

A MIZO BRAHMACHARINI IN DOON GURUKUL

By Brigadier Chitranjan Sawant, VSM

A smiling face with peace writ large all over, her Mongoloid mien pronounced her personal identity suo moto. I saw her for the first time during the Gurukul Utsav when she ascended the stage and stood behind a mike. She sang a Vedic bhajan in a melodious voice like a nightingale in a mango grove. Enchanting indeed beyond belief.. The audience was spellbound. They loosened strings of their purses to shower monetary blessings on her. Dr Ved Prakash Arya of Lahore, the founder Kulpati of the Dronsthal Kanya Gurukul, opined that the singing and swaying teenager from Mizoram was indeed a doyen of the Gurukul choir. Her chanting of the Ved mantras was equally melodious and the pronunciation quite authentic.

LAL SAN PUYI

Let us not feel put off by these three outlandish words of the sub-heading here. That is the original name of the smiling face from Mizoram. Moving up and down on the undulating Doon terrain from the Yajna shala to Sabha Bhawan and from Goshala to Bhojan Kaksh, one could not miss her blithe gait and a free from blemish face. I beckoned her during one such routine march and enquired about her name."Nandita - that is how Dr Annapurna, Acharya Ji and other brahmacharinis address me" was her effortless response. That is your Gurukul name, right, but how do your people back home address you, I persisted, "Lal San Puyi" said she with a twinkle in the eye assessing my predicament in pronouncing unfamiliar words. Of course, the unfamiliar words are for record purposes only and the entire Gurukul knows her as Nandita. She likes it. It is indeed a Visa to enter the North Indian social set up that is so different from the North-Eastern milieu. Well, it goes to prove what India, that is Bharat, actually is - Unity in Diversity. This concept may now be a myth in some parts of our great nation as there turmoil has practically replaced the rule of law.

A lady assistant to Acharya Ji explained to the Aryas that had come from far and near to attend the Gurukul Utsav that the ethos of the Vedic education was an all inclusive one. So, Lal San Puyi, now Nandita, had no problem in learning the Ved mantras or the Vedic syllabus. She never felt like an alien from another planet. She took to the Gurukul life like a fish takes to water. She too turned a vegetarian like the rest of her classmates. Just imagine, a descendent of a head hunting tribe turning to cabbage and cauliflower for sustenance. Of course, cow milk from the Gurukul Gaushala was a purifying protein that cleansed her body as Ved mantras made her soul a sanskari one. Unbelievable but true!

RE-EDUCATION WAS A REALITY SHOW

After she became Nandita, the first few days, nay weeks, were indeed trying ones. Lal San Puyi knew no Hindi at that point of time. And the Faculty knew no English, Exasperating at times both for her and for those around her. Communication was major problem. Communicating by signs and symbols became the order of the day. At times it developed into comic situations. At times when Lal San Puyi wished to eat cheese, she was offered a piece of chalk out of sheer ignorance. Both the giver and the taker laughed it away. A fine sense of

humour saved the situation many times. "A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down in a delightful way, that was the musical refrain of the heroine in the movie, The Sound of Music. Our heroine in focus is from the tribal tract, has a fine sense of humour and handles difficult developments in a delightful way.

One wonders what caused her exodus from her native state, Mizoram. Well, the Christian clergy were determined to convert Lal San Puyi and other members of her family to the flock of Jesus but this Animist family was equally, if not more, determined to stick to the ancestral faith. This firmness paved the path to Gurukul for Lal San Puyi and to the tribal belt of Tripura for the rest of the family. The Vedic way of life has been a boon to Lal San Puyi and she is nursing a plan to enlighten those who are still in an area of darkness.

Neo- Nandita always lends a helping hand to those who need it. One fine morning as I emerged out of the lecture hall after delivering a sermon, I found my new pair of sandals missing. Perhaps someone old enough to distinguish between own chappals and those of others had mistakenly wore mine. No sweat, I thought. Or may be, my new sandals were a source of temptation to a pair of needy feet.. Nandita saw me walk barefoot for a day or so.. Nandita ran here and there looking for my lost pair of sandals. She confided that she had located an old pair of chappals lying in a corner for a day or so unclaimed. She brought them to me and requested me to accept them. I declined. She persisted and eventually had her way. These old chappals protected my feet from loose pebbles in the Doon valley and still occupy some space in a corner of my house awaiting their original owner.

THE FUTURE PLAN

Today Nandita is a sanskari brahmcharini because she has been groomed by the Acharya, Dr Annapurna Ji. She took her under her wings and provided physical protection, mental reassurance and spiritual guidance when Lal San Puyi needed them most. Dr Ved Prakash Arya, the Kul Pita, stood by the new entrant from Mizoram like a rock and provided her with everything that she needed. Uprooted from her native place and transplanted in the Doon valley her spirit could have been shattered but for the Kul Pita and the Acharya Ji. Lal San Puyi had a smooth sailing to the new uncharted sea. Her passage to the Vedic Dharm was so flawless that even psychologists found it a good topic of research in human behaviour.

It will indeed be a great day when she succeeds in attracting, not luring or coercing like the Christian missionaries do, many of her compatriots from Mizoram to the Vedic Dharm. The Vedas will indeed show light to those who are still living in darkness and then the life of Vedic bliss will be lived for ever and ever. Let us wish our new Nandita god-speed and a true success as a Vedic missionary. May Param Pita Parmatma be with Nandita in her forward march on the Vedic path.