



FASHION is generally considered in our country, to be a domain of the female sex and compared to women, men's attitude towards fashion is marked by an unparadigmatic indifference. It is true that women in Bangladesh, as in other countries of the world, had always taken a profound interest in fashion. Yet men's contribution to it cannot altogether be overlooked.

Historically speaking, it has been only forty to forty-five years since women of this country have endeavoured to liberate themselves from the "purdah" constraint and have made their own appearance into the outer world. Men, on the other hand, had always been exposed to the outside world and with a regular outdoor exposure he all the while had to think of something agreeable to wear. So if not wholly by choice, by sheer necessity, men in this country were forced to follow a certain vogue. This is probably, one believes how the evolution of male fashion took place.

There was a time, long before the Mughals, Pathans or the Company Rulers came to this land when Hindu Brahmins wore an unsewn piece of cloth. But after the Mughals and the Pathans came in, they introduced a fashion which was alien to the people of this region. They popularised stitched clothing in this country. The orthodox Hindus, of course, at first did not willingly accept this insurgence of these fortune hunters. But as they gained acceptance and popularity their fashions and cultural practices became one of our own.

It is worth mentioning that artificial fragrance or perfume was not popular here before the Muslim leaders came to this land. They made perfume of 'atar' in vogue in this land and soon it became a common practice among the rich to wear scents. After that, men of that time could not even think of attending a royal 'darbar' without wearing perfume and

Making of the Bengalee Man

by Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury

soon it became a type of status symbol for the rich.

Similar was the case with the British rulers. People of this country did not accept their fashion during the first phase of the British rule. It was after the period of their rule that people, here, gradually became acquainted with their fashion; and if not by choice, followed it, to please these foreign rulers. During this

which was typically their own.

After the Swadeshi Movement most of the people in India, out a patriotic feelings discarded the British fashion and tried to popularise their own. But it was not easy to abolish the British vogue from India altogether. It had by then been practised for nearly hundred years, and had gained certain measure of popularity here. British and Indian fash-

ionise a new kind of fashion, but added some special dimensions to the current or on going trend of the day. Of the above film idols, mentioned Uttam Kumar had a profound influence, in the Bengalee man of those days. Irshad Hossain, a man now in his late fifties recalls, "We went to the tailors and asked him about the latest Uttam fashion and requested him to add to our shirts,

as well. Long haired youths wearing high collared shirts, thick bottomed trousers and large pairs of goggles were also seen in the streets of Dhaka and other parts of the country. Shameem Rahman, now a bank executive in his mid forties admits that, "We were totally driven, by the wave of this hippy and pop culture. We tried to imitate almost everything that the westerners were doing. Whether it was good or bad we didn't question ourselves. We only knew that what we were doing was something new. It so happened that sometimes, we even spilled talcum powder on the floor and tried to imitate the twist dance of the time. Those were the good old days," he expresses with exquisite fondness.

The role of politics or political personalities are among few of the causes which decided and motivated men's fashion in this country. Political personalities like Nehru, Jinnah, Sheikh Mujib, Ziaur Rahman and even Ershad contributed to the fashion of the time. Political leaders in this country had often used their charisma to influence their party men along with a host of others to dress as they do. They tried to create a "mode" which will be identified as one of their own and as political parties they were recognised by their dresses. Jinnah cap, Mujib coat, safari suit introduced by Ziaur Rahman and the prince coat popularised by Ershad, can occasionally be seen worn by even persons other than their own party men.

Yet to be frank, fashion is still a luxury in our country. Because there is too obvious a connection between fashion or being fashionable and one's budget. Fashion still remains a domain of the few riches of this country. But for the rest of the population, fashion is an unknown word. For the run of the mill people of our country, poverty, unfortunately dictates their fashion and the way of life that they can think of.



time, most of Hindu men followed two kinds of fashions. At home they followed their own and at work the Britisher's. But the Bengalee Muslims in those days usually followed three kinds of fashions. While with the British they followed the western fashion, when interacting with the Hindus they usually followed their style of 'dhoti and 'punjabi'; while at home they took after a fashion

ion then went on simultaneously. The foreign influences apart, from time to time personal charisma of individuals played a prime role in moulding the fashion of the day. Even matinee idols like Bikash Roy, Phomathesh Barua, Raj Kapoor and Uttam Kumar had deeply influenced the fashionably men of the time. These matinee idols did not really revolu-

trousers or suits the typical 'Uttam' cut. We, in our youth tried to imitate his looks, walks, hair style and even for hours stood in front of the mirror and practiced his famous smile."

As the late sixties approached and in the wake of seventies pop culture shocked the youths of the world, The Beatles or Elvis craze gradually crept into our society

Oh, for Sensibilities!

by Fayza Haq

ONE is not out to prove that people from different localities in the city are vastly different, but one has remarked that their outlook and taste differ — being influenced by their varied environment, upbringing and genetic inheritance.

The people from Old Dhaka, one knows, having visited that place and having lived there sometimes as a child of 3 years and later of 9 years, that the people there, are extremely warm hearted and sympathetic. What they do for one is from the bottom of their hearts. This is not to say that people from Bananal, Gulshan, Baridhara or DOHS, or Dhanmondi, Lalmitia or even Faribagh are not kind and considerate. Yet, from cases studied, one comes to the conclusion that despite the enveloping smell of sweets and curds constantly being prepared, hither thither and yon; and despite the narrow lanes, which do not permit proper drainage or cleanliness, there is a sense of comradery and humane warmth, which those earning only Tk 2,000 a month will offer one, which perhaps one can get nowhere else.

The little that the goldsmith and silversmith or even the "shakha" and conchshell worker has, he will lend one or share it with one in one's times of dire need. They will see to it that one has one's cup of tea or the necessary biscuit, when one is world-weary and believing only in Hardy's pessimistic vision. Women do not "come and go talking of Michelangelo" for relief; and there is no flaunting of highbrowed intelligence, gathered from expensive education. This is not to say that these people are lacking in basic wit or intelligence. One knows of individuals, coming from Old Dhaka, earning Tk 11,000 a month and more, working in Mojibheel, and having the manners of perfect ladies and gentlemen.

Yet, here, at this juncture, one is not concerned with the Old Dhaka gentlemen in their smart office outfit, nor the gorgeous women from the same place — with the Scarlett O'Hara waistlines, with "yard-long" eye-lashes, and the appearance of "hairs", with their inimitable and undying charm. One is preoccupied with the toiling thousands who live there, and manage their living. One does not refute the point that some of the people in Old Dhaka, in places like Armanitola and Islampur, mint thousands of Takas, if they are the original shop owners. Yet one is not concerned with them, although their manners remain suave, and above reproach. There is time to "stand and stare" in the lanes of Old Dhaka, and there is no one to upset the individual caught in one's own private dreams — "Les reves sont la meilleure partie de la vie".

In places like Dhanmondi or even Outer Circular Road, people prefer one to telephone before one drops in. They are, no doubt, warm and hospitable, but one finds them,

in cases observed, as caught in the struggle to earn a living. In many homes, both the husband and wife work, and even when the lady of the house is at home, she has many occupations. Unless you are a bosom friend, you cannot "burst in", and expect a tray full of goodies, to gladden your tired and down-trodden soul. Lalmitia, Dhanmondi, Inner and Outer Circular Road individuals have their homes decorated in different ways from that found in Old Dhaka. Their manner of speaking, with exceptions of course, is not always spontaneous. Their politeness is out of sheer courtesy — because one is the friend or the close relative with a problem.

They will undoubtedly welcome one, even at an odd hour, and give one the necessary guidance in life. After all, a conservative individual does not normally "hop" into homes of people, unless there is some dire urgency. One would like it to be very clear here that this is no disparaging piece on the bourgeoisie of the city. There are kind people who have sheltered fugitives of all sexes and ages at all times, when the need had arisen. They have shared their meals with those who were in trouble in times, such as '71, and even after. Yet, unless one is a bosom friend, planning to "load and bless" some issue or project somewhere, one is often taken for an eccentric for

forget the day one's father died, and one felt it was hillocast much worse than doomsday of the religious books. One remembers them to come from the area one has just mentioned. These were the individuals, who slept together and ate together, like Rosind and Celia in "As You Like It" (Shakespeare)

One's dearest and nearest kith and kin, apart from treasured friends live and work in Dhanmondi, and one has never been let down by them. Yet, "il ya la difference". And can one say "vive la difference" — in this context? Certainly not, one conjectures.

As for Bananal, Gulshan, DOHS, I have spent many nights there with bosom friends; discussed "petit amis" late into the hours; shared jokes and had wonderful time at the vicinity of the "golden ghetto". One's close friends, once again live there, and they remain always ready with encouragements and kind words — even over the telephone, and constantly cry out, "Why don't you spend sometime here and see the children? — you haven't seen them in the last 12 years." What area is more tranquilising and soothing than Gulshan, Bananal, Baridhara and even Uttara for that matter — where one has standing invitations for a "spending the night for a



Middle class family at old Dhaka. — Photo: Anwar Hossain

making the flying visits. One has no desire to run down oneself, human beings being egocentric, in many cases, as one has observed. One has received kindness and co-operation from friends, acquaintance and relatives residing in Dhanmondi, Outer Circular Road, Lalmitia and such areas. One has borrowed books; had the essential meat had necessary translations and even typing done, and even had prayers said over the head, at all crucial points in one's life. The people one knows best are living and working in the Lake Circus, Purana Paltan, Naya Paltan — leaving Dhanmondi apart — and undoubtedly they have given one constant guidance, moral and material support at all junctures of life and living. One will never

change." There has been nothing but kindness and cordiality from the friends and acquaintances in the elite area of the town. Yet one fears to tread the privacy of these charming, gentle friends of one's younger days. How will the in-laws take it; how will the husband react; how will one's own family take to a single woman sleeping away from home? Coming from a conservative family one must keep everyone's feelings and sensibilities intact.

Nobody is equipped to judge others, least of all one who has spent seven years in all in Dhaka, counting childhood visits to the extended family. One can hardly "blame it on the bassanova" for having a penchant for the dwellers of Old Town, and a craving for a holiday with wild cats.

WHAT is karate? It literally means open hand combat. "Kara" means empty and "Te" means hands. Generally people who do karate are considered to be violent and dangerous. This is a wrong concept everybody has about the martial artists. This is very unfortunate because some people misunderstood and misinterpreted the martial arts.

Karate is strictly used in self-defence. That is the first rule every student is taught. There is a lot of hard work and self discipline is involved. You are taught to train your wind and body, you learn things that are so simple and yet extremely effective. You must have patience because you need to practise each technique many times before you can actually learn it properly. Like anything else, be it cooking or painting practice will only make it perfect.

The object of this piece is to bring home to the reader the need to be able to defend one self effectively in this day and age, against any type of unwanted attacks, either outside or inside the home. In the process, you will also learn more about the martial arts and have a better understanding of the art of self-defence.

We live in a society where attacks on man, women, children are all too common. A considerable number of those people who have experienced assaults, muggings and beatings of various kinds would undoubtedly have been better off today, had they been capable of defending themselves.

Training in the art of self-defence often begins in school, college or when ever

Karate to the Rescue

by Rani Padamsi

one feels the need or desire to learn. There is no age limit and the benefits are many. Self-defence is not something you play at, it is a very serious art I can see that your life depends it one day. By reading this article, studying and practising the knowledge you will gain one day in the future save your life when some attack may cause serious injury. Then I am sure reading

When you have gained this confidence you will react instinctively to any sudden attack and be able to deal with your opponent according to the severity of the attack, calmly, and without the loss of mental or physical control. The best thing to do will be to join a club or school to learn the martial arts of your choice either karate, kung-fu, taekwondo, ju-jitsu aikido or judo.

great deal upon you as an individual. But if you are willing to fight, at least now you can have a definite plan of action, knowing where and how to hit and kick — plus the use of the combination techniques which increases the chance of the blow or kick finding its target.

So, please be very serious when you practise and be very careful when trying out techniques, as serious injury could

When women and children are in danger both at home and in the streets of Bangladesh it is imperative that some defence action should be learnt in time. This should be done specially by women and children who cannot defend themselves against the thugs, hoodlums and muggers who have transformed Dhaka, the capital city of our country into something like New York or Melbourne. To deal with "chanda parties" who ring bells at doors at places like Gulshan, Mohammedpur, Dhanmondi and even Old Dhaka, one advises that karate should be learnt.

this will be worthwhile. Great care will be taken to present the techniques to clarity and readers with precision: I will combine these with pictures and the article will enable the beginner to practise the techniques with a fair degree of accuracy. Great care must be taken when you practise of the martial arts.

Training in self-defence is no exception to any learning. Its prime purpose is not to maim or kill, merely to defend oneself to that point of safety required for the situation. However, confidence comes through constant practice.

There you will have regular practice. Many techniques like punches, kicks, arm locks, wrist levers or similar movements require great deal of practise before they can be used in real combat, you will need a partner to execute and practise all the techniques.

While it is not unpleasant to read through a book and imagine all the things you are going to do to the ungodly, it is quite another thing to execute them in a badly lit street, country lane, or even in your own home.

Obviously your reaction to any given situation depends a

result. During practice with a partner makes are that you stop some inches short of your target. I suggest, you do not use these methods for minor social infringements. It need not take long, and any training you can manage is better than now.

Many people fail to react in such circumstances as an attack, it is mainly due to fear, either of getting hurt, dislike of violence, knowing that the attacks may well be at least twice as strong, doubt about their ability to take any effective action. Each one of us knows fear. The best thing is not to show it, mental attitude can, in itself, reduce the odds against attack. A pose of calmness when your stomach is churning with fear or indignation, when you feel like crawling away; this is true bravery. When faced with an unpleasant situation, the ideal solution is to talk your way out of trouble — but it may not work.

Again, to run away may not be possible. The classic dilemma is to fight or run or submit. In my experience and the knowledge that self-defence instruction gives, karate generates in itself a high degree of self-confidence in the majority of students. The element of surprise is very important. You can overcome a much stronger and tougher opponent by surprise combined with the knowledge of where and how to strike.

Once a great grandmaster

said: "The best defence is to be inoffensive, better still, do not be there, be somewhere else. This is wise advice, meaning avoid dark alleys and strangers. Do not take short cuts at night or rides from new acquaintances. Never smile at strangers, or wear too much jewellery or carry too much money. Avoid things that draws too much attention. It can pay to keep a low profile. Let us begin our training — remember to always warm up properly before practice. Start with meditation and end with meditation. In between exercises should be from head to toe. Physical fitness and mental conditioning together in the martial arts. Right now how many of you are carrying a weapon is probably none. But you might have keys in your hands or pocket. This can be used as a weapon. Put each key through your fingers with the keyring in the "palu." Now make a first they will stand and stick out. Use your head anything can be used as a weapon, a stick or umbrella. You can use them to defend yourself. The most effective are your elbow and knee attacks. In close attacks striking the face is most effective. Remember you have strong teeth, do not target you could bite somebody's flesh off easily. In extreme situation one has to use everything for survival. I hope you never have to use any of the techniques. If you do, then you will have the knowledge in a few months time will be the best I can devise. Learn the methods. It is like having a fire extinguisher in your home. I hope you never have to use it — but it is good to know that it is there.

(This is a part of a series to be continued in later issues)



The Bengalee woman looks best in a "sari"

Biryani for a Change

Biryani (for 5 to 6 people)

Ingredients:
rice — 1 "seer"
meat — 2 "seers"
potato — 1 "seer" (6-7 potatoes)
ghee — 1/4 "seer"
onions — 1/2 "seer"
ginger — 1 "pua"
garlic — 1/2 "pua"
ground red chilli — (depends on your taste)
whole "zeera" — 1 "tola"
ground nutmeg "joyphol"
1/2 a nutmeg (if big then one)
saffron — (according to requirement)
raisins — 1 "chattak" (1/2 "chattak")
spices — "elachi" (1/2 "tola"), "darchini" (1/2 "tola"), "lobongo" (1/2 "tola") and bayleaf (1/2 "chattak")
cream topped milk 1/2 cup
almonds and pistachio (ground) — 1 table spoon (if available) "joytree" (spice) (nutmeg leaf) — 2 teaspoons
rose water — a little for sprinkling
yoghurt 1/4 seer.

Method:

Wash and soak rice for atleast 2 hours. Cut the meat into fairly large pieces and wash and squeeze it dry. Soak the meat (which is mixed with spices) in yoghurt, ginger paste, garlic paste & onion

paste (onion paste will be more in quantity than in usual meat curries) and some ground chilli.

Put this mixture on the cooker and cook till very little gravy remains (also make sure the meat does not become too soft in the process). Peel the potatoes but do not chop them, next mix them with a

Spread 1/3 of the remaining "ghee". Next put a few table spoons of rice water (that you saved) around the inside surface of the "degchit".

Mix the rest of the nutmeg and creamy milk with the left over gravy of the meat. Spread 1/2 the rice on top of the meat, on it. Spread the gravy mixture, cleaned raisins, a cupful "ghee" and some rice water.

Put 2nd layer of rice, pressing firmly levelling with wet hands.

Rest of the "ghee" and rest of the water mix the saffron with 2-3 table spoons of rose water and pour it zig-zag over the rice. Lastly spread rest of the fried onions and close the lid tight with some "atta" — (wet wheat flour). Apply heat from below and above the "degchit" with hot coals.

Strain the rice, saving about 1/2 cup of water. Make sure of the taste of salt in the rice (whether enough or not). Next



The writer holding her class at the American School, Baridhara