

Eastern Mirror

Dimapur, Saturday, February 6, 2016

'Architecture is aesthetic representation of our heritage'

A Staff Reporter
DIMAPUR, FEBRUARY 5

A two-day national level seminar-cum-photo-exhibition on eastern Himalayan domestic architecture in India's northeast, organized by The Global Open University, Nagaland in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India and Society for Cultural Heritage for Northeast India, is underway here in Dimapur.

At the inaugural session, former bureaucrat and present chancellor of The Global Open University, TN Manen underscored the message of architecture as an intrinsic

link to our heritage. Speaking as the chief guest of the session, Manen said that architecture, like poetry, is an aesthetic representation of our heritage.

And that any attempts to explore/study the culture of a place through its architecture must be encouraged. He shared that with the advent of Christianity in Nagaland, "we have been systematically discouraged" to preserve our culture.

Manen stressed on the need to divorce "spiritualism" from culture, in order to allow us nurture our heritage. He also expressed his belief that architecture, in the

region, could be "transformed into a tremendous industry."

Guest speaker, Dr OC Handa, a scholar from Shimla also encouraged people to adopt a "traditional way of life with due consideration to modernity." In a "synthetic" world, he said, it is all the more important to strike the right balance by sticking to the traditional lifestyle.

"Let us redeem ourselves, redeem our culture and not live the synthetic life," he said. Dr Handa also suggested that, at least in academic writings, scholars should stop using the word "tribal." He reasoned that the very word in itself

is demeaning.

"It is a colonial dubbing. Instead of 'tribal', please say native or indigenous people. The colonial rulers tagged us as tribal people to imply their superiority. But we are not tribal. We are far more advanced, far more civilized than the western culture," he shared.

Other speakers at the opening session include the superintending archaeologist of Archaeological Survey of India, Guwahati circle, Dr Milan Chauley Kumar and Dr HN Dutta, the vice chancellor of The Global Open University, Nagaland.