

Institute Registration Number: 1000782

Institute name: Anubhūti School

Theme: Our Homes

Our paper aims to review the condition of 78 homes in and around Jalgaon, Maharashtra. In this study we will try to explain the lopsided growth in Indian homes which creates fault lines in our society. Based on the primary data and the secondary data collected from the internet, the study aims to propose a simple model to understand the links between Indian homes and the entire crisis manifesting in different forms.

In this essay we are attempting to present our understanding from a subjective point of view. We know it too well that an objective view gives a concrete picture about the issue in the physical realm. But beyond the physical, this approach loses its validity and leads us towards a polarized world view. And since the physical, as argued in our brief, is not isolated from the other domains, we prefer to follow this approach.

Introduction

The experiencing of “Home” plays a significant role in shaping our attitude to life. It is in the home that one experiences love, learning, safety and security. Our entire journey from cradle to grave revolves around it. Yet we find that our homes are not made keeping in mind all the parameters which promote a sustainable life style. Though awareness has gone up in recent times, it has not yet gathered the critical mass to make a difference. We still see homes being made without having the necessary measures to face natural disasters, save energy and rain water, and manage waste. The connection between the micro home and the macro home i.e. the personal residence and the earth is not yet quite clear in the consciousness of the people. To perceive the whole earth as one home appears to be a possibility now, due to the technological advancement; but lots need to be done at the ground level to actualize this dream. So the idea of “sweet home” must be seen in its totality and necessary initiatives be taken to move from houses to homes. Only we can transform the four walls of a house into a home. We can also consider these four walls as the four aspects of a home that are physical, spiritual, emotional and mental. If we are successful in fulfilling these criteria, then we can easily convert a house into a sweet home.

Survey Review (Micro Level)

“Industrial growth in India is about 7-8% per annum. Use of solar energy and water harvesting are now happening at a constantly increasing rate”. This is something that all of us are taught in our school. But digesting these facts is not easy until and unless we have practical experience. And to have practical experience what is better than doing a survey and finding things for oneself?

The area surveyed was Jalgaon town and a neighboring village, Shiroli. The questionnaire used in the survey was divided into four aspects i.e. Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual. People were asked to give their responses. While doing so, we found some interesting patterns of response which need to be attended. Below, along with some figures, we give our subjective interpretation of the data and the experience we gathered.

Survey done in the Jalgaon City

Physical: The cost of construction of the houses range from ₹1 lac to 3 crores and the prominent construction cost figures are 10 lacks, 25 lacks and 50 lakhs.

The lowest electricity bill paid by the citizens of Jalgaon was ₹ 300/- and the highest going up to ₹ 25,000/- while the usual bills paid are between ₹ 1000- ₹ 7000/- per month.

The money spent by the people on their household ranges from ₹ 200/- per month to ₹ 25,000/- month, prominent figure being between ₹ 2000/- and ₹ 5000/-. We also saw the trend of rain water harvesting is slowly being adopted by the city. Around 30-40% of the houses have rain water harvesting systems. A few have solar heaters. This tells us that environmental awareness is slowly developing among people and attempts are being made to conserve rain and electricity thereby protecting the environment. "We realize that human activities are damaging the environment and we are doing all we can at our small level to conserve our resources" this was what some people had to say.

On the whole, health and hygiene in Jalgaon is commendable. People have a good sense of sanitation and waste disposal / management. Medical facility and guidance is easily available.

Emotional: Perhaps, one of the most prominent observations made about the emotional life of the people was the increasing trend of nuclear families. Out of the forty families we surveyed, 11 i.e. about 28% were nuclear families. The beautiful system of joint families has not disappeared yet. But it is slowly fading away. But where are these family members going away? They become an important part of our social life as they now come in as our neighbors. Nearly all houses were found to have a close and intimate relation with their neighbors. Though not very close, they knew each other and made it a point to help whenever in need.

In spite of children being away from their parents, they frequently meet each other and stay closely connected. We did not find any family where the ties between the parents and the children have been completely severed. Yes, the depth of intimacy has lessened but not completely gone. We found in people a respect for family relations and values.

People tend to be busy; they strive hard for a living. But they do their best to take out time for their families. A few families have a complete family union every month or so, while a few just go out every Saturday or Sunday which acts as a stress buster. But this scenario is not found everywhere. There are families where the father is not able to take out time for his children and the children are found complaining about their fathers' absence.

Parents plead helplessness and say that they are unhappy due to lack of time. However, it is not only the children who expect something from their parents; the parents also have a lot of expectations from their children. But what is astonishing is that when asked whether they believe that their children will live up to their expectations, not many could give a firm answer. It is disheartening to see that parents do not have complete faith in their children. "Let's see what he will do. Right now nothing is sure", answered a parent when asked about her child.

There were also positive things seen in the families; parents want their kids to be like friends. They explain to their children the scientific ideas behind rituals and are happy to see their children following the old rites and traditions, even though they might rebel sometimes, which is common.

From the responses in regard to the emotional aspect we get a basic idea about the family life and the relationship aspect of their lives. The condition of family life and relationship is perhaps influenced more by modern thoughts and ideas. However, some sense of alienation was sensed in regard to the issues which are not directly concerning the family life.

Mental: We see that schools are becoming more and more academic heavy, marks-oriented. It is said that sports and co-curricular activities are considered to be unimportant and that parents completely agree with this system of education. But we found this to be wrong. All parents want their children to be good not only in studies but also in sports, in co curricular activities and character. They want a school where integral growth of the child takes place. It also looks like the movie "3 Idiots" has had a great impact on the minds of the people. Parents have now become broad minded enough to promote the child in whatever field he/she wants to pursue. Children are less pressurized by their parents. Only one family told us that their child should excel in their family business. This shows that people are slowly developing awareness and understanding regarding right parenting. Despite the patriarchal system, decision making in the family is becoming more democratic in nature.

If we talk about rituals, superstitions and blind faith, we have got a varied view. There were some families who believed whole heartedly in their rituals and did not question them, while there were some families who questioned and found out the scientific reason behind these rituals. There were also some who considered rites and rituals to be a waste of time and spent their time on social service instead. Mr. Vijay Bhansali said interestingly, "If you have rituals to follow, the fear of these rituals prevents you from doing something wrong". This is one of the plus points of rituals. Now, whatever these people believe about their rituals, that is what they will teach their children. We found out some beautiful values taught to children of Jalgaon city by their parents:-

- Confess when you do something wrong.
- See and learn from your mistakes and those of others.
- Help everyone.

- Be strong.
- Have knowledge about yourself.

Parents believe in teaching these values to their children with love and care because that is the way they will learn. Children are also sent for drawing, dancing, singing and chess classes. They play football and go to the gym. A few children have also been exposed to meditation and yoga which is practised by most of the families. Morning walk, pranayamas, yoga, meditation, exercise and timely eating are what they do for enhancing their mental health and ability. This shows that the citizens of Jalgaon are having a way of life which appears to be in harmony with the world around. They are both grounded and estranged in native culture which is churning their social life. However, it was felt that quest for a higher purpose, for understanding the meaning of life, is not a dominant culture yet.

Spiritual: “What is the difference between religion and spirituality according to you”? was one of the most important questions asked by us to the people. Some said that they were more or less the same while some said that spirituality depends on self consciousness and is common for everyone. One who is religious may not be spiritual. You can stay spiritual even if you are non-religious. These answers reflect the thinking and mindsets of the people. Many of them have a clear picture of religion and spirituality as two different things in their minds.

Not all people followed all the aspects of their religion blindly. There were some who had complete faith in their religion, some who believed but could not follow and some who didn't believe and didn't follow. One point where most agreed, was that, society and religion were a little strict towards women. Some answers that we got about the condition of women in present times were:

- “Less scope for women”
- “Women still have fear in their heart”
- “Men have ego lessened but not gone”
- “Most of the religious rituals are followed by women”

While some had to say that men and women have got equal status which might be true for them. There were also women who thought that men have been born to lead and therefore it is natural that they should take control.

Love is a word that connects every living being on this planet. Love, according to some of our participants, is unconditional. They believe sacrifice, understanding and faith, are the most essential parts of life. If we talk about love, care and understanding, then one of the many things that comes to mind is the conflict between Hindus and Muslims. What did our participants have to say about this religious divide? There was not even one person who agreed with it. None of them had any problem with the Muslims. In fact one of the Hindu youths we met had a Muslim

girlfriend. If this broad mindedness is adopted by all, then perhaps many of our problems could be solved. “We are all creations of God and therefore equal “, said Dr. Pallavi Chaudhari, a dermatologist and a mother of two children.

Every coin has two sides. If we talk about love and happiness, then miseries, sorrows and hatred are their alter images. People had quite a lot to say when they were asked about how the miseries in the world can be brought to an end. “Everyone should make everyone happy. We should do all we can at our level, helping our neighbors, seeing that we don’t become the cause for someone else’s sadness” were the responses. Some more responses are worth mentioning.

“One man makes a big difference”.

“People have become bad and they will take time to recover”.

“Great understanding is required”

“The production of weapons needs to stop”.

People also had great expectations from today’s youth. “The youth can do something. They are energetic and creative.” Thus, the youth needs to be brought up in a correct and efficient manner. The world needs to evolve to a greater level so that the future generations turn out to be strong, courageous and live up to the expectations of their forefathers. The world needs to be a beautiful place where peace, harmony and love thrive and prosper, where materialistic culture is absent and people stop existing and start living.

Rural area Review

While surveying the Shirsoli Village, only 10 km away from Jalgaon, we found many contrasting features along with some common trends. People were eager to interact with us and shared stories of their life. In the town, the interview was a private affair; but in the village it became a public affair. Many people came together to listen and talk.

Physical: The Rural areas are not developing in an integrated and harmonious manner as there is less awareness and fewer resources. Here most people were not able to explain the cost of construction of their houses. Most of them were made of mud with hardly any cement or bricks. Construction cost varied from ₹3000/- to ₹1, 50,000/-. Many of them were using kerosene oil for lighting. The electricity bill ranged from ₹100/- to ₹900/- per month. The household expenses varied from ₹300/-to ₹3000/- per month. About 10% of the people were content with what they had while the rest longed for a larger spaces and greater facility. Their consumption is comparatively very less and therefore waste generation also was negligible. Even drinking water was not available to some. People were dependent on the government water supply. Lack of knowledge prevented people from adopting rain water harvesting, garbage management etc. In other words, less impinging on the ecosystem.

Only 10%of the houses had T.V and computers. Living spaces were not very clean and lacked proper sanitation facility. Many people did not have toilets in their houses and were using

common toilets or defecating on the streets or in the fields. Living space was so less that people used the same space for bathing, washing and cleaning dishes. Often a large joint family shared a very small space.

Emotional: We witnessed many hard cases of broken relationships-a widow ill treated by her in-laws, beaten up and served stale food, who found that even in her native village she was not welcome. Nevertheless she felt that had she had a son instead of two daughters, she would have been better off. We encountered a woman who gave birth to twin children, one of whom had died in the womb. There was a guy whose wife had run away and another whose wife and daughter-in-law had passed away. Such men turn drunkards. It appeared as though these people had lost all hope and were living just for the sake of living. Most of them were from joint families and we did not find many nuclear families proper.

Mental: In most of the families the occupation was farming and working as laborers. Quite a lot did not even have basic education. Girls and married ladies did not study beyond high school. However, a trend emerging now a day is that more girls are going to school. Compared to the urban populace, many of the villagers were vocationally trained. They were bound to age old customs and not really questioning them. They were approaching the problems from the emotional angle and not very thoughtfully.

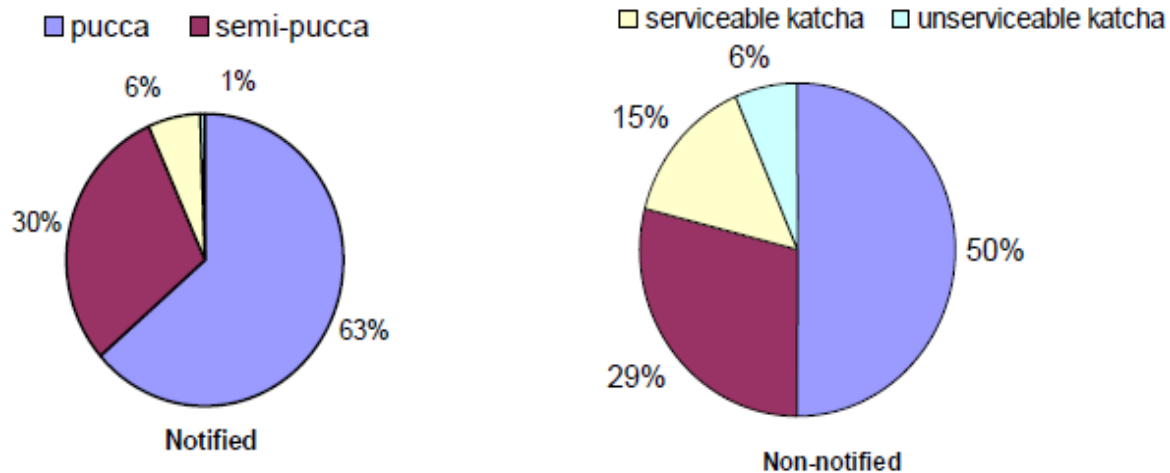
Spiritual: Religion was a matter of heredity. They did not apply any logic or factual thinking to it. They prayed twice a day but would not know anything about spirituality. People believed in spirits/ghosts and such stuff. There were two temples and a few shrines dedicated to saints. One of them was built with free labor and donations from some of the rich people from the city.

ANNAMAYA KOSA (PHYSICAL) (Macro Level)

Gandhi has said “there is enough for everybody’s need but not enough for anybody’s greed” That is true indeed, because we now see that the natural resources can satisfy the daily needs of human beings; but if we try to consume them on a larger scale for our gluttony, it won’t be enough for us. The diseases which are becoming rampant now are called life style diseases. These diseases are the outcome of a sedentary way of living where maximum emphasis is on accumulating and consuming. Our definition of development is quite erroneous as we have defined our progress in terms of western parameters which have been responsible for many miseries in the world. No doubt awareness is growing in the western world and many initiatives are being taken. But in our country we are still in the process of aping them. It is unfortunate that rather than learning from their mistakes we are repeating many of their mistakes.

In India not everyone has an “Antilia”; leave alone Antilia, not even four walls and a roof on their heads and here is a graph which shows the percentage distribution of slums by types of structure. The National Sample Survey Office has this statistics about slums.

Percentage distribution of slums by type of structure of majority of houses, all-India



Ref: National Statistical Organisation

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Government of India May 2010

To achieve perfection in the physical aspect, there are some things that need to be done right from the very inception of a home and these include:

- Land – To lead a peaceful life in our house with our family we need to have a land without any governmental issues regarding it or any inter-family conflicts because we cannot start of our life with conflict.
- Raw materials – The raw materials which we use for making houses need to be seen and chosen by the people who have expertise. People can be helped to use eco friendly bricks and similar other materials. They can also be encouraged to follow the indigenous house building ideas with eco friendly raw materials. If modern architecture can look into this issue and come up with various housing designs suitable for each terrain and state, it would do wonders. For example, an initiative is being taken in this direction in Auroville. For further details one can visit this website

http://www.auroville.org/thecity/architecture/appr_technology/appr_building_technology.htm

- Water – While building a house, our first preference should be the availability, conservation and management of water. Water always plays an important role in household works and so our house should follow the trends of housing which includes rain water harvesting or there should be some arrangement done for the collection of rain water (a pond dug nearby) for water that is used in the household. The water used in households can be reused for some other purposes.

- Food- Food is our basic need. But the disparity in the consumption of food items in Indian homes is quite serious. The table below gives a clear picture about the condition in different Indian states.

Average consumer expenditure per person on selected food groups in 2006-07: major States, rural and urban								
State	monthly per capita expenditure (Rs.) on							
	milk & milk products		egg, fish & meat		vegetables		fruits	
	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Andhra Pradesh	40	74	32	42	40	48	15	28
Assam	24	56	69	107	57	78	10	26
Bihar	39	62	13	25	44	56	5	16
Chhattisgarh	9	44	12	18	42	63	5	17
Gujarat	98	143	8	11	55	70	16	32
Haryana	199	180	6	10	45	55	19	33
Jharkhand	24	69	21	30	48	81	6	18
Karnataka	40	69	24	29	30	38	19	27
Kerala	48	60	84	94	41	46	48	57
Madhya Pradesh	45	84	7	12	29	44	7	21
Maharashtra	46	107	23	34	40	60	23	44
Orissa	12	45	20	36	42	63	6	16
Punjab	167	185	5	8	55	64	19	30
Rajasthan	130	145	7	11	37	52	9	24
Tamil Nadu	35	64	35	43	43	49	16	24
Uttar Pradesh	68	96	10	17	40	49	10	19
West Bengal	21	51	55	95	55	76	7	21
India	56	97	24	34	43	57	12	28

source: NSS 63rd Round (July 2006 - June 2007)

An attempt needs to be made for the proper distribution of food items through effective distribution channels. We know that food is getting wasted in various FCI godowns due to lack of proper facility and distribution mechanism where as people are dying of hunger. Apart from this, there need to be other systems to check hoarding and black marketing food items. It seems India ranks 67th in the Global Hunger Index among 81 countries. Even a country like Rwanda performs better than India. The statistics gives the following dismal figure.

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX			
COUNTRY	1990	2001	2011
INDIA	30.4	24.1	23.7
CHINA	11.7	6.8	5.5
PAKISTAN	25.7	21.9	20.7

Source: The Times of India Student Edition, Thursday, October 13, 2011

At the home level there needs to be made an attempt to help people know about a balanced diet. Awareness can also be generated about

- Wastage of food in various celebrations in our homes.

- Electricity – Nowadays one of the main problems in villages is the non availability of electricity; but the residents of the cities usually don't have to face such problems as an hour's power cut in a city may lead to the loss of millions. So in order to make our sweet home ideal, our house should have eco-friendly appliances like the CFLs, solar heaters instead of geysers; solar lamps etc. we would like to suggest to install solar street lights in all the villages and cities.

Kerosene and electricity are the twin prime sources of energy for lighting in either of the sectors of India and more than 99% of the households are dependent upon them altogether.

Source: Nss 50th round July 1993 - June 1994 Report No. 410/2

This observation though made 18 years ago still holds good as we are heavily dependent on kerosene and electricity mainly produced by burning fossil fuel.

- Fossil Fuels – it has been a long time since humans have been lavishly consuming fossil fuels which are now posing a threat to its availability. So now what we can simply do is try to reduce the use of these fossil fuels or use renewable sources of energy. We need to abandon all our luxuries and try to live as simple as we can because “simplicity is the ultimate sophistication”. When we can easily walk to a place, we still prefer to go by car. In this case there are two harms. One, humans are becoming extremely lazy day by day and two, to satisfy their laziness an extra litre of fuel needs to burn. But now this cannot go on, because there is no extra litre to get burnt. There is going to be a day when all our cars will be piled up, useless and due to the excessive presence of green house gases we will be facing catastrophes worldwide. It is high time we reached out to each home and help those adopting alternative sources of energy. Also we should work on researching on alternative sources of energy like growing green algae to reuse the green house gases and then utilizing the released gases for various purposes.

Prānamaya Kosa (Emotional)

Essentially emotion is the domain of relationships. This relationship includes all the other three domains and influences them to evolve further. If the relationship is built on sharing, caring, mutual respect, responsibility, love and empathy then one evolves towards a more harmonious life otherwise one will end up in a relationship which will be gradually more and more suffocating. Any relationship which is based on exploitation, consumerism, ambition, desire would eventually end up choking that relationship. People involved in selfish mode of relationship will learn their lessons the hard way. However, the real issue of relationship will find its true essence in the spiritual realization which we will talk about in the spiritual domain.

Earlier there were joint families which are gradually turning up to be nuclear families. In the same way today people are getting divided on the grounds of caste, creed, religion, place, color, gender.

- The number of old age homes is increasing. Adults are becoming so callous that they don't care about their own creators, their old parents. They are so possessive on what they earn that they don't want to spend it on their old parent's service who in turn taught them how to earn.
- Parents don't provide children the open space to choose their career and develop their interest. On the other hand children not being able to fulfill their parents' expectations, they commit suicide instead of thinking about what they can do to explain to their parents to realize their interests.
- Production and development also results in emotional disturbances. We nowadays emphasize on the country's development; but is the development sustainable? Big industries are sucking out manpower and economy out of poor. Deforestation, mining, etc. are taking place at macro level.
- Marriage system-The stigma against inter- caste marriages

SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME THE EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES

- Dialogue with each other.
- Celebrating together
- Weekend planning- social work, community, service, visiting places together
- Eating meals together
- Educating parents about child's behavior and emotion.
- Promote joint families
- Entrepreneurship- Take initiative and open up
- Co-education- Give equal opportunity
- Stop female infanticide.
- Join up together:- →you → family →community → city →state →country
→ continent →world → Nature → Mother Earth
- Earth is the only one we have, so let's love it.
- You are never too small to make a difference

MANOMAYA KOSA (MENTAL)

About the condition of education of India here is some data from the Net.

Proportion of persons of age 5-29 never enrolled

Age 5 38% (Rural- 42%, Urban- 25%)

Age 6-10 9% (Rural- 10%, Urban- 6%)

Age 11-13 6% (Rural- 7%, Urban- 4%)

Age 14-17 8% (Rural- 10%, Urban- 5%)

Age 18-24 17% (Rural- 20%, Urban- 8%)

Age 25-29 24% (Rural- 29%, Urban- 12%)

Percentage break-up of education-discontinued population of age 5-29 by level of last enrolment (whether completed or not)

Below Primary 2% Primary: 24% Middle: 28% Secondary: 25%

Higher Secondary: 11%

Above HS (incl. diploma): 10%

Major reasons for Discontinuance/ drop-out

Financial constraints 21%

Child not interested in studies 20%

Unable to cope up or failure in studies 10%

Completed desired level or class 10%

Parents not interested in studies

Source: *NSS Report No. 532: Education in India, 2007-08: Participation and Expenditure*

The data no doubt tells a lot of about the educational condition in our country and also about the condition of our homes. Apart from the commoditization and commercialization of education in the urban areas we see the apathy and failure of the system. The National Education Policy no doubt needs an overhauling so that schools can become an extension of home.

- Fragment, argue, debate, divide, compete; these have been ruling our mind for the last few centuries, but the time is changing and with it is changing the mentality of the people. Before we used to debate over every good idea, compete with every person and divide the ideas in good or bad, but now the growth of the mind is taking a new turn. Wars have been fought just because people thought that only they are correct. Is this the real reason why we the humans have come into existence? No! Our perception is different. The new generation is moving away from the old trend “who is right” to “what is right”. A new mode of thinking together is emerging where people are dialoging and evolving according to their world view.

Spiritual (Vijnnamaya Kosa) Our suggestions: In the end, we would like to suggest a few key ideas which need to be implemented at the home level. In order to do so, we need to have nodal centres which would facilitate a different kind of living by their examples. These nodal centres can be established on an experimental basis in one of the states in India. The people who will work in these nodal centres need to be selected on the basis of their aspiration for a different way of living, spiritual insight and clarity. It needs to be seen that in their mental makeup they operate from synthesis mode of thinking to the analytic mode of thinking and not vice versa. A thorough training along the lines suggested with the latest scientific, technical

knowhow would enable them evolve an integral way of life which can be slowly and gradually introduced in villages and cities. The new homes need to be given a certain kind of exposure where they will complete a foundation course. The foundation course needs to be developed keeping in mind the following key ideas and these nodal homes need not necessarily be replicated or imitated. By the very act of living, they will act as energy centres to inspire and help people grow in an integral manner. These Nodal Homes should be having the following characteristics.

- a. Operating from whole to part.
- b. Product to process and process to product.
- c. A shift from Alienating mode of life to Connecting mode of living.
- d. A shift from “Who is Right” mode of life to “What is right” mode of life.
- e. Adopting Yogic approach to life where all life is seen and experienced as Yoga.
- f. Living in unity consciousness and simultaneously addressing the multiplicity.
- g. Living a life where all contradictions prepare the ground for a harmonious, complex, rich and pluralistic life.
- h. Inner revolution to outer reformation.
- i. Focus on the mutation of consciousness so that everything gets gradually permeated by this new way of living.
- j. Thinking in terms of Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis.
- k. Making policies on the basis of Synthesis of Ideas.

We can see that above points direct towards a cyclic model of life where Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Reproduce will be a natural way of life. This journey will be a transformative process as experienced by a caterpillar when it becomes a butterfly by dropping its residues and that would be a day of real home coming.
