



ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

The 32nd Annual Convention, Chicago



2001 Souvenir Issue

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ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ୱାଗତ କରୁଅଛି
Orissa Welcomes You

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that the Oriyas of Americas (OSA) will be holding their 32nd Convention in Chicago during June 29th to July 2nd and publishing a souvenir on this occasion.

The Oriyas abroad have earned accolades in various fields and brighten up the face of our State. They should be proud of their glorious heritage when ancient Orissa excelled in art, architecture, sculpture and maritime trade. I hope the Oriyas of Americas would contribute significantly to our efforts in rebuilding Orissa as a prosperous and vibrant State.

I extend my warm greetings to all the members on this happy occasion and wish them great success in their endeavour.

(NAVEEN PATNAIK)

Dated June 20th, 2001

Table of Contents

(ସୂଚୀପତ୍ର)

Front & Back Cover and Convention Logo	Saroj Mohanty	1
Message from the OSA President	Anadi Naik	2
Message from the Convener	Saroj Mohanty	3
Responsibilities at the Chicago Convention, 2001	Saroj Mohanty	4
Editorial (Oriya)	Jhinu Chhotray	5
Editorial (English)	Raj Kishore Pati	6
Ambassador, Lalit Mansingh, A Profile	Jnana Ranjan Dash	7
Keynote Address at the 25 th OSA Convention	Lalit Mansingh	9

Remembering You.....

A Life Journey Ends, a Life Journey Begins	Lalu Mansinha	16
In Memory of the Founding Father	Saradindu Misra	19
Utkal Ratna Prof. Bhubaneswar Behera: Memoirs	Niranjana Mishra	23
Manmohan Misra, the voice of the people	Rabi Dash	27
ତମେତ ଫେରିବ	ରବି ଦାଶ	୨୯
Kuntala Kumari Sabat's Centenary in Delhi	G.K. Das	30
Forever Remembering	Iris Yashodhara Das	34
Moving On	Seeta Misra	36
The Last Tide	Anushila Mahanty	37

Glory That Glitters

ଉତ୍କଳର ଗୌରବ- “ସୁଧର୍ମମନ୍ଦିର”	ସୁଶୀ ଜ୍ୟୋତିର୍ମୟୀ ସେଠି	୩୮
ହେ ବିଶ୍ଵର ମହାରାଜା	ନନ୍ଦକିଶୋର ଶତପଥୀ	୪୦
I'm Hindu, I'm proud, and I'm here to Stay	Deepalie Milie Joshi	41
ଏ'ତ ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା	ବିଜୟ ମିଶ୍ର	୪୨
Initiatives in Western Orissa	Devi. P. Misra	44
ମୁଁ କିଏ	ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପାଢୀ	୪୬
Portrait Poem	Amrit Misra	47
ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ରତ୍ନସମୁଦ୍ର	ଆରତୀ ମିଶ୍ର	୪୮
Puri Beach	Ananya Mishra	54
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆତ୍ମପରିଚିତି: ସମୀକ୍ଷା ଓ ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା	ଶୁଭକାନ୍ତ ବେହେରା	୫୫
Radha Krishna – A Painting	Reena Pattnaik	58
Purusottam Kshetra	Pratyasha Acharya	59
ସର୍ବ ଚରାଚର	ଶାନ୍ତିଲତା ମିଶ୍ର	୬୧

Table of Contents

Memories Are Never Lost

Memory	Seema Mishra	62
Reflection	Seema Mishra	62
ଆମର ଏ ବନ୍ଧୁତା	ସବିତା ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ	୬୩
Emotion	Sangita Misra	64
Memories	Sangita Misra	64
ଝୁରା ପଥକ	ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ	୬୫
Remembering Holi	Chandra Misra	66
ଝୁରୁଥିବା ମନ	ଚିନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୬୮
Solace of the Light	Sneha P. Mohanty	69
କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର	ପଦ୍ମନାଭ ପ୍ରଧାନ	୭୦
Support	Tanuja Tripathy	71
Remembering Bahadur Shah Zafar	Bibhu Padhi	72
This Green Light	Bibhu Padhi	72

Life with it's Twists and Turns

Whats the Problem	Avisek Chandan Khandai	73
ମୂଳଦୁଆ	ତାପସ ସାହୁ	୭୪
The Gateway to Heaven	Prasanna K. Pati	79
God's Guiding Hand	Bagmi Das	86
Fate is Given to You, But Destiny is Yours	B. C. Sahu	87
Spring Semester	Nirupma Kar Mohapatra	89
The Missing Appointment	Ishwar P. Pati	90
It Would Be Really Strange If	Avisek Chandan Khandai	92
The Pulanga Tree	Bidyut Mohanty	94
Eternal Love	Nilu Rath	97
The Wait	D.P.	98
Ode to Bliss	Snigdha Mishra	101
Time Unlimited	Babru Samal	102

Something for Everyone

A Waker – Up's Woe	Soumya Shanker	103
Letter to a Child A Time to Count	Srikanta Mishra	104
ଅନନ୍ୟ ଅନୁଭୂତି	ମନୋଜ ପଣ୍ଡା	୧୦୬
Grandpa's Story	Ghanashyam Mishra	108
My Brothers	Dave Raj Praharaj	112
One Jealous Turtle	Anyarath	113
ଘୋଡ଼ିଏ କବିତା	କବିନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ	୧୧୪

Table of Contents

Something for Everyone

House Lizards	Bibhu Padhi	116
Never	Bibhu Padhi	117
ପରିଚୟ	ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୧୧୮
Poem for the Tree.	Raju Samal	119
House of God	Raju samal	119
ସମାଧାନ	ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ	୧୨୦
The bird in the sky	Prerana Pradhan	129
My Love of Computers	Sanjay Misra	130
A Tale of Two Worlds	Abhisek Chandan Khandai	131
Beauty	Ankita Mohanty	133
Flowers	Shaswati Das	134
The Beach	Swagateeka Panigrahy	135
Why I Enjoy Going to OSA Conventions	Jeeta Mahapatra	136
My Little Girl!	Sabita Panigrahi	137
ସ୍ବାଭିମାନ	ମଧୁସୂତା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ	୧୩୮
Cranes at pre-dawn	Raju Samal	139
The Wind	Nilu Rath	140
The Moon	Nilu Rath	140
Friends	Nilu Rath	140
I am Inique	Mrunali Das	141
An Ending? Or a Beginning...	Smita Mahapatra	142

Facts, Not Myths

Random Thoughts for an Er-in-Law School	Mamata Misra	143
ଜୀବନ	ଶଶିଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର	୧୪୮
Food Habits of Orissa	Shahabuddin Md. Gani	149
Jagannath Society of the Americas	Panchanan Satpathy	155
Orientation Program for H.S. Teachers in Orissa	Nareh Das	156
A Report on Ravenshaw College Alumni Assocn.	Surendra Nath Ray	159
Supporting Your Project in Orissa	Devi P. Misra	160
ବୃକ୍ଷାବସ୍ଥା- ଏକ ସାମାଜିକପ୍ରଶ୍ନ	ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାରାୟଣ ଦାସ	୧୬୧
A solution to dire needs in oDiSA	Rotary International	164
Rehabilitating a Cyclone-ravaged Village in Orissa	Our Village Trust Members	168
Visions for New Orissa	Sankarshan Acharya	174

Table of Contents

Activities of Our Association

OSA Orissa Cyclone Relief Fund Report	177
PRESIDENTS of the ORISSA SOCIETY OF AMERICA	188
VENUES OF OSA ANNUAL CONVENTIONS	188
THE 31 st CONVENTION OF OSA, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE	189
THE 31 st OSA CONVENTION, FINANCIAL STATEMENT	192

FRONT COVER

The cover for the 2001 Journal was designed by Ashok "Babu" Parida. Ashok and his wife Sarita live in Aurora, Illinois with their two beautiful daughters. Ashok has his own businesses, primarily in the automotive repair industry. Ashok and his wife are both artistically talented. Ashok designed the 2001 Journal's cover to primarily represent the migration of Oriyas from east to the west. The east is represented by the depiction of the Rajarani Temple in Bhubaneswar and the west is represented by the skyline of Chicago. The sunrise depicts the hopes and aspirations of the Oriyas in the USA. Assisting Ashok in designing the cover, was Jeff Boberg, Senior Graphics Artist at Conseco.

Convention Logo

The logo for the 32nd Annual Convention depicts the skyline of Chicago and that of Puri. It depicts the metaphor of our lives in the greater Chicagoland area. The logo was created by Mrs. Geeta Pattanaik. Mrs. Pattanaik lives in Riverside, California with her husband, economist Dr. Prasanta Pattanaik. Mrs. Pattanaik is a Librarian by profession. She has indulged in art as a hobby from her childhood. She also indulges in crafts and has held exhibitions of her art and crafts regularly. She is also a qualified Commercial Graphics Artist, having obtained her training in the discipline from the University of California, Riverside. Mrs. & Dr. Pattanaik have a lovely daughter, Swaha, who works for Reuters in London, UK.

BACK COVER

The back cover of the 2001 Journal is a painting by Mrs. Chitra Patnaik. Mrs. Patnaik is a professional artist who also teaches art. She has a Masters in Fine Arts degree from Shantiniketan. She has exhibited her work in several national galleries in India. She currently lives with her family in Bhubaneshwar, Orissa.

President's Message on the eve of 32nd Annual Convention of OSA

Last year at Nashville, our friends from the Chicago area promised us a very good 32nd convention. All year long, they have been preparing for this event. For their tireless efforts they deserve a big hand from all of us.

For many within OSA, this year has been a contentious year. Yet, words have not destroyed the mutual respect our members hold for each other. In the process, the organization as whole has become stronger, more responsive and more engaged in issues confronting our relatively small community. As a result, more Oriyas have become more involved in solving Orissa's problems than ever before. This is the most heartening thing that has come out of this contentious year.

In a personal way, the last two years have been quite eventful for me. They have given me a chance to know and work with some of the wonderful people in our community. Last year we had to deal with the Super cyclone and all the problems it brought with it for the coastal Orissa. The problems of reconstruction are not over yet. This year, we have to deal with the drought problems of Western Orissa.

The 32nd convention will spend a lot of time and energy to find ways to help the people of Orissa. As usual, the convention will be a grand gathering of friends and relatives. Cultural events and culinary extravaganza will create and highlight the real Oriya feeling amongst us.

I urge each participant of the convention to share his/her commitment to Orissa with others and help make the convention a grand one in every possible way.

With best wishes to all. –

Anadi Naik President, OSA



Message from the Convener

The members of the Chicago Chapter of OSA extend a warm welcome to you as you attend the 32nd Annual OSA Convention. The Chicago-land area is noted for its friendliness and hospitality. The members of the Chicago chapter as well as some of our friends across the country have worked diligently through the past year to extend the Midwest warmth to you, as you attend the 32nd OSA Convention. As in recent years, the younger generation has planned and will be executing the Convention. It has been my pleasure to be associated with this fine group of individuals, as they have worked hard to bring you three days of social and cultural activities.

It has been a wonderful experience as well as a lot of fun as we worked hard to pull the pieces together for the Convention. There were adversities along the way too, but everyone has worked together to overcome them. Support for our efforts has come in different forms and I want to take the opportunity to thank all our supporters for helping us make this a successful Convention. We have been able to demonstrate our pride and passion as Oriyas in a constructive manner during the process.

During the Convention we will be spending time reflecting in the glory of our past as well as enjoy an opportunity to showcase and recognize the successes and achievements of the present. We hope to use the discussion groups at the Convention as an occasion to plant seeds that germinate and blossom into initiatives that benefit us as a community as well as benefit our motherland, Orissa.

We hope you will have a fun and enjoyable experience at the Convention and at Chicago.

Cordially,
Saroj Mohanty, Convener



ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

The Thirty-Second Annual Convention, Chicago

June 30th – July 2nd, 2001



Convention Volunteers

OSA Chicago -- Officers

(Host chapter)

Satish Jena, President

Sarita Parida, Vice-President

Himanshu Sahu, Treasurer

Convener

Saroj Mohanty

Assistant Conveners

Padmini Khuntia

Sudhansu Panigrahi

Advisory

Sankarshan Acharya

Anup Behera

Bijoy K. Misra

Gokul Misra

Sarat Mohapatra

MaryAnn Patnaik

Cultural

Shreelekha Mohanty

Sthitaprajna Acharya

Arun Das

Bigyani Das

Chandrasri Das

Pratap Das

Shabnam Das

Usha Dash

Ashok Misra

Bijoy Misra

Bijoy M. Misra

Anuradha Mohapatra

Tarani Mohapatra

Radhagobinda Mohanty

Prakash Muduli

Sujata Panigrahi

Meenakhi Panigrahy

Rosalin Samantray

Decoration/Gifts

Ajanta Jena

Ipsita Satpathy

Sarita Parida

Finance

Sarada Mohapatra

Gokul Das

Pradeep Nayak

Sushant Satpathy

Food

Roopa Mohapatra

Ratna Mishra

Priyambada Nayak

Fund Raising

Ashok Parida

Anup Behera

Gokul Mishra

Housing

Tarani Mohapatra

Logo Design

Geeta Pattanaik

Pre-Teen Activities

Gokul Das

Registration/Reception

Ashish Mohanty

Himanshu Sahu

Sunita Dash

Sunil Mishra

Nitai Misra

Lipika Sahu

Seminar

Manmath Nayak

Anup Behera

Souvenir

Surya Panigrahy

Raju Pati, (Editor)

Jhinu Chhotray, (Editor)

Dipti Rath

Stage/Equipment

Saurjya Khandai

Prashant Mohanty

Young Adult Activities

Ranjan Mohanty

Sunita Dash

Prashant Joshi

Subhasree Joshi

Sunil Mishra

Nitai Misra

Sumi Misra

Ashish Mohanty

Monica Mohanty

Prashant Mohanty

Youth Activities

Sujatha Nayak

Sunita Mohanty

Seetal Mishra

Anjali Agarwal

Shilpi Chhotray

Chandan Khandai

Abhijit Misra

Anulekha Mohanty

Leena Mohapatra

Tina Mohapatra

Lina Nayak

Lisa Nayak

Madhuri Nayak

Nick Nayak

Ellora Roy

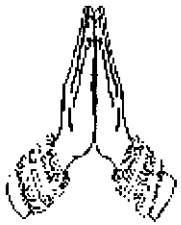
Web Activities

Nilmadhab Nanda,

Sanjib Parija

Sachi Pati

Ashok Sahu



ବିନ୍ଦୁଗଣ,

ନମସ୍କାର । ଏଇ ପତ୍ରିକାଟିର ସଂପାଦିକା ହେବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇବା ଏକ ଗୌରବର ବିଷୟ । ମୋ'ଉପରେ ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଗଭୀର ଆଶ୍ଚା ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ରଖୁଥିବାରୁ ସିକାଗୋର ସମସ୍ତ ସଦସ୍ୟଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ।

ମଧୁକର ଓ ମଧୁଛତ୍ର ସହିତ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ବ୍ୟତିରେକ ସୁମଧୁର ପୁଷ୍କରସର ଆସ୍ବାଦନ ମିଳେନା । ବିନା କଷ୍ଟ ଓ ସାଧନାରେ ସଫଳତା ଅସମ୍ଭବ । ସମ୍ପାଦନା ଏକ ସମୟ ସାପେକ୍ଷ ଓ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତିକର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏଇ ପରିଶ୍ରମର ଅନ୍ତିମ ପରିଣାମ ଅଶେଷ ଆନନ୍ଦମୟ ଓ ତୃପ୍ତିକର ।

ପତ୍ରିକାଟି ଏକ ସମନ୍ୱିତ ଉଦ୍ୟମର ଅବଦାନ । ବିନା ଲିଖନରେ ଯେପରି ସଂପାଦକ, ସଂପାଦିକାଙ୍କ ଭୂମିକା ନ ଥାଏ, ବିନା ପାଠକ, ପାଠିକାଙ୍କ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସହଯୋଗରେ ଲିଖନର ପରିପୁଷ୍ଟ ଓ ପରିବର୍ଦ୍ଧନ ହେଇ ପାରେନା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତ ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା, ପାଠକ ଓ ପାଠିକାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆମର ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ।

ମୋର ଏଇ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱର ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତାରେ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସହାୟତା କରିଛନ୍ତି ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ୍ ଓ ମୌସୁମୀ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ । ଅନବରତ ଉତ୍ସାହ, ପ୍ରେରଣା ଏବଂ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଟି ସ୍ତରରେ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ସମୟରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଉପଲବ୍ଧତା ପାଇଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ମୁଁ ଖୁବ୍ କୃତଜ୍ଞ । ସ୍ୱେଚ୍ଛାକ୍ରମେ ଛାପା ସଂଶୋଧନର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ବହନ କରି ଲେଖାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଯଥାସାଧ୍ୟ ତୃପ୍ତିଗୁନ୍ୟ କରାଇ ଉପସ୍ଥାପିତ କରିବା ଦିଗରେ ସହାୟତା କରିଥିବା ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ବିଜୟ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କୁ ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ।

ଆଜି ଆମେ ଏଇ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପତ୍ରିକାଟିକୁ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଓ ଗର୍ବର ସହିତ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ହସ୍ତରେ ଅର୍ପଣ କରୁଅଛୁ । ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ଭ୍ରମଶୀଳ । ଯଥାଶକ୍ତି ଉଦ୍ୟମ ପରେ ଯଦି ତୃଟି ଥାଏ, କ୍ଷମା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନୀୟ ।

ଝୀନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

From my heart to yours...

Some six months ago, when Saroj Babu, the Convener, and I met at a social function in Naperville, naturally we got around to talking about the upcoming OSA convention. It was a time of great excitement, expectations and most importantly, responsibilities. As we talked, the excitement within me grew and visions of a convention, where all participants are having fun, socializing, discussing ways to help our Motherland, and of course proudly admiring the souvenir in their hands, ran through my mind. I think it was at that moment that I involuntarily volunteered to co-edit the souvenir, taking responsibility of the English section. This was my opportunity to follow my heart and give something back to the society. I had a great co-editor in Mrs. Jhinu Chhotray, who is a seasoned editor and herself a writer.

This was my first experience in such a role, and I really did not know what to expect. So I approached some previous editors for guidance and the tips that were so generously and readily offered, have helped me immensely. I thank them all for sharing their experience with me.

Well, the daydreaming was suddenly over when the articles started to arrive and I had a challenge at hand. I would be kidding if I said, "It was a walk in the park". But then, on second thought, in many ways it was just that. As one is free in will when walking in a park, to sing with the birds, wander away from the trodden path, reminisce in old memories, remember those that are no longer with us, be proud of one's heritage, lose track of time and so on and so on, such was my experience in editing the articles in this souvenir.

It makes me proud to partake in putting together such a diverse collection of verses, stories, memories, and hard facts from such a diverse group of contributors. The sleep-starved nights are now over and we are ready to present this compilation to you, our readers. I truly envy all of you for the novelty of your experience when you read this collection, because, for me now it is in the past. The "Keynote address by Lalit Babu at the 25th Convention", singularly stands out as a 'must read'. This is a piece that will inspire all generations.

I cannot thank the contributors enough for the experience they have given me, and all I can give them back is encouragement from my heart to keep on writing. It will be foolhardy of me to even attempt at thanking the many that have guided me, encouraged me, listened to me, and above all, tolerated me during this journey of mine. But, I must say it, "Thank you".

All members of the Chicago chapter have, in many ways, worked hard and selflessly to pull together this unique convention. Please do take a moment to greet and show your appreciation to any and all host chapter members, when you see them.

I believe in beginning or ending any endeavor with the acknowledgment of blessings from Lord Jagganath. He has given me the energy to complete this task. He watches over us all, always.

So, as we convene, mingle, lose ourselves in the fun and frolic
And debates so close to our hearts,
Please take a moment, now and then, to say "Jai Jagganath"....



...Raj Kishore Pati,
Co-editor

Journal for the 2001 OSA Convention at Chicago



Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, A Profile

Mr. Lalit Mansingh assumed the position of India's Ambassador to the United States on March 15

For the first time in history, we have a son of Orissa as the Indian ambassador to the United States, Mr. Lalit Mansingh. It is a rare honor and prestige for Orissa to see this illustrious Oriya to adorn such an important diplomatic position.

A brief background

Lalit Babu is the second son of Orissa's well known poet, philanthropist, educator, and author of several books, Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh. After completing his bachelor's degree in history, he did his masters degree in Political Science from Utkal University. While his father wanted him to be a musician, Lalit Babu was at the top of the list in the elite Civil Services selection examination, and joined the service in June of 1963. He was the first Oriya to top the all-India Civil Services examination. He took up several diplomatic positions in Afghanistan, Geneva, and Belgium. The first appointment as ambassador came in 1980, to the United Arab Emirates.

He was appointed Deputy-Chief of Mission (DCM) to Washington DC during 1989-92. Following that, he was posted as Indian High Commissioner to Nigeria, which was considered a rather difficult assignment. Later, he was Dean of the IFS

Training Institute in Delhi, and then was appointed as India's High Commissioner in London. After a 14-month tenure in London, he took over as Foreign Secretary in December 1999. All these three positions in Nigeria, U.K. and that of Foreign Secretary were also positions for an Oriya for the first time. He is only the second Foreign Secretary to be appointed ambassador to Washington DC., the first being T.N.Kaul. Needless to say, one has to be an outstanding person, even among a pool of outstanding persons, to be appointed DCM in Washington, Dean of Diplomatic School in New Delhi, High Commissioner in Nigeria and the U.K., Foreign Secretary, and now India's Ambassador to Washington DC.

In addition to being an outstanding diplomat, Lalit babu's supplemental asset, during his service in Washington, was art and culture. He had served previously as Director of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in New Delhi, when the "Festival of India" was organized in several countries. As someone wrote, "His innate good taste drips from every detail: classical music, paintings, books and general aesthetics. He is always so polite and civil to everyone – an example incarnate of a perfect gentleman, really.

And Mr. Mansingh is always so impeccably well dressed – even in casual wear.”

Lalit Babu is married to Indira, a senior media professional, and they have two children.

Personal Observations

I met Lalit Babu for the first time in 1992 at the annual OSA Convention in Atlanta. He came as the chief guest from Washington. His deep love for Orissa was evident immediately from his speech and through personal interactions. We met again in 1994 at the twenty-fifth OSA convention. He flew all the way from Lagos, Nigeria to meet all the Oriyas in North Americas at the convention and to be the chief speaker. He presented a very thought-provoking speech titled, “Orissa, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow”. It is worth reading by all persons from Orissa. (The keynote address has been published in this issue of the souvenir). I have never seen someone synthesize the entire history of Orissa so precisely, extolling the bravery and adventure of Oriyas during the maritime history. He then painted the dismal view of Orissa today, based on statistical facts. Finally he presented two

pictures of Orissa’s future, one a very grim one and the other a brighter one. He concluded by suggesting what the expatriate Oriyas can do towards achieving the brighter future.

Last time we met was at the 1999 OSA Convention in Toronto, when he came from London (he was India’s High Commissioner to the U.K.). I asked him how he could find time to come when there was the Kargill war going on in India. He smiled and said, “I had given my word to Lalu Bhai (Professor Lalu Manasinha of London, Ontario, Canada) and I had to come.” His address at that convention was equally uplifting and educational. One quickly realizes how much he cares for Orissa.

In conclusion

Orissa lacks in modern-day icons and mentors for the younger generation. Lalit Babu stands out as an inspiration to all. He also shows the virtues of humility despite all the successes. Let us take real pride for such an illustrious son of Orissa amidst us holding such an important position. We wish him the best in this very important role.



Jnana Ranjan Dash lives in San Jose, California. He is a life member of OSA and works as Group Vice President, Architecture & Technology, at Oracle Corporation.

Keynote Address at the 25th Annual OSA Convention

By **Shri Lalit Mansingh**, IFS, High Commissioner of India to Nigeria, Ambassador of India to Cameroun, Chad and Benin. *He is presently India's ambassador to the USA.*

The 25th Anniversary of the Orissa Society of Americas is a very special occasion and an important milestone in the Society's history. This is evident, not only from the unusually large gathering of the Overseas Oriya Community, but also the galaxy of dignitaries and outstanding sons and daughters of Orissa, present here, led by Hon. Shri K. P. Singh Deo. It is an occasion for deep introspection and self-analysis, so that we discover where Orissa and Oriyas stand on the eve of the 21st Century. I have chosen to speak on a topic, which is as sweeping as it is challenging, "Orissa Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow".

History, unlike light, does not proceed in a straight line. Orissa's chequered history had its ups and downs - from the heights of glory to the depths of defeat and despair. From the mist of Indian antiquity emerges a great kingdom called Kalinga. In the Mahabharata war, we see the King of Kalinga, entering Kurukshetra with a formidable formation of war-elephants, to fight on the side of Duryodhana. Unfortunately for Kalinga, it was not the winning side. A more spectacular defeat awaited Kalinga in the 3rd Century BC, when the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka decided to conquer a territory he has described as Avijta i.e. previously unconquered. The Emperor paid tribute to the bravery, and recklessness of the defenders: 100,000 soldiers were killed and 150,000 taken as prisoners of war. Ashoka renounced war, became a Buddhist and used Kalinga as a base for his missionary activities overseas.

Two hundred years later, Emperor Kharavela appears on the scene. He conquered large tracts of territory in the South and the North,

including Ashoka's Magadha. He relished his victory by making his elephants and horses drink from the River Ganga.

We skip a few centuries and find the Sailodbhava dynasty ruling Orissa from the 6th to the 8th Century AD. From the ports spanning the Eastern seaboard, merchants from Orissa reached distant destinations in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Java, Bali, Sumatra, Borneo, Malaya and Cambodia. Historians point to the links between the Sailodbhabas of Orissa and the Sailendras of South East Asia, the builders and patrons of the great temples of Borobudur and Ankor Wat. The rituals of *Balijatra* and *Khuduru Kuni Osa* in Orissa today remind us of a great maritime past.

The Golden Age of Orissa came with the Ganga Dynasty, which ruled, from the 11th to 14th Centuries. The great temples of Puri, Bhubaneswar and Konarka were erected during this period. Orissa remained a strong, powerful and independent Kingdom, even while the neighboring States fell victim, one by one, to the conquest of Muslim invaders. In 1568, Orissa became the last Hindu Kingdom in India to lose its independence.

According to historians, the next three hundred years constitute the Darkest Period of Orissa's history - a period of continuous slide into decline. Repeatedly exploited and plundered by invaders, Orissa became the hapless victim of the power struggle between the Muslims, the Marathas and the British. By the beginning of the 20th Century, Orissa existed only as a geographic expression. Oriyas lived as aliens in three different British provinces: Bengal, Bihar and Madras. Worse

still, Oriya culture was under threat and the Oriya language was almost extinguished as powerful groups conspired to declare it as a dialect of Bengali.

It is appropriate on this occasion, to pay tribute to our great leaders, who stubbornly fought for Orissa and saved her from oblivion. Special mention may be made of three of Orissa's founding fathers: Barrister Madhusudan Das, Maharaja Shree Ram Chandra Bhanj Deo of Mayurbhanj and Maharaja Krishna Chandra Gajapati of Parlakhemindi. Madhusudan Das was undoubtedly the greatest among them. He was the first Oriya graduate, the first Oriya advocate, the first Oriya to join the Viceroy's Council and the first Oriya Minister. Through the Utkal Sammilani founded in 1903, Madhusudan Das waged a struggle for more than three decades to achieve the cultural revival and political unification of Orissa.

To those who now take Orissa for granted, it is worth reminding that Orissa became a separate province only in 1936 and attained its present geographical form only in 1949. The British certainly had a sense of humor in creating Orissa on April 1st, 1936.

I have so far attempted to present, in a capsule, the Orissa of yesterday: from the pinnacle of its glory under the Chedis, the Sailodbhavas, and the Gangas to the depth of its degradation under the Muslims, the Marathas and the British. Let us now turn the focus from the past to the present.

An assessment of Orissa should rightly begin with an inventory of its physical assets. It has an area of 60,000 square miles, slightly larger than Florida, 40% of which is said to be covered with forests. The Eastern coastal belt

of Orissa has rich alluvial soil and the abundance of water. According to the National Commission on Agriculture, Orissa, with 4% of India's geographical area has 10% of the country's water resources. The Western region is endowed with extensive mineral resources. Orissa has one of the world's largest deposits of coal, iron ore, bauxite, dolomite, limestone, manganese and graphite. It has nearly 20% of India's total mineral resources, including 98% of chromite, 70% of bauxite, 33% of graphite and 26% of iron ore. The Chilika Lake, with 450 square miles of shallow backwaters, combined with an extended coastline of 500 kms on the Bay of Bengal, make Orissa a treasure house of marine resources.

It would be logical to assume from this impressive inventory that Orissa must be one of the most prosperous States of India. Unfortunately, the reality is quite the contrary. In the mid-19th Century, British administrators described the Orissa region as the most backward area of the Bengal Presidency. One hundred and fifty years later, Orissa retains the unhappy distinction of remaining the most backward province of India. Per capita income in Orissa in 1989-90 was Rs.1557, which is 50% of the per capita income of States like Punjab, Maharashtra and Haryana. According to a statement made in the Indian Parliament on 20th December 1993 by Mr. Giridhar Gomango, Minister of State for Planning, 55.61% of Orissa is below the poverty line, making it the Poorest State in India. In other words, while the rest of India has forged ahead, Orissa has remained at the bottom of the pile.

The development of human resources reveals a mixed record. The progress of education in the State has been a redeeming feature. Orissa

did not have a University until 1943. Utkal University was established that year with 11 colleges and 300 High schools. Today, the State boasts of 5 Universities, 3 medical colleges, 6 Engineering and Technical Colleges and over 300,000 students. Nevertheless, literacy in Orissa is one of the lowest in India. It is 48.5% compared to the Indian average of 52.2%. Female literacy is only 34%. Among the tribals in Orissa, who constitute 20% of the population, literacy is as low as 2%. Infant mortality in Orissa is 122 per thousand, among the highest in the country. It reaches almost 150 per thousand among the tribal population. The national average is 80 per 1000.

The growth of infrastructure has been slow and inadequate. Orissa has only 122 kms of surface roads per 1000 square kms of area, compared to the national average of 269 kms. Only 15% of Orissa's villages are connected by all-weather roads, compared to 41% at all-India level. Orissa, which was power surplus until 1982 has been suffering a power famine since then. Power is currently imported from far-away Chukha in Bhutan and neighbouring Farakka in West Bengal. Power availability in Orissa today is 721 MW against a total demand of 1271 MW, a deficit of over 43%. Current projections forecast a deficit of 22% even by the turn of the century.

The history of industries in Orissa is even more revealing. Madhusudan Das is regarded as the pioneer of industry in Orissa. Around 1885, he established the Orissa Art Wares to revive the traditional arts and crafts of Orissa, especially gold and silver filigree. This was followed in 1897 by Utkal Tannery which was set up to process local hides and skins and produce shoes, bags and other finished products. Madhu Babu was a great

visionary, but a less than brilliant business manager. His two ventures were commercial disasters, forcing him into bankruptcy in his declining years. From 1885 to 1947, Orissa had only 2 industries, a paper mill and a cotton mill. By 1962, after two Five-Year Plans, there were around 15 industries including the Public Sector Rourkela Steel Plant. By 1993, some 300 large and medium industries had been established. These may be statistically impressive but Orissa's place in the industrial map of India is still insignificant. A simple fact will illustrate the industrial backwardness of Orissa. Per capita output in the industrial sector is less than Rs.1000 in Orissa, compared to Rs.2000 at all India level. The figures for progressive states like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Punjab range between Rs.4000 and Rs.4500.

The question we should all ask ourselves today is: Why is Orissa poor? It has been fashionable among our intellectuals to ascribe the backwardness of Orissa to exploitation by outsiders. Orissa's decline, following the death of Mukunda Deva in 1568, was blamed, in varying degrees on the Muslims, the Marathas, the Tamils, Telegus, Biharis and Bengalis. Orissa, however, has been under Oriya administration for nearly sixty years. I wonder if this has brought much cheer and joy to the common people.

The recollections of past glories cannot erase the misery of the present. It is a matter of national shame that 12.5% of Orissa's population do not get two meals a day; that children are reported to be sold by starving parents in Kalahandi; that young girls from tribal areas are flocking to Delhi and elsewhere to seek employment as domestic servants. Most of the statistics I have quoted are those published by the Government of Orissa. If I have drawn a pessimistic and

bleak picture of Orissa today, it is not to minimize the considerable improvements, which have taken place in many walks of life. The intention is not to point accusing fingers at any one or find a scapegoat but to provoke a collective rubbing of minds to discover why Orissa suffers from poverty in plenitude. Only then can we find ways to expedite the pace of change in the future.

What then is the outlook for the future? I would like to present two alternative scenarios: a nightmare and a dream. First, the nightmare. I would like you to imagine Orissa twenty years from now. The population will have doubled from the present level of 30 million to approximately 60 million. Cuttack and Bhubaneswar will merge and become one urban area. Congested roads, lack of drainage and sanitation, and pollution will transform Cuttack-Bhubaneswar into the worst urban slum in India. The story will be repeated in cities and towns all over Orissa. The forest cover will be reduced from 40% to a mere 10%: thanks to the combined greed of contractors, bureaucrats and local leaders. The magnificent wild life of Orissa, including the tigers, cheetahs, elephants, crocodiles and turtles will face extinction. Urban and industrial wastes will be drained into the rivers and the sea. The beaches will become filthy and unhygienic. The Chilika Lake will lose its unique ecological character. Much of it will be reclaimed for human habitation; the rest of the lake will be turned into a large aquacultural pond for breeding prawns and fish. Modernization will come with a vengeance into Orissa. Bars, casinos, nightclubs, video-parlors and discotheques will be common features of the urban landscape. Lawlessness will increase and criminal elements will become powerful through political connections. For the masses

of people life will be nasty, brutish and short; for the elite, it will be insecure and full of stress. This is a pretty grim picture, and many of you may be inclined to dismiss this as the product of the fertile imagination of the son of a poet. I beg to submit that this is no flight of fancy on my part. Much of what I have described is already taking place. While official statistics claim that 40% of Orissa's land area is covered with forests, the latest remote sensing show that the forest cover is no more than 19%. Two other illustrations will suffice to remind us how close we are to disaster. The first relates to Talcher, situated in the heart of the industrial complex of Orissa. When I visited Talcher some ten years ago, I could not believe the surrealistic landscape, which greeted me. As far as the eye could see, everything was covered under thick layers of gray ash spewed by the thermal power station and other industries in Talcher. It looked to me like the aftermath of a nuclear accident. I shudder to think what Talcher looks like today, after the addition of the NALCO Aluminum Smelter and the new Super Thermal Power Station. As for Chilika. Few can resist being carried away by Radhanath Ray's poetic tribute to Chilika: "Utkala Kamala Bilasa Dirghika/Marala Malini Nilambu Chilika." At the present rate of encroachment and pollution, Chilika will not remain either Marala-Malini or Nilambu.

Let us turn away from this harsh depiction of reality to my dream of the Orissa of the future. In this scenario, there is orderly economic growth. The mineral rich western region is earmarked for industrial development, with stringent protection of the environment. A series of super thermal power stations, based on Orissa's enormous reserves of coal, convert Orissa into the powerhouse of

India's eastern region. With an abundance of power and mineral resources, Western Orissa develops as an advanced industrial region, specializing in metallurgy, heavy equipment and a host of major manufacturing industries. All this is achieved without degrading the environment or disturbing the balance of nature. In the rich, fertile eastern seaboard there is emphasis on tourism, agriculture, electronics, agro-industries, aquaculture and small-scale industries. The traditional arts and crafts flourish throughout the State. Famous fashion houses and interior designers use Orissa's handloom and handicrafts in their creations. Urban planning ensures the orderly growth of cities. Wide and well-maintained roads provide easy access to all parts of Orissa. The forest and tribal areas are preserved as a part of India's precious natural heritage. Tourists come in the millions not only to admire the ancient monuments but also to absorb the immense natural beauty of the forests, mountains, lakes and beaches. The ports of Orissa become active again, carrying cargo from the eastern region of India to farthest destinations.

To avoid the nightmare and fulfill the dream is the greatest challenge facing the leadership in Orissa today. Orissa has traditionally suffered from an impediment, which I may describe as the, Orissa Time Cycle. This represents the period Orissa has taken to catch up with the rest of India. Historically, there has been a 50 to 60 year time lag. (It is interesting to note that even the Mughals and the British occupied Orissa fifty to sixty years after they had established their presence in the rest of the country!) Industrialization took place in most parts of India in the early years after independence whereas the process seems to be starting in Orissa today. The Orissa Time Cycle needs to be broken and Orissa

must join the mainstream at an accelerated pace. With the liberalization and restructuring of the nation's economy in the past few years, India is poised for a great leap forward. Orissa must not miss her date with destiny this time. Oriyas overseas have made their mark in diverse professional fields not only in the United States and Canada, but all over the globe. The stereotype of the shy, immobile, homesick, Oriya is now a figment of the past. In the course of my assignments abroad, I have been pleasantly surprised to discover Oriyas in the most unlikely places: from the deserts of Arabia to the darkest corners of Africa. Most recently I have met them in Nigeria, the Ivory Coast and even the tiny Benin Republic. I firmly believe that Non-Resident Oriyas have an important responsibility in the shaping of the Orissa of tomorrow. Their experience of the new frontiers of science and technology and their exposure to the forces of international trade and commerce will be of inestimable value if Orissa has to leapfrog into the 21st Century.

I believe the time has come for Orissa to adopt an external policy. Authorities in Orissa must seek out new markets for Orissa's products and attract investments from abroad. Non-resident Oriyas will have a significant role in this regard. I have therefore the following suggestions to make for OSA:

1. The creation of a Small Standing Group within OSA to prepare a socio-economic data-base on Orissa and identify areas in which overseas Oriyas can make significant contributions.
2. The formation of two other broad groups:
 - a. To survey and identify the projects in which Overseas Oriyas can invest.

- b. To identify socio-cultural Non-Government Organizations (NGOS) for making effective use of charities in donations from Overseas Oriyas.

I am confident that these groups will, render a most valuable service to hundreds of overseas Oriyas all over the world. Three major areas come to mind where non-resident Oriyas will have a natural advantage: First: Hi-tech industries and services; Second, Exports, and Third, Tourism. Oriya professionals in Europe and North America have distinguished themselves in a wide range of industries and services: electronics, telecommunications, computers, power production and banking. These are the very areas attracting foreign investment to India in recent years. And herein lies the most cheerful news, which has come from Orissa in a long time.

In the financial year April'93 to March'94 Orissa was the third largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). FDI approvals for Orissa during this period totaled Rs.780 crores, following Rs.1514 crores, for Maharashtra and Rs.956 crores for Delhi. What it means is that Orissa's economic potential has received recognition from overseas investors. I am convinced that Non-Resident Oriyas should stake out a major role in this development. The export prospects from Orissa are enormous. There are the traditional staples: minerals like iron ore, manganese, bauxite and chrome. It should be easy to add to this granite and other stones which are in great demand all over the world. Orissa's traditional arts and crafts, textiles, sculptures and filigree jewelry have a vast market if only we can expand production and follow the market trends. Export of manufactured products will be possible after Orissa sets up a solid industrial base.

Tourism is the third major area in which Orissa's Potential has been exploited only marginally. The global tourism market consists of 500 million tourists per year of which only 1.8 million visited India in 1993. Only a small fraction of this came to Orissa. According to a draft tourism plan some 5 million tourists are expected to visit India by 1997. Using a simple rule of thumb, a million tourists will generate foreign exchange earnings of around \$1 billion. I am convinced that with a little effort tourism can become a major revenue generator for Orissa. Consider the unique attractions: incredible natural scenery with mountains and forests teeming with wild life; vast white beaches with sun and sand; two thousand years of art and architecture embodied in magnificent temples and monuments and a rich living legacy of dance, music, folk arts and crafts. Orissa has been the home of three major religions: Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Religious tourism can be a major attraction not only for pilgrims within India but visitors from Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and other prosperous East Asian countries. These are only suggestions in outline. The mapping out of details can best be done by the Non-Resident Oriya groups I had suggested earlier. I earnestly hope that this will be the beginning of a close, two-way collaboration between Orissa and overseas Oriyas for the future prosperity of Orissa.

I would like to refer in this connection to a problem, which is agitating a number of Overseas Oriyas: a perception that the authorities in Orissa are lukewarm, often hostile in dealing with their proposals. The recent experience of the sponsors of the Kalinga Hospital Project is cited in support of this feeling. It seems to me to be a case of mismatched expectations. Oriyas in Orissa are

often offended by the supercilious attitude of returning natives who seem to have lost touch with the reality of India. Overseas Oriyas in return, are hurt when their prosperity and success abroad seem to be resented and their genuine desire to help Orissa is misunderstood and discouraged. These are wrinkles, which need to be ironed out. We are fortunate in having the presence, at this convention, of distinguished political leaders, senior civil servants and businessmen from Orissa. I would urge our leaders present here to consider setting up, either in Delhi or

Bhubaneswar, a small cell for extending help and guidance to Overseas Oriyas.

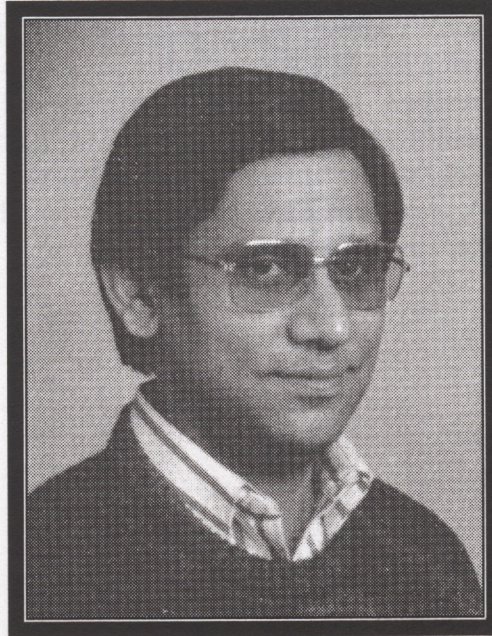
I would like to conclude on a note of robust optimism for the future of Orissa. It is not without symbolism that India's latest technological achievement, the 2500 km ballistic missile Agni has been launched from Chandipur, not far from the ancient Surya temple at Konarak. With Lord Jagannath being assisted by Surya and Agni, Orissa's destiny is safely in the hands of the Gods.

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्
अन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

ବାଞ୍ଚିବି ଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣାଣି ଯଥା ବିହାୟ,
ନବାନି ଗୃହ୍ଣାତି ନରୋଽପରାଣି ।
ତଥା ଶରୀରାଣି ବିହାୟ ଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣାଣ୍ୟ,
ଅନ୍ୟାଣି ସଂଯାତି ନବାନି ଦେହୀ ।

*As leaving worn-out garments
A person takes other, new clothes,
So leaving worn-out bodies,
The soul enters new ones*

— The Bhagabat Gita



A Life Journey Ends, a Life Journey Begins
Hemant Senapati (1948 - 2001)

*For the born, death is unavoidable;
For the dead, birth is sure to come.
In that which is inevitable,
There is no justification for grief.*

*Unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval,
The soul never dies when the body dies.*

ଅଥ ଚୈତ୍ ନିତ୍ୟଜାତଂ, ନିତ୍ୟଂ ତା ମନ୍ୟସେ ମୃତଂ ।
ତଥାପି ତ୍ଵଂ ମହାବାହୋ, ଚୈତ୍ ଶୋଚିତୁମର୍ହସି ।
ଜାତସ୍ୟ ହି ଧୁତୋମୃତ୍ୟୁ, ଧୁବଂ ଜନ୍ମମୃତସ୍ୟ ତ ।
ତସ୍ମାଦପରିହାର୍ୟୋଽର୍ଥେ, ନ ତ୍ଵଂ ଶୋଚିତୁମର୍ହସି ।

We grieve for Hemant Senapati, not just for a life extinguished, but for a husband, a companion, a father, a son, a brother, a friend, and a colleague taken away in his prime. His was a life well lived, but not lived long enough. Grief for the departure of such a man comes naturally, yet grief is proscribed, for, birth, life and death are part of the eternal cycle of life. In the Hindu view of the universe birth follows death as surely as death follows birth.

Hemant Senapati passed away on Monday, June 4, 2001, after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife, Sworna (Kuni), and sons Rajesh and Devesh, and brothers Shishir and Manoj in America, and one other brother and a sister in India.

Hemant was born in 1948 to the late Srimati Padmabati and Shri Haribandhu Senapati, of Singarpur, near Pipili, in Orissa. We feel for Sworna, Devesh, Rajesh and all members of the family, and we feel the agony of a ninety-two year old patriarch receiving the news of the death of a son. At the memorial services in Detroit on June 9, friends, colleagues and acquaintances painted a portrait of a remarkable man, a man who has touched the lives of so many, in the Oriya, Indian and American communities. His secretary of 22 years tearfully described what a wonderful boss he was. A sheriff from Macomb County described how they could find no one to treat the jail inmates; fortunately Dr. Senapati came forward eleven years ago. The sheriff and Dr. Senapati became family friends. A much younger colleague described how he had friends of his own age, but after working with Dr. Senapati, Hemant became his best friend. A colleague described how, against their advice, Hemant gave money to his needy patients. Hemant considered helping the indigent patient a part of the duties of a physician. So, many of his patients became his friends.

Another Good Samaritan act by Hemant for a stranger in distress led to a lifelong friendship. In the long lineup at the Passport Office in Calcutta, Hemant saw a young woman with a child, very distraught because she had lost her passport and all papers. Hemant helped her, looked after the child, and made sure that they got all the papers right and the airline ticket back to USA. That lady is Mrs. Kalpana Dash of Minneapolis. Thus started a lifelong family friendship. Hemant and Sworna followed Sita Kantha and Kalpana in naming their two sons Rajesh and Devesh.

After receiving the MBBS degree in 1972, he came to America in 1974, and started his residency in 1976 in Detroit. I remember the day I met Hemant for the first time, in a house in a suburb of Detroit. There was this lively and unassuming young man with glasses, just finishing his residency, and talking about his new job in a few months. What I remember most was his laughter.

In the years that followed, as Hemant rose as a popular physician and hospital executive, his demeanor did not change. He continued to be the same happy, modest and concerned person. Most marriages of Oriyas of his generation and earlier, were arranged by parents, well wishers and friends. Not Hemant. He met a pretty young Oriya girl, Sworna Subudhi, studying Social Work in Detroit. They fell in love.

Dr. Senapati's professional competence and leadership resulted in his rapid rise in the medical hierarchy in his area within a very short period: Medical director, Pontiac General Mental Health 1985-1986; Administrative responsibility at Macomb County Jail 1980-1986; Utilization Review Coordinator, Psychiatric department of Holy Cross Hospital 1988- 1990; Vice Chairman, Department of Behavioral Medicine, St. Joseph (Mt. Clemens) 1987- 1992; Chair of Behavioral Medicine, St. Joseph (Mt. Clemens) 1992-2001; Executive Director, Department of Psychiatry, St. Joseph (Mt. Clemens) 1994-.

Dr. Senapati was an extraordinarily competent doctor and administrator. He is the first physician of Indian origin in the Detroit area to be appointed the head of a major department. Under him the Department of Psychiatry underwent major expansion, increasing two and half times in size, both in budget and staff.

Often, professional success and achievement of personal wealth brings about insulation from the community. Not so with Hemant. The most remarkable thing was that he retained his humanity and links with the community. He remained much the same, as I had seen him in 1976. He was active in the Michigan Chapter of the OSA. In fact his pride was that he was the only physician from Orissa who repeatedly and successfully ran for the high executive positions of the Orissa Society of Americas, Vice President (1981-1983); Secretary-Treasurer, (1991-1993) and President (1995-1997). During his tenure as Secretary-Treasurer, he along with the President planned and setup the first OSA Orissa Center in Bhubaneswar. Hemant provided funding for the project.

Over the years Hemant has given generously for community and cultural projects. He established two high schools in his village, one for boys and the other for girls. The first group of students graduated last year, in 2000.

This immigrant physician from Orissa came to America and touched the lives of so many, at all levels of life. He has been recognized as the 'Compassionate Physician of the Year'. My heart swelled with pride at the memorial service, in that I had known such a man and that this man came from Orissa.

The lasting image of Dr. Hemant Senapati is as I saw him for the first time on the bright sunny day in 1976 - a happy young man concerned about humanity. That is how we must remember him.

Lalu Mansinha, London, Canada

Hemant Senapati Memorial Trust Fund:

To continue the goals and projects that Hemant Senapati supported during his lifetime, the Hemant Senapati Trust Fund has been established in collaboration with the Orissa Society of America. Please make the checks payable to OSA, and write on the Memo line: Hemant Senapati Memorial Trust Fund and mail to: **Shishir Senapati, 2653 Somerset Blvd. Apt. #209, Troy, MI-48084**

In Memory of the Founding Father

During November/December of 2000, my wife Lata and I visited Orissa. Upon our return, our dear friend Mana Ranjan Pattanayak came to fetch us from the Newark, NJ airport and gave us the sad news that Dr. Krushna Mohan Das had passed away on December 6 at the Kalinga Hospital. For us, it was like a bolt from the blue. Only on December 5, we had the privilege of meeting with Dr. Das and Basi Apa at their Bhubaneswar home. Although weak, Dr. Das seemed to be in best of spirits. He was lying on the bed, but got up when we showed up. We had a lively conversation with him for over an hour and we never thought that he would depart from this world, forever, the very next day. Although he was suffering from multiple physical complications, he never gave the impression that he was ready to call it "quits" so suddenly. He was undergoing dialysis twice a week at the Kalinga Hospital and seemed extremely pleased with the treatment dispensed to him by the hospital. We stayed in Bhubaneswar for about ten days during which time we had the opportunity of meeting the Das family three times. Each time, it was pure pleasure discussing and reminiscing about people and events of the past, along with hearty meals provided by Basi Apa. During his last visit to New York in May of 1999, Dr. Das promised my wife to treat her with a *PĀLĀ* when she would come to Bhubaneswar, next. True to his promise, he organized a *PĀLĀ* in Bhubaneswar, while we were there. About 100 people were invited, including dignitaries such as poet and administrator Sitakanta Mahapatra. It was a great evening. A delightful Dr. Das sat among the guests till 11 P.M. After the conclusion of the *PĀLĀ*, Basi Apa treated all the guests with a sumptuous vegetarian meal. Little then did we know that his end was so near.

Dr. Das was among the first Oriyas who set foot in this country in 1958. He obtained his MS and Ph. D. from Cornell University with high distinction. Born in a poor family in 1925, in the village of Chasikhanda in Jagatsinghpur district, he lost his mother at the age of two. She died of smallpox. While attending the P.M. Academy High School at Cuttack, he joined Gandhiji's "Quit India" Movement and courted imprisonment in Cuttack and Berhampur jails. In spite of his involvement in the Movement, he passed his

Matriculation examination with flying colors, securing a position among the best 10. His classmates were some of the most distinguished Oriyas of our time, such as, Justice Ranganath Mishra and Professor Jiten Mohanty. He then joined the Bihar Veterinary College of Patna from where he graduated in 1946 with distinction and honors in Pathology and Bacteriology. He became an Assistant Professor in the newly opened Veterinary College at Cuttack. In 1958, he was selected to pursue higher studies at the Cornell University and thus set foot in the United States of America. After obtaining his Ph.D. from Cornell, he held a variety of teaching, research and administrative positions in the United States, notable among them, as Professor of Pathology at the Pace University and Chief of Staff at the Animal Medical Center, both in New York City. He owned two animal hospitals, one in Yonkers and the other in Mount Vernon in New York. Later, he joined the Federal Government from where he retired in 1992.

When I came to United States in 1971, I brought with me a letter of introduction from Mr. Ullas Mohanty of Bhubaneswar who is the brother-in-law of Krushna Babu and met with him a week after my arrival in New York. Since I had no permanent place to live at that time, Dr. Das insisted that I stay with his family, and thus started a life-long friendship between his family and my family. Both Krushna Babu and Basi Apa (Mrs. Das) treated me no less than a family member. However, I was not alone. Dr. Das welcomed scores of newly arrived Oriyas in New York with open arms into his home until they were settled, and found residence elsewhere. At that time, Dr. Das was the only Oriya to have a house in New York City. Scores of visiting dignitaries from Orissa, including Chief Ministers, Assemblymen, Assembly Speaker, Members of Parliament, etc. were his guests when they were in town. Every weekend, unless someone else had invited him, there would be a gathering of all the local Oriyas in his house. Amidst lively conversation of all sorts, Basi Apa's authentic Oriya food was the greatest attraction. Memorable of all the events at that time was the Thanksgiving party hosted by Dr. & Mrs. Das every year. All the Oriyas of the tri-state area were invited and were treated to a sumptuous feast. It was a tradition that continued for over a decade while Dr. Das lived in Queens, New York.

Dr. Das was a true Oriya patriot. He epitomized Oriya tradition, culture, language, and above all, the Oriya spirit in every breath of his life. At that time, when there was only a handful of Oriyas in the United States, he encouraged Oriyas to migrate in greater number to this country. In his opinion, this would reduce the burden of unemployment in Orissa while the immigrants would substantially contribute to their families in Orissa in form of valuable remittances. Whenever there were natural calamities in Orissa, such as, flood, drought or cyclone, he would immediately set up a task force to collect money and material for the victims and made sure that the relief reached the affected people. Unfortunately, such occasions were numerous and he tirelessly contributed his time and energy, besides extending substantial financial help. His children continue to speak chaste Oriya although brought up in this country from a very early age. They all married in Orissa. In the year 1969, Dr. Das formed an organization called the Orissa Society of New York, before even the formation of OSA. When OSA was formalized as an organization later, the New York Society became its first chapter. He never craved for any position in OSA, although he had been roped in to become the president of OSANY many a time. During his leadership of OSANY, his landmark achievement was to institute three annual scholarships in the three universities of Orissa - Utkal, Berhampur and Sambalpur, from where the best graduates in every year get an OSANY scholarship. He was a familiar figure in almost all the annual OSA conventions and would be called upon to moderate whenever there were differences of opinion. He would always speak from his heart, never ever thinking of maligning or belittling anyone, be it young or old. In recognition of his service to the Oriyas in North America, OSA conferred on him the Utkaliya Award in 1993, along with wife Basanta Kumari.

After his retirement from Government service, Dr. Das started spending more time in Bhubaneswar. By then both of his sons were firmly established as physicians in New York. He wrote extensively in local newspapers and magazines about the Oriyas living in the United States. He also wrote his biography at that time, depicting his time and life in the United States. He also devoted a substantial part of his time building a college in Baisi Mouza, near his village, Chasikhanda in Jagatsinghpur district. The college has since been completed and was given recognition by the Government of Orissa. In

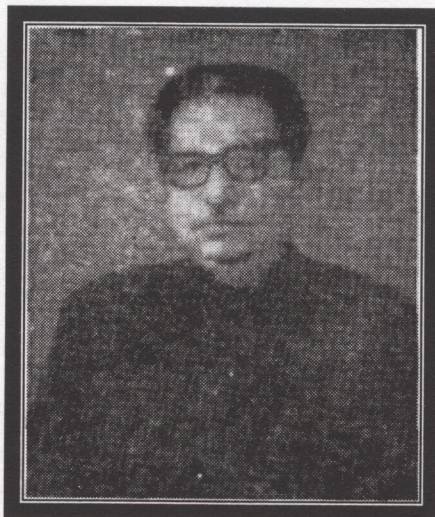
between, he came to New York several times, where his two sons are living. Because of his failing health, both of his sons would persuade him to stay permanently in New York in order to avail better treatment, but he would always go back to Orissa after a couple of months' stay in the USA. His final visit to the USA was in the year 1999. His two sons, Akhaya and Annada, along with their wives Rini and Ruby, planned a big 50-year marriage anniversary for Dr. & Mrs. Das. A big hall had been rented and hundreds of invitations were sent out for the occasion. However, Dr. Das fell ill soon after his arrival in New York. He was immediately admitted to the Northshore hospital in Manhasset and his condition steadily deteriorated. The planned felicitation had to be cancelled. Some of us, at that time, thought that he would never recover. However, due to the excellent treatment provided by the hospital, and the care and devotion of his wife, daughter, sons and daughters-in-law, he recovered miraculously. But once that happened, disregarding all pressure from his family, he was ready to return back to Orissa. I was in constant touch with him at that time and also suggested to him that going back might prove fatal to him, because of lack of treatment and facilities in Orissa, compared to what he would get here. He confided that his end was drawing near and his cherished desire was to die in Orissa and be cremated in Puri. The end came finally on December 6, 2000 and his mortal remains were taken in a procession to Puri. He was cremated on Swargadwara. In his honor, the Orissa Military Police accorded him the "Twenty-one Gun Salute".

In their eulogy in ORNET on December 7, 2000, Mana Ranjan Pattanayak and Lalu Mansingh have said, "Dr. K.M. Das was truly a founding father of the Oriya community here. He laid the path on which hundreds of later immigrants, young Oriyas, tread so effortlessly, and so casually, and went on to meaningful careers in the US and Canada. He was a pioneer. His life and living has touched us all" – a fitting tribute to the departed soul. The doyen has disappeared from our midst and it will be difficult to fill that void.

May his soul rest in eternal bliss!

Saradindu Misra is a member of OSA since 1971 and has been a regular contributor to the OSA Souvenir. He lives in Plainsboro, NJ with wife Lata.

Utkal Ratna Professor Bhubaneswar Behera: Memoirs



(January 1, 1916 - April 16, 2001)

When a man has a clear vision, total commitment and strong determination, he can excel in all walks of life and make the best use of his faculties. Professor Bhubaneswar Behera, a proud son of Orissa, an illustrious Engineer from Kalahandi, grew up in a small village in Kalahandi and took challenges in life to focus on developmental plans and multifarious activities and excelled in every aspect of life.

He was born on the New Year's Day of 1916, in the village Kashibahal in the princely state of Kalahandi. His early education included Matriculation from Bhawanipatna in 1935 and B.Sc. with Honours in Physics from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, in 1939 and B.Sc. (Engg) with honours in Civil Engineering from Bihar College of Engineering, Patna, in 1943.

After an apprenticeship in Works Department of Government of Orissa, he worked for the Irrigation Department of the then princely state of Mysore, and was involved in the Jog HydroPower Project. He returned to Orissa to join as an Assistant Engineer in charge of the Irrigation project under the Kalahandi-Durbar in 1945.

His vision for power and water shortage in western part of Orissa turned into a plan of action when he proposed and investigated the possibility of diversion of the water flow from the Indravati river to the Hati river, to cause an artificial water fall from a height of 2000 feet to generate hydroelectric power, and provide perennial water supply to the region. The Indravati river flows across Thuamal Rampur Plateau of Kalahandi and is a tributary of the Godavari river, running parallel to the Eastern Ghats. His preliminary investigation and report to the Maharaja of Kalahandi was later approved and thus the plan of a young engineer took shape as the "Indravati Project".

On a Government of India scholarship, he went for Master's Program in the University of Iowa, USA, in 1947.

On return from the USA, he joined the Kalahandi State Government as an Irrigation Engineer. With the merger of the princely state in 1948, he joined the Government of Orissa, and was deputed to work on the Hirakud Dam Project where he worked as an Assistant Engineer and then as Executive Engineer. University College of Engineering in Burla attracted him to go for a teaching career, and he joined there as a Professor and later became the Principal in 1961.

On August 15, 1961, under the charismatic leadership of Late Biju Pattnaik, the second Engineering College of Orissa was born, it was named the Regional Engineering College at Rourkela. Professor Behera was selected Principal of this newly born technical institution. He took up the challenge of turning the newborn institution into a premier technical centre for learning by accepting the position of Principal in 1962. He made remarkable contribution to the field of engineering education and research in this capacity until 1971.

During his nine years of stay as Professor and Principal of the Regional Engineering College, he made indelible impression on the student community, the faculty and staff. His view of life was a total commitment to the profession, position and responsibilities he held. While bidding farewell to the graduating class, his wife (late) Mrs. Uma Devi Behera, an ideal wife and a great social worker, would send out dinner invitations (in her name) and have all the faculty and their spouses cook a family dinner, serve the students and bid them "good-bye" and "good-luck" with tears in her eyes. "He suggested this" she used to say, "students are his children".

He tried to maintain the legacy of Ashram life and an unbroken bondage between Guru and *Shisya* in the residential environment of the Engineering College. In 1965, during a state-wide student strike, he tried to resolve the strike by REC students by resorting to hunger strike while recuperating from a major surgery. The students respected his Gandhian ideals.

He chose to leave Regional Engineering College in 1971 to accept the Vice Chancellorship of Sambalpur University. The staff and students gathered to bid him farewell, all spoke with tearful eyes and from their heart, how each would miss him, how he made the College grow with a touch of love and care under his term in office. Professor Behera, in his farewell remarks, spoke of the underlying meaning of Ratha Yatra. He said, "Orissa is proud to celebrate Ratha Yatra, keeping Lord Jagannath as the symbol of unity and prosperity".

He added, "When you go attend the *Ratha Yatra*, you either touch or pull the ropes of the *Ratha*, and there are thousands of devotees doing this. Everyone thinks, "I am pulling the *Ratha*", but it is the combined effort of all that can only pull this big and heavy *Ratha*. Everyone contributes as much as one can. Everyone has to do the action, and everyone shares the responsibility and glory. Every family, every institution, every organisation is

a *Ratha*, and we just cannot stand and watch, we have to do our role in building it. With total commitment and hard work, we can accomplish our goal. So with me or without me, the institution can and will grow". Such was his modest and inspirational speech, a story to remember and an ideal to follow.

There is another interesting anecdote relating to *Matrubhasa*. The College was conducting a debate competition on the "Three-language formula" envisaged by Dr. Triguna Sen. Some spoke for and some against the use of either Hindi or English as the National (Official) language of India.

As the moderator, in his concluding remarks, Professor Behera, said, "One's mother-tongue (*Matrubhasa*) is the dearest of all languages. Listen to this story.

"There were three roommates sharing residence with a bright, pretentious and seemingly smart young student. They were not sure what would be the mother tongue of this 'sahib-like boy'. Once while the 'sahib' was sleeping, the three friends got up in the middle of night and made an unusually loud noise as if there was a fire. The 'sahib' exclaimed "*ILO BOULO*", (O my mother!) And then the friends concluded, this 'sahib' is an Oriya."

Professor Behera's later day accomplishments included being deputed by Government of India to advise the Democratic Republic of Liberia (West Africa) on Technical Education. He was a member of the Orissa State Planning Commission. He joined as Member of the Union Public Service Commission and remained there till 1981.

On return to private life, he went back to his native place and enjoyed being a farmer and received awards for farming.

He kept his literary talents latent for many years. As Principal of Regional Engineering College, he used to write in Oriya and English quite infrequently. Later in life, he dedicated himself to write short stories, novels, and technical writings in Oriya. His essay book "Suna Parikshya" earned him 'Sahitya Academy Award' and his novel; "Gaonro Daka" earned him the "Sarala Award". Awards such a "Sarala Samman" and "Prajatantra Prachar Samiti Essay Award", "Sahiya Sudhakara" by Utkala Pathak Samsad were conferred on him. He has authored 8 books and several research papers. The Sambalpur and Utkal **Universities** have conferred on him the Doctorate of Science (Honris Causa).

In 1998, Professor Behera was honoured as "**UTKAL RATNA**". In April 2000, the old students of REC, Rourkela along with the present staff and students, paid homage to their beloved teacher by felicitating him with overwhelming emotions during the millennium celebrations.

He is survived by one daughter and three sons. Daughter, Dr Yashodhara (Mishra) has emerged as a prolific and established writer in Oriya. Sons, Malay is a physician; Binay

is a member of the Indian Railway Service; and Abhay is a member of Indian Police Service.

Prof. Behera's contributions to technical education and research in Orissa, and to Oriya literature, place him, as one of the greatest sons of Orissa of the last century. It is difficult to realize how one single individual could accomplish all these.

It is equally difficult to recount the many unforgettable memories he has left behind in the minds of thousands of students he cared for and hundreds of staff he managed. He had a magic touch of love and compassion, care and forgiveness, with which he turned stone into gold.

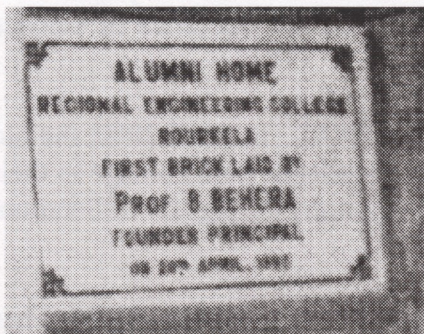
He is truly a "UTKAL RATNA", jewel of Orissa and Orissa lost such a "RATNA" on April 16, 2001.

His legacy, his life and works, his 'foot-prints on the sands of time' will continue to illumine the minds of future generations of Oriyas, in making firm resolve to build Orissa as a technically advanced, economically strong and culturally vibrant state, so that Oriyas, at home and abroad, can identify themselves as "Proud Utkaliyas".

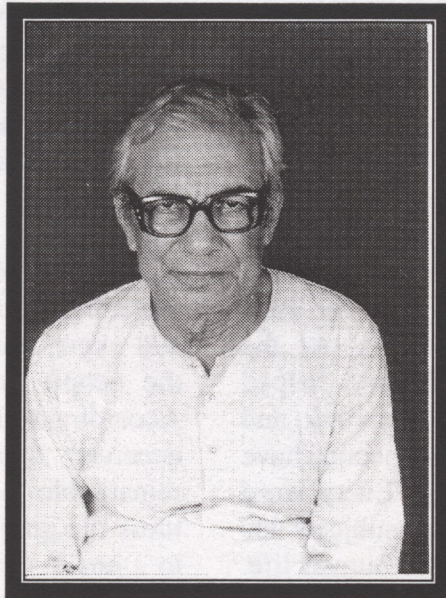
This is what **Utkal Ratna; Professor Bhubaneswar Behera** cherished in his life. We all pray that his soul may forever be at peace.

Niranjan Mishra graduated in Civil Engineering from Regional Engineering College, Rourkela in 1965. He belongs to the first batch of students in the college and had many years of close association with Prof B.Behera, both as a student and later as a member of the faculty of Regional Engineering College, Rourkela. He is currently President of Regional Engineering College, Rourkela Overseas Alumni Association. He lives in Sudbury, Canada.

(Biographical sketch prepared by Dr. Saroj K. Patel of REC, Rourkela, is gratefully acknowledged).



Manmohan Misra, the voice of the people



(March 23, 1920 – November 19, 2000)

Sri Manomohan Mishra, the patriot of the soil, has left us forever. His spirit lives with us with his idealism and poetry. As a patriot he had lodged relentless struggle for the independence of the country from the British colonialists and for the freedom of the people from the yoke of feudal, capitalist and colonial exploitation. For him nothing was more precious than the freedom of the people and the independence of the country. His image as was captured in his funeral is forever etched in the heart of the working people of Orissa, engaged either in mines, collieries, agricultural field, gardens or government offices. He and the masses were one. He wrote hundreds of poems, songs and articles to rouse the consciousness of the slumbering masses in the freedom movement of India. Such efforts are unparalleled. His melodious tone and commanding voice united the freedom fighters, students, cultivators, migrant laborers, poor peasants, Girijans, the have-nots and the down-trodden, in a voice of unison that has no comparison in India and is rarely seen in the world. He led the

progressive movement of poets, politicians, social workers and leaders for sixty years and became known as the “voice of the people” in Orissa. His oratory in Oriya had a profound effect on all and we would miss him.

Sri Misra was born on March 23, 1920 in the village Biranarasinghapur in Puri District in a progressive Brahmin family. His father used to work for the erstwhile princely state of Baudh and Sri Misra's early life was spent on the hills of western Orissa. Pandit Gopabandhu Dash was related to his family and he was deeply influenced by Pandit Dash to be inspired to a life of service and dedication. He had poetic inclinations and won prizes for his creative talents in school. While being felicitated in Puri in 1938 for his good results in BA examination of Patna University, he gave the fiery speech calling for complete freedom of all people. He was jailed for three years and thus began a life of service and dedication to human freedom and a call to end exploitation in all spheres. After coming out of jail, he published he poetry

collection "Koti Kanthe" which was banned by the British authorities. His undaunted courage to remove the Union Jack from the flagstaff in Ravenshaw College would remain as one of the heroic acts in the annals of liberation movement on Orissa soil.

His unique song "*Kete dure tora Odisha matire, kahin Mahanadi pani*", roused the migrant laborers of Orissa in Assam Tea Garden in 1948 like wild fire. He was in exile for three years and he continued to write about the pains and sufferings of people and helped organize the poorer masses for economic and social freedom. Many of these poems have been classics in Oriya literature. Every word explodes with power. The poet subjects his penetrating study to all aspect of human life. The poems became the organ of protest to integrate Oriya tracts into Orissa State during the state reorganization efforts in 1956.

After leaving the Communist Party in 1958, he joined with Pandit Nehru to organize socialistic movement through the formal government and the official procedures. He became the Chairman of Cuttack Municipality and helped to establish the daily newspaper, Kalinga. While he brought new light to journalism and to Oriya prose writing during this period, he was intolerant to be tied up with corruption and ineptitude. The cause of people was paramount to him and he left all official connections in 1964. He spent the next decades in the mines, collieries and factories of western Orissa in negotiating wage and benefits for the laborers. He led the working class movements in Cuttack, Keonjhar, Belpahar, Brajaraj Nagar, Rourkela

and Biramitrapur. His hunger strike for thirty-three days in Brajarajanagar is a beacon in Trade Union movement in Orissa. Before succumbing to his departure on November 19, 2000, he was busy organizing progressive writers in continuing to carry on the voice of the people, that he had heard.

By writing the ethos of people, Sri Manmohan Misra created words and poetry that are poignant and refreshing. The feelings and expressions speak out loud the agony of the people and their resolution to be free. According to him, people's heart can never be deceived, their will can never be bent. His remarkable poem "*Nuhen Kandana Bela*" turns the grief of people of natural calamities to a positive hope of unity and progress. His poem "*Muhin Hindustan*" is a call to the world from the youth of a young nation. In all compositions, the metaphorical word plays of conviction and resolution stand out as a tribute to the genius.

Politically, he believed in Marxism and translated many Marxist literatures into Oriya. He was aligned with the Marxists in India and in the world. For him Marxism was the new tool to end exploitation. He resolutely carried out proletarian revolutionary line and adhered to the political philosophy: "Practice Marxism, not revisionism. Unite, and don't split. Be open and be aboveboard. Don't intrigue and conspire". He attracted many young people as followers, and his idealism lives through the works of hundreds of selfless field workers today. His songs will be heard wherever there is exploitation and human subjugation. The light shall live on...

Rabi Dash, Kalahandi, Orissa.

01/06/2001

ତମେ ତ ଫେରିବ

(କବି ମନମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କ ବିୟୋଗରେ)

ରବି ସିଂ *

ଜନାରଣ୍ୟର ତରୁ-ବୀଥିକାରୁ କାହିଁ ଉଡିଗଲା କୁହୁ !
ଅଗ୍ନିବୀଣାର ସେହି ଝଙ୍କାର, ଯାହାଟା ମୁହଁମୁହଁ -
ବାଜି ଉଠୁଥିଲା ଗୀତେ ସଂଗୀତେ
ଜନସଭାର ଘାତେ - ସଂଘାତେ
ଚେତନାର ସେହି ଦାବାନଳ ଦିକିଦିକି, ଦାଉଦାଉ
ଯିଏ ଜଳୁଥିଲା ଶୁମସଭାରେ, ସେ ଥିଲା ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱବାହୁ ।

ପଥ ଦୁର୍ଗମ, ସେ ପଥେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ, ଝଟ ଓ ଅନ୍ଧକାର
ରକ୍ତ, ଅଗ୍ନି, ଫଣୀର ମଞ୍ଚ, ହାତାହାତି, କାରାଗାର ।
ସେ ପଥରେ ଶତ ଶହୀଦ ଶିବିର
ଅଜ୍ଞାତ ବାସ, ଶତ ଜଉଘର
ସେ ପଥେ କବିର କଂଠ କମାଣ ଗଞ୍ଜିଛି ଅବିରଳ,
ତାକୁ ମୋ ପ୍ରଣାମ, ତାକୁ ଜନଗଣ କର ହେ ନମସ୍କାର ।

ସର୍ବହରାର ସେହି ପିୟ କବି ଚାରଣ ଯେ ଗୀତିକାର
ତାହାରି ବିଦାୟେ ସର୍ବହରା ତୁ ଅବନତ କର କର -
ଦାଆ ଓ ହାତୁଡି ତାରକା ଖଟିତ
ସେ ଲାଲ ପଟାକା ଲେନିନ ରଚିତ
ପୁଷ୍ପିକାଦର ଜଞ୍ଜିର ଛିଡା - ଝଟକ ନମସ୍କାର,
ମରିନାହିଁ ସିଏ, ବସ୍ତୁର ସିନା ଘଟିଛି ରୂପାନ୍ତର ।

ବଂଧୁକ ପରି ବାନ୍ଧବ ସେ ତ ମୁକ୍ତିସେନାର ଲାଗି,
ବୁଦ୍ଧି ବିହୀନ - ରଣ ଉତ୍ସବେ ସିଏ ଥିଲା ଅନୁରାଗ
ବିଦ୍ୟୁତର ସେ ପବନ ପବାହ
ମୃତ୍ୟୁବିହୀନ ସଦା ପାର୍ଶ୍ୱମୟ
ସାମୟିକ ତାର ଅନୁପସ୍ଥିତି ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟଥା ଉଠେ ଜାଗି,
ଅଛି ତାର ସ୍ମର, ଅଛି ସଂଗୀତ, ଅଛି ଯେତେ ଅନୁରାଗୀ -

ପୁଣି ସେ ଆସିବ ରକ୍ତତୋମ୍ମେନ୍ ଶକ୍ତ ଆଘାତ ନେଇ
ରକ୍ତଗଂଗା କିନାରେ କିନାରେ ବାଜିବ ତା ସାହାନାଲ ।
'ତଳ'କୁ ଉପରେ ଆଣିବାକୁ ପୁଣି
'ଉପର'କୁ ତଳେ ନେବାପାଇଁ ଟାଣି
ପୁଣି ସେ ଆସିବ ଜାତୀୟ ଜୀବନେ ଲୋହିତ ଅଶ୍ୱାରୋହୀ,
କାନ୍ଦିବା ବେଳ ନୁହେଁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଆଖିଲୁହକୁ ତୋ ଭାଇ !

କବିର ବିଦାୟେ ପ୍ରଣତି ଜଣାଅ ବିଦଳିତ ଜନଗଣ
ଯେତେ ଖଟିଖିଆ ମଜଦୁର, ଟାଣୀ, ଲଜୁଆ ସଂଗଠନ
ଛନ୍ଦିତ ଚିର ବିନ୍ଦିତ ସିଏ
ଆଜି ପଦାତିକ ବିଶାମ ନିଏ
କେତେ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ହୁଅରେ ନୀରବ, ଦିଅ ତାକୁ ବିଶାମ,
ପୁଣି ସେ ଉଠିବ, ବୃନ୍ଦେ ଫୁଟିବ, ଶୁଭିବ ବଂଶୀସ୍ୱନ ।

ମାନବଜାତିର ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦରେ ଥିଲା ସେ ଆୟୁଷ୍ମାନ
ଲଢ଼ିଛି - ହାରିଛି, ପୁଣି ତ ଲଢ଼ିଛି, ସରିଲାନ୍ତି ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ।
ଶସ୍ତ୍ର ଛେଦିଲେ ସେ ତ ଛିଡିନାହିଁ
ଅନଳ ପାରିନି ତାକୁ କେବେ ଦହ
ଆକାଶେ ଛାଇଲେ ଯେତେ ବୋମାବାହୀ, ବିଦୋହ ତାର ନାମ,
ସିଏ ଜାଣିଥିଲା ବିପ୍ଳବ ନୁହେଁ ମୋଟେ ଗୋଲାପର ବନ ।

ବିଦାୟ ବିଦାୟ ହେ ମନମୋହନ, ଘେନ ହେ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ।
ତୁମେ ତ ଫେରିବ ଯୁଦ୍ଧଜୟର ନେଇ ଶୁଭ ସଂବାଦ ।
ବସିଛି ମଣିଷ ତୁମ ବାଟ ଚାହିଁ
ଫେରିବା ଛଡା ତ ତୁମ ଗତି ନାହିଁ
ତୁମେ ମଣିଷର ଶ୍ରମର ମୂରଲୀ, ତୁମେ ତ ଅଗ୍ନିଦେବ
ସାମ୍ୟର ତୁମେ ଲାଲ - ଓଢ଼ିକାର, ଜନମଉଣ୍ଡର ସ୍ୱାଦ ।

ନୁହେଁ ଭୋଜିସଭା, ଗୋଲାପଗଣୀ ବୁର୍ଜୁୟାର ସେ ପ୍ରୀତି,
ମହାଭୃଗୋକର ମହାଉତ୍ସବ, ଜୀବନର ଜୟଗୀତି ।
ରୂମାଲରେ ଫୁଲ ଆଙ୍କିବା କାମ
ଧନତାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ସିଫିଲିସ୍ ପେମ
କବି ଭାବେ ଯାହା ନୁହେଁ ସିଏ ତାହା, ବିପ୍ଳବ ଅପ୍ରୀତି
ସେ ତ ଫିନିଶ୍ ପକ୍ଷୀ ଶାବକ, ଅଗ୍ନିର ପ୍ରଜାପତି ।

ଜଗନ୍ନାଥର ଧାମର 'ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ ଦୁଆରେ' ତୁମରି ଚିତା -
ଜାଳିଲେ ଯେମାନେ ସେମାନେ ତ ଦେଲେ ତୁମ ସଭାକୁ ବ୍ୟଥା
ଜୀବନରେ ଦିନେ ଧର୍ମ - ଅଧର୍ମ
ଖାଇ ତ ନ ଥିଲ ତୁମେ ବାହୁଣୀ
ତୁମରି ଦେହଟି ହେଲାପରେ ଲୀନ ଘଟିଗଲା ସେହି କଥା
ହସି ପେଟ ଖଟେ ହେ ମନମୋହନ, ଧନ୍ୟ 'ଆତ୍ମୀୟତା' ।

'ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦୁଆର' ବାଟେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗକୁ ଯାଇନାହିଁ ତୁମେ ସାଥୀ,
ତୁମେ ତ ରହିଛ ଆମରି ମେଳରେ, ରହିଛି ତୁମରି ସ୍ମୃତି ।
ଆଜି ବି ଶୁଭୁଛି ତୁମରି ଭାଷଣ
ସଭାମଞ୍ଚରୁ ତୁମ ଗୀତଗାନ
ଏକାଠି ହେବାକୁ ମଣିଷର ତାଳ, ପାହିନି ଶୋଷଣ ରାତି ।
ଯେ ଚିତା ଜଳିଲା 'ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ ଦୁଆରେ' ସେ ନୁହେଁ ତୁମରି ସାଥୀ ।

* ମନମୋହନ ଶତାବ୍ଦି ପୁଷ୍ପିକାରୁ ସଂଗୃହୀତ

Kuntala Kumari Sabat's Centenary in Delhi

The centenary of the birth of Kuntala Kumari Sabat (1901-2001), one of the foremost crusader woman poets of the last century was held in Delhi on April 21, by the initiative of capital's academia, some eminent writers, journalists, some senior civil servants marked by their love of culture, and several cosmopolitan, patriotic citizens. The celebration had the moral support of Delhi's Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shiela Dikshit. It turned out to be a most moving event. Without it, one had the feeling that the centenary of this great woman would pass by unremembered. Like the little known men and women of history, Kuntala Kumari would rank with Thomas Gray, celebrated 18th- century elegist;

"Some village Hamden that with
dauntless breast

The little tyrant of his fields
withstood

Some mute inglorious Milton here
may rest

Some Cromwell guiltless of his
country's blood..."

With the exception of a modest celebratory function held by Orissa's *Lekhika Sansad*, which brought out a souvenir volume on the life and work of Kuntala Kumari, nothing noteworthy was done by our nation, where we boast of our abiding cultural values, to commemorate the saga of this historic woman, who, as an

activist poet and writer, was at one time an intensely romantic poet, a radical spokesperson of the underdogs, and a mystic, like the English poets Blake and Shelley. Her zeal for human rights, especially the rights of women and *dalits*, as well as her passion for social reform was the main motivation behind her poetry, fictions, and inspirational prose writings. She fiercely championed the cause of the masses, the oppressed and the submerged womenfolk in a male dominated, feudal India. Even today the majority of honorable male members of the Lok Sabha cannot agree on appropriately democratizing the composition of the august body by gender, by passage of the shelved Women's Reservation Bill!

Kuntala Kumari Sabat was born in the old state of Bastar, once a part of Orissa, but afterwards separated from it. Her Christian father Daniel Sabat was, by profession, a doctor, who stayed away in 'Burma' of those days for several years. Her mother, Monica Sabat, was keen that as a child, Kuntala learn English and Bengali. Kuntala had not learnt Oriya until the age of thirteen, when she was admitted to Ravenshaw Girls School. There, she was happy to learn Oriya. Securing the first position in school examinations, she got admission to Cuttack Medical School and passed the L.M.P. examination in 1921.

1921 to 1927 was a most fruitful period for Kuntala Kumari as regards shaping of her life as a poet and writer in the years that followed. She wrote extensively in Oriya: several volumes of poems, e.g. *Anjali*, *Archana*, *Sphuling*, which contained the poem titled 'Narishakti' i.e. womanpower, and novels of social questioning and commitment, e.g. *Bharati*, *Parasmani*, etc. Her works protested *purdah*, child-marriage, casteism, discrimination against women, untouchability, and supported women's rights steps towards their empowerment, widow remarriage, etc.

For some years she worked as the Superintendent of Cuttack Red Cross, but in 1927 resigned her job and left for Delhi, where she set up independent medical practice. That was a turning point in Kuntala Kumari's life. She became an Aryasamajist and married Krushna Prasad Brahmachari, protesting caste and religious taboos. She began to write in Hindi, in addition to continuing her work in Oriya language; she produced a volume of poems in Hindi titled *Baramala*. She also came to be an influential editor of several Hindi periodicals such as *Mahavir*, *Jeevan* and *Nari Bharati*. She was invited to deliver addresses in Benaras Hindu Viswavidyalaya and Allahabad University, according to data, painstakingly gathered by late Professor Kunja Behari Dash of Ravenshaw College. That was a mark of rare recognition accorded to a woman of those days.

Kuntala Kumari's development as an extraordinarily talented woman was comparable in significant ways to that of her senior poet and leader Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949). Sarojini, like the young Kuntala Kumari, always desired to be (in her own words): "A wild free thing of the air like the birds, with a song in my heart." In her letters from Florence, comparable to Kuntala Kumari's famous long "Letter from Delhi", Sarojini wrote in a vein of poetic ecstasy, "This Italy is made of gold . . . the gold of dawn and daylight, the gold of the stars . . . the gold of fireflies in the perfumed darkness. . . . God! How beautiful it is, and how glad I am that I am alive today." A romanticist at heart, she wrote Arthur Symons in 1904 that "the very 'Spirit of Delight' that Shelley wrote of dwells in my little home. . . ."

In personal life, Sarojini was far more privileged than Kuntala Kumari. She studied three years in Britain: first in King's College, London, and then at Girton, Cambridge, which accounts for the "Western influences" on her that Symons speaks of. Kuntala Kumari, on the other hand, was homespun: as a poet, thinker, and as an individual. Throughout her short life, she constantly emphasized the value of her dual identity: as an Oriya first, and then as an Indian.

In their social and political thinking and action they were markedly similar and yet dissimilar. Both were champions of secularism. Both broke the

bonds of casteism: Sarojini on her return from studies in Britain in 1898, married a non-Brahmin Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu, "to the scandal of all India" in the words of Symons, as did Kuntala Kumari - some twenty-five years after her - marry an Aryasamajist, outside of the Christian community. Sarojini and Kuntala Kumari both were followers of Gandhi and were deeply committed to the Indian National Congress. Sarojini Naidu was elected President at the Kanpur Session in 1925; Kuntala Kumari did not live long enough to gain that honor, but she played a leading role in the AICC Session held at Puri. As regards their position relating to Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu was, in principle, closer to Gokhale's liberalism than to the relatively greater activism of Gandhi, but Kuntala Kumari avowedly believed in Gandhi's policy above that of any other national leader. Her concept of 'Nari Swaraj' (Self-rule for women) embodied a highly far-sighted emancipated womanhood.

The points of difference between Kuntala Kumari and Sarojini went further. Although Sarojini Naidu ardently participated in the freedom movement against British colonial rule, she, strangely enough, opposed the struggle for freedom of the people of the Nizam-ruled State of Hyderabad. She was on the side of Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan. Kuntala Kumari Sabat showed no such ideological inconsistency in her single-minded devotion to people's struggle for freedom.

The centenary of Sarojini Naidu's birth was celebrated at a national seminar in Osmania University in 1979. Dr. P.C. Chunder, then Central Education Minister, gave the keynote address; eminent scholars from all over the country took part in the event. But neither the Central Government, nor the Government of the State of Kuntala Kumari's birth, Orissa, showed any noticeable interest in celebrating the centenary. Today's self-aggrandizing, blatantly partisan political masters as well as the *Babus* of the Central Government Department of Culture (Their dole to Orissa's *Lekhika Sansad's* function was a meagre ten thousand rupees given via the Central Sahitya Akademi), seem hardly concerned with a memory of this unforgettable woman of the nation. Apparently, for this circle, Kuntala Kumari has gone into oblivion.

At a time when governments are impervious to cultural history and people's aspirations to celebrate continuity and re-invention of past tradition, what civil society can do to preserve and enrich valuable, humane, identity were shown by the memorable Kuntala Kumari Sabat's centenary held by people's effort in Delhi at the India International Center. Papers were read at the conference on Kuntala Kumari's extraordinary life and works, her socio-economic perspectives as a writer, her radical nationalism, her richly ambiguous mind and art, her humanism, and her unwesternised feminism based on

a reformist vision of Indian femininity. These presentations evoked engaging interventions from the audience.

In a unique session titled "Fusion: Readings of Kuntala Kumari's Poems in Oriya and in Translations", one listened to renderings of her works in diverse languages; Ahomiya, English, Hindi, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.

Delhi's Chief Minister, Shiela Dikshit's declaration that

Delhi State, and indeed the entire nation will honor Kuntala Kumari by naming a street in the capital city after her, was greeted with thunderous applause from the audience.

Can one expect the present government of Orissa led by a writer-turned-Chief Minister to arise from apathy and think of building a befitting monument to the memory of this great Orissa-born woman of the 20th century?

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Forever Remembering

It is almost summer and I am in the midst of new beginnings. The clear azure sky surrounds me as rays of golden hue warm my tan skin. Before, the scent of freshly cut grass and the sounds of giggling children running through sprinklers would call for the yellow bag of oatmeal cookies and a trip to Bar Beach in the maroon Camry. But those days are no more. Instead, I pull up a dusty lawn chair and take a seat in the cool of the shaded porch where he once sat- reading the NY Times, nibbling on a snack. My eyes drift shut and I am back, forever remembering, a time of lazy summer days, filled with the intoxicating aroma of coconut filled trees and ripe mango groves. I can almost taste the nectar of juicy guavas and feel the red dripping from strawberry stained fingers. I feel the hot Indian sun beating down on my face, painting my cheeks with a permanent cherry blush, making me the sight of innocence and purity. I was always innocent in his eyes. In his eyes I could do no wrong. In his steps, we would follow with greater strides. In his arms, we would suffer no harm...

He lay in the bleak gray of the early morning dawn, upon a mound of white and ashen colored linens. A slow turning ceiling- fan provided him with his solitary source of relief from the scorching heat. There lay, buried in a haze of white pillows, a thin, frail man. His eyes released a helpless, lonely glance. At first, I thought I had entered the wrong room. This was not my grandfather, but rather a mockery of the man who once was- a paled image of the greatness I once knew.

"Hi Jeje", I spoke softly, afraid that if I spoke too loudly the delicate man lying in the bed would shatter into a million pieces. I cautiously walked over to the bed, not wanting to disturb him. I sat down upon a lonely brown chair and silently held his hand. I sat holding his tan and leathery hands- worn from ages of toil. Not a word was spoken but everything that needed to be said was said. My eyes quietly traced the now prominent bone structure in his gaunt face. His sunken eyes had seen so much in their 74 years. Would they be able to see more? His mouth had helped him speak his way through life, to attain the unthinkable, the impossible. His chin, stubborn and proud kept his head up- never letting it bend to the might of the many blows. He always said I would make it big someday. "You have the gift for the gab Iya," he would say. But I knew better. If only I possessed half his talent, if only I possessed half his charisma, if only I possessed half his power- maybe I could have saved him...

While he slept, my eyes stole a quick glance out of the window. As I gazed out the window, I remembered how my grandfather used to be. Suddenly I could smell the salty water of the Atlantic and feel grains of hot sand between my toes. I remember my days as a little girl swinging on low black plastic swing at Bar Beach. Behind me stood a tall, plump, energetic man. The sun shimmered off his dark gray hair and twinkled in solemn brown eyes. His arms, strong and powerful pushed me higher and higher until I could no longer see anything but the tops of the trees. He was always standing behind me- maybe that is why it is so difficult for me to remember his face back then. As I swung higher I caught glimpses of Bou sitting on a near by bench, smiling sweetly,

looking like a saint, a *devi*. This is how I knew them, Jeje and Bou- a pair, inseparable. Jeje would come down on the weekends, and before he even entered the house, he would call me to take me to Bar Beach, no matter how tired he was. Jeje was always like that- doing things for others without any regard for his own well being. People call him a "path finder". I know better though, he was not a path -finder he was a path maker. If there were trees in his way, he would cut them down. Boulders were no problem- he merely rolled them out of the way. He was the gate keeper- welcoming all in fervent enthusiasm. He was a father to many and a teacher to all. He broke barriers, brought himself and his family over, founded Temples, societies, colleges- but he was so much more than his contributions.

Lost in my own "re-memories" I barely heard Jeje saying my name. "Hi Iya".

"Hi Jeje" I said as I gave him a kiss on the head.

"Thank you" he said. He always said "thank you" whenever I gave him a kiss or "I know" when I told him I loved him. He always knew how to prevent a situation from becoming overly emotional- I loved that about him. We sat and talked for a while about the hospital, my adventures in Khandagiri and Udayghiri. My trip to Puri, the *Pandaas*, the monkeys, the heat, Amrit, Kris, Tina. We laughed and joked. After Jeje had gotten sick, this was the usual pattern of our conversation. Then he would grow serious. The lines on his forehead would appear and his eyes would gaze out past me in a pensive manner. You could see his mind working, thinking of what he wanted to say next.

"Iya, I've lived here forty years. I have done a lot in my life but not more than most. I do not have any regrets. I am proud of my children. I am proud of my grandchildren. I am proud of all of you." I would look into the eyes of this man, weathered by the storms of life, and see his heart. He spent so many years hiding it, building an iron fortress around it and now it had begun to crumble. This was not the hard and bitter man everyone feared. It was Jeje, my grandfather. He was my guiding flame in a world of darkness and cynicism. He made me the woman I am today. But, I know I could be so much more... if only he was here.

My eyes slowly flutter open. Drunk with sleep, the gaping darkness startles me and for a second I don't know where I am. But there is something comforting and familiar about my location and I realize that I am sitting in his old seat- I have accidentally taken his place. I quietly stretch my arms and legs, shaking off the sleep from my lethargic limbs. As I stand, alone engulfed by twilight I feel a sudden need for oatmeal cookies- the ones in the yellow bag. Hesitantly, I leave the chair behind to bemoan its solitude and I creep back into the warmth of the family room. Before leaving, I turn towards the black and white visage framed in gold, and say, "Goodnight Jeje, I love you."

Iris Yashodhara Das is 17 years old and a college bound senior in Manhasset High School in Long Island, NY. Krushna Mohan Das was her grandfather.

Moving On

It hurt's really badly,
Sometimes for very long,
It seems like this couldn't be happening
To me,
Not something this wrong.

I feel as if I can't breathe
As if someone knocked the wind out of
Me,
And if I close my eyes really tight
Maybe this whole thing wouldn't be.

I don't know what I am supposed to feel
Or what I am supposed to do,
I don't know what's wrong or right
What's false, or what's true.

My mind seems to spin in swirls
It goes around and around,
I seemed to have fallen
And just never quite reached the ground.
It's as if something reached inside my
Body
And pulled part of me right out,
Something very special to me
Something I could never do without.

Now this is how I felt
About six months ago,
It's been quite some time since then.
Now, this I know,
Even though it's been so long

I still sometimes feel like this,
I still feel bad
About what it is that I miss.

But I have come to realize
That even with my grandfather gone,
I have to understand that
It's time to move on.

I know that I will always miss him
And that I will hurt too,
But at the same time
I know that things aren't really so blue.

I think of the good times
That we had together,
And slowly but surely
I start to feel better.

So you see, what I am
Trying to say,
Is that we must move on
And start another day.
We must value the precious moments
That we once had,
And hang on to those,
So that we never feel bad.

Once we learn to do this
And not see this and run,
We can say to ourselves:
Yes...I know that I can move on!

***Seeta Misra** wrote this poem about 6 months after her grandfather passed away, and it pretty much symbolizes what she has come to learn from him, and this whole experience.*

The Last Tide

(In memory of those who lost their lives in the recent Orissa Cyclone)

My tiny village by the seashore,
A pristine and idyllic look it always wore.

Nestled in the backdrop of a crystal pond, awash with rich green paddy fields,
Oh! What a treat for the tired eyes and weary soul, the serene view that it yields.

I remember the temple by the banyan tree, with the sounds of the conch and the bell,
The fragrance of the flowers and the burning camphor with its mesmerizing smell.

You can see the fishermen's dhows casting yards of net,
Far in the horizon where azure blue skies and the tranquil sea met.

Every evening I would wait for my brother returning from the sea,
That was my home and he was the world to me.

Then one day the skies turned hostile,
The clouds became angry and furious waves crashed on the rocks mile after mile.

Our trawler was out at sea, with my brother, uncles and all,
I panicked as the village siren sounded its first cyclone warning call.

Tears streamed down my cheeks, I was numb with fear,
I had only heard tales of killer cyclones but there had been none here.

"Come away girl, to the dry inlands!" urged the elders while retreating,
As I stood perched on the roof of our hut, with the rain pounding.

The torrents came in like invaders, but why was my brother late?
I saw the seawall break yet I remained rooted, for the trawler I must wait.

The ground beneath gave way as I closed my eyes, overcome by fatigue and worry.
With the last tide, came a familiar benign smile, "we'll go in peace, there is no hurry!"



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ଉତ୍କଳର ଗୌରବ - 'ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିର'

ସୁଶ୍ରୀ ଜୋତିର୍ମୟୀ ସେଠି



ଭାରତବର୍ଷରେ ଯେତେଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ଚାରୁକଳା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମନ୍ଦିର ଅଛି ତନ୍ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ଉତ୍କଳର 'ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିର' ଓଡ଼ିଶା ତଥା ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ଗର୍ବ ଓ ଗୌରବର ଅନ୍ୟତମ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦିତ ପ୍ରତୀକର ସୂଚନା ବହନ କରି ଉତ୍କଳର ଶିଳ୍ପୀ କୂଳକୁ ଚିରଦିନ ଅମର କରି ରଖୁଛି । ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଏହା ଗବେଷକ, ଦର୍ଶକ ଓ କଳା ପ୍ରମାଣକ୍ଷଙ୍କୁ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟକରି ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ଉତ୍କଳର ସୁସ୍ଥ କଳାକୃତିର କାରୁକାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଉତ୍କଳର ଶିଳ୍ପୀମାନଙ୍କ ନିପୁଣତା ପ୍ରତିପାଦନ କରି ପାରିଛି ।

ଏହା ପୂର୍ବଦ୍ୱାଦିମାରେ ବଙ୍ଗେପସାଗରଠାରୁ ମାତ୍ର ୫ କି.ମି., ପୁରୀଠାରୁ ବେଳାଭୂମି ମାର୍ଗରେ ୩୦ କି.ମି. ଓ ଉତ୍କଳର ରାଜଧାନୀ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରଠାରୁ ୬୦ କି.ମି. ଦୂରରେ ବେଳାଭୂମି ସଂଲଗ୍ନ ବାଲୁକା ପ୍ରାନ୍ତରେ କୋଣାର୍କଠାରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ । ଭାରତ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତ୍ନତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ବିଭାଗଦ୍ୱାରା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟବେକ୍ଷଣ କରାଯାଇ ୧୨୫୦ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟାବ୍ଦରେ ଏହି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିରର ନିର୍ମାଣକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା ବୋଲି ସ୍ଥିର କରାଯାଇଛି । ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ରାଜା ନରସିଂହ ଦେବଙ୍କ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶରେ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସିବେଇ ସାମନ୍ତରାୟଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାନରେ ଏହାର ନିର୍ମାଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ୧ ହଜାର ୨ ଶହ ଶିଳ୍ପୀ(ବେଢେଇ ଜାତି)ଙ୍କର ୧୨ ବର୍ଷର ଅକ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ପରିଶ୍ରମ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଥିବା ପ୍ରମାଣ ମାଦଳା ପଞ୍ଜିକା (ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପୂଜା, ନୀତି ଓ ନିୟମ ଥିବା ଏକ ପଞ୍ଜିକା)ରେ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଅଛି, ଏବଂ ୧୨୬୨ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟାବ୍ଦରେ ଏହାର ନିର୍ମାଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଶେଷ ହୋଇଥିବାର ପ୍ରମାଣ ଅଛି ।

୨୪ ଚକ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଏହି ମନ୍ଦିର ଏକ ବିଶାଳ ରଥ ସଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ଉତ୍କଳର ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ଶୈଳୀରେ ନିର୍ମିତ ଏହି ମନ୍ଦିରଟିର ମୁଖଶାଳା ନାଟ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିରକୁ ନେଇ ଗଠିତ । ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିରରେ ପୂର୍ବେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦେବତାଙ୍କୁ ପୂଜା କରା ଯାଉଥିଲା । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ମନ୍ଦିରଟି ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଭଗ୍ନ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ରହିଥିବା ବେଳେ ମୁଖଶାଳା ଓ ନାଟ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିରଟି ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ରହିଛି । କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀରୁ ଜଣାଯାଏ ଯେ ଜଣେ ମୁସଲମାନ 'କଳାପାହାଡ଼' ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ କୌଣସି ଏକ କାରଣରୁ କ୍ରୋଧାନ୍ୱିତ ହୋଇ ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନଙ୍କର ଏକାଧିକ ମନ୍ଦିର ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେଇଥିଲା । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିର ମଧ୍ୟ କଳାପାହାଡ଼ର କ୍ରୋଧର ଶିକାର ହୋଇ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଭଗ୍ନ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ରହିଅଛି । ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ଓ ଗବେଷକଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଉକ୍ତ ମନ୍ଦିରଟିକୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିବାର ଅନ୍ୟ କୌଣସି ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ପ୍ରମାଣ ନାହିଁ ।

ଐତିହାସିକ ମାନେ ପ୍ରମାଣ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ଯେ ରାଜା ନରସିଂହ ଦେବଙ୍କର ଶରୀରର ଭଙ୍ଗ ବିକୃତ ଓ ବକ୍ର ଥିଲା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ପଛ ମେରୁହାତ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ପାଇ ଲାଞ୍ଜ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ବାହାରକୁ ଦେଖା ଯାଉଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲାଙ୍ଗୁଳା ନରସିଂହଦେବ ନାମରେ ନାମିତ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ନିଜର ବିକୃତ ନାମକୁ ଜନମାନସରୁ ଦୂର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ରାଜା ଏହି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ଉକ୍ତ ମନ୍ଦିରଟି ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିବାପାଇଁ ରାଜା ୧୨ ବର୍ଷ ସମୟ ସାମାଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିଥିଲେ । ନିର୍ମାଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଚାଲିଥିବା ସମୟରେ ରାଜା ମନ୍ଦିର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଲାଗି ଏକ ଶୁଭଦିନ ସ୍ଥିର କରିଥିଲେ । ସ୍ଥିର ହୋଇଥିବା ଶୁଭଦିନଟି ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ଦିନଠାରୁ ୩ ମାସ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପଡ଼ୁଥିବାରୁ ଏହି ଦିନରେ ମନ୍ଦିରଟିକୁ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରିବା ଲାଗି ରାଜା ମନ୍ଦିରର ଅସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଶୀଘ୍ର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଦିନରେ ଶେଷ କରିବାକୁ ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଏହି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ଶିଳ୍ପୀମାନେ କିଭଳି ସୁଚାରୁ ରୂପେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବେ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ବହନ କରିଥିବା ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସିବେଇ ସାମନ୍ତରାୟ ଜଣେ ଅଣଓଡ଼ିଆକୁ ମୁଖ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଭାବେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଦେଇ ନିଜେ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପରିଚାଳନା କଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଉକ୍ତ ଅଣଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିଳ୍ପୀଙ୍କୁ ଉତ୍କଳର ବସ୍ତୁକଳା କିପରି ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିବାକୁ ହୁଏ ତାହା ଜଣା ନ ଥିଲା । ଏଣୁ ରାଜାଙ୍କ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶିତ ଶୁଭଦିନ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ମନ୍ଦିର ତୁଟା(ଅଗ୍ରଭାଗ)ରେ ଦଧିନଉତି (କଳସ) ସ୍ଥାପିତ ହୋଇ ପାରିନଥିଲା । ଫଳରେ ରାଜା କ୍ରୋଧାନ୍ୱିତ ହୋଇ ମନ୍ଦିରଟିକୁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଦିନରେ ନିଷ୍ଠିତଭାବେ ଶେଷ କରିବାକୁ କତା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଏବଂ ଯଦି ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନ ହୁଏ ତେବେ ସମସ୍ତ ଶିଳ୍ପୀଙ୍କର ମୁଣ୍ଡକଟା ହେବ ବୋଲି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଜଣାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।

ଫଳରେ ଶିଳ୍ପୀକୂଳ ଭୟଭୀତ ହୋଇରହିଥିବା ସମୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରତ ଜଣେ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ବିଶୁମହରଣାର ୧୨ ବର୍ଷର ବାଳୁତ ପୁତ୍ର ନିଜେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ହୋଇ ମନ୍ଦିରର ଦଧିନଉତି (କଳସ) ସ୍ଥାପନ ଶୈଳୀକୁ ନିଜେ ତିଆରି କରି ମନ୍ଦିର ତୁଟାରେ କଳସ ବସାଇଥିବା ଏବଂ ୧୨ ଶହ

ଶିକ୍ଷାଙ୍କର ଜୀବନ ରକ୍ଷା ନିମନ୍ତେ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ବଜେପସାଗରକୁ ଡେଇଁପଡ଼ି ପ୍ରାଣ ବିସର୍ଜନ କରିଥିବା କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀରୁ ଜଣାଯାଏ । ନାନା କାରୁକାର୍ଯ୍ୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଏହି ମନ୍ଦିରର ଉଚ୍ଚତା ପ୍ରାୟ ୭୦ ମିଟର ଓ ମୁଖଶାଳାର ଉଚ୍ଚତା ୪୬ ମିଟର ଅଟେ । ଉକ୍ତ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିରର କାରୁକାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ସମାଜର ଚିତ୍ର ସୁନ୍ଦର । ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ସମାଜର ସାମାଜିକ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା, ଶିକ୍ଷା, ଧର୍ମ ଭାବନା, କାରୁକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଗୁରୁ ଶିଷ୍ୟର ସୁସମ୍ପର୍କ, ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କର ଚାଟଶାଳୀ ଯିବାର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ, ରାଜନୈତିକ ଆଲୋଚନାରେ ରତଥିବାର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତ ମନ୍ଦିର ଗାତ୍ରରେ ଥିବା ପଥର କାରୁକାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟମାନ ହୁଏ । ସ୍ଥାଲୋକମାନେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧବିଦ୍ୟାରେ ନିପୁଣା ଥିଲେ ବୋଲି ଉକ୍ତ ମନ୍ଦିର ଗାତ୍ରରୁ ସୂଚନା ମିଳେ । ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ସମୟରେ ଘୋଡ଼ା, ହାତୀ, ଓଟ ଆଦି ପଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଉଥିବାର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ପଥର କାରୁକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଅତି ସୁନ୍ଦର । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିରରେ ବହୁ ପ୍ରଣୟରତା ଯୁଗଳମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ବିରହ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗତା(ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ବିଛେଦ) ଦୂର କରିବା ଲାଗି ଏହା ଶିଳ୍ପୀମାନେ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିଥିଲେ ବୋଲି କେତେ ମନୋବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ମତ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ।

ସେ ସମୟରେ ଉତ୍କଳୀୟ ବଣିକମାନେ ବୈଦେଶିକ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବ୍ୟବସାୟ କରୁଥିବା ବିଷୟରେ ମନ୍ଦିର ଗାତ୍ରରୁ ପ୍ରମାଣ ମିଳେ । ସେ ସମୟର ସମସ୍ତ ତଥ୍ୟର ମୂଳସାକ୍ଷୀ ଆଜିର ଏହି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିର । ଉତ୍କଳର ଏହି ଶିଳ୍ପ କଳାରେ ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ତଥା ପୁରାତନ ତଥ୍ୟର ଭଣ୍ଡାର ଆଜି ମୂଳସାକ୍ଷୀ ଭାବେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ବିଶ୍ୱର ପ୍ରତିକୋଶରୁ ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ, ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ, ଗବେଷକ, ଐତିହାସିକ ଓ ଭୌଗଳିକ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରି ବହୁ ତଥ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରି ଆସୁଛି । ଏହାର ନିର୍ମାଣ ଶୈଳୀ ନିଜେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ ନ କଲେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିବା ଅସମ୍ଭବ ।

Sushree Jyotirmayee Sethi attends 8th Grade in Government High School, Konark, Puri



ହେ ବିଶ୍ଵର ମହାରାଜା !!

(ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ପହଣ୍ଡି ବିଜେ ଦର୍ଶନରେ)
ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ନନ୍ଦକିଶୋର ଶତପଥୀ



ସ୍ନେହରାଜା ତାଲେ ଯେବେ ପଥରୁଞ୍ଚ କରି ।
ଚାଟୁକାର ଗହଣରେ ପଟୁଆର କରି ॥
ଜନ ସମାଗମ ହୁଏ କୁତୁହଳ ବଶେ ।
କିପରି ସେ ରାଜା, ଆହା କିପରି ସେ ଦିଶେ ॥
ଚାଟୁକାର ହସ୍ତ ତାଲେ ବାହାଞ୍ଛେଟ ମାରି ।
ତପ୍ତ ତପ୍ତ ତାଳେ ରୁଷ କଣ ଭରି ॥
କିନ୍ତୁ
ହେ ବିଶ୍ଵର ମହାରାଜା ତୁମେ ଯେବେ ଆସ ।
ସମଗ୍ର ସଂସାର ଧାଇଁ ଆସେ ତୁମ ପାଶ ॥
ଶରୀର ସାଗର ଦିଏ ତୁମକୁ ବୁଡାଇ ।
ଦିଅ ତୁମେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ବୁକୁରେ ଜଡାଇ ॥
ହାତକୁ ବଢାଇ ସର୍ବେ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗିବା ପାଇଁ ।
ଝୁମି ଝୁମି ତାଲ ତୁମେ ବିଶ୍ଵର ଗୋସାଇଁ ॥
ଧନ୍ୟ ଧନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଭୁ ତୁମ ପଟ୍ଟାନ୍ତର କାହିଁ ?
ଶରୀରେ ହିଁ ବସି ହୁଅ ତା ଅନ୍ୟଥା ନାହିଁ

Sri Nandakishore Satpathy stays in Orissa and is the father of Sanjay Satpathy, New Jersey. Born in Cuttack to Bata Krushna & Hemalata, he always had a talent towards literature & writing. His hobby for writing blossomed during his bachelor education in Ravenshaw College. Later on in the midst of worldly worries his inclination towards literary activity got side tracked, & which again was revived after his retirement from active professional life. A very humble & God fearing person, he is probably the epitome of honesty. He is now leading an extremely fulfilling life in his residence in Nayapalli, BBSR.

I'm Hindu, I'm proud, and I'm here to Stay.

That's right, I'm Hindu. A good number of Americans are thinking I'm a dot-wearing cow-worshiper, the biggest misconception of Hinduism in the Western Hemisphere. My parents were born and raised in Orissa, where they were brought up with a strong faith in Hinduism, and my older sister and I have chosen to be Hindu also. We attend the Sri Ganesh Temple in Nashville, Tennessee. I don't regret being Hindu one bit.

Hinduism is a lot deeper than most non-Hindus realize. Hinduism is the oldest practiced religion in the world. The majority of Hindus live in India or Nepal. Sanskrit is the ancient language of Hinduism; the word Hindu is derived from the Sanskrit word sindhu ("river," more specifically the Indus). Our Holy book is the Bhagavad Gita. Hindus are monotheist and polytheist (we believe that there are many parts of God but one whole higher being) and live the ideas of karma, dharma, and reincarnation. We also believe that God is in every individual's soul, and your actions in one life will determine your being in the next life. When one has become truly pious then one's soul is taken in as a part of God, the universal soul. Hinduism has more depth than most people of other religions realize.

In my high school of approximately 1450 people, there are two Hindus. That is a 1:725 ratio, and sometimes I do feel a bit out of place. My dad puts it as being "The tongue in a mouthful of teeth". You have to watch what you say or do, so that you won't get bitten.

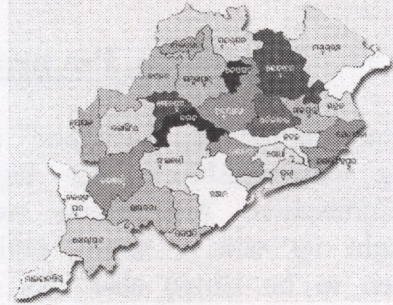
The main problem for Hinduism today is lack of education of the religion. Many of my peers don't know much about Hinduism, and I am often asked if I worship cows or if I will wear the red dot on my forehead when I get married. The fact of the matter is that I don't worship cows. Hindus have great respect for animals, especially cows for milk and plowing, and many are vegetarians. And, I see the red dot as merely makeup to draw attention to the eyes and away from the body and prevent impure thoughts. The best way to deal with such questions is by having patience and explaining about my wonderful religion, so if anyone has a question, I'll gladly try my best to answer.

Like I said before, "I'm Hindu, I'm proud, and I'm here to stay".

Deepalie Milie Joshi will be a senior in high school this year. She lives in Tennessee with her parents Ajoya and Jyoshna Joshi. Her hobbies are swimming and playing soccer. She takes a very active role as an attorney on her school's Mock Trial team.

ଏ' ତ ମୋ' ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ବିଜୟ ମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର



କେନ୍ଦୁଝର ମଧୁଜଳ ବାଲେଶ୍ଵର ଖେତ
ଚିଲିକା ପାରିକୁଦ ମହେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପର୍ବତ ।
ମହାନଦୀ ସାତକୋଶୀ ସୁନା ନଈଧାର
ସମୁଦ୍ର ବୀତିରେଣୁ କିବା ମନୋହର ।
ଦଣ୍ଡକ ଜଙ୍ଗଲ କନ୍ୟାମାଳ ବଲାର୍ଦ୍ଧିରି
ଫଳଫୁଲ ଗନ୍ଧପାଣି ହସେ କିରିକିରି ।
ବହୁକାଳୁ ଲୋକେ ଏଠି କରିଛନ୍ତି ବସା
ଦେଖୁମୁହିଁ ଖୁସି ହୁଏ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୧॥
କୋଣାରକ ପୁରୀଧାମ ନୀଳ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ
ସାକ୍ଷୀଗୋପାଳ ସେ' କ୍ଷୀରଚୋରା ଗୋପୀନାଥ ।
ସମଲାଲ, ବିରଜା ଓ କାଳିକା ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିକା
ବିମଳା ଯୋଗିନୀ ଏଠି ପାତୁକା ।
ଦେବ ଲିଙ୍ଗରାଜ ଆଉ ବାସ କପିଳାସ
ବୌଦ୍ଧ, ଜୈନ, ଶିଖ୍, ଶୂନ୍ୟ ସବୁ ଅଧିବାସ ।
ସବୁରି ବୁକୁରେ କେତେ ଲଗାଇଛି ଆଶା
ସୁନାବୋହୁ ସାଧବାଣୀ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୨॥
ହୁଷ୍ଟ ଆଦିବାସୀ ପିଲା ହାତେ ଧନୁଶର
ତା ପିତା ମାରିଲା କୃଷ୍ଣେ ସେ' ଜାରା ଶବର ।
ବିଶ୍ଵାବସୁ କରିଥିଲା ନୀଳାଚଳେ ପୂଜା
ଧରଣୀ ଆକାଶ ବସେ ଉଡେ ତାର ଧୂଜା ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗଢିଲା ସେଠି ତନ୍ତ୍ର ଓ ଗାରେଡି
କୁହୁକ ତାହୁକ ଦେଖୁ ରୋଗ ଯାଏ ଛାଡି ।
ତା ପେଟରେ ନାହିଁ ଭାତ, ହୋଇଛି ହତାଶା!
ମରୁଡି ବିପନ୍ନେ ଭାତ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୩॥
ଅଶୋକଙ୍କୁ ଧର୍ମେ ଜୟ, ସେନା ସେ' କଳିଙ୍ଗ
ଖାରବେଳ ଯୁଦ୍ଧକରେ, ଆଶେ ଜୀନ ଅଙ୍ଗ ।
ଧରମା କରିଛି ଲକ୍ଷ କୋଣାରକ ତୁଳୁ
ବୀର ବାଜି ବାଟ ରୋକେ ବିଦେଶୀର ଠୁଳୁ ।
ବକ୍ସି ଜଗବନ୍ଧୁ ବୀର ଅମର ସୁରେନ୍ଦ୍ର
ନବକର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୋଟିରାଜା ବୀର କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ।
ଭୟ ସେଠି, ଯୁବକର ଆଖିରେ ନିରାଶା
ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ଶଙ୍କିତ, ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୪॥
ଶାରଳା ଲେଖିଲେ ଏଠି ସେ' ମହାଭାରତ

ଅତିବଡୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦେଲେ ଭାଗବତ ।
ଉପଇନ୍ଦ୍ର, ବୈଦେହୀଣ ସାମନ୍ତସିଂହାର
ଗୋପାଳ, ବଳଦେବ ଦେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସ୍ଵର ।
ଅନ୍ଧ ଭୀମ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଦେଖେ ବିମୁଗ୍ଧ କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ
ଭକ୍ତ ସାଲବେଗ ଗାଏ ସେ' ଜଗବନ୍ଦନ ।
ସେ ଭାଷା ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଅଛି ମୋର ଆଶା
ବିଭାଷୀ କାହିଁପାଇଁ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୫॥
ମନ୍ଦିର ଖୋଦାଇଲା ଯେ' ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିରାଣୀ
ଉତ୍କର୍ଷ କଳା ବୋଲେ ତାହାର କରଣୀ ।
ବସ୍ତ୍ର, କାଢ଼, ସୁନା, ରୂପା, ଚାନ୍ଦି, ତାଳପତ୍ର
ଅଳଙ୍କାର ସଉଝବ ତା'ର ମାନଚିତ୍ର ।
ବିଦେଶେ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟେ ଯାଏ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୋଇତ
ସାତ ସିନ୍ଧୁ ପାରି ଯାଏ ସାଧବର ନେତ ।
ଅନୁସାହ ଦେଖ ସେଠି, ଉଣା ତା' ଭରସା
ଜାଗି ଉଠ ଭାଇ ତୁମେ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ' ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୬॥
ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ, ମଧୁବାବୁ ଭକ୍ତଳ ସନ୍ତାନ
ଦେଶକାମେ ଆଦର୍ଶରେ ଦେଲେ ବଳିଦାନ ।
କୃଷ୍ଣଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଗଜପତି ସେ' ଗୋଦାବରୀଶ
ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ ହରିହର କୃପାସିନ୍ଧୁ ଲଗ ।
ମିଶ୍ର, ଭୂୟାଁ, ଭଞ୍ଜ, ସିଂହ, ଦାସ ଓ ନାୟକ
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସେବାରେ ସର୍ବେ ହେଲେ ଯେ' ସେବକ ।
କାହିଁ ସେହି ସେବାପଣ, କାହିଁ ସେହି ଆଶା?
ଆଶାର ଦାୟାଦ ତୁମେ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ' ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୭॥
ଶୁଣିଅଛି ହୋଇଥିଲା ନଅଙ୍କ ଦୁର୍ଭିଷ
ଆସେ ବନ୍ୟା ବତାଶ ଯେ' ଘୋର ଦୁର୍ବିପାକ ।
ସତେ ଅବା ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦେଲା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଟେକ
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗାଉଁଶୀ ଆଜି ମାଗୁଥାଏ ଭିକ ।
ସେ' ବନାନୀ ମାଟି ଆଉ ସେହି ଜଳଧାରା
ସେ' ପବନ ଖରାତାତି ପୁଣି ବର୍ଷାଧାରା ।
ସବୁ ଅଛି ନିର୍ମାଲ୍ୟ ସେ କିଛି ତା' ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶା
ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣକର ଭାଇ ତୁମେ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ' ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୮॥
ଦେଶେ ବିଦେଶେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଆଜି ରହେ
ମନ ମୋର ଅଥୟ ସେ' ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ବହେ ।

ଗୁଣୀ, ଧନୀ, ବିଜ୍ଞ, କବି ହେ ବିଶ୍ଵ ନାବିକ
ଆମ ବୁକେ ପଡ଼ିଅଛି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଭେକ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରାଣ ଧର୍ମ ସ୍ଵଜାତି ମିଳନ

ବିଶ୍ଵ ଦରବାରେ ହେଉ ଆମ ସଙ୍ଗଠନ ।
ପ୍ରାଣଭୁଇଁ ଜନନୀ ଗୋ, ମନେ ରଖ ଆଶା
ମନେ ଅଛି କଥା ଆମ, ଏ' ତ ମୋ' ଓଡ଼ିଶା ॥୯॥

ବିଜୟମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର ସାମୟିକ ଲେଖକ ଓ କବି । ଏହି କବିତାଟି ୧୯୯୯ ମସିହା ଟରୋଣ୍ଟୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସୋସାଇଟି ଅଫ୍ ଆମେରିକା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ପଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଲେଖା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସୋସାଇଟି ଅଫ୍ ଆମେରିକା ସ୍ମରଣିକାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଅଛି ।

The Inspiring Initiatives in Western Orissa: One Man's Dream

He grew up in a village of 800 people, about 8 miles from Bargarh. Having left home at the age of 9 to live in the hostels, he graduated from C.S. Zilla School in Sambalpur in 1962 and finished LSC from G.M. College, Sambapur in 1964. He was the first undergraduate from Orissa to enroll at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi. His career flourished into the demanding field of neonatal pediatrics here in Iowa.

His feelings and concern for Orissa's needs hit a nerve center in 1964 while at AIIMS. 'People in Delhi would recognize Orissa through "Bhubaneswar" & "Puri". In general, the public in India hardly knew of the existence of Orissa, frequently commenting "Ah! Orissa is a backward state."

In 1978, he initiated a U.S. based foundation with a vision to build a children's hospital in Sambalpur in cooperation with Rotary International and Sambalpur Rotary Club. Unfortunately, two grants from Rotary International, one amounting to \$40,000 in 1982 and another one amounting to \$20,000 in 1990, were returned by Sambalpur Rotary Club due to inaction. Because of this lack of fruitful action, his focus shifted to establish a clinic in Pipilimunda with his own contribution of \$25,000 and an additional grant of \$14,000 obtained

through the effort of Burla Rotary Club. The clinic had an operating budget of \$12,000 per year; \$6,000 donated by him and \$6,000 matched by AAPI (Association of American Physician's from India). Now, AAPI has adopted the clinic. The clinic serves 15 villages – it has 10 girls serving as aides, a girl from each village. The clinic is managed by a doctor, a nurse, and a midwife. It has an ambulance. This time the clinic has a matching grant of \$6,000 from Rotary International to upgrade to a mothers' and children's hospital and this Iowa physician has agreed to build the building itself.

In 1990, his mother passed away, his father having been gone since 1970. With the help of two brothers in Sambalpur, he established "Shakuntala - Bidyadhar Trust" in the name of his parents. The family started a high school in their own village 8 years ago. The family is upgrading 4 elementary schools to middle schools and has started three more elementary schools. His long-term goal is to help 500 schools. With the help of "Trees of Life", he has provided Rs.25,000 to Rs.40,000 worth of books to about 20 schools. They plan to cover 100 schools with such help.

Another project of his Trust is in collaboration with "Trees for Life", a Wichita, Kansas based non-profit organization run by Mr. Balbir Mathur, who has been involved in planting fruit

girls, is of paramount importance in reshaping the future development of an underdeveloped state or country.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Through the Trust, they have dug 40-50 tube wells in the vicinity surrounding the schools in and around the village. Having gone through a thorough research in development of underdeveloped, poor countries, this Iowa based physician is of a firm belief that education in general, including technical education, particularly of

If we take a telescopic view of all the achievements of this Iowa based physician, I am sure each of us, particularly those of us who are from there, can give 1 to 3% of our physical, emotional, and financial support to fulfill the endearing dreams each of us may have for the development of our motherland.

[illegible]

Devi. P. Misra, Huntsville, Alabama

ମୁଁ କିଏ ?

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପାଢୀ



କିଏ

କହେ ମୁଁ ରାଜ ନନ୍ଦିନୀ

କିଏ କହେ ମୁଁ ରାଜ ବନ୍ଦିନୀ

କିଏ କହେ ମୁଁ ଦୁଷ୍ଟା ବିରହିଣୀ

ମୋ ମନ କହେ ମୁଁ ଆଦର୍ଶ ଗୃହିଣୀ ।

ରାଜର୍ଷି ଜନକଙ୍କର ଅଳିଅଳୀ ଦୁହିତା

ରମିଳା ନାମେ ମୁଁ ଥିଲି ପରିଚିତା

ବିଖ୍ୟାତ ରଘୁବଂଶର କୁଳବଧୂ ହେଲି

ହର୍ଷ ଭରା ହୃଦୟେ ଅଯୋଧ୍ୟାରେ ପାଦ ଦେଲି ।

ପ୍ରାଣନାଥ ମୋର ସୁମିତ୍ରା ନନ୍ଦନ

ତେଜ ପ୍ରତାପେ ଥିଲେ ଜଗତ ବନ୍ଦନ

କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ନିଷ୍ଠାର ଥିଲେ କୁଳନ୍ତ ପ୍ରତୀକ

ପ୍ରଭୁ ରଘୁନାଥଙ୍କର ଥିଲେ ସଦା ରକ୍ଷକ ।

ବିବାହ ଜୀବନର ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ ବେଳେ

ବନବାସ ପାଇଁ ସ୍ବାମୀ ମୋର ବିଦା ନେଲେ

ଚକ୍ରରୁ ମୋର ଗତିଗଲା କେତେଧାର ଲୁହ

ନଥିଲାତ ସେହି ଲୁହ ଅତି ଦୁର୍ବହ ।

ଥିଲା ସେ ଉଚ୍ଚିକ ସ୍ବଚ୍ଛ ଅମୃତର ଧାରା

ଚିରନ୍ତନ ନିର୍ମଳ ପ୍ରେମର ପ୍ରତୀକ ପରା

କିନ୍ତୁ ସ୍ବାମୀଙ୍କ ଆଦେଶେ ଲୋଚକ ପୋଛିଲି

ଚଉଦ ବରଷ କାଳ କେବେ କାନ୍ଦିବି ନଥିଲି ।

ଦିବାନିଶି ଭାଇ ଭାଉଜଙ୍କର କରାବାକୁ ରକ୍ଷା

ସୌମିତିଙ୍କ ପାଶେ ଥିଲା ମୋର ଏକମାତ୍ର ଭିକ୍ଷା

ଏକାକିନୀ ରହି ମୁଁହି ଅଯୋଧ୍ୟା ରାଜ ମନ୍ଦିରେ

ପତିଙ୍କ ସ୍ମରଣା ପାଇଁ ବିଭୁଙ୍କୁ ଚାକୁଥିଲି ଆତୁରେ ।

ମେଘନାଦ ବାଣରେ ମୋ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଯେବେ ହେଲେ ଆହତ

ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧରାତ୍ରିରେ ହୃଦୟ ମୋର ହୋଇଥିଲା ଆଘାତ

ମୋର କଠୋର ପୂଜାରେ ସ୍ବାମୀ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ

ଆମ ପ୍ରେମଥିଲା ଅଗ୍ନି ପରି କୁଳନ୍ତ ଓ ଶାଶ୍ବତ ।

Sumitra Padhi lives in Burlington, Ontario with her husband Hara Padhi, daughter Shovita and son Pinak Padhi .

Portrait Poem

*My grandpa is a hard fruit tree,
Not blowing away in a tough wind,
Making fruits for everyone to sample and enjoy,
Making everyone recognize greatness when
It's name is said.*

*My grandpa is a falcon,
Standing proud and feeding its young,
So they can be like him when they grow up,
Helping them and others.*

*My grandpa is a shooting star,
Bright and great, people wishing on it,
Leaving a streak that everyone admires,
Having an impact on whoever sees it.*

*My grandpa is lightning,
Spectacular and great,
People, though scared of it, admire
The sound and shape of natures
Amazing wonder and hope they can be like it.*

*Amrit Misra lives in Flint, MI and goes to eighth grade at Detroit Country Day School.
In his own words, "I wrote this poem in honor of my grandfather, Dr. Sarat Chandra
Misra, who lives in Cuttack. I love him dearly."*

ଓଡ଼ିଶୀର ରତ୍ନସମୁଦ୍ର

ଆରତି ମିଶ୍ର



କେବଳ ସଂଗୀତ ନୁହେଁ, ଯେ କୌଣସି କଳା କୌଣସି ଭାବନା ଓ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତାରୁ ହିଁ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥାଏ । କଳା ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ କୃତି ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସହିତ ରସର ନିବିଡ଼ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ରହିଛି । କେବଳ ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ, ପଶୁପକ୍ଷୀ, ବୃକ୍ଷଲତା, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଭାବ ଓ ରସର ଅନୁଭବ ରହିଛି । କବି କାଳିଦାସଙ୍କର 'ଅଭିଜ୍ଞାନ ଶାକୁନ୍ତଳମ୍' କାବ୍ୟରେ ଶକୁନ୍ତଳାଙ୍କର କଣ୍ଠମୁନିଙ୍କ ଆଶ୍ରମରୁ ବିଦାୟ ନେଉଥିବାବେଳେ, ବୃକ୍ଷଲତା ଓ ପଶୁପକ୍ଷୀଙ୍କର ଦୁଃଖ ଓ ବେଦନାର ପ୍ରକାଶ ଓ ତାହାର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମର୍ମାନ୍ତରୀଣ । ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସହିତ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସ୍ୱରର ଯେପରି ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ରହିଛି, ରସର ମଧ୍ୟ ସେହିପ୍ରକାର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ରହିଛି । ରସର ଫଲଗୁଧାରା ବିନା ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନା ଅସାର । ସଂଗୀତ ଯେଉଁ ଧାରା ବା ପରାବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେଉନା କାହିଁକି, ସୃଷ୍ଟି, ଯୋଜନା ଓ ପରିବେଶରେ ଏପରି ରସପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ନୀ ସ୍ୱର ସମୂହର ବ୍ୟବହାର ହେବା ଉଚିତ ଯାହା ଶ୍ରୋତାଙ୍କର ହୃଦୟସ୍ପର୍ଶ ହୋଇ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଭାବର ଉଦ୍ବେଗ କରିବାରେ ସକ୍ଷମ ହେବ । ନଚେତ୍ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟର୍ଥ ହେବ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତ ଭାବ ଓ ରସର ବାରିଧି । ଦ୍ୱାଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ଜୟଦେବଙ୍କ ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ରଚନା, ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତକୁ ଏକ ଅନବଦ୍ୟ ଦାନ । ଜୟଦେବଙ୍କ ରଚନା ହିଁ ଶୃଙ୍ଗର ରସର ବିଶେଷ ରଚନା । ଏହାପୂର୍ବରୁ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଗାନ ଓ ଭକ୍ତିରସ ମୂଳକ ଗାୟନର ପ୍ରଚଳନ ଥିଲା । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କାଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତର ପ୍ରତିଭାବାନ୍ ସୃଷ୍ଟିଗଣ ଯଥା - କବି ସମ୍ରାଟ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜ କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଳଦେବ ରଥ, ଗୋପାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ, ରାଜା ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ଦେବ, କବି ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଓ ହଳଧର ମିଶ୍ର ଇତ୍ୟାଦିଙ୍କର ରଚନାର ଧାରାରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରତ୍ନର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଓ ଏହି ରତ୍ନ ମାନଙ୍କର ଆଗମନରେ ନାୟକ ନାୟାକାଙ୍କର ମନୋଭାବ ଏବଂ ବିରହ ଓ ମିଳନ କାଳୀନ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଉପରେ ଉତ୍ତର ପ୍ରଭାବ ବିଶେଷ ଭାବରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୋଇଛି । ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ଓ ପ୍ରକୃତି ଉପରେ ଉତ୍ତରକର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଓ ବିଶେଷ ପ୍ରଭାବ ଥାଏ । ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରଜ୍ଞଙ୍କ ମତରେ 'ସା' ସ୍ୱର ଷଡ଼ରୁତ୍ତରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୁଏ । 'ରେ' ସ୍ୱର ବସନ୍ତକାଳରେ, 'ଗା' ସ୍ୱର ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ, 'ମା' ସ୍ୱର ବର୍ଷା, 'ପା' ସ୍ୱର ଶରତ, 'ଧା' ସ୍ୱର ହେମନ୍ତ ଓ 'ନି' ସ୍ୱର ଶିଶିର ଉତ୍ତର ରଚନାରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୁଏ । ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ଅନୁସାରେ ଷଡ଼ରୁତ୍ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଛ'ଟି ରାଗର ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଛି । ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମରେ ଭୈରବ, ବର୍ଷାରେ ମେଘ, ଶରତରେ ପଞ୍ଚମ, ହେମନ୍ତରେ ନଟନାରାୟଣ, ଶୀତରେ ଶ୍ରୀରାଗ ଓ ବସନ୍ତରେ ବସନ୍ତରାଗର ସୃଷ୍ଟି । ଏହି ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ମତ ଅନୁସାରେ ସଂଗୀତ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଧାରା କାଳକ୍ରମେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତର ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ରଚୟିତାମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହି ନିୟମ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ରଚନା କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ପୂର୍ବେ ପୂଜାପାର୍ବଣ ଓ ଦେବାର୍ଚ୍ଚନା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସଂଗୀତ ପ୍ରଚାରିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରୀମନ୍ଦିରରେ ହେଉଥିବା ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ଗାୟନ, ମାହାରୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଓ ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ଅବସର ବିନୋଦନାର୍ଥେ ବୋଲା ହେଉଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତର ଭାବ ଯାହା ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାହା ଭକ୍ତିଭାବରେ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରାଯାଇଥାଏ ।

ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସମସ୍ତ ରଚୟିତାଙ୍କ କାବ୍ୟରେ ରତ୍ନମାନେ ନାନା ଭାବରେ ଶୃଙ୍ଗର ଉଦ୍‌ଘୋଷିତ ରିତରେ ଚିତ୍ରିତ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କବି ଉତ୍ତ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାକୁ ନାୟକ ନାୟାକାର ପ୍ରେମ ଓ ଭାବ ତରଙ୍ଗର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ମାଧ୍ୟମ ରୂପେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତରେ କବିମାନେ ରାଧାକୃଷ୍ଣଲୀଳା ବା ଅନ୍ୟ ନାୟକ ନାୟାକାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେମର ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନକୁ ଉତ୍ତ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଥିବାର ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ ରହିଛି । କବିସମ୍ରାଟଙ୍କ ରଚନାରୁ ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ, ବର୍ଷା ବା ବସନ୍ତ ଉତ୍ତର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଖୋଜି ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରିବା ଦୂରୁହ ଓ ଅସାଧ୍ୟ । ଏହି ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷାରେ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଅନେକ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଓ ଗୁଣୀ ମାନେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ରଚନାର ଅଧିକ ବାରିଧିରେ ମାତ୍ର କେତୋଟି ମୁକ୍ତା ଆହରଣ କଲି ।

ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମରୁତ୍ତର ଆଗମନରେ ପ୍ରକୃତି ଶୁଷ୍କ ହୁଏ ଓ ଦେହମାନ ଉଷ୍ମାପ ଜର୍ଜରିତ ହୁଏ । ଶୀତଳ, ସୁନ୍ଦ ଓ ଧବଳ ପଦାର୍ଥ ପାଇଁ ବିଶେଷ ଇଚ୍ଛା ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଥାଏ । ଏହାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରି କବିସମ୍ରାଟ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ରଭଞ୍ଜର ଅମର ଲେଖନୀରୁ ନିଃସୃତ ହୋଇଛି:

ମଲ୍ଲୀମାଳ ଶ୍ୟାମକୁ ଦେବି, ମନ ତୋଷିବି
ଗ୍ରୀଷମ ହୋଇଲେ ବାସ, ଚନ୍ଦନ ମୁଁ ଲେପିବି
ତା' ଅଙ୍ଗରୁ ସ୍ନେହବାରି, ଯେବେ ପଡ଼ୁଥିବ ଝରି
ମୋ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ପଡ଼େ କାନି ପଶନ୍ତରେ ପୋଛିବି - ।୦। (ରାଗ-ଛାୟାନଟ, ତାଳ-ତ୍ରପଟା)

କୋଟି ବ୍ରହ୍ମାଣ୍ଡ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ କାବ୍ୟର ତତ୍ତ୍ୱୋଦ୍‌ଗ ଛନ୍ଦରେ: ଦେଖିଲେ ଆରାମ ଅତି ଅଭିରାମ, ଯେ ଦେଖିବ ଏହି ପ୍ରତୀତି; ମନରୁ ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି, ରତିକାମ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ମନ୍ତେ କି ବିଭା ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । କୋକିଳ, ଗାୟକ ଉଚ୍ଚେ ଗାଏ ଗୀତ; ଝିଙ୍କାରୀ ଝଙ୍କାର ଖଞ୍ଜାରୀଟ ପାଛତ ସୁବାଦ୍ୟରେ ବିଦିତ । (ରାଗ-କଲ୍ୟାଣ ଆହାରୀ)

ପୁନଃ ୮ମ ପଦରେ: ହରିତା ସିନ୍ଦୁରୀ ପକ୍ୱଫଳ ଧରି ସହକାର ଶୋଭା ବିଶେଷ; ଗବୟ ଶୁଙ୍ଘ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତୟ ମଧୁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମାଣିକ୍ୟ ଜ୍ୟୋତି ଦିଶ । ଅକ୍ଷତେ, ଦେନି ବଂଶରେ ଜାତ ଘୋଷ; ବାହୁଣୀରେ ପୁଣି ବନ୍ଦିତ ହୋଇଛି ସାର ଅନୁରାଗ ପ୍ରକାଶ ।।

ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ ଏହିରୂପେ ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ଉତ୍ତର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରାଯାଇଛି:

ଏଥୁ ଅନ୍ତେ ଶୁଣ ଉପ, ଗ୍ରୀଷମେ ନିଶି ପ୍ରବେଶ
 ଉଦୟ ତାରା-ଜୀବେଶ ହେଲେ ଆକାଶେ
 ଚକ୍ର ପୁଷ୍ପ ଚକ୍ର ନକ୍ଷେତ୍ରେ ହାରକ ଚକ୍ର
 ପିଙ୍ଗିଛି ତାତ ପିଙ୍ଗିରେ କାମକି ରୋଷେ ।
 ବେଶ ହେବକି ରାତ୍ରୀବାଳୀ
 ଷ୍ଟରିକ ପେଟରେ କିବା କଞ୍ଚୁରୀ ଦଳି । ୧। (ରାଗ-ତୋଷୀ)

ନାୟାକାଙ୍କର ବିରହ ଜନିତ କଷ୍ଟର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାରେ ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ: *ଗ୍ରୀଷମ ସମୟ ପ୍ରବେଶ ହୋଇଲା ନବୀନା ଦୂତୀ ପ୍ରକାର; ପତି ପଙ୍କଜେ ଶୁଆଇ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରକରେ ଲାଜ କରାଇଲା ଦୂର । ବିରହୀ ଚିତା ପରାୟେ ଦିଶେ ପ୍ରକଟ ବନ ଅନଳ; ମଜନୀକର ପବନେ ଭତି ଦେବ ଦୀପକୁ କଲେ ଆକୁଳ । ୧।* (ରାଗ-ବଞ୍ଜାଶ୍ରୀ)

ପୁନଃ ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ ନବମ ଛାନ୍ଦ: *ହୋଇଲା ପ୍ରବେଶ ଗ୍ରୀଷମ ସମୟ, ସୁଷମା ପୌଢା ସୁବତୀଳି; ଉଜନୀ ମନୋହର କରି କହିଲା ପକ୍ଷ ତରୁ ଫଳ କାନ୍ଧିକି । ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲ ମଲ୍ଲୀକା ହାସକୁ ବିକାଶି; ଉପିତ ଭ୍ରମର ଚାଟୁକୁ ନିରତେ, ପାଟଳୀ ଶ୍ରବଣ ନିବେଶି । ୧।* (ରାଗ-ସାମ ଗୁର୍ଜରୀ) । କବି ପଦ୍ମନାଭ ଶ୍ରୀଚନ୍ଦନଙ୍କ କାବ୍ୟରେ ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର: *ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ଦାୟା ବସନ୍ତ ଅନ୍ତରେ, ତପତ ପବନସବୁ ଦିଗରେ ପ୍ରସରେ । ପୁଟି ପାଟଳୀ ଶିରିଷ; ଗନ୍ଧ ଗନ୍ଧବହ ପୁରାଇଲା ଦଶଦିଶ । ୧।* (ରାଗ-ଶଙ୍ଖରାଭରଣ)

କବି ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାସଙ୍କ କାବ୍ୟ ଉପକଲ୍ଲୋଳରେ ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା: *କ୍ରମେ ମଧୁଷେଷ ହୋଇଲା ପ୍ରବେଶ ହୋଇଲା ଗ୍ରୀଷମ ସମୟ, କରମାଳି କର ମହା ଖରତର କମଳ କୁମାର ପରାୟ । ସୁଜନେ କି କହିବା ମହାତପତ; କରାଇଲା ନୃତ୍ୟ ପୃଥକ ପଦକୁ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ଭୂମି ଅଶ୍ରୁବତ । ୧।* (ରାଗ-ବସନ୍ତ ବରାଡି)

ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗର କବିମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାଳୀଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତକୁ ଅବଦାନ ଅତୁଳନୀୟ । ତାଙ୍କ ରଚନାରୁ: *ଏ ଗୁରୁ ଗ୍ରୀଷମ ଗରୁ ହେଲାରେ, ପଣି ଝାଳି ପରଶରେ ବହିଲରେ । ସରିତ ଝୁରି ସରି ସୁବେଶ ପରି ହରି, କଣାୟ ବାସେ ତନୁ ଛାଇଲାରେ ।* (ରାଗ-କଳାବତୀ, ତାଳ-ତ୍ରପଟା) । କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କ ରଚନାରୁ ଏହା ଏକ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଉଦାହରଣ ମାତ୍ର ।

ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ଋତୁ ପରେପରେ ବର୍ଷା ଋତୁର ପ୍ରବେଶରେ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଧରଣୀ ଶୀତଳ ହୁଏ । ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ଓ ପଶୁପକ୍ଷୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଉଦ୍ଭାପ ପ୍ରପୀତିତ ପ୍ରାଣରେ ବର୍ଷାର ଶୀତଳ ଘର୍ଷ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଦିଏ । ବନପ୍ରାନ୍ତର ସବୁଜିମାର ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ଶୋଭିତ ହୁଏ । କବି ସମ୍ରାଟ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜ ବର୍ଷା ଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାରେ ଗିରିବନର ଅପୂର୍ବ ସବୁଜିମା ଓ ତମାଳ, କେତକୀ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଫୁଲକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଧ୍ୱାନ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ବର୍ଷା କାଳରେ ନାୟିକାର ବିରହ ଜନିତ ଭାବନା ଓ ଯାତନାର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯଥା: *ଏ ଘନ କାଳରେ କାନ୍ତ କରିଯା ଗଲେ ଏକାନ୍ତ, ଯାହା ପାଇଁ ଭତି ନାହା ମରମେ ଦହେ ସନ୍ତତ ।* (ରାଗ-ମୁଖାରୀ, ତାଳ-ତ୍ରପଟା)

ଏହି ରଚନାଟି ବର୍ଷା ଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ଏହି ରାଗର ଦେଶ ବା ମହାରରେ ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ରହିଛି । ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ: *ଦେଖି ନବକାଳିକା ବକାଳିକା ମାଳିକା, ଆଳିକାଳିକା କାନ୍ତ ସୁରି* (ରାଗ-ତୋଷୀ); *ନିରଦ ଗଗନେ ଘୋଟି ଦିନେ କରୁଥିଲା ବୃଷ୍ଟି ଝଟଝଟ କରୁଥିଲା ବିଦ୍ୟୁ । ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ ଭେଜ କୁଳ, ଭଜେ କରୁଥିଲେ ରୋଳ* (ରାଗ-ପଞ୍ଚମ ବରାଡି) ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ ଅତି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବେ ବର୍ଷାଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରାଯାଇଛି । ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ପଦ୍ୟରେ ବର୍ଷାଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି କବି ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି: *ପ୍ରବେଶ ହୋଇଲା ବରଷା କାଳ; ପ୍ରମାଦ ମାନଙ୍କ ଜନମ ଛଳ । ଜଳଦ କଢୁଳ ଜାତି ଶାଉଁଳ, ଆସି ବିହରିଲା ଶିଖରୀ ତୁଳ । ଗର୍ଜିଲା ସନ୍ତତ ଯେ, ପ୍ରକାଶି ଝଳି ବକାବଳି ଦନ୍ତ ।* (ରାଗ-ବରାଡି)

କବିସମ୍ରାଟଙ୍କର ଉତ୍ସୁକୀପକ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଓ ପାଣ୍ଡିତ୍ୟର ସମାଲୋଚନା ପାଇଁ ଏହି ସାମାନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ପାତ୍ର ନୁହେଁ । ଏହା କବିଙ୍କର ଉତ୍କଳ ପ୍ରତିଭାର ସାମାନ୍ୟ ପରିଚୟ ମାତ୍ର ।

କୋଟି ବୃହ୍ମାଣ୍ଡ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ ଥିବା ବର୍ଷା ଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଏହାର ଉଦାହରଣ ।
 ଆଶାର ସଫଳ କାଳ ହୋଇ ଉଦୟ
 ଅସିତ ପରବଳରୁ ଦରଶମୟ
 ଛନି ତହିଁ ଶୁଟକାଳ କଣ୍ଠ ମରୁତ
 ଅବିରେ ପ୍ରଭାତ୍ ତାର ଦିଶେ ବିଶେଷ ତ
 କେକିର ସଂଗୀତରେ କାମୁକ ଭଲ୍ଲସ
 ଧରାମଣି ଆଛାଦନେ ଘନ ବିଳାସ ।

ଏହି ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀର ପ୍ରତି ପାଦର ପ୍ରଥମ ଅକ୍ଷର ବାଦ ଦେଲେ, ଶୀତ ଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା । ଯଥା: *ସାରସ ଘନ କାଳ ହୋଇ ଉଦୟ* - ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ।

ପାଦର ପ୍ରଥମ ଓ ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଅକ୍ଷର ବାଦ ଦେଲେ ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନା ହୋଇଛି । ଯଥା: *ଉପ ଯନ କାଳ ହୋଇ ଉଦୟ, ତପର ବଳରୁ ଦରଶମୟ - ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ।* ଅତି ପୁରାତନ ରଚନାରୁ ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ଵରୂପ: *ପ୍ରାଣ ସଜନୀ ପ୍ରାଣ ସଜନୀ, କେହି ବଞ୍ଚେ ଯାମିନୀ (ପତି) । ଝରଝର ବରଷା ଦେଖି ଦେଖି ଏ ଉପାଳସା, ମଣ୍ଡନ କୋଳେ ଉଷା ହେବ ଖଞ୍ଜନ ଦୃଷା ।* ଏବଂ ପରପଦରେ: *ଏ ଯନ ଯତଯତି, ଭେଦ ତାହୁକ ରତି । ଶୁଣି ତଳରୁ ପତି, ଜ୍ଞାନଟି ଯିବ ବୁଡି ।*

କବି ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ରସକଲ୍ଲୋଳ କାବ୍ୟରେ ବର୍ଷାଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନା ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର: *କମେ ଗୀଷମ ହୋଇଲା ଶେଷ । ପ୍ରବେଶ ହେଲା ଆଷାଢ ମାସ । କାଳକରାଳ କାଳିକା ଉଦେ ହେଲେ ଆକାଶ ହେ । କଲା ନିବିଡ କରି ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାସ । ଶିଳିଳା ଗିରିବର, ଶିରିଷ ମହାପ୍ରବଳ ଅକ୍ଷରେ ନ ଦେଖାଇଲା ଦିଶ ଯେ ।* (ରାଗ-ପାହାଡିଆ କେଦାର)

କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଳଦେବ ରଥଙ୍କର ବର୍ଷା ଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନା ଅପୂର୍ବ ମାଧୁରୀରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ଯଥା: *ଯନ ଉପ ବରଷିଲା ରେ ଚଞ୍ଚଳା, କ୍ୟୋଟି ପ୍ରକାଶି ତୋରିତ ଉନ୍ମୟ ସରିତ ବଜିଲା । ଦମ୍ଭ ଦମ୍ଭ ଗଲା ଭାସି । ପୁଲକ କମନ୍ତ ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲ ହୋଇଲା ନାଚିଲା ବେଶୀ ମୟୂରୀ; ଛାତି ମୋତି ମାଳ ଦିଶେ କି ଚଞ୍ଚଳା ସେ ନଞ୍ଜ ପଙ୍କତି ପରି ।*

କବି ଧନଞ୍ଜୟ ଭଟ୍ଟଙ୍କର କାବ୍ୟ ଅନଙ୍ଗ ରେଖାରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଉଦାହରଣ: *ଏମନ୍ତ କେତେ ଦିନ ତହିଁ ଗଲା; ପହିଲି ପ୍ରାବୁଟ ପ୍ରବେଶ ହେଲା । ସକଳ ଜୀବ ଉଲ୍ଲାସ ହୋଇଲେ; ବନ ଗିରି ଦାବ ତାପ ଦେଇଲେ ।* (ରାଗ-ବରାଡି)

କବି ପଦ୍ମନାଭ ଶ୍ରୀ ଚନ୍ଦନଙ୍କ ରଚନାରୁ - *ବରଷା ପ୍ରବେଶ ହୋଇଲା ଆସି; କାଳିକା ଦିଶେ ଦିଶେ ପରକାଶି । ନଭେ ଭାଜିଲା ସୁନାଶିର ତାପ; ଚଞ୍ଚଳା ହେଟ ହେଲା ଅମାପ । ଯନ ଯତି ଯତି । ଯତିକି ଯତି ପଡୁଛି ମାତି ।* (ରାଗ-ବରାଡି)

ଶ୍ରୀ ନାରାୟଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ରଚନାରେ ବର୍ଷା ଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନା ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର - *ବାଉ ସାରସ ନୟନା, ବରଷା ଉପ ପ୍ରକଟିଲା ଅନା । ନୀଳ ନୀରଦ ଘୋଟିଲା ଗଗନ, ଝଟଝଟ କଳଧର ସେ ଯନା ।* (ରାଗ-ତୋଡି ମହାର) । କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାଳୀଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ରଚନାର ପଟ୍ଟାନ୍ତର ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ରଚନାରେ ଭାବ ଭାଷା ଓ ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ଶୈଳୀ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସାବଲୀଳ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ଵରୂପ: *ସାଜ ସଜ ସରୋଜ, ସରସ ମୁଖି ଆଜ, ବରଜ ଯୁବରାଜ ତାକିଲାନି (ପତି) । ଯନ ଗରଜି ଯନ ଛାଇଲା ଘୋର । ବନ ଗହନ ହେଲା ଘୋର ଅନ୍ଧାର । ଉଜାଣି ବହିଗଲା ଯମୁନା ନୀର । ନିରତ ଗଲା ବେନି ତୀର ଉଛୁଳି ।* (ରାଗ-ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରକାନ୍ତି, କେଦାରଗୌରୀ ବଳଚିତ୍ର)

ପୁଣି ତା'ଙ୍କ ରଚନାରୁ ରାଗ ସୁରଠ ମହାରରେ: *ଯନ ଋତୁ ରାତିରେ; ଦେଖି ସଖି ଗଲି ପତିରେ । ଘୋର ଯତଯତି ଛାତକ ଯନଯନ; ମାତି ପଡିଛି କି ନିବିଡ ନବଯନ । ଯତିକି ଯତି କରେ ଭେଦ ତାତ, ଉଝାଇ ଚମକାଇ ବାରି ଗତିରେ ।*

ସମସ୍ତ ରଚନାରେ ନ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଚ୍ଚଯିତାମାନେ କିଛି କିଛି ରଚନା ସୁରଠ ମହାର, ତୋଡି ମହାର ଓ ମେଘ ମହାର ରାଗରେ ରଚନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବାର ଅବକାଶ ନ ଥିବାରୁ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଉଦାହରଣ ଦେଲି ।

ବର୍ଷାଋତୁ ପରେପରେ ଶରତ ଋତୁର ଆଗମନ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମନୋରମ । ନଦୀ ଜଳ ସୁଚ୍ଛଦୁଃସ, ଆକାଶ ପରିଷ୍କାର ହୋଇ ଶୁକ୍ଳ ମେଘମାଳାରେ ଭୂଷିତ ହୁଏ । ବାତାବରଣରେ ଏକ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଶାନ୍ତ ଭଲ୍ଲସିତ ଭାବ ଓ ଏକ ବିଶେଷ ଋତୁଜନିତ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଅଟେ । କାଶତଣ୍ଡି ଫୁଲର ସମାରୋହ ଓ ମା ଦୁର୍ଗାଙ୍କ ଆଗମନୀ ମନ ଉପରେ ଏକ ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରଭାବ ବିସ୍ତାର କରେ । ଏହି ଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନାରେ କବିସମାଚଳ ଲେଖନୀରୁ - *ଖେଦି ନୀରଦ ନୀରଦ ଶରତ ଋତୁ କେଶରୀ ପ୍ରସରି ବିଷଦ । ତାହିଁ ତମସା ନାଶ ବନ ଦେଖ ଝୁଟେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କଲେ କାମଦ ।*

ଏଥିରେ ସେ ଶରତ କାଳରେ ନାୟିକାମାନଙ୍କର ବିରହ ଜନିତ ପୀଡାର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । କବିଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସବୁ ଋତୁର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କଲେ କେବଳ ତାହାହିଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବା ଦୁଇଟି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ହେବ । ନାୟକ ମାନଙ୍କ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି କବି ଧନଞ୍ଜୟ ଭଟ୍ଟଙ୍କର ଅନଙ୍ଗ ଲେଖାରେ ଏହି ପରି ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ହୋଇଛି । *ଏମନ୍ତ ବରଷା ଚିରସ ହେଲା ; ପ୍ରମଦ ଶରତ ଋତୁ ରାଜିଲା । ନବୀନ ବିଧୁ କଳିତ ଦୁଧି; ନବୀନ ବଧୂକ ଅଧର କାନ୍ତି ।*

କାବ୍ୟ ରସ ସିନ୍ଧୁ ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣାର ଉଚ୍ଚଯିତା କବି କେଶବରାଜ ହରିଚନ୍ଦନଙ୍କ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଏହିପରି: *ଏଥି ଅନନ୍ତରେ କିଛିଦିନେ ପ୍ରବେଶ ହୋଇଲା ଶରଦ କାଳ; ଝୁଟ କମଳ ମଞ୍ଜେଳ ମଣିହୋଇ ହୋଇଲା ଅତି ନିର୍ମଳ । ସେ କଳ ତେହେ ଦିଶିଲା ଅତି ମଞ୍ଜୁଳ ସେ; ଯେହେ କିଛି କାଳ ବିନ୍ୟାକାଳ ସେ; ଶୋଭାପାଇ ଦାତ ହୋଇ କାଳ ସେ ।* (ହରି ଚଉତିଶା ବାଣୀ)

କବି ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାସଙ୍କ ରଚନାରୁ: *କମେ ପ୍ରବେଶ ହୋଇଲା ଶରତ; କମଳ ଧରେ ଦିଶିଲେ ବିଷଦ । କୃପଣ ହୋଇଲେ ଅମୃତ ଦାନେ; କେବଳ ଭୟଦ ହେଲେ ଗର୍ଜନେ; କକୁଭ ନବ ଦିଶିଲେ ଶୋଭା । କଲେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପୁଷ୍ପବନ୍ଧେ ପ୍ରଭା ।*

ବିଦଗ୍ଧ ଚିନ୍ତାମଣି କାବ୍ୟରେ କବି ଅଭିମନ୍ୟୁ ସାମନ୍ତସିଂହାରଙ୍କର ଶରତ ବର୍ଷନା ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର: *ସହଜେ ଶରତ କାଳ, ଉତୁମ୍ଭ ଜାତ ତିଥି ନିଶି ମଞ୍ଜୁଳ ।*

କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାଳିଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ରଚନାରେ ଶରତ କାଳର ବର୍ଷନା ଅତି ରସବନ୍ଧ: *ଶରତ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା ରାଜି ନିରିମଳ ଗଗନ ମଣ୍ଡଳ ସାଜିଲା; କାଶବନ ନବହାସ ଧବଳିତ ବାସରେ ତନ୍ମୁ ସାଜିଲା । ଅନ୍ତ ଯୌବନ ଶାନ୍ତ ମେଘଜଳ; ଚଳିଲେ ଭାସି ନଇ ଶିରେ ଧବଳ ବୃକ୍ଷ । ହେଜି ମାନସ ପୁଲ ମାନସ ହୁଏ ଜଳ କଳରାଜିଲା ।* (ରାଗ-ଦେଶ, ତାଳ-ତିପଟା)

ଶରତକାଳରେ କାଶତଣ୍ଡି ପୁଲର ବର୍ଷନା କାଳିଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ରଚନାରେ ହିଁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ପୁନଶ୍ଚ: *ଆସରେ ଶରତ ସଜନୀ । ରଞ୍ଜିତ ଆନନ୍ଦେ, ରସଲେଖା ସେତ ଶରତ ରାଣୀ । ମାନସ ମାନସେ ଲୋଡ଼ି, ମରାଲେ ଉଡ଼ିଲେ ଗୋ, ଶଶୀମୁଖେ ଛାଇ କଳା ପଶତ କାନି ।*

ଏଠାରେ ଆଉ ଏକ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କ ରଚନାରୁ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରାଯାଇ ପାରେ ।
ନିଶିଳ ଭୁବନ ଭରି, ଅପରୂପ ରୂପ ଶିରି ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଶରତ ଗୋ ସାଜିଛି ।
ଅସି ଭୁବନ ମନମୋହିନୀ ଶୁଭମୟୀ ପ୍ରସନ୍ନବଦନୀ
ଆଜି ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ କର ମଣ୍ଡିତ ଦିନକର, ପରାଶେ ମଧୁର ବୀଣା ବାଜୁଛି ।

ଏହି ଅପୂର୍ବ ରଚନାଟି କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କ ରଚିତ ମହିଷାମର୍ଦ୍ଦିନୀ ଗୀତିନାଟ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଥମ ମଞ୍ଚରୀ । ବହୁ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ମହାଶ୍ୱମୀ ଉଷାର ପ୍ରଥମ ଲଗ୍ନରେ ଆକାଶବାଣୀ କଟକ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରରୁ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ପ୍ରଚାରିତ ହେଉଥିବା ଏହି ମହିଷାମର୍ଦ୍ଦିନୀ ସଂଗୀତ ଆଲୋଚ୍ୟ କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କର ଏକ ଅମର ଅବଦାନ ।

ଶରତ ଋତୁପରେ ହେମନ୍ତ ଋତୁର ପ୍ରବେଶ ପ୍ରକୃତି ସହିତ ମନୁଷ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ଦେହ ଓ ମନରେ ପ୍ରଭାବ ପକାଏ । କ୍ରମଶଃ ଶୀତର ପ୍ରାଦୁର୍ଭାବ ବଢେ । ଦିନ ଛୋଟ ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗେ । ଏହି ମର୍ମରେ କାବ୍ୟ ରସସିଦ୍ଧି ପୁଲକ୍ଷଣରେ କବି ଶ୍ରୀ କେଶବରାଜ ହରିଚନ୍ଦନ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି - *ଶରଦ ଶେଷରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ ହେଲା ହେମନ୍ତ କାଳ, ସାଜି ଦରିଦ୍ର ଜନମନ ପାସେ ହେଲେ ବିକଳ ।*

କବି ଦିନବନ୍ଧୁ ରାଜ ହରିଚନ୍ଦନ ଶ୍ରୀ ରାଧାବିଳାସ କାବ୍ୟରେ ହେମନ୍ତ ଋତୁରେ ଧାନ ପାତିବା ଘଟଣାକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି କହିଛନ୍ତି: *ଏମନ୍ତ ସମୟେ ହେମନ୍ତ କାଳ ହେଲା ପ୍ରବେଶ, ପାଟିଲା ଧାନ୍ୟାଦି ନାଟିଲା ଚଷା ହୃଦେ ଉଲ୍ଲାସ ।*

ହେମନ୍ତ ପରେ ଶିଶିର ବା ଶୀତ ଋତୁର ଆଗମନ ହୁଏ । ଶିଶିର ଆଗମନରେ ଶରୀର ଅଧିକ ବସ୍ତ୍ର ଓ ମନ ଅଧିକ ଉଷ୍ମତାର ପ୍ରୟୋଜନ ବୋଧ କରେ । ସାମାଜିକ ଚିତ୍ର ମଧ୍ୟ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ହୁଏ । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ନାୟକ ନାୟିକା ପରସ୍ପରର ସାନିଧ୍ୟ କାମନାରେ ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଏହି ମର୍ମରେ କବି ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ରସକଲ୍ଲୋଳ କାବ୍ୟରେ ଏହିପରି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

କହୁ କହୁ ଦାଉ ମାତି ପଡ଼ିଲା, କମ୍ପିକାତରେ କେ କର ଯୋଡ଼ିଲା ।
କେହୁ ହୃଦରେ କରଯୁଗ ଛନ୍ଦେ, କଷ୍ଟେ ଶୀତକୁ ବତ କରି ନିନ୍ଦେ
କେହି ଶୀତରେ ନତ କଲା ତନ୍ମୁ, କେହି ବିକଳେ ଲୋଡ଼େ ଚିତ୍ରଭାନୁ
କେହି କାମୀ ଶୀତେ ହୋଇ ଆକୁଳ, କଲା ଆଶ୍ରେ କାମିନୀ କାନ୍ତ କୋଳ ।

ସାମାଜିକ ଦୃଶ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଯେ ଶୀତ ସମୟରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକାଠି ହୋଇ ନିଆଁ ଜଳାଇ ତାକୁ ଘେରି ବସିଥାନ୍ତି । ତାହାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ କରି କବିଙ୍କ ଲେଖନୀରୁ - *କଲେ ଶୀତକୁ ଅର୍ତ୍ତ ମହାଭୟେ, କଲେ ପୁରେ ପୁରେ କାନ୍ତି ଉଦୟେ ।*

ଦିନ କ୍ରମେ କ୍ରମେ ଛୋଟ ହେଲା ଓ ପ୍ରବଳ ଶୀତରୁ ପଦ୍ମ ବନ ପୋତି ଯିବା ଘଟଣାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ କରି କବି ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି -
କଲା ଦିବସକୁ ଅତି ନିଉନ
କହୁ କହୁ ଯୋଡ଼ିଲା ପଦ୍ମ ବନ ।

ଏହି ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ କବି ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର *ପ୍ରଣୟ ବଲ୍ଲରୀ* କାବ୍ୟରେ ଶୀତଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନାରେ ନିର୍ବାସିତ ପଦ୍ମର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯଥା-
ଶିଶିର ସଦନେ ଜନ୍ମିଲା ନୟନ ମନୋହର ରୂପବନ୍ଧ
ତା ଦେଖି ଶିଶିର ଆନନ୍ଦେ ଅଧିର ହେଲା ଯେହ୍ନେ ଉନ୍ମୁର ।
ଦିଗେ ଦିଗେ ହେଲା ହରିଦ୍ରା ରଞ୍ଜିତ ମଧୁମୟ ଶୁଭ ପତ୍ର
ଆତପ ଚାପିତ ଜନେ ବିଚରିଲା ଲକ୍ଷ ଲକ୍ଷ ଆତ ପତ୍ର

ନିର୍ବାସିତ ପଦ୍ମ ସବୁକୁ ଆଣିଲା ହୃଦେ ହୋଇ ଦୟାପୁଷ୍ପ
ଶୀତ ବିକଳିତ ପ୍ରଭାତକୁ କଲା କୁଜଝଟିକା କାରାମୁକ୍ତ ।

କବି ଲୋକନାଥ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଶୀତ ଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପଦ୍ମବନ ବିଷୟ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯଥା -

ଶୀତ ଆସିଲା,
ଅମଳ କମଳ ବନ ଶୋଭାରାଶି ବିନାଶିଲା
ସୋରିଷ ସେବତୀ ଯତନ ଦିଶିଲେ ଅତି
ଶତ ବର୍ଷ ଗରେ ମାଟି ଲୁଚିଲେ ମଧୁ କୋଷଳି ।

ଶୀତ ଋତୁର କଷ୍ଟ ପରେ ଆସେ ଋତୁରାଜ ବସନ୍ତ । ବସନ୍ତ ଋତୁର ଆଖମାନରେ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ସହିତ ଶରୀର ଓ ମନରେ ଅସୁରନ୍ତ ପୁଲକର ସଞ୍ଚାର ହୁଏ । ଶୁଙ୍ଖର ଭାବନା ଉଦ୍‌ଘାଟକ ଏହି ଋତୁର ମୂଳଧାର ହିଁ ଶୁଙ୍ଖର ରସ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କାବ୍ୟରେ କବିମାନେ ବସନ୍ତ ବର୍ଷନା ଓ ତାହାକୁ ଆଧାର କରି ନାୟକ ନାୟିକା ମାନଙ୍କର ମିଳନ ବାସନାର ପ୍ରାଞ୍ଜଳ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଜୟଦେବଙ୍କ ରଚିତ ଶୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦରେ ବସନ୍ତ ଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନା ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମୀ । **ଲଳିତ ଲବଙ୍ଗ ଲତା ପରିଶୀଳନ, କୋମଳ ମଳୟ ସମୀରେ, ମଧୁକର ନିକର କରମ୍ବିତ କୋକିଳ, କୁଞ୍ଜିତ କୁଞ୍ଜ କୁଟୀରେ ।** ତହିଁରେ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସଂଯୁକ୍ତା ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଣ ସଞ୍ଚାର ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ । କବିସମାଜ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜଙ୍କ କାବ୍ୟରେ ବସନ୍ତ ଋତୁର ବହୁଳ ବ୍ୟବହାର ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ -

ମଳୟ ଶିଖରୀ ଶିରୀ ଚୋରି କରି, ବହିଲୁଣି ମନ୍ଦସମୀର ।
ସୁମନାକୁ ବାସ ଚୋରାଇ ନେବତି, ବୋଲି କହିଲୁଣି ଭ୍ରମର ।
କେଶରେ କେଶରେ ହେଲୁଣି ମଞ୍ଜୁଳ,
କେଶରେ ମଣ୍ଡନ କରିବା ଭଳିରେ ପୁଟିଲେଣି କେତେ ମଞ୍ଜୁଳ ।

କୋଟି ବସ୍ତ୍ରାଣ୍ଡ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ -- ଅତି ରସମୟ ବସନ୍ତ ସମୟ ପବିତ୍ର ପ୍ରମେହ ତାହାର; ମିତ ଅନଙ୍ଗକୁ ପ୍ରବଳ କରାଇ ଆଚରି ବନୋରୀ ବିହାର । ଆଗତେ, ଆରହିଲା ନାଗେଶ୍ଵରକୁ । ଋତୁରାଜ ପଦୁ ସେ ରଜ ଯେନିଲା, ଚାହିଁ ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲ କେଶରକୁ । ସେହି କାବ୍ୟରେ - ଦେଖିଲା ଆରାମ ଅତି ଅଭିରାମ, ସେ ଦେଖିବ ଏହି ପ୍ରତୀତି । ମନରୁ ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି ରତି କାମ ମୁହିଁ ମନ୍ତେ କି ବିରା ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । କୋକିଳ ଗାୟକ ଉଚ୍ଚେ ଗାଏ ଗୀତ, ଝିଙ୍କରୀ ଝଙ୍କର ଖଞ୍ଜରୀଟ ପାନ୍ଥ ହୃତ ସୁବାଦ୍ୟରେ ବିଦିତ । ଶୁକ ଉରଦ୍‌ବାଜ ବେନି କୁଳ ଦ୍ଵିଜ, ଶୁଦି ମଞ୍ଜୁ ବାକ୍ୟ ଉଚ୍ଚାରି, ମଲ୍ଲୀ କଳ ଶଙ୍ଖ ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ଅନେକ କନକ ମଧୁରୀ ମାଧୁରୀ । ମଧୁପା ତୁମ୍ଭେ ଧ୍ଵନି କରେ ଜାତ । ମରୁତ ଅଧିକାରୀ ଯେନି ସୁବାସ ରଞ୍ଜିତ ଠାରୁ ଗତାଗତ ।

ବୈଦେହୀଶ ବିଳାସ କାବ୍ୟରେ - ବସନ୍ତ ସମୟ ଅତି ରସମୟ ରଘବ ପ୍ରବେଶ ଆସି ଯେ, ବିଦୁମ ଛବି ସୁଦୃଶ ଲତା ଭାବି ପଲ୍ଲବେ ସରାଗେ ଦିଶି ଯେ । ଚମ୍ପା ଓ କେତକୀ ପୁଲର ଉକ୍ତ ସୁଗନ୍ଧ ପାଇଁ ମଧୁପ ଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ଏହି ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ କବି ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି - ବସନ୍ତ ବାତ ବାସ, ହରେ ଏକା ଯେ । ବସାଇ ନ ଦିଏ ପାସେ ମଧୁପକୁ, କେତକୀ ସତୀ ନାୟିକା ଯେ । ସେହି କାବ୍ୟରେ - ବସନ୍ତ ଋତୁ ବର୍ଷୁ ମଉରରେ, ବସନ୍ତ ରସାଳ ଚରୁ ଉପରେ । ବସନ୍ତ ଦୂତ କୃତ ଭଜ ସ୍ଵରେ, ବସନ୍ତ ବାସନା ଅଗନ୍ଧ୍ୟ ସୁରେ । ବ୍ୟାଧି ବାତ କର । ବ୍ୟାଧି ଯାତ ଗୁଞ୍ଜୁ ଋତୁ ଭ୍ରମର ।

କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଳଦେବ ରଥଙ୍କର ଅମର ଲେଖନୀ ନିଃସୂତ ବନ୍ଦୁକଳା କାବ୍ୟରେ ବସନ୍ତ ବର୍ଷନା ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର-- ପରବେଶ ହେଲା ସୁରଭି ଜାଳ; ବରବେଶ ହେଲେ ଭରୁହ କୁଳ । ଗରବେ ପ୍ରବଳ ହେଲା ମଦନ; ଭରବେ ଜାର ହେଲେ ଯୋଗୀ ଜନ । ପରବେଶ ଚାହିଁ । ସରବେ ଭାଳିଲେ ବଞ୍ଚିବା କେହି । ପୁଟିଲେ ବିବିଧ କୁସୁମ ବୃନ୍ଦ; ଛୁଟିଲା ବିନ୍ଦୁ ବିନ୍ଦୁ ମଜରୟ । ରସାଳ ମୁକୁଳ । ଚାହିଁ ଶୁଥ ହେଲା ବାମା ଦୁକୁଳ ।

ଅମର କବି ଗଙ୍ଗଧର ମେହେରଙ୍କର ତପସ୍ଵିନୀ କାବ୍ୟରେ ବସନ୍ତ ବର୍ଷନା ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଭିନ୍ନ । ପଞ୍ଚମ ସର୍ଗ - ଏକେତ ମଧୁର ବସନ୍ତ ଜାଳ, ବାଳ ଭାନୁ ହେମ କିରଣ ଜାଳ । ପ୍ରସରି ଶିଖିର ଖର୍ଜୁର ପର୍ବେ; ଲୀଳା କରୁଅଛି ବିବିଧ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣେ ସେ । ଶିଖିର ବିନ୍ଦୁରେ ପଡିଯେ, ହୀରାନୀଳା ମୋତି ମାଣିକ୍ୟ ପଟଳ ବିଚିତ୍ର ହେଉଛି ଗତି ଯେ ।

ଏହିପରି ବସନ୍ତ ବର୍ଷନା ବିଭିନ୍ନ କବିଙ୍କର ନିଜସ୍ଵ ଭାବ ରସରେ ରସାଣିତ ହୋଇ ରୂପାୟିତ ହୋଇଛି । କବି ଲୋକନାଥ ବିଦ୍ୟାଧରଙ୍କର ଚିତ୍ରକଳା କାବ୍ୟରେ ବସନ୍ତ ଋତୁର ବର୍ଷନା ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର - ଏଥୁ ଅନ୍ତେ କିଛି ଦିନାନ୍ତରେ ବସନ୍ତ ପ୍ରବେଶ ହୋଇଲା, ମନ୍ଦ ଗନ୍ଧ ଶୀତ ମଳୟ ମରୁତ ସମସ୍ତ ଦିଗେ ପ୍ରସରିଲା ।

ରସକଲ୍ଲୋଳ କାବ୍ୟରେ କବି ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାସଙ୍କର ଅମର ଲେଖନୀରୁ ଏହି ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଉଦାହରଣ - କୁସୁମ ସମୟ ହୋଇଲା ଭଦୟ । ଦକ୍ଷିଣା ପବନ ବହିଲା କନ୍ଦର୍ପ ଦର୍ପ ହୋଇଲା ଅତିଶୟ । କୁସୁମ ବିଶିଖ କରିବାକୁ ଲାଖ କାମି କାମିନୀ ଜଳେ ଭୟ ।

କବି କେଶବରାଜ ହରିଚନ୍ଦନଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ - *ଏଥୁ ଅନ୍ତେ କିଛି ଦିନେ ପବେଶ ହୋଇଲା ବସନ୍ତ ସାମନ୍ତ; ମଳୟ ମରୁତ ଉଥ ଆରୋହଣ ବଜାଇ ବାଦ୍ୟ ପିକରୁତ । ତେଜାଇ ନାଗ କେଶର ଆତପତ । ଜେତକୀ କୁଳ କୁଟ ଚାର ରୁଚିର ଭ୍ରମର ମାଳା ଅସିପତ ।* (ରସ ସିନ୍ଧୁ ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣା)

ପୁରାତନ କବିଙ୍କର ରଚନାରେ ବସନ୍ତ ବର୍ଷନାର ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ ଏତେ ବହୁଳ ଯେ ସମସ୍ତ ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କଲେ ତାହାହିଁ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ପଦ୍ୟରେ ପରିଣତ ହେବ । କବି ପଦ୍ମନାଭ ଶ୍ରୀ ଚନ୍ଦନଙ୍କ ଶଶିରେଖା କାବ୍ୟରେ ବସନ୍ତ ରତ୍ନ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର - *ଶିଶିର ଅନ୍ତରେ ହୋଇ ବସନ୍ତ ପ୍ରବେଶ, ବହିଲା ମୟ ପବନ ପଲ୍ଲବିଲେ ତୁଟ । କୃଷ୍ଣ ରସାମୃତ କାବ୍ୟରେ କବି କରୁଣାକର ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଲେଖନୀରୁ -*

*ବହିଲା ମୟ ସମୀର ପଲ୍ଲବିଲେ ତରୁବର,
ପଲ୍ଲାସ ପଲ୍ଲାସ ସବୁ ଝଟିପଟିଲେ
ପୁଷ୍ପ ମଧୁ ପାନେ ମଉ, ମଧୁ ବୁଡ ପରାଭୂତ
ବରନ ଛବିକି ସେହି କାଳେ କହିଲେ
ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କିରଣରେ ଶୟନ
କଳପି ସକାଳ କଲେ ତନ୍ତ୍ର ବିଧାନ ।*

କବି ଲୋକନାଥ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଅବଦାନ ଅନବଦ୍ୟ । ଯଥା - *ଦେଖ ପାଣ ମିତଣୀ ରସା ରସାଇଲାଣି ମଧୁରେ ମଧୁ ବସନ୍ତ । ଠା ବିତରି ମକରନ୍ଦ ବହୁଳ ମକରନ୍ଦ, ସୁଗନ୍ଧ ଶନ୍ଦବହୁ ମନେ ବହି ଆନନ୍ଦ । ପତି । ତମାଳ ବନେ ପିକ ଗାଉଛି ମାଙ୍ଗଳିକ, ନଳିନୀ ପାଶେ ଅଳି କରେ ଅଳି ରସିକ; ସାର ରସ ରସାରେ ହେବାକୁ ଅଭିଷେକ, କରନ୍ତି ସୁରସିକେ ମାନସେ ମାନସିକ ।* (ରାଗ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଭୈରବୀ)

କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାଳୀଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ ବସନ୍ତ ବର୍ଷନା ଏହି ପ୍ରକାରର: *ସାଜ ରତ୍ନପତି ଆଜି, ହିମ ରତ୍ନ ଲାଜ ଲଭିଲାଣି । ଠା ଘନ କୁହୁଟି ତଳେ ତନୁ ଚୋରାଇ; ଶିରି ଗଉରେ ଶୀତ ଲୁଚିଲା ଯାଇ ।* (ରାଗ-ଆନନ୍ଦ ଭୈରବୀ, ତାଳ-ଝଞ୍ଜ)

ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତର ସ୍ୱାତନ୍ତ୍ର୍ୟ ଭାଷା ଓ ଛନ୍ଦରେ ପ୍ରତିପାଦିତ । ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ, ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ, ପ୍ରାଚ୍ୟ, ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ସଂଗୀତରେ ଭାଷା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ସ୍ୱର ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସ୍ୱର ସମୂହର ନିୟୋଜନ (**permutation and combination**) ଉପରେ ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି । ମାତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତର ସୁଲଳିତ ରଚନା ସହିତ ସୁମଧୁର ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନାର ପଯୋଜନ ରହିଛି । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଶବ୍ଦର ଅର୍ଥ ବିନ୍ୟାସ ସହିତ ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନା ଓ ଛନ୍ଦର ସମ୍ମିଶ୍ର ରହିଛି । ତେଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତକୁ ଛନ୍ଦ ରହିତ ଓ ଶବ୍ଦକୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଆକାସ, ତାନ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି କରି ତାହାକୁ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଂଗୀତ ପ୍ରମାଣ କରାଇବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା ବିଧେୟ ନୁହେଁ । ରସାଣିତ ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନାର ଯୋଜନା ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତରେ ଶବ୍ଦ ଓ ବାକ୍ୟର ଭାବ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ସେଇ ଭିତ୍ତିରେ ସ୍ୱର ଓ ଛନ୍ଦ(ତାଳ)ର ସଂଯୋଜନା ବିଧେୟ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତ ଭାବ ଓ ରସ ସାଗରରେ ନିମଜ୍ଜିତ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସଦୃଶ । ଏହା ଆହରଣ କରି ଆଦୃତ କରାଇବା କଷ୍ଟସାଧ୍ୟ । ମାତ୍ର ଏହା ହିଁ ରସିକ, ପ୍ରବୀଣ, ବୁଦ୍ଧିମତ୍ତ, ଅଭିଜ୍ଞ ଓ ଧୂରନ୍ଧର ଗାୟକ ଗାୟିକା ମାନଙ୍କର ଏକାନ୍ତ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ।

ଆରତି ମିଶ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଜଣେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ସାଧୁକା ଭାବେ ଖ୍ୟାତି ଲାଭ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତରେ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଅଳଙ୍କାର ଉପାୟ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ କରିବା ପରେ ସେ ଗୁରୁ ବାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାଶ ଓ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତରେ ଶିକ୍ଷାଲାଭ କରିଥିଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଜଣେ ସୁନାମଧନୀ କଳାକାର ହିସାବରେ ସେ ଜାତୀୟ ଓ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ସ୍ତରରେ ବହୁ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

PURI BEACH

Light blue sky, dark blue water
Gulls flying overhead
Wet and pretty shore
Shells scattered everywhere
Crabs scuttling away
People walking by the waves
Waves washing over the sand
Water going over my feet
Glittering, shimmering, ocean
Sunset painting colors in the sky
The same colors reflected in the sea.



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ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆତ୍ମ ପରିଚିତି, ସମୀକ୍ଷା ଓ ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା

ଡକ୍ଟର ଶୁଭକାନ୍ତ ବେହେରା ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଟନ୍ ଡି-ସି

ନିଜକୁ ଚିହ୍ନି ଶିଖିବା ଏକ ବଡ଼ କଳା । ଏହି କଳାରେ ସିଦ୍ଧିଲାଭ, ବଞ୍ଚି ରହିବା ଓ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେବା ପାଇଁ ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ଯୋଗାଇବା ସହ ପଥ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକର ଭୂମିକା ନେଇଥାଏ । ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଜୀବନରେ ଆତ୍ମ ପରିଚିତିର ଯେପରି ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ରହିଛି ଗୋଟାଗତ ବା ଜାତି ଜୀବନରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାହାର ଯେପରି ଗୁରୁତ୍ବ ରହିଛି । ସ୍ବତନ୍ତ୍ର କେବଳ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିକୁ ନୁହେଁ ଜାତିକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଜକୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବାର କଳା ଆୟତ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ବିନା ଆତ୍ମ ପରିଚିତିରେ ଦେଶ ବା ଜାତିର ଉନ୍ନତି ଅସମ୍ଭବ । ଆତ୍ମ ପରିଚିତିରୁ ଆତ୍ମଜିଜ୍ଞାସା ଓ ଆତ୍ମ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ ଜନ୍ମ ନିଏ । ନିଜ ସହ ଅନ୍ୟର ତୁଳନା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୁଏ । ତିଷ୍ଠି ରହିବା ଓ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେବାର ଏକ ସାମଗ୍ରିକ ଜୈବିକ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୁଏ ।

ଇତିହାସରୁ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇ ଆସିଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି ନିଜକୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବାର କଳା କେବେ, କିପରି ଓ କେତେ ଦୂର ଆୟତ୍ତ କରିଛି ? ଏପରି ଜିଜ୍ଞାସାମୂଳକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତରାନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ସାମଗ୍ରିକ ଉତ୍ତରଣ ଓ ଜାଗରଣର ମୂଲ୍ୟାୟନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ସହାୟକ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଏହି ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୋଣରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି କିପରି ଓ କେଉଁ ଐତିହାସିକ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ନିଜ ପରିଚିତିକୁ ଆତ୍ମସ୍ଥ କଲା, ତାହା ଏଠାରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରାଯାଇପାରେ ।

ଆତ୍ମ ପରିଚିତି ବିଷୟରେ ସଚେତନତା କେତେକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ବା ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଆତ୍ମ ପରିଚିତି ଉନ୍ନବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଶେଷାର୍ଦ୍ଧ-ବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ପ୍ରଥମ ଭାଗରେ “ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଚେତନତା” ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହାର ରୂପରେଖ ନବମ/ଦଶମ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରୁ ବିକଶିତ ହୋଇଆସିଥିଲା । ଏହା ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇପାରିଥିଲା “ଓଡ଼ିଶା” ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡର କ୍ରମଶଃ ଧାରଣାଗତ ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଯୋଗୁଁ । ମହାଭାରତ ଯୁଗରୁ “ଓଡ଼ିଶା” ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡ ବିଷୟରେ ସଚେତନତା ଥିବାର ଜଣାପଡ଼େ । ମହାଭାରତର ବନପର୍ବରେ ଲୋମଶ ରିଷି ଏହି ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡ ଓ ଅଧିବାସୀମାନଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ପାଣ୍ଡବମାନଙ୍କୁ ସୂଚନା ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଭରତମୁନି “ନାଟ୍ୟଶାସ୍ତ୍ର”ରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡରେ ଉତ୍ତ-ମାଗଧୀ ନୃତ୍ୟଶୈଳୀର ପ୍ରଚଳନ କଥା ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରାଚୀନକାଳରୁ ଏହି ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡ ଉତ୍କଳ, କଳିଙ୍ଗ, ଉତ୍ତ ଓ କୋଶଳ ନାମରେ ପରିଚିତଥିଲେ ହେଁ, ଏହି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ନାମ ବିଶାଳ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଐତିହାସିକ ଅଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ହିଁ ବୁଝାଏ । ସେ ଯାହା ହେଉନା କାହିଁକି, ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରୁ ହିଁ ସେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡର ଭୂଗୋଳ ବିଷୟରେ ଧାରଣା ଥିଲା, ଏଥିରେ ଦ୍ବିମତର ଅବକାଶ ନାହିଁ । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କାଳରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରାଜବଂଶ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ଉପରେ ନିଜର ରାଜତ୍ବ କରିବା ସହ ପରସ୍ପର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡକୁ କ୍ରମଶଃ ଏକତ୍ରୀକରଣ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ । ଗଙ୍ଗବଂଶ ରାଜତ୍ବ ସମୟ (୧୦୭୮-୧୪୩୫)ରେ ସମଗ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ଏକତ୍ରୀତ ହେଲା ଏବଂ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଶା’ ନାମ ଏହି ଏକତ୍ରୀତ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ପାଇଁ କ୍ରମଶଃ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଭୌଗୋଳିକ ଓ ରାଜନୈତିକ ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହିଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପରିଚିତିର ମୂଳଦୁଆ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କଲା । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗୀୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଧର୍ମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚିତିର ବିକାଶରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କଲା । ଆଦିକବି ସାରଳା ଦାସ ତାଙ୍କ “ମହାଭାରତ”ରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ମହାଭାରତର ବିଷୟ ବସ୍ତୁ ମଧ୍ୟକୁ ଆଣି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଏକ ଅନନ୍ୟ ପରିଚୟ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । କେବଳ ସେତିକି ନହେଁ, ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ପର୍ବରେ ସାରଳା ଦାସ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି ସହ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡ ଅଙ୍ଗଙ୍ଗ ଭାବେ ଜଡ଼ିତ କରାଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏହା ଫଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସମଗ୍ର ଭାରତବର୍ଷରେ ନିଜର ଏକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ପରିଚୟ ପାଇ ପାରିଲା । ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗୀୟ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କବିମାନେ, ଯଥା-ବଳରାମ ଦାସ, ଅଚ୍ୟୁତାନନ୍ଦ ଦାସ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପରିଚୟ ଦେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ । ବଳରାମ ଦାସଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରାମାୟଣରେ ଭୌଗୋଳିକ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପାହାଡ଼, ପର୍ବତ ଓ ପ୍ରକୃତି ମୂଳ ରାମାୟଣ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ଭୂଗୋଳର ସ୍ଥାନ ନେଲେ । ଏପରିକି ଅନେକ ମୂଳ-ରାମାୟଣ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ଘଟଣା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଘଟିଥିବାର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ମିଳିଲା । ସେହିପରି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ ତାଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଗବତରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଲୀଲାଖେଳା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିବା ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଚାର କଲେ । ଏ ସବୁର ପରିଣାମ ସ୍ବରୂପ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡ କ୍ରମଶଃ ପବିତ୍ର ଓ ପୁଣ୍ୟଭୂମି ହିସାବରେ ପରିଚିତ ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ମଧ୍ୟ ଯୁଗୀୟ କବି ମାନେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତି ଓ ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି ସମସାମୟିକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରିକ ଭକ୍ତିଭାବର ଉଦ୍ବେଗ କଲେ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଯେ, ଏହି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡର, ତାହା ସାରଳା ଦାସଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି କୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାସଙ୍କ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସମସ୍ତେ ଦାବି କଲେ । ସାରଳା ଦାସ କେବଳ ଦ୍ବାରକାରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ସହ ପୁରୀ ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ନୀଳମାଧବ ରୂପରେ ଆର୍ବିଭାବକୁ ଯୋଡ଼ିଦେଲେନି, ଅଧିକନ୍ତୁ ସେ କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀର ରାଜା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଯାଜପୁରର ରାଜା ରୂପେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କଲେ । ସେହିପରି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ ତାଙ୍କ “ଦାରୁବ୍ରହ୍ମ ଗୀତା”ରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଅଭ୍ୟୁଦୟକୁ ଏକ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ଘଟଣା କରି ଥୋଇଦେଲେ ।

ମଧ୍ୟ ଯୁଗୀୟ କବିଙ୍କ ପରିକଳ୍ପିତ “ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣବ୍ରହ୍ମ” ଓ “ନିତ୍ୟ ପୁରୁଷ” ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ କ୍ରମଶଃ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କର ଧାର୍ମିକ ପରିଚିତିର ଦ୍ୟୋତକ ହେଲେ । ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀର ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣରୁ ଜଣାଯାଏ, ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଏହି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡରେ ବହୁ ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ମଧ୍ୟଦେଇ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଛନ୍ତି । ଷ୍ଟକ୍, କୂର୍ମ ଓ ନାରଦ ପୁରାଣରେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି ବିଷୟରେ ଯେଉଁ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ରହିଛି, ତାହା ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କଲେ ଏହା ଷ୍ଟକ୍ ଯେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମୂଖ୍ୟତଃ ଜଣେ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ଦେବତା ହିସାବରେ ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡରେ ରହି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି, ଯଦିଓ ଭିନ୍ନ ରୂପ ଓ ଭିନ୍ନ ପରିବେଶରେ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କାଳରେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ରାଜପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକତା ହେତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଧର୍ମର ଅଭ୍ୟୁଦୟ ଘଟାଇଛନ୍ତି, ଯାହାକୁ କି ଆମେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଧର୍ମ ନାମରେ ଚିହ୍ନିତ କରୁ । ସୋମବଂଶୀ ରାଜା ଦ୍ବିତୀୟ ଯଯାତି (୯୨୨-୫୫)ଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟବଂଶୀ ଗଜପତି ରାଜାମାନଙ୍କ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ, ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟର ରାଜତନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଏକ ଅପରିହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲେ । ଅନନ୍ତବର୍ମନ ଚୋଡ଼ଗଙ୍ଗ ପୁରୀ ଠାରେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ କଲେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ବଂଶଧର ତୃତୀୟ ଅନଙ୍ଗଭୀମ ନିଜରାଜ୍ୟକୁ

ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ପାଦନ କରି ନିଜକୁ ତାଙ୍କର “ରାଉଟ” ବୋଲି ଘୋଷଣା କଲେ । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟବଂଶୀ ଗଜପତି କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେବ ପ୍ରତୀକାତ୍ମକ ଭାବରେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କର ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦାତା କରିଦେଲେ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଧର୍ମକୁ ରାଜତନ୍ତ୍ର ସହିତ ଏପରି ଜଡ଼ିତ କରିବାର ଯାହା କିଛି ଅଭିସନ୍ଧି ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏପରି ରାଜା-ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସମ୍ପର୍କର ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କ ଧର୍ମ ବିଶ୍ୱାସରେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ଥୋଇଲା । ରାଜା ହେଲେ ଚଳନ୍ତି ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ଛେରାପହରା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସାଧାରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ନିକଟତମ କରିଦେଲା । ସମ୍ଭାରର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରାଜା ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର ମାଧ୍ୟମ ହେଲେ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଓ ଚଳଣିରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ କୈନ୍ଦ୍ରିକତା କ୍ରମଶଃ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଇଷ୍ଟଦେବତା କଲା । ଉନ୍ନବିଂଶ ଓ ଚାରି ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆତ୍ମପରିଚିତିରେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହେଲେ ଏକ ଅପରିହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅଙ୍ଗ । ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଆତ୍ମସମ୍ମାନ ଓ ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ଆଦ୍ୟ ସେବକ ଚଳନ୍ତି ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ଓ ଗଜପତି ରାଜାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଗଢ଼ିଉଠିଲା । ଏଣୁ ବିତିଶ୍ ଶାସନ କାଳରେ ସରକାର୍ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ଓ ଗଜପତି ରାଜାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଯାହା କାଲଦା କଟକଣା ବସାଇଲେ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜନମତ ସେତେବେଳେ ତାର ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିଛି । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କାଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନେତୃତ୍ୱ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନରେ ସଫଳତା ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ମାଧ୍ୟମ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଉତ୍କଳମଣି ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଉପସ୍ଥିତକୁ ସାର୍ବଜନୀନ ବୋଲି –“ବନ୍ଦୀର ଆତ୍ମକଥା”ରେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ କେବଳ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନେତାବୋଲି ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରିନାହାନ୍ତି, ତାଙ୍କର ଉପସ୍ଥିତକୁ ସାର୍ବଜନୀନ ବୋଲି ମଧ୍ୟ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେହିପରି କୁଳବୃଦ୍ଧ ମଧୁସୂଦନ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କୁ ରକ୍ଷାକରିବା ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଆବାହନ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କର କୃପାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରଗତିର ବାଟ ଖୋଲିବ ବୋଲି ଆଶା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଏସବୁର ପ୍ରତିକାତ୍ମକ ଅର୍ଥ ହେଲା: ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଚେତନା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚେତନା ସହ ଏକାକାର ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିବାରୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏକତ୍ୱର ମାଧ୍ୟମ ହୋଇପାରିବେ । ଆଜି ମଧ୍ୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଚେତନା ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କୁ ଏକତ୍ୱର ଫାଶରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିଛି । ପୁରୀ ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ହିନ୍ଦୁଓଡ଼ିଆର ବହୁ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷିତ ତୀର୍ଥ । ପୁଷ୍ପ, ଦୁଃଖ, ବିପଦ, ଆପଦ ସବୁଥିରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ତ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର କେବଳ ଶରଣାପନ୍ନ ହୁଏ ।

ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଧର୍ମ ଯଦି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆତ୍ମପରିଚିତିର ଧାର୍ମିକ ଅଙ୍ଗ ହୁଏ, ତେବେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏହି ପରିଚିତିର ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ଅଙ୍ଗ । ଭାଷାଗତ ପରିଚିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ଜାତିକୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଜାତିମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ କେବଳ ପୃଥକ୍ କରେନି, ତାହା ସଂପୃକ୍ତ ଜାତିର ସାମଗ୍ରିକ ପରିଚିତିର ପ୍ରକାଶନ ପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକ ଦୃଢ଼ ମାଧ୍ୟମ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଉନବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଦିତୀୟ ଭାଗରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଚିଣି ରହିବାରେ ଯେଉଁ ସଂକଟର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହୋଇଥିଲା ତାହା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଏକ ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ, ଐତିହ୍ୟ ଓ ପରମ୍ପରା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବାରେ ସହାୟକ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଭାଷା ସଂକଟ ହିଁ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧାକାନ ଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଜକୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବା ପାଇଁ ବାଟ ପରିଷ୍କାର କଲା । ‘ନିଜର’ ଓ ‘ନିଜପାଇଁ’ର ଭାବନା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଉଦ୍ଭିଷ୍ଟ ହେଲା । ଫଳରେ ଆତ୍ମସମୀକ୍ଷାର ପର୍ବ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା । ନିଜ ଭାଷା ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଆଗରେ ବଢ଼କରି ଥୋଇବାର ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ହେଲା । ପରିଶାମରେ ଆମେ ପାଇଲୁ ଫକୀରମୋହନ, ରାଧାନାଥ, ମଧୁସୂଦନ, ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ଓ ନନ୍ଦକିଶୋର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ରଥିଲୁ । ଏମାନଙ୍କ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ବଡ଼କଥା ହେଲା-ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚେତନାର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ । ଏହାକୁ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚିତିର ଧାରଣାଗତ ମୂଳଦୁଆ ବୋଲି କହିପାରିବା । ଏହି ଚେତନାକୁ ଭିତ୍ତି କରି ଫକୀର ମୋହନ ଲେଖିଲେ “ଛମାଣ ଆଠଗୁଣ୍ଠ” ଓ ରାଧାନାଥ ରଚନା କଲେ “ଚିଲିକା କାବ୍ୟ” । ଫକୀରମୋହନଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଚେତନତାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସମସାମୟିକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜୀବନର ମାର୍ମିକ ଚିତ୍ର ଦେବାକୁ ସହାୟକ ହୋଇଥିଲା ‘ଛମାଣ ଆଠଗୁଣ୍ଠ’ର ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ମଙ୍ଗରାଜ ବା ‘ପ୍ରାୟଶ୍ଚିତ୍ତ’ର ଗୋବିନ୍ଦଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ବା ‘ସଭ୍ୟ ଜମିଦାର’ର ରାଜୀବଲୋଚନ-ସମସ୍ତେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଶାସନ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାର ପ୍ରଭାବର ଫଳଶ୍ରୁତି ମାତ୍ର । ଏମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟବିତ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜର ପ୍ରତିନିଧିତ୍ୱ କରନ୍ତି । କେବଳ ସମସାମୟିକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନୁହେଁ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରକୃତି ଓ ଭୂଗୋଳ ମଧ୍ୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ଅଧିକାର କଲେ । ରାଧାନାଥଙ୍କ ‘ଚିଲିକା’ରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୌଗୋଳିକ ପ୍ରକୃତି ଜୀବନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ପରିଚିତିର ଦ୍ୟୋତକ ହେଲା । ରାଧାନାଥ ପ୍ରକୃତି ସହିତ ଇତିହାସ, କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ଓ ପରମ୍ପରାକୁ ମିଶାଇ ଦେଇ “କେଦାର ଗୌରୀ”, “ନନ୍ଦିକେଶ୍ୱରୀ” ପ୍ରଭୃତି ନୂତନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତୀୟ ଗାଥା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚିତି ଏହି ଗାଥାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଜରିଆରେ ଏକ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟା ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ବିଂଶଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚିତିର ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟାନରେ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନେଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରୂପ ଓ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ପରିକଳ୍ପିତ ହେଲା । ଯାହା ଫଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପରିଚୟ ଆତ୍ମସ୍ଥ କରିବାକୁ ସୁବିଧା ହେଲା । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ, ଭକ୍ତ କବି ମଧୁସୂଦନ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ସବୁ ପୁଣ୍ୟ ଓ ଗୌରବର ଅଧିକାରୀ ‘ଜନ୍ମଦାତା’ (ଉତ୍କଳ ଗାଥା) ହିସାବରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କଲାବେଳେ ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ‘ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଦେବୀ’ (ଉତ୍କଳ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ) ହିସାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଜନ୍ମଦାତା ବା ଦେବୀର ପ୍ରତୀକ ଭାବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସାଧାରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚେତନାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆତ୍ୱ ଭାବ ଉଦ୍ରେକର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଉତ୍ସ ହେଲା । ସତ୍ୟବାଦୀ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀର କବି ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ ମାନେ ଏହି ଓଡ଼ିଆତ୍ୱ ଭାବକୁ ଇତିହାସ ଓ କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀର ସାହିତ୍ୟରୂପ ଭାବରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । ଗୋଦାବରୀଶ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କ ନାଟକ ଦ୍ୱୟ ‘ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ଦେବ’ ଓ ‘ମୁକୁନ୍ଦଦେବ’ ଯଥାକ୍ରମେ ଗଜପତି ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ଦେବ ଓ ଶେଷ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆରାଜା ମୁକୁନ୍ଦଦେବଙ୍କ ଗୌରବ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାକରି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଇତିହାସର ଗୌରବାକରଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେହିପରି ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ ଦାସ ତାଙ୍କର “କୌଶାକ୍” କାବ୍ୟରେ କୌଶାକ ମନ୍ଦିରକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ପରିଚିତିର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ଦେବାପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଜାତି ବା ସଂପ୍ରଦାୟ ଯଦି ନିଜର ପରିଚିତିକୁ କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ ସଂକୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଇତିହାସ, ପରମ୍ପରା ଓ ଭାଷା ଦେଇ ଦେଖେ, ତେବେ ସେ ପରିଚିତି ବହୁ ସମୟରେ ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟାଶୀଳ ଓ ନିମ୍ନମୁଖୀ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ବୋଧହୁଏ ଉତ୍କଳମଣି ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଦାଶ୍ ଏହା ଉପଲବ୍ଧ କରିପାରି ଓଡ଼ିଆର ବିଶାଳ ଓ ଉଦାରମନା ପରିଚିତିର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ଦେଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର “ଧର୍ମପଦ” ଓ “ବନ୍ଦୀର ଆତ୍ମକଥା”ରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମହାଭାରତୀୟ ମୁଖ୍ୟସ୍ରୋତର ଅଂଶବିଶେଷ ରୂପେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହେଲା । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ସମୟରେ ସବୁଜଗୋଷ୍ଠୀର କବିମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆକୁ “ବିଶ୍ୱମାନବ” ହିସାବରେ ପରିଚିତି ଦେଲେ ଯେ କି ଅସୀମ ଆକାଶ, ନିର୍ଝରିଣୀ, ପାହାଡ଼ ପର୍ବତ, ଶସ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଓ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଲୋକର ଅଧିକାରୀ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏତାଦୃଶ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚିତିର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ଦେଇ ସମଗ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚେତନା ଉଦ୍ରେକ କରିବାକୁ ସମର୍ଥହେଲା । ଏହି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚେତନାର ଫଳଶ୍ରୁତି ଯେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପ୍ରବେଶ ଗଠନ (୧୯୩୬), ଏଥିରେ ଦ୍ୱିମତର ଅବକାଶ ନାହିଁ । ପୂର୍ବରୁ କୁହାଯାଇଛି, ନିଜକୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବାର କଳାହିଁ ବଞ୍ଚିରହିବା ପାଇଁ ପଥପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଧର୍ମ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ପ୍ରଥମାର୍ଦ୍ଧରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କୁ ନିଜକୁ ଚିହ୍ନି ଶିଖିବାର ବାଟ ଦେଖାଇଲା । ନବମ-ଦଶମ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରୁ ଯେଉଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଚେତନତା ବୀଜ ଅବସ୍ଥାରୁ କ୍ରମଶଃ ବିକଶିତ ହୋଇଆସୁଥିଲା ତାହା ବିଂଶଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣବୃଦ୍ଧି ପରିଣତ ହେଲା । ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଏହି

ସଚେତନତାକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚିତିର ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା ଓ ସଂଜ୍ଞା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଏକ ଜୀବନ୍ତ, କ୍ରିୟାଶୀଳ ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟାରେ ପରିଣତ କରିପାରିଲେ । ପରିଚିତି ହିଁ ଆମ୍ଭ ସଚେତନତା ଜାତ କରେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବୟୁତଃ ଏହାହିଁ ଘଟିଛି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚିତି ବିଷୟରେ ଆଜି ଆମେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଉଶାଅଧିକେ ସଚେତନ । ଅଦ୍ୟାବଧି ଆମେ ଯାହାକିଛି ଉନ୍ନତି କରିଛୁ ବା କରୁଛୁ, ଏହା ଆମ ପରିଚିତିକୁ ଅଧିକ ଦୃଢ଼କରୁଛି । ଆମ ଇତିହାସ, ଧର୍ମ, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ପରମ୍ପରାର ଯେଉଁ ପରିଚୟ, ତାହା ସାମ୍ପ୍ରତିକ ପ୍ରଗତିଦ୍ୱାରା ଆହୁରି ପରିପୁଷ୍ଟ ହେଉଛି । ପରିଚିତି ବିଷୟରେ ଆମେ ଅଧିକରୁ ଅଧିକ ସଚେତନ ହେଉଛୁ । ଏହା ଆମକୁ ନିଜର ପ୍ରତିଫଳନକୁ ଅନୁରାଗ ଦର୍ପଣରେ ଦେଖିବାପାଇଁ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଦେବା ଦରକାର, ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଃଖର କଥା ଆମେ ଆଜି ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ 'ବିରାଗ ଦର୍ପଣ'ର ଆଶ୍ରୟନେଇ ନିଜର ପରିଚିତିକୁ କ୍ଳେଦାନ୍ତ କରିଦେଉଛୁ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହୋଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚିତିକୁ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି ନକଲେ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ କ'ଣ ?

ଡକ୍ଟର ଶୁଭକାନ୍ତ ବେହେରା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଡି.ସି. ସ୍ଥିତ ଭାରତୀୟ ଦୂତାବାସରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ସତୀବ ରୂପେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଭାର ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସିଏ ତାଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀ ରାଜଶ୍ରୀ ବେହେରା (ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ବିଶାରଦା) ଓ ଦୁଇଟି ସନ୍ତାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବେଧେସ୍ତା, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରନ୍ତି ।



“Radha Krishna – a Contemporary Rendition” is the title of the painting rendered by Mrs. Reena Pattnaik. She lives in Queens, New York, with her husband, Sourjya P. Pattnaik and two lovely young children, Darshee and Divya. Mrs. Pattnaik has been painting as a hobby since her childhood. She does not have any formal training in art but has always had a passion for it. She prefers to work with oil paints as her medium. She likes to paint contemporary art, portraits and landscapes. The painting showcased in this year’s Souvenir Journal was painted by her about 6 years back when she was extremely fascinated with rendering contemporary versions of Hindu gods and goddesses. Mrs. Pattnaik has plans to hold exhibitions throughout the country.

Purushottam Kshetra

When I got up in the morning, 'Aai,' my grandmother, asked me to get ready fast. She also insisted that I should take a bath. That was winter. "Ooh! Do I really have to take bath early morning? How I wish I could control the temperature of the tap water by myself!" The only thing I used to hate in Cuttack was taking bath early in the morning. Since I was on holidays I was allowed to go to bed late, wake up late and take bath late. Even Mama did not insist on me to follow my usual Toronto schedule. "Aai," I asked, "why do I have to take an early bath t-o-d-a-y? Can't I go to Puri without it?" Aai explained, we were supposed to visit temples with a fresh mind and body.

An hour later, we were on the road and on our way to Puri. All along, Aja, my grandfather, kept narrating to us about the different places we passed by. Finally we reached Puri, some three hours later. My mama told Puri is also known as Purushottam *kshetra*. On asking, she explained Purushottam means an excellent or unique being, *kshetra* means place, together the phrase means the place of the excellent being (God).

India is full of temples, holy places, and pilgrimages. Purushottam *kshetra* or Puri is one of the four most important pilgrimages of India. Purushottam Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are worshipped in Puri. The temple is also known as Shri Mandira which stands on the holy ground of Shri Kshetra.

We parked the car a good distance from the gates of the temple. I was asked to take off my shoes and keep them inside the car before we went inside the temple. The barefooted walk to the temple was not very pleasant and I know my younger sister did not enjoy it too. I stepped on cow dung ('*gobara*'). While I was worrying about it, Mama reassured me we had to wash our feet before entering the temple.

The temple was very crowded. As I looked at the structure through the gates, the temple looked huge. We had to climb twenty-two steps to reach the place of worship. Those stairs are called "*Baisi Pahacha*." On our way we met many '*Pandas*' who insisted to guide us. Although my Aja asked one of them to help us buy '*prasad*' and offer *Puja* for us, I noticed most people were ignoring the '*Pandas*.' I wondered why! Our '*Panda*' helped us buy '*dipa*' or earthen lamp, flowers and '*prasad*.' My little sister was thrilled watching how the *dipas* were lit inside the temple. Finally, we were pulled close to the Gods by our *Panda*. There we saw Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra. So close! On our way back, I felt the tapping touch of very fine sticks on my head. I looked up and saw a priest tapping everyone's head with those sticks. I was later told, that was a way to bless us. We took a round of the temple premises, which is called '*Beddha*'. There were many other small temples. I noticed on a high platform many priests were sitting. There was no God there. I was told, that was the '*Mukti Mandapa*'.

When I came out of the temple Aai showed me the flag on the top of the temple, which is called '*Nilachakra Bana*'. We sat on the *Baisi Pahacha* for few minutes while waiting for *Khira* (a delicious sweet dish made out of milk) to be bought.

I later heard more about the history of Sri Mandira temple from my Papa. I learnt King Indradyumna had set up the deities at Puri on divine orders. Since then, kings of Orissa have

been serving the deities—Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra with deep faith and Orissa is truly known as 'The land of Jagannath'.

There are many other temples in Puri such as Lokanath temple, Gundicha temple, Markandeswar temple, Nilakantheswar temple etc. I could not visit all of them but I visited Loknath temple and Gundicha temple. After visiting the temples we went to the sea beach. It was wonderful! Of course crowded. I collected seashells and still have them with me in my souvenir box. I was surprised to see beautiful hand made idols made out of seashells. Mama bought few of them.

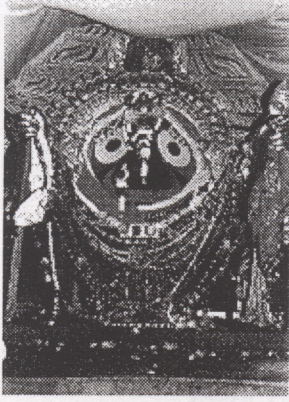
On the way back to Cuttack, I was thrilled to know more about Purusottama *kshetra* from mama. The temple of Lord Jagannath observes many festivals and ceremonies throughout the year. Two of the most important festivals are *Snana Purnima* and *Ratha Jatra*. *Ratha Jatra* is also known as *Gundicha Jatra*. Every year this festival is observed with pomp and ceremony. On this occasion, people from different corners of India as well as abroad assemble at Puri to visit Lord Jagannath. Three chariots are constructed for the three deities (Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra) in *Rath Jatra*. People pull the chariot with utmost devotion and the deities go to Gundicha Mandira. Again on *Bahuda Jatra*, Jagannath, Balabhadra & Subhadra come back to Srimandira.

On the way we got down at Pipili where I saw beautiful decoratives, bags, skirts. I bought a few of them as gifts for my friends in Toronto. They were very impressed to see the colorful handicrafts of India (Orissa).

We reached home tired at about 8pm. We had *Mahaprasad* as dinner, which we bought from Puri. The *Mahaprasada dali* was very tasty! Sometimes my Mama prepares a special kind of dali, I realized then why she calls that Puri *dali*. But the real Puri *dali* was a lot tastier than Mama's Puri *dali*. Many kinds of sweets were prepared for the *bhoga*. Puri *khaja* is the most delicious one. For the first time, my sister and I were allowed to eat outside food. When I was hesitant to eat *Mahaprasada*, my Great grand mother insisted, "Eat Roma, this is Bhagaban's *prasada*. Nothing will happen." Really, nothing happened to me and my three-year old sister who visited India for the first time!

Then it was my bedtime. I used to write my daily diary before going to bed in Cuttack. That night I was too tired to write. I went to bed straight with the sweet memories of my Puri visit thinking that I would write about it the next day. Somehow I could not write about it. Later when Papa asked me whether I want to contribute this time to OSA souvenir, I do not know why the thought of Purusottama *kshetra* came to my mind even if I had visited other interesting places in India! Though I had visited Puri twice before with my parents and grandparents, the first time when I was two years and then six years, the memory of my last visit is unforgettable!

Pratyasha Acharya is a Grade 4 student of Jesse Ketchum Public School and the daughter of Ashok & Madhusmita Acharya of Toronto. She likes sharing all pleasures with Prateechi, her younger sister.



ସର୍ବ ଚରାଚର

ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର

ସର୍ବ ଚରାଚର ମୁଁ ଖୋଜିଲା ବେଳେ
ଗଲ ହେ କେଉଁଠି ହଜି ।
ସର୍ବ ଶକ୍ତିମାନ ମୁଁ ଡାକିଲା ବେଳେ
କାନ ଦେଉଅଛ ବୁଜି । ଘୋଷା
ଖାଲି ମୋ ପାଇଁ କରୁ ନାହିଁ ଅଳି
ଅନେକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ କରେ ।
ଦୟା ପାତୁ ତୁମ କରୁଣାର ସୁଧା
ଭଣା ନ ହେଉ ଝରିବାରେ ।
ଏ ବିରାଟ ବିଶ୍ଵ ତୁମ ଅନୁକମ୍ପା
ତୁମ ହାତର ଅରଜି । ୧।
ଶକ୍ତି ଅଛି ବୋଲି ବିନା ବିଚାରରେ
ଶାନ୍ତି ଦେଇ ଚାଲ ନାହିଁ ।
ପାତକ ଜନଙ୍କୁ କ୍ଷମା ବାରିଧିରେ
ଦିଅ ହେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଭିଜାଇ ।
ଅକ୍ଷୟ ଅନନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ସଦା ରହୁ
ତୁମ ଗୁଣ ଶୋଭା ରାଜି । ୨।
ବିଶ୍ଵ ଜନ ଯେବେ ଭିକ୍ଷାର୍ଥେ ଦ୍ଵାରସ୍ଥ
ଦୟା ଦ୍ଵାର ଖୋଲି ଦିଅ ।
ଚିର ସ୍ଵରଣୀୟ ସବୁ ହୃଦ ପଟେ
ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ହୁଅ ।
ଶରଣା ଗତକୁ ପାଦ ତଳୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ
ଦିଅ ନାହିଁ କେବେ ତେଜି । ୩।

Shantilata Mishra lives in Rochester, Minnesota with her husband Prasanna Mishra

Memory

That time you opened up with your secrets, I confided mine in return
That time you were upset and explained your problems
I offered you guidance to help see you through
That time you supported me when all happiness was gone
I reflected on how lucky I was to know you
That time you cried from a broken heart
I realized mine was also cracked in two
That time you made me laugh so hard from all your silly jokes
I returned the favor with a gazillion unspoken thank -yous
That time you wouldn't let me play with your dolls and makeup
I just really only wanted to play with you
That time you screamed you hated me
I cried silent tears it wasn't true
That time you told me you loved me
I replied I love my sister too

Reflection

I used to be lied to when I was young
Now that I am older, I'm not oblivious to the truth
I used to be told I could be anything, princess or doctor
Now I am told my SAT scores are low and colleges won't accept me any longer
I used to believe that tomorrow comes forever and beyond
Now I fear that tomorrow is a fantasy and my life will be done
I used to think people were all fair and just
Now I know hate hides in all forms with prejudice
I used to think people would always be beside you
Now I see something comes along that's better and then they are gone
I used to cry from bleeding knees and smile after the pain went far away
Now I realize a broken heart cannot be mended with a band-aid and kissed away
I used to be forced to eat, so I would grow nice and tall
Now I count my calories, so I won't gain a pound or two
I used to be able to waste my days away
Now I am yelled at for wasting precious time
I used to want to know the secrets in my life
Now I wish to be deceived once again.

Seema Mishra, 16years old and an 11th grade student is the poet of both poems. She lives in Laplata, Maryland with her parents Mukta and Sanjeeb Mishra.

ଆମର ଏଇ ବନ୍ଧୁତା

ସବିତା ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ

ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ମୋର,

ଆମର ଏଇ ବନ୍ଧୁତା, ମନେନାହିଁ
କେବେ ଆଉ କେମିତି ତାର ଆରମ୍ଭ
ଖୋଜିପାଏନି କେବେ ବି ତାର ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି,
ପାଏନି ତାର କୁଳ ଆଉ ଜିନାରା ।

ଜୀବନର

ଗନ୍ତନଇରେ କେତେବେଳେ ଭାସିଆସେ
ଆମ ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କର ଏକାଠି ଦିନ ବିତାଇବା
ଏକାଠି ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବା, ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ସମାଧାନ କରିବା
ବା ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ମୁଗତୁଷ୍ଟରେ ହଜିଯିବା,
ସତରେ ଥିଲେ ଆମେ କେତେ ତଥକା ସରଳା ।

ତୋ ସାଥେ

କାହିଁ କେଉଁ ଦିନୁ ଦେଖା ହୋଇନାହିଁ
ଜୀବନ-ଯୁଦ୍ଧର ବିଭିନ୍ନ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତରହି
କଣ ତଥାପି ଦିହେଁ ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କୁ ଯାଇଛୁ ପାଶୋରି?
ହସଲୁହସ ସେ ଅନେକ ଅନୁଭୂତି
ହୃଦୟରେ ରକ୍ତରେ ମିଶିଯାଏ ଆଉ
ମନେପକାଇଦିଏ - ପବିତ୍ର ଏଇ ଆମ ବନ୍ଧୁତା ।

ତାହା,

ଜାଣୁ, ବେଳେବେଳେ ସମୟ ଉପରେ ମୁଁ ଭାରି ରାଗେ
ଜାଣି ଜାଣି ସେ ଆମଠୁ ଅନେକ କାଲି ବୋରାଇ ନେଇଛି
ତେବେ କାଲି ହଜେଇଦେଲୁ ବୋଲି ଦୁଃଖ କରୁକରୁ
କାଲି ପାଇଯିବା ବୋଲି ଆଶା କରୁକରୁ
ଆଜି ଆମର ବିତିଯାଇ, ପୁଣି କାଲି ହୋଇଯାଏ
ଆଉ ଏମିତି ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ଆଜିକୁ ଏକାଠି କରୁକରୁ
ଜୀବନ ଆମର ବିତିଯାଏ ।

ହେ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ,

ତେବେ କାଲିମାନେ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଆଉ
ଆସିବେ ବୋଲି ତ ଆମେ ବଞ୍ଚିଲେ
ତା ହେଲେ ଆମେ କାହିଁକି କାଲିମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ହଜି ନ ଯିବା?
ସେଇ ପରମେଶ୍ୱର ଯାହାଙ୍କ ଆଶିଷରୁ
ଆମର ଏଇ ବନ୍ଧୁତାର ସୃଷ୍ଟି
ଚାଲି, ତାଙ୍କରି ପାଦ ତଳେ ପୁଷ୍ପଞ୍ଚଳି ଦେବା
ଆଉ ସମୟକୁ ଆମ ସ୍ନେହ ମମତାର
ମଧୁର ସ୍ମୃତିରେ ପରିଣତ କରି ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିବା ।

Sabita Panigrahi lives in Toronto with her husband Gagan and two children Soman and Ineka.

EMOTION

Thoughts thundering through
The fields of my mind,
Feelings flowing in a fury
Through my heart,
Heartbeats howling hard
Shaking my soul,
Soul shivering silently
In sheer agony.

MEMORIES

Old memories
Fond memories
Clothed in sequin and gold.....
Molesting my mind

Old memories
Fond memories
Making me moan with misery...
Mocking my present

Old memories
Fond memories
Mercilessly meandering through my mind
Mauling my future.

Old memories
Fond memories...
Memories of you.

*Sangita Misra is a Librarian cum Homemaker, lives with her husband Sameer
and two children in Bayside, New York*

ଝୁରାପଥିକ

ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

ପଥର ପଥିକ ଆମେ ଏଇ
ଅଜ୍ଞା ବଜା ଜୀବନ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ।
ଭେଟ ପଡ଼େ କେତେ ନୂଆ ମୁହଁ
ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ବୃକ୍ଷ ଛାୟା ତଳେ ।

ସ୍ନେହ, ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା, ପୀତିର ବନ୍ଧନେ
ବାନ୍ଧି ହେଉ କିଛି ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ।
ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟର ତାଳିଆରେ ପୁଣି
ବଢ଼ି ନେଉ ଅନ୍ୟ ଗଛ ଛାଇ ।

ପଳାଶର ଛାଇ ମିଳିଥିଲା
ଏତେ ଦିନ ଅତିକ୍ରମ ପରେ ।
ଏଇ ତରୁ ଆଶିତଙ୍କ ମନ
ରଙ୍ଗାୟିତ ସଦା ପଞ୍ଜୁଶରେ ।

ହସ ଖୁସି ସଂଗୀତ ଆସରେ
ପଥିକ ଯେ ସଦା ଉଜାଗର ।
ଚାଲି ଚାଲି ସଂସାର ରାସ୍ତାରେ
କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ କେବେ ନୁହେଁ ତା ଶରୀର ।

ଝଟ, ଝଞ୍ଜ ଆସୁ ଏ ପଥରେ
କେବେ ହେଲେ ନଥାଏ ଶୋଚନା ।
ଦୁଃଖ, ସୁଖ ଲାଗିଛି ସଂସାରେ
କୁହେ ସିଏ କାହିଁକି ଭାବନା ?

ପଳାଶର ରକ୍ତିମ ରଙ୍ଗ
ତରୁଟିର ସୁଗୀତକ ଛାଇ ।
ପଥିକଙ୍କ ସ୍ନେହ, ଭାବ, ପୀତି
ନେଇଥିଲା ଏ ମନ ଚୋରାଇ ।



ଯାତ୍ରାର ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭ କାଳରୁ
ଖୋଜୁଥିଲା ଏଇ ଛାଇ ମନ ।
ଭାବିଥିଲୁ ଦୃଢ଼ ବସା ବାନ୍ଧି
କାଟି ଦେବୁ ବାକିଆ ଜୀବନ ।

ଦଇବ ଦଉଡ଼ି ଖିଅ କିନ୍ତୁ
ଚାଣୁଅଛି ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ମୋଡ଼େ ।
ଭେଟିବାକୁ ନୂଆ ବାଟୋଇଲୁ
ପୁଣି ଏକ ଭିନ୍ନ ବୃକ୍ଷ ମୂଳେ ।

କାଲି ପରି ଲାଗେ ସ୍ବାଗତମ୍
ଆସିଗଲା ଏ ଦୁଇ ମେଲାଣି ।
ଚଉଦିଗେ ନବୀନ ବାସନା
ଆଘାତର ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଉନି ।

ଭରା ମନେ ଯଦିଓ ବେଦନା
କରାୟତ ନାହିଁ କାର କିଛି ।
ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ
ହୃଦେ କୋହ, ଆଖି ଲୁହ ଚାପି ।

ସ୍ବଳ୍ପ କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ରହଣୀ ଏଠା
ଭରା ଥିଲା ଅତି ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ।
ରହିଗଲା ଏ ମଧୁର ସ୍ମୃତି
ହୃଦୟର ସ୍ବତନ୍ତ୍ର କୋଣରେ ।

ଦେଇଥାଉ ଯଦି ମନେ ବ୍ୟଥା
ଆଳାପ କି ହାସ୍ୟ ପରିହାସେ ।
କ୍ଷମା ଭିକ୍ଷା ତା ପରେ ମେଲାଣି
ମାଗୁଅଛୁ ରହଣୀର ଶେଷେ ।

ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ ସେକ୍ସର୍ଭିଲ୍, ଭିରଜିନିଆରେ ନିଜ ପତି ଶାନ୍ତନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ ଓ ଦୁଇଟି ସନ୍ତତି ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଓ ଶ୍ରେୟାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରନ୍ତି ।

ଖୁବ୍ ଅଳ୍ପ ଦିନର ରହଣିରେ ସିକାଗୋ ତଥା ସିକାଗୋର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଲେଖିକାଙ୍କର ଖୁବ୍ ଆସକ୍ତି ଓ ଅନୁରାଗ ଆସିଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏଇ ଲେଖାଟି ସେଇ ମାନଙ୍କ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଲିଖିତ ।

Remembering Holi



After the long winter, finally spring is here. Everybody is in the mood to celebrate spring. Stores are filled with different brightly colored clothes. Crocuses and daffodils buds are coming out. I was happy to get the invitation to celebrate spring at the Hindu temple with our friends. We went to Washington D.C. to celebrate Holi, which is an Indian festival welcoming spring. We all enjoyed the rituals of the festival. When the children were performing the rituals of the Holi festival, my mind wandered to my childhood. I thought about the time when I was a child. During the Holi festival day, families cook special meals. People visit friends and relatives and wish them good luck for their new crops. When people come, families offer snacks, sweets, and delicious punch to them. But it was different in my family. Most of the kitchen duty was done by my grandmother, since my mom died when I was very young. Granny was old and grumpy, complaining of aches and pains due to her age and bad health. So, she did the cooking as a duty, rather than out of love. As a child, I always wanted this day to be special and have my friends visit us.

When I asked my family to have my friends over, I remember my grandma saying to me, "Do not ask for any special treat, I am lucky to cook two hot meals, I am too old to make sweets and punch. I will be happy when you grow up and give me a hand with the kitchen chores". I tried to ignore what she was saying. We ate the regular meal at the usual time on the special day Holi, and I was not too happy about it. After lunch, I used to gaze out of our courtyard to my neighbor's house. Their small house was filled with people and laughter, and I sometimes could smell the steamy Basmati rice pudding and cinnamon pastries. There was noise of festivity and rituals going on in their house. The smell of hot steamy rice pudding with cinnamon was coming from the children's bowls. The little children were enjoying the pudding sitting on their mother's lap, when the adults were busy talking and catching up with the village gossip. It was twilight time, but their house seemed to be much brighter than ours. I felt cold and our house looked dark to me. I tried to cover my face with the quilt hoping it will take away some of the darkness and cold from me, but instead the pain seemed to go

deep inside of me. I wished my mom was there to cook some special meals for us like any other family. I told myself that she would have made some sweets for us on this day for sure and I could have shared it with my friends. Yet, it is not possible since she is gone forever. Suddenly a silver lining appeared in the clouds. I consoled myself saying, " Chandu, do not worry. When you grow up and have children, you will make lots of sweets for your children and their friends. You can celebrate with them in your own family."

childhood memories. Although I wiped my tears before any one saw it, my son's curious eyes caught me. After the festival, when we were coming back, I asked my son Sanjay, "Did you like the festival ?" Looking at me he said, "Yes, I did, but why were you crying there?" I did not know how to answer his question. I asked myself, "How I could explain to a child, who has a mother, the empty and cold feelings that a motherless child goes through ?" Looking outside, I told Sanjay, "You know, I was thinking about my childhood memories of the Holi celebration, and I feel sad. I couldn't enjoy Holi with my mom since she died when I was a baby -- but I am happy we can enjoy it together. Let us go and join the prayer group to sing the songs. I do not know what he thought, but he paused and gave me a kiss at my cheek. Then he mumbled, "It is OK to cry sometimes. Mom"

[illegible]

ଝୁରୁଥିବା ମନ

ରିନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ



ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ ବାପା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଠକି ଚାଲିଗଲା
ମୋ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ଦିବା ଆଲୋକରେ ମିଶିଗଲା ।

ଭୁଲିଯାଉ ନାହିଁ ସେଦିନ ତୁମର ଶେଷ ଦେଖା
ଗୋଟିଗୋଟି ହୋଇ ମନେ ପଡେ ମୋର ସବୁ କଥା ।

ନେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲେ ସଭିଏଁ ତମକୁ ଶୁଣାନକୁ
ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା ଧାଇଁ ଯାଇ ନେଇ ଆସିବାକୁ ।

କିଏ ଜାଣୁଥିଲା ବିଦାୟ (ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ) ଆମଠୁଁ ନେଉଥିଲ
ସତରେ କି ଅବା ଫୁଲ ଶେଯେ ତୁମେ ଶୋଇଥିଲ ।

ସବୁଦିନ ବୋଧେ ଝୁରୁଥିବ ଏଇ ଆଖି ଲୁହ
କି ଦୋଷ ପାଇଁ କି ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଶାନ୍ତି ତୁମେ କୁହ ।

କୁହ ବାପା ସତେ ଝିଅ କି ତୁମର ନ ଥିଲି ମୁଁ
ଅପେକ୍ଷା କଲିନି ଶଙ୍ଖା ସିନ୍ଦୂର ରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ।

ଦେଖାହେଲେ ଥରେ ବାଢ଼ନ୍ତି କେତେ ମୁଁ ଅଭିମାନ
ଝୁରୁଅଛି ମନ ପାଇବାକୁ ତମ ଦରଶନ ।

କାନେ ସଦା ବାଜେ ମଧୁଭରା ସେଇ ନୀତିଶିକ୍ଷା
ମାଗୁଅଛି ତବ ଶ୍ରୀଚରଣ ତଳେ ଆଶୀର୍ଷ ଓ କ୍ଷମା ଭିକ୍ଷା ।

Rina pattanaik lives in Queens, New York with her husband Saurjya and daughters Darshee and Dibya. This poem is dedicated to her father and was written before her marriage. Rina has a special talent in painting.

Solace of the Light

**When all the light of life fades away
I only hear the music of leaves
Rustling in the night.
My sweet, precious child's words
I love you
Whispers softly like a soothing song.
As a lonely saint visions ecstasies in divinity
With you, grandchild
I see the glimpse of the absolute
Pure and lovable beauty.
Suddenly a renewal of joy, streams of life.
There is a delight and laughter
I long for that moment
You enchant me with your wonderful laugh
Weaving the joy of love
Spreading all through my heart
Bringing solace of the light.
Two ways to be the eternal candle of my life
Or the mirror that reflects it.**

Sneha P. Mohanty lives with her family in Huntington Beach, CA and enjoys spending time with her grandson, Milan. She is a regular contributor to the OSA journal.

କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର

ଡଃ ପଦ୍ମନାଭ ପ୍ରଧାନ



ଗାଁ ଗୁଆ ଖେତ ପରବତ୍ ନିଲି

ଝରନା ନାଟୁଛେ ଖିଲିଖିଲି

କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶୁଛେ, ମୋର ଗାଁସେବା ପତ୍ରାପାଲି (୧)

ଲ ଫଲେ ଜୋର, ସେ ଫଲେ ନାଲି

ଉତ୍ତର ଆଡେ ପତ୍ରାମାଲି

ଗାଁ ବାହାଲର ସେ ଆଡକେ, ଏ ନଦୀର ପାନି ଖଲଖଲ (୨)

ବେଲ ଚିକେ ଆଏଲେ ବୁଡି

କୁଲୁହୀ ଆଇଲୁ ରତା ରତା

ଝାରୁ ନାଲି ଆଏଲେ ବଲି, ବହୁର ଯାଉଛେ ଜୀବନ ଛାଡି (୩)

ମଝୁର ନାଟୁଛେ ପରବତ୍ ଖୁଲେ

ପତକା ଝୁରୁଛେ ମହୁଲ ତାଲେ

ନଳି ଘାଟୁରୁ ମଠିଆ ଧରି, ଚୁକେଲ ଆଉଛନ୍ ଗେଲେଗେଲେ (୪)

କେତେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର କେତେ ତାର

କଠେଇ କୁଇଲି ବୁରୋ ମାଲି

ଆମ୍ ଜାମୁ ତୁମ୍ବି ଲେଟି, ଯାହାକେ ଯେତେ ଖେଜୁର ତାଲ (୫)

ଖରା ମାସ ଲଗା ପତପତିଆ

ପୁଷ୍ପପୁନିକେ ଧରଧରିଆ

ସାଗ ମାମ୍ବରି ଠେଲକୋ ଛତି, ଶରାବନ୍ ଯଦି ଝରୁଝରିଆ (୬)

ଛେରଛେରା ମଠା ପୁଷ୍ପପୁନି

ମଦକୁସୁନା କରମସାନି

ନୁଆଖାଇ କେ ଭେଟାଭେଟି, ତିହାର ବାହର କେତେ କେୟାନି (୭)

ଧୋବ ଫରଫର କୁରେହି ଫୁଲ

ଗଣ୍ଡକର ବିହା ନୁହେଁ ଦୁର୍

ରାମଲୀଲା ପାଠ ସୁନ୍ମା ଚାଲ, କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ ଗୁଡିଥି ସଭେଠୁଲ (୮)

ଜନମ ମାଟି କେ ଦେଖି ବଲି

ସୁରତା କରୁଛେ ନାଲି ପାରେଠୁଲି

କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସତେ ଦଦା, ମୋର ଗାଁ ସେବା ପତ୍ରାପାଲି (୯)

Padmanabh Pradhan lives in Charlottesville ,Virginia with his wife Chandana and daughter Prerana and son Pratik.

A decorative border of small black umbrellas surrounds the text. There are 20 umbrellas along the top and bottom edges, and 15 umbrellas along each of the left and right edges.

SUPPORT

**The long etched memories,
Of a very distant past,
Looms on the soul at present;
Reliving moments in a flash.
The thrill in a child's laughter,
Radiates a moment of life,
In being someone's little child;
With a support to share and confide.**

**The marvel in viewing distant horizons,
Building castles out of dreamy designs;
But always getting encouraged and loved;
With words of praise drawing a smile.
The moments bereft of sorrow and care,
The laughter really laughed and felt;
The vivid ecstasy seen in simple dreams;
Marvels in a belief that stays.**

**The way that one feels,
Basking in the genuine warmth of love;
That parents shower on us,
Gives us the strength and courage to hope.
The strength of love felt;
As one strolls down memory lane,
Reliving days of golden childhood;
Being grateful for a love with all its grace.**

Tanuja Tripathy lives in Georgetown, Kentucky with her husband. This poem means a lot to her as this is about the unconditional love that parents shower on us.

Remembering Bahadur Shah Zafar

For Baharuddin Khan "Riaz"

Never, never was it so difficult
To speak; never for me.
And never was there a time
When you were so much
(As you are now) in the middle
Of an occasion, an hour of your
Storied presence and activities.

Who took away, at some
Dark, unguarded time today, all my
Happiness, my restful peace?
Never did I feel so lost, O Heart!
Never was speech so tough as this day.
Never have I been so lonely,
So much unable to speak.

This Green Light

This green light seems to be
Everywhere, even at those places
Where we had so secretly buried
Our nascent hopes, pale miseries.
The books, the white-and-blue tables
On which our children completed
Their weekend homework
Without complaint, the bed on which
Every night we bundle ourselves
Into a semi-frozen sleep,
The very blocks of molded plastic
With which our younger, six-year old son
Struggles to build his frail, formless
Worlds of innocence and simplicity—
Each little thing seems to have been
Transformed by this light into
The lucidity of April, joy and dreams.
This green light, which has been
So near our nagging, over-protected
Sicknesses and shadows, our
Childlike hopes adult fantasies.

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Poems by Bibhu Padhi of Puri, Orissa. Read his other poems in section "Something for Everyone".

What's The Problem?

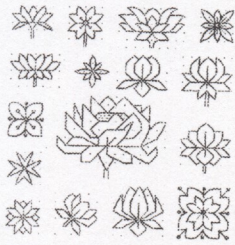
Once I had the best of friends,
And a good family, a perfect blend,
I was doing well in school, and had gone
many places,
And was facing the problems everyone
faces,
But one came with such a persuasive
voice,
That it made me choose the incorrect
choice,
The name of the problem: drugs.
At first, it made me feel so high,
I was flying, soaring through the sky,
But then I realized the awful price,
If I did drugs, I'd lose my life.

When my friends told me that drugs
aren't right,
I blew them off, because it's my life,
But then my friends left me, one by one,
And I realized that drugs weren't fun.
I have no friends now.
As I fell in deeper, my grades were falling,
But my descent was never stalling,
But even as I was finally expelled,
I did not think how far I fell.

I became a drug dealer, and in a flash,
I could buy more drugs with my new
cash,
Drugs were the cat, and I the mouse,
But then my parents found out, and
threw me out of the house,
Now I have lost my family.
Now my drugs are running low, there's
not much left,
And to get more money, I turned to theft,
But then I got caught, and put in jail,
If life is graded, I have failed.

I'm out of jail, but still not free,
The grip of drugs began to squeeze,
Not a single moment passes now,
When I do not ponder how,
To get more drugs.
Now I've killed an old lady,
To take her money,
My humanity by now is melted honey,
But as I'm shot by a pursuing cop,
I fall, and my life begins to stop.
By now I'm dead, and my soul's now free,
And I'm going wherever God's taking me,
But as I watch my life pass by,
Did I really have to die?

Avishek Chandan Khandai of Naperville, Illinois is a regular youth contributor to the OSA Journal. This poem won him a school district award.



ମୂଳଦୁଆ

ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ, ଇର୍ଭିଂ, ଟେକ୍ସାସ୍



ଏଇତ ଆସିଗଲା ମା । ଶୀତର ପହିଲି ପରଶରେ ଜୁଡୁବୁଡ଼େ ଦେହକୁ ଶାଲ୍ ତଳେ ଉଷୁମେଇ ଦେଇ କାଉ ରାବିବାର ଅନେକ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଉଠି ପଡ଼ିଲାଣି ଗୀତି । ସକାଳୁ ଉଠି ଦୀପ, ସଳିତା ସଜାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ହେବ; କଦଳୀପାଟ, ସୋଲ ତିଆରି ତଙ୍ଗରେ ଏ ଯାଏଁ ପତକା ଲାଗିନି । ତା ପରେ ସଜବାଜ ହୋଇ ସହଳ ବାହାରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ତଙ୍ଗ ଭସାଇବାର ପବିତ୍ର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା ଆଜି । ପୂର୍ବପୁରୁଷଙ୍କର ଗୌରବମୟ ସ୍ମୃତି ଉନ୍ମୋଚନ କରିବାର, ପତିମାନଙ୍କର ଶୁଭ ମନାସି, ବନ୍ଦାପନା କରି ମେଲାଣି ଦେବାର ଦିନ ଆଜି । କ'ଣ ଯେ କହିବାକୁ ହୁଏ ତଙ୍ଗ ଭସାଇବା ବେଳେ . . . !

“ଏ ଅଳସୁଆ, ଉଠ, ପାଞ୍ଚଟା ବାଜିଲାଣି । ଆଉ ତଙ୍ଗ ଭସାଇବା ବେଳେ କ'ଣ କହିବାକୁ ହେବ ମତେ କହିଦିଅ । ମୁଁ ଭୁଲିଗଲିଣି । ଉଠ, ଜଳ୍ମଦି ଉଠ ।”

ଗୀତି ମୋ'ର ଗେହ୍ଲା ଝିଅ । ମୋ'ର ସାଙ୍ଗ-ସାଥୀ, ସୁଖ-ଦୁଃଖ, ଆଶା-ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ସବୁ କିଛି । ମା' ତା'ର ତାନ୍ତ୍ରାଣୀ । ଗୀତି ଚାଲି ଶିଖିବା ପରଠୁ ଦୂର ଯାଗାରେ ତା'ର ଚାକିରି । ମାସରେ ଥରେ ଦୁଇଥର ଆମ ପାଖକୁ ଆସେ; ନହେଲେ ଆମେ ଯାଇ ବୁଲି ଆସୁ । ଗୀତିର ପାଠପଢ଼ା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବା ଦିନଠୁ ଆମ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କର ମତ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ । ରୀତିର ଇଚ୍ଛା ଥିଲା ତା' ଝିଅ ବୋର୍ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢ଼ିବ । ଆମର ତ ଏକା ଯାଗାରେ ପୋଷିଙ୍ଗ୍ ହେବାର ଆଶା କମ୍ । ହେଲେ ବି ବଦଳି ଚାକିରି । ସବୁଦିନ ତ ଏକାଠି ରହି ହେବନି । ତେଣୁ ଗୀତି ବୋର୍ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ରହିଲେ ସବୁ ଝାମେଲାକୁ ମୁକ୍ତି । ମୋ'ର ଏଥିରେ ଭିନ୍ନ ମତ ଥିଲା । ବାପା, ବୋଉ ବି ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିରୋଧ କଲେ । ଗୋଟିଏ ବୋଲି ନାତୁଣୀକୁ ଏଡ଼େ ଟିକେ ବେଳୁ ବାହାରେ ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ଆକଟ୍ କଲେ । ସୁତରାଂ, ଗୀତି ରହିଲା ମୋ' ପାଖରେ । ବାପା, ବୋଉ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସମୟ ଆମ ସହ ରହନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ କେଉଁ ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀରେ କିମ୍ବା ଶ୍ରାଦ୍ଧକର୍ମ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ପାଇଁ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଗାଁକୁ ବରାବର ଯା'ନ୍ତି । ରୀତି ତା'ପରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଦେଇଥିଲା ଗୀତିକୁ ଇଂରାଜୀ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପଢ଼ାଇବାକୁ । ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଏକ ରକମ ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ତା'ର ନାଁ ଲେଖାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲି । ସେଇଦିନୁ ରୀତିସହ ମୋ'ର ମନାନ୍ତର । ଗୀତି ଏବେ ପଞ୍ଚମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ । ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ ପଢ଼ୁଛି ।

ଗୀତି କଞ୍ଚାମାଟିର ଗଦାଟିଏ । ଯେମିତି ଛାଞ୍ଚରେ ପଡ଼ିବ ସେମିତି ଗଢ଼ାହେବ । ମୁଁ ତା'କୁ ମୋ' ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଗଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ମୋ କଳ୍ପନାର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଝିଅଟିଏ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ପିଲାଟି ଦିନରୁ ସେ ବଢ଼ି ଆସିଛି ତା' ବୁଢ଼ୀମା' କୋଳରେ । ବୋଉ ତା'କୁ ଶିଖାଇଛି ଓଡ଼ିଆଘରର ସମସ୍ତ ଶାଣ୍ଡଶା, ରୀତିନୀତି । ବୋଉ ସେମିତିକା ନିହାତି ପୁରୁଣା କାଳିଆ ମନୋବୃତ୍ତିର ନୁହେଁ । ଯେଉଁଠି ଯେପରି ଅକ୍ଷ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ, କୁସଂସ୍କାର ଦେଖିଛି ଆମର ନିୟମ କାନୁନରେ, ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟରେ ଫେପାଟି ଦେଇଛି ସେ । ଯୁଗ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ସେ ସବୁରେ କିଛି କିଛି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ବି କରି ନେଇଛି ଅବିଳମ୍ବେ । ବାରମାସର ତେର ପର୍ବ, ଚଉଦ ପର୍ବାଣି, ସେ ସବୁର ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ - ପୌଷରେ ମକର ଓ ଶାମ୍ବ; ମାଘରେ ଅଗ୍ନି ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା ଓ ଶ୍ରୀପଞ୍ଚମୀ; ଫଗୁଣରେ ଦୋଳ; ଚୈତ୍ରରେ ପଣା ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତି; ଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠରେ ସାବିତ୍ରୀ ଓ ରଜ; ଶ୍ରାବଣରେ ରାକ୍ଷି ଓ ଜନ୍ମାଷ୍ଟମୀ; ଆଶ୍ୱିନରେ ମହାଳୟା, ଦଶହରା ଓ କୁମାର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା; କାର୍ତ୍ତିକରେ ପୁଣି ଦୀପାବଳୀ, ପ୍ରଥମାଷ୍ଟମୀ - ସବୁ ଜାଣିଛି ଗୀତି ।

କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ସରିଲା । ମାର୍ଗଶିର ହେବ । ସବୁ ଦୁଆରବନ୍ଧରେ ଗୁରୁବାରରେ ଚିତା ପକାଇବ ବୋଉ । ସକାଳୁ ଉଠି ଚାଉଳଚୁନା ଗୋଳି ହାତ ଆଙ୍ଗୁଠିରେ ଆଙ୍ଗିଦେବ ଫୁଲପତ୍ରରେ ସଜାଇ ମା' ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କର ସରୁପାଦ ଦୁଇଟି । ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଦୁଆର ମୁହଁରୁ ଠାକୁର ଘରଯାଏ ବାଟ କଢ଼େଇ ନେବ ତାଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଆସନ ଯାଏ । ଧନଧାନ୍ୟରେ ଭଣ୍ଡାର ପୁରି ଉଠିବାକୁ ମନାସିବ । କାହିଁ କେତେ ବର୍ଷରୁ କରି ଆସିଲେ ବି ଚିତା ଆଙ୍ଗିବାର ବୋଉର ସେ ଶୈଳୀରେ ଏତେ ଟିକେ ବି ଭଜା ପଡ଼ିନି । ବରଂ ସୁନ୍ଦରରୁ ଅଧିକ

ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଥର । ଆମେ କାଳେ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ମାଡ଼ି ଚକଟି ଦେବୁ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଜମା ଉଠିବାକୁ ଦିଏନା ଆମକୁ ବଢ଼ି ଭୋରୁ । ଏଥରକ ବୋଉ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଇଛି । ମାଣବସା ଯାରି ଫେରିବ ।

“ଆ କା ମା ଭୈଃ . . .” ମୁଁ କହିଲି ।

ଉଠି ଦେଖିଲାବେଳକୁ ଦୁଆରମୁହଁଯାକ ଚିତାରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି । ଏତେ ସକାଳୁ ଉଠି ଗୀତି ଚାଉଳବୁନା ଗୋଳି ଆଜି ପକାଇଛି ବୁଢ଼ୀମା’ଠୁ ଶିଖିଥିବା ଝୋଟିଚିତାର ନକସା । ଏଡ଼େତିକେ ଝିଅ ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର, ନିଖୁଣ ଭାବରେ ପରିପକ୍ୱତାର ନିଦର୍ଶନ ଦେଇପାରିଛି ଦେଖି ମୋ ଛାତି କୁଣ୍ଡେ ମୋଟ ହୋଇଗଲା ଗର୍ବିଣୀ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ । ନୂଆ ଜାମା ପିନ୍ଧି, ସଳିତା, ଦୀପ, ଧୂପ, ଦୁବ, ବରକୋଳିପତ୍ର, ଭୋଗସହ ତଙ୍ଗ ଧରି ସଜ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ଗୀତି । ଏବେ ତା’ ସହ ଯିବାକୁ ହେବ ତଙ୍ଗ ଭସାଇବାପାଇଁ ନଦୀ କୂଳକୁ । ଟିକି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଧବାଣୀର ସମସ୍ତ ବନ୍ଦାପନା, ମେଲାଣି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମାପନ ହେଲାଯାଏ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ତା’ପରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲେ ଜଳଖିଆପରେ କଥା ଅଛି ତା’କୁ ଶୁଣାଇବାକୁ ହେବ ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରାର କାହାଣୀ - ୧୭୦୦ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଗୌରବମୟ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର କାହାଣୀ । ଐତିହାସିକ କଳିଙ୍ଗ-ବାଲି ଯାତ୍ରାରେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟାତ୍ମକ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ସାଧବପୁଅମାନଙ୍କର ସୁଦୂର ଇଷ୍ଟୋନେସିଆର ବାଲିଦ୍ୱୀପକୁ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଉପଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟରେ ନୌଯାତ୍ରାର ବିବରଣୀ । ଏମିତି ଅନେକ କାହାଣୀ ଶୁଣେ ସେ ମୋ’ଠୁ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଭାଷାର ବିଶ୍ୱବିଖ୍ୟାତ ଯେତେ ଯେତେ କାହାଣୀମାଳା ମୁଁ ପଢ଼ିଛି, ସବୁଥିରୁ ଗପ ଶୁଣାଏ ତା’କୁ । କାହାଣୀସବୁ ପଢ଼ି ଇତିହାସରୁ ବିଜ୍ଞାନଯାଏ ସମସ୍ତ ବିଭାଗରେଇ ବିସ୍ତୃତ । ଅସାଧାରଣ ସ୍ମୃତିଶକ୍ତି ଗୀତିର । ଅବିକଳ ମନେ ରଖିବାର ଅଭୁତ ଶକ୍ତି । ବୁଦ୍ଧିମତୀ ଛାତ୍ରୀଟିଏ ପରି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସବୁ ଶୁଣିଯାଏ, ସହଜରେ ବୁଝିଯାଏ ସେ । ବୟସାଭିବୃଦ୍ଧି ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଏକ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଶିକ୍ଷା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ବି ତା’ ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ମନେ ମନେ ତିଆରି କରି ରଖିଛି । ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ସର୍ବଶୁଣସଂଲଗ୍ନା ଏବଂ ସନ୍ତୁଳିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱସଂପନ୍ନା ଏକ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଝିଅର କଳ୍ପନା ମୋ ଭିତରେ ଖେଳୁଛି । ପ୍ରଥମେ ଥିଲା ସେ କଳ୍ପନାର ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣ ମୋ ଭାବୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମଧ୍ୟରେ । ଆସିଲା ରୀତି । ରୀତି ଭିତରେ ମିଳିଲା ମୋତେ ଏକ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା, ଏକ ଦୃଢ଼ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ, ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ନାରୀ ଶକ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅଭାବ ରହିଗଲା ଏକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗୃହିଣୀର, ଏକ ନାରୀସ୍ଥଳର ସ୍ୱଭାବ-କୋମଳ ଲାଳିତ୍ୟର । ମୋ କଳ୍ପନାର ବାସ୍ତବ ରୂପାନ୍ତର କେତେଦୂର ସମ୍ଭବ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣର ଅନ୍ୟନାମ ଏବେ ମୁଁ ରଖିଛି ଗୀତି ।

ତଙ୍ଗଭସା ପରେ ଗୀତିକୁ ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା ଗପ କହିସାରି ତା’ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଲି । ଆଜି ତା’ଙ୍କ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା ହେବାର ଅଛି । ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବାର କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ରୀତି । ଅଳ୍ପ ସମୟ ଭିତରେ ହିଁ ସେ ତା’ ଆସିବାର କାରଣ ଜଣାଇଲା ।

“ଦେଖ, ଏବେ ଗୀତିକୁ ଇଂରାଜୀ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି କରିବାର ଠିକ୍ ବେଳ ଆସିଛି । ଆଉ ବେଶିଦିନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢ଼ିଲେ ସେ ବର୍ଷେ ହରାଇପାରେ । ତା’ ବିଷୟରେ ମୁଁ ସେଣ୍ଟ୍ରାଲ୍ ସ୍କୁଲର ପ୍ରିନ୍ସିପାଲ୍‌ଙ୍କ ସହ କଥା ହୋଇ ଆସିଛି । ସେ ଷ୍ଟୁଡେଣ୍ଟ ଫାଇଲ୍‌ରେ ହିଁ ନେବାକୁ ରାଜି ଅଛନ୍ତି, କାରଣ ଗୀତି ଆମର ଖୁବ୍ ଇଣ୍ଟେଲିଜେଣ୍ଟ ବୋଲି ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ କହିଥିଲି । ମୁଁ ତା’କୁ ଆଜି ନେବାକୁ ଆସିଛି । ଏବେ ଆଡମିଶନ୍ କଲେ ଏଇ ସେସନ୍‌ରେ ହିଁ ସେମାନେ ନେଇଯିବେ ।”

ଅନେକ ଦିନ ହେଲା ଆମେ ସେ ବିଷୟରେ କଥା ହୋଇ ନ ଥିଲୁ । ରୀତି ହଠାତ୍ ଏ କଥା ଉଠାଇବାରୁ ମୁଁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲି । ଗୀତିର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢ଼ିବା ନେଇ ସେ ସେ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧେ ନୁହେଁ, ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା’କୁ ଇଂରାଜୀ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢ଼ାଇବାକୁ ସେ ଯେ ଏମିତି ଜିଦ୍ କରିବ ମୁଁ ଭାବି ନ ଥିଲି । ବାପା, ବୋଉ ଓ ମୋ’ର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍କୁଲ ସପକ୍ଷରେ ମତ ଥିଲା । ବୋଉ ଥରେ ଥଙ୍ଗାରେ କହିଥିଲା, “ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି, ତୋ’ର ପୁଅ ହେଲେ ତୁ ତା’କୁ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ପଢ଼ାଇବୁ । ଝିଅ ମୋ’ର ତା’ ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ ପଢ଼ିବ ।” ବାପା, ବୋଉ ଉଭୟ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଗାଁରେ । ଏମିତି ତରବରରେ ମୁଁ କ’ଣ ଠିକ୍ କରିବି ଜାଣି ପାରିଲିନି ।

ରୀତିର ଯୁକ୍ତି ଇଂରାଜୀ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଷୟରେ - ଇଂରାଜୀ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢ଼ିଲେ ପିଲାଟିର ‘ଫୁଏନ୍‌ସି’ ବଢ଼ିବ, ସେ ଅଧିକ ‘ସ୍ପାର୍ଟ’ ହେବ . . . ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ସେଇ ବିଷୟରେ ସେ ଅନେକଥର ପରୋକ୍ଷରେ ମୋତେ ଶୁଣାଇଛି । ଭାବିଚିନ୍ତି ତା’କୁ ବୁଝାଇବା ଭଳି କହିଲି -

“ରୀତି, ଟିକେ ଭିତରେଇ କଥାଟାକୁ ଦେଖ । ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କର । କେବଳ ଗୋଟାଏ ଭାଷାକୁ ନେଇ, ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାଇବାର ଗୋଟାଏ ମାଧ୍ୟମକୁ ନେଇ ଯଦି ଆମର ଏ ମତ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ, ତେବେ ତାହା ନିରର୍ଥକ, ଭିତ୍ତିହୀନ ଏବଂ ଯୁକ୍ତିହୀନ । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷା ମାତ୍ର । କେବଳ ଏଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାରେ ପାରଦର୍ଶିତା ଆଣିବା ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତ ଶିକ୍ଷାର ମାଧ୍ୟମ ରୂପେ ତା’କୁ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବା କ’ଣ ନିହାତି ଦରକାର ? ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ଭଲ ଦଖଲ ଆଣିବାପାଇଁ କ’ଣ ଏହା ଏକମାତ୍ର ଉପାୟ ? ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷା ଶିକ୍ଷା କରିବା କ’ଣ ଏତେ କଠିନ ଯେ ତା’କୁ ମାତ୍ରଭାଷା ରୂପେ ଶିକ୍ଷା କରାଯିବା ଏକାନ୍ତ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ?”

“ସେ କଥା ତମେ ଭଲ ଭାବରେ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିଥିବ । ଯେ କୌଣସି ଇଂରାଜୀ ସ୍କୁଲର ପିଲାସହ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍କୁଲର ପିଲାର ‘ଞ୍ଜଣ୍ଡର୍’ ତମେ ତୁଳନା କରି ଦେଖିପାର । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ‘ସ୍ପାର୍ଟନେସ୍’, ‘କଲ୍‌ଚରର୍’ ବ୍ୟବହାର ଦେଖିପାର . . .”, ରୀତି ବିରକ୍ତ ହୋଇ କହିଲା ।

ଏଇ କେତୋଟି ବାକ୍ୟରେ ମୁଁ ବୁଝି ହୋଇଗଲି । ଜାଣିଛି, ରୀତି ଏଇ ଯୁକ୍ତି ହିଁ ବାଢ଼ି ବସିବ । ମାନୁଛି, ସେ ବି ଠିକ୍ କହୁଛି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଂଶିକ ଭାବରେ । ଏ ସବୁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର, ଯୁକ୍ତିର ସଠିକ୍ ଉତ୍ତର ଯେ ମୋତେ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ, ସେ କଥା ନୁହେଁ । ବରଂ ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ମୋ’ର ମତାମତ ଭୂମିକ୍ଷ-ରହିତ ବର୍ଷାବିନ୍ଦୁ ପରି ନିର୍ମଳ, ପରିଷ୍କାର । ଯଥା ସମ୍ଭବ ଧାର ସ୍ୱରରେ ତା’କୁ କହିଲି-

“କେଉଁ ‘ଞ୍ଜଣ୍ଡର୍’ ବିଷୟରେ ତମେ କହୁଛ ? ବୁଦ୍ଧିମତ୍ତାର ନା ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ ପାରଦର୍ଶିତାର ? କୌଣସିଟିରେ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ୁଥିବା ଛାତ୍ରର ମାନ ନ୍ୟୁନ ହେବାର କୌଣସି ଯୁକ୍ତି ମୁଁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରି ପାରୁନାହିଁ । ଏକଥା ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ସତ ଯେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ସ୍କୁଲର ସମସ୍ତ ଛାତ୍ର ବୁଦ୍ଧିମତ୍ତାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ଛାତ୍ରଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଉଚ୍ଚରେ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । ଛାତ୍ରର ବୌଦ୍ଧିକ ଶକ୍ତି କୌଣସି ଭାଷା ବା ମାଧ୍ୟମ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ ନାହିଁ । ଯିଏ ବୁଦ୍ଧିମାନ ସେ ଯେ କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ, ଯେ କୌଣସି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଅଧିକ ଗୁଣବତ୍ତା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରିବ ହିଁ କରିବ । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ ଦଖଲ ବିଷୟ ବି ସେହିପରି । ତମେ ତ ନିଜେ ଜାଣିଥିବ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟମାନଙ୍କରେ ପଢ଼ା ଯାଉଥିବା ଇଂରାଜୀ ପାଠ୍ୟ ଓ ବ୍ୟାକରଣର ‘ସିଲାବସ୍’ । କେଉଁଠି କ’ଣ କିଛି କମ୍ ରହି ଯାଉଛି କି ସେଠି ? ଯଦି ରହି ଯାଉଥାଏ, ତା’ ହେଲେ ତାହା ପୁରଣ କରିବା ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ।

ଆଉ ରହିଲା ‘ସ୍ପାର୍ଟନେସ୍’ କଥା, ‘କଲ୍‌ଚରର୍’ ବ୍ୟବହାରର କଥା । ଏଇଠି ଗୋଟିଏ ବିରାଟ ବଡ଼ କଥା ଉଠାଇଛି ତୁମେ ଯେଉଁଟା ଦୁଇଟି ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ନେଇ; ଶାଳୀନ ଆଚାର ବ୍ୟବହାରର ଦୁଇ ପ୍ରକାର ସଂଜ୍ଞାକୁ ନେଇ । ଆମ ଘରେ ଆମେ ଭଲ ପିଲା ବୋଲି କାହାକୁ କହୁ ? ଶାନ୍ତ, ଶିଖ, ସୁଧାର ପିଲାଟିଏର ଆଦର୍ଶ ସବୁବେଳେ ଆମ ଉଦାହରଣ ଭିତରକୁ ପଶି ଆସେ ନାହିଁ କି ? ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାଟିଏ ପିଲାବେଳୁ ବିଦ୍ୟାରୁ ବିନୟତାରୂପକ ଭୂଷଣ ଅଧିକାର କରିବାକୁ ଶିଖେ । ଗୁରୁଙ୍କୁ ପରଂବ୍ରହ୍ମ ମାନି ଭକ୍ତି କରେ । ଏ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ସେ ନିଜ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ବା ଗୁରୁଜନମାନଙ୍କ ସହ ତଥା କଥିତ ‘ସ୍ପାର୍ଟ’ ଭାବରେ କିପରି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବା ଆମେ ଆଶା କରିବା ? ନିଜ ପିତା ମାତାଙ୍କ ସହ ‘ହାଏ’, ‘ହାଲୋ’ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ତମେ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିବ କି ? ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଉଚ୍ଚିତ୍ତେ, ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବାକ୍ୟରେ ଭଦ୍ରାମିର ଦ୍ୱାହି ଦେଇ କେତୋଟି ‘ସର୍ମାଲ୍’ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ଶିଖିବା କ’ଣ ନିତାନ୍ତ ପକ୍ଷେ ‘କଲ୍‌ଚରର୍’ ବ୍ୟବହାରର ପରିଚାୟକ ! ଯଦି ବା ହୋଇଥାଏ ତାହା କ’ଣ କେବଳ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରୁ ଶିଖିହେବ ? ତା’ ଛଡ଼ା ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାରେ ବି କ’ଣ ଶାଳୀନ ବ୍ୟବହାର ଉପଯୋଗୀ ଶବ୍ଦର ଅଭାବ ଅଛି କି ? ଯଦି ସେପରି ମନେ ହେଉଥାଏ, ତେବେ ତାହା କେବଳ ସେ ଭାଷା ବିଷୟରେ ଆମର ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଜ୍ଞାନ ହିଁ ଦେଖାଇବ । ମାନୁଛି, କେବଳ ଇଂରାଜୀ କହିବାର ବେଗ ବା ‘ଫୁଏନ୍‌ସି’ର ଅଭାବ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ପିଲାଙ୍କଠାରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ

ପାଇ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଅଭାବ ଗୀତି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ରହିବ ନାହିଁ; ସେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ମୋ'ର । 'କୌଣସି ଭାଷା କହିବାର ବେଗ ଏବଂ ସାବଲୀଳତା ନିୟମିତ ପ୍ରୟୋଗାଭ୍ୟାସ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ । ତମେ ଦେଖିବ, ଗୀତି ଭଳି ବୁଦ୍ଧିମତୀ ଛାତ୍ରୀ ପକ୍ଷରେ ତାହା ସମସ୍ୟା ପଦବ୍ୟାପୀ ବି ହେବ ନାହିଁ ।”

ମୋ'ର ଲମ୍ବା ଚଉଡ଼ା ଭାଷଣରେ ରୀତି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲା । କିଛି ସମୟର ନୀରବତା ପରେ ସେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ତା'ର ଶେଷ ବାଣ ଆକାରରେ ବାଢ଼ି ବସିଲା ଏଇ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟି -

“ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଏ ସମସ୍ତ ଯୁକ୍ତି ପରେ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସପକ୍ଷରେ ତମର ଯୁକ୍ତି କ'ଣ ? ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ନେଇ ତମେ ଯେଉଁ ଏତେ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରୁଛ, ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ବା ଅନ୍ୟ ଯେ କୌଣସି ଭାରତୀୟ ଭାଷାରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟବହାର ନ କରି ବାକ୍ୟଟିଏ କହିବା ଯେ କେତେ କଠିନ ଓ ଦୁଷ୍ଟର କେବେ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରି ଦେଖିଛ ? ତା' ଛଡ଼ା ଗୀତିକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପଢ଼ାଇବାର ଜିଦ୍ ପଛରେ ତମର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ କ'ଣ ? ତା' ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ବିଷୟରେ ତମେ କ'ଣ ଠିକ୍ କରିଛ ? ତା'କୁ କ'ଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା ବନାଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁ ? ଯଦି ସେପରି ନୁହେଁ ତା' ହେଲେ ସେ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ପଢ଼ିଲେ କ୍ଷତି କ'ଣ ? ବରଂ ତାଙ୍କର, ଇଂଜିନିୟର କିମ୍ବା ଅନ୍ୟ ଯାହା କିଛି ବି ହେବାପାଇଁ ପରେ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ହିଁ ତ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ !”

ରୀତିର ଏଇପରି ଆକ୍ଷେପମୂଳକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କେତୋଟି ମୋତେ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଉତ୍ତେଜିତ କରି ପକାଇଲେ । ମୁଁ ଅଗତ୍ୟା କହି ପକାଇଲି -

“କୌଣସି ଭାରତୀୟ ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟବହାର ନ କରି ତମେ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ତମର ସମସ୍ତ ଭାବ, ଅନୁଭବ ଓ ସମସ୍ତ ଉକ୍ତି ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ପାରିବ କି ? ଯଦି ପାରିବ ତେବେ ମାର୍ଗଶିର ମାସ ଗୁରୁବାରରେ ମାଣ ବସାଇ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କୁ ପୂଜା କରିବାର ଅବା ଖୁଦୁରୁକୁଣି ଓଷାର ବିଧିକୁ କିପରି ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବ ମୋତେ କୁହ ତ ! ବଡ଼ ସଜନାଛୁଇଁ ତରକାରୀ ଅବା ଶାଗ ଲଗାଇ ପଖାଳ ଖାଇବାର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ କିପରି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିବ କୁହ ତ ! ଭାବ ପ୍ରକାଶ ଓ ବିନିମୟ କରିବାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ଭାଷାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆବଶ୍ୟକସ୍ଥଳେ ଏକାଧିକ ଭାଷାର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଲୋଡ଼ିବାରେ ମୋ'ର ଆଦୌ କୌଣସି ଆପତ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ କେବେ ବି ଇଂରାଜୀ ନ ଶିଖିବାକୁ କହୁନାହିଁ ; କିମ୍ବା ଗୀତିକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା ବନାଇବା ବି ମୋ'ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ । ନିଜ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ନିଜେ ଠିକ୍ କରିପାରିଲାଭଳି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱଟିଏ ତା' ଭିତରେ ଗଢ଼ିବାର ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା କେବଳ ମୁଁ କରୁଛି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ଆକ୍ଷେପ କରି ଯେଉଁ କଥା ତମେ କହୁଛ ତାହା ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ମୋତେ ଖୁବ୍ କଷ୍ଟ ଦେଉଛି । ମୁଁ ପ୍ରଥମରୁ କହିଛି, ଯଦି ପାଠପଢ଼ାର ମାଧ୍ୟମକୁ ନେଇ ଆମର ମତ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ, ତେବେ ତାହା ଭିତ୍ତିହୀନ । ମୋ'ର ଯୁକ୍ତି କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷାକୁ ନେଇ ନୁହେଁ, ବରଂ ଗୋଟିଏ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ନେଇ । ଗୀତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାଧ୍ୟମର ସ୍ଥଳରେ ପଢ଼ିଲେ କିଛି ବି ହରାଇବ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଇଂରାଜୀ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପଢ଼ିଲେ ହରାଇବ କେବଳ ତା'ର ମାତୃଭାଷା ନୁହେଁ, ବରଂ ତା'ର ନିଜସ୍ୱ ସଂସ୍କୃତି; ହରାଇବ ଏକ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଗର୍ବ, ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଅଭିମାନ । ମାତୃଭାଷା ଭାବରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହୁଏତ ତା'କୁ ଶିଖାଇ ହେବ; କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହେବାର ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହେବାର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଗର୍ବ କିଏ ଆଣିଦେବ ତା'କୁ ? ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଘରର ରୀତିନୀତି, ଚାଳିଚଳନ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗୌରବମୟ ଇତିହାସ, ତା'ର ଉର୍ବର ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ଭାବ୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟରେ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଖ୍ୟାତ ଲୋକପ୍ରୀତିର ମୂଳମନ୍ତ୍ର କିଏ ଶିଖାଇବ ତା'କୁ ? ଓଡ଼ିଆଣୀର ଶାଝଣା, ରୁଚିମନ୍ତ ଓ ଶାଳୀନ ବ୍ୟବହାର ଶିଖିବାରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ହୋଇଯିବନି କି ସେ ? ଜଣେ ଭାବୀ ତାଙ୍କର ବା ଇଂଜିନିୟର ପକ୍ଷରେ ନିଜ ରାଜ୍ୟ, ନିଜ ସଂସ୍କୃତି କିମ୍ବା ନିଜ ମାତୃଭାଷା ବିଷୟରେ ଶିକ୍ଷା କରିବା କୌଣସି ବାଧାବିଘ୍ନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିପାରିବ କି ?

ପରିଶେଷରେ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ସପକ୍ଷରେ ଆଉ କେଇ ପଦ । ଇଂରାଜୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ଟମାସ୍ ହାର୍ଡିଙ୍କ ଜନପ୍ରିୟତା ଓ ଖ୍ୟାତି ବିଷୟରେ ତ ଜାଣିଥାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ତା'ଙ୍କ ସହ ତୁଳନା କରାଯାଏ ସରସ୍ୱତୀ ଫକୀରମୋହନଙ୍କୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରକୃତ ମାନଦଣ୍ଡରେ ତୁଳନା କଲେ ଫକୀରମୋହନ ହାର୍ଡିଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଅନେକ ଉଚ୍ଚରେ । ଉଭୟ ମାଟି, ଗୋଡ଼ିର ମନୁଷ୍ୟକୁ ନେଇ

ଶକ୍ତି, କବିତା, ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ଲେଖୁଥିଲେ । ସେଇ ଇତର ଶ୍ରେଣୀର ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ଜୀବନକୁ ନେଇ ସେମାନେ ଆମ ଆଗରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ଅନେକ ପରମ ସୃଷ୍ଟି । ଅଥଚ ଫକୀରମୋହନଙ୍କର ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ କ’ଣ ଥିଲା ଜାଣ ? ସେ ନିଜର ଅତ୍ୟୁତ ସାରସ୍ୱତ ସାଧନା-ଶକ୍ତି ବଳରେ ଏକ ଭାଷାକୁ ଏବଂ ଜାତିକୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ମୁଖରୁ କେବଳ ରକ୍ଷା କରିଗଲେ ନୁହେଁ, ବରଂ ତା’କୁ ଏକ ସମ୍ମାନଜନକ ମୂଳଦୁଆ ଉପରେ ସଗର୍ବରେ ଠିଆ କରାଇବାର ଶକ୍ତି ଓ ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟ ଦେଇଗଲେ । ଆମର ଏଇ ଜାତିର, ଆମ ମାତୃଭାଷାର କରୁଣ ଜୀବନ ସଂଗ୍ରାମର କାହାଣୀ ପଢ଼ିଲେ ତମେ ବି ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିବ ଏହାକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ କରିବାରେ ତମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟବୋଧ ବିଷୟରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଖୁସିର କଥା, ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଏହା ଏକ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିକଶିତ ସମ୍ମାନଜନକ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ବିଦ୍ୟମାନ । ଏହାର କାରଣ ଏହାର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ଭିତ୍ତି, ଶକ୍ତ ମୂଳଦୁଆ । ଗୀତିକୁ ମୁଁ ସେହିଭଳି ଦୃଢ଼ତ୍ୱର ସମସ୍ତ ଉପାଦାନ ଦେଇ ଶକ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ତା’ ଗଠନ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାରେ ନିୟୋଜିତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପରମାଣୁକୁ ଚିକିନିଷି ପରଖି ନିରିଖି ଏକ ସନ୍ତୁଳିତ ମୂଳଦୁଆ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା ମୋ’ର ପରିକଳ୍ପନା, ଯାହା ଉପରେ ସେ ହସିକୁଦି ଗଢ଼ିହେବ ନଇଁଥିବେ, ନିର୍ଭୟରେ ଏବଂ ସୁସ୍ଥର ଭାବରେ । ଇଂରାଜୀମିଶା ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ କହିଲେ ସେ ହେବ ଏକ ‘ପରଫେକ୍ଟ’ ଝିଅ ।”

ଏତିକି ବେଳକୁ ଗୀତି ଫେରିଲା ସ୍କୁଲରୁ । ତେଇଁ ତେଇଁ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପଶି ଆସୁ ଆସୁ କହିଲା, “ବାପା, ବାପା, ଆଜି ନା, ଆମ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ବନ୍ଧୁତା ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା ହେଉଥିଲା - ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା ବିଷୟରେ । ମୁଁ ସେଥିରେ ଆମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ହୋଇଛି . . .” । ହଠାତ୍ ତା’ ମା’କୁ ଦେଖି ଖୁବ୍ ଖୁସିଗାଏ ହୋଇଗଲା ଓ ଚିକେ ଅଟକିଯାଇ କହିଲା, “ହୀଲୋ ମମି, ହାଓ ଆର୍ ଯୁ ? ହେନ୍ ତିତ୍ ଯୁ କମ୍ ?” ତା’ପରେ ଆଉ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ କହି ନ ପାରି କହିଲା, “ମମି, ଜାଣିଛ, ମୁଁ ଆଜି ଘରେ ଚିତା ପକାଇଛି । ବୁଢ଼ୀମା’ ଗାଁକୁ ଯିବା ଆଗରୁ ମୋତେ ଶିଖାଇ ଦେଇ ଯାଇଛି; . . . ଦେଖିବ ଆସ . . .”,

. . . ଭଲ ହୋଇଛି ନା . . . ?”

ଶ୍ରୀ ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ ୧୯୯୮ ମସିହାରୁ ୨୦୦୦ ମସିହା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସୋସାଇଟୀ ଅଫ୍ ଆମେରିକାସ୍, ନିୟୁ ଯୋର୍କ ଚାପ୍ଟର’ର ଉପ-ସଭାପତି ରୂପେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ସଂପନ୍ନ କରିଥିଲେ । ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପତ୍ରିକା ‘ସଂବିତ୍’(www.sambit.com)ର ସହ-ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାତା ତଥା ସଂପାଦକରୂପେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ବିକାଶ ଦିଗରେ ସେ ସର୍ବଦା ପ୍ରବେଶିତ ।

The Gateway to Heaven

Every sunset during my two-week stay in Puri during the winter of 1981, I would walk towards *Swarga Dwara*, literally meaning Gateway to Heaven, the cremation site on the beach. Puri is famous for the temple of Lord Jagannath, the holy Hindu shrine, a place of pilgrimage for Hindus for centuries. Having been in the practice of Psychiatry in Chicago for many years, I was suffering from burnout, fatigue, and irritability. I thought it was time for me to return to my native Orissa and nothing could be better than to spend a few days in Puri, walking on the beach, visiting the Great Temple, reflecting on the meaning of life and meditating near the cremation site.

During my early morning walks, the beach would be full of bathers, strollers, vendors, and fishermen. The Bay of Bengal was shimmering in gold and silver. However, I enjoyed the evening walks with brilliant sunsets and the sky aglow with bright colors. Soon, it would be dark and I would be left alone by hawkers, but families lingering or strolling on the beach, enjoying the snacks, perhaps, listening to the music of breaking waves. I would invariably go towards the *Swarga Dwara*, the cremation site on the beach. There would be funeral pyres, perhaps, half-a-dozen or more. There would be small groups of people huddled together, squatting close to the funeral pyre of a departed loved one and sometimes, a funeral pyre with no one nearby. As I recall, it must be about the third or fourth evening that I observed a squatting figure at a certain spot. Again, I saw the same figure in the same posture for three more evenings and I began to wonder about this. On the fourth evening, my curiosity overwhelmed me and with caution, I took a few steps towards this unknown creature. It was dark, but there was some light from a nearby funeral pyre, and as I approached, I heard voices emanating from this figure, two different voices as if two persons were in conversation. I came to about ten feet from the figure when the voices stopped abruptly for a moment and then, a male voice, quite clear, asked me simply, "Who are you?"

I was speechless for a minute or so, fearful, my childhood memories of ghost stories intruding into my consciousness - this macabre scene of a cremation site on the beach at Puri, funeral pyres nearby, and a psychiatrist being asked a question by a human figure who has been on the same spot for at least four evenings.

I took a deep breath and told him, "I am Dr. Sonjee, a doctor from Chicago. I am originally from Orissa." At that point, I couldn't proceed, not only speechless but also anxious. I was about to run away, but it gave me some solace that there were still clusters of squatters nearby at various funeral pyres. I wanted that figure to say something, as the silence was unbearable. I wanted to hear some human voice to assure myself that I was in the real world and not in a nightmare. Finally, I could bear no more and shouted in Oriya, "Kichhi

Kahantu", meaning, "say something". Then, I heard this very soft and sweet voice, "Please come and sit by me".

I was still apprehensive but sat down on the sand, five feet away from him. Then, I waited. After what seemed to be a never-ending minute, he told me his story about himself. I will put down here more or less what he told me. "Dr. Sonjee, I didn't expect anyone would be curious about me. I have been here four evenings, meditating. I have seen many dead bodies brought in for cremation during these four evenings, sometimes the mourners just a few yards away from me but none has come as close as you".

I was feeling reassured by this matter-of-fact version and mustered enough courage to speak up, "Sir, when I came close to you just a few minutes back, I heard two voices, as if two people were in conversation, two distinct voices, both male and that aroused my curiosity. Am I correct or was my mind playing a trick on me?"

"Yes, Dr. Sonjee, you are right, you did hear two voices. I was having a talk with Lord Jagannath". At this, I couldn't help but laugh aloud and stated, "Why have a talk with Jagannath here? Why not go to the great temple and face Him there?"

I was increasingly feeling bold in confronting this man, perhaps insane, claiming to be communicating with Jagannath. It was quite dark by now but there were at least three funeral pyres nearby. I saw no one around.

Then, I heard the same voice, "Let me proceed with what I was going to tell you. Yes, I was having a talk with God. Let me tell you my whole story. Do you have time?" I replied, "Yes, I have plenty of time".

"You see, my name is Ramakanta Panda. I am from Balasore, a retired schoolteacher. I am almost 75. I am a life-long bachelor. I have no dependents. I get a small pension from the Government. I have no one in Balasore. I have no close friends anywhere. Yes, I have a brother in Cuttack and a sister in Delhi, but I have not been in touch with them for years. I have had no contact with my nephews or nieces. Even during my teaching career, I led a secluded life. I have always been a voracious reader. On retirement, I moved to Puri, to be near Lord Jagannath. I have a small room in a boarding house near the beach."

"You are living a life of detachment, of no desires, no passions and no ambitions," I said.

"Not quite" he responded. "You see, I am a devotee of Lord Jagannath. I visit the temple. I attend all the festivals and festivities. I walk on the beach daily, reflecting on the meaning of life".

"But why meditate here on the cremation site? Why not in the court-yard of the Great Temple?"

He was silent for a moment as if he was pondering an answer and he added, "This is a cremation site. This is the Gateway to Heaven. Truth is no more transparent anywhere than here. I have been at this site on many lonely evenings. I go into a trance-like state. Then I have a conversation with God, our Lord Jagannath".

It seemed to make sense to me. I remained silent. Not too far away, was the Bay of Bengal, the soothing music of breaking waves, the beach almost deserted, a bit scary to be near the shadowy figure of a man who has been in a conversation with Jagannath. I thought to myself, "Why am I here? What am I looking for? Why did I leave the comfort of my suburban Chicago home to come to this unreal scene?" My reverie was jolted by this particular conversation between two voices, one voice accusing the other of casting a spell over the Oriyas. As I recall, this was the man's voice, which said, "You, the Lord of the Universe, you Kalia, the Black God, you have mesmerized the people of Orissa to the point that they are no longer able to fight for themselves. They are no longer able to take action to correct their problems. All they do is to pray to you over and over again. This great Orissa, when your temple was built, has fallen into despair and disgrace. Look around your own abode. Your people are unable to stand on their own feet. The large majority is struggling to survive day after day. Where is your mercy and your guidance?"

Then I heard the other distinct voice from Mr. Panda, in response and presumably the voice of God, "You are an angry man. Your rage is boiling over. You feel deeply for your people. That I appreciate very much. You people have built me this beautiful, magnificent temple. You have for centuries developed these elaborate rituals for my worship. You take me on a parade in the Car Festival. You celebrate the festival with wild enthusiasm but my message to you has been lost over centuries".

The first voice, that of the man, responded, "You have failed to guide your people. Visiting you, praying to you and calling your name for help, has replaced all their action to improve life, to help each other, and to turn their life around. This once powerful and beautiful country is now like a vast famished land, except for a few. Your people do not even realize that they are facing a calamity, an immense tragedy. Your people are under-nourished, they are physically and mentally weak. All they are doing is pray to you and thus, mesmerizing themselves into inaction and lethargy."

Jagannath responded, "I am deeply distressed at what you are saying. My message has been universal love, not cowardice or inaction in the presence of evil. You know the message of the Gita."

It struck me that the message in the Gita, the essential and the core is to fight evil, to do right. However, the response of our great God Jagannath didn't sound convincing, even to me. I thought for a moment that the Gita was quoted profusely all over India but hardly practiced. My own thinking was interrupted by the response of the man, Mr. Panda. "Oh Jagannath, do not quote the Gita. I know all about it. Do not hide behind such intellectualization from the Gita. That response will not help our people. I am having this conversation with you and I haven't been wiser. You have to come down from your pedestal in your great temple and arouse your people to action, as you were able to do for several centuries. Your people have become weak, passive, inactive, confused and perfectly content with praying to you and blaming either the British or the Muslims for their occupation of Orissa. Your temple has now become a place to hide from the real world."

I was curious to listen to what the Great Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe, would say to Mr. Panda's sharp comments. I looked around and the beach was now almost deserted. However, there were still some funeral pyres aglow. Then, in the distance, I could hear voices and soon enough, another bier was being brought to the beach for cremation. It was close to ten o'clock in the evening. While I was preoccupied with witnessing another body being brought for cremation, I suddenly remembered Mr. Panda but he had disappeared. At that point, I was not sure if I was sane or insane. I looked around some more and all I could see was the bier being placed on the sand with some crying loudly and a few pyres still burning. There was no sign of Mr. Panda. For a moment, I got confused and despite the funeral pyres around me, I thought I was in Chicago. I came back to my senses and started walking towards my beach hotel.

Early the next morning, I walked to the temple of Jagannath, which was just a mile away from the hotel. I was in the inner sanctum, worshipped our Great Jagannath with the usual rituals. On another level, I was still trying to sort out my experiences on the beach the previous evening. During the afternoon, I took a long walk on the great road leading to the temple. On a side lane, I entered a small monastery and I was delighted to find a room full of men and women engaged in devotional singing to Lord Jagannath. I sat down on the floor and listened to this soulful music, sung in unison. It was enchanting.

I was on the beach as usual late in the afternoon, walking and enjoying the scene. The sunset was spectacular. I was away in a remote area of the beach. I was debating whether I should return to the Gateway to Heaven, the cremation site. It was beginning to get a bit dark. Then, almost as if in a compulsion, I started walking towards the cremation site. There were already more than a dozen funeral pyres, some with a few people around and some with none nearby. I came to the same spot where Mr. Panda was the previous evening

and sure enough, he was there, a shadowy figure silhouetted against a multitude of funeral pyres.

Immediately, I heard him say, "I was waiting for you." I told him, "Last evening, you disappeared in a flash. I looked around for you. All I could see were funeral pyres at this Gateway to Heaven, silent groups of men squatting around some pyres."

"Yes, I had to leave in a hurry. You see, I was getting angry at Jagannath as he was not answering my questions."

We chatted some more about his daily routine, my life in Chicago, a perfectly normal exchange though with an eerie background. Then, abruptly, there was silence and obviously, Mr. Panda had gone into a trance-like state and a resumption of the two-way dialogue, that is, between him and God.

"Your majestic presence on this coastal town, considered sacred by Hindus all over the world, no doubt, has given solace to millions who flock to your temple daily. Yet, you look around in Orissa and in fact, entire India. This society is now being run on lies and deceptions, and plunder of the state treasury. The country is on the verge of moral and economic collapse. India is facing an abyss. Your people need your re-incarnation of another Krishna in the battle field and new guidance to your people who do not even realize what they are facing". His voice was rising, increasingly accusatory in tone. As expected, there was a change of voice and it was the impersonated voice of the Lord of the World.

"Yes, I hear you. I will return as the Great Shiva or Durga. I assure you I am Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. The time is fast approaching and I will come and guide the people again. There will be a gigantic struggle, a war far exceeding the horrors of the Mahabharata, a war within the minds of men and right will triumph."

Then, there was silence. Mr. Panda remained in a trance. After several minutes, a very sweet voice came through, "Dr. Sonjee, I will be proceeding to the Radhakanta *Matha*, the monastery where Sri Chaitanya used to stay. He came to Puri in 1510 AD and made this pilgrimage city the center of his religious mission and activity."

"Yes, I know about Chaitanya. I will come with you. I know where it is located. We will listen to the devotional *Kirtans* popularized by Chaitanya."

We walked together in silence and soon reached this monastery. We participated in the musical chanting of names of the Lord. Apparently, it goes on day and night. Finally, we parted company, he proceeding to his boarding house and I to my hotel. I asked him whether I would see him again next

evening, but there was no response. When we were about to part company, in a gesture of friendship and warmth, he vigorously shook my hands and then started sobbing on my chest. Then, he was gone.

I stayed in Puri a few more days, walked on the beach every evening and regularly visited the cremation ground, looked for him in vain. Finally, one morning I went to his boarding house. The manager told me that Mr. Panda had not returned and it was his speculation that he might have gone to Balasore to visit with friends and relatives.

I was to depart from Bhubaneswar to Delhi on the evening flight and from there, proceed to New York. Puri was a bittersweet experience, I was not able to say good-bye to the man conversing with the Lord of the World, Jagannath in the cremation site, the Gateway to Heaven. I was just glancing through the morning paper when I noticed a brief news item indicating that the body of an elderly man, yet to be identified, had been recovered on the beach some seven miles from Puri. I was overcome with an intense feeling of horror. The report indicated that according to Police, it was a case of accidental drowning and no foul play was suspected. Autopsy was scheduled in the Puri Hospital.

Immediately, I took a taxi to the Puri Hospital and reported to the Police Officer who was in charge of the investigations. I was very agitated but the Officer was patient, listened to my story. He reported to me that there was no identification. In the meanwhile, I narrated to him my meetings with an elderly male in the cremation site and his conversation with Jagannath. The officer seemed curious but skeptical but assured me that I would be allowed to view the body as soon as the autopsy was finished.

After about an hour I was escorted to view the body and my heart sank. It was Mr. Panda. I related to the Officer that the deceased had been a recluse. He might have some relatives but had not maintained any contact with them. I requested the authorities to release the body to me and that I would take care of the funeral rites. I rescheduled my flight from Bhubaneswar to Delhi. I was interviewed by police officers for hours. With my unbelievable story, they might have thought that here was another Oriya who had gone crazy in America. At the end of the day, the body was released to me for funeral rites. Three Police Officers came forward to assist me in making elaborate arrangements. It was just after sunset that the body was brought to the Gateway to Heaven cremation site. With all the appropriate rites and rituals, the body was ignited. With flames rising to the skies, I recalled Jagannath's voice coming via the departed that He would come to the earth and cleanse India and Orissa of all evils. I saw the consuming fire and then, realized how impatient Mr. Panda was with our Great Jagannath because he thought a time bomb was ticking away at India's heart and soul.

I thought to myself, what an encounter in the Gateway to Heaven for the departed. I bowed my head to pray for the departed, but nothing came to me.

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***Dr. Pati** is a retired psychiatrist in Salem, Oregon. He played the role of Dr. Sonjee in the movie, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" in 1975. Many of his stories have been published in the souvenir issues of the OSA Journal. His stories deal with pain, tragedies, conflicts and Hindu mysticism. His book, "Adventures and Misadventures of Dr. Sonjee: A Collection of Short Stories," has just been published and will be available for sale at the OSA Chicago convention.*

## **God's Guiding Hand**

He is up there  
Watching me  
Guiding me  
Along my own path

Wherever I look  
He is there  
Making sure  
I am happy

And whenever  
I am down  
I can count on Him  
To cheer me up

It may be  
For only a moment  
But then  
I feel His presence  
Stronger than ever  
And I feel His bliss

No one  
Not anybody  
Can match Him  
Or earn his place

In my heart  
He will remain there  
Evermore  
To be with me  
During the good times  
And the bad times  
I will be  
With Him  
Forever  
For He is  
My God!

***Bagmi Das** is a eighth grader Gifted Talented student in Patuxent Valley Middle School, Columbia, MD and is the daughter of Naresh and Bigyani Das. She is a student of Odissi Dance School Nrityalaya for 6 years. Her other activities include representing her school in orchestra, Black Saga competitions, Science Fair etc.*

## "FATE IS GIVEN TO YOU, BUT DESTINY IS YOURS"

This profound statement came from a small observation, even though the fact that "you are born with a fate, but you make your own destiny, by your own 'Karma', is known to all religions and scriptures. The other day we were eating in a Chinese Restaurant and at the end, we opened one of the fortune cookies and it said, "Fate is given to you, however, you create your own destiny." How true indeed is this statement? When you are born into this world, you genetically inherit some of the traits from your parents. The genetic code decides what kind of person you are going to be to some extent, but most of it is decided by your own actions, your own *karma*. The environment that you create or live in influences the making of your being. You are the 'doer' and the 'enjoyer'.

You shapeup or destroy your life. To be more precise, you are your own problem and your own solution. The choice is yours. If you want, you can be Timothy McVeigh, the infamous Oklahoma City Bomber, or Michael Jordan, the famous basketball star. You can be Ryan, the notorious shooter at Columbine High School, or you can be Tiger Woods, the youngest and most talented golfer. Belief, hard work, and perseverance will make you achieve what you want.

The parents and the teachers will help you make the right decisions but the ultimate decision is yours. Seek the grace of God, the Almighty, and the Invincible. (G = generator or creator, O = Ordainer or ruler, D = destroyer). With the grace of God, the most impossible is possible. Without the grace of God, the most possible is impossible. You may have knowledge, power, money, name, fame, and work hard at it, still you may not be able to get what you want without the grace of God. God always guides you. Good is godliness and good always wins over the evil. When you are at the crossroads to make a decision, ask your parents, ask your teachers and ask your good friends and, most important of all, 'Talk to God'. Pray and ask the Almighty Lord to give you wisdom and knowledge to make the right decisions.

You know, I was reading an article the other day in one of the leading newspapers about Humanitarian Corrie ten Boom. Those of you who do not know her, she was a jeweler from Amsterdam, Netherlands. She was a catholic but saved thousands of Jews from Hitler's Nazis during World War II. She was caught by the Nazis and imprisoned and later sentenced to death. However, just before being put to death by a firing squad, she was spared due to mistaken identity. What else could it be! It is sheer grace of God. She had saved thousands of lives and God saved her. She survived either by her fate or her destiny she had made, or immense faith in God. She used to tell the youth in Boys and Girls Club "Faith is like radar that sees

through the fog... the reality of things at a distance that the human eye cannot see."

So, go to a church, synagogue, mosque, or temple or any other place of worship and seek the grace of God to help you find the right direction. In order to have a 'direction' you have to think about it. You have to have a 'dream' and once you have a dream, work in that 'directions' until you achieve the goal. Let me conclude by quoting Henry David Thoreau, the famous philosopher, "Go confidently in the direction of your dream. Live the life you have imagined."

*This, in part, was a commencement speech and was delivered on the eve of presenting the SAHU ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT Award to the best student in one of the schools in Alabama.*

**B. C. SAHU, M.D., ATHENS, ALABAMA, MAY 9, 2001**

## Spring Semester

Spring Semester  
In January?  
The earth is still gray,  
The wind is still frigid,  
And it is the middle of winter.

Registration  
Class schedules  
Syllabi to prepare  
The campus is still sleeping  
No sign of students or teachers

Under the heavy winter coat,  
My heart flutters  
Between my cracked chapped lips,  
I softly whisper  
"Spring Semester"

I think of you,  
Your promise to return  
In spring semester  
I feel the warmth of your presence,  
And hear the sound of your laughter.

I think of daffodils,  
Cherry Blossoms,  
And Bradford pears,  
The warmth of spring sunshine,  
And the cascade of colors.  
I await your arrival  
Light hearted and sure  
I welcome spring semester  
In winter  
Because you will be here.

**Dr. Nirupma Kar Mohapatra** is a professor at Robison  
Community College in Lumberton, North Carolina.

## **The Missing Appointment**

I was anxious to keep my appointment. It was a very important appointment for me, an interview for a new job that I had worked hard for, and badly wanted. The headhunter who wanted to interview me had asked me over phone to meet him at 235 Mayfair Avenue in Milwaukee at 9:30 am. Driving down from the suburbs of Milwaukee, I was still on the freeway, a good ten miles away, and with ten minutes to go for my appointment. The entire blame for my late running lay at my door, I had overslept. Praying fervently to God, I stepped on the gas.

The first exit from the freeway to the city of Milwaukee came on my right. I thought fast. Mayfair Avenue ran parallel to the freeway right from its first to the second exit and number 235, I guessed, would be somewhere near the second exit. I could either take the first exit and go down the rather crowded Mayfair avenue, or I could race to the second exit on the freeway and come back a little ways to number 235. The latter option was a bit longer in distance, but perhaps quicker in terms of time, perhaps... I hesitated.

Then, before my rational brain could process the available data and come up with the 'best-available' alternative, my hands automatically turned the steering wheel to the right and I was through the first exit, leaving the freeway behind. I looked at my watch. I had only about six minutes left with Mayfair Avenue to negotiate yet. I prayed again to God that Mayfair would be as free as the freeway.

But when I turned into Mayfair Avenue, my heart sank. I never knew nor realized that Mayfair had so many traffic lights and that it could hold so many cars at a time. My task seemed hopeless now. I would be at least fifteen minutes late for my interview. Fifteen vital minutes which would crush whatever impression I wanted to create with my interviewer. After all, first impressions last long. In a market starved of jobs for people like me, every detail mattered. So the delay could make all the difference between success and failure. Cursing myself for not taking the second exit, I drove my car forward behind the long line of vehicles.

Beyond care, I tried to relieve my tension. I had time to observe the people walking on the footpath and in and out of the shops and restaurants lining the street. A tall girl in a white dress and sunglasses was engrossed in talking with her companion, even as they walked with a brisk pace. A small boy tried to keep up with his mother, walking and running in spurts. Smoke was curling out of Joe's Diner, advertising its bacon and fried eggs for breakfast. Faceless men, with colorless briefcases were running to their offices and I noticed two of them in gray suits as they entered an office building. I happened to look up at the signboard.

The screeching of my brakes could be heard clearly, even in the rush hour traffic, while a few cars behind me pressed their horns in annoyance. I had stopped suddenly in the middle of the road, for the name of my headhunter's company stared at my face from the signboard. Without wasting a moment more, I waved my apologies to the drivers behind me and made for a parking slot. I almost ran into the building and the office I was

going to. It was half past nine on the dot. While entering, I noticed that the address of the building was 1235 Mayfair Avenue. After the interview, I had time to reflect on what had happened. When the headhunter gave me the address over the phone, I had missed out the '1' from 1235. So I went searching for 235 Mayfair Avenue, while 1235 was in fact very near the first exit.

Was it coincidences that I happened to look up at that particular building, or must I thank my powers of observation for spotting it? Whatever the reason, the turning of my car's steering wheel at the first exit was no coincidence. That act was done not by my hands, but by His hand. It was His way of telling me that He steered the car as well as the affairs of the world, which He cared for.

Left to myself, I think I would have raced to the second exit and come back along Mayfair Avenue to number 235. Bewildered, I would have made frantic calls. After getting fresh directions, I would have probably reached 1235 Mayfair Avenue a full one-hour late, and my credibility lost. It would have caused the greatest disappointment of my life.

As it was, God kept my appointment and gave me the appointment letter for the job.

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*Ishwar Prasad Pati lives in Bhubaneshwar, Orissa. He is a regular contributor to the OSA souvenir. This is a narration about an experience of his brother.*

### "It Would Be Really Strange If..."

Everyday, everywhere, the world turns and people go on  
Living out their dreary lives, struggling to overcome sorrow and strife.  
But every once in a while, a wonderful, beautiful thing happens  
That makes us remember there is joy in life.

A bit of good luck happens, or beauty blooms forth unexpectedly  
And we just take it all in stride, and pass it by quickly.  
But no one ever ponders the cause of these mysterious happenings  
Do they occur by chance, or does someone somewhere make them be?

It would be really strange if there are beings in the world  
Whose sole purpose is to make light where it's dark.  
These are the people who help in small and special ways  
And create all of Nature's works of art.

They are the ones who help us guess the right answer  
Who slip the extra coin in our pockets when we think all is gone  
Who help us remember what we forget  
And give us the strength to carry on.

These are the clandestine creatures that send us  
Those red-letter days and block out ones that are black  
Who stitch our clouds with silver linings  
And bring our missing socks and pencils back.

These purveyors of aid are also the ones  
Who try to make the world a better place to live  
They engender friendship, create love where there's none  
And persuade people to take less, and rather, give.

They are also in Mother Nature's employment, as they  
Create the masterpieces on the canvas of Earth  
They make the sights for us to see  
And sculpt the natural scenes of infinite worth.

They make the flowers bloom and the snow fall gently  
And paint the rainbows across the stormy skies  
They teach the birds the lyrics they sing  
And choreograph the dances of butterflies.

Now these givers, these helpers, these unseen friends  
These guardians of hope and weavers of dreams  
You'd think "It would be strange if they were real at all"  
But to doubt their existence is wrong, it seems.

For some walk among us, and are actual people  
And though they do not do, all their mythical counterparts do  
They work to help others laugh and smile  
And try to make some hopes and dreams come true.

Though it may seem really strange, these mysterious people  
Do not want prizes or praise from their fellow man  
And both real and unreal types have gone unthanked and ignored  
Although they have worked since time began.

Now all of us can be Givers as well  
And mold the world into something more  
To make happiness around us, and aid other people  
In facing the obstacles that life has in store.

For it would be really strange if we did not give help to  
Those beings that have helped us so many times before.

*Avishek Chandan Khandai of Naperville, Illinois is a regular youth contributor to the OSA Journal*

## THE PULANGA TREE

After many years Avinash has come to visit his village orchard. Overlooking the river *Alaka*, this has been a prize possession of the family for many generations. It's not that big in size. But it is something that no one dare sell off. Avinash's great grandfather had bought it from a *zamindar* for a song.

Avinash is now a renowned environmentalist. After doing research at several advanced centers of the world, he is now a senior consultant with the UN Environmental Program. He has conclusively shown through research that to cope with the Green House effect certain level of intensive plantation is essential. Plant, plant and more plant – this is his motto. The earth is getting barren so fast! Avinash is always restless. We must make the earth green by planting more trees. Only giving advice to governments and NGOs does not bring him peace. Everyone must do something. He too can do something with the ground. At least he can plant trees - even eucalyptus trees, in his one-acre orchard in the village. He remembered the lush green orchard of his childhood. The vision of that being barren troubled him so much, that he decided to make a quick trip to his village.

He still remembers how deeply his grandfather was attached to the orchard. Everyday he walked half a mile to the orchard to nurture the plants before doing anything else. There was this Gandua Bauri from a scheduled caste. He had been given a corner in the orchard to build his hut and look after the trees. Grandpa is gone, Gandua lives with his children and grand children like an ancient banyan tree. For long, Avinash had never taken any interest in this piece of land. As a schoolboy, he had gone there a few times to supervise the plucking of coconuts or mangoes. But he did not have the good fortune of taking a close look at the orchard.

After schooling in Rishi Valley, he came straight to the US, and the very first job he got was with the UN. He never got an opportunity to return to the village and the orchard. Today Avinash is determined. If nothing else, he will plant at least eucalyptus trees in his village orchard to save the planet from the Green House effect. He knows, plantation in just one acre is not very much. But he would at least feel happy even though it is only a drop in the ocean. He had already sent a letter to Gandua. Today he must do it, he told himself. He should go ahead and inspect the condition of the orchard before the

UN vehicle reaches there and unloads the eucalyptus saplings. He was carrying the literature, giving specific instructions on things like the spacing of the plants.

As soon as he arrived, Avinash was startled at seeing the orchard. It was lush green, full with trees. Gandua received him with a loud welcome and ecstasy of joy. He served Avinash a green coconut to drink. The size and the taste were very familiar. It was from the coconut tree close to Gandua's hut. Then he took him around the orchard. Gandua pointed at the mango tree in the corner and said, "Your grandpa had planted it when he was 65. While visiting Vrindavan he had picked up a mango seed of a *Dusseri* variety and brought it all the way here to plant. He had told me, "Oh! Gandua, true enough, when it bears fruit I will not be around but my grand children and great grand children will surely enjoy these mangoes and remember me." His grandfather planted that mango tree to the south. That seed he brought from Baripada. How sweet is that! It has survived many storms and cyclones, and stands erect." Gandua suddenly became excited.

He continued, "On the riverside, you can see the Chakunda trees, seven in a row. The old man had planted one tree for each of his brothers. He had warned me, " Look Gandua, when we brothers die, there should be no shortage of pyre wood." In fact, when a brother died, a big trunk was felled to set the funeral pyre in no time. The bamboo bushes that you notice there supply the requirement for thatching the houses every year. And what to speak of the coconut trees! They are thirty in all. The year round festival needs are met from these. The household never has to buy coconut oil for daily use from the market."

"The tree leaning towards the Pana hamlet is the Sahara tree. The Master's younger brother married this tree to ward off the evil omen after his first three wives died in quick succession. The next wife lived long and has survived him. Since that day no one breaks even a twig from that Sahara tree for brushing teeth. By its side are the majestic pippal and banyan trees – the Master's favorites. He had performed the marriage of the two trees. It was a grand occasion. The whole village had turned up at the feast. Everyone had eaten their bellyful. His brothers were so jealous that they too carried out six other weddings of pairs of pippal and banyan trees by the roadside. There were six more feasts on grand scale. The entire village was enthralled."

“Now look here at these rows of trees. They are Pulanga trees. Only the bats eat the Pulanga fruits. But, do you know, the lamps using the oil from these Pulanga fruits all year round light both your courtyards, the front side rooms as well as the backside rooms. Every year Arjuna, the oil crusher collected ten sacks of Pulanga fruits and supplied five tins of oil to the household. We also use this oil in our family. Mahana’s mother – Mahana is my eldest son- is particularly fond of using the dry leaves of Pulanga as fuel for seasoning the paddy for making parboiled rice. Of course, the dried coconut branches are the first preference.”

“How nice, Babu, you finally cared to come to see the orchard. Many times the Master used to say with tears in his eyes, “Gandua, I fear this orchard would lose its luster after I go. Only you can save it, no one else.” He continued, “After the Master passed away, I have been rooted to the soil, couldn’t leave the place. My children, and the grand children all wish to get out of this place. But, I cannot go back on the word I gave to the Old Master.” Now addressing me, he said, “Young master, now that you have come, please take charge of the orchard. This orchard is *Lakshmi Thakurani*, Herself – the goddess of wealth. If you look after her then she will fulfil your family’s needs.”

Avinash was stunned. Outside, at the gate, the UN vehicle was blowing the horn impatiently.

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*Translated by Manoranjan Mohanty*

*This is the translation of the story Pulanga written in Oriya and included in the collection of Oriya short stories titled Pulanga published by Orissa Writers Cooperative, Bhubaneswar in 1998. Dr Ms. Bidyut Mohanty writes her short stories in Oriya in the name Lata Mohanty. She is also the author of Kaluribenta (1987). Born in 1943 in Janiapada, District Jagatsinghpur, Orissa, she had her education in Baripada and Delhi and obtained Ph.D. in Economics in Delhi School of Economics for her thesis on Famines, Agriculture and Women. She is currently a Senior Faculty at the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi coordinating the Programme on Panchayats, Women and Development. Address: C-8, 21-31 Chhatra Marg, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007, Tel.91-11- 7667960, e-mail: dr\_mohanty@yahoo.com*

***ETERNAL LOVE***  
*(For my cousin Tini Nani's Wedding)*

*With a bless and a kiss,  
Love takes its course,  
Pulling them together,  
They take it without force.*

*Happily ever after,  
Stories always end,  
But for never ending love,  
In the heart it only begins.*

*This story does not end,  
The band remains gold,  
No rust, nor tear,  
The love will still hold.*

*Whoever has witnessed a wedding,  
Knows the joy that takes place,  
Eternal Love binds husband and wife,  
Straightened stays their base.*



***Nilu Rath** is 11 years old and she is a 5th grade student in McKelvey Element. School in Maryland Heights, MO. She has a natural talent for writing poems and few have been published in various school district and school level magazines. She is a voracious reader (too much, in our view). She is the class president, spelling bee champion for the school and a gifted student in the Parkway School District.*

## THE WAIT

BY DP

Twenty long years and the wait will be over. He is coming to me today. We will meet at the place we parted that hot summer evening with the promise to wait for each other. He was heartbroken but I was determined. It was just a test of our love; time can not change it.

The decision of their only child to not marry and wait for somebody, who has not communicated since, did not make my parents very happy. Mom was quite vocal about it. I tried to defend him. It was not at his choice, that he left this country. The partition of India forced it on his family. They moved to East Pakistan and the relation between both countries was not exactly very friendly. Later I just ignored her. I finished medical school and joined in Dad's hospital. When I passed the marriageable age, mom slowed down to occasional outbursts " Why wait twenty years?.. Not twenty weeks, twenty months but twenty years? Life is not something that you play like a game. How do you know he will ever comeback?" But my dad, he never uttered a word. I caught him few times looking at me with those sad eyes. I could see the pain in them. I wish I could have taken all that pain away from him. Mom still blames me for my father's death. Dad died of heart failure and nothing could have saved him. I tried my best, but his years of abuse of his body have left it with many a problem. He knew it. But a grand child probably could have given him an incentive to fight. Over the years, I promised him several times that his name would not end with me and I would name my child after him. He used to smile and say "Then go and adopt somebody soon li'l one for my days are getting shorter." I did not want anybody else's child. I wanted his and my child. I knew in my heart he will return soon and I will have my own family, my own flesh and blood. My friends and enemies alike think I am crazy. I am the subject of gossip of many a social evening. I have laughed it away. Today I will be vindicated. I was not chasing a dream. He is returning today to ask for my hand.

Two decades have passed by. It has very little adverse effect on my body. If anything, at thirty-nine, I look better than I was at nineteen. I have matured. Hard work and exercise has kept my body toned. I have preserved it for him. I still turn few heads. He will be happy. Ah, that smile of his. I wonder how he looks now. It does not matter really. He will be only forty-two. We still have a long life ahead of us. I will quit my practice. The money from my hospital alone is enough for us. I will be his full time wife and a full time mother. We will have a lovely life. I have plenty of money to last us a long time. We will visit all those beautiful places together. We will walk holding hands together. We will sit down by the beach and watch the sun go down.

When he called me a week back, I was delighted. Our promise of waiting for at least twenty years had almost come to an end. I did not even give him a chance to talk. To his question whether I am still available, I poured out my twenty years in that one short hour. He sounded so uncertain, rather nervous as if I will not accept him, but he was always like that. He was never strong, never assertive. He used say, I will be his backbone. Well, I will be lot more to him. I will be his friend, sister, mother and wife all rolled into one. I will be his and he will be mine and mine alone. We will be one.

Our meeting place had changed. The park and the pond were gone and replaced with tall office buildings. All the houses including his were also replaced with parking spaces for the multistory offices. But the old tree is still standing there, the mute witness to our love and promise. The tree is in full bloom. It is spring now. Yes, it must be spring. I sat down; just the way I used to sit and wait for him. But I could not stay still. My heart was racing and my mind was even racing faster. I closed my eyes. When I see him, I will run towards him. He will hold me tight. I will lay my head down on his shoulder. He will lift my head up and look in to my eyes. I will smile. There will be no tears. We have own. There should only be laughter of celebration. It's Sunday. All the offices are closed. The parking lots are empty. That's OK. I like it this way. I do not want to share my meeting with him with anybody. How much must he have suffered. It was a long wait. After all he is a man. They have different needs. But he kept his promise and is coming back to me. I will wait.

The noise of a car stopping brought me back from my reverie. A car stopped all the way at the entrance of the parking lot. It must be them. He said he will bring some body with him. He is sitting in the front. My God! he has not changed a bit. He got down. No it can not be him. He looks so young, maybe seventeen or eighteen. There is another younger boy in the back of the car. The driver got down and stood by the car. They are looking around. The driver, that's him. Yes, it must be him. He has aged considerably. Time has not been kind to him. But the boys...? So much likeness. He looked at me for a while, seemed uncertain. He told something to the younger man who started walking towards me. Same walk... chin up, body swinging from one foot to the other; a clone of him. I keep staring at him. He got closer, smiled at me. That smile. The same smile I saw two decades ago, the smile that I dreamt of every night for the last twenty years. He must have said something, I did not hear him. He was uncomfortable under my stare. But how can he know of the unfathomable turmoil that is raising inside of me. It is pulling me apart. My two decades of dream flashed by. Two decades of shattered dream. I felt nauseated. I was beyond tears, beyond any hysterics.

"Are you OK ma'am? You don't look right!" he asked.

I looked up " I am fine. Can I help you?"

"My dad wants to know if you are waiting for somebody?"

I looked at him some more. Unsure now, he kept looking back at his dad. I asked, "Where is your mom?"

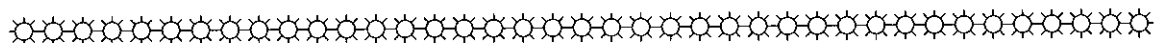
"She passed away last year." I saw the sadness in his eyes.

"Oh, I am sorry," was my instinctive reply.

"That's OK; we are coping well. Naturally my dad misses her the most. They were married almost twenty years," he said "Anyway we are supposed to meet some body here. Are you her? Are you waiting for somebody?"

I was chasing a memory, which was over twenty years back. How could I be so wrong? I shook my head "No, not I. My wait is finally over."

I got up and started walking towards my car. As I passed their car, he looked at me. I did not look back. My eyes are burning with hot tears of shame. I did not want him to see that. I did not want any sympathy from some shadow of a person who died twenty years back. All the thinking will come later. I have to get away from this nightmare right now. I drove on.



*Unfortunately, not much is known about the author except that DP is an Oriya.*

## Ode to Bliss

Wind chimes tinkle in the gentle breeze,  
A hummingbird flashes iridescent – amidst the coral sage.  
Cool, blue dart of a jay into the green oak foliage.  
Somnolent – I smile as I sip my fragrant tea.

The pomegranate dips and sways, flirting with the morning breeze.  
The climbing rose wafts its perfume into my expectant senses.  
Notes of *Bhairavi* drift through my mind  
As I muse – my haven, my sanctuary of bliss.

A shriek shatters the morning calm.  
Pieces of my reverie tumble to the beat of my startled heart.  
My teacup splinters on the porch tiles.  
I hear myself cry out “Who’s hurt? WHO’S HURT?”

Over by the playscape, where the peach tree stands,  
My laughing daughter holds out her cupped hands.  
“Look Mama” she says, “ I caught a yellow butterfly!”  
Not to be outdone, my little son shrieks “boosasaai, boosasaai!”

I admire their treasure and watch them set it free.  
I smell the wilted wildflowers they have picked for me.  
I kiss their flushed faces and I think,  
This is my life, an ocean of bliss.



*Snigdha Mishra is a resident of Austin, TX.  
Currently on an extended leave of absence from a financial analyst career, she teaches  
Hindustani classical music and writes poetry in her spare time.*



## Time Unlimited

*Time,  
I try to fathom you  
In the number of teeth  
Sprouting in my baby girl,  
In my receding hairline.  
Trying to fathom you  
In the size of the expanding hole on my head  
And in ever invading wrinkles  
Around my eyes and cheeks.  
But,  
Only you  
By the magic wand  
Change the toddler  
To the heart breaker  
To the grand mother  
To be a baby again.  
I try to measure you  
By looking at the sunrise and sunset  
And the rise and fall of tides  
And in the changing color of the leaves.  
But, you still  
Remain unchanged,  
A drop of water on the lotus leaf,  
A flow of eternity  
With no ends.  
I measure you  
With the anticipation of my dreams  
Waiting, waiting for ever it to happen  
To see you speed up the moment to treasure,  
Put me in your wings,  
Move me  
To the moments  
To undo me,  
Unwind me,  
Feed me  
With the pollen of life again*

\*\*\*\*\*

*\* Babru Samal lives in Maryland and work in the area of neurogenomics.*

## A Waker – Up's Woe

All sweet dreams have to come to an end,  
At the outbreak of dawn.  
Just when you have a prize won or a good deed done,  
Along comes your mother telling you to water the lawn.  
In a sweet little voice she says "rise and shine son, rise and shine"  
And you let out a protesting little whine.  
At this her mouth becomes a thin straight line,  
And she screams in your ear, "Its already nine!"  
You moan and you groan, you plead and you preach,  
About the evils of slumber breach.  
But she remains unmoved and steadfast,  
And for your bedclothes her hands reach.  
You then head grumpily towards your breakfast,  
Thinking that your dream was too good to last.

**Soumya Shanker** wrote this poem when his 13<sup>th</sup> Birthday was approaching during March, 2001. On a Sunday morning his mother was attempting to wake him. He wished to continue in his pleasant state of slumber. Mother desired that he wake up in time, put in extra hours and succeed in life - hence the phrase "rise and shine". The words "sweet little voice" and "unmoved and steadfast" depict the unique balance of love and discipline.

**Soumya Shanker** lives in the steel city of Rourkela, State of Orissa (India). He writes poems on natural urge. Probably you too have had the same feeling like him and all mothers have the same desire.

## **Letter to a Child: A Time to Count**

Recently, I have been reading a book called “What are the Seven Wonders of the World?” by Peter D’Epiro and Mary Desmond Pinkowish. The authors have put together a very nice collection of culturally significant lists drawn from the basics of western civilization. The book is full of fascinating questions such as “Who were the 3 sons of Adam and Eve?”, “What were the 5 rivers of the classical underworld?”, “What were the Latin names of the 12 months?”, etc.

As I slowly worked my way through the 101 questions and their answers, I began to think about coming up with a similar list based on the mythology, culture and heritage of India. I had to do a little bit of research to find some interesting facts, and it turned out to be an enjoyable learning experience for me as well! So here it is; a very preliminary list of some facts related to India – which I hope you will enjoy. As time permits, I will try to expand this list beyond the number 10, and also try to include more items per number. Until then, have fun with the counting!

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[Q] *Who are the 3 Gods of the Hindu Trinity?*

[A] The Gods, also known as the Trimurti, are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma is the God of creation, Vishnu is the God of preservation, and Shiva is the God of destruction.

[Q] *What are the 4 Vedas?*

[A] The Vedas are Rigveda, Yayurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. Rigveda mostly contains hymns to Gods, Yayurveda has formulas for conducting rituals and sacrifices, Samaveda is a collection of priestly chants, and Atharvaveda has chants for well being. The Vedic writings are believed to be at least 3000 years old.

[Q] *What are the 5 elements, which make up the physical world?*

[A] The basic elements, which make up the world around us, as well as the human body, are: Kshiti or Prithivi (earth), Ap or Jala (water), Tejas or Agni (fire), Marut or Vayu (wind), Vyoma or Akasha (sky, ether)

[Q] *What are the 6 seasons in the Indian calendar?*

[A] The seasons are Grishma (summer), Varsha (rain), Sharata (autumn), Shita (winter), Hemanta and Vasanta (spring). Hemanta is a transitional season between winter and spring, and along with Varsha, has no western equivalent.

[Q] *What are the names of the 7 stars, which form the Saptarshi Mandala (The Big Dipper)?*

[A] The stars, named after 7 sacred rishis, are called Kratu, Pulaha, Pulastya, Atri, Angira, Vasishtha and Marichi. The little star you can see next to Vasishtha is named after his wife, Arundhati. If you join Pulaha and Kratu by an imaginary line and extend it

away from Pulaha, you will find Polaris, the North Star, known as Dhruva in Indian astronomy.

[Q] *Who are the 8 guardians of the directions in Indian mythology?*

[A] The 8 principal directions and their guardians are: North – Kuvera (God of wealth), North-east – Ishana (divine physician), East – Indra (King of heaven and God of war), South-east – Agni (God of fire), South – Yama (God of death), South-west – Nirriti (Goddess of death and destruction), West – Varuna (king of the seas), North-west – Vayu (God of wind).

[Q] *Which are the 9 planets in Hindu astrology?*

[A] The nine planets are: Surya (Sun), Chandra (Moon), Mangala (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Vrihaspati (Jupiter), Shukra (Venus), Shani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu.

[Q] *What are the 10 incarnations of Vishnu?*

[A] The incarnations, also known as the Dasha Avatara are: Meena (fish), Kachapa (tortoise), Shookara (boar), Narasingha (man-lion), Vamana (dwarf), Parshurama (axe-man priest), Rama, (prince), Balarama (plowman), Buddha (enlightened), and Kalki (destroyer). The first nine avatars have appeared so far, and it is believed that the appearance of Kalki will signify the end of the universe. One interesting fact – there is a mural of the avatars in the Jagannath temple at Puri, where Jagannath is shown as the ninth Avatara (Buddha)!

✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱

**Srikanta Mishra**, an engineer who also dabbles in risk analysis, lives in Austin, TX. His hobby is to continue learning about Orissa and India so that he can teach his children more about our heritage.



## ଅନନ୍ୟ ଅନୁଭୂତି

ମନୋଜ ପଣ୍ଡା, ଡିପ୍ଟଏଚ୍, ମିଡିଗାନ୍



### ପଲ୍ଲବିତ ସବୁଜ କାନନ

କୋକିଳର ପଞ୍ଚମ ତାନ ।  
ସୁଗନ୍ଧିତ ମଳୟର କୋମଳ ପରଶ  
ଦୂର ଦିଗନ୍ତର ଆଲୁଲୀୟତ ଅଭ୍ରକଣ ।  
ଚଳଚଞ୍ଚଳା ତଟିନୀର ହାସ୍ୟ-ଉଚ୍ଛ୍ଵାସ  
ରତ୍ନଗର୍ଭା ମହୋଦଧିର ଉତ୍କର୍ଷ ଉନ୍ମେଷ ।  
ନିମ୍ନଗା ନିର୍ଝରିଣୀର ଝର୍ଝର ଝଙ୍କାର  
ନିଃଶବ୍ଦ ମରୁପ୍ରାନ୍ତର ବାଲୁକା ସମ୍ଭାର ।  
ଉତୁଙ୍ଗ ଶିଖରେ ସୁପୀକୃତ ତୁଷାରର ଶ୍ଵେତ  
ସମାରୋହ  
ଅବା ନକ୍ଷତ୍ର ଖଚିତ ବିତାନ ପାର୍ଶ୍ଵେ ଝଙ୍କାରୀର  
ନେପଥ୍ୟେ କୋଳାହଳ ।  
କୃଷ୍ଣକେଶୀ ମେଘମାଳେ କୁଜଝଟିକାର ଲୁଚକାଳି  
ଖେଳ  
ପୁଣି ସଦ୍ୟସ୍ନାତା ପ୍ରକୃତିରାଶୀ ଗଳେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ  
ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଧନୁ ମାଳ ।

ହୃଦିୟାଏ ଏ ମନ, କେଉଁ ଏକ ଅଜଣା, ଅଶୁଣା  
ରାଜ୍ୟରେ  
ମଜ୍ଜିୟାଏ  
ଉନ୍ମୁକ୍ତ ହୁଏ  
ମନ୍ତ୍ରମୁଗ୍ଧ ପରି  
ଉଦ୍‌ବେଳିତ, ଫେନିଳ, ବିଗଳିତ  
ସରଳ ଆହ୍ଲାଦର ଅଫୁରନ୍ତ ଧାରେ ।  
ଶୋଭା-ରଞ୍ଜନାଳାର କମନୀୟ କାନ୍ତି ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତି  
ଆଶେ ସଂସାର ପାଂଶୁଳ-ପାଶରୁ ସ୍ଵାଗତ ନିଷ୍କୃତି  
।

ଆଃ, ସଞ୍ଜର କି ନିର୍ମଳ ଅନୁରାଗର ଅଭିବ୍ୟକ୍ତି  
ଅନିର୍ବଚନୀୟ ବିଭୁପ୍ରେମର ଅସରନ୍ତି ଗୀତି  
ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି  
ଅବାସ୍ଥୁତ ଭାବେ  
ଅପାଂକ୍ଷୟ ତା' ପାଇଁ କେହି ନୁହେଁ  
ସତେ! ଏକ ଅନବଦ୍ୟ କୃତି ।

ଅମୃତମୟ ହୁଏ ଜଗତ୍  
ଯୁଗପତ୍ ଉଲ୍ଲସିତ, ଉଦାସିତ  
ସତ୍ୟ-ଶିବ-ସୁନ୍ଦରର  
ଭୂମା ପବିତ୍ର ପୁଲକରେ ।  
ରୋମାଞ୍ଚିତ ମୁଁ  
ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲ ମୁଁ ।  
ଉତ୍‌ଫୁଲ୍ଲ ମୁଁ ।  
ଅଭିଭୂତ ମୁଁ ।  
ସେହି ଅବ୍ୟକ୍ତର ଅପୂର୍ବ ଶିହରଣେ ।

ଅବନତ ମୋ ସଶୁଦ୍ଧ ମସ୍ତକ  
ବିନୀତ କୃତଜ୍ଞତାର ଲୋଚକ ପ୍ଲାବନେ  
ମୃଦୁ ସିଞ୍ଚିତ ସେହି ଚରଣ ଯୁଗଳ  
ସେ ଯେ ବହୁଜନ୍ମର ନିରକ୍ଷ ଅମା ଅପସାରକ  
ଆତ୍ମଜ୍ୟୋତି ଝୁରକ  
ସେ ଯେ ମୋର ଅତି ନିଜର, ଅତି ଆପଣାର  
ଚିନ୍ତୟ  
ବାତମୟ  
ପରମେଶ୍ଵର, ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ  
ଲୀନ ହୋଇଯାଏ ମୋ ନିଞ୍ଚକ ଆତ୍ମସ୍ମୃତି

ସେହି ବିଶ୍ଵନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ସତ୍ତାରେ  
ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ  
ସେ ଓ ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ଓ ସେ  
ଏକ  
ଅଭିନୁ  
ଅବିଭକ୍ତ ।

ଜନ୍ମ, ମୃତ୍ୟୁ, ଜରା, ବ୍ୟାଧି, ଅର୍ଥ, ଅନର୍ଥ  
ଅସୁମାରି କେତେ ଜାତ-ଉପସର୍ଗର  
ଅତି ଦୂରରେ, ହେଲେ ବି ଅତି ନିକଟରେ  
ଅନୁଭବ କରେ  
ଉପକମ - ଉପସଂହାର ହୀନ ଅନନ୍ତ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର  
ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତି

ବିସ୍ମୃତି  
ବିନାଶ  
ସବୁଠାରେ, ସବୁ ମଧ୍ୟେ  
ଅହରହ ପ୍ରତିକ୍ଷଣେ  
ସେହି ନିବିଡ଼ ଝରନ ।  
ଉଦ୍‌ଗତ ନବ୍ୟ ବସନ୍ତର ଏକାନ୍ତ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ ।

ସେହି ସୁମଧୁର, ପବିତ୍ର, ମାଙ୍ଗଳିକ  
ପ୍ରୀତି, ଉପସ୍ଥିତି  
ଉପଲବ୍ଧରେ

ଧନ୍ୟ ହୁଏ ଏ ଜୀବନ  
ଅଶାନ୍ତ ହୁଏ ଶାନ୍ତ  
ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ ପାଏ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ  
ଅସଂଯତ ହୁଏ ସଂଯତ  
ସୁଦ୍ଧ ହୁଏ ଜାଗ୍ରତ  
ଘନ ତିମିରରେ ପ୍ରଜ୍ବଳିତ ହୁଏ ମୁକ୍ତିପଥ  
ସେହି ଯୁକ୍ତ - ନିତ୍ୟ - କୈବଲ୍ୟ ତ୍ରୈବେଣୀ  
ସଙ୍ଗମ  
ସେହି ଦିଗ୍‌ଦର୍ଶକର ଅନନ୍ୟ ଅନୁଭୂତିରେ ।

Manoj Panda stays in Detroit, Michigan with wife Meeta and daughter Maitreyee

## Grandpa's Story

Our twin grandsons, Noah and Alex, are always very inquisitive about their grandpa. At the age of eight, they know a lot about India and Orissa. Their mother (our oldest daughter Seema) has been to Orissa only once as a child, when she was ten years old. And does not remember too much. Now it is my turn to tell my grand sons the stories of farmers and fishermen in coastal Orissa. To Noah and Alex, their grandpa's life is very unreal and as mysterious as Harry Potter's is. They have heard about mud hut homes without electricity, hurricane lantern lights, monsoon rains, muddy roads, and schools with no roofs and feet with no shoes. They question me if I really killed a cobra with a bamboo stick when I was fourteen years old, and how I used to feed my uncle's six mongooses mashed rice and crabs. They love to hear the translation of Sanskrit fictions like *Hitopadesh-Mitralabh*, and the story about the frog and the black snake. My grandsons think their grandpa belongs to another age, another world.

They are right. Their grandpa did belong to a very different world. It feels like yesterday. I distinctly remember on July 1, 1961, forty years ago, I started working with the Andrew Yule & CO's coalmine in West Bengal, India. It was my first job as a graduate-engineering trainee after I received my engineering degree from Banaras Hindu University. The mine was closed three years earlier when a massive methane gas explosion caved the mine tunnels and killed 199 coal miners. The Chinakuri mine complex located 160 miles west of Calcutta was the deepest coalmine in India. The vertical mine shafts were over 2500 feet deep. The top company officials were British. The midlevel management and workers were Indians. It was definitely a very diversified work force. I am not talking about religions or caste system. I am talking about language, the basic means of communication. The underground mine laborers were from Bihar and spoke only Hindi. The mechanics and electricians were Bengalis or Punjabis, who spoke their native languages. My mother tongue was none of the above, although I had working knowledge of Hindi and Bengali.

My first assignment was to supervise a crew of about 20 men engaged in the cleaning rocks, debris, twisted metal arches and mine cars in the caved tunnels. It was not exactly a dream job for a young mining engineer to work in a dark, dusty and humid tunnel in the midnight shift. But the pay was good, 250 Rupees per month (about \$35 then and \$5 now) and free housing in a supervisors' dormitory. The coal miners earned about 100 Rupees per month.

Looking back, I have worked four decades in three continents. It seems to me as an achievement of unparalleled proportions. I have traveled 10,500 miles from an out-of-the-way fishing village on the shores of the Indian Ocean to live in a resort community on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

I was born in British India a year before Hitler invaded Poland. The Second World War came very close to my tiny village and to the Mishra family. My Uncle Banshidhar Mishra, who was working in Calcutta, joined the British Army to fight a brutal land war

in Rangoon, Burma. There was rationing of kerosene, sugar and fabric for clothes. My father, a small farmer, was complaining about paying unheard of prices to black-marketers for a gallon of kerosene, our only source to light hurricane lanterns. We did not have to worry about blackouts, since we did not have electricity. We did not hear from Uncle Banshi for many years. I remember my grandmother crying everyday for losing a son. Many of our neighbors returning from Calcutta reported heavy bombing of the Calcutta Harbor by the Japanese. We all lost hope of ever seeing Uncle Banshi again. Then one day a miracle happened. At the end of the war Uncle Banshi showed up in the village. He was carrying a miracle singing machine. It was a hand-cranked Gramophone with several 78-RPM records. News spread like wildfire to nearby villages. Every day, we had a big crowd at hand to hear the war stories and the machine singing. As the youngest and the most favorite nephew, I was privileged to change needles and crank up the machine. Since he was a war veteran, Uncle Banshi was rewarded a comfortable job of a Postman.

After the end of the Second World War, a Minor School and then a High School opened three miles away from my village. My father was not very enthusiastic about my attending a school. He wanted additional hands for farming. But my mother and Uncle Banshi prevailed. Since I had a couple of years of education at a village *Chatshali*, I was admitted to the fourth grade. As a barefooted kid in a rural coastal village in Orissa, I dreamt of America through the pages of my geography and history books. I dreamt of the vast open landmass stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean with its beautiful coastlines, navigable rivers, mid-western prairies, rich mineral deposits, automobile factories in Detroit and the skyscrapers in New York City. As I entered high school, I memorized President Lincoln's "The Gettysburg Address", read Uncle Tom's Cabin ten times over and my imagination roamed with the Autobiography of a Super Tramp (by W.H. Davis) and the Adventures of Tom Sawyers and Huckleberry Finn (by Mark Twain). In my college years, I was fascinated by the great American Institutions of learning like Harvard, MIT and Cal. Tech, the research conducted in science, engineering and medicine. I was overwhelmed by the sacrifices made by the U.S. Peace Corps workers in my village who traded their comforts at home to teach how to install septic tanks in my mosquito-infested village. But I never planned to come and work in America and become an U.S. citizen. It was a strange twist and turn of my "Karma" that I came to West Germany and a few years later, I ended up as a graduate assistant at the Penn. State University.

In September 1963, I came to West Germany as a "Guest Worker" (Gast Arbeiter). During that time, there were about a million guest workers in the post war Germany, a nation with a severe shortage of workers. My engineering degree in India was not considered equivalent to Diplom-Ingenieur in Germany. I was given all kinds of odd jobs. My wages were 600 Deutsche Marks or \$150 per month. After six months, I was given a job with the mining company's engineering office. The foreign workers earned between \$150-\$200 per month and lived mostly in the workers' dormitories with common bath and common kitchens. I developed friendship with many workers from Turkey, Korea and Pakistan living in the dormitory, in the mining town of Gelsenkirchen in the heart of the Ruhr District. Since I was a foreigner, I could never become a German citizen. On

the brighter side, I traveled across Western Europe by train, visited Nikita Krushchev's infamous Berlin Wall and shook hands with Willie Brandt, the mayor of West Berlin (who later became the Chancellor of Germany). One of the major highlights of my stay in Germany was to attend the Beatles concert in Gelsenkirchen, before the legendary Rock Group became world famous. The ticket cost was one Deutsche Mark or one quarter in terms of American money in those days.

As I mentioned earlier, I was not very keen to come to America. In November 1963, just six weeks after my arrival in West Germany, President Kennedy was assassinated. The entire world, particularly Germany, was deeply saddened. In 1965, one of my BHU classmates, Paul from Penn State University wrote me a letter asking me to immigrate to U.S.A. I declined his offer of help. Those were the days of civil disobedience, peaceful marches and bloody consequences. I did not want to come to a country besieged with violence and bloodshed. In 1965, I returned to India, got married and went to work for the Planning Commission, New Delhi. Two and a half years later, I got restless and decided to take Penn. State's offer to pursue graduate studies. After a year and half, I received a master's degree in engineering and moved to the great industrial city of Pittsburgh. Starting as a junior engineer, I rose to the rank of the Group Chief Engineer of the Raw Materials Division, in the third largest steel company in America.

I am glad I immigrated to America in the sixties, when there was less affluence and less technology. Most people had to work hard and long hours to make a living and support a family. I worked with the people of diverse ethnicity in the coalmines and the steel mills of western Pennsylvania. The dust, smoke and heat at the work place bonded us together as a family. I developed close friendship with my co-workers whose parents and grand parents immigrated in the early part of the century from Ireland, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Italy. Blacks, Whites, and Asians worked together, made good wages and rooted for the Pirates, Penguins and the Steelers. After the collapse of the smokestack industries in the eighties, many of us left Pittsburgh, but we remained as life long friends.

In the sixties, customer service was the real thing, not a slogan. No one had to go through the daily harassment of voice mails and e-mails. It was the time when "Made in the USA" meant good quality and reliability. Gasoline cost less than 30 cents a gallon and a giant ice cream cone in the Penn. State Creamery cost a nickel. Wealth was created through mining, manufacturing and agriculture and not through speculating in the stock market or suing companies for product liability or suing doctors for malpractice. It was a time when most fathers worked and most mothers stayed home to take care of the little ones. Little toddlers were not dragged out of their beds so that their mothers would go to work. My family always had dinner together and we discussed our children's' homework and school assignments. People had less money, smaller homes and less material things. But they had more time to enjoy the home and family life. People, in general, had higher morals and were responsible to guide their children for better futures.

I do admit, it was not all rosy in the sixties. We were in the midst of a very unpopular war in Vietnam. The young generation was getting introduced to a new drug culture. Certain part of the country was embroiled with racial tensions.

As I am about to call “quits” to my four decades long career; I am concerned about the future of our grand children. Not a single day goes by without a senseless killing in some little corner of our nation. Innocent lives are lost through school shootings, domestic violence, and alcohol and drug abuse. I am very deeply concerned about the racial prejudice and the racial profiling of minorities all across the nation.

I will summarize my feelings in a paragraph taken from Ann Lander’s Columns:

**“Paradox of Our Time”**

We have cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul: split the atom, but not our prejudices. We talk too much, love too seldom and hate too often. We have more advanced degrees, but less common sense; more knowledge, but less judgement; more medicine, but less wellness. We live in a time when technology can bring a letter to you in seconds, and you chose either to make a difference or just hit “DELETE”.

This is just a glimpse of Noah, Alex and Natalie’s grandpa from a far off land called Orissa. All across America, you will hear similar stories from many Oriya parents and grand parents in the years to come.

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***Ghanashyam Mishra** is a Senior General Engineer with the U.S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Plant. He and his wife Dr. Manorama Mishra reside in Kiawah Island, South Carolina.*



## My Brothers

My little brothers are very loving and caring,  
We like to share together lots of things.  
Brothers are nice and clean,  
But sometimes they are cool and mean.  
They like to play with all my toys,  
Then they try their best to hide the mess.  
One always eats well, stays in good mood,  
So, my mom forces me to finish all my food.  
The little one always likes to draw everywhere,  
Then cries and goes with mom or aunt somewhere.  
We love to play soccer in our own way,  
One holds the ball, other one runs away.  
Sometimes together we play games and chess,  
But, I can trick them and win without any fuss.  
When I do my homework with my computer,  
They pretend that they know everything better.  
Every Sunday we like to go to our temple,  
And pray to God for everything and be humble.

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*Dave Raj Praharaj is a fourth grade student at the Jones valley Elementary School of Huntsville, Alabama and is the son of Dr.Sarat Chandra and Minnie Praharaj.*

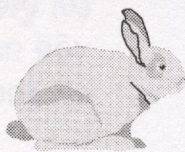
# One Jealous Turtle



Once upon a time, there was a turtle. She was always happy. One day she saw a hare that was wearing a lot of jewelry. She told herself “I want same jewelry so that I would look beautiful too”.

She went to a jewelry store. There were all different kinds of jewelry. She got confused. She could not know which one to pick because they were all too beautiful. She wanted to take everything that was there. Finally she picked the best one. It was a silver necklace with a sparkling turtle in the middle. She looked at the price. It was three dollars. She had three dollars ! She got excited. She bought it. She tried it on immediately. When she saw herself in the mirror, she was very happy. “It’s beautiful”; she told it to herself.

But when she got home, she was not happy anymore. It was hard to walk with a heavy necklace on her neck. She told herself, “God made me happy but I am not happy because I am jealous.” She went back to store and returned it. She was happy to get her three dollars back. Now she can buy what she really needs, something that will make her happier.



*Anya Rath is a student of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and lives in Macomb Township in Michigan.*

## ଯୋଡ଼ିଏ କବିତା

କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ, ମିନିଆପଲିସ, ମିନେସୋଟା

### ମାଆର ଚିଠି:

ଦିରାହ ମିହିର ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଯେ ଦେଶେ ଶୁଶୁର  
ରଖିବାକୁ ରାଜସଭାରେ ନିଜର ମହତ ।।  
କାଟି ଦେଇଥିଲେ ବିଦୁଷୀ ବଧୂର ଜିଭଟି  
ଖନା ନାମେ ଲିଳାବତୀ ଏ ସଂସାରେ ବିଦିତ ।୧।  
ଦୋଶ ପରି ଗୁରୁ ଆଖୁଟି ମାଗିଲେ ଦକ୍ଷିଣା  
ଧର୍ମପଦର ଜୀବନ ହଜିଛି ଅକାଳେ ।।  
ଏଇ ସେ ଦେଶର ମାଆଟିଏ ମୁହଁ ମାତର  
ଝିଅ ବିଭା ଦେଇ ବାହୁନି ମରୁଛି ବିକଳେ ।୨।  
କଅଣ ମୁଁ ଆଉ କରିଥାଆନ୍ତି ତୁ କହଲୋ  
ଝିଅ ଜନ୍ମ ଦେଇ କେତେ ଅବା ମୋର ବହୁପ ।।  
ହାତକୁ ଦି ହାତ କରିଦେଲେ କାମ ସରିବ  
ଭାବିଲି ହୋଇବି ସବୁ ଦିନ ଲାଗି ନିଦକ ।୩।  
ରୂପାର ତାମବ ଛତାଇ ନେଲି ତୋ ମୁହଁରୁ  
ନତିଆ ପହଁରା ଛାଞ୍ଚୁଣି ଦେଲି ତୋ ହାତରେ ।।  
ଅଣ୍ଟ ପାଉଁରୁଟି ଫଳ କାଢି ନେଲି ପାଟିରୁ  
ଜୀବନ କାଟିଲୁ ବଗତା ଚାଉଳ ଭାତରେ ।୪।  
ବେଶ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁ ବସିଥିଲୁ ସମସ୍ତେ  
କେଶ ବାନ୍ଧିବାକୁ ବେଳ ପାଉନାହୁଁ ଶୁଣିଲି ।।  
ବହି ନ ଧରିଲେ ନିଦ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ ରାତିରେ  
ସଞ୍ଜ ପରେ ତୋର ଘରେ ଜଳୁ ନାହିଁ ଚିବିରି ।୫।  
ପାଣି ଗିଲାସଟେ ଦେଇ ନଥିଲୁ ଲୋ କାହାକୁ  
ଚପଲ ନଥିଲେ ଚାଲନଥିଲୁ ତୁ ଭୁଲରେ ।।

ଗତିଆ ତୁଠରେ ବସି ତୁ ବାସନ ମାଜୁଛୁ  
ଲୁଗା ଟେକିଛୁ ଯେ ଆଖି ପୁଣି ଲୁଚୁ ନାହିଁ ରେ ।୬।  
ରୋଷେଇ ଘରେ ତୋ ରୂପ ଛବି କିଏ ଦେଖୁନି  
ଗ୍ୟାସ୍ ଚୁଲି ଆଉ କାଠ କୋଇଲାରେ ଏ ଘରେ ।।  
ଘଷି ଧୁଆଁ ପୁଣି କାଉଁରିଆ କାଠି ଜାଳେଣି  
କେମିତି ସକାଳୁ ସଞ୍ଜ କରୁଛୁ ମୋ ଧନରେ ।୭।  
ପଇସାରେ ବାଟ ଚଳେଇଲେ ବାସ କକେଇ  
କେମିତି ଚଳୁଛି ଚଳୁଥାଉ ବାକି ସଂସାର ।।  
ବୁଝୁଛି ଏବେ ତୋ ଦିନ ସରେ ହାତ ପଡେଇ  
“ରାତିକେ ହାତିଏ” ରୋଜଗାର ପଛେ ସ୍ବାମୀର ।୮।  
ହାତ ନ ବାଜିଲେ ସବୁରି ଥାଳିରେ ତୋହର  
ଖାଉ ନ ଥିଲେ ତୋ ମା, ଜେଜେ, ବାପା, କକେଇ ।।  
ନଶାୟ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଖାଇବାକୁ ହେଉ ବିକଳ  
ଦୂର୍ ଦୂର୍ କରି ଦିଅନ୍ତି ପାଖରୁ ଉଠେଇ ।୯।  
ବିନା କିରୋସିନି ବିନା ଦିଆସିଲି କାଠିରେ  
ଅହରହ ତୁମେ ଜଳୁଛୁ ତହକ ଜୁଇରେ ।।  
ବହି ଛାଡି ବୋହୁ ହୋଇଗଲୁ ମୋର କଥାରେ  
ସେଥିଲାଗି ମନ ନିଇତି ହେଉଛି ଦୁହିଁରେ ।୧୦।  
ପିଲା ତୋର କେବେ ମଣିଷ ହୋଇବେ ମାଆରେ  
ତୋ ଦୁଃଖ ସତେକି ପାଣିଗାର ପରି ଲିଭିବ ।।  
ଏତିକି ମାଗୁଣି ମାଆ ମଙ୍ଗଳାଙ୍କୁ ତୋ ପାଇଁ  
ତୋ ଶେଷ ଜୀବନ ସୁଖ ସରାଗରେ ଭରିବ ।୧୧।

### ଝିଅର ଉତ୍ତର:

କାହିଁକି ମାଆଗୋ ଏପରି ହେଉଛ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ  
ସବୁଦିନ ଲାଗି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଯାଏନା ଅସ୍ତ ।୧।  
ଯଥା ସମୟରେ ନିଶୀଥୁନି ଯାଏ ପାହିଁ

ତମସା କୋଳରୁ ତପନ ଆସଇ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ।୨।  
ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ସବୁ ଚାଲିଛି ଏଯାଏ ମୋର  
ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ସବୁ ଚାଲିବ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କର ।୩।  
ଯଉତୁକ ଦେଇ ନପାରି ଯେ ଦେବ ଝିଅ  
ଏକାକୀ ଜୀବନ ବିତାଏ କି ଦୂରୁବହ ।୪।

ପାଉଣୁ ଆସୁଣୁ ପ୍ରିୟ ପରିଜନ ତାର  
 ସମବେଦନା କି ସମାଲୋଚନାର ସ୍ୱର ।୫।  
 ଅଜାତି ଦିଅନ୍ତି ଉଜାତି ତା ମନ ହାଏ  
 ଯଉବନଠାରୁ ଜୀବନ ଯିବାର ଯାଏ ।୬।  
 ଶୁଣୁଛି ନିଜତି, ବିଭାଘର ପରେପରେ  
 କେତେ କେତେ ଝିଅ ଫେରନ୍ତି ଯେ ବାପଘରେ ।୭।  
 ଦବା ନବା ବାକି ତାଲିକା ହାତରେ ଧରି  
 ଏ ଦୁଃଖରୁ ପୁଣି ସେ ଦୁଃଖ ପତଇ ବଳି ।୮।  
 କଅଁଳା ଛୁଆଟି ଏକ୍ସଟିରେ ଥାଉ ଶୋଇ  
 ଜୀବନ ଛାଡୁଛି କିଏବା ଦଉତି ଦେଇ ।୯।  
 ଦେଖୁନକି ମାଆ କେତେ ଯେ କୁମାରୀ-ବଧୂ  
 ଦାରୁଦାରୀ ତୁଲେ ନିବାସୀ ପରାଶବନ୍ଧୁ ।୧୦।  
 ଲୁହାପଥରରୁ ଟାଣ କରି ନିଜ ଛାତି  
 ଦୁଃଖେ ଜରଜର କାଟନ୍ତି ଦିବସ ରାତି ।୧୧।  
 ଏତେ ସବୁ କଥା ଭାବିଲେ ବଢେ ମୋ ବ୍ୟଥା  
 ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ନିଜ ଅତୀତ ଜୀବନ କଥା ।୧୨।  
 ନଥିଲେ ନଥାଉ ରୂପାର ତାମତ ତୁଣ୍ଡେ  
 ତାଆଁଠାରୁ ଭଲ ହାତରେ ଛାଞ୍ଚୁଣୀ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ।୧୩।  
 ମାନ୍ଦୁଛି ସହିଲି ଅକୁହା କଷଣ କେତେ

ମଉଳି ଯାଇଛି ପ୍ରତିଭାର ଫୁଲ ଯେତେ ।୧୪।  
 ପଛ ଦେଖିବାର ଦର୍ପଣ ଆଡେ ଚାହିଁ  
 ଜୀବନର ଯାନ କେମିତି ଚାଲିବି ମୁହିଁ ? ।୧୫।

ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ମୋ ଅସୀମ ଯୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ  
 ବିଧାତାକୁ ପରା ନିଜତି ଆସିଛ ଦେଇ ।୧୬।  
 ଆଜି ମୋ' ପାଇଁ ଭାଳନା ଭାଳନା ଲୁହ  
 ଭାବୁଛି କି ମୋର ହେଲା ବୋଲି ପରାଜୟ? ।୧୭।  
 ଗୋଟିଏ ପାତୁ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ନିଗାଟିଲି  
 ଏତିକି ସତ୍ୟ ଜୀବନରେ ବୁଝିଗଲି ।୧୮।  
 ସ୍ୱପ୍ନେ ମୋହର ସମାଧି ଦେଇଛି ସତ  
 ବାସ୍ତବରେ ତ ଫୁଟାଇଛି ପାରିଜାତ ।୧୯।  
 ଜାୟା ଓ ଜନନୀ ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମୋ ପ୍ରାଣ  
 ଉପରେ ଭୋଗିଛି ମୁଁ ଗଉରବେ ଭରା ଦିନ ।୨୦।  
 କିନ୍ତୁ; ମାଆଗୋ ଶେଷ ଜୀବନର କଥା  
 ସେ ପାଇଁ କାହିଁକି ଆଜିଠୁ କରାବି ଚିନ୍ତା ।୨୧।  
 କୋଶଳ ନନ୍ଦିନୀ ଦଶରଥ ପାଟରାଣୀ  
 କରଗଲ୍ୟା ମାଆ ଦୁଃଖ କେ ପାରେ ଭଣି? ।୨୨।  
 ବିଶ୍ୱବ୍ରହ୍ମାଣ୍ଡ ପରିତ୍ରାଣିବା ପାଇଁ  
 ଜଠରେ ଯାହାର ବିହରିଲେ ରଘୁ ପାଇଁ ।୨୩।  
 ଶେଷ ଜୀବନରେ କି ଦୁଃଖ ପାଇଲେ ଆହା  
 ହାହାକାରେ ବାକି ସମୟ ବିତିଲା ଯାହା ।୨୪।  
 ତାଙ୍କ ତୁଲ୍ୟ କି ସନ୍ତାନ ଅଛି ପାଇ ?  
 ଶେଷ ଜୀବନର ସୁଖକୁ ବସିବି ଚାହିଁ ।୨୫।  
 ସେ କଥା କୁହନା ସେ ଆଶା ଦିଅନା ମାଆ  
 ଚାଲିଥାଉ ମୋର ଏମିତି ଜୀବନ ନାଆ ।୨୬।  
 ମନ ନିବେଶିଛି ପରମ ଦେବତା ପାଦେ  
 ଶେଷ ଜୀବନକୁ ସେଇ ଏକା ସାହା ହେବେ ।୨୭।

**Kalpanamayee Dash lives in Minneapolis with her husband Sitakantha Dash**

## House Lizards

In these tropical homes, they are many,  
But they keep mostly to themselves and eat only  
Those insects, who gratefully offer themselves.

They are believed to be right, yes, always.  
When we differ on a critical point, from behind  
The piles of old newspapers will come the words:

*True, true.*

During a crisis in thought, when everything  
Large and small is bound into a knot  
That won't open despite our best efforts;

Or when, at the lean lost end of an  
Imagining hour, we find ourselves  
Farther than we were, we hear:

*True, true.*

Reptilian group. Cream-white and smoke-gray.  
Harmless. Preservers of ancient memories.  
Our wise forefathers in enviable disguise.

### ATTENTION: Poetry lovers!

**BIBHU PADHI** (from Orissa) is considered to be among the finest of the younger generation of Indian poets.

His fifth and latest book of poems (all of which deal with the unusually tender and unsparingly cruel nature of love in its various forms), *Games the Heart Must Play*, priced at US\$9.95, is available to the North American Oriya Society's members at a special pre-publication price of US\$5.95 (which includes packing and air-mail postage). It is a book for all time, not just for the hour.

To ensure your copy, please send your orders (with your complete postal address and an appropriate check) to **Raj Pati, W67 N985 Cambridge Ave., Cedarburg, WI-53012**. Copies should be received by the end of July/early August.

## Never

1.

Never.

Never wait.

Never wait for letters.

Never wait for letters from distant hands.

Never wait for letters from the hands

That will never hold you.

Never wait for letters.

Never wait.

Never.

.

2.

Never.

Never wait.

Never wait for anything, anyone.

Never wait.

Never.

3.

Never.

Never wait.

Never.

---

*The poems, essays, and book-reviews of Bibhu Padhi (b.1951; Cuttack, Orissa) have appeared widely in distinguished magazines and anthologies throughout the English-speaking world. His fourth book of poems, *Painting the House*, was published by Orient Longman in 1999, while his fifth, *Games the Heart Must Play: a trilogy in verse*, is scheduled for publication by Pen & Ink in October, 2001. He lives and teaches at the small seaside town of Puri, in Orissa.*

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# ପରିଚୟ

ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ, ଫିଲାଡେଲ୍ଫିଆ

ଆସ ଆମେ ହଜିଯିବା ଦୂର ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟ ତଳେ  
ମେଲାଣି ତ ସରିଲାଣି ଆଉ କିମ୍ପା ଚିନ୍ତା  
ରୀତି ଚାହିଁ କରିଗଲ ଯାହା ସବୁ କରିବାର କଥା  
କାହିଁ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଇ ଆଉ ଆଜି ଏ ସକାଳେ ।

ରୁଷ ନାହିଁ, ରୋଷ ନାହିଁ, କାହାର ବା ଦୋଷ  
ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ, ବାପ, ମାଆ ଅବା ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀ  
ରହିଯିବ କଥା କିନ୍ତୁ କାଳ ଯିବ ବିତି  
ତମସା ଦେବନି କେବେ ଆଲୋକର ଉତ୍ସ ।

ଅଗସର ହେବା ଆମେ ଅଗଜଙ୍ଗ ପରି  
ବାହାର ଭିତର ସବୁ ହେବ ଏକାକାର  
ଭାସମାନ ବୋଇତର ଆହୁଲା ସ୍ଵରୂପ  
ରଙ୍ଗ ହୀନ ଜୀବନରେ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦିଅ ଭରି ।

ତପନକୁ ତୁଳ ନାହିଁ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା ସହିତ  
ରୂପ ରଙ୍ଗ କିଛି ନୁହେଁ ଆତ୍ମା ଏକା ସାର  
ଆଗାମୀକୁ ଆଜି ତେବେ କର ନମସ୍କାର  
ମେଲାଣି ନେଲାଣି ଦେଖ ତୁମର ଅତୀତ ।

ରୀତି ନୀତି ଏକାକାର (କରି) ଦୁଇ ସମାଜର  
କାଳି ଅବା ଆଜି ତୁମେ (କିନ୍ତୁ) ସେହି ଭାରତର ।

Sulochana Pattanaik stays in Philadelphia with husband Joy Gopal and three sons  
Viswaprakash, Guruprakash and Alok.

## Poem for the Tree

Neither you asked for a blanket  
In winter's biting cold,  
Nor did you ask for a cooler  
In the hottest of summer.

When rains came lashing on you with full cry,  
You managed even without an umbrella.

Those days when autumn arrived,  
I envied the richness of your golden fruits  
And each time  
I injured by throwing a stone at you  
Each time you sent down fruits from you.

When my body was brought to the funeral pyre,  
My dearest ones shed a tear or two  
But you came quietly as wood  
And flamed yourself into death with me.

To avoid this all  
I thought I had better  
Wished to have been buried on my death  
In that case  
You would have come as my coffin  
To be together with me till eternity.

## House of God

World has not become greater  
With teachings of the great  
Whose followers  
Have divided this earth  
With their love and hate.

How beautiful  
It is for us to be

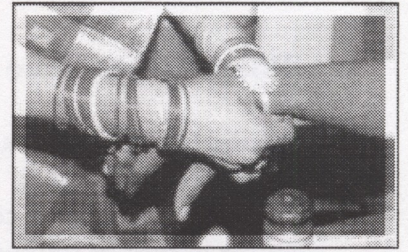
Like those nameless leaves  
On the tree that we see  
Know nothing of God  
Yet how godly they look to be

\*\*\*\*\*

*Poet Raju Samal lives in Bhubaneshwar, Orissa. See his other poems in this section*

## ସମାଧାନ

ଡକ୍ଟର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, କଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ



“ବୁଝିଲ, ମତେ ଜଣେ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ମିଳିଗଲେ ।”

ପାଣିଗ୍ରାସଟା ହାତକୁ ବଜାଇ ବଜାଇ କହିଲା ସୁଧା । ସୁଧା ଭାବିଥିଲା, ସୁମନ୍ତ ହୁଏତ କହିବେ, “କଣ, ଭାଇମାନେ ସବୁ ଦୋକାନରେ ବିକ୍ରି ହେଉଛନ୍ତି କି? ତମକୁ ବଡ଼ଭାଇଟିଏ ମିଳିଲା ମାନେ?” ନଚେତ୍ କହିବେ, “କଣ ତମ ମା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜନ୍ମକରିଥିଲେ ନା ତାଙ୍କ ମା ତମକୁ ଜନ୍ମକରିଥିଲେ ।” ଏମିତି ଥରେ କଟକର ବନା ଗୁଣ୍ଡା ତାଙ୍କ ଚାକରକୁ କହିଥିଲା । ବନା ଗୁଣ୍ଡା ମଦପିଇ ହୋସ୍ ହରାଇ ଟଳିଟଳି ଚାଲୁଥିଲାବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରର ଚାକର ଜଗା କହିଥିଲା, “ବନା ଭାଇ, ଆପଣ ପଡିଯିବେ, ମୋ ହାତ ଧରନ୍ତୁ ।” ବନା ଗୁଣ୍ଡା ରାଗରେ ଗର୍ଜିଉଠି କହିଲା, “ହେ, ମୋ ମା’ ତତେ ଜନ୍ମ କରିଥିଲା ନା ତୋ ମା’ ମତେ ଜନ୍ମ କରିଥିଲା? ଭାଇ କାହିଁକି ତାକିଲୁ?”

କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁମନ୍ତ ପଚାରିଲେ ଏକ ଅଲଗା ପ୍ରକାରର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ; “କଣ ପଇସାଦିଆ ଭାଇ ନା ମାଗଣା ଭାଇ?”

ସୁଧା ମୁଣ୍ଡର ଖୋସାଟାକୁ ସଜାଡୁ ସଜାଡୁ ହସି କହିଲା, “ତମର ସବୁଥିରେ ଖାଲି ହିସାବକିତାବ, ସ୍ନେହର ସମ୍ପର୍କକୁ କଣ ଖାଲି ଅର୍ଥରେ ମପାଯାଏ?”

‘ଆରେ, ମାଗଣା ଭାଇରେ ଲାଭ କଣ ତାହେଲେ? ସେମିତିତ ସାରା ପୃଥିବୀଟାର ଲୋକ ମାଗଣାରେ ଭାଇ ହୋଇପାରିବେ । ତମକୁ ଯଦି ବଡ଼ଭାଇଟିଏ ମିଳିଲା, ମତେ ବି ତ କିଛି ମିଳିବା ଉଚିତ, ମାରୁତି କାରଟିଏ କି ହୀରାର ମୁଦିଟିଏ, କିଛି ନହେଲେ ପୁନେଇଁ ଖାଇଯିବାକୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ତ ମିଳିବା ଉଚିତ ।’

ସୁମନ୍ତ ସୁଧାକୁ ଭଲପାଇ ବିବାହ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେ ବିବାହରେ କୌଣସି ଯୌତୁକର ବିନିମୟ ନ ଥିଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ଯେଉଁସବୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଆଣିଥିଲେ, ସେ ସବୁ ଧନାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ପରିବାରର ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କର । ହେଲେ ସୁମନ୍ତ କେଉଁଠି ରାଜି ନହୋଇ ସୁଧାକୁହିଁ ବିବାହକଲେ । ତେଣୁ ସେ ଯୌତୁକ ବିଷୟ ନେଇ ଧଳାକରିବାକୁ ସୁମନ୍ତ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଭଲପାଆନ୍ତି । ସୁଧା ସେକଥା ଜାଣେ ।

ଉତ୍ତରରେ ସୁଧା ହସିଲା । “ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି । ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଆସିଲେ ତମେ ତମ ପୁନେଇଁଖିଆ କଥା କହିବ । ହେଲେ ମୋର କେବଳ ସ୍ନେହର ଭାଇଟିଏ ଦରକାର ଯିଏକି ମତେ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରିବ, ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଶୁଭ ମନାସିବ, ମୋ ଭୁଲକୁ ଦେଖି ଠିକ୍ କରାଇବା ପାଇଁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେବ; ମନକୁ ଏତିକି ପ୍ରବୋଧନା ମିଳିବଯେ ମୋର ଜଣେ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ଅଛି ।” ତାପରେ ସୁଧା ରାଜୁଭାଇ ସହିତ ପରିଚୟ ହେବାର ସମସ୍ତ ବୃତ୍ତାନ୍ତ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କୁ କହିଲା ।

କଚେରିପଡିଆରେ ସେଦିନ ପ୍ରବଳ ଲୋକଗହଳି । ଆସନ୍ତା ରଜର ପ୍ରାଇଜ୍‌ଖେଳ ଆଲୋଚନା ହେଉହେଉ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତର ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦର ସଭାପତି ପଦପାଇଁ ଦୁଇଦିନପରେ ସଭାକରାଯାଇ ନିର୍ବାଚନ କରାଇବାର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବଦେଲେ ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ର । ସାହୁପତା ଗ୍ରାମର ଦାମ ସାହୁ ଅଭିଯୋଗକଲା, “ମଉସା, ଏ କଚେରି ପଡିଆର ସଭାଟା ରଜର ପ୍ରାଇଜ୍‌ଖେଳ ଆଲୋଚନା ପାଇଁ । ଏଠି ତ ଗାଁର ସବୁଲୋକ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ତାପରେ ଆମ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତର ଗାଁ ମାନଙ୍କର ବହୁତଲୋକ ସବୁ କଟକ, ଯାଜପୁର, ଜାରକା, ଚଣ୍ଡାଖୋଲ ଯାଇ କାମକରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଶନିବାର, ରବିବାରବେଳକୁ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବେ । ଆପଣ ଦୁଇଦିନପରେ ସଂସଦର ସଭାପତି ପଦପାଇଁ ସଭା କରାଇବାର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ କେମିତି ଦେଲେ? ଏ ସଭା ମାସକ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ହୋଇପାରିବ ନାହିଁ ।”

ଦାମର ତମତମ ଚେହେରା ଦେଖି ଓ ଶେଷବାକ୍ୟ ଶୁଣି ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ର ଭାରି ଅପମାନିତ ବୋଧକଲେ । ତଥାପି ନିଜକୁ ସଂଯତ କରି କହିଲେ, “ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି, ତାହେଲେ ପାଞ୍ଚଦିନପରେ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ସଭା ହେଉ । ବେଶୀ ତେରି କଲେ ସବୁ ପୁଣି ତେରି ହୋଇଯିବ ।”

ଦାମ ସାହୁ ପୁଣି ଠିଆହୋଇଲା ଓ ବଜ୍ରଗମ୍ଭୀର କଣ୍ଠରେ ଶୁଣାଇଦେଲା ଯେ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦର ସଭାପତି ପଦପାଇଁ ନିର୍ବାଚନସଭା ମାସକପରେ ହେବ ହିଁ ହେବ ।

ଭୁଲତା କୁହୁତକରି ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ର ଦାମ ସାହୁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ ଓ ଘୋଷଣାକଲେ ଯେ ସେ ତିନିଟି ପଞ୍ଚାୟତର ସବୁଗାମର ମୁରବୀମାନଙ୍କର ମତାମତ ନେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଦୁଇଦିନପରେ ନହେଲେ ପାଞ୍ଚଦିନ ପରେ ହିଁ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ହେବ । ଆଉ ସେଥିରେ କୌଣସି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହୋଇପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କର ଏମିତି ଘୋଷଣା ଓ ସେଠି ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଥିବା ବୟୋଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କର ମୌନସମ୍ମତ ଦେଖି ଦାମସାହୁ ଓ ତାର ସାଥୀମାନେ କୋପାନ୍ୱିତ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଦାମ ସାହୁ ଘୋଷଣାକଲା ଯେ ଯଦି ଦିବାକର ମଉସା ନିର୍ବାଚନ ତାରିଖ ମାସକପାଇଁ ନ ଘୁଞ୍ଚାନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ସେ ଏକ ନୂଆ ସଂସଦ ଗଢିବ ।

ଦାମ ସାହୁର ଯୁକ୍ତିକୁ ସମର୍ଥନ ଜଣାଇ ଆଉ କେତେଜଣ ମଧ୍ୟବୟସ୍କ ଓ ଯୁବକମାନେ ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କୁ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ତାରିଖ ଘୁଞ୍ଚାଇବାପାଇଁ ଅନୁରୋଧକଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ର କୌଣସି ସମାଧାନ କରିବା ଦାୟିତ୍ୱରେ ନଥିଲେ । ନାଥପୁରର ରାଜୁ ପାଣି, ପାତସାହିର ଗଗନ ପାତ୍ର ଓ ମାଟିଆପଡାର ବିପିନ ପଣ୍ଡା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କୁ ଯାହାତାହା ଗାଳିଦେବାରେ ଲାଗିଲେ ଓ ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ର ବି କେମିତି ଗଗନ ପାତ୍ରର ଭଉଣୀ ବାହାଘର ଗଣ୍ଡଗୋଳରେ ମିମାଂସା କରାଇ ଗଗନ ପାତ୍ରର ପରିବାରର ଇଜ୍ଜତ ରକ୍ଷାକରାଉଥିଲେ, ସେସବୁ କଥା କହି ପରିସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ବେଶୀ ଜଟିଳ କରିଦେଲେ ।

ସୁଧା ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଫେରିବାବାଟରେ ଏମିତି ପାଟିତୁଣ୍ଡ ଶୁଣି କଚେରିପଡିଆକୁ ଗଲା ଓ କାହାକୁ ନଚାହିଁ ସିଧା ଯାଇ ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଠିଆହୋଇଲା । ବଡ଼ପାଟି ଆଉ କଳିଝଗତା ଶବ୍ଦ ସୁଧା ଜମା ସହିପାରେନି । ବଡ଼ପାଟି ଶୁଣିଲେ କୁଳ ଧଳ ଆଉ ନୀଳ ଧଳଙ୍କର ଝଗଡ଼ା ଆଉ କୁଳ ଧଳର କୁରାଢିତୋଟରେ ନୀଳ ଧଳର ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଘଟଣା ତା ଆଖିଆଗରେ ନାଚିଉଠେ । ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଭୂମି ଚାଖଣ୍ଡକପାଇଁ ଭାଇଭାଇର ବିବାଦର ଏ ତାବ ପରିଣତି ବିଷୟ ଚିନ୍ତାକଲେ ତାର ହୃଦୟରେ ବଢିଯାଏ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସୁଧା ପ୍ରଥମେ ଝଗଡ଼ାର କାରଣ ବିଷୟରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକଲା ଓ ତାପରେ ଗୁରୁଆ ମଉସାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ସମସ୍ତ ବୃତ୍ତାନ୍ତ ଶୁଣି କହିଲା “ଦିବାକର ମଉସା, ଆମର ଏ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦ ଯେବେ ପରବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବେ ଗଢାହୋଇଥିଲା, ବେଶୁ ମଉସା ନିୟମସବୁ ଲେଖିଦେଇଯାଇଥିଲେ ଯେ କାର୍ତ୍ତିକପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା ଦିନ ସଂସଦର ସଭାପତି ପାଇଁ ନିର୍ବାଚନର ତାରିଖ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଘୋଷଣା କରାଯିବ । ସରସ୍ୱତୀପୂଜା ପରଦିନ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ନିର୍ବାଚନ ପାଇଁ ଲଢୁଥିବା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀପତ୍ର ଦାଖଲ କରାଇବେ ଓ ଦୋଳପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମାର ପାଞ୍ଚଦିନପରେ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ହେବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପଣତ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେ ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେଇନାହାନ୍ତି । ହଠାତ୍ ଏ ପାଇଁଜଣେକ ପାଇଁ ହେଉଥିବା ମିତିଙ୍ଗରେ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ମିତିଙ୍ଗ ବିଷୟ ମିଶାଇ ଏତେ ଜଟିଳ କରୁଛନ୍ତି କାହିଁକି? ଯଦିବି ଏ ମିତିଙ୍ଗରେ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ମିତିଙ୍ଗ ବିଷୟ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କଲେ, ତେବେ ଦାମର ଯୁକ୍ତିକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବା ଉଚିତ । ଦାମତ କିଛି ଅଯୌକ୍ତିକ କଥା କହୁନାହିଁ ?” ଦିବାକର ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କୁ ଏକଥା କହି ସୁଧା ଅନ୍ୟ ବୟୋଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ଓ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର ସମାଧାନ କରାଇବାପାଇଁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲା । ସୁଧାର କଥାରେ ବହୁଲୋକ ସମର୍ଥନ ଜଣାଇଲେ ଓ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ବିଷୟ ଭଲଭାବେ ଚିନ୍ତାକରି ସ୍ଥିର କରାଇବାର ପିନ୍ଧାନ୍ତନେଇ ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜନିଜର ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଆସିଲେ ।

କଚେରିପଡିଆ ଅତିକ୍ରମ କରି ବାରମଣିଆ ପୋଲ ପାରହୋଇ ଘରକୁ ଫେରୁଫେରୁ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ସୁଧା “କଣ ଯେ ହେବ ଏ ଗାଁର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ, ଭଗବାନ ହିଁ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ବୟୋଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠ ଓ ଯୁବକଗୋଷ୍ଠୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଥିବା ମତଭେଦ ଦିନକୁଦିନ ବୃଦ୍ଧିପାଉଛି ଓ ଯୁବକଗୋଷ୍ଠୀଙ୍କ ମନଭିତରେ ଏ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦପ୍ରତି କେମିତି ଏକ ଘୃଣାଭାବ ଭରିଆସୁଛି ।”

“ସୁଧା ନାନୀ!”

ଭାବନାରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣହେଉ ପଡିଲା ସୁଧାର । ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଠିଆହୋଇଛି ରାଜୁ ପାଣି --- ନାଥପୁରର ହରି ପାଣିଙ୍କ ପୁଅ । ସୁଧା କେବଳ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନାଁ ଶୁଣିଥିଲା, ଭଲଭାବେ ଜାଣି ନଥିଲା । ସେମାନେ ପ୍ରାୟତଃ କଟକରେ ରହନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଗାଁ ସହିତ ବି ସବୁବେଳେ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ରଖିଥାନ୍ତି । “ସୁଧା ନାନୀ, ଆପଣ ମୋଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ କି ସାନ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିନି । ତେଣୁ ନାନୀ ଚାକୁଛି, ଯଦି ଭୁଲହୁଏ ତେବେ କ୍ଷମା କରିବେ । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ବୁଦ୍ଧିର ପ୍ରଖରତା ଓ ପରିପକ୍ୱତା ହିଁ ମତେ ବିସ୍ମିତ କରାଇଛି । ଆଶାକରୁଛି ଯେ ଦିବାକର ମଉସା ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସୁପରାମର୍ଶ ଶୁଣିବେ ଓ ଏ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ କରାଇବେ ।”

ସୁଧା ହସିଲା, “ମତେ ପଇଁତିରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା, ଯଦି ସେ ତୁଳନାରେ ଆପଣ ମୋଠାରୁ ସାନ, ତେବେ ନାନୀ ତାଙ୍କିଲେ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହେବି । ଏମିତି ବି ହୋଇପାରିଥାଏ ଯେ ଆପଣ ମୋଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ କି ସମବୟସ ବି ।”

“ତାହେଲେ ତ ମୁଁ କେବଳ ସୁଧାହିଁ ସମ୍ବୋଧନ କରିବି । କାରଣ ମୁଁ ଓ ମୋ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଦୁଇଜଣଯାକ ଚାଳିଶି ଅତିକ୍ରମ କରିସାରିଲୁଣି । ତେଣୁ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆସମାଜର ଚଳଣି ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଆଉ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ସୁଧାନାନୀ କହିହେବନି ।”

“ତାହେଲେ ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଭାଇ ତାଙ୍କିପାରିବି କି? ଆଉ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ନାନୀ ତାଙ୍କିପାରିବି କି? ”

“ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ସୁଧା, ନିଶ୍ଚିତଭାବେ ତାଙ୍କିପାରିବ । ଭାଇତାଙ୍କିଲେ ମୁଁ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହେବି ।”

“ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି ରାଜୁ ଭାଇ, ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ।” ତାପରେ ହସିହସି ରାଜୁ ପାଣି ଅର୍ଥାତ ସୁଧାର ରାଜୁଭାଇ ସେଦିନ ବିଦାୟ ନେଇଥିଲେ ।

ଦୁଇଦିନପରେ ସୁଧା ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଫେରି ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନେଉଛିତ ତାର ସାନଝିଅ ଲଳିଆ ଦଉଡି ଦଉଡି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ଓ ଖବରଦେଲା ଯେ ଗୌରମାମୁଁ ରମେଶ ଜେଜେଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଝଗଡ଼ା କରୁଛି ଓ ଅସଭ୍ୟ କଥାକହି ଗାଳିବର୍ଷଣ କରୁଛି । ସୁଧାର ଇଚ୍ଛାହେଲା ଯେ ସିଏ ସିଧାଯାଇ ଗୌରକୁ ଗାଳିଦିଅନ୍ତା ଓ କାନମୋତି ଦୁଇଟା ଚଟକଣି ପକାନ୍ତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସାରାଦିନ କ୍ଲାସ୍ରେ ପଢ଼ାଇ ପଢ଼ାଇ କ୍ଲାନ୍ତ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ଲଳିଆ ହାତରେ ଗୌରପାଖକୁ ଚିଠାଟିଏ ଦେଇ ତାକୁ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଆସିବାପାଇଁ କହି ପୁଣି ଟିକେ ବିଛଣାରେ ଗଡ଼ପଡ଼ ହେଲା । ଗୌର ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ଅଧଘଣ୍ଟା ପରେ । ରାଗରେ ତମତମ ଦିଶୁଥାଏ । ଗୋରାରଙ୍ଗଟା ତାର ଲାଲ ପତିଯାଇଥାଏ ଓ ମୁହଁରେ କ୍ରୋଧର ଛାପ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ବାରି ହୋଇଯାଉଥାଏ । ସୁଧା ଗୌରର ମୁଣ୍ଡଠାରୁ ଗୋଡ଼ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଚାହିଁଲା । ବୁଝଦେବଙ୍କର ଦର୍ଶନତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ତାର ମନେପଡ଼ିଲା ଓ ରାଗୀବ୍ୟକ୍ତିକୁ ତାର ରାଗ ସହିତ ମିଶାଇ ଅବଲୋକନ କରିବାର କୌତୁହଳକୁ ଦମନ ନକରିପାରି ସେ କେବଳ କିଛି ନକହି ଗୌରକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ।

ଗୌର ପଚାରିଲା, “ସୁଧାନାନୀ, ମତେ କାହିଁକି ତକେଇପଠେଲୁ ? ”

“ପ୍ରଥମେ ତୋ ରାଗ ଶାନ୍ତକର । ପାଞ୍ଚଥର ଜୋରରେ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ - ପ୍ରଶ୍ୱାସ ନେ, ତାପରେ କହିବି ।”

ଗୌର ପାଞ୍ଚଥର ନିଶ୍ୱାସ - ପ୍ରଶ୍ୱାସ ନେବାର ଅଭିନୟ କରିସାରିବାପରେ ସୁଧା କହିଲା, “କିରେ, ସୁଧାନାନୀକୁ ଭୁଲିଗଲୁ ତୁ, ତତେ ତା ଘରକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ସମୟ ମିଳୁନଥିଲା, ହେଲେ ରମେଶଦାଦାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଝଗଡ଼ା କରିବାକୁ ତତେ ସମୟ ମିଳୁଛି, ନାହିଁ ! ରମେଶ ଦାଦାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ତୁ କାହିଁକି ସବୁବେଳେ ଏମିତି ଝଗଡ଼ାକରୁ ? ”

“ସୁଧାନାନୀ, ତୁ ଜାଣିନୁ, ରମେଶ ଦାଦା କେତେ ଖରାପଲୋକ । ତୁ କେମିତି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଛୁ କେଜାଣି ? ”

“କାହିଁକିରେ ଗୌର, ଦିବାକର ମଉସା ଯେ ଏତେବଡ଼ ଭୁଲକାମ କଲେ, ଦାମ ସାହୁ ନୁଆ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସମାଜ ଗଢ଼ିବାପାଇଁ ଆହ୍ୱାନଦେଲା, ସେତେବେଳେ ତ ତୋ ପାଟିରୁ କିଛି ବାହାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ହେଲେ ରମେଶ ଦାଦାଙ୍କ ଛାଇପଡ଼ିଲେ ତୋର ନାହିଁ କାହିଁକି ଡିଏଁ କିରେ ? ”

“ସୁଧାନାନୀ, ଦିବାକର ମଉସା ଖରାପ ମୁଁ ମାନୁଛି, କିନ୍ତୁ ରମେଶ ଦାଦା ବଡ଼ ବିପଦଜନକ, ବହୁତ ମାରାତ୍ମକ ।”

“ତୁ’ତ ଆଗେ ରମେଶ ଦାଦାଙ୍କ ଚାମଚା ଥିଲୁରେ, ପୁଣି ମାରାତ୍ମକ କେମିତି କହୁଛୁ । ଆଗେତ ତା’ଙ୍କ ପଛେପଛେ ଖୁବ୍ ପୋଷାହୋଇ ବୁଲୁଥିଲୁ । ତୋ ଚେହେରା ତ ସେମିତି ଅସତ ଅଛି, କାହିଁ ଖଣ୍ଡିଆଖାବରା ହୋଇନି । ପୁଣି କି ବିପଦଜନକ କାମ ସିଏ କଲେ ? ”

“ସୁଧାନାନୀ, ତୁ ଖାଲି ରମେଶ ଦାଦାଙ୍କ ସପକ୍ଷରେ ଯୁକ୍ତିକରିବୁ । କରୁଥା ଯୁକ୍ତି । ହେଲେ ମତେ ଭୋକ ଲାଗିଲାଣି, ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦେଲୁ କିଛି ।”

ରୁପା ମାଉସୀକୁ ଗୌର ପାଇଁ ଖାଇବାକୁ ବାଜିଦେବାକୁ ବରାଦକରି ସୁଧା ପୁଣି ଗୌର ପାଖକୁ ଆସିଲା । ବୁଝେଇ କହିଲା, “ଗୌରରେ, ତୁତ ଏତେ ଭଲପିଲାଟା, ହେଲେ ତୋର ଏ ରାଗମିଜାଜଟା ବହୁତ ଖରାପ । ତାକୁ ଟିକେ କଣ୍ଟ୍ରୋଲ୍ କରିବା ଶିଖ । ନହେଲେ ବହୁତ ପକ୍ଷେଇବୁ ପରେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ସୁଧାନାନୀକୁ ମନେପକେଇଲେବି ନେତିଗୁଡ଼ କହୁଣୀକୁ ବହିଯାଇଥିବ ।”

ରୂପା ମାଉସୀ ଆସି ଚକ୍କିପିଠା ଓ ଆଳୁଭଜା ପରଶି ଦେଇଗଲା । ଗୌର ତାକୁ ଖାଇ ବିଦାୟନେଇଗଲା । ସୁଧା ତା'ର ଯିବାବାଟକୁ ଚାହିଁରହି ଭାବୁଥିଲା, ସତରେ ଗୌରର ରମେଶ ଦାଦାଙ୍କ ସହିତ କାହିଁକି ଏ ଶତୃତା ? ଏ ଗାଁରେ ଗୌରଭଳି ପିଲା ମିଳିବା ଦୁର୍ଲଭ । ରମେଶ ଦାଦାଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଜ୍ଞାନୀ, ଗୁଣୀ, ପଣ୍ଡିତ ବି ମିଳିବା ଦୁର୍ଲଭ । ରମେଶ ଦାଦାଙ୍କ ଜ୍ଞାନ ସହିତ ଗୌରର କର୍ମତତ୍ପରତା ଓ ବିଚକ୍ଷଣତା ଯଦି ମିଶିଯାଆନ୍ତା ତେବେ ଏ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଉନ୍ନତିର ଚରମଶିଖରରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିପାରନ୍ତା । ଗାଁର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଦରକାରବେଳେ ଯାଇ ପାଖରେ ଠିଆହେବ ଗୌର । ଜାତିଅଜାତି ବାରଣନାହିଁ । ସେଦିନ ପାଣସାହିରେ ଷଷ୍ଠପଣି ହରିପାଣର ସାନପୁଅଟାକୁ ମାରିଦେବାକୁ ବସିଥିଲା ଯେ ଗୌରପାଇଁ କେବଳ ସେ ଛୁଆ ବଞ୍ଚିରହିଲା । ନାରଣ କଣ୍ଡରାକୁ ସେଦିନ ବିଲରେ ସାପ କାମୁଡ଼ିଲା ଯେ, ଗୌର ତା ବିଷ ଶୋଷି ସାଙ୍ଗେସାଙ୍ଗେ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ନେଇ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇଲା । ହେଲେ ଏତେସବୁ ଭଲକାମ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ବି ରାଗଟା ତାର ବଡ଼ ସାଂଘାତିକ । ଯଦିଓ ସୁଧାକୁ ସେ ବଡ଼ଭଉଣୀ ଭଳି ମାନେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଗବେଳେ ସୁଧା ତାକୁ କିଛି କହେନି । କାଳେ ରାଗରେ ହୋଣ୍ଡହୁରାଇ କିଛି କହିଦେବ । ଯାବି ହେଲେ ଗୌର ଉପରେ ତାର କିଛି ଦାବି ନାହିଁ । ପରପୁଅ ସେ । ନାନୀ ବୋଲି ମାନୁଛି । ତଥାପି ସୀମା ତ ଜଗି ଚଳିବା ଉଚିତ । ନିଜ ମାନମହତ ଜଗି ନ ଚଳିଲେ ଅପମାନିତ ହେବାହିଁ ସାରହେବ ।

ଗୌର ଯିବାପରେ ସୁଧା ନିଜ ପଢ଼ାଘରକୁ ଆସିଲା । ସଞ୍ଜ ହେବାକୁ ଆହୁରୀ ଘଟିଏ ବାକିଅଛି । ଲଳିଆକୁ ରୂପା ମାଉସୀ ପୋଖରୀକୁଳ ଆଡ଼େ ବୁଲେଇ ନେଇଯାଇଛି । ସୁଧା ଭାବିଲା, ଏହି ସମୟରେ ତାର କିଛି ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି କରିବା ଉଚିତ । ପ୍ରାଇଭେଟ ଭାବେ ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି କରି ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଏମ୍. ଏ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାଅଛି । ସୁମନ୍ତ ଯାଜପୁରରେ କାମକରନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ସତ୍ୟହରେ ପାଞ୍ଚଦିନକାଳ ସିଏ ଯାଜପୁରରେ ଭଟ୍ଟାଘରେ ରହନ୍ତି ଓ ଶନିବାରଦିନ ରାତିରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ସୋମବାର ସକାଳେ ଫେରିଯାଆନ୍ତି । ସୁଧା ଏଇ ଧାରପୁର ଗାଁର ଝିଅ । ପିଲାପୋଷିରେ ଏମ୍.ଏ ପାଶକରି ବି. ଇତି. ଟ୍ରେନିଙ୍ଗ୍ ନେଇ ସେ ଯେଉଁଦିନରୁ ଏ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ସହକାରୀ ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀ ହୋଇ ଜ୍ୟନ୍ତଳା, ସେହିଦିନରୁ ହିଁ ରହିଛି ତ ରହିଛି । ସହକାରୀ ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀରୁ ପୁଣି ପ୍ରଧାନ ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀ ହେଲା । ଯଦିଓ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାହାଘର ପରେ ବଦଳି ହୋଇଯିବାକୁ ବହୁତ ମନଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମା'ଟାକୁ ଏକା ଛାଡ଼ି ଯାଇପାରିନଥିଲା । ତାପରେ ରହିଛି ତ ରହିଛି । ସୁମନ୍ତ ବି ସେମିତି ଆତଜଷ୍ଟ କରିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏ ଗାଁଟା ପ୍ରତି, ଏ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତର ସବୁଗାଁ ପ୍ରତି ତାର କେମିତି ଏକ ମାୟା ଲାଗିଯାଇଛି । ଯେମିତି ଏସବୁ ଗାଁମାନଙ୍କର ସାରାଲୋକ ତା ନିଜର । ସୁମନ୍ତ ବେଳେବେଳେ ବିରକ୍ତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି, କହନ୍ତି, “ସୁଧା, ତମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ନିଜକଥା ଚିନ୍ତାକର ଓ ଗାଁ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିଜନିଜକଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବାକୁ ଦିଅ । ଯଦି ଗୌର ରମେଶ ଦାଦାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଝଗଡ଼ା କରୁଛି ତ, କରୁ । ତମର କଣହେଲା ? ଗାଁରେ ତ ଆହୁରି ଏତେଲୋକ ଅଛନ୍ତି, କେହି କିଛି କହୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ତେବେ ତମର କଣ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି ? ”

ସୁଧା ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରେ: “କେହି ନକହିଲେ ବୋଲି ଗାଁଟା ଭିତରେ ଏମିତି ବାଦବିବାଦ, କଳିଝଗଡ଼ା ଲାଗୁଥିବ; ଆଉ ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଥିବି, ଶୁଣୁଥିବି, କିଛି କହୁନଥିବି କେମିତି? ” ସୁଧାର ଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଖରେ ସୁମନ୍ତ ହାରିଯାଆନ୍ତି ।

ଭାବନାରୁ ବାସ୍ତବ ଜଗତକୁ ଫେରିଆସି ନିଜର ଏକାଗ୍ରତା ରଖିବାପାଇଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡକବାଟ ବନ୍ଦକରି ପଢ଼ାଘର ଭିତରେ ବସି ବହି ଖୋଲାଉଥିଲା ସୁଧା । ଦଶମିନିର୍ ପଢ଼ିଛି କି ନାହିଁ କବାଟରେ ଖଟଖଟ ଶବ୍ଦଶୁଣି ଭାବିଲା ହୁଏତ ଗୌର ଫେରିଲା କି ରୂପା ମାଉସୀ ଲଳିଆକୁ ନେଇ ଫେରିଆସିଲା । ତେଣୁ ପଚାରିଲା, “କିଏ ସେ? ”

“ରାଜୁ, ମୁଁ ରାଜୁ କହୁଥିଲି ।”

କବାଟ ଖୋଲି ରାଜୁ ଭାଇକୁ ଦେଖୁ ସୁଧାର ଆନନ୍ଦର ସୀମା ରହିଲାନି । ହେଲେ ପୁଣି କବାଟକୁ ଅଧା ବନ୍ଦକରିଦେଇ ଅଭିମାନଭରା କଣ୍ଠରେ ଦୁଇହାତ ଜୋଡ଼ି କହିଲା “ରାଜୁ ଭାଇ, ନମସ୍କାର । ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିବାକୁ ଦେବିନି ।”

ସୁଧାର ଏତାଦୃଶ ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ ବିସ୍ମିତହୋଇ ରାଜୁ ଚାହିଁରହିଲା । ତା'ର ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ଆଖିଦିଶା ଯେମିତି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରୁଥିଲା, “କାହିଁକି? ”

ମନବୁଝିନେବାଭଳି ସୁଧା କହିଲା, “ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ପଚାରିଲି କିଏ ବୋଲି ଆପଣ କହିଲେ “ରାଜୁ” । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପଣଟ ମୋ ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ରାଜୁ କହି ମତେ ଭଉଣୀପଦରୁ ଅଲଗା କାହିଁକିକଲେ ? ”

ରାଜୁ କହିଲା, “ସୁଧା, ତମେ ସେମିତି ଭାବନି, ମୋର ଭୁଲ୍‌ହୋଇଗଲା ।”

“ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସାନଭଉଣୀ, ମତେ ପୁଣି ତମେ କାହିଁକି କହିଲେ ? ମତେ ତମେ ନକହି ତୁ କହିବେ । କହିବେ କି ନାହିଁ ? ”

ଖୁସିରେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ହୋଇଉଠିଲା ରାଜୁର ମୁହଁ । “ସୁଧା, ତତେ ଭଉଣୀରୂପେ ପାଇବାଟା ତ ମୋପାଇଁ ବଡ଼ ସମ୍ମାନର ବିଷୟ । ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି, ଏବେ ତୋ ଭାଇକୁ ବସିବାକୁ କହିବୁକି ନାହିଁ ? ”

ସୁଧା ଯେମିତି ପ୍ରଗଳ୍ଭା ହୋଇଉଠୁଥିଲା । ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା ଖାଲି “ରାଜୁ ଭାଇ, ରାଜୁ ଭାଇ” ତାକି ସେ ଘରସାରା କମ୍ପାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତା; ଦାଣ୍ଡସାରା କହିବୁଲନ୍ତା, “ଆସ ଦେଖିବ ମୋ ରାଜୁଭାଇକୁ, ମୋ ବଡ଼ଭାଇକୁ, ମୋ ଭାଇକୁ ।” ‘ଭାଇ’ ଶବ୍ଦର ଏତେ ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ କରନ୍ତା ଯେ ‘ଭାଇ’ ଶବ୍ଦଟା ମନଭିତରେ ପରିପୁଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ସାଧାରଣ ହୋଇଯାନ୍ତା ଯା’ ଫଳରେ ତା’ ର ଆଉ ପ୍ରଗଳ୍ଭା ହେବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ରହନ୍ତାନ୍ତି ।” ହୁଏତ ଅବଚେତନ ମନତଳେ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ନଥିବାର କ୍ଷତବିହ୍ୱଳା ଯେମିତି “ଭାଇ” ଶବ୍ଦର ସଂଜୀବନୀ ଔଷଧର ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ କେମିତି ପ୍ରଶମିତ ହୋଇଥାଉଛି । “ଛି, ପଇଁଟିରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ଏମିତି ପ୍ରଗଳ୍ଭା ହେବାଟା ଶୋଭାପାଏନି ତାକୁ । ପୁଣି ସିଏ ଗାଁ ସ୍କୁଲର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଶିକ୍ଷୟତ୍ରୀ ।” ନିଜକୁ ମୋହଭାବରୁ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ କରାଇ ରାଜୁକୁ ଦାଣ୍ଡଘରର ଚେୟାର ଉପରେ ବସିବାକୁ କହିଲା ସୁଧା । ହଠାତ୍ ତାର ମନେ ପଡିଲା ଯେ ଗୌର କହୁଥିଲା ଗଡ଼କାଲି ଲାଇବେରୀଘରେ ରାଜୁଭାଇ କାହାକୁ ଚୁରୁମ୍ପା କହି ଶୋଧୁଥିଲେ । ରାଜୁଭାଇର କଥା ବେଳେବେଳେ କତାହେଲେ ବି ସିଏ ସବୁବେଳେ ଯୁକ୍ତିଯୁକ୍ତ କଥାହିଁ କହନ୍ତି । ସୁଧା ପଚାରିଲା “ରାଜୁଭାଇ, କାଲି ଆପଣ ଲାଇବେରୀଘରେ ଚୁରୁମ୍ପା କହି କାହାକୁ ଚିରସ୍ଥର କରୁଥିଲେ । ଆପଣ’ତ ମତେ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନିଛନ୍ତି । ଭଉଣୀକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସକରି କହିବେକି ନାହିଁ ?”

“ସୁଧା, ଚୁରୁମ୍ପା ଆଉ କେହି ନୁହନ୍ତି, ଦିବାକର ମଉସା ।”

“କଣ ସିଏ କହିଲେ କି କଲେ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏମିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ପକ୍ଷତ ଦେଲେ ଆପଣ?”

“ସୁଧା, ସେକଥା ମୁଁ ତତେ କହିପାରିବିନି । ତାମାନେ ନୁହେଁଯେ ମୁଁ ତତେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସକରୁନି । ତତେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସକରୁଛି ବୋଲିତ ନାଁଟା କହିଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦିବାକର ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ଯେତେ ପୃଣ୍ଡାକଲେ ବି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତଭାବେ ହୋଇଥିବା କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାକୁ ମୁଁ ଅସମ୍ମାନିତ କରିପାରିବିନି ।”

“ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି, ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ମତେ ନକହନ୍ତୁ । ଆପଣ ମହାନ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆପଣ ମୋ ଭାଇ । ଆଜ୍ଞା ଏବେ କୁହନ୍ତୁ, ଏ ଭଉଣୀଟା କଥା କେମିତି ମନେପଡିଗଲା ।”

“ସୁଧା, ମୁଁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି ଯେ, ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦର ସଭାନେତ୍ରୀ ପଦପାଇଁ ତୁ ନିର୍ବାଚନରେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀ ହୋ । ତତେ ତ ଏ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତରେ, ଏ ଗାଁରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଭଲପାଆନ୍ତି, ସମ୍ମାନକରନ୍ତି । ତାପରେ ତୋଭଳି ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଆଉ ଦୂରଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଏ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଭିତରେ କାହାର ନାହିଁ । ତୁ କାହିଁକି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀ ହେଉନୁ ?”

“ମୁଁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀ ହୋଇପାରିବିନି ରାଜୁଭାଇ ।”

“କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି ସୁଧା ?”

“ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଯାହାହେଲେବି ମୁଁ ଔଅପିଲା । ଟିକେବି ଅପମାନଜନକ କଥା ମତେ ବାଧିବ । ମତେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଭଲପାଇଲେବି ମୁଁ ଯାହା ଜାଣିଛି, ଏ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଭିତରେ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧାଧିକ ଲୋକ ଭଦ୍ରତାର ‘ଭ’ ଅକ୍ଷର ବି ଜାଣନ୍ତିନି । ପ୍ରଥମେ ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭଦ୍ରତା ବିଷୟରେ ସଚେତନ କରାଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛି, ଯେଉଁଟାକି ସଭାନେତ୍ରୀ ହୋଇ କରାଇପାରିବିନି । ହେଲେ ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଆପଣେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀ ହୋଇପାରନ୍ତେ ? ”

“ନା ସୁଧା, ଏବେ ମୋର କାମ ବହୁତ । ଦିବାକର ମଉସା ଦାମକୁ ଏମିତି ରଗାଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତିଯେ ଦାମ ତାର ନୁଆ ସଂଗଠନ ଗଢିସାରିଲାଣି । ଯଦିଓ ନିର୍ବାଚନଦିନଟା ଘୁଞ୍ଚିଲା, ହେଲେ ନିର୍ବାଚନର ଫଳାଫଳ ଯେମିତି କିଛି ଆଶାଜନକ ଜଣାପଡୁନି । ମୁଁ ତୋ’ଉପରେ ଆଶାକଲେ ଆସିଥିଲି । ଜାଣିଛୁ ସୁଧା, ଦିବାକର ମଉସା କାହିଁକି ଏମିତି କଲେ ।”

“କାହିଁକି ? ”

“ତାଙ୍କ ଔଆରୀ ମିନୁକୁ ସଭାନେତ୍ରୀ କରାଇବାକୁ ।”

“ମିନୁକୁ ! ହେଲେ ମିନୁଟା’ତ ସାନପିଲାଟା । ଏଇଜମା ଚାରିବର୍ଷହେଲା ବାହାହୋଇଛି । ପୁଣି କୋଳରେ ଛୁଆଟିଏ । ସିଏ ସଭାନେତ୍ରୀ ହୋଇ କଣକରିବ ? ”

“ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ତ ଦାମ, ଗଗନ ସବୁ ରାଗିଛନ୍ତି । ସୁଧା, ତୁ ଆଉଟିକେ ଭାବେ । ସୁମନ୍ତବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ବି ପଚାର । ମୁଁ କାଲି କଟକ ଯାଇଛି । ଚାରି, ପାଞ୍ଚଦିନ ପରେ ଫେରିବି । ଫେରିଲେ ପୁଣି ତୋ ସହିତ ଦେଖା ।”

ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଫେରିଗଲାପରେ ସୁଧାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୋଳମାଳ ହୋଇଗଲା । ପାଠପଢ଼ା ସେତିକିରେ ରହିଲା । ଏ ଗାଁ ଲୋକମାନେ ସତରେ କଣସେ ଭାବୁଛନ୍ତି । ଦାମ, ଗଗନ କେତେ ଭଲପିଲା । ସେମାନଙ୍କପାଇଁ ସୁଧାର ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାହାଘର ହୋଇଯାରିଲା । ନହେଲେ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ନଥିବାକୁ ଆଉ ବାପା ଅତି ସରଳିଆଲୋକ ହେବାକୁ ଗାଁଲୋକେ ଯେମିତି ଅତିବସିଲେଯେ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣଘରଝିଅ କେମିତି କରଣପୁଅକୁ ବାହାହେବ, ଏଇ ଦାମ, ଗଗନ ହିଁ ଏମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆଇନର ଭୟଦେଖାଇ, କେଶକରାଇବାର ଧମକଦେଇ ସୁଧା ଓ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କର ବିବାହ କରାଇଥିଲେ । ଦାମ ଓ ଗଗନଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଉଚ୍ଚଆଦର୍ଶ ଓ କର୍ମତତ୍ପର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନେ ଯଦି ଅଲଗା ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦ ଗଢିବେ, ତେବେ ପୁରୁଣା ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦର ଅଧୋପତନହିଁ ଅନିବାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଦିବାକର ମଉସା କଣ ଏତିକିବି ବୁଝିପାରୁନାହାନ୍ତି ? ତାପରେ ଯଦି ତାହିଲେ ମିନୁକୁ ସଭାନେତ୍ରୀ କରାଇବାକୁ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଏମିତି ଅନ୍ୟାୟକରିବା କଣ ଦରକାରଥିଲା ? ସୁଧା ଭାବିଲା, ଦିବାକର ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଇବ, ଦାମ ଓ ଗଗନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବୁଝାମଣା କରାଇବାକୁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେବ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଦିବାକର ମଉସାଙ୍କର କେତେଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ପୁରୁଣା ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପରତାର କାହାଣୀ ମନେପକାଇ ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ କହିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାକଲାନି ।

ଏ ଭିତରେ ସୁମନ୍ତ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଓ ଗାଁର ସେ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦ ବିଷୟ ନଭାବି ତା ପାଇଭେଟ୍ ଏମ୍.ଏ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ବିଷୟ ଭାବିବାକୁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଇଗଲେ । ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଚାରିଦିନପରେ ଫେରିଲେ ଓ ସୁଧାଠାରୁ “ନା” ଶୁଣି ମନଦୁଃଖକଲେ । ସୁଧା ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଶୁଣାଇଲା । ଛାତିଥରାଇ ଲମ୍ବାନିଃଶ୍ୱାସନେଇ କହିଲେ ରାଜୁଭାଇ “ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି । ଦେଖାଯାଉ, ଆମଭାଗ୍ୟରେ କଣଅଛି ।”

ସୁଧା କହିଲା, “ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦ ଯାହାବିହେଉ, ମୁଁଯେ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ଭାବେ ପାଇଲି, ସେଇହିଁ ମୋର ଖୁସି । କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଭାଇ କହି, ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଭଉଣୀ ହୋଇ ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ବଢ଼ାଇଦେଲିନିତ? ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଅଧିକ ମାୟା, ଅଧିକ ମୋହ ଓ ଅଧିକ ବନ୍ଧନରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଚିନ୍ତାର ମାତ୍ରା ବଢ଼ାଇଦେଲିନିତ?”

“ସୁଧା, ତୁ ସେମିତି କାହିଁକି କହୁଛୁ? ଏ ଅଳ୍ପଦିନର ଜୀବନକାଳ ଭିତରେ ତୋ ଭଳି ଭଉଣୀଟିଏ ତ ଜୀବନରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ମୋତିମାଳା ଭଳି । ସେ ଭଉଣୀର ମାୟା, ମୋହ, ବନ୍ଧନ ଓ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱରେ ତୁଟି ଅଛି, ଆନନ୍ଦ ଅଛି; ସେ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣାୟ ସୁଖ ଭରିରହିଛି । ପ୍ଲିଜ୍ ସୁଧା, ଆଉ କେବେ ସେମିତି କହିବୁନି ତୁ ।”

“ହେଲା ରାଜୁଭାଇ । ଆଉ କେବେ ସେମିତି କହିବିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ, ଏ ବି ସତକଥା ଯେ, ଆପଣଙ୍କଠାରୁ ମୁଁ କେବେ କିଛି ଚାହିଁବିନି । ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଯୌତୁକ ଚାହିଁବିନି କି ମୋତେ ରକ୍ଷାକରିବାର କୌଣସି ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ବି ଚାହିଁବିନି । ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଭାଇ ତାକି, ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଭାଇ ମାନି ଖୁସି ହେବି । ସେଥିରେ ଯଦି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟରେ ବଢ଼ାଇଦେଲି ତ ତେବେ ମୁଁ ଦୁଃଖିତ ।”

“ସୁଧା, ଭଉଣୀ କେବେ ‘ଦୁଃଖିତ’ କହେନି । ଭଉଣୀର ମାନହିଁ ତ ତା’ ର ଭାଇ । ମତେ ଭାଇ ତାକି ଯେଉଁ ସମ୍ମାନ ତୁ ଦେଇଛୁ, ତାର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ବହୁତ ବେଶି । ସେ ସମ୍ମାନର କରଜ ରହିଲା ମୋ ଉପରେ ।”

ରାଜୁଭାଇର ସ୍ନେହିଳ କଥାର ମୋହରେ ସୁଧା ସେମିତି ମୋହିତ ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା । ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହେଉନଥିଲା ସତରେ ସିଏ ତା ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ପାଇଛି । ସେହିଭଳି ମୋହାଞ୍ଜନୁ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ପଚାରିଦେଲା, “ହେଲେ ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ପଚାରିବି, ରାଗିବେନିତ?”

“ପଚାର ।”

“ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ମୁଁ ମଦପିଉଥିବା ଓ ବିତି, ସିଗାରେଟ୍ ପିଉଥିବା ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ବଡ଼ ଘୃଣାକରେ । ହେଲେ ମୋ ବଡ଼ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଘୃଣାକରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁନି ମୁଁ । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ମୋର ଗଭୀର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ । ତଥାପି ନିଜମନକୁ ସହଜ ଓ ଶାନ୍ତକରାଇବାପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁବି, ଆପଣ ମଦ୍ୟପ ନୁହଁତ? ଧୂଆଁ ପିଅନ୍ତିନିତ?”

ସୁଧାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନରେ ରାଜୁର ମୁହଁ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ହୋଇଆସିଲା ଓ ସେ ଚୁପ୍‌ରହିଲା । ସୁଧାର ହସହସ ମୁହଁରେ ବି ଯେମିତି ସହସ୍ର ବାଦଲ ଭାଙ୍ଗିହୋଇଗଲା । ରାଜୁ କହିଲା, “ସୁଧା, ତୁ ମତେ କ୍ଷମା କରିବୁ, ମୁଁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଯାଉଛି ।”

“ହେଲେ କାହିଁକି ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଆପଣତ ଏବେ ଆସିଲେ ? ତାମାନେ ଆପଣ କଣ ……… ”

“ହଁ ସୁଧା, ମୁଁ ବେଳେବେଳେ ସାମାଜିକ ଫଙ୍କ୍ସନ୍‌ରେ ମଦ୍ୟପାନକରେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତୋ ଘୃଣା ମୁଁ ସହିପାରିବିନି ।”

କିଛି ସମୟ ପୂର୍ବର ସେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ପରିବେଶଟି ହଠାତ୍ ବଦଳିଗଲା । ସୁଧାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଯେମିତି ଗୋଳମାଳ ହୋଇଗଲା । ରାଜୁଭାଇକୁ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେ ଯେ ବଡ଼ଭାଇର ଆସନରେ ବସାଇଆସିଥିଲା । ମନେମନେ କେତେ ପ୍ରଗଳ୍ଭା ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଇଚ୍ଛାକରୁଥିଲା ଯେ ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳର ସାଙ୍ଗ ସୁନି ଓ କୁମୁଦ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ବଡ଼ଭାଇମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଯେଉଁ ଫୁଟାଣିସବୁ ଦେଖାଉଥିଲେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେ ରାଜୁଭାଇ ବିଷୟରେ କହନ୍ତା । କଲେଜ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ୍‌ର ସାଙ୍ଗ ରେଣୁ ତା ଦୁଇଭାଇଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ରାକ୍ଷାବାନ୍ଧି, କେତେ ଉପହାର ନେଇଆସି ଯେମିତି ଖୁସିରେ ଉଛୁଳି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତନା କରୁଥିଲା, ସେବି ସେମିତି ରାଜୁଭାଇ ହାତରେ ରାକ୍ଷାବାନ୍ଧି ବର୍ତ୍ତନାକରନ୍ତା । ଭାଇ-ଭଉଣୀର ସମ୍ପର୍କକୁ ଏମିତି ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତାର ରୂପ ଦେଇଦିଅନ୍ତା ଯେ, ଜଣା ବି ପଡ଼ନ୍ତାନି ତା’ର ସତରେ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ନଥିଲା ବୋଲି । ଆଉ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କୁ କୁହନ୍ତା, “ଦେଖ, ମୋ ଭାଇ ତମକୁ ପୁନେଇଖାଇ ଚାକିବ ।” ହେଲେ, ଏ କଣ? ସଜାଇଥିବା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟି ତାର ଯେମିତି ବିକୃତ ହୋଇଉଠୁଥିଲା । ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଯେ ମଦ୍ୟପାନ କରୁଥିବେ, ଏକଥା ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିବାକୁ ତାକୁ କଷ୍ଟ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ରାଜୁଭାଇ ତଥାପି ଦୁଃଖୀ ଥିଲେ ଓ ସୁଧାକୁ ଚାହିଁବାକୁ ସାହସ କରୁନଥିଲେ । ସୁଧା କରୁଣକଣ୍ଠରେ ମିନତି କଲା, “ହେଲେ, ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଆପଣ କଣ ସାମାଜିକ ଫଙ୍କ୍ସନ୍‌ରେ ପିଆପିଇ କରିବା ଅଭ୍ୟାସଟା କମାଇପାରିବେନି ? ଧୂରେଧୂରେ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି, ଏ ଭଉଣୀଟା କଥା ମନେପକାଇ ମଦ୍ୟପାନ ଛାଡ଼ିପାରିବେନି ରାଜୁଭାଇ ?”

“ସୁଧା, ତୁ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଭିତରେ ଏମିତି ସବୁ ସର୍ତ୍ତ କାହିଁକି ରଖିବୁ? ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ କିଛିବି ପଶୁନି ।” ରାଜୁଭାଇ ସୁଧାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ନଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ।

ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଚାଲିଯିବାପରେ ସୁଧା ଯେମିତି ବାସ୍ତବଜଗତକୁ ଫେରିଆସିଲା । ସତରେ ତ ରାଜୁଭାଇ ତାର କେହିନୁହେଁ । ସୁଧା ତାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଏତେ କେମିତି ଆଶାକଲା ? ଏଇତ ପକ୍ଷର-କୋଟିଏ ଦିନ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ରାଜୁଭାଇକୁ ସେ ଜାଣିବି ନଥିଲା । ହଠାତ୍ ଏତେ ଭାତୁମୋହ ତାର ଜାଣିଉଠିଲା କାହିଁକି? ସେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଖୋଜୁଖୋଜୁ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ଉପଦେଶ ତାର ମନେପଡ଼ିଲା, “ସୁଧା, ତମେ ଟିକେ କଳ୍ପନାବିଳାସୀ ନହୋଇ ବାସ୍ତବଜଗତ ବିଷୟରେ ଭାବ, ଦୁନିଆକୁ ଚିହ୍ନି । ଏଠି କିଏ ବା କାହାର ? ଏଇ ଯେଉଁ ଗୌରକୁ ଏତେ ସ୍ନେହକରୁଛ, ପଦେ କରୁକଥା କହିଦିଅତ, ରମେଶଦାଦାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଯେମିତି ଝଗଡ଼ାକରୁଛି, ତମ ସହିତ ସେମିତି ଝଗଡ଼ାକରିବ । ଶତକଡ଼ା ଅନେଶତଭାଗ ଭଲହୋଇ, ଭଲକାମକରି ଗୋଟିଏଭାଗ ଯଦି ଖରାପ ହୋଇଗଲା, ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏଭାଗହିଁ ପରିଚୟର ପରିମାପକ ହୋଇରହିଯିବ । ମଣିଷମଣିଷର ସମ୍ପର୍କ କେବେ ଚିରସ୍ଥାୟୀ ନୁହେଁ, ସବୁବେଳେ କ୍ଷଣସ୍ଥାୟୀ । ରମେଶଦାଦା ଓ ଦିବାକର ମଉସା କ୍ଷୀର, ନୀର ଭଳି ବନ୍ଧୁ ଥିଲେ, ପୁଣି ଦେଖୁଛତ ତାଙ୍କ ବିବାଦ । ଏହି ଗୌର କଣ ଦିନେ ରମେଶଦାଦାଙ୍କର ପୋଷା ନଥିଲା । ଏମିତିକି ଦାମ ଓ ଗଗନବିତ ଏକଦା ଦିବାକର ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ସମର୍ଥନ କରୁଥିଲେ । ତେଣୁ ତମେ ଏ ଯେଉଁ ମଧ୍ୟସ୍ଥିହୋଇ ସମାଧାନ କରାଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛ, ସେଇଟା ବେକାର ପରିଶ୍ରମ । କାରଣ, ସମୟକ୍ରମେ ମଣିଷମଣିଷର ଆକ୍ରୋଷ ଧୂରେଧୂରେ କମିଯିବ, ସେମାନେ ପୁଣି ମିଶିଯିବେ । ଆଜିର ବନ୍ଧୁ କାଲିର ଶତ୍ରୁ ହୋଇଯିବ ଓ ଆଜିର ଶତ୍ରୁ କାଲିର ବନ୍ଧୁ ପାଲଟିଯିବ । ଏହାଛଡ଼ା ଆଉକିଛି ସମାଧାନ ନାହିଁ । ସମୟହିଁ ସବୁ ସମସ୍ୟାର କାରଣ ଓ ସମୟହିଁ ସବୁ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ ।”

ଏ ଘଟଣାର ଦୁଇଦିନପରେ ଗୌର ଆସି ଖବରଦେଲା ଯେ ଦାମ, ଗଗନ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ତାଙ୍କ ନୂଆସଂଗଠନ ବିଷୟରେ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ କରୁଥିଲେ ଓ ରାଜୁଭାଇବି ସେ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ରେ ସଂଗଠନର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟସୂଚୀ ବିଷୟରେ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ସୁଧା ଭାବିଥିଲା ରାଜୁଭାଇ ରାଗିଲେବି ତାକୁ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଦେଖାକରିବାକୁ ଆସିବେ । ହେଲେ ତାର ଭାବନା ମିଛରେ ପରିଣତହେଲା । ତାପରଦିନ ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ରିସେପ୍‌ବେଳେ ସେ ପୋଷ୍ଟଅଫିସ୍ ଯିବାବାଟରେ ହଠାତ୍ ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଭେଟହେଲା । ଯଦିଓ ରାଜୁଭାଇ ତାକୁ ଆତେଇଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ, ସୁଧା କିନ୍ତୁ ନ ସହିପାରି ପଚାରିଦେଲା, “ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଏଇକି ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଭଉଣୀପତି ସ୍ନେହ, ଭଉଣୀପତି ଯନ୍ ? ଆପଣ ଗାଁରେ ଥାଇ ଭଉଣୀକୁ ଦେଖାକରିବାକୁ ଆସିପାରିଲେନି ।” ସୁଧା ଆଉ କିଛି କହିପାରିଲାନି । ଦୁଃସ୍ତ ନିଜକୁ ସଂଯତ ନକରିଥିଲେ ସିଏ ସେ ରାସ୍ତାଟାରେ କାନ୍ଦିପକାଇଥାନ୍ତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଜୁଭାଇ କେମିତି ଏତେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁରହୋଇ କହିପାରିଲେ, “ସୁଧା, ସତ କହିବାକୁ ଗଲେ ତୋ ପାଖରେ ତ ମୋର କିଛି କାମନଥିଲା । ମୁଁ ଟିକେ ଅଲଗାବିଚାର ମଣିଷ । କାମନଥିଲେ ମୁଁ ଖାଲିରେ କାହାକୁ ଦେଖାକରିବାକୁ ଯାଏନି । ତାମାନେ ନୁହେଁଯେ ମୁଁ କାହାପ୍ରତି ଯନ୍‌ଶୀଳ ନୁହେଁ । ତୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଚଞ୍ଚଳହୋଇ ମତ କାହିଁକି ଦେଉ? ତାପରେ ତୁ ଯଦି ଆଶାକରୁଛୁ ଯେ ଜଣେ କେହି ତତେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଦେଖାକରିବାକୁ ଆସିବ ଓ ତୋ ସହିତ ସବୁବେଳେ

କଥାବାଣୀ କରିବ, ତେବେ ମୁଁ ସେ ପ୍ରକାରର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ନୁହେଁ ।” ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଯଦି ପ୍ରଥମ ବାକ୍ୟଟି କି ଶେଷ ବାକ୍ୟଟି ନ କହିଥାନ୍ତେ ତେବେ ସୁଧା ହୁଏତ ଥକା ଖେଳିଥାନ୍ତା, “କି ନୁଆ କଥାଟା କହିଲେ ଯେ ଆପଣ? କେହି କଣ ଜାଣିନି ଯେ ଏ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଅଲଗା ଅଲଗା ମଣିଷ ବୋଲି । ତା’ ପରେ ଯିଏ ଯାହାକୁ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରକରେ, ଯନ୍ତ୍ରର ଭାବନା ତ ମନକୁ ପରିଚାଳିତ କରିବ, ଦେଖାକରିବା ପାଇଁ ପାଖକୁ ଟାଣିଆଣିବ । ଆଉ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର କି ପ୍ରକାର କି?” କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଜୁଭାଇର ପ୍ରଥମ ଓ ଶେଷ ବାକ୍ୟ ଦୁଇଟି ଶୁଣିଲାପରେ ସୁଧାର ଆଉ କିଛି ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାହେଉନଥିଲା । ମଣିଷ କଣ ସତରେ ଏମିତି ବଦଳିପାରନ୍ତି । ଏଇତସେ ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଯିଏ କହିଥିଲେ, “ସୁଧା, ତତେ ଭଉଣୀରୂପେ ପାଇବାଟା ମୋପାଇଁ ସମ୍ମାନର ବିଷୟ ।” ଅଭିମାନରେ ସୁଧାର କଣ୍ଠସ୍ବର ଧରିଉଠିଥିଲା । ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ କହିଲା “ଠିକ୍‌ଅଛି, ରାଜୁଭାଇ, ଆପଣ ନିଜ ମନକଥା ଖୋଲିଯେ କହିଲେ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଅନେକ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ମୁଁଯେ ‘ଭାଇ’ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ଏତେ ମୋହାନ୍ତନ ହୋଇଗଲି, ସେଥିପାଇଁ କ୍ଷମାକରନ୍ତୁ । ମୋର ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଉପରେ କିଛିବି ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ । ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଯାହାଛାହୁଁ ତାହାକରନ୍ତୁ । ଯେତେଇଛା ସେତେ ମଦପିଅନ୍ତୁ । ମୋର ସେ ଭ୍ରାତୃମୋହ ଏହିଠାରେ ହିଁ ଶେଷକରି ମୁଁ ଯାଇଛି । ମୋତେ ଶେଷଥରପାଇଁ କ୍ଷମାକରିଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ଆପଣ ନ ଚାହିଁଲେ ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଆଉ କେବେ ଦେଖାକରିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିବିନି । ଏଇହିଁ ମୋର ଶପଥ ।” ଏତିକି କହି ଆଉ ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଆତଙ୍କୁ ନଚାହିଁ ସୁଧା ଏକମୁହାଁହୋଇ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ହୃଦୟହୀନ ଏକ ମଣିଷ ପାଖରେ ହୃଦୟର ଭାଷା କହି ଅପମାନିତ କାହିଁକି ବା ହେବ ?

ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଫେରି ସୁଧା ନିଜ ମନକୁ ବୁଝାଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକଲା । ରାଜୁଭାଇ ବିଷୟ ଯେତେଯେତେ ଭାବୁଥିଲା, ତା ମନରେ ସେତେ କଷ୍ଟ ହେଉଥିଲା । ରାଜୁଭାଇର ସ୍ନେହଳ କଥା ସବୁ ମନେପଡି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେ ସେ ହୁଏତ ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଭୁଲୁଥିଲା । ପୁଣି ଯେତେବେଳେ ରାଜୁଭାଇର ଶେଷକଥା ମନେପଡୁଥିଲା, ସେତେବେଳେ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଯେମିତି କହିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ, “ସୁଧା, ତୋ ପାଇଁ ମୋ ମନରେ କିଛି ବି ଭାବନା ନାହିଁ; ତୋ ସହିତ ମୋର କୌଣସି କାମବି ନାହିଁ; ତାପରେ ତୁ ଯଦି ଚାହୁଁଛୁ ଯେ ତୋର ଜଣେ ଭାଇ ଦରକାର, ଯିଏ କି ତୋ ପାଖକୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଆସୁଥିବ, ତେବେ ଆଉ କାହାକୁ ଭାଇ କର, କାରଣ ମୁଁ ସେ ପ୍ରକାରର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ନୁହେଁ ।” ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଶିକ୍ଷିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି; ତେଣୁ କଥାକୁ ହୁଏତ ଏମିତି ସିଧା ନକହି ବଙ୍କା କରି ଭଦ୍ରଭାବେ କହିଲେ । ରାଜୁଭାଇର କଥାର ମର୍ମକୁ ଏଭଳି ଅର୍ଥରେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବା ସମୟରେ ସୁଧା ବହୁତ ମର୍ମବେଦନା ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲା । ସିଏ ତ ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ସାଧାରଣ ମଣିଷଠାରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ବରେ ରଖୁଥିଲା । କେତେ ପବିତ୍ରମନରେ ତା’ ବଡ଼ଭାଇର ଆସନରେ ନେଇ ବସାଇଥିଲା । ମନତ ଏମିତି କଳାପଟା ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଇଚ୍ଛା ଯାହା ଲେଖିଦେବ, ପୁଣି ପୁରୁଣାଲେଖାକୁ ଲିଭାଇଦେଇ ନୁଆ କିଛି ଲେଖିଦେବ । ମନରେ ତ ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ସିଏ ଭାଇ ମାନିଲା, ତାକୁ ତ ଆଉ ବଦଳାଇ ପାରିବନି । ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଯଦି ତାକୁ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ଭଳି ବୁଝାଇ କହିଥାନ୍ତେ, ତା’କୁ ଏତେ ଖରାପ ଲାଗିନଥାନ୍ତା । ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ତ ସେ ଅଧିକାର ସିଏ ଦେଇଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନେହେଉଥିଲା ରାଜୁଭାଇ ହୁଏତ ତା’କୁ କେମିତି ବିଚାରୀ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାବି ସେମିତି କହିଲେ । ନହେଲେ ସେ ଏମିତି କାହିଁକି କହିଥାନ୍ତେ, “ତୁ ଯଦି ଆଶାକରୁଛୁ ଯେ ଜଣେ କେହି ତତେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଦେଖାକରିବାକୁ ଆସିବ ଓ ତୋ ସହିତ ସବୁବେଳେ କଥାବାଣୀ କରିବ, ତେବେ ମୁଁ ସେ ପ୍ରକାରର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ନୁହେଁ ।” ଏମିତି କଥା କଣ ଜଣେ ଭାଇ ତା ଭଉଣୀକୁ କହିପାରେ? ତାକୁ ସିଏ ଯଦି ଭଉଣୀ ଭାବିଥାନ୍ତେ, ତେବେ ତ କହିପାରିଥାନ୍ତେ, “ସୁଧା, ମୁଁ ଟିକେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଯାଇଥିଲି, ତା ମାନେ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ମୁଁ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାଳ ନୁହେଁ । ହୁଏତ ସମୟ ଅଭାବରୁ କି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ମୁଁ ତୋ ପାଖକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ନ ଆସିପାରେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ପନ୍ଦରଦିନରେ ନହେଲେ ବି ମାସକରେ ଅନ୍ଧତଃ ଥରେ ତୋତେ ଦେଖାକରିବାକୁ ଆସିବି ।” କିନ୍ତୁ ଏକଥା କହିବା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ରାଜୁଭାଇ କେତେ ପରକରି କଥାକହିଲେ ସତେ? ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ହୋଇ ଭଉଣୀକୁ ସେ ଏମିତି କହିପାରିଲେ ? ସୁଧା କଣ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ବୁଝେନି ଯେ ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଏମିତି କଟୁ ଶବ୍ଦ କହିବାକୁ ପଡିଲା । ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଏତିକି ବି ବୁଝିଲେନି ଯେ ସୁଧା ତା’ ର ସ୍ବାମୀ, ସଂସାର ଓ ସମାଜ ପାଇଁ ଥିବା କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟବୋଧ ଯେମିତି ବୁଝେ, ରାଜୁଭାଇର ଭଉଣୀ ହିସାବରେ ବି ତା’ ର ଅଧିକାର, ସୀମା ଓ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟବୋଧ ସେମିତି ବୁଝିପାରିବ । ରାଜୁଭାଇର ଏ ଯେ ଦୁଇଟା ରୂପ: ଗୋଟିଏ ସ୍ନେହଳ, ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ବେଶାତର; କେଉଁଟିକୁ ସତ, କେଉଁଟିକୁ ଅବା ମିଛ ଭାବିବ ସିଏ । ଜଣେ ଭଉଣୀର ଭାଇଠାରୁ ଏତିକିଟା ଆଶାକରିବା କଣ ଭୁଲ୍? ରାଜୁଭାଇର ଶେଷକଥା ମନେପକାଇ ଓ ନିଜର ଶପଥ ମନେପକାଇ ବିବେକ କହୁଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ସିଏ ଆଉ କେବେବି ଦେଖାକରିବନି କି ତାଙ୍କପାଖରୁ ଆଉ କେବେ କିଛି ଚାହିଁବନି । ରାଜୁଭାଇ ଉପରେ ତା’ ର କଣ ବା ଅଧିକାର ? ନିଜଛଡା ମଣିଷର କାହା ଉପରେ ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ । ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ବଦଳାଇବାର ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ବ୍ୟର୍ଥ ହେଲେ ନିଜକୁ ହିଁ ଖାପଖୁଆଇ ଚଳିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ, ପୁଣି ବେଳେବେଳେ ଅଶାନ୍ତମନ ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଝୁରୁଥିଲା, ରାଜୁଭାଇର ସେ ସ୍ନେହଳଭାଷାକୁ ମନେପକାଉଥିଲା ଓ “ଭାଇ, ଭାଇ” ଚାକି ଅଳି କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା । ଆଶା ଜାଗୁଥିଲା, ରାଜୁଭାଇ ସହିତ ତା’ର ଏ ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝାମଣା ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଦିନେ ଦୂର ହୋଇଯିବ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଏ ପବିତ୍ର, ମଧୁର ସମ୍ପର୍କ ପୁଣି ମଧୁରତର ହୋଇଯିବ । ସିଏ ପୁଣି ତାଙ୍କର ଗେହ୍ଲା ଭଉଣୀ ପାଲଟିଯିବ, ଆଉ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କର ପୁନେଇଁ ଖାଇବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ମଧ୍ୟ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଯିବ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁ ? ମାସେ ଦେଇମାସ ବିତିଗଲା ପରେ ବି ରାଜୁଭାଇର କିଛି ଖବର ନାହିଁ ; ସୁଧା ମଲା କି ଗଲା, ସୁଧା କଣ କରୁଛି, ସୁଧା ମନରେ କଣ ଭାବୁଛି, ରାଜୁଭାଇର କିଛି ଯେମିତି ଭାବନା ନାହିଁ । ଦିନ ଯେତେ ଯେତେ ବିତୁଥିଲା, ସୁଧାର ମନ ସେତେ ଅସ୍ଥିର ହେଉଥିଲା; ବିବେକ ଓ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ସେତେ ବଢୁଥିଲା । ମନ କହୁଥିଲା, “ରାଜୁଭାଇ ତ ତୋ ଭାଇ, ସିଏ ଯଦି ରାଗି ନ ଆସିଲେ, ତୁ ଗୌର ହାତରେ ଚିଠି ଦେଇ ତକେଇପା; ନହେଲେ ନିଜେ ଯାଇ ତାକି ଆଣେ । ରାଜୁଭାଇକୁ ପଚାର, ସିଏ କାହିଁକି ତୋତେ ସେମିତି କହିଲେ । ହୁଏତ ମନଭିତରେ କିଛି ଖରାପ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ନ ରଖି ବି କହିଥାଇପାରନ୍ତି; କି ତୁ ମଦ ପିଉଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କୁ ଘୃଣା କରୁ ବୋଲି କହିଲୁ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ କଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଥାଇପାରେ । ରାଜୁଭାଇକୁ ନିଜେ ଯାଇ ପଚାର ଓ ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝାମଣାର ଅଳସୁକୁ ଝାଡ଼ିଷ୍ଟି ପରିଷ୍କାର କରିଦେ । ରାଜୁଭାଇକୁ ବୁଝାଇ କହ ଯେ ତୁ ମଦ୍ୟପ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଘୃଣାକରୁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ମାନେ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ତୋ ବଡ଼ଭାଇକୁ ଘୃଣାକରିବୁ । ଯଦିଓ ‘ମଦ୍ୟପାନ ଛାଡ଼ିବାର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଯଦି ରାଜୁଭାଇ ତାଙ୍କ ସାନଭଉଣୀକୁ ବଡ଼ଭାଇର ଉପହାର ରୂପେ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ତାହାହିଁ ତୋ ପାଇଁ ଭାଇପାଖରୁ ସର୍ବଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ଉପହାର ହେବ ।” କିନ୍ତୁ ବିବେକ କହୁଥିଲା, “ଯେଉଁ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ମଦ ପିଏ, ପୁଣି ଭଉଣୀକୁ ବିଟପା ଓ ଲତର ଫ୍ରୀ ଭଳି ଭାବି ଏମିତି କରୁ ଭାଷା କହିପାରେ, ତାକୁ ଭାଇ ଆସନରେ ବସାଇହିଁ ଭୁଲ୍ କରିଛୁ ସୁଧା; ଭୁଲିଯା ସେ ଭାଇକୁ, ବଡ଼ଭାଇଟିଏ ବିନା ତ ପଇଟିରିଶ ବର୍ଷକାଳ କଟାଇଲୁ; କଣ ଦରକାର ଏମିତି ଏକ ହୃଦୟହୀନ ମଣିଷକୁ ହୃଦୟରେ ବସାଇବା ? ତାପରେ ତୁ ଯେ ଶପଥ କରିଛୁ । ରାଜୁଭାଇର ଚିକେ ବି ଯଦି ସ୍ନେହ ଥାଆନ୍ତା, ଦେଇମାସରେ ଥରେ ବି ତୋ କଥା ଭାବି ନ ଥାଆନ୍ତେ ? ସେଇଥିରୁ ହିଁ ରାଜୁଭାଇକୁ ବୁଝ । ତାପରେ ଭୁଲ୍‌ବୁଝାମଣା ଦୂର କରିବାର ଚାବିକାଠି ତ ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ଅଛି । ସିଏ ଯଦି ତୋତେ ଦେଖା କରିବାକୁ ଆସନ୍ତେ, ତୁ’ କଣ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଘରୁ ତଟି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ? କିନ୍ତୁ, ଅସଲ କଥା ହେଲା ରାଜୁଭାଇଙ୍କର ଖାତର ହିଁ ନାହିଁ । ମଦପିଇ ଭୁଲ୍, ଠିକ୍ ବିଚାର କରିବାର ଚେତନାଟା ତାଙ୍କର ବିକୃତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି ।”

ନା ! ନା ! ସିଏ ଆଉ ତା ନିଜଛଡ଼ା କାହାରି ବିଷୟ ଚିନ୍ତାକରିବନି । ରାଜୁଭାଇ କଥା ନୁହେଁ କି ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦ କଥା ନୁହେଁ । ଏ ନିର୍ବାଚନରେ ଯିଏବି ଏ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସଂସଦର ସଭାପତି ହେଉନା କାହିଁକି ସୁଧା ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡଖେଳାଇବନି । ଯଦି ନୁଆସଂସଦ ଗଢ଼ାହେବାଟା କାହାକୁ ଚିନ୍ତିତ କରାଉନି, ସେ କାହିଁକି ମିଛରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଦୁଃଖ ମନଭିତରକୁ ଆଣି ନିଜକୁ ହସ୍ତମନ୍ତ୍ର କରିବ । ନା ! ତାକୁ ଏ ମାୟା, ଏ ମୋହ, ଏ ବନ୍ଧନରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ବରେ ରହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ରାଜୁଭାଇର ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ହୃଦୟଭିତରେ ବଡ଼ଭାଇପାଇଁ ସାଇତାହୋଇଥିବା ସେ କୋଠରୀଟିରେ ବନ୍ଦକରି ସବୁଦିନପାଇଁ ଚାବି ପକାଇଦେବ । ରକ୍ତର ସମ୍ପର୍କ କଥା ଅଲଗା । ହେଲେ ମନର ସମ୍ପର୍କଟିଏ ଗଢ଼ିବାକୁ ହେଲେ କେତେ ସବୁ ଭାବନାର ସୋପାନକୁ ଅତିକମ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝାମଣା, ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସ, ସନ୍ଦେହ, ରାଗ, ଅଭିମାନର କେତେ କେତେ ସୋପାନ ସବୁ । ସ୍ନେହ ସହିତ ଏ ସବୁ ଭାବର ମିଶ୍ରିତ ଅନୁଭବ କେବଳ ଅନୁଭବୀ ହିଁ ବୁଝିପାରିବ । ହେଲେ ରାଜୁଭାଇର ମନ ଯଦି ତା ପ୍ରତି ସତରେ ବିଷାକ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି, ସେ ବା ଆଉ କଣ କରିପାରିବ? ତାପରେ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ତ ଆଉ ଏକତରଫ ଗଢ଼ିହେବନି । ତେଣୁ ରାଜୁଭାଇର ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ମନଭିତରେ ଖାଲି ଚାବିପକାଇ ସାଇତି ରଖିବା ଛଡ଼ା ସୁଧା’ର ଆଉ କିଛି କରିବାର ନାହିଁ । ଖୋଲିଲେ ତ ମୋହଲାଗିବ । ତେଣୁ ସେସବୁ ଚିନ୍ତା ନକରି ଦାମ, ଗଗନ ଓ ରମେଶଦାଦା ମିଶି ଯେଉଁ ମାସିକପତ୍ରିକା ଛପାଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି, ସେଥିରେ ସେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟକରିବ ଓ ରଜର ପ୍ରାଇଭିଲେଜ ସମୟରେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରତିଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦିତାର ପରିଚାଳନାର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଯଦି ତାକୁ ନେବାକୁ ହୁଏ, ସେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନେବାକୁ କୁଣ୍ଠିତ ହେବନାହିଁ । ଆଉ କାହାର ବିବାଦ, ଝଗଡ଼ା, ମନୋମାଳିନ୍ୟକୁ ନେଇ ସେ ଆଉ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ହେବନି କି କାହାଠାରୁ ଜୀବନରେ କିଛି ଚାହିଁବନି । ସତରେ ତ, ଜୀବନ ବଡ଼ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟାୟୀ, ସେମିତି ଜୀବନଭିତରେ ଗଢ଼ିଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ । ଆଉ ଏ ଆକର୍ଷଣ, ଏ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ, ଏ ମୋହ, ଏ ସନ୍ଦେହ, ସବୁକିଛି କ୍ଷଣିକ, ସମୟପୁଷ୍ପକର ପୃଷ୍ଠରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଧାତିମାତ୍ର । ଗୋଟିଏ ଧାତିରୁ ଆଉଗୋଟିଏ ଧାତି ଭିତରେ କେତେ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ; ଗୋଟିଏ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରୁ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ପୃଷ୍ଠା ଭିତରେ କାହାଣୀର ଅନେକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ । ଆଉ ସମୟ ! କେବଳ ସମୟହିଁ ସବୁର କାରଣ, ସେଇ ସମୟହିଁ ସବୁର ସମାଧାନ କରାଇପାରିବ । ସେଠି ସୁଧାର ଭୂମିକାର ତାତ୍ପର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବହୁତ କମ୍ ।

କେମିତି ଏକ ଦୃଢ଼ନିଷ୍ଠାନେଇ ସୁଧା ତା ପଢ଼ାଘରଭିତରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏମ୍.ଏ. କୋର୍ସର ସିଲାବସ୍ ସବୁ ଚେକ୍‌କରୁଥିଲା ।



ତକଟର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ ନିଜର ପତି ନରେଶ ଦାସ ଓ ତିନୋଟି ସନ୍ତତି ବାଗୁ, ମୃଣାଳୀ ଓ ଶାଶୁତୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ଅସମ୍ଭବ ରକ୍ଷାପ୍ରେମ ଦୂର୍ବଳତା । କଳ୍ପିତ ଗଳ୍ପ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଜୀବନର ସତ୍ୟତାକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର ଓ ଉପସ୍ଥାପିତ କରିବାହିଁ ଲେଖକାଙ୍କର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ।

## The bird in the sky



As I was looking in the sky one day,  
Something flew in a steady curve.  
It landed on a tree to stay,  
The thing I saw was a bird.

I looked at the bird as it flew.  
It was tiny but fast.  
With the colors of green, blue, and golden too.  
It was the bird I saw in the sky.

It darted across flowers a lot,  
It flew around endlessly,  
Still, in flower vines, it never got caught.  
It was the bird I saw in the sky.

I figured it was a hummingbird  
But, I had to go home to make some curd.  
I turned around to wave good-bye,  
To the bird I saw in the sky.



*Prerana Pradhan, a student of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade is the daughter of Chandana and Padmanava Pradhan of Charlottesville, Virginia.*

## My Love of Computers

(Sing To the Tune of Yankee Doodle)

I go on computers everyday, they keep me very busy.

I go on them so very much, the screen can make me dizzy.

I can go on PowerPoint all day, Microsoft Word as well

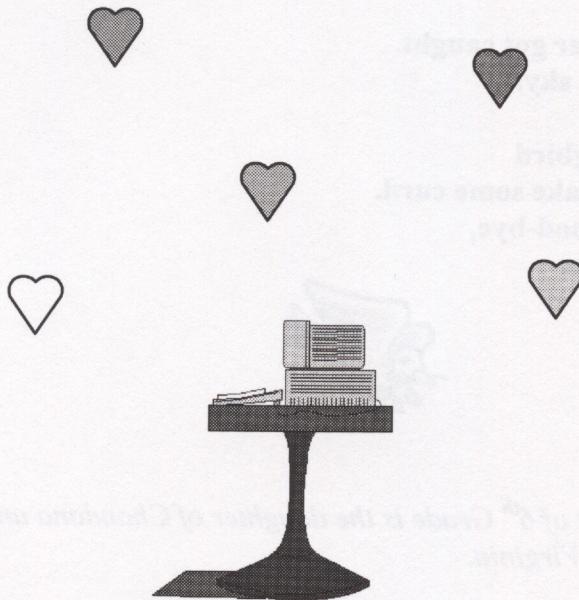
As you can see right now, I almost dwell in Dell.

Hyper-Studio is a weakness, but I don't really care,

I can learn it easily and it won't cost me a fare.

Any program I can't do, I can easily learn,

All I have to do is read a book, if I really yearn.



*Sanjay Misra is 11 years old and lives in North Wales, Pennsylvania. He loves sports and plays bass for two orchestras.*

## A Tale of Two Worlds

This is the best of times, and the worst of times, a world of good and beauty, and an abode of evil and despair. Some say that the world is progressing and becoming better and more civilized as time passes, while others denounce the progress and condemn the world to destruction. Some wallow in deceit and greed, while others ennoble themselves through empathy and selflessness. Miracles and catastrophes happen in the same year, lives are born while lives are lost. Darkness and Light bloom alike and slightly gray in humankind, a race inherently double-sided in its nature.

Into this twofold world I was born, bringing along my share of doubling. I have two names, “Abhisek” and “Chandan.” I have two different personalities, one that cares so much about others, and another intensely self-centered. I have two groups of friends, one that goes with the popular flow of things (“cool” clothes, events, and talk) and strives for popularity and prepackaged happiness, and the other that rebels against the status quo and enjoys things like Anime and other “alternative” forms of fun. In addition to this two-sided present, I have two possible futures, as a lawyer or as a doctor. But most importantly, I have two pasts, two heritages, and two cultures.

On one side, I have my Indian heritage, a way of life that stretches back thousands of years and still continues today in the great nation of India, a land full of two sides. More specifically, despite what others might say or not know, I am an Oriya, a member of an ethnic group that lives in the state of Orissa in eastern India. Orissa is known for its great poverty and low level of industrialization. However, Orissa is also known for its calm and quiet people, strong religious background, and hard working population. It is important to remember the second part, for we, as Oriyas are a people, not an economy. Here in America, our past, present, and future live on in the OSA, where I can preserve who I am by being with others of my people, all the aunts and uncles and *bhais* and *apas*.

Then, on the flip side, I am arguably part American. For though I was born an Indian citizen, and will probably remain so for the rest of my life, I have grown up in this nation for most of my life, and have been irrevocably affected by it. I speak English with little or no accent, live in the archetypal American suburban house, wear mainly American clothes, go to an American school, and watch American TV. In addition to my Oriya quasi-relatives, I am friends with many Americans, who themselves are of many backgrounds (European, Chinese, African, Latino, etc.). I will live in America for the rest of my life.

From these two seemingly opposite backgrounds, I strive to reconcile my life and fuse them into something new and wonderful. I wake up in an Indian house, go downstairs past the stately gods of my religion, off to an American school. There, I hang out with my friends and eat American food. I go home and have Indian food for dinner, and sometimes visit or have visits from other Indians. I go to Chinmaya Mission and learn about Hinduism and chant *slokas* and *bhajans* in Sanskrit, then the next day, sing

Christian gospel music in Chorus. A friend takes me out to a 50s-era restaurant by the mall and I, in turn take his family out to the best Indian restaurant in the area.

However, the life of an "Indian-American" is not as easy as that. Sometimes, and more frequently in the turbulent period known as adolescence, they can clash with occasionally nasty results. I feel as if I am on a white bridge walking towards my destiny in life. On my right is the orange and green, on my left the red and blue. Both sides have many flowers, of which I pluck many and adorn myself. Also, both sides have monsters in the form of books, TV, and most importantly, people. The red and blue ones, more numerous yet less noisy, exhort me to join them, drop my orange and green and embrace their side, drown myself completely in their world like many before me. On the other side are some sinister zealots, old and young, few in number but poisonous in their attacks and more effective in the fact that they are closer to who I am. They scream at me to go back to them and immerse myself in mango and plantain, to not walk on. When I refuse them, they accuse me of betraying them with words and ways I have never used, and say that I am not worthy of the beautiful orange and green that emblazons my soul.

To these nightmares that plague my journey in defining who I am, I say, "I am all the colors of the rainbow." To the strictly red and blue beasts I say that they must accept me for who I am, and to look beyond their narrow minds. With the demons in ultra-conservative orange and green, it is a harder fight, as they resemble me far more so than the previous monsters. However, they attack and I must defend. I tell them, "Yes, I am proud of who I am but not so arrogant like you". I remind them that in this world of change, one cannot obstinately be one type, but must open their eyes to other viewpoints and accept the truth. I will not turn into *American Desi's* "Kris" Reddy, but neither will I regress into a cultural box that never opens.

With this philosophy and defense, I must walk along my path with others like me towards my destiny. There is no guidebook yet to this unique journey, and it may be up to someone like me to write it, a deed far, far better than I have ever done. However, for now I must stay who I am, and shepherd others like me along. To them I say, listen not to the monsters on both sides. Strive ahead, ignore their assaults and you will be the stronger. Take the best from both lands, and be proud of who you are in the two worlds you reside in. In your twofold life you are one, for two worlds do not have to war, but can reconcile in a yin-yang-like balance. It is not the nature of colors to only look good by themselves, but to enhance others and mix in a beautiful work of art. At the end of the journey, it will not matter who we were based on nationality, religion, or culture, as we all go to the same place after our stay on Earth is done. It will matter what we did, and who we were as a human.

---

*Abhisek Chandan Khandai is 15 years old and is a freshman in high school. He loves music, drama, poetry and painting. He is an Illinois State spelling bee finalist and North South Foundation National vocabulary championship third place winner.*

## Beauty

Beauty is important because this quality makes one feel peaceful. In society, it helps in making friends. Everybody has beauty in them to help others. The beauty in heart leads to kindness and love for others.

The most important kind of beauty is the beauty inside of a person. Someone may be beautiful on the outside and ugly and mean on the inside. Someone may be ugly on the outside and beautiful and kind on the inside.

Beauty is not always in a person. This quality is also in arts, music, and flowers. The beauty in music is the melody, the rhythm, and the sound. The composer has beauty in mind to compose such a song. The beauty in arts is the beauty in the artist's hand, the way he strokes the brush. Flowers have beauty with their beautiful colors, shapes, and sizes.

Beauty is everywhere. Some places and some people might look like they have no beauty in them, but if you look closely enough you will find beauty in everyone and everything.



*Ankita Mohanty, a 6th grade student is daughter of Dillip and Rita Mohanty from Mt. Pleasant, MI.*

## Flowers

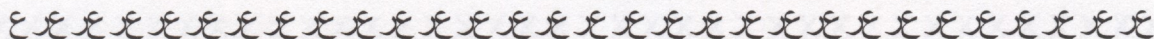
Flowers are beautiful  
You smell them  
And give them to your loved ones  
Flowers grow in your favorite colors  
Like blue, red, orange and purple  
You are like a flower  
They grow just like you.

***Shaswati** is a first grader in Guilford Elementary School and is the daughter of Naresh and Bigyani Das Of Columbia, MD. Shashwati is a student of Odissi Dance School Nrityalaya and Gymnastic Plus of Columbia, MD. She was inspired to write this poem just by observing her sisters.*



## THE BEACH

The beach's waves are usually quiet  
They will never cause a riot  
The dolphins and fish play like a child  
They certainly are very, very wild  
And the gloomy sharks creep behind  
The school of fish starts to wind  
And as the sun starts to set  
All the children come draping wet  
And everyone will start to weep  
Because the love of the ocean they will keep



**Swagateeka Panigrahy** is the daughter of **Surya Narayan Panigrahy** and **Minakshi Panigrahy**



## Why I Enjoy Going to OSA Conventions

Last year we attended the OSA convention after a long time. I'm really glad we went to the convention, which was in Nashville. The hotel, located in a colorful part of the city, had a fine ambience with lighting and decorations.

I especially liked meeting the other Oriya kids from around the United States. It is a very unique experience to meet new people with similar backgrounds. I also saw families of other people that I hadn't seen for a long time. It was quite interesting to see how many and how much people had changed since I'd last seen them.

I find it funny when you go to the conventions because eventually you can find some way that you're related to almost everyone. You meet a perfect stranger in the lobby, your parents begin a conversation, and in five minutes they trace their common relatives. And suddenly you have three or four new cousins, distant though they may be, and a new family relationship begins.

The cultural programs at the convention are also a big highlight, because how often do you get to see a group of people get together and show off their talents? The dances that the kids do and the songs they sing are always so cute and fun to watch. When I have children I'm going to take them to OSA and hope they find it as enjoyable as I have. I'm really looking forward to going to Chicago in July for OSA and I hope it's as fun as it was last year.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

*Jeeta Mahapatra is 14 years old and just completed her freshman year in high school. She is the daughter of Lakshmi and Meenakshi Mahapatra.*

## My Little Girl!

My little girl!

I think about you  
    When I wake up  
I think about you  
    When I go to work  
I rush from work  
    And pick you up.

When I play with you  
    I feel relaxed  
When I dance with you  
    I feel young  
When you do something new  
    I feel proud.

You are so cute  
    You talk so sweet  
I know you are naughty  
    But I don't mind it  
I wonder about your energy  
    Where do you get it?

When you follow me all over the house  
    Sometimes I get upset with you  
But somewhere in the deep corner  
    Of my heart, I enjoy it too.

I love watching you  
    Running on the ground  
My sweetie, just be careful  
    Please don't fall down.

You are so cute  
    You are so wise  
You are adorable  
    You are bright!

When you grow up I know  
    You will be a smart bold lady  
No matter whether  
    You are two or seventy  
You will always be  
    My little girl, my sweetie!

*Sabita Panigrahi lives in Toronto with her husband Gagan and two children Soman and Ineka.*

# ସ୍ବାଭିମାନ

ମଧୁସ୍ମିତା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ

ଶାଶୁତର ସନ୍ଧାନରେ  
ବିବସ୍ଥାନକୁ ଅନୁସରି  
(ସେ) ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲେ  
ମନର ଅସୀମ ଶକ୍ତିକୁ ନେଇ...

ବିବେକୀ ପ୍ରାଣର ଆୟତ୍ତ ଭିତରେ  
ସ୍ବାଭିମାନକୁ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖି  
ଭୁଲ୍ ଆଉ ଠିକ୍ ବାଞ୍ଛିବାର  
ଅଭ୍ୟାସରେ ପୀଡ଼ିତ ହୋଇ  
ଚିନ୍ତାର କୁହେଳି ମଧ୍ୟରେ  
ଭବୁତୁକୁ ହେବାରେ ତା ଆନନ୍ଦ ।

ତୋଷାମୟ କରିବାର କଳାକୁ  
ସମାଲୋଚନା କରି  
ଲଭିଥିବା ଆନନ୍ଦ ଟିକକକୁ  
କ୍ଷତବିକ୍ଷତ କରିଦିଏ  
ପ୍ରିୟା-ପ୍ରୀତି-ତୋଷଣର  
ତୀକ୍ଷଣ ସେପଣାସୁ ।

ନୀତିନିୟମର ଶରାବଳୀକୁ  
ଉପେକ୍ଷା କରି  
ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଥିବା ଜନସମୂହକୁ  
ରୋକିବାର ପଡ଼େଷ୍ଟର  
ସେ ସତତ ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ ।  
ମଣିଷପଣିଆ ଟିକୁ

ଧରି ରଖିବା ଲାଗି  
ହୃଦୟ ତା ଝରିତ ।

ଅନେକେ ଭାବନ୍ତି-  
ଯୋଷା ଶୁଆ ହୋଇ  
ପଞ୍ଜୁରିରେ ବନ୍ଦୀ ପଡ଼ି  
ସେମାନେ ପହଞ୍ଚନ୍ତି  
ସଫଳତାର ପ୍ରଥମ ପାବଛରେ;  
ତା ପାଇଁ ତାହେଲେ  
ସେ ପାବଛ ଅପହଞ୍ଚ ।

ତା ଆତ୍ମାର ତାଙ୍କ ଏ ସବୁରୁ ଭିନ୍ନ  
ତଳୁ ଉପର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ  
ସ୍ବାଭିମାନରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୋଇ  
ସେ ତ ଆତ୍ମବଳୀ  
ନିଜ ଶକ୍ତିରେ, ନିଜ ଦୃଢ଼ତାରେ,  
ସେ ସେ ତେଜୀୟାନ ।

ଅନ୍ୟର 'ହୁ' ରେ 'ହୁ' ମିଳାଇ  
କରେ ନାହିଁ ଅତିକ୍ରମ  
ସୋପାନରୁ ସୋପାନ...  
ମେରୁଦଣ୍ଡୀ ମଣିଷ ସେ  
ତା ବିଚାର, ତା ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ  
ସେ ସବୁ ତା ହୃଦୟର  
ଅମୋଘ ଆହ୍ୱାନ ।

Madhusmita Acharya lives in Toronto with her husband, Ashok, and daughters, Pratyasha and Prateechi.

## Cranes at pre-dawn

From the last of darkness  
That surrounds a nearby tree  
A flight of white cranes  
Open their wings  
And begin to fly

As though  
The petals of a huge lily  
Freeing themselves  
From the bondage of flower

Now, up in the blank page  
Of the sky  
They look like the writing of a preface  
To the great poetry of dawn

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**RAJU SAMAL** graduated in English from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and is now a Regional Manager with the New India Assurance Company, Bhubaneswar, Orissa. He has published three books of poems. Delicate, haiku-like, and cryptic in style, most of his poems surprise us with an end-twist or a most unusual metaphor.

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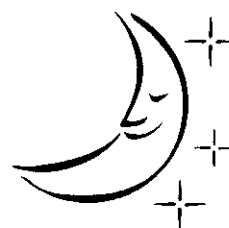
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## The Wind

Softly speaking,  
Into your ear,  
The hush-hush voice,  
Breathing near.

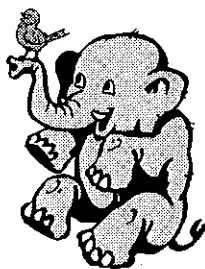
Singing and humming,  
Beckoning to you,  
Flying beside you,  
Like a friend forever true.



## The Moon

The moon,  
It radiates its glow,  
Us watching far  
below.  
Giving us light,  
Happiness, and love,  
From far, far above.

*Poems by Nilu Rath*



## Friends

Friends are there,  
When you need them the most,  
Friends say they're sorry,  
When they boast.

Friends help each other,  
Through dark and light,  
Friends make you keep trying,  
With all their might.

## **I am Unique**

I am Unique  
Mrunali is my name  
Mrunali, the Goddess of Wealth  
And the Lotus Bud of Fame

Marvelous  
Respectful  
Unique  
Nice  
Ambitious  
Loving  
Intelligent  
And that's me,  
The unique **MRUNALI**.

Creative, Imaginative, Caring, Friendly  
Sister of Bagmi and Shashwati,  
Lover of parents, puppies, sisters,  
Who gives happiness, respect, love.  
Who needs freedom, fresh air, water;  
Who wants love, respect, books;  
Who would like to see  
The Eiffel tower, Italy, Paris  
And that's me  
A girl that's friendly.  
I am unique

**Mrunali Das** is a Gifted Talented 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader (will enter 4<sup>th</sup> Grade) in Guilford Elementary School, Columbia, MD and is the daughter of Naresh and Bigyani Das. She is a student of Odissi dance school Nrityalaya and is a member of Soccer Association of Columbia.

## An Ending? Or a Beginning...

As the 2000-2001 school year comes to an end, I begin to realize how little of my high school career remains. My freshman and sophomore years seem to have flown by without my taking many glances back.

Most people say their last two years of high school were the most memorable of the four. There could be a number of reasons for this. One big issue could be the formals, for those who didn't attend any during their freshman and sophomore year.

Prom is an exciting experience for most teenagers. Personally, I am looking forward to it next May because it will be my junior prom. Everything from the theme to the food and the decorations will be designed by us to make it a beautiful success.

Another topic that comes up throughout the year is college. Many students have already received or are receiving information from various universities all over the United States. We will most likely be touring and visiting campuses sometime before the end of our junior year. This will probably be the most stressful of all the activities of our junior year.

During the senior year we try to complete all the goals put off for a while, to renew old friendships and make tons of new friends, so we have memories to hold on to upon entering college. By this time, we know what college we plan to attend and what our major will be. We also look back upon family, teachers, friends, and other people who have made a difference, no matter how little, in our life.

Those last two years are also a beginning in life. Some look at it as a door to the "real world," while others see it as a transitional stage that could help you make some important decisions in life.

Although these final years of high school may prove stressful and nerve-racking, they are a time of retrospection and introspection, a time of completion and initiation, loss and gain. On graduation day, I hope to take into college, cherished memories of those "elementary years" of life.



*Smita Mahapatra is the 15-year old daughter of Lakshmi and Meenakshi Mahapatra of Vincennes, Indiana.*

## Random Thoughts for an Er-in-Law School

"These mothers-in-law: no matter whose mother-in-law they are, and how nice they are otherwise, why do they suck as mothers-in-law?" Years ago, a friend had wondered once. I had no immediate insight. But the question has bugged me since. I remember what my own mother-in-law had exclaimed in fond memory of her mother-in-law. "It is very hard being a mother-in-law; my mother-in-law was good at it, and I don't know if I can be as good!" I had found it surprising coming from someone as confident as her, who had, time and again, proved that she was better than anybody at any job. Maybe mothering-in-law is hard. Unlike mothering, for which there are books, classes, and support groups, poor mothers-in-law are left alone to do their mothering-in-law without any training or support. Also, while a daughter may wait until her teen-age years to find fault with her mother's mothering, a daughter-in-law may be much quicker to find fault with her mother-in-law. The role of the mother-in-law in a joint-family is significantly different from her role in a nuclear family. While more and more South Asian families today are shifting toward a nuclear model, mothers-in-law are not being adequately prepared for it.

Therefore, there seems to be a need for a mother-in-law prep school. Perhaps I should wait for my daughter-in-law to arrive before deciding on the exact curriculum for such a school. But not knowing how long I would live after my daughter-in-law has had a chance to decide whether I pass or fail at my mothering-in-law, I have decided to give it a head start now based on observations made by other people's daughters-in-law.

Also, how can I be sure that when I become a mother-in-law, I won't change my mind to work instead on a prep school for daughters-in-law? Actually, just like cute little babies can grow into heart-burning, sleep-depriving teens, timid daughters-in-law may grow into terrorizing mothers-in-law. So it may not be a bad idea for both daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law to go to the same prep school for all ers-in-law as long as the classrooms allow only one in-law per family.

Perhaps the basic belief of the prep school could be something like this: *We believe that all ers-in-law can learn to be loving and caring toward one another.* The mission statement could be something like this: *Our mission is to help women learn to develop friendships with their ers-in-law.*

And what are some of the topics that may be incorporated into the curriculum of the er-in-law prep school? The following basic points come to mind. I invite the readers to make other suggestions.

**Who is in charge where?** In the laws of the land, jurisdictions are usually quite clear. In the work place, departments and administrative units and their boundaries are well defined. But, in the unwritten and changing laws of the household, there seem to be frequent confusions about jurisdictions resulting in collision and injury. For example, if the ers-in-law live under the same roof, who is in charge of the primary activities of the area under that roof? The answer seems simple for nuclear families, because only one er-in-law is a permanent resident and others

would be visiting, living temporarily under the roof. Therefore, logically, the permanent resident (moth or daughter) er-in-law should have the jurisdiction. She should be in charge and her responsibility should include decision making for the household, as well as hospitality toward the visiting er-in-law. But in practice, it seems that many mothers-in-law behave like visiting circuit court judges, assuming decision-making roles as they visit their sons' nuclear homes. This practice often leads to problems. Another common problem is that the er-in-law in charge ignores her hospitality duties toward the visiting er-in-law, and even worse, expects the visiting er-in-law to take charge of hospitality toward the permanent er-in-law. This can be a silent call for war. In a joint-family, where there are multiple permanent resident ers-in-law, usually there is an invisible implicit org chart that the newest daughter-in-law figures out slowly through observation and guessing. The resident ers-in-law could make the org chart explicit and help the new daughter-in-law get oriented.

**Who is married to whom?** You are married to your husband. Your son to your daughter-in-law. Your mother-in-law to your father-in-law. You are not married to your son. Your husband is not married to his mother. Simple and clear, right? Not! While clarity is usually maintained in the sleeping arrangements, confusion seems to prevail in other aspects of life in problematic families, such as, mother and son spending more free time together than wife and husband, mother and son making more decisions together than wife and husband, mother and son having bank accounts together instead of wife and husband, mother and son going to more places together than wife and husband. Healthy families show lifelong friendship

between wife and husband. I have seen that wife's lack of friendship with her husband sometimes manifests in her forming an unusual bond with her son which in turn stands in the way of her son's developing friendship with his wife. Thus, the first step to being a good mother-in-law often starts with having a good fulfilling marriage.

**Fear of losing a son.** Mothers-in-law often have fear of losing their influence over their son to their daughter-in-law. This fear brings in rivalry and makes friendship with the daughter-in-law impossible. But by the time your son is ready to marry, he should be able to live by himself, take care of himself, including the basic cooking, cleaning, shopping etc. But more importantly, he should be able to make decisions on his own without your help. In other words, you should not have any influence on his daily life. You should have nothing to lose to your daughter-in-law. Sure, your son may come to you every now and then to enjoy your fantastic cooking or his childhood memories. But he should be able to live on his own in case you suddenly drop dead. Ancient India had a wonderful stage of life called *Vanaprastha*. When children were educated and able to earn a living and start a nuclear family of their own, parents detached themselves from the children and traveled in quest of spiritual wisdom and peace. But somewhere along the line, Indians abandoned this nice system, and instead, concentrated on building joint family empires and ruling them into old age. With build-up of power and attachment to it, came the fear of its loss and efforts to protect it. I am a strong advocate of the old *Vanaprastha* idea and reinterpreting it for modern times. Another fear women have is that the son may not support his parents financially or

may not take care of them when they are old and unable to take care of themselves. This is a valid fear, and is a real problem if the family is so dependent on the son. At the same time it is important to remember that a man has the financial responsibility for his own children and not for his siblings. South Asian men with good relationships with their families do help their parents and siblings to the best of their abilities. If your son has strong feelings for you, and plenty of money, his chances of helping are more if you get along with his wife than if you do not. Therefore, try not to let the fear stand in your way of making friendship with your daughter-in-law.

**Fear of losing family traditions.** Another common fear you may experience as a new mother-in-law is the fear of losing family practices and traditions. The daughter-in-law may bring new traditions with her from her natal family and may want to follow them instead of (or in addition to) your family traditions. Get to know your daughter-in-law before trying to convert her. Find out her likes and dislikes. Share family traditions with her but don't impose them on her. Let her share her natal family traditions with you and who knows you may enjoy those too. Let her see the values of your family traditions by enjoying them. Give her the time to make the new traditions part of her life. If your son values the traditions, your daughter-in-law is likely to make an effort to adopt them and incorporate them into her nuclear family. People do what is enjoyable and avoid what feels like a punishment. Try making the traditions enjoyable for the whole family and especially not a punishment for anyone.

**Daughter-in-law treated as a legal immigrant and not as an illegal alien.**

Because of the patrilineal nature of South Asian families, in a way, daughters-in-law migrate from their natal families to their affinal families where they become new members (are reborn) and a formal transfer of location occurs, symbolized by the new family name they assume. This is somewhat like you leaving your country and becoming an immigrant and eventually a naturalized citizen in another country. It is just as difficult as settling down in a new country with different customs, traditions, expression styles, and rules. It takes time to adjust to the new family. A young bride may go through various stages before accepting your home as her home. First, a honeymoon stage, where the newness feels enjoyable but unreal with a feeling that it will not last. Then comes a period when one misses home terribly. Then, slowly the bride gets used to the fact that it is her new home whether she likes it or not and tries to use humor to accept things that are different. Finally, years later, true understanding and appreciation develops and one calls the new family her home. Expecting overnight adjustment is unrealistic and can only cause unhappiness. And just as an immigrant cannot cut off his relationship with his country of birth, a daughter-in-law cannot cut off her relationship with her natal family. This expectation is asking for trouble. The more hospitable you are as a mother-in-law, and the friendlier you are to the bride's natal family, easier is the transition on the part of the daughter-in-law and happier the whole family. Under no circumstances should a daughter-in-law be treated like an illegal alien, with reduced rights or benefits, or with threat to deportation to her natal family, which she left for good according to the patrilineal system.

**Self-esteem and self-care.** When you feel good about yourself, you wouldn't have a need to make your er-in-law look bad in comparison. When you value yourself as a person, you will be able to value others for who they are and not for their circumstances. Self-care is not selfishness. It is an essential part of life. If you are not well you cannot take care of others. Self-care means assuming responsibility for yourself and being independent from others for your happiness. When you are happy with yourself and independent you will have less need to depend on your er-in-law for your state of mind.

**Non-Competitiveness.** Today's society values competition. Competition with others can give one the drive to succeed in business and produce better consumer goods. But competition between family members can only bring unhappiness to the family. Especially, when two ers-in-law compete for attention from the same man they both love, home can become hell. It is important for the daughter-in-law to remember that her mother-in-law will always be the first woman in her husband's life. She is the one who nurtured him to life and raised him to be a man. You must honor that special relationship and know that you will never be like her or replace her in his life. Try to get to know her as a person. What does she like? What does she dislike? You must also remember that your mother-in-law is not your mother. She will not have the same feelings for you as she has for her daughters. She did not see you grow up. You will not have the same feelings for her as you have for your mother. It will take both of you a long time to develop feelings of love for each other. Closing doors on each other prematurely will prevent this friendship from developing. Hard feelings for his mother

on your part can stand between your husband and you. It is important for the mother-in-law to remember that her grown son needs his wife as his partner more than he needs his mother. She may not do things the way you would but it doesn't matter that much in the long run. Your son and your daughter-in-law have to figure it out for themselves how they want to live their life together. You must learn to let go. When both ers-in-law honor and respect each other's positions in the life of the man they both love, and not compete with each other for his affection, they will notice that the man they love is capable of loving both in different ways.

**Assertiveness and effective communication.** When you can express your opinions, needs, and desires without imposing them on or sacrificing them for your er-in-law, you will be happier. When you are able to listen to your er-in-law with empathy, you are opening doors to friendship and family happiness. It is unlikely that your er-in-law and you will see eye to eye. Even your sister and you probably disagree on many things. Disagreeing is only a natural and human expression of individual differences among people. Disagreements can be expressed and accepted with respect and grace without hurting one's feelings. There is potential of friendship between ers-in-law, based on their common experiences related to their womanhood. This potential often remains undiscovered due to lack of communication and fear of loss. When you use mind reading, guesswork, and symbolic gestures without use of direct conversation for communication, you are risking misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

**Compliments rather than criticism.**

Compliments are easy ways to win friendships and criticisms are sure ways to lose them. Learn what to say or not say to minimize hurt feelings.

**Problem solving and conflict resolution.**

Being able to determine whose problem it is, and if it is your problem, learning to take effective steps toward initiating a solution can help prevent problems from escalating to tear families apart. If your son and daughter-in-law have a problem you can leave it to them to work it out. If your husband and mother-in-law have a problem, you can leave it to them to work it out. Most likely your intervention will not help. It might hurt. No need to make it your problem. If you and your er-in-law have a problem, it is better to talk to her directly about it and not to your son (husband). A third party intervention may be unnecessary and may hurt instead of helping.

**Keep money and employment out of relationships.**

Any monetary expectation in any form is a killer. Don't touch dowries even with a nine-foot long pole. It creates a problem to begin with. Your daughter-in-law, if educated, can earn more than what her father can provide as dowry. If in spite of your request, the daughter-in-law brings in substantial gifts, honor those as her sole property, because they are. Dividing the household chores between all residing family members including the visiting er-in-law is healthy as it brings unity and harmony. But expecting the er-in-law to bear the burden of most household work or most baby-sitting makes it unpaid work and brings resentment and unhappiness.

**Learning to leave your past behind.**

If you suffered in the hands of your mother-in-law, your daughter-in-law need not pay for it. You don't have to repeat what you did not like.

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# ଭୀବନ

ଚକ୍ରର ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର, ସିଲ୍‌ସ୍ପ୍ରିଙ୍ଗ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

## ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳ:

ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ, ନିରାଶ  
ନିଃସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମାନ  
ଛନହୀନ, ଛନ୍ଦହୀନ  
ଦୀପ୍ତିମାନ, ଅମୃତସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାନ ।  
ବରଗଛ, ବରକୋଳି  
ଧୂଳିପର, ଲୁଚକାଳି  
ମଠବାବା, କୋଳାକୋଳି  
ବାବଶାଳୀ, ଶୀତାଞ୍ଜଳି  
ସନାତନ, ଅବଧାନ  
ଆସିଗଲେ ଶୂନ୍ୟଶାନ୍  
ହସାସର, ଛବିବହି  
ଖେଳଛୁଟି, କାଶିନଳ  
ଅଙ୍କସା, ବେତମାତ  
ପଣିକିଆ, କାନମୋତ, ମନେପଡେ ।  
ଖୁବ୍ ମନେପଡେ, ସର୍ବସଂହା ମୋ  
ମମତାମୟୀ ବୋଉର ସୀମାହୀନ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା,  
ମୁଁ କାଳେ ତାର ଜୀବନ ଶଙ୍ଖାଳି,  
ଦୁଃଖପାଶୋରା, ନୟନର ତାରା,  
ଅମାନିଆ ବେଶୁ, ଅଝଟିଆ କାହୁଁ,  
ଗଣିଧନ, ଜୀବରଜୀବନ  
କରିପିଲି ତା ଗର୍ଭରେ ଦିନେ ମୁଁ ଅନନ୍ତଶୟନ ।  
ମନେପଡେ ସାହିପତିଶାଙ୍କର ସ୍ମୃତ୍ତି,  
ବନ୍ଧୁମାନଙ୍କର ଆଳାପ, ଆଲୋଚନା,  
ବଡ଼ନାନୀର ଆପରି, ଅଭିଯୋଗ,  
ସାନଭାଇର କାହୁରାମୁହଁ,  
ବୁଢ଼ାମା'ର ଉତ୍ସୁକକୋଳ,  
ବାପରେ ଧନରେ କହି, ମୁଁଟିଏ ଖୁଆଇବା ପାଇଁ  
ଗାଁର ଏ ମୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ସେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ  
ବୁଲୁଥାଏ ପୁଣି ଏଗଳି ସେଗଳି  
କି ସୁଖପାଇଁ ସେ ଜାଣେ ।  
ଆଉ ମନେପଡେ ବାପାଙ୍କର ଆଦେଶ,  
ଗୁରୁଙ୍କର ଉପଦେଶ  
ଜେଜେଙ୍କର ଆକଟ,  
ଆଜ୍ଞାକୁ ଅବଜ୍ଞା କଲେ  
କାଳେ ବୁଢ଼ୀଠାକୁରାଣୀ ଅସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ହୁଏ ।

## ଯୌବନ:

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନମୟ, ସୁଖମୟ  
ପ୍ରେମମୟ, ପୀତିମୟ ଲାଗେ ଏ ଦୁନିଆ  
ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ବାନ୍ଧିଛି ସିତି,  
ସବୁଲାଗେ ହାତପାହାନ୍ତାରେ  
ତୁ ଝେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଯୋଗୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ  
ଆଖି ତକ୍ଷ ରେଡ୍ ଏ ଲଟ୍ ।  
ଏ ମନ କୁଟନେ  
କେତେ ପାରିଜାତ ପୁଷ୍ପେ,  
ବାସନା ଚହଟେ,  
ଏଠି ଜହ୍ନହସେ ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ ଓଠେ,  
କାମନାର ବଂଶୀ ଘନଘନ ବାଜେ -  
କେତେ ମଧୁସୁରେ,  
ମନର ରାଧା ଫେଇଥୋଇ ନାଚେ  
ବଂଶୀର ତାଳେ ତାଳେ  
ସବୁଶାଂର ନୀଳନଳ କୁଳେ ।  
କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉର କତାବଜର  
ସମାଜର ଲାଲଆଖି  
ବାପାଙ୍କର ଖାନଦାନି, ବୁନିଆଦି  
ଆଉ ଜେଜେଙ୍କର ସାଆନ୍ତିଆ -  
ମନୋଭାବ ଦେଖୁ ତରଳାଗେ,  
ବୋଉ କହେ - ଧରେ ପାଦ ଖସିଗଲେ  
ସଳଖିବା ଭାରି ଜଷ୍ଟ  
ବାପା କହନ୍ତି - ବଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ହେଲେ  
ମେହେନତି କରିବାକୁ ପଡେ,  
ଜେଜେ କହନ୍ତି - ଧନରେ  
ଜୀବନରେ ଅନ୍ଧକିଛି ପାଇବାପାଇଁ  
ଅନେକ ବେଶି ଦେବାକୁହିଁ ପଡେ  
ଏସବୁ ଧୂବ ସତ୍ୟ  
କିନ୍ତୁ, କିଏ ଶୁଣେ, କିଏ ବୁଝେ ?  
ଏସବୁ ବୟସର ଦୋଷ ।

## ବାର୍ଦ୍ଧକ୍ୟ:

ନିଃସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ନିଃଶହାୟ  
ଜରାଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ଭାବମୟ  
ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମନ୍ତ ଅବତାର ଭଳି  
ଇଚ୍ଛାହୁଏ ନିରୋଳାରେ ବସି  
ତାହୁଁବାକୁ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଆକାଶକୁ  
କାଳେ ଶୂନ୍ୟବାଣୀ ହେବ,  
ମୁଁ ଏକ ଥୁଣ୍ଡ ବୃଷ  
ଶାଖାପତାଖା ବିହୀନ  
ଦୋହଲୁଛି ମୃଦୁମଳୟରେ,  
ନା ରଙ୍ଗ, ନା ଛାତି ଅଛି  
ନା ବାସ୍ନା, ନା ପୀତି ଅଛି  
ନା ସୁଖ, ନା ସାପ୍ତ ଅଛି  
ଏଠି ଭୟ ଅଛି, ଏଠି ଭାନ୍ତି ଅଛି  
ଏଠି କୋଧ ଅଛି, ଅଭିମାନ ଅଛି  
ଏଠି ଗର୍ବ ଅଛି, ଅହଂକାର ଅଛି  
ଏଠି ଦୁଃଖ ଅଛି, ଅନୁଶୋଚନା ଅଛି  
ଏଠି କିଛି ନାହିଁ, ଏଠି ସବୁ ଅଛି ।  
ଏ ଦୁନିଆଁ ରଙ୍ଗମଞ୍ଚରେ ମୁଁ ଏକ ଖେଳାଳୀ,  
ଜୀବନ ଡୁଆଖେଳରେ କେତେ -  
ମୁଁ ହାରିଛି, ମୁଁ ଜିତିଛି  
ମୁଁ କାନ୍ଦିଛି, ମୁଁ ହସିଛି  
ମୁଁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଛି, ମୁଁ ଗଢ଼ିଛି  
ମୁଁ ଦେଇଛି, ମୁଁ ପାଇଛି,  
ଏସବୁର ହିସାବକିତାବ କଲେ -  
ଇଚ୍ଛାହୁଏ ଚିତ୍କାରକରି କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ  
ଇଚ୍ଛାମୟଙ୍କ ନିକଟେ,  
ଖୁବ୍ ରାଗହୁଏ, ଚଳିଚଳି ଦେବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାହୁଏ  
ମନଭିତରର ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କୁ  
ମିଳିଗଲେ ହାତପାହାନ୍ତାରେ,  
କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉ କହେ - ଧନରେ  
ଭଗବାନ ଭକ୍ତର ଅଧୀନ  
ତାଙ୍କରି ତାକହିଁ ଶୁଣନ୍ତି,  
ହେ ଛନ୍ଦାବରଣ, ହେ ପଶୋଦାନନ  
ହେ ପତିତପାବନ, ହେ ପତ୍ନୀ ନାରାୟଣ  
ଆମେ ସବୁହିଁ ତୁମର ଅବୋଧ ସନ୍ତାନ  
ଅଜ୍ଞାନକୁ ଦିଅ ବିବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗନ  
କ୍ଷମାକର ଦୋଷ ମୋର  
ଶୀତରଣେ ରହୁ ସଦା ଧ୍ୟାନ ।

Dr. Shashadhar Mohapatra stays in Silver Spring, Maryland with wife Meera, son Siddharth and daughter Sharmistha.

## **FOOD HABITS OF ORISSA**

Cuisine stems from two sources, a popular one and the erudite, the latter necessarily being the product of the well-off classes of every era. In the course of history there has been a peasant cuisine and a court cuisine. The state of Orissa had developed a third kind of cuisine, especially for Gods. The first type of cuisine has the advantage of being linked to the soil, of being able to exploit the products of various regions and seasons, in close accord with nature, based on age old skills transmitted unconsciously by way of imitation and habit, by applying methods of cooking patiently tested and associated with certain cooking utensils and recipes prescribed by a long tradition.

Not surprisingly, one needs to put one's hand into the mouth of a tiger to be able to satisfy the culinary taste of the people of Orissa. Such hands are believed to be the best skilled for preparing delicious dishes to suite the palate of the people living in this part of the country. One should have a savory taste to enjoy the varieties of Orissa food, in preparation of which one attains proficiency by risking one's hand into the mouth of a carnivorous. To ensure perfect red color to the turmeric, grown in their fields, some tribes in Orissa used to smear human blood on the fields. This practice has since been stopped. The standards are rigid and quality predestined. Slight variation of color, texture or flavor, outright degrades the preparations. Therefore, Orissa cuisine is considered very exclusive and distinguished. The variety of dishes that make up the cuisine, the pattern with which they all come together in a feast-like meal, and the evident intricacy of craft, offer enough material for life long study and enjoyment. It is such a classical art, which satisfies

ones senses while reconfirming the higher order of society, community life, and culture that existed in this state.

The Modern State of Orissa was formed in 1936 as province of the British Empire. However, the ancient Tri-Kalinga covers the area extending from the Ganges to river Godavari, which covers a part of Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Hence, it can be observed that people living in the border districts of Bengal and Andhra have semblance in their food to that of Orissa. The state is an extensive plateau, which slopes gently into the coastal plains along the Bay of Bengal. The river Mahanadi flowing west to east, through the plateau cuts it into distinct parts. The eastern part is an extension of the Chotanagpur plateau and the southern part is covered by hills of the eastern ghats. There are, thus, four well-defined physical regions of the state: the Northern plateau, the Eastern Ghats, the Coastal plains and the River basins of the central tableland. The climate here is characterized by high temperature and medium to high rainfall, restricted to the four months of rainy season. The seacoast extends to over 480 km.

Great civilizations always produce art. In Orissa, which has a history stretching back to thousands of years, the preparation of food also was developed as a great art. The cuisine may not be rich but is surely convenient and nutritious. As a testimony of a civilization, visual expression of a particular conception of the world, the magnificent temples of Orissa tell a story that lasted for millenniums. A technical capacity for construction of the highest order, the rich and well-developed culture has bequeathed precious testimony,

especially in stone carving, metal tools and utensils. Its music, dance and culinary perfection, clearly demonstrate the existence of master-craftsmen in these art-form and profession. Today, neither the state nor the people can be called rich in wealth. Therefore, the diet the people of this region evolved over the course of the centuries, heavily rely upon such ingredients as rice, roots, leaves and vegetables which are inexpensive and nutritionally filling. Freshwater fish, seafood, pulses and dairy products supply the protein in the diet.

A meal is highly complicated and complex when items are so numerous. But, in Orissa, compiling a menu really does not create any problem, because the season and the traditions are the best guide. Principally a rice growing and rice eating area, rice is treated with great respect. The housewife will specify the kind of rice she wants to use for a particular dish: either long grain or round grain, flavored, polished or par-boiled. Rice is therefore, the heart of every meal. When people sit to dine there is always a mound of white grains poured in the center of the plate or leaf. Rice is the mainstay of everyday diet. Vegetables and lentils are also consumed in plenty. Leafy vegetables are always there, as if an essential item.

To an Oriya, the essential part of the harmony in a meal is its variety. The meal would consist of highly spiced dishes, heavily seasoned along with bland, accompanied by some fried and crispy items. An item of sweet and sour or preserved pickle or slices of fresh lime and a couple of green chilies are a part of the menu. To suit the long dry summer season, there will be watery food known as *Pakhal*, i.e. cooked rice dipped in cold water. This is eaten plain with salt or

highly seasoned with herbs and yogurt. Soft and light food like *Khechuree* or *Kichri*, made out of rice and lentils is also a popular dish. Rice with ghee called *Ghee Arna* or slightly sweetened, called *Kanika*, is common on festive fare.

Rice flour, sugar or *gur* with coconut or creamy cheese constitute the base of the most delicious and attractive sweets. Creamy cottage cheese and sugar are made into several kinds of pastries, popular all over the country. Festivals are many, and housewives religiously observe the traditions and prepare the *Pithas* at home for offering to Gods, family and friends. The *Pithas* are snacks, also made of rice flour, lentils, sugar, cheese, thickened milk and spices. The *Pitha* is a kind of preparation, which originated in the Indus Valley Civilization and was known as *Pistakas*. These were either fried or steamed. According to availability, seasonal fruits like mango, jackfruit (*Panasa*), ripe palm fruit (*Tal*), banana etc., are added to the *Pithas*. Rice is also perched or puffed for serving as snacks.

The protective tree, bamboo while serving as a fuel, also provides food in its tender offshoots. A delicious bar-be-Que. is prepared with bamboo. A hollow section of bamboo is capped with clay at one end, filled with scraps of meat and a little liquid, then capped again at the other end, is put into a fire pit. When the outer shell is burnt the meat inside gets cooked. This process of cooking meat is also practiced in Indonesia. The red jungle fowl (*gallus gallus*), considered the ancestor of the domestic fowl or the present day chicken, which is now eaten all over the world, are found in plenty in the forests of Orissa.

The state has a large tribal population, though they are no more as isolated as

fifty years ago. Still, in some pockets, their food is so simple that it is characterized as wild. The people, who live on hills with no irrigation facilities and scanty rainfall, largely depend on roots, tubers and animals killed in the forests for food. They cannot grow adequate amount of grain to sustain through a year. They, therefore, eat whatever edible is found in the adjacent forest. Among fruits, there are plenty of *Kendu*, *Jamun*, several kinds of berries, dates and wild grapes. *Mahua* flowers are a great favorite. It is eaten in various preparations, like fried with Sal seeds or tamarind seeds or *Ragi*. Dry tamarind seeds are eaten after being boiled. Those who live in deep forests and hilltops resort to eating wild potato known as *Pharsa Kandha*, *Paisa Kandha*, *Gandha Kandha* (found at one to two meters under the ground), *Gethi Kandha* and *Kolkola*. Meat of animals, killed in the forest, fish in mountain springs, crabs, frogs, big ants known as Kai and other insects that appear during rainy season are eaten with great pleasure. Alcoholic drinks are brewed from Mahua flower, Amla fruit and also from rice. Juice, collected from palm and date trees known as Toddy are a great favorite as intoxicant.

Rice is the staple food of these tribes. It is, however, considered a luxury during summer and rainy season when rice is scarce and they have no income. The tribes build their houses away from water points to avoid confrontation with wild animals like tigers, bears and elephants that also depend on these water holes for drinking water and bathing. Thus drinking water is generally obtained from a distance of one to two kilometers. Water is collected and carried in dry shells of pumpkins known as *Thumba*. It is light to carry and it keeps water cool. *Thumbas* are not so fragile as earthen pots. Food is

eaten or served on leaves. Bowls are stitched by joining several leaves using bamboo picks. However, earthen pots are used for cooking. Food is cooked early in the morning and before sunsets.

The whole village gathers for a community feast on the occasion of marriage or childbirth or on death in any family. Sometimes the whole village enjoys a feast if a big animal like *Sambhar* or wild bore has been killed. Fermented palm juice is distributed liberally and the young and old celebrate the occasion with dance and music. Often each individual owns a palm tree and enjoys the right to tap the juice for one's own consumption. Trespassing on others' palm tree causes violent disputes leading to injuries and death..

In tribal areas drinking of milk is a taboo. It is considered a sin to rob the calf of its share of milk. The yield from the cow is so scanty that it is just sufficient for the survival of the calf.

The people of Orissa are not strictly vegetarian. Those living in coastal region relish fish. But they prefer sweet water fish from the rivers and ponds than the seafood. Crabs from the brackish water of Chilika Lake are a delicacy. The tiger prawns from the lake and the deep sea are being frozen and exported, leaving very little for local consumption.

Vegetarianism was often a matter of necessity. Even if religion is involved, people were reluctant to kill the highly productive cattle, goats included. Cattle were so few in relation to the land under agricultural production that further depletion of cattle population would have unbalanced the production of crop. The spread of Buddhism and Jainism also

influenced the people to abstain from killing animals for food. Barring cows, the meat of goats and chicken are being eaten. With the arrival of Chaitanya in Puri, Vaisnamism was spread to grassroots of the society, and under its influence eating of all meats including chicken and eggs were forbidden.

People of this region like community feeding. Every function or celebration concludes with a feast for the gathering. Feasts, following a Puja or religious functions, are very simple: rice, boiled or fried, *dal* (lentil), vegetables of the season, a sweet and sour dish, concluding with a sweet dish, normally Payas made of rice, milk and sugar. In feasts held in connection with marriage, serving of fish is considered auspicious. Fish curry, fried fish, fish in yogurt, fish *besara* (mustard paste) are very common. A mixed vegetable with fish head is a delicacy called *Chenchera*. Sometimes sixteen to eighteen kinds of fish preparation are served in one feast. The marriage feasts in Orissa are very elaborate and lavish.

Towards the end of rainy season, a dish called *Ghanta* is prepared in every home. All available vegetable of the season, added with coconut, sprouted gram, sweet potato, sugarcane, sour vegetable like *Oyu* and several spices are the ingredients of *Ghanta*. This is prepared in a season when vegetables are in plenty after the rainy season or a good rainfall. The most common curry is called *Dalma*, which is a combination of lentils and some common vegetables like brinjal, pumpkins, potato and onions flavoured with spices like turmeric, coriander, cumin and dried chilies. When cooked, temper with *ghee* or vegetable oil for a mild blend. For a hot blend, temper with dry red chili, mustard seeds and cardamom.

Among sweets this state is famous for some particular milk based preparations like *Rasgollas*, *Chenna podo pitha*, *Chenna jhilli*, *Rabdi* (thickened milk sweetened) *Ras malai*, *Chenna Gaja*, *Khasta gaja*, *Labong lata*, *Sara pulli* and many others. The most notable is *Chenna podo*, which is prepared in some parts of the state, is a kind of upside down cake of creamy cottage cheese with little flour, sugar and spices to flavor. In wedding feasts several kinds of sweets are served as desserts, preferably milk products.

On festivals, the menu is fixed taking into account the produces of the season. It may appear strange, but it is true, that in every Oriya at home would be eating the same preparation during a particular festival. Even the ingredients and accompanying spices are prescribed for the perfect production of the food.

All important temples in Orissa offer eatables as *Bhoga*. Therefore temples have a separate edifice called *Bhoga Mandap* to facilitate offerings to the deity. After it is offered to Gods, the food turns into sacred *Prasad*. Thereafter, it is distributed to the devotees.

It is believed that Lord Jagannath had ordered to serve him with cooked food. This proves that the cooks attached to the kitchen of Shri Jagannath Temple, in Puri were required to prepare food for the highest authority known to mankind. The offerings to Gods are identified as *Prasad*, whereas the offerings at the Shri Jagannath Temple is honored as *Maha-Prasad*. Because the offering made to Lord Jagannath is also offered to Goddess Bimla, thus the offerings turn into *Maha-Prasad*. The divine command had established the famous kitchen of the Shri Jagannath temple at Puri, which now

caters to thousands of visitors from all over country. The kitchen prepares fifty-six items daily from a list of eighty-four tasty items. It has the capacity to serve food to over one hundred thousand devotees everyday. It is believed that the fire that lights the ovens, called *Vaishnavagni* has been preserved since the temple was built a thousand years ago. The method of cooking followed here is basically 'steaming'. Only jar shaped earthen pots are used here which are arranged one over the other on the wood fired ovens. Normally 72 quintals of rice is cooked every day. To work to full capacity the kitchen requires 900 quintals of rice and about 160 quintals of firewood to heat the ovens. One of the largest kitchens of its kind is operating very efficiently uninterrupted for the last millennium. Neither the menu nor the method of cooking has undergone any change. Still, devotees coming from all over the country, having distinctly separate food habits, relish it. No complain or suggestions have been received to effect any kind of change. Nowhere such traditions have been preserved for the people to enjoy and study the food and its method of preparation.

Every grain grown here is dedicated to the Gods. Because production of food grains depends on favorable rainfall, which is believed to depend on the goodwill of the Gods.

On full moon night in the month of *Kartik* (November), the festival of *Bali-jatra* or voyage to the island of Bali, is celebrated on the banks of river Mahanadi in Cuttack, reminiscent of the past maritime activities of the people living in this part of India. During the *jatra*, traditional food shops sell unusually large size of *Rasogolla*, *gulab jamun*, *ladoos*, *batasha*, *phennys*,

weighing one to two kilos each, the kind of fare that was offered to the *Sadhabas* (seafaring traders), embarking on their journey overseas. Only during *Bali-jatra*, such sizes of sweetmeats and *Purees* are made to remember the glorious days of the past. Pumpkins are called *Boito Kokharu*, meaning boat pumpkin. This was the only vegetable, which has a long shelf life, if kept suspended in slings. Therefore pumpkins were carried in ships, conveniently to be consumed during their long sojourn on the seas to distant lands.

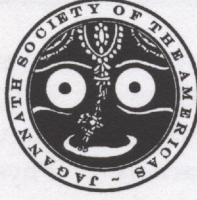
Concern for hygiene in this state extended not only to plates and pots but also to the food itself. The standard of cleanliness prescribed for the kitchen of Shri Jagannath Temple in Puri is ultimate. The food is perfumed with precious camphor to prevent decomposition. Camphor was earlier imported from Borneo in Indonesia. Stone utensils of Orissa were much in demand overseas in the past. These were exported along with fine linen produced here. It was a law to destroy the earthenware after one use, so that it could not be used for a second time. Hence people avoided the issue by using thick unabsorbent leaf of trees as plates. On finishing eating, the leaves alongwith the leftover is thrown into waterholes or buried under the ground. The chefs were required to wear cloth masks to cover their mouth. The housewives used to enter the kitchen only after bathing and cleaning the entire kitchen and its floors.

The cuisine of Orissa is so scientifically grouped that any kind of foreign influence has not effected any change in food, its method of cooking or the food habit of the people. There is no trace of Muslim or Christian food in this region. Except while celebrating *Satya Narayan Puja*, the *bhoga* offered to *Satya Narayan* is called

Among beverages, fresh palm juice, green coconut water are popular drinks. Intoxicating drinks are common among tribal community. Home-brewed rice beer

Savoring the cuisine in an idyllic retreat of sun and sand. Orissa is home to some of India's best chefs. Here, amidst the turquoise waters, golden sand beaches, and brilliant sun, an equally colorful culinary tradition thrives in every home and in some casual restaurants. The chefs here combine the finest gift of nature with flair for traditions, instinct and a unique sense of invention. Whatever be the recipe, the inviting spirit of the state infuses into every dish. The breadth of culinary choices in Orissa is nearly overwhelming.

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## **Jagannath Society of the Americas**

**P. O. Box 2210939**

**Nashville, Tennessee 37221-0939**

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### **Jagannath Swami Nayana Patha Gami Bhabatu Me**

Jagannath Society of the Americas (JSA) was established in 1992. Since then, JSA has been spreading the word of Lord Jagannath. Last year's Ratha Jatra was a great success due to the presence of many members of the Orissa Society of the Americas. This year, we hope to pull the Lord in a new Chariot from India.

JSA has adopted three villages affected by cyclone in Orissa and plans to adopt more villages. Beginning this year, JSA has started a fund raising drive in an effort to help educate the people in India about health and hygiene.

Please join us during Ratha Jatra. We sincerely thank all JSA members and devotees for their continued support.

May Lord Jagannath bless you and your family.

***Panchanan Satpathy, Ex-President: 615 859 5326***

***Gita Mishra, President: 615 591 4365***

***Akshay Joshi, Vice President: 615 331 9616***

***Sreeranjana Kanungo, Secretary: 615 367 4273***

***Sangita Chakraborty, Treasurer: 931 525 1514***

***Satya Hota, Editor: 615 860 2456***

***Sucheta Misra, Chairperson, Prasad Committee: 615 221 3987***

## **Orientation Program for High School Science Teachers in Orissa**

In association with the The Govt of Orissa, we few non-resident Oriyas (NRO), organized a two-day orientation program for high school science teachers at Kendrapara College for schools in Kendrapara district on May 10-11, 2001. We are thankful to Orissa society of America (OSA) for supporting and partially financing the orientation program. Ever since the super cyclone in 1999, we were thinking of improving educational program in Orissa. It is needless to say that education helps whether you are facing cyclone, flood, drought or famine etc. Though there are many ways one can work, we thought of concentrating at the high school level education. Through our personal acquaintances in Orissa, we collected information on what is needed in the school program. Hence the idea of improving the science teachers' skills through orientation program was born.

Now-a-days, most of the college level study materials have been included in High School courses. The Orientation Program is very much needed to upgrade teachers' skills as well as to make them aware of many new subjects like computers, environmental sciences etc. Though it is planned to organize similar course at each district level, the first of its kind in Kendrapara was very much successful. An organizing committee was

formed with Kendrapara circle inspector (CI), Chandrasekhar Mohanty as convener, and Dr. Anant Panda, reader in Physics, Kendrapara College, as co-convener with a few people from USA as advisors. Invitations were sent to 100 High School headmasters to send their science teachers. Total attendance in the course was 76 teachers. Credit goes to Kendrapara CI, Chandrasekhar Mohanty and his many dedicated staff, as well as Dr Anant Panda, Reader in Physics, and many faculty members in Kendrapara College. We would like to thank Dr. Dibakar Patnaik, Principal, Kendrapara College for extending all the facilities on the premises. The detailed information about the program is presented later in this article.

Registration and inauguration started exactly at 9:00 AM on May 10<sup>th</sup>, as scheduled. To our surprise, almost 50 teachers had already arrived at the venue by 9:00 AM. Pictures below show the attendees and the guests during the inaugural function. As can be seen, each teacher has a nametag. With the permission from the OSA executive, we declared that the course is sponsored by OSA (as seen in the photographs). Principal, D. Patnaik was the chief guest. Each teacher was given a folder with the program and handouts of all lectures.



All the lecturers who taught the first day were from Kendrapara College of the course except for Dr. Sudhansu Tripathy, who taught about periodic table and chemical reactions, was from Ravenshaw College. Faculties and guests were given special *prasad* from Baldevjew temple during lunch. Other lecturers for the first day were P.C.Samantray (wave motion) and Dr Binayak Das (photosynthesis). Teachers were given homework on each lecture and next day 75% of teachers returned their homework sheets, after completion.

On May 11th, the second day of the program, the morning lecture was given by Bikram Parida, from Oricom who brought PC/Printer etc. to give an introduction about PC. The talk was well received. In fact, Govt. of Orissa is planning to introduce computers in High School from next year. This talk was very much needed. Other lecturers who taught on May 11<sup>th</sup> were, Dr N.N. Sarma and SK Palit (cell division), Dr C. Mohanty (Heredity and variation) and Dr. A. Panda (Nuclear physics). All the lectures started and ended exactly as planned. I gave survey questions to teachers to get their feedback on this type of program. The overall score about the usefulness and arrangement for the course was 80% . That is high compared to Orissa standard of scoring. Most of them wrote that this course should be 5 to 7 days long. In a valediction session, teachers were given certificates and Rs. 80.00 each towards expenses incurred. One male and one female teacher spoke in the function about

the course and they had a lot of praise for the course arrangement, particularly to see the standard and the method of teaching. As we informed in the function that we had plans to arrange similar courses in other districts, at the end one teacher came and requested me to arrange similar courses in Kendrapra for the second time before trying at other places.

We have plans to organize similar courses in all the districts of Orissa. Bhagabat Behera, Cabinet Minister for Ministry of School and Mass Education, was very much supportive for the past program as well as for future courses. With his support, we are optimistic to make positive changes in the school education program. We invite you all to support and sponsor for organizing similar courses in future. This will not only benefit the teachers but also help in improving quality of education system in Orissa. Eventually this will result in better students. Although the first program was planned and carried out by a few of us, I am thankful to many people who strongly supported the idea and are interested to be involved in such types of efforts in the future. With the success of the first program, I can see a bright future of such types of efforts. If you are interested to know more about future orientation program, please contact any one of the following people.

Hemant Biswal, [hbiswal@hotmail.com](mailto:hbiswal@hotmail.com)  
Naresh Das, [nareshdas@yahoo.com](mailto:nareshdas@yahoo.com)  
Lalu Mansinha, [Mansinha@uwo.ca](mailto:Mansinha@uwo.ca)

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*Naresh Das, Columbia, Maryland*

Below is the schedule followed in the orientation program:

May 10, 2001

9:00 - 10:00 Registration and Inauguration.

D. Patnaik, Principal Kendrapara college, and Dr. S.C. Das, Jagatsingpur college

10:00-11:30, Dr. P. Panda, Kendrapara college, Wave motion, and sound waves,

11:30-1:00, Dr. S. Tripathy, Ravenshaw college, Chemical Reaction

1:00-2:00, Lunch break

2:00-3:30, Dr. S. Tripathy, Ravenshaw college, Atomic structure and periodic table

3:30-5:00, Binayak Das, Kendrapara college, Botany

May 11, 2001

9:00-10:30, Bikram Parida, Oricom Corp. Introduction to Computer, TBD

10:30-11:30, Dr. N. Sarma, Kendrapara College, Cell Division (Meiosis)

11:30 -1:00, Dr. S.K. Palit Kendrapara College, Cell Division ( Metosis)

1:00-2:00, Lunch break

2:00-3:00, Dr. C.R. Mohapatra, Kendrapara college, Photosynthesis

3:00-4:00, Dr. Anantram Panda, Nuclear physics

4:00 -5:30, Valediction function: Dr S. Ray, Reader in Physics, Chief Guest

Dr. N.C. Das, Army Research Laboratory, Maryland, Certificate distribution,  
comments from teacher representative and vote of thanks

In 1997 we collected \$1,250.00 for benefit of the Physics Department. A sum of \$1,279.00 (Rs.35, 470.00) was remitted to Ravenshaw College Trust Fund, which as of May 1, 2001 has not been spent because Physics Department has not been able to fulfill the requirements. During my visit to Orissa last May, I talked with the Principal Professor Rama Krishna Kar ([RKKar@yahoo.com](mailto:RKKar@yahoo.com)) regarding this. He asked me if the money could be spent to support one experiment for Physics Department instead of the two, we had requested. I told him that it should not be a problem, but he has to send me a note and I would discuss with the committee (Dr. Subhendra Mohanty, Dr. Bijan Rao, and Dr. Naresh Das).

In 1998, we sent a letter to Orissa Chief Minister urging the government to allow full autonomy to Ravenshaw College, thus opening door for UGC and other private organizations' contributions and grants. Approximately fifty (50) persons from the North America signed this letter and copies were sent out to the Governor, Ministers, and Education Secretary, etc. We did not get any response from Orissa. Professor Kar, this time, mentioned that they are trying to make it a "Deemed University". A copy of the charter of this "Deemed University" is with me for information purposes. This has been in the boilerplate for past 10-12 years.

I have this time requested the Principal to let me know the procedure for establishing scholarships because some people are interested to contribute money for that.

Last Remark: I have been receiving enquiries from NRIs from time to time regarding Ravenshaw College and I believe there is room for progress. Response from Orissa has been a little slow. I apologize for not replying each enquiry. The financial account is maintained by me and is open to anyone interested.



*Surendra Nath Ray, May 2001*

## **Supporting Your Project in Orissa**

### **Organizations To Count On**

1. Center for World Music  
San Diego Indian American Society  
2225 9th St. (surcharge: 5%)  
Olivenhein, CA 92024  
TEL: 760 436 8277  
Attn: Purna Patnaik
  
  2. Jagannath Society of America  
(Charitable wing) (Surcharge: 5%)  
641 Gaylemore Drive  
Goodlettsville, TN 37072  
TEL: 615 859 5326  
Attn: Panchanan Satapathy
  
  3. The Orissa Foundation  
1001 Brookridge Circle  
Huntsville, Alabama 35801  
TEL: 256 883 5499  
Attn: Devi P. Misra
- 

### **STIPULATIONS:**

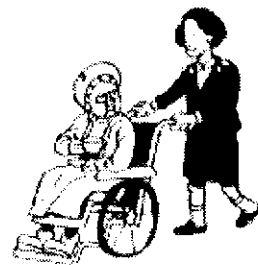
Your yearly donations are tax-free

- You will receive a receipt.
  - Donations should be to an organization of your choice but not to an individual.
  - Wire transfer of money not to be requested.
  - The organization, receiving donation from USA should have clearance from Orissa or Government of India to receive foreign currency.
  - Please allow about a month or two for your donation to reach its proper place. Hence kindly plan well ahead.
  - Your donation will be earmarked to the charity of your choice.
  - You can support with your donation any institution in Orissa, India or here in USA.
- 

*Devi P. Misra, Huntsville, AL*

# ବୃଦ୍ଧାବସ୍ଥା: ଏକ ସାମାଜିକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ

ଡକ୍ଟର ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାରାୟଣ ଦାସ



ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ଦେଶ ଓ ଭାରତବର୍ଷରେ ଜରାଜୀବନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ତଫାତ୍ ଅଛି । ଯଦିଓ ଜରାଜୀବନ ସବୁଆଡ଼େ ସମାନ ଓ ଜରାବସ୍ଥାରେ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ବୃଦ୍ଧବୃଦ୍ଧାଙ୍କର ମାନସିକତା ସମାନ; ତଥାପି ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ଦେଶରେ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ଓ ସାମାଜିକ ପ୍ରଭାବ ଯୋଗୁଁ ବୃଦ୍ଧବୃଦ୍ଧାମାନଙ୍କର ମାନସିକତା ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଆଜିର ଯୁଗ, ଅର୍ଥର ଯୁଗ, ବସ୍ତୁର ଯୁଗ । ଭାରତ ବର୍ଷରେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ମଣିଷମାନେ ଅତୀତର ପଛରେ ଗୋତାଲବାକୁ ଶ୍ରେୟ ମନେ କରନ୍ତି । ଅତୀତର ଆଦର୍ଶର ସୁନାମୁଗ ପଛରେ ଧାଇଁଲେ ହତାଶ ହେବାକୁ ହୁଏ । କାରଣ ତାହା ସୁନା ନୁହେଁ; କିମ୍ବା ମୃଗ ନୁହେଁ; କେବଳ ଗୋଟାଏ ରାକ୍ଷସ । ତାହାହିଁ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ବାସ୍ତବ । ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ଦେଶରେ ମଣିଷ ତା'ର ଜୀବନ ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ବଞ୍ଚେ । ସେଠାରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ହେଉଛି ମୁଖ୍ୟ । ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପ୍ରଥମେ ନିଜକୁ ଦେଖି ପରେ ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ଦେଖେ । ଭାରତ ବା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଆମେ ଆମ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଜୀବନରେ ବଞ୍ଚିଥାଉ । ଆମେମାନେ ସଦାସର୍ବଦା ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ମଣିଷ କରିବାପାଇଁ ଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମଣିଷ କରି ନିଜେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଅର୍ଜନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ନିଜକୁ ନିୟୋଜିତ କରୁ । ଏପରି ଜୀବନ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ଆମ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ସୀମିତ କାଳର ନୁହେଁ; କାଳରୁ କାଳକୁ ଏହାର ଗତି । ବାପା ମା ମରିଗଲା ପରେ ଆମେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଶୁଦ୍ଧି କ୍ରିୟା କରୁ ଓ ପ୍ରତି ବର୍ଷ ପିଣ୍ଡ ଦେଉ । ଏହାରି ଭିତରେ ବାପା ମାଆ ସତେ ଅବା ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଭାବରେ ବଞ୍ଚିଥାଆନ୍ତି । ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ଦେଶରେ ଏହା ନଥାଏ । ମୃତ୍ୟୁରେ ହିଁ ସେଠାରେ ସବୁ ଶେଷ । ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଜୀବନ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ । ପୁନର୍ଜନ୍ମରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନାହିଁ । ଏହି କାରଣରୁ ସେମାନେ ବୁଢ଼ାଦିନେ କଷ୍ଟ ପାଆନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ଦେଶରେ ବାପାମାଆ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ନିଜେ ଠିଆ ହେବାପାଇଁ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରକାର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଷୋଳ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ବେଳକୁ ସେମାନେ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ହୋଇଯାନ୍ତି । ନିଜେ ନିଜେ ସେମାନେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ମାର୍ଗ ବାଛି ନିଅନ୍ତି ।

ଅଧ୍ୟୟନଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି କର୍ମକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସବୁଥିରେ ସେମାନେ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନଜୀବୀ । ସେମାନେ ଆତ୍ମନିର୍ଭରଶୀଳ ହୋଇ ଜୀବନ କଟାନ୍ତି ଅଥଚ ଭାରତବର୍ଷରେ ସେହି ପରମ୍ପରା ନାହିଁ । ବାପା ମାଆ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ପିଲାମାନେ ସବୁବେଳେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଅଧୀନ ହୋଇ ରହନ୍ତୁ । ଏପରି ମାନସିକତା ପ୍ରଗତି ବିରୋଧୀ । ଭାରତରେ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ବାପା ମାଆ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପୀଡ଼ିତ । ଏପରି ପରିବେଶରେ ପିଲାମାନେ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର ହେଇଯିବା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ । ବାପାମାଆ ମାନେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏହି ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପରତା ଶିଖାଉଛନ୍ତି । ମୋ ଘର, ମୋ ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି, ମୋ ପିଲା ଭିତରେ ପିଲାମାନେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୋଇଯାନ୍ତି । ବୃଦ୍ଧ ହେଲାବେଳକୁ ଏହି ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପରତା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋହଗନ୍ଧ କରି ରଖିବ । ଏହି ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପରତା ପାଇଁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର କିଛି ଦୋଷ ନାହିଁ; ଦୋଷ ବଡ଼ମାନଙ୍କର । ଏହି ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପରତା ଶିକ୍ଷା ଯୋଗୁଁ ଶେଷରେ ବୁଢ଼ାବୁଢ଼ୀମାନେ ନିଜେ କଷ୍ଟ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ଶେଷ ଜୀବନରେ ସେମାନେ ନିଜେ ଦୁଃଖୀ ଓ ଅସହାୟ ମନେ କରନ୍ତି । ଯେତିକି ଯେତିକି ମଣିଷ ନିଜ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ହୋଇଥାଏ, ସେତିକି ସେତିକି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ କିଛି ବ୍ୟତିକ୍ରମ ଦେଖିଲେ ସେ ଦୁଃଖୀ ଓ ଅସହାୟ ହୋଇଯାଏ ।

ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ଦେଶରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଷୋଳବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ପରେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ବାପାମାଆଙ୍କ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ସେମାନଙ୍କର କ୍ଷୀଣ କହିଲେ ତଳେ, ତେଣୁ ବାପାମାଆମାନେ ମାନସିକ ଭାବରେ ଜୀବନର ଶେଷ ସମୟ ବେଳକୁ ଯେ କୌଣସି ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥାଆନ୍ତି । ପରିଣତ ବୟସରେ ଏକପ୍ରକାର ନିସଙ୍ଗ ଜୀବନ ଯାପନ କରିବାକୁ କୁଣ୍ଡାବୋଧ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଅନେକ ଲୋକ ଜରାନିବାସକୁ ଚାଲି ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ଭାରତବର୍ଷରେ ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ଆଦର୍ଶରେ ଜରାନିବାସମାନ ନିର୍ମାଣ ହୋଇଣି । ଏଠାରେ ବୁଢ଼ାବୁଢ଼ି ମାନେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏହାର କାରଣ ଆଜିର ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ସର୍ବସ୍ୱ ଓ ବୈଷୟିକ ଯୁଗରେ

ପୁଅଝିଅମାନେ ନାନା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ କାହିଁ କେତେ ଦୂରରେ କିମ୍ବା ବିଦେଶରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ବୃଦ୍ଧ ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କର ଯତ୍ନ ନେବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କର ସମୟ ନାହିଁ ବା ସୁଯୋଗ ମଧ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ । ଆମ ଦେଶରେ ବାପାମାଆମାନେ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ଯେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ବାର୍ଦ୍ଧକ୍ୟ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ପୁଅ ବୋହୂ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଖବର ବୁଝନ୍ତୁ ବା ସେବା କରନ୍ତୁ । ଏହା କିନ୍ତୁ ସମ୍ଭବ ହେଉନାହିଁ । ବୃଦ୍ଧ ପିତାମାତା ମାନେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ମାନସିକତା ହେତୁ ହାୟ ହାୟ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନେ ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗର ଆକାଂକ୍ଷାକୁ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ନାରାଜ ।

ଯେଉଁମାନେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ସେବା କାମନା କରନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଦୁଃଖୀ । ଯିଏ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ ତା' ଠାରୁ ଦୁଃଖୀ କେହି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ନିର୍ଭର କରି ବିନିମୟରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ନ ପାଇଲେ ହତାଶ ହେବାକୁ ହୁଏ । ତେଣୁ ଭାରତରେ ବୁଢ଼ାବୁଢ଼ୀମାନେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଏଣୁ ତେଣୁ କହନ୍ତି । ନିର୍ଭର ନ କଲେ କେହି କିଛି କହନ୍ତେ ନାହିଁ । ପାଖତ୍ୟ ଦେଶରେ ବୃଦ୍ଧବୃଦ୍ଧା ଏହି କାରଣରୁ ଅସହାୟ ଅନୁଭବ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । କାରଣ ଜୀବନର ଆରମ୍ଭରୁ ହିଁ ସେମାନେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ଯେ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ହେଲେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏକୃତ ଆ ରହିବାକୁ ହେବ । ସେଠାରେ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ଓ ବୃଦ୍ଧାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମିଳିମିଶି ସମୟ କାଟିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ସେମାନେ ଏକରକମ ମାନସିକ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି କରି ସାରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଏକୃତ ଆ ଜୀବନ ବା ଜରାନିବାସରେ ଜୀବନଯାପନ ତାଙ୍କପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖଦାୟକ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । ଭାରତବର୍ଷରେ ଏପରି ମାନସିକତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇନାହିଁ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ଆମେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମାନସିକ ଭାବରେ ଆମେମାନେ ଅତୀତମୁଖୀ । ସେହି ଅତୀତକୁ ଭାବିଭାବି ଆମେ ହାୟ ହାୟ ହେଉ ଓ ନିଜର ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ନିନ୍ଦୁ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗର ଆଶା ଓ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ସହିତ ଆମେମାନେ ପରିଚିତ ହେଉନାହିଁ ଓ ସେହି ସମସ୍ୟାର ମୁକାବିଲା କରିବାପାଇଁ ଆମେ ସାହସ କରୁନାହିଁ । ମଣିଷ ଯୁଗକୁ ବଦଳାଏ ନାହିଁ; ଯୁଗ ମଣିଷକୁ ବଦଳାଏ । ତେଣୁ ଆଜିର ଯୁଗ ମଣିଷକୁ ବଦଳାଇ ଦେଇଛି । ଏ ଯୁଗରେ ପୁଅଝିଅଙ୍କର ଆଉ ବୁଢ଼ା ବାପାମାଆ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଧରି ବୁଲିବାର ଅବକାଶ ନାହିଁ । ବୃଦ୍ଧ ପିତାମାତା ବାସ୍ତବ ପରସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରି ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମାନସିକ ଭାବରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେବା ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ବିଧେୟ । ଏହା ନକରି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଧୂଳିକାର କରିବା ଓ ନିଜର ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ନିନ୍ଦିବା ଆଦୌ ପୌରୁଷ ନୁହେଁ ।

କୁହାଯାଏ, ଯେଉଁ ପରିବାରରେ ପିତା, ମାତା, ପୁତ୍ର, କନ୍ୟା ଇତ୍ୟାଦିଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସ୍ନେହ ମମତା ବିରାଜିତ ଥାଏ, ସେଇ ପରିବାର ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠ ସହିତ ସମାନ । ଏହା ଏକ ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ବିଚାର । ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି ବସ୍ତୁବାଦୀ ଯୁଗରେ ଏହା ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ଯେଉଁ ପରିବାରର ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ଅବସ୍ଥା ସୁଚ୍ଛଳ ଓ ସମସ୍ତ ସଦସ୍ୟ କୌଣସି ନା କୌଣସି ଅର୍ଥକାରୀ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସହିତ ସଂପୃକ୍ତ, ସେହି ପରିବାରରେ ହୁଏତ ସେପରି ମନୋଭାବଥିଲେ ଏପରି ଭାବନା ଆସିପାରେ; ମାତ୍ର ଯେଉଁ ପରିବାର ଅଭାବଗ୍ରସ୍ତ, ସେହି ପରିବାର କେବେ ହେଲେ ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠ ହୋଇପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । କାରଣ ସେଠାରେ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ପାଇଁ ସଂଘର୍ଷ ଓ ଅଶାନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ସେଠାରେ ପରସ୍ପରଠାରୁ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ହେବାପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାୟ ସମସ୍ତେ ଆଗ୍ରହୀ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ଜରାନିବାସ ହେଉଛି ସୁସ୍ଥ ଭାବରେ ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ ଜୀବନ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଏକ ଆଶ୍ରମ । ସେଠାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଜଣେ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ନିର୍ମଳ ମାନସିକତା ନେଇ ଉନ୍ନତ ଚିନ୍ତା ମଣିଷ ସମାଜକୁ ଦେଇପାରିବ । ଭାରତୀୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତି କଥା କହି, ଗୀତା ଭାଗବତରୁ ଶ୍ଳୋକ ଆବୃତ୍ତି କରି ଜଣେ ବାହାବା ନେଇ ପାରେ ସତ୍ୟ, ମାତ୍ର ସତ୍ୟ ଓ ବାସ୍ତବର ମୁକାବିଲା କରିପାରେ ନାହିଁ । କାରଣ ସତ୍ୟ ବଡ଼ କଠୋର । ଏହି ସତ୍ୟ ଯୋଗୁଁ ମଣିଷ ଏକାକୀ ହୋଇଯିବା ପାଇଁ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି । ପରିଣତ ବୟସରେ ମଣିଷ ବଡ଼ ଏକଲା ଓ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ । ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି ଜଗତରେ କାହା ପୁଅ ବା କାହାର ? କେହି କାହାର ନୁହେଁ; ନିଜେ ହିଁ ନିଜର । ମଣିଷ ଆଜି ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ତା'ର ବେଳ ନାହିଁ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କ କଥା ବୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ । ତେଣୁ ଜରାନିବାସ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ଓ ବୃଦ୍ଧାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଚରମ ଶାନ୍ତିର କ୍ଷେତ୍ର । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ସେବା ଆଶା କରିବା କେବଳ ଗୋଟାଏ ମାୟା, ଗୋଟାଏ ମୋହ । ଜରାନିବାସରେ ରହିବା ବୃଦ୍ଧଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ କୌଣସି ଅସମ୍ଭବଜନକ କଥା ନୁହେଁ । ସବୁ ହେଉଛି ମାନସିକ ବ୍ୟାପାର । ମାନସିକ ଭାବରେ ମୋହଯୁକ୍ତ ହେଲେ ଜରାନିବାସ ଆପଣାର ହୋଇ ଉଠିବ । ଭାରତୀୟ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି କଥା କହି ବାସ୍ତବତାକୁ ଏତାଇ ଦେବା ଠିକ୍

ନୁହେଁ । ଗଛରେ ପତ୍ର ବୁଢ଼ା ହେଲେ ଝଟି ପଡ଼ିବ । ସେ ଝଟିଗଲେ ତା ପାଖରୁ ନୁଆ ପତ୍ର କଅଁଳେ ନାହିଁ । ନୁଆକୁ ବାଟ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେବା ପୁରୁଣାର ଧର୍ମ । ପୁରୁଣା ଯଦି ବାଟ ଓଗାଳି ବସେ, ତେବେ ନୁଆର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଆସେ ନାହିଁ । ବିକାଶ ଧାରାରେ ଗୋଟେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଛେଦ ପଡ଼ିଯିବ ।

ବୃଦ୍ଧ ଓ ବୃଦ୍ଧାଙ୍କୁ ଅସହାୟତାରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ଦେବାପାଇଁ ଜରାନ୍ଧିବାସ ଏକ ଶାନ୍ତିମୟ ତପୋବନ । ଭାବବାଦୀ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୋଣରୁ ଏହାକୁ ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଭାବ କହି ଉଡେଇଦେଲେ ହେବ ନାହିଁ । ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ବାସ୍ତବତା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୋଣରୁ ଏହାର ଉପାଦେୟତାକୁ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଏହା ଜୀବନ ବସ୍ତୁବାର ଏକ ସଂଜୀବନୀ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର । ବୃଦ୍ଧ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ମୋହରୁ ମୁକ୍ତ ହୋଇ ନିଜକୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ସଂପ୍ରସାରିତ କରିପାରିଲେ ତାର ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ସାର୍ଥକ ହେବ ।

ତତ୍କଳର ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାରାୟଣ ଦାସ ପ୍ରାୟ ଚାଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ଜର୍ମାନୀ ରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାପିତ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କଳା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସହ ସେ ଖୁବ୍ ଓତପୋତ ଭାବରେ ଜଡ଼ିତ । ଗତ ମାସ ଉତ୍କଳ ପାଠକ ସଂସଦ ତାଙ୍କୁ “ବାଇମୁଣ୍ଡି ପ୍ରତିଭା” ସମ୍ମାନରେ “ଉତ୍କଳ ବିଶ୍ୱକର୍ମା ” ଉପାଧୀ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଅଛି ।

## **A solution to dire needs in oDiSA - SERVICE ABOVE SELF**

*(The following four paragraphs are simulations of actual events. Names and places are fictitious.)*

Babu was late. He so much wanted to be on time. To meet with his future brother-in-law would be exciting in itself. But things were more complicated than that. His father Gopinath had just retired, and like most people in his situation, was unable to provide for the family. His only sister, Kuni had yet to be married. Until then the family must somehow stay on in Bhubaneswar. Finding a suitable groom in the village would be next to impossible, at least a good mannered and well-employed young man that would fill the dream Kuni had harbored and the old parents had prayed for. Babu was sure this would be the lucky day. Shankar might be just the answer to the family's prayers. He assured his little sister, saying "Kuni, don't worry. Your brother is here, and if the boy is not good enough for my eyes, I shall not rest till I find you your dream bridegroom."

Gopinath called out to Babu to be careful as he got on his scooter strapping on his helmet. So obedient, his father thought to himself. Babu's mother called to him to ask if he ate his breakfast. Babu gestured to her to signal he could not hear her above the "phut-phut" of the scooter but smiled impishly and swung the scooter around to face the street. His mother waved from inside the doorway saying something about reserving a special bowl of "khir" and "ChhenA Poda" for him to eat on his return. Babu was so proud of his new scooter he had just purchased with his own savings. This made it easy for him to go to work and also do the tuition classes thrice each week. He could perhaps find more work, now that he had the scooter, he had assured his father. He swung out of the narrow lane turning into the main road greeting neighbors and waving once toward Kuni, now just visible through the dust behind him.

He did not know what hit him. The truck coming up behind him could not stop when Babu pulled up for two little boys that ran out onto the center of the narrow road, chasing their kite, eyes glued skyward. Babu was flung several yards to land against a pushcart laden with corrugated iron sheets for roofing. Babu's family heard the screech of brakes when the truck tried to stop. There was a loud impact, and then silence, but only for a second. People were shouting and someone came running down the street. Kuni felt her heart beating like thunderclaps. She held her brother tenderly lying in the dust bleeding profusely. He kept saying he was sorry, for one of the little boys had come under his scooter when the truck slammed into him from behind.

It was tragic. Not only because it occurred, for such events occur far too often, but also because not enough blood was available soon enough to save his life. He died later that afternoon in the City Hospital. Babu's life was lost needlessly along with the hopes and dreams of an entire family. The child too was severely injured and later succumbed due to loss of blood.

The following day was a Monday and we were at a meeting of the local Rotary Club. News of the tragedy and lack of adequate blood was brought up. An idea began to take shape. Could the situation be corrected? It would cost over a Crore of Rupees! The Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar together with the Rotary Club of Brighton, NY wrote a proposal and forwarded it to the The Rotary Foundation. They proposed to refurbish the equipment in the existing Blood Bank at the Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar.

They also proposed to establish a new Blood Bank at the Bhubaneswar (Old Town) Municipal Hospital. A third unit would be a mobile air conditioned van that could travel round to the outlying villages where it would screen people and collect blood from eligible donors. The blood collected would be frozen immediately and transported to the hospital at night for further processing. The mobile unit would be used also as a mobile classroom in the rear of the van, to teach disease awareness, animal husbandry and literacy programs.

The efforts resulted in a grant of over \$300,000.00 from the Rotary Foundation to match the \$25,000.00 seed capital raised from private individuals and the two Rotary Clubs. Many of the donations were from oDiA residents of USA. A dream became a reality. The program is now fully functional, contributing immensely toward the quality of life of the local population.

In the aftermath of the super cyclone of October 1999, which destroyed many lives, villages and live stock, another grant has been obtained from the Rotary Foundation to urgently repair and reinforce many buildings that will serve as storm shelters and community centers. When not used as a shelter they will be utilized as classrooms for health awareness, HIV, AIDS, birth control and literacy lessons. In addition to this, a third proposal has been submitted to the Rotary Foundation for consideration. 25 concrete shelters are to be built in the coastal belt to provide safe haven to local villagers in the event of another cyclone coming on shore. The shelters are to be put to good use in between storms. Local Rotary Clubs will be responsible for operation of each shelter. Apart from the literacy and health awareness programs, advice will be available to local farmers on how to grow better crops, better agriculture methods and animal husbandry.

Members of the Rotary Clubs involved are grateful for the contributions, interest and encouragement received from the oDiA population residing in the USA and a few others. Rotary was the vehicle that made delivery of this service possible.

About Rotary: (source – [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org))

Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders, united worldwide, who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. In more than 160 countries worldwide, approximately 1.2 million Rotarians belong to more than 29,000 Rotary clubs. Rotarians develop community service projects that address many of today's most critical issues, such as children at risk, poverty and hunger, the environment, illiteracy, and violence. They also support programs for youth, educational opportunities and international exchanges for students, teachers, and other professionals, and vocational and career development. The Rotary motto is "*Service Above Self*".

The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International is a not-for-profit corporation that promotes world understanding through international humanitarian service programs and educational and cultural exchanges. It is supported solely by voluntary contributions from Rotarians and others that share its vision of a better world. Since 1947, the Foundation has awarded more than US\$1.1 billion in humanitarian and educational grants, which are initiated and administered by local Rotary clubs and districts.

A few personal impressions of Rotary and its impact from around the globe follow.

(Source – [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) )

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**Name:** Charles A. Rogers  
**Position:** District Governor  
**Club:** Rotary Club of Celebration District 6980  
**Location:** Celebration, Florida USA  
**Email:** [charlie.rogers@celebration.fl.us](mailto:charlie.rogers@celebration.fl.us)

#### Comments

Rotary is the world's oldest and largest international service organization. It's motto, "Service Above Self" exemplifies the dedication to international understanding and world peace we strive to achieve. Collectively we give back, both to our local and global communities, far more than we could ever do individually. Comprising almost 1.2 million men and women in 163 countries, Rotarians daily make a difference in thousands of peoples lives. I'm proud of the service and money I've invested in an organization that will have eradicated polio as a disease during my lifetime and can do so much more in the future.

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**Name:** Tom Ewen  
**Position:** Past District Governor  
**Club:** Barrie-Huron - District 7010  
**Location:** Barrie, ON Canada  
**Email:** [tewen@bconnex.net](mailto:tewen@bconnex.net)

#### Comments

Rotary International exists in 163 countries. I like to think that our inter-nationality evolves because of Rotarians' involvement through the avenue of International Service. Rotarians have seized the opportunity to assist the less fortunate in a multitude of ways - immunization programs, water and sanitation projects, vocational training, education, housing; the list is endless. These people are being presented with numerous opportunities to enhance their lifestyles. Multi-faceted programs address disease and sickness, which leads to reduced mortality rates. Through Vocational Training programs they acquire skills that lead to employment opportunities; thus reducing their dependency on others.

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**Name:** Allan R. Frumkin  
**Position:** Rotarian  
**Club:** Red Bluff; District 5160  
**Location:** Red Bluff, CA., USA  
**Email:** [frumal@aol.com](mailto:frumal@aol.com)

#### Comments

Rotary is the Miracle of.....a World Without Borders. At a time when children lose life and limb because adults disagree about borders, religious preference, ethnic background etc., only in Rotary have I, time and again, stood in a room with my brothers and sisters of every race, every nationality, every religion and understood that, despite these differences, we are, in fact, brothers and sisters. Service unites us - Rotarians do not allow us to be pitted against one another.

**Name:** Robert Tuttle  
**Position:** Past Club President  
**Club:** Marin Evening, 5150  
**Location:** San Rafael, California, U.S.A.  
**Email:** [tuttlebob@home.com](mailto:tuttlebob@home.com)

**Comments**

Tired of too many goals and objectives; Tired of not knowing where your money is going or what it is being used for; Tired of being around people with mixed motivations. Join Rotary; Service Above Self & Participation in Club, Community, Vocational and International work that everyone is behind.

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**Name:** Vince Pinto  
**Position:** Past Club President  
**Club:** RC Kowloon Golden Mile - District 3450  
**Location:** Hong Kong  
**Email:** [pinto@selpro.com.hk](mailto:pinto@selpro.com.hk)

**Comments**

I wanted to be part of a community service organization, which had no religious or political affiliations, and I joined my Rotary Club in 1989 when the RI theme was "Enjoy Rotary". I had so much fun with my new friends, who really knew how to do the serious work of serving the community with such a "joie de vivre", that I have never looked back.

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**Name:** Flemming Sørensen  
**Position:** District Governor  
**Club:** RC of Faxe, District 1480  
**Location:** Fakse, Denmark  
**Email:** [faas@post.tele.dk](mailto:faas@post.tele.dk)

**Comments**

Join Rotary in order to give help (economical or practical) to suffering peoples around the world - a help, which will always reach the place, where it is needed. Join Rotary to get into a friendship worldwide with all the facilities thereby. I know, that I had never met so many friends without Rotary.

For more information, please visit [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

If you need help to locate a Rotary Club in your vicinity, please contact the writer.  
(Rotarian) Bhabesh C. Dash, Life Member of OSA.

**Rehabilitating a Cyclone-ravaged Village in Orissa:**  
**An initiative under Our Village Project at**  
**Bhitara SriChandan Pur**

***Introduction***

The aftermath of 1999 Super-cyclone that devastated major parts of Orissa's coastal belt and brought about untold miseries to millions, engendered an unprecedented ground swell of enthusiasm among the Oriyas living in the USA to help the survivors of this unprecedented catastrophe. Members of the Oriya community at-large, living in the Washington DC metropolitan area were no exception. They were active in raising funds and relief supplies to send to Orissa through various relief and aid agencies.

As relief supplies poured into Orissa from different parts of the world, it was becoming increasingly clear that, beyond the immediate need for food, medicine, clothes and temporary shelter, the need to counter the potential risks of similar disasters in the future is paramount. It was also evident that to solve massive problems of this nature, simply replacing the materials and structures destroyed in the cyclone would not be enough. One must focus on the total development of the poor and neglected communities in Orissa. To help them strengthen themselves not only to face the wrath of nature but also to improve their general economic and educational standards.

It is in this context that a group of Oriyas from the Washington area perceived the need to band together and work towards not only "rehabilitating in the short-run" but also "integrated rebuilding for the long-run", the villages affected by the killer cyclone. At a philosophical and strategic level what they wanted most was not just "quick-fixes" or "band-aids", but

solutions that can mitigate such disasters in the future and bring about an all-round development in these villages through the direct participation of the villagers themselves.

***The Organization***

Rebuilding for the long run is a tall order! But this group was ambitious enough to put their horns together and use every minute of resource available, including their own expertise in areas such as architecture, engineering, finance, health, and community work, to build these villages from ground-up. They wanted to make it a cohesive, well structured and well managed effort, and named it "Our Village Project", to emphasize the partnership between the villagers and the helpers. Furthermore, they formed a charitable organization called Our Village Trust (OVT for short) to provide a stable structure under which to accomplish this mission. OVT was created as an IRS 501(3)(c) organization in January 2000, to carry out developmental work in disaster-hit areas at zero overhead, while ensuring high ethical standards and full accountability.

From its very inception, OVT aimed at maintaining a formal discipline and a balanced plan for all its work. Its approach was to be rather conservative, and take small steps at a time after thorough evaluation by all its members. All important decisions were made by its Board of Directors (an IRS nomenclature) through simple majority.

The newly formed organization soon devoted its energy to come up with a

development plan, the name of NGOs to help implement the plan, a village willing to cooperate, and the initial funding. OVT members visited the village several times at their personal expense, and slowly the plan started to take shape.

### ***A Development Plan***

It was a foregone conclusion that, as in the case of Andhra Pradesh, the risks of similar catastrophic cyclone in Orissa, year after year, are real. The other indisputable example is Bangla Desh, which has had its share of catastrophic cyclones. It was also clear that in the villages that were hit by the cyclone, people living in brick and mortar houses survived much better than people living in thatched houses. Therefore, the obvious conclusion was that in order to rebuild any village to counter such killer cyclones in the future, one has to include structurally sound dwellings that are made of brick and mortar. Thus, in the full developmental plan that was created for Our Village Project, cyclone-proof housing became an integral part.

The plan itself was ambitious, and entailed a multi-prong, multi-phase development approach, which included:

1. Building a community center to foster a strong community spirit – which would be a gathering place for cultural events, educational activities, health camps, vocational training, village library; and also serve as a cyclone shelter
2. Providing aid for building small (~ 200 sq. ft.) brick-and-mortar houses for each family in harmony with the village surroundings. It would not only provide security against cyclonic dangers, but also raise their awareness, and motivate them to reach a higher standard of living and take better care of their environment.
3. Providing better income generating plans and agricultural assistance.

4. Providing vocational training, adult education, health/environmental education, and youth camps.

OVT planned to engage an NGO, who shared OVT's ideologies, to supervise day-to-day progress in the chosen village. Loksevak Yuba Mandal (LYM), a local branch of the national Indian organization, Lok Sevak Mandal, founded by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, was the answer to our search. They are a trusted, volunteer-based organization with dedication, determination and expertise required for such work.

### ***Funding***

Of course, raising the necessary funding for rehabilitating even a single village was not a trivial task. Most of the OVT members had helped raise a significant amount of money on behalf of OSA-Washington chapter through their personal efforts and contacts, and expected to receive that funding from OSA according to the established guidelines. But various reasons delayed its release for almost a year. However, that did not dampen the spirit of the OVT members. They found many supporters, believers and well wishers among the larger Oriya and other Indian communities in the USA, who wanted to see such progressive work to take place in Orissa. Along with words of encouragement, came monetary contributions from individual donors and from organizations in Arizona, Michigan and Minnesota, and of course from the OVT members, themselves.

### ***The First Village: Bhitara SriChandan Pur***

Bhitara SriChandan Pur, in the Erasama block of Jagatsingh Pur and with 46 families, was selected by OVT in February 2000 from a list of three villages recommended by LYM based upon our suggested criteria. OVT members visited

the area before making a final decision. The village was at the bulls-eye of the cyclone. The thatched roofs of all the mud houses were gone; and so were the farm animals. People had survived in chest-deep water for more than two days, clinging to walls and other structures. Luckily, most human lives were spared; and the villagers were very resilient, bent upon rebuilding their lives rather than brooding over their losses. All the families were way below the poverty level, with minimal education, but with a cooperative spirit rarely seen in more affluent communities.

We had decided to accomplish OVT's objectives in four phases, the first phase being the construction of the community center. This being a well-defined, stand-alone job should be easier to manage and should prepare us to handle the more complex jobs later. Houses were to be built in the next two phases. Income generation activities were to overlap with these three phases and continue into the fourth.

#### *Grants vs. Loans*

From the beginning, OVT believed in providing no major handouts. Thus, except for the community center, which was a grant, other facilities were intended to be provided through interest free loans. Agricultural loans were to be paid back by the villagers to their own village cooperative for recycling. Housing loans were to be paid back over a period of ten years, to be used in rebuilding other villages. Furthermore, the community center and the houses were to be built by the villagers' donated labor.

#### *Roles of LYM and HfH*

Our NGO, Loksevak Yuba Mandal played a crucial role in this development effort. They are a low-overhead organization, run by mostly volunteers with knowledge in social service, engineering and the like.

Through their frequent interaction with the villagers of Bhitara SriChandan Pur, they had developed a deep bonding and understanding with the villagers, and were very objective in assessing their requirements and requests. LYM completely oversaw the construction of the community center, and delivered it within budget.

However, building 46 houses was a big job, and we felt that LYM might not be able to accomplish it within our budgeted money, mainly due to escalating cost of materials in the cyclone-affected areas. Thus, we explored the possibility of Habitat for Humanity (HfH) to undertake this activity. HfH is an USA-based, non-profit organization dedicated to developing low-income communities through out the world, and has been active in Southern India, particularly Andhra Pradesh, for many years. (Former USA President Jimmy Carter is one of its active members). They have a "no hand-out" philosophy, similar to OVT's. Fortunately, HfH was coming to Orissa to help in the post-supercyclone reconstruction, and was willing to work with us in building the houses within our budget. HfH would initially share the house building cost, and recover the money from OVT over the next ten years, to use in the development of other communities.

#### *Getting to work*

The first task of OVT was to develop an architectural and engineering plan for the village community center, drawn by its own members with years of professional experience in the area. The ground was broken by LYM in March 2000. The villagers were very cooperative and enthusiastic in joining as a team.

Once the community center work proceeded smoothly, OVT decided to begin the house construction. One OVT

member went to the village in June, 2000 for several days, along with LYM, to explain to them the advantages of building stronger houses, with interest free loan from OVT, and how they would be able to afford to pay it back over 10 years using agricultural and other assistance provided by OVT. All the villagers agreed to it readily, and signed documents giving their consent. The construction was to be started by HfH after the monsoons were over.

### ***Hurdles***

However, in the ensuing period, the villagers changed their mind and refused to take the interest-free loan from OVT. Due to the outpouring of money in Erasama area from many fronts, most people there had developed an "entitlement" attitude. Other charity organizations started giving away free houses in neighboring villages. HUDCO loans were available easily, and for political reasons, many people preferred to take the HUDCO loan. There was also misinformation. Considering such factors, we had to re-evaluate our policy, and we decided not to ask the villagers of Bhitara SriChandan Pur to repay the housing loan, thereby making it free.

We encountered hurdles in the USA too. Some expected donations were not received by OVT at the right time, and there were other technical issues that delayed the disbursement of funds. That is when the OSA-Michigan chapter came forward and completely funded the construction of the community center in Bhitara SriChandan Pur. Since then, OSA-Michigan has played a major role in the rehabilitation efforts for that village.

There were many other difficulties, too numerous to mention here, but not strong enough, even collectively, to deter us or derail the project work. We believe that no project had ever completed successfully without encountering such distractions.

### ***Developing an Understanding with the Villagers***

We soon realized that the villagers had many wrong notions that needed to be dispelled. Especially, it was believed that money coming through OVT was a gift from the Clinton Administration, to be given away to the Erasama people. Only through repeated visits to the village, and long conversations with the villagers, we were able to change such beliefs, and convinced the villagers that OVT would be there on a long-term basis, to help them build a better future. Loksevak Yuba Mandal helped reinforce this idea. Finally, the villagers developed trust and goodwill towards OVT and were willing to become collaborators in the development effort; and things started to take a smoother course.

### ***Progress So Far***

The completion of the community center and direct interaction with the OVT members had a strong positive impact on the villagers' psychology. At times, they have come up with improvement ideas and suggestions of their own. They built all the bricks used in the community center and the houses, and provided their own labor. How much has been accomplished in the course of a year may be seen from the list below:

- The Community center was completed, and is being used for many things such as a sewing center and for housing a small school.
- The local Government, through our initiatives, completed an approach road, connecting the village to the main road and facilitating transportation to the village. It is a crucial step for the economic growth of the village.
- 23 houses are almost completed and work on the remaining 23 has started. These houses are add-ons to the existing structures.

- The two village ponds were cleaned, and are being prepared for fisheries
- Coconut and other plantations were done around the ponds and in people's back yards.
- Agricultural credits for subsidized seeds and fertilizers were promised/given for a year. This money is to be paid back to the village cooperative and recycled in the future years.
- Irrigational help in the form of a diesel engine was purchased and donated to the villagers. It would help in water supply to support three crops a year.
- A village cooperative was established to oversee the maintenance of the community center and to undertake community-based responsibilities.
- Sewing training was provided to the village ladies.
- A health camp was held in the village to address common health problems.
- A youth camp was held with the participation of volunteer college students.
- The villagers have built a temple for the "*Grama Dehati*", through their own initiative and efforts, as a part of the over-all improvement of their community.

A number of other incentives are being explored. They will be gradually adapted as people feel more comfortable and settled in their new environments.

### ***Pleasant Surprises***

There were many things that pleasantly surprised us during the course of this project:

- Dedication of LYM – When we started the job, we did not expect to find such a dedicated, reliable, voluntary organization. They were experienced, conscientious, and understood the local sentiments. They never hesitated to express their opinion and to suggest

corrections. They also tried to save OVT every penny they could.

- Spirit of the Villagers – At no time did the villagers seem intimidated or awed by us. They voiced their opinions and concerns very logically through a few articulate spokesmen. They appeared quite intelligent and down-to-earth, as well as respectful and civil.
- Unity of the Villagers – There was a strong cohesiveness and goodwill among the residents. For any meeting, given a few minutes notice through the ringing of a bell, each family would send a male member to participate.
- Interest of the Women – In most meetings, the women stayed home and did not participate. However, after some OVT members visited them in their homes and talked to them, they felt more free, and expressed a keen interest in having some education and vocational training to supplement their family's incomes.

### ***Lessons Learned***

There are many valuable lessons learned from this experience. Some of them were anticipated, but others came as big surprises:

- Developing trust and understanding with the people is very important. Most people are full of misconception, fed by media and other organizations, often for their own vested interest.
- Finding a reliable and trustworthy NGO is crucial when we are so far removed from the worksite (although e-mails and telephones help a lot). However, even the most honest and trusted have a different record-keeping practice than what we are used to in this country.
- Because of the amount of financial aid from other agencies coming to the area, people have options to pick and choose. So, we had very little leverage over the villagers on the basis of

money alone. And signing of documents did not mean a thing

- Providing houses is the most difficult part. Not only it is the most expensive, but also most challenging logistically and otherwise. Although we provided it for free in one village, people should be encouraged to build on their own with interest free loan and other help from us.
- In our enthusiasm to achieve something quickly, we were occasionally overly trusting and naïve. Still, we feel that is necessary to keep the incentive and maintain the momentum.
- There were many instances when our spirit was low, especially when problems arose unanticipatedly or we got harsh, unfair criticism from outsiders. However, we learned that this is the norm, rather than an exception, for any social work, and that we should not deter as long we have faith in ourselves.

### *Future Plan*

**Contributed by: Members of Our Village Trust**

## **VISION FOR NEW ORISSA**

### **An open letter to the new Orissa legislators**

Oriyas have reposed their immense trust on you at the hustings, and its important that you do not fritter away this trust, once again betraying the aspiration to rejuvenate Kalinga. As I presented in a December 1999 Conference held at Utkal University, the Oriya aspiration is to resurrect Kalinga that was once so dominant, that it kept the British and Muslim invaders at bay. Relics of Kalinga pride include our dominating presence in Indian culture as in one of four Hindu Dhams (Puri Jagannath) with a highly respected Sankaracharya, and myriad of temples epitomizing Hindu culture. Ironically, this dominant Kalinga of the yore might have left us behind a re-surging India in the wake of her independence from British Raj, as it generated few English speaking Oriya *babus* for central government policy making bodies.

Unfortunately, our political class that took control of the state has basically usurped the central government assistance to the hilt; howled empty slogans like establishing one thousand industries in as many days, made redundant foreign trips to sign memoranda of understanding that never materialized, patronized industries by only those that were ready to give kickbacks, and allocated state land only to the favored few. Testimonies of gross mismanagement abound:

- (i) Macheswar Industrial Estate filled with sick industries and palatial private residences of "industrialists" in government allocated lands,
- (ii) Rs. 16,000 crores of debt that cannot be paid,
- (iii) A bankrupt state exchequer that cannot pay staff salaries,
- (iv) Callous bureaucratic attitude that refuses to allocate land for a price to dominant information technology organizations like Tata Consulting Services, and
- (v) An unprofessional, non-transparent system instituted by bureaucrats, unqualified to evaluate financial feasibility (or is the system designed deliberately to generate kickbacks?).

The recent natural calamity was perhaps god-send for depraved bureaucrats who seem to be competing to oust each other to usurp the relief pie, rather than serve the devastated poor. What a shame to have the relief material lying in Kalinga stadium, undistributed for months!!

We can continue to blame each other. But, can we construct a solid foundation to rejuvenate the Oriya pride and develop the state? I am optimistic that we can turn the state around to restore the mighty Kalinga pride. My proposal does not need money, but volition on the part of new legislators to enact the following rational policies.

- (A) The first policy is to explicitly facilitate recruitment of outstanding professionals into all government executive posts (including the Chief Secretary) through a nationwide competition open to all Indians and to not restrict these posts to only certain cadres, such as, Indian Administrative Service or Indian Revenue Service. Obviously the candidate must have a strong commitment to develop Orissa, and be professionally qualified and experienced for the post. I cannot fathom how an IAS officer, who has virtually vegetated after the selection into the cadre, can be better suited to an administrative job (such as Chairman of Industrial Development Corporation of Orissa) than an MBA with relevant industry experience and success! Competition will induct highly skilled professionals into posts like Chief Secretary and will eventually force many inefficient and stolid state bureaucrats to change their attitude and behave rationally for the betterment of the state.
- (B) The second policy is to cut the state government expenditure by trimming the bureaucracy sufficiently.
- (C) The third policy is to create an independent Orissa Vigilance Commission (OVC), answerable only to people through the state legislature, with a power to confiscate the properties acquired by those individuals with values in excess of the means (incomes of the family), and hold

the individuals guilty until proven innocent in a court. [The CVC Bill being introduced by the central government will have a similar provision.]

- (D) The fourth policy is to upgrade Xavier Institute of Management to the level of the Indian Institutes of Management by ensuring that XIM is run professionally as per its original charter, which precludes a body like CENDERT that Jesuits have created (despite vehement opposition by the faculty) to oversee NGOs questionably linked to religious activities within the state. Incidentally, I have no prejudice against Christianity. I have read the Bible many times and have many Christian friends. I am not alluding to the political aspects of conversion within the state or the country. If Jesuits want to propagate their religion through an organization like CENDERT, they should, in my view, be free to do so as per Constitution, but they must be refrained from doing so from within a management institute that the state created with a considerable investment to train future entrepreneurs and managers for the state and the country. Currently, the fees collected from students can almost meet XIM's expenditure, and so the institute should not be bound by the dictates of foreign Christian missionaries' contributions for rural development within the state. XIM should not be in the business of channeling such funds to villages in Orissa. The state must force XIM to execute its principal mission through a competitively chosen professional Director with requisite business qualification and experience, unlike the current Director who is a botanist with no business experience and who tenaciously preaches religion. Orissa, like Andhra Pradesh, must have an eminent business institute, not shackled even remotely by any religious involvement or bureaucratic interference. The state must seek central government support to accomplish the goal of transforming the XIM to the level of IIMs (unless a new IIM can be started) to enhance its facility and faculty to guide the state in managing business and technology.

It is reassuring that the noose laid by the Reserve Bank of India and other Indian commercial banks on our state bureaucracy will act as a catalyst to implement the new policy proposals. The ulterior motive and goal of my proposal is to win the hearts and minds of genuine information technology industrialists and to enlist the trust and confidence of the RBI and investors including commercial banks. While we must continue to help our poor, and efficiently distribute relief to the devastated cyclone victims, the primary goal of our new legislature should be to seek ways and means of enhancing our revenue base through creation of new capital and expansion of new industries that do not disturb the environmental beauty of the state. It is possible to achieve such goals because Bhubaneswar has the necessary physical attributes of a Silicon Valley with an enormous potential for information technology industries to relocate due to a real congestion elsewhere like Mumbai and Bangalore. The propitious geographical features of Bhubaneswar have induced the central government to choose the city as one of the six information technology parks in the nation. The city has, however, remained a defunct center of technology thus far, mainly due to a hackneyed state bureaucracy, operating with a premise that allocating land is a favor granted to an industrialist, while the rest of the world, and even states within India, have gone out of their way to invite entrepreneurs through a highly professional and transparent approach. My proposal will aim to ensure that the bureaucracy is meant to serve the best interests of people and not act as medieval Lords to subjugate the masses, while aggrandizing themselves by granting favors to industrialists.

I envision that only by implementing the policies proposed here, can we hope to win the support of investors, bankers, and central government policy makers, and make them believe that Kalinga belongs to the same group of innovators that once depicted Orissa distinctly in the map of the Hindu culture. We have no way out, but to innovate our state administration and project ourselves to the rest of India that Oriyas can mean business. Why will taxpayers from other states subsidize non-performing Oriya bureaucrats and programs? You, dear legislators, have to be pragmatic, shed your standard politician mold and be visionary leaders to realize these issues right away and usher a new era of progress for Orissa. It is pathetic that the more the kickback a bureaucrat can muster (not the service he/she renders), the more the bureaucrat brags as a successful person in our society. This typical bureaucratic mentality must give way to that of service to people and commitment to economic development of the state. New laws as proposed here will definitely bring about positive changes in the corroding bureaucratic attitude.

My policy proposals may appear cosmetic, but they are indeed profound. I believe that these policies will emit a strong and credible signal to the central government policy makers, bankers, investors and entrepreneurs that Oriyas can set their house in order, and can, by proper innovation of the state administration process, surpass the rest of the nation. We have to prove our pre-eminence in India, not just culturally, but in finance and industry. But, we have no capital and are laden by heavy debt. The only way we can extricate ourselves from the precipice of an impending disaster is by proving that we are second to none in implementing a clean and efficient administration, run by professionals. This seems to be the only natural cost-less route to attract industries to make Bhubaneswar a successful information technology center. This will likely facilitate badly needed debt relief for Orissa from the Reserve Bank of India. We also need new revenues. Only by creating a climate conducive to industries through a transparent approval process and by inviting good industries to the state, can we hope to create new jobs and enhance our tax revenues. If we do not act now, we will continue to be consumed by the same bureaucratic process that has made Orissa a state of totally sick and failed industries! Oriyas have faith that you, dear new legislators, will act this time to improve their precarious plight.

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**Dr. Sankarshan Acharya**  
*Associate Professor of Finance*  
*University of Illinois at Chicago*

## **OSA Orissa Cyclone Relief Fund Report**

This report itemizes each organization that received funding through the Orissa Cyclone Relief Fund and provides a short summary of its activity as available. The report gives the name and address of the organization and the name of the official in the organization responsible for the work. Specific OSA individuals are listed who have volunteered to oversee work on behalf of OSA. OSA Secretary is the default contact person for all other projects. More details of the report and the list of donors appear in the OSA web page <http://www.orissasociety.org>.

- 1. Sarvodaya Relief Committee,  
Gunanidhi Bhavan, Thoria Sahi, Cuttack  
Contact Person: Sri Manmohan Chowdhury, President  
OSA contribution \$24,000.00**

Sarvodaya Relief Committee is a volunteer organization known for its grass-root work in the villages. The initial work of SRC in cyclone relief was concentrated on providing food and medical assistance, and cleaning the water systems in the cyclone-devastated area.

The rehabilitation work has been on house reconstruction and building new huts in many of the villages.

337 damaged dwellings and 72 new ones in eight villages in the Kunjakothi-Ajagarvedi area have been completed. The average cost of each new hut (15 ft x 10 ft, GI sheet roof) is about Rs. 13,000.00 and repair expense in average was about Rs 1,050.00.

SRC continues work in Bari and Nuadih. As of the end of 2000, 361 new houses have been completed. SRC also supported artisans in regaining livelihood and was instrumental in distributing paddy seeds to the farmers in the interior villages.

\$2,000.00 was allocated to SRC to work in the drought-affected region of Kalahandi district.

- 2. Ramakrishna Mission  
Belur Math, Howrah, West Bengal.  
Ramakrishna Mission, Vivekananda Marg, Bhubaneswar  
Contact Persons: Swami Smarananda, General Secretary, Belur.  
Swami Sibeswarananda, Secretary, Bhubaneswar.  
OSA contribution \$14,000.00**

Ramakrishna Mission is the premier volunteer organization with the monks and volunteers working in various education, healthcare and social welfare projects. It took a leading role during the initial days of relief work, taking the responsibility of distributing relief supplies in Erasama, Kujanga and Paradip areas.

After April 2000, Ramakrishna Mission concentrated on building houses at Kunaguli area of Kunjakothi block. 330 brick houses (each of 210 sq ft area and added toilet) and 3 school-cum-cyclone shelters were completed. The expenditure on each house was Rs 60,000, with the toilet adding an additional Rs 5,000. Each school-cum-cyclone shelter cost Rs 1,350,000.00. The last phase of the houses were handed over to the villagers in April 2001. The ceremony was presided over by His Excellency Sri M. M. Rajendran, the Governor of Orissa. Besides the work in Kanaguli village, three cyclone-shelters have been built at Kotang village in Kakatpur block in Puri district.

Ramakrishna Mission has also taken up the construction of Ma Jagulai Vidyamandir in Nagaspur, Cuttack. Vedanta Society of Tornoto and OSA Ozark Chapter have actively contributed to this effort.

### **3. Basundhara**

**Basundhara Nagar, Abhinaba Bidanasi, Cuttack.**

**Contact Persons: Smt Saila Behera, Secretary.**

**Smt Anjali Misra, Flint, Michigan (OSA)**

**OSA contribution \$20,500.00**

Basundhara is a rehabilitation center for children, women and adults in distress and has a remarkable record in relief and rehabilitation work. Ms. Jayashree Mahanti of Michigan volunteers on-site with the organization on a regular basis. Basundhara hosted the OSA Survey meeting in November 2000.

Besides providing food and clothing in the immediate aftermath of the cyclone, Basundhara has taken a leading role in providing shelter to the orphaned children. 92 orphaned children in Ambiki, Padampur, Ajarbedi, Olara, Baleiputr, Sahada, Jalya, Chakuliabasa and Padampur were provided support. Medical and financial help was provided to widowed women and single mothers. Assistance to rebuild houses was provided in Tirtol, Erasama, Marshaghai, Barachana, Budhakendua and Niali blocks.

Besides housing and welfare help, Basundhara had a successful paddy seed distribution and shallow tube well program. 78 tube wells and 11 pumps were installed in Erasama block providing a head start to *dalua* farming. Several drinking water projects have also been undertaken. Basundhara is active in assisting people in restarting trades. Fishing boats, fishing nets and training widowed mothers in various skills are other important projects.

- 4. The Samaj Relief Fund**  
**Servants of the People Society (Orissa Branch)**  
**Gopabandhu Bhawan, Cuttack.**  
**Contact Person: Smt. Manorama Mohapatra, Convener.**  
**OSA contribution \$5,000.00**

The Samaj Relief Fund has been in the forefront of relief efforts in Orissa since 1920. Immediate relief assistance was provided by the Fund volunteers in the interior regions of Erasama and Kujanga. Continued rehabilitation work has continued through the sister organization Lok Sevak Yuva Mandal (see below).

- 5. Loksevak Yuva Mandal**  
**Madhupur House, Buxibazar, Cuttack.**  
**Contact Persons: Sri Prabhas Acharya, Secretary.**  
**Smt Anjali Misra, Flint, Michigan (OSA).**  
**OSA contribution \$15,000.00**

Loksevak Yuva Mandal is a local organization in Cuttack. It's active in education, environment and national integration. It took major steps in constructing a school-cum-cyclone shelter in the village of Bhitara Srichandanapur in Kujanga block. OSA Michigan chapter supported this project. The shelter is augmented by houses for the villagers being constructed by Orissa Village Trust, Inc., supported by OSA Washington Chapter.

- 6. Ramadevi Mahila Silpodyaga Sangathana**  
**P.O. Tarpur, District - Jagatsinghpur.**  
**Contact Person: Smt Dharitri Dash, Secretary.**  
**OSA contribution \$6,000.00**

Ramadevi Mahila Silpodyaga Sangathana is run by women social workers and runs a Cooperative Society for the women weavers. The weaving center, looms and the raw materials were destroyed in the cyclone causing unemployment to a hundred weavers. OSA funds were used to repair the old center and build two new rooms (10 feet by 12 feet). Six new looms, a new drum and eight *charkhas* have been purchased. Various accessories for the loom and 10 bundles of yarn were procured to bring the center to full functionality. The weaving center is back to normal operation.

- 7. Vijaya**  
**417 Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar.**  
**Contact Person: Smt. Chandrika Mahapatra, President.**  
**OSA contribution \$10,000.00**

Vijaya is an advocacy organization for women and children. It has been active in the inundated villages of the Astaranga, Gop and Kakatpur blocks in transporting much

needed food and clothing to the inaccessible areas. Its work on health and hygiene has been especially commendable.

OSA funding has been used in its Jeevan Dhara project aiming to provide clean drinking water in the villages. The project consisted of installing a tubewell and organizing a group of about a dozen women to operate on a trade with microcredit system. Loans ranging from Rs1, 000.00 to Rs 5,000.00 are payable back in three years. Installation of each tubewell costs about Rs 4,500.00.

Fifty tubewell projects have been completed in Niali block of Cuttack district and Kakatpur and Astaranga blocks of Puri district. Fifty more tubewell projects are under construction in Sakhigopal, Puri Sadar and Brahmagiri blocks. Villages are chosen on the basis of availability of fresh water in the area and the distance travelled by the villagers to fetch water. The project has been immensely successful.

- 8. Gandhian Institute of Technical Advancement (GITA)**  
**Vill: Jagannathpur, P.O.:Naindipur, Dist.: Kendrapara.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Prasant Kumar Mishra, Chief Executive.**  
**OSA contribution \$8,000.00**

GITA is a leading non-governmental agency working among the poor people creating sustainable development, environment and sanitation awareness with emphasis on conservation. It's active in Khurda, Kendrapara and Koraput districts. It participated in immediate relief work in Kendrapara area in providing food and shelter.

OSA funds have been utilized to create an Agro-Service Center for one hundred beneficiaries in Garadpur and Patkura Gram Panchayats. The Service Center has purchased a power tiller, two diesel pumps and other agricultural implements. The Center resources are utilized by the beneficiaries for credit or cash. A revolving loan of Rs500.00 grant is made available to each beneficiary. A manager looks after the day to transactions at the Center. The Center has been extremely successful needing demand to open new Centers.

The *kharif* yield has been excellent. The organization is interested in creating a Live Stock Center if more funding would be available.

- 9. Society for Promotion of Rural Technology and Education (SOPORTE)**  
**Bont Chhak, Bhadrak.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Sitakanta Dash, President.**  
**OSA contribution \$3,000.00**

SOPORTE, a grass-root village-based organization, works in 48 villages in Dhamnagar, Tihidi, Basudevpur and Bhadrak blocks in Bhadrak district. These areas were massively hit with incessant rain and winds during the supercyclone with about 90% loss of vegetation. The organization provided immediate food and medical help in these villages.

OSA funds were used to create alternate income resources for the villagers through gardening. High-yielding vegetable seeds were procured and were distributed in seven villages in Shyamsundarpur and Bental Gram Panchayats. Two diesel pumps were procured and were rented out at Rs 5 per hour. The rent helps to defray the costs. The vegetable yield from the land was excellent. The villagers used the vegetables and the surplus was sold in the market. The surplus profit was about Rs40, 000 from the project.

**10. Sri Jagannath Rural Development Organization (SRDO)**

**Vill: Jagatpur, P.O.:Beruda, Dist.: Jajpur.**

**Contact Person: Sri Bipin Bihari Nayak, Secretary.**

**OSA contribution \$2,000.00**

SRDO is an organization, focused on health and hygiene of the poorer sections of the society. It made a proposal to create income resource for the cyclone-affected villagers through animal husbandry. 25 poor families in Ampore, Rasalpur, Hasinipur, Kunida, Iswarpur, Jamuna, Jagatpur, Bhagatpur and Bahabalpur were selected. Each family was given a milch cow (cost Rs 3,300.00). The families paid back Rs 100 a month towards the procurement and these funds were used to assist new villagers. The project targets to reach 170 families in 17 villages with continued funding.

**11. Social Awareness Institution (SAI)**

**Divine Nagar, Nayabazar, Cuttack.**

**Contact Person: Sri Ashok Kumar Hota, Secretary.**

**OSA contribution \$3,000.00**

SAI is a five-year old organization working principally in the areas of health, education, environment and sanitation. It operates in Cuttack, Kendrapara and Mayurbhanj districts. Most trees in the area were uprooted through the supercyclone. SAI proposed a plantation project in the villages of Dalanta, Agarbindha, Jampara and Goudgaon in Jampara Gram Panchayat. The project was undertaken during the three-month period May through July 2000.

With an eye for community participation, women and youth of the area were organized through seminars and expert resource persons were invited during the month of May to motivate people on planting. Laborers were engaged in leveling the land to prepare for planting. Saplings of mango, guava, lemon, papaya, banana, cocoanut, betelnut and those for mass plantation like akasia, eucalyptus, *neem* and *chakunda* were procured from Oriflora at Cuttack. All plantings were completed in July. The trees are well nurtured and are bringing back greenery to the lndscape of the area. Fruit trees will become productive shortly.

**12. Development Alternatives through Research and Innovative Action (DARIA)**

**Vill: Baranga, P.O.:Alasahi, Dist.: Puri.**

**Contact Person: Sri Ashok Kumar Behera, Secretary.**

**OSA contribution \$2,000.00**

DARIA is an organization working in the coastal Astaranga area in the areas of agricultural development and animal husbandry. It has deep roots in the community and has been active in the awareness campaigns on health, hygiene and human rights. A project proposal for plantation and Agro-Service Center was received and was partially funded. The villages involved were Baranga, Olihan, Asana, Patasundarapur, Alasahi Patna, Anata and Alasahi.

DARIA initiated an innovative sapling distribution program among the villages by organizing thirty women self-help groups. 1000 saplings consisting of drumstick, papaya, banana, *bela* etc and 1,500 coconut plants were distributed. A diesel pump was procured and loaned to the villagers. The project has helped in restoring the agricultural income of the villagers as well as providing winter vegetables to the families.

**13. Odiani**

**Satasankha, Puri.**

**Contact Person: Smt Niramani Sahoo, Chief Functionary.**

**OSA contribution \$2,000.00**

Odiani was established in 1992 and works to train scheduled caste and backward caste women into productive employment. It submitted a proposal to create productive employment in coir craft manufacturing for one hundred poor women in Indalo Gram Panchayat of Kendrapara district. The proposal was partially funded and further funding would be necessary. The women were given stipends and were trained for a month by three instructors. The material produced is of export quality and deserves a good market.

**14. Asha Nayakam Seva Sangh (ANSS)**

**Vill: Benjarpur, P.O.:Mandari, Dist.: Jajpur.**

**Contact Person: Sri Padmanabh Jena, Secretary.**

**OSA contribution \$2,250.00**

ANSS was established in 1975 after the massive floods that year and operates to assist in socio-economic developments in its area of operation. It ran a very efficient project of supplying twenty-eight milch cows to deserving villagers in Shrirampur, Bejarapur, Mandari and Berhampur villages. Each cow costs an average of Rs4, 000.00 and it has been of immediate benefit to the villagers. Each person makes an income of Rs100.00 per day by selling milk and dairy products.

- 15. Loka Shakti Unnayan Sanstha (LSUS)**  
**Vill: Bari Malia Ghai, P.O.:Bari Kalamatia, Dist.: Jajpur.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Siba Prasad Nayak, General Secretary.**  
**OSA contribution \$2,000.00**

LSUS is a local organization working for the welfare of the villagers in Bari area. It helped in repairing several houses and constructing five new houses. The beneficiaries are: Dolia Malik, Banamali Malik, Bishia Malik, Madhu Jena, Jhitu Malik, Baishnaba Malik, Anadi Malik, Adikanda Malik, and Tunji Bewa. LSUS is commended for its efforts in bringing people together in the village construction efforts. OSA reimbursed the expenses.

- 16. Maindipur Yuvaka Sangha**  
**Vill: Maindipur, P.O.:Chasikhanda via Anakhia, Jagatsinghpur.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Bipin Bihari Pattanaik, President.**  
**OSA contribution \$1,800.00**

Lalit and Asima Pattanaik put efforts in raising funds to help rebuild the Middle School in their village. The School was completely destroyed in the supercyclone and now has been fully functional. OSA congratulates the organizers for their efforts.

- 17. Utkala Sarvodaya Mandal**  
**Angul, Dhenkanal.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Manmohan Chowdhury.**  
**OSA contribution \$2,000.00**

The supercyclone devastated the freedom fighters' hostel called Baji Rout Chhatrabasa in Angul. OSA supported to rebuild the hostel and provide temporary help in food and amenities.

- 18. Konarka Natya Mandap**  
**Arka Vihar, Konarka.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Gangadhar Pradhan, Director.**  
**OSA contribution \$2,000.00**

Konarka Natya Mandap is a premier cultural organization of Orissa helping to revive the traditional dance forms through presentation and training. The stage and the hostels were demolished because of the cyclone. OSA funds have helped to restore the stage and parts of the residential areas.

**19. Nivedita Ashram**

**At/P.O: Patalipanka, via Kujanga, Dist.: Kendrapara.**

**Contact Person: Smt Pramila Tripathy, Secretary.**

**OSA contribution \$1,000.00**

Nivedita Ashram is an orphanage run by Lutheran Mahila Samity in the interior areas of Kendrapara. The number of residents in the orphanage has increased five times after the cyclone. OSA helped food expenses for 260 residents for a month. More help is needed for the betterment of the children.

**20. National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF)**

**Thiruvanthapuram, Kerala.**

**Contact Person: Mr. Harekrishna Debnath, Chairperson.**

**OSA contribution \$2,500.00**

NFF is a part of World Forum of Fishharvesters and Fishworkers (WFF) that assists fishermen worldwide. OSA funds were utilized in providing 24 fishing implements and building eleven houses in Ajrepally village in Ganjam district. NFF worked in the area after the first cyclone hit Ganjam on October 15, 1999.

**21. Kalinga Hospital**

**Chandrasekharapur, Bhubaneswar.**

**Contact Person: Sri Mana Ranjan Pattanayak, Executive Vice-President.**

**OSA contribution \$5,153.00**

Friends of Kalinga Hospital organization in USA helped raise funds to provide relief efforts in cyclone affected areas of Orissa. Food and clothing were distributed in Bhubaneswar and the adjacent areas. Hospital doctors provided free medical help to the distressed. Medicines obtained from relief agencies were distributed with the help of the volunteers.

**22. THRIVE**

**Needham Heights, Massachusetts, USA.**

**Contact Person: Smt Monalisa Patnaik, Secretary.**

**Sri Budhinath Padhy, Northboro. MA (OSA).**

**OSA contribution \$4,500.00**

THRIVE is a young organization reaching out to the people of Orissa in the areas of health and education. The New England Chapter of OSA raised funds to assist efforts in building a Community Cyclone Shelter in Jagatsinghpur. Full reports on the construction are not received.

- 23. Brighton Rotary Foundation**  
**Rochester, New York, USA.**  
**Contact Person: Dr. Robert A Penty, Chairman.**  
**Sri Satish Jena, Naperville, IL (OSA).**  
**OSA contribution \$17,000.00**

Funds were raised by OSA Chicago and Ozark Chapters raised \$15,000 and \$2,000 respectively to help support a matching grant proposal by Brighton Rotary Foundation to construct six cyclone shelters in the Bhubaneswar area. The funds will be refunded back to OSA in case Rotary International rejects the proposal.

- 24. Rotary Club of Berhampur**  
**Berhampur, Ganjam.**  
**Contact Person: Sri P. K. Padhy, Governor.**  
**Sri Satish Jena, Naperville, IL (OSA).**  
**OSA contribution \$2,300.00**

Funds from OSA Chicago Chapter were sent to help cyclone victims in the city. Detailed report from the organization has not been received yet.

- 25. HELP**  
**Paradip, Jagatsinghpur**  
**Contact Person: Sri Sourjya Kumar Khandai.**  
**OSA contribution \$2,500.00**

Funds from OSA Chicago Chapter have been dispatched to help build a cyclone shelter. Full reports have not been received yet.

- 26. Utkala Sevak Samaj (USS)**  
**Mahanadi Vihar, Nayabazar, Cuttack.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Amiya Bhusan Biswal, Secretary.**  
**Sri Naresh Das, Columbia, MD (OSA).**  
**OSA contribution \$4,000.00**

OSA Washington Chapter supports the efforts in educational projects. Full reports have not been received yet.

- 27. Volunteers Association for Rural Reconstruction & Social Action (VARRSA)**  
**Ramakrushnapur via Barapada, Bhadrak**  
**Contact Person: Sri Sushanta Ranjan Mohanty, Director.**  
**Sri Naresh Das, Columbia, MD (OSA).**  
**OSA contribution \$4,000.00**

OSA Washington Chapter supports the efforts in educational projects. Full reports have not been received yet.

- 28. Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society (SEEDS)**  
**Portland, OR.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Priyadarsan Patra, Director.**  
**OSA contribution \$48,000.00**

SEEDS comprises of a group of volunteers that has been active in projects of socio-economic development in Orissa. They have worked on various relief related projects in association with a NGO called, Unnayan. Details of the activity will be published at the website <http://www.seedsnet.org>

- 29. Orissa Village Trust (OVT)**  
**Columbia, MD.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Indu B Mishra, President.**  
**Sri Suresh Kodolikor, Ellicott City, MD (OSA).**  
**OSA contribution: \$25,000.00**

OVT is a newly formed US Foundation to support developmental activities abroad. It has taken the task of building houses in the village of Bhitara Srichandanpur and is working with Habitats for Humanity (HfH) on the project. The full reports on the progress are reported in a separate article in this issue of the souvenir.

- 30. OSA Reimbursements**  
**Amount: \$4,381.70**

Remibursements are made for onsite relief work and donations.

- (a) \$3,000.00 to Anadi Naik for donations to Sarvodaya Relief Committee, Vijaya and Basundhara and the villagers.
- (b) \$881.70 to Souryaknata Khandai for work in Nuagan and Dhandia.
- (c) \$500.00 to Bijoy Misra for donation to Ramadevi Mahila Silpodyoga Anusthan, Astaranga Harijan Club and Ma Sarala Sahayaka Samiti.

- 31. Kalahandi Vikash Parishad (KVP)**  
**Sunabaheli, Kalahandi.**  
**Contact Person: Sri Rabi Dash, Secretary.**  
**OSA contribution \$2,000.00**

Funds given to assist in drought relief work in Kalahandi. Full details will be reported in the next year's souvenir.

- 32. India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF)**  
**Bethesda, MD.**  
**OSA Contribution: \$38,000.00**  
**Contact Person: Anadi Naik, Mt Airy, MD (OSA).**

Full details of the transaction and project reports have not been received yet.

Respectfully submitted,

Bijoy Misra  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Orissa Society of the Americas.  
May 31, 2001.

**PRESIDENTS  
of the  
ORISSA SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

|                  |      |                            |
|------------------|------|----------------------------|
| Gauri Das        | 1970 | Boston, Massachusetts      |
| Bhabagrahi Misra | 1971 | Hartford, Connecticut      |
| Gauri Das        | 1973 | Boston, Massachusetts      |
| Amiya 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 Mishra  | 1991 | Birmingham, Alabama        |
| Sita Kantha Dash | 1993 | Minneapolis, Minnesota     |
| Hemant Senapati  | 1995 | Bloomfield Hills, Michigan |
| Gopa Patnaik     | 1997 | Olivanhain, California     |
| Anadi Naik       | 1999 | Mount Airy, Maryland       |

**VENUES OF OSA ANNUAL CONVENTIONS**

|      |                           |      |                          |
|------|---------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| 1970 | Hartford, Connecticut     | 1986 | Toronto, Ontario, Canada |
| 1971 | Hartford, Connecticut     | 1987 | Stanford, California     |
| 1972 | Riverdale, New Jersey     | 1988 | Saginaw, Michigan        |
| 1973 | Riverdale, New Jersey     | 1989 | Nashville, Tennessee     |
| 1974 | College Park, Maryland    | 1990 | Washington, DC           |
| 1975 | Riverdale, New Jersey     | 1991 | Chicago, Illinois        |
| 1976 | Toronto, Ontario, Canada  | 1992 | Atlanta, Georgia         |
| 1977 | Riverdale, New Jersey     | 1993 | Troy, Michigan           |
| 1978 | Wheaton, Maryland         | 1994 | Pomona, New Jersey       |
| 1979 | New Brunswick, New Jersey | 1995 | Minneapolis, Minnesota   |
| 1980 | Detroit, Michigan         | 1996 | Washington, DC           |
| 1981 | Chicago, Illinois         | 1997 | Houston, Texas           |
| 1982 | Minneapolis, Minnesota    | 1998 | Monterrey, California    |
| 1983 | Bowie, Maryland           | 1999 | Toronto, Ontario, Canada |
| 1984 | Glassboro, New Jersey     | 2000 | Nashville, Tennessee     |
| 1985 | Kent, Ohio                | 2001 | Chicago, Illinois        |

## THE 31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION OF OSA, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) was held at Nashville, Tennessee, from June 30 (Friday) through July 3 (Monday). About 700 people from all over the United States and Canada participated in this annual get-together. Events related to the convention were shared between the Sheraton Music City, a magnificent hotel that served as the headquarters for the convention, and the nearby McGavock High School.

The inaugural functions, presided by Sri Anadi Nayak, President of OSA, was addressed by two special guests from Orissa. The Chief Guest, Sri Bhagabat Behera, Minister of Primary Education, Government of Orissa, conveyed the good wishes of the Chief Minister, Sri Naveen Patnaik. He thanked all the benefactors, including non-resident Oriyas, for their enthusiastic support of the relief efforts in coastal Orissa after the devastating super cyclone of October 1999. Sri Behera appealed to all non-resident Indians to get involved in the post-cyclone reconstruction program in Orissa and proposed the formation of an Advisory Council, consisting of representatives of the Orissa Government and NRIs, to accelerate and sustain the reconstruction process.

Professor Rajat Kumar Kar, an eminent literary figure, addressed the Convention as the keynote speaker. Citing many examples, he extolled the richness of Oriya literature, one of the oldest vernacular literatures in India, and challenged the NRIs to participate in the task of disseminating the Oriya literature through new books and translations.

A highlight of the inaugural function was the nostalgic musical “*Juge Juge Odissa*” (“Orissa through the Ages”) produced especially for the occasion. It depicted the history of Orissa from the times of Emperor Ashoka to the modern age and set the stage for the multi-faceted cultural programs of the Convention.

The dominant theme of discussion in the General Body Meeting of the Society, an important component of the Convention, pertained to the involvement of OSA in the post-cyclone relief efforts in Orissa. Questions were raised about several other relevant issues, such as the partitioning of responsibilities between the OSA office-bearers and the organizers of the annual OSA Convention, but these could not be discussed adequately due to lack of time.

Several events at the Convention were devoted to the organization of post-cyclone reconstruction in Orissa. The seminar, “Rebuilding Orissa After the Cyclone” (Chair, Dr. Digambar Mishra, Moderator, Dr. Lalu Mansinha) focused on the continuing participation of various organizations, including OSA, in this effort. A second seminar, “Post-cyclone Orissa: Perspectives of Strategic Changes” (Chair, Dr. Digambar Mishra; Moderator, Dr. Manindra Kumar Mohapatra), discussed strategies that the Government of Orissa should implement in order to circumvent such disasters in future. The OSA officials, led by Dr. Bijoy Mishra, organized an exhibition entitled, “Orissa and Super Cyclone 1999”, that emphasized continued awareness of potential natural disasters

and highlighted the relief efforts accomplished by OSA. The exhibition provided a glimpse of the devastation and human suffering caused by the supercyclone and a reminder to all of us that the people in our home state need our help to combat this calamity.

Sri Satyen Pitroda, an entrepreneur of international repute, was the keynote speaker for the symposium entitled "The Role of Overseas Indians in Developmental Strategy for India in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". Sri Pitroda emphasized the urgent need for providing a stable infrastructure in terms of health and education, and for uplifting the rural economy through small-scale industries and the introduction of modern technology. The seminar entitled, "Coping with Cultural Conflicts: Challenges for a Woman" (Chair and Moderator, Ms. Josna Mishra), addressed various women's issues ranging from health and stress management to marriage.

Youth activities, planned entirely by their peers led by Mr. Shrimanta Mishra and Miss Anjali Joshi, included seminars and discussions. The topics were; "World Domination Led by Orissa", "Oriya Marriages for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", "The Future of Orissa". Other activities organized were, Oriya Speech Competition, Art Workshop, Poolside Luau for 12-17 year olds, and *Desi* Dance on the Sea for 18 years and above. The organizers should be commended for a very successful youth program that was meaningful and enjoyable for all participants.

Many participants appreciated the two sessions on Oriya poetry reading, "*Satabdira Jagruti*", one devoted to the

reading of poems written by poets across the United States and Canada, and the other for poems from traditional literature.

A novel feature of this Convention was the opportunity to participate in the *Ratha Jatra* festival held on Sunday, July 2 at the Ganesh Temple, located in the suburb of Nashville, under the auspices of the Jagannath Society of the Americas (JSA). It was an occasion for both traditional worship and cultural pride. The OSA and the organizers of the Convention thank the JSA for this unique opportunity, especially for the youth and the children (as well as for the delicious lunch that followed).

Thanks to the efforts of Pratap Das (Washington), Prabir Dash (Nashville), a group of dedicated volunteers, and an array of talented artists, there were plenty of cultural programs to keep the participants happily engaged in the evenings. The cultural programs included: the Promode Patnaik Inter-Chapter Competition; the Subrina Biswal Competition sponsored by IAFF (Indian-American Friendship Foundation); a session by "*Sadhana*", a musical group from Orissa; and performances by some renowned professional artists (for example, Sushree Sangita Kar, Nandita Behera, Mala Ganguly) and many amateur artists. As usual, the late-night *Mehfil* sessions, organized by Dr. Amit Chakravarty (Huntsville), were thoroughly enjoyable.

Several annual awards were presented at the Convention. The Distinguished Oriya "*Utkaliya*" Award went to Dr. Sitikhantha Dash of Minneapolis, a biotechnologist and entrepreneur.

Mrs. Gopa Patnaik of San Diego, CA was awarded the prestigious “*Kalashree*” award for her sustained efforts in promoting *Odissi* music and dance in the United States. Ashutosh Sahoo of Maryland claimed the “Subrina Biswal” award for the college-going senior for his exceptional academic record and strong contributions in the field of social work.

A Convention of this magnitude could not have been organized without the active cooperation of the OSA officials, the sustained efforts of an army of volunteers over a period of several months, and financial help from generous benefactors. Our sincere thanks to all those who helped, and to all of you who graced the occasion with your presence and endured our inadequacies with a smile.

***Kula C. Misra and Radhakanta Mishra***  
*Co-Conveners*

## THE 31<sup>st</sup> OSA CONVENTION, NASHVILLE, 2000

### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

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#### INCOME

|                                       |             |                    |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| <i>Collections for OSA</i>            |             | <b>\$ 5,400.00</b> |
| Annual Membership Dues                | \$ 1,370.00 |                    |
| Life Membership Dues                  | \$ 1,814.00 |                    |
| OSA Fee                               | \$ 2,216.00 |                    |
| <i>Collections for the Convention</i> |             | <b>\$86,322.75</b> |
| Registration                          | \$13,335.00 |                    |
| Meals                                 | \$34,168.00 |                    |
| Deposit for Hotel Rooms               | \$21,689.75 |                    |
| Donations                             | \$ 5,830.00 |                    |
| Advertisements                        | \$11,300.00 |                    |
| <b>Total Income for Convention</b>    |             | <b>\$91,722.75</b> |

#### EXPENSES

|                                                                                                  |             |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| <i>Registration</i>                                                                              |             | <b>\$ 9,019.27</b> |
| <i>Food</i>                                                                                      |             | <b>\$24,227.39</b> |
| <i>Cultural Programs</i>                                                                         |             | <b>\$10,843.21</b> |
| <i>OSA Journal Souvenir Issue</i>                                                                |             | <b>\$ 6,664.50</b> |
| <i>High School Rental</i>                                                                        |             | <b>\$ 2,013.00</b> |
| <i>Youth Activities</i>                                                                          |             | <b>\$ 6,223.82</b> |
| <i>Hotel Rooms</i>                                                                               |             | <b>\$21,689.75</b> |
| <i>Sports</i>                                                                                    |             | <b>\$ 440.00</b>   |
| <i>Bus for Ratha Yatra</i>                                                                       |             | <b>\$ 713.00</b>   |
| <i>Reimbursement for Travel and Telephone Charges</i>                                            |             | <b>\$ 1050.00</b>  |
| <i>Miscellaneous (Bank Adjustment, Canadian \$ Discount, Returned Check, etc)</i>                |             | <b>\$ 938.68</b>   |
| <i>OSA Address Directory</i>                                                                     |             | <b>\$ 3,682.08</b> |
| Printing                                                                                         | \$ 3,561.75 |                    |
| Mailing                                                                                          | \$ 120.33   |                    |
| <i>OSA Cyclone Exhibit</i>                                                                       |             | <b>\$ 635.00</b>   |
| <i>Paid to USA (Collection \$5,400.00 – Expenses for OSA Directory &amp; Exhibit \$4,317.08)</i> |             | <b>\$ 1,082.92</b> |
| <b>Total Convention Expenses</b>                                                                 |             | <b>\$89,222.62</b> |

#### BALANCE SHEET

|                                                  |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Surplus (\$91,722.75 - \$88,672.62)</i>       | <b>\$ 2,500.13</b> |
| <i>Paid to OSA (50% of Surplus)*</i>             | <b>\$ 1,250.07</b> |
| <i>Paid to Southern Chapter (50% of Surplus)</i> | <b>\$ 1,250.06</b> |
| <b>Convention Balance</b>                        | <b>\$ 0.00</b>     |

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\* The Convention accounts have been audited by an internal team consisting of Mr. Prabir Dash, President, OSA Southern Chapter, Dr. Panchanan Satpathy, and Mr. Manoj Senapati.

\* Total Paid to OSA = \$1,082.92 + \$1,250.07 = \$2,332.99.

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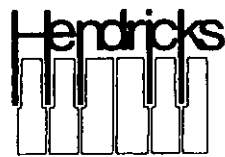


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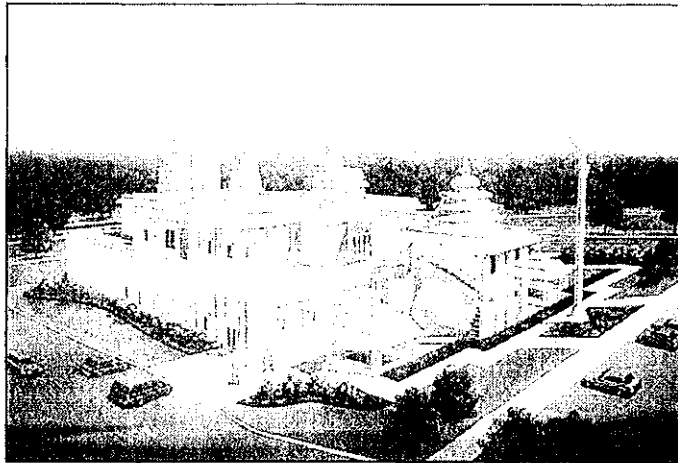
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in the spirit of the Lord  
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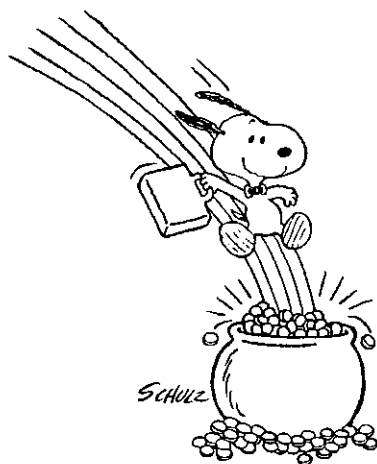


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*... We are distressed in our minds to see the people suffering from various tribulations and injuries on account of diseases of somatic, psychic, and traumatic origin, behaving helplessly and crying in agony... In order to cure these people who desire to be relieved of diseases as well as to keep up normal health...*

**Susruta, Physician and Surgeon  
Circa 500 B.C., Varanasi, India**



**Please participate with us for the advancement of healthcare in  
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