



THE MAN WHO MET THE MONK

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reporting that story. To my great fortune, he granted me an authorization soon after the story appeared. The book was published in America by Doubleday/Random House in 2007 and has since been published in some 24 languages worldwide as well as an audio book in Australia. I am in the process of updating it with four new chapters.”

Talking about getting his book published in America, he says, “That credit must go first to the subject of the book—the Dalai Lama’s immense global stature—and then to the respected New York-based literary agent Lynn Franklin. Of course, the fact that the Dalai Lama authorized it also helped a great deal. I

suppose one may attribute its eventual success as a book to my craft and skills as a journalist.”

THE NEW INDIA

As a journalist studying and reporting new developments in Indian context, Chhaya has observed an exceptional growth in India. He says, “One signature change in South Asia generally and India particularly over the past two decades has been a remarkable strengthening in the confidence of its people. There is much greater self-assurance among young Indians now than ever before.”

He adds, “India’s economic liberalization, which began in 1991 and to which I was a close witness to it as a journalist based in New Delhi, has dramatically altered the

country’s mindscape, especially that of its hundreds of millions of people below the age of 30. That is a powerful asset, which, if used intelligently, can pay handsome demographic dividends for the next few decades.

India was always an entrepreneurially vibrant and creative place but the past two and half decades since economic liberalization have made it extraordinarily so. Rarely would you find a people as self-assured as Indians now.”

RESPONSE IN CHICAGO

Chhaya who loves being in Chicago however rues the fact that the South Asian community takes lukewarm interest in the history behind their roots. He says, “I have been here since 2005.

The community has not been particularly aware of my book. Its interest in South Asian affairs is at best superficial. Those who came here in the 1970s, 1980s and even 1990s as opposed to those who were born and raised in America, there is a clear gap in their affinities toward South Asian affairs. The former has a little more interest in it than the latter.”

He adds, “Those who were born here are naturally more invested in local and national affairs of America. However, since we all live in such a globalized world shrunk so much by the information and communications technology those barriers have gone down. What happens anywhere in the world now happens everywhere simultaneously. So, to that extent people are aware of what goes in South Asia.”