



**GOVERNOR  
OF  
ARUNACHAL PRADESH  
SHRI S.K. SINGH'S REMARKS  
TO N.C.C. CADETS**

**AT**

**DERA NATUNG GOVT. COLLEGE  
AUDITORIUM, ITANAGAR**

**JUNE 17, 2006**

**GOVERNOR OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH  
SHRI S.K. SINGH'S REMARKS  
TO N.C.C. CADETS  
JUNE 17, 2006**

The shape and organization of our armed forces as these stand at present, was inherited through normal historical processes from the era during which the Mughal Imperial system was declining. Provincial Warlords who claimed to owe allegiance to the powerless and helpless titular Emperor in Delhi, in reality were by and large free and entirely lawless.

During this period foreign adventurers and traders specially French, Dutch and Portuguese etc. roamed around our country-side trying to sell arms make profits, offer their services to train and equip all kinds of quasi military personnel of various princes and princelings. They understood weapons, both small field guns, and individually carried breach loading personal guns that used but small amounts of explosive and pellets. All of them too achieved some notoriety and authority, much as Veerappans and Malkhan Singhs of that era.

In this atmosphere of confusion, British power grew. They enlarged the scope of their military and economic influence through their already systematic and organized trade, in which they had to use both tact and flattery. Also by claiming valour for their race and society. The British East India Company's ultimate achievement towards the 18<sup>th</sup> century was, when they persuaded the Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar to grant them the Subedari of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa and parts of Oudh. The term Subedari meant the authority and license to collect land revenue on behalf of the Imperial Government and for this activity they could use both their British white personnel and also the Indian ethnics, junior civil functionaries. Gradually they started charging stiff commissions or fees for their services. They had, in that period of confusion to enforce their right to collect revenue by force, employed by the Company's armed personnel which was both British and Indian; and also their unarmed accountants who were called

gumashtas or tehsildars. The same force were also used by them to discourage other neighbouring rulers who tried to snatch their territory through their armed personnel, police and para military forces.

The British East India Company did not bring from England many white soldiers, only a few young, vigorous Commissioned Officers, of the level of Lieutenants, and Captains and Majors. Many French, Dutch and Portuguese officers, started either competing with the British, or enrolling with them. In due course of time, the British started recruiting and training Indians, as part of their own British force. The British used both white and Indian officers to drill, train and discipline this emerging force, and the activity included organizing them in separate regiments, using new uniforms which were designed and provided by them, for their various Regiments, both regional and activity-based. The foreigner shrewdly understood, right from those early days all about the psychology and characteristics of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and their caste system. They preached them only the morality of unity, and pride in the non-caste non-religious unity of Indian soldiers. Once they joined these armed forces, religion and caste issues were rendered irrelevant through the Army disciplines. Today's caste based reservations for specific jobs or castes or religions found no space in this British scheme of things for their Indian subjects and friends.

I have indicated above how the foundations of our armed forces of today were laid in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the Mutiny or our First war of Indian Independence (or active rebellion) these forces were left to evolve. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century while emphasizing unity of these casteless, religion-less essentially Indian soldiers, the Indian Army also joined fighting in the Middle East North Africa and in Europe's battle-fields First World War (1914-1919) and Second World War (1939-1946). This experience too built up their fighting

qualities and prowess. They had by now seen the wider world, and compared their own comparative fighting qualities with the French, Dutch, Germans, Australians, Canadians, Egyptians, Iraqis, Israelis and Persians.

Let me go back to the even earlier periods, of our peoples' growth and evolution as fighters. Let us see how from early historical periods, India's armies were structured. In Emperor Ashoka's days (around 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) his army was built up as an all-India Imperial force. Its story takes us back to a few centuries prior to the birth of Christ. I do not propose going further back to the periods of our ancient epics Ramayana, Mahabharata, or to the battles of Kurukshetra, and Hastinapur, as that period is one connected with our religious faith, Epics or Shastras, and cannot be considered as part of historical and recorded history. There is little written or archeological evidence to prove that there was, in reality, and not merely in terms of our faith in mythology, there was an invasion by Lord Rama of Sri Lanka or a battle at Kurukshetra, so we leave that period alone.

Now when an Emperor like Ashoka decided to punish the rulers of Kalinga and went to war against them, that became a series of battles about which evidence does exist. The battle for Kalinga lasted several days and at the end, both armies sustained huge losses and casualties. Entire battle fields lay strewn with dead bodies and when the Emperor who was also an ardent devotee of the Lord Buddha's teachings and believed in non-violence watched and surveyed the results of his carnage against Kalinga, he was moved to tears, and cried out aloud "Oh Lord! Why did you turn my head in pride and arrogance, and got me to get all these men killed." He decreed further that there shall be no further carnage and all wars should be won through love and persuasion. Your enemy has to be persuaded by love and arguments and not through the sword, by shedding blood, he declared.

This indicates how right from the beginning the philosophy of this country and its people has been non-aggressive, non-violent, defence oriented and not aggressive but passive. Certain accounts exist of later Emperors and rulers like Chandragupta Vikramaditya and Emperor Kanishka waging war and fighting with arrows, swords and daggers, from horse-back, also using elephants, and conquering territories. During other periods too, evidence exists of Chola Kings in the South, with their great naval strength and talent, expanding their authority and power across the seas and establishing their sway throughout South-East Asia: specially Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos. In Thailand too where both Hindu and Buddhist cultures and religions spread, and prospered, Indian sculptures of Gods and Goddesses, and a lot of paintings of Lord Buddha, Lady Tara and all kinds of Dragons were left behind by the artists of the period for historians and archeologists to assess.

Then we come to the centuries that followed the death of the Prophet of Islam Hazrat Mohammad. From the middle East, particularly the Gulf region came Arab sailors and traders to the Gujarat coast, and /or to the Kerala sea board, entirely peacefully and in quest only of money and trade. These people brought knowledge of the new religion and philosophy of Islam as also their quest for India's spices, sandalwood and ivory to be further exported by them to Europe, for profit. At the same time came the very first Arab invasion of Sindh when Mohd. Ibn Qasim with his small Arab force sailed in to attack Raja Dahir of Sindh. That was a minor incident, merely the first of several Islamic armed intrusions. Ibn Qasim's little band of armed persons could not penetrate the sands of Sindh and was unable to leave any impact on the country.

This Arab intrusion was followed by the Central Asian Turkic armies entering North India through Khyber and Bolan passes, principally for loot and

territorial gain. They were joined after a few decades by Turko-Afghan Forces of adventurers and marauders like Mahmood of Ghazni followed by Sahabuddin Mohd of Ghor. Their armed forces were often joined or infiltrated by Persian or Iranian soldiers. They left little impact on this country.

As you know Urdu is one of our well-known modern Indian language. The word Urdu, literally means an army Cantonment. As things were developing, Cantonments grew in North India, as constantly these external armies were on the move. They had to travel along with their tents and equipment, food grains, vegetables, and meat providers, all of whom were essentially Hindu businessmen. So the language that developed around these Cantonments got to be known as the language called Urdu. Its diction or vocabulary was derived from the words of Turkic, Persian, Pushto, and Arabic. All these were knitted together by the grammar of the latter-day Prakrit. The businessmen around the foreign soldiers became experts also in languages like Persian, Turkic, Arabic etc. This language got known as the language of the Cantonment or the Urdu language. The businessmen around the armies of that period grew into an all purpose agency for spreading business, banking, commodities, arms etc. In addition these businessmen also acted as money lenders and bankers to the soldiers and their officers to buy various Indian products to be sent to their village homes throughout Asia. This stream of army personnel of this period was used by all kinds of free booting invaders of the pre Mughal era, and were utilized during the pre Mughal Sultanate period (or the period of Delhi Sultanate from 1206 A.D. to 1526 A.D.) Babar, the first Mughal invaded North India in 1526.

The story of the period of the Great Mughal Emperors Babar, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan, and Aurangzeb, I hope, is already known to you. I have already described to you how during the period of the decline of the Mughal

Empire a variety of decadent Hindu and Muslim Princes gained importance through their capacity for intrigue and internal fighting and the British East India Company saw its chance of gathering power and authority by organizing, recruiting, arming, training, putting into uniform of a British trained body of Indian soldiers and claiming it as their own armed forces.

Soon enough they learnt the trick of arranging Boy's Companies for training younger Indians as trained armed personnel and gaining loyalty and long term service with the British. It is through them that they cornered power and armed authority in various regions of India. It was thus that the British East India Company muscled in with its better organization and administrative principles and philosophy and gradually enslaved the vast length and breadth of the Indian Sub-Continent, and our huge population.

This story holds several lessons for your generation. Abolish caste, and clan, and tribal differences. Be united and disciplined, spread all over India, amongst all classes, regions, and remnants of castes, clans and tribes essential unity and oneness of all our vast land and all our billion population. Be truthful and non-violent as Gandhiji preached. Have no feeling of inferiority. For you are valiant and moral as a people, you need to build and develop these qualities further ever and always. That is what your NCC Training and Camps like this are meant to achieve.

---