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Perspectives

An article by Tiara Wajri

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THIS WEEK'S  
THE WATCHLIST

Featuring:  
Tune in for love  
Sky Castle  
The Half of it  
My Neighbour Totoro

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# DRAWING THE LINE

-Ngukivi Chishi, School Captain ISC 2019

Episode 3

The year is 1967, and there is yet another Sino-Indian war brewing on the border. Not in the infamous Aksai Chin or the even more notorious Arunachal Pradesh, but where a reluctant monarchy, but a monarchy nevertheless, finds itself sandwiched in between an anxious democracy and a communist dictatorship. Of course, The Kingdom of Sikkim is in every way, an Indian protectorate. As cliché as it sounds, it seems to be the only thing preventing another iniquitous annexation by The PLA (*People's Liberation Army*). Who they are liberating from whom, remains a mystery till date. Perhaps even to our northern neighbours themselves. The battles would come to be known as the Nathu La and Cho La clashes, denoting the conflicted areas. It has barely been five years since the much more talked about Sino-Indian War of 1962. Inarguably a victory for the Chinese. However, the results are not quite same this time around. As far as the backgrounds of the conflicts are concerned, the simplest explanation is that it is the usual- both nations with their fingers pointed at the other; be it opening fire across the border or encroaching upon the other's land. Nonetheless, the outcome is the heartening highlight for our countrymen. Though obviously disputed by the Chinese, it is widely accepted as an Indian victory, and that we gained decisive tactical advantage by destroying several PLA barricades along the border. By May of 1975, the monarchy is abolished and Sikkim is formally inducted as the 22nd state of the

Indian Union. Fast forward to 2020, and there is even more distressing news vis-à-vis the current scenario. At the Galwan Valley, we have confirmed reports that between the 16th and 22nd of June, Chinese structures have been built on Indian soil.

The question is, when these images have been picked up by Planet Lab satellites- a private company, how could it possibly be that it has escaped the notice of the Indian Government? Worse still, if it has not escaped the notice of the government, why does it continue to do very little? As jingoistic as it sounds, the truth is that the idea of peace needs a certain degree of reciprocation, at the least. If our neighbours cannot correspond accordingly, can we offer no alternative response? In another rabbit out of the Chinese hat, the PLA has reportedly made another intrusion in the Depsang plains- approximately 18 kilometres into Indian Territory. Interestingly, a similar incursion was made in the same area in 2013. After a brief scuffle, the UPA government was successful in dealing with the situation and the Chinese forces retreated across the border. So technically, that would be points awarded to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The victory of 1967 lay under the belt of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Flashing forward again to 2020, and Prime Minister Modi has promised us that the sacrifices of our martyred soldiers will not have been in vain. The apt phrase, I believe, is that the ball is in your court, Prime Minister. We wait on your promise.

# Perspectives

-Tiara Wajri, XI

A word that defines our impression on people. *Reputation*, a word so indispensable it converts the vast mind into nothing but a narrow cubbyhole. The word reputation comes from the Latin word *reputare* which means to think over and when combined with the English word *repute*, results in the formation of this valued characteristic. Reputation is a widespread belief or opinion of dozens of people.

As you wrap your head around the worthy honour this specific word holds, you will find that it's rather unfathomable how a certain word, the creation of such a word and the exact meaning it holds, controls how the many strangers you've never met, *judge* you. Growing up, I've seen various adults, teenagers and young children hide, squabble, lie, cheat, betray, struggle, clash and fall apart because of this one word. This one description determining just exactly what a person may be? I've seen several feel conscious, perturbed, anxious all because a certain stranger may judge what their heart holds based on what reputation says.

Reputation is a word describing the particular idea or opinion another may have of you. It is something people choose to depict you as. Sometimes with good reason and valid points and sometimes out of spite and abomination. Do you not agree with me when I say that

opinions and beliefs change? Today I believe that there is afterlife and tomorrow I may say that there is a hell and heaven. Today, you think your sister is a coward and tomorrow you think she's as brave as *Virtus*. My point here is reputation is rather mutable. Some say you're no bit less than a coward and some say you're as brave

as a warrior in a battlefield. We work and struggle and ruin our frame of mind over something that holds so little value than we are brought up to believe. We make choices and live according to how someone recognizes us knowing very well this particular person could whenever change their opinion as quick as a wink.

Although conversely, I would like to state that reputation is also built and created by our very own selves. We create, engage in situations and make decisions which give reasons to people to make several conjectures upon us. However not all matters are black and white, not all poor decisions came from unfortunate circumstances, not all mistakes make for an awful person and not all intentions have no explanation.

There is more than just what we perceive and it takes more than one mistake to judge who a person really is.

Ergo, as I have clearly made my point here I would like to suggest we remind ourselves how little the significance is of what the society labels you as and how great it truly is to live by what *you* see yourself as.



Illustration: Takhe Tamo Reela

## Peace of Mind

-Nilay Dhakal, XII

I looked left, I saw a wall. I looked right, I saw a wall. I looked behind, I saw a wall. I looked front, I saw a door, that too, encased by a wall. Then I decided to close my eyes and I looked within, I found peace, I found freedom. This quarantine I got the opportunity to look within me and delve deeper, with the help of the ancient Indian practice of meditation. In this article I would like to

share my experiences and provide a brief outline on the ancient art of meditation. I was inspired to start this practice as I read a book called the Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramhansa Yogananda, quarantined as I was in my home at Gangtok, Sikkim. The book opened up spheres of esoteric wisdom and felt magical, deeply engaging the curious person I am. One may wonder

what meditation is and how one could do it? Having completed two courses on it during this period, it is safe to say that one cannot 'do' meditation. It is unlike any other activity we are accustomed to. The moment one wants to 'do' meditation, to improve concentration, health, well-being and so on, (*and these are benefits that one acquires from meditation*) he/she will never be able to meditate, because these thoughts itself violates the very principles of this ancient art. When one meditates, one must strive to be in a state of thoughtlessness. The very process to reach this state cannot be forced. It initiates us into a journey of self and understanding of the universe. Though there are many forms of meditation and some have scientifically been proven to even change the genetic makeup of immune cells, some techniques have even puzzled scientists because of the profound effect of supernatural body temperatures they can cause. I would simply talk about the process of observing one's breath. I would describe it as a layman's approach to meditation. Before sitting down to meditate, one must exercise, then proceed with a few rounds of *pranayama* (*breathing exercises*). We meditate to live in the present.

Since the 'present' is an enormous entity, the only way we can grasp it, is to observe, without analysis and thought for otherwise they limit our senses. This can be achieved when one, sits down and simply breathes deeply, sensing the inhalation and exhalation of one's breath. With every inhalation one must feel, embrace and observe the very source of life, that is *breath*. With every exhalation, one must let go. Let go of all thoughts, without disturbing them. With every breath as we let go of all emotions we start slowly to delve into nothingness (*this takes time and practice*).

That nothingness will be the holder of the most beautiful moment of one's life, when one is deeply engrossed in discovering one's true self. Once the practice of meditation becomes a habit and observing that *nothingness* a part of daily routine, all negative habits and emotions buried within surface. This allows the practitioner to correct these emotions. Such corrections then fill our lives with joy. Peace then is no longer a philosophical virtue but becomes a daily observance. This has been the age old path to realize the *God* within and the ethos of the ancient art of meditation.



**O**k, so it has been now almost 2 and a half months and we are still in lockdown. We unsuccessfully tried to get rid of one of the tiniest organisms found on the earth. With all the advances in science and technology, it took a virus, which by the way is even smaller than a bacterium, to bring the world on its knees. Viruses are very fascinating organisms, if we can call them that! The amazing thing about them is that they are a connecting link between living and non-living. They are non-living outside the host body, and as soon as they enter the host body, they become alive. Since they do not contain any cell organelles (*a bit of Biology!*) they take over the host cell and force it to make copies of itself. It is very much like how a hijacker hijacks a plane. They hold the passengers hostage and force the pilots to fly the plane wherever they want to. In the same way, the virus forces the DNA to make copies of itself, so that more viruses will be produced.

But nature has a way of protecting our bodies. The cell which has been attacked by the virus sends of a distress signal. These signals are called interferons. These interferons, then alert the neighbouring cells of the body to develop an anti-viral state so that the virus is not able

to enter the cells.

Interferons are a part of the immune system which helps our body to protect itself against viruses. As in case of the Novel Corona virus, we need to boost our immunity so that we can be protected against the virus. This does not mean that we might never get infected with the virus, but if and when we do, our immune system should be strong enough to fight against it.

We cannot live in isolation forever. At some point in time we will have to step out, and we need to be prepared for the same. There are different ways of building immunity. One of the ways is to get vaccinated. The news that a vaccine will be available soon is indeed welcoming, but in the meanwhile, we need to build our immunity to fight against the disease. Healthy living habits like getting enough sleep, eating healthy food, exercising regularly will surely go a long way in building our immunity. Taking care of our mental health is also particularly important during these times. Negative stress can weaken our immune system and expose us to infections. So, we need to stay connected to family and friends and deal with our emotions effectively. Immunity is also developed by exposure to the virus.

This happens by our body successfully fighting against the virus, very much like how we get cough and cold and then recover from it. The time for recovery also depends on how strong our immune system is. Last and not the least is maintaining personal hygiene. Do not forget to wash your hands regularly!

No one individual can fight against the spread of this

disease. We must collectively contribute towards the fight against this disease. While the world had become so individualistic and selfish, this disease has taught us the importance of community and sharing. We can beat this, if we all cooperate and do our bit. The sooner we understand the power of togetherness, the better it will be for all of us.



“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

-Martin Luther King Jr.

The North East of India is like the forgotten paradise of my country. It is the Amazon of the sub-continent water by the massive perennial river called the Brahmaputra and its tributaries. Hailing from this part of the world, my love for this land is beyond description. I had my school education in a boarding school situated in Nainital (now in Uttarakhand). During my schooling, I highly desired that my part of the world should have a school wherein a person is taught not just the subjects but the necessary life skills an individual needed as well. The boarding school nurtured my physical and mental faculties, grooming me into becoming a person of influence wherein I could leave an impact on people, the likes of which was immeasurable.

After I was finished with College and University, I decided to serve as a teacher. As that was where I felt I could be of most significance and influence for the people of my land. Being a teacher was exciting, and I was filled with the innate passion to walk an extra mile in whatever I did. But working in a day school soon became tiresome as one could not do beyond a limit. I wanted to do more than just teach. I wanted to groom the boys and girls of my land into individuals who would bring about impact and change beyond the boundaries of the North East. Therefore, I resigned the job I had, although it was a good paying government position, and joined a boarding school called Donyi Polo VidyaBhawan, Itanagar (a member of the IPSC) in Arunachal Pradesh.

Though the job was a private one, I had the quenching satisfaction, the likes of which could not be granted by a day school. Here, I was giving my all as a boarding school master in every form- as a physics teacher, as a tutor, on

the sports field, in the dining hall and everywhere else. I was actually a part of every child's life on the campus in one way or the other. Rather than just teaching them about values, I was trying to be an example for them in everything that I did. I believed that students learned better by observing rather than just merely listening to what you tell them. I'd like to believe that I did a good job at raising the children. One of my students grew up to serve as the Chief Minister of the state. Some of them are in administrative services (*IRS and IAS*), while many more grew up to be Engineers, Doctors and Social Workers.

However, my story does not end there. My life as a boarding school teacher took an even greater and brighter turn when The Assam Valley School, a mammoth of a Boarding School opened up in the middle of the pristine tea gardens of Assam in the 90s. I was enthusiastic to join the school as it was established in my part of the land. I knew I could do more for my people through this gigantic institution. It has now been more than two decades, and the feeling that I can still do more as a Boarding Schoolmaster and teacher still persists. I have always given more than my all to whatever role I was given. Whether it be as the Head of Admissions, Head of a Department, Head of E-learning, Round Square Representative, a Tennis and Hockey Coach, or even simply as a teacher.

As a physics teacher, I desired to enlighten the students on the importance and significance of science in today's world. As most of the students were first generation learners, I had to really make them realise the influence of physics in every day life. Thus, I walked an additional mile by taking students every year to NASA in the USA. Students have workshops at J.F. Kennedy space center, The trekking and camping expedition in Darjeeling, Bhutan and north east taught me the social behaviour of the students outside four walls of the

classroom. I also served the school as a Round Square Representative. One knows the kind of influence Round Square has on the student body. International Conferences in Singapore, presentation of students' engagement in Aiglon College, Switzerland, and South Africa engages the students in discovering the framework on which the pillars Round square are built, which will eventually go on to impact their lives. However, despite of all which I have mentioned above, the greatest role I have played as a boarding school teacher has been on the pastoral front. The pastoral care is the essence of a boarding school, a place where one can create the most impact as a boarding schoolmaster. The key components of a boarding school i believe are nurture and nature. I have loved passionately the nourishment of students in these aspects by serving as a Housemaster, It is an indescribable feeling to experience the kind of connection I have enjoyed and still enjoy with students in the boarding house. This where the real nature of the students are witnessed: their personal beliefs, their past joys and pains, the passion they bare, the challenges they have met in life, the agony they have felt because they have lost a loved one, the kind of person they long and strive to be. As a housemaster, I am in a position where I am almost like a potter, wherein I can mould these lovely individuals to become upstanding citizens of society. I have become more than just a teacher and more than just a parent. When in the shoes of a Housemaster, one must possess a burning passion to be in at a place where a student finds one trustworthy enough open up his heart, and confiding his deepest fears and joys. Every year, new students with different temperaments enter the campus, and every student is a

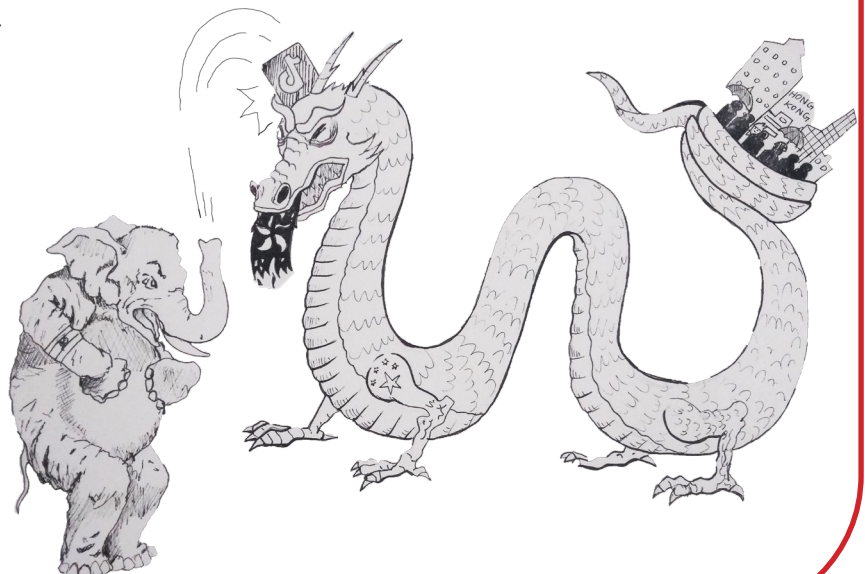
unique challenge. No matter how difficult it may be to make a gentleman out of that boy, I still persist to find a way, in the hopes of moulding a fine person who will serve as a ray of hope to the planet. After becoming the Senior Master of the Boys Department, I am glad I will have a legacy to leave behind, with a hope that when I retire, the student community will continue to have passionate housemasters to nurture them. Learning is a continuous process and I have always had the passion to learn from my mentors, one of whom is Dr. Vidhukesh Vimal, Headmaster of The Assam Valley School. I believe deeply in his beautiful ideas, and his effective and proven methods. Improving the school as time goes on. My heartfelt and most sincere gratitude goes him and my other countless mentors.

The greatest satisfaction, in my opinion, lies when graduated students enter the threshold of the campus, not as a student, but as a person who is of service to human civilization in one or the other constructive way- as an IAS officer, a Chief Minister, an entrepreneur, a law and enforcement officer, a defense officer, a pilot and the like. That one moment of seeing the once- upon- a- time kid standing in front of me, now a responsible adult who is greater than his teacher in every aspect, immediately fills my heart with pride; for my student and for my profession as a teacher and a boarding school housemaster. To me, every single individual is a living, breathing story and I have the joy of being a character in their life's journey. Like the potter, like the sculptor, like the painter, as a teacher.

The journey I have gone on as the Boarding School master and a teacher has been most enjoyable and satisfactory, and I would not change it one bit.

# THE OUTPOST

India bans 59 Chinese apps including Tiktok in the light of growing security concerns after the India-China standoff at Doklam. Prime Minister Modi visits Ladakh to address soldiers and deliver India's firm stance on protecting its borders. China introduces a new security law for Hong-Kong threatening to dub the acts of protestors as "terrorism" which is punishable by a maximum life sentence in prison. Russian Voters grant Putin the opportunity to rule till 2036 by approving changes to the Russian Constitution. The new word that gathers momentum on social media is Chin pireet Samajh, the new global order.



# The Quarantine Watchlist

## Ripple #134

-Eloziini Senachena, XI

Time was running out,  
His scope caught the  
enemy unaware  
Victory came running to  
him  
But he saw only darkness  
Another match ruined by  
a blackout

Feeling sick and tired of the same four walls at home? Well grab your popcorn and immerse yourself in the world of media, here is a list of some of our suggestions:

**TUNE IN FOR LOVE:** Brimming with emotions and melodrama, this movie tells the story of two lovers with troubled pasts trying to stay connected with each other even with all the obstacles that they face.

**SKYCASTLE:** A dark comedy that satirically portrays issues such as corruption, extreme parenting, neglect and mental health of a being. Full of unpredictable plot twists and wild cliffhangers, Sky Castle is not one to disappoint.

**THE HALF OF IT:** Watch Ellie, a shy introverted girl, and Paul, an inarticulate boy, as they experience love and friendship and slowly learn what it means to love. A romantic, coming-of-age story that will keep you intrigued.

**MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO:** One of Ghibli's masterpieces, My Neighbour Totoro takes you on a heartfelt adventure with the two sisters, Mei and Satsuki, and Totoro, a mystical creature living in the nearby forest.



## Keep It Reel!

### Wild Whiskers

-Aarnav Dutta, VIII

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