

## America's long journey into night

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international / prose / post

There is a very pertinent Indian story about a courtesan that seduced a revered ascetic Holy man who lived in a forest and survived on a meager diet of leaves and other basic forest foods. The Holy man was held in such high esteem by the people that the local Raja became jealous and plotted to disgrace him and so become the most revered man in the Kingdom.



The Raja offered a huge bounty for anyone that could disgrace the Holy man and ruin his reputation. Many were those that tried but failed. After many failed attempts the Raja offered half his worldly wealth to anyone who could succeed.

News of this offer spread far and wide and finally reached another Kingdom in which a most beautiful courtesan resided; her beauty, charm and guile had gained her the most prized position in court.

Attracted by the huge offer of wealth for simply seducing a man, the courtesan soon appeared before the Raja and guaranteed that she could succeed where everyone else had failed. The Raja was so thoroughly dejected and infuriated by the Holy man that he offered more of his wealth if the courtesan could achieve her goal before the occasion of a Holy Festival in two years time. The courtesan assured the Raja she would succeed and took her leave to locate the ascetic in the forest.

After some time she managed to locate the cave in which the Holy man dwelt and began to spy on his daily habits. She learned that the Holy man did indeed live on forest leaves and herbs. She spied the ascetic foraging in the jungle and learned which herbs and leaves he consumed.

She then hurried back to a nearby village and paid the women to prepare papadams -- an Indian deep fried tasty, crisp appetizer, which she took back to the forest and began to lightly add to the leaves the Holy man collected for food. As anticipated the ascetic collected the leaves with tiny fragments of papadam, which the Holy man innocently consumed.

After a time the courtesan slowly increased the amount of appetizer in the leaves until the Holy man became accustomed to the taste. The Courtesan then slowly added more tasty morsels until the Holy man began to take food offerings directly from the courtesan, who had disguised herself as a humble village girl.

After some time and regular daily visits by the 'village girl' the Holy man became so familiar with the girl he allowed her to cook and perform other basic duties for him, until one night she finally succeeded in seducing him.

The Courtesan fell pregnant and delivered her baby a week before the Holy festival. She then appeared before the Raja with her baby and informed him that she would ridicule the Holy man in front of all his subjects on the occasion of the Holy festival.

Well, the King was delighted and allowed the courtesan to weave her dastardly plot.

On the day of the Holy festival the ascetic was again the most honored in all the land. However, on this occasion the courtesan dressed in her usual professional attire and wore traditional make-up that clearly identified her as a court prostitute.

As the people queued to prostrate before the Holy man the courtesan approached and began to abuse the ascetic in front of all the townsfolk for not taking care of 'their child;' she dumped the infant in his lap and departed in a dramatic huff. The citizens were appalled and rebuked the ascetic Holy man -- who, it must be said, remained philosophically detached throughout the entire episode.

One lesson from the story is; if we would alter entrenched patterns of behavior it must be done surreptitiously and in incremental stages until a person (society) learns to accept completely new circumstances for good or ill -- whatever the case may be!

To be fair to the tale, which I abbreviated for practical purposes, the full story contains a number of other important lessons/morals, however, the above example is particularly relevant to America's journey into 'night' and how the population has been duped in incremental stages and has failed to notice or react to save itself before certain calamity.

Article from OpEd News follows:

### **A Dark, Very Troubling Period in America's History**

by Michael Payne

We are certainly living in the midst of a very dark period in American history. This is a nation that is not advancing, it is regressing; it is no longer growing, it is rapidly declining. This is a country that possesses monumental wealth but, at the same time, is plagued by a myriad of critical problems that seem to be insurmountable.

Where is the evidence that supports this premise? It's everywhere; just look at the deteriorating conditions in this country, the absence of a functioning government and the mounting extreme violence in this society. When America needs leadership and direction there is none to be found. There are no signs or indications that this government is ready to reassume the responsibilities of governing this country in a competent manner and doing what is in the best interests of the American people.

Republicans block, obstruct and filibuster. Democrats vacillate, cave in and refuse to change the filibuster rules. We have a president who won't prosecute the Wall Street criminals but goes after whistleblowers instead; a president who has done more to restrict the constitutional rights and freedoms of the American people than any other in our history. Don't believe it; then do some research and find out for yourself.

The financial sector is on the road to collapse, full of deceit, manipulation and drowning in a sea of trillions of dollars of toxic derivatives. The banking industry, a chief subsidiary of Corporate America, has become an albatross around the neck of America. Because of its reckless actions, schemes and deceitful practices used to subvert laws and regulations it represents a distinct danger to this nation's financial stability.

The American people are now fully aware that those political incompetents that inhabit the U.S. Congress, that institution that I have referred to as a massive cesspool, simply don't give a damn about them, their needs or their many problems. They also are very frustrated by the fact that no matter whom they vote for, it makes no difference whatsoever.

Of the 100 senators and the 435 members of the House those who could be called honest, dedicated, and uncorrupted representatives of the people could be counted on the fingers of your two hands. Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren and a handful of others fit that description and they are in a class by themselves. The rest are, in one way or another, under the control and in the employ of Corporate America.

Government has many roles that it should play in this country and one of them, although some would disagree, is to set a standard of honesty, decency and morality for the people it represents. It, in its dealings and actions, should be a role model for the American people. Unfortunately it is none of those things and, as a result, it has brought significant damage upon this country.

The White House: it no longer matters who enters the Oval Office because an incoming president immediately comes under the control of the Washington Establishment. To believe that some future president will assume that office and become an agent of change, one who will go up against the powers that control Washington and attack the nation's problems, is delusional thinking at best. It just does not happen.

A lot of the turmoil and extreme stress in this society can be attributed to Corporate America which is directly responsible for the destruction of our manufacturing sector. Millions of Americans are desperate for work and, yet, the corporate stooges in Congress want nothing to do with job creation. Unemployment is worsening as many Americans have given up on finding a job; but this is not reflected in the monthly reporting of the % of Americans who remain unemployed. That's just plain misinformation and the media says nothing about it, lets it just pass.

Student loans are a national disgrace. Senator Elizabeth Warren of MA is introducing legislation in the Senate that "would set interest rates for federally-subsidize loans at .75% for one year compared to the current rate of 3.4% which is set to double on July 1, 2013." Should this Congress allow that to happen it would be absolutely the height of irresponsibility on its part.

As Warren has stated, "If the Federal Reserve can float trillions of dollars to large financial institutions at extremely low interest rates to grow the economy, surely they can float the Department of Education the money to fund our students, keep us competitive and grow our middle class."

Violence in America is not decreasing, it's rapidly escalating. Not only did we see the slaughter of 20 little children that were mowed down by an assault weapon in Newtown,

CT but since then there has been a rash of incidents in which kids anywhere from 5 to 10 years old have used firearms in their homes to kill a sibling or a family member. When is this sickness in America ever going to be cured? Or is the NRA infallible?

This is a society in which guns and violence are everywhere; movies, TV shows and video games include violence of every form imaginable. America gives every appearance of becoming a shooting gallery with rampant and escalating violence that is now embedded in our national psyche. Watching this idiocy disguised as entertainment will warp one's mind but, nonetheless, the theaters are filled, the ratings are great and the kids stay glued to their screens. And this is what we call a civilized society?

Every state except Illinois now has a concealed carry law that allows people to carry guns in many public places and that state will soon be forced by federal law to also adopt that same kind of legislation. Is this pure madness or what? And how about this: students in five Pennsylvania universities are being allowed to carry guns on campus; here's the link.

How long will we in America continue to watch as our children are slaughtered by assault weapons? What in the world does it say about a government and a society where children can lose their lives in an instant wherever they are, on the street, in their homes or in their schools? It says that we are living in a society that is in the process of unraveling.

America has become a world military empire, albeit it one with a financial foundation that is quickly eroding. The Military-Industrial Complex and its world military empire are bankrupting this nation. Our domestic needs, which are endless, are not being addressed as hundreds of billions and trillions of taxpayer dollars are sucked into the black hole of war and empire. This monumental waste of the wealth of America has been going on for many decades.

Just like the Roman Empire and every other empire down through history the American Empire is imploding from within and is nearing its inevitable end. Some say that when this empire collapses from its own colossal weight that this will open up a great opportunity for this nation to rise from the ashes and rebuild itself; and these visionaries may be entirely right. So let's think about what such a new America might be like.

\*There would be no more Military-Industrial Complex. There would be no Pentagon but rather a Department of National Defense that would have no foreign military bases and would not have an agenda of world domination. It would be dedicated to using every form of negotiation and diplomacy to solve disputes with other nations before ever thinking about initiating military actions.

\*There would be no such thing as banks that are too big to fail. The financial sector would be regulated by reasonable and effective legislation and government agencies that would monitor their activities very closely to prevent manipulation and deceitful practices, and bring legal action against any of them who crossed the line of ethics and laws.

\*Corporate America would be non-existent and America would have a capitalistic system that, as in the case of the banks, would be subject to effective regulations and monitoring of business practices. Corporate CEO's would no longer be making anywhere

near 700 times the salaries of workers. The U.S. manufacturing sector would be restored because the U.S. Congress would have made the creation of jobs for Americans its #1 priority, with the greatest concentration being on new sources of energy. Corporations would be totally banned from any involvement in the Congress, the government in general, and in the election process.

\*America would have the opportunity to begin the process of restoring its ethical and moral foundations. Yes, we'd still have a very necessary separation of church and state but there would be an excellent opportunity for religion and the principles of ethics and morality to become a much greater part of our society.

Could this really happen? Well, this is certainly not the first time in world history where a society and its people were caught in the midst of an expanding world empire, with an inept and corrupted government and a situation where the money and power of the ultra-wealthy ruled. But every empire folded, many corrupted regimes fell by the wayside and nations and societies were rebuilt. It has happened time and again and it can happen once again.

There are those who would label these thoughts as an impossible dream. But maybe that's what America really needs right now; those who will not accept the fact that we live in a country that seems to be entirely incapable of instituting critically needed change; those who believe that the American Dream as we have come to know it may be on life support but maybe, just maybe, we can find the ways to resurrect it.

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<http://www.opednews.com/articles/A-Dark-Very-Troubling-Per-by-michael-payne-130516-215.html>

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Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-563.html>