

Dear friends, Hope you all are enjoying the summer! I would like to share some of my thoughts from the past two months. It has been an eventful two months. After the semester ended I have been feeling a little more relaxed although life has been busy. I am also learning to deal mindfully and compassionately with some disappointments. More details below. It helped that we had been able to enjoy little weekend outings, including a great trip to the Shenandoah mountains and Luray caverns. I have posted pictures on Flickr and written more about them on my blog. Both can be reached through [nature-lover.net](http://nature-lover.net).

Look forward to seeing you all soon and hearing from you!  
Yours, Sankar

Random Thoughts (104)  
6/8/2014

1. (4/24) Why do sometimes human characteristics skip a generation? I think there is a logical explanation. We have traits from our grandparents inherited through our parents. Which traits we allow to manifest depends on our environment and our reaction to it. Since much of our environment in our formative years consists of our parents, we react to it and suppress those traits that we think are negative based on what we see in our parents and nurture and develop those traits that we actually admire in our parents even if they are not manifested fully in them. This is my humble hypothesis.
2. (4/24) I don't think treating college students as customers is a good idea. What I do for students I do out of love and caring and it is amply repaid by the respect and love they show for me, at least most of the time. In this day when young adults stay with their parents until they are 26, there is an even greater need for mentoring and guidance albeit on a partnership basis, more like a coach. Especially when knowledge and experience are at a premium, most young people need time to absorb and develop before they jump into the real world. The day when they convert universities into factories where students choose what they learn and how I will probably try to find another way of living. Oh wait, maybe that day is already here :-)
3. (5/6) It feels good to do hard physical labor in a natural setting, whether it is in your own yard or hiking up a mountain. It is actually invigorating to the mind and the body, and it clears out a lot of the mental chatter and semi-neurotic thinking and worrying that goes on as part of life in a busy place like Washington, DC. The mind becomes very clear and calm and you are only aware of the sunlight, the breeze, the trees, the grass and the flowers.
4. (5/10) I hope for a world in which men measure themselves not by how much they have but by how much they give.
5. (5/18) It is possible to be despondent about the results of the elections in India,

especially if you were a supporter of the Aam Aadmi Party like I was, and believed that Narendra Modi should not have been allowed to continue as Chief Minister of Gujarat after the 2002 riots let alone become Prime Minister. It seems like there is a sizeable section of the population who only care about a comfortable life for themselves, with cars and big houses and who want India to be like China and Japan. You wonder if they care about the plight of the poor, the Dalit and the indigenous people who have been increasingly marginalized and brutalized by the reckless development of land and natural resources and the rampant inequality. You wonder if they care about the rights of the minorities for life and liberty and happiness, rights that have been trampled upon. Perhaps they are not aware of these issues, being consumed by their own struggle to get ahead and stay ahead. Otherwise how could they vote for someone like Modi? I can't imagine he would respect the rights of minorities or the poor or care about the land and the environment. His record as Chief Minister is not very encouraging.

Yet at the same time I know that this is the same country that Gandhi once inspired with his message of non-violence and love for all. Even in Gandhi's time there was a sizeable section who opposed him. In fact it was one of the Hindu nationalists who killed him, and Modi comes from an offspring of that same group. It is unfortunate that those same Hindu nationalists have won such widespread support. Yet the fact that millions of people also volunteered for and voted for the Aam Aadmi Party which wants to follow in the steps of Gandhi is what I take encouragement from. That group of people might be smaller, but with the right leadership and under the right circumstances I have no doubt that the Indian people would join them.

6. (5/19) Two positives from India election:

1. People have decisively voted against corruption and incompetence. Although it remains to be seen how clean the new administration will be, politics can never be the same again.
2. Someone from the lower castes has become PM.

7. (6/3) Our success is only limited by our ingenuity and our willpower. What looks stupid and impossible today might be commonplace tomorrow. I hope renewable fuels replace fossil fuels eventually. So far we have not cared about the earth while developing our technology. Now that we do, maybe in 50 or 100 years all of our needs can be met sustainably.

8. (6/5) Lately I have been going through some difficult times in terms of my relationships with some friends and relatives that are close to me. I have found myself in strong disagreement with some of their opinions and actions. I think they are wrong and they probably think I am wrong. Yet it has always been my policy to not let such differences affect friendships. So this has been a big test of my ability to stay friendly and affectionate with people that I disagree with strongly on certain things. I guess that is part of being a friend or relative but I haven't had to deal with such strong disagreements before. I am going to have to be very mindful and talk to them in a way that expresses my love and affection towards them at the same time

as being honest with my opinions.

9. (6/7) I was wondering what the US would be without California. It was kind of scary. Maybe it would be like Russia...an oligarchy dominated by oil and gas, Walmart and MacDonalDs. CA has such an outsize influence both directly and indirectly...

10. (6/8) Been dreaming about a society where people are not working like slaves to Walmart style corporations, a society where the economy is based more on collaboration. I want to help people to become self-sufficient and live in harmony with nature by using technology and scientific innovation to provide livelihood, food, energy and shelter for them in a sustainable way. We should form co-operatives to provide energy and shelter and livelihoods as well. Seems like in many ways such a movement is already on its way, according to an article by Mr. Jeremy Rifkin. Very forward thinking. I was surprised to learn that China already has an "internet of Things" and an "Energy Internet." Read the entire article at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeremy-rifkin/collaborative-commons-zero-marginal-cost-society\\_b\\_5064767.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeremy-rifkin/collaborative-commons-zero-marginal-cost-society_b_5064767.html)