

UTKARSA OSA NEWSLETTER

A Reflection of ଓଡ଼ିଆ Life in the Americas

MARCH 2012

VOL. # 43 ISSUE

From Editors' desk...

This spring issue became a special issue thanks to the request by madam president Annapurna Pandey. In addition to the regular features about the administrative and other reports, this issue also explores the impact of immigrating to or being born here as an immigrant's kid on one's outlook, adaptation two different cultures. We have few articles here, which might be a stepping stone for an anthology of coming to America, an Odia perspective as suggested by Madam President. With the departure of mild winter, spring has sprung quicker than before to be celebrated with our spring issue.

Babru Samal

Julie Ray

Sridhar rana



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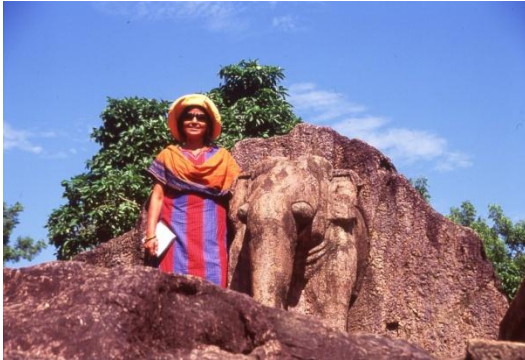
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Annapurna Pandey



Dear Friends,

Happy Spring!

Spring is particularly special for Odias. April 1st marks Utkala Dibasa (Odisha Day), when we celebrate the day our state secured its independent identity on April 1, 1936. We honor our forefathers – including Utkala Gouraba Madhusudan Das, Utkala Mani Gopabandhu Das, Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati, Pandita Nilakantha Das, the legend writer-activist Fakir Mohan Senapati, Gangadhar Meher and Radhanath Roy - who labored to make this possible, while at the same time we, the North American Odia community, do our part to keep the Odia identity vibrant.

Let me start with a few acknowledgements:

- Thank you to Dr. Babru Samal and editors Julie Acharya Ray and Sridhar Rana for their dedication to our Utkarsa newsletter, which plays such an important role in keeping us in touch
- Welcome to our two new OSA Board of Governors members:
Jhara Das, the new President of Chicago Chapter
Sujata Nayak, the new president of the Maryland/ Virginia chapter.
- Welcome to Bikas Panda, our new volunteer web administrator, who is working on making the OSA website more interactive

Here are some of the highlights of upcoming OSA activities:

Membership Drive

Please join me in welcoming all of the new members to our OSA community.

We are now almost 900 member families - which is wonderful! However we still have some ways to go in order to reach our goal of 1000 families by March 31st.

The life discounted family membership fee of \$200 will end on March 31st. Please spread the word and let other Odias in your area know about us.

Constitution is under Review:

The new constitution was approved by the GBM during the 42nd convention in Dallas last year. There has been much debate going on regarding some loopholes in the present constitution. I have asked a team of Odia leaders to look into it and suggest modification by 31st March, 2012. Then it will be approved by the BOG and sent to all our members for their feedback. After BOG's review and members' comments, it will be sent to the attorney by May 15 and will be brought to the GBM in 2012 OSA convention in Seattle.

OSA Annual Convention: July 5-7 in Seattle, Washington

The annual OSA Convention is the highlight of our year. It's OSA's annual showcasing event and attracts Odias from all over North Americas, Odisha, and around the world.

This year's convention will be held in the beautiful city of Seattle, Washington.

The convention team has been hard at work putting together a convention to remember.

Here's a sneak peek of what to expect:

- Chief guest Vidushi Sunanda Patnaik, an eminent Indian classical singer of Gwalior Gharana from Odisha. She is considered as one of the great dames of Hindustani classical music, a living legend for the Odias who have been listening to her music for almost half a century.
- Several cultural talents like Trupti Das among others will be entertaining the audience with their melodious voice and instruments. There will also be many choices for the children, youth and the second generation adult Odias, including mehefil, discussions, the Subrina Biswal competition in Performing Arts, the Samik Singh Kalinga Entrepreneurship Award competition.
- Many other dignitaries, including His Excellency Malaya Mishra, the present High Commissioner of India to Trinidad and Tobago since 2009, Santrupt Misra, CEO, Carbon Black Business, Director, Group HR and Director, Aditya Birla Management Corporation Private Limited, are also planning to join us at the convention.
- For complete information on convention program plans, please visit the convention page at osa2012.org. Please also note the deadlines to participate in various activities

The 2013 OSA election process will also kick off during the convention. If you are interested in an OSA leadership position, the convention is the time for you to get to know current members, understand the organization and measure its pulse, and start campaigning.

Award Nomination Deadlines:

Samik Singh Award for Kalinga Youth Entrepreneurship – March 31st

Meghna Memorial Award for Creative Writing – April 30th

The details of the competition and additional information about the convention can be found on the convention website: www.osa2012.org.

Please spread the word in your local community. For a list of all of the awards, please visit the OSA webpage: <http://www.orissasociety.org> for more information.

Chapter status updates:

We now have 15 OSA chapters around the country. You will find details online at: <http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/osachapters.htm>.

Drama Festival 2012

Two regions, mainly Michigan and Texas will each be hosting drama festival events in April and May 2012. Please check the following web page for details. If you are a member of the host chapter, please plan to attend and assist and spread the word.
<http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/dramafestival.htm>

I'm looking forward to having our entire OSA family together at our convention to celebrate and socialize. I urge you to register as soon as possible to help the organizers plan.

See you in Seattle!

Annapurna Pandey



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SECRETARY'S REPORT

LEENA MISHRA

BOG Meeting (January)

Date: 01/08/2012

Agenda:

- CONVENTION UPDATE
- GREATER SEATTLE CHAPTER
- TREASURER'S REPORT
- SECRETARY'S REPORT
- MISCELLANEOUS

Attendance:

No	Name	Title	Organization	Present
1	Annapurna Pandey	President	OSA	Yes
2	Kuku Das	Vice President	OSA	Yes
3	Leena Mishra	Secretary	OSA	Yes
4	Sushant Satpathy	Treasurer	OSA	Yes
5	Gatikrushna Tripathy	President	OSA- DC	Yes
6	Bigyani Das	Past President	OSA	Yes
7	Amar Pani	President	Southern Chapter	Yes
8	Prabhat Mohapatra	President	OSA – NYNJ Chapter	Yes
9	Sabita Panigrahi	President	CanOSA	Yes
10	Nihar Nanda	President		Yes
11	Debashish Panda	President		Yes
12	Amar Pani	President		Yes
13	Nishikant Sahoo	President		Yes

14	Arat Rout	President		Yes
15	Radhagibinda Mohanty	President		

Outcome:

- 1) the responsibility of writing a response to the Debututta Dash based on the BOG discussion was assigned to BOG member Radhamadhav Mohanty and Debashish Panda.
- 2) The fund for OSA & Odisha will maintained as separate fund.
- 3) Haranarayan Padhi was added to the Grievances committee

BOG Meeting (February)

Date: 02/05/2012

Agenda:

- President's Report
- Convention Update
- Constitution Review
- Convention 2013
- Drama Festival & OSA's Budget
- Miscellaneous

Attendance:

No	Name	Title	Organization	Present
1	Annapurna Pandey	President	OSA	Yes
2	Kuku Das	Vice President	OSA	Yes
3	Leena Mishra	Secretary	OSA	Yes
4	Sushant Satpathy	Treasurer	OSA	No
5	Amar k. Pani	President	Southern Chapter	Yes
6	Anadi Naik	President	OSA – MD/VA	No
7	Arata Tran Rout	President	OSA - Ohio	No
7	Bigyani Das	Past President	OSA	Yes
8	Debashish Panda	President	OSA – Grand Canyon	No

9	Gatikrishna Tripathy	President	OSA- Washington DC	No
10	Nihar Nanda	President	OSA – New EnglandOSA	No
11	Jhara Das	President	OSA - Chicago	Yes
12	Nihar Nanda	President	OSA – New England	No
13	Pitabasa Panda	President	OSA - Michigan	Yes
14	Prabhat Mohapatra	President	OSA – NYNJ	No
15	Radhagobinda Mohanty	President	Ozark - Central	Yes
16	Sabita Panigrahi	President	OSA - Canada	Yes
17	Priyadarshan Patra	President	OSA – Pacific Northwest	Yes
18	Bidhu Das	President	OSA - SouthEast	No
19	Gopal Mohapatra	President	OSA-Southwest	No

Outcome: It was decided to discuss the constitution about chapter boundary in March BOG Meeting.

BOG Meeting (March)

Date: 03/04/2012

Agenda:

- Convention Update
- Drama Festival and OSA's Budget
- Vice President's Announcement on OSA Award
- Treasurer's Report
- Constitution Review
- Miscellaneous

Attendance:

No	Name	Title	Organization	Present
1	Annapurna Pandey	President	OSA	Yes
2	Kuku Das	Vice President	OSA	Yes
3	Leena Mishra	Secretary	OSA	Yes

4	Sushant Satpathy	Treasurer	OSA	Yes
5	Amar k. Pani	President	Southern Chapter	Yes
6	Anadi Naik	President	OSA – MD/VA	Yes
7	Arata Tran Rout	President	OSA - Ohio	No
7	Bigyani Das	Past President	OSA	Yes
8	Debashish Panda	President	OSA – Grand Canyon	No
9	Gatikrishna Tripathy	President	OSA- Washington DC	No
10	Nihar Nanda	President	OSA – New EnglandOSA	No
11	Jhara Das	President	OSA - Chicago	Yes
12	Pitabasa Panda	President	OSA - Michigan	Yes
13	Prabhat Mohapatra	President	OSA – NYNJ	Yes
14	Radhagobinda Mohanty	President	Ozark - Central	Yes
15	Sabita Panigrahi	President	OSA - Canada	No
16	Priyadarshan Patra	President	OSA – Pacific Northwest	No
17	Bidhu Das	President	OSA - SouthEast	Yes
18	Gopal Mohapatra	President	OSA-Southwest	No
19	Sandip Dasverma	Representative	OSA PNW Chapter	Yes
20	Sujata Naik	President (elected)	OSA - MD/VA	Yes
21	Amulya Das	Convenor	Convention - 2012	Yes

Outcome:

1) A Constitution Review committee was formed comprising of the following people.

- Radhagobinda Mohanty
- Bidhu Das
- Jhara Das

2) It was announced that Sunanda Pattanaik is proposed to give life time achievement award

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TREASURER'S REPORT



Sushant Satpathy

Membership Drive

Welcome our new members to OSA Family!

Please join me in welcoming our new members to OSA Family. We are thankful for their decision to join OSA and be part of OSA. We look forward to their involvement with OSA and its activities.

Naba Kar and Bijaylaxmi Kar, CA, Life Member

Shaikh Haque and Amirunnessa Haque, CA, Benefactor

Dr. James Freeman, CA, Annual Member - 2012-2013

Bidisha Mohanty and Biswa Ranjan Karan, CA, Life Member

Bikash Panda and Prangya Pattnayak, CA, Life Member

Jyostna Patnaik and Kanak Nath, CA, Life Member

Vivek Das and Julie Das, MI, Life Member

Subodh Samal and Suryasnata Sahoo, MN, Life Member

Sanat Patnaik and Sagarika Patnaik, NJ, Life Member

Sarang Mahatwo and Rasmita Swain, NJ, Life Member

Rabindra Sahoo and Deepti Mayee Sahoo, OH, 5-year Member

Ashok Das and Anita Das, OH, Life Member

Anjan Basa and Arpita Basa, OH, 5-year Member

Mohammad Siddiquee and Sayed Diba Farrah, OH, Life Member

Ram Patnaik and Rupa Patnaik, OH, 5-year Member

Ashok Das and Anita Das, OH, Life Member

Satya Pattnaik and Snigdha Pattnaik, OH, Life Member

Anjan Basa and Arpita Basa, OH, 5-year Member

Abani Mishra and Lucina Satapathy, OH, Life Member

Satwik Patnaik and Himanandini Mohanty, OR, 5-year Member

Ravijeet Das and Hemanthika Patnaik, OR, Life Member

Sujit Das and Pinky Patnaik, VA, Life Member

Current Proposals:

There are various suggestions to increase the membership and following proposals are currently under consideration in addition to exploring various Membership Benefit options:

#1. Share a certain % of membership fee (life/ 5-year) with chapters

#2. Allocation of certain % of life/5-year membership for developmental activities

#3. Keep life membership at \$200 to encourage people to join as life member anytime

#4. Possible changes to constitution to allocate difference between life membership and Patron or Benefactor membership to OSA development fund. We believe this will encourage members to upgrade their membership to Patron or Benefactor level to help with a good cause.

OSA Account Statement as of Dec 31st

	Amount	Income/ Expense Category
Opening Balance (9/1/2011)		
Checking A/C #1	\$7,830.07	
Checking A/C #2	\$0.00	
CD #1	\$25,631.81	
CD #2	\$62,224.67	
Total	\$95,686.55	
Receipts		
	\$10,000.00	2011 Convention Advance - Return
	\$1,540.00	Annual Membership
	\$11,775.00	OSA Life, 5-year and Benefactor Membership
	\$402.00	Donation
	\$2,775.00	OSA Fee
	\$13,114.12	Flood Relief Donation
	\$385.25	Interest Income
Payments		
	\$10,000.00	2012 Convention Advance
	\$1,500.00	Regional Drama Festival
	\$170.76	Administrative (Fees , Postage etc)
	\$10,552.41	Flood Disbursement and Expense*
Closing Balance (12/31/2011)**	\$113,454.75	

*Check sent to CMRF for \$2,500
had not cleared as of 12/31 and
not included in the total

****Account Balances as of
12/31/2011**

Checking #1	\$13,965.00
Checking #2	\$11,248.02
CD#1	\$25,661.81
CD#2	\$62,579.92
Total	\$113,454.75

OSA 2011 Convention Account Statement

OSA Convention , 2011 at DALLAS		
Income Expense Statement		
Revenue	Item	Amount
Other Income		
	01 Advance from OSA	10,000.00
	02 OSA Membership	1,000.00
	04 Dance School	290
	05 Business Symposium	4,300.00
	06 Shirts	1,941.06
	Interest Inc	9.16
	TOTAL Other Income	17,540.22
Registration		
	01 SW Chapter	29,181.00
	03 Non SW Chapter	27,092.78

TOTAL Registration		56,273.78
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Sponsors

01 SW Chapter	14,577.00
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03 Non SW Chapter	15,675.00
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04 Souvnr	7,000.00
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05 Corporate	39,853.80
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TOTAL Sponsors		77,105.80
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Total Revenue		150,919.80
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Expenses	Item	Amount
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Entertainment

01 Stage , Light and Sound	12,238.37
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02 Decoration	1,029.94
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03 Youth Entertainment	350
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04 Artist Travel	28,434.38
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05 Artist Honorium	6,700.00
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06 Cultural	1,662.21
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TOTAL Entertainment		50,414.90
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Food Expenses

01 Provision	1,303.85
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02 Kids Meal	599.5
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03 Adult Meal	30,950.55
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TOTAL Food Expenses		32,853.90
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Hotel and Logistics

01 Room Rent and Hotel	9,971.46
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04 Vehicle Rental	1,056.70
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05 Logistics labor	7,628.73
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TOTAL Hotel and Logistics		18,656.89
Mandatory Expenses		
Bank Charge	177.84	
Credit Card Payment	1,643.86	
TOTAL Mandatory Expenses		1821.7
Misc.		
01 Refund to OSA	18,913.59	
03 Video and Photo	400	
04 Trophy	897.5	
05 Business Symposium	1,082.45	
06 Website	229.17	
TOTAL Misc.		21,522.71
Registration Exp		
01 Material Exp	6,294.54	
02 Printing & Postage	1,266.72	
TOTAL Registration Exp		7,561.26
Souvenir		
01 Printing	10,627.60	
02 Mail and Postage	650.66	
TOTAL Souvenir		11,278.26
Youth		
01 Rental	3,034.34	
02 Labor	602	
03 Youth Material	1,749.00	
TOTAL Youth		5,385.34

Total Expenses	149494.96
Total Surplus	1,424.84
Transferred to OSA Main Account	712.42
Transferred to SW Chapter	712.42
(Loknath Patro)	(Tapan Padhi)
Finance , OSA Convention 2011)	(Convener, OSA Convention 2011)

Based on the discussion in OSANet the executives have requested Mr. Sandip Dasverma with help of few other members to come up with a standard format to report Convention Account. As we have encouraged the practice of transparency it was decided by executives that detail reports for different categories (income and expense) will be provided in OSANet forum after March 30th. We will respect the privacy of our donors/sponsors and not publish individual names with donation amounts as we don't have explicit permission do so.



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CHAPTER REPORTS

CANOSA REPORT MARCH 2012



Reported by Sabita Panigrahi

CANOSA's Participation at India Republic Day Celebration

Many from Odia community attended the Panorama India Republic Day celebration. CANOSA presented a beautiful opening dance of Ganesh Vandana. It was very much appreciated by the audience, the media, and the Panorama organizers. This item was choreographed by Nandita Gantayet. It was performed by Arpita Gantayet, Nikita Gantayet, Prachi Mishra and Ineka Panigrahi with excellent synchronization and flawlessness. In spite of their exams the next day as well as other commitments, the girls did a great job. Brampton Guardian published the photograph of Ganesh Vandana dance on the front page of their newspaper. Other newspapers such as South Asian News also carried the news item on CANOSA's Ganesh Vandana with photographs. It was telecasted on Asian Television Network and Rogers TV. Congratulations Girls!

Upcoming Events

Sahitya Patha Chakra

CANOSA is going to conduct its 6th Annual Sahitya Patha Chakra on the 6th of April. The first half of this event will be devoted to the life and literary work of Palli Kabi Nanda Kishore Bala. The second half of the programme will be devoted to oDiA kabita pATha (oDiA Poetry Reading Session) in which local oDiA poets will have the opportunity to recite their own poems. The last component will be on Byanga Sahitya. It is going to be organized by Niranjana Mishra with the help of Sumitra Padhi, Parasar Misra, Abani Pattanaik and Amitabh Mohanty.



Bishuba Milana

Annual Bishuba Milana will be celebrated on May 19th in concurrence with Diamond Jubilee Celebration which marks the 60th anniversary of the reign of the Queen of Canada. On this occasion, CANOSA is planning to publish the souvenir celebrating 40 years of Odias' presence in Canada.

Regional Drama Festival

CANOSA is participating in the regional drama festival which will be held on May 12th in Detroit.

SOUTH WEST CHAPTER

By Gopal Mohapatra

Southwest chapter of OSA had a great year in 2011 as it held the annual OSA convention in Dallas. We are already to a great start in 2012. Our first big event of this year is the regional drama festival. It is going to be held on April 14th in Dallas. Six dramas will be presented by different cities in this festival. This is the 3rd festival and is being awaited eagerly by several drama enthusiasts. Saraswati puja was held in various cities too. People in some cities like Houston and Austin are also gearing up for the Spring picnic to be held in month of April. Houston folks have already started preliminary preparation for this year's Ratha Jatra. Land development and fencing of the proposed Orissa Culture Center in Houston are underway.



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FINAL PS

Shivani Kanungo, Virginia

Although the Myers-Briggs test labels me an ESFJ, a peek into my closet reveals more than those four letters ever could – without the annoyance of 93 questions. On the left, my closet holds pairs of jeans, starting with my dark wash pairs and ending with my totally-eighties acid wash jeans reserved for spirit days. On the right hang my beautiful silk saris embellished with detailed handwork followed by ones made of chiffon and bedazzled with shiny sequins. Right in the middle of my closet, my saris and jeans come face to face. As I got ready for a Diwali dinner, I realized I belong to two very different worlds – both unique and equally a part of me.

My saris, beautiful and vibrant, represent my roots and trigger memories that have helped shape part of who I am. Savoring spicy *samosas* in the busy and bustling markets of New Delhi. Falling asleep in my grandmother’s arms listening to stories of my father’s childhood mischief. Reciting the Indian national anthem on Republic Day. A million saris, a million memories.

Moving to America saw me trade my sari for Dora the Explorer embroidered jeans. As “colour” transformed into “color”, I became a true American—a top seller of Thin Mints and Tagalongs, an avid viewer of *Arthur*, and a proud owner of light-up Scooby-Doo Velcro shoes. My jeans remind me of field trips to Mount Vernon, my first day of Kindergarten with Ms. Coby, and checking out *Junie B. Jones and The Yucky Blucky Fruitcake* from the library. They jog my memories of testing pH levels in West Goose Creek, road trips to Myrtle Beach, and going on daily patient rounds during my internship at Apollo Hospital. But no matter how comfortable my perfectly broken-in Levi’s are, I’ve realized that my wardrobe will never consist of jeans alone.

The truth is, I don’t need to choose between macaroni and *murg masala*; my cultures complement one another. Ice-cold Dr. Pepper washes down savory kebabs and a dash of my mom’s secret cumin spice blend jazzes up crispy French fries. I’ve realized that being immersed in two very different but complementing cultures has taught me to be comfortable in my own skin. I’ve learned adaptability from oscillating between worlds where *paneer tikka* is the food of choice to where potato salad is the mainstay. I’ve learned to educate instead of berate when I get the inevitable “What’s that dot on your forehead?” question referring to my decorative *bindi*. I’ve learned to overcome challenges whether it be fasting all day for a religious ceremony, understanding photosynthesis at the molecular level, or finishing up an AP Statistics assignment while babysitting my brother.

Obviously, a sari-jean ensemble will not grace the pages of *Vogue* any time soon. But as I got ready for my Diwali dinner, staring into my closet, I knew regardless of what I wore, I could not go wrong.

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HAPPY WALKING TO ALL

Prasanna Pati

Salem, Oregon

[have been walking four miles daily Since July 1985. It is not just an exercise; it is a combination of silence, solitude., introspection, meditation and above all, connecting with Mother Nature. Over the years, I have walked the streets of Bangkok, Singapore, Tokyo, Kolkata, New Delhi and also in many cities in America, just to name a few. However, my favorite walking sites are right here in Salem, especially Bush Park.

How did I arrive at this daily walking program? I was a physician/administrator of the Forensic program in the Oregon State Hospital. I suffered from a heart attack around 9:00 A.M. on Friday, December 14, 1984. I was at work. I remember the beginning waves of pain in the chest, crushing, spasmodic, radiation to both arms. I was sweating and even then, I didn't recognize that I was having a heart attack. I was a smoker for many years. I got up from the chair and only then, I felt dizzy. I thought I might pass out. Only at this point, I thought I should go to the Salem Hospital ER. I slowly walked to the nearby, office of a colleague, Dr. Frances Sessions. She gave me a close look I told her I needed to go to the ER and we were on our way. Neither she nor I thought about calling an ambulance.

On the way, Dr. Sessions asked me, 'Are you going to make it?' I cannot recall what I told her, but I should have replied, "May or may not." My mind was abnormally clear. I was vaguely aware that I might not return from this trip and might cross over. I was neither disoriented nor confused.

I knew that I was experiencing a "Near Death Experience." What else do I remember? The nurse, who triaged me, made an instant diagnosis, "I bet this man is having a heart attack." That was the beginning of assessment and treatment, diagnosis confirmed by the ER MD after an EKG reading. Soon after I was started on IV Streptokinase, which had been in use for only two or three years.

Was this a Near Death Experience? Only at the ER I became aware that with a delay of one or two hours, I would have been history. I am a Hindu but during this experience I uttered no prayers, neither had I hallucinations. I had multiple stressors, smoking, lack of exercise, high cholesterol and a very stressful job. I had been in denial.

Dr. Jo. Thaler was my physician. 'While in the cardiac rehabilitation ward, Dr. Thaler told me to come with him on only a hundred feet walk He held my hand I thought Dr. Thaler might be crazy to take me on a walk shortly after the heart attack. Next day, it was two hundred feet. On discharge from the hospital, he 'ordered' me to start walking daily and slowly increase to four miles a day by July 1985. Also, I started working in the Oregon State Hospital on a limited basis. I decided to retire at the end of 1985, at age 60.

That is the story behind my walking program. In January 2006, I had a depressive episode following the death of an elder brother in India. I had weeping spells, sleep problems and difficulty in concentration. Dr. Thaler prescribed medication for sleep, and also asked me to continue my 'spiritual' walks daily and write a story. He is the one who added 'spiritual' to my daily walks. I completed a story within three months. It was about death, dying and mourning and a Hindu ritual in the sacred River Ganges. All my stories in my book, *Adventures and Misadventures of Dr. Sonjee, A Collection of Short Stories" were

constructed during my walks. Dr. Sonjee was my name as a psychiatrist in the Oscar-winning film, "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest." Sometimes, I chant a hymn to Lord Shiva of the Hindus. Lord Shiva is the Great Yogi, the Great Guru and the Cosmic Dancer, creating the Universe. However, during the Near Death Experience on December 14, 1984, it never occurred to me to pray to Lord Shiva or any other Hindu Gods and Goddesses. I recall the Chaplain of the Oregon State Hospital telling me that "God gave you a slap on your face."

Many years after the episode, I read the following about Death. Lucius Annaeus Seneca (3 BC 65 AD) wrote: "He who does not want to die should not want to live. For life is tendered to us with the proviso of death; life is the way to this destination. On this account, it is folly to fear death, for only the uncertain is to be feared, the certain being taken for granted. Death signifies a just and unavoidable necessity. Who should complain about a situation in which everyone is unexceptionable? The first law of nature is equality. Therefore, it would be unseemly to reproach Nature for not having different law for us than for herself. What she joins together, she puts asunder, and what she puts asunder, she joins together again.'

Physicians are under extraordinary stress. Hopefully some, who read this story, will start a program of walking daily and encourage their families to do the same. Hopefully, all physicians in their contact with patients discuss life style issues and expect patients to take responsibility about their health. I implore that you start your day with walking dancing, yoga or meditation.

I worked for almost 28 years in the Oregon State Hospital. I have the view that there is none in America who is not affected directly or indirectly by mental illness and/or substance abuse. Thus, when the State of Oregon decided to reserve a small part of the J Building of the State Hospital, I submitted a Guest Opinion about a Mental Health Museum in that space. This was published in the December 18, 2007 issue of the Statesman Journal. Another guest opinion followed in the November 29, 2008 issue. It is most gratifying to report that there is now a Board of prominent citizens working on this museum. What is close to my heart in this upcoming museum is the educational aspect, the message being, and "Take care of your physical and mental health through primary prevention".

Culture in this country has to change towards people taking responsibility for their own health. I would rather not have people go through a Near Death Experience like I did, but motivate themselves towards a healthy life-style. It is easier said than done. There are all kinds of defense mechanisms operating against lifestyle changes. However, the physician can direct the patient towards such changes, with compassion, discussion, evidence-based interpretations and follow-up monitoring.

Happy Walking to all.



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MY AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

JNANA RANJAN DASH,

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

Since my arrival on this continent (Canada) in September 1970 as a graduate student, years have flown by so quickly! I spent my first 9 years in Canada followed by next 32 years in California. I still look back to my early years in Canada with fond memories.

Those were the days with no Internet, no personal computer, no smartphones, no Facebook, and no instant messaging. Synchronous communication via phone was the primary way. When I was an employee at IBM Canada, I started compiling a directory of Odias in North America. Locating fellow Odias was a personal favorite pastime for me. I asked an IBM secretary to type all these addresses and she had a hard time staring at these strange names. When she asked what does "Digambar" mean, I explained (no clothes), and she blushed with a giggle.

During my days of travel in the 1970s, I would locate any Odia in the city and call shamelessly introducing myself. Typically, there was a pleasant surprise and an instant invitation for dinner. I have located Odias in far off cities such as Brussels, London & Birmingham, Canberra, Frankfurt, and Sydney, including many American cities. The simple-hearted and loving nature of Odias all over the world stand out as a specialty. That smile, that curiosity, and that willingness to please you with food are the hallmark of Odia hospitality everywhere.

Then there were those annual OSA conventions. I organized one in 1975 July in Toronto and 100 people attended. It was a one-day affair. In our two-bedroom apartment, four families (from Detroit and Boston) stayed and helped cook the lunch for the convention. It was so much fun! I have attended many conventions and the primary reason is always the same - to meet Odia friends from across the continent.

The entire Odia community felt like a family then. I always claim that being a minority (within the Indo-American diaspora) has its advantages. We all know each other (less now than then) and these friends have become our family. We have spent more time with them than with our own relatives. When our parents and relatives visited, our friends would come regularly and provide such loving company that they never felt being in a foreign country.

Today, our community has grown significantly. Many young people may not feel the passion of meeting other Odias like we did. Given the easy communications now, India and Odisha do not feel far. I guess we were more homesick then than the current generation. I used to write a regular column in Odia called "America Chithi" in the daily Samaj newspaper.

We managed to maintain our cultural heritage and be part of the American mainstream. In my professional life, I have played the executive roles at large companies such as IBM and Oracle and have traveled the world extensively. But that did not hijack me from the basic roots of my language and

culture. When my two sons visit Odisha and speak fluently in Odia, the smile from family members and friends is one of wonder and deep appreciation.

It is quite stressful to pretend to be someone you are not. Let us shed any inferiority complex and embrace our culture and language with real pride. My only wish is for every Odia to keep the language of our forefathers, because that gives us our unique identity. Don't forget – Odia is so close to Sanskrit, the mother of all languages.

To sum up, my years in USA and Canada have been wonderful, largely due to our close Odia community.



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TREKKING BACK ON THE MEMORY LANE

Ghanashyam Mishra

Fort Myers, Florida

It feels like yesterday. But more than four decades ago I landed at JFK airport via TWA Airlines with a student visa. It was my journey to an unknown future with less than five dollars in my wallet and a connecting ticket to State College, Pennsylvania the next morning. I purchased the airline ticket in Calcutta paying Rs. 6520. That was all my life's savings. All my friends and relatives were stunned that I gave up a comfortable Govt. of India's Class I Officer's job in New-Delhi and I was leaving my young bride of two years and our little baby girl behind with my wife's parents at Bolangir. I did not realize then, but it was a sheer madness or I was chasing a mirage.

In the late 1960's, there was a great exodus of doctors, engineers and scientists from India. Soviet style planning by the government resulted in massive unemployment among highly educated young people. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi banned ECFMG examination in India to stop doctors leaving the country. In those days, there was a long line of applicants in front of German, Canadian and Australian embassies' in New Delhi. Young engineer and scientists were looking for jobs abroad in the post-war booming economy. In my profession, Mining Engineering, there were plenty of job vacancies advertised in the mining journals published in USA. But before the enactment of the US Immigration and Naturalization Act, very few Indians were allowed work visas or Green Cards. It was much easier to get a student visa.

At JFK, a very friendly student advisor greeted me. He suggested staying in a hotel for the night near LaGuardia Airport, since I had an early morning flight to Mid-State Airport close to Penn State University. But I did not have fifteen dollars for a hotel room. He showed me the bus stand leading to the sub-way station that would take me to Down-Town Manhattan. I could spend the night in the waiting room at the Port-Authority bus terminal. Also, it would cost only 20 cents bus fare to go to LaGuardia Airport. The advice suited me well. I had no choice but to spend my first night in America at the 5th ave-42nd street bus terminal in New York. By 11 PM the waiting room was almost deserted, except for a couple of persons dozing in one corner. I was lonely, but I had a bigger problem. I was suffering from dysentery and diarrhea eating airline foods. I was surprised that all restroom stalls at the bus terminal were coin operated. Two dimes were to be dropped in the slot to open the door. You could not leave the door open, because it shut close automatically. I could not think of consequences, if I ran out of dimes. Necessity may be the mother of invention, but desperation leads to quick thinking. After my second visit to the bath room, I folded a piece of paper and pushed it in the bolt hole of the stall. That way the door closed, but did not lock. Fortunately, the technique worked and I did not have to feed any more dimes to use the facilities.

Next morning, I made my way to LaGuardia airport without trouble. At State College, I had more hurdles to reach the campus. From India I wrote a letter to my friend Chugh to pick me at the airport. Somehow, he marked his calendar wrong, and I was stranded 20 miles from my destination. I arrived via a campus transport directly at Penn State's Dept. of Mining, since I did not know my friend's location. I was glad to see couple of Indian students in the building, who offered me a ride to my friend's apartment. The next day, I had to take 100 dollars advance from the Dean of the Student Affairs to manage 5 or 6 weeks until I received my social security card and my first pay check as a graduate assistant. The Dean was not very happy that my Professor was admitting so many grad students from India.

From my monthly salary of \$230, I saved enough money during the next six months to buy airline tickets for my wife Manorama and our two year old daughter Seema. So far, I was sharing an apartment with two other students. Before my family's arrival, I rented a one bed-room apartment in the Graduate Students' Apartments. I furnished the place with a six dollar bed, eight dollar bed, a five dollar black-white TV, and a two dollar dinette set. I picked up discarded cooking pots and a half broken baby chair for Seema from the laundry area. One man's trash is another man's treasure. During my days at Penn State, graduate students with families were the poorest in the land of affluent. They had barely enough to survive. Almost half of my pay check went for apartment rent. Fortunately, groceries were cheap. A loaf of bread cost 29 cents, a gallon of milk less than a dollar and gasoline cost 30 cents a gallon. Most grad students from India did not have health insurance. One very kind physician, Dr. Wright charged \$2 per patient visit to needy students and their families. All student families cared for each other. Our children played together, shared toys, and our neighbors offered rides to those without cars. My wife earned a few dollars baby-sitting for our neighbors' children at 25 cents an hour. In a few months, she saved enough to buy a hand sewing machine. She would buy a piece of remnant cloth from the G.C.Murphy store and make a little dress for our daughter.

Most of my professors were very helpful to foreign students. But some did not like foreigners being hired by American Companies after graduation. My advisor was one of them. He liked my work, but he wanted me to get my degree and return back to India. Once he told me openly, "You Indians, Chinese, Koreans and Turkish students will never be accepted socially or culturally. You should get your degrees and go back to your own countries". At that time I knew what kind of reference he would give me when I apply for jobs. Moreover, I was on a student visa. I did not have any savings to pay for finger-printing and photograph etc. to apply for immigration. I took a loan of \$120 from a local bank with the condition of repaying \$20 per month and accrued interests. I applied and within four weeks, I got my green card approval from the US Immigration Service. After a week, I got a call from an Army Lt-Colonel in Bellefonte, PA to appear in front of the Draft Board. The officer was polite. "Mr. Mishra, you are 29 years old. You may be called for military duties if there is an all out war against USA. In the meantime carry this draft card in your wallet". I had a sigh of relief. Later on I learnt that the cut-off age for active duty in 1968 was age 25. Military Draft was very unpopular among young Americans and many left for Canada to avoid going to Vietnam War.

Somehow, I survived the rigors of graduate studies and was about to graduate in December 1969. The next question was to find a job. The 60's and 70's were the golden age of American Industrial Superiority. But it was not easy to get hired with a foreign sounding name and an accent. Big companies like US Steel and Bethlehem Steel sent me regret letters that they could not hire non-citizens. They did not accept green cards. Also, I did not have any support from my Penn State advisor. It was a coincidence that I was attending a meeting in Pittsburgh and I walked into the corporate headquarters of a mining company for an interview. I knew from campus advertising that Eastern Gas and Fuel was looking for several mining engineers for its Pennsylvania and West Virginia operations. The personnel manager was surprised, since just a few days before my professor told him that no mining students will graduate from Penn State until May of next year. He told me to come back after lunch for an interview with the Vice President of Engineering. That afternoon, I had an hour of interview with Mr. Laird, the Vice President. At the end of our meeting, Mr. Laird offered me a job on the spot. My starting salary would be \$1000 per month and the company will pay for my family's moving expenses. I thanked him and declined the moving expenses. I told him that we did not have any furniture to move. I could move everything we own in my old 1960 Dodge car to an apartment in Pittsburgh. Suddenly, Lord's Grace shined on the Mishra family right before Christmas Holidays.

In early January, 1970, I started working as a junior engineer armed with a slide rule and some basic engineering knowledge, mostly from text books. I preferred working in the corporate office located in the Koppers Building, down-town Pittsburgh. I was assigned the job of ventilation engineer to oversee the design, construction and start up operation of air shafts, fan installations and methane degasification projects in company's Pennsylvania and West Virginia Coal Mines. The office people treated me well. There was one major problem. In USA, everyone calls you by your first name. I had to spell my name and tell my co-workers the correct pronunciation repeatedly. I started with G as in George. To make life easier for everyone, I suggested them to call me George. During most of my working years I was known as George Mishra.

My mentor in the office was a senior draftsman, Mr. Elmer Bracken. Mr. Bracken became a father figure to me. He taught me how to use drafting instruments, and how to make blue prints. Elmer was very friendly and could talk to any stranger, young or old. Thanks to him, I got rid of my low self-esteem and started talking to my peers and supervisors. Elmer's wife June and daughter Lynn visited our apartment and set up our household. Mr. Bracken took me to see baseball games in Pittsburgh's newly opened Three Rivers Stadium. Over the years, our children became good friends of his grandchildren. Our families remained close until Mr. Bracken's passing in mid 1980's.

In the industrial America, honesty and hard work paid off well. In less than two years after I passed my professional engineering exams, I received a 15% raise and was assigned a supervisory job in a mining complex in West Virginia. My wife started her Pediatrics residency in Morgantown and we bought our first home close to the WVU Medical Center. In 1975, I was appointed as the Chief Engineer of Buckeye Coal Company, a subsidiary of LTV Steel Corporation. My wife completed her residency and opened her private medical practice in a small town in south western Pennsylvania. During a short span of six years our family was well established. Before the end of the decade, there were many mergers and acquisitions in the steel industry, and in 1980, I was named the Group

Chief Engineer of the Coal Division of the third largest steel company in America. I had a young staff of 30 engineers, surveyors, draftsmen, and field technicians to support production of 8 million tons of coal for our steel mills. There were over 3000 coal miners employed by our company. Our work force consisted of mostly children of East European immigrants. One of the future labor leaders, Mr. Richard Trumka (the current President of AFL-CIO) was born in our company's mining housing complex at Nemaquin. I knew both his parents, and Richard worked in our office as a summer student. Our three children grew up in a crime-free rural environment with many friends whose parents were farmers, coal miners or steel workers. It was a real melting pot of cultures.

I was lucky to witness the glorious days of the Steel City. Pittsburgh boasted as the 3rd largest corporate head-quarters for fortune 500 companies like US Steel, Alcoa, Westinghouse, Gulf Oil, J&L Steel, HJ Heinz and PPG Industries. Residents of Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania enjoyed high paying jobs. After the building boom of 1960's and early 70's, the city dazzled with its magnificent sky-line surrounded by three sparkling rivers. Our sports teams like the Steelers, Pirates and the Penguins dominated the sports world. In the mid 1980's, the decline of the steel industry and bankruptcy of my company resulted in our move from Pennsylvania. I was lucky to get a job with the US dept. of Energy to clean up nuclear waste in South Carolina. By this time, our children had moved to colleges and universities. For several years, my wife and I had to work and live in different cities in South Carolina. We had a few friends, but our social contacts were limited. After our retirement, we decided to move to the Sunshine State. This time, our social life has changed for better. We have several Indian friends, both young and old. On our street, we have 10 young Indian couples. Most of them are doctors or engineers. We are everyone's uncle and auntie. Their children love my wife's cookies. Our own children and grandchildren are spread across the continent in Ohio, Nevada and California. Fortunately, we have a few Odia friends not too far from us. Our cotemporaries, Prabhat and Nirmala Mishra, Natabar and Ballari Khuntia are in Naples and Dr. (Mrs.) Ira Dash lives in Bonita Springs. We enjoy joint Odia cooking, and reminisce the old times. Also, I have three of my South Indian BHU classmates living nearby. At least once a month, they invite us for a Dosa and Idli party. In summary, it has been a wonderful journey for a little boy who grew up in the impoverished Talamal of Mahanadi Delta area of Odisha to the beautiful Gulf Coast of South Florida.



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RUSTY DIED YESTERDAY – HERE IS THE OBITUARY

Barun Pani

Ridgeland, Mississippi

Rusty died yesterday. Those of us, who lived in Romeoville, any length of time in last half century, knew Rusty. Everybody who heard it, felt sorry that he died so early. Mostly the reactions were that of some kind of sadness, 'So sad, Rusty was a good man. RIP Rusty, Our prayers are with you and your loved ones.' Most of the obituary read something like that.

But Rusty was not someone who ever featured in Newspaper, or TV. He had no big accomplishments to talk about. He never had any opinion about leaders, political parties, church, issues, economy or the current affairs. No one ever heard him talking about the historical wars we fought, or Obama's winning, or even Kennedy or Dr. King's assassination. He did not know who Saddam Husain or Osama Bin Laden was. He was a church going guy, but even in the church, he just prayed on his Sundays and then came back to his little apartment and spent the day probably watching TV or doing chores.

Those of us who knew him during his younger days knew that Rusty was married to his High school sweetheart Leona. Leona was an ever smiling beauty, and everyone in the school was jealous of Rusty. They were married early just after the High school. Then Rusty took this job in the furniture factory as a carpenter. He loved his job, and he loved Leona to death. But then suddenly one day, ever smiling Leona went home to be with God after a brief illness. Rusty has been living alone in his apartment ever since.

Life without Leona was empty, but Rusty kept himself busy making those Sofas, Beds, and in his spare time he did custom made furniture for the rich folks in Romeoville and surrounding cities. He did not earn a lot, but then he did not need a lot either.

The economy was tough. Markets were plunging and businesses were trying to stay afloat. One day, the company Rusty worked for decided to import the furniture from China instead of making them locally. It was cheaper to buy from China than paying all the workers here. There was a mass layoff. Rusty lost his job with many others in Romeoville, Mississippi. Those who could relocate relocated, the population declined, and once flourishing Romeoville looks like a semi-deserted town. The government services declined, the police force was trimmed. Shops closed, crime increased, pot holes grew bigger, houses stood empty, and those who could not move were left tried to live with less.

Rusty did not know how to react, he had very little savings. He spent most of it when Leona was sick and hospitalized. He did not know that the factory will close and one day he will not have a job. He tried to get odd jobs like mowing or fencing, but there were very few customers left in and around Romeoville. He kept on trying to earn a little but everyday it was getting more and more difficult.

Last night a few kids broke into his apartment with guns and ski masks. Rusty woke up from his sleep. They asked him where his money was. Rusty showed a drawer where he had thirty five dollars left. They did not believe him and started beating him hoping that he will ultimately tell them. But Rusty had no answer. He collapsed and as soon as the kids realized that he is not going to get up, they ransacked the house and took whatever they could.

Someone in the neighborhood realized something wrong this morning. Rusty's door was open, and the robbers left a few things in front of his house because they were useless junk for them. The neighbor called 911. The paramedics came, checked and then declared Rusty died last night.



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DOWN THE MEMORY LANE: SNIPPETS

Lalatendu Pahi

Houston, Texas

“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both “

- *Robert Frost*

Once upon a time...

Year 1978 presented a ticklish dilemma. Should I attend Delhi University for M.Phil. or Leads University in England for a PhD in Linguistics ?or for a PhD in Higher Education Administration at Ohio University in US. Soon ended up in DU, subsequently relocated to JNU dabbled in pursuit of bourgeois IAS. Doomed as English Literature major when subject was dropped as Angreji Hate from Prelim Afterwards despite ranking in the top 25 in Orison state civil service exam deep frustration set in when summary OAS appointments got stalled in the courts in the name of affirmative action. Joined in academics for about a year as Head of Dept deemed Vice Principal in a Steel Company owned College. Got disillusioned by early 1986 resulting perhaps in a self banishment, seeking fortune in a far away place! Call it Brain Drain 101 if you like...

A Home Away From Home..

I Left dear motherland to be in dreamland on September 9, 1986 first arriving in Chicago. It has since been quite an Odyssey for a quarter century everybody!

Iowa Days:

Balancing East and West that is in a Midwest state. It was shock of our life at first. Everything kind of seemed strange, forlorn but beautiful and haunting. First impressions last long! Winter was devastating, but summer was idyllic. Iowa indeed is a Land of Plenty with hardy farmers and techno parks in aesmplatic co existence. Initially my wife Surashri (Bada Baby) was preparing in pursuit of her integrated PhD in Psychology, and I went for an executive MBA program in MUM an exclusive private university. While there it was amazing to meet a lot of Ivy League faculties, global scholars, scientists and Nobel laureates assembled in a small campus established in the seventies by a Yoga phenomenon from India who had propounded pragmatically that “Knowledge has infinite organizing power” and “Knowledge is structured in one’s consciousness”. As a novice seeker it was nice to be in touch with one’s own living, breathing heritage and all the more sweet in a foreign land.

Our son Angsuman (Lasu) was four years old when he accompanied his mother, a daughter (Suchismita) was born to us in May, '88 effectively making my wife forgo her higher education and contented herself

to be a doted mom and beautiful home maker. Now that kids are grown she is mulling her aspirations, and I'm all for it.

Attractions of the Metropolis:

Settle in CHICAGO, Windy City or move to Houston, Space City was a real hard choice as sometimes I was shuttling 300 miles a week almost for eight years between Hinsdale, Chicago (Corporate Hd. Office, my private apartment) and Fairfield, Iowa (my Branch Office, Family home) Since kids were growing and family came first a gut wrenching decision had to be made by September 1996 the main reason being we had no Indian family then in a 150 mile radius except handful college students, none married with kids the same age or range that of our children. Our in-laws while frequently visiting joked about how it was easier to find aliens in corn field than tanned brown faces in Heaven on Earth!

Weather was the biggest consideration other than a plum job which I had cultivated from Chicago. Chicago was cold and windy, Houston, warm and humid. In a stroke of luck, I got hired for a comparable corporate job in Houston. We folded our existence in Iowa and bolted for the Bayou City. Children missed their longtime loving friends but parents got reprieve from the bone chilling cold and prairie washed arctic winds. It was all bitter sweet parting and meeting, heaving sighs-new place, new friends, intimidating unknowns-big city living. We landed in Houston after a long two days drive in our battered family sedan.

Do Not Mess With Texas

While driving we noticed the state posted signs. It was to say the least asking the travelers not to mess or is this warning for messy Texans or uncouth cow boys and cow girls. We have seen quite a few of cow boy movies but real life? No easy settling here perhaps.

Keep Houston Beautiful

Then we roll into the five six lane wide state highways and by lanes and the tone and tenor of the DPS road signs feels assuaging-a mild admonition to conscientious city dwellers and visitors.

Space City or Bayou City:

"Houston we have landed" Houston is known perhaps all over the world for NASA Johnson Space Center, the manning station since when man landed in the moon.

But native Houstonians like to call her the Bayou City referring to the intricate natural and man made waterways and canal systems connected to the Houston Ship channel and confluence of Gulf of Mexico off the beautiful Galveston Island.

Everything is Big & Beautiful in Texas

We wanted to find myth or reality and some how convinced factually that it is indeed the fourth largest metropolis and a beautiful mosaic of people and culture from all over the world with a very sizable Asian Indian people and more than fifty Odiya families of late.

Houston is justifiably called Greater Houston by the city visitors beaureau literatures, Downtown may be merely seven square miles

With air conditioned sky walks and underground well traveled public tunnels, metro ride and metro suburban shuttle rides but Houston at large is densely spread out over 150 square miles of wide spacious inhabitations. There is limited public transportation in this automobile mecca. Texas size hospitality is a common refrain in this Southwestern state in United States. This is a southern charm offensive any way you look at it. Indeed Texas is huge not only size but called a Texas republic state, the only state in Federation where the state flag flies parallel to the US Flag, and fiercely independent Texans armed to the teeth pledge their first loyalty to state.

Houston You have a problem:

Like Los Angeles, Houston's air quality needs improvement as to have no ozone days. Thus poor environmental quality in the industrial refineries impacts surrounding suburbs giving rise to seasonal respiratory problems. Summer in Houston can be compared to Mumbai but the active hurricane season brings apprehension with frequently occurring El nino phenomena.

We are also concerned about southern sumptuous eating habits which create a lot of plump people. There are over 5000 five thousands restaurants of all kinds and all palates in Greater Houston alone not to mention neighboring cities.

Excellent Schooling:

Our kids both have been through public and private mix of career education. Our son graduated from the elite Engineering High school and was a participant in NASA fly high Aerospace program and our daughter excelled in the Magnet science program in highly structured environment sometimes referred in the south as school within school.

Much unlike other metropolises, Houston has been able to maintain a real good public funded education system. For example the Texas Lotto bequeaths part of its proceeds directly to education. Besides there are numerous private and charter schools for best quality education at affordable price. Our experience with higher education is also sheer delight as one of our Asian Indians Dr. Renu Khatoor is the chancellor of Flagship University of Houston, who raised it to a Tier One research University.

Travel Bugs;

Our cohesive family has traveled extensively through the length and breadth of America, the Beautiful. Be it East Coast or West Coast, North plains or Gulf South or in between, we try to fly or drive at the drop of a hat. It has almost become both ritual and pilgrimage to go on vacations to the many National Parks, Monuments and the Splendors and Wonders both Nature and man made .Reminiscing I had the good luck and opportunity to practice flying in wonder struck but stopped after only 18 hours and was even offered owning a Cessna as motivation by a Swiss friend but somehow did not continue in the 90's. However it sure feels good now to see my nephew Sabyasachi, (Baby) happens to be a Captain in Indian Jet Airways after completing Flying school here staying among us in Houston, Kansas, Florida, Atlanta

and flying for a charter airlines delivering US Mail. He has incredible sense of loyalty and humor to fly us to Indian traveling destinations and is now blessed with his sweet young daughter and an ever dotting wife.

Home is where your Heart is

Call it a confused Desi Odiya's feeling of homesickness, pull of the birth place or anything, there is nothing like a rich feeling like a real home coming and not the adopted home away from home. It for sure is melancholic, or sentimental attachment or the longing for the long lost, there is always a pull somewhere inside to become the Return of the Native. However the more my hairs turn white I feel like Oarsima Tarro, the Japanese sea man who got lost in the sea and by the time he resurrected, time had written him off...If art mirrors life where am I in the memory lane. At what point in the cross roads of life can I determine the remainder of my path: The Road Ahead for this Odiya. Call by whatever designation you wish Non Resident Indian Odiya or overseas Odiya or Repatriate Odiya or Paradesi, my Southwestern Odiya Roots (hailing from a semi-town called Thakur Patna by Keonjhar Maharaj's palace Keonjhar Garth) (physical map orientation: National Hwy 6 originates from Calcutta passes through Keonjhar to Sambalpur up to Mumbai), Strong and faded Memories vignettes stretch from days of School/College/University/Work Places in Bhubaneswar , Shantiniketan, Delhi, Rishikesh, Badbil, Kolkata in India to Chicago, Illinois; Fairfield, Iowa to Houston, Kingwood, Texas and dots the slippery path stretching the horizon.

And memory is getting fuzzier; I'm still away from home...

----End---

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost



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JAGANNATH FINDS A HOME IN THE BAY AREA

Annapurna Pandey

Santa Cruz, California

Beginning in 1965, when the United States encouraged people from other countries to study and legally work in the country, a significant number of Oriyas took advantage of this policy. Shalini Shankar notes that “ From the 1970s until the present, the high-tech industry has drawn waves of immigrants into this region”(2008: 31). They are mainly professional people, with degrees in the sciences, medicine, engineering and technology. Unlike Punjabis, Gujuratis, Bengalis, UP wallas (people from the state of Uttar Pradesh known as UP), and other regional communities from India, the number of Oriyas was not large, but a majority of them were economically very successful with high paying jobs in their areas of expertise.

Globalization has led to the emergence of new diasporic communities brought together by new opportunities. It has given a new face to diasporic communities like the Oriyas in the Bay Area. As one of the diasporic Oriyas who came to California in late 1960s put it, “During my time, we were so few in number. We were constantly struggling to fit into the mainstream society. Today the new generation of Oriyas arrives with a new self- confidence, which their skills have given them and are surrounded by more people like themselves. They do not have that sense of insecurity. With their sophisticated mastery of the new information technology, they are well aware of the possibilities open to them and they also know how to take advantage of them” (Saroj Behera, March 6, 2009).

Even though Indians started to arrive in the United States, especially California, beginning the early 20th century, the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, set a quota of 20 thousand immigrants from each country. It promoted mainly the migration of educated professionals and their families from India. A handful of Oriyas came for graduate education during the 1960s and 70s followed by a large number in the 1990s for jobs made available with the advent of the information technology revolution. Since the early 1990s, the Greater Bay Area has emerged as one of the hubs attracting engineers and other professionals from all over the globe, including Orissa.

When I came to the Bay Area in 1989, there were only about 75 Oriyas in the midst of about 30 thousand Indians (Mohan, 2005). The Oriyas used to meet in each other’s homes, and used to rent community halls to celebrate some of the religious festivals like Saraswati Puja (the worship of the goddess of learning) and Ganesh puja (the worship of god of auspiciousness and remover of evil). It was only in the 1990s, with an increase in population, that Oriyas began to see themselves as a distinct ethnic group, who are consciously crafting a sense of cultural identity and a sense of community in Silicon Valley. Sharing a common language and heritage (from the same university, college, town, neighborhood), Oriyas feel at home with each other in the Bay Area and bond with each other by sharing food, and celebrating many feasts and festivals. Being transplanted from the same cultural region, they continue to address each other using kinship terms specific to that part of India. For example, any male older than the person is addressed as Bhaina; any female older becomes Nani. The second generation children born and brought up in this country, address the first generation adults,

sometimes even younger to them, as Mause (mother's sister's husband) and Mause (Mother's sister). Even if they are twelve thousand miles away from their homeland, the use of these kinship terms reaffirms the feeling of regional connection the Oriyas feel towards their fellow members.

Oriyas from Southeastern India constitute a distinct immigrant community of a thousand middle class professionals, spread throughout the Silicon Valley. Even though they are divided by castes, regions of Orissa, class and family background, they are united by their common worship of Jagannath, the presiding deity of their state. Oriyas represent the Jagannath tradition, an age-old Hindu tradition, which emphasizes Jagannath as the Ishtadevata (presiding deity) of the region. He is the preserver of the Universe, the avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu, but very unique in terms of myth, image, and associated rituals. He represents the diverse communities of Orissa, and his uniqueness lies with his distinct identification with Oriya people.

Even though there are three Hindu temples in the Greater Bay Area, the Oriyas missed their principal marker of identity, Jagannath. Since they have come to seek better opportunities and a new life for themselves, their patron deity from Orissa, Lord Jagannath, had to come with them. So it was no surprise to me that during March 2009 a week long celebration was organized for installing Jagannath in the Fremont Hindu temple. Some senior members of the community used the CALNET to appeal to their fellow Oriyas for contributions to cover the cost of installing Jagannath. Within six months, they were able to collect eighty seven thousand dollars, and began planning to bring Jagannath to Fremont. An astrologer was consulted to determine a sacred and auspicious day for the installation ceremony. The Murtis (idols) were ordered from Puri, and materials for the ceremony were purchased in Orissa. A priest from Jagannath Temple in Puri was contracted to bring these accessories to Fremont and to preside over the installation ceremony. The community used modern technology and various means of communication, such as print media, television, Internet, Facebook, CALNET.org and emails to disseminate details concerning Jagannath's sthapana (installation). This community provides a vivid example of the continuation of Hindu tradition, spiritual creativity, and inventiveness. The impressive aspect of the weeklong celebration of the installation of Jagannath was that the Oriya community succeeded in creating a distinct place for Jagannath in the Hindu community of Bay Area. They were able to do that by successfully orchestrating the participation of people of different regions of India in this celebration. As a result, they acquired a unique place for themselves as worshippers of Jagannath among the diasporic Indians in the Bay Area. Every day almost a thousand people were fed at the Fremont Temple where the ceremony occurred.

One important aspect of the celebration involved the communal sharing of food specifically prepared by the Oriyas. This consisted of distributing Prasad (consecrated food) and a full meal catered by the Oriya community. Interestingly, some young engineers searched for the exact recipe followed at the Jagannath Temple in Puri, and cooked similar food for this special occasion. They successfully replicated not only the same items but also the same taste and flavor in each one of them. Attendees raved about the food, remarking that they tasted the same flavor in the Prasad, served at the installation ceremony, as they had eaten at the Puri temple. On CALNET, people signed up to bring offerings every day and some members organized bhajans (the singing of religious hymns), kirtans (communal recitation from

sacred books and playing religious music) at the temple. Young community members were engaged in building a replica of the temple gate to welcome all the visitors to the temple.

One of the highlights of the festival occurred when a cow and her calf were brought to the temple. Cows are worshipped by Hindus as the giver of milk, hence are the symbol of life. Cow is also known as the mother for being the life giver. Interestingly, by involving the cow in the life giving ritual of Jagannath, symbolically it affirmed the importance of cow in the practice of Hinduism even in the diaspora. As explained by the presiding priest, the god had to see the cow first when he opened his eyes, which is the birthing ceremony of the divine. It was amazing to see the humanization of the divine body, the cow as the mother of not just humans but also the divine. This symbolizes Jagannath's association with Krishna, the cow herd god in Hindu mythology. I observed that many parents were explaining their children about the role of cow in Hindu mythology, and her significance for the sustenance of the universe. This ritual might be compared with Durkheim's description of Chirunga ceremony as a means of "collective effervescence"(1912:469), reaffirming a sense of community and belongingness among the participants across generations.

On the day Jagannath was installed, a dance drama was organized which enacted episodes from the life of Jagannath, his change of abode from his Savara (tribal) origin brought by the Hindu king to the present temple in Puri. For the young children, participating in the dance drama was an occasion to experience their ethnic identity and demonstrate their ability to sing songs in the Oriya language and to show off their skill and talent in performing Orissi dance. I found it moving to see the spontaneous singing and dancing of the people who gathered to witness the installation ceremony of Jagannath. The joyous celebration felt like the events welcoming a newborn child in a family, a common occurrence in an Indian household.

The installation of the Jagannath idol in this Fremont Hindu Temple is nothing new in the United States. With the growing Indian population, and the increasing number of Oriyas, not only the number of Hindu temples are growing, similar rituals are regularly occurring in many Hindu temples in various parts of the United States. Hindu temples boast having a Jagannath idol as well as other gods and goddesses from different regions of India. I have observed the worship of Jagannath in many Hindu temples in cities such as Nashville, and Huntsville, Tennessee; Omaha Nebraska; Washington DC; Dallas, Texas; St. Louis, Missouri and Minneapolis, Minnesota, places where Oriyas are present in substantial numbers. The installation of Jagannath in the Fremont Hindu Temple along with the preexisting gods and goddesses of other regions recognizes the increasing presence of Oriyas as a distinct regional community among the Indians in the Silicon Valley.

Within the broader context of the Indians in Silicon Valley, the Oriya community is surely holding on to the markers of its Oriyaness by clinging to its language and culture. The establishment of Jagannath in the Fremont Temple provided Oriyas a public space—presided over by their patron deity—where they can assemble any time as individuals or as groups. It also provides a safe space for social bonding among the Oriyas, both newcomers and those who have been in the United States for a long time. Since the installation of Jagannath at the Fremont Temple, the Oriyas of the Bay Area are sponsoring a monthly gathering at the Fremont Temple, where they meet to sing bhajans culminating in a sumptuous meal

sponsored by community members. Many parents bring their children to participate in these gatherings, which help them to learn about the significance of Jagannath in Oriya culture. This personal as well as social space helps the members reaffirm their sense of belonging to a community that is blessed by their patron deity—a deity who is a meaningful marker of their identity. The establishment of Jagannath in the Fremont Hindu Temple has given the Oriyas a new sense of recognition among their fellow Indians in Silicon Valley. It has also given them a new pride in bringing their patron deity to live with them in their new home. This helps strengthen their ethnic identity and reinforces their values as members of a close-knit ethnic community.



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COMING TO AMERICA

Babru Samal
Rockville, Maryland

Soon after my master's in Botany from VaniVihar, I got the national scholarship for study abroad and came to California to do my Ph.D. my entry into a different surrounding and culture was smoothed thanks to the help of Dr. Nirode Mohanty and Dr. Sarat Mohapatra. The aspect of society as well as science that impressed me was the availability of ways and means to accomplish what one wants to do. I was able to order a chemical or enzyme for research and got it next day instead of waiting six months or more. In the land of opportunity to excel or get lost was my choice. Luck is another name for hard work, which I had to do as I switched field from descriptive science of Botany as taught at VaniVihar to intriguing, rapidly developing area of molecular and cellular biology. There was so much to learn and so many means at my disposal to do it. Only think I have to do seek out and use it.

Like any person, American society has both good and bad aspects. It was my choice what to embrace, should I go to bar, library or laboratory to Hindu temple. What struck me most was the lack of rigidity of definition of right and wrong and a sense of adventure. Instead of already feeling confident and assured based on what parents and teachers told me to be right and wrong, it opened the door to possibilities, to question, to seek, do experiment within a boundary and venture in whatever I was interested. It may be meditation, music, medical technology, metallurgy, microarray, mobile technology or MARs. There is no father figure with stringent rules telling what to do or what not do based on his convictions. As long as I am willing to do hard work, be diligent, take responsibility of my own action and know how to market my talent and deeds and smart enough to accept and learn from my mistake, the possibilities are endless.

My aspiration changed once I realize where I am. Where there is a way, there is a will. Using the available means to my advantage instead of pining and complaining about what is missing became the path to achieving what I wanted. Seeking out help when I am stuck was mostly beneficial. That came from my own Oriya community, Indian community or even strangers at large in science over the internet to strangers in a city I am visiting for the first time. There is no hand out and everyone is on his or her own to sink or swim. The dignity of work appeared to be classless. A vice president of a company was willingly driving a taxi or working at Macy while preparing for a new startup venture.

I appreciated myself as an Indian much more once I was in USA. There I was one Oriya among millions with not much exposure to the amazing cultural diversity that Indian has to offer. A sense of bonding to nonOriyas became a norm. Sooner and later that led to the appreciation of other food and cultures from around the world. Pizza, Chinese food, Pasta, Buritto, Gyro, Falafel, Kimchi and more became as familiar as gphant turkari and pakhal. Enjoying cultural festivals festooned with Korean, Persian, Chinese and Japanese dances added my appreciation to the poetry in motion beyond Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Kuchipudi.

Most people I deal with inside or outside science have accents. It spans from Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, German, Hungarian, and Spanish, Africans and even New York or southern drawl. At my work we discuss research proposals and results with people who came from all different parts of the world. In addition to their mother tongue, every one speaks the language of science, a unity in diversity.

My exposure to the cultural programs and festivals of different ethnic groups enrich me and enhances my appreciation of other's way of life, other's sense of beauty, musical preference, food preferences as well approaches they take to tackle a problem. I enjoy the common human yearnings while respecting the different ways to achieve it. It is wonderful feeling to be a part of microcosm in addition to be an active participant of the Oriya culture which I understood and appreciated much better after I came to America.

Certain values I learnt as a child stuck with me instead of being diluted or contaminated. The value of spirituality, yoga and meditation, respect for ancient knowledge, vegetarian food, respect for mother earth and to each other irrespective of race, language, facial features and clothing slowly becoming more American than before and I appreciate that. It appears as if the principle of 'basudhyeb kutumbakam' became more apparent to me with time after I came to America.



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ଉଦ୍ୟାନର ସମ୍ପର୍କ

(ପଞ୍ଚମ ଭାଗ - ପୂର୍ବ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ଭାଗରୁ)

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, ଡେଟନ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ



ସେଦିନ ଥାଏ ଶୁକ୍ରବାର । ପ୍ରତିଭାର କନ୍ଫରନ୍ସର ଶେଷଦିନ । ଲକ୍ଷ୍ ପରେ ଅଳ୍ପ ସମୟ ପାଇଁ ବଜାରକୁ ଗଲା ପ୍ରତିଭା ଓ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଉପହାର କେତୋଟି କିଣାକିଣି କରିସାରି ସେ ହୋଟେଲ୍ ଫେରିଆସିଲା । ଯଦିଓ ସେଦିନ କନ୍ଫରନ୍ସ ଡରଫରୁ ପାଖାପାଖି ଅଧକ ସବୁ ବୁଲି ଦେଖିବାର ଯୋଜନା ଥିଲା, ତରୁଣ ମହାନ୍ତିଙ୍କ ଗୀତ ଶୁଣିବାର ନିଶା ତା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପଶିଥିଲା । ହୋଟେଲ୍ରେ କିଛି ସମୟ ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନେଇ, ସେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଅଧଘଣ୍ଟା ଭିତରେ ଶ୍ରୀଜୟ ଗୀତି ନେଇ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । ଠିକ୍ ଅପରାହ୍ନ ୫ଟା ବେଳକୁ ସେମାନେ ଉଦ୍ୟାନରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ସମସ୍ତ ଅତିଥି ପ୍ରାୟ ଆସିଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି ଓ ମାଇକ୍ରୋଫୋନ୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରେ ତରୁଣ ମହାନ୍ତିଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ପ୍ରତିଭାର ମନ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଗଲା । ଏହାକୁ କହନ୍ତି ହିଁ ଘଟସୁତ । ନହେଲେ ପ୍ରତିଭାର ଭାଗ୍ୟ କଣ ଏମିତି ହୋଇଥାଆନ୍ତା କି ସଂଯୋଗ ବଶତଃ ସେ ଏହି ସମୟରେ ହିଁ କନ୍ଫରନ୍ସ ଆସିଥାନ୍ତା, ଶ୍ରୀଜୟଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିଥାନ୍ତା ଓ ଆଜିର ଏ ସଂଗୀତ ଆସରକୁ ଆସିଥାନ୍ତା ?

ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଘୋଷଣା କରାଗଲା ଯେ, ସମସ୍ତେ ଜଳଖିଆ ପନ୍ଦର ମିନିଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ଶେଷକରି ଆସି ବସିଯାଆନ୍ତୁ ଓ ପନ୍ଦର ମିନିଟ୍ ପରେ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବ । ମିସେସ୍ ଦାଶ ପ୍ରତିଭା ପାଇଁ ପୌର୍ବରେ ଆଲୁଚପ୍ ଓ ପକୋଡି ନେଇ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ ଓ ପ୍ରତିଭାକୁ ନେଇ ନିଜ ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ଚେୟାରରେ ବସାଇଲେ । ବହୁତ ଅତିଥି ଥାଆନ୍ତି ସେଦିନ, ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ଶହେ ଜଣ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ଦାଶଙ୍କର ସଂପର୍କୀୟ, ବନ୍ଧୁ ଅଥବା ଜଣାଶୁଣା ।

ପୂର୍ବଦିନର ଚିକ୍ତ ଅନୁଭୂତି କଥା ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ସମସ୍ତେ ଭୁଲିଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି କି କଣ ? ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ପ୍ରଧାନ କି ନରହରିଙ୍କୁ ସେ ସେଠି ଦେଖିଲାନି ।

ଠିକ୍ ପନ୍ଦର ମିନିଟ୍‌ପରେ ସଂଗୀତ ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା । ଭଜନ, ଆଧୁନିକ, ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ, ଗୀତ ପରେ ଗୀତ ଗାଇ ଚାଲିଥାନ୍ତି ତରୁଣ ମହାନ୍ତି ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଥୀ କଳାକାରମାନେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଥାଆନ୍ତି, ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପତି । ପ୍ରତିଭାର ସବୁ ପସନ୍ଦର ଗୀତ ସିଏ ଗାଇଲେ । “ଜୋଛନା, ଲୁଚନା, ସେଇ ଦୂର ଗଗନେ...”, “ମୋ ମନ ବୀଣାର ତାରେ...”, “ଲୀଳାନିଧି ହେ ଲାଜେ ମୁଁ ଗଲିଟି ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ...” ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ତରୁଣ ମହାନ୍ତିଙ୍କର କେତେଟା ଗୀତ ତା ହୃଦୟକୁ ଏମିତି ଛୁଇଁଲା ଯେ, ସେ ଅନୁଭୂତିକୁ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିବାପାଇଁ ଭାଷା ସେ ଖୋଜି ପାଇଲାନି । “ରତିସୁଖସାରେ...” ଓ “ଅଳପ ହସରେ ଅନେକ ଆଶାର...” ଗୀତ ସେ ଏମିତି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବେ ଗାଇଲେ ଯେ ମନେହେଲା ପ୍ରତିଭା ହୁଏତ ଏକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଛି, ଯାହା ଚାହୁଁଛି, ତାହା ମିଳିଯାଉଛି ।

ପ୍ରାୟ ଦୁଇଘଣ୍ଟାର ସଂଗୀତ ସମାରୋହ ପରେ ରାତିଭୋଜନର ବହୁତ ଭଲ ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଖାଇବାବେଳେ ସୁଲଗ୍ନା ନେଇ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଦେଲା କେତେଜଣ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଅତିଥିମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଥାଆନ୍ତି ଜର୍ମାନର ସୁଦୀଠ୍ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସପତ୍ନୀ ସୁନୟା । ସୁନୟା ସୁଲଗ୍ନାର ମାଉସୀ ଝିଅ ଭଉଣୀ । ସେମାନେ ଖୁବ୍ ମେଳାପୀ ଓ ସ୍ନେହୀ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ କିଛି ସମୟ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିସାରିବା ପରେ, ପ୍ରତିଭା ଭେଟିଲା, ସୁଲଗ୍ନାଙ୍କୁ ରହୁଥିବା ମାନସ ମିଶ୍ର ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସପତ୍ନୀ ଅଲିଭା । ସେମାନେ ବି ସୁଲଗ୍ନାର ସଂପର୍କୀୟ । ମାନସଙ୍କ ମା, ସୁଲଗ୍ନାର ମାଉସୀଙ୍କର ନଣନ୍ଦ । ତାପରେ ସେ ସୁଲଗ୍ନାର ଆହୁରି କେତେ ସଂପର୍କୀୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରିଚିତ ହେଲା । କିଏ ବିଦେଶରୁ ଆସିଥାଆନ୍ତି ତ କିଏ ଭାରତର ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କରୁ ସବୁ ଆସିଥାଆନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରତିଭାକୁ ବହୁତ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଉଦ୍ୟାନର ଏ ସମାରୋହ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଏ ବନ୍ଧୁମିଳନ, ଏ ଆନନ୍ଦ, ଏ ଉତ୍ସାହ, ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ତାକୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଓ ଅବାସ୍ତବ ଭଳି ମନେ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଏ ଖୁସି ସମୟରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ତାର ସେ ପ୍ରଧାନ ଓ ନରହରିଙ୍କ କଥା ବି ମନେ ପଡୁଥିଲା । “ଭଲ ହେଇଛି ଯେ ସେମାନେ ନାହାନ୍ତି, ନହେଲେ ଏ ଭଳି ଖୁସି, ଆନନ୍ଦ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେମାନେ କେତେ ବିଷାକ୍ତ କରିଦେଉଥାନ୍ତେ?”

ଶ୍ରୀଜୟ ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଆସିଲେ ଓ ପ୍ରତିଭାକୁ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଦେଲେ ତରୁଣ ମହାନ୍ତିଙ୍କ ସହିତ । ବହୁଦିନର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସତ ହେଲା ଭଳି ମନେହେଉଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ହଠାତ୍ ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ଓଲଟା ମନେହେଲା । “ହେ ଭଗବାନ୍, ତରୁଣ ମହାନ୍ତି କେତେ ମଦ ପିଇଛନ୍ତି ?” ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାକ୍ୟାଳାପ କରିବାର ଯେଉଁ ଉତ୍ସାହ ତା ମନରେ ଭରିରହିଥିଲା, ସେ ଉତ୍ସାହ ସେଇଠି ମରିଗଲା । ଯଦିଓ ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ଗୀତର ପ୍ରଶଂସା କଲା ଓ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାରେ ତାର ହୃଦୟର ଆବେଗ ନଥିଲା ।

ସବୁ ଗାୟକମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସେ ପରିଚିତ ହେଲା । ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରେ ରସାଣିତ ଗୀତ ଗାଇ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ତା ହୃଦୟରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଓ ସମ୍ମାନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିଲେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏମିତି ମଦ୍ୟପ ଭାବେ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କଲାପରେ ତାର ସେ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା, ସମ୍ମାନ ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ଜଳିଯୋଡ଼ି ଭସ୍ମ ହୋଇଗଲା ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ।

ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ରେ ସୀତାର ବଜାଉଥିଲେ ମିଷ୍ଟର୍ ସନାତନ ସାହୁ । ସେ ଗୋଟିଏ କୋଣରେ ବସି ଖାଉଥିଲେ ଓ ମିସେସ୍ ଦାଶଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଗପଗପ କରୁଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରତିଭାର ମନର ଭାବ ସେମାନେ ବୁଝିପାରିଥିଲେ ହୁଏତ ।

“ସଂଗୀତ ତ ଏମିତି ଏକ ନିଶା, ସେଥିରେ ଏ ମଦ ନିଶାକୁ କାହିଁକି ଧରିଛନ୍ତି ଏମାନେ ?” – ମିସେସ୍ ଦାଶ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟଦେଲେ ।

“ମୁଁ ବି ତ ସେମିତି ନିଶା ଧରିଥିଲି ମାଉସୀ, ହେଲେ ଥରେ ଏମିତି ଅପମାନ ପାଇଲି ଯେ, ଛି କରିଦେଲି । – ସନାତନ କହିଲେ ।

“କହିଲ କହିଲ କଣ ହେଲା, କି ଅପମାନ କୋଉଠି ପାଇଲ?” – ମିସେସ୍ ଦାଶଙ୍କର ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା ।

“ସିଏ ସାତ-ଆଠ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର କଥା । ଆମେମାନେ ଯାଇଥିଲୁ ଗାଇବାକୁ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ । ଆମ ଜିତୁ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପୁଅର ବାହାଘର ଥାଏ । ଆମପାଇଁ ବି ବହୁତ ଭଲ ହୋଟେଲ୍ରେ ରହିବା, ଖାଇବା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ସବୁଥାଏ । ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ପରେ ଜିତୁବାବୁ ଆମକୁ ଆଣି ବହୁତ ଦାମୀ ଡ୍ରାଇନ୍ ଦେଲେ । ମୋର ଟିକେ ଲୋଭହେଲା । ତରୁଣବାବୁ ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ଫେରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମୁଁ ଆଉ ଆମର ତବଲା ବଜାଇବାକୁ ଥିବା ରସିକ ମିଶି ଡ୍ରାଇନ୍ ଖୋଲିକି ପିଲଲୁ । ତାପରେ ତରୁଣବାବୁ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କୁ କିଏ ସମ୍ଭାଳେ । ଏମିତି ଅପମାନ କରି ସିଏ କଥା କହିଲେ ଯେ ସେଦିନ, ମୁଁ ସେଇଦିନରୁ ମଦକୁ ଛି କରିଦେଲି । ବାସ୍, ଆଉ ଛୁଉଁନାହିଁ ।”

“ଭଲ କରିଛନ୍ତି ।” – ପ୍ରତିଭା ପାଟିରୁ ହଠାତ୍ ବାହାରିପଡିଲା ।

ତାପରେ ସନାତନ ବାବୁଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଯାହା ଶୁଣିଲା, ବଡବଡ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ଆୟୋଜକ ମାନେହିଁ ମଦ ଭେଟ ଦେଇଦେଇ କଳାକାରମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏମିତି ମଦୁଆ ଓ ନିଶାସକ୍ତ କରିଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ।

“ହେଲେ, ତକ୍ଟର୍ ଦାଶ କାହିଁକି ଏମିତି ଖାଇବାପରେ ମଦର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଥିଲେ ?” – ପ୍ରତିଭା ମନରେ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟି ଆସିଲା ଯଦିଓ ସେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କଲାନି ।

ହୁଏତ ମିସେସ୍ ଦାଶ ପ୍ରତିଭାର ମନକଥା ପଢିପାରିଲେ । କହିଲେ, “ଏ ଉଦ୍ୟାନର ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵରେ ଥାଏ ସୁବ୍ରତ, ତକ୍ଟର୍ ଦାଶଙ୍କ ପୁତୁରା, ସାନଭାଇର ପୁଅ । ସୁବ୍ରତର ଧାରଣା ଯେ ଠିକ୍‌ଭାବେ କଳାକାରମାନଙ୍କର ମନ ନରୁଝିଲେ, ସେମାନେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନୀୟ କରିବାକୁ ଆସିବେନି । ଏ ଯୁଗରେ ସେ ମନ ରଖିବାଟା ହେଲା, ଭଲ ଅର୍ଥଦେବା ଓ ଖୁଆଇବା ସହିତ, ପିଆଇବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ବି କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ନହେଲେ ଭଲ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ହବନାହିଁ ।”

ଯୁଗ ସହିତ ତାଳ ଦେଇ ଯିବାକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି ।

ହେଲେ କିଏ ଭୁଲ୍ କରୁଛି? କିଏ ଠିକ୍ କରୁଛି ?

ପ୍ରତିଭା କିଏ ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିବାକୁ ?

ସମସ୍ତେ ତ ଖୁସି ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ବିଭୋର । ସମସ୍ତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗୀତ ଶୁଣିଲେ, ସାକ୍ଷ୍ୟାଧୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମିଶିଲେ, ଉତ୍ତମ ଭୋଜନ କଲେ ଓ ଖୁସିହେଲେ । ସେଥିରେ ତରୁଣ ମହାନ୍ତି ଅବା ଚିକେ ମଦ୍ୟପାନ କଲେ, କଣଟା ବେଦ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇଗଲା? ତରୁଣ ମହାନ୍ତି ବିଷ୍ୟାତ କଳାକାର । ସାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ସେ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ । ପ୍ରତିଭାର କଣ ପରିଚୟ ? ଆହୁରି ଅନେକଙ୍କ ଭଳି ସେ ଏକ କଲେଜର ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା । ସେଥିରେ କଣଟା ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ରହିଲା ? ସିଏ କଣଟା ପସନ୍ଦ କଲା ନକଲା ସମସ୍ତେ କାହିଁକି ତାକୁ ଏତେଟା ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଦେବେ?

ଏମିତି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନସବୁ ଭିତରେ ନିଜକୁ ହଜାଇଦେବା ସମୟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ଦାଶ ।

(କମ୍ପାଣି.....)



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ଯେମିତି

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 “ଡାକ ମୁନସୀ” ର “ଗୋପାଳ” ହୋଇଯାଇଛି
 “ହରି ସିଂ” କୁ ପର କରିଦେଇଛି
 ନିଜଘରୁ ତଡ଼ିଦେଇଛି ।

ନାହିଁ ବାପା
 “ଗୋପାଳ” ହେବା ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟ
 ବହୁ ଅଧ୍ୟବସାୟ ଦରକାର
 ନିଜକୁ ନିଜେ ଘୃଣା କରିବା ଦରକାର
 ମୁଁ ସେତେ ତଳକୁ ଯାଇନାହିଁ ;
 ଏବେବି ଅନୁଭବ କରେ
 ତମ ପିତୃତ୍ୱ, ତମ ସ୍ନେହ
 ମୋ ଭିତରେ
 ଯେବେ ତୁମ ନାତୁଣୀ
 ତାହା କୁନି ଅଧରରେ କଥା କହେ,
 କୁନି କୁନି ଓଠରେ ଅଝଟ କରେ ।
 ପିତୃତ୍ୱ ପାଖରେ ସବୁ ହାରମାନନ୍ତ୍ରୀ
 ଅଭିମାନ-ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ, ରାଗ-ରୋଷ,
 ମାୟା-ମୋହ ସବୁକିଛି
 ଯେମିତ ହାରିଯାଏ “ଅଜାତଶତ୍ରୁ”
 “ଉଦୟଭଦ୍ର”ର କୁଆଁ କୁଆଁ ରାବରେ
 ଦଉଡ଼ିଯାଏ “ବିମ୍ବିସାର” ପାଖକୁ
 ସେମିତି ମୁଁ ଫେରିଯିବି
 ତମ ଦୁଃଖର ପସରା ହେବାକୁ, ଅନ୍ଧର ଲଉଡ଼ି ହେବାକୁ
 “ଶ୍ରୀବତ୍ସ କୁମାର” ଭଳି
 ଆଉ ଅଳ୍ପ ଦିନର ଅପେକ୍ଷା ପରେ
 ଏହି “ଇତି” ରେ ଇତି ହୋଇଗଲା ପରେ ।

ହିମାଂଶୁ ଶେଖର ବିଶ୍ୱାଳ
 ୧୦-୦୩-୨୦୧୨, ମିଟିଗାନ, ଯୁକ୍ତରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଆମେରିକା

ମନକଥା ମନେ ରହିଲା ଅଧା

ରୂପ ସଂଭାର କୁ ଏପରି ବିଛାଇ, ଆକର୍ଷିତ କର କାହିଁ ଆମେରିକା !!
ନ ଦେଖିବା ଲୋକ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ସଦା, ହୁଏ ବାୟା ପ୍ରାୟେ , ହୋଇ ସେ ରଂକା ॥ ୧ ॥
ଏ ମାୟାପୁରୀ କୁ ଯିଏ ଆସେ, କେତେ କିର୍ତ୍ତୀ ତାର ବଖାଣେ ନିତି ।
ସେଇ ମୋହିନୀ ମାୟାରେ, ସମ୍ମେହିତ ହୋଇ, ଆସିଗଲି ଦିନେ କରି ମୁଁ ଦୁତଗତି ॥ ୨ ॥
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଢେଉରେ ଭାଷି ଭାଷି ଯେବେ, ଚାଲି ଆସିଲି ମୁଁ ତୁମ ଦୁଆର ।
କେତେ ସ୍ନେହ ଶରଧାରେ, ବାହୁ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ, ନେଲ କରି ମତେ ଆପଣାର ॥ ୩ ॥
ଯେତେ ଖାଇଲେ ବୋହିଲେ, କେବେ ସରେ ନାହିଁ ତୁମ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଭଣ୍ଡାର ।
ତୁମ ବାଦାନ୍ୟତା, ତୁମ ଶାଳୀନତା, ଦେଖି ମନେ କରିନେଲି କେତେ ବିଚାର ॥ ୪ ॥
ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ଶୋଇଥିବା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, ହେଲା ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ଜାଗତରୁ ଜାଗତତର ।
ଏମିତି କରିବି ସେମିତି କରିବି, ଭାବନାରେ ଲାଗିଗଲା ମୋ ପର ॥ ୫ ॥
ତୁମ ଭଣ୍ଡାର ରୁ ଗଦାଏ ଚଂକା ନେଇ, ଉଡିଯିବି ମୋର ସେହି ଦୂର ଦେଶକୁ ।
ଏକ ବିରାଟ ପ୍ରାସାଦ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିଣ, ଆଣି ରଖିବି ମୋର ଆପଣାର ଜନଙ୍କୁ ॥ ୬ ॥
କିନ୍ତୁ ଦିନୁ ଦିନ, ଯେତେ ହେଲି ତୁମ, ନିକଟରୁ ନିକଟତର ।
ଅନୁଭବ କଲି ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ଆବିଳତା, ଅବା ଥିଲା ସିଏ ମୋର ମନ ବିକାର ॥ ୭ ॥
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଜଗତରେ ବହୁ ଦୂରୁ ତୁମେ, ଦିଶୁଥିଲ ଯେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ।
ପାଖରୁ ଆସି ଦେଖେ, ତାହା କେବଳ ଥିଲା, ମୋର କଳ୍ପନା ମାତ୍ର ॥ ୮ ॥
ଅପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନୀୟ ତୁମେ, ଯେମିତି ଥିଲ ସେପରି ଅଛ, ରହିବ ବି ସେମିତି ।
କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ଭିତରେ ହଜାରେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ, ଦୋହଲାଇ ଯାଏ ମତେ ସତେକି ॥ ୯ ॥
ହାଏ, ବାଏ, ଥ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ୟୁ ଶବ୍ଦେ ଅଭ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ, ଚାଲିଗଲା ହାଏ ଛ ମାସ ବର୍ଷ ।
ଏଠିକା ରହଣି ସହଣି ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ ଶିଖୁ ଶିଖୁ, ବିତିଗଲା ଆଉ ଦି ବରଷ ॥ ୧୦ ॥
ଏଠିକି ସେଠିକି ଯିବା ପାଇଁ ତ୍ରାଇଭିଙ୍ଗ ଶିଖୁ ଶିଖୁ ଗତିଗଲା ପୁଣି ପାଞ୍ଚ ବରଷ ।
ଘର ଜଂଜାଳ ରେ ସଂସାର କାମରେ, ଆଖି ପିଛୁଳାକେ ଚାଲିଗଲା କାହିଁ କେତେ ବରଷ ॥ ୧୧ ॥
ଆଜି ଯାକୁ, କାଲି ତାକୁ କିଣିବାରେ ଅଜାଣତେ ହାତୁ ସରିଗଲା ବାକି ସମୟ ।
ଆଉ କିଛି ସମୟ ର, ହିସାବ ରଖିନି କରି ଦେଇଥିଲି, ଅଜ୍ଞାତେ ଅପଚୟ ॥ ୧୨ ॥
ସବୁ କାମ ସାରି ପୁରୁସତ ଦେଖି, ଯେବେ ଭାବି ବସେ ମୋର ପୂର୍ବ ସପନ ।
ଭରଷା ପାଏନା କି ସାହାସ ପାଏନା, କରିପାରିବି ମୁଁ ତାର ଆଜି ପୁର୍ନନିର୍ମାଣ ॥ ୧୩ ॥
ଛାଡି ଚାଲିଗଲେଣି ସେଦିନରୁ, ଆଜିଯାଏ କେତେ ପରିଚିତ ପ୍ରିୟ ଜନ ମୁହଁ ।
ଆଜି ଟଙ୍କା ଆଣି କାହା ପାଇଁ ଆଉ, ଗଢିବି ସେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ନିଳୟ ॥ ୧୪ ॥
କାହାନ୍ତି ସେମାନେ, ଯେଉଁ ମାନଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ, ହସି ଖେଳି କାଟି ଦେଇ ଥାଆନ୍ତି ଦିନ ।

କେତେ ମିଛ ସତେ, ଏଇ ଧୂଳି ଘର, ତାର ଆୟୁଷ ଥିଲା ମାତ୍ର ଦିଦିନ ॥ ୧୫ ॥
ଆମେରିକା ତୁମ ପଛେ ପଛେ, ଦୌଡ଼ି ଦୌଡ଼ି, ସାରି ଦେଲି ମୋର ବଳ ବୟସ ।
ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପାସାଦେ ରୁପାର ତୋରଣ, ସାଜିବାର ଥିଲା କେବଳ, ସେ ଏକ ମିଛ ପ୍ରୟାସ ॥ ୧୬ ॥
ହିସାବ କିତାବ କରି ଦେଖେ ଆଜି, କେତେ କରିଅଛି ଅର୍ଥ ସଂଚୟ ।
ଆୟ ବ୍ୟୟ ସବୁ ସମାନ ହୋଇଛି, ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ପାଇଁ ଛାଡ଼ି, ସାମାନ୍ୟ ପାଥେୟ ॥ ୧୭ ॥
ମନ କଥା ମୋର ମନରେ ରହିବ, ଏ ଜନ୍ମ ର କରିଣ ଏକାଠି ସବୁ ଅନୁଭବ ।
ସେତ କୋଶାରକ ଅଧା ଗଢା ତାର, ମୁଣ୍ଡି ମାରିବାତ ମୋ ପକ୍ଷେ, କେବେ ନୁହେଁ ସଂଭବ ॥ ୧୮ ॥
ଅଜ୍ଞର କୋଳିକି ଖଟା କହିଦେଇ, ଆଚରି ନେବି କି ମୁଁ ଧୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଶିଆଳର, ସରଳ ସହଜ ପଥ ।
ଅବା ଯାହା ଗଲା ଗଲା, ଯାହା ହାତକୁ ଆସିଲା, ସେ କେବଳ ମୋର, କହି ହେବି ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ॥ ୧୯ ॥

ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର, ରଚେଷ୍ଟର, ମିନେଗୋଟା