

THE CHALLENGE OF THE HIMALAYAS - GEOPOLITICS OF CONFRONTATION OR CO-OPERATION

APPASAMBA B. PANT, Pune.

I

While speaking on "The Challenge of the Himalayas", I would first deal with the general aspects of the great changes that are overwhelming this area of which the Himalayas are the kingpin. In this area, geographically, geologically, geopolitically, and geoeconomically, the whole of the Indian Ocean area is included. The Himalayas determine the climate, the soil, the mineral wealth, the very atmosphere of all this area. Around them have sprung up over the centuries, great cultures, and, religions, and empires. The British, the Russian, the Chinese and the Indians acted and reacted to each other in various historical events around them. Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, have been sheltered and nurtured, have grown and conflicted and influenced each other in and around the Himalayas. The land of the Five Rivers and of the Ganga-Brahmaputra is a crucible in which have been melted together a spectrum of experiences that have inspired, enriched the humans not only of this area but throughout the world. There obviously is going to take place, watched silently by the Himalayas, a great drama of events and happenings in the next fifty years in this area which will add constructively to better living all over the world.

The Himalayas pose an eternal challenge to all of us, especially living in this area and to others elsewhere. It is a challenge for intelligent and compassionate living. Living

not in the Golden Ages (?) gone by, or in their memory, but living in the modern age of Science, and Technology of speed, of production of better goods and services, of rising needs and wants and of greater expectations, in an age where greed surpasses needs, and power-mania distorts vision.

In living, problems arise because we are not intelligent. Intelligence, competence and compassion can create with the help of modern science and technology, prosperity, stability and happiness. Mere intelligence with the help of Science and Technology leads to power-mania, arrogance, decay and destruction. The various World Wars are an example of it. It leads to exploitation of man by man, of nature by man, to empires and conflicts and confusion, pollution and waste. On the other hand, only compassion is weak, sentimental, ineffective and leads to superstition, stagnation, sloth and decay. Together, with the help of modern science, they both can bring abundance and liberty, a new vitality, and, joy in living, contentment and peace.

Obviously, there is something very special about the Himalayas. No geographical area has played such a vital and inspiring role in human events that effected the course of history throughout the world as the Himalayas. Whether in the Himalayas there are some powerful, beneficial, benevolent centres of energy secretly hidden to be discovered for the good of the humans is a subject

beyond the range of these talks. That all the cultures and kingdoms, ideologies and endeavours of this small planet of ours at one time or another lead themselves to the Himalayas is a fact of life. Today the Europeans, Russians, Chinese, the Americans, the Japanese and of course the Arabs, the Iranians, Africans and the South-East Asians, feel that somehow their security, their progress, their well-being whether linked with oil or minerals, with sea-wealth or the forests and rivers, is dependent on what takes place, or should, in this area. That is why all this rumpus about bases, and free passages, and revolutions and wars and killings and insecurity and suffering.

Perhaps, never since the Himalayas were "born" as the twin continents of Gondwana and the Northern one crashed into each other millions of years ago, creating them, that so much turmoil and rapid change has been witnessed in this area. Again, never before have so many people from all over the world felt, or imagined, that their very living depends on what they, or others, do in this area. This happening itself presents not only problems of conflict and tensions, of revolutions and wars, but also, a potential, many a definite possibility, of intelligent compassionate living. It would be interesting to look at what is happening and is likely to happen around the Himalayas, and to think of probable courses of action that could be pursued.

But before we do so, can we ask ourselves a more basic question as to why, and perhaps how, intelligent - compassionate living seems to have eluded the humans throughout the ages or, at least is extremely difficult to practise. In spite of the sufferings, wars, destruction, disease, death, throughout the ages caused by ignorance, the humans seem to learn the art of symmetrical living all too slowly. In every age, we seem to fall into the same rut with only minor deviation in the degree and duration of violence and sorrow, destruction and debasement.

Today thanks to Science and Technology,

a new dimension is added to the possibilities of symmetrical living as well as to the capacity of creating misery and sorrow all around us. Is an awakening to the fact that all this greed and waste, wars and exploitation, conflicts and misery is nonsense, stupid, and can be, must be, changed, also noticeable?

Intelligent, compassionate living is intimately involved with the mind of man, its capacities and conditioning; a distorted, inefficient mind cannot live intelligently and compassionately. Usually in most cases distortions in vision and action arise due to the involvement of the mind in "power", political, military, economic, social etc, or a named religion, in the idea of a Nation, in fame, prosperity, pride etc. Distortion also arises in this age of science and technology where there are pockets of abundance of goods and services together with poverty, that is, a lack of competence to create wealth and the will to distribute it in keeping with the ever rising demands and the expectations of a consumer oriented society. It seems that this "explosion" of desires for better living and more and more goods and services that is at the same time so exciting and stimulating cannot be met quickly and adequately enough as new technology takes time to be absorbed in a slowly developing society, and often the methods followed to do so are counterproductive. Production gets lost in bureaucratic paper work, in licences, controls, planning commissions, corruption of the executive machinery which has a limited motivation, chiefly only in maintaining itself.

Technology and Science brought Power to Europe, the Americans, Japanese, the U. S. S. R. It is not always evident that it brought to them with this power, intelligence or compassion. Instead of producing wealth, goods and services, to create symmetrical living, the excitement of power, pride and their urge for domination and "exclusiveness" has led to wars and killing of over 1,00,000,000 citizens, "individuals", in the last seventy

years. This "distortion" of the mind by addiction to power seems to be most devastating and stupid. It is also infectious. What the Euro-Americans, Japanese did, are doing today, the rest of us seem to follow blindly. Either we get ourselves involved in their mad power games or create our own "toy" ones. Result is, un-intelligent non-compassionate living, that is, living in confusion, bitterness, sorrows and suffering. Thus we do not, can not, respond to the Himalayas, when the mind is distorted by power.

Nearer home in India with all the good will and high idealism, those who wrote the Indian Constitution allowed a political and administrative-cum-executive machinery to grow (and grow! and grow!) which seems to have little motivation and less competence in the field of creating real wealth. If the machinery is wasteful and frustrating, it is not the fault of the individual who, the poor being, is only trying to live in this turmoil of unemployment and shortages. It is the approach that is un-intelligent. To imagine that real wealth can be created through political or bureaucratic hierarchies and not by sustained, hard, efficient work through intelligent and competent application of Science and Technology to resources is un-intelligent and ignorant. Again, it is not the fault of the individual but of the approach that is basically a feudal one and therefore, unsuited to this age of "consumerism". That during the past thirty years of Indian independence poverty and conflicts have grown is a fact. That with the same people, the same capacities, same time, money and energy spent, we would have, could have, achieved, if the motivations were different almost three times of what we have done is also a fact. Productivity and efficiency, sophisticated management and cost-accounted results was not, is not even now, our motivation, but, it is some irrelevant ideology, or, a dream, in which our mind has got stuck, hypnotised by slogans and

shouts on the polling platforms. The present day political and administrative machinery is irrelevant, inappropriate, wasteful, un-intelligent from the point of view, of the social-economic change (revolution?) that is with us, or for the prosperity and stability of our society.

Are we then stuck for ever (God forbid!!) with a system of rules and regulations, committees, complaints, inquiries, promotions, transfers, power concentration, hierarchies, and above all politicians that is irrelevant to the removal of poverty? Can the modern techno-economic culture with its dynamism, vitality, nervous energy be grafted on the existing system, political and administrative, which lacks socially oriented motivations? Again, with no fault of the individual, can we inspire and bring intelligent compassion to the working of the existing system which suited, perhaps, an empire, or, the Maharajas, or do we have to scrap it. How do we do it?

How do we co-ordinate, harmonise the divergent group interests that have already emerged and will continue to emerge as we "progress" and who today seem bent upon pursuing selfish, sectarian interests leading to conflicts? The trade unions, the disorganized landless labourers, the urban industrial proletariat, the students, the civil servants, the entrepreneurs, the farmers, the transporters, the educationists and others? Is the present system of a political hierarchy in which you spend Rs. 50,000/- p. m. on a Minister in State and Rs. 75,000/- p. m. on one in the centre really worthwhile? What do they do for the money we pay them? Do they give back to the society Rs. 50000/- + (at least) 2 rupees? Is it not time to have a close look at the whole apparatus of so called "governance" to see whether it is in fact cost-productive? This "distortion" of our mind which involves us in the 'power', glory, glamour, pride of a Neta, Leader, a Party, a Minister, Prime minister etc. and seems to satisfy us is, surely, totally irrelevant to the peace or the

progress or stability of a society which is so different from the ones where such a system may have worked in the past. Unless this can be seen clearly, breaking out of these old habits of the mind which has led us no-where will be impossible and there cannot be intelligent or compassionate living.

The old approach and attitudes outlined above create only centres of "power", politically, administratively or in institutions like finance, industry, trade unions etc. Only when we can create instead centres of intelligent competent-compassionate action that contentment and stability will emerge. The attitude that the "State" or the 'party', or the 'leaders', or the 'Govt.' is responsible, or capable of doing things means that we, individuals, avoid and shirk our responsibilities, do not exert ourselves to be competent, we are lazy, (or ignorant) and refuse to use our intelligence which we do have. This approach may have been adequate in a feudal society or may suit a dictatorial one. It cannot be successful in a modern techno-economic consumer oriented democratic society. Democracy has meaning only if all can aspire for, and get the same range of goods and services by working hard and efficiently. This is not possible if the individual is non-intelligent not competent or compassionate. The idea that a welfare-state can be built by stupid, incompetent, irresponsible citizens is bunkum. This approach has made even great countries like Great Britain bankrupt. The present crisis in the West, the inflation, unemployment, recessions are largely due to this wrong approach.

There is another 'distortion' that we must consider, that is important, and in a way, basic to the society as it is developing all the world over as more and more new techniques for production, distribution and consumption are brought into play. In the old societies where production was limited to a few goods and services and, it was, in a way, 'socially oriented', meaning, the objective was to 'keep the society stable' (even

stagnant) the problems were simple. There were strict rules regarding production and distribution. One caste would produce or transport only a certain range of goods such as a carpenter, cobbler, shepherd, farmer, smith, potter etc. The rules regarding consumption were even stricter. If you ate or drank or smoked or tried to behave differently, you were 'outcast'. Then you lost your 'I'-dentity and security. So you conformed and kept the society intact. Society was all important, so was tradition, religion and the rules and regulations observed over the centuries.

The capacity now acquired through Science and Technology to produce a wide range of goods and services simultaneously creates desires which are even provoked (breaking consumer resistance now is a great Science and Technique), and an insatiable urge to own and to enjoy. It is important to understand that this provoked, stimulated, desire (VASANA) must necessarily function outside the traditional, feudal "do's and 'don'ts", the taboos, the religious social, caste restrictions. This new "freedom" from the old routine, and, ruts is thrilling, has a vitality, creates restlessness and has an energy of its own. But it has devastating impacts on the existing range of relationships between man and man, man and nature, and man and the old systems of authority and government. We must see this clearly in order to understand what is happening around us.

This "explosion of desires" creates competition, ruthlessness, self-centredness, corruption, pollution, nervous exhaustion and boredom.

Yesterday's luxuries in this competitive world of increasing desires become today's necessities and the accepted standard of life!! As all desire the same or similar range of goods, no one bothers to see whether there is the capacity, urge or motivation individually and collectively to produce them. Desires outstrip production. Individuals who desires more and more do not think of

acquiring the capacity to produce the necessary wealth with their own efforts to pay for them. Political parties, leaders shout that it is the inherent right of every citizen to get what the other has without paying for it !! This is the beginning of inflation and high prices which brings in the demand for higher wages which means more inflation as too much money (printed) chases too few goods and services. This is the un-intelligent, non-compassionate road to rack and ruin,

A more serious and dangerous 'distortion' which militates against intelligent and compassionate living is the 'big' and small game of power that the Nation States play. It would be 'intelligent' to know how the existing interrelated inter-dependence of all of us on each other throughout the world functions and then acts. Oil, Coal, Copper, Iron, Bauxite, Timber, Gold, Diamonds, rare minerals make the modern life, or, can make it, comfortable. But some Nation States want to corner these resources exclusively for themselves and build up more prosperous and more powerful communities only for themselves. They have also the technology. The U. S. A. which forms only 6% of the world population controls and uses 46% of the resources of the whole world !! To maintain this advantage and superiority all means including war, revolution, murders, corruption are freely used. In this area of the Himalayas this game is going to assume gigantic proportions 'distorting' normal, natural, intelligent approach to compassionate living.

One is often despaired of seeing any intelligence or compassion in this game of power at the National or international level. Those who are supposed to be at the helm of affairs are as confused, angry, and stupid as those whom they are supposed to lead and often even more so as their mind gets influenced, distorted, with a sense of 'wisdom' that accompanies power.

One should grasp the fact clearly that the very concept of a Nation State presupposes power and leads to living in fear, or, with a desire to dominate, be superior to your

neighbour. In this modern age of interlinked inter-dependence, this concept of exclusive powerful or domineering Nation State will always create conflict. No Nation State today can be exclusive or independent. Not even China who after trying to be so for nearly thirty years is now realising the futility of this approach. The U. S. S. R. and U. S. A. are dependent on each other. So are Europe and U. S. S. R.

For this interrelated inter-dependence to function freely, smoothly and naturally a great many in-built resistances and vested interests shall have to be removed. One of these distortions is that most countries today produce armaments for sale abroad. No vested or National or business or industrial interest has played such havoc in human lives as armament production. It is wasteful, solves no crisis, creates new ones, involves distortions in the Socio-economic functioning of the country which produces them and in the one which buys and uses (or tries to) them. The U. S. A. and U. S. S. R. together sell abroad, or " pump in " every year for so called Nationalistic, political and strategic reasons twenty-billion dollars of armaments (20,000,000,000 . . .). France, Belgium, Sudan, Great Britain, Israel, Brazil, Argentina, China, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland produce another two billion dollars worth for sale. No other single factor makes intelligent compassionate living difficult, or impossible, as this trade in death and destruction.

The economies of all these above mentioned countries depend on the profits, employment, taxes, on selling death and destruction. Papers have been published, books written, Seminars held, the U. N. O., U. N. E. S. C. O. debate this matter spasmodically to no effect. South Africa, India, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Israel, Syria, Libya, U. A. E. buy 5,000,000,000 dollars worth of armament each year !! Can intelligent compassionate living be possible under these circumstances? This is the challenge of the Himalayas.

It seems that a few at least are looking at the problem intelligently. The old conditioning of the mind with the fears, pride, have created misery. Are we going to accept a new set of conditioning of the mind (slogans, pride, ruthlessness with

different labels !!) or, no, conditioning what soever? Is the mind going to be still so that intelligence and compassion shine forth in a new world of joy and energy. That is what the Himalaya expects and is waiting to see happen.

II

In the context of what we have discussed before, would it be worthwhile to look into the future a bit and see what could be the likely scenario around the Himalayas in the next five to fifty years or so? Would the wealth of this region be utilised intelligently, compassionately or will it lead, in the inevitable process of rapid change, to devastation and sorrow?

The U. S. S. R., China, India are the most dominating features of this region. Much will depend on how these three develop their relationships with each other. Because of oil and other mineral resources Japan, Germany, France and other European countries are here too. So is great Britain and South Africa. The Emergent Black Africa has its own momentum and priorities so has Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia. The Arabs and Iranians have today the riches to attract through their oil all who don't have enough of it. They also add to the complicated games of power.

Over all these, dominate United States of America and her global interests and postures. Apart from many other factors which

we can consider separately, India and Pakistan could not settle down to a process of peaceful progress because of American interest in bases in Pakistan to spy on the Soviet Union. America was also willing to pay the price in armaments desired by our 'small' neighbour Pakistan then dreaming not only of equality but the disruption of our secular State. A feeling of inferiority, jealousy-hate-pride made use of the U. S. of America's strategic global posturing to build herself up as our equal. Without the involvement of U. S. A. India and Pakistan may have solved their problems including that of Kashmir with a certain amount of realism and intelligence. After three wars and especially after the break-up of Pakistan a new approach seems now possible. Have the global interests of U. S. A. also changed. This may perhaps help.

How the most recent happening in Afganistan and Iran would affect U. S. America's interest in this area and whether Pakistan would again be brought in to counterbalance the so called 'revolutionary' regimes remains to be seen. One thing seems

clear is that both U. S. A. and U. S. S. R. will continue to play their games of power in this region, pump-in armaments, advisers, 'Volunteers', and will not allow this region to settle down for quite a while easily. We all shall have to pay a heavy price for the lack of intelligence in others.

The case histories of the Shah of Iran, of Somalia, Ethiopia should be eye-openers to us all. In ten years U. S. A. alone gave (in return for the much needed oil, of course) 23 billion dollars worth of armaments to the Shah-in-Shah. It did not serve any real strategic interest of the U.S.A. but, brought massive corruption and, socio-economic-cultural collapse to Iran. It will take some time before Iran finds again a new 'I'-identity after this traumatic experience. Her search in Islamic fundamentalism for it may be infructuous as the problems of creating real wealth and its distribution equitably requires new techniques, intelligence and competence relevant to this age of science and technology, which is lacking. Emotionalism and harking back to a past age would solve no problems presented by an urge for 'progress', and for a high standard of life. Iran is a poor country because its people, individuals, are not capable of producing real wealth. Money acquired from oil revenues cannot alone build a symmetrical society. It can only delay the development of competence.

As regards competence to use science and technology to produce real wealth, Afghanistan is in a sorrier mess. Is there an in-built resistance in Islamic Societies to technological advance? Nasser in Egypt had to control the Mullahs severely before he could launch his plans of industrialisation, and of "Arab Socialism" whatever it meant. Too near to Soviet Union, Afghanistan, who, once we all thought was playing her cards well would take at least a generation more before the inner contradictions and inadequacies will be sorted out. By then U. S. S. R. and U. S. A. may realise that this game of

power that they play is infructuous and does not, in the long run, help them stabilize even their own societies!! But many more, Afgan, Iranian, Pakistani lives will be lost, much misery suffered by the poor, the outcastes, the refugees, before a sane, intelligent approach is possible. We always pay a full price for non-intelligence!!

Whether Pakistan will lend herself again to be played at by these two powers and China in their triangular games of power remains to be seen. Her joining the non-Aligned movement is a good sign. Of all the Islamic countries, and not only of this region, she is the most competent to use modern technology and science to produce real wealth. To many in India Islam, Islamic power, Islamic unification, Islamic wealth, Islamic atom bomb, are night-mares!! This is due to a long hang-over of historic happenings in which power was not shared and the process of cross-fertilization of cultures delayed. This is a problem of an 'I'-identification being in danger, or, of 'Pollution'? It operates both ways. Hindus and Muslims think - feel they alone are pure and therefore privileged to use power.

Pakistan has taken an active part in the economic and social changes that are taking place in the gulf area. She has also played there anti-India politics. But the fact remains, that in this area industrial, commercial, technological, financial progress is in no small measure due to the Pakistani individual, his competence, and the involvement of the Pakistani State and political apparatus in it.

Pakistan has dreamt, and willed to act, to become the counterprice of Arab Iranian-Islamic world of oil riches and power. Her chief motivation was, still is (?) to be the equal and, even superior to India. Only if her vision would not be clouded by hate, anger, jealousy of India her inherent capacity and dynamism could still enable her to take a very active and successful part in the task of stabilising this region. But

once the mind gets into the habit of feeding itself on hate and anger and jealousy the whole society gets corrupted. It takes generations to purge itself of this poison. Even Martyrdom of a Mahatma has not purged us of it !!

So what of the Atom Bomb and the power it would bring to Pakistan? Intelligent people throughout the world have concluded that atomic Bomb is unusable in war. The "squeak" that we made didn't impress anyone. It is a dead end, and wisdom should lead us not to spend on something that does not even bring a shadow of power. Atomic or Hydrogen energy for peaceful purposes is a different matter. Do we then keep our "options" open? Is there an option to us in a dead end?

What of China with her Atom, or Hydrogen Bomb? If we are afraid even an atom Bomb is unnecessary to get us down. As 'ego' fulfilling, a bomb is such a short time affair that Diwali phatakas are better !! They are also much cheaper !!! In the new world which we now face as a reality Atom Bombs are totally irrelevant and produce no real wealth.

Pakistan's acquiring an atom bomb apart from her own desires and capacities is linked with what Euro-America desire, in the power game, Pakistan to do. This complicates a simple relationship further.

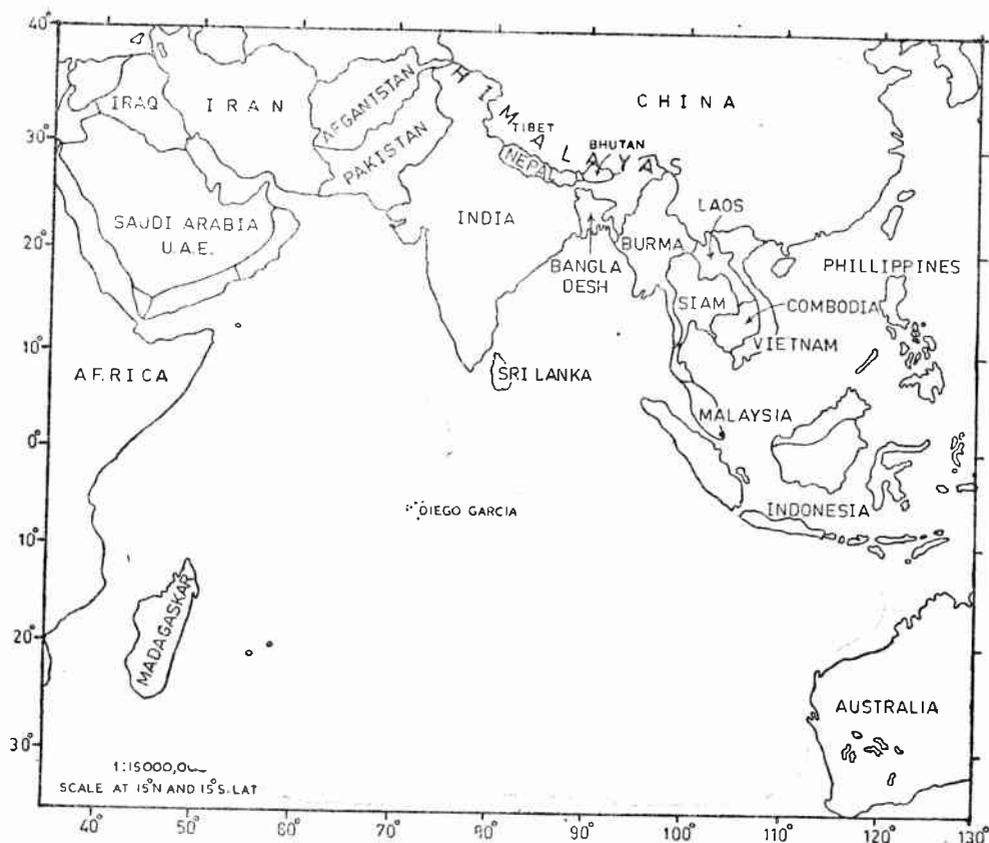
Curiously it also depends on private business enterprises who need profits and backed by Libya or Saudi Arabia, Pakistan can make these available to them. In this game of power and profit, peace, stability, humanity are no concern of those who play and gain from it.

How do we react to this problem, then, of a Pakistani Bomb? Perhaps it may never come. If it does, it will be counter productive. Let us examine a more basic and important quadrangle of relationship India, U. S. S. R. - China - U. S. A.

Is India-U. S. S. R. equation dependent on India-China and India-U. S. A. relation-

ship? When in 1954 Chou-en-lai visited India to proclaim the doctrine of Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai, Bulganin and Khrushchev followed hot on his heels. The wisdom of Nehru kept us on an even keel during this period, though the U. S. A. involvement in Pakistan cost us a heavy price in three wars. The west, that is Great Britain and Europe and U. S. A. consider India as a 'natural' ally of the U. S. S. R. To an extent a mutual-ity of advantages and benefits have over the years indeed developed between India and Russia. A certain range of technology has been made available to us by U. S. S. R. At the moment to build us up as a potential counterweight to China, the U. S. S. R. would be willing to go to even greater lengths than before in equipping us with technology and expertise except in the atomic field. The Soviet Union, besides, does not have the same feeling of persistent jealousy-rivalry that China demonstrates against us. In the third world, China feels that she must outpace India everywhere. Russia has no such response. She is secure in her own power relationships with U. S. A. and involved only in check-mating her. In this game of power between Russia and U. S. A. India has no real role to play. Nevertheless we are affected by it. But as against China, U. S. S. R. considers India's position in this area as not only important but vital to her interests. That is why China is interested in Pakistan and her "Islamic" bomb !!

On her side, China considers India as a rival for the soul of the third world and of non-alignment. The nearer we develop a relationship of mutual advantage and benefit with the Soviet Union the more difficult will be the task of building constructive co-operation with China in the near future. China's clumsy attempts to dominate and sinofise Tibet brought many complications in our relationship with her. In many ways Tibet is an extremely important and vital piece in this jigsaw-puzzle of relationships around and across the Himalayas.



How one wished that Nehru would have succeeded in really defusing the Tibet issue in 1958 by visiting Lhasa at the invitation of the Dalai Lama together with Chou-en-lai? The preliminary obstacles of an invitation, and protocol had been cleared and even a suitable craft to fly Nehru to Lhasa in Sept, 1958 was selected !!

Was it fate that intervened to stop this happening at the last moment in the shape of the Khampa revolt? No coloniser has mismanaged affairs, perhaps, with the best of intentions, as Chinese did in Tibet during the late 50's. The Dalai Lama was indeed most willing to bring in reforms but requested only to be allowed to keep a separate "I"-dentity for Tibet, in religious, cultural affairs and language. Nehru and Chou-en-lai discussed all this in November-December 1956 and January

1957. They agreed that to maintain the "Identity" of Tibet was just and proper. Tibet's, "special" cultural and religious relationship with India was also recognised and Chou-en-lai promised Nehru that he will consider favourably the setting up of an Institute of Indology in Lhasa. A similar institute of Sino-Tibetology was to be set up in Saranath. It was thought then that for once and for all this delicate problem of Himalayan relationships would be solved intelligently and compassionately. In 1957 February the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet from his pilgrimage tour of three months in India happy and hopeful. And then the Khampa rebellion was on us and all the good wishes and dreams were washed away. The intensity of the power urge of the Chinese asserted itself and there were massacres and executions in Tibet. The

Chinese were afraid. The Tibetians confused. Anger, suspicion, hate was rampant. The "I"-dentity of the Chinese as a revolutionary regime bringing "new life" to Tibet was being questioned and challenged. They even proclaimed India as the "main culprit" of all the trouble and of the counter revolution in Tibet". The Dalai Lama sought refuge from Chinese pressures in India. The die was cast for a prolonged period of tensions and suspicions and sorrow across the Himalayas. It all exploded in 1962 awakening Nehru to the realities of the power game of which he was well aware already but being an incurable dreamer of peace and good-will took a calculated risk in dealing "softly" with China in order to break the vicious circle of hate, suspicion and anger. India was also not ready in early 50's to take on China and fight a war in the Himalayas.

It seems that for the stabilization of India China relationship and for an understanding to develop, and, for normal natural reciprocal co-operation to grow, Tibet is important, even vital. No people have been unnecessarily, unashamedly sacrificed (though Nehru was very unhappy about it) to the requirements of appeasement and to the requirement of the power game than the Tibetians. To please China, or not to annoy her, India took a posture which was understood as weakness by the other side. It was not that our vital national interests were in danger. The whole approach of creating intelligent enduring and compassionate relationships within the frame-work of the so called "National interest" is inadequate and wrong. National interests always are shortsighted and limited and within the perspectives of the power games of Russia, China, U. S. A. no answers for us will ever be available to them. That is why Tibet suffered and suffers.

The Dalai Lama is well aware of all this. His most recent efforts to re-establish contacts with the new Chinese leadership and

take advantage of the changed international relationships is a worthwhile exercise in the long term context of peace and harmony in this area. To think of "freedom" for Tibet from the powerful grip of the Chinese at the moment may be a fantasy. But it is "realistic", as the Dalai Lama has been proclaiming, to consider the priorities of human action in the country, of peace and harmony. If your priorities are only for power, for rivalry and, so called progress at any cost human or material, it will lead only to an illusion of happiness, and to instability, and misery. The Dalai Lama's approach and his priorities have great relevance to all that is happening in this Himalayan area now, an approach of peace and friendship.

Events, happenings have a spontaneity as well as an inevitability. The Dharma was kept secretly locked up in Tibet for centuries. Rituals, dogma made it difficult for the common man to benefit from it. The Chinese occupation of Tibet and the flight of the Dalai Lama from Lhasa was symbolic of the breaking open of this locked up secret knowledge so relevant to the misery that the humans have created due to ignorance around them today the world over. But today as a result of what happened in Tibet then, never before has Buddhism, especially the Mahayana been studied so widely all over the world as it has since 1959. Thousands of books are produced in all languages of the world on the Dharma. Hundreds and thousands of radio and television programmes have been projected. Even in Russia the Doctrine of the Buddha is being seriously studied as relevant to the solution of some of the problems of modern times. China, underneath its temporary anachronistic vulgar, power and profit veneer, has deep down a long tradition of search for the Truth. China and India have met often on that plane of profound experience of harmony, joy, enlightenment and will indeed meet again. Tibet is vital and relevant and important in this context.

But how does India herself fit into all this? Is she willingly going to be a part of the power game of Russia-China-U.S.A. and should she respond to it in kind? Do we have the money, resources, capacity, and motivation to play this dirty game? Is it worth our while to get into it? Nehru-Nassar-Tito developed the Non-alignment thesis to keep out of it. But to be Non-aligned is not to deny economic, cultural, political, scientific, technological relationships with those who may be engaged in this game. Can we not see the futility of this game and surpass it? Can we not modify it?

But India can play even a more important and necessary part in the creation of stability and prosperity in this region. The building up systematically and patiently of relationships with the peoples, cultures, religions of this area on the basis of mutual-ity of advantage and of interlinked interdependence is a task India can tackle. She alone seems to have the, as yet, not fully utilised (and tested) capacity to do it.

But do we really have the motivation to apply ourselves to it? We have yet to find our own "I"-dentity. Tremendous turmoil is in front of us during the next fifty years. We have taken many wrong turns and hypnotised ourselves with ideas that are irrelevant to intelligent compassionate living. Can we break out of this confusion of institutions and organisations, political, economic, administrative, educational that are exercising a strangle-hold on our creative capacities? How long and how much suffering will be necessary to bring this about? There are those who think that there must be brought about in India total destruction through violence and killing before real reconstruction can start!! May be that is our lot!! But intelligent-competent-compassionate individuals can bring about great changes and start a new powerful current in the right direction without it.

An intelligent competent individual can even utilise, to a limited extent, the present

organisations and institutions to bring about a part of this vital necessary change in relationships. But the task is not easy and will take years and years of suffering before any positive results are available. Can we have the patience?

Our mind must get over this compulsive obsession of creating centralised authority, political and administrative and putting on top of it incompetent and power hungry persons. In the Nordic countries the saying goes that less the government the more civilised the society. By that norm we in India are barbaric!!

Surely we can have much, much less government if we shoulder the simple day to day responsibilities that we normally, naturally, must. Private organisations in all fields of our existence can and do operate efficiently and humanly. We do not lack initiative or intelligence.

Dependence on government or authority, is the new slavery. Can we see it clearly as such and get over it, free ourselves of it and feel 'intelligently responsible' for our actions and our life?

Ultimately it is the 'individual' awakening and his actions that matter.

In the beginning operating within the framework of the existing institutions intelligent competent compassionate individuals shall have to work as it were on two different planes simultaneously. An example may better illustrate this point. Let us take the problem of our relationship with Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Burma, all small countries, the so called 'minorities' inside and outside national frontiers. They are as is natural, afraid and jealous of a 'big' brother. Pakistan and Afganistan we have discussed in a different context. But the problem of our relationship with the above mentioned small neighbours is applicable to them also in a slightly different way, as in their case religion plays a more important part in it.

Either India is so 'powerful', like Russia (or U. S. A.) that she dominates her neigh-

bours, or she 'absorbs' them ethnically-culturally like China. Any name like 'co-prosperity sphere', 'mutual security pacts', or, what have you, can be given to such relationships. Neither of these approaches is intelligent. It will not work. Many say India must be strong. Strong in what? Armaments? Anger? Pride? or strong in a capacity to live intelligently and compassionately? Domination or, absorption, is outdated and is infructuous, and does not suit the Indian psyche for long. We are not 'good' at it. Domination is back firing even in Russia and now in China. Then how do we keep Bhutan, Nepal, Burmah, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afganistan with us? The answer is, like France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Belgium, 'keep' with each other. Intelligence, to do it, dawned on them after killing 100,000,000 ignorant innocents in three wars. This need not be so with us under the protection of the Himalayas. Three wars and few thousand dead should suffice for us !!

If there is self-confidence that is unrelated and independent of 'Nationalism', which is irrelevant in any case to modern times. A relationship with the so called small neighbour can be developed that is relaxed, pragmatic, and, happy. That mutuality of advantage can be worked out by not being suspicious, angry, jealous, should be obvious to intelligent human beings. But are we intelligent? How to be intelligent? How to clear our vision of routine habits of the mind? How to get out of the prison that we create by sloth?

Some of those individuals functioning even within the framework of the present national institutions could intelligently, persistently, patiently project a trans or, supra-national, human approach. Often it is said that only nationalism can bring out a dynamic motivation and discipline for sustained action. But nationalism corrupts if it is chauvanistic and, is arrogant, and exclusive, frightened, proud, possessive and

stupid. It creates conflicts not harmony. It leads to violence and not to peace.

In this modern world of new horizons of new competence and of a remarkable effective system of communications to remain stagnantly satisfied with one kind of nationalism, or, "I" -dentity, is stupid. One can easily be, and, very happily, an Indian, a Tibetan a Chinese, Bhutani, Nepalese, Pakistani, Arab, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Jain, African, Indonesian at one and the same time and be comfortable anywhere, everywhere. All the world is your home now in this modern age of easy transport and even easier and incessant communication through Radio, Television, Films Festivals, Travels, trade technology and science.

To the intelligent-competent-compassionate worker this is not a theory, a dogma, a doctrine, or, a vote catching slogan. It is a real and a highly worthwhile experience. In this unifying experience all tensions and conflicts, suspicions, and cravings dissolve and action becomes affectionate, spontaneous, and joyful. The motivation for correct action is always full of joy, energy and is competent. Such activity creates a new current of history. It is splendidly simple.

The awakening, the "MANDALA" consciousness is always there. The Himalaya is a silent inspiration and a witness of it. It is inevitable that it realises itself. If there are more individuals who are awakened the current will be swift and strong. That it seems to be far away and not realisable as seen from India may not be a fact. India is today in great turmoil. Minds of men are being churned and stretched and brought under great pressure. But in this turmoil a new vision is being born. It can be seen in the young who are so restless and impatient with the pompous hypocracies and self centred Egoism that is so rampant. The young want to be "free" of these un-intelligent, crude, restrictions, the "do's and don'ts", that are irrelevant in this modern age of new energies and new capacities.

The challenge of the Himalayas is the eternal one for intelligent compassionate living. How many intelligent-competent-compassionate individuals would bring about a significant change in the existing system? What would be the pattern of the society, what kind of relationships between man and man, man and nature, and man and authority would emerge out of this change?

If sufficiently competent and intelligent, only a few, a couple of thousand individuals, at the right points of convergence of Socio-economic pressures would suffice.

These individuals should be competent in 'Crisis' management as the whole region, especially India, is likely to be a welter of strikes, lock-outs, shootings, shouting, kidnapping, urban guerillas, desperadoes, black marketeers etc. Over population, lack of water, living in shortages, lack of sanitation, lack of proper transport are going to be our lot for years to come.

No change, of leadership, or party, is going to avoid them. No government of today, Central or State, can manage this highly complicated, interlinked, interdependent world society. Only intelligent compassionate individuals in the right places can try and tackle the most pressing problems over

a long period of time. This effort itself will bring to view the new pattern of the society.

The tolerance level of the Indian is generally pretty high. He can suffer any amount of hardships. There are also escape valves for the pent-up steam to blow off. Pilgrimages, Melas, Sadhus, Meditation are all there. And above all the modern cinema. These as cultural tranquilisers are very useful. A government determined to maintain power can make use of them with devastating results. But we Indians are a people who live at various levels of awareness. The Mandala level attracts a few of them, vaguely. In all this turmoil and tensions those few who accept the challenge of the Himalayas will act and not only a couple of thousand but millions will respond to them with intelligence and compassion. That is how new civilizations are born.

Thus there is in front of us a thrilling, worthwhile, adventure. Most of us here in this hall may not live to see its end. But to have dreamt of it and tried to take the first few tentative steps towards the 'unknown' is worthwhile.

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Address of the author

Appasaheb B. Pant, Pant Niwas, Bhandarkar Road, Pune.