



Dear Reader,

One of my earliest memories of home is of The Jalan Museum, when I was about five years old. Paintings larger than my small human figure- of Benaras ghats and people enveloped in a haze, some half submerged in the Ganga while others, standing on the steps near the ghat chanting prayers- hung on the walls right next to the intricate tapestries. As a child, I was enthralled and overwhelmed to an unimaginable extent. Right then, Papa held my hands and revealed to me the stories of a somewhat forgotten history. I remember how, with wide, excited eyes, he tried to explain to me, the uniqueness of figurines and old china plates, hoping that one day I could carry on the family legacy. I did not understand the importance of the antiques then but I did fall in love with history.

The Editorial Board of Triveni consists of members who have their own stories of finding their passion for this subject. Through this issue, I wish to portray the passion within us as students of history and political science. We have all tried to make this newsletter as engaging and interactive as possible, as we wish to encourage you to recognize your interest in these subjects, and harbor your own perspectives, even if they are contrary.

We have covered a variety of topics ranging from the Akune Brothers to Roman graffiti. The inside provides an extensive elucidation of the evolution of countercultural movements, detailing five such efforts and their evolution from the 1960s to the 21st century. Throughout the newsletter, you will also find some company school paintings on the side of a few articles. These paintings were highly popular before the invention of photography as they depicted the life of Indians and their day-to-day activities.

Before you dive into the rich world of history and politics, I would like to make it clear that the views put forth by the writers are their own. The Triveni newsletter includes opinions from diverse thought processes. However, the publication itself is not affiliated with any particular opinion shared in the newsletter.

HAPPY READING!

**NANDINI JALAN**  
**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

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The study of history is conventionally thought of as the study of a series of events - the objective being memorization, and the utility being an effective understanding of the paths that have led us, as a collective species, to where we are today. However, we often get too caught up in the processes of rote memorization, forming mental timelines and revising separate incidents that we forget that history is ultimately about human beings - and even though it is often written from a bird's eye view, not focusing much on narratives that shed light on how it would actually feel like to live through the events we study about, sometimes that is exactly what we need: a more intimate, personal outlook on those events. This is one of those times.

Ichiro Akune and his wife, Yukiye Akune, seem, on the surface, just like any other Japanese immigrant family of the early 20th century - when hordes of thousands from the country were moving to California in 1918, chasing the so-called 'American Dream'. With the little money the Akunes had, they set up a moderately successful family grocery store, and gave birth to nine happy children, of which there were four sons - Masami, Kenjiro, Saburo and Shiro. Life seemed pretty stable - the kids were growing up thinking of America as their home - but in 1933, Yukiye died a tragically early death, leaving her nine children without a mother - and forcing her husband to send the kids back to Japan, being unable to take precious time off from the family business to take care of them. Ichiro ended up coming back to his birthplace in 'The Land of the Rising Sun' after tying up all affairs back in the States. The family would now live as any other native Japanese family.

The eldest brothers however - Masami and Kenjiro (who preferred to go by Harry and Ken respectively) - felt out of place in this supposedly familiar land. They had spent most of their life in the US already, and felt oddly unsure of themselves in Japan. When they came of age, the pair returned alone to the US, hoping to find some work. Instead, they were met with the reaction to the Pearl Harbour attack (1941).

Public opinion towards the Japanese had become very sour very quickly - and this extended to US citizens who were of Japanese ancestry as well. Harry and Ken found insults being hurled at them for being in the country they had been born and grown up in. By 1942, along with about 120,000 other Japanese Americans, the brothers were forcefully relocated to go live in mass internment camps. They had legal citizenship, and under the Constitution, as many rights as any other person there. Still, they had been alienated by the country they had longed to return to. When the US Army ended up approaching people in the camps, asking for volunteers who spoke Japanese to help in the war efforts, they readily agreed. As Harry later said: "Before the war, I [being an immigrant] didn't have the full freedom that other Americans had...But I still felt very free. When we lost that freedom, I was in shock...We felt that somebody had to stand up and say we are Americans too, and when they gave us an opportunity to prove that, we did and volunteered for military service."

People like Harry and Ken, who would translate Japanese documents, help questioning Japanese prisoners of war, and create propaganda for the opposing side to surrender, played a vital role in the war. Despite this, the non-immigrant American soldiers maintained their hostilities.

Some years later, the pair came back to Kagoshima, Japan, to reunite with the rest of their family. Unbeknownst to them, on the other side of the war, they had been fighting not only with the country of their parents' birthplace, but also with their direct family - as they found out over a meal that their other brothers, Saburo and Shiro, had signed up to help fight the war from the Japanese side. This definitely had the set-up of a very... interesting sibling fight, but Ichiro stepped in before any major falling-out could take place. The four opposing veterans would end up coming together to fight for America during the Korean War much later, in 1950.

This intriguing account of a family torn apart, diasporic exclusion, and brothers' fighting on opposing ends of a war lets us take a look at the way large, worldwide wars affect people on a smaller, familial scale - and paint us a better image of their consequences. After all, history is constructed from several individual accounts all comprising a single collective experience - quite fitting, isn't it?

- AADHYA KHANNA (PRESC) & VIDUSHI MOHAN (SC)



## COMPANY SCHOOL PAINTINGS

### *DANCING GIRLS (MICA PAINTINGS)*

Company school, also called Patna painting, is a style of miniature painting that developed in India in the second half of the 18th century in response to the tastes of the East India Company. The paintings in this magazine are the collection of Bal Manohar Jalan and Aditya Jalan from Patna.

# THE SILK ROAD

The speed and volume at which goods and information move across the world today is unprecedented in history. But global exchange itself is older than we think, reaching back 2 thousand years over a 5-thousand-mile stretch known as the Silk Road.

The Silk Road wasn't a single road but a network of multiple routes that gradually emerged over centuries connecting to various settlements and each other thread by thread. The first agricultural civilisations were isolated places in fertile river valleys – their travel was impeded by surrounding geography and fear of the unknown. But as they grew, they found that the arid desert and steps were inhabited not by the demons of folklore but by nomadic tribes on horseback.

The Scythians who ranged from Hungary to Mongolia had come in contact with the civilizations of Greece, Egypt, India and China. These encounters were often less than peaceful. But even through raids and warfare, as well as trade and protection of travelling merchants in exchange for tariffs, the nomads began to spread goods, ideas and technologies between cultures with no direct connection.

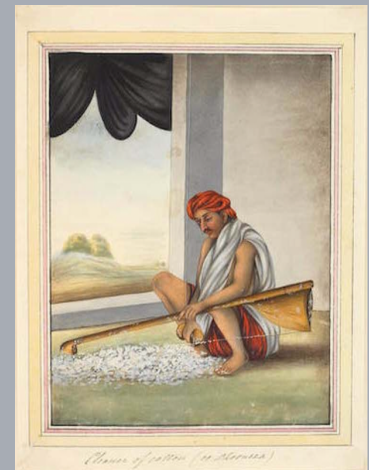
One of the most important strands of this growing web was the Persian Royal Road, completed by Darius the 3rd, in the 5th Century BCE. Stretching nearly 2000 miles from the Tigris river to the Aegean sea, its regular relay points allowed goods and messages to travel in nearly one-tenth of the time it would take a single traveler. With Alexander the Great's conquest of Persia, which was effectively an invasion into central Asia by capturing cities and establishing new ones, the network of Greek, Egyptian, Persian, and Indian cultural trade extended further east than ever before, laying foundations for a bridge between China and the West.

This was realized in the second century BCE when an ambassador named Xiang Chen, sent to negotiate between nomads in the West, returned to the Han emperor with tales of sophisticated civilizations, prosperous trade, and exotic goods beyond Western borders. With this, eastern and western routes gradually linked together in an integrated system spanning Eurasia, enabling cultural and commercial exchange farther than ever before.

- AARYA SHARMA (BI)



## COMPANY SCHOOL PAINTINGS



### MAN PASTING THE COTTON

THESE PAINTINGS HIGHLIGHT THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN TRADITIONAL INDIAN, ISLAMIC, AND WESTERN SCHOOLS AND FEATURE WORKS BY LUCK NAVI, MUGHAL, MARATHI, PUNJABI, PAHARI, TAMIL, AND TELUGU ARTISTS.



# COMEDY: A DOORWAY TO POLITICS

*“ HUMOUR IS A POWER WE INSTINCTIVELY TRUST — EVEN IF USED CYNICALLY, WE ARE POWERLESS TO RESIST ”*

Mass appeal, a voice, and some good humour seem to be all you need to become a politician these days. The past few decades have seen a spike in the number of satirists, stand-up comedians, and professional jokers making it to the political front. This plane of thought immediately conjures up the images of two politicians on the international and national forum - Volodymyr Zelensky and Bhagwat Singh Mann. Through these seeming alchemists of politics (for they did convert absurd jokes into persuasive political propaganda), let us explore the interrelation between comedy and politics.

A few years ago, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had quite a reputation as a Ukrainian stand-up comic and television entertainer. Despite having a law degree, Zelensky primarily pursued the performing arts - directing, screenwriting, acting, and entertaining. A television entertainment production company founded by Zelensky, Kvartal 95, marked his entry into politics. In July 2019, Kvartal 95's political party, 'Servant of the People,' earned the first single-party majority in Ukrainian parliamentary history.

Instead of relying on normative political campaigns to expand his electorate, Zelensky took to the comedy clubs - joking about the absurdity of his opponents. Sometimes he held interviews and press conferences, but that was all. For the rest of his campaign, he proceeded to send messages on social media and continued to be an active comedian. He had not held any positions in elective office when he ran for the post of president, but an anti-corruption platform he created, along with his huge online following was enough to carry him to victory. Zelensky, which had been a household name for comedic performances on stage a few years back, has now earned its position on people's lips for President Zelensky's performance on the battleground and in the parliament.

A popular representative of the Aam Aadmi Party in the current election, Bhagwant Singh Mann - the Chief Minister of Punjab - resembles Zelensky's mettle in his comedian-turned-politician story. Affectionately called 'Jugnu' by comedy fans and followers alike, Mann was a master of social and political satire and the 'undisputed king of comedy' in Punjab. He received mass praise (in the form of inconsolable laughter and uncountable votes) for his performances on the Great Indian Laughter Challenge on Star Plus and his role in long-running television shows such as Jugnu Mast Mast. The start of Mann's political career was through the People's Party of Punjab. He joined AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) in 2014. He had been an active ambassador for AAP during the 2017 elections, where he turned the Punjabi ditty 'kikli-kaleer' into a satirical roast on the Badal family. While it may seem bold for AAP to pick a comedian to be the face of their party, their decision was quite calculative and clever. Through multiple telephonic conversations with the voters in Punjab, the party found that 93.3% chose Mann to be the Chief Minister candidate.

This makes one wonder - what is it about satirists and comedians that makes voters believe in their ability to lead them better than the other (more stoic) candidates? Perhaps people are unknowingly drawn to the relatability and overt blatancy of humour. Humour brings to politics just what it usually lacks - the truth. This common (albeit bitter) truth that politicians are too afraid to share is brought up freely and dissected in comedic forums. Amidst a pool of laughter and a scuffle of practical jokes, the bitter truths become easier to hear and their speaker becomes the epitome of truthfulness in the minds of voters. What remains to be seen is whether these comedians turned political leaders will be able to hold onto their apparent truthfulness now that they are on the other side of the jokes.



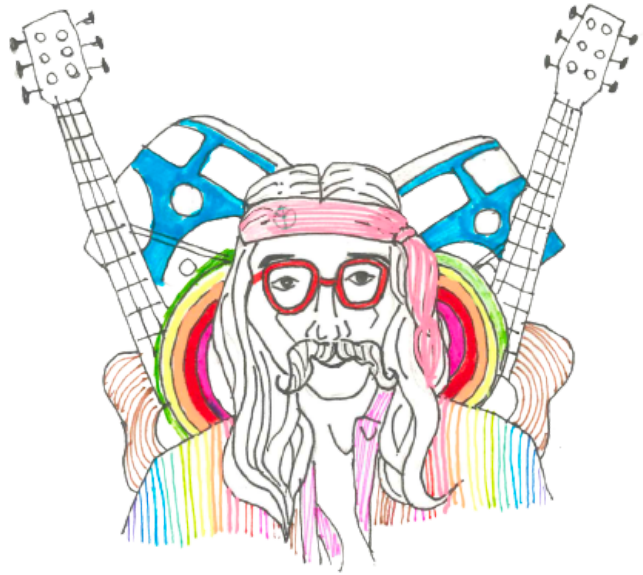
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Hippies became the largest countercultural group in the United States. Their lifestyle integrated the ideals of peace, love, harmony, music, and mysticism. Meditation, yoga, and psychedelics were often embraced as routes to expanding one's consciousness. They promoted peace over war and protested conscription. The movement essentially revolved around three things: authenticity, individualism, and community living.



The foundations of the human rights movement involve resistance to colonialism, imperialism, slavery, racism, segregation, patriarchy, and oppression of indigenous peoples. The movement is committed to upholding the rights described by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – from civil and political rights, such as the right to assemble and the freedom of speech, to economic and social rights, such as the right to education, food, and housing. These movements include support for the Rohingya Muslims, the Democracy movement in Hong Kong, the Farmers' Protests in India, and even Climate-related movements across the world.



#BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murder. Its mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. This is done by combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centring Black joy. We saw the movement at its peak in 2020 with the murder of George Floyd.

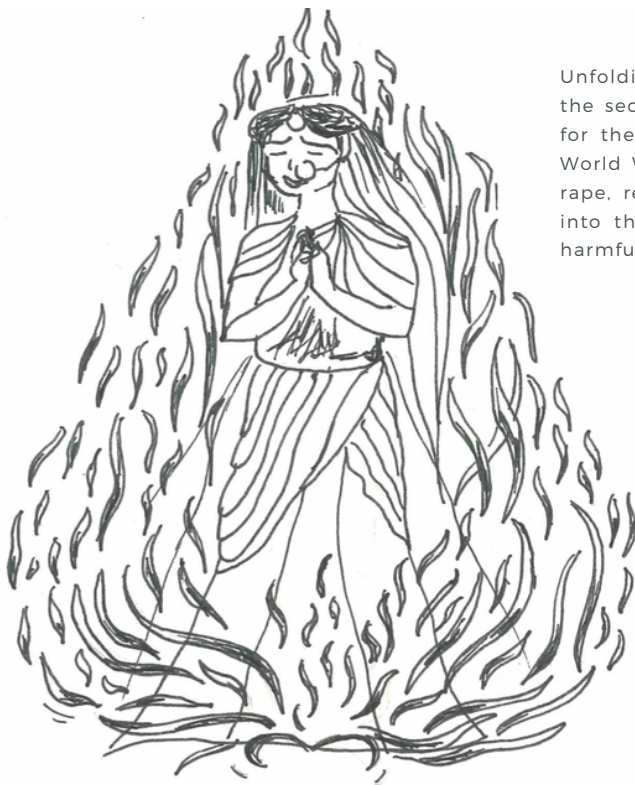


# EVOLUTION OF COUNTER CULTURE

The Civil Rights Movement is an umbrella term for the varieties of activism that sought to secure full political, social, and economic rights for African Americans in the period from 1946 to 1968. Civil rights activism involved a diversity of approaches, from bringing lawsuits in court to lobbying the federal government, to mass direct action, to black power.







Unfolding in the wake of the anti-war and the civil rights movement, the second wave of feminism emerged as a reactionary movement for the return of women to their domestic roles after the end of World War II. The feminist movement was concerned with bringing rape, reproductive rights, domestic violence, and workplace safety into the mainstream, along with rebuilding the stereotypical and harmful image of women that was prevalent in popular culture.



India was made up of social evils like female infanticide, Sati, child marriage, caste system, purdah, the ban on female education and widow re-marriage. India in the 19th century witnessed a series of reform movements undertaken to restructure this regressive Indian society along modern lines. They focussed on European ideals of rationalism, empiricism, monotheism, and individualism. The father of reform movements in India was Raja Rammohun Roy.



The movements originated from Gamergate where female gamers were receiving threats of death and sexual harassment. The movement is exclusive from other waves in its emphasis on intersectionality, expanding the idea that social categories like race, class, sexuality, and so on create layers of oppression that are necessary to be considered when discussing marginalization. The use of the internet is a particular marker for the movement—for it allowed women to share their experiences about sexual harassment, violence, discrimination, and objectification (movements like #MeToo, #YesAllWomen, and #NotYourAsianSidekick). It also steered away from the bio-essentialism of previous waves and made flexible the definition of a 'woman' – previously only based on reproductive factors – along with discussing issues affecting other marginalized genders.

India is yet to see a movement against caste on the scale of Black Lives Matter. Moreover, just like the current generation of White Americans and Europeans are not responsible for the slave trade and colonialism but are reaping their benefits, the Brahmins in India, hugely benefitted from their ancestors' oppression of the Shudras and Dalits. Now, as the colour revolution begins attacking all symbols of exploitation, India has started its revolution against caste with the #DalitLivesMatter#.

# ROMAN GRAFFITI

## *ART AND EVOLUTION*

By looking at the remnants of the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, one can conclude that scribbling graffiti was as popular centuries ago as it is today. The purpose for which graffiti was invented also remains quite unchanged since its conception.

Roman graffiti or graffiti, in general, are pictures or writings on a wall in a public setting. In the Roman era, Romans used to make graffiti to declare their love, hurl insults, or even in way of games. They were also helpful in discouraging thieves by painting long stretches of white on the walls of houses that didn't have windows. They were made using charcoal, chalk, or sometimes even by using sharp implements to scratch the wall plaster.

In ancient times, they were not seen as acts of vandalism but rather as valid feelings of the citizens and thus graffiti was not prohibited. They were not referred to as graffiti, though, but as writings and drawings, indicating that they were perceived as one of the many forms of expression. Because of Roman graffiti, we now know how it was used to advertise houses for rent, political campaigns, and other everyday businesses.

In the ancient Roman city of Pompeii alone, the discovery of over 5000 wall graffiti has been made. Roughly around 40% of these hold name tags and the rest include greetings, messages, quotes from famous literary works, drawings of animals, numbers, dates, and prices. In short, they reflected everyday life: the greetings of a certain Tyrannus to Cursor, numbers documenting business deals in shops, a customer complaining about too much water mixed into wine and many others. The walls of Pompeii were also used for daily interactions. They reveal little stories about the neighbourhood characters and life in the town. Such anecdotes might not interest those who study the region's broad history and its significant events, but they do help us to get an idea of how people communicated publicly about private affairs, left marks on spots they passed, and displayed personal connections such as friendship, love, anger, and rivalry on the wall. In the brothels of Pompeii, dozens of visitors even left commemorations of their visits, visible to all following clients.

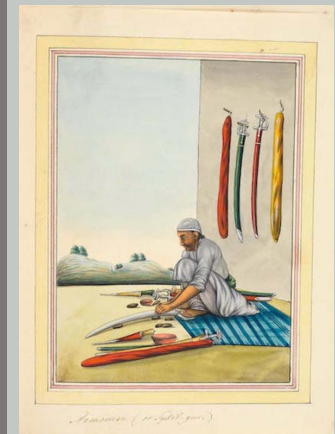
Although Roman graffiti could be made by any trespasser in the busy streets of Rome, there were some who were incredibly famous for their work like Laia, Publius Aelius Fortunatus, Gaius Fabius Pictor, Arellius to name a few.

While most of Roman graffiti stands destroyed today due to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, the ones that remain still provide an accurate representation of the ancient Roman way of life.

- ANISHA DHAWALE (AIII)



## COMPANY SCHOOL PAINTINGS



### *SWORD MAKER*

COMPANY SCHOOL PAINTINGS BECAME A VISUAL RECORD IN THE ABSENCE OF PHOTOGRAPHY – USING WATERCOLOURS ON PAPER TO CAPTURE THE FACTS (AND FANTASY) OF INDIA. THEY CAPTURED THE 'PICTURESQUE' AND THE 'EXOTIC' ASPECT OF THE LAND, WHILE ALSO RECORDING THE INDIAN WAY OF LIFE THAT THE ENGLISH ENCOUNTERED.

# COLOSSAL FLOODS AND CELESTIAL WRATH

Which version of the story have you heard?

Who we are today is inevitably an amalgamation of all we have assimilated through our lives— our beliefs and values have been instilled in us ever since we were children, and the smallest details that we perceive leave their imprint on us in some way. I first heard the story of Manu, the man who rebuilt mankind, in my grandmother's lap. It was much later, sitting at a school desk, that I came across the man named Noah— who had done much the same thing, in much the same way. His story was discordant with my view of humankind's history, until I found more legends, from even more different cultures, on much the same thing. Which version of the story have you heard?



Indians have a legend about a simple man named Manu (मनु), who was the only one who believed in God. Lord Vishnu was enraged and unleashed a great flood, informing only Manu of it. He built a large ship and filled it with animals and rations, Vishnu in the form of a fish guided him. Being the only sole survivor, he performed a sacrifice to continue his race and revived human life.

The Christians have a very similar narrative of Noah and the ark, where Noah is the equivalent of Manu with a few details adjusted.

And- surprise, surprise- the Greeks too have a myth about a Great Flood. As the legend goes, Zeus, the king of the Olympian gods, decided to wipe out humankind after seeing the terrible repercussions of Pandora's box. He did this by way of raising the waters and causing a huge flood, of which there were only two survivors: Deucalion, the son of Prometheus, and his wife Pyrrha. According to his father's instructions, they constructed a well-stocked ark on which they sailed for nine days and nine nights. Finally, as the waters receded, they were settled on the tip of Mt. Parnassus. Again, in accordance with Prometheus' words (which went on about throwing the bones of the Great Mother— interpreted to be the rocks of the earth), they began to throw some stones over their shoulder. The stones that Deucalion threw became men, and the ones which Pyrrha threw became women; and thus, humanity was replenished again.

According to the Aztecs, the god Titlacauan warned Nata and his wife Nena of the impending flood and sealed them in a hollow tree so they would survive. The Aztec myth is fundamentally different in its telling, because here, the people are not all killed and wiped off the earth, but rather turned into fish by the same god. So, when the two emerged from the hollow, Titlacauan ordered them to not eat the fish around them, which they disobeyed. Subsequently, they were punished and turned into dogs. The God then decided to start the human species once more from scratch.

The Norsemen from Scandinavia have their own story. When Odin and his brothers Vili and Vé killed the giant Ymir, the blood that poured from his body flooded the earth. The world drowned in the blood. In this literal bloodbath, a single frost giant named Bergelmir, and his wife made an ark, were saved, and repopulated the earth.

While these stories are all different in their details and retellings, the motifs of the wrath of celestial beings, the consequent flood, and an invariable repopulation run through each of these. The existence of such similar stories across cultures has led people to wonder whether the stories preserve the memory of something more than legends. What I find interesting here, personally, is this continual thread that ties these cultures together, cultures that are otherwise vastly different in their values and practices. While each of them expresses the same concept in different manners, humankind is united by stories that have existed since the inception of time. 'Life is a conundrum of esoterica,' the ever-wise Lemony Snicket said— it is a problem, a conflict, a misunderstanding— one that we cannot ever term subjectively as correct or incorrect. And it is this strange connection, perhaps, that helps us establish our beliefs and opinions.

- AKSHITA GOYAL (AII)



# THE WAR DRUMS OF PEACE



This poem is about Ashoka, one of the most famous rulers of the Mauryan dynasty. He is best known for the Kalinga war, which caused in him a complete change of heart. This war was the reason the proud man, who once called himself Devanampiya (beloved of the Gods) and Priyadassi (man of handsome looks), turned into a selfless ruler that preached the message of non-violence.

Long long ago,  
In a battle of which little is known  
A young man, proud and bold,  
Changed the way his story would be told.

Just like his ancestors,  
Inspiring young and old,  
Stood the young man,  
proud and bold.

Thrown into the world at a young age,  
The battle-hardened man spared no place  
Never questioning his duty to fight and conquer  
Wealth being at the center of his gaze.

His kin he discarded,  
for the throne he wanted to win,  
just as ruthless and ambitious,  
as his father made him.

The stories of his conquests  
that every child was told  
proved him to be not a coward,  
but a heart made of stone.

But then came a little kingdom,  
Prosperous and brave,  
That prepared to stand its ground  
In front of the new king that came.

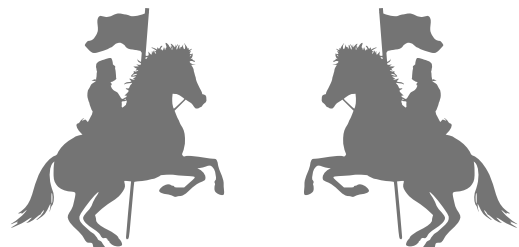
The ambitious and ruthless king,  
still in the midst of his prime,  
Marched on with courage  
To a battle that stood the test of time.

The young king, though victorious  
Couldn't help but stop and stare  
In horror at the battlefield  
With warriors lifeless and bare.

The price he paid for his victory  
Was the deafening cries of pain  
Of women and children  
Whose sons, husbands, and fathers were slain.

Unlike those before him  
Victory growing their ambition  
The young king chose to never strike again  
And vowed peace and amity with those around him.

His thoughts on war and peace  
Stood the test of time  
Not just carved in stone  
But engraved in his subjects' hearts and minds.



- SHREYA SINGH (AIII)

# A DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING

The tenets of democracy have often been violated to gross extents in a lust for power and conquest. The idealism of the ancient Greeks begot a form of governance that was quite famously put by President Abraham Lincoln as 'of the people, by the people and for the people.' However, the hundreds of immigrant children in detention centers under the leadership of President Biden would disagree. The tears of the weeping widows in Afghanistan would paint a different picture.

The Watergate Scandal marked the lowest points of American democracy, and seems to be a fitting example of democracies forgetting the ethical boundaries in a quest for power. The office of the President of the United States was one of the most powerful ones across the globe during the turbulent Cold War era. President Richard Nixon, in a bid to attain his position for a second time to satisfy his 'quest for power', wiretapped the Democratic Party's office. Several burglars were caught red-handed doing so in 1972, and a two-year-long legal process embroiled. It resulted in the resignation of Richard Nixon for his blatant abuse of power, and his name went down in the history books. The Gulf of Tonkin resolution, famed for initiating the Vietnam War, was admittedly formed on a lack of substantive evidence. Lyndon B. Johnson's decision to involve the USA in a supposed resistance to communism in Vietnam cost them about \$168 billion monetarily, but the human cost was priceless. The fragility of democracy on a domestic scale is horrifying for a multitude of reasons, and the incident highlighted how the only difference between an authoritarian and democratic state is the way legislation is presented. One announces it in a speech, while the other makes it an emergency amendment to the constitution.

The rickety chair we call democracy stands on three feet: the sovereignty of the individual, equality amongst citizens, and norms or constructs which affirm sovereignty and equality for the people. Upholding these values is no facile task, and this often leads to a gross misunderstanding in the minds of our political leaders. They believe that their position entitles them to bend the rules to whatever suits their agendas, whatever fulfills their vendettas. Politicians and presidents across the globe are like a group of people in a gas-filled chamber with only one exit: everyone is gasping for the very few shreds of air, or power in this case. This makes us question, who does the power lie with, the street vendor living on a single meal a day, or the people wearing clothes worth more than entire houses in fancy Senate chambers?

Democracy as a concept is not flawed. It may have its complications, which rise not only from attributing wrongful implementing of acts, but also bureaucratic structures. Elitism perhaps is the core obstacle in accomplishing a true democratic state. Equal demarcation of powers and regular checks by a council or a board could easily uphold the ethical standards of democracy. Ethics has and should always govern a democracy, not a hundred-dollar bill. Hence, it may hold the key to preserving the unique achievement that has historically made liberal-democratic systems so stable: the ability both to protect individual rights and to pay heed to the popular will.

- BIDISHA DAM (SC)



## COMPANY SCHOOL PAINTINGS



### MAHOUT WITH A DECORATED ELEPHANT

The paintings covered a wide genre, which included trades and professions, social groups, flora and fauna, famous buildings, the military, as well as social groups, durbar scenes, and depictions of local rulers.

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