



THE PINE CHRONICLE

News, Views and Creative Expressions

Volume II, Issue no. 10, February 2019

ABOUT NUKSA

Nuksa The Pine Chronicle is the monthly news magazine of IIM Shillong which seeks to provide to the world outside, News, views and Creative Expressions from members of the IIMS family. Nuksa is a Khasi word meaning example or sample and as the Pine Tree is almost synonymous to Shillong and our beautiful campus, hence the name Nuksa, The Pine Chronicle.

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The Views expressed here are not necessarily reflective of the views of the Editorial team or of the Institute

Vision

To become an internationally recognized management Institute with a global outlook grounded in Indian values.

Mission

To generate and disseminate knowledge in all aspects of management education for sustainable development and to develop innovative leaders with strong ethical values.

Core Values

- ❖ Openness to new ideas and experiences
- ❖ Intellectual freedom
- ❖ Self-experimentation and creative pursuit
- ❖ Adherence to fair, just and ethical practices
- ❖ Compassion for others

EDITORIAL

One of my favourite quotes about what is exactly meant by specialized higher education goes something like this: *When you know more and more of less and less!* The truth of this small line is becoming painfully apparent in almost all fields of life. The medical profession is seeing the proliferation of super specialists who are trained to peer into smaller and smaller slices of the patients' health issue. While doing so, it is often felt that the big picture of life, well-being and the happiness of the whole person gets somewhat pushed to the background. So also with teachers of higher education who become absolutely focused on imparting specific knowledge in rarified subjects that the question of the all-round development of the character and personality of the individual student is never ever considered! Is this what is meant when one says *missing the woods for the trees?* Probably, the tendency of missing the larger picture in our quest for micro level data and information has percolated to all aspects of life. As a matter of fact, in the present day, individuals have an innate dislike (which probably hides a basic inability) to comprehend the larger picture of things. For instance, a person requires a job in order to have the means of living life in a way he or she desires and deems fit. So, the job is the means to an end and by no means an end in itself. But in most cases, the job becomes an end in itself

whereby a person uses up his or her life entirely for the sake of the job. Everything can be sacrificed at the alter of the so called career whereas a job is supposed to be more in the form and nature of a load carrier which allows the individual to load it with the burden of livelihood earning! But the problem is, most individuals have lost the ability to finding meaning in life beyond their careers. Most do not have hobbies or friends and would not know how to fruitfully engage themselves with tasks that would bring fulfillment and joy outside of their chosen career paths. Save for the few who have succeeded in making their careers into vocations and out of their sheer love for their vocations transforming it to a vacation! For most the job becomes a drudgery that needs to be endured. Probably it is this mind set which gave rise to the obnoxious phrase *Killing Time!* Watching a movie, playing a game or just sitting under a tree may be classified as belonging to the category of *killing time!* Little do people realize that we do not kill time, we kill ourselves, minute by minute, hour by hour day by day. A better way of looking at such activities could be as living life! If there is one truth in life, it is the inevitability of death. If death be the destination of life, why is everyone trying to live as if life is forever! Hoarding, cheating, jealousy, avarice, war and pain. It is time we both learnt and taught that since nothing is for keeps it would make good sense to live a life filled with happiness and fulfillment. In the big picture of life and creation, that is what matters the most.

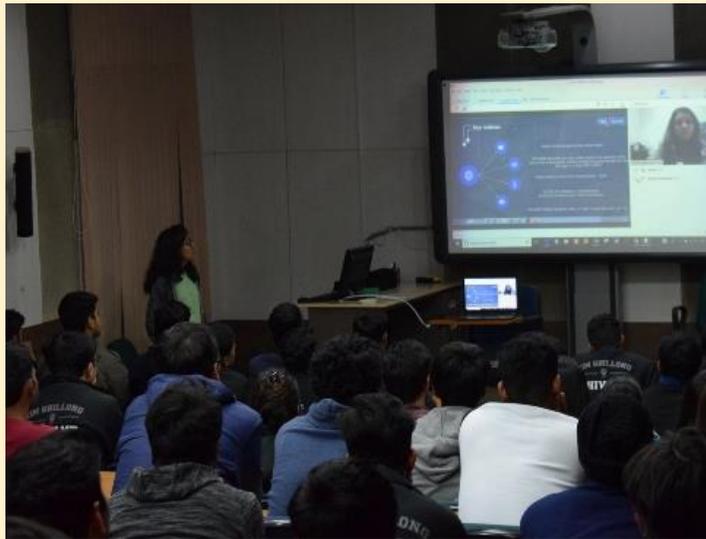
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TIMELINE

YES FUTURE READY Scholarship

YES BANK unveiled the fifth edition of the YES FUTURE READY Scholarship Programme. It is an initiative to identify 30 exemplary scholars and empower them to become future ready in this tech savvy world, through a guided mentorship programme under the senior leadership at YES BANK.



BLOOD DONATION CAMP

The concept of blood donation reinforces the truth that all human beings are the same. No matter what the colour, race, religion or language spoken, the same blood runs in the veins of all humans. This makes possible for one human being to donate blood to another and thereby save the life of a complete stranger. Blood donation is considered one of the noblest of deeds a human being can engage in and blood donation camps are gaining in popularity and importance. Like the previous years, the students of the institute have been at the forefront in organizing blood donation camps. This is done at the initiative and leadership of the EcoBiz club. This year, the EcoBiz Club of IIMS in collaboration with the Blood Bank of NEIGRIHMS, Shillong and the Meghalaya AIDS Control Society organized a blood donation camp at the campus.

The Meghalaya State Transfusion Council awarded the ECoBiZ Club for its continued support and donation to this cause every year.



Bamboo cycle bags special prize at Reliance The Ultimate Pitch 4.0



Impressing the grand jury with their idea of a Bamboo Bicycle, Team Hashtag from IIM Shillong won the Special Prize at The Ultimate Pitch 4.0 hosted by Reliance.

IIM Shillong named the campus with India's Most Employable Management Graduates, Class Of 2019

Bagging 10 out of 30 spots on InsideIIM's list, IIM Shillong has secured the title of the campus with India's Most Employable Management Graduates, Class Of 2019.



IIM Shillong is **InsideIIM's** Campus with Most Employable MBA Graduates, 2019



Congratulations to the following students for grabbing a spot among the **Best 30**



Amit Kumar Das



Abhishek Soni



Arjun V



Sahyasachi Dasgupta



Aakash Saxena



Sahithi Vinjamuri



Akshay Yogi



Subhrajyoti Saha



Himank Agrawal



Indrasis Roy

#CampusInClouds

InsideIIM.com

Achievers of IIM Shillong

National Winners of ICICI Beat The Curve competition

IIM Shillong is proud of their PGP17 students Raghav Agarwal and Amit Kumar Das who emerged as National Winners, among over 1100 of India's brightest students from 23 B-schools, in ICICI Bank's marquee campus case study competition – Beat the Curve.



Summer Placements Concludes

The summer placements for the 2018-20 batch, comprising of 180 students was concluded with the highest stipend of 3 lakhs and an average stipend of 1.12 lakhs, implying a jump of 29 per cent from last year. The top 20 per cent and top 50 per cent of the batch secured an average stipend of 2.44 lakhs and 1.7 lakhs respectively.

The summer placement season at IIM Shillong witnessed participation from 54 recruiters, spanning across various domains such as sales and marketing, strategy and consulting, general management, finance, operations and human resources.

Sales and marketing continued to be the most sought-after domain this year, with 38 per cent of the total offers made to the participants.

The PGP 2018-20 batch of IIM Shillong, which proudly boasts of its academic, gender and industrial experience diversity, has been offered several roles ranging across advisory, analytics, change management, consulting, corporate strategy, equity research, global investment research, global management, international business, investment banking and so on.

Amazon, Deloitte USI, HDFC Bank, Pidilite and TATA Steel made the maximum number of offers this year. The offers in Human Resources and Operations observed a huge jump this year, with 60 per cent increase in the number of offers made in operations and 125 per cent increase in the highest stipend offered in human resources.

Matribhasha Diwas

The Matribhasha Diwas (Mother Tongue Day), which is observed by UNESCO as International Mother Language Day every year on 21st of February to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and promote multilingualism, was celebrated at the institute.

Prof. Keya Sengupta, Director in charge remarked that one should not forget ones roots and give the utmost respect for one's mother tongue, which is essential for preserving one's history, culture and traditions. She further encouraged everyone present for greater use of their mother tongues and spread awareness about the same.



Hosting the Tata Crucible

IIM Shillong hosted an exciting Shillong City Round of Tata Crucible on 20th February. The 15th edition of Tata Crucible Campus Quiz saw some amazing performances by the enthusiastic participants. The winners and runners-up, both from IIM Shillong, displayed their verve in the ultimate battle of wits and knowledge.



Accolades at the startup initiative at Startup India Meghalaya

IIM Shillong is proud of Shubham Rangari, student, PGP 2018-2020 program, for winning the second prize and incubation money for his startup initiative 'Testman' at Startup India Meghalaya Yatra 2019. The award was bestowed upon the five most attractive startup ideas from among 50 entries from across the state.

Startup India is a government initiative to create a world class technology start-up ecosystem by fostering entrepreneurship and a culture of innovation which contributes to increased knowledge, wealth and employment in the society. The award was presented by Shri. JL Mawing, Director of Commerce and Industries, Government of Meghalaya.



'Finweekend' @ Niveshak

Finweekend this year the games got more intense and saw participation from across different B-Schools including S P Jain, IIM Nagpur, IIFT, FORE School of Management and many more.

The event kicked off with the release of the Budget 2019, post which a discussion session "Chai pe Charcha" was organized where students discussed their views on the budget over tea. There was something for everyone and a special treat for the finance enthusiasts in the games played this year, Fin Poker, Com(T)rade, Grafin, Koffee pe Charcha and Finfun.



Podium Sessions in February 2019

Mr. Sunil Chainani - Former Director, Fabindia

Mr. Sunil Chainani, was on campus for the Podium Credited with guiding the growth of Fabindia from a 30 cr company to a 1500 cr company by raising funds and in the investment/acquisition of East, Bandhej and Organic India, this IIM A alumnus, was also involved with many startups and mid-size businesses as mentor & advisor in varied industries including retail, foods, wellness, digital publishing & IT in and outside India. He has previously worked in senior positions in companies such as Britannia and Nabisco. He has been a guest lecturer at several top business schools in India & Overseas including Harvard and London Business School, and has also been part of many top international forums like World Retail Congress. Speaking on the topic 'Inclusive Capitalism', Mr Chainani opened the session by asking the participants whether they were capitalists. Sharing that he himself is hardcore capitalist, Mr Chainani said, "The only product that I've seen people buy regularly because it's for a good cause is the Christmas cards people buy whose proceeds go to charity". He also expounded upon the importance of NGOs being transparent in their dealings and for them to set their targets in measurable terms.



He spoke about his tenure at FabIndia and how the company's People Oriented Capitalism Model helped build a strong brand that also helped artisans in terms of microfinancing and fair labour wages. Advocating the need for companies to imbibe the social impact activities as part of their very DNA, Mr Chainani said he

didn't believe in the concept of reserving a percent of the profits for CSR. "2% CSR is charity, not sustainable. What if instead of 2% of profits, 2% of management time could be spent on this? Imagine the impact it would make," he said, igniting within the students a drive to do more starting now.

Piyush Chowhan - Chief Information Officer, Arvind Brands

Mr Piyush Chowhan was another Podium Speaker on campus. Having worked in the US, UK and India in areas such as Retail Strategy, Business Analytics, and Supply Chain Management in such organizations such as Walmart, Target, Circuit City, and Tesco, he is currently the Chief Information Officer at Arvind Brands. A graduate from NIT Surat and an MBA from Xavier Institute of Management Bhubaneswar, Mr. Chowhan has also worked with Wipro and San Disk in the Supply Chain and Business Analytics domain. Speaking on the topic, 'Mindful leadership in the Digital Age', Mr. Chowhan began the session by asking attendees how they believed technology was changing our lives. Sharing striking statistics from studies about the human mind, he spoke about how the ability of our external environment to influence us is increasing in the digital age, for example, that an average user picks up their phone more than 1,500 times every week. Our smartphones cause us to be distracted and our attempt at multitasking is akin to our brain having too many tabs open. This results in higher fatigue, decreased productivity, and ultimately, stress.



Mr. Chowhan explained how low attention spans and wandering minds have been strongly linked with unhappiness in our lives. "Stress is not something that happens when you are 40 or 50 years old, it is happening to young children today," he said. Stating the futility of India becoming a \$10 trillion economy if the population is diseased by ailments such as depression, the speaker encouraged the participants to exercise every day and prioritize their sleep over their smartphones. He also explained how social connections are vital to a long life and that being able to utilize the power of the brain is an art and skill that cannot be taught.

Unmesh Pawar - Partner, Head - People, Performance and Culture, KPMG

Mr. Umesh Pawar was the next invited speaker at the Podium. Known for his expertise in Human Capital Strategy, Organizational Transformation, and Coaching. He served as the Global HR Head for Accenture's Products Operating Group and Global Managing Director – Talent Acquisition. Known for his role in leading talent transformation while ensuring high employee engagement and retention, he has consistently been voted an employer of choice in the industry. Mr. Pawar talked about Geopolitics and its impact on businesses globally, and highlighted that according to KPMG's India CEO Outlook 2018, 62% CEOs see emerging markets as the

biggest priority for geographical expansion. Additionally, he spoke about how technology holds the potential to disrupt existing businesses.



“It is an era of Personalisation; today we have the likes of Uber and Amazon, such is becoming the baseline expectation from the HR Department of an organization in terms of people experience”, said Mr. Pawar. Sharing the need to conform to the norms of grappling with mental health issues, organizations need to focus on creating places that give people a chance to be who they are.

OFF BEAT

Season of Goodbyes

Farewell season is upon us. From farewell night to farewell dinners, it is the season of Goodbyes.

For most of us, this is the end of formal education. For freshers like me, the culmination of an odyssey that began when we were 4 years old. The experiences of the 180 would be a mixed bag, some satisfied and some unhappy. But what unites us is the excitement/trepidation as we enter the corporate world, carrying the weight of the IIM Shillong tag, its expectations and benefits intertwined.

On our Convocation Day, tears will be shed. It would be a ceremony of the realization of dreams and prayers. Proud parents posing for photographs with their children; they deserve it. It's as much as their sweat and toil, as it is ours.

Promises to stay in touch will be made, but time will tell if these promises will be kept. Wedding invitations will be given out, an indication that the journey of life is like a river, continuously flowing from one bend to another. We probably may never see some of our batch mates again, some we may never want to see, a certain few who will go on to make us proud, and the handful who will stay friends for life.

Looking back on these two years; it's been an eventful journey. I won't lie, I certainly have regrets. I have made life long memories, to be cherished on my death bed. IIM Shillong, you will forever remain in my heart.

Sabreesh Sekar
(2017PGP102)

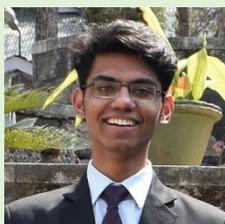
Too Good to be True

Rain kissed February night sky with specks of lustrous dust particles easily sets the mood right for a romantic moment. Underneath such a vast expanse resides a small home where students from across the country come in search of the most sought-after resource of one's life, happiness. Over the years, middle class families have realized that one cannot be happy unless one has financial security in life and for that sole purpose, thousands of students each year fall into the trap of deficit spending. Then, begins a race to reach the biggest kitty first so as to attain that state of happiness at the earliest. And like every single sprint race, no one remembers who came second. But what could have happened if there was no fear of life in the first place? Under the quilt of that magical sky, few idiots sat one last time trying to find an answer to this question. After some contemplation, they had an answer which they penned down as 'A day in the life that is too good to be true'.

The report read: “In the morning, we would wake up around 6 and check our phones. With messages and emails filled with tasks to accomplish today, we would get ready to go for a run. Hoping to meet a few professors on the morning run, we would hope to exchange some ideas with them. At the end of the run, we would all sit together in the mess and have a nice cup of milk while fussing over various newspaper articles. As the professors bid us adieu for a few hours, we students would come back to our dorms and get ready for the classes. A typical classroom would have students from various background with a zeal to learn. The professor and the students would enter the class a few minutes prior and all would then begin to go over the case to be discussed. The professor would not hesitate in taking a back seat and let the students form teams on the spot based on the side of the coin they are looking at. Each student would come up with a different reasoning for a certain possibility and then try to win others over with varied arguments. The prize of this discussion would be a moment when each student would realize what exactly goes on in the real world when decisions have to be made. Professors during this time would try to not let students alienate anyone from the discussion and help each student put forward his or her point. The professor would bring in the element of ground reality from his or her experience but would never undermine a possibility. Students would be taught the importance of effort over rewards in the first few days of the course and as a result the effort inside the class would rather be genuine. The difficulty level of the examination would be so high that anyone who doesn't put in the required effort would be bound to fail. But professors would be willing to help any student at any point of time and would also have the caliber to do so. Students would share ideas in between classes and try learning from each other as they would realize that time is in perpetual shortage at all times on that campus. Assignments would hold high importance because professors would care to read through each and grade on the basis of their novelty. Skill and wisdom addition would be the aim of the education and this would be judged on the basis of both, soft as well as hard skills. The classes would pave way for an evening of life beyond the book. Students would be encouraged to work in various committees and clubs based on their interest and their performance would be judged on the level of hypocrisy they display in their title and attitude. Like minded students would get together to create

new things on campus. All students would be free to speak up their mind and approach anyone in the administration. They would all stand tall on equal grounds of flat hierarchy. Lack of facilities of any kind would be handled at immediate basis. Students would take every task at hand seriously and put in genuine effort to make it a reality. As no one cares about the end result, each student would try to make sure that not just he himself, but his friends too are able to give their best. Seniors would support juniors at every important juncture, starting from onboarding to placements. The culture in such a campus would be that of support and cooperation. Every single student would own a part of that institute and would thus be responsible for its reputation. The director would want to sit with the students and try to understand their needs so that she could navigate the institute in the right direction. Every single person associated with this place, from the security guard at the front gate to the chairperson would be proud of being part of such an amazing family. At the end of two years, students and professors would have traveled miles from where they began and would have enriched their thinking to a level beyond imagination. Years later, when they would come back to this home, they would carry heavy tears in their eyes and gratitude for this place in their hearts.”

The report ended with the words, “If education were not treated as a business and rather was run as a service, the above-mentioned scenario would have been a reality. But, as of now, it is not.”



Shubham Singh
PGP 2017-19

The Strategy of ‘Kuai’

The strategy of ‘Kuai’ is perhaps the game changer for the emerging business collaboration between India and China. While the comparative advantages of both the nations and rise of global protectionism are two of the drivers presenting promising prospects, the Indian market is greatly limited by the scarcity of human resources, skilled and competent enough to catalyze the business relations between the two nations. As of now, the presence of companies such as Cheetah Mobile, We-Chat, Alibaba and a few of its subsidiaries in India are grappling with high attrition rates. The churn at the senior level has either disbanded entire teams in cases like Cheetah Mobile or downsized teams to half in cases like WeChat, Alibaba, and UCWeb. (As reported ET Times, November 2018). Here lies the impetus of what can be termed as the Strategy of ‘Kuai’.

Our programme has understood and developed the model based on the Strategy of ‘Kuai’ to galvanize the Indian organizations with existing ties in China or having future prospects for the same. The solution is not only updating the Indian Human Resources with the facts and figures about Chinese economy, business and culture, but to help adapt according to the Chinese culture, work ethics and context, which is, at root level, very similar to the Indian

conventions, code of conduct and values. The difference is that in business work-culture, Indians have imbibed the liberal code of conducts and professionalism of western culture. It is not only studying the contextual intelligence to build a business model but to practice it. This requires sincere efforts at developing a solid base of Language proficiency and practical training of the cultural aspects. While attending the Mandarin Lab, we felt that this challenge is analogous to the general view of the use of Chopsticks – or ‘Kuai’ as called in Mandarin. Usually, the use of chopsticks is considered very difficult and an overhead because people reason that when spoon and fork can provide a simple and straightforward method of eating, why to go for the constraint of using chopstick. And this is what they think when they try to understand China. But, China has a perspective of the Chopsticks which is completely different but worth appreciating for us. For them, Chopstick is not a challenge but a learning. A pair of chopsticks represent mutual respect and love. It is not a transaction but an acceptance. Not just a part of kitchen, but a context –just to hold it right. And this is what we need to follow when we try to step into one of the richest civilizations.

As mentored by the visiting faculties (Experts of Sino-Indian business relations) we are trying to inculcate the propensity to adapt and practice, when required, the Eastern and specifically Chinese, contextual norms. Covering the Mandarin proficiency, pragmatic approach to imbibe Culture and Legal compliances, we are made to touch the sensitive aspects of business relations such as Negotiations, relationship building –or Guanxi, organizational behaviour and communication decorum. This experience is not just a China specific skills development but development of the right attitude and technique to learn how to understand and approach a civilization, culture or a new market. It is more of an enlightenment to shun off the stereotypes and pre-conceived notions and to explore with an open mindset.

Hence, with a pair of beautiful chopsticks, looking forward to explore the culturally abundant and largest economy of the world.



Nayyer Khan
PGPEX. 2018-19

MÉTIER

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ALUM SPEAK

Reflections on the irrelevant JD



A couple of years ago, my dad retired from a Government bank after 34 years of service. I am already in my 4th company in 8 years post B-school. I have a team member who has two failed startups to his name and he is just 25. One of my mentees in an earlier company just got featured in

Forbes Top 30 under 30 list!

I can imagine this will be music to the ears of those stressed about campus placements. The job profile and employee profiles are evolving so fast that the companies are bending over backwards to attract talent with the right attitude and retain them. I look back with fondness the naivety with which we were worried about where we start the career post B-School and the importance we gave to location, CTC etc.

I am not presenting a case for opportunism but rather highlighting how professionals now have as much say as companies in the kind of roles that are getting created. The new gen professionals are more passionate, self-assured and transactional. Loyalty is not a given. With the means of LinkedIn and Glassdoor they always have an eye open for opportunities. One of my ex-colleagues used to crack interviews on regular frequency but never quit from the company – just tried to use it to his advantage. And there are people I know who just moved out to Canada and Australia without a job offer believing in their ability to make their career.

What is this ‘infidelity’ attributed to? Not just an overnight change in attitude nor just bullish arrogance! Organizations are playing their part trying to reinvent themselves in the digital era, if they aren’t already in various states of transformation. Machine learning algorithms are making role of business analysts less significant than data scientists. AI and Robotic Process Automations are changing the job roles in customer service and KPOs. Productivity tools like Darwinbox are simplifying HR operations. The changing customer behaviour and personalisation demands have made marketing an analytics game. All this is happening right here right now.

Transformation is the name of the game and the objective is staying relevant, if not ahead – Finance, HR, Operations or Marketing. I see this constant state of flux a blessing for B-school grads and I sincerely believe our institute prepares us well for the new age corporate – strong fundamentals backed by core values – which you appreciate more in retrospect. Thinking back, the most valuable skill I picked up at IIM Shillong is adaptability.

I don’t know what the future holds, but then I have started believing that not knowing is not so bad after all. As one of my mentors once told me – 5 years down the line, the most critical role in an organization is the one which hasn’t been created yet!

Girish Krishnakumar
PGP 2009-11

Head – Business Excellence, Arvind Fashions Limited

ODE

Dedicated to the Indian Army

You are our love, you are our soul;
Always remember, you are never alone.
You are our strength, you are our power;
We are with you, always with you.
You protect us in the cold, you protect us in the heat;
You are such a power, that no one can ever beat.
You are the epitome of bravery, you are the pillars of our courage;
Don’t let any cowardly act make you ever discourage.
In tough times like these, we won’t sigh;
Because we know, your Josh is High !!
More power to you, our Indian Army :)

Hitesh Gupta
PGPEX 2018-19

Prophets

Inspired by the poetry of Miroslav Holub

The aged spring day has faded out of focus ;
Figures now slowly flock to the sloping ,naked earth,
where the walls of the edifice will later whisper about the
memories of time past,
protecting them from the hollow of the abyss beyond.

The drunken fire has masked them with faces and wrapped them
in shadows,
crackling and burning red with the joy of its creations ,
Its Smoke colouring the sky inky black,
Their arcane invocations paint the hollow night with ancient
shimmering stars
while tethered mulberries swaying to the tunes of men
shed melancholy red on the path to their shores of destiny
where waves of merciless time summon them to their inevitable
odysseys.

The promised Dawn will break and soon transform them into
travellers,
armed with the ambition of conquistadores ,
voyaging to distant, unknown kingdoms .

Their trepidations remain buried in the sacred ashes of their
bonfire :
Will Elegiac hymns be sung for them one day as many were for
the Argonauts ? Did the gods keep a Homeric vigil on their
souls ,
blessing their initiation into a new age of discovery ?

OGNIBHO BANERJEE
PGPeX

