

Journal of the

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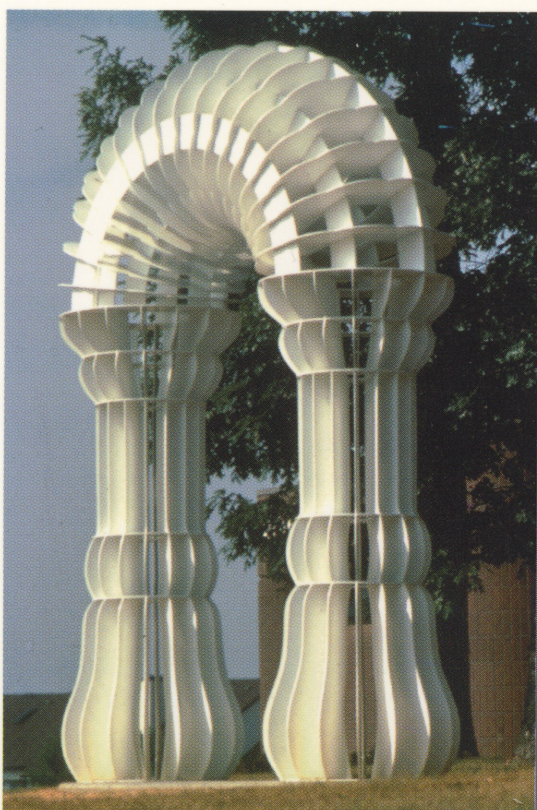
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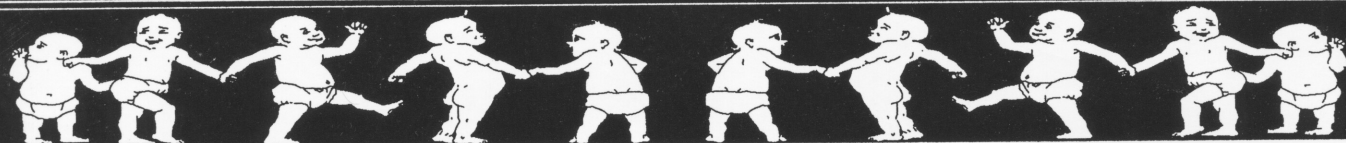
Americas

Souvenir Issue 1996

Festival of Orissa



27th Annual Convention
Washington, DC
July 3 - 6, 1996



" Try to do little things in an extraordinary way "

Paramahansa Yogananda

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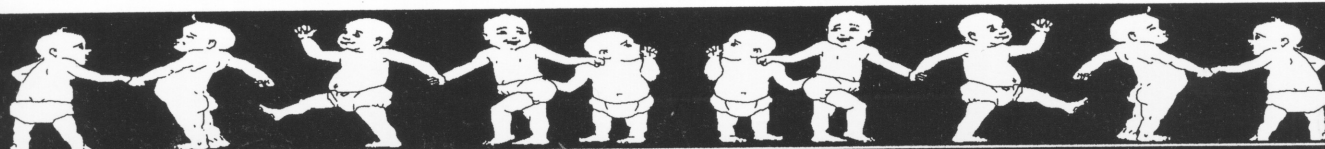
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**Journal
of the
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Souvenir Issue 1996**

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ମୁଖ ବାଟେ ଜିହ୍ବାକାଠେ ବଖାଣି ନୋହେ ।
ସଦା ଜୟ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାନନ୍ଦ ପାଇଲେ ଚରଣେ ବନ୍ଦ;
ନିରନ୍ତରେ ଆଜ୍ଞା ଚିନ୍ତିତ୍ତରେ ଉଦୟେ ॥
ଭିମା ଭୋଇ

*ulata palata nohi, mahaa shunya shunya dehi;
mukha baate jihvakanthe bakhaani nohe /
sadaa jaya purnaananda paaile charane banda;
nirantare aajnaa tinipure udaye //
bhima bhoi*

He is motionless; He is the transcendental void embodied in the void;
The mouth and tongue cannot describe Him; Glory to him;
He is the manifestation of eternal bliss; If you ever find Him pray at his feet;
The three worlds always revolve under His command; He has risen.



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The 27th Annual Convention
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JAGANNATHASTAKAM

*Kadachit Kalinditata Bipina Sangeeta Karavo
Mudabhiri Nari Badana Kamala Swada Madhupah
Rama Shambhu Brahma Surapati Ganesharchito Pado
Jagannathah Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Mey*

*Bhuje Savye Benum Shirasi Shikhipuchhim Kati Tate
Dukulam Netrante Sahachara Kataaksham Vilasayan
Sada Shrimad Vrindavana Vasati Leela Parichayo
Jagannathah Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Mey*

*Mahaamvodhesteere Kanaka Ruchire Neela Shikhare
Vasan Prasadantah Sahaja Balabhadrena Valina
Subhadra Madhyastha Sakala Suraseva Basarado
Jagannathah Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Mey*

*Krupa Paravarah Sajala Jalada Shreni Ruchiro
Rama Vanl Ramah Sphuradamala Pankeruha Mukhah
Surendraradhyah Shrutigana Shikhaa Geeta Charito
Jagannathah Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Mey*

*Rathaa rudho Gachhan Pathimilita Bhoodevapatalaih
Stutipradurbhavam Pratipadamupakarnya Sadayah
Dayaa Sindhurbandhuh Sakalajagatam Sindhusutayaa
Jagannathah Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Mey*

*Parabramha Peedah Kuvalaya Dalotsphullanayane
Nivasee Nilaadrau Nihatacharano Anantashirasi
Rasanando Radhasarasabapuralingana Sukho
Jagannathah Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Mey*

*Na Val Yache Rajyam Na Cha Kanaka Manikya Vibhabam
Na Yache Aham Ramyaam Sakalajana Kamyam Varavadhun
Sada Kale Kale Pramatha Patina Geetacharito
Jagannathah Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Mey*

*Haratwam Samsaram Drutataramsaram Surapate
Haratwam Papanam Bitatimparaam Yadavapate
Aho Deenanatham Nihitamchalam Nischitapadam
Jagannathah Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Mey*

*Jagannathastakam Punyam Yah Pathet Prayatah Shuchih
Sarvapaapa Vishudhaatma Vishnulokam Sa Gachchati
Iti Sri Jagannathastakkam Sampurnam*

The beautiful creation of Ms. Unger has at least one profound implication; it debunks the idea that, "The East is East and the West is West and never the twain shall meet." In a very elegant and profound way it represents the meeting of the minds of creative people separated by cultural, religious and space-time barriers. To conclude, the following eloquent words describe more directly and succinctly what motivated her to choose the *Mukteshwar torana* as a theme.

"I had been studying Eastern religions and, because I am a sculptor working in the public sphere, I also looked at religious architecture from a variety of countries including Cambodia, India, China and Japan. I wanted to design a "holy city" for an ideal American space which was non-sectarian but spiritual in nature. As you know, America lacks much in area of great public places, secular or religious. Our shopping malls are a sad remnant of the great European plazas found in Italy and even in colonial South America. Great plazas are usually anchored by a church and are places where people can stroll, feel comfortable mixing with other people, listen to music or simply sit on a bench and watch their fellow citizens.

I was particularly enchanted with the complex of arches and temples at Orissa. It seemed to me that this was an ideal of a space where people could move from one kind of spiritual experience to another, some more private than others, both inside the buildings and moving around them. Their beauty and the repetitive nature of the stone carving is like a ritual and a visual mantra."

Let the *torana* of Mukteswar temple welcome you all to the *Festival of Orissa*.

Chandrashaalaa of Mukteshwar Temple

Our back cover represents the west side of the main temple which is dominated by the elaborate heraldic relief carvings -- otherwise known as '*chandrashaalaa*.' This picture was also taken by Raju Mishra. The other sides of the temple are also decorated with similar carvings. The depiction of *chandrashaalaa* appears like a heraldic device which can be compared to a court of arms. The repetition of miniature *chandrashaalaa*s all over the entire facade in a geometrical pattern, creates a mosaic, which appears like a "visual *mantra*" -- to borrow a phrase from Mary Ann Unger. The *chandrashaalaa* dramatically displays the head of the monster "*Kritimukha*" at its apex. Swirling creepers with exquisite detail are emitted out of the mouth of *Kritimukha* like a garland. Two demonic dwarf figures (*ganas* -- spirit attendants of *Shiva*) holding the garland of creepers on two sides appear to be flying in space. The west side as well as the other sides are covered with many figurines with dramatic detail, which add elegance to the entire temple. The significance of these carvings have been extensively described in a recent paper, "Images of Divine Kings from the *Mukteswar Temple, Bhubaneswar*", published in *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 51, 1991.

The "Festival of Orissa" insignia is an adaptation of *Tarasa*, a colorful applique from Pipili. It was designed by Arun Das, who is also the designer of the OSA logo.

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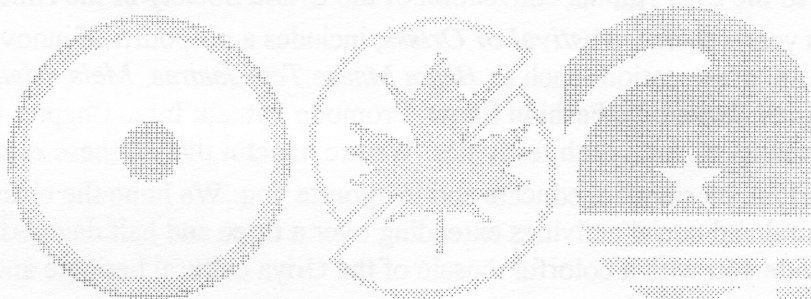
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A Letter From The Convener

"What is that which, being known, everything else becomes known."

Mundaka Upanisad

July 3, 1996

Dear Friends,

Namaskar!

The members of the Washington Chapter have the honor of welcoming you to the 27th Annual convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas. This year's theme, *Festival of Orissa*, includes a potpourri of innovative cultural presentations such as *Baara Maase Tera Jaatraa*, *Mela*, *Mangalika*, *Sangeet Samaroha*, Fashion Show, Promode Patnaik Inter-Chapter Cultural Competition, and youth festivities. We are hopeful that all these events will entertain, mesmerize, educate and invigorate you. We hope the elaborate cultural and social activities extending over a three and half day period will provide you with a colorful mosaic of the Oriya cultural heritage and make you proud to be an Oriya.

I thank all the committee members, and benevolent sponsors whose selfless commitment has made this convention possible. My sincere thanks to all of you are for joining using this year's festivities.

With warm regards,

Annapurna Biswal

Convener, 27th Annual OSA Convention

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A Letter From The Co-Convener and The Host Chapter

July 3, 1996

Dear Friends:

The Washington Chapter welcomes you to the Festival of Orissa, the 27th Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas.

Our members have worked very hard to present you with a spectacular show. We are confident that you will enjoy the unique experience of a four-day convention. We sincerely thank everyone who helped in the planning and coordination of this weekend.

We hope your stay in Gaithersburg, Maryland, is a comfortable and a memorable one. Once again, we thank you for being a part of the Festival of Orissa.

Sincerely,

Sudip Patnaik

President, Co-Convener

Ira Patnaik

Secretary

Alpana Das

Treasurer

A letter from the Youth Convener

July 3, 1996.

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 27th celebration of OSA! We are delighted to present a youth-oriented, eventful convention that's bound to make the more mature amongst us younger!

We are proud to celebrate our Oriya heritage in our American spirit. It is this union that makes us a unique society. Our youth best expresses the vigor and versatility that is borne from this fusion. With our enthusiastic support, they are paving the way to a broadening future. With the many graduations this year, from kindergarten to PhDs, our youth are taking prodigious strides that would make Orissa proud. It is this youthful energy that this year's convention hopes to capture. Here are some of the highlights focusing on youth.

After a reunion Wednesday, the excitement begins! Thursday will bring us the glamour of a fashion show and the glow of a fireworks celebration of America's Independence. This will lead on to all improvisational comedy/*garba*/karaoke night featuring budding actors/comedians/musicians to strut their stuff in a laid-back atmosphere. If this night fails to invigorate out energetic Oriyas, we have a 3K walk at 7 AM, Friday. Then, we are engaged in a light hearted Orissa Jeopardy game that features unusual topics from Oriya language to Hindu Gods. During lunch our young adults will rekindle our deepest concerns by discussing Volunteerism Here and in India. Covering topics such as poverty, AIDS awareness, and orphans, we will explore ways we can/are helping our communities. Friday's Gala Dance event will feature youth inspired DJ music, blending western beats with eastern melodies. Then early Saturday, our energetic ones will hop on a bus to DC and see the sights with our volunteer tour guides. Immediately afterwards, they can languish in a high-energy, myriad *Melas* - food, rides, magic, fortune-telling, face-painting, Young vs. Mature Soccer matches, Tug-o-war and more! Then to cool down, we will facilitate youth panel discussions to address real concerns such as dual identity, cultural/generation gaps, pressures and spirituality.

Our youth have spoken, and hopefully, we have listened. Our goal was to provide all exciting setting for our youth to congregate and reflect on their concerns/hopes about the future. We hope our youth will feel proud to carry our torch to keep OSA ignited into the 2000s. We hope we leave with a feeling of continuity, unity and commitment to work together towards making our world, both here and in India, a fairer, safer and happier place for all of us.

Thank you all for making this possible.

Supata Satpathy Sullivan

Youth Convener

27th Annual OSA Convention



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

July 3, 1996

Friends:

First, on behalf of the officers and members of the OSA, I wish to express endless gratitude to our friends of the Washington, D.C. Chapter who have invested their time, energy, and talent to make the 27th Annual Convention a grand success. They have once again become innovative in announcing a theme for the convention, namely, "The Festival of Orissa." What a wonderful feeling to get together in the nation's capital and celebrate our community spirit with fellow members of the OSA family!

I cannot over-emphasize the role of the OSA in holding us together in an alien land that we reluctantly call our new home. It indeed has helped us develop a sense of community over the years.

As we re-invent our community, we need a critical dimension that we learned back home - to minimize "self" which has plagued the baby-boomer generation here in recent years. The fear is that it might lead us to label and be uncivil to those who think differently. Let us not forget that we do need each other in pleasure and in pain.

Those of us who believe strongly that what we are today is because of the sacrifices of many others that we have left behind must continue to work hard to renew and expand our commitment. We have projects like "Basundhara", "SEEDS", "Ravenshaw College", and "Fakir Mohan University" and many others to support on an on-going basis.

We have learned that the wells in different communities in Orissa which many of us drank water from, are dry and filled with dirt. It is our moral duty to dig them and add some more for others who follow us.

Therefore, I urge you to support the OSA more vigorously, creatively, and effectively than you ever have. Please go beyond the role of a critic. Those of you - several thousands perhaps - who are non-members, please join us. We need you!

Let me close by expressing my gratitude to all of you for your support.

Welcome to the 27th Annual Convention!

Hemant Senapati

President, Orissa Society of the Americas

CELEBRATING THE CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF ORIYAS IN THE AMERICAS

Digambar Mishra

Like most other Indian ethnic and cultural groups, we at OSA have been doing a great deal of thinking lately about our cultural identity and heritage. Indeed, strengthening our cultural linkage with Orissa through projects, seminars, debates, lectures, dance and music has been an OSA focal point for nearly a decade. Since the 1992 OSA Convention in Atlanta, we have had several distinguished Oriya literary figures address our annual conventions. Several excellent programs including a seminar on "Tradition and Individual Talent in Orissan Art and Culture" are scheduled in this year's convention. The distinguished participants include Professors Jitendra Nath Mohanty, Gour Kishore Das, Sura Prasad Rath, Jnanpith Award winner poet Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra, artist and author Sri Prafulla Kumar Mohanty, and historian Dr. Prabodh Kumar Mishra. We wish to extend to them our warm welcome.

Today we are working to identify the implications of our cultural activities across our small communities and families in the United States and Canada, especially among our children and youth - so that we can share data, resources, and strategies that can help us make the best decisions for the future generations who need to be proud of their roots. For example, with support from several individuals, the OSA has been able to establish our presence through a Center in Bhubaneswar to facilitate a strong program of linkage. It is a pleasure to announce here that the Center is going to be relocated on the Utkal University campus at Vani Vihar effective December 1996. We extend our thanks to Vice Chancellor Das for this support to OSA.

It is important for our posterity to understand the cultural underpinnings that make them so distinct in the American multi cultural society. Needless to say, therefore, that there is a need to celebrate the rich and varied traditions of Orissan culture in the Americas.

Although holding a cultural celebration once a year is no panacea, it does hold promise as an avenue for helping us sustain our continuity as a group of Orissan-Indians in the Americas. All of this is to suggest that we need to face reality: that, in the future, such celebrations will occur in new and probably different ways as our youngsters settle down and take charge. They will have to focus on new ways of learning Orissan culture and how it influences them acquiring American culture they are born into. In other words, they have to endure the stresses and strains of harmonizing the two cultures.

In sum, we would suggest that even as we preserve the Oriya culture and tradition at the core of our communities, we, the elders, must learn to embrace the new from our own children. From this mix will emerge new traditions that will advance the progress of our dear OSA. One of these new traditions will undoubtedly be a community of Oriya, both old and young, infused with a new tradition, creating a truly exciting version of a sound and stable Oriya vision of love, fellowship, caring, and hope.

So much about how must we preserve our Oriya identity and cultural roots. Now I wish to extend to all fellow Oriyas, both members and non-members, my best wishes as we celebrate the "Festival of Orissa" at the 27th Annual Convention of the OSA in the nation's capital. We all owe our host chapter and its supporters a great debt of thanks for their warm welcome. Together, we have worked hard to take a step nearer to fulfilling our commitment toward the cultural enrichment for every Oriya in the United States and Canada.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Compiling a souvenir of this size within the strictest of time constraints required many hours of meticulous work. Soliciting articles from Orissa and then printing in Oriya further complicated the process. Without the collaborative efforts of many individuals, the publication of this collection of writings would have been nearly impossible.

First and foremost, we thank all those who submitted their writings for this Souvenir Issue. We also thank the 27th Annual Convention Committee and the OSA Executive Council for their continued support through all phases of this project. We thank Franklin Press and DJ Graphics for their production support. We extend our gratitude to all the volunteers who assisted in the endless preparation and production of this issue. Finally, we wish to recognize the following individuals for their keen interest and continued support of both the Journal and the OSA.

Nilambar Biswal	Devi P. Mishra	Gautam Patnaik
Arun Das	Digambar Mishra	Gokul Patnaik
Bijoy Das	Raju Mishra	Purna Patnaik
Manmath Nath Das	Kamal Kanta Mohanty	Rabi N. Patnaik
Rajendra Das	Minati Mohanty	Sujata Patnaik
Upendra K. Das	Bijoy P. Mahapatra	Manaranjan Pattanayak
Alekh Dash	Sitakant Mahapatra	Arun Rath
Jnana Ranjan Dash	Tushar Mahapatra	Sura Rath
Gyana Dwivedy	Bana B. Nayak	Panchanan Satpathy
Lalu Mansinha	Laxmidhar Nayak	Hemanta Senapati

Binod Nayak
Susmita Patnaik

THE "LEGACY" OF NORTH AMERICAN ORIYAS -- A SOLILOQUY

Binod Nayak

"I am not interested in the past. I am interested in the future,
for that is where I expect to spend the rest of my life."

Charles F. Kettering

If not outlandish, it is definitely premature or even preposterous to think about what "legacy," if any, the North American Oriyas should leave for their younger generation. But then, is it really that outlandish? History tells us about the legacy of the sea-faring Kalingas and Odras in the islands of Java, Sumatra, Bali and Borneo in the fields of art, architecture and religion. When one sees an Indian temple going up in an American city, one naturally thinks about the architectural, cultural and religious legacy the Kalingas and Odras left behind in South-East Asia. Our small number and relatively short existence in the North American continent, makes it difficult for us to think in the grand scale of Kalingas and Odras. What is more, our efforts in this sphere will also remain modest even in comparison to Indians from other states. Even if modest, we as a group ought to reflect and plan not to waste our limited resources.

Most of us, who landed in this continent for higher education, have been waking up, of late, to the fact that our children and grandchildren should be aware of their roots -- their heritage and culture. They should imbibe into their own multi-cultural tapestry some of the rich cultural heritage of Orissa. In the process of teaching our children about their own culture, many parents are slowly rediscovering the rich cultural heritage of Orissa. Perhaps therein lies the greatest benefit that might accrue to both the North American Oriyas as a group and our own people back in Orissa.

First and foremost, in the cultural sphere, the North American Oriyas have been establishing schools in Odissi dance so that their children can learn this rich dance form. Even if modest, unwittingly these schools have become centers of Orissan culture. Many individuals and organizations, as well as the OSA, have been sponsoring Oriya artists to North America. It may not be too far-off to think about establishing an international school in Odissi in North America which can be used as a center to teach both the Odissi music as well as the dance. Our efforts in the area of Odissi dance will ultimately be one of our major contributions in the area of Orissan performing arts.

Lately, the OSA has started a speaker forum in which artists, writers, poets, and critics have been visiting North America on a yearly basis to speak about Orissan culture. These speakers have used the OSA as a platform to teach and educate and in the process contribute to a better understanding of Orissan culture outside of Orissa. There are now serious efforts to translate Oriya literature so that others, who can not read, write and speak in Oriya including our own children, can have access to it. Serious research in the field of Orissan history and philosophy such as the Jagannath philosophy is originating in many of the universities in North America. We ought to support these efforts as much as possible.

One of the best ways to learn about Orissan culture is to travel to Orissa and be in the midst of its unique architectural creations of bygone years. These architectural structures took hundreds of years to take shape. These exquisite work of art, represent the best Orissa has to offer to the rest of the world in terms of its heritage. Many of these structures were destroyed in the past, the existing structures have been slowly decaying because of natural and man-made calamities as well as environmental pollution. These works of art not only belong to Orissa, but to India and the world at large; they not only belong to us but to our future generations. These are our national treasures. It is imperative that an awareness is created to preserve these structures. The North American Oriyas as a group should spearhead an effort to create this awareness and find resources to preserve them for our posterity. Our youngsters should visit and appreciate these monuments.

Besides learning about Orissan history and appreciating its architectural beauty, they should find avenues to preserve them. This may sound like a tall order, but a beginning has to be made. It may be one of the most profound ways the North American Oriyas can help preserve the Orissan heritage.

One of the most obvious areas where North American Oriyas can make a difference is in the area of education. Most of us living in North America are professionals and can contribute tangibly in helping universities and colleges by teaching a course, organizing a seminar or a summer school. Many individuals have already contributed their time, efforts and resources to help build educational institutions. A lot can be achieved in this sphere and the demand for resources is unlimited. The only way to achieve our goals is to leverage ourselves and be innovative in our approach.

In the field of charity, during the last few years, organizations such as Basundhara, SEEDS, the Anand Fund, to name a few, have made discernible contributions. These efforts, however modest, will ultimately endure for all times to come.

Finally in the spiritual arena, the Jagannath Society of America has made great strides in promoting and sustaining the Jagannath philosophy in North America. Efforts are underway to construct a temple for Lord Jagannath in the continental USA.

It appears that, these efforts, some realized and some unrealized, represent an emerging framework on which the legacy of the North American Oriyas will be built in the years to come.

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"A man's rootage is more important than his leafage."

Woodrow Wilson

GLIMPSES INTO THE ROLE OF OSA
OUR HERITAGE, OUR CULTURE AND OUR YOUTH

"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."

T. S. Elliot
Little Gidding

SHARED EXPERIENCES THE MISSING LINK IN OSA'S FUTURE

Nivedita Misra

The mission of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) is to preserve Oriya culture. For the past 27 years, OSA has fulfilled its mission by serving as a vehicle by which Oriya immigrants and their children have socialized and celebrated festivals and the performing arts. In recent years, OSA's founders and their contemporaries have expressed a desire to see second generation Oriyas take a more active role in the organization and its leadership. Unfortunately, as second generation Oriyas reach their teens and adulthood, they are increasingly distancing themselves from both the organization and its annual conventions. As OSA approaches the next century, it must answer the question "How can OSA increase active participation among second generation young adults and inspire them to assume responsibility for the organization's future?" The answer may lie in the development of initiatives and projects related to Oriya culture that not only interest young adults, but can provide them with shared experiences and memories that they will want, as a group, to preserve through the organization.

To understand why second generation Oriyas are turning away from OSA when they become adults, it is helpful to review why OSA continues to attract participation from first generation immigrants. The shared experience of having lived in Orissa and the desire to preserve those memories serve as strong links among first generation Oriya immigrants. For them, OSA conventions and events provide a time and place during which they can share memories of life in Orissa and develop ways to introduce their children to Oriya traditions and their cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the absence of a similar bond among second generation Oriyas and an established social network of Oriyas has diminished the importance of the organization for them.

Unlike their parents who had to seek out an Oriya social network, second generation Oriyas are born into one. Oriyas living in the Americas socialize with one another both within and outside the context of OSA. Thus, there is less of a need among second generation Oriyas for an official social facilitator. However, OSA can still facilitate networking among

second generation Oriyas who have common interests and/or concerns in Orissa. Unfortunately, there have been few, if any, opportunities within OSA's existing framework for second generation Oriyas to come together to discover, develop, and act upon their common interests in Oriya culture. In the absence of shared experiences related to OSA, the bonds that link second generation Oriyas are rooted in common academic, artistic, or volunteer interests unrelated to the organization or its activities.

A comparison of attitudes towards the convention cultural programs between second generation Oriyas and their parents reflects their different views of the organization's role in their lives. The most common suggestion from young adults and children for this year's convention was to reduce the amount of time devoted to cultural programs. For years, performing arts have been the focus of OSA conventions. Afternoons and evenings of plays, songs, and dances performed by soloists and groups have dominated the annual weekend festivities. These performances are intended to represent a cross-section of Orissa's cultural heritage. These performances can remind first generation Oriyas of various times in their lives. They might remember the first time they heard a particular song, or their first visit to Puri, or a college celebration. More importantly, first generation Oriyas are able to place these performances in a broader context and appreciate them not as individual pieces but as a sample of a more diverse artistic tradition. On the other hand, many second generation Oriyas cannot appreciate the inherent diversity of these performances and the role that the performing arts play in Oriya life. For example, to a child or young adult who does not understand Oriya or cannot distinguish between a folk dance from Sambalpur and one from Puri, cultural programs become a blur of songs and dances that, by the end of the convention, all sound or look similar to each other.

The request to reduce the time allotted for cultural programs is not a rejection of the performing arts, but a desire for more time to develop ideas and initiatives that will not only strengthen the ties among second generation Oriyas but also increase their

understanding of Oriya culture beyond the realm of the performing arts. Individually, second generation Oriyas are developing and implementing initiatives not only to strengthen their own knowledge and ties to Orissa, but also to increase awareness about the challenges facing Orissa and potential ways to overcome those challenges. The strong interest among second generation Oriyas in these projects suggests that if OSA can develop collaborative projects and initiatives that will allow children and young adults to pursue a common goal together, it will renew interest and participation in the organization.

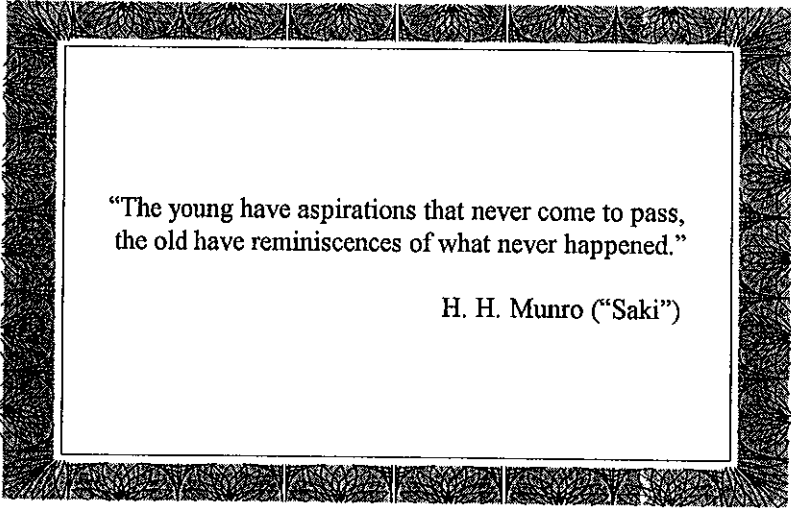
Conversations with several second generation young adults have resulted in many ideas for future OSA-sponsored projects. The suggestions include the following:

- *Youth Camp* - a week-long retreat for children and young adults filled with activities and workshops that can enhance their understanding of Orissa and

each other.

- *Summer Grants to Orissa* - a program that would allow a group of children/young adults to go to Orissa to study, or do volunteer work for some period of time during the summer.
- *Development project* - a program that would help a particular district or locality in Orissa address a public health or development concern.

Projects similar to the three described above can serve as a way to encourage involvement among children and young adults in OSA and stimulate interest in Oriya culture. By facilitating the pursuit of common interests in Orissa and Oriya culture among second and future generations of Oriya immigrants, OSA will not only fulfill its mission but provide second and future generations of Oriyas with shared experiences and memories that they will want to pass on to their children.



"The young have aspirations that never come to pass,
the old have reminiscences of what never happened."

H. H. Munro ("Saki")

TOO NEAR, TOO FAR: A 'RETURN' TO ORISSA

Arun Shankar Rath

In the early spring of 1993 I traveled to India for six weeks. The trip was for me a major event; I had been saving for the journey since my graduation from college the previous year. I hadn't been to India since my infancy, so this was to be a journey of discovery.

Discovery of India and, for a first generation Oriya-American, I hoped a discovery of self. I would be meeting my grandmother, uncles, cousins, aunts, virtually for the first time. Growing up in America, I did not have access to an Indian community, and I have spent a fair amount of time studying Indian history and the Hindu tradition; I thought I had a reasonably good idea of what to expect. But I also knew somehow that India would defy my expectations.

Arriving in Delhi I met my cousin Ansuman, approximately the same age as myself. The family bond was strong, and we hit it off immediately. Something seemed familiar about him, and after a few days, I realized that I could see a little of my brother in his face. After a few days in the capital city, I left by train for Balasore.

Several hours into the train ride I became violently ill. A woman sitting down and across from me who may have been a doctor took it upon herself to cure me, more I think because my frequent trips to the lavatory were annoying her than for any Hippocratic intent. She would offer me various pills which, ignorant of their ingredients and her qualifications, I would protest, much to her offense; but inevitably, after some amount of badgering, I would wearily acquiesce. It made no difference really, for my body would reject anything within moments of taking it. These unsuccessful treatments were alternated with attempts at homeopathic cures offered by various other travelers, none of which worked any better.

The sickness had soured me against India. I thought, hunched over in the toilet, that I was stuck with western sensibilities, and could never fully adjust to the East. Confused thoughts regarding my cultural identity swarmed through my febrile brain, and in a state of dehydration and self-pity I concluded I was

fated to be a perennial outsider: in America I was an Indian; in India I was an American.

Or perhaps this sense of isolation was unjustified. Most everyone on the train was quite kind to me. The homeopathic cures were certainly well-intentioned if misguided; the passengers in adjacent seats had all noticed my suffering and seemed to join forces to take care of me, bringing me bananas and green coconut when I was feeling a little better the following morning. I realized at one point they were calling me by name even though I had never introduced myself. They could have found this from the passenger list, I suppose, but they also knew other details, such as the fact that I was meeting my uncle at the station. When I asked how they knew my name, I was just laughed at. I didn't have the strength to maintain the kind of interrogation their game required, so the mystery was never solved.

The train arrived in Balasore in the late morning, three hours late, although the inconvenience by then meant nothing to me. I was ecstatic, finally seeing my uncle's face. I dropped down and touched his feet, and he laughed and pulled me up. He took me by the arm and before I realized it we were at his house. I slept most of the afternoon and by the evening felt much better. My uncle Tunu said he had arranged for a trip to the Simlipal tiger reserve, but if I wasn't feeling well it had better be called off. I was still feeling slightly shaky, but insisted I was up to the trip.

I found the scenery along the drive compelling. Perhaps a little feverish still, rice fields, mountains, bands of tribal hunters floated past me in a magnificent dream scape. Orissa seemed to me a largely unspoiled paradise, the beauty increasing the deeper we journeyed into the countryside. I had never been so far away from city lights and the night sky. The serenity of the wilderness was a pleasant contrast to the crowds and concrete of Delhi, and the perfect anodyne for my illness.

One of the wonders of Orissa for me is the ease with which one can move from the sublimity of nature to the sublimity of glories man-made. I could fill a

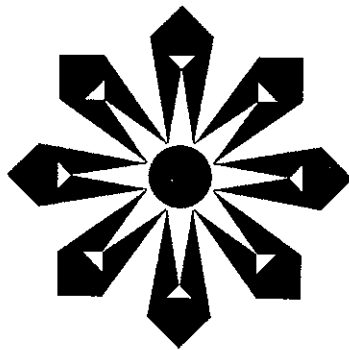
book with descriptions of the architectural marvels of Bhubaneswar, Konark or Puri, but I cannot convey in words the sense of awe I felt entering living temples that had been standing for a thousand years. Nothing I had ever seen in America or even Europe could provide even the feeblest correlate.

All of these experiences were most powerful and moving -- indeed, how could I, as a Hindu, not be profoundly moved by the experience of worshiping at a temple my ancestors had visited for generations -- but I had yet to experience that moment of transcendent affirmation. I felt cheated out of, in my period of bitterness on the train, an awareness, however fleeting, of my place in the context of this land that was in many ways a mystery to me. I know it was unrealistic to expect anything like this, particularly on a short trip, but I couldn't help it. The moment did come, however, unexpectedly at Dhauli.

It struck me as a little odd that I should experience such a rush of emotions at this place. While the story of Ashok's conversion is dear to all Oriyas, Dhauli is a place of much greater significance for Buddhists than for Hindus. There were no sublime architectural monuments, no remarkable natural features, just a hill and some edicts carved in stone. Yet, more than

two thousand years after the fact, the place still resonated with the power of Ashok's realization; I could feel it in my bones. It was late in the day, around the time when Ashok would have been surveying the battlefield from his encampment. As the sky turned the color of blood and the sun approached the horizon I could see the bodies of the dead, tens of thousands, the land and river soiled with the red stain. And for an instant I knew what Ashok knew, understood the terrible process that had transformed the heart of a warrior into that of a monk. The experience I had been searching for had found me. At Dhauli the land spoke to me.

India is still very much a mystery to me. Contrary to my expectations, I left the country with more questions than answers. Still, it is better to know the depth of one's ignorance than to be ignorant of the depth of one's knowledge. This is a kind of wisdom in itself, something valuable I brought back with me. Whatever confusions it may have engendered, growing up in America probably increased my appreciation for my Oriya heritage. This, combined with the tantalizing incomplete understanding I achieved at Dhauli has sown the seeds of my inevitable return.



MAINTAINING ORIYA CULTURE IN WESTERN SOCIETY

Sarita Mishra

The office of Immigration and Naturalization Services recently informed me that my application for U.S. citizenship has been approved and that my "swearing - in" ceremony is scheduled for April 26, 1996. For years, this issue of acquiring American citizenship has been a 'touchy' subject for me.

"Why?" I am often asked, "have you lived in the U.S. for twenty-one years and waited so long to get your citizenship?" I am always quick to retort that I am proud to be an Indian citizen. The truth of the matter is this: I have hesitated in renouncing my Indian citizenship because in many ways I feel that it is the last intangible which ties me to the land of my birth. It is a cushion which makes me feel like an 'authentic' Indian and more specifically, an Oriya in spite of several attempts on my part to pursue knowledge about Orissa and its people. As my oath of allegiance to the United States looms near, I find myself examining the positive and negative associations I hold with being an individual born in Cuttack, Orissa while living and socializing on American soil.

While I am far from an expert on the subject, I do want to examine definite aspects of Oriya culture and what these mean to those of us creating an identity for ourselves here in the States today.

Those Oriyas presently coming of age in America realize that our parents risked much and faced discernible challenges by leaving the land of their birth and settling in a country with values and customs so different from their own. As a young child, I took for granted elements such as our native tongue, which today remains one of the few commonalities that ties me to my parents' generation.

Oriya : that very same language which I often found too embarrassing to claim as a teenager is the same one I now cherish and embrace. It is the language which reassures and calms me while listening to my parents over the phone after a rough week at work. It is the language which binds me to my Oriya peers in the presence of non-Oriyas; a secret code we use to deepen our connection and empathy for one another. Although some of us may not converse in Oriya every day, we should not fear that this dialect will escape

us. It is the language we grew up hearing, the language we were reprimanded in and that same language which has loved and guided us from adolescence to adulthood.

As Oriyas growing up in America, we have been blessed with strong images of home life where family is the priority. We live in a country where over half of the marriages end in divorce, yet we have been fortunate enough to have a strong familial net to fall back on during times of confusion and crisis.

We also stem from a state in India, while relatively poor, has provided Indian society with a rich tapestry of arts and culture. Here in the States, we are well represented in the fields of law, medicine, engineering, and academia. However, at the same time, it seems that we, as a people, tend to neglect the artistic aspect of our heritage and are quick to discourage those pursuing careers in the arts and humanities. I want my children to realize that their ancestors were artists, dancers, and poets as well as doctors, lawyers, and engineers. We must support and encourage our youth to pursue artistic endeavors and not merely dismiss such notions as fantasy or a waste of time.

"Oh! So you want to be a dancer (or painter or writer)," we exclaim to a child. "Well, you can do that on the side...aim to be a doctor first and foremost; it will bring in great income and you'll be secure for the rest of your life!"

To be honest, I firmly believe that nothing guarantees security in life ... NOTHING! We must not squelch the dreams of our youth and ignore artistic inclination or talent; it is the soul and essence of life and the very thing that will save our society.

The day I receive my American citizenship will be an emotional day for me. I can no longer look to my Indian citizenship as 'proof' that I am a real live Oriya! I must actively strive to maintain more than a semblance of Oriya culture and tradition for my own sake and for that of those Oriya-Americans who follow me. However, as I yearn to expand my understanding of our heritage, may I always keep in mind that it is this very understanding which is causing me to seek such knowledge in the first place.

"ଆମେରିକାରେ ବଢ଼ିବା"

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାଙ୍କର ସ୍ବୟଂକବ୍

ଉପାଧି ପାତ୍ର

ଏହା ଏକ ଗୋଲକ ଧରା (Puzzle) । ଏହା ଏକ ବିରାଟ ସୁନ୍ଦର (Conflict) । ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନା ବିଦେଶୀ ? ଆମେ ଭାରତୀୟ ନା ଆମେରିକୀୟ ? ଏହି ଉଚ୍ଚିତ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ସମାଧାନ ଅତି କଠିନ । ନିଜର ତଥା ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଅନୁଭୂତି ନେଇ ଏହି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧଟି ଲିଖିତ ।

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲା ଏବଂ ଆମେରିକୀୟ ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବେଶ୍ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ଅଛି । ଭାରତୀୟ ଏବଂ ଆମେରିକୀୟ ସଭ୍ୟତା ତଥା ସଂସ୍କୃତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବହୁତ ତପାତ୍ ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ଏହି ଦୁଇ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଏବଂ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ମିଶାଇ ଚଳିବା ଏକପିକାର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ କଷ୍ଟ ହୁଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଇମାନେ ଦୁଇଟି ସଭ୍ୟତାରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧୃତ ହୋଇ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ପଞ୍ଜରୁ ପତ୍ର ପରି ଉଦ୍ଧୃତ ମଣିଷ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାନେ ଆମେରିକୀୟ ଅଧିକ ଜ୍ଞାନ ତଥା ଧନ ଆହରଣ କରିବାକୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ବାପା ମାଆଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା ତାଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ଝିଅ ଉପ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ନ୍ତୁ । ପାଠରୁ ଜୀବନରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଯାନ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ପରକୁ ଛୁଆ ମାନେ ଛୁଲରେ ଆମେରିକୀୟ ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଭାବ ଭାରତୀୟ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ପଡ଼େ । ଏହି ଦେଶରେ ରହି ତାଙ୍କର କେତୋଟି ଗୁଣକୁ ସ୍ବୟଂକବ୍ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ନ ହେଲେ ଦୁମରୁ ଏକ ଘରିଆ କରିଦେବେ ।

ଭାରତୀୟ ପିଲାଙ୍କର ମନରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠେ, ସେମାନେ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ କଣ । ଏଇ ପିଲାମାନେ ଏଠାରେ ଡବ୍ ନେଇଥିବାରୁ ନିୟମ ସୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଆମେରିକୀୟ କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ବାପା ମାଆ ପାଇଁ ଏବଂ କୁଳ ବଂଶ ପାଇଁ ଭାରତୀୟ । ଏଇ ଛୁଆ ମାନେ ଦୁଇ ସଭ୍ୟତା ନେଇ ଚଳିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରନ୍ତି, କିନ୍ତୁ କେତେ ସମୟରେ ତାହା କଷ୍ଟକର ହୋଇ ପଡ଼େ, ଦୁଇ ନାଆରେ ପାଦ ଦେଲା ଭଳି ହୁଏ । କେତେକ ପ୍ରଥା ଗୋଟିଏ ସମାଜରେ ଚଳି ପାରେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ସମାଜରେ ତାହା ଚଳି ନ ପାରେ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ବରୂପ 'ଡେଟିଂ'(Dating) ଆମର ଭାରତୀୟ ସମାଜରେ ଆଦୃତ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । ଆମର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାମାନେ ତାଙ୍କର ଆମେରିକୀୟ ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କ ସହ ମିଶିଲେ ବି ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ମିଶି ପାରୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି ।

ଆମେରିକାରେ ବଢ଼ିଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୁଲିଗଲେ, ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବ ମାନେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭିନ୍ନ ଭାବରେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତି । ଏଠିକାର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପରିବେଶ ଭିତରେ ବଢ଼ି ନାହାନ୍ତି, ସେଇଥି ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଅନୁଭବ କରନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାଣିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏଠିକା ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଉଚ୍ଚିତ୍ ସମୟରେ ଉଚ୍ଚିତ୍ କାମ କରିବା ଏବଂ ଉଚ୍ଚିତ୍ କଥା କହିବା ଆଦି କଷ୍ଟକର ହୋଇ ପଡ଼େ । ତୁମେ ଯଦି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଜାଣି ନାହିଁ, ତେବେ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବ ମାନଙ୍କ ସହ କଥା ହୋଇ ପାରିବନି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି ଜାଣି ପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ଆମେରିକାରେ ଡବ୍ ହୋଇଥିବା ପିଲାଙ୍କର ସ୍ବତନ୍ତ୍ରତା ଅଛି । ସେମାନେ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନୁହନ୍ତି ବା ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଆମେରିକୀୟ ନୁହନ୍ତି । ପରକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଥୀତ୍ବ ହେଲା ଏଇ ଦୁଇ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଭିତରେ ଥିବା ସ୍ବରାଜ୍ୟ କମେଇବା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ବହୁତ ଭଲ ଚିନିଷ ଅଛି । ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୋଲି ଗର୍ବ କରିବା ଉଚ୍ଚିତ୍ । ଆମର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅଧିକ ହୋଇ ନ ପାରେ, ହେଲେ ଜଣେ ନୂଆ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଆମର ମନ ଖୁସି ହୋଇ ଯାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନେ ଯେତେ ଦିନ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାବ ଛୁଲି ପାରିବେନି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନୃତ୍ୟର ଲାଳିତ୍ୟ ଅତି ପ୍ରିୟ । କୋଣାର୍କ ମନ୍ଦିରର କାନ୍ଥରେ ନର୍ତ୍ତକୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଅତି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବ ରଙ୍ଗ ସାରା ପୃଥିବୀର ଲୋକମାନେ ଦେଖି ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରନ୍ତି । ଉତ୍କଳୀୟ ସୁରାଧୀନ ଚାରି ଧାମରୁ ଏକ ଧାମ । ଉତ୍କଳୀୟଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣିଛନ୍ତି । ଆମେରିକୀୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ତୁଳନାରେ ଭାରତୀୟ ତଥା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତିରେ ବହୁତ ଭଲ ନୈତିକତା ଅଛି ।

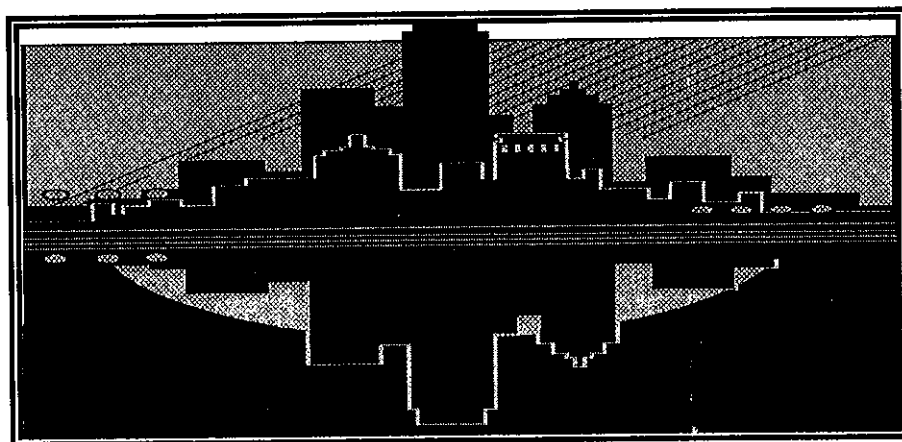
ଆଉ କ'ଣ ବାକି ଅଛି କହିବାକୁ ? ପିଲାମାନେ ନିଜ ଭାଷା ନିଜେ ବାଛିବେ । ଆମେ ଦୁଇ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଭଲ ଉନିଷ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାକୁ ଚିନ୍ତିବା ଭାବେ । କହିବାକୁ ସମ୍ଭବ, କିନ୍ତୁ କରିବା କଷ୍ଟ । ମୁଁ ନିଜେ ଭାଣିଛି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବାପା ମାଆଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମିଳିମିଶି କରିବା କଷ୍ଟ, ପରନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନେ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ମୋର ଦିବ୍ ପର୍ବତ ଏବଂ ମୋର ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସହ ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ଯୋଗ ସ୍ଥଳ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହ ଓ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ପାଇ ତଥା ଦୁଇ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଭଲ ଉନିଷ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାକୁ ସୁବିଧା ପାଇ ନିଜକୁ ଭାବ୍ୟବାନ୍ ମନେ କରୁଛି । ମୁଁ ଆଜି ନିଜକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୋଲି ଭାବି ପାରୁଛି ଏବଂ ସେଇଥି ପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗର୍ବ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଛି ।

ଜୟା ସାହୁ

ଦଶମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ଛାତ୍ରୀ

ଆଲବାନା, ଆମେରିକା ।

ଏହି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧଟି ଆସନ୍ତା O.S.A. ସନ୍ମିଳନୀର ଆବାହିକା ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଅନୁପମା ବିଶ୍ୱାଳଙ୍କର ପ୍ରୟୋଚନା ଏବଂ ମୋର ବାପା ମାଆଙ୍କର ଉତ୍ସାହ ଯୋଗୁଁ ସମ୍ଭବ ।



ORIYA CULTURE AND AMERICAN LIFE VIEWS FROM A GERMAN 'INDIAN' IN THE US

Binod Mahanty

"Germany" was my natural response throughout my adolescence when people asked me where I considered home. Growing up in Germany, I said this without hesitation, despite the fact that I am half Indian. I considered myself as German as any of my friends, or any of the people around me. I did not view myself as sticking out in the crowd.

Today, I wonder how I was unaware for so long about the Indian side of me. One explanation could be that culture is predominantly passed on to children through mothers, and my mother is German. But it could also be because Germany was and still is, a homogenous country with a strong, dominant, indigenous culture which can pervade you completely. I grew up in a medium-sized town in southern Germany, where I went to a high school in which I was the only nonwhite person until my sister entered four years later. The major cultural impact throughout my adolescent life was the German influence. There were a few other Indo-German and Indian families in the town and, of course, we shared common annual Indian functions such as Divali. Yet, I usually attended these functions more out of social pressure than out of my own interest. It was, in my eyes, the function for "them", meaning the Indians, rather than for me. It is only now that I feel part of the community and take equal pride in my Indian heritage.

The fundamental difference between the United States and Germany is that Indians who settled in Germany are forced to change and adapt more to the local culture than are Indians who settled in the United States. This includes things like food, where in Germany many of the Indian spices and ingredients are not available. It is also reflected in the higher percentage of mixed marriages (Indo-German) as compared to the United States. Between 30% and 40% of all Indians settled in Germany are married to a German spouse. Overall, this greater adaptation leads to a reduced awareness of, and exposure to, the Indian culture and, as a consequence, there is a much stronger Indian assimilation into German society. The immediate circle of relatives and friends includes many non-Indians. However, due to strong societal

counter-signals, it is difficult for parents to maintain and convey part of their Indian heritage to their children. For example, most of second generation Indians in Germany do not speak an Indian language. In the U.S., it is easier to maintain and pass on the Indian Cultural heritage. There are Indian shops, movie theaters, TV shows, and all Indian amenities are available. Colleges and universities offer Hindi and some even offer Oriya classes. Exposure and opportunities to learn and live the Indian culture are ample, allowing children to find their identity between the two cultures early on in life. As a German 'Indian', I admire these opportunities and I wish I could have had a similar exposure to Indian culture while growing up. This exposure certainly would have left me less confused about my own identity. It took me a long time to acknowledge my Indian ancestry, and to come to terms with my bicultural heritage. Among German-born 'Indians', the knowledge and understanding of India and her culture are often very limited due to the lack of exposure and a strong adaptation to the German Society. There is much to be learned from the way Indian culture is maintained and passed on in the United States.

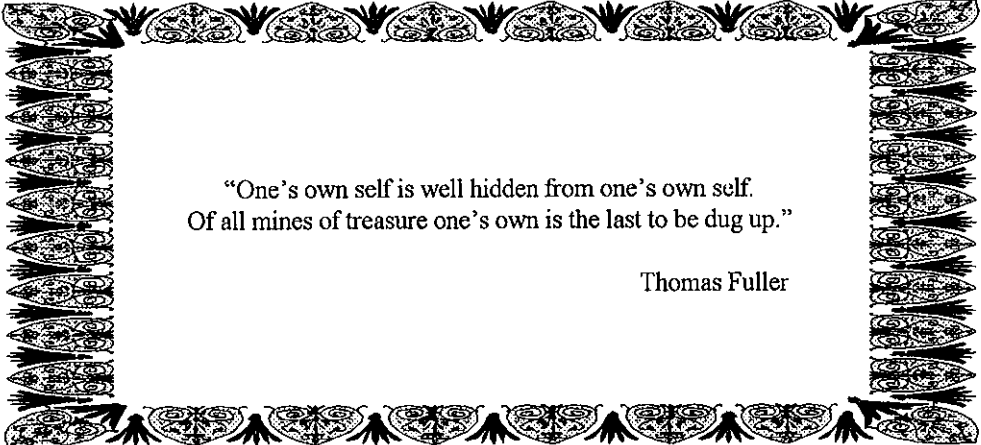
However, this truly great accomplishment of Indians' maintenance of their culture in the United States has a slight downside to it as well. First generation Indians that settled in the U.S. tend to primarily associate with other Indians and they do not seem to have a favorable attitude toward the American culture and lifestyle. Overall, first generation Indians are less integrated into society - much less so than Indians settled in Germany are part of the German culture. In my eyes, this is an unfortunate development in the US.

With the first generation Indian born and brought up in the U.S., a change is taking place and an integration of cultures has started (many parents might not like to see that). This truly bicultural generation is American by birth and socialization, and Indian by upbringing. These Indians represent the perfect link between the two communities, American and Indian, because they know and

understand both. Therefore, this generation has an unique bridging role. It is prepared to be a key-player in opening up the Indian community and reaching out to fellow Americans and all those interested in India. OSA should acknowledge this transition, and with the help of the second generation, shift from being a preserver of 'Oriya heritage' to becoming an ambassador of India and Orissa in the U.S.. The challenge will be to convey to interested Americans the tremendously rich cultural heritage of Indian art, music, dance, and philosophy. OSA functions should invite a broad audience of Oriyas and non-Oriyas as well. In this way, OSA can help create an understanding of India in the U.S., and help lobby and promote India's cause, which will be fruitful for relations between the countries and their mutual development.

OSA, in its 27-year history, has played an important and successful role in being the 'home-away from home' for many Oriyas. With the first American-born generation of Indians growing up and 'coming of age', a transition has occurred. A new perspective is

added to OSA's character. In its self-understanding, OSA should consider to shift from maintaining Oriya culture to actively making an effort to opening up and sharing Oriya and Indian culture with fellow Americans. The generation of Indians born in the U.S. may be the most suitable ambassadors to accomplish this goal. As a German 'Indian', I can state that many countries, and certainly Germany, are far from the cultural co-existence that is found in the U.S.. It is an accomplishment of which the Americans can be extremely proud. This country has allowed Indians, after coming to the U.S., to maintain their culture. It is now the Indians' turn to return to their new home what they have gained, by sharing with their fellow Americans their unique backgrounds and experiences to enrich the whole society. OSA's redefined role for the years to come should become that of an active ambassador of Oriya culture in the U.S., opening up to enhance an understanding of India and her culture and advancing peaceful co-existence of the different cultures in the United States.



"One's own self is well hidden from one's own self.
Of all mines of treasure one's own is the last to be dug up."

Thomas Fuller

A SEEDS HONEYMOON

SOUL SEARCHING IN AN OLD AGE HOME IN ICHHAPUR AND IN FLOOD RAVAGED NAUGAON

Somdutt Behura

Babu apanamananka dayare ame banchuchu. We are surviving on your kindness, said one old lady. Some of the old men, residents of this Old Age Home in Ichhapur even tried touching my feet. I was shocked, my whole body shivering in a strange awe. Almost in tears I begged them not to do so. All of a sudden I felt my life has no meaning. I could not judge what I was about. Here in front of me were my grandfathers and my grandmothers begging for their just right, the right to live and to die with dignity, which somehow by some strange process I have snatched away from them. I prayed for Shamir babu's well being without even knowing him, without having yet met him.

For I was experiencing, for the first time in my life, a strange irony of life where under the same roof there was an equally strange arrangement of human life where there was an interplay between the corrupt young mind against the aged, yet pristine and simple, mind. Here I saw a corrupt establishment making its fragile attempt at serving my bygone reality, an arrangement where at stake is the fate of a few old men/women at the mercy of few corrupt persons, youths like me. Who should I blame! Me or them?!

Like many young Oriyas before me, I had completed a graduate program (in Computer Science) in the US, at Houston, had a job offer, and now I was going to get married. Everything had been arranged, except that I and Shrabani had not yet met. Apart from the wedding something else was on my mind. I have always been conscious that I must do something for Orissa. Sometime during my student days at the University of Houston I had come to know about SEEDS (Sustainable Economic and Education Development Society) which was founded through the ORNET (ORissa NETwork, computer network linking Oriyas in North America and in across the world) by Darshanbhai (Priyadarshan Patra), other students at the University of Texas and many others. When SEEDS came to know of my trip to Orissa, they asked me to visit existing SEEDS projects and also bring back reports on SEEDS projects under consideration. Of particular interest was a proposal by ASRA (Association for Social Reconstructive Activities) for a fairly large project in the Jagatsinghpur-Ichhapur-Balikuda-Naugaon area of Cuttack District. Shamir Kumar Mohanty is the Chief Functionary of ASRA. He founded the Old Age Home in 1994. When Lalubabu (Lalu Mansinha of London, Canada) originally presented the ASRA proposal on our SEEDSnet, I had got excited as this was near my village and I have many relatives in the area.

To find out about ASRA projects I had to have a strategy. But what? As it turned out, luck was on my side, both in my upcoming wedding, and in my inquiries on behalf of SEEDS. The reader will forgive the natural penchant of a young man to mention his enchanting bride again and again. As it turned out, Shrabani became as enthused about SEEDS projects as I, and travelled with me to many of the places. With her active support, both before and after the wedding, I (or rather we) could visit so many of the remote villages in the ASRA project areas.

India and Orissa now have thousands of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisation) that are involved with various social projects funded by agencies from within and without India. Just the numbers suggest that easy money is a prime motive for those involved. Discovering the few NGOs that are genuinely interested in the upliftment of the community and not solely for a quick buck is a real problem. SEEDS has no spare resources for in depth evaluation of the genuineness of a proposal from an NGO. They have to depend on volunteers for eyewitness appraisal of the ASRA and every other proposal.

Thus began my journey, in early 1996. The flight from Houston to Delhi was uneventful. On the Delhi-Bhubaneswar leg the passenger next to me was working on some document pertaining to Orissa. Dr.

A is from Kerala, working on a World Health Organisation (WHO) project in Koraput and Phulbani. I introduced myself, started a conversation, and asked about NGO's in Orissa. His reply was demoralising. There are about 450-550 NGO's working in each of the entire states of Maharastra and Gujerat, while Phulabani district alone has about 450 NGO's operating there. Same is the story in Koraput and other backward districts. More than 95% of these organisations use the funds for developmental projects in Orissa to amass wealth. Dr. A said that hardly 5-10 organisations are genuine. On this same flight I met Mr. J, from Orissa, who also expressed similar views about NGOs in Orissa and asked me to exercise caution. Accordingly I decided not to meet Mr. Shamir Kumar Mohanty until I had done my own research about ASRA as an NGO.

After reaching Bhubaneswar I unexpectedly met Shrabani for the first time. I had gone to listen to a talk by my friend Dr. Debananda Pati in the Zoology Department at Utkal University. And there she was! She had also come with her friends to attend the same lecture.

In Bhubaneswar I met Mr. Chittaranjan Das, a retired chemical engineer, a relative of Srigopal Babu (Dr. SriGopal Mohanty of Hamilton, Canada). He was the main motivator and guide in my search for the reality. Chitta Babu and his French wife have dedicated themselves for development work in Orissa at a grassroot level. His wife was the only person (on this trip) to highlight the efficacy of Vanabasi Kalyan Ashram's (VKA) method of imparting education to the tribal people, i.e. using kirtan and other local traditional methods to bring these people into the mainstream of modern society. I emphasise here the distinction between modern society as against westernised society. I had taken all the documents and letters relating to our SEEDS project in Kalahandi and the ASRA proposal. I gave them to Chittaranjan Babu and I sought his advice. Unfortunately I could not meet him before I left, despite my best efforts. I even dropped an invitation card for my wedding.

Later, Shrabani and I met at her hostel in SCB Medical College, and then we went over to the Mahanadi river and the Anicut. It was early in the morning. In that beautiful setting we discussed many

issues. I wanted her to feel how insignificant we are, in numbers, against the huge suffering masses of Orissa, but how significantly we can contribute to bring about a substantial change in their lives, if we so wished. To my surprise she herself raised the issue of SEEDS and ASRA project. In fact she made my job pretty easy. I immediately requested her to accompany me when I came back from village (I was about to leave for my village after I met her). She happily agreed. But I was not very sure as yet how I would go about it.

Shrabani helped me immensely by providing moral and intellectual support. The scarce time that I had really belonged to her (or us), and she could have insisted otherwise.

While traveling to my village by bus I befriended a poor student from Balikuda and promised to finance his studies at the rate of \$10/month. He provided useful information about whom to meet if I wanted to get authentic information about the region. He was of the opinion that people are largely doing well; girls are doing extremely well in education; women have adopted modern birth control techniques. The transport system is good, with at least 15 buses plying between Balikuda and Cuttack and/or Bhubaneswar. Every five-ten minutes trekkers ply between Balikuda and Jagatsinghpur. People are generally proud about their achievements. Most of the educated people are migrating to Cuttack or Bhubaneswar. People are politically well educated. In other words he gave me a very rosy picture of the region he was hailing from. Obviously, his account raised my doubts about the need for the ASRA project. He said he would guide me early next morning at Balikuda.

After arriving at my village I talked to several educated people in and around the locality to get a rough idea about the education, health and economic condition of the people in Balikuda and Naugaon. I got a general feeling that Balikuda is doing well as compared to Naugaon. Last year's flood, however, has brought suffering in Naugaon.

I was tired of traveling, to Cuttack, Balasore, Calcutta and in and around Bhubaneswar. My parents were desperately waiting for my return. Everytime I stayed anywhere beyond my stipulated time, my mother worried that I met with some

accident.

But things changed the day I was going to meet the student who had promised to take me around the villages served by ASRA. The early morning breeze in the village gave me a fresh lease of life. I left my thatched house at around 4 in the morning. Took the first bus to Cuttack, but I got down at Dhiyasahi, from where I could get a bus to Balikuda, about 12km away. It was still dark. Trekkers and buses had not started plying yet. So I decided to walk. It was a charming morning walk. A clear sky with a beautiful sunrise filled my heart with joy and jubilation. I had been told that the first trekker would arrive around 7am. After I had covered around 5-6km, I saw a fully loaded trekker passing by. Stopped the trekker and somehow placed one leg on the rear. Thus continued my journey to Balikuda, with my body hanging in the open air. I reached Balikuda around 7:30am. Looked for the student at the place we had decided to meet. After one hour I gave up and decided to go by myself.

I had a list of several well known people of the area. First person I met was the Congress (I) leader who had once unsuccessfully run for MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from this area. I covered the distance to his house walking. To my surprise he appeared to be a person of very simple disposition. Living in a modest thatched house, he appeared more like a Gandhian worker. I asked him many questions. His views, in a nutshell, are the following:

1: In the last few years Balikuda has been doing well. The wealth of the region is growing, people are health conscious, women are adopting modern birth control methods, trying to limit number of children per family to two. Education of women is growing at a rapid rate, outperforming the boys. People are politically conscious about their leaders. (He did not once refer to the untold suffering of the Naugaon region people last year because of heavy flood. This fact is very important as would be clear little later.)

2: The major problem is that 40% of the people are landless laborers and 20% are sustenance farmers. Irrigation in Balikuda region is not sufficient yet to grow two crops in a year. Consequently, the landless laborers are employed

only for four months in a year. For the remaining 8 months they are largely unemployed and survive below minimum level of existence. Many leave the state to go to Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and find temporary low paid jobs in tanneries and cotton mills. But recent ugly incidents in Gujarat, accentuated further by the recent plague, have virtually stopped this migration of laborers.

3: His solution to this problem is essentially Gandhian and based on "Kutira Silpa", cottage industry. He thinks that the export potential of these products is very high. On being asked what he would do if he is financed by his Oriya brethren from outside the country, he gave me a very nice plan as to what should be done to improve the plight of the people. It almost coincided with my idea of cooperative movement by the people themselves at a grass-root level. In my mind I questioned his insistence on him being in charge of the project. However he was extremely confident about the success of his plan. I have asked him to submit a draft proposal.

4: As to my probe about ASRA and Mr. S. K. Mohanty (Chief Functionary of ASRA), he had a very low opinion about ASRA and the like. He openly doubted the leadership of Mr. S. K. Mohanty and dubbed his work as an attempt at drawing media attention and scoring political gains. On being asked if he knew the existence of Ichhapur Old Age Home run by ASRA, he said yes. He added further that it was a total flop. That Mr. S. K. Mohanty started with 20-25 people, and now, thanks to mismanagement, all have left except 4-5 inmates. He challenged me to visit the place to see for my self the failure of ASRA's Old Home Project.

If he was right then Mr. S. K. Mohanty and his ASRA is all a farce; otherwise he is nothing more than a political crook.

I left the political leader's residence at around 10am. I walked over to Balikuda High school. I was told that the school's headmaster, Shri Krushnachandra Panda had played a major role in a recent eye camp and that he is a man of very high integrity and truth. I met him around 11 am. He is one of the founding fathers of the school. He and the school staff showed great interest to start a movement of the kind envisaged by me if properly funded. A very nice

proposal came from a young lady teacher. She said many of their youth have graduated with Bachelors and Masters, but there were no jobs to be had. These youths, in the absence of any fruitful engagements, are turning to nasty politics and criminal activities. She opined that with very little fund she would be able to organise these youths into doing some meaningful work.

Now starts the soul searching for ASRA. I took a trekker back to Ichhapur, the village where ASRA's Old Age Home is located. I was dropped off one kilometer from the place I wanted to go. It was hot. At the junction where the main road and the bylane to the Old Age Home, I met an old gentleman in typical Odiya attire in *loongi* and *ganji*. He was walking towards bus stand. I asked him if he knew the Old Age Home. He asked me where did I come from ("*Babu apana keunthu asile?*"). Then he accompanied me to the Home. He said he was a resident of the Home. While walking down with him he talked and I gradually got a picture of a man whom I had not met yet, Mr. Shamir Kumar Mohanty of ASRA. To quote the old man, "*Bada babu bhagwankara awatara, nahile ame sabu ebe jayen banchi nathantu!*" (Shamir babu is the incarnation of God, otherwise we would not have survived). "*Se amara bahut bhala dekha suna karuchant!*" (He is taking care of us very well), "*amen mane ethi ebe baisijana achu, auhri charijana asibe!*" (we are now 22 residents here, 4 more more will join), "*ambha paina bhala ghara, bhala gadheiba ghara, bhala paikhana, sabu kari deichant!*" (he has given us good house, good toilet and bath rooms), "*amara samastanka deha dekhasuna kariba pain dakatara prati saptaha/pandar dinare ashant!*" (We are taken care of our health by regular visits by doctor).

I asked him if he was speaking truth about the number of residents in the Home. By this time we had arrived at the doorstep of the Home. Cheerfully, without even waiting for my response, he went inside and called all the residents. It looked as if something in him had correctly recognised the importance of my visit. My visit was a total surprise; even my mother did not know of my visit to Ichhapur. Yet this 80 year old man meticulously, and unknowingly, presented the success of ASRA and this Old Age Home. Had it not been for this old man I would not have supported the cause of ASRA.

I met four old women, one was to join later, one

above 90. "*Babu apanamananka dayare ame banchuchu!*" (we are surviving on your kindness), said one old lady. Some even tried touching my feet. I was shocked, my whole body shivering in a strange awe. Almost in tears I begged them not to do so. All of a sudden I felt my life has no meaning. I could not judge what I was about. Here in front of me were my grandfathers begging for their just right, the right to live and to die with dignity, which somehow by some strange process I have snatched away from them. I prayed for Shamir babu's well being without even knowing him. I had gathered from the residents that Shamir babu had been a regular visitor to the Home, but lately he had been suffering from an illness and was unable to move. Here is the story of few old men/women fighting, in their destitution, for their dignity and survival in their own little world.

But there is another face to this grim reality, the reality where ASRA is in desperate need of drastic change in the way they do their job. But we must exercise extreme caution here. It is exactly the problem making the whole country bleed. It can not be solved by ASRA alone, nor can it be solved in a day or two. It is the story of corrupt youth. This time I was not facing corrupt boys, but to my utter surprise corrupt women youth.

I inquired of the residents about the Project In-Charge (PIC). The residents said that he had gone out. The PIC was not there for the two to three hours that I spent there. I asked about the next in the heirarchy. She was a nurse taking care of the old people. I wanted to talk to her, but she flatly refused to make an appearance. I assumed that this was because I was a stranger and there was a danger of phony visitors seeing two girls in charge and taking advantage. I did not take offense and tried to persuade her to speak to me, with the help of an resident. Only when I said that I had come on a ASRA project proposal that she appeared. However, she was very terse and rude, and asked me to meet Mr. S. K. Mohanty instead of wasting her time. In the end I was able to speak with her for a little while. To my query as to how she felt working with the old people, she replied she was doing that for a temporary period to show work experience in her search for a "real" job. She exhibited a very low motivation, although she herself came from a very poor background. Her behavior was extremely rude. I requested her to show me the register with the logs

of all the residents. She refused to do so.

I was told that the other lady (I have forgotten the title of the position) in the Home was next to the PIC, and that she was responsible for studying the psychological health of the residents. I was eager to talk to the other lady, to which I got a flat 'no', and that too after waiting for more than 20-30 minutes. She said she would not meet me, and if I so dared I could complain against her before the governing body of ASRA. I was left abandoned by my same group. The residents all along been almost holding my knees not to get upset. I maintained my temper all along.

It is important to appreciate the need for old age homes in Orissa. With increasing migration from the villages to cities in Orissa, to other states and to overseas, there are many old people, parents and grandparents in the villages who have no one left to look after them. Many of the children have almost forgotten them. Several of the residents were destitute and were literally lifted, sick and starving, from the roadside. Shamir babu tells the story of an old man, so frail that he was given up for dead, is now fully recovered and in the best of health.

My work was more than half done. Remaining task was easy; to talk to Shamir babu, thank him for his good job and ask him how he would tackle the problems within his team.

Then I went to Naugaon for a brief period. This place has been badly suffering from last year's flood. The roads are broken, agriculture subdued, with a demoralised population. I would come back to Naugaon with Shrabani a few days after our wedding. I was extremely happy at having seen the problem of my people so closely. And total cost to SEEDS for this adventure was a mere Rs.30, less than a dollar.

We got married on 26th of February. We had a very simple marriage without any pomp and grandeur. No band, no light, no drink, no dance. We had a reception on 29th. On March 1st I was at Cuttack with Shrabani. Met Shamir babu at his modest one room house the same day. He had already heard of my odyssey to Ichhapur. I first raised the issues related to the project. I inquired why he had exaggerated the problem of transport (in the ASRA proposal to SEEDS). He replied "You must have visited the villages located near the road, but more

than 50% of the villages in the project area are accessible only by bicycle and occasional tractor. Let me plan a visit for you and you would discover for yourself". He had exact answers to all my queries, and I was highly impressed by his foresight and inner acumen. We held wide range of discussions, including about an environmental project. In short, here is a man not as educated as we would claim ourselves to be, yet far advanced in thought and action.

Without any notice all of a sudden Shamir babu called me from Cuttack to start immediately for a visit to Naugaon. I asked Shrabani to get ready in just half an hour. We hit the road in 45 minutes and headed for Cuttack and then to Naugaon. Shamir babu had selected a good mix of villages to show the progress of ASRA projects in this area. He had arranged lunch and other formalities for us, but I cut short all of them and headed for Naugaon. I visited around 11 villages, some near the road and some in the interior. Wherever required I covered the distance walking. As I have said before, Naugaon has badly suffered from last year flood. There was fear of a wide scale epidemic because of water logging for a long period. With Naugaon completely cut off during the flood, only army help saved the lives of many.

The most acute problem was shortage of safe drinking water because all wells and tubewells were contaminated. All government tubewells are ill designed; located at low elevation spots; with no concrete, and shallow depth. Shamir babu found a novel solution. ASRA had located new tubewell sites that are chosen at spots with higher elevation. Most of them are located near school building, the places where most flood victims would likely take shelter during such natural calamities. He has further raised the platform by more than 4ft above highest elevation with nice concrete around. The depth has been adequately maintained with proper care. The materials used are the best in the market (I am the living proof of it, I saw them for myself). The expected life of each tubewell is more than 50 years in case salination does not occur.

Let me narrate an incident here. In one such village I was deep in the interior to see a tubewell. There on the tubewell platform I saw few village youth chit chatting. I talked to them for a while and took a nice

picture. Then from somewhere came an old lady. Looking at me she said, "*Mu janichhi tu aji asibu. aji sakale para ma Mangala mate janei deithile. Gaan pain kichhi karibu!*" (I knew you would come today. Goddess Mangala had told me so in the morning. You would do something for the village). I was almost in tears. Then came another frail man. "*Babu, machine ta kebe lageibe. Ebe bahut hairan hauchu pani pain. Tike Bada babu nku kahi machine te lagei diyante nahin? Bhagwan tamaku ashirbad karantu!*" (Babu, when will you fix the machine? (by which he meant the hand pump) Can you please talk to Bada babu to fix it early? We are facing a lot of difficulties for fresh water. God bless you.) I was once again emotionally and mentally broken. I have recorded his frail voice too. This complaint was about the fact that although around 51 tubewells have been bored and platform raised, the handpumps for lifting the water are not installed. So they are all inoperational now.

I had later raised this issue with Shamir babu. He explained that it would be cost effective if he installed them all together instead of doing one or two here and there. His plan is to dig around 121 tubewells in more than 150 villages. I felt like pressuring Shamir Babu to install the handpumps as

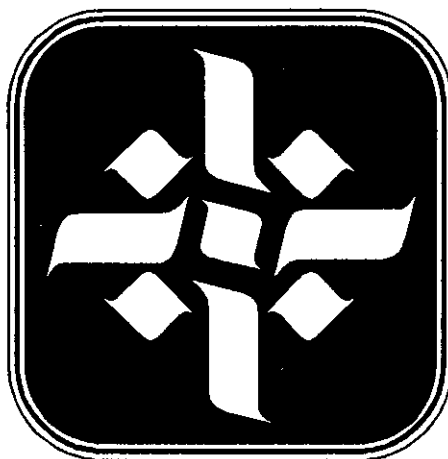
soon as possible.

It was almost dusk when we left for the Naugaon Block proper where the hospital building is being constructed. A 40 bed hospital is under construction by ASRA and most of the building is complete.

Shrabani was particularly very happy, feeling at heart the dedication of the man. I returned to my village late in the evening. After a simple dinner we had a sound sleep, being spiritually and mentally reinvigorated by seeing so many aspects of life in so small a time. It is not the end of the saga. It is just a beginning....

This is my request to all, especially our youth, to undertake a trip such as mine and Shrabani's. Not only because we would be of great help to those who have been left behind in their race for progress, but also for our self development and inner spiritual satisfaction.

Somduitt Behura is at the University of Houston, Texas. This article was abstracted, with permission, from three reports by Somduitt on SEEDSnet, by Lalu Mansinha. If you would like to participate in or contribute to SEEDS please write to Somduitt Behura, 4720 Polk St. #1/2, Houston, Texas, USA TX 77023; or send an email to bsom@cs.uh.edu or call 713-926-3888.



GROWING UP DIFFERENT

Swati Mishra

Growing up in the United States had always put me under the impression that I was an American. However, as I became older, I realized that when people first see me, they do not think of me as an American (by conventional categorization, the white-Anglo Saxon). Before anyone even speaks to me, they categorize me as a foreigner because of my skin color. As soon as most people discovered that my background was Indian, many questions followed. "Do they really worship cows over there?" and "Why do women wear those red dots on their head?" are examples of the types of queries with which I was bombarded. I was Indian. I wished I could be "American" just like everyone else in my class. I blamed being Indian as the cause of all those questions. I wished that I could be like everyone else in my class and have someone else be the one who was always having to "defend" their differences to others.

At least that is how I felt, as if I was defending something. The more I grew and thought about how I felt, I soon began to realize that it was not others who were looking down on me for being Indian; rather I myself felt somehow inferior for being different. My friends and classmates were not the ones causing the problem; I was.

It soon became clear that the reason I felt this way was because of my ignorance of Indian history and culture. I began to read about India as much as I could. I felt pride when I learned of India's independence, acquired without the use of violence,

rather through sheer wit over the British - and of the various ethnicities and religions accenting Indian culture. Most importantly, I learned where I came from and about myself. I felt proud to be of Indian origin and was happy to answer any question posed to me; silly or genuine.

I feel most proud of the knowledge of our ancestors. For example, today nutritionists and doctors are proclaiming the benefits of a high protein, low-fat diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Indian diets have always had rice and lentils as their staple, this allows for high protein without all of the fat found in meat. Vegetables are a part of every Indian diet as well.

Conservationists and environmentalists are just recently, within the past few years, talking about saving the earth and its resources. Hindu dharma has taught respect for nature and other living creatures for almost 5,000 years.

Those are just a few examples, but the point remains the same. We must learn about where we came from and what our ancestors have accomplished before us in order to understand and appreciate our heritage. I used to think that it did not matter what our Indian heritage meant; I had grown up in the United States and was therefore an American. Now I know that I could never feel good about myself until I understood myself, and part of that understanding has come from my appreciation of my heritage; my Indian heritage.

"Perfect kindness acts without thinking of kindness."

Lao-Tse

ORIIYA YOUTH GROWING UP IN THE UNITED STATES

Joya Sahu

Oriyas are one thing, but Oriya youth are another. Caught not only between a generational gap and a cultural gap with the country they live in, Oriya youth face many unique problems. However, as with everything, there are two sides of the story. There are also several bonuses to growing up as an Oriya youth in America. The rich cultural background helps these second-generation Indian-Americans keep in touch with their true selves, their Oriya identity.

Oriya youth are expected to go to school, come home, do homework, and then study some more. Most Oriya parents came to America for the opportunities here (to acquire more wealth and to obtain better education). However, it is impossible to go to school without interacting with American children. Most parents expect their children not to be affected by the American customs, but this is very unrealistic. One cannot associate with people without being influenced by them and their customs. Living in a different society, one must be expected to adapt to the culture in order to avoid being an outcaste.

The Oriya youth of America do not know who or what they are. They are not totally American because they are part of India through their parents and because of the way they look. They are not totally Indian because they were brought up in India. Therefore, they are both, yet they are neither. The children want to fit in with both the Indian and American cultures, but they are caught in a chasm between the two. What is socially acceptable in American culture is totally unacceptable in Oriya culture. Practices like dating or going out are frowned upon in the majority of Indian communities, yet they are an integral part of American culture. The children want to fit in and to do things with their American friends, but the barrier remains.

When American-raised Oriyas go back to Orissa, they are treated differently than 'Oriyas'. They do not fit in because they are not immersed in the culture. Even if they know Oriya, they do not know the proper things to do or say because they do not know the proper customs. If one does not know the language, then one cannot communicate with his relatives or grasp the Oriya culture. The language is a vital link to Oriya culture and heritage, without which Oriyas would be like everyone else. American born Oriyas are in a class all of their own. They did not choose to be born here, yet they are. Their duty remains to bridge the gap between the two cultures.

There are many benefits from being part of the Oriya culture. We should be proud that we are Oriya and belong to such a unique society. Because there are not many of us here in America, it is always nice to meet a fellow Oriya. No matter how Americanized some Oriyas are, there remains a special, indelible bond between them. The Oriya language has a melodious lilt to it, the Odissi dance itself is truly beautiful. The intriguing poses depicted on many ancient temple walls (i.e. Konark) are admired all over the world. What else is there left to say. The children today must make up their minds. We must learn to take the best of two worlds, but this is easier said than done. I, for one, know. Dealing with Oriya parents who were born and raised in India is not easy, but they are my only link to my Oriya heritage. Because of them and their interest in providing me with the best of both cultures, I am who I am. Through them, I am Oriya.

Much thanks and credit must be given to Ripa Patnaik, Sony Satpathy, my mom, Puspalakshmi Sahu, and my dad, Bhagabat Sahu.



THE FUTURE OF OSA AND JSA SOME PERSONAL VIEWS

Ghanashyam Mishra

In the first week of December 1995, I flew to Huntsville, Alabama, to attend my first ever Jagannath Society Of America's (JSA) Executive Committee meeting. There was a nice size gathering of 12-14 Oriya families from Tennessee and Alabama. It was a very fulfilled mission for me, since for the first time in my 28 years in U.S.A., I felt really at home. I have attended only two Orissa Society of Americas (OSA) conventions in the 80s. On both occasions we met a few old friends and made a few new acquaintances. The opportunities for meeting with new Oriya families during these conventions was limited due to the convention protocols and the tight time schedules. But this visit was very relaxed and informal. The food was excellent and the hospitality of my hosts was overpowering. The meeting was held in the basement of Dr. Bhagabat Sahu's home. The heated debate and the discussions during the meeting was completely forgotten when the wine bottles were opened and playing card tables were set. Next day, on the day of my departure, Devi babu (Dr. Devi Prasad Mishra) asked me if I could write my views about the two societies (i.e. the OSA and the JSA) that binds loosely all of us Oriyas in the North American continent. OSA and JSA are two organizations, which are complimentary to each other; and at the same time their goals and objectives may not always be compatible. Let us look at the past history and the circumstances under which the two societies evolved and we can, hopefully, map out the future.

For 27 years, OSA has been a cultural link between a few hundred Oriya families scattered across the United States and Canada. Starting with a handful of Oriyas in Boston in 1970, today's OSA has grown to represent about 800 families. OSA has built a strong bridge between the educational, cultural, philanthropic and literary interests in Orissa and us. Most of the OSA members are professionals, who immigrated in the sixties and seventies. There has been a slow growth of membership in the past 15 years. Hopefully, infusion of young Oriyas through marriages or students coming for higher education will help to maintain a steady growth.

In contrast, JSA was formed only 3 years ago by less than half a dozen hard core Jagannath devotees. The founding members, Dr. Bhagabat Sahu and Mrs. Puspalexmi Sahu along with a highly dedicated group of Oriyas from Nashville, Huntsville and Birmingham have nurtured the toddler religious society with a place of worship for Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra at the Nashville Hindu Temple. We are proud of this small group of Oriyas who have made sacrifices for all of us. Truly speaking, the true identity of Orissa in the Indian subcontinent is mostly due to the existence of Lord Jagannath's temple at Puri, Surya temple at Konarak and the more than a century old Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar. Lord Jagannath is not just a God of Hindu religion. He is also worshipped by Buddhists, Jains, Adivasis and the Harekrishnites. And to us the Oriyas, He is the very embodiment of Orissa 's culture for over thousand years. In the words of Dr. Digambar Mishra, one of our past OSA presidents, "The ethnic pride of all Oriyas revolves around Him."

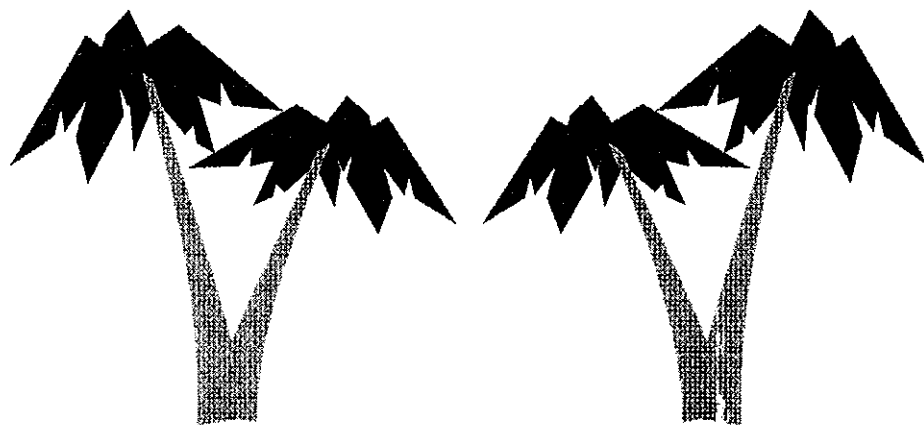
Here comes the reality of life. We cannot force every OSA member to be deeply committed to Lord Jagannath or JSA. To us Hindus, religion is a very personal matter. Our faith reflects a personal communication between us and our Creator. Also we respect the feelings of our OSA brothers and sisters who belong to other religions and faiths. By all means, we welcome participation of OSA members for the religious/cultural activities associated with Lord Jagannath's festivals and other temple ceremonies. But we should not force any body who can not join the worships and the rituals for their personal reasons or make monetary contributions.

In the past 3 years, the JSA and OSA members have accomplished some thing that was unthinkable. We have deities installed in a major city in the US. We have successfully staged 3 car festivals (Ratha Yatra), published several issues of Oriya Religious magazine-Neela Chakra, hosted several Oddissi and Bharatnatyam performances and invited eminent scholars to promote Jagannath philosophy and culture. We need everyone's generous monetary

support and personal efforts for the future growth of JSA. It costs between fifteen and twenty dollars a day to buy material and pay for the priest to perform the daily worship of Lord Jagannath at the Nashville temple. JSA is a tax exempt, religious non-profit organization. In about six months, a new constitution of JSA will be finalized and will be mailed to all JSA and OSA members.

In my opinion, JSA and OSA are mutually inclusive religious societies, which promote cultural identities of a large substance of the Oriya population in North America. OSA fulfils our socio-cultural needs and JSA is now here to fulfil our spiritual needs. Some of us prefer to express our religious beliefs with rituals and many others prefer silent prayers. As regard to what society one should patronize, or and

where one should devote his energy and enthusiasm, it is left up to each individual. Several centuries ago our forefathers sailed to Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Cambodia and left behind Orissa's art and culture. Can you imagine of a JSA sponsored Jagannath temple and Orissa Cultural Complex in a southern state with audio-video library along with a museum of arts and crafts from all parts of India? Let us leave a part our heritage in our adopted land for our children and grand children to visit and marvel with pride, how a few of their parents and grand parents worked hard to establish their culture 10,000 miles away. Nothing is impossible. Let us work together. Let us move forward. Who knows if we can not have a NEW PURI in the map of US some day. Let Lord Jagannath's blessings be with you all



THE EARLY DAYS : THE WAY WE WERE

Manaranjan Pattanayak

It was a brilliant spring day in April 1969. The snow was still on the ground. I was nervous. I and Mini (my wife) and our baby girl Lina arrived in Montreal. We arrived in to a New World. We, like millions before us, had come to seek our fortunes in Canada, in America.

I was like many other immigrants to this land, but different from most of the other Oriyas and Indians who came to Canada and the US for higher studies.

Virtually all Oriyas in North America came with at least a post graduate degree or a degree in medicine. For them there was always a "Campus Welcome Committee," an "International Student Adviser," or a Professor waiting to welcome and soothe out the culture shock. For an arriving student, the work and income for the next few years are pretty much predetermined. A typical student simply transfers from a campus in India to a campus in America.

For me, a landed immigrant, there was no welcoming committee, no job offer and no steady source of income. I had a booklet for immigrants given to me by the Canadian Embassy in Bonn. That was all. Between Mini and me, we had about \$100 dollars. My friend Ram Dayal (who tragically died in the 1984 Air India crash) from Montreal had discouraged me from coming to Canada. "The situation is bad" he cautioned me. "The Canadian economy is in a depression." I came anyway.

Why did I leave my country? Why did I leave Orissa? I always took pride in the fact that only fifty years ago, during my youth, our house in the village of Menda was the largest joint family in Orissa. Everyday, some 100 family members lived and ate together under one roof. Cooking food for such a large number of people was virtually a twenty-four hour operation, going on from before dawn to well past midnight. I was, and still am, close to all my uncles, aunts, cousins and other relatives. To leave my joint family and emigrate to Canada was a heart wrenching decision for me and for them as well.

The seeds of my arrival in Montreal on that April day were sown in a personal tragedy during my youth. My mother died when I was a young boy. Those of you who take your mother's love and affection for granted cannot imagine my trauma, my agony. In spite of all the love, affection, and sympathy bestowed on me in the joint family, I felt wronged, abandoned, unloved. I became a resentful, rebellious boy, and later, an angry young man.

Before my mother passed away, I was a good student. Without her to look after me, I ran away from home, stayed with my uncle, somehow completed high school, went on to obtain a diploma in Jharsuguda, and then joined the new Rourkela Steel Plant. I refused to take any money from home and wanted to be on my own as soon as I could. I did not even think of going on to a university. Years later, I earned my first degree, in engineering, from Carleton University, Ottawa.

At the steel plant, I worked on the blast furnace floor. I slowly rose through the ranks to become a foreman. Life on a factory floor is rough. As a foreman, I was in charge of about 30, all tough and hard individuals, almost always difficult to discipline and control. On the factory floor, a wrong order or a wrong move can result in an accident. The working conditions were appalling. If you think Orissa is hot in May- June, think of what it is like to work near molten iron at 1200 degrees. If you have not worked at an industrial furnace, you do not know how hot is "hot."

Out of my curiosity to see the world, I decided to learn German in the evenings. I went to Germany in 1961 and returned back to Rourkela in 1965. Then, the best thing that could have happened to me happened. I married a young medical student, Minati Pattanayak. It was an arranged marriage. We fell in love after the wedding, and have been so ever since. She has been my friend, my companion and my support all these years. She pampered me, humored me, believed in me, and loved me. She calmed me down and smoothed my agony and anger.

With her by my side, I have mellowed. I have been extraordinarily lucky.

Lina was born in July 1968. With a wife and a daughter, I saw that as a factory worker, my future in Orissa was bleak. However hard I worked, and whatever I did, I could never rise in wealth or in society. Status was conferred on the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers. They were super heroes. They could even run Hindustan Steel even though they did not know the difference between iron and steel. I would always be a poor nobody.

I went back to Germany in 1968. Mini and Lina (not yet a year old) joined me later. From there, I applied for immigration to Canada and arrived in Montreal in April 1969. My first problem was to find a job. After one week of filling out forms and "Don't call us. We will call you," delivered with a typical smile, I had had enough. I went to an aero-engine plant of United Technologies in Montreal. In the Personnel Department, they handed me the usual forms. Instead of filling out the forms, I demanded to see the Personnel Manager. After some resistance, I was finally allowed to speak to him.

He: "What can I do for you?"

Me: "I would like a job"

He: "Please fill out this form"

Me: "I am tired of filling out these forms. I have been doing it for a week, and I still do not have a job. I will make a deal with you. You tell me what positions are available. I will tell you if I can do the job or not. You can always fire me if I am no good at the job".

He: "We are looking for a draughtsman."

Me: "Then I am a draughtsman."

So, a week after my arrival, I had a job. The Personnel Manager must have appreciated the audacity of the new immigrant. We found an apartment overlooking the St. Lawrence river. It was a good beginning to a new life in the New World. Mini and I should have been happy. We were, but we were lonely. There were no other Oriyas in Montreal.

I knew that I would not be a draughtsman forever. I kept looking for something in metals and metallurgy and found a job with Inco in Sudbury. We moved. If Montreal was bad, Sudbury was worse. Far away from the large cities in Canada, Sudbury in 1969 had

only two other Indian families. Mini and I were now more isolated than ever before.

One day, we heard that Jnana R. Dash (now vice-president, Oracle Corp.) had come to Waterloo as a graduate student. I had known Jnana back in Rourkela, when he was a student. He used to drop by our place quite often. After he phoned from Ottawa, Mini and I waited with bursting expectation for the overnight bus to arrive. Our excitement and joy, meeting an old (really quite young) familiar Oriya face defies description. There was endless talk, jokes, discussion, and gossip. We sat up the whole night talking. Mini's superb dishes kept us fueled. Jnana and I drew up a list of all Oriyas we knew of in the U.S. and Canada. I learned about Saroj and Suniti Behera, Deepak and Savitri Misra in Ottawa, and Gopabandhu and Dula Misra in Cornwall, and Padmini and Arjun Purohit in Kingston.

We had wrecks for cars; but they were cars, our first cars. In those ramshackle vehicles we drove hundreds of miles to visit Oriya "neighbors". Soon, we were celebrating each others' birthdays and anniversaries. This was followed by celebrations of the births of children and their birthdays. Anything was an excuse for a visit, a feast, or a party. Life was good. We were happy.

The floods in Orissa in 1970 brought us all together in the basement of an apartment building in Toronto. The discussions led to the collection of funds and a cheque was sent to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. My daughter Lina met Leena, the daughter of Lalu Mansinha. The two toddlers were almost the same age, and became lifelong friends. That summer, Sri Gopal Mohanty and Shanti organized the second Oriya gathering. It was hot, and they had prepared "*pakhaala*" and all the delicate tidbits that go with it. It was heaven.

The success of the two gatherings led to the organizing of an all weekend gathering in cottages by Rice Lake. Fishing in the lake, singing by the bonfire, mouth watering Oriya food are lingering memories of that first gathering. The next year the cottage weekend was even more elaborate. Word about our annual cottage weekend spread around and soon Oriyas from Detroit, Washington, Alabama, New York, and New England joined us for our annual event.

Unknown to us, simultaneously across America, a similar nucleation of Oriyas was taking place, though, as far as I know, none matched the Canada Oriya cottage weekends. If I compare our annual conventions with that of OSA -- clearly those were more elaborate. The invitation to the Second Annual OSA Convention at Hartford Connecticut read: "The convention will start at 3:00 PM and will continue till 10:00 PM." Our two and half days of cottage weekends were definitely more elaborate than that.

With the inauguration of the Orissa Society of Americas in 1970 and with Dr. Gauri C. Das as President, our informal gatherings in Ontario became organized under the banner of Utkal Samaj, the Canadian chapter of the OSA. The OSA Newsletter (Vol. 2 No. 4) of 1971-72 notes, "Oriyas of Toronto Chapter celebrated Kumar Purnima Festival on the evening of October 28, 1972. The program consisted of Odissi dances by Mrs. Mina Sargangi and Mrs. Chitrlekha Patnaik...and songs by Mrs. Charulata Hota."

I wish I could say that since we had an elaborate formal structure to our frequent gatherings we were happier. Not so. Interminable discussions on a constitution for the OSA, the relationship between the parent OSA and the local chapters, adoption of a logo, etc., started. What used to be a happy and carefree organization soon became spirited as emotional debates with buzzwords -- goals, objectives, culture, heritage, executive, membership, election, nomination, by-laws, rules, regulations, democratic process, tax deduction, conviction, ethics, moral, judgment -- followed. The growing up of Oriya children in America gradually shifted the buzzwords to "youth, our future, passing on the torch."

The rise in disposable incomes of Oriyas in America changed the nature and tone of the OSA conventions. In the early years, all attendees were housed with local Oriya families. The ladies cooked authentic Oriya dishes, looked after accommodations and fed the guest families. The OSA convention in Chicago in 1981 changed all that. All the attendees stayed in a residence hall, and the main meals were catered. Today, the conventions are held in commercial hotels, with a few exceptions. The result is that the convention now easily costs \$25,000 - \$30,000 to organize. If one includes the boarding and lodging

costs, we are looking at cashflows in the neighborhood of \$100,000. Ah! the good old days when members almost came to blows when the executives of the association could not explain discrepancy of a puny sum of \$10 have been long forgotten.

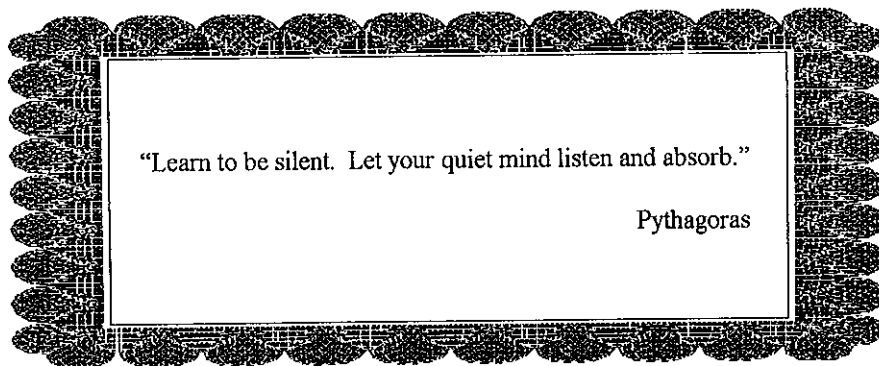
During the early sixties a trip back home was rare, triggered by significant occasions, such as a birth (in America) or a wedding (back in Orissa). The trip usually wiped out several years of savings. It was expensive. With rising prosperity on both sides -- in Orissa and in America -- it is now common for parents to visit here, and for us to visit quite frequently. With this two-way traffic, it was possible to have, as "chief guest" notable personalities from Orissa at OSA conventions. Prafulla Ghadai, a Orissa cabinet member, and Mrs. Manorama Mohapatra, Editor of Samaj, were guests at the Atlanta convention. Mr. Lalit Mansingh, IFS, Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission for India in Washington, was also honored at the Atlanta Convention.

As I look back at my association with the OSA, I feel particularly happy with my role in the organization during the early days of the chapter in Canada, the 1976 convention in Toronto, the 1984 convention in Glassboro, New Jersey and the 25th Anniversary OSA Convention in Pomona, New Jersey. After I moved to United States, I became a member of the OSANY, the local chapter in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. I am happy. I am happy that OSANY instituted an endowed scholarship at three Orissa Universities. Although I had no role in it, I applaud the Kalahandi-Bolangir community project and OSA's support of it.

OSA is going to be 27 years old. For a youth, one can say life begins at 27. Can we say the same about OSA? As the founders of OSA approach seniority, OSA is also showing signs of a mid-life crisis. Our goal should be to handover the torch to our children and take OSA to a higher plateau. But the future is far from certain. Many of us put in a lot of sweat and tears into the organization so that the expatriate Oriya community would remain as one integrated community in North America for the next generation. Our children themselves reaching their adulthood, identify very strongly with United States and Canada but somewhat weakly with the Oriya

community. Their bonds with Oriyas and Orissa is not tight. The desire we had and effort we put forth to meet another Oriya, to speak in Oriya, or to eat Oriya food, to appreciate Oriya culture is absent in our children born here. Even new immigrants coming to America do not identify with the OSA -- most are not even members. Maybe they do not experience the same emptiness of the soul that we felt in the absence of an Oriya community in our first days in this New World.

Our youth, those who have grown up here and the new arrivals from Orissa are all upwardly mobile, successful professionals in middle to high income brackets. Through them, an Oriya presence will continue to be felt in Canada and the United States. However, it is not at all certain that the OSA, as a forum, will be able to survive to serve the young and the not so young in the years to come.



2001 : AN OSA ODYSSEY

Jnana Ranjan Dash

Introduction: What will the Orissa Society of Americas look like in the Year 2001, a mere five years away? Let's put it another way - what will be the role of our second/third generation descendants so far as OSA is concerned? In its first 27 years, the organizational leadership came from the first generation immigrants. If that's still the case in the Year 2001, then we better call it, in a depressing sense, "back to the future". In the following few paragraphs, we would like to project what OSA should be in the year 2001; therefore the question we must ponder is how to get there in 60 months.

Hopefully this article won't sound preachy or doctrinaire.

OSA in the 20th century : Yes, we have heard it a few times by now. It was started by a few individuals in the Boston area in 1970. Since then, it grew slowly but steadily over the first decade (1970s). OSA of New York was a prominent chapter full of activities. Other major chapters included Washington, Chicago, Detroit, South, and Canada (Toronto). Besides establishing the OSA directory and a semi-regular newsletter, the only major milestone was the annual convention. During the next decade (1980s), a few novelties came about. The convention took a larger dimension starting the year 1983. People started traveling great distances to attend the annual fiesta. Serious organizational accomplishments were few - scholarships for deserving students in Orissa, infrequent relief funds for flood-affected areas. In the next decade (1990s), we pretty much continued on our standard slow pace. Conventions became big events, the biggest one was the 25th Anniversary in 1994. Dignitaries were invited from Orissa/India to come to the convention. An OSA center was established in Bhubaneswar as a liaison office.

In our typical low-key and humble way, we take credit for the "existence theorem" - that OSA did survive through all these years. Our children thought the annual convention was a lot of fun and looked forward to come meet their friends. It's time to look forward to OSA's future course and leadership. The following is a desirable scenario.

OSA - Year 2001: Last year, the world went through a historic milestone of a transition - not only from one century to another, but from one millennium to another. Our children who graduated from high school in the 1980s and the 1990s have all entered the work force. Many of them have families with children now. The OSA is about 5000 members strong (in terms of unique addresses). The leadership has "completely" shifted to the second generation except for one position called "Senior Representative". This position more or less acts as the continued linkage to the OSA of the last century.

Chapter membership has grown significantly. There is an OSA home-page in the World Wide Web which provides an ongoing electronic discussion forum. Each chapter is linked to the home-page, therefore membership information and various chapter activities can be instantly accessed by anyone. There is a large population constantly surfing the OSA home-page from across the world including Orissa, enough to cause occasional slow performance. Volunteers such as Anil Dash (Camphill, PA) and Anup Gantayat (Milpitas, CA) have suggested ways to improve Internet access to much larger number of users. Four times a year, there are town-hall type meetings via the Internet where issues are discussed and resolutions made. This idea was started by Devjani Mishra (Washington) and Mukta Mohapatra (Los Angeles). Devjani acts as the forum leader during the electronic meeting with assistance from Mukta. Amongst many interesting ideas, one popular one is the summer exchange program for children and summer OSA camp for teenagers. The OSA center in Bhubaneswar now provides facilities for surfing the Internet for quick information access.

In this year's annual convention at Acapulco, Mexico, the attendance was an all-time high. About 2500 people showed up crowding the hotels and beaches. The OSA president Sanjib Behera (high-tech executive in Northern California) with assistance from the four vice presidents Sandip Biswal (doctor in California), Seema Mohapatra (doctor in Orlando), Debashis Mishra (business leader in Plymouth, Michigan) and Devjani Mishra (big lawyer in Washington DC) did a great job organizing the convention. Many other members in the organizing

committee (Prasanna Mohanty, Srijoy Mohapatra, Niki Patnaik,...) worked hard for this convention.

One of the key messages came from President Al Gore who is into his second year of presidency. He mentioned that OSA represents one of the highest per capita income groups in the USA. There were 3 big delegations from outside the continent, the largest one was from the UK/Europe. The Australian delegation came for the first time. The Indian/Orissa delegation was 20-people strong and brought major talents for the cultural program. Several successful entrepreneurs of Oriya origin came from India with ideas of projects both in India and in the USA.

The secretary/treasurer of OSA, Goutam (Babu) Patnaik (big-time businessman from Randallstown, Maryland) mentioned that this convention was budgeted at about \$250,000. He surprised everyone by flying in a popular Oriya rock group, called Apache Oriya from the UK to perform on the cruise ship. The annual convention journal was distributed in CD-ROM (electronic version) due to the volume of articles (besides being made available in the Internet (URL- www.osa.com/convention/2001)). The editor of the journal Nivedita Mishra (Boston) got ample help from other regional reps like Somesh Dash (California), Sony Satpathy (Nashville), Lubu Mishra (Boston), Balaji Nayak & Swagat Das (Washington), Sidharth Mohanty (Indianapolis), Robin Panda & Leena Mohapatra (Minneapolis), Raj Mishra (Chicago), and Lona Patnaik (Toronto).

The cultural program was very rich with talents. The two-evenings of programs were organized by the San Diego sisters (Laboni, Shibani, and Shalini Patnaik), Rini (Niharika) Mohanty (Canada), and Sarba Das (New Jersey). Most of the special Odissi group dances were directed by Rini Mohanty with help from Nandita Behera (Los Angeles). A special Odissi program was presented by Lora and brother Raj Patnaik from Canada. A visiting group of traditional *Chhau* dancers from Orissa enthralled the audience.

Major highlights at the convention included a serious sports program for children (5 through 13), organized by Suchit Dash (California) with assistance from Rajiv Behera (Los Angeles), Vijay Mishra (Toronto), and Neeraj Rath (Dallas). Serious discussions covered many topics such as: choosing a career in the highly competitive new century, spirituality for a

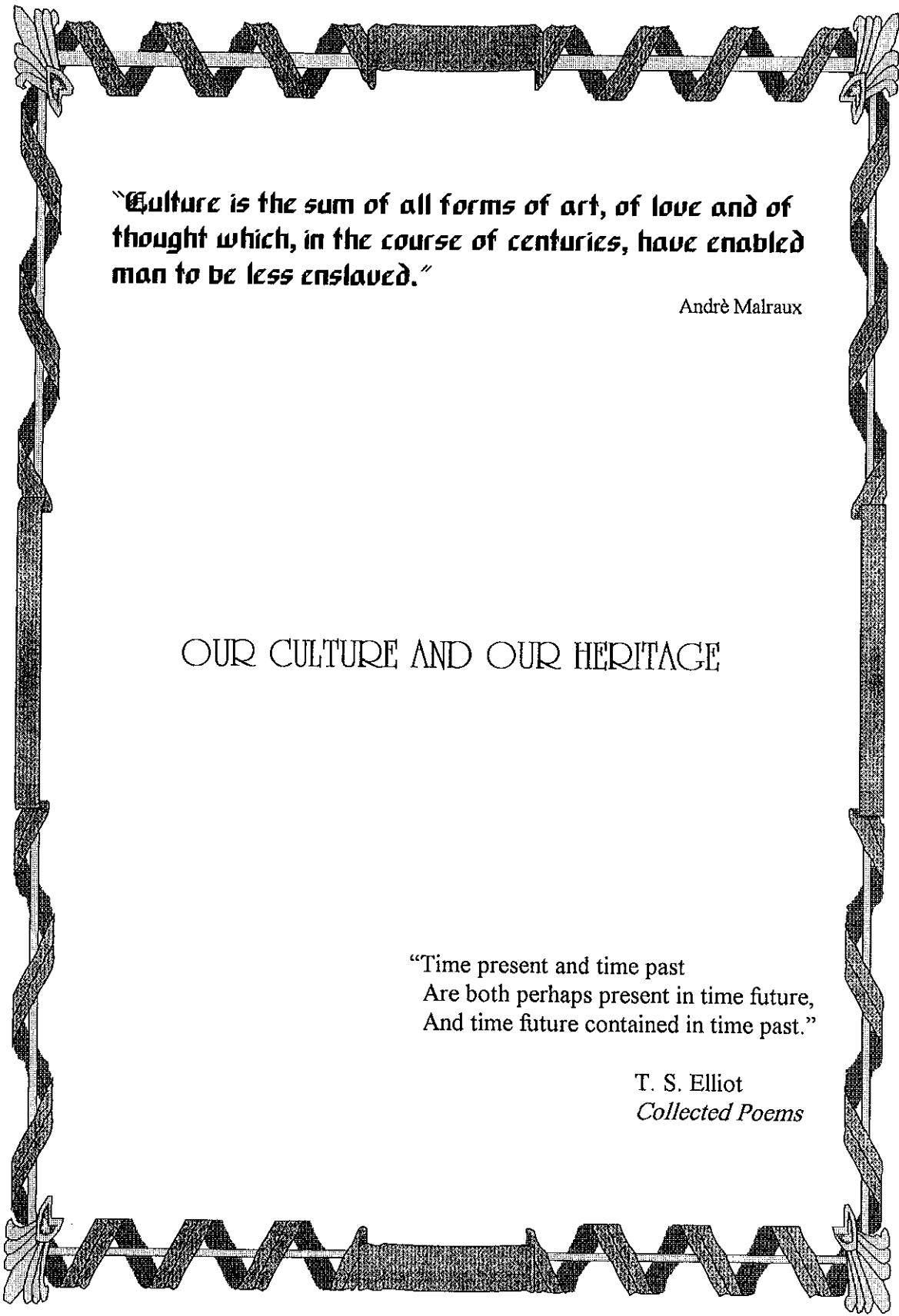
harmonious life, balancing between work and family, the emerging role of husbands as home-makers, progress of the 17 OSA projects in Orissa, selecting 5 new development projects for Orissa, etc.

The secretary/treasurer Babu Patnaik said that the current OSA projects in Orissa are worth about \$2 million dollars. Two college students have been spending 2 months each summer for the last two years looking after these projects. There is a list of about 20 students interested to do the same over the next couple of years. The president Sanjib Behera gave a clarion call to the youth to come forward and take more active interest in the welfare and growth of OSA. Some seniors glanced at each other with a smile, remembering the passage of time and the sound of those familiar words. The senior group had special sessions on "graceful aging and retirement" and a larger room was needed to accommodate the growing audience. The new-age *guru* Deepak Chopra was invited to speak on "a harmonious mind and body".

A group of young doctors lead by Lina Pattanayak, Sandip Biswal, and Sarina Behera just returned from a 8-week program at the 5-year-old Kalinga hospital in Bhubaneswar, where they conducted training for doctors and several surgical operations for critical patients. President of Kalinga hospital thanked the young team and encouraged such help and involvement by other doctors from USA and Canada.

What a convention this was! The cultural programs were broadcast live via the Internet to all over the world. Several thousands of people experienced the "virtual reality", watching the events from different parts of the globe as if they were physically present. By popular vote, the next year's convention site was picked to be in Maui, Hawaii.

Conclusion : One gets carried away, but does it not feel good to fantasize! How do we reach that reality? We must ask ourselves -- are we preparing the ground for such a transition of the mantle or are we continuing to do the same as we did 20 years ago ? It's time to shed the self-importance and encourage and listen to our children. Make them the torch-bearers for tomorrow. The immediate action we old-timers can take is to vow not to contest the next election and strictly ask/force the second generation to take over. We all agree that they are very capable to outdo us. As the saying goes - First Ponder, then Dare.



"Culture is the sum of all forms of art, of love and of thought which, in the course of centuries, have enabled man to be less enslaved."

Andr  Malraux

OUR CULTURE AND OUR HERITAGE

***"Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past."***

T. S. Elliot
Collected Poems

AN INTRODUCTION TO ORISSA THROUGH THE PANORAMA OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION

Manmath Nath Das

India can unfold the panorama of a civilization which runs through millennia from the days of Mahenjo-Daro. A home of major ethnic groups; a birth place of four out of seven great religions on earth, namely: Brahminism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, and an abode of the fifth one, Zoroastrianism; a meeting ground of numerous peoples and of cults; a land of spiritual inspiration for the rest of Asia; a center of attraction either for wisdom or wealth from ancient till modern age; and above all, a country where history maintained an unbroken continuity through bright or dark days since the time of Buddha, India retains an identity typical of its own. Civilization did not die out as on the valley of Nile or Mesopotamia, it did not get dim like the civilizations of Greece or Rome, and it did not remain confined to its own frontiers like the secluded civilizations of Carthage, Mexico or Peru. It radiated itself and enlightened others.

Such a panorama was multicolored and multi faced. Because, to its making and splendor, every part of India offered its gifts. It is indeed a conglomeration and a synthesis of wave after wave of ideas and activities, and of currents and cross currents of mental and material processes, seen through centuries. Identities of many sources which supplied vitality to our civilization are either lost or are indistinct, or are vivid or clear; but, they all in their totality constitute the foundations as well as the superstructure of the Indian life.

It is through that totality that one has to identify any part of India for its contribution to the whole, without which the whole itself could not have been comprehensive and wide. Assam or Andhra, Kashmir or Kerala, the Punjab or Orissa, Gujarat or Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh or Karnataka, Bihar or Bengal, Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, and all the rest, are the limbs of an organic whole. In their regional distinction, and individual growth, they have made India what she is, and parenthetically, too, the spirit that India breathed from the days of her ancient seers, inspired and caused the growth of several different identities according to the genius of each people for the beauty and harmony of the whole land.

What role did Orissa, that is ancient Kalinga, play in the growth of India? Viewed in the broader perspective of the civilization of this great land, Orissa emerges in manifold manner with an ethos of its own which is at once perceptible and purposeful. An indication of it will suffice as an introduction of Orissa to the rest of India.

One may begin with a peep into a prehistoric past when the earliest people, in their migratory course, were settling down on the land mass of India. Geography became a compelling factor in giving shape to those settlements. Divided into two halves by the insurmountable Vindhya, the Uttarapatha and the Dakshinapatha were destined to live separate racio-cultural existences with Dravidians and Aryans occupying the two broad geographical divisions. But the coastal plains of Orissa became a link between Dakshinapatha and Aryavarta, the meeting ground between two great races, while at the same time providing home to the original primitives in hilly vastness of its western regions. On the soil of Orissa began the fusion of the two civilizations, the Dravidian and the Aryan, which ultimately culminated in the emergence and evolution of that mighty though amorphous religio-cultural force, otherwise named as Hinduism. It represented the united Indianism in thought and action, in ways of life and manners of living, scriptural doctrines as well as ceremonial performances, religious practices and ethical conduct, in brief, in all that Hinduism stood for - faiths and beliefs concerning this life and the next - accepted as absolute by an entire population covering a subcontinent from Himalayas to Kumarika. Ancient Orissa as a meeting ground between north and the south helped in formation of primeval Hinduism and hence forever remained its chief stronghold, which is a unique distinction of Orissa in India's spiritual history. Mahabharata described Orissa as a land inhabited by the Rishis. Brahma Puran called it the country of "the blessed adorned with all the virtues." And to the fold of an all comprehensive faith the original sons of the soil were drawn in from their otherwise secluded life in inaccessible hill tracts. Orissa is one of the states where neolithic life was traced as late as the last part

of the 19th century when William Wilson Hunter saw the Juangs or Patuas as one of the last of the surviving tribes among the vanishing descendants of the Stone Age primitives. The hill tribes in Orissa were nearer to the mainstream of national faith than they were elsewhere in India. Tradition established it that Jagannath, "Lord of the Universe", the supreme deity of Orissa since an immemorial past, was originally a god of the Savaras.

Geography not only caused Orissa to be a meeting ground of primary races and primal cultures, but also made it the gateway of India, for farther Asia. Human movements and migrations were a regular phenomenon in ancient times all over the world. In case of India, her colonization of thither Asia was a remarkable episode in proto-historic ages. The peninsular India was a home of Indian colonists who carried a systematic policy of colonization in lands such as Ceylon, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Malayan Peninsula, Annam, China, Cambodia, East Indies and the islands of the Pacific. It was the people of Kalinga, by virtue of their geographical situation, championed the over-sea expansion of India most successfully and became the pioneer founders of Indian colonies across the oceans. Malaysia still preserves the tradition regarding their early ancestors that twenty thousand families were sent to Java by Prince of the Kling (Kalinga). These people prospered and multiplied. At the opening of the Christian era, the author of the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea saw how ships from South Indian ports regularly sailed to Malaysia, and in days of Ptolemy when he surveyed the geography of South Eastern Asia, he observed a regular voyage from the Kalinga port of Paloura to the Malaysian islands. The ancient Chinese named the islands of the archipelago as Kling. They also named the island of Java as Ho Ling, which was the name of Kalinga in the Chinese language. It was during the first stages of colonization from pre-Christian era to the 1st and 2nd century A.D., that Hinduism spread in those overseas lands, and the earliest Hindu caves and temples were erected in Borneo.

The culmination of colonizing activities was seen in 8th Century A.D. when a far-flung empire came into existence with almost all the states of the Malay Peninsula and Malay Archipelago within its orbit. Famous as the Sailendra Empire of Suvarna Dvipa it survived for four hundred years during which period

Indian religion and philosophy, art and architecture, and in brief the Indian culture as such became the culture of those parts of Asia. During the age of the Sailendras, Suvarna Dvipa was known as 'Kalinga,' a bright testimony as regard to the achievements of the ancient people of Orissa in carrying the civilization of India to other Asia lands.

Kalinga also played a remarkable role in the evolution of the culture of Sri Lanka. The first Aryan immigration from India into Ceylon took place from the shores of Kalinga. And next followed the language and Religion. Authorities like Oldenberg and E. Muller believed that Pali came to Ceylon from Kalinga. The tide of Buddhism, too, flooded Ceylon from the great ports of Kalinga when Ashoka entered into his role as a missionary after his great conversion in the wake of his epoch-making Kalinga War. Finally, the precious-most emblem of the Buddhist world - the Tooth of Buddha - was taken from Kalinga to Ceylon in the 4th Century A.D. when King Sri Meghavarna ruled that island. The relation between Kalinga and Ceylon continued to be so effective that as late as 12th century A.D., a Kalinga prince named Nissanka Malla became the king of Sinhala by virtue of his being the son-in-law of perhaps the greatest monarch of the Sinhalese history, Parakrama Bahu the Great. The inscriptions at Polonnaruwa stand till today as witness to the Kalinga-Ceylon relation of an ancient past.

Thus ancient Orissa played two vital roles, in the history of India, namely, a role to synthesize ancient racio-religious traits, and a role to spread Indian culture across the seas.

And, on its own soil, and in an indigenous manner, Orissa manifested a creative genius of a rare quality which enriched Indian civilization in a fundamental way. Orissa became the workshop of Indian art and architecture through ages. Cultural traits and racial characteristics do at times defy definition. Why should Orissa become the museum of Indian art is difficult to account for. A century ago, James Fergusson exclaimed in profound surprise: "There are more temples now in Orissa than in all the rest of Hindustan put together." There are cities in Orissa which can rightly be described as temple cities. For example, so late as early 20th Century, Mano Mohan Ganguly saw as many as five hundred small and big temples only in Bhubaneswar. If five hundred

edifices were seen at a place after temple-building activities had been given up for five hundred years, one may pause to think, how many thousands of them were built during the one thousand years, which constituted the architectural span of Bhubaneswar! And, before those one thousand years, there was yet another period of the same length which saw the foundations of Buddhist, Jaina and Brahmanic art in and around the same city of Bhubaneswar. "I need not make an apology to my readers," said Mano Mohan Ganguly, one of the renowned authorities on temple architectures, "for taking up Orissa in preference to the other provinces comprising India. It is a patent fact that it has peculiar interests of its own alike from an archaeological and architectural point of view not shared in common by the other Indian provinces. To a student of architecture, it is important by reason of its being the seat of Indo Aryan style in its purest form; here we do not notice the least vestige of foreign influence. It has maintained its native purity marvelously, being nurtured and reared on the very soil where it grew, without any extraneous aid."

What for and why? Three basic causes account for Orissa's unique achievements in the realm of art and architecture. First, for massive and majestic superstructures in the stone, and that too, in countless number, ancient and medieval Orissa possessed adequate material resources as well as the physical stamina of her people. As Rajendra Lal Mitra put it, "Its people lived happily and contented for ages under a national government, with every opportunity to cultivate arts of peace, and to promote the prosperity of their fatherland. The ancient monuments it contains are, therefore, more authentic than what are to be met with in most other parts of India." With maritime commerce and overseas colonies, with fertile and productive river valleys, and with people's capacity for hard work, Orissa could afford to indulge in the luxury of costly architectural enterprises. Secondly, deep religious faiths emitting deeper spiritual inspiration moved the people to devote time and energy in not merely building numerous monuments but also in preparing the images and figures of numberless deities of all cults and beliefs in a fabulous way. Hundreds of thousands of exquisitely beautiful pieces of sculpture which lie scattered all over Orissa are the dumb and mute witnesses to the faiths of people through different epochs of time. Thirdly, it was the spirit of the

people, the innate creativeness of the race which got an outlet through spiritual conviction as well as material advantages for self-manifestation. Art, in Orissa, took an abundant form in its contents and fantasy, and the artist engraved myths and mythology, faiths and legends, religion and spirituality, superstition and imagination, everything on imperishable stone.

How much poorer does India become if Orissa is taken out from her art map? It goes by implication and needs no elaboration. Some of the precious-most gems of the Indian art are treasured in Orissa. So, too, some of the biggest monuments of Hindu India. The great Temple of Lingaraja at Bhubaneswar is the most imposing temple of whole India, and one of the greatest artistic monuments of the world. The Temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri is an appropriate edifice for the "Lord of the Universe", a monument worthy of being the center of pilgrimage for millions of Indians through many centuries. And, the Sun Temple of Konark is the greatest as well as the finest specimen of Hindu architecture, a monument at once majestic in body and superb in beauty, having neither an equal nor a rival.

If such monuments with their immortal glory are removed from the cultural map of India, it is the annals of that culture which would lose beauty and luster. India without Orissa will be like Greece without Athens or Italy without Rome. From the days of antiquity when sculptors of Orissa engraved for Asoka the figure of elephant at the top of the Rock Edict of Dhauli, to the days of Gajapati Kapilendra Deva when the Temple of Kapileswara saw its construction, it was a period of seventeen hundred years. All through that period, phase by phase, and time after time, but in a consistent and regular manner, the architect, the sculptor and the artists of Orissa remained alive to their duty to serve the cause of religion and art, the former representing the inner devotion of man and the latter, his inspired creativeness. Ages have passed into oblivion, but art has survived.

Civilization at times, both in its outer and inner aspects, developed around the works of great men, who either as men of action or of thought, added substance to history. To the making of that history, Orissa contributed no small part, with footprints of many great men marked on the sands of time. One of

the earliest historical personages to launch his movement in Orissa was Mahavira Jina. Ancient Jaina literature describes how he was invited by the ruler of Kalinga to conduct his mission in this land. As a result, till long after Jina, Orissa continued to be a stronghold of Jainism. Even today, the hills of Khandagiri-Udaygiri, with their Jaina rock cut caves, attract devout Jainas from all parts of India. Gautama Buddha did not pay a visit to Kalinga, but the Buddhist sources such as *Datha Dhatu Vamsam* and *Mahaparinivanna Sutta*, narrated how Buddha's Tooth-Relic was carried by a Buddhist monk named Kshema from the Lord's funeral pyre to the far away Kalinga and handed over to the Kalinga king Brahmadata who erected a stupa for the Relic at a place which became famous as Dantapura. To some scholars, the Dantapura or Dantapuri of ancient times came to be known as Puri in future where the Temple of Jagannath came to be located. Traditions proclaim that the Holy Relic of Buddha was preserved in the Navipadma of Jagannath. Indian religion being a synthesis of great cults, it is no wonder that Buddhism merged with Hinduism in due course, and even Buddha who would not advocate the fatherhood of God, was converted into an incarnation of Vishnu. In that process, Puri as a holy center, played a considerable role. Jagannath, at times, is identified with Buddha, and the cult of Jagannath is considered an amalgam of Buddhism and Brahmanism. In its social manifestation, such a union had a great liberalizing impact on a rigid caste-society. Puri, it may be noted, was the only religious center in the whole of India where there was no caste system as such and therefore, a place where the Brahmana and the Sudra could dine together on the same plate.

Men like Mahavira and Buddha were creators of immense thought. But civilization also required men of action for the balance of history. In the annals of Indian civilization, men of action have created events which have proved far-reaching in consequences. One of the greatest of such events occurred on the soil of ancient Orissa. It was the Kalinga war of Asoka in 261 B.C.

What was its cause? In the last quarter of the 4th century B.C., Chandragupta Maurya built up the first all-India empire in history. It extended from the Pamir and Hindukush to Ganges, and from Himalayas to Mysore. His son, Bindusara was also a powerful monarch. It is surprising, however, that

the Maurya army, which conquered more or less the whole of India, did not try to conquer the nearest country to their own capital Pataliputra, namely, Kalinga. It explains the power that Kalinga possessed, to which the Greek Ambassador Megasthenes, made an indirect reference during the time of the first Maurya.

It was left to the third Maurya, Asoka, to conquer that unconquered country. The people of Kalinga offered a relentless resistance, but they lost at last. Asoka had invaded with the military strength and economic resources of whole India. How desperate was the battle, how bitterly was it fought, and how terrible were the results, are known from Asoka's own descriptions. This is what he wrote about the Kalinga War in his Thirteenth Rock Edict: "The country of Kalinga was conquered when kind Priyadarshin, Beloved of the Gods had been anointed eight years. One hundred and fifty thousand were therefrom captured, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times as many died."

With what result? The conquered Kalinga conquered her conqueror. The change which came in Asoka has been described thus: "Thereafter, now, when the country of Kalinga has been acquired, the beloved of the Gods has zealous compliance with Dhamma, love for Dhamma, and the teaching of Dhamma... Even one-hundredth or one-thousandth part of those who were slain, died or captured in Kalinga is today considered regrettable by the Beloved of the Gods."

Asoka became a Buddhist and a pacifist. He gave up violence once for all and entered into his role as a missionary. The Dharma-Vijaya which he initiated after his Kalinga-Vijaya was and is rare type of conquest in the history of mankind. It was a conquest of human heart for morality, virtue, ethics and peace. Asoka's missionaries proceeded far and wide into distant countries to preach the gospel of Buddha. That was the beginning of a civilizing mission for the whole of Asia. In course of time Buddhism became the religion of the entire Humanity of Asia, and Buddha became the Light of Asia. And Asoka? History accepted him as the greatest of the monarchs who had ruled over countless climes through ages of times. The political empires of Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne or Napoleon vanished after them, but the religious empire of Asoka continues till today. Thus if to the world's roll

call of heroes India has supplied the first name, it was a name written in the blood of the Kalinga people. How much poorer the Asian civilization without Buddhism? It goes to the credit of Orissa that the deposits of those riches came from an event which took place on her own soil.

As centuries rolled by, Orissa continued to invite heroes, scholars and prophets alike. Famous Kings like Samudragupta and Harsha Siladitya came to Orissa on political missions, while scholars like Prajna and Hiuen-Tsang came to learn at her centers of learning. When the latter, the famous Chinese pilgrim of 7th century, visited Orissa, he was surprised to see the University of Puspagiri, imparting knowledge to innumerable scholars. Puspagiri, like Nalanda, was a renowned university of ancient India, now lying buried under the Buddhist complex at Ratnagiri-Latitgiri-Udayagiri.

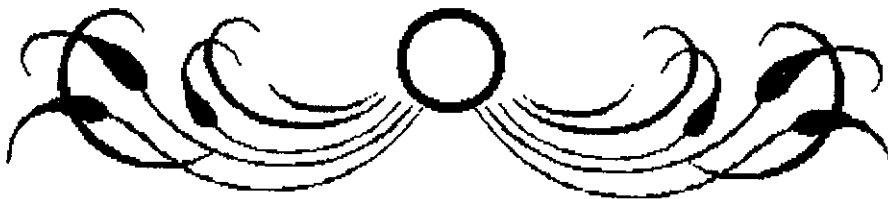
The prophets and seers who visited Orissa were many in number. In 9th century there came the redoubtable Samkara to Puri to make it a center of his mission. His monastery rose to fame as the Bhoga Bardhana. Early in 12th century, came Ramanuja who founded at Puri his famous monastery known today as Emar Math. In the same century, Jayadeva composed his immortal Gita Govinda at Puri. During the subsequent two centuries, preachers like Narasimha Muni, Narahari Tirtha, Narasimha Bharati and Basudeva Bharati preached their religious tenets in Orissa. And, finally, early in 16th century there came Sri Chaitanya to make Puri his abode and to flood Orissa with his devotional doctrines.

If the inner spirit of all religions pointed at a universality, Orissa breathed a spirit of cosmopolitanism to represent that spirit. Here on her soil primitivism, Brahmanism, Jainism, Buddhism, Saivism, Saktaism, Tantrism and Vaisnavism merged into common shapes. The art of Orissa represented a synthesis of all those faiths. The cult of Jagannath which pervaded Orissa was product of the faiths of the Adivasis, Hindus, Jainas and Buddhists. Finally,

when Islam came to Orissa, very late indeed, it was not with a spirit of confrontation but with a spirit of co-operation to co-exist with Hinduism, in peace and appreciation. The cult of Satya Pir was a popular faith among Hindus and Muslims, during the Muslim period of Orissan history. Its legacy prevails till today and account for the fact that Orissa saw no communal frenzy even in the worst days of communalism in pre-independence days when the virus of separatism affected most parts of India.

The glories of Orissa ended in later half of 16th century. Two centuries later, the British administered the final blows by dismembering the original territory into several administrative units, kept under adjacent presidencies and provinces. They also allowed a number of small princely states to flourish in Orissa under separate administrations. Yet, in her worst days of economic misery and political disintegration, the people of Orissa joined the mainstream of national movement for the liberation of the country. A real people's movement was seen in the inaccessible Garjats of Orissa where the suffering mass fought against feudalism and imperialism through untold hardship and the largest massacre by the British during the Quit India Struggle took place at Iram, now described as the second Jallianawallah Bagh.

So, to the making of Indian History, and of Indian civilization, Orissa has contributed her immense share. Cultures have no frontiers, and therefore, the culture of Orissa is seen diffused in the vast spectrum of Indian civilization. Art is an object of beauty, and the Art of Orissa has been an object of attraction for millions of men through all ages. The spirit of any place is a speciality of its own, and Orissa's spirit is the spirit of cosmopolitanism. With legacies of a memorable past, Orissa now looks ahead with pride and confidence for a future of its own linked with destiny of the rest of India. It will be a vast panorama again a panorama of progress in the light of newness.



ORISSA FOR CHILDREN

Bijoy Misra

We call ourselves Oriyas, because our parents and grandparents speak a particular language called Oriya. Oriya is the anglicized name of "Odia" (pronounced as Od-I-a, rhymes with "India"). The name came about since the original settlers in the area were called "Odra"s (pronounced as "od-draw"). "Odra"s were a martial race. Some of these original settlers still live in the hills and forests of Orissa. They speak a language that resembles partially with the present day Oriya. Why they were called "Odra" in ancient times is not fully known.

The beliefs of Odras in life and living have not been fully researched. It's believed that they were skilled archers and had excellence in the execution of bow and arrow. They were very sincere to their word and did develop a barter economy in sharing goods and services. They probably used very colorful costumes and used various masks and icons in their festivities. They had developed woodworking skills and could use rivers for transportation.

The land of the Odras was gradually divided into three units: a western Koshala (pronounced as Koshala), a northern coastal Kangoda (pronounced as Kan-go-da) and a southern coastal Kalinga (pronounced as Ka-lin-ga). The people in Koshala had ties with the central and northern sections of India and developed a prosperous society based on agriculture and crafts. There were continuous exchange of scholars to other centers of learning in northern India and the area benefited with the scholarship. The rulers in this area have been known to be benevolent to their subjects and were kind to the scholars. The last of the *Vedas*, called *Atharva Veda*, did most likely originate from this area.

The people in Kangoda developed their own agricultural society, but were also artisans. They developed strong ritualistic traditions in worship and were fascinated by the feminine forces of nature. These speculations on feminine force gave rise to *Tantra* literature and affected the thinking in the northeast region of India very strongly. *Tantra* literature compares the entire universe to the human body and tries to create an association of the origin of the universe with the limbs and organs of the

supreme universal mother. Such theory believes in the presence of *shakti* (power) in the universe and associates the cause of all events to the manifestation of *shakti*.

The people in Kalinga mostly became tradesmen and developed engineering and navigational tools to undertake maritime excursions to distant lands. While the martial training was prevalent in all the three areas, the Kalingans had special interest in it and maintained a large army, Kalingans developed port facilities and strong trade relations flourished with the islands of southeast Asia. Material like grains, spices and textiles were traded for precious stones, gold and herbs. The Kalingan wealth built up strong cities and centers of commerce at both sides of the trade route.

While the people in Koshala were busy in developing script for writing and developing a basis for the language, the coastal sections were influenced by Jaina Tirthankara Mahavira. Jainism was quickly accepted and a new spoken language called "Odra Magadhi" (Magadhi, pronounced as Ma-ga-dhi, is the language spoken in the Magadha area of Bihar state). Odra-Magadhi combined the language of the Odras and that of Magadhi and used the then prevalent *Brahmi* script to write it. Most of the *Jaina* literature at this time was written by the scholars in Kangoda and Kalinga in Odra-Magadhi.

Two traders from Kalinga were among the first five disciples when Gautama Buddha delivered his first teachings at Sarnath. Buddha couldn't visit the land of the Odras during his lifetime, but gradually Buddhism took strong root in the land. The famous war between the imperial forces of Ashoka and the Kalingan army took place in 261 BC. The massive loss of human lives was devastating to the morale of Ashoka and he vowed never to touch the sword again. With his embracing Buddhism, the Kalingans helped him propagate the Buddhist faith following the trade routes that they had discovered.

A Kalingan king called Kharavela (pronounced Kharave-la) waged war against the kingdom of Magadha and retrieved the statue of Mahavira that Ashoka had

taken away from Kalinga. Kharavela's empire extended prominently in north and south India. With the relative prosperity in the land, Kalingans developed various expressions of arts literature, music and theater. The fineness of artistry continued to be the hallmark of land the entire area gradually came to be known as "Utkala" (pronounced Ut-ka-la, "the land where the arts are the finest").

Now we come to the story of Buddhist connection to the city of Puri in modern Orissa. With the popularity of Buddhism in the early centuries of the Christian era, shrines containing Buddha's relics were constructed all around the country. It is believed that one such shrine containing Buddha's tooth was established in Puri and the word Puri (pronounced Pu-ree) was borrowed from the *Pali* language which was the prevailing spoken language of the Buddhists. It is also probably true that Buddhists had started the tradition of an annual festival of carrying the urn containing Buddha's tooth in wooden chariots. This tradition has later transformed itself into the famous Car Festival at Puri, which has become a great tourist attraction.

During the time of the spread of Buddhism, Sanskrit language also had its full development in north India and the lands of Koshala, Kangoda and Kalinga became the centers of Sanskrit scholarship very quickly. Sri Vishnu Sharma in Puri led the prose writing in Sanskrit and wrote the famous fables called *Hitopadesa*.

These are beautiful stories that have now influenced the children's literature all around the world. The stories are witty and entertaining. Books on music, grammar, mathematics, astronomy and engineering sciences were also developed. You should know that these books were written on palm leaves with a special script called "Brahmi" (pronounced Braa-h-mi).

The development of literature and the cultivation of analytic knowledge, led to the construction of massive architectural monuments that have been the hallmark of the present Orissa State. The temple of Lingaraja at Bhubaneswara was built first, the temple of Jagannatha in Puri was built next and finally the famous Sun Temple at Konarka was built. The icons in Jagannatha Temple are unique because they are made out of wood. There are stories about how the

icon of Jagannatha came to be, but the Oriyas treat Sri Jagannatha as a living king and all the rituals are handled in a regal manner. The temple building in Orissa went on from about 600 AD to about 1300 AD. Bhubaneswara came to be known as the City of Temples. Temples in other parts of the area were also constructed. Except the principal structure at Konarka, all the temples continue to exist to announce the marvel of Odra engineering and craftsmanship. The Odissi dance and music that developed through the patronage of the temples continue to mesmerize people with their rhythm and melody.

This was also the time when the development of modern Oriya language took place. The Oriya script has been hybrid between the northern Nagari script and the southern Dravidian scripts. Like all Indian languages, Oriya is written from left to right and is phonetically based. With minor variations it borrows all the consonants and vowels from the Sanskrit language. Because of the colloquial nature of the spoken language, Oriya grammar borrows quite a bit from *Pali* language. The grammar constructs and the syntax have resemblance to the earlier Odra. We should note that other Indian languages like Hindi, Bengali, Gujrati, Marathi etc. also developed at this time and so was English in the western world.

Sri Sarala Dasa (pronounced Saa-ra-la Daa-sa) in the fifteenth century became the first person to write the story of Mahabharata in a regional Indian language. Massive as Mahabharata is, Sarala Dasa typified the nature of Oriya peasantry and scholarship. It is considered the first book in Oriya language and Sarala Dasa is considered the "Father of Oriya Language". Sri Sarala Dasa was followed in the sixteenth century by Sri Jagannatha Dasa who made a translation of *Srimad Bhagavatam* (pronounced Sri-ma-d Bha-ga-va-tam) in Oriya language. This translation made in twelve books has continued to be the most popular book in Oriya literature.

Sixteenth century also saw many other poets and writers, but the most famous Oriya writer by the name of Sri Upendra Bhanja (pronounced Upe-nd-ra Bha-n-ja) arrived in the eighteenth century in the southern district of Ganjam. He was a prince, but relinquished his throne in favor of writing. He wrote about human feelings, love, joy and separation. His poetry is ornamental and the beauty of the use of

By the early seventh century A.D., according to Hiuen Tsang's account, in the Odra country (Midnapore district of West Bengal, Balasore and Cuttack districts and a part of the Puri district) Mahayana Buddhism was predominant. According to him, there were one hundred Buddhist monasteries, ten thousand Mahayana monks, and only fifty Deva temples in this region.

Hiuen Tsang referred to the Hinayan-Mahayan controversy of 639 A.D., and it appears that in the seventh century A.D. Mahayanism triumphed over Hinayana Buddhism. By the end of the seventh century A.D., Tantrik or Vajrayana Buddhism began to evolve. In the course of time, Orissa became a great center of Tantrik Buddhism. It is believed by the scholars that a great Tantrik Buddhist monk of Orissa, Padma Sambhava, went to Tibet and preached Tantrik Buddhism there.

Tantrik Buddhism received royal patronage from the three early Bhaumakara rulers - Kshemankaradeva, Sivakaradeva I and Subhakaradeva I who assumed the Buddhist titles of *Paramopasaka*, *Paramatathagata* and *Parama Saugata*, respectively. Sivakaradeva I sent a Buddhist manuscript entitled *Gandavyuha* to the Chinese emperor Te-tsong.

The Tibetan historian Taranath and the Tibetan work *Pag Sam Jon Zana* mention a place called Oddiyan as a great center of Mahayan Buddhism and also the birth-place of Tantrik Buddhism. Some scholars identify Oddiyan with Orissa. In fact, the predominance of Tantrik Buddhism in Orissa is amply proved by historical evidence. According to *Pag Sam Jon Zana*, a Tantrik monk named Bodhisri practiced Yoga at Ratnagiri. To please the Tantrik monk, Mahamandalacharya Paramaguru Rahula, the Bhaumakara king Subhakaradeva I carved a beautiful image of Avalokiteswar Padmapani at Khandipada (12 km to the northeast of Jajpur, in the Balasore district). According to Taranath, Rahula was born in Odivisa (or Orissa). He became the Chancellor of the Nalanda University early in the ninth century A.D. Tantrik Buddhist images, such as Marichi, Lokesvara, Manjushri, Jambhala and Tara have been found in such places as Ayodhya (in the Nilgiri subdivision of the Balasore district), the excavated site of Viratagarh near Khiching (in Mayurbhanj

district) and the Baneravanasi hillock in the bed of the Mahanadi (in Cuttack district).

The Tantrik Buddhists formulated various Tantrik doctrines such as *Dharini*, *Tapini*, and *Mandal*. They composed tracts, entitled *Mantra*, *Mandala*, and *Japa*. They practiced esoteric Tantrik rites. Tantrik Buddhism was not confined to Orissa alone; it spread over the whole of eastern India, covering Bengal, Assam, Orissa and Bihar. In the tenth century A.D., the Tantrik Buddhists of Oddiyan Pitha wrote a book of Buddhist hymns, entitled *Baudha Gana 0 Doha*. To this work scholars trace the origin of east Indian languages - Oriya, Bengali, Maithili and Assamese. Tantrik Buddhism developed into various branches, such as Kalachakrayana, Vajrayana and Sahajayana. The composers of *Baudha Gana 280 or 0 Doha* belong to the Sahajayana school which was the latest popular school of Tantrik Buddhism.

Buddhism enjoyed royal patronage during the Bhaumakara rule. The character of Buddhism had changed by the time of the establishment of the Bhaumakara rule. It had been somewhat assimilated into Hinduism. The earliest Bhaumakara ruler, Sahemankaradeva, respected the Brahmanical caste system. Later Bhaumakara rulers leaned towards the Brahmanical religion. Tantrik practices probably resulted in undermining the doctrinal purity and integrity of Buddhism. The Somavamsi rulers were staunch Saivites and did not patronize Buddhism. Nevertheless, Buddhism continued to prevail even up to the Ganga period. The Gangas were patrons of Vaishnavism. During Ganga rule, the Buddhists were persecuted. Lack of royal patronage and persecution during Somavamsi and Ganga periods might have caused the final disappearance of Buddhism in Orissa.

Buddhism left some important legacies. It contributed to the development of Orissan iconography. It contributed to the evolution of Oriya language. The Buddhist doctrine of *Sunyata* (void) was subsequently accepted by the Orissan school of Vaishnavism. Though the Gangas patronized Vaishnavism and ignored Buddhism, Jayadeva, the Vaishnava poet of the twelfth century A.D., regarded Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu.

ORIIYA LANGUAGE

Bijoy Prasad Mahapatra

The Oriya language belongs to the Indo-European family of languages to which such great classical languages like Greek, Latin, Germanic, Slavic, Persian, Sanskrit, etc. belong. Therefore, when we come across words such as Sanskrit *pitar*, Greek *pater*, Latin *pater*, English *father*, Gothic *fadar*, old Oriya *piara* or *pita* for 'father', or Sanskrit *tvam*, Greek *tu*, Latin *tu*, English *thou*, Gothic *thuk*, Oriya *tume*, *tu*, etc. for 'you', the phenomenon is not to be treated as a coincidence or an accident. In fact, the list of such phonetically and semantically related words known as 'cognates' runs into hundreds of words and forms, clearly establishing the obvious genetic relationship among these languages.

One of the branches of this great family of languages is known as Indo-Iranian to which old Persian and Sanskrit belong. The old Sanskrit of the Vedas, which found a home in the Indian sub-continent, changed into a number of spoken languages beginning in the 10th century A.D.. These major new languages, which are known as Indo-Aryan languages, are Marathi, Konkani and Gujarati in the west; Sindhi, Panjabi, Hindi, Rajasthani, Nepali in the north; Kashmiri in the northwest, and Oriya, Bengali and Assamese in the east. For example, the Sanskrit *karna* for 'ear' becomes Kashmiri - *kan*, Sindhi - *kanu*, Nepali, Hindi - *kan*, Gujarati and Marathi - *kan*, Bengali, Assamese - *kan* and Oriya - *kana*. There are thousands of such examples, both lexical and structural, which clearly establish that these modern languages of India have originated from Sanskrit and are genetically related. These sister languages, including Oriya, are known as modern Aryan languages of India. The particular sub-family of Indo-Aryan to which Oriya belongs is known as the Magadhan branch and its immediate congeners are Bengali, Assamese and Maithili, the languages of West Bengal, Assam, and Bihar respectively. It is not the geographical contiguity that makes these languages so highly mutually intelligible, but because they belong to the same genetic node. The Telugu language of Andhra Pradesh, which is also contiguous to Orissa, however, has zero intelligibility with Oriya, mainly because Oriya belongs to the Aryan family of languages while Telugu to the Dravidian.

Oriya also has a unique position among the modern Aryan languages, because of its geographical location and its varied history. Geographically, it is the southernmost Aryan language beyond which is the domain of Dravidian languages such as Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and others. Thus it is in permanent contact with the Dravidian family of languages and languages in contact, irrespective of their genetic affiliation, influence each other. In this case Oriya is no exception. Secondly, although by the early part of the 12th century most of North India including Bengal fell to Muslim invaders, Orissa remained an independent Hindu kingdom for another glorious five hundred years under the powerful Ganga kings and following them the Surya kings and the Gajapati kings of Orissa. This period, from the beginning of the 12th century till the end of the 16th century, is considered the renaissance period of Orissa history and culture. The Ganga kings of Orissa who were of Dravidian origin brought these two distinct cultures in close contact until the Gangas were totally assimilated in Orissa. When they were succeeded by the Gajapati kings, the entire tract between the two rivers Ganga in the North, and Godavari in the South was under Oriya dominance. The empire, while unifying the Oriya speaking areas, also held large tracts of Dravidian speaking areas under its sway. Many inscriptions of this period clearly show the linguistically composite character of this empire. As in a number of cases, the inscriptions were not written in Oriya only, but also in Telugu and Tamil languages. These intimate contacts between these two peoples have left permanent impressions on the Oriya language. Many day to day words which are used in Oriya such as: *aitha*, *arisa*, *endua*, *gina*, *gera*, *gori*, *kotara*, *tota*, *cari*, *chata*, *pandara*, *palama*, *pila*, *muna*, *muni*, etc., are of Dravidian origin. In many cases the Dravidian influence has also influenced the Oriya grammatical structure.

A third language family that has contributed to the development of the Oriya language are the languages of the Austro-Asiatic family, particularly its Munda branch, including Santali, Mundari Juang, Sora Bhumij, etc. These tribal languages have been spoken indigenously within Orissa from time immemorial, and have played a singular role in the

development of the modern Oriya language. Many Oriya words such as bhaturi, thomani, baya, bhenda, benta, doli, canguri, kandhei, danga, tumba, etc. are likely to be of Munda origin. Even the very name 'Oria' may be of the same origin. Thus, Oriya in spite of being an Aryan language, also has a number of traits belonging to Dravidian and Munda sources. This reality made Pandit Nilakantha Das observe that although Oriya is basically an Aryan language, it has two distinct substrata, one that is Dravidian and the other Munda. This is the very foundation of the Oriya language and also that of Oriya social customs, art, architecture, literature, and ethos. In understanding the character of the Oriya civilization in the total Indian context this uniqueness of the Oriya language must not be under valued. This compositeness is the central theme of our culture. The Oriya culture including the language is a product of the confluence of three major civilizations, i.e. the Aryan, the Dravida and the Munda.

As per the 1981 census, 23,021,528 persons in India returned Oriya as their mother tongue. This number represents 3.73 percent of India's total population. It is the 10th largest language of India. The majority of Oriya speakers are, however, concentrated in the Orissa State, where their number is 21,590,286, forming nearly 81 percent of the State population. Of every 10,000 persons of the State, Oriya speakers form an overwhelming 8,187 majority. The distribution of other major languages in the state are Telugu 237, Hindi 233, Bengali 152, Urdu 147 and so on. The strength of the other indigenous tribal languages in absolute numbers in the State are Santali 529,574, Kui 519,256, Kondh 189,678, Savara 160,821, etc. comprising roughly 11 percent of the total population. In short, this is the linguistic composition of the Orissa State.

Of some 200 languages spoken in India, only 18 languages are listed in the VIII schedule of the Indian Constitution as scheduled languages. Oriya is one of these scheduled languages by virtue of its speakers strength, its autonomous linguistic structure, its sociological attainments and its territorial concentration. This constitutional status is further augmented by declaring the language as the official language of the Orissa state by enacting a law in 1954. By this piece of legislation Oriya has been given the status as the "Language of administration in the Orissa State." Thus, the language has received

these two important juridical sanctions to function with authority both at the national and state levels.

The third dimension of language development is its sociological attainments. In other words, how does the language fulfill either directly or indirectly, various societal functions. First of all, Oriya is a written language with its distinct writing system. This is a rare privilege in a country where out of some 200 languages hardly 50 languages are written or have a means to express their language in an established writing system. The present Oriya script is nearly as old as the language, the earliest form of which was found in a stone inscription dating 1051 A.D. known as Urjam inscription. Further, by the 15th century, a copious literature in Oriya language had bloomed. Since then, hundreds of volumes written on palm leaves with an iron stylus, have been found. This has helped not only in the propagation of the language, but standardizing it to a greater extent, and holding its speakers together. Its long written tradition also helped in producing a huge literature, establishing it as one of the cultured languages of the world. However, history is not enough for the survival of a language. Even a great literary language like Sanskrit has been dead long since. The modern civilization demands a highly developed communication medium or an advanced language for its survival and growth. It demands speedy elaboration of the language to keep pace with its multifarious activities and interests. Speedy language elaboration is the corner stone of a modern civilized society. This elaboration can be achieved both by oral and by written means. The oral media are radio, television, films and cassettes. The written media are literature and newspapers. All these media facilities are not available in Oriya to the extent necessary for its survival and growth, still they are available and must be put into better use. Further, the language is fully available in the vital sector of education beginning from the primary to the university level. This has helped in producing a vast number of not only imaginative narration but also of vital information. The Oriya reader, like the reader of any advanced society, is starving for information, and this is obvious from the fact that many journals and periodicals which were wholly literary magazines a decade ago are gradually switching over to 'feature' magazines or are more committed to bring information to the reading public. The same also goes for journalism. This is a definite improvement

and must go on, failing which the people will look elsewhere, i.e. to a different language, be it English or Hindi. Such a state will mean the people's rejection of their own mother tongue, and create an imbalance between the categories of people who have access only to their mother tongue and others who also know a foreign tongue. This will create a permanent group of people in the society who have a divided language loyalty.

The fourth is the linguistic dimension of the Oriya language. Sir George A. Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India categorically says that the Oriya Language is free of dialectal variations i.e., a uniform language is spoken throughout its length and breadth. But our recent studies show that, barring a few pockets of tribal dialects, Oriya has one major dialect, Sambalpuri. This dialect is spoken in the four western districts of Orissa, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Bolangir, and Kalahandi. Except this variety the language is spoken fairly uniformly throughout the state. Although there are not many distinct dialect areas of Oriya, dialectal forms are quite common. For example, 'the guava fruit' is known by more than twenty names, i.e., *caulia*, *cauli*, *pjuli*, *bijuli*, *biduli*, *pera*, *pehera*, *badam*, *gudam*, *jamu*, *jhamu*, *maeja*, *mewa*, *tamras*, etc. and this is not an exception. But the grammatical structure of the language is fairly uniform in all areas.

The Oriya script which is used in writing Oriya, is derived from the Brahmi script and has undergone a number of changes over centuries to give it a special identity. There is a good correlation between the letters and the sound units of Oriya. In other words, the language is written as it is spoken. There are a few redundant letters in the writing system but these are of a minor nature.

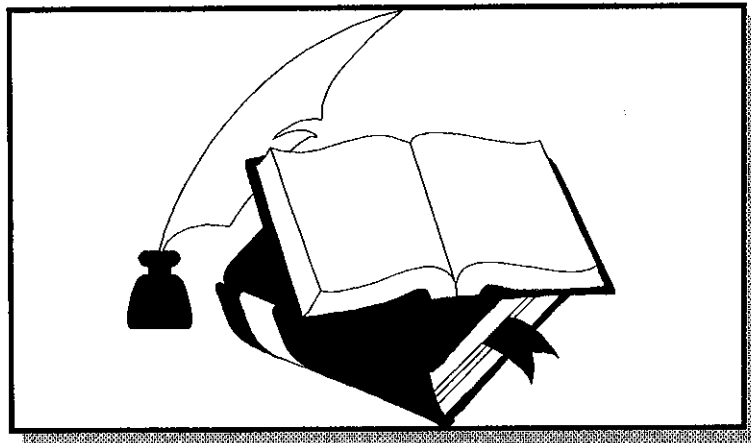
In its grammatical structure Oriya is a simple language without many morphological or grammatical complications. Barring the verb-system which is quite elaborate in modern Oriya, other areas of the language are generally analytical rather than synthetic. The language has a large vocabulary befitting an advanced language. To cope with the varied demands of a modern civilization, the language also freely borrows words and concepts from Sanskrit and English.

In conclusion, to understand the vitality of a modern

language, we must examine its demographic strength, its linguistic autonomy, its sociological functions and its juridical status. Once these vital areas are marked, it can be examined if the language is taking a healthy course. The linguistic situation of India has become lately very complex. Many languages of India both small and large, which survived for centuries together have suddenly become endangered. Let us examine the demographic dimension first. Oriya enjoyed an undivided loyalty of nearly two and half crore persons as their mother tongue. But a crack has appeared already. A serious movement is underway among people in western Orissa to call their mother tongue by a different name because the speech is different from Oriya. Thus, the Oriya solidarity bond which bound Oriyas together will now be divided. In the process it will lose half of its population and its territory. This alienation of nearly half of its population may lead to its total dissolution. Linguistically, Oriya is way behind the other major languages of India. Instead of growing out of its childhood fixation, it is still tied to the apron strings of Sanskrit. A small example will suffice. One might have noted that the value of currency notes are given on the body of the notes in different scheduled languages including Oriya. Although, all other languages give this value in their own language, the Oriya version reads as 'eka sata tanka', for 'one hundred rupees' when it could have given 'Sahe Tanka'. This is not as trivial as it sounds. Such lapses grossly undermine the linguistic autonomy of the language, which exists not in the language structure alone but in the minds of its millions of speaker. In regards to the sociological attainments of the language, great importance should be given on primary education, because it is only in this level that a child's first associations are formed with its mother tongue. But, with the English medium schools, where the child's mother tongue is of no consequence, a whole generation of students is being born who are deficient in Oriya, to say the least. The alienation starts from the very beginning. Similar is the case with thousands of Oriya children who are growing either outside the state or the country, They will be permanently lost to the Oriya society unless necessary steps are taken now to make them at least literate in Oriya. While all other language groups are doing this Oriya is doing nothing. The second aspect of language development is the literature. Literature of the language is of two kinds - narrative and non-narrative. It is the non-narrative prose literature

which brings information to the society. But the Oriya language is almost obsessed with narrative literature which has limited value for the society. Narrative literature, like poetry and fiction, only stirs the imagination of a reader. It has almost no contribution to the realm of information. Therefore, we will not be surprised at all if another Rabindranath Tagore is born to the Oriya language, but there is little chance of a Bertrand Russell, Marx or a Freud being born to this language. The best boys of our present day society are "dreamers" and not "thinkers". This is a sad state of affairs. Finally, there is juridical aspect of the language. We have already said that the Oriya language is one of the few

languages of India which has necessary political status but it has not been able to stand up to it. Oriya was until three years ago one of the privileged 15 languages known as scheduled languages. But this list is no longer a closed list. Already three more have been added to it, and others will follow. Taking advantage of this status, other languages of India have made spectacular progress. In the case of Oriya, a beginning is yet to be made. At the moment the language is almost endangered. To put it back on its feet it would require all our expertise, resources, emotions, initiative and patriotism, not necessarily in that order.



ODISSI MUSIC

Upendra K. Das

The Odissi music is quite a broad term as it encompasses both the traditional and the classical. In the following we will briefly discuss both the styles of singing which are very popular throughout Orissa.

Shrutis

The Odissi tradition accepts 22 *shrutis* in an octave but their names differ from those mentioned in the *Natyashastra*. Some of these have been shown below:

Jati, Grama and Murchhana

As late as 18th century, the tradition of music in Orissa (for the sake of convenience we shall call it the Odissi music) followed the ancient practice of *Jati* singing under the *Grama-Murchhana* classification system. This is because many ragas were derived from *Jatis* or *Gramas*. In the *Jati* system, the name of the tonic was *graha* and the dominant note was *ansa*. 'Sa' was not always the tonic. Ragas born of *Jatis* became popular in Orissa. There are three types of *gramas*: *Shadaja*, *Madhyam*, and *Gandhar*. Even if this system of music was eclipsed in both North and South India, it remained popular in Orissa. The tradition in Odissi music describes ragas as born of *Jatis* having characteristics such as *Graha* (initial note, the tonic), *Ansa* (the dominant note), *Nyasa* (note of rest), and *Apanyasa*. The description of ragas found in Odissi music are very similar to those in *Sangeeta Ratnakar* which are still practiced today, to some extent, in Karnatic music. Thus the Odissi treatises had substantial affinity with Karnatic system of music. Other major treatises on Odissi music are *Sangeeta Kaumudi*, *Sangeeta Mukhabali*, *Sangeeta Narayana*, *Sangeeta Kalpalata*, and *Natya Manorama*.

Murchhana System

The names of the *murchhanas* as given in the two treatises *Sangeetas Narayan* and *Natya Manorama* have different names than those given in the *Natyashastra* of Bharata. The *murchhanas* under the *Shadaja grama* followed in the Odissi tradition are as follows:

1. *Lalita*, 2. *Madhyama*, 3. *Chitra*, 4. *Rohini*,
5. *Matangaja*, 6. *Soubhira*, 7. *Shadajamadhyam*.

The names of the *murchhanas* under other two *gramas*, that is, *Madhyam* and *Gandhar*, also bear no similarity with those mentioned by Bharata.

Odissi

Natyashastra

1. <i>Nandi</i>	<i>Tivra</i>	1st shruti
2. <i>Vichitra</i>	<i>Chandovati</i>	4th shruti
3. <i>Chandanika</i>	<i>Ratika</i>	7th shruti
4. <i>Mala</i>	<i>Krodha</i>	9th shruti
5. <i>Maitreyi</i>	<i>Marjani</i>	13th shruti
6. <i>Shangiravya</i>	<i>Alapini</i>	17th shruti
7. <i>Rasa</i>	<i>Ramya</i>	20th shruti
8. <i>Madhukari</i>	<i>Kshovini</i>	22nd shruti

Let us now examine the two ragas, *Shri* and *Vasanta*, used in Odissi Music.

Raga Shri

Sangeeta Narayana defines it as a raga of the *sampoorna* variety, using all the seven notes of the octave. The *jati*, *nyasa* (note of rest), *graha* (the initial note, the tonic), and *ansa* (the dominant note) of raga *Shri* is *Shadaja*. It uses *pancham* infrequently (*swalpa pancham*) and its songs express love or heroism. In conformity with the tradition, it is *sampoorna* with *Ga* and *Ni* flat, *Sa* as both *vadi* and *nyasa* and *ma* - *sambadi*. Infrequent use of *pa* brings it, at times, closer to *Bageshri* and *Kafi* of Hindustani music. Karnatic music is not so far away from the Odissi tradition since in practice it groups even now the raga *Shri* under *Kharaharpriya Mela*. *Shri* raga has now become rare in Odissi music.

Raga Vasanta

One finds that the Odissi music has drifted away from the traditional singing of raga *Vasanta*. At present the raga is more often rendered with both *re* and *dha* flat resembling more or less the style of Karnatic music. Many musicians, besides using these two notes flat, employ both sharp and flat *ma*, in a way similar to the *Vasanta* of Hindustani music. Raga *Vasanta* is born of *Shadajamadhyamika jati* and

the note *shadaja* is its *nyasa*, *graha* and *ansa*. It is sung anytime during the spring season. According to *Sangeeta Ratnakara*, *Vasanta* is a *raganga* born of *Hindol* which belongs to the *Kaishika jati*. *Shadajamadhyamika jati* belongs to the *Matsari krita murchhana* which in Odissi tradition is called as *Matangaja*. *Gitagovinda* of *Jayadev* uses raga *Vasanta* quite extensively in many of its composition.

Traditional Singing

The traditional singing of Odissi music is so sweet that it is on the lips of musicians, music lovers and the common man of Orissa on occasions when community gathers together and also when individual travellers make journey to their destinations. The myriad portrayal of love life of Krishna and Radha is almost always the theme of Odissi songs, and sung with gusto and great enthusiasm.

Poets Banamali, Upendra Bhanja and Gopalkrushna are the most popular writers, whose compositions form the foundations on which the entire edifice of Odissi music has been built. Simple, soft poems of Banamali on the love episodes of Radha and Krishna are so enchanting that they are imprinted in the mind once they are heard.

Let us go back in time five thousand years when the sacred *Yamuna* river flowing near *Vrindavan* saw on its banks the unforgettable playful dalliance between Radha and Krishna. The love, the separation and days of sadness all combined to form a passionate love story. Those were the days when water had to be brought from river *Yamuna* to meet the household necessities. In what? ... in *Matki*, *Matka*, *Garar*. The clay pots filled in water, while being brought by the Gopis on their heads were invariably broken by stones thrown by Krishna and mother *Yasoda* had to listen to many a complaints made by the Gopis about Krishna's '*natkhat pan*' -- naughty behaviour. Poets have gone rapturous over his handsome face and inimitable flute playing.

Innumerable songs have been written on the love story of Radha and Krishna in various languages of India. Indian classical music is not far behind in adopting and extolling these compositions in various ragas. For example the following composition --- "*Lapak jhapaka pakad lun na baiyan mori, baiyan mori,*

churiyan tori" or "*Jamuna kinare kanha mangata hai jobana dan, phodi ayee mataki main, bhagi ayee chori ...*" are mostly rendered in raga *Durga* or in other ragas.

Let us now examine some poems of poet Banamali: "*Bata chhada suhata nagara Jamuna jibi nira aniki*." In this composition Radha is pleading with Krishna to let her go to Yamuna to fetch water. Yet another beautiful composition "*Prana sanginire kali mun ki laje budili*" -- O dear friend, what a shame in which I was immersed yesterday." And also, a poor devotee tells the Lord of his sorrows "*Dinabandhu daitari dukha na gala mohari...*" -- O' friend of the poor, O' enemy of the demons, my sorrows are still there, I am not yet free from the sorrows.

Chhanda style of singing

The Odissi has also a fascinating and strong oral tradition in the *chhanda* style of singing which is basically a metrical scheme used in Oriya poetry, especially in the *Kavya* literature. There are about hundred different *chhandas* each with a fixed metrical scheme, and they are primarily meant to be sung. Many *chhandas* are named after *ragas*. In a few *chhandas* such as *Ashadhasuklabani*, raga is not mentioned. However, they are sung in a fixed traditional style. Some *chhandas* have a simple arrangement of syllables in their metrical scheme. For instance, in the *chhanda* called *Bangalashri* (which according to Sangeeta Narayana is a mixed raga) has two lines in each stanza and each line has 6+6+8 arrangement of syllables or beats. The metrical scheme may, however, be quite complicated as in the case of *raga Chokhi*. Many a beautiful poems have been written in this *chhanda*.

Odissi Music and Dance

Odissi music and Odissi dance compliment each other and become a audio-visual treat. Odissi is a graceful dance of delight. It is a lyrical dance form. The Odissi music of Upendra Bhanja, Gopalkrushna and Banamali provide the beautiful lyrics and appropriate raga compositions. Stripped of its lyrics and the ragas, Odissi dance is devoid of the grace and charm which puts it in a class by itself among the Indian dance forms.

BUILDERS OF MODERN ORISSA THE SATYABADI GROUP

Bauri Bandhu Kar

In the early part of the twentieth century the Satyabadi group played a vital role in the building of modern Orissa. With the dream of serving the people of Orissa, this group established a school called the *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya*. Five young idealists in this group were Gopabandhu Das, Neelakantha Das, Godavarish Mishra, Krupasindhu Misra and Acharya Harihar. The *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya* was not a traditional school. It was a school of high order that fought against blind beliefs and age old superstitions. It aimed at producing men of brilliant character, equipped with the qualities to render selfless service to the mankind and the country.

The founder of the *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya* was Gopabandhu Das. The school opened on August 12, 1909, long before Mahatma Gandhi thought of his basic education in *Sevagram*, Wardha and Rabindranath Tagore conceived his *Shantiniketan*. Since 1880, a similar school had been operating in Maharashtra, where famous statesmen like Bishnukrushna Chiplukar, Balgangadhar Tilak, Aagarkar, Baman Sivaram Apte and Basudev Sastrikhare were teachers. Gopabandhu might have been influenced by this institution to establish his *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya*.

The method of education at *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya* was based on Indian traditions. It taught students the importance of discipline, plain living and high thinking through an ashrama lifestyle. Relations between teachers and students were cordial. The teachers assumed roles as friends, philosophers and guides for the students. The teachers were always ready to help the students. Teachers and students stayed on the same campus. Practices such as bathing before sunrise, physical exercise, morning and evening prayer, social work, participation in various functions of the day were carefully insisted upon the students. Literary discussions and social services were encouraged. There were literary competitions and seminars every week on history and culture. The students were encouraged to make trips to several historical places on excursions and study tours during the year. With all these, students also enjoyed sufficient liberty and freedom. It was really the cultural center of Orissa at that time.

In addition to theoretical education, *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya* emphasized technical training. Spinning, weaving, carpentry, and agriculture were the main technical subjects. For spinning, Seth Jamunlal Bajaj had contributed one hundred charkhas to the institution. For training in agriculture about twenty five acres of land had been acquired. Spinning was compulsory for all students studying at the school. Teachers were also actively engaged in spinning and weaving khadis of different varieties. Social services, social reform activities and relief projects were part of the technical training.

The novel feature which this school possessed and with which it had favorably impressed the distinguished visitors, was its open air system. Great people like Mahatma Gandhi, Vice-Chancellor Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, and British government officers expressed admiration for the school. Gandhiji published his observations about this school in *Young India* on April 13, 1921. He wrote: "*Pandit Gopabandhu has an open air school at Sakhigopal, twelve miles this side of Puri. It is a grove school. It is worthy of a visit. I passed a most delightful day in the midst of the boys and their teachers. It is a serious experiment in open air teaching. Some of the boys are powerful athletes.*" Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, the then Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University wrote about the school, "*I have visited the Satyabadi School with great interest. The school possesses many remarkable features. It is managed by well-educated Oriyas, who have realized the great truth that spread of education amongst their people can be effected on the surest and soundest lines by persons, who are prepared to make a great sacrifice. . . . The promoters of this school have set a laudable example to the contrary. Their ideals are high; they understand the value of discipline and culture - mental, moral and physical; the results of their labor is likely to be great, for the very reason that the beginnings are so humble, one cannot but wish that every village in Bengal should possess a genuine place of instruction like Satyabadi School.*"

The Lieutenant Governor of Bihar and Orissa, Sir Edward A. Gait, on April 27, 1917, wrote about his visit to this school. "*I was greatly impressed by the devotion shown to their work by the masters, most of whom are devoting their lives to the school, and receive*

nothing beyond their bare maintenance in return for their services. I was also greatly impressed by the system of teaching in the open air, instead of crowded classrooms. It is to be hoped that the boys will thus learn to appreciate the advantages of fresh air, and will do their best to discourage amongst their relatives the pernicious practice of shutting out air from their houses, which is at present so common and which, in many parts, is causing terrible spread of tubercular diseases. . . . Other commendable features of this school are the instruction in Carpentry, the combined Bank and Store, and the general atmosphere of simplicity and good fellowship."

Mr. J.G. Jennings, then Director of Public Instruction, wrote about his visit to the school, "*I found the classes being held under the trees in the garden adjoining the school grounds. The garden is extremely beautiful, and the trees shady. During the cool weather this open air teaching has much to be said in its favor.*"

The teachers of *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya* were unique in their own way. The entire staff, under the inspiring leadership of Pandit Gopabandhu, was devoted to reconstructing the nation through basic education and literature. For the cultural development of the Oriyas, he started a monthly magazine, *The Satyabadi* (1915), and a weekly magazine and newspaper, *The Samaja* (4/10/1919). Today, *The Samaja* is the most popular daily newspaper in Orissa. Gopabandhu had a tremendous impact on literature dealing with nationalism and social reform. He had intense feelings for his motherland and its poor people. For the sake of the country, he was ever ready to sacrifice his life. His literary creations carried a special message for the down-trodden people of Orissa. He was a true patriot of the country. He wrote about his country and his countrymen in his famous book, *Bandira Atma Katha*. His love for the country was really commendable. His great lines towards attainment of Swaraj was like this:

*"Let my body mingle with this soil
Let my countrymen tread on it
Let the cavities on the road to Swaraj
Be leveled with my flesh and bones.
Let men move even an inch to freedom
At the cost of my life."*

He was the uncrowned king of Orissa and popularly known as *Utkalmoni*. He had a special love for the

poor people and he gave his all to his people.

Gopabandhu's close associate, Pandit Nilakantha Das, was a brilliant teacher of *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya*. He joined the faculty in 1911. He was a renowned writer, an erudite scholar, an exceptional leader, a great orator, a famous journalist, and a true patriot. Even his arch political rival, Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab, praised him. He wrote, "Pandit Nilakantha was the most powerful personality in Orissa politics, literature and culture in his time. It is a wonder that the personality of Pandit Nilakantha has not been as radiant in history as it should have been. But there is no doubt that it will be so one day or other." Pandit Nilakantha Das was a powerful prose writer and a poet of rich sensibility. His scholarship was evident in his interpretations and commentary on *Srimad Bhagavat Gita*. His *Arya Jiban* and his famous epic *Konarke* gained wide popularity among the Oriya readers. His style is ceremonious and sophisticated.

As a political leader, Pandit Nilakantha Das believed in the value based politics. He was the member of Orissa legislative assembly and he was the speaker of Orissa. As speaker, he created a new convention. According to him, "The Speaker never dies even when a Ministry falls, the Speaker continues in his office till a new Speaker is elected." He was also the Pro-Chancellor of Utkal University. He fought for the establishment of the Utkal University and wrote several editorials in his Journal, *Nababharata*. Pandit Nilakantha was associated with several cultural activities in Orissa till his death. He was called *Utkal Guru* by the people of Orissa.

Pandit Godabarish Misra was an excellent English teacher of *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya*. Like an Englishman, he taught English. He also spoke English just like an Englishman. He was a learned man. He could have joined any prestigious University as a professor. Instead, he chose to join *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya* with an honorarium of Rs. 10 per month. In the year 1919 he left *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalaya* and proceeded to Singhbhum to lead the Oriya movement there. Later, he joined the freedom movement and was for sometime the Education Minister of Orissa. Under his stewardship, the Utkal University was established in the year 1943. He took keen interest in the unification of Oriya speaking tracts.

Godabarish was a poet and novelist of high order in Oriya literature. His poems were short, simple, lyrical, and heart touching. A sense of liberal humanism was found in his poetry. He wrote four novels, *Ghatantara*, *Abhagini*, *Athara Saha Satara* and *Nirbasita*. His historical novel, *Athara Saha Satara*, based on the theme of *Paika* Rebellion gained wide popularity among the readers.

Among the teachers of the *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalyaya*, Sri Krupasindhu Misra was a teacher of high repute. He taught history, Oriya and geography to the students. He was for sometime in Bahadagoda, Singbhum, to organize the Oriya Movement. He also participated in the non-cooperation movement at the call of Gopabandhu.

Krupasindhu Misra was a famous historian and prose writer. He was extraordinarily talented in history. His books were *Barabati Durga*, *Konarka* and *Utkal Itihasa*. He wrote a series of essays in the famous journals *Utkal Sahitya* and *Mukura*. He wrote an excellent essay about *Utkal Sammilani*. He died only at the age of forty in 1926. Acharya Harihar was a brilliant academician and a man of high moral character. As a text book writer he was well-reputed. His *Child's Easy First Grammar* was an excellent book on English Grammar. He translated *Srimad Bhagavat Gita* and *Chhandogya Upanishad* into Oriya. At the

direction of Pandit Gopabandhu Das, he devoted his time to the non-cooperation movement.

After the non-cooperation movement enrollment at *Satyabadi Vana Vidyalyaya* declined. After the death of Pandit Gopabandhu Das in 1928, the *Satyabadi* endeavor came to an end. In a short span of time (1909-1928) this institution contributed a great deal to the cause of nationalism. The school was not only an educational institution but also a center for Oriya nationalism. The teachers and the students of *Satyabadi* were great patriots. They identified themselves with the glories of great Indian culture and heritage and dreamed of a bright future for Orissa.

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Without music life will be a mistake."

Friedrich Nietzsche

GENESIS OF ORIYA NATIONALISM

Prabodh K. Mishra

The occupation of Orissa by the East India Company in October 1803 marked a change from the Medieval to Modern period of history. Though Orissa remained politically dismembered and was ruled by three different provincial governments (Bengal, Madras, and the Central Provinces) the introduction of British rules and regulations and the activities of the Christian Missionaries were harbingers of socio-political changes. The inclusion of nuclear Orissa (Balasore, Cuttack, and Puri) in Bengal made available the educational and employment opportunities offered by Calcutta, notwithstanding the problem of communication. The missionaries, however, deserve credit for establishing educational institutions and the printing press in the Orissa Division and pioneering the effort to provide western education and social reform. What Bengal had experienced in the first half of the 19th century in the form of a renaissance under the aegis of the Young Bengal Movement could be witnessed in Orissa in the second half of the said century. Two events made this transformation possible, The Great Famine of 1866 and the emergence of an elite class.

Although the famine of 1866 took a heavy toll of human life by causing the death of one million people in Orissa Division, the natural calamity was a great social leveler. The government and the Oriya-speaking people could never be the same as they had been before 1866. The impact of the catastrophe shook the sleeping conscience of an apathetic government. As a result, the government sought to improve social welfare through the establishment of vernacular press, college, medical and engineering schools, and irrigation facilities. If T.E. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner, was responsible for the heavy loss of human lives, he atoned for his sins by taking steps to modernize Orissa. The publication of *Utkal Dipika* under the editorship of Gourishankar Roy heralded the beginning of a new era of freedom of expression, criticism of the government policies, and projection of the problems faced by the Oriya-speaking people. The weekly Oriya newspaper not only disseminated current information, but also successfully articulated public opinion on a variety of issues.

Ravenshaw's social welfare policies promoted the

spread of education. The multiplication of schools increased the number of educated persons who formed a new elite class with a progressive outlook. They formed numerous socio-cultural associations, held public meetings and debates, and submitted representation and memorials to the government demanding redressal of grievances. Their different social outlook brought a welcome change. The advent of the Brahmo movement, coupled with the Mahima movement, sponsored a new religious attitude which abhorred casteism, superstition, idol worship and social discrimination. A spate of socio-religious reform movements began to encroach on the existing social order. Government policies reflected the rising sentiments as efforts were made to end the heinous customs of infanticide and human sacrifice.

The political dismemberment of the Oriya speaking people was a great impediment to their linguistic and cultural homogeneity. In the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts, a language agitation had raised its head, stirring public opinion as never before. The chauvinism of the Bengalis in Orissa Division, Telugus in Ganjam, and Hindi-speaking people in Sambalpur generated a counter force in the form of a fierce language agitation for the safety of Oriya language and culture. This language agitation dominated the public life in the Oriya-speaking tracts culminating in the demand for amalgamation under one administration. This movement for safeguarding Oriya language and culture very soon turned in to a political demand for a separate identity.

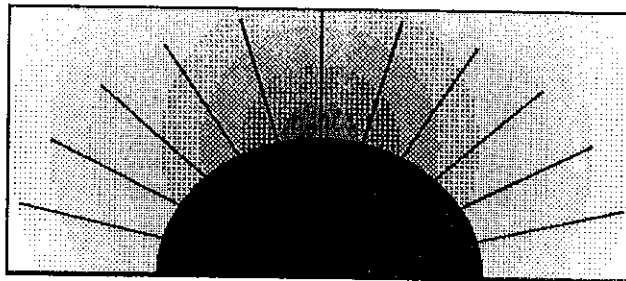
The advent of Madhusudan Das in the public life of Orissa and the growth of Oriya nationalism were simultaneous events. Madhusudan's educational background, social outlook, and sensitive mind made him the undisputed leader of the Oriya-speaking people. As secretary of the Orissa Association in 1882 and 1885 he presented memoranda to the visiting Lieutenant Governors, drawing the latter's attention to the problems of his countrymen. In 1890, he met Lord Curzon to impress upon the Viceroy the necessity of bringing together the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts under Bengal. He also the government to reinstate Oriya as the official language of Sambalpur. The results were the Risley

Circular of 1903 and amalgamation of Sambalpur with Orissa Division in 1905. Both events served as shots in the arm for Oriya nationalism; but there was an urgent need for an organization to sustain the political struggle for a separate identity.

The establishment of the Utkal Union Conference in 1903 was a bold step taken by Madhusudan to unite the scattered people at least once a year on a common platform to think and act alike. His efforts bore fruit when the Utkal Union Conference led the Oriya-speaking people to achieve their goal by following the moderate policy of 'Protest, Petition, and Prayer.' He provided Oriya nationalism with leadership, a purpose and program orientation. The programme included growth in education, modernization of agriculture, industrialization, improvement of roads and communication, means of livelihood for labor class people and amalgamation of the dismembered tracts. He personified the hopes and aspirations of Oriya nationalism. Although there was dissension in the rank and file, the Utkal Union Conference, under Madhusudan's leadership, set the course of political life in Orissa by articulating a vigorous public opinion.

Oriya nationalism was a product of the cumulative effects of socio-political error and a lack of administrative foresight. Series of events in the second half of the 19th century generated a strong feeling of discontent and alienation. The government's inadvertent policy to introduce Bengali textbooks and Bengali as a medium of instruction in the Orissa Division faced serious consequences. In

the Ganjam area, instruction in the schools was in Telugu because the teachers were recruited from that community. In Sambalpur, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces by Notification No. 237 dated January 15, 1895, substituted Hindi in place of Oriya as the official language in the district. Subsequently, he abolished 82 Oriya primary schools. The above steps had an enervating influence on the mental faculties of the Oriya children. As increasing numbers of Oriya students dropped out of schools, their conscious parents realized that the government's policy would not only deprive them of employment prospect of but also perpetuate their backwardness. The threat against language and culture was likely to obliterate the distinct identity of the Oriya-speaking people. Notwithstanding their political dismemberment, the Oriya movement spontaneously raised its head in the three major scattered Oriya-speaking tracts where the Oryas were a linguistic minority. The strident voice of the Oriya vernacular press reverberated the sky, stirring social tension. It dominated the thought process of the Oriya elite, though quite small in number. The subsequent move to unify the Oriya-speaking people was essentially a result of a language crisis which generated race consciousness. This strong race consciousness, coupled with a sense of pride in history and culture, gave birth to Oriya nationalism. Gourishankar Roy and Madhusudan Das of Cuttack, William Mohanty and Janardan Das of Ganjam, Nilamani Vidyaratna and Dharanidhar Mishra of Sambalpur were the founders of Oriya nationalism.



ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ବିକାଶରେ ଅନ୍ତରାୟ

ବିଜୟ ପ୍ରସାଦ ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଭାଷାର ବିକାଶର କଣ କଣ ଅନ୍ତରାୟ ଦେଖାଦେଇପାରେ, ସେ କଥା ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଗୋଟିଏ ବିକଶିତ ଭାଷା କହିଲେ କଣ ବୁଝାଯାଏ, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ଧାରଣା ଥିବା ଉଚିତ । ଅଧିକାଂଶଙ୍କର ଧାରଣା ଯେଉଁ ଭାଷାରେ ଉନ୍ନତ ଧରଣର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଲେଖା ହୋଇଛି, ତାହା ଗୋଟିଏ ଉନ୍ନତ ଭାଷା । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଗୋଟିଏ ଉନ୍ନତ ଭାଷା, କାରଣ ଏହି ଭାଷାରେ ସେକ୍ସପିଅର, ଶେଲି, ବାଇରନ୍ ଆଦି ସାହିତ୍ୟ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ସେହି ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବି ଗୋଟିଏ ଉନ୍ନତ ଭାଷା, କାରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ସାରଳା ଦାସ, ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ରଭଞ୍ଜ ଓ ଫକୀରମୋହନ ଅମର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ରଚନା କରିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ କଥାଟି ଆଂଶିକଭାବେ ସତ୍ୟ । କେବେଳେ ଉନ୍ନତ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ରଚନା ଦ୍ଵାରା ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାର ସର୍ବାଙ୍ଗୀଣ ଉନ୍ନତି ସାଧିତ ହୋଇ ନଥାଏ । ଗୋଟିଏ ଆଧୁନିକ ସମାଜର ପ୍ରୟୋଜନ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଏହା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ନୁହେଁ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଏହାର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦିଗଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକାଧାରରେ ଉନ୍ନତ ହୋଇଥିବା ଉଚିତ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ଵରୂପ, ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାରେ ବହୁ ଉନ୍ନତ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ରଚିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ତଥାପି ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଏହା ଗୋଟିଏ ମୃତ ଭାଷା । ତେଣୁ ଜୀବନୀଶକ୍ତି ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ସଂସ୍କୃତକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ, ବଙ୍ଗଳା, ତାମିଲ, ହିନ୍ଦୀ ବା ମରାଠୀର ସମକକ୍ଷ ଭାବେ ଧରାଯାଇ ପାରିବନାହିଁ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ, ବଙ୍ଗଳା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ସମାଜର ଭାଷା ଓ କୋଟି କୋଟି ଲୋକଙ୍କର ମାତୃଭାଷା, ଯେଉଁ ଭାଷାକୁ ସେମାନେ ଏକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସମାଜରୁ ଶିଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏହା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ସାମାଜିକ ଅବଦାନ, ଯାହା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ଵ, ବିବେକ ଓ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଗଠିତ ହୋଇଛି । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇଛି ଆତ୍ମ-ପରିଚୟ ଓ ଜାତୀୟତା । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସମଗ୍ର ପୃଥିବୀକୁ ଦୁଇଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରିଛି : ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ - ଯାହା ସେ ନିଜେ ଓ ‘ଅଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ - ଯାହା ସେ ନିଜେ ନୁହେଁ । ଯେତେବେଳେ ଜଣେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ନିଜର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଉଛି ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ ବୋଲି, ସେ ଏକାଧାରରେ ନିଜର ସମାଜ, ଭାଷା, ଜାତୀୟତା, କଳା, ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ଐତିହ୍ୟର ପ୍ରତୀକ ଓ ଦାୟାଦ୍ଵାରୀ ।

ସେ ହେଉଛି ‘ଆମେ’ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତେ ‘ସେମାନେ’ । ଏହି ମୌଳିକ ବିରୋଧର ଅଭାବରେ ସଂସ୍କୃତକୁ ଏକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସମାଜର ଭାଷା ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଇ ପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ଏହି ଭାଷାର ବନ୍ଧା ଥାଇପାରନ୍ତି, କିନ୍ତୁ ସମାଜ ନାହିଁ । ତେଣୁ କେବଳ ଉନ୍ନତ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଦୃଢ଼ ଦେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାର ବିକାଶକୁ ସାମ୍ପ୍ରତିକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ବିଚାର କରାଯାଇ ପାରିବ ନାହିଁ ।

ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାର ବିକାଶକୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ କରିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ତାରୋଚ୍ଚି ଦିଗରୁ ଆମକୁ ବିଚାର କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ । ସେ ଦିଗଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହେଲେ- ଏହାର ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟିକ (demographic) ବଳ, ଏହାର ଭାଷାତାତ୍ତ୍ଵିକ (linguistic) ଗଠନ, ଏହାର ସମାଜତାତ୍ତ୍ଵିକ (sociological) ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ଓ ଏହାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାଗତ (juridical) ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା । ଭାଷାର ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଏ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଟି ଅଙ୍ଗର ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ଅଛି ।

ପ୍ରଥମେ ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟିକ ଦିଗଟିକୁ ନିଆଯାଇ, ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ କେତେ ସଂଖ୍ୟିକ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଏହା ମାତୃଭାଷା ଓ ଏହା ଏକ ବର୍ଦ୍ଧିଷ୍ଣୁ ଭାଷା କି ନୁହେଁ । ଏହି ଦୁଇଟି ବିଷୟ ଆମକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାର ଜୀବନୀଶକ୍ତିର ସୂଚନା ଦେଇଥାଏ । ଯେଉଁ ଭାଷାକୁ ଲୋକେ ମାତୃଭାଷା ରୂପେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ, ଯଥା :- ସଂସ୍କୃତ, ତାହା ଗୋଟିଏ ମୃତ ଭାଷା । ସେହିପରି ଯେଉଁ ଭାଷାର ଭାଷାଭାଷୀଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟାର ବୃଦ୍ଧି ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ କ୍ରମବର୍ଦ୍ଧିଷ୍ଣୁ ନୁହେଁ ବା ହ୍ରାସ ପାଉଥିବାର ଦେଖାଯାଏ, ତାହା ଏକ କ୍ଷୟିଷ୍ଣୁ ଭାଷା । ଭାରତର ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟା ଯଦିଓ ଦ୍ରୁତ ଗତିରେ ବଢ଼ିବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେହି ଅନୁପାତରେ ବଢ଼ିବାର କଥା, କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ଭାଷା ସେହି ଅନୁପାତରେ ବଢୁନାହାନ୍ତି ବା କ୍ରମଶଃ ହ୍ରାସ ପାଇବାରେ ଲାଗିଛନ୍ତି । ଭାରତରେ ଏହି କ୍ଷୟିଷ୍ଣୁ ଭାଷାର ଅଭାବ ନାହିଁ, ଏପରିକି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବି ନାହିଁ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅନେକଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଭାଷା ଅଛନ୍ତି, ଯେଉଁଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ କ୍ରମାଗତ ଭାବେ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀଙ୍କର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ହ୍ରାସ ପାଇବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି । ଏପରିକି ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଭାଷାଭାଷୀ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଇ ବା

ତିନି ହଜାରରେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ଅବସ୍ଥା ଆଉ କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ଏହିପରି ଭାବେ ଚାଲିଲେ, ଏହି ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଲୋପ ପାଇଯିବାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଅଛି । ଭାରତବର୍ଷ ପରି ଗୋଟିଏ ଦେଶରେ, ଯେଉଁ ଦୁଇଶତାଧିକ ଛୋଟ ବଡ଼ ଭାଷା ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି, ସ୍ବାଧୀନତା ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ପରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ବଚ୍ଛନ୍ଦ ଜୀବନରେ ବିରାଟ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଦେଖାଦେଇଛି । ପ୍ରକୃତିର କୋଳରେ ସବୁ ଜୀବଜନ୍ତୁଙ୍କର ବଞ୍ଚଣା ପାଇଁ ଯେପରି ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ପରିବେଶ ରହିଛି, ଆଉ ସେହି ପରିବେଶରେ ଯଦି ବିକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଦେଖାଦିଏ, ତାହାହେଲେ କିଛି ଜୀବଜନ୍ତୁଙ୍କର ଲୋପପାଇଯିବାର ଯେପରି ଆଶଙ୍କା ଦେଖାଦେଇଥାଏ, ସେହିପରି ଭାଷାପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକ ପରିବେଶ ରହିଛି । ପ୍ରକୃତିରେ ଯେପରି ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ହିଂସ୍ର ଜନ୍ତୁ, ଯଥା:- ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତ ଜୀବଜନ୍ତୁଙ୍କର ଧୂସର କାରଣ ହୋଇପାରେ, ସେହିପରି ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷା ଯଦି ରାଜନୈତିକ ବା ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କାରଣରୁ ହଠାତ୍ ଆଶାତୀତ ପରାକ୍ରମ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରେ, ଏହା ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ସ୍ଥାନଚ୍ୟୁତ କରିପାରେ, ଯାହା ଫଳରେ ସେମାନେ ବିପନ୍ନ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଏଇ ବିଗତ କେଜ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ହିନ୍ଦୀଭାଷା ହଠାତ୍ ରାଜନୈତିକ ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକତା ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରି ଭାରତର ମାନଚିତ୍ରରୁ ବହୁ ଭାଷାଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ଥାନଚ୍ୟୁତ କରିଛି । ୧୯୬୧ ମସିହାର ଜନଗଣନା ଅନୁସାରେ ଏହା ଯଦିଓ ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ଯୋଡ଼ିଏ ବା ତିନୋଟି ପ୍ରଦେଶର ଭାଷା ଥିଲା, ଯଥା:- ଉତ୍ତର ପ୍ରଦେଶ, ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦେଶ, ଓ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ, ଏବଂ ଭାରତ ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟାର ମାତ୍ର ଶତକଡ଼ା ପଚାଶ ଭାଗ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଭାଷା ଥିଲା, ୧୯୮୧ ଜନଗଣନା ସୁଦ୍ଧା, ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ମାତ୍ର କୋଡ଼ିଏ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ଏହା ଭାରତର ପ୍ରାୟ ଚାଳିଶ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇଛି । ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ, ଏହା ମାତ୍ର ୧୨କୋଟି ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଭାଷାରୁ ୧୯୮୧ ରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ୧୮କୋଟି ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭାଷା ହୋଇଛି । ସେହି ସମୟ ଭିତରେ, ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ୧୯୬୧ରୁ ୮୧ ଭିତରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ବୃଦ୍ଧି ହେଉଛି ଦେଢ଼ କୋଟିରୁ ଦୁଇ କୋଟି ପଚାଶ ଲକ୍ଷ ମାତ୍ର । ହିନ୍ଦୀର ଏହି ଆଶାତୀତ ଜନସାଂଖ୍ୟିକ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ କାରଣରୁ ହୋଇନାହିଁ, କାରଣ ଭାଷାର ସ୍ବାଭାବିକ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମନ୍ଦର, ଯାହା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଭାରତର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ମୁଖ୍ୟଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ବୃଦ୍ଧିର ହାରରୁ କଳନା କରାଯାଇପାରେ । ସେ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ, ହିନ୍ଦୀରେ ଏହି ଅସ୍ବାଭାବିକ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ଭାଷାତାତ୍ତ୍ବିକ ପ୍ରପଞ୍ଚତା ବଳରେ ଖାଲି ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇନାହିଁ, ସଫଳ ହୋଇଛି

ମଧ୍ୟ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ହିନ୍ଦୀ ଖାଲି ଉତ୍ତରପ୍ରଦେଶ, ମଧ୍ୟପ୍ରଦେଶ ଓ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀର ଭାଷାନୁହେଁ - ଏହା ବିହାର, ରାଜସ୍ଥାନ, ହରିୟାନା ଓ ହିମାଚଳ ପ୍ରଦେଶକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ କବଳିତ କରିଛି ଓ ସମଗ୍ର ଦେଶର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରଦେଶରୁ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ମାତୃଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ, ଯଥା: ବିହାରର ମୈଥଳୀ, ଭୋଜପୁରୀ ଆଦି, ରାଜସ୍ଥାନର ମାରଘାଡୀ, ମେଘାଡୀ ଆଦି, ହରିୟାନାର ବାଙ୍ଗରୁ, ହିମାଚଳ ପ୍ରଦେଶର ଚନ୍ଦେଆଲା, ପାହାଡ଼ି ଆଦି, ଉତ୍ତର ପ୍ରଦେଶର ଗଡ଼ଘାଲା, କୁମାଓନୀ ଆଦି, ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର ପ୍ରଦେଶର ବନ୍ଦୁଜାରୀ, ସୁଗାଲି ଆଦି, ଏପରିକି ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଲରିଆକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆତ୍ମସାତ କରିଛି । ଏହି ମାରାତ୍ମକ ଭାଷାତାତ୍ତ୍ବିକ ପଦ୍ଧତିକୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କରି ହିନ୍ଦୀ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଯେଉଁ ଆତଙ୍କ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଛି, ତା'ର ଏକ କଳକ ଉଦାହରଣ ଗୁଜୁରାଟୀର ବରେଣ୍ୟ ଲେଖକ ସୁରେଶ ଜୋଷୀ ଓ ସଲ୍ମାନ ରୁଖ୍‌ଦୀଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଏକ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଛି । ରୁଖ୍‌ଦୀ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି ଯେ, ସୁରେଶ ଜୋଷୀଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଭେଟନ୍ତି, ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ କହିଥୁଲେ - ହିନ୍ଦୀରେ ଲେଖିପାରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ଯଦିଓ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଛି, ତଥାପି ହିନ୍ଦୀରେ ନଲେଖି ଗୁଜୁରାଟୀରେ ଲେଖିବାକୁ ସେ ତାଙ୍କର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ବୋଲି ମନେ କରନ୍ତି, କାରଣ ଗୁଜୁରାଟୀ ଭାଷା ଆଜି ବିପନ୍ନ । ଗୁଜୁରାଟୀ ପ୍ରତି ଏ ବିପଦ ଜଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷା ବା ପାଶ୍ଚାତ୍ୟ ସଭ୍ୟତାରୁ ଆସୁନାହିଁ, ଗୁଜୁରାଟୀ ପାଇଁ ଏ ବିପଦ ହେଉଛି ହିନ୍ଦୀ, ଯାହା ତାପରେ ବର୍ଷ କେଜତା ଭିତରେ ଗୁଜୁରାଟୀ ମରିଯାଇପାରେ । ଆଧୁନିକ ସଭ୍ୟତାରେ ଭାଷା ମରିବାର ଅର୍ଥ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ, ଏହା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ଲୋକମୁଖରୁ ଲୋପପାଇଯିବ । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ବି ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଲୋପପାଇନାହିଁ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ପୂଜା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିବା ବେଳେ ବା ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଧର୍ମ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାରେ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୋଚ୍ଚାରଣାଦି କରିଥାଏ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସଂସ୍କୃତର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଏହି ଧର୍ମୀୟ ପରିସରଟି ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ ଆମ ସମାଜରେ ଅନ୍ୟତ୍ର ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୁଏନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ନିଆଯାଉ । କେତୋଟି ବିଶେଷ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆମ ସମାଜରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଯେଉଁ ସାମାଜିକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଅପହଞ୍ଚ, ସେ ହେଲା ଉଚ୍ଚ ନ୍ୟାୟାଳୟ, ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶାସନ, ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷା, ବୃହତ୍ ବ୍ୟବସାୟ, ଆନ୍ତର୍ଦେଶ ବା ଆନ୍ତଃରାଜ୍ୟ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ, ଜତ୍ୟାଦି । ଏ ସବୁ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଜଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷା ଦ୍ବାରା ଅଧିକୃତ । ଅପରପକ୍ଷେ, ମୈଥଳୀ, ମାରଘାଡୀ ପରି କେତେକ ଭାଷା ଏବେ ବି ଲୋକମୁଖରେ ବଞ୍ଚୁଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଭାଷାର

ସମ୍ମାନ ହରାଇଛନ୍ତି, କାରଣ ଏ ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ସାମାଜିକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହିନ୍ଦୀଦ୍ୱାରା ଏପରିଭାବେ କବଳିତ ହୋଇଛି ଯେ, ଏହି ଭାଷାଭାଷୀମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ନିଜ ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପାଇବା ଦୁରୁହ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଛି । ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଦୂରେ ଥାଇ, ଆଧୁନିକ ସମାଜରେ ଏହା ହିଁ ହେଉଛି ଭାଷାର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ, ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ତ ନୁହେଁ ଜୀବନତ୍ୟାଗ । ତେଣୁ ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀଙ୍କର ଦଶବର୍ଷରେ ହାରାହାରି କୋଡିଏ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ବୃଦ୍ଧିକୁ ଭାଷା ବିକାଶର ଏକ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ପ୍ରମାଣ ଭାବେ ଧରି ନେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଏହାର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ କି ନୁହେଁ, ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରିବା ଉଚିତ ।

ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଆଜି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆତ୍ୱ’ କି ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ନୁହେଁ । ଏ ଓଡ଼ିଆତ୍ୱ କଣ ? ଓଡ଼ିଆତ୍ୱର ପ୍ରଥମ ଓ ପ୍ରଧାନ ପ୍ରମାଣ ହେଉଛି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାପ୍ରତି ଆନୁରତ୍ୟ ବା *Language loyalty* । ଏହା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଜ୍ଞାନ ନୁହେଁ, ଏହା ଏକ ପରିଚୟ (*identity*) । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ ଅରାଧ୍ୟ ଜ୍ଞାନ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଆମେ ଇଂରେଜ ହୋଇପାରିବା ନାହିଁ ବା ଫ୍ରେଞ୍ଚି ଭାଷା ବଳରେ ଫ୍ରେଞ୍ଚି । ଭାରତରେ ବି ଜାତୀୟତାର (*ethnicity*) ପରିଚୟ ହେଉଛି ମାତୃଭାଷା । ଏହାର ଅନ୍ୟ କୌଣସି ବିକଳ୍ପ ମାର୍ଗ ନାହିଁ, ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତିମାନଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡିଦେଲେ । ଏହି କୋଡିଏ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କର ସେହି ଜାତୀୟତାରେ ବିଭ୍ରାଟ ଦେଖାଦେଇଛି, କାରଣ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀ ଭାଗ ନିଜର ମାତୃଭାଷାକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୋଲି କହିବାପାଇଁ ନାରାଜ । ଏମାନେ ନିଜ ମାତୃଭାଷାକୁ ‘ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ’ ବୋଲି ନାମିତ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି । ମାତ୍ର କୋଡିଏ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ଏ ପରିଚୟର ଚିହ୍ନବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ କୋଡିଏ ବର୍ଷଭିତରେ ଏହା ପ୍ରାୟ ପଚାଶହଜାର ବା ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଏବଂ ଆଶୁ ପ୍ରତିବିଧାନ କରାନଗଲେ ଏହା ବିଜାତୀୟତାର ବିକଟ ରୂପ ଧାରଣ କରିବା ଅବଶ୍ୟମ୍ଭବ । ଭିନ୍ନ ପରିଚୟର ଅନ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ଯେ ନାହାନ୍ତି ନୁହେଁ, ଯଥା : କୋରାପୁଟର ପରଜା, ବସନ୍ତର ଭୋଥଡା ବା ଶ୍ରୀକାକୁଲମର ରେଲ୍ଲି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ ଓ ଏମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ପ୍ରଧାନ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ଯେ, ଏମାନେ ଅଜ୍ଞାନାତବଶତଃ ଓଡ଼ିଆକୁ ନିଜର ମାତୃଭାଷା ନକହି ଭିନ୍ନ ନାମର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରରୋଚନା ମିଳିଲେ, ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା ମିଳିଲେ ସେମାନେ ସ୍ୱତଃ ନିଜକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷୀ ବୋଲି ପରିଚୟ ଦେବେ ।

ଅପରପକ୍ଷେ, ‘ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ’ ହେଉଛି ଏକ ସଚେଷ୍ଟ ବିଜାତୀୟ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିକୁ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରିବାରେ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଦେଶକୁ ଖଣ୍ଡଖଣ୍ଡ କରିବାରେ ହିଁ ଏହାର ପରିଣତି ।

ସେହିପରି ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ହେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୁସଲମାନ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୁସଲମାନମାନଙ୍କର ମାତୃଭାଷା ଯାହା ହୋଇଥାଉ ନା କାହିଁକି, (ଏବଂ ଆମେ ଜାଣୁ ଯେ ଅଧିକାଂଶ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏହା ନିରୋଳା ଓଡ଼ିଆ), ପରିଚୟ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ସେମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷୀ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନବେଭାର ମୁସଲମାନ ନିଜର ମାତୃଭାଷାକୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଦୁଭାଷା ରୂପେ ଲେଖାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଯାହା ଫଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରତି ଦଶହଜାର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ୧୩୧ ଜଣ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଦୁଭାଷୀ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଏହା ଚତୁର୍ଥ ବୃହତ୍ତମ ଭାଷା । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୁସଲମାନମାନେ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଦୁ ମାତୃଭାଷା ରୂପେ ନିଜର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଉ ନଥିଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏତେ ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଦୁଭାଷୀ ଆସନ୍ତେ କେଉଁଠୁ ? ଏ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଧର୍ମର ଆନୁରତ୍ୟ ପାଖରେ ମାତୃଭାଷା ବି ହାରମାନିଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହା ହେବା ସ୍ୱୟଂସିଦ୍ଧ ନୁହେଁ । ବାଙ୍ଗଲାଦେଶ, ଇଣ୍ଡୋନେସିଆ, ମାଲେସିଆ ପରି ବହୁ ମୁସଲମାନ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରରେ ମାତୃଭାଷା ଧର୍ମଠାରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ । ଭାରତରେ ବି ପଶ୍ଚିମ ବଙ୍ଗ, ତାମିଲନାଡୁ ଓ କେରଳର ମୁସଲମାନଙ୍କର ଭାଷା ଆନୁରତ୍ୟ ମାତୃଭାଷାକୁ ଧରି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏହାର ବ୍ୟତିକ୍ରମ ଦେଖାଦେବାର କାରଣ ନାହିଁ, ବରଂ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୁସଲମାନମାନଙ୍କର ଏହି ମିଥ୍ୟା ପରିଚୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଆନୁରତ୍ୟକୁ ବିଭ୍ରାନ୍ତିକର କରିଦେଇଛି ।

ଏହା ପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବିରାଟ ଆଦିବାସୀ ସଂପ୍ରଦାୟ, ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କର ନିଜସ୍ୱ ପରିଚୟ ଅଛି; କିନ୍ତୁ ମାତୃଭାଷା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରାୟ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧାଧିକ ଆଦିବାସୀ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏବଂ ସର୍ବାଗ୍ରେ ଏହି ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷୀ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହୁଥିବାରୁ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରିପାରିନଥାନ୍ତି । ଏହା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟ । ବାକି କିଛି ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କର ନିଜର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରଭାଷା ଥିଲେବି, ଗୋଟିଏ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ମାତୃଭାଷାକୁ ରକ୍ଷାକରିବା ପରି ଆବଶ୍ୟକୀୟ ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟିକ ସବଳତା (*demographic viability*) ନାହିଁ, ଯାହା ଫଳରେ କୁଆଙ୍ଗ, ଖଡିଆ, ପାରେଙ୍ଗୀ, ବଣ୍ଡୋ, ଡିଡେଇ ପରି ବେଶ୍‌କେତୋଟି ଭାଷା ଦୃତଗତିରେ ହ୍ରାସ ପାଇବାରେ ଲାଗିଛନ୍ତି । ଏକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଆମକୁ ମନେ ରଖିବାକୁ ହେବଯେ, ଏହି ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଆଦିବାସୀ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଗଡଜାତର ନିରାପଦ

ଆଶ୍ରୟରେ ଥିଲେ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରାଜଶାସନ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବାହାର ସଭ୍ୟତା ଠାରୁ ଆତ୍ମିଆଳରେ ରଖୁଥିଲା । ହଠାତ୍ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏହି ଜାଲ ଖସିପଡ଼ିଛି । କ'ଣ ସେମାନେ ବାହାରୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବେ, କଣ କରିବେ ନାହିଁ ତାହା ଭାବିଦେଖିବାର ବି ଅବସର ନାହିଁ । ଅନେକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଏକ ମହା ପ୍ଳାବନ ଆଉ ବୁଡ଼ିଗଲା ଲୋକ କୁଟାଖିଏକୁ ଜାବୁଡ଼ି ଧରିଲା ପରି ଯେ ଯାହା ପାରିଛି ତାକୁଜ ଜାବୁଡ଼ି ଧରି ବୈତରଣୀ ପାରହେବାର ଆକୂଳ ଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ । କିଛି ଆଦିବାସୀ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସେହି ପରି ଗୋଟିଏ 'କୁଟାଖିଅ' ହେଲା 'ଅକ୍ଷର' ବା *Script* ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ନିଜ ଭାଷାକୁ ଲିଖିତ ବୋଲି ଦେଖାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭିନ୍ନ ଲିପି । ଏହି 'ଅକ୍ଷର ନିଶା' ଆମ ଆଦିବାସୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏପରି ଭାବେ ବିମୋହିତ କରିଛି ଯେ ଗତ ପାଞ୍ଚ ଦଶ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଅଧଜଙ୍ଗଲେ ଆଦିବାସୀ ଭାଷା ଯଥା:- ସାନ୍ତାଳି, ସଓରା, ହୋ, ଖଡିଆ, ଭୂମିକ ଆଦି ନିଜ ଭାଷାପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧ ନୂଆଲିପି ଉଦ୍ଭାବନ କରିବସିଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନର ପ୍ରଥମ ଆରମ୍ଭହୁଏ, ସାନ୍ତାଳି ଭାଷାରୁ ଗୁରୁ ରଘୁନାଥ ମୁର୍ମୁଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା, ଯେ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ସାନ୍ତାଳି 'ଉଲ୍‌ଟିକି' ଅକ୍ଷରର ଉଦ୍ଭାବକ । (ଆଦିବାସୀ ନେତାମାନଙ୍କ ତାପପଲରେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଏହି ଲିପିରେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବାପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର ବି ୧୮ଟି କି ୨୦ଟି ସ୍କୁଲରେ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଛନ୍ତି ।) ରଘୁନାଥ ମୁର୍ମୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସାନ୍ତାଳି ଭାଷା ପାଇଁ ଓଲ୍‌ଟିକି ସୃଷ୍ଟି କଲେ ତାହାର ହୁଏତ କିଛିଟା ଯଥାର୍ଥ ଥିଲା, କାରଣ ସାନ୍ତାଳି ମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଛଡ଼ା ବିହାର, ପଶ୍ଚିମବଙ୍ଗ ଓ ଆସାମର ତା' ବାଗାନଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ବିକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ହୋଇରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ଗୋଟିଏ ସାଧାରଣ ଲିପି ଦ୍ଵାରା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଏକାଠି କରିବାର ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ଦେଖାଦେବା ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ । ଭାରତରେ ଏହା କିଛି ନୂତନ ନୁହେଁ । ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଉଚ୍ଚତ କୋଙ୍କଣି ଭାଷା ଯାହା କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକ କେରଳ, ଗୋଆ ଓ ମହାରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର, ଏପରି ତାରୋଟି ପ୍ରଦେଶରେ ବିକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ହୋଇରହିଛି, ସେ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବି ଗୋଟିଏ ସାଧାରଣ ଲିପି ପାଇଁ ବହୁ ପ୍ରୟାସ ଚାଲିଛି । ସେ ଯାହାହେଉ, ପଣ୍ଡିତ ରଘୁନାଥ ମୁର୍ମୁଙ୍କୁ ଯଦି କିଛି ଅମର କରି ରଖୁଯାଏ, ତାହା ତାଙ୍କର ସାନ୍ତାଳି ଲିପି ଓଲ୍‌ଟିକି ନୁହେଁ, ଯାହା ଭାଷା ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ବିଚାରରୁ ବହୁଭାବେ ଅଭାବନିୟ; ଏପରିକି ଏହା ଭାରତୀୟ ଲିପି :- ପରମ୍ପରାରେ ଆକ୍ଷରିକ (syllabic)କି ନୁହେଁ, ବରଂ ପି.ଓ. ବୋଡ଼ିଂକୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କରି ରୋମାନ୍ ଧାରାରେ ଆଲଫାବେଟିକ୍ । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଖାଲି ସାନ୍ତାଳି ଭାଷାନୁହେଁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସମଗ୍ର ଭାରତୀୟ

ଆଦିବାସୀ ଭାଷା ଶିକ୍ଷା-ଦର୍ଶନ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଯାହା ପଣ୍ଡିତ ମୁର୍ମୁଙ୍କୁ ଦିର୍ଘଦର୍ଶକର ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେବ, ସେ ହେଉଛି ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ସାନ୍ତାଳିଭାଷା ପୁସ୍ତକ 'ପାର୍ସିପୋହା' । ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ସବିଶେଷ ଆଲୋଚନା ପାଇଁ ଦ୍ରଷ୍ଟବ୍ୟ ଲେଖକର (tribal language pedagogy- A case for the Santali guru, 1987, indian linguistics, vol 47, no.1-4, Poona) । ଏହା ସାନ୍ତାଳି ଶିଶୁ ପାଇଁ ଖାଲି ଏକ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ପାଠ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ ଏହା ଭାରତୀୟ ଆଦିବାସୀ ଭାଷା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ଶିକ୍ଷା-ଦର୍ଶନ । ଅଥଚ ପରିତାପର ବିଷୟ ଯେ, ଆଦିବାସୀ ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଉଦ୍ଭଟ, ଅବାସ୍ତବ ଲିପି-ଉଦ୍ଭାବନର ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀରାଜନୀତିରେ ମାଡ଼ିଥିବାବେଳେ, ପ୍ରକୃତ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଅବହେଳିତ ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି । ଏମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲିପିକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିପାରିଥାନ୍ତେ, ଆଉ ସେଥିରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥ ଅଧିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ।

ଆଦିବାସୀ ଭାଷା ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଏହି ସବୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟହିନ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ଫଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥ ଯେ ବାଧାପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହେଉନାହିଁ ନୁହେଁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଅଯଥା ଉଦ୍‌କଣ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିବାର କାରଣ ନାହିଁ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥ ଆଦିବାସୀ ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଉଦ୍ଧେବ କରିବାରେ ନାହିଁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିଖାଇବାରେ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଅଛି । ତେଣୁ ଯଦି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଆଦିବାସୀ ମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ଅନ୍ୟଭାଷାକୁ ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଭାଷାରୂପେ ଶିଖନ୍ତି ବା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତି, ତାହା ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥର ପ୍ରତିକୂଳ ହେବ । ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଏପରି ଉଦାହରଣର ଅଭାବ ନାହିଁ । ବିଶେଷ କରି ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଓ ଉତ୍ତର-ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କେତେକ ଆଦିବାସୀ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ, ଯଥା:- କୁଡୁଖି, କିସାନ, ମୁଣ୍ଡା, ହୋ, କୋଲହ ଆଦି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ହିନ୍ଦି ଶିଖୁଥିବାର ଦେଖାଯାଏ, ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ହିନ୍ଦି ହେଉଛି ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଭାଷା ବା ଯୋଗାଯୋଗର ଭାଷା । ରାଜ୍ୟସରକାର ଏହାର ପ୍ରତିବିଧାନ ପାଇଁ ଆସୁ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେବା ଉଚିତ୍ ।

ବସ୍ତୁତଃ ଏହି ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଭାଷା ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ କୁହାଯାଇପାରେ ଯେ, ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଭାଷାରୂପେ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଜନସାଂକ୍ଷୀକ ସ୍ଥିତି ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ନୈରାଶ୍ୟଜନକ । ୧୯୭୧ ଜନଗଣନା ଅନୁସାରେ ଭାରତରେ ମୋଟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା କହିପାରୁଥିବା ୨୧,୦୮୦,୪୨୯, ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ମାତ୍ର ୧,୨୧୭,୨୩୧ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଅଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାଣିଥିବା ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଅଭାବରୁ ଆମେ ସର୍ବଭାରତୀୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏକ

ଅଜ୍ଞାତ ଅବୋଧ୍ୟ ଜାତି ହୋଇରହିଯାଇଛି । ଆମ ସଭ୍ୟତାର କେବଳ ଦୃଶ୍ୟମାନ ଭାଗଟି, ଯଥା :- ଓଡ଼ିଶୀନାଚ, ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ ଶାଢ଼ୀ, କୋଣାର୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ବା ଚାରକସି ଅଳଙ୍କାର ବାହାରେ କିଛି କିଛି ପହଞ୍ଚିଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମର ମାନସିକ ସାଧନା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ବିଶେଷ କରି ଆମର ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ଦର୍ଶନ ଓ ଇତିହାସ ବାହାରେ ଅଜ୍ଞାତ ଓ ଅଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିତ । କୋଟିର ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷୀର ଗୋଟିଏ ବହି ଅନ୍ୟଭାଷାରେ ଅନୁଦିତ ହୁଏ, ଭାରତର ଭାବଜଗତକୁ ସ୍ପର୍ଶକରିବା ତ ଆହୁରି ଦୂରର କଥା । ଶହଶହ ବର୍ଷ ବିତିଯାଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବି ଶାରଳା ଦାସ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ ବା ଦିନକୃଷ୍ଣ, ଅଭିମନ୍ୟୁଙ୍କ ନାମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବାହାରେ ଶୁଣାଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ସଚ୍ଚି ରାଉତରାୟ ବା ରମାକାନ୍ତ ରଥ ଭାଗ୍ୟଶାଳୀ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ନାମ ଯଦି ସମ୍ବିଧାନର ଅଷ୍ଟମ ସୂଚୀରେ ଉଠିନଥାନ୍ତା, ଯାହା ବା ଅଳ୍ପବୟସରେ ସମ୍ମାନ ଆମକୁ ମିଳିଛି ବା ମିଳୁଛି ତା' ବି ମିଳିନଥାନ୍ତା । ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନ୍ୟଭାଷାର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ବୁଝିବାରେ ପାରନ୍ତା । ଆମର ଅଛି ଇଂଲିଶ୍ ଇଂବିଷୟରୁ, ହିନ୍ଦି ପ୍ରଚାରକେନ୍ଦ୍ର, ଉର୍ଦ୍ଦୁ ଆକାଡେମୀ, ସଂସ୍କୃତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଏପରିକି ଆଦିବାସୀ ଭାଷା ଶିକ୍ଷାକେନ୍ଦ୍ର । କିନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଶିଖାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଚାଳିଆଘର ବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ପାଇଁ ପାଠ୍ୟ ସାମଗ୍ରୀ କି ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷକ । ଏହାଠାରୁ ବଳି ବଡ଼ ଅନ୍ତରାୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ବିକାଶ ପଥରେ ଆଉ କ'ଣ ହୋଇପାରେ ? ଏ ଜାତିର ୧,୬୮୦,୧୫୮ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷା କହିପାରନ୍ତି, ଅପରପକ୍ଷେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀ ମାତ୍ର ୧,୨୧୭,୨୩୧ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଜାଣନ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ । ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାର ଗୌରବ ବଢ଼େ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀମାନେ ସେହି ଭାଷାକୁ ଶିକ୍ଷାକରିଥାନ୍ତି, ଯେପରି ଭାରତରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷା । ଭାରତରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ମାତୃଭାଷୀଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଦୁଇଲକ୍ଷରୁ ବେଶୀ ହୋଇନଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିରାଟ ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ ଅନ୍ୟଭାଷା ଭାଷୀଲୋକ ଏହାକୁ କହିବୋଲି ପାରନ୍ତି ।

ଭାଷା-ବିକାଶର ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଦିଗଟି ହେଲା ଭାଷାତାତ୍ତ୍ୱିକ । ଭାଷା ଯଦିଓ ସବୁ ମଣିଷ କହନ୍ତି, କୃତ୍ରିମ ଲୋକ କହିପାରିବେ ଭାଷା କ'ଣ ? କେହି ଯଦି ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା କ'ଣ ? ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହୋଇଥିବା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଆପଣ ଏହାର ଏକ ଯଥାର୍ଥ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ଜଣେ ଭାଷାବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ହୁଏତ କିଛିଟା ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟିକତା ମିଶାଇ କହିବେ ଯେ, ଭାବ ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବାର ଏହା ଏକ ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ

(communication system) । ରେଲଲାଇନ୍ ଉପରେ ରେଳ ଚଳାଚଳକୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯେଉଁ ସିଗ୍ନାଲ ବସାଯାଏ ତା'ର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ବି ଭାବ ଆଦାନ-ପ୍ରଦାନ ଓ ଏହାକି ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହି ପ୍ରଣାଳୀରେ ଅଛି ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଇଟି 'ଶବ୍ଦ'=ଗୋଟିଏ Stop ବା 'ରୋକ' ଆଉ ଅନ୍ୟଟି Go ବା 'ଯାଅ' । ଏହି ଶବ୍ଦ ଦୁଇଟି ପାଇଁ ଦୁଇଟି ପ୍ରତୀକ (symbol) ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ରୋକ ପାଇଁ ଲାଲବତୀ ଓ ଯାଅ ପାଇଁ ସବୁଜବତୀ । ଦିନବେଳ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଏହାର ବିକଳ ପ୍ରତୀକ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇଥାଏ, ଯଥା :- ରୋକ ପାଇଁ ସିଗ୍ନାଲକୁ ସଳଖ ରଖୁ ଓ ଯାଅ ପାଇଁ ସିଗ୍ନାଲକୁ ପକାଇ । ଏତିକି ହେଲା ଏହି ପ୍ରଣାଳୀଟିର କ୍ଷମତା । ଏଇ ଯୋଡ଼ିକ 'ବାର୍ତ୍ତା' (message) ଛଡ଼ା ଏହି ପ୍ରଣାଳୀଟିରେ ଆଉ କିଛି କହିବା (encoding) ବା ବୁଝିବା (decoding) ଅସମ୍ଭବ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠୁଛି, ରେଳବାଇ ଏହି ଦୁଇ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା ପ୍ରଣାଳୀଟି ପାଇଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଏତେ କଥା କରିବାକୁ ପଡୁଛି, ଗୋଟିଏ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ଭାଷା, ଯାହାର ବାର୍ତ୍ତାସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅସୀମ, ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଏଥିରେ ସବୁକିଛି କୁହାଯାଇପାରୁଛି, ସେ ପ୍ରଣାଳୀଟି କେମିତି ହୋଇଥିବ ? ମଣିଷର ଭାଷା ଏକ ବିସ୍ମୟକର ସୃଷ୍ଟି । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ବି କିଛି କମ୍ ବିସ୍ମୟକର ନୁହେଁ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଭାଷାର ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ହେଉଛି ଯେ, ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୀମିତ ଗଠନ ଉପାଦାନ (finite set of input) ଦ୍ୱାରା ସ୍ୱଳ୍ପ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ (economically) ପ୍ରାୟ ଅସୀମ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା (infinite set of output) ଉତ୍ପାଦନ କରିବା । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଗଠନ ଉପାଦାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ସୀମିତ ଓ ଏହାର ଉତ୍ପାଦନ କ୍ଷମତା ମଧ୍ୟ ଅସୀମ । ଗୋଟିଏ ଉଦାହରଣରୁ ଏହା ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ହେବ । ଏହି ବିଶାଳ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ଲେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ୪୫ଟି ଅକ୍ଷର ଆମେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଥାଉ । ଏହାକୁ କହିବା ପାଇଁ 'ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ'ର (sound units) ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଆହୁରି କମ୍ ବା ମାତ୍ର ୩୫ଟି । ଓଡ଼ିଆର ସବୁ ଶବ୍ଦ କେବଳ ଏଇ ୩୫ଟି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ତିଆରି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅଭିଧାନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଯେତେ ମୋଟା ଦିଶନ୍ତୁ ନା କାହିଁକି, ଶବ୍ଦର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ବି ସୀମିତ ଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଯୋଡ଼ି ବାକ୍ୟ ଗଢ଼ିବାର ଧାରା ଆହୁରି ସୀମିତ । ଏହି ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୀମିତ ଉପାଦାନକୁ ବିନିଯୋଗ କରି ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ତଥା ଅସୀମ ଭାବ ଆଦାନପ୍ରଦାନ ହେଉଛି ମଣିଷ ଭାଷାର ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ । ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକେ ଭାଷା କହି ଓ ବୁଝିପାରୁଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହା କିପରି କାମ କରୁଛି

ବା ଭାଷାର ଗଠନ ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ (code structure) ବିଷୟରେ ପ୍ରାୟଶଃ ଅଜ୍ଞ, କାରଣ ଭାଷା କହିବା ଓ ବୁଝିବା ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟା ଅଭ୍ୟାସବଶରେ ଚାଲିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସଚେତନ ଭାଷାଗଠନ ଜ୍ଞାନର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ । ତେଣୁ ଭାଷାଗଠନକୁ ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କର ଅବଚେତନରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରି ଜ୍ଞାନର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟକୁ ଆଣିବାପାଇଁ ଭାଷାବିଜ୍ଞାନର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ନେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ, ଖାଲି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ପାଇଁ ନୁହେଁ । ଯେ କୌଣସି ମଣିଷ ଭାଷା ପାଇଁ । ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାର ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଏହି ଜ୍ଞାନକୁ ପ୍ରଯୁକ୍ତ କରାଯାଇପାରେ ଯେପରି ଧୀରେ ଚାଲୁଥିବା ଗୋଟିଏ ଘଡ଼ିକୁ ସଜାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ତାହାର ଯାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ପ୍ରଣାଳୀକୁ ସଜାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ । ଭାଷାର ଯାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳା ବିଷୟରେ ଧାରଣା ନଥିବାରୁ ଭାଷାକୁ ଉଚ୍ଚତ କରିବାପାଇଁ ଯେଉଁ ସବୁ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣ, ଦେଶାତ୍ମବୋଧକ ଭାଷଣମାନ ଶୁଣାଯାଏ ସେସବୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅଚଳ ଘଡ଼ିକୁ ଠିକ୍ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ତା ଆଗରେ ‘ବହେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ’ ଗାଇବା ପରି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଭାଷାତାତ୍ତ୍ୱିକ ବିକାଶ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଭାଷାକୁ ଏକ ଯାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳା ଭାବେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ।

ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଏହି ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରଗତି ପଥରେ ପ୍ରଧାନ ଅଂଗରାୟ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଭାବପ୍ରବଣ ରାଜନୀତିଜ୍ଞ, ନିଷ୍ଠେଷ ସରକାରୀ ପ୍ରଶାସକ ଓ ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାରେ ବ୍ୟାପୂତ ଅନଭିଜ୍ଞ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକମାନେ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ରାଜନୀତିଜ୍ଞମାନଙ୍କ ଭୂମିକାକୁ ନିଆଯାଉ । ମନେ ରଖିବାକୁ ହେବ ଯେ, ମାତୃଭାଷା ଗୋଟିଏ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣକାନ୍ତର ବସ୍ତୁ ଓ ଏହାର ଖୁଲାପରେ କିଛି ଘଟିଲେ ଏହା ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ମନରେ ପ୍ରବଳ ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥାଏ । ଭାରତରେ ରକ୍ତାନ୍ତ ଭାଷା-ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନର ଅଭାବ ନାହିଁ । ତେଣୁ ଭାରତ ସରକାର ଭାଷାଗତ ତଥ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବାରେ କଠୋର ଗୋପନୀୟତା ଓ ସତର୍କତା ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗୋଟିଏ ବହୁଭାଷିକ ପ୍ରଦେଶ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏକ ପ୍ରାଦେଶିକ ଭାଷା । ଏହି ଭାଷାର ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ହୁଏତ ଏପରି କିଛି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିପାରେ, ଯାହା ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥରେ ଆଞ୍ଚ ଆଣିପାରେ । ଏହି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥରେ ଆମକୁ ଏପରି କେତୋଟି କଥା କହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଛି, ଯାହାଦ୍ୱାରା ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀମାନେ ଉତ୍ସାହିତ ହୋଇପାରନ୍ତି । ଏହା ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସତ୍ୟ ଯେ, ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାର ବିକାଶ ଅନେକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଚକ୍ଷୁଃଶୂଳ ହେବ, ଯେହେତୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଓ ପରୋକ୍ଷ ଭାବେ ଏହା ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କ

ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥରକ୍ଷା ବିଗ୍ରହେ ନିୟୋଜିତ ହେବ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପ୍ରଦେଶରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଅବସ୍ଥାକୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଚରମ ଅବହେଳା ଓ ଅଜ୍ଞତାର ଚିତ୍ର ଆମକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା-ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ପରେ ବି ଏହା ଏକ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ଭାଷା, ଏପରିକି ଆଧୁନିକ ଓ ଶିକ୍ଷିତମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଅପରାଗତା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରିବା ଏକ ଗୌରବର ବିଷୟ । ଔପଚାରିକ (formal) ପରିବେଶରେ ସେ କଥାରେ ହେଉ ବା ଲେଖାରେ ହେଉ, ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କର ନାହିଁ । ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାରିବାରିକ ପ୍ରତାଳାପ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ କରିବାପାଇଁ ଅକ୍ଷମ ବା ଅମଙ୍ଗ; ଚିନ୍ତାଗର୍ଭକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ତ ଆହୁରି ଦୂରର କଥା । ଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କୁ ଯଦି କେହି କହି ଦିଏ ଯେ, ତାଙ୍କ ଇଂରେଜୀ ଖରାପ, ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଏହା ତାଙ୍କ ଆତ୍ମସମ୍ମାନରେ ଆଞ୍ଚଲୀୟ ଥାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ କେହି ଯଦି କହେ ତା ତାଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଖରାପ, ଏହା ହୁଏତ ପ୍ରକାରାନ୍ତରେ ଏକ ପ୍ରଶଂସାଭାବେ ସେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିପାରନ୍ତି । ଅପରପକ୍ଷେ ଯେଉଁ ମୁଷ୍ଟିମେୟ ଲୋକ ତଥାକଥିତ ଓକ୍ସିନୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ବାସ୍ତିତା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରିପାରନ୍ତି ବା ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ, ଆଲୋଚନାଦି ଲେଖିପାରନ୍ତି, କୃତିତ୍ୱ ତାହା ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ଚିନ୍ତା ଓ ସ୍ମୃତ୍ୟତା ରକ୍ଷା କରିଥାଏ । ବୃଥା ବିତଣ୍ଡା, ଅତ୍ୟୁକ୍ତି ଅଯତିତ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତା ବା ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟତା ଯୋଗୁଁ ଏହା ବୌଦ୍ଧିକ ଭାରସାମ୍ୟ ରକ୍ଷା କରିପାରି ନଥାଏ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଯେତେତା ବାଘାନ୍ତିହେଉ, ତା’ଠାରୁ ବେଶୀ ବାଘା ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ଶିକ୍ଷାପ୍ରଣାଳୀ । ବସ୍ତୁତଃ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବାପାଇଁ କୌଣସି ପଦ୍ଧତି ଅନୁସୂତ ହୋଇ ନଥାଏ । ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଓ ମାଧ୍ୟମିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ଭାଷାଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବା ନାଁରେ ‘ମୋ ସାହିତ୍ୟ’ ବୋଲି ଯେଉଁ ସରକାରୀ ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଚଳେ, ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ‘ମେରା ଭାରତ ମହାନ’ ଶିକ୍ଷାଦେବା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହଣ ପୁସ୍ତକ । ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ପଢ଼ାଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାରେ ମୂଳଦୁଆ ପକାଇବା ବୃଥାଶା ମାତ୍ର । (ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ସବିଶେଷ ଆଲୋଚନା ପାଇଁ ଦ୍ରଷ୍ଟବ୍ୟ, ଲେଖକର ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ପାଠ୍ୟ ବିଷୟ : ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ଝଙ୍କାର, ୪ତମ ବର୍ଷ ବିଷୁବ ସଂଖ୍ୟା, ୧୯୯୧, ପୃଷ୍ଠାମାଳା ୩୬୨) । ଏହିପରି ଏକ ଅଭାବନୀୟ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ପୁରୁଷ ପୁରୁଷ ଧରି ଓଡ଼ିଆଜାତିର ଚରିତ୍ର ଓ ମାନସିକତା ଭ୍ରଷ୍ଟ ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ରାଜନୀତିଜ୍ଞମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଭାରତର ଭାଷା, ରାଜନୀତିରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥରକ୍ଷାକୁ ନବୁଝିବା ଆତ୍ମହତା ।

ଏହାପରେ ରାଜ୍ୟଶାସନର ପଦାଧିକାରୀମାନଙ୍କର ଭୂମିକା । ଏମାନେ ପାଇଲ ଉପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଟିସ୍ପଣୀ ଦେବା ନଦେବା ବଡ଼କଥା ନୁହେଁ, ଯଦିଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦେଶରେ ଭକ୍ତିପୂର୍ବକ ଭାବେ ସେମାନେ ଏହା କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଯାହା ସେମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆଶାକରାଯାଏ, ବିଶେଷକରି ଯେଉଁମାନେ ସ୍ୱରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର, ଶିକ୍ଷା, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଆଦିର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ଦେଖିବା ଉଚିତ ଯେ, ଭାରତର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଭାଷା-ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ କଣ ଓ କାହିଁକି କରାଯାଉଛି, କି ପ୍ରକାରର ବିଶେଷଜ୍ଞମାନଙ୍କୁ ତା'ର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଦିଆଯାଉଛି, କେଉଁ କେଉଁ କାମରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଲଗାଯାଉଛି କଣ ସେମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆଶା କରାଯାଉଛି, ତା'ର କି ଉପଯୋଗ ଅଛି ଭାଷାର ଉଚ୍ଚତିରେ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର କି ପ୍ରକାରର ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ସେଥିପାଇଁ କି ଧରଣର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓ ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା ଉପଲବ୍ଧ ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କର ଏ ଦିଗରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଲୋଡ଼ାଯାଇପାରେ, ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଏକଥା କହିବାବେଳେ ଆମେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ଅବହେତ ଯେ, ଆମର ବହୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅଫିସର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଖାଲି ଆଗ୍ରହ ରଖନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଅନେକ ନିଜେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତା ଓ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଇତିହାସିକ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିବ୍ରତ ନ କରିବା ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟକର ହେବ, ବିଶେଷକରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ କଳାକୃତିର ଇତିହାସିକ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଏହି ଭାଷାର ଇତିହାସିକ ଉପରେ ଏକାକ୍ର ଭାବେ ନିର୍ଭରଶୀଳ । ଭାର୍ୟକୁ ସେମାନେ ଉପମନ୍ୟୁ ଚାଟାର୍ଜୀ ବା ବିକ୍ରମ ସେଠ ନୁହନ୍ତି ।

ବାକି ରହିଲେ କିଛି ତଥାକଥିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ପଣ୍ଡିତ, ଯେଉଁମାନେ କ୍ରମାଗତ ଭାବେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ବିଷୟରେ ଅବାଚ୍ଛର ଓ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥବିରୋଧୀ ତଥ୍ୟ ପରିବେଷଣ କରି ଏ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରଭୁତ୍ୱ କ୍ଷତି ସାଧନ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଐତିହାସିକ ଧାରାକୁ ଦିଗଭ୍ରଷ୍ଟ କରି, ଏହାର ଇତିହାସକୁ ବିକୃତ କରି ଭାଷାଦର୍ଶନ ଓ ବିଭବର ମୂଲ୍ୟାୟନ ନ କରି, ପତାଶ ଦଶକର କେତେକ ଫିଲୋଲଜିଷ୍ଟଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଦିଆଯାଇଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଉପରେ ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଯାହା ବହୁଦିନରୁ ଭାଷା ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଖଣ୍ଡିତ ଓ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟାତ, ସେ ସବୁକୁ ଅନ୍ଧଭାବେ ପୁନରୁଦ୍ଧାର କରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଐତିହାସିକ ଉପାଦାନ ରୂପେ ଏମାନେ ଖାଲି ପଢ଼ାଇବାରେ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତ । ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଗଦା ଗଦା ସ୍ମାରକୋତ୍ତର ଛାତ୍ର ନିଜ ଭାଷା ବିଷୟରେ ବିକୃତ ତଥ୍ୟ ଓ ଅବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ଘୋଷି ଶିକ୍ଷା ସମାପନ କରୁଛନ୍ତି, ଯାହା ପରେ

ସେମାନେ ନିଜେ ପଢ଼ାଇବେ । ଏହି ଅନଭିଜ୍ଞ ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକ ପ୍ରଣେତାମାନଙ୍କ ଯୋଗୁ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବର୍ଷ ଛାତ୍ରମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଐତିହ୍ୟ ବିଷୟରେ ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ, ବିକୃତ, ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧସତ୍ୟ ବା ଅସତ୍ୟ ଗଳାଧଃ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ବିଷୟକ ଏହି ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ବାଜ୍ୟାସ୍ତ୍ର କରାଯିବା ଉଚିତ । ସେହିପରି ଅନ୍ୟ ଗୋଟିଏ ବିଷୟ ହେଲା, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବ୍ୟାକରଣ ଏବଂ ଏ ସ୍ଥଳରେ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଆହୁରି ଦୁଃଖଦ, କାରଣ ଏ ପାଠ୍ୟବହି ତଳ ଶ୍ରେଣୀମାନଙ୍କରେ ପଢ଼ାଯାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବ୍ୟାକରଣ ନାମରେ ଚଳୁଥିବା ସବୁ ବହିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ବ୍ୟାକରଣର କପି, ତେଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଏ ବ୍ୟାକରଣରେ ନାହିଁ ବା ଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ଦିଆଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ କ୍ରିୟାପଦ ସଂସ୍କୃତଠାରୁ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭିନ୍ନ ଭାବେ ଗଠିତ ହୋଇଛି, ତେଣୁ ଏହାର ଠିକ୍ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କୌଣସି ଗୋଟିଏ ହେଲେ ସ୍କୁଲ-ବ୍ୟାକରଣରୁ ମିଳେନାହିଁ । ଫଳରେ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବର୍ଷ ପିଲାଏ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ବ୍ୟାକରଣ ନାଁରେ ତୁଚ୍ଛ ଅନର୍ଥକ ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ଅତଥ୍ୟ ଘୋଷୁଛନ୍ତି ଓ ସାରା ଜୀବନ ମନେ ରଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର ମାତୃଭାଷା ବିଷୟକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ସେ ସ୍କୁଲସ୍ତରରେ ହେଉ କି ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ସ୍ତରରେ ହେଉ, ଏହା ଗୋଟିଏ ଜାତିର ବୌଦ୍ଧିକ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପକ୍ଷରେ ଯେ କି ପରିମାଣରେ କ୍ଷତିକାରକ, ତାହାର ତୁଳନା ଅନ୍ୟତ୍ର ନାହିଁ । ଏ କଥା ସତ୍ୟ ଯେ, ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଇତିହାସ ବା ବ୍ୟାକରଣ ଲେଖାଯାଇ ପାରିନାହିଁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଥିପାଇଁ କି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନିଆଯାଇଛି ? ତେବେ ଏହି ବିଷୟଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଭାଷାବିଜ୍ଞାନ ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ନଲେଖା ହେବାଯାଏ, ଅନ୍ୟଭାଷାରୁ କପି କରାହୋଇ ଲେଖାହୋଇଥିବା ଏ ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଆମ ଭାଷା ବିଷୟରେ ପ୍ରାମାଣିକ ତଥ୍ୟ ବିତରଣ କରୁଥିବ ଓ ଭାଷାଶିକ୍ଷାକୁ କଳୁଷିତ କରୁଥିବ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ବିକାଶର ଚୂତୀୟ ଦିଗଟି ହେଲା ସମାଜତାତ୍ତ୍ୱିକ ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ କେଉଁ କେଉଁ ସାମାଜିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ପରୋକ୍ଷ ଭାବେ ହେଉ ବା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଭାବେ ହେଉ, ଭାଷାର ଉଚ୍ଚତା ସାଧିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଆଧୁନିକ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଦାବୀ କରେ ଏକ ଉଚ୍ଚ କ୍ଷମତାସମ୍ପନ୍ନ ସଂଚାର-ମାଧ୍ୟମ ବା ଏକ ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ଭାଷା ଓ ସଭ୍ୟତାର ଦୃଢ଼ ଅଗ୍ରଗତି ସହିତ ତାଳ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଭାଷାର ଦୃଢ଼ତର ବିସ୍ତାର (elaboration) । ଭାଷାର ବିସ୍ତାର ଦୁଇଟି ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ହୋଇଥାଏ, କଥିତ

ମାଧ୍ୟମ (oral) ଓ ଲିଖିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମ (written) । କଥିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମର ଉପାୟଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହେଲେ ରେଡ଼ିଓ, ଟେଲିଭିଜନ୍, ଫିଲ୍ମ ଓ କ୍ୟାସେଟ୍ । ଲିଖିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଉପାୟ ହେଲେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସମ୍ବାଦପତ୍ର । କହିବା ନିଷ୍ପ୍ରୟୋଜନ ଯେ, ଭାଷାର ବିସ୍ତାରକୁ କଥିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଲିଖିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମର ଅବଦାନ ବେଶି - ଖାଲି ଲିଖିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମର ଭାଷା ସ୍ଥାୟୀ ବୋଲି ବୁଝେ, ଲିଖିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଭାଷାର ଶିଥିଳତା ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ କମ୍ ଓ ଭାଷାର ମାନ (standardization) ଅଧିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ । ଭାଷା ପାଇଁ ଲିଖିତ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଏକ ବିରାଟ ସମାଜତାତ୍ତ୍ୱିକ ଭୂମିକା ରହିଛି । ଏଠାରେ ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ବ୍ୟାପକ ଅର୍ଥରେ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଏହି ଅର୍ଥରେ ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ଦୁଇ ଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରାଯାଇପାରେ - ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାତ୍ମକ (narrative) ଓ ଅଣବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାତ୍ମକ (nonnarrative) । ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାତ୍ମକ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ କଳ୍ପନା-ପ୍ରସୂତ । ଏହି ସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରକାରଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହେଲେ କାବ୍ୟକବିତା (poetry) ଓ ଗଳ୍ପଉପନ୍ୟାସ (fiction) । ଗୋଟିଏ ଆଧୁନିକ ଭାଷାର ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାତ୍ମକ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଭୂମିକା ଅପେକ୍ଷାକୃତ ଭାବେ ଗୌଣ, କାରଣ ସମାଜରେ ତଥ୍ୟ ବିତରଣ (transfer of information) ପାଇଁ ଏହା କୃତ୍ରିମ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥାଏ । ଯଦିଓ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାତ୍ମକ ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ଧରି ସାଧାରଣରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ମିଳିଥାଏ । ତଥାପି, ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ଦକ୍ଷତାର ବିଚାର ହୁଏ ଅଣ-ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାତ୍ମକ ଗଦ୍ୟ-ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ଧରି, ଯେଉଁ ଗଦ୍ୟରେ କଳ୍ପନା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ବୌଦ୍ଧିକ ତଥ୍ୟ ବା ମୌଳିକ ଚିନ୍ତାର ପ୍ରସାର ଘଟେ, ବିଦ୍ବତ୍ତାର ମୌଳିକ ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା କରାଯାଏ । ସେହି ଗଦ୍ୟପାଇଁ ଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଡାର୍ଡ ଭାଷାର ବ୍ୟବହାର ବାଧ୍ୟତାମୂଳକ ହୋଇପଡ଼େ ଓ ସେହି ଗଦ୍ୟସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ହିଁ ଧରି ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ଦକ୍ଷତା ମପାଯାଇଥାଏ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଷୟକ ଷ୍ଟୁଲ-କଲେଜର ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଉଚ୍ଚମାନର ମୌଳିକ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ, ରଚନା ଆଦି ଏହି ଅଣ-ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାତ୍ମକ ଗଦ୍ୟର ଉଦାହରଣ । ଏହି ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷାର ତିନୋଟି ସ୍ତରରେ, ଯଥା : ପ୍ରାଥମିକ, ମାଧ୍ୟମିକ ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଯଥାକ୍ରମେ ତିନୋଟି ମାନର ଗଦ୍ୟ ଭାଷା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥାଏ । ସାଧାରଣ (popular), ଉନ୍ନତ (refined) ଓ ଓଜସ୍ବିନୀ (learned) । ସମାଜ ଯେତିକି ଯେତିକି ଅଗ୍ରଗତି କରେ, କାଳ୍ପନିକ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଏହା ଅଧିକରୁ ଅଧିକ ତଥ୍ୟଭିତ୍ତିକ (informative) ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ । ଏକ ଉନ୍ନତ ସମାଜର ଭାଷା

କାବ୍ୟକବିତା ଓ ଗଳ୍ପ-ଉପନ୍ୟାସରେ ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ନରହି ଖୋଜେ ସୁଚିତ୍ରିତ ଗଦ୍ୟ । ପୃଥିବୀର ପ୍ରାୟ ସବୁ ଭାଷାରେ କାବ୍ୟକବିତା ଓ ଗଳ୍ପ-ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ଲେଖାଯାଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଷ୍ଟିମେଣ୍ଡ ଭାଷା ମୌଳିକ ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ଚିନ୍ତା ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ଏକ ଉନ୍ନତ ଗଦ୍ୟପରମ୍ପରା । ଏହି ଗଦ୍ୟର ଅଭାବରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବି କାବ୍ୟିକ ଭାଷା ସ୍ତରରେ ରହିଯାଇଛି । ତେଣୁ ଏ ଭାଷାରେ ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ରନାଥ, ଲଳିତାଦେବୀ, ହେମିଂୱେ, ବେକେଟ୍ ଜନ୍ମଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାରେ କୌଣସି ଅସୁବିଧା ନାହିଁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତୁଣ୍ଡ ରସେଲ୍, ମାର୍କସ ବା ପ୍ରାଏଡ୍‌ଙ୍କ ପରି ଚିନ୍ତାନାୟକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏହି ଭାଷା ଜନ୍ମଦେବାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା କମ୍ । ଏହା ଏହି ସମାଜର ବୌଦ୍ଧିକ ବିକାଶର ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଅକ୍ଷରାୟ । ଏହି ଅବସ୍ଥାର ଉନ୍ନତି ନଘଟିଲେ ଏହି ଭାଷା ‘ଭାବୁକମାନଙ୍କର’ ଚରାଭୂଇଁ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିବ, ‘ଚିନ୍ତକମାନଙ୍କ’ ପାଇଁ ଏଥିରୁ ଉତ୍ସାହ ବା ପ୍ରେରଣା ମିଳିବ ନାହିଁ ।

ଏହାପରେ ଭାଷା-ବିକାଶରେ ସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟତାପୂର୍ବକ ଭୂମିକା । ଭାଷାର ଉନ୍ନତି ପାଇଁ ସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟତା ଅନେକଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ସୁଯୋଗ ଯୋଗାଇଥାଏ । ପ୍ରଥମେ, ଲିଖିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଏହା ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷିତମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଓ ନବଶିକ୍ଷିତ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଥାଏ । ଏହାର ଭାଷା ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକତାକୁ ନାତରତ ଭାବେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଦେଇନଥାଏ, ତେଣୁ ଏହା ଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଡାର୍ଡ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରସାରରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥାଏ । ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟରେ ଏହାର ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁ କାବ୍ୟିକ ଭାଷାର ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକତା ନକରି ତଥ୍ୟଭିତ୍ତିକ ଗଦ୍ୟକୁ ଆଶ୍ରୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ବାଧ୍ୟ । ତୃତୀୟରେ ଏହାର ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁର ପରିସର ଏତେ ବ୍ୟାପକ ଯେ, ଏହା ସାମାଜିକ ଜୀବନର ବିଭିନ୍ନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକଳାପ, ଚିନ୍ତା ଓ ଭାବନାକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବା ଛଡ଼ା ଉପାୟଗୁଡ଼ିକ ନାହିଁ । ଯାହାଫଳରେ ଏହା ଭାଷାର ଏକ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ପରାମ୍ପରା । ରାତି ପାହିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଏହାର ପ୍ରୟୋଜନ ଶହଶହ ନୂତନ ଶବ୍ଦ, କଳ୍ପ (concept) ଭାବ, ଅନୁଭବ । ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା ଛଡ଼ା ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଓ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟମୂଳକ ଭାବେ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କରି ଏହା ଭାଷାକୁ ଦୃଢ଼ ପରମ୍ପରା ଯୋଗାଇଥାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପ୍ରଦେଶର ସାକ୍ଷରତା ହାରର ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛତା ଯୋଗୁଁ (୧୯୯୧ ସୁଧା ୪୯.୦୯ପ୍ରତିଶତମାତ୍ର) ତଥା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମ୍ବାଦପତ୍ର ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ନିମ୍ନମାନର ସାମ୍ବାଦିକତା ହେତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ଏଥିରୁ ଯେଉଁ ପରିମାଣରେ ପ୍ରେରଣା ମିଳିବାର କଥା, ତାହା ମିଳିପାରୁ ନାହିଁ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବୈଷୟିକ ସମ୍ବାଦ ଓ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣାତ୍ମକ ତଥା

ସମାକ୍ଷାରତ ସାଧ୍ୟବିକତା ସେହି ପ୍ରେରଣା ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସୋରାନ୍ତା ଏବଂ ଭାଷାର ଜଡତାକୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିପାରନ୍ତା, କିନ୍ତୁ ତାହା ହୋଇପାରୁ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ପତ୍ରିକା ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଅବଦାନ ଆହୁରି କମ, କାରଣ ଏମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଉପଯୋଗୀ ଭିତରେ ଥାଏ ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣଶ୍ରୀମୂଳ ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ସିନେମା ଓ ଖେଳ । ଭାଷାର ବିସ୍ତାର ପାଇଁ ଏ ବିଷୟ ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ନୁହେଁ ।

ଆମେ କହି ସାରିଛୁଯେ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାପ୍ରଦେଶର ସାକ୍ଷରତାର ହାର ୫୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତରୁ କମ, ତେଣୁ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ମାଧବର ସୁଯୋଗ ନେଇପାରୁନଥିବା ସ୍ୱତଃସିଦ୍ଧ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଭାଷା ଶିକ୍ଷାବାର ଏକମାତ୍ର ଉପାୟ ହେଉଛି କଥିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମ । ଭାଷାପ୍ରଚାରର କଥିତ ମାଧ୍ୟମଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ରେଡିଓ, ଟେଲିଭିଜନ, ସିନେମା ଓ କ୍ୟାସେଟ । ଏ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ବି ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ଭାଷା ସମାଜରେ ପ୍ରସାର ଲାଭ କରିପାରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏ ମାଧ୍ୟମ ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିନିଯୋଗ ହୋଇ ନାହିଁ । ଏପରିକି ରେଡିଓର ବି ନୁହେଁ । ଟେଲିଭିଜନ, ସିନେମା ଓ କ୍ୟାସେଟ ତ ଆହୁରି ହାଲର କଥା । ତା' ଛଡା, ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଯେଉଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପୋଗ୍ରାମ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ, ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକର ମୁଖ୍ୟଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ହେଲା ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନ ବା ସରକାରୀ ପ୍ରୋପାଗାଣ୍ଡା । ଆଲୋଚନାତ୍ମକ ବକ୍ତୃତା ଆଦିର ପ୍ରସାର କ୍ଷତିତ ସ୍ଥାନ ପାଇଥାଏ । ପୁଣି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜର ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତ, ବିଶେଷଜ୍ଞ ଓ ବୁଦ୍ଧିଜୀବିମାନେ, ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ବୈଷୟିକ ତଥ୍ୟ ଓ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଅଛି, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରେ ଏହି ଜ୍ଞାନ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ ଗଚ୍ଛିତ । ତାକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାପାଇଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଆବଶ୍ୟକିୟ ଭାଷାଜ୍ଞାନ ନାହିଁ କି ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ନାହିଁ । ଯାହାଫଳରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କ୍ଷତିତ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ମିଳିଥାଏ । ତା'ର ବିକଳ ହୁଏତ କିଛି କରାଯାଇପାରନ୍ତା, କିନ୍ତୁ ଯାହା ପକ୍ଷେ ଅବରାମ ହେଉଛି, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଏ ପ୍ରସାର - ମାଧ୍ୟମଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ନୁହେଁ । ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ତୁଳନାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆକାଶବାଣୀ ପ୍ରସାରର କେନ୍ଦ୍ରହେଉଛି ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଇଟି, ଜୟପୁର ରିଲେ - ଷ୍ଟେସନକୁ ବାଦଦେଲେ । ସେଥିରୁ ମୋଟାମୋଟି ମାସକୁ ୩୬୦ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପ୍ରସାରଣ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ସେ ତୁଳନାରେ ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ପ୍ରସାରଣ ସମୟ ବଙ୍ଗଳାରେ ୯୫୬ ଘଣ୍ଟା । ଏପରିକି ଆସାମିୟାରେ ୪୯୦ ଘଣ୍ଟା । ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ଭାଷାମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ନକହିବା ଭଲ । ଆକାଶବାଣୀ ତୁଳନାରେ ଦୂରଦର୍ଶନର ଆହୁରି ହାଲର

କଥା ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଏହା ନାମକୁ ମାତ୍ର । ଏହା ପରେ ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ର । ଭାରତରେ ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ରକୁ ଦୁଇଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରାଯାଇଥାଏ ଯଥା ଡକ୍ଟୁମେଣ୍ଟାରି ଫିଲ୍ମ ବା ତଥ୍ୟ ଚିତ୍ର, ବା ପ୍ରାମାଣିକ ଚିତ୍ର ଓ ଫିକ୍ସର ଫିଲ୍ମ ବା କଥା ଚିତ୍ର । ତଥ୍ୟଚିତ୍ର ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ସରକାରି ଏବଂ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟସରକାରଙ୍କର ଅବଦାନ ସାମାନ୍ୟ । ତଥାପି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ତଥ୍ୟ ଚିତ୍ରଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଅବଦାନ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ବେଶି । ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ କଥାଚିତ୍ର ଠାରୁ ଖାଲି ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ ବେଶିନୁହଁନ୍ତି । (୧୯୮୧ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ତଥ୍ୟଚିତ୍ରର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ୨୩୧୩), ବିଷୟଗତ ଦୈର୍ଘ୍ୟ ଓ ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଉପରେ ଦିଆଯାଉଥିବା କମ୍ପେଣ୍ଡାରି ବା ଭାଷ୍ୟଭାଷାର ବିସ୍ତାର ପାଇଁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ବେଶି ଅନୁକୂଳ । ବାକି କ୍ୟାସେଟ୍ । ଏକ ଆଧୁନିକ ପ୍ରସାର ମାଧ୍ୟମ ହିସାବରେ ଏହା ଖୁବ୍ ଜନପ୍ରିୟତା ଅର୍ଜନକରିଥିଲେ ହେଁ, ଏବଂ ଏହି ମାଧ୍ୟମଟିର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ବିଷୟରେ ଆମେ ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ହେଁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଏହା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜରେ ଜଗାବଳିଆ ଭଜନ ଓ ସିନେମା ଗୀତ ପ୍ରସାର କରିବା ଛଡା ଆଉ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି କାମରେ ଲାଗୁନାହିଁ । ଗୋଟିଏ ଆଧୁନିକ ଭାଷାର ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଏହି ପ୍ରସାର ମାଧ୍ୟମଗୁଡ଼ିକର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ଅନସ୍ୱୀକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ପୃଥିବୀର ବହୁ ଭାଷାକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏହି ମାଧ୍ୟମଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ବୈପ୍ଳବିକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଅଶାଯାଇପାରିଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାପାଇଁ ସେହି ଦୃତସାଫଲ୍ୟ ଅର୍ଜନ ନ କରିବାର କାରଣ ନାହିଁ ।

ଏହାପରେ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାପତ ବିକାଶ, ଯାହା ରାଜନୈତିକ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତିରୁ ଭାଷାକୁ ମଳିଥାଏ । ଭାରତରେ ଦୁଇଶହରୁ ଅଧିକ ଭାଷା ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ହେଉଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଭାରତୀୟ ସମ୍ବିଧାନରେ ମାତ୍ର ୧୫ଟି ଭାଷା (ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ୧୮)କୁ ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଭାଷା (scheduled language)ର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ମିଳିଛି । ଏହି ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅନ୍ୟତମ ଓ ଏହି ତାଲିକାଭୁକ୍ତ ହେବାପଛରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପ୍ରଦେଶର, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଐକିକତାକୁ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ଦିଆଯାଇଛି । ଭାରତର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀୟ ଶାସନରୁ ଯେଉଁ ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ ଦିଆଯାଇଥାଏ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାହାର ହକଦାର । ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଭାଷାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଆଜନତଃ ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ । ଏହି ସାମ୍ବିଧାନିକ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି-ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟର 'ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା ଆଇନ' ପ୍ରଣୀତ ହୋଇଛି ଯଥା-

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆଇନ ୧୪-୧୯୫୪, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା ଆଇନ-୧୯୫୪ (ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତିପ୍ରାପ୍ତ-ଅକ୍ଟୋବର ୧୯୫୪) । ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରକାଶ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରେଜେଟର ବିଶେଷ ସଂଖ୍ୟା-୧୫, ଅକ୍ଟୋବର ୧୯୫୪ । ଶିରୋନାମା - ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାକୁ ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା ଘୋଷଣା ଆଇନ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା ରୂପେ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ବା କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ବିଶେଷରେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାର ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ।

ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ଭାରତର ପଞ୍ଚମ ବର୍ଷରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟର ବିଧାନସଭା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଗୃହୀତ ।

ଶୀର୍ଷକ-୧ । (କ) ଏହି ଆଇନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା ଆଇନ, ୧୯୫୪ ରୂପେ ଗୃହୀତ ହେଲା ।

(ଖ) ଏହା ସମଗ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଲାଗୁ ହେବ ।

(ଗ) ଏହା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନଠାରୁ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ହେବ ।

ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା ରୂପେ ଏହାର ପ୍ରଚଳନ -

୨ । (କ) ସମ୍ବିଧାନର ୩୪୬ ଓ ୩୪୭ ଧାରାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ବିରୋଧ ନକରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରାଜ୍ୟର ସମସ୍ତ ବା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସରକାରୀ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହେବ ।

(ଖ) ରାଜ୍ୟସରକାର ସାଧାରଣ ଅବଗତିକୁ ଆଣି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସମୟଠାରୁ ସରକାରୀ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ କରାଇପାରନ୍ତି ।

ବିଲ୍ ଲତ୍ୟାଦିରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବ୍ୟବହାର -

୩ । ରାଜ୍ୟସରକାର ସାଧାରଣ ଅବଗତିକୁ ଆଣି ଭାଷା-ବ୍ୟବହାରକୁ ଅତ୍ର ଲାଗୁ କରାଇପାରନ୍ତି -

(କ) ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିଧାନସଭାରେ ଯେତେ ବିଲ୍ ବା ତାହାର ସଂଶୋଧନ ଅଣାଯିବ ।

(ଖ) ବିଧାନସଭାରେ ଯେତେ ଆଇନ ଗୃହୀତ ହେବ ।

(ଗ) ସମ୍ବିଧାନର ୨୧୩ ଧାରା ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ ଯେଉଁ ସବୁ ଅଧାଦେଶ ଜାରି କରିବେ ।

(ଘ) ସମ୍ବିଧାନ, ଲୋକସଭା ବା ବିଧାନସଭା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଗୃହୀତ ସବୁ ଆଦେଶ, ନିୟମକାନୁନ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ହେବ ।

କ ଠାରୁ ଘ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଯେଉଁ ବିଷୟଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଉଲ୍ଲିଖିତ ହୋଇଛି, ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ରାଜ୍ୟସରକାର ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାର ବ୍ୟବହାରକୁ ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ସମୟରୁ ଲାଗୁ କରାଇପାରନ୍ତି ।

ଭାରତୀୟ ସମ୍ବିଧାନର ଆରମ୍ଭର ପନ୍ଦରବର୍ଷ ଅତିବାହିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ, ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷା ୧୯୬୫ ମସିହା ଜାନୁଆରୀ ୨୬ ତାରିଖଠାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ସହିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିଧାନସଭାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ରହିବ ।

ଏହି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା ଆଇନ ୧୯୫୪ ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ସରକାର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରେଜେଟର କ୍ରମସଂଖ୍ୟା ୩୯୨, ଏପ୍ରିଲ ୧୪, ୧୯୬୬ରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନାମା ପ୍ରକାଶିତ କରନ୍ତି ଯେ, ୧୯୬୬ ମେ' ୧୬ ତାରିଖରୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସରକାରୀ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ହେବ । (ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିବରଣୀ ପାଇଁ ଉକ୍ତ ରେଜେଟ୍ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଦ୍ରଷ୍ଟବ୍ୟ) ।

ତା'ପରେ ୧୯୮୩ ମସିହା ଏପ୍ରିଲ ୩୦ ତାରିଖରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ସରକାରୀ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାର ବ୍ୟବହାର ପାଇଁ ଏକ ସଭା ବସେ ଏବଂ ସଭା ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ସଭାପତିତ୍ୱରେ ବସେ । ଏହି ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ଗୃହୀତ ହୁଏ ଯେ, ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା କମିଟିଙ୍କର ସୁପାରିଶ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ସବୁ ମୁଖ୍ୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ ଏବଂ ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଅଧୀନସ୍ଥ ସମସ୍ତ ବିଭାଗରେ ଏକବର୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏବଂ ରାଜ୍ୟର ସମସ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ୧୯୮୫ ଏପ୍ରିଲ ୧ ତାରିଖରୁ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହେବ । ଏହା ପୁଣି ଗୃହୀତ ହୁଏ ଯେ, ଏହାକୁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସମୟ ଭିତରେ ସଫଳ କରିବା ପାଇଁ କେତେକ ଆନୁଷ୍ଠାନିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ନିଆଯିବ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରତିଟି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ସମୟ ସୂଚନା ରହିବ ।

ଏହି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସଂକ୍ଷେପରେ ହେଲା -

୧. ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶବ୍ଦକୋଷର ମାନକୀକରଣ

୨. ଆଇନ-କାନୁନର ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଅନୁବାଦ

୩. ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଅନୁବାଦ ଓ ସ୍ଥାନକୀକରଣ

୪. ଆବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରଚନା ଓ ଚିତ୍ରଣୀର ସଂକଳନ

୫. ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଟାଇପ୍-ରାଇଟର ପାଇଁ ଏକ ସହଜ କି-ବୋର୍ଡ ନିର୍ମାଣ

୬. ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଟାଇପ୍-ରାଇଟର ଯୋଗାଣ

୭. ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଟାଲିପିଂ ଓ ସେନୋଗ୍ରାଫିରେ ତାଲିମ

୮. ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ପ୍ରଗତିର ତଦାରଖ ଓ ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ ।

ଏହି ସରକାରୀ ବିଜ୍ଞପ୍ତିଗୁଡ଼ିକରୁ ମନେ ହେବ ଯେ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ପାଇଁ ଟାଲିପି କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟକୁ ପୂରଣ କରିସାରିଛନ୍ତି । ବାସ୍ତବିକ ଏହି ଆଠ ଦମ୍ପା ସମ୍ବଳିତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟସୂଚୀ ବା ଅନୁରୂପ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ମହାକରଣ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଭାଷାମାନି ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ କୌଣସି ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ନାହିଁ । ଏ ପଦକ୍ଷେପଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରୂପେ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାଗତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଯେଉଁ ଦୁଇଟି ସ୍ୱାକୃତିର ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ରହିଛି, ସେ ହେଉଛି ଭାରତୀୟ ସମ୍ବିଧାନର ଅଷ୍ଟମ ସୂଚୀରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସରକାରୀ ଭାଷା ଆଇନ-୧୯୫୪ । ଏହି ଦୁଇଟି ଆଇନ ବଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ହୋଇଛି ଓ ଏହି ସୁଯୋଗ ନିମିତ୍ତେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ନାଗରିକ ଅଧିକାର କ୍ଷୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେବାର ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଆଶାଯାଇପାରେ ।

ତଥାପି ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକରି ଦେଖିଲେ ବୁଝିହେବ ଯେ, ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଏହି ଆଇନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଏହା ଅନେକଦ୍ରୁ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଅକ୍ଷମ । ଏହି ଅକ୍ଷମତାର ଏକାଧିକ କାରଣ ଅଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରୀ ସ୍ତରରେ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଆର ବ୍ୟବହାର କାଗଜ କଲମରେ ରହିଯାଇଛି । ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବି ଏହା ଆହୁରି ସଂକୁଚିତ । ରାଉରକେଲା ଇସ୍ପାତ କାରଖାନାର ସଞ୍ଚାଳକ-ମଣ୍ଡଳୀ ସଭାରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଛଡ଼ା ଅନ୍ୟ କେଉଁ ଭାଷାର କ୍ଷମତା କି ଅଛି ପ୍ରବେଶ କରିବାର ? ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରବେଶ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଏ ସବୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ରୁଦ୍ଧ କପାଟ, ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ସେଠି ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷା ଆସନ ଜମାଇ ବସିଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ସବୁ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରକୁ ପଶିବାର ଓଡ଼ିଆର କ୍ଷମତା ନାହିଁ । ଅନ୍ୟଦ୍ରୁ ଆଇନଗତ । ଯେପରି ନ୍ୟାୟାଳୟଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହେବା ନିଷିଦ୍ଧ । ଅପାରଗତା ବା ସୁଯୋଗର ଅଭାବରୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଅନେକଦ୍ରୁ ପ୍ରତିହତ ହୋଇଛି, ଯଥା : କ୍ରିକେଟ ଟେଷ୍ଟ ମ୍ୟାଚର ଧାରା-ବିବରଣୀ କେବଳ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଓ ହିନ୍ଦୀରେ ମିଳିପାରେ । ରେଳଗାଡ଼ି ତବାରେ 'ସ୍ଲିପରକୋର୍' ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ହିନ୍ଦୀରେ 'ଶୟନଯାନ' ଲେଖାଯାଉଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଦିଆଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ଗୋଦରେଜ କମ୍ପାନୀର ଆଲମାରୀ ବା ଫ୍ରିଜ୍ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବିକ୍ରି ହୁଏ ବା ଉଷା, ଖଇତାନ ପଞ୍ଜୀ ଉପରେ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ନାମ ଲେଖାହୁଏ, ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ନୁହେଁ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ନିର୍ମିତ କୋଣାର୍କ

ଟି.ଭି. ଉପରେ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ନାଁ ଦିଆଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ନାନା ଧରଣର ଔଷଧ ବା ବହୁ ବ୍ୟବହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଜିନିଷ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାର ଯେଉଁ ସୂଚନାପତ୍ର ଆସେ, ସେଥିରେ କୃତ୍ରିମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲେଖା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ଏଥିରୁ କ୍ଷଷ୍ଟ ଯେ, ନାନା କାରଣରୁ ସଂସ୍କାରଗତ ହେଉ, ଅପାରଗତା ଯୋଗୁ ହେଉ ବା ବ୍ୟବସାୟିକ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ହେଉ, ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପ୍ରବେଶାଧିକାର ନାନା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରହିତ ବା ସଂକୁଚିତ । ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାକୁ ରାଜନୈତିକ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଦେବାର କାରଣ ହେଉଛି ଯେ, ଜଣେ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀ ଆଇନତଃ ସେହି ଭାଷାରେ ସମସ୍ତ ସେବା ଦାବୀ କରିପାରିବ । ସେ ଅଧିକାର ତା'କୁ ନମିଳିଲେ ଆଇନତଃ ସେ ତା'ର ପ୍ରତିବିଧାନ କରିପାରିବ । ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାସମ୍ପନ୍ନ ଭାଷା ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ଏହି ନାଗରିକ ଅଧିକାରକୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରିଥାଏ କିନ୍ତୁ ସଚେତନତାର ଅଭାବରେ ଏହା ସରକାରୀ ଓ ବେସରକାରୀ ହତତାର ପରିଣତ ହୋଇଛି ।

ମୋଟାମୋଟି ଭାବେ ଏହା ହିଁ ହେଉଛି ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ବିକାଶର ସ୍ତର ଓ ସମସ୍ୟା, ଯେଉଁଥିରୁ ଏହାର ଉନ୍ନତିପଥରେ ଦେଖାଦେଇଥିବା ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାରର ଅନ୍ତରାୟଗୁଡ଼ିକର ସୂଚନା ମିଳିପାରେ । ତେବେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ସାମ୍ପ୍ରତିକ ଅବସ୍ଥା ବିଷୟରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦୁଇଟି କଥା କୁହାଯାଇପାରେ, ଯାହା ଖାଲି ଓଡ଼ିଆ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ନୁହେଁ, ଅନ୍ଧେ ବହୁତେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଭାଷା, ଏପରିକି ହିନ୍ଦୀ ପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଯୁଜ୍ୟ । ତାହା ହେଲା ଶିକ୍ଷାକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ମାତୃଭାଷା । ଶିକ୍ଷାବିତ୍‌ମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ସବୁ ରଙ୍ଗର ରାଜନୈତିକ, ସମାଜସେବକ ଓ ଦେଶପ୍ରେମୀମାନଙ୍କ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ, ସମସ୍ତେ ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ ଶିକ୍ଷାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ବିଷୟରେ ଶତମୁଖ ।

ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଯେ, ଶିକ୍ଷା ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ ଦିଆଗଲେ ଏହା ଏକ ଢେଲାରେ ବହୁ ଚଢ଼େଇ ମାରିବ । ଏହା ଶିକ୍ଷାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ମାନ ବଢ଼ାଇବ, ଶିକ୍ଷାର ଅହେତୁକ ସୁଯୋଗ ନେଉଥିବା ଧନୀ, ଉଚ୍ଚଜାତି ଓ ସହରବାସୀମାନଙ୍କର ଏକଚାଟିଆକୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିବ ଓ ସର୍ବୋପରି ଇଂରାଜୀଭାଷା ପରି ଏକ ବିଦେଶୀ ଭାଷା, ଯାହା ଆମର ତ୍ରିକାଳକୁ ଆବେରି ରହିଛି, ତା'କୁ ସମ୍ବଳେ ବହିଷ୍କାର କରାଯାଇପାରିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯାହା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳୁଛି, ଇଂରାଜୀଭାଷା ଯାହା ବ୍ରିଟିଶ ଅମଳରେ ବି କେବଳ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ସୀମିତ ଥିଲା, ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ତାହା ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ସ୍ତରକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଆସିଛି । ଭାରତର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ

ଯେଉଁ ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ ଇଂଲିଶ୍-ମିଡିଅମ୍ ସ୍କୁଲ ଖୋଲୁଛି, ସେଥିରୁ ଏହା ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ । ମୁଲାୟମ ସିଂହ ଯାଦବ ବା ଲାଲୁପ୍ରସାଦ ଯାଦବଙ୍କ ପରି କଞ୍ଚର ହିନ୍ଦୀପ୍ରେମୀମାନେ ବି ନିଜର ସନ୍ତାନସନ୍ତତିକୁ ଇଂଲିଶ୍-ମିଡିଅମ୍ ସ୍କୁଲକୁ ପଠାଇବା ପାଇଁ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇପଡିଛନ୍ତି । ଅନ୍ୟ ସାଧାରଣଙ୍କ କଥା ସହଜରେ ଅନୁମେୟ । କାରଜପତ୍ରରେ ଯାହା ହେଉଥାଉ ନା କାହିଁକି, ଇଂରାଜୀଭାଷା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସୁବିଧାବାଦୀ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀପାଇଁ ନୂତନ ସୁଯୋଗର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସୃଷ୍ଟିକରିଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବି ତା'ର ବ୍ୟତିକ୍ରମ ନାହିଁ । ଏଇ କେତେବର୍ଷ ତଳ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷାର ପୋଥିଗତ ଇଂରାଜୀର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ନେଇ ଏକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଶ୍ରେଣୀର ଲୋକ ଧନ, ମାନ, ଶକ୍ତି, ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟକୁ କଳ୍ପା କରୁଥିଲେ । ଏହି ଭାଷା ଥିଲା ଏକ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୀମିତ ଭାଷା, ଯେଉଁଥିରେ ସୃଜନଶୀଳ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବାର ଦକ୍ଷତା ନଥିଲେ ବି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାରର କିରାଣିଗିରି କରିବାପାଇଁ ଏହା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ଥିଲା । ଏବଂ ଏହି ଇଂରାଜୀର ମାତୃଭାଷାର ସ୍ଥାନ ନେବାର ବା ତାହାକୁ ଉଚ୍ଛେଦ କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ନଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ

ଜଣେକି ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଇଂରାଜୀଶିକ୍ଷା ବଳରେ ଉଚ୍ଚାସନରୁଢ଼ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି, ଇଂରାଜୀଭାଷାରେ କବିତ୍ୱ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଇଂରାଜୀଭାଷାରେ ସୃଜନଶୀଳ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ଭାବନାକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବା ପରି ଭାଷା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ନଥିଲା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ଭାଷାରେ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ, ସେ ଭାଷା ଜୋରରେ ସମସ୍ତ ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଥିବା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଓଡ଼ିଆତ୍ୱ ବିପନ୍ନ ହେଉନଥିଲା, କାରଣ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମାତୃଭାଷା ଅତୁଟ ରହୁଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଇଂରାଜୀମାଧ୍ୟମ ସ୍କୁଲର ଇଂରାଜୀଭାଷା ଛାତ୍ରର ମାତୃଭାଷାକୁ ସମୂଳେ ଉଚ୍ଛେଦ କରିବ ବା ଏପରି ଭାବେ ପଢ଼ୁ କରିଦେବ ଯେ, ସେ ଭାଷା ଉପରୁ ତା'ର ସମସ୍ତ ଆତ୍ମା ତୁଟିଯିବ । ଅତିରେ ଏହିପରି ଏକ ଶିକ୍ଷିତ ବା ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଶିକ୍ଷିତ ତରୁଣଗୋଷ୍ଠୀକୁ, ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଜନ୍ମରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହେଲେ ବି ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ବା ଭାବନାରେ ବୁଦ୍ଧି, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ୱାଗତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେବା ଉଚିତ ।

“ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ବିଭବ”ରୁ ସଂରୁଦ୍ଧିତ

ସ୍ବପ୍ନେ ଓ ଜାଗରଣେ

ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଧର ନାୟକ

ସତ୍ୟବାଦୀର ବକୁଳ କୁଞ୍ଜବନେ
ତୁମେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲ ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କୁ
ପଞ୍ଚସଖାରେ ଜଣେ ।
ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଥିଲି ସିଂହଭୂମିରେ
ଏକକ ପାତ୍ରୀ ଘୂରି ବୁଲୁଥିଲେ
ପୋତାହାଟ ଠାରୁ ପଞ୍ଚରୁଲିଆ
ଜାତୀୟତା ଜାଗରଣେ
ତୁମେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲ ବକୁଳ କୁଞ୍ଜବନେ

ବନ୍ୟା ବିପତ୍ତି ବେଳେ
'ବାଣେ ଆପଣ'ଙ୍କୁ ତୁମେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲ
'ସେବା' କର୍ମୀଙ୍କ ମେଳେ,
ଦୁସ୍ତ ଜନତା ପାଖେ ଛିଡା ହେଇ
ତୃତୀ, ଗୁଡ, ମୁକ୍ତି, ଲୁଣ ବାଟିଦେଇ
ସଭା ସମିତିରେ ଆକୁଳେ କାନ୍ଦିବା
ଅଝଟ ଶିଶୁଟି ପରି,
ମୁଁ ଶୁଣିଥିଲି ତା'କ ବଜ୍ରତା
ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନାଞ୍ଚଳେ, ଉଜେ ଟେକି ମଥା
'ପଲସିକା ପଞ୍ଚ' ଅସୁଲ୍ କରିବା
ଝୁଲି ମୁଣିଟିଏ ଧରି
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରଚାର ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନେ
ଜାତୀୟତା ଜାଗରଣେ ।

ମୁଁ ପୁଣି ତାଙ୍କୁ କହିବାର ଶୁଣିଥିଲି:
ବ୍ରିଟିଶ୍ ସାଥରେ 'ଅସହଯୋଗ'ର ଯୁଦ୍ଧେ
ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଲୋକ ଗାନ୍ଧିଜୀଙ୍କ
କଂଗ୍ରେସେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଉ
ମହାଭାରତୀୟ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନର ସ୍ରୋତେ
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ପ୍ରାଣ ପ୍ରବାହର ଧାରା
ମିଶି ଏକ ହୋଇ ଯାଉ ।

ଏ' ମହା ଉଦ୍‌ଘୋଷଣା...
ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀଙ୍କ ତରଫୁ କେବଳ ସର୍ବସ୍ବଅମ
ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ହିଁ କରିଥିଲେ ଆମେ ଜାଣୁ, କାରଣ....
ତାଙ୍କର ଦୃଢ଼ ବିଶ୍ବାସ ଥିଲା...
ଭାରତ ଭୂମିରୁ ବ୍ରିଟିଶ-ରାଜକୁ ତଡ଼ି,
କଂଗ୍ରେସ ଯେବେ ଶାସନ କ୍ଷମତା ନେବ
ଭାଷା ସୂତ୍ରରେ ପ୍ରଦେଶ ଗଠନ ବେଳେ

ପତୋଶୀ ରାଜ୍ୟେ,
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷୀଙ୍କ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ଯେତେ ଥିବ
ସେ ସମସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ମିଶିଯିବ ।
ଛିନ୍ନମଣ୍ଡା ଉତ୍କଳ ମା' ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାଙ୍ଗିନୀ ହେବ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ହାୟ ! କ'ଣ ହେଉଛି,
କ'ଣ ଦେଖୁଛୁ ଆମେ ?
ସ୍ବାଧୀନତାର ପତାଶ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବି
ଷାଠିଏ ଲକ୍ଷ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜନତା
ପଡ଼ି ରହିଛନ୍ତି ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନାଞ୍ଚଳେ
ଆକୁଳ ବିକଳ ପ୍ରାଣେ ।

ଏବଂ ଦେଖୁଛୁ ଆମେ...
ଏବେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ହିମ୍ମତ ଆଉ ନାହିଁ
ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ କଥା କହିବାକୁ, ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ।
ସେମାନେ ନଜରବନ୍ଦୀ
ଭାବନ୍ତି ସେମାନେ : କାହିଁକି ବଂଚିବେ,
କଏଦୀ ଜୀବନ ନେଇ, କୋଉ ନିର୍ଲଜ୍ଜ ପଣେ ?

ଏଇ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର କିଏ ଦେବ ?
ଏବେ ପାଖାପାଖି ସାତ୍ବେତିନି କୋଟି
ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀଙ୍କ ଲୋକପ୍ରତିନିଧି,
ନେତା ଓ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ମହାମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ମେଳେ
ଅଛନ୍ତି କି କେହି ଓଡ଼ିଆ-ପ୍ରାଣର
ଜାତୀୟତାବାଦୀ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦର୍ଶ ନେତା ଜଣେ ?
କୁଳ ବୁଦ୍ଧଙ୍କ ପରି ?

ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ବ୍ୟାପି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି.....
ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ,
କେବଳ ମାତ୍ର....
ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ବନି, ଫେରି ଫେରି ଆସେ ଶୂନ୍ୟେ,
ବିଦ୍ରୋହୀ କବି ଶୁଣେ
ଏବଂ ଗୋଟାଏ ଶେଷ କ୍ରାନ୍ତିର
ଶପଥ ପଢ଼ିବାପାଇଁ
ଲୋହିତ ଲଗ୍ନ ଖୋଜି
ଥରି ଉଠେ ମନେ ମନେ,
ସ୍ବପ୍ନେ ଓ ଜାଗରଣେ ।

APHORISMS ON INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

"From every sentence (of the Upanisads) deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. In the whole world . . . there is no study . . . so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanisads. They are products of the highest wisdom. They are destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people."

Schopenhauer

(Quoted in "The Principal Upanisads" by S. Radhakrishnan)

"When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavadgita. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies -- and my life has been full of external tragedies -- and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teachings of Bhagavadgita."

M. K. Gandhi

(Young India)

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind . . . has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which will deserve the attention of those who have studied Plato and Kant -- I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we . . . who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw the corrective which is the most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more human a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life -- again I should point to India."

Max Muller

(Quoted in "The Religions of Man" by Huston Smith)

Thus it appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta, drink at my well. In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmological philosophy of Bhagavat Gita, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions."

Heny David Thoreau

(Walden)

ଧ୍ୟାନେନାତ୍ମନି ପଶ୍ୟନ୍ତି କେଚିତ୍ ଆତ୍ମାନମ ଆତ୍ମନା ।
ଅନ୍ୟେ ସାଂଖ୍ୟେନ ଯୋଗେନ କର୍ମଯୋଗେନ ଚାପରେ ॥

କେହି ଧ୍ୟାନଯୋଗ ଚଳରେ ଏହି ଦେହରେ ଫିଟି ଚକ୍ଷୁଦ୍ୱାରା ଆତ୍ମାର ପର୍ବନ ଲାଭ କରନ୍ତି ।
କେହିବା ସାଂଖ୍ୟ ଯୋଗଦ୍ୱାରା, ଆଉ କେହିବା ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କର୍ମ ଯୋଗଦ୍ୱାରା ଆତ୍ମାକୁ ପର୍ବନ ଲାଭ କରନ୍ତି ।

*dhyaanenaatmani pashyanti kechid aatmaanam aatmanaa
anye saankheyena yogena karmayogena chaapare*

Through meditation some perceive the Self (*paramaatmaa*) in the
self through the self; others through the path of knowledge
(*saankhya yoga*); and others through the path of right action (*karma yoga*).

*Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaaga Yoga
Bhagbad Gita*

ଦେଶର ଉନ୍ନତି ଯେତେ କର ଆସା
ଉଚ୍ଚକର ତେବେ ନିଜ ମାତୁ ଭାଷା ।
ଗାନ୍ଧୀଜୀ ମେହର

ORIYA : THE LANGUAGE OF ORISSA

"The limits of my language
mean limits of my world."

Ludwig Wittgenstein

ବୈଦେହୀ ବିସର୍ଜିତା

ମନୋରମା ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଆସୁଛି
ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଆସୁଛି କିଏ
ବିନ୍ୟାସଲରୁ
ବିପ୍ଳବୀ ପୃଥ୍ବୀର କୋଳକୁ
ବେଗବତୀ
ଦଉଡ଼ି ଯାଉଛି
ବିନ୍ଦୁ ସରରୁ ସିନ୍ଦୁ ତୀରକୁ ।
ଭୂମି ଶାନ୍ତିନୀ
ଭୂମିଷ୍ଠ ପ୍ରଣାମ କରୁଛି
ଭୂ'ମାକୁ !

ସପ୍ତର୍ଷି ମଣ୍ଡଳର
ଅବଗୁଣନ ଚିରି
ଅବତରି ଆସୁଛି
ଅରୁନ୍ଧତୀ
ତା ଅଲୌକିକ ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ

ଦେହର ଉତ୍ତରୀୟକୁ
ବିସର୍ଜନ କରି
ବୈଦେହୀ
କ୍ରମଶଃ ବିଲୀୟମାନ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି
ବସୁଧାର ବନ୍ଧବକାରରେ

ORISSA : THE OPEN-EYED LAND FOUR POEMS

"What can a poet write about his state, his land and his people? For they flow in his veins, build residence in his heart. He only remembers, lives them. He closes his eyes and can see the village, any village in his ancient land. The Mahanadi flows linking the past to the present - the Barabati fort to a paper mill. A tribal boy on the hill slopes of distant Koraput sings to his beloved. And the election comes when the people, whose grief outlives empires have again to chooseMay be, the poems can convey something of his inner tumult"

Sitakant Mahapatra

The Village

As if there is no one, anywhere;
and in whichever direction you look
only emptiness.

Except time, the fearsome loner;
the narrow lanes, trees, creepers
the few emaciated men
only its wide-open eyes
with teardrops glistening in them.

Time floats everywhere
as miniscule particles of dust;
helpless, it falls as yellow leaves;
it swings in the invisible swings of the wind
as errant children
from the overhanging banyan tree's roots;
as cursed Ahalya
it weeps in silent, weather-beaten rocks;
it sings softly
in the river's indolent current.

Time flows in Chitrotpola's quiet stream
eager, zestful
startled by the passionate call of the sea
rippling white in its pure passion.

Time ripens slowly in the golden sun
milk filling up in the maturing grain
of paddy stalks stretching
endless to the horizon.

Time is the grain;
it is the body made of clay
that smoulders and burns
on the funeral pyre on the river-bed
time is the eternal inner witness
that straddles this emptiness.

As if it is not a village
but only a small speck
in the infinite stretch of time
in whose dark womb
the past, the present and the future
ever get lost
in a game of hide and seek
that will never end.

(Translation: Poet)

Dhangda's Love Song

*On the hill's sloping ground
I asked you to give me love, dreams,
 rough tobacco leaves
And you said: Here there are only
 the harvesting men.
 Not here.*

*In the twilight dark,
at the place where the village
 now begins to be restless
 with the scent of mahula,
I asked for your affection, your body;
Or else, you just give me your word, I said.
And you said: I'm always afraid of
 the fireflies and the lonely stars;
it is better we left this solitary place.*

*Inside the wild-thick forest, when
the bearing of the heart could be clearly heard,
I asked for your love, your touch.
And you said: Oh, not here, it is only
 the pale grey earth. Wouldn't this
 flower-like body, this pure
 unblemished soul, go earth-pale?
 Not here, not here!*

*Beside the rivulet, there was no one
except the lone bird that sang.
I asked for your touch, for darkness.
And you said: On the rivulet's clear mirror
everything is seen.
Not here, not here.*

*The whole world had drooped to sleep,
even the moon and the stars,
I asked for your touch, asked for life,
and, for my helpless, shivering soul, begged for a
small place in the nest of your body.
And you said: Even in the dark, inside
your eye's mirror, everything is clearly seen.
Not now, not now.*

*Taking off my eyes thus, I am giving them over
to you, like a lotus-gift. Take them.
And now give me the touch, the love, the dark,
give my lonely soul its much needed shelter.*

Dhangda - unmarried boy

(Translation - Bibhu Padhi)

The Bridge on the Mahanadi

*A steel bird
flies away, away
it flies, away.*

*Nor does it pause
above the water's greener depths
to look at the fish
shining with the magic glaze of silver.*

*Nor does it pause
above the tiny river island
to eat the red berries
and build a nest
in the palm tree's paved body.*

*A steel bird
flies away, flies,
away it flies away,
holding in its beak
the deadlover's letter, now
smeared with the night's
sinister, papermill smell
it seeks the princess of Barabati
under the pale moon -
seeks on through the night, seeks.*

(Translation: Bibhu Padhi)

The Election

*Our jeep crawls to your village
seeking strange melodies
from the roaring sun and to instal
a few cool moments of community bliss
in the howling chaos
of private agonies.*

*Our dark longings do not touch you
nor our clever trappings:
posters, symbols, pep talks, handbills;
for your grief outlives empires.*

*The cold grandchildren
awaken in your heart
as you discern muted allegories
on our ashen faces.*

*Here the great persuaders
are little things and not so hidden:
cheap plastics, cheaper nylons
dark glasses to blot out suns.
One step in hunger
another in atman you decide:
the anguish of choice.*

(Translation: Poet)

THE MAKERS OF ORIYA LITERATURE

Ganeswar Mishra

INTRODUCTION : Oriya belongs to the Indo-Aryan family of languages in the state of Orissa and its adjoining states such as Singbhum (Bihar), Midnapore (West Bengal), Raipur and Bastar (Madhya Pradesh) and Srikakulam (Andhra). About twenty million people speak Oriya as their mother-tongue.

The earliest records of Oriya language are available in innumerable stone and copperplate inscriptions found in east and south India. Ashoka's inscriptions found in Dhauli (Bhubaneswar) and Jaugarh (Ganjam), written in Palli in the Brahmi script in the first century B.C.; King Kharavela's Hatigumpha inscriptions (Bhubaneswar) written in Palli in the Brahmi script in the first century B.C.; Maharaja Mahasamanta Madhavaraja's copper-plate inscription (Ganjam) written in Sanskrit in the seventh century; these are immensely helpful for the study of the evolution of the Oriya language and script. However, the earliest Oriya inscriptions belong to the period of the Ganga kings (eleventh century) and the Surya Kings (fifteenth century). Oriya inscriptions have been discovered in Vizagapatnam (Andhra) and Midnapore (West Bengal) thus suggesting that the Oriya language was spoken and understood in a much larger area than the present territory of Orissa.

The *Charyapadas*, discovered in Nepal by Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sashtri in 1906, are claimed by Oriya, Bengali, Maithili and Assamese scholars to be the examples of the earliest verse in their literatures. The *Padas* were composed by a school of Buddhist monks presumably between the tenth and twelfth century. *Shishuveda*, a collection of religious verses composed by Gorakhnath presumably in the thirteenth century; *Kalasha Chautisha*, a poem dealing with the marriage of Siva and Parvati (fourteenth century); a lyric by King Kapilendra Deva (fifteenth century); *Madala Panji* (the temple chronicle of Puri), written in the sixteenth century - these are landmarks of early Oriya literature. One may reasonably conclude, from this evidence, that by the fifteenth century the Oriya language was fairly developed and was considered a fit medium for literary compositions. It may not be

out of place to note here that Orissa had, from ancient times, a tradition of writing in Sanskrit, mostly under royal patronage, and works such as *Pancha Tantra* by Vishnu Sharma (fifth century), *Ekavali* by Vidyadhara (thirteenth century), *Gita Govinda* by Jayadeva (thirteenth century) and *Sahitya Darpana* by Viswanath Kaviraj (fourteenth century) were composed in Orissa. Thousands of Sanskrit manuscripts, mostly in palm-leaves, are available in Orissa.

Orissa is one of the most colorful regions of the country, geographically as well as culturally. With the vast blue ocean at its east, the eastern ranges and the deep forests in its eastern and southern zones, it is a land of picturesque landscape and flora and fauna. Two-fifths of its population consists of tribals and scheduled castes and, although Oriya is the dominant language, tribals have their own dialects such as *Mandari* and *Shantali*. Orissa, down the centuries, has been the land of pilgrimage and exposed to various religions and beliefs, including Buddhism, Jainism, Shaktism, Tantrism and even Islam and Christianity. A land of ancient origin and known at different stages of history as *Kalinga*, *Utkala*, *Odra*, and *Koshala*, Orissa has come under the domination of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim and British rulers. However, Jagannath (the Lord of the Universe), has remained the national deity of the Oriyas who symbolize the synthesis of all religions and cultures, Aryan or non-Aryan, tribal or alien.

Orissa has an extremely rich tradition of oral literature consisting of innumerable myths, legends, folklore, *brata-katha* (stories narrated on religious occasions), riddles, idioms, and proverbs. It is a state of predominantly rural and its rate of literacy (1981 census) is as low as thirty four percent. Understandably, oral and folk forms of literature are an important aspect of Orissan life and culture. It may also be noted that the entire bulk of medieval literature in Oriya was recorded in palm-leaf manuscripts of which, for obvious reasons, many are lost. We understand that the palm-leaf manuscripts in the Utkal University Library and the State Museum are fifty thousand and there must be many in other institutions and private collections.

SARALA DAS
The First Major Poet

Though Oriya literature had already few literary compositions, it was Sarala Das (fifteenth century), the author of *Mahabharata*, the *Vilanka Ramayana* and the *Chandi Purana*, who laid the firm foundation of Oriya literature. He may be compared with the great poet Chaucer, the Father of the English language and English Poetry, who lived in the fourteenth century.

Sarala Das has written eighty three thousand verses in the *Mahabharata* (roughly twenty-three hundred printed pages). His *Vilanka Ramayana* and *Chandi Purana* contain about twenty-eight hundred and fifty-five hundred verses respectively. Composing such a substantial body of literature in a language that was still hardly considered 'respectable', was indeed an extremely brave and laudable achievement. In no other Indian language is such a voluminous *Mahabharata* known to have existed at such an early date.

Sarala Das was born in a poor peasant family in the village Jhankada (Cuttack) close to the temple of Goddess Sarala whose devotee he was. His family name was Sidheswar Parida and Sarala Das (meaning the servant of Goddess Sarala) was the name by which he referred to himself in his works. It was a convention in ancient Oriya literature for poets and authors to introduce themselves to their readers as 'servants' or 'dasas' of some god or goddess. This was a mark of humility as well as suggestive of the religious world-view of the authors.

Sarala Das lived in a century that is considered the most glorious in the history of Orissa. He was the contemporary of Kapilendra Deva who ruled Orissa from 1435 A.D. to 1467 A.D. and whose empire extended from the Ganges in the north to the Kaveri in the south. The entire Orissan society, then, was militarized and particularly the caste of cultivators to which Sarala Das belonged, formed the mainstay of the Orissan army. War being a major theme of Sarala Das's *Mahabharata* and the details of war being extremely authentic and convincing, it is believed that Sarala Das was closely associated with the army. As evident in his *Mahabharata*, he had a fairly sound knowledge of the political map of contemporary India and it is possible that he accompanied Kapilendra Deva's army in its conquest

of far-off kingdoms. It may be mentioned that Muslims had already dominated India whereas Orissa was the only powerful Hindu state then, and it remained so until 1568, even after most parts of India, including Orissa's neighboring provinces, came under the Muslim administration.

Sarala Das indeed was a great rebel not only for composing monumental literary texts in a language other than Sanskrit, but also because he was a *sudra* (the lowest caste in Hindu social order) who became the first poet to compose religious works in Oriya. It is possible that Sarala Das faced bitter opposition from the Brahmins - elites of the time. However, Sarala Das never expresses any rancor for any other caste or class, but repeatedly states that he is ignorant and 'records at sun-rise, what Goddess Sarala tells him at night'.

Sarala Das's expressions of humility have often been literally accepted and many seem to believe that he was little better than an illiterate peasant. But nothing could be farther from truth. Sarala Das was well-familiar with the Sanskrit *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and much of classical literature including *Raghuvansha* and other plays of Kalidas. Possibly he heard the Sanskrit texts from Brahmin pandits and had no opportunity for any formal education.

The *Mahabharata* is the magnum opus of Sarala Das. Though based on the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* it is different from the original in so many ways that it may be accepted as a new creation. For one thing, Sarala Das completely adapts the story of the *Mahabharata* and its characters to Orissan life and situation, and omits portions of the original as well as adds episodes of his own. Local myths, legends, folk-lore, customs and habits find free expression in his work and the reader feels that even characters such as *Yudhisthira*, *Bhima* and *Draupadi* are not distant and superhuman figures, but they are familiar ones who had been to his village or locality at some time or other.

The *Mahabharata* of Sarala Das can be aptly described as the encyclopedia of medieval Orissan life and history. Though the story of *Mahabharata* is ancient, Sarala Das has referred liberally to events of his time and even to Muslim invasions.

Poetry came to Sarala Das as easily as leaves come to

trees in spring. Though generally composed in colloquial, earthy idiom of the peasant's speech, the poet uses Sanskrit vocabulary wherever necessary and there are passages which are excellent as poetry. Composed in a form called *dandi-brutta*, in which lines contain uneven number of words, it is a free and spontaneous creation evoking Oriya life, culture and ethos as no other work seems to do. In popularity it is second to none except perhaps the Oriya *Bhagabat* of Jagannath Das (sixteenth century). Sarala Das's popularity spread far and wide and the Bengali and Telugu versions of his *Mahabharata* are known to have enjoyed wide circulation.

Sarala Das borrowed the story of his *Vilanka Ramayana* from the Sanskrit *Advut Ramayana*. In *Vilanka Ramayana*, Rama slays the one-thousand-headed *Ravan of Vilanka*, much more powerful than the ten-headed *Ravan of Lanka*, not by his military power but by the feminine power of *Seeta*. Also in *Chandi Purana* Sarala Das describes the killing of the demon, *Kapila Singha* which has the body of a buffalo and the head of a man.

Sarala Das, the devotee of *Goddess Sarala*, was a *Shakta* (worshiper of *Shakti*, God revealed in Feminine Form) and in both *Vilanka Ramayana* and *Chandi Purana*, he proves the supremacy of the Eternal Feminine over the crude masculine force.

JAGANNATH DAS The Supremely Great

Jagannath Das the sixteenth century poet who translated the *Bhagabat* into Oriya, is the most widely read and the most widely quoted poet of Orissa. His place in Orissa life and culture can be easily compared with that of Tulsi Das in Hindi or the author of the *Kurals* in Tamil.

By the time Jagannath Das lived and wrote, *Vaishnavism* (the cult of *Vishnu*) had great influence on Orissa and *Jagannath* of Puri was viewed as a form of *Vishnu*. Saints such as Ramanuja (twelfth century) had visited Puri and Jayadeva (thirteenth century) had composed beautiful verses on the *Radha-Krishna* theme (*Krishna*, an incarnation of *Vishnu*). During Jagannath Das's time, Chaitanya, the great saint of Bengal, visited Puri and attracted by the congenial atmosphere of *Vaishnavism* in Orissa, settled down in Puri. Chaitanya's *bhakti* cult inspired many in Orissa

and influenced Orissan life and culture in a number of ways. The Orissan form of *Vaishnavism*, however, is somewhat different from the *Vaishnavism* preached by Chaitanya known as *Gaudiya Vaishnavism*. Chaitanya was a great admirer and friend of Jagannath Das and is reported to have conferred on Jagannath Das the title of *Atibadi* (Supremely Great), even though Jagannath Das and Chaitanya belonged to two different cults of *Vaishnavism* (*Utkaliya* and *Gaudiya*).

From *Jagannatha Charitamruta*, a biographical work on Jagannath Das written in the seventeenth century by Bipra Dibakar Das, we learn that Jagannath Das was born and lived in Puri. He was a great saint and scholar in Sanskrit and classical literature.

Scholars are not yet unanimous as to the number of works written by Jagannath Das. As many as sixty Oriya books and nine Sanskrit books are ascribed by some to Jagannath Das's authorship. However, except the *Bhagabat* (out of which the first eleven volumes were composed by Jagannath Das and the rest two volumes by his disciples), other works are not of much significance.

Legend has it that Jagannath Das translated the Sanskrit *Bhagabat* into Oriya, at his mother's instance, as the Sanskrit *Bhagabat* was inaccessible to most of the common people. He translated the Sanskrit text, and read it out and interpreted it to the devotees, inside the shrine of *Lord Jagannath*. It was while reading and interpreting the *Bhagabat* that Chaitanya saw Jagannath Das for the first time and admired him immensely.

Sixteenth century is an important period in the religious history of India. Besides Chaitanya, Shankar Dev, Kabir, Nanak, Mira Bai and Dadu were the contemporaries of Jagannath Das and India has never seen such a host of great saints in any other century. It is possible to see Jagannath Das's life and work as part of a religious and literary movement that was pan-Indian in character.

Though less gifted as a poet than Sarala Das, the author of the Oriya *Mahabharata*, and even Balaram Das, his contemporary and the author of the Oriya *Ramayana*, Jagannath Das surpassed both of them in popularity. This may partly be due to the appeal of *Vaishnavism* to the Oriya masses but mostly due to

the clarity and lucidity of diction and economy of expression of the Oriya *Bhagabat*. Composed in the form known as *navakshari* (each line containing nine letters), the Oriya *Bhagabat* blends successfully the literary and the colloquial styles. It is by no means a literal translation of the Sanskrit text but a free rendering which is sometimes better than the original.

The Oriya *Bhagabat* became so popular that it was read almost in every Oriya village and *Bhagabat ghars* (*ghar*: house) were established in every village where the villagers would assemble in the evenings to listen to the reading of the *Bhagabat*, discuss welfare of the village and settle disputes finding solutions in the teachings of the *Bhagabat*. People of all castes thought it their duty to learn the Oriya alphabets just to enable them to read the *Bhagabat* and the *Bhagabat* helped spread of education and literacy in Orissa. The philosophy preached in the *Bhagabat* has gone into the subconscious of the Oriya mind and even illiterate villagers are found quoting the *Bhagabat* in course of their conversation.

UPENDRA BHANJA The Superb Craftsman

Upendra Bhanja, who wrote in the last decade of the seventeenth and the early decades of the eighteenth century, championed a style of poetry called *reeti* in Sanskrit poetics. Though many poets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote in the *reeti* style, Upendra Bhanja decidedly emerged as the greatest.

The times of Upendra Bhanja were significantly different from those of Sarala Das and Jagannath Das. Orissa had already lost much of its political glory and the mighty Orissan empire was already split into many small kingdoms. After the death of the last Hindu emperor, Mukunda Deva, in 1568, Orissa had come under the domination of the Muslim power and was ruled, successively, by the Moghuls, Afghans and Marathas until 1803 when it became a part of the British empire.

However, in spite of the decline of the political glory of Orissa, literary activities continued in full swing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Besides Upendra Bhanja who is referred to as *Kavi Samrat* (emperor among poets), Deenakrushna Das, Abhimanyu Samanta Simhar, Bhakta Charan Das

and Gopal Krushna Pattanayak enriched Oriya *Kavya* literature immensely, during this period.

Upendra Bhanja belonged to the royal family of *Ghumusar* (south Orissa) who preferred to devote his entire life to poetry rather than to rule a kingdom. He had a thorough training in Sanskrit Classical literature and mastered Sanskrit dictionaries such as *Amar Kosha*, *Trikanda Kosha* and *Medini Kosha*. He even wrote a dictionary, *Geetabhidana* for helping the poets.

As a poet, Upendra Bhanja seems to have been influenced by the Sanskrit *kavyas* of the ninth and tenth centuries; Jayadeva's *Geetagovinda* and the *prabandha-kavyas* that flourished in Telugu during the reign of emperor Krishnadeva Roy (1503-1530). These *kavyas* in Sanskrit as well as in Telugu, have two dominant characteristics : (i) the main theme of these *kavyas* is *shringar* (physical love) and (ii) there is greater emphasis on the techniques of poetry such as puns, alliterations, assonances, etc, rather than on the novelty in theme or imagery. Often the poets get obsessed with the idea of creating particular sound effects and ignore the sense and produce works which are nothing but exercises in versification. Thus, if in one work each line starts with a particular alphabet, in another, one stanza might give rise to various meanings if read with permutations and combinations of words used in the stanza.

Upendra Bhanja is said to have composed as many as seventy *Kavyas* out of which many are still unpublished. Among his published works, the important ones are : *Lavanyabati*, *Kotibrahmanda Sundari*, *Premasudhanidhi*, *Rasikaharavali*, *Baidhishavilasa*, *Subhadraparinaya*, *Chitra-kavya-bandhodaya* and so on. Even the titles suggest that most of Bhanja's *Kavyas* center around a most beautiful woman with love and marriage as the dominant theme.

Almost all the Bhanja *Kavyas* have the same pattern. They deal with the birth, adolescence and youth of a prince and a princess, their marriage and love-making, periodic separation and union. For an ordinary reader it is impossible to follow his *kavyas* without referring to dictionaries and glossaries, for his excessive fondness of word-play. Yet, *palawalas* (a class of folk actors) are often found to keep their audience spell-bound while interpreting Bhanja's

kavyas abundant with descriptions of love and marriage. Bhanja has repeatedly referred to his verse as a coconut with sweet juice inside, but a rough exterior; meaning thereby that he alone can appreciate his *kavyas* who can understand the meaning and implication of the words he uses.

Though Bhanja seems mistaken thinking word-acrobatics as poetic excellence, there is no shadow of doubt that he is a great poet. He is a superb craftsman who has often manipulated words to create excellent music. It is for the music of his poetry that he has been read and enjoyed universally. He has employed a variety of forms and one may enjoy much more listening to his poetry being sung than reading it with the help of foot-notes or dictionaries.

BHIMA BHOI A Great Tribal Poet

Though Orissa has a substantial number of tribals and the tribals' contribution to Orissan culture is by no means insignificant, we do not have any major Oriya author who hails from the tribal community. The only exception, however, is Bhima Bhoi.

Bhima Bhoi was a *kond*, who lived and worked in Redhakhol (Sambalpur), an extremely backward native state, full of hills and jungles. By profession, he was a cowherd and led a very hard life. It is even said that he was blind and illiterate. He was a follower of *Mahima Dharma* (Religion of Glory) which was preached by Mahima Goswain. This *dharma* seems to be a blending of *Hinduism* and *Buddhism* which condemns worship of images and observance of rituals. Inspired by his faith, Bhima Bhoi composed innumerable *bhajans* (prayer-songs) and *chautishas* (poems with stanzas beginning with consonants in chronological order) which were particularly popular among the rural masses.

Bhima Bhoi's works include *Bhajana-Mala*, *Stuti Chintamani*, *Shrutinishedha Geeta*, *Nirveda Sadhana*, *Adi-Anta Geeta*, *Padmakalpa* and *Chautisha Madhuchakra*.

Recently interest has been revived in Bhima Bhoi's works and All India Radio, Cuttack, is regularly broadcasting his *bhajans*. Bhima Bhoi's love for suffering humanity is unbounded and in one of his famous songs he says, let me rot in hell, if thereby the world can be saved.

Bhima Bhoi is a religious poet who may remind one of the earliest poetry in Oriya language; the *Charyapadas*. Often mystical, he refers to the *pinda* (body) and *brahmananda* (essence) and its intricate relationships. Sometimes he seems uncertain of his vocabulary and his ideas seem blurred. But his sincerity of feelings and spontaneous expression have earned for him a niche in the temple of Oriya poetry.

RADHANATH ROY A Meeting of Two Traditions

Radhanath Roy (1848-1908) is recognized as the national poet of Orissa, who, along with Fakirmohan Senapati and Madhusudan Rao, ushered in the modern age in Oriya literature. During his life-time and may be up to the thirties Roy remained the most popular poet of Orissa and even now, in the age of prose and Journalism, when eminent poets of the past are hardly read except by students and scholars, Roy still enjoys a wide readership both among the elites and rural folk.

The first matriculate of his home district Balasore, Roy worked as a school teacher in various parts of Orissa and retired as an inspector of schools, a highly coveted position held by any native then. He was widely read in ancient Oriya Sanskrit, Bengali and English literatures and was equally familiar with Indian and Western literary traditions, a fact that is a significant pointer to the nature and quality of his achievement. We do not have, so far, any Oriya poet or author so well versed in Indian and Western literary traditions and more importantly, who could synthesize in his works both the traditions so skillfully and competently. Pre-Radhanath Roy poets, understandably, had access only to Indian or Sanskrit literary tradition whereas Radhanath Roy belonged to the first generation of Oriya authors exposed to English language and literature.

It seems ironical that Roy, a poet who was considerably inspired and influenced by Western literary tradition, has the distinction of being the national poet of Orissa, patriotism being a major theme in his poetry. Roy knew intimately the history of Orissan, its legends, myths, folklore, temples, rivers, its flora and fauna, as few other poets before him knew; and all this knowledge has gone into the making of his work authentic, convincing and historically plausible. His *Tipakhata* (diary), hitherto

unpublished, is one of the most valuable social and historical documents of his time.

Roy's fame mostly rests on the nine *kavyas* and a few short lyrics. He has also translated Kalidas's *Meghadootam* into Oriya and composed poems in Sanskrit and Bengali. In fact he started his poetic career with the publication of *Kavitavali*, a collection of poems in Bengali. *Bharata Geetika*, a Sanskrit lyric composed by Roy, with the opening line: 'India is the mother of all' is often sung in Orissa as the inaugural song on ceremonious occasions.

Roy's *kavyas* are *Kedar Gauri* (1886), *Chandrabhaga* (1886), *Nandikeswari* (1887), *Usha* (1888), *Parbati* (incomplete, 1890), *Chilika* (1891), *Mahajatra* (incomplete, 1893), *Jajati Keshari* (1894) and *Darbar* (1897). Except *Chilika* and *Darbar*, the plots of all other *kavyas* have been borrowed, mostly from Western sources, but so well adapted to Orissan situation that it is difficult to believe that the stories are not genuinely indigenous. The stories of *Kedar Gauri*, *Chandrabhaga*, *Nandikeshwari* and *Usha* are taken from Ovid's *Pyramus* and *This Be, Daphne and Adonis*, *Scilla* and *Nunus*, and *Atlanta's Race* respectively, with suitable additions and modifications. The stories of *Parbati* and *Jajatikeshari* are taken from the *Madala Panji* (the temple chronicles of Puri) and the Bengali poem *Vidya Sundar* by Bharat Chandra.

Though Orissa has a rich tradition of *kavya* literature, almost all pre-Radhanath Roy poets based their stories either on *Ram-Seeta* or *Radha-Krishna* themes, or on the love and marriage of a prince and princess, blending eroticism with *bhakti rasa*. In theme as well as in form and in the employment of images and metaphors, poets had already become conventional and archaic. Roy brought great freshness not only in his themes, but also in his form and style. He used a variety of forms and discarding the heavily sanskritised literary vocabulary, preferred an idiom comparatively more intelligible to the reader. His stories of intense romantic love and charming lyrical poetry provided the reader, simultaneously, the pleasure of reading fiction and poetry.

Mahajatra, though incomplete, is perhaps the most ambitious and unique work of Roy. It deals with the last journey of the *Pandavas* towards the Himalayas - the story borrowed from the *Mahabharata* and is

composed in blank verse. *Chilika*, again, is an unique poem on the scenic beauty of the Chilka lake and with the invocation of the glorious past of *Utkal*. In *Darbar*, Roy satirizes the Indians who surround and flatter the British officials for their petty material gains.

Roy wrote twenty-three short poems and translated *Meghadootam* and some verses of Tulsi Das. He also wrote a long story, *Italiya Juba*, an essay, *Viveki*, and the conclusion of his *kavya Parbati* in prose. His prose style is colorful, lucid, though occasionally archaic.

FAKIRMOHAN SENAPATI The Father of the Oriya Novel

Fakirmohan Senapati's (1843-1918) emergence as a novelist was significant not only for Oriya literature, but also for Indian literature as a whole. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries such as Umesh Chandra Sarkar who wrote the first novel in Oriya (*Padmamali*, 1888), Ramashankar Roy (1858-1907) and Gopal Ballav Das (1860-1914), Senapati completely discarded the theme of romantic love between a prince and a princess and wrote about the common people and their problems. In contrast to the heavy sanskritised style of Sarkar, Roy and Das, Senapati used colloquial idiomatic Oriya with great skill and competence. If the early novelists works seem more or less like prose renderings of medieval *kavyas*, Senapati's novels are realistic to the core. Moreover, Senapati can be favorably compared with twentieth century novelists such as Premchand and Bibhutibhusan Banerjee.

Senapati was born in the coastal district of Balasore, in a poor peasant family. He had no formal education but he led an active and eventful life working as a teacher, a printer and significantly, as a *Dewan* (Administrator), in various princely states of Orissa. As an administrator he came in contact with the people of various walks of life which must have helped him a great deal to collect material for his fiction. It is important to note that the period Senapati lived and wrote was one of the darkest in Orissan history. The Oriyas, then, had no state of their own (Orissa was formed in 1936) and they lived scattered in three neighboring states - Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Madras. As a result, they were economically neglected and had little opportunity to

develop their literature and culture. Since there were few schools in Oriya-speaking areas, the Oriyas were extremely backward in education. Some influential Bengalis, interestingly, started a campaign that Oriya was not a language but a dialect of Bengali, and hence Oriya should be replaced by Bengali in Orissan schools.

During Senapati's time there was the *Desha-Mishran Andolan* or the movement to bring all the Oriya speaking areas under one political administration. It was also felt that it was important to write text books and other works to enrich the modern Oriya literature if the Oriya language was to survive.

With this background in view, it is easy to understand why Senapati began his literary career as a writer of text books, and why Oriya nationalism was a dominant theme in Oriya literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Senapati apparently had no literary ambition in his youth. His purpose in writing text books was prompted by his zeal of opposing the move to abolish Oriya from Orissan schools. Though Senapati is recognized as the greatest prose writer in Oriya, it is amazing that he hardly wrote any prose (novels, short stories and autobiography) until he retired from administrative service. But all his life he was a prolific writer of verse producing *kavyas*, lyrics, satires and *puranas*. He translated the *Ramayana*, and the *Mahabharata*, and some of the *Upanishads* from the original Sanskrit. Though never as prominent a poet as his friend and contemporary, Radhanath Roy, Senapati was a highly respected poet who was offered the title of *Saraswati* by the royal court of Bamanda state. For his translation of the *Mahabharata* he is also known as *Vyasa-Kavi*.

Senapati's poetry was over-shadowed by the poetry of Radhanath Roy, which was immensely popular because it depicted love between a prince and princess in a language that was extremely lyrical and charming. Though less gifted than Roy, Senapati's poetry anticipated modern poetry in a number of ways. He wrote on themes which conventionally were not considered fit material for poetry, and he used the colloquial, spoken and rugged language of the common man which no poet in Oriya had done for centuries. His *Utkala Bhramanam*, which he wrote at one stretch while traveling on official duty on the back of an elephant, is a classic in humorous verse.

Senapati wrote four novels, two volumes of short stories and an autobiography. Some critics believe that *Lachhmania*, a story by Senapati published in a local magazine of Balasore, was the first short story written in any Indian language. Unfortunately this short story was lost. But the two volumes of short stories (*Galpa Swalpa, Vols I and II*) unmistakably prove that Senapati is a master in the art of writing short stories. He was out and out a realist who drew his material from the society around him. His *Atma Charit* (Autobiography, 1917), Senapati's autobiography, is not only the first of its kind in Oriya, but remains the best, and is perhaps one of the most interesting autobiographies written in Indian Languages. It is important both as a work of art and as an account of Orissan life in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Moreover, it is as readable as any of Senapati's novels and short stories.

Senapati's novels comprise: *Lachhama* (1901), *Chhamana Athaguntha* (Six acres and a Half, 1902), *Mamu* (Uncle, 1913) and *Prayaschitta* (Expiation, 1915). *Lachhama* is a historical novel set against the backdrop of the Maratha invasion of Orissa in the eighteenth century. The other three novels are portraits of contemporaneous society. All these four novels can be taken as depicting the social history of Orissa from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century.

Lachhama is a story of the Maratha invasion of Orissa which depicts the suffering and the heroic resistance of an Oriya country girl in the face of the invasion. *Chhamana Atha Guntha* is a vivid account of the exploitation of poor village folk by zamindars. *Mamu*, again, is a story of exploitation of village folk by petty Government officials and clerks. *Prayaschitta* portrays the predicament of a semi-educated youth who persistently defies the old order of things with his over enthusiasm for new Western values.

It is easy to see that Senapati was intensely aware of the social changes that were taking place during his lifetime. Except his first novel, for which he must have gathered material from second-hand sources, he wrote all his works from his own experience. Exploitation of the poor villagers by zamindars and the rise of a new class of exploiters in the petty officials and the clerks under the British Government

were the two dominant traits of nineteenth century Orissan social history; and Senapati chose to write about them in *Chhamana Atha Guntha* and *Mamu*. Senapati's last novel, in which he studied the conflict between traditional Indian values and Western values as understood by the educated youth of the time, clearly suggests that he was neither a traditionalist nor an over zealous advocate for the new wave of Westernization that was sweeping over the country. Perhaps he preferred a middle course. Exploitation of the poor by the rich has been such a dominant theme in India fiction, especially in the thirties and the forties, that the story of *Chhamana Atha Guntha* may not seem very significant to many contemporary readers. But Senapati was perhaps the first Indian novelist to write about this theme, thus anticipating works like Premchand's *Godan* (1936). Though almost a contemporary of the great Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Senapati was surprisingly different from him in his choice of theme as well as language and style. Senapati's colloquial style is a contrast to Chatterjee's literary, high flown and Sanskritised prose. Senapati, not having as much Western education as Chatterjee, wrote, uninfluenced by any literary masters of any kind.

Senapati's novels are a portrait gallery of characters. Most of his characters have become archetypal in Oriya literature. Even a minor character that appears once or twice in a Senapati novel leaves a permanent impression on the reader. Senapati seems to be at his best when he portrays the Satan in man. His most memorable characters, thus, are *Mangaraj* and *Champa*. Compared to extremely lively portraits of *Mangaraj* and *Champa*, *Bhagia* and *Saria* appears shadowy and sketchy. Though Senapati had love and sympathy for the poor and the neglected in society, he did not seem, to have known them as intimately as he knew the rich and the affluent. In *Chhamana Atha Guntha* we get the vivid picture of *Mangaraj's* dosmetic world, but nothing of the background of *Bhagia* and *Saria*.

Senapati writes in the tradition of realism and indeed there are chapters such as the one in *Chhamana Atha Guntha* describing the filth and the dirt in the village pond, which are totally unexpected from a novelist rooted in the nineteenth century. Senapati's sense of humor and irony have remained unsurpassed in Oriya literature and it is this characteristic which has made him popular with a wide range of readers. However,

it is possible to find fault with his form which is loose and episodic. This may be partly due to the fact that the novels were written to be serialized in monthly magazines. A profoundly religious man, Senapati ends all his novels with the wicked being punished, either by some external agent or by his own conscience, thus conforming to the convention of 'poetic justice.'

MADHUSUDAN RAO

The Poet of Divine Love

Madhusudan Rao (1853-1912), contemporary and disciple of Radhanath Roy, is one of the founders of modern Oriya literature. A teacher by profession and a *Bramho* by faith, Rao wrote short and long poems, essays and text books and his contribution is as significant in verse as in prose. Unlike Radhanath Roy, Rao mostly wrote short poems and popularized forms such as a *lyric*, *ode* and *sonnet*. His short poems are collected in *Kavitavali (I, 1876)*, *Kavitavali (II, Chhandamala (I, 1884)*, *Sangeetamala (1895)*, *Chhandamala (II, 1898)*, *Basanta Gatha (1901)*, *Kusumanjali (1901)* and *Utkala Gatha (1908)*. His long poems are *Rushi Prana Devavatarana* (Revelation of Divinity in the life of a Sage, 1903) and *Himachale Udaya Utsava* (Dawn in the Himalayas, 1911). He published collections of essays such as *Prabandhamala (1880)* and text books for children such as *Varna-bodha (1885)*, *Bala-bodha*, *Shishu-boda*, *Sahitya Kusuma* and *Sahitya Prasanga*. Rao also translated from the Sanskrit *Ramayana* and wrote stories, which are among the earliest in Oriya literature. His translation of William Cawper's *Alexander Shelkirk* is so successful that many mistake it to be an original composition.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century Rao's text books, for the primary as well as for the secondary classes, were extremely popular in entire Orissa. It is no exaggeration to say that all educated Oriyas up to the forties learnt their Oriya language and literature from Rao's writings. Even today, *Varna-bodha*, a book meant for beginners, enjoys wide popularity. Some of Rao's prayer-songs, included in his text books, may be heard even today in any remote village of Orissa, recited by school children in a hostel or a household.

As a writer of textbooks Rao keeps himself in the

place of a teacher and imparts moral lessons through his writings. Love of God and love of the motherland are two important lessons Rao conveys to his young readers. His prose is direct, lucid, written in *sadhu bhasa* (sanskritised vocabulary). His verses, though they often lack originality and inspiration, are popular for their themes such as love for God, for nature and for their simple diction and rhyme-scheme. In long poems such as *Rushi Prane Devavatarana*, however, Rao reminds one of ancient sages who composed the *Upanishads* in a style that is close to Sanskrit hymns (*mantras*). Rao succeeds in conveying the state of sublimation a sage attains at the realization of the presence of the Supreme Being.

If romantic love is the forte of Radhanath Roy, in Madhusudan Rao it is the love for the Supreme Being. That is why critics call him *Bhakta Kavi* (the poet of Divine Love) and one may compare him with other poets of the *Bhakti* tradition.

GANGADHAR MEHER The Last Classicist

Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924), another contemporary of Radhanath Roy, is a major poet of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. He came from the family of the Meher, a caste of weavers of Sambalpur who have earned world-wide reputation for manufacturing beautiful *sarees*. Gangadhar Meher lived and died a poor man and had no English education. However, he studied ancient Sanskrit and Oriya literature which inspired his poetic activities.

Meher's first major *kavyas*, *Rasa Ratnakar* and *Ahalya Stava* were written under the influence of the poets of the *Reeti Yuga* (seventeenth and eighteenth century). But soon he changed his style under influence of Radhanath Roy. Meher's *kavyas* and verses collections include *Utkal Lakshmi* (1894), *Kichaka Badha* (1903), *Arghya Thali* (1909), *Ayodha Drushya* (1911), *Padmini* (1911), *Tapaswini* (1912), *Kavita Kallol* (1912) and *Pranaya Ballari* (1915).

Though Meher borrows the plots of his *kavyas* from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* and employs images, metaphors and similes that are mostly conventional, yet he is a superb craftsman who can create the most musical of sounds by his diction and rhyme scheme. His *Tapaswini*, dealing

with the banishment of *Seeta* in the forest by *Rama*, is unparalleled in Oriya literature in its description of the dawn arriving at *Seeta's ashram* (fourth canto) and *Rama's* dilemma as to whether he should banish his beloved wife in the forest as desired by some of his subjects (third canto).

Meher wrote a few powerful satires against the corrupt officials and even against the British Government. Though poor and neglected in life, a sense of joy and sublimity pervades Meher's works.

GOPABANDHU DAS The Poet Statesman

Gopabandhu Das (1877-1928) who is one of the founders of the modern Orissa state, is also remembered for his patriotic lyrical poems and lucid, thought provoking prose writings.

After graduation, Das obtained his Law degree and joined the Bar. But soon he left his legal profession and devoted himself completely to the service of the people. Along with his illustrious friends, Nilakantha Das, Godavarish Mishra, Acharya Harihar Das and Krupasindhu Misra, he started a school at Satyabadi (Puri) which became the most important center of cultural activities of Orissa for decades. He championed the cause of the formation of the Orissa state for the Oriya speaking people, started the *Satyabadi* (a literary monthly) and the *Samaj* (a weekly which later became the most widely circulated daily of Orissa) and joined the Freedom Movement under Gandhiji's leadership.

Gopabandhu Das was a great orator and his speeches made at the Bihar-Orissa Legislature of which he was a member, show his excellent style of oratory as well as his clarity of thought and concern for the poor. One may point at Das as the father of modern Oriya journalism. His essays on education easily prove that he was an educationist of great insight and understanding.

However, Das's ambition from childhood was to be a poet and he records this, rather with a note of sadness, in the preface to his long narrative poem. Absorbed in social activities Das had little time for literary endeavors, yet while imprisoned in the Hazaribagh Jail (1922-24) for participating in the *Freedom Movement*, he wrote *Bandira Atmakatha* (The

soliloquy of a Prisoner) and *Dharmapada*. *Bandira Atmakatha* is the expression of his deep love for the people of Orissa and *Darmapada* is the story of the twelve-year-old artisan boy who, after completing the Konark, drowned himself in the sea to save the lives and prestige of the twelve hundred artisans of Orissa. Though not a great poetic genius, Das's sincerity of feelings and simple diction often remind one of the Oriya *Bhagabat* of Jagannath Das, touch the heart of the reader. Educated Oriyas are often found quoting a line or two from Das's verses such as *Mishu Mora Deha E Desha Matire* (Let this body of mine merge with the soil of this country) or *Pachha Ghuncha Nahin Birara Jatake* (The valiant never retreats).

CONCLUSION : Oriya literature has a history which is about one thousand years old. It is their literature that has sustained the unity and identity of the Oriya-speaking people, even though they have had a long history of political adversity and suffering. After formation of the Orissa state and the independence of the country, understandably, this ancient literature has got a new impetus to develop on modern lines.

Like literatures in other Indian languages, modern Oriya literature has developed rapidly, during the last one hundred years, after the introduction of the printing press and the exposure of the Oriya authors to English language and literature.

Up to the mid-nineteenth century, Oriya literature primarily meant a literature composed in verse. Prose has developed rather late. Medieval literature was predominantly religious whereas modern literature is developing on secular lines. Though economically a backward state, with the rate of

literacy as low as forty eight, Orissa has produced in recent years, authors and poets comparable to the best in other Indian languages and even in world languages. Gopinath Mohanty, Surendra Mohanty, Kishori Charan Das, Santanu Acharya, Mahapatra Neelamani Sahoo, Krushna Prasad Mishra and Manoj Das in fiction, Sachidananda Routroy, Ramakanta Rath and Sitakant Mohapatra in poetry, Manoranjan Das and Bijaya Mishra in drama are some of the names worth mentioning. However, due to lack of the wealth of Oriya literature remains inaccessible to the larger world.

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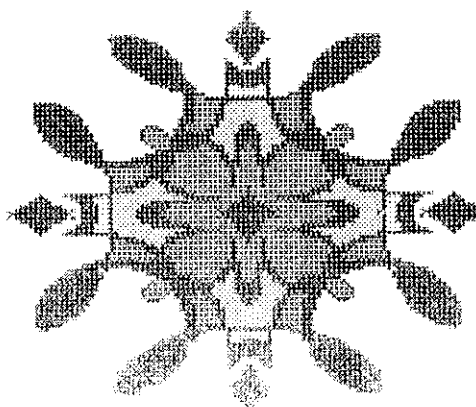
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କାମାଥୀ ପୁରର କଳିକା

ସୁଲେଖା ଦାସ

ସେ ରହେ, କାମାଥୀ ପୁରର
ଜନ୍ମା ଘରେ
ତେଣୁ ସେ ଯଦି ହସୁଛି
ତେବେ ହସୁଥାଉ
ତାକୁ ହସିବାକୁ ଦିଅ
କାରଣ ଯେ କୌଣସି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ
ସେ କରୁଣ ହସ ଫେରିପାରେ
ବୁଫେରାଂ ପରି
ବାଷ୍ପାକୁଳ ଲୁହ ଆଉ ଚିତ୍ତତାର
ବିଷ୍ଠୋରଣ ହେଇ ।

ସେ ରହେ କାମାଥୀ ପୁରର
ଜନ୍ମା ଘରେ
ତେଣୁ ସେ ଯଦି କାହୁଁଟି
ତେବେ କାହୁଁଥାଉ
ତାକୁ କାହିଁବାକୁ ଦିଅ
ଦାରୁଣ, ଛାତିଫଟା କାନ୍ଦ
ତା' ଲୁହ ତାର ଏକାନ୍ତ ନିଜସ୍ବ
ସେଇ ହତାଶ, ପରିତ୍ୟକ୍ତ
ନିଃସ୍ବ ଜୀବନରେ

ସେ ଏବେ ରହୁନି ଆଉ
କାମାଥୀ ପୁରର ଜନ୍ମା ଘରେ
ତାର ରୋଗଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ଜର୍ଜରିତ ଦେହ ଅରେ
କାମାଥୀ ପୁରର.....
ଏକ ଭଙ୍ଗା ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ
ତେଣୁ ତାକୁ ଦିଅ
ତା' ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ପଚାରିବାର 'ଶେଷ' ଅଧିକାର ।

କିଏ କଲା ଏ ସମାଜକୁ
ପକ୍ଷୀ, ମୂକ ଓ ବଧୀର ?
ତା ଉପରେ ଯେବେ ହେଲା ବଳାକାର !!
କାକୁସ୍ଥ ସେ କ୍ରୀତଦାସୀ
ନିଜ ଲୁହେ ନିଜେ ଅନ୍ଧ
ତା କୁଣ୍ଡିତ ପାଦ ତାଲେ
ଲଜ୍ଜାହୀନ ସହରର ଲମ୍ଫଟ ରାସ୍ତାରେ
ଭୀରୁ ପରି ସବୁ ଦେଖି ଏ ଦୁନିଆ
ନ ଦେଖିବା ଅଭିନୟ କରେ
ଦର୍ଜୀ କିଛି ସମସ୍ତେ ଲୁଚିଲେ
ତାକୁ ଯେବେ ବନ୍ଦ କରାଗଲା ଆଜୀବନ ।
କାମାଥୀ ପୁରର ଜନ୍ମାଘରେ --

Kamathi Puram is the infamous red district of Bombay. Everyday many innocent girls from villages are snatched away from their homes, against their will, brought to become life long prostitutes. They never go back home and eventually die of AIDS. They live in cages, die near open sewers without knowing any tenderness of life. This poetry is dedicated to all the tender buds of Kamathi Puram.

ସମୟ

ଦିଗନ୍ତ ମିଶ୍ର

ହଜିରଲା ସ୍ମୃତିଗୁଡ଼ା ଖୋଜିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ
ଇତିହାସ ପୃଷ୍ଠା ସବୁ ଚିରିଦେବି
ଓ ତମକୁ ଫେରାଇ ଦେବି
ତମ ଆଖି ଲୁହ ସମୁଦ୍ରକୁ ।

ତମେ ମୋ ଆକାଶୀ ମନ
ଛଳନା ମୁଁ ଅନେକ ଦିନର
ଜାଣେନା ମୁଁ କାହିଁକି ଯେ ଖୋଜିବୁଲେ
ଅପଦସ୍ତ ସମୟକୁ ଯାହା ଆମ
ପାଶୋରା ସଂପର୍କର ବୟସ ବଢ଼ାଏ ।

ହଁ, ବେଳେବେଳେ ଭଲଲାଗେ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ
ହଜିଲା ଆଖିର ବାଉଁଶ
ଭଲଲାଗେ ଖୁବ ଭଲଲାଗେ
ବଜାର ଖବର ଓ ମଦିର ଦର୍ଶନ
ଏବଂ କେତେ ହତାଶିଆ ମନକଥା
ଅପବାଦ ବ୍ୟର୍ଥତାର
ତେଣୁ ଭଲ ଲୁଚାଇବା ସବୁ ହସ -
ମନ ଓ ଦେହର ଏବଂ ସବୁ କୋଳାହଳ
ନିଜଠାରୁ ଓ ଅସହିଷ୍ଣୁ ସମୟ ସୀମାରୁ ।

ମାୟା

ରାଜୁ ମହାନ୍ତି

ଜନ୍ମ ମରଣର ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖ ଭିତରେ
(ମୋ) ମନ ଭାରି ହେଉଯାଏ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନରେ
ଏ ତ ଅନିଶ୍ଚିତ ମାୟା ଆଉ ବ୍ୟସନର ଜୀବନ
ତେବେ ଏଥିରେ ବାଧୁ ହେବାପାଇଁ
ବାବି, ଅଧିକାର, ଆଶା ଦେଉଥିଲା କିଏ ?

ବୋଉର କୋଳରେ ମୁଁ କଣ ଜାଣିଥିଲି
ଏ ମାୟା ଓ ଏ ବନ୍ଧନ କ'ଣ ?
ଭାବି ନଥିଲି ଦିନେ ବୋଉର କୋଳ ଛାଡି
ବାପାଙ୍କର ଭରସାରୁ ଆତ ହୋଇ
ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କର ମମତାରୁ ଦୂର ହୋଇ
ବାଧୁ ହେଉଯିବି ଆଉ କା' ବନ୍ଧନରେ ।

ଛିଣ୍ଡିଗଲେ ଦିନେ ଏ ସବୁ ବନ୍ଧନ
ବଞ୍ଚି ପାରିବିତ ସଂସାରେ ଧରି ଏ ଜୀବନ ?
ଆଖିର ଲୁହର ସାଗରେ ବୁଡିଯିବି
ହୃଦୟର ଆଘାତରେ ଆଖିରୁଜି ଦେବି
ସେ ସ୍ନେହ, ଶରଧାର ପରଶ ବିନା
ପଞ୍ଜୁ ହେଉଯିବି ଏ ଜୀବନ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ।

ଲୁହ ବି ଶୁଖିଯାଏ ଏ ଆଖି କୋଣରେ
ଏ ଆଘାତ ହାରି ଯାଏ ମନର ବଳରେ
ମୁଁ ବଞ୍ଚି ରହିଯାଏ ଏ ଜୀବନ ଧରି
ଅନ୍ୟ କା ସ୍ନେହ, ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା, ମାୟା ବନ୍ଧନରେ
(ହେଲେ) ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ରହିଯାଏ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ହୋଇ
ମୋ ହୃଦୟର କୋଣ ବିନା ତା ପରଶରେ ।

PHAKIRA MOHAN SENAPATI AN APPRECIATION OF HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Lalu Mansinha

Vraja Mohan Senapati was born in 1842 in the town of Balasore, Orissa. Seven years later, in 1849, the last part of Orissa, Sambalpur, came under the control of a private corporation, the British East India Company. Parts of Orissa had already come under British administration in 1804. There was no question that the British private company was there to maximise its profits. The enrichment of the British stockholders and impoverishment of Orissa and India was a logical consequence.

In the first millenium AD Orissa was a great land and maritime power, with Oriya settlements and kingdoms in present day Phillipines, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Malay, Thailand and Burma. However, in the 1850s, under the British, Orissa had hit the bottom. Orissa was divided and administered as parts of (1) Madras Presidency; (2) Central Provinces (3) Bengal (4) Bihar (5) A group of Princely States. An once great civilisation reduced to five disparate chunks! The threat of a total disappearance of the Oriya language and culture was real. The young Vraja Mohan was destined to play a crucial role in the literary and political renaissance of Orissa.

Nothing in the early life of the baby boy, born in 1842, suggested his future greatness. Orphaned at age three, the boy was brought up by a doting grandmother and a sadistic uncle. During his childhood he was sick, ailing from various life threatening illnesses, such that his grandmother despaired for his survival. Though a Hindu, she sought the help of the Muslim faith, by promising that she would make the boy a *faqir*, a Muslim holy man, if Vraja Mohan did not die. The young boy survived and his name was changed to Phakira Mohan. This was how he spelt his name. Later authors have changed it to Fakira Mohan).

Phakira Mohan's father and uncle were contractors, loading locally produced sea salt onto sailing ships, and repairing sails. The family was well off until the British banned all salt production in India, forcing purchase of expensive salt from Britain. With the demise of the salt trade the ships also disappeared,

and the family became poor. The young boy had a thirst for learning and progressed through the grades until the family could no longer afford the school fees of four annas a month (25 cents at current rate of exchange). That was Phakira Mohan's only exposure to formal schooling.

It is here that Phakira Mohan's genius first appears. He taught himself Oriya, Bengali, Hindi and Sanskrit. His self education was so successful that he was hired as a teacher (The Third Master) at a local school. Later, he became the Headmaster of Balasore Mission School.

John Beames was the Collector (i.e. chief administrator of the district; the term comes from *Tax Collector*) of Balasore. Beames knew 11 languages, and was working on the book *A Comparative Grammar of the Indian Languages*. He employed Phakira Mohan as his teacher, to learn and discuss Oriya, Bengali and Sanskrit.

Around this time, the mid 1860's, T. Ravenshaw was appointed Commissioner for Orissa. During the novichood of Ravenshaw a critical food shortage in Orissa was misread and ignored by the British authorities and the Great Orissa Famine of 1866 ensued. The population of Orissa was about five million at that time. A million people died of starvation in 1866.

As a school teacher Phakira Mohan worried over the absence of Oriya text books for schools, and the five part political division of Orissa. He decided to write the school texts, on different subjects, including arithmetic and grammar, himself. Phakira Mohan and five other citizens of Balasore formed the Society for the Promotion and Promulgation of Literature with the aim of printing all old the poetical works.

There was a move to persuade the British to stop the teaching and use of Oriya in the school system. Had this been successful it would have meant the death of the Oriya language. Phakira Mohan and a group of citizens successfully interceded with John Beames; Oriya was recognised as a separate language and

continued to be taught in the schools. *Senapati* means a leader of the troops, a General. This was a major victory for the *Senapati* who led the defense for the Oriya language and culture.

The first, and only, printing press in Orissa, was owned by the Orissa Mission Press and was used for printing the Bible and other religious tracts. Phakira Mohan decided that there must be a Oriya owned printing press in Orissa. He formed a joint stock company, Utkala Press, P.M. Senapati and Co.

Phakira Mohan's lot in life had not been easy. Writing of his childhood after the death of his mother '*Loneliness has been my lot ever since. . . . Yet I, fatherless and motherless, constantly ailing, survivor of a variety of near misses, am sitting here setting down on paper with a hand enfeebled by age, the paltry tale of my long life*'.

Phakira Mohan wrote on and off, with bursts of creativity and fallow periods until his death. His early marriage, at age 13, to Lilavati was not happy. We have only his description of her as '*cruel, conceited, sharp-tongued and disobedient*'. Lilavati died at age 29, and Phakira Mohan married Krsnakumari in 1871.

It was the tragedies in his life that inspired bursts of literary creativity. The death of their second son was a serious blow to the couple. In order to console his dear wife Krsnakumari, Phakira Mohan began the translation of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, so that she would read his renderings of the great books and be comforted.

Then in 1894 Krsnakumari died. Phakira Mohan grieved for her for the remainder of his life. "*It is almost twentyfour years since she died, but my empty heart still guards its sacred memories of her. I have no one now to tell my troubles to. Whenever anguish engulfs me, I sit by her grave in the garden, and comfort comes. It was mainly because of my wife that I learnt to write poetry*". Now, to console himself, he started writing short stories for a magazine *Utkala Sahitya*. "*Then I began a story called Chha Mana Atha Guntha. It gradually grew and grew till it became a full length novel.*"

With such unassuming words he describes the creation of a masterpiece, the first Oriya novel. The novel as a literary instrument was unknown in Oriya

literature. In Europe the genre was established only after the publication of Don Quixote, in Spanish, by Miguel de Cervantes. As in Don Quixote, European novels were simply long tales of fantasy. The portrayal of near real life situations of ordinary people did not come about until the writings of Charles Dickens. In one step Phakira Mohan jumped several centuries of European literary experimentation to arrive, instinctively, with a style which has since been termed 'literary realism'. *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* was serialised in Utkal Dipika. One segment of the serialised novel depicted a trial. The scene was realistic enough for people from afar to gather outside the courthouse in Cuttack to attend the fictional trial of Mr. Mangaraj.

Later authors have compared Phakira Mohan with various English writers. He would have been vexed. Perhaps deliberately Phakira Mohan had learnt just enough English to get by. There has been no direct English influence on his writings. Some indirect influence may have come from discussions with John Beames.

It is hard for me not to compare Phakira Mohan with another Oriya writer that I happen to know well, my father Mayadhar Mansinha. Both men had an internal urge to write, to express inner feelings. It was lucky for Oriya literature that when the inspiration arose, neither my father nor Phakira Mohan had sufficient mastery and fluency in English to write in that language. My father started writing at the age of twelve, in his remote village of Nandala, long before he knew English. His first play was *Kharavela*, the manuscript has been lost long time ago. He kept writing all through the early years of his youth, firmly established as a poet by the time he came to college. His real creativity was in poems in Oriya. English was an acquired skill; he developed fluency, but without inspiration.

Phakira Mohan and Mayadhar Mansinha also shared a cosmopolitan interest in all religions; Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist. Remarkably both became fascinated by Buddhism; Bapa sufficiently so to declare himself a Buddhist.

The dreams of Phakira Mohan for a politically united Orissa came about in 1936, with the creation of the separate state. He saved the Oriya language from being snuffed out at a time when only four million

Oriyas spoke the language. A century later some 30 million Oriyas speak the language in Orissa State and outside. The Oriya language and culture has not only survived but is also flourishing. And we, the Oriyas in the New World and the Old, we all owe him a debt.

Source Materials:

John Bolton : My Times and I (English translation of the autobiography by Phakira Mohan Senapati *Atma Jivana Carita*) Orissa Sahitya Akademi, Bhubaneswar, 1985.

Mayadhar Mansinha : Fakirmohan Senapati, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1976.

A Poem Dedicated to the Memory of Krsna Kumari

(from *Pushpa Mala*, Garland of Flowers)

Translated by Mayadhar Mansinha

Phakira Mohan Senapati

Beautiful Krsna Kumari, the queen of my poor cottage,
My eternal sweet-heart, dear as life,
And my constant companion, the apple of my eyes,
See, how all your excellent virtues
Have got intermingled in my very blood streams,
with your departure.

Haven't known a more virtuous woman in life,
Or a wife, more fully dedicated than yourself
To her husband,
And the loveliness of the full moon
In the blue heavens,
Or of the pearls of dew
On full-blown roses and lotuses,
Pale into banality, against your tears
That flowed from your eyes,
While in communion with the divine.
I feel now, as though, that it is the beauteous peace
Of your face,
That is now spread over the whole firmament.
At night, when the world was quiet,
And just we two
Sat on the terrace of our house
Or in the garden,
And observed the moon and the stars
Float slowly up above the sky,
Shedding heavenly light all around,
I did feel, darling, --- didn't I ---
in those quiet moments, that,
We too were twin stars,
Like those up in the sky.

କୃଷ୍ଣ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ

ବିଜୟମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର

(ନାଗଭିଲର ପ୍ରଥମ ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ)

(ଭାଗବତ କୃତ୍ତେ)

ତୁ ନାଥ ପରମ କାରଣ ।
ଦେବଦେବ ତୁ ନାରାୟଣ ॥
ତୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ବାସୁଦେବ ।
ତୁ ସ୍ବାମୀ ଭେଦାଭେଦ ଭାବ ॥
ପରମ ଯୋଗୀ ତୁ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ।
ସମ ଦୁଃଖ ସୁଖ ଶ୍ରୀତୋଷ ॥
ସଂସାରେ ତୁହି ନିରାସକ୍ତ ।
ସତତ ତୁହି ସଂଗ ମୁକ୍ତ ॥
ତୋ ମାତା ଥାଇ ବନ୍ଦୀ ଘରେ ।
ମାୟାରେ ଗଲୁ ତୁ ଗୋପରେ ॥
ଯଶୋଦା ତୋତେ ପୁତ୍ର ମଣେ ।
ତୋର ମହିମା ସେ ବି ଜାଣେ ।
ଗୋପୀ ଯେ ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ଭାବନ୍ତି ।
ତୋ ଯୋଗ ଗୁଣ ନ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ॥
ଯୋଗରେ ତୁହି ଜନ୍ମିଥିଲୁ ।
ଅତିରେ କଂସକୁ ମାରିଲୁ ॥
ଉଦ୍ଧବ ତୋର ବାଲ୍ୟବନ୍ଧୁ ।
ତା ଥଳି ତୋର ଅନ୍ନ ସିନ୍ଧୁ ॥
ଦ୍ରୌପଦୀ ବିବସନ ବେଳେ ।
ତୋ ଚିନ୍ତା ମନେ ମନେ ଭାଲେ ॥
ତୁ ତାକୁ ରଖିଲୁ ନିୟନ୍ତା ।
ତୋତେ ଯେ କଲା ଯେବେ ଚିନ୍ତା ॥
ବିଦୁର ସହ ଶାମ ଭୋଜି ।
ତୁ ଗଲୁ ସିଂହାସନ ଚେଜି ॥

ଶିଶୁପାଳ ତୁ କଲୁ ବଧ ।
ନ ସହୁ ତା'ର କାମ କ୍ରୋଧ ॥
ଅର୍ଜୁନ ସହ କ୍ରୀଡ଼ା କଲୁ ।
ସାଥରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ମିଶିଲୁ ॥
ସାରଥୀ ହୋଇ ହୁଷୀକେଶ ।
ଦେଲୁତୁ କେତେ ଉପଦେଶ ॥
ଭଣିଲୁ ଗୀତା ମହାଜ୍ଞାନ ।
ପରମ ଯୋଗ ଦିବ୍ୟଜ୍ଞାନ ॥
ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ପରମାତ୍ମା ।
ସଭିକ ତୁହି ଅନ୍ତରାତ୍ମା ॥
ଯୋଗ ବଳେ ତୁ ବଳିୟାନ ।
ନହିଁ ତୋ ବାଞ୍ଛା ସୀମାହୀନ ॥
ଗୁଣାତୀତ ତୁ ସର୍ବ ପୂଜ୍ୟ ।
ସଭିକର ତୁ ଅଟୁ ଅର୍ଜ୍ୟ ॥
ଏ ବିଶ୍ୱ ଯାହା ପ୍ରକଟଇ ।
ସଭି ତୋ ମଧ୍ୟେ ବାସ ହୋଇ ॥
ଏ ପ୍ରାଣୀ ହୋଇ ଶତ ଶତ ।
ସୃଜିଛୁ ସହସ୍ର ନିୟୁତ ॥
ସହସ୍ର ହସ୍ତ ପାଦ ହୋଇ ।
ସହସ୍ର ନୟନେ ଦେଖଇ ।
ସହସ୍ର ମୁଖ ବକ୍ଷୋଦର ।
ନକ୍ଷତ୍ର ପର୍ବତ ସାଗର ॥
ସଭିକୁ ଧରି ଅଛୁ ବହି ।
କହନା କରି ନ ହୁଅଇ ॥

ତୋହର ଦେଖୁ ବିଶ୍ଵରୂପ ।
 ଭୟାଳୁ ହୁଏ ପରତପ ॥
 ପୁଣି ତୁ ସୌମ୍ୟ ଦାମୋଦର ।
 ତୋତେ ମୁଁ କରେ ନମସ୍କାର ॥
 ଅର୍ଜୁନେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଜିତାଇଲୁ ।
 ପୁଣି ଦ୍ଵାରକା ନିବାସିଲୁ ॥
 ସମୁଦ୍ର ମଧ୍ୟେ ଗଡ଼ ତୋଳି ।
 ତୁ ପୁଣି ଯାଦବେ ସମ୍ଭାଳି ।
 ଦେଖୁ ତୁ ଯାଦବ ଚାମସ ।
 ଚିତ୍ତିଲୁ ଯଦୁ ବଂଶ ଧ୍ଵଂସ ॥
 କୋକୁଆ ଭୟ ମାୟାକଲୁ ।
 ଯାଦବେ ଆପେ ସଂହରିଲୁ ॥
 ଅକ୍ଷାରେ ଚିହ୍ନି ନ ପାରନ୍ତି ।
 ଭୟରେ ଗଦା ଯୋପାଡ଼ନ୍ତି ॥
 ଏ ରୂପେ ଯଦୁକୁ ବିନାଶି ।
 ଶୟନ କଲୁ ବଚବାସୀ ॥
 ଭୂଇଁରେ ତୁହି ଶୋଇଥିଲୁ ।
 ପରମ ଯୋଗେ ନିଦ୍ରା ଗଲୁ ॥
 ଶବର ହରିଣ ସନ୍ଧାନେ ।
 ମାୟାରେ ତୋ ପାଦ ନ ଚିହ୍ନେ ॥
 ଭ୍ରମେ ସେ ଭାବେ ମୃଗ କର୍ଣ୍ଣ ।
 ବିକ୍ଷେ ସେ ଶର ଅତି ତୀକ୍ଷ୍ଣ ॥
 ପାଖରେ ଆସି କ୍ଷୋଭ କରେ ।
 ବ୍ୟଥାରେ ମନସ୍ଥାପ କରେ ॥
 ପୁଣି ସେ ଜାଳି ଚିତାସ୍ଥାନ ।
 କରେ ସେ ତୋର ପିଣ୍ଡବାନ ॥
 ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପିଣ୍ଡ ନ ଜଳଇ ।
 ଆକାଶେ ଶୂନ୍ୟବାଣୀ ହୋଇ ॥
 କର ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ ।
 ଶବର କରିଲା ବିସର୍ଗ ॥

ପିଣ୍ଡ ଯେ ସମୁଦ୍ରକୁ ଗଲା ।
 ସମୟେ ଦାରୁବ୍ରହ୍ମ ହେଲା ॥
 ସେ ଦାରୁବ୍ରହ୍ମ ନୀଳାଚଳେ ।
 ବିଗ୍ରହ ସାଜି ମନ ଭୋଜେ ॥
 ସଂଗରେ ଭାଇ ବଳରାମ ।
 ସୁଭଦ୍ରା ସୁଦର୍ଶନ ଧାମ ॥
 ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧାମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ବହି ତେଜେ ।
 କରିଛ ଶଂଖ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରେ ବିଜେ ।
 ଭୂଦେବୀ ଶ୍ରୀଦେବୀ ମାଧବ ।
 ଏ ରୂପେ ତୁହି ସପ୍ତଭାବ ॥
 ତ୍ରିବେଦ ତ୍ରିଗୁଣ ଅଧର୍ବ ।
 ସୃଜିଅଛୁ ତୁ ଖଣ୍ଡ ସର୍ବ ॥
 ବଳରାମ ଯେ ଜୀବରୂପ ।
 ସୁଭଦ୍ରା ପ୍ରକୃତି ସ୍ଵରୂପ ।
 ସୁଦର୍ଶନେ ତୁ ଆତ୍ମବଳ ।
 ଆପଣା ରୂପେ ତୁହି କାଳ ॥
 ଜୀବ ପ୍ରକୃତି ବଳ କାଳ ।
 ବନ୍ଧିଛ ପୃଥ୍ଵୀ ସକଳ ॥
 ତେତିଶି କୋଟି ଦେବ ମେଳେ ।
 କେହି ବା କେବେ ଅବହେଳେ ॥
 ତୁ ଦେଖୁ ସର୍ବ ଦେବ ହିତ ।
 ତୋ ନାମ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ॥
 ମାୟାରେ ବିଶ୍ଵ ବିସୃଜଇ ।
 ଇଚ୍ଛିଲେ ବିଶ୍ଵ ସଂହରଇ ॥
 ପରମ ହିତ ମନୁଷ୍ୟର ।
 ତୋ ନାମେ ଥାଏ ଜପ ଯା'ର ॥
 ଚନ୍ଦନ ସ୍ନାନ ଜାନିଯାତ ।
 କେତେ ଯେ ପୁଣି ଭୋଜିଭାତ ॥
 ଭଜତ ଭିତ ଲାଗିଥାଏ ।
 ସଜିକ ଆଖି ତୋର ଠାଏ ॥

ଦ୍ରାଘ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଲାଗି ହୋଇ ।
 ଗହଳ ଚହଳ ଚାଲଇ ॥
 ରାତ୍ରି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଚାଲିଥାଏ ।
 ଅନ୍ନ ନିର୍ମାଳ୍ୟ ବଞ୍ଚାହୁଏ ॥
 ସାତ ଘଡ଼ିରେ ନିଦ୍ରାଯାଏ ।
 ଶୂନ୍ୟରେ ସବୁ ଦେଖୁଥାଏ ॥
 ଦ୍ଵାଦଶ ଯାତ୍ରା ବାର ମାସେ ।
 ବଳିଛୁ ଭକ୍ତଙ୍କ ସକାଶେ ॥
 ପ୍ରକାଶ ତୋର ଘୋଷଯାତ୍ରା ।
 ସଭିଙ୍କ ଲକ୍ଷ ଏକ ମାତ୍ରା ॥
 ଆସାଦ ମାସେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଯିବେ ।
 ଭକତ ଆରତି ଶୁଣିବେ ॥
 ରଥ ଯେ ତୋର ନବିଘୋଷ ।
 କରୁ ତୁ କେତେ ସମାବେଶ ॥
 ସେ ରଥ ଦେଖୁ ପୁଣ୍ୟ ଲଭେ ।
 ରଥ ଟାଣନ୍ତେ ମୋକ୍ଷ ଲଭେ ॥
 ଚକା ନୟନ ବହିଥାଉ ।
 ସବୁରି ଆଡେ ଦେଖୁଥାଉ ॥
 ଭକତ ଆରତି ଶୁଣିଲୁ ।
 ରଥକୁ ଅଟକି ରଖୁଲୁ ॥
 ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଯେ ତୋ'ଠି କରିଥାଏ ।
 ମନେ ପ୍ରାପତ କରିଥାଏ ॥
 ଯେ ପାରେ ଯାହା କରେ ଅର୍ଘ୍ୟ ।
 ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧାରେ ଅଟେ ସବୁ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗ୍ୟ ॥
 ସଂସାର ଦୋଷ ଭୟଙ୍କର ।
 ନାଶୁ ତୁ ହୋଇ ଖରଚର ॥

କୃପାରେ ପୁଣି ଦେଖୁଥାଉ ।
 ପରମ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଦେଇଥାଉ ॥
 ଯେ ସ୍ଥାନେ ଯେବେ କରେ ପୂଜା ।
 ଗ୍ରହଣ କରୁ ତାର ଅର୍ଚ୍ଚା ॥
 ଯେ ପ୍ରାଣୀ ଶରଧାରେ ଭାଲେ ।
 ତୁହି ଦରଶୁ ସେହି କାଲେ ॥
 ଯେ ଜୀବ ବିଶ୍ଵେ ହୁଏ ଭୀତ ।
 ତୁହି ତ ତାହାର ସଂରାତ ॥
 ନାସଭିଲେ ତୁ ହେଲୁ ଠାବ ।
 କରିଲି ଏବେ ତୋର ସ୍ତବ ॥
 ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ରେ ଯେତେ ଉପଚାର ।
 କହିଁ ପାଇବୁ ସେ ଆଚାର ॥
 ତୁହି ତ ପ୍ରଭୁ ସର୍ବବ୍ରହ୍ମା ।
 କ୍ଷମିବୁ ମୋର ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧାନିଷ୍ଠା ॥
 ସକଳ ବିଶ୍ଵ ତୋର ବାସ ।
 ଏ ସ୍ଥାନ ଖାଲି ଅଧିବାସ ॥
 ଅଛନ୍ତି ଭକ୍ତ ଏ ରାଜଜେ ।
 ତୋ ଗୁଣ ଗାଇଥାନ୍ତି ସାଜେ ॥
 କରନ୍ତି ତୋର ଯାଗଗାନ ।
 କିଏ ବା ଜପ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଧ୍ୟାନ ॥
 ତୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗତର ନାଥ ।
 କହିଁ ବା ତୁଚ୍ଛାକୁ ଭକତ ॥
 ତଥାପି ପ୍ରାଣେ ଚାଣିଥାଉ ।
 ତୋ ସଂଗେ ମନ ଲାଗିଥାଉ ॥
 ତୋ ଯଶବାନା ଉଡୁଥାଉ ।
 ଏ ମନ ସଦା ଭାବୁଥାଉ ॥

MEDIEVAL ORIYA POETRY

*Oriya literature has a tradition of poetry which is a thousand years old.
Here are a few medieval Oriya poems translated into English by Dr. Ganeswar Mishra.*

(Fifteenth - Sixteenth Century)

Henceforth, Oh Mind

JAGANNATH DAS

Henceforth, oh mind, will you forget ?
Don't you know the vulture of death
circling in the sky ?

Your ambition is your enemy;
cut its two wings off.
Can't you hear the flute
played in the void ?

The five soldiers in the marketplace
are making a noise.
Once the market closes
do the merchants stay on ?

The parrot in a golden cage
looks lovely for a few days.
Once it flies off
can you catch it ?

Look within and see
the banner flying in Trikuta.
Once lost
can you find the supreme goal ?

Look within the Om sound
and see the swan upside down.
Says Jagannath Das:
Why can't you seek shelter in it ?

(Fifteenth - Sixteenth Century)

Oh Friend of the Poor

BALARAM DAS

Oh friend of the Poor,
my suffering is not yet over.
If you forget me, Oh friend of the Poor,
Who will be my friend ?

Your head is adorned with garlands
and crowns of *tulasi*.
The Blue Wheel is visible
from the altar of the *tulasi*.

The beauty of the *sevati* flowers
on your head inspires awe.
No danger befalls on your devotees;
they are ever victorious.

One who is called the Friend of the Poor,
is the greatest ascetic.
He redresses the suffering of the *Yogi*;
provides pleasure to the deprived.

The temporal and the eternal are matters of
argument;
and is the real and the unreal.
The person of the void moves in the void;
the cage remains closed.

To cross the ocean the world is,
you have made a float of stone.
If you do not save me, Oh Round-Eyed one,
I will be swept away.

The true love of your devotees pleases you.
Balaram Das does not seek wealth;
just the dust of your feet.

(Sixteenth Century)

Mind is a Crazy Milch Cow

JASHOBANTA DAS

Mind is a crazy milch cow
that fled breaking the chain.

Who is there in the twenty-one worlds
to find comparisons
for her glories and powers?

The cow is gentle, but who led her astray?
Does he know black magic?

The cow did not graze for a day
in the twelve-acre field
of green grass.

I tied her tight
with the rope of three virtues
but the cow fled
breaking the chain.

Says Jashobanta: he aspires
for the feet of the cow.
Who can bring her back
to the right path?

(Sixteenth Century)

You Crazy Mind

ACHYUTANANDA DAS

You crazy mind, make the swan play.
If the swan flies away
your boat will sink.

The pond is bounded on four sides.
The male swan has laid eggs.
The dry pond is filled with ripples.
The chicks have flown away
leaving the eggs intact.

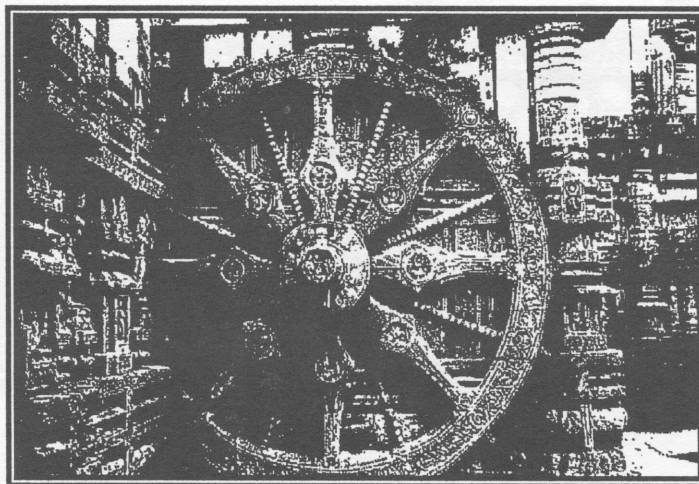
The truly learned will certainly claim
that one egg holds three chicks.

The female frog is fondling the snake.
The *Jui* plant wears the *mandar* flower.

One temple has ten doors.
Where is the tree of salvation?

The flute is played in the void.
Where is the country of *Gopa*?

A verse has only six stanzas
but many a meaning:
Says Achuta Das
with great feeling.



(Sixteenth Century)

Look, the Market is about to Disperse

SHISHU ANANTA

Look, the market is about to disperse;
I am yet to do the shopping.
The five leaders are out
to disperse the market.

The market spreads in a circle
under a banyan tree.
The thieves are waiting
to enter the market.

The clever goldsmith displays his wares
at the roadside.
The oilsmith is gathering his bundle
along with the name of God.

Manu Mohapatra is the custodian of the
market.
He has tied a great wild elephant
at the center of the market.

If the elephant accidentally breaks the chain
the market will disperse, says Shishu Ananta.

(Seventeenth Century)

The Flute in the Flower Garden

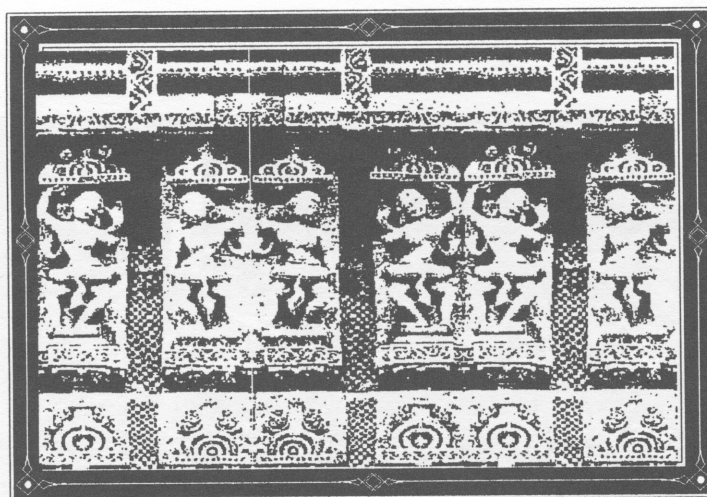
SALBEG

Who played the flute in the flower garden,
my dear ?
The dried plants wore new leaves
at the sound;
the air stood still.

Stone melted. Tide crossed the Yamuna.
The fish came to the bank of the river
leaving the water behind.

The slow signal made one shameless.
One had to put on one's clothes in a hurry.

The seat of the sage was shaken
and fell into love.
The deer chased the tiger.
Says Salbeg the low-born:
he is Yavana by caste;
his mind always at the feet of Radhakrushna.



(Seventeenth-Eighteenth Century)

You Moody Fellow

DEENAKRUSHNA DAS

You moody fellow,
this clay pot of your body will melt away.
It will not last for ever.

When you see the walls cracked and broken
why are you fond of the house ?

The blacksmith seated on the six wheels
creates forms with the help of fire.

When the black smith leaves the furnace
where does he go ?

The blacksmith is but another name for God:
says Deenakrushna meditating His feet.

(Seventeenth-Eighteenth Century)

A Garland of Jasmine Flowers for Shyama

UPENDRA BHANJA

I will offer Shyama a garland of jasmine
flowers and make him happy.

In summer
I will rub his body
with scented sandal paste.

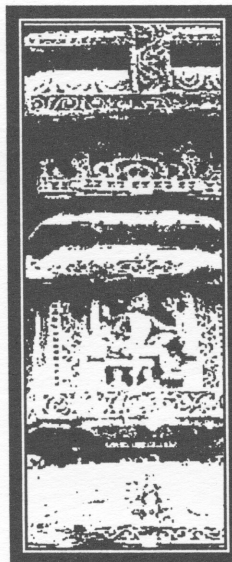
If I see him sweating
I will dry his body with the fringe of my *saree*.

If he is withdrawn
I will offer him a betel,
kiss his cheeks
and make him happy.

I will make him my necklace
and worship his feet.

When he is pleased
I will offer gratitude
to God.

Says Upendra Bhanja:
she is the jewel among women.
He meditates her feet
and seeks her shelter.



(Eighteenth Century)

I am Castigated by the Family

BANAMALI

I am castigated by the family, my dear,
for making a necklace of Shyama's love.

Whosoever abuses or scolds me
doesn't matter.
The Blue God is my most precious wealth,
I am his slave maid.

Some say Radha is a fallen woman,
others say Radha is a lunatic,
Radha is rich with wealth of love, claim some.
Who bothers for the abuse
or the praise?

Without the slightest thought
of the right or the wrong
I have turned into a maid of Krishna
at my own will.
You may ask others to verify:
I don't feel like taking food
in his absence.

How can I forget, my dear,
that handsome, new youth,
ever-pleasant, flute-in-hand,
glowing like young *tamala* flowers?

Says Banamali:
Listen, Oh Radhike,
a market of scandal is sure to assemble.
In your affairs with Shyama
in your love making
now act in secrecy.

(Eighteenth - Nineteenth Century)

Why Did You Get Up So Early, My Dear?

GOPALKRUSHNA PATNAIK

Why did you get up so early, my dear?
Wouldn't you let me churn the curd?
You didn't even have a wink of sleep.
To my ill luck
you have turned out so naughty!

Once the night ends
you may play with Rama.
Now let me lull you to sleep.

How can I churn the curd
unless you take your hand
off the churning stick?
Let me feed you some butter.

What an evil omen!
Do not cross your legs.
Why not go and see brother Balarama?

'Are you crazy?' chides mother,
when the baby puts his little hand
into the churning pot
to get some butter.

Says mother:
'Why are you dancing like this
licking your bare palm?
Do not look at your shadow:
You may become thinner.
'I wish I neglected the household jobs
and held you in my arms
day and night!'

Mother rubbed the baby's face
With the fringe of her *Saree*
and kissed him.

Gopalkrushna meditates on both of them.

JNANPITH AWARD PRESENTATION SPEECH BY DR. SITAKANT MAHAPATRA

Following is the text of Sitakanta Mahapatra's Jnanpith Award acceptance speech at the twenty-ninth award presentation in New Delhi, 22 March 1994. Minor editorial changes have been made by Dr. Sura Rath.

In the first chapter of the *Adi Parva* of Sarala Dasa, the author of *Oriya Mahabharat*, there is the following invocation to *Vagdevi* praying for her *amruta drusti*, her auspicious gaze.

*Adi anta madhya tu atu sarve thane
Grantha Bhiailu tu bhuta bhavisya vartamane.*

"You are everywhere: In the beginning, the middle and the end. And all the *granthas* flow from you in the past, present and the future."

I pay my obeisance to that Goddess of Learning without whose grace words are never transmuted into poetry.

On this occasion my mind goes down the memory lane. It was 1953, I left behind my village, my parents, near and dear ones, friends, the river Chitrotpola that always sings to my tiny village, and the paddy fields stretching out endless to the sky -- and came to a hostel in Ravenshaw College at Cuttack. My first poem written that year later became the opening poem in my first poetry anthology.

Sometimes the realization comes how forty long years have gone by almost like a wink. Forty years of losses, loves, memories, friendships and intimacies. So many anguished moments and the pain of growing up. So many attempts to seek and realize what is happening to oneself and all around. But like a voice heard in a dream, remembered voices often speak. And in speaking they are both themselves and my changing selves, my persona. I hear my own recitation of the *Oriya Bhagavat* in the inner room of the house where so many gods were installed on a small wooden chariot. I hear the voices of Achyut, Yasovant and Bhima Bhoi's *bhajans* at the tiny temple at one end of the village. I hear the stark fearsome voice of silence in the dark night of the village with cholera raging everywhere and the Goddess Mangala being propitiated by *Sankirtana*. And then the voice of the rain, of numerous deaths, of remembered loves and the passing of seasons

punctuating births, sickness and death. It is also my father's voice -- he is gone now eleven years -- reciting stanzas from *Tapaswini* of Gangadhar Meher and from *Dinakrushna*, *Kavisurya* and many other stalwarts of Oriya literature.

Poetry for me is the tale of this forty-years' quest, inadequate, incomplete, never fully satisfying and ever generating new dimensions of experience and the search for words with which to clothe them.

I have always felt that I am inextricably linked to all that happens around me, all beings and their destinies. All events happen twice-once outside at the moment of its happening and later, repeated overtime inside of me. All beings -- men, rivers, trees, stones -- are ineluctably tied to me with the thread of our common impermanence. My inner self internalises everyone, every being and suffers and celebrates with all.

My poetry would like men to wish, at the end of their day, after going through all the tragedies and triumphs, smiles and tears of life, that they would like, if there is an after life, to be born again into this destiny, the destiny of being a man.

A poem is composed of words. Words have social memories as much as memories and dreams of the user's individual psyche. This inheritance extends from cries and whimpers to loud rhetorics, from the bargain counters in houses of prostitution to international diplomacy strewn all over human history. In a good poem each word *speaks*, each word is inevitable, irreplaceable. Each word is charmed, charged with myriad nuances of associations. In a good poem they speak quietly, simply, almost afraid to dare break the silence. They become steps towards a meeting the *other*, the others, and not denying such meeting. They possess what Lorca called *duende*, the dark energy that moves them and moves us, that mysterious quality which is comprehended only through intuition.

A good poem, like any other piece of art, meditates

on existence and does not teach. It is not an addition to our store house of ideas. It is only an extension of the frontiers of our experience, the range of our Being, the awareness of our destiny. It is only a moving shape, which through its texture of words, conveys some of the mysteriousness of all things that exist. In it are merged our flesh, our soul, our dreams, our deaths. It is full of evocations -- from the dream of distant stars to the taste of food in the mouth. At its core is a mother's joy of giving birth to something that did not exist before.

Poetry begins when precipitations of experience look back on themselves. Poetry insists on holding them in the shivering hands of words with the prayer that each experience reveals its soul. He stands before them not shaman-like but as a child with hands folded in prayer. For his passion is to fully grasp the evanescence of our existence with its inexorable sadness and ineluctable magic. It is a groping in that perpetual semi-darkness that refuses to lift. Its frailty is that of a semi-articulate wonder.

For me poetry is ultimately a matter of courage, of fearlessness. The scripture defies *vidya* or wisdom as that which sets you free *sa vidya ya vimuktaye*. And poetry to me is *paravidya* the supreme *vidya*. It liberates us from all fears - of animals, men, gods, demons, even ourselves, our lesser, meaner selves. And nothing characterises our times as much as fear. Haunted by fear words become slogans or rhetoric, the camouflaged expressions of fear like a lonely man on a dark road singing loudly only to reassure himself.

For me poetry is also a matter of humility. Its humility flows from two sources. Its determination not to leave out anyone from its universe, the refusal to stand on any pedestal and instead to be on the level ground with all. It sacrifices all forms of selfish delight in creativity to evoke and simultaneously witness with all the essential grandeur of being human. Its humility also flows from the realization that what he has said is not entirely what he intended to say and has perhaps been said before, while what he intends to say may remain ever unsayable. Poetry is thus the courage of the humble. Its vulnerability and humility are ultimately the source of its power both to subvert and to console.

If a good poem is full of a certain humility it has also

a quiet feeling of piety towards words. Almost the same which a potter has towards earth, the simple carpenter towards the timber.

And from all history of human grief a good poem takes on no bitterness but only compassion and an unsentimental determination to hope. It is obsessed with the harvest and is indifferent to history. It would knock at all the closed doors of the Gods to demand an answer when an ant is trampled under one's feet. It would pray let two blades of grass grow where one grew before. Its ultimate prayer : let every reader, every man become a poet.

To me a poem is not an adventure or battle of ideas. It is not the sociology of emotion of the metaphysics of Being and Becoming. It is a bid to hold on to the experiences etched on fleeting moments. It is to discover the power and glory of memory and imagination which inscribe an event or an emotion into eternity. It is to transform its dull ordinariness into a mystery and a miracle, so that the unique becomes the universal and the tiny, sharp icon of an individual's emotion becomes the archetype for an age.

Our times has taught us a great annoyance towards mystery in any form, the mystery of all that exists, the mystery of our own existence. It has done so because one feels humble, even powerless, in the presence of mystery, which our age seeks to believe that we are all powerful. It has taught us not to trust impulses that are non-rational. The writer, on the other hand, believes that mystery is not only what keeps the world going but that it is not at the heart of our being and it is the task of words to find symbols for it. Our times have also taught us a complete distrust of hope and miracles. To speak of hope today is almost a blasphemy and we have forgotten that miracles could still be happening before our very eyes, in the surviving continuity of our very ordinariness, in the tangled remains of our never-ending dream. And they may not have happened only in mythical times. And literature as Joyce pointed out, deals with this ordinary and not the extraordinary. It is time to look for the miracle in the ordinary, the remnants of our dreams encoded in symbols within us and all around us. All that could decode them is a determination not to turn back on life or give up hope but to meditate on our ordinary experience beyond which there may be any meaning, mystery, miracle and dream.

Mystery demands that we contemplate it and seek to resolve the conflict between illusion and reality and to make the dream visible with all the colors of man's obsession, ambivalences, sacrifices, cravings, hopes and fantasies. Its subliminal message can liberate the power of love and communion that defeats death and annihilation. By closing the door on intimacy with our own inner being as also with the 'other', we can only condemn ourselves to loneliness and the torture of being surrounded by objects. Before his final madness Van Gogh painted that agonized picture of a group of prisoners going round and round in a circle. Outside there is life, a landscape washed in moonlight and all that they need to do is only to open a gate and walk out. And yet they don't do that. Life is the residence of the human spirit and by refusing to open the liberating door of imagination it can be turned into a prison.

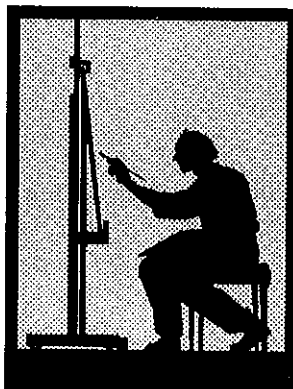
It is the emotive journey of the imagination that delivers us from continuous corrosion of our essential humanity. Nietzsche made that remarkable statement that we use up so much of our true creativity in dreams that our waking life becomes so poor. Art seeks to restore dream and creativity to life. In each of us there is a psychic subconscious world which we often refuse to acknowledge. Literature holds up a mirror to that inner self and seeks to present that privileged image which the writer's creative self has made every man's. It is a final act of achieving *communitas*.

To a monastery in 15th Century Europe came an impatient young man who questioned the Head of the monastery whether they ever got bored in their steadfast and lonely meditation year after year. The

head pointed out to the young man a bird of beautiful plumage sitting on the branch of a nearby tree and singing. The young man was charmed and pursued the bird for a closer look as it kept flying away from tree to tree. Finally somewhat tired he came back to the monastery. He found a new head all grey and a few teeth gone. Then the monastery Head added "Dear one, if you could not notice the passage of forty long years in looking at a beautiful bird, how can one get tired in looking at life and seeking to find some meaning in it?" Every sincere poet knows this is also his predicament and such a search leads on inevitably to the search for the purity of language. A language that can partake of a dual purpose -- of reaching out to the core of one's being and providing, at the same time, a meeting ground with other selves. That could mean staking almost one's whole life on a word, the realization that you may need a whole lifetime and may be many lives to perfect a word. And I quote from one of my poems:

A word will be uttered
for this the sky changes its color
a thousand times,
the wind sings in many voices,
the sea weeps, laughs
lashes at the deaf sands;
the all-enduring earth looks on
like an eager sparrow;
a word will be born
for this one hundred births and
one hundred deaths
become necessary

(Silence and the Poet)



ମୋହ ଭଙ୍ଗ

ଶରତଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ମିଶ୍ର

ବିରାଟ ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶ । ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଉପକୂଳରେ ସାନଫ୍ରାନସିସ୍କୋ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ନଗର । ନଭେମ୍ବର ଅକ୍ଟୋବରରେ ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଓ ସ୍ପାନିସ ଛପଭିର ମିଳନସ୍ଥଳ । ମିଳିତ ଜାତିସଂଘ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏଇଠାରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଏହି ନଗରକୁ ଦେଖିବାପାଇଁ, ଚାଇନା ଟାଉନ ଓ ଫିସରମ୍ୟାନ ହୁଆର୍ଡ଼ରେ ଟିକେ ବୁଲିଆସିବା ପାଇଁ ଲୋକେ ହଜାର ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରନ୍ତି । ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ନଗରୀର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ଚିତ୍ତବିନୋଦନର ସମସ୍ତ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଅବିନାଶ ଓ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ମନକୁ କୌଣସି ଆନନ୍ଦ ଆଣିପାରୁ ନାହିଁ । ସେମାନେ ଆମେରିକା ପୂର୍ବ ଉପକୂଳରେ ନିଉଜର୍ସି ପାଖରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଏକମାତ୍ର ପୁତ୍ର ବିକାଶ ସାନଫ୍ରାନସିସ୍କୋର ବର୍ଜଲେ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନରତ ଥିଲା । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ନିଜେ ଜଣେ ଶିକ୍ଷୟତ୍ରୀ ଓ ଅବିନାଶ ତାଙ୍କର । ସୁଦୂର ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଆସି ଆମେରିକାରେ ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ କରାଇ ପାରିଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଏକମାତ୍ର ପୁତ୍ର ବିକାଶ ବର୍ଜଲେ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ଛାତ୍ର । ବିକାଶକୁ ନେଇ ସମସ୍ତ ଆଶା, କଳ୍ପନା ଓ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ଅବିନାଶ ଓ ସୁନନ୍ଦା । ସେଇ ପୁତ୍ର ବିକାଶର ମରଣରାତ୍ରକୁ ଏକ ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ ରୁଲିରେ ଦାହକରି ଉତ୍ତର ନିଉଜର୍ସି ଫେରିବାକୁ ସାନଫ୍ରାନସିସ୍କୋ ବିମାନ ବନ୍ଦରକୁ ଗଲେ । ବିମାନ ବନ୍ଦରକୁ କେତେକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଅବିନାଶ ଏକଦା ଆମେରିକାସ୍ଥିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆସୋସିଏସନର ଜଣେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତା ଥିଲେ । ପୂର୍ବ ଉପକୂଳରେ ରହିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଉପକୂଳରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅନେକ ବଂଧୁ । ଅବିନାଶ ଓ ସୁନନ୍ଦା ବଂଧୁମାନଙ୍କର ସହାନୁଭୂତି ଯୋଗୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇ ମେଲାଣି ମାଗିଲେ ଓ ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କଲେ । ଇଷ୍ଟ-ଫ୍ରେଷ୍ଟ ଏୟାରଲେନ୍ କମ୍ପାନୀ ଅତିଥି ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ପାଇଁ ଜଣାଶୁଣା । ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ଶୁଖିଲା ମୁହଁ ଦେଖି ପରିଚାରିକା ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହ ତାଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କ ସିଟ୍ ପାଖକୁ ନେଇଯାଇ କଣ ସେବା କରି ପାରିବି ବୋଲି ପଚାରିଲେ । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ଓ ଅବିନାଶ ମୁକୁ ପାନୀୟ ନେଇ ରୁପଚାପ ବସି ଗଲେ । ସାନଫ୍ରାନସିସ୍କୋରୁ ନିଉଜର୍ସି ଛଅ ଘଣ୍ଟାର ଉଡ଼ନ୍ତା ବାଟ । କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାର ଅନେକ ଉତ୍ତର ଉପକୂଳକୁ

ଓ ଜଳପାନ, ପାନୀୟ ପର୍ବ ପରେ ଯାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ପ୍ରାୟ ରୁପଚାପ । କେହି କେହି ଶୋଇ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । କଦବାକୁଟିର ନିଜର ତ୍ରିପ୍‌କେଶ ବା ଖାଇବାପାଇଁ... ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଉଥିବା ପଟାକୁ ଆଗରେ ରଖି ନିଜର ବୃତ୍ତିଗତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ଅବିନାଶ ନିଜ ଆଖିରେ ପରିଚାରିକା ଦେଇଥିବା କଳା ପଟିଟିକୁ ବାନ୍ଧି ଶୋଇବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ଚିନିଦିନ ହେଲା ସେ ଶୋଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦା କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୋଇବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା ବି କରୁନଥାନ୍ତି । ମନ ଅସୀମ ଭାରାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଓ ସିନେମା କାହାଣୀ ପରି ଜୀବନର ସମସ୍ତ ଚିତ୍ର ଆଖିଆଗରେ ଭାସି ଆସୁଥାଏ ।

କାଲିପରି ଲାଗୁଛି । ସେ ରେଭେନ୍‌ସା କଲେଜର ବି.ଏ.ଛାତ୍ରୀ ଥିଲେ । ପିଲାଦିନୁ ଗାର୍ଲସ୍ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଓ ଆଇ.ଏ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଶୈଳବାଳା ମହିଳା କଲେଜରେ ସେ କେବଳ ଔପମାନଙ୍କ ସାଂଗରେହିଁ ପଢୁଥିଲେ । ପୁଅପିଲାଙ୍କ ସାଂଗରେ ଏକାସାଙ୍ଗେ ପଢ଼ିବାର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ରେଭେନ୍‌ସା କଲେଜରେ ପ୍ରଥମ । ସୁନନ୍ଦା କଳ୍ପନା ବିଳାସୀ ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ମନ ସବୁବେଳେ ଗୋଟିଏ ସର୍ବଗୁଣ ସଂପର୍ଷ ପୁରୁଷକୁ ଖୋଜି ବୁଲୁଥାଏ । ସଦ୍ୟ ବିଲାତ ଫେରନ୍ତା ସୁର୍ ତାଇ ପିନ୍ଧା ସୁଦର୍ଶନ ତରୁଣ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ କ୍ଲାସରେ ବକ୍ତୃତା ଦେଲାବେଳେ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ମନ ତାଙ୍କରି ଉପରେ ଲାଗୁଯାଏ । ଭାବନ୍ତି ଏଇଭଳି ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଯାହାର ଥିବ ସେହିହିଁ ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ । ନିଜର ସହପାଠୀ ସରୋଜର ରୂପ, ପ୍ରକାଶର ବକ୍ତୃତା ଶୈଳୀ, ସତୀଶର ଭଦ୍ର ବ୍ୟବହାର, ଖେଳ ପଡ଼ିଆରେ ରଜତର ପାରଦର୍ଶିତା, ସବୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ କରେ । କଲେଜ ଡ୍ରାମାରେ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟର ନାୟକ ଭୂମିକା ତାଙ୍କୁ କେତେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ କରିନଥିଲା ଓ କେତେ ରାତି ସେ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିନାହାନ୍ତି ! ସୁନନ୍ଦା ସିନେମା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଭଲପାଉଥିଲେ, ହିନ୍ଦି ଓ ବଙ୍ଗଳା । ତାଙ୍କ ସମୟର ସଫଳ ନାୟକମାନେ ଥିଲେ ଦିଲିପ୍ କୁମାର, ରାଜକୁମାର ଓ ଦେବାନନ୍ଦ । ଦିଲିପ୍ କୁମାରଙ୍କ ଅଭିନୟ ନିପୁଣତା ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ରେଖାପାତ କରୁଥିଲା । ରାଜକୁମାରଙ୍କ ଅଭିନୟ ବିଶେଷତଃ ନର୍ତ୍ତକ ସହିତ ଯୋଡ଼ି ସେ ପସନ୍ଦ କରୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦେବାନନ୍ଦଙ୍କ କଥା ନିଆରା ! ରୂପେଲି ପରଦା ଉପରେ ଦେବାନନ୍ଦଙ୍କ ଆବିର୍ଭାବ

ତାଙ୍କର ଦେହମନରେ ଶିହରଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥିଲା । ସେଇ ପରି ବଙ୍ଗଳା ନାୟକ ଉତ୍ତମ କୁମାର ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ଚହଲାଇ ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ କୋଠାରେ ବସି ବସି ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ସୁନେଲି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଆଙ୍କନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ମନର ମଣିଷ ହବ ସବୁ ଗୁଣର ଆଧାର । ସେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଭାବିପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ଏପରି ଏକ ମନର ମଣିଷ ମିଳିବ କେଉଁଠି ? ଏ ସମସ୍ତ କଳ୍ପନା ବିକାସିତା ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ସୁନନ୍ଦା କୌଣସି ସହପାଠୀ ବା ପୁଅର ପ୍ରେମପାଗଳୀ ହୋଇ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି ବା କାହାର ପ୍ରେମ ନିବେଦନକୁ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରିନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ବି.ଏ. ପରୀକ୍ଷା ସବୁ ନସରୁଣୁ ସମସ୍ତ କଳ୍ପନାର ଯବନୀକା ଟାଣି ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହୁଥିବା ତାଙ୍କର ଅବିନାଶ ତାଙ୍କ ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସୁନନ୍ଦାକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଆସିଲେ ଓ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି ନୋଟିସ ନଦେଇ ବାହାହୋଇ ଆମେରିକା ନେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ଅବିନାଶ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ବୟସରେ ବେଶ କିଛି ବଡ଼ । ୧୯ବର୍ଷର ତରୁଣୀ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ୩୨ବର୍ଷର ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଜାଗାରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନୂତନ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ଖାପଖୁଆଇ ଚଳିବାକୁ ପଡିଲା । ଆମେରିକାରେ ସବୁ ଅଛି । ଧନ ବୌଳତ, ରାତି ମଟର, କୋଠା-ବାଡ଼ି, ହେଲେ କଟକ ଜୀବନର ସାଂଗସାଥୀ ମିଳନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଦୁଇପଦ ମନ ଖୋଲି କା ସାଂଗରେ କଥା ହୋଇଥିବ ନାହିଁ । ଦିନରାତି ଚିନ୍ତା ଘଣ୍ଟା କାମ । ସବୁ ରୁଟିନ ବନ୍ଧା । କେତେ ବେଳେ ଉଠିବେ, କେତେ ସମୟ ସୁନ୍ଦା ତୟାର ହେବାକୁ ହେବ, ତା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଘରଦ୍ୱାର ସଫା ସୁତୁରା କରି ଓ ପ୍ରାତଃଭୋଜନ ସାରି ସାତଟା ସୁନ୍ଦା ଅବିନାଶକୁ ବାହାରିଯିବାକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ତାପରେ ସୁନନ୍ଦା ନିଜେ ବାହାରି ଯାଆନ୍ତି କଲେଜକୁ । ଆମେରିକାରେ ରାତି ଚଳେଇ ଶିଖିବା କଲେଜରେ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବା, ସେମାନେ ବୁଝିଲା ପରି ଇଂରାଜୀ କହିପାରିବା, ସେଠିକାର ଜୀବନପ୍ରଣାଳୀ, ଖାଦ୍ୟ ପଦାର୍ଥ ଓ ପାରିପାର୍ଶ୍ୱିକ ଅବସ୍ଥା ସହିତ ଖାପଖୁଆଇ ପାରିବା ଓ ତା ସହିତ ବିନା କୌଣସି ଭୃତ୍ୟର ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ନିଜର ଘରଦ୍ୱାର, ବଗିଚା ଓ ସନ୍ତରଣ ଜଳାଶୟର ହେଫାଜତ୍ କରିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲୋଚଣି ପାରା ଭଳି ଖଟିବାକୁ ପଡେ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଅବିନାଶ ସଂଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ଫେରନ୍ତି । ସେ ଆସିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସୁନନ୍ଦା ନିଜର ବେଶ ବିନ୍ୟାସକୁ ମନୋରମ କରିନେଇ ଏକ ଅଭ୍ୟର୍ଥିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ଧାରଣା ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରନ୍ତି । ଅବିନାଶ ଅବିବାହିତ ଭାବରେ ଆମେରିକାରେ ୬୭ ବର୍ଷ ରହିଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଏକୃତ ଆ ଜୀବନଯାପନରେ ବ୍ୟତିବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ସଂଧ୍ୟା ସମୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରୁ

ଫେରିବା ପରେ ଦୁଇ ତିନି ଘେରୁ ହୁଇଥିବା ପିଇବାର ଏକ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରିନେଇ ଥିଲେ । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ବିଶେଷତଃ ସପ୍ତାହ ଶେଷ ଅବକାଶ ଦିନମାନଙ୍କରେ ଦୂରଦୂରାନ୍ତରୁ ବଂଧୁମାନେ ଆସନ୍ତି ଓ ଏକ ଆସର ଜମିଉଠେ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଏକ ବୋଝ ପରି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଓ ସେଇ ପରିବେଶ ସଙ୍ଗେ ନିଜକୁ ଖାପଖୁଆଇ ପାରୁ ନଥିଲେ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କର ଏ ଅବିବାହିତ ମାନସିକତାକୁ ସେ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ମଧ୍ୟ ବାହାର କରି ଫୋପାଡ଼ି ପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ବୟସରେ ଛୋଟ ଓ ଶିକ୍ଷାର ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛତା ହେତୁ ଅବିନାଶ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ମତାମତ ଓ ରୁଚି ଉପରେ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେଉନଥିଲେ ଓ ଏଇତା ଆମେରିକା ଓ ଆମେରିକାର ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ ସହିତ ତୁମକୁ ଖାପଖୁଆଇବାକୁ ହେବ କହି ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିବାଦ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସେ ଏଡାଇ ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ଅବିନାଶ ଯେ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ପାଉନଥିଲେ ତା ନୁହେଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ସୌହର୍ଦ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଓ କମନୀୟତା ଉପରେ ନିଜର ଅଧିକାର ଜାରି ରଖିବା ଓ ସେଥିରୁ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଅବିନାଶ ବନ୍ଧୁକ ଆସର ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ କମାଇ ଦେଲେ ଓ କାଳକ୍ରମେ ଉଭୟେ ସଂଧ୍ୟା ସମୟଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଏକତ୍ର ବିତାଇବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ ଓ କିଛିତା ବୁଝାମଣା ଉଭୟଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଲା । ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ଅସୁଯୋଗ ନଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅବିନାଶ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କର ମନର ପୁରୁଷ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ଏକଥା ସୁନନ୍ଦା ନିଜର ଅନ୍ତରତମ ଗହନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିସାରିଥିଲେ । ନିଜ ଜୀବନରେ ସ୍ୱାମୀର ଯେଉଁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ ସେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଧୂଳିସାତ ହୋଇ ସାରିଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ସଂଗରେ ଜୀବନ କାଟିବାରେ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦିଗରୁ କୌଣସି ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଉ ନଥିଲା । ବହୁ ସମୟରେ ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କର କେତେକ ବଂଧୁ ଓ ନିଜର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟସ୍ଥଳରେ କେତେକ ସହକର୍ମୀ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପରୋକ୍ଷ ବା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଭାବରେ ପ୍ରେମ ନିବେଦନ ଜଣାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ସ୍ୱଭାବଗତ ଭାବରେ କାହାକୁ କତା କଥା କହିପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ କି ଏ ନିବେଦନକୁ ଅପମାନଜନକ ଭାବେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଖାନ କରିପାରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ଧୂରନ୍ଧିର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଖାନକୁ ଅନେକ ମୌନ ସମ୍ମତି ବୋଲି ଭାବି ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଆଗେଇ ଆସିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ଲଜିତ ଓ ଅପମାନିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ପତିବ୍ରତା ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସାମାଜିକ ଚଳଣିରେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ବନ୍ଧୁତାକୁ ଓ ସୁପୁରୁଷମାନଙ୍କର ଭଦ୍ର ବ୍ୟବହାରକୁ ସୁଖ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ନିଜ ପ୍ରଶଂସା, ତା ପୁଣି ରୂପ ଓ ଗୁଣର କାହାକୁ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ

ଭଲ ନଲାଗେ । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ଏ ଦୁର୍ବଳତାରୁ ମୁକ୍ତ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । ପାଟି ମାନଙ୍କରେ ମହୁମାଛି ପରି ଘେରି ଅନେକ ପୁରୁଷବନ୍ଧୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଖୋଲାଖୋଲି ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନେ ତ ଏଥିରେ ଇର୍ଷାଦ୍ୱିତା ହେବା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ଓ ଅବିନାଶକ ସାଂଗରେ କେତେଥର ଏ ଏନେଇ ମନୋମାଳିନ୍ୟ ଘଟିଛି । ଆମେରିକା ବିଦେଶ ଜାଗା । ବାପା, ମା, ଭାଇଭଉଜ ନାହାନ୍ତି ଯେ ମନ ଦୁଃଖ ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ପଳାଇ ଯିବେ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମନାକ୍ତର ଘଟିଲେ ମାଟି କାମୁଡି ପଡି ରହିବାକୁ ପଡେ । ମନ କଥା ଦିପଦ ଫିଟେଇ କାହାକୁ କହିବୁଏନା । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ଏଇ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏମ୍.ଏ. ପାସ କରି ଚାକିରୀ କଲେ । ଚାକିରୀ ବୋଝ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବା ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ ଗର୍ଭବତୀ ହେଲେ । ଜୀବନର ପୁଣି ସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଆସି ଉଠି ମାରିଲା । ସର୍ବଗୁଣ ସଂପର୍ଷ ପଡି ତ ପାଇଲେ ନାହିଁ । କଥାରେ ଅଛି ବିବାହ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗରେ ହିଁ ହୁଏ ଓ କିଏ କାହାକୁ ବାହା ହେବ ତାକୁ ଶଠିଦେବୀ ଆଗରୁ ସ୍ଥିରକରି ଥାନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦା କଣ ବା କରିପାରିଥାନ୍ତେ । ନିଜେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୁବତୀ, ସ୍ୱାମୀ କିନ୍ତୁ କଠିନ ପରିଶ୍ରମ ହେତୁ ବୟସ୍କ ଦେଖାଗଲେଣି । କେହି କେହି ଅବିବେକି ପାଟି ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ କଥା ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ ଅବିନାଶକ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ କି ବୋଲି ପଚାରି ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଦୂରରୁ କଥାଟା ଅବିନାଶକ କାନରେ ପଡିଗଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ସାରା ମଉଜ ନଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ପାଟିରେ ଅବିନାଶ ଯେକୌଣସି କୋଣରେ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖି ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଥାଏ ଓ ସେ କାହାସଙ୍ଗରେ କଥା ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଓ ହସୁଛନ୍ତି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ନଜର ରଖୁଥାନ୍ତି । ଫେରିବା ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଗାଡିରେ ସୁକ୍ତିଚର୍ଚ୍ଚ ହୁଏ ଓ ପାଟି ଫେରନ୍ତି ମଉଜ ବଦଳରେ ରାତିରେ ମୁହଁ ବୁଲାଇ ଦୁଇଜଣ ପରସ୍ପରଠାରୁ ଅଲଗା ରହନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ଦିନେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଆଉ କେବେ ପାଟିକୁ ଯିବେ ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ଅବିନାଶକୁ କହିଦେଲେ ଓ ପୁଅ ଜନ୍ମ ହେବାର କେତେ ମାସ ଆଗରୁ ଓ କେତେ ମାସ ପର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୁନନ୍ଦା ସାମାଜିକ ବଳୟର ବାହାରେ ରହିଗଲେ । ସେଥିରେ ମଧ୍ୟ କଥା ଛିଣ୍ଡିଲା ନାହିଁ ବା କୌଣସି ସମାଧାନର ସୂତ୍ର ବାହାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଅବିନାଶ ଏକୁଟିଆ ଗଲେ ସବୁ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବମାନେ ସୁନନ୍ଦା କଥାହିଁ ପଚାରନ୍ତି ଓ କିପରି ଅଛନ୍ତି କାହିଁକି ଆସି ନାହାନ୍ତି ଏପରି ନାନା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠାନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନାହିଁ ବିକାଶ ଏତିବାକୁ ଚାହଁନ୍ତି ଓ ସେଇ କଥାକୁ ଏତି ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । କାଳକ୍ରମେ ବିକାଶ ଜନ୍ମ ହୁଏ ଓ ନିଜର ସବୁ ସ୍ନେହ, ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା, ଆଦର ବିକାଶ

ଉପରେହିଁ ଢାଳି ଦେଲେ । ଅବିନାଶ ଭଲ ତାହାର । ସର୍ଜନ ଭାବରେ ନାଁ ଅଛି ଓ ଭଲ ପଇସା କମେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଦାମିକା ମସିତିସ୍ ଗାଡି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟବହାର ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ଟୟୋଟା ଗାଡି ଓ ଜିନିଷପତ୍ର ନିଆଆଣ ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ନିଶାନ ହାଫଟର୍ ବ୍ରକ । ଏ ପ୍ରାଚୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ ମନ ହୁଏ । ଏ ଧନସଂପତ୍ତି, ଏ ପ୍ରାଚୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନିଜ ଲୋକ ସିନା ଦେଖିଲେ କିଛି ମୂଲ୍ୟ ଅଛି । ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ ମୟୂର ନାଚିଲେ ତା ଶୋଭା ଦେଖୁଛି କିଏ ? ତାଙ୍କର ଅନେକ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ, ବାପା ମା ଅଛନ୍ତି । ବିକାଶଟି ମାମୁଁ ମାଇଁ, ଅଜା ଆଇଙ୍କ ସ୍ନେହରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ହୋଇ ଯାଉଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଗଲେ ସେ ସବୁ ମିଳନ୍ତା ଓ ଯେତିକି ଅର୍ଥ କମେଇ ସାରିଛନ୍ତି ସେଥିରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ନର୍ସିଂହୋମ ଖୋଲିଲେ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଜୀବନ ବେଶ୍ ସୁଖରେ କଟନ୍ତା ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କର ଧାରଣା । ଅବିନାଶକୁ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଏକଥା କହନ୍ତି । ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କର ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ପରିବାର ଅଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଆର୍ଥୀକ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ସାଂଗରେ ନଆଣିପାରିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତି ୨୩ ବର୍ଷରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଥରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବୁଲିଯାନ୍ତି । ସେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଫେରିବା ସପକ୍ଷରେ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । କିଛି ନକହି ତୁମ୍ଭ ରହନ୍ତି । ଦିନେ ସୁନନ୍ଦା ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବାରୁ କହିଲେ ମଧୁ ଶୁଣ । ସେ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ମଧୁ ବୋଲି ଡାକନ୍ତି । ନୂଆ ବାହାହୋଇ ଆସିଲା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସୁଇଚି ବୋଲି ଡାକୁଥିଲେ । ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଡାକରାରେ ଆକ୍ତିରିକତା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ବାହ୍ୟତନ୍ତର ଦେଖିଥିଲା ପରି ଲାଗିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଡାକିବା ପାଇଁ ଅବିନାଶକୁ କହିଲେ । ଅବିନାଶ ସେଇଦିନୁ ମଧୁ ବୋଲି ଡାକନ୍ତି । କଟକ ମେଡିକାଲ କଲେଜରେ ପଢ଼ିବା ସମୟରେ ମଧୁବାଲା ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରିୟ ଅଭିନେତ୍ରୀ ଥିଲେ । ଅବିନାଶ କହିଲେ “ମଧୁ, ତମେ ଯେତେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପ୍ରତି ଆଗ୍ରହୀ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଇପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ସେଠାରେ ଏ ବିଦେଶୀ ଗାଡି ଚଳିବ ନାହିଁ ଓ ଦେଶୀ ଗାଡିଗୁଡିକ ଅଟୋମେଟିକ ନୁହଁ ଓ ଗିଅର ବେଇ ଚଳେଇବାକୁ ହୁଏ । ରାସ୍ତାରେ ସାଇକେଲ, ରିକ୍ସା, ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ଏକା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଚାଲନ୍ତି । ଟେଲିଫୋନ ପାଇଁ ଦରଖାସ୍ତ କଲେ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷରେ ମିଳେ ଓ ହାକିମଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଗୋଡ଼ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଠିଆ ହୋଇ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହାସଲ କରିବାକୁ ପଡେ । ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଲାଞ୍ଚମିଛ ତ ଅଛି । ରାସ୍ତା କଡରେ ଲୋକେ ମଳତ୍ୟାଗ କରନ୍ତି ଓ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ନାକ ଟେକି ତମ ଜୀବନ ଅତିଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ଉଠିବ । ଘରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇବ ନାହିଁ ।

ତମ ଶୋଇବା ଘରେ ଝିଟିପିଟି, ଅସରପା ଚାଲୁଥିବେ । ତମ ଆଦରର ପୁଅ ବିକାଶକୁ ମଶା କାମୁଡ଼ି ତା ଦେହସାରା ଫଳାଇ ଦେବେ ଓ ସେଠିକାର ଅଶୁଷ୍କ ପାଣି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ପୁଅର ଦେହ ଖରାପ ହୋଇଯିବ । ପୁଅର ଖାଇବା ଜିନିଷ ସେଠାରେ ମିଳିବ ନାହିଁ । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ଏକଥା ଶୁଣି ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଲେ । ନିଜେ ସିନା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଜନ୍ମି ଥିଲେ ବୋଲି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଚଳାଇ ନେବେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବିକାଶର ଅସୁବିଧା ହେବ । ସେଇଦିନଠାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଫେରିବା କଥା ମନରୁ ଯୋଛି ଦେଲେ । କାଳକ୍ରମେ ବାପା, ମା, ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ ମାନସପଟରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଗଲେ ଓ ଜୀବନର କେନ୍ଦ୍ରବିନ୍ଦୁ ହୋଇ ଉଠିଲା ବିକାଶ । ତଥାପି ବେଳେବେଳେ ମନରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠେ ଅବିନାଶର ଜ୍ୱଳିତରେ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଆମେରିକୀୟ ଝିଅ । ଅବିନାଶ ବାଛି ବାଛି ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଝିଅ ସେକ୍ରେଟାରୀ ରଖନ୍ତି ଓ କହନ୍ତି ଯେ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଝିଅଟିଏ ବସିଥିଲେ ଅଭ୍ୟର୍ଥନାକାରିଣୀର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦୋଷତ୍ରୁଟି ଆରତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନେ କ୍ଷମା କରିଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଆମେରିକା ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତିକାର ସେ ଗୋଟେ କାରଣ ହୋଇପାରେକି ? ହେଲେ ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ଆଚାର ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ କିଛି ଦୋଷତ୍ରୁଟି ସେ ଦେଖିପାରି ନାହାନ୍ତି ଓ ସେ ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅଯଥା ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେବା ବି ସେ ଦେଖିନାହାନ୍ତି । ଆମେରିକାରେ ବର୍ଷରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିନ ସେକ୍ରେଟାରୀ ଦିବସ ରୂପେ ପାଳିତ ହୁଏ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ନିଯୁକ୍ତିଦାତା, ତା ସେକ୍ରେଟାରୀକୁ ସେଦିନ ବାହାରେ ଖାଇବାକୁ ନିଏ ଓ କିଛି ଉପହାର ଦିଏ । ବର୍ଷସାରା ବିଶୁଦ୍ଧତାର ସହିତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିଛି ବୋଲି ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଏ । ଏହି ସେକ୍ରେଟାରୀ ଦିନରେ ସେକ୍ରେଟାରୀମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ଅଧିକାରୀମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଅତିବେଶି ଖୋଲାଖୋଲି ମିଳାମିଶା କରିବାର ଅନେକ କଥା ଶୁଣାଯାଏ । ଏପରିକା ବେତୁଙ୍ଗ କଥା ଖାଲି ଆମେରିକାରେହିଁ ଶୁଣିବ, ଯାକୁ ପୁଣି ଜାତିସଂଘବାଲା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଅବିନାଶ କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କ ସେକ୍ରେଟାରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଲକ୍ଷ ଖୁଆନ୍ତି ଓ କେବେ ହେଲେ ତିନରକୁ ନେବାର ଜଣାନାହିଁ ।

ବିକାଶ ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ବଡ଼ ହେଲା । ତା ଷ୍ଟୁଲକୁ ସୁନନ୍ଦା ବରାବର ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ତା କ୍ଲାସ ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀ ସଂଗରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଦେଖା କରନ୍ତି । ବିକାଶ କ୍ଲାସରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ହେଉ ଓ ଆମେରିକୀୟ ପିଲାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଭଲ କରୁ ଏହା ସୁନନ୍ଦା ଚାହେଁ । ଟିକେ ସମୟ ପାଇଲେ ବିକାଶକୁ ପଢ଼େଇ ବସନ୍ତି ଓ ବେଶି ଖୋଲାଖୋଲି କରିବାକୁ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । କିଛି ଶାରିରୀକ ଏକ୍ସରସାଇଜ ଦରକାର ସେଥିପାଇଁ ନିଜ

ଘରେ ଥିବା ସନ୍ତରଣ ଜଳାଶୟରେ ତାକୁ ସନ୍ତରଣ ଶିଖାଇ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସନ୍ତରଣ କରାନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରାୟ ୨୦ ମାଲଲ ଦୂରରେ ଥିବା ଗିଟାର ଶିକ୍ଷାକେନ୍ଦ୍ରକୁ ନେଇ ଗିଟାର ଶିଖାନ୍ତି । ରବିବାର ଦିନ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଗୋଟିଏ ଗିଟାର ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ହୁଏ । ସେଠାରେ ଗିଟାର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ପାଇଁ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଘଣ୍ଟା ବସିବାକୁ ପଡ଼େ । ବିକାଶର ପୋଷାକ ପରିଚ୍ଛଦ, ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ, ଖେଳ କ୍ଷମରତ, ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି ସବୁଥିରେ ସଠିକ ନଜର ଦେଇ ସେ ବିକାଶକୁ ଏକ ଆଦର୍ଶ ବାଳକ ଭାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରେ । ଏବେ କୌଣସି ପାଠି ବା ବନ୍ଧୁ ମିଳନରେ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ପାଟିରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା । ବିକାଶ ଜଣ କହିଲା, କେମିତି ଗିଟାର ବଜାଇଲା, କିପରି ଭଦ୍ର ଓ ସ୍ଥିର, ତାର ବ୍ୟବହାର କିପରି ମାଜିତ, ବଡ଼ମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେ କିପରି ସମ୍ମାନ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରେ, ସେ କିପରି ଚିତ୍ର ଆଙ୍କିପାରେ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ସାଙ୍ଗ ବାନ୍ଧବାମାନେ ସେଇ ଏକ କଥା ବହୁବାର ଶୁଣି ବିରକ୍ତ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁହଁରେ କିଛି କହନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ପଛରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଥଳା ପରିହାସ କରନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଏକମତ ଯେ ବିକାଶ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭଦ୍ର, ମାଜିତ ଓ ଭଲପିଲା । ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି ଭଲ କରେ । ଭଲ ଖେଳୁଆଡ଼, ଗିଟାର ଭଲ ବଜାଏ । ତାର ମା କିନ୍ତୁ ବିକାଶର ଗୁଣାବଳୀକୁ ଅତିରଞ୍ଜନ କରେ ବୋଲି ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ରହସ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତି ।

କାଳକ୍ରମେ ବିକାଶ ବଡ଼ ହୋଇ ଷ୍ଟୁଲର ଶେଷ କ୍ଲାସକୁ ଉଠି ଆସିଲାଣି । ତା କ୍ଲାସର ପିଲାମାନେ ଏବେ ଡେଟିଂ କଲେଣି ଓ ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କୁ ସଂଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ନେଇ ହୋଟେଲରେ ଖୁଆଇ ବୁଲାଇ କଲେଣି । ଦୁଇପକ୍ଷ ବାପମାଙ୍କ ଜାଣତରେ ଏକଥା ଘଟୁଛି । ଅନେକ ପିଲା ମଧ୍ୟ ଦୈନିକ ଗୁପ୍ତଜ୍ଞାନ ଅର୍ଜନ କଲେଣି ଓ କ୍ଲାସରେ ଅବସର ସମୟରେ ସେ ସବୁର ଆଲୋଚନା ହୁଏ । ବିକାଶ ହୃଷ୍ଟ ପୃଷ୍ଠ, ତେଜା ଓ ସୌମ୍ୟବର୍ଣ୍ଣନ । ସେ ଡେଟିଂର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଦେଲେ ହୁଏତ ଅନେକ ଝିଅ ରାଜିହେବେ । କେହି କେହି ଇଂରୀତ କଲେଣି । ବିକାଶ କିନ୍ତୁ ଲାଜକୁଳା । ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲି କୌଣସି ଝିଅକୁ କିଛି କହିପାରେନି । କ୍ଲାସର ପିଲାମାନେ ତାକୁ ମମିର ବେବି ବୋଲି ଚିତାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଦିନେ ଷ୍ଟୁଲ ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ ଯାଉଥିଲାବେଳେ ପଛରେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଝିଅ ତାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷକରି ମାଜିତଥା ବୋଲି କହୁଥିବାର ସେ ଶୁଣିପାରିଲା । ଲାଜରେ ତା କାନ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଲାଲ ହୋଇ ଗଲା । ଘରେ ମା'ଙ୍କର କଠୋର ନିୟମ । ଆମେରିକାରେ ଝିଅମାନେ ପୁଅମାନଙ୍କୁ ଖରାପ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ମନଲାଖି ସୁନାମାକି ବୋହୂ କରିବେ । ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କର ଏକ ବାର୍ଷିକ

ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ହୁଏ ଓ ବହୁଲୋକ ସପରିବାର ଆସନ୍ତି । ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ମନ କିନ୍ତୁ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ବା ଉତ୍ସବରେ ନଥାଏ । ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖି ଖାଲି ଘୁରିବୁଲୁଥାଏ କାହାକୁ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ବୋହୂ କରିବେ । ମନକୁ ଲାଗିଲା ଭଲ ଝିଅଟି ଦେଖିଲେ ତା ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରନ୍ତି ଓ ଆଗତୁରା ପରିଚୟ ଦେଇ ତା ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଭାଗ୍ୟର କି ବିତୟନା ଯେ ଝିଅଟି ଭଲ ଦେଖାଗଲେ ତାର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଭଲ ନୁହେଁ । କାହାର ନିୟମିତ ବୟସପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ଅଛନ୍ତି । କାହା ବାପାଙ୍କର ଭଲ ରୋଜଗାର ନାହିଁ ବା କାହାର ଭାଇ ନିଶାଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ସେବନ କରୁଛି । ତିନିଦିନିଆ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନଟା ଯାଏ ଖୋଜାଖୋଜିରେ । ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଦିନଟା ଆଗ୍ରହ ଓ ବୁଝାବୁଝିରେ ଓ ତୃତୀୟ ଦିନଟା ହା ହୁତାଶରେ । ହେଉ ବିକାଶର ତ ବୟସ ହୋଇନାହିଁ । ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ ତ ଭଗବାନ ଝିଅ ଆଣି ଲୁଟାଇ ଦେବେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବିକାଶ ଯଦି କୌଣସି ଆମେରିକା ଝିଅ ପାଲରେ ପଡି ନିଜର ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି ଓ ଚରିତ୍ର ନଷ୍ଟ କରେ ତାହା ହେଲେ ଆଶା ସବୁ ଭସ୍ମର ହୋଇଯିବ । ଅବିନାଶ କିଛି ବୁଝୁ ନାହିଁ । ବିକାଶ ପାଖକୁ ଟେଲିଫୋନ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ତେଣୁ ବିକାଶର ଟେଲିଫୋନରେ ଲମ୍ବା କଥା ହେବା ସେ ମନା କରିଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । କହିଲାରୁ ଅବିନାଶ ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ଦାର୍ଶନିକ ଭଳି “When you are in Rome, Do as Romans do II ବୋଲି କହିଥିଲେ । ପୁଅର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଯେ ନଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି ତାହାକଣ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ପଶୁଛି । ବିକାଶ ଏଣେ ଅଣନିଶ୍ଵାସି ହୋଇଉଠିଲାଣି । ଅନ୍ୟସବୁ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପରି ସେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଜୀବନ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ସିଏ ବି ତାର ମନୋଗତ ସାଥୁ ବାଛିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ସେତ ଆମେରିକାରେ ଜନ୍ମ, ଆମେରିକାନ । ସେ କାହିଁକି ଭାରତୀୟଙ୍କ ପରି ବାପ ମା ବାଛିଦେବା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ବାହାହେବ । ମା'ଙ୍କୁ ସେ ବହୁତ ଭଲ ପାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମା'ଙ୍କର ଏହି ମିଳାମିଶା ବାରଣଟା ତା ପକ୍ଷରେ ଅସହ୍ୟ । ମା'ଙ୍କର ଏ ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳାଗତ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ବାଟ ଖୋଜି ବସିଲା । ସେ ଏବେ ସ୍କୁଲ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଶେଷ କରି ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ଯିବ । ସ୍କୁଲ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ମା'ଙ୍କ ଆଶାକୁ ସଫଳ କରି ସେ ଖୁବ୍ ଉଚ୍ଚ ସ୍ଥାନ ଅଧିକାର କଲା ଓ ଭଲ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟମାନଙ୍କରେ ସିର୍ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବିବେଚିତ ହେଲା ।

ନିଉୟାର୍କର କଲମ୍ବିଆ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ପୃଥ୍ଵୀ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ । ନିଉୟାର୍କର ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ଘରଠାରୁ ଅଳ୍ପ କିଛି ମାଇଲ ଦୂର ।

ବିକାଶର ଦ୍ରାଘତା ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ଓ ସ୍କୁଲ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ବିଶେଷ କୃତିତ୍ଵ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିବା ହେତୁ ବାପମା ତାକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଛୋଟ ନୂଆ ଗାଡି ଉପହାର ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ଗାଡି ସେ ନିଜେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଚଳାଇ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ଯାଇପାରିବ । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ମନେମନେ ଭାଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଥାନ୍ତି ଯେ କଲମ୍ବିଆ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ମିଳିଯାଉ । ବିକାଶ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦରଖାସ୍ତ ପଠାଇଥାଏ । ବିକାଶ ବର୍ଜିଲେ ଓ କଲମ୍ବିଆ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ପାଇଲା । ତାର ଏକ ଜିଦ୍ ସେ ବର୍ଜିଲେ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ଯିବ ଓ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ରହି ସ୍ଵାଧୀନ ଭାବରେ ଚଳି ଶିଖିବ । ଅବିନାଶ ମାତ୍ରିକ ପାସ କଲାଦିନୁ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରଥମ ବର୍ଷରେ ଘର ଛାଡିଥିଲେ । ରେଭେନ୍ସା କଲେଜ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ଓ ମେଡିକାଲ କଲେଜ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ୫.୬ ବର୍ଷ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ବିକାଶର କଥାଟା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ଲାଗିଲାଣି । ବରଷ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ପିଲାଟାକୁ ସୁନନ୍ଦା ସବୁବେଳେ ପଣତରେ ଘୋଡାଇ ରଖୁଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କର ଧାରଣା । ପୁଅଟା ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ରହିଲେ ବାହାର ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାଂଗରେ ଚଳି ଶିଖିବ । ବହୁ ମାନ-ଅଭିମାନ, ରୋଷ, କାନ୍ଦଣା ପରେ ବିକାଶ ସାନ-ଫ୍ରାନସିସ୍କୋର ବର୍ଜିଲେ, ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ଗଲା । ସୁନନ୍ଦା ଏକା ହୋଇଗଲେ । ବହୁଦିନ ହେଲା ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କଠାରୁ ମାନସିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ସେ ଦୂରେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସଂଧ୍ୟାବେଳ ବିକାଶକୁ ଟେଲିଫୋନ କରନ୍ତି । ତା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଚିକେ କଥା ନହେଲେ ସୁନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ଶାନ୍ତି ମିଳେନା । ବିକାଶର ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଟେଲିଫୋନ ଆସିବା ଫଳରେ ବର୍ଜିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମମିର ବେଦି ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କନାମ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଗଲା । ବିକାଶ ବ୍ୟତିବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଉଠିଲା । ବର୍ଜିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଏଣିକି ମା ଟେଲିଫୋନ କରିବା ସମୟକୁ ସେ ଆଉ ନିଜ ରୂପରେ ରହେନି । ମା ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଟେଲିଫୋନ କରନ୍ତି ଓ ଲାଇବ୍ରେରୀରେ ଥିଲା କହି ଠକେଇ ଦିଏ ।

ବିକାଶର ଏବେ ଅନେକ ସାଂଗ ହୋଇଗଲେଣି । ଡେଟିଂ, ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି କଲାଣି । ନିଜେ ଗୋଟିଏ ମରଦ ପିଲାବୋଲି ପ୍ରମାଣ କରିବାପାଇଁ କିଛିଟା ମରଦ ପଣିଆ ଦେଖେଇଲାଣି । ଅନ୍ୟ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ସାଂଗରେ କିଛିଟା ନିଶାଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ସେବନ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ବାପାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ପଇସା ଆଣି ଗୋଟିଏ ନୂଆ ମଟର ସାଇକେଲ କିଣିଛି । କିଛିଟା ନିଶାଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ଟାଣିଦେଇ ଗାର୍ଲ ଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡକୁ ପଛରେ ବସାଇ ମଟର ସାଇକେଲରେ ବୁଲି

ଆସିବାର ଯେଉଁ ମଜା ତାକୁ ଯେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଛି ସେ ସିନା ଜାଣିବ, ଆଉ ଖାଲି ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଉଥିବା ଦରକୁଡ଼ା ଦରକୁଡ଼ାମାନେ କାହୁଁ ବୁଝିବେ । ବିକାଶର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକଳାପ କିଛି କିଛି ସୁନଦାଙ୍କ କାନରେ ପଡ଼ିଲାଣି । ସେଦିନ ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ବନ୍ଧୁ ସରୋଜ ବାବୁ ସାନପ୍ରାନ୍ତସିଂହଙ୍କୁ ଟେଲିଫୋନ କରିଥିଲେ ଓ ହାଇଡ୍ରୋରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଝିଅକୁ ପଛରେ ବସାଇ ବିପଦଜନକ ଗତିରେ ବିକାଶ ଯାଉଥିବାର ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି କହିଲେ । ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଶୁଣି ସୁନଦା ଚିତ୍ତିଗଲେ । ଏ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗୁଡ଼ାକ ଯୁଆଡେ ଗଲେବି ତାଙ୍କ ଅସହିଷ୍ଣୁ ପଣ ଛାଡ଼ନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଗୋଟେ ପରିବାରର ଭଲ ଦେଖିପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ସବୁବେଳେ କିଛି କିଛି ଦୋଷ ବାହାର କରୁଥିବେ । କଥାଟାକୁ ଉଡେଇ ଦେଲେ । ରାତିରେ ଏକୁଟିଆ ଶୋଇଥିବାବେଳେ ସୁନଦାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଖଟକା ଆସିଲା । ବିକାଶ ସତରେ ଏପରି କରୁନାହିଁ ତ । ଅଳ୍ପଦିନ ପରେ ଛୁଟିରେ ବିକାଶ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ସେହି ପୂର୍ବ ପରି ବ୍ୟବହାର । ପଡ଼ାପଡ଼ିରେ ମନଯୋଗିତା । କିଛିତ ଅସ୍ବାଭାବିକ ଜଣାପଡ଼ୁ ନାହିଁ । ହଁ, ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଚିକିତ୍ସ ଏକୁଟିଆ ରହୁଥିଲା ଓ ଛୁଟି ସରିବା ଆଗରୁ ପଡ଼ାପଡ଼ି ଅଛି କହି ଫେରିଗଲା । ମାଆଙ୍କ ସାଂଗରେ କୁଆଡେ ଯିବାକୁ ରାଜି ହେଉନଥିଲା । ସେଇଟା କିନ୍ତୁ ସେତେ ଅସ୍ବାଭାବିକ ନୁହଁ । ବୟସ ଟିକେ ବଢ଼ିଲେ ଏପରି ହୁଏ ।

ସୁନଦା ତାଙ୍କ ଅଫିସରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ହଠାତ୍ ଟେଲିଫୋନ ଶୁଣି ହତବାକ୍ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ବିକାଶ ମଟର ସାଇକେଲ ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣାରେ ଗୁରୁତର ଭାବରେ ଆହତ ଓ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ହୋଇଛି । ଅବିନାଶକୁ ଟେଲିଫୋନ କରି ଅଳ୍ପସମୟ ଭିତରେ ଉଡ଼ାଜାହାଜରେ ସାନପ୍ରାନ୍ତସିଂହଙ୍କୁ ବାହାରିଲେ । ଉଡ଼ାଜାହାଜରେ ୬ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଲାଗିଲା । ଠିକ୍ ୬ଘଣ୍ଟା ୬ମୁର ପରି ଲାଗିଲା । ବାଟ ସରୁ ନଥାଏ । ସମୟ କଟୁନଥାଏ । ବିମାନ ବନ୍ଦରରୁ ସିଧା ହସ୍ପିଟାଲକୁ ଗଲେ । ପହଞ୍ଚିଲାବେଳକୁ ଶେଷ ଅବସ୍ଥା । ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମେରୀ ଥିଲା, ସେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆହତ । ମେରୀର ଜଠରରେ ବିକାଶର ପିଲା । ତାର ଦେଖାଶୁଣା କରିବ । କଷ୍ଟେ ମଷ୍ଟେ ଏତିକି କହି ବିକାଶ ପ୍ରାଣତ୍ୟାଗ କଲା । ସୁନଦାଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଜୀବନ ଚୁର୍ମୁଗର ହୋଇଗଲା । ଏ ଜୀବନ ତାର ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ । ସ୍ବାମୀ ଅବିନାଶ ମାନସିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ଅନେକ ଦୂରରେ । ବିକାଶ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ବିକାଶର ମୃତ ଶରୀରକୁ ବହୁ ସମୟ

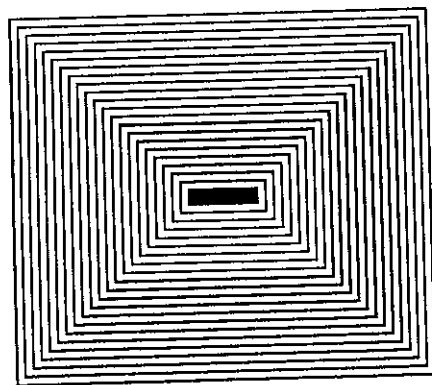
ଜଡ଼ାଇ ଧରିଲେ । ଅବିନାଶ ବୁଝାଇ ସୁଝାଇ ହୋଟେଲକୁ ଫେରାଇ ଆଣିଲେ । ସାରାରାତି ବିନିଦ୍ର । ବିକାଶହଁ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ଆସୁଥାଏ । ବିକାଶର ଶେଷକଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ବିକାଶ ତାର ସ୍ମୃତି ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ଯାଇଛି ତାର ମେରୀ ପାଖରେ । ତା ଆଉଦିନ ବିଜୁଳି ଚୁଲିରେ ବିକାଶର ମରଶରୀରକୁ ଦାହ କରିସାରିଲା ପରେ ଉଭୟ ଅବିନାଶ ଓ ସୁନଦା ମେରୀକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଗଲେ । ସୁନଦା ନିଜ ପୁଅ ପାଖରେ କୌଣସି ଆମେରିକାନ ଝିଅକୁ ସହ୍ୟ କରିପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଏମାନେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ତାହାଣି । ତାଙ୍କ ପୁଅର ରକ୍ତ ଶୋଷି ନେବେ । ମେରୀ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଧୀର ସ୍ବରରେ ସମ୍ମାନ ଜଣାଇଲା । ଏ ଝିଅଟି ପ୍ରତି ସୁନଦାର ଏକ ଅହେତୁକ ମମତା ଜାଗି ଉଠିଲା । ମେରୀକୁ ସ୍ବାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ କଥା ପଚାରିଲେ । ତାକୁ ସମସ୍ତ ଦରକାର ମୁତାବକ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବେ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରବୋଧନା ଦେଲେ । ମେରୀ କହିଲାଯେ ଯଦିଓ ସେ ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇଯିବ, ତାର ଗର୍ଭର ପିଲାଟି ନଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତାକୁ ସୁନଦା କଣ ସାଙ୍ଗନା ଦେବେ । ନିଜକୁ ବା କଣ ସାଙ୍ଗନା ଦେବେ । ବିକାଶର ସ୍ମୃତି ବି ଚାଲିଗଲା । ମେରୀ ଧିରେ ଧିରେ କହିଲା, ବିକାଶ ଯଦି ଏ ଦୁନିଆରେ ନରହିଲା ତାର ସନ୍ତାନକୁ ନେଇ ଏ ଅଳ୍ପ ବୟସରେ ମୁଁ ଜୀବନରେ କଣ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଯେମିତି ହେଲେ ଗର୍ଭପାତ ତ କରାଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥାନ୍ତା । ଏ ଗୋଟାଏ ମୋହ । ଏ ମୋହଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ମୁଁ ଓ ସେ ଶିଶୁଟି ଜୀବନରେ ବହୁ ଦୁଃଖ କଷ୍ଟ ସହ୍ୟ କରିଥାନ୍ତୁ । ଭଗବାନ ଜାଣି ସନ୍ତାନଟିକୁ କଷ୍ଟରୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ ତାକୁ ନେଇଗଲେ । ଆପଣ ମୋତେ ଘୁଣା କରିବେ ବୋଲି ବିକାଶ ମୋତେ କହୁଥିଲା । ଆପଣ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହ ଆଦର ଦେଖୁ ମୁଁ ଅଭିଭୂତ । ଅଳ୍ପଦିନ ପରେ ଆପଣମାନେ ଓ ମୁଁ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ହୁଏତ ଭୁଲିଯିବା କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ସ୍ନେହ ଭୁଲିବି ନାହିଁ । ମୋତେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଆସିଲେ, ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ହାତ ବୁଲାଇଲେ ଓ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ପଦର୍ଶନ କଲେ । ସେଥିଲାଗି ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରଣୀ । ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ମୋର ସମ୍ମାନ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରନ୍ତୁ । ମୋ ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ । ମୋ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ମୁଁ ବୁଝିବି ।

ସାନପ୍ରାନ୍ତସିଂହଙ୍କୁ ବିମାନ ଉଡ଼ିଚାଲିଛି । ଅଳ୍ପ ସମୟ ପରେ ବିମାନ ବନ୍ଦରରେ ବିମାନ ଅବତରଣ କଲା । ମନଭିତରେ ଏ ସବୁକଥା ଖେଳି ଉଠୁଛି । ସତେ କଣ ଏସବୁ ମୋହ । ବିକାଶ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କ ଆଶକ୍ତି କଣ ମୋହ ଓ ଏ ମୋହକୁ

କ'ଣ କାଟିବା ପାଇଁ ବିକାଶ ଅବାଚରେ ଗଲା । ମାଆ ଯାହା ତାହୁଁ ନଥିଲା ସେଇଆ ସବୁ କଲା । ସୁନହା ଠିକ୍ ଭାବିପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ବିମାନ ବଦରୁ ଉଭୟେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲେ । ଏବେ ଅବିନାଶ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି କଥାବାତା କରୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ଆଉ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଫୁଲି ନାହିଁ । ଦାରୁଭୂତୋ ମୁରାରୀ ପରି ବସିଛନ୍ତି । ସେଦିନ ସଞ୍ଜବେଳେ ଅଫିସରୁ ଫେରି ଦେଖିଲେ ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ଗାଡ଼ି ଥୁଆ ହୋଇଛି । ସେ କଣ ଏତେ ତଞ୍ଜଳ ଫେରି ଆସିଲେଣି । ନିଜ ଚାବି ଦ୍ଵାରା କବାଟ ଖୋଲି ଧୀର ସନ୍ତର୍ପଣରେ ଉପର ମହଲାକୁ ଉଠିଲେ । ଶୋଇବା ଘରୁ ଅବିନାଶଙ୍କ ପାଟି ଶୁଭୁଛି । ଆରେ, ଅବିନାଶ ଯେ କଣ ଗୋଟିଏ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଶ୍ଳୋକ ବୋଲୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏତେ ନୂଆ କଥା । ପାଖେଇ କାନ ପାତିଲେ । ଅବିନାଶ ଗାଉଛନ୍ତି । “କାଃ ସ୍ତଃ କାନ୍ତା କଃ ସ୍ତେ ପୁତ୍ର । ସଂସାରୋଽୟମତୀବଃ ବିଚିତ୍ର । ଅର୍ଥମ୍ ଅନର୍ଥ ଭାବୟ ନିତ୍ୟମ ନାସ୍ତି ତତ୍ର ସୁଖଲେଶ ସତ୍ୟମଃ” ଆଖିରୁ ଅଶ୍ରୁର ସ୍ରୋତ ବୋହିଗଲା । ସୁନହା ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରକୁ ଝଟ ବେଗରେ ପଶିଗଲେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅବିନାଶ

ଜତାଇ ଧରିଲେ । ଏପରି ନିବିଡ଼ ଆଶ୍ଵେଷ ବହୁଦିନୁ ଉଭୟେ ଭୁଲିଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଆଗରୁ ଏ ନିବିଡ଼ତା ଶରୀର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସିମାତ ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ନିବିଡ଼ତା, ମନ ଓ ଆତ୍ମାର । ରାଗ, ରୋଷ, ବିରୋଧ, ଓ ଖାପଛତା ଭାବ ସବୁ ପାଣିହୋଇ ବହିଗଲା । ଅବିନାଶ କହିଲେ ‘ମଧୁ’ ଆମେ ଟଙ୍କା, ପଇସା, ସମ୍ମାନ ଓ ନିଜର ପୁତ୍ର ମୋହରେ ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅନ୍ଧ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଓ ସଂସାରରେ ଅନ୍ୟସବୁ ବିଷୟକୁ ଭୁଲି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଏଣିକି ମୋହ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଓ ସଂସାରକୁ ଦେଖ । ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ଉପକାରରେ ଓ ହିତରେ ଯେତେଦୂର ପାରିବା ଜୀବନ ଜଟାଇ ଦେବା ।

ଉଭୟ ଅବିନାଶ ଓ ସୁନହା ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ ଓ ଦାତବ୍ୟ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ସମୟ ବିତାଇ ସମାଜରେ ବିଶେଷ ନାମ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ନିଜର ସଂପତ୍ତି ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ଦାନ କରିଦେଇ, ସେ ଅର୍ଥରେ ନିଶ୍ଚାମୁକ୍ତ ଗବେଷଣା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିବେ ବୋଲି ସ୍ଥିର କରିଛନ୍ତି ।



ମାଘ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା

ନିରୁପମା କର ମହାପାତ୍ର

ହେମନ୍ତର ହେମାଳ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ
କ୍ଷୀଣ ତନୁ ଏ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣୀ ନଳ,
ସାଗର ର ମିଳନ ଆଶାରେ
ଅବିଶ୍ରାମେ ଯାଉଅଛି ବହି ।

ବସନ୍ତର ଆରମ୍ଭ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା
ଆଣେ ଯେବେ ଏ ତୋରା ମଳୟ,
କୁଳୁକୁଳୁ ଗୀତ ତା କଣ୍ଠରେ
ଉଲ୍ଲାସିତ ତାର ମନ ଦେହ ।

ତଟିନୀ ତଟରେ ନୌକା ବାନ୍ଧି
ଅପେକ୍ଷାତ ଅଜଣା ନାଉରି,
ସକାଳ ତ ଗତି ସଂନ୍ଧ୍ୟାହେଲା
ରତାମତ ଯାତ୍ରୀ କରି ପାରି ।

ପହଁଞ୍ଚୁ ନଦୀତୀରେ ଆମେ
ଯିବୁ ପରା 'କାମାକ୍ଷା ନଗର',
ରୋଧୁଳି ତ ଯାଉଅଛି ଗତି
ନାଉରିଆ ଦୁହେଁ ଚରତର ।

ପୂର୍ବମୁଖୀ ହୋଇ ନୌକା ମଙ୍ଗେ
ବସିଅଛି 'ଗୋପା' ମୋ ଝିଆରୀ,
ଅଙ୍ଗେ ତାର ଯୌବନ ର ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ
ଆଖିରେ ତା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଅସୁମାରି

ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳିତ କରି ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟ
ଉଠେ ଯେବେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମାସୀ ଶଶି,
ବିଛୁରିତ ଶୁଭ୍ର ଜୋଛନାର
ବେଳାଭୂମି ଉଠେ ଅବା ହସି ।

ବିସ୍ମୟୀତ ହୋଇ କହେ 'ଗୋପା'
ଦେଖ 'ଶୁଭୀ' ଅପୂର୍ବ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା,
ବାସ୍ତବ୍ୟତା ଭରା ମୋ ଉତ୍ତର
“ଆଜି ପରା ମାଘ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା” ।

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ

ଝାନ୍ସ ଛୋଟୋୟା

ପ୍ରେମ :

ତା ବିହୁନେ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ ଏ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ରଚନା
ଭକ୍ତର ଉଡେ ନାହିଁ ବାନା
ସଂସାରୀର ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଓ କାମନା ।

X X X

ଅନ୍ତରର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଯ୍ୟାମୀ ଦୟାର ସାଗର
ବନ୍ଧା ପାଶେ ହେବା ପାଇଁ ତାର
ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ କ୍ଷତ ଉପଚାର
ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ ସେ ବାଜା ବାଜଣା
ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ ବାହ୍ୟ ଆଡ଼ମ୍ବର
ସୃଷ୍ଟିର କରତା ପ୍ରେମ ପାଇଁ ସିଏ ବି ବିକଳ
ବିହୃତକ ଶାଗ ଭଜା ଶର୍ବରୀର ଫଳ
ନିଷ୍ପପତକ ପ୍ରେମ ଦାସିଆ, ବନ୍ଧୁ ମହାନ୍ତିର
ରଖୁଥିଲେ ଟେକ ପ୍ରଭୁ ସୁଦାମା ଭକ୍ତର
ପ୍ରେମର ରଚକ ସିଏ ପୁଣି ଭିକାରୀ ପ୍ରେମର
ପ୍ରଭୁ ମାଗେ ପ୍ରେମଭରା
ଗୋଟିଏ ତୁଳସୀ ଆଉ ଠୋପାଟିଏ ଜଳ
ପରମ ପିତା ପଚାରନ୍ତି
ପିତା ପାଇଁ ଏତିକି ବିରଳ ???

X X X

ପଦ୍ମୀର ଅନ୍ତରର ଅଳି
ସଂସାରକୁ ଗଢ଼ିବାକୁ ସରଗରୁ ବଳି
ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ ସ୍ବାମୀ ମୋର ଦୀର୍ଘ ଅଜାଳିକା
ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ ସରଗର ଚାନ୍ଦ
ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ ହୀରକ ମୁଦ୍ରିକା
ଏ ଆଖି ଯଦି ଭିଜିଯାଏ ନୟନର ଜଳେ
ପୋଛି ଦେବ ପ୍ରିୟ ମୋର ତୁମ କରତଳେ
ପାଦ ଯଦି ଥକି ପଡେ ସଂସାର ରାସ୍ତାରେ
ଚାଲିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ହେବ ତୁମ ପ୍ରେରଣାରେ
ତୁମରି ନରମ କଥା ତୁମରି ଦରୋତି ହସ
ଟିକିଏ ପରଶ ତୁମ
ଦିବସର ଅବଶେଷ କାଳେ
କୁହ ସ୍ବାମୀ ଏକି ତୁମ ଶକ୍ତିର ପାରେ ???

CHANDRABHAGA AND CHANDRAKALA

Pratibha Ray

Why does the moon wax and wane, one wonders. The sliver of the moon looks so beautiful, perhaps because, behind the imperfection, an invisible artist dreams of a picture of completeness.

To me, however, it seems as if day by day, the moon is only getting smaller. When I think of the moon, I think of Buddha's words that suffering is the perennial truth of human life. Ordinary man searches for happiness amidst misery and experiences, suffering in many ways. That is why perhaps, the sick take recourse in treatment and console themselves that physical well-being, not illness, is reality...., knowing all the while that the reverse is true. Hope leads to a greater suffering, yet it is the same hope that sustains man and gives him pleasure however transient.

But what is the meaning of hope? I find it hard to understand. How, for instance, is this girl to console herself? After all, the doctors have pronounced their final words. There is no further treatment to be undertaken now. Despite this, she has remained alive, because of her indomitable will to live. Her strength of mind and power of endurance simply amaze me. Perhaps, like the force of a river that gets stronger when a swimmer strives against its current, adversity tends to fill a person with a greater strength.

It is she who was the means of our acquaintance. One day, an unexpected phone call greeted me. The caller introduced herself as Chandrabhaga Das. She said she was an admirer of my books and wished to see me. "I am usually at home during the evenings. You're welcome to visit me then," I said. Her silence over the phone filled me with a curious admixture of melancholy and eagerness. "You know," she continued, "I've been ailing for quite some time. I heard you live nearby. If only you could come!"

It was not pity but curiosity that drew me to her house. My visits continued over a period of time. I suppose it was some invisible attraction that drew me there despite my busy schedule.

The first day I saw her, she was wearing a long gown

and lying in bed. I introduced myself to her aged father, Lambadar Babu, who ushered me in, and said to his daughter, "This is Prabhat Ray, whose writings you love so much. Remember, you invited him."

She folded her feeble hands together and greeted me, but lay still in bed. She made no effort to rise. It must be due to her weakness, I thought. Perhaps, she has been asked by her doctors not to get up. Her small face appeared somewhat pale and lusterless. Some hidden emotion made the tip of her nose appear a trifle tremulous. With eyes unblinking, laden with a deep sadness, her gaze held me as if she were in search of something. The gaze was direct and made me somewhat self-conscious. What answer to life's mystery does she seek from an unknown writer, I wondered. Aloud, I asked, "How are you? How long have you been ill? Is it a fever or a headache?"

In reply, she only smiled and then began discussing my works. I suppose, it was easy for me to be oblivious of her illness as I sat there listening to my own praise. All in all, I think I liked the girl more than she liked me. By then her mother had treated me to some tea and snacks, and I felt myself to be a member of their family. At our first meeting, I stayed for two whole hours. When I finally stood up to go, I said with easy familiarity, "Now it's your turn, you know. I do hope you will get well soon and pay me a visit. I am sure my wife will be delighted to meet you."

In her reclining position, Chandra offered me a weak smile in return. As I stood there to take leave, I added, "And by the way, you asked a lot about my writing but you said nothing about yourself. Which college did you attend? Are you in the Sciences or in the Arts? And how long the doctors advised rest for you?"

I wonder what else I could have asked her at my first meeting.

In a subdued tone, Chandra answered, "What can I possibly say about myself? Well, perhaps another day! I think as it is, I have wasted a lot of your time. But I must tell you, it was a wonderful meeting you.

As with your writing, you imparted a feeling of intimacy at our very first meeting. I have no doubt that it's my great fortune to have you call on me."

I thanked her and stepped out. As I looked back at that still form upon the bed, my smugness gave way to deep sorrow. How does one explain the plight of such a pure and tender soul, I wondered. Could it be simply her misfortune or perhaps the result of some past *karma*?

As if interrupting my thoughts, her father said, "It has been twelve years you see. Before that, she could at least sit up. Now, even that is not possible. The wheelchair is lying idle over there. It may never be put to use again."

"Heavens, no!" I exclaimed quite involuntarily.

Her father continued, "When the doctors made false promises, I used to pray to God. Now they say there is no hope. I don't even pray anymore. Also, I no longer have to go to the temple or the hospital. That's better in a way. Chandra was in a nursing home for five years. I had a tough time then commuting between the hospital and the temple."

I listened in a daze as he went on, "Chandra was ten when she felt some pain in her spinal column near her waist. The doctors advised an operation, the result of which was that she was paralyzed from her waist downwards. The girl, who was notorious in school and at home for her restless nature, has been absolutely still for the last twelve years. This dark room is her world. And that ceiling over there draped with cobwebs is her sky. I wonder why God has kept her alive. Our own days are numbered. Can you imagine what will happen to her after our deaths?"

I had no answer to all these questions and could only mumble, "What about your other children?"

"Well, they're there, you know, doing well. Two of my daughters are abroad; the sons are quite busy in their world. When they come, they live here for a day or two. But Chandra is our responsibility. Who will look after her when we are gone, I wonder. Strange, there was a time when she was the darling of all!"

Chandra's father heaved a deep, melancholic sigh. I wanted to leave, but I felt hard pressed, offering any

cheap consolation to someone who had experienced in her very cells the bitter truths of life. Moreover, what consolation could one offer in Chandra's peculiar condition?

I was standing with my back towards Chandra. She was obviously within earshot, and I just didn't have courage enough to look back at her. Obviously, Chandra believed in me as a writer. What response could I give to her crisis? Nonetheless, I retraced my footsteps, bracing myself to face Chandra. It would not be proper for me to leave abruptly now that I knew the whole story, I thought. But could I possibly tell Chandra about her death in life condition? I decided to pack all my sorrow and empathy into the expression, "I am sorry," but stopped when my gaze finally fell on her.

She has thrown her unknown and unwanted body upon the bed. What could I possibly tell someone who harbors the cruel truth of twelve long years in every blink of her eyes? It would be so presumptuous of me! Her eyes were as still as stones. The agony of the present made her face devoid of expression. It was as though our roles had been reversed, as if not Chandra but I was helplessly begging for her grace. It was as though I was pleading with her to let me know what words of mine would not violate or insult her being. She had retained, in the last twelve years, the picture of so many people rendered helpless at seeing her plight. And the more helpless the others had been, the more strength she found in herself, perhaps because she realized that no suffering is ever lessened nor can the expression of sorrow and pity help in restoring one's past.

Interrupting my thoughts, Chandra asked, "How long are you going to stand like this? I've truly caused you a lot of trouble I think, by summoning you in this way."

"Well, the pain is not due to my standing," I said and fell silent.

"If you're really worried on my account," Chandra remarked, "will you do something for me?"

I had resolved to do my utmost when Chandra said, "My only request is that you should never show any pity for me. For the last twelve years, the more pity

people have showered on me, the poorer I have become. Today, this country is so poor that many people here can even live on the surfeit of pity. I hope you don't mind what I say."

As I gazed at the girl, I wondered whether Chandra was feeling pity for my own helplessness. "I'll come again," I said hastily as I stepped out of the room. I made an effort not to look at the wheelchair on the verandah. My mind was not prepared to accept as truth the chair, which for me had become a symbol of Chandra's crippled status.

While seeing me to the gate, Chandra's father said, "Actually, I wanted to see you. Will you do something for Chandra?"

"I am prepared to do whatever I can, especially if its going to do any good for her," I replied with eagerness.

"I think I'll ask Chandra to make a representation to the government. Could you please draft this letter?"

When I said eagerly that I would, he remarked, "She will end her life for which she seeks the sanction of law. I shall die in peace if this much can be accomplished. Wouldn't it be ideal for her to pass away amidst love and care? She is sure to die after us but that would be a cruel death, full of suffering and neglect."

Hearing those words, my eyes became moist. And when I saw the stony eyes of Chandra's mother looking at me, I wanted to flee. It seemed to me as though I was being implicated in some crime. What could I reply? Aloud I said, "Does Chandra know this?"

"Yes. I am preparing her for this kind of suicide," replied the aged father. "Instead of a death full of suffering, perhaps her soul should leave her broken body before our eyes."

"But does Chandra agree to this?" I persisted.

"Well, if the world were working according to Chandra's plans, would she have languished for twelve long years? Do you know that at one time she was a great dancer? And today, her fate is worse than a lizard crawling on its belly. That is why I never

allow any lizards to thrive in our house; I kill them all ruthlessly. No wonder many people take me for mad."

I returned home in silence. Later, at each visit, Chandra's father would ask, "Did you write that representation? Don't you think it's better for Chandra to die? Do you really take this for life? How can we as parents bear this sight and for how long?"

Yet, I saw that day by day Chandra was improving. She may have been paralyzed at her waist but her heart and mind were still active. Above all, her hands were amazingly brisk. A stranger might have mistaken her illness for a simple case of the flu. I looked around the house and saw Chandra's handiwork scattered everywhere. The sweaters that she continued to knit were being used by her family and neighbors. It was as if her dead body had been kindled into a flame of life. Her hands had defied her inert feet.

Now visiting Chandra became a matter of habit for me. She had become a source of inspiration, revealing in effect that it is only the shirker of work who is truly the cripple.

Of course, I never succeeded in replying to Chandra's father. At times he would ask me, "What's holding you up? Are you really worried that there may be some legal problem? Rest assured that she will affix her own signature to the document. Don't you realize that our days are numbered? Who would give her even a drop of water after we are gone?" he repeated.

All waiting is tiresome. Waiting for death is, in a way, worse than death itself. But it was hard to believe that Chandra was actually waiting for death. That this condition could be glorious like the radiant moon on a new moon night, defied all imagination.

That day I saw Chandra creating the image of Lord Jagannath with the help of some golden thread. She was humming a tune to herself from the depth of her heart. It seemed to me that perhaps Chandra loved someone dearly and it was this profound love of hers that kept her alive. This love had created music in her and manifested itself through her hands as the blossoming of many flowers.

Gathering courage, I asked, "Chandra, I hope you

don't mind. But tell me, though your body is nearly paralyzed, your heart is full of wonderful dreams. Have you fallen in love with someone?"

Instead of looking at me, she turned to the image of Lord Jagannath and smiled, "How could you know my mind?"

"Your life tells me that," I answered. "There are many who are healthy but cannot live so fully as you. Look at me for instance! I am one of them. I am more dead than alive! Perhaps in the humdrum chores of everyday existence, I have lost the track of life."

Nodding her head, Chandra said, "Yes, there is someone I love. My love for Him has added strength and joy to my life. He has taught me that I am no crippled imperfection."

"But who is this ideal of yours?" I persisted, half expecting her to point me out, so full of vanity and self-love had I become.

Chandra's lovely gaze held be still. Then she turned toward the two huge eyes and beautifully engraved picture of Lord Jagannath. "I adore the incomplete image of the Lord," she remarked. "If my Lord can be perfect and immanent despite his crippled status, why should I grieve over my plight? After all, my feelings are not dead, nor has my heart ever been still!"

I detected a peculiar radiance in Chandra's otherwise colorless face. Perhaps it is I who deserve to be the object of pity, I thought, for I took a crippled body for a hungry soul whereas Chandra, I realized, had moved beyond the joys and sorrows of ordinary life.

I stepped back bowing to that noble soul. At the doorstep, her father, who had witnessed our conversation, said, "Perhaps you don't need to write that letter of representation. My Chandra's soul will outlive her body! Can one ever destroy the soul? I think I suffered before because this truth had escaped me. Now, I am freed from this burden."

I could sense the murmur of a faint whisper penetrating the recesses of my being. "There is no end to suffering in this world, but like the surrender of Draupadi before Lord Krishna when threatened with disrobement by the Kauravas, the world's miseries are lessened when they are offered to the Lord."

I was stepping out of my room when I checked myself. I thought I heard Chandra's voice behind me, and retraced my footsteps. Her smile of perfection was the enigmatic counterpoint to her crippled body under the shadow of the new moon.

Translated from Oriya by Dr Sachidanand Mohanty, Department of English, University of Hyderabad

"After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music."

Aldous Huxley

ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ

ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାୟକ

ନବୀନ ଆଲୋକ
ନୂତନ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ
ଥୁଲା କେତେ ନୂଆ ଆଶା;
ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର,
ତେର ନଈର କୋଳ'ରେ
ଭାସିଗଲା ସେ ସୁଦୂର ବାଞ୍ଛା ।

ତୁମେ କି ବୁଝିବ ନା ବୁଝିଲ
ହୃଦୟ'ର ଆଶା
ନା ତା'ର ପରିଭାଷା ।

ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଆସିଲି
ପଶ୍ଚିମେ ରହିଲି
ଆଜି, ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କେତେ ଯେ ମନେ;
ତୁମର ସ୍ନେହକୁ ଆଞ୍ଜୁଳିରେ ଧରି
ଭାବେ, ଯିବି ଉତ୍ତରେ ନା ଦକ୍ଷିଣେ ?
ଚାରିବିଗ ସାକ୍ଷୀ
ନିର୍ଜନ ବିଜନେ
କୁଆଡେ ପାରୁନି ଯାଇ;
ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୟ ତୋଳୁଟି
ଲୁହକୁ ଫୁଟି ଚାପି
ତୁମର, ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ପାଇଁ ।

ସେଇ ମୋ ପ୍ରିୟ ସହର

ମଧୁସୂତା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ

ସେଇ ମୋ ପ୍ରିୟ ସହର !
ହୃଦୟର କେଉଁ ଅଳିକରେ
ତାର ସ୍ମୃତି ଆଜି ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ।
ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣାକ୍ଷରେ ଲିପିବଦ୍ଧ
ତାର ସୁନ୍ଦରତା
ବାହ୍ୟ ଆତ୍ମର ନୁହେଁ,
ମନେପଡେ ଖାଲି ଆତ୍ମୀୟତାର ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ
ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଧୂଳିକଣା ତାର ଚିର ପରିଚିତ ।

ରଳିକନ୍ଦି, ରାସ୍ତାଘାଟ
ସବୁଥିରେ ଭରପୂର ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗଭାବ
ଦୂର ବିରାଜିତ ତଳ ଗୁମୁଚ୍ଛ ତାରକାର କ୍ଷୀଣାଲୋକ ପରି
ଶୈଶବର ସ୍ମୃତି ତାକୁ ନେଇ,
ଯୌବନର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସେଇଠି,
ସେଇ ମୋ ପ୍ରିୟ ସହର ।

କିନ୍ତୁ.... ଆଜି ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଅନ୍ତରାଳେ,
ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର, ତେର ନଈ ପାରି ହୋଇ
ତାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ ବି ଅନୁଭବ କରି ହୁଏନା,
ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ପୂର୍ବପରି...
ଅନବରତ ତାର କୋଳାହଳ ଶୁଣି ହୁଏନା
ତା ଭିତରେ ହଜି ବି ଯାଇ ହୁଏନା ।

ତେବେ ବି ମନେପଡେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କ୍ଷଣରେ !!
କର୍ମମୟ ଏ ଜୀବନ ଜଞ୍ଜାଳ ଭିତରେ...
କେତେ ଆପଣାର !
ସେଇ ମୋ ପ୍ରିୟ ସହର !
ଯେଉଁଠି ମୁଁ ଦିନେ ହୋଇଥିଲି ଆତ୍ମହରା ..
ଧ୍ରୁବତାରା ପରି
ଚିରନ୍ତନ ସତ୍ୟ କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ସ୍ମୃତି
ଆତ୍ମୀୟତାର ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମିଳେ ଯାହାଠାରୁ,
ଆଜି ବି ସୁଦୂରରୁ....
ସେଇ ମୋ ପ୍ରିୟ ସହର !

ଶୀଳାପଦ୍ମ

ଉତ୍ତରା ଦାସ

ଶୀଳାପଦ୍ମ !

ତୁ କି ଆଉ ଖୋଲିବୁନି ମୁଦା ଆଖି/ବନ୍ଦ ଓଠ ?

କିଏ ଜାଣେ କାହିଁକି ଯେ ପଥର ପାଲଟିଗଲା

କାଟିଦେଲା ଯେତେକ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ.....

ପଥର ତୋ ଆଖିରେ ବି ଭିଜି ଆଖିପତା

ସତରେ କି କହିଦେବୁ ଅଳ୍ପହା କାହାଣୀର କେତେପଦ କଥା !!

ଶୀଳା ପଦ୍ମ !!

ତୁ କାହିଁ ପାଲଟିଗଲା ପଥର/ନିଷ୍ଠୁର

କିଏ ଯେ କାହିଁକି ତତେ କରିଦେଲା ଫୁଲରୁ ଅତିଷ୍ଠ ?

କାହିଁ ଗଲା ତୋ ଓଠର କୋମଳତା ?

ନିଷ୍ଠାପ ତୋ ଆଖିର ଚାହାଣୀ,

ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମନ ଆଉ ହସର ଝରଣା;

ତୁ ଆଜି ଉତ୍ତରୁକୁ ଲୁହ ଆଉ ଲହର ବନ୍ୟାରେ

ସତେ କି ତୁ ବୁଝିଗଲା ମିଛ ଏଇ ମୋର ସମ୍ପର୍କ ??

ନିଜ ମନ / ଏବଂ କିଛି ଏଇ ସବୁରି ଛଳନା !!

କେହି ନାହିଁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନାଭିଜା ରାତି

ତାରା ସବୁ ଗୁପ୍ତରୁ ଟାପର

ତୁ କାଳେ ଖୋଲିବୁନି ମୁଦା ଆଖି

ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଆଉ କା ସ୍ନେହର ଇଶାରା

ଖୋଲିବନି ବନ୍ଦ ଓଠ ଆଉ କେବେ

ତୁ କାଳେ ପାଲଟିଛୁ ଓହ୍ଲ ଅରୁଣତୀ !!!

ରକ୍ଷି କୁମାରୀ

ପ୍ରିୟମତା ମହାନ୍ତି

ମୃଦୁ ମୃଦୁ ତାନରେ ବାଜୁଛି ବୀଣା
ସଂଗୀତ ଗାଉଛନ୍ତି ଏଣାନନ୍ଦନା
ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅଟଳ ତାଙ୍କରି ସ୍ଵର
ମଧ୍ୟେ ମଧ୍ୟେ ଶୁଭର ବୀଣା ଝଙ୍କାର
ନିର୍ଜନ କୂଟୀରରେ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି
ସଂଗୀତ ଗାଇ ଗାଇ ଦିନ ବିତାନ୍ତି
ବସନ୍ତ ଋତୁରେ ନିର୍ଜନ ରାତ୍ରୀରେ
ଶୀତଳ ସମୀର ବହେ ଧରେ ଧରେ
ଦୀପ ଜାଳି ବସିଲେ ରକ୍ଷି କୁମାରୀ
ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ସୌମ୍ୟ ରୂପ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କରି

ସେ ପଥ ଦେଇ ଆସନ୍ତି ରାଜପୁତ୍ର
ଦେଖୁ କୁମାରୀକୁ ହେଲେ ଓହ୍ଲିଭୁତ
କୁମାରୀ ଦେଖୁ ହେଲେ ନତ ମଣ୍ଡଳ
ରାଜକୁମାର ହରେଇଲେ ବିବେକ
ରାଜପୁତ୍ର ପଡ଼ାରନ୍ତି ମୃଦୁସ୍ଵରେ
କିଏ ତୁମେ ପରିଚୟ ଦିଅବାରେ
ମୋର କିଏ ପିତା ମାତା ଜାଣେ ନାହିଁ
ଜଣ୍ଠରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବଞ୍ଚୁଅଛି ମୁହିଁ
ରାଜକୁମାର ଲଜିତ ହେଇଗଲେ
ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାସୀ ଧ୍ୟାନରେ ମଗ୍ନ ରହିଲେ

ତୋ ଲାଗି ଗୀତଟିଏ...

ଶୁଭଶ୍ରୀ ଦାସ

ରଂଗୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ତଳେ
ପ୍ରକୃତିର ସଲ୍ଲଜ ମାଧୁରୀ
ବସନ୍ତର ମହକରେ
ଉଲ୍ଲାସିତ ସବୁଜ ଧରଣୀ ।

ସବୁଜିମା ଆସ୍ତରଣ ଭେଦି
ଫୁଲର ରଂଗୀନ ପାଖୁଡ଼ା
ହସିଉଠେ ରହି ରହି
ଭରିଦିଏ ନୂତନ ଅଭାସ୍ୟା ।

ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାଗର୍ଭା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତୋୟା ପ୍ରକୃତିର କୋଳେ
ବସନ୍ତର ବାସନ୍ତିକା ଖେଳେ
ମୋ କୋଳରେ ମୋ ପ୍ରେମର ପ୍ରଥମ ସନ୍ତକ
ହସେ ମୁଁ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ଗରବେ ।

ତୋ ଓଠର ହସ ଆଜି
ମୋ ଜୀବନ ଅମୃତ୍ୟ ସଂପଦ
ତୋ ଆଖିର ଜ୍ୟୋତି ପରା
ମୋ ଜୀବନ ପଥ-ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକ ।

ତୋ ଆଖିର ଲୁହସାଥେ,
ଅସହାୟ, ମା'ର ମମତା
ଧନ ମୋର ଲୁହ ସାଥେ, କୋହ ତୋର
ଭରିଦିଏ ଏ ଜୀବନେ ବ୍ୟଥା

ଜୀବନରେ ଜାଣିବାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ
ତୋ ପାଇଁ ତୋ'ରି ସାଥରେ
ଭରପୁର ଐଶ୍ୱର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅଞ୍ଜଳି ମୋର
ତୋ ସୁଖ ପ୍ରାରୁଣ୍ୟ ଭିତରେ ।

ତୋ ଓଠର ଦରୋଟି ବଚନ
ଜୀବନର ଏକମାତ୍ର ଅପହଞ୍ଚ ସତ୍ୟ
ଜିତିଗଲି ତୋ ଲାଗି, ତୋରି ପରଶେ
ହସେ ଆଜି ଗରବେ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ

କୁନି କୁନି ହାତର ପରଶେ ତୋର
ମୁଦି ହୋଇ ଆସେ ମୋର ଆଖି
ସପନର ଗନ୍ତାଘର ମୁଦା ଆଖି ତଳେ
ଉଠନ୍ତି ଝଲସି ।

ଫୁଲର ପାଖୁଡ଼ା ସମ, କୁନି ପାଦେ ତୋର
ଶକ୍ତିର ଝଲକ
ଜୀବନର ଚଳାପଥେ ଚାଲିବାର
ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରୟାସ ।

ଚମକି ଉଠେ ମୁଁ ଧନ, ହସେ ପୁଣି
ତୋ ହସ ସାଥରେ
ଚାଲିଶିଖ, ଜୀବନକୁ ସାମନା କରିବାର
ମୋ ହାତ, ତୋ ଲାଗି, ତୋରି
ସାମ୍ନାରେ ।

କୋଳ ମୋର ଭରପୁର, ହାତେ ମୋର
ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୁଖର ଅଞ୍ଜଳି
ଜୀବନ ଯାତନା ନୁହେଁ, ଦୁଃଖର ସାଗର ନୁହେଁ
ଐଶ୍ୱର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଗନ୍ତାଘର, ଲାଗେ ଆଜି
ତୋ ଅଳି ଅର୍ଦଳି ।

କଷ୍ଟକିତ, ଜୀବନର ଚଳାପଥ
ମନେ ଆଣେ ଭୀତି ଓ ଆଶଙ୍କା
ଡରିନୁତ, ଜୀବନଟା ଏଇମିତି ଆଣିଦିଏ ଶଙ୍କା

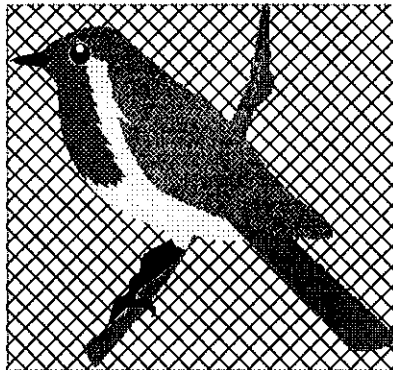
ତୋ ଜୀବନ ଚଳାପଥୁ, କାଢ଼ିବାକୁ କଣ
ହୋଇପାରେ ରକ୍ତାକ୍ତ ତୋ ମା'ର ମମତା
ହୋଇପାରେ ତା' ଆଖି ଓଦା ।

ଧନ ମୋର ଫେରି ଚାହିଁ ଅଟକି ଯିବୁନି
ସେ ହିଁ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ଆଉ
ଜୀବନର ସୌଦା ।

କାଶ୍ମୀର ମୋ'ର

ଯତୀନ୍ଦ୍ର ପାଢ଼ୀ

ମୋତେ ତୁମପରି ଅନେକ ବନ୍ଧୁ ପ୍ରାଣ କରୁଛନ୍ତି
ମୁଁ ସେ ଝିଅଟିକୁ ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ କାହିଁକି ମନା କରିଦେଇ ଆସିଲି ।
ବନ୍ଧୁ, ମୁଁ ସେ ମହାଶୟାକୁ ପଚାରିଲି
ମୋ ସହ କାଶ୍ମୀର ଯାଇ ପାରିବ ?
ସେ ଡରିଯାଇ କହିଲେ 'ନା' ।
ମୁଁ କହିଲି ମୁଁ ଭୀରୁ ଝିଅକୁ ନେଇ ସଂସାର କରିପାରିବିନି;
ବାସ୍, ଏତିକି ।
ବନ୍ଧୁ, କାଶ୍ମୀର ମୋର
ମୋତେ ବିବାହ କଲେ କାଶ୍ମୀର ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ।



ଜୁମ-ବ୍ୟତିକ୍ରମ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ଶୋଭାଯାତ୍ରା ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଥିଲା । ବରଯାତ୍ରୀଦଳ ଅସାମ ଆହ୍ଲାଦରେ ରେକର୍ଡର ଗୀତ ତାଳେ ତାଳେ ବ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡପାଟି ସହିତ ନାଚି ନାଚି ଚାଲୁଥିଲେ । ବରଯାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କାଃ ବର୍ଷ ଏପଟର ତରୁଣଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅଧିକ । ଯେଉଁ କେତେ ଜଣ ବୟସ୍କ ଲୋକ ଥିଲେ ସେମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଆଧୁନିକ ଚଳଣୀର ସପକ୍ଷବାଦୀ । ତେଣୁ ଶୋଭାଯାତ୍ରା ବହୁତ ଜମିଥିଲା । ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଂ ପଢୁଥିବା ବଡକକାଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ସନ୍ତୋଷ ଓ ତାର ପ୍ରାୟ ଦଶବାର ଜଣ ସାଙ୍ଗ ମିଶି ଡିସ୍କୋଗୀତର ତାଳରେ ଅଣ୍ଟା ଦୋଳାଇବାରେ ଲାଗିଥିଲେ । ବରବେଶରେ ବସିଥିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ ସୁସଜ୍ଜିତ କାର ଭିତରେ । ବାପା କାର ସାଜସଜ୍ଜା ପାଇଁ କଲିକତାର ରାଜଶ୍ରୀ ଫିଲ୍ମ ପ୍ରୋଡକସନର ମେନର ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅଣାଇଥିଲେ । କାର୍‌ଟର ତରୁଣପାର୍ଶ୍ବକୁ ଏକ ବଡ ବୋଇତ ଆକାରରେ ସଜା ଯାଇଥିଲା । କାର ଭିତରେ ବ୍ରାଇଡରକୁ ଛାଡି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସହକର୍ମୀ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ବନ୍ଧୁ ଦେବାଶିଷ ଓ ଛୋଟ କକାଙ୍କ ସବା ସାନପୁଅ ପିଙ୍କୁ ବସିଥିଲେ । ଶୋଭାଯାତ୍ରା କଲେଜ ଛକର ମହତାବ ରୋଡ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଯିବ । ବରଧରା ଆସିଥିବା ବଡଶଲା ଅସିବ୍ ସନ୍ତୋଷର ସାଙ୍ଗ । ସିଏ ସେଇ ବ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡପାଟି ସହିତ ଚାଲୁଥିଲା ।

x x x x x

ଲେଡି ଡକ୍ଟର ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ କ୍ଲିନିକକୁ ଯିବାପାଇଁ ସେତେବେଳେ ଚଣ୍ଡାଛକ ପାଖରେ ରିକ୍‌ସା ଖୋଜୁଥିଲେ ନିଲିସ୍ତା । ରାତି ସାଢେ ଆଠଟା । ଏକାଟିଆ ତରୁଣୀ ଜଣେ ଏ ସମୟରେ ବାହାରକୁ ବାହାରିବା ନିଷେଧ । ପ୍ରାୟ କେତେଦିନ ଧରି କଟକରେ ଅସାମାଜିକ କାମ ଯେଉଁ ହାରରେ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ପାଇଛି, ସେ ସମୟରେ ଚଣ୍ଡାଛକରୁ ରାଣୀହାଟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଏକା ଯିବାକୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଡର ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ତଥାପି ନିଲିସ୍ତା ସାହସ କରିଥିଲା । ମା'କୁ କିଫିୟତ ଦେଇଥିଲା ନିରୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଛି ବୋଲି ଆଉ ସେଇ ରାତିଟା ସିଏ ନିରୁଘରେ କଟାଇ ପରଦିନ ଫେରିବାକୁ ଜଣାଇଥିଲା । ରିକ୍‌ସାବାଲା ମାନେ ରିକ୍‌ସା ଭିତରେ ଶରୀରକୁ ସଜୁଟିତ କରି ଶୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଦରବୁଡା ରିକ୍‌ସାବାଲା ଜଣେ ମନ୍ଦିର ପାଖ ଦୋକାନରୁ ବିଡି କିଣୁଥିଲା । ସବା ସାନଭାଇ ଟୁକୁନ୍ ତା ସହିତ ଆସିବାକୁ

କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ଟୁକୁନ୍‌କୁ ବୁଝେଇବାକୁ ମା'କୁ କହି ଝଟବେଗରେ ବାହାରି ଆସିଥିଲା ନିଲିସ୍ତା । ବିଡି କିଣିସାରି ସେ ରିକ୍‌ସାବାଲାଟା ଫେରୁଛି । ତାର ଫେରିବା ଦିଗରେ ଧରେ ଧରେ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେଉଥିଲା ଚବିଶ ବର୍ଷର ତରୁଣୀ ନିଲିସ୍ତା ।

x x x x x

ବାଣ ପୁଟା ହେଲା । ରୋଷଣୀ ଜଳିଲା । ପଟୁଆର ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଲା । ଦୋ ମହଲା ଉପରୁ ଝରକା ଖୋଲି କୁନି କୁନି ପିଲାମାନେ ଆଗ୍ରହରେ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିଲେ । ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ବୁଦ୍ଧକତରେ ଛୋଟବଡ ଅନେକ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଭିତ । ଅନୁସନ୍ଧିସୁ ଆଖିମାନେ ବୋଇତ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଜୁଥିଲେ । ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଧନ୍ୟ ଧନ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲେ । କାରଣ ଏତେ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର ସାଜସଜ୍ଜା ଭିତରେ ଏତେ ଦୀର୍ଘ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଅତିକ୍ରମ କରିବା କୌଣସି ବାହାଘରରେ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଘଟିନଥିଲା କଟକ ଭିତରେ । ବାପାଙ୍କର ଏ ରେକର୍ଡ ସୃଷ୍ଟି । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଦୁଇ ଗୋଟିଆ ବାଧ୍ୟ ପଶୁଟିଏ କେବଳ । ତା ନହେଲେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଝିଅର ମନରେ ଆଶାର ଶହସ୍ର ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଧନୁ ଭରିଦେଇ ପୁଣି ପ୍ରତାରିତ କରିପାରିଥାନ୍ତେ ସିଏ ? ସୁବ୍ରତ ଅମଣିଷ ହୋଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ବାପାଙ୍କର ଅଟଳ ଜିଦ୍ ଓ ଆଭିଜାତ୍ୟର ମୁଖା ଭିତରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଭିତରର ମାନବ ଚେତନାଟା ଅଣନିଶ୍ଵାସୀ ହୋଇ ପଡିରହିଛି । ଉଠିବାକୁ ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟନାହିଁ । ଶକ୍ତିନାହିଁ । ତା ମାନେ କଣ ସୁବ୍ରତ ନଂପୁସକ । ନା ତ ! ଜିଲ୍ଲାମାଜିଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଟ୍ ଆଖିବୋଷ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ସୁବ୍ରତ ନଂପୁସକ ହୋଇପାରେନା । ରେଭେନ୍‌ସା କଲେଜର କୁଲନ୍ ଭାବେ ଖ୍ୟାତିପାଇଥିବା ଇଫ୍‌ସିତା ଚୌଧୁରୀର ପତିରୂପେ ନିର୍ବାଚିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ସୁବ୍ରତ ନଂପୁସକ ହୋଇପାରେନା । ନଂପୁସକ, ହୋଇପାରେ ନିଲିସ୍ତା ଦାସର ପ୍ରେମିକ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ଗୋଟିଏ ସରଳ ଝିଅକୁ ପ୍ରତାରିତ କରିଥିବା ଲମ୍ପଟ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ସେ ସୁବ୍ରତ ଅଥର୍ବ ପାଷାଣ । କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ଏ ବି ପଠାଇବାକୁ ସାହସ କରି ନଥିଲେ ସିଏ ନିଲିସ୍ତା ପାଖକୁ । ବନ୍ଧୁ ଦେବାଶିଷ ହାତ ଚାପୁଛି । ଚମକି ପଡିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ପଟୁଆର ରାଣୀହାଟ ଛକ ଅତିକ୍ରମ କଲାଣି । ଅଥଚ ତାଙ୍କର ଖୁଆଲ ନାହିଁ ।

x x x x x

ରିକ୍ଷାବାଲାକୁ ଦୁଇଟଙ୍କା ଯାଗାରେ ଚାରିଟଙ୍କା ଦେବାକୁ
ତୁଚ୍ଛ କରି ରିକ୍ଷାରେ ବସିଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ଦଶଟଙ୍କା ମାଗିଥିଲେ
ବି ସିଏ ଅରାଜି ହୋଇ ନଥାନ୍ତା । ଯେତେ ଭିତରେ ଚାରିମାସର
ଶିଶୁଟିଏ । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେମର ସନ୍ତକ । କୌଣସି ଏକ ଦୁର୍ବଳ
ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ଏକ ଆକାଶୀ ଖୁଆଲଟିଏ କେବଳ । ସେ ଖୁଆଲର
ଦାମ୍ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଖୁଆଲକୁ ଦୁନିଆ ସ୍ବାକାର କରିବନି ।
ନିଜେ ସୁଷାତ ସୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ ଖାତର କଲାନ୍ତି । ନିଲିପ୍ତା ତ ଏମିତି
ଚାହିଁନଥିଲା । ଚାହିଁ ନଥିଲା ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ହରାଇ
ଏକ ଅସୁହଣୀୟ ଅବିବାହିତା ଜୀବନ ଭିତରେ ନିଜକୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ
ରଖିବାକୁ । ମନେ ମନେ ବହୁତ ଜିଦ୍ କରିଥିଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା,
ଯେତେ ସନ୍ତାନଟିକୁ ନିଜେ ଭୂମିଷ୍ଠ କରାଇ ମାତୃତ୍ବର ଗୌରବ
ନେବ ଆଉ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖାଇ ଦେବ ଯେ ନିଲିପ୍ତା ବି
ତାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡି ବଞ୍ଚିପାରେ । ପତିର ପରିଚୟ ନଦେଇ ବି
ମାତୃତ୍ବର ଗୌରବ ନେଇପାରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କିଛି ହୋଇ ପାରିବନି ।
ଘରର ବଡ଼ଝିଅ ହୋଇ ସାନ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ
କଳକିନୀର ଉଦାହରଣ ସାଜି ରହିପାରିବନି ସିଏ । ପତିଶା
ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ମା'କୁ ଗୁଣା ଶୁଣାଇ ନିଜେ ସମସ୍ତ
ଆଖିର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ ସାଜି ବଞ୍ଚିବା ତା ପକ୍ଷେ ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ ।
ଆଉ ସର୍ବୋପରି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଅପମାନିତ କରି ତାଙ୍କ ସଂସାରରେ
ଧୂମକେତୁ ସାଜି ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ନାରୀ ପ୍ରାଣକୁ ଆତ୍ମୀୟ
ଦେଇପାରିବନି ସିଏ । ରିକ୍ଷା ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଥିଲା । ଗତି
ଧିମେଇ ଯିବାରୁ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହୋଇ ଚାହିଁଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ବରଯାତ୍ରୀ
ମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ରାସ୍ତା ନାହିଁ ରିକ୍ଷା ଯିବାକୁ । ଅଗତ୍ୟା
ବାଧ୍ୟହୋଇ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ପଡିଲା ତାକୁ ।

x x x x x

ସୁବ୍ରତ କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ଟିକେ ପଛେଇ ଚାହିଁଲେ ।
ଆଖିକୁ ବିଶ୍ବାସ କରିପାରିଲେନି । ଏ କଣ ! ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁ
ନାହାନ୍ତି ତ ସିଏ । ବାଁ ପଟରେ ଝାପ୍ସା ଆଲୁଅରେ ବି
ନିଲିପ୍ତାକୁ ସିଏ ଭଲଭାବେ ଚିହ୍ନିପାରୁଥିଲେ । ମନେ ମନେ
ଭୟ ପାଇଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ନିଲିପ୍ତାକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଦେଖିବାକୁ
ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ବି ଦେଖିଦେଇ ହଠାତ୍ ବଦଳି ଗଲେ । ନିଲିପ୍ତା
ଯଦି ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରେ ? ତେବେ ???..... । ତଥାପି ମନକୁ
ସାନ୍ତନା ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ଥରେ ଚଣ୍ଡୀ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ନିଲିପ୍ତାକୁ
ସିଏ ଶପଥ କରାଇଥିଲେ, ଯେତେ ବାଧା ବିଶ୍ବ ଆସିଲେ
ବି ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା ନକରିବାକୁ । ଆଉ ନିଲିପ୍ତା ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଯେ

କେତେ ଭଲପାଏ, ତାଙ୍କ କଥାକୁ କେତେ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ଦିଏ,
ନିଜେ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିଛନ୍ତି ସିଏ । ତାକୁ ବିଶ୍ବାସ କରାଯାଇପାରେ
ଅନ୍ତତଃ । ତେବେ..... । ସେ ଆଗାମୀ କଳିକା ଟିର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ?
ହଠାତ୍ ଚମକି ପଡିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ନିଲିପ୍ତା ପାଇଁ ସିଏ କଣ
ବା କରିପାରିବେ ? ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ସୁବ୍ରତ ନିଜକୁ ଅସହାୟ
ମନେ କଲେ । ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା ସେହି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ନିଲିପ୍ତାକୁ
ଧରିଆଣି ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଯାନ୍ତେ ସିଏ ବରଯାତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କ
ଗହଣରେ । ଇପ୍ସିତା ବଦଳରେ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଘରକୁ ବୋହୂ
ସାଜି ଯାଆନ୍ତା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ପୌରୁଷତ୍ବ ଯେମିତି
ମରିଯାଇଥିଲା । କେବଳ ନୀରବରେ ନିଲିପ୍ତାକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର
ଚାହିଁବା ଛଡା ଅଧିକ କିଛି କରିପାରିବେନି ସିଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ
କେବଳ ଥରଟିଏ ଛଡା ସେ ଚାହାଣୀର ଭଉର ସିଏ ପାଇ
ନଥିଲେ ।

x x x x x

ରିକ୍ଷା ଅଟକି ଯିବାରୁ ରାସ୍ତାର ବାମ କଡରେ କିଛି
ସମୟ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କର ଏତେ ପ୍ରତାରଣା
ସତ୍ତ୍ବେ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଟିକେ ବି ବିତୃଷ୍ଣା ଆସୁନଥିଲା ତାର ।
ବରଂ ତାଙ୍କର ଆଜିର ବରବେଶଟା ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ସିଏ
ବହୁତ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା କରିଥିଲା । କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ ଥର ଚାହିଁଛି
ସିଏ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ଚାହାଣୀରେ ଧରା ପଡିଯିବା ପରେ
ବହୁତ ଲଜିତ ହେଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ବହୁତ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶୁଛନ୍ତି
ସୁବ୍ରତ । ସୁନା ଜରିଦିଆ ପଞ୍ଜାବୀ ଭିତରେ କୌଣସି
ରାଜପୁତ୍ରଠାରୁ ଉଣା ଦିଶୁନାହାନ୍ତି ସିଏ । ମନ ହେଉଥିଲା
ପ୍ରାଣ ଭରି ସିଏ ଆଜି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଯାଆନ୍ତା ।
ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ବାରମ୍ବାର ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁଥାଆନ୍ତା,
କିନ୍ତୁ ଏକ ଅଜଣା ସଙ୍କୋଚ ତା ମୁହଁକୁ ତଳକୁ କରିଦେଲା ।
ସିଏ ସେହି ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ପୁଣି ଭାବରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲା ।
ରିକ୍ଷା ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଚାଲିଲାଣି । ବର ଓ ବରଯାତ୍ରୀ ଦଳ
କେତେବେଳୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେଣି । ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବାଙ୍କ କ୍ଳିନିକ୍ ପାଖେଇ
ଆସିଲାଣି । ସୁବ୍ରତ ବାରମ୍ବାର ମନକୁ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି । ହୁଏତ
ଆଉ କିଛି ଦିନ ପରେ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵାରକଟି ଜଗତରେ
ଆଲୋକ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ସମର୍ଥ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ନିଲିପ୍ତାକୁ ମା' ବୋଲି
ତାଙ୍କନ୍ତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସ୍ବପ୍ନ କେବଳ ସ୍ବପ୍ନ । ବାସ୍ତବତା ବହୁତ
ନିଷ୍ଠୁର, ବହୁତ..... ।

x x x x x

ଜନ୍ମାଘର ପାଖେଇ ଆସିଲାଣି । ଶୁଣୁର ଆସି ବାପାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନାବଦ୍ଧ ହେଲେଣି । କେତେଜଣ ୧୯/୨୦ ବର୍ଷର ଝିଅ ଆସି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ଚାରିପଟେ ଧାଡ଼ିବାନ୍ତି ଚାଲୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ କେତେ ଅଜ୍ଞାତାମସା ଚାଲିଛି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ । ସେ ଡେଙ୍ଗାହୋଇ ଗୋରା ଝିଅଟା ବାରମ୍ବାର କାରୁ ଆଡକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛି । ଦେବାଶୀଷ ବୋଧହୁଏ ତା ପ୍ରେମରେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲାଣି । ଅବିବାହିତ ଦେବାଶୀଷକୁ ଏଗୁଡ଼ା ସବୁ ମଜା ଲାଗୁଛି । ମଜା ବି ଲାଗନ୍ତା ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଯଦି ସିଏ ଇପ୍ସିତା ବଦଳରେ ନିଲିପ୍ତା ଘରକୁ ବରବେଶ ସାଜି ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ପ୍ରକାରର ସାଜସଜ୍ଜା ଭିତରେ ଯେଉଁ ବଡ଼ ଜିନିଷର ଅଭାବ ରହିଯାଇଛି ତାଙ୍କ ମନଭିତରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା କରିବି ତଡ଼ିପାରୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି ସୁବ୍ରତ । ଗାଡ଼ି ଅଟକିଲା । ଶଙ୍ଖ, ହୁଳହୁଳି ଓ ବାଦ୍ୟର ଶବ୍ଦରେ ଏକ ଅପୂର୍ବ ରୋମାଞ୍ଚ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଉଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ଦେହରେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ବନ୍ଦାପନା କରି ବରଣୀ କରାଗଲା । ସହରର ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଫଟୋ ଷ୍ଟୁଡ଼ିଓରୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ହୋଇ ଆସିଥିବା କ୍ୟାମେରାମ୍ୟାନ ମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିବା କ୍ୟାମେରା ସବୁ ସକ୍ରିୟ ହୋଇ ଉଠିଲେ । ୧୪/୧୫ ବର୍ଷର ଝିଅଟିଏ ପିଙ୍କୁକୁ ଧରି ନେଇ ଗଲାଣି । ସନ୍ତୋଷ ଓ ତାର ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଇପ୍ସିତାର ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଗଲେଣି । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ହାତ ମିଳାଉଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ଶୁଣୁର, ଚିଫ୍ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ଅତୀଶ ଚୌଧୁରୀ । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେଉଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସଜ୍ଜିତ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିବା କୋଠରୀଟି ଆଡେ ।

x x x x x

ରିକ୍ସାକୁ ଗେର୍ ପାଖରୁ ବିଦାୟ ଦେଇ ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେଉଥିଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ତାର ଦେହ ଅରୁଥିଲା । ଏତେ ବଡ଼ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ସିଏ ସାହାସ ବାନ୍ଧିଛି କାହାକୁ ନ ଜଣାଇ । ପ୍ରଥମରୁ ମା'କୁ ଜଣାଇ ଦେବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା କରିଥିଲା ଯଦିଓ, ବାପାଙ୍କର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଶଯ୍ୟାରେ କରିଥିବା ଶପଥ ମନେପକାଇ ମା' ପାଖରେ ଅବିଶ୍ୱସ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଲାନି ତାର । ବହୁତ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ଚାରି ମାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରହିଆସିଛି ସିଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ ନୁହେଁ । ମା'ର ତା ଉପରେ ଅଖଣ୍ଡ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ । ଅଫିସର ସହକର୍ମୀ ମାନେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ବହୁତ ନିଜର ସାଜି ପାଖେଇ ଆସନ୍ତି । ପେଟ ଭିତରର କଥା ନେବାକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା କରନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି ନିଲିପ୍ତା ଅତି ସହଜ ଭାବରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇ ଯାଇଛି ।

ଆଉ ଏତେ ସହଜରେ ସିଏ କାହା ପାଖରେ ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସର ପାତ୍ର ହୋଇ ପାରିବନି । ହେଲେ ବି ସତ୍ୟତାକୁ ତ ଲୁଚାଇ ହେବନି । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ସ୍ମାରକଟି ଯେବେ ନଷ୍ଟ ନ ହୁଏ, ତେବେ ଦିନେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ଘୁଣାର ପାତ୍ର ହେବ ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ସିଏ ନେଇ ପାରିବନି । ବରଂ ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବୀ ଓ କେତେଜଣ ନର୍ସଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଏ ରହସ୍ୟ ଫିଟିଯିବ, ନିଲିପ୍ତାର ସତୀତ୍ୱର ରହସ୍ୟ, ବିବାହ ନ କରି ଘର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ସମ୍ଭାଳିବା ଭଳି ଆଦର୍ଶର ରହସ୍ୟ, ତଥାପି ସିଏ ଆଜି ହିଁ ଏହାର ସମାଧାନ କରିଯିବ । ସନ୍ତର୍ପଣରେ କଲିଂବେଲ ଟିପିଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ନର୍ସ ଜଣେ କବାଟ ଖୋଲିଲା । ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ରୁମ୍ ଆଡେ ଆଗେଇଲା ସିଏ ।

x x x x x

ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ସମୟ ମିଳିଲାନି ଟିକେ ନୀରବରେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବାକୁ । ସମବୟସୀ ଝିଅ କେତେଜଣ ପଶିଆସିଲେ । ପରେ ପରେ ଅଳ୍ପ ବୟସ୍କା ବିବାହିତା ନାରୀ ଜଣେ ହାତରେ ଜଳଖିଆ ପ୍ଲେଟ ଓ ସରବର୍ ଧରି ଆସିଲେ । ତାପରେ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ଆକ୍ରମଣ ଚାଲିଲା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର । ଇପ୍ସିତାର ସଜ୍ଜିନୀ ସେ ବିବାହିତା ତରୁଣୀ ଜଣକ କେଉଁ କଲେଜର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା । ନୂଆ ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଅଜ୍ଞା ହେବାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଫର୍ମୁଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା । ତାଙ୍କ ଅଜ୍ଞାର ଜବାବ ଦେବାକୁ ସୁବ୍ରତ ହତବତେଇ ଗଲେ । ଇପ୍ସିତାକୁ ଶୁଣେଇ ଶୁଣେଇ କହିଲେ ସିଏ “ତୋ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ପତି ନିହାତି ବୋକା ଜଣେ ।” ଭୀଷଣ ଅପମାନିତ ବୋଧ କଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ତାପରେ ସେ ଝିଅମାନେ, ଇପ୍ସିତାର ଭଉଣୀ ଓ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଖେଳି ଚାଲିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ସହ । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ବନ୍ଧୁମାନେ ବି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । ବେଶ୍ ଗୋଟିଏ ଖୁସି ଭିତରେ ଜମି ଉଠୁଥିଲା ଆସର ।

x x x x x

ପ୍ରତିଭାଦେବୀ ବେଶ୍ ଅମାୟିକ ଓ ସହାନୁଭୂତିଶୀଳ ନାରୀ ଜଣେ । ନିଲିପ୍ତା ଆସିବାର କାରଣ ପଚାରିଲେ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ହତବତେଇ ଗଲା ସିଏ । ପ୍ରତିଭାଦେବୀ ଅନୁମାନ କରିପାରିଲେ ବୋଧହୁଏ । ତାପରେ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା ଦେଇ ଆତ୍ମୀୟତା ସହିତ ପଚାରିଲେ ତାକୁ । ନିଲିପ୍ତା ଟିକେ ସହଜ ହେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲା । କିଛି ସମୟ ନ ଯଯୌ ନ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟେ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ରହିବା ପରେ ଆସିବାର ଅଭିପ୍ରାୟ ଜଣାଇଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବୀ ଟିକେ ବିସ୍ମିତ ହେଲେ । ଚିନ୍ତିତ ହେଲେ

ବି । କାରଣ ଏତେ ସରଳ ଓ ପବିତ୍ର ଦିଶୁଥିବା ଝିଅଟି ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ସାହାସ ବା କରି ପାରିଲା କେମିତି ? ପୁଣି କେଉଁ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ପ୍ରରୋଚନାରେ ? ନିଲିପ୍ତା ବିନୀତ ହୋଇ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କଲା ଏକଥା ଗୁପ୍ତ ରଖିବାକୁ । ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବାଙ୍କର ଦୟା ହେଲା । ଏକ ବିଶୁଷ୍ଟ ନର୍ସକୁ ତାଙ୍କ କଣ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଇ ଏକ ପ୍ରାଇଭେଟ୍ ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ପଠାଇଲେ ନିଲିପ୍ତାକୁ ନର୍ସ ସହିତ । ତାପରେ ଔଷଧ ଇଞ୍ଜେକ୍ସନ୍ ଠିକ୍ କରିବାରେ ଲାଗିଲେ ସିଏ । ନିଲିପ୍ତା ଯନ୍ତ୍ରବତ୍ ନର୍ସକୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କଲା ।

x x x x x

ଦେବାଢ଼ପରେ ବସିଥିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୋଚାରଣ କରୁଥିଲେ । ହାତଗଣ୍ଡି ପଡ଼ିବ । ପାଖରେ ଇମ୍ପସିତା ବସିଛି । ଦେବୀ ଚାରିପଟରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଭିତ । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କର ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଏ ପଟରୁ କମେଷ୍ଟ ଦେବୀରେ ଓ ଇମ୍ପସିତାର ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ସେପଟରୁ କମେଷ୍ଟ ଦେବୀର ଲାଗିଛନ୍ତି । ଇମ୍ପସିତା ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶୁଛି । ବହୁତ ସୁନ୍ଦର । କେମିତି ଏକ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ରହିଛି ତା ଚେହେରାରେ । ବାରମ୍ବାର ଦେଖିଲେ ବି ମନ ପୂରିବନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏତେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଅଲୀକ୍ଷ କହିବେ । ଆଗରେ ନିଆଁ ଜଳୁଛି । ପବିତ୍ରତାର ସାକ୍ଷୀ । ଇମ୍ପସିତାକୁ ପବିତ୍ର ମନରେ, ଅନାବିଳ ମମତା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଅଗ୍ନିକୁ ସାକ୍ଷୀରଖି ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନେ ଅପବିତ୍ର ତାଙ୍କର । ନିଲିପ୍ତା କଣ କରୁଥିବ ଏବେ ? ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କର ସନ୍ତକଟର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ କଣ ହେବ ? ନିଲିପ୍ତା ଆଖିର ଲୁହ ଟିକ୍ ଟିକ୍ ହୋଇ ସାମନାରେ ଥିବା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣକୁମ୍ଭ ଦେହରେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥିଲେ । ଅଗ୍ନିଭିତରେ ଜଳିଯାଉଥିଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତାର ପ୍ରେମ, ବିଶ୍ୱାସ, ତାର ସବୁ ସୁଖ, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, ସବୁ କିଛି । ସୁବ୍ରତର ରକ୍ତ ଗୁଡ଼ି ହୋଇ ମିଶି ଯାଉଥିଲା ସେ ଅଗ୍ନିସହିତ । ବାପାଙ୍କର ମୁହଁତଳକୁ ନ କରିବାକୁ ଓ ହୃଦରୋଗୀ ମା’ ମନରେ ଦୁଃଖ ନ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟପୂର୍ବ ସୁବ୍ରତ ନିଲିପ୍ତା ନିକଟରେ ନପୁଂସକ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତାର ଅନାବିଳ ପ୍ରେମ ପ୍ରତାରଣା ହୋଇ ରହିଗଲା ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ । ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ସୁବ୍ରତ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଅମଣିଷ, ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର, ପ୍ରବଞ୍ଚକ । ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣର ମନ୍ତ୍ରୋଚାରଣ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିଲିପ୍ତାର ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଭଳି ଶୁଭୁଥିଲା । ତଥାପି ସିଏ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ । କ୍ୟାମେରାମ୍ୟାନ୍ ମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁକୁ ପଏଣ୍ଟ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଦେବାଶୀଷ ଚିତ୍କାର କରୁଛି “ଜଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ଲାଉଲ୍ ପ୍ଲିଜ୍” । ଝିଅମାନେ କମେଷ୍ଟ ଦେଲେଣି, “ବାବା, କେତେ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ଦେଖନା, ଦେବୀ ଉପରେ ବି

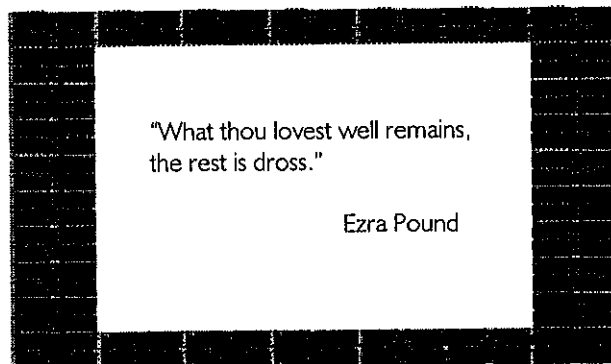
ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ମୁହଁ ।” ସବୁ ଶୁଣିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ଦେବାଶୀଷ ତା ସିନ୍ ଛାଡ଼ି ସୁବ୍ରତ ପାଖରେ ହାଜର । “ଅରେ, ତୁ ରଷି ମୁନି ଯଦି ସାଜିବୁ, ଏଠିକୁ ବର ସାଜି ଆସିବାରେ କି ଲାଭ । ମତେ ହେଲେ ସେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ମିଳିଥାନ୍ତା । ଏଇଟା ସିଏ ଇମ୍ପସିତାକୁ ଶୁଣେଇ କହିଲା । ଇମ୍ପସିତା ଟିକେ ସଲଜ୍ ହସ ହସିଲେ । ମୁରୁଧ ଭାବରେ ଚାହିଁଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ଇମ୍ପସିତା ହସର ଉପମା ନାହିଁ । ଅଗତ୍ୟା ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଟିକେ ହସିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । କାରଣ, ନିଲିପ୍ତା ପାଇଁ ଇମ୍ପସିତାର ଜୀବନକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିବାର କୌଣସି କାରଣ ନାହିଁ । ସେପଟୁ ଅତୀତ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାପା ଖୋଲା ହସରେ ପରିବେଶ ମୁଖରିତ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସେ ତେଜୀ ଗୋରୀ ଝିଅଟା ଦେବାଶୀଷ ଆଡ଼କୁ ଚାହିଁ ହସୁଥିଲା ଲାଜେଇ ଲାଜେଇ, ଆଉ ଦେବାଶୀଷ ବି ବାଦ ଯାଉନଥିଲା ।

x x x x x

ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବାଙ୍କ କ୍ଲିନିକ୍‌ର ସେ ପ୍ରାଇଭେଟ୍ ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ ବେଢ଼ରେ ଏକା ଶୋଇ ଶୋଇ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ବହୁତ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଲାଗୁଛି ଏବେ । ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବାଙ୍କୁ ମନେ ମନେ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଲା ସିଏ । ତଥାପି ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଶୂନ୍ୟତା ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲା ମନ ଭିତରେ । ତା ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରେରଣା ହୋଇ ଆଉ କିଛି ରହିଲାନି । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ତା ମନରେ ଦୟା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଉଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଥମେ ଭୀଷଣ ଭାବରେ ରାଗିଯାଇଥିଲା ସିଏ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଓ କେମିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧର ଭାବନା ବି ତା ମନରେ ଦେଖା ଦେଇଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଭାବି ସିଏ ଟିକେ ନରମି ଗଲା । ଜଣେ ପୁଅ ସହିତ ବିବାହ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଏତେଟା ଆଗେଇଯିବାର ଭୁଲ ପାଇଁ ନିଜେ ହିଁ ସେ ଦାୟୀ । ସୁବ୍ରତ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୋଷ, ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବରେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୋଷ । ଯାହା ହେଲେ ବି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ସନ୍ତକଟ ଯଦି ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ତା ପାଖରେ ରହିଥାଆନ୍ତା..... । ଛାଡ଼ । କେଉଁ ସାହସରେ ବା ସିଏ ଅବିବାହିତା ହୋଇ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ନେବାକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥାନ୍ତା । ଇଏତ ଆଉ ପାଶ୍ଚାତ୍ୟ ଦେଶ ହୋଇନି । ବାପାଙ୍କ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପରେ ସେମାନେ ଆହୁରି ଅସହାୟ ହୋଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏଇତ ଜମା ବର୍ଷେ ହେଲା ସିଏ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା ଭାବେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଛି । ଚାକିରୀର ସେ ଟଙ୍କା କେତେଟା ଛତା କଣ ବା ସମ୍ଭଳ ତାଙ୍କର । ଏତେବଡ଼ ସଂସାରର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନେଇ ସେ କେମିତି ବା ନିଜ ପାପକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଥାଆନ୍ତା ସମାଜ ଆଗରେ ।

ଆଉ ସବୁପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେବାପରେ ବି ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ଭୟ ଆସିଥିଲା ତାର ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଖୋଲିଯିବା ନେଇ । ବହୁତଥର ନିରାଶ ହୋଇ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରିବାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରିଛି ସିଏ କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ସଂସାରର ଆକର୍ଷଣ, ବୃଦ୍ଧା ମା ଓ ସାନସାନ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କର ସଂସାରର ଆକର୍ଷଣ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଶେଷଶଯ୍ୟା ନିକଟରେ କରିଥିବା ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଓ ପୁଣି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ଦେହ ଛୁଇଁ କରିଥିବା ଶପଥ ମନେପକାଇ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାରୁ ନିବୃତ୍ତ ହୋଇଛି । ଆଜି ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସନ୍ତାନର ଆକର୍ଷଣ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲା । ନାରୀ ଜୀବନର ଚରମ ସାର୍ଥକତା ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ପାଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଜେ ହରାଇ ବସିଲା । ନିଲିପ୍ତା ସତରେ ଅଭିଶପ୍ତା । ଆଶାୟୀ ଚେତନାଟୀ ତାର ଧୂରେ ଧୂରେ ନିଲିପ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଆସିଲାଣି । ତାର ମନେ ହେଉଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ଛୋଟ

ଶିଶୁଟିଏ ତା କୋଳରେ ଶୋଇ କୁଆଁ କୁଆଁ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦୁଛି ଆଉ ମୁରୁଧା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ସୁବ୍ରତ ତାକୁ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । କବାଟ ଖୋଲିବାର ଶବ୍ଦ ହେଲା । ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବୀ ପଶି ଆସିଲେଣି “ଆରେ ନଅଟା ବାଜିଲାଣି, ତମେ ବିଛଣାରୁଟି ଉଠିନ ।” ଲଜିତ ହେଲା ନିଲିପ୍ତା । ଘରେ ମା’ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବଣି । ତାକୁ ପୁଣି ନିରୁ ଘର ଦେଇ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଅଥଚ ସିଏ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରୋଗିଣୀ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିରହିଛି । ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବୀ ଆସି ପାଖରେ ଠିଆ ହେଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ସମ୍ମେହ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ନିକଟରେ ନିଲିପ୍ତା ଏକ ମାନବିକତାର ଛାୟା ଦେଖୁଥିଲା । ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲା ଏ ଘଟଣା ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଗୁପ୍ତ ରଖିବାକୁ । ପ୍ରତିଭା ଦେବୀ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗତାର ହାତ ନେଇ ରଖିଲେ ନିଲିପ୍ତାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପରେ ।



ସଞ୍ଜ ବେଳଟାରେ ଡର ମାତେ ମୋତେ.....

ଗିରିଜାଶଙ୍କର ଦାସ ମହାପାତ୍ର

ମାଗି ମାଗି ମୁଁ ଯେ' ମାଗିତ ଯାଉଛି
ଦେଉଅଛି ଭରପୁର ହେ,
ଆଉ କେଉଁ କଥା ବାକି ବା ରହିଲା
ମାଗୁଥିବି ନିରନ୍ତର ହେ ॥

ଧନ, ଜନ, ମାନ, ଯଶ ଅଭିମାନ
ଦେଇଛ ଅଜାତି ତୁମେ ହେ,
ଦୁଃଖ, ସୁଖ, ସିନା ଦିନ ରାତି ପରି
ଆସିଥିଲେ ଯିବାପାଇଁ ହେ ॥

ଦୁନିଆ ହାଟରେ ଚିକା ଜିଣା ସବୁ
ଲାଭ ହାନି ସବୁ ଏକ ହେ,
ତମ ଦୟା ସିନା ଅମୂଲ ମୂଲର
କିଣି ନ ପାରିଲି ଶେଷରେ ॥

ବେଳ ବୁଡ଼ିଲାଣି ହାଟ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲାଣି
ଗହଳି ଆଉ ତ ନାହିଁ ହେ,
ସଞ୍ଜ ବେଳଟାରେ ଡର ମାତେ ମୋତେ
ଫେରିବାକୁ ଏକା ଏକା ହେ ॥

(“ସମର୍ପଣ”ରୁ ସଂଗୃହିତ)

ଜାଗରେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳାୟ

ଆରତୀ ନନ୍ଦ

ଜଳାର ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ହେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ !
ବହୁ ଚରଣ ତୋର ଆମ୍ଭେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳାୟ ।

ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଦିବସେ ଆଜି
ମନେ ପଡେ ତୋର କାହିଁରାଜି
ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ରକ୍ତ ଚେଳି
କରି ଯିବା କିଛି କାମ ବୀର ସାଜି ।

ସବୁଥାଇ ଦରିଦ୍ର ଆମେ ରେ କହିଁକି ?
ସାଧବର ଧନ ବିଦ୍ୟାର ମାନ ଲୁପ୍ତ କହିଁକି ହୋଇଛି ?
ସତେକି-ଆମ ପାଖେ 'ଏକତା'ର ଅଭାବ ରହିଛି ।

ଆମ ଅତୀତ କଦାପି ନୁହେଁ ଦୁର୍ବଳ
ଆମ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ତଥାପି ସବଳ
ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ପାଇଁ ଦେଉଯିବା କିଛି କିଛି ଦେୟ ।

'ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ' ମଜ୍ଜା ପରେ 'ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ' ଅବସ୍ଥିତ
ମନର ସିମେଣ୍ଟ ଦେଇ ଯୋଡ଼ିଦେବା ଜଟୀଳ ପରସ୍ତ
'ଧରମା' ର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ ଦେଲେ କୋଣାର୍କ ହେବ ସୁଶୋଭିତ ।

ମୁଁ ନୁହେଁ କଟକୀ, ମୁଁ ନୁହେଁ ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ
ନୁହେଁ ମୁଁ ରଞ୍ଜାମୀ ଅବା ନୁହେଁ ବାଲେଶ୍ୱରୀ
ଏକ ଭାଷୀ ସନ୍ତାନ ଆମେ, ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଜନନୀ ଆମରି ।

ଜଳାର ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଦେବ ଆମ ପରିଚୟ
ବିଶ୍ୱ ପ୍ରତି କୋଣେ ଥାଇ ଆମ୍ଭେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳାୟ ।

ପଳାଶର ଶିଖା

ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଧର ନାୟକ

କର୍ମ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ
ମୋ' ମନକୁ ଆରାମ ଦେବାକୁ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ
ତାକେ ଯେ ବସନ୍ତ
ସିଏ ମୋର ଖୁବ୍ ଚିହ୍ନା, ଖୁବ୍ ପରିଚିତ
ସିଏ ମୋର ଶ୍ରମର ସମ୍ମିତ
ଖୁସିର ଗୋଲାପି
ମୁଁ ତାକୁ ଭୁଲିଲେ କେବେ,
ସିଏ ମତେ ଭୁଲେ ନାଁ କଦାପି ।

ଆସି ତାଜି ନିଏ
ନିବିଡ଼ ଫାଲ୍‌ଗୁନେ ।
ସବୁ କିଛି ଭଦ୍ରତାରେ ମୁଁ ବି ଫାଜି ଦିଏ
ଉଡ଼ିଯାଏ ନୀଳିମାର ଶୂନ୍ୟ ।

ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ଟଙ୍କାର ଭାବନା,
ଟିକିଏ ଭୁଲିବା ଲାଗି ଚେଷ୍ଟାକଲେ ଦେଖେ
ବିବର୍ଣ୍ଣ କହ୍ନନା
ହଠାତ୍ ଜାଗ୍ରତ ।
ବସ୍ତ୍ର, ଜନପଦ,
ପାହାଡ଼, ପ୍ରାନ୍ତର, ନଦୀ, ସହର, ସମୁଦ୍ର,
ମୁଲାଏମ ରୁଦ୍ର ।

ନିର୍ଜନତା, ମୁଖର ଚଞ୍ଚଳ
ସଂଘର୍ଷର ଝଡ଼ ତଳେ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସୁନ୍ଦର
ଏ' ଜୀବନ
ଜୀବନର ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଆଉ କୁସୁମ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ।
ପୃଥିବୀଟା ଦରମାଲା, ଏଠି କିଛି ନାହିଁ
ଖାଲି ପ୍ରେତ ଛାଇ;
ଭୋକିଲା ପ୍ରାଣର...

ଭାରୁ ପଳାତକ ଦଳ
ଯେଉଁମାନେ କେବଳ ଦେଖାନ୍ତି
ପ୍ରାଣସରା ଭୁଲୁଥିବ ଏଠି,
ଚାରିଆଡ଼େ ଝରା-ପତ୍ର ଶବ୍ଦଧାର ଚିହ୍ନ
ସେମାନେ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ
ହୁଏତ୍, ଜୀବନବୋଧ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିଭଙ୍ଗୀ ଠାରୁ
ଦିନର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଖରା,
ରାତ୍ରିର ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତି ତଳେ ଘୁମନ୍ତ ସ୍ବପ୍ନାକୁ
ଆତ୍ମାର ସତ୍ୟତା
ସୃଜନର ଛାୟା-ଦୃଶ୍ୟପଟୁ ।

ମୋ' ଜୀବନେ ଫର୍ଦ୍ଦିସ୍, ଫ୍ୟାକ୍‌ଟରୀ,
ପ୍ରକୃତିର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା କାକଳୀ,
ଉଭୟେ ଦର୍ଶନ
ହାତଭଙ୍ଗା ପରିଶ୍ରମ ଶେଷେ
ଫୁଲଫୁଟା ଉଦ୍ୟାନ ବିହାର ।

ଖାଲି ଜୋସ୍ତା, ମଳୟ ନୁହେଁ କି
ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷା
ମେସିନ୍ ବା କଳ-କର୍କା ନୁହଁ,
ହସ ଖୁସି ଲୁହ
ସବୁ ଲୋଡ଼ା, ସମଭାବେ ଲୋଡ଼ା
କଲ୍‌ପନାର କୋଣାରକ ତୋଳା
ହେଲାନି କେବଳ ତୁନ ସିମେଣ୍ଟ ପ୍ରସ୍ତରେ
ହାତୁଡ଼ି ଚାଳନା ତଳେ

ମେହନତି ମଣିଷର ମନ
ସେଠି ବି ଖୋଜିବି କିଛି
ପ୍ରେମ ଆଉ ନୃପୁର ନିକୃଷ୍ଟ
ଲାସ୍ୟମୟୀ ଷୋଡ଼ଶୀର କଷର ଲାଳିତ୍ୟ
ଅଭିସାର, ନୃତ୍ୟ ଆଉ ଗୀତ ।

ମଣିଷର ସତ୍ୟ ଆଉ ସତ୍ୟ ତା'ର ଆଦିମ ପ୍ରକୃତି
ସୃଷ୍ଟିଶୀଳ ପ୍ରାଣ ଖୋଜେ,
କିଛି ପ୍ରୀତି, ପ୍ରେରଣା, ସ୍ବାକୃତି ।

କର୍ମଠ ପ୍ରାଣର ସେଇ ଅସରନ୍ତି ପ୍ରେମର ଉଦ୍ଧାସ
ମୁଁ ବି ଏକ ଫୁଟନ୍ତ ପଳାଶ
ଖଟେ ଆଉ ଆରାମ ବି କରେ
ଲେଖେ ଆଉ ପଢ଼େ
ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଦେଖେ ସୁଖ ଶାନ୍ତି
ଅସରନ୍ତି ପ୍ରେମ ଶସ୍ୟ-ହେମ
କଲ୍‌ପନାର କ୍ଷେତେ ।

ଆୟୁ ବଢ଼େ ଯେତେ
ସେତେ ଆଉ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଲୋଭେ
ଲୁଟି ଲୁଟି ଛପି.....
ବୟସର ମେଘନାଦ ପାଚେରୀକୁ ଟପି
ଯାଏ ସଙ୍ଗୋପନେ
ପ୍ରେୟସୀର ହାରେମ୍ ନିର୍ଜନେ

ମୋ'ର ବି ରହିବି କାହିଁ ନିଭୃତ ନାୟିକା
ମୁଁ ବି ଏକ ପ୍ରେମ-ଦୀପ୍ତ ପଳାଶର ଶିଖା ।

(ଖୋଲା ଝଙ୍କା'ରୁ ସଂଗୃହିତ)

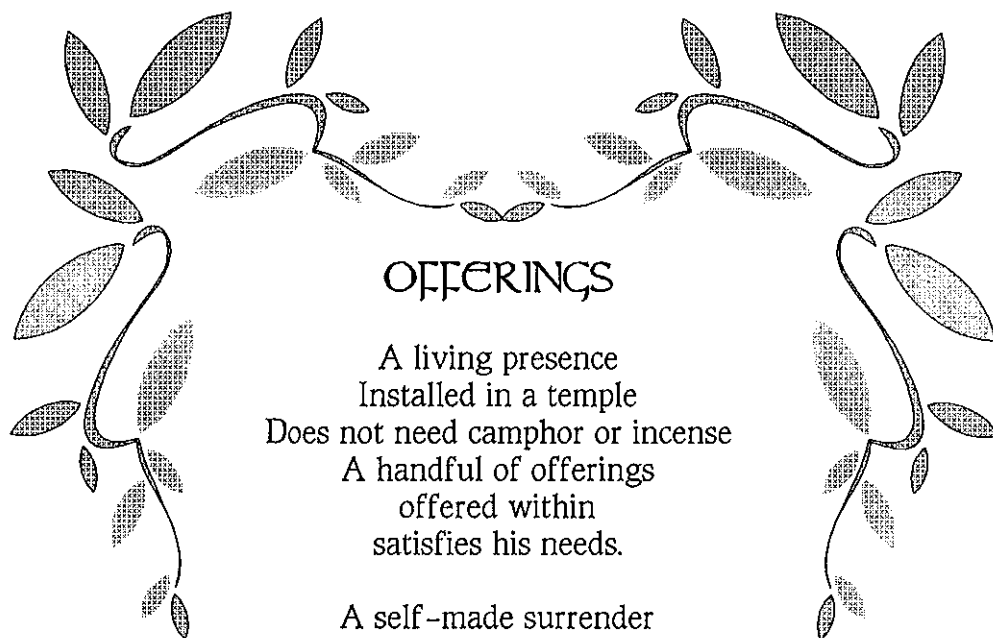
"A poem should not mean / But be."

Archibald MacLeish

A POTPOURRI OF PROSE AND POETRY
FROM NORTH AMERICA AND ORISSA

"Poetry is the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits."

Carl Sandburg



OFFERINGS

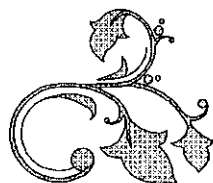
A living presence
Installed in a temple
Does not need camphor or incense
A handful of offerings
offered within
satisfies his needs.

A self-made surrender
I make to you
Accept me as I am
I surrender myself
Had I anything else to give
I would have given it to you.

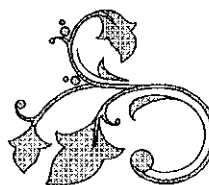
Offering to be an abode of love
I try to kill my inner desires
Color me with the color of love
Desire me with your desire alone.

Tainted by the stream of life
I take refuge in you
Dip myself in the muddiest of pools
Offer Ganga to you.

I struggle today
With long forgotten
desires,
Desires,
new yet old,
I Struggle today
To offer you
Myself,
Desire bared at last.



KISHORIPATNAIK





Dreams

SROTALINA NAYAK

Dreams
good or bad
sweet or sour

Hallucination
Hologram
Illusion
Vision

A special place to be in
cozy or scared
Personal
Private
Fantasy

Can other share?

NAHL.....



DOGWOODS

Dogwoods are so pretty,
They are such a beauty!

Those blossoms I can see,
Are awesome to me!

They glisten in the sunlight,
And make everyone's day bright!

Padma Sahu



SIVA

BLUE-THROATED, TEN ARMED WITH A GARLAND OF SKULLS,
THE LORD OF SLEEP SERVES SLOW DEATH PENANCE
TO EXTINGUISH THE SELF AND RENDER SENSE DULL
AND ENTER BEYOND THE VEIL OF EXISTENCE.
PAIN IS REDEEMED BY THE GREAT GOD OF PAIN.
HE DISPERSES IT INTO DETACHMENT,
WEAVING HIS SIGN ON THE LOOM OF THE BRAIN
OF THE AVATAR OF HIS ENCHANTMENT.
GOD OF DEATH, DEATH OF DEATH, ETERNAL LIFE,
REJOICING IN ENTROPY LORD SIVA
BEAUTY EMBODIED IN HORROR AND STRIFE,
DESTROYER OF ALL, FIERCE MAHA-DEVA !
TANDAVA DANCER ON A WORLD ON FIRE,
RUDRA, THE LORD OF TEARS, THE DESTROYER.

ARUN SHANKAR RATH

PARENTS

Swaroop Mishra

Our parents. For years, we depend on them, rely on them, and turn to them; all too soon, we grow to be independent of them. To a great extent, they determine the direction that our lives take. As we grow older, we seek to become parents ourselves, to change roles and assume new responsibilities; it may be this long before we think to ask, "What is a parent?"

To many young people today, parents seem to be impediments. When you are a child, they are the ones who refuse to buy the toys or video games you need, the ones who force-feed you broccoli or *dal* and keep the cookies hidden away. As children become adolescents, their parents set curfews, monitor movements, and curtail freedom.

Others come to regard their parents as those individuals with the responsibility of providing for them, particularly with material things. In this view, parents are simply the people who furnish their children with food, shelter, clothing, and a car, and the greatest injustice a parent may commit is to refuse their child's request.

The dictionary, meanwhile, tells us that a parent is "someone who gives birth to offspring." Taken literally, this is the case. But while our parents may give birth to us, serve as obstacles to our freedom, and provide for us, none of these things characterizes parenting. For example, the dictionary definition is rarely the first thing that comes to mind when we think of our own parents, and it surely is not that which defines them as parents. This is especially true for adoptees, who often times think of those who raised them - and not those who possess their genes - as their true parents. The question remains: what is it that defines a parent?

To me, parents are defined by their affection for their children. Our parents care about us. This is especially true in the Oriya community, where family values tend to be strong. The sacrifices our parents make to provide for us and the restrictions they place on our independence are founded in their deep-rooted concern: a concern for their children.

Despite this, when we think of our parents, we are often times preoccupied with our superficial perceptions of them, of the obstacles they create and the material things they provide. It is difficult to look beyond these things in our relationships with them and concentrate on their affection for us, especially if our daily interaction with our parents tends to focus on what we need or want: dinner, an extended curfew, new clothes, or the car for the evening.

Our parents have many responsibilities towards us; as we grow older, it becomes our responsibility to appreciate their fulfillment of those responsibilities. We should understand and cherish what drives our parents to fulfill them: their affection for us. Some claim that children have a "right" to the blessings of their parents, but regardless of whether or not we are entitled to their love or their gifts, we should be appreciative of them. Considering their contribution to our lives, it is asking little.

Attending college a continent away from my parents has given me a greater appreciation for who and what they are. At the root of it all, they are two people who care greatly about me. They deserve, as all parents do, to know that their love is cherished.

P. G. WODEHOUSE

Tutu Sahu

P. G. Wodehouse was one of the great humorists of all time. His works include the Jeeves and Bertie Wooster stories, as well as numerous other novels, short stories, and plays. Born in England, Wodehouse eventually had both American and British Citizenship. After being knighted and appearing on the Queen's Honors list, Wodehouse died in 1975, at the age of ninety-three.

Many Wodehouse stories are centered around the Drones Club, to which Bertie Wooster, Gussy Fink-Nottle, and other air headed aristocrats belong. The club gets its name from the drone which is described as "...an useless parasite, having no sting. Something that lives off the work of others" - all characteristics that describe the members to a tee.

Another center of action is the Ganymede Club, to which Jeeves and other distinguished butlers belong. Ganymede in mythology, was a servant to Jupiter, King of Gods. In the same way, members of the Ganymede Club exist to serve.

Wodehouse weaves his magic into a simple backbone of a plot and produces so many different plots. The backbone of every Jeeves and Bertie story is simple. Bertie gets into a predicament (usually to help out a close friend), a friend of Bertie's falls in love, a girl announces that she will marry Bertie (a thought that he cannot stand), and Bertie's Aunt Dahlia gets involved somehow. Then of course, it is up to Jeeves to think up an interesting solution that leaves everyone gasping in awe.

However, on this simple theme, endless variations are made. The end result is that every book is drastically different, yet they all keep a certain similarity that is reassuring to the reader.

Also, during the course of each story, Bertie picks up a bad habit that his butler Jeeves cannot stand, such as growing a mustache, buying monogrammed handkerchiefs, wearing mauve pajamas, etc. Jeeves' solution invariably causes the destruction of these irritants.

There are a whole regiment of girls that Bertie has narrowly escaped marrying. Each of these girls is

under the impression that Bertie is madly in love with her, while in actuality, it makes Bertie shudder when he thinks about marrying them. As a final bit of Wooster irony, Bertie adheres to some gentleman's code and never refuses when a girl expresses the desire to marry him (actually most of the girls don't ask him: they *te//* him).

Another Wodehouse theme is the effects of strong drink upon character. Take Gussy Fink-Nottle for example. This timid admirer of newts was once called upon by Bertie's cherished Aunt Dahlia to make a speech at a school awards ceremony. Due to Gussy's timid nature, Bertie realized that the speech would not be a success, and in order for Gussy to impress the girl of his dreams (who would be listening) something would have to be done. This something was inducing Gussy, the teetotaler, to take a drink. When confronted by this plan, Gussy refused. So, of course, Bertie took matters into his own hands and poured a high concentration of alcohol into the pitcher of orange juice that Gussy would drink before making his speech.

Shortly afterwards, Bertie observed a cheerful and unworried Gussy. Upon inquiring, Bertie found out that Fink-Nottle had planned to drink a whiskey and soda, but had forgotten the soda, and had drunk a large amount of undiluted whiskey. Wooster, a few minutes later, rushed to the pitcher of orange juice and found it empty. "Thank goodness" he thought to himself "Jeeves has already emptied it."

Running into Jeeves in the hall, Bertie congratulated Jeeves on his clear thinking in emptying the pitcher. "But Sir, I thought *you* emptied it!"

But the damage was already done. A thoroughly drunk Fink-Nottle made his devastating speech. In a few short minutes Gussy called the headmaster a silly ass, surmised that the winner of the scripture-reciting contest had cheated, and compared Bertie's Uncle Tom's face to a pickled walnut.

There are many other funny parts in the many books written by P. G. Wodehouse. Even today, his books are refreshingly funny and a pleasure to read.

TODAY IS YOURS

Manorama Mohapatra

I see you moving in the cosmic movie
like a ray of hope;
daughter of determination that you are
none can deprive you
of your right today;
from within your bosom
shall blossom a movement
pervading the continents.

Your role is everywhere
in politics or in science
in literature or in literacy
in society or in culture
in peace or in crisis
speaks of your capability
in a changing world.

As one more millenium
is heading toward its end
millions watch you,
expanding and emancipating
and shaking the stagnation.

The future of humanity
is linked with your present;
the past is buried
along with its nightmares
of oppression and suppression.

Today is yours-
You who embody a new idiom,
a new expression.

OUR PARENTS

Many years ago they came to the United States
Entering a whole new world's gates

Another country they left behind
So they could come abroad and cultivate their mind

Family members were now on the other side of the earth
They wondered if the sacrifices were worth

All the loneliness and emptiness they felt in their soul
Yet they had to strive for the ultimate goal

Get through school and receive a first-rate education
So their families could live in a terrific situation

Through the tough times and the difficult years
They overcame obstacles and their fears

Making their family proud all the way
Working harder and harder through each day

Through the hard work and self-motivation
They got through school and stayed in this nation

The work did not stop after they graduated from school
They entered the work force which can be difficult and cruel

But they continued working through the tough times
Scrounging up all the pennies and dimes

So they could give their children a better chance to succeed
They gave their kids everything they could ever need

They blessed our lives with the culture they obtained from the past
And they wondered how the years had gone by so fast

As children of such parents we have to say
They have taught us a lot and shown us the right way

Thanks for making our lives so great
Thanks for sacrificing so much and coming to the United States

Subir Sahu

MEMORIES OF INDIA

India so beautiful and young,
In another way so ancient and filled with wonder,
Has so much history and breath-taking scenery,
So much to see and learn,
And have great fun.

India so vast and people everywhere,
But people so warm and friendly,
Treating others as their own,
When I think about India,
People's faces dance before my eyes,
And a warm feeling comes over me.

Real India is made of people's feelings,
So tender in their hearts,
India's real power is in people's
Loving and caring hearts,
Of both rich and poor.

No matter how many years,
We go into the future,
India's uniqueness will charm
And attract people for ever.

Satya Bikram Das

LOST DIARY

Leena Mohapatra

The hot summer sun poured on my back as I loaded up our luggage into the trunk of our Ambassador car. As I looked around I wondered, "Why do we have to leave now?"

Then I saw her. She was standing by the window sulking a little bit while she waved good-bye. Hope to see you in a couple of years! Don't forget about me until then," I said waving back at her.

As we were driven down to the airport the thought of never seeing her again didn't strike me.

Her name was Geeta and she was the 16 year-old servant who worked at my grandparents' house. She had been working there since she was 8 years-old. Her days of cleaning and keeping up with her chores never seemed to end. I watched her and wondered why she would want to live a life like this? She was never given much credit for her work. No one ever said "Thank you, Geeta," or "Good job," to her. I sometimes felt that I was her only support system while she was trapped inside the house. But day after day she held her head high and smiled while she labored over her thankless job.

She was like a diary to me, always there when I had something very important to say. I could open her up, and there she would be, attentively listening to me. Whenever I was happy, sad, angry, or mad; she would have similar feelings. We would tell each other about our problems, ambitions, and goals. I was amazed to hear that she wanted to do so much, but I wondered, how will she ever find the time? There was a block of time during my visit where she began to ignore me. I had to find

out the problem. One day I asked her curiously, "Why don't you talk to me anymore?"

"I've been told to keep my distance away." She paused, thinking about how she should continue on. "I am the servant here. I am supposed to concentrate on my work and you are a distraction to me. I've also been told that I am a bad influence on you."

I was stunned because I knew what she said was something she was forced to tell me. It showed in the soft voice she said it in. I knew in India things happened differently, but this was absurd! I was hesitant to talk any more, but I wanted to change the subject and worry about this later. Then we began talking about Hindi movies until she was beckoned by my grandparents.

When I left India four years ago, I was still a little confused with what Geeta had told me. I never talked to her again. Two years ago I started to ask about where she was because I wanted to talk to her. At first, I was told that she had gotten married. That was a lie. What really happened was that she and her sister decided to go back to their village to visit their parents, but they never returned. The news of her leaving didn't really shock me, considering I had predicted that it would happen. I realize that now she is probably living a happy life because the pressure she was getting at my grandparents' house has vanished. She is in a surrounding where people appreciate her and her work. But as I pack my bags for my trip to India, I cannot help but think that I have lost a good friend, my diary.

WATER

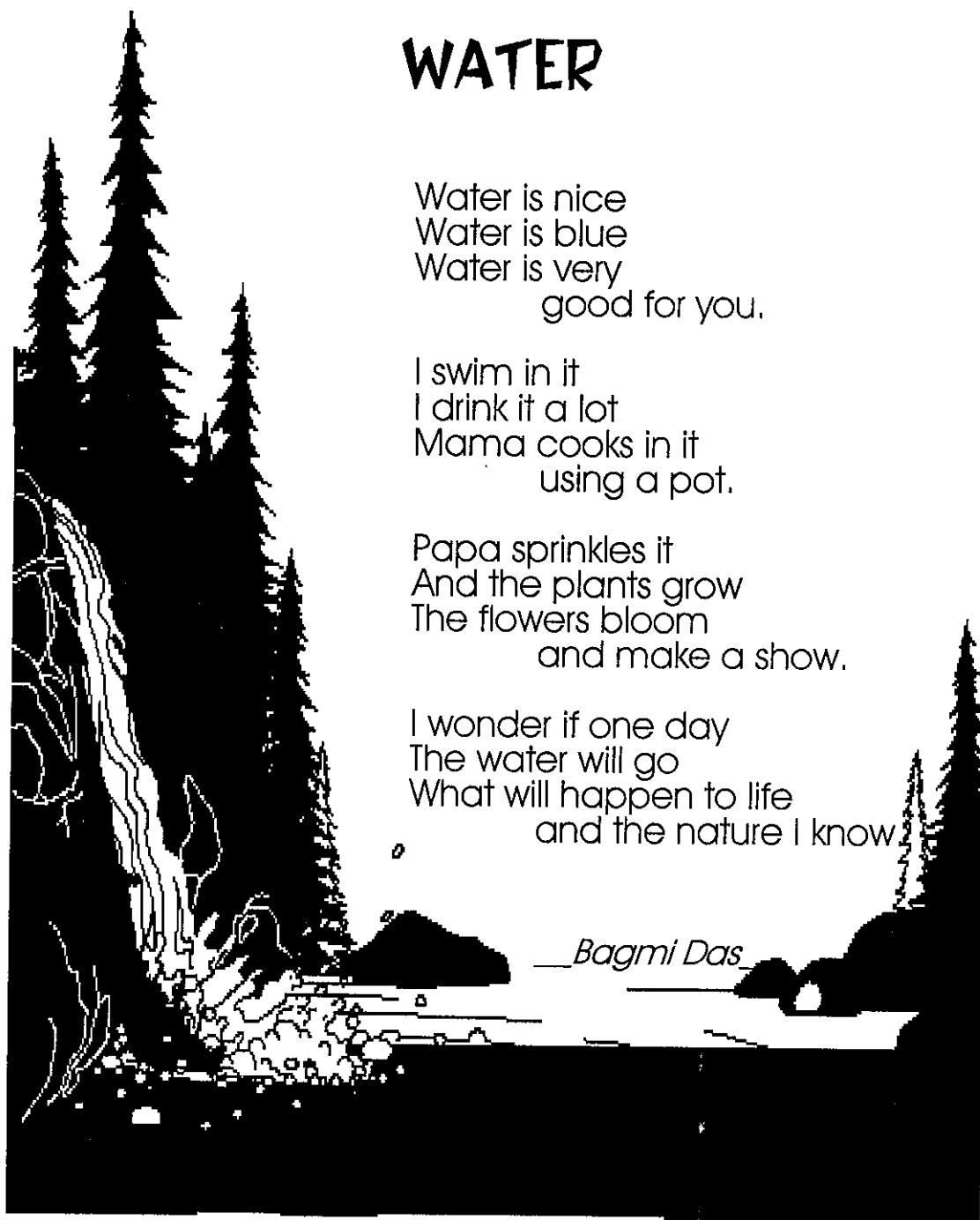
Water is nice
Water is blue
Water is very
good for you.

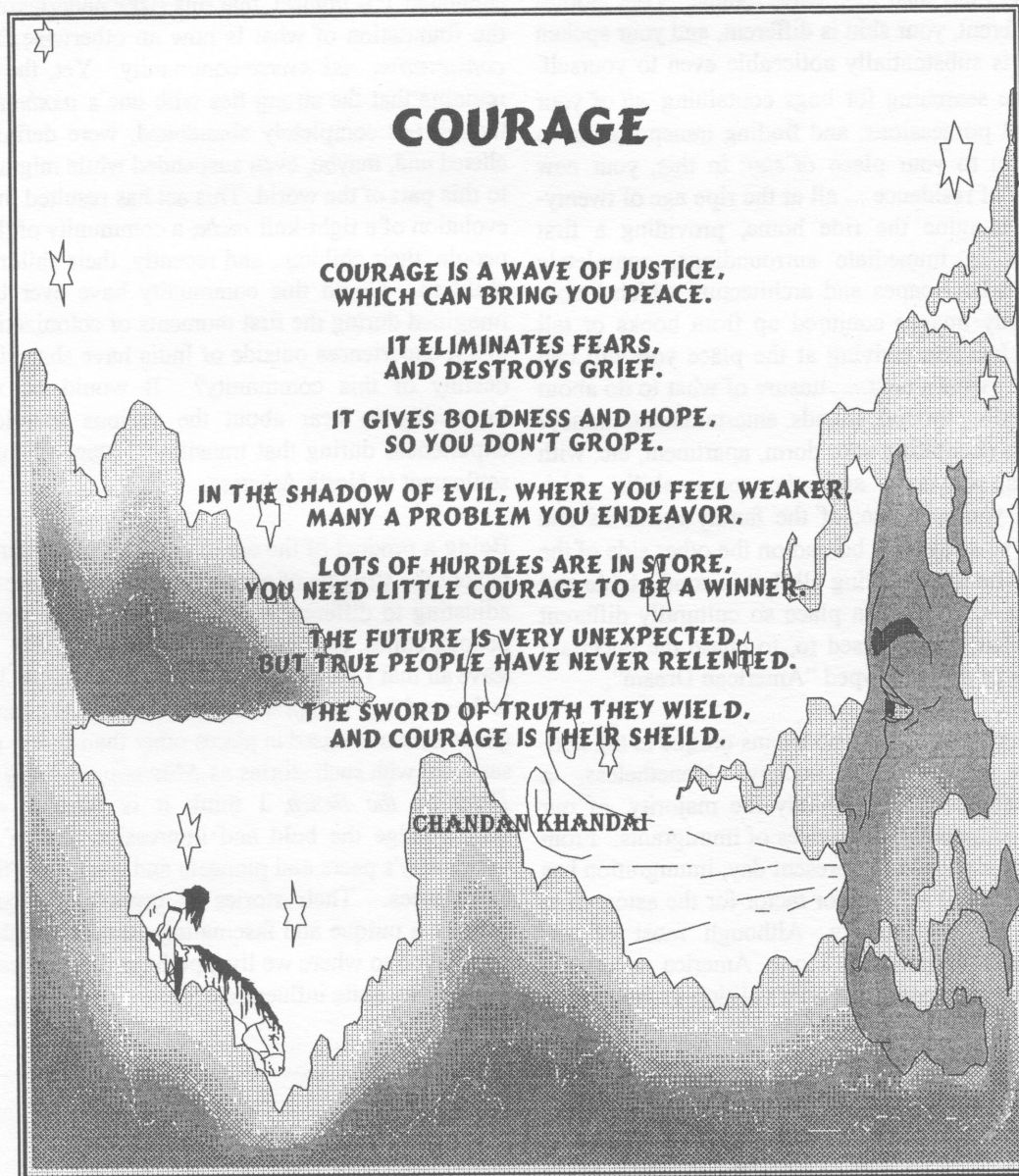
I swim in it
I drink it a lot
Mama cooks in it
using a pot.

Papa sprinkles it
And the plants grow
The flowers bloom
and make a show.

I wonder if one day
The water will go
What will happen to life
and the nature I know

Bagmi Das





WHAT A LONG, STRANGE TRIP IT'S BEEN....

Sanjiv Behera

Imagine...stepping out of a plane after a long twenty-four hour flight, perhaps your first ever. Walking through a terminal filled with people speaking a language other than your native tongue. Your clothes are different, your skin is different, and your spoken accent is substantially noticeable even to yourself. Imagine searching for bags containing *all* of your material possessions, and finding transportation to take you to your place *of stay*; in this, your new country of residence ... all at the ripe age of twenty-two. Imagine the ride home, providing a first glimpse at immediate surroundings, completely different landscapes and architecture which before were only images conjured up from books or tall tales. Imagine arriving at the place you will call home..... what's next..... unsure of what to do about food, getting around, friends, entertainment, money? Imagine decorating your dorm, apartment, etc. with pictures, souvenirs, and other memorabilia which remind you of home; of the family members and friends you have left behind on the other side of the world. Imagine leaving all that is comfortable and familiar to come to a place so culturally different from what you are used to, to chase the uncertain rewards of an over hyped "American Dream".

This phenomenon is by no means unique to the non-resident Oriya/Indian society. Nonetheless, a significant portion, probably the majority, of our Indian community, comprises of immigrants. From the early sixties to the present day, immigration has been, and still is, a major factor for the astounding growth of our society. Although most of our forefathers migrated to North America as middle class Indians under their own volition to improve

economical or educational status, i.e. they were not forced slaves or refugees seeking political asylum, the act of such relocation in itself is quite impressive and admirable. It is ironical that this risky undertaking is the foundation of what is now an otherwise fairly *conservative, risk averse* community. Yet, the fact remains that the strong ties with one's *motherland*, though not completely abandoned, were definitely altered and, maybe, even suspended while migrating to this part of the world. This act has resulted in the evolution of a tight-knit *niche*, a community of these people, their children, and recently, their children's children. Could this community have ever been imagined during the first moments of colonization? What experiences outside of India have shaped the destiny of this community? It would be very interesting to hear about the various individual experiences during that transitional stage of initial settlement in North America.

Being a product of the era of convenience, I cannot fathom the struggle of adapting to a new culture and adjusting to different perceptions about the world, people, ethics, etc. for the remainder of my life. To leave all that I know and start fresh in a foreign land is beyond my comprehension. As our generation (those born and raised in places other than India) gets saturated with such stories as *Mississippi Masala* and *Bhaji on the Beach*, I think it is time to also acknowledge the bold and impressive feat of our community's peers and pioneers and learn from their experiences. Their stories of immigration could provide a unique and fascinating perspective about our relation to where we live, perhaps one that could prove to be quite influential.

LOST IN AMERICA THE STORY OF THE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE

Sulekha Das

"The person who does not read is no better than a person who can not read." Abigail Van Buren

It was a dull, wintery evening. Freezing rain drops were dancing on my car window and forming a thin layer of ice. The windshield wipers were reluctantly moving from side to side, making crunching noises. The street looked deserted. The Community Center, where I was headed, looked quiet but inviting. It is a neat little building just behind the Hindu temple. I parked my car and started walking carefully on the slippery pathway towards the Center. It was getting dark, there was no sign of light anywhere. Somewhere I thought I heard a child crying. Then, there was a hush! Puzzled, I opened the door. Surprise! Surprise!! Everyone was shouting in unison.

The lights went on, the brightness almost hurt my eyes. My students - adult students - were looking at me with amusement, observing my reaction with great satisfaction. This was their last day of class. A neat package was waiting for me on my desk (waiting to be opened). As soon as I sat down, they urged me to open the package. Gingerly, I started opening the wrapping - my thoughts were wandering - looking back at my volunteering as an ESL English Tutor.

The panic stricken face of Laticia - my first student three years ago - sitting across from me distracted me from my task of opening my present. The pleading eyes were trying to say a million words, but she was dumbstruck. Laticia's voice feebly spoke again. . . "Phone, Phone." She made hand gestures. She was shaking. Her anemic cold hands were clutching mine with urgency and intensity as we were starting our first literacy session at the clinic. I was also at a loss for words. How does one comfort a woman who is tormented by the shrill beep of the monster - *the telephone*? She pretty well knew that this monster would be back to torment her time and time again. How could anyone think of the telephone as a monster and be traumatized by it? It was beyond my comprehension! The telephone is one of my greatest loves - I spend half of my waking hours with it.

I went down memory lane to another time, another place, and another set of anxious eyes - the same

panic expression - exuding an air of helplessness.

It was Ma's, my mother-in-law, when she was visiting us in the US twenty three years ago. When I returned home from work one afternoon and opened the door, I found, to my horror, Ma huddled up on the sofa, with her knees pulled up under her chin. I looked at her agonized face. Without speaking she pointed her shaking hands at the telephone on the corner table. A feeling of relief rushed over me. I laughed offhandedly and said, "It was just the phone, Ma! You don't have to answer it," I said casually. Did I see a gleam of disappointment in her intelligent eyes? Did I hurt her feelings? I thought I saw a tiny touch of rebellion perhaps - in those tired eyes admonishing me, telling me "*Yes, I can learn and yes, I can answer that phone.*" Was it my imagination? Or perhaps it was my postpartum blues! The child's cries halted my fleeting mind on its tracks. Brushing off my negative thoughts as the unwanted snowflakes, I went to hold the baby, the light of my life, and to indulge myself in the selfish world of maternal bliss.

My Spanish student Laticia's horrifying experience with the telephone, made me realize how naive and insensitive I had been. And how easily I had taken things for granted, not giving any thought to the mundane things of everyday life in the US. People have difficulty managing their basic day-to-day life, with shopping, reading road signs, mailing letters, filing taxes, banking, children's school, doctor visits, hospital stays - struggling to explain to a doctor where does it really hurt. What's happening to millions and millions of immigrants pouring into this country? Millions of healthy, normal intelligent people turning deaf and dumb overnight, slowly losing their self-esteem and confidence, and feeling lost in the crowd. I did not know that this world existed in almost every community, until I made an active effort to seek them out. I trained to be a tutor in basic literacy (BL) and English as a Second Language (ESL). I started to visit free clinics, temples, churches, community centers and schools. I was amazed at what I found. To my astonishment,

it was pervasive. Mexican, Asian-American, farm laborers and factory workers - they are happy and healthy like us but can't speak a word of English. I was surprised to learn that there are school principals, office managers, computer programmers, immigrant doctors among other professionals who are functionally illiterate, albeit to various degrees. As a professional librarian for the past eighteen years, I have been more than happy to provide the public with information, never questioning, never realizing why so many people and more often, the same people, kept on coming back to me for the same information (interpreting charts, indexes, graphs, tables, instructions, maps, etc.) over and over again. Sometimes they would ask me to phrase it for them.

"Of course, they are functionally illiterate!" confided Carol, my ESL teacher during training. She was amused to see the look of horror in my eyes. I felt as if someone had pulled a rug from under my feet. How many times I must have been asked by well-dressed men and women "Can you read this for me? I don't have my glasses, the print is too small" or some sort of excuse. "It was not much different than when my grandmother used to ask me to read her letters."

I was saying loudly, "But that was in the late fifties, sixties in India. And this is America in 1996." I stressed my point helplessly. Carol said, "You will be surprised to know how many learning disabled people are out there." She continued, "So many of these problems were not diagnosed in the past. ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) was not known then, so children with learning problems were treated harshly, often ostracized and turned away from learning. They pretended that they understood. Their high level of intelligence, sixth sense, highly perceptive ability helped them finding clever ways to survive, manage and persevere.

"It's too bad and such a pity that these problems did not get attention and counseling," I retorted. "But you know," Carol said, "they can still cure and get over this problem if they can only come out and admit that they have a problem and seek help." "Just the other day," she continued, "the fifty-five year old principal was here. His secretary of many years retired. So now the principal is having a hard time at his job - cannot communicate with his peers and

parents effectively, whereas he was an excellent administrator - a warm and caring person with a vision. He has a new secretary now but he does not have the former's efficiency. He has to scrutinize everything very carefully and not leave anything to chance. He is an educator and cannot afford to make mistakes with grammar, syntax and spellings, etc."

"It is a truly interesting story" I said with amazement. Carol said, "The US Department of Education estimates that about 90 million (50%) of the adult population do not have the literacy skills that they need to function in our society. Another 40-44 million adults are thought to be functionally illiterate. The functionally illiterate adult costs \$224 billion annually in welfare payments, crime, job incompetence, lost taxes and remedial education.

"Unbelievable!" I was shaking my head with disbelief.

Ever since my training, I have been a committed volunteer tutor. My Latin American student Laticia has a job now as an aide in a nursing home. Someday she plans to take her GED and attend a nursing school. That would really please me I thought, closing my eyes, savoring the anticipated pleasure. And now in the community center's classroom, facing my adult students' quizzical looks filled with questions, "Did I or didn't I like their presents?" This was their graduation day - they have handed me their token of love and appreciation - I looked at my present with amazement - a flashlight! Of course! How symbolic! Their eager eyes were dazzling, now they no longer feel trapped, the total darkness around them even standing in the middle of a brightly lit room or under the full sun. They can focus like this little flashlight. Their aura of self confidence filled inside me with pride along with a twang of pain and regret. My image of Ma's bruised body and pain floated in front of me - the day she jumped off the running bus as it started to leave, because my father-in-law could not make it - she felt trapped due to her language inability. It was hurting me more inside, frustrated, I felt like I could stretch out my arm once more, fold her shaking and frail body, rock her gently, and whisper, "Hush Ma, please don't feel bad. I will teach you spoken English so you will not feel frustrated. You will be all right."

Non-Existence

Perhaps this is how it was all meant to be...

I am no more
Does the river still flow?
Its waters as blue as the feathers of the kingfisher.
Does the moon still shine?
Its cold silver rays lighting up the darkest corners of the earth.
Do the half naked children still run down those cobbled streets?
Playing their aimless games, a veritable bedlam I recall.
Oh! how I miss sitting on the verandah on a lazy summer afternoon,
watching sleepy strays as they seek the comfort of shade.

What has become of you ?
Tell me have you changed ?
Like a little slug that grows into a beautiful butterfly,
or the ugly duckling that becomes a swan.
Life is such; forever changing...

They say it is good,
All that suffering is gone they claim.
But how do they know?
Have they seen the eyes of death
or felt the state of non existence ?
In a world that you and I had come to know so well
We came into this world together my dear
But alas! Fate dealt us a heavy blow,
we went our separate ways...

The terrain was quite formidable
and the journey defeating
Innumerable battles had to be fought
But I lost them all my dear,
I slept the final sleep.
I exist no more my dear but only in your heart...

SHANTA MISRA

CONSPIRACY AND MURDER IN ELEPHANT SOCIETY

ALEXANDER, ELEPHANT-PRINCE OF KORAPUT

A Story in the Form of a Memoir

Lalu Mansinha

One of the children shouted *Hathi! Hathi! Elephant! Elephant!* I turned in the direction of the little girl's finger and saw what appeared to be a big grey mound rising out of the hillside sloping down from our verandah. The top of the head, the eyes and the ears were visible. Slowly the trunk, the tusks and the rest came into view. He kept walking and then stopped, just to the right of a bamboo clump. The sun was just above the trees on the hilltop behind us. The shadows gave a bold and stark relief to everything. The young elephant was facing us, in full sun, swaying just a little. The trunk was hanging down, with an inward curl at the tip. Two magnificent tusks jutted forward, gracefully curved, turned slightly outwards. There was a large white spot right in the center of his forehead. He stood, not relaxed, but tense, with every muscle taut. His ears were fanned out, straining to hear the slightest rustle.

After all these years, that view, that scene, is still etched in my memory. It was early on a cool winter morning in the dense Dandakaranya forest in Koraput District, Orissa, India. Everyone else was drinking piping hot tea, except me. I was considered too young to have tea; I had a cup of Horlicks. We were all swaddled in sheets shawls and sweaters, clutching a small cup in both hands and standing in the morning sun to get the chill out of our bones. There was still dew on the grass on the ground. From our verandah we could see the valley below and the hills on the other side, covered with bushes, trees and grass. The valley was in the shape of a triangle with terraces on both sides. Our hilltop was towards the narrow edge of the triangle. A small stream meandered through the valley towards the wider end. The lush green color of the trees and the rice fields was breathtaking. We were in a clearing, an island, in perhaps the largest and densest forest in India in those days. The real dense, dark and scary forest surrounded us and the valley. Wildlife abounded. Deer, tigers cheetah, sambhar, nilgai and monkeys were common. Twittering birds on the trees provided a constant background music.

Mica flakes from a billion year old slowly decaying granite were everywhere and sparkled in the sun like diamonds. The elephant must have been rolling in the dust; for, he too sparkled with the mica all over him. The bright sun, the pearl like dew drops and the sparkling mica gave an eerie magical quality to the whole scene. But even without the sparkle the young elephant would have attracted attention. He had an air about him, enhanced by the distinctive spot on his forehead. With that spot and his bearing he looked royal, born a prince, destined to be king. It was his tusks that caught my eye. They looked like polished weapons. With all the glitter of the mica and the dewdrops around him, it appeared as if the tips of the tusks were really made of sharpened polished steel. Each tusk gave the impression of being a weapon, a lance. As I would learn in a few minutes, my impression was no illusion. I was looking at an determined assassin.

The young elephant was facing us, looking up towards us, standing on the gently sloping hillside. His hind legs were lower than the front. He looked for all the world like an young mammoth, of the type now extinct, that roamed the earth ten thousand years ago, back in the last ice age. Just looking at him I felt that his lineage was different from other 'ordinary' elephants. I imagined him to be directly descended from the other extinct elephant species that I had read about and seen in artistic renditions: *Stegodon*, *Mastodon*, *Gompothores*. Of the many elephant species that have inhabited the earth, only two survive, *Elephas maximus*, the Asian elephant, and *Loxodonta africana*, the African elephant.

I was not the only one fascinated by the young male elephant. One of the boys at the next table said 'He looks like a prince. I think his name is Alexander'. Other children started calling out 'Alexander! Alexander!' The name stuck and that is the name he came to be known by.

Suddenly there was a movement behind the bamboo

clump next to Alexander. There was a rustling sound and a big old male elephant lumbered into view, walking slowly towards Alexander. Then we understood; this was going to be a showdown, a challenge to the Old One. There was going to be a fight between two elephants scarcely hundred meters in front of us. The chatter among the children and adults stopped abruptly. As the big male advanced towards Alexander a boy by my side shouted, "Oh No! Poor Alexander. He will be killed." Another girl shouted "Run Alexander Run! Go away! He will kill you!".

Alexander stood his ground and faced the big bull. After some preliminary snorting, pacing and bellowing, each approached closer and lunged; their heads hit with a thud; their trunks raised and intertwined. It appeared that some rule of elephant combat prohibited the use of tusks in these challenge fights. It was a fight to establish supremacy, not a mortal combat.

The two elephants pulled back and their heads hit again. There were more bellows and several more thuds. It was clear that Alexander was not getting the better of it. Then, with relief, we saw Alexander turn tail and run away. The old bull gave chase briefly, and after seeing the young upstart fleeing downhill, he turned around and stood facing us. There was no threat in his demeanor, just the pride of victory. The Old One simply stood there for while, swaying and fanning his ears.

And then I saw a movement on the right from the corner of my eye. It was Alexander again. He had circled back, and now approached the old bull from behind. Perhaps the Old One was slightly deaf, and also appeared to have poor eyesight. He seemed oblivious of the approaching Alexander. After silently reaching perhaps twenty-five meters from the bull, Alexander sprinted towards the bull, and then, suddenly, lunged with all his weight at the old bull, stabbing him with his two sharp tusks. Slowly Alexander backed out, pulling out the now bloodied tusks. I saw blood spurt out of two holes. The old bull sank to the ground and then toppled.

All this had happened in a few minutes. Nobody spoke. The adults were silent. We simply clutched

the warm cups, sipped the tea (or Horlicks), and looked at the dead elephant and Alexander.

And then suddenly, from just below our verandah there was an ear piercing, unearthly shriek. We all jumped, having absolutely no idea what it was. An elephant's trunk appeared from just below, and then an front foot. She was an old female attempting to climb onto the verandah on which all of us stood. Luckily, the verandah itself was high off the ground, high enough to have hidden the old female all this time and too high for her climb. She had witnessed the execution of the Old One, just as we had. She watched the old bull die. Perhaps her shriek was a cry of grief. Perhaps she was grieving for a misguided son who had just murdered his father. She guessed that she would be next. She was desperately trying to climb the balcony to escape Alexander.

The horrible shriek and the appearance of the trunk and the leg on the verandah broke the spell. There was a sudden realization that we were no longer mere witnesses. We may become victims. Pandemonium broke loose. Men women and children ran helter skelter, screaming in Oriya, Bengali, Telugu, Hindi, English. Children were dragged back into the rooms by the parents. The first ones to enter bolted all doors and windows, leaving half the people banging on the outside and screaming to be let in. I did not even try to get into the rooms; I found a stairway and ran up to the roof of the two storey building. I wanted to be at a place where I could watch. *Bapa* (father) and *Bou* (mother) had gone to visit a family in another building and had missed the entire episode. My mother, like all Oriya mothers, was overprotective and was always on guard for dangers and mishaps for her children, even where none existed. She certainly would have packed me into one of the rooms. Lucky for me, she was not there. By the time I reached the roof, Alexander had reached the matriarch and was within a few meters. This time he wasted no time in preliminaries. In one swift run and lunge he stabbed the old lady and then slowly pulled out the tusks. Two jets of blood shot out in arcs and splattered on the ground. Blood was dripping from Alexander's tusks. With a last pained cry the matriarch sank to the ground. The trunk and the foot, which were still draped over the stone

balcony wall, dragged down, leaving a trail of skin and blood on the sharp and rough stones.

From inside the shuttered rooms others also saw the murder of the matriarch. I could hear the screams of terror from the rooms below me. In-between I could hear someone praying. Many were convinced that their last moments on this earth had come. Someone started banging pots and pans, hoping to scare away the elephant. Others also took it up, making a tremendous din.

Alexander took no notice of this cacophony. He paused briefly, looked up and saw me on the roof. He watched me intently for a second or so. For that second my heart stopped. I looked into those eyes and was hypnotized with fear. Boyish bravado is one thing; facing a manic elephant is another. Yet another side of my mind did not fear Alexander. I felt that he really posed no danger to me personally. Perhaps it was my imagination, but as Alexander turned away, I thought he raised his trunk just a little, to greet, to indicate recognition.

Alexander did not even look towards the noisy rooms. Instead, he slowly turned towards the valley below and scanned the horizon, searching for something. Halfway through the turn he stopped as if he had found what he was looking for, and then took off with a determined pace towards the stream at the bottom of the valley.

I looked down at my hand and was surprised at finding the cup still in my hand, with the cup still warm. It had been only a few minutes since the little girl first saw Alexander. In a few minutes an idyllic peaceful retreat had turned into a horror scene. We had two dead elephants and an elephant assassin on the rampage.

As I watched Alexander rush down towards the stream, I saw what appeared to be hundreds of water buffaloes grazing on the hillsides and the valley. On a closer look I got yet another shock. The grey blobs were not buffaloes but elephants. There were hundreds on both sides of the valley and along the stream. Silently, stealthily, during the night the elephants had turned up in our valley. I started counting, then gave up. I estimated perhaps seven

hundred to a thousand elephants. There must be many more that I could not see. There was something peculiar about the elephants. Virtually all the elephants had their heads towards the grass and appeared to be grazing. The scene was too peaceful, too passive. In any elephant herd normally there are frolicking babies, playful young adults, bellowing seniors. There were a thousand silent elephants.

I hesitate to use the term 'herd'. Normally a herd has no more than fifty elephants, usually less. A herd of this size would have been reported. A herd of a thousand hungry elephants gathered at one spot can eat the grass and trees bare. I saw no bare patches in the grass, in the rice fields and no uprooted trees. It appeared that all the elephants were slinking, pretending to eat with their heads down. Even more peculiar, except for the old matriarch, no elephant had raised an alarm. And no elephant had answered the old lady's distress cry.

Elephants are very social animals. When elephants get lost and find their own herd, they greet each other with exuberant cries and signs of genuine happiness and pleasure. When a comrade or friend dies, members of the herd grieve in sorrow. And in captivity they are known to be intelligent and have a long memory. The very fact that not one of the hundreds before me appeared to have noticed the two murders meant that something was bizarre.

Then it clicked. This was all deliberate. An elephantine conspiracy. But how? And why? If there was an elephantine conspiracy, it was clear that not every elephant was a party to it. Down at the stream two elephants were playing in the water, spraying water on each other. One even took some yellow mud and splashed on the other one. I could clearly see the bright yellow splashes on the gray-black skin. Perhaps it was the movements that caught Alexander's attention. Or perhaps it was the yellow splashes. Or perhaps Alexander had already targeted his victims. I saw him making a beeline for that spot on the stream. I found out later the yellow splashed elephant was a young male. Alexander sprinted along the dirt road that went from our lodge to the bottom of the valley.

Usually an approach of another male at high speed

triggers some suspicion and alarm. But Alexander managed to splash into the shallow water without being noticed. He sort of walked up to the young male and then a swift lunge and it was over. As Alexander withdrew his tusks, I could see two red spots, in addition to the yellow splashes, on the victim. Then the young male buckled and vanished from view behind some marsh grasses.

Still there was no alarm among the elephants. No raised trunks shouting out that three elephants have been killed. There was that deathly silence. Even the young male's companion, so playful only moments before the death, was silent. Alexander then made off towards another elephant not too far away. Now I was convinced that Alexander had a plan. This was no random killing. He was eliminating other elephants from a list, with full complicity of the others.

At this moment my mother found me on the rooftop. My observations on animal behavior came to an abrupt stop. I was dragged away from my vantage point in spite of my protests. I was scolded for not barricading myself like everyone else. I reminded her that I am a *Khandayat* (the warrior caste) boy, destined to be a soldier, not to be frightened by a mere elephant. This brought forth even more scolding from my father, who was a poet, and abhorred violence. Though born a Hindu, later in his life he had embraced Buddhism, primarily for the gentleness and non-violence.

Sometime during that night the elephants moved out, as silently as they had arrived. Next morning there were no elephants in the valley, except for the carcasses. A total of twenty-nine elephants, twenty-six males and three females, were slaughtered by Alexander that day.

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The lodge where we were staying had an interesting history. In the mid seventeenth century a Polish gentleman named Bravatsky came and settled in the Schwabian region in Germany. His great grandson Hans Joachim Bravatsky graduated in Chemistry from the Free University in Berlin and looked for a job. It was the mid nineteen-twenties and jobs were hard to come by in the economic chaos of the Weimar Republic. After a long search Bravatsky managed to

get a job in Switzerland with a pharmaceutical company.

The discovery of aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) in a swamp plant and the discovery of quinine for malaria in the bark of the cinchona tree had led to the belief in Europe that there are probably thousands of miracle drugs just waiting to be discovered in plants the world over. In 1925 Bravatsky arrived in India, sent by the Swiss company to find medicinal plants. He wandered around in British India, and finally arrived in Orissa, in Koraput. He found out about the dense *Dandakaranya* forest, mentioned in the great epic *Ramayana*. Rama and Lakshmana had passed through this region on their way to Sri Lanka. In Koraput, in the middle of the forest, he found people living in harmony with nature, rich with jungle lore. He lived among the forest people, known in India as *Adivasi*, learnt their language, and learnt about beneficial plants from them, and slowly built up a catalogue of medicinal plants. Among the plant he collected was *Rauwolfia Serpentina*, from which the drug *Reserpine* was isolated.

In 1928 Bravatsky returned to Switzerland with his catalogue and seeds and seedlings. The company was happy with his work, gave him a good bonus, and all the back salary. But after about six months in Switzerland, Bravatsky just could not take the hectic life in Europe. He resigned his position, to the shock and dismay of his superiors, and came back to Koraput with his young bride. There he and his wife built a cottage and lived among the Adivasis. A son was born to the happy couple. The few outsiders who had seen them during that period reported that the couple had 'gone native'. But for the color of the skin, they had become Adivasis.

The British officials in the area did not like Europeans living as natives. All colonial powers ruled by fostering an illusion: the rulers were always superhuman; the ruled always sub-human. It just would not do for someone of the ruling class (*i.e.* Europeans) to behave like the natives. So Bravatsky was visited by a British official who laid down the law in no uncertain terms. Obey their rules or be summarily expelled from India.

Bravatsky had no wish to return to Europe. He and

his wife decided to compromise by building a tourist lodge. This way he could still live among his tribal friends but for the sake of the British, still maintain a 'distance'. He advertised the lodge as a nature preserve and a health resort. He applied his considerable knowledge of tribal remedies and medicinal plants to all the aches and pains that bedeviled the indolent British Civil Servants, military officers and business class. Soon he acquired a reputation as a healer. British officials and European travelers flocked to this remote lodge in the middle of the dense forest.

However events in Europe were moving towards a climax. England declared war on Germany in 1939. The British government ordered all German citizens throughout the Empire to be arrested and interned in camps. So one morning in December 1939 one of the very officers who had patronized the lodge, came and arrested the family and seized the property in the name of the King-Emperor of India, George VI. Bravatsky still had a few friends in high places. One of the officials declared that his wife and son were really Swiss citizens and released them. But they would not or could not release Bravatsky. He had a heart attack and died in 1941 in the Alien Internment Camp in Lucknow.

By a strange coincidence, years later I ran into his son, Hans Anand Bravatsky, at an Oriya gathering in Toronto. Anand Bravatsky spoke fondly of his youth in Koraput, of playing with Xaxa, his bosom buddy, a boy of the forest, of hunting with bow and arrow etc. Anand strongly believes that when the Germans started bombing British cities, causing lot of civilian casualties, the British started mistreating the Germans that were interned in India. Anand believes that his father was actually murdered. I will have more to say about Anand later on.

The Second World War ended in 1945. But the Empire was not to be the same again. The illusion of the superiority of the British was broken. The British were forced to quit India just two years later, in 1947. The new government in Orissa inherited the lodge in Koraput as 'Government Property', but just did not know what to do with it. Most of the new ruling class, now Indians, had never been to Dandakaranya forest. In any case, the lodge was far

from anywhere. Some junior official decided to sell it off and called for bids. An enterprising gentleman put in a bid for the lodge for Rs. 10. It was the only bid, and Mr. K. Shiva Rao became the proud owner of the lodge.

Much as Bravatsky had done a decade and half earlier, Mr Shiva Rao started a campaign to get the officials of independent India to come and visit the lodge. People of my father's generation, who had heard of the lodge from the white superiors but were previously forbidden to visit, now flocked to it. And that is how, in the early winter of 1948 I found myself on a hilltop watching an elephant named Alexander.

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At an Oriya picnic on Toronto Island Park on a beautiful summer day in 1972 against the backdrop of Lake Ontario on one side and downtown Toronto on the other, there was a heated and excited debate on some accounting glitch of the previous Oriya gathering. Anand Bravatsky was there, perhaps thinking that someone from Koraput would be there among the Toronto Oriyas. He understood nothing of the discussion about the missing (or was it excess?) \$10. I saw him standing alone and introduced myself. We started talking. He wanted to know if my wife could cook *Mandia Jaoo* (a gruel made of millet). During his childhood in Koraput Anand spent a lot of time with the family of his close friend Xaxa. He loved the food. But most of all he missed *Mandia Jaoo*. I told him that in that gathering of middle class Oriyas most probably no one had tasted his favorite dish, let alone cook it

I recounted to Anand the mysterious appearance and disappearance of the elephants and the murders by Alexander. Specifically I asked him there were any similar event during his time in Koraput. No, he said, he had not seen any such gathering during his stay. But he remembered one of the stories that Xaxa's grandmother used to tell. I could picture the two young boys, one dark brown and the other a white, tanned deep brown, sitting on the mud floor in the evening and listening wide eyed to the stories of animals, demons, monsters, gods and other supernatural things, against the backdrop of strange jungle sounds, of tiger's roars, cheetah's purring and deer's barking. One of the stories of Xaxa's

grandmother was of a gathering of thousands of elephants. One elephants kills many and becomes a rajah among the elephants.

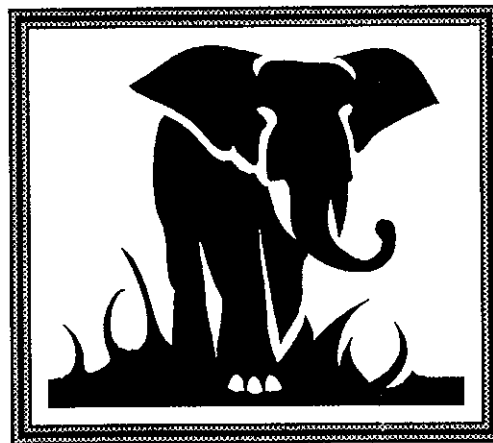
The grandmother's story, though only folklore, confirmed my suspicions that we knew very little about the dynamics of elephant community in the wild. Most of our knowledge comes from captive and enslaved elephants. Every 100 years or so somehow small elephant herds communicate with each other in different parts of the huge forest and gather silently at one place. Somehow a list is drawn up, and one young male is chosen to carry out the will of the majority. They choose (elect?) one leader who then goes about systematically killing a targeted list. The majority of the elephants remain silent during the executions. Then the herds disperse. The communication of complex tasks, implies that the elephants of Koraput have a complex language. What sounds like grunts, squeals, bellows, snorts are actually part of a large vocabulary. Strange that even at the end of the twentieth century we are totally ignorant of their language. Perhaps it should not come as a surprise. Most of us do not know the language of the Adivasis, the humans who live in the

forest.

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I saw Alexander only once more, in the summer of 1955. I was a Geology student, doing field work in the eastern part of Koraput. We were walking along a jungle trail. Suddenly an elephant crossed our path. It was Alexander. I recognized him right away. With his distinctive white spot on the forehead, he still looked every bit as regal as before. He was leading a small herd of about twenty elephants. He saw me, stopped and raised his trunk and gave a bellow. I had a feeling that he recognized me as the boy on the verandah and the rooftop. Elephants have long memories.

I presume Alexander is still the king among the elephants. On the other hand, he may have been murdered by now by some young ambitious male. Or he may have been killed by a human with a gun. Much of the dense Dandakaranya forest of my youth is gone and the rich fauna have been decimated. The climate has changed. The biting cold is gone. Bravatsky's lodge survived only a few years. Only a few decaying pieces of wood and a few stones mark the spot now.





I AM

**I am an empty wine glass.
Disproportional in size.
Everything pouring into me,
While I am unable to stop thee.
The bitter sweet taste is intoxicating,
Making my emotional state fascinating.
With the rim of my glass as my limit.
Once it is reached everything spills from within it.
The mess has begun,
But I have done no harm.
I am put away and there I stay,
Waiting not to be filled another day.**

Leena Mohapatra

JEWEL AMONG THE PEOPLE KUNJA BIHARI DASH

Udaya Nath Dash, with Meera Dash

I was nine years younger than the brother I called Kunja Bhaina. My earliest memory of him is that he used to bring "coras" (sweets) for me when he came back to our village, Rench Shasan, from the city of Bhubaneswar. I thought the coras were lying under trees. At the end of his vacation, I cried to go with him to Bhubaneswar. Our mother used to hold me until he was out of sight.

My brother claimed that he was the ugliest and dirtiest child, and that our eldest brother, Ghana Shyam was the favorite. He also claimed that he was the average village lad, neither clever nor courageous. He had few toys, but used to make some with coconut leaves and clay, and whistles with mango seeds. He molded statues of the mythical characters Rama, Laxmana, Seeta, and Ravana with ten heads. My father had no plans to educate him beyond primary school. But one day Ghana Bhaina fell sick at school in Bhubaneswar. Kunja Bhaina was asked to care for him. While he was there, a teacher asked why he was not in school. He said, "Our father could not afford to send two boys to school and I am helping him in the farm." The teacher asked some questions and found out that he was intelligent. He arranged for my parents to enroll Kunja Bhaina in the fourth grade with financial aid.

Kunja Bhaina was a reluctant pupil. He hid in the village when he was supposed to be at school, ate cucumbers that the teacher had asked him to collect for the class, and almost drowned just to get some candy. The teacher's brutal punishments would have been "child abuse," in today's terms. Kunja Bhaina scored far below passing in all subjects. His handwriting was terrible; before going to school, he had not written anything on paper, which was rarely available. His teachers and classmates began to think that he had little promise, but the headmaster arranged for upper-class students to tutor and discipline him.

The headmaster made sure that Kunja Bhaina was admitted to a new high school that had recently been added to Nimapara middle school. My brother jumped up and down with joy when he heard that he was going to be the first from our village to go to

high school. To pay the expenses of the dormitory, he traveled six miles daily to tutor a few students. Eventually, he got a job doing the marketing, cleaning, dish washing, cooking, and serving for one of his teachers. He had time to study only after everyone went to bed. I visited him in Nimapara. On a kerosene stove, he made *mohan bhog* for me, but he could not afford to eat that well all the time. He ate sprouted *mung* for breakfast.

He became an idealist, and opposed smoking, chewing tobacco, and killing chickens. He gave up fish for the next twelve years. He was always telling me to read. Once I said, "You must be dumb; you study all the time. I remember everything once I read it. Why should I study so much?" He laughed and said, "There are thousands of books. It will take many lifetimes to read all of them, let alone remember them. If you want to be big and famous, you must read as many books as possible." The philosophy of the Indian National Congress party attracted him, and he wore khadi (cloth made from homespun cotton thread). He got to see Mahatma Gandhi visit our district. Locals asked Gandhi to go to the Jagannath temple to visit the Lord, but he refused to enter the temple that denied the *Harijans* (untouchables) access.

Suddenly, our father died at the age of 52. Kunja Bhaina wanted to leave the worldly life and be a Sanyasi. In Puri he became a disciple of Sri Nigamananda. However, the Guru persuaded him to return to school. After he graduated in 1935, Ghana Bhaina asked him to look for a job, to help manage the household. But Kunja Bhaina wanted to go to college. He met Shree Madhu Sudan Dash, a famous lawyer, who arranged for him to tutor his 7-year-old grandson. With that lucky turn of events, my brother got admitted into Ravenshaw College in Cuttack, Orissa's only college at that time.

He studied history, logic, Oriya literature, Sanskrit, and English. Earning an Intermediate in Arts degree in two years, he began teaching at a new high school for a monthly salary of 25 rupees. The place was surrounded by mountains, with Chilika Lake nearby. He went hiking, watched the sun rise and set,

and wrote about a bear. He had written during high school, but this was where his poetic instinct blossomed. In two months, he had enough money to return to college. He took a new tutoring job and stayed at his student's home. When I went to Cuttack, I was suffering from scabies but recovered with his care. He slept in one corner of the drawing room on a mat. In the daytime he had to roll his belongings into a bundle. His kerosene stove, rice, clothes, and mat shared that corner for three years. The next year he stayed in a dorm for 1 rupee per month, due to the superintendent's kindness. In 1939, he graduated from Ravenshaw College, which belonged to Patna University, in Bihar, as Orissa had no university at that time.

He failed to get a job after college. Because of his talent in Oriya literature, an advisor encouraged him to earn a master's degree in Oriya. He gathered the courage and money to go to Calcutta. He met Professor Binayak Misra, a published writer. With help from other Oriyas, he got a teaching job in a night school for 10 rupees monthly. He slept on the steps of an office building with janitors until some Oriya porters offered to share rooms with him. Kunja Bhaina took part in movements to unite Oriya parts of Bihar and Bengal with Orissa. He chaired the Utkal Sahitya Society, which set up a foreign branch in Bengal. He graduated first in the class, awarded with 200 rupees and three gold medals.

He then tutored a prince in Ranchi, Bihar. Kunja Bhaina enjoyed lots of traveling. He had written several poems and articles by this time, but we saw none of them. I recall cleaning boxes at home one day with Ghana Bhaina. We found a big book with no writing inside. On the top was scrawled, "Kunja Bihari Granthabali," meaning that from an early age he dreamed of being famous. We laughed.

At Mission Baptists High School, I stood first in the annual exam. Kunja Bhaina discovered that my grade was 100 marks higher than any other student's. He thought I needed better competition and advised me to transfer to P.M. Academy. He encouraged me to prepare for medical school, saying, "Are you not impressed with all the diseases and suffering surrounding us? Wouldn't you like to alleviate some of these?" He helped me financially and inspired me in letters. I graduated from Ravenshaw College, and

was in the first batch of students in SCB Medical College, created in 1944.

At age 23, he received a marriage proposal from Puri, arranged by the famous Pandit Nilakantha Dash. Kunja Bhaina accepted it without ever seeing his nine-year-old fiancée. The week-long wedding took place a few weeks later. He stayed in his in-laws' house and met his wife, Nisamani (my Bhauja), four days after the wedding. She hardly spoke and replied timidly once every fifteen questions from my brother. They met again four years later when she came to our house to live. I teased Bhauja by putting frogs in her blouse and throwing rotten mangoes at her, but she liked me because I made her laugh. Kunja Bhaina tutored in the coal town of Talcher until landing a job teaching Oriya literature in a private college in Berhampur. He began living with Bhauja in a rented house. When a servant stole all of her ornaments, he had a few new ones made for her from two of his gold medals.

Wanting to learn more, my brother returned to Calcutta and earned a master's degree in Sanskrit. Just before his exam, he heard of Ghana Bhaina's death from malaria, at 34. He was wiping tears while taking the exam. He took a government job as Inspector, and later as Superintendent of Sanskrit literature, for Orissa. Despite heavy travel, he translated the *Rig Veda* from Sanskrit into Oriya. In 1947 he was appointed to teach Oriya literature in a college in Balasore. He organized a convention of Oriya literature, visited Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and wrote about his travels. Communal disturbances followed the partition into Pakistan and newly independent India, but he did not suffer or go to jail like many others.

Finally, in 1950, my brother became Professor of Indology Post Graduate Research at Santiniketan, a university near Calcutta established by author Rabindranath Tagore. I visited Santiniketan and was impressed with its rows of trees, flowers, and plants. Its many buildings housed centers of studies of all Indian languages, and of Asian and European countries. Most of all, I was happy that my brother, after being kicked around like a football through various jobs, had found a wonderful place to stay. He had excellent teacher-student relationships. Santiniketan was for studies, but it was full of opportunities for music, arts, crafts, and dances of

various cultures. It was ideal for my brother. His horizon of knowledge broadened immensely due to his association with talented people from all over the world.

He achieved much during his eleven years at Santiniketan. He felt fortunate when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru handed him the certificate for his Ph.D. in Oriya. Kunja Bhaina was the prime mover in creating a separate Oriya department. He made his name as poet and author. His three sons thrived. He did not want to leave. So every year, when the Orissa government demanded his return, he made an excuse to stay. When politics compelled him to leave, he rejoined Ravenshaw College as a lecturer of Oriya.

My brother encouraged me to get the best medical training in the U.S.A., but he wanted me to serve my country. I had arranged to return to India but changed my mind after our mother died in 1956. I met my wife-to-be, Ira, in 1959 and wrote to my brother about her. He complained that she was not Oriya but was relieved that she was Indian. He felt much better after visiting Ira's parents. In the mid-1960's, he lobbied to represent India in a world cultural conference. After presenting a paper, "The Influence of Orissan Folklore on Oriya Society" at Indiana University, he stayed with us in St. Louis for three months. Kunja Bhaina had lots of fun with our three young children, trying to teach them Oriya. The children liked his sense of humor. They made fun of his voracious appetite for warm milk and fruits. We took a seventeen-day 5200-mile drive through the western U.S.A. He was enthusiastic about every new place. Each night he wrote about our experiences. Later when we saw his published travelogue of the U.S.A, Europe, and Africa, which enriched the Oriya literature, we felt that our trip was worthwhile.

When Kunja Bhaina returned to Ravenshaw College, he organized a movement to separate Oriya and Sanskrit into two departments. He was chosen to head the new Oriya department. He retired in 1979, built a house, Udayasree, and spent more time writing. After another trip to the U.S.A., with Bhauja in 1985, he published *America Revisited*. Sixty-eight books of his were published. The Central Literary Society of India named him Lokaratna (Jewel Among the People). Budding writers flocked to him. Every day, all day long in the front room of

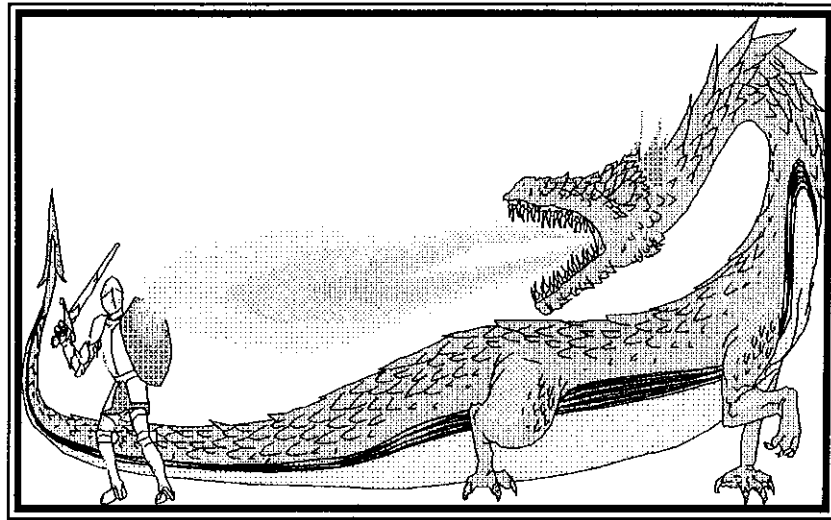
Udayasree, he received people from all walks of life. They wanted his blessings but also received tea and food from Bhauja.

He stayed very busy. When the villagers lamented that they lacked a good school, my brother suggested that we build a high school. I sponsored it on condition that it would be named after our father. I wrote a check for \$2000. The villagers, however, could not agree on a location and some of them objected to the name. Only after a storm destroyed an existing mud wall and thatch roof house, did the villagers agree on a site. My brother created a managing committee and even convinced the richest man of the village to donate land. They established the school Chintamani Bidya Pitha, in 1968.

Encouraged by that success, we embarked on building a hospital. In 1979, Ira went to the village to acquire three acres of land. However, she found that the land belonged to eighteen people who were not so anxious to part with it. My brother assured her that he would persuade them. After two years of politicking, pressure, and leg work, he was able to register the ground in the name of the hospital. Using his tremendous zeal and perseverance, he managed to erect a building worth the admiration of all passersby. We named the clinic Ghana Shyam Arogya Niketan, after our eldest brother. During our next visit, Kunja Bhaina went daily to invite doctors to see our clinic. He carried a bag to collect drug samples. As a result, on dedication day in 1983 we had eight doctors and a pile of medicines to tend to the patients' needs. We could not have accomplished the school or the hospital without my brother. It would have taken ten times more money, and no amount could have built them without his leadership. We recently decided to build a drug rehabilitation clinic in his name. I had asked him what could we build or name after him. He said that he would be remembered through his poems and books. He died in 1994, at the age of 80, missed by literary circles in Orissa, India, and many corners of the world.

Since I lost my father from an early age, my brother was like my father, guiding me all the way through school. Later, I considered him more like a brother and friend. Then he became like a philosopher and revered personality with a great sacrificing spirit. He would bribe nobody, in an age when bribery was the custom. He understood what poverty was and helped

innumerable people in their time of need. I had wanted to buy better furniture for his home. He said, "Don't you think your money will be better spent in building the village high school?" It is my privilege to have been born as his younger brother.



My Friend's *Balding* Problem

I have a friend whose name I will not take,
Fearing that our good terms will break.
A nice guy, whom I will call the "boss",
Is facing a problem of hair loss.

Taking his job too seriously
He finds losing hair regularly.
Over this, the more does he worry,
The mirror makes him feel more sorry.
Seeing the mirror makes him feel remorse
And his worries turn from bad to worse.
I hope someone could perform the miracle
Of getting the boss out of the vicious circle!

Siddhartha Panda



A Song of The Footsteps

The days are so long and warm
The glowing sunlight was piercing through the window
I heard the footsteps
Is it the same rhythm?
I have been listening for years
The little footsteps are bigger now
Still it has the same music
You came to say "good-bye" so quietly
Ripping at the depth of my heart
The wings of freedom soar high
Searching for the new horizon, in a maze of dreams
Someday you can turn and look
The most gentle protective love
Silent as a river bed and wait,
The current of love, a stream hidden always.

Sneha Mohanty

THE WOMAN FROM AUSCHWITZ A SHORT STORY, PART II

Prasanna K. Pati

Synopsis of Part I: During World War II, Sarah, a 16 year old Jewish girl from Hungary, was held in the Nazi Death Camp at Auschwitz, Poland. She lost both her parents and her brother and sister - all gassed and consigned to the crematorium. After Russian soldiers liberated the camp in May of 1945 she migrated to America and later became an occupational therapist. While working at the University of Arkansas Medical Center in Little Rock she met Dr. Sonjee, a doctor from India. Though from diverse backgrounds they developed a deep friendship and parted company in 1958.

Many years later, Dr. Sonjee began his own practice in Toledo, Ohio. Much to his surprise, one day he received a letter from Sarah then residing in Santa Cruz, California, with a bizarre proposal. She wanted him to accompany her to Auschwitz, where Sarah had experienced near death. Dr. Sonjee was confused about her decision to choose him since they had not had any contact for 27 years. After much thought he agreed to make the trip and they were to meet at JFK to take a flight to Krakow via Frankfurt, Germany.

We were to meet at the Lufthansa Airlines Flight 75 boarding area about two hours before the departure. I was there on time and looked around for Sarah. A number of passengers were already in the boarding area. I had a fear that I would not recognize her. I glanced around, casting furtive glances at all the women, and became convinced Sarah was not there. I had a momentary feeling that all this was a big hoax. I was getting nervous. Suddenly, as if from nowhere, a woman appeared and gave me a hug and a kiss on my lips. She held me tight. She didn't say anything. I had closed my eyes and found myself softly saying "Sarah, Sarah". Obviously both of us were oblivious to our surroundings for a few moments. Finally, she let me go and held my hands, then we sat down, and we made eye contact. I found her still extraordinarily beautiful despite the passage of twenty-seven years. She radiated warmth. She was calm in contrast to my inner agitation and confusion. I was speechless. She held my hands tightly, gently caressing them. For a moment, I thought she was behaving like a wife. I was aware of the old sexual feelings toward her that were rising like storms within me. Attempting to suppress my feelings, I asked Sarah about her flight from California. She probably sensed what was happening to me as she let go of my hand and we engaged in a routine

conversation. We talked about our mutual friends and our days in Little Rock as we waited to board our flight. We didn't discuss the bizarre trip we were about to take.

It was a smooth, long flight to Frankfurt and on to Krakow, Poland. During that time I was vaguely aware of an unpredictable, unknown situation and a sense of anxiety. Our conversations were similar to those we had had in Little Rock. As usual, she was verbal, animated, spontaneous and charming. By contrast I was stilted, at times evasive, and not so charming. I had always wondered why she was attracted to me. Though we did not talk about our mission, I knew something was going to happen.

It was evening when we arrived at the Krakow airport. Surprisingly, it was a very busy airport. Sarah observed the crowds and made the remark that perhaps Jewish survivors or sons and daughters of those who had perished at Auschwitz-Birkenau were making the same trips that we were. She had made a reservation at a small hotel for us at Oswiecim, a small town nearby. We checked into our rooms and had dinner. During dinner, Sarah made no mention of the mission. When we each retired to our rooms she simply stated that the next morning after breakfast we were to take the bus to Auschwitz. She said this in such a matter-of-fact way that it was almost unreal. I reflected on the fact that so many people had arrived here on cattle trains from Nazi-dominated Europe in the cruel illusion of coming to a rehabilitation camp. Only the Nazis could invent such an euphemism.

I had a restless night. What was I doing here in Poland? I thought I must have been insane to undertake this trip. My mind went back to a secure and predictable childhood in India. I got comfort from such memories. This Holocaust was beyond my comprehension.

It was a beautiful morning. I met Sarah in the dining room of the hotel. I asked her how she slept and her cheery response was "Fine." She asked, "How are you?" I told her that I had a restless night. She smiled. We had a good breakfast. I was rather stunned that Sarah was behaving like a tourist, no

real emotions, no complaints so far about the Nazis, no tears.

We took a bus along with a number of others on our way to Auschwitz-Birkenau. There was an almost eerie silence on the bus. Obviously, some had come from Israel, some from America and from other lands. Finally we arrived at the camp.

There were already a number of buses with hundreds of people of all ages entering the camp site. Sarah and I followed the crowd. We noticed that there was some kind of ceremony going on. We quickened our paces towards that area. We saw rabbis with richly embroidered prayer shawls walking along. I felt a little out of place in a Jewish ceremony in memory of those who were gassed, starved, clubbed, hung, shot and finally consigned to the crematorium.

The ceremony started. The Israeli cantor's prayer with unbridled anger recalled those whose ashes still lingered in the fields and ponds forty years after Soviet soldiers liberated Auschwitz. This ceremony was being conducted in the world's biggest graveyard. Sarah and I were holding hands. Her grip on my hand was tightening but she was in rapt attention to the speakers. Anyone could come and speak for a minute or two. A man in a wheelchair, obviously in his eighties, came up to speak. His voice was trembling, "I still have the same fear now as I had walking on these grounds forty years ago. I still see the faces of those who are not here. I still see the SS guards. Sometimes I imagine one of them coming towards me with a bayonet and I scream. I fight him back with bare hands. Over there, under that tree a young Jewish girl would regularly pass by me and hand over a piece of dry bread. She was working in the kitchen. On the other side of that building, Aaron, my friend, fought a Nazi guard with bare hands. He was shot repeatedly by two Nazis. Despite those bullet holes in his body he kept trying to stand up and go after one of them. Finally, he laid on the feet of a Nazi who kicked the dead body like a maniac until he himself collapsed. I thought to myself as long as there are Jews like Aaron, Judaism will survive." Sarah still showed no emotion but suddenly I felt a jerk on my hand and she started pulling me towards the platform. Obviously she was going to speak. I resisted going with her but she seemed to be so strong. For a moment, I thought I would simply pass out. She whispered a reassuring word into my ear,

"Come on. I will speak a few words and you can speak if you wish." I thought I was participating in a most bizarre phenomenon. Nevertheless, I went along, quite self-conscious but with full realization that Sarah had this in mind when she had invited me to come along with her.

We went up holding hands. She spoke very briefly. "Today I come here with no thoughts of Holocaust, of Nazism, of SS Guards, of gas chambers and crematory. I am here today to call on my parents, brother and sister from Heaven to listen to me." At that moment, Sarah stretched her hands towards the sky and said, "Mama, Papa, Moritz and Helene, do you hear me? I am here today at Auschwitz. Deep, deep in my heart there is a place where I talk with you every day. I do not talk to you about Auschwitz. I talk to you about our village in Hungary, our good days together, and as long as I am alive I will talk with you daily. You will live within me." At that point Sarah gave me a hug, threw a kiss towards the audience and introduced me. She said, "This is Dr. Sonjee, a Hindu friend of mine. The Hindus believe in re-incarnation and I asked him to say a few words." With that Sarah nudged me towards the microphone. I have never been a good speaker. What could I say in this strange and historic place where 1.5 million Jews were murdered? I took a deep breath. I was certainly not prepared for this. I looked up towards the heaven and said, "Oh, Jagannath, the God of all peoples of the world, didn't you hear the cries of millions of Jewish men, women and children as they were being murdered in Europe? Did you remain blind to their sufferings because they are non-Hindu? Haven't you claimed again and again that the entire Universe lies within you? Let my message to you reverberate within your great Temple at Puri and let there be, from now on, deep friendship and love between the Hindus and the Jews." With that I wiped my tears away and came away from the platform.

The ceremony continued for another hour or so. Sarah and I, along with many others, cried much of the time. At the end, Sarah looked for the man in the wheelchair, and I followed her. We found him surrounded by family and friends. Sarah found her way through them and stood in front of him. She bent down and gave him a kiss and hug and gently said, "Simon, I'm sorry I do not have your piece of bread today." There was a stunning silence for a moment. I have inadequate words to describe the

scene that followed. Sarah was literally mobbed by the crowd around the man. There were tears of joy. Someone started singing a Jewish folk song from Hungary and people started dancing around Sarah. I was lost in the crowd. I realized that I was witnessing a beautiful story of love in a place filled with so many memories of hate and death. This was happiness and love the Nazis could not eliminate.

We next visited the nearby museum where there were remnants and relics of Auschwitz, including human hair. Each item was a reminder of an event or a story of indescribable suffering. I became numb and I told Sarah that I could not take any more. I was surprised at her seeming composure. Many people greeted me and Sarah. One little girl about 10 years-old stopped us. She said, "I am Freida. I am from Tel Aviv. Over there are my parents. I would like to ask you something. My grandparents died at this camp. You said something you believe in re-incarnation. Does it mean that my grandparents have been reborn, and if so, where are they and how can I find them?" I knelt down and held her hands. I said, "We Hindus believe in re-incarnation. We believe that the body dies but the soul never does. It enters another body. About your grandparents, I do not know where they are. When you grow up I hope you can go to India and experience the faith and devotion of the Hindus. I know you feel there are many things that do not seem to make sense, but my faith shows me they ultimately do."

Sarah and I made the final trip to the gas chambers and the crematoria, stark witnesses to one of the most horrible examples of man's inhumanity to man. Only at this point Sarah sobbed just as she had in the park near Little Rock. I could not come up with any words to console her. I held Sarah to my chest and wept silently. Many people around us were also crying.

We returned to the hotel. Neither one of us was in a conversational mood. We had no desire to stay any more in Poland. The next day we took a flight out of Krakow and returned to New York. As we walked through JFK airport I was in a partial daze, but Sarah was recovering rather rapidly. I wondered how she could be so cheerful considering that she had just returned from the site where she had been near death for more than a year. She was quite chatty and began to console me. She kept talking about her childhood in Hungary. The memories and images were sharp

and not unlike mine from my small town in India. Finally we sat in a lounge to wait, as we had many hours before our respective flights, hers to California and mine to Chicago. Finally I thought I might ask her why she had asked me, of all the people she knew, to come with her to Auschwitz. She was for a moment taken aback at this question. Obviously, she was not expecting it. For a moment, she seemed agitated and then she started laughing. She was becoming quite loud. She caught the attention of others in the lounge. I was feeling embarrassed. She sat closer to me and gave me a gentle kiss and said, "Didn't you realize that I was in love with you in Little Rock? I am still in love with you. I know you are married now." Then she laughed and said, "Maybe in our next lives." I was stunned and confused. I had the urge to run away. I flashed back to our friendship in Little Rock. I knew the relationship was more than platonic but I never could make the next move. I kissed Sarah and said, "Sarah, we Hindus also believe in destiny. I guess it was not to be." We hugged each other as a final good-bye.

Her flight was being announced and I accompanied her to the boarding area, kissed her again, and said, "maybe in our next lives." She laughed and wiped away a tear and we parted.

It has been almost six years since my trip to Auschwitz. It was difficult for me to forget the experience and get into my routine, but time is a great healer and I found my life took on a new dimension after that. I was also able to look at the entire panorama of the history of the Jewish people from a different perspective. I realized that the ups and downs of the Jewish people parallels other cultures and groups, but the Holocaust surpassed all tragedies of human history. I saw that I too have ups and downs, but nothing I can't handle or learn from, and I saw how life goes on.

Sarah and I didn't contact each other for years but in the early part of 1991 I was surprised to receive a letter postmarked Puri. I had not been corresponding with anyone in Puri. I opened the letter and read, and re-read it.



Puri, Orissa, India
January 21, 1991

Dear Dr. Sonjee:

I am sure you are surprised to receive this letter from me. I am in Puri and have been here for almost two years. After our trip to Auschwitz my life changed. I was no longer interested in the material, mundane aspects of my life. I continued in my profession for awhile but all along I felt powerful urges to do something different. I studied your Hindu scriptures and the Bhagavad Gita. I became a regular attendant in discourses in Hindu philosophy as given by various Swamis visiting the area. Having no family of my own it was not that difficult to make the final decision. I became a Sannyasin and decided to move to Puri as a devotee of Jagannath. Here I have started a training center for women who have no home, and helping them toward self sufficiency has been very rewarding. I have learned to speak Oriya. I visit the Jagannath temple daily. Since I am of non-Hindu origin I am not allowed to enter the temple, but I pray from outside the Lion Gate. You remember the beautiful pillar from the Konark Temple in front of the gate? I stand near the pillar and pray to Jagannath. I am now at peace with my life.

The nightmare of Auschwitz is no longer with me. The work I am doing with these women is immensely gratifying. My training center has your father's name, Mrutyunjaya, meaning Conqueror of Death. Perhaps you do not remember your telling me about your father. The training center is very close to the Chaitanya Ashram. I would like you to visit me here on your next trip to Puri.

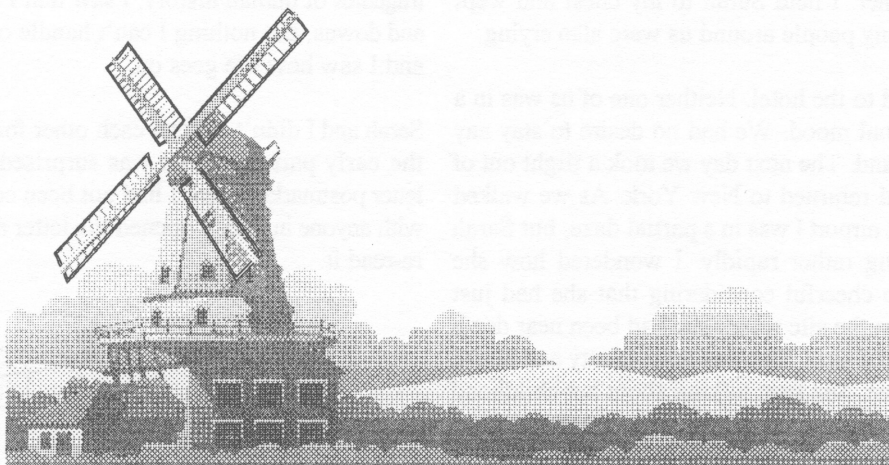
You may be wondering what it was that inspired me to be a devotee of Lord Jagannath and start this project in Puri. Well, it was your friendship. As I wrote you in my first letter in 1985 we are of very different backgrounds, I am a Jewish woman born in Hungary who had survived the Nazi Death Camp, and you are a Hindu from India. Do you remember the hours we were together? There was a chemistry between us. Was it love? I don't know. How could I fall in love with a superstitious Hindu, a devotee of Lord Jagannath. I have to admit now that I have been in love with you ever since our days at Little Rock. Even though it is the love of a woman for a man it transcends religions, backgrounds and countries. Yes my love for you is intense and will remain so. Perhaps in our next lives we will be together.

Love,
Sarah



That evening I went to my favorite park near Lake Erie in Toledo. It was getting dark and very cold. The park was quiet and silent. I happened to be the only person under this huge tree. I let myself go. I outstretched my hands towards the sky and looked east towards India and yelled at the top of my voice,

"Sarah, Sarah, you have shown the world that the suffering you and your people endured can be transformed into great love and beautiful service. Bless you, Sarah, you have defeated the Nazis again!" With that I threw a kiss towards her in a distant land.





"A real theatre of the sex war is the domestic hearth."

Germaine Greer

THE STATUS OF WOMEN

***"In practical life, the woman is judged by a man's law,
as if she were a man, not a woman."***

Henrick Ibsen

SPECTRE OF DOWRY DEATHS IN ORISSA

Ranu Misra

The system of dowry is an age old practice which is prevalent throughout India in varying degrees. It cannot be ascertained when and how the dowry system evolved. But *Manu*, the great law giver, while describing different forms of marriage, mentions the giving of dowry by the bride's father in *Brahmin* and *Devavrites* and vice-versa, i.e., acceptance of gifts by the bride's father in *Asha* and *Asura* rites. *Manu* disapproved of the acceptance of any price by the father of the bride to give his daughter in marriage but did not disapprove of the presents given by the father of the bride.

Though *Manu*, in effect, approved of giving dowry, in his time it was taken to be a part of the ritual. However, over the ages, the system has developed into a complex social phenomenon in which political, economic, socio-cultural and religious factors merge together. On an economic plane dowry represents the terms of exchange between two families who negotiate marriage between their son and daughter. It is essentially a buying-selling process in which either the bride or the groom is bought.

The definition of dowry in the Indian Dowry Prohibition Act itself recognizes that this is an exchange of property. It defines dowry as any property or valuable Security given or agreed to be given directly or indirectly.

- i) By one party to a marriage to the other party to the marriage, or
- ii) by the parents of either party to a marriage or by any other person to either party to the marriage or to any other person at or before or after the marriage as consideration for the marriage of the said parties.

This definition does not include any present made at the time of a marriage to either party to the marriage in the form of cash or kind.

Though the dowry system has prevailed over the ages, torture including murder of the brides who do not bring enough dowry is a development of the twentieth century. Contemporary developments like large scale unemployment, dilution of social norms

and ethics and a laxity in the enforcement of law aggravates the problem in multiple ways. In Orissa the problem has assumed menacing proportions in the last few years as is reflected in the number of incidents of dowry related deaths, i.e., death of bride through suicide and murder of brides for not bringing enough dowry. The figures for the years 1982 to 1994 underscore the increasing magnitude of this problem.

DOWRY DEATHS FROM 1983 TO 1994 IN ORISSA			
YEAR	HOMICIDE	SUICIDE	TOTAL
1983	01	02	03
1984	12	09	21
1985	17	16	23
1986	21	31	52
1987	17	46	63
1988	29	47	76
1989	46	46	92
1990	72	49	121
1991	98	71	169
1992	155	49	204
1993	187	45	232
1994	265	43	308

There has been more than a hundred-fold increase in these incidents in a little over a decade. The percentage of homicides as compared to suicides is progressively increasing. In 1983, homicide accounted for 33% of the incidents, whereas in 1994 it accounted for 86% of the incidents. This is reflective of the increasing aggressiveness and animal instinct on part of the grooms' families.

A district-wise analysis of dowry related deaths shows that in the more culturally and educationally advanced districts like Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, and Ganjam the problem of dowry is more acute and the incidents of dowry-death are more. On the other hand, in the less advanced districts like Koraput, Kalahandi and Phulbani, the number of dowry deaths are much less. The main reason for this appears to be that in the more advanced districts money and wealth have become a measure of success. The less advanced districts have a greater percentage of tribals in their population. Among tribals, bride-price prevails which has given women an elevated status.

Gender discrimination is not acute in these districts because of the prevalent culture. However, recent trends suggest that even in these districts the dowry problem is increasing, though at a lesser pace in the more advanced districts.

A rural-urban break down of dowry deaths shows that about 67% of the total deaths are in rural areas and 33% in urban areas. This, however, is not surprising since, in Orissa as elsewhere in India, about $\frac{2}{3}$ (67%) of the population live in the rural areas.

The age profile of dowry victims is quite revealing. The highest concentration of dowry deaths is found among women aged 19 to 25 years. The percentage of deaths in this age group is about 89%. Thereafter, as the age advances, dowry deaths sharply decline. The law recognizes this aspect of the problem by stipulating that any death of a bride within seven years of marriage will be presumed to be dowry related death unless otherwise proved.

Caste is an important sociological factor for analyzing the problem of dowry deaths. Figures indicate that over 70% of the dowry victims are from general caste, i.e., members who dominate society in all its spheres. Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes contribute to about 29% of the incidents. Population-wise, however, the general castes constitute only about 30% of the population. Thus, the fact that 30% of the population accounts for 70% of the incidents of dowry death speaks for itself. Among the general castes, the highest percentage of incidents is among the *Khandayats* followed by the *Brahmins* and *Karanas*.

Family structure is an important element influencing dowry deaths. Decision about marriage alliances take place at this level. Figures indicate that almost 90% of the incidents of dowry death occur in joint families and only about 10% in nuclear families. This is perhaps because the society is in a transitional period where the joint family system is breaking up and is under stress. Lack of employment opportunities, exposure to modernity, cramped living conditions, divergent views on family affairs, etc., have their negative effects on the members of joint families. Since newly wedded women are the weakest members, they become the victims of family discord.

The agents who are primarily or collusively responsible for dowry deaths are in-laws followed by husbands. In certain cases, the in-laws and husbands collude to perpetrate the crime. It is assessed that, in about 32% of the cases, the in-laws perpetrate the crime on their own while, in another 25% of the cases, they perpetrate the crime in collusion with the husband of the bride. In about 13% of the cases, the husbands perpetrate the crime while, in the remaining 30% of the cases, the identity of the perpetrators of the crime is difficult to establish. The modes of murder of the victim are generally burning, poisoning, and beating to death. Interestingly, the State Commission for Women has received a few cases where women have complained about the murder of their husbands by their in-laws. In all such cases, the husband fiercely protested against the torture of his wife for more dowry by his parents and other kith and kin.

The amount of dowry demanded or given is significantly quite modest in the majority of dowry related death cases. It is assessed that the amount involved is mostly under Rs.50,000. In a number of instances, brides have been killed because they could not bring items like a color television, a two-wheeler or even a fan.

There are stringent laws in India to prevent the menace of dowry and to tackle the problems of dowry related deaths. The main laws are the Dowry Prevention Act (1961) and Section 498(A) of the Indian Penal Code. Unfortunately, it is greatly felt that police take a lukewarm attitude toward dowry deaths. In some cases, they collude with the culprits to suppress facts and stall proceedings. In a sense, the police exhibit gender bias against women. The judicial process is also too laborious and long and the victims' families rarely get justice. The conviction rate is very low.

Eradication of the evil of dowry may be impossible to achieve. However, one must aim to contain and control the evil. The starting point has to be the younger generations who are at marriageable age. The evil effect of dowry has to be drilled into their minds through proper propaganda and education. As Gandhiji said, "Any young man who makes dowries a condition for marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonors womanhood." The law of the land has to be enforced strictly. It is a startling

fact that though the Dowry Prohibition Act was enacted in 1961, not a single case had been registered in the whole of the country till the end of 1978, i.e., for 17 years. The attitude of police and judiciary should be made to change through training. Girls and women should be given basic legal education about their rights. For faster settlement of cases, a time limit should be fixed for each case. Right to property of women should be implemented with proper provisions so that transfer of property to women becomes easy. Registration of marriage, together with lists of gifts, should be made compulsory. The voluntary and non-government organizations should come forward to prevent dowry torture and take up the cause of women. Social ostracization of family

members who torture their daughters-in-law should be encouraged. Economic emancipation of women should be achieved so that women do not feel helpless when tortured by the in-laws. The print media, TV, and radio should be more extensively used to tackle the problem of dowry menace. The entire populations of the State, particularly the intelligentsia, are yet to awaken to this burning problem.

Acknowledgments:

Data taken from:

- 1) Home Department : Govt. of Orissa
- 2) Women's Studies Research Center : Berhampur University, Berhampur, Orissa.



WOMEN AND INDIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Deepa Parija

For an adequate description and assessment of their social status, women of India cannot be treated as a homogeneous group. In a highly complex and diversified society as ours, the inequalities inherent in our traditional social structure based on caste, community, and class have a very significant influence on the status of women. Socially accepted rights and expected roles of women vary among different groups and regions. Thus, women belonging to different strata and groups require separate consideration.

Indian society consists of communities professing diverse religious faiths. Religion provides the ideological and moral base for the accorded status and institutionalized roles of women in a society. A comparison of the fundamental notions regarding women in the major religious traditions reveals a direct conflict between them and the idea of equality of sexes.

Hinduism describes a woman by a multitude of derogatory attributes and is grouped with the shudra to be called 'Papayoni' that is of sinful birth. A woman is always supposed to be under control according to Manu. This dictum of Manu along with Tulsidas' well known stanza in which he groups women with drums, morons, shudras and cattle as objects fit to be beaten have influenced the attitude of the Hindu masses towards women.

In their relationship with the divine, men and women stand on an equal footing in Islam but the Muslim Shariat law places women in a disadvantageous position. The practice of 'Talaq' or unilateral divorce and seclusion or veiling of women have been most detrimental to the status of Muslim women. The latter has kept women backward in respect of education, health, prevented their participation in economic and social fields and has been a hurdle in the way of realizing their property rights.

In Christianity, the myth of creation which says that Eve was created after Adam to act as his companion and helpmate accords a second place to woman. But a Christian woman's participation in congregational prayers, absence of purdah, no rigid insistence on

segregation of sexes, monogamy, emphasis on husband-wife relationship (absence of patriarchy) put her in a relatively better position.

Modes of descent has implications for the status of women. India has only a limited number of matrilineal communities which are concentrated in the south-west and north-east regions of the country. Matriliney is associated with such ecosystems in which women are not really dependent on men. Within these societies, the degree of freedom of movement is related to the contribution of the women to the economy. The north-east women stand in a better position compared to the Nayers in the south who do not contribute to the economy.

The majority of the Indian population follows the patrilineal system of descent which has direct relevance to the place of women in society. A boy is perpetuator of the patri line. He is looked upon as the supporter of his parents in old age. By contrast a girl is considered to be another's property, a guest in her parents' house. A daughter's loyalties are believed to change at marriage. The fact that daughters have to be educated as well as married off puts a double burden on parents. The transferability of the girl from the parents' house to the husband's house seriously affects a daughter's jural rights. There is no tradition of daughter's having a right of inheritance except among the Muslims.

However, it is not the question of patriliney by itself but its association with joint property, a joint family household and certain rules of marriage which lead to greater constraints over women.

The status of women also varies according to the different caste groups and the types of families they belong to. In extended joint families characteristic of rural high status castes, a woman's status is influenced by her husband's social position. Thus, her own efforts may not be able to raise her status. These women are symbols of family status and the notion of high status is associated with immurement of women. Among middle-class agriculturists and artisans, the absence of a large scale joint family and the economic contributions of both husband and wife

towards household maintenance accords a better status to the women of the family. But it is the women of the lowest category who seem to be more respectful to their husbands. Thus women of upper caste families enjoy low status and vice versa. But in the case of upward social mobility due to economic prosperity and 'Sanskritisation' (an attempt of lower caste to rise high in the social ladder by emulating the lifestyle and patterns of the upper castes), there is restriction rather than emancipation of women of lower castes because they are withdrawn from work - high status being inconsistent with extra marital activities. This attitude is seen among the Christian and Muslim converts also. In contrast, nuclear families which characterize the urban areas allow greater scope for a woman in management and policy decisions.

The notion that the honor of men rests in their women and it can be violated by their conduct is an extremely common one in India. This along with the concern with patriliney in a patrilineal system lead to a direct control of men over the sexual and marital norms relating to women. Thus marriage is not an affair of the boy and the girl who are getting married but an alliance between two groups.

The simplest form of this alliance is sister exchange, where a woman is directly exchanged for another woman. Found among the lower castes and semi hinduised tribes, this kind of marriage allows greater movement for women. Divorce is easier and widow remarriage is permitted. This exchange marriage also provides a built in check against harassment by the woman's-in-laws. If a man does not treat his wife well, then he can expect his sister to be ill treated in return. This also ensures that there is no status difference between wife givers and wife takers that is typically found among high castes.

Among high castes like Rajputs, the marriage rules are hypergamous i.e. a woman from a lower section could marry a boy from the upper section but not vice-versa. Factors inducing the woman's family to enter into such an alliance are status and political patronage. The boy's family is interested in the political support of the affinal group and money in the form of dowry. Here the women are used as pawns in the whole system of status building.

Unlike the Rajputs, who are more concerned with the

ideas of honor and shame, the Brahmins have a strong notion of purity and pollution. Here the women are used for protecting the ritual purity of the group. This makes it necessary to guard the sexuality of women but not of men. Thus, pre-puberty marriage is practiced to transfer the problem of sexuality to the spouses. There is ban on widow-remarriage and divorce.

There are two major types of transfer of material wealth which accompany marriage - bride price, which travels in the opposite direction of the bride, and dowry which travels along with the bride. The custom of bride price exists among the lower rungs of the social hierarchy where the idea of compensation for the loss of a productive worker is implicit. But in the course of upward social mobility, there is a tendency of immurement of these women. With this, the notion of daughter becomes that of a liability rather than an asset. To enhance the girl's value, she is accompanied by dowry. Thus a process of status elevation of a family or caste involves devaluation of the status of women. Dowry also encourages the belief that regards women's work in the home as non-productive.

A prominent feature of Indian social structure is the acceptance of a sharp distinction between men's and women's spheres. Women are primarily associated with the home and man with the outside world. Manual work in one's own house is done by women as they are considered derogatory for men. Participation in decision making for the community and the exercise of political power is regarded as man's sphere.

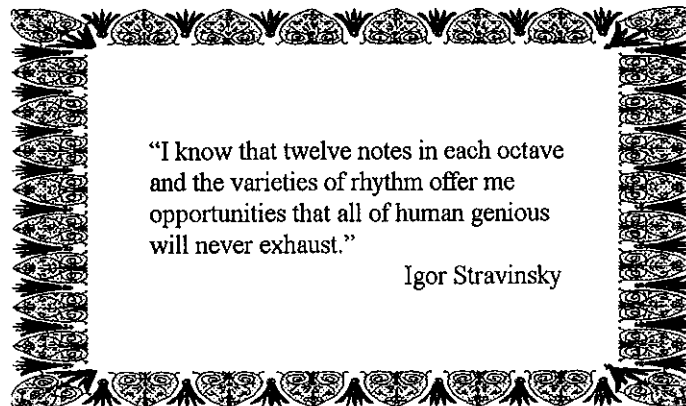
In the rural sphere there is a clear division of labor governing agricultural activities. Men's tasks aren't necessarily more arduous. But what is more important is that men do work which is considered more prestigious. In the middle class, the spheres of men and women are more clearly defined. Ideas of personal and family prestige are strong at this level; people take pride in the fact that their women don't go out to work for others. Among the high classes also spheres of women are well defined.

High status rural women offer a sharp contrast to urban educated women who also hail from high castes. Now the career woman in India is very much visible. This is because of migration to urban areas

and education. Education with all its inadequacies has opened up an arena in which women can compete freely with men and prove themselves. But it's on the overt level that the attitude towards women has undergone significant modifications. On the covert level, the alteration in the basic attitude structure doesn't keep pace with more explicit changes. Position of women with respect to men still remains inferior and subordinate. The persistence of traditional norms in regard to women's essentially domestic chores and the addition of new work roles in the wider society has created problems of

adjustment and has added to the burdens.

Thus social structure while stimulating certain trends of change can at the same time prove to be an impediment in their path. Changes in the normative structure and in the organizational forms of society don't take place in unison. Religion, family and kinship, roles and cultural norms continue to delimit the spheres of women's activities obstructing their full and equal participation in the life of society and the achievement of their full potential.





HEALTH FORUM

"Health is not valued till sickness comes."

Proverb

DIABETES FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Devi P. Misra, M.D., FACP

Fourteen million people in the US (5-6% of population) have diabetes, but only seven million have been diagnosed. Diabetes is the third leading cause of death by disease in the US.

Diabetes is the leading cause of end-stage renal disease, blindness, non-traumatic amputation and impotence. Heart disease and stroke are two to six times more common in diabetics. The total cost of diabetic care is \$30 billion a year in the US.

Diabetic complications can be greatly reduced in severity, if not prevented, when diabetics control their blood glucose, blood pressure and weight, reduce lipid abnormalities, exercise regularly, and stop smoking.

What happens when you eat?

- ▶ Food breaks down into sugar, the body's main fuel.
- ▶ Sugar enters the bloodstream and blood sugar level rises.
- ▶ With blood sugar rise, the pancreas secretes insulin.
- ▶ Insulin drives sugar into cells, blood sugar falls.
- ▶ The body cells use sugar for fuel.

In Diabetics:

The above scheme does not work. Sugar builds up in the bloodstream instead of going into cells and spills over into urine.

Insulin is in short supply or does not do its job due to resistance to insulin -- more likely to happen during stress-like sickness or injury.

There are two types of diabetes.

TYPE I (Insulin Dependent Diabetes):

The body makes little or no insulin. Sugar cannot enter cells to be used for energy, hence blood sugar remains high. Type I affects less than 10% of diabetics, mostly young people (ages 14 to 30) but

also may occur in older adults. Type I diabetics need insulin to live.

Symptoms:

- ▶ Increased thirst
- ▶ Increased hunger
- ▶ Increased passing of urine
- ▶ Sudden weight loss
- ▶ Feeling very tired

Omission of insulin may lead to life-threatening diabetic ketoacidosis (diabetic coma). Family history of diabetes is always present in Type I diabetics. Occasionally it is triggered by a viral infection.

TYPE II Diabetes (Non-Insulin Dependent):

90% of diabetics are in this group and are over 40 years of age. The body may make insulin but not enough or can't use the insulin it makes. Type II diabetics develop insulin resistance.

The risk factors are obesity (75%), strong family history, diabetes during pregnancy, mothers with overweight babies, stress of an illness or an injury. Type II diabetics may have associated high blood pressure. There is very little likelihood of developing coma (or ketoacidosis).

Symptoms:

- ▶ Feeling tired
- ▶ Dry itchy skin
- ▶ Frequent infections
- ▶ Blurred vision
- ▶ Sexual dysfunction
- ▶ Increased hunger or thirst
- ▶ Numbness or tingling of hands and feet
- ▶ Frequent passing of urine
- ▶ Slow healing cuts or sores.

COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES:

Both Type I and II diabetics encounter tissue damaging complications.

a) Microvascular (small blood vessels):

Basically involves three organ systems: eyes (visual disturbances), kidney (kidney dysfunction and failure), neurological (pain, burning, and loss of sensations)

b) Macrovascular (larger blood vessels):

High blood sugar levels along with other risk factors like smoking, high blood pressure and abnormal blood lipid (fat) levels contribute to hardening or narrowing of arteries resulting in reduced blood flow to tissues causing angina, heart attacks, strokes, and amputations.

OBJECTIVES IN TREATING DIABETES:

- a) Normalizing blood sugar
- b) Normalizing blood pressure
- c) Normalizing blood lipids
 - Cholesterol < 200 mg
 - Triglycerides < 150 mg

d) To prevent complications

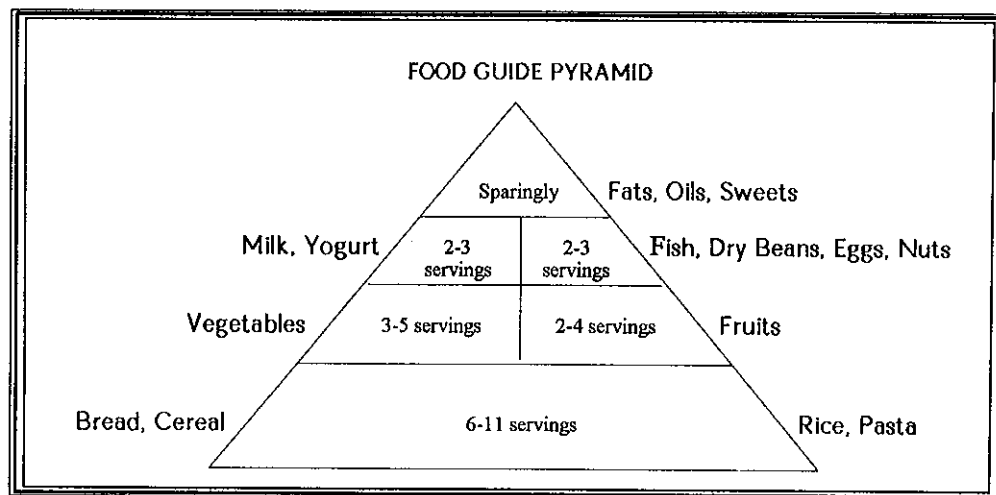
WHAT IS NORMAL BLOOD SUGAR?

In non-diabetics normal blood sugar is between 70-115 mg. In diabetics blood sugar before meals should be 80-120 mg/dl, one needs to be cautious if below 80 mg/dl or above 140 mg/dl and blood sugar at bedtime or after meals should be 100-140 mg/dl taking care if it is above 160 mg/dl.

WHAT IS HbA_{1c} ?

This is a glycosylated form of hemoglobin (the oxygen carrying molecule of blood) that reflects the average blood glucose concentration over a three month period.

In older people low blood glucose may lead to strokes or heart attacks.



TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR DIABETES:

Five major treatment modalities for diabetes are:

1. Education
2. Meal Planning
3. Exercise
4. Medicines
5. Diabetes tests

Institution of medicines (whether insulin or oral antidiabetic agents) and diabetic tests are better left to the discretion of the physicians. We will discuss the scope of meal planning and exercise in context of controlling one's diabetic status.

1. Eat a variety of foods.

Include foods high in nutrition, minerals, vitamins. Adhere to the serving guidelines, shown in the above

pyramid, for breads, rice, cereal and pasta group, fruit group and milk group. Even though these are the high carbohydrate group they give good nutrition.

2. Maintain a healthy weight.
3. Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol.
 - ▶ Avoid foods high in fat.
 - ▶ Choose low fat protein foods like lean meat.
 - ▶ Use a nonstick cooking spray instead of butter, oil.
 - ▶ Limit high fat add-ons like butter, margarine, oil.
 - ▶ Eat less fried food. Try baking, broiling, steaming.
 - ▶ Choose 1% low fat and skim dairy products.
 - ▶ Eat higher fat cuts of red meat no more than three times a week.
 - ▶ Season food with low fat flavorings.
4. Choose a diet with vegetables, fruits and grain products.

Choosing high carbohydrate plant foods (breads, rice, cereal, pasta, fruits and vegetables) increases intake of vitamins, minerals as well as fiber. Fiber lowers blood fat, promotes bowel function, slows absorption of sugar after a meal.

5. Use sugar in moderation.
6. Use salt in moderation.
7. What about alcohol ?

Alcohol use should be refrained.

MEAL PLANNING IN TYPE I DIABETICS:

One has to match the amount of insulin you take to the amount of food you need. Eating the same

amount of food every day makes it easier to keep insulin and food working together.

MEAL PLANNING IN TYPE II DIABETICS:

75% of type II diabetics are overweight. Extra body fat reduces the body's ability to make and use its own insulin. Losing extra body fat is the most powerful treatment. Losing 14 or more pounds may bring blood sugar to normal -- needing thereby less medicines.

In type I or type II diabetics one should not delay or skip meals.

EXERCISE IN DIABETICS:

Benefits

- ▶ Lowers blood sugar levels.
- ▶ Lowers basal and postprandial (after eating) insulin levels.
- ▶ Improves insulin sensitivity Lowers HbA_{1c} levels.
- ▶ Improves lipid profile.
 - a. Decreases triglycerides.
 - b. Decreases low density lipoprotein cholesterol.
 - c. Increases HDL cholesterol.
- ▶ Improves mild to moderate blood pressure elevation.
- ▶ Increases energy expenditure.
 - a. Adjunct to diet for weight reduction.
 - b. Increases fat loss.
 - c. Preserves less body mass.
- ▶ Cardiovascular conditioning.
- ▶ Increased strength and flexibility.
- ▶ Improved sense of well being and quality of life.

CHOOSING THE ACTIVITY THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU:

One has to decide which activity to choose at one's

current level of activity. Exercise regularly. Please check your blood sugar before and after exercise. Please take advice of your doctor before you embark on strenuous exercises.

CALORIES BURNED DURING COMMON ACTIVITIES

Activity	Cal/Min	Cal/Hr
Walking (3mph), golf, pulling cart, cycling (6 mph), bowling, cycling (8 mph), volleyball, tennis doubles, golf (carrying clubs)	4-5	240 - 300
Walking (4 mph), Ice or roller skating, cycling (10 mph)	5-6	300 - 360
Walking (5 mph), cycling (11 mph), water skiing, tennis singles	6-7	360 - 420
Running (5-1/2 mph), aerobics, cycling (13 mph)	7-8	420 - 480
Running (6 mph)	10-11	600 - 660
Jogging (5 mph), cycling (12 mph), downhill skiing	11 or more	660 or more
	8-10	480 - 600

Walking is the most convenient form of exercise.

EXERCISE GOALS:

Three times a week, 20-30 minutes each time.

Achieve target heart rate each time. Subtracting age from 220 gives you the safest heart rate. One may work towards 50% - 75% of safest heart rate .

The above discussion gives you basic concepts regarding diabetes and also preventive measures aiming towards adequate control. As to whether one's diabetes can be controlled by diet alone or requires institution of oral anti-diabetic agents or insulin one needs to seek advice of a physician.



HIV/AIDS - A NEW HEALTH PROBLEM IN ORISSA

Binod Mahanty

In the summer of 1995, I was working on a study of childhood diarrhea at the S.C.B. Medical College in Cuttack. At the same time, news about the increasing HIV-infections in India caught my attention. The number of HIV infected persons in India was estimated to be 1,750,000 people in 1995, an increase of 150,000 newly infected people in only 2 years since 1993, and numbers were expected to increase to five million by the year 2000. This trend seemed alarming and raised my interest to investigate the extent of the HIV/AIDS problem in Orissa. I contacted several sources in the state including Major Ball of the Center for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) in Bhubaneswar. CYSD is an NGO (non-government organization) that is involved in raising AIDS awareness among youth in the state. I also spoke to a government official in the Ministry of Health in Bhubaneswar, who was initially very reluctant to give me any facts or numbers. The information I finally collected from several sides supported my impression that HIV/AIDS had started to become a public health issue in Orissa, and that there was a definite need to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS in the community. Ignorance and misconceptions about the disease, its spread and its prevention were highly prevalent.

How is HIV spread and what are the modes of transmission in Orissa? To give you some background information: the main risk factors for infection with HIV are unprotected sexual intercourse, contact with contaminated blood supplies used in blood transfusions, and intravenous drug use. There are simple measures to prevent infection, such as screening of blood supplies, the use of disposable needles and syringes in hospitals, and the use of condoms. HIV is not contracted by casual contact like shaking hands, hugging or sharing the toilet. In Orissa, HIV/AIDS is spread by migrant workers who return to their villages from metropolitan cities (Bombay, Calcutta, Madras) and by truck drivers who pass through the state and infect roadside prostitutes. Also, an important mode of infection is through HIV-contaminated blood from private blood banks whose blood supplies are not routinely screened. The virus, originally introduced

into rural areas and villages along the two major highways, is working its way into the interior of Orissa. Assuming there is a rate of 2 HIV-infected persons per 1000 population, as is the case for India as a whole, one can expect around 60,000 HIV-infected persons in Orissa (which has a population of 31 million). The official number released by the Orissa government was 96 HIV cases in 1995 (Ministry of Health, 1995); the actual number may be somewhere in between 96 and 60,000.

The three most urgent tasks in containing the spread of the infection at this point are the following. First, screening the blood supplies in Orissa, especially from private blood banks, and maintaining clean blood supplies for use in hospitals. Second, training doctors and health care workers on AIDS to improve recognition of AIDS cases in order to decrease misdiagnoses and improve detection. Third, starting public education campaigns to raise awareness among the population and initiating a comprehensive AIDS awareness and education campaign in schools and colleges. This final task is the focus of most NGOs that work on HIV/AIDS in Orissa.

What can we do? The purpose of this article is to inform and mobilize the Oriya community. As experience from western countries has taught, HIV/AIDS information and education are crucial factors in a successful AIDS prevention campaign. In Orissa, where resources are limited and where family planning, immunization and sanitation are still the most pressing health concerns for the government, we need to encourage as much private, non-governmental initiative as possible in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Because few local NGOs have taken on this task, we, as informed Oriyas, have an obligation to support these organizations by raising awareness among our own families and friends in Orissa. All we need to do is to talk to our immediate family members, cousins, and neighbors back home about sources and modes of infection, and about how to prevent infection. These people can share this information with their own friends and social circles. In this way, we will help to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS in Orissa which may help save many lives

down the road. I hope that this article has raised your consciousness about HIV/AIDS in Orissa and motivated you to contribute a tiny bit to the fight against this killer disease which has raised havoc all over the world.

If you are interested in more information or want to discuss these issues, please contact the author: Binod Mahanty at Yale School of Epidemiology and Public Health.

E-mail: mahantbk@biomed.med.yale.edu.





Figures in dance depicted in sculpture dating back to Second Century Before Christ are found in Orissa, located on the Eastern shores of India. Having an ancient genesis, Odissi dance has, in course of time's refinement, evolved into the most lyrical and graceful of the dances of India, combining both Nritya (pure abstract dance without thematic limits) and Nritya (representational dance with facial expressions and hand gestures, epitomising a theme.)



Surama Panda, a major exponent of Odissi dance, emerges with exquisite charm and stage-presence, as if a temple figurine comes to life and moves with supreme lyrical grace. Having the unique privilege of tutelage from three legendary *gurus* of the three schools of Odissi dance (Pankaj Charan Das, Kelu Charan Mohapatra and Debaprasad Das) has absorbed the best from the three and evolved a distinct creative style of her own.



The artist's quest is a continuum: aspiring for attainment of the Infinite, Universal and Divine Being, through the finite symbols. Paradoxically, the dancer tries to reach the perfect stillness through variegated movements.

In Surama the body, the mind and the soul dance in unison.

SURAMA PANDA
85-50 115th Street
Richmond Hill, NY 11418
U.S.A.
Telephone 0718-8053381



LEETA SARANGI A TIME TO REMEMBER

Surendra N. Ray

On June 23, 1985, 14-year old Leeta Sarangi boarded Air India Flight 182 from Toronto to Bombay. From Bombay, she had planned to continue her journey to Orissa. The young Oriya had planned to spend her summer there, as she had done in summers past, studying Odissi dance under the tutelage of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. The tenth grader had been a pupil of the world-reknowned performer and teacher since the tender age of six and her annual trips to Orissa had become routine... until the summer of 1985.

Leeta's talent was inspiring and her charm and enthusiasm for life were contagious. Her performances at the annual OSA conventions encouraged other children to pursue their interests in the performing arts. I still remember the group dance Leeta performed with two other girls at the 1984 convention. The choreography was innovative and very different from the traditional Odissi performances I was accustomed to. In the dark, the three figures gracefully glided across the stage, guided by the light from the candles they held in their hands. As my eyes followed the candle-lit figures, I

sensed an aura of magic and mystique pervading through the auditorium. Unfortunately, that dance was to be Leeta's final performance at an OSA convention.

My wife and I had known Leeta for several years. Her parents, Rajendra and Meena, were close friends of ours and their family used to visit us occasionally. In fact, the Sarangi family had planned to visit with us in the summer of '85 following Leeta's return from Orissa. However, our feelings of eager anticipation quickly transformed themselves into feelings of shock upon hearing the tragic news...

Air India Flight 182 never reached its destination. The explosion of a terrorist bomb forced the plane down off the coast of Ireland, killing all 329 people on board. In that tragedy, the Oriya community of North America lost one of its most promising and talented young performers. To remember and honor Leeta's contributions to the organization, the Executive Council of OSA has established an award in her name. Details will be announced at the 1996 Annual OSA Convention.



SRI SHASHI BHUSAN NAYAK

Bijoy Misra

Sri Shashi Bhusan Nayak passed away on April 14, 1996, after a brief battle with lung cancer. He was admitted to the hospital in February when he discovered respiratory problems, but could not recover from the illness since the cancer was not curable. His death was sudden. Sri Nayak was a renowned *tabla* player, popular as a performer and as a teacher.

Shashi was born in 1941 in the village Srichandanpur, near Nimapara in Puri district in Orissa. His father was late Sri Shyama Charan Nayak. His mother died when he was less than a year old and was raised by Srimati Lakshmi Nayak, whom his father remarried. He was the oldest of four brothers and four sisters.

Shashi was raised in Jamshedpur, Bihar, where his father worked. Music attracted his interest at an early age and he began his training under the direction of his uncle Pandit Anand Chandra Chaudhury who ran a Music School at Jamshedpur. He loved playing the *pakhawaj* and developed his skills at playing this traditional instrument that accompanies *Odissi* dance and music. At age 17, he left home in search of more musical training and spent time in *pakhawaj* training with the renowned Guru Thirakwa. This time he learned of Pandit Santa Prasad of Benares and decided to be a disciple to him to learn *tabla*.

While in training, he excelled in *Hindi* and performed with famous musicians, including Gopa Mishra, Bhajan Lal, and Bhimsen Joshi. After completing his training, Shashi moved to Delhi and joined the Music Faculty of Delhi University. He traveled to Switzerland in 1973 on a promotional tour sponsored by Air India and left a strong impression on European musical enthusiasts. He accompanied Bhaskar Bose and Satish Babbar in several concerts in Europe. In Switzerland, he met his future wife, Barbara, and decided to move to the United States with her. They were married in July, 1976, at the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center in Boston.

To popularize Indian music in the West, he founded the Academy of Indian Music. His school became a popular meeting place for Indian music lovers. Besides having a pressing performance schedule in the United States and Europe, he gained a reputation for being a diligent teacher. With the help of his students and members of the community, he organized many performances by visiting Indian musicians and vocalists. Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Smt Lakshmi Shankar, Sri L. Subramaniam, Ustad Zakir Hussain were among those who visited and offered master classes on behalf of the Academy.

Shashi's concerts with the famous sarod player Sri Vasant Rai were very popular. The Boston musical scene became extremely energized to the beat of his "Indian drums." As a teacher, he traveled to various parts of the US and Europe to create innovative music. The Boston musical scene became extremely energized with the influence of "Indian drums." In addition, he renovated houses in Boston to provide residences for himself and his students.

Shashi's attitude towards life changed in 1984 after he fell victim to an assault and robbery near his home. That incident was followed by another blow, the death of Sri Rai. Shashi became very introspective about both his career and his personal life. Being without children all his life, he also longed for a progeny. He was blessed with a son Christopher in 1989, with whom he spent most his later years. In 1993, they shared a memorable visit to India.

Shashi revered his village and his family. He visited them almost every year and supported them in every possible way. He helped build a school and a clinic in his village and longed to spend his final years there. He loved Bhagavata and Oriya music. The day before he passed away, he and I read the *Bhagavata* and did Jagannatha pujas together. I will remember him dearly both as a musician and as a friend.



BASUNDHARA

Ranu Mahanti

I had heard about *Basundhara* before but never got a chance to visit *Basundhara* and did not know exactly what was the purpose of this organization. Most of our friends or relatives also did not know about *Basundhara*. Last summer when I was in Orissa, I got an opportunity to visit *Basundhara* in Bidanasi, Cuttack, with my husband, Professor Subhendra Dev Mahanti, and Dr. Devi Prasad Misra of Huntsville, Alabama. I was very excited just to know that there has been such an organization in Orissa for the last ten years (1985-1995).

One a December afternoon in 1985, an unwed mother with her four-year old baby did not have anywhere to go and knocked desperately for help at the doors of the two sisters - Drs. Mahamaya and Jogamaya Patnaik. She handed over the child to their safe hands and left. They named the baby *Basundhara* and thus *Basundhara* was born as a volunteer organization.

Since that time, *Basundhara* has admitted many abandoned and destitute children, and given many children for adoption inside and outside of India. *Basundhara* has expanded its horizon in different areas. It has opened six slum schools in different parts of Cuttack with its own resources. It provides a short stay home facility to orphaned and abandoned children, destitute women, unwed mothers, divorcess, helplessly aged or the chronically ill patients. It also provides a vocational training program to destitute women to make them financially self sufficient.

I have developed a great admiration for the two sisters and all those sincere, hard working, and enthusiastic members of *Basundhara* who have dedicated their time, life and passion for *Basundhara*.

You may ask why some of us are so interested in supporting this particular organization. To my knowledge this organization is already well established. Its work is visible. Its goals are broad. *Basundhara* has concentrated on different problems of the society which is often neglected and within ten years has reached many significant goals. The organizers are very willing to provide us the opportunity to go and help *Basundhara* in different

ways and also have asked us to visit *Basundhara* to see what they are doing. Some of our children may like to go and work there for their course requirements or just for experience. We have to make a beginning from somewhere -- even in a small way. We cannot just tell them that India (Orissa) has so many problems. It is futile to do anything there. I do feel that we can help the organization with a little financial assistance and support. In the future, with our varied individual interests, each of us can help *Basundhara* in different ways.

My personal experience in collecting resources for this cause is very encouraging. I am extremely thankful to our friends for putting their trust in me and Dr. Misra. There are a few of our children who eagerly supported the cause which touched my heart. With your generous support, *Basundhara* has now 23 sponsor families (just by giving \$12.00 per year for one child) and we have been able to provide money to buy nursery equipment. With all your help, Dr. Devi Misra and myself were able to collect \$7,5100.00 for *Basundhara*. Last March, Professor Subhendra Dev Mahanti went to *Basundhara* to give the money collected from here and was overwhelmed by their appreciation, hospitality and the work they are doing.

I do understand, many of you are involved in similar types of commitments and it is always annoying when people ask for money for a different purpose. We cannot help it. Money is important and we have to knock at your door for support again and again. We will accept your response gracefully. To achieve our goals we need people and every person, whatever contribution he or she makes is responsible for its success. We have to put together all our strengths to make this world a better and caring place. Also, we must set examples for our children that we do not just come to this country for more money, or a bigger house, or career satisfaction, or for our children's future, but we also have other goals in our lives which are beyond the normal and routine responsibilities.

On behalf of *Basundhara*, Dr. Misra and I sincerely thank you all for your support, trust, and kindness.

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| <p>* Video tapes, documents, and other papers are available on <i>Basundhara</i>. Please contact me at (517)337-9570 if you are interested.</p> <p>* For sending clothes (saris, blouses, children's clothes, bed sheets, etc.) please contact:</p> <p>Mrs. Mrudula Rao, Executive Director
International Families, Inc.
N.W., Washington D.C, 50005
Tel# (202)667-5779 (work)</p> | <p>* If you are visiting Orissa, please visit <i>Basundhara</i> or contact the president at the given address and phone numbers:</p> <p>Dr, Mahamaya Pattnayak, President
Basundhara Nagar
Bidanasi, Cuttack 753008, Orissa
Tel # 011-91-671-600178
011-91-671-34079</p> |
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ପ୍ରାଣିକ ଆତତ ଦୁଃଖ ଅପ୍ରମିତ ଦେଖୁ ଦେଖୁ କେତା ସବୁ
ମୋ' ଜୀବନ ପଛେ ନକେ ପଡ଼ିଆଉ, ଜଗତ ଉଦ୍ଧାର ଦେଉ ।
ଭୀମା ଭୋଇ

*Praaninka aarata duhkha apramita dekhu dekhu kebaa sahu
Mo' Jibana pachhe narke padi thaau jagata uddhaara heu /*

Bhima Bhoi

**Boundless is the anguish and misery of the living;
Who can see it and tolerate;
Let my soul be condemned to hell;
Let the universe be redeemed.**

Translation by Sitakant Mahapatra

କାମଦଂ କୀଳଶୈଳସ୍ତଂ କରୁଣା ଚରୁଣାଳୟମ୍ ।
ଶରଣଂ ସର୍ବସତ୍ତ୍ୱାନାଂ ଶାଶ୍ୱତଂ ପାମକାମୟେ ॥



କୀଳାଚଳ କିତାସାୟ କିତାୟ ପରମାମୃଦେ ।
ସୁଭଦ୍ରା ଚଳଭଦ୍ର ସହିତାୟ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥାୟ ନମଃ ॥

ଭାଗବତ, ପୁଷ୍ପଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ, ଉଦ୍ଭୀ, ପ୍ରିୟଦର୍ଶୀ ଏବଂ ଶ୍ୱେତପଦ୍ମା ସାହୁ
ଆଥେନ୍ସ, ଆଲାବାମା

JAGANNATH SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Bhagabat C. Sahu

The JSA was formed *to promote and sustain Jagannath Philosophy* in the western hemisphere and we are actively pursuing those goals and objectives. We have been partially successful to spread Jagannath Philosophy to other communities beyond the people of Orissa. Lord Jagannath wishing, we will install Him in all major cities of USA. It is our dream to have a temple of our own in the pattern of Nilachala Puri somewhere in the continental USA. Efforts are already under way for the same. 'Dream came true' four years ago when we were able to install Lord Jagannath at Nashville and this dream of having an exclusive Jagannath temple will be materialized. We

the people from the great land of Lord Jagannath and devotees of Lord Jagannath beyond the confines of Orissa can achieve this dream with His "Chakadola" and of course our efforts. A link has been established between Jagannath Research Center in Orissa and JSA. Down the road hopefully, we should be able to finance a research scholar to do research on Jagannath philosophy and expand our knowledge on the same. We have planned to open a page on World Wide Web to promote the Jagannath Philosophy through the Internet. With His grace and our faith and Shraddha on Him, we can achieve these goals in no time.

Jagannatha Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhabaturney

The Jagannath Society of America,

Nashville, Tennessee,

invites you to attend the auspicious

CAR FESTIVAL

(Rath Yatra)

on July 20th, 1996 (Saturday)

and

RETURN CAR FESTIVAL

(Bahuda Yatra)

on July 28th, 1996 (Sunday)

*na devo vidyete kaste na pashaane na mrunmaye
debohi vidyete bhabe tasmad bhabohi karanam*

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF ANANDA FUND IN ORISSA

ANNUAL REPORT BY SURYA KANTA DAS AND SAMSON MOHARANA, BHUBANESWAR, INDIA

Abstracted by Lalu Mansinha

Dr. Ralph Victor, his wife Polly and their young daughter Joyce lived for several years in the village of Barpalli, near Sambalpur in a village development project in the mid-fifties. On their return to the United States they established the Ananda Fund. The primary aim of the fund has been to help needy school children in Orissa through scholarships, grants for school uniforms, and textbooks. Due to poverty many of the students and teachers had not travelled much, and knew of Orissa and India only through books. The Ananda Fund awards fund for group travel for teachers and students to see Orissa, and for a few teachers to see India.

During their stay in Barpalli Ralph and Polly Victor became close friends of my parents. It was their wish to honor the memory of my father through an annual essay contest and now an annual memorial lecture.

1996 is the 35th year of operation for the Ananda Fund. From the beginning the fund has been managed by Prof. Surya Kanta Das. The responsibility of the administration of the fund has now passed onto Prof. Samson Moharana. In the United States the fund is handled by the Fresno Free College Foundation.

The following account has been abstracted from the 1994-1995 Annual Report of the Ananda Fund.

A BREAKDOWN OF THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE REGION SERVED BY ANANDA FUND

Landless agricultural labourer	18%
Nominal farmers with small land holdings	40%
Venders of eatables and sellers of small items in villages	12%
Fishermen, craftsmen, carpenters, handloom weavers and other artisans	10%
Cooks, village priests etc.	8%

The Ananda Fund has continued to support the poor and meritorious high school students of Orissa in the form of monthly scholarships and text book and school uniform grants. Many poor, tribal orphan students have been able to complete their high school education because of Ananda Fund. Many have gone

on to college and are now successful in their life. The financial assistance from this fund has definitely brought good cheers, new hopes and a new meaning in the lives of many poor students."

Scholarships: One of the main functions of the Ananda Fund is to provide monthly scholarship in the range of Rs.20-25 per month to the poor high school students, on the basis of the recommendations of the Head Master of the school. During the past year monthly scholarship were awarded to 206 students (142 boys and 64 girls) of 14 high schools in Orissa. These students come mostly from the poor, tribal and economically weaker sections of the society. The parental background of the students speaks of their poverty.

Text Book and Uniform Grant: Besides monthly scholarship, Ananda Fund provides textbooks and uniform grants. As the prices of most of the text books have gone up significantly during the last few years, this grant comes as a great help to the poor students who cannot afford to purchase books. For the book grant, preference is given to those students who do not receive the monthly scholarship. For the school uniform grant, priority is given to girl students.

School Visit: During the current year, a visit was made to Balugaon High School and Godavarish Vidyapitha, the two schools which are located very close to Chilika Lake. Ananda Fund is assisting 31 boys and girls in these two schools. Most of the students come from fishermen family. Their fathers take rented boats in the morning to the lake and come back in the evening with the catch. These people are mostly illiterate and are not very enthusiastic about the schooling of their children. Because of the Ananda Fund, and also because of the care given by the school teachers, the children from the fishermen family are able to continue in school.

Survey of Past Beneficiaries of Ananda Fund: During this year we made an attempt to find out what the past beneficiaries of Ananda Fund are doing.

Four schools, associated with the Ananda Fund for a long time, provided the most complete data. The schools are Balugaon High School (BHS), Godavarish Vidyapitha (GVP), Brundaban Vidyapitha (BVP) and Remunda High School (RHS). Data from other schools were incomplete.

	RHS	BVP	BHS	GVP
Govt. Service	13	3	17	17
School Teachers	27	3	22	23
College Teachers	13	5	6	7
Doctors	4	2	2	3
Engineers	4	9	3	2
Bank, postal, railway service	4	3	12	14
Business, Company,	13	2	3	3
Military	2	5	5	4
Others	2	3	2	9
Total	82	35	73	82

It is clear that the Ananda Fund has played a crucial role in making many poor families economically stable and independant.

Examination Results: In the Annual High School Certificate Examination held in April 1995, 67 Ananda Fund scholarship holders, including 17 girls, had appeared. Out of them 62 (47 boys and 15 girls) passed, with 22 in First Class (21 boys and 1 girl), 25 in second class (19 boys and 6 girls), and 15 in third class (8 boys and 7 girls). The results of Ananda Fund scholarship holders has been quite satisfactory. However, we continue to request the concerned teachers to give some extra care to the poor boys and girls.

Study Tour: During the month of December 1994, 10 teachers and 48 high school students from 10 schools went to places of importance in Orissa, namely Rourkela, Vedavyas, Rajgangpur, Hirakud and Burla.

Accounts: The accounts of the Ananda Fund during the period November 1, 1994 to October 31, 1995 is given below:

206 Scholarships	\$50,800
Text book and uniform grants	\$45,291
Special grants	\$8,910
School visit travel expenses	\$510
Study tour	\$15,696

Although the exact number of students receiving the Book and Uniform grants are not given, we can estimate it around 200. The entire budget for helping about 400 students is Rs124,000/year (US\$3550), about US\$10 per student per year. This must be one of the highest benefit/cost ratios for any charitable organisation in the world. Imagine steering an individual's life for the annual cost of two Big Mac meals!

If you would like to participate in or contribute to the Ananda Fund please contact:

In India :

Prof. Surya Kanta Das, Prof S. Moharana
A-175 Sahid Nagar
Bhubaneswar, Orissa India 751007

In Canada :

Lalu Mansinha
131 Ambleside Drive
London, Canada N6G 4P8
Voice: 519-433-0854
fax: 519-661-3837
email: lal@uwo.ca

In United States :

Ananda Fund of the Fresno Free College Foundation
PO Box 4364
Fresno CA 93744
fax: 209-233-5776
email: kfef@aol.com

A letter to the President, OSA

ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ. (Orissa Society of the Americas)ର
ମାନନୀୟ ସଭାପତି ମହୋଦୟ ଶ୍ରୀମତେ

ପ୍ରିୟ ମହାଶୟ ,

ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ସମ୍ମାନ ସ୍ବରୂପ କରିବେ । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ
ବହୁଶ୍ରୀ ଭାବେ ଅପରିଚିତ ଏବଂ ଅବିଚିତ ଏକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପାଖରୁ ମୋର ଏ ପତ୍ର ପାଇ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ
ଭାବରେ ଆପଣ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେବେ । ମୋର ଏକମାତ୍ର ପରିଚୟ ହେଉଛି ଏହିସେ ଶ୍ରୀମାନ
ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନ ହେଉଛି ମୋର ଅନ୍ୟତମ ଅନୁତ ଏବଂ ତାରି ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଏ ପତ୍ର ଆପଣଙ୍କ
ପାଖକୁ ପଠାଇବା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରୟାସୀ ହେଉଛି ।

ଆମ ପରିବାରର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଏହା ଏକ ପୌରାଣ୍ୟର
ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ହୁଏ (ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନର ତାଙ୍କ ନାମ) ବର୍ଷରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଥରେ ବୁଲିଥାଉ ସୁଦ୍ଧା
ଆମେରିକାରୁ ଏଠାକୁ ଆସି ଘେରାଏ ହୁଏଥାଉଛି । ତାର ଏଠାକୁ ଏପରି ଆସିବା
ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ଥରେ ତା ଆଗରେ ବ୍ୟାଜୁଙ୍କରେ ବହିଥିଲିସେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଉନ୍ନତି କହେ
ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ର ଡିରିକ୍ଟ ବାର୍ଷିକୀଟି ବାସ୍ତବିକ ଅତୀତ ପ୍ରଶଂସନୀୟ । ହେଲେ, ଯେତିଏ
ଅପ୍ରାୟ ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେତେବେଳେ ମୁଁ ବୁଲୁଆଗରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ବହିଥିଲିସେ
ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ର ଯେଉଁ ବର୍ଷିକ ଅଧିବେଶନମାନ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହେଉଛି ତାର ବାର୍ଷିକ
ପରିଚାଳନା ସବୁ ନହୋଇପାରିଲେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ପେଣ୍ଡିଂମ୍ୟରୁ ବହୁଳାଂଶ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ
କରା ହେଉଥିଲେ ଭାରି ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ବହୁତଃ ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ର ରୌପ୍ୟ ହୁକୁମି
ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହେବା ଅବସରରେ ଆମ ବେଶର ତଦାନାନୁସ୍ଥ ସୁଚନା ଓ ପ୍ରସାରଣ
ମହତ୍ବାଳୟ ବହିର୍ଭାଗରେ ଥିବା ମହା ଶ୍ରୀ ବାମନା ପ୍ରସାଦ ଟିକ୍ଟବେଡ଼ ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରବଳ
ଭାଷଣ ଇଂରାଜି ଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଭାବରେ ମତେ ଚିହ୍ନିଏ ଅରୁଚିବର
ବୋଧହେଲା । ଅଥଚ ଟିକ୍ଟବେଡ଼ଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ୟତମ ସ୍ବତନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀ ବାସ୍ତବ ଚରଣ ଲେଖାଙ୍କର
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରବଳ ଭାଷଣ ମତେ ବେଶ୍ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା । ବୁଲି ମାନ୍ୟବର ଅତିଥିଙ୍କର
ପ୍ରବଳ ଭାଷଣରେ ପାରସ୍ପରିକ ନୁହେଁ, ବେବଳ ଭାଷାର ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ନେଇ ମୋର ଏ
ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ରୁଚି, ଅରୁଚି ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ହେଉଛି, ଅନୁଭବି ନୁହେଁ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଏ ସବୁ ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ
ବିଚାର ସୁଯୋଗ ଆମକୁ ମିଳିଲା ବେବଳ ଶ୍ରୀ ଟିକ୍ଟବେଡ଼ଙ୍କର ପୌରାଣ୍ୟତା ହେତୁ ,
ଏଭିପାଇଁ ସେ ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ବାର୍ଷିକୀମାନଙ୍କର ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ଭାବେ ଏଠାରେ ବୁଲିବର୍ତ୍ତନ
ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରସାରଣ କରାହୋଇଥିଲା ।

ମୋର ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟକୁ ମୁଁ (ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନ) ଶୁଭିକ୍ଷା ପରେ
ପଞ୍ଚେଷଦରେ ଏତିକି ବୁଝିଥିଲା ଯେ ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ର ଯେଉଁ ବର୍ଷିକ ଅଧିବେଶନ ସବୁ ହେଉଛି
ତାହା ଯଦି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ପରିଚାଳନା କରାଯାଏ ତାହାହେଲେ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ପକ୍ଷ ତାହା
ପଞ୍ଚେଷଦ କରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ଏପରିକି , ବିଶେଷତଃ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ପ୍ରତିର ପେମାନେ ପ୍ରାୟ
କିଛି ବୁଝିପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ ।

ମୁଁ ସେଥର ଆମେରିକା ଯେଉଁଠି ଯାଇ ପରେ , ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ର ଶୈଳ୍ୟ
ମୁହଁ ଅବସରରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ସ୍ବାଗତ ପତ୍ରିକା (Souvenir)ର ଏକ କିତା ନବର ମୋ
ପାଖକୁ ପଠାଇ ମତେ ବିଶେଷ ଭାବେ ଉପହୃତ କରିଥିଲା । ତାହା ପାଠକରି ମୁଁ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ
ଆନନ୍ଦିତ ହେଉଥିଲି ଯେ ସେଥିରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ , ଗଳ୍ପ , କବିତା , ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ବାହାଣୀ
ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଆମେରିକା ଯୁଗ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବାସିନ୍ଦା , ବିଶେଷତଃ ସହ ଲୁକ୍ଷ , ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣା , ଛାତ୍ର ଓ
ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ବାରା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଲିଖିତ । ମୁଁ ଉତ୍ତୁଧିତ କରିଥିବା ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ପଞ୍ଚେଷଦରେ
ଏହା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଭାବରେ ଏକ ଶୁଭ ପଞ୍ଚେଷଦ ଓ ଗର୍ବର ବିଷୟ ।

ଯାହାହେଉ , ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଯଦି ଆଦୌ ଗ୍ରହଣୀୟ ଓ ବିଚାରଯୋଗ୍ୟ
ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି ଆପଣ ମନେକରନ୍ତି , ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଦିନକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧଯେ ଅବିଚଳେ ତାହାର
ପରିସମାପ୍ତି ଏହିଠାରେ ସତାଇ ମୋର ଏ ପତ୍ରଟିକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିଦେବେ । ପରନ୍ତୁ, ଯଦି ମୋର ମନୁଷ୍ୟ
ଚିନ୍ତିତ ପରିମାଣରେ ବିଚାରଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବୋଲି ଆପଣ ମନେକରନ୍ତି ତାହା ମୋ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଏକ ପରମ
ପୌରାଣିକ ବାସନା ହେବ । ଏବଂ ତାହା ହେଲେ ନିମ୍ନ ଲିଖିତ କେତେକ ସୂଚନା ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ର
ବର୍ଣ୍ଣବର୍ଣ୍ଣମାନେ ବିଚାରକୁ ନେବାପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଅଛି ।

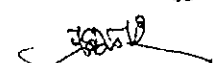
- (କ) ଆମେରିକା ଓ ବାନାଟାୟିତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିବାରରେ ପରସ୍ପର ମଧ୍ୟରେ
ତଥା ଅନ୍ୟତ୍ର ପରସ୍ପର ସାକ୍ଷାତ ସମୟରେ ବ୍ୟବହାରଧନ ଅଧିକରୁ ଅଧିକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ
ଭାଷାରେ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠିତ ହେବା ।
- (ଖ) ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ରୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଛାନରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାପିତ ଶାଖା , ପ୍ରଶାଖା ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଏକ
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାସିକ ପତ୍ରିକା ପ୍ରଚଳନ କରାଯାଇ ଉଚ୍ଚବେଗରେ ତଥା ଉପାଦେୟ
ଲେଖିପାଇଁ ପଞ୍ଚେଷଦ ଲେଖକ ଓ ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କୁ , ବିଶେଷତଃ ଶୁଭ
ଚିନ୍ତିତ ବାଲକ , ବାଲିକା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ପୁରସ୍କାର ପ୍ରଦାନ କରି ଉତ୍ସାହିତ କରିବା ।
- (ଗ) ସେହିପରି ଉକ୍ତ ଶାଖା , ପ୍ରଶାଖାମାନଙ୍କରେ ଛୋଟ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ
ଭାଷା ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବାପାଇଁ କିଛି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିବା, ଓ ପ୍ରତି ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବରେ ନହୋଇ
ପାରିଲେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ମାସକୁ ଥରେ ଅବା ଦୁଇଥର ଲିଖିତ ହୋଇ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମସ୍ୟା
ଉପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ତଥା ଚିନ୍ତାପତ୍ରିକା ଓ ସୁଦ୍ଧା
ପ୍ରତି ମାସକୁ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ବହୁତା ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା , ଗଳ୍ପ ବ୍ୟୟନ ,
ପଞ୍ଜୀତ ରାମ , ଅଭିନୟ କରିବା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ନିମ୍ନିତ ଭାବରେ ଆୟୋଜନ କରି
ପୁରସ୍କାର ପ୍ରଦାନର ସୁବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିବା ।

- (କ) ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ. ର ବର୍ଷିକ ଅଧିବେଶନ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହେଲାବେଳେ ତାହାର ବାର୍ଷିକ ପରିଚାଳନା, ଯେତିକି ସମ୍ଭବ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ ହେବା ।
- (ଖ) ଯେହୁପରି ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ. ଦ୍ଵାରା ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ସ୍ଵାଗତୀ ପତ୍ରିକା (Souvenir) ରେ ଅଧିକରୁ ଅଧିକ ପଞ୍ଜ୍ୟାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଉପାଦେୟ ତଥା ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନ କରାଇ ଲେଖା ପଠାଇବାପାଇଁ ସବୁ ପଦ୍ୟ-ପଦ୍ୟାମାନଙ୍କୁ, ବିଶେଷତଃ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଯୁବ ପିଢ଼ର , ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଓ ଉତ୍ସାହିତ କରିବା ।

ମୋର ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଦିନିକ ଭାବରେ ଏହାହିଁ ନିବେଦନ ଯେ ଯୁଗଯୁଗ ପାଇଁ ବିଦେଶରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ ବଢ଼ାଉ ଓ ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛୁଦ୍ଧ କରି ଶକ୍ତିବା ଆପଣ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରେୟ ଓ ଉନ୍ନୟ ହେଉ । ମୋର ଛାତିବାରେ ବହୁବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ପମୟ କ୍ରମେ କଟିପୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଯୁବକ ଜାତିବା ନିର୍ମାତା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ହେଉ ଅଥବା ଅଧ୍ୟୟନ କରିବାପାଇଁ ହେଉ ନିଜ ନିଜର ବିଦ୍ୟା ବୁଦ୍ଧି ବଳରେ ପାରବର୍ଷିତା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ତଥା ଏ ଦେଶର ଭିତ୍ତମାଟି ଛାଡ଼ି ଓ ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର ତେର ନଈ ପାର ହୋଇ ବହିଁ ସୁଦୂର ଆମେରିକା (ଓ କାନାଡା) ଯାତ୍ରାକରି ସେଠାରେ ବସବାସ କଲା ପରେ ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ. ନାମକ ଏକ ଅତି ମହାନ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ଗଠନ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ହଜୁରୀର ବଢ଼ିଥିବା ଉତ୍ତମ ମହତ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନଟି ଅତି କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ତରୁ ତରୁ ପରି ପ୍ରତିଯୁଗାନ ହେଲେହେଁ ଆଜି ତାହା ଉତ୍ତର ଆମେରିକା ପରି ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଦେଶର କୋଣେ କୋଣେ ନିଜର ଶାଖା, ପ୍ରଶାଖାମାନ ମେଲାଇ ଏକ ଅତି ବିଶାଳତାକୁ ବଚସ୍ତରେ ପରିଣତ ହେଇଛି । ତାହା ବେଳକ ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ର ପଦ୍ୟ-ପଦ୍ୟା ମାନଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ତଥା ବିଦେଶରେ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ନାହିଁ ନାହିଁ ନାହିଁ ପକ୍ଷରେ ନୁହେଁ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଏକ ଅତି ଶକ୍ତି ଓ ଗୌରବର ଦିଶୁଛି । ଏବଂ ମୋର ମନେ ହୁଏ ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ. ହଜୁରୀର କଲାବେଳେ ତାହାର ଗଠନର ପଶ୍ଚାତରେ ମୌଳିକ ଓ ପ୍ରଧାନ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଏହାହିଁ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଧୂଳାସେ ଆମେରିକାରେ ବସବାସ କରୁଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ-ଭାଷୀ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ପତାକା ତଳେ ଓ ଗୋଟିଏ ମନ୍ତ୍ର ଉପରେ ଏକତ୍ର କରି ପରସ୍ପର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପୌର୍ଣ୍ଣାୟମତା, ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧିତ, ଓ ସର୍ବଭାବକୁ ଗଭୀର ଭାବରୁ କରି ଶକ୍ତି ଅଧିକରୁ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରତିଭୂତ କରିବା । ମୋର ସର୍ବସ୍ଵଭାବେ ଏହାହିଁ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ଯେ ଯେଉଁ ମହତ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ନେଇ ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ. ଗଠନ କରାହୋଇଥିଲା ତାହା ବେତେବେଳେ ହେଲେ ଧୂଳିପାତ ହେବାକୁ ଆପଣ୍ୟାନେ ହୁଏତା ଓ ସୁଧୋର ଦେବେନାହିଁ । କାରଣ ସମସ୍ତ କ୍ରମେ ଓ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ର ପଦ୍ୟ ପଦ୍ୟା ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଲୁପ୍ତ ପ୍ରାୟ ହୋଇଗଲେ ଉପୋରସ୍ତ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧିତ ନିଷ୍ପତି ଭାବରେ ବାଧାପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହେବ । ମୋର ଏ ବାର୍ଷିକ ପତ୍ର ଶେଷ କରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମୁଁ ଏତିକି କହିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ଯେ ମୁଁ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟବା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ ଯଦି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ମନରେ ତିଳେ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ଶୋଭର ସଂଚାର କରେ ତାହା ସୁ ମହନୀୟତାରେ ଆପଣ ମତେ ଜଣା ଦେବେ ।

ଆଉଧରେ ମୋର ପଞ୍ଚାନ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ହସାଇ , ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ନିକଟରୁ ବିଦାୟ ନେଉଛି ।

ରବିନେଶ୍ଵର,
ତା. ୧୭.୫.୯୬,

ଆପଣଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ଵସ୍ତ

(ପ୍ରଭୁ କୁମାର ଦାସ)

THE STATE OF SEEDS – A REPORT

Priyadarsan Patra

Genesis of the Sustainable and Economic Development Society (SEEDS) lies at the door of the compassionate, responsible pangs of conscience that many of you share. Yet, SEEDS, while appreciating the import of benevolent charity, rather emphasizes the need and desire for a catalytic, reasoned involvement in sustainable and equitable development of the people. While what sparked many of the SEEDS members/supporters might have been the cries of the dispossessed in Kalahandi-Bolangir, the real issue at stake is the basic human rights and decency of obtaining a few square meals, basic sanitation and the right to not remain illiterate. What better way than to think globally and act locally by lending a sustained helping hand to some of these most unprivileged from our own towns and villages we have left behind?

Thus, the mission of SEEDS is to give expression to our often muted urge to help the less fortunate among us to educate and sensitize ourselves to the problems of inequity, and to possibly harness that most potent energy of all -- the activism of the younger generation to devote a part of their active life to face the socio-economic maladies gravely eroding the human fabric. To this end, we adopt and try to closely work with appropriate "development" projects in Orissa. In the following, I will briefly describe the projects, financial status and our present needs.

Well, how far have we come? Over the last 30 months, we have cajoled and excited scores of people, eclectic in age and interest, to chip in, share and chat about the non-proselytizing philosophy of

SEEDS. We periodically publish a newsletter Ankur on SEEDS activities and news on development, etc. We also engage in dialogues with many people and groups around the world who find our philosophy and work interesting. However, perhaps the most tangible part of our activism is the few projects we undertake in Orissa.

The Lanjigarh Project run by Vanabasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA): This project involves establishment of one-teacher schools in 10 tribal panchayats in Lanjigarh area of Kalahandi district. (Please see the previous reports for details on the purpose and content of the project.) Our commitment was for 15 such schools and for an experiment with fruit sapling nursery. However, VKA which is part of a national organization, Akhila Bharatiya Vanabasi Kalyan Ashram, has a laudable goal of expanding it to over 25 schools in Lanjigarh this year. Dr. Umakant Choudhury and this author had visited several Lanjigarh project villages for two days in December, 1994 and Dr. Dhanada Mishra had toured the area as late as September, 1995. The progress and content of the schools seemed very satisfactory to these visitors among us. The tribal villagers seemed thrilled about the project despite the fact that they don't receive any direct monetary benefit and that they have to send their children to the schools who would otherwise have perhaps helped them with many chores. The last report from VKA notes regular functioning of 20 such schools and their audit report as of last year shows a total expenditure of Rs. 70,275 on this project since the start. We present data on first four of the 20 one-teacher schools, as provided by VKA, in Table 1.

Village	Gram Panchayat	No. Of Students	Name of Teacher
Melghutu	Biswanathpur	34	Pabitra Bibhar
Sulin	Biswanathpur	40	Mahendra Harpal
Matkera	Lanji	45	Kanhu Ch. Sahoo
Kuburi	Bandhpari	30	Butuka Majhi

Quoting from Dhanada's October, 1995 report to us: "Before visiting Lanjigarh I met Bharat Agrawal and

almost all other members of VKA (Vanabasi Kalyan Ashram) on separate occasions. I have been also

receiving copies of their correspondence including the last years audited accounts and so on. Also I attended parts of VKA's all Orissa Adivasi Khel-kud competition held recently in Bhubaneswar. It was a big event with over 300 participants from all the Adivasi districts of Orissa brought to Bhubaneswar for three days to participate in traditional sporting events as well as non-traditional Vanabasi games. Some of these promising sports persons will be sent to participate in the All India event in Rajasthan later this year. Limbaram, one of India's ace Olympian archer was a find of one such effort in the past of VKA's Khel kendra program to spot talent among Vanabasis.

Mr. Kamalesh Kumar arranged my one day trip. I arrived at Bhawanipatna in the morning of 29th and met Kamalesh. We then proceeded to Biswanathpur by bus. VKA now has rented a small house at Biswanathpur as their headquarters for our project. I met many of the 28 teachers that are now working in our schools. The office has some maps and charts showing the details of our project and its progress. Afterwards Kamalesh arranged for bikes and we visited two schools. Our attempt to visit a third school was unsuccessful as our bike got a flat tire on the way. The two schools I visited highly impressed me. The first one was on the way to Lanjigarh and operates on the premises of a village temple. The children (30 odd) were very enthusiastic and the neatly maintained attendance register showed good attendance. The teachers have been supplied with some wall charts to teach alphabets and other basic things. The class has already learnt a lot of songs and games. Most of them have been given slates and books, and the rest have their own. The village committee was very thankful for our work and promised all help in the future."

On the other hand, we also noticed that VKA lays a certain emphasis on "protection of Adivasi religion," and education on basic sanitation, living in harmony, resistance to exploitation, self-help, etc. are imparted by "bhajans, kirtans, etc." which may be construed by some as controversial. However, our colleague Mr. Somdutt Behura received an assuring critique during his meeting last month with Mr. Chittaranjan Das, an engineer and development worker at Bhubaneswar, whose wife highlighted the efficacy of VKA's method of imparting education and bringing tribal people to the mainstream through kirtans and other religious

methods.

Unfortunately, we have not yet received detailed interim progress report this year, possibly on account of VKA's recent change of address: VKA headquarters have moved from Sundergarh town to Vanabasi Kalyan Ashram, C/o Legal Forms & Books; 9, Udyan Market Complex; Udit Nagar, Rourkela 769012; FAX (courtesy of one Sri Rishi Arjya): (0661) 2973. As per policy, we are deferring our next installment payment to the Lanjigarh project waiting to receive the latest progress report which VKA has now indicated to send by May.

Our New Projects

We have received short proposals from several NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) such as *Darabar Sahitya Sansad* of Khurda district; Life Improvement Members Association of Nowrangpur; Institute of Rural Welfare & Research Center at Kosagumuda, Nowrangpur; RISE of Rourkela, and Sarvodaya Kanya Ashram of Nawapara, etc. We first evaluate simply based on the contents of the proposals, and then for the promising ones we look for extensive information on the NGO, their past record, and present proposal. Whenever possible we obtain a report of site-visit by a SEEDS member or sympathizer before adoption of the project. This is where we would like to pool (y)our common resources -- topical knowledge, area familiarity, vacation time in Orissa, etc. -- in search for an appropriate, visionary project led by a high-integrity, motivated NGO in Orissa.

Srinivas Memorial Fund (SMF): We are now in the process of finalizing SEEDS grant for a library extension at the Jalespeta Kanyashram, a school for tribal girls in Phulbani run by VKA, in memory of our departed colleague Dr. Srinivas Praharaj.

We have received a promising initial proposal, which is also available on SEEDS Home Page on Internet at <http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/darshan/SEEDS/>, from Asra, an NGO reachable at S.K. Mohanty, president, Association for Social Reconstructive Activities (ASRA), Satyabrata Press Premises, Pithapur, Cuttack-753001, India; Phone No (0671) 30221 S (0671) 35616; FAX - (0091671) 31678. Quoting from the first-year budget part of their proposal: "100% Immunization, 2500 EC Protection

by Sterilization, 2000 EC Protected by other temporary methods. 25% of population motivated to use sanitary latrine. 20,000 trees to be planted. Health services for 25% population. 100% to be motivated to in-take safe drinking water. Cost: 210,000." Although this proposal may be weak in self-sustainability, definitive inquiries by Dr. Lalu Mansinha and colleague Mr. Somdutt Behura's visit of ASRA projects (old-age home, hospital, and tube-well sites in Balikuda and the flood-ravaged Naugaon blocks) in March, '96 have discovered many redeeming aspects of this proposal and integrity of the ASRA leadership. Moreover, Dr. Sri Gopal Mohanty has obtained word from India Voluntary Action Network (IVAN), a non-profit, volunteer group based in Hamilton, Canada for their collaborative, financial support of the part of ASRA project involving immunization and kitchen-garden. However, we need your generous financial support to be able to take up such ambitious projects.

SEEDS Finance

SEEDS started as a non-profit, non-sectarian, social-development organization registered with the Campus Activities Office at the University of Texas at Austin. Now that the individuals maintaining it have graduated and moved, we have all but closed the SEEDS university account. All funds have been consolidated in an account under SEEDS at First Technology bank in Portland. We seek volunteers to own the task of treasury and fund management, which this author has, for better or worse, carried out since the inception. We also hope that with help of the community, SEEDS can take its EIN registration with IRS one step further to obtain 501© status for tax exemption.

Some highlights: We have collected \$541 from individuals and \$3263.71 from OSANY, the host of 25th annual OSA Convention, towards Srinivas Memorial Fund (SMF). We have received \$125 as our newsletter (Ankur) subscription fees. Since inception, we have raised nearly \$18,000 total. We acknowledge the few individuals who have contributed upwards of \$500, and the few groups of people (New York, Chicago, Dallas, Canada chapters of OSA) for their generosity. However, we greatly value sustained financial support from a great

number of individuals like you.

We have paid four installments to VKA in the amounts of \$800, \$600, \$500 and \$500 since December, 1993 for the Lanjigarh project. Our total initial grant to the project was about \$4000; we are continuing evaluation of the project's progress in order to decide release of the remaining funds of the initial grant, and for possibly further extension to the next year. We have paid \$360 for the training of volunteers from Orissa at Bhagavatula Charitable Trust of Dr. Parameswar Rao in July, 94. We have remitted \$150 for the opening of a SEEDS branch in Bhubaneswar headed by Dr. Dhanada Mishra. However, job-related relocation of Dhanada has temporarily suspended the functioning of this branch.

SEEDS remains a "negative-overhead" organization with only less than \$100 of SEEDS funds spent on university registration and miscellaneous photocopy costs --- thanks to the generosity of SEEDS activists.

Conclusion

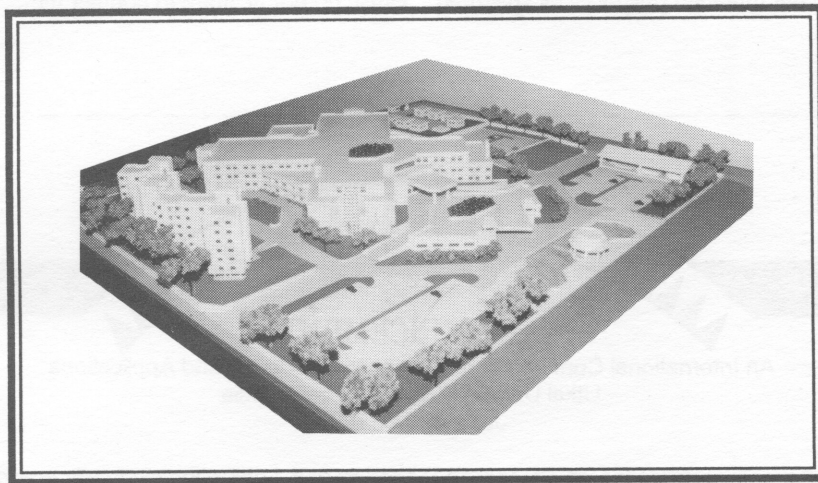
Time and again we have emphasized that money is merely a means, and not the "the be all and end all." SEEDS activists are still a very small group hard-pressed for time. We need your ideas, criticisms, and involvement to keep SEEDS alive. We need your help in obtaining, screening, evaluating, periodic monitoring and reporting of projects and proposals. Of course, we also need people for out-reach and fund-raising as well. Our task has been difficult, and twice as much because we must meet on the network or by phone. What makes it even harder now is SEEDS derived most activism from the student members in the past, and most have graduated struggling to find footholds in their careers as well. Of course we could have chosen to do nothing as an alternative to this demanding yet profoundly rewarding task. So, we need your involvement more than ever. Donations and inquiries may be sent to :

SEEDS,
c/o Dr. P. Patra,
15852 NW West Union Rd., #129,
Portland, OR 97229.



**TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FOUNDING OF THE
KALINGA HOSPITAL
AND RESEARCH CENTER AT BHUBANESWAR**

About forty years ago a Swiss pharmaceutical company isolated a new drug, Reserpine, from a plant, Rauqolfia serpentina, found in Koraput, Orissa. This was a source of pride for Oriyas. Reserpine was Orissa's gift to the world. However, the story would have been a matter of pride for us if an Oriya scientist would have participated in the process. Orissa had no scientific expertise nor technical infrastructure capable of making that type of discovery. Half a century after the discovery of Reserpine, a new modern glass and concrete structure is rising out of the ground in Chandrasekharpur, in the suburbs of Bhubaneswar, Orissa. In one sense this is a new modern temple in this city of three hundred temples. It is a temple dedicated on the alter of the art of healing. This is the Kalinga Hospital and Research Center. This ten acre campus will house the most modern diagnostic equipment and will certainly be the best equipped medical facility not only in Orissa, but in the entire eastern region of India. Within a few months, in late 1996, the doors of the Kalinga Hospital will open and patients from Orissa and the surrounding areas will have ready access to the best and the latest medical and surgical facilities. This ultra-modern medical complex will not simply be a dispenser of treatments developed elsewhere. Our expectation is that in the future new medicines, new surgical techniques, new protocols for treatment will originate in this medical complex. There will be future discoveries of Reserpine, but it will be by Oriya doctors and scientists, working out of a research facility in Orissa. We believe this is your chance of a lifetime to participate in a noble and path-breaking endeavor.



The Kalinga Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

TECHNICAL DETAILS: The Kalinga Hospital has planned capacity of 350 beds. The Diagnostic Services include MRI, CT Scanner, Automated Biochem lab, 800MA X-ray Unit, Fluoroscopy and Tomography Units, Radiotherapy, Blood bank, Ultrasound, Cardiac unit, EEG and EMG, etc.. **THE TREATMENT FACILITIES INCLUDE** Emergency and trauma center, Three Operating Theaters, ICO, Kidney Dialysis, Kidney Transplant, Open Heart Surgery, Laser Ophthalmic Surgery, etc. For further details please contact:

Dr. Ramesh Raichoudhury, MD.
President
Hospital Corporation of Orissa
29 Westland Drive
Glenn Cove, NY 11542
(516) 676-6896

Manaranjan Pattanayak
573 Kings Road
Yardley, PA 19067
(215) 493-8770 (home)
(215) 493-0207 (fax)

Dr. Uma B. Mishra, MD.
Secretary/Treasurer
41 Susan Drive
New Burgh, NY 2550
(914) 534-4700 (office)
(914) 534-4800 (fax)

RAVENSHAW COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF NON-RESIDENT INDIANS (RCAA)
PROGRESS REPORT AS OF APRIL 15, 1996

Surendra N. Ray

Much progress has been made during the last year. The association has been registered as a non-profit tax exempt organization in the state of Maryland as of January 1996. The Physics Department help committee (chaired by Dr. S.Mahanti) has collected over \$1,000 towards the goal of \$5,000 to support modernize laboratories. We have promised to send them the first check by the end of April and work on the project can begin by July, 1996. I had visited Ravenshaw College twice during my stay in Orissa in March and had detailed discussions with the principal and the members of the Ravenshaw College Development Trust (the Trust). Two important documents have been signed, one with the principal and the other with the chairman of the Trust, to establish the infrastructure to fund projects. According to this agreement any funding for Ravenshaw College can be channeled through the Trust and the Trust will spend the money through the principal only for the intended purposes as specified

by the donor (or group of donors). It is generally agreed that the most important requirement for Ravenshaw College is to achieve full autonomy. Towards this end I have requested a copy of the document prepared earlier by Professor P.L.Nayak et. al. We intend to review this and further discussions will be continued with non-residents and the Trust to present a concrete proposal to the Orissa government. The Trust has requested us to help (in the order of priority) in the construction of a Girls Hostel, a Boys Hostel, and an Auditorium. You can donate tax exempt money either to the RCAA or the Trust directly, making sure to mention the purpose.

I want to appeal to all Ravenshawians and their friends to help the college in any way possible. My personal impression is that the college can be saved but not without our help. Anyone interested in making a tangible contribution towards this noble cause do not hesitate to contact me.



ANNOUNCEMENT

An International Conference on Stochastic Modelling and Applications
Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, India
January 6-8, 1997

An International Conference on Stochastic Modelling and Applications is jointly organized by Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta and Utkal University, Bhubaneswar at Vani Vihar Campus of the University during January 6-8, 1997. The topics of the Conference are : Theory of stochastic modelling and applications to various fields such as queues, inventories, population, communication, environment, finance; statistical inference and numerical techniques. Professor C.R.Rao has kindly agreed to be a keynote speaker. For further information please contact in any one of the following addresses:

Professor J. Sarangi, Department of Statistics, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751004, Orissa, India

Professor S.G. Mohanty, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8S 4K1;
Fax : 905-522-0935 e-mail : mohanty@mcmaster.ca

*An
International
1996
Celebration*

*The Seventieth Birth Anniversary
of*
GURU KELUCHARAN MOHAPATRA

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Menaka Thakkar, *Toronto*
Philip Zarilli, *Los Angeles*
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Sri Gopal Mohanty, *Hamilton*

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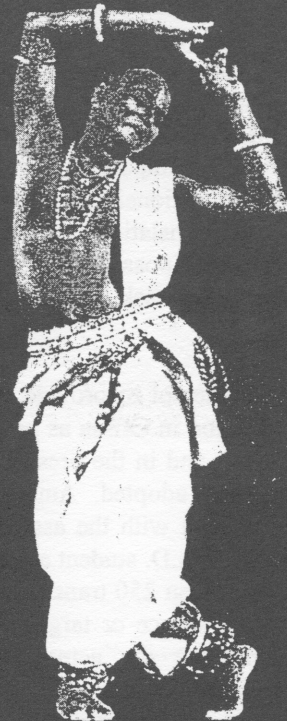
Odissi dance
from India with live music

Traditional items and dance drama

Featuring:

**Guru Kelucharan
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**Ratikanta Mohapatra,
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All programs dedicated to:

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cospponsored by Orissa Society of Americas

THE ORIYA TRANSLATION PROJECT

Paul St-Pierre

This project is a collaborative effort based in India, Canada and the United States, which has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and from the Shastri Indo-Canadian Foundation. Professors from Utkal University, Cornell University and the University of Montreal are working together to look at some of the issues translation involves in India, and more specifically, in Orissa.

How do cultures interact? What power relationships are involved? How do cultures influence one another? These are some of the questions for which a study of translation can help provide answers, focussing on the points of contact between languages and cultures. With the involvement of Professor Satya P. Mohanty of Cornell University such a study is being carried out in Orissa with a view to determining the factors involved and in the hope of providing answers for some of these questions. While India's plurilingual nature makes translation particularly important, through the role it is given to play in national integration, it at the same time renders translation particularly difficult, the large number of possible language combinations alone making the task of translation in India especially daunting.

In an attempt to provide as thorough a picture of translation in Orissa as possible, of its role both in the past and in the present, a number of strategies have been adopted. Among these, which have been carried out with the assistance of Santosh Kumar Padhy, a Ph.D. student at Utkal University, a survey of more than 250 translators working with Oriya as either a source or target language with a view to determining the actual conditions under which translation takes place, interviews with senior translators who have played an important role in the development of translation in Orissa, and a comprehensive bibliography of translations into Oriya (likely to contain some 2500 titles) which will make it possible to demonstrate concretely the interactions between Orissa and other --Indian and non-Indian -- languages and cultures.

Another aspect of the project is to promote the translation of Oriya literature into English. Working with professors Jatindra Nayak (Utkal University) and Rabi Shankar Mishra (Sambalpur University), Professor Mohanty and I are presently revising for publication an English translation of *Chha Mana Atha Guntha*. Other projects, including commissioning translations of modern Oriya short stories, are in the works. In addition, a special issue of an international journal devoted to translation, META, will focus on translation in India, with particular attention paid to Orissa.

On the more strictly professional level, two workshops with practicing translators and teachers were held last year at Utkal University. These dealt with both literary and non-literary translation, as well as problems of terminology specific to Oriya. Questions relating to the professionalization of translation -- adequate remuneration, minimum requirements for translators, the necessity for a professional association have all been raised. It is hoped that the project can be continued and extended in this area, notably with input from the Canadian context, where translation has received official recognition.

These different aspects of the Oriya Translation Project, as well as others which remain to be defined, would benefit from the participation of people interested in becoming actively involved in the project.

I can be contacted at the following address:

Professor Paul St-Pierre,
Department de linguistique et de traduction,
University de Montreal, C. P. 6128, Succ.
Centreville, Montreal, H3C 3J7

or, at my e-mail address:

saintpip@ere.umontreal.ca

Chapter News compiled by the Chapter Presidents

ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS CHAPTER NEWS

CHICAGO

President: Priya Nayak

SARASWATI PUJA

The Saraswati Puja was held on January 27th at Chinmoya Mission. Shrananandaji conducted the puja. There was a large gathering for this occasion. Foods prepared were superb. Moreover, there was a children's program done by children of all ages with great enthusiasm. Our thanks to Ratna Mishra, Roopa Mohapatra, Chabi Mohanty, Meenakshi Panigrahi and all participants, volunteers and children.

GET-TOGETHER

The first get-together after the Saraswati Puja was held in the residence of Mr. Manmath Nayak. It was a potluck dinner with excellent food and many enthusiastic participants. There was very good and honest discussion about many issues. Discussion was basically about how to unify all OSA people with a vision and simultaneously have short term goals and objectives consistent with the vision. Learning the Oriya language as an objective was also discussed. Also having an agenda in any meeting was thought to be very appropriate. Children again happily participated and gave their opinions.

The next one was held in the residence of Mr. Anup Behera. The attendance in this get-together was low due to some conflicting engagement. But the cultural activities by the children were excellent. The night was full with

song, music and dance. Next in line are Sujata Patnaik and Anu Khandai (Savitri Brata and monthly get together). Those who want to host such a get-together please contact Priya Nayak.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Ashok Parida (Babu), Tarani Mohapatra and Sudhansu panigrahi all got married recently. At the last get-together a small cake cutting ceremony was held to congratulate and to welcome them. We wish all of them a very happy, long married life.

OSA CONVENTION

All of you must have received the newsletter about the 27th Annual OSA Convention. Please plan ahead since the deadline to register, participate in cultural activities and send articles to the journal are quickly approaching. Please refer to the convention schedule. If you do not have one contact Saurjya Khandai (708-851-7926) or Priya Nayak (708-834-3277) in order to get a brief summary of the events in the convention.

Sujata Patnaik has agreed to coordinate a group cultural program for Pramod Patnaik Inter-Chapter Cultural Competition. We need participants for this and other activities. Please don't let Chicago down. If you can participate in some of these activities please contact Saurjya Khandai or Priya Nayak.

MONEY MATTER

With our membership fee and some savings at Saraswati Puja our financial situation has improved and we hope it to be better still. As of February 25, 1996, we have a balance of \$1,103.11. Opening balance of \$816.75 + 1996 membership \$270 (18 x \$15) +

Saraswati Puja collection \$240 (16 x \$15) + \$10 past due adjustment - \$57.85 communication) - \$121 (Donation to mission) - \$54.79 (puja samagri & flowers) = \$1,103.11. If you have any question or want to send your past dues, please contact Sarada Mohapatra (708-898-6125).

PICNIC

Last but not the least, we are quickly approaching *Raja* time. All of you remember *Doli Khela*, *Raja Pitha* and other fun activities. We want to share some of those feelings during *Raja* time by holding a picnic. The picnic will be held on June 16th. Please make yourself available to make this a great success. Time and location will be announced later.

NEW JERSEY

President: Deepa Muduli

SARASWATI PUJA

The 1996 events started with celebrating Saraswati Puja. This Puja was held in the residence of Dr. Mohan Rao and Bharati Kintala in Warren, N.J. Dr. Akhileswar Patel presided and conducted the puja which was followed by an hour of Bhajans, participated by all children.

VISUBA MILAN

On April 14, the Visuba Milan get-together was held in the residence of Dr. Hazari and Deepa Muduli, where a wide variety of activities were planned that day. A President's awarded Oriya movie, "Kanaklata" was viewed for all and children kept busy in rehearsing dances and songs for upcoming CIO, New Jersey folk dance competition.

Chapter News compiled by the Chapter Presidents

ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS CHAPTER NEWS

NEW CASSETTES

An acclaimed lyricist and composer and a prominent member of Orissa Society, Mrs. Kabita Patnaik, has presented two Oroya cassettes, *Smruti* and *Preeti*, which are on sale here and back in Orissa. Sixteen beautiful Oroya modern songs which were written and composed by her were sung by the eminent playback singers Debasis Mohapatra, Trupti Das, Lopita Hota, Anjali Mishra and also herself.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Rolli Sahoo

Rolli Sahoo is among few who has been selected to participate in the 1996 Summer Program in Pennsylvania Governor's School of Health care at the University of Pittsburgh. Students will spend the summer in the college campus working with the leading experts and educators as mentors. The school provides hands-on-experience in the Health care program which stress innovation and cutting-edge instructions. An 11th grader, her biography has been accepted for publication in the 30th Annual edition of *Who's Who Among American High School Students*. Rolli was also selected for the Hugh O'Brien Youth Foundation in the state of Pennsylvania as a student ambassador for 1996.

Ruby Sahoo

The American Legion Auxiliary has awarded Ruby Sahoo with the 1996 Pennsylvania School Award in recognition of her attainment acquired as winner in the American Legion Auxiliary Service. She is in the 9th Grade in Tamaqua High School. Both Rollo and Ruby are children of Dr. Dilliswar and Sukanti Sahoo of Tamaqua, PA.

Sarthak Das

Sarthak is the recipient of Ames Award from Harward University in 1995 for his exemplary selfless service and commitment to people in need. Harvard Alumni Association present this award every year to one of the men and women from the graduating class during the senior class graduating ceremony. He also received the Anthropology Department's "Vogt Prize" for his outstanding thesis "Aids in India: An Ethnography of HIV/AIDS among Bombay's Commercial Sex Workers." He received a \$15,000 Echoing Green Foundation's National Award to start his dream project "Project Asha" for the prostitute children in Bombay's red light district. Sarthak has established his project Asha since last August under the umbrella organization called Committed Communities Development Trust (CCD). His project aims to provide positive learning experience for disadvantaged children of the prostitutes. He has contributed few chapters to a recently published book "Women, Poverty and Aids" by the eminent Harvard Professor, Paul Farmer (ISBN-1567510744). Sarthak is scheduled to attend the International School of Public Health at Yale this fall.

Sarba Das

Sarba, a Junior at Yale University, completed the fall semester at the University of Paris in Sorbonne. A major in Film Studies and Psychology, she is at present in India making a mini film. A young enthusiastic Odissi dancer she is also continuing her Odissi dance under the guidance of Sri Guru Gangadhar Pradhan. Sarthak and Sarba are the children of Dr. Santosh and Sulekha

Das of Randolph, New Jersey.

NEW YORK

President: Jagannath P. Mohanty

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

The annual summer picnic was organized in the Colonial park in Somerset, NJ on June 15th, 1995. Everybody had a fun time playing soccer, boating, fishing and eating good food.

The Kumar Utsav was celebrated on November 10th at the Martinsville community center. Over 50 people attended the function and we had a great evening of music and song.

The Saraswati Pooja was celebrated on Feb 10th '96 at the Ved Mandir, NJ. The pooja was performed by Mr. Pitambar Sarangi.

This year the chapter is organizing the annual camping from August 16th (Friday) through August 18th (Sunday) at the Belleplain state forest. Also there will be the celebration of Ganesh Pooja during the camping.

VISITORS FROM INDIA

Professor S.P. Misra, Professor Emeritus, Institute of Physics visited City College of City University in NY last fall and later he visited University of Alberta in Canada and several universities in United States. Retired Supreme Court chief justice and chairman International Human Rights organization (Indian branch) Sri Ranganath Mishra visited NY last summer.

The ex-Information & Broadcasting Minister & current Food Minister of India, Mr. K. P. Singh Deo, visited

Chapter News compiled by the Chapter Presidents

ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS CHAPTER NEWS

New York earlier this year.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our congratulations go to Rajan and Surama Panda for son Sriman, Rajeev and Lipi Pattanaik for son Rohit, Dillip and Sonal Mishra for daughter Niki, Sameer and Sangeeta Mishra for daughter Soumya, Pitambar and Gitu Sarangi for son Amrut, Goutam and Soma for daughter Sheyna, Umakanta and Seema for daughter Mudra.

WASHINGTON DC

President: Sudip Patnaik

95 HIGHLIGHTS

Annual Picnic '95: The Annual OSA, Washington Chapter picnic on June 17, 1995 was a huge success. The organizers did a super job - there was plenty of food. The most popular snack was of course the typical Oriya *masala mudi*. There were games for both the young and the old. Bandita Nayak and Biju Misra won prizes in their respective categories of the popular Musical Chair.

KUMAR UTSAV

Kumar Utsav '95: The show was attended by Mr. Digambar Mishra, Executive Director and Dr. Hemant Senapati, OSA President. The cultural programme was a huge success. The cultural programme began with a dance by our youngsters to the traditional chorus *Phoola Boula Beni*, the chorus was performed live by the ladies of the chapter, lead by Mun Mun Patnaik. Imaginative choreography and lilting variations on the traditional song made this item a memorable one.

Other performances included solo dance presentations, a piano recital, and a violin recital. The children of the chapter presented 'Savitri', a one act play based on "A tale of ancient India" by Aaron Shepard. The "Dharma" chorus by the adults made the audience nostalgic, transporting them to Konarak.

ACTIVITIES

By-laws for the Washington DC Chapter: The By-Laws, drafted over a period of two months, were finally presented to the chapter members at the Kumar Utsav function.

Selection of Members for Board of Trustees: The Washington Chapter has selected its first Board Of Trustees, in accordance with the newly approved By-Laws of the chapter. The Trustees are Niva Kodolikor, Sidhartha Das, and Surendra Ray. This body will be responsible for facilitating the smooth transfer of responsibilities from the outgoing Executive Committee to the newly elected Committee.

The Washington Chapter co-sponsored a dinner reception for newly arrived Embassy of India officials. The reception, attended by approximately 100 people, was held at Kashmir Palace. Among the attendees were the outgoing Indian Ambassador, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, his successor, Naresh Chandra, and representatives from several local Indian organizations.

In January, children from the Washington Chapter performed a patriotic Oriya song at a Republic Day program organized by the Asian Indian Council.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Reena and Sidhartha Das on the birth of their daughter Divya Bose

Das. Mrs. Das is the treasurer of the Washington Chapter of OSA.

To Kun Kun and Michael Callahan on the birth of their son Ross. Kun Kun is the daughter of Rabi and Sova Patnaik of Baltimore.

To Gautam (Babu) Patnaik and Bella Dave of Baltimore on the occasion of their engagement.

NEW GRADUATES

Mun Mun Patnaik: Master's degree in bio-technology.

Subhransu (Mitu) Ray: graduated from Albert Einstein Medical College with an M.D. and Ph.D. Mitu will begin his residency in Boston this summer.

Sandip Biswal: graduated from Harvard Medical School. Sandip will begin a one-year internship in New York this summer.

Subir Sahu : graduated from Cornell University with a B.A. in Electrical Engineering. Subir plans to pursue a Master's Degree at Cornell.

Saswat Misra: graduated from high school and will attend the University of Maryland.

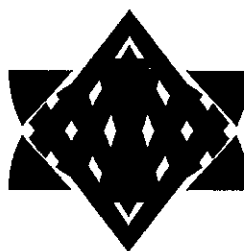
UPCOMING EVENTS

Ganesh Puja
Chapter Elections
Kumar Purnima

SUBRINA BISWAL MEMORIAL AWARD

Every year, the Orissa Society of Americas, in joint sponsorship with Dr. Nilambar and Annapurna Biswal, presents the Subrina Biswal Memorial Award to one graduating high school senior. This award, initiated in 1990 in the loving memory of Subrina Biswal, daughter of Dr. Nilambar and Annapurna Biswal of Maryland, provides the recipient with a one time scholarship of \$1,000 (U.S. currency).

Recipients are selected based on their academic achievements, extra-curricular activities, interest in the arts, and personal qualities. Applicants must be the child of an OSA member and must submit a personal statement regarding their future goals and objectives, a list of extra-curricular activities, a letter of recommendation, a high school transcript, and SAT scores.



PAST RECIPIENTS

Year	Name	University
1990	Nivedita Misra	Harvard; Presently working in Washington, DC
1991	Sarthak Das	Harvard; Now pursuing a project in Bombay, India
1992	Seema Mohapatra	Johns Hopkins; Now at Yale
1993	Sarba Das	Yale
1994	Manas Mohapatra	Johns Hopkins
1995	Swaroop Mishra	Stanford

KALASHREE AWARD

The criteria and guidelines for the Kalashree Award were developed by the OSA Cultural Committee and are as follows:

1. CRITERIA :

- a. The person should be a performing artist.
- b. The person should be living in North America.
- c. The person, should be active in performing arts related to Oriya art and culture. Activities can include performances, teaching, organizing Oriya functions, promoting local Oriya artists, or promoting visiting artists from Orissa.
- d. The person should have at least ten years of participation in cultural activities of OSA.

2. GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING A RECIPIENT :

The presidents of the local chapters of OSA should submit the names of the qualified artists to the Cultural Committee. The members of the Cultural Committee will then select the finalist by the majority vote. No artist should receive this award more than once in his or her lifetime.

3. NAME, TYPE, AND PRESENTATION OF THE AWARD :

- a. The name of the Award should be an Oriya word, preferably reflecting the purpose of the Award, e.g., *Oriya Kalapriya, Kalamani, Kalashilpi* or *Kalashree* (selected by Gopinath Mohanty).
- b. The Award should be in the form of a plaque.
- c. The Award should be given out at the Annual Convention of the OSA.
- d. The President of the OSA or the Chairperson of the Cultural Committee should recognize the finalist in a speech and the chief guest or the President of the OSA should present the Award to the artist.

RECIPIENTS

1991	Promode Patnaik Pratap Das
1992	Chitralekha Patnaik
1993	Sushri Sangeeta Kar
1994	Annapurna Biswal
1995	Srigopal Mohanty

DISTINGUISHED ORIYA AWARD

The Distinguished Oriya Award is the highest award presented by the Orissa Society of the Americas, a non-profit organization operating in the United States to preserve and promote the culture and the customs of the Oriya-speaking people. Recipients receive an inscribed honor plaque and a certificate of achievement at a special function hosted by OSA.

CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION - (SELECTION IS BASED ON ONE OR MORE) :

- Lifetime achievements in the promotion and propagation of Oriya culture and language.
- Proficiency in professional disciplines with strong accomplishments in arts, theater, literature, science or medicine.
- Public service with innovative use of resources to enhance literacy, health, hygiene, child care or adult welfare.
- Leadership to bring forth social and political justice.
- Entrepreneurial skills to cultivate resources in order to provide economic stimuli and opportunities for employment and growth.
- Patriotic idealism to uphold the honor and dignity of Oriya people.
- Acts of heroism.

NOMINATIONS AND SELECTION :

- Nominations may be made by individuals or by organizations. Self-nomination is discouraged.
- Nomination is made on plain paper and consists of biodata of the nominee with complete particulars of the contributions and a letter from the nominating person or the organization.
- All nominations must reach the Award Committee by June 15 of the year of the Award.
- The selection is made by a three-member Award Committee, appointed by the President of the OSA, on behalf of the OSA Executive Committee.
- The decision of the Award Committee on the selection is final.
- The Award Committee may choose to defer the Award on any year if it does not find a candidate of outstanding distinction.

RECIPIENTS

1992	Shri Biju Patnaik Prof. J. N. Mohanty
1993	Dr. & Mrs. K. M. Das
1994	Dr. Gouri Das
1995	Dr. T. P. Das

PRESIDENTS of the ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

Gauri Das	1970	Boston, Massachusetts
Bhabagrahi Misra	1971	Hartford, Connecticut
Gauri Das	1973	Boston, Massachusetts
Amita Patnaik	1975	Riverdale, New Jersey
Promode Patnaik	1978	Birmingham, Alabama
Ladukesh Patnaik	1981	Detroit, Michigan
Rabi Patnaik	1983	Randolph Town, Maryland
Saroj Behera	1985	San Jose, California
Asoka Das	1987	Toronto, Canada
Amiya Mohanty	1989	Richmond, Kentucky
Digambar Misra	1991	Birmingham, Alabama
Sita Kantha Mishra	1993	Minneapolis, Minnesota
Hemant Senapati	1995	Bloomfield Hills, Michigan



VENUES OF OSA ANNUAL CONVENTION



1970	Hartford, Connecticut	1983	Bowie, Maryland
1971	Hartford, Connecticut	1984	Glassboro, New Jersey
1972	Riverdale, New Jersey	1985	Kent, Ohio
1973	Riverdale, New Jersey	1986	Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1974	College Park, Maryland	1987	Stanford, California
1975	Riverdale, New Jersey	1988	Saginaw, Michigan
1976	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	1989	Nashville, Tennessee
1977	Riverdale, New Jersey	1990	Washington, DC
1978	Wheaton, Maryland	1991	Chicago, Illinois
1979	New Brunswick, New Jersey	1992	Atlanta, Georgia
1980	Detroit, Michigan	1993	Troy, Michigan
1981	Chicago, Illinois	1994	Pomona, New Jersey
1982	Minneapolis, Minnesota	1995	Minneapolis, Minnesota

1996
Washington, DC

EDITORS

The names of the publications of the Orissa Society of the Americas have undergone changes. In 1986, the Orissa Society of America began publishing an annual Special Souvenir Issue, which also carried the Membership Directory. Now the Directory is published as a separate volume.

Orissa Society News <i>Utkala Samachara</i>	1971 - 1973	Gauri C. Das
OSA Newsletter <i>Utkala Samachara</i>	1974 - 1975	Promode K. Patnaik
OSA Newsletter <i>Utkala Samachara</i>	1975 - 1977	Joana Ranjan Dash
<i>Utkala Samachara</i>	1978	Amiya K. Patnaik
OSA Newsletter	1981 - 1984	Joana Ranjan Dash
Lipika	1985 - 1986	Deba Prasad Mohapatra
Special Souvenir Issue	1986	Lalu Mansinha Saradindu Misra Mana Ranjan Pattanayak
Journal of the Orissa Society of America	1986	Lalu Mansinha Saradindu Misra
Special Souvenir Issue	1987	Lalu Mansinha Saradindu Misra Mana Ranjan Pattanayak
Journal of the Orissa Society of America	1987	Saradindu Misra Lalu Mansinha Sabita Panigrahi
Special Souvenir Issue	1988	Lalu Mansinha Gagan Panigrahi Sabita Panigrahi
Journal of the Orissa Society of America	1988	Lalu Mansinha Saradindu Misra
Special Souvenir Issue	1989	Lalu Mansinha Gagan Panigrahi Sabita Panigrahi
Journal of the Orissa Society of America	1989	Digambar Misra Sura Prasad Rath
Special Souvenir Issue	1990	Digambar Misra Sura Prasad Rath Sudip Patnaik
Journal of the Orissa Society of America	1990	Digambar Misra Sura Prasad Rath
Special Souvenir Issue	1991	Digambar Misra
Journal of the Orissa Society of America	1991	Digambar Misra
Special Souvenir Issue	1992	Kula C. Misra Minati Biswal
Special Souvenir Issue	1993	Kula C. Misra
Special Silver Jubilee Souvenir Issue	1994	Lalu Mansinha Mana Ranjan Pattanayak Sri Gopal Mohanty Netti Prasad Bohidar Satya Mohapatra
Orissa Society of Americas Journal	1994	Alekha K. Dash
Journal of the OSA Souvenir Issue 1995	1995	Alekha K. Dash
Orissa Society of Americas Journal	1995	Purna Patnaik
Journal of the OSA Souvenir Issue 1996	1996	Binod Nayak Susmita Patnaik

CONSTITUTION OF THE ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

ARTICLE I : NAME

The name of the organization shall be the "Orissa Society of the Americas, Inc.," hereafter abbreviated OSA.

ARTICLE II : OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Society shall be :

- a. To form a non-political and non-profit organization of all persons interested in Orissa.
- b. To promote interest and activities in the understanding of Oriya culture.
- c. To facilitate the exchange of information between Orissa and the United States/Canada.

ARTICLE III : ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION

Section 1 : OSA is incorporated under the laws of the United States and is a non-profit organization.

Section 2 : The articles of organization of the OSA comprise of the Article of Incorporation and the By-Laws as amended from time to time.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 : Membership in the OSA shall be open to all persons interested in Orissa. The membership dues and categories shall be described in the By-Laws.

Section 2 : Annual membership dues shall be payable by July 30th of each year.

ARTICLE V : OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1 : The ultimate authority of the OSA shall be vested in the membership. The members from USA & Canada shall choose the elected officers by mail ballot.

Section 2 : The office bearers of the OSA shall be an elected President, a Vice-President, and a Secretary-Treasurer. The Executive Committee of the OSA shall consist of the following :

1. President (Chairperson of the Committee).
2. Vice-President.
3. Secretary-Treasurer.
4. Editor of the OSA Newsletter, appointed by the President (Non-Voting).
5. Immediate Past President.
6. One representative from each local chapter as constituted by June 30th of each election year.
7. One student representative to be nominated by the President (Non-Voting).
8. One representative of the youth (16-21 years) group to be nominated by the President (Non-Voting).

Section 3: The President, the Vice-President, and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be elected by the active members for a term of two years. These three executive officials must be members of OSA of good standing and must be of 21 years of age or older. The Vice-President shall be a running mate of the President. A vote for the President shall mean a vote for his/her running mate. The President shall appoint the Editor of the OSA Newsletter.

Section 4: Powers and Functions of the President :

- a. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the OSA. He/she shall announce the members of the Executive Committee at the time of assuming office in the annual convention. The Executive Committee shall assume office for a term of two years. The other elected office-bearers also shall take office at the annual convention following the election, for a term of two years.
- b. The President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall present a plan of activities along with a proposed budget at the annual convention. In the event of resignation, inaction or negligence of duties by any member of the Executive Committee, the President shall call for re-election or renomination for such position within a period of one month.
- c. The President shall have the power to appoint committees and subcommittee to conduct various functions as he/she deems proper for the smooth functioning and continuity of the OSA.
- d. If the President fails to perform his/her duties to the satisfaction of the members of the OSA, he/she shall be removed by a vote of no-confidence. A no-confidence motion may be moved by a petition signed by at least 20% of the total membership as per the annual membership list published in the July-September Newsletter of the calendar year or from the current roster. This petition shall be submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer who shall circulate the same among the members of the Executive Committee within 10 days and among the membership within 30 days from the date of receipt of the petition. The Secretary-Treasurer will collect the votes from the membership by mail ballot, within 21 days from the date of remittal, and will announce the outcome, in writing, to the Vice-President and to the Executive Committee within 7 days of the deadline date for the receipt of votes. The President will be removed from office by a 2/3 majority of votes of no-confidence. In case of the removal of the President by a vote of no-confidence the Vice-President shall assume the office of the President for the remainder of the term of office and shall appoint a Vice-President, subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee.

Section 5 : Powers and Functions of the Vice-President :

The Vice-President shall derive his/her duties from the President and succeed him/her in case of his/her incapacity, resignation or death.

Section 6 : Powers and Functions of the Secretary-Treasurer :

- a. The Secretary-Treasurer shall assume office along with the President and present detailed annual expense reports at the annual convention. He/she shall be responsible for keeping the financial records current and for updating the Executive Committee and the general body on the status of the organization's finances at the annual meetings.
- b. The operating budget of the OSA shall be within the limits of the total revenue raised.
- c. The financial records shall be audited at the end of every two fiscal years ending in an election year.
- d. The Secretary-Treasurer shall be responsible for fund-raising, membership recruitment,

and for compilation of a list of paid members. This list shall be published in the first issue (July-September) of the Newsletter for every fiscal year.

- e. The office bearers of the OSA shall be reimbursed for reasonable mailing, telephone, and travel expenses. Any one item of expenditure beyond two hundred dollars must be approved by the President. Any amount over four hundred dollars on a single non-budgeted item must be approved by a majority of the Executive Committee. On expiration of his or her term, or in the case of his/her resignation or removal, he/she shall transfer the accounts to his/her successor or to the President within 30 days.
- f. The Secretary-Treasurer shall be removed in the same manner as the President. However, a no-confidence motion in this case shall be presented to the President for further action.
- g. In case of the removal of the Secretary-Treasurer by a no-confidence motion, or his/her resignation or death, the President shall nominate a successor whose appointment will be approved by the Executive Committee with a simple majority vote, for the remainder of the term.

Section 7 : Powers and Functions of the Editor :

The Editor is responsible for publishing the OSA Newsletter/Journal at the end of each quarter. He/she is also responsible for the contents of the newsletter. Each Newsletter shall include, among other items, the President and Secretary's notes, local chapter activities, non-political Orissa news, and a section on the youth and women.

Section 8 : Powers and Functions of Executive Committee :

All matters pertaining to OSA must be discussed in the Executive Committee and the decisions must be taken by a majority vote of members present in the meeting.

ARTICLE VI : ELECTION

- Section 1 : All life members and annual members of OSA have the right to vote and participate in the election.
- Section 2 : All elections are to be conducted by secret ballot. The election procedures shall be described in the By-Laws.
- Section 3 : No two members of the Executive Committee at any time shall be from the same immediate family (e.g., husband, wife, parent(s), child(ren), and siblings) of any Executive Committee member.
- Section 4 : In case a current office bearer such as the President, Vice-President or Secretary-Treasurer decides to run for re-election or for another position, he/she shall give up all his/her election related responsibilities as defined in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE VII : MEETINGS

- Section 1 : There shall be at least one general body meeting within one calendar year. The President of the OSA shall be responsible for organizing such meetings with the help of the Executive Committee and the organizing chapter.
- Section 2 : The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a year to discuss past activities, future plans, and the budget.
- Section 3 : Fifty percent of paid members shall constitute a quorum for the general body and Executive Committee meetings.

Section 4 : The President shall preside over the meetings. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall preside over the meetings. In the absence of both the President and the Vice-President, an Executive Committee member appointed by the President shall preside over the meetings.

ARTICLE VIII: LOCAL CHAPTERS

Section 1 : A minimum of 10 families with at least 20 members from a particular area is required to petition for establishing a chapter.

Section 2 : A petition to form a chapter must be made to the Secretary of the OSA for approval by the Executive Committee at least two months prior to the targeted date of its establishment.

Section 3 : The President of a chapter or an elected representative shall become a member of the OSA Executive Committee for a term of two years. A notification to that effect shall be submitted to the Secretary of the OSA on or before the June 30th of the OSA election year.

Section 4 : The President of a chapter shall provide a membership list for the chapter to the Secretary of the OSA at the beginning of each fiscal year and he/she will collect the OSA membership dues from the members of his/her chapter.

Section 5 : Any donation and membership dues collected by a chapter in the name of the OSA shall be deposited with the Secretary-Treasurer of the OSA. A chapter shall, however, be free to raise its own membership fees and other donations for local activities.

Section 6 : Local chapters raising funds in the name of the OSA and using the OSA Federal Tax Identification number shall follow the OSA rules and be accountable for IRS audits. A copy of the annual financial report shall be submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer of OSA at the end of each fiscal year.

ARTICLE IX : AMENDMENTS AND RULES OF BUSINESS

Section 1 : Any proposed amendments to the OSA constitution or By-laws shall be proposed by a petition signed by at least 10 percent of the total membership or by the Executive Committee. The petition must be circulated to the general membership at least 30 days prior to the annual general body meeting.

Section 2 : Any amendment to the OSA constitution shall need the approval of 2/3 majority of members present at the general body meeting, or by 2/3 majority of members through mail ballot, for incorporation into the OSA constitution.

Section 3 : The business of the OSA shall be conducted in accordance with the rules contained in the latest edition of 'Robert's Rules of Order'.

Section 4 : The decision of the majority of the Executive Committee on any question involving the Constitution, its By-Laws and the Rules of Business shall need approval of a 2/3 majority of the total membership of OSA.

BY-LAWS OF THE ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

BY-LAW I : MEMBERSHIP

Section I : Any person eighteen years of age or more interested in the stated objectives of the OSA shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2 : Membership in the OSA shall be of the following types:

- a. **SINGLE PERSON** of eighteen years of age or more by paying annual dues of \$10.00
- b. **A FAMILY** (husband, wife, and children under age 18) by paying annual dues of \$25.00
- c. **LIFE MEMBER**: A single person or family paying a one-time membership fee of \$200.00. In case of marriage of a single member, the spouse shall be granted life membership. In case of divorce, both spouses shall be accorded individual life membership.
- d. **STUDENT MEMBER**: Single \$5.00, family \$10.00.
- e. **PATRON**: A person who contributes \$500.00 or more to the OSA.
- f. **HONORARY MEMBER**: Persons selected to this status by the Executive Committee.
- g. **SUPPORTING MEMBER**: Persons, families or organizations who contribute at least \$20.00 a year.

Section 3 : Honorary or Supporting members are not eligible to vote or seek office in the OSA.

Section 4 : Membership dues in any category may be changed by the Executive Committee with the approval of the general body by a majority vote.

Section 5 : The fiscal year of the OSA shall be July 1 to June 30.

BY-LAW 2 : ANNUAL CONVENTION

Section 1 : The site of the annual convention shall be selected by the Executive Committee a year in advance for smooth planning. The host chapter shall be responsible for all aspects of the convention. The President or, in his/her absence, the Coordinator of a chapter must submit a written request, with a signed approval of a majority of the chapter's members, to hold the convention. The request must be submitted to the President of the OSA at least one year in advance of the proposed convention date.

Section 2 : The convention shall not be viewed as a fund raising method on the part of the local chapter. The accounts of the convention shall be prepared by the President or his/her representative of the host chapter and will be presented to the OSA Secretary-Treasurer. Any profit or loss shall be equally shared by the host chapter and the OSA and the matter must be resolved within 60 days. The income and expenses of the OSA shall be available for review by the general body of the OSA. The membership dues collected at the convention will not be spent by the host chapter.

BY-LAW 3 : ELECTION PROCEDURE

Section 1 : A three member election committee, including one chairman shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and will be announced to the general body for approval by a majority at the annual convention preceding the election year.

Section 2 : No member of the Executive Committee shall be eligible to be a member of the election committee.

Section 3 : The secretary of the OSA shall prepare a list of members who have paid their dues by December 31 of the year preceding the election year. This list along with the list of life members and patrons shall be submitted to the chairman of the election committee by January 15 of the election year.

Section 4 : Nominations for the various offices shall be solicited by the election committee chairman

through the OSA Newsletter of September - December quarter, preceding the election year. In case of contests, the names of the candidates shall be announced in a special letter to be sent by the election committee along with the position statement of each contesting candidate.

Section 5 : The Secretary of the OSA shall print and supply the ballots to the election committee. All ballots must be sequentially numbered or coded.

Section 6 : The ballots shall be mailed in the fourth weekend of March of the election year. The ballot number or code must be noted against the master membership list held by the election committee. For a returned ballot to be valid, it must be postmarked by the date on or before the 4th Monday of April of the election year.

Section 7 : The election committee shall open a post office box address to which the ballots shall be mailed to by the voters. The ballots shall be counted in the presence of the election committee members and the candidates or their representatives on the second Saturday of May of the election year. The results of the election shall be announced then and there and a written statement of the results will be sent to the President of the OSA. All the election materials must be sealed and signed by the election committee members and the candidates or their representatives and will be preserved by the election committee chairman for a period of six months after the election.

Section 8 : The President of OSA shall submit the results to the Executive Committee for approval and for publication in a special Newsletter by May 30 of the election year.

Section 9 : The election committee shall adopt prudent ways to insure the secrecy of the voting system.

Section 10 : All expenses for the election shall be reimbursed by the Secretary-Treasurer of the OSA upon the submission of the expense report. The committee shall caution to keep expense within the budget.

Section 11: Any charge of election irregularity or fraud shall be forwarded to the President and the members of the Executive Committee for resolution.

BY-LAW 4 : DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Disciplinary action shall be taken by a 2/3rd majority vote of the Executive Committee against any member for gross misconduct.

BY-LAW 5 : MISCELLANEOUS

No part of the earnings of OSA shall go to the personal benefit of any member, office bearer, or private individual. Should the OSA disband, after paying or making provisions for payments of all the liabilities of the OSA, the remaining funds and assets of the OSA shall go to such charitable organizations as have objectives similar to this society, chosen by the majority vote of the general body at a special meeting called for that purpose.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE OSA CONSTITUTION
EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 1992**

1. General: A. Replace "Executive Committee" throughout the current version of the constitution by "Board of Governors".
2. Article V: A. Replace the title "OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE" by "BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL".

B. Replace Section 2 by the following:

- (a) OSA will have a Board of Governors (hereafter referred to as Board) to serve as the custodian of the Society. The Board will be responsible for making policy decisions to be implemented by the Executive Council (as defined below). The membership of the Board will consist of:
 - (1) President
 - (2) Secretary-Treasurer.
 - (3) Presidents/Coordinators of the various chapters formed with the approval of the Board.
 - (4) Immediate Past President.
- (b) The President of OSA shall serve as the chairperson of the Board and the Secretary-Treasurer as the Secretary of the Board.
- (c) The Board should meet at least twice every fiscal year. Each member of the Board must participate in at least one of the meetings.
- (d) Fifty percent of the membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of its meetings.
- (e) Approval by the board must carry at least a simple majority of votes of its membership, but at least a two thirds majority will be required to override the action of the Executive Council or dissolve the council.
- (f) The Board will be responsible for the implementation of the policies in case of dissolution of the Executive Council.
- (g) The Executive Council will be composed of the following:
 - (1) President
 - (2) Vice-President
 - (3) Secretary-Treasurer
 - (4) Editor-In-Chief.
 - (5) Student Representative
 - (6) Youth Forum Advisor
 - (7) President of the Youth Forum or his/her representative. The President may invite chairs of appointed Committees to any meeting of the Executive Council. However, only the members of the Executive Council will have voting rights.
- (h) The tenure of continuous membership on the Board will be limited to a maximum of two consecutive two-year terms.

C. Section 3. Insert the following after..... his/her running mate" toward the end of paragraph:

"No member of OSA will be eligible to hold any of the above elected positions continuously for more than one two-year term."

- D. Delete Section 8.
3. Article VII: A. Section 2. Replace "Executive Committee" with "Executive Council"
- B. Replace Section 3 with the following:
- (a) A proxy authorization form should accompany notification of the General Body meeting. This form should also be available at the registration desk during the OSA annual convention.
 - (b) Fifty percent of the members in good standing, including proxies in the prescribed form, will constitute quorum or general Body meeting. Should the attendance fall short of this minimum, thirty-three percent of the membership in good standing, including proxies, will constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting the General Body meeting. In the latter case, however, the resolutions passed in the General Body meeting will be mailed to members not present (personally or by proxy) at the meeting for their approval within 30 days. A lack of response by the date specified in this circular will be taken as a vote in favor of the resolution(s).
 - (c) It will be the responsibility of the Secretary-Treasurer to arrange for proxies and maintain proper records of proxies obtained.
 - (d) The President will appoint a Parliamentarian for the General Body meeting. The interpretation of the OSA Constitution and by-laws by the Parliamentarian will be binding.
4. Article VIII: A. Replace Section I as follows:
- To form a new chapter, a minimum of 15 families, with signatures of at least 20 members with continuous membership for at least the past two years, must submit a written request to the Board of Governors through the Executive Council. The decision of the Board shall be conveyed in writing. A sub-chapter may be formed by any group of reasonable size and this will require the written approval of only the Executive Council. However, only the President/Coordinator of a chapter approved by the Board can serve as a member of the Board. The President/Coordinator of a sub-chapter is not eligible for Board membership.
- B. Section 3. Insert after..... for a term of two years" the following:
- The President/Coordinator of a Chapter is eligible to continue on the Board for a second two-year term if reelected by the chapter, but no more than two consecutive two-year terms."
5. Article IX: A. Modify Section 2 as follows":
- Any amendment to the OSA constitution and By-Laws shall need the approval of two-thirds majority present in the General Body meeting(including proxies, as described in Article VII), or two-thirds majority of members through mail ballot. A lack of response within the date specified in the mail ballot will be considered as a vote in favor of the amendment(s).
- B. Replace section 4 as follows:
- On any question involving the constitution, the By-Laws, or the Rules of Business, the decision of the Board of Governors will be final.
6. By-Law I: A. Section 1. Add the following at the end of paragraph:

"Membership in OSA involves submission of an application for formal approval by the Executive Council."

B. Section 2. Modify "e" to read:

"PATRON" : A person or family contributing a lump sum of \$500 or more to OSA."

C. Section 2 insert:

(f) BENEFACTOR : A person or family contributing a lump sum of \$1,000 or more to OSA.

D. Section 4. Insert after..... by a majority vote,":

"However, to encourage membership drive, the Executive Council may temporarily reduce the amount for any category of membership through written notification to the general membership. The period over which this reduction will be valid must be specified in the notification and the reduction cannot be repeated within the normal tenure of a particular Executive Council. The membership fees cannot be reduced to less than 65% of the prevailing schedule."



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FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF OSA FROM 7-8-95 TO 5-28-96

<u>FUNDS RECEIVED FOR FIXED DEPOSIT ON 7-8-95</u>	\$ 40,044.81
--	---------------------

INCOME

DONATIONS:

BASUNDHARA & SAHAYA	\$ 5,100.00
CHITTARANJAN HELP FUND	\$ 300.00
FAKIRMOHAN UNIVERSITY	\$ 2,002.00
SEED	\$ 1,490.00
GUEST TRAVEL EXPENSES	\$ 2,000.00
MISC. DONATION	\$ 1,500.00

INTEREST CHEQUE FROM DR. SENAPATI FOR SAVINGS ACC. FOR YEAR 1994-95	\$ 3,550.00
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INTEREST INCOME	\$ 1,827.30
-----------------	-------------

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 1995-96	\$ 4,505.00
-----------------------------	-------------

MEMBERSHIP DUES FROM MINN.CONVENTION	\$ 1,453.00
--------------------------------------	-------------

OSA MINN. CONVENTION (PROFITS)	\$ 739.89
-------------------------------------	-----------

OSA NEW YORK CONVENTION (MEMBERSHIP & PROFITS)	\$ 692.00
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TOTAL INCOME	\$25,159.19
---------------------	--------------------

EXPENSES

BASUNDHARA & SAHAYA	\$ 5,100.00
---------------------	-------------

CHITTARANJAN HELP FUND	\$ 300.00
------------------------	-----------

FAKIRMOHAN UNIVERSITY	\$ 2,000.00
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SEED	\$ 1,490.00
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CONTRIBUTION FOR GUEST TRAVEL	\$ 2,100.00
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FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF OSA FROM 7-8-95 TO 5-28-96

OSA JOURNAL (SPRING ISSUE 1996)	\$ 1,500.00
PRINTING, POSTAL & MISC. EXPENSES	\$ 405.00
TELEPHONE EXPENSES	\$ 399.60
ADVANCE TO WASH.D C. CHAPTER	\$ 4,000.00
ADVANCE FOR GUEST EXPENSES TO WASH.D.C. CHAPTER	\$ 1,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 18,794.60

BALANCE

CD ACCOUNT AT NBD BANK, DETROIT	\$ 35,544.81
CD ACCOUNT AT HOUSEHOLD BANK, CHICAGO	\$ 4,500.00
CHECKING ACCOUNT AT NBD BANK, DETROIT	\$ 6,364.59
TOTAL	\$ 46,409.40

ACCOUNTS MAINTAINED AND SUBMITTED BY PARIKSHITA NAYAK,
SECRETARY/TREASURER, OSA

THIS IS AN UNAUDITED ACCOUNT.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Acharya, Madhusmita: has worked as a broadcaster for Cuttack Doordarshan and All India Radio.

Behera, Sanjiv: is a graduate of the University of California and currently lives and works in upstate New York.

Behura, Somdutta: is at the University of Houston, Texas; is a strong supporter of SEEDS.

Biswal, Dr. Nilambar: is a virologist of repute and an avid photographer; the picture at the top of the cover is from his collection.

Chhotray, Jhinu: a past contributor to the OSA Journal, lives in Cleveland, Ohio.

Das, Arun: designer of "Tarasa", the insignia for the "Festival of Orissa"; creator of the OSA logo; resident of Maryland.

Das, Bagmi: is a third grader and lives with her parents, Naresh and Bigyani Das, in Maryland.

Das, Dr. Bigyani: is a post-doctoral fellow at the Johns Hopkins University.

Das, Dr. Manmath Nath: is a retired history professor and a former Vice-Chancellor of Utkal University in Orissa; is a prolific writer and widely published; lives in Bhubaneswar.

Das, Satya Bikram: is a fourth grader; has won several prizes for his art and writings; lives with his parents, Jayantika and Ram Das in Goleta, California.

Das, Subhashri: lives in Highland Park, New Jersey.

Das, Sulekha: is the Director of the Public Library in Hanover Township, New Jersey; a certified instructor of both Basic Literacy and English as a Second Language; tutors on a volunteer basis.

Das, Surya Kant : is a retired professor of commerce from Utkal University; is a prolific writer on contemporary issues.

Das, Upendra: has retired from a career with All India Radio and is currently a freelance writer in Bombay; has authored a book entitled *Bharatiya Sangeeta*.

Das, Uttara: is a graduate of Utkal University in English and lives in San Ramon, California.

Das Mohapatra, Dr. Girija Shankar: an eminent surgeon of Orissa; has published several anthologies of poetry.

Dash, Jnana Ranjan: is the Vice-President for Database Technology at Oracle; lives with his wife and two children in San Jose, California.

Dash, Meera: is an editor in Ft. Worth, Texas.

Dash, Dr. Udaya Nath: is a retired physician who currently lives in Bonita Springs, Florida.

Kar, Dr. Bauri Bandhu: is a professor of Oriya at Berhampur University in Orissa.

Khandai, Chandan: is a fourth grader and lives with his parents in Aurora, Illinois.

Mahanti, Ranu: is an accomplished singer and an active supporter of *Basundhara*.

Mahapatra, Dr. Bijay Prasad: is an eminent linguist of India; currently holds the title of Deputy Registrar General of the Language Division of the Government of India.

Mahapatra, Dr. Sitakant: is a well-known Oriya poet and critic; has received many honors and awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award and the prestigious Jnanpith Award.

Mansinha, Dr. Lalu: is a professor of geophysics at the University of Western Ontario in Canada; a former editor of the Journal of OSA; actively involved in SEEDS, the Ananda Fund, and other charitable projects.

Mansinha, Dr. Mayadhar: was an eminent educator, poet, and literary critic; besides his poetry anthologies, he has authored other books such as "The Saga of the land of Jagannath", "History of Oriya Literature" and "Sikhyabidra Gatha".

Mishra, Dr. Digambar: is currently the Executive Director of OSA; has served as editor of the Journal of the OSA as well as president of the organization.

Mishra, Dr. Ganeswar: is a professor of English at Utkal University in Orissa; recipient of many awards and fellowships, including the Sahitya Akademi Award; has published numerous poems, short stories, and novels.

Mishra, Ghanashyam: is with the U.S. Department of Energy Savannah River Operations Office.

Mishra, Dr. Prabodh K: is a professor of history at Sambalpur University in Orissa.

Mishra, Raju: is a well-known Oriya film maker; the photographs in the middle of the front cover and the one on the back cover of this souvenir were taken by him.

Mishra, Sarita: is a graduate of the University of Georgia and currently resides in Atlanta.

Mishra, Shanta: is a geophysicist at Schlumberger and an active member FACE, a family support group based in Houston, Texas; also a Sangeet

Mishra, Swaroop: has just completed his first year at Stanford University.

Mishra, Swati: is a recent graduate of Franklin and Marshall college and currently lives in La Plata, Maryland.

Misra, Dr. Bijoy Mohan: is a physicist who teaches at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Misra, Dr. Devi P.: is a physician who has been an active member of OSA and a strong supporter of *Basundhara*.

Misra, Nivedita: is a recent graduate of Harvard-Radcliffe Colleges and currently lives in Washington, D.C.

Misra, Dr. Ranu: is the chairperson of the State Commission for Women in Bhubneshwar, Orissa.

Misra, Saratchandra: is a member of the Orisa Public Service Commission; served as Minister in the Indian

of Police for the state of Orissa; also served as Minister in the Indian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Mohanti, Priyambada: lives in East Lansing, Michigan.

Mohanty, Binod: is a recent graduate of the Yale School of Epidemiology and Public Health.

Mohanty, Sneha: lives in Huntington Beach, California.

Mohapatra, Leena: has completed her tenth grade in high school and lives with her parents, Sarat and Rita Mohapatra

Mohapatra, Manorama: is a well-known writer, speaker, and social worker. She is also the Associate Editor of the Oriya daily, the *Samaj*.

Mohapatra, Dr. Nirupama Kar: is a molecular biologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Moharana, Samson: is a professor at Utkal University, Orissa.

Nanda, Arati: resides in Austria.

Nayak, Laxmidhar: is a well-known novelist, poet, and lyricist; recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award as well as the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. His experimentation in "Oriya Ghazals" has been appreciated.

Nayak, Dr. Parikshita: is the current Secretary-Treasurer of OSA.

Nayak, Srotalina: is a sixth grader lives with her parents, Surya and Sujata Nayak, in Maryland.

Nayak, Surya: is a lyricist and lives in Maryland; some of his lyrics have been put to music and recorded; has been a regular contributor to the Journal of OSA for several years.

Padhi, Jatindra: is an author, poet, lyricist, singer who lives in Cuttack, Orissa.

Panda, Siddhartha: is a graduate student at the University of Houston in Houston, Texas.

Parija, Deepa: is a graduate of Delhi School of Economics and an accomplished painter in Madhubani style.

Pati, Dr. Prasanna: is a retired psychiatrist who played the role of Dr. Sonjee in the film "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"; lives in Salem, Oregon.

Patnaik, Kishori: is a poet and has recently published a collection of her poems in English; lives in Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

Patra, Dr. Priyadarsan: works for Intel and is an active member of SEEDS; lives in Portland, Oregon.

Pattanayak, Manaranjan: has been an active member of OSA since its inception and has been the convener of several OSA conventions; is the Chairman of Construction for the Kalinga Hospital Project and is an active supporter of SEEDS and other similar organizations.

Pradhan, Dr. Atul Chandra: is a professor of history at Utkal University in Orissa, India.

Rath, Arun Shankar: is a graduate student at Georgetown University and is doing an internship with National Public Radio's program "Talk of the Nation."

Ray, Dr. Pratibha: is a prolific writer and speaker; has received both the prestigious Sarala Award and the Moorti Devi Award of the Bharatiya Jnanpith for her novel *Yajna Seni*.

Ray, Dr. Surendra: is the President of the Software Cooperation of America and resides in Maryland.

Sahu, Dr. Bhagabat: is a physician and the Chairman of the Jagannath Society of the Americas; lives in Athens, Alabama.

Sahu, Joya: is a tenth grader and lives with her parents, Bhagabat and Puspalakshmi Sahu, in Athens, Alabama.

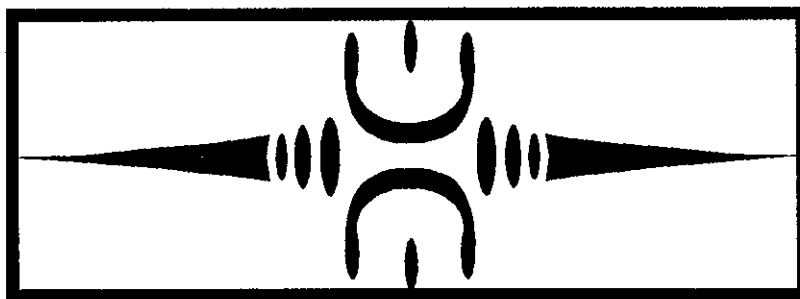
Sahu, Padma: is a fourth grader and lives with her parents, Bhagabat and Puspalakshmi Sahu, in Athens, Alabama.

Sahu, Subir: is a high school senior and lives with his parents, Saura and Jharana Sahu.

Sahu, Tutu: is an eighth grader and lives with his parents, Devraj and Urmila Sahu, in Germantown, Maryland.

St-Pierre, Dr. Paul: is a professor at the Université de Montréal in Canada and is one of the key members of the Oriya Translation Project.

Unger, Mary Ann: is a well-known sculptor who has used the torana of the Mukteshwara Temple as a "theme" in some of her pieces; a picture of one of her works is included on the front cover of this souvenir; She currently resides in New York.



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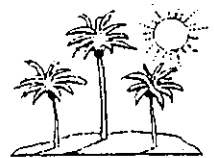
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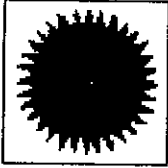
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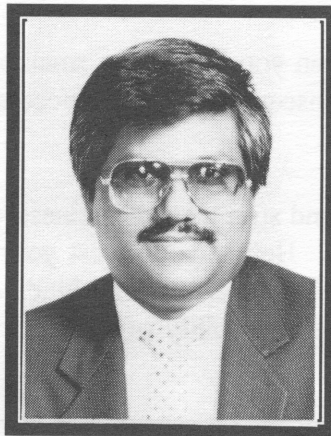
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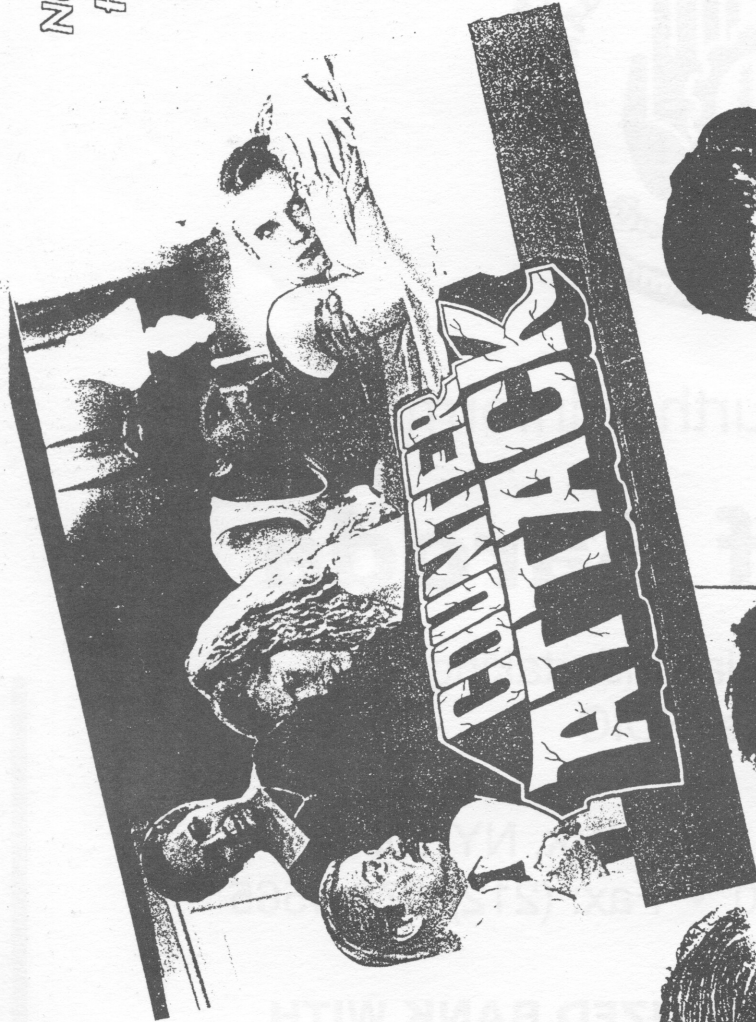
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