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॥ उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम् ॥—The Gita
Raise yourself by your own efforts

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ANCIENT INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

SHAMSUDDIN, B.A., B.T., M.Ed.

Raipur, M.P.

Ordinarily the History of ancient Indian education extends from 2000 B.C. to 1200 A.D. From the point of education the period from 1200 A.D. to the eighteenth century can be called the medieval age. Socially and educationally, ancient India did not have the same characteristics throughout. Therefore, we sub-divide the periods, and the division would be as follows :—

I. 2000 B.C. to 1000 B.C. — The Vedic period.

II. 1000 B.C. to 200 B.C. — The Upanishadic period.

III. 200 B.C. to 500 A.D. — The Dharmashastric period.

IV. 500 A.D. to 1200 A.D. — The Pauranic period.

THE VEDIC PERIOD :—At this stage society was very simple. Idol worship was unknown. Men and women had equal rights. The caste system had not taken shape. Practically, every one was his own teacher, his own warrior, his own farmer and agriculturist.

THE UPANISHADIC PERIOD :—During this period, gradually, society began to be divided into groups, and this grouping started with the Vedas.

Round about 500 B.C., we began formulating the rules of writing. The Vedas were very small in the beginning, and the people did not practise idol worship.

THE DHARMASHASTRIC PERIOD : This period saw a good deal of activity in respect of art, literature, mathematics and dramatics. Sanskrit had become a classical language. The language of popular communication was Prakrit. The caste system was rigid. Women did not enjoy the same freedom as before.

THE PAURANIC PERIOD :—Really speaking, this period is the period of the Buddhists so far as education is concerned. Universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila were Buddhistic institutions. Their language was Pali. Institutional education began for the first time in the Pauranic period.

Thus in brief, our modern institutions can be compared with the schools of ancient India. Any student who earnestly desired to be educated was never disappointed. Teachers too did not hide deliberately any technical knowledge from their students.

Sukhracharya, the preceptor of the Daityas, taught to his bitterest enemy's son, Kacha, the art of reviving the dead. Drona, the famous archer, could

not hide whatever he knew of the art of archery from Dhrishtadyumna, in spite of the fact that he knew that this disciple would kill him one day.

The guru and the pupil lived together. They had great affection for each other; rather their love was just like the love of father and son. The students used to live in the teacher's house which was known as the gurukula.

In the gurukula, the student had to shun all comforts. He had to go to bed after the guru and had to get up before him. He had to help the Guru in household work, involving even menial duties at times. The life in the gurukula was well disciplined, and at times very hard. From the point of view of needs, both teachers and the taught were satisfied. As the teacher did not live in luxury, he did not lead a life of want. The problem of indiscipline arose very rarely and since it was not frequent, punishments were not needed. There was a code for all sorts of activities.

LIBERAL EDUCATION

The education provided in the Universities like Taxila, Nalanda, Kanchi, Sridhanyakataka, Vikramashila and Banaras was quite liberal. Students were provided with free boarding, lodging and clothing. There was generally a keen competition between the villagers in giving their mite for the village school. Besides this, they used to donate without hesitation at the time of social functions like marriage, upanayanam, etc. The teacher not only provided knowledge to the students, but also raised funds from the villagers for the benefit of the students. In times of crisis, the guru used to approach kings with a request to help the gurukula. The guru did not refuse to teach any student, provided the student was fit to receive instruction.

Their method of teaching was predominantly oral. It was not merely oral, but was individual also. Hearing, contemplation and practice were the main features of their method. There

were few books, the Vedas were not written. Everything was learnt by heart. Their conviction was "If knowledge is in books, it is like money lent to others". At a time, the Guru had 15 or 20 students and at a time two or more syllables were taught to a child. Whatever was taught, was learnt by the student on the same day. Unless the first lesson was fully learnt no further lesson was given. Sometimes older students were required to teach younger students. The "Bell Lancaster System," the "Monitorial System" or the "Madras System" was copied by the Britishers from this country. The teacher taught older students at a fixed time of the day, and then the older taught the younger ones at some other time. It was possible, as the number of students and the number of subjects were less. In this way there was an apprenticeship.

NALANDA

Our information regarding Nalanda comes from the Chinese pilgrim, Yuan Chwang, who toured India from 673 to 687 A.D. He stayed at Nalanda for ten years. He copied sacred Buddhist works. According to him, the place was known as Dharmaganj. The University had three big buildings known as Ratnasagar, Ratnadandi and Ratnaranjak. Out of these, the middle one was a nine-storeyed building. The Library was housed in it. In all, there were eight halls and 300 apartments. Messing was common. In every courtyard there was a well. Rooms were either single-seated or double-seated. Every student had a stone, known as the chabutra, to sleep on. In every room there was a place for keeping lamps and books. There was great rush for admission. Not more than three out of ten succeeded in getting admission. Even then, there were 10,000 students and 1,000 teachers and it continued for more than eight or nine centuries, beginning from the 2nd century A.D. The institution was financed out of grants in the shape of lands. There were as many as 200 villages endowed by the Gupta kings

for the maintenance of the University. Since it was a Buddhistic institution, the head was a monk, and the teachers were bikshus. Strangely enough, the study of Sanskrit was compulsory.

To Indian Universities came students from far-off lands like China, Tibet, Java, Sumatra, Korea, Greece, Iran and Arabia to quench their thirst for learning. They stayed in the Universities for more than ten years, and specialised in logic, medicine and astronomy. It is quite obvious that the Indian Universities had a high standard; that was why students from foreign lands were attracted, even when there were no facilities for travelling. The standard of these Universities can be judged from the stay of the famous doctor Jeevak (who attended on Emperors and whose fee was a figure of not less than eight digits) at Taxila for seven years specialising in medicine. Even after his long stay, when he left the University, he thought that he was lacking in adequate knowledge of medicine. In those days, theoretical knowledge had no value. The theoretical knowledge of the doctor was regarded like an ass, conscious of the quantity and not the quality of the load on its back.

Practical training in pharmacy and surgery was insisted upon by legislative action before a doctor could set up a practice. Strabo, the Greek historian, has certified the fact that Indians were great physicians, and they were specially good at curing snake-bites. Inexperienced candidates were given practice in surgery, under the most experienced and specialised teachers. Only proficient surgeons were allowed to make operations of intestinal displacements, deep cranial abscesses, cataract, hydrocele and the removal of the still-born child from the uterus. The patients were made insensitive to pain by an over-dosage of wine.

Not only human beings but even animals were given perfect medical aid. For the first time in the history of the world, Ashoka the Great built veteri-

nary hospitals duly equipped with all necessary medicines. The names of great veterinary surgeons like Nakula and Sahadeva cannot be removed from the pages of history.

Similarly, ambulance cars were also utilised to remove the injured soldiers from the battle-field. We do not find the name of any such conveyance in European history before the commencement of the Crimean War. Not only this; even the services of Indian doctors like Manaka and others were requisitioned by Khalifa Harun Rashid of Baghdad, when he was seriously confined to bed and Arab physicians had lost all hopes of curing him. After recovery the Khalifa himself requested Manaka to stay with him and translate Ayurvedic works into Arabic. He also desired to call Indian lady doctors and midwives to write text books for his medical colleges.

The Taxila University was at its zenith as regards medical studies even in the early centuries of the Christian Era. Similarly, the famous University of Ujjain had specialists in mathematics and astronomy and it was famous for having established a great observatory. In Southern India, there was a famous educational centre at Kanchipuram.

Instances of life-long brahmacharya were quite common in Nalanda. Megasthenes has quoted instances, where Brahmins studied for as many as 48 years. They studied logic, Vyakarana and philosophical subjects which are given great importance today and have been included in the humanities.

There were equal opportunities for all. There was no distinction between the rich and the poor. The prince and the peasant used to get the same kind of education from the same guru. The pupilage of Drona and Drupada is the best example of this type.

To conclude, education was free and broad-based. For the upkeep of the Uni-

versities, donations and endowments were made by the foreign as well as native rulers. The ultimate aim of education was the emancipation of the soul. 'Action is important' was their belief. Self-action and self-control lead life to emancipation. Education was influenced by the general principles of life. The Bhagavad Gita emphasises that a student who seeks admission into a temple of learning should be properly disciplined, a sincere devotee, eager to hear and serve and never showing hatred towards others. Learning for base purposes was strictly prohibited. Every individual was induced to serve the community, irrespective of caste or creed, or his needs, just like a Doctor, who while treating, forgets whether the disease

is contagious or whether he would get his fee or not. In convocations, high ideals were insisted upon both in the teacher and the taught. The teachers prayed for the glory of their students so that the students might earn a good name and fame for themselves as well as for their teachers wherever they went. Referring to such times Yaska has defined a true scholar in the words of the goddess of learning, Saraswati; "Protect me, and I will be thy cherished treasure".

In brief, education was not controlled by any external authority in ancient times. The State did not try to control it. The teachers were free to teach whatever they liked. They were the masters of the field.

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XX INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION, GENEVA, 1957

Recommendation No. 44 to the Ministries of Education Concerning Expansion of School Building. 211

The International Conference on Public Education, convened in Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the International Bureau of Education, and having assembled on the eighth of July, nineteen hundred and fifty seven for its twentieth session, adopts on the sixteenth of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-seven the following Recommendation :

The Conference,

considering that past and future recommendations of the International Conference on Public Education cannot be fully implemented without the provision of adequate school buildings in the various countries,

considering Recommendation No. 9 on the legislation governing school building, adopted on the seventeenth day of July, nineteen hundred and thirty-six, by the International Conference on Public Education at its fifth session,

considering that educational development is one of the essential problems to be solved in coming years for the future good of mankind, for cultural, economic and social progress and for international understanding, and that this development largely depends on the provision of school buildings,

considering that the right to education implies for all children without distinction the opportunity of receiving their education in suitable accommodation, with classrooms specially designed and equipped for that purpose,

considering that all countries, whatever the stage of their material

and cultural development, are suffering from a shortage of school buildings,

considering that growth and internal movements of population, the introduction or prolongation of compulsory education for all and the extension of secondary education must increase school enrolments year by year,

considering that, on account of the complexity of the problem, effective collaboration must be established within each country between all the authorities and interests which are concerned with school building development,

considering that while all countries must benefit from international co-operation in this field many countries need positive international aid,

considering that countries sharing similar aims, but having different economic, financial and administrative systems, need to find varied solutions to the problem of school building,

Submits to the Ministries of Education of the several countries the following recommendation :

SURVEY OF NEEDS

1. In order to find a rational solution to the problems and avoid all unnecessary expense, it is essential to draw up well in advance an overall plan based on a study of present and future needs in school building.

2. This study should be based on the educational requirements of each country, and should include :

- (a) a census of existing school buildings including rented premises,

provisional accommodation and hutments, with details of their present use, the extent to which they can be adapted to new needs, etc.;

- (b) statistical data regarding present and future trends in school population;
- (c) a study of the possible effects on the growth and distribution of school enrolments of: (i) the introduction, where it does not already exist, of compulsory education for all; (ii) a possible extension of the compulsory schooling period; (iii) the provision of secondary education for an increasing number of children; (iv) internal movements of population; (v) a better distribution of school accommodation;
- (d) an estimate of the financial outlay necessary to give effect to the plan;
- (e) an analysis of the availability of technicians, building labour and materials;
- (f) arrangements for carrying out the plan in phases.

3. The nature of the bodies responsible for carrying out this study and keeping the results up to date will vary according to the administrative structure of each country and the degree of centralisation of its educational system; but it is desirable, even when the responsibility rests with local authorities, that an overall study giving a general view of the whole country's requirements should be provided.

4. The production of such long-term development plans, as well as revealing issues requiring decision, also offers particularly effective means of awakening authorities and public opinion to the urgent demands to be met by the country and the financial effort involved.

ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

5. The administrative procedure for the erection of school buildings should be as simple and as speedy as possible; it should never impede or delay the planning and building of schools.

6. Where different authorities are concerned at different levels with school building, it is necessary to avoid duplication or overlapping in the work of central, federal, regional and local administrative bodies.

7. It is in the interests of education to associate the local public authority with the school building programme in so far as their contribution would be effective.

8. In cases where different departments (education, public works, finance, etc.) are directly responsible in the matter of school building, every effort must be made to co-ordinate their roles on a permanent basis.

9. The adoption of national, regional or local long-term plans, whether mandatory or not, will facilitate action, increase efficiency and save time; all plans for social and economic development should include a special section comprising the needs and plans for school building expansion in the coming four or five years.

10. It is important to build accommodation for teachers at the same time as the schools themselves, especially in areas where the housing shortage threatens to affect the recruitment of teachers.

FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC MEASURES

11. Whatever the stage of development reached in the educational field, expenditure on school building in every country must be regarded as a continuing necessity; in order to provide for this outlay a long-term financial policy is necessary.

12. Depending on the administrative and economic structure of each

country, a balance must be established as rationally as possible between the respective shares of financial responsibility for school building which are to be borne by local, regional and central or federal authorities.

13. In view of the magnitude of the financial outlay required for school construction, every effort should be made to keep capital expenditure as low as possible, provided that the quality of the building and educational and health standards do not suffer as a result.

14. When it is a question of providing basic educational facilities or of meeting new demands which are particularly urgent, the following exceptional financial measures have been found useful:

- (a) supplementary budgets or specially created national or local funds or loans to cover extraordinary programmes of work;
- (b) additional revenue from special taxes, collections, stamp issues, etc.;
- (c) the attraction of private capital by issues of stocks;
- (d) private gifts by individuals or local communities of money, land, labour or materials.

15. In some countries, the legal obligation requiring large industrial, commercial, mining, agricultural or housing concerns to share in some way in the building of schools, may help to solve the school building problem in certain areas.

TECHNICAL MEASURES

16. The design of schools must be based upon educational, sociological and sanitary requirements and meet the needs of children and families, taking into account such factors as climate, surroundings, economic situation and building techniques; therefore the design of schools must be the result of

a close collaboration between educators, parents, designers, builders and administrators.

17. Experience has shown the value of the study, by bodies set up for that purpose, of school design and actual construction.

18. In designing new buildings, it is necessary to take into consideration changes in teaching methods as well as continuous technical progress.

19. School premises should not be conceived as monuments intended to last for centuries but as buildings which may be easily adapted to changes in the distribution of population and to educational and technical progress.

20. Without seeking undue uniformity or inflexibility which would be incompatible with varying local conditions and the evolution of educational ideas, the simplification and standardization of building components, and, where necessary, the drawing up of adaptable and varied model plans can be of great help in reducing capital costs and speeding up construction.

21. Rational examination of user needs can lead to substantial economy by reducing the floor area and, in certain cases, the cubic content of school buildings. Provided that the needs of education and health are safeguarded it appears essential to secure such economies.

22. Much school building will have to be carried out in stages for reasons of expediency; nevertheless each project should be planned as a whole before any part is built, so that the completed project is satisfactory educationally and architecturally.

23. In areas where the climate is suitable, the provision of open-air accommodation may constitute an economical method of partially solving the school building problem.

24. It is essential that in all town planning, space be reserved from the start for all types of schools, including boarding accommodation if necessary, without losing sight of the fact that in the none too distant future more space will be required for secondary education than for primary education.

25. In the choice of sites for new schools it is desirable to take into account such factors as possible population changes, traffic hazards, means of transport, sanitary requirements, availability of public utilities, topography and soil conditions, etc.

26. In sparsely populated areas, advantage should be taken of any development in transport facilities; centrally placed schools, for example, able to accommodate larger numbers of pupils, might be more economically substituted for separate small schools; on the other hand the building of large schools with an excessive number of classes and pupils should be avoided; it is better to build, whenever possible rationally distributed schools which will be suited to the child and where life and work in common will be possible, where the social conscience of the children can be trained and contact with the outside world and with nature facilitated.

27. It is educationally desirable that children should contribute to the greatest possible extent to the furnishing and decoration of their own school.

28. Building services and concerns should have at their disposal reliable information on school building in order to allow them to establish programmes of work covering a substantial period ahead and to organize their labour and equipment as efficiently as possible.

29. For the purpose of enabling building services and concerns to obtain materials at better prices, to standardise certain constructional elements and to organize operations on a rational basis, it may be found desirable, in

some cases, to combine the erection of several schools in one inclusive contract.

30. Encouragement should be given to the organizing of national congresses and seminars for specialists, of exhibitions, of competitions for designs, etc., connected with the building of schools.

EMERGENCY MEASURES

31. Some emergency solutions cannot be entirely rejected; as far as possible, however, they should be recognised as necessary evils to be remedied as quickly as possible and not allowed to become permanent.

32. Emergency measures such as increasing the number of pupils per class or taking classes in shifts (one classroom being used for two or three groups of pupils in turn) have obvious disadvantages and should only be adopted in exceptional circumstances.

33. The use of premises designed for other purposes than teaching, and the erection of temporary structures, are often unavoidable expedients. For short-term use they probably offer the easiest and cheapest way of providing emergency accommodation. If retained in use for long periods, however, there is evidence that, apart from their educational and environmental disadvantages, their cost (purchase price, rent, upkeep, etc.) may exceed that of well designed permanent school buildings.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The Conference submits to the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies and to the Inter-governmental Organizations the following recommendation:

34. It is of advantage to all countries to combat everything which may hinder educational development, and consequently to help each other acquire increased efficiency in their school building activity.

35. It is desirable to pay particular attention to the case of under-developed countries. As they have great requirements and considerable leeway to make up, they suffer, despite every possible effort on their part, from a shortage of material, financial and technical facilities which renders positive foreign aid a necessity. For this reason it is desirable that international organs whose activities are on a world or regional scale continue and if possible increase their assistance in the matter of school building to countries in particular need.

36. In the field of school building construction, design and costing (which should always be worked out with reference to local conditions), international aid can take the form of:

(a) Exchanges of ideas, experience and information. In this connection it would be advisable to set up, with the assistance of UNESCO, the International Bureau of Education and other international institutions, an international school building centre with appropriate technicians and educators on the staff. Such a centre should stimulate and assist the development of similar regional centres.

(b) The awarding of scholarships in connection with technical assistance programmes, the sending of architects and technicians to under-developed countries, in particular to study the use of available local material, to draw up plans specially conceived for the various areas and to suggest the economies which are even more necessary in those countries than elsewhere.

(c) The organization jointly by important international associations of educators, architects and economists of international meetings, school

building exhibitions and study travel.

(d) The publication of pamphlets, handbooks and reviews devoted to modern methods of school building.

37. International organizations could also play a useful part in the setting up of national and regional research centres which would devise suitable building plans and speedy, economic methods of construction suitable for different areas.

38. International aid may take the form of grants, loans on particularly favourable conditions and even of contributions to an international fund, set up under the United Nations, for advancing school building.

39. It is indispensable for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to consider the possibility of making long-term loans for school building to countries which request them. These loans will be needed so long as the economic development of these countries has not advanced sufficiently to enable them to meet the necessary expenditure themselves.

40. It would be advisable to have experts examine the question of the international circulation of capital available for investment in school building, particularly building by under-developed countries.

41. International aid may be constituted by donations and by offers of school building materials at favourable prices; the possibility of such exchanges should form the subject of special study by international and national organizations concerned with economic and social questions.

42. It is important for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in its programmes of activities for the next few years to make provision for a major project devoted to school building.

FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT SOVIET WOMEN

Soviet women take an active part in administering the state. There are 348 women deputies in the USSR Supreme Soviet, or 25.8 per cent of the total number of deputies. Out of these 348, 170 are members of the Soviet of the Union and 178 — of the Soviet of Nationalities.

There are 540,314 deputies to local Soviets which amount to 35.2 per cent of the total number of the deputies there.

One hundred and three women occupy posts of Vice-Chairmen of the Councils of Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the USSR Government or the Governments of the Union Republics.

A Soviet woman may attend any vocational, technical or general educational school, any secondary or higher technical educational establishment.

Nine hundred and sixteen thousand women, or 54.8 per cent of the total number of the students, attended specialised secondary educational establishments last year, and 642,800, or 52.3 per cent of the student body, attended higher educational establishments. In addition to this, some half a million women are studying by correspondence.

Out of the specialists with higher education 53 per cent are women; out of the total number of doctors 76 per cent are women and among teachers—70 per cent.

Some 10,000 women have scientific degrees or titles. There are 77,500 women scientists. There are 5,795 women among the scientists of the USSR Academy of Sciences, or 42.3 per cent of the total number of the scientists. They include 2 Academicians, 11 Corresponding Members of the Academy, 141 Doctors of Science, 2,127 Masters of Science. More than 100 women are at the head of institutes or laboratories.

More than 38,000 women are teachers or research workers at the higher educational establishments of the USSR, 1,919 women are heads of the departments, 320 have the title of Professor and 4,500 are assistant professors or senior researchers.

A huge number of women are employed in industry and construction, at public and cultural institutions and organisations. Women make up 45 per cent of the workers and office employees in Soviet industry, 30 per cent of the building workers, 49 per cent of the state employees, and 96 per cent of the librarians. There are 1,800 women in the 2,604 staff of the Lenin Library, the biggest state library in the USSR.

Women constitute 42.8 per cent of all the members of the factory trade union committees, 39.3 per cent of the members of the trade union central committees and 32.3 per cent of the members of the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions.

“Soviet Land”, March 1, 1957.



JANAB C. M. FAZALUR RAHMAN,
Member of the Delegation
to China from the A. I. F. E. A.

The Origin and the Development of the People's Movement for Free Supply of School Meals in the Madras State

SRI N. D. SUNDARAVADIVELU

Director of Public Instruction, Madras

The provision of free mid-day meals to school children has always been recognised as one of the incentives to regular attendance of pupils enrolled. Many of the progressive countries have arranged for this as one of the essential amenities in the scheme of primary education. Wherever compulsion has been successful, it has been successful not only due to the vigilance in enforcement and the co-operation of the public but also because of this provision. It is these realisations that has prompted the Madras Government to provide free mid-day meals at State cost to Harijan children reading in Welfare schools for some years now. The Corporation of Madras has also been providing free mid-day meals to the poor children in their elementary schools for many years now. It is this provision that accounted for the appreciable percentage of attendance in these schools, catering to the poorer section of our society.

It has rarely been realised that it is not merely an incentive for regular attendance but a dire necessity if the pupils are to be effectively educated. The large-scale prevalence of poverty in our country is too well known to need special mention. Nor is it necessary to remind ourselves of the fact that this is, to a large extent, responsible for the non-enrolment of a considerable percentage of the school-age children. Because of this widespread prevalence of poverty there are even today, when every village with a population of 500 and above has been provided with a school, a considerable percentage of school-age children still outside the school. Every one is equally aware of the presence of a number of hungry pupils at every school. We are attempting to teach these starving

children in the schools. How can anyone educate effectively such hungry children? We all know an old Tamil poem which says “as hunger comes in, education along with nine other things fly away”. Starvation has been responsible for a good deal of ineffectiveness in our schools and consequential stagnation and wastage in education. Many of you are aware that many pupils stagnate at the same class for more than a year even at the elementary stage and continuous stagnation causes withdrawal of children from the school, which is called “Wastage”.

An unforgettable incident, to which I was an eye-witness some years back, made me realise fully the absolute need for free mid-day meals for poor children if we are to educate them. In the month of November 1955 I happened to visit one evening, in the course of my tour in Malabar district, the Board High School, at Perinthalamanna. There was a meeting of the students over which I was presiding. In the course of a few minutes the sad spectacle of two boys swooning in the meeting one after the other, was witnessed by me. On enquiry, I found that it was not due to any special strain to which they have been put on that occasion. I was told that that was a common sight in that school, due to utter starvation. These poor children go walking to the school from distant places, and, in addition, go without a noon meal. This has been an eye opener to me of the conditions prevailing among our school children and on further enquiry, in various districts, I found that there are many starving children in all our elementary and high schools throughout the State, irrespective of where they are situated.

To the poor the only means of salvation and social upliftment is education and, if the poor children are to be educated, at least, as well as, their richer class-mates, if not better, we must ensure for them certain basic requirements. They have to run at present, a handicap race with their well-to-do class-mates. The poor pupils are subjected to various handicaps. They have neither educational environment nor physical provision like proper lighting, etc., in their homes to enable them to study at home as much as the well-to-do child can. Nor can they afford the finances to engage a private tutor as is done by richer pupils, who need such extra tuition. Their only hope of getting an acceptable kind of education is, therefore, in the class room alone. It is there that they must assimilate as much knowledge as possible and acquire necessary skills and proper attitudes. Outside the class room opportunities for study are limited to them.

How could we expect them to do their best in the school when they are hungry? Being hungry, they are not in a position to be, at least, as attentive as others. Hence they do not do as well as others but fail. Their stagnation and wastage is more due to this cause than to their lack of intrinsic worth and the capacity to benefit by the educational opportunities. It was at Perintalamanna that I realised that the attempt to teach a hungry child and to condemn him later on as "not so good as others" is a crime against humanity. It is not only an administrative waste but a destruction of tender human material, that can blossom into one of the finest personalities, if only the necessary environmental and physical requirements are supplied. Of what avail will all our educational reforms, up-to-date techniques, modern methods and attractive aids be, when the child is unable to attend to or absorb what we provide for it by these means and aids?

We are witnessing the paradox of innumerable pupils and students going

without their noon meals or starving during the school day and, at the same time, a flood of charity and hospitality flowing in the country. Ours has been a country renowned for hospitality and charity. Many are the forms in which our spirit of charity has found expression. We value Annadhan as the best of the "Dhans". If our traditional hospitality and "Annadhan" could only be diverted, to some extent, to the schools, it will be possible to feed these hungry children without any extra burden being placed on society. These were the ideas that were tormenting me.

A big gathering of all Elementary school teachers in Tuticorin in February 1956, provoked me to give expression to these ideas and to plead for voluntary provision for free mid-day meals to school children through non-official agencies. It so happened that the speech was tape-recorded by Sri Ramasubbu, the President, District Board, Tirunelveli, who later on lent this recorded speech to the District Educational Officers, Tirunelveli. This speech was first broadcast in a village called "Nagalapuram" in Koilpatti taluk. This was listened to not merely by teachers who gathered for their monthly meeting but also by the local public. It was there that the leaders of the village, having listened to this appeal for school annadhan, responded to the call, calculated the requirements to feed the poor school children in their schools and resolved that everyone owning a plot of cultivable land should contribute a specified quantity of food grains at the time of harvest. The Hon. the Chief Minister of Madras Sri K. Kamaraj who happened to see this news in the papers encouraged me personally by pointing out that this has a great potentiality and no village in Tamil Nad will fail to contribute for annadhan, whatever their views on other matters may be. The Hon. Minister for Education Sri C. Subramaniam equally encouraged me by pointing out that the seeds of Sarvodaya can be sown in schools by such a movement for school annadhan.

Encouraged in this manner, I and my officers took up the task of organising purely on a voluntary basis free mid-day meal centres in towns and villages. The movement was launched in July 1956. This developed entirely as a people's movement for organised charity. It was entirely a voluntary movement. To avoid official pressure no orders of any kind have been issued by me. Nor was the progress taken official cognisance of till September 1957. It was only in September 1957 that the particulars from various districts were officially gathered, reviewed and communicated so that every officer may know what is being done by his colleagues in other districts.

I am happy to record that the experience has been thrilling and encouraging. Wherever the officers have taken this up in earnestness and put across this idea, it has caught the imagination of the people and they have responded enthusiastically both in towns and in villages. In the course of last 15 months, this has received the enthusiastic support of the various sections of the public. Leaders of public life with different political views, economic objectives and social aspirations have lent their support to this humanitarian movement though not as a means of permanent solution of our problems of poverty, but at least as a sort of first aid to the suffering. Newspapers have also given a good deal of support by due publicity of these activities and some even by editorials supporting the scheme. To-day, this scheme is functioning not only in thousands of elementary schools but also in a number of secondary schools. Today about 4,277 educational institutions provide such free mid-day meals for about 92,070 pupils and students. If it has not spread to other schools, it is not so much due to the lack of support of the public or hard-heartedness of the people but due to the inability of our officers to spare more time and efforts for this purpose.

It is not merely the contribution in cash and kind and the burden that the

public willingly take up in feeding these children that is full of hope and promise for the future. The volume of interest that this participation inevitably arouses in them, will go a long way to improve the school-community relationship and thereby raise the standards. The larger the interest the public develop in educational matters, the more certain is the future of education. Without public understanding and support, it will not be possible to get adequate support, both material and moral, for our educational plans. Looking at it from this point of view, I feel, this movement of free mid-day meals augurs well for the future of the education of our children.

The kind of mid-day meals served varies from school to school. Mostly, it consists of simple "sambar" or "curd bath" on alternate days. There are a few schools where both are served daily. Here and there a few schools provide regular meals consisting of the usual two or three courses like sambar, rasam and butter milk.

Many are the ways by which these mid-day meal centres have been organised in various localities. I have already referred to the case of Nagalapuram where all the land owners, big and small, have agreed to contribute at the time of harvest the specific quantity of food grains according to the extent of the lands, towards school "Annadhan". Another example comes from an Elementary school at Avinashi run by nuns. About 100 empty match boxes were distributed to such of those school children who can donate every morning without strain and compulsion a match box full of rice. These children willingly brought with them to school match boxes full of rice. In the course of a few days, the accumulation, became substantial and the scheme was then launched. Thereafter, a few charitable persons of the locality supplemented the continuous free supply of food grains in that school. It is learnt that, in the Board High School, Eddapadi, almost all the children bring

on the first working day of the week a handful of food grains and deposit them in the school. These collections enable the school to feed about 30 to 40 children per day throughout the year. The collection of handful of rice for this purpose is resorted to in many schools.

In many villages of homogeneous population, the mothers at home put aside a handful of rice when they cook their own food. This rice set apart for charity is collected once a week from each house and utilised for feeding the school children. In bigger villages and towns, cash donations are the mainstay. Annual cash donations are given by the rich and the salaried. There are cases where one wealthy individual undertakes to feed the children throughout the year as in the case of the Ettayapuram Raja's Elementary School, Gomathi Ambal High School, Tirunelveli, Sri Visalakshi Kalasalai, A-Thekkur etc. In several villages, a few rich land owners of the village come together and undertake to feed the poor children for a specific period of time like a week, a month etc., by rotation so as to cover the entire year.

Almost all the Government Basic Training Schools are doing this charity, by feeding a specific number of poor children in the model schools where they save their teaching practice. As these teacher-trainees have to live in hostels, all that they have to do is to allow a slightly larger quantity of rice to be cooked and spare the extra to the poor children. As no separate establishment or organisation becomes necessary, the extra burden to them is almost negligible. It does not amount to more than 3 to 4 annas per month per trainee and none grudges to spare that much. The organisation of free mid-day meals by the pupil teachers gives them the necessary training for organising such things later on when they go out as teachers. The teachers in service have not been lagging behind in contributing to this cause. There are many instances of lump sum or periodical contribution by teachers. In

one high school the teachers themselves set the ball rolling by agreeing to feed by turns 6 students per day. In a few days the villagers came forward to take up the responsibility of free supply of meals. There are centres where food is cooked in the individual house for a specific number of pupils and sent to the schools at the appointed hour. The houses in the village take their turn in cooking and supplying the mid-day meals.

These reveal to us that there are various ways of getting cash and kind for running free mid-day meals in the schools. It is not only the rich but also the poor that have contributed according to their capacity. It is not merely those with a regular income, however small, that come forward to contribute but also others with less certain incomes. The noble example of even 'daily' wage earners contributing to this cause, their mite, has come to my notice quite recently in a village called Narasingapuram, Tiruvellore taluq, Chingleput District. The mid-day meal scheme for the Elementary school in the village was inaugurated by me on the 24th October 1957. The list of donors were read out in full in the public meeting. In that list the names of 9 good men — daily wage earners — who have undertaken to contribute every day a quarter of an anna found a place. This shows that though they are so ignorant as to speak even now in terms of old coins, yet are good enough to be as charitable as any up-to-date men can be.

As the ways and means of financing of this scheme is varied, there is a lot of elasticity in the organisation of the scheme. In many places informal committees have been constituted right from the beginning. In some places like Kancheepuram, the non-official committees are all party committees including the local leaders of all political parties and social organisations. Such committees have organised collections in cash and kind, arranged for central or individual cooking of meals and serving them.

Where individual or individual households undertake to feed the children by turn, no such committees are formed. Similarly in institutions, where the meals scheme is organised on the basis of handful or match box full of food grains, committees have not come into existence. Now, that it is proposed to put the free mid-day meals scheme on a regular basis, to ensure their continuous and proper functioning over long years, the inspecting officers have been requested to see that, in every one of these centres, a non-official committee with rules and regulations is formed and reported to the inspecting officers concerned. As regards the mode of preparation of the food, there are a number of ways. In the Basic Training Schools, the food is cooked in the hostel itself along with the food for the pupil-teachers and served in the model schools. In a few high schools, the Domestic Science sections undertake the responsibility of preparing the food. There are schools where the maid servant of the school cooks the food. In many places they employ some one from outside to cook and serve the food for the children. They are on a part-time basis and they are remunerated with food and some cash payment.

The experience of the last 15 months in organising free mid-day meals leaves no doubt as to the potentiality of this movement. There is plenty of resources waiting to be tapped for such charitable purposes. Such free supply has ensured not only regular attendance but also better enrolment. In my own native village, within a month after the inauguration of the mid-day meals, the enrolment has increased from 61 to 77. This is not a stray case of improvement in enrolment. Wherever they are able to feed extra poor children that are admitted into the school because of this supply, there one finds improvement in enrolment without resort to compulsion. The children are also more contented and more atten-

tive. Their growth is better and there is a marked improvement in their health is the impression that I have gathered from these centres.

There is one silent revolution that this is ushering in. In my village when this was launched, there were 40 starving children of different communities. 15 of them were Harijans. When it actually came to serving the mid-day meals on the first day, 25 non-Harijans, though poor, did not want to sit together and eat with Harijans. Hence, this free supply had to be confined to the Harijans alone for a few days. In a few days things have changed. The non-Harijan parents themselves came forward to allow their children to sit with Harijans instead of allowing them to starve. Today pupils of different communities sit together and eat together without any hitch. Such a state of affairs I have personally noticed in a few other villages in other districts. This silent revolution in the outlook of these young pupils will go a long way in bringing up a unified, well-integrated society without any consciousness of caste differences.

Good social habits, habits of health and hygienic practices can more easily be instilled in the minds of the children by these services than by class room theoretical teaching.

All these have been going on depending entirely on private benefactions in a new field, where no tradition as yet has been established. This, I am confident, will extend as months advance. To make this a fairly long standing provision and placing it on a sound footing, Government subsidy is essential. Now that Government have decided to share the expenses and to give subsidy towards this scheme, one can confidently expect progress both in quantity and in quality of the free supply of mid-day meals — and along with that undoubtedly in the effectiveness of education that is imparted.

TUTICORIN

The Secretaries of all the local Teachers' Associations formed themselves this year into the Education Week Committee, with Sri V. Antonyswamy, B.A. (Hons.), L.T., Headmaster of the Subbiah Vidyalayam Boys' Model High School and Vice-President of the S.I.T.U. as its convener and organised a 3-Day Education Week on the 9th, 10th and 11th November. All the meetings were held in the spacious Municipal Council Hall in the evenings.

The week was inaugurated on 9-11-57 by Sri B. Dharmarajan, B.Sc., L.T., the new D.E.O. of Tinnevely North at Tuticorin. Mr. V. Antonyswamy gave him a well-nigh 'civic' welcome in the name of all teachers, pupils and managers. In his address the D. E. O. made a special appeal to the Tuticorin Municipality to provide for mid-day meal centres in all their schools, as all schemes of compulsory education are bound to fail in view of the poverty of the masses. Prof. V. M. Krishnamurthi, M.A., L.T., of the V. O. C. Teachers' College spoke on 'Fundamentals of Education and National Unity'.

The second day was observed as the Teachers' Day and it was presided over by Sri K. R. Appalachary, M.A., L.T., Principal of the Teachers' College. While he stressed the supremely important role of teachers in spreading literacy and culture and forming the character of the youth of the country, Sri V. V. Naidu, B.A., L.T., Headmaster, S. A. V. High School, pointed to the glaring disparities in the matter of pay, allowances and privileges between teachers, and Government servants, and Sri M. Subramanian, Headmaster, Melur Municipal Elementary School, spoke about problems of elementary school teachers. Sri S. Srinivasan of Vellore, ex-member S.I.T.U. Working Committee, brought home to the audience the good things done for the profession by the S.I.T.U. and how it could do more, if it could command the unstinted allegiance of all teachers.

The meeting unanimously adopted the following resolutions requesting

the State government to immediately enhance the scales of pay of teachers of all grades, if it was serious about implementing its new scheme of educational reorganization; extend pension benefit to all teachers and provide medical relief and house rent allowance to all teachers irrespective of the agency employing them.

The closing day (11-11-57) was the parents' day. Chevalier J. L. P. Roche Victoria, K. S. G., ex-Minister Madras State, presided over the evening function and made a vigorous plea both to the Central and State Governments for a 'go-slow' policy in the matter of replacing English by Hindi as the official language of India and in changing over the medium of instruction in universities from English to regional languages. Sri T. R. Parthasarathi, M.A., B.L., Asst. Manager, Madurai Mills Ltd., Tuticorin, and Sri R. Jayachandran, B.A., D.P. Ed., Lecturer in physical education, V. O. C. Teachers' College, addressed the gathering on 'Education & Home'.

Sri V. Antonisamy, the convener of the Week, after thanking all the Presidents and spectators, made a special mention of the kind co-operation extended to him by the Municipal Chairman, Sri Sam Masilamoney, and the Municipal School Supervisor Sri Olimuthu Samuel. The contributions in shape of dances and songs made by the three Municipal Girls' Higher Elementary Schools were very much appreciated by the public.

SIVAKASI

Under the auspices of the Teachers' Association, S. H. N. V. High School, Sivakasi, the 27th South Indian Education Week was celebrated on 29th and 30th October, 1957 in the school premises, when Sri P. S. R. Shenbagamurthi, Manager and Correspondent of the S. H. N. V. High and Higher Elementary Schools, Sivakasi, presided. A large gathering was present.

Sri S. Krishnamoorthy, M.A., B.T., Headmaster, S. H. N. V. High School, Sivakasi, welcomed the gathering and

he explained to the audience the significance of the week.

Sri A. Michael Ponnusamy, B.A., M.Ed., Headmaster, C. M. S. High School, Srivilliputtur, spoke on 'Education and Cultural Heritage'. He gave an account of the growth of education from the early days to the present date. He also told the audience how educationists like Froebel, Montessori and Roussaeu were responsible for a revolution in education. He pointed out that Indians are said to be passive, meditative and philosophic. He clearly brought out the relationship between education and Indian culture and requested that we must have a feeling that we are citizens of the world.

Mr. T. Samuel Asirvatham, B.A., L.T., Assistant, C. M. S. High School, Srivilliputtur, spoke on 'Education and the Teacher'. He pointed out the potential capacities of the pupils and how a good and responsible teacher can shape them. He explained how a teacher should be and asked a good teacher to equip himself before entering the class and discharge his duties efficiently. Mrs. P. Lalithabai, Tamil Pandit, S. H. N. Girls' High School, Sivakasi, spoke on the same theme. The speaker quoted from 'Nannool' and defined the term "teacher" and "education" and brought out the salient characteristics to be possessed by a teacher. Mr. C. Sivamurugan, B.A., L.T., Assistant Headmaster, S. H. N. V. High School, Sivakasi proposed a vote of thanks.

On 30th October, 1957, Sri K. S. V. Natarajan, B.A., Partner, Chithrakala Litho Works, Sivakasi, was in the chair. Pulavar K. Thirumaran, Lecturer in Tamil, Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars' Senthikumar Nadar College, Virudhunagar, spoke on "Education and Home" and he quoted from Tirukkural many more examples to illustrate the real home. He talked about the responsibility of the parents in imparting good education to their pupils. Smt. N. Gnana-sundari, B.A. (Hons.), B.T., Assistant, S. H. N. Girls' High School, Sivakasi, spoke on "Education and the Development of Personality". The speaker at

length defined the term "Education and character Training". The speaker emphasised the vital need of moulding sound personalities entrusted to their care.

Sri S. T. Rajagopal, Headmaster, S. H. N. V. Higher Elementary School, Sivakasi, dealt with the importance of "Elementary Education". He deplored that there is a rapid deterioration in the standard of education now-a-days and pointed out that we should all try to build up a better future in the field of education. Some High School students gave out their experiences in their excursion tour of Mysore, Bangalore, Trichy, Tanjore, Trivandrum and Quilon.

The president in his concluding remarks appealed to the teachers to be co-operative with the Government as well as with the school authorities in effecting their policies. With a hearty vote of thanks proposed by Sri V. Isaac Devapiriam, B.A., B.T., Secretary of the Association, the meeting came to a close.

SHOLINGHUR

Education Week was celebrated on 29-10-57 at 5 p.m. in front of the Perumal Temple, Sholinghur with Sri S. Ramakrishnan, M.A., LL.B., District Munsiff, Sholinghur in the chair. Sri J. John Dorairaj, B.A., L.T., Headmaster, Goodlet High School, Sholinghur, inaugurated the Education Week. In the course of his speech, he referred to the objects of the Education Week. Sri S. Ramakrishnan, the president, stated the part played by Education in Welfare state, which was greatly appreciated by the public.

All local schools took an active part and contributed to its success. A special programme of songs, dance and other activities by school children was prepared for the occasion and was successfully carried out. The president appreciated the entertainments performed by the students and concluded his remarks by advising pupils to take interest in all activities of the school. With a vote of thanks and singing of the National Anthem the meeting came to a close.

NEWS AND NOTES

MADURAI CITY SCHOOL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATION, MADURAI. A RETIRED TEACHER HONOURED.

The Madurai City School Servants' Association was inaugurated at U. C. High School under the chairmanship of Sri S. Krishna Iyengar, B.A., L.T., President, Madurai District Teachers' Association. Sri V. G. Srinivasan B.A., L.T., spoke about the methods and ways to be adopted by the Association. Sri P. Pandian, B.A., B.T., gave a talk on the aims and objectives of the Association. Sri M. Alwar spoke about the necessity for unity among the servants. Sri K. Karuppiah proposed a vote of thanks.

NEHRUJI'S BIRTHDAY AND CHILDREN'S DAY.

The pupils of the Sourashtra Secondary School, Mainguard, Madurai, celebrated on 14-11-57 the Birthday of Nehruji and the Children's Day in their school under the presidentship of Sri N. M. R. V. Mahadevan, Correspondent of the School and in the presence of Sri R. Ramasubbu, B.A., B.T., Headmaster, the staff, parents and pupils of the school.

The pupils of each class took active interest in depicting select scenes of Nehruji's early career, his active participation in Freedom movement, his life in prisons, his universal love for children and international peace. The pupils exhibited their skill in the demonstration of various pyramids and physical activities. Prizes were awarded to such class pupils who enacted well in the plays and a separate shield was presented to the physical education department.

A vote of thanks was proposed by a child-student, signifying the celebration of the day. With the singing of Jana Gana Mana, the Children's function came to a close.

Sri N. Krishnamoorthi, an active Scouter and the Ex. Manual Training Instructor of the Boys' High Schools, Mayuram and of the High School, Thirukattupalli, who retired on May last after an illustrious career of 3 decades and more in the Teaching Profession from the National High School, Mayuram where he served last, was honoured by the Public on Sunday the 17th November, 1957 in the premises of the National High School, Mayuram.

His Holiness Kunrakudi Adigalar presided over the function and the District Educational Officer, Tanjore East, Negapatam, Mr. U. B. Mohamed Sarvar, B.A., L.T., took part in the function. Mr. M. S. Ponnuswami Iyer, B.Sc., the Ex-Chairman of the Town and Chairman of Sri Krishnamoorthy Celebrations Committee welcomed the gathering in a short speech. Many addresses were then read and presented to the chief guest which were followed by speeches made by eminent educationists of the town and district about the noble qualities of the head and heart of the chief guest. Besides, the chief guest was presented with a purse which he received from the hands of His Holiness amidst great applause. An address was also presented on this occasion to His Holiness by the Members of the Old Boys' Association, National High School, Mayuram.

In addressing the gathering His Holiness dealt at length about diplomacy, anger, education, past and present and teachers past and present in his own saintly way exciting side-splitting laughter now and then from the audience. He admired the chief guest of the day and wished him a long, happy, healthy—scouting life in his retirement.

Both His Holiness and the Chief Guest answered suitably for the addresses presented to them.

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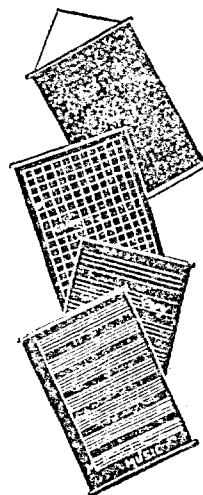
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Reorganisation of Secondary Education

In November 1957, both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council discussed the recommendations made by the Legislature Committee. Sri C Subramaniam, Minister for Education, ably presented the recommendations. One good feature is that the leaders of the opposition both in the Assembly and the Council supported the Legislature Committee's report. The Government will hereafter find no difficulty in implementing the recommendations. To the suggestion made by some of the members that in the study of languages, provision should be made for the study of both Hindi and Sanskrit, the Minister said that such of the schools as are desirous of having Sanskrit may do so, but it will be outside the curriculum. The salary given to the Sanskrit Pandits, he said, will be taken for purposes of grant. This proposal does not meet the request of those who want the study of Sanskrit within the curriculum. If it is left to the heads of educational institutions, it is possible still to have the study within the working hours. It is hoped that students desirous of studying Sanskrit will take advantage of this provision.

The Minister frankly admitted that teachers deserve higher salaries and other amenities. If funds permitted, he would do so immediately. Regarding the extension of pension scheme and house rent allowance, he said, he had not forgotten them and he would in due course grant them. It is hoped that at least in the next budget he will make provision for the granting of these two items. The Pay Commission that is now examining the case of Central Government servants should not fail to recommend the case of State Government servants and employees in local bodies and aided educational institutions. The Central Government should bear at least 75% of the expenditure on elementary education.

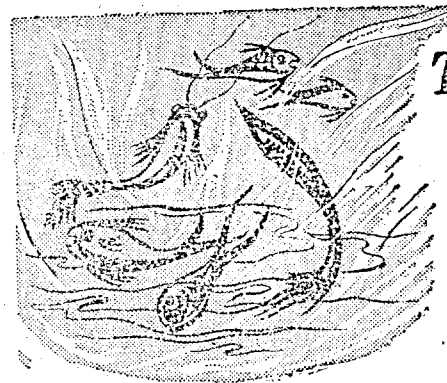
Since the recommendations of the Legislature Committee have been ap-

proved of by both the Legislatures, it is hoped that the educational pattern will not be tampered with for at least 25 years. Syllabuses have been drawn up for the various subjects. The Government deserve to be congratulated on giving opportunities to teachers to make suggestions regarding the draft syllabuses published. This time in the drawing up of the syllabuses in the various subjects, teachers have been associated. It is hoped that this healthy practice will be followed whenever the Government have to consider educational problems.

Nationalisation of Text Books

The Executive of the South India Teachers' Union has stated that the nationalisation of text books is a retrograde step. The teaching profession rightly feels that it will lead to indoctrination and regimentation. Further there will be no intellectual variety. On the other hand, the proposal will lead to dull uniformity. The Government cannot in the present circumstances bring out good books, even though they desire to do so. Great men like Sri Rajaji and Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, have warned the Government against this move. In countries in the West there is no nationalisation of text books. In our schools there are boys and girls at various intelligence levels and the Government cannot prepare text books for those levels.

The Government's intention seems to be that undesirable influences have crept in the prescription of text books. We do not deny that, but the remedy suggested is worse than the disease. In a Government that is run on party lines, there is always the danger of indoctrination and regimentation. Our future leaders are our children and we want them to be educated in a free atmosphere. The Government's purpose will stifle the growth of literature which we so badly need. We appeal to the Government to drop the proposal to nationalise the text books.

*The Eye Witness*

(A MAHAKOSHAL FOLK TALE)

When the jackal came to court, he began yawning vastly.

"Didn't you sleep last night?" asked the magistrate.

"Last night," the jackal replied, "there was a great fire in the lake, and all the fish were burning in the blazing water. I spent the whole night eating them."

"What nonsense you talk," snapped the magistrate. "How can water catch fire?"

"Does not the magistrate talk nonsense, too?" the jackal asked. "How can a wooden pole ever give birth to a horse?"

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A merchant rode into town, and spent the night at an oilman's house. Before going to bed, he tied his horse to a wooden post in the compound.

Next morning, the horse was missing. He asked the oilman where his horse could have got to and was told, "You brought no horse. You came on foot!"

"I rode into town," the merchant said, "the whole town saw me riding!" Just then he spotted his horse in the oilman's stable and exclaimed, "That's my horse!"

"No, that's my horse," the oilman said. "That wooden pole gave birth to it last night. It does so every year. Everybody in town knows about it."

The merchant complained to the magistrate, who asked him, "Have you any witnesses?" But everybody was on the side of the oilman.

Suddenly, the merchant remembered that he had helped a jackal on his way to town, so he replied: "Yes, my lord, I have one witness."

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