfall, prediction is very difficult and methodology is to be dependent on analysis based on the homogeneity of rainfall. For example, the state of Andhra Pradesh has three sub-divisions namely coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana, which are characterised with seasonal rainfall of 50 cm, 42 cm and 72 cm respectively. The first attempt to predict seasonal rainfall over India was made more than a century ago after the severe drought and famine of 1877. Since then, continuous attempts are being made to understand the physical and dynamical linkage of monsoon rainfall with changes in the global scale landatmosphere-ocean system. The methodology is to find independent parameters prior to the monsoon season, which have high correlation with the subsequent monsoon rainfall. Two important phenomena are worth mention here. The phenomenon of El Nino (i.e.) anomalous warming of the equatorial Pacific ocean off the Peru coast is identified to produce enormous changes in the atmospheric circulation all over the globe. El Nino is linked to atmosphere through oscillations in the sea level pressure difference between Tahiti (south pacific island) and Darwin (Australia), called Southern Oscillation. El Nino causes low index of southern oscillation and so deficient Indian monsoon rainfall. During the last three decades the influence of the EI Nino on the Indian summer monsoon is well established through the atmospheric Southern Oscillation. Similarly snowfall over Eurasia during the preceding winter is noted to have inverse relationship with the subsequent monsoon rainfall. For a longtime, IMD used to issue long-range prediction of monsoon seasonal rainfall for the entire India as a single unit without concern of regional variations. Since 1980s, IMD developed a sixteen-parameter

monsoon model based on power regression method to issue prediction for the five sub-regions. The sixteen identified parameters are to be evaluated and a forecast issued in May. This model's performance was good for nearly 12 successive good monsoon years up to 2001 but failed in 2002 during which 70% of India experienced drought. In fact, all the methods in vogue failed to predict the monsoon failure of 2002. This prompted the administrators and researchers to have a new look at the problem for a better understanding and solution. The IMD revised its model to be a 10-parameter scheme taken into consideration of the changing relationships of different parameters with the monsoon rainfall. With this model, IMD issues a first prediction in the middle of April and revises it during July after including corrections based on monsoon behaviour during onset phase. As the author writes this article, monsoon of 2004 indicates its unpredictable nature once again with 50% of the country having deficient rainfall on the verge of drought while Assam and Bihar are experiencing floods.

The above description of the monsoon system clearly depicts its complexity. The inter-annual variability (i.e.) the year-to-year variability of the monsoon is due to global scale variations of the sea surface temperature, winter snowfall, biennial oscillation etc. Similarly the intra-seasonal variability (i.e.) variability during the monsoon season is due to atmospheric fluctuations of 5-50 days resulting from interaction with id latitude and upper air circulations. With the present status of the prediction of the inter-annual and intra-seasonal variabilities by themselves being difficult, the prediction of a monsoon system resulting from interaction of these two variabilities is a long way ahead.

Studies also indicate very long time trends in the monsoon rainfall, with decadal variations and epochs of increasing and decreasing rainfall. Climate change due to global warming is another contributing factor. The author opines that these two factors also should be given due weightage along with other parameters for improving the long-range forecasting of the monsoon rainfall. Scientific efforts also should increase for improvement of methodology. Finally the author wishes that public will understand the difficulties in the prediction of a natural system like climate, which involves complex interactions of different parameters on various spatial and time scales

DURGABAI, BEACON LIGHT TO WOMEN

A. Prasanna Kumar

Great rivers, it is well known, begin as small streams. The Andhra Mahila Sabha which was established in 1937 had its origins in the Balika Hindi Pathasala, launched by a twelve-year-old girl in 1922. That 'master magician' Gandhiji toured Andhra in 1921. Inspired by his call to non-cooperate with the British, Durgabai, hardly eleven then, destroyed her foreign clothes, began to learn Hindi and ply the charka. In 1923 little Durgabai was a Congress volunteer at the Hindi Sammelan and the Congress exhibition. She attracted the attention of all when she refused to permit Jawaharlal Nehru

into the exhibition as Nehru did not have the ticket.

Fearlessness and sacrifice were part of the movement launched by Gandhiji. Like the countless number of people who gave up their wealth or profession to join the freedom struggle, Durgabai plunged into the freedom struggle. She was the embodiment of courage and when she led a batch of Congress volunteers defying the prohibitory orders in Madras, and was put in jail. She suffered incarceration a number of times between 1932-33. Her father Rama Rao and mother Krishnaveniamma instilled in her universal love and spirit of service. The Mahatma provided to such selfless youngsters and idealists the leadership they were yearning for.

Durgabai had her education at Benares and later at Andhra and Madras Universities. At Madras she founded a novel type of institution - The Little Ladies of Brindavan. No.14 Dwaraka in Brindavan, Mylapore was the venue of the club where girls between four and ten were taught songs, dance and patriotic stories. This little organisation became part of the Chennapuri (Madras) Andhra Maha Sabha, as its women's wing, which later broke away to become the Andhra Mahila Sabha in 1937. Thus according to Durgabai the Andhra Mahila Sabha was actually 'started' in 1922 when she founded the Balika Hindi Pathasala. The Sabha has 75 buildings and several branches covering over 12 districts of Andhra Pradesh. In 1958, the Hyderabad branch was opened. Schools, hospitals, workshops training centres and children's homes are among the many branches of the mighty tree that has grown up since its birth in the thirties.

The growth and phenomenal achievements of the Andhra Mahila Sabha are due to the dynamism of Durgabai and the dedicated work of her lieutenants. Prabhudas Patwari, the then Governor of Tamil Nadu, remarked that Saraswati and Lakshmi who do not normally go together' joined hands to help the dreams, hopes and aspirations of this adventurer. Durgabai explains the secret of her success. "While one honest, sincere and efficient worker could create millions or billions of rupees, no million or billions of rupees can create an honest, sincere and devoted worker". The Andhra Mahila Sabha, dedicated 'to the service of education, and welfare of women and children in the tasks of nation-building' the offshoot of the Balika Hindi Pathasala is now a mighty tree giving shelter and succour to countless number of women and children. Prabhudas Patwari in his moving introduction to Durgabai's book. "The Stone that Speaketh" put it aptly: "The achievements of this selfless patriot and dynamic social worker will be written in letters of gold in the history of our country's social progress."

Durgabai was the Chairman of the Social Welfare Board and National Committee on Girls. She helped in the starting of 10,000 voluntary organisations in the country (says the citation when she was given the Honorary Doctorate degree in 1963 by Andhra University). She edited the Encyclopaedia of Social Work. In 1953 she married Dr.Chintaman Deshmukh. When the Deshmukhs visited Andhra University in 1956, Dr. V.S. Krishna, its Vice-Chancellor, recalled that Dr.C.R. Reddy had once introduced Sarojini Naidu as Andhra's

greatest daughter-in-law, Cheers rent the air even before Dr.Krishna said that Deshmukh was Andhra's greatest son-in-law. "The manner in which Andhra University extracted work from me makes me wonder whether I am the daughter-in-law or the son-in-law" replied Deshmukh with characteristic humour.

The Deshmukhs spent the evening of their lives in Hyderabad. Despite indifferent health they continued to evince keen interest in social work. Durgabai whose life is a saga in the annals of modern Indian womanhood hoped to witness the Golden and Diamond jubilees of the Andhra Maha Sabha she had founded and built up. She wrote 'the story of 57 years' under the title 'The Stone that Speaketh' (given by Dr.Deshmukh) the story of the growth of her institutions how the stones laid by eminent people grew up into great institutions in the service of the nation. Durgabai has demonstrated that stones can speak. Most encouraging it is to remember that people are always there to respond generously to noble causes and great ideals.

(Durgabai's birth anniversary was celebrated on July 14.)

PLATO (427-347 B.C.) II

Sri Challa Sivasankaram

Plato lived in conformity with the upanishadic dictum "Tena tyaktene Bhunjeeta (sacrifice and enjoy) oft-quoted by the Sanyasins of Swami Ranganatha Ananda's eminence. Celibacy, and austere life-style gave Plato the halo of sage Suka. No wife, no progeny, no property (property is unchristian). "Nakarmana, naprajaya, Dhanena tyagen alike Amritative manasuh" he dauntlessly believed in it, accepted the challenging truth and lived for ever and attained immortality, Neither vedic rites, neither progeny, nor wealth would help lead to immortality (Amritatiam). Poetry was his wife, philosophical works were his wealth and progeny are innumerable tribes of Platonists spread all over the world. Like Kapila, father of Sankhyayoga, like Vyasa the author of eighteen puranas he continues to live ceaselessly in all schools of thought, in all branches of developing humanity, in all departments where human excellence reached its highest pinnacle.

Philosophy is the lamp of all sciences, the means of performing all works, and the support of all duties - Kautilya.

This is just a humble attempt at giving a concise account of the poet/philosopher Plato the like of whom neither before nor after him was born. This profile is like reflection of the mighty mountain like the Himalayas in a looking glass. If pyramids of Egypt are considered as wonders of world standing as the towering emblems of human ingenuity and genius, Plato without wonder is wonder of wonders - the Architect was God himself. In Plato's "City of Justice" the Philosopher ruler banished their epic poet, Homer, together with his pagan system, polytheism. The system ruled out sense of discernment and discretion and encouraged prevalence of superstition and worship of all and sundry gods and goddesses. His foresight counselled him to do away with the system that secretly mended

men to believe with awe in the childish tales about the Olympian gods who strut about with their silly human weaknesses throughtout the pages of Iliad. Indra's foolish excursion into the forest retreat of sage Gautama to rape his wife Ahalya is similar to the tales and fables of Iliad. Such fables unwittingly provoke men to substantiate their moral departures on the ground Indra the god of gods himself committed such a blatant act, why not we the lesser insignificant men? Viewed form the rowdy episode of India Bill Clinton looks rather less beastly in the intensity of Lust. Indra's position is not hereditary or dynastic. It is incumbency achieved by regular performance of scriptural sacrifices for hundred times. Religion must go through a concerted process of purgation, to eliminate the savage, vulnerable to woman and booze and insert same man of reason and social decency. Anything that does not stand the scrutiny of reason, however old and long the institution had existed must forth - with be uprooted.

In the "City of Justice" constituted by Plato religion that is incompatible with human reason had no place. Business is looked upon as degrading because - Plato maintains - it is impossible for a businessman to be successful and honest at the same time. If a man commits a crime, Plato believes that it is because of lack of proper education. Viciousness is the result of ignorance. Plato thinks that no man by birth is a criminal or one susceptible to acts of orgy and one beyond reparation to normal manhood. The philosopher's clarion call harps. "Stamp out crime with the medicine of wisdom and treatment of love". Ignorance is not bliss. It is mankind's menace. Mahatma Gandhi, two thousand and four hundred years after Plato, spoke the same language, prescribed more or less the same type of panaceas. The Mahatma practised Platonic love, preached Platonic love to Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan and his wife Prabhavati to practise in their personal life as the illustrious couple was deeply involved in the struggle for freedom. Is Plato dead? Impossible. Sun and Moon attested to Plato's Philosophy and regimen.

Sage Vyasa and Philosopher Plato existed about two thousand years apart. Humanity may be deemed damned to peridition the day Vyasa is dethroned from spiritual realm and Plato the Philosopher-king and King of Philosophers is allowed to recede into oblivion.

Principal works of Plato

Republic Charmides Symposium Gorgias Phaedrus **Parmendies** Phaedo Euthydemus Apology of Socrates Sophist Crito **Protagoras** Timaeus Cratylus Critias Ion Philebus Meno Theaetetus Euthyphro Lysis Laws Laches Amen

BOOK REVIEW

* INDIAN ECONOMIC REFORMS - AN ASSESSMENT : Edited by Prof. K.C. Reddy. Sterling Publishers Private Limited. Pp.240 Price : Rs.600/-

Economic Reforms - Where are we Heading?

The last decade of the last century was preceded by the collapse of the Soviet Union, causing a great setback to the International Communist Movement. The fallout of this event was read by many pro-capitalist economists and even by some impartial observers as the conquest of the market forces over state capitalism. Economic liberalisation became the buzzword everywhere on the globe, with privatisation and globalisation becoming the constant refrain since then.

After the mess-up of our political economy by a combination of anti-Congress parties resulting in loss of credibility of India among the comity of nations and after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, who had initiated the liberalisation process on a modest scale during his tenure as Prime Minister, the Congress regained some sympathy from the voters. P.V. Narasimha Rao took up the reins heading a minority Government at the Centre. The induction of Dr.Manmohan Singh as his Finance Minister set in motion the New Economic Policy which practically bade adieu to the policy of "state being on the commanding heights of the economy" and ushered in minimal state intervention in economic matters. The talk since then has been that economic reforms would be irreversible even if other parties come to power. It has been proved true to a large extent.

After tinkering with the economy through the so-called reforms for over 12 years, where does the economy stand? Have the reforms been fruitful? Has the promised El Dorado arrived? These questions need to be answered not only by the powers that be but also by the votaries of the New Economic Policy.

The Economics Department of Andhra University, under the leadership of Prof.K.Chenchu Reddy, took the initiative in 1999 to make an assessment of the reforms implementation strategy through a seminar at which 15 papers were presented by the participants on the various aspects of the reforms and their impact on the economy. These papers have been presented in a compendium*, which can certainly serve as a tool to make the necessary mid-course corrections in the policy implementation.

The general assessment, as perceived from the analyses

of these economists, is that the reforms have not been successful in making even a dent on the poverty alleviation front. They have helped only the upper strata of society, with no change in the living style of those below the poverty line. With the Governments at the Centre and in the States washing off their hands, the public sector undertakings are languishing with no budgetary support. In the name of cutting the flab, existing industries have started trimming their workforce through the voluntary retirement mode. The promised safety net to protect the interests of the working class has not materialised. The inevitable overemphasis on exports to earn a few dollars more has led to soaring prices of essential commodities compounding the people's misery. The ideal thing to do would be to couple the growth of exports with pragmatic provisions for food security and improvement of the human development index, says one of the papers.

The expected improvement on the job front has not materialised because of the emphasis on low labour-intensive and high-tech industries. With Government jobs and intake of industries getting scarce, the service sector alone affords scope for large-scale employment. The Government should promote this line of activity to absorb the large army of jobless persons. However, there has been a general decline in the unemployment rate thanks to the rapid growth in the GDP rate of over five per cent, but unfortunately casualisation of the labour force is on the rise. Trade unions are getting marginalised with labour laws getting liberalised in favour of the entrepreneurs, with a view to attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).

On the FDI front, the expected proposals have mostly been on paper because of several conditionalities from prospective investors, apart from suspicions of political instability. The Government needs to act firm, without compromising the national interests. Happily, the possibility of India attracting FDI to the extent of \$4 billion during the current fiscal has emerged with the approval of many proposals.

On the whole, Prof. Reddy has done an excellent job of editing these papers and presenting them in proper perspective. The handy volume has a database highlighting the growth or lack of it in each sector of development. It is bound to be a valuable possession of people concerned with economic reforms and their proper implementation.

R. Sampath, Chief of Bureau, The Hindu, Visakhapatnam

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The well-known and highly popular philosopher, and teacher of Alexander of Macedonia Aristotle was one of the pupils of this Academy. Traditions that were held sacrosanct and holy were not to be violated. Plato felt that total ignorance could bear the terrible bitter fruit of evil. According to Plato strength without reason results in despotism. Plato believed that like subjugation, unlimited freedom begets evil. Plato's ideal was a monarchy accountable to 35 guardians of the law who were elected by popular franchise and a council of elder wisemen. Plato was both a philosopher and an elegant master of style. It is certain, that Plato was among the first to workout the basic concepts of objective idealism. The word idea in Greek means, "Some thing visible" Material by itself is incapable to produce. By the force of penetrating and splendorous light emanated by the ideas, the world of ideas beyond time, it abides or reposes in eternity The Noblest idea is Good (Sivam) which is identical with absolute Beauty (Sundaram). Plato believed, in other words in the triad, Satyam-Sivam-Sundaram. All the three are one in essence and final in their actuality. The idea of these: "Whatever is created was to decay, decline, deformation and aging" To Plato visible existence is a deliberate distorted image of the permanently Beautiful ideas. In order to attain the unattainable Beauty by means of material knowledge one must become a philosopher, a seeker of the highest truth and a poet at heart. This perception wipes out ignorance, making perceptible the splendid light of knowledge, the Real as Real. The soul of Plato as that of the upanishadic mystic is the most important part of the individual for it belongs, as it were, in essence to the eternal brilliant world; not to the transitory. Wisdom, usually known as Philosophy, for Plato is a preliminary spadework for death, in that it fits the soul to stay permanently in the world of ideas, instead of being condemned to return once more. Swami Vivekananda says explaining Plato's doctrine of Ideas; "All that is but a feeble manifestation of the great ideas which alone are real and perfect. The perfect is not to return, perfect is permanent, permanent is the Idea". As we go on delving deep into Plato and his ideas we arrive at the conclusion that he believes the soul of a being, the determining principle of body and mind. Intellect, spirit and consciousness all these are material helpers for the seeker to reach the world of Ideas. Plato like the Indian seer asks of us to mistrust our nature, to see in it an indelible blemish, and exhorts us to bank upon the imperceptible Formless Idea. The process of reaching it, the spirit in us, is justan act of recollection for already it is there and we have only to recongize. Those of us who are perfect and most righteous are most like god. The idea of the Good is tantamount to the upanishadic view of the highest God. Languages are different in letters, but spirit is always the same. We need, we earnestly need the language of heart for heart is limitless, classless, casteless and devoid of narrow chauvinism. Plato the seer pierced the veil hiding the unity of man, the sense of universal brotherhood. Without our knowledge the truth of universal oneness of mankind is in action in our day-to-day routine. It is not the working of the saints trotting the globe, lovig paraphernalia, lusting the cheer of the gallery. But it is the outcome of poets, thinkers and philosophers of Plato's greatness and martyrs like Mahatma Gandhi and Paramahamsas like Ramakrishna the illiterate symbol of India's unborn soul. The Vedas say, "In the midst of sun is the light, in the midst of the light is truth and in the midst of truth is the imperishable being" Likewise in the midst of the language is heart in the midst of heart is Real and in the midst of the Real is the imperishable universal idea which is all, yet not all.

The biography of Plato is interior. His biography is the livnig account of mankind's collective life, ever new, ever alive, ever green and ever enlightening. The sun, the moon, the star are studied. Is the study over? Have we exhausted the study of the said stellar galaxy? Plato the son of Apollo, raises again and again, he like the sun sets not. His works are immortal. For his philosophy there were no boundaries. Earth and heaven converge at the point where his works meet to discuss, define that which is beyond the grasp of man (mind & word). The earth and heaven by names are several, In truth they are one for they meet their goal in unison when their hearts whisper to each other in silence in a language that is universal and the linguafranca of the World of Heart, the gods of heaven eavesdrop the sweet nothings singing the truth about the unity of the self. Man is not utilitarian but Unitarian. Of the four hands of Lord Vishnu two belong to Maya, his indivisible consort and the rest of the four belong to the Lord. Lord's energy is Maya. Maya is Lord's complement. Without Maya God becomes desolate as Sri Rama when removed from Sita. Like Flower and fragrance are God and Maya. Men contemplate distinctions because they are stupefied with ignorance. One soul exempt from birth, existence, growth, change, decay and death unifies all of us no distinction, no sinner, no saint. Soul makes up in the words of Ralph, W.Emerson (one of the Western mentors of Mahatma Gandhi). Out of Plato come all things are still written and debated among men of thought, Sr. Agustines, Copernicus, Newton, Behmen, Sweden-berg, Goethe are his debtors and must say after him. Plato is philosophy, philosophy, Plato-Mysticism finds in Plato all its texts "Plato has been bridge of the Asiatic and European parts of the world. The unity or the idea of one Deity of Asia and the detail of Europe, the infinitude of the Asiatic soul, and the analysing, result-desiring, fruit-conscious Europe are splendidly joined by Plato, and by contact to enhance the energy of each.

(To be continued)

MUSIC AND MOODS

- Dr. T.V. Sairam

Chief Commissioner of Customs and Central Excise, Visakhapatnam

Consciously or unconsciously, everybody responds to music. The lilt, rhythm, gait or speed in music has the power to waft away our sorrows, disappointments or depressions. Hegel, the German philosopher had once observed that music alone is capable of expressing many nuances of emotion, and hence it is more useful than any language invented so far by the mankind. Yet another German philosopher, Arthur Schoppenhauer found music stronger, quicker and infallible than any language invented by man, as it restores all emotions of our innermost nature far removed from their pain.

MUSIC HUGS

Be it folk or classical, eastern or western it is a plain fact that music affects our moods. It also promises an unfailing companionship to those among us greying, gnarling and getting marginalized with age. It can work as an anodyne for those who have undergone trauma and emotional upheavals in life by way of accidents, ageing, losses of near and dear ones etc. Music helps them so beautifully to get rid of their miseries and surrounds and hugs them very much like a mother, caring for her new-born.

MUSIC AND BIOLOGY

All biological activities involve patterns of rhythms similar to what we find in music. Breathing, snoring, walking, jumping, jogging, eating, nay, all the body processes such as metabolism, respiration, circulation etc. follow a definite pattern of timing and cycle. When this pattern or cycle gets badly affected, we term it as an ailment and seek for its restoration.

Perceiving its importantance in restoration and renewal of life-rhythms, the ancient communities across the globe had incorporated music and rhythm in their everyday living. Rhythms and tunes have been used in acknowledging the power of Nature eg., prayer and iterative chants in celebrating the change of seasons, in expressing the joy or sorrow and in expressing the inexpressible. Very ordinary human activities such as pounding the grains, putting the babies to sleep, rowing a boat, doing the manual labour, cooking the game etc., - all assumed a touch of glory or grandeur, thanks to the addition of certain rhythms and tunes in them.

MUSIC ELIMINATES NEGATIVE EMOTION

Not only physiologically, but also emotionally, music works wonders. In a recent demonstration (August 2003) of Indian ragas affecting the moods, conducted before the senior citizens of Visakhapatnam it was demonstrated by this author how a musical form representing certain emotion could help destroying the very same emotion. Thus, a raga known for its melancholy - Subhapantuvarali - could per se act in melting the trauma or tragedy of a listener. Are you short tempered and prone to bouts of anger? Then try, any of these ragas : Atana, Deepak, Gauri Manohari, Hamsadhwani, Hari Khamboji, Nagawara Valli, Sankarabharanam, Shanmukha Priya, Simhendra Madhyamam, Sunada Vinodini, Todi or Vasantha. A feiry composition of Vivaldi and the carnatic raga Atana both forms of music equally representing the moods of anger or rage, were demonstrated to explain how the accumulation of anger and frustration over the years in an individual could be melted away again with their very inclusion! Sensual elements found in music also came up for review during the demo and the ragas Behag and Khamas were found to exude shringara rasa in abundance! Other erotic ragas, identified are Abheri, Behag, Brindavana-Saranga, Hamir Kalyani, Karaharapriya, Kiravani, Khamas, Sri Kalyani, Suddha Saveri, Tillang and Todi.

During the Ice-dem, fear and disillusionment popped out of veena, when the raga Revati was played. Participants felt the same, when Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.5 in E Minor emerged through the loudspeakers. Though these musical forms came from two different systems of music, both reflected fear or uncertainties. It is interesting that none of the participants ever felt any adverse emotional impact of these negative emotions. On the contrary, they started enjoying them in a positive manner! One witnessed, on this occasion, the significance of saakshi bhaava, that great Indian thinking that teaches us to react to all events in our lives - both favourable and adverse - as if we were a witness! A case of transcendence was thus possible with music.

MUSIC ENHANCES POSITIVE EMOTION

It was quite interesting to watch the participants - smiling naturally and unconsciously as the ragas depicting joy (Kathana Kuthoohalam), wonder (Suddha Saveri), compassion (Natta Kurinji) and peace (Sama) were demonstrated in veena. The same was the case, when a selection in Western classical compositions of Baach, Mozart and Strauss, in audio cassettes were played.

IN THE WONDERLAND OF JUNIORS...

We all know that it is the freshness of the child's mind that wonders at every thing around. It is a pity that as the child grows into adulthood, the freshness of the mind alongwith its capacity to wonder get slowly replaced by indifference, sloth or cynicism. As we grow older and older, it is necessary that we retained the mind of a child so that we could watch with wonder the roller coaster path that our life may take as a witness, without getting seeped into them. Here melodies and rhythms can come handy, as they are capable of reinjecting in us the patterns of freshness that can keep us child like once again as we age. The participants during demo wondered how the raga Suddha Saveri enabled them wonder as it meandered in Veena!

ON COMPASSION, THE ULTIMATE VIRTUE

There is an ancient saying in the Sanskrit language that there is no dharma (virtue) in heaven or earth, which can equal karuna or compassion, shown to one's fellow-beings. The great saints and savants such as Gautama Buddha, Manimekalai, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theressa and others have all demonstrated by their life-styles, how compassion could erase human miseries and sufferings. The participants of the Ice-dem could feel the pulsation of compassion hidden in the raga Natta Kurinji, a nascent raga, born out of an ancient melakarta (parent) scale, Hari Khamboji. The wide-ranging movements of the raga (it is a non-standardized raga), played in slow tempo enhanced the feelings of compassion.

MUSICAL PEACE

Shanti or peace is the ultimate goal sought by all religious groups. According to Saint Thyagaraja, no well-being could be possible, without peace! The participants found peace and harmony in the vibrations emanating from the raga Sama, when played in veena. A piece from Blue Danube composed by Strauss also sounded peace and majesty. Do you want to immerse yourself in harmony and peace? Try any of these ragas that can impart them in abundance: Desh, Hamsamanjari, Kaanada, Nilambari Sri, or Yadukula Khamboji. Observe how your anger and inner frustrations melt away over a period of time, leading you toward a state of bliss, causeless but conductive to universal harmony.