



DNC

T I M E S

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India:
a
Gem
of
Cultures



LOGO DESIGNED BY SCH. VYSAKH TITUS, S.J. (KAR)
3rd Year Theology, DNC

DESCRIPTION

The resplendent Jesuit emblem, the IHS, serves as the unmistakable hallmark of Jesuit venture. A quill, elegantly poised, embodies the intellect, heralding DNC's scholarly pursuit. Radiant sunburst with eight hues, where golden radiance evokes Christ's luminous presence and the remaining seven shades represent the diverse continents, symbolizing DNC Times' commitment to extending its influence to the farthest corners of the globe. A single glance unveils the distinctive insignia of DNC Times, where innovation and enlightenment unite.

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Editorial

India, with its diverse cultures, languages, religions, and traditions, is a nation that has long fascinated people from all over the world. Its cultural richness is one of its most amazing features, from the vibrant colours of its festivals to the exquisite beauty of its art and architecture.

As a nation of extremes, with each region having its own unique culture and traditions, India's rich past is reflected in the numerous historic temples, monuments, and ruins that dot the landscape. The country's extensive history is one of the richest and most intriguing in the world, and its art, architecture, and food reflect this rich cultural legacy.

The festivals and holidays are a celebration of life and the nation's rich cultural legacy, showcasing the variety of its culture. The country's spirituality and religion are strongly ingrained in its culture and way of life, from the Hinduism of the majority population to the Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and Buddhism of its minority populations.

As India modernizes and develops, it is crucial to recognize and honour its rich cultural past. Its rich culture should be nurtured and conserved for future generations since it is a source of inspiration and pride for its people. The government has taken several steps to promote and preserve India's cultural legacy, from fostering traditional arts and crafts to encouraging cultural tourism. To promote and protect Indian culture, increased financial support for regional artists, musicians, and artisans, as well as cultural research and education, is necessary. This issue features cover articles written by prestigious Indian personalities and short excerpts by students from various parts of India expressing the richness of their own culture.

It is important to continue to promote awareness of the need to protect India's rich cultural legacy for future generations. Let us celebrate and honour the diversity and richness of Indian culture. Happy reading.



Sch. Sean Brian Cardozo, S.J.
Editor, DNC Times



THE INDIAN CIVILIZATION

The erudite historian Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) in his epochal work *A Study of History* completed over a period of ... has studied the rise and evolution of 26 civilizations. Toynbee identifies India as one of the five living ones. Initially, there was the Indus Valley Civilization with its urban characteristics. The current one started around BCE 800 according to Toynbee.

The Indian civilization has been free from xenophobia, unlike some of its counterparts. Far from being non-xenophobic, India has welcomed fellow human beings from other civilizations whether Jews, Zoroastrians, Christians, Baha'is, and others. The motto *Vasudheiva Kutumbakam* was not only preached but also practiced.

To-day's India needs to bear in mind all this and suitably change its current approach to the Rohingyas who have fled from genocide in Myanmar. To think that such a genocide should be happening in that country with a Buddhist majority shows the prevailing famine of values in our times.

There is so much talk of globalization these days. Often, interlocutors see globalization through the prism of the market, forgetting that the market and the economy are embedded in the state, founded on values. In the ancient world we see two types of globalization. One, the violent variety based on military conquest, was carried out by Alexander the Great whose soldiers, finding themselves too far from home, compelled him to retreat from India circa BCE 327. The second type of globalization was by Emperor Ashoka (whose reign was from BCE 268 to 232) who abandoned war as state policy after seeing the horrors in Kalinga in present day Odisha. Ashoka sent his missionaries to all parts of the known world including north Africa under Roman control. They reached Sri Lanka where Buddhism developed strong roots there even as it declined in the subcontinent over centuries.

The Buddhism has enriched the religious, philosophical, and spiritual treasury of humanity. In fact, the human mind in India has explored the human reality and endeavored to understand the meaning and purpose of human life as well as any civilization. The departure from the binary logic of Aristotle, say, in Quantum Physics, reminds one of the seven-valued logic of the Jains.



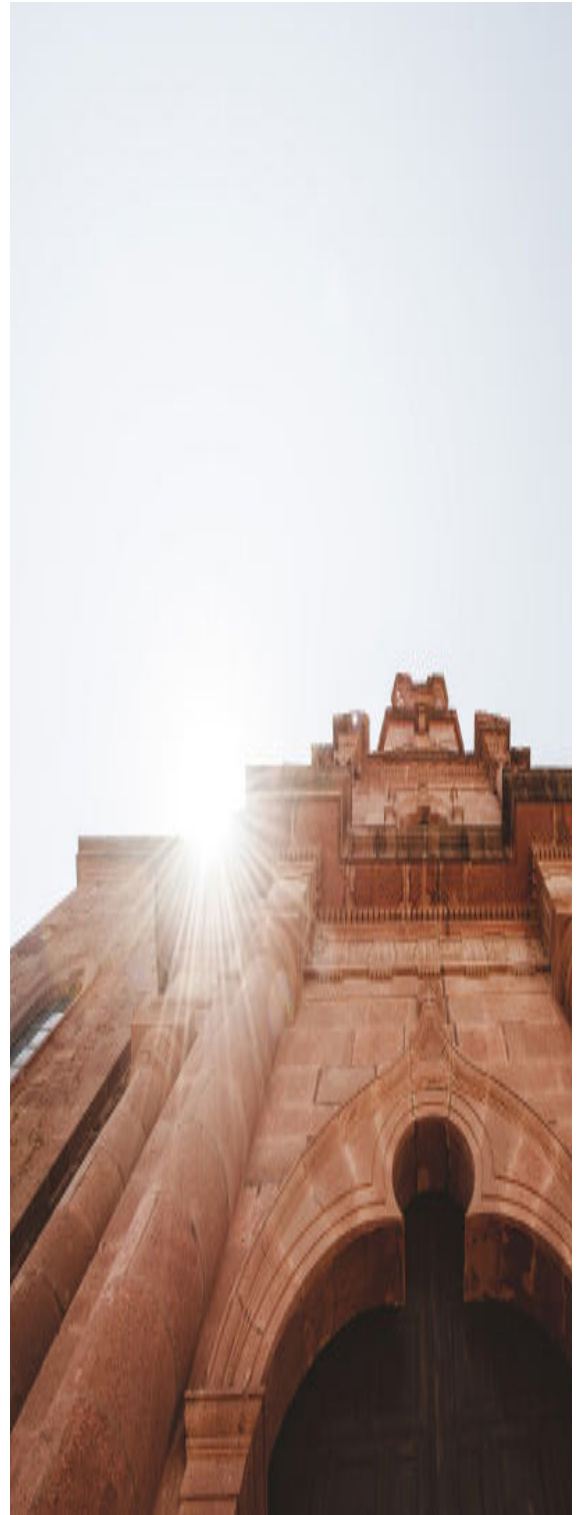
India's achievements in the realm of science and mathematics and their impact on the evolution of physics and allied disciplines in the modern world cannot be ignored. Would Newton have been able to lay the foundations of modern physics including astronomy in his monumental *Philosophiae Naturalis Mathematica* (1687) if he could not have availed of the Indian decimal system and had to depend on the laborious Roman system? Is not there an affinity between trigonometry and *trikonamiti*? Sine and Cosine series were developed in India at least two centuries in advance of Europe.

The way India struggled based on non-violence under the overall leadership of Mahatma Gandhi is a unique chapter in human history. He held that good ends can be attained only through good means. By adopting a Constitution based on the secular character of the Republic and pledged to give justice -social, economic, and political- to all Indians cutting across all divides, India demonstrated its political maturity in 1950. It is for the succeeding generations to remain true to that Constitution and realize the dream of the Father of the Nation 'to wipe every tear from every eye.'

Contemplating the state of humanity with wars and conflicts across continents, with poverty and hunger depriving millions of their inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness even as the global production of food and wealth is sufficient to erase hunger and poverty, even if only ten percent of the resources spent on war are re-directed, it follows that India must do its utmost to lead the world in the right direction.

To lead the world in the right direction, India needs to introspect its journey since independence and recognize that its many-splendored diversity is its strength and that a unity based on that diversity makes the nation stronger and takes it in the right direction. Any majoritarian approach based on fashioning a monochromatic India is bound to fail and will imperil this ancient civilization. No single language or ideology should be imposed. Unfortunately, we have witnessed a growing criminalization of politics. Parliament passes legislation without due debate. The doctrine of separation of powers enunciated by the French philosopher Montesquieu (1689-1755) is part of the basic character of the Constitution and should be adhered to scrupulously.

We need to continuously demonstrate to ourselves that India is a self-correcting democracy endowed with an electorate that exercises its franchise with responsibility. Such a self-correcting democratic polity will be accepted by humanity as part of the leadership required to resolve the multi-dimensional challenges facing it.



Ambassador Kalarickal Pranchu Fabian

He is an Indian Diplomat who served in the Indian Foreign Service between 1964 and 2000. During this time, he was posted to Madagascar, Austria, Iran, Sri Lanka, Canada, Finland, Qatar and Italy.

Thinking Civilizationally



celebrating India today needs a metaphysic and a different kind of storytelling. The narrative cannot end in nostalgia. It has to function more as a parable, conveying a sense of the unbelievable and yet lived sense of reality. Our civilization was not about kings and conquerors, it was more about dreams and ways of life, about how to see the miracle in the everyday. Maybe one should begin with three examples that illustrate the plurality and diversity of a culture, which created unities with a difference.

Firstly, India is a country of myths and legends. We are a country with 300 versions of the Ramayana. There is little that is monolingual or monotheistic about such narratives. Even today in a village near Mahabalipuram in Chennai, there is a community that safeguards 70 versions of the Mahabharat. Acting and memory, exegesis, and storytelling become part of a living culture. All this is done even today without state help. In such a society, memory is critical and the role of the storyteller becomes supreme.

Our scientists tell us that diversity is a critical art form. A society that has 150,000 varieties of rice has innumerable ways of cooking, dreaming, thinking, and living. Food becomes a symphony of diversity. I remember once in a fit of absent-mindedness I called America a high-information society. Wess Jackson publicly dubbed me an idiot. America, he said, has reduced its varieties of apples from 166 to 6. Only in India, he suggested, is every farmer a Johnny Appleseed. Another scientist added, it is not laboratories and scientists who keep diversity alive. you need myths, housewives, an aesthetic of soil, and a litany of festivals to keep such diversity alive.

The trend is a celebration but a sadder story of what happens when a civilization becomes a nation-state. A nation-state loves control and uniformity which its census reveal almost predictably. The literary critic Ganesh Devy points out to the linguisticide of the Indian regime. it began with a simple definition of defining a language as a form

with a simple definition of defining a language as a form of being with a script. In one day the government threatened over 250 oral languages reducing the tribal to silence. One has to add that science and progress can often be genocidal merely through definition. When government defines orality as repetitive and rote, you destroy the inventiveness of orality. The disappearance of the storyteller is a signal of the end of plurality. Orality is not rote in the Macaulayite sense of the term. Memory to stay alive has to be plural and inventive.

Our civilization differed from the enlightenment politics of the West in understanding the art of difference. We did not move towards standardization and uniformity to create a narrow model of productivity and efficiency, we moved towards diversity the art critic Anand Coomaraswamy once said the redness of red English cannot understand. Every village in India produces a different dream of redness.

This sense of color was brought home to me in a more immediate way when the physicist K.S. Krishnan came home. He sat in the drawing room and my little sister sat happily on his lap in a red pavada. He asked her, "what colour is it?" She said Red, convent school style. Krishnan shook his head and said "Sharap" in Tamil. English can never capture the redness of red. This is why the loss of colour has been one of the little-told stories of colonialism. The English loved Khaki and as one athlete described it "Khaki is a fusion of different forms of colourlessness." Language in that sense can become a symptom of monocultural order. Think of words like weed and waste. A friend of mine told me that these are 'law and order' words meant to police reality. A weed is a marginal, extraneous being, unwanted in a monocultural world. Waste is waste because many don't sense its diversity of uses. This is what made the legendary Indian chemist

working in a slum claim that, “waste is the only resource of a wasted people.” Current democracy required a different mentality to look at difference. Difference becomes hierarchy, the imposition of one order when it should celebrate panarchy, the difference of epistemic order varying with scale.

Our civilization is a living civilization and cannot be reduced to history, heritage, or nostalgia. In fact, it is full of living hypotheses, and heuristics for greater experiments. To do this we have to link cosmology, civilization, constitution, commons, and citizenship into a dialogic experiment of plurality. For a start, our Directive Principles should be replete with syncretic experiments and plural possibilities. We have to seek alternative imaginations, not ideological features.

This brings me to the last story, an oft repeated one. Gandhi was once asked, “what do you think of Western Civilisation.” He replied, “it would be a good idea”. The story does not stop there. O.V. Vijayan, the cartoonist, and the author adds an extension. Gandhi is older, his walking stick more bent. He is asked, “What do you think of Indian civilization.” He answers “that too would be a good idea.”

It is a warning that civilizations like soil need to be cherished and worked up. Ideas like development, security, nation-state are illiterate substitutes for it. it is time for new experiments.



Prof. Shiv Visvanathan

An Indian academic best known for his contributions to developing the field of science and technology studies (STS), and for the concept of cognitive justice, a term he coined. He is currently a Professor at O P Jindal Global University, Sonapat.



THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN TELUGU STATES (ANDHRA AND TELANGANA)

The practices we are taught and the things we do inform who we become. Diversity of culture incorporates beliefs, values, norms, and behaviours, and overall can be understood as the epitome of our “way of being.” When we go out into the world, we come into contact with people of different backgrounds and cultural walks of life. It is good to honour cultural diversity with our actions. The resulting cultural diversity expands our choices, nurtures skills and human values, and provides wisdom from the past to inform the future. Such cultural diversity is a mainspring for sustainable development for individuals and communities in the states of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Telugu is the official language spoken by natives in both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. It is one of the ancient Dravidian languages. Even though it originates from the proto-Dravidian sub-language, literary experts have confirmed its connection to Sanskrit as well as

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, like many Indian states, are a rich concoction of cultures, religious practices, traditions, beliefs, and ethnicity. Ethnic tribespeople and urban citizens live in perfect harmony, and we witness natives coming together to celebrate major festivals like Ugadi (the Telugu New Year), Sankranti, Dasara, Bathukamma, Diwali, and Christmas. Many natives still believe in ancient traditions and pursue them sincerely. Muggulu is one such tradition where people decorate entrances irrespective of caste, clan, and creed with white rice powder during every cultural celebration. These age-old traditions are prevalent in many households and may vary depending on ethnicity. This is a speciality of the Telugu States. Every district and village follows a different lifestyle that distinctly distinguishes it from the rest. So do the practices carried out by the people of Telugu states. These states are a land full of fun, frolic, laughter, and life. The culture of the Telugu States is rich in terms of its food, clothing, festivals, dance, music, paintings, and any other forte. “Atithi Devo Bhava” is the hallmark of social awareness in these states. These states have a lot to offer those who want to be a part of them and appreciate their beauty.



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PONGAL: A FESTIVAL OF TAMIL CULTURE

India is known for its unity in diversity. It is the abode of different religions, cultures, languages, and traditions. It is very paradoxical to see people born and brought up with diverse horizons yet living in unity. This significant aspect of unity in diversity forms the people called Indians.

One of the components that edify India is its diversity of cultures. Tamil culture is one such culture. Pongal, the most important harvest festival of the Tamilians, adds beauty to their culture. The word “Pongal” is derived from the Tamil word “pongu” which implies “to boil over”.

Pongal is a dish prepared with a boiled sweet rice and consumed during this festival. Pongal calls for four days of celebration starting from the 14th of January, the beginning of the Tamil auspicious month called Thai. During these days, Tamilians express their gratitude towards the sun, Mother Earth, and the farm animals, whose contribution bestows them with a bountiful harvest.

Bhogi, the first day of Pongal, is a day of cleaning and discarding old belongings, which signifies a fresh beginning. New clothes are worn, and houses are decorated to mark the advent of a new beginning.

Thai Pongal, the second day of celebration, is a day to honour the Sun God. Each household draws a kolam at the entrance of houses and cooks a pot of fresh rice with milk at auspicious times. As the milk boils freely over the pot, family members shout out “Pongalo Pongal”. And it is offered to the Sun God along with several Pongal dishes.

Mattu Pongal, the third day of celebration, is devoted to honouring the cattle (oxen) to remember the work they do—plough the land. They are bathed and adorned with garlands, colours, and bells.

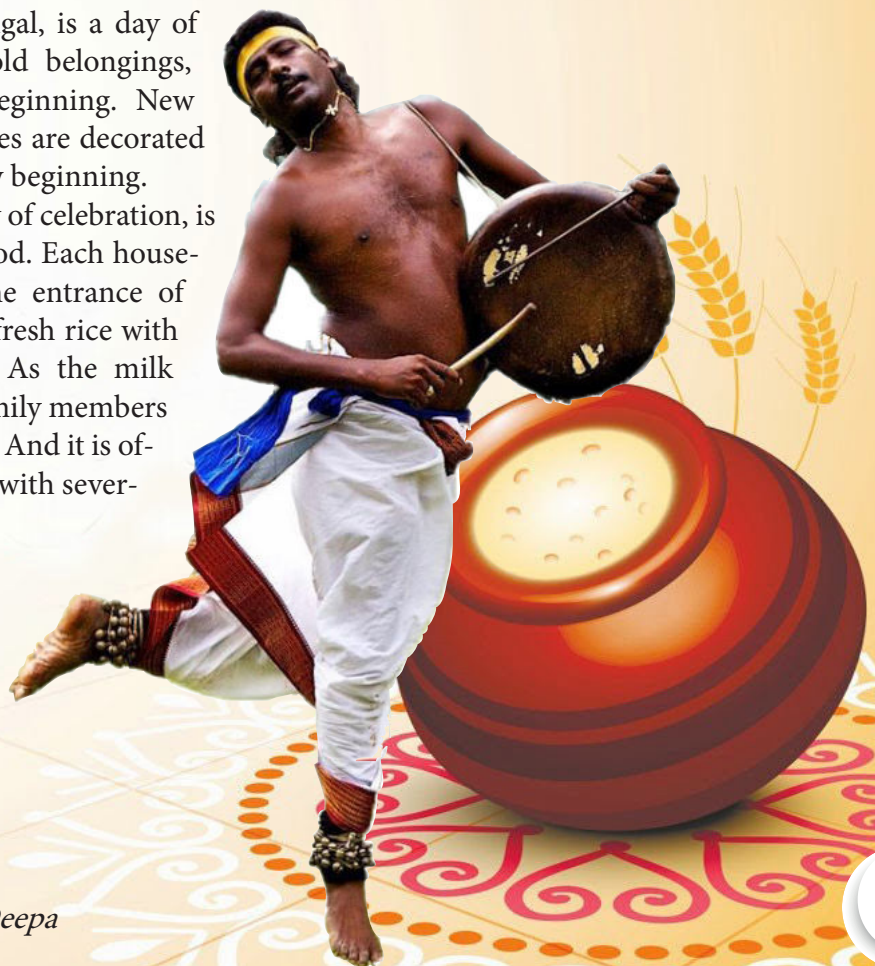
Kaanum Pongal, the last day of celebration, is dedicated to strengthening the families, which are gathered together for a sumptuous meal, and younger members seek the blessings of the elders of their families.

During these days, famous Tamil traditional Pongal games such as Jallikattu, Uri Adithal, Silambattam, tug of war, Kabaddi, and Vazhukku Maram are conducted and played to cherish the culture.

Like Pongal, all other cultural festivals that add beauty to our culture are grandly celebrated with significant meanings and rituals in every corner of our country. At last, the diversity of our cultures and festivals unites us and builds up our country.



Br. Justin Arokia Raj S.V.D.
2nd Year Theology, Jnana Deepa



THE SACRED GROVES OF THE KHASI-PNAR

Khasi-Pnar is one of the many tribes in the northeastern states of India, in Meghalaya. Nature is at the heart of the Khasi-Pnar. For them, nature is sacred.

It is a place where God resides and interacts with human beings.

Christian tradition teaches that human beings are stewards of God's creation. Hence, they are responsible for its care and protection. The Khasi-Pnar have something unique to say in this regard. One of their old traditional practices that protect and preserve the environment is keeping sacred groves, known as 'Law Kyntang' in Khasi and 'Khloo Blai' in Pnar. The traditional religion's belief—Niam Tre or Seng Khasi—holds that there is a forest deity called 'Ka Lei Ryngkew' or 'U Basa' who dwells in the thick and virgin forest.

They believe that 'Ka Lei Ryngkew' protects and provides for the well-being of the village community. Therefore, the community preserves and protects these sacred groves. These forests are under strict prohibition. Cutting down trees and plucking flowers, fruits, or any twigs are prohibited. They believe that if this is done, Ka Lei Ryngkew will get offended and bring bad luck or do evil things to the perpetrators. In these sacred groves, rituals and animal sacrifices (cow and goat) are performed periodically. They believe that pleasing 'Ka Lei Ryngkew' or 'U Basa' will provide for and protect the clans from natural disasters like famine and drought and keep the evil spirit away. Traditional ancestral worship is also performed in these forests.

Today, there are as many as 105 sacred groves in Meghalaya. Some of the well-known sacred grooves are the Mawhphlang sacred grove, Sohrarim, Nartiang, and Mawmihthied. Besides these sacred groves, there are also other traditional practices of protecting forests like ki law adong (prohibited forests), ki law shnong (village forest), ki law raij (community forest), and ki law kur (clan forest). These forests are not subject to total prohibition. However, their use is carefully regulated by the authorities.

Today, these practices are still in place in many villages. These practices have not only helped to preserve the environment but have also created a home for much-endangered flora and fauna.



THE PAITE 'PUANDUM'

The Paites are one of the Zo Ethnic tribes in Manipur. They settle mainly in the southern part of Manipur and some parts of Mizoram. There are many traditional clothes of the Paites and some of them are common and shared with the other Zo people in Northeast India and Myanmar. The most common traditional attire for the Paites is the Paite 'Puandum'. 'Dum' in Paite means 'Black' and 'Puan' means 'Cloth'. So, Puandum means a dark black cloth in its literal sense. The Paite Puandum has black, green, yellow, and red colours on it with a white colour lining in between. It is the most important traditional cloth among the Paite Zomi tribe and has a very deep cultural significance. It is used mainly on important occasions such as religious ceremonies, marriages, festivals, etc. On getting married, a Paite girl must take at least one 'Puandum' to her husband's house. The possession of a Puandum by the newly married girl is culturally linked with one of her sacred duties; to cover her husband's dead body if he dies during her lifetime. Paite Puandum is also presented as a gift to close friends as a token of love, care, thanks and appreciation. Both men and women use it in their traditional dances such as 'Jangta laam', 'Phiit laam', 'Suktuah laam', etc.

Birth and Death Ceremonies before the Christian Era

Dr. Th. Siamkhum said in his book that the Paites did not have a significant birth ceremony in the olden days. The child was washed soon after the birth, and a fowl was

feathers were worn around the necks of the mother and the child. The parents of the child abstained from work for four days after the birth of their child. Pigs were usually killed at the naming ceremony of the child, and rice beer (Zu) was served to all the invitees. The first child was usually named by the parents of the father, and the second child by the mother's parents. The death ceremonies were more interesting. The dead person was placed on a platform, and fires were lit around it.

Young men and maidens slept near it. After the body was preserved for weeks, it was washed, its hair dressed, and it was clothed in the best clothes available with a gun and spear in hand. In the evening, the villages would dance around the corpse and drink rice beer, even pouring it into the dead person's mouth. The ceremony went on for a month or more, depending on the social position of the deceased.



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2nd Year Philosophy, DNC*

KA JAIÑKYRSHAH

Jaiñkyrshah is a modest sort of apron worn by female Khasi – Jaintia tribes. It is a traditional printed material which is part and parcel of daily top wear. It is unique only among the Khasi - Jaintia tribes.

Many who have no idea about the moral value behind the jain kyrshah may wonder when they see the female folk of the Khasi – Jaintia tribes wearing it. It is neatly worn on top of all other dresses. The very principle for its use is to cover women's bodies as a sign of respect and dignity. In this connection, it can be said that Khasis value the modesty of their fair sex.

Jainkyrshah also protects women from the eyes of those who look at them with seduction. In that sense, Jainkyrshah is a dress which signifies the standard of the Khasi – Jaintia women's moral values. It is so practical that every non-Khasi-Jaintia female who hails from other parts of the region and country immediately adopts it.

In the community, jaiñkyrshah is a sign of love and care for one's dignity as a woman. It is a multi-purpose material of about one meter and a quarter wide. Commercially it is printed in different shades and colours. Senior women feel incomplete without it when leaving the home. It is a socially accepted decorum by one and all. By wearing it, the woman shows that she respects herself and treasures her womanhood. In her family, when a girl reaches puberty, she wears it. She also has to wear it whenever she goes out of the house. One looks queer and odd if one does not wear it.

However, Jaiñkyrshah is not worn when people attend services and festivals, because they have other more costly wears called Jaiñsem or 'dharas'.

In this global world, when our young women tend to ape the western way of dressing, at home the jaiñkyrshah is still very popular. Jaiñkyrshah will always remain a celebrated identity of the Khasis to outlive change.



Sch. Darmiki, S.J. (KHM)

Garo

The Garo tribe is one of the major tribes in the northeastern state of Meghalaya, India. They are known for their bravery, folktales, culture, and food rich in nutrients and taste. The tribe follows the matrilineal system, where lineage is traced from the mother and property is inherited by women from their parents. The males go to the women's houses after marriage. The Garos can be found in five exogamous divisions known as Chatchis or Katchis. Christianity is the major religion among the Garos, and they were one of the first tribes of northeast India to be evangelized.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Garos, with rice being the major crop, along with vegetables, millet, corn, and horticulture. The tribe celebrates several festivals, including Wangala, a harvest festival held annually during October and November with great pomp and show. They are notable for the variety of dishes that they prepare with pork. Music lies in the blood of the Garos, with their songs and dances being based on the tribe's culture, beliefs, and traditions. The tribe's musical instruments are distinct and often used in moments of celebration and during festivals.

The Garo people can be found in villages in a typical family system, with the head of the village known as Nokma, who exercises his powers of administration over the village. The tribe is also famous for their craft in sculpture and house building using locally available materials. Many Garos have migrated to urban areas in search of employment, education, and facilities.

Overall, Meghalaya is the right place to be in the company of a group of green panthers, foodies, or music lovers, or to be with people known for their hospitality, simplicity, or hard work, and the Garo Hills of Meghalaya are a great place to experience the culture and traditions of the Garo tribe.



Bro. Agassi Paul Tariang M.C.B.S.
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NOMO SHKAR



No sooner than people hear the word Bengali, they automatically switch to using phrases like “Jol Khabe” and “Ami tomake bhalobashi” and they say this in the worst Bengali accent possible. But there is much more to this.

Bengali culture is considered one of the most prosperous cultures. Bengalis are well known for their literature, fine arts, dance, music, food and language. Bengali as a language ranks seventh in the world and second in our country. It is also considered one of the sweetest languages.

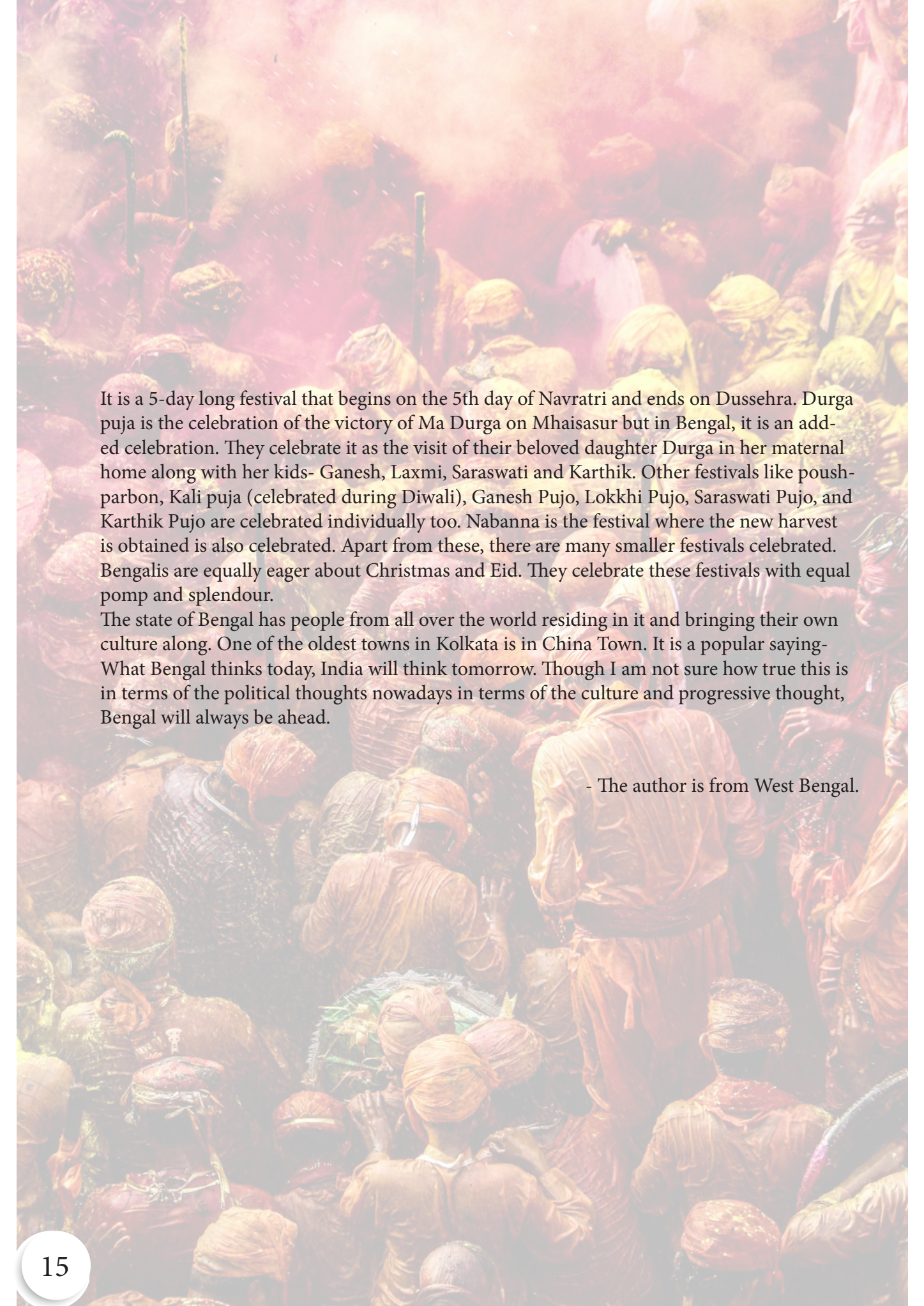
Works of great writers like Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay are popular all over the world. Satyajit Ray with his works has put Bengal on the world map of Cinema. Rabindranath Tagore has won the Nobel Prize for Gitanjali.

Great singers like Manna Dey, Kishor Kumar, Hemant Mukherjee and others have given amazing songs to the music industry. Bengalis are well known not just for their songs in Bollywood or Tollywood movies, but for their knowledge and expertise in classical, folk and rock as well. Regional music like the Baul, Gombhira, Bha-waiya and Kirtans are very popular. Rabindra sangeet was made popular by Rabindranath Tagore himself. Every household in Bengal will have at least one musical instrument and a minimum of one member of the household will be involved in arts or music. Dance is again an integral part of the Bengali culture.

Bharatnatyam, Kathak, and Odissi are very popular here. Apart from the different dance forms practised all over the country, the state has its traditional dance form called the Chau dance- where the people performing it wear huge colourful masks and depict some folklore or mythological stories through their dance form.

Bengalis and foodies are synonymous with each other. Bengalis have a big list of food items that they cook, eat and feed people. Their mornings begin with tea, biscuits and newspaper and they keep eating throughout the day. People often correlate Bengalis with fish and rice but there is a lot to Bengali cuisine. Be it the vegetarian dishes like Aaloo posto, lucchi- aloo dum, and ghugni to begin with to the non-veg dishes including a variety of fishes, chicken and mutton. Sunday afternoon in the Bengali household has to be kosha mangsho- a mutton dish and rice. Desserts are an important part of meals throughout the day. Be it breakfast, brunch, lunch, snacks or dinner, the meal is incomplete without a dessert. It can be as simple as a sondesh to Roshogolla, Rajbhog or mishti doi.

Talking of the festivals- it is said that Bengalis celebrate 12 mashe 13 parbon which means we celebrate 13 festivals in 12 months. Each festival has significance and correlation with nature. Bengalis celebrate Femininity. Most of the festivals celebrate female goddesses. One of the well-known festivals of the Bengalis is Durga Puja.



It is a 5-day long festival that begins on the 5th day of Navratri and ends on Dussehra. Durga puja is the celebration of the victory of Ma Durga on Mhaisasur but in Bengal, it is an added celebration. They celebrate it as the visit of their beloved daughter Durga in her maternal home along with her kids- Ganesh, Laxmi, Saraswati and Karthik. Other festivals like poush-parbon, Kali puja (celebrated during Diwali), Ganesh Pujo, Lokkhi Pujo, Saraswati Pujo, and Karthik Pujo are celebrated individually too. Nabanna is the festival where the new harvest is obtained is also celebrated. Apart from these, there are many smaller festivals celebrated. Bengalis are equally eager about Christmas and Eid. They celebrate these festivals with equal pomp and splendour.

The state of Bengal has people from all over the world residing in it and bringing their own culture along. One of the oldest towns in Kolkata is in China Town. It is a popular saying- What Bengal thinks today, India will think tomorrow. Though I am not sure how true this is in terms of the political thoughts nowadays in terms of the culture and progressive thought, Bengal will always be ahead.

- The author is from West Bengal.

THE TANGKHUL NAGA TRIBE: THE FESTIVAL

The Tangkhuls are one of the tribes of the Naga. The land of Tangkhul is the abode of the world-famous lonely mystic beauty 'Shirui Lily'. It is a place known for its vibrant dances and festivals, as well as for its abundant flora and fauna. Over 12 festivals are celebrated every year. Celebration of the different festivals is a part and parcel of every Naga society.

One of the largest and most elaborately observed festivals is 'The Luira Festival' (a seed-sowing festival). The celebration differs from village to village and on different dates. The Loree Kaju village style of celebrating the festival is from the 27th to the 31st of January every year. Before the festival, the housewife of every household prepares rice beer with sticky rice for the festival. Almost every household kills a pig on the first day of the festival, or a pig is shared by two or three families. Because of this, some people refer to this festival as a "pork-eating festival." Every household in the village cooks a huge amount of pork at a time—roughly 15-20 kilograms—in a specially built earthen pot called a "Hamlei." Cooking in this particular 'Hamlei' is significant because we feel the meat acquires a flavour and taste from this pot, which completes the feast.

The following day, in a little area set aside just for this ceremony, the Awunga and Awungva (the village's equivalent of King and Queen in English) symbolically sow various food grains, including paddy, maize, peas, sesame, etc. After this ritual ceremony, a grand feast is organized, and every household eats outside the house. It is a beautiful thing to see all the households eating together and neighbours sharing their dishes. This signifies unity, love, peace, and harmony. Pork and rice beer are the main foods during the festival. After the grand feast, the villagers gather in the village 'ngareophung', a place where various traditional games and sports are held. Traditional folk songs, singing and folk-dance competitions, wrestling, long jump, high jump, tree climbing, javelin throw, racing, cockfights, catapult shooting, and tug-of-war by different age groups or localities are held. It goes on for days.

It is also customary among the Tangkhuls that married sisters visit their brothers on this occasion, and upon their departure, they are provided with presents, especially meat. After this festival, the villagers can start sowing the seeds.



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God's Own Country

Kerala, christened “God’s Own Country”, at the southernmost tip of India, is more than just sandy beaches and backwaters. The pleasant nature of the land also extends to its people, who take extreme pride in their unique identity. Kerala culture is an eclectic mix of South Indian culture, traditions, beliefs, customs, and legends. Within the state itself, individual characteristics stand out from district to district, which is easier to trace when we divide the state into North, Central, and South Kerala.

Each region has its distinct dialect and culture, largely borrowing from the religion that is followed there. Malabar or North Kerala, for example, has a large population of Muslims, and the regional cuisine and language are influenced by early Muslim settlers from other parts of India and the world. Central Kerala, on the other hand, is influenced by the Christian community, starting from the time of St. Thomas to Vasco da Gama. South Kerala has a mix of Hindus, Christians, and Muslims. To Kerala’s credit, these religious groups have always lived in brotherhood and

The unity in diversity is also reflected in the festivals and various art forms. Onam, based on the legend of Mahabali, is the state festival, celebrated by all without distinction. Keralites enjoy classical music and dance. The land is renowned for its art forms and a dance-drama ritual known as Kathakali, based on Hindu mythology. This interesting dance form integrates dance, music, poetry, and histrionics. Elaborate make-up, headdresses, and flamboyant costumes make Kathakali a visual treat, while the story and the music make it intellectually stimulating. Christians have their art forms like Margamkali, Chavittunadakam, etc. Muslims have Duff Mutt, Oppanakali, etc.

Kalarippayattu is a martial art form famous in Kerala. It is training in combat and uses the same body techniques as in Kung-fu and Karate. It is the oldest and most scientific of its kind in the world. Kalaripayattu borrows from another ancient tradition of Kerala, Ayurveda, by using oils and massages that keep the body supple for fast movement. There is a cure in Ayurveda for every ailment and disease. The natural herbs and medicinal plants available in the Western Ghats make Kerala an ideal place for this ancient form of medicine.



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CULTURE DIVERSITY IN KARNATAKA

Karnataka is a diverse state. It is distinctive for its multilingual ethnicity, exquisite dancing styles, captivating music, affluent heritage, fervent celebrations, chic attire, and mouthwatering cuisine. Karnataka is home to numerous historical mysteries that are intertwined with a vibrant and diverse culture. Karnataka has something to offer everyone, whether they are interested in history or nature or want to fully experience its cultural legacy. A long history of different linguistic and religious diversity has influenced the art and culture of the southern Indian state of Karnataka. In addition to Kannadigas, Tuluvas also call Karnataka home and identify as Kannadigas. There are also small numbers of Siddi tribes, Tibetan Buddhists, and a few other ethnic groups.

The principal dramatic genres of coastal Karnataka are indigenous folk arts. The only Indian state where both Hindustani and Carnatic vocalists are in great demand is Karnataka. Hindustani music is most well-known in North Karnataka, whereas Carnatic music is well-known in South Karnataka. With the growth of Vaishnavism and the Haridasa movement came Karnataka and composers like Purandaradasa, whose devotional, cultural, and intelligible Kannada-language works were popular with the general public. Purandaradasa is also known as the father of Carnatic music. Karnataka has become well-known in the Hindustani music industry as well. Hindustani musicians from Karnataka have won the Kalidas Samman, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan prizes. Several well-known performers include Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal, and Puttaraj Gawai. Languages spoken in Karnataka include Kannada, which is also the official state language. Besides this, people from different parts of Karnataka speak Tulu, Konkani, Kodava, Urdu, and Byari.

The unique dance form of Karnataka is Yakshagana, which is a dance drama. It is a fusion of folk and classical tradition that makes Yakshagana a unique form of art, which includes colourful costumes, music, dance, singing, and most importantly, dialogues composed on the spot. The other important dance style is known as Pilivesha. Pilivesha is a dance style that is frequently performed at temples and on the streets of coastal Karnataka. The unique aspect of this dance style is that the performer must paint a tiger on his body.

Kambala, the two-day buffalo race festival, is important in Karnataka. The two other major celebrations in Karnataka are Navratri, also known as Mysuru Dasara, a ten-day festival honouring the Hindu goddess Chamundeshwari, which dates back to the fifteenth century, and Ugadi, the Kannada new year.



Apart from these things, we can also notice a notable change in the food style in various locations. Some of the unique foods found in Karnataka are the Majjiage (buttermilk), Mysore Rasam, Udupi Sambar, Mysore Bonda, Maddur Vada, Paneer Gassi, Dhawan Keri Dosa, Ragi Dosa, and Neer Dosa. Chicken Sukka, Idli with Mutton Stew, Puli Munchi, and Payasam Of course, one must not forget the rice varieties like the Bisi Bele Bhath (Sambar Rice), the Vangi Bhath (Eggplant Rice), the Avalakki (Baked Flat Rice), and the Maavinkaayi Chitranna (Raw Mango Rice).



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CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN TAMIL

As I pen down my thoughts and reflections on the cultural diversity of Tamil Nadu, the profound quote of Stephen Covey strikes my mind: “Strength lies in differences, not in similarities”. It is indeed true regarding the people of Tamil Nadu. According to Oxford Languages, cultural diversity is “the existence of a variety of cultural or ethnic groups within a society”. I would like to add that culture is a confluence of language, literature, architecture, theatre, arts, and crafts, martial arts, sports, games, rituals, traditions, dance, music, food, dress, religion, festivals, philosophy, etc.

“Tamil Nadu” literally means “the land of the Tamils” and is reckoned to be one of the oldest civilizations; Tamil is one of the oldest surviving languages in the world. A land of exhilarating, fascinating, mesmerizing, and breathtaking beauty, Tamil Nadu has a distinct place in the hearts of the people of India and the world. The heritage-rich state is famous for its Dravidian culture, colossal temples, alluring rock carvings, intricate silk weaving, and baroque bronze sculptures. In affinity with the most ancient and prestigious Dravidian civilization, the natives of Tamil Nadu are deeply rooted in their rich Tamil culture.

The people of Tamil Nadu are united amidst a lot of cultural differences. Though the differences seemingly try to part with people, the reality of unity lies in its core. Cultural diversity has paved the way for people to come together to celebrate their differences and make life more beautiful and meaningful. ThandhaiPeriyar, being a staunch atheist, brought in the concept of unity amidst the religious differences of people.

He came down heavily on Brahminical supremacy, which was controlling the mindset of the people through their so-called “traditions and teachings,” which divided people based on caste, religion, and status. His teachings have become a light on the path of darkness and are guiding the steps of the Tamils even today.

Culturally, Tamil Nadu is as diverse as the colours in the peacock’s feathers. Cultural diversity stems from the bond we cherish among one another, irrespective of the partition that tries to divide us. Cultural diversity adds beauty to our lives. “In reality, we live in everyone. I live in you. You live in me. There is no gap, no distance. We are all eternally one”, said a famous writer, Amit Ray. This quote brings home the real oneness that the Tamils experience, irrespective of their diversity.

“The human heart is too grand to be wasted in the gutter of cultural exclusivity,” said Abhijit Naskar. He has succinctly stated the reality of Tamil Nadu’s cultural diversity in the above-mentioned quote. The confluence of cultures has made Tamil Nadu exceedingly great, and to finally culminate the cultural diversity in Tamil Nadu, there is a very famous Tamil saying, “VandhooraiValavaikum Tamil Nadu” which means that whoever comes to Tamil Nadu for their livelihood will surely find their life settled”.



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AMCHE GOI!

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Goa is a state in western India, with coastlines stretching along the Arabian Sea. Goa is also known for its beaches, ranging from popular stretches at Baga and Palolem to those in laid-back fishing villages such as Agonda. The capital city of Goa is Panaji (Executive Branch). The land area is 3,702 km², the state was founded on May 30, 1987, and the official animal is the gaur. The Chief Minister is Pramod Sawant, a flame-throated bulbul. The official language is Konkani, and the fruit is cashew.

The long Portuguese rule has influenced the culture in more ways than one, and many of the Portuguese traditions are reflected in the Goan culture even today. The crafts and arts of Goa also reflect Hindu, Muslim, and Christian origins. A former Portuguese colony, Goa is also fondly known as the “Rome of the East.” Inhabited and colonized by the Portuguese for almost 450 years, the culture of Goa is distinctly different from that of the rest of the nation.

As a small state on India’s western coast, has always benefited as a trade center because of its easily accessible ports. With a beautiful harmonization of the East and West, Goans have taken the best of both worlds. A civilization of warm, happy people, Goa sees a mix of different religions like Christians, Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus that live together in harmony. Following their age-old traditions and customs, Goans celebrate all major festivals with fervour, without bringing any religious barriers within the society.



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MARRIAGE IN ORAON TRIBE (KHUDKHAR HI BENJA)

To know the mode of celebration of marriage, it is essential to know the Oraon idea of human marriage. It can be understood in the context of its broader significance among the Oraons. Oraons celebrate the marriage of inanimate objects. Before using the new things, he goes through a ceremony that he calls a marriage ritual.

When new things are purchased, Oraons anoint them with vermillion; this is known as the “Benja” or “marriage” of the new object. In the past, Oraon young men and women used to select their marriage partners, and their choice used to be communicated to their parents. In recent times, this idea underwent slight changes. Most of the Oraon parents themselves select brides for their sons. However, Oraons are very attached to customary laws. Therefore, the Oraons take impediments quite seriously. From the very beginning, they preserve the permanence and indissolubility of the existing bond. Oraon culture is vast and includes different groups who also practice the same culture.

This article deals only with the marriage of those Oraons who practice the Christian faith. Other tribes may also have similar procedures regarding the celebration. Some preparations for the marriage celebrations are Dagar baat, Danda khorna, Danda kirtana, Lota pani, etc.

Dagar Baat: In a family, when a boy attains the age of marriage, it becomes essential for his parents to seek out a suitable bride for him. This is done by the parents through the intermediaries, who may be either male or female.

Danda Kherna: This is the initial stage, while the bridegroom's family goes to the bride's house and inserts a stick on the roof of the bride's house, symbolizing the responsibility of the bride's family to take the matter seriously. This is called Danda Khorna, or Puna Dahre.

Danda Kirtana: According to the fixed date, the girl's party goes to the boy's house. They reach the house at dawn, covered in dust. The girl's party brings this time the swats inserted in the girl's house back to the boy's house. The guests are welcomed, and their feet are washed.



Lota-Pani(engagement): After several exchange visits between the two families, the consent of the boy and girl to proceed with negotiations is asked in the Lota-Pani ceremony. The Lota-Pani ceremony is performed between the boy and the girl standing on the mat, the girl facing eastward and the boy facing westward.

Bride-Price: After the Lota-Pani ceremony, the bride-price ceremony takes place. For this, a newly made mat is spread out. This ceremony is performed by the leaders of the villages of both parties. The bride price is fixed in four categories: Mysaari cloth is a woven cloth that is necessary for any marriage ceremony. Bride-Price, Five rupees or an ox Clothes for the family depend on the number of family members.

The boy's party has to bear the expenses of all the wedding garments and clothes for the marriage ceremony. Having finished the pre-marital ceremonies, the date of marriage is fixed in consultation with the parish priest of the bride.

Marriage Preparation: When the above-mentioned ceremonies are over and settled down, the preparation for the marriage celebration begins. “Nyota” (invitations) is sent to all relatives and friends. Yellow-coloured rice is distributed to relatives and others as a symbol of invitation. All the requirements are bought, and you get ready for the wedding day. The Marwa (wedding pavilion) is erected one day before the wedding in the boy's and girl's house courtyards. The Marwa has to be supported by nine sal poles, which symbolize the mother's ninth month of conception.

Marriage: The marriage ceremony had three stages. The first is the bride's dress with a crown and a yellow veil, which signified the distinctive mark of married women. The second stage of the ceremony takes place in the house of the young girl. The Bride is presented there. Then the contract is read out in the presence of the witnesses who sign it. After the exchange of consent, the father hands over the young girl to her husband by joining their right hands. The stage of celebration takes place in the evening when the bridal party goes together with the bride to her husband's house in procession for the concluding marriage ceremony.

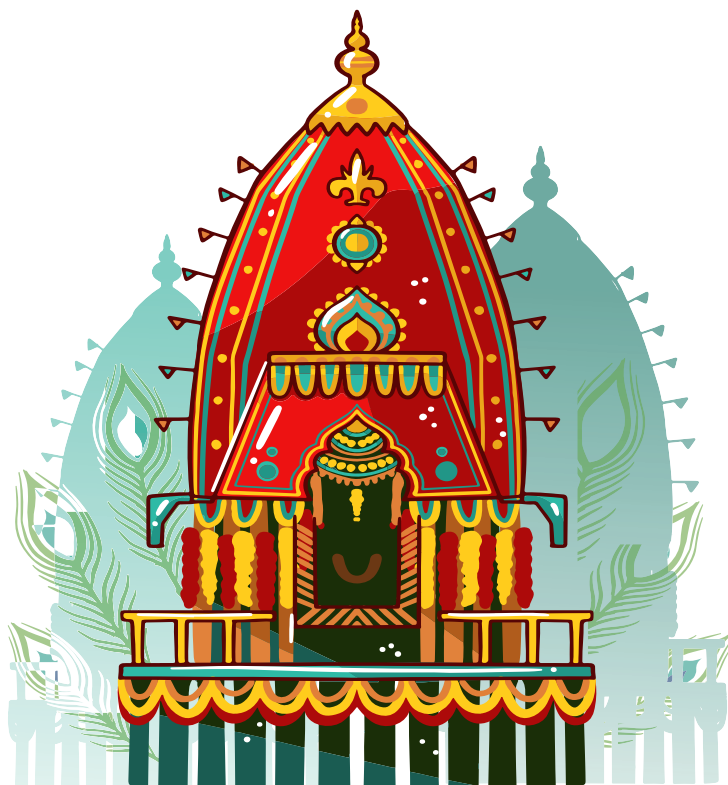
ODIA CULTURE



Odisha is one of the most beautiful states in India. It is located in the northern part of the country and is bounded by a few Indian States. Odisha is known for its tribal cultures and its many ancient Hindu temples. The stunning architecture, history, dialects, vibrant music, and dance forms make Odisha one of the most famous states in India. It is an eastern Indian state on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, known for its many cultures. The people of Odisha have a combination of Folk religion, Hinduism, and other religions. The culture of this state is influenced by several different factors such as the languages spoken here, the local cuisine, and the dances that are performed. Odisha has been ruled by various rulers in the past and they have played an important role in shaping the culture of the State. Thus, the State has a diverse culture and is one of the oldest civilizations in the country. Mainly it is a confluence of the Aryan, Dravidian, and Adivasi cultures. It is believed that 95% of people are Odias.

They belong to Indo Aryan ethnic group native to the Indian state of Odisha who speaks the Odia language. Odia is the official and most widely spoken language in Odisha. Along with Odia, there are a lot of tribal languages too.

The literature works are mainly written here in the Odia language. The unique feature of Odisha is in every district people speak in Odia in a different style. The culture and tradition stand as strong pillars of any Odia household's upbringing. The Odias are the dominant ethnic group and with the rest belonging to various tribal groups. Odisha is predominantly a land of tribes and every tribe has its distinct song and magnificence of dance. The Odia culture has a lot of songs that are predominantly from the tribal people. One of the famous classical dances in India is the Odissi dance. The classical dance Odissi bears the closest resemblance to the temple culture than other extant forms of dance. Some of the other famous dance forms of Odisha include Chhau, which is a form of tribal martial dance that originated in Mayurbhanj; Gotipua,



– Which refers to boy dancers who dress up as girls; Pala, a unique form of balladry; and Sambalpuri, a folk dance that originated in the tribes of Sambalpur. Sambalpuri songs are also very famous in this state as well as in the neighbouring state. The state of Odisha has over 62 tribal communities. Some of the popular tribes are Kondh, Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Gond, Kharia, etc. Every tribal community has its own particular culture, language, art, music, dance, songs, etc. These popular tribes of Odisha mainly survive on agriculture, fishing, farming, hunting, etc.

The cultural diversity of Odisha is admirable. It is said that the state stands as a coastal corridor between the northern and southern parts of the country. Odias are fond of rice. A typical Odia meal consists of rice, dal, and a vegetable dish. Traditional dishes like Pakhala (water-soaked rice), Chenna Poda (a roasted cheese dessert), and Mansa Tarkari (meat curry cooked with potatoes) are loved everywhere in the state, no matter the innumerable dialects, uniting natives together. The majority of Odia identify themselves as Hindus and are ardent followers and worshippers of Lord Jagganath and Lord Shiva. The state is known for its prehistoric temples and the fine architecture they possess. Some of the important temples are Lingaraja Temple, Jagannath Temple, and the great Sun Temple. Major Odia festivals that bring people from all backgrounds together are Rath Yatra, Prathamshtami, Rajo, Durga Puja, and Maha Shivratri. The traditional clothes for women are sarees, and for men, it is a dhoti-kurta with a gamcha. Lungi is also a common dress here. But as the years pass, people prefer to wear western clothing more often and save traditional attire for auspicious occasions.

People here are mainly workers and farmers. Agriculture is one of the main occupations for the people living here. The cultures of the Odia people are unique and beautiful. The people living here are loving and caring and welcome guests with open arms. It is one of the loveliest states in the country.



KHARIA CULTURE

Adivasi culture is enormously connected with nature. Water, forests, and earth (jal, jungle, and jameen) are significant sources of livelihood for Adivasis. They all belong to them. From the early days onward, Adivasis found themselves rooted in nature. Earth, water streams, forests, and hills have always mesmerized humans, especially the community of Adivasis. In eastern and central parts of India, the Adivasi occupy the land predominantly. The Kharia tribe is one of the major tribes found especially in Chhota Nagpur, which comprises Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh. Earlier, the arrival of the Kharia came from central Asia, crossing the valley. They first reached Bihar, and then they spread to different areas of Chhota Nagpur. However, the tribes have split into different states like Assam, West Bengal, and the Andamans, etc. They are closely associated with nature and ecological and cultural surroundings. They are straightforward and amicable by nature.

The Kharia community is divided into three tribes: Dudh Kharia, Dhelki Kharia, and Hill or Pahari Kharia. The Dudh Kharia and Dhelki Kharia have built one compact tribe. Their lifestyles and ways of living are equally the same. These two tribes are agriculturists who mainly depend on the land for survival. Whereas, the Hill Kharia tribe is a food-gathering, hunting, and labouring community. The Dudh Kharia community predominantly resides in Chhota Nagpur, where the names of the families are carried according to patrilineal descent. There are nine clans or gotras found in this tribe, namely Kerketta, Soreng, Baa, Kiro, Kullu, Bilung, Tete, Dungdung, and Toppo.

After the plight of the British in India, the Kharia tribes became the owners of the lands and forests in their geographical areas. The land, forests, water, and other resources belonged to them. They consider them part of their identity and culture. The tribes speak their traditional dialect, generally called the Kharia language, which is also highly rich in their culture. However, the traditional dialect of Kharia tribes is known as the Austroasiatic language.

Kharia culture is observed as rich in their traditional dress, stories, language, songs, etc. Traditionally, women wear a saree falling just above the ankles. Women generally wear ornaments made of silver or aluminium. The men wear traditional dhotis and tie them around their heads, unlike the turban. The Kharia people are recognized for their cultural dance. Just like other tribes of Chhota Nagpur, Kharias also celebrate festivals like Karam, a festival of liberation from enemies; Jankor, which is the purification of a cattle shed; Kadleta, the celebration which relates to the work in the muddy field soon after the completion of transplantation; Bandai; Festival celebrated to pay honour to the buffaloes, cows, and bulls on the first moon day of the Hindi month of Kartik (October). Nawakhani is the festive meal of new crops celebrated in the month of Kartik (October). During festival time, both men and women come together in the evening to a particular place called Akhara and sing and dance the whole night with traditional drums. Kharia youths of both sexes dance together. Their dance patterns are called Hario, Kinbhar, Halka, Kudhing, and Jadhura. They express their culture with their dance steps, songs, and traditional musical instruments. Festivals of the Kharia Tribe are performed on communal, family, and individual levels to bring contentment, delight, health, and prosperity to the community.

The Kharia Tribe is endogamous; they have the custom of marrying only within the limits of a clan or tribe. Therefore, the marriage of Kharia is considered sacred. Marriage with tribes or clans is regarded as a social crime, and the offender is excommunicated from the village and society. During marriage time, the entire village extends their helping hand and joyfully engages in the ritualistic marriage ceremony.

Apart from the community practices, Kharia life and religion are interconnected. All norms and moral conduct are established by God. They believe that God is the giver and upholder and has an embracing control over each individual

They also believe that if anything wrong is committed, in return as a consequence, God is the only one who can give punishment. The cultural practices of Kharia, such as birth rituals, pasteurization, creating tattoos on girls' foreheads, etc., are significantly observed.

However, due to the recent education system and the contemporary world, there is a wide range of cultural and linguistic changes. Earlier, the Kharia people used to worship nature, but after western influence, the majority embraced Christianity. As they become more educated, they give less importance to their culture. For Kharia now, urbanization, industrialization, and westernization are the post-effects of globalization. Gradually, they are on the verge of losing their identity. Therefore, taking this on a serious note, there is a Kharia Sabha (summit) and Kharia Mahadoklo (assembly) in which the matters are discussed and the committees look into the matter and the cultural practices of Kharia. Educated men, women, and youth are more actively engaged in conducting seminars and gatherings. This platform will benefit the community by preserving Kharia culture.



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Manav Dharma

Have you ever considered how diversely divided the Indian culture is and how it continues to thrive nonetheless? Have you ever wondered how it is appealing to you and me as Indians to live in perfect harmony with a neighbour who might belong to a diverse ethnic group, speak a different language, eat different foods, and follow a different religion, rituals, and customs altogether? How do you think a country with such diverse ethnicities, religions, languages, traditions, and beliefs can exist as an all-embracing melting pot? Fortunately, history has all the answers. A review of the history of the world reveals that you and I belong to an old nation with an age-old history of diverse people belonging to various origins such as Dravidians, the Aryans, the Mongols, the Semites along with various other tribes. You and I belong to a vast cultural heritage which is a beautiful amalgamation of varied factors coming together and creating vibrant and colourful practices and life. You and I belong to a history that has witnessed many civilizations flourish and vanish, welcomed foreign

invasions, respected external influences and adopted them. You and I belong to a history that has skilfully blended various traditions, customs, religions, art, and literature into one diverse and unique culture. The world recognizes the source of this diverse and rich culture as none other than India. Unity in diversity is the implicit law of the land.

The Indian word for culture is 'Sanskriti'. From time immemorial, Indians have described their Sanskriti as 'Manav Dharma' (human culture), referring to the enhanced development of human capabilities. In other words, culture is the development of body, mind, and spirit through instruction, practice, and experience. It entails the refinement, nourishment, and enrichment of physical, intellectual, and spiritual faculties that help us progress towards perfection or enable us to achieve high objectives in various walks of life.

Cultures of different parts of the world are based on different schools of thought that developed there during evolution according to place, time, and situation.



Indian culture has roots in the Vedic school of thought and ideology. In the history of world literature, the Vedas are the earliest sources of knowledge. India has had the proud privilege of being the motherland of countless divinities and grand sages known as the Rishis or Munis. These enlightened supreme seers established the Vedic school of thought and laid the foundations for the Manav Dharma of India.

The Munis, or Rishis, were Yogic saints who reached the pinnacles of perfection in various fields of knowledge. With their sharpened intellects and knowledge of universal truths, the sages developed codes of conduct, following which one could enhance physical, mental, and spiritual abilities and become capable of achieving success. They transformed these valuable principles into actions, applied and practically utilized them, and revealed them to their disciples for onward advancement and further transmission to society. The tried

and tested codes of conduct of the Indo-Aryan Masters have come down to us through the ages, and upon these are based our customs and traditions. Thus, the Indians describe their Sanskriti as Manav Dharma, as it is aimed at enhancing the capabilities of body, mind, and spirit and helps one achieve the objectives of life and enter the stage of bliss.

The Indian culture is capable of providing all the beauty and perfection that human beings require and can achieve. The age-old customs and traditions we follow apply to people of all times and places; as a result, they have withstood all tests of time. Continuous use of these customs by our preceding generations is the cause of the continuity of our culture, the 'Manav Dharma/Human Culture', the richness and usefulness of which are unparalleled in the world.



M. Jagadeesh



RAJASTHANI: THE LAND OF KINGS

Rajasthan, sometimes known as the “Land of Kings,” is a state in northwest India. The culture of Rajasthan is renowned for its extensive history, vivid customs, and lively arts and crafts. Some distinctive cultural traditions that have been passed down through the centuries may be found in this state.

Dance and folk music are fundamental components of Rajasthani culture. Popular traditional dances performed in the state include Ghoomar, Kalbeliya, and Terah Taali. During major occasions like weddings, festivals, and other cultural events, these dances are frequently performed. Usually, traditional instruments like the dholak, sarangi, and harmonium are used to accompany the song.

Rajasthan is renowned for its majestic palaces and forts, which showcase the state’s rich architectural and historical legacy. Among the most well-known historical sites in the state are the City Palace in Jaipur, Junagarh Fort in Bikaner, and Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur.

The state is renowned for producing fine handicrafts, including jewellery, ceramics, and textiles. Bandhani (tie-and-dye) and block-printed textiles, which are produced using conventional

methods, are well known in Rajasthan. Also, the state is home to talented artisans who use silver, gold, and precious stones to make exquisite handcrafted jewellery.

The food of Rajasthan is a significant component of its culture. The state is noted for its tasty and spicy prepared foods. Popular foods include ker sangri, gatte ki sabzi, and dal bati churma. Ghee is frequently used to prepare Rajasthani cuisine, giving it a rich and peculiar flavour.

Rajasthan is also well-known for its vibrant festivals, which are observed with tremendous fervour. Diwali, Holi, and Teej are some of the state’s well-known holidays. Another significant draw for travellers from throughout the world is the yearly Pushkar Camel Fair.

Rajasthan’s culture is a diverse fabric of custom, history, art, and music. The state is a storehouse of cultural richness and tradition, with beautiful forts and palaces, vivid folk dances, and fine handicrafts.

- The author is from Rajasthan.



KASHMIRI CULTURE

The northernmost territory of India is home to Kashmir, which has a long history and rich cultural legacy. Kashmir's culture, which has developed over many years and reflects the history, geography, and social conventions of the area, is a distinctive fusion of Indian, Iranian, Central Asian, and Tibetan influences.

Kashmir's ancient arts and crafts, which include delicate needlework, wood carving, papier-mache, carpet weaving, and shawl making, are among its most important cultural features. The handicrafts of the area are well-known for their excellence and beauty and have been imported into many nations for ages.

Kashmir's food is a crucial component of its culture, which is largely affected by the terrain and climate of the area. Popular meals prepared using regional ingredients such as beef, dairy, and spices include Rogan Josh, Gushtaba, Yakhni, and Wazwan.

Kashmir's music and dance are also fundamental components of its cultural legacy. Sufi music, a style of Islamic devotional music that stresses the use of poetry to express spiritual truths, has a long history in the area. The traditional Rouff dance, which is performed at weddings and other social gatherings, is one

The social customs and traditions of the people of Kashmir are characterized by their friendliness and generosity. The social fabric of the area is centred on the idea of community, and celebrations of festivals and other events frequently bring people together.

Given that Muslims make up the vast majority of the population, religion is a fundamental part of Kashmir's cultural identity. Yet there are also many Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists in the area who have lived side by side in harmony for many years.

Lastly, the natural beauty of Kashmir has also played a key role in defining its cultural character. The region's snow-capped mountains, beautiful lakes, and lush green valleys have inspired poets, painters, and authors for ages and continue to be a source of inspiration for individuals from all walks of life.

Kashmiri culture is a rich and varied tapestry of art, music, food, social norms, and scenic beauty. It is a treasure trove of cultural legacy from centuries of history, and a fusion of many cultural influences has moulded its richness and distinctiveness.

- The author is from Kashmir.

The Koli Culture in Vasai

The Koli (Fisherfolk) community is an integral part of Mumbai. They are often considered the original residents of Mumbai city. The community has a rich history and heritage. The Koli community has grown mostly in Mumbai's secret neighbourhoods, known as "Koliwadās." In essence, koliwadās means "a house that opens to the sea." There are several well-known Koliwadās in Mumbai, including Worli Koliwada, Sion Koliwada, Vasai Koliwada, and Colaba Koliwada. Koli people live in great numbers in the islands that make up Mumbai, including Kolbhat (now Colaba), Palva Bunder (now Apollo Bunder), Dongri, Mazagaon, and Naigaum. Every year, the Koli people celebrate the main festival of "Narali Punav" in a magnificent fashion. After this day, it's said, the wind and water conditions are more favourable for deep-sea fishing. The beginning of a brand-new harvesting season is something that the entire Koli community, along with the farmers, looks forward to on this day. The boats are regarded with reverence and they offer prayers to the sea god. Vasai is a historical location and city close to Mumbai's (Bombay) western suburbs. It is situated in the Palghar district, which was divided from the Thane district in 2014.

The Konkan region of Maharashtra is also a section of the twin cities of Vasai and Virar. There is a special relationship between people with the sea. The sea is like a father, teacher and friend and they completely depend on it for their survival. Though the Koli people face tremendous difficulties because of the heavy storms and rough seas it is a part of their life and a member of their family. Koli people of Vasai go into the deep sea to catch fish. They remain there for 10 to 12 days as if it is their other home. They are also devoted to God and so before going to the deep sea they pray to their God to bless their hard work and grant them the fruit of their hard work as a good catch of fish. The one who owns the boat is called Nakhwa and those working with him in his boat are called Bhagi. Once they are back from fishing, women go to the sea-shore to segregate the fish. Small fish is being sold at the local markets and the big fish at the big markets such as Naigaum, Bhayander and Bombay. After fishing Nakhwa and others with him mend their nets for their next trip. People of this community remain always together and celebrate festivals and marriages regardless of caste, creed and religion.

- The author is from Vasai.

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETATION

INDIA: A GEM OF CULTURES



Decon. Francis S.J.



Sch.Prithivi S.J.



Hrrvinan Helena



Decon. Ebanezer S.J.



Sch.Princen S.J.



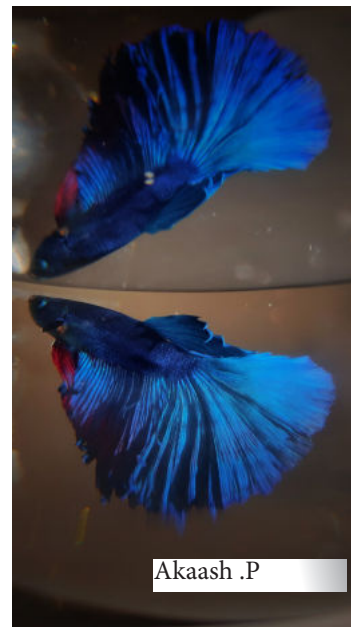
Sch.Vysakh S.J.



Sch.Dilip S.J.



Kartik Omkar



Akaash .P



Sch.Cicil S.J.



Sch.Elson Lobo S.J.



Sch.Irivo S.J.



Sch.Augustine S.J.



Prithvi Antha



Sch.Sanju C.S.T

DNC NEWS

BALMELA

The Christmas celebration held with the children from the Kalyani Nagar slum brought immense joy and contentment to all involved. Organized by the Karnataka Scholastics, the full-day program catered to around 60 children. Through the generous contributions of sponsors, namely Mr Paul Das and his family, Frs. Francis and Raja of the St. Vincent's community, and Fr. Anish of the Loyola community, it was possible to create a memorable experience for these children. The day was centred around sharing the joy of Christ with the less fortunate through sumptuous meals and Christmas gifts such as bags, sweaters, and water bottles.

During the morning hours, it was scintillating to witness the hidden talents of the children during the cultural events. In the afternoon, meticulously conducted fun games, action songs, and competitions took place. The chief guest of the day was Marilingu, the correspondent of the slum. Before the closing of the ceremony, the rector addressed the children and distributed prizes and Christmas gifts. Overall, it was a heartwarming experience to spread the festive spirit to those in need, and we express our gratitude to all those who contributed to making this event possible.

CCA CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

The Christmas season is an occasion that comes once a year, but for many, it was delayed for two years due to the pandemic. To make the most of this eagerly anticipated occasion, we took care in our planning and preparation beforehand. On December 18, we organized a recollection for the public to use as a spiritual preparation. Fr. Mukti Ekka SJ delivered the remembrance speech, and the attendees also had access to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Before the Vigil Mass on December 24, individuals were given the opportunity to receive absolution once again.

This year, both the general public and scholastics were looking forward to the performance of A Christmas Carol. We were divided into two groups and travelled to various locations to sing carols and share the good news. The locals welcomed the newborn king with enthusiasm, and the passionate carol singing, coupled with the thundering drumbeat, created a lively atmosphere.

The highly anticipated day had finally arrived; the decorations were complete, the baby Jesus was placed in the crib, the star shone bright, and the lights sparkled with joy. At the Vigil Mass, vast crowds of people arrived from far and wide, and it began at nine o'clock. The Mass was presided over by Fr. George Beck SJ and concelebrated by other fathers. The faithful attended the service, lined up to receive Holy Communion, and kissed the Baby Jesus despite the overcrowded church. The ceremony was made more profound by a beautifully adorned altar, church, surrounding areas, and melodic singing. Following the mass, everyone wished each other a joyous and happy Merry Christmas. We then moved to the former basketball court for beverages and food, where an amazing tribal dance enthralled everyone who came after it.

Overall, the CCA Christmas event was profoundly significant, spiritually enlightening, and unforgettable. The atmosphere of joy and celebration during the Christmas season was truly a remarkable experience for everyone involved.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS.

As we approached the Christmas season, we eagerly awaited the arrival of the infant Jesus. As soon as the semester examinations at JD were completed, preparations for Christmas at DNC began. The home was decorated with the utmost skill by scholastics from various regions, making it an unforgettable occasion. The Eucharistic celebration provided spiritual depth to the celebration. As a community, we were united by a fellowship meal. Each zone performed Christmas carols throughout the evening, keeping the holiday spirit alive.

The atmosphere was enthusiastic and joyful, and the holiday cheer and celebration were heightened by the music played by everyone.

The celebration of Christmas at the DNC this year was a testament to the unity and joy that the season brings. The community came together to celebrate the birth of the infant Jesus, and the festivities were a beautiful display of the holiday spirit.

TRIDUUM AND RENOVATION OF VOWS.

As the year drew to a close, we prepared for change and renewal. Under the guidance of Fr. Errol Fernandes S.J. (BOM), the Triduum was conducted this year. It was a time for private reflection and prayer, and the daily pints given by Fr. Errol enriched with spiritual illumination for us. The moment of adoration provided an opportunity to be silently present before the Lord and to have a close connection with Him. On December 30, 2022, during Holy Communion, we reaffirmed our vows and dedication to the Company of Jesus.

We are grateful for Fr. Errol's guidance as we embarked on this spiritual endeavor, which is characterized by an attitude of praise, love, and service.

The Triduum was a time for spiritual growth and introspection. As we reaffirmed our dedication to the Company of Jesus, we were reminded of the importance of service and love in our daily lives. We thank Fr. Errol for his leadership and guidance throughout this transformative experience.

PONGAL

Pongal was celebrated at DNC with colourful flowers and sweet sugarcane. It marks the first day of the Tamil month of Thai, a day to express our gratitude towards Mother Nature for all her blessings. The day started with the Holy Eucharist. Fr. Alex Clement, director of NVSC, was the main celebrant. He was accompanied by the other Tamil fathers of the community as co-celebrants. After breakfast, we had traditional games like pot-breaking and sugarcane eating for all the Scholastics. The games were filled with laughter and fun, which brought the community together.

A delicious Tamil cuisine was prepared for lunch by Scholastics for the community. Sugarcane juice was provided to all after lunch. The evening prayer service was also based on Pongal, during which we thanked God for all his graces. Soon after the prayer, we had a cultural program. Scholastics performed various traditional dances like Bharathanatyam, oilattam, karagam, and kaliyam. As milk overflowed from the Pongal pot, our hearts were overflowing with gratitude as the day came to an end. Thanks to all who made this day memorable.

DIACONATE ORDINATION

It was a grace-filled day for third-year theologians, who, along with three other Capuchins, were ordained deacons by Rev. Thomas Dabre, Bishop of the Diocese of Pune, during a solemn Eucharistic celebration in the chapel of De Nobili College on February 19. The theme, “Go and proclaim the good news to all,” was very appropriate because our twelve brothers, having experienced the good news of salvation, committed themselves to Jesus and are now ready to bear witness. The ceremony began with Fr. Francis Pudhicherry, Rector of DNC, presenting the nine Jesuit candidates to the ordaining prelate. In his homily, His Excellency instructed the ordinandi on the meaning of diaconate ordination and the role of a deacon in the Catholic Church in India. He called on the deacons to proclaim the gospel and to serve God and His people with love. He also reminded them to be effective in action, gentle in ministry, and constant in prayer in their lives of service to others.

Fr. Ryan Rodrigues (KAR) meticulously planned and executed the ceremony with the help of Scholastics. The entire ceremony was heavenly, and it was a thrill to see the DNC chapel filled with family members, friends, and well-wishers of the deacons. The melodious singing of the scholastics stirred every heart in the chapel and added an aura to the ceremony. The faithful who witnessed the ceremony responded generously by praying and singing with true devotion.

After the ceremony, there was a short felicitation program for the newly ordained deacons. The deacons expressed their gratitude to the rector and the staff who accompanied them closely. They also thanked the scholastics for their close-knit cooperation and for making the ceremony memorable. As we congratulate the deacons, let us pray that they may become Christ-like in love and service.





THANKS TO THE OLD DNC TIMES TEAM



WELCOME NEW DNC TIMES TEAM

UNRAVELLING MANIPUR'S
CRISIS: IS LAND
THE ROOT CAUSE?



NEXT
ISSUE