

It is difficult to articulate the frustration. ‘Manipur is burning,’ they say before turning to a different news story, Manipur done and dusted. Meanwhile, I can hear my mother calming my aunt down, who is terrified that her home will soon fall victim to the violence a short walk away. When all I’ve ever known of my Kuki family is love, warmth, and the funniest conversations; I cannot imagine the words ‘burning’ and ‘violence’ with their faces.

I am a Kuki, yes, but I understand the Meitei cause. They are a majority in their own land, but restricted to only 10% of that land. “Why can ‘they’ settle in my valley but I can’t settle in their hills?” They must lament. It must feel terribly unfair, more than half the population on a tenth of the land. They are a majority, yes, but they watch other tribes taste the fruit of reserved opportunities and they do not understand why it is forbidden only to them. After all, the Khasis are the majority in Meghalaya, as are the Konyaks in Nagaland, but they lap up the fruit too. It is difficult to explain how it feels learning everything from the internet, articles talk about ‘persons displaced’, ‘violence gripping towns’ and I realise these are my people, these are my hometown, my family’s. It then becomes far too easy to side with the tribe whose language moves my tongue. 40 out of 60 constituency seats are held by Meiteis, who make up around 53% of the population. They hold a disproportionate amount of power in government and other institutions. The next largest group, the Thadou-Kukis

barely come close to the Meiteis. It is difficult not to feel disadvantaged against them, and it is far harder to imagine a future where such people are suddenly taking up the spots you awaited for years.

My Meitei friends share news of the innocence of ‘their’ people, my Kuki friends do the same. It is hard to imagine how both parties can be innocent in a conflict. At the same time, my family members talk of how Meiteis are sheltering Kukis, and vice versa. It is also hard to imagine how such ordinary people can be painted villains. Hope in me flickers and wavers, and it turns to a rage. I wonder if both ends have thought of how the divisive elements employed by Christian missionaries have led to the distrust today. Have they thought of the government’s role in this, from forest laws that suffocate to ‘shoot-at-sight’ orders that terrify? Have they realised that the price for peace has been paid too many times in Manipur? That we are impoverished in our solidarity and we continue to repeat mistakes?

Conflicts aren’t solved by finding the person to blame. Tensions aren’t eased by agreeing simply to divvy up the spoils. There are systemic issues that need to be addressed; deep-rooted differences that have been spat on and tossed aside by outsiders, and Manipuris have fallen prey to doing the same. If only people would stop adding fuel to the fire, stop blaming the ‘other’ and conclude that we owe it to our past and to our future to be better than this. I cannot imagine my home as one that burns, and I refuse to believe it as my future.

An
Open
Letter
From
A
Kuki

-Hiyaneijemmy
Das, Deputy
Editor, 2022-
2023

Folktales: Chapter

XI

HEART OF THE TIGER

-Atoti Zhimomi, XI



Illustration: Richie Kontoujan, X

The heat was scorching Lotsu's skin as she worked in her family's fields. Her arms were tired, the soles of her feet were not only calloused but also aching, just as her back was. Everyone else had gone home already but she was the Chieftain's daughter, whispers would be heard amongst the kitchens the next day, 'Lotsu went home early yesterday. Does being the Chieftain's daughter make her excusable when all of us work so hard for them?' She couldn't have that when she was not only the youngest but also the only daughter of her family, she was to never give anyone any opportunity to talk about them.

The orange rays from the setting sun signalled to her that she was done for the day. Then she saw the most tempting thing, a half-eaten cucumber on top of the big rock she always sat at when she was tired. She ravished it before making her way home, all the while thinking who would be crazy enough to not finish such a delicious thing? There was no way she could've possibly known that it had been half-eaten by a were-tiger. That night she dreamt that she was a tiger, running through the woods as fast as her strong limbs could take her. She saw an open field and sat there, gazing up at the moon and the clouds passing by wishing for the freedom that this dream gave her before being woken up by her mother. "Lotsu wake up, it's time to go to the kitchens."

Lotsu had more nights of dreamless sleep until she dreamt of being the tiger once again but this time she was no longer running through the woods, she was hunched over in between the tall grass behind a house, inching closer and closer to the pigsty until she was close enough to jump inside their fence. Her stomach growled, she must've not eaten in days, waiting for the perfect moment when the humans would be drunk on celebrations from the harvest.

It was swift, the way that she moved, like she'd done it a hundred times before. The pig that her jaw had latched onto, began squealing to all the other pigs who were all as distant as possible from her. Then she heard the commotions from inside the house, they were coming to get her. She tightened her jaw's grip on the pig and ran as far as she could from the house into the woods as she heard the yelling behind her, "Get it! Kill that animal!" She made it to a place she knew was far enough before she began feasting on the pig like it was her last meal, for it might as well have been. Then she was shaken awake by her mother, "What happened? Why are you bleeding from your mouth?" Instinctively, she wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. Blood dripped down to her elbow and she knew it wasn't hers. Lotsu retold the entire incident to her mother, from the cucumber to the previous night. Her parents then organized the entire family for a ritual that evening, a ritual that would heal her soul and stop the nightly terrors. They were to give her two things, a chick to be eaten raw followed by a ginger to remove the taste of bloodthirst from her tongue. However, on the day of the ritual, they switched the ingredients. Giving the ginger before the chick left the palate of raw meat on her senses, but her family didn't realize the mistake. "Come here," she said smiling to her nephew, "Let your Aunt carry you. I am alright now."

Her sister-in-law handed the baby boy to Lotsu but before he even left her hands, his aunt bit straight into his belly, snatching him from his mother and running out of the woods, with her body morphed into her tiger form. That was the last time anyone ever saw Lotsu, in either one of her forms. But the whispers in the kitchens say that sometimes in the dead of night you can hear her cry in the forests over her family for she could never return after what she had done.

R E M E M B E R I N G T A G O R E

-Deubale Meru, XII,
Deputy Editor

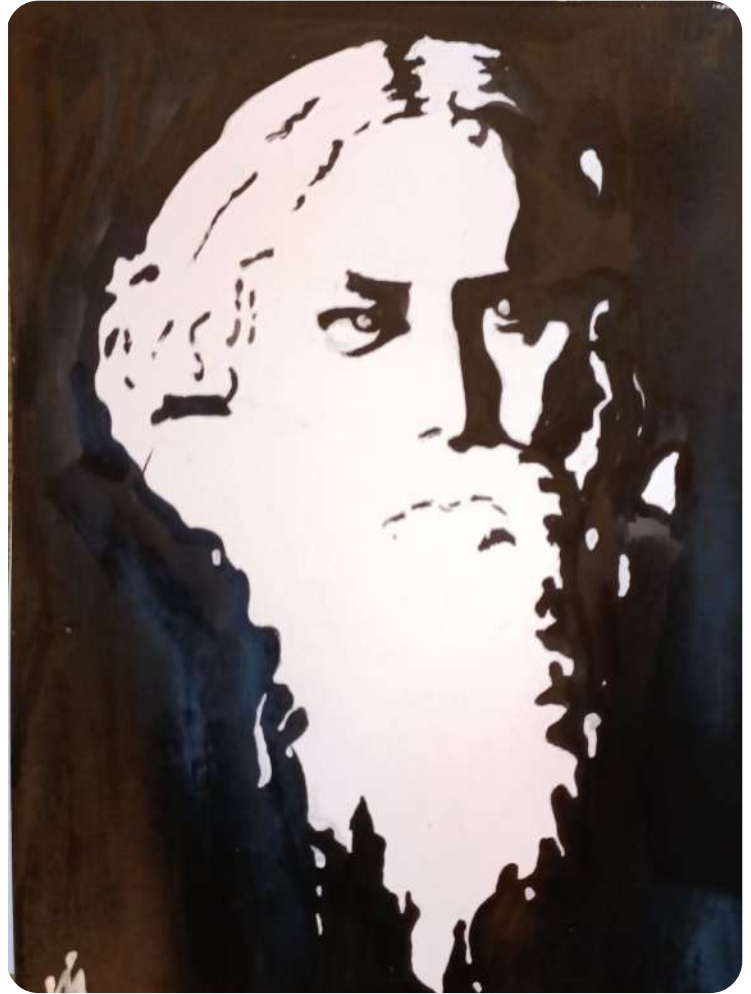


Illustration: Immalemma Imchen, XII

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali polymath who worked as a poet, writer, composer, social reformer and painter until his demise in 7 August 1941. He was the first non-European to earn the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. They say behind every man's success is a woman. Throughout Tagore's life, there have been women who have shaped and influenced his literature. We remember him today on his 162nd birth anniversary through the women who left an indelible mark on his extraordinary life. Kadambari Devi, Tagore's sister-in-law, was married to Tagore's older brother at the age of 10. Being too young to understand her situation and her duties as a wife, Kadambari found a companion in Tagore. Since they were of similar age, Tagore shared many of his literary ideas with Kadambari, who became his critique. However, their companionship was frowned upon by the family as they grew older. While in London, Tagore penned a few

letters to Kadambari and eventually published them, which sparked fires from all directions. Tagore's father quickly decided to marry him off to Mrinalini Devi. Kadambari lost a confidante with his marriage, as she had no one else to look up to. Four months after Tagore's marriage, she took her own life. In 1883, Tagore married Mrinalini. Mrinalini Devi was originally called Bhabatarini. However, her name was changed as it was considered 'old-fashioned' by the Tagore Family. She performed her duties but went above and beyond by expanding her literary horizons and learning other languages in order to become his companion. After her sudden death at the age of 29, he published Smaran (Remembrance), a collection of 27 poems in her honour. Annapurna was the daughter of Atmaram Pandurang Turkhad, a doctor from Mumbai. Tagore was sent by his brother to spend some time with the family before embarking on his expedition to

Britain. The two parted ways after two months during which Tagore learned spoken English from Anna, who was given the name 'Nalini' by Tagore. Victoria Ocampo was an Argentine writer. She was a 63-year-old widow, and had a close friendship with Tagore. The poet shared an isolated mansion outside of Buenos Aires with Ocampo. It is said that Ocampo discovered Tagore's aptitude for painting. She was the one who noticed his sketches in Buenos Aires and inspired him to take up painting more seriously. When the poet's health deteriorated, the lady took care of him. These women had influenced Tagore's Literature as they did his life. His relationship with these women allowed him to depend on them for hope, and inspiration. While his relationships may be controversial, this kind of connection and companionship where two people inspire and work for each other, cannot be coined.

State of Sudan

-Zaheen Shah, X

Very few countries have seen a humanitarian crisis worse than Sudan. It has been in a constant state of war that had dislodged thousands while killing thousands more. Sudan's autocratic leader Omar al-Bashir came to power in the backdrop of a civil war fought between North and South Sudan. The North was primarily dominated by Islam and South Sudan which has a large Christian following as well a minority that followed animism. South Sudan fought the Omar al-Bashir government to be allowed religious freedom. Al-Bashir used Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, to run a para-military force to crush the rebels. Burhan used his right-hand man Hemedti to do the job as well as stage a coup to dispose of the A Bashir government. Burhan came to power using Hemedti and now finds himself battling him for power. In the midst of this Sudan remains a war-torn zone sending more than half its population as refugees to other countries. Peace would be hard won here if it ever came.



Illustration: Gaurish Satriya, X

Wrestler's Protest

-Kanyaka Tamuli, X

The rumbles of the wrestler's protest began in December 2020 when wrestlers from across India protested in Delhi against the President of the Wrestling Federation of India, Brijbhushan Sharan Singh, who is also a BJP Member of the Parliament. The wrestlers protested against alleged corruption and favoritism within the WFI and demanded the removal of Singh from his position as president. Things took a turn when headed by world title holders wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, and Vinesh Phogat, protests began alleging sexual harassment by Brijbhushan Sharan Singh against underaged female wrestlers. There seems to be many more plots behind the scene including a fight over the WFI presidentship between Singh and former Haryana CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda. The protests have taken on a political colour with the Opposition making the most of the wrestler's platform. It is important that the truth of these allegations be brought to light and the sports associations be given the overhaul they have long needed.

Harry Potter Phone

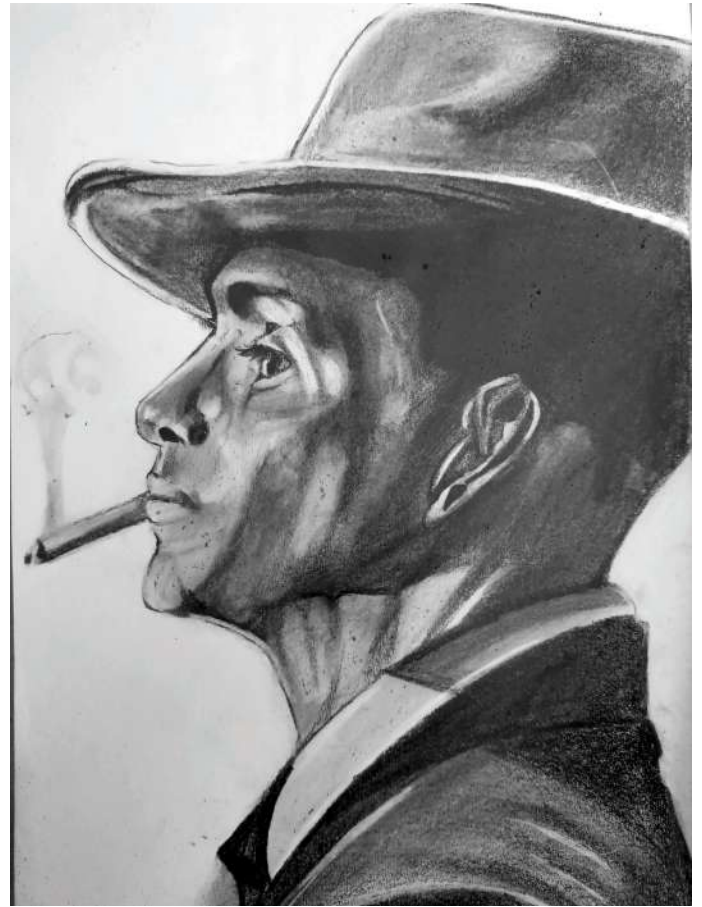
-Tanveer Ahmed, X

Great news for Potterheads across the world, Alohomora, Xiaomi opens its doors and reveals something new and exciting to bring to the smartphone market. Xiaomi announces the release of a brand new smartphone but with a twist, being the smartphone is harry potter themed. The phone offers all of the signature features of the Harry Potter series such as the bright lighting scar, the back cameras which represent Harry's owl like goggles, the ball Harry caught in his mouth while playing his first ever game of quidditch, the golden snitch and the Hogwarts logo on the back of the phone just screams that it's a must buy for any and all potterheads. Buying the phone may give a muggle like us with mud blood some wizardry powers, but the only way to find out is to buy the phone

A year of Movies

-Aanya Paul Sarkar, X

Aqua's 'Barbie Girl' has found a new recognition with the upcoming movie- 'Barbie'. Directed by Greta Gerwig, the movie promises us a new perspective on the film as Barbie is banished from Barbie-land and introduced to our world. Starring the incredible Margot Robbie, better known as 'Harley Quinn' from the Suicide Squad movies, and Ryan Gosling starring as Ken, 'Barbie' has become the talk of the town. Many people questioned the actresses' ability to portray the characters, but what would Barbie be without some controversy? On the other side, Christopher Nolan's 'Oppenheimer' is just as anticipated and features a stunning ensemble that includes some familiar names, like Gary Oldman, Cillian Murphy, Florence Pugh, Emily Blunt, Matt Damon, Robert Downey Jr., Rami Malek, Josh Hartnett, and Benny Safdie. This biography chronicles the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer and follows the incredible narrative of the atom bomb's creation. With Cillian Murphy starring as the protagonist, and with Nolan working his magic, 'Oppenheimer' brings together some of the most magnificent artists and maverick actors from across the film fraternity to a single screen. These two anticipated movies both being released on July 21 means that people are going to have to choose between the two powerhouses, and now the question lies in which one are you going to see and whether you'd dare miss any.



A Review: THE HUNTING PARTY

-Ila Gupta, X

If you are someone who loves the unstoppable thrill, suspense, mystery, and guessing the next move then this page-turner is perfect for you. 'The Hunting Party', the debut psychological thriller novel of Lucy Foley is an engaging story with a compelling structure and a multi-character narration. This book is not your normal murder mystery novel; it's filled with plenty of clues and bluffs which remain confusing when you are unaware of the mystery you are attempting to solve, all of which unravels beautifully at the end. The story is set on New Year's Eve when a group of old friends arrives at a remote, isolated island in the Scottish Highlands for the annual getaway, just before a horrific blizzard that seals them off from

the outside world. As the hours pass, the weather worsens and the relationships between decade-long friends get fractured, exposing the deceptive lies, the fake smiles, the unspoken resentments, and before you know it, someone is dead. Knowing that they are entirely cut off from the outside, it is certain that one of them is guilty of murder. "Who was it?" is the question that sinks deep into your mind as you turn the pages; yes, it sounds like a typical whodunit but don't be surprised if you're wrong once you've read it.

Campus Caricature

I like it, Picasso.

Illustration: Ssara Jha, XII



CAMPUS NEWS

PLANTATION DRIVE

Mr. Samuel Horpel, Mr. Githartha Bora, Mr. Chandan Donia and Mr. Paresh Basumatary had planned and organised a plantation drive of Agar trees at AVS. Tanveer Ahmed and Siddhi Priyadarshini of AVE spoke to the quartet to find out about the project.

Interview

Q. When did the project start?

Ans: The project began on the 27th of April, 2023, and was inaugurated by the Headmaster Dr. Amit Jugran.

Q. Why was this project started?

Ans: The project was started as a way to give back to the school and thank them for all that they have done for the SESSA community. It was also a way to contribute meaningfully to the growth of an ambitious school such as AVS.

Q. By whom was the project undertaken?

Ans: The project was the brainchild of Mr. Samuel Horpel associated with the Music department, Mr. Githartha Bora associated with the ICT lab, Mr. Chandan Donia associated with the library and Paresh Basumatary teaching in the ICT lab. The team is grateful to the Headmaster Dr Amit Jugran who was



extremely supportive of the idea and helped it take shape in the manner in which it has. From choosing the plot of the plantation to the many other administrative requirements, the Headmaster rallied behind the Team and helped them bring their idea to fruition.

Q. How will the project contribute to the school?

Ans: The Agar trees will take close to a decade to mature. On maturation, each tree will fetch over Rs. 50,000. The money generated will go towards the development plan of the school.

Q. Are there any other future projects?

Ans: This time we have planted 3500 Agar trees in the lawn behind the Namdang House. In the near future, we hope to plant white sandalwood trees near the Headmaster's bungalow and in another venue inside the campus allocated to us by the Headmaster. We are extremely hopeful about this pilot project and hope it contributes successfully to the overall development of the school.



NOTION PRESS PUBLICATION

Hiya Keshan of Class 12-C, S/ 3640, has recently published a collection of poems on Notion Press which is a self-publishing platform. The book takes its readers through a kaleidoscope of relationships and the various relations we make through them. The book is available on Amazon and Flipkart and will soon be available in the AVS Library. Many congratulations to Hiya and her family on her achievement.



THE OUTPOST

In a bid to up the ante and draw the African countries away from the Chinese markets, India deploys attachés to promote Indian weaponry as cheaper and more dependable versions. Diplomatic ties between China and Canada worsened as in a tit-for-tat move China expelled a Canadian diplomat from Shanghai. In a sudden move Pakistan's ex- PM Imran Khan was arrested by the Pakistani paramilitary forces in front of the Islamabad High Court. In a scene straight out of a movie the ex-cricket superstar was surrounded and whisked away like a staged 'abduction'. This sudden move foretells further unrest on Pakistan's streets.



Illustration: Sara Jha, XII

Ripple #205

-Aanya Paul Sarkar, X

Dark morning gloom, summer
ecstasies.

The haunt of the classics were
melodies.

Eccentricity indeed is the language of
the Greek.

'Misfits' they'd say. 'Freaks in the
gutter!'

Who knew when mischief would turn
into murder?

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "I toast his book to him." - Takhe Haaro, XII (*Definitely is not a safe way to pass things.*)
2. "Give me the canvas, I need to paint the brush." - Chingloi Angh, X (*The lack of sleep is catching up to you*)
3. "This paint is pinkly." - Anoti Kinimi, XII (*Interesting color.*)
4. "I rent myself once." - Lomika Benjamin, XII (*Whoop! Whoop! IT'S THE SOUND OF THE POLICE!.*)
5. "When you speak, sound comes out." - Neilginryan Das, X (*Surely not common sense.*)

Keep It Reel!

Silhouette skies
- Taniskha Sharma, XII



Editor-in-Chief: Emidaka Rapsang

Deputy Editor: Deubale Meru

Correspondents: Ssara, Zaheen, Tanveer and Aanya

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Telephone: 09678074320/08812009627 Website: www.assamvalleyschool.com

Patron: Dr. Amit Jugran, The Headmaster of The Assam Valley School



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