Brampton Tamil Seniors' Association

BRAMPTON TAMIL SENIORS' ASSOCIATION

பிரம்ரன் தமிழ் மூத்தோர் கழகம்

The Indigenous Network

雅樂居 Villa Cleanner

UNITY IN DIVERSITY SHARING CULTURES

SACHSS
SOUTH ASIAN CANADIANS HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

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MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT COORDINATOR

The Brampton Tamil Seniors' Association (BTSA) proudly presents this informative Heritage magazine about the history, traditions and cultures of the Indiginous, Chinese, South Asian and Tamil communities. Our team worked very hard to collect and compile this magazine. The picture gallery will tell you the activities we had with various cultural groups especially with the Indigenous community. We are delighted to have included some creative work from our members, speaking about their experience on cultural sharing with other communities

We are grateful to the Government of Canada, Ministry of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism for their generous grant for this project - Cultural Exchange with Indigenouus Community - from which only a small amount is utilized to produce this magazine.

On behalf of the Heritage Grant Advisory Committee I like to express my deepest gratitude to all the contributors to this magazine. My special thanks goes to Mr. David Rajaratnam, President, Mr. Stan Giri, Additional Secretary (Grants) and the late Mr.Thangavel, Vice President who was also the Team Head, for their leadership. I also wish to thank the committee members Mrs.Vasantha Rajeshwaran, Mrs. Christobelle Alphonsus and Mrs. Lydia Tharmarajah for working together with me as a team.

I earnestly hope this magazine will be a good source to BTSA members and others to learn about the history, traditions and cultures of Indiginous, Chinese, South Asian and Tamil communities.

Joyce Thiagamoorthy
Project Coordinator - Heritage Grant Advisory Committee

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the President of Brampton Tamil Seniors' Association, I am extremely pleased that the first major diversified project for our association, supported by Heritage Canada, went well.

A big thank you to Robbie Elliot of Heritage Canada, who was our project manager for this project, for all his help, support and valuable advice throughout this project.

As a senior's association, most of our past project were directed to Seniors health, social gathering, isolation, elder abuse, quality of life etc. But on this project, our project team, especially our coordinators, Joyce Thiagamoorthy, Lydia Tharmarajah (Part time) and Vasantha Rajeshwaran (Part time), deviated from that approach and went for a complete diversified approach, where seniors, met members of other communities who are diversified in culture, age, religion, interest etc. This is a major turning point and a milestone for our members, who mostly are seniors, and an eye opener for our association.

We started with Mississauga Indigenous Group, but we ended the project with having South Asian, Chinese, Pakistani association members of all ages and interest.

Finally I conclude this message by saying, a big thank you to Robbie Elliott of Heritage Canada, project coordinators who took up this challenging diversified project, our late Thanga Kathirvelu who was engaged in this project as chief of grant team and continued to manage the project until he passed away in May 2021 and all the members from our association as well as other neighboring groups, especially May Wong and Dr. Maher Hussain.

Projects of this type are very helpful to seniors and in fact all nonprofit associations to expand their outlook and community integration.

Even though we are seniors in age, our life experience in taking up challenges at much higher level, always help us to diverse our approach to support integrated community.

David Rajaratnam
President Brampton Tamil Seniors' Association

MESSAGE FROM THE ADDITIONAL SECRETARY (GRANTS)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Heritage Canada for approving our cultural exchange with other communities project, mainly involving indigenous community in Mississauga.

The project was planned to partner with other community groups, specially with the Peel Aboriginal Network to deliver the Cultural Exchange with Indigenous Community. This project will bring local seniors together with Indigenous community members to learn about each other's history, heritage and traditions.

The project went went on very well, where diversified members of the community met for weekly cultural activities, attended open air PowWow, participated and learned earth dance, Circle dance, Line dance, Social activities, learned each other's tradition, example how wedding, funeral etc. are conducted, how elders are respected and given leadership role in community events etc. All the activities came to a STOP in early 2020 due to spread of Covid 19 virus. Community centers were closed, social distancing introduced, and seniors were dying in hundreds all over the world to this virus.

As a Seniors' association, our members were most affected and we suffered the loss of few leading members. We restarted the project after a lengthy stoppage, thru remote activities, (Using Zoom technology) and we included Chinese and South Asian communities into our project. Having activities thru computers, Tablet etc. were not easy with Seniors who are not used to these technologies.

Initially we estimated about 400 seniors will participate in fifteen weekly seminars, trips, socializing, and other events offered through this project. The project was estimated will involve 40 volunteers and reach out to 1,000 seniors in its promotion and outreach.

Now that our projected is completed, overall, we are happy that we have achieved most of medium goals such as participants gain increased knowledge, understanding and comfort in moving along with different cultural members of the community, histories and practices of South Asian, Asian and Indigenous community members in Peel Region are progressing well (within the limited Covid restriction).

Our long term goals such as, Better comprehension, communication and understanding between all cultural and diversified communities, Creation of a more open and active community mindset, Creation of an ongoing dialogue of support etc. are not fully achieved, mainly due to Covid situation and extended lockdown.

Once again, I would like to thank Heritage Canada, Indigenous community, Chinese community and South Asian community for working with us in this very exciting project and bring all the communities together. I also like to thank our grant team led by Joyce Thiagamoorthy, Lydia Tharmarajah (part time), Vasantha Rajeshwaran (part time) for their tireless work to achieve our goals. Sincere thanks goes to supporting team members, Nava Thiagamoorthy, Gertrude Santhiapillai, Mr. Sivamayam, Siva Aryharan, Christobelle Alphonsus and the Magazine printers.

A special thanks to Chief of Grant Advisory Committee, Mr. Thangavel (who has passed away few months ago) for his non stop work to get us moving in the right direction. He was Magic.

Stan Giri, MEng, MSc, BSc, CQP, MCQI.
Additional Secretary (Grants)

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March 27, 2021

To: David Rajaratnam

President, Brampton Tamil Seniors Group

This is a great project with excellent opportunity to do share with your enthusiastic group our Chinese Culture and Tradition. Such cultural exchange and sharing will promote further understanding between ethnic groups in our multi-cultural Canada.

We are pleased to work with your core group who are dedicated, innovative and pleasant to work with. We wish you all the success in your future projects.

May Wong

May Wong

President

Villa Elegance

SACHSS
South Asian Canadians Health & Social Services- SACHSS

Not for profit Charity Organization
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Dr. MAHER HUSSAIN 8th April, 2021 MD (India), MPH (USA)
Chief Executive Officer & Clinical Director
South Asian Canadians Health & Social Services- SACHSS

Dear President Mr.David, Office bearers, Organisers and Members of BTSA

Congratulations on the successful organisation and completion of the Cultural Exchange Program of Brampton Tamil Seniors Association – BTSA with South Asian Canadians Health & Social Services SACHSS.

The program was very informative and interesting showcasing the cultural traditions, practices, food and festivals of Indian and Tamil Srilankan cultures.

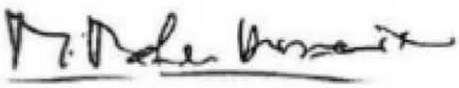
It was a great program. We all enjoyed the great program and enjoyed working with you together on this Cultural Exchange Program.

We also congratulate you on the publication of the Heritage magazine.

Your programs enrich not only the seniors of your organisation, but all the seniors from different communities.

We wish you all the success in all your future endeavours and all our collaborative programs.

With best regards



Dr.MAHER HUSSAIN

South Asian Canadians Health & Social Services – SACHSS

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A generous Heritage grant was awarded by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Government of Canada in July 2019 to the Brampton Tamil Seniors' Association (BTSA} to pursue on the above project.

Our Heritage Grant Advisory Committee (GAC) under the partnership of Mr. David Rajaratnam and Mr. Stan Giri got together with The Indigenous Network (TIN) Mississauga, headed by Angela Boyer, and pursued this project with the Indigenous community. We were able to do the activities listed below with the Indigenous people until the covid-19 lockdown.

1. Made a trip to Manitoulin Island in Sudbury to have an understanding of the culture and lifestyle of the Indigenous community. We were able to interact with diverse Indigenous community.

2. Attended Indigenous POW WOW (get together) celebration at St. Catherines and joined in their dancing. There we also met with some Indigenous students from Brock University and exchanged ideas about their experiences.

3. Celebrated BTSA's sixth anniversary at Castle Brook Public school in Brampton in partnership with The Indigenous Network, Mississauga.

4. Celebrated our Tamil Thai Pongal festival at the Castle Brook Public school to which the Indigenous Network was invited to celebrate this Tamil traditional festival with us.

5. Attended mini–POW WOW held at Fletcher Meadows Public School, Brampton and our members participated in the Pow Wow dance and also were able to interact and exchange ideas with a few young Indigenous people.

6. BTSA hosted a Unity Social with the Tamil & Indigenous Communities on February 22, 2020 at the Shingar Banquet Hall, Brampton. The Opening was by Healer Pete Wynn, followed by a Hoop Dancer performance, Tamil cultural dance performance, food, games, music, dancing and fun.

7. Some of our BTSA members visited The Indigenous Network facilities in Mississauga and learned Zumba and Belly Dances. They had an opportunity to interact with young indigenous people and had an enjoyable time with them.

8. Seminars conducted by Indigenous Network for BTSA members at Gore Meadow location in Brampton on:

- Medicine Wheel life cycle conducted by EJ Kwandiben
- Wedding Ceremonies
- Funeral Ceremonies
- Handicrafts such as making beautiful accessories with multicoloured beads conducted by Nicole Levack of the Indigenous Network.

Details of these activities are in articles written by
BTSA members published in this Heritage magazine.

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

From the middle of 2020, after the covid-19 pandemic lockdown was removed, with the consultation of Mr. Robbie Elliott, Program Officer, Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada, we have added two more communities to our project namely Chinese and South Asian. The Cultural Exchange program with the Chinese community was headed by Mrs. May Wong and the following activities and seminars were conducted every week by them.

1. Xiang Gong (live presentation) by Master Kwan Lam. Chinese Xiang-Gong is a kind of QiGong (techniques for "Life-Energy Cultivation"), combining the natural gentle movements of the body with a brief three-minute standing meditation.

2. Mrs. May Wong from Chinese Cultural Centre conducted seminars on the following topics.

- Chinese Lunar New Year & Chinese Calendar
- Chinese New Year Celebration and Tradition
- Chinese Cultural Arts
- Chinese History in brief (Then and Now)
- Hong Kong-Tourism and Culture
- Festivals & Traditions
- Cooking demo

The South Asian Cultural sharing program was headed by Dr. Maher Hussain of the South Asian Canadian Health and Social Services (SACHSS). The following programs were conducted by Mrs. Yasmin Ashraf K. Ghouse every week.

- Chapathi / Parota Making
- Indian Muslim Wedding
- Chicken Biriyani Making
- Traditional Indian Dance - Kathak Dance by Rithu
- Parsi New Year - Navroz by Yasmin Khorey
- The Holi celebration by Been Marwa

BTSA also made the following DVDs of Tamil cultural items and shared with members of Chinese cultural centre and SACHSS.

- Making of Sri Lankan Fish Cutlets
- Making of Sri Lankan Fish Buns
- A typical Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu Wedding and explanation of its rituals.
- Bharatha Natyam Recital - A South Indian cultural Dance
- Veena Recital - Veena is an ancient musical string instrument

I am glad to say the evaluation of these projects among our members are very positive. They enjoyed the programs and learned about the history, traditions and cultures of the Indigenous, Chinese and South Asian communities. To enhance more learning about these communities for our members and others, we the Heritage Grant Committee has published this Heritage Magazine.

On behalf of the Heritage Grant Advisory Committee, I like to thank Angela Boyer of The Indigenous Network, Mrs. May Wong of Chinese Cultural Centre and Dr. Maher Hussain of SACHSS for their support in making this project a success. Without the hard work of Mr. David Rajaratnam (President), Mr. Stan Giri (Additional Secretary-Grants), the late Mr. Kathir Thangavel (Vice President and Team Head), and the committee members Mrs. Vasantha Rajeshwaran, Mrs. Christobelle Alphonsus and Mrs. Lydia Tharmarajah, the successful completion of this project would not have been possible.

On behalf of BTSA, a BIG THANK YOU to the Ministry of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Government of Canada, for funding this project.

Joyce Thiagamoorthy
Project Coordinator (Heritage Grant)

CANADIANS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INDEGENOUS PEOPLE

National Aboriginal Day is a chance to educate and reflect on the lives and status of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

To recognize this day, Suzanne L. Stewart, interim director of the Indigenous Education Initiative at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and Jean-Paul Restoule, associate professor of Aboriginal Education, have compiled a list of 12 things the average Canadian should know about Indigenous people in Canada.

1. Who are Indigenous peoples?
There are about 1.4 million people of Indigenous ancestry in Canada, refering to three distinct cultural groups of original inhabitants:

- First Nations (status and non-status Indians)
- Metis (a culture born of the mixing of elements of First Nations and European settlers, primarily French and Scottish. While having roots in the Great Lakes, it flourished most prominently in the Red River Valley)
- Inuit (peoples from far northern territories)

2. Where do Indigenous people live?

- Ontario has the largest concentration of Indigenous people— almost 250,000
- Six Nations of The Grand River is the largest reserve in Canada, with over 21,000 members
- Over 60% of the national Indigenous population lives in urban areas

3. First Ride Share in Canada
The original ride share service in Canada was at the mouth of the Humber where Indigenous people left canoes for anyone travelling upriver to use. People coming downriver in turn left canoes for others to use.

4. Signing Up for Battle
Indigenous people joined the Canadian world war efforts in greater numbers per capita than any other subpopulation of Canada, primarily to defend "the land," and not necessarily the nation nor Europe's reasons for conflict.

5. How many languages?
There are anywhere between 52 and 70 languages indigenous to what is now called Canada (depending on how you count them). Only three are expected to survive this century. But many people are working hard to change that.

6. Suicide rates – 7x higher among First Nations youth
Suicide rates among First Nations youth are up to seven times higher than among non-Indigenous youth. This tragic reality was highlighted in April 2016 when five children tried to take their own lives on a Friday night at the Attawapiskat First Nation. Twenty-eight of its community members also attempted suicide a month earlier.

7. Clean water
Close to 20 per cent of First Nations communities are under a drinking water advisory, a stat that has remained remarkably consistent for the past 25 years.

8. The truth about taxes
Most Aboriginal people pay Canadian taxes. Tax exemptions are accorded only to certain Aboriginal people (Status Indians) under circumstances (usually if the goods are purchased on or delivered to a reserve or in the case of employment income, it is earned on a reserve).
Dispelling the Myth: Indigenous people do not get free post-secondary education, generally speaking.

CANADIANS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INDEGENOUS PEOPLE (CONT)

9. Life before Europeans arrived

Prior to the arrival and settlement of European immigrants, Indigenous people had complex and successful knowledge systems and practices about land systems, sciences, mathematics, clans, politics, physical and mental health, and food security that provided healthy and abundant livelihood for millions of peoples for tens of thousands of years.

10. Are non-Indigenous Canadians affected by treaties? How?

Treaties between the Federal Government of Canada and First Nations are still important and binding today. Treaties are not only for Indigenous peoples - Canadians have treaty rights and responsibilities too but don't often think of them. Most Canadians live in a treaty area and where they don't they are on unceded Indigenous lands. More than 70 historical treaties were negotiated by the Federal Government of Canada with First Nations and Métis peoples between 1701 and 1923. The first Modern Treaty to be signed was on November 11, 1975, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (Parks Canada, 2016).

11. How did the Indian Act of 1876 change the lives of Indigenous peoples?

Most Canadians don't know that most Indigenous peoples' lives are governed by federal laws under the Indian Act of 1876, which continue today. This affects Indigenous peoples' access to health care, education, housing, clean drinking water, and many other things that non-Indigenous Canadians often take for granted.

12. Residential Schools: Canada's Horrific – and Not So Distant– Past

Education was used as a tool of oppression for Indigenous peoples through Indian residential schools, an extensive school system set up by the Federal government. They were administered by churches from the early 1920s to the mid-1990s. The goals of residential schools was, according to the Indian Act, "To kill the Indian in the child" and was based on the premise that Aboriginal cultures were inferior to White Christian ones. Canadian Indigenous children were forcibly removed, often by the Indian Agent or the RCMP, from their families and communities and shipped to the schools and kept for months and years. Many children experienced sexual abuse, corporal punishment for speaking their language, and were instilled with beliefs that being Indigenous was bad. In 2006 the Federal Government began a process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples for the harms suffered and treatments experienced by survivors of Residential School through the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which released its final report in 2015. Where do things stand now in terms of education? It will take about 20 years to close the education gap between First Nations and other Canadians, if action to make changes is taken. Some factors that contribute to this situation are:

- There are 40 First Nation communities without schools.
- There are First Nation communities where children haven't been to school in more than two years.
- The K-12 completion rate for First Nation students living on-reserve is 49%
- First Nation students are more likely to end up in jail than to graduate high school.
- First Nation students attending on-reserve schools are funded at a rate of $3,000 – $7,000 less than students attending other schools in Canada (AFN, 2011).
- There are almost 600 unresolved cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada

Compiled by:
Suzanne L. Stewart, Interim Director of the Indigenous Education Initiative
And Jean- Paul Restoule, Associate Professor of Aboriginal Education

CANADA'S FIRST NATION

It is very interesting to study the origin the culture and the history of the first nation in Canada in todays context comparing with other groups or societies living in this beautiful country. First Nations- also known as Natives and Native Canadians- are an aboriginal group in Canada and one of the country's original inhabitants. Today their history lives on through cultural centers, museums, and festivals.

In Canada, the term Aboriginal peoples refers to First Nations, Inuit, and Metis which was determined in Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1983. Each of these groups were the country's original inhabitants, and they all have very different histories. The First Nations have been in Canada for at least 12000 years, but it could be for much longer.

Today Canada is the most multi-cultural country in the world and the home of immigrants of every ethnic and religious groups from every country in the world. But less than 500 years ago , the only people living in Canada were the Aboriginal people of Canada." Aboriginal" means the original inhabitants, the people who were here first. The words "Native" or " Indigenous" are also used , and mean the same thing. Today they all collectively refer to themselves as the First Nations or First Peoples of Canada. However there are many different cultural groups.

Canada's first people used at least 53 different languages. Each group referred to themselves by a specific name in their own language. For instance, the Inuit- colloquially know for years as Eskimos - have always referred to themselves as Inuit- the people or in the singular as an Inuk-a person.

Scientists do not agree on where First Nations people come from, or how they got to North America, but they do know that First Nations people are genetically related to people in parts of Asia. Scientists know that First Nations people have lived in what is now Canada for at least 12000 years, because they have found bones and artifacts that go back that far. Many scientists now believe that some of the first peoples may have been here for much longer than that.

Documenting the effects of the Indian residential school system (governmental boarding schools for indigenous children), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) recently defined reconciliation as 'establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The commission determined that this is a relationship that Canada does not presently have. The country is at an important moment in its relationship with the First Nations. It is beginning to acknowledge its own colonial history and there is discussion of how reconciliation might be achieved. The context of why reconciliation is needed relates to dark aspects of Canadian history, which linger on today.

There were many reasons why Canadians wanted to assimilate indigenous peoples into their society. Some were well intentioned, albeit condescending, such as the belief that it was only by assuming Western culture that indigenous peoples could survive in a modern world. Other reasons were more malicious, such as the belief that this process would invalidate the claims of the Indigenous peoples to their lands, meaning it could be divided up and seized for Canadians.

CANADA'S FIRST NATION (CONT)

This thinking led to the horrors of the Indian residential school system. These schools were, for much of their existence, run by Church denominations and later by the state, from the late 19th to late 20th centuries, the last of the schools closing in 1996. Not all students had negative experiences, but there were many cases at these schools of extreme emotional and physical abuse, including deaths. First Nations children were isolated from their families and forced to give up their own languages and cultures. This had disastrous implications for the self-esteem of many indigenous children. Bud Whiteye, who attended the Mohawk Institute Residential school explained the extensive and oppressive cultural regime within these institutions. There you didn't anything but English. You went to the white man's school. You went to the White man's church. You wore White men's clothes. All those were built in. It was not a class room type lecture. It was ingrained in the system . All this was designed to alienate children from their indigenous identities as they were removed from their families – often forcibly. It was this, specifically, that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada would go on to describe in 2015 as " cultural genocide " when it determined that the schools deliberately prevented 'the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next'.

First Nations peoples inhabited North America, or Turtle Island, as some cultures call it, for thousand of years before Europeans arrived in the continent. The traditions of many of these cultures tell us that it is their land of origin. Canada by contrast, is a young nation. Although remaining a British Colony for many decades afterwards, it became independent from the U.K in 1867.With this, it is inherited treaty obligations -agreements that had been signed between First Nation peoples as sovereign nations and the British crown. Soon after its independence, Canada asserted control over indigenous peoples and lands. The Indian Act (1876), which is still upheld with amendments in Canadian law, was imposed on First Nation peoples without their consultation. It was, and still is, legal reaction to Canada's treaty obligations. It limits the self-governance of First Nations peoples, their control over indigenous lands and service they use such as education and health care.

During this period, First Nations peoples, like Native Americans in the US, were also confined on reservations. Within these spaces, Canadian authorities attempted to suppress indigenous cultural practices. The Potlatch festival for example, a practice which could be used to redistribute wealth or as a rite of passage depending on the culture, was made into a criminal offence in Section 33 of An Act Further to Amend the Indian Act (1880). This ban lasted until 1951.

This was all part of a larger process by which Canadian authorities were consciously trying to eliminate indigenous identities and assimilate these peoples into Canadian culture, largely because they wanted them, as an ethnic minority group with unique treaty statuses, to disappear. In 1920, Duncan Campbell Scott, the Canadian Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs said of his government's policy "our objective is to continue until there is not an Indian that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department.

CANADA'S FIRST NATION (CONT)

Canada has much work to do towards reconciliation. First Nation peoples are still enduring the consequences of colonialism. As a demographic group in Canada they are more likely to, among other things, experience overcrowded housing, food insecurity, unemployment, mental health problems in their youth and low levels of confidence in the justice system. In 2015, indigenous peoples (including Metis and Inuit) accounted for 25% of homicide victims, despite only representing an estimated five percent of the population. Canadian provinces also still allow the exploitation of indigenous lands by businesses and the lucrative extinction of natural resources on these lands, something which many indigenous peoples oppose.

The sovereignty of First Nations remains limited. As First Nations activists Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Donald Derrickson have pointed out, Canadian government does not allow Indigenous peoples significant power, over any land or resources in. Aboriginal and treaty territory except for the 0.2% that has been designated Indian reserve lands, like indigenous peoples who have resisted colonialism in the past, many First Nations peoples are unwilling to accept this situation. For them, Canada needs to make significant concessions so that a better relationship can be developed.

Canada's historic treatment of First Nations peoples has been oppressive, seeking to exploit their lands and eliminate their cultures. There have however been some improvements in, or at least acknowledgements of, the way in which First Nation peoples are treated through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Yet for many First Nations Peoples, Canada needs to accept that indigenous self- governance and control of lands must be allowed if reconciliation efforts are to be sincere.

Murugesu Krishnapillai,
Attorney-at-Law & Notary Public,
Solicitor (England & Wales)

A MEMORABLE FOUR DAYS TRIP: BRAMPTON TAMIL SENIORS ASSOCIATION

It is my great privilege to share with you about the four days trip I went with our BTSA members to Sudbury, Manitoulin Island and Montreal in August, 2019. I thoroughly enjoyed, and I would like to share my thoughts about this trip. It was an exciting Tuesday morning; about 55 seniors from BTSA journeyed on this amazing trip. It was a great fun filled trip with sing songs and delicious snacks, served by the seniors in a timely manner until our bellies were full in the bus.

First we went to Sudbury to see the famous nickel mine and were able to see the image of the big Nickel Coin standing upright in the middle on the top of a hilly area which is a famous tourist attraction and it was erected in 1951. This famous roadside attraction is a monument to the Canadian nickel industry. The reason that the land is so rich in copper and nickel is because it is located right on the third largest known impact crater on earth. This rock was several kilometers below the earth's surface when it was broken up by a massive meteorite that struck the Sudbury area 1.85 billion years ago. The impact blasted out a 200 km wide crater, melting and ejecting fragments of rock into the air. These fragments fell back onto the larger fragments that remained and both were combined in the melt sheet.

Then in the evening we went to the famous Bell Park which is a large municipal park in Greater Sudbury, located on the western shore of Ramsey Lake. There we enjoyed the beauty of the sandy beach of the lake. Sudbury has beautiful lakes and offers a wide variety of accommodations and a range of options to attract tourism. In Sudbury we stayed in one of the reputed top class hotels for 2 days and drove around visiting the beautiful spots such as lakes and bunds with rocks and greenery.

On the 2nd day we visited the Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron with an area of 2,766 km square. It is the largest fresh water island in the world, large enough that it has over 100 inland lakes itself. Our aim is to exchange culture with Canadian Natives and to know about their rich culture. First we went to the places where the Natives are dwelling. We saw the way they are living. After that we visited the M'Chigeeng First Nation, also known as West Bay. In M'Chigeeng we visited The Ojibwe Cultural Foundation which was created to preserve and vitalize the language, culture, arts, spirituality, and traditions of the Anishinaabe People of the Manitoulin Island. The staff is amazing, proud of their culture and open to teach you all about Ojibwe culture and traditions. The museum is a very moving, more of a celebration of First Nation traditions. The quill boxes are absolutely beautiful. This is in the heart of Manitoulin Island. We are very thankful to the Heritage Canada for providing the Heritage Grant for the cultural exchange.

Next we visited the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church which is very close to the Cultural Foundation and M'Chigeeng Administration Office. We were thankful to the lady pastor and much appreciated her prompt response to our request to visit us. She opened the church for us, explaining clearly about their customs and order of service in a solemn manner. The seniors were listening to her in pin drop silence. The architecture of the Church is phenomenal in a unique way. We were able to gather new things and interesting information about the indigenous people's history, habits, lifestyle etc.

Our next visit is to the museum that has many varieties of arts and crafts made by the indigenous people in an intricate manner. Every piece which was in the Museum has a story behind it. The seniors were able to have a closer look and benefitted with their wonderful job. They also purchased many items from the adjoining Gift Shop.

A MEMORABLE FOUR DAYS TRIP: BRAMPTON TAMIL SENIORS ASSOCIATION

Then we proceeded to Montreal and on our way we stopped to see the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, is a place of pilgrimage situated in the hillside of Rigaud, Montreal, in a green natural area; dedicated to the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. The worship place is outside and the pews were arranged in such a way the daily gathering is very large. The colorful candles and the statues added to the beauty of the inside sanctuary. After that it was getting dark and we went to another good hotel and stayed the third night there.

During this three nights and four days trip we were mingling with each other and helping among them which were a healthy experience. I observed that all the seniors were very co-operative and well united, had a team spirit throughout the trip.

The next day morning we visited the Subramanya/ Ayyappa/ Mariamman Temple in Val – Morin, Montreal where the devotees climbed the hard rock to go to the top where the temple is located for worshiping. We took part in the morning Pooja, which is a ceremony or ritual during which we make offerings to deities in order to receive blessings or good fortune. And on completion we visited the famous Atwater Market is a market hall located in the Saint-Henri area of Montreal. The interior market is a home to many butchers and bakeries. The outside market has many farmers' stalls which sell both local and imported produce. There we purchased various items including fresh fruits. Then we all had our lunch in the hotel and rested for few hours and started our journey back to Brampton.

Finally on our way to Brampton we visited "The Big Apple", are a bakery, restaurant and are a large tourist attraction in the community of Colborne. We bought apples, apple pie, apple cider, apple syrup and many more items.

We are so grateful to all the seniors of BTSA who helped us to weave those connections linking people together. This shows their sense of community, strengthening their understanding and building up with a positive attitude to become more close to each other. We had fun filled time during the whole trip which made the seniors become as young and act like spring chicken again. I am so amazed to see their enthusiasm with energetic activities, singing and dancing in the bus.

This trip would not have been possible without the hard work, the co-ordination and a team work put in by the seniors of the committee. One thing that worked best for this trip was the seniors working together in one accord. May God bless all the members of BTSA and give us good health and happiness in the coming years to enable to build the BTSA's future in a brighter and a higher level.

By Lydia Tharmarajah
Heritage Grant Advisory Committee Member 2021

TRIP TO ST. CATHARINES TO VIEW FIRST NATION'S POW WOW CEREMONY

We 24 members of the Brampton Tamil Seniors' Association on 5th of October 2019. Started our ' journey to the above place at 9:00 am from Gore Meadows Recreation Centre. This trip was organized by Mrs. Vasantha Rajeswaran and Mrs. Joyce Thiyagamoorthy. After a short break on the way we reached St. Catherine venue arena at 11:45 am.

When we arrived there we saw many people with glamorous outfit which was really a beautiful sight. Most of the elderly Native American men with the eagle status wanted to save their tradition had given their knowledge to their brother hood. The few members left are carrying on their tradition of celebrating POW WOW. The POW WOW is a dance for celebration of life. The First Nation people from different parts of America had gathered in this arena to show their friendship and culture by singing Native songs.

Natives from Malchida. Chokta Okalahoma and other places were there to celebrate the occasion. This was the seventh celebration of POW WOW in the same arena. There were three big drums kept on the ' floor and three or four people sat around each drum beating at the same time and singing songs in their language.

All presented were requested to stand and remove their head gear as the Grand entry of Eagle staff and no one was permitted to take photo or video. Famous dancer Mr. Clayton Logan !kW Veteran was present in the arena. All the Flags belonging to the Eagle staff, Turtle island North America, Flags of Other Nations, American, Canadian and Mental Health flags were paraded along the Grand Entry. After the Grand Entry we were allowed to take photograph. The gathering presented there were from three years to elderly. They were in their traditional dresses dancing around the arena was very fascinating to us There were many dancing competitions for different groups. On their request to join in the dance, members of the Brampton Tamil Seniors also took part. There was an eating competition and other sorts of activities. Seven people took part in the eating competition one woman and six men. The competition was to eat without using their hands. They have to eat the food by mouth without leaving any trace and one of the men who ate early got the prize.

We got the permission to take photograph in front of the hoisted flags and we took photographs with the First Nations in their traditional dress.

There were many stalls around the arena selling food, first nation's traditional ornaments etc. After a short time of shopping we started our journey from there about 3:45p.m and reached our destination at 6:30 pm.

We take pleasure in congratulating and thanking the organizers of the Heritage grant committee for organizing such a wonderful trip to learn our First Nation's tradition and culture.

Dr. Rathakrishnan Kandiah
Ex President & Founder Member - BTSA

THE SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS

Nibwaakaawin-Wisdom: To cherish knowledge is to know Wisdom. Wisdom is given by the Creator to be used for the good of the people. In the Anishinaabe language, this word expresses not only "wisdom," but also means "prudence," or "intelligence." In some communities, Gikendaasowin is used; in addition to "wisdom," this word can also mean "intelligence" or "knowledge."

Zaagi'idiwin-Love: To know Love is to know peace. Love must be unconditional. When people are weak they need love the most. In the Anishinaabe language, this word with the reciprocal theme /idi/ indicates that this form of love is mutual. In some communities, Gizhaawenidiwin is used, which in most context means "jealousy" but in this context is translated as either "love" or "zeal". Again, the reciprocal theme /idi/ indicates that this form of love is mutual.

Minaadendamowin-Respect: To honor all creation is to have Respect. All of creation should be treated with respect. You must give respect if you wish to be respected. Some communities instead use Ozhibwaadenindiwin or Manazoonidiwin.

Aakode'ewin-Bravery: Bravery is to face the foe with integrity. In the Anishinaabe language, this word literally means "state of having a fearless heart." To do what is right even when the consequences are unpleasant. Some communities instead use either Zoongadikiwin ("state of having a strong casing") or Zoongide'ewin ("state of having a strong heart").

Gwayakwaadiziwin-Honesty: Honesty in facing a situation is to be brave. Always be honest in word and action. Be honest first with yourself, and you will more easily be able to be honest with others. In the Anishinaabe language, this word can also mean "righteousness."

Dabaadendiziwin-Humility: Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation. In the Anishinaabe language, this word can also mean "compassion." You are equal to others, but you are not better. Some communities instead express this with Bekaadiziwin, which in addition to "humility" can also be translated as "calmness," "meekness," "gentility" or "patience."

Debwewin-Truth: Truth is to know all of these things. Speak the truth. Do not deceive yourself or others.

Courtesy of The Indigenous Network)

CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN BTSA AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

We started this cultural exchange program in 2019 and continued until 2021. We were able to share our cultures and the significance of our traditions and values, we found both cultures have a lot in common when it comes to marriages and funerals. These cultural exchange programs were possible with the help of David Rajaratnam, Stan Giri, Thangavel Kathir, Joyce Thiagamoorthy and Vasantha Rajeshwaran from the BTSA. From the indigenous side we had Angela Boyer spear heading and the members of the Indigenous Network.

During this cultural exchange we were able to visit different places to explore their lifestyle and have a better understanding of their culture. These trips took us to Manitoulin Island in Sudbury. We also attended their POW WOW in St. Catherine and met Brock University students and exchanged ideas about their experiences. We were able to witness how POW WOW is conducted and we were able to participate as well. We educated ourselves on their different flags of the indigenous people and met the Mohawk tribes from the USA.

We celebrated BTSA's sixth anniversary at Castle Brook Public school and the Indigenous people attended the occasion under the leadership of Angela Boyer from the Indigenous Network. Nicole Levack from the indigenous group performed a "Shawl Dance" on the stage along with our program.

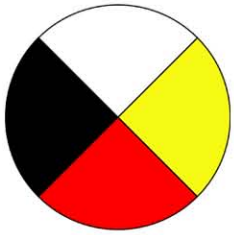
We celebrated our Thai Pongal festival at the Castle Brook Public school and the Indigenous Network was invited and we were able to have the famous "Friendship Dance" both communities participated and it was fun. One of the indigenous people was exhibiting their traditional drum playing and the water drum explaining the purpose of the drums and the significance and importance role it plays in their community. We were invited to a mini–POW WOW held at Fletcher Meadows Public school and our members participated in the pow wow dance as well, after the inauguration ceremony.

We had few seminars held at Gore Meadows and the seminars were sponsored by BTSA with the Indigenous Network. BTSA also sponsored a seminar about Medicine Wheel life cycle conducted by EJ Kwandiben. Major concept was they always make their entrance in the eastern direction to indicate Sun-Beginning of Life. Connection to mother earth, indicating Mother's Womb. Women are considered the backbone of the community and they are the life givers.

Indigenous Network introduced us to the Beads Making craft at the Gore Meadows facility and it was conducted by Nicole Levack of the indigenous Network our members were able to learn craft. Some of our members visited their facility and learned Zumba dance and belly dance. Unity Social with Tamils & Indigenous Community was hosted by BTSA on Feb 22, 2020 at the Singer Banquet Hall. The event was inaugurated with sweet grass purification by the indigenous community member Mrs. Tim McGregor. We had Bharatha Natyam dance recital performed by Tamil girls and Line Dance by BTSA members joined by Angela Boyer, Sheryl Jacob. One of the indigenous members gave us a hoop dance recital. Our BTSA member Gurunathan and Cheryl Jacob of the indigenous community sang a duet song. Finally, indigenous members and our BTSA members took the floor to have a dance to Tamil song. Our cultural exchange program was successful.

Vasantha Rajeshwaran
Heritage Grant Advisory Committee Member (2019-2020)

THE SCIENCE OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL



Many cultures have attempted to track the movements of the sun, the moon and the stars and have used these celestial bodies to measure time, to follow specific geographic routes using cardinal directions and to relate to the physical and spiritual world they live in. There are numerous examples of ancient sites around the world where ancient cultures and ancestors laid out stones in patterns that relate very closely to the movements of the sun and can be used as calendars showing accurate sunrises and sunsets on the solstices and observed equinoxes.

The Medicine Wheel, sometimes known as the Sacred Hoop or Sacred Circle, has been used by generations of various Native American tribes and First Nations in Canada for health and healing and as a tool for learning and teaching. There are many interpretations of the Medicine Wheel by many people and cultures, and no one is wrong. Depending on the teachings they received, many Elders, including SAY Magazine's consulting Elder Norman "Redsky" Monkman, refer to the Medicine Wheel as the Medicine Circle. In fact, "Medicine Wheel" is not an Indigenous term – this term was given to the structures by the first Europeans and is not the way the first peoples referred to their rock structures. In fact, a wheel was a foreign concept to the ancient first peoples, but this is how they are commonly referred to in present time.

For the purpose of this article we will use the more widely recognized term Medicine Wheel.
There are seven common teachings associated with the medicine wheel in many First Nations' cultures. These teachings vary by tribal custom and by the elders relating their own heritage and stories. However, there are a lot of common themes that can be taught and discussed that are truly relevant to modern life and can be proudly taught as evidence of the high level of knowledge in cosmic things, in the changing of seasons, in timekeeping, in the use and respect for animals, in plants and in the elements.

There is no right or wrong way to use the medicine wheel as a teaching tool. It is both a universal symbol and a personal mnemonic tool for various cultures. Inviting elders to relate their associated learnings about the medicine wheel is an important way of preserving and passing on culturally important knowledge. The knowledge vested in elders should be honoured and respected.

USING THE MEDICINE WHEEL IN TEACHINGS

THE CIRCLE

The circle, or wheel, is a common symbol in many cultures and represents several elements to the First Nations. The circle acknowledges the connectedness of everything in life, such as the four seasons, the four stages of life and the four winds, and it represents the continuous cycle and relationship of the seen and unseen, the physical and spiritual, birth and death, and the daily sunrise and sunset.

The circle is divided into four coloured quadrants. The colours can vary, but the symbolism remains similar amongst the first peoples. The wheel moves in a clockwise direction, with the teachings always beginning at the yellow, or eastern, quadrant. These colours relate to teachings of the directions, seasons, elements, animals, plants, heavenly bodies and the stages of life.

THE SCIENCE OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL (CONT)

LESSON #1: THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

The four colour quadrants on the medicine wheel can represent the four directions: north, south, east and west. The teachings of the four directions start with the east, or yellow, quadrant and run clockwise around the circle. Red symbolizes the south, black the west and white the north.

LESSON #2: THE FOUR SEASONS

The four seasons (spring, summer, fall and winter) are also represented in the medicine wheel's colours. Yellow symbolizes spring. We start the wheel with yellow the same way we start the seasons with spring when life is renewed; it is a time of planting and birth. Red represents summer and is a time of abundance when ripe red berries are picked, and fresh food is preserved. Black represents fall; this is when plants mature, and harvests take place. White symbolizes the winter season when there is death and completion of the life cycle.

LESSON #3: THE FOUR ELEMENTS

The four elements, fire, earth, water and wind, can be taught through the medicine wheel. In the teaching of the elements, the yellow quadrant represents fire, since from fire we receive warmth and light. Red represents earth, as it is from the earth, we receive the food we eat and the medicine we need to live; it is our life blood. Black symbolizes water. It is essential to our bodies, flowing to all the plants and animals on the earth. Wind is represented by the white quadrant. It is the air we need to breathe; it is the life-giving force we cannot see.

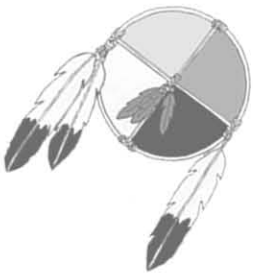
LESSON #4: ANIMALS

There are no firm rules about what animals are associated with the medicine wheel or in which quadrant they must be shown. This is a matter of choice and tradition. However, there are some common spirit animals that are associated with the wheel: the eagle, the buffalo, the wolf or coyote and the bear.
The eagle is most often shown in the yellow section and represents the eagle's vision, power and ability to see the bigger picture of the world from above. The eagle is the bird that flies closest to the creator and is the messenger between people and the creator.

The buffalo is frequently represented in the red quadrant. The buffalo is a provider, a strong spirit with great endurance and emotional courage. In some cases, red also symbolizes the mouse or rabbit, spirit animals that are associated with abundance and busy working.

The wolf or coyote is normally shown in the black quadrant. The coyote is a spirit animal that is playful, adaptable and is often characterized as a "jokester". The wolf spirit animal is intelligent, has strong instincts and demonstrates freedom as an essential way of life. The wolf at times can also represent distrust and fear of being threatened.

The white, or northern, quadrant is frequently associated with the bear, a brother to people. The bear is strong, confident and is a powerful image of healing for both the physical and emotional.
The white section is also often associated with the white buffalo calf, which is a sacred animal to the first nations.



THE SCIENCE OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL (CONT)

LESSON #5: PLANTS

The medicinal plants associated with the medicine wheel are all plants that can be used to smudge. The plant associated with the yellow/eastern section of the medicine wheel is tobacco. Tobacco is a sacred plant used to honour the creator. It was the first medicinal plant given to the people, and it is often offered as a gift to other medicinal plants, to honour the spirits or to begin a personal conversation with the creator. The plant associated with the southern section is sage. Sage is often used in ceremonies as a smudge to remove negative energies, to cleanse the mind, and to ready for the ceremonies and teachings. Sweetgrass is associated with the black/western quadrant. It is a calming smudge and is used for purification prior to important ceremonies. Cedar is represented by the white/northern part of the medicine wheel, and it is a plant that can be used to purify an area such as a home or sweat lodge. It is often considered a guardian to keep away evil.

LESSON #6: HEAVENLY BODIES

The alignment of the medicine wheel on the ground is placed in relation to the heavenly bodies and how they move through our lives. The sun rises in the east, and so it is represented in the yellow section, the beginning of the medicine wheel. The rising sun signals a new day, and this section is also seen as morning in some teachings. The sun represents new beginnings and a renewal of the rhythms of life.

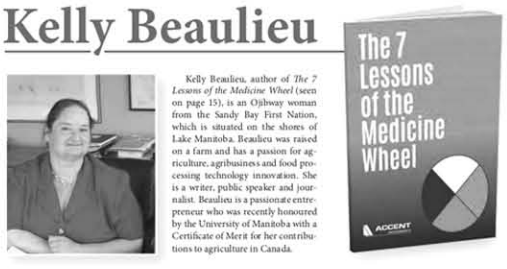
The earth is represented in the south, which is directly below the stars, or heavens. The earth is the sacred home of the people and is the giver of the essentials of life. It is a living system in which people are integrally bound from birth until death. The moon is represented by the west or the blackness of night. The moon helps to guide times of planting and is a way to record time and events. The stars are represented in the northern section. They mirror what is below and represent those that have gone before. They also represent ways of understanding and of navigating at night using constellations.

LESSON #7: STAGES OF LIFE

The four sections of the medicine wheel also symbolize the four stages of human life. The eastern section represents the beginning of life, birth and early childhood. It is a time of innocence and purity. The east is where people come from. The east represents new life being brought into the world. The southern section represents youth and adolescence, a time of growth and the beginning of knowledge. It is a time of learning and represents the mental development of self.

The west is the time of adulthood and parenthood, when responsibilities and nurturing are one's main occupations. The west represents the emotional self and meeting the fulfillment of life as we find our meaning and place.

Finally, the northern section of the wheel represents elders, grandparents and death. The white symbolizes the hair of the elders and their years of learning. This is the place of wisdom and of imparting the knowledge gained from a lifetime of living in the physical world to the younger generations. It is a time of reflection, rest and increased understanding of the aspects of the spiritual world.



By: Kelly J. Beaulieu, B.A., BSc Ag

DIVERSITY AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

According to independent senator, Ratna Omidvar, Statistics Canada survey report reveals a "Diversity Deficit "in the governance of Canada's charitable and nonprofit sector which relies on government funding and donation for their day to day operation.

She continued to say that we all think the nonprofit and Charitable organizations as angels, and they are but, even the angels need evidence to take further actions.

Knowing and working with a number of associations, specially seniors' association in an around our neighborhood, the proportions of women participants against number of women on board of directors, or any leading projects, it is about 80:20 (80% total women members represented only 20% on the board), and many organization do not have any procedures or inhouse policies to implement to balance this diversity ratio. It also appears, wherever manual work is required, or any odd jobs, such as tea making, collection donation, or any action required after the verbal garbage at board meetings, etc. the diversity is 80% women and 20% men.

Having diversity on age, racial background, sex, education, where they originated from etc. are very important for all the above associations, specially charities and nonprofits because the board of directors set their missions, they decide how dollars are spent, they make decision on how associations will respond to this and that. They are in control of the resources that come from the government and donors.

A statistics report released last week (February 2021), only 42% of the people responded said that their associations have written policies on board diversity, and their policies are very vague that it can be interpreted to suit the day and time. According to the above report, 22percent of Canadian population are immigrants; 19 percent belong to a visible minority group; 22 percent on the above have some form of disabilities and 5 percent are First Nations, Metis or Inuits.

A suggestion put forward by the above Senator, for the Canada revenue agency to require every charitable and nonprofits to submit information pertaining to their governance diversity in order to renew their registration status annually. Adding this one question on the renewal form is not going to cost anyone any money, but it will get us the evidence that the politicians need and will be able to take further. This will require political will.

In every associations, there are candidates who are qualified and willing, ready and able to serve on board, but they are neglected when members for the board or major activities are selected.

It is time that Canadians woke up to that diversity deficit in our own little non profit association. This may be a drop in an ocean, but every little drop makes the country to treat all as equal.

Stan Giri MEng, MSc, BSc, CQP, MCQI
Additional Secretary (Grants)

PICTURES FROM BELLY DANCE/ZUMBA 2020

PICTURES FROM ACTIVITIES WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY 2020

பெண்ணினத்தின் பெருமை

ஞாலத்தின் படைப்பில் முதற் பேறு தாய்மை.
ஆதி மூலத்தின் கூற்றின் முதற் பகுதியும் அ.்.தே.
அதற்கு அமைவான உறுப்புக்களும் பெண் இனத்திற்கே உண்டு.
இது எல்லா ஜீவராசிகளிலும் பெண்மைக்கே சொந்தமானது.
பலனை எதிர் நோக்காது பக்குவமாய்ப் பெற்றெடுத்து,
பாலூட்டித் தாலாட்டி அன்புடன் பண்பூட்டி வளர்ப்பதும் பெண் குலமே.
வாழ்க்கையில் வளைந்து கொடுப்பதும் பெண்மையே.
தலை நிமிர வைப்பதும் பெண்மையே.
காற்றோடு கரைவதும் பெண்மைதான்.
கனலாகிக் காப்பதும் பெண்மைதான்.
அடக்கத்தின் பிறப்பிடமும் பெண்தான்.
அவலங்கள் கண்டு ஆவேஷமாவதும் பெண்தான்.
அடுத்தவர் துயரம் கண்டால் இரங்கி அரவணைப்பதும் பெண்ணே.
நடிப்பவர் உயரம் கண்டாலோ கடுகடுத்து நகைப்பாள்.
ஆறை நூறு ஆக்குவாள், அறநெறியில் நின்று ஆக்கமும் புரிவாள்.
அழகு வடிவமும் பெண்ணில் தான்.
அளக்க முடியாத ஆழமும் பெண்ணிற்கு உள்ளே தான்.
ஓய்வு இன்றி உழைப்பவளும் அவளே.
உரிமைக்குப் போர் ஆடுபவளும் அவளே.
தொட்டது எல்லாம் துலங்கவும் வைப்பாள்.
துணிவிற்கும் இலக்கணம் ஆவாள்.
பத்தரை மாற்றுத் தங்கம் பெண் தானே.
பணிந்தாரைக் காக்கும் பராசக்தியும் பெண்ணே.
புனிதத்தில் புதைந்திருக்கும் சுகம் - பெண் சுகம் தானே.
அது புரியாதவர்க்கு புதிராக இருப்பவளும் பெண்ணே.
அர்த்தம் உள்ள சொற்களை அடுக்கடுக்காய்ப் பேசுவாள்.
ஆழம் உள்ள கருத்துக்களை அழகழகாய் எடுத்து உரைப்பாள்.
கருணையின் வடிவமும் பெண். காளியின் எழுச்சியும் பெண்ணே!
ஆணுக்கும் பெண்ணுக்கும் அடையாளம் காண முடியாத அளவில்,
நாகரீகம் என அலங்கோலம் ஆகின்றனர் தான் இன்றைய சில பெண்கள்.
மகனைப் பெற்றதால், மனிதத்தை மறந்த சில அன்னையர்
தன்னைப் போல் ஒரு அன்னையின் மகள் தான்,
தன் மருமகள் என்பதனை மறக்கின்றார்கள்.
அவர்களுக்கும் ஒரு நற்செய்தி!!!
பணத்திற்கு மதிப்பு அளித்துப் பண்பை மிதிக்க வேண்டாம்.
குணத்திற்கு மதிப்பளித்துக் குடும்பத்தைக் கோவில் ஆக்க வேண்டும்.
கசப்புக்களும் காரங்களும் அறுசுவைகளில் அமைந்தவை தானே.
நதிகள் சங்கமம் ஆகும் இடம் கடல்.
பண்புகள் சங்கமம் ஆகும் இடம் பெண் தானே.
கடல் பொங்க நேர்ந்தால் காடு மேடு காணாமற் போகும்.
எனவே பெண்களே பெண்ணினத்தின் பெருமை காக்க வேண்டின்,
புண்ணியம் தங்க வேண்டும், புன்மைகள் ஒழிய வேண்டும்.

நன்றி!

திருமதி. கண்மணி கனகேந்திரம்
பிரம்டன் தமிழ் முதியோர் சங்கம் (BTSA)

கலாச்சாரம் பகிர்வோம்

ஒரு மனிதனுடைய வாக்கையின் பண்பு, கலாச்சாரம் அதிக முக்கிய தத்துவத்தை வகிக்கும் ஒன்றாகும். அவனுடைய வாழ்க்கையை, நல்ல பண்புகள் ,நன்றாக வாழ்வதற்கு உதவுகிறது. அதேபோல சில கலாச்சாரங்கள் தொன்று தொட்டு எம்மை தொடர்ந்து வருகின்றது. உதாரணமாக நாம் தமிழர்கள், எமக்கென குறிப்பிட்ட ஒரு சில கலாச்சாரங்கள் உண்டு. அதாவது சில உணவுப் பழக்க வழக்கங்கள், உடைகள் அணிவது, நாம் நம்முடைய நண்பர்கள் இனத்தவர்களை வீடுகளில் வரவேற்பது போன்றவைகள் உண்டு. இவற்றை விட முக்கியமாக எமது வாழ்வில் நடைபெறும் நிகழ்வுகள் குறிப்பிடத்தக்கவை. நமது திருமணங்கள், இறப்புகள், நாம் கொண்டாடும் நல்ல விசேஷங்கள், தீபாவளி, தைப்பொங்கல், சரஸ்வதி பூஜை, புதுவருடப் பிறப்பு, நத்தார் போன்றவவை. எமது கலாச்சாரத்திற்கமைய நிகழ்ச்சிகளை ஒழுங்குசெய்து குறிப்பிட்ட உணவு வகைகளுடன் சிறப்பாகக் கொண்டாடுவோம்.

இன்று எமக்கு, எமது பிராம்ப்டன் முதியோர் கழகத்தின் மூலமாக ஒரு சில வேறு இனத்தவர்களிடம் இருந்து, அவர்களது கலாச்சாரம், உணவு முறைகள் அறிந்து கொள்ள முடிந்ததில் மகிழ்ச்சி அடைகின்றேன். முன்பு நாம் பழங்குடியினரின் பழக்கவழக்கங்கள், கலாச்சாரத்தை அறிய எமது சங்கம் உதவி செய்தது. இந்தக் கதவு அடைப்புக் காலத்தில் zoom வாயிலாகச் சீன மக்களினது கலாச்சாரம், அவர்களது வாழ்கை முறை, உடலை ஆரோக்கியமாக வைப்பதற்குரிய அப்பியாசங்கள், மற்றும் அவர்களது நாட்டு சரித்திரங்களையும் மிகவும் விரிவாகவும் அழகாகவும் எமக்குக் கூறி வருகின்றனர்.

இவர்கள் மட்டுமல்லாது தென் ஆசியா மக்களினது உணவுப் பழக்கங்கள், அவர்கள் தமது உணவு களைத் தயாரிக்கும் முறைகளையும் கூட நாம் இப்போது அவர்களுடன் இணைத்து அதனைக் கற்று வருகின்றோம். முதலாவதாக அவர்களுடைய உணவு முறைகள் அதிகமாக எம்முடைய உணவுகள் போலவே அமைந்துள்ளன. பரோட்டா என அவர்கள் குறிப்பிடுவது, நாம் தயாரிக்கும் ரொட்டி, அதன் செயல்முறையில் சிறிது வேறுபாடு உண்டு. அவர்கள் எமக்குத் தயாரித்துக் காட்டிய கோழிப் புரியாணி எமது வாயில் நீரை ஊற வைத்தது. Zoom வாயிலாகச் செய்முறையை மட்டும் பார்த்தோம். அதனை நாம் சுவைத்து உண்ணவில்லை. அவர்கள் காட்டிய முறையின்படியே தான் நாமும் கோழிப் பிரியாணி செய்வோம். அதனைவிட வெவ்வேறு முறைகளிலும் எம்மவர்கள் பிரியாணி செய்வார்கள். இப்படியாக அவர்கள் தமது உணவு முறைகள் சிலவற்றை எம்முடன் பகிர்ந்து கொண்டனர். அத்துடன் அவர்களின் நிகழ்வுகளில் ஒரு சிலவற்றையும் பகிர்ந்துகொண்டனர். அதில் முக்கியமாக Holly பண்டிகை குறிப்பிடத்தக்கது. எமது மக்கள் இப்பண்டிகையைக் கொண்டாடுவதில்லை. ஆனால் அவர்களது பண்டிகையை கொண்டாடும் விதம் பார்த்து மிகவும் மகிழ்ச்சி அடைத்தோம். இன்னும் வரும் நாட்களில் பல புதியன கற்போமென எதிர்பார்க்கின்றோம்.

இந்தக் கொடிய கொரோனாவின் ஆக்கிரமிப்பு குறைவதாக இல்லை. அது இன்னும் வேகமாகப் பரவுவது போலத் தெரிகிறது. ஆனால் எமது சங்க அங்கத்தினர்கள் சோர்ந்து போகாமல், உற்சாகமாகவும், மனஅழுத்தத்திற்கு ஆளாகாமல் இருப்பதற்கு zoom வாயிலாக சங்கத்தின் முக்கியமானவர்கள் தரும் ஒவ்வொரு நிகழ்ச்சிகளுக்கும் நன்றி சொல்கிறேன்.

இன்று நாம் வெளி நாட்டில் வாழ்வதற்கும், பல இன மக்களுடன் கைகோர்த்து அன்புடன் நடப்பதற்கும், அவர்களது கலாச்சாரத்தை கற்றுக் கொள்வதற்கும், கிருபை பாராட்டிய கடவுளுக்கும் நன்றி கூறுகின்றேன்.

வணக்கம்.

டோரா

CHINESE FUNERALS AND RITUALS

The Importance of the Burial

Burial of the dead and the process by which it's handled is very important to Chinese people. Certain elements of how the funeral and burial rites are carried out depending on the dead person's:

- Age
- Social status
- Cause of death (the Chinese word for death)

It is believed that bad luck will plague the family of the deceased if the burial is done incorrectly.

Funeral Rites for Elders

Proper respect is always paid to elders in Chinese society, including those who are deceased. Therefore, the funeral of an elder must be carried out completely. This includes:

- Preparing for the funeral even before death while the person is on their death bed.
- Ordering a casket
- Causing the family of the deceased to go deep into debt to pay for the funeral.

Funeral Rites for Younger Family Members

According to Chinese custom, an elder does not have to show respect to someone who is younger. If a younger family member dies, there remains the question of how to prepare for the funeral of unmarried adults and children. What may happen includes:

- If someone dies and are unmarried, no respect is paid to them as they are not considered an elder, nor do they have children to prepare their funeral for them.
- They will be left at the funeral home and not brought home for a typical Chinese ritual. The parents are not even allowed to take the body home or offer prayers for them.
- The same is true for infants and children. No funeral rites are performed. The family members perform these burials in silence.

Funeral Preparations for Elders

Elaborate funeral preparations are done for elders in Chinese families. It is considered good and proper for children to go into debt to pay respect for older people at their funeral. These preparations include:

Caskets

While some traditional Chinese death rituals use the rectangularly shaped casket with three humps, more modern Chinese use the Western-style caskets.

Preparation of the Body

Before the body is placed in the casket, it must be:

- Washed with care and dusted with talcum powder.
- Dressed in the absolute best clothes from their personal wardrobe. All other clothing must be burned.
- Dressed in black, blue or brown but never red as it is believed that this will cause the corpse to become a ghost.
- Placed on a mat. The face is covered with a yellow cloth. The body is covered with a blue cloth.

CHINESE FUNERALS AND RITUALS (CONT)

Certain preparations for the funeral must be made in the home which include:

- Covering all statues of deities in the home with red paper
- Removing all mirrors from sight. According to Chinese beliefs, if you see a coffin in a mirror, you will have a death within your own family soon.
- Hanging a white cloth or banner over the door.
- Placing a gong outside of the door at the entrance. If a male has passed, the gong will be placed on the left side of the door. If a female has passed, the gong will be placed on the right side of the door.

Proper Funeral Etiquette

There are certain funeral etiquette protocols that should be followed for a Chinese funeral. These include:

- The color of clothes that are worn by family.
- Wearing black symbolizes the strongest sadness and should be worn by the spouse, children, and daughters-in-law. They are to wear a sackcloth hood as well.
- Sons-in-law wear white or something similar.
- Grandchildren wear blue and great-grandchildren wear light blue clothes.
- Attendees should wear dark, somber colors. No red and no jewelry.
- Flowers are acceptable at a Chinese funeral, but the color is very important.
- Fresh-cut flowers are appreciated. Artificial flowers are also acceptable, especially if you are traveling a long distance.
- Lilies, irises, and chrysanthemums in white or yellow are traditionally considered to be funeral flowers in Chinese culture. Roses are acceptable but only in white.
- It is customary to give money as an offering to the deceased's family. It should be placed in a white envelope and handed to a family member or placed in a donation box.

The Wake

The wake itself usually lasts for a day. The traditions of a Chinese wake include:

- If the person has died at home, his or her coffin is placed on a stand within the home.
- If he or she died away from home, the coffin is placed on a stand within the home's courtyard.
- Wreaths, photos, and gifts are placed near the head of the deceased as it lays in wake.
- Food is placed in front of the coffin as an offering to them.
- During the wake, the person's comb is broken in two; one half is placed in the coffin and the other half is given to the family members.
- An altar is placed at the feet of the deceased person.
- A white candle is lit and incense is burned.
- Joss paper and prayer money are continually burned throughout the wake to ensure the deceased person has plenty of money in the afterlife.
- Those attending the funeral are required to light incense, bow to the deceased and place money in a donation box to help defray the cost of the funeral.
- It is customary for family members and women to wail at Chinese wakes.
- The larger the fortune is left to the relatives, the louder the wailing.
- It is also customary for gambling to take place in the courtyards of the home. This is done to help family members stay alert during the wake and to take their minds off of the funeral.

CHINESE FUNERALS AND RITUALS (CONT)

Period of Mourning

The funeral ceremony lasts 49 days, but the first 7 are the most important. Prayers are said once a week, but the number of ceremonies held depends upon the financial wealth of the family. Even though the funeral rites end, mourning continues for the family for 100 more days

Day of Funeral

On the day of the funeral, all the guests are expected to give money in white envelopes (white is the color of mourning in Chinese culture) to the family members of the deceased. This can be directly handed over to one of the family members (or put into a donation box, if there is one), either on the day of the funeral or one.

The Funeral Procession

- Once the elaborate funeral ceremony is over, a funeral procession to the final resting place of the deceased, the crematorium, or the cemetery, is held.
- For this, a special band is hired, and loud music is played until the place is reached. Traditional Chinese culture believes that evil spirits can be kept away by means of loud music.
- The family members of the deceased wear mourning clothes. The children and the sons/daughters-in-law of the deceased wear black and white colors, while the grandchildren wear a blue-colored attire.

After the Funeral

- Once all this is done and the guests are about to leave, the family of the deceased distributes red envelopes among them. Each of these envelopes contains a coin.
- Red, in Chinese culture, is the color of happiness. So, the distribution of red envelopes after funeral symbolizes the end of the period of mourning, and the beginning of a new start.
- As a marker of a fresh beginning, the guests are also made to consume a piece of sweet candy before leaving for their respective homes. Sometimes, the guests may also be presented with a handkerchief.

It is worth noting that in Chinese culture, the funeral customs and rites vary from person to person, depending on the social status of the deceased and/or also his/her position in the family. They also depend on the age, marital status, and the way the person died. So, while you prepare yourself to attend a traditional Chinese funeral ceremony, ensure that you have considered all these things so that you can follow the appropriate etiquette once you get there.

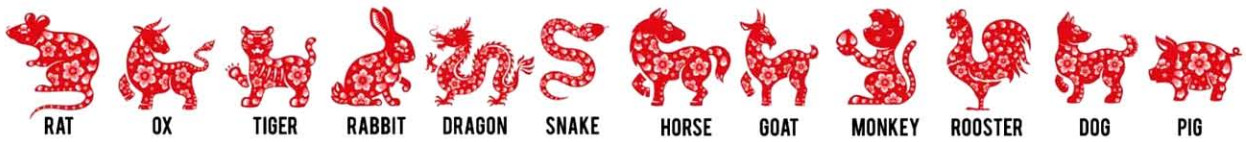
The above is a collection from various sources and my discussion with a Chinese Native.

Compiled by:
Stan Giri, MEng, MSc, BSc, CQP, MCQI
Additional Secretary (Grants)

CHINESE CULTURE AND TRADITION

Chinese culture is one of the world's oldest cultures, tracing back to thousands of years ago. Therefore it has many tradition and things changes but there are still some very common tradition still exist nowadays. The most important festival and tradition is the Chinese New Year or the New Lunar Year. Chinese even use the western calendar, they still refer to the lunar calendar or Chinese calendar fir festivals, birthday and simple horoscope.

Every lunar year is represented by a zodiac animal sign and this lunar new year starting February 12, 2021 is the year of the Ox. What are the 12 Chinese zodiac signs that rotates again every 12 years? They are:



Chinese cares a lot of their own zodiac sign since every lunar year, fortune teller will talk about the general condition for each zodiac sign in the entire new lunar year so they will do something to avoid the bad or to attract more luck and wealth, romance etc. Nowadays, Chinese do not use matchmakers, But in remote villages or say prior to 1930, it has been very common to have matchmakers who mainly do the first screening of candidates by seeing the zodiac sign, the birthday and birth-time to see whether the couple will not crash and cause bad things to both families. So look for the zodiac sign of yours if your birth year happens on the right hand side.

ZODIAC ANIMAL	YEARS	ZODIAC ANIMAL	YEARS
RAT	1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020	HORSE	1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026
OX	1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021	GOAT	1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027
TIGER	1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022	MONKEY	1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028
RABBIT	1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023	ROOSTER	1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029
DRAGON	1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024	DOG	1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030
SNAKE	1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025	PIG	1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031

This is Chinese calendar for February 2021.
Feb 12 is the Chinese New Year, so the bottom says 正月/1 meaning the 1st lunar month.

春節 meaning Spring Festival or Chinese New Year

The black characters on the right are the Not to do for that day.
The red characters on the left are the suitable things to do that day.

Nowadays, some Chinese also use the calendar as a reference in choosing wedding date, moving date, closing date etc.

How accurate is the Chinese calendar? March 20, 2021 is predicted as the Spring, that concurs with Spring in the western calendar.

春分/8 meaning Spring and 8th day of the 2nd lunar month

CHINESE CULTURE AND TRADITION

In preparation to receive the Chinese New Year:

- Clean the house to get rid of the bad usually on the 28th day of the last lunar month;
- Pay outstanding bills or loan;
- Prepare or buy Chinese "guo"/ steamed cakes and specialty snacks;
- Buy decorations for the Chines New Year;
- Have a reunion feast with your family members on the Chinese New Year Eve;
- Eat "Tong Yuan" i.e. Rice balls sweet dessert to mean union and togetherness

Chinese New Year

- Wear red, never wear black (bad luck or death);
- Wear new clothing;
- Do the New Year wishes or "Kung Hei" to our immediate elderly like parents, grands etc., on the 1st day;
- Will receive "lai sees" or the red packets from elderly;
- Will distribute "lai sees" or the red packets to younger generations, in some cases to say waitress, hair dresser or even your staff;
- The 7th day of the lunar year is birthday for everyone since the legend says human beings were created on the 7th day in creation of the world;
- The 15th day is called the Lantern Festival which marks the end of celebration of the Chinese New Year. That is also the Chinese Valentine Day.
- Use even number since that means double or pair which means good luck;
- Eat "Tong Yuan" i.e. Rice balls sweet dessert to mean union and togetherness

Other Chinese Tradition:

Gifts to Chinese

- Do not give a clock since the pronunciation is "seeing an end of you" meaning death to the receiver;
- Do not give a knife or sword as gift which means harm
- Do not give shoes as gift to Chinese since that means not smooth which is bad luck;
- Do not give handkerchief as gift since that means weeping to the receiver;
- Do not include some number that has "4" that means death;
- Chinese like "8" meaning getting rich.

Going to a funeral

- Never give out even amount condolence money since that means double (to repeat);
- Wear black or blue, never wear red or cheerful color;
- The family usually prepare a white packet to give to people attending the funeral. That white packet is a "thank-you" but do not bring that home, open it and consume the candy or use the coin but never bring that home (otherwise it may bring bad lucky to home);
- The family usually hold a reception lunch as a "cleaning the bad luck and evil" lunch for guests;
- Due to the zodiac signs, the funeral planner may announce what are the zodiac signs who should turn their back at certain times (reason there may be a conflict with the deceased's zodiac sign).

May Wong
President, Villa Elegance

HONG KONG

Hong Kong, officially the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, is a metropolitan area and special administrative region of the People's Republic of China on the eastern Pearl River Delta of the South China Sea.

Hong Kong Chinese speak the dialect called Cantonese. Hong Kong became a colony of the British Empire after the Qing Empire ceded Hong Kong island, at the end of First opium war in 1842.

The colony expanded to the Kowloon Peninsula in 1860 after the second Opium war and was extended when the British obtained a 99-year lease of the New territory in 1898. The whole territory was transferred to China in 1997.

As a special administrative region, Hong Kong maintains separate governing and economic systems from that of mainland China under the principle of "One country two systems.

Hong Kong officially the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the Peoples Republic of China (HKSAR). Hong Kong has the population of 7.5 million residents of various nationalities in a 1,104 square kilometers territory with densely populated place in the world. Hong Kong Victoria harbour is a buzzling shipping hub in the South China sea and the economy flourished mostly in opium trade.

Earliest known human traces in Hong Kong are dated by some to 35,000 and 39,000 years ago during the Paleolithic period. The claim is based on an archaeological investigation in 2003. Hong Kong residents enjoyed their freedom under the British rule. They celebrate Dragon boat race and Dragon dance mostly during the spring times. They follow lunar calendar as per Chinese traditions.

Hong Kong currency is a "$" or called Hong Kong dollar, which is still in use as we speak. Ethnicity is 96% Chinese. Their culture and traditions are unique as it represents little dissimilarities from the mainland china.

Currently some political chaos in Hong Kong as mainland Chinese communist politburo trying to bring in their reign in the form of suppressing the democratic values the residents enjoyed all these years under the British rule. This had caused lots of political arrests and detention of political activities and the organisations which try to maintain the democratic values.

Hong Kong Victoria harbour is a buzzing shipping hub in the South China sea and the economy flourished mostly in opium trade during the hay days of Hong Kong history.

Rajesh Kanapathipillai

CHINESE XIANG-GONG

What is Chinese Xiang-Gong?

Chinese Xiang-Gong is a kind of QiGong (techniques for "Life-Energy Cultivation"), combining the natural gentle movements of the body with a brief three-minute standing mediation. "Xiang" means fragrance and "Gong" means practice and refinement, skills or mastery. After practising Xiang Gong" for a period of time, some may experienced fragrances released form the body.

History of Chinese Xiang-Gong

Chinese Xiang-Gong was developed over 2000 years ago and has been passed down orally from master to disciples only on a one-on-one basis. Grandmaster Tien RuiSheng, the latest "disciple", is a native of Luo Yang City, Henan Province. When he was twelve years old he suffered from a rare disease which caused his skin to come off. He was healed and taught Xiang Gong by an enlightened Buddhist monk, Shi Wukong (who broke from tradition and asked Tien to propagate the technique after 50 years for the benefit of all who wish to learn it). After cultivating himself for more than five decades, Grandmaster Tien began to teach Xiang Gong to the public in 1988. Because of its strong healing effects, Xiang Gong is welcomed in China with 40 million people in daily practice. In 1992, staff members of the World Health Organization (at Geneva) set up a Xiang Gong Club, there was an article in one of its journals introducing Chinese Xiang Gong to WHO's member countries. Now Xiang Gong has spread to over 40 countries and regions.

Characteristics of Chinese Xiang-Gong

1. Easy to Learn ~ There are only 15 forms with simple hand movements (for the Primary Level). You can learn the basics within two hours and practise by yourself afterwards.
2. Safe ~ No need to focus your mental concentration (thought or mind); no need to regulate your breathing, nor to (seriously) mediate; no risk of undesirable deviations with possible physical discomfort or psychological mishaps (when the instructions are followed).
3. Fun ~ It is encouraged that Xiang Gong be practised in a group where the atmosphere and energy filed are best, and where members can share the fun, experience and health benefits enjoyed by fellow members. One can even watch TV while practising at home.
   (But, ideally, this is not really recommended - the show will affect your emotional state.)
4. Everybody Can Do It ~ Whatever your physical condition, you can adjust top the exercise-like movements. even a person with stroke can do it while seating or lying in bed with just one hand (if half of the body is paralyzed).
5. Feel the Effects Quickly ~ You can feel Qi, the life-energy, flowing inside your body even in the first practice. After three weeks of daily practice, many find improvements in their overall health conditions. The effects or results will of course differ from person to person.
6. Time-Saving – Practise twice daily, once in the morning, once in the evening. Each practice session only lasts from 15 to 18 minutes. (Xiang Gong is a daily discipline. It requires dedication and commitment - to really love yourself and care for your own body.)
7. Strong "Healing" Effects ~ Quoted from page 23 of "The Joy of Enlightenment QiGong"

Coutesy: Mr. Kwan Lam

HINDU RITES AND RITUALS

The Ceremonies of Hinduism: The ritual world of Hinduism, manifestations of which differ greatly among regions, villages, and individuals, offers a number of common features that link all Hindus into a greater Indian religious system and influence other religions as well.

Purity and Pollution: The most notable feature in Hindu religious ritual is the division between purity and pollution. Religious acts presuppose some degree of impurity or defilement for the practitioner, which must be overcome or neutralized before or during ritual procedures. Purification, usually with water, is thus a typical feature of most religious actions. Avoidance of the impure—taking animal life, eating flesh, associating with dead things, or body fluids—is another feature of Hindu ritual and is important for repressing pollution. In a social context, those individuals or groups who manage to avoid the impure are accorded increased respect. Still, another feature is a belief in the efficacy of sacrifice, including survivals of Vedic sacrifice. Thus, sacrifices may include the performance of offerings in a regulated manner, with the preparation of sacred space, recitation of texts, and the manipulation of objects. A third feature is the concept of merit, gained through the performance of charity or good works, that will accumulate over time and reduce sufferings in the next world.

Domestic Worship: The home is the place where most Hindus conduct their worship and religious rituals. The most important times of day for the performance of household rituals are dawn and dusk, although especially devout families may engage in devotion more often. For many households, the day begins when the women in the house draw auspicious geometric designs in chalk or rice flour on the floor or the doorstep. For orthodox Hindus, dawn and dusk are greeted with recitation from the Rig Veda of the Gayatri Mantra for the sun—for many people, the only Sanskrit prayer they know. After the ritual purification of a bath, the Hindu family conducts personal worship of the gods at their shrine, which typically includes lighting a lamp and offering foodstuffs before the images, while prayers in Sanskrit or a regional language are recited. In the evenings, especially in rural areas, mostly female devotees may gather together for long sessions of singing hymns in praise of one or more of the gods

Hindu Weddings: The next important transition in life is marriage. For most people in India, the betrothal of the young couple and the exact date and time of the wedding are matters decided by the parents in consultation with astrologers. At Hindu weddings, the bride and bridegroom represent the god and the goddess, although there is a parallel tradition that sees the groom as a prince coming to wed his princess. The groom, decked in all his finery, often travels to the wedding site on a caparisoned white horse or in an open limousine, accompanied by a procession of relatives, musicians, and bearers of ornate electrified lamps. The actual ceremonies in many cases become extremely elaborate, but orthodox Hindu marriages typically have at their center the recitation of mantras by priests. In a crucial rite, the new couple takes seven steps northward from a sacred household fire, turn, and make offerings into the flames. Independent traditions in regional languages and among different caste groups support wide variations in ritual.

Death and Funeral Ceremonies: After the death of a family member, the relatives become involved in ceremonies for the preparation of the body and a procession to the burning or burial ground. For most Hindus, cremation is the ideal method for dealing with the dead, although many groups practice burial instead; infants are buried rather than cremated. At the funeral site, in the presence of the male mourners, the closest relative of the deceased (usually the eldest son) takes charge of the final rite and, if it is cremation, lights the funeral pyre. After a cremation, ashes, and fragments of bone are collected and eventually immersed in a holy river. After a funeral, everyone undergoes a purifying bath. The immediate family remains in a state of intense pollution for a set number of days (sometimes ten, eleven, or thirteen). At the end of that period, close family members meet for a ceremonial meal and often give gifts to the poor or to charities. A particular feature of the Hindu ritual is the preparation of rice balls (pinda) offered to the spirit of the dead person during memorial services. In part, these ceremonies are seen as contributing to the merit of the deceased, but they also pacify the soul so that it will not linger in this world as a ghost but will pass through the realm of Yama, the god of death.

Compiled by:
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THE TAMIL HINDU WEDDING CEREMONY

The Tamil Hindu Wedding ceremony is built upon a thousand years of faith, tradition and values, These weddings are a lot about rituals and traditions that take the center stage. It is not just about the bride and groom tying the wedding knot, but also about a grand occasion to cherish the coming together of two families. To illustrate this theme, many customs involve both families.

The Manavarai – The Ceremonial Stage

The stage where the ceremony takes place is a vital part of the Tamil Hindu weddings, with interesting elements, adding up to give life to the setting. The Gurukal (priest) conducts the ceremony in a decorated open canopy called the Manavarai, which hosts the holy moment of the bride and the groom tying their eternal knot. The holy fire in the center of the Manavarai serves as Agni Saatchi (sacred fire witness) to the communion. The Gurukal offers prayers, and a coconut which symbolizes purity of character, is broken at intervals to honour the realization of supreme self. Kalasha, which is Brass pots filled with coconut water (Holy water) are placed in front of the bride and groom. The Kalasha is said to represent the human body. According to the Hindus, this is to denote that the soul that occupies the human body is 'pure'.to symbolize deities. A branch of a tree is also decorated and placed in the middle to symbolize fertility. With everything set, it is time for the to-be-weds to step in.

Mappillai Azhaippu - Welcoming The Groom

The ceremony begins with a welcome note, as the Thozhan, (bride's younger brother) welcomes the groom into their family with acceptance and excitement. Two married women perform "Aarathi" in front of the groom swinging a silver tray with lighted lamps to prevent any mishaps in the proceedings. The Bride's father then garlands the groom and welcomes him. The Thozhan then escorts the Groom and proceeds to the Manavarai where the Gurukal awaits.

Mana Sankalpam – Commencement of Ceremony

Addressing Lord Ganesha to remove all the obstacles and ensure harmony in the proceedings, the priest offers prayers on behalf of the groom. The Panchakavya Pooja that follows is meant to purify the Manavarai and the mind and the body of the groom before he steps into the holy state of matrimony. The Groom is then given a Thetpai (grass ring) that symbolizes the cleansing of mind, and a saffron thread is tied to his right wrist for guarding against any forthcoming evil. Five married women plant nine types of grains in the pot and sprinkle water to signify their wishes concerning the prosperity and fertility of the couple.

Kanyathanam & Kannika Thaanam – Arrival And Giving Away Of The Bride

The stage is now set to welcome the bride, as she gracefully enters, accompanied by the Thozhi, (groom's younger sister), her relatives and friends. The Gurukal performs the same purification rituals on the bride as he did for the groom. The parents of the Bride gift their daughter to the the Groom, with the Groom undertaking to protect and cherish her throughout their lives together. The groom then presents the bride with Koorai (wedding saree) and the Thaali (eternal golden thread). The Koorai and Thaali placed on a silver tray are circulated amongst the gathering for their blessing. The Bride then leaves the Manavarai to change into the Koorai.

THE TAMIL HINDU WEDDING CEREMONY (CONT)

Thaali Kattu – Tying Of The Eternal Knot

This is the most significant and awaited moment of the wedding. Dressed in her Koorai, the bride makes her way into the Manavarai holding a garland to put on the groom. Representing Lord Shiva and Parvathy, the groom and the bride sit in the elevated space in the middle amidst the prayers chanted by the priest. To the loud beat of the Thavils (drum) and music of Naathaswarams (classical pipe music) the Groom ties (three knots) the Thaali around the Bride's neck signifying long-lasting love. The first two knots tied by the groom to signify the commitment of the couple and to assure the wellbeing of the bride. Meanwhile, the third knot tied by the groom's married sister signifies commitment between the two families. Guests shower the couple with atchadhai (flowers and rice grains) as a blessing. The couple is then declared as husband and wife as they exchange garlands with love.

Maalai Maatral (Exchange Of Garlands)

The marriage is considered complete only when the bride and groom exchange their garlands. The ''Maalai maatral' ritual is the symbol of unifying two souls into one. ' Maalai' (garland) is made out of flowers and thread, in which the flowers symbolize happiness, enthusiasm, excitement, aspiration, zeal and beauty; whereas the thread is a medium to secure all these feelings and emotions together. Even though the flowers after sometime lose their charm and luster, the thread stays intact holding the ones still in place and allowing more to be added upon. In the same way, the wedded couple should never leave each other through the tough times of life and must always move ahead with mutual understanding, love, respect, trust, faith and passion. That's the significance behind this interesting ritual as the couple exchange their garlands accepting each other as partners.

Sapthapathi – The Seven Steps

The married couple then takes seven steps to start a new life together.
With every step the priest narrates each vow from the following hymn:

With God as our guide let us take;

The first step to flourish each other;

The second step to grow together in strength;

The third step to preserve our wealth;

The fourth step to share our joys and sorrows;

The fifth step to care for our children;

The sixth step to be together forever;

The seventh step to remain lifelong friends;

The perfect halves to make the perfect whole;

THE TAMIL HINDU WEDDING CEREMONY (CONT)

Prathakshanam Walk around the Agni Saatchi

The couple walks around the sacred fire in three rounds. On the first round, the Groom places the Bride's right foot on the Ammi (a granite stone) and places a Metti (silver ring) on her second toe. On the second round, the Groom repeats this on the left foot. The Ammi symbolizes the strong foundation of life and the Metti symbolizes the only visible sign of her marital status (as the Thaali is hidden behind 1heir outfit all the time). They complete the final round to symbolize their union as husband and wife complete and full.

Arundhathi – The Unified Vision

After Saptapathi, the groom takes the bride out and shows her the sky pointing at the Arundhathi star coupled with Vashishta. Arundhati, who is the wife of Vashishta (one of the Septarishis or Seven Sages), is said to be the embodiment of wifely devotion, chastity and conjugal bliss. The couple together views the double star as the ideal couple, and sees them as one with a unified vision of marital happiness and devotion.

Nalungu – Play Time For The Couple & Family

After all the hustle since morning, it is playtime now for the couple and the family to relax and bond well. Nalungu features a whole variety of games like – fishing for the ring, the bride applying a colored paste on groom's feet, fanning him, showing her face to him on a mirror, breaking papads over each other's head, rolling a coconut from one to the other and so on. During these games, the families sing songs poking fun at the couple. On the top of all the fun are values like understanding, compromising, complementing and so on that are embedded in every game.

Aseervatham & Vidai

Aarathi is performed in front of the couple, forestalling all the evil and wishing them good luck on a new life together with the Aseervatham (blessings) of Gods & families. Vidai marks the departure of the bride from her parental house. This is the final phase of the ceremony, and it gets emotional as the bride's parents send off their daughter to a new life with the groom.

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தமிழர் வாழ்வின் பாரம்பரிய உணவு

தமிழ்ச் சமூகம் சிந்து வெளியை அடியொற்றி வாழ்ந்து தென்னிந்தியா, தென்கிழக்கிந்தியா, தென் ஆபிரிக்கா போன்ற பிரதேசங்களில் இன்று நிலைகொண்டு வாழ்ந்து வருகின்றனர். ஆயினும் அரசியல் குழப்பங்கள், பொருளாதார நெருக்கடிகள் போன்ற காரணங்களினால் நிலை கொண்ட இவ்விடங்களில் இருந்து இடம் பெயர்ந்து ஐரோப்பா, அமெரிக்கா நாடுகளிலும் வாழ்ந்து வருகின்றனர்.

மனிதன் கால நிலைக்கேற்ப உணவை உட்கொண்டு வந்த போதிலும் தமிழர்கள் தமக்கான உணவை கால நிலைக்கும், இயற்கைக்கும், பயன்பாட்டிற்கும் ஏற்றாற்போல் தமக்கான உணவை கண்டு கொண்டதிலும், தயாரித்ததிலும் இவைகள் பொது வெளியில் முதன்மையான பேசு பொருளாகவும், கற்றறியும் கலையாகவும் மாற்றங்கண்டது. கற்றறிதல் என்பது தமிழர் பண்பாட்டுடன் இணைந்த ஒரு பாட நெறியாக இன்று உருமாற்றம் பெற்றுள்ளது.

இந்த வகையில் தமிழர்களால் கற்பகத்தரு எனப்போற்றப்படும் பனைமர விளைபொருட்களான நுங்கு, பனங்காய், பனம்பழம், கள்ளு, கருப்பநீர், பனங்கட்டி என்பன ஆரம்பகால தமிழர் வாழ்வில் அவர்களது ஜீவாதார உணவாக இருந்தது. இம்மூலப்பொருட்களில் இருந்து பனாட்டு, ஒடியல்மா, புளுக்கொடியல், ஓடியல்கூழ், ஒடியல் பிட்டு என்பன பழம்பொருள் உணவாகவும், பாரம்பரிய உணவாகவும், போசாக்குணவாகவும் பயன்பாட்டுப் போகத்தில் மற்றைய உணவுகளை மிஞ்சிய ஓர் உணவாக பாவனையிலும், மதிப்பீட்டிலும் இரசாயன ஆய்வாளர்களால் நிரூபிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

மேலும் தமிழர் தமது கலாச்சார விழாக்கள், சமய அனுட்டானங்கள் என்பனவற்றின் போது தயாரித்து உண்டு மகிழும் உணவாகவும் தைப்பொங்கல் தினத்தில் பொங்கல் அமுதும், தீபாவளித் தினத்தில் உளுத்தம் பணியாரம் ஆகிய இவ்விரண்டும் கலாச்சாரப் பயன்பாட்டுணவுகளாக அடையாளப்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளன. கல்யாண நிகழ்வுகளின் போது சீனிப்பணியாரம், முறுக்கு என்ற இவ்விரண்டும் சடங்குகளுக்கான விசேட உணவுகளாக இருந்து வருகின்றன.

இவர்கள் தங்களது நாளாந்த வாழ்வில் உண்டு வரும் சோறு கறி என்ற இவ்விரண்டுடனும் வடை, பாயாசத்தையும் கலந்துண்ணும் பழக்கம் இன்று எல்லா வீடுகளிலும் காணக் கூடியதாகவுள்ளது. இவர்களது இவ்வகையான உணவுகள் கடந்து வந்த பாதையின் படிப்பினைகளாகவும், அனுபவங்களாகவும் இருப்பதுடன் இவற்றை தலைமுறை தலைமுறையாய் பின்பற்றி வரும் பழக்கமும், வழக்கமும் தொடர்ந்து கொண்டிருப்பதை நாம் காண்கின்றோம்.

இவ்வாறான இவர்களது இவ்வுணவுப் பழக்கம் அவர்களை நோய், நொடி இன்றியும் நீடித்தும் வாழக்கூடிய நிலையையும் ஏற்படுத்திக் கொடுத்துள்ளது. மேலை நாட்டார் தமிழர் வாழ் பிரதேசங்களுக்கு வரும் போது அவர்களது உணவின் மூலப்பொருட்களை வாங்கிச் செல்கின்றனர்.

இதனால் தமிழர்களது உணவுகள் பேசுபொருளாகவும், பாவனையிலும் அதிகரித்துள்ளது. உணவகங்களில் இடியாப்பம், பிட்டு, வாய்ப்பன், சூசியம், போண்டா போன்ற சிற்றுண்டிகள் விற்பனைக்கான உணவுப்பண்டங்களாக இருந்து வருகின்றன. இந்த வகையில் தமிழர் உணவு என்பது தமிழர்க்கான உணவு என்பதற்கப்பால் அவர்களது பாரம்பரிய பண்பாட்டு அடையாளமாக இருப்பதுடன் தமிழரின் சிறப்பை உறுதிப்படுத்தும் ஒரு பண்டமாக இருப்பது தமிழரின் ஒரு மேம்பாட்டிற்கு மதிப்பீடாகும்.

தமிழரின் உணவைத் தனித்துவமாக்கவும், இதன் செயன்முறையை மாற்றமுறா வண்ணம் பாதுகாக்கவும் தமிழர் சமையற்கலை என்ற பெயரில் இரு மொழிகளில் அதாவது தமிழ், ஆங்கிலம் ஆகியவற்றில் நூலாக்கம் செய்து வைப்பது காலத்தின் தேவையும் கற்றறிந்தோர் பணியுமாகும்.

ஆக்கம்
கலைமகள் தனஞ்செயன்

அம்பிகாவதி அமராவதியின் அமர காதல் காவியம்

பல நுற்றாண்டு காலமாக இன்னும் மக்கள் மத்தியில் மனத்தில் நீங்காத இடம்பிடித்த காதல் காவியம்! இந்தக் கதை!

சோழநாட்டு மன்னனின் மகள் தான் அமராவதி. கம்பராமாயணத்தை படிக்காதவர்கள் யாரும் இருக்க முடியாது. இக்கதையின் கவிஞர் கம்பராமாயணத்தை இயக்கிய கம்பர்! அவர் மகன்தான் அம்பிகாவதி!
அம்பிகாவதி, அமராவதி காதல் இனித்ததா? கசத்ததா? இப்போ கதைக்குள் செல்கிறோம்.

இவர்கள் இருவருக்கிடையில், எப்படிக் காதல் மலர்ந்தது? கங்கை கொண்ட சோழபுரத்தின் தலைமையில் ஆட்சி புரிந்து வரும் குலோத்துங்க சோழனின் மகள்தான் அமராவதி. ஒரு நாள் கன்னி மாடத்தில் உள்ள மொட்டை மாடியில் தோழிகள் சகிதம், காற்று வாங்க நின்றிருந்த அமராவதி, கீழ் தெருக்கோடியில் ஓர் வசீகரமான இளைஞன், சுருண்ட கேசம் நெற்றியில் புரள கம்பீரமாக வந்து கொண்டிருந்தான், அவன் ஏதோ ஓர் பாடலைப் பாடியபடி அங்கும் இங்கும் இயற்கையை ரசித்தபடி வந்து கொண்டிருந்ததைக் கண்ணுற்ற அமராவதி, தானும் அப்பாடலைத் தன்னை மறந்து பாடியபோது. மேலே பாடல் கேட்டு அண்ணாந்து பார்த்த அம்பிகாவதி தன்னை மறந்தான். இப்படியும் ஓர் அழகை எப்படிப் படைத்தான் இறைவன். அண்ணலும் நோக்க அவளும் நோக்கவும், இதயங்கள் இடம் மாறியது.

இவற்றைப் பக்கத்து மாடியில் நின்றிருந்த அமராவதியின் தந்தை காணவும், கேட்கவும் நேர்ந்தது. அவர் மிகவும் அதிர்ச்சசியில் உறைந்தார். பின்பு மகள் அமராவதியை அழைத்து, யாரைப் பார்த்து அப் பாடலைப் பாடினாய், அதற்கு என்ன அர்த்தம்? எனக் கேட்டபோது, தடுமாறிய அமராவதி சட்டெனத் சுதாகரித்துப் பாட்டை மாறிப் பாடிக் காண்பித்தாள். தந்தை குலோத்துங்க சோழன் புரிந்து கொண்டார். மறுநாள் அரசன் அம்பிகாவதியை அழைத்து, இத்தவறை இத்தோடு திருத்திக்கொள். அமராவதி சோழ நாட்டின் இளவரசி. புரிந்து கொள். இனிமேல் என் மாளிகைப் பக்கம் உன்னைக் காணவே கூடாது, தவறினால், கம்பர் மகன் எனவும் பார்க்காது சிறையில் அடைத்து விடுவேன் என மிரட்டி அனுப்பி வைத்தார்.

ஆனால், காதலுக்குக் கண்ணில்லை என சும்மாவா கூறினார்கள். இவர்களின் காதலும் யாரும் அறியாது அழகிய நந்தவனங்கள், ஏரிகள், மலைகள், சோலைகள் எனத் தொடர்ந்து, ஓர் முறை அந்தப்புரத்துக்கே அம்பிகாவதி சென்று விட்டான். ஆண்களுக்குத் தடைவிதிக்கப்பட்ட இடமாதலால், பணிப்பெண்கள் சிதறி ஓடினர். அதில் ஓர் பணிப்பெண், இளவரசிக்கு ஆபத்து வந்து விடுமோ? என எண்ணி அரசன் காதுக்கு செய்தி எட்ட வழி செய்தாள்.

இந்நிலையில், புலவர் கம்பரை அழைத்து, இனி இப்படி ஏதும் நடந்தால், உன் மகனுக்கு மரண தண்டனை நிச்சயம் என அரசர் எச்சரிக்கை விடுத்தார். கம்பரின் மனம் துடித்துப் போனது. மகனைக் கண்டித்தபோது, அம்பிகாவதி அதற்கு சீதா, ராமர் திருமணம் காதல் காவியம் தானே? சத்தியவான் சாவித்திரி காதல் திருமணம் தானே? எனக் கோபமாகக் கூறியபடி வெளியேறிச் செல்கிறான். இந்நிலையில், அரசசபையில் வருடாந்த விழா நடக்க இருப்பதால் புலவர் கம்பருக்கும் அழைப்பு விடுக் கிறார். போட்டிகள், முடிந்தபின்பு உணவு மண்டபத்திற்கு எல்லோரும் சென்று அமருகிறார்கள். அப்போது அரசியும், அமராவதியும், இனிப்புப் பதார்தங்களைக் கொண்டு வந்து வழமைபோல் பரிமாறுகிறார்கள். அப்போது தன்னை மறந்து அம்பிகாபதி பாடுகிறான். எப்படி ? "இட்ட அடி நோக, எடுத்த அடி கொப் பளிக்க" எனப் பாடியதைக் கேட்ட கம்பரும், அதிர்ச்சி கொள்ள அரசர் கோபத்தில் வெளியேற, அரசியும் அமரவாதியும் வெளியேறுகிறார்கள், அப்போது கம்பரிடம் ஓடி வந்து அரசர் வரும்படி அழைத்ததாகக் காவலாளி கூறுகிறார். பயந்தபடி உள்நுழையும், கம்பரைப் பார்த்து அரசர் கூறுகிறார், நாம் ஓர் முடிவு எடுத்திருக்கிறோம், உனது மகன் அம்பிகாவதி என் மகளை திருமணம் செய்வதானால், எமது நிபந்தனைக்கு உட்பட்டு, 101 பாடல்கள் எந்தவித ஆபாசமின்றி பெண்ணழகை வர்ணிக்காமல் பாட வேண்டும். மீறிப் பாடினால், உடனே, மரண தண்டனை வழங்கப்படும். 101 பாடல்கள் பாடி முடித்தால், எமது கட்டுப்பாட்டுக்குள் இணங்க திருமணம் நடக்கும் என சூசகமாக அவர் யுக்தியைப் பிரயோகித்தார். சபையில் திரைமறைவுக்கு பின்னே இருந்தபடி, அமராவதி, பாடல்களை எண்ணி மலர்களைப் போடும்போது, 100 பாடல்கள் முடியும் நேரம், அவள் வளையல் கரங்களில் குலுங்கிய சத்தத்தினால், அம்பிகாவதி தன்னை மறந்து, அமராவதியைப் புகழ்ந்து பாட, அங்கே காவலர்கள் வந்து அவனை இழுத்து செல்லும் போது, கடவுள் பாட்டு கணக்கில் வராது எனக்கூறி மரண தண்டனை கொடுக்கிறான் மன்னன். மன்னனின் சதி மகளையும் அழித்துவிட்டது. இதைக் கேட்ட அமராவதி கதறிப் புரண்டு அழுகிறாள். அப்பா! அது என் தப்பு, அவசரப்பட்டு விட்டேன். எனக்குத் தண்டனை கொடுங்கள், அவரை விட்டுவிடுங்கள் என! யாரும் கேட்கவில்லை. அம்பிகாவதியைத் தூக்கிலிடும்வேளை அமராவதியின் உயிரும் பிரிகிறது. அவர்கள் காதல் இறப்பிலும் தொடர்கிறது. இதையே அமரகாதல் காவியம் என அழைத்தனர், அழைக்கின்றனர். "அவசரம் என்றும் ஆபத்தையே தேடித்தரும்" என்பதற்கும் எடுத்துக் கொள்ளலாம். இக் கதையை மிகவும் சுருக்கமாக எழுதியுள்ளோம்.

ஆக்கம்
ராஜேஸ்வரி கந்தசாமி

TAMIL CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Wearing Ring on Toe

Indian women normally wear toe rings on the second toe. A particular nerve from this connects the uterus and passes to heart. Thus, a toe ring on this toe strengthens the uterus, keeping it healthy by regulating the blood flow to it. Moreover, a woman's menstrual cycle is said to be regularized.

Tilak Or Pottu (Red or Blank spot near eye borrow)

The spot between the eyebrows on a forehead is considered a major nerve point in the human body. A tilak is believed to prevent the loss of energy, and retain this to control various levels of concentration. Moreover, the act of applying this ensures that the points on the mid-brow region and Adnya-chakra are pressed, facilitating blood supply to the facial muscles.

Temple Bell

People ring the temple bell on entering as the sound of it is said to clear our mind and help us stay sharp, keeping our full concentration on devotion. Moreover, these bells are made in such a way that the sound they produce creates unity in the left and right parts of our brains. The duration of the bell echo is ideal to activate all the seven healing centres in our body, clearing us of negativity.

Throw Coins in River

Historically, most currency was made of copper, a vital metal for the human body. Throwing coins in a river was a way to intake sufficient copper as part of water as rivers were the only source of drinking water.

Not Sleep North and South

The human body has its own magnetic field, while the Earth is a giant magnet. When you sleep with your head pointing north, your body's magnetic field becomes asymmetrical to the Earth's, causing problems related to blood pressure since your heart needs to work harder in order to overcome this.

Ear Studs

Indian physicians and philosophers believe that piercing ears helps in the development of intellect, power of thinking and decisionmaking faculties. Get a piercing today.

Praying the Sun

Hindus have a tradition of paying their respects to the Sun God early in the morning through the Surya Namaskar. Waking up to follow this routine ensures we are prone to a morning lifestyle.

Threaded Hair

Sushruta described the master sensitive spot on the head as Adhipati Marma. This was considered a centre of wisdom. The knotted plait helps boost this centre and conserve its subtle energy.

TAMIL CULTURAL TRADITIONS (CONT)

Fasting

Ayurveda sees the basic cause of many diseases as the accumulation of toxic materials in the digestive system. Regular cleansing of toxic materials keeps one healthy. By fasting, the digestive organs get rest and all body mechanisms are cleansed and corrected.

Blessing from Elderly

When you touch the feet of the elderly, their hearts emit positive thoughts and energy, which they transmit through their hands and toes. In essence, the completed circuit enables flow of energy and increases cosmic energy, switching on a quick connect between two minds and hearts. Your fingers and palms become the 'receptor' of energy and the feet of the other person become the 'giver' of energy.

Kungkumam

Sindoor is prepared by mixing turmeric, lime and the metal mercury. Due to its intrinsic properties, mercury controls blood pressure and activates sexual drive. Thus, sindoor should be applied right upto the pituitary gland where all our feelings are centered.

Worship Idols

Hinduism propagates idol worship more than any other religion. This was initiated for the purpose of increasing concentration during prayers. According to psychiatrists, a man will shape his thoughts as per what he sees.

Wearing Bangles

Bangles cause constant friction with the wrist which increases the blood circulation level. Further more, the electricity passing out through outer skin is again reverted to one's own body because of the ring shaped bangles.

Courtesy of Rishabh Banerji - 2018 Edition
Compiled by Stan Giri. MEng, MSc, BSc, CQP, MCQI
Additional Secretary

DANCES OF INDIA - CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE FORMS AND THEIR STATES OF ORIGIN

India has many dances, coming from every state in the country, although there are only six forms of the classical dances recognised by India on a national level. They are Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri, Kuchipudi, and Odissi. The folk dances of India are much more than mere body movements, from the very ancient times the classical dance forms of India is considered as a discipline and a way to devote yourself to God through art.

1. Bharatnatyam - Tamil Nadu, South India

Performed on the celestial tunes of the Carnatic music, Bharatnatyam comes from the state of Tamil Nadu in South. The origins of Bharatnatyam can be traced back to 1000 BC, and it originates from the ancient temples of Tamil Nadu performed by the women of the classical period. The dance form is known for its beautiful body movements and gestures which are called Mudras in the traditional language. It focuses on the hand gestures, leg movement and the facial expressions of the dancer. This dance form was very prevalent before the British era but was profoundly depressed during the colonial period. However, India kept the dance form alive in the houses, and today it is recognised as one of the most respectable art forms in India especially in the Southern region of the country where it is a moment of pride for the women of the house to learn the classical dance form of Bharatnatyam.

2. Kuchipudi - Andhra Pradesh

Belonging to the Andhra Pradesh, Kuchipudi is probably the toughest form of classical dance in India. Kuchipudi is not just considered as the dance but a whole religious procedure dedicated to God which includes certain rituals such as sprinkling the holy water, burning the incense sticks and praying to God. Kuchipudi includes both singing and dancing by the performer which is why it requires both the skill and much more dedication than any other art forms in India. In the earlier period, Kuchipudi was only performed by the male dancers in the temples, specifically the Brahmins(Upper caste of the society) but with the passage of time, it became famous amongst the women and nowadays it is mostly performed by the female dancers.

DANCES OF INDIA - CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE FORMS AND THEIR STATES OF ORIGIN (CONT)

3. Odissi - Odisha, East India

Odissi dance form comes from the state of Odisha in the eastern part of India. The traditional dance has been derived from the Hindu temples in Odisha. Most of the gestures and movements (Mudras) are inspired by the sculptors and idols belonging to the ancient temples of India. The dance is performed as a way to express the mythological tales of Hindu gods, including that of Shiva and Surya. The dance is accompanied by a mythical story, Hindi poem in the form of music by the musicians. Odissi is considered as the oldest dance forms of India which are surviving till today. Odissi dance is performed mostly by the women dancers, and it includes more than 50 intriguing mudras (body movements).

4. Bhangra/Gidda - Punjab, North India

Belonging to Punjab, Bhangra is a heart-pumping dance adorned with the loud beats of dhol (traditional Indian instrument). It is very prevalent in traditional Punjabi festivals.

5. Rouf - Kashmir, North India

Performed by the Kashmiri people to celebrate their festivals and important occasions, Rouf is a soothing dance form generally performed by the female dancers to the. traditional Kashmir music.

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Additional Secretary (Grants)

தமிழ் கலாச்சாரம்

தமிழ் கலாச்சாரம் என்பது தமிழ் மக்களின் பண்பாடு ஆகும். தமிழர் சுமார் இரண்டாயிரம் ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பே பண்பாட்டிலும், நாகரிகத்திலும் சிறந்திருந்தனர் என்பதை சங்க இலக்கியங்கள் உணர்த்துகின்றன. மொழிக்கு இலக்கணம் வகுத்த தமிழர்கள் மனித வாழ்வியலுக்கும் இலக்கணம் வகுத்து வாழ்ந்தனர். தமிழ் கலாச்சாரம், கலை மற்றும் இந்தியா, இலங்கை, மலேசியா, சிங்கப்பூர் மற்றும் உலகம் முழுவதும் தமிழர்கள் வாழ்க்கை வழிகளில் வேரூன்றி உள்ளது தமிழ் கலாச்சாரம். மொழி, இலக்கியம், இசை, நடனம், நாட்டுப்புறக் கலை, தற்காப்பு கலை, ஓவியம், சிற்பம், கட்டிடக்கலை, விளையாட்டு, ஊடகங்கள், நகைச்சுவை, உணவு, ஆடைகள், கொண்டாட்டங்கள், தத்துவம், மதங்கள், மரபுகள், சடங்குகள், நிறுவனங்கள், அறிவியல் மற்றும் தொழில்நுட்பம் என்பனவற்றில் வெளிப்படுத்தப்படுகிறது. தமிழர் பண்பாடு தமிழ் மொழியின் ஊடாகவும், தமிழர் தாயகப் பிணைப்பின் ஊடாகவும், தமிழர் மரபுகள், வரலாறு, விழுமியங்கள், கலைகள் ஊடாகவும், சமூக, பொருளாதார, அரசியல் தளங்கள் ஊடாகவும் பேணப்படும் தனித்துவ பண்பாட்டுக் கூறுகளைக் குறிக்கும். தமிழர் வாழ்வை அகவாழ்வு, புறவாழ்வு என இரண்டாக இலக்கணம் வகுத்து வாழ்ந்தமை பண்பாட்டின் சிகரமாகக் கருதப்படுகிறது. மேலும் அன்றைய கால மக்களின் நாகரிகம், பண்பாடு, பழக்க வழக்கங்கள், வாழ்க்கை முறை, அரசு, அமைச்சு, ஆட்சிமுறை, போர், வீரம், காதல் போன்றவற்றை நமக்குக் காட்டி நிற்கின்றன.

தமிழர் பண்பாடு பல காலமாக பேணப்பட்ட, திருத்தப்பட்ட, மேம்படுத்தப்பட்ட அம்சங்களைக் குறித்து நின்றாலும், அது தொடர் மாற்றத்துக்கு உட்பட்டு நிற்கும் ஒரு இயங்கியல் பண்பாடே.. தமிழர் பண்பாட்டின் அமைப்பொழுங்கானது அடிப்படையில் இரண்டு அம்சங்களைக் கொண்டதாகும். ஒன்று, அதனளவில் சார்புடையது (culture dependent). மற்றறொன்று, உலகளாவிய அமைப்பியல்பு களோடு பொருந்தக்கூடியது (culture independent). அதாவது, தமிழ்ப் பண்பாட்டின் உருவகத்தைத் தரக்கூடிய "புறக் கூறுகள்" பண்பாடு சார்ந்தும், அவற்றின் "அகக் கூறுகள்" உலகளாவிய அமைப்புகளோடு ஒத்திசைவு பெறுவதும் இதன் உட்பொருளாகும்.

நமக்குக் கிடைத்திருக்கும் சங்க இலக்கியங்களிலிருந்து தமிழர் பண்பாட்டை நன்கு அறிகிறோம். பண்பாட்டின் கூறுகள் சிலவற்றைப் பற்றி இங்கு காண்போம்.

பண்டைய தமிழர்கள் வீரத்தைத் தொல்காப்பியப் புறத்திணை இயல் எடுத்துக் கூறுகின்றது.

தமிழர் காதலை அன்பின் ஐந்திணை என்றனர்.

சங்ககாலத் தமிழர் நட்பினை பெரிதும் மதித்து வாழ்ந்தனர்.

தமிழர்களின் விருந்தோம்பலும் இன்னொரு அம்சமாகும்.

இவை மட்டுமன்றி ஈகை,கொடை, கற்புடைமை, உலக ஒருமைப்பாடு ஆகியவற்றையும் தமிழ்ப் பண்பாட்டின் கூறுகளாகக் கொள்ளலாம்.

அருளானந்தம் பொன்னுத்துரை

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