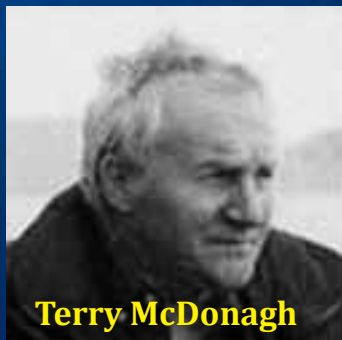


Live encounters

December 2013

Volume Two

Free online magazine from village earth



Terry McDonagh



Dr. Candess Campbell



Randhir Khare



Dr. Mukesh Batra



Vandana Vasudevan



Joo Peter



Dr. Benjamin Authers



Sangita Malhan

Guest Editorial

Captain Paul Watson

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society



Support Live Encounters. Donate Now and keep the Magazine alive in 2014!

Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was started in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Civil and human rights activists, animal rights activists, poets, writers, journalists, social workers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. Please help spread the free distribution of knowledge with any amount that you feel you want to give for this just cause.

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Kantor Cabang Utama Denpasar

Jl. Gajah Mada

Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

markulyseas@liveencounters.net



**December 2013
Volume Two**

**"You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body,
but you will never imprison my mind." - Mahatma Gandhi**

Dear Contributors, Publishers and Readers

Thank you for supporting Live Encounters in 2013.

But times are getting tougher as we speak and without your continued support in 2014 we shall not see the light of day.

Kindly share this free issue with your family and friends.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous Peaceful New Year to you all.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas

Publisher/Editor

Cover photograph of whale: Captain Paul Watson, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society
Cover design : Mark Ulyseas

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AUSTRALIA

Anita Mackay
Christine Deftereos
Christoph Sperfeldt
Roemary Grey
Nikola Stepanov
Dr. Jemma Purdey
Dr. Peter Phipps
Dr. Benjamin Authers
Dr. Emma Larking

CANADA

Mark Gelsomino
Melanie Sellar

GERMANY

Marc Wiese
Rainer Tormin
Joo Peter

INDIA

Ranjana Padhi
Kalyani Menon-Sen
Paula Banerjee
Sourav Jourdar
Randhir Khare
Madhu Mehra
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Sabbah Haji
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Sangita P. Menon Malhan
Dr. Mukesh Batra
Dr. Veerandra Mishra
Lavanya Khare

INDONESIA

Jill Gocher

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Noel Monahan

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Dr. Carool Kersten
Dr. John Zavos

U.S.A

Captain Paul Watson
Chris Hedges via truthdig.com
Zuade Kaufman
Carol Buckley
Perinaz Avari
Dr. Candess M Campbell
Dr. Budi Hernawan
Dr. Shreerekha Subramanian

SWITZERLAND

Catherine Jan Birch

PUBLISHERS

HarperCollins INDIA
Iti Khurana

HarperCollins UK
Katie Moss

C. Hurst & Co. UK
Rob Pinney

Sage INDIA
Smrithi Sudhakaran

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Guest Editorial - A Returning Eco-Exile

Captain Paul Watson, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

Watson is an acclaimed environmentalist who has authored a number of books and has received international awards for his endeavor to save the denizens of the marine world. Presently, he leads a flotilla of four ships lying in wait to confront the Japanese whaling fleet heading for the Southern Antarctic Ocean. His decades long fight against the rape of the oceans is now stuff of legends.

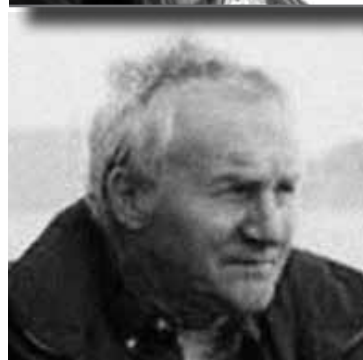
<http://www.seashepherd.org/>



Randhir Khare celebrates 50 years of writing

interview by his daughter, Lavanya Khare

Lavanya Khare is a student of English Literature, currently pursuing her Masters in Literary Art from Ambedkar University, New Delhi. She is as passionate about her writing as she is about special needs education. Her history with writing includes work in both the Miranda House College Magazine as well as Sanctuary Cub Magazine. Her essays have also been featured in a compilation of works titled 'Girl 13'.



Snow in Hamburg

Terry McDonagh

Irish poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh, taught creative writing at the University of Hamburg and was Drama Director at the Int. School Hamburg for 15 years. He now works freelance; has been writer in residence in Europe, Asia, Australia; published seven poetry collections, book of letters, prose and poetry for young people translated into Indonesian and German, distributed internationally by Syracuse Uni. Press; latest poetry collection Ripple Effect due for publication in May/June 2013, Arlen House; next children's story, Michel the Merman, illustrated by Marc Barnes (NZ) to be published in September 2013. He lives in Hamburg and Ireland. www.terry-mcdonagh.com



Invitation to contribute to 'Regarding Rights'

Dr. Benjamin Authers

Benjamin Authers is an Australian Research Council Laureate Postdoctoral Fellow in the Centre for International Governance and Justice at the Australian National University. His research examines the interrelations between law and literature, with a focus on the legal and cultural work of human rights in Canada and globally. He has previously worked as a lawyer and as a Conciliation Officer with the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission. regardingrights



Urban Villager - Life in an Indian Satellite Town

Vandana Vasudevan

Vandana Vasudevan studied economics at Lady Shri Ram College (Delhi University) and trained in management at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. She has worked in leading banks and media companies for over 15 years. In parallel she has been writing for leading publications including a fortnightly column in the business daily Mint. www.sagepub.in



The TOI Story

Sangita P. Menon Malhan

Malhan is a Delhi-based former journalist. She worked at the Delhi Mid Day, The Statesman, and The Times of India, before turning to creative writing. Her short stories - *Rastapherian's Tales* - were published in 2010 by the Writers Workshop. Arshia Publications brought out her Urdu poems entitled Nusrat-e-Gham (*The Triumph of Grief*) in 2012. Prior to this, she was a national gliding champion, and acquired a Private Pilot's Licence. Currently, she is a freelance editor and translator; and she teaches French.



Toraja People of Sulawesi, Indonesia

Joo Peter

Aka Joachim Peter is a Visual artist and writer based in Southwest Germany, presently working on documentary & travel photography in Asia right. He loves to explore and combine all arts in his work. Joo has studied Arts; painting and graphics, worked for theatre (designing stage, costume and light), did some work for television and film, went into teaching. He writes essays and a blog in his native tongue, German, for he feels his language combines philosophy and humour. www.joo-peter.photoshelter.com



Homeopathy & You

Dr. Mukesh Batra

Dr Mukesh Batra, LCEH, FSRH (MED) P (LON), MDH (USA), FBIH (UK), a homeopath of international repute, is Founder & Chairman, Dr Batra's, the world's first and largest corporatized homeopathic healthcare group. In a career spanning four decades, he has treated over a million patients, including presidents and prime ministers, and revolutionized the way homeopathy is practiced today. Batra has been honored with several fellowships and over 50 national and international awards, including the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honors, by the President of India. He has authored several books, including the cyclopedic work, *Healing with Homeopathy* (September 2011). drbatramukesh@drbatras.com



Energy Medicine: Kinesiology and Muscle Testing

Dr. Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is an internationally known Intuitive Life Coach, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Seminar leader, Hypnotherapist and Author. She specializes in assisting others to gain their own personal power and to live a life of abundance, happiness and joy. Early 2012 she will be releasing her book *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine*. www.12weekstoselfhealing.com



Heroes of 2013

Mark Ulyseas

Heroes of 2013 are the unsung refugees, the homeless, the disenfranchised languishing on street corners like abandoned dogs, abused women and orphaned children and more. Sadly there are no awards for these wretched souls. They are the forgotten, misplaced people whose lives are not worth rewarding in every sense of the word.



A Returning Eco-Exile

by **Captain Paul Watson**

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

It is a fascinating experience being an exile and an international fugitive.

I have been at sea for fifteen months since departing from Germany in early August 2012.

On that day when I refused to be extradited by Germany to Japan, I drove to the Netherlands and there I boarded a sailing boat. It took me four months to reach Samoa where I boarded my flagship the Steve Irwin to continue down to the waters around Antarctica.

The next three months were spent in the Southern and Indian Oceans in pursuit of the Japanese whaling fleet where the Sea Shepherd fleet of four vessels succeeded in restricting the whale kill to 9% of their intended quota saving close to 900 whales.

It was a very successful campaign but success has its consequences.

The Sea Shepherd fleet returned to Australia in mid-March but I could not go ashore because of two Interpol Red notices. One from Costa Rica for stopping a Costa Rican shark poacher in Guatemalan waters in 2002 and the other from Japan for conspiracy to trespass and interference with business.

I left the Steve Irwin off Tasmania and for the last eight months I have been on the water continuously except for occasional landings on remote uninhabited islands in the South Pacific.

Text & Pics © Captain Paul Watson

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© Sea Shepherd

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During the last year my allegations against Chinchilla's government have been given credibility with the head of COPESCA the Costa Rican fishery agency now under investigation for bribery from shark poachers and drug traffickers.



Top: Laura Chinchilla 'no corruption or censorship in Costa Rica government [LINK](#). Bottom: Costa Rican Times 'how deep is the costa rica shark finning-rabbit-hole [LINK](#).



During that time I collected lots of plastic debris from remote beaches, watched Green Turtles and numerous species of sea-birds laying their eggs and I ate quite a few coconuts. I was also working with my legal team to resolve the issues that forced me into exile.

The Costa Rican warrant is blatantly political and finally even Interpol saw through it. It has been dropped from the Interpol Red List. The charges for interfering with a Costa Rican shark poaching vessel stem from 2002 but the warrant for my arrest was issued in 2012 only a few weeks after a meeting between Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla and the Prime Minister of Japan. Also, during the last year my allegations against Chinchilla's government have been given credibility with the head of COPESCA the Costa Rican fishery agency now under investigation for bribery from shark poachers and drug traffickers.

No one gets extradited for trespassing and especially when it was someone else doing the trespassing.

In 2011, Pete Bethune's boat the Ady Gil was rammed and destroyed by a Japanese security vessel in the Southern Ocean. Bethune responded by boarding the Japanese vessel to demand that the Japanese captain return to New Zealand to answer for the destruction of his boat. Instead the Japanese arrested Bethune and charged him with trespassing.

Before Bethune boarded the Shonan Maru #2, I advised him not to do so and I can be seen on camera doing so.

Bethune responded by boarding the Japanese vessel to demand that the Japanese captain return to New Zealand to answer for the destruction of his boat. Instead the Japanese arrested Bethune and charged him with trespassing.

Before Bethune boarded the Shonan Maru #2, I advised him not to do so and I can be seen on camera doing so.

Bethune was taken back to Japan and put on trial where he made a deal. In return for a suspended sentence Bethune stated that I had ordered him to board the whaling ship. This was the basis for the charges filed against me with Interpol.

In June of 2013, Bethune agreed to sign an affidavit stating that he lied about being ordered by me to board the Japanese vessel. He stated that he did so as part of a plea with Japan to reduce his sentence. I did not have that affidavit when I was in Germany but now that I do I am confident that I have a strong case to demonstrate that the Japanese request for extradition is political.

My exile bought me time to prepare a solid defense. If I had stayed in Germany I would have been sent to Japan without a hearing and once in Japan, my chances of a fair trial would be non-existent.

During the last week of October I returned to land when I arrived on the Brigitte Bardot in San Pedro, California. I arrived on the same day as the civil charges of contempt proceedings began in Seattle.

Japan had filed for an injunction in the U.S. Courts to stop our interventions. The request was denied by Judge Richard Jones and Sea Shepherd prepared for Operation Zero Tolerance.

We thought it was amusing that Japan would ask a U.S. court to stop Dutch ships from leaving Australian ports to intervene against a Japanese whaling operation in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary that was continuing in contempt of the Australian Federal Court. That was the way Judge Jones saw it, also.





Top: One of the 932 whales saved during Operation Zero Tolerance. Bottom: Operation Zero Tolerance against Yushin Maru No.2. Photographs Courtesy www.seashepherd.org



But to our surprise on December 18th after the Steve Irwin had left for the Southern Ocean, the 9th Circuit Court overturned Judge Jones without explanation and granted the injunction.

This caused Sea Shepherd USA to withdraw and I had to withdraw personally. Operation Zero Tolerance continued under the leadership of Sea Shepherd Australia.

Despite that, the whalers claimed that the injunction was violated and now the directors of Sea Shepherd USA and me are on trial for contempt.

One of the Circuit Court judges even went so far as to declare marine protests as piracy and this is a decision presently being used against Greenpeace activists by the Russians in response to a recent Greenpeace protest against Russian oil drilling in the Arctic.

The outcome of the trial will have no bearing on the ability of the Sea Shepherd ships to return to the Southern Ocean. They are fueled, crewed and ready for departure from Australia in December.

Operation Relentless will be the 10th campaign to the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary to defend the whales and it will mark the 7th season of the Animal Planet show Whale Wars that documents the annual encounters.

When people say that we should not be surprised that we are being persecuted for defending the whales, I can only answer that we are not surprised.



In fact we are delighted. The continued Japanese efforts to shut down Sea Shepherd simply reveal how much of a threat we represent.

In Sea Shepherd we measure our success by the number of and the intensity of our enemies. If we did nothing we would not have a single enemy but numerous enemies are merely a reflection of numerous successes.



Campaign leaders Jeff Hansen and Bob Brown with crew member wearing the new Operation Relentless T-shirt. Photograph Courtesy www.seashepherd.org.au

Operation Relentless - Sea Shepherd's 10th Antarctic Whale Defence Campaign
www.seashepherd.org.au

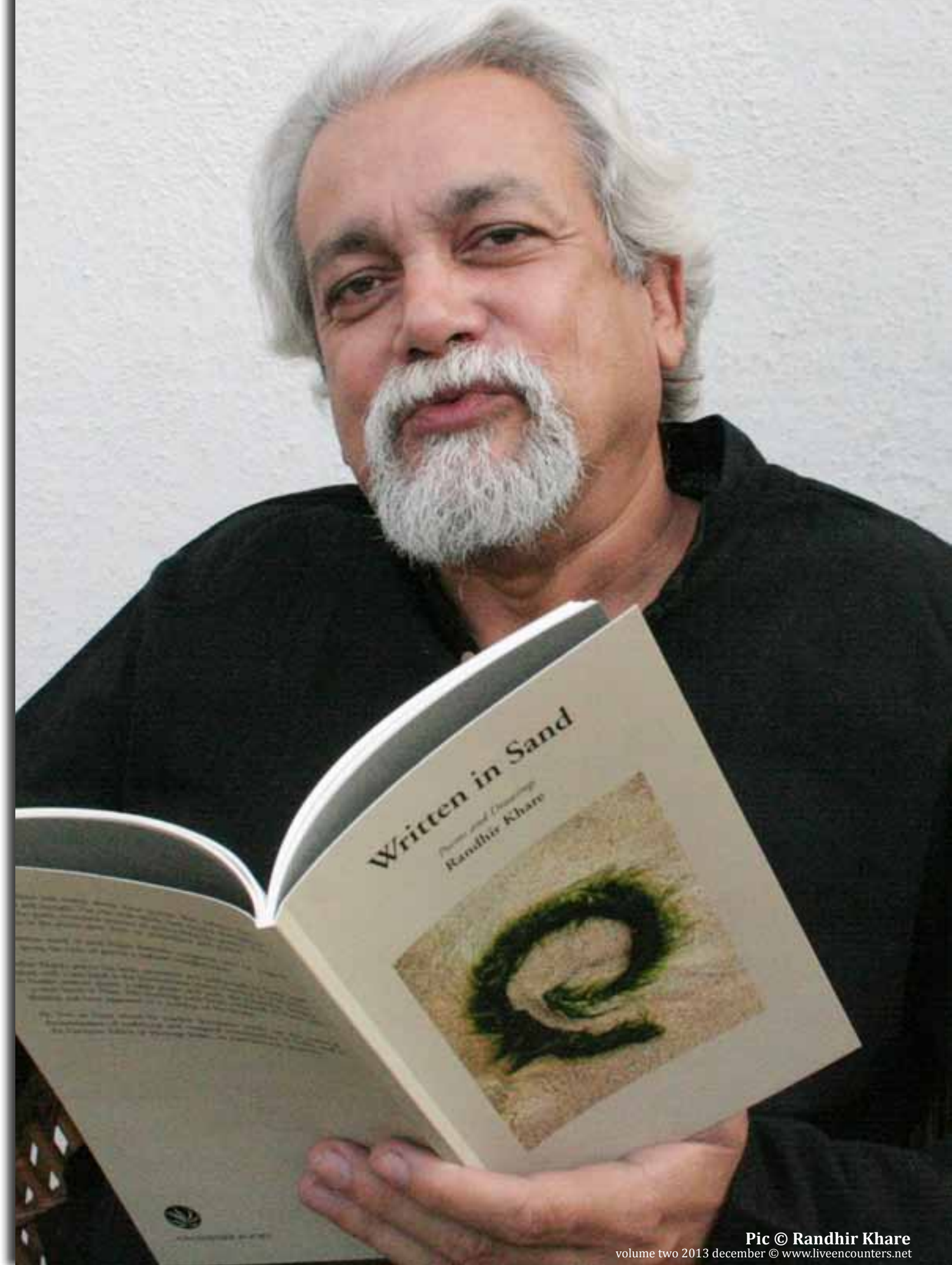


Lavanya Khare, daughter of Randhir Khare, speaks to him on his 50 years of writing.

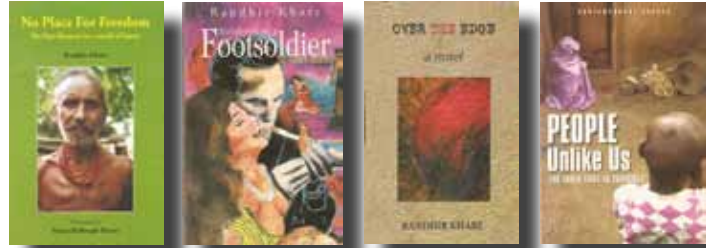
The Renaissance Man

“My entire family from my father’s side lived in and around Kanpur in North India so Hindi was well in use as a social language and non-English speaking people floated in and out of our home. In fact, my paternal grandfather who was a criminal lawyer, fought most of his cases in Hindi. However, when it came to the language spoken at home – it was English. I keep wondering whether this was so because my Grandfather had gotten into the habit of talking in English at home because his late wife was Irish. Also, my mother who was half Spanish and half English spoke only English. Having said this, I must add that my mother knew fluent Tamil because she had grown up in Madras. But then Tamil wasn’t of much use in Kanpur. It was a *foreign language*.”

Randhir Khare is a teacher, writer and theatre person. He started his career in theatre acting and journalism before shifting his focus to teaching, writing and workshops. His work with different tribal communities has brought him recognition. Khare is representing India at Europalia this year on Diversity/Tribal Issues.



THE RENAISSANCE MAN



Since you have chosen to write in English, has your use of language been influenced by your multi-lingual exposure ?

Yes certainly. I find it difficult to write ‘straight English’ because I find it artificial. My written English is really spoken English with multi-lingual Indian rhythms and cadences, broken sentences and in a way idiosyncratic. This came in handy when I wrote plays for my theatre company.

Why was English your choice for your medium of expression?

Because it was the language I was most familiar and comfortable with. Besides that - because my immediate family had moved away from Kanpur and the Hindi speaking North to Bengal. We lived in a part of Calcutta that had a considerable number of English speaking families – people from various nationalities as well as Anglo Indians. So you could say that my surroundings further stimulated my choice of English. Then of course at another level, for a culturally in-between person like me English was the obvious choice.

You have been writing for 50 years now, how has the game changed for you?

Personally, it hasn’t changed. I still write because I am compelled from within and not because I want to be published . And that too - only when I am satisfied with what I have created do I publish. Of course, my canvas of themes, styles and concerns have evolved.

When you say canvas of themes, how do you feel the concerns explored within your writing have evolved?

I guess as my experience of my outer world and inner world has grown, through travel, reading and reflection, themes became more wide ranging and varied. From ‘encounter’ inspired writing I moved on to ‘issue’ inspired work. Now it’s an amalgamation of the two.

New themes have demanded new styles. For example, the style and treatment used in most of my short stories in *‘Return To Mandhata’* is quite different from *‘Survivors’*...and radically different from *‘Notebook Of A Footsoldier’*. My poems in *‘Written In Sand’* are far more clarified than those in *‘Hunger’*. I have never shied away from experimentation.

These concerns, are they an amalgamation of your personal and emotional location in a particular moment of time or then more to do with the issues surrounding you?

Both.

LAVANYA KHARE



Has some of your work been influenced by reader responses or suggestions to you?

Not at all. I am a doggedly individualistic person.

With your writing career starting with your work for J.S. Magazine, why did you eventually shift away from journalism?

Oh well, I was a young man living in an Age of Upheavals and witnessed both the Naxalbari violence and the Bangladesh war of Independence. As if that was not enough I even volunteered to work in Mother Teresa’s Home For The Dying And The Destitute. Those experiences moved me to want to effect change for the better in the world in which I lived. But pretty soon I discovered that journalism could not do that. It was terribly disenchanting. So I dropped everything I was doing, left behind a job, a readership, a pretty successful theatre career of sorts and set out alone to travel across the country, into remote areas and unlearn everything I had learnt and rediscover my true calling.

You have rekindled that past interest by working with various Pune newspapers, is it something you will always return to?

Not ‘papers’ but yes, a popular paper for which I wrote a weekly column for nearly six years. I chose to do that because through the column I could reflect the life of the city with warts and all. Not in activist mode but as an entertaining commentator. I would love to have the occasional opportunity to do that...but there is little space in my life at this stage as I find myself turning more and more away from the temporal experience.

You have lived in several different cities in your life, starting your career in Calcutta and now living in Pune. Do you feed off the energy of the city you are in?

Yes, in a way. Because every city has its own past, present and future, its own way of surviving, its own way of thriving. A city that is stimulating in what it has to offer but also allows me space to continue to be myself.

Would you associate a particular phase of your writing with a city you have lived in?

Yes, absolutely. I was born in the dusty, cluttered wild west ‘city’ of Kanpur, went on to spend my formative years in the riotously intense city of Calcutta – leaving it for Mathura and Madras, lived briefly during my travels in Delhi and towns in Kumaon, then central and western India then spent an entire cycle of my life in Bombay then went south to places in the Nilgiris and other parts of Tamil Nadu and north to Delhi then back again to Mumbai and on to Pune with innumerable stops in between. I have the nomadic spirit. Earlier, it meant shifting residence but now the shifting and travelling goes on inside me.

THE RENAISSANCE MAN



Your struggles with your own identity, being from a family of mixed heritage comes out in the writing you have done about the Anglo-Indian community. What change have you seen in your writing since ‘Survivors’ in this regard?

I think I have moved on to writing about in-between and marginal people from various backgrounds and in various situations. Not just ethnically but socially and psychologically. And the good news is that my approach has become more expansive, giving me the flexibility to explore various levels of living.

In your work with tribal communities across India, what compels you to travel and record their folk narratives?

Because I feel that their narratives are an expression of their way of life and their relationship with each other, with the land that they inhabit, their beliefs and their very identity. I have been recording folk narratives and carrying them to non-tribal people through print, oral presentations and advocacy efforts because they deserve to be part of the great tapestry of living India. I am sure a lot of people are doing a lot of work but I nevertheless feel I need to do this. Coming to think of it – maybe it has to do with this deep seated absence of a living heritage/identity in my own life that I am driven to the deepest roots of belongingness that is evident in the life of tribal communities.

Have these interactions with people from tribal communities changed the way in which you see your own location in an urban set-up?

Completely. Though I live in an urban environment, I now have the spirit of a person from a tribal community. I think the essence was always been there, with continuous exposure, that essence has flowered into a psychological manifestation.

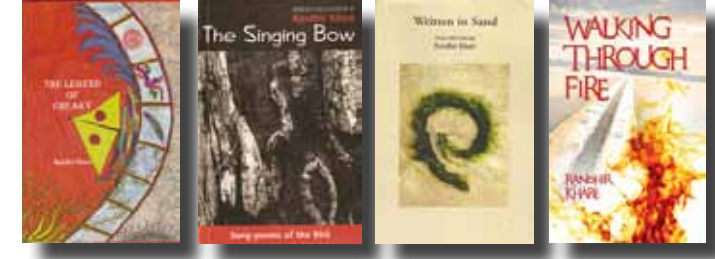
The poetry you choose to write shifts thematically from personal experience towards the translation of tribal folksongs, touching upon the theme of nature as well. What has influenced these shifts in your writing?

I don't see them as shifts but more as approaches to the same 'theme'. Someone at the Poetry Festival in Chennai commented that there appears to be a deep seamless connection between my poetry and Bhil songs.

After having done theatre workshops across age groups, what purpose do you feel your workshops play in the lives of children when it comes to the sphere of self-expression?

I believe that the educating process should, apart from all else, help a child to find his or her own voice and make his or her own choices. And this should be done in a creative and inspirational way and

LAVANYA KHARE



not shoved down their throats. Because the act of finding one's own voice and sharing it with the world and thereby evolving is so like the act of 'play.' In an ideal world, the education system should be able to take care of that. But then the system has its own limitations so is unable to deliver. This is where my workshops find a meaning and purpose.

Is this need for self-expression also the reason you have been drawn towards working with special needs education?

Yes of course. Another angle to this, I know what it means to be an 'outsider' so I always make an effort to stand up for the outsider.

In today's day and age with the social climate in India being the way it is, how relevant do you feel your workshops are for children?

Absolutely relevant. I feel that in my own way I am helping young Indians to discover their own identities and creatively assert themselves. In the new world order that is rapidly evolving, you have to start 'swimming or you'll sink like a stone (thanks Bob Dylan) for the times they are a changing.'

Do you see a change that has come about in the manner special needs education is given importance between when you first began your engagement with children with special needs and now?

Yes, there is increased awareness, more trained professionals, somewhat more services but deep rooted ignorance, fear and neglect persist. Special needs children, young people and adults are marginal people still struggling to be heard.

When it comes to writing for children between 'The Last Jungle on Earth' and 'Legend of Creaky', is there a central vein that runs through your writing?

Yes. Yes. Yes. They explore my abiding themes...self assertion, survival, belonging, acceptance.

How did you/what did it take you to reach the point in your writing where you could write a novel instead of your previous literary forms of poetry and short stories?

I see the writing of novels as more necessary for me today than writing short stories. My short stories were like boulders rumbling down a mountain side. My novels are the mountains themselves. My short stories were streams that flowed into a river. My novels are rivers. The shift took me a long time. My first novel was written in the mid 80s in Delhi. When it was complete – I lost the manuscript!! After that I had to wait for the urge to come back. Now it has.

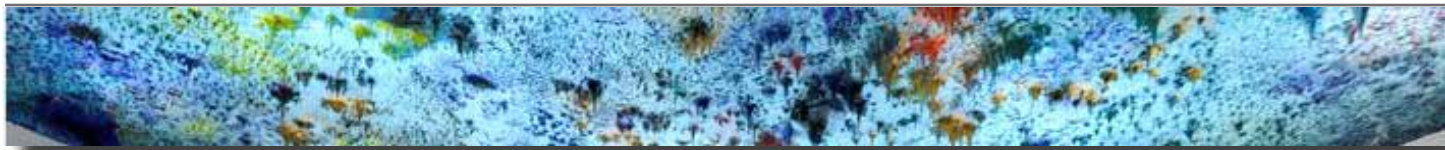


It's winter again. I'll be in Ireland this time, but I'm reminded of my first winter in Hamburg when was very cold and full of surprises. I was not used to 'real' snow and all the ritual that surrounded its arrival. The sound of that first scraping and shovelling still reverberates in my ears. These days, when in Hamburg, I am part of the ritual. My poem was a response to the surreal world of snow that met me in Hamburg many years ago.



Snow in Hamburg

It has been snowing for two days.
 Yesterday, a clown dropped off
 at the harbour – he was tired and
 searching for peace. The snow
 had really surprised him, he said.
 Still, he walked to the city, passing
 people shovelling snow by the flake,
 brushing furiously, striking out at
 heavier snow, or switching on
 spotlights for the night watch.
 One man heard the man sniggering;
 he called the police. They came
 with great fervour and bagged him
 in one swoop. Under heavy guard,
 he was taken to prison, while all
 along the streets, people brushed
 and swept and fought snowflakes.



Centre for International Governance and Justice,
Regulatory Institutions Network, Australian National University

Regarding Rights: Academic and Activist Perspectives on Human Rights

Dr. Benjamin Authers and Dr. Emma Larking, Co-Editors



“La porta di Lampedusa” (Lampedusa’s door), also known as “La porta d’Europa” (Europe’s door). The monument, “looking” towards Africa, was built in 2008 on the Italian island of Lampedusa in memory of more than 10,000 migrants who died over the years while they were trying to reach the island.

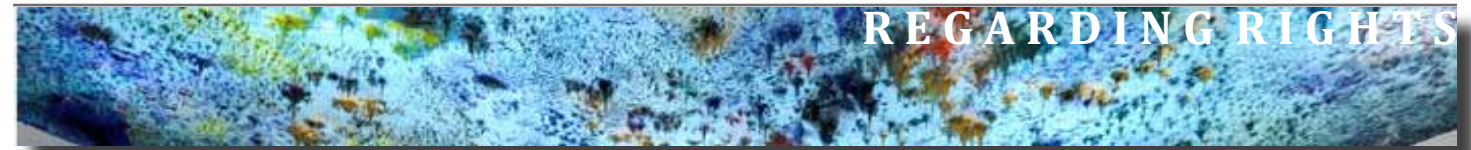
Regarding Rights is an initiative from the [Centre for International Governance and Justice \(CIGJ\)](#). Under the auspices of Professor Hilary Charlesworth’s ARC Laureate Fellowship Project ‘[Strengthening the international human rights system: rights, regulation and ritualism](#),’ the *Regarding Rights* blog provides a forum for voices from activism and academia to comment on important issues in human rights. We are hosted by the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia.

The aim of *Regarding Rights* is to engage critically with human rights issues from a range of perspectives. We seek to be inclusive and engaging while ensuring that the articles we post are thoughtfully and carefully argued. Contributors so far have included members of the CIGJ and visitors to the Centre, as well as Australian and international commentators and social justice activists.

In the year since its launch, *Regarding Rights* has published articles on a spectrum of human rights issues. Posts have discussed [the history of human rights](#), the [International Criminal Court](#), and [Maori rights under New Zealand constitutional law](#). Contributors have also brought different perspectives to the right to [asylum](#) in [Australia](#) and [Europe](#), [corporations and human rights](#), [prisons in Australia](#), the [November 2012 ASEAN Human Rights Declaration](#), and [children’s rights](#).

As the Blog continues to develop we hope to foster the dialogue that has already begun to take shape, while welcoming new voices to the conversation in the form of comments and new articles.

Interspersed with comments on human rights issues, *Regarding Rights* also provides regular updates on the activities of the CIGJ, and news and events from other, similar initiatives.



Invitation to contribute to ‘Regarding Rights’

Would you be interested in contributing to *Regarding Rights*?

We are happy to publish short pieces of around 400 words, but we also regularly feature more sustained comments of up to 2,000 words. Entries may focus on ‘hot topics’ in rights; equally importantly, we provide a space for contributors to intervene in long standing debates and to comment on areas of historical and theoretical concern.

Our aim is to publish pieces that represent the breadth of work in human rights. We welcome articles that are carefully considered, reflective, and that cast new light on contentious issues.

While *Regarding Rights* has developed out to the ‘Strengthening the international human rights system: rights, regulation and ritualism’ Project, there is no need for your contribution to reference the project or to use its terminology. You may, however, be interested to know that the project draws on regulatory scholarship to analyse how states respond to human rights principles, focusing particularly on the notion of ritualism (i.e. formal participation in a system of regulation while ignoring its substantive goals). Thus, the project looks at the gap between many countries’ acceptance of human rights standards and their commitment to these standards. It also identifies ways of resisting human rights ritualism, and mechanisms for improving the implementation of international human rights principles.

Interested contributors are invited to contact us.
Benjamin Authers - benjamin.authers@anu.edu.au
Emma Larking - emma.larking@anu.edu.au



Dr. Benjamin Authers



Dr. Emma Larking



Builders are perhaps the most powerful lobby in India and they influence land acquisition and allocation by the government. A lot of that acquisition is happening at the fringes of the city, moving further and further into the interior and gobbling up farmland creating “urban villages” around a metro.

Vandana Vasudevan

author of
Urban Villager

in an interview with Mark Ulyseas

“An urban villager is one living on the cusp of rural and urban India, a resident of one of the new towns that are being built around a metro on what was once rural land. Like Gurgaon and Noida, Greater Noida outside Delhi or Rajarhat New Town outside Kolkatta or Sriperembudur outside Chennai. The lives of the residents here is a curious mix of city life and the countryside. They shop in malls which spring up next to fields and live in big gated societies surrounded by villages.

When I moved to Greater Noida in 2011 I was struck by these aspects-the absurd contradictions in our semi-urban lives; the way the villagers had adapted to the professionals living in high rise apartments built on land which until recently belonged to them; how the city folk were trying hard to stay urbanized while living amidst wheat fields. The duality I witnessed as an “Urban Villager” prompted me to write the book.”

- Vasudevan

Published by Sage Publications

I know of a wedding celebration in a Noida village where the groom's party-the baraat-landed at the girl's village in a helicopter. In Greater Noida, in the village opposite my house the DJ plays trance and disco beats all night when there are weddings and the scale of fireworks is dazzling by any standards. The amount of cash and the kind of gifts given in dowries have skyrocketed. There weren't such ostentatious displays of wealth in rural communities before- perhaps because there was no wealth. The villagers who sold land have become rich beyond their remotest dreams.

Is rampant development in real estate (housing) been the primary cause in the 'creation' of the urban villager? And is this development spurred by the rapid rise in the middle class and movement of rural folk to the big cities for work?

The real estate sector has been growing at an incredible 20% per year since 2005 when the government allowed foreign investment into real estate companies. Both domestic and foreign players rushed in lured by the demand and the high returns on investments. It has been moving along like an uncontrolled juggernaut- many fly by night operators have profited and it became common to hear of flat buyers who invested but the project never came up. Builders are perhaps the most powerful lobby in India and they influence land acquisition and allocation by the government. A lot of that acquisition is happening at the fringes of the city, moving further and further into the interior and gobbling up farmland creating "urban villages" around a metro.

This expansion of the city is definitely spurred by the rapid rise of the middle class, their demand for houses and their growing ability to afford them. That part is true. But it is not caused by the movement of rural folk to the city. In fact, it is the other way round. The urban folk are moving into the countryside because the countryside is getting urbanized. Large corporations have moved out of the city and are setting up factories in the hinterlands for cost reasons, which makes the city folk who work for them look for houses nearby. This in turn creates residential complexes and then shopping malls and so on. So, many urban villages are formed in the perimeter of the city, over decades they will get fully urbanized and then the city will push further inwards to create new urban villages.

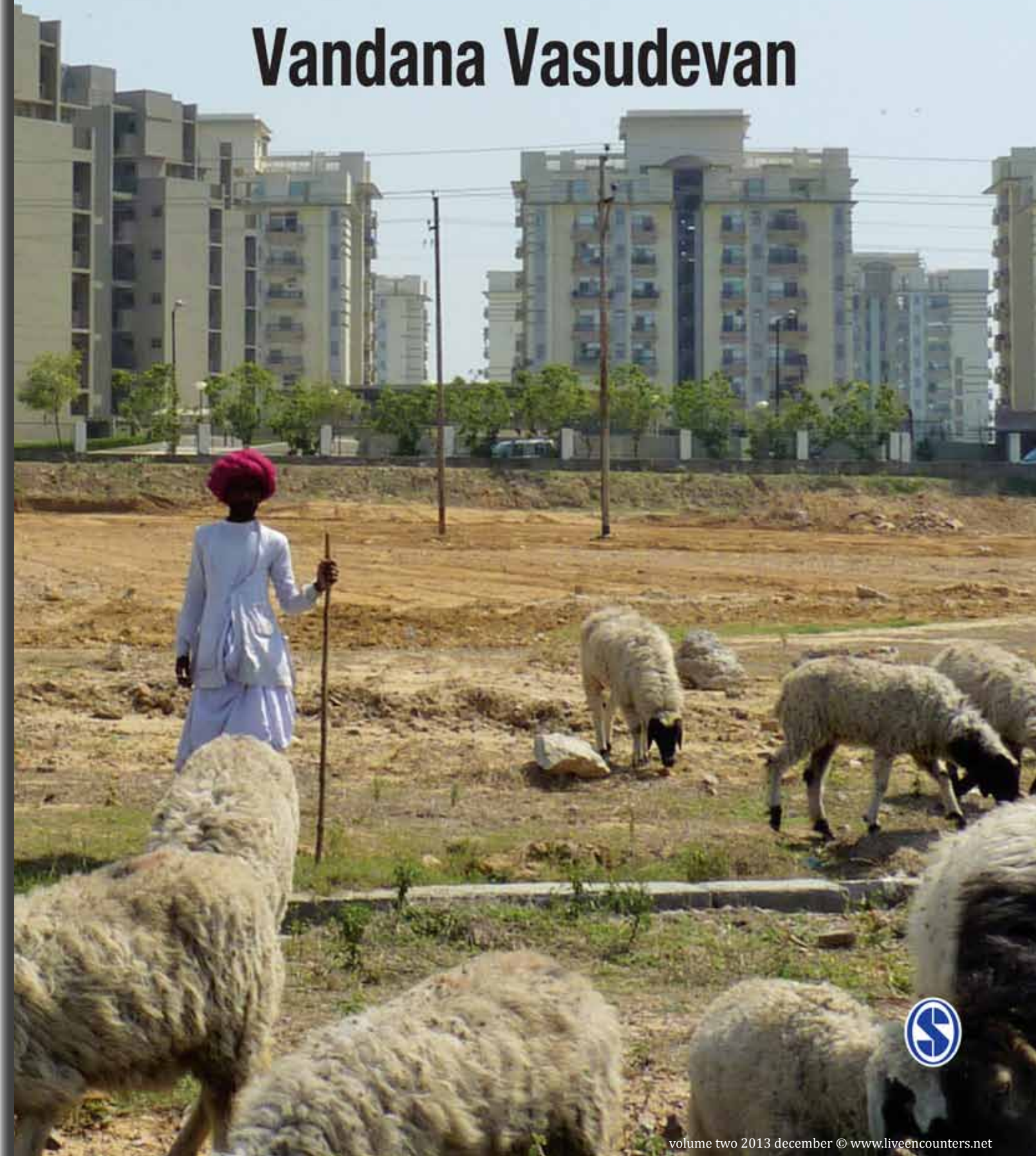
Is it true that many villagers who had become rich by selling their land have frittered away the proceeds on purchase of fancy cars and splurging on entertainment etc., and therefore have become 'landless farmers' often resorting to antisocial activities including assisting real estate developers in acquiring more land?

In the suburbs of Delhi called the National Capital Region (NCR) consisting of Gurgaon, Noida, Faridabad and Greater Noida, the roads are full of SUVs. I know of a wedding celebration in a Noida village where the groom's party-the baraat-landed at the girl's village in a helicopter. In Greater Noida, in the village opposite my house the DJ plays trance and disco beats all night when there are weddings and the scale of fireworks is dazzling by any standards. The amount of cash and the kind of gifts given in dowries have skyrocketed. When I spoke to elders in the villages of Greater Noida for the book, all of them uniformly said that this was a recent trend, say, about ten or maximum fifteen years old. There weren't such ostentatious displays of wealth in rural communities before- perhaps because there was no wealth. The villagers who sold land have become rich beyond their remotest dreams.

Urban Villager

Life in an Indian Satellite Town

Vandana Vasudevan



The sudden influx of wealth hasn't brought a change in entrenched traditional thinking. In the years that I lived in Noida-Greater Noida I did not see rural girls travelling outside their village to study in college for instance. If college meant sending their daughter to a nearby urban centre, then they would rather stop with school. I did not see a farmer's family saying "Now, I can afford to send my daughter to learn computers in the city, so let me do that."

Some of them have wisely bought more land or started a business but the majority have no idea how to manage the money. They do not know of investments. Most don't have a bank account. Rural banking, once a wave in the early part of the century has sort of petered out because villagers do not know how to save. This is across the country. Sociological studies show that cash as compensation has always resulted in it being frittered away, and that's what I saw happening in Greater Noida. And they no longer have their land to fall back on, once the cash is exhausted. There is also the question of the youth in these villages having a huge amount of idle time. It is distressing to see strapping youth playing cricket in the village grounds every weekday. No college to attend, no jobs to go to. Just entire days of doing nothing. When they had the land, they were gainfully employed during the day-tilling, planting harvesting etc. This idleness has a social impact as it encourages drinking and casual crime.

What has been the socio-economic impact on villagers who live cheek by jowl with modern India in terms of education, alcoholism, crime, domestic violence including the murder of youngsters who have eloped, etc?

The sudden influx of wealth hasn't brought a change in entrenched traditional thinking. In the years that I lived in Noida-Greater Noida I did not see rural girls travelling outside their village to study in college for instance. If college meant sending their daughter to a nearby urban centre, then they would rather stop with school. I did not see a farmer's family saying "Now, I can afford to send my daughter to learn computers in the city, so let me do that." Wealth hasn't broadened their horizons or made them adopt modern ideas. In fact in a perverse way, wealth has perpetuated some social practices, especially those that are unfavourable to women. That's why the practice of dowry is now stronger than ever. During a wedding in a Noida village, the father of the bride displays all the gifts that he is going to give his daughter- the brand new TV, refrigerator, furniture and of course the "chaar paiyye ki gaadi" (the four wheeled vehicle i.e. car). At one time the humble two wheeler would pass muster but not any more unless one wants to invite ridicule. Now a car is par for the course. If the farmer's family has to save face in the community, they have to include in the dowry at least a Maruti 800 and very often an SUV.

The number of cases of women getting molested in these suburbs is only increasing as the news reports show us. Crime in general is on the rise, making these suburbs notoriously unsafe, especially after dusk. Carjacking, chain snatching, eve teasing and kidnapping are fairly routine. The Superintendent of Police of Greater Noida told me that one reason for this is the alcohol and the fondness for the good life that money can now buy. Rich village brats get hooked to it and don't mind resorting to crime to keep up their lifestyle. In my book, there are several interesting anecdotes gathered from local people and insights about the connection between sudden wealth, easy guns, crime and a society that continues to be very patriarchal and orthodox.

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Has the sprouting of Art villages like Hauz Khas in New Delhi and the yearly Surajkund Mela in neighbouring Haryana enriched the meeting of modern and rural India? Or, is this just another economic activity in no man's land where everyone earns a bit?

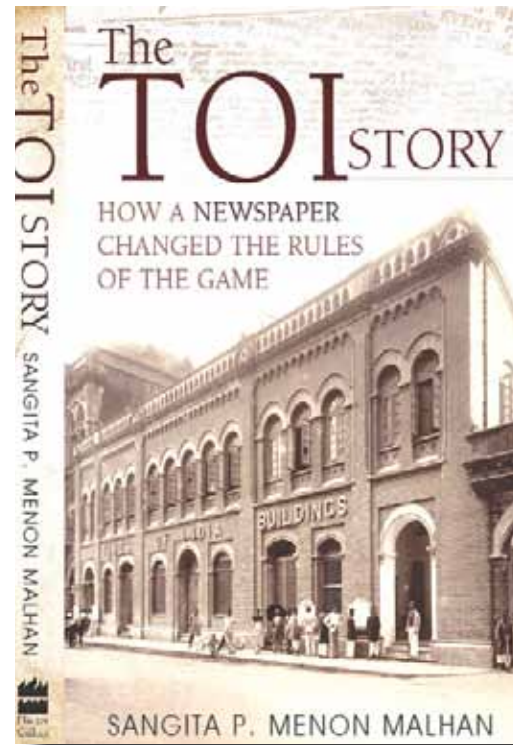
The two examples are very different. Haus Khas village contains restaurants serving global cuisine, outlets of fashion designers, French style patisseries and boutiques selling kitschy knick knacks. None of it has anything to do with the original Haus Khas village behind the tomb/mosque complex where you can see people going about their lives, quite disconnected from the hip urban crowd just a few feet away from them. The streets in the village are narrow and the place seems like any other low income habitat in and around Delhi.

The Surajkund mela on the other hand is quite different. It is organized by the Haryana tourism department and features numerous craftsmen from across the country who show their wares to visitors from across the world. Therefore it is a forum for the urban and rural to interact.

Haus Khas village is a space and exists in a different world from the original village that it has been carved out of. The Surajkund Mela is an event created around the principal of a rural-urban meeting ground. This sort of event in a new town like Greater Noida, would boost local self esteem.

What are you working on now?

My next book called "Tough Customer" is based on urban consumer experiences and is expected to be published in the spring of 2014.



Sangita P. Menon Malhan

The TOI Story:
How a Newspaper Changed the Rules of the Game

Published by HarperCollins India

“Every thing that becomes great... becomes greater, after being less.” Plato, quoting Socrates, in his ‘Phaedo’.

It took 12 years to complete “The TOI Story”, from concept to print. During one of the few hundred interviews for the book, an industry top notch who had played a leading role at the Times of India, told me: “Quite simply, the Indian media story can be divided into two parts – pre Samir Jain, and post Samir Jain”. And then, he proceeded to detail out the differences between the two.

He may have overdone it a bit. Nevertheless, during the course of this journey, I realised that the current state of the Indian media – mainstream “national” media at any rate – is influenced in large measure by what Samir Jain and The Times of India tried out over two decades ago.

There are strong views on whether we are better off today with the sort of media we have given ourselves. I have refrained from making any judgements, preferring instead to let a lot of relevant people on either side of the debate voice their views even as I unravelled and documented this most fascinating story.

I joined The Times of India in New Delhi as a city correspondent in 1994. By 2001, I was writing on aviation and hospitality. It was at this time that something happened to me.

One day, I was drawing up a list of potential interviewees to profile for the business pages. I had interviewed Richard Branson of Virgin Atlantic and Naresh Goyal of Jet Airways among others. When it came to the media as a domain, I realized that the greatest growth story in the media in India had happened right where I was; at Times House.

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Pic © Sangita Malhan

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Samir Jain went about making these changes systematically. He brought in concepts hitherto unknown to this domain. Even as rivals looked on, he re-jigged content; put the spotlight on local issues; created supplements with a view to tapping the advertising segment and also to cater to a niche client base; his publications became colourful and snazzy; highbrow pontificating gave way to simpler, clearer, wittier language.

I was curious about how my newspaper had become such a success; why it carried the content that it did; how The TOI became the largest-selling English daily newspaper in the country, and subsequently, in the world. I couldn't have done justice to the project while working at the newspaper. Besides, I wanted the freedom and the time to pursue the subject.

I moved out of The Times in April 2001 to begin my research; without a contract from a publisher for the book; without any support (or obstruction, for that matter) from The TOI; and without a grandiose plan. I did draw up a list of editors and heads of marketing and advertising I was going to interview. I intended to see the story through their eyes, and take in their narrative to get the big picture. People were initially incredulous, even amused by the initiative. But many of them overcame this and shared their stories with me.

The core of Samir Jain's thought has been that his publications must offer superior value to the advertiser. Every aspect of his business has to be aligned to deliver that. This is the touchstone for decisions and initiatives at the Group. The TOI group, self admittedly, is all about "aggregating audiences for the advertiser".

Pushed to the limit, this means that if the newspaper is forced to choose between an erudite editor's expounding on larger national issues and upper middle class professionals worried about water shortage and unsafe neighbourhoods, then the latter would get preference in the columns of the newspaper.

If the consuming classes find a certain style of language stiff and uncomfortable, it will be replaced with something lively. If these targeted classes did not have time for long reports, the stories would be crisper. If lifestyle, celebrity, education, travel and fashion were their new priorities, separate supplements would be spun out to serve them, and to serve the advertiser.

Samir Jain went about making these changes systematically. He brought in concepts hitherto unknown to this domain. Even as rivals looked on, he re-jigged content; put the spotlight on local issues; created supplements with a view to tapping the advertising segment and also to cater to a niche client base; his publications became colourful and snazzy; highbrow pontificating gave way to simpler, clearer, wittier language. He backed this with clever marketing moves. He combined the advantages of all his main publications and offered them as a collective to the advertiser, thereby changing that pattern once and for all. He hiked the rates for space in certain publications such as The TOI, Bombay where he is the dominant leader, and then sweetened that by offering space in lightweight editions across north India for a nominal, additional fee.

As one of the stalwart editors, Girilal Jain, famously observed (and is quoted in The TOI Story): "I do not regard The Times of India as a family owned or company owned newspaper. I regard it as a national institution. ...If it were to be run as a company-owned concern, I won't fit in". And then, he went on to add: "For me, it (being editor) is national service with a certain amount of payment".

To attract advertisers in Delhi, where he was a distant second to The Hindustan Times, he spoke of the 'value' that his publications delivered instead of focusing merely on circulation.

People described those changes and the surrounding controversies with great emotion. They told me how Jain shut down many publications of the group, including those which had been launched by his grandparents and were respected among the intelligentsia. They said he wanted to sharpen his focus; they explained how the decision was met with severe shock and indignation, but how he still went ahead.

This was fine to the extent that no one could grudge a businessman trying to become more relevant for his audience. Except that the other side of the debate was that this is not a soap business. This is an "institution". The media has to rise above commerce, as it were, since it had a larger role. The Times of India, with its long tradition and leadership position, was obliged to play that role.

As one of the stalwart editors, Girilal Jain, famously observed (and is quoted in The TOI Story): "I do not regard The Times of India as a family owned or company owned newspaper. I regard it as a national institution. ...If it were to be run as a company-owned concern, I won't fit in". And then, he went on to add: "For me, it (being editor) is national service with a certain amount of payment".

But Samir Jain was not interested in that "larger role". He wanted to do what his advertisers wanted, and by extension, that which would touch the sort of readers whom the advertisers targeted. What added colour and interest to these battles was the personality of Samir Jain himself: reclusive, spiritual, focussed, and with an almost uncanny knack of anticipating - and shaping - the demands of his customer.

By and by, the media world began to take Samir Jain seriously. It criticized him, but also watched him closely, and followed what he did. Today, practically every leading newspaper in the country brings out its own supplements; launches localized editions; brings out its own version of the price matrix; rakes in the glamour, the celebrity. It condescends to conquer.

The context in which these changes took place was also conducive. India was beginning to change. Consumerism was no more a dirty word. It was all right to want to make money. Entrepreneurship was emerging. The stranglehold of the government would loosen up. Economic reforms were unleashed with a vengeance. And, Samir Jain had been able to read the message in the wind, and take that leap of faith. In that sense, he becomes the pioneer; also the 'perpetrator' of change.

The main concern with this subservience to the news consumer – and by extension, the advertiser – is whether the media is now left pandering to the least common denominator. In its focus on news that you “want to know”, has it completely lost sight of news that you “ought to know”? Is mainstream national media now circumscribed by the narrow and immediate concerns of the middle class, and is unable to take up more in-depth and long term issues?

There are accusations against The Times of India. It ‘dumbed-down’ journalism. It guillotined the great power of the editorial cadre. It brought in advertorials and entertainment into the newspaper. Some of the columns in its supplements are up for sale. Small newspapers have died. He has ‘commercialized’ news in India. The Times of India, admittedly, is in the business of advertising, entertainment, or “infotainment”, not news.

Indeed change has been coerced on the print medium in the country. Benefits have accrued to the consumer and the advertiser. Pulp and trivia have found a clientele. It is a high-stakes venture. Monetary gains drive the media enterprise like any other. While there are many more players, they often end up as clones of each other.

There has been growth. Readership and circulation are both growing in this country while newspapers across the world are folding up or being consumed by their peers in the digital space.

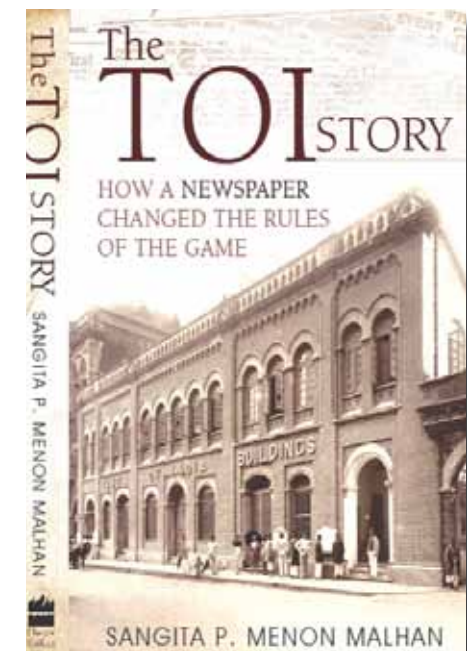
Undoubtedly, all this has had a strong bearing on shaping contemporary media in India. “Aggregating audiences for the advertiser” has been replaced with the supremacy of the TRP, with much greater vigour and clarity.

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I refrain from making any judgements here.

The sense I have got from the TOI group is they recognised at some point that they had taken relevance too far and perhaps trivialised issues. Besides reversing some of that, they have also tried to discharge the “national institution” role through multiple social campaigns. It seems to them that young people want to make a difference by participating and doing, more than by analyzing and discussing issues in newspaper columns.

What does one expect from the media and from the leader of the pack? With its sizeable resources and reach, we expect more research and analysis; more intervention in areas that matter; and in cases where columns are for sale, perhaps a fuller disclosure!



Of course the environment is changing rapidly. Content is now being “aggregated” in cyber space, tempting one to question the relevance of the media as it exists. That may be a little premature. Knowing The Times of India, one can be certain that there will be profound changes to adapt and win, as the world around us transforms.

I’m glad the opportunity to capture the most defining upheaval in the medium came to me. And, no matter what more happens to print in India, the story of the mid 1980s to the ‘90s will always be when it all began!

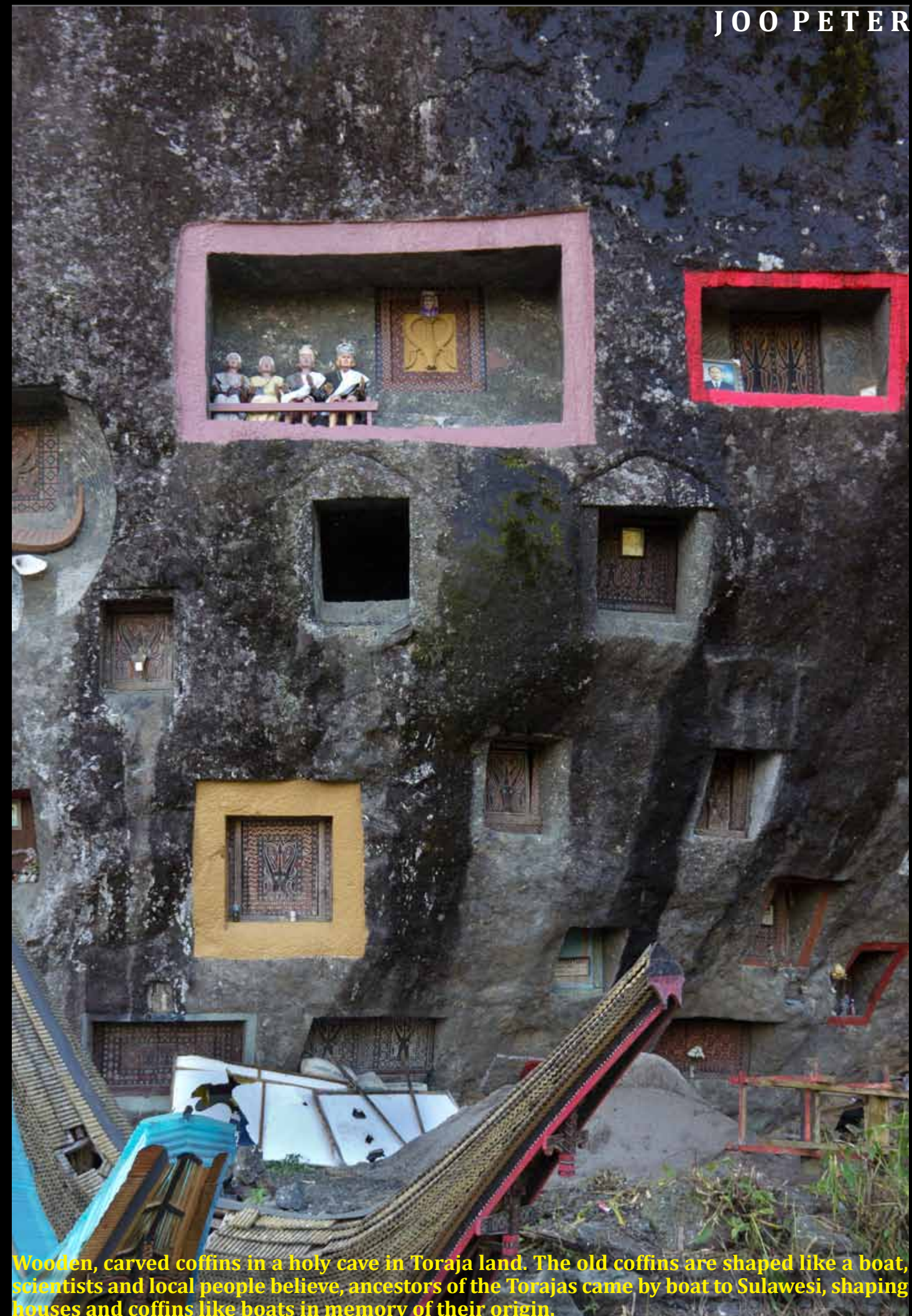
Sulawesi, Indonesia

Living in the mountains of Sulawesi are the Toraja people who are proud, independent and smart. They keep a unique heritage alive and are famous for their Tau Tau figures, effigies of the deceased family members buried in caves in rocks. Major events are funerals in the village with sacrifices of buffalos. White buffalos are the most vulnerable.

When I was searching one of the caves hidden in the jungle for the ancient graveyards with boat-like shaped coffins and beautiful ornamental carvings, I met a rice farmer coming home from work. He told me that he was learning Spanish by himself and had visited Europe some time ago, travelling from Amsterdam to Vienna in winter time. Then he returned to work in the rice fields and built a new traditional house. That's the way Sulawesi people are. There might be a SUV in front of the home and the mummy of grandma in the back of the house – they know how to balance tradition and modern life.



Joo Peter, www.joo-peter.photoshelter.com



Wooden, carved coffins in a holy cave in Toraja land. The old coffins are shaped like a boat, scientists and local people believe, ancestors of the Torajas came by boat to Sulawesi, shaping houses and coffins like boats in memory of their origin.



Babies are buried in holes in holy trees, Toraja land, Sulawesi, Indonesia. The little doors covering the hole in the trees, where the babies are buried, are made of hairy palm strings, symbolizing the hair of the mother. Babies are spirits coming from nature, from the trees, so returning back to the trees. When the hole in the tree is closing in the following years, the spirit of the baby has successfully returned to spiritual world and is strong enough to help the family after its death, as a spirit.



Family member in traditional costume at a traditional funeral in a village in Toraja land, Sulawesi, Indonesia



Wooden, carved coffins in a holy cave in Toraja land. The old coffins are shaped like a boat, scientists and local people believe, ancestors of the Torajas came by boat to Sulawesi, shaping houses and coffins like boats in memory of their origin.



Man at a traditional funeral in a village in Toraja land.



Buffalo sacrifice at a funeral in a traditional village in Toraja land.



Traditional village in Toraja land. The traditional houses are called Tongkonan.



Dr Batra's has been at the forefront of homeopathic revolution — transforming the 200-year-old holistic alternative medical system into a modern, safe and effective science. From what started as a small one-room clinic, 32 years ago, *Dr Batra's* is today the world's first and largest homeopathic healthcare corporate, with over 120 clinics located in India and across the globe.

As thought leaders in homeopathy, it has been *Dr Batra's* constant endeavor to bring the best of homeopathic healthcare, supplanted by technology, within the reach of all.

Dr. Mukesh Batra *of Dr. Batra's* speaks to Mark Ulyseas on the launch of his magazine **Homeopathy & You**

There is a plethora of magazines on health in the market. Why is H&Y different?

India's first on homeopathy and lifestyle - adds a new dimension to the idea - bringing homeopathic and lifestyle content that you can depend upon, trust and use for your day-to-day and long-term needs. H&Y has set its own benchmark; it is unique not just in terms of content, but also presentation.

According to WHO, homeopathy is the second largest system of medicine in the world. The global market estimated at Rs 26,000 crore; India's homeopathy market is currently worth Rs 2,758 crore. It is expected to reach Rs 5,873 crore by 2017. The homeopathy market has been growing at 30 percent per annum over the last five years. With 150 million people already using homeopathy in India, we felt, as pioneers of this system, that we should take the benefits of this wonderful science to the masses. This prompted us to come up with Homeopathy & You.

We believe that the magazine will provide the platform to people to know more about homeopathy. We believe that health awareness is important and a lot can be done if we educate people about health, popularise homeopathy and create awareness about several health issues.

The best part - the ideas and solutions that the magazine presents can be easily incorporated into your and your family's daily health and lifestyle plan, so that you can maximize your chances for a long, healthy and vibrant life.

Put in précis, H&Y empowers you, the reader, with the best there is to create and maintain optimal health and wellness.

Is H&Y an in-house magazine of the corporate entity, Dr. Batra's Group of Companies?

Yes; but the magazine is endowed with complete editorial freedom. It exemplifies independence, not 'pontification.'

H&Y is a magazine on homeopathy and lifestyle; it is not a magazine about our company or policies.

What do you hope to achieve with H&Y?

Despite growing awareness about health, wellness and homeopathic healing, there exists a gap in terms of objective dissemination of practical health information and knowledge.

Homeopathy & You intends to bridge this gap and increase active participation of its readers, their families, and others in the holistic healthcare process.

- H&Y seeks to bring about a healthy change by highlighting the importance of routine medical check-ups and management of acute illness and chronic disease — because too often, notwithstanding the World Wide Web and other access to information, most people are ill-equipped to effectively manage their health,
- There is also just too much information, or lack of dependable, appropriate knowledge, about our physical, emotional and spiritual health and wellness, or even a lurking fear of 'taking control' of one's own health
- H&Y is keyed to give you all the tools you need to take care of your health and, in so doing, empower you with relevant, up-to-the-minute, trustworthy and succinct information, encompassing every area of your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health
- H&Y explores health issues affecting all stages of life, including lifestyle, nutrition, diet, fitness, exercise and environment, in a new, practical light, in tune with homeopathy and its signature tune that 'nature, be my teacher.' This only means there will be something for everybody... literally.

Do you think it is ethical for a company that manufactures and markets medicines to be associated with a health magazine because editorial objectivity may be compromised?

H&Y is a magazine on homeopathy and lifestyle; it is not a magazine about our company or policies.

Is the editorial content centred on your products/services or are there articles on the whole gamut of health issues/treatments, some not related to your company/products?

Not really; all articles are 'keyed' to focus on a whole range or gamut of issues without favor or bias.

Vol 1, Issue 1, November 2013 • ₹75

Homeopathy & You

www.homeopathyandyou.com

TREAT HAIR LOSS ON TIME

Your balding pate may signal bad health

Dr MUKESH BATRA
Know your personality and stay well with homeopathy

MANEKA GANDHI
Grow plants to repel mosquitoes

HOW TO...
Banish skin eruptions, treat cold and cough naturally, erase stress, use treadmill for effective weight loss

TARLA DALAL
Healthy snacks for diabetics



H&Y explores health issues affecting all stages of life, including lifestyle, nutrition, diet, fitness, exercise and environment, in a new, practical light, in tune with homeopathy and its signature tune that 'nature, be my teacher.' This only means there will be something for everybody... literally.

Who are your contributors? And how are they qualified to write for H&Y?

Our writers make us what we are and sustain to be — leaders in homeopathic and wellness information and knowledge. Our writers and columnists are top-notch, internationally-renowned, university qualified, certified and licensed homeopaths, physicians, or respected names, in their respective specialties, or areas of interest. What does this signify? That the information provided in the magazine is free of bias and based exclusively on their evidence-based practices, or long years of experience.

Dr Mukesh Batra, a homeopath of international repute, is Founder-Chairman, Dr Batra's. In a career spanning four decades, Dr Batra has treated over a million patients, including presidents and prime ministers, and revolutionized the way homeopathy is practiced today. A writer, photographer, singer and philanthropist, Dr Batra has been honored with several fellowships and over 50 national and international awards, including the Padma Shri by the President of India. He has authored several books, including the critically-acclaimed cyclopedic work, Healing with Homeopathy. He lives in Mumbai.

Dr. Akshay ., the first-ever trichologist from Asia to be elected President of the Trichological Society of London, his alma mater, is Managing Director, Dr Batra's. He is the youngest and the first-ever non-UK-based trichologist to receive the prestigious Robert Olding Award for outstanding achievement in the field of trichology. He is also India's first hair specialist to be associated with the European Hair Research Society [EHRS]. His published work includes the first-of-its-kind and landmark book, Hair: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About It, which is available at all good bookstores and on www.flipkart.com. He lives in Mumbai.

Dr Rajgopal Nidamboor, Editor-Publisher, is a Board Certified wellness physician-turned-writer, commentator, critic, columnist and author. In a writing career spanning 35 years, Dr Nidamboor has published hundreds of newspaper, magazine, and Web articles, essays, meditations, and critiques, on a host of subjects. His published books include four self-help titles on natural health, published in the UK, two coffee table books, published in Australia, a handful of E-books, and a primer on medical therapeutics, aside from an encyclopedic treatise on Indian philosophy.

H&Y seeks to bring about a healthy change by highlighting the importance of routine medical check-ups and management of acute illness and chronic disease — because too often, notwithstanding the World Wide Web and other access to information, most people are ill-equipped to effectively manage their health,

Kavita Nadkarni, Assistant Editor, is a writer and healthcare communications professional. She holds a degree in microbiology with a master's in bio-informatics. She has managed editorial teams in media groups, specialising in healthcare and pharmaceutical publications. Her other areas of interest include complementary medicine and alternative healthcare.

Columnists

Maneka Gandhi is a noted politician, animal rights activist, writer and environmentalist. She is also equally well-known for her books in the areas of etymology, law and animal welfare.

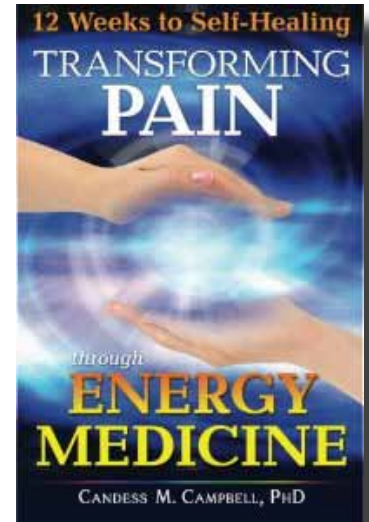
Dr Richard Firshein, Founder-Director of The Firshein Center for Comprehensive Medicine in New York City, is a leading innovator and authority in the field of preventative and nutritional medicine, integrating both Eastern and Western medical practices. He is Board Certified in Family Medicine and has served as professor of family medicine. An internationally recognized leader in the field of integrative medicine and healthy aging, a cancer researcher, prolific author and writer, Dr. Firshein has written several groundbreaking books, including the bestselling Reversing Asthma, Your Asthma-Free Child, The Nutraceutical Revolution and, most recently, The Vitamin Prescription [For Life].

Kerry Dulin, a world-renowned fitness guru, first got into professional bodybuilding at age 40. He won his first bodybuilding competition, at age 41. Now 54, with a physique that would put someone half his age to shame, Dulin has, what he calls "a manageable program," 12 top trophies to show for his fitness endeavors and three health and fitness Websites. He lives in the US.

Nelressa Stallings, a copywriter-PR consultant, writer, teacher and ESL instructor, is a qualified life-coach. An Indophile, Stallings has worked and consulted at top companies like HarperCollins, Pentagram Design, Exceed Communications, Scholastic, and DirecTV, aside from Dow Jones. A resident of New York City, she now lives in the Middle East.

Radhanath Swami, a spiritual guide of international repute, is the author of the bestselling book, The Journey Home.

Ambika Shukla is Trustee of People for Animals, India's largest animal welfare organization and Director of Sanjay Gandhi Animal Care Centre. She shares her home in New Delhi with ten dogs.



Energy Medicine: Kinesiology and Muscle Testing

Some of the most helpful tools of Energy Medicine include kinesiology and muscle testing. I use at least one of them in my life on a daily basis.

What is kinesiology?

According to <http://dictionary.reference.com> it is defined as “the science dealing with the inter-relationship of the physiological processes and anatomy of the human body with respect to movement.”

In the forward to Dr. Hawkins’s book, *Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Behavior*, editor E. Whalen gives the history of kinesiology. I could not say it better, so I will quote him: *The study of kinesiology first received scientific attention in the second half of the last century through the work of Dr. George Goodheart, who pioneered the specialty he called applied kinesiology after finding that benign physical stimuli—for instance, beneficial nutritional supplements—would increase the strength of certain indicator muscles, whereas hostile stimuli would cause those muscles to suddenly weaken. The implication was that at a level far below conceptual consciousness, the body “knew,” and through muscle testing was able to signal, what was good or bad for it.*

Whalen further explains, “Dr. John Diamond refined this specialty into a new discipline he called behavioral kinesiology.” Diamond realized that the indicator muscles would grow stronger in response to “positive or negative emotional and intellectual stimuli, as well as physical stimuli.” Dr. Hawkins took this concept further when he began researching the “kinesiological response to truth and falsehood” in 1975.

This is a simple explanation of kinesiology. Begin with two people. One is the subject, and the other is the tester. Have the subject stand tall, with one arm raised straight out from the side of the body and parallel to the floor. If it is the subject’s left arm that is extended, then the tester faces the subject and places his or her left hand on the subject’s right shoulder. It is suggested that the subject not look directly at the tester, but rather over the tester’s shoulder. The tester then places her or his right hand on the subject’s left wrist, with his or her palm facing downward. The tester can instruct the subject to resist when the tester pushes down on the wrist. Then the tester pushes down firmly on the wrist.

A specific way in which you might want to use this tool is to test the level of life energy in the food you eat. Imagine a scale. For example, you may use percentages. Let's use the example of an apple. As soon as the apple is picked from the tree, it begins to lose its life energy. This life energy is what nourishes your body. When you choose an apple, test the apple for the level of life left in it. A level of 100% would be the highest level of life, and 0% the lowest.

The idea is to see whether the response is strong or weak, and there should be a bounce. It is not good for the tester to push too hard or for the subject to strain to resist, as this will fatigue the arm. Different people have different amounts of bounce in their arm as they are tested. Over time, the tester will know their testing answer—yes or no—quickly.

When you begin the kinesiology, the first question to ask should be a yes or no question or statement to ensure information is being received correctly. If you are the subject, an example would be for you to say, "My name is [your name]." When you test, you would get a *yes* response by your arm being strong while the tester pushes on it. Your next statement might be, "My name is Minnie Mouse." In this case, you would get a *no* response, meaning the arm the tester is pushing would be weak. To see if you are going to get an accurate response to subsequent questions, you should test strong for what is true and weak for what is false in this initial set, as it is a very simple example in which you know the answers.

Cross Crawl

If you are getting the wrong responses, then you are not communicating with yourself accurately. In this case, there are a couple of things you can do. One is to have a large glass of water. You may be dehydrated. The other would be a cross crawl. The cross crawl is an energy technique taught by Donna Eden in her book *Energy Medicine*. She explains that it "facilitates the crossover of energy between the brain's right and left hemispheres." She adds that the technique helps you to "feel more balanced, think more clearly, improve your coordination, and harmonize your energies." Eden explains the steps for this technique as follows:

1. While standing, lift your right arm and left leg simultaneously.
2. After you let them down, raise your left arm and right leg. If you are unable to do this because, for instance, you are confined to a wheelchair, simply lift your knees to the opposite elbows, or twist your upper torso so your arm passes over the midline of your body.
3. Repeat, this time exaggerating the lift of your leg and the swing of your arm across the midline to the opposite side of your body.
4. Continue in this exaggerated march for at least a minute, again breathing deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth.

I have included this information because kinesiology is an incredible diagnostic tool, as well as one that is extremely useful in self-healing. Many integrative health practitioners use kinesiology.



What is muscle testing?

Some people assert kinesiology and muscle testing are not the same. My assessment is that the ways in which the tests are conducted are different, but the results are the same. Kinesiology requires two people and muscle testing you can do yourself. You are able to use muscle testing personally in many ways. Once you learn the muscle testing, you will be able to adapt this tool to your lifestyle. When you use it on yourself for healing, be aware that you must also remain neutral with no intention or expectation. At times this can be difficult. For myself, when I realize I may have Ego involved in the outcome, I will ask someone else to help me. I have created the process with photos for you to learn muscle testing on my website [LINK](#).

A specific way in which you might want to use this tool is to test the level of life energy in the food you eat. Imagine a scale. For example, you may use percentages. Let's use the example of an apple. As soon as the apple is picked from the tree, it begins to lose its life energy. This life energy is what nourishes your body. When you choose an apple, test the apple for the level of life left in it. A level of 100% would be the highest level of life, and 0% the lowest. To apply muscle testing using your fingers, either take the apple in one hand or touch one of your hands against the apple and test, starting at 10%, 20%, and so on, and see how high the percentage gets before your fingers release, signifying a no. That will give you knowledge about the level of life the apple has retained. I try to find food that has at least 70% of life left. During the summer, your food generally will have higher life energy. Think about it: how much life do you suppose is available in a can of green beans? Try muscle testing it and see. If you need further information or instruction on this technique, you may want to check out the videos called "Kinesiology" on my website at [LINK](#).

I have been blessed in having this tool at my disposal at several key moments in my life. One time that stands out for me was several years ago when my family—my dog Friday, my cat Kayla, and I—got sick at the same time. Friday and I fared well and recovered, but Kayla had a more difficult time. One evening I decided to take her to the pet emergency center. A friend of mine was in town and staying with me, so we went together. The vet checked Kayla and said he wanted to run a set of tests to see what was wrong. Well, truthfully, I have been resistive to medical testing and procedures as a first response, so I asked him if he would work with me. I asked what he was looking for with respect to the test results. He explained to me what organs might be involved in Kayla's illness. My response was to muscle test, and my testing showed it was the stomach. Then I asked him, "If it's the stomach, what would the treatment be?" He gave me the names of a couple of medications he thought might be helpful in that circumstance. I muscle tested and picked a medication. Kayla was severely dehydrated, having been sick for a few days, and the vet kept her overnight.



The next day when we went to get her, the vet announced, “She’s good!” We looked at him questioningly, and he responded that he had decided to run the test on his own, the results of which indicated that I had been right. The problem was with the stomach, and the medicine Kayla had muscle tested for was what he would have given her. I was delighted with this feedback and the ability to act as a bridge between traditional medicine and energy medicine. I shared with the vet about Reiki as well, which I touched on earlier in this book and will talk about more again in the last week.

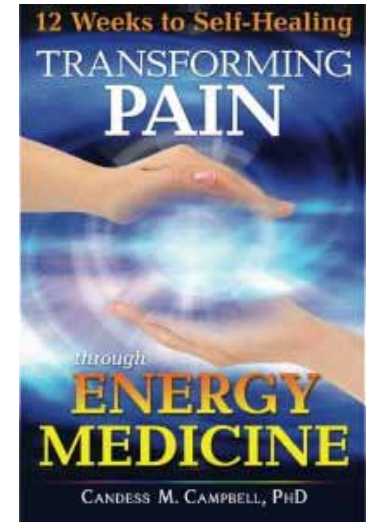
Another example that surprised me took place when I awoke one morning and found something wrong with my neck. It was kinked, and my head was twisted to the left in an odd position. I was in so much pain that I could hardly move, and when I moved accidentally, it really hurt. I was frightened and didn’t know what to do. I had neither medical insurance nor a regular medical doctor. Finally, I remembered my friend, who was a massage therapist. I called him and asked if he could help me. He came right over with his massage table and intuitively asked me some specific questions that had to do with my beliefs. He used muscle testing as well.

As he began asking me questions, I had a strange image of a past lifetime. I saw that in the past lifetime, my husband was physically abusive to my (our) children. My response had been to look away; I didn’t do anything to help them. Once I realized this as I lay on the massage table, I felt remorseful. Then the muscles in my neck loosened, and I was fine. I realized then that this image had been triggered by a John Grisham movie I viewed the previous evening, in which there was a similar scene. It appeared that my neck became stuck as I would not turn my head to look at what was happening to my children. The effect of Robert’s kinesiology and his newly learned skill at asking just the right questions to get to the core of the issue turned out to be miraculous. Dreams can also cause this kind of situation, and the healing would be the same process. I am confident it was from a past life only because I have been taking clients through past life hypnotherapy for many years.

Invite your friends to learn this special tool with you so you can practice together. Below are a few exercises you can use to develop your skill.

Tools and Exercises

1. Write down some declarative statements, one per paper, to practice kinesiology. Fold the paper so you do not know what each paper says. Find a friend and practice kinesiology. Hold the paper near your solar plexus (in front of your body under your heart), while your friend tests your non-dominant arm. You may want to test movies, politicians, or medical providers in your life.



2. Go to [LINK](#) to learn the steps to muscle testing.
3. Watch the videos to learn to test your food [LINK](#).
4. Go to the grocery store and test the food you pick. Use a percentage scale. You will be surprised at the difference from one piece of fruit to the next. Be sure to allow yourself to test without getting your Ego or head involved, because it is important to be in a neutral state. In addition to testing foods to determine the general level of life force in them, you can test food to see whether a particular food is likely to support your body. Think of the food, or hold it, and say the following to yourself, either silently or out loud: “This food, [whatever it is], will support my body and my health.” You will get a strong response or a weak one. The response will tell you whether it is wise for you to have the food at that time. I almost always use this technique when I want to have a cup of coffee, ice cream, or a glass of wine. These are foods that my body will accept at some times and not at others. There is also a video on my website that teaches how to muscle test food.

This is only one aspect of energy medicine. In my book [12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine](#) there is much to learn about acupuncture, flower essences, essential oils, the chakras, crystals and more.

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Heroes of 2013

Hope is the seed of life, an energy that lies dormant within us ready to sprout forth when all else fails...even love.

2013 is for many just another rung up the ladder towards self-indulgence. But for millions of faceless people it has been a long hard struggle to survive the rigours of living on the periphery of Life... And in spite of all the hardships, humiliation and starvation, these folk have prevailed with hope in their hearts and faith in their Gods.

These people are in truth the heroes of 2013 for they, in their fallen grace, have risen above the inhumanity of humanity to find sustenance in all that is good, wholesome and life embracing. It is these people who have stood up and walked the road when all were being slaughtered around them. ..blood being the water of death and dust, reality between the teeth.

Let us for a moment be thankful to these heroes of 2013 for believing in Life... for keeping the true spirit of humanity alive, like an oil lamp glowing un-flickering in a thunder storm...these faceless starving folk carrying their emaciated children and meagre belongings with the hope that over the horizon somewhere, someone, would open their homes to them, to give them shelter, food and dignity...while the well fed and clothed have watched with a deadly disconnection the shenanigans of power politics and gendarmes of faith decimate with ruthlessness the innocence of humanity...the defenceless, unarmed people who want simply to live their lives in peace.

The heroes of 2013 are the unsung refugees, the homeless, the disenfranchised languishing on street corners like abandoned dogs, abused women and orphaned children and more. Sadly there are no awards for these wretched souls. They are the forgotten, misplaced people whose lives are not worth rewarding in every sense of the word.

They are the expendables.

And yet, in them, hope glows brightly.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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Live encounters

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