



Ambedkar Times

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DR. AMI BERA'S VICTORY CELEBRATION



Living for the Sake of Others : Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon
article by



Ronki Ram (Dr.)
complete article on page 3



Parmjit Bhutta, Hans Raj Kajla, Rakesh Chander (Electrical Engineer), Tawinder Kazla, Dhyan Bagha, Rakesh Kumar Heer, Gurbax Bagha, Amar Baidwan with others of the Ad Dharmi/Ravidassia Community members of Greater Sacramento area of California, Balbir Singh Dhillon, President of the Gurdwara Sahib West Sacramento with others of the Sikh community members, Mr. Sharma with others the Hindu community members, Dr. Jasjit Singh with others of the Christian community members and Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief "Ambedkar Times" & "Desh Doaba" news papers joined

enthusiastically in the grand celebration of Dr Ami Bera's entry into the US House of Representatives. A first generation Indian America, a California Democrat, a doctor, a teacher, and a dedicated leader in his community, Dr. Ami Bera has created history in getting elected to the United States Congress. He is the first Indian American physician to don this honor and only the third Indian American in the diasporic experience of the community to have the distinction of being elected to the US House of Representative. What added more prestige to his honor is that in one of California's most hotly contested Congressional

elections he emerged victorious against the nine-term Republican incumbent Dane Lungren. Born and brought up in La Palma city of the Southern California, Dr. Bera belonged an Indian family immigrated to US in 1950. Dr Bera is an alumnus of UC Irvine and had served as Associated Dean for Admission at the UC Davis School of Medicine and also as a Chief Medical Officer for the County of Sacramento. Married to Janine, his beautiful wife, the celebrated couple has one daughter. The Ravidassia community of Sacramento wishes Dr. Bera a brilliant success in his new endeavors as a Congressman of

United States House of Representative. Dr. Bera gave credit of his monumental victory to the engaging support he received from a wide spectrum of diversity and to his hardest working campaigning staff. He assured his constituency to work stridently for the rebuilding of US economy and empowerment of the middle class. Leaving behind the stances of most vituperative electoral campaign, Dr Bera showed his magnanimity in boldly appreciating the long record of public service rendered by his rival Congressman Lungren.
Prem K. Chumber
Editor-In-Chief (Ambedkar Times)
Dr. Bera's more pictures on page 6

YOUR SUPPORT IS MY REAL STRENGTH



First of all I want to wish all of you a very Happy Holidays and Happy Gurburab for A Champion of Human Rights - Our First Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Next I wanted to let all of you know that it was your support

which gave me courage and strength to run for an office in the city of Concord. Most of you have called me and told me that I should not be discouraged and should run again as I have made lot of friends during this time

even though I did not win the election. However, coming fourth out of eleven candidates means a lot of approval from the residents of Concord. I am indebted to more than 7,300 people who have showed their trust and voted for

me on Nov.6, 2012. I want to thank all of you from bottom of my heart for your generous contribution in my election for the Concord City Council. I want to personally thank Mr. Prem Chumber and Dr. Amrik

Singh for coverage of my election in Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba. I am also thankful to Mr. OP Balley, Mr. Tavinder Kazla, Mr. Hans Raj Jr. and Sr. Kajla, Mr. Bagha, Mr. Paramjit Bhutta,
contd. on page 5

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Editorial on 56th Death Anniversary**BABASAHEB DR. AMBEDKAR
A GREAT STATESMAN AND
A PARLIAMENTARIAN OF PAR EXCELLENCE**

Bodhisattva Bharat Ratan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar had multi-faceted personality. He was not only the sole highly educated Indian during his life time, even in our own times we hardly come across a person as qualified as he was! One should not forget the circumstances under which he struggled to achieve the heights in the field of education not only in colonial India but also from the most sought after institutes of higher learning even in Europe and North America. His research work was so meticulous that it was quoted in legislative bodies of the British political system. Apart from concentrating on the problem of Indian economy, Dr. Ambedkar also delve deeply into the social setup of the Hindu society and had been able to provide an altogether new and fresh insights on the vexed question of caste. The paper he wrote on the origins of caste in the Hindu society during his Masters programme at the Columbia University, New York became a classic during his life times. Annihilation of Caste is another equally well known classic work of Dr. Ambedkar, which sharply explores the insidious grammar of graded inequality in our society based as it is on highly stratified caste system. In addition to economy and society, Dr. Ambedkar also wrote extensively on the water management, labour laws, women rights, issues related with partition, constitutionalism, social democracy, parliamentary form of government, right to education, social equality, justice, and on the most complicated question of solidarity among the different Scheduled Castes communities. He worked on various senior positions during the British rule and in Independent India. He was the chairman of the drafting committee of the constitution of India. The first law minister in the Nehru cabinet after India attained independence. He founded three political parties to represent and safeguard the interests of the downtrodden. He also launched three journals to educate his people about their rights.



Despite the fact that Dr. Ambedkar had such a versatile personality, he is often referred to as the leader of the Scheduled Castes only; and is remembered for his contribution towards the uplift of the downtrodden. On his birth and death anniversaries, he is often remembered at state forums as the architect of the constitution of India. No doubt, Dr. Ambedkar fought continuously for the dignity and rights of the Scheduled Castes. But at the same time he was a great statesman, parliamentarian par excellence, a great visionary, votary of world peace, universal human rights and an ardent crusader of the rights of women. He was a great educationist who emphasized on the urgent need of rational education for any society to march towards progress, secularism and democracy. Last but not the least, he was a living example of simple, straightforward, and clean public life having no stain of corruption, which has become a common practice among the contemporary politicians and public personalities.

Let us remember this great man of our century and for times to come and draw lessons from his multifaceted and versatile personality on his 56th death anniversary. His rational approach to social problems, annihilation of caste, parliamentary democracy, universal peace, human right and gender equality would continue to goad us to work for the emancipation and empowerment of downtrodden in particular and peace and democracy in the world in general.

**Prem K. Chumber
Editor-in-Chief**

ORAL HISTORY**AMBEDKAR'S VISIT TO JALANDHAR IN 1951****ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਰਾਮਦਾਸਪੁਰੀ**

**ਖੱਬਿਓ : ਸੇਠ ਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾਸ, ਅਧਿਆਤਮ ਰਾਮ (ਪਿਸਤੌਲਧਾਰੀ),
ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਰਾਮਦਾਸਪੁਰੀ, ਬਾਬਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੀ. ਐਨ. ਰਾਜਭੋਜ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਥੀ**

I have come back to my roots in Jalandhar after 35 years long diplomatic service in the Indian Foreign Service. I would like to share some oral history of the place called Bootan Mandi, my native place. Bootan Mandi, a neglected slum about 40 years before (now a much better place), remained a hub of dalit social and political awakening as it was the centre of leather business owned by the Dalits (Chamars) of the region even before independence in 1947. The dalits of the Doaba region of Punjab, led by Seth Sunder Dass and Seth Kishan Dass of Bootan Mandi fully supported the Ad-dharam Movement under the stewardship of Babu Mangoo Ram and also the struggle of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for the emancipation of dalits. Later In terms of political polarization, Seth Sunder Dass developed leanings towards the Congress Party and Seth Kishan Dass remained a staunch follower and supporter of the outfits floated by Ambedkar, Scheduled Caste Federation and Republican Party. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had established himself as an undisputed leader of dalits in the process of his unstinted struggle for the rights of dalits and also in the political landscape of the country in his capacity as the chief framer and architect of the constitution of India. His political and social agenda and mission differed from that of Nehru and the Congress Party. He parted company and resigned from the Cabinet of Nehru in October 1951, basically on irreconcilable differences on the Hindu Code Bill and inter alia issues of foreign policy and economic development. It was the political scenario, in the dalit constituencies, in the mid 40s and early 50s.

Dr. Ambedkar came to Jalandhar, after his resignation from the Government, in September, 1951. It turned out to be a historical visit. I grew up in Bootan Mandi and heard a lot about the visit of Ambedkar from my father who was personally involved in the bandovast of the visit in a small way. My personal on and off chat with Pritam Ramdasspuri (nephew of Seth Kishan Dass and a poet and activist of standing), who drove Dr. Ambedkar from the Raja Sanshi airport in Amritsar to Jalandhar, gave me the graphic

glimpses of the visit. Pritam Ramdasspuri told me that it was unique experience. Right from the airport in Amritsar to Jalandhar, thousands and thousands of people were lined up en route to see and welcome Dr. Ambedkar. The administration was caught unaware of this unprecedented visit. The journey which was to take about two hours generally took seven hours. The private arcade had to stop at various places and long queues of people made to pass by to see Ambedkar. The organiz-



**RAMESH
CHANDER
Ambassador
(IFS Retd.)**

ers, including Pritam Ramdasspuri, carried private arms (pistols and revolvers) for providing physical security to their leader particularly in the wake of assassination of Pakistani PM Liaquat Ali Khan. Ambedkar decided to enjoy the homely hospitality of Seth Kishan Dass and stayed with the family in Seth's appointed place popularly called "Kishan Dass da Chobara" at Bootan Mandi which is still the residence of Seth Kishan Dass's son Seth Mool Raj and grandson Avinash Chander who is the Chief Parliamentary Secretary in the Punjab Government.. Ambedkar especially asked for the Punjabi delicacy Sarson da Saag and Makki di Roti and relished it in a homely setting. He met leaders of the community and impressed them with his charming and friendly persona.

Ambedkar addressed a huge, 6-7 lakh audience, public meeting in Bootan Mandi on October 27. My father told me that no such assembly of devoted dalits was witnessed in Jalandhar

before. Seth Sunder Dass was invited to join the organizers, in spite of different political leanings. He presented a bag full of thousands of Rupees, on behalf of the community, in honour of Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar was over-whelmed by the reception and honour he received and rightly so. He invited Seth Sunder Dass to speak but he humbly refused as he felt that it would not be possible for him to speak in the exalted presence of Dr. Ambedkar. As a rare gesture of honour, a particular chair was brought from Kartarpur which belonged to the Sikh gurus. Ambedkar was inclined to sit on the chair but was made to sit by the followers as he was the uncrowned king of the community. The community poets like Gurdass Ram Alam enlivened the gathering by his poem "Aj koun ayia savere savere; wada shor hunda gariban de dere". Pritam Ramdasspuri welcomed the great leader and recited his poem " Hindostan ko hastie Ambedkar per naaz hai". Dr. Ambedkar responded with a spirited speech and said that he did not know our people in Punjab particularly in the Doaba region were so involved and dedicated in the caravan otherwise he would have come here much before and many a times. The informed sources told me that dalit leaders of the Congress Party like Master Gurbanta Singh and Prithvi Singh Azad were opposed to Ambedkar and threatened to hold black flags on his visit to Punjab. The local media covered the event. Mahasha Krishan of the Urdu Pratap wrote an editorial and commented that the dalit leader was made sit on the special chair pertaining to the Gurus.

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Living for the Sake of Others : Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon

(1920-2012)

This article is originally carried in the latest issue of Asia-Pacific Business & Technology Report (Seoul). We are posting this article with due regards and sincere thanks to the illustrious Managing Editor Dr. Lakhvinder Singh.



The Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon will be remembered passionately by the coming generations for his concerted efforts towards building a viable peace and harmony in the world. He was, in fact, an angel of peace, family unity, and inter-faith dialogue who invented new traditions and ways to organize universal gatherings of diverse religions/faiths in the contemporary world within the forums of UNO and without for the sole purpose of learning the basic lessons of living together harmoniously and with compassion for one and all. Father Moon was not an arm-chair philosopher who philosophized idyllically in the realm of mere dreams and thoughts, but a karmayogi (a man of action) who firmly believed in practical actions now and here in the real world of our day-to-day existence.

Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon was no doubt one of the greatest spiritual leaders and champions of world peace in our times. He is affectionately known by millions of his followers and devotees as "Father Moon."

Father Moon attached his life-long goal of world peace and the permanent faith in loving God with the bounties of simple but inexplicable nature. He used to say, "If you empty your mind and receive nature into your entire being, there is no separation between you and nature. Nature comes into you, and you become completely one with nature. In the moment that the boundary between you and nature disappears, you feel a profound sense of joy. Then nature becomes you, and you become nature". Father Moon was thoroughly convinced that "Everything around us was given birth through a combination of forces so complex we cannot even imagine it. These forces are closely related to each other. Nothing in the universe was conceived outside the heart of God. The movement of just one leaf holds within it the breathing of the universe". To know the mysteries of complex universe around us, Father Moon keenly urged his followers to get closely connected with the nature. "Nature creates a single harmony and produces a sound that is magnificent and beautiful. No one tries to show off and no one is ignored; there is just a

supreme harmony. Whenever I found myself in difficulty, nature comforted me; whenever I collapsed in despair. It raised me back up". And it is in the name of this benevolent nature called God that Father Moon wanted to create for us a world of perpetual peace and harmony. The time is not far when the world will come to realize and appreciate the genius, sincerity, humility, selflessness, and true love of Father Moon and the driving force of nature behind what he was striving hard to achieve and accomplish during his given limited life span: universal world peace and one human family under God.

Father Moon dedicated his entire life for bringing peace in our contemporary world and deeply touched hearts of the millions. He passionately taught the lesson of world citizenship and lived the life of a true world citizen. His philosophy of universal peace and world citizenship is vividly reflected in his life-long efforts towards winning the heart of others including his enemies and strangers. In his own touching words "At times I would simply go for a while in an area of Shinagawa where poor people lived. I slept with them, using rags for cover. On warm sunny days I picked lice from their hair and ate rice with them. There were many prostitutes on the streets of Shinagawa. I would listen to them tell me about themselves, and I became their friend without ever drinking a drop of liquor. Some people



Ronki Ram (Dr.)

claim they need to be drunk in order to speak candidly about what is on their mind, but that is just an excuse. When these women realized that I was sincere in my sympathy for them, even without drinking any liquor, they opened their hearts to me and told me their troubles".

Father Moon had the charisma to win over all. He taught his followers the indispensable lessons of loving one's enemies and living for the sake of others. He always used to emphasize on learning to live for God and His People, and striving hard to overcome selfishness. For the purpose of living for the sake of others, Father Moon used to stipulate on the need of working hard in one's life. He once said that "I did not spend all my time roaming the hills and meadows and playing. I also worked hard helping my old brother run the farm. On a farm there are many tasks that must be done during a particular season. The rice paddies and fields need to be plowed. Rice seedlings need to be transplanted, and weeds need to be pulled ... After the seeds are planted, the furrows need to be

weeded at least three times, and this is background work. When we were finished, we couldn't straighten our backs for awhile". Father Moon combined hard labor with his mission of world peace in such a manner that it became a new principle of peace to bring harmony through hard work, family unity and living for others. The roots of peace, according to him, are to be searched at the family level and in hard working selfless living. For him, the parents represent the present, the children the future and the grandparents the past. So it is only when the grandparents, parents, and children live together, said Father Moon that the children can inherit all the fortunes of the past and present. To love and respect ones grandfather is to inherit the history of the past and to learn from the rich experience of the past. Peace can not be built in a day. It requires continuous efforts on our part. For a peace to become reality, Father Moon founded various non-profit international organizations (the Universal Peace Federation, and Family Federation for World Peace and Unification), interfaith service group (the International Relief Friendship Foundation, and Religious Youth Service), and various print, electronic and digital media outlet publications.

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF), an NGO in special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United States, is a global

association of conscientious individuals and committed organizations dedicated to the noble cause of building a peaceful world, where each individual can fully realize her/his potential in a peaceful way while living together with others in freedom, harmony, and cooperation, with prosperity for all. Dedicated to build a peaceful world centered on universal spiritual and moral values, UPF programs focus on four core areas: 1) building of strong, healthy families; 2) promoting interfaith harmony and cooperation; 3) building a culture of service, reconciliation and partnership; 4) revitalization of the United Nations. UPF's many peace initiatives include efforts to establish an interreligious council at the United Nations; regional and national peace councils; peace-building initiatives in Middle East, Northeast Asia/South Asia, Africa, and the Americas; the promotion of the Bering Strait Peace Tunnel; and, the World Peace Blessing. The idea of an Interreligious Council at the UN was first advanced by the UPF Founders, Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon, in August 2000. Since then, there has been a steady development of both local and international initiatives to garner support for this idea among governments. A number of regional and national interfaith councils have also been created, most recently in Thailand.

UPF considers peace as positive, holistic and indivisible. It believes that "we are one human family created by God. The highest achievements of men and women are rooted in spiritual and moral developments. The family is the 'school of love and peace'. Peace comes through dialogue and cooperation. Service to others is the foundation of reconciliation". UPF works to achieve these goals with a special focus on interfaith dialogue, peace education, and service to mankind. It believes that interfaith dialogue and cooperation through conferences and forums allow participants to share diverse aspects of their rich cultural heritage, sacred scriptures and traditions that benefit the entire mankind. Father Moon sponsored thousands of such conferences on world peace, family and interfaith dialogues in different parts of the world. The UPF participates each year in the

UN's World Interfaith Harmony Week, International Day of Families, International Day of Peace and Women's day. For the UPF marriage, parenting, and the family are the foundations of human development and they function as building blocks of universal peace. Peace begins in the hearts of individuals and it gets nurtured by loving and stable families at home before it spreads on the entire globe. The message of Father Moon was very simple and lucid: live for the sake of others.

Father Moon envisioned a peaceful world devoid of territorial boundaries, conflicts and wars. He did not want that sons and daughters of God suffer the wars of the sovereign nations. He did not find any meaning in diplomatic strategic alliances and dividing the world in mindless power hunting opposite camps. He did his best to help the world wriggle out of the sinews of the 'not so-cold' cold war with love and peaceful ways of persuasion and inculcation of the everlasting message of interfaith harmony and world citizenship. He wanted to replace the current world of sovereign nation states with the one where people could live as citizens of one world. For him nations and nationalities teach nothing but complex rules of the grammar of war and deceitful diplomacy. A world beyond the narrow legal boundaries of statehood, ethnicity, nationality, religion, power politics and strategic alliances was his most desirable dream. He placed God in the centre of his envisioned world of peace and harmony.

Ambedkar's visit to... contd. on from Page 2

On October 28, Ambedkar delivered a lecture at the DAV College on the theme "the future of Parliamentary Democracy in India" which was a thought provoking exercise. The intelligentsia headed by Principal Suraj Bhan appreciated the lecture and the impressive style and manner in which it was delivered. I vividly remember that during my college days in DAV College itself in 1968-69, in one of Paper Reading Declamation Contest on the Parliamentary Democracy, I intensively quoted from the same lecture of Dr. Ambedkar which got due notice and was appreciated. The lecture till date remains as valid and prophetic as it was before.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has a considerable following in Punjab and rightly so.



Father Moon told us in very simple words who God is. He explained ardently to his millions of followers all over the world how the God is doing. Moses told the humanity that there exists a God that governs the cosmos. Jesus told the world that God is father. But it was Father Moon who told the world how God is doing. He brought God near to mankind. Father Moon's God is not the one who sits on a throne in distant heavens. On the contrary, He is the one who always feel pain and sufferings of all of us and want to redeem and liberate the humanity as soon as possible from the pangs of distrust, fear, war and cruelty. His God is a working God, who live amidst his people. His God reside in peace and the only way to realize Him, according to Father Moon, is to build a peaceful world of fellow loving citizens. He also explained 'human responsibility' as to strive for peace and the realization of God. It is here in the very context of human responsibility that Father Moon's principle of living for the sake of others makes an absolute sense. He never felt tired talking about the

image of God who always work for humanity and peace. Even in his ripe age of ninety plus many witnessed him talking day and night ceaselessly about God, peace, one human family under God, universal brotherhood and interfaith harmony. He was eager to build peaceful world in his very life time. He wanted to create a peaceful world in the real image of the abode of God facilitating each and every one of us to recognize God as Father and all of us as his children. He tried his level best to bring people together in as diverse fields as sports, spiritual conclaves, peace meetings, rallies, international leadership conferences, platforms of the UNESCO and UNO, and Ceremony of the Blessing of Marriage. He made the goal of world peace as the most important task of his life. As a true father, Reverend Dr. Moon got tremendous support from his loving family and all of his followers. Father Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Mother Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon personify an 'ideal couple', and 'true parents'.

For times to come, the institution of UPF, the principle of

'one human family under God', 'living for the sake of others' and a world of perpetual peace and harmony will remain the finest legacies of Father Moon. The world will remember him for ever for his life long dedication to peace and human unity. I have had the honour and privilege to sit in his august company during his 93rd birthday celebration at Peace Palace (Cheon Jung Gung) up in the mountains east of Seoul in the forenoon of January 24, 2012. Ambassador Krishna V. Rajan of India in his congratulatory message on the auspicious occasion said that "Father Moon's simple but powerful message of boundless love and unconditional compassion, of service and sacrifice, of family values and spiritual leadership, is like a lighthouse which beckons the world". The Ambassador continued, "His answer to conflict is the realization that we are one human family created by God. Living for the sake of others is the only road to real happiness".

Father Moon's birthday celebrations in January 2012, coincided with the Chinese New year holidays celebrations, brought together over 200 participants from 72 countries of the world. To celebrate the auspicious day of Father Moon's birthday, UPF organized an international Leadership Conference at Seoul (January 21-25, 2012). It was during this conference that I had the rare opportunity to listen to the engaging lectures of Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, UPF International Chairman (appointed by Father Moon in 2009 as the one chosen to represent him) and that of Dr. Kook Jin Moon, Chairman Tongil

Foundation, Korea, who deliberated at length on "Peace and Security in East Asia", one of the two core themes of the conference. Dr. Kook Jin Moon was generous enough to provide me some time from his very busy schedule to talk on various aspects of peace in East Asia, which I later on published entitled *Envisioning Peace and Prosperity in Northeast Asia in the Asia-Pacific Business & Technology Report (Seoul) Vol.4, No.1. 2012, pp. 26-9*. This conference also provided me a rich opportunity to meet various Ambassadors for Peace of Father Moon, almost from all parts of the world, discussing the ways to bring peace and harmony in the world. The central themes during all such discussions were the vibrant ideas and teachings of Father Moon and his various ongoing peace projects in the world. Father moon was indeed a Messiah of world peace who sincerely wanted this world become the most conducive place for everyone to realize his/her potentials to the maximum with an ultimate objective in mind to grow peace around. In his own words: "I have lived my life with just one thought: I wanted to bring about a world of peace, a world where there are no wars and where all humankind lives in love".

It would really be impossible to replace soon Father Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon, the angel of peace, who had left for his heavenly abode on September 3, 2012. Let's pray for his holy soul which will keep guiding the whole world towards his pious mission of peace and one human family under God.

The writer (Dr. Ronki Ram) is ICCR Chair Professor of Contemporary India Studies, Leiden University Institute for Area studies (LIAS) & International Institute for Asian studies (IIAS), Leiden, The Netherlands. He can be reached at ronkiram@yahoo.co.in

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE REAL GURU NANAK?



We aren't. Today, and always, we celebrate THIS Guru Nanak.

Today Sikhs around the world celebrate the Gurburab of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The Jakara

Movement is inspired by Guru Nanak's revolutionary spirit that spread his message of equality, love, and justice for all.

It is this message that inspires volunteers to develop programs like Bhujangi Youth Academy and Bhujangan Leadership Retreat. It is this spirit that reminds volunteers that we are blessed with the opportunity to serve others. Today, as we all celebrate as a community, we ask you for your support. Donate today and help us continue with our efforts. Can we count on your support?

November was a month of many-firsts for the Jakara Movement. We held our first one-day workshop in the NJ/NY area.

Our first Midwest Misl is up



and running in Minnesota. San Antonio is the newest city to be added to the list of Jakara Junior Camps. We hope that you'll join us in many more 'firsts' to come. Find out how you can get involved.

This December, as you

reflect upon the year that has past, spend time with family and take a much needed break, we invite you to end your year with the spirit of seva.

Make a difference in YOUR community today. Support these programs.

IIAS Seminar
7-8 December 2012
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Harnessing counter-culture to construct identity Mapping Dalit cultural heritage in contemporary India

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Convenor: Prof. Ronki Ram
(ICCR Professor of Contemporary
India Studies, LIAS & IIAS)
Information and registration
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FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON HARNESSING COUNTER-CULTURE TO CONSTRUCT IDENTITY : MAPPING DALIT CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

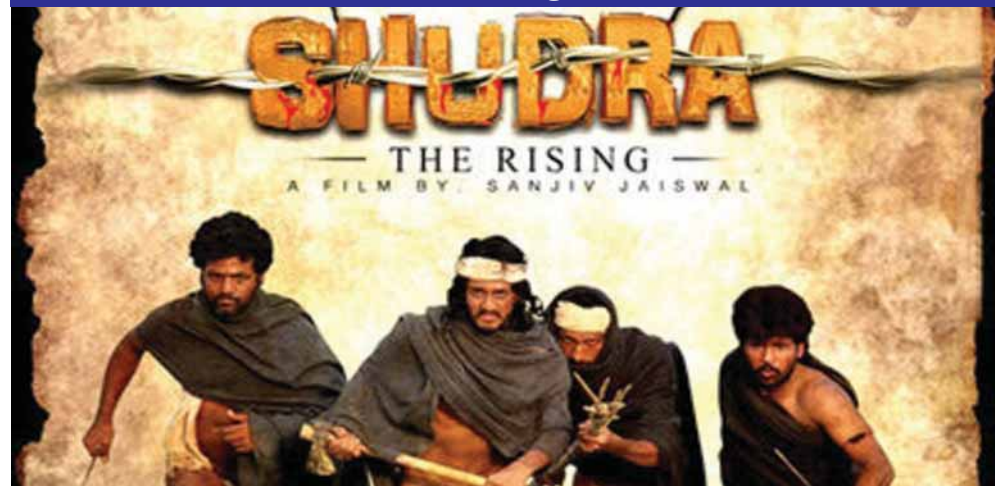
ORGANIZED BY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN STUDIES
(IIAS) & LEIDEN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR AREA STUDIES (LIAS),
LEIDEN, THE NETHERLANDS (DECEMBER 7-8, 2012)

Convenor: Prof. Ronki Ram,
ICCR Professor of Contemporary India Studies, LIAS & IIAS,
Leiden University, The Netherlands

Cultural heritage is fast emerging as a politically contested site where the hitherto marginalized and socially excluded Dalit communities are learning to deploy it as a viable agency in their identity formation process. This workshop will focus on the various dimensions of the Dalit cultural heritage and the ways it impacts the identity formation process among the Dalits in contemporary India. Dalits in contemporary India are closely engaged in a herculean task of building their exclusive centers of Dalit cultural heritage at the local as well as national levels. Through this engaging but challenging process of constructing Dalit cultural heritage they are in fact exhibiting their dormant and long cherished will to build a separate Dalit identity which could help them gain dignity and visibility in the hitherto dominated public sphere in the mainstream Indian society. Dalits hardly figure anywhere in the most sought after popular centers of cultural heritage in India. They often attribute their conspicuous absence in the mainstream cultural heritage centers to their historic exclusion from the civil society as well as to the dominant discriminatory social structures that relegated them to the periphery in the name of low caste birth based as it was on Varnashramdhrama (four-fold Hindu social order). They also allege that their rich indigenous cultural heritage was deliberately made oblivious simply to keep them away from the corridors of power.

The nascent ongoing diverse Dalit cultural heritage project seems to coalesce tradition and modernity. In their (Dalits) concerted efforts of constructing Dalit cultural heritage, the tradition ceases to be a value of the past and the modernity loses its aura in the fast acclimatizing present in the images of yesterdays. It is in this critical context that tradition and modernity are acquiring new meanings and nuances to the advantage of the socially excluded sections of the society. Consequently, this has led to a sort of perennial conflict between the hitherto dominant communities and the ex-untouchables who find in their resurfacing cultural heritage a hope of reclaiming their long-overdue share in the local/national structures of power.

Soon coming to UK



Shudra : The Rising is a Hindi language period film with subtitles in English set in the Indus Valley Civilization with a storyline based on the beginning of caste system in ancient India. It is directed by Sanjiv Jaiswal and dedicated to Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar, the Father of the Indian constitution and the leader of the Untouchables. It is the first Bollywood feature film which depicts the plight of the Untouchables.

The film release was originally expected in February 2012, but because of protest from many extremist organizations, it was postponed many times. After a long struggle it was finally released on 19th October. Due to threats from these organizations to the cinema houses, the film was taken down prematurely.

Shudra is based on about 250 million people born Out Castes in Hindu Varna system. They were treated as Unclean & Impure, so much so that nobody ever even touched them or even allowed their shadow to fall on upper cast. It is believed that nature took ages for man to evolve from animal, but it took moments for certain men to make their fellow humans animals again. They were named differently across the globe like - 'BLACKS', 'RED INDIANS', 'DASYU', 'DAS', Chandala, Antyaja, Black Caste, Out Caste, Schedule Caste & "Shudra- The Untouchable" "Shudra- The Rising" highlights the depth that evil human mind can succumb, to cling on to power and supremacy.

An out caste Man 'Shudra' died for want of a sip of water, a child is publicly violated for uttering Holy Mantras, a pregnant woman is forced in the physical submission, a wounded man dies in need of medicine, all for one crime only....Born in the caste of "Shudra-The Untouchable"

The initial part narrates the invasion of the people of west Asia to India. They were of the Aryan race and they took over the local tribe and started controlling them. Finally their learned scholar Manu wrote a code book of caste system which turned the local population as the Shudras (lowest of the low), who were imposed with cruel rules in the society. They were suppressed and exploited at every level of their lives by the upper caste people. The film shows various rules imposed on the Shudras such as walking with a bell around their ankles and a long leaf as tail. The film also sheds a light on the struggle by the Shudras.

Speaking about the film, director Sanjiv Jaiswal said that the film is only an attempt to portray the truth. "If we can be proud of our history, we should also have the courage to be ashamed of our past. It is only after we accept the wrong doings of the past that we can attempt to bring a change in our present," he insisted.

As the film was virtually dumped by the ruling class of India, the majority of the Indian masses were not given opportunity to watch the true history of their past. The producer/director of the film Mr. Sanjiv Jaiswal took a big risk to tell the story of the origin and development of caste. He was so exhausted of the funds that he was not able to release this film overseas. Some of the organizations in UK and individuals strongly felt that this film must be released overseas and defeat the anti Dalit forces who are bent to suppress this film. They took on themselves to raise the funds for the release.

You will be pleased to know that this film will definitely be released in the UK in the very near future. Dates will be announced later on. Watch out for the date, time and cinemas in the UK. When the film is released, make sure you take your family and friends to watch the film and encourage the film producer/director to make more films on similar issues.

If anybody wishes to help in this project, please contact the following:

Arun Kumar	Pirthi Kaeley	Ram Pal Rahi	AshokSehjal
07909828750	07814724214	07721935138	07888817820

YOUR SUPPORT IS MY REAL.....contd. on from page 1

Mr. Makhan Lohar, Mr. Raj Sood and Mr. Chopra who spent their time in Concord to do outreach to voters on my behalf on election day. I would also was touched by sincere efforts by Mr. Inderjeet Singh Thind and entire Committee of San Jose Guru Ghar, Ash Kalara, City Council Member, City of San Jose and Mr. Jai Ram Reddy of Swagat Restaurant, Milpitas to raise funds for my election along with endorsement of State Senator Mark DeSaulnier. Their dedication, kindness and generosity and faith of friends like you that we are able to stand up to serve the common good. Your contribution will help in making our dream come true.

I would appreciate your continued support in the coming years. I will be starting my bid for 2014 with a renewed energy and vigor. Please spread the word to your friends and community members to support my bid. It was mainly lack of funds that I could not reach many individuals by mailers as other candidates were able to.

Thank you once again for your support of our mission. I am looking forward to continued supports and your generosity.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Harmesh Kumar
Candidate for
Concord City Council

DR. AMI BERA's VICTORY CELEBRATION

SEE REPORT ON FRONT PAGE



All Pictures Credit : Prem K. Chumber (www.ambedkartimes.com)

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia And Ad-Dharma Movement

While recalling the significance of the role of the Ad-Dharma movement launched by Babu Mangu Ram of Mugowal in the year 1926, for espousing the cause of the Untouchables of the pre-partition Punjab, we must remind ourselves of the circumstances prevailing in those times. For, since then tremendous changes have taken place in the social, political and administrative fields, and not many of the present times may have a precise idea of the harrowing conditions and environments in which our people found themselves.

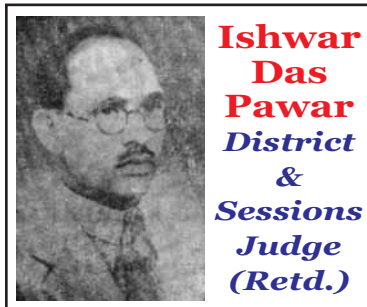
Till about the mid-twenties there was no social and political awakening among the untouchables. People had been fed on the deceptive and demoralising Brahmanical philosophy that the Untouchables were born as such not by any coincidence but because of their accumulated bad deeds committed in the past lives. As a consequence, they were disintitiled to get education, to own and possess property, to take to professions and avocations of their own liking and choice, and to a place of equality, honour and dignity in society. This was the divine dispensation. It was dinned into their ears day in and day out that this was not due either to their own fault in this life or to the fault of society that they were born in the lowest and wretched castes, and, there-



fore, they were made to suffer untold hardships and punishments under the edict of the Almighty for their past sins. Out of sheer ignorance these misguided and gullible people tacitly accepted their cursed fate foisted on them by the clever sort. For their woeful sufferings they would beat their foreheads in utter helplessness and say pathetically that it was due to their inevitable fate and destiny. It never occurred to them, and there was none to tell them, that they were being duped and cheated by the uppermost strata of society who were interested in keeping them under their feet. They could not understand why others who were leading most sinful lives before their very eyes were enjoying all comforts of life both good and bad. The good deeds of the ignorant and unsophisticated people of this life were of no consequence for them

in this life; they were being stored and preserved for consideration in the life to come. It was a very cunning ruse played on the ignorant and deprived people.

There was none among the Untouchables to raise the banner of revolt against this aggression, oppression, tyranny, deception and exploitation of the poor and the ignorant committed behind the facade of religious philosophy. There, however, appeared on the scene an inspired soul in the person of Babu Mangu Ram of Mugowal, who came back from America after a decade's sojourn



Ishwar Das Pawar
District & Sessions Judge (Retd.)

there. There he was a member of the Ghadar Party formed by the Indians living there to supplement the struggle of freedom launched by the nationalists here.

On reaching home Babu Mangu Ram founded an organisation under the name Ad-Dharma Mandal. Soon a band of enthusiastic and devoted work-

ers gathered around him. The message brought by Babu Mangu Ram was new inspiring. It was aimed at awakening the Un-touchable. The message called upon them to know and realise themselves as they had forgotten their true selves due to the hostile influences in which they had been living for thousands of years. It caught the imagination and hearts of the oppressed and down-trodden people and soon Babu Mangu Ram's name became a household word. He succeeded remarkably well in creating awareness and awakening the people. His path was beset with difficulties and he had to work against odds and trying circumstances. Financial difficulties apart, he and his co-workers were chased everywhere and hounded out of bound out of bounds of towns and villages by the Hindus, and quite often they had to hold their meeting and conferences in open fields. One such incident also took place at Una. A weekly "Adi-Danka" in Punjabi was also started to carry the message to every nook and corner of the province. This was the beginning of the struggle for getting back the human rights of which they had been deprived for centuries. Wherever Babu Mangu Ram went, the people were eager to have a glimpse of their beloved leader and benefactor. He did the pioneering

work to awaken the people. My own relations with him had been very close and cordial. From my college days I had been attending meetings of the Ad-Dharma Mandal and also occasionally contributing small articles to the Adi-Danka.

In the crucial days of the Round Table Conference held in London in the early thirties for the purpose of hammering out a new political set up for our country, Babu Mangu Ram worked enthusiastically shoulder with the greatest leader of the underdog, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was representing the Untouchables of the County at the Conference, to strengthen his hands in his historic struggle for securing political rights for his people on the basis of their being a separate and distinct political entity.

Babu Mangu Ram will be long remembers as the devoted pioneer in the crusade against social and political injustice. He fought relentlessly even in the face of crippling heavy odds for the achievements of the goal. Whatever rights we have been able to snatch so far is entirely due to these great men.

There is needed to look back lest we should forget our benefactors-the brave soldiers who fought our battles.

Courtesy: Souvenir, 1985 Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia 99th Birth Anniversary, Published by Mr. C. L. Chumber

2012 NATIONAL SIKH CONVENTION HELD IN SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

Kavneet Singh, Secretary General, WSC-AR

Representatives of Sikh Gurdwaras and organizations from across the US gathered for the 2012 National Sikh Convention from November 9 to 11 at Sikh Gurdwara Sahib of San Jose, California. Representatives came from Massachusetts to California and Wisconsin to Alabama to attend the convention. "At this national convention WSC-AR committed itself to implementing Conflict Resolution Services, developed by it, with the purpose of resolving conflict within Gurdwara sangats in a gurmat-oriented way and minimizing the need to resort to litigation in the courts. In addition, the Council discussed its initiative on developing an international Sikh representative structure, and decided to continue further enhancing this initiative enthusiastically," said Dr. Satpal Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR. US Sikh Gurdwaras (which are

managed by Sikh community) and other US Sikh organizations that respect the Sikh Rehat Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) were invited to send one delegate each to the National Sikh Convention. The convention opened on Thursday evening at the Sikh Gurdwara Sahib in San Jose with registration and social hour/informal discussions. The Friday morning plenary session was devoted to sharing the accomplishments of WSC-AR, and representatives of Sikh community's national outreach organizations gave presentations about their projects. A highlight of the Friday morning session was a presentation on the significance and implementation of a global Sikh structure based on cooperation and collaboration among Sikh organizations in various countries. The afternoon session was devoted to presentations by various Sikh outreach organi-



Sikh organization representatives at the convention

zations.

The Saturday morning session covered Khalsa school curriculums, charter schools, need for encouraging and financially helping Sikhs to adopt the teaching profession in public schools, Sikh networking, and involvement in shaping public policy initiatives. The highlight of the session was the presentation of the Conflict Resolution Services being provided by the World Sikh Council –

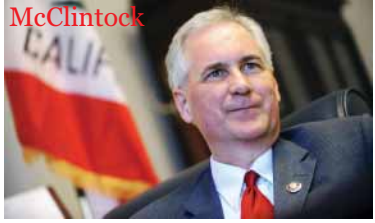
America Region. On Saturday afternoon, the General Body meeting discussed these important issues and passed resolutions, including the Conflict Resolution Services and some changes in the by-laws to make the functioning of the Council more effective. In the evening, a banquet was held in downtown San Jose for delegates, representatives, and members of the sangat. Individuals who had helped pass resolution SB1540,

that will implement Sikh history in the California school curriculum, were honored at the banquet including Professor Jeffrey Brodd of California State University at Sacramento.

On Sunday morning, the meeting was held at the Gurdwara Sahib in San Jose at which major decisions of the convention were adopted, followed by reporting to the Sikh commu-

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U.S. Congressman McClintock Trumpets Sikhi's Principles of Liberty and Tolerance



McClintock
STOCKTON-On Tuesday, California Congressman Tom McClintock declared: "There is no religion more attuned to the principles of the American Declaration of Independence than the Sikh religion."

The congressman's remarks, an extended version of those he delivered in person at the October 13 celebration of Gurdwara Sahib Stockton's centennial anniversary, were formally inserted in the Congressional Record on November 13. The earliest Sikh immigrants to the USA arrived through San Francisco in 1899. They founded Stockton Gurdwara, the first permanent Sikh-American settlement, in 1912.

Congressman McClintock's speech honoring the 100-year legacy of the Sikh-American community began: "This is the story of a small group of families who long ago crossed a great ocean in search of religious tolerance and economic liberty; a land where people were free to enjoy the fruit of their own labor, to raise their children according to their own values, to practice their religious beliefs openly, to express their opinions without fear of retribution, to live their lives according to their own best judgment, and not according to the whims and mandates of the powerful."

"That is the story of the pilgrims who crossed the Atlantic Ocean on the Mayflower in 1620 seeking a better future in a free land for their descendants. It is the very same story of pilgrims like Baba Vasakha Singh and Baba Jawala Singh Thathian who founded the Stockton Gurdwara Sahib a century ago, and all



Dr. Ambedkar

those who have followed since."

McClintock, a conservative Republican and professing Christian from a district east of Sacramento, earned high praise from Sikh-American community leaders. Bhajan Singh Bhinder, director of both the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Sikh Foundation and Sikh Information Centre, said, "On the eve of our country's Thanksgiving holiday, we are delighted to thank God for the unity shown by Tom McClintock and great Americans like him who fearlessly transcend humanity's social, religious, and ethnic differences to embrace universal equality. His actions are a reflection of the egalitarianism of his own faith."

Bhinder, who also coordinated Stockton Gurdwara's centennial celebration, further stated: "As Sikh-Americans, our duty is to overcome internal strife and strive instead towards the ideals of Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The Sikh nation and its principles are not reflected in disturbances like that recently seen in Yuba City. We are responsible to seize and live out the conception of true Sikhs recognized by American leaders like Congressman McClintock."

He also noted that McClintock's remarks brought to

mind a famous saying of the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh Ji, who, in 1699, proclaimed: "All human beings are the reflection of one and the same Lord. Recognize ye the whole human race as one." He said McClintock, who has welcomed South Asians as Americans on several occasions in 2012, clearly grasps that unifying principle of Sikh philosophy.

Two weeks after the August 5 massacre of six Sikhs at the Oak Creek, Wisconsin Gurdwara, McClintock visited the Roseville Sikh Temple, largest in his district. In his opening remarks there, he said: "Sat Sri Akaal. I greet you as a Sikh today because we are all Sikhs today. On my visits here over the years, I learned a little of the Sikh's history; of the martyrdom of Guru Arjun; of the Ghallooghaaraa; of the massacres of 1984. To these thousands of



Baba Wasakha Singh (left) & Baba Jawala Singh (right)

Sikh martyrs, we now enroll the names of the fallen at Oak Creek."

In June, McClintock commemorated the 121st birth year of the Father of India, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkarji, with remarks on the U.S. House floor, saying: "He articulated the basic principle that all men are created equal and that the Dalits required not the paternalistic guidance of the privileged few who ruled over them, but the freedom to live their lives according to their own lights.... We often appeal to the paragons of freedom among the American Founding Fathers in this chamber. We need search no further than Dr. Ambedkar and his tireless devotion to the rights of man to confirm that the bedrock principles of liberty and freedom for which our Founders are known are truly universal."

Bhinder, offering further thanks to McClintock, said, "Protection of human diversity is the strength in American society which inspired Sikhs to settle in Stockton and other parts of this free nation. The Sikh centennial's real celebration is that the virtues of individual liberty and personal responsibility were enshrined in the U.S. constitution. Like McClintock, like Dr. Ambedkar, like the Gurus, and like the U.S. Founding Fathers, Sikhs are devoted to pursuing the cause of liberty as the best chance for achieving peace and prosperity worldwide."

About SIC: The Sikh Information Centre is a USA-based non-profit committed to the discovery, dissemination, and elevation of crucial data concerning the achievement of liberty for the unhindered exercise of all intrinsic rights of humanity.

Continued from page 5

nity in attendance at the Gurdwara Sahib. Attendees at the Convention also passed a resolution congratulating President Barack Obama on his re-election. Further, Senator Ellen Corbett, the California Senate Majority Leader, was honored in the sangat for her contributions to the Sikh community. Senator Corbett presented California Senate Resolution to WSC-AR, felicitating the Council on its achievements and wishing it continued success in pursuing its goals and mission.

The convention was attended by representatives of the following US Sikh Gurdwaras and organizations: Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Opelika (AL); Guru Nanak Mission, Livingston (CA); Gurdwara Guru Angad Darbar, Bakersfield (CA); Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont (CA); Gurdwara Sahib, Merced (CA); Colorado Singh Sabha, Denver (CO); Singh Sabha of Augusta, Augusta (GA); Sikh Study Circle of Atlanta, Atlanta (GA); Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham (NC); Guru Nanak Religious Society of Central Ohio, Columbus (OH); New England Sikh Study Circle, Boston (MA); Sikh Cultural & Educational Society of Western New York, Buffalo (NY); Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin (OH); Sikh Foundation of Syracuse, Liverpool (NY); Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, Palatine (IL); Sikh Sabha of New Jersey, Lawrenceville (NJ); Sikh Sabha of Upper Valley, Hanover (NH); Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights (MI); Sikh Youth Alliance of North America, Toledo (OH); Singh Sabha of Michigan, Canton (MI); Tri-State Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville (PA); and Sikh Religious Society of Wisconsin, Brookfield (WI). In addition, representatives of United Sikhs, Sikh Research Institute, SALDEF, Jakara and other Sikh organizations from across the nation, including Khalsa School San Jose, Sikh Scouts – Troop 600, Sanjog, Sikh Family Center, and Kaurista attended the convention.

The World Sikh Council - America Region (WSC-AR) is the umbrella organization representative of Sikhs in the United States. It is an elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions. Currently 48 Gurdwaras and other Sikh institutions across the nation are members of WSC-AR. The major governing purpose of the organization is to represent the collective view of Sikhs in the United States. WSC-AR works to promote Sikh interests at the national and international level focusing on issues of advocacy, education, and well-being of humankind.

**TRIBUTE TO
 BABA SAHIB DR. AMBEDKAR**
 Ambedkar Times
 &
 Desh Doaba
 pay its glowing tribute to
 Bharat Rattan Baba Saheb
 Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar
 on his 56th Pr Nirvan Divas.
Prem K. Chumber (Editor-In-Chief)

