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We welcome all guests attending The Doon School Model United Nations Conference, 2010

## EDITORIAL

### Delegates of Tomorrow

*I confess that I am an idealist. While I concede many of the criticisms of the United Nations, such skewed representation or lopsided dynamics of advantage and power, I firmly believe in what it stands for: a platform for global legislature and multilateralism. The Headmaster has already addressed the School in this regard, talking about how the need for multilateral solutions is increasing. Indeed, we were disappointed by the failure of the Copenhagen Summit, but we must not hold these few, singular failures against an international democracy as a whole. We must take heed of these failures, not as a verdict on multilateralism, but as a harsh awakening to the more pressing issues faced by the world as a homogenous political unit: a lack of accountability, a reluctance to compromise and, greed.*

*In my opinion, a Model United Nations Conference is not meant to be a simulation of the current United Nations (although awareness of global issues and knowledge of policies are imperative). Rather, it is a forum where we, given the present situation, model an ideal plan of action. Of course, a delegate must know what the issues currently on the conference tables are, along with the policies and stands of the major countries involved. But one must also develop faith in the United Nations Organization and what it stands for and the many values such a global forum entails. By virtue of its name, 'United Nations', the Organization implies solidarity, cooperation and unity amongst nations. It also entails an international consciousness: each nation must be conscious of the global community. This consciousness is not only at the level of the government and administration, but also the common citizen. Each individual can potentially affect such an organ of global legislature by entering politics, the media or the foreign services or expressing one's opinion, given the many channels of doing so. Each individual must therefore develop a sense of accountability and responsibility to the world at large.*

*So much of what we hear and say in such conferences is dismissed as empty words that promise much and deliver little. The United Nations' role as a body of equal representation may be considered tokenistic, its role in education, healthcare and development often taken for granted. But the truth is that the United Nations, like any other body of legislation, will only be as good as its representatives or leaders make it. If we dismiss these words and speeches as hollow rhetoric, then we would render this Model United Nations conference nothing more than an extravagant inter-school public speaking competition. If, on the other hand, we were to leave with an ambition to contribute to this imperfect, yet vast, global community as delegates, journalists, politicians or diplomats of tomorrow, then the Conference will be a success.*

## The WAM Way

*Tanuj Kumar reports on the workshop and concert held by pianists from the Worldwide Appreciation of Music Foundation (WAM) between August 18 and 19 in the Music School*

Music can move hearts. It can make you cry, or fill you with sheer joy. The statement might sound melodramatic to you, but it is true. I have experienced it myself and I can vouch for it. "Music has healing powers," says Helen Allen-Williams, music therapist, and one of the members of the Worldwide Appreciation of Music Foundation team, that visited School last week, to give a concert. The team comprised four accomplished young musicians from England: Gaspar Hunt, Lucie Bebbington, Sam Tannenbaum and Helen Allen-Williams. The day before their concert, they held a workshop and master classes for the music students. I realised anew the nuances of piano playing and learned that there is so much more to it than just hitting the right notes! I learnt to connect with the piece, and also understand what the composer is trying to say through his music. Another important aspect I learnt was 'improvisation', which they taught us in an interesting 'question-answer' format. They made two pianists sit at one piano, and instructed them to ask each other questions, and then answer by playing just one note in different styles. It was like an exercise for the mind. Next, they invited us on stage to play our pieces so that they could help us understand them both musically and technically. I definitely got a few things right, and I was certainly a better pianist by the end of the workshop!

Next day, as the evening drew on, the audience started pouring into the music hall for the concert. It began punctually at 6:15 pm, with the first performer, Sam Tannenbaum, taking the stage. He played five small pieces by French composer Henry Dutilleux, who, interestingly, is still alive (considering the fact that many famous composers are resting six feet under!). The pieces were fast and cheerful, except the second-last, which was a slow piece in a minor key. The quick tempo gave a kick-start to the concert. Next up, we had on stage Helen Allen-Williams, who played two pieces: *Sonetto 104 de Petrarca*, composed by the famous Hungarian composer Liszt and a jazz prelude by George Gershwin. The *Sonetto 104* by Liszt was one of the best I heard that evening. It reminded me of his famous *Liebstraume (Dream of Love)*, as it had a similar kind of melody. The piece was played with such delicacy through the rippling chord-work that I was carried away by it. The jazz piece was a good contrast to the Liszt, and ended on a cheerful note. Lucie Bebbington then gave us biographical snapshots of the

*(contd. overleaf)*

## WELCOME

**Steven Hailey**, from Williams College, USA, will be a part of the teaching faculty till the end of the term. We wish him a fruitful stay.

## SCHOLAR

Itihaas Singh has been awarded the **Scholar's Blazer**. Congratulations!

## SHUTTLING GLORY

Vaibhav Gupta, Siddharth Sethi, Vidit Sadana, Abhishek Parasrampur, Arjun Khaitan, Dhruv Goel, Shashwat Vineet Agarwal, Aditya Gandhi, Pulkit Agarwal, Saket Golyan and Sarthak Gupta represented the School in the **IPSC Badminton Tournament** held at **Pestle Weed College, Dehradun**. The following were the results:

### Individual events:

**Under-14:** Shashwat Vineet Agarwal reached the quarterfinals

### Under-17 (Finals):

**Winner:** Abhishek Parasrampur

**Runner-up:** Dhruv Goel

**Under-18:** Vidit Sidana reached the quarterfinals

### Team events:

**Under-14:** The School reached the quarterfinals

**Under-17:** The School emerged victorious

**Under-18:** The School lost in the finals. Well done, all!

## DEBATE UPDATE

The following are the results of the various rounds of the **Junior Inter-House English Debates, 2010**:

### Semi-Final Round

#### Oberoi vs Kashmir:

**Best Speaker:** Vishal Tummala

**Most Promising Speaker:** Vrindam Nagpal

**Winner:** Oberoi

#### Jaipur vs Hyderabad:

**Best Speaker:** Rahul Srivastava

**Most Promising Speaker:** Utkarsh Jha

**Winner:** Hyderabad

### Final Round

#### Oberoi vs Hyderabad

**Best Speaker:** Vrindam Nagpal

**Most Promising Speaker:** Divyant Sapra

**Winner:** Oberoi

The following are the final **House positions**:

**1st:** Oberoi

**2nd:** Hyderabad

**3rd:** Jaipur and Kashmir

**5th:** Tata. Well done!

## Opinion

Are the logistics of School events becoming increasingly inconvenient?



( 274 members of the community were polled)

**Next week's question:** Are your meals being disrupted by too many announcements?

## ERRATA

In issue no 2255, dated August 21, 2010, **Animesh Gupta's** name was omitted from the list of the Gymnastics Full Colours awardees. The *Weekly* regrets the omission.

Czech composer Janacek with four of his pieces. Each had a different theme: the first one was *Evening among Friends*, the second *Religious Procession*, the third *Mood of Parting* and finally *The Song of Life*. The pieces were from the *On an Overgrown Path* and we had heard some of these pianistic gems last year, in Sriyash Kishorepuria's concert. They gave us an idea of how music can mirror real life. It was very inspiring. The last performer for the evening was Gaspar Hunt, a piano student at the Trinity College of Music, London, who played two 'Etudes' (French for 'Study') by Moritz Moszkowski and Scriabin, and *Theme and Variations* by Mendelssohn. An 'Etude' is basically a study piece, as the name suggests, which is written to practise a particular skill, but at the same time it can be performed for a concert. The etudes were quite engaging, but the Mendelssohn which followed was certainly the main attraction of the evening. Swift leaps from the top to the bottom of the keyboard characterised this virtuoso piece. He made full use of the ten-octave keyboard and by the end of it, we were left breathless!

After the concert ended, I felt deeply affected in a positive way. I cannot explain it, but it had done something to my mind and soul. But, shortly after, I was plagued by a thought. I felt that not many people in today's world appreciate this kind of music. Today's youngsters have climbed on to the 'rap' juggernaut and find it 'cool' to spew out words at supersonic speeds. I think 'rap' is far from being 'music'. The music I heard that evening was 'real' music. Not for nothing has it survived the test of time. The WAM artistes had certainly given us some quality music that evening. Though the team left the campus that night, the music they played will perhaps stay with us forever!

\* \* \*

## | Poetry |

### Flight

*Shashank Peshawaria*

Fluttering thought,  
Butterfly of the brain,  
I chase you  
In fields and forests.  
I move with you  
From flower to flower,  
Dream to dream.  
When I catch you,  
You dissolve  
In my spirit,  
My body,  
My voice,  
My hands,  
My words.  
And then  
You become  
A butterfly of the world.

### Mirage

*Shashank Peshawaria*

Poems  
Are the silver surface  
Of a silent lake,  
In which  
You think  
You see your real face.

| Interview |

# Independent Thoughts

*The following are excerpts from an interview that The Doon School Weekly conducted with thespian Victor Banerjee, Chief Guest at the Independence Day celebrations, 2010*

**DSW: Given the great European influences of the British in India, what is the identity and future of our nation?**

**VBJ:** If we had had such a great European influence, we would today have become much richer as a nation. Look at the revival of Germany after it was destroyed after two world wars. I feel Paris is the capital of romance, Italy of culture, Egypt of history; like Manhattan and London and Tel Aviv are throbbing centres of world culture and we, like the Greeks once did, offer philosophy that the famous historian Arnold Toynbee predicted, would one day prevail upon the world of thought and belief.

India's riches lie in its diversity, the wealth of an Indian experience. But you know something, I sometimes feel sad at the disappearance of the influence of the British. What saddens me is not so much our shedding the influence, but what is replacing it. While the Americans have thirstily scanned the globe to learn from others and create a culture of sorts for themselves, we have been consumed by hamburgers and Coke that have added to our greatest national liability, obesity. I am hoping this growing inclination towards Americanism and this aping of other cultures is only a passing, temporary phase. I am betting on Toynbee winning.

**DSW: Is it not imperative that we hold the balance of power in our hands before we can assert our own identity?**

**VBJ:** The balance of power was always askew. But look at what is happening: the Americans are falling from grace. Historically, no one ever really had the balance of power, the sceptre and sword merely changed hands for brief moments in linear or cyclical time, depending on which philosophy you subscribe to. Right from the storming of the Bastille to the demolition of the Berlin Wall, from the Spaniards with guns against the defenseless Incas, the so-called liberation of Haiti by Jeffersonian Americans to our's of Goa and Sikkim, to the unrest in Kashmir as we speak, the history of the world is just a series of acts of cruelty perpetrated by humans on their fellow beings. It is Oriental to believe in cyclical time; to watch history mercilessly repeat itself. Be we must all be rebels. We must be rebellious, as in Camus' essay *The Rebel*, and stop behaving pathetically like 'victims' all the time. We mustn't view rebellion to be negative, nor must you boys get any such ideas. You must rebel only in order to respect and preserve your values, by asserting and fighting for your rights. That includes your right to change things for the betterment of our people and society.

**DSW: Is the 'xenophilia' you spoke of not an inevitable consequence of globalization?**

**VBJ:** No, it isn't. Globalization is presently misunderstood and its meaning is limited to merely commerce and trade and your finding well-known labels on products sold here. Globalization is, in fact, an insidious and cleverly covert form of imperialism. You might call it the globalization of minds by an eating away at cultures and cultural values.

Globalization, as I see it, is a clever and systematic destruction of cultures. I no longer need to conquer your land. Your diet, your wardrobe, your gadgets, your creams and aftershaves, your cars and mo-bikes and every other consumer item conceivable, are 'global' brands that the western world is flooding our markets with, to win over minds and alter value systems.

Globalization is an attempt to homogenize cultures. My advice would be to identify the virus when you see it and kill it before it spreads like an incurable cancer. Our cultures in India are so subtly variant that each individual flower in the *Vanamala*, our garland of wild flowers, is subject to infections and viral infestations. Destroy a small culture in the remote tribal areas of the Northeast, or the still uncharted jungles of Andhra Pradesh, in Leh or Ranchi, and you set the rot to work into the *Vanamala* of India.

**DSW: What exactly is 'unselfishness'?**

**VBJ:** Unselfishness can be anything. It is whenever you put other people ahead of you, whenever you think of others before you.

**DSW: It is easy to profess the values of unselfishness and the responsibilities of the 'aristocracy of service'. But these values apply equally to the entire youth of today. How would these values percolate beyond this 'aristocracy'?**

**VBJ:** You must remember that not every person who has accomplished something good is an ex-student of Doon School or any other similar 'aristocracy'. Some of the greatest minds come from the smallest and yet unfashionable, or even unknown institutions of our country. Rabindranath Tagore received formal education only up to class VI, Satyen Bose, India's greatest physicist, whose then-unproven theory of subatomic particles called Bosons has won the Nobel Prize for more than one physicist in recent times, studied at Hindu High School, Calcutta; Jagadish Chandra Bose, arguably India's greatest scientist, studied in a vernacular school in Munshiganj before he joined Hare School in Calcutta, the great mathematician and physicist, Nobel Prize Winner CV Raman, studied in Vishakhapatnam at St Aloysius Anglo-Indian High School, and Tensing Norgay who came from a village and perhaps never had any formal education, went on to become the first to set foot on the summit of Everest. Finally, even the inventor of Bose Speakers and the sound system we show off about, was the son of a freedom fighter who fled from British persecution in Bengal to America. Studies have shown that the most well-adjusted and broad-minded children in the US come from ghettos and slums in Harlem and the Bronx and the inner-city communities of Detroit and Chicago. The rough and the brilliant grow up alongside, beside each other. In terms of social adjustment and inner maturity, that holds true for the inner-city children of Bombay and Calcutta too.

Receiving quality education here at Doon doesn't mean you have to worry about the youth of today. You will face many  
*(contd. overleaf)*

more cultural conflicts in your life than they will! Your and my form of upbringing and education didn't lay enough emphasis on being Indian, thinking Indian and being proud of being an Indian. The poorer communities take all that for granted because all those qualities are in their bloodstream, drilled subliminally and subconsciously into their psyche.

Also, learn to respect the average man. Think. What does the word average mean? It means the majority, doesn't it? Well, if this is what the world has come to, inhabited by the 'average', we need to applaud them for having learned to imbibe the best from intellectuals and applied sciences practically for the progress of mankind. Being average is perfect and makes for a lot of happiness.

The world consists of averages, and average people unknowingly propagate such values. So the bottom line is that you must lead by example. You must all become exemplars of the qualities and values you want to set as the indelible identity of your School. Values that you will never compromise.

**DSW: What is the responsibility of young people?**

**VBJ:** Nothing just yet, except to listen and learn and obey when your intellect dictates it. At this stage of your life, it is the responsibility of your teachers and parents to give you direction. You are too young to follow your instincts. You need your Aristotle, just like Alexander did. And hey, he made it as a winner at the age of 16, like I told you, therefore, so can you.

**DSW: A large number of boys at Doon are going into the business world. How would you inspire and redirect these boys into a variety of careers?**

**VBJ:** It depends on one's family, or it comes from your teachers. Your home and your parents play a very important role. Your parents are the ones you watch and learn from. No matter what you are taught at school or in classes of Moral Science, if your home is corrupt and your family dysfunctional (to use a classification that's fashionable these days), you're going to have a taller mountain to climb. It is your parents who instill values; when families have discussions at the dining table, you learn; when you gather around in the evenings and gossip or chat, you learn; when you play games with your parents and brothers and sisters, you learn; when you are comforted or encouraged by your family, you learn. Sure, teachers can become irreplaceable mentors and guides, but if your parents have the right moral and social values, you at least will always be able to distinguish right from wrong and hopefully make the honourable choice. You're right about a lot of students going to business schools today for no other reason but that there's a lot of money to be made out there.

**DSW: For those of us enthusiastic about pursuing theatre as a career, do you have any advice you can give us?**

**VBJ:** If you love acting, do it and enjoy it. But if you find even a single person who says "you cannot act for nuts", leave it forever, before you become a laughing stock. You may have a bad performance occasionally, and people may say "that role didn't suit you" or "you could have done better", but if someone says you cannot act, please believe him and change course. You will do yourself and your audiences a big favour. Quit.

| Viewpoint |

## Raksha Bandhan

Vivek Santayana

The announcements couldn't be more explicit: "All boys who wish to meet their *real* sisters in Welham Girls' or Hopetown for *Raksha Bandhan*, not their cousins or anyone else, should give their names to their housemasters." "Real sisters," I said to myself, "as compared to what, fake, virtual or adopted sisters? And who would use *Raksha Bandhan* as a pretext to go meet 'anyone else'?" I wasn't as conspicuous in my outing clothes as I expected, that afternoon: everyone took for granted that I was a stand-in representative in the afternoon's School Council meeting. No one bought the story that I was going to meet my sister, as though I had an aura of an only child. Every other brother dutifully drove off to the respective schools, not to return till later that day after collecting a dozen rakhis from a dozen new sisters. I, on the other hand, was content with receiving two by post and two more through cyber space from cousins scattered across the world.

I was often asked why my wrists were bare. I contemplated what would be the best answer: a direct admission of not having a sister, or something a trifle more sarcastic, "After the one-bracelet policy, I cannot choose just one sister over the others, so I decided not to wear any." As it is, the gesture of Raksha Bandhan is increasingly misunderstood. To begin with, it is not necessarily a ritual between a sister and a brother (nor one wherein a sibling is adopted). During the partition of Bengal, Raksha Bandhan was a prominent ritual in the movement against the partition. In the face of division, tying a rakhi and chants of '*Bande Mataram*' were the symbols of unity and solidarity. It is ironically the same festival that one associates with the partition of Bengal that attracts sly sniggers today. The same bond of solidarity, irrespective of blood relations, that drew Humayun to the aid of Rani Karnavati has been reduced to an opportunity to spend an afternoon at a girls' school (or a pretext to demand sweets).

The most precious rakhi I have ever received was one with a card which had my name misspelled (and a couple of letters written almost-backwards) from a cousin who had only recently learned how to write. Of course, no longer do I get anything nearly as touching: e-cards and bulk sends are my lot.

doontoon Madhav Dutt



*One bracelet policy?*



*All my real sisters.*

## स्थिरता और विस्तार

शिवांक सिंह

विस्तार प्रकृति का आधार है। विस्तार की प्रक्रिया वही होती है जहाँ सीमाएँ अनिश्चित होती हैं। हमारे जीवन में स्थिरता ही नहीं, विस्तार की प्रक्रिया भी समान रूप से महत्वपूर्ण होती है। यह प्रक्रिया हमारे जीवन का एक हिस्सा बन चुकी है। ऐसा नहीं है कि यह सब सहज रूप से हो जाता है। विस्तार या फैलाव को उसके विरुद्ध चलती प्रक्रियाओं का भी सामना करना पड़ता है।

जिस तरह, एक सीमा में बंधे ज्ञान का दूसरी जगह प्रचार करना होता है तो उसमें हज़ार तरह की अड़चने आती हैं, उसी तरह हर वस्तु जिसका विस्तार करना होता है, अपने साथ कुछ नकारात्मकता भी लिए होती है। यही नकारात्मकता रुकावट या अड़चन के रूप में हमारे सामने आती है। कई समाज अपने ज्ञान और धन की रक्षा करते हैं। रक्षा का अर्थ है कि उसे आगे नहीं बढ़ने देते। वे समाज नहीं चाहते कि उनके ज्ञान और धन का लाभ कोई और उठा सके। मेरा मानना है कि उस समाज के गोपनीय ज्ञान और खजानों में बन्द धन का विनाश अवश्य होता है।

भगवद् गीता में अर्जुन की प्रार्थना पर भगवान कृष्ण ने अपनी आकृति का विस्तार करके दिखाया था। परमेश्वर की आकृति के अलग अलग हिस्सों में सारा संसार समाया हुआ था। निश्चित रूप से यह हमारे आस-पास की उर्जा को दिखाने का उनका एक तरीका था। विस्तार में ही परमात्मा का निवास होता है।

हमारे आस-पास दिखाई देने और महसूस होने वाली वस्तुओं का फैलाव हॉलांकि दिखता नहीं लेकिन समय समय हमारा मन उसे महसूस ज़रूर करता रहता है। विस्तार का यह अहसास ही जीवन के प्रति हमारे विश्वास को बढ़ाता रहता है।

प्रवाह आगे बढ़ते रहने की प्रक्रिया है जो हमें छोटी चीज़ों में उलझने नहीं देती। सब ओर होने वाला यह प्रवाह ही हमें एक खुशहाल, संतोषपूर्ण और नेक भविष्य की ओर ले जा सकता है। अगर हम अपने जीवन को रोकते हैं तो हमें दुःख का अहसास होता है। यह अहसास हमें एक अंधकार भरे भविष्य की ओर धकेल सकता है। बहाव कई बार अनिश्चित दिशा में होता है और इसमें किसी प्रकार के घोखे की गुंजाइश ही नहीं रहती।

अगर दार्शनिक दृष्टिकोण से देखा जाए तो हम पाते हैं कि विस्तार और अनजान दिशा में ले जाने वाला प्रवाह मनुष्य को बहुत जोशीला बनाता है। सबसे बाँटने की भावना अकेलेपन को दूर कर मनुष्य को शांति के मार्ग का पथिक बना देती है।

जीवन में बहाव और स्थिरता कभी कभी एक दूसरे के आड़े भी आते हैं लेकिन दोनों में बुद्धिमानी से बनाया गया संतुलन सुविधा और संतोष को जन्म दे देता है। जब स्थिरता और विस्तार एक साथ ही होते रहते हैं तो जीवन में जादू आ जाता है, सुख का राज्य हो जाता है।

## सहयोग

चैरिक फुलेत्रा

इस दुनिया में लोग मदद और सहयोग के बजाय अपने फायदे और जीत के बारे में ज्यादा सोचते हैं। इसका परिणाम यह है कि मानव की मानवता से दूरी बनती चली जा रही है। आज का मूलमंत्र बस यह कथन है - जो जीतता है वही पाता है। हर जीत के इस खेल में एक मनुष्य दूसरे से दुश्मनी करता चला जा रहा है। एक भाई, दूसरे भाई का जीना हराम करता चला जा रहा है। इस सब अराजकता का एक और सिर्फ एक ही कारण है - सब एक दूसरे से अधिक प्रभावशाली, ताकतवर और दौलतमन्द बनना चाहते हैं। न

जान क्या हम सभा लाग एक साथ आर एक दूसरे क लए जीने का स्वप्न देखना ही भूल गए। हम भूल गए कि अगर हम एक साथ रहे तो इस दुनिया में खुशी और सच्चाई के दीप जगमग करेंगे। यह विचार मेरे दिल को गहरे गम के समुद्र में डुबा देता है कि आज सबकी सोच कुछ ऐसी हो गई है कि छोटी चीज़ों के लिए बड़ी चीज़ों को यूँ ही छोड़ दिया जाता है।

हम हर महान विचार को अपने पास तक पहुँचने ही नहीं देते। लालच और लपुता महानता के रास्ते को रोके छोड़ी होती है। स्वार्थ की यह स्थिति है कि जब किसी के लिए कुछ करने की बारी आती है तो हम समर्थ लोगों की ओर ही नज़रें घुमाते हैं। इसका सीधा सा कारण यह है कि हमें मालूम होता है कि आवश्यकता पड़ने पर हम उनकी भी मदद ले सकते हैं। अगर ईमानदारी से देखें तो हर आदमी अपने हिस्से से कुछ ना कुछ ज़रूरतमन्द को दे ही सकता है, चाहे धन हो, ज्ञान हो या थोड़ा सा सौभाग्य हो। ऐसा तब ही हो सकता है जब मनुष्य में स्वार्थरहित होकर कुछ प्रदान करने की भावना की उपजेगी। दान जैसा नेक काम तो सबसे गरीब भी कर सकता है। धन के नहीं तो ज्ञान के दान से भी लोगों का हित किया जा सकता है। बूँद बूँद से ही सागर बनता है। हम अगर सहयोग कर बाँटने की चेष्टा करें तो बदलावों की घंटियाँ हमारे दरवाज़े पर बजना आरम्भ कर देंगी।

सहयोग में एक अनोखा आनन्द है जो हमारे मन की स्वच्छ भावनाओं को प्रकट कर, हमारे आस पास के महौल को खुशी की सुगंध से भर देता है जिसकी खुशबू बरसों बाद भी हवा में रहती है। धर्म भी सहयोग के आधार पर टिके हैं। मैं सोचता हूँ कि सहयोग ही हमारे अन्दर के राम और कृष्ण को जगाता है। मेरा मानना है कि दया और सहयोग ही सबसे बड़ा धर्म है और हमें इसकी राह कभी छोड़नी नहीं चाहिये।

## हर पल

उमा शंकर गोस्वामी

क्षमभर लगता है,  
एक दीवार को तोड़ने में,  
क्षमभर लगता है,  
एक मकान को गिरने में,  
क्षमभर लगता है,  
एक गर्दन मोड़ने में,  
क्षमभर लगता है,  
एक दिल को खो देने में।  
होने को कुछ भी कठिन नहीं,  
पर कई बार सब बेहद कठिन हो जाता है,  
चाहत हो अगर किसी के लिये दिल में,  
तो एक ना के साथ सब खत्म हो जाता है।  
देखा था मैंने एक चहरा,  
चाहत के सितार बजे थे सब ओर,  
पर, सबकुछ बदल कैसा गया,  
जब बदलना नहीं ही नहीं था कुछ भी।  
सोचा था होगा कहीं किसी के भीतर एक दोस्त,  
लेकिन गलत निकली मेरी सोच,  
एक क्षण था जब पंख लगा, उड़ने लगा मेरा दिल,  
फितना खुश था मैं,  
पता ही नहीं चला कि कैसे कतर दिए किसी ने मेरे पंख,  
रोक दिया मेरी उड़ान को,  
और छोड़ दिया मेरी तलाश में एक तड़पन को,  
तड़प तड़प कर मर रहा हूँ मैं।  
नहीं समझ पाता कि क्या गलत हुआ था मुझसे,  
जीवन ने क्यों मुँह मोड़ लिया मुझसे।  
भतक रहा हूँ मैं आवारा गलियों में,  
शहर के अंधेरे कोनों में।  
लगा हूँ उजाला लाने की कोशिशों में, हर पल, हर पल।

| Report |  
**RSIS LADAKH, 2010**

Harsh Verma



Ladakh: the name spells natural beauty and it didn't disappoint. This July, Hemang, ANJ and I participated in the RSIS Project Ladakh. The Project began on July 9 and ended on August 2. This was the first time that any of us was participating in a Round Square Project, whose objective was to help construct a library for the children of The Lamdon School in Sumur.

What was to be a fruitful and exciting time in Ladakh started off with a bumpy and scary landing followed by applause by the passengers aboard when the plane made a skilful landing at Leh Airport. What struck us first was the feeling of breathlessness because of the altitude. The two-day acclimatisation phase is compulsory if you go to Leh. Leh and its outskirts were spectacular. We were to stay in Leh for a few days before leaving for Sumur. Leh is a small town full of tourists, mountaineers, with clothing and handicrafts shops doing brisk business. It was in Leh really that we first got to know the entire RSIS team. There were 28 students from all over the world and 5 adults. We stayed at a well-furnished hotel and were served delicious food (better than I had expected). During the first few days of acclimatisation, we visited a number of monasteries and previous years' worksites. The people in Ladakh are mostly Buddhists and so it came as no surprise to see so many beautiful monasteries in the region.

The six-hour long drive to Sumur from Leh was an exhilarating experience: crossing the Khardung La Pass: the world's highest motorable road at a height of 18,380 ft. We were given a warm welcome on reaching Sumur by the trustees of The Lamdon School. Our campsite was in a shrub forest and we had the entire kitchen crew serving us hot food which was most welcome. The plan for each day was to work at the school in two shifts of three hours each, one in the morning and one in the evening. We had been divided into five groups, out of which each day, four groups went to work at the worksite while one group had a day off. ANJ's was called 'Hidalgo', while my group called itself 'LGD' (Yeah, I know it sounds cool). Our free time was mostly spent talking about life elsewhere –

our schools and homes; walking to the river, playing cards, Frisbee and, most interestingly, talking about our futures. I liked the discussions and the random chats that we had every day. There is no better place and platform to get to know culturally different people than an International Project. I thoroughly enjoyed being in the company of new people as it helped me learn a lot of new things as well as learn to look at things from a different perspective.

The purpose of the Project was to assist the locals in the construction of a library for the children at The Lamdon School. The work at the school comprised laying down the foundation for the walls, lifting heavy rocks, preparing mud-mixture, carrying sand, and collecting huge logs of wood. It was extremely hot during the daytime and working for six to seven hours under the scorching sun was by no means an easy task. However, the human chain or the "chain gang" as we liked calling it, made our work of lifting heavy material much simpler and less tiring. It is these small instances of working together towards a common goal that instil in an individual the ideals of unity, teamwork and unselfishness. Apart from working at the school, we also opened an eye clinic for the villagers. ANJ, Hemang and I were the official translators. It was a pleasant experience at the eye clinic. Teaching the children at The Lamdon School was another entertaining experience. It was a good feeling going to other villages and being recognised by the same children that I had taught a few days ago.

During our stay in Sumur, we were lucky enough to get a chance to see and hear His Holiness The Dalai Lama, who was on a visit to Ladakh. I remember one of his talks in which he said that Buddhism was not about only visiting monasteries but about understanding the interdependent nature of things around us. It was an unbelievable experience to be in the presence of such a radiant personality.

Some of the other memorable experiences include the camel ride on the Bactrian camels, watching the World Cup Final at a garden café, taking long walks down the roads clicking pictures, riding on a lorry full of wood through the rocky mountain roads with high snow peaks all around us and bathing in the freezing streams.

The trek phase of the Project was hampered at many stages due to the many team members falling sick because of high altitude issues. It was disappointing when the trek route was changed; however, the picturesque setting of Ladakh compensated for the disappointment all through the trek. Our motto through the trip was 'positive attitude'. On reflection, the Round Square Project Ladakh was a truly enriching experience and we are immensely satisfied with the kind of exposure we got. It was definitely worth the time away from the too-well connected world and its hustle-bustle.

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