



Volume VI

Newsletter of the Women's International Club

WVIC NEWS
February 2015

GENERAL MEETING

“Wealth, Desire and Spirituality in the Mahabharata”

A Talk by Bibek Debaroy

The Mahabharata or Mahābhārata is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, the other being the Ramayana. Besides its epic narrative of the Kurukshetra War and the fates of the Kaurava and the Pandava princes, the Mahabharata contains philosophical and devotional material, including an elaborate discussion of the four "goals of life". Another principal work and story in the Mahabharata is the Bhagavad Gita.



Traditionally, the authorship of the Mahabharata is attributed to Vyasa. The oldest preserved parts of the text are thought to be not much older than around 400 BC, though the origins of the epic probably fall between the 8th and 9th century BC. The text probably reached its final form by the early Gupta period (c. 4th century).

The Mahabharata is a long epic poem and has been described as "the longest poem ever written". Its longest version consists of over 100,000 shloka or over 200,000 individual verse lines (each shloka is a couplet), and long prose passages.

Bibek Debaroy started authoring in 2010, a ten-volume unabridged English translation of The Mahabharata from the Sanskrit edition compiled at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune. His labour of love concluded in 2014. He underlines the need for accessing Sanskrit texts in English: "English is increasingly becoming the global language, and if familiarity with the corpus is not to die out, it needs to be accessible in English."

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Bibek Debroy is a well known economist. Since March 2007, he has been professor at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. He was also the Visiting Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. He has been the Director of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies and a consultant to the Finance Ministry (Government of India). Debroy has authored several books and professional articles. He has been a consulting Editor to the Financial Express and the Economic Times. Since September 2014, he chairs a high powered committee set up by the Ministry of Railways to restructure the Indian Railways.

Date : Wednesday, February 11th, 2015

Time : 3.00 pm

Venue : 26, Feroze Shah Road

Hostess : Kusum Ansal, 9810016006

RSVP: Hospitality Chairperson, Iris Vogel, Irisd.vogel@gmail.com, 8826144001

**Executive Committee
2014 / 15**

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Kiran Anand
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Maria Allgeier
Mar.allgeier@gmail.com

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(Programmes)**

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Secretary

Leena Singh
Leena_s455@hotmail.com

Newsletter

Sarah Schwering
Sarahschwering@hotmail.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Our February calendar is very very exciting!!! The circle leaders have stretched out further than before and are presenting some "out of the box" afternoons for us.

The Executive Committee and I am sure all of us at WIC, appreciate and support the sincere efforts of the circle leaders in steadfastly exerting themselves for the Club each month.

Camaraderie and unity is the heart of WIC. Let us continue to forge ahead on this path and have a wonderful year ahead.

We continue to wait for your suggestions and thoughts for forthcoming meetings for the Club. In case you would like your Club to know of an activity of interest to many BUT do not include commercial transactions do let the newsletter chairperson know well ahead of time so that fellow members can also enjoy these programmes. We will make every effort to print it in the newsletter.

Kiran Anand
President

THE LIBRARY

Nilanjana Roy

Nilanjana Roy is the author of "The Wildings" (Aleph Book Company, 2012 winner of the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, 2013) and "The Hundred Names of Darkness" (Aleph Book Company, 2013).

She is a contributing opinion writer for the International New York Times and she writes about books for the Business Standard, but mostly she reads. And cooks, a little. Over a decade and a half in media and publishing, Nilanjana has been chief editor at Westland / Tranquebar, edited and contributed to the Outlook Books page, Biblio and several other literary magazines / periodicals, served on the jury of the Crossword Prize and the DSC Prize among others.

She lives in Delhi with her husband; they are jointly owned by two demanding cats and it is a distinct possibility that they jointly own too many books. Lakshmi Chandra will engage Nilanjana and the audience in a conversation about her loves "reading, writing, fooding, lodging".

Date : Tuesday, February 10th, 2015

Time : 3.00 pm

Venue : Aurangzeb Road, 27

Hostess : Veena Dass, 9811292020

Limit : 30

RSVP: Hospitality Chairperson, Iris Vogel, Irisd.vogel@gmail.com, 8826144001

WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE

Self Employed Women's Association, SEWA

Ela Ramesh Bhatt, born in Ahmedabad in 1933 is an Indian co-operative organiser, activist and Gandhian who founded the Self Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA) in 1972, serving as its secretary until 1996. A lawyer by training Bhatt is part of the international labour, co-operative, women and micro finance movements and has won many awards. She was invited to become a member of 'The Elders' a group set up by Nelson Mandela on his 89th birthday to tackle some of the world's toughest problems



Ela Ramesh Bhatt

Her representative Ms Mirai Chatterjee, the current head of SEWA is kindly coming from Ahmedabad to talk about Ela, the story of the movement and its current active work.

Date : Tuesday, February 17th, 2015

Time : 3.00 pm

Venue : B39 Gulmohar Park

Hostess : Smita Divan, 9811770405

Limit : 40

RSVP: Hospitality Chairperson, Iris Vogel, Irisd.vogel@gmail.com, 8826144001

INTERNATIONAL CUISINE, A POT OF CULTURES AND THE LIBRARY, COMBINED CIRCLE EVENT

Blog & Quiche, an interactive session

During our blog session, we will share our inner thoughts, experiences and especially our humor with others. Through blogging, we'll start expressing ourselves and we'll share mind recipes with our friends. Marjan will guide us through the forest of words, the meaning and various interpretations and the various ways of expressing experiences. Of course there are always feelings of doubts and uncertainty when you start blogging but let's jump together into the unknown.

The introduction session on blogging will be followed by a short course on French quiches by a professional Chef. You will then be able to share your experience with your friends of this typically French snack through your freshly acquired blogging know-how.

Date : Friday, February 6th, 2015

Time : 3.00 pm

Venue : A1 Mayfair Garden, 110016, New Delhi (GF)
Close to Hauz Khas metro station, in front of
Laxman Public School

Hostess : Christine Samandari, 9910400276

Limit : 35

RSVP: Hospitality Chairperson, Iris Vogel, Irisd.vogel@gmail.com, 8826144001

Arts and Museums

Seema Bhalla 9316120551
Radhika Birla 9811222402
Sunaina Suneja 9811059724

Healing Touch

Shakuntala Dawesar
9811440101
Janie Haskell 9717422055
Surrinder Sarna 9811701071

High Tea, a Celebration

Shawn Runacres
9811300610
Gugu Singh 9811007710
Bindu Talwar 9818077882

Indian Heritage

Sunaina Aggarwal
9810400482
Josien Bansema - Cost
8586930950
Leena Singh 9810032426
Suneeta Trivedi 9910335938

International Cuisine, a Pot of Cultures

Zahra Echarif 9560694953
Trhas Gutsche 8800409933
Christine Samandari
9910400276
Joana Daniel Wrabetz
8588829652

The Library

Lakshmi Chandra
9910000254
Marjan Franzen 9650118773
Gita Devi Kapurthala
9810149150

Travel Desk

Emma Horne 9810579143
Parbeen Kaur 9810625869
Devika Anand Puri
9810010547

Wonderful World

Nayana Goradia
9873441744
Ala Madhu 9999986573
Elena Petrov 8375824750
Jeannie Tien 9810669647
Iris Vogel 8826144001
Josefina Young 9810009634

Women of Substance

Kusum Ansal 9810016006
Sunita Kohli 9811101080
Antje Lux 9717773100
Neena Malhotra 9811031436
Eliese Steiner 882688666
Sandra Walker 9560682956

Special Events

Natalie Maria Daalder
8527355022
Lise Fredriksen 011 24617980
Ike Indrakesuma
Sunita Kohli 9811101080
Anita Meattle 9811199111

WONDERFUL WORLD

Haldi Kumkum

Haldi Kumkum is an enchanting Maharashtrian ritual wherein women meet in a festive atmosphere of fun and frolic to exchange haldi (turmeric) and kumkum (vermillion) for the welfare and prosperity of their families.



The custom of holding Haldi Kumkum goes back to olden times and was prevalent among the Peshwa and the Maratha kings of yore. Royal palaces had specific areas marked out for these celebrations with built in stone troughs for grinding and storing the vermillion and saffron powders. Generally held in early Spring this tradition was originally restricted to married women or Saubhagyavatis and was celebrated to ensure long life for husbands. Today the ceremony holds a much wider connotation, encompassing all women. It has become an occasion to invite women relatives and friends to come dressed in their finery.

The hostess adorns her home with a special welcoming rangoli at the entrance and hangs torans of flowers on the doors. She distributes bangles, bindis, betel leaves and ladoos of sesame seeds to her guests in an environment of merriment and joy. Women sing, dance or even play "games" handed down to them over generations.

We are fortunate to have members of a Maharashtrian ladies group in Delhi to come in and demonstrate for us some of these customs. The more adventurous of us can join in the fun and games while the rest can sit back and enjoy this unique experience.

So come dressed for the occasion!

Date : Wednesday, February 4th, 2015

Time : 3.00 pm

Venue : 145 Sunder Nagar

Hostess: Nayana Goradia

Limit : 35

RSVP: Hospitality Chairperson, Iris Vogel, Irisd.vogel@gmail.com, 8826144001



The Delights of Old Delhi Street Food

To savour, and delve into, the delights of Old Delhi street food, please join us on the 12th February at the Australian High Commission Residence.

We will be joined by Pamela Timms, author of the "Korma, Kheer & Kismet, Five Seasons in Old Delhi" who will speak to us about her fascinating book and take us on an exciting food journey. To complete the experience, and satisfy our inevitable food cravings, we will enjoy real street food.

Date : Thursday, February 12th, 2015

Time : 3 pm to 5 pm

Venue : Australian High Commission Residence, 1/50 G Shantipath
Chanakyapuri. Gate 5

Hostess : Natalie Daalder

RSVP: Hospitality Chairperson, Iris Vogel, Irisd.vogel@gmail.com, 8826144001

Table Settings of the World

The more you think about it, the more you realise the numerous cultural values intrinsically imbued in the exercise of setting a traditional table. It also involves so many aspects of design and decoration.

The event will showcase more than 20 table settings from around the world. From Australia to Brazil and from India to Germany, each table setting will tell a story, one that is passed from generation to generation and enjoyed each night as families, wherever they are gathered, to share the pleasure of eating together. It is a daily ritual which unites us all.

We invite you to go around the world in table settings with us and experience a special event.

Date : Wednesday, February 25th, 2015

Time : 3 pm to 5 pm

Venue : Residence of the Danish Ambassador, 24 Amrita Shergill Marg

Hostess : Lise Fredriksen

RSVP: Hospitality Chairperson, Iris Vogel, Irisd.vogel@gmail.com, 8826144001

Your special events team, Lise, Natalie, Sunita, Ieke and Anita

CLUB MATTERS

- Nominations Committee 2015

Members of the Nominations Committee for the Executive Committee 2015 / 2016 are:

Mona Aggarwal (Chairperson)

Indian members: Gita Devi Kapurthala, Reva Singh

International members: Patty Dhar, Antje Lux, Hemant Pasrich

The Nominations Committee gives notice calling for suggestions. The closing date for suggestions is February 28th. Suggestions are to be sent to the chairperson only, as per the constitution.

- Hosting and snacks

Ladies who would like to help out with snacks and / or hosting circle events please get in touch with Iris Vogel, Hospitality Chairperson, Irisd.vogel@gmail.com, 8826144001.

FEBRUARY FESTIVALS

Maha Shivaratri, February 17. The marriage of Shiva and Parvati represents the union of passive and dynamic energy (Shakti) and this powerful moment is celebrated as Maha Shivratri. Shiva is believed to reveal his 'lingam' form, which is universally worshipped on this night.

Shiva is believed to release devotees from the karmic cycle by pleasing him by performing fasting, rituals and puja. Sincere devotees are rewarded with wealth and prosperity. Married women fast for the long life of their husbands as Parvati paid strict penance to hers. Unmarried women fast to win a suitable husband.

After an early dip in a holy water body, a ritualistic puja which involves giving offerings and bathing the 'lingam' and the Nandi with milk, water, yoghurt, bael leaves, fruits, dhatura, betel leaves and incense is performed. 'Om Namah Shivaya', ringing temple bells, devotional songs, bhajans and mantras are heard throughout the day. As one of the most pious days in the Hindu calendar, the twelve major seats of Shiva worship called 'Jyotirlingas' witness an unmatched fervor.


Valentine's Day, February 14. The origin remains unclear and is variously attributed to the ancient festival of Lupercalia, a fertility celebration in Roman paganism, and early Christian saints named Valentinus celebrated as martyrs in liturgical celebrations.

The day was first associated with romantic love in the circle of poet Geoffrey Chaucer in the High Middle Ages, when the tradition of courtly love flourished. In 18th-century England, it evolved into an occasion in which lovers expressed their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering confectionery, and sending greeting cards known as "valentines", similar to how it is celebrated by couples today.

PICTURES FROM THE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING



WIC PROGRAMMES FEBRUARY 2015

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 WONDERFUL WORLD 3 PM | 5 | 6 INTERNATIONAL CUISINE AND THE LIBRARY 3 PM | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 THE LIBRARY 3 PM | 11  GENERAL MEETING 3 PM | 12 SPECIAL EVENT STREET FOOD 3 PM | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE 3 PM | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 SPECIAL EVENT TABLE SETTINGS 3 PM | 26 | 27 | 28 |