



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 **Messages from OSA executives**
- 2 **OSA Convention 2005**
 - GBM minutes
 - Awards
 - Kabita Patha
 - Convention reports
- 3 **Chapter News**
 - CanOSA
 - Texas
 - New York/New Jersey
 - California
- 4 **Literary Column**

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 ଜହ୍ନରାତି ଚାପସ ସାହୁ
 କୁସୁମାଞ୍ଜଳି ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ
- 5 **Miscellaneous News**

Welcome Message from the President

ନମସ୍କାର !

As office bearers of OSA for the 2005-07 term, we are humbled by your vote of confidence, and thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve the Oriya community of North America. We see the Orissa Society of the Americas as an organization that should try to express and nurture the identity of Oriyas living in North America, and to the extent possible, make a difference in the lives of people living in Orissa. We are committed to this vision. We will continue to work as volunteers and make every effort to enlist the support of those who share this vision. With that support, we are confident that our team can make a difference in the reach and scope of OSA.

A voluntary organization such as ours draws sustenance from its membership network. Presently, only about 650 households (or about 1,250 individuals) are registered life members, patrons and benefactors of OSA. The membership roster of OSA has not kept pace with the demographic changes in the North American Oriya community, especially during the last ten or fifteen years. It is our earnest appeal to all persons, with connection to and interest in Orissa, to become life members of OSA. We also appeal to existing members to help us carry out the membership drive. In addition to forging a bond with the largest network of Non-resident Oriyas and enable it to become an effective organ for identifying and furthering our collective interest, OSA life membership also provides the following tangible benefits:

- A one-time tax deduction for the amount of the fee
- A printed versions of our newsletter, *Utkarsa*
- An annual OSA souvenir
- Annually updated OSA directory
- Reduced registration fees for OSA conventions
- Participation in OSA elections

While life membership fee is normally \$300, it has been temporarily reduced to \$200 until December 31, 2005. We invite you to take advantage of this offer and become life members through your local chapter representatives or by completing the membership form available at our website, www.orissasociety.org and sending it to the treasurer's address along with a check payable to OSA.

Most OSA members and visitors to OSA website should be familiar with the OSA newsletter, *Utkarsa*, and the commendable work that Mrs. Bigyani Das had done during her two-year tenure as its editor. We cannot thank her enough for the time and energy she put into this project. As Bigyani now assumes responsibility as the secretary of OSA, we are very excited to announce that both Dr. Sikhanda Satapathy from Austin, TX and Mr. Tapas Sahoo from Dallas, TX, who previously edited the 2004 OSA Souvenir, have agreed to serve as joint editors of *Utkarsa*. While Bigyani has certainly succeeded in raising expectation about the newsletter, we feel assured that *Utkarsa* is in capable hands under its new editors. Please join me in welcoming both Sikhanda and Tapas to the editorial board and as new members of the OSA Executive Council. We will communicate with you shortly about other committee compositions through OSA website, e-mails,

Continued on page 2

Dear Friends,

Over the years, the Orissa Society of Americas (OSA) has played a significant role in bringing the Oriyas together culturally. It has also provided a springboard for various non-profit organizations benefiting the needy in Orissa. As a NRI community, we have not only a responsibility towards our kids for providing a supportive extended family, but also a duty of sharing our vision, ideas, and wealth for betterment of Orissa. It is said that it took a million tiny mice to help build the mighty Lanka-setu, so let's put our contribution, however small it might be, to make each other's journey a little more enjoyable.

We thank all, who contributed to this issue. Please send your news items and literary articles for next issue of *Utkarsa* by October 15. Let us know what you like to see in future newsletters in addition to OSA news, at osaeditor@orissasociety.org.

Thank you.

Editors

General Body Meeting Minutes

Radisson Hotel, Newport Beach, CA, July 3, 2005

Meeting Commenced at 4.30 pm, Present on Podium:

Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan (President), Nivedita Mohanty (Vice President) and Hari Arjuna Patro (Secretary-treasurer)

1. Inviting New OSA Office Bearers:

The OSA President presented the results of the OSA election to the General Body Meeting. The GBM unanimously approved the election results following which the new office bearers were invited to the podium. They are: Niranjan Tripathy (President elect), Dharendra Kar (Vice President elect), Bigyani Das (Secretary elect) and Prakash Patro (Treasurer elect)

2. President's Report:

OSA President Mr. Bhuyan presented the progress report (see page 3) for the last 2 years.

3. Financial Report:

OSA Secretary-Treasurer Mr. Patro presented the financial report for the past 2 years – as attached. The report was unanimously adopted. It was noted that OSA had more than \$5,000 in regular account in addition to adding a fixed deposit of \$11,000 from life membership collected during the past 2 years.

4. Address by Elected Officers:

The new Office bearers addressed the GBM and announced a promotional life membership fee of \$200 (instead of \$300) valid until the end of 2005.

5. NRO Day, NRO Cell and NROFC

Mr. Sahadeva Sahoo, OSA Coordinator at Bhubaneswar, presented the progress on NRO cell and NROFC at Bhubaneswar. He informed that the NRO day will be held again in December around Christmas time in 2005 at Bhubaneswar.

6. Directory Issues:

Mr. Bijoy Mohapatra proposed a motion for moving to a secure centralized electronic directory, where the members would be able to access the directory and be able to modify their addresses on-line. The proposal was approved by the GBM with a strong majority. The new office bearers promised to take steps to design a secure directory soon.

6. Vote of Thanks:

The General Body of OSA thanked the out-going OSA office bearers for the outstanding job they did during the past two years.

The meeting adjourned at 6.30 pm.

and Utkarsa.

We also take this opportunity to inform you that as a culmination of initiatives taken several years ago, an NRO Facilitation Center (NROFC) has been registered as a non-profit society. This center is planning to organize a "Prabasi Oriya Dibasa" in Bhubaneswar, sometimes during the last week of December 2005. One of the goals of this event will be to create awareness, interest, and action plans for establishing development projects in Orissa, by assembling experts and representative or spokespersons from various organizations to share their ideas and concerns on this issue. We will continue to post updates about the event. If you are visiting Orissa during Christmas time this year, please make plans to attend.

The 36th annual OSA convention in Newport Beach, California was a big success. As someone who was closely involved with an OSA convention previously, I know how much work was involved in this endeavor. We particularly extend our thanks to local organizers and the team of volunteers led by the convener, Mr. Kirtan Behera for their time, resources and enthusiasm in making the event successful. Please stay tuned for announcements regarding the venue of the 37th annual OSA convention.

We hope that this website will be a regular destination of choice not only for our members but also for anyone interested in Orissa. Please give us your suggestions to improve our website to make it an effective medium of communication.

As we assume our new responsibility for the next two years, we like to appreciate the services of the outgoing President, Dr. Laxminarayan Bhuyan, Vice-president, Mrs. Nivedita Mohanty, and Treasurer, Mr. Hari Patro. They leave us with the advantage of building on good precedence introduced by them. We certainly hope to continue the good work while taking new initiatives that will be valued and sustained by future OSA committees.

With Best regards,

Niranjan Tripathy (President)



New Elected OSA Office Bearers:
Prakash C. Patro, Niranjan Tripathy, Dharendra Kar, Bigyani Das

President's Report July 2003-2005.

Dear Friends,

Time goes fast. I have now completed two years as President of OSA, and the new office bearers are waiting to take over. In spite of limited budget and lack of volunteers, we have tried to do our best for OSA during the past two years. In this letter, I like to point out some of the things that we have done and some that we could not do. The credit for all the good things that happened goes to my coordination committee members. Here are a few examples of our accomplishments.

- We have recruited a large number of life members, and upgraded our friends to patrons and benefactors. Although we started with \$550 balance, we are leaving more than \$5,000 in the OSA account. This is in addition to a record deposit of \$11,000 in the OSA fixed deposit account towards the life membership dues, collected during the past two years.
- I am most pleased with the regular publication of OSA newsletter. The newsletter exhibited superb editorial talents and hard work by our newsletter editor.
- Our OSA website was revamped for proper dissemination of important information and chapter news. An e-mail alias was created to broadcast important information to all our members.
- Based on valuable suggestions from OSA members, we have adopted several amendments to the constitution that were voted in the General Body Meeting (GBM) on July 4, 2004.
- We have taken various steps to help students in Orissa seek guidance for higher study in USA. We have collected donations and supported Orissa Information Technology Symposium (OITS) and National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela.
- We have started two new OSA awards, one to recognize members for their development work in Orissa, and another Yuva Kalavikash award to recognize talents among our youths.

You will all be very happy to know that OSA persuaded the Government of Orissa to start a Non-Resident Oriya (NRO) day to be held every year around Christmas time in Bhubaneswar. The NRO day and the second annual OSA Development Symposium were conducted in December 2004 during the day followed by an outstanding Odissi performance by the Orissa Dance academy in the evening at Ekamra Matha. Many OSA members attended this function, which felt like a second OSA convention in winter. The Orissa Government has opened an NRO cell to coordinate various NRO activities in Orissa. Also, a Non-resident Oriya Facilitation Center (NROFC) has been registered as a private-government-NRO corporation to facilitate various development works by the NROs. The new Secretary of OSA will be in charge of coordinating all these efforts with NROFC and the Government of Orissa. I hope that all this effort, started during my tenure, will flourish under the new OSA leadership.

Friends, while every OSA member should be proud of our

accomplishments, there are some things that I wish we could have done more.

- Although we recruited a large number of life members, patrons and benefactors, we were really unable to attract most young Oriya families into permanent membership of OSA. As I understand that remains as a standing problem for OSA over the years.
- Although we collected some donations for Tsunami fund and created an environment of cooperation with the Government of Orissa (through NRO day, NRO cell and NROFC), we were unable to take more active part in Orissa development works. I think one reason for this is the lack of trust in the government and OSA by our already active volunteers in this country.
- Even though our NRO day was well attended by OSA members and many Oriyas living throughout the world, I wish there was more participation by the OSA members. There were many OSA members visiting Orissa that time who were either unaware of the event or unwilling to attend the meeting. I hope this event grows to be the second OSA convention every year and OSA members attend the function with their families as they do in our July convention.

With this, I sincerely thank all my coordinators for their time and efforts. I congratulate them for their good work. The blame for lack of activities in some areas goes to me probably because I did not create enough enthusiasm and leadership.

Now I am out of job, but fortunately another job is waiting for me. You will be glad to know that I have been selected as the Editor-in-Chief of the highly prestigious IEEE Transactions on Parallel and Distributed Systems, which has more than 8,000 paid subscribers, but is read and referred by tens of thousands of researchers throughout the world. IEEE is the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering with about 200,000 members worldwide. So it is a challenging job that will keep me busy for the next four years. Instead of OSA coordinators, I shall work with editors who are highly distinguished in their research areas.

I think I have said enough about me and what we did during the last two years. It is now time to say goodbye. I thank you all for having given me the opportunity to try to serve you. If you are attending the OSA convention in July, I look forward to seeing you at Newport Beach, California. Their registration numbers and hotel occupancy have exceeded their expectations. The convention organizers are doing their best to make it a memorable event.

Thank you and goodbye.

Sincerely,

Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan
OSA President, 2003-2005

OSA Secretary's Column

Dear Friends

Namaskar. Thank you all for your faith on our team and electing me as the Secretary of OSA. As the secretary, my duties include maintaining (and producing) OSA documents and making sure that they are accurate and up-to-date. My other responsibility includes establishing relationships with the Orissa Government to facilitate exchange of information and resources between Orissa Government and NRO volunteers who want to do developmental work in Orissa. I am hopeful that with your help and cooperation, I would be able to perform in my roles effectively.

Here is a plan to produce OSA handbook. I would appreciate to get help in this regard.

Overall Objective: To make OSA an excellent organization
Vision: Smoothly running OSA where members are content and OSA officers are effective.

Mission: Document and explain the workings of OSA executives, and OSA operations and procedures. Produce OSA handbook that is adopted by the organization.

Core Values:

Ethics and transparency

Every OSA member is special and should be treated with special attention.

Recognize people for their contribution, personal time as well as financial.

A proposal for producing OSA Handbook

I am planning to prepare an OSA operation manual. I have the following contents in mind some of which are in OSA web page. However, they have to be in a handbook, which would be used by all the OSA officers during their terms. This can also be distributed among members so that they would have exact knowledge about OSA affairs. The plan is to have a set of working principles, a two-year calendar for OSA executives including what should be done and when, a set of guidelines such that the conflicts between people can be minimized (for example: the souvenir distribution issue) etc.

Some of the items to be included are:

What is OSA, OSA history, OSA statistics

Constitution, By-Laws, Amendments

OSA 2-year Calendar

Convention Guidelines

Souvenir Distribution Strategy

OSA's Financial Status

President's Role

Vice President's Role

Secretary's Role

Treasurer's Role

OSA's goal for next fifteen years

OSA's Activity Plan (What should be the focus and how)

I would appreciate if you can think of some new items, some new points about the above items etc. or just share your suggestions/comments in general.

Please take a month and let me know your comments

after a month. You can also talk to people, know about their opinion, do some people research and think from your own experiences etc.

My plan to publish this handbook is as follows:

1. Get preliminary inputs from people like you by Oct. 1st.
2. Make a rough document and announce it to membership for feedback, more comments by Nov. 1st.
3. Finalize the manuscript and contents and send the final document to be reviewed by the membership by December 1st.
4. Check for editorial mistakes and the final form should be ready by December 31st. If we get money we will make hard copies for distribution, otherwise we will have the electronic versions.

Current Focus Areas:

I have three Key Areas at present. They are:

Convention Guideline

Service to Members

OSA Developmental Activities

Convention Guideline

- a. Research the experience of 3 previous conveners and document
- b. Research the experience of 3-10 convention attendees and document
- c. Add own ideas and make a final document

Service to Members

- a. Survey 10 random OSA members and find out their impression and expectations from OSA
- b. Local chapters and their activities. How do they connect to OSA National?
- c. OSA Developmental Activities:
Research the experience of 3-4 NRO involved in developmental activities in Orissa. Research areas where OSA can contribute for the development of members in this country as well as for Oriyas in Orissa and worldwide.

I would appreciate volunteer members to help me in this effort.

Major Issue at Present: Souvenir Production and Distribution

Some members have already sent comments on this issue. A few members have asked the following major questions:

1. What is the intent of publishing the souvenir? Can the members realize its value?
2. Convener is responsible for taking care of convention attendees. OSA permanent members who do not attend the convention are the responsibility of OSA national. Should or should not the convener be responsible for the distribution of souvenirs for them?

Facts

1. OSA was formed 36 years ago with a few members. The society was homogeneous. Souvenir size was small. Distribution was easy. Expense was less.
2. Now the society has grown to be more than 20 times than that was 20 years ago. The society is heterogeneous. There are many voices, many opinions. The souvenir size has become bigger.
3. In 15 years, the membership would grow, may not be 15 times, but 3-4 times as it is today. There will be many writers from both younger and older generations. The souvenir size will grow. We may even need 2-3 supplements. The production and distribution would be critical.

Description of the problem

Souvenir distribution has become an unresolved issue for a long time. For example, during 2003 convention copies were sent with the convention attendees to distribute among members in their areas. The rest of the copies were sent to all the chapter presidents in boxes to distribute souvenir to the rest of the OSA permanent members in their chapters. Although that seemed to be an effective method, however, some members have not yet received their copies. The distribution depended on chapter presidents and we have no account of whether that covered all the members or not.

OSA's effectiveness depends on the effectiveness of volunteers, not one, two or ten, but many. The efforts need synchronization.

From recent email exchanges in Ornet, now I know that some members have not yet received 2003 and 2004 souvenirs. This information was put in most of the issues of Utkarsa so that members could inform if they did not receive the souvenir. Unfortunately, we did not get any reports then and it was not possible to take any action without any information.

In my plan to prepare an OSA handbook or working manual, souvenir distribution is one issue that has to be properly addressed. Thus I request your input in this matter.

Request

Please think about souvenir edition and distribution problem as your own problem and come up with a best solution idea. Then share your solution idea either to all the OSA national executives or to me personally. I will organize them, extract good points from each, we will discuss if some mechanisms seem unrealistic and then I am confident that we would come up with a best strategy.

Please take enough time to think and share your ideas before September 15, 2005. We don't have to rush. At the same time we don't have to sit indefinitely. So, let's make this timeline:

1. Everybody thinks and comes up with the best solution for the production and distribution of OSA Souvenir by **September 15, 2005**. The questions to be considered are:

a. What should be the maximum budget of annual souvenir? Should convener or the convention committee determine it completely? Should it be given some flexibility in case the editor can raise some funds for production and distribution?

b. Who would distribute and how?

We always give statements like the convention committee should take this charge; OSA president should take this charge, Editor should take this charge, convener should take this charge.

However, consider the case that we have about 600-630 or so permanent members (not counting 50-100 annual members) out of which approximately 200 families attend the convention and the rest 400-430 families have to get this by post. I mailed Utkarsa copies to all the members and I know how much work is involved.

Considering all these facts, please come up with the best setup for souvenir distribution.

c. Souvenir distribution cost depends on souvenir size. Also people don't feel good about carrying heavy materials to post office and send. They also feel reluctant to carry heavy materials if they are asked to collect copies for other people in their area. There are some authors who are not OSA members. There are authors who stay outside USA and Canada.

Considering that the souvenir is "OSA Souvenir," please think about whom to give priority, how to set up the priority in publishing, rendering services such as typing (sometimes some non-members and international people do request for service), and sending copies to them. Should we put size restriction?

Please think about all these points and share with us your ideas by September 15.

2. After I receive your ideas, I will organize everything and prepare a document by September 30 and send it for your review.

3. I will receive your comments on the document by **Oct. 15**.

4. We will send it to OSA executive members for their comments that should be received by **October 30**.

5. After we all feel happy about the mechanism (although it may need formal GBM approval, however, if the executives say yes, we can adopt the procedure), we can adopt the mechanism to distribute 2005 OSA souvenir copies that we have.

Thank you all for your attention.

Regards,
Bigyani Das
Secretary, OSA

OSA Awards-2005

Birendra Jena, OH

1. Distinguished Oriya Award:

Recipient: Dr. Udaynath Dash

This year's recipient of Distinguished Oriya Award, Dr. Udaynath Dash is a self-made man who exemplifies compassion, resourcefulness and selflessness of the highest degree. He has devoted his life to helping others, beginning with his family, extending to his career as an orthopedic surgeon, and continuing in his charitable efforts in Orissa, the Oriya community in the U.S.A, and in other worthwhile arenas. He has been instrumental in setting up schools and hospitals in his native village in Orissa, an Oriya speaking school in the state of Jharkhand for the benefit of the *adivasi* and *harijan* children. In addition, he has also made large contributions to the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Center in New Delhi.

Dr. Dash also has been active in propagating Indian culture and heritage in his adopted country. He has helped found the "Mahatma Gandhi Center" in St. Louis, Missouri and served as the chair of the Center's Board of Governors from 1985 to 1991. Even after his retirement, Dr. Dash still continues his involvement in philanthropic activities.

2. Kalashree Award

Receipient: Patnaik Sisters

The winners of this year's Kalashree award, Patnaik Sisters (Laboni, Shibani and Shalini Patnaik) have been very active in promoting Odissi art and culture in North America. These highly acclaimed Odissi dancers have performed in many parts of the world and have won laurels for their performances. Apart from choreographing and participating in the Odissi style dance segment in the 1998 MTV music award opening ceremony with the famous artiste Madonna, they have also been invited to conduct lecture demonstrations at various school and University campuses. From mid- eighties these sisters have participated in OSA cultural programs and won prizes under various categories

3. Subrina Biswal Award

Recipient: Miss Bagmi Das

Miss Bagmi Das, a graduating student from Hammond High School, Columbia, Maryland has been selected for the Subrina Biswal award for the year 2005. Apart from her high academic achievements, Bagmi was also very active in extracurricular activities. A member of the National Honor Society, French Honor Society and School Orchestra, she also participated in fundraising drives for many worthy causes such as leukemia society. Bagmi has set her career goal to becoming a Pediatric Psychiatrist.

Subrina Biswal Prize for performing arts

Managed by IAFF

1. **Shivani Mohapatra (1st),**
2. **Natasha Mohapatra (2nd)**
3. **Ishani Behera (3rd).**

There were over 20 participants under the age of 18 in all.

OSA membership (as of 2005 OSA convention)

Courtesy: Harsha Pattnaik

New Life Members

Nihar Mohapatra
Laxmidhar Mishra
Sunil Kar

Annual Members for 2005

Abdul Khan	Pallavi Das
Akhaya Das	Pinaki Panigrahi
Amaresh Hota	Pradeept K Sahoo
Amlan Debnath	Prakash Muduli
Anoop Mishra	Prasanna Mohanty
Anurag Patnaik	Raj K. Pati
Bapi Mohanty	Raj Singh
Baral Himansu	Ranjan Rout
Bibek Das	Sabita Mohapatra
Biswajit Pati	Sabyasachi Panigrahi
Chhabi Mohanty	Sahana Misra Custer
Choudhury Debi P	Sangita Pradhan
Debasis Panda	Santosh Mishra
Eva Samal	Sapan Panigrahi
Feeley Brian	Satpathy S.M
Gati Kar	Sitikantha Mahapatra
Geeta K Dash	Smarasakha Maharana
Joyesh Raj	Sikhanda Satapathy
Jyotsna Pattnaik	Sounak Misra
Kash Mitra	Sri Patnaik
Kishora Panda	Subhas Khasnabish
Lokanath Das	Sudheer K. Maharana
Manaswi Patnaik	Surendra K. Patnaik
Manoj Joshi	Susmita Das
Manoj Misra	Tapan Behera
Mohanty Debaranjan	Uday Krishna Rath
Mohanty Niharika	Umakant Choudhury
Mohanty Rita	Vikas Misra
Mukta Mohapatra	Vivek Misra

A Personal Glimpse of OSA Convention

Sri Gopal Mohanty, CA

Did I say 'Glimpse'? What else. I was, like some others of my age, dutifully enjoying the company of the generation of grandchildren, and as a bonus, had opportunities to peep at some segments of conventional 'Convention 2005' of OSA. Conventional enough like other years, a *Mela* like atmosphere of earlier years which Southern Californians preferred to call it a *Jatra*, the 'Cali Jatra' – *Jatra* of /in /to California, in any way one can interpret. Aptly called or not, there were enough variations from the so-called *Jatra*, be it *Ratha Jatra* or *Bali Jatra*, or even the dramatic *Jatra*.

'Namaskar, Subas Babu', 'He, Mini Apa' and the never-ending grin of the first meeting, were just a few compelling and spontaneous gestures that reverberated the reception hall of Radisson Hotel, Newport Beach, where the Convention was held. This was the eager moment, one was waiting for from the last convention to this one – a long wait and yet one becomes accustomed to, just like *Ratha Jatra* or any festival.

I have never been neither to any *Ratha Jatra* nor to a *Bali Jatra*, but from childhood certainly been to our *Dola/Melana Jatra* and *Muni Jatra* during *Makara Sankranti* period. My father often prodded us to go, even accompanied us. *Muni Jatra* and *Durga Puja* time were occasions when almost all members of our joint family had the bullock-cart ride – it became a whole day affair with special excitement for children. We were indeed grateful to our elders for providing the so-called 'fun-fun' in its simple and unsophisticated form. We did buy some toys, snacks and watched a few special attractions, a treat otherwise never being available to us.



Opening remarks by the convener, Kirtana Behera.

At *Cali Jatra*, one could not miss the Southern California's *jatra*-like outdoor atmosphere. The food was served in the 'Tent', an open area covered by umbrellas, an area adjacent to the swimming pool. Another covered open area called the 'Pavilion' was the 'pendal' of the *Jatra* along with audience chairs. A *pendal* is a 'must' in any fair – a center of attraction; it could be the *pendal* for a deity or a stage for performance; you could always hear announcement of such and such items on the *pendal* or of calling such and such person required on the stage. Well, more than the *pendal* part was Niranjana Tripathy, the new

OSA President, standing near the pool like a hawker and selling Fakir Mohan DVD for \$10. A little further, there was some one selling a coffee-table book 'Puri' just for \$4. Wow, what a deal – 'harek mal panch panch rupaya.' Yes, I did buy both. Yet, no *jatra* is ever complete without ladies items – jewelries and garments; and there was an exclusive area for those. But if someone was thinking of 'chat, bara-piyaji and pana', we should ask the organizers as to where they could hide them. Not quite so. Except for 'pana', they supplied some of the favorites in the formal menu, even to include 'mudhi misa chenachur.' Hey, Oriyas love food!

Wait a minute. This *jatra* was not for everyone, not an open-gate event. You have to register. Why not? It was your gate pass for a three-day affair. Look, when I registered I was given a bag reminiscent of Orissa's rich handicraft, a piece of souvenir. And the real souvenir was inside, 'The Journal' as we know. It has surpassed any other in number of pages. Nirode Mohanty, its editor and his group have put treasures of material in it.



Gajapati Dibyasingha Dev talked on Oriya heritage

The ceremonial inauguration was of course on the *pendal*. I could only stand at the back, and could not attend the entire function. My attention was drawn to the audience just to find some known faces. Instead, I was only able to see bald and semi-bald scalps and touched my own to realize the undeniably denying feeling of advanced age. As my gaze moved upward to the stage, I could see *Gajapati* of Puri, a guest speaker, reminding us of Lord Jagannath as our spiritual heritage. From circular bare scalps, my focus transcended to the powerful circular all-pervading eyes of Black God Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe - 'Kalia Jaga ra Chaka Akhi'. His universality and symbolism was a later realization for me. I was more exposed to Madan Mohan and Radha Govinda – Radha-Krushna – and the festivities associated with them such as Janmastami, Nandostava, Radhastami, Jhulana, Rahasostava, Dola/Melana. These deities belong more or less to the community whereas Jagannath is worshipped by a Brahmin family on a private basis and thus *Ratha Jatra* did not attract our attention. My recollection is that almost all our neighboring villages have a similar trend. Rather, worship of Shiva/ Mahadev and Shakti through *tantric* goddesses such as Mangala, Baarapada Nayikani, Basulei, Basantei is very common. My interest of Jagannath started when I stayed in Puri in 1945 and it became stronger later when I moved away from Orissa to Delhi in 1951. For the Republic Day Parade in 1952, Oriya

Samaj, the then organization of Oriyas in Delhi, presented Ratha Jatra tableau as a symbolic representation of Orissa. In Delhi, my identity – the Oriya identity - was challenged by the ocean of ignorance about Orissa and it was somewhat restored by referring to 'Puri Jagannath'.

In room 809 of the hotel, I was taking care of our four-month old grandson Akash and looked at his round eyes. These innocent eyes stared at me without a wink. And then a smile with spread out lips came out. Was that image saying something of the Lord?



Oriyas gather in a Jatra setting around the food stall to enjoy gupchup, pana, and chat.

After Gajapati's words on spirituality, Manorama Mohapatra - the writer, educationist, journalist and social activist - reminded us about our roots and self-identity, 'swabhiman'. Reminding and reaffirming one-self of the heritage are some of the survival tools of a minority cultural group. It has worked out for generations and Srimati Mohapatra was well aware of this fact to do her share. My emotion of 'swabhiman' was heightened when Dr. Damodar Rout, the Minister of Culture and Panchayat Raj from Orissa addressed the audience in Oriya. That the USA is transiting from a melting pot society to a multicultural one was the message of the Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez. I had a hidden smile since Canada, where I come from, has already embraced multiculturalism long back.

Long back when hardly there were Oriyas around us in Toronto-Hamilton area, my basement was echoing with 'chaiti rati chhapi chhapi ailo sajani dhire...' It was my instinctive response of *swabhiman* to sing and teach dance (honestly, I do not know dance, nor can I sing) to my daughter Jini and her friends (non-Oriyas.) It was the same instinct that propelled Kali Mishra in Saskatoon, Canada to dance and teach Oriya dance in his own way to his two daughters. Sometimes, I have listened to the desperate words: Languages disappear; the onslaught of English on other languages is ruthless; look at the boys and girls in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Rourkela, and look at those educated ones. Does my heart sink? No, my answer is: We all know one day we will die; should we stop living today? 'Jama asiba boli kana kataraa ghodi shoibaa?' But then, look at the technology. You can learn Oriya and about its heritage even living far away.

We all heard 'Youth, Youth, Youth' from Kirtan Behera, the Convener as he emphatically declared the theme of the

Convention with these words. True to his words, there was one stream of sessions intended for younger people (not exclusively), organized by youths headed by Mukta Mohapatra - sessions titles are: 'College life in America,' 'What it means to be an Oriya,' 'Mehendi,' 'Dance workshop for under 14,' 'Exciting non-traditional careers,' 'Cross generational conversation' and 'Jeopardy.' The theme was highlighted by an exclusive agenda 'Focus on Youth' on Sunday morning without any parallel sessions and the celebrated personality Nandita Das was one keynote speaker. I could not attend it, but I understand that she was excellent.

'Yie mo naatuni' announced Surya Misra when I met him with our granddaughter Maya. So did Kirtan Babu introducing his daughter Sarina and her children at the reception desk. The trend to move out from the center of the stage is inevitable and so is the thought of youth and their involvement with OSA. Not that this was the first time that thought crept in. Involving youth has been a constant ongoing process. At last Toronto Convention, the Chapter President was Reena Patnaik, a youth fresh from her college. Her sister Lona and Sovita Padhi were two among others, who were heavily involved in planning youth activities; so was the case at other places. California's remoteness makes its residents oblivious of others. Yet, this Convention wrote YOUTH in bold letters.

The experiment to pass on the torch from a handful of Oriya immigrants, who for their genuine need of closeness formed OSA, to others who are unable to bond together for the same reason, is continuing. The transition to new immigrants (sometimes this group has been neglected) on one hand and the second generation on the other hand, is a social struggle as the gap between these three groups is not close enough. Yet the transition is inescapable.



A glimpse of comedy presented by Washington DC chapter

The lack-luster men at the *Jatra* were almost unnoticeable before the 'sari-sankha-alata pindha' ladies. They had to be ready for the *Jatra* or else an occasion would pass away without being noticeable. So were the children. There in an elevator, I met a father carrying on his shoulder a half-asleep but well-dressed little girl to go to the *Jatra* (the cultural program). Kali-Jatra did not quite provide the kaleidoscopic nature of a *jatra* or *mela*. Never mind, it is still a *jatra* of some sort! *Jatra's* folksy

diversity was modernized and at that point took the form of a convention. The open-air panorama was made compact into three rooms, called Mahanadi, Baitarani and Brahmani, available for seminars. The varieties of products for selling and for entertainment were topics of contemporary interest, at least for an internalized intellectual level.

Of course, the first and foremost was the language, culture and heritage. 'Oriya Poetry Reading' initiated by Bijoy Mohan Misra, has become a part of any convention; so was in this one by the effort of Bigyani Das. And this time, the topic was 'Love.' Similarly, a session on Jagannath culture is also a traditional item. This year's speakers were Dr. Kabi Mishra and Manorama Mohapatra, the well-known personalities on the topic. 'Chala Odia Shikhiba' was a refreshing topic, run by Kuku Das and Gayatri Joshi. I had the chance to attend the seminar on 'Oriya Literature through Ages'. The presenters were none other than Prativa Ray who spoke on Oriya fictions, Manorama Mohapatra on poetry and Dr. Kabi Mishra on Bhanja literature. I could have spent hours listening to them. Their knowledge was vast, their style was appealing and the substance was absorbing. They awakened in me the sensibility lying dormant for ages – the quest for my rich heritage. I welcome the modern age of technology and the progress associated with it. But they do not touch my heart, and without it life is simply insipid. Kabi Babu rightly pointed this out, and more than that, he pointed out the invaluable wealth and richness that could be found in Upendra Bhanja's writings. The organizer Sweta Dash (Bui) thanked the speakers by reciting a poem. What a delight!



Nandita Das participated in the youth program by discussing a variety of issues put forth by young Oriyas.

You hear laments and sighs about language and culture for the future generation, but sincere attempts and experiments are being made by individuals and groups by whatever way to preserve the heritage such as *Chala Ame Odia Shikhiba*. In fact, there was a panel discussion on 'Study Abroad.' Its purpose as thought by Nirode Mohanty, was to introduce a program of study on Orissa, its language, culture, literature, anthropology and other related subjects at a University in Orissa. This would encourage and facilitate those from here (for example, someone interested in the second generation) or elsewhere to learn about Orissa. Officials from Orissa accepted the idea and a formal proposal would be presented to the Government by December this year.

While every age group was looking for a forum, the seniors had a session on 'Quest for Happiness in Retirement.' Well, I

could not attend it, but would just say that life is beautiful even after retirement. Again, 'Women Forum' has become a traditional seminar item at the Convention.

A mother was guiding her dressed up daughter to the stage for a performance. It could be her first appearance before a large group; there are high hopes and lurking anticipations. She might be competing for Subrina Biswal award. Our thanks go to Subhas Mohapatra whose efforts led to the establishment of this award.

At some point, I met Bijaylakshmi Gantayat, who pointed out to her daughter Atoshi and remarked: You taught her to be on the stage and say 'I am Ravana, the King of Lanka.' In fact, her impromptu words were like the 'open sesame' to a memorable vista, recounting our one-year stay in Bay area during 1981-82. For the first time, Oriyas in Northern California celebrated Kumar Purnima on stage. Among the children, we did not have a boy to play the role of Ravana. Atoshi's mother and I were able to persuade her to do the job and she was excellent. Mukta Mohapatra, was then only a three-year old girl and she played the role of the golden deer. I remember one event when children were performing a dance item, Laboni (one of Patnaik sisters: Laboni, Shibani and Shalini, who received this year's Kalashree award) then a little child spontaneously came to the front to mimic others and there was a roar of laughter. Our presence reenergized the cultural life of Oriyas in the Bay area and they willingly accepted us to cling to them.



The Southwest Chapter won the Inter-Chapter drama competition with its play "dui Dahara sAhityika," a play adapted from Faturananda's "mangaLa bAriA sAhitya sansada." The plays from Michigan, Washington DC and California were very enjoyable as well.

That was the time when Sanjukta Panigrahi came to North America for the first time. Since then California has evolved steadily to promote and nurture Orissa's most treasured export "Odissi." The quality and standard are at least as good as one would like to expect among good artists. This was evidently reflected in the cultural program at the Convention. Nandita Behera's school provided items at the inaugural function. From Orissa

came two guest artists, Aruna Mohanty and Yudhistir Nayak. My daughter Rini danced even with handicaps of having a two-year daughter and a small baby. I could only see from the back, a part of dance of Pallavi, daughter of Pratap Das. Her stage presence and grace were very appealing. The joy of participants was immense. And then there were dramas from various chapters. This time at least there was a sense of reassurance that cultural program was no longer dominated by *ghazals* and filmy dances and that there were many younger participants.

Then the thought of Orissa and her future had to preoccupy minds of many, almost all of the first generation. It was not the oppressing cry of 'Utha kankala,' rather a deep concern of a well-to-do group about Orissa's condition almost in every respect. It was translated into three sessions, a pre-Convention seminar called 'Technology Seminar' and two others, namely, 'NRO efforts in development of Orissa' and 'Economic development in Orissa.' The Technology Seminar focused on Biotech and IT with speakers who are either engaged in the development or have set-up enterprises in NA and Orissa/India. They narrated their stories of successes and challenges along with frustration. Bailochan Behera, President of System Technology International, Inc. particularly painted a rosy picture on doing business in Orissa. The key factor in doing business in Orissa to be the low cost of operation was mentioned several times. The Seminar was attended by representatives from Orissa Government including Sahadev Sahoo, (ex-chief secretary), President, NRO Facilitation Center. The seminar on NRO's contribution was organized by Dr. Debi Mishra, as he has been doing it for past few years. There was a strong emphasis on agriculture and rural development. Ranu Mahanti's impassioned appeal for establishing micro-credit facilities like Gramin Banks was substantiated by Binod Nayak's presentation on the impact of micro-finance on development. I was delighted to hear this perspective, for I belong to SEEDS (Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society,) which has already realized this fact right at its inception some years back and initiated experiments on micro-credit in a small scale with mixed results. Unfortunately, SEEDS was not represented in this seminar. Now I am encouraged to suggest and even urge to join hands and network among various individuals and groups who are engaged in Orissa's development. It is high time we all share our experiences and coordinate such efforts so as to be more visible and effective.



A marvelous dance rendition in colorful attire

While this seminar involved those who are directly active in the field, the seminar on Economic Development in Orissa had speakers who presented the issue from academic points of view. Speakers were: Bhabani Mishra - IMF, Prashanta Patnaik – UC at

Riverside and Sukanta Mishra – Lubock, Texas. They all agreed that rural and agricultural economy should take precedence over others for bringing Orissa out of its despicable economic condition. Labor intensive, rather capital intensive development should be encouraged. As an example, Bhabani Mishra said modern mining industry would discourage large employment. Instead, he suggested promoting garment industry, which would employ many from rural area who have been otherwise going away to Gujrat. Prasanta Babu's lucid presentation and his convincing argument in support of large scale rural employment, by using economic theory were most impressive, so much so that one person in the audience who have attended three conventions so far asked to see more of this type of presentation and large scale distribution of such material. Srimati Manorama Mohapatra requested him to write articles for 'Samaj' expressing his viewpoint. My personal satisfaction was that what some of us have believed, gained the support of famous economist like Prasanta Babu.



Budding Thespians

The Jatra-cum-Convention has to come to an end. 'Cali- Jatra' became 'Kali-Jatra' - an event of yesterday. The fun-fare was over. Let us remember with gratitude the team of VOLUNTEERS who with their sleepless nights committed themselves with heightened zeal to do better than other years and to do the best. Yes, there were lapses, food problem, stage problem, and roaring sound of planes flying out of the nearby airport and what not. We will improve and that's for the future. But we will move – 'chake gale baara haata,' another twelve months to wait. I am hearing half-clear syllables of 'chaiti rati chhapi chhapi' that my granddaughter is singing while moving her hips.



Photo Credits:

Laxmidhar Mishra, Kirtan Behera, Jnana R Dash, Gagan Panigrahi, Dharendra Kar, Pradip Tripathy, Santanu Das, Bigyani Das and Sikhanda Satapathy

Editorial assistance:

Bigyani Das

“Promoting Youth and preserving our culture” was the main theme at the 36th. Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) at Los Angeles, California.

Jnana Dash, CA

The 36th annual convention of OSA (Orissa Society of the Americas) was held with much pomp and ceremony at the Radisson Inn in Newport Beach in Los Angeles, California on July 1-3, 2005. More than 650 people attended the convention from various parts of the USA and Canada. Several Oriyas from the UK and India also attended. The chief guest was the honorable Dibyasingh Deb, Gajapati Maharaja of the Puri temple. The keynote speaker was Mrs. Manorama Mohapatra, eminent writer, poet, philanthropist, and editor of The Samaj. Other visitors included Dr. Kabi Prasad Mishra, a cardiologist at the Appollo hospital in Chennai and an expert on Upendra Bhanja's writings and Pratibha Ray, the well-known writer of Oriya novels. A minister from Orissa government, Mr. Damodar Rout was also in attendance. Mrs. Loretta Sanchez, a member of US Congress was the honorable guest.

The convention opened on the July 2nd with a welcome address by the convener, Mr. Kirtan Behera followed by a welcome by OSA president Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan. Then Gajapati Maharaja said to the august audience about the eight hundred years of tradition of Lord Jagannath and expressed his satisfaction at the spreading of Lord Jagannath's message of universal love and unity of mankind. The keynote speaker Mrs. Manorama Mohapatra electrified the audience by her speech by appreciating the theme of the convention. She cited many examples of the cultural significance in daily Oriya life and their spiritual significance. Her speech moved the audience. Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez emphasized the importance of maintaining one's roots while growing up in America as she herself was the product of first generation Mexican immigrants. Minister Damodar Rout communicated a message from the chief minister of sending the best wishes to the NROs (non-resident Oriyas) attending the convention. The inaugural program was followed by a short cultural program consisting of Odissi dance.



Convener Kirtan Behera



Manorama Mohapatra, Editor of The Samaja, Addressed the attendees

The second day of the convention had a youth inaugural program with two key invited guests – Nandita Das, the famous actress; and Bibhu Mohapatra, a rising star in the fashion industry in Paris and New York. Nandita Das is well known as an actress and social worker. Bibhu Mohapatra is the chief designer of a Paris-based fashion house called J. Mendel, a rare accomplishment by an Oriya. Bibhu's designs are popular among Hollywood actresses and other celebrities. Mukta Mohapatra was the youth convener and Somesh Dash conducted the stage interviews of Nandita and Bibhu. Both days of the convention were packed with important seminars on varieties of topics. On July 1st, Friday, there was a technology session on the progress of biotech and information technology in Orissa.

An important seminar on Orissa's economic development included Dr. Prashant Patnaik, the eminent economist. The key message by the panelists was that Orissa's economy will only grow if there is social progress, especially in primary school education. Dr. Patnaik commented that recent research by

well-known economists suggests that basic education is a primary catalyst for economic progress. While there are too many colleges springing up across Orissa, the drop-out rate of rural children from primary and upper primary schools is alarmingly high. However, there seems to be no focus on this issue. Mrs. Manorama Mohapatra suggested to Dr. Patnaik to communicate his ideas via Samaj so that public awareness will grow on this topic.

Other seminars included topics on women's issues, Oriya identity, non-traditional careers. Three parallel tracks of seminars for various age groups were organized. Evenings were packed with cultural programs running past midnight. All in all, the Radisson Inn at Newport Beach was a mini Orissa for 3 days.

The newly elected members of OSA were given the charge for next two years. Niranjan Tripathy of Dallas is the new president of OSA with a new team (Dhirendra Kar, Vice President; Bigyani Das, Secretary; Prakash Patro, Treasurer).



Participants of a group dance presented by California kids.



Odia Poetry Reading (Kabita Patha) Session Kusumanjali

Dr. Bigyani Das, MD

Odia Poetry Reading was held in the Brahmani room on Saturday at 8:00 AM. The table was decorated with Pipili handicraft work. Dr Bigyani Das delivered the welcome speech. In her speech she explained the theme "Prema" and the connection of the theme to the title "Kusumanjali". Love is like a fresh flower (kusuma) that captivates human mind with its beauty and freshness.

Everything happens in this world because of this intricate, yet strong force of human mind. Love is power, love is inspiration and love is intuition. Love is like the gentle breeze that sings the never-ending song of joy and happiness. Love is compassion, love is caring, love is nurturing, love is empathy and love is protective. After the welcome, everybody sang "Bande Utkala Janani" honoring motherland Utkala and expressing their love for the land.

Eminent writer Dr Pratibha Ray, winner of Murti Devi award, Sahitya Academy award and many other awards was introduced by Dr Bigyani Das to give the keynote address. Dr Pratibha Ray delivered an excellent inspiring speech. In her



Nayak read three poems "Mun Jane Mehanati", Bhorara Haawaare", and "Swapna Dekhe" by his late father Laxmidhar Nayak. Babru Samal read the poem "Bhaaratabarsa" by Manorama Mahapatra. Bisnupriya Mishra read the poem "Sei Sei Nilakain". Jhinu Chhotray read her poem "Baapaa", written for her father after his death.



Braja Bhai, General Manager of Oriya Daily Samaja read his poem "Mo Bishwasare OSA" describing his experiences about OSA as an organization. Bigyani Das read her poem "Kusumanjali" that she had composed for her husband. Manorama Mohapatra, editor of Oriya daily Samaja read her poem "Antima Prema". She gave the closing comments on poetry and described poetry's relation to love. Braja bhai gave his concluding remarks. Dharendra Kar read another poem "Matrubhumi" by Gangadhar Meher as the last poem expressing love for our mother land. Co-organizer Jhinu Chhotray adjourned the session.

speech, she emphasized the role of love in a writer's life. According to her, love creates sympathy, sympathy creates the feeling, the happiness, the pain and that provide the spice for a new creation. Whether it's a story or a poem, whether it's an essay or a critique note, all start with love.

The poetry reading started with Sachi Routray's "Chhota Mora Gaanti", read by Dharendra Kar. Sneha Mohanty read her poem "Siddhi Prema" depicting the life of Tulasi Das. Binod

Due to the communication problem, some poets were not able to participate in the poetry reading session. Sikhanda Satpathy, Sri Gopal Mohanty, Anjana Chowdhury and Swadha Rath were scheduled to recite their poems; however, in the process of avoiding parallel sessions, there was confusion on the day of the poetry reading session. In future we plan to avoid the confusion and go ahead with a definite day and time schedule fixed before a month of the event.



Chapter Report for CANOSA

Dr. Gagan Panigrahi, Toronto

Bisuba Milana Celebration

Bisuba Milan has been observed by the Oriya families in Canada for the past three decades. This year, the Bisuba Milan was organized by CanOSA on April 30 in Toronto. The evening belonged to the youth and the very young. As in many community participatory events, many items were put on stage with minimal rehearsal. There were many absolutely priceless unrehearsed moments on stage, mostly by the very young and some not so young. We were also charmed by the innate dance, music and dramatic abilities of the youth.



Under the directorship of Dr. Sushree (Mishra) Kar a dance drama 'Manabhanjan' was presented with the ladies of the Greater Toronto Area. The set, with the kadamba tree in bloom in the background, and with the bushes and the deer was very artistic and professional. The broad smiles on the face of the cast after the show indicated the exhilaration of a new achievement. For each, it was a first, to overcome stage fright and participate in the anchor production for the Bisuba Milan evening. Niranjan Mishra of Sudbury, with a very multi-talent stage presence, regaled us with an almost spontaneous and almost impromptu farce about a visit to North America by the Odisha Minister of Irrigation and Culture, and three of his entourage. The Bisuba Milan this year highlighted the remarkable contribution of a very large number of recent Odiya immigrants to Canada. With them the new arrivals bring a variety of talents and a reservoir of youthful energy.

This surge of talent and energy showed not only on stage, but also in the snacks at the beginning of the evening and dinner at the end. Approximately 150 people graced the occasion. There was no catered food. Everything was home cooked. All the items were of superior quality, fresh and tasty.

One day Summer Picnic

It was a hot summer day. Under the shade of the trees, the CanOSA picnic, at Wildwood Park, began at 11:00 am with people arriving slowly until 1:00 pm. All the items were placed under the tent and trees to protect them from the sun. At 1:30 lunch was served: chips & salsa, chat, noodles and halwa. After lunch, the crowds dispersed into their own activities. These included children playing at the playground,

a friendly match of volleyball, card games, and sitting around talking under the shade. During this time, watermelons were also cut and served, which provided some relief from the hot sun. The games continued with the younger children playing musical chairs, and volleyball became even more competitive. Around 3 o'clock, cooking for dinner started. A big group sat around and gathered at one place and cut the vegetables, and some helped by bringing water and some started cooking. Also during this time delicious *pakor*s were made, with tea being served intermittently. Dinner was then served at 6:30. The items consisted of rice, mutton curry, dal, egg curry, *matar paneer*, mixed vegetables, salad, *saga*, *amba khata*, *chenna poda* and butter tarts. After dinner (*bhuri bhojan*), people were in relaxing mood and sat together in a group to participate in *anthakshari*. The fun and laughter continued late till dusk, at which point the communal clean up began, with the last of us saying our goodbyes, and leaving the park at 10:00 pm. It was a moment to cherish.



Meeting with Prativa Ray, the renowned novelist

It was our pleasure that the Toronto Odiyas could spend few hours with noted novelist Mrs. Prativa Roy on the 18th of July in the Earl Bales Community Centre. The program started at 11 A.M. The president of CanOSA, Dr. Gagan Panigrahi gave a brief introduction about Mrs. Ray and her contribution to Oriya literature. After that she spoke about the status of Odiya literature now and how it can be improved. She narrated how she started her career as a writer and her difficulty. Through her speech she encouraged especially the women to continue to write in spite of their busy schedule. She was at her best, spoke extremely well and at the end answered questions. People enjoyed every bit of her talk. At the end she was presented a book about Canada by president of CanOSA and Dr. Prakash Patnaik. The meeting ended with a lunch.

Canada Long weekend Cottage Picnic

"Away from home" and a three-day sojourn in the lakefront resort beside the Rice Lake in a beautiful setting and amidst wonderful families and friends has left behind sweet memories to store and restore for a long time.



The CanOSA 2005 Cottage Picnic started on Friday evening, July 29 until Monday near Rice Lake, Ontario. Eighty people joined the fun filled weekend. The Friday evening provided a wonderful forum to know each other: there were a few older faces and many new; a few of older people and many young and most interestingly, many children and youth. "Draw a picture" contest was exciting for the parents to know their children even better. Another color full fashion show by children added to the event

Saturday morning started with Cricket and Volley ball matches. At the same time children enjoyed fishing in the dock area of the picturesque rice lake. The high light of Saturday evening was Swamiji's meditation lectures under the tree beside the lake in a serene atmosphere. The evening program *Sabdakshari* (that starts with a word or a general meaning or with hints of films or actors) was challenging and women won over the men. A *Chadhaeiya-Chadheiyani nacha* was the high light of the evening program.

Sunday morning: Many enjoyed going into the lake and see the beautiful view around. Going to the beach in the Ontario Lake was a great fun: getting into water was a greater joy. Children moved into water first, then men followed by ladies.

Other games included Men's beach volley ball and ladies *rumala chori* (stealing of handkerchief. The evening program of "Song for you" was quite exciting and surprise for many. The food was prepared on the spot and delicious. Many volunteers worked hard and made it a successful long week end. As Niranjan Mishra puts it, "away from home to bigger home for sweet and short stay amidst wonderful persons".

All those who participated in this memorable event of the CanOSA, no doubt, came with one determination: "Life is beautiful, let's enjoy it". Every one did so to the fullest extent.



Texas Over night Picnic at Lake Whitney

Prashanta Ranabijuli, Austin, TX

The Oriyas of Texas got together for an over night picnic near the beautiful Lake Whitney on April 30- May 1. It was a fun filled event for Adults and Kids. Starting from the usual "Gapa Sapa", Oriya style lunch, BBQ, mutton curry, catered dinner to the kids' sports, Cricket, Cultural event, and the late night campfire - there was something for everyone to enjoy.



The day was busy with a challenging cricket match between Austin and Dallas, which Austin team narrowly won. It was followed by a cook out of "kadhei" mutton curry and a cultural program, which included solo and group songs, dance renditions, and a play. The over night stay in tents and huts brought wonderful experience to every body. Those who didn't want to waste a moment, gathered around the camp fire until early morning. The following day saw a tough tug-of-war between males and females, with the result that the kids won. A trip to the water front with home made "muDhi-mixture" was too hot to resist, while the kids swam in the cold water. Every body left after a sumptuous lunch carrying the fund memories with them.



Orissa shines in New York

Mahendra Kar, NJ

The Volunteers of OSANY-NJ participated in 58th India's Independence Day on 21st of August in New York City. The relentless effort of local Oriya's, well wishers and not to mention its ever energetic office bearers, resulted in a colorful extravaganza of melodious songs, traditional music, Odisi dance atop the float bearing the great Konark wheel, the arch of Mukteswar temple, picture of the mighty Konark and "Ratha Yatra." Indeed, the event was classic and touched many hearts among the fellow Indians and New Yorkers. The Float conveyed the message of rich Odiya heritage, Jagannath culture, abundant natural resources, unique life style and friendly Oriya community. Audience around the globe became spell-bound after observing the Odisi dance tuned to devotional songs. Here are some excerpts from the experience of people who were part of the 58th India Day Parade Celebration.



"It was *Ratha Yatra* in August, *Konark Nritya Samaroha* on 41st Street, and *Sambalpuri Folk Dance Festival*, three-in-one, a triple delight for the audience." "It was like a Miracle on Lexington Avenue, New York, the World's greatest city." "It was an amalgamation of rich Jagannath culture and symbol of modern world." "It was a true fusion of heritage and technology, an acceptance of universal brotherhood, respect for mutual coexistence, a step towards peace and harmony."

Oriyas, Indians and Americans, along with tourist from rest of the world danced on New York Street to the tune of "Rangabati" and its rich rhythm with *Mahuri*, *Madal* and *Dholla*. For couple of hours, Lexington Avenue became *Bada Danda* and an Odiya showcase.

"Nandighosa, Taladhwa and Darpadalan" at the backdrop, Konark wheel taking the center stage, Odia dancers dancing like "Devadasis" in front of the chariots are some of the unique symbol of Orissa on its Float, that attracted many audience regardless of their religion, ethnicity and race.

Organized by IFA, since last 25 years, the India Day Parade is a significant event for fellow Indians in Tri-State area. This year, the Oriyas appeared with

exuberance, strength, color and pride to celebrate the birthday of Independent India and silver jubilee of the event. This was our second year of participation.



Local Odiyas walked the parade route, along with fellow Indians, visiting Indian dignitaries, celebrities, Bollywood stars and others. At the end of the parade, there were Indian cultural programs, music, dance, and tasty treat of ethnic foods from all around India. □

Ratha Jatra at Fremont, CA.



This year Fremont Temple celebrated Rath Yatra in all pomp and glory. The Chariot was constructed from scratch by Sanjiv Kumar Mohanty and his friends.



Oriyas Celebrate Independence day in California. In the last six years Orissa float got four first prize and two second prizes. – *Laxmidhar Mishra*

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ବରୁଣ ପାଣି, ମିଶିଶିପି

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ପ୍ରଣୟର ନିବେଦନ ଚିରନ୍ତନ ବୋଲି
କହିଥିଲ ଧୀରେ
ଏକ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା ରାତ୍ରିରେ ।

* * * * *

ଆଉ ଏକ ରାତ୍ରି
ସେଇ ସାଗର କୂଳରେ
ଜୁଆର ଢେଉରେ
ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଯାଇଥିଲା ଆମ ବାଲୁକାର ଘର
ମେଘର ସେ ପଶତ କାନିରେ
ଲୁଚିରହି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେଖୁଥିଲା
ମନେ ମନେ ହସୁଥିଲା ଅବା
ଜୀବନ ଯୌବନ ନେଇ ଏଇ ଲୀଳା, ଖେଳା
ଜୁଆରର ସ୍ରୋତେ
ଚାଲି ଯାଇଥିଲ ତୁମେ ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟ ପର ପ୍ରାନ୍ତେ
ମନେ ମନେ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାରେ
ମୁଁ ପରା ଗୋ ଗୋଟି ଗୋଟି ବାଲୁକା କଣାକୁ
ଗଣୁଥିଲି ଦିବସ ଶେଷରେ ।

Written on 9/5/1984 in Jamshedpur, India

ଜହ୍ନୁରାତି

ତାପସ ରଂଜନ ସାହୁ, ଚେନ୍ନାଇ

ତୁମକୁ କି ଭଲ ଲାଗେ ଅମାବାସ୍ୟା ଅକ୍ଷର
ତୁମକୁ କି ଭଲ ଲାଗେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରହୀନ ସଫର୍ଷ ମଣ୍ଡଳ ?
ମୁଁ ଜାଣେନି ତୁମେ କିଆଁ ଭଲପାଅ,
ଜହ୍ନୁରାତି ଏତେ ବେଶି ଭଲପାଅ !

ତୁମେ ଗୁହଁ ଜହ୍ନୁରାତି, ତୁମେ ଗୁହଁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଚନ୍ଦ୍ର,
ଅକ୍ଷର ଭଲପାଏ, ଖୁବ୍ ବେଶି ଭଲପାଏ ମୁଁ ଯେ;
ମୋ' ପାଇଁକି ଅମାବାସ୍ୟା ମୁଖରିତ
ଶଙ୍ଖଧ୍ଵନି, ମଙ୍ଗଳ ବାଦ୍ୟରେ -

ଜନ୍ମ ନେବ ଜହ୍ନୁରାତି ଯେଣୁ,
କମନୀୟ ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣ ତା'ର ଭରିଦେବ
ତୁମ ଦେହେ ମଧୁର ସଙ୍ଗତ,
ସେ ସଙ୍ଗତ ମୁହଁନାରେ ସ୍ଵୟିତ ମୋ' ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମନ;
ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି, ମୁଁ ବୁଝିଛି
ଅକ୍ଷରୁ ଆଲୋକର ସୃଷ୍ଟି,
ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଅକ୍ଷର - ଅଚିହ୍ନା, ଅଜଣା,
ହେଲେ ଆଲୋକିତ ଅନନ୍ତ ଅତୀତ !

ଅମାବାସ୍ୟା ଅକ୍ଷରୁ ଜହ୍ନୁ ଯେବେ ଜନ୍ମ ନେବ . . .
ଶୈଶବରୁ କୈଶୋର ଓ ତା'ପରେ ଯୌବନ;
ଜହ୍ନୁ ଖେଳେ ଲୁଚକାଳି ଅକ୍ଷରରେ,
ସ୍ଵପ୍ନରେ ବିଭୋର ତୁମେ . . .
ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମାର ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପାଇଁ ସତେ ବା କାତର !
ତୁମ ଜହ୍ନୁ, ତୁମ ରାତି, ତୁମ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମାରେ -
ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ତୁମ ଜହ୍ନୁରାତିର ସମାପ୍ତି !

କେବେ ଥରେ ଭାବିଛ କି -
କୋକେଇରେ ବନ୍ଧା ତୁମ ମୃତ ଦେହ,
ତା' ଉପରେ ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନାସ୍ନାତ ଧବଳ ଗୃହର
ଶୋକାକୁଳ ଜହ୍ନୁରାତି ଶାନ୍ତ, ସ୍ଵବ୍ଧ,
ସେ ଜହ୍ନୁର ଆସନ୍ନ ମୃତ୍ୟୁରେ !

1989 - Instant Poem Competition, ବୁର୍ଲା

କୁସୁମାଞ୍ଜଳି

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, କଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ହୃଦୟର ବଗିଚାରେ
ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତିତ ସୁହାସୀ କୁସୁମ
ମଲ୍ଲୀ, ଚମ୍ପା, କୃଷ୍ଣଚୂଡ଼ା
ବସନ୍ତର ମଧୁ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ
ରଙ୍ଗମୟୀ, ଲାସ୍ୟମୟୀ,
ରୂପସୀ କୁସୁମ;

ଆନନ୍ଦର ମହକ ଛୁଟାଇ
ମମତା ନୁପୁର ପିନ୍ଧି
ପବନର ତାଳେ ତାଳେ
ମତୁଆଲା ଗୀତ ଗାଇ
ନୃତ୍ୟ ରତେ କେତେ ଯେ କୁସୁମ ।

ପ୍ରଥମ ଦେଖାରେ ତମେ
ରୋପିଥିଲ ଶୁଭ୍ରମଲ୍ଲୀ ଚାରା
ହୃଦୟେ ମୋ ଭରିଥିଲ ଶୁଷ୍କ ସ୍ନେହ
ତୁମ ବିଶାଳ ହୃଦୟର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଇ
ଅଜଣା ଝିଅଟିର ଅସମୟେ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସଙ୍କଟ
ବଦାନ୍ୟତା ପଶେ ତୁମେ ଅର୍ଥ ଯାଚି ଦେଲ
ସଙ୍କଟ ମୋଚନ କଲ
ଉଦାହରଣ ଦେଖାଇଥିଲ
ଦୟା, ଆତ୍ମୀୟତା, ମାନବିକତାର
ଶୁଷ୍କ ସ୍ନେହର, କରୁଣାର
ମନେ ମୋର ରୋପିଦେଲ
ଶୁଷ୍କ ପ୍ରେମ ଚାରା ।

ପୁଣି ଦିନେ ମୋ ସହିତ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚ କଲ
ଅନ୍ଧଜଣା ଥିଲେ ବି ମୋ ଅଭିଯୋଗ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ
ସ୍ଵଚ୍ଛବାଣୀ କହିବାକୁ ପଛାଇ ନଥିଲ
“ଝିଅପିଲା ବୋଲି ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ସୁବିଧା ପାଇଁ
କର ଯେବେ ଦାବୀ,
ପୁରୁଷ ସହିତ ତେବେ ସମତା ପାଇଁ,
କିମ୍ପା କର ଯୁକ୍ତିତର୍କ, ଅଯଥା ଲଢ଼ାଇ;”
ତୁମ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚ ମୋ ମନ ଛୁଇଁଲ
ଭାବନା ତୁରାନ୍ୱିତ ହେଲା

ଅପ୍ରିୟ ସତ୍ୟବଚନ କାଟିଥିଲା ସତ,
ହେଲେ ଜାଗିଥିଲା ନୃତନ ପ୍ରେରଣା,
“ଝିଅ ପିଲା ବୋଲି ପଛଘୁଞ୍ଚା ଦେବି ନାହିଁ;”
ଚମ୍ପକର ଚାରା ରୋପିଦେଲ
ବିତରିବାକୁ ସ୍ଵଚ୍ଛବାଦିତାର,
ଦୃଢ଼ମନ୍ୟତାର ସୁଗନ୍ଧ ନିରତେ ।

କୃଷ୍ଣଚୂଡ଼ା ରଙ୍ଗ ଦେଇ
ମୋ ମନରେ ଭରିଦେଲ
କାମନା, ବାସନା ରଙ୍ଗ
ତୁମକୁ ନିଜର କରି ରଖିବାର
ପ୍ରବଳ ଅଭୀପ୍ସା
ଜୀବନ କୁଞ୍ଚରେ ବଜାଇଲ
ମୋହନ ବାଂଶୁରୀ
ଉଜାଣି ଯମୁନା ବହିଲା
ଶ୍ୟାମ ସଙ୍ଗେ ରାଇ ନାଚ କଲା ।
ବିରହ, ମିଳନ, ରାଗ, ଅନୁରାଗ,
ସୁଖ, ଦୁଃଖ, ମାନ, ଅଭିମାନ,
ସବୁ ମିଶି ଜୀବନର
ରଙ୍ଗଭରା ସଙ୍ଗତ ହୋଇଲା ।

ହେ ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟତମ
ପ୍ରେମର ଭାଷା ମୁଁ ଯେ ତୁମଠୁ ଶିଖିଛି
ଏମିତି ମନେ ମୋର ରୋପିଅଛି
ପ୍ରେମ ନାମେ କେତେ କେତେ କୁସୁମର ଚାରା
ତୁମ ପାଇଁ ସେ କୁସୁମେ ଆଜି
ଭରିଛି ଅଞ୍ଜଳି
ପ୍ରିତି ଧୂପ, ମମତା ମହକ
ପ୍ରିୟ ତୁମ ପୂଜା ପାଇଁ
ଭକତି ଚନ୍ଦନେ ସଜାଇଛି ଅର୍ଘ୍ୟଥାଳି
“ମୁଁ କେବଳ ତୁମକୁ ହିଁ ଭଲପାଏ”
ଗାଇ ଏ ପ୍ରେମର ବନ୍ଦନା
ଅରପୁଛି ଏ କୁସୁମାଞ୍ଜଳି ।

ଏହି କବିତାଟି ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ନରେଶ ଦାସଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ ଓ ନିଉପୋର୍ଟ ବିଚ୍, କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆରେ ୯ ବର୍ଷର ଓସା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ଆୟୋଜିତ କରାଯାଇଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବିତା ପାଠୋତ୍ସବରେ ଆବୃତ୍ତି କରିଥିଲେ ।

CELEBRATION OF DANCE GRADUATION (ODISSI MANCHA PRABESHA)

Bagmi (Liti) Das, a disciple of Guru Meera Das of Gunjan Dance Academy, Cuttak, Orissa and of Guru Jayantee Paine Ganguly of Konark Dance School, Lanham, MD, USA performed her *Mancha Prabesha* (Odissi Dance Graduation) on Saturday, August 6, 2005 at Smith Theater, Howard County Community College (HCC), Columbia, MD, USA. An Odissi *Mancha Prabesha* is the professional debut performance in Odissi. The dancer earns her mastery in Odissi by performing her *Mancha Prabesha*. Bagmi's *Mancha Prabesha* attracted more than 300 people, which included American, Indian, Japanese, Iranian, Chinese and other ethnic groups. Her breathtaking performance lasted for more than two hours and mesmerized the audience. The demonstration and clear explanation of the mythology behind each dance took the audience thousands of miles away to the culture of India.



The memorable dance was an Abhinaya "Sajanilo Chahaan Baare Nayana Pheri" that was completely designed for Bagmi. It was an *abhinaya* depicting color playing in Gopapura. The lyric was a composition of her mother Bigyani Das in the Oriya language. The music composition was by Sumanta Mohanty. This item was choreographed and taught to Bagmi by Meea Das. The Abhinaya "Sajanilo Chahan Bare Nayana Pheri" in *raag* Bakulaa-bharana, set to Ekataali had the greatest impact on the audience. The stage decoration by Arun Das in lead was of superb quality. The entry foyer decoration by Sangeeta Dey with Orissa sarees, Pipili handicrafts welcomed the guests with traditional Oriya hospitality. Rangoli designed by Sangeeta Dey added color to the welcome spirit. Konark background in the sides with projection of dance themes in the middle screen gave an enchanting look to the Smith Theater stage.



Bagmi was very fortunate to have all three Odissi dance teachers in the Washington DC area, Dr Chitra Krishnamurti, Mrs Sukanya Mukherjee and Mrs Jayantee Paine Ganguly in the audience. A leading dance exponent Guru Gangadhar Pradhan was also there to bless her after her *Mancha*

Prabesha. Bagmi's school friends were very surprised that Bagmi could dance continuously for such a long time. It was there first exposure to an Indian classical dance graduation event and they treasured every moment. The dance event was followed by a grand reception in the Multipurpose Hall of HCC. The slide show presented by Bagmi's sisters Mrunali and Shashwati added extra charm to the event.

About Bagmi

Bagmi, now seventeen years old, started her Odissi training at the age of six with Dr Chitra Krishnamurti, Director of Nrityalaya, Potomac, MD. Over the years, Bagmi performed in most of Nrityalaya's productions as well as for other organizations. In 2002, she performed Odissi at Army Research Laboratory and was awarded certificate for her dance. Later she studied with Jayantee Paine, the director of Konark Dance School in Lanham, Maryland, who perfected her dance with a careful watch and much affection.



She participated in their annual production "Parampara" earlier this year. Bagmi furthered her learning of Odissi under the tutelage of Meera Das, Director of Gunjan Dance Academy, Cuttack, Orissa. In June, 2005, she traveled to Orissa alone and was challenged with the summer heat. However, she tolerated everything for the sake of the dance. Bagmi graduated from Hammond High School in Columbia, MD in June 2005. Aside from dance, Bagmi was involved in many extra curricular activities, including School Orchestra, It's Academic Team, French Club and other activities. Bagmi is a member of National Honor Society and the French Honor Society. She has received many awards for her creativity, academics, hard work and leadership skills. She also participated in two of Hammond's stage productions, "Bye Bye Birdie" and "The Secret of Monkey Island." Bagmi is a passionate writer and has published stories and poems in a few journals. She is a regular participant in many Odia drama productions and has performed extensively in Odia community events. Bagmi will be attending Carnegie Mellon University this fall. According to Bagmi, "Odissi will always stay as a part of my life." Bagmi, daughter of Drs. Naresh and Bigyani Das, resides in Columbia, MD.



Letter: Oriya Artist Wins First Prize

Namaksar

Greetings from Puri. I just returned back from Berlin, there I participated in International sand sculpture competition. You will be happy to know that I am the First Indian who own first prize. I am sending some of news links and my wining photographs.

Thanking you.

sudarsan pattnaik
International sand artist
Puri, Orissa,India



SAND ARTIST SUDARSHAN PATTNAIK MEETS PRESIDENT

22-08-2005 : Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi

PRESS RELEASE

The well-known sand artist, Shri Sudarshan Pattnaik met the President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam today at Rashtrapati Bhavan and presented a photograph of his prize winning entry at the 3rd International Sand Sculpture Competition 2005 in Berlin.

The entry won a prize competing against entries from around the world. The 20 foot high sand sculpture called, "World Peace", features Mahatma Gandhi and the three famous monkeys who teach not to see evil, hear evil or speak evil.



Shri Pattnaik has been creating sand sculptures for the past more than a decade in Puri, Orissa.

Sustainable Economic and Educational and Development Society (SEEDS)

SEEDS has been active in developmental activities in Orissa since early 90s. It has worked with local NGOs for sustainable, equitable and decentralized projects in education and economic development areas. SEEDS currently has following four thrust project areas:

- [Microcredit for Women](#)
- [Enabling Mass Computing](#)
- [Mahila Shanti Sena](#)
- [Rural Math Talent Search](#)

To learn more, and to participate, please look up <http://myseeds.home.comcast.net/> today.

Send your suggestions and comments to: osaeditor@orissasociety.org. OSA website is: <http://www.orissasociety.org>