Journal of the Orissa Society of America

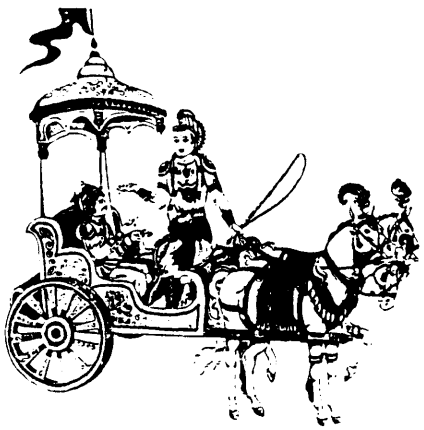
Thirty-fourth Annual Convention, July 4 - 6, 2003
Princeton, New Jersey

With best compliments on the occasion of 34th Annual convention 2003

Dr.Minati Pattanayak,M.D.
FAMILY PRACTICE

Pennsylvania Office
NEWTOWN MEDICAL OFFICE
THE ATRIUM- Suite 11
4-TERRY DRIVE
NEWTOWN, PA 18940
Tel.(215)968-5814

New Jersey Office
89 Somerset drive
Willingboro,NJ 08046
Tel.(609)877-4545



कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

Your choice is in action only, never in the results thereof.
Do not be the author of the results of action.
Let your attachment not be to inaction.

Bhagavadgītā 2.47

Orissa Society of the Americas

The Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention
Princeton, New Jersey
July 3rd-July 6th, 2003

OSA Souvenir 2003

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Associate Editor Dr. Bigyani Das

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OSA Executive Council

President Shanak (Nick) Patnaik
Vice President Leena Dehal
Secretary/Treasurer Lolly Ihrke
Editor Likun Mishra

Welcome.....

I take the opportunity of welcoming you all to this 34th Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas, hosted by the New York Chapter, being conducted in the historic city of Princeton, NJ, for the first time. It may be recalled that OSANY had the privilege of being the mother nucleus of the Orissa Society of the Americas way back in 1969 under the pioneering and visionary leadership of Late Dr. Krushna Mohan Das. OSANY also had hosted annual conventions eight times in the past, the last one being the Silver Jubilee of the Society in 1994.

We had been looking forward to this historic event for which tireless efforts and cooperation have been extended by numerous volunteers and members. Our sincere appreciation and thanks to all of them.

In selecting the theme "OSA in the new Millennium", we are conscious of the present condition of our cultural heritage in Orissa, its glorious past and its rich cultural pageantry. We have to debate and discuss how the State of Orissa can be rejuvenated from its present state. Whereas history can give us inspiration and lessons, living in the past is dangerous. Orissa must face its problems squarely by living in the present and plan to execute its visions for the new millennium.

The New York Chapter has spared no efforts in trying to make this Convention a unique experience of intellectual and cultural confluence for all of you. We hope that you will thoroughly participate and enjoy.

JAI JAGANNATHA, JAI UTKAL JANANI !

Saradindu Misra
Convener

Message From OSA President

Welcome to the New Jersey area! Like many of you, the annual convention has always been one of the highlights of my year. Convention means different things to different people. We get to see many members of our community talk and show off their talents in the cultural programs. We get to participate in seminars that touch on a range of interesting topics, such as seeking ways to improve Orissa or addressing the role that women play in Oriya society or providing guidance to teenagers on which college to select.

While I truly love those activities, to me the best thing about convention is the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. While some of my friends from my high school, college, law school and professional life have moved in and out of my life, my Oriya friends continue to play an important role in my life. There are many things that differentiate us – where we live, what we do for a living, how long we've lived in North America, etc. However, what binds us all is that we are all fortunate enough to be steeped in a wonderful and dynamic culture. That commonality provides a strong backbone for some great personal relationships.

Happily for me and for you, this Convention will provide me ample opportunity to meet our fellow Oriyas. Moreover, this Convention is special to me since the chapter that I grew up with – OSANY – is the host. Through my parents and now on my own, I have been a member of OSANY for almost my entire life. Our oldest chapter has hosted more Conventions than any other chapter, and the organizers have outdone themselves and have provided the excellent lodging, food and cultural programs to which we have all become accustomed. In addition, the Convention location in beautiful Princeton offers easy access to Atlantic City, the cradle of liberty – Philadelphia, and, of course, the capital of the world – my home, New York City. Hopefully, you will have an opportunity to enjoy the area.

Our time in office has been an interesting one, to say the least. While we have not been as successful as we would have liked, we have done our best to foster the well-being of OSA by encouraging new members to join and by encouraging old members to contribute what they can. We have also focused on making the organization run in a more professional manner, with appropriate record-keeping and fostering an environment where differences of opinion are discussed vigorously, but respectfully. We've stumbled, but we hope that we have justified your faith in us. We are indeed thankful to you all for having given us this opportunity.

With that, I once again welcome you to New Jersey. Enjoy yourselves!

With best regards,

Shanak (Nicki) Patnaik

राष्ट्रपति के निजी सचिव
PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO THE PRESIDENT

No.9/Per Cell/2003

राष्ट्रपति भवन,
नई दिल्ली - 110004.
RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN,
NEW DELHI - 110004.

June 10, 2003

Dear Shri Saradindu Misra,

Please refer to your letter inviting the President to be the Guest of Honour at the inaugural ceremony of the 34th Annual Convention of Orissa Society of the Americas on 4th July 2003 at Princeton, USA.

While thanking you for your kind invitation, the President regrets his inability to participate in the inaugural function of the 34th Annual Convention of Orissa Society of the Americas owing to prior commitments during that period. However, he sends his best wishes for the success of the programme.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(H Sheridon)

Shri Saradindu Misra,
Convener,
OSA Convention, 2003
44 Heather Court,
Monmouth Jct.,
NJ 08852 (USA)

MESSAGE

Life can only be understood backwards; it must be lived forwards-observed philosopher Kierkegaard. Orissa Society of the Americas rolls together the two perspectives, exhibiting or rather documenting each life (of Oriya-Americans) that, though specific in its particulars, is universal in its emotional resonance. They are bobbing through the churning waters of social and political changes, which predictably have to buoy each one to the top. I am confident with fewer resources and larger projects, OSA during poignant moments of the 34th convention, shall evince the courage of its members in exuding loyalty, friendship and love by transcending geographical barriers to live life forwards (while understanding it backwards). I wish great success of the convention, its Souvenir and each member and his family. JAI JAGDISH.

Bijan Ray,
Senior Advocate and Former Chairman, Orissa State Bar Council, Cuttack
98, Bay Blvd, Fayettville, GA 32104.

THE COVER

Cover design by Lalu Mansinha, with advice from Charu Hota and Bhaskar Sahoo.
The cover shows a scene from the life of Krishna, painted on silk by an unknown young artist in Raghurajpur. The village of Raghurajpur, about 15km from Puri, and 50km from Bhubaneswar, is a unique artist village of Orissa and is also the birthplace of Padmabhusan Guru Kelu Charan Mahapatra.
The *patta-chitra* painting tradition dates back probably to the 12th century, coinciding with founding of the temple of Lord Jagannatha. The artistic tradition was in serious decline, but has been revived through the efforts of an American art lover, Halina Zealey in the 1950s. Ms. Zealey's husband was then part of a project in Orissa of the American Friends Service Committee.
There are artists in every house in this village. Very young boys and girls can be seen creating the traditional paintings with paint and brush. With increased national and international tourism, much of the art is now not art, but manual reproduction, and they have branched out into other forms that sell to tourists, such as silk and palm-leaf paintings. And yet, there is the charm and beauty in each painting, as on this cover. For each painting carries with it the artistic traditions more than a thousand year old.

The four color paintings in this souvenir are the art works of Mrs. Rita Patnaik from Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

EDITORIAL

It has been a wonderful experience to trudge through these two hundred and fifty plus pages of this unique journal, a compilation of thoughts and feelings of our community. There are over one hundred twenty articles, stories and poems in this issue. Reading these pages was like walking through the woods, where its sylvan beauty is enhanced with the nostalgic memories of the past like those tiny droplets of dews adhering onto the soft blades of grass left over from a colorful night. This indeed is a memorable experience, so sweet and, I am sure, would continue to remain everlasting.

Over the years, we as a community have come along a long way overcoming many barriers and hardships that one would expect to encounter in a society so different from that of our origin. We are moving on steadfastly with a determination to achieve and a momentum to continue. The pages of this souvenir reflect that achievement in many ways. They reflect our thoughts and dreams. They resonate the vibration of a small but vibrant community. I hope this journal serves its purpose to reflect our concepts and commitments and our dreams and the hopes for the future.

This year the contribution of articles from our authors was unbelievably large. Articles were just pouring in well past our announced last date of submission. It is interesting and heartening to see so much talents and such enthusiasm. This also highlights an inherent desire among our authors to share their experience and ecstasy with readers. This year, for the first time we started a young writers competition in poetry and short-stories in English and Oriya for our young writers in two age groups. Such contest, certainly would encourage our children to contemplate more into writing and enhance their creativity. The response has been overwhelming and children as young as first graders have submitted their compositions. In Oriya, however, there was no response. It is high time that parents make an effort to teach their children their mother tongue. Oriya, not only has a rich and ornamental literature, it is also a link to our culture and the heritage. I hope, such competitions that we initiated this year would continue in coming years.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to congratulate all our authors for submitting their innovative imaginations, colorful reveries and informative essays for all of us to sip and enjoy. And not the least, I express my profuse thanks to Dr. Bigyani Das for editing the Oriya Section, Dr. Lalu Mansinha for preparing the front cover, Sri Animesh Patnaik, Sri Saradindu Misra and Sri Mana Ranjan Pattanayak for their help and advise in completing this marathon task of bringing out this souvenir and to all those volunteers and the donors for bringing or publishing their ads, all of whom I gracefully accolade and their names I gratefully acknowledge in the following page.

Pradyot Patnaik
Editor

ସଂପାଦକୀୟ (ଆଗେଇଚ୍ଛୁଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଗେଇଚ୍ଛୁଲ)

ପ୍ରିୟ ବନ୍ଧୁଗଣ,

ନମସ୍କାର । ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର, ତେର ନଈ ପାର ହୋଇ ଇଥର ବକ୍ଷରେ ତରଙ୍ଗ ତୋଳି ବିହଙ୍ଗ ଭଳି ଉଡୁଥିବା ବାୟୁଯାନଟିରେ ବସି ଦିନେ ଦେଶ ଛାଡି ଆସିଥିଲି ବିଦେଶ । ମନଭିତରେ ବିଭବଶାଳୀ ନୂଆ ଦେଶଟିକୁ ଦେଖିବାର ଆଗ୍ରହ ଓ ଉତ୍ତେଜନା ଥିଲା ଯେତେ, ନିଜ ମାତୃଭୂମି, ମାତୃଭାଷା ଓ ଆପଣା ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସହିତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ହୋଇଯିବାର ଅବସାଦ ଥିଲା ତହୁଁ ଅଧିକ । ଆଜି ଯେ ମୁଁ ମୋ ଜନ୍ମଭୂମିଠାରୁ ଯୋଜନ ଯୋଜନ ଦୂରରେ ରହି ଏ ପାଶ୍ଚାତ୍ୟ ଭୂମିରେ ଓଡିଆ ସମାଜର ବାର୍ଷିକ ପତ୍ରିକା ପାଇଁ ଓଡିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ସଂପାଦକୀୟ ଲେଖୁଛି, ତାହା ଏ ସଦା ବିକାଶୋନ୍ମୁଖୀ ମାନବଚେତନାର ଏକ ଜ୍ୱଳନ୍ତ ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ । ଓସା ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଆମେରିକାର ଓଡିଆ ସମାଜ ସେ ଦୀପ୍ତଚେତନାର ଆଉ ଏକ ପ୍ରତିଫଳନ ।

ଏ ପାଶ୍ଚାତ୍ୟ ବିଦେଶ ଭୂମିରେ ଓଡିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଚାର ଓ ପ୍ରସାର ନିମନ୍ତେ ସତତ ଉଦ୍ୟମଶୀଳ ଓସା ସଂଗଠନ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ଏ ବାର୍ଷିକ ଓଡିଆ ମିଳନୀର ଆୟୋଜନ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡିଆ ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଯୋଗସୂତ୍ର ସ୍ଥାପନର ଏକ ବିଶେଷ ମାଧ୍ୟମ । ସେ ମାଧ୍ୟମର ଏକ ଅଂଶ ହେବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ ଗୌରବାନ୍ୱିତ ମନେକରୁଛି । ମୋ ଉପରେ ଗଭୀର ଆସ୍ଥା ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ରଖି ମୋତେ ଏ ପତ୍ରିକାଟିର ଓଡିଆ ବିଭାଗର ସମ୍ପାଦନା କରିବା ଭଳି ଗୁରୁଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ମିଳନୀର ଆବାହକ ଶ୍ରୀ ଶରଦିନ୍ଦୁ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କୁ ଓ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପାଦକ ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ପ୍ରଦ୍ୟୋତ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କୁ ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଯାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ଯୁଗର କ୍ଷିପ୍ରତର ଜୀବନଯାତ୍ରା ମଧ୍ୟରେ କଷଟି ହୋଇ ମଣିଷ ମନର ଭାବନା, ଆତ୍ମାର ସ୍ୱର ଓ ଚେତନାର ତରଙ୍ଗ କେମିତି ଅଣନିଃଶ୍ୱାସୀ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି । ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ, ପଛକୁ ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ, ସୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ ରୋମଞ୍ଚନ କରିବାକୁ ସମୟର ଅଭାବ । ସେହି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ, ବିବ୍ରତ ଜୀବନରୁ ସମୟ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ ଯେଉଁ ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ମାନେ ନିଜ ଭାବନାକୁ ଗଳ୍ପ, କବିତା, ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଓ ରମ୍ୟରଚନା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ଏ ପତ୍ରିକାଟିପାଇଁ ଅଙ୍ଗ ଆଭୂଷଣ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏ ଅତୁଳନୀୟ ଅବଦାନପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଅଶେଷ କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଓଡିଆ ଭାଷାର ଅକ୍ଷର ମୁଦ୍ରଣ ପାଇଁ ଓଡିଫନ୍ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ନିଜର ଲେଖାକୁ ନିଜେ ସଜେଇ ପଠାଇବା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିଥିଲି । ମୋର ଅନୁରୋଧ ରକ୍ଷାକରି ପ୍ରଥମଥର ପାଇଁ ଓଡିଫନ୍ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ଲେଖା ମୁଦ୍ରଣ କରି ପଠାଇଥିବା ସେ କର୍ମବୀର ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ । ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଏ ବର୍ଷ ଓଡିଫନ୍ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ନପାରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଲେଖା ମୁଦ୍ରଣ କରାଇବାରେ ସହାୟତା ଚାହିଁଲେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡିଫନ୍ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ମୋର ବିଶେଷ ଅନୁରୋଧ ।

ମୋର ଏଇ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱରେ ସହାୟତା କରିଛନ୍ତି ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ବିଜୟ ମିଶ୍ର (ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍), ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର (ସିଲ୍‌ଭର୍ ସ୍ପ୍ରିଙ୍ଗ୍), ଶ୍ରୀ ବିଶ୍ୱରଞ୍ଜନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ (ଟରୋଣ୍ଟୋ), ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ (ଭର୍‌ଜିନିଆ) ଓ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ମୌସୁମୀ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ (ସିଲ୍‌ଭର୍ ସ୍ପ୍ରିଙ୍ଗ୍) । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ପ୍ରେରଣା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ କୃତଜ୍ଞ । ମୋର ସ୍ୱାମୀ (ନରେଶ ଦାସ) ଓ ସନ୍ତାନମାନଙ୍କ (ବାଗ୍ମୀ, ମୃଣାଳୀ, ଶାଶ୍ୱତୀ) ପାଇଁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ରଖିଥିବା ସମୟକୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ପତ୍ରିକାଟିର ସମ୍ପାଦନା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ବିନିଯୋଗ କରିଛି । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବୁଝାମଣା ଓ ସହଯୋଗ ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଋଣୀ ।

ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କର ମତାମତକୁ ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଦେଇ, ସଂପାଦନା ଦାୟିତ୍ୱବୋଧର ଅଧିକାର ଓ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟର ସୀମା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ରହି, ଲେଖାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର, ସୁସଜ୍ଜିତ ଓ ତ୍ରୁଟିଶୂନ୍ୟ କରି ଅର୍ପଣ କରିବାପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଯଥାସାଧ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରିଛି । ତଥାପି ଯଦି ଭ୍ରମଶୀଳ ମନର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ ସମ୍ପାଦନାରେ ତ୍ରୁଟି ଥାଏ ତେବେ ପାଠକ, ପାଠିକା ମାନେ କ୍ଷମା କରିବେ ବୋଲି ଆଶା ।

ଆଉ ଶେଷରେ ମୋର ଏଇ ସନ୍ଦେଶ, 'ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଗେଇଚାଲ' । ଜୀବନଯାତ୍ରାର ଗତିପଥରେ କେତେକେତେ ବାଧା, କେତେବେଳେ ପାହାଡ ତ, କେତେବେଳେ ଘନ ଜଙ୍ଗଲ, କେତେବେଳେ ପୁଣି ଉଚ୍ଛୁଳା ନଇର ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧକ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମକୁ ହିଁ ସେ ପାହାଡର ପଥରକୁ ହଟାଇ ଆଗେଇବାକୁ ପଡିବ, ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ଭିତରେ ରାସ୍ତା ତିଆରି କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ଓ ଉଚ୍ଛୁଳା ନଦୀକୁ ପାର କରିବାପାଇଁ ନୌକା ଖୋଜି ଆଣିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ଅନ୍ଧାରୀ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପଥର ସନ୍ଧାନ କରିବାପାଇଁ ଆମକୁ ହିଁ ବତୀ ଜାଳିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ।

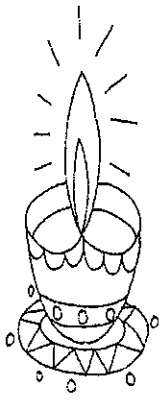
ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଚାଲ

ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଚାଲ
ଡରିଯାଅ ନାହିଁ ଦେଖି ପଥରେ ଅନ୍ଧାର
ଆଲୁଅ ଓ ଅନ୍ଧାର ଏ ଦୁନିଆର ରୀତି
କେବେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ପୁଣି କେବେ ଅମାରାତି
ଅନ୍ତରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ବତୀ ସଦା ରଖ ଜାଳି
ଆପଣାଛାଏଁ ଅନ୍ଧାର ଯିବ ଅପସରି
ପଥରେ ପଥର ଦେଖି ହୁଅ ନାହିଁ ସ୍ଥିର
ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଅସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଚୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କର ସେ ପଥର
ଭୟ ନାହିଁ, ଅନ୍ତଃର୍ମନ କର ବଳିୟାର
ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ।

ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଇଚାଲ
ଅତୀତକୁ ଫେରିଚାହିଁ ନହୁଅ କାତର
ଅତୀତ ଘଟଣା ସର୍ବ ଅତୀତରେ ଲୁପ୍ତ
ତୁମ ଅଧିକାର ତହିଁ ସ୍ଥିର ଓ ସୀମିତ
ଆରମ୍ଭ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନରୁ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟର ସିଡି

କେତେ ଯେ ପାହାଚ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱେ ଯାଇଅଛି ମାଡି
ସିଡି ଚଢିବାକୁ ମନେ ରଖନାହିଁ ଭୟ
ଅତୀତର ଅନୁଭୂତି ହୋଇବ ପାଥେୟ ।
କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟରେ ରଖ ଲୟ, ମନେ ରଖ ବଳ
ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ।

ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଗେଇଚାଲ
ଅଲଂଘ୍ୟ, ଅଜେୟ ଅଟେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସର ବଳ
ସେ ଶକତି କାଟିବାକୁ କାହିଁ ନାହିଁ ଅସ୍ତ୍ର
ସତ୍ୟ, ଧର୍ମ ପଥେ ସଦା ହୁଅ କର୍ମରତ
ଅନ୍ୟାୟ, ଅଧର୍ମେ କେବେ ନଦିଅ ପ୍ରଶୟ
ଖଳ ମେଳେ ସମୟ ନକର ଅପଚୟ
ପ୍ରତି ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ଜୀବନର
ବନ୍ଧୁ, ପ୍ରିୟଜନେ ସ୍ନେହ ଦେଇ ତୋଷ କର
ମାନବ ହିତରେ ଲୟ ରଖି ନିରନ୍ତର
ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ।



ମୋର ସମସ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱନିୟନ୍ତା ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରୀଚରଣ ତଳେ ସମର୍ପିତ କରି ରହୁଛି ।

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, କଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ଏହି ସଂପାଦକୀୟଟି ମୁଁ କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆର ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ଅନ୍ନପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ପାଣ୍ଡେଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କର ନିଷ୍ଠାପରତା, ବନ୍ଧୁତା, ସହାନୁଭୂତି ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାୟ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ପ୍ରତିବାଦର ସ୍ୱର ଉତ୍ତୋଳନ କରିବାର ଦୃଢମନ୍ୟତା ପାଇଁ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରୁଛି ।

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The editorial committee of OSA Souvenir 2003 gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and organizations for their help in bringing out this souvenir, placing ads and sponsoring events.

Ads: Dr. Minati and Mana Ranjan Pattanayak, Mr. Satya Narayan Mohanty, Mrs. Vyjayanti (Rini) Das and Mr. Saradindu & Lata Misra for obtaining several ads, along with the following donors: Americast - Tata Consulting Services - Kini Information Technology - J.P. Chase - Western Union - Air India - Alliance Business Consultants - Source One Medical Management - Dr. Devi & Sarojini Mishra - Mr. Satya Shaw – Mr. Rajan Panda - Dr. Prasant & Chandra Raj - Dr. Lina & Jim O'brien - Dr. Kirtan Behera - Mr. Bijoy & Jayanti Mohapatra - Dr. Fanelli Regional Gastrointestinal Consultant - Dr. Pradip & Asha Swain - Dr. Varun & Kiran Saxena - Heart Care Associates - Dr. Ranga & Sadhana Rao - Dr. Gita & Radhakanta Mishra - Donelson Family Practice - Payal Beauty Salon – Dr. Minati Pattanayak – Dr. Saroj & Sunil Behera – Dr. Bhaskar & Jeet Nayak – Dr. Panchanan & Sashikala Satpathy – Mr. Tirthankar Das – Kalinga Hospital Ltd. Bhubaneswar.

Souvenir: Dr. Lalu Mansinha – Mr. Animesh Patnaik – Mr. Jacques N. Khoury – Ms. Manisha Patnaik – Ms. Ananya (Shiney) Patnaik.

Oriya Section: Dr. Bijoy Misra – Mr. Biswa Ranjan Patnaik – Mrs. Jhinu Chhotray – Mrs. Mausumi Patnaik – Dr. Naresh Das.

Young Writers Competition: Dr. Debasmita Mishra and Mr. Mana Ranjan Pattanayak for sponsoring some of the awards and Mr. Manoj Panda, Dr. Jayasmita Mishra, Mrs. Sangeeta Nayak and Dr. Birendra Patnaik for serving as judges.

OSA Directory: Mr. Hara Narayan Padhi – Dr. Lalu Mansinha.

The convention committee gratefully acknowledges the following individuals for their donations to the convention or for sponsoring cultural events.

Dr. Uma Ballava Mishra – Dr. Shantilata Mishra – Mr. Shanak (Nick) Patnaik – Mrs. Kalpana Das – Mr. Akhileswar Patel – Mr. Nilamadhav Mahapatro - Dr. Akshaya Das – Dr. Annada Das - Mr. Prakash Patnaik – Dr. Pradipta Patnaik – Mrs. Mala Patnaik Perna – Mr. Rocky Patnaik – Dr. Pradyot Patnaik.

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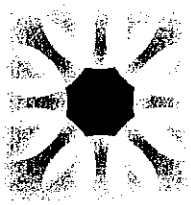

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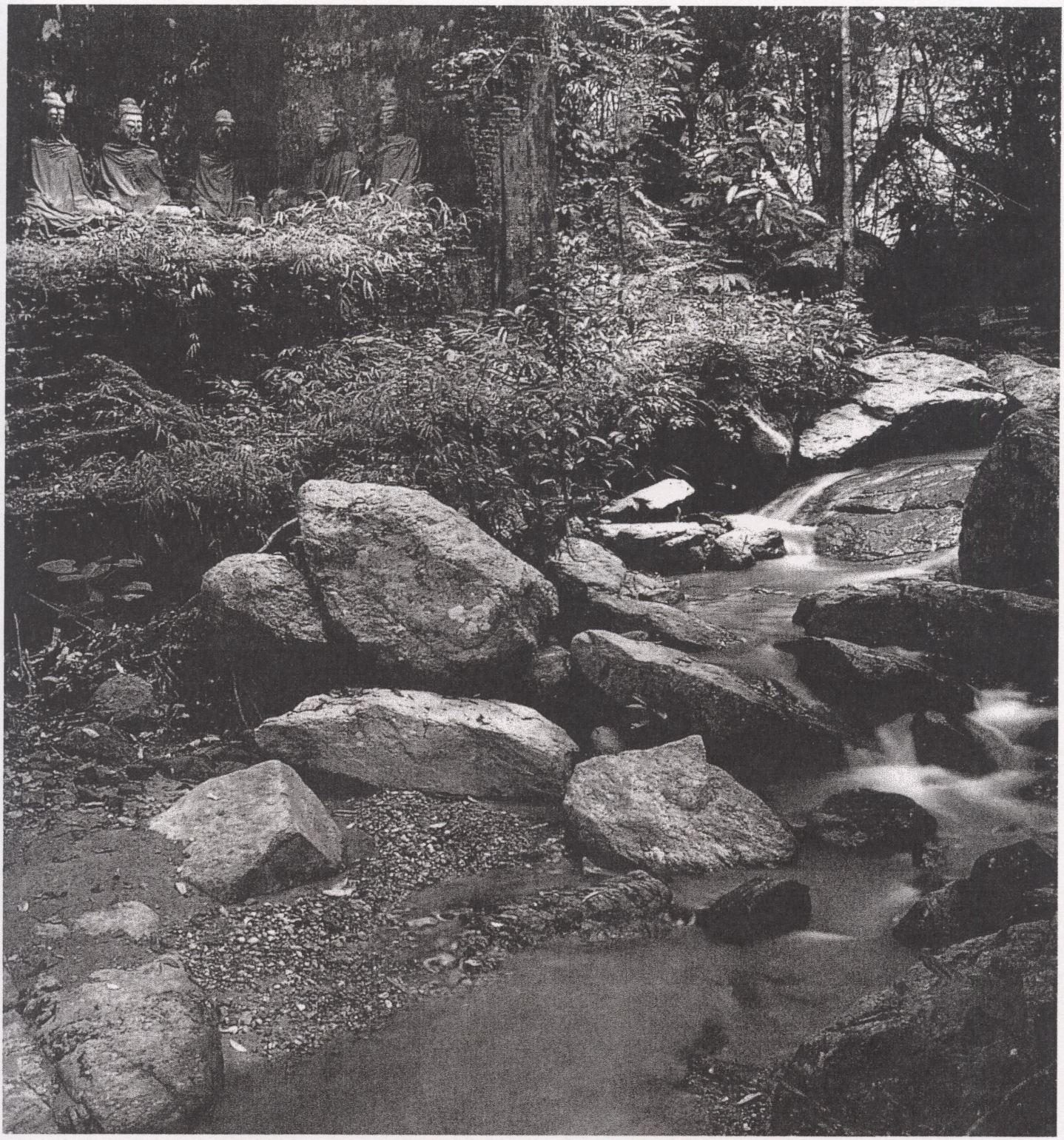
Humble beginning

Mrs. Rita Patnaik
Bhubanseswar / Orissa

Life Moves On



MY FIRST OSA CONVENTION

Debendra Kumar Das

INTRODUCTION: I first attended an Orissa Society of Americas (OSA) annual convention in the summer of 1973. Due to some special events that I am describing below, that convention has always occupied a special place in my heart.

I had joined Brown University in Rhode Island in August of 1972. At that time, there were thirteen Indian students at Brown. All were graduate students, three of them were married and ten were bachelors. For me, there was no other Oriya student to interact with. In various engineering disciplines there were nine students including me. We hung around together, being bachelors, often trying to cook exotic Indian meals in the weekends and generally failing miserably to produce good dishes during the early period after our arrival. We communicated either in Hindi or in English. I did not have a chance to talk to anybody in Oriya, and I missed my language, foods, customs and the lifestyle of Orissa that I had left behind.

EARLY YEARS: The first year, as in the life of all foreign students, was a hard year. Getting used to the new culture and environment, enduring the first New England winter and the anxiety of establishing oneself in a graduate program ensuring successful progress toward the degree, made life difficult.

After that hard year I looked forward to the summer of 1973. I had just finished my second semester and had entered into my master's thesis research when I began to feel a bit relaxed.

For the whole year I was separated from anything resembling my life in Orissa and I always hankered for it. Therefore, to fill that void, I periodically kept in touch with my cousin, Dr. Birendra K. Patnaik and his wife, Mrs. Navanita Patnaik. Soon after my second semester exams, I visited them briefly in the beginning of the summer while they were busy relocating to their new house in Parsippany, New Jersey. During that visit, Birendra Babu, sensing my loneliness, told me "Chhabi (my nickname): there is going to be an Oriya gathering during the July 4th weekend here in New Jersey. You must come and attend this gathering. You will meet many Oriyas and it will be very enjoyable for you."

I remembered that vividly and upon returning to the campus after that brief visit, I started counting the days for the arrival of July. But there was one obstacle on the way in the life of a graduate student in those days. One must get approval for the leave of absence from his/her professor. As June of 1973 was nearing the end, I cautiously approached my professor to take permission to have a few days off just before and after the July 4th weekend. I explained to him that it would enable me to visit our annual ethnic gathering in New Jersey. My professor was in the final year of his three year grant period and he replied, "Deben, in August 1973 we will be submitting our second phase of a proposal for the continuation of funding for the next grant cycle. Your research results are essential for this proposal. If you take time off now, you must make it up somehow, so that the results will be ready by August." I assured him that I would work during

evenings and weekends to make up for the leave time and generate meaningful results. On the basis of that assurance, I was delighted to receive my professor's approval for several days of paid vacation.

I boarded the Greyhound bus from Providence, R.I. to Port Authority in New York and then took another bus to Parsippany, N.J. I arrived at Birendra Babu's place a couple of days before the July 4th weekend of 1973.

On the night before and on the morning of the Oriya gathering, I observed Mrs. Patnaik preparing dishes for the gathering. She told me that there would be a potluck dinner and every family was expected to bring a dish with them.

THE CONVENTION THEN: The Oriya gathering was arranged in the basement of a church in Riverdale, N.J. As I remember, it was arranged by Dr. Amiya Patnaik of New Jersey. At that time, the title of "OSA Convention" had not been coined. It was just called an annual Oriya gathering.

Slightly after the noontime, on the day of the gathering, we all piled up in Birendra Babu's sporty Mustang. His son, Nick Patnaik, our current OSA president, was perhaps 4 or 5 years old then. He occupied the back seat beside me and soon we were immersed in interesting conversations. At that time I was new to American sports such as basketball, baseball and football. He amazed me with score statistics of all teams and well known individual players. Another interesting fact that comes to my mind is, his sister, Simi, currently an executive with 3M Company, was not even born at that time. It is hard to fathom how fast time flies.

We proceeded to the church, the venue of the Oriya gathering. I remember the event just like yesterday. It was a beautiful clear day with a blue sky and fluffy clouds and it was cool. Coming from New England, I truly appreciated the cool summer days, because prior to that I had experienced the oppressive heat of summers in Rourkela, where I studied engineering for five years before coming to the United States.

We drove through quaint, quiet neighborhoods, with thick oak trees on both sides and shady streets, until we came to a church at the end of a nice residential neighborhood.

The church parking lot was small, yet it accommodated all of the cars. The meeting place was a single long room in the basement with a series of chairs and a small, single lectern on the front right corner of the room for the speaker.

I estimate that there might have been about thirty families-less than 100 people in that gathering. Each family brought in a dish. The first hour was spent socializing while the Oriya ladies were putting their graceful touch in organizing the dishes on a long dining table. Compare that to the grand catering we see in OSA conventions nowadays! After being out of touch from Oriyas for a year, I felt deeply joyous and excited. There were many Oriya folks to talk to, asking about our mutual relatives back in Orissa and speaking of events of various places of Orissa. I took the opportunity to interact with as many Oriyas as I could that afternoon.

Then the dinner started. They were simple Oriya dishes but all homemade and so different from the modern catered Indian dishes. But they were exactly what I was missing. In those days, as a graduate student, I was surviving on my simple cooking and occasional American style lunch at the university refectory or subsisting on cheap American fast food places. To me this conglomeration of Oriya dishes was a godsend. I ate to my fullest content and soon got ready for the annual meeting.

The meeting might have started around four o'clock in the afternoon, when Dr. Bhabagrahi Misra came to the lectern. He was then a faculty member at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. I knew his father-in-law from Orissa, who was my mathematics teacher in Middle English school. His wife, Mrs. Shantilata Misra, was a friend of my sister in Kendrapara and her brother was my classmate at the Regional Engineering College (REC) Rourkela. I had heard about them from my friend at REC before coming to the United States. It was a pleasant event to see them in that meeting and I became a believer that it was a small world indeed.

Dr. Misra, observing two to three Americans present in the audience, gave the speech, first uttering the sentences in Oriya and then translating that to English. He outlined the activities of the Orissa Society during the previous year. However, in those days the activities were only a few and I guess the dual mode of communication was inconvenient, which influenced the speech to be brief.

He then invited the guest speaker to give a speech. He was an elderly gentleman from Bengal. He was clad in traditional Indian robes of "Dhoti," "Punjabi," and "Chadar," and a pair of "Chapals." He looked like an ascetic to me, and I imagined he might have been a Swami Vivekananda scholar or a visitor to the Ramakrishna Mission in the United States for a short period.

I recall that he began his speech by saying: "You have all come from Utkala. "Ut" means "High" and "Kala" means "Art," a place with a rich heritage in art. You should be proud of it, preserve it and enhance it. Soon after, his speech was over and we entered the entertainment phase of the annual Oriya gathering.

The stars of the evening were two little girls, daughters of Dr. & Mrs. Bhabagrahi Misra. In the same room, in the front area, there was some open space, where these two little girls performed some Indian dances, perhaps portions of Odissi or Bharatanatyam—I can't remember precisely. As I understand now, those stars of the evening are a doctor and an engineer, both residing in California.

With that single dance function, the OSA Convention of 1973 was adjourned. The evening was just drawing in when we all packed up the empty dishes and shut off the lights of the church basement room and walked to our cars to return home. The OSA Convention of 1973 was all over in about five hours. It was too short for me, but was very sweet. Although I wanted to be in the company of those Oriya folks for a much longer time, we all had to get back to work. I returned to my campus two days after that ceremony to carry on my thesis research. But I remember, I returned with a great deal of rejuvenation from that small Oriya gathering and was mentally energized.

THE CONVENTION NOW: When I compare that humble beginning to the mega convention we are having for OSA these days, it amazes me to notice how far we have come.

The last OSA convention that I attended with my family was in Chicago in 2001, which was the 32nd one. It was a four-day celebration with hundreds of volunteers arranging everything from the hotels, to the catering, the decorations, and the cultural festival of several days. It was a colossal effort, pulled together by the hard and selfless work of volunteers from Chicago and its vicinity. It was attended by more than seven-hundred Oriyas in a gala gathering held in a five star hotel.

When I look back, I couldn't have dreamt in my wildest dreams in that 1973 summer afternoon, that some day the OSA Convention would grow from a five hours' celebration in a church basement to a multi-day mega celebration with hundreds of people attending at a top-notch hotel.

At times I contemplate about those early years and a deep sense of respect comes to my mind for those Oriyas who came to the United States in the 50's and 60's. I can only imagine the intense isolation, loneliness and struggle they must have endured to establish themselves in this strange new world. I tip my hat to them for their sheer grit and tenacity with which they paved the way for us who came after them. So that when I arrived, my cousin was there to receive me at the airport in New York. They were the pioneers.

Several of those pioneers had conceived and organized those early Oriya gatherings. I had the opportunity to meet some of them in that 1973 OSA Convention. Hence, I felt that my first convention was very special to me. Furthermore, being a new immigrant, after starving for Oriya culture and traditions for one year, I found the soothing intimacy of getting reconnected with Oriya people, whom I believe are the most gentle and loving people in the world. The event was small, intensely personal, cozy and warm, and left a lasting impression in my mind. It is like the first love that one never forgets.

Dr. Debendra Kumar Das and his wife, Katherine Anne Cross-Das make Fairbanks, Alaska their home, where Debendra serves as a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Alaska.

Contexts and Connections

Deba P. Patnaik

In early 1900s, a dark-skinned Oriya from what used to be a garjat, came to the US to study engineering. He obtained his degree, married an American, but decided to return to Orissa. He chose to be a freedom fighter for India's liberation and that of many millions of voiceless and oppressed people of the garjat kingdoms and zamidari areas. Since that time, Oriyas have come to this country, not in waves as in the case of other Indian groups; several returned over the years. After 1947 steady migration took place. They came initially to study mostly in the fields of medical and hard sciences and engineering. A large number of them got domiciled; their children and grandchildren are US-born citizens. Those of the parent generation have Oriya or Indian spouses, and are in their mid-fifties and beyond. Those who settled in North America were driven by two impetuses: material well-being and children born and growing up in this part of the globe. Life has not been easy and smooth for them, especially for the wives, despite their achievements and acquisitions. They still struggle to negotiate among several worlds--mainly, the socio-cultural world of the 'old country' and the western and North American worlds. Most lead a rather insulated life, feeling uprooted and observing peripheral cultural practices and belief systems. Contexts and connections have become increasingly problematic.

But the children inhabit a different world in language, culture, taste, and sensibility. Hence, tensions and conflicts between the generations; communication and understanding present an enormous challenge. Rift is often caused not because of clash of values, but of belief and habit patterns. The older generation forcing them on the younger generation more as a face-saving with their families and peers. The irony is, the older generation, to which I belong and carry an Indian passport, hold on to the mistaken notion of culture and identity as static, fixed, and absolute. India has always inherited a multitude of variations; so too Orissa or Utkal or Kalinga or Odradesha. In my experience, I must admit, I have found the younger generation more honest, straight-forward, open-minded, and daring. My generation's wishy-washiness and split personality, I believe, create avoidable confusion, pain, and anguish. We need to celebrate and reinforce the younger generation's integrity and expansiveness. We need to realize that eternal verities and values are not fixed dogmas or belief patterns, but justice, compassion, respect, freedom, curiosity and creativity. We need to demystify the hierarchical and confining cultural and economic structures as well as the lure of bourgeois and capitalist glitz and glamour. As a former student of mine and a competent poet, Bibhu Padhi, writes we must "wipe the acquired and inherited meanings off our tired faces."

Our children and grandchildren in this country, unlike us, live in a highly mobile and multicultural society. Their inclinations, tastes, and sensibility are naturally conditioned by the American ethos. They will chart their own paths and carve their own cosmos. I believe it is counter-productive to impose our unfinished aspirations and desires, our torn psyche, and our eroded cultural myths on the younger generations. They

are smart, tolerant, creative, sophisticated, and free-spirited more than we were or are. But, they too suffer from illusions about the country of their birth and from naïve assumptions and enchantments of this society and culture. America, a vastly multiracial and multicultural nation, is no melting pot despite all the rhetoric. Color of eyes, hair, and skin still play a real part in the consciousness of the dominant group. The tragedy of September 11, 2001 exposed America more than changed it - - the vulnerability of the only superpower, a kind of arrogance of being a 'special/chosen' nation and its 'manifest destiny,' and the very ground of its generous and accepting mind. I have a feeling that our children and grandchildren have to contend with this reality for years, and as Americans of non-European immigrants, they need to realize their particular function and responsibility to themselves, to this country, to their ancestral community as well as to other non-European communities in the US.

They need to seriously think of careers beyond the traditional professions such as art, architecture, archaeology, consulting, higher education administration, sociology, politics, and social activism. They must build connections with other American minority communities as well as build solidarity with others for justice, equality, and liberty in this country and elsewhere. This is the sanest form of globalization. In the diversification of career and in the commitment to justice and equality, they can serve admirably this land of their birth and citizenship and the land of their parents' birth where their contribution is immensely needed.

One final thought, I must get it out of my chest. Being a student of language and literature, I continue to cherish a love for Oriya language and literature. The younger generation, by and large, is multilingual except in Oriya. Unlike other Americans, this generation has the advantage of growing up in Oriya-speaking households. It would be of singular benefit to acquire this language fluency and enrich itself and share with others the inexhaustible wealth of art, literature, dance and music of Orissa. Here again, we of the older generation must assist and inspire through our own example, our American children and grandchildren. Home, I have come to realize in my vagabond life, is not a spatial territory. Its geography is one of imagination, connections, and the grace of living.

Dr. Deba Patnaik is Professor of Graduate Studies and Director of Multicultural Affair at Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

O Goddess, Trill Thy Veena For Once

Pradyot Patnaik

O Goddess, trill thy Veena for once

Fill the world with melody
Trill our broken strings
Merge thy celestial music
Into the silent ripples of dream
Mingle thy melody soft
In nocturnal world's sleep
Into the impetuous waves of oceans
And the odorless fallen leaves

Blend thy rhythm into nectar
of moonlit radiance
O Goddess, tune our songless life
once and just for once

Awake the world from slumber
Vivify its thoughts
Resurrect the minds charred
With thy cosmic touch

Glitter the dawn with love
litter your radiance
Sprinkle the sky with vermilion
once and just for once

Mother Earth trampled
Crushed under behemoth feet
Blood dripping from burnt grasses
Rage thirsty to sip

Tottering life falling
Wobbles each feeble step
Stumbles into somberness
Hidden shadow of death
Holding a little lantern
Life stretching its tiny hands
Searching for its lost soul
Befuddled benumb it stands

Kindle all minds O Goddess
that hatred ignorance
Descend down - into this burning cage
once and just for once

Money's world so morbid
Deceit, decayed sordid
Under the illusory tapestry
Culture inside diseased
Somberness engulfs the layer
Hard deep and dense
Wisdom bemoans in soliloquy
Its woeful decadence
Beneath a crust so rigid
Frigid dark and deep
In the somnolence of night
Truth fallen into sleep

Awake the truth O Mother,
cast an eternal trance
And turn us the stones into gods
once and just for once

[Dedicated to Vagdevi Saraswati]

(Dr. Pradyot Patnaik is the editor of this souvenir)

Our second generation

Dr. Joy Gopal Mohanty

All right, you read the title of my essay. You must be wondering what do I mean by "Our"? Who are we? We are the first generation Oriyas (or Indians) and are Americans of Indian origin, including my wife, and me who have migrated from Orissa to live in North America. We are Oriyas by birth but American citizens by our choice. However, our children born or brought up here with us are American citizens by birth or by naturalization while they are second-generation Oriyas (or Indians). Yet, there is some confusion in labeling them. As Vivek Gupta[1] put it, "*Born in the United States of America, second-generation Indians always suffer from a hyphenated identity. Their growing-up as Indian-Americans throws a challenge at them to tackle issues that force them to choose between being either Indian or American. Needless to say, they generally end up "confused", allowing Indians back home to label them 'ABCDs' - American-Born Confused Desis (Desi is an Indian word referring to everything that belongs to India.)*". Nevertheless, according to Tamar Jacoby[2], second-generation Indians are not confused at all about their baseball although they do not know cricket all that well.

Now, we the Oriyas, not from Orissa but from OSA (Orissa Society of the Americas) living in various parts of USA and Canada are meeting here in New Jersey in this Independence Day weekend to celebrate thirty-fourth anniversary of our American society and to commemorate our cultural heritage. At this conjecture, I am thinking of our second generation and asking questions about them. Can we really say they are Oriyas? What quality they have to be called as Oriyas? If so, is it just because they have lived with their Oriya parents, or they have actually maintained Oriya culture in their lives? Do they really want to have an organization like OSA? Do the second-generation Oriyas (so-called) think the same way for OSA as the first generation Oriyas? How many of the second-generation Oriyas really speak Oriya at home? Well, it all depends. I do not know all the answers. When I asked my 23-year son 12 years back to learn Oriya, he questioned me saying why should he learn Oriya in USA. He had a point then. Nevertheless, I noticed that children of my Oriya friend who is married to a Canadian, speak pure Oriya to their father (of course he insisted that way since their very child-hood otherwise he would not listen to them). I do not know where my wife and I went wrong. May be we have not done the way my friend did. We are in the midst of an experiment now. It is for the first time, our present OSA office bearers are from the second generation Oriyas, although some of them are married to non-Oriyas and still have interest in OSA. What they have contributed to OSA during their tenure, time will tell. During this writing, we are again preparing for the election of our next group of office bearers to be decided in a month or two. Surprisingly, I do not see enthusiasm amongst our second generation Oriyas to stand in the election for the next term of office bearers! Does it mean that they had enough or they do not have similar support anymore from the OSA members as they had in the past before their election? May be they have lost interest or we are not supporting our second generation hard enough to take part in the election again.

In search for some answers, I looked at other second-generation Indians in USA. One first generation Gujurati Vijay Vashee[3] mentions what his son Ajay had to say about himself. Ajay said, "*My parents immigrated to this country prepared to accept the American lifestyle, but unprepared to release their hold on traditional Indian beliefs. They raised us as Indians in America. We usually ate Indian food, practiced our Hindu customs and spoke in Gujarati, our native tongue. Yet, we simultaneously participated in neighborhood barbecues, little league baseball and school dances. Like many Indo-Americans, I faced an identity crisis; part of me wanted to discover more of my Indian side while the other part wanted to become American. Home, family and*

tradition pointed me towards Indian values and ideals, while school, friends and social life pointed me towards American attitudes and ethics."

Based on what his son said, Vijay Vashee[3] mentions, "*America is tough and competitive enough and yet we saddle our children with an additional burden of this dual existence without helping them to deal with it. We have a tremendous opportunity to help the next generation scale even higher. The first step is to treat them as Indo-Americans and not as Indians. Second is to understand that the community that we live in, treats both generations as Indians or Indo-Americans anyway. Therefore, we need to be united and not separate. Finally our sons and daughters will be more Indo-American than they will be Punjabi, Keralite, South Indian, Marathi, Bengali or whatever regional part of India their ancestors are from. As it turns out, this is the biggest asset we have. We will have taken a major step towards a stronger unified Indo-American community because the regional differences do not exist in the second generation. Think about it – how much more powerful we can be as a united Indo-American community.* " I strongly agree with Vijay – we should think us first as Indians and then as Oriyas. Therefore, we should not discourage children's dances with Hindi music in OSA cultural functions, even though such is not of Oriya culture. In fact, even children to Oriya parents in Orissa itself are learning to dance to Hindi music. The main reason to this is that no such pop (the craze of present younger generation) Oriya songs are available for dance.

Now let us look at the other side of the coin, what a second-generation American-born girl named Anastasia Pai[4] married to a first-generation Indian had to say. She stated, "*I am an American born Irish/Norwegian who is happily and proudly married to an Indian man who grew up in Thane in suburban Bombay. We have been married for more than six years. I respect him, his family, his country and his culture. I believe it is important for my husband, our children, and me to celebrate and honor his heritage. What kind of wife and mother would I be as the caregiver of our family if I selfishly enveloped the family in my Western culture?"* Wow! It is amazing! Anastasia goes on narrating, "*We go to temples, we partake in pujas with family and friends, and we attend munjis, etc. I usually wear salwar kameez on most occasions;, except I wear saris for munjis and weddings. When we visit India I wear salwar kameez almost everyday. I love Indian fashion because I think it is beautiful and it makes my husband and mother-in-law very happy to see me wearing it."* This appears to be a true love story. I have come across other similar stories. I hope such understanding continues among second-generation Oriyas. Only then, we can continue to preserve Oriya or Indian tradition within our community. It appears that if our second-generation Oriyas find their life partners in Orissa, then they revive more interest in Oriya culture than if they get married to Americans or other second-generation Indians here.

Interestingly, in the last quarterly newsletter of OSA, there were several citations of newly weds from our second generation Oriyas who married to non-Oriyas only, while there were no citation of Oriya-Oriya marriages. Does it mean that our second-generation office bearers in charge of the newsletter were not aware of any such marriages during the last one and half years? To my knowledge, during this period, there is a case of a second-generation Oriya in USA, who got married in Orissa (of course with his parent's help) and brought his wife to USA. A few years back, one of my first-generation Oriya friends in Canada also arranged a similar marriage in Orissa for his Canada raised son. I asked him then, how did he make his son agree to such a marriage. In reply, he said that he did not force his son, rather he explained the plus and minus points of marrying a girl from Orissa *vs* a girl from Canada and his son chose to marry in Orissa. And, I know the young couple that is living a happy family. So, it all depends on the particular second-generation individual and how he/she is grown up with. If our children did not like this, that means they did not see the plus points.

While searching for the reason why we the first-generation Indians formed language groupings in North America; I found the writings of A. V. Srinivasan[5] and Mechthild Gawlick[6] quite appealing.

We the first generation Indians immigrated to USA by choice. We left India voluntarily for better economic opportunities and not out of cultural frustration. Unlike other ethnic groups, we did not come here in large groups. Most of us came to USA one at a time, from different parts of India, with the corresponding language and sub-culture baggage. We brought with us a willingness to adapt into the professional world and a great sense of cultural preservation. As a result, we socialized not only exclusively with our own ethnic but also within our own religious group. We did so in order to preserve a sense of our cultural identity, and to facilitate the transmission of religious tradition to our next generation. Now question is, how to motivate our second-generation to maintain our past tradition in the Americas after our time is over.

Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut are among the most highly regarded sociologists studying the new immigrants[2]. More than a decade and many millions of dollars later, Portes and Rumbaut have completed several stages of the definitive study of the second generation: an ongoing look at some 5,300 teenagers in San Diego and Miami. This massive research project, known as the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, or CILS, has generated six books and countless articles by its two architects, their students, and others. Their seminal work suggests that the people who really matter for the future in the USA are in fact the new arrivals' children, the second generation, whose successes and failures will set the mold for their ethnic groups, determining patterns that will last for generations to come. In their view, the happiest and most successful of the second generation are not those who quickly learn American ways, who switch from their parents' language to English and fit in seamlessly at school, but rather those who grow up under the umbrella of an ethnic community, nurtured by old-country customs and traditional mores. Therefore, we the first generation Oriyas (or Indians) have a big role to play in guiding our second generation and to maintain our unforgettable cultural heritage.

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(Dr.Joy Gopal Mohanty is a research scientist and lives with his family in Pennsylvania.)

Two Men in a Heaving Boat

"I pressed the Red Button and instantly the waters around me boiled and convected as in a maelstrom. The boat was buffeted from below by the force of the explosion of thirty depth charges. As the boat heaved and rocked I could see internal pressure waves, made visible by the rising bubbles of gas, moving up from the depths. The force of these upwelling waves made the surface breakup into an upward spray. And then the fishkill started floating up. With a quick look over of myself and the sailor, I was reassured that, in spite of our fears and the feeling of extreme peril, we were not injured in any way. I became elated ·

I also became the only person ever to have exploded 30 depth charges together".

Lalu Mansinha

This true story of a long ago summer in the Straits of Georgia, between Vancouver Island and the mainland, involves depth charges, a weapon that was used extensively in the Second World War. A depth charge is a barrel of high explosive that detonates underwater. The weapons of war engender as much fascination as war itself. Modern weapons invoke awe because of the flash of light and sound. But even without the bang and the flash, long before gunpowder, super weapons of those times have been described in detail in the Mahabharata.

Stripped of the horrors of the pain and misery, individual battles become moves in a chess game where the outcome seals the fate of peoples and empires for centuries to follow. Soldiers who participate in the 'kill or be killed' conflict, experience the excitement of battle, the pain of injuries, grief at the loss of comrades and the exhilaration of victory. But more real to the surviving combatant is the lingering lifelong depression caused by retained images and experiences of man's brutality to man. We are the only species to have devised weapons of mass destruction to kill our own kind.

A submarine's main weapon is stealth. Once detected, the submarine is totally defenceless against the surface warships. There are so many movies that use the life and death drama between the hunter and the hunted, between the destroyer and the submarine. Destroy or be destroyed, depth charge or be torpedoed. The depth charge was the main weapon against submarines. A close encounter with a single depth charge can be fatal to a submarine.

A depth charge on the deck of a navy ship looks benign, nothing at all like the weapon that invokes horror in every submariner. Movie and TV clips of the destroyer and U-boat battles often show the tension and fear on the face of the submarine crew as the submarine waits underwater, defenceless, helpless, still, soundless. It is silent, except for the 'ping····· ping·····' from the destroyer's echo locator trying to find the submarine. The silence is punctuated by sounds of depth charges detonating and getting ever closer. How horrible must be the waiting for the very last one.

This is the true story of how in the summer of 1960, I, then a freshman graduate student, became the 'Scientist Chap' aboard a Canadian Navy ship and exploded thirty depth charges together. There was the failure to detonate on first try, and the fear as the cluster of depth charges, with the mis-fired detonator still in it, was hauled back on board to be fixed. We had success on the second try.

My young friend Sanjiv Behera, born in Canada, has been interested in the immigrant experience of Oriyas of his parents generation. At his urging I have written up this episode in my life.

There was a knock on the door, and the young sailor saluted smartly and said 'The Captain presents his compliments, Sir, and invites you to join him for breakfast'. The year was 1960 and I was on board a Canadian Navy ship sailing south in the Straits of Georgia, between Vancouver Island and the mainland. I was then a very green graduate student in the Physics Department at

the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. I was selected to be the 'Scientist Chap', as the other officers on the ship called me, the person who presses the Red Button.

I had been a NCC Cadet (National Cadet Corps) in school and college days, and had served a total of seven years, but never was 'smart' enough to rise above the lowest rank. So while I had saluted so many officers in my NCC days, no one had ever saluted me. So getting salutes on board the ship was heady stuff for me.

In the long summers of my youth, in Cuttack, Sambalpur and Parikud, I used to play war games all the time, perhaps inspired by the then raging Second World War. Stones and pebbles represented my infantry and armor, battleships and submarines, fighters and bombers. I was the Commander who ordered into battle the army, navy and airforce in military campaigns on the grand scale, with vast armies on both sides locked in battle, using all the modern (in mid-1940s) armaments, at least in my imagination.

At the end of the Second World War in 1945 Canada had the second largest navy in the world, and so had a huge stock of naval munitions. By 1960 the Second World War vintage depth charges were getting old and unreliable, and newer models were more effective. So the Canadian Navy decided to get rid of the old depth charges by exploding them in training exercises. The seismology community in British Columbia persuaded the Navy to bundle several depth charges strapped together, to create a really powerful explosion. This would act as a source of seismic waves which could be used to determine the structure of the crust underneath western British Columbia. My selection to participate in this project as a vicarious naval officer was a boyhood dream come true.

For this experiment thirty barrel shaped depth charges were strapped together in a specially constructed frame. Although designed to crush submarines, there is enough explosive power in a single depth charge to damage surface ships in the proximity also. The danger was real enough and the captain of the ship was uneasy about setting off the 30 depth charges together anywhere close to his ship. He wanted his ship to be a safe distance away when things exploded.

The deck crane gently lowered the depth charge cluster into the water. Then the ship moved away to a safe distance, about a kilometer away, but hovering within sight. A sailor and I left the ship in a small boat and went back to where the depth charge cluster lay on the bottom. The boat had a radiophone for communication with the ship, and a small box with a Red Button. The wires from the detonator in the depth charge cluster would be connected with a long wire to the box. Our small boat was more or less above the cluster, but to the side, as permitted by the length of the wire.

My task was simple. On receiving instructions from the ship over the radio link, I was to press the Red Button. This would send an electrical signal to the detonator on the depth charge cluster, and then 'kaboom'.

I had been assured that the small boat was in no danger. The deep water would muffle the force of the explosion. But in retrospect it seems strange that I did not raise the question then as to why, if it was so safe, did the large navy vessel and the two fisheries vessels had to stay at a 'safe' distance, while I and the sailor were floating above the depth charges. We must have been considered expendable.

The sequence of events before I pressed the Red Button would be thus: the scientist on shore in charge of the seismic recording stations would send a signal to the Captain that all recording stations were ready. The Captain will then order me (on the small boat) to press the Red Button and set off the explosion.

Well, I talked to the ship on the radio link and informed the officer that we were ready. He then talked to the seismologists on shore, and then ordered me to fire. I pressed the Red Button. The milliseconds and seconds ticked by. The sailor and I waited and waited. And waited. Nothing happened. Nothing. No swoosh, no whoosh, no bang, no kaboom, no nothing. Absolutely nothing. After some time it was clear to us that the depth charge cluster had failed to explode. Something had gone wrong.

Now we had a real problem. A cluster of depth charges that had a detonator that had been sent a signal to fire, but had not. It could go at any moment. Certainly the possibility of exploding increases if the cluster was shaken. We could just leave it there and go away. But this was in a busy shipping channel, with commercial and pleasure boats and fishing vessels. Minutes or years later the depth charges could explode under a passing ship. So the cluster could not simply be abandoned.

I was ordered back to the ship. There was hurried consultation with authorities and scientists on shore. In spite of the dangers, the Captain decided to haul the depth charges back on deck, fix whatever was wrong and try again. I was surprised and scared. What if the unstable depth charges go off on the deck, even as the two shipboard explosive experts are removing the detonator and putting in a new one? The two explosive specialists approached the cluster, and after discussing with each other, and not knowing what to do, opened their training manual. Questions raced through my mind. What sort of experts are these who have to read a manual before being able to defuse the cluster?

Anyway, nothing untoward happened. The cluster was defused, and then made ready for the next attempt. The next day we went through the whole procedure of lowering the cluster, the ship moving away, and I going in a small boat with the radio-phone and the little box with the Red Button. I received the order to fire.

I pressed the Red Button and instantly the waters around me boiled and convected as in a maelstrom. The boat was buffeted from below by the force of the explosion of thirty depth charges. As the boat heaved and rocked I could see internal pressure waves, made visible by the rising bubbles of gas, moving up from the depths. The force of these upwelling waves made the surface breakup into an upward spray. And then the fishkill started floating up. With a quick look over of myself and the sailor, I was reassured that, in spite of our fears and the feeling of extreme peril, we were not injured in any way. I became elated because I recognised that a strong explosion meant that the seismic recording stations on land would have recorded a strong signal and that there would be lots of good data to be interpreted over the next several months to determine the deep crustal structure in the region.

I also became the only person ever to have exploded 30 depth charges together.

My exposure to the comfortable life as an officer on board a Canadian Navy ship, and the glamour of the uniform, revived all my childhood dreams of a military career. In my letter home I had deliberately toned down the description of my sitting in a small heaving boat above a cluster of exploding depth charges, which could have been hazardous to my health. My mother never did learn that her first born was taking uncalled for risks exploding naval munitions. My father, a poet, and a follower of Buddha, sent back a stern rebuke, saying very firmly that no son of his was going to commit murder on a mass scale.

And so ended my brief career in the military. For all my bravery, I received neither a medal, nor did I enter the Guinness Book of Records in the category of largest number of depth charges exploded by a single person with single press of the button (or, two persons and two presses of the button, if we count the young sailor on the boat, and the first unsuccessful attempt).

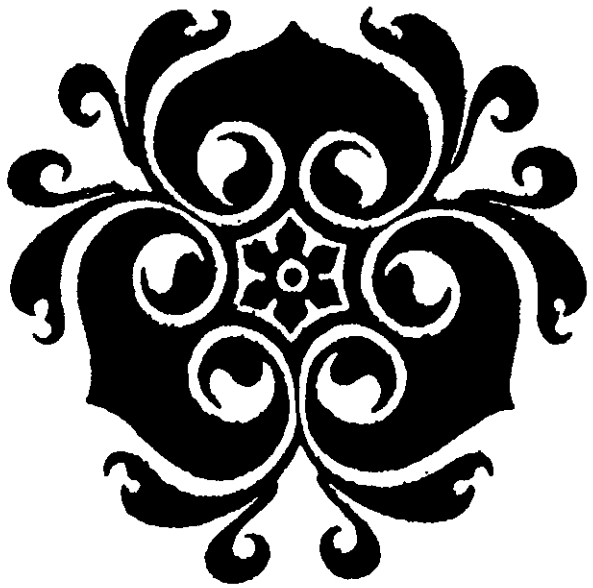
Lalu Mansinha lives in London, Canada. His research interests are in earth dynamics, spectral analysis of time series, image processing, and gravitational effect waves. As a member of KalaManjari he organises classical Indian music and dance programs. He is a past Editor of the Geophysical Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society and of the Journal of the Orissa Society of America. As a founding member of SEEDS he is part of several grass roots community projects in Orissa.

Best wishes to
The Orissa Society Of The Americas

From

Jeet & Bhaskar C. Nayak, M.D.
BAYSHORE PSYCHIATRIC SVCS PC

283 Commack Rd , Ste. LL3
Commack, NY 11725-3400



A few Tenets to Consider

Dr. Debasmita Misra

I have often come across a quote, which reads – "Smile, it increases your face value". Whether a smile means anything or not, but it definitely projects one's ambassadorial image.

We need to remember that each of us is an "ambassador of goodwill" in this country that we chose to adopt for our higher studies or career. We may not be aware, but others are watching us closely. So, how we speak, how we perform, and how we behave, reflects directly on what impression people carry about India through us. Whether I have been a naturalized citizen of USA or a permanent resident, or a non-resident alien, I am still considered as an Indian and my behavior as Indian behavior. We all need to project our ambassadorial goodwill at least through our smile. Trust me, we all can smile. All we need to do is try.

So, just how do we project our ambassadorial image?

Taek-won-do has provided some tenets or guidelines for everyone to achieve their best. Any martial arts teaches how one would defend oneself in a crisis or critical environment, adoption of such tenets builds self-discipline and character along with any other techniques that helps one to tide over any crisis without much difficulty. We all encounter rigor on daily basis. Thus, the tenets of martial arts may help us in understanding how we need to orient ourselves in performing our ambassadorial duties efficiently and achieve our goals successfully by diffusing the tensions due to the daily rigors.

There are five tenets that taek-won-do teaches the students. These are – Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-Control, and Indomitable Spirit.

COURTESY is the behavior that comes from a respectful attitude. Respect is the attitude that stems from humility. Under all circumstances it is essential to be courteous.

INTEGRITY is the completeness one attains from adhering to a code of values, i.e. sincerity, honesty and loyalty towards oneself and others. Integrity is when you do the right thing even though no one is watching. It brings credibility.

PERSEVERANCE is the nectar of sweat that yields the honey of accomplishment. It means that one has learned the art of living with adversity while still keeping one's sights on goals. The key to success is diligence with perseverance.

SELF-CONTROL, mastery over one's behavior, is a vital component in the maturing process. This enables one to direct ones energies in creative ways towards attaining better

grades in school, gaining more respect and acceptance of responsibility from teachers, parents & peers, and developing a circle of friends based on the positive human values of gentleness and caring rather than rowdiness or intimidation.

INDOMITABLE SPIRIT is the will to do one's best with all one has, against even the most insurmountable odds. It reflects a personal desire to achieve, through setting goals and living with the results, and resetting goals with the values appreciated through failures.

Although the above tenets are considered the backbone of any martial arts practitioner, I believe these tenets should also be widely applicable to any human being. Especially as the ambassadors of goodwill, the above tenets could bring us credibility, acceptability, and pride as well as a sense of achievement when we reach our goal. Please do not forget that we each have ventured so far to fulfill our dreams and our goals. The only way we can focus on our goals and achieve it successfully is through self-discipline and adherence to the tenets or philosophies that are meant for success.

Let me especially focus my concluding remarks on "Integrity". Loyalty to my country, my state, my language, and my fellow oDiAs would only bring me more respect and credibility as opposed to selling my basic identification to try and gain some pseudo-respect. I am the culture that I project through my behavior. No culture is devoid of its identification the language, its attributes such as mutual respect, humility, art, literature, poetry, dance, food, etc., and above all the heritage and history that has strengthened the culture. What we need to consider is how we can be integral through the aid of the other tenets and form a close community that has its head always high and instills pride in each member of the family.

Debasmita Misra is currently a faculty at the University of Alaska Fairbanks(UAF). His hobbies include reading, writing and classical music. He is actively involved with the service organiztions, Odisa Bikasha Initiative and Odia Samaj. He lives in Fairbanks, Alaska with his wife, *Nilima and son, Sambit and daughter Manisha.*

Dream

Manoj Panda

Every body dreams:
From a blade of grass in undulating meadows
To the twinkling stars lurking in shadows;
Along with the virulent tides rising in high seas,
and the grains of sand spread beneath its knees.
So also the buds while dancing in their tender stalk
Honey sipping droning bees risking to be moonstruck.

Sometimes dream comes true:
Lighting up the eyes with the charms of glee maiden
Daring the vivacity of a rapturous belle hoyden.
Celebrations for the attainment opens vistas further
Ingress of replacing dream makes it again older.
Repetition of kindred ilk traverses limitless cycles
While consummating hopes keeps dripping in trickles.

Often it doesn't:
Eyes become vacant succeeding spate of tears
Like a somber omen striking stricken mourners.
Consoling inspirations uninhibited flows from all quarters
Not to buckle down with pressure ready to shatter.
Mundane promissory sanguines somehow gets instilled
To turn the wheel of reverie to next round of rebuild.

Merry-go-round thus trudge on:
Flower showers and brick bats plays hide and seek
One bringing joyous cheers other suffering and bleak.
Enactment of such, plays from one "frame" to another
Collecting "fertile seeds" in their respective secret folder.
Serving as "the cause" to put the worlds in motion
But "the following option" remains ever one's volition.

The Essence is:
That a dream itself chases the trails of another dream
Gyrating ever after guiled in its mold of pseudonym.
When the dreamer is a dream at the journey's onset
Foolish won't it be to run through the gauntlet.
If one has to dream at all in the mythical horizon of illusion
That should be to wake up to unravel the confusion.

Manoj Panda is a distinguished writer and scholar. He regularly contributes to OSA Journal. - Editor

Hidden Flaw

Shobhana Ray

Toying the lap-top to meet the deadline of the editor. OSA Souvenir 2003, I was reminded:"One million monkeys on one million keyboard? You don't get Shakespeare, you get AOL."

Reality is a question of perspective- inevitably more incredible - I tapped www.samachar.com and it revealed:

-Supreme People's Court, china has pronounced that any one spreading SARS can be executed or sentenced to life imprisonment.

-Orissa high court has stayed the order of suspension of a senior IAS officer passed by the speaker of Orissa Legislative Assembly - the conflict between judiciary and legislature rest at the supreme court for final verdict.

-On the western front, the landmark campaign finance law on 'Soft Money', that restricts large political donations from corporations and labor unions on being struck down by federal court, on the eve of Bush filing papers of his re-election as the president USA, remain pending in the dockets of US-Supreme court.

Simultaneously CNN, Fox and the media ensued battle royal in derision for rule of law relating to Laci Peterson's case that has raised a tornado in the corriders of American courts of Justice;Lacy's husband accussed of her murder, fighting his right for unsealing the Search Warrants , invoking egalitarian concept that State shall not deny to any person equality before law and equal protection of law. The lis had already seen three Judges.

The judicial aberrations, all round the globe, instigated and incited by the politicians, the power-brokers and the forum-shoppers' game played on the international map, affect the credibility of the judiciary , afflicting public confidence. Convulsions that has cramped the nations lead to congruence. In the words of Chief Justice Coke:"Prescription and custom are brothers and ought to have the same age and reason ought to be the father, congruence the mother, and use the nurse and the time out of memory to fortify them both. "

Impulsively in abnegation of constitutional canons, while playing legal interpretation regressively, the Judiciary lure and facilitate an easy entry to fascism. Atrophy that emaciated the judicial system and the administration of law and justice, seems in danger of being submerged in political and legal, and even literary theory-with the rule of law becoming little more than a setting for the ventilation of favored views about legal interpretation, theorizing prophetic function of independent judiciary.

Montesquien concept of reign of law in contrast to the tyranny of power, was prosilient feature and positive contribution of the judicial system that prevailed in eighteenth century Kalinga(later on Utkal and thereafter Orissa), spread on the eastern shore of India, with a coast line formed

by flat lands and sea broken by heavy surfs - the system that accorded the fundamental principles of rule of law a practical shape and form of reality sharpened by wisdom.

The principle is shiningly illustrated in the legendary case of Padmavati, recorded in madala-panji preserved at Jagannath Temple of Orissa. Padmavati's Case - Briefly Raja Prataprudra Dev being enamored by the beauty of princess Padmavati of Kanchi, expressed his desire to marry her. King of kanchi flatly refused to give her daughter , the princess in marriage to a sweeper. The refusal enraged Prataparudra, who attacked kanchi and won the battle. King and the princess, war prisoners faced their trial, conducted by the king's court . Both were found guilty in the trial conducted by complying doctrine of equal protection. At the instance of the old-minister, who defended Padmavati, amicus-curiae, a lenient punishment was awarded: she was to be given in marriage to a 'sweeper'.

Retributive Justice - even the law of retribution has redemption as its inner motive; redemption being the central motive of divine incarnation. Incarnation is the entry of divine love in its critical moral situations in order to arrest the progress of sin.

Punishment on Padmavati, remained to be implemented by the executive. On the day of car festival (Ratha Jatra), Raja Prataprudra went up the cars(ratha) to fulfil and discharge the customary duty of "Chherra-paharan". On completion of the sacred religious duty on Taladhwaja, Debadalan and Nandighosha, when Prataprudra came down Nandighosha, Minister, the Executive-head wanted the royal permission for due execution of punishment inflicted on Padmavati-she was offered for marriage to the Raja, who was then the SWEEPER of the Lords.

Arrogance of the victor, pride of highest judicial authority, Royal vanity and affectation yielded to the fiat, the rule of law and the judicial administration in vogue.

King's acceptance was not merely an embelishment of his desire but amplify the judicial system and the respect for the execution of judicial decree by the wisdom of the Executive.

Law was above the sovereign.

(This article is inspired by Constitutional Relics: TODAY IS YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW" written by BIJAN RAY).

Shobhana Ray lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her husband Kew Ray and son Arkesh.

Nilamadhava Jagannatha

(One Act Play for Children)

(Legend of SriJagannatha based on the popular folk story)

Bijoy M Misra

Scene 1

(The curtain opens with the forest scene.
The deity *Nilamadhava* is established in a cave area behind a tree. There is the offering of burning incense, flowers and a food plate with rice.
Viswavasu prostrates on the ground face down – full stretched body with hands pulled forward.
Viswavasu dress: half dhoti, several bead necklaces, arm bands, head cap with feather, tattoo
The popular musical tune of the song *Ahe Nila Saila* is played in the background.)

Viswavasu: (gets up, stands erect, puts folded hands at his chest, closed eyes) Prabhu! Please eat. I will only come tomorrow. You have to survive!
(looks devotionally at the deity)
You said I shouldn't tell anyone. So, you have to eat what I give you.
I love my *Nilamadhava*. Prabhu, I love you!

(Viswavasu puts the puja garland around his neck.
He packs his worship utensils and objects and slowly walks out.
He gives a final look back to the deity, murmurs "Prabhu!!" Lights out.)

Scene 2

(Sabara village.
Viswavasu's daughter Lalita is working with the grains outside the cottage.
Brahmin Vidyapati enters.
Lalita dress: half saree, sabara hairdo, bead necklaces, bangles
Vidyapati dress: dhoti, upavita, chandana and sikha on forehead, uttariya wraps chest, tulasi necklace, shoulder bag. Bag contains water jug and other articles.)

Lailta: Namaste. Please come. How did you get here?
Vidyapati: My name is Vidyapati. I was walking through the forest and got lost. I noticed the huts, came to ask.
Lalita: I am Lalita. My father is Viswavasu. He has gone out to the forest. Just wait. He would be coming any minute.
(Lalita spreads a bamboo mat on the ground. Vidyapati sits.
After a few seconds, Viswavasu enters from the other side.)

Lalita: Father, we have a guest. He is a brahmin. He got lost in the forest. I asked him to wait to meet you.

Viswavasu: Excellent. You are my guest. You would stay right here. I will make provisions for you. You will be most comfortable.

(Lights out.)

Scene 3

(The same hut as before.
Vidyapati is sitting alone near the tree. He is morose and unmindful.
Looks deep to the sky and is thinking. Lalita enters from the hut.)

Lalita: You seem to be always unmindful. You are thinking something.

Vidyapati: I have now been here for three months. We have gotten married. I love you so much. I see your father leaving home everyday in the early morning hours and coming back with aloe, sandalwood and flowers. I am a brahmin by birth. I have been curious about his worship. Do you know where does he go?

Lalita(laughs): This is what has been bothering you! (laughs more) He goes to worship Nilamadhava! Nilamadhava is in the forest.

Vidyapati: Nilamadhava! Your father worships Nilamadhava! Can I go with him to the puja shrine?

Lalita: That's simple. Let's ask him when he comes.

(Viswavasu enters. He looks refreshed and spiritual, has his usual puja dress.)

Lalita: Vidyapati told me that he would like to go with you to visit Nilamadhava. Can he go with you?

Viswavasu: Why? Everyone won't get there. It's in the jungle and the path is dark and difficult. Nilamadhava wants to stay hidden.

Vidyapati: I am a brahmin. I will love to get a glimpse of Nilamadhava. I have heard so much about Him. I didn't know that you offer worship to Him every day. (beggingly) Can I come?

Viswavasu: OK. You come with me tomorrow. But you will have to blindfold your eyes. I will open your blindfold at the shrine. You should not know the path.

(Viswavasu left on the other side. Vidyapati again sat under the tree, morose.)

Lalita: He said he would take you. What's the problem now?

Vidyapati: He said he would blindfold me and I would not see the road. What happens if your father would fall sick? How would Nilamadhava receive worship?

Lalita: This is simple. I will put mustard seeds in your bag. You sprinkle them on the path as you go. Seeds will grow in a month. Then you have a path.

Vidyapati: Lalita, you are indeed bright. I appreciate your help letting me get a darsana of Nilamadhava. .

(Lights out)

Scene 4

(Forest scene. Viswavasu is walking. Vidyapati is blindfolded and walks behind.
He sprinkles mustard seeds from one hand.
The cave is seen in the background.)

Viswavasu (looking forward): Are you all right?
Vidyapati: Yes, I am delighted that I would be seeing Nilamadhava.
(They reach the cave. Viswavasu removes the blindfold from Vidyapati.
Vidyapati looks at Nilamadhava, prostrates on the ground.)

Viswavasu: Prabhu! He is Vidyapati. He is visiting from Puri.
Vidyapati: He Nilamadhava, I have been searching for you all over the world. You have been hiding here! What a splendor! What beauty! Prabhu! King Indradyumna will build the biggest Temple on earth. He will install you. Prabhu! You are all merciful! We are your servants. Have mercy on us!!
(Viswavasu and Vidyapati sit down. Viswavasu offers his puja.
He lights incense and offers rice and flowers to the deity.
Musical tune of Ahe Nila Saila is in the background.
After puja, Viswavasu puts the flower garland from his neck to Vidyapati.)

Viswavasu: Please accept prasada, Vidyapti. I have been offering this rice everyday. Prabhu Nilamadhava told me he only likes the rice cooked by me. I offer him what I get!
Vidyapati: I am blessed, Viswavasu. Prabhu! I am blessed.
(Viswavasu and Vidyapti partake prasada.
They rub their palm on their head.)

Vidyapati: Now since I've had the darsana of the Lord, I must go and tell King Indradyumna. He would be waiting for me. Please tell Lalita that I will be away for a short while. I will be back with Nilamadhava soon.
Viswavasu: But you have to come back soon. My daughter stays alone. She likes you very much.
(Viswavasu and Vidyapti pack their belongings.
Viswavasu blindfolds Vidyapati. He leads forward and asks Vidyapati to follow.
Vidyapati sprinkles mustard seeds again and follows. Lights out.)

Scene 5

(King Indradyumna's court. The majestic Temple is in the background.
There are several courtiers standing with fans, spears and swords.
The King and Minister enter the court. The King sits on the throne. Minister stands to his right.
All courtiers in chorus: "King Indradyumna, Jai, King Indradyumna, Jai..")

King: How are people doing in my land?

Minster: Through the Lord's grace everyone is doing fine.
King: But the Lord himself is not here. I built this Temple to make it the Lord's abode. The Temple remains empty. Brahmins have come back with no news.
Minister: Maharaj, Vidyapati from the south is not back yet. He may have good news. Lord will only appear if He pleases. Vidyapati is sincere. We should wait.
(Vidyapati enters. He is in his regular dress with shoulder bag.)

Vidyapati: *Pranam*, Maharaj.
King: You look tired. How did your journey go?
Vidyapati: I travelled three months. I had the blessing of the darsana of Nilamadhava last week only.
King: What are you saying? You saw Nilamadhava with your own eyes. Prabhu! Where are you? How can I see you, Prabhu!
Vidyapati: In the south, next to the Rusikulya River, there is a sabara village. Not far from there, in the forest, the Lord is established in a cave. I have put mustard seeds on the path such that I can retrace it. I am sure we can find it.
King (offers gifts to Vidyapti): Vidyapati, you are the best of my brahmins. Please accept these gifts. Please take rest for two days. We leave Sunday.
(King and Minister leave.
Everyone in chorus "King Indradyumna, Jai, King Indradyumna, Jai..".
Lights out)

Scene 6

(Forest scene. The cave shrine of Nilamadhava is in the background. Vidyapati is walking. King, Minister and the courtiers are following. They reach the cave. The shrine is empty. There is no Nilamadhava.)

Vidyapati: O' Prabhu Nilamadhava! Where are you hiding? King Indradyumna has come for your darsana. Please appear.
(The party waits and the shrine remains empty. Viswavasu arrives for his daily puja.)

Viswavasu: I knew you would return, Vidyapati. Who are these?
Vidyapati: He is the Maharaja of Puri, King Indradyumna. The rest are his party. But have you seen Nilamadhava? The shrine is empty.
Viswavasu: What? The shrine is empty! Prabhu Nilamadhava has disappeared! Prabhu! Why do you trick me? Please appear. I have not told anyone your presence. I only showed Vidyapati your puja. He is part of my family.
Nilamadhava (background, from the sky): Viswavasu, you are my devotee. I have enjoyed living here for all these years. Now, I plan to move to Puri and receive worship in the Temple. You and your family must come there and serve me as you have served here. The King will make special villages for your welfare.

And, King Indradyumna, I'm pleased with your devotion. In the kali age, my body will be made out of wood. The wooden image will be worshipped in the

Temple. There is a special log of wood floating in the river at Banki. Collect it and make images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra from this log. You go and get this done. Don't delay.

(All prostrate on the ground. Music of *Ahe Nila Saila* plays in the background. Lights out.)

Scene 7

(King Indradyumna's court. The majestic Temple is in the background. King and Queen seated on the chairs. It's evening.)

King: The old carpenter said that he would take twentyone days to complete the images. Now fourteen days are past. We were hearing some noise before. Now nothing is heard. I am getting worried.

Queen: No one can stay inside the Temple without food for such a long time. When Viswavasu and Vidyapati arrive, you should check inside. You must help the carpenter.

(Viswavasu and Vidyapati enter.)

King: Vidyapati, remember that the old carpenter said that he would be all by himself for twentyone days to make the images. Fourteen days are past. We don't hear any noise inside for several days now. We should go and check.

Vidyapati: I always serve your order.

Viswavasu: I wish to see my Lord.Prabhu!

(The curtain is lifted. Bright light. The images of Sri Balabhadra, Sri Subhadra and Sri Jagnnatha are seen installed on a vedi. There is no one in the room. The images look half-finished.)

King: Where did the carpenter go? How did he disappear?

Voice from the vedi: You don't get worried King Indradyumna. He had come from the heaven to create the images. Vidyapati will explain to you the features in the images.

Vidyapati: (prostrates and gets up) The white image is that of Balarama. He has the saunaka mace and the plough in his hands. He is SriKrishna's older brother and is Siva. The middle yellow image is Subhadra. She is SriKrishna's sister and represents Brahma. The black image on the right, which is very beautiful to behold is of Sri Jagannatha, SriKrishna himself in the form of Narayana.

King: Grateful I am O' Lord. You are all merciful! Let you be worshipped in this Temple for thousands of years.

Voice from the vedi: Vidyapati's family will offer the worship to me in kaliyuga. Please provide help to them such that they can be here for generations. Viswavasu's family will be suaras in the Temple kitchen. You must make provisions such that the kitchen is always ready and everyone can get food in the Temple. There would be no high and low among people for any reason.
You may ask a boon for yourself and your family.

King: My only wish was to install you in this Temple. Now you are here. Let there be no one left in my family who might claim that they brought you here. You have to be with your people. Let me not have any children. Let this be true!

Voice from the vedi: You are a benevolent King, Indradyumna. We will be in the Temple for thousands of years. All people of faith will visit us and eat our prasada in the Temple. We will go out once a year and receive people who cannot come to the Temple. Nobody would be denied a darsana. Everyone with devotion will be freed from the earthly bondage of grief, disease and pain. We will protect you.

(Loud sound of conch and cymbals in the background, flower petals from the sky.)

All: Jai, Sri Balabhadra, Jai
Jai, Sri Subhadra, Jai.
Jai, Sri Jagannatha, Jai

(All prostrate. The music of *Ahe Nila Saila* is played in the background. Curtain drops.)

* * *

Bijoy Misra is a physicist and teaches at Harvard University. He is a past Secretary of OSA. His articles for children have appeared in the OSA journal in earlier issues.

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Letter to a Child: What is this thing called "Culture"?

Srikanta Mishra

The word "culture" is a very commonly used but vaguely understood term. To some, culture refers only to creative art forms such as music and dance. To others, culture represents a collection of deep-rooted values and beliefs. In reality, culture is both of these things, and more. Culture is the way of life of a group of people who share some common attributes. The language they speak, the clothes they wear, the food they eat, the religious beliefs they practice, the festivals they celebrate, the traditions they follow, the songs they sing, the dances they perform, the stories they tell, the social norms they obey – the composite of all such characteristics is what defines culture.

Why do human beings need culture? Elements of culture such as language, clothing and food are essential for our survival. Other elements such as traditions, social norms, music, dance and mythology provide us with a link to the past and sustain us through the grind of daily life. Finally, elements such as religious beliefs, thoughts and festivals help us with our spiritual and inner growth. In other words, culture is simply an expression of our day-to-day habits, thoughts and feelings; and a statement of our living traditions.

We often use the word *samskriti* for culture, which is derived from the word *samskara* (*sam* = being true to one's Dharma or righteousness, *kara* = to bring about). *Samskara* is generally used in the context of a rite of purification. Along the same lines, *samskriti* can be taken to mean the combination of all activities that bring our life into alignment with its Dharma. All activities that lead to our physical, spiritual and intellectual progress (and provide a sense of balance in how we live, think and feel) are part of *samskriti*. The opposite of *samskriti* is *vikriti* – which means corruption and deviation from one's Dharma. The path from *vikriti* to *samskriti* is *samskara* – modification and purification.

As people of Indian origin living outside India, we take pride in India's ancient and diverse culture – one that has absorbed and assimilated wave after wave of migration and invasion from Asia, Arabia and Europe. Jawaharlal Nehru notes that: "No other country except China can trace back its language and literature, its religious beliefs and rites, its dramatic and social customs through an uninterrupted development of more than 3000 years". But how much of the Indian culture should we try to retain in our translated surroundings?

It is important to recognize that culture is a living entity that must adjust to external influences. One should not rigidly stick to one's culture in foreign lands, nor should it be completely rejected. Such extreme decisions tend to promote either a sense of isolationism or a loss of cultural identity, both of which ultimately lead to a lack of balance in life. In thinking about

which cultural elements to accept or reject, it helps to be guided by the principle that the element should satisfy the definition of *samskriti* (and not *vikriti*) in order to be assimilated.

Clearly, our use of language, choice of clothing, food habits and some social norms will have to change to reflect our present environment. However, elements worth retaining (and practicing) are those that highlight the strengths and values of Indian culture, and showcase the heritage of a noble and rich civilization. Some examples are observance of our religious festivals and traditions (as and when possible), exposure to our traditional forms of creative expression, reinforcement of our scriptural guidance about how to deal with the ups and downs of life in a balanced way, etc. Such activities are keys to providing a cultural continuity for all of us, regardless of whether we grew up in India or in North America.

Preserving our cultural identity requires more than just wearing Indian clothes during festivities, watching Hindi movies on weekends, and occasionally visiting temples to perform a puja. It also requires a little bit of understanding of how that cultural identity came about in the first place.

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.

Donelson Family Practice, PLLC

Dr. Gita Mishra, M.D., F.A.A.F.P
Dr. R.K. Mishra, M.S. (Michigan) Ph.D (Chicago)

205 Donelson Pike
Nashville; TN 37214

615-885-3223 (24 Hrs.)
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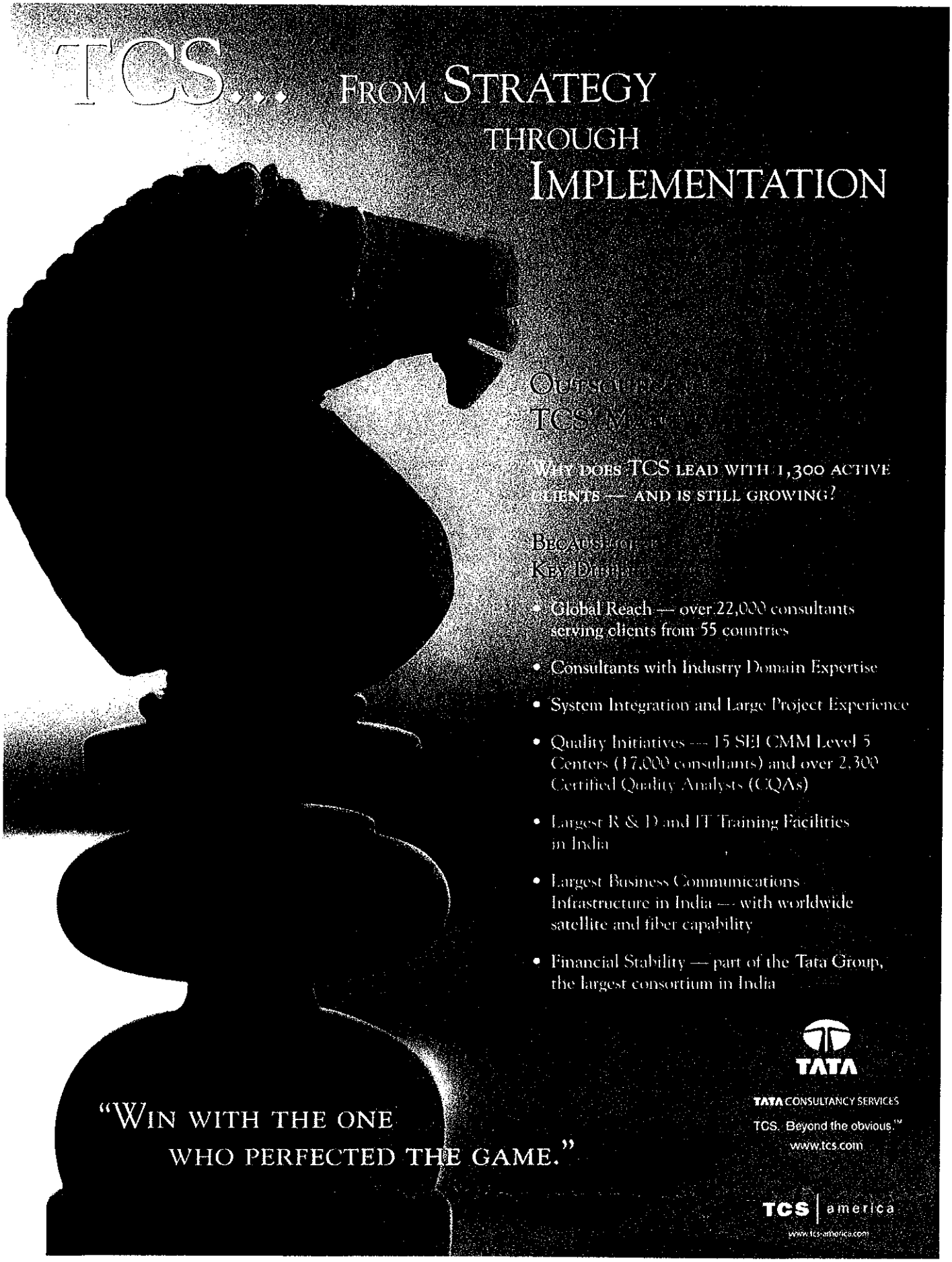
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The Boy Wanders.....

Josna Mishra

It is January 10, 1974 in a small town in the State of Orissa, India. Raj's family has just moved to his wife's relative's home on the day before. This is a day of both excitement and sadness for Raj, Lisa (his wife), and their two small children: Neel, two years old and Lina, one year old. Raj, who is an ambitious young man, is leaving home to go abroad for higher studies. As he makes the final preparation for his departure, he promises one more time to Lisa to return home soon and asks her to take care until then. Lisa is trying to give both the children an early nap at the request of Raj, so that he can leave home with much less pain than saying goodbye to two cute, playful children.

Finally, it is time for Raj to say goodbye to Lisa and other family members. He takes a final glance at his two children who are sound asleep and leaves with teary eyes. Two hours have passed. Neel wakes up and looks everywhere without a word. Perhaps he immediately reacts to some change in his surroundings. Lisa knows exactly what is happening. Neel has been very close to his father who does not forget to take him out on a scooter ride every afternoon. This is that time for a ride.

Next day, Raj's good friend Jatin comes by to see Lisa and the children. Neel runs toward the gate hearing the scooter sound. Jatin is nice and gives him a ride. Time flies—day after day... Neel frequently goes to the gate with wandering eyes to see his father coming home on a scooter. By this time, Neel is almost labeled a hyper kid by the family members who are concerned about his safety and are locking the gate with each move.

One afternoon Lisa, who is a graduate student at the time, comes back from school and hears some complaints about Neel because he refused to hand over a letter to any adult family member that the postman had delivered earlier. Neel is determined to give that letter to mom only because it is from his dad. As Lisa reads the letter, the first one from Raj, Neel watches her reaction attentively and curiously.

Raj studies hard and is determined to save money to help his family join him. A few months have passed. Raj asks his friend in the U.S. to take some pictures and send these to his family. All family members enjoy looking at the first set of pictures from the U.S. for the first time. Lina is too small to connect with her father. Neel is very excited and stares at his dad's picture as if he is taking his own time to reassure himself of dad's wellbeing.

Years have passed. Neel is now five years old and has joined the kindergarten. But he has neither stopped running to the gate when he hears a scooter sound, nor staring at his dad's picture in the family album.

On 26th August, 1976 Lisa, Neel, and Lina reach New york's Kennedy airport where Raj's friend receives them and puts them on the connecting flight to their final destination, Birmingham. As the family reaches the airport and approaches the gate, Neel walks faster and faster ahead of his mom as if it is a challenge for him to find his dad before anybody does. He meets the challenge and runs to his daddy who gives him a nice hug. There seems to be a silence for several moments. It seems Neel has finally stopped wandering.

Josna Mishra teaches Economics and Sociology at Miles College, Birmingham, Alabama.

Crash course to Oriya-ization available in America

Anupama Tripathy

Hail from Uttar Pradesh, raised in Delhi I married a boy from Orissa.
I knew him well but about his state I just had no idea!

Soon after marriage we came to USA, thinking little did it matter who we were to marry.
What is important is the Indian nametag that we carry.

In a way I was relieved that there won't be any expectations and there won't be any stares of scrutiny.
But little did I know what was cooking in my destiny!

I thought I'd be deprived of staying with my in-laws & learning Oriya customs & culture.
But America had a big surprise waiting for me here.

No later than the very next day we landed here was the big *Savitri Puja.*
It was my very first taste of Orissa.

We ladies did *puja* & observed fast all day for our husbands' long lives & well-being.
While they had their full course meals without any change in their routine!

As time went by, I met people who in spite of being here for decades, ate Indian food & wore Indian clothes.
This was something that impressed me the most.

Without visiting Orissa even once, I got to eat '*Dalma*', '*Pitha*', '*Santula*' and various fishes.
That's when '*Pakhala*' became one of my favorite dishes.

Not just this I also got an opportunity to be a part of one of the religious events of Orissa.
This was *Rath Yatra* organized in Philadelphia.

Thanks to this crash course in America, now I feel more of an Oriya
I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have learnt so much in so little time in India

Anupama born in Uttar Pradesh and raised in Delhi married to Pradip Tripathy. They live in Plainsboro, NJ. Anupama adores Oriya food and culture.

Flashing Yellow

Mamata Misra

"Mommy?" said a voice gone mushy from the other end of the phone. After all, it has been almost eight years since I got promoted (or demoted?) from Mommy to Mom. Now-a-days, my experience interprets an occasional "Mommy" as a flashing yellow sign, warning me to watch out for hidden objects I may collide into causing injury to myself, the other, or both. I tried to proceed with caution. This may have slowed me down because he had to make sure that I was still on the line.

He told me that he was coming home around five. I said OK. I asked how he did in his test. He said he thought he made an A. After the introductory small talk, I heard something like, "I got my RPA, Mom". Now, I must admit that I am quite illiterate when it comes to teenagerish, a language of its own. A sudden spill of teenagerish always makes me dizzy from the enormous pull between a strong desire to understand the child and a hopeless inability to do so. I was wondering what the acronym could possibly mean. We had talked about grades. Could it be something to do with grades? No, the grade acronym was GPA – grade point average. With the help of two or three 'what's, "RPA" slowly turned into "are peers" and finally resolved itself to "ear pierced," leaving me at a loss for words. My silence must have made him uncomfortable. "What's the matter?" "Aren't you going to bless it?" he ventured.

I don't remember what I said at the end of my silence. But it was nowhere near "I bless your newly pierced ear, my boy. May many fashionable earrings perch there in the coming years until you get sick of it." I did try not to yell out "How could you, without asking me?" and probably succeeded to some extent. I did not ask the name of the shop to storm into demanding why they pierced the ear of a minor without parental permission. The thought failed to meet the spontaneous demand and reserved itself for later. Had it occurred and found words to convey it, it would probably have been challenged by a frowning "Why?" or "Do I look like 16?" It is true that my son looks about five years older than his age and no one would ask for his id suspecting underage. In fact, the reverse has been true. Once, a few years ago, a train ticket inspector in India had given me a nasty "You don't have to buy a half ticket for your 15-year old to save a few bucks" look, forcing me to dangle my son's passport at his face. My son is mature, independent, responsible, and sensitive to others' needs and feelings. So what sentiment on my part was appropriate at this proclamation of proud ownership of his own earlobe? Obviously he was ready to experience any enjoyment and tackle any consequence a tiny hole in an ear could bring. He did not see a need for my permission but did expect my blessing.

Later on, for rumination, I tried to recollect the thoughts and feelings that had left me speechless. I couldn't. They must have rushed through at the speed of light without leaving any identifiable trail. In that still of the moment, did I see some scary future possibilities? Did a relatively harmless "I got my ear pierced" of today project itself into monstrous, multi-armed demons of tomorrow? Like "I converted to ---", or "I made ---

pregnant", or "I am moving out with ---", or "--- and I got married"? It could happen, you know, a natural consequence of your choice of raising your child in a different society, and there is nothing you can do about it except blessing or not blessing. Those are the only two choices you have. Someone inside me had started lecturing like a mother, rubbing it in real hard. You gave birth, nourishment, and some values by example, some good, some bad. Now everything is up to him. Let go, he has to take control of his life starting with his ear. Let him experiment, make a few mistakes, and learn from them. A wise inner voice was reminding, a verse from Chaanakya Neeti, sound, practical advice from the royal advisor to king Chandragupta Maurya around 300 B.C., I had learned in my high school Sanskrit class.

Laalayet panchavarshaani, dasavarshaani taadayet
Praapte tu shodashevarshe putram mitravat aacharet

Cuddle and hug for the first five years, discipline for the next ten
But once your son is sixteen, treat him like your friend.

This parenting tool from Ancient India I have been carrying with me before I was sixteen. Today it is my privilege to use it with my 16-year-old, by treating him as a friend, by admiring his new hole in the ear with earring, acquired without parental permission, deemed unnecessary. The flashing yellow signal of a mushy "Mommy" from now on would mean, listen, take a deep breath, don't freak out, treat him like a friend. From now on, to bless or not to bless, will be the only question, although it may visit again and again in the guise of many different situations, just for fun.

Mamata Misra lives in Austin, Texas.

Bathing Beauty

Mrs. Rita Patnaik
Bhubanseswar / Orissa

MY DEAR COLONEL RUSSELL

Dr. Prasanna K. Pati

It was the summer of 1981 when I was in London to attend the World Congress of Psychiatry. I had been in the private practice of psychiatry in Philadelphia for a number of years. I loved the City of Brotherly Love.

However underneath this facade of brotherly love, many African- American neighborhoods were seething with anger, despair and hopelessness. It was not surprising that at times this city would explode with racial riots.

I genuinely loved my African-American friends. Once they could shed their racial paranoia and got to know you, generally they were warm, friendly and with a ready laughter. In the World Congress of Psychiatry, I was due to present a paper on "Psychiatry Aspects of Racial Discrimination in America." Also, I looked forward to visit the great museums and historical sites of London. Having been born a citizen of British India, I have had this love-hate relationship with the British.

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon when I headed towards the Tower of London. This important monument on the River Thames had witnessed much of British history. It was the royal residence until the reign of James I. And James I was the king who sent an Ambassador to the Court of Emperor Jahangir. I was particularly interested in an area called Tower Green where Henry VIII had ordered two of his wives, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, to be executed. It should be mentioned here that Anne Boleyn was the mother of Queen Elizabeth I, who signed the charter of the East India Company in 1600 and his company eventually laid the foundation of their Empire in India. I was listening to the tower guide about Henry VIII and his wives and the details of the execution. The description was so vivid and gruesome that I could visualize the entire scene in front of me and what took place in 1536. I felt a bit sick in my stomach and almost without thinking, I said a prayer to our Hindu God Jagannath of Puri, for the departed soul of Anne Boleyn. I felt foolish in realizing that here I was a Hindu praying for an English Queen who was execute on the orders of her husband more than four hundred years back.

I was about to follow the guide, along with the group, to the next historical site, when I felt a gentle tap on my right shoulder. I turned around and saw an elderly gentleman, who softly said, " I am sorry. I hope you didn't mind but are you from India?" I shook his hands and introduced myself, "Yes, I am Dr. Sonjee. I am originally from India." With that I was about to give him the brush-off and get on with the tours, but there was something about the frail, elderly Englishman, something in his facial expression and his eyes that touched me. I continued, "I am now a doctor in America, in the city of Philadelphia and I am attending the World Congress of Psychiatry here in London." He shook my hands again and said, "I am Col. Russell. Where are you from in India?" The tour group was moving away and I was anxious not to miss it, but wished not to be rude.

"Col. Russell, originally, I am from a very small town called Sambalpur in the north-western part of Orissa." With that I started moving away from him, when Col. Russell literally stood in my way and said, "Dr. Sonjee, I will be delighted if you please join me for a cup of tea after we finish the tour."

"Yes, it will be a pleasure."

During tea at the canteen, we talked small things. He had indicated that he had served in India in the late 1930's. He said, "Dr. Sonjee, if you are free this evening, I would very much like you to come to my apartment. You know, I miss India even after so many years." I accepted his invitation. I thought, this old British fellow would like to share some of his tales of the Raj and I have had special fondness for those stories. On the way to his home on the bus, we chatted about the current situation in India. He seemed to be in his late 70's or early 80's but in apparent good health. Throughout the bus ride, he had many questions about the town and the district of Sambalpur.

His apartment was elegantly furnished, cozy and comfortable. He said that he had remained single. There were various paintings of Indian scenes and Indian artifacts throughout the place.

"Dr. Sonjee, I am going to fix myself a Scotch. Would you like to have one?"

"No, thank you very much Col. Russell." I got up and looked at some paintings. One drew my attention and I read the caption, "Col. Gilbert's Residence, Sambalpur, 1828." It was a colonial residence obviously on the river Mahanadi. "Dr. Sonjee, that is a reproduction of an original painting in the India Office Records and Library here in London."

He settled down in a comfortable chair. "I will fix some vegetable curry and a fish soup such as made in Sambalpur and rice." I was getting a bit hungry and offered to help him out in the kitchen. While busy in the kitchen, we kept chatting about Orissa. He mentioned that Sir John Hubback was the first governor of Orissa, in 1936,when it became a separate British Province.

"Dr. Sonjee, tell me about your Sital Sasthi Festival. It was some sort of a marriage festival of one of your Gods. Wasn't it?"

"Yes, it is the marriage festival of God Shiva and Parvati. In the eyes of a child in Sambalpur, I can tell you, Col. Russell, it was a wonderful festival."

"Dr. Sonjee, I thought, you people were nuts to celebrate something like that, but even as an Englishman, I enjoyed the gaiety and festivity of your people. Should I admit to you now that when I passed your God Shiva in his chariot, I offered a salute?"

I laughed and said, "Col. Russell, you were District Superintendent of Police and you a Christian, saluted our Lord Shiva?"

"Dr. Sonjee, I could only hope that none of my men would report me to the Governor's Office at Cuttack."

Both of us laughed.

Surprisingly, he prepared an excellent dinner. We chatted amicably during our meal, mostly about Sambalpur and the festivals. When he had brought out dessert, he said in a somber voice, "Do you have time to listen to a story?"

"Yes, Col. Russell, I was waiting for this moment." I looked at my watch. It was past eight in the evening. I will relate his story mostly in his own words. He proceeded, "Dr. Sonjee, do you know why I tapped on your shoulder in the Tower of London?" You looked like a typical man from the Sambalpur region of Orissa. I had that inexplicable feeling that here was a fellow who might be from western Orissa and I must take a chance."

"Col. Russell, you must have experienced some extra-sensory perception but please proceed with your story."

"Dr. Sonjee, I think, on the bus ride, you told me you were a psychiatrist. You might think I am insane."

"You need not worry Col. Russell, there is a core of insanity in everyone."

"You remember, Dr. Sonjee, I told you that I was the District Superintendent of Police for three years in Sambalpur between 1938 and 1941. You remember the road to the Court and the residence of the road to the Court and the residence of the Deputy Commissioner, close to the bank of your Mahanadi River. My official bungalow was just across the residence of the Deputy Commissioner. I came out to India as a young man. I was born in 1904 on Lincoln, England. My family had a tradition of service in India. Two of my uncles served in the Calcutta Police Force. One of my great uncles on the maternal side was killed in Cawnpore during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. It was a formidable job, to be in charge of police administration of such a huge district. I can tell you true stories of all kinds of police encounters, but such can wait. Let me refresh my drink. Yes, Dr. Sonjee, have you been lonely, I mean that sense of loneliness, homesickness, feeling not wanted or needed, a sort of estrangement or perhaps, depression and specially, in a foreign country? When you went to America, you might have experienced what I am talking about."

"Col. Russell, how right you are. It was not only loneliness but also bouts of depression and guilt for leaving India and mourning for people close to my heart. You remember the Hindu cremation site in front of Pataneswari Temple and the riverbank of Sambalpur. My heart cringes with pain, when imagined scenes of the cremation site intrude on my memory but Col. Russell, please proceed with your story."

"Dr. Sonjee, I remember that Hindu cremation site. I am sorry, if I aroused painful memories. Let me return to my story. In Sambalpur, I had a number of servants including a young girl of about seventeen. You know about the tribal people of your district, simple, honest, trusting, warm, and quite beautiful. This young lady, a converted Christian, knew a smattering of English. I have a photograph of her. Let me show you."

With that Col. Russell went to his bedroom and returned with a tattered photograph. He gingerly handed it over to me. I could very easily make out a beautiful young lady in tribal jewelry of Sambalpur with an enchanting smile. The background was that of a garden. I was still engrossed looking at this photograph when I heard faint sobbing. I went over to Col. Russell, hugged him.

"Col. Russell, will it help you to relate to me the entire story?"

He resumed his story, " Priya, that his her name, was so outgoing and open, and with her broken English and peals of laughter, she brought something to me that, at first, I had difficulty in understanding what I am talking about? She was utterly child-like, so open, so trusting. Falling in love with her does not quite describe what happened. You can imagine in those days, a young English officer having a relationship with a tribal girl of Sambalpur."

"Col. Russell, I can understand. In my college days, my friends and I used to visit villages on the occasion of Hindu festivals. Once under a full moon, I watched a folk dance of tribal women. We could barely make out the figures of these women dancing and singing to some folk tales of Sambalpur. If I were you, I too would have had a relationship with Priya.

"Yes, Dr, Sonjee, you are so understanding. You might have gone thru similar situations in life. Yes, we had a relationship for almost a year. Priya became pregnant.

You know very well how gossipy people in Sambalpur can be. Finally, it reached the ears of the Deputy Commissioner. I was called to the carpet. He was my boss. I remember the scene very well. He was enraged. He started screaming at me, accusing me of having an affair with a "nigger" and having brought down British prestige in Sambalpur. I listened quietly. I feared he might lunge at me. He was frothing at the corners of his mouth. At times, he would strike his fist on his desk. He said he was ashamed of me. His ravings and ranttings went on and on for what seemed liked an eternity. Then there was a pause. He wiped his forehead, got up from his chair, came over to me and shook my hand."

He said, "Being a Civil Servant in Imperial India has taken the humanity out of me. We, the Britishers, have dehumanized the people of India, but in the process, we have dehumanized ourselves. I had almost forgotten I was dealing with human beings."

He returned to his chair and asked me to sit down and ordered tea. I didn't know what to expect. He seemed to be struggling with himself, anxious and perspiring. We sipped tea in silence. Then, as if in impulse, he reached out to the bottom of the desk, to take out an old envelope and pulled out a photograph. Soon, he came over to me, put his arm around me and showed me the photograph. It was quite faded, but a picture of a beautiful young lady in Punjabi costume. Below, it was simply written, "Lahore, 1910."

I was speechless for a moment, but then, I could only mutter, "Sir, Sir". He took the photograph looked at it again, gently and gingerly put it back. He took his time, sipping tea and said, she was a Punjabi girl". Then abruptly, he announced, Col. Russell, I will recommend your transfer to another province, far away from Sambalpur,' Being a faithful and loyal officer, I didn't protest.

I made an attempt to speak, but I was tongue-tied. He seemed to understand. He added that the Government of Orissa would be setting up a monthly grant to the girl and the unborn child. Only at that point, I protested and requested the Deputy Commissioner to allow me to stay in Sambalpur until the baby was born. My eyes were misty and my voice choked. Something must have touched my boss. He got up abruptly from chair, went out to the window and I saw him wiping his eyes."

"Col. Russell, can you please fix me a scotch?"

"Yes, Dr. Sonjee, I will fix you one and I will get a refill." He returned with two drinks. Then, he resumed, "Dr. Sonjee, what my boss told me was touching, haunting. Let me tell you more or less in his own words, "Col. Russell, in all confidentiality, I will tell you a bit more about this Hindu girl in Punjab. It was about 1910. I was, as you are now, fairly new in India. Her name was Sita. I too had a relationship with her. One evening she was lying on my chest in the back of our garden in my Lahore bungalow. She softly whispered that she had my baby. I remember, I was stunned. After several weeks, one night I asked her to return to her village to get an abortion. She flew into a rage. The next day she was gone. I asked and received a transfer to Orissa." Then, he said that he was going to allow me to continue on my duties at Sambalpur until the baby was born but that Priya had to go to Jharsuguda to give birth." I will be at Cuttack in a few days on official business. I will make a trip to No.8 Cantonment Road, residence of the Chief Secretary, to have a quiet word with him about you. It will be confidential.' I thanked him and left."

"Col. Russell, before you proceed with your story, please tell me what happened to the Deputy Commissioner."

"Dr. Sonjee, you remember the Quit India movement started by your Gandhi in August 1942. Mr. Moore was that time posted in Koraput District of Orissa. Because of Gandhi's movement, vast areas of that District had erupted into rebellion against British rule. He had to take stern measures against unarmed villagers to suppress riots and rebellion. He died presumably of a heart attack in one of these trips to the interior of that District. Dr. Sonjee, let me return to my story. I stayed in Sambalpur. Priya had gone to Jharsuguda about thirty miles from Sambalpur. I kept in touch with her. Finally, I received the news that she had given birth to a baby boy.

I decided to go to Jharsuguda on an official visit but really to see Priya and my boy."

At this point, Col. Russell broke down. He started sobbing. I hugged him, patted him on the back. I suggested to Col. Russell that we would walk over to the nearby Indian Restaurant, The Taj India, for snacks. He readily agreed.

We ordered some delicious South India snacks. Col. Russell was well known to the Restaurant staff as apparently, he was a regular visitor. Col. Russell kept talking about his days in Sambalpur, dishes his chef used to prepare and his activities in the Mahanadi Club of Sambalpur. During this talk of days gone bye, he confided that even in those days, when the World War II had started, he knew that the British Raj in India was going to end.

Col. Russell and I had another drink of scotch and he resumed his story.

"Dr. Sonjee, do you remember how beautiful an early winter morning in your district is? I think, it was December that I started for Jharsuguda early one morning. I was going to see Priya and my son. Priya lived with her parents in the Christian section of Jharsuguda. I was not expecting any difficulties with the local population. You people of India are so accepting of others. Of course, I was the police boss of the entire district. My Indian subordinates escorted me to Priya's house. With me, there were Mr. Das, Sub-Inspector of Police and three policemen. When we reached Priya's house, there was a fairly large gathering outside. I knew it was a friendly gathering. Mr. Das made way for me and I was inside the house. First I greeted Priya's parents and then, I went to Priya. I sat down by her and asked her to let me hold our son. He was only a couple of weeks old. I asked Priya whether she had named the baby and she just smiled and said "no". I then announced that the boy's name would be Mohan. I held my son in my arms for a long time. There was a joyous crowd around. Mr. Das stayed close to me. I knew, he was a devout Hindu, but he was so overwhelmed that he asked me if he could hold the baby. I handed over my son to him and he went over to Priya and said, "Madam, after the Sahib leaves Sambalpur, I will look after you and Mohan." I was so moved and happy that I started singing and doing an English jig."

"Col. Russell, Priya knew that you were leaving her. Did she say anything to you?" That seemed to jolt him. However he said, Priya assured him that she was going to raise Mohan and he need not worry.

He resumed, "Priya's parents asked that I have lunch with them. You know, in those days, it was taboo for an Englishman to eat in an Indian's home. I decided that I

would be a human being and agreed. I sat on the floor, cross-legged Indian style. Soon, it was time to leave and I planted a kiss on my baby, Mohan, but I couldn't do that to Priya. I went up to her and handed over our baby and simply said, "God be with you." I left my heart in that house."

Col. Russell started sobbing again. I was not able to console him. I just waited. He went for another drink.

Dr. Sonjee, I returned to Sambalpur the same day. I had an order transferring me to Amritsar in Punjab. I saw my boss, the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Moore. He told me I would be leaving for Amritsar in a week or so. He had me sit down and describe to him in all detail my visit to Jharsuguda. He listened with rapt attention, shook my hand and said, "We the British will be humane only after our Empire is history!" I knew he was thinking of Sita in Punjab.

"Col. Russell, you could have married Priya and taken her and Mohan to Punjab with you"

"Dr. Sonjee, you are a psychiatrist. Don't you understand? We the British for two hundred years had built a barrier between your people and us that I was unable to surmount."

It was getting close to midnight.

"Dr. Sonjee, it is getting late. Let me finish. I want you to go to Jharsuguda on your next trip to India and look for Priya and Mohan. You see, after I left Orrisa for Punjab, I got busy in my work. You know what Punjab was going through. I just didn't think about my son and Priya. I drank a lot every evening but was able to do my job. I was a witness to the 1947 massacres in Punjab. I left India in December 1947 and retired here in London. I would like you to inquire about my son and Priya and report to me."

I asked Col. Russell as to why he himself had not made the trip to Jharsuguda. He simply stated that many times he thought of making the trip but something prevented him from doing so. I assured him that I would go to Jharsuguda make the inquiries and write to him.

It was about fall of 1983 that I went to India. On my visit to Sambalpur, I told my family members that I was going to Jharsuguda for a day. I didn't tell anyone why I was going.

In Jharsuguda I decided to go to the Police Station for help. I told one officer Sahu the whole story. Of course, none of them had ever heard of Col. Russell, but Mr. Sahu was gracious enough to accompany me to the Christian section of Jharsuguda. We went in a Police jeep. It was Sunday and the morning services at the local Church was going on. Mr. Sahu had suggested that we stand outside the Church and ask people if anyone recalled one Priya, a Christian girl, who had a baby by one Col. Russell and who was District Superintendent of Police some forty-four years back. Mr. Sahu posed this question repeatedly as I stood behind him. People did not respond and others were surprised at the question. Some greeted Mr. Sahu warmly but denied any knowledge of Priya. I knew it would be a miracle if someone in this small Christian Community would recall something like this after almost half- a- century. In a way, I was feeling relieved. But an elderly female, on being asked the same question, stopped for a moment and had Mr. Sahu repeat what he was asking about. I saw the old woman collapse in the arms of Mr. Sahu. There was a general commotion and I sprang up to assist Mr. Sahu. She was

received quickly and murmured, "I am Priya' s aunt. Dr. Sonjee, please come to my home for lunch."

Mr. Sahu and I escorted her in the jeep and took her to her house. She introduced herself as Mrs. Mahanti. On reaching her home, we were seated while she fixed a delicious lunch, those heavenly Sambalpuri dishes. I decided to wait for her to tell the story of Mohan and Priya.

She first apologized for losing control of herself in the Church. She said, " I never entertained in my wildest fantasies that this story about Col. Russell would resurface." I briefly explained to her my encounter with Col. Russell about two years back in London and his assignment to me.

Mrs. Mahanti composed herself and gave the following story: "Priya died at the age of 27of typhoid. She took good care of her son, Mohan who was then about 10. Priya's parents took over the responsibility. Mohan seemed to do well. You know, he was a so-called Anglo-Indian, son of an Indian mother and English father. Mohan came to me many times to talk about his confusion as to who he was. Of course, after the death of his mother, it became more acute. He was in turmoil. He must have been around sixteen. Was it 1954? I guess it was. One day he just left Jharsuguda. Just like that he was gone, no note, nothing. Even today, we do not know. He could have gone to England to search for his father. He could have gone to Australia. It is almost thirty years now we have heard nothing. He just was gone. Priya's parents were beyond consolation. Both of them had raised Mohan as their own son. Soon after, they passed away. What else can I tell you?"

I had no heart to quiz her anymore. I was stunned. I wished I had not made the trip to Jharsuguda. We sat in silence. I asked Mrs. Mahanti where Priya was buried in the Christian cemetery. She offered to accompany me there if I wished to visit her grave. It was late afternoon. Mr. Sahu, and I and Mrs. Mahanti were on our way to visit the cemetery and on reaching it, she guided us to the grave of Priya. I stood by the grave with folded hands and said loudly, "Priya, Priya, if you can hear me, Col Russell has a message for you, that is, even now after forty five years, his heart carries your love for him and his pain for separation from his son, Mohan. I touched the grave tenderly and put one single rose which Mr. Sahu handed over to me. I stood there in prayerful silence. Then, I turned around and saw the big burly Police Officer, Mr. Sahu, sobbing silently, two Hindus at the grave site of a Christian girl who had passed away many many years back.

I stayed in Sambalpur for two more weeks. However, Col Russell was always in my mind. What to tell him and what not to? I was literally torn apart. Then, a thought came to me that I should visit our Goddess Samaleshwari in Sambalpur and pray her for guidance. Just prior to departure from Sambalpur and on my way back to America, I found a day that I could visit the temple and pray to her for guidance on that matter. I visited the inner sanctum and prayed to Goddess Samaleswari for guidance. I was keenly aware that many of my forefathers came to the same sanctum and had prayed to the Goddess for guidance. At that moment, no guidance came from the Goddess.

I returned to my home in Philadelphia. That encounter with Col. Russell was like a bad dream. It was no longer in my mind. Then, one night I had a dream as to what to

write to Col. Russell. It was like a nightmare. The language was so clear that I woke up, in perspiration and wrote it down lest it would evaporate. I sent the following to Col. Russell:

December 3, 1983

3139 Crawford Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
USA 19129

Col. James Russell
203 Blackfriars Road, Apartment No. 7
London SE1 8NG
United Kingdom

Dear Col. Russell,

I hope this letter greets you in good health. You remember the assignment you gave me. It turned out to be not that simple. You remember, during your stay in Sambalpur the temple of Goddess Samaleshwari in the old part of Sambalpur. What to write to you was so excruciatingly complex that I had to consult with our Goddess. I went to the inner sanctum of the temple and with folded hands, I briefly told our Goddess your story. I prayed her to give me guidance. I waited in vain and I returned disappointed. There was no word of guidance from our Goddess. Then, several days later, I had the dream and in which, Goddess conveyed to me what to write to you, and it is the following, "Dear Col. Russell, Priya is in Peace and Mohan, your son, is somewhere. Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita says to Arjuna "The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead". Dear Col. Russell, was it strange that our meeting took place in the Tower of London? Being a Hindu, I think, that meeting was ordained by our Goddess of Sambalpur.

With best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. Sonjee

Dr. Prasanna & Mrs. Norma Pati of 1353 Heather Lane, SE, Salem, OR 97302 have raised funds to assist the Ramadevi Vidya Mandir operated by Palli Unnayan Seva Samiti. This school is at Naharkanta near Bhubaneswar. Autographed copies of Dr. Pati's book, "Adventures and Misadventures of Dr. Sonjee: A Collection of Short Stories" will be available directly from Dr. Pati during the Convention for $14.95 per copy or by mail for $18.45 from the above address. Dr. and Mrs. Pati will donate the net proceeds from this book sale to the above school.

On that Day

Ranjita Mahakul

So it rained a while then poured again,
Every grain gleamed in the coral plain;
A gust of wind turned around the corner,
Blowing a page from the book she held;

She had taken up to ink some pages back,
When the clock stopped heart strings snapped;
A lump snared up at the calling of the moors,
Out dropped the reams of timeless tale;

I must go for I have done my part,
They may not see he said its in the past;
I am yours the one you hold in heart,
Meet the others who have a future at last!!

I miss you!!!

Ranjita is a software professional and a part-time Masters student. Currently resides in Columbus, Ohio with husband Tusar Das and son Dev.

Love

Sulochana Patnaik

A beautiful smile
A look in her eyes
A soft touch
A big hug
Or two little words
That says it all.

All those little nothings
The unreasonable crying
The long silence
A life, a death
The cause of the causeless
You win it all.

Sulochana Patnaik writes poetry in English and Oriya. She lives in Philadelphia with her husband Dr.Joy Gopal Mohanty.

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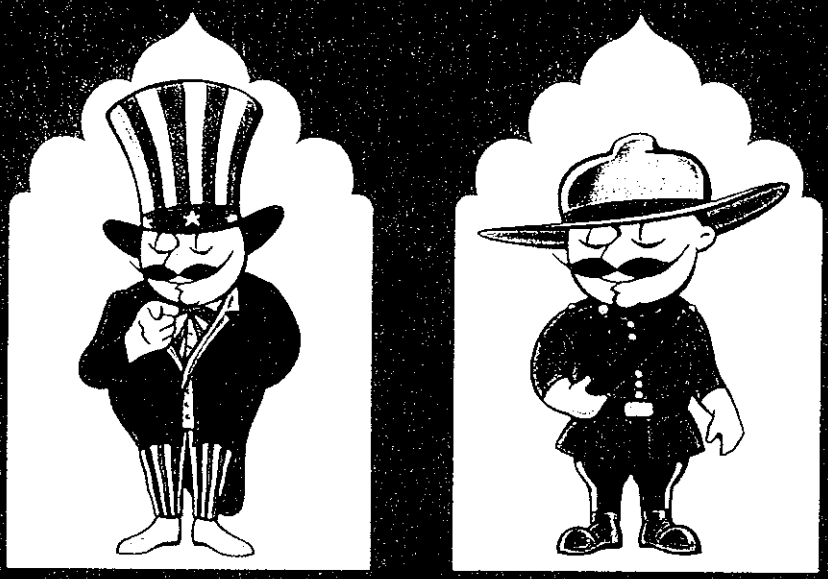

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Words of Wisdom

Dr. Jayasmita Mishra

----"A child never tells a lie, I'm sure you believe it. You are a Psychologist and must be knowing better than me", shouted Kiran as she ran down the stairs of their 8th floor apartment.

"Believe me, for God's sake today is *Mahashivaratri* –an auspicious day of the Hindu calendar, I have done no harm to your child. I swear by God that I am innocent."

Well! Innocence, sacrifice, sympathy, helpful attitude, fellow feeling all these are perhaps things of the bygone days that have been deliberately erased from the modern day dictionary; as the present day's hectic life schedule is primarily governed by the basic dictum-TIME IS MONEY.

The words kept ringing in her mind, as the harsh words echoed around her ears. Shruti, just could not believe that things would take such a nasty turn when her sole intention was to help a neighbor, derive psychological happiness in the company of a cute cuddly little girl and at the same time earn some extra money for the family.

It is always fate's will that takes the ultimate decision. Long lost from a warm, friendly and happy environment in which she was born and brought up.....today she feels absolutely dejected and helpless in an alien land-a sapling uprooted from its native soil in search for some recognition and affinity –a basic self esteem need as recognized by ' Maslow's Theory of Psychological Needs.'

Things suddenly took a different turn in life, when Shruti's husband got an overseas appointment by a firm in the States. Yes, after all it was New York; the place which seems to be heaven –the city that never sleeps- controlling the economy of the whole corporate world .Who could deny such an offer! Yes, irresistible it seems. As family and friends came to know about it eyes turned, ears whispered; people vied.

It hardly took minutes for her to think of resigning from the job from which she had derived an immense sense of satisfaction-a fact that she could at least use her talents in the right direction. Family and friends had always made fun of her simplicity but at work she was a different entity altogether, smart, capable, efficient and willingly accomplishing any possible job that was assigned to her from time to time. The Principal kept assuring her: "Shruti, you are a well qualified competent and capable young lady-who knows you may be absorbed in a job of your choice earning more than your husband. A bright future awaits you...think positive...the sky ought to be your limit go ahead with your plans take advantage of this golden opportunity-remember, opportunity comes only once. I am pretty sure success will be yours-our best wishes are always with you".

A calm and composed mind of Shruti also consoled her, alleviating the basic fears of jeopardizing a well-settled life. Go ahead said the inner voice-- for a woman my dear – family comes first--think of your husband's career prospects and the future of your kids after all, in their happiness lies yours.

Everything was final and soon the day dawned to bid farewell to family and friends as she boarded the international flight to join her husband and build up a new home with a renewed spirit of enthusiasm and vigor.

The initial euphoria was soon over; all the excitement and thrill that hanged on for some time gave way to reality. In spite of the beautiful surroundings of the suburb area of NEW YORK in which she lived and the comforts of modern day living that she had at her disposal, some sort of vacuum engulfed her mind, as the days flew past. Atul, a workaholic by nature was engrossed in his job day in and day out. The kids who were old enough to look after themselves did no longer hanker for the company of their mother.
Yeah! She found herself to be a doormat with the burden of time hanging heavily on her shoulders. It is true, she was indeed the queen of her domain with none to question her actions but nature perhaps had not made her that way to enjoy this life of sheer luxury.
Memoirs behind her had always spoken about the true story of struggle that she had undertaken just to reveal to the world that she was indeed a gem hidden beneath the deep waters of the ocean. She wanted to prove that she was always an achiever in spite of all the odds that seemed to have come her way.

Today, all her efforts seem to have gone into thin air, as she found herself totally enclosed within the four walls of then home and hearth. The prime time of life the most productive years when she could utilize her, brain -power seemed to be going down the drain. The truth lied in the fact that –without a job permit getting a job was not easy. It is rightly said –impossible is a word found in a fool's dictionary. Good friends and well - wishers always encouraged her- "Come on Shruti! Do not get disheartened keep applying, someday or the other victory will be yours" .Yes, hope is the power that sustains life on the earth so there is no harm in trying and thus the days rolled by in the process of inquiry and investigations; hoping against hopes that something concrete might crop up someday or the other.

One fine morning, as she slept lazily reading a story- book on the couch, a familiar voice at the door beckoned her to get up and listen. Oh! She was, the known Indian aunty whom she had met the other day, she was wearing salwar kameez and spoke Hindi. " Come in aunty," she said as she lovingly pulled her into the living room. It was indeed nice to have the company of someone from your native land in a foreign country.
Aunty had brought along with her a little girl; she was her grand daughter, " MENAKA" by name. Oh! What a lovely name that matches her looks so well. The delicate little girl was no less beautiful than 'Menaka", the celestial fairy of the *puranas*. Her mother perhaps did not have to think a second to give her such an apt name, I suppose, thought Shruti as she cuddled the tiny bundle into her arms giving her a big hug.

The grand old lady peered through her glasses and with a stern yet pleading voice said, "Shruti, you have to look after Menaka while her mother goes out to work for her baby sitter has refused to take care of her anymore on grounds of ill-health''.
Shruti paused for a while and replied, "but I have never looked after my own, as I have always been an outgoing lady leaving the aspect of childcare on other dependable people."
Menaka's granny assured her, "you do not have to worry much about Menaka as she is already toilet –trained and basically she is a well-behaved darling. Moreover, you will be sitting at home, at least you will have someone to share your loneliness. Don't forget you

shall be earning in dollars too. Remember, if you convert the amount it will be twice the salary that you were paid for the job that you did back home''.

It wasn't a bad idea thought Shruti for her friend too was on the same boat and the dealing was between Indian families where she was doubly sure nothing wrong could ever happen. Moreover, they were bound to the same culture and differences if at all there was could be sorted out with understanding.

Atul at first, was wary about the proposal "I' am sure you will get into trouble, drop the idea-I am earning enough for the family. Come' on learn to be satisfied with whatever you have. Isn't it a big risk that you are undertaking".

Shruti laughed out his words ". Didn't I depend on others to take care of my kids when they were young-I feel there is no harm in this .I will be helping them in a way and at the same time have the satisfaction of earning some money on my own".

"Do whatever you like", was his ultimate and final word. A sense of victory for Shruti indeed! Because mostly his words ruled the home. This time it was hers and she felt so good about it.

Kiran was very happy, everything seemed to work out so well for she lived in the flat downstairs. Shruti was well educated and she was sure that her daughter would be in safe hands. "Is 25 dollar per day ok for you," she asked over the telephone.

Shruti replied, "I am so new to this place and I know nothing about this I will ask my friend and tell you". Before she could say something the money was pushed into her hands. Shruti did not mind it at all for Menaka proved to be a well-behaved child and everything worked out fine.

Days, weeks and months passed by – 'MUNU', as she was fondly called became the focus of attention in the Dutta family. Even Atul adored her, allowing her to sit on his head and shoulders. Shruti would anxiously wait to greet the girl every morning as her father came to drop her. The children who were normally noisy would come back from school hush hush tip toed-'Munu is asleep'.

Kiran soon realized and acknowledged the fact as to how much her daughter was pampered in the family where she spent most of the day. Shruti also never did mind when on occasional times Kiran had to leave Munu in their house and go out – for they had become good family friends.

One fine evening, Kiran related to Shruti, "Well, I have resigned from my job today and very soon I shall be joining another firm. Tell me if you are fed up taking care of Menka. Speak out your mind for this firm is far away from home and thus, Menka will be staying with you for an additional time of two hours. I do not mind paying you more for that, even I shall make up for the deficit if any, which is due to you till date. At least I should not be bothered about Menaka when I take up this new assignment." Shruti laughed, "I have never said that I am ever tired of Munu, I shall definitely love to take care of her as long as I am at home. Regarding the money part I shall think about it and talk to you tomorrow".

"Money, money, money brighter than sunshine sweeter than honey". Who would not like to have more and more of it only a *sadhu*, saint, *sanyasi* will say no. Kiran has asked me to open my mouth so why shouldn't I thought, Shruti. It is utter foolishness to keep your mouth shut suggested other friends. "Now you are an American, you should learn not to allow others to take a ride on your back. Babysitters over here are paid on an hourly basis. Aren't you bound with that child for a pretty long period of time? She

would never be able to get another babysitter at such a low price. Do you think you are going to get a gold medal from her for being the best babysitter in the world? Moreover, she is not a poor lady who needs help, you ought to open up and speak out-mind you- do ask for more."

Yes, all her life till today she has always been exploited by others in some way or the other. This time she thought she would be wiser.

However, Atul had given her the warning signal. "You never asked for the money that she is giving you now. If you open your mouth you shall be loosing your upper hand, remember if you demand expectations will arise and you shall be treated no less than a maid".

Ignoring his words, Shruti mustered up enough courage to speak out. "Kiran you have stayed in this country for long and you must be having a better idea about the system of childcare. As I have gathered information from the people around here-the rate is much higher than what I receive so you have to decide and give me what I deserve."
No sooner had the words been finished from her mouth Kiran immediately flared up speaking a lot defending her stead regarding the issue.

"Ok, Kiran, it is just my bad luck that I have always been exploited by others in whatever job I have been doing so far. Frankly speaking, I don't mind it- 'MONEY' should never be a factor to destroy the lovely bond that we have developed with each other over the time period. We do not have our own kith and kin to help us over here, so what is the use of being friends if we do not share our burdens at times of need. Go ahead-forget about it."

Over the weekend news reached Shruti's ears that Kiran was desperately looking for a babysitter. After listening to the whole story, well wishers had advised her to stop having relations with that ungrateful lady thereby maintaining her own dignity and self-respect.

Once again the inner voice within her prompted her to remain calm and composed. If Munu comes she thought she would certainly welcome her with the same sense of affection that she had done before. The child should not be punished in any way because of the parent's arrogant behavior. She had in fact, tried her very best to forget Kiran's diplomacy and patch up the hole.

Monday morning, it was Munu at the door. Her shrill voice could be heard- "Sonia didi open the door". A voice that could melt a stone! Shruti immediately opened the door and greeted her father as usual. Munu, as it was a part of her daily routine cried a bit as her father waved goodbye.

An emotionally chocked voice of Shruti blurted out, "It wasn't decent on Kiran's part to speak such harsh words to me. I still am unable to comprehend as to where I had gone wrong. She seems to be too smart it wasn't right on her part to behave in such a wild manner. Leaving little kids with others and going out to work is no joke. See, how much the child needs you".

Akhil, a gentleman by nature just nodded his head and went off to duty.

Things went on as usual, when next day Menaka, while sleeping in the afternoon spoiled the sofa. She had done this before also and each time Shruti had stripped off the sofa cover and given it to Kiran for washing. That day also she did the same thing. In the

evening Kiran apologized to Shruti regarding her ill-behavior and once again brought in the subject of money to the forefront "Menka is so much attached to your family", she said, " I do not want her to be separated from you people. It would become too much for her if she looses contact with you for she has yet to recover from the pain that she had to undergo of missing her Granny when she had to leave for Bombay. We are prepared to pay you the money in any form that you demand as per your will-be it on an hourly or daily basis." Shruti at first evaded this issue after pausing for a while, in a very humble manner she said, " Give whatever you like I just cannot say anything," but on Kiran's insistence she said ok. " Give me, $ 35 per day that will suffice". Thus, the agreement was over.

As a part of his daily routine Akhil always made it a point to ring up from office and talk to his daughter for some time. This time the tone was different and he asked Shruti as to whether Menaka was being taught everyday from the books which they borrowed from the library for her.

Shruti at once recalled Atul's words; Teaching was her passion and she loved to do it .All these years this was what she had been doing and how much she missed that part of life she only knows. Well, she never had taught little kids-for this was a different art altogether and she knew that she had no patience for that. She soon realized how much the giver values each and every penny that he has to part with .She was paid for the job and he had all the rights to demand.

The sofa in Shruti's living room lay bare, she knew that both Kiran and Akhil were busy persons and would get the time to wash the cover only during the weekend so she did not ask for it. On the other hand, she covered it up with a bed sheet. She had the tendency to adjust to others giving less priority to her own needs.

Next day, while Munu was busy eating noodles in front of the T.V. Shruti went to the kitchen to complete some of her cooking chores. After a while she came out of the kitchen and to her utter dismay she found Munu completely engrossed in messing up the place gleefully pulling out bits of foam from the sofa. She was busy in her job completely unaware of the consequences. A glance at the mess and a bewildered Shruti hit her own head with her fists and shouted, "Munu, see what you have done! A minute out of sight means you are up to some mischief or the other".

As was normal and obvious, the little girl started crying, as pearl like tears rolled down her rosy cheeks. Shruti lost no time in trying to pacify her. The delicate child was like an ice doll ready to melt at the slightest spark. Anyway, experience had taught Shruti how to tackle the situation and she did it the same way as she had done before. Munu had her lunch and went off to sleep.

Kiran came in the evening to pick up her baby. As she closed the door Munu turned back, "good bye, Aunty" she said.

Who knew that this would be the last day of Munu in her favorite aunt's house? As is usual for little kids to narrate the day's tale to their mother, Munu must have incoherently said something about the incident to her Mama. Kiran promptly rang up to know exactly what had happened and informed Shruti that Menaka would not be coming to her house for a whole week as she was on leave.

Since, it is winter break the kids will be at home thought Shruti and she would not miss Munu much. She on the other hand, meticulously planned up to finish all her outdoor errands over the time period.

One fine morning, a grim faced Kiran came to Shruti's house and said, "Please handover Menaka's personal belongings that are in your house as she is no longer going to come here. She herself says that she does not want to stay with you anymore."

Shruti could not believe her words, but after a second thought asked her, "where will she stay while you are away from home."

"I am going to leave my job", said Kiran, "it is just a matter of 6 months or so because very soon Menaka will be joining a day school".

"Are you mad Kiran, please do not leave your job see how bad I feel sitting at home. I am willing to take care of Menaka until you find an alternative. I am sure you will get one soon."

"No, my daughter is my priority she hates you and does not want to come to you anymore".

"Yes, it is the right and duty of every mother to look after her own baby, so do as you like", sadly uttered Shruti .Her brain could not analyze the complexities involved in the statement.

"Akhil has taken her today with him to his office just to heighten up her spirits. He will continue doing so till some arrangement is done .She has been traumatized and you must be knowing the reason. She is scared of you and shakes like a trembling leaf when we speak to her about you".

Like a lunatic; Shruti ran into the bedroom pulled out a small idol of the ALMIGHTY, clasped it tight in her hands and cried out. " Believe me"..... By the time she had returned back to the entrance of the flat where Kiran stood, she had already disappeared into the stairs. "Believe me"..... Once again the distraught Shruti shrieked.

The battle was over and Kiran emerged as the ultimate winner!!!

Atul patted her gently saying: "Once they're over let go of irritating things that happen. Dwelling on slights will only add to your annoyance. Remember, the truth is that –other people can ruin your moment, only you can ruin your day. It was just a bad dream !!! My dear, forget it.

May his words of wisdom always reign in my home forever.... was Shruti's earnest prayer to the LORD.

Dr.Jayasmita Mishra obtained her PhD in Psychology from Delhi University. She is presently relocated in New York with her family. She spends much of her time in voluntary activities, reading, socializing and freelance writing.

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Eternity

Chandra Mishra

When death comes
and whispers
that my days have ended,

Let me say to him:
I have lived in love and
not in mere time.

He will ask,
"Will your poems remain?"

I shall say, "I know not,
but this I know -- that
when I wrote I
found eternity."

Chandra Misra lives in North Wale, PA with her husband Dr. Sudhansu Misra. The author likes to express her feelings through poetry.

My Gift To You

Chandra Misra

I asked myself what could I do
To show how much that I love you.
How could I show how much I care?
Each gift I found just couldn't compare.
I searched to find one I could say
My heart it truly did portray.

But then I realized just why
The perfect gift I couldn't buy.
The only gift that shows my heart
Is one you've guessed my gift to you,
My love declared once more anew.

So, with this poem, I say once more
Something I think you know for sure,
That you're the one I truly love
And daily I thank God above

Bi-cultural Marriages: Some Personal Reflections

Arjun Purohit

One bright spring day, my son Robin and his girlfriend Marie announced their engagement and sought blessings from us. Congratulations, hugs and kisses followed. Then my better half Padmini held both of Marie's hands, and said lovingly to her," From today, I will call you Meera. Though Marie is a beautiful name, it has a bad meaning in our language. Would you mind?" "Of course not" she said, and added, "I will call you both Ma and Bapa" not to be outdone. She sure knew how to pull our heartstrings! Then looking at me, she said, "Bapa, you will conduct our marriage in authentic Hindu style. And I will not take no for answer."

For this I was not prepared. A mixture of feelings swept through me. Though I have been conducting marriages for kids of my friends for a while, doing so of my own son was somehow seemed quite intimidating. But the very thought of doing so was also quite exhilarating. Then I suggested that Meera's parents and we should put our heads together to see how we can co-ordinate Hindu and Christian weddings the same day. "Nope", she said," just the Hindu wedding." Just to cut a long story short, the couple got married on Canadian Thanksgiving day, which occurs in second week of October when trees don blazing red colored leaves. Robin and Marie picked a century old one room school house, which serves now as a the village museum in a small village in the wine growing area near Niagara Falls!!

Robin is born in Canada, and is a Canadian kid in every sense of the word. Living in a small town in Ontario where there was not much of a presence of Indians, his friends were all non-Indians. As a family, we can not be considered as devout Hindus, though my wife does her Pujas every morning and I read scriptures more as a connoisseur than as a pucca Hindu. I also read scriptures of other faiths, be they Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Islam, and what not. Therefore one may say that Robin's exposure, if one may call it exposure at all, was primarily to comparative religion. For some reason, Padmini insisted that Robin must have to go through thread ceremony. We got it done in Vishnu Temple in Toronto. I had to bribe Robin with all kinds of goodies to go through that. I could easily see that he hated the experience because, as he said later, the meaningless monotonous drone of Sanskrit chants of the South Indian priests almost put him to sleep. Later he took a sabbatical from his job and went to India to explore his heritage. He was impressed with arts, old monuments and the uncomplicated and overwhelming love of kinfolks. His worst memory of the trip was being refused admission to Lingaraj temple because he could not tell his gotra as demanded by the priest! And of course the filth and beggars and ravenous priests in most temple sites.

Meera came to Canada via U.S.A. with her parents from Scotland because her father came to do his residency in a medical college in Boston, where he died prematurely. The rest of the family moved to a rural area in Nova Scotia. Her ethnic background is very diverse. Her ancestry has a bit of Italian, a pinch of Spanish, a dash of Gaelic, and a host of other ethnicities hard to remember. She did her degree in fine arts, and pursued a career as an artist. Her exposure to Indian sub-continent came when she spent some time in Pakistan as an exchange student. During that time, she became reasonably competent in Urdu. And later she explored with Robin Rajasthan, Khajuraho, Kerala and most of South India and fell in love with the mystery and magic of India. As an artist she was especially struck with explosion of color, and the use of artistry in day-to-day life of ordinary folks.

Robin and Meera dated each other for more than year before they decided to be lifelong partners. Their story is not very unlike of many bi-cultural couples, though the details will vary from couple to couple.

My career as a Hindu priest was launched by accident. A very close doctor friend, his wife also a doctor, came to me in great distress because his daughter, also a doctor, is to marry another doctor but the Hindu priest fell very ill whom no doctor could help!! Could I, a Purohit, save the situation and conduct the marriage? "My last name is Purohit because my ancestors were priests, but I am no priest", I told them. But they would not leave me alone, but I stood my ground. Later in the evening, the bride-to-be came and gave me third degree. What kind of an uncle am I refusing to help her in her big moment? Her parents arrived a little later assuming that I have been already softened up by their daughter. "We will help you and give all the details. All you have to do is to go through the protocols," they said. I implored them to look for another priest and make me stand-by. They left a few scribbled papers, most important of which was the transcript of Saptapadi from Gandhi movie!! And since they could not find any priest, my career was lunched in full regalia of the most decorated hall in Royal Military College in Kingston in front of all my friends and oversea visitors who had come to witness the wedding!!

Now let me give you some guiding principles of the protocols I use in the marriage ceremony.

1. It should be short, definitely less than an hour. My protocol is for about forty minutes. I personally think that our traditional Hindu ceremonies are too long often beyond the attention span of the marrying couples and the audience.
2. The couple should be involved in crafting the protocol. I usually send the initial draft and the couple make suggestions, alterations, additions, etc. This makes them involved, and makes the ceremony meaningful. However, I always keep some elements for surprise so that couple does not feel that they are just going through the expected motions.
3. Doing everything through Sanskrit slokas and mantras is avoided. Nor should one translate the slokas in a prosaic and literal manner because it becomes more like a teaching session. Rather the sublime and profound character of slokas should be conveyed capturing the intended meaning and impact. I alternate between

Sanskrit and English in a lyrical way to create a profound ambiance through Sanskrit slokas and to make the ceremony meaningful through English.

4. Slokas should not be enunciated hurriedly as is often the case in most Hindu ceremony. Profoundness of Sanskrit portion should be conveyed with appropriate expressions because even though the participants and the audience do not know the meaning of the slokas, they imbibe the profoundness by osmosis.
5. Supplement wherever possible traditions and rituals of faith of the non-Hindu bride/groom in appropriate junctures. This is particularly important when the ceremony of the other faith is not contemplated.
6. Eliminate all sexist and chauvinistic references from the ceremony.
7. Avoid temporal gaps between steps because such gaps invite distractions and restlessness in the audience. Brief rehearsal of the ceremony prior to the ceremony is highly recommended to avoid such gaps.
8. I recommend a lapel mike for the priest so that the entire audience hears what is going on.
9. Finally, the couple always determines ultimate shape and structure of the ceremony. The dictum, "*Mia Bibi Raji, To Kya Karega Kaji*" is upheld.

Now let me give you the steps/protocol of the ceremony I use.

1. Agamana/Arrival of bride and groom
2. Abhinandana/Greetings and introduction of bride and groom
3. Prarthana/Prayers
4. Dipajwalana/Lighting of candles/Homa/Abahana/Invocation of deities
5. Kanyadana/Giving away of daughter
6 .Hastababandhana/tying of hands
7. Ashirvada/Blessings of priest
8. Agniparikrama/Going around the fire
9. Sindura Dana/Exchange of rings
10. Saptapadi/Seven Steps
11 .Shantipatha/Peace prayer
12 Pronouncement of marriage
13. Seeking blessings from the parents
14. Exit

As you look at the protocol you will notice that most of the essential elements of Hindu marriage ceremony are there, though some may disagree. Though marriage is between followers of two different faiths or culture, the structure of the ceremony is essentially Hindu which of course gets modified according to the wishes of the couple. It may appear to be too long, but it can be done within an hour. The details are taken from the scriptures, interspersed with some of my own compositions. All protocols are personalized and unique for each couple. Occasionally, some radical requests are made by groom or the bride. For instance, my daughter-in-law did not want Kanyadana. "I am no chattel to be given away by anybody," she said. In another occasion, request was made to avoid reference to deities by the groom who was an atheist. But he wanted the traditions and rituals of his Hindu bride. I respected both requests.

Do the bicultural marriages work? To simplify the outline of the debates on this issue, one may focus on two opposing views, which we may call as orthodox and liberal. Proponents of orthodox view would argue that when the bride and groom come from the same faith or background, they are intuitively familiar with roles and expectations of husbands and wives, and hence probability of spousal conflicts would be minimal. That should result in domestic harmony and successful marriage in the end. In bi-cultural marriages, they would argue, conflicts are constant, and divorces are likely. Liberals, rather ultraliberals, would argue that rigid roles and expectations will produce undue stress in contemporary life and cause disharmony and failed marriages. They would go further and argue that background has nothing to do with good marriages, and are ardent supporters of bi-cultural marriages.

In my limited experience, there is a grain of truth in both positions, and serious flaws as well. I have seen success and casualty in both uni- and bi-cultural marriages. I know of marriages one would have thought would not survive long but continue to blossom over the years, and the mirror image. Tragically, I also know of marriages which were thought of as made in heaven but flounder in no time. These happen in both types of marriages. Therefore, though similarity of background is important, it is not sufficient condition of good marriage. Obversely, mature couples do often rise above pull and push coming from background differences and enjoy domestic bliss. In my view, whether marriage is bi-cultural or uni-cultural, the same variables make or mar the marriages. I will try to delineate some of these variables but before I do that I will make a few comments on dynamics of life in North America since we are debating this issue in the context of life here.

Like it or not, bi-cultural marriages are here to stay. Twenty years ago when I met a young man or lady in OSA convention, a twenty something he/she was from Orissa. No longer so. We have lot of kids now born of Orissan parents and brought up in North America who are reaching mature age. At the same time, we do not have a critical mass of these young folks concentrated enough in this vast continent to make the mate selection within the community always possible. Besides, many of these kids often do not want to limit their choice of mates to the Oriya or Hindu community. Caste consideration is already gone. Arranged marriages are things of the past. Getting a bride/groom from back home is out of style. Though such marriages do happen occasionally, the trend is decidedly against such mate selection. One need not be surprised at these developments here; this is happening in Orissa, and in cosmopolitan centers are like New Delhi and Mumbai, it is booming.

In my view, marriages are always bi-cultural to some extent. Even families of the same caste, creed, or nationality do have some unique values, life styles, and ways of relating within the family. Therefore, when brides and grooms always have to adjust to each other and other members of both families in any case. When the difference of origin is more pronounced, then adjustments require more maturity, sensitivity, and effort. Jungians say that usually marriage partners of different background need to have similarity of interests

whereas those coming from similar background need to have diversant interests to make the marriage vibrant and lively.

Here are some two-cent worth of tips to the new bi-cultural couples and their parents. First to the couples. It may surprise you coming from a priest that marriages are not made in the heaven; it is made right here on earth. Its success depends entirely on you, not on any divine entity. Love has brought you together, but it is commitment and steadfast determination to make it work will keep you together. A Chinese proverb says that often the spirit of battle is lost when it is celebrated too early. The battle of life together starts after the celebration of marriage. You will encounter the joys of life together, but you must also expect many challenges in your journey, such as, sickness, job loss, career change, accidents, and what not. And when they come, as they must, they may strain your relationship and create conflicts. At that time, avoid the tendency to find faults in each other's background. Identify strength in both of your background, synthesize them and harness them instead of dwelling on the weaknesses in both cultures. A boat goes much faster and goes more distance when two motors work cohesively instead of the motors pulling the boat in opposite directions.

Now a brief message to the parents. Never burn the bridges between you and the kids even when not everything they do is to your liking. You are going to be the main social support system here substituting the whole social network we were used to back home. The familiar cultural traditions, which worked for us, may not be the only way for our grown up kids who must explore for themselves to navigate their lives in this environment. Do not advise if not asked. Do not overwhelm the spouse of your kid by imposing our cultural modes and learn to give them some comfortable space.

Now, do you think anybody listens to the priest and remembers what he advises? I certainly do not recall what our priest said when I got married forty-five years ago in front of ghee fed *Homa* on an unbearably hot day in May in Sambalpur! Now you must be wondering what happened to Robin and Meera, a.k.a. Marie. We have a two-year-old bundle of joy and mischief named Olivia Apsara!

Arjun Purohit resides in Kingston, Ontario. He is a regular contributor to OSA journal.

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Division of Labor in USA

Kiron Senapati, P.E

I came to the US in the late seventies after completing my undergraduate degree in engineering. Upon arriving in the US, I realized that there was a division of labor based on ones abilities. Not everyone went to college for higher studies. Some of the students chose to do manual labor and made a decent living doing what they could do to their best. Although, there is dignity of labor, the upper class are usually the rich, constituting the white collar workforce who control the economy of the country, while the lower class are much poorer, who performed most of the basic functions, such as, daily laborers, farm workers, janitorial services etc. There was supposedly equal mobility within the system that allowed a person to change his or her status by working hard at it and rising to the top of the division of labor system – may be the President of the United States.

My reason for writing this is to analyze the importance of division of labor, which is critical for a nation to prosper and succeed in this fast technological era. On my arrival in US, in the late seventies, the Personal Computer (PC) was not widely used yet, and therefore most of the type written texts in schools and offices were performed by a specialized group of people called typists who had specialized in the use of typewriters. Even I had to have my thesis typed by a typist, which was a very tedious process, since every time I made a change to my text, I had to run to the typist. Finally, after several trips to the typist's home, and use of several bottles of white out, I had my final thesis prepared and submitted for approval. Similarly, there were experts in other fields, such as plumbers, pipe fitters, welders, cooks, roof layers, and other skills that were part of the division of labor. When we had a leaky roof, we called the roof layer, and not a carpenter. In today's world of "Do it yourself" and prevalence of "Home Depots" and "Office Depots", in US, one tends to do everything without proper training. I don't think there is anything wrong with doing one's own work, but there is some concern of a task being done by an amateur, who may not be proficient in that particular task. Sometimes that work may compromise with safety, which might bring harm to others. For example if a roof is built by a person who does not have the skills of doing such work, the roof may collapse under normal conditions, thereby bringing harm to the resident of that house.

Gone are those days when we used to have personal secretaries, who had the necessary skills and ability to prepare properly formatted document before they were sent out. In the days of PCs, everyone is putting out sloppy office documents that lack proper formatting, and sometimes with erroneous information that would have normally been flagged by a proficient secretary. I am not a proponent of bringing back the old days, where every task has to be done by a specialist, but there should be a limit to our ability to perform multiple tasks. Just as we don't expect a chef, to fix our roof, similarly we should not expect an engineer to create a well-drafted engineering drawing. For example, we used to have skilled draftspersons in our office to prepare engineering drawings. But with the availability of canned drafting programs, draftspersons have become obsolete and we have cookie cutter drawings/specification packages put out by engineers who don't give much time to details, and leave out important specifications resulting in a poor engineering package. Division of labor has some relevance in our society today, and we should rethink our options of allowing ourselves to become "Jack of all trades".

May be, the pendulum of self reliance has swung too far in the last 20+ years. We tend to do everything ourselves, cooking, cleaning, gardening, driving, etc. Recently, on my visit to India for an extended stay, I realized the importance of having someone else drive the car for you, since it requires concentration. In the United States we often see people on the road driving with cell phones glued to their ears with their mind wandering about somewhere while they hold the steering wheel of a fast moving car. Although the roads in India are much narrower and heavily crowded, the accidents there are less fatal than those in the USA. Such fatal accidents here may be attributed to inattentive driving, because we are all trying to do everything ourselves. This point alone drives home the importance of "Division of Labor" and may be we are doing something right in India – keeping the division of labor alive.

Kiron Senapati is a professional Chemical Engineer and an Environmental Consultant in the areas of water and wastewater treatmen. He lives in Tampa, Florida. Presently he is working in Kolkata, India on mitigation of arsenic in groundwater in West Bengal and Bangladesh.

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PREVENTABLE DISEASES BEYOND 30

Devi P. Misra, MD, FACP

As we get older we encounter many common treatable and yet preventable diseases, which if detected in early stages the specific disease complications can be prevented. All diseases have a natural history of progression if not checked early. Diabetes, hypertension, and hypercholesteremia (or hyperlipidemia) are the ones if unchecked early would lead later in life to heart attacks and strokes in both men and women. More in women after 40 years than in men, osteoporosis can stamp its silent footsteps before the doctor can even try to know the reason for the frequent fractures and pain. In our complex day-to-day life a little awareness about following commonly encountered diseases will place us in good stead to prevent their scourge in later years of our life by undertaking an appropriate lifestyle management.

HEART ATTACK:

A heart attack or myocardial infarction is the leading cause of death. It occurs when an artery supplying a part of the heart is blocked or has spasm. The part of the heart muscle supplied blood and oxygen by one of the three blood vessels becomes damaged (after the blockage or spasm) and hence becoming ineffective in the pumping mechanism.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:

1. Stable Angina (chest pain): Pain may start below breastbone on left side. It may feel like crushing, tight or heavy pressure-like sensation radiating to neck, jaw, shoulders, back, or inner arms. Pain also may mimic indigestion or burning. The pain may start slowly and may last only few minutes or up to 30 minutes. (Other signs are trouble in breathing, sweating, nausea, vomiting, skin may be pale or cool, lightheaded or weak. Some may not have any chest pain called a silent MI or heart attack).

2. Unstable angina: It happens new and more often hurting more every time it returns. It moves to different places. It comes irrespective of rest and exercise. It is a warning sign for incoming myocardial infarction or heart attack.

INVESTIGATIONS:

1. EKG: Helpful in acute cases - May not be diagnostic at times, sometimes normal.
2. CPK with MB bands, troponin levels.
3. Echocardiogram-not helpful.

4. Exercise test with Thallium GXT-if positive cardiac catheterization is indicated.
5. Cardiac catheterization-confirms blockage or narrowing and the extent of blockages.

RISK FACTORS & PREVENTIONS:

1. Smoking-causes 20% of coronary artery disease deaths. Smokers are six times more prone to heart attack.
2. High cholesterol.
3. Hypertension - often asymptomatic, can lead to heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.
4. Diabetes - Incidence of cardiovascular death is 3 to 7 times.
5. Physical inactivity - exercise reduces risk of heart attack by one third to one half.
6. Obesity - Being 20% over ideal weight can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes, and high lipid levels.
7. Aspirin - Reduces incidence of coronary artery disease.
8. High homocysteine levels - Individuals may need to take folic acid 400 mcg, vitamin B6 100 mg to prevent heart attack.
9. High triglyceride level - Limit sugar and refined starch in diet, lose weight, limit alcohol intake, and control diabetes.
10. Alcohol & drug abuse.
11. Irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation).
12. Women and heart disease - One out of two women over age of 45 will die from a first heart attack. Forty-seven percent of women between 45 and 64 have some form of cardiovascular disease like angina, arrhythmia, coronary artery disease, high cholesterol, heart failure, and stroke. Every woman over age 20 should take lifelong prevention.

HYPERCHOLESTEROLEMIA (hyperlipidemia)

Cholesterol and triglycerides are otherwise known as lipoproteins. Cholesterol is present in all cell membranes and is part of steroid hormones and bile acid. Triglycerides help the transfer energy from food in to body cells. Higher the levels of cholesterol and triglycerides higher is the risk of coronary artery disease--a major cause of mortality and morbidity.

Density of lipoproteins are based on content of cholesterol, triglycerides, and apoproteins. HDL (high density) cholesterol is "good cholesterol". LDL is the bad cholesterol.

Higher is the LDL greater is the risk for heart disease and atherosclerosis (plaques along the walls of coronary arteries). High HDL lowers the risk.

Reducing cholesterol levels (below 200) and LDL levels (below 100) reduces the rate of MI (heart attacks), new case of angina (chest pain) and need for bypass graft procedures and at least causes 20% reduction of cardiovascular mortality.

Aggressive lowering of cholesterol with statins (drugs) causes regression of atherosclerotic plaques in blood vessels and prevents progression of atherosclerosis in grafts and slows down or reverses carotid artery (in the neck) atherosclerosis thereby reducing incidence of heart attacks, strokes, and peripheral vascular disease.

AGGRESSIVE RISK REDUCTION (all vascular diseases):

Stop smoking; controlling hypertension; Aspirin usage; controlling diabetes; post menopausal hormone replacement therapy; regular exercise; avoid alcohol.

OBJECTIVE:

A complete lipid profile to be done after overnight fast.

Cholesterol <200 mg, LDL <100 mg, triglycerides <150 mg, HDL >45 mg are the desired levels.

DIETARY CONTROL:

Control total fat intake <30% - Cholesterol intake <300 mg - Carbohydrate 55% to 60% - Avoid high sugar intake - Food fiber 25 to 30 grams daily - Use monosaturated oil (olive or canola) - Fruit and vegetables - Salt intake <6 grams. For hypertensive/heart patients <3 grams - Add antioxidants, vitamin C, beta-carotene, and vitamin E.

HYPERTENSION:

About 30% of people with high blood pressure do not know that they have it. Higher the blood pressure higher the risk of stroke and heart disease. For every rise of 20/10 in blood pressure starting at 115/75 the risk of dying from heart disease doubles.

2003 Guidelines:

Systolic Diastolic: Normal under 120 under 80

Prehypertension: 120-139 80-89

Hypertension: Stage I: 140-159 90-99 and Stage II: 160 & above 100 & above.

In the prehypertensive state one should not get alarmed unless one has coexisting heart disease or diabetes. Even if one's pressure is normal at age 55 one has a 90% change of developing hypertension.

There are many non-drug approaches that can be applied to preventing or managing hypertension, which are as follows:

Reduce weight. Regular low-density exercise reduces systolic by 10 points and diastolic by 8 points. Restrict salt intake. Limit alcohol consumption. Managing stress--biofeedback, relaxation training, and yoga produced modest decrease (4-6 points) in blood pressure. Increasing potassium, calcium, magnesium, and fiber intake. Stop smoking.

STROKES:

Transient ischemic attacks (TIA) is sudden onset of a neurologic deficit that resolves within 24 hours. Significant carotid artery blockage with or without ulcer release microemboli (mini clots) to brain causing TIA's. A major stroke is a neurologic deficit that persists beyond 24 hours.

Manifestations:

(1) Motor weakness or numbness or paralysis on one side of body. (2) Lack of speech or understanding. (3) Blurred or decreased vision. In setting of hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, hyperlipidemia, heavy smoking, and alcohol usage.

Prevention:

(1) Aspirin usage. (2) Carotid artery surgery in symptomatic carotid artery narrowing more than 70%. (3) Controlling hypertension and rate irregularity (atrial fibrillation/flutter). (4) Lowering of lipids.

DIABETES:

Type II (adult onset). Diabetes accounts for 95% of all diabetics. Most common after age 40, type II diabetes affects 8% of population over age 20, affecting 16 million people. Diabetes is the main cause of kidney failure, limb amputation and new onset blindness in adults and is a major cause of heart disease and stroke.

The genesis: Diabetes is the result of disordered glucose metabolism leading to inappropriate increase in blood sugar due to deficient insulin secretion and development of insulin resistance.

Stages: A. Insulin resistance.

B. Pancreatic beta cell dysfunction.

C. Hyperglycemia due to beta cell failure/damage.

Symptoms:

Thirst, weight loss, blurred vision, passing urine many times, fatigue, itching, voracious appetite, involvement of nerves.

Values: -Normal <110 -Impaired 110-125 -Diabetic >126

Assay of hemoglobin A-1-C levels assist in monitoring appropriate blood sugar control. Achieving HbA1C level below 7% shows distinct benefit in reducing incoming vascular complications.

Treatment: It is possible to delay the development of diabetes and its vascular complications through intensive lifestyle management with diet control, active exercise and use of drugs.

Obesity and diabetes

People with body mass index of 30 or greater have 5-fold greater risk of diabetes than normal BMI of 25 or less.

Maintaining physical activity at 30 minutes per day with walking or moderate intensity exercise lost on an average of 10 pounds and hence reduced risk of diabetes. Regular exercise improved glucose control in diabetics.

Drugs: Addition of metformin has been shown to reduce risk of getting type II diabetes by 31%.

OSTEOPOROSIS:

In osteoporosis bone density is decreased but is of normal composition. Osteoporosis is preventable and treatable yet many patients are unaware of an existing problem unless they sustain a life-threatening fracture.

Bone mineral density (BMD) 2.5 below mean value is seen in osteoporosis. BMD between 1-2.4 are seen in osteopenic or low bone mass individuals.

About 15% of women above 49 (5 million) have osteoporosis, another 40 to 50% (15 million) have low bone mass or osteopenia comparable to 1.5 million of men older than 49 having osteoporosis and 6.5 million of men have low bone mass leading to approximately 1.3 million fractures including 2500 hip fractures which alone carries 25 to 30% morbidity and mortality.

Clinical Presentations:

A. Mostly asymptomatic.
B. Compression fractures with minimal stress like sneezing, bending, or lifting heavy objects.
C. Back pain.
D. Height loss.
E. Spinal deformity.

Diagnosis:

1. X-ray.
2. Bone densitometry.
3. Bone scanning.
4. Secondary causes of osteoporosis should be ruled out.

Treatment:

- Reversal of osteoporosis is not possible. Early intervention can prevent osteoporosis and half progression of the disease.

- Exercise-30 minutes of vigorous exercise about 3 to 5 times a week. Physical therapy with weight bearing and non-weight bearing exercises.

- Relieve pain with analgesics and muscle relaxants.

- Drug treatment: Conjugated estrogen 0.625 mg/day, Micronised estradiol 0.5 mg/day, Transdermal estradiol 0.05-0.1 mg/day, Fossamax 5 to 10 mg/day, Actonel 5mg/day or 35 mg/week, Calcium 1000 mg to 1500 mg/day, Vitamin D 400 to 800 IU/day, Calcitonin 200 IU/day. Hormone (estrogen) replacement therapy is most effective for prevention and treatment of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women specifically if started within five years of menopause. These agents reduce spine and femoral neck bone loss. Addition of progestin decreases risk of endometrial cancer.

EXERCISE & THE BENEFITS:

The current guideline is for 20 to 30 minutes walking or aerobic exercise 3 to 5 times a week. Regular exercise reduces risk of heart attack, stroke, hypertension, type II diabetes, diverticular disease, and osteoporosis. In hypertensive individuals regular exercise sustains lowering of systolic and diastolic blood pressure.

Regular exercise including walking reduces the incidence of colon, breast, and reproductive organ cancers. Exercise helps osteoarthritis patients with improved functional status of joints and reduction in use of pain medications.

Regular exercise also alleviates depression and anxiety, increases sleep quality, and elevates mood and self-esteem.

Dr. Devi Misra is practicing internal medicine, pulmonary medicine and critical care medicine at Huntsville, Alabama for 23 years. Along with his wife Sarojini, Dr. Misra has established the Orissa Foundation in 1997 to encourage charitable projects in Orissa.

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HEART ATTACK IN INDIANS

Avinash Patwardhan, M.D.

avinilima@townisp.com

Several studies conducted among Indians have revealed an extremely high rate and early occurrence of heart attacks. Established risk factors such as diabetes, smoking, high blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol, diet high in saturated fat, lack of exercise and stress are common to all ethnic groups. But Indians whether in India or abroad have a 4-5 times higher rate of heart attacks and that too at a much younger age. Every Indian unless proven otherwise is at high risk for coronary artery disease. It is important to note that both men and women are at equal risk.

Studies have now shown that there is a large group of Indians who have a genetic predisposition for coronary artery disease. A significant number are vegetarians, and many have made maximum modification to their lifestyle to reduce their risk of heart attacks, yet they still have a very high incidence of coronary artery disease. This genetic problem with coronary artery disease in Indians is complex and multifactorial.
Early intervention at younger age with appropriate drug therapy has shown significant reduction in cardiac events. The abnormalities identified in lipids and genetic profile are:

1. Elevated levels of lipoprotein (a), (Malignant CAD)
2. High levels of low-density lipoproteins, (LDL)
3. Low levels of high-density lipoprotein, (HDL)
4. Diabetes associated with insulin resistance.
5. Elevated Homocysteine levels.
6. High levels of triglycerides.
7. Smaller diameter of coronary vessels with right-sided dominance.
8. **Elevated levels of Cardio CRP (C-Reactive Protein)**
9. **Clamydia Infection of chronic nature.**

An Indian with or without a bad family history of Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), must have a thorough evaluation of the following.
There is no excuse for not getting these done early in your life.

TEST	IDEAL TARGET VALUES:
Total Cholesterol	**< 150 mg**
LDL	**< 100 mg**
HDL	**> 40 mg**
Triglycerides	**< 150 mg**
Lipoprotein (a), Lp (a)	**< 30 mg**
Homocysteine	**< 15 um**
Fasting blood sugar	**< 126 mg**
Cardio CRP	**< 1.0 mg/L (> 3.0mg = high risk)**

Lifestyle changes alone are not enough to correct the abnormalities.

Drug therapy is a must to bring the levels to target values. One cannot achieve them by diet.
TO PREVENT A CORONARY EVENT, ATTAINING TARGET VALUES IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL.!!
"Statin" group of drugs are the most effective and should be taken with no hesitation.

TREATMENT

Treatment schedule has to be very aggressive to include: -

1. **Aggressive correction of lipid abnormalities with statins, (Zocor, Lipitor, Pravachol) and Niacin to be monitored by your MD.**
2. **Enteric Coated Aspirin: 81 mg daily.**
3. Fish Oil capsules 1000mg/day (should have EPA and DHA > 200mg)
4. Folic Acid 1000 ug per day
5. Vitamin B-12 500 ug per day
6. Vitamin B-6 50 mg per day
7. Rigorous control of diabetes.
8. **Multi vitamin one daily.**
9. **Olive oil is used for garnishing food, canola oil for cooking.**
10. **Total fat intake of no more than 30 to 40gms per day.**
11. **Treadmill exercise 20 to 30min. at 3.00 to 3.5 mph daily.**
12. **Life style changes, stress reduction, meditation, yoga, etc.,**

This is a simplified outline of Coronary Artery Disease, and the associated genetic and lipid abnormalities that are frequently encountered in Indians. Most of these abnormal factors can be corrected with appropriate therapy and intervention.
The earlier in your life you get your lipids and metabolic status evaluated the better are your chances of avoiding a serious cardiac event.

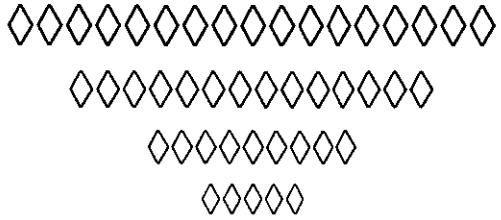
Courtesy: Dr. Harlal Choudhury

Outside the ICU Window

Mamata Misra

People gather for *darshan*
Some have travelled for hours
A kind guard lifts the curtains
To unveil a battleground
Where life meets death
They stand on their toes
To take a peek
Not only at the helpless body
Of someone they love
But also at their own future
Curtains drop and silently they turn
Wondering why it couldn't be easier
Like a river meeting the ocean
Or a ripe fruit falling

Bhubaneswar
April, 2002



More ICU Scribbles

Mamata Misra

I see you
Again and again
Intensely
Carefully
The hallway to your unit
Wet with tears
Soft with love
Heavy with anxiety
Bound with duty
Noisy with questions
Silent with answers
Awaits with patience
For the unknown
As a numb witness
Watches Kali dance
With Kala flowing
A moment at a time
Into eternity.

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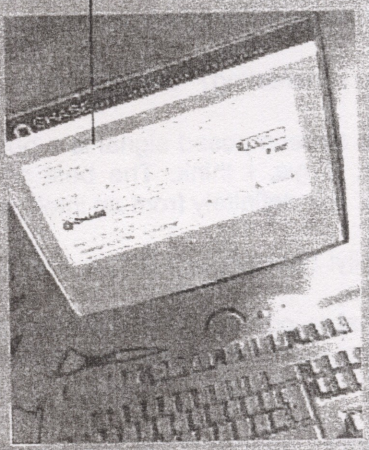

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Angle of the Sun

Tarun K. Tripathy

May 15th, 2025 A.D:

Half asleep, Dr. Malfoy picks up the phone. It's 3:30 am in the morning. He mumbles, "What, Jordan? Couldn't you have waited couple of hours more?"

"Sorry. Sir, could you please come over at once? You don't want to miss this."

Dr. Malfoy works for the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) institute, California. He has been searching for extra-terrestrials from 1999. He has devised new techniques in harnessing the Sun's immense energy for composing high energy focused signals. As he puts on his coat and grabs a rice-crispy, he feels that something exciting has happened. Why else would Jordan wake him up like that?

As he drives up to the Hat Creek Observatory in northern California's Cascade mountains, Jordan greets him outside the lab. "Sir, you will not believe this. We are receiving a superimposed signal at an incredibly clear frequency - 1428.3 MHz, to be precise. *Arecibo* picked it up, sir."

"What's so interesting?" asks Dr. Malfoy anticipating something exciting.

"Well, the superimposed signal is a human audio sequence that has information read out in an East Indian language. *Oriya*, I think. The best part is that it is appended with information given to us in an alien language. It is definitely from an intelligent life form, sir. I have confirmed it a hundred times now."

"Holly molly! I got to see this." Dr. Malfoy exclaims as both of them hurry to the lab.

"The signal is coming from a system 383.5 light years from Earth. Right over there." Jordan points to a location on a star map. Dr. Malfoy leans over to confirm the map position with the coordinates on the monitor.

"Which would mean that the life form received an Earth signal and composed this reply signal years back ...," Dr. Malfoy muses. "Hmm, certainly they are not responding to a signal from our lab. Only bisons lived in North America 800 years back. Well, can you play the audio signal?"

"Yes, sir," Jordan replies as he touches an icon on the monitor screen to start a Livingstone Media Player instance. The audio sounds like a repetitive chant. Hundreds of people are chanting in harmony at a very low frequency almost at 70 Hz. It sounds as if it was recorded on an unidentifiable magnetic medium.

"I don't believe this - we have found a friend in this lonely universe! Earth has a friend now!"

Jordan and Dr. Malfoy tingle in excitement as they listen to it over and over again.

"Aum! Aum! Aum! ... "

Two Days before *Magha Saptami*, 1258 A.D:

"Hurry up, people! The sun will set soon", Suryapujari cried aloud in the mid afternoon of a sultry day. He alerted his group of thirty craftsmen working on a statue under a scorching sun with salty water sprinkling at regular intervals as *Chandrabhaga* broke on the compound walls of the huge temple complex.

The sound of the waves was ignored by all. For the last twelve years, the sound of metal hitting metal for hours had become something of a steady drone in the background. It did not annoy Surya - it did not even register in his mind. He could clearly hear the songs and the gossip of his fellow artists over the noise.

The statue that they were building was to be completed before sunset. This was a direct order from the chief architect, Bishu Maharana. The rule had to do with a domain too complicated for Surya to understand.

Bishu was nominated as the chief by King Narasimha Deva because he was unique. He lived 3 miles from the temple site. His house was filled with scrolls with thousands of calculations and diagrams. There were measuring instruments that came from far away lands. There were instruments that calculated heights of vertical structures using trigonometry. It was common knowledge that the architect sometimes used a strange foreign language to take down notes. He was well versed in *Jyotisha Shastra*.

Many of Surya's workers were perched on wooden platforms made out of bamboo and logs, installed at three different height levels. They worked on various parts of the statue. As Surya's people worked on, a divine countenance emerged from the cold and lifeless sandstone. Surya thought that the statue of *Shukra* deserved nothing less. Dasa, one of Surya's favorites, was working on the intricacies of the garment that *Shukra* wore. His eyes looked drowsy and he was tired. He was terrified of the future just like everyone else and wanted to go home early and spend his time with his family.

"Sir, can you help finish off this part of the garment? I have to go home and pray for tomorrow. Please sir!" Dasa pleaded. Surya looked at his rough hands. He had dried blood on his fingers. Dasa knew that Surya could do the garments the best - the curls and the textures were best known to him.

Surya understood Dasa's plight. "Dasa, you go home now and rest. Be here tomorrow before daybreak. It's Maharaja Narasimha Deva's wish! Maybe things will work out and we will see a better tomorrow." Surya said as he took on Dasa's chisel, hammer and bamboo brush.

Surya then hollered at Menaka, who stood motionless 10 feet away from their site. "Menaka, can you please turn to the right a little bit?" The beautiful girl who had been modeling for the group moved as ordered and resumed her difficult job. She stood still for hours as two groups building the *Shukra* and *Chandra*, looked at her and replicated her on stone.

As Dasa picked up his lunch bag and left for home, Gajasekhara, a supervisor, stomped up to Surya. "Glory to Maharaja! Surya, you can not let anyone go. We have to complete the statue and install the *hrid*". Surya looked at the huge magnetic sphere or the the *hrid* (an interior mechanism for *Shukra* that he did not understand). No one knew where it was made or how. It was covered in a piece of special sheath. Without the anti-magnetic sheath, it could pull away all the chisels and hammers from the hands of the artists.

Surya calmed Gaja, "Glory to Maharaja! Sir, we can finish this before sunset. I will install the *hrid* myself." Gaja gave Surya a pitiful look and sauntered away.

Surya kept his promise. The *hrid* was installed in the statue before sunset. As he went home that night, his heart sunk for what lay ahead. This could be his last day with his wife and children.

The king had declared that all the workers would be imprisoned or killed, if the temple wasn't ready by *Magha Saptami* for the *Maha Yagna*. That was just two days away.

Everyone could see that the architects were not happy even as twelve years of strenuous labor was about to be completed. They looked pensive and terrified. The main temple was still under reinforcements - one thousand metal and bamboo pillars held the huge 52 ton magnetic *peak stone* on top of the main temple. The stone blocks in the temple lay loose and reinforced with support structures.

Nobody knew the exact degree at which the peak stone should be installed. If installed correctly, all the stone blocks with metal interiors would fall into position using the magnetic field. Or else, the temple would crumble and thousands of lives would be lost.

As Surya headed home, he sighed and looked back at the temple as the view faded. It still wore the soothing rays of the hidden sun. A full moon emerged from the sea and all looked enchanting beneath it. He prayed silently.

Day before *Magha Saptami*, 1258 A.D:

A miracle happened! Bishu Maharana's son, Dharmapada, a 12 year old genius, solved the complex equation that Bishu and his team were working on. The bright lad knew the coordinates for placing the peak stone. Bishu was very proud of his son. He did not waste any more time as he kissed his son and headed to the main temple. He had a lot of work to do.

As Suryapujari arrived at the main temple compound, more than a thousand craftsmen stood holding the bamboo rods. Thick ropes at four different corners were pulled by groups of people as Bishu read the position of the peak stone on his instrument. Surya joined in at the north end of the calibration rope. He pulled or let go of the rope as he was ordered. The peak stone moved in millimeters as Bishu's instrument registered the magnetic flux and other parameters.

Soon the time came when Bishu agreed with his instrument and ordered, "OK, people! At my count, slide the rods down." Everyone held their breath as Bishu began the countdown. At the end of the countdown, all rods were slid down and the peak stone fell on the stone structure with a thunderous roar. Instantly, all the stone blocks glued up compactly and stuck together by the unseen magnetic field.

"Hurray! It works, it works!" the workers went crazy dancing in joy. They soon began removing the support structures that were no longer required to hold the stone blocks.

After 8 hours, all support structures had been removed. The temple stood on its own.

This was the last step in the process of completing the main temple of *Konark*, a poem in stone! It was the supreme realization of Bishu Maharana through ceaseless architectural experiments. It would remain as a timeless proof of the creative upsurge of thousands of **Oriya** architects and craftsmen.

To Suryapujari and his group's delight, the temple's main statue of Surya God had sprung to life. As if by design, it lay suspended in mid air (because of the internal *hrid*). With a single large diamond in its forehead, it looked extraordinary in the main pedestal of the temple. The other different statues had also risen to life, floating around the main statue like planets around the Sun. Suryapujari's eyes were following the *Shukra* statue as it floated in mid air moving slowly in an orbit.

***Magha Saptami* Day, 1258 A.D:**

This was a great day for the people of *Kalinga*. This fantastic effort in human perseverance had taken 1200 workers and 12 years to complete and today everyone flocked to celebrate that. Long before the sun rose there were already all sorts of activities. The craftsmen and the laymen were mingling. Everyone was awed at the craftsmen and the technological marvel they had created. They paid homage to the artists who lay down their own lives for the divine cause. There were dances and wresting matches starting. Street side vendors were setting up shop to sell ornaments and toys.

The great king and the chief architect were seated around the *Maha Yagyan*. Hundreds of priests chanted their mantras in harmony.

Just before sunrise, the main architects and the King gathered in the main hall of the temple. Suryapujari followed them. As the sun rose, they looked at the Surya statue. Not a single word was uttered. Astounded by the eerie silence, Suryapujari held his breath puzzled at this turn of events. He knew nothing of this, "What was going to happen at sun rise?"

Then it happened. The rays of the rising sun passed through the *Devadaasi* Hall, the middle chamber and hit the diamond creating the most blinding flash of light. It was so bright that Suryapujari closed his eyes instantly in agony. With his eyes closed he could feel strange subsonic vibrations all around him. Too afraid to look around him, he kept his eyes closed. He could hear deafening yet soothing sounds emerging from the peak stone reverberating at a very low frequency.

"Aum! Aum! Aum! ..."

Tarun Tripathy works for a startup in the Network Attached Storage domain and has three US patents to his credit. He is a Sangeet Visharad in Tabla. He lives in Freemont, California with his wife Neeta and son Nimitt (age 7). His passions include writing poems and sci-fi stories.

THOUGHTS

Sangeeta Nayak

Let there be Rhythm between the Earth and Sky,
In every season in every Day and Night
Let the rain come down and wash away our tears,
Giving us strength to overcome fears.

Let the Golden rays filter down the Bushes,
Brightening up every place there is darkness
Let the wind carry our whispered words,
Across rocky mountains and watery plains.

Let the fallen dew-drops shimmer,
On every leaf, every blade of grass
Let us stop, behold each drop,
For the glory has magic all over its path.

Let the ocean gather parts of our delicate dreams,
Breaking down our sorrows into tiny bits
Let the sun slowly disappear behind the hills,
Scattering golden rays, making it a real paradise.

Let there be joy where there is pain,
Sorrows be gone, life be filled with fun
Let us hear music from the wind, sea and sky,
Drifting on to realms beyond which we cannot fly.

Sangeeta Nayak has written several poems which have been published in National and International journals. She resides with her family in Cary, North Carolina.

MAMU GHARA

SANGITA MISRA

Does that conjure up any images in my mind?
Images in multitudes flit by
Like puffed up clouds on an azure sky
From Brooks Hill to Dix Hills I find
Vibrant images brushing against my mind
Uplifting my mood in times of pain
Caressing and comforting me time and again
Traveling down memory lane I see
You waving wildly at me and shouting out my name
As my school bus ambled down your lane
You spot me through your windowpane
While I try to hide under the seat in shame....
Because you're wearing boxer shorts!
And I don't want my friends to know
They would make an uproar knowing I 'm your sweetest niece so.

Hari Mamu, how I wish you were here for real
I miss you so much that I can almost feel
You're here by my side...
As a friend, philosopher and guide.
Looking up at the ebony sky, I see
A falling star winking at me!
Could that be you Babu Mamu , the brightest of the lot?
Those smart creatures out there, you they have got

Babu Mamu, how I miss you here
Your full-throated laughter splashed with sunshine and cheer
Your childish pranks and innocent teasing
During those days, it used to leave me seething.
Now I miss those days and wish you were here
So that I'll have nothing to fear...
Memories of you fill my mind with peace
You sitting quietly by the side of your niece
Neither of us talks nor makes a sound
But in those sounds of silence I found
An affectionate man, a warm human being
Blessing me quietly, wishing me many good things

Sachi Mamu you're there and I'm here
And I pray to God to keep you away from harm
And make your life long, cozy and warm
In the world that I live now
I thought I would never find
A MAMU GHARA to conjure up images in my mind

But lo and behold! As I lay gazing at the stars
I found a bright moon shining from afar!
"Janha Mamu" for you "Sashi Mamu" for me
Glimmering among the clouds, shimmering down on me
Sashi Mamu, we're blessed that you're near
Protecting us from darkness, kissing away our fear
May the Good Lord shine on you and bless you with all his heart
And keep us together as one family and never apart.

****

(Sangita Misra resides in Bayside, New York with husband Sameer and children Soumya and Satwick.She is a librarian.)

Best Wishes From

Lina M. O'brien M.D.

&

James E. O'brien, Jr. M.D

11732 High Drive
Leawood, KS 66211

Pages from my journal

Joyshree Mansinha

***Rambag*, my village:**

The last time I left *Rambag*, my brother stopped the car for me to have one last look at my ancestral village. The sky was blue with clouds floating low on the horizon. The emerald fields of rice were dotted with coconut and *tala* palms. I stood by the side of the road, the same road that my brother and I traveled by bullock cart on our summer vacations. My heart was laden with depression like the storm clouds of the monsoon. All I remember of that day is the azure sky and the emerald fields of rice.

After twelve long years I went to visit my family in *Orissa*. The trip was a pilgrimage to reconcile with my past, to know my mother and my last chance to see my father as he was dying. After years of soul searching, I had come to the realization that I had left my country in my childhood without understanding it, and, with the passage of time it looms large. At times, the memory of it is the only thing that seems to sustain me in New York City!

The sky was gray and the air cool the day I left *Bhubaneswar*. I did not have the strength to look at my mother's face, downcast and melancholy, thinking that she may not see me again! The heat and humidity made me somnambulant. The plane flew over *Lingaraj* temple surrounded by rice fields full of ochre water dotted with houses and trees. The monsoon was just over. There was more water than dry land and from the plane it looked like a glistening mirror reflecting the sunlight.

Delhi was hot, humid, and frantic. The sun, a faded amber disk in bleached pewter sky. In the oppression of that heat I wondered, how can people here look so calm and cool in this heat! One last day to speak *Oriya* and one last day to be with my youngest brother. The sun blazes on so that even with dark glasses, my eyes are dazed. All I notice is a swirl of humanity like the blurred background of a picture in National Geographic. My eyes scan wearily without taking in any detail. I have an eerie feeling, in less than twenty-four hours, I will be in a country that is so alien that the memory of India would not seem real! In my heart of hearts, I am still a woman from a third world country for whom the laws of aerodynamics are awesome and mysterious! A hazy twilight in *Delhi* but still no respite from the heat. I waited wearily anticipating the exhausting midnight flight and wondered in amazement, how can mosquitoes can be inside an air-conditioned room to have their last feast on me!

Time stands still in my village:

Last day in *Rambag*: I sit on the front verandah watching the neon colored birds flitting in and out of banana and mango grove. It is only eight in the morning but I am already saturated with heat and torpor, drinking milky sweet tea from a cup the size of a thimble that my mother just made, listening to the far melancholy sound of a solitary flute. Dewdrops are rapidly vanishing from the pumpkin vine on the thatched roof with brilliant orange trumpet flowers. There is no

newspaper to read or radio to listen, but my mind is full of memories of the past and trying to capture the present to keep it alive for years to come. I do not have the strength to look at my father, knowing that I will never see him again. There are so many things I want to say to him, so many things I want to ask him, all I do is look at him and my heart overflows with sorrow remembering him the way he was.

I watch my mother comb her long gray hair in front of a mirror set on the floor, the same way she used to when I was a child. Has she always been this frail! I do not remember so many things! I listen to her talk about my daughters (the grandchildren she saw almost twenty years back and will never see again) like it was yesterday and keeps saying that she must see them once before she dies. I will get up soon to pump water from the tube well for my mother's bath. Technology of the twentieth century has come to my village in my absence, now there is a TV and a tube well in *Rambag*! After her bath my mother will go into the *Thakura Ghara* for her *puja* and I will not follow. I have lost faith in God long time back to pray, it used to be so natural, in another life, perhaps a million years back!

I hear tinkling of bracelets and smell the musty smell of freshly steamed *dhana* drying in our courtyard, bordered by rows of green coconuts. *Charuabou's* bangles make the tinkling noise as she spreads the rice with her hands. She has been our maidservant for as long as I can remember. She has no name, at least I do not know of it. She is known in our village as "mother of *Charua*", a culture where a woman's identity is through her connection with others, especially with other male members of the family. The smell of steamed *dhana* takes me back to my childhood. I can almost see *ma*, my grandmother sitting in the *dhinikisala*, supervising the maidservants among steaming caldrons of *dhana*. I can almost see the maidservants thrashing the *dhana* with the *dhinki*. I look up to see brilliant patches of color of flowers: red, magenta, white, yellow, and orange. The flower that I remember most is *champa*. It has a delicate fragrance in an exquisite design of pale golden yellow. If I close my eyes now, I can almost see the huge *champa* tree surrounded by the walls in the courtyard. I remember the thrill of walking under that tree in rain soaked mornings and finding a stray flower on the ground. I can almost feel the stifling heat and humidity of temples mixed with the smell of *champa* and the taste of *belapatra*. The tree was uprooted during a bad monsoon; it does not exist except in my memory.

Soon my father will go around picking flowers for his *puja*. My father was a very proud gardener. He used to make elaborate garlands for the deities after counting the varieties of flowers from our garden in *Bhubaneswar*, to make sure that he had more varieties than any of our neighbors. The garden in *Bhubaneswar* was his pride and joy. The *Oriya* flowers have such lyrical names: *aparajita, ashoka, boula, ganga-siuli, golapa, jui, karabi, katha-champa, kadamba, kanchana, kunjalata, kunda, krushnachuda, madhu-malati, malli, mandara, patali, rangani, radha-tamala, rajani-gandha, sugandharaj, tarata.*

Last night in *Rambag*: Pin-drop silence is only broken by the hoot of the owl and occasional moans of jackals far away. I stand in the courtyard and look up. The stars hang low and brighter than any I have seen in Canada. The milky way is so clear and bright that it seems you can almost touch it! I remember the sultry summer nights when we slept in the open courtyard

because it was cooler than inside the room, falling asleep watching the moon through the latticed leaves of the coconut palms. The tall *puntia* trees and coconut palms are a dark shadow against an inky black sky. There was no electricity in my village when I was a child, only the kerosene lantern for light. I was terrified of the *puntia* trees as they were supposed to be inhabited by all kinds of *bhuta* and *preta*. Now I look up without fear. I have forgotten this darkness, the darkness that lurks in every corner, inside the courtyard and outside the front and back door. People here walk in semi-darkness without fear. I carry a flashlight and walk cautiously. There are just too many creatures that creep and crawl on the grounds here for my comfort. In the darkness of the outer courtyard the fragrance of the night blooming *malli* takes me back to the garden in *Bhubaneswar*. I wonder how my mother spends her time at night! During the day, she is busy running the house and our farm. She has a TV that rarely works as the electricity is erratic. She plays a solitary card game or reads in the light of the lantern. She told me, here in the village, it seems like mid-night when it is only 7 p.m. I knew exactly what she meant!

I have a picture of my village the day I left: the emerald fields of rice, the azure sky with the white clouds low on the horizon, sprinkling of coconut and *tala* palms among the thatched huts. I remember every moment I took the pictures and the thought that crossed my mind. I knew then as I know now, there is no escape from my memory and my past. No matter how much I traveled, my eyes never got weary. The scenery was always new to me, as if I had forgotten what I saw the day before! Every scene shone with a brilliance of color and texture, its background and outline crystal clear. I could never close my eyes or turn away from the car window, I could not bear to miss a single scene!

Orissa this time was forever green: the emerald green of rice fields rippling in the breeze, occasionally broken by a line of tall white plumed *kasatandi*. The deep green of the leaves of the coconut and *tala* palms, the bright neon green of the tender banana leaves, the village ponds with algae laden green opalescent water with bamboo bushes bordering it.

I saw an ebony skinned peasant woman with a bright fuchsia sari in the background of emerald fields of rice. I saw a picture perfect *Oriya* village, set like a jewel among yellow mustard plants, surrounded first by a circle of palms and then by rice fields. I saw a hazy orange sunset reflected twice on the bends of *Birupa* river with the silhouette of a man fishing on the foreground, the water was a pool of molten gold from the golden rays of the setting sun. Ponds full of gigantic pink and white water lilies, droplets of water glistening like pearls on their round leaves. The temples on the roadside with deities with flowers on them. Thatched cottages with *chita* designs on the mud walls and the brilliant orange flowers of the pumpkin vines on the roof. Saw *dhana* drying on the roadside and naked urchins skipping through. Saw *Oriya* madonnas sitting on the doorsteps of polished mud huts with *chita* on the wall. Sat in the courtyard watching thousands of fireflies. Saw rainwater turn into russet rivulets while it slid off the thatched roof. Saw raindrops make perfect bubbles on the surface of the pond behind the *kathachampa* tree. Every time I saw a thatched mud hut, polished clean against the backdrop of banana, coconut, and mango trees, I had this incredible ache and longing in my heart: this is where I belong!

I saw tender green rice seedlings being planted in fields full of ocher water. Saw a tropical storm

roll in one evening that made the western sky a collage of brilliant orange and pewter. It vanished just as suddenly, bathing everything in a muted golden glow. Saw a sudden dust storm that gave the sky an eerie orange glow, against which the palm trees were dark silhouettes. Dusk has a very romantic name in *Oriya – godhuli,* cow-dust-time. Dusk is the time when cows return to the village from the pasture for the night. Dust flies on the dirt road from their hoofs, hence the name cow-dust-time!

The rain soaked mornings when I used to get up at sunrise to pick flowers for *khudurukuni puja.* Walking barefoot on wet earth and grass, picking flowers that were still wet from the rain. The festivities of *dola purnima* on moonlit sultry evening in summer with the smell of *sugandharaj* and sandalwood. Walking in dappled moonlight filtering through the mango trees, the moonlight that turned the world into ghostly black and white, yet it is etched so brightly in my mind! That is what I remember of my childhood, a series of freeze frames full of color, texture, sound, and smell. "Halcyon" -- that is the only word that describes the magical and enchanting childhood that I remember! My daughters never had the joy of growing up surrounded by family and relatives -- growing up with tradition, religion, rituals, celebration, and wonderful childhood memories!

I remember the long journey from *Bhubaneswar* to *Rambag* that took almost eighteen hours when I was growing up, starting with *rickshaw,* train, bus and finally a bullock cart!. The whole trip was wrapped up in such wonderful anticipation that I could not sleep the night before! The train with steam engine used to belch great gusts of black smoke. My mother used to tell us not to lean out of the open window because the coal dust might get into our eyes. I never listened; the scenery outside was too tempting to miss! If the train went on a curve, you could almost see the whole serpentine shape of the train with smoke belching out of the engine. What I loved most were the ponds full of red, pink, and white water lilies and purple water hyacinth next to the tracks. Sometimes the shrubs and trees used to be so close to the tracks that if you stretched your hands, you could almost touch the branches!

We went by train to *Jajpur* Road Station and then took a bus to the town of *Jajpur.* The road to *Jajpur* was bordered by tall trees full of purple *jamukolis* and mangoes, baby mangoes glittering like pieces of emerald among the pale amber blossoms of the mango tree. The road that turned into *Jajpur* was lined with dust coated *sijhu* bushes and dingy shops. The shops did not seem dingy to me then; they were full of wonderful stuff: bright colorful saris, fabrics, jewelry, candies, fruit and toys. The wonderful smell of *pokudis* and *biri baras* being deep-fried in mustard oil. To this day I cannot pass a falafel stand in New York City and not think of the smell of *bazaars* of *Jajpur*! At *Jajpur* we used to get down from the bus and wait for the bullock cart that would come to take us to *Rambag*. When we reached *Rambag*, almost at midnight, *Badabou* will be waiting for us and rush to the gate with servants carrying lanterns. I could not get to sleep the first night, could not wait till morning to go and explore the trees in our *amarabadi*!

Now the trip to my village from *Bhubaneswar* takes only a couple of hours by car! I was stunned and dismayed the first time I went to *Rambag* after I had been in Canada for six years. The rivers on which the bus used to be transported on boats had bridges now. The dirt roads had asphalt

paving. Technology has wiped out the nostalgic and romantic memories of my trips to my village during summer vacations!

***Bhubaneswar*:**

Almost all my dreams are set in the house in *Bhubaneswar* where I spent only four years! The background of my dreams are eerie, a backdrop of ominous grays and muted yellows. It was a semi-detached government quarter in Unit 1. My memory of it is resplendent with profusion of trees and flowers. Every time I go back to *Bhubaneswar*, I have to have a look at it from outside. Now the trees in the front garden are so dense and tall that the house is almost invisible from the street. In those days there were so few houses in *Bhubaneswar* that from our front verandah, I could see the hills of *Khandagiri* and *Udayagiri*!

I spent most of my adolescent years in *Bhubaneswar* on the branches of the guava tree in our courtyard. I spent endless hours in that tree daydreaming, surrounded by fragrance of the white blossoms and tender new leaves and looking out for ripe guavas that might have escaped the attention of my two younger brothers!

When I was growing in *Bhubaneswar*, in those years before I got married and came to America, I dreamed a perfect future for myself -- a whitewashed house surrounded by mango, banana, and casurina trees. Bright orange and magenta bougainvillea bordering a portico, a drawing room tastefully decorated and windows with *sambalpuri* drapes, a black car, a cook, few servants, and two beautiful and elegant daughters. I saw myself going shopping to the market with my daughters, my daughters in *salwar*, me in elegant pastel cotton saris in warm summer evenings. Entertaining my friends in afternoons with tea and snacks. In early 1060s, pre Internet and pre MTV, as a teenager, I was neither interested nor fascinated to come to America. Living all alone in New York City was never even imagined!

Bou:

This time I kept looking at my mother in such sadness that I was taken away from her, that I have become a stranger to her. My heart was always drenched with tears when I looked at her tiny, frail body. I have no clear memory of her when she was young; all I saw now was an old woman! Had she suddenly gotten so old! Is it my memory that is not clear? We had such a tenuous connection that finally even our fingertips, that barely touched for years, had let go!

I remember my mother drying her long hair after washing it on Thursday mornings for *Laxmi puja*. I remember her doing *chita*, and *muruja* with neon bright powders in front of the *tulasi* plant. My mother in a black *sari* with a bright blue border with *zari*. My mother at *Puri* beach in a beige georgette *sari* with sprays of green flowers on the *anchal*. When I was starting to have an interest in wearing saris, that beige georgette *sari* and a *mayurakanthi* blue silk *sari* were my favorites. Last time when I was India, my mother gave me the *mayurakanthi sari* to keep for my daughters. What I remember most about my mother is her cooking and serving us our meals, especially hurrying with our morning meal before we left for school. The morning meal before

we left for school was almost always the same: rice, *mung dal,* and *alu bharta,* which was always too hot to eat with our fingers! I remember my mother sitting in the sunlit inner courtyard on winter mornings, cutting vegetables, stooped over trays of rice and lentils to clean before cooking, making all kinds of pickles, cleaning and scraping the gigantic *pani kakharu* to make *bodi.* My mother made the best guava jelly from our own guavas, and *koli achar*a from *koli* from *Rambag* in winter. I never saw my mother eat. She practically lived on cups of tea throughout the day. She would clean and wash the kitchen floor after everyone has eaten and then sit down with her *thali* of food. Only occasionally, she would call me to serve her a second helping of rice.

This time, I went with my mother to *Baleswara* to visit my younger brother and his family. I kept looking at her - a tiny figure bravely traveling alone in all that chaos, clutching a bag with all her valuables in it. This is the first time I understood what it meant to her to lose her only daughter. She sat making *paan* in the train and talked to me about her relatives and her friends. The relatives whom I have forgotten now. We arrived at *Baleswara* at twilight. She pointed out a house where she used to live when she was a child. Her mother, my grandmother whom I never knew died when my mother was only eleven years old!

I was unable to give her any explanations about the path my life has taken. Even if I wanted to, I could not express it in *Oriya* for her to understand. Perhaps she knew it and did not ask me too many questions. She did the only thing that she knows like all *Oriya* mothers to show her love, she cooked all my favorite foods. I loved to sit beside her and watch her cut vegetables on a *paniki.* Sometimes she cooked for me on the *chulhi* as that is the taste of food I remember from my childhood. I had *kadali bhanda tarkari, panasa katha tarkari, kakharu phula bhaja, kadali manja patara-poda,* and all kinds of *pithas*: *enduri pitha, chunch- patar pitha, budha chakuli.* All food that I yearn for when I feel nostalgic for my childhood and the food that I will never have once my mother is gone!

Then, the three-week-trip is suddenly over and I come back, often I am relieved to come back to a country that I call home. But, I come back with stirred memories and new memories with such exquisite pain that prick at my heart at every waking moment. After a while, my heart aches for my country and my family. My eyes long for the palm trees against the blue sky, the emerald rice fields, the profusion of colors in the flowers, the outrageously extravagant sunsets, the neon-bright hues in the tropical birds, and I long to speak *Oriya* and taste my mother's cooking.

Then, there is a tug at my heart again to undertake that journey *Orissa*, a journey that is ceaseless and circular. Hunting for myself in a divided world. Forever betwixt and between: a quintessential alien caught between conflicting cultures.

Joyshree Mnasinha left Orissa at the age of fifteen. She works as a librarian and lives in Toronto at present.

Best Wishes

Orissa Society of Americas

Dr. Uma Ballava

&

Shantilata Mishra

Orissa an Oasis

Manisha Patnaik

Orissa is like an oasis in the middle of the desert. After staying in the farm lands/suburbs/cities of America for years at a stretch, a person begins craving for a taste of nativity. After two weeks of take offs, landings, hotel rooms, courteous cab drivers in Bombay, Bangalore, and Goa I yearned for a home-cooked meal. I looked forward to quench my thirst for roadside appetizers. And I yearned to see my relatives. Orissa became that oasis for me after traveling through other parts of India amidst unknown strangers and fast-moving crowd.

There is an immense sweetness to see grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. There is some nostalgia to ride a bicycle rickshaw in the serpentine street of Cuttack. I recall the butterflies in my tummy every time our plane touches the grounds of Biju Patnaik Airport at Bhubaneswar.. These are not the standard butterflies of motion sickness. Rather, I get very excited every time I go to my home state. Why? Because it is the one place that still has a trace of the past and the magic to relieve the headaches pounding in your brain.

You stumble upon Orissa unknowingly. Let's face it. Most Indians born and brought up in America cannot even recall hearing of the state called Orissa. We belong to that area below Bengal in the map, right on the ocean. However, this hidden location is like a diamond in the rough, tucked safely deep inside Earth's elements. Hurricanes have not affected the life or spirit of our tough state and its people. To perceive the beauty of this diamond called Orissa, one has to dig deep and explore its history , culture and natural beauty. Upon digging deep into its culture, I was mystified.

I visited Orissa last winter. I went to a village called Satyabhamapur located near Khurda. It's a beautiful place where my generation can see things we can't see here. I saw children playing with a week old baby cow. The playful calf believed it was a pet. I watched it joyfully playing tag with barefoot children as if it were a puppy and mischievously trying to slip through the gates as if it were a curious toddler. The outdoor bathhouse in the near house was a fun to see and certainly a fun to use than our stereotype modern showers.. To be able to bathe in cool spring water while the sun beats down on you and the trees huddle overhead as if protecting you from the clouds seems like a dream. My suburban brain gets excited to see people pumping water straight from the ground. We in America spend time and money to get that pure water delivered into our homes. They have it an arm's reach away. Very luxurious indeed.

Orissa is like a diamond. Once you get past the dirt surrounding the jewel, the gem's sparkle draws a smile on your face. I noticed a determination in common people of Orissa live respectfully. The cleaning lady may not have footwear, but charms of her favorite goddess dangle proudly off her neck. She walks the extra distance barefoot on the way to her work every morning in order to secure blessings from

Gods in one of the many temples dotting each corner. The rickshaw puller sweats hard in hundred degree heat to earn a few rupees, yet he never hesitates to help his fellow people . People over there are simple and have a passion to live happily with whatever they earn. They maintain a simple life style but rejoice under all homely elements that we lack here --- from home-cooked meals to true affection. Orissa and her people are proud of their culture and glorious past. It is my home state and I am proud that I belong to this land.

Manisha is a sophomore at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. She lives in Burlington, New Jersey with her parents Pradyot & Sanjukta Patnaik. She enjoys reading, writing and traveling.

Best Wishes From

Pradip K. Swain MD.

&

Asha L Swain MD.

131 Stratford Ct.

Hollidaysburg, Pa 16648

My American Diary

Rajesh Parida

Dear OSA Bros,
How are you all doing? Some of you probably know me from Ornet, the e-network linking Orissans worldwide. For those of you who don't know me, I used to be a computer consultant during the golden era of information technology. Just like thousand others, I made it to the US by riding the IT super sonic jet. And just like thousand others, I took the jet back to India when the era was coming to a screeching halt. My first job took me to downtown Chicago. Two things that would stay with me forever from the Chicago experience were the gush of wind that always blew past my ear, and the Afro-American security guard at the entrance door to the downtown office building. Every morning as I made my way into the building through the revolving door, he would greet me by saying something, to which I had no clue whatsoever. This went on for a few days. Then I started reciprocating his greeting by saying " Aau kana chalichi?" in pure Odiya. This continued for a while, both parties absolutely happy with each other. As I did not understand what he was saying, I was dead sure he did not understand what I was saying. Nevertheless, a warm feeling built up between us. We had smiles and nods for each other whenever we exchanged our code words. It took me few more days to realize that his greeting was actually " Howizitgoin, bro?" This made me feel good that at least my greeting was pretty close to his, if not exactly the same. The meaning of his greeting was 'how life is going for you', I guess. However mine was a notch better, 'What else is going on in your life'? When I compared and contrasted both greetings, I found that mine was carrying more warmth. By asking 'aau kana chalichi' I really gave an impression as if I already knew what actually was going on in his life. Does it make sense to you all? If not, it will one day. Anyway, finally a day came, which I wish had not. My friend stopped me abruptly after the routing exchange of the greetings. He took me to a side and asked "Brother, don't mind, but I don't understand what the heck you say". I gave a big laugh and said "Brother, me too". He was not laughing. I explained what my greeting actually meant and why was I saying it in my language. However, that explanation ended one of the best experiences I had ever had in my life. From next day onwards, the greeting came but somehow did not carry the warmth it used to. Something was missing. It was like the day a child comes to know that it was his parents who brought the gift, not Santa Claus. Or it was like the day, when you realize that there actually is no proof that God exists; it is simply your faith and belief in which God exists.

My job then took me to Bay area from Chicago. It was like living in India, but in an air-conditioned room. Desi faces, desi parties, everything desi. So during those air-conditioned 'desi' days, once I got invited to a party where I met this brother, who was a believer in "early start". Simply speaking, I thought he wanted his 3-year-old daughter to be in her best behavior all the time, learn gymnastics, learn piano, learn ABCD and probably learn programming. He had a business degree. I guess the advantage of being first in market place went so deep into his head that he wanted his 3 year old daughter to have a jumpstart ASAP. Don't you hate people like this, who push their children so early on that they never get a sense of what childhood is like? Anyway, the children were playing with the toys. One of the boys tried to snatch the toy from this 3-year-old girl and she would not let it go. Our brother kept shouting, "Meena, share, share, share....", so much so that the little girl finally gave in

and started crying. I asked, "Brother, why did you make that girl cry?". He said, "Well, she should learn to share". I said, " What would happen if she learnt to share". The brother said "well, she would share...sharing is good". I said, " Brother, would you share? Would you share your car with me? Can I drive your car to fetch a packet of cigarette?" He said "What do you mean man? Insurance ka problem patta hai ki nehin?" I said "Brother, that's exactly right. That little girl also has an insurance problem in sharing that toy. Because she thinks that the moment she lets that toy go, she would not get it back. When you are so much concerned about your own insurance problem, should not you respect her insurance concerns? Brother, let a child be child. Let the children fight, share and learn life the natural way. Why are you restricting the natural flow of childhood? Brother, if we were truly sharing, would the world be like what it is today. If we were all sharing why for some people homogenized milk is a health risk while for others milk is a dream". Well, that was again the end of my conversation with the brother, who said while walking away "Man, you should write a book on how to bring up children". I said " Brother, if you pay for publishing, why not".

A twist in my job took me from Bay area to Phoenix. Brother, if you ask somebody from Arizona about how does he handle the heat, the answer invariably is "Oh, it is dry heat", as if dry heat does not burn your skin. But life there was certainly fun. I met this brother from Bihar who was very patriotic. Every time you meet him, he would talk about India. He could talk about politics, culture, society, military, Bihar and Lalloo, anything. He always encouraged us go back and serve the country. He would say, "You young fellas have a lot of energy. You should go back and serve the country. India badly needs people like you. I wish I could go. But I have a green card and my children are going to school. So I cannot leave this country. But I would very much like you fellas to go back and serve our poor motherland". Brother, what a selfless man, what a patriotic man!! India just needs a few more of these people. Anyway, the day he knew that I was making some good money from IT consulting, he gave up talking to me. That was the end of the story.

Few months later, I escaped from the heat of Phoenix and landed in a city, which I want to keep unnamed for variety reasons. One of them was the weekly dinners. Our folks there were very cordial and always loved to entertain newcomers. In fact, there was a competition among some of the families to show the size of their followers or admirers. Obviously single homeless guys like me were a good choice. So a vanload of us would be going to this party on Saturday, and that party on Sunday. We would be fetched, fed, entertained and dropped off after the show. It was a like a show of strength. Competition improves quality and reduces cost – we were eating good food at no cost. What can be better than that?

So, I can go on and on with my stories, but I would save a few for next year. Needless to say that as the IT bubble burst, its impact pushed me as far as Chennai, where I live now. I am in Chennai, but not really. I am not in the US, but really am. My day starts with "Om akhandamandalakaram byapta jenam characharam" under a cold shower in the morning and ends in one of the pubs with 'Komon, Komon baby, Komon, Komon'. As I go from one end of the spectrum to the other, I see thousands of faces, and millions of emotions roaming and flying all across in search of something, to which no one has any clue. I just wish I had. If not today may be someday.

Rajesh Parida is a consultant-cum-adviser. His advice is not to take anybody's advice. He can be reached at rajesh_p@tajamail.com

IN FOCUS

(Experience of A First Generation Oriya Filmmaker in America)

Arati Misro

Much like many young privileged Indian kids growing up in America, I was enrolled in the usual piano and tennis lessons as a teen. When I was ten years old, my mom enrolled me in art school in Cupertino. I found myself taking my art classes more seriously than regular school. It was mostly experimental art. I got to draw with color pencils, crayons, water colors and charcoal. It was what I looked forward to every week. I was not the strongest student in math and science. Go figure, My father's genes did not pass over. As I got older, I went to YOUNG AT ART where I specialized in oil painting. I knew at a young age that I valued self- expression more than anything else in life. I took art classes for ten years. During this time I was also taking tabla lessons which introduced me to Indian Classical Music. This made a huge impact on me latter as a filmmaker because music brings out the emotion from heart. I was fortunate enough to study with Zakir Hussain during the summers and Arshad Syed locally in Cupertino every week.

After graduating from college with a B.A in Mass Communication and Anthropology with a minor in Third World Literature (1998), and five majors later at the U.C San Diego, I traveled to Europe and India. I did manage to take some film production classes in college but my true passion surfaced when I saw the hardship people go through in my ancestral state, Orissa. Luckily, I stole my dad's old video camera and kept it secretly after he left India. I soon started documenting women's dialog and hardship. I started listening to what they were saying intently and realized they need to be heard. I immediately felt connected to them. I also worked with a task force that monitors violence against women which is highest in Orissa. After traveling throughout Orissa and Northern India for six months, I knew I wanted to be a filmmaker by profession. I found it mind-boggling that our parents had come from such a world of hardship and poverty. It was hard to fathom that then and even today. I also could not believe the obstacles women go through on a day today basis that we have taken for granted. I feel I escaped a world of struggle and chaos. I was born into freedom without being questioned on any of my mobility.

My concern and consciousness for human rights stemmed out from my literature and Cultural Anthropology classes in college. I felt that film was such a powerful medium. What better way is there to educate people? When I came back home to California, I edited the footage I shot with the help of a friend who had the editing equipment. At the same time, I researched and applied to many Graduate Schools in the U.S, took film production and direction courses at San Francisco and worked at a TV station. I used various materials from these experiences to create my own portfolio

including a documentary film entitled, DISTANT VOICES, highlighting the conditions of women from various backgrounds in Orissa. I was there in Orissa during the Anjana Mishra case. There were several rallies and meetings going on and I witnessed intense interaction among women's organizations.

September 2000, I enrolled into the American Film Institute. I was astonished I got admission to a top film school. Here I specialized in the Master of Fine Arts, producing program. In my first year, I produced three short films, one of which was based on my own screenplay. I spent almost every other weekend on the film set as a production coordinator or manager for my colleague's films and my week days were going in classes in story, production management and the Entertainment business, presented by many Industry professionals. Some of them were the producers of films, THE ENGLISH PATIENT , MOULIN ROUGE and THE INSIDER. My second year at film school involved intensive courses in Entertainment Law, Independent Financing and International Distribution. I also had to produce my thesis film.

It was the most challenging experience in my life as a filmmaker and an entrepreneur. I learned how to pitch a project and get investors excited about what the film is and why its so important to make. I pitched the project to mostly tech industry leaders in the Bay Area who I thought would support me. I met many of them from a previous job as a journalist. Prabhat Andleigh believed in my potential as a producer. He taught me how to create a business plan and introduced me to business leaders that had an interest in film. I also pitched the project to Producers in Los Angeles. There were rejections numerous times. Many people told me, the time was bad. September 11th just happened, how can you fathom fundraising for a film? People just bluntly said I couldn't do it. The more I got rejected, the more driven I was to prove them wrong.
in myself.

As an Indian student and filmmaker, I targeted the Indian/ Oriya/ Bengali community. My director and me, we believed in each other. We never gave up our vision. I felt our story was so rich and depicted an India that not many people in the world knew about. We spent about five months in fundraising and acquiring donations from various vendors in Los Angeles, such as Kodak film and Panavision 35mm cameras which were freely given to us! All throughout this period we were pitching and fighting to get what we needed to have our film made. We raised $45,000.

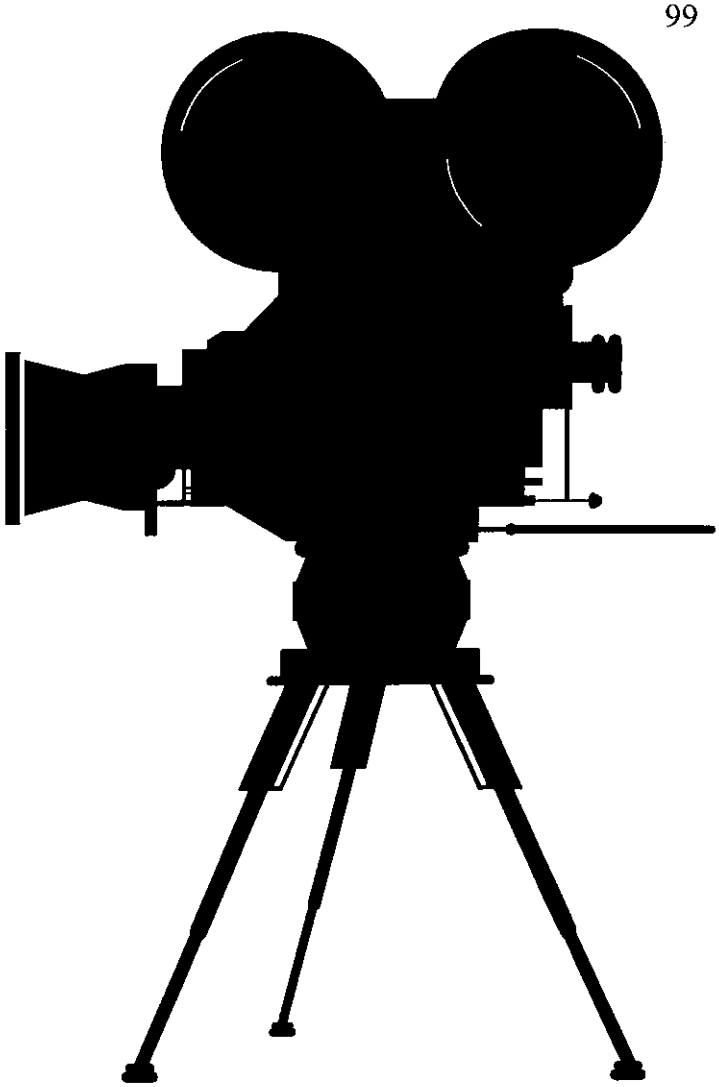
Our shooting date was Jan. 2002. We finally reached sufficient funds to shoot on 35 mm black and white. I spent the last two months organizing the project and hiring crew, location scouting and casting. The film was our life and our blood. We recreated India in Down Town Los Angeles and my director shot footage of India earlier for exterior, establishing shots in Calcutta. During this time she also found the acclaimed actor, Dhirtiman Chaterji who has worked with Satyajit Ray. This was quite an honor. BADGER was the first student Film Dhritiman starred in.

On October 16th, 2002 BADGER premiered at the Egyptian theater in Hollywood, California along with two other thesis films. It was sold out and it was the most magical night of my life. I got to show work to my investors, industry professionals, family and friends. The reception followed with wine and appetizers. We also had a jazz band play in the background. I must say, all our hard work and drive for perfection paid off that night. It was the biggest reward of all. I have never felt so proud and blessed at the same time!

On Nov 10, 02 BADGER premiered at Stanford for the Bay Area debut. It was also a very touching experience. Everyone I wanted to be there was present. Many people of the Oriya community who knew me since I was born showed their genuine support for me. I was very emotional and in awe for how much love was there in the room.. Bay Area investors were present as well. It followed with a Question and Answer session and the reception was at my parent's house.

There are a number of people who have inspired me professionally as well as spiritually. I have been fortunate enough to grow up with a loving Oriya community in California. They not only support me but also treat me as their own child. I cannot imagine my life without them. I must acknowledge my parents who are unreal because they believe in me and have always supported me. My sister, Pragati who has always stood by me. She has encouraged me to do what I believe in. Saroj and Sunity Behera, Anjalika and Surya Patnaik , Hara and Biju Misra love me for my individuality and the time I have spent with them as a child. Their love is invaluable. Sanjiv Behera, has been the most amazing big brother. Triloki and Anapurna Pandey have supported my efforts as an artist and an activist as a young teen. They helped me in my entrance into the graduate school. Kasturi and Deba Mohapatra have let me into their home with unconditional love since I moved to L.A . Their knowledge of spirituality and teachings of Hindu Philosophy has helped me become a healthy person. I still have so much to learn. My best friend, Sarita Misra and I share the same goals and the same soul; she has given me strength during hard times to keep on going. I have been blessed with all of my friends and family in America and in India who have come into my life as messengers of love and teachers. Mentioning all of their names would easily take up a whole page.

My thesis film has been actively touring Europe and India at numerous film festivals. Currently it is touring America with a South Asian organization called 3rd I. The film may be coming to a city near you soon. BADGER has won numerous awards for direction and best picture. I had the honor of being invited to the Clermont Ferrand International film festival in France to represent my work along with my director and editor. We were in an international competition. This is the most prestigious film festival in the world for short films. It was an incredible experience. The film was most recently invited by Kodak in Hollywood for a private screening for leaders in the local film community. BADGER will be sold by the end of the year to a short film distributer.



I have also been able to spend time with director Mira Nair whom I look up to as a role model. She has deeply inspired me and profoundly impacted my perspectives on Filmmaking. I had the honor of interviewing her as well as assisting her for a Women and Film International event. I was also present when she was awarded Best Asian Director of the year by the Directors Guild of America.

I hope my ambition continues to drive me towards pursuing social change and educating the minds of people who may lack resources for education. I have a social responsibility because film is such a powerful medium that is a universal language. I also hope my career as a filmmaker and visionary will create dialog and an understanding that the human struggle exists with all of us. My inspiration comes from my father who taught me the value of hard work and always striving for the best that life has to offer.

With much demand from Oriya peers, I wrote this article hoping to encourage our Oriya youth to do whatever they are truly passionate about, especially those who are artists. Success and fulfillment do come with hard work, conviction and a love for what you do. I want to create a dialog between all of us. This is crucial for the future of the next generation of Oriyas. I look forward to hearing from you.

Arati Misro lives in Los Angeles, California. She is 28 years old. She is presently working at a production company with three producing partners. She is promoting a film about AIDS in Africa and producing her own story. Feel free to contact her at misrofilms@yahoo.com. Arati is the daughter of Dr. Sarat and Bijayalakshmi Misro from Cupertino, California.

DIARY OF AN UNKNOWN ENGINEER

Lakshmikant Choudhury

I retired as Technical Director of Orissa Lift Irrigation Corporation on the 31st August 1997. Unlike most of my predecessors, I did not feel sad on that day as I was entering a new life. I spent the next few months in visiting people and places I was unable to visit during my busy service life. Then came the real problem. As I had sold my car, my movements were restricted. I spent almost all the time reading newspapers and watching TV/Video. This, I felt, boring after some months.

My son Mitu (Umakanta), realizing my predicament sent money to buy a PC. I grabbed this opportunity and bought a PC with internet connection - something very few people had at Bhubaneswar at that time (March 2000).

Then began a new journey. As I had no training in PC operation, I hired a person who taught me for 7 hours in 7 days how to run the PC and browse the NET. The first few weeks were difficult but my zeal to see the world from my home dissolved the difficulties and I marched on....

In Aug 2000, I visited USA to see my first American grandson Ayush whom I had seen only in photograph. During my tours to various places in USA, I saw nearly 20 screensavers on a PC in a relative's home. Oh! What a pleasure to see beautiful color photos in slide view. I learned that this kind of screen savers could be downloaded free from the NET. Thus began my quest for screen savers and wallpapers for all kinds of photos from all over the world.

On my return to India in October 2000, I immediately pursued my interest, spending 4-5 hrs every day, browsing and downloading color photos. My monthly telephone bill ran to Rs. 2000-2500 for several months but I did not care. I was criticized by my wife for spending so much money and time on something she considered not useful. But I continued. Then a friend advised to fit a TV card in the PC to capture photos/videos from TV channels almost free. This gave me a pleasant break. I saved nearly 12000 color photos (my weakness from childhood) and requested Sri Soumya Ranjan Patnaik to publish my work in daily SAMBAD. He agreed and published it prominently. Then came the OTV people and took my interview and showed it on TV. That was in July 2002.

This encouraged me and I saved a few thousand more photos including screen savers and registered my name in LIMCA Book of Records. I was then asked to prove my claim through two important persons who saw my work and wrote to LIMCA Book. Months passed but nothing happened. Then I got an email from the Editor of LIMCA Book that my achievement would find a place in their 2003 Edition. This is how I am there. My aim now is to break my own record in 2004. At present I have nearly 20000 photos. I will try for a place in the Guinness book of world records, which is very difficult.

It will be unfair if I do not mention the names of Deb Chowdhury(my cousin) and Seema (my daughter-in law) both in USA who have inspired me to continue this work. Last but not the least, I am grateful to God for giving me patience and ideas to come to the stage where I am now.

Engineer Lakshmikant Choudhury retired from Orissa Lift Irrigation Corporation. He currently resides in Bhubaneswar. His name has been entered into Limca Book of Records for saving maximum number of screen savers.

With Blessings From

Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra

Shiva Vishnu Temple

Cleveland, Ohio

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- The Raj Family -

Inner Happiness

Hindu Dharma: An Introduction

MUNMAYA K. MISHRA

As a beginner on the subject probably I know very little – quite honestly almost nothing. However, I was quite fascinated by a book on the very subject written by Mr. Bansi Pandit (published by B&V Enterprises, Inc. USA, 1996). Although it is impossible to summarize this vast subject in just few pages, I have attempted to provide an introduction.

There are several religions in the world and all of these have a common goal. Hindu Dharma or "Hinduism" is a magnificent religion practiced by over a billion people in the world but mostly who live in India. Hindu Dharma is also known as *Vaidika Dharma*, meaning "religion of the Vedas," the ancient Hindu scriptures or the *Sanatana Dharma* meaning "universal religion." Hindu Dharma didn't originate from single person, a single book or at a single time. This is how it sets apart from other religions. The Hindu Dharma has been evolved over thousands of years. The keystone of this religion was laid by the ancient rishis (sages) who had discovered the eternal principles through their meditation. The Hindu Dharma is essentially a religion of principles rather than persons.

Hindu religious thought is based upon the belief in the Ultimate Reality. There are different ways to approach the same goal, catering to different people exhibiting different levels of spiritual development. The diversity is thus an essential feature of the religious life of Hindus.

Hindu view of the Ultimate Reality can be simplified as "Truth is one; the wise call it by various names" (*Rig Veda* 1.164.46). The aspect of the Ultimate Reality is beyond conception, beyond reasoning and beyond thought. The Ultimate Reality possesses infinite potential, power and intelligence, and therefore cannot be limited by a single name or form. Therefore Hindu's worship male and female aspects of Ultimate Reality (Sanskrit names are *Ishwara, Parameshwar*) in many forms called deities.

Hindu views teach that an individual is essentially *atman* enclosed in a physical body. The Sanskrit word *atman* means "God within," in an essence God is everywhere! Thus *atman* is immortal and divine. In Hindu view, an individual is not born a sinner, but commits sin due to *maya*. Just as darkness quickly disappears upon the appearance of light, an individual's delusion vanishes when one attains self-knowledge. The process of creation, sustenance and dissolution is repetitive and occurs in cycles without beginning and without end. Thus, in Hindu view there is no absolute beginning or end to the universe. The ultimate goal is that when the *atman* gets liberated from the physical body it should merge with the Ultimate or God. Hindu's believe in incarnation. Thus one must do good and be good now, as one will have to come back again and again in this world until the *atman* is liberated.

The Hindu view of God allows one to exercise complete freedom of worship. Hindu religion is often labeled as a religion

of 330 million gods. Thus number is a symbolic expression of the fundamental Hindu doctrine that God lives in the hearts of all living beings (*Krishna Yajur Veda Svetasvatara Upanishad* 3.20). In ancient times it was believed that there were about 330 million living beings – thus the number came from. Hindus view of cosmic activity of the Supreme Being as comprised of three tasks: creation, preservation, and dissolution and recreation. These tasks are associated with three deities, Brahma (represents the principle of creation), Vishnu (represents the principle of preservation and Maheshwar/Shiva (represents the principle of dissolution and recreation). They are not three independent deities rather represents the same power but in three different aspects. "The oneness of three gods Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar is brought out by he mystic symbol *AUM* , where 'A' represents Vishnu, 'U' Maheswar and 'M' Brahma" (S. Radhakrishan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Oxford University Press, London, 1949 pp 310-311).

In conclusion one must do good and be good now, as one will have to come back again and again in this world. This is a message for our kids ..... As a youth, you are the architect of your own destiny. According to Hindu view what you are today is in part the result of what you had done and thought in the past. Similarly what you think and do today will determine your tomorrow. So worship God and do your best.

The following guidelines from ancient wisdom will inspire you to live a purposeful life. The purpose of human life is to unfold one's inner potential. As a youth your potentials are boundless and you need to invoke it. In order to proceed you must be armed with few principles and a strong mind. **Set Goals**: a life without goals is akin to a journey without destination. **Sharpen Your Tools**: your growing body needs to be taken care with proper education including spiritual aspects of life, proper diet and exercise. Yes, don't forget to have a kind heart – you need to develop qualities such as love, non-violence, kindness, and compassion. **Build Your Character**: Every fool may become a hero at one time or another, but the people of good character are heroes all the time. **Develop a Well-balanced Personality; Utilize the Power of Positive Thinking; Develop Self Confidence (have faith in yourself); Honor parents, Teachers and Elders, Be Respectful of Others, Learn to Pray & Meditate Daily.** If we all begin to start practicing the above principles there is no doubt we will have a better tomorrow.

God Bless All.

Dr. Munmaya K. Mishra lives in Richmond, VA with his wife Bidu, daughter Swati, and son Suraj.

Jagannatha and Shakti

Manoj Panda

Vakratunda mahaakaaya sooryakoti samaprabhaa

Nirvighnam kuru mae daeva sarva karyeshu sarvadaa

O Lord with curved trunk, immense body and whose brilliance matches that of a million Suns, please make all my endeavor free of obstacles all the time.

namo devyai mahaadevyai sivaayai satatam namah
namah prakrtyai bhadraayai niyatah pranatah sma tam

We bow to Shree Devi, Mahaa Devi always with devotion. We bow lovingly also to Prakriti (mother nature) who is auspicious all the time.

Today is a very sacred day. We have installed the images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra in the temple of Divine Mother. First of all we have to understand why we need an image to worship, then what is the need of installation ceremony and then how these activities impact our daily life.

Human mind is very agitated. It needs to be focused. A calm, pointed mind can do much better work. To do this it needs a support. Image of the chosen deity helps in doing that. Mind can easily concentrate on an object. That is the reason we have so many forms of Gods and Goddesses. All cater to the different needs of mind which are connected with some philosophical ideal to contemplate upon.

There are three things. They are Yantra, Mantra and Tantra. Yantra is a pictorial mystical symbolic representation of eternal Energy. Mantra consists of "man" and "tra", means that which protects the mind from distraction. It is the utterance of certain syllables in certain ways which can transmit power in very subtle ways. Hence Yantra can be energized by Mantra. Similarly image of a deity is just a symbolic representation of an aspect of eternal Truth which can be energized by mantra. As we know that if electricity is conducted through an ordinary iron bar, then it can turn that to a magnet. Similarly a mantra or chanting of mystic syllables in proper manner can wake-up the vibratory power that is very conducive materially as well as spiritually. This process is called image installation ceremony or prANa pratishThA or infusing power to the deity. Regular worship and proper recitation of the mantram can sustain the invoked power in the image. The environment in which the image is there that is also affected greatly by this. This subtle vibration helps one's agitated mind to calm down quickly. The word Tantra has its root in "tanyatae" means to expand. That which helps in expanding the consciousness is Tantra. By regular worship and yogic sAdhanA or practice, one can expand one's consciousness so that he/she gets the divine qualities and God realization at the end.

Now let us discuss about the uniqueness of deities. Everywhere Hindu Gods are worshipped either in individual form or as that of couples. But in this case they are worshipped as brothers and sister. It helps spreading the maxim of universal brotherhood. The color of the deities Jagannatha (black), Balabhadra (white) and Subhadra (yellow) along with Sudarshana (red) represents possible skin color combinations of all the people of the world. If we look at the forms closely we find that they have shapes and also they don't have shapes. For example they have hands, but they don't look like hands. They have eyes but they don't look like eyes. And they have other limbs, but those fit into ordinary descriptions of limbs. This is the representation of Brahman as close as possible. It is said in Swetaswtara Upanishad:

ApANipAdo yabano grahitA
Pashyatyachakshuh sa shruNotyakarNah
Sa baetti baedyam na cha tasyAsti baettA
TamAhuragryam purusham mahAntam.

This means that without hands and feet He moves fast; without eyes He sees; without ears He hears. He knows whatever is to be known, yet there is none who knows Him. It is said that He is the foremost, the great infinite Being.

It is also said in Bhagavad GeetA:

Sarbatah pANipAdam tat sarbatokhsishiromukham
Sarbatah shritimallokae sarbamAbrutya tishThati

It means that everywhere are His hands and legs; everywhere are His eyes, heads and mouths. Everywhere are His ears and He envelopes everything.

The Holy Triad is representation of the holy "AUM". The seed mantra of Lord Jagannatha is "A", that of Lord Balabhadra is "M" and that of mother Subhadra is "U". That is the holy Pranava. It is said in PatanjaLi Yoga sutra in samAdhi pAda:

Tasya bAchaka praNavah

It means AUM is the identification of Parabrahma.

It is said is Bhagavad GeetA:

Baedyam pabitram AUM kAram

It means that it is only worth to know the sacred AUM kAra.

Also it is said that: AUMiti aekAksharam brahma

It means that AUM is one akshara or unchanging Brahman.

Even though they are three, they are ONE.

Idols are the forms of "saguNa brahma" or Brahma with attributes. As the water in liquid form is same as in gaseous and ice form, similarly Brahma which is attributeless, inexpressible and beyond the senses yakes the form of "bigraha" or idols for the fragmented "body", "mind" and "intellect" instruments to be integrated and focus to direct towards iInfinite.

The Lord has taken up the forms of images to uncover the Self-knowledge in devotees. The idols of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra are made of special Neem wood. This is called "dAru". Before the real building of the images start, the location of the tree is indicated to a special priest in dream. On this tree no birds have made nests; it has the symbols of shankha (conch), chakra (discuss), gadA (mace), padma (lotus); it is protected by a cobra and there are several other special features of this special tree. The whole building process is known as "naba kaLaebara" or "new body". This happens on special "tithis", every twelve years.

Now let's understand the etymological meaning of the words Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra. The word Jagannatha consists of two words. Jagat + nAtha = Jagannatha. "Jagat" (jagatIti jagat i.e. which in state of constant flux) means world and "nAtha" means controller or Lord of the same. It is said that there are fourteen worlds and each world has there own limitations and freedom. Upper seven worlds are Bhurloka, Bhubarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janarloka, Taparloka and Satyarloka. Nether seven lokas are atala, vitala, sutaLa, pAtAla, talAtala, mahAtala, and ultimately rasAtala. All these fourteen worlds are considered as Jagat. Jagannatha, the Lord of all Jagat controls all these and power by which He does that is Shakti. Just like fire and its burning power can never be set apart, similarly Jagannatha and Shakti are inseparable.

If we consider from yogic point of view the entire Jagat is miniaturized inside the human body. Spine is the highway where spiritual energy works through. There are seven energy centers which are known as Chakras or spinal centers. Actually these are located in the subtle body. Each of the lower five charkas denote a mahAbhUta and also a specific activity is associated with it. They are Mulaadhaara or coccygeal plexus (earth element, material wealth earning activity), swAdhisThAna or sacral plexus(water element, family generating activity), maNipura or lumbar plexus (fire element, food digestion activity), anAhata or dorsal plexus(air element, seat of emotional activities like love, hate etc.), bishuddha or cervical plexus(space center, religious activities). The serpent power or kundalini energy is staying inactively at the lowest center that is Mulaadhaara. When it is activated, it flows through a very fine nerve known as "SushumnA nADi" inside the spine. As it rises higher and higher the consciousness expands. The sixth center is known as AjnA chakra or medullary center or the command center. This is also known as kUtastha. Here one's chosen deity's form is seen. Beyond this is the seventh center which is known as sahasrAra. This is formless stage. This is the place of parA shakti. When "kundalini" energy rises from mulaadhaara and reaches sahasrAra, then a person becomes Self-realized. That is the state of universal consciousness. This is the purushottama stage. As it is said in Bhagavad GitA:

DwAvimou purushou lokae khsharaschAkshara aeba cha
Khsharah sarbANi bhUtAni, kUtasthahokshra ucchyatae
....
YasmAt kshramatItoham aksharAdapi chottama
Atoshmi lokae badae cha, prathitah purushottama.

Lower five spinal centers are khshara i.e. changeable. Sixth center or AjnA chakra is represented by akshara tattwa. And beyond these two is sahashrAra chakra which is purushottama state. This what is described in Purusha sUktam as " sa bhUmi bishwatobruttwA atyatishThad dasAnguLam..". The seat of parA shakti. The place of highest realization. The state of universal consciousness. The Nirbikalpa samAdhi state. The state of being Jagannatha.

The name Balabhadra consists of two words namely "Bala" and "bhadra". "Bala" means strength and "bhadra" means auspiciousness, goodness. When strength is used to become auspicious, good and divine, then the state achieved as a result of that process is Balabhadra. It is said in chapter 13 of Bhagavad Gita:

Idam sharIram kauntaeya, khsetram iti abhidhIyatae
Aetat yo baetti tam prAhuh, khsetragna iti tad-bidah

This human body is the field. One who knows it is known as the knower of the field. The real knower reaches the state by "cultivating" it with strength so that the essence of it, the driver of it is revealed. The cultivation is done by following yama, niyama, Asana, prANAyAma, pratyAhAra, dhAraNA, dhyAna or other methods prescribed by different paths by which samAdhi stage is reached.

The name SubhadrA means by which auspiciousness can be achieved easily. That is the power of divine Mother which is moving the whole Jagat. By Her grace the divinity can be achieved easily. It is said in Bhagavad Gita:

Ishwarah sarba bhUtAnAm hruddaeshaerjuna tisThati
BhrAmayan sarba bhUtAni yantrAruDhAni mAyayA

Lord Krishna says that is the power which being within everybody, driving the world. That shakti or energy is Subhadra. By Her grace one can realize the essence of everything, the One immutable, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent.

Shakti Peethas in India are very important places for Shakti worship and related practices. There are 51 Shakti Peethas. Puri, the seat of Jagannatha temple is one of them. Lord Jagannatha is worshipped as the Bhairaba and Mother Vimala as the BhairabI. The food offering has to be offered to Mother Vimala after Lord Jagannatha, so that it can be accepted as MahAprasAda.

The temple of Lord Jagannatha is called "Shree Mandira". Puri is called "Shree Kshetra". Shree itself is an epithet of Shakti.

From the above discussion we know about Jagannatha and Shakti. By our sincere devotion we can realize in us the essence of life by which one can bath in the perennial fountain of bliss.

Manoj Panda lives in Detroit, Michigan. This article was delivered as a speech on the occasion of Image installation ceremony of SriJagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra in the ParAshakti Temple, Pontiac, Michigan by the author.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS FROM TAOISM

Dr. Sandhyashree Purohit

Human nature is developed by profound serenity and lightness, virtue is developed by harmonious joy and open selflessness. When externals do not confuse you inwardly, your nature finds the condition that suits it; when your nature does not disturb harmony; virtue rests in its place.

If you can get through life in the world by developing your nature and embrace virtue to the end of your years, it can be said that you are able to embody the Tao. When the mind neither sorrows nor delights, that is supreme attainment of virtue. To succeed without changing is supreme attainment of calm. To be unburdened by habitual desires is supreme attainment of equanimity. Not getting mixed up with things is supreme attainment of purity.

Those who can accomplish these five things reach spiritual illumination. Those who reach spiritual illumination are those who attain the inward. When attained this within, you can develop it outwardly. Your thoughts are calm; your muscles are strong, your eyes and ears are alert and clear. You have accurate perceptions and understanding, you are firm and strong without snapping. In a small domain you are not cramped, in a large domain you are not careless. Your soul is not excited; your spirit is not disturbed. Serene and aloof, you are the toughest in the world.

Human nature is generally such that it likes tranquility and dislikes anxiety; it likes leisure and dislikes toil. When the mind is always desireless, this can be called tranquility, when the body is always unoccupied, this can be called leisure. If you set your mind free in tranquility and relinquish your body in leisure, thereby to await the direction of nature, spontaneously happy within and free from hurry without, even the magnitude of the Universe cannot change you at all. Then you are as if noble even if lowly, and you are as if rich even if poor. When the spirit controls the body, the body obeys; when the body overrules the spirit, the spirit is exhausted. Although intelligence is useful, it needs to be returned to the spirit. This is called the great harmony. The mind is the ruler of the body, while the spirit is the treasure of the mind. When the body is worked without rest, it collapses. When the spirit is used without cease, it becomes exhausted. Sages value and respect them, and do not dare to be excessive.

Rank, power, and wealth are things people crave, but when compared to the body they are insignificant. Therefore sages eat enough to fill emptiness and maintain energy, and dress sufficiently to cover their bodies and keep out the

cold. They adjust to their real conditions and refuse the rest, not craving gain and not accumulating much.

Abandoning intellectualism, they return to utter simplicity, resting their vital spirit, they detach from knowledge. Therefore they have no likes or dislikes. This is called great attainment.

Those who know to nurture the harmony of life can not be hooked by profit. Those who know how to join inside and outside cannot be seduced by power. Sages use the inner to make the external enjoyable, therefore they have spontaneous enjoyment in themselves, and so have their own will, which is esteemed by the world. The reason it is so is that this is essential to the world in the world's own terms. It is not up to another, but up to oneself, it is not up to anyone but the individual. When the individual attains it, everything is included. So those who understand the logic of mental functions regard desires, cravings, likes and dislikes as externals. Therefore nothing delights them, nothing angers them, nothing pleases them, nothing is wrong, nothing is right.

When the vitality, spirit, will and energy are calm, they fill you day by day and make you strong. When they are hyperactive, they are depleted day by day, making you old. Therefore sages keep nurturing their spirit, make their energy gentle, make their bodies normal, and bob with the way. In this way they keep company with the evolution of all things and respond to the changes in all events.

So the physical body may pass away, but the spirit does not change. Use the unchanging to respond to changes, and there is never any limit. What changes return to formlessness, while what does not change lives together with the Universe. This is where real people roam, the path of quintessence.

(Dr.Sandhyashree Purohit lives in Richmond Hill, Ontario)

SRI AUROBINDO

Kiranbala Das

India was under the British Rule before August 1947. As a result there was no existence of independent India as such. Everything was under British empire. Sri Aurobindo was one of the freedom fighters who had main contribution in bringing independence to India.

On 15th August 1872, Sri Aurobindo was born to Sri Krushnadhan Ghosh and Swarnalata in the Khulna district of Bengal. Being dear to everybody in the family, he was addressed as "Auro" (red lotus). As a doctor, his father was well acquainted with the inhuman attitude of the British rule. So he wanted his children to be strong, courageous and highly educated so that they could fight for India's independence. That was the reason he sent his children to Doon School in Dehradun and later to London for higher education. The children completed their education amidst poverty and lot of difficulties. From that time onwards Sri Aurobindo was building himself as a true patriot. He was keeping in touch with all the updated news of India secretly. In spite of passing the exam in good marks, Aurobindo chose to withdraw from the ICS exam by not showing up for the horse riding. His father died in heart attack when he received that news. The ship that Aurobindo was supposed to board to return to India hit a storm. Aurobindo for some reason could not catch that ship. Probably the call of the divine was something else.

After returning back to India Sri Aurobindo joined the service under the King of Baroda. When he felt obstruction in his yogic karma, he left that job and joined as a professor in a reputed college. This is the time when Aurobindo published a journal named "ARYA". At the same time he also started carrying out secret missions against the British Rule. He was sentenced to one year imprisonment for several bomb blasts and for planning to assassinate British Generals. While in the jail Aurobindo had the Darshan of the omnipresent Narayan through his psychic power. He became famous as Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo in his prison days.

After coming out of the jail Aurobindo withdrew himself from the political world. While being in the jail, he had the realization that the change always comes from within. That's why he took the path of meditation for India's independence. He chose the French occupied Pondicherry to be the apt place for his meditative purpose. He meditated day and night to bring supramental force to the human world. He struggled a lot for that.

While leading the yogic life in Pondicherry, Aurobindo happened to meet a French lady named, "Meera Alfassa" (latter on became known as "SRI MAA") who joined him in his spiritual quest for truth. Sri Maa helped to protect the world from pain and suffering. Ten more Sadhaks joined him in his yogic path. The place where Aurobindo started his yogic life came to be known as "Sri Aurobindo Ashram". Sri Maa took over the entire Ashram management, because Sri Aurobindo was busy in meditation and decided not to come out of the room. He came out of his room only on Darshan days. Sri Aurobindo's birthday

and Sri Maa's birthday (21st Feb) are considered to be the most important days in Ashram for Darshans.

In his last days Aurobindo was suffering from ailment in his knees. It didn't get cured till the end of his life. In this world, when the divine force witnesses itself for the betterment of mankind, the asuric one's try to interfere in it. We know Ravana was born before Sri Rama, Kansa was born before Sri Krushna, and devil forces were already there before Sri Aurobindo came into this world. On the 5th December 1950 the soul of Sri Aurobindo departed his body. Though Sri Aurobindo is not physically with us, but he is present in our subconscious level.

We still hear from Ashram devotees that some sort of fragrance emanated from Sri Aurobindo's body when he was alive. They say it was the divine fragrance. People say that at the time of his death, a blue light surrounded his body. The light protected his body from decomposing and it remained fresh for five days. On the 9th December, his body produced the fragrance of rose petals. On the same day he was given Samadhi in the ashram. Sri Aurobindo's Samadhi is well known and famous through out the world. For immortality of human life, Sri Aurobindo started the process of bringing down the supramental force into the world. We pray that we should be capable of living the yogic life that Aurobindo showed us.

Mrs. Kiranbala Das is a follower of Aurobindo philosophy. She lives in Bhubaneswar, Orissa with her husband Adikanda Das

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Musings on Happiness

Jnana Ranjan Dash

These are simple musings on some basic issues of our inner happiness and ways for stress-free living. Our being here in North America has no relevance, as these thoughts are independent of one's coordinates. You can be miserable in Baltimore, or Barcelona, or Balasore. Evereyone of us seeks to get "happiness". When you ask about the ways to get happiness, we immediately explain - a good profession with lots of money, a big house with a grand view, and everyone in the family doing well in terms of good health and material success. But we have seen many examples where the "real" happiness eludes us despite all the above accomplishments. This is well-known over the centuries that object-based happiness is ephemeral and illusory. Next time, when someone wishes you "Happy New Year" on New Year's Eve night, just look at his or her eyes and ask, "How?" The person will be somewhat ill at ease to answer.

Suppose you say that you are very healthy with no illness or physical problems. Plus you are doing "well" in your profession with name, fame, and wealth. Your ego is flying high with self-congratulations and you believe you can reach the sky. In theory then, you should be "happy". At the same time, if your child is ill, suddenly you discover that your happiness is gone and you start worrying about your child's quick recovery. Therefore, your happiness can not be there with the presence of other's unhappiness. This is because we are all "connected": at the family level, at the society level, and at the humanity level. Our individual happiness is a factor of a total happiness around us. Hence, looking at the innocent victims of the Iraq war, we felt unhappy and sad even if they are thousands of miles away and unknown to us.

So what to do? How to go about feeling happy? This question has been the search for many milleniums and the answer was given by our Indian thinkers long ago. They are beautifully documented in many of our scriptures such as the Upanishads, The Bhagbat Gita, The Bhagatam, etc. Someone said that we have a "super-market" of scriptures. One needs to pick and choose whichever appeals to your taste. You want stories? Go for the Ramayana or the Mahabharat. You want more intellectual discourse? Then pick up the Upanishads. The secret to happiness lies in a deeper understanding of "who we are?" first. When you wake up from a deep sleep, you announce that you had a great sleep, so great that you had no sense of your body or the mind. The question then is -- who was observing you? When you say "I" had a great sleep, which was that "I" since you did not even have any body or mind-consciousness. That "I" is termed as the Self, or God or Atman or the Soul. That is the intellect behind the intelligence that you brag about so much. That is the immutable, immortal, "awareness" or Chetna we call the Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence– Knowledge–Bliss).

Right now, many of you are thinking, "where is he going? Kind of philosophical" - an accusation of being old-fashioned and out of style to modernity. The truth is: as you explore the thought of the Bramhan, the one who created this universe and commands the cosmic dynamics, then your mind stops, because it's abstract and beyond any comprehension. Adi Shankara who lived only for 32 years back in the 8th. Century India, expounded the Advaita Vedanta (the principle of the non-dual Bramhan) and wrote many wonderful books such as the Vivek Chudamani (the crown Jewell of discrimination), Atma Bodh, Tatva Bodh, etc. He concluded that the duality between the individual jiva (humans) and the paramatma (God) does not exist. He established the equation: jivatma = paramatma. The Sat-Chit-Ananda called Bramhan is inside each one of us. All we need to do is look within and seek Him. That's where the real happiness resides.

It's like this. You are watching the ocean waves, the roar, and the turbulence and are amazed at the marvel of the creation. You also feel very small in comparison and your ego disappears for a moment. If you go little deeper inside the ocean, there is a vast calmness that is a contrast to the surface turbulence and restlessness. Now your "mind" is just like that. On the surface there are all kinds of turbulence, restlessness and turmoil. Many thoughts are flowing causing all kinds of stress in you. A taunting remark by a colleague at work keeps bothering you after several hours. You are fuming and practicing how you will teach him a lesson next time you come face to face with him. Your spouse said something harsh and it keeps you up all night. You keep getting angrier and sadder as you prolong the brooding. These are the mental turbulence we are talking about. But right underneath, there is a fountain of calmness and happiness that needs discovering to bring you true happiness. The real question then is – how do you find that? This is where the meditation factors in. The body needs nourishment and exercise for longivity. What do you do for the mind? What noursihment and exercise do you provide that mind causing so much anguish in you? Learning how to meditate and look inward helps. Take a class from organizations such as The Art of Living, or read one of several books (e.g. Eknath Easwaran's Meditation) and start practicing. You will see a big change in your mental and physical state. Breath control such as pranayama and Kriya Yoga are processes practised over thousands of years to help you gain mental equipoise.

As we have three equipments, the body, the mind, and the intellect, we also need to provide nutrition and exercise for all three. A great teacher from the Chinmaya Mission once suggested a 20-20-20 program, a catchy name following the ABC weekly program 20-20. The program suggests daily 20 minutes for the body (exercise), 20 minutes for the mind (meditation), and 20 minutes for the intellect (reading some scriptures, not a John Grisham book). Practice will make it easy even though we may find it hard initially. Have the determination to stick to it and one can see the benefit right away.

In India, we have the attitude that during our prime years of life, we should enjoy life through the eat-drink-and-be-merry principle. Then after retiring from our work, we should start focussing on these things. The problem is that starting when we approach the sunset of our lives is meaningless, as there is very little runway left. We may have problems of eyesight, hearing, and other physical illness. Therefore, why not start early

when you are real young, so that you can reap the benefits early also? Spirituality is a fundamental aspect of our lives irrespective of age, location, profession, and our lineage. The difference between religion and spirituality is the same as the difference between the banana skin and the inside of the banana. Religion is the dry skin, but spirituality is the inside. Unfortunately we stick to the dry skin and start quarreling with each other, when the inside part is the same across the board.

What we face as the biggest hurdle in individual life is "stress" which causes all kinds of mental and physical problems. A definition of stress can go like this – stress is directly proportional to the delta between "who I am" vs. "what I project myself to be". Many of us love to pretend to be someone we are not and that causes all kinds of stress. Evereyone of us has seen these phenomena in our daily lives. A well-known Venture capitalist friend in Menlo Park changed the definition of "stress" to fit the corporations. So "Corporate stress" is directly proportional to the delta between the truth and bullshit. Just take the case of Enron and you will appreciate what he was saying. Therefore, pretensions and being artificial lead to much stress. The bottom line is – just be yourself and no need to pretend.

In conclusion, each one of us is a manifestation of the one source - the sat-chit-ananda Bramhan. Hence we are one. This one-ness principle, when internalized, can be a tremendous solace for all. It prevents you from being hateful and negative. You look at the world with a very positive attitude. Like Vallavacharya said – Adharam Madhuram, Badanam Madhuram....everything is sweet. The Glass is always half-full. A change of inner attitude can lead to true happiness. One then revels with the egolessness state of being one with God. Mahatma Gandhi aptly said, "I want to be reduced to zero." In other words, I am a mere nothing in this vast expanse of the creation. But I am also the Sat-Chit-Ananda Bramhan that is always joyful and happy. That self-realization is the only highway to happiness.

The author is a consulting executve in the software industry and lives in San Jose, California.

MY MEDITATION

Sudhansu S. Misra

As I sit for meditation I ask myself what is it I want to do! As a small boy I was inspired by a holy man in my hometown to practice yoga and healthy habits. But it lasted only until I finished my grade school. Many years later after coming to America, I was inspired by a great teacher Dr. Usharbudh Arya (now Swami Veda Bharati), who is a disciple of Swami Rama of Himalayas.

After years of practice, I have basically learnt how to sit for meditation for up to 45 minutes with a peaceful and calm mind. I have been told by experienced meditates that early morning time before dawn is the best time to sit for meditation when it is quiet and peaceful. I have been unable to follow it strictly. I have followed a schedule, which I am comfortable with. In the morning after I am up, I do my yogic stretching exercises to the best of my ability to get my limbs relaxed and flexible. Then I take a shower, change in to some comfortable clothing, which is suitable for sitting on the floor. I have selected a particular place in the house, away from disturbance, where I sit daily over a folded blanket and a meditation pillow. I cover my body with a shawl and put on a beaded mala, a gift from a loving Swami in Rishikesh, around my neck. Then I sit cross-legged in *sukhasana* posture on the cushion with my head neck and spine erect. I relax every limb in my body with deep breaths as if they are flowing in the part of the body, which I am trying to relax.

Before starting my meditation I begin with some alternate breathing known as *pranayama*. I press my thumb on the right nostril and exhale through my left nostril. After mentally counting up to 16 (or 32 if possible) I press my left nostril with the middle finger and inhale to a count of 8 (or 16 if possible), thus completing a 2 to 1 breathing cycle. I repeat this process for five times. Then I switch to exhale through my right nostril and inhale through the left for five more times. After this process I enter in to a state of mental peace and quiet. Then with my beaded mala held between my thumb and the middle finger I start my *japa* repeating my personal *mantra (or SO HUM* for those who do not have a personal *mantra)*, once for each breath. I still my body to the point where I am absolutely motionless except for my breathing and slight movement of my fingers to move the beads of the mala. Next I still my mind with silence in an attempt to enter a thoughtless state. With a completely relaxed body in meditative posture, I encircle myself in an imaginary shield of light that isolates me from the external world. I do my *japa* by repeating my mantra, paying attention only to my breath. If any random thoughts appear, I only observe them as a witness without attaching my thoughts to them. I am only observing my mind, which is calm, serene and peaceful. I make my mental journey within myself to see a vision of pure light. The light is soft, pure and unwavering. It is the light of my inner being called the self. I begin to meditate on this light, which gradually surrounds my whole being. The presence of my body becomes less significant. An accomplished meditate forgets the existence of the body in deep meditation. Only my

breath and my mantra are all I can relate to. I sit in this state as long as I want to. They say true meditation lasts only for a few moments. The rest is just preparation to attain that state. When completely transformed in to a state of bliss, one enters a state called *samadhi*. There are no thoughts and doubts in this state. Only a few accomplished Yogis attain this state. They can go in to *samadhi* and can stay there as long as they want enjoying the nectar of bliss. I only have to be mentally silent without any disturbance. Any external thought that appears is noise, which have to be silenced. I continue sitting in this state as long as I want. When I am ready to come out of meditation I very slowly raise my hands, cup my palms and place them over my eyes. I open my eyes to my palm saying "*Thy will be done*. I do not expect any benefit from my meditation. If there is any benefit that may accrue I dedicate and surrender them to you". Then I slowly lower my hands maintaining the meditative mind. I resolve to enter in to meditation for brief periods as often as possible during the day to calm my mind.

Meditation and Science (extracted from an article "Meditation and the Scientific Method" by Judy Foreman a lecturer in medicine at the Harvard Medical School)

Considerable research suggests that regular mediation even for 20 minutes a day can reverse many of the ill effects of stress. A new study conducted by Richard Davidson, director of the laboratory of affective neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and Jon KabatZinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical School has helped in the understanding of effect of meditation on mind. The underlying theory is that when people who are stressed, anxious or depressed, the right frontal cortex of the brain is overactive and the left frontal cortex is under active. Such people also show heightened activation of amygdala, a key center for processing fear. By contrast, those who are habitually calm and happy typically show great activity in the left frontal cortex relative to the right. Each person has a natural "set point", a baseline frontal cortex activity level that changes from left to right and around with daily fluctuation of mood swirl. What meditation does is to nudge this balance in the favorable direction. From the volunteers taking part in this study, it was determined that the meditators' brain showed a pronounced shift towards the left frontal lobe, while the nonmeditators' brain did not, suggesting that meditation may have shifted the "set point" to the left. At John Hopkins School of Medicine Dr. Solomon Snyder has determined that meditation may increase serotonin, a calming neurotransmitter, in the brain. Although not a cure-all, meditation is a wonderful tool according to Barrie Cassileth of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer center in New York.

At long last, the subtleties of mind long known subjectively to meditators, is now being understood objectively, as well.

Sudhansu Misra, a long time resident in Minneapolis, MN is a retired engineer from Honeywell.

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Tribute

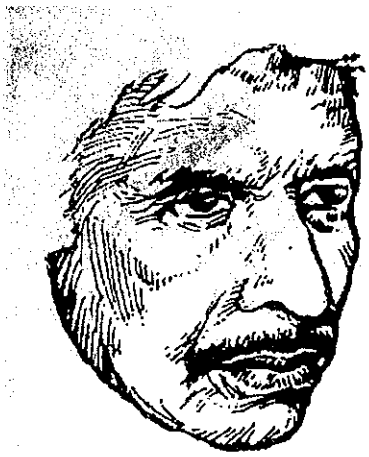
Obituary

We offer our heartfelt condolence on the sorrowful demise of four illustrious sons of Orissa who passed away recently. They have contributed immensely in the fields of music, literature, art and social service. They are Akshaya Mohanty, the legendry singer and composer; Gopal Chhotray, an eminent playwright of our time; Pankaj Charan Das, the innovative founder of Odissi style of dance; and Manamohan Choudhury the well-known freedom fighter and social worker. Also, we mourn the loss of all those beloved members of our OSA community who have left us behind. We share the grief with their bereaved families, friends and admirers and offer our tributes and recollect some fond memories in the following pages.

Editor

The Legend, Akshaya Mohanty

Saradindu Misra



October 12, 1937 - November 17, 2003

My association with Akshaya Mohanty goes back a long way. My childhood friend, Sikander Alam, introduced me to him in 1955. We were quite very close until I left Orissa in 1971. In the year 1955, Akshaya led the team, which won the first prize in the All India Youth Festival, held in New Delhi. That was the start of a long and distinguished career as a singer and musician for Akshaya Mohanty. All India Radio was comparatively new in Cuttack. Except a few stalwarts like Balakrushna Das, most singers used to come from the Calcutta station to participate at Cuttack. I guess, in 1956, both Akshaya and Alam became certified radio artists and started singing regularly in the Cuttack radio station. Raghunath Panigrahi and Pranab Patnaik came later; and Prafulla Kar came much later. It was the hay days of A.I.R., Cuttack popular with melodies of Akshaya and Alam, coupled with instrumentalists such as Hari Prasad Chourasia and Bhubaneswar Misra. At that time, Akshaya did not have a job. Music was his full-time avocation. Initially, he was closely associated with *Kala Vikas Kendra* and then joined the National Music Association to learn classical music. He was a loner at that time and seemed to be eternally immersed in music. However, his intense dedication to music started to pay off. He became immensely popular with songs like *"Ei Jhum Juhm Jhum Nupura Bajere", "Chandrama Ek Chandana Bindure",* and a host of other melodies. Soon he became the favorite Oriya singer of the State. Oriya movies were few and far in between. So he used All India Radio and stage shows as springboard to delve into his fame. Later came the regular production of Oriya movies. By then, Akshaya had become a household name in Orissa through his innovative, modern songs.

Akshaya always experimented something different than the run of the mill. He used lyricists to come up with songs which were considered a kind of bold and vulgar, those days. While the conservative population branded him as immoral, he became a craze with the young masses. With regular production of Oriya movies, Akshaya's plate was always full. He started not only singing, but also directing the music of most of the Oriya films of those days. At that point, he felt that he was not able to give expression to his feelings through the lyrics of others. He started writing and composing his own songs. The blending of his voice, with his own lyric and music, produced some

of his outstanding numbers that went on to become all time classics of Orissa. He sang thousands of songs, directed music in scores of Oriya movies, and even acted in a couple of them. By then he was the most famous singer of the state.

In 1979, Akshaya Mohanty visited the United States for the first time. Pratap Das was instrumental in bringing him to this country. Pratap had the distinction of playing tabla with Akshaya in Orissa when the former was a young boy. But the friendship lasted a lifetime. Pratap organized a number of shows throughout the United States for Akshaya. I was living in New York at that time and had the privilege of having him as my guest for a week. That gave us an opportunity of going down the memory lane and reflect upon the passage of time that made Akshaya Mohanty from a novice, awkward singer to the modern day legend. During that time, my wife Lata took him around New York and showed him the famous sites of the city. After his return, he wrote a book about America and was kind enough to remember both of us. Besides meeting him briefly during my occasional trips to Orissa, I had my last meeting with Akshaya during the Chicago Chapter convention in 2001. Together, we spent hours and hours, recollecting the past, until the wee hours of the morning. He looked frail and sick, but the tempo was still in place. When he sang at the Chicago Convention, there were rousing cheers from the audience, as he enthralled and mesmerized them with his all time great hits.

On November 16, 2002, I was talking to my friend Sikander Alam, on phone, when he informed me that he had just returned from the Cuttack hospital where Akshaya was bedridden. Alam stated that all kinds of tubes were connected to his body and the chances were that he would never recover. The next morning, Pratap Das called me and informed me of the sad demise of Akshaya.

The legend has disappeared from this world. He was only 63 years old when he left his mortal body. The man never maintained physical discipline which was typical of all great artists and that brought him to his untimely death. Akshaya Mohanty was a singer, lyricist, composer, writer and a philosopher. He is the forefather of the contemporary Oriya music, just as Kabichandra Kalicharan Patnaik is the forefather of Odissi music. There were many occasions, when I told my wife that had I been living in Orissa, I would have easily got a Ph.D. by writing a thesis on creativity and achievements of Akshaya, who was endowed with such multi-faceted talent.

Akshaya's memory will stay alive with Oriyas for several generations. It will be hard to replace his creations. Thus, it is only befitting that the OSA Convention, this year, is paying a loving tribute to the memory of this giant by staging his magnum opus "Patent Medicine" in their cultural event. Long live Akshaya Mohanty through his memorable songs and music!

Saradindu Misra is the convener of this year's OSA Convention.

Empty Dreams

Sneha P. Mohanty

Dawn arrived in a blink
It was time for your morning prayer
Like an angel singing in a heavenly choir
The fragrance of the incense lingers in the room
The sweet perfumed flowers bedecked on God
So fresh and surreal
How could it happen?
You disappeared like mist
In a white silver veil
The miracle baby is waiting
A little creeper stricken with winter's harsh wind
The mother's tender love sparkles
Like a crystal in the richness of sunlight
I float like a dark cloud
Holding countless drops of tears
You reflect with love, hope, and strength
I shut my eyes
Moving in an endless circle
Then plunging into an empty dream

Sneha P. Mohanty lives in Huntington Beach, CA. She is a regular contributor to the OSA Souvenir Issues. This poem is dedicated to her nephew's wife, Madhusmita Mohanty, who recently passed away during childbirth.

KAUTUKI PATNAIK ----- SOME UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

Sanjukta Patnaik

I never had the opportunity to meet Babuli Apa before I came to USA. She could not attend our wedding because both her kidneys were damaged by then for which she could not travel to India.

It was in June 1983 when we arrived first time in this country . My brother- in-law Prakash Bhai was there at the New York airport to receive us. But Babuli Apa could not come. She had to go to the hospital for her dialysis. My heart was constantly pounding with a trepid concern and a morbid anxiety over her kidney failure. Merged with an unknown dream of an unseen future I was a little nervous and every moment missing India very much.

Within an hour after we reached her house she came back from the hospital. The whole atmosphere in the house changed in a trice, once she came home, as if sun bursting through a patch of dark clouds. There she was --- after her four hours of torturous dialysis---yet fresh and full of rhythm, full of energy and vigor. All of a sudden life looked colorful to me and a newfound joy dissipated all our gloom. During our initial stay at her house I never felt for a moment that I was in an 'alien' country. The environment in her house constantly reverberated in the singsong of fun, frolic and humor---- and occasional burst of laughter. Carom became a popular pastime for a while as we had just brought a carom board from India. All of us, incidentally, were good in that game, at least we thought so. Thus the game would go into fervent pitch and no one was prepared to give up, especially Babuli Apa. To her life was a challenge, but unlike others, she added laughter and splendor to it.

Babuli Apa loved people and everyone loved her. Despite her poor health she enjoyed cooking a variety of dishes to treat anyone who visited her house. She liked to talk, she had a unique sense of humor. She even talked with strangers and grieved and consoled them for their problems and often tried to help them out. I remember, on one occasion in a casino in Atlantic City, she approached an elderly lady who was sitting quietly, stunned and upset over her loss of money. Babuli Apa spent a lot of time with her, talking and consoling her. At the end the lady regained her composure and looked somewhat normal and cheerful. In our fast moving life, where all our actions are dictated mostly by material greed and self interest, no one takes interest nor spends any time to pause for others, especially for unknown people. Babuli Apa, in this respect, was very different from everyone, that was because she did not belong to this material world.

Sorrow or depression could never wear her down even in the worst moments that any normal mortal would succumb to.

Babuli Apa loved to fly with her husband. They had a small plane. When we were in Ithaca in the upstate New York, they would fly there many times. One day when they were about to return back from Ithaca, the weather was getting worse and knowing that one had to fly over the Poconos, we strongly urged them not to do so on that day. When I told her that, she smiled and said, "Don't worry, nothing would happen" and then cracked a joke in her typical humorous style. She had a strong faith in God and a tremendous self- confidence that probably kept her going strong despite her ill health. To her, sky was a place where imagination and existence composed an assonance that was life.

Babuli Apa survived for twenty years after her kidney failure, ten years under dialysis and an equal length of time with a transplanted kidney. A lifelong OSA member, she was very active socially and culturally. She was a very popular figure.

It is said that Helen Keller won her battle against her physical handicaps, the darkness and silence of her life with hopes and perseverance. In the same way Babuli Apa overcame her physical pain and hardship with her tremendous courage, a child-like ebullience and an inborn spirit to laugh and make everyone laugh. The petals of roses are adorning my thoughts and memories, still fresh and emanating a fragrance that tells us---------- life is beautiful and full of love, if one knows how to live.

(Written on the third death anniversary of Kautuki Patnaik)

In the loving memory of

Annapurna Kanungo

A Founding Member of the Orissa Society of the Americas

From her arrival in the United States in 1966 until her passing in 1992, Anu Kanungo filled the lives of her family, friends and the members of O.S.A. with love, laughter and always with plenty of good food. While her vibrant presence in our lives is missed daily, the comfort of her memory sustains all who loved her.

MANAMOHAN CHOUDHURY

Anadi Naik

Sri Manamohan Choudhury, the well known public figure of Orissa, breathed his last on June 11, 2003. In his passing India lost a freedom fighter and the Sarvodaya movement lost one of its inspiring figures.

Sri Choudhury was born on October11, 1915. His father Gopabandhu Choudhury was in his time the highest-ranking Oriya Civil Servant of the Raj. His mother was Rama Devi- a familiar name in Orissa. However, the elder Choudhury quit his job and joined the freedom movement. In 1921. Gopabandhu Choudhury and his brother, Nabakrushna went to prison. Nabakrushna Choudhury became chief minister of Orissa in the 1950s. By 1930 the entire Choudhury family, engrossed in the struggle for India's independence, was put in prison. Manamohan Choudhury, then a teenager, was the leader of Gandhiji's "monkey brigade" in Orissa. He was imprisoned several times. At one point he, along with his mother, Rama Devi – a niece of Madusudan Das - was taken to prison together on the same day.

Manamohan Choudhury joined the Congress Socialist Party in Orissa under the leadership of his uncle, Nabakrushna Choudhury. However, his interests lay in the nonviolent, constructive works of Gandhiji. He participated in many of those activities at the Sodepur ashram of the late Satish Chandra Dasgupta of Bengal and at Gandhjiji's Sevagram.

Instead of participating in the electoral politics after independence Sri Choudhury remained a Gandhian worker and opted to work among the villagers in Bari. He became a farmer, a beekeeper, a carpenter and a cobbler. With a young band of co-workers he tried to bring about changes in the rural life of the Bari area. While conducting a night school to educate adults, he lived among the so called " untouchables"

The onset of the Bhoodan movement pulled Manamohan away from his work in Bari and he carried the message of Vinobaji. For him the Bhoodan movement was an extension of the work he had already been doing at Bari. Over the years he became a leading figure in the movement. For six years he was president of the Sarva Seva Sangh, the apex body of the Gandhian Organizations of India. Manamohan Choudhury was a leading figure in the protest movement - initiated by Jaya Prakash Narayan – of the1970s. During that period he was jailed by the Congress Government under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act and was released when the Emergency rule ended. The opposition parties, once in power, behaved very much the same as did the Congress Party. BJP was no exception. So Sri Choudhury did not hesitate to speak out against the missteps of various political parties. Through his regular columns in the *Vigil*, an English

magazine, and *Sarvodaya*, an Oriya weekly, he continued his criticisms of the dirty power politics . He remained a thorn on the sides of the government no matter who led it.

Sri Choudhury vehemently opposed the entrance of Coca Cola, Pepsi and the likes into rural India. As an active participant in the freedom movement of the country he was well aware of the roots of India's subjugation. While many saw the opening of India's markets to foreign companies as a boon, Sri Choudhury saw this as a tentacle of multi national companies choking the poorest of the poor in India. He feared the ruin of India's economy in rural areas.

As a young man Sri Choudhury had to quit his formal education because Gandhiji had asked the country to boycott the British institution and goods. However, he had passed the high school examination as a private student. In those days only a few students graduated from high schools in Orissa every year. The result used to be announced in *Samaj* – the only newspaper of Orissa. In 1930 Manamohan Choudhury's name appeared among the high school graduates. On the same day the newspaper also carried the news of his father's arrest for defying the British Government's restriction on his movement. Years in jail gave the young Manamohan ample opportunity to study mathematics and social sciences.

In independent India Sri Choudhury edited *Nai Talim*(Hindi), *Vigil* (English) and *Sarvodaya* (Oriya). While involved in constructive actvities in Sevagram, he met Sumitra Banarjee whose father grew up in Puri. They were married in Sevagram in 1946.

Manamohan Choudhury traveled extensively within India. He was a sought after speaker among all sorts of activist groups in the country. His autobiography KASTURI MRUGA SAMA received the Sarala award in Orissa. Both Manamohan Babu and Sumitra Devi last visited the U.S. in 1994. They lost their only son Kabir in a tragic accident in the Chicago area in 1983. Kabir's two sons, Arastu and Tathagata are young men now. Arati, Kabir's widow lives in New Jersey.

In the passing of Sri Manamohan Choudhury the masses of India lost a public figure who spoke his mind no matter what. For the last few years he had been in ill health, yet he continued to read and write and kept a sharp eye on events around the world. He is survived by his wife Sumitra Devi; daughter Madhabi and son-in-law Radhanath Das and their son Anubrata; and daughter-in-law Arati and grandchildren Arastu and Tathagata. Since the late 1960s Sri Choudhury had been residing at Cuttack in a house built by his grandfather Gokulananda Choudhury, an architect of geographic Orissa, along with his sister, Annapurna Maharana and brother-in-law, Sarat Chandra Maharana. Their house in Bakharabad in Cuttack for years has remained the nerve center of the planning and execution of many activities around Orissa. Sri Choudhury lived a relatively long life. His counsel and daring will be missed by many of his followers and friends in Orissa and around the country. His life and work remain a source of inspiration.

Anadi Das was the president of OSA in 2001. He is associated with Bhoodan movement.

Guru Pankaj Charan Das --- A Tribute

Sri Gopal Mohanty

The doyen of Odissi dance Guru Pankaj Charan Das, who was popularly referred to as "Guru of Gurus" passed away on Wednesday, June 4, 2003. Shri Das was born in the traditional *Madeli* family (the *Madelis* provide *Madal* or drum accompaniment to the *Maharis* or the dancers and musicians of Jagannath Temple) on March 17,1921 in Puri. His mother lost her husband when she was expecting Pankaj Charan and therefore brought him up in extreme hardship. The family moved to live with Fakira Mahari and this gave Pankaj Charan an exposure to the temple music and dance from his infancy. Pankaj Charan, as a boy, was very popular in his elementary school for he could sing and act very well. His formal training in music and dance was from *Akhadagharas*, the centres for training in gymnastic, music and dance for men. He learnt dance from his aunt Ratnaprabha, Late Guru Ranganath Dev Goswami and Late Bhikari Charan Dalai. Misfortune fell upon him with a prolonged struggle when he lost his mother at the age of fourteen. He had to set up a betel-shop, worked as a peon and performed occasionally in Hajuri theatre in Puri.

Pankaj Charan's future became brighter when he moved to join New Theatres at Cuttack. and later when he began his career as a dance teacher in Annapurna Theatre. There his creative force let him to convert the traditional *Mahari* dance into an embryonic form of the present Odissi dance. There he taught dance to the husband-wife team of Padmabibhusan Guru Kelucharan and Laxmipriya and established himself as a Guru in Odissi style. He was with Annapurna Theatre from 1944 to 1949 and during that period he married Sarojini Devi, the adopted daughter of Mahari Haripriya.

Because of the-then relaxed negative attitude towards dance and because of his popularity as a teacher, Pankaj Charan continued teaching dance privately and in many institutions. He joined the newly established Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, at Bhubaneswar in early 1960's from where he retired as the Pricipal in 1984. After his retirement he remained active as a teacher, dance director and a choreographer.

Some of Guruji's famous choreographies are *Panchakanyas, Navadurga, Sthai, Pallavi Gatibilas, Matrubandana, Om-Namah-Shivaya, Vishnu, Glani Sanhara and Savitri Satyaban. Glani Samhara* has been acclaimed as one of the best choreographies by many dance gurus of the world. He also gave dance direction in two Oriya movies, "*Shri Jagannath*" and " *Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja*". Because of his closeness to

Mahari families Pankaj Charan was requested by Frederique Apffel Margoline to assist her in writing her book "Wives of the God-King: The Rituals of the Devadasis in Puri".

Noted among Guruji's disciples include Padmabibhusan Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Late Guru Deba Prasad Das, Guru Mayadhar Rout, Padmashree Guru Bhagawan Sahoo, Guru Gangadhar Pradhan, Guru Durga Charan Ranabir, Niranjan Rout, Late Sahadev Padhi, Yamini Krishnamurthy, Late Padmashree Sanjukta Panigrahi, Dr.Priyambada Mohanty-Hejmadi, Ritha Devi, Dr.Ratna Ray, Sumati Koushal, Kumkum Mohanty, Dr. Minati Mishra ,Sabita Mehetta and Nandita Behera.

For his outstanding contribution to the development of Odissi dance, Guruji was felicitated with Kendra Sangeeta Nataka Academy Award, Orissa Sangeeta Nataka Academy Award and the Orissa Sahitya Academy Award. Other recognitions include Sarangdev Fellowship from Mumbai-based Sur Singar Samsad, Udra Nrutya Bhusan Award by Kalinga Bharati, Sarala Award by Impa Charitable Trust, Emeritus Fellowship by Union Cultural Ministry and many others. The President of India honored Guruji with Padmashree. Guruji visited many countries including Japan, Laos, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Lebanon and many European countries.

Guru Pankaj Charan evoked the absolute enchantment that emanated from his dance, as his tall figure stood and demonstrated a movement in simple dhoti and kurta. His dance has a unique quality and distinctive individuality which could hardly be emulated by others. He followed the *Mahari* tradition which is quite distinct from the *Gotipua* tradition in some of the technical features. He followed the same tradition in his approach and attitude as a dancer. However, it was his superlative dancing ability and immense gift for creativity that gave his style a charm and character of its own, which set it apart from the ordinary repertoire of the *Maharis.*

Orissa's cultural revival owes a great deal to Guru Pankaj Charan Das. His loss is immense and irreparable. He left an indelible imprints on Orissa's cultural scenes and in particular on the pages of Odissi dance history. We salute this great pioneer and pray for his soul to rest in peace.

Dr. Sri Gopal Mahanty is an Emeritus Professor at Department of Mathematics and Statistics at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

The Nature of Things

Snigdha Mishra

Fall has come, child, and the leaves change color,
Copper, orange, burgundy against the brown.
Like bursts of laughter in a crowded room
Rays of sunshine on a cloudy day.
I reflect on life, it's joys and sorrows,
A tapestry woven in many shades.
Brilliant threads of laughter and delight,
Intertwining muted ones of tears and pain.

The chill November dusk has darkened the sky
It is Diwali, child, let us light the "deepas".
I remember a Diwali when I was ten like you.
Us children standing to one side, clapping in time
My uncle dancing among the "chakris"
Nimble-footed, laughing on that wide verandah.
Tears blur my vision (I blame the smoke)
My uncle will never dance on Diwali again.

What shall I tell you about my aunt?
Steadfast as a rock, bearing the brunt
Of waves in a confusing ocean of burdens –
Of family members too numerous to name
Of errant children and interfering adults
Of emergencies, festivities and the need for advice.
The oldest daughter, the eldest "bohu" –
How could she be otherwise?

Fall will come again, that is the nature of things
Brilliant leaves will glow amidst the browns.
I will sit with you by my side, child,
And point to a photograph in an old album.
My aunt. She passed away I'll say.
My favorite uncle. He is no more.
I will let the healing tears come again
As I hold you close to me.

Will you understand as I try to explain
There can be no light without the shadows,
No love or joy without the loss, the hurt?
That a smile will shine through the tears once more?
Some day memories will sparkle again
Radiant against the somber shadows of my pain.
It is all part of that larger seasonal cycle
For that too is the nature of things.

Snigdha Mishra resides in Austin, TX, with her husband and two children. Trained as a financial analyst, she teaches Hindustani classical music and writes poetry in her spare time. This poem was written after the deaths of a beloved uncle and an equally beloved aunt.

Jeje

Vasudha Chhotray

I ruled the world sitting on his lap. My cousin Millie, five months older than me, was somehow able to retain her place with Sou, my grandmother, but not with Jeje. Moon, my brother, who appeared on the scene six years later, was no competitor either. Jeje and I have a special relationship.

My Jeje, the writer of many books did not ever go to college. He told me stories of how his father died when he was only fourteen, and though he had buried pots of gold coins under the earth for Jeje to go to England to study further, this was not to happen. When Jeje went to take the dreaded matriculation examination, after having attended only 60 days in school that year, he said it was without preparation. When the Sanskrit paper was handed out to him, he looked through it, judging intelligently that chances of failing it were very high. He asked the invigilator to give him the optional Oriya literature paper instead. He changed his subject in the examination hall, and secured the highest marks ever handed out for that paper. He had read all that Oriya literature was about on his own. For most of my young years, I did not believe him. Jeje, the original storyteller, was only making it up, I thought.

For years and years, Jeje told me stories. Most of them were from our village Purunagarh. A personal favourite was one that he called 'Nichatiya Kharabela' or 'Deserted Afternoon', In pre-star trek days, the image of a lonely rock sitting under a tree, shifting slightly every time a trapped voice emerged from within it, was enough to fill my imagination with trepidation. I made him recount this to me time and again.

When I was seven and wrote my first poem, Jeje was in Bhubaneswar, on one of those short trips from Cutback, which I waited for impatiently. It was called 'Walnut Shells'. When my parents came home for lunch, I proudly brought out my creation. My mother asked me, 'son, " how did you know that there are something known as Walnut Shells?' I said that a vendor had come past our house selling 'w'alnut shells, and I had heard him shout, 'Walnut Shells! Walnut Shells!' Then the grown ups discovered I had merrily copied the poem from an Enid Blyton book. A hearty laugh followed much to my discomfiture, and Jeje announced that I too would be a writer. He said that he had also copied his first poem, and that the aspiration to write was what only the brave possessed.

I never wrote in Oriya, even though my mother made me learn how to read and write the script, if only to read Jeje's innumerable delights. She used to read them herself, especially Jeje's humorous plays. Addicted, she even forgot to feed me my dose of antibiotic medicine when I had a fever, and was severely reprimanded by my father, She would read passages from his books to Jeje, and I have scarcely ever seen two persons happier together.

Jeje was happiest when in the kitchen. He loved food and feeding. Every year, he would take his three grandchildren to Hotel Swosti in Bhubaneswar for a one-to-one lunch meeting

between Jeje and us. We loved every bit of it. For years on end, our parents were never invited to our exclusive club. And the menu was always the same, year after year. Sweet and sour chicken and fried rice for Millie and Moon, matar paneer for me, and chicken curry and plain rice for Jeje. And vanilla ice cream for everybody. Jeje always honoured our individual tastes, and would never compromise on ordering a common dish. He had a big heart, much bigger than his means.

He was the proudest grandfather, and the most loving, and ferociously protective. He banned my father from taking Moon and me out, in the absence of any other adult. My father had on two earlier occasions, left Moon and me behind in Master Canteen Shop, while going across to Modern Book Depot around the corner, and leaving with some new books, forgetting that he had children, or that they were bawling nearby. We were the safest with Jeje, and I always felt confident that he would have money in his crisp white Kurta pocket to pay the rickshaw driver, a feeling my father rarely inspires.

I used to be fascinated with Jeje's immaculate sense of dress. He was an avowed Gandhian, but never the one to compromise with smart clothing. His dhotis were always pressed clean and sparkling white and he liked his Kurtas to be cut well. With his watch and umbrella by his side, he was always ready for any time or weather. And he never approved of my non- descript salwar kameezes, maintaining despite heated arguments, that salwar kameezes were meant for hefty Punlabi girls, and since I was not a hefty Punjabi girl, I had no business wearing one.

My London adventures brought tears to his large eyes. I would tell him, Jeje, I am trying to do what tens of scholars do on books you wrote, a Ph.D.'. His big, humble heart was never convinced that my achievements were any less than his. He remembered London from his careful readings of books in England, many of which he went on to translate. In later years, he did not read other writings as much. He spent leisure hours following sport on TV, and watching Raj Kapoor films.

Jeje loved life, and enjoyed it fully. He was always an optimist, who could be trusted to find the sunny side to even the most depressing situation, and for the few times that his optimism may have failed him, his humour never did.

Vasudha is the granddaughter of the late eminent playwright Gopal Chhortray. She is doing her graduate studies at the University of London, UK.

Gopal Chhortray was one of the eminent playwrights of modern Orissa. He passed away on January 22, 2003. We offer our deep condolence to the bereaved family ---- Editor

Life and Times of Sanjukta Panigrahi

Sangeeta Tripathy

Sanjukta Panigrahi the great Odissi dancer was a legend. She was born with just one objective in life- to dance and dance to perfection. She was relentless in achieving her goals and inspite of the hurdles and obstacles she faced in the pursuit of her career, she reached the pinnacle of her career and brought glory to Odissi dance form.

Sanjukta was born to a modest Government officer in the town of Berhampur on 24th Aug 1944. From the age of four Sanjukta started her dancing lessons. Her mother encouraged her tremendously but her father didn't like the idea of his daughter taking to dancing. In those days many people did not appreciate girls from respectable Brahmin families to pursue a dancing career. Her battle with the society started from early childhood days and continued through her youth, her marriage and her early motherhood. In her journey towards perfection, Sanjukta had to face deprivation and hunger. But her spirit was indomitable. She was a born rebel. She was headstrong and uncompromising in anything she wanted. Her obsession for perfection, the grit to break through all opposition and her relentless spirit, made her what she was a great legend of our time, loved, worshipped and endeared all over the world.

Sanjukta had started performing on stage from an early age. Her earliest major stage performance was in 1951 in Calcutta's famous New Empire Theatre. The audience were left spellbound. Everyone was captivated by her superb synchronization of body movements, actions, _expression and gait.

Sanjukta took inspiration from gurus like Deba Prasad Das, Pankaj Charan Das, and Kelu Charan Mohapatra, the three prominent gurus of the time. In 1953, Sanjukta joined Kala Bikas Kendra at Cuttack as a dance student. She continued her thirst for learning at Kalakshetra(Madras). In the five years she spent at Kalakshetra, Sanjukta became the best student. She obtained the "Nrutyapraveena" diploma in Bharat Natyam and Kathakali. During this period she continued her interest in Odissi dance form and was able to obtain her " Nrutyashri" diploma in Odissi dance from Kala Bikas Kendra Cuttack. In 1958, Sanjukta let her dreams take her to Bombay, where she started learning Kathak dance under Guru Hazarilal and obtained diploma in Kathak from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. It was an extremely rare achievement. She had received talim in four famous schools of Indian classical dance.

In 1959, Sanjukta a bubbly fifteen year old young girl met and fell in love with Raghunath Panigrahi. The young man had made a name for himself as a singer in Madras. They tied the knot in 1960. After marriage, like a conventional Oriya "bahu" Sanjukta stayed with her in-laws in Koraput, a remote and tribal district

of Orissa. It was then full of thick, dense forests and wild animals. Sanjukta, the dancer remained confined to playing her role of a daughter-in-law of a conservative Brahmin family, away from the applause of Cuttack, Madras, Bombay or Calcutta. But she could not stifle her desire for a dancing career for too long. Already a mother by now, she left her child in the care of her mother and proceeded to Bombay with her husband to seek out a career.

Raghunath wanted to sing in films and Sanjukta wanted to dance on the stage. But Bombay did not give any opportunity to the couple. Life was full of struggle. They had to sometimes survive on one meal a day. After a tough struggle to make things work both decided to move to Madras . It was no better. In the meantime they were already blessed with a second child, but the future looked bleak. The six years period from 1960-1966 was a period of hardships, struggle, frustrations and discord. The couple decided to come back to Orissa and merge their talents to work as a team. That was the beginning of their success story. Thereafter there was no looking back for Sanjukta. She went onto become Padamshree Sanjukta Panigrahi and he became Suramani Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi. It was a rare team brought together to glorify Odissi dance form.

The last days of this talented dancer were grief stricken. In 1996 Sanjukta suffered from acute pain in the knees which made it impossible for her to dance. For her living without dance was like life without oxygen. Unfortunately her health deteriorated and the same year she developed breast cancer, soon followed by cancer of esophagus. No treatment could cure her agony and pain. Sanjukta passed away on 28th July, 1997, before completing the age of 53.

Sanjukta Panigrahi was a legend, a born genius. She was a devoted dancer, and a great wife and mother. Her warmth attracted a large number of friends and relatives to her. She took Odissi dance to its pinnacle. With her sheer grit and determination Sanjukta became the queen of Odissi dance, to be remembered and cherished by the generations to come.

Sanggeta Tripathy was closely associated with Sanjukta Panigrahi and her family for many years. Presently residing in Toronto and running an Advertisement and Video Production Company with her husband Subhashis Tripathy.

Story Time

Mrs. Rita Patnaik
Bhubanseswar / Orissa

young world - future vision

If only God could sing

Bagmi Das

If only God could sing
What a world it would be
We would all live together
In perfect harmony
Every note He hit
Would fill all our ears
And erase all the pain
Take away all our fears
Life would be happy
The norm, a paradise
People would walk about
With twinkling in their eyes
But instead there is sorrow
And darkness everywhere
God's solemn silence
Fills the empty air
We all fight with anger
No laughter in our hearts
No one sees the destruction
That we are about to start
No one sees the people
As they slowly fade away
No one sees the blood
As it seeps into the bay
All the people lying there
Crying in their pain
No one understands
That there's nothing to gain
If only there weren't wars
Over all the little things
Maybe, just maybe
We could hear God sing

Bagmi Das is 15 year old and is a tenth grader Gifted and Talented student at Hammond High School, Columbia, MD. She is a student of Odissi dance school Nrityalaya and plays Violin. She is also on the volleyball team, mathematics team and in the school choir. Her hobbies include writing, art, sports and singing.

Mom

SWATI MISHRA

If I could give you diamonds
for each tear you cried for me.
If I could find you sapphires
for each truth you've helped me see.
If I could give you rubies
for the heartache that you've known.
If I could give you pearls
for the wisdom that you've shown.

Then you'll have a treasure
that would mount up to the skies;
That would almost match
that sparkle in your kind and loving eyes.

But I have no pearls, no diamonds,
as I'm sure you're well aware.
So I'll give you gifts more precious:
My devotion, love, and care.

Happy Mother's Day!!
May 11, 2003
Love, Swati

Ms. Swati Mishra a junior of Godwin High School lives in Richmond, VA with her parents Drs. Munmaya & Bidu Mishra.

Courage

SWATI MISHRA

There's not much longer until
I must let loose of the lightening bolt.
The electric bolt that sends fear into my hands
and up through my arms as I'm swinging.
The bar is a glue stick that causes
me to stay on forever and never let go...

For my fear must be overcome
as I gradually let go...
Flipping, Floating, and Flying.

The sensation of flipping is that
of a peppermint patty;
somewhere in-between I float on a cloud,
and the half second that I'm flying
is relaxation by the ocean,
where my worries don't get to me.

Me feet hit the floor,
completing my moment,
for I was a moment of bravery.

Courage has just been built.

Ms. Swati Mishra a junior of Godwin High School lives in Richmond, VA with her parents Drs. Munmaya & Bidu Mishra.

EXPERIENCE OF A TRANSITION

Pratyasha Acharya

We all know that children adapt themselves to changing environments easily. Those children, who successfully adapt, come out with stronger characters. This requires many adjustments.

An adjustment caused by a transition between two school systems can be an unforgettable experience. I started my schooling in Toronto and enjoyed it for six uninterrupted years. When my parents decided to move to New Delhi, I was very apprehensive of getting into a new educational environment. I did not share all my fears and feelings with my parents. Although I did resist the idea initially, my parents advised me to adapt to this change. Schooling in India was only part of my concern; I was also worried about leaving behind my friends, surroundings, way of life, Canadian weather, food, and various other things that I had grown attached to in the last several years.

When I arrived in New Delhi in the middle of the Indian summer, my mind was still locked in Toronto's snow. Within a few days of our arrival my parents were on the lookout for an appropriate school. The admission time for the schools in India were already over by then. Admission into schools in Delhi is very competitive. I was very tense about the entrance examination that I was supposed to write which, I was told, would determine my eligibility. Normally every school evaluates an incoming student in the areas of English, Mathematics and Hindi. I was confident of my English, but had no clue of what was in store for me in the other two. Luckily for me the Hindi requirement was waived. We finally chose Montfort School, a Christian missionary school, known for its high academic standards. The only comfort I could derive from the choice of the school was when I came to know that the founder of the school was a French Canadian missionary from Quebec. But that is where all my sense of comfort of a Canadian connection with the school began and ended.

Prior to the first day in school, I already had all my uniforms, books, and other stationery bought from the school store. The first few days were a real experience. I had not realized until then how very different educational systems can be. The Principal of the school welcomed me very warmly. On day one I sat through a series of specialized subject periods, meeting and interacting with new friends and teachers. Although nervous at first, I got a great boost from both my friends and teachers. In a couple of days I could boast of a good friend circle. All my fears regarding adjustments were put to rest. Gradually, my fears and nervousness vanished and within a short span of time I felt completely at home. But this involved transitions of other kinds.

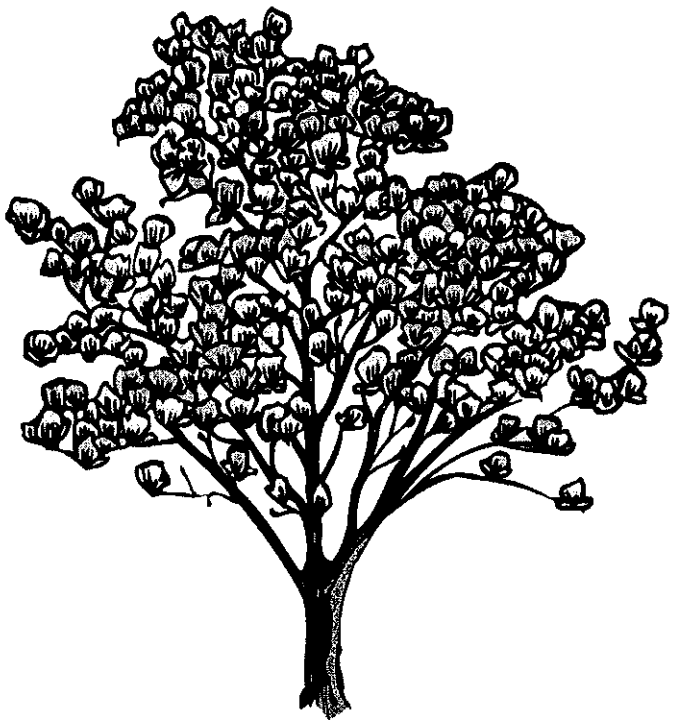
My lessons in Hindi (it was only one of the subjects) were pretty tough and I made up by taking extra private coaching. In barely a month I could learn to read and write in Hindi, and in a couple of months I was able to write essays and poems. My joy knew no bounds when within a year I won a 3rd prize in a Hindi recitation contest. I was not so lucky with

Maths however. I had to struggle with it for quite some time in order to bring myself up to the expected school standards. Now, of course, I am proud to be one of the toppers in the class.

In my experience, there were a few surprises however. I had never known that schools in Delhi were so highly equipped with computer labs, auditoriums, science labs, conference halls, gyms, swimming pools, music and activity rooms, libraries, and included such accessories as LCD projectors with which our teachers regularly made presentations and we watched movies and documentaries. My school, like other schools in Delhi, has Debating, Science, Environment, Literary Clubs and societies that organize activities every week.

The competition in the Indian school system is very high. One of the things that I initially never liked about the schools here was the frequency of examinations, heavy workload, and project assignments during vacations and, of course, the weight of my school bag! All in all, the transition to a different school system has been very challenging. But, of late, I realized what it means to be sincere and responsible in studies, participating in many co-curricular activities, doing my homework regularly, improving my handwriting, learning to read and assimilate more, and all this from expert teachers who know their subjects very well. The ability to cope and adapt with the new surroundings has greatly boosted my confidence. I consider myself lucky for having benefited from both systems in a successful manner.

Pratyasha Acharya is presently a student of Class VII, Montfort School, Delhi. She attended Jesse Ketchum Public School in Toronto, and is the daughter of Madhusmita and Ashok Acharya.



Phoebe

Salini Mohanty

There was Phoebe, her hands and face so clean.
While sitting there on the carousel in bright red and green.
All the parents position themselves on the old wooden bench watching their child.
Phoebe sits there on the seasoned carousel so gentle and mild.

Her face glows bright red with happiness for, she is having a ball.
Not exposed to anything harmful and foul at all.
She is protected from the obscenities of the world.
For she is just a child living in an adult world.

Her hair dark and long gets drenched with the arrival of the storm.
Holden wants her innocence he wants her form.
Phoebe disregards the rumbling of the storm that is right in her face.
She jumps off the carousel, and raises her long skinny arms ready for an embrace.

Salini, age 17 is in the eleventh grade. She lives in Newtown, PA with her parents Satya and Sujata Mohanty.

.....

Respecting Yourself and Others

Ananya (Shiney) Patnaik

You're the best
When you respect
Yourself and others.
You're better than when you cheat
You're better when you share
No one wants to hear,
" I don't care!"
You could be a friend,
You could be polite.
Honesty is the right thing to do
Isn't that right?
Caring is what matters
So is good attitude.

Ananya (Shiney) age 11 is the daughter of Animesh & Puspa Patnaik.

Paint Me Like I Am

Prianka Misra

Paint me like I am running, jumping,
Laughing, too,
Playing,
With my friends,
Just like me or you would do,
Paint me like I am,
Learning Odissi
Yet playing softball,
Paint me like I am ,
With black hair,
Brown eyes,
And a beautiful smile,
JUST PAINT ME LIKE I AM.

Prianka is a third grader at Jensen Ranch Elementary School. She lives in Castro Valley, California with her parents Dr Sourjya and Krishna Misra.

The Spotted Owl

Anya Rath

As I walked in the woods an owl I saw,
Had a field mouse in his claw.

I looked carefully at the owl's face
Then I touched it. He was soft as lace.

He had many small and colorful spots.
they looked just like polkadots.

He's always awake during the night.
His Large eyes blinked at my flashlight.

He'd gotten frightened I'd wished he'd stay,
But he lifted his wings and flew away.

Anya is nine years old and a 4th grader. She lives in Macomb, MI with her parents Nirmal and Swapna and little sister Nayna.

Happiness From The Soul

Ankita Mohanty

What does it take to make you happy? Money, clothes, video games? The list goes on and on. Will it ever end? There is no end to our needs, it seems. The more we get, the more we want. Are we ever truly happy? This world we create and are placed upon becomes more materialistic everyday. Have we forgotten the simple beauties in life; that feeling of pure joy, innocent bliss? Why do we, as mere human beings, take irreplaceable beauties like the rain, the sky, and our family and friends for granted?

When I see the rain, I feel I must step out and dance in its coolness. I feel the drops of purity slide down my face and I close my eyes, open my mouth, and wonder at the beauty of it all. I briefly ponder why umbrellas were made. The drops of gentle intensity fall on my tongue and my thirst is suddenly quenched, forever, it seems. The plip-plop splatter on the cold concrete has a constant rhythm, a rich beat, music to my heart.

Then there is the sun, which seems to taunt us from the sky. We defy it, however, and get the best of it at times. The rays touch me and I soak them up, letting the warmth seep through my bones, flow through my blood. Have you ever seen the sun peek through the voluminous clouds? The effect is breathtaking. The sky turns into a raging sea with waterfalls of sunlight rushing through it. Perhaps this symbolizes that even when misery falls upon us, when people are blind and ignorant, there is always hope, hope for a fuller, more worthwhile tomorrow. Our eyes take in so much beauty on those wonderful summer evenings. We glance at God's easel covered with soft pastels, bold paints. The sunset is so amazing, and I get filled with awe and wonder looking out there.

Those people that surround us everyday are often overlooked in our pursuit of moving forward. If we just slowed down, maybe we would go farther than we ever imagined. What would we see? Acts of kindness and love being done without receiving a "Thanks!" or an "I love you." Our friends and family contribute so much and are always there beside us, part of our hearts. Do we take the time to really appreciate it all? One day, suddenly, they might all disappear, taking a section of our hearts with them. The loss is often sudden and painful, worse if we are filled with regrets.

These seemingly unimportant beauties are here for us. Who has the time to look, wonder, and feel? I believe we must take the time to see things that blend in with the scenery everyday. We do not live forever, and everything on this earth is a blessing, ready to be appreciated. Will we ever learn to see glory everywhere? You may see that while looking over things that our eyes tend to miss everyday, the beauty will be taken in and expectations will lower, our minds and souls free and clean and finally at peace, only because we already have what it takes to be truly happy.

Ankita Mohanty is the daughter of Dillip and Rita Mohanty. She is in the 8th grade and lives in Mt. Pleasant, MI.

MY DOMAIN

Blake Praharaj

A stop sign hangs on the door,
Clothes clutter on the floor.
My dresses are torn and tattered with knacks,
And on my bed there lay some snacks.

Posters and skateboards hang on the wall,
Like a few loose screws about to fall.
A sheet-less bed with a tear,
And next to that a fold-up chair.

A TV rests near my bed,
Next to it a PS 2 playing "House of the dead".
A stereo sits right next to the door,
Where I stub my toe since its on the floor.

Look out my window to see something
You'd never see,
A place not filled with misery.
At my room light flutters in,
Right onto a huge game filled bin.

The light sparkles like diamonds in the sun,
For the day is almost done.
The stereo jams loud with a rapper's roar,
I smell something cooking beneath the floor.

As I go to close the door,
I feel like there is something more.
Ah ha! The snacks still lay,
So I will eat them all today!

Blake Praharaj, age 13 is in 8th Grade. He lives in Forest Hill , MD with his parents, Alok & Tonya Praharaj.

SPRING

Soumya Misra

Spring, spring, spring is fun
Spring, spring, play under the hot sun!
Spring, spring, buds and flowers grow
Spring, spring, rain showers flow!

oooooooooooooo

FIREFLY

Soumya Misra

Sitting outside
I watch the firefly glow
Shining like a star
Making a show
Bright like the sun
Happy like a clown
Doing some magic tricks
Over the moon!
Flying away
It goes home
Wishing me goodbye
Leaving me alone.

Soumya is the sister of Satwick and the daughter of Sameer and Sangita Misra , residing at Bayside, NY. She is seven years old and wrote the above poems while sitting outside on the patio of her house one summer night and chanced upon fireflies dancing near the bushes. Some day she wishes to become an author and an illustrator.

ICE STORM

Ananya Mishra

I woke up and saw a pretty sight –
outside the window, the world was white.
This is Austin, could it really be snow?
Taking no chances, I went out before it could go!

The roof was covered with a blanket of snow,
my street had put on a shiny hairbow.
Trees wore pearls on a string,
and slopes of glitter – perfect for sliding!

I watched the news on TV,
our school was closed – yippee!
Quickly, I made plans to slide down the driveway,
and make snowballs that would not melt away.

I went and grabbed a cookie sheet –
outside, I set it down and took a seat.
Whoosh! The wind rushed by my ears,
I came to a thrilling stop after my first slide in years.

I tried to make my snowballs stay nice,
but those silly things just turned to ice.
Yet all good things must come to an end –
so, the next day: back to school again.

Ananya (age 11), daughter of Snigdha and Srikanta Mishra, attends the 5th Grade Talented and Gifted (TAG) program at Pond Springs Elementary in Austin, TX. She loves to read and write, and is also taking Hindustani Classical Music, Piano and Bharatanatyam lessons.

With best compliments on the occasion of 34th annual convention

DR. Saroj K. Behera & Suniti Behera
5332- HORIZON DRIVE
MALIBU, CA 90265

Very best wishes to Orissa Society of Americas on the 34th convention. The organization has developed in to a forum for all Oriyas living abroad and for those who are growing up here as new Indian Americans. We must foster to integrate the new generation in to the OSA more and more and insure that the forum is open to all for participation.

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभः मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Relinquishing all dharmas take refuge in Me alone;
I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not.

Bhagavadgita 18.66

South Asian Contributions to America

Biplab Panda

When I'm in my parents' place at Cuttack, every one wants to know where I'm from as they expect the answer to be Tulashipur, Ranihat, Mangalabag etc. When I'm in my Kaku's place in Puri, for the same question, "Where are you from?" my answer is always "Cuttack". When I'm in Delhi (I lived in Delhi for about three years prior to coming here) the answer to the same question is "I'm from Orissa". Now when I'm asked the same question in this part of the continent..... my answer has been a consistent "I'm from South Asia/India/Orissa/Cuttack".

First and foremost that comes into mind is "What's South Asia?". South Asia in origin is a geographical expression. It is a more recent construction – only about five decades old – which today encompassed seven diverse sovereign states of very different sizes: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. The term South Asia refers in the first instance to a vast geographical space stretching from the Himalayan Mountain ranges in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south and from the valley of the Indus in the West to the plains of the Bramhaputra in the east. This huge geographical expansion has become home to a teaming population numbering over a billion people (South Asians) who account for over a fifth or, to be precise 23 percents of humanity. The subcontinent carries the weight not only of its people but also of their ancient history, stretching back five millennia, and a modern History encompassing the experience of British colonialism compressed in tremendous development within the past couple of centuries.

South Asians present a picture of diversity in Unity, indeed of immense diversity within a very broad contour of unity. The geographical boundaries drawn by the highest mountain ranges in the world and encircling seas and oceans set the whole of the subcontinent apart from the rest of the world. People inhabiting such a clearly defined, yet diverse, region have evolved a shared culture ambience, unique to the West/ America, but at the same time are deeply attached to the distinctive cultural beliefs and practices. South Asians speak at least twenty major languages, and if one includes the more important dialects the count rises to over two hundred. Fact almost unbelievable to most Americans, who generally speak one language namely English.

Adherents to every major world religion are to be found in the subcontinents. The majority of the populations of India are Hindu. Each of the three most populous countries in South Asia – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh – has well over a hundred million Muslims. India is also the birthplace of Buddhism. The region also contains significant Christians, Sikhs and other religion minorities. In one sentence the contributions of South Asians to America can be grouped under the following categories – Bliss, Culture, Thrill, Taste, Wisdom, Wonder, Peace/Ahimsa, Number Zero, and 5000 years of History and Tradition.

Bliss: As mankind enters into the New Millennium, in spite of all the worldly pleasure available to all Americans, things that is most sought after and scare is nothing but Peace. South Asians namely Indians have practiced and preached "YOGA" for centuries. YOGA is the gift of peace to the Americans.

Culture: Unity in diversity is the theme modeled by each and every South Asian and at the present time all Americans are looking upto this uniqueness. Many languages, many religions,

many colors, and many political parties, but south Asians have respect for each other and leave in peace, harmony and tranquility.

Thrill: Be it musical equipments like Veena, Flute, Dance, South Asians namely Pundit Ravi Shankar, Hari Prasad Churasia, Sonal Mansingh are the living monuments. Unique style, unique expression of art with absolutely no nudity and no vulgarity is the essence of this thrill, which is admired by most Americans.

Taste: Be it Tandoori Chicken, or Basmati Rice, spice and flavor is brought to the Americans taste buds by the South Asian recipes which is being made in South Asian kitchen for thousands and thousands of years.

Wisdom: The art of playing Chess and mastering it to be a Grand Master was originated from India. Even IBM, the computer Giant is still looking up to the Indian Brains and Chess pioneers such as Master Anand while reinventing the much talked about "Blue Chips".

Wonder "If there is a Paradise on Earth. It is this It is this. " ---inscription in Shah Jahan's Delhi Palace. In a land fabled for its gems, silks, and gold, lived emperors, whose courts were rich beyond imagination. There they built palaces, forts, mosques, and tombs that, to this day, are among the World's greatest wonders. India is the home to the Seventh Wonder Taj Mahal.

Peace/Ahimsa: Mahatma Gandhi, the name known to the rest of the world gave the gift of Non Violence and Peace to the man kind. This tool was practiced by great American such as Martin Luther King for his fight against Slavery, which earned him Noble Prize in Peace.

Number Zero: South Asia's biggest contribution to the world comes from one of its great son, "Aryabhatt" He gave to the world nothing but Zero, beginning of any Mathematics.

History and Tradition : While Americans are disillusioned over the nesting and chemical abuse by the kids they acquire great peace by knowing the history and tradition of South Asians, which is almost over 5000 years old.

Literature: Great son of India Rabindra Nath Tagore got the most deserving Noble prize for Literature for his famous work "GITANJALI". He is the only person who holds the unique distinction of writing national Anthem for two Countries – India and Bangladesh. Americans derive great values going thru his famous creation. Politics: Unlike in America multi party system prevails in South Asian Subcontinents. This subcontinent has been a great role model of practicing Democracy not only to the Americans but also to the rest of the world. H.H Mrs. Sirimavo Bandarnaik is the first woman to attend the highest executive office in the world.

First in many fields: Great son of Nepal, Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, broughtto the world/Americans the glimpse of the highest peak of Mount Everset. Even the Gurkha regiment boasted by this country is always in great demand by American Military for its unique skill.To conclude, the subcontinent defies piecemeal approaches much the same way as the proverbial elephant confounded the blind men in the famous story by the Muslim Sufi poet Jalaludin Rumi.

Biplab , 11 yr old, attends 7th grade in Fulton Science Academy. He lives in Atlanta, GA with his brother Vedic and parents Smita and Dilip Panda. He holds the unique honor, 2nd place in the GA State Spelling Bee, and 3rd place in GA State Geography Bee. He is an accomplished Piano and Violin player.

Spring is in the air!

Anwesha (Smiley) Patnaik

Spring is in the air
flowers bloom
to lovely colorful ones.
Spring is in the air,
spring is here to be with us again!
The trees bloom their flowers
the colors so bright,
pink, yellow
everybody is a jolly fellow.
Red and green
please don't be mean for spring has sprung
and the fun has just begun.
Go outside and feel the breeze
before you get a winter freeze!
Don't waste your time watching TV,
come play outside with me.
For the sun is shining,
and you are smiling.
Spring has sprung
and the fun has
begun!!

Anwesha (Smiley) is nine years old and is the daughter of Animesh and Puspa Patnaik

Rainforest

Rutuparna Sarangi

Shadows lurking everywhere,
Cheetahs, leopards, look out, beware!
Boas sliding through the trees,
Just hope you won't get a contagious disease!
"WOOSH!" What was that?
Are you sure it wasn't a vampire bat?
Monkeys swinging from every branch
Crackling leaves come from army ants
Crocodiles sharpen their teeth
As alligators snap underneath
Parrots squack in loud voices
Their bright feathers create many entrances
Panthers dressed in silky black
Suddenly gone while you're taken aback
Coming out you look behind
How your life's been intertwined
Going through in this adventure
Was like solving an algebraic structure
Life has many twists and turns,
But either way we always learn.

Rutuparna, age 12 is a 7th grader. Her parents are Pitambar and Anindita Sarangi

Come on, Rain!

Neeli Mishra

Squinting into the endless heat

Sizzling like a hot potato

Sweat trickles down her neck

Peeling out of my clothes and into my suit.

It streams through our hair and down our backs
It freckles our feet, and glazes our toes

first drops plop down big,
Making dust dance all around us.

Then a deeper gray descends,
And the air cools and the clouds burst

Neeli Mishra, age 10 is a 5th grader at Village Upper Elementary Scchool, West Windsor, NJ. Her parents are Narendra and Sabita Mishra

Kids

Neeli Mishra

Kids,
Kids,
Kids,
Fat Kids,
Skinny Kids,
Big, ugly, mean kids
Short, pretty, dainty kids-
Those are just a few.
Crazy kids,
Wild kids,
Brand clean, new kids,
Playing in the house kids,
Loud kids too.
Tall kids,
Sleepy kids,
Don't forget noisy kids
Last of all, best of all
I like heroic kids.

Puppies

Neeli Mishra

Puppies,
Puppies,
Puppies,
Cute Puppies,
Ugly Puppies,
Big, fat mean Puppies,
Medium, pretty brown puppies-
Those are just a few.

Skinny puppies,
Chubby Puppies,
Small, long bony Puppies,
Jumpy, white furry puppies,
Round Puppies too.

Small Puppies,
Gigantic Puppies,
Don't forget hairy Puppies.
Last of all, best of all
I like cuddly Puppies.

A Peek Into My Heart

Bagmi Das

A whisper in my ear says, "*Apa*, wake up! *Khudi* made *dosas*!"

I am awoken to feel a netted object upon my face. My cousin, Apu, has dropped the mosquito net on me, which is the consequence I face for not waking up early enough. Sighing, I stretch out and think about all the things I look forward to doing today. Since I will be leaving for my American home tomorrow, I plan to make the most out of the time I have. I decide to take a stroll and think about everything that I'm about to leave behind.

In the heart of Orissa, India, lies Bhadrak, a small but bustling city, with villages snugly situated along the grassy terrain. One of these villages, Sahada, belongs to my family. My little village holds several families, most with little children. Outside, a bazaar, or marketplace, plays an important in peoples lives. It sells sweetmeats, vegetables, and on occasion, clothes. The enticing aroma of *gulab jamun* and *rasugullas* fill the air. Sweaty, exhausted men gather at little picnic tables to discuss how lousily and unprofitably their day went by. Bikes, as the most sensible form of transportation clutter the street. Then a lone sign stands at the side, welcoming anybody and everybody to our quaint little town. Our tiny rice fields greet passerby. One dusty road, straight and rocky, leads into the core of our village, my home.

A long porch serves as an entrance to the house. Mats lie there, squished from frequent use. An ancient chess set sits outside, for anyone who understands the game, to play. Undomesticated dogs and pups chase each other around and around on the ground. No grass performs the duty of a typical lawn, however, and so their paws feel the wrath of tiny pebbles every step they take. A couple of cows also roam around, waiting to be taken to the fields or to be milked. Old women sit outside on a platform, teeth gritted in concentration, shelling grains of rice to use for dinner. The light blue house stands and welcomes all.

A large room with a swing, built for me by my uncle, hanging from the ceiling, plays the part of a meetinghouse. Before them lies our temple, decorative and colorful from the many prayers performed for the gods. Although an old house, some new additions have come into existence. Now, instead of a hole in the ground, a fully westernized toilet, seat cover and all, stands in the bathroom. However, the best part of the village lies not in the bathrooms, but in the natural beauty of the area.

A small pond, a well of water reaching its murky depths to oblivion, greets inhabitants as they come to visit our village. Surrounded by small temples, foliage, and that narrow road, its peaceful atmosphere seems almost too serene. Fortunately, it receives steady interruptions by little staccatos of small noises, children laughing, cows mooing. The murky, brownish water contains an abundance of life and the sanitation level of the water seems a bit questionable. My uncles and my father joined together and raised enough money to place a gigantic plastic lotus flower in the middle of the pond. So

now, there it sits, spraying a fountain of water up in the air from a tiny hole in the center. The faded pink petals serve as an elegant touch to our little village pond.

The lush vegetation next to the pond shares its home with critters of all shapes and sizes that eat away at the dark green leaves. Vines hang from a single tree, leathery and limber. It looks as if Tarzan could jump out any second. A tiny walkway leads to the three little temples built by the pond, surrounded by palm trees. Food lies there, some rotten, some fresh, in remembrance of meals offered to the deities.

The sound of schoolchildren singing bhajans, or songs of prayer, floats in the air constantly in yet another temple that stands in the middle of road. A bell rings. The day begins now; just another, ordinary day in my village haven...

Once again, I awake, but this time there is no silly little cousin to wake me. Instead, I hear the trumpeting of my loud alarm clock, persuading me to rise with its earsplitting noise. Though I must hurry and get to school, I cannot help but think about my days in my little village. Here, I enjoy the conveniences of friends, technology, and opportunities, but never will I forget the innate serenity of my true home. As I find my way downstairs, my mother glances at me knowingly. " Do you still remember, Liti? Do you still remember all that you left behind?"

" Yes mama, I remember. I always will."

Bagmi Das is 15 year old and is a tenth grader Gifted and Talented student at Hammond High School, Columbia, MD. She is a student of Odissi dance school Nrityalaya and plays Violin. She is also on the volleyball team, mathematics team and in the school choir. Her hobbies include writing, art, sports and singing.

You Are the Eternal Mother Nature

Sunny Tripathy

You are the love in lovers,

And the green in grass,

You are the water in the river,

And the teacher in a class,

You are the breeze in the wind,

And the blue in the sky,

You are the heat in fire,

And the tears of a cry,

You are the gift of life,

And the friendly in a friend,

You are the sun during the day,

And the moon during night,

You are the light and dark,

And the rainbow in white, (light))

You are the magic in medicine,

And the pride in nations,

You are my Saviour in all situations,

You are the Eternal Mother Nature.

Sunny Tripathy, age 13 is in the 8th Grade at Pleasanton Middle School. He is son of Niranjan Tripathy.

The Lord's Changing Hands

Arpita Mohanty

Summer

Schools out
Finally, it's here
Summer
Sun shines brightly
Kids play in the sun all day long
Grown-ups walking, watching their kids at the park, reading in the sun's, warm light, or talking while drinking a smoothie on the grass
Ice cream melting in your mouth, dripping everywhere you go
The smell of barbecues floating in the air
Hear the yells from summer parties
July 4th, fireworks blasting in the night sky
Summer
The bugs buzzing through the sky
Bumblebees fly to the flowers looking for nectar,
Making honey in their hives
Mosquitoes looking out for people to bite
Birds flying back from Florida
Summer
Oh, no, school starts again
Looking forward to something
Summer!

Spring

Cold winds are gone
Spring
Still a little chilly out
Sun shine brightly
Trees blossoming
Flowers blooming
Spring
Kids wearing shorts after
A long time

People turning sprinklers on
Making the brown grass green
Kids riding bikes, running, and playing tag in their yard
Can't wait to get out of school
Not that much homework, for kids have too much to do
Kids playing outside until the sunsets
Catching fireflies in their hands
Watching them glow
Parents telling them to come inside
"Oh, fine"
Getting in to bed
Dreaming of the fun of spring

Winter

The end of autumn
Winter
Cold winds whirling in the air
Snow falling from the sky
Trees bare
Winter
Kids sledding, building snowmen, skiing, snowboarding, and have a few snowball fights for fun
Winter
Kids bundled up tightly, so, they won't get sick
Kids rushing inside to get warm
Drinking hot cocoa and eating a few cookies with it
Winter
December 24th, Christmas Eve
Anxious children waiting, for Santa Claus to come
Setting out cookies and milk
December 25th, Christmas
Opening presents, exclaiming
Winter
Snow is melting, spring is here
Can't wait until winter next year

Arpita Mohanty is the younger daughter of Dillip and Rita Mohanty. She is in the 5th grade and lives in Mt. Pleasant, MI.

Back to the Future: the Return to Orissa

Chandan Khandai

Six years. For a teenager like me six years is an unfathomably long period of time. And for our fast-paced world, six years is a historical epoch. In six years, I have gone from an awkward preteen entering middle school, to a sociable teenager full of bravado and apprehensions about his senior year. My world has changed from complacency to uncertainty, optimism to stoicism, and grandiose plans to multiplying concerns. The changing and rearranging of our world has left little to be recognized after the passage of six years. And not just for me, but for everyone and everything. This terrifies me, for something has not happened in that era- for six years, I have not been to India.

I cannot lie and say that I pine for India. Orissa is my birthplace, but it is a remote and mysterious place, thousands of miles and years removed from my thoughts. I do not have many close friends in the motherland, and while my relatives may dwell there, all the family I need is here. There is no mythical curse upon my head to bind me to that land, nor am I a ghost, compelled to carry around my native earth or vanish into oblivion. But the truth of the matter is that I have both a curse and a ghost- I am cursed with the knowledge that I do have a past, imprisoned within the fact that I have foundations beyond my comfortable suburban home. And I am haunted by the spirits of the past and future- the unanswered questions to the great enigma that is India.

While it may offend some, I must continue with the idea of the past as a curse as well as a blessing. Can you not understand the overwhelming weight of thousands of years of history, culture, and society, compressed within the confines of my physical frame? The idea of a heritage is both profoundly comforting and fearful. On one hand, I have the rich background of my past at my fingertips, available through Oriya classes, religious pujas, my sister's Odissi dance recitals, and the trappings and cookings of my proudly Asian home. On the other hand, there is the deeply discouraging belief that all I have is a diet beverage, the tip of the iceberg of what could be. For on the other side of the world, millions of people eat, sleep, live, and dream an Orissa a thousand times deeper and more vivid than any experience of mine here in America. If the OSA is DSL, true Orissa is broadband. And broadband is beyond me.

But I cannot simply forget Orissa. I do not remember the first few years of my life in my ancestral homeland, but like any traveler to India, I am haunted by the images of journeys past. The hot sun overhead with cool stone underneath; the sparkly taste of Limca in a bottle to wash down the spicy curry served on metal plates; the pungent aromas of spices, dung, gas, and countless other scents, all swirling together, baked by the sun and then washed away by a monsoon. The thoroughfares packed with myriad

peoples, animals and vehicles, traveled at one's own risk; waking up with the very real possibility of seeing monkeys, elephants, and cows outside your window. And the people, the thousands and millions of people, all brown-skinned and black-haired and bright-eyed and smiling and shouting and living just like you. An entire nation of people, complete strangers yet as close as any family. For they are a part of you, and you are a part of them. On entering and leaving Orissa, I took with me that revelation- this alien world is in your blood and your mind, the colorful sari on which your life is another thread.

But if trying to forget these wild and beautiful images is unraveling the pattern of my life, not going back to India is like stopping the weaving itself. For one of the things I need to find out is the future of that world. What has changed since I have last returned? Are the coconut trees and jasmine flowers still there? Has the great constant of my Indian relatives inexorably changed as well, turning into something different than I remember? Do the changes of my American world echo in Orissa, and is home still home? Much obviously has changed in six years, and I need to know what has happened in the passage of time. Though it would be delusional to believe that Orissa is exactly the same, it is also a genuine fear- whether or not your heritage has left you, back in the past.

But there is a far greater matter to be settled. It is an insidious question, a seed of doubt and uncertainty silently devouring all immigrants- the question of what might have been, if we had never left. What might have been? If I had stayed in Orissa, what would my life be like, and how would it have been different? Would my life be better, more relaxing, less lonely and uncertain? Or would I simply be writing an article in Oriya instead of English, in Cuttack instead of Chicagoland, about the opportunities and perils of Oriya-American friends and relatives? The possibility, however impossible, of erasing my American life and moving back to India is nevertheless alluring. A snake charmer beats MTV any day.

I know it is impossible to turn my back on America. America is my home now, as much as Orissa, and to leave it now would be traumatic, to say the least. I cannot dwell on the visions of an India past either, because it is not well to dwell on dreams and forget to live. However, it is possible to visit the past. If I go back to India, I can reexamine the roots of my life, see and hear again the things and places that make up the fabric of my being. I can see all the people that I have talked to and wrote to for years, because words are just not enough. I can reestablish the ties to my old home, and thus hopefully gain a new insight into my new home. And by watering the seeds of my past, I can perhaps catch a glimpse of the garden of my future. My father enjoys saying that you cannot plant tonight and expect your garden tomorrow. However, a month or two shall do just fine, to reap a satisfaction not seen in six years.

Chandan Khandai is sixteen years old. He lives in Aurora, Illinois with his parents Saurjya & Anu Khandai

My Favorite God/Goddess

Mrunali Das

I really don't know which god to chose
There's not one that I could refuse.

Ganesha-I'm just like him
Our stomachs are both brim,

We both like so many sweets,
We just can't choose which one to eat.

Laxmi-I'm named after her,
But we very much differ.

Her favorite color is lotus red,
While that is the color I really dread.

Shiva-he protects the earth,
He keeps us full of joy and mirth.

Shiva is so very cool,
Compared to him I look like a fool.

Saraswati-She's goddess of knowledge,
She's the god I highly acknowledge.

She has a very beautiful swan,
You'd come to it as if you were drawn

Brahma-he is the ultimate creator
He is a lord that is definitely greater

Supposed to be one of the three main lords
He, by many, is adored

Durga-She came out of a fire
To the demons she caused dire

She was given a gift by each god
She went down and treated the asuras roughshod

As you can see this choice is very hard
I really don't know which one to regard

Mrunali is ten years old and is a 5th grader in Guilford Elementary School. She lives in Columbia, MD with her parents Naresh and Bigyani Das. She is a student of Odissi dance school Nrityalaya and Soccer Association of Columbia. Her hobbies include taking care of people, dance, reading, and writing.

The Wishing Stone

Lipsa Panda

I see a stone in the mud,
It is as red as human blood,
The sun shines on it's smooth
Surface,
Well then, around it I will pace,

To see if my Earthly shadow,
Will spoil the beauty of its face,
Must I cry to the wind of the willows?
To pick up that stone from it's wondrous
Pillows,

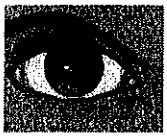
Alas! When I finally pick up that stone,
I have a feeling,
This feeling though is of good tone,
Now it has become dark; moonlit shrines,
As I cry to the willows the wolf-dog pines,

My stone has dropped, the feeling gone,
As I cuddle up, I see a light on,
Somewhere, Somewhere in the darkness...
I wish I was home, I wish I was home...

Suddenly my surroundings disappear,
Into my room I reappear,
Caught with a mixture of swirling mists,
As I sleep, I wonder WHAT had brought me,
Humbly home,

And as I sleep it hits me! WHAT brought me,
home was that stone, that stone...
The Wishing Stone
Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Lipsa is a 5th grader in Baylis Elementary School, Syosset, Long Island. Her parents are Lalit & Meeta Panda

The  Eye

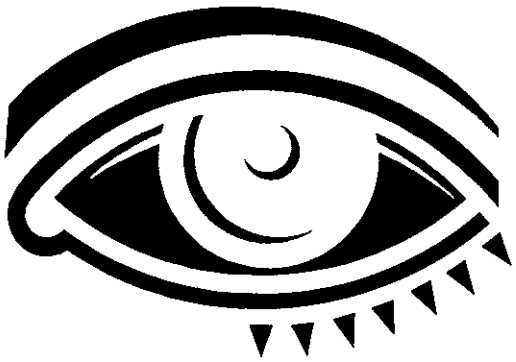
Prerana Pradhan

Confined in liquid, it sheds its tear
Expressing emotions, more perilous than fear
Showing us truth, by deflecting a lie
It showed us beauty, the gifted eye

Do we really believe what the eye makes us see?
And is what we see really the true appearance?
For it the dangerous, this eye, since it is covering real danger
And the wise eye shows us
That the earth is still a stranger

For truth lies hidden
The eye doesn't show the forbidden
And yet it yearns to see more, the fickle eye
To see more than the ground, and more than the sky

Prerana Pradhan lives in Edison, New Jersey with her parents Dr.Padmanava and Chandana Pradhan.



The way I see Orissa in 2050

Abritee Dhal

Like every human being I also have a dream. That dream is to see a beautiful and prosperous Orissa in the year 2050. I dream Orissa to change in many ways in the next few decades. Orissa will have better transportation and communication systems. The pollution level in Orissa would be much less than what it is today. More high tech/ computer companies will be set up in Orissa. There will be better health care system to save people from many killer diseases. Orissa will have many world class educational institutions.

I have been visiting Orissa regularly for the past thirteen years. I have seen Oriyas both in the USA and India. I find Oriyas are smart people and they have potential to make Orissa a great state of India.

Oriyas have proven their caliber many times. They are very capable people. Oriyas have built the famous Konark temple. They were also the first to go for trade to far away places crossing oceans thousand years ago. Orissa has some of the largest industries of India, like the Rourkela Steel Plant. Oriyas in the USA have to play a big role in the development of their state. They have already done it once by setting up the Kalinga Hospital. And they can do much more. Every time I go to Orissa, I see changes happening there. Interestingly, education among the Oriya women is also growing. Not all women are living as housewives these days. Many are working and earning money. This shows that Oriya people are becoming modern thinkers and want to improve their quality of lives and the living conditions of others.

By 2050 Orissa will have better ways of transportation and the roads will be safer to travel. One perfect example of this is the road that links Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. When I went there last year to visit my relatives in Bhubaneswar, it took us only about 30 minutes to travel from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar.. Earlier it used to take a couple of hours.. These days one does not notice animals moving on the roads. Transportation in Orissa has improved and will develop as the years pass on.

Orissa will have a lower pollution level in 2050 than it has today. The government has finally realized that less pollution in the air can keep people safe and healthy. People are becoming careful about their surroundings and are not throwing away things wherever they like. The Puri sea beach is very clean these days. It looks like a beach in America. Some places actually have trashcans and they are being used efficiently. In some places there are fines if you litter. Many cars these days are using less polluting fuel to have a healthier habitat. If these

trends continue Orissa will be a great place to live and visit. Orissa has many historical places and these changes will attract lots of tourists.

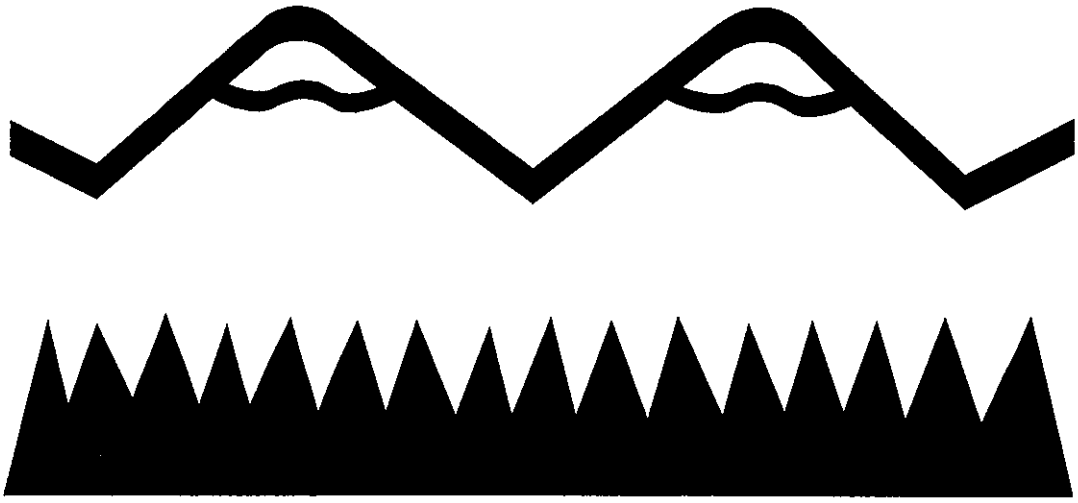
In 2050 Orissa will be a leader in the high technology. Since it has so many intelligent people they can set up new technology companies. This will improve the economy of the state and more people will have better paying jobs. If this can happen then the crime rate will also go down.

Orissa has rich natural resources and floras and faunas. This should help the state furthermore in setting up new pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries to produce medicines and control diseases. No wonder many kids in Orissa want to be doctors.

Orissa is certainly passing through a dynamic change. Children these days in Orissa are very particular about their studies. Even with minimal support from their parents they are they are trying their best get into good colleges. When I went to Orissa I saw many young children who were not more than 5-6 years old, walking to their schools. This shows their determination to learn. Such determination will create a new generation of leaders in science and technology who will move Orissa forward in progress and prosperity.

Orissa can become a very beautiful state. Oriya people are capable of doing anything. I see in my dream a great Orissa in the year 2050 making wonders. I hope this dream comes true.

Abritee Dhal is 13 years old and is a Freshman in Westford Academy, Massachusetts. She is a devoted Bharatnatyam dancer. She loves to play basketball and flute.



We are all animals

Shashwati Das

Animals are like people I know
Monkeys swinging from tree to tree
Are like my sister Mrunali
Athena reminds me of an ocelot
Because I love and cherish them a lot
Sydney is like a little jaguar
Because she walks as fast as a car
The cute little koalas starring at me
Remind me of my sister, Liti
My mom is a hard working ant
She is a perfectionist and she is smart
Tigers are like my dad
Because they both get sort of mad
I'm like a faithful dog
Because we both are sincere in love
Now my dear friends, as you can see
How animals are like you and me

Shashwati is eight years old and is a 3rd grader in Guilford Elementary School. She lives in Columbia, MD with her parents Naresh and Bigyani Das. She is a student of Odissi dance school Nrityalaya and Gymnastic Plus of Columbia. Her hobbies include music, dance, sports and reading.

Brother

Ayesha Kar

You see Brothers are very great,
they make happy when you feel like an empty lake.
You will have empty heart,
but your brother will feel it with lots of love.
Your brother will care about you,
even if he is little.
Your brother is great thing to have in your life,
my brother is loving and very cute.
He is not a rat or a brat,
he is just a loving brother.
My brother is my company, he is very great,
I hope you have one as I do.

Ayesha, age 8 is a second grader. She lives with her parents Mahendra Kumar Kar and Ullasini Sahu in Somerset, NJ

TWO RINGS

Ankita Khandai

I hold in my hands two rings,
One leads a good life
And one leads a bad life.
Which one do I wear?

The good ring shows a
Wealthy, healthy life,
And flowers and butterflies,
Who could have a better life?

The bad life shows a
Sad, poor life,
With all the horrid stuff
You can imagine.
Who could have a scarier life?

Of both rings
I chose the good ring,
And I waited
For good things
To find me.

Ankita Khandai (age 10) studies in 5th grade. She lives in Aurora Illinois with her parents, Saurjya & Anu Khandai.

My trip to India

Sanchita Mahapatra

My trip to India was fun. I stayed in Delhi for a week. We traveled in a train to Agra. Train ride was very exciting for me. I don't get a chance to ride a train in America. I saw Taj Mahal. It was really great. I got to see most of my cousins that I had not seen for a while. My grandma lives in an open house. Most of the houses in India are like that. Going to India was a blast because I could go to some of the best parties. We went to the Puri sea beach with my family and my dad taught me how to swim there. I also went and saw the Jagannath temple, which was very pretty. I have a lot of good memories from there. India was fun. I can't wait to go there next year with my family again. It's been so long since I've been there!

Sanchita Mahapatra, 8 years old, studying in 2nd grade in Franklin Elementary School, Vincennes, Indiana, is the daughter of Meenakshi and Lakshmi Mahapatra.

Why Grasshoppers Don't Chirp

Amrut Sarangi

It was a summer night and there was so much noise that people couldn't sleep. So they went outside and were trying to find the noise-maker. Though people were using flashlights, it was dark and they could not find the noise-maker. They thought that the noise-maker would be in the garage. They looked everywhere in the garage, but couldn't find him. And then they found a small can with a tiny hole in it. They opened it and found a lot of worms. They said, "EWWWWWWWWW!!!!!!!!!" Then they found another can with a ladybug in it. People thought that the noise-maker would become a friend to the ladybug. So, they hid by the side of the door and spied on the ladybug. And then the noise-maker came! One of the men said, "Hey, that looks like a grasshopper!" To confirm that he tip-toed the can. Then he put a net over the grasshopper. The poor grasshopper pleaded, " Why are you trying to kill me?" "Because you are making too much noise !", said one man. The grasshopper said, "I help protect your garden." "How?" the man asked. "By eating all the bugs, of course", said the grasshopper. And then the man let the grasshopper go with a condition that it will not make any more noise ever again. Then the grasshopper said, "Okay, from now onwards, any grasshopper that lives on earth will never make any noise." Till today, grasshoppers still keep the promise made by their great-great-great-grandfather and do not make any noise to disturb people. (Although crickets have started annoying them and a contract is under process, however, I will write that later)

Amrut is a first grader. He likes to write stories, draw funny pictures and play soccer. His parents are Pitambar & Anindita Sarangi.

Setting Sun

Rutuparna Das

The sun in my heart is sinking
The one I love doesn't love me back
"Money," is what he answers
When I ask him what I lack

I have a picture of him
Currently ripped into halves
When I ask what money has to do
With anything
He simply laughs

The sun in my heart is setting
The one I loved doesn't love me back
"True love," is what I would answer
If he ever asked me what he lacked

☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼☼

Color of Colors

Rutuparna Das

The color of colors dwells in the stars,
The Milky Way
Dwells in the clouds all year round
Dwells in what comes down from them
Freezing cold in winter

Doves mean peace
And so does
This blend of
All other colors

White is blank,
Nothing,
And yet,
Everything is a part of it.

An Unparalleled Love

Rutuparna Das

In Eastern India, far away
Lives a lady of love and care
A lady who brings joy
To all who are close to her

Separated by miles of land and sea,
Our hearts intertwine
Hers and mine
Like a star embracing its distant neighbor

Our love connects
Over blue-green waters
Each half of it
From other ends of the world

Our souls have touched
Made a bond, unbreakable bond
Of love
Which will bind us together
'Till the end of time, in lives to come
For eternity and beyond

Never goes a day without a thought of her
Never goes a night without longing
Nor does a moment without this
unparalleled love
This love of a very special loved one:
My grandmother

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

Rutuparna, age 12, is a seventh grader at Hammarskjold Middle School in East Brunswick, NJ. Her parents are Bidyut Baran and Bijaylaxmi Das.

Dreams

Jeeta Mahapatra

My dreams are not just dreams,
Without them, I wouldn't know me.
No one tells me what's right, or what to do,
It just comes through, though not quite true.
The steps I take are completely my own,
And I pay close attention,
Watch the side I've never shown.
Learn new things every night,
Now I know, what I want from life.
See my future in my dream
May not be true, but perfect for me.

Jeeta Mahapatra, age 16 is from Vincennes, IN. She is a junior at Lincoln high school. She is daughter of Lakshmi and Meenakshi Mahapatra.

Being A Winner

Smita Mahapatra

Anything is possible, if you think its worthwhile
Willing to go the distance, to go the extra mile
With determination and effort, you can achieve more
Not always what you wish, but what you work for
Dreams can be challenging, no matter what they cost
Strive to complete your task, you'll never end up lost
So keep up with your goals, leave your doubts behind
Whether you can or can't, you certainly will find
You'll be right either way, never quit and that's why
You always will be the winner, until you fail to try.

Smita Mahapatra, age 17, is a senior at Lincoln High School. She is from Vincennes, IN, daughter of Lakshmi and Meenakshi Mahapatra.

Sweet Guavas

Lina Nayak

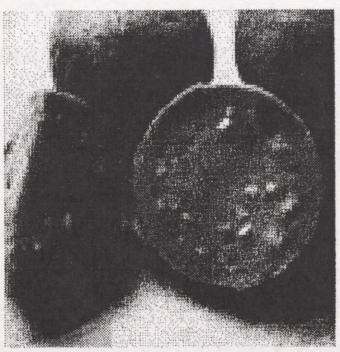
As a seven-year-old, I remember savoring freshly picked guavas with my cousins on a family trip to India. Together, we enjoyed this sweet fruit on excursions to colorful festivals and on the serene journeys to the temple. After dinner every evening, our family shared guavas, laughter, and joyful memories. Reading Esmerelda Santiago's short story, "Guavas," which describes guavas that smell "faintly of late summer afternoons and hopscotch under the mango tree," revived my jubilant childhood memories in India as I identified with her experiences.

Through my encounter with Santiago's "Guavas," I have acquired a deepened appreciation for literature; I realize the true beauty that words conjure. By describing the guava's "prickly stem end," "its pale pink center," and its "thick, firm, and sweet" skin, Santiago's "Guavas" appeals to each of the senses. Stimulating my senses, Santiago's "Guavas" has cultivated my keen awareness; enhanced perception of literature has led to more meaningful insights in life. When I eat guavas, I appreciate their distinguished bumpy texture. While reading, I recognize the poetic devices employed. As I interact with others, I see the genuine concern behind a friend's casual demeanor.

For me, guavas symbolize my personality. Guavas fuse a tough green outside with a fleshy pink heart; I demonstrate a similar balance in my life. I am strong and assertive; recently, in chemistry, my lab partner demanded that we alter our observed results to match the expected outcome; I refused to misrepresent our results, standing firmly by my value of integrity. Yet, I am also nurturing and compassionate; while volunteering at Westlake Hospital, I had the opportunity to help a frightened, elderly Guatemalan woman. Holding her hand, I explained the upcoming procedures to my new "abuela" (grandmother) in Spanish, thus alleviating her fear.

As the seasons change, guavas exhibit sweet and bittersweet tastes. In this sense, they serve as a metaphor for life. Through my resilient personality, I have learned to endure the difficult times, such as the death of my grandmother. I have also learned to savor the happier times, such as playing soccer with my friends. The sweetness of these moments whets my appetite for life events through the hard times.

Eating guavas reminds me of my joyful childhood. Reading Santiago's "Guavas" satiates my desire to read beautiful literature and inspires me to write. Through life and through literature, guavas have nourished me.



Lina is a high school senior at the Illinois Math and Science Academy.
She is the daughter of Pradip and Bidu Nayak.

The Konark Sun Temple and Little Dharmapada

Ankan Dhal

In the heart of Orissa,
Lies the Konark Sun Temple,
The greatest architectural achievement,
Brilliantly adorned,
Architecturally amazing,
Yet, it's not just a temple,
But as if an architect's last wonderful chapter of a long journey,
As the legend goes
A little boy named Dharmapada,
Had finally made it possible,
He sacrificed his life to save twelve hundred lives
The Oriyas are just as proud of Dharmapada,
As they are of their grandest art- epic.
The boy had a noble heart,
Like Konark itself.
Shaped like the Sun god's chariot,
With seven horses and,
Twenty four wheels,
The sun shines its first ray on it every morning.
It is surprising that the chariot cannot be used as a real one.
And Konark's carvings,
Are detailed to the point of a pin,
Proclaiming correct architectural superiority,
To create this great monument,
It took no less than twelve hundred of the best architects,
And sixteen long years,
But it was worthwhile,
For Konark is one of the most precious jewels of India.
For young children Konark is not a playground
But a constant reminder
Even a child can make a difference,
To the human civilization.
Being a tribute to the Sun god probably,
Explains the temperature there,
Konark is truly a great place,
A world-class wonder
Created by our own Oriya ancestors,
But today it is ruined and broken,
And stands as a bereavement,
to Orissa's past glory and achievement.

Ankan age 12, is a 7th grader in Westford Middle School, MA. Poetry is one of his passions and some of his poems have been published in "The Teachers' Selection Anthology of Poetry"

Bollywood: An Approach to Hindi? Nope

PRACHI MISHRA

It all started quite innocently-watching a movie with my family in Texas. Not just any movie, a Bollywood movie. It was *Ishq*, with Juhi Chawla, Kajol, Aamir Khan, and Ajay Devgan. I did my best to translate the dialogues from Hindi to Oriya, to English - I couldn't keep track of reading subtitles while watching people doing things. But I learned one thing: *Ishq*=love. Two years later my cousins moved from Indonesia to the US. They both knew Hindi, Oriya, English and Indonesian. I felt left out – I only knew Oriya and English. After seeing my cousins display their Hindi, my father had an epiphany. Since he had learned to speak fluent French from watching movies, he thought we should give it a try. So my brother and I would try learning from Bollywood.

My aunt we to the Indian store and guess what she brought back? *Ishq*. By the end of watching it for the second time, not only did I have two more synonyms of *ishq*, but I also knew the basic story plot for almost any Bollywood movie. Rich girl likes poor guy, but parents only approve of some rich guy who might be abusive. Or, rich guy likes poor girl but is engaged to some rich girl, who might possibly be a model. Throw in some violent fight scenes, a few – okay, a lot of – cheesy songs in the Swiss Alps, and you have a Bollywood movie. After Ishq, movies started pouring down on us. My brother and I saw most any movie from *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* through *Taal*. My parents even brought out some old classics like Padosan and Teesri Manzil. But noticed my Hindi was not progressing as much as the happenings in Madhuri Dixit's life. I was only learning how to say phrases like, 'tell me you love me' which I picked up from, '*Kaho na pyar hai.*' Or, 'I have already given away my heart.' Which would be '*hum dil de chuke sanaam.*' And those were just film titles!

All this 'learning' would do me no good unless the person I all in love with in the future, speaks Hindi! I figured I will never learn how to speak Hindi from watching movies. Nope. All I was doing for the last five years was learn how to propose to someone in Hindi, which it even less likely, me being a girl! But hey, it's still a good excuse to watch movies, isn't it?

(This article has been published in the India Abroad)

Prachi Mishra is the daughter of Lingaraj and Sanjukta Mishra. She enjoys writing, dancing, playing the piano and viola, and of course, watching Bollywood movies.

Homework Is Great

Ekta Panigrahi

Homework makes me smart
My brain gets a workout
I sure like an early start
That's what I'm all about.

Homework makes me learn
There's history, math and reading
Sure, there's a lot to learn
In spelling and writing.

Homework makes me practice what I learn at school
It's the responsible thing to do
Learning at home is also cool
You should try it too.

So, you go home and study
You have homework to do
Ask a buddy
If you need to.

Ekta is eight years old. She loves Indian music and dancing to the tune of popular Hindi movie songs. She is the daughter of Bikash & Sujata Panigrahi.

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Home

Ananya Behera

Home
There is no place better
To give you the warmth
A place where the heart doesn't feel wetter

You've lived there your whole life
You were born and raised there
You have memories there
And there you've learnt to care

Your memories live
Live in that house
Where the warmth is
Where the love is his

Where a sister lives
Where a brother teases
Where the mother lives her life
Where the father freezes

You'll miss your home
Wherever it is
Maybe in Rome
Where you can enjoy a cone

As they say
Home is where the heart is
Home is where we all play
It's where we spend the majority of the day

Ananya, 11 years old, is a 6th grader at the North Bethesda Middle School. He loves reading and writing. He lives in Bethesda, Maryland with his parents, Subhakanta and Rajashree Behera, and little sister Amrutashree.

Rainforest

Rutuparna Sarangi

Shadows lurking everywhere,
Cheetahs, leopards, look out, beware!
Boas sliding through the trees,
Just hope you won't get a contagious disease!
"WOOSH!" What was that?
Are you sure it wasn't a vampire bat?
Monkeys swinging from every branch
Crackling leaves come from army ants
Crocodiles sharpen their teeth
As alligators snap underneath
Parrots squack in loud voices
Their bright feathers create many entrances
Panthers dressed in silky black
Suddenly gone while you're taken aback
Coming out you look behind
How your life's been intertwined
Going through in this adventure
Was like solving an algebraic structure
Life has many twists and turns,
But either way we always learn.

Rutuparna, age 12 is a 7th grader. Her parents are Pitambar and Anindita Sarangi

Paper

Pooja Panigrahi

A piece of paper is like a younger sister.
You can shape it
To be anything you wish.
A fast cheetah, or perhaps something sluggish.
Some call it the art of paper folding.
I call it making a change.

A piece of paper is like a younger sister.
You can express
Your thoughts through it.
It is a way like none other.
Some call it writing.
I call it communicating.

A piece of paper is like a younger sister.
It is doing its very best
To torture and aggravate
A writer who stayed up too late.
Some call it writer's block.
I call it an occasional annoyance.

Pooja is 13 years old. Her hobbies are playing violin, video games and landscape painting. She is the daughter of Bikash & Sujata Panigrahi

My Trip to Orissa

Animesh Mahapatra

This year when my mom asked me what am I going to write for OSA souvenir? A good idea came to my mind. Actually in last December I had gone to India, I spent more days in Orissa. I saw my grandpa, *aja, aai, kakas* and *khudis*, *mausa* and *mausi* and lot of cousins. It was a good time for me. So I decided to write about my Orissa trip for the souvenir.

During our stay in Qrissa I visited lot of places. I went to Nayagar, Dhenkanal, Nandan Kaanan, Niali and Puri. My grandpa and my *aja* and *aai* reside in Bhubaneswar. So I got more time to spend with them and also to see Bhubaneswar city.

One day we went to Niali, which is my grandpa's village. We saw the rice field and there were cows in it. We also saw straw houses there. One of my Grandmas prepared a delicate dish for us. She used banana leaves as plate. Because I had never seen it before, I sat on it by mistake. Then my mom told me that in Orissa people use banana leaves as plate on some special occasions. I also visited Dhenkanal. One of my *mausi* lives there. I spent few days there. I saw a big *Shiva* temple there. That is called Kapilas. My *mausa* works in Dhenkanal Science Center .One day he took me there.

After staying few days there then I went to Nayagarh where my aunt and her *mausi* live. I also saw a nice temple there, which is called Sarankul Ladubaba temple. There I stayed for only two days, so I could not get time to see more things. My cousins are very nice. So I spent more time with them for playing. I also learned a little bit of playing Cricket. Then I came back to Bhubaneswar .I had a really a great time with my grandpa and *aja* and *aai.*

One day we all went to Puri to see Lord Jagannath. I got surprised to see those big statues of all three gods. The temple was too crowded. But I liked that place Then my grandpa, dad and *kakas* brought some temple rice which is called *Abhada* with some curry .It was fun to see everybody was sitting on the floor in an open place and eating together. There was no spoon there to serve the food. I saw people were using the broken part of pot as spoon.

By the way my Orissa trip was very nice. I really enjoyed that. I also learned so many things from there. I missed all my cousins. Especially my grandpa and my *aja* and *aai.* They are old now .May be when I will go next time I will have a lot of fun with them. That's all about my trip to Orissa.

Animesh is the son of Dr. Dibyajiban and Mrs. Usharani Mahapatra of Huntsville, AL.

A POEM OF TIME

Mohit Sahoo

At one o' clock in the morning
If you open your window and listen
As the trees in the shadow rustle
And the trees in the moonlight glisten
You will hear the feet of the wind
That is going to call the sun
And though it is deep dark night
You feel the night is done

At two o' clock as you listen
To the sound of the crickets
The wind gives you a slight chill
As you breathe in this intoxicating air
You get sleepy, but you stay up against your will
Then the crickets stop chirping
And the woods are but a lull
All your memories are just a past
And everything gets very dull

At three o' clock the cool morning breeze
Caresses your soul
But your hours of long wake
Have finally taken their toll
For one last time here comes the breeze
And your last thoughts.....are....put at....ease

Then you wake up and see
Your clock's face says it's six
As you can see your feelings
And memories seem to be a mix
You run across your room
All the way to your windowsill
You watch the sunrise
Till you have had your fill

At ten as you wake up you realize the sun is up very high
As you wake up you past the birds and up into the sky
You notice you overslept and try to rise from your bed
But that is futile for your feet feel like lead

At twelve you start fixing a rather nutritious lunch
Then you hear a loud crunch and a small munch, munch
All of a sudden it hits you, for who is making that noise, it is you
You quickly rise and think is there others like you too?

At three your friends come over just to chat in the evening
You tell them how you are sleeping and living
You talk about your problem as well
And this is the advice they have to tell

One says, you should go to a psychiatrist though it will cost some money
And another, I have no suggestions though I believe this is rather funny
And another says, this nightly thinking seems to help you, perhaps you should do more
And I reply this all the advice we can come up with from a table of four?

Now it is eight and you are thinking what to do?
Perhaps you should not have taken those sleeping pills called Tums42
You decide to go down to check what the label says
And you find out they are non-drowsy pills called Flaze

You go to sleep and the moon is up high
And the bats are up high, way up in the sky
You fall off your bed at exactly one
And feel the morning breeze come to get the sun

Oh no not again!!!

Mohit is eleven years old and a seventh grader.

Jagannath loves Children

Ankita Ray

Long ago in Orissa there lived some people in Puri who worked in the temple for Lord Jagannath. They used to go from house to house and ask people for food and money. If they got food then they gave it as "bhoga" to the Lord and if they got money then they used to keep it for themselves. One day while begging for alms for the Lord they reached a woman's house. The woman gave them some fruits. Just when they were about to leave a little girl came running out of the house with something in her hand. She came to the men and gave them a piece of paper that was neatly folded. She requested the men to give it to Lord Jagannath. On their way the men opened the note from the little girl.

It said; "Dear Lord Jagannath! Always keep me happy."

When the men reached home they kept the food from the lady as "bhoga" for the next day and since they thought nothing of the letter, they threw it away.

That night when the headman slept, he dreamt. He dreamt and heard Lord Jagannath telling him, " You kept what belonged to you but threw away what belonged to me"? The headman was confused. He woke up from his sleep. He thought about his dream but could not understand anything. He drank some water and again went to sleep. In his sleep again he saw the same dream repeated over and over.

The next morning when the man went to the temple he was amazed to see the letter hanging on the neck of Lord Jagannath. Today that letter has been put into a gold locket and is still there in the Puri Mandira.

Ankita Ray is eight year old and a second grader at Irving Primary School in Highland Park in New Jersey. She loves to dance, paint and write stories. She is daughter of Abhijit and Julie Acharya Rai.

The Girl Who Once Was Short Known as Shortina

Sheena Pradhan

There once lived a little girl named Christina. She was always nice to people and usually they were nice back. However, she was very sad because she was short and was always reminded of it. Everywhere she went people told her she was short, they made short people jokes and they even made fun of her. Some people called her a hobbit, but most people called her Shortina.

One day, after school, Shortina was so depressed that she ran away into the woods, where she thought no one would bother her.

Shortina: Call me by my proper name!

However, when she was sitting on a random bench crying, a magical figure appeared. She comforted Christina, and asked her what was wrong. Nonetheless this only made her cry more. We don't think she noticed the mystical, magical figure. Maybe five minutes later....

Christina looked up questioningly, "Who are you?"

"Why I am your fairy god sister, Sheena."

"Wow, is this like in Cinderella?"

"Sure, Sure....." replied Sheena, towering over Christina. "See I'm short too, doesn't that make you feel better."

Christina burst into tears, "You are taller than me!!!!!!" She gasped through sobs.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings....."

Christina sobbed, "So I'm not really short?"

Sheena ignored that and went on to say, "Here's the deal, I can make you grow. Oh by the way like my crown?"

Christina nodded. It was really more of a tiara, sterling silver and had little diamonds on it. Eager to hear how Sheena could make her grow, she thought this could be a way to suck up.

She tapped her magical silver wand on the bench and a bottle of strawberry milk appeared. "Drink ONE sip of this once every day and you will grow. But drink no more, or less than a sip or you might turn into a tall freak!! Either that or a small shrimp...literally." Then in a poof of rainbow colored smoke she disappeared.

Overjoyed Christina skipped home. She went up to her room, took a sip and then waited.....Ten minutes later.....When nothing happened Christina became impatient. She grabbed the bottle and chugged half the bottle. There was a sudden poof of red smoke. That should do the trick, she thought to herself. She waited again.....Fifteen minutes later.....Nothing happened. Aggravated she pushed the bottle off of her bed, thinking that Sheena cheated her, and cried herself to sleep.

The next morning Christina woke curled up in her bed. She stretched feeling revitalized and hit her head against the headboard, while her feet hung off the bed. As she got out of bed, she was surprised that the jump had shrunk... a lot. She stood up and looked around. Everything seemed smaller. She had a feeling something was different, like something had changed.

As she walked to the bathroom she bumped her head on the top of her doorway. " OWW!!" she shouted. Ducking she hunched over to the bathroom. She stared at herself in the mirror. All of a sudden she realized what was different. She grew! Overjoyed, she jumped, and hit her head on the ceiling with a loud thump.

She fell to the floor and burst into tears, as she remembered Sheena's warning, - "But drink no more than a sip or you might turn into a tall freak!!" She knew she should have listened to Sheena.

"I'm a tall freeeaaak!" She cried.

Then a mystical, disembodied voice (Sheena's voice) rang out, "Ooh, suck it up. You should have followed directions." Again Christina started to cry.

"I don't want to be a freak!!!" She sobbed.

"Ok. Ok. Your not a freak."

Christina began to wave her arms around, thinking her fairy god sister was some where in the room. "Where are you she shrieked???"

Five minutes later.....

Out of breath Christina sat down in the middle of the hallway, and she did not say a thing. Instead she tried to meditate, "Oooommm.."

"You are doing it wrong." The voice of Sheena the fairy god sister rang out. Suddenly there was a poof of rainbow smoke and Sheena appeared.

"See don't you wish you had listened to me?" Sheena said wisely.

Christina looked down at her skeptically. "What? You should have listened..."

All of a sudden there was a lot of giggling. Sheena glanced around her, wondering who it was. Then she froze, horrified, as she realized who it was. There was a poof of pink and purple smoke and a figure appeared wearing a blue crown and an orange gown. She laughed, "Thats funny," she managed to choke out.

"Pooja, what are you wearing? Your clashing." Sheena questioned desperately.

"Hey, Blue and Orange will be the new trend!!" Pooja replied in response.

"Well, anyways, I'm glad you're here I need to make Christina shorter."

"Why? Christina is already so incredibly short." Pooja responded. Sheena pointed obnoxiously in Christina's direction.

Pooja looked confused. "What are you doing?!?" She asked, smugly. Aggravated, Sheena waved her wand and in a poof of pink and purple smoke Pooja disappeared. Her voice rang out, "What the hell, yo?!!!?!?!" Sheena rolled her eyes.

"Now. How to make a person, who drank magical strawberry milk too fast and turned themselves into a tall freak, back down to normal size." She mumbled to herself.

She grabbed Christina by the wrist and pulled her outside. She looked around as if she was trying to find something. She leaned down and picked up two pebbles. "Bipity,

Bompity, Boo!" Sheena burst into song and danced around. At the last bipity, bopity, boo, Sheena threw the pebbles into mid air, and they turned into large boulders. She burst out laughing and quickly collected herself commenting on that being fun.

"Now there, go sit on one of those rocks." Christina looked strangely at Sheena but went over to the rocks anyways, feeling doubtful about her fairy god sister, secretly wishing Pooja could come to save her. All of a sudden, she stumbled upon a small lamp. It actually looked a bit like a tea
kettle wearing a chandelier. She picked it up and touched each of the crystals thinking to herself that they were pretty. All of a sudden there was a cloud of pink and purple smoke, and Pooja appeared. Sheena turned around, "How did you get here?"

"Christina rubbed my magic lamp. Anyways, you don't really seem to know what your doing so.... just..... stand over there and don't do
anything." Pooja replied, as Sheena tapped her foot in disapproval. "You have three wishes. Actually you only have one," she giggled. "Anyways, I'm assuming you want to be smaller."

Christina nodded, "But not smaller than I used to be...People...will...make...fun...of...me." She sniffed, close to tears.

"I'll see what I can do." Pooja replied. "Now how tall were you?" After having discussed Christina's height thoroughly. Pooja went into a state of deep thought. As she stared up at the sky, she quietly said, "...that one looks like a rabbit..."

Aggravated, Christina yelled, "I can't believe I wished you here!!!!!"

"You did what!?!?!?!" Sheena, her fairy god sister, exclaimed angrily, as she stormed over. She tapped Pooja on the shoulder with her wand, while she stared hard at Christina, and Pooja disappeared. "I am very disappointed in you." Christina looked down shamefully. "I'm not sure I want to help you, anymore!" Christina got down on her knees and begged Sheena to give her another chance. Sheena dazed off, dreaming of ruling the world, "uh.....what?...never mind.... ok, I'll help you."

Sheena walked over to one of the boulders and tapped her wand on it. A bag of Chex Mix appeared. "Now I know you aren't patient... so grab a handful of Chex Mix and eat it in one gulp... or as fast as you can." Christina took a handful, dropping half of what she intended to pick up and tried to stuff them in her mouth. She chewed what she could fit in her mouth and swallowed repeating the process three times.

"Ok, I guess you did a good job of that... If you want immediate
results, some side affects you'll probably get are soreness, fever, or a runny nose. I could try to make you shrink and put a side affect repellent on you, but that may cause you to break out in pimples, thatrarely happens. Or you can just wait all day with out eating anything. You may only drink carbonated beverages. Any consumption of other things may cause a severe reaction. Remember that. You'll probably be a couple inches taller than you used to be."

"Ok, I pick the first one with the repellant. I hate pimples, but if that rarely happens..." She trailed off then grinned, excited that she was going to be normal sized.

Sheena smiled. And tapped her wand on Christina's shoulder and said, "Bipity, Bopity, Boo!" She hummed the song as she watched Christina shrink down to about her own height. "Happy?" Christina nodded. "Hurry now child, its getting late! Off with you, the ball can't wait! ...Or school... You
wouldn't want to get detention!"

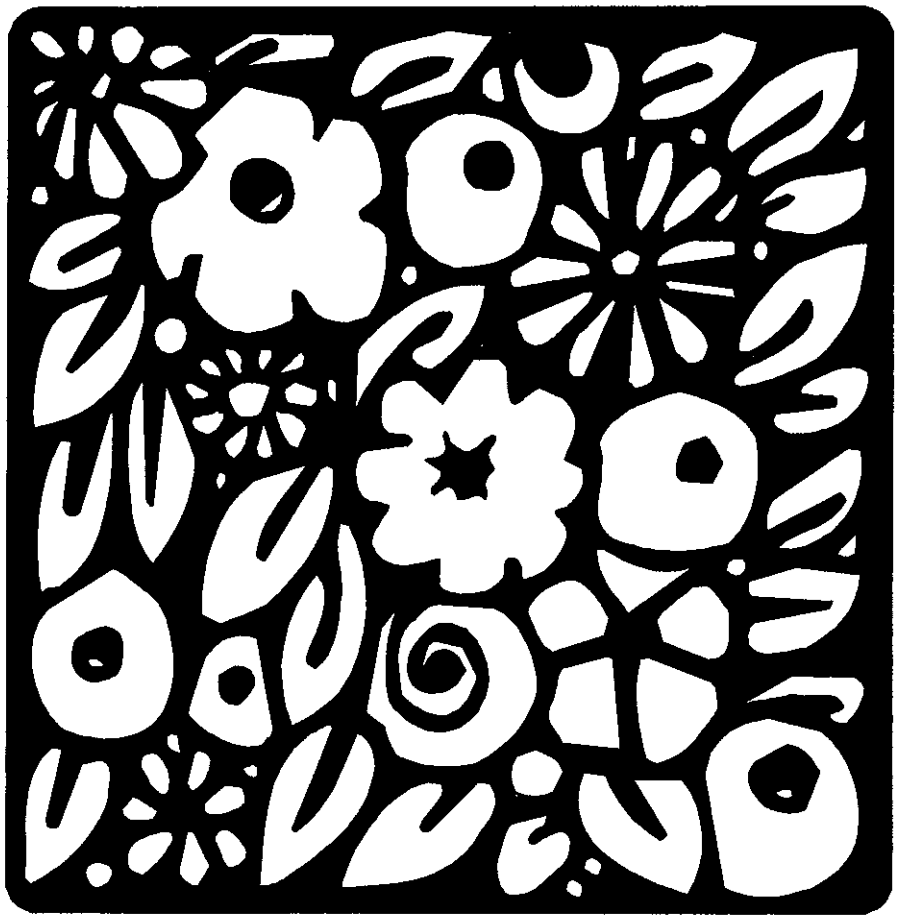
She tapped one of the boulders and it turned into a rock like, gray beetle (the car). Sheena got in the driver's seat and said, "What are you waiting for? I can drive you to school." She noticed Christina was in pajamas and tapped her shoulder transforming them into her favorite outfit.

"Oh, thank you so much, God Sister!"

"No problem."

As they drove off, Pooja appeared in the backseat in a poof of pink and purple smoke. And they all lived happily ever after.

Sheena (age 14) is an eight grader residing in Lawrenceville, NJ with her parents, Tanuj & Meera Pradhan. She traveled to Australia last year as a student ambassador.



Heroes

Jagannath Nayak

Abraham Lincoln
The one I look up to
With tall stature and great courage
For emancipation, he showed the key

Princess Diana
The one I look up to
Protecting children's rights
She helped others for free

Martin Luther King Jr.
The one I look up to
Fighting against prejudice
He helped to establish equality

Franklin Delano Roosevelt
The one I look up to
With hard work and a gifted mind
He improved the US economy

Mother Teresa
The one I look up to
Caring for the sick
She served the global community

Mahatma Gandhi
The one I look up to
A pioneer in peaceful fighting
Like him, I want to be
My hero is who I want to be
This is who I want to be

Jagannath Nayak, age 12, is the son of Pradip and Bidu Nayak. He lives in Elmhurst, IL At school, he is on the executive board of student council and the 1st place winner of District Math Contest.

Defining Death

Sanjay Misra

"What is death?" is a popular question that we ask
Is it the start of an adventure or end of a journey that has passed?
It happens everyday, so why does it carry so much grief
It causes so much sorrow and it forces us to weep

Perhaps it is the fact that it will happen to all of us
We want our lives to be perfect and we don't want it to rust
Everyone wants to achieve their goals
Yet they cannot when they no longer have their souls

Maybe we cannot bear the loss of our loved ones
And we want to rewind time even though life still runs
Just one special moment to experience the mirth
That we had so much of until death took all that it was worth

Why do we not mourn for those nonentities that have passed away?
We only remember the "heroes" when all of us can say
"I want to be thought of even after I am gone"
Yet these tragic events occur often and we easily move on

Until death strikes someone we know
We take it for granted, but this just shows
How much of a surprise it always is
When the one we adore falls into an eternal abyss

When that special person dies, what can we do?
We feel an agonizing pain that we have never knew
Many will mourn, and some want to move on
Because they know that special individual is gone

All that we can do is mourn
We must keep our love, even if it is worn
Life will still go on, and so must we
Though we will forever hold their memory

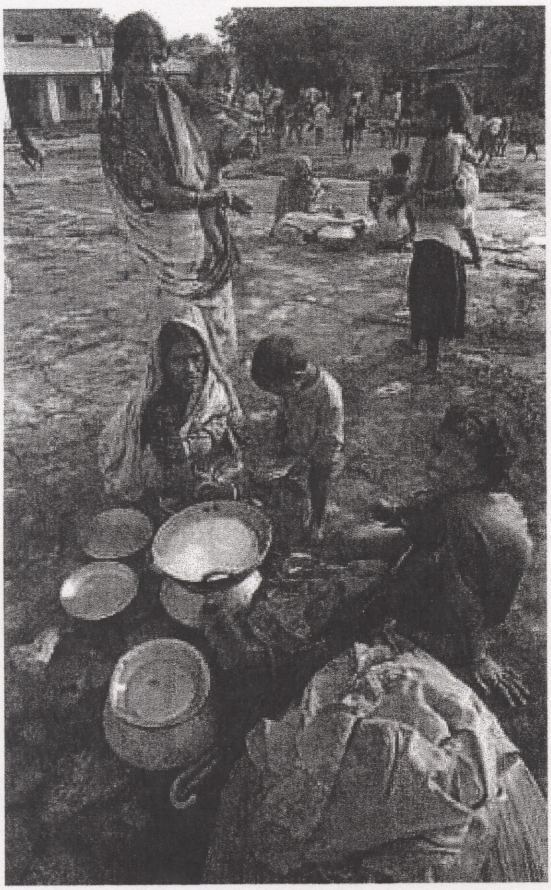
As we all know, bodies cannot be revived
But souls can always keep their lives
We can still remember those that we have lost
By keeping them in our hearts, which has no cost

(This poem is dedicated to my friend D.J.Farar who passed away recently)

Sanjay, age 13 lives in North Wale, Pennsylvania with his parents Dr. Sudhansu and Chandra Misra. His hobbies are sports, reading and studying history.

Livelihood

Mrs. Rita Patnaik
Bhubanseswar / Orissa



Serving People

Organizational News and Report

A Team Effort

The team effort has made a big difference and impact on the lives of the villagers in Orissa. The following organizations and friends having selflessly and generously supported different projects in Orissa. Their donations have brought small changes and have touched the lives of the villagers in many different ways. We hope that by continuing the teamwork we will achieve and fulfill our dreams.

ASHA for Education (USA), Basundhara (Cuttack Orissa), BISWA (Sambalpur Orissa), IWSO (Dhenkanal Orissa), The Orissa Foundation (Huntsville, AL. USA), Michigan Chapter, OSA (USA), & SEEDS (USA)

Anonymous Donors - Geeta & Kula Misra - Usha & Monty Ahuja - Sanjukta & Sirish Misra - Sangita & Satya Chakrabarty - Sarojini & Devi Misra - Sumita & Subinoy Chakravarty - Rajashree Mohanty - Jhinu & Santanu Chhotray - Rita & Dillip Mohanty - Nirja Dhar - Shantimayee & Srigopal Mohanty - Mary Hartley - Smita & Gopal Mohanty - Raj & Jai Jaglan - Puspalata & Parikshita Nayak - Vijaya & K. Jayaraman - Sagarika & Hemanta Nayak - Tripti & Purusottam Jena - Yamini Naygandhi & Aditya Samal - Saroj & Yash Pal Kapur - Irish M. & Stanford Ovshinsky - Padmani Karna - Sipra & Binayak Panda - Santosh & Prakash Kansa l - Smruti & Samir Parikh - Alka & Raj Khanijow - Urmila & Dev Pateriya - Shyama & Hira Koul - Chinmayee & Harek Patnaik - Jay R. Mahanti - Monjula & Prasant Patnaik - Joyasree & Subhendra Mahanti - Minati & Manaranjan Pattanayak - Nibedita & Surendra D. Mahanti - Margie Pegram - Priyambada Mahanti - Bijaylaxmi & Bijan Rao - Sanjit Mahanti - Bishnu P. Rath - Smeeta Mahanti - Chitra & Jaganath Rath - Amrita & Sabyashachi Mahapatra - Saheb Sahu Family Foundation - Puspa & R.K. Mahapatra - Sally Editorial Services - Usha & D.J. Mahapatra - Preeti & Val Sapra - Janaki & Venkateswar Mani - Krishna & Brij Mohan Sapru - Krishna & Sourjya Mishra - Marvin Sawyer - Mukta & Sanjeeb Mishra - Chandra Bhan Singh - Susmita Mishra - Margo K. Smith - Anjali & Ramesh Mishra - Lalita & Satish Udpa.

(For details refer to the article Team Effort, vol. 2)

A Team Effort (vol. II)

A beautiful path to volunteerism

Joyasree (Ranu) Mahanti

Dear Friends

This was a successful year for our team. Each year gets better with time and experience. On behalf of the villagers and all the organizations involved, I sincerely thank you all for your generosity, kindness, and trust. The villagers send their blessings and best wishes for you and your families. They wish you could visit them and accept their hospitality. The following information relates to the funding and projects I have been involved with during 2002-2003. For more information, you can contact me at (517) 337-9570 or send me e-mail at ranumahanti@yahoo.com. I will be more than happy to answer your questions.

2002-2003 Projects
(Proposed expenditure, 2002-2003 Contributions, and project explanation)

A. BISWA* projects supported by friends in the United States and Canada (through Dr. Devi Mishra (Orissa Foundation), Huntsville, AL and Mrs. Joyasree Mahanti, East Lansing, MI)	$16,696
B. Eye Care Camp (Funded by Mr. Harekrishna Patnaik, Rochester Hills, MI)	$ 2,250
C. Four Non-formal schools (Funded by ASHA** for education)	$3,000
D. Bamboo Plantation (50% funded by SEEDS***, 50% by BISWA)	$6,000
E. Self-sustained project for ISWO**** (Funded by SEEDS)	$500
F. Water project for ISWO (Funded by the Michigan Chapter)	$300
Total amount	**$28,746**
G. **Loans to Self Help Groups in Ersama area (a rolling fund)**	**$12,000**

*Bharat Integrated Welfare Agency, Orissa (India) based non-governmental organization (NGO)
**Asha for education (Detroit chapter), USA based non profit organization
***SEEDS, USA based non profit organization
****Indira Social Welfare Organization, Orissa (India) based NGO

A. <u>BISWA projects supported by friends in the United States and Canada</u>

Village Jhakarbahali , Budapada, Rathipara and Tangerjori in Boduapli Gram Panchayat (G.P.) of Sambalpur district and village Mulbag in Mulbag G.P., Bhatli Block of Bargarh district.

1. Finance to the Self Help Groups
   - 9 Groups/125 members in Sambalpur District — Rs.1,05,000/-
   - 4 Groups/50 members in Bargarh District — Rs.25,000/-

2. Construction of Water Harvest Structures for irrigation purposes
   - 250 acres per structure @Rs.75,000/- per structure.
   - BISWA, the Sambalpur based local NGO will bear the additional expenses by mobilizing funds through different sources. — Rs.3,00,000/-

3. Community Based Drug Centers
   (i) Training in community health care and health education through Orissa Voluntary Health Association
   4 trainees for 6 months @Rs.3000/- per trainee per month — Rs.72,000/-

   (ii) Expenditure for conducting one health care and health education camp in each village adopted for the program, twice in a year

Doctors fee @Rs.500.- x2x12	Rs.12,000/-	
Cost of Medicine	Rs.70,800/-	
Cost of Transportation @Rs.300/- x2x12	Rs. 7,200/-	Rs.90,000/-

4. Opening a production center in Sambalpur for Badi making and Candle making with product brand name "ODISSI" — Rs.90,000/-

5. Drinking Water Tube wells (Deposit to be made on behalf of the villagers for installation of 5 tube wells @Rs.4500/tube well) — Rs.22,500/-

6. Provide blankets to the inmates of Hatibari Health Home (Leprosy Colony) in Sambalpur — Rs.21,000/-

7. Provide game materials to the 4 schools running By the support of ASHA for education — Rs.5,000/-

Total proposed expenditure — **Rs.7,30,500/-**
8% Administrative Cost — **Rs. 65,900/-**

Total Funds collected from friends in USA — **Rs.7,96,400/-**
(The administrative cost includes bank charges (Rs 12,560/-) for collection
$16,696 collected and converted to Indian currency @Rs.47.70 per dollar.

1. Finance to the Self Help Group (Sambalpur and Baragarh districts)

Due to our micro credit finance system, the village women will not have to receive loans from the local moneylenders with exorbitant interest rates. BISWA teaches them about the benefit of savings and paying back loans in timely manner. It is a constant effort for BISWA employees to educate the women and help them to increase their daily wages through different sources. This is important because they do not have to depend on the local contractors who pay them minimum wages and lower prices for their products. BISWA arranges training for these women in different trades, which will help them to be self-dependant in the future.

2. Construction of Water Harvesting Structures (WHS)

When complete, each WHS project will consist of a Water Structure (WS) and an Over Tank (OT). The WS is dug underground (depth 30 feet/ width and length 20 feet) and the OT is built on the side to store water that will be pumped from the WS. There will also be precautionary measures taken in order to protect children, adult, and animals from falling into the WS. Stone siding will be installed in case of landslides. Cement slabs will cover the entire opening of the WHS. Drains will be constructed on four sides of the WS to channel rainwater for storage. In addition, cemented channels will be constructed for water distribution for agricultural purpose. A diesel motor and pipe system will lift water from the WS to the OT.

This type of WHS does not need a large water reservoir, thereby avoiding the waste of agricultural or forest land. Therefore this does not negatively affect the environmental conditions. In addition to the ground water recharging method, it also has provisions for rainwater harvesting. We feel that this type of WHS program will be very cost effective and serve the needs of the people. All four WHS are being constructed on land provided by the Government. We have sought expert advice and the supervisor of this project is a competent retired engineer. The digging of this WS(s) has employed many villagers. We expect the major part of the digging work to be completed before the rainy season.

3. Community Based Drug Center and Health Camp

i. Training Program: Currently four people are receiving training through the Orissa Voluntary Health Association to be village doctors. After they complete their training, they will be employed by BISWA to provide basic health care to the needy villagers. They will also train people from each village to take care of basic health problems in their absence. Hopefully, the future budget will allow us to train four more people as village doctors.

ii. Health Camp: BISWA organized a health camp in the village of Budapada on Feb. 25, 2003. With 42 house holds and a population of 243, 103 people attended the health camp. Of these, 92 (45 Female, 34 Male, and 13 Children below 5 years) were given medicine for various diseases. In this small health camp, many diseases both serious and common were detected. Examples of the serious disease were: four cases of Leprosy in the early stage, one case of Leprosy at its terminal stage, one case of TB and one case of STD. With the funding from this year, BISWA will organize a total of 24 health camps in 12 villages (twice a year) with regular follow ups. In my experience, I believe health camp will be very effective. The continuation of these camps will have significant impact on eradicating these serious diseases.

4. Opening one production center for Badi making and candle making:

One of my dreams is to market Badi (made out of lentils with different variations) not only in Orissa, but also in all of India. With our financial support, BISWA has started a small production center for making Badi and candles. Marketing of the products has already started. We have to wait and see the progress and the profit. Badi making is generally a seasonal business. Hopefully we will make it year around in the coming years.

5. Drinking Water Tube wells:

The Central Government of India approved a scheme in December 2002 (Rural Water Supply – Swajaladhara scheme) to provide drinking water tube wells to the villagers. The villagers as a group will have to deposit a certain percentage of the total cost (depending on their status) for a drinking water tube well. A major part of this deposit will be covered by our contribution on behalf of the villagers. This is an excellent opportunity to provide drinking water tube wells to the villages where each tube well normally costs approximately Rs. 45,000 (~ $1000). BISWA has applied for 5 tube wells. I am hoping that through this scheme we can provide many tube wells to the villages where water is the major problem with minimum beneficiary contribution.

B. Eye Care Camp

BISWA organized two eye camps, one at Mahulpali UGME School and the other at Sahaspur UGME School on 16th-17th & 18th-19th February 2003 respectively. In these two camps, 1140 people were examined, of which 286 were provided with eyeglasses and 338 people will be operated at Sambalpur District Head Quarter/Burla hospital. The surgery will be performed in batches due to space shortage. The total cost of this project has been arranged by Mr. Harekrishna Patnaik, Detroit, and USA, which came to Rs. 1,08,000/ (about $2,250). Mr. Patnaik was present during the distribution of the eyeglasses. The BISWA family was delighted to have Mr. Patnaik with them for a few days. Mr. Patnaik has already committed the funds for another eye camp that will be held in November 2003 when I will be there.

[The following projects are supported by different non-profit organizations in the United States]

C. ASHA for education (in collaboration with BISWA)

Starting date of the Schools: November 15, 2002
Name of the villages

Locations of schools	Number of students
Jhankarbahali	96
Budapada	47
Tangerjori	47
Rathipara	32

ASHA is providing salary to the teachers and food for the children. BISWA has provided teaching materials and is managing the schools. The projected cost for the food has been exceeding the budget, which was submitted to ASHA. We have requested to increase the fund. Hopefully, ASHA will consider the new budget for the food. The Revenue Divisional Commissioner of northern zone of Orissa has visited the schools and has committed to provide funds from the MCL (Mahanadi Coal Limited) periphery area development fund for construction of buildings in these four villages. These buildings will be utilized as School-cum CBD center-cum- Community hall.

D. Bamboo Plantation (SEEDS in collaboration with BISWA)

The sale of bamboo articles are the main source of livelihood for many villages in the Sambalpur district. This has resulted in large-scale de-forestation in this area. This area depends on the creation of new bamboo plantations that will be beneficial, both for sustainable livelihood of the villagers as well in creating New Forest.

SEEDS has agreed to provide 50% of the fund for the planting of 50 hectares of bamboo. The remaining 50% will be raised by BISWA from outside sources.

Proposed expenditure :	Rs.2,42,000/
Amount to be provided by SEEDS	Rs.1,21,000/
Amount to be raised by BISWA	Rs.1,21,000/

BISWA has completed the land leveling and will start plantation work in June 2003.

E. Self Sustained Project for ISWO funded by SEEDS

ISWO's mission is to help the most deprived women residing in the slum and rural areas of the Dhenkanal district of Orissa. SEEDS contributed $500 to ISWO and asked me to oversee a project and use the funds in the most beneficial way. ISWO has started a self-sustained project to make candles and market them locally. When I visited the organization, the production and marketing had already started. Hopefully, this will employ many local women. I will have a better idea of this project during my next visit.

F. Water Project for ISWO funded by Michigan Chapter

The Michigan chapter donated funds to support a project for ISWO. After visiting the tribal school, the secretary of ISWO and I jointly decided to use the money for installing a drinking water tube well that will be extremely useful for the school. Currently, they are getting water from a well (using water hoses) located at a nearby Ashram. The total cost of digging a drinking water tube well is approximately $1,000 (RS 45,000). Hopefully, the Michigan chapter will collect enough funds to support this worthy project.

G. Working with Basundhara, Cuttack

This is a continuation of an existing project in several villages that were affected by the Super Cyclone of 1999 in the Ersama area in Jagatsinghpur district.

Financial Assistant to Self Help Groups in the Ersama Area

This is a project I monitor with the help of Basundhara and a local villager, Mr. Kedar Sahani, in the coastal belt (eastern part of Orissa). Most of the credit for the success of this project goes to Kedar. His constant and endless effort and hard work to collect the money and encourage the villagers to participate in this project have made this project flourish. This project was started in 2001 after the super cyclone. It is a great pleasure to see how many women have been benefited by this project. It is a revolving fund of about $12,000; this year I did not invest any new money in this project. This year we have given loans to more than 43 groups (about 500 individuals). We were able to open a training center in the coastal belt (**Prabasi* Training Center**) with the interest obtained from the money invested in this project for the last two years (2001 and 2002).

*Prabasi means Indians who live outside India.

The training center has started with a tailoring program from March 24, 2003 with 30 girls. After completing the training in six months, they will be encouraged to start self-help groups and start their own business by getting loans from us. I hope, in my next visit we will be able to add one more new training program within our small budget.

Total Budget for the Prabasi Training Center

Community center is free for the training school
One time expenses:
Sewing machine and other materials Rs. 5,000/-
Tables and chairs etc. 11,000/-

Teacher's salary for 1 year @ Rs. 500/month 6,000/-
Electricity Bill Rs. 300/month

Registration fees per student Rs. 25/- (will be deposited in the bank)
Monthly fees per student Rs. 10/- (takes care of the electricity bill)

Summary Remarks

The Chairman of BISWA, Mr. Khirod Chandra Malick informs me that after our interventions in the villages of the Sambalpur district, the State Govt. of Orissa (district level) has extended help and is taking more interest in our work in the rural areas. Now there is a road under construction to the villages where we are working. The Govt. has supported a vocational training (in bamboo products) in the local villages with the help of BISWA. This is very encouraging.

This time I visited and selected four more villages (Labdera, Jogipali, Kundebahal, and Kankedpali) to start working for the coming year. By the end of next year we would have supported a total of 8 villages. The health camp has already started in these 4 new villages with this year's budget. Again as before, our main goal is to provide the basic needs to the villagers such as water, food through self-help group projects, education, and health care.

It is teamwork. The success of the above projects is due to the hard work and the commitment of the local organizations. Without their help and follow-ups, the projects could not have been successful. Of course, the other team members are my friends and family members who have supported generously with great trust. Lastly the villagers, without their cooperation and appreciation, the projects would not have continued.

I am very thankful to God for giving me this opportunity to work for the people, my parents who exposed me to the beautiful village life, my friends and family members for their blind faith and trust in me which compels me to work on a right path. Lastly, the person who sacrifices in many ways to support my dream, is not only my husband, but my inspiration as well.

Teacher's Refresher course for quality science education

Education is the backbone of the civilized society. It is needless to say that in this highly competitive age one's survival depends on how much knowledge he/she posses. Though basic education has been declared as birth right, less importance is given to promote quality education and produce good citizens. The goal of education is to develop, in every child, capacity to think, an understanding of scientific and social phenomena, and proficiency in technical skills so that a person can stand on his own. It must also inculcate commitment to truth and equality, both social and economic. We at Jagannath Organization for Global Awareness (JOGA) in cooperation of Govt. of Orissa, have started organizing refresher course for high school science teachers in Orissa since May 2001. Since then we have been asked many questions from both the supporters as well critics of this endeavor. Basically the questions may be classified as consists of **WWWW** (why?, who?, where? and what next?). We will try to answer these questions with a hope to clarify all the doubts and hopefully gain more support.

Why the refresher course needed?

The present high school syllabus consist of many college level courses including few nonconventional subjects like computer science, environmental science etc. There is no formal training program for teachers from state Government to upgrade their skills. Also the quality of classroom teaching is gradually detiorating as most of the students from well to do family seek private coaching. Now the time has come to give back to our motherland to support quality education for future generation.

Who is benefited?

The answer is everyone in Orissa. Though the course is meant for high school science teachers, eventually when the teachers get to upgrade their skill, all the student get better education. Hence the quality of student standard improves which will help in building prosperous Orissa. There are several ways one can improve the standard of education. However, we believe by improving teachers teaching skill will better serve the education system. The knowledge stays with the teachers and hence helps thousands of students for years to come.

Where the courses conducted?

We have chosen to conduct the course in one of the established college in each district so that teachers can meet many college faculties and see the science laboratory. Till now we have received excellent cooperation from many college authorities. College faculties who take classes are also very enthusiastic as they know their little help will go long way as the teachers when go back to school after course will have better knowledge for class room teachings.

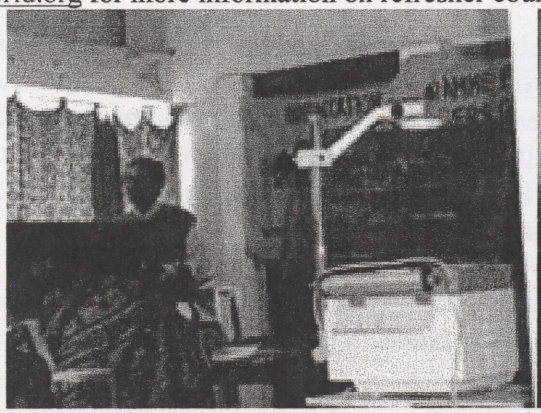
What next after the course?

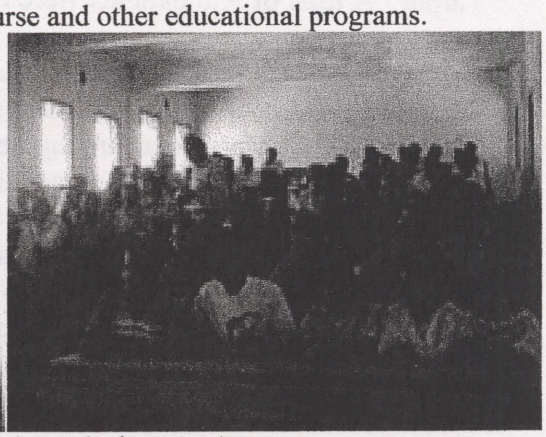
This is one obvious question people ask how do you know teacher's have used his knowledge from refresher course? For this we have introduced many steps to know the usefulness of the course. First homework assignment is given by each faculty during the refresher course. Based on their homework assignment we give few give few cash awards to teachers with top scores. We also ask the teachers to give a seminar at their school after returning from refresher course and get certified by the headmaster for the same. We have plan to monitor the school performance in board examination.

Science is a beautiful thing. It needs to be taught in every school in the state the way it is taught in US. It is still not too late to realize why the west is so advanced? In my mind the simple answer would be "People's Attitude ". We always complain more on others than we really do things for them. Criticism does not work any more unless you back it up. But Suggestion does work. For every suggestion you need commitment and that is what we lack as a community or society. We are most committed to ourselves (families). That is the main difference between the people of west and east (Orissa/India). Think how much time or money you spent on others per year. Do a simple comparison with Americans. The Govt. of US does not do everything for the people.

It is people who do most for their own community. On average an American donates 10 to 15 % of their salary every year in various causes. At the same time imagine us donating 1 to 2 % of the annual salary for the various education program for the needy children in Orissa. We live here for sure but sometimes we forget to learn and practice the good qualities of these people. If we are here today, it is only due to the value of a good education. Therefore we must commit ourselves to provide help for other who is not lucky enough to have that kind of education. By contributing 1000 dollar per year towards the educational program in Orissa, you are not only bringing the smiles among many kids and families but also wiping out the darkness.

Therefore JOGA is eagerly waiting for your wonderful constructive ideas and financial assistance to carry out the educational projects throughout the state. We are committed to hold science refresher course for the high school teachers in every district. Unless the school teachers are equipped with latest methods and modern skills of teaching science and carry a rich fundamental, they cannot infuse confidence among the students. We have identified a group of committed college faculties in Orissa to conduct the refresher course. Also so far, we have received excellent cooperation from various circle inspectors of schools and their staffs for sending information to the school teachers. JOGA is non-profit tax-exempt organization. Please visit our webpage: www.jogaworld.org for more information on refresher course and other educational programs.





(Above pictures show the class in progress and a part of the participants in the course)

Here is the detail of some of our previous courses that was conducted in Orissa.

District	Sundargarh	Khurdha	Jajpur	Bhadrak	Kendrapada	Jagatsingpur	Dhenkanal
# of Teachers	87	93	72	85	78	80	67
Place	Municipality Hall, Rourkela	R. D Women's College	Jajpur Highschool	Bhadrak High school	Kendrapada college	SVM College	Dhenkanal College
Dates	Aug 16-18, 2002	June 21-22, 2002	Dec 28-29, 2001	Dec 26-28, 2001	May 10-11, 2001	Dec. 20-22, 2002	Dec. 21-23, 2002
Convener	Pitambar Das, CI	Naliniprava Pattnaik, CI	K. C. Mishra, CI	C. S. Mohanty, CI	C. S. Mohanty, CI	Nimain C. Swain, CI	Prasanna Panigrahi, CI
Cosponsorer	SCERT, BBSR	Orissa Bikash Initiative	Oriya Samaj	Oriya Samaj	Orissa Society of America		Orissa Foundation

Based on the feedback report from the participants we are modifying the course curriculum of successive courses. We have palnned to organize two refresher course in this summer in Bolangir and Mayurbhanj districts. We welcome your involvement in this noble effort.

Author: Dr. Naresh Das, Mr. Hemant Biswal, Mr. Dhirendra Kar

FAHO & VIJAYA TREATED 2463 PATIENTS IN ORISSA

Federation for Advancement of Healthcare in Orissa (FAHO), a non-profit organization founded in USA by Orissa Society members and concerned for health care needs of Orissa, organized three health camps in Orissa during the month of December 2002 in cooperation with Vijaya, an organization in Bhubaneswar dedicated for health care needs of needy Orissa patients.

At Ramchandrapur High School of Jagatsinghpur District the health camp was held on December 20, 2002 with the support from Rama Devi Mahila Shilpadyog Sangathan of Tarpur. A total of 536 patients were treated.

On December 22, 2002 honorable health minister of Orissa, Pratulla Chandra Ghadai inaugurated the health camp at Bhera of Cuttack district. Mr. Ghadai praised FAHO and Vijaya for their efforts in arranging health camps in Orissa and treating the needy patients. The health minister personally praised Dr. S.K. Dash, the FAHO patron who took the time to come to Orissa from USA and organized the health camps and paid for all the expenses of the three health camps.

Bhera High School Alumni did all the local arrangements for the health camp in Bhera in conjunction with their Annual Alumni Association meeting. A total of 840 patients were treated at Bhera health camp.

The third and the last health camp was held on December 24, 2002 at Nadiali U.P. School campus of Govindpur of Dhenkanal District with the support of the local Lion's Club and Nadiali Gram Panchayat. A total of 1087 patients were treated.

At these health camps several critical cases like Bone T.B., myocardial stenosis, myasthenia gravis and molecular atrophy etc. were also followed up. Arrangements were made for the patients for follow up treatments at the nearby hospitals.

The following doctors provided their services at the health camps:

Dr. Satya Narayan Routray, Dr. Niranjan Tripathy, Dr. Rabi Tripathy, Dr. Pramod Acharya, Dr. K.C. Sahu, Dr. D.C. Mohanty, Dr. R. Satpathy, Dr. H.R. Mohanty, Dr. Sabita Mohanty, Dr. P.K. Mohanty, Dr. A.K. Sar, Dr. S.S. Behera and Vijaya Secretary Dr. Gita Mohanty.

A follow up plan to treat the needy patients in these rural areas has been set up by Dr. S.K. Dash, OSA past president and FAHO Patron, Mrs. Chandrka Mohapatra, Vijaya President and Dhenkanal Lions Club President Mr. Subhendu Mohapatra.

SIX BEST ORISSA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES OF 2002 RECEIVE AWARDS

Orissa Society of Americas/Dr. Hemanta Senapati Trust honored six best Orissa High School graduates of 2002 at a state level event held at Sriramchandru Bhavan of Cuttack, Orissa on December 25, 2002.

The students who received the cash awards, plaques and certificates from the chief guest, Honorable Sarat Kumar Kar, the speaker of Orissa State Assembly are:

Subhrakali Paramguru, Debasis Panda Satrupa Jena, Jayant Kumar Samal, Girija prasad Panda, and Rupali Patnaik. Two each shared the first, second and third positions. The first position carries Rs 25,000, second position Rs 15,000 and the third position Rs 10,000.

Dr. Hemanta Senapati Trust Fund provides the cash prizes and expenses for the Orissa State High School Award program every year. This trust has been established by the family members and friends of late Dr. Hemanta Senapati. Dr. Senapati was a health professional in Detroit, Michigan and past president of Orissa Society of Americas from 1996 to 1998.

Dr. S.K. Dash is one of the founding members and past president of Orissa Society of Americas from 1993 – 1995 and serving as the trustee. Dr. Dash has been instrumental in establishing Dr. Hemanta Senapati Trust Fund to honor best high school graduates of Orissa every year.

Honorable speaker of Orissa State Assembly Mr. Sarat Kar was the chief guest of 2002 Orissa State High School Graduate Award Ceremony. Mr. Kar presented the awards to the best students holding first, second and third positions and praised Dr. Senapati's family and friends as well as Orissa Society of Americas for supporting education in Orissa and helping the high school students.

Dr. N.C. Panda, past director of Orissa Health Department and teacher of Dr. Hemanta Senapati praised Dr. Senapati's family and friends for establishing this trust fund.

Dr. Niranjan Tripathy, the past Rotary President spoke highly of the Orissa Society of Americas' Orissa deveopment program.

Mr. Debendra Nath Mishra, the coordinator of Orissa-America Resource Center arranged this Award Ceremony and Dr. S.K. Dash, the trustee presided the meeting. Dr. Dash congratulated the high school graduates and wished them prosperous futures and thanked the guests, students and their parents.

The Gopalbadi Tribal Girls School Project

Lalu Mansinha
mansinha@uwo.ca

Introduction

In 1951 Acharya Vinoba Bhave walked through the then undivided Koraput District as part of his Bhoodan campaign for donating land to the landless. The people of Koraput responded with very generous donations of land and funds. Vinobaji suggested that some of the land be used to establish a center for training, education and instruction for tribal people and village level workers. A large parcel of land was set aside at a place called Gopalbadi (also spelled Gopalwadi), about 20km from Raygada. The land was deeded to a new organisation called Utkal Khadi Mandal (UKM) and a training institute was started in 1956, but for various reasons ceased operations within a few years.

In 1992 UKM suggested to the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust (Orissa Branch) (KGNMT) that they open a school for tribal girls on the UKM land. In 1994 a residential girls school, housing 50 Adivasi girls, with classes Grade I- V, was opened. It was soon recognised by UKM and KGNMT that educating only the Adivasi girls, without educating the boys, will lead to a situation in which the girls will be unable to marry within their community. To prevent this situation from developing in Adivasi society, UKM started in 1997 the Utkal Khadi Mandal Madhyamika Vidyapitha, a secondary school for boys and girls. The two schools, and the defunct training center are sometimes referred to as the Educational Complex at Gopalbadi.

The two schools serve a population of about 16,000 in Dundili Gram Panchayat and 15 villages in Gadisekhal Gram Panchayat. The Secondary School has 130 students, and is the only school in the Gram Panchayat. The Girls School has 50 girls in residence for Grades I-V. KGNMT pays for the boarding, lodging, clothing, study material and education of the 50 resident students. All the resident students are from poor Adivasi families. A serious problem is the absence of Grades VI and VII in the Girls school, since the High School starts with Grade VIII.

Budget

The UKM High School runs on an annual budget of Rs3 lakhs (USD6,700., CAD10,000.), and the KGNMT Girls School requires a budget of Rs4.5 lakhs (USD10,000. CAD15,000.). The two schools, run by two different organisations, present separate pictures of budget solvency. In this project we focus on the needs of the Girls School. The Girls School has run up major deficits in meeting operational budget, and essential repair and maintenance work has been held up. Gaping holes in the corrugated roof of the hostel, caused by the 1999 cyclone, are still unrepaired, in 2003. Due to lack of funds Grades VI and VII have not been started. Major funding for the school normally is through grants from various levels of the Government. However, the Government's own budget problems has regressed to a point that money for the past 3 years has not been remitted, resulting in a shortfall total of Rs8 lakhs (USD17,800., CAD26,700.). The school manages by economies such as cutting the already low salaries of the teachers, and through entreaties for donation by Mrs. Annapurna Maharana, head of KGNMT in Orissa.

It was Mrs. Annapurna Maharana who originally brought the attention of individuals in CanOSA and SEEDS (Satya Mohanty, Ithaca, NY and Sumitra Padhi, Burlington, Canada) on the plight of the KGNMT Girls School due to budget shortfalls several years in a row. Hence we (SEEDS and CanOSA) have taken the initiative to find ways to provide the KGNMT School with a continuing source of funds

such that the school would have a buffer for operating funds, and also manage some capital construction. In late 2002 a fund raising campaign was initiated. The planned visits to Orissa by SriGopal Mohanty (Nov.-Dec, 2002) and Lalu Mansinha (Jan-March, 2003) provided the opportunity to study and start the project. At our request, Devraj Lenka (Bhubaneswar), and Biswajit Patnaik (Raygada and Bhubaneswar) visited the Gopalbadi campus on separate occasions.

At a meeting convened on February 9, 2003 at HIG 144, Kanan Vihar, Bhubaneswar, the various options helping the school were discussed and a decision to adopt the horticulture development plan was taken. Present at the meeting were Somdutt Behura, Sudarsan Das, Devraj Lenka, Prabhu Lenka, Lalu Mansinha, Purna Mohanty, Nivedita Scudder. Our goal was not to meet the entire budget of the school, but only to create a reserve fund that will allow the school to tide over financial crises. Any surplus would be used to enhance the very rudimentary residence and school facilities. Financial support for the project from SEEDS and CanOSA will be no more than five years. SEEDS and CanOSA involvement will be terminated if the goals cannot be met or the project ceases to be workable for whatever reason.

Horticulture

Devraj Lenka and Prabhu Lenka are faculty members, with expertise in horticulture, at Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in Bhubaneswar, and their advise has been crucial. From the site visit report by Devraj Lenka (Appendix I) it became clear that substantial (Rs 4 to 6 lakhs, (USD8,900 to 13,400., CAD13,400 to 20,000.) annual income can be generated by developing 19 acres of campus land for agricultural production. Some revenue can be achieved within two years, but the full amount will be achieved in five years. Initial investment would be needed for an electric pump powered irrigation system, storage tanks, plastic distribution pipes, and a fulltime manager will have to be appointed. Currently the campus land is not managed to maximise returns and yields only Rs15,000 (USD333., CAD500.) (2002), but is expected to go up to Rs25,000 (USD555., CAD833.) (2003).

It was decided to start on a small scale this year (2003), and depending on positive experience, ramp up to a full scale project next year. There have been several generous offers of help from persons in Raygada and Koraput is setting up the irrigation system, provide seedlings, finding a project manager etc. Until sufficient revenue is generated in 2007, support would be needed for setting up the irrigation system, paying the salary of a fulltime manager, and for the expenses involved in starting Grade VI and VII.

2003:
a. Start Grade VI.
b. Mango and Cashew plantation on 3 acres; fencing of around 250 mtrs initially.
2004:
a. Start Grade VII
b. Appoint Project Manager
c. Set up electric pumps, storage tanks, pipes. Plant the total land acrage. Complete fencing.
2005:Tend crops and prepare for marketing
2006:Market the produce.
2007: Full production

Biswajit Patnaik will oversee the project in Raygada. Devraj Lenka will oversee the horticulture and irrigation system. A Managing Committee has been formed:

Biswajit Patnaik, Devraj Lenka, Annapurna Maharana, Baishnab Charan Das, Nivedita Scudder.

Bashnab Charan Das heads Utkal Khadi Mandal. Other members can be co-opted by the Committee as required. Prabhu Lenka, though not formally a member now, has been involved with this project right from the start, and has been providing advice all along and is expected to continue in an advisory role. Lalu Mansinha and SriGopal Mohanty will be tracking the project from SEEDS and CanOSA.

Fundraising

In Canada fundraising efforts is headed by Sumitra Padhi of CanOSA. In US the fundraising is through SEEDS, Somdutt Behura. I must give special recognition to Satya Mohanty and Chandra Talpade-Mohanty of Ithaca, New York in making a substantial commitment of annual donations (USD2,000/year). This core amount was persuasive going ahead with this project. We were also inspired by the donation and commitment of young (12 year old) Sanjay Prayag Misra of North Wales, PA, who is not only bright, but also has the sensitivity to feel for the disadvantaged children of his own age in Gopalbadi.

Sumitra Padhi has a photo list of 50 girls at the Gopalwadi School. We are requesting you to be sponsors of one or more girls, with a commitment to donate (USD or CAD) $200/year for 5 years. Although we are linking sponsors with girls, (and we have plans for progress report on each girl to go to the sponsor) I wish to make clear that the money collected is for the short and long term operation of the school, and not specifically for individual students. Each student will benefit from the overall health of the school. Our goal is achievement of financial independence of the school in five years.

So far we have counted approximately 25 sponsorships. Our target is 50 sponsorships. Any left over donated funds will be used for other SEEDS and CanOSA projects after consultation.

In Canada:
Please write the cheque to Sumitra Padhi, and on the memo line in front, or on the back, please write 'Gopalbadi Tribal School'. The cheque should be mailed to:
Sumitra Padhi, 2359 Arnold Crescent, Burlington ON L7P 4J1, Canada
Phone: 905-335-8681; email: *Sumitra<hpadhi@cogeco.ca>*

In USA US charitable donation receipts will be provided. Please write the cheque to 'SEEDS', and on the memo line in front, or on the back, please write 'Gopalbadi Tribal School'. The cheque should be mailed to:
Somdutt Behura, 3722 Latma Drive, Houston TX 77025, USA
Phone: 713-664-7901; email: Somdutt *<sbehura@gocacs.com>*

The Ananda Fund Celebrates 41 Years in Orissa

A tribute to Polly and Ralph Victor and Surya Kanta Das

Lalu Mansinha

On February 4, 2003, in a lecture room in Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar, a young American woman walked uncertainly to the blackboard and hesitantly wrote out her name **SHj** -Joyce Victor- in the Oriya script that she had learnt in school in Cuttack some 35 years ago. The audience, mostly students and teachers from several schools across Orissa, broke into a loud applause. The names of the towns and villages of the schools,-- Baliguda, Balugaon, Banpur, Barapalli, Bisamkatak, Gopalbadi, Hinjlicut, Baragarh, Delanga, Harichandanpur, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Madanpur Rampur, Naharkanta, Nandala, Nayagarh, Remunda, Satyabhamapur, Sohela, Themra -- invoke an image of the very fabric of the history and culture of Orissa.

The meeting was a landmark celebration of the 41st Anniversary of the Ananda Fund in Orissa. The Ananda Fund, quietly and without much fanfare, has helped some 16,000 students in Orissa to get a high school education. The Fund has also been helping several orphanages. Last year the fund has helped Banabasi Seva Samiti in the tribal area of Khandmal, Viswa Bandhu Seva Mandir in Mayurbhanj, Palli Unnayan Seva Samiti at Naharkanta, Kasturba Gandhi Kanya Ashram at Satyabhamapur, and a platform school to teach poor and wandering children around the Bhubaneswar railway station.

The Ananda Fund started almost a half century ago, in the 1950s, with the visit of a young American couple, Ralph and Polly Victor, to the village of Barpalli in Sambalpur District, as part of a development project sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker organisation. After a stay of two years Polly and Ralph Victor went back to the US, only to return a few years later to spend some time in Cuttack, where Joyce went to school. The Victors formed a deep and abiding friendship with my family. In 1959 I came for graduate studies to Vancouver, Canada, across the border and 100 miles from Seattle, where the Victors stayed. Their home became my home and Ralph and Polly became my uncle and aunty. I spent many weekends, holidays and summers with Victors. I was part of their family.

Ralph and Polly had an idea of establishing a fund to help students in Orissa. They requested Surya Kanta Das, then a lecturer at Gangadhar Meher College in Sambalpur, to administer the program. In November 1961 the first scholarships were awarded to seven boys at Sohela High School and two girls in the Lady Lewis Girls High School in Sambalpur.

The 41st Anniversary meeting was not only a celebration of the vision of Ralph and Polly Victor, but was also to honour 41 years of community service by Surya Kanta Das. It was he who set up the basic system such that the overhead costs of the Ananda Fund in Orissa was minimal, and the number of awards was maximum. It was Surya Das

who started the Ananda Fund tradition of personally visiting every school and getting to know the school, the headmaster, the teachers and the students. The remote, isolated schools are often the neediest, and there are stories of the trips Surya Das (and later, Samson Maharana) made by train, bus and foot to reach a distant school, taking several days.

From G.M. College Professor Surya Das went on to found the Department of Commerce at Utkal University. He continued administering the Ananda Fund even as he was busy as the Head of a university Department. Now that Prof. Das is in his eighties, Prof. Samson Maharana, is administering the Ananda Fund in the tradition established by Prof. Das. And Samson Maharana is also Head of the Department of Commerce. It so touching to discover that Prof. Surya Das was a student in the high school in Bhowanipatna in Kalahandi in 1936, when my father was a school teacher there. Now that I am active in community projects, I am following in the footsteps of Prof. Das in the tradition of direct involvement at the grassroots level. And so the teacher-student thread continues.

The Ananda Fund has been organizing two annual events, the Mansinha Memorial Essay Contest and the Mansinha Memorial Lecture. The Essay contest is open to all college students in Orissa. Each year a select scholar delivers a learned discourse on Mayadhar Mansinha and his writings. Plans are afoot to collect the annual scholarly lectures into a book.

The amount the Ananda Fund gives to each student is small, typically Rs35/month. Yet this makes the difference in having or not having shoes for the daily kilometres long trek to school and back. It means the difference between having or not having clothes, sandals, books, food etc. for so many students. The small scholarship makes the difference between finishing or not finishing high school. Funds are also provided for school trips for students and teachers, repair of school buildings, new ideas etc. The rules and guidelines of the awards are flexible, and depend on local initiatives and ideas.

There is a high school outside the town of Banpur, on the edge of a dense forest. Many of the students walk 5 to 10km to school from villages within the forest. Although the school is housed in a brick building, they had no lavatory for the 500 students and staff. The school has barely enough funds to operate, certainly no money for a 'luxury' like a lavatory. After failing to find help from other sources, they made a proposal to Ananda Fund. The students will provide the labour if the Fund gives them money to purchase the brick and concrete etc. And so it was that the students and staff toiled to build this structure, brick by brick. During our visit to the school in February Joyce and I were amused and startled to see a large sign on the outdoor lavatory, thanking the Ananda Fund.

With Ralph and Polly Victor now in their eighties, Joyce will be looking after the Fund in the US. Her 2003 trip was to take a first hand look at the operation and benefits of the Ananda Fund in Orissa. In Orissa too, with Surya Kanta Das in his eighties, the

torch has been passed onto Samson Maharana. In addition Joyce instituted a small committee to advise Prof. Maharana. The Advisory Committee is already considering new ideas on the proper use of the funds. Among the ideas: Refresher Workshops for science high school teachers; a project for the Chilika area high school science teachers to teach about the Chilika; day and overnight outings for students in orphanages.

From a letter from Ralph and Polly Victor to Surya Kanta Das, dated May 23, 1961:

> "It has occurred to us that there are a great number of students in Orissa High schools who hardly can meet their ongoing expenses and that we watched many of them in hostels at a nutritional level where they hardly could be expected to be able to study properly. We also believe that there are some students whose families cannot send them to High school or cannot permit them to continue because of the economic burden involved."

They have been true friends of Orissa, and benefactors of thousands.

Charitable Giving – Some Facts to Know

Dr. Arun Misra

Give, save and help. Charitable giving maximizes your support for the causes you care about. Giving is one of life's greatest satisfactions. It allows you to share your financial success with loved ones and the causes you care about, while establishing a legacy to benefit future generations.

Before making a gift or donation, it is good to know some facts about charitable giving. This should maximize the benefit of the gift to the recipient, and save undue costs to you.

Gifts are irrevocable. Donor must release all control and title over the asset, in order for the gifting process to be complete. Gifts can trigger gift taxes. Gift taxes are unrelated to income taxes should be kept in mind. Gift taxes are levied on the donor not the recipient.

Most of the gifts are tax-exempt. Gifts that do not trigger gift tax are:
1) any gift to a spouse, could be any amount, since there is an unlimited marital deduction provision. Spouses should be U.S. resident/citizen.
2) gifts up to $11,000 per year per donor/recipient, to any number of individuals, called annual exclusion, and should be available to recipient for immediate use/possession/enjoyment.
3) a spouse can follow the above rule and gift similar amount to the same individual, hence the total annual exclusion to a married couple is $22,000, IRS considers them to be split-gifts, $11 ,000 from . each spouse.
4) gifts to charities or political organization; there are many ramifications and controversies associated with such gifts.
5) paying medical or tuition/educational expenses for another person, especially directly to institution(s).

Transfer, during one's lifetime, of cash, securities, property or any other kind of asset, to qualify as gift should be permanent/irrevocable. Some gifts may require donor to pay a gift tax. These could be:
1) amounts above the annual exclusion of $11,000 or $22,000 for married couple, to anyone individual, in a single year.
2) any future interest(s), gifts of any size, even smaller than annual exclusion amount, not available to the recipient for immediate use/possession/enjoyment.
3) medical and/or tuition /educational expenses not paid directly to the institution concerned.

If you make a gift that is taxable, IRS requires a gift tax return, IRC form 709 to be filed and copies kept indefinitely. Filing the gift tax return does not mean one has to pay gift tax, which is at about 55% rate. We all have a lifetime exemption equivalent of about $1 million. Hence, the huge gifts will reduce our lifetime exemption, and increase our liability of estate tax at the time of death by that amount. Future increase in exemption limits, repeal of estate taxes, and other provision in estate taxes rules in year 2010, are still undecided and are being discussed by the congress.

With planning one can give today, realize immediate tax benefits, and enhance the quality of life for loved ones (and increase the scope of some organizations and causes one cares about. Even for accommodating modest amount (one can create a foundation, or join one of the many foundations already established for charitable giving programs.

Creative gift giving can lower the overall taxes and benefit for the loved ones or favorite causes. Gifts or transfers to minors (UGMA/UTMA) to children and grandchildren have been very popular for a long time. New education and College Savings plans have extended the scope of giving even further.

In addition to children/grandchildren, the gifts can be designed to take care of the long-term needs of parent/ grandparent, on a tax-deductible or tax-favorable basis.

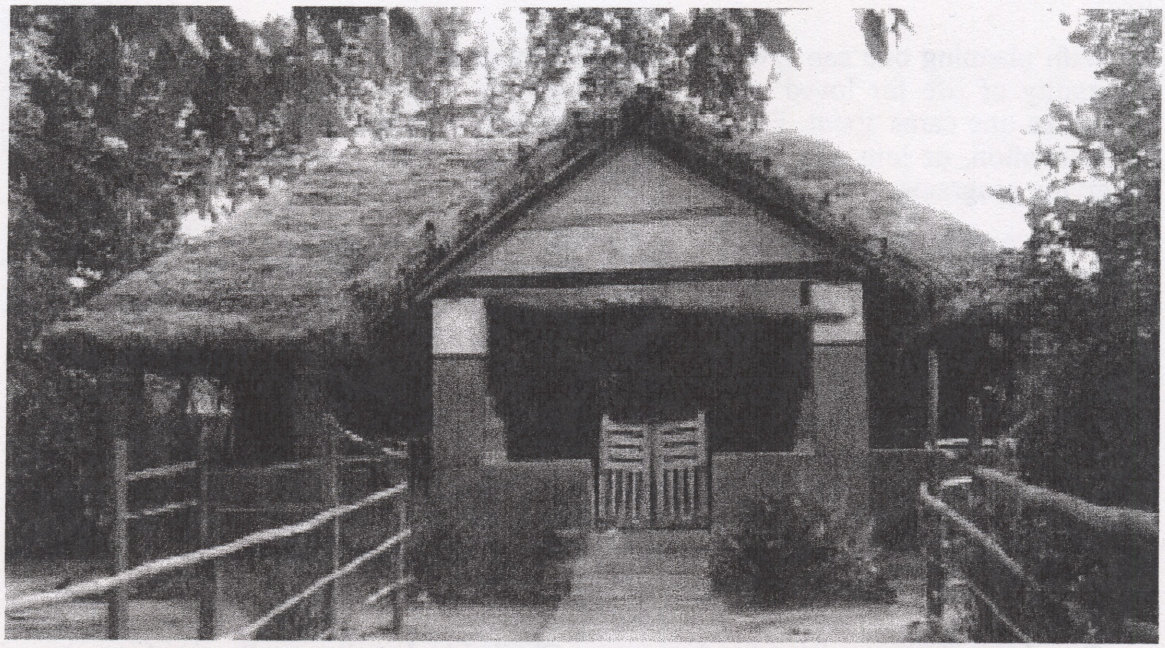
To secure current and future income for themselves and their loved ones, and enabling them to leave a philanthropic legacy, one can set up a tax-deductible annuity program. This program has been maligned and linked to scams many times, but there are many excellent and legitimate programs available.

-Tax-deductible annuity, also known as Charitable Installment Purchase program, ChIP, will accept variety for assets like: cash, real estate, appreciated securities. Immediate income tax deduction of 30% of the amount gifted becomes available, which can be used in the same year the gift is made or carried over for up to five additional years. In addition, a tax favorable annual/monthly income at the rate of 5-7% of the gifted amount can be generated for up to 20 years on immediate or deferred basis.

If the amount of tax-deductible annuity is substantial, the payout can extend to the second or third generation. A portion of the annuity, however, say 10% has to be spent for charitable cases, through IRS-approved charitable organizations

Qualified estate attorney or a financial planner can provide further insight into charitable giving. The paperwork on these programs is generally very simple and easy to execute. For complicated estate, charitable remain/lead trusts arid other instruments may be designed to manage funds in tax- efficient ways to provide maximum benefits to all concerned.

Dr. Arun Misra is the CEO of Misra Enterprises Inc. in Alpharetta, Georgia.



BAJIRAUT CHHATRAVAS ANGUL

A Place for Children to Grow

The Barjiraut Chhatravas, an institution of national importance (registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860), was established in 1946 at Angul in Orissa State by Smt. Malati Choudhury, Freedom Fighter, Social Activist, and former member of the Constituent Assembly of India, and Shri Nabakrushna Choudhuri, Gandhian Thinker and Scholar, and former Chief Minister of Orissa.

Bajiraut Chhatravas was established on 11 May 1946 in memory of a twelve-year-old boy, Bajiraut, who sacrificed his life by disallowing the British forces to cross, by boat the river Brahmani. This spirit of sacrifice is an eternal message for the children of Bajiraut Chhatravas.

Genesis

It had its genesis in the Prajamandal Movement (the resistance movement organized and sustained by the people) and its initial activities were geared towards providing residential facilities and educational opportunities to the children of Freedom Fighters. Over the passage of time there was a societal demand on the Bajiraut Chhatravas to provide educational facilities and educational opportunities to the children belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other Backward Classes and under-privileged sections of society coming from all over Orissa. Its workers have been instrumental in bringing children to the Chhatravas from the tribal areas of Orissa.

Educational Philosophy

Inspired by the educational philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, Smt. Malati Choudhury, Nabakrushna Choudhuri and their dedicated team introduced an innovative pattern of education, called Nai Talim, in Bajiraut Chhatravas.

In the system of Nai Talim which was popularly known as Basic Education, Gandhiji advocated on the complete development of the children through body, mind and spirit, or in other words, the union of his hand, heart and intellect, in which emphasis was given on art, crafts, and manual work. Rabindranath Tagore's emphasis on education is the complete harmony between creator (nature) and its creation (man). When a child learns agriculture work scientifically, he uses his hand, heart and intellect and also becomes close to nature. Therefore, Bajiraut Chhatravas aims at developing the aesthetic sensibilities of a child so that he grows as a self-reliant and nonviolent human being.

Management

The Bajiraut Chhatravas has a General Body having Annual Members and Life-Members. It has a 15-member Executive Committee which manages the programmes and activities of the Chhatravas through a President, and Executive President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary elected for a three year term. Presently, Smt. Krishna Mohanty is the President, Prof. Bibhuti Bhusan Mohanty is the Executive President and acting Secretary, and Shri Sibaram Mishra is the Tresurer.

Collaboration with other Organizations

The Bajiraut Chhatravas is an institutional Member of the Indian Adult Education Association, New Delhi. It has partnership status with the Worldview International Foundation, Colombo. It also works on a programme to programme basis with the Jana Sikshan Sansthaan, Angul. It may not be out of place to mention here that Smt. Krishna Mohanty, President, is the Vice-Chairman of the Jana Sikshan Santhaan, Angul

Activities

1. Inter-Religious-Prayer - Early morning and evening
2. Morning Yogasana Practices
3. Gardening and Agriculture work
4. Community Cleaning
5. Community Cooking
6. Self-Study
7. Sports & Games

8. Spinning
9. Learning Crafts in collaboration with Jana Sikshan Sansthaan (JJS).
10. Celebration of Festivals.
11. Observance of the National Days and Birth days of important personalities.
12. Welcoming the different seasons through music and dance.
13. Students working as volunteers during national calamities and accidents.

The Present Scenario

Today there are 175 children belonging to the above mentioned categories. Previously they used to study in 4 or 5 schools situated at Angul, because no one school is able to cater to the needs of all the children. Because of this we are not able to inculcate in them coherent educational values. This was, and is, a serious educational as well as management problem; and to obviate it partly we have opened a primary school with the first seven classes in our campus so that its own development and growth in course of time, it would be able to cater to the needs of primary and secondary education of our children. The name of this Primary School is Balabhadra Vidya Mandir, named after Shri Balabhadra Mishra who was a co-worker of the Smt. & Shri. Choudhury and who had devoted his entire life for the cause of the Chhatravas. Out of the 175 children, 75 are covered under an educational programme sponsored by the Tribal and Harijan Welfare Development of the Government of Orissa, and the rest 100 are covered under the scheme of Maintenance of Children in Need of Care and Protection in accordance with the Orissa Maintenance of Orphanage Rules, 1985, of the State Government; and the grant-in aid received from the government of Orissa in respect of the above mentioned schemes is barely sufficient to feed and clothe 175 children, and it becomes extremely difficult to do anything even for their health care. This is a serious matter which concerns all of us, specially when in the national and international arena we are talking of , and advocating for, the Rights for the Child.

The Bajiraut Chhatravas has about 10 acres of land out of which 4.5 acres of land are agricultural land and there is a pond measuring 1.5 acres. Our children work on the agricultural land as a part of their practical work and produce vegetables for their own consumption. For want of funds we are unable to do anything in the areas of dairy farming,

pisciculture and Poultry farming.

How can you help?

Bajiraut Chhatravas welcomes assistance in the form of donations and sponsorships in the following areas.

We need funds for the campus primary school; a programme for Balanced Diet and Health Care; programmes for Agriculture, Dairy-farming, Pisciculture and Poultry Farming and Mushroom Cultivation; repair work for Dormitories, Shanti Mandir (Prayer hall cum Dining hall), Sarangadhar Cottage, Kitchen, etc.; for building a Children's Park and for revamping the Library and Reading Room.

You can send you Cheques/Demand Draft payable at the State Bank of India, Angul, at the following address:

The Secretary
Bajiraut Chhatravas
Angul - 759122
Orissa, INDIA

Designed & produced by Amlan Mohanty, with necessary inputs from his sister, Mrs. R. Kalpana and parents, Mrs. Krishna Mohanty & Prof. B. B. Mohanty.

Courtesy: Sandeep Dasverma

YOUNG WRITERS COMPETITION – RESULTS

This year for the first time we started a competition for our young writers in poetry and short-story in English and Oriya for two age groups, 14 to 21 and below 14. There were a total of nine (9) entries in the age group 14 to 21 and thirtyone (31) in the age below 14. All the submissions we received were in English only (none in Oriya) and most of them poems. Three prizes will be awarded for poems and one for short story for each age group. General articles from our young writers were not considered for this contest. The results are as follow:

Age group(14 – 21)

Poem
First : Bagmi Das ***If only God could sing***
Second : Smita Mahapatra ***Being a winner***
Third : Swati Mishra ***Mom*** **and Prerana Pradhan** ***The Eye***
Short story
Bagmi Das ***A Peek into My Heart***

Age group(below 14)

Poem
First : Ankan Dhal ***The Konark Sun Temple and Little Dharmapada***
Second : Sunny Tripathy ***You are the Eternal Mother Nature***
Third : Sanjay Misra ***Defining Death***
Short story
Ankita Ray ***Jagannatha Loves Children***

Congratulations all formal winners ! --- and all participants are also winners too.

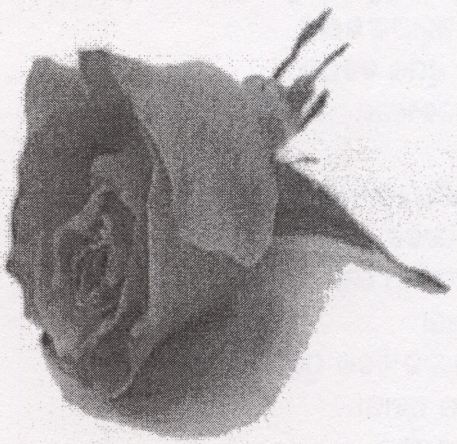
I would like to thank all our distingushed judges, Mr. Manoj Panda, Mrs Sangeeta Nayak, Dr. Jayasmita Mishra and Dr Birendra Patnaik

Editor

Oriya Section

ଓଡିଆ ବିଭାଗ

କିଛି ଭୋଗ, କିଛି ଯୋଗ
କିଛି ଆଶା, କିଛି ଅନୁଭୂତି



କିଛି ମାନ, କିଛି ଜ୍ଞାନ
କିଛି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, କିଛି ମିଠା ସ୍ମୃତି

କିଛି ଇତି, କିଛି ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି
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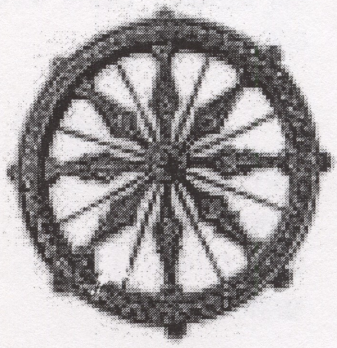
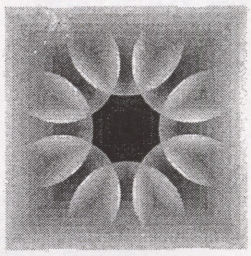


ସୂଚୀପତ୍ର (ଓଡିଆ ବିଭାଗ)



କିଛି ଭୋଗ, କିଛି ଯୋଗ; କିଛି ଆଶା, କିଛି ଅନୁଭୂତି (ଗଳ୍ପ ବିଭାଗ)

ଅଭୁଲା ଅତୀତ	ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୧
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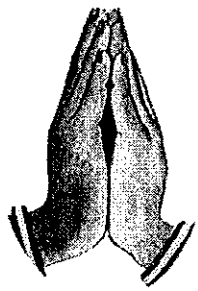
ଆଦିଅନ୍ତ	ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ୍	୬
ଶୀବନ୍ତ	ରସାନନ୍ଦ ବେହେରା	୧୪
ମୃଗୟା	ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର	୧୭
ଆସକ୍ତିର ବୋଝ	ଜୀବନକୃଷ୍ଣ ମହାପାତ୍ର	୨୨
ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ	ତାପସ ସାହୁ	୨୪

କିଛି ମାନ, କିଛି ଜ୍ଞାନ; କିଛି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, କିଛି ମିଠାସ୍ମୃତି (କବିତା ବିଭାଗ)

ତୁ ଖୋଜୁଛୁ ଯାହାକୁ	ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଧର ନାୟକ	୨୫
ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଜଣାଣ	ସରଳା ତିପାଠୀ	୨୬
ଏ ତୁମର ବଡପଣ	ଶାନ୍ତି ମିଶ୍ର	୨୭
ଅନନ୍ୟପ୍ରେମ	ଝୀନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ	୨୮
ମା	ବିଜୟଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଦାଶ	୨୯
ପତିଯୋଗୀର ଜୀବନ	ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର	୩୦
ନିବେଦନ	ଅଞ୍ଜନା ଚୌଧୁରୀ	୩୧
ଏକାକିନୀ ମୋ ଭଗିନୀ	ବିଶ୍ୱରଞ୍ଜନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୩୨
ରାଜା	ନିରୁପମା ମହାପାତ୍ର	୩୨
ଅନେକ ଦିନର ପୁରୁଣା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟିଏ-	ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର	୩୩
ରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ	ଦେବସ୍ମିତ ମିଶ୍ର	୩୫
ନବଗୁଞ୍ଜର	ନିତ୍ୟାନନ୍ଦ ସାହୁ	୩୬
ସର୍ବହରା	ଅନନ୍ତ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୩୭
ସୁନୀଲ୍	କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ	୩୮
ଆମେରିକାରେ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗର ବିଳାପ	ବଜମୋହନ ପ୍ରଧାନ	୪୦
ଚାଖି ଖୁଣ୍ଟିଆ	ସୁମିତା ପାଢୀ	୪୧
ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ	ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାୟକ	୪୨
ଆଶାର ଆଲୋକ	ପୀୟୁଷଦା ମହାନ୍ତି	୪୨
ଚିଠି ସଖୀ ପାଇଁ	ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୪୩
ଆତ୍ମ ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ - ତିନୋଟି କବିତା	ଶ୍ୱେତପଦ୍ମ ଦାଶ	୪୩
ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ	ବିଜୟମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର	୪୪

କିଛି ଇତି, କିଛି ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି; କିଛି ଇଚ୍ଛା, କିଛି ପରିତୃପ୍ତି (ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଓ ରମ୍ୟରଚନା ବିଭାଗ)

ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ କବିତା	ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାରାୟଣ ଦାସ	୪୬
ସଙ୍ଗୀତରେ ରସାନୁଭବ	ଆରତୀ ମିଶ୍ର	୫୦
କବାଟ କୋଣରେ ମୁଁ ଦିଶୁଥିବି	ଦେବକୀନନ୍ଦନ ଚୌଧୁରୀ	୫୩
ଆମେରିକା ମାଉସୀ	ନନ୍ଦିତା ବେହେରା	୫୪



ସଂପାଦକୀୟ (ଆଗେଇଚ୍ଛୁଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଗେଇଚ୍ଛୁଲ)

ପ୍ରିୟ ବନ୍ଧୁଗଣ,

ନମସ୍କାର । ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର, ତେର ନଈ ପାର ହୋଇ ଇଥର ବକ୍ଷରେ ତରଙ୍ଗ ତୋଳି ବିହଙ୍ଗ ଭଳି ଉଡୁଥିବା ବାୟୁଯାନଟିରେ ବସି ଦିନେ ଦେଶ ଛାଡି ଆସିଥିଲି ବିଦେଶ । ମନଭିତରେ ବିଭବଶାଳୀ ନୂଆ ଦେଶଟିକୁ ଦେଖିବାର ଆଗ୍ରହ ଓ ଉତ୍ତେଜନା ଥିଲା ଯେତେ, ନିଜ ମାତୃଭୂମି, ମାତୃଭାଷା ଓ ଆପଣା ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସହିତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ହୋଇଯିବାର ଅବସାଦ ଥିଲା ତହୁଁ ଅଧିକ । ଆଜି ଯେ ମୁଁ ମୋ ଜନ୍ମଭୂମିଠାରୁ ଯୋଜନ ଯୋଜନ ଦୂରରେ ରହି ଏ ପାଶ୍ଚାତ୍ୟ ଭୂମିରେ ଓଡିଆ ସମାଜର ବାର୍ଷିକ ପତ୍ରିକା ପାଇଁ ଓଡିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ସଂପାଦକୀୟ ଲେଖୁଛି, ତାହା ଏ ସଦା ବିକାଶୋନ୍ମୁଖୀ ମାନବଚେତନାର ଏକ ଜ୍ୱଳନ୍ତ ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ । ଓସା ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଆମେରିକାର ଓଡିଆ ସମାଜ ସେ ଦୀପ୍ତଚେତନାର ଆଉ ଏକ ପ୍ରତିଫଳନ ।

ଏ ପାଶ୍ଚାତ୍ୟ ବିଦେଶ ଭୂମିରେ ଓଡିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଚାର ଓ ପ୍ରସାର ନିମନ୍ତେ ସତତ ଉଦ୍ୟମଶୀଳ ଓସା ସଂଗଠନ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ଏ ବାର୍ଷିକ ଓଡିଆ ମିଳନୀର ଆୟୋଜନ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡିଆ ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଯୋଗସୂତ୍ର ସ୍ଥାପନର ଏକ ବିଶେଷ ମାଧ୍ୟମ । ସେ ମାଧ୍ୟମର ଏକ ଅଂଶ ହେବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ ଗୌରବାନ୍ୱିତ ମନେକରୁଛି । ମୋ ଉପରେ ଗଭୀର ଆସ୍ଥା ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ରଖି ମୋତେ ଏ ପତ୍ରିକାଟିର ଓଡିଆ ବିଭାଗର ସମ୍ପାଦନା କରିବା ଭଳି ଗୁରୁଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ମିଳନୀର ଆବାହକ ଶ୍ରୀ ଶରଦିନୁ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କୁ ଓ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପାଦକ ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ପ୍ରଦ୍ୟୋତ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କୁ ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଯାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ଯୁଗର କ୍ଷିପ୍ରତର ଜୀବନଯାତ୍ରା ମଧ୍ୟରେ କଷଟି ହୋଇ ମଣିଷ ମନର ଭାବନା, ଆତ୍ମାର ସ୍ୱର ଓ ଚେତନାର ତରଙ୍ଗ କେମିତି ଅଣନିଃଶ୍ୱାସୀ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି । ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ, ପଛକୁ ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ, ସୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ ରୋମନ୍ଥନ କରିବାକୁ ସମୟର ଅଭାବ । ସେହି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ, ବିବ୍ରତ ଜୀବନରୁ ସମୟ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ ଯେଉଁ ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ମାନେ ନିଜ ଭାବନାକୁ ଗଳ୍ପ, କବିତା, ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଓ ରମ୍ୟରଚନା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ଏ ପତ୍ରିକାଟିପାଇଁ ଅଙ୍ଗ ଆଭୂଷଣ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏ ଅତୁଳନୀୟ ଅବଦାନପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଅଶେଷ କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ଓଡିଆ ଭାଷାର ଅକ୍ଷର ମୁଦ୍ରଣ ପାଇଁ ଓଡିଫନ୍ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ନିଜର ଲେଖାକୁ ନିଜେ ସଜେଇ ପଠାଇବା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିଥିଲି । ମୋର ଅନୁରୋଧ ରକ୍ଷାକରି ପ୍ରଥମଥର ପାଇଁ ଓଡିଫନ୍ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ଲେଖା ମୁଦ୍ରଣ କରି ପଠାଇଥିବା ସେ କର୍ମବୀର ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ । ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଏ ବର୍ଷ ଓଡିଫନ୍ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ନପାରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଲେଖା ମୁଦ୍ରଣ କରାଇବାରେ ସହାୟତା ଚାହିଁଲେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡିଫନ୍ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ମୋର ବିଶେଷ ଅନୁରୋଧ ।

ମୋର ଏଇ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱରେ ସହାୟତା କରିଛନ୍ତି ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ବିଜୟ ମିଶ୍ର (ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍), ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର (ସିଲ୍‌ଭର୍ ସ୍ପ୍ରିଙ୍ଗ୍), ଶ୍ରୀ ବିଶ୍ୱରଞ୍ଜନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ (ଟରୋଣ୍ଟୋ), ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ (ଭର୍‌ଜିନିଆ) ଓ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ମୌସୁମୀ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ (ସିଲ୍‌ଭର୍ ସ୍ପ୍ରିଙ୍ଗ୍) । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ପ୍ରେରଣା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ କୃତଜ୍ଞ । ମୋର ସ୍ୱାମୀ (ନରେଶ ଦାସ) ଓ ସନ୍ତାନମାନଙ୍କ (ବାଗ୍ମୀ, ମୃଣାଳୀ, ଶାଶ୍ୱତୀ) ପାଇଁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ରଖିଥିବା ସମୟକୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ପତ୍ରିକାଟିର ସମ୍ପାଦନା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ବିନିଯୋଗ କରିଛି । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବୁଝାମଣା ଓ ସହଯୋଗ ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଋଣୀ ।

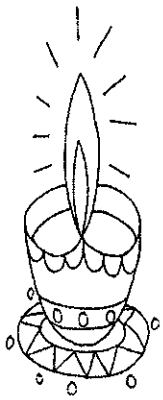
ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କର ମତାମତକୁ ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଦେଇ, ସଂପାଦନା ଦାୟିତ୍ୱବୋଧର ଅଧିକାର ଓ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟର ସୀମା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ରହି, ଲେଖାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର, ସୁସଜ୍ଜିତ ଓ ତ୍ରୁଟିଶୂନ୍ୟ କରି ଅର୍ପଣ କରିବାପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଯଥାସାଧ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରିଛି । ତଥାପି ଯଦି ଭ୍ରମଶୀଳ ମନର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ ସମ୍ପାଦନାରେ ତ୍ରୁଟି ଥାଏ ତେବେ ପାଠକ, ପାଠିକା ମାନେ କ୍ଷମା କରିବେ ବୋଲି ଆଶା ।

ଆଉ ଶେଷରେ ମୋର ଏଇ ସନ୍ଦେଶ, 'ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଗେଇଚାଲ' । ଜୀବନଯାତ୍ରାର ଗତିପଥରେ କେତେକେତେ ବାଧା, କେତେବେଳେ ପାହାଡ ତ, କେତେବେଳେ ଘନ ଜଙ୍ଗଲ, କେତେବେଳେ ପୁଣି ଉଛୁଳା ନଈର ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧକ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମକୁ ହିଁ ସେ ପାହାଡର ପଥରକୁ ହଟାଇ ଆଗେଇବାକୁ ପଡିବ, ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ଭିତରେ ରାସ୍ତା ତିଆରି କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ଓ ଉଛୁଳା ନଦୀକୁ ପାର କରିବାପାଇଁ ନୌକା ଖୋଜି ଆଣିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ଅନ୍ଧାରୀ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପଥର ସନ୍ଧାନ କରିବାପାଇଁ ଆମକୁ ହିଁ ବତୀ ଜାଳିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ।

ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଚାଲ

ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଚାଲ
ଡରିଯାଅ ନାହିଁ ଦେଖି ପଥରେ ଅନ୍ଧାର
ଆଲୁଅ ଓ ଅନ୍ଧାର ଏ ଦୁନିଆର ରୀତି
କେବେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ପୁଣି କେବେ ଅମାରାତି
ଅନ୍ତରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ବତୀ ସଦା ରଖ ଜାଳି
ଆପଣାଛାଏଁ ଅନ୍ଧାର ଯିବ ଅପସରି
ପଥରେ ପଥର ଦେଖି ହୁଅ ନାହିଁ ସ୍ଥିର
ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଅସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଚୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କର ସେ ପଥର
ଭୟ ନାହିଁ, ଅନ୍ତଃର୍ମନ କର ବଳିୟାର
ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ।

ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଇଚାଲ
ଅତୀତକୁ ଫେରିଚାହିଁ ନହୁଅ କାତର
ଅତୀତ ଘଟଣା ସର୍ବ ଅତୀତରେ ଲୁପ୍ତ
ତୁମ ଅଧିକାର ତହିଁ ସ୍ଥିର ଓ ସୀମିତ
ଆରମ୍ଭ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନରୁ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟର ସିଡି
କେତେ ଯେ ପାହାଚ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱେ ଯାଇଅଛି ମାଡି
ସିଡି ଚଢିବାକୁ ମନେ ରଖନାହିଁ ଭୟ
ଅତୀତର ଅନୁଭୂତି ହୋଇବ ପାଥେୟ ।
କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟରେ ରଖ ଲୟ, ମନେ ରଖ ବଳ
ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ।



ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଗେଇଚାଲ
ଅଲଂଘ୍ୟ, ଅଜେୟ ଅଟେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସର ବଳ
ସେ ଶକତି କାଟିବାକୁ କାହିଁ ନାହିଁ ଅସ୍ତ୍ର
ସତ୍ୟ, ଧର୍ମ ପଥେ ସଦା ହୁଅ କର୍ମରତ
ଅନ୍ୟାୟ, ଅଧର୍ମେ କେବେ ନଦିଅ ପ୍ରଶ୍ରୟ
ଖଳ ମେଳେ ସମୟ ନକର ଅପଚୟ
ପ୍ରତି ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ଜୀବନର
ବନ୍ଧୁ, ପ୍ରିୟଜନେ ସ୍ନେହ ଦେଇ ତୋଷ କର
ମାନବ ହିତରେ ଲୟ ରଖି ନିରନ୍ତର
ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଆଗେଇଚାଲ ।

ମୋର ସମସ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱନିୟନ୍ତା ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରୀଚରଣ ତଳେ ସମର୍ପିତ କରି ରହୁଛି ।

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, ଜଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ଏହି ସଂପାଦକୀୟଟି ମୁଁ କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆର ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ପାଣ୍ଡେଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କର ନିଷ୍ଠାପରତା, ବନ୍ଧୁତା, ସହାନୁଭୂତି ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାୟ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ପ୍ରତିବାଦର ସ୍ୱର ଉତ୍ତୋଳନ କରିବାର ଦୃଢମନ୍ୟତା ପାଇଁ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରୁଛି ।

ଅଭୁଲା - ଅତୀତ

ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ, ଫ୍ଲୋରିଡା

ସୁରଜିତା ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବାର ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ପଚିଶ ବର୍ଷରୁ ବେଶୀ । ଆମେରିକାର ଆଦବକାଇଦା ରଙ୍ଗଢଙ୍ଗରେ ମିଶିବାକୁ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷରୁ ବୋଧହୁଏ ବେଶି ଲାଗିଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ମନେହୁଏ, ଯେମିତି ସେ ସେଇ ପଚିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଆଗର ସୁରଜିତା । ମନେହୁଏ ଏଇ ଯେମିତି ସେ ଭାରତ ଛାଡି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଶୁଭଙ୍କରଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ କରି । ସେତେବେଳେ ତିନି ଚାରିମାସ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଭିସା ପାଇଁ । ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଦିନ ଗଣୁଥିଲେ ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କ ପଥ ଚାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁରଜିତା ଯେମିତି ଏକ ଦୋଦୁଲ୍ୟମାନ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ସେତେବେଳେ । ଏକ ଦିଗରେ, ଶୁଭଙ୍କରଙ୍କ ସ୍ନେହ, ପ୍ରେମର ଆକର୍ଷଣ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଗକୁ ଟାଣୁଥିଲା, ଅନ୍ୟ ଦିଗରେ ବୋଉ, ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ବନ୍ଧୁମାନଙ୍କ ଅକଳନ ନିଃସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର ଭଲ ପାଇବା ତାଙ୍କୁ ପଛକୁ ଭିଡୁଥିଲା । ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଜିତିଲେ । ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କ ଦୋଦୁଲ୍ୟମାନ ମନ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହେଲା ଏକ ସ୍ଥିରତାକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ନେବାକୁ ।

ଆସିବାପରେ, ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ତାଙ୍କୁ ୟୁରୋପ୍ ନେଇଗଲେ, ରୋମ୍, ପ୍ୟାରିସ୍, ସୁଇଜରଲାଣ୍ଡ, ଲଣ୍ଡନ୍ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ରୋମାନ୍ କୋଲିସିୟମ୍, ଟ୍ରେଭି ଫାଉଣ୍ଟେନ୍, ଭାଟିକାନ୍ ସିଟି, ମାଇକେଲ ଆଞ୍ଜେଲୋଙ୍କ ଆର୍ଟ, ଷ୍ଟାଚ୍ୟୁ ଅଫ୍ ମୋଜେସ୍, ଫ୍ଲୋରେନ୍ସର ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମ୍ଠାରୁ ଭେନିସ୍‌ର ସେଣ୍ଟମାର୍କ ସ୍କୋୟାର୍, ପିସାର ଲିନିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଟାଓ୍ୟାର୍, ସୁଇଜରଲାଣ୍ଡର ସଲଜ୍‌ବର୍ଗି, ଟିଟ୍‌ଲିସ୍ ମାଉଣ୍ଟେନ୍ ଟପ୍, ପ୍ୟାରିସ୍‌ରୁ ଲଣ୍ଡନ୍ କ୍ରୁଜ୍, ହୁଭର ଡ୍ୟାମ୍ ଏବଂ ପ୍ୟାରିସ୍‌ର ରିଏଲ୍ ପର୍‌ଫ୍ୟୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ ସେ କିଛିଦିନ ବୁଡି ରହିଲେ । ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ଭୁଲାଇବାକୁ କନ୍‌ଫରେନ୍ସ୍‌ରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ନେଇଗଲେ ପୋରଟିରିକୋ, ଭାକେସନ୍‌ରେ ନେଇଗଲେ ମେକ୍ସିକୋ, ବାହାମା, ଭର୍‌ଜିନ୍ ଆଇଲାଣ୍ଡ ..... ହାୟାଟ୍, ହିଲ୍‌ଟନ୍, ମାରିୟଟ୍‌ର ପ୍ରାଚୁର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ସୁରଜିତା ଯେ ଜୀବନକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରି ନ ଥିଲେ, ତାହା ନୁହେଁ - କିନ୍ତୁ ଏକ ଅଜୁହା ଅଭାବର ଅନୁଭୂତି ଛାଇ ଭଳି ସବୁବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଚାଲିଥିଲା, ଚାଲିଛି ଆଜିବି ।

ଭାରତରୁ ଆସିବାର କିଛିଦିନ ପରର ଘଟଣା ମନେପଡେ ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କର । ଏତେ ବଡ ପ୍ୟାଲେସ୍ ଭଳିଆ ଘରଟାରେ ସେ ଏକା ଏକା । କ୍ଷୀରଟା ବାହାରେ ରଖିଥିଲେ ସିଝେଇ ସିଝେଇ ଘନ ଆଉଟା କରି । ଶୁଭଙ୍କର କ୍ଷୀରି ଖାଇବାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ଦ୍ୱିପହରରେ ଆଖି ଲାଗିଯାଇଥିଲା ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କର କିଛି କ୍ଷଣ ପାଇଁ । ହଠାତ୍ ଚମକି ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା ତାଙ୍କର । ବିଲେଇଟା କ୍ଷୀର ଖାଇଗଲାକି ? ପରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହେଲେ । ଏମିତି ନିବୁଜ ଘର ଯେ ମଶାଟାଏ ବା ମାଛିଟାଏ ପଶି ପାରିବନି । ବିଲେଇ ଆସିବ କେଉଁଠୁ? ପେଟ୍ ରଖିବା ପସନ୍ଦ ନୁହେଁ ଶୁଭଙ୍କରଙ୍କର । ଭାରତରେ ଥିଲା ବେଳେ କେତେ ଥର ବିଲେଇ କ୍ଷୀର ଖାଇ ଦେଇଛି, ଟିକେ ଆଖି ବୁଲାଇଦେଲେ ବା ଅସାବଧାନ ହେଲେ । ସୁରଜିତା ଦୀର୍ଘ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ମାରିଲେ । କାଉ କୋଇଲି ନ ଥିବା ଜାଗା । କାଞ୍ଚନ ଆସିବନି ଏଠାକୁ ବାସନ ମାଜିବାକୁ କି ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ଆସିବନି ଏଠାକୁ ବଜାର ସଉଦା କରିଦେବାକୁ । କୋଳାହଳ ନାହିଁ । ରଜର ଦୋଳି, କୁଆଁର ପୁନେଇଁର ଚାନ୍ଦ ପୂଜା, ଠୋ ଠୋ ହସ, ଖୁଦୁରିକୁଣୀରେ ସକାଳ ଫୁଲ ତୋଳା, ହୋଲୀର ଉଜୁଡା ରଂଗ ଖେଳ - ସବୁ ବହୁ ଦୂରରେ - ପଛେଇ ଯାଉଛି ସେତିକି ଜୋର୍‌ରେ - ଯେତିକି ଜୋର୍‌ରେ ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଛି ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ।

ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ, ପୋର୍ଟଅରେଞ୍ଜ୍ , ନିଜର ଲାଗିବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲା ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କୁ, ପୁଅ,ଝିଅଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ । ସମୟର ସୁଅରେ ସୁରଜିତା ମାଷ୍ଟର୍ କରିଲେ, ପି·ଏଚ୍·ଡି କରିଲେ, କଲେଜ୍‌ରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଚାକିରୀ ପାଇଲେ । ସାବଲୀଳ ଭାବେ ଜୀବନ ଗତି ଚାଲିଲା ପୁଅ ଝିଅଙ୍କ ଜଞ୍ଜାଳ ଭିତରେ । କାଲି ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ଜନ୍ମଦିନ । ରେଷ୍ଟୁରାଣ୍ଟରେ ଡିନର୍, ପୁଅ ଝିଅଙ୍କଠୁ ଉପହାର, ଶୁଭଙ୍କରଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଡାଇମଣ୍ଡ୍ ହୁପ୍ ଇଅରିଂ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସତରେ କ'ଣ ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ କିଛି ଅଭାବ ନାହିଁ? ସୁରଜିତା ସେକ୍‌ସନାଲ୍ ଲେଦର୍ ସୋଫାରେ ଗୋଡ ଲମ୍ବେଇ ଟିକିଏ ଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଚ୍ ହେବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଲେ । ବିରାଟ କଷ୍ଟମ୍-ମେଡ୍ ଲିଭିଙ୍ଗ୍ ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ ସେ ୫୨ ଇଞ୍ଚର ହାଇଡେଫିନିସନ୍ ଡିଜିଟାଲ ଟିଭିଟା ବେଳେବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବିରକ୍ତ ହିଁ କରେ । ସୁଇଚ୍‌ଟା କ୍ଷଣକ ଭିତରେ ଟିପି ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଲେ ପୁଣି । ପୁଅ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲରେ ଏବଂ ଝିଅ କଲେଜ୍‌ରେ ସୋଫୋମର୍ ପାଠ ପଢା ପରେ ବାକୀ ସମୟ ତାର ବନ୍ଧୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ପୁଅ

ଝିଅଙ୍କର ସେପାରେଟ୍ ଫୋନ୍ ଲାଇନ୍ । ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥାଏ । ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଖବରକାଗଜ, ସାଇଣ୍ଟିଫିକ୍ ଆମେରିକାନ୍, ସାଇନ୍ସ ନିଉଜ୍, ଇରାକ୍ ୱାର୍ ଆଉ ପୃଥିବୀସାରାର ରାଜନୀତିର ଚିନ୍ତାକୁ ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ବର୍ଷରେ ୨/୩ ମାସ ଉଇକ୍ ଏଣ୍ଡ୍‌ରେ ଫୁଟ୍‌ବଲ୍ ଗେମ୍ ଆପ୍ୟାୟିତ କରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ । ଜୀବନକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରନ୍ତି ସେ ମିନେସୋଟା ଭାଇକିଙ୍ଗ୍ କି ଟାମ୍ପା ବେ ବକେନିୟର୍ସଙ୍କ ହାର୍‌ଜିତ୍ ଭିତରେ ।

ଶୁଭଙ୍କର କେବେଠୁ କଂପାନୀର ଡାଇରେକ୍ଟର୍ ହେଲେଣି । ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କୁ କଲେଜ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡେନି ସେମିଷ୍ଟର୍ ଶେଷ ପରେ ସପ୍ତାହେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ । ସଞ୍ଜରେ ଟୁନା ମାଛ ଚପ୍ କରିବେ ଭାବିଛନ୍ତି । ଗରମ ଗରମ ଛାଣିଲେ ଚପ୍ ଗୁଡା ଖାଇବାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗିବ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ । ହାତରେ କାମ କରିବାକୁ କିଛି ନାହିଁ ଏବେ । ଲେଦର୍ ସୋଫାଟା ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତ । ପିଲୋ ଗୁଡା ଯଦିଓ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅଡୁଆ ଲାଗେ, ହେଲେ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଏକା ଏକା ଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଚ୍ ହେବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ । ସୁରଜିତା ଆଖି ବନ୍ଦକରିଲେ । କିଏ ଯେମିତି ଟାଣି ନେଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ ପଛକୁ ।

ଘର ମନେପଡିଲା । ବାପା ମନେପଡିଲେ । ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କ ବୟସ ସେତେବେଳେ ଛଅ କି ସାତ । ଦ୍ୱିପହର ହୋଇଥାଏ । ନିଛାଟିଆ ଖରାବେଳ । ଦିନଯାକର ରୋଷେଇ, ଠାକୁର ପୂଜା କରି ଖିଆପିଆ ସାରି ବୋଉ ବଡ ଘରେ ଆଖି ବୁଜି ପଡିଥାଏ । ଖରାଦିନ । ତାକର ବାକର ହାଲିଆ ହୋଇ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଘରେ ଗଡୁଛନ୍ତି । ବାପା କଚେରିକୁ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ନାମକରା ବଡ ଓକିଲ ସେ ସେତେବେଳେ । ସେମିତି କାଳିଆ କୋଟ୍, ଧଳା ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ ଛୋଟ ଧଳା ଓକିଲ ଟାଇ । ପତଳା ହୋଇ ଛଅ ଫୁଟର ଲମ୍ବା ମଣିଷ । ତାଙ୍କ ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ପାଖରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଯେମିତି ଛୋଟ ବାଙ୍କର ହୋଇଯାଆନ୍ତି । ଜିତାଙ୍କ ଛୋଟ ନିରୀହ ଆଖିରେ ବାପା ଯେମିତି ବିରାଟ ପୃଥିବୀ । କାଁ ଭାଁ ଶବ୍ଦ ନାହିଁ । ବୋଉ କହିବା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଜିତାଙ୍କୁ ନିଦ ଲାଗି ନଥିଲା । ଗୋଡ ଚାପି ଚାପି ଘର ଭିତରୁ ଚାଲିଆସିଲେ । ତଳ ପଟର ଲମ୍ବା ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ ରୋଷେଇ ଘର ପାଖକୁ ଆଉଜି ଠିଆ ହେଲେ । ଅଗଣାରେ ଲେମ୍ବୁ ଗଛ , ଖରାଦିନିଆ ଗେଣ୍ଡୁ ଓ ଗୋଲାପ ଗଛ । ପାଚେରି ପାଖକୁ ଆମ୍ବ ଗଛ । ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଆମ୍ବ ଦୋହଲୁଥାଏ । ହଠାତ୍ ଜୋତା ଶବ୍ଦରୁ ବୁଝିପାରିଲେ ବାପା କଚେରିରୁ ବୋଧେ ଟିକେ ଆଗୁଆ ଫେରିଛନ୍ତି । ଜିତା ସେମିତି କାନ୍ଥକୁ ଆଉଜି ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିଲେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଦିଗକୁ, ତାଙ୍କ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଆଖିରେ ଦୁନିଆ ଯାକର ସମ୍ମାନ ଅଜାଡି । ଖରାଦିନେ କୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପାଣି ଭରି ରଖି ଦେଇଥାଏ କାଞ୍ଚନ । କାରଣ ପାଣିର ଅଟକଳ ଖରାଦିନେ । ସବୁ ସମୟରେ କଳରେ ପାଣି ଆସେନା । ବାପା ଆସି କୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ପାଣି ନେଇ ହାତ ଧୋଇଲେ । ଆଉ ହାତ ପୋଛି ସେମିତି କୋଟ ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ ଟାଇ ଉପରେ ଜିତାଙ୍କୁ ତୋଳିନେଲେ କାଖକୁ । ଜିତା ସେତେବେଳେ ସେ ଆଶା କରି ନଥିଲେ । ଛୋଟ ମନରେ ବୁଝିଥିଲେ ସେ କାଖ ହେବା ବୟସର ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଖରାଦିନର ସେ ଅଭାବିତ ଓ ଆଶାତୀତ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଆଜି ବି ମନ ଭିତରେ ସତେଜ । ସେ ବିରାଟ ଲମ୍ବା, ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ଓ ତୀକ୍ଷ୍ଣ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ସଂପନ୍ନ ମଣିଷଟିର କାଖରେ ଥିବାର ସେ ନିଗୂଢ ସ୍ମୃତି । ସବୁ ପାଇବାର, ସବୁ ଅଭାବର ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ, ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତାର ଅନୁଭବରେ, ଛୋଟ ଜିତା ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ସବୁ କରି ପାରିବାର, ସବୁ ଜାଣି ପାରିବାର, ସବୁ ଦେଖି ପାରିବାର ଗୋଟିଏ ଲୋକ ପୃଥିବୀରେ । ସିଏ ବାପା ।

କାଖରେ ଥାଇ ସୁରଜିତା ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଥିଲେ, "ବାପା ତୁମର ବୟସ କେତେ ?" ବାପା ବୋଧେ ଆଶା କରି ନ ଥିଲେ ସେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ତାଙ୍କଠୁ ସେତେବେଳେ । ମୁହଁଟାର ଭାବରେ ହାଲ୍‌କା ଏକ ନରମ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହସ ହସି କହିଥିଲେ "ପଚାଶ" । ହଠାତ୍ ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କୁ ମନେ ହେଲା ଯେମିତି ପାଦ ତଳୁ ପୃଥିବୀଟା ଖସିଗଲା କି । ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ?? ଆଖି ପାଇଲାନି ତାଙ୍କର । ସୁରଜିତା ଅଙ୍କରେ ଭଲ । ହରିଲେ ସାତରେ । ନିଜ ବୟସକୁ ସାତରେ ଗୁଣିଲେ ପୁଣି । ଅଣତାଶ । ପଚାଶ ପୁଣି ଆହୁରି ଅଧିକ । ଆଖି ଲୁହରେ ଜକେଇଗଲା । ଭାବିଲେ ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ - ବାପା ମରିଯିବେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡି ଚାଲିଯିବେ । ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷଟା ମନେ ହୋଇଥିଲା ସେତେବେଳେ ଆଜିର ଶହେ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ଭଳି । ବାପା ଦେଖି ନଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିର ଲୁହ, କାରଣ ହଠାତ୍ କିଏ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଘରେ ଆସି ଡାକିଲା, 'ବାବୁ ଅଛନ୍ତି?' । ବାପା ଆସ୍ତେ ଜିତାଙ୍କୁ ତଳେ ଛାଡି କହିଲେ, " ମା' ଯା' ବୋଉକୁ ଉଠା ଚା' କରିବ" । ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତାରେ ସେ ଅପରାହ୍ନଟା କଟିଗଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସେ ଅପରାହ୍ନର ସ୍ମୃତି ଆଜି ଚାଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବି ଅକ୍ଷତ ଓ ସତେଜ ।

ଗତ ସପ୍ତାହରେ ସୁରଜିତା ସତଚାଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ଥିଲା । ମନେ ହୁଏନା, ଏ ଭିତରେ ଏତେ ବର୍ଷ ଚାଲିଗଲାଣି । ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷଟା ହାତ ପାହାନ୍ତାରେ । ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ ମନେ ହୁଏ ତଥାପି ଯୌବନ । ଲାନ୍‌କୋମ୍,

ପ୍ରେସ୍‌କ୍ରିପ୍‌ଟିଭ୍, ଏଷ୍ଟି ଲଡର୍‌ର ଫାଉଣ୍ଡେସନ୍, ମାସ୍କାରା, ଆଇ ସାଡୋ, ଇଭିନିଂ ପର୍‌ଫ୍ୟୁମ୍‌ର କାଟେଗୋରି ଭିତରେ ବୟସର ଧକ୍କା ହାଲ୍‌କା ହୋଇଯାଏ । ମେକ୍‌ଅପ୍‌ର କମ୍‌ବେଶିରେ ଆଡେଇ ଦେଇ ହୁଏ ସହଜରେ ବୟସକୁ । ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷରେ ବି ମନେ ହୁଏ ଯେମିତି ଅଫୁରନ୍ତ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଆଗରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ, ଛୋଟ ବୟସରେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷଟା ଜିତାଙ୍କ ନିରୀହ ମନରେ ଅନେକ ଭୟ ସଂଚାର କରିଥିଲା । ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ହରେଇବାର ଅକୁହା ବେଦନା ତାଙ୍କ ବିରାଟ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ଭୂମିକମ୍ପ ଆଣିଥିଲା । ଆଜି ହଠାତ୍ ଚାଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ସେ ଚାପା କୋହ ଶୂନ୍ୟ କୋଠରିରେ ମିଳେଇଗଲା । ମନେ ହେଲା ବାପା ଥାଆନ୍ତେ କି ? ସେ ହଠାତ୍ ସାତ ବର୍ଷର ଜିତା ହୋଇ ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା ଭରା ଆଖିରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରନ୍ତେ କି ? ସୁରଜିତା ପୁଣି ଚାଲିଗଲେ ପଛକୁ ।

ଅଗଣାରେ ବିରାଟ ବଗିଚା ଥିଲା । ବାପା ଅବସରରେ ବଗିଚା କାମ କରିବାକୁ ଭଲପାଆନ୍ତି । ମନର କଠିନ ସମସ୍ୟା ସବୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଇ କାମ ଭିତରେ ହିଁ ସମାଧାନ କରିପାରନ୍ତି । ଛୋଟ ଜିତା ଆଉଟିକେ ବଡ ହେଲାପରେ, ଆଉ ଦିନେ, ମଝି ଅଗଣାର ସେ ଲେମ୍ବୁ ଗଛ ପାଖେ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଥିଲେ, "ବାପା, ସରକାର କିଏ?"

ବାପା - "ତୁ ଜିତା ।"

ଜିତା - "ହେ ନାଁ - ସତ କୁହ ନାଁ ବାପା- ସରକାର କିଏ ?"

ବାପା - "ମୁଁ ।"

ଜିତା - "ହେ - ନାଁ, ନାଁ, ସତ କୁହ ।"

ବାପା - "ତୋ' ବୋଉ", (ବାପା ହସୁ ଥାଆନ୍ତି ଚାପା ଚାପା)

ଜିତା - "ନାଁ, ନାଁ-" (ହସି ହସି ଗଡିଗଲେ ଜିତା 'ବୋଉ' ନାଁ ଶୁଣି ।) - "ଆଉ କିଏ ସରକାର ହୋଇପାରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉ ହେବ ସରକାର ! କୁହ ନାଁ ବାପା ।"

ବାପା - "ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ସରକାର ।"

ବୁଝି ପାରିନଥିଲେ ସେତେବେଳେ ସୁରଜିତା ସରକାରର ଡେଫିନିସନ୍ । ବହୁ ପରେ ବୁଝିଥିଲେ । ଆଉ ସେତେବେଳେ, ଅଜଳନ ସମ୍ମାନରେ ବାପା ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ଆହୁରି ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱକୁ ଉଠିଗଲେ । ରାଜନୀତିରେ ଗଭୀର ଜ୍ଞାନ ବାପାଙ୍କର । ଆଜି ସୁରଜିତା, ଆମେରିକାରେ କଲେଜ୍ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି, ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ସୀମିତ ଜ୍ଞାନକୁ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଗଭୀର ଜ୍ଞାନ ସଙ୍ଗେ ତୁଳନା କରିବାକୁ ଲଜ୍ଜା ଲାଗେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ! ଯେମିତି ବାପାଙ୍କ ଅଗାଧ ଜ୍ଞାନର ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଜ୍ଞାନ ବିନ୍ଦୁଏ ଜଳ ଭଳି ।

ବାପା ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିଲେ ଠିକ୍ ସେ ଘଟଣାର ପଚିଶ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ପଞ୍ଚାସ୍ତରୀ ହୋଇଥିଲା ସେତେବେଳେ । ସୁରଜିତା ଆମେରିକାରୁ ଯାଇପାରିଲେନି । ଅତିକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ସମୟ ଭିତରେ ସେ ଆମେରିକାର ସିଟିଜେନ୍ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏବେ ଭାରତ ଯିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭିସା ଦରକାର । ବୋଉବି ବାପାଙ୍କ ଯିବାର କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଝୁରି ଝୁରି ଚାଲିଗଲା । ପୁଅ ଝିଅଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ କହିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହୁଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ କହି ହୁଏନା । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଭିଡିଓ ଗେମ୍ ଭିତରେ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଆଣିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହୁଏ ନା । ସୁରଜିତା ସୋପାରୁ ଉଠି ରୋଷେଇ ଘରକୁ ଗଲେ । କାଚ ଝରକା ଦେଇ ପଛ ଅଗଣାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ । ଭୁର୍ସୁଙ୍ଗା ଗଛଟି ଝଙ୍କାଳିଆ ହୋଇ ବଢୁଛି । ଶୀତ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବଢିବ ଯାହା । ଭୁର୍ସୁଙ୍ଗା ପତ୍ରର ବାସ୍ନା ଭଲ ଲାଗେ ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କୁ ଉପମାରେ ବା ମସୁର ଡାଲିରେ । ପୁଅ ଝିଅ ଛୁଅଁନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ଯଦିଓ, ବେଳେବେଳେ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଖାଆନ୍ତି । କଦଳୀ ଗଛରେ ଭଣ୍ଡାଟିଏ ପଡିଛି । ଛୋଟ ତିନି ଫୁଟର ସଜନା ଗଛଟି ପବନରେ ନହକା ନହକା ଦୋହଲୁଛି । ଏଇ ସବୁ ଭିତରେ ବାପା ପୁଣି ଝାପ୍‌ସା ହୋଇ ଆସିଗଲେ । ମଝି ଅଗଣାର ଲେମ୍ବୁ ଗଛ ଦିଶିଗଲା । ବାପାଙ୍କର ବିରାଟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ସୁରଜିତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ କରିଦେଲା ପୁଣି କିଛି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ପାଇଁ । ପିଛିଲା ଅତୀତର ଅଭୁଲା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ସୁରଜିତା ପୁଣି ମନର ଗନ୍ତାଘରେ ସଯତ୍ନେ ଚାବି ଦେଲେ । କେଉଁ ଫାଙ୍କରେ, ନିଛକ, ନିବୁଜ, ଏକୁଟିଆ ଦ୍ୱିପହରରେ ପୁଣି ଚାବି ଖୋଲିବେ, ଯାହା ତାଙ୍କର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନିଜର - ଅଭୁଲା ଅତୀତର ।

Mrs. Sulaksana Patnaik is a college professor in mathematics and lives with her husband Dr. Shukdeb Sen and five year old daughter Susan in Florida.

ସ୍ମୃତିରୁ ପୃଷ୍ଠାଟିଏ

ଶୁଭଶ୍ରୀ ଦାସ, ନିଉ ଜର୍ସୀ

"ବରଦେଖିବୁ ଉଠ୍" ସ୍ୱରରେ ଧଡପଡହୋଇ ଉଠି ଜେଜେଙ୍କ ସହ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଦୁଆରକୁ ଦଉଡି ଆସିଥିଲି କିଛି ବୁଝିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ । ଦୂରରୁ ବାଜା ରୋଶଣିର ଶବ୍ଦ ପାଖେଇ ଆସୁଥିଲା । ଆଖି ମଳୁମଳୁ ଅବାକ୍ ହୋଇଉଠିଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଦୁଆରେ ଜମା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ - ସାଇର ପିଲାଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ବୁଢା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ଦୋଳ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମୀରେ ବିମାନ ସଜା ହେଲା ପରି ନାଲି ନେଳି ଜରି ଆଉ ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗର ଫୁଲରେ ସଜା ହୋଇ ହଲି ଦୋହଲି ପାଖେଇ ଆସୁଥିଲା ପାଲିଙ୍କିଟିଏ । ମଥାରେ ଚନ୍ଦନ ଟିପା, ବେକରେ ଫୁଲର ଗଜରା ଆଉ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ମୁକୁଟ ପିନ୍ଧି ପାଲିଙ୍କିରେ ବସିଥିବା ଅଦ୍ଭୁତ ମଣିଷଟି ଆଡକୁ ହାତ ଦେଖାଇ ଜେଜେ କହୁଥିଲେ "ଏଇ ଦେଖ୍ ବର" । ଅଧାରାତିର ନିଦୁଆ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଆଖି ଦି'ଟାକୁ ଢିମାଢିମା କରି ବର ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କଭାବେ ପଚାରିଥିଲି "ମୁଁ ବି ବର ହେବି ବଡ ହେଲେ" । ବାଜା ଆଉ ମାଇକ୍‌ର କାନ ଫଟା ଚିତ୍କାର ଭିତରେ ବି ଜେଜେଙ୍କର ନାସ୍ତିବାଚକ ଉତ୍ତର କାନରେ ବାଜିଥିଲା ମୋର । ପ୍ରତିଟି ଗପର ଶେଷରେ, ପ୍ରତିଟି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଆରମ୍ଭରେ ଜେଜେଙ୍କର ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଆଶା ଭରା ସ୍ୱର, "ବଡ ହେଲେ ତୁ ଗାନ୍ଧି ହେବୁ, ନେହେରୁ ହେବୁ, ଡାକ୍ତର ହେବୁ, ବାରିଷ୍ଟର ହେବୁ" ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଭିତରେ "ମୁ ବର କାହିଁକି ହୋଇ ପାରିବିନି" ପ୍ରଶ୍ନରେ ଗୁଡେଇ ତୁଡେଇ ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲି ମୁଁ । କୋଳକୁ ଆଉଜାଇ ନେଇ ଜେଜେ କହୁଥିଲେ "ପୁଅ ମାନେ କେବଳ ବର ହୁଅନ୍ତି, ତୁ ବଡ ହେଲେ ତୋ ପାଇଁ ଏମିତି ବର ଆସିବ" । ହଠାତ୍ ଚିକ୍‌ଚିକ୍ କରି ଉଠିଥିଲା ମୋ ଆଖି । ପାଲିଙ୍କି ଭିତରେ ସେମିତି ସଜ ହୋଇ ବସିଥିବା ଅତି ଆପଣାର ମୁହଁଟିଏ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ନାଚି ଉଠିଥିଲା ବିଜୁଳିବେଗରେ । ମନେ ମନେ ହସି ଉଠିଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ବାଜା ରୋଶଣିର ଶବ୍ଦ ଦୂରେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ । ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥିଲି --

"ଜାଣିଛୁ ତୁ ବର ହେବୁ ବଡ ହେଲେ ।" ରିଙ୍କାରୁ ଓହ୍ଲେଇ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଦୁଆରେ ପାଦ ରଖୁ ରଖୁ ମୋ ଚିତ୍କାରରେ ଚାହିଁଥିଲା ସେ ମୋ ମୁହଁକୁ । "ଧେତ୍", ଚାରି ଆଡକୁ ଆଖି ବୁଲାଇ, ମୋ ହାତକୁ ବ୍ୟାଗ୍‌ଟାକୁ ବଢାଇଦେଇ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ଦଉଡି ଯାଇଥିଲା ସେ ଆଖି ପିଛୁଳାଜେ । ସେ ଏକଥା ଆଗରୁ ଜାଣିଥିଲା ପରି ମନେ ହୋଇଥିଲା ମୋର । ନିଜ ଉପରେ ରାଗ ଅସୁଥିଲା, କେମିତି ସେ ଜାଣିଯାଉଛି ସବୁ କଥା ମୋ ଜାଣିବା ଆଗରୁ ? ଗୋଟିଏ ବର୍ଷର ବ୍ୟବଧାନ ଥିଲା ଆମ ଦିଜଣ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ । ମାମୁଁ ଘରେ କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ଏକାଠି ବଢିବା ପରେ ସେ ରହୁଥିଲା ମା' ପାଖରେ, ଆଉ ମୁଁ ମାମୁଁଘରେ, ଅଜାଙ୍କ ସହ । ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେ ଆସେ ଖୁସି ଦୁଇଗୁଣ ବଢିଯାଏ ମୋର । ତା ଆସିବାକୁ ଚାହଁ ବସିଥାଏ ।

ସେଦିନ ଆହୁରି ଚମତ୍କାର ଘଟିଥିଲା । ଆମ ସାଇରେ ବାହାଘର ହୋଇଥାଏ । ନାଲି ଟୁକୁଟୁକୁ ସାଧବବୋହୂ ପରି ନାଲି ରଙ୍ଗର ପାଟ ଶାଢି ପିନ୍ଧି ନଇଁନଇଁ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପାଦ ରଖୁଥିଲା ନୂଆ ଝିଅ ଟିଏ । ସବୁ କେମିତି ଓଲଟ ପାଲଟ ହୋଇଗଲା ଗୋଟିଏ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକ ଭିତରେ । ଦୁଆରବନ୍ଧ ଉପରେ ଗୋଡ ଲମ୍ବାଇ ବସି କୁନି ଅପା ପାଟି କରୁଥିଲା, "ମୋ ନଣନ୍ଦ ପୁଟୁଳି ନଦେଲେ ତମେ ଆସି ପାରିବନି ଭିତରକୁ" । ଏତେ ସ୍ନେହୀ କୁନି ଅପାର ଏ ରୂପ ନୂଆ ଥିଲା ମୋ ପାଇଁ, ରାଗ ଆଉ ବିସ୍ମୟର କୁହୁଡି ଭିତରେ ସବୁ କେମିତି ଝାପ୍ସା ହୋଇ ଉଠୁଥିଲା । ପଛରୁ ଜଣେ କେହି ପାଟି କରି ଉଠିଲେ "ଏଇ ନେ ତୋ ନଣନ୍ଦ ପୁଟୁଳି" । ବେକ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଚାହିଁଥିଲୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ପଛକୁ । ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗର ବାକ୍ସଟି ଆଡକୁ ହାତ ବଢାଇ ହସି ହସି ଦୁଆରବନ୍ଧ ଉପରୁ ଉଠି ଯାଇଥିଲା କୁନି ଅପା । ଅଟକି ଯାଇଥିବା ନାଲି ଅଳତା ପିନ୍ଧା ହଳଦି ଗୁରୁଗୁରୁ ପାଦଟି ଭିତରକୁ ବଢିଥିଲା ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ।-- କୁନିଅପାକୁ ଘେରି ବସିଥିଲୁ ଆମେସବୁ । ଯାଦୁଗର ପରି ଭଳିକିଭଳି ନୂଆନୂଆ ଜିନିଷ ସବୁ କାଢୁଥାଏ ସେ ବାକ୍ସ ଭିତରୁ । ଶାଢୀ, ବୁଡି, ଅଳତା, ପାଉଡର, ସ୍ନୋ, ପାନିଆ, କୁଙ୍କୁମ ଏମିତି ଅନେକ ଜିନିଷ । ଶୁଣିଲି ବଡ ଝିଅକୁ ମିଳେ ଏଇ ଜାଦୁର ପେଟେରା ଭାଇର ବାହାଘର ସମୟରେ । ଆଖି ଦିଟା ଚିକ୍, ଚିକ୍ କରି ଉଠିଥିଲା ମୋର ସପନର ଘେର ଭିତରେ ।

"ତୁ ବାହା ହେଲେ ମୁଁ ନଣନ୍ଦ ପୁଟୁଳି ନେବି" । ଗୋଡରୁ ଜୋତା କାଢୁ କାଢୁ ମୋ ମୁହଁକୁ ନ ଚାହିଁ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ହୋଇ ଉଠିଥିଲା ସେ ହଠାତ୍, ମୋ ସ୍ୱରରେ । ଚମକି ପଡିଲି ମୁଁ ମନଭିତରେ, ଭୁଲ୍ କଣହେଲା ବୋଲି । ଜୋତା ଦି'ଟାକୁ କଣକୁ ରଖୁ ରଖୁ କହିଲା "ତୁ

ନୁହେଁ, ଗୁଣ୍ଡୁରି ଦେଇ ନେବ ନଣନ୍ଦ ପୁଟୁଳି ମୋ ବାହାଘରର" । ସପନର ବାଲିଘର ମୋର ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯାଇଥିଲା ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ । ଗୁଣ୍ଡୁରି ଦେଇ ବଡବାପାଙ୍କର ବଡଝିଅ, ମୋଠାରୁ ବଡ । ନଖରେ ଗାର ଟାଣୁଥିଲି ମୁଁ ତଳକୁ ଚାହିଁ । ଲୁହ ଦି ଟୋପା ଗଡି ଆସୁଆସୁ ଅଟକି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ନିହାତି ଅସହାୟ ଭାବରେ । ମୋ ମୁହଁକୁ ଉପରକୁ ଉଠାଇ ଉତ୍ତର ଚାହିଁଥିଲା ସେ, "କଣ କହୁଛୁ ?" ତା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର କଠୋରତା, ଆଖିର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଆଉ ସ୍ନେହର ଜାଲ ଭିତରୁ ବହାରିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ନଥିଲା ମୋ ପାଇଁ । ନଣନ୍ଦ ପୁଟୁଳି ବଡ ଝିଅର । କଥାର ସତ୍ୟତା ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରୁକରୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ହଲାଇ ହଁ କରିଥିଲି । ହସିଥିଲା ସେ, ମୁଁ ବି । ହାତ ଧରି ଟାଣିଟାଣି ନେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ସେ ଖେଳିବା ଲାଗି । ମନଭିତରେ ଅଲିଭାଗାର ଟିଏ ଟାଣି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ଅଜାଣତରେ ।

ଅନେକବର୍ଷ ବିତିଯାଇଛି ଯା ଭିତରେ । ସାତ ଦରିଆ ତେର ନଈର ଦୂରତାକୁ ଆଖି ଠାରମାରି ଅନେକବାର ଉଙ୍କି ମାରିଛି ସେଦିନର ସେଇ ଛୋଟିଆ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟି । ସମୟ ଖୋଜି ରଙ୍ଗ ବି ସେଥିରେ ଲଗେଇଛି ଅନେକ । ଏଥର ଘରକୁ ଯିବା ସମୟରେ, ଏମିତି କଥା ମଝିରେ ପଚାରିଥିଲି, "କେବେ ବାହାହେବୁ ତୁ?" ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳିଥିଲା "ତୁ ପୁଣି କେବେ ଆସିବୁ କହ, ସେତେବେଳେ ଦେଖିବା" । "ଧେତ୍, ମୋ ଆସିବାରେ କଣ ଅଛି ? ତୁ ଜଲ୍‌ଦି ବାହା ହେଲୁ ।" ହସି ଦେଇ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ସେ ହଠାତ୍ । "ତୁ ନଆସିଲେ ମୁଁ ବାହାହେବିନି" । ମନଭିତରର ବହୁତ ଗହୀରିଆ କୋଣରେ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ସେଇ କଥାପଦଟି, ଆଖି ବୁଜିଥିଲି ମୁଁ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ।

ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପଶୁପଶୁ ଆନସରିଙ୍ଗ୍ ମେସିନ୍‌ରେ ମେସେଜ୍ ଦେଖି ଅନ୍ କଲି ମୁଁ । "ବାହାଘର କାଲି, ଆସିବୁ ବୋଲି ଭାବିଥିଲି, ଫୋନ କରିବୁ ।" ହାତବ୍ୟାଗ୍‌କୁ ଟେବୁଲ୍ ଉପରେ ରଖି ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଇଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ପିଲାଦିନର ବାଲି ଘର ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଗଲାପରି, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ମୋର ଭାଙ୍ଗି ସାରିଥିଲା ମୋ ସାମ୍‌ନାରେ । ଚା' ପାଇଁ ପାଣି ବସେଇଲି ଚୁଲି ଉପରେ ।

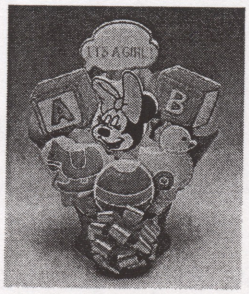
ରେଜେଇକୁ ମୁଁହ ଉପରକୁ ଟାଣି ନେଉ ନେଉ ଅଜାଣତରେ ପାଟିରୁ ବାହାରିଆସିଥିଲା, "ଜାଣିଛୁ, ଏବେ କୁଲୁମାମୁଁର ବାହଘର ହେଉଥିବ" । ହଠାତ୍ ଉଠିପଡି ମତେ ହଲାଇ ପଚାରୁଥିଲା କୌସ୍ତୁଭ, "ସେ ଏବେ ସେଭେନ୍ ପ୍ରମିଶ୍ ନେଉଥିବ ବି ।" ହଠାତ୍ ବୁଝି ପାରିଲିନି, ପରେ ମନେପଡିଲା କେବେ ତାକୁ କହିବାର ସାତଥର ଅଗ୍ନି ଚାରିପଟେ ବୁଲିବା କଥା । ହସିଥିଲି ମନେମନେ, ଥରିଲା ସ୍ୱରରେ ତା' କଥାରେ ସମ୍ମତି ଦେଉ ଦେଉ ।

ସକାଳର ଗରମ ଚା' କପ୍‌ର ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ ସହ ଗାଡି ଷ୍ଟାର୍ଟ୍ କରୁକରୁ ପୁରୁଣା ଓଡିଆ ସିନେମାର ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ୱର ଭାସି ଆସିଲା, "ଆଜି ଆମ ଖୁସିର ଦିନ ଖୁସିରେ ଯିବା ମାତି, ଗାଇବା ଗୀତ, ନାଚି ନାଚିକା ମଜେଇ ଦେବା ରାତି----" । ଭାଇ ବାହଘର ପୂର୍ବ ରାତିର ଏକ ମନୋରମ ପରିବେଶର ସ୍ୱର ଏଇଟି । ବହୁତ ପ୍ରିୟ ଥିଲା ମୋର ଏ ଗୀତ କାହିଁ କେଉଁ ପିଲାଟିଦିନରୁ । କ୍ୟାସେଟ୍‌ଟିକୁ କାଢିଆଣି ଖୋଳ ଭିତରେ ବନ୍ଦ କଲି ମୁଁ ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କ ଭାବେ । ସକାଳର ନରମ ଖରା ଭିତରେ ବି ସବୁ କେମିତି ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ଦିଶୁଥିଲା ମତେ, ଆଖି ପୋଛିଲି ମୁଁ । ମୋ ଭାଇ ବାହାଘର ସରି ଯାଇଥିଲା ।

Mrs Subhashri Das lives in Edison, New Jersey with her husband Kalyan Das and son Koustubh.

ଆଦିଅନ୍ତ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ୍, କଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ



ଯୁକ୍ତରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶର ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଛୋଟ ସହରଟିଏ ଗେଥର୍ସ୍‌ବର୍ଗ୍ । ରାଜଧାନୀ ୱାଶିଂଟନ୍ ଡି·ସି·ରୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ପଚିଶ ମାଇଲ ଦୂରରେ ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଗରେ ଏ ଛୋଟ ସହରଟି ଶିକ୍ଷସମୃଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଗଢିଉଠିଛି । ଆମେରିକାର ୨୭୦ ନମ୍ବର ରାଜପଥ ଏହି ସହରଟିର ଛାତି ଉପରେ ଯେମିତି ଏକ ଗାର ଟାଣି ଦେଇଯାଇଛି । ୨୭୦ ନମ୍ବର ରାଜପଥରୁ ୧୧୭ ନମ୍ବର ରାସ୍ତା ପାଇଁ ଦଶ ନମ୍ବର ଶାଖାରାସ୍ତାରେ ବାହାରିଯିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ୧୧୭ ନମ୍ବର ରାସ୍ତାର ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଦିଗକୁ ଗଲେ ବାମ ପଟରେ ପଡିବ ନିଷ୍ଟ (ନେସ୍‌ନାଲ୍ ଇନ୍‌ସ୍‌ଟିଚ୍ୟୁଟ୍ ଅଫ୍ ଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଡାର୍ଡସ ଆଣ୍ଡ୍ ଟେକ୍‌ନୋଲୋଜି) । ପ୍ରଥମ ଟ୍ରାଫିକ୍ ଲାଇଟ୍‌ରେ ବ୍ୟୁରୋ ଡ୍ରାଇଭ୍‌ରେ ଦକ୍ଷିଣକୁ ଗଲେ ବାମପଟରେ ପଡିବ ଗୋଟିଏ ଛୋଟ ବଜାର । ଆମେରିକାରେ ସେଇ ଭଳି ବଜାର ମାନଙ୍କୁ 'ମଲ୍' କହନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ଛୋଟ ମଲ୍‌ଟି ଭିତରେ ମଧ୍ୟମ ସାଇଜ୍‌ର ଭୋଜନାଳୟଟି, 'ମାଡ୍ରାସ୍ ପ୍ୟାଲେସ୍' । ସେଇ ଭୋଜନାଳୟର ସାମନାରେ ଥିବା କୋଠରିଟିରେ ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁର ଜନ୍ମ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ କୋଳାହଳ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ।

"ରାନୁ, ତମ ଶାଢୀଟା ବେଶ୍ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶୁଛି । କଣ ଡିସେମ୍ବର ମାସର ଓଡିଶା ଯାତ୍ରାରୁ ଆଣିଛ?"
"ହଁ, ମୋ ମଝିଆ ଅପା ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଯା' ଏଇଟା ଉପହାର ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।"
"ତାଙ୍କ ଚଏସ୍ ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ ।"

ଏତିକି କହି ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ କୋଠରିଟିର ଦ୍ୱାରଦେଶକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ଓ ଭିତର ବାହାର ହୋଇ ଦଉଡୁଥିବା ତା'ର ଚଞ୍ଚଳମତି ବାରବର୍ଷର ପୁଅକୁ ସ୍ଥିର ହୋଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଚେୟାର୍ ଉପରେ ବସିବାପାଇଁ ଆଦେଶଦେଇ ପୁଣି ରାନୁ ଆଡେ ଚାହିଁଲା । ରାନୁ ସେତେବେଳକୁ ମିନୁ ସହିତ ଗପ ଜମାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଚାହିଁବାରୁ ମିନୁ ପଚାରିଲା,
"କଣ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅପା, ଆପଣ କଣ ଏମିତି ବେଶରେ ?"
"ନାଇଁ, ଗୋଟିଏ କ୍ଲାସ୍ ସାରି ସିଧା ଏଠିକୁ ଆସିଲି ତ ! ଆଉ ବେଶଭୂଷା ହେବାପାଇଁ ସମୟ ନଥିଲା ।" - ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଉତ୍ତରଦେଲା ।
"ଥିଲେ ବି କଣ ହେଲା ? ଏତେଦିନ ଏ ଦେଶରେ ରହିଲେଣି । ଟିକେ ଏ ଦେଶର ଚଳଣୀ ବି ତ ଶିଖିବା । ନା କଣ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ?" ରାନୁ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ କଲା ।
"କାହିଁକି ନୁହେଁ ? ବୁଝିଲ ମିନୁ, ଏଥର ତ ମତେ ଏମିତି ବେଶରେ ଦେଖୁଛ । କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ଦେଖିବ ମତେ ଅଲ୍‌ଟ୍ରା ମଡର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ଲେଡି ବେଶରେ । ମାଇକେଲ୍ ଜାକ୍‌ସନ୍ ଯେମିତି ପ୍ଲାଷ୍ଟିକ୍ ସର୍ଜରୀ କରି ଧଳା ଆକେରିକାନ୍ ଲେଡି ପାଲଟିଥିଲା, ସେମିତି ରଙ୍ଗ, ଚେହେରା, ବେଶଭୂଷା ବଦଳେଇ, ଓ୍ୱେଷ୍ଟର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଡ୍ୟାନ୍‌ସ୍ ଶିଖି, କେଶକୁ ସାତ ରଙ୍ଗରେ ରଙ୍ଗେଇ ମୁଁ ବି ଗୋଟିଏ ବିଦେଶିନୀ ମହିଳା ହୋଇଯିବି ।"
ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣର ଉତ୍ତରରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ହସିଲେ । ରାନୁ କହିଲା, "ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ସେତେବେଳେ କମଳା ରସ ବଦଳରେ ତମ ଗ୍ଲାସ୍‌ରେ ଖାଲି ଥିବ ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ସୋମରସ, ମାନେ ହ୍ୱିସ୍କି, ବିୟର୍, ୱାଇନ୍, ନା କଣ?"
"ତା'ହେଲେ ଆମ ବିଶୁଭାଇଙ୍କର କଣ ହେବ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅପା ?" ମିନୁ ଥଟ୍ଟା କଲା ।
"କଣ ଆଉ ହେବ ? ତୋ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅପା ଆଉ କଣ ସେତେବେଳେ ପଖାଳ ଖିଆ ବିଶୁ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଘରଣୀ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିବେ ? ଅଲ୍‌ଟ୍ରା ମଡର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଲେଡି, ପୁଣି ବିଶୁ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଘରଣୀ ? ଅସମ୍ଭବ !"

ରାନୁ ମିନୁକୁ ଏତିକି କହି ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆଡେ ଚାହିଁ କିଛିଟା ମଜା ଓ କିଛିଟା ସିରିୟସ୍‌ନେସ୍ ମିଶାଇ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ କଲା, "ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ, କିନ୍ତୁ ମନେ ରଖିଥିବ ଯେ ସବୁ ଜିନିଷର ସୀମା ଥାଏ । ମାଇକେଲ୍ ଜାକ୍‌ସନ୍ ଏତେ ଥର ପ୍ଲାଷ୍ଟିକ୍ ସର୍ଜରୀ କଲା ଯେ ଶେଷକୁ ତା'ର ନାକ

ଖଣ୍ଡିଆ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତମେ ଅଲଟା ମଡର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇ ନୀଳବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଶୃଗାଳ ବେଶରେ ମାଇକେଲ୍ ଜାକ୍‌ସନ୍ ଭଳି ଯେମିତି ହଟହଟା ନ ହୁଅ । ବିଶୁ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ନ ପଚାରିଲ ନାହିଁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଟିକେ ସୀମାରେ ରହିଥିବ ।"

ଏମିତି ସବୁ ଥଟ୍ଟା ଖେଳି, ମଜା ଗପସପ କରି ସମସ୍ତେ ପାର୍ଟି ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ କୋଠରିଟିର ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ କୋଣରେ ନିଜର ଆସ୍ଥାନ ଜମାଇ ସାରିଥିଲେ । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ରାମ ନାରାୟଣ ନାଇଡୁଙ୍କ ବକ୍ତୃତା ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା । ତା'ପରେ ଡକ୍‌ଟର୍ ଦେଶାଇଙ୍କର ଗୀତା ଆଲୋଚନା ଚାଲିଲା । ଦୀପକ୍ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ୱାଗତ କରୁଥିଲା । ଦୀପକର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଅନିତା କୋଠରିଟିର ଦକ୍ଷିଣ କୋଣରେ ବସି ତା'ର ନବଜାତ ପଚିଶ ଦିନର ଝିଅଟିକୁ ବୋତଲରେ କ୍ଷୀର ପିଆଉଥିଲା । କୋଠରିଟି ସାରା ଲୋକ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି । ପ୍ରାୟ ଚବିଶ, ପଚିଶ ପରିବାରଙ୍କୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଥିଲା ଦୀପକ । ତା' ନବଜାତ କନ୍ୟାର ଜନ୍ମ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ଖୁସିର ଉତ୍ସବ ପାଳନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ।

ଦିନ ଦିନ ଧରି କ୍ରମାଗତ ବରଫପାତ ପରେ ଗତକାଲିଠାରୁ ଟିକେ ପାଗ ଭଲ ଥିଲା । ତଥାପି କେବଳ ଗାଡିଯିବା ରାସ୍ତାସବୁକୁ ଛାଡିଦେଲେ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡର ସମସ୍ତ ଖୋଲା ସ୍ଥାନ ସବୁ ବରଫର ମୋଟା ଧଳା ଚାଦର ଭିତରେ ନିଜକୁ ଘୋଡାଇ ରଖିଥିଲେ । ଥଣ୍ଡା ଗଛମାନଙ୍କରେ ଲାଖି ରହିଥିବା ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ବରଫ କଣିକାମାନ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟକିରଣର ସ୍ପର୍ଶରେ କେମିତି ଏକ ନୂଆ ରକମର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥିଲେ । କେତେ କେତେ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ବରଫର ପାହାଡ ସବୁ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ରାନୁର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଥଣ୍ଡା, କାଶ ଲାଗିରହିଥିଲା । ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ବି ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ଥିଲେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ରାନୁକୁ ଗତକାଲି ଡ୍ରାଇଭ୍‌ୱେର ସମସ୍ତ ବରଫ ଏକାଏକା ସଫା କରିବାକୁ ପଡିଥିଲା । ଔଷଧ ଖାଇ ଟିକେ ଭଲହେବାରୁ ଆଜି ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଦୀପକର ପାର୍ଟିକୁ ଆସିପାରିଥିଲେ । ପିଲାମାନେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଅସୁସ୍ଥତା ପାଇଁ ଆସିପାରିନଥିଲେ ।

ସେଦିନ ଶିବରାତ୍ରି ଥିଲା । ରାନୁର ଖାଇବାର ନଥିଲା । କେବଳ ରାନୁ, ମିନୁ, ଓ ମିନୁର ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଲଳିତକୁ ଛାଡିଦେଲେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଆଉ କାହାର ଖାଦ୍ୟରେ ବାରଣ ନଥିଲା । ଗେଥର୍ସ୍‌ବର୍ଗ୍‌ର ମାଡ୍ରାସ୍ ପ୍ୟାଲେସ୍‌ର ଉତ୍ତପମ୍, ଦୋସା, ସମ୍ବର୍ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତ ସୁସ୍ୱାଦୁ ଖାଦ୍ୟପଦାର୍ଥ ମାନଙ୍କର ବାସ୍ନା କୋଠରିଟିର ସମସ୍ତ କୋଣକୁ ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରି ରଖିଥିଲା । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ସୁମି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ଓ ତା'ର ଉପହାରଟି ଆଣି ଅନିତା ପାଖରେ ରଖିଦେଇ 'କନ୍‌ଗ୍ରାଚୁଲେସନ୍‌ସ୍' କହିଲା ।

"ଝିଅର ନାଁ କଣ ରଖିଛ ଅନିତା ?"
"ତେଜସ୍ୱିନୀ । ଡାକ ନାଁ ସୋନି ।"
"ଏ ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶରେ ତେଜସ୍ୱିନୀ ନାଁଟା ଲୋକମାନେ ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ କରିପାରିବେ ତ?"
"ନହେଲେ ସୋନି ଡାକିବେ ।" - ଇରା କହିଲା ।
"ହଁ, ନାଁରେ ବା କଣ ଅଛି । ଯାହାହେଉ ଭଲରେ ଭଲରେ ସବୁ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ଦୟା ।" - ଅନିତା ଉତ୍ତରଦେଲା ।
"ସୁମି, ଇରା ଅପା, ଅସନ୍ତୁ । ଖାଇବାକୁ ଆଣନ୍ତୁ । ଖାଇସାରିବା ପରେ ଭଜନ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବା ।" - ଦୀପକ ଆସି ଡାକିଲା ।

ଠିକ୍ ଏତିକି ବେଳେ ଶିଲା ଅପା ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । "ଅପା, ନମସ୍କାର", ଏକ ସମୟରେ ଆଠ-ଦଶଟି କଣ୍ଠରେ ସେହି ଏକା ଶବ୍ଦ ଭାସିଆସିଲା । ରାନୁ ଶିଲା ଅପାଙ୍କୁ ନମସ୍କାର କରି 'କେମିତି ଅଛନ୍ତି' ବୋଲି ପଚାରିଲା । ଶିଲା ଅପା 'ଭଲ ଅଛି' ବୋଲି କହିଲେ ଓ ରାନୁର ଶାଢୀର ପ୍ରଶଂସାକଲେ । ତିନି ସପ୍ତାହ ତଳେ ଶିଲା ଅପାଙ୍କର ବଡଭାଇଙ୍କର ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ଓ ସେ ବହୁତ ଭାଙ୍ଗିପଡିଥିଲେ ବୋଲି ଦୀପକ କହୁଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ହୁଏତ ଏ ତିନି ସପ୍ତାହ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଶିଲା ଅପା ନିଜର ଭାବନାକୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ କରିଥିଲେ ଓ ସହଜ ଦିଶୁଥିଲେ । ଏ ଜୀବନ ତ ଏମିତି । ଜନ୍ମର କୋଳାହଳ ଓ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ହାହାକାର ମଧ୍ୟରେ କେତେଟା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ସୁଖ, ଦୁଃଖ, ଆନନ୍ଦ, ବିରକ୍ତି, ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ଓ ଅପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର କିଛିଟା ଅନୁଭୂତି ହିଁ ତ ଏ ଜୀବନ ।

କିଛି ସମୟପରେ ଖାଦ୍ୟପର୍ବର ସମାପ୍ତି ଘୋଷଣାକରି ଦୀପକ ମାଇକ୍ ସେଟ୍ କଲା ଓ ଭଜନ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା । ପ୍ରଥମେ ସିଏ ଭଗବାନ ଶିବଙ୍କର ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭଜନ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗାଇଲା । ତାପରେ ଗାଇଲା ଟୁନି । ଟୁନି ପରେ ଦୀପକ କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ଆଉ ଦୁଇଟି ଓଡିଆ ଭଜନ ଗାଇଲା । ହଳଧର ବାବୁ ତବଲା ବଜାଉଥିଲେ ଆଉ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ବଜାଉଥିଲେ ଝାଞ୍ଜ । ଭଜନ ଗୀତର ସ୍ୱରରେ ସାନ କୋଠରିଟି ଝଙ୍କୃତ ହୋଇ ଉଠୁଥିଲା । କିଛି ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ଅତିଥି ତଥାପି ଡେରିରେ ପହଞ୍ଚୁଥିଲେ ଓ ଅନିତା ପାଖରେ ଆଣି ଉପହାର ଜମା

କରୁଥିଲେ । ଅନିତା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ 'ବର୍ଫେ' ଆଣି ଖାଇବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଥିଲା । ସେମାନେ ସେଇ ଏକାଭଳି ଭାଷା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ଅନିତାକୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଥିଲେ ଓ ନବଜାତ କନ୍ୟାଟିକୁ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ, ଛୁଉଁଥିଲେ, ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରୁଥିଲେ ।

ଦୀପକ ଡାକିଲା, "ରାନୁ ଭାଉଜ, ଆପଣ ବି ଗୋଟିଏ ଭଜନ ଗାଆନ୍ତୁ" ।

ରାନୁ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି ଖାଇ ନଥିବାରୁ ଦେହରେ ଶକ୍ତିର ଅଭାବ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲା । ତଥାପି ଭଜନଟିଏ ଗାଇବାକୁ ମନ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଏଇ ଯେ ଶିଶୁ ଜନ୍ମର ଆନନ୍ଦ, ଉତ୍ସବ, କୋଳାହଳର ଆସର ସେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲା, ମନରେ ପୁଣି ଚାରିମାସ ତଳର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଭାସିଆସୁଥିଲା । ସେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଥିଲା ମୃତ୍ୟୁର । ଦୀପକର ବାପାଙ୍କର ଚିରବିଦାୟର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ଦୁଃଖର, ଲୁହର ସେ ହୃଦୟ ବିଦାରକ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ସେଇ ପରମପିତା ଈଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କର ଏ ମାୟାଖେଳର କେତେ କେତେ ଛବି ସବୁ ରାନୁର ସ୍ମୃତିରେ ଚିତ୍ରରୂପ ନେଉଥିଲେ । ଭାବନାରେ ସେ ଲୀଳାମୟଙ୍କର ଲୀଳାର ଗୀତଟିଏ ରଚନାକରି ମନେମନେ ଗାଉଥିଲା । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଦୀପା ଭାବନାରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଫେରାଇଆଣି ଡାକିଲା, "ରାନୁ ଅପା, ଯଶୋମତୀ ନନ୍ଦନ ଗୀତଟା ମିଶିଜରି ଗାଇବା ଆସନ୍ତୁ" । 'ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି' କହି ଦୀପା ଓ ରାନୁ ଗୀତ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ, "ଯଶୋମତୀ ନନ୍ଦନ ବ୍ରଜବର ନାଗର····" ।

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ସବର୍‌ବାନ୍ ହସ୍‌ପିଟାଲ୍‌ର ଇଣ୍ଟେନ୍‌ସିଭ୍ କେୟାର୍ ଇଉନିଟ୍‌ର ଗୋଟିଏ କୋଠରିରେ ମଉସା ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଦୀପକର ବାପା ମୋର୍‌ଗ୍ (ରୋଗୀମାନଙ୍କ ସୁବିଧା ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଉନ୍ନତ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରପାତି ଖଞ୍ଚିତ ଶଯ୍ୟା) ଉପରେ ଶୋଇ ରହିଥିଲେ । କୋଠରିଟିରେ କେବଳ ଚାରିଟି ଚେୟାର୍ ପଡିଥିଲା । ସେଥିରେ ବସିଥିଲେ ଦୀପକ, ଅନିତା, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ତିନିବର୍ଷର ପୁଅ ରିଜୁ ଓ ବିଶୁ ବାବୁ । ବିଶୁ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ କାନ୍ଥକୁ ଆଉଜି ଗୋଟିଏ କୋଣରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ରାନୁ ଓ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ଦୀପକ ଉଠି ଠିଆହେଲା ଓ ରାନୁକୁ ବସିବାକୁ କହିଲା । ରାନୁ ଦୀପକକୁ ବସିବାକୁ କହି ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ସିଏ ସୁସ୍ଥ ଦିଶୁଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଦେହରେ ଲାଇଫ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ପ୍ରଶ୍ୱାସ ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ଚାଲିଥିଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ବ୍ରେନ୍ ସର୍ଜରୀ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଶୁକ୍ରବାର ଦିନ ସକାଳେ ଘରେ ନାତି ସହିତ ଖେଳୁ ଖେଳୁ ପଡିଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଦୀପକ ସେତେବେଳେ ତା' ଅଫିସ୍‌ରେ ଥିଲା । ଅନିତା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ନେଇଗଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ହଠାତ୍ ଡାକ୍ତର କିଛି ଆବ୍‌ନର୍ମାଲିଟି ଲକ୍ଷ କରିନଥିଲେ ଓ ପେନ୍‌କିଲର୍ ପ୍ରେସ୍‌କ୍ରାଇବ୍ କରି ଘରକୁ ଫେରି ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନେବାକୁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ବାଟରେ ସିଏ ଦୋକାନକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ । ଦୋକାନରୁ କିଛି ଗ୍ରୋସରୀ ଆଣି ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ବେଳେ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର ସାମ୍ନାରେ ହିଁ ସିଏ ଥିର ହୋଇ ଠିଆ ହୋଇରହିଲେ ।
"ବାପା, ଘରକୁ ଆସନ୍ତୁ" - ଅନିତା ଡାକିଥିଲା
"ହାଁ, ହାଁ, ଘର, କି ଘର····" - ଏମିତି ଆହୁରି କିଛି ଏପଟ ସେପଟ କଥା କହିବାରୁ ଅନିତା ମନରେ ଶଙ୍କା ହେଲା ଓ ସେ ପୁଣି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏମର୍‌ଜେନ୍‌ସୀକୁ ନେଇଗଲା । ସେଠି ସେମାନେ ଏମ୍‌.ଆର୍‌.ଆଇ କରି ଦେଖିଲେ, 'ଇଣ୍ଟରନାଲ୍ ବ୍ଲିଡିଙ୍ଗ୍' । ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସର୍ଜରୀ କରିବାର ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଇଲେ । ସର୍ଜରୀ କରାଇବା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କର ରେସ୍‌ପନ୍‌ସ୍ ଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ଆସିଲାନି ଓ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲାଇଫ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟରେ ରଖାଯାଇଥିଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ଭାଇଟାଲ୍ ସାଇନ୍ ସବୁ ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ଥିଲା ଓ ସେ 'ବ୍ରେନ୍ ଡେଡ୍' ବୋଲି ଡାକ୍ତର ଜଣାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।

ଏ ଖବର ରାନୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣଠାରୁ ସକାଳେ ପାଇଥିଲା, ଘଟଣାଟିର ଜଟିଳତା ବୁଝିପାରିନଥିଲା । ମଣିଷ ହଜାର ଥର ପଡୁଚି । ତା ବୋଲି କଣ ପତିକରି କିଏ ଜଣେ ବ୍ରେନ୍ ଡେଡ୍ ହୋଇଯିବ ? ରାନୁ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟକୁ ଖବରଦେଲା । ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଦୀପକକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ସବୁ ଘଟଣା ବୁଝିଲେ ଓ ହସ୍‌ପିଟାଲ୍‌ର ଠିକଣା ଆଣିଲେ । ରାନୁର ପିଲାମାନେ ରବିବାର ଦିନ ନାଚ କ୍ଲାସ୍‌କୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ଓ ପାଖ ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ରେ ରାନୁ ବି ଗୀତ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଯାଏ । ହସ୍‌ପିଟାଲ୍‌ଟା ସେଇ ପାଖରେ । ତେଣୁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନାଚ କ୍ଲାସ୍‌ରେ ଛାଡି ଓ ରାନୁକୁ ଗୀତ ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ରେ ଛାଡି ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଥମେ ହସ୍‌ପିଟାଲ୍‌କୁ ଗଲେ । ଦେଢଘଣ୍ଟା ପରେ ସେ' ପୁଣି ରାନୁକୁ ଗୀତ କ୍ଲାସ୍‌ରୁ ପିକ୍ ଅପ୍ କରି ହସ୍‌ପିଟାଲ୍ ନେଲେ ।

ରାନୁ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ପାଦରେ ହାତମାରିଲା । ପୁଣି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଓ ହାତକୁ ଛୁଇଁଲା । ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଦେହର ଉତ୍ତାପ ଠିକ୍ ଥିଲା । ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ବାଟରେ ବୁଝାଇଥିଲେ, 'ବ୍ରେନ୍ ଡେଡ୍ ମାନେ ଡେଡ୍' । ଲାଇଫ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟ ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଭାଇଟାଲ୍ ସାଇନ୍ ସବୁ ଠିକ୍ ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଲାଇଫ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟ ବାହାର କରିଦେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଶରୀର ଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ରେସ୍‌ପଣ୍ଡ୍ ନ କରିପାରେ । ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ରାନୁକୁ ଲାଗୁନଥିଲା ଯେ ସତରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଏମିତି କିଛି ହୋଇଯିବ । ତେଣୁ ବାହାରକୁ ଆସି ସେ ନର୍ସକୁ ପଚାରିଲା । ନର୍ସ ବି ସେମିତି ବୁଝେଇଲା ଯେମିତି ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ବୁଝାଇଥିଲେ । ତଥାପି ରାନୁ ମନେମନେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଡାକୁଥିଲା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ କରି ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଦେହକୁ ଛୁଉଁଥିଲା । ଭଗବାନ ତ ସବୁର କର୍ତ୍ତା । ସିଏ ଚାହିଁଲେ ସବୁକିଛି ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇପାରେ । "ପଙ୍ଗୁ ଲଙ୍ଘୟତି ଗିରିମ୍ ·····।" ଆଉ ମଉସା, ତାଙ୍କର ତ ହୃଦ୍‌ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ଚାଲିଛି । ସାମାନ୍ୟ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କ ସହିତ ସଂଯୋଗ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରିବାଟା କଣ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇଯିବ ? ଅନିତା ଅନ୍ତସତ୍ତ୍ୱା ଥିଲା । ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଓ ଦୀପକ ଅନିତାକୁ ତଳକୁ ନେଇଗଲେ କିଛି ଖୁଆଇବା ପାଇଁ । ଦୀପକ ଗତ ଦୁଇଦିନ ଧରି ଖାଲି ଫୋନ୍ କରୁଛି । ଓଡିଶାକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ଲାଇଫ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟ ବାହାର କରିବା ବିଷୟରେ ନିଜ ମାଆ, ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମତାମତ ସବୁ ଆଣିଛି ।

"ଆଉ ଘଣ୍ଟାକ ପରେ ସେମାନେ ଲାଇଫ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟ ବାହାର କରିଦେବେ । ତୁ ଯା' ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନାଚକ୍ଲାସ୍‌ରୁ ନେଇଆସିବୁ ।" - ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ କହିଲେ । ରାନୁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନାଚକ୍ଲାସ୍‌ରୁ ଆଣି ପୁଣି ହସ୍‌ପିଟାଲ୍‌କୁ ଆସିଲା । ସେମାନେ ଲାଇଫ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟ ବାହାର କରିଦେଲେ ଓ ତଳେ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ଟ୍ରାନ୍‌ସ୍‌ଫର୍ କରାଇବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରୁଥିଲେ । ରାନୁର ସମସ୍ତ ପରିବାର ଦୀପକ ଓ ଅନିତାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ପାଖେ ଥାନ୍ତି । ବିଶୁ ବାବୁ ଓ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବି ଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବାଲ୍‌ଟିମୋର୍ ଯିବାର ଥିଲା, ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ପାଖକୁ । ସେମାନେ ବିଦାୟନେଲେ । ଶୀତ ସମୟ । ଦିନ ବି ବହୁତ ସାନ । ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ମାଡିଆସିବ ଓ ରାତ୍ରିର ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଛାଇଯିବ । ଯେତେ ବିଜୁଳିବତୀ ହେଲେ ବି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କର ଆଲୋକକୁ ତ ଆଉ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ କରିପାରିବନି । ମନେ ମନେ ରାନୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଡାକି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଥିଲା ଯେ ଲାଇଫ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟ ବାହାର କରିବା ପରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ କିଛି ମିରାକ୍‌ଲ୍ ଦେଖାଇ ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ସୁସ୍ଥ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଯେ ଏତେ ବଡ ଠାକୁର, ଆମେରିକାର ନର୍ସ ଓ ଡାକ୍ତରମାନେ ଟିକେ ତ ଜାଣନ୍ତେ । ଚକାଡୋଳାର ମହିମା ବିଷୟରେ ତାଙ୍କର ତ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ବଢିଯାଆନ୍ତା । ନର୍ସ ଓ ଟେକ୍‌ନିସିଆନ୍‌ମାନେ ଆସି ତଳରୁମ୍‌ରେ ମଉସାଙ୍କର ସବୁ ସେଟ୍ କରିଦେଇଗଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ପ୍ରଶ୍ୱାସ ଠିକ୍ ରହିଥିଲା ଓ ଶରୀରର ତାପି ଠିକ୍ ଥିଲା । ଦୀପକ ଓ ଅନିତା ସେଠି ରାତ୍ରିଯାପନ କରିବାକୁ ରହିଗଲେ ଓ ରାନୁ, ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଆସିଲେ । ଘରେ କିଛି ରୋଷେଇ କରିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଲାନି । ବାରମ୍ବାର ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଛବି ସ୍ମୃତିପଟରେ ରୂପ ନେଉଥିଲା । ରାନୁ ଖାଲି ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଡାକି କାନ୍ଦିକାନ୍ଦି ମଉସାଙ୍କର ଜୀବନରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଶବଦାହ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରମାନଙ୍କୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ବୁଝୁଥିଲେ ଓ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞ ଓଡିଆ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଫୋନ୍‌କରି ଶବଦାହ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପରାମର୍ଶ ନେଉଥିଲେ ।

"ତମେ କଣ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଚାହୁଁଚ ? ତା'ହେଲେ ଏମିତି ଶବଦାହ ବିଷୟ ଚିନ୍ତା କାହିଁକି କରୁଛ ?"
"ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ମତ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଏବେ ନହେଲେ ବି କିଛି ସମୟପରେ ମଉସାଙ୍କର ଜୀବନ ଚାଲିଯାଇପାରେ । ଏଣୁ ଏବେଠାରୁ ଆୟୋଜନ ନକଲେ ପରେ ପୁଣି ଦୀପକ ହଇରାଣ ହେବ ।"
"ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦୟାକଲେ ସବୁ ପୁଣି ଠିକ୍ ବି ତ ହୋଇଯାଇପାରେ । ତାଙ୍କର ହୃତ୍‌ପିଣ୍ଡ ତ ଠିକ୍‌ଭାବେ କାମ କରୁଥିଲା । ତମେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ନକରି ଭାବନାରେ ଏମିତି ଅଶୁଭ କଥା କାହିଁକି ଆଣୁଛ ?"
"ଯେଉଁଟା ସତ୍ୟ, ସେଇଟା କଣ ବଦଳାଯାଇ ପାରିବ? ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କଣ ମୁଁ କରୁନି ? କିନ୍ତୁ ସତ୍ୟକୁ ତ ଆଉ ଫାଙ୍କିଦେଇହେବନି ।"

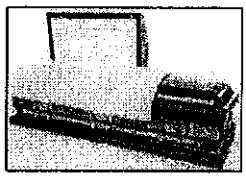
ତଥାପି ରାନୁ ଆଶା ରଖୁଥିଲା ଓ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଥିଲା । ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍‌ରେ ବ୍ରେନ୍ ଡେଡ୍ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ କିଛି ଆର୍ଟିକିଲ୍‌ସ୍ ପଢିବାପରେ ବି ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ସତ୍ୟକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିପାରୁ ନଥିଲା ।

ତା' ପରଦିନ ସକାଳ ସାତଟାରେ ଫୋନ୍ କଲା ଦୀପକ । "ବାପା ଚାଲିଗଲେ ।" - ଦୀପକର ସ୍ୱର ଦୁଃଖର, କିନ୍ତୁ ଅସୀମ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟର । "ମୁଁ ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ଭିତରେ ଯାଇ ତୁମକୁ ହସ୍‌ପିଟାଲ୍‌ରେ ଭେଟିବି । ତା'ପରେ ଆମେ ସେଠି କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ହେବା ।"- ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ କହିଲେ ।

ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ସତ୍ୟକୁ ରାନୁ ବି ଗ୍ରହଣ କଲା । ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟଙ୍କ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଆଉକିଛି ଓଡିଆ ପରିବାରଙ୍କୁ ଫୋନ୍‌କରି ଏ ଦୁଃସମ୍ବାଦ ଜଣାଇଦେଲା ଓ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌କୁ ପଠାଇ ନିଜ କର୍ମକ୍ଷେତ୍ରକୁ ଗଲା । ତିନି ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କନ୍‌ଫରେନ୍ସ୍ ଯିବାର ଥିଲା ଓ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଅନେକ କାମ ବି ଶେଷ କରିବାର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଥିଲା । ଦୁଃଖ ଓ ଅନୁଶୋଚନାରୁ ଏକମାତ୍ର ମୁକ୍ତିର ଉପାୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ନିଜକୁ ମଜାଇ ରଖିବା । ତଥାପି ବାରମ୍ବାର ମଉସାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ମନେପଡୁଥିଲା ଆଉ ତା'ଙ୍କୁ ଥ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍‌ସ୍‌ଗିଭିଙ୍ଗ୍ ପାର୍ଟି ପାଇଁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଥିବାର କଥା ବି ।

.....୨୦୦୨ ମସିହା, ଅକ୍‌ଟୋବର ସତର ତାରିଖ । ସେଦିନ ବାଲ୍‌ଟିମୋର୍ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଭଜନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାର ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ଥାଏ । ୱାଶିଂଟନ୍ ଡି·ସି· ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସେତେବେଳେ କୋକୁଆ ଭୟ । ଆତତାୟୀ ମାତିଛି । ଯେଉଁଠି ନାଇଁ ସେଠି, ଯାହାକୁ ନାହିଁ ତାହାକୁ ଗୁଳି କରି ମାରିଦେଉଛି । ପୋଲିସ୍ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କାହାକୁ ଗିରଫ କରିନାହିଁ । ଅକ୍‌ଟୋବର୍ ୨ ତାରିଖରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲା ତା' ଜଘନ୍ୟ ଗୁଳିମାରିବା କାଣ୍ଡ । ଅକ୍‌ଟୋବର୍ ୩ ତାରିଖରେ ୪ ଜଣକୁ ଗୁଳି ମାରିଥିଲା । ଏମିତି ଅକ୍‌ଟୋବର୍ ୭, ୯, ୧୧, ୧୪ ତାରିଖରେ ଗ୍ୟାସ୍ ଷ୍ଟେସନ୍‌ରେ, ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ରେ, ମଲ୍‌ରେ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଗୁଳି କରି ମାରିବାରୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଭୟରେ ଛାନିଆ ହୋଇ ରହିଥାନ୍ତି । କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ ସୂତ୍ର, ଧଳା ଭ୍ୟାନ୍ । ଧଳା ଭ୍ୟାନ୍ ତ ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ । ତା'ଭିତରୁ କେଉଁଟି ପୁଣି ଆତତାୟୀର ଭ୍ୟାନ୍ ? ରାନୁ ଭଳି ଟିଭି ନଦେଖୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ବାରମ୍ବାର ଟିଭିରେ ସମ୍ବାଦ ଦେଖୁଥିଲା ଓ ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍‌ରେ ଖବର ପଢୁଥିଲା । କାଳେ ଆତତାୟୀକୁ ଧରା ପକାଇବାର କୌଣସି ସୂତ୍ର ମିଳିଯିବ । ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ପଠାଇବାକୁ ଭୟ । ସେମାନେ ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ରୁ ଫେରିବେ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବି ଭୟ । ଗାଡିରେ ତେଲ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି କରିବାକୁ ବି ଭୟ । 'ଭୟ', 'ଭୟ', 'ଭୟ'; ବାହାରକୁ ବାହାରିବାକୁ ବି ଭୟ । ଏତେ ଭୟରେ ରହିବାର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ନାହିଁ । ଭାରତରେ ଭୟ ପାଇଁ ରାତିରେ ଘରୁ ନ ବାହାରିବା କି କେଉଁଆଡେ ଏକା ନଯିବା ପାଇଁ ନିୟମ ଥାଏ । ହେଲେ ବିନା କାରଣରେ କେହି ବନ୍ଧୁକରୁ ଗୁଳି ଚଳାଇ ଜୀବନରେ ମାରିଦେବାର ଭୟ ନଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ଅକ୍‌ଟୋବର ମାସରେ ଭଜନ କରିବାକି ନାହିଁ ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ସନ୍ଦିହାନ ଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ, ବିଶୁବାବୁ, ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ଦୀପକ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସାହସଦେଲେ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବିନା କିଛି ଅଶୁଭ ଘଟିବନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ମନରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଜଗାଇଲେ । ସମସ୍ତେ ତେଣୁ ଅକ୍‌ଟୋବର ସତର ତାରିଖରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ମିଳିଥିଲେ ଓ ସ୍ନାଇପର୍ ମନରେ ସଦ୍‌ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦେବାପାଇଁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଥିଲେ । ଭଜନପରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଥ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍‌ସ୍‌ଗିଭିଙ୍ଗ୍ ପାର୍ଟିକୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଥିଲା ରାନୁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ବିଦାୟ ନେଇ ଯିବାପରେ ଦୀପକର ପରିବାର ଶେଷକୁ ହିଁ ରହିଯାଇଥିଲେ । ରାନୁ କହିଥିଲା, "ମଉସା, ଆପଣମାନେ ଆଗେ ଯାଆନ୍ତୁ । ସ୍ନାଇପର୍ ଯେମିତି ମାତିଛି, ଆପଣମାନେ ଗାଡିଭିତରେ ନ ବସିଲେ ଆମେ ଯାଇପାରିବୁନି ।" ସେଇଟା ମଉସାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଶେଷ ଦେଖା ଥିଲା । ସ୍ନାଇପର୍ ତ ଧରାପଡିଥିଲା ଓ ସେ ଭୟ ଆଉ ନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ମଉସାଙ୍କର କାଳ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ।.....

ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଫୋନ୍‌କରି ଜଣାଇଲେ ଯେ ସେ ଲରେଲ୍‌ର ଫ୍ଲିଟ୍ ଫ୍ୟୁନରାଲ୍ ହୋମ୍‌ରେ ଆସନ୍ତାକାଲି ଶେଷ ସଂସ୍କାର ପାଇଁ ସବୁ ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଆସନ୍ତାକାଲି ଚାରିଟାରୁ ଛଅଟା ଭିତରେ ଭଜନ, କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ କରି ମଉସାଙ୍କର କ୍ରିମେସନ୍ କରାଯିବ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିରର ପଣ୍ଡିତ ରାମାନନ୍ଦ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଶେଷକୃତ୍ୟ କରାଇବେ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ରାନୁକୁ ନିଜ ଅଫିସ୍‌ର ସମୟ ବି ସେଇ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଆଡ୍‌ଜଷ୍ଟ୍ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ।



ମଙ୍ଗଳବାର ଦିନ ସାଢେ ଚାରିଟାବେଳେ ରାନୁ ନିଜ ସାନ ପିଲାଦୁଇଟିଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଲରେଲ୍‌ର ଫ୍ଲିଟ୍ ଫ୍ୟୁନରାଲ୍ ହୋମ୍‌ରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଓ ବଡଝିଅ ଆଗରୁ ଯାଇଥିଲେ ଓ ସମସ୍ତ ଆୟୋଜନରେ ଦୀପକଙ୍କୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଦୀପକ, ଅନିତା, ଶିଲା ଅପା, ସୁମି ସମସ୍ତେ ଚୁପ୍‌ଚାପ୍ ବସିଥିଲେ । ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ବୟସ୍କା ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳା ଜଣେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଦ୍ୱାର ପାଖରେ ସ୍ୱାଗତ କରି ସଂସ୍କାର ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ କୋଠରିଟିକୁ ରାସ୍ତା ଦେଖାଉଥିଲେ । ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଶରୀରକୁ ବଡ ସୁନ୍ଦରଭାବେ ସଜାଇ କାସ୍‌କେଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ରଖାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଗାଢନିଦ୍ରାରେ ଶୋଇ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିବା ମଣିଷଭଳି ସିଏ ଜଣାପଡୁଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଶରୀରରେ ନୂଆ ବସ୍ତ୍ର ଥିଲା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଦପାଖରେ ଓ ଶରୀରର ଦୁଇପାଖରେ ଫୁଲଗୁଚ୍ଛ ରଖାଯାଇଥିଲା । ରାନୁ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଯାଇ ତଳେ ବିଛାହୋଇଥିବା ଥଳା ଚଦର ଉପରେ ବସିଲେ । ଦୀପକ ତା' କି-ବୋର୍ଡରେ ଭଜନ ଗାଇବା ଆରମ୍ଭକଲା । ରାମଙ୍କ ଭଜନ, କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଭଜନ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଭଜନର ସୁର ଭିତରେ ନିଜ ହୃଦୟର ଦୁଃଖକୁ ସେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରାଇ ଜନ୍ମଦାତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଆତ୍ମାଶାନ୍ତିର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଥିଲା । ମିନୁର ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଲଳିତ ମଧ୍ୟ ଭଜନରେ ଯୋଗଦେଲା

ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକ ସଙ୍ଗରେ ଅନୁଚ୍ଚ ସ୍ୱରରେ "ରଘୁପତି ରାଘବ ରାଜା ରାମ୍" ଭଜନ ଗାଉଥିଲେ । ସେତିକିବେଳେ ରାନୁ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ତା' ନିଜ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ବିଷୟ । ଯଦି ଅକ୍ଟୋବର ମାସରେ ତା'ର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହୋଇଯାଇଥାନ୍ତା, ହୁଏତ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଆଜି ତା'ପାଇଁ ବି ଏମିତି ସବୁ ଆୟୋଜନ କରୁଥାନ୍ତେ ।

.....ସ୍ନାଇପର୍‌ର ଭୟରେ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ କଲେଜ କିଛିଦିନ ପାଇଁ ବନ୍ଦରହିଲା । ଖେଳ, କସରତ, ନାଚ, ଗୀତ ଜେନ୍ସ ସବୁ ବି ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିଲା । ହେଲେ କେତେ ଦିନ ବା ଆଉ ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇ ରହିବ ? ଯଦିଓ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମନଭିତରେ ଭୟଥାଏ, ତଥାପି ସବୁ ପୁଣି ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଖୋଲିଲା । ଅଫିସ୍‌ରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ରାନୁ ତା' ଅଫିସ୍‌ମେଟ୍ ରୋଜ୍‌କୁ ସ୍ନାଇପର୍ ପାଇଁ ଭୟ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ତା' ମନର ଭାବ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ କରୁଥିଲା, ସେତେବେଳେ ରୋଜ୍ ତା'କୁ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲା ଯେ ସ୍ନାଇପର୍‌ର ଗୁଳିରେ ମରିବାର ଚାନ୍ସ୍‌ଠାରୁ ଆକ୍‌ସିଡେଣ୍ଟରେ ମରିବାର ଚାନ୍ସ୍ ଆହୁରି ଅଧିକ । ସେଦିନ ସୋମବାର, ଅକ୍ଟୋବର୍ ୨୧ ତାରିଖ । ରାନୁ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଅଫିସ୍‌ରୁ ଫେରିଲା, ମଝିଆଁ ଝିଅ ମିମିକୁ ସକର୍ ପ୍ରାକ୍‌ଟିସ୍ ପାଇଁ ନେବ ଓ ବଡଝିଅ ସ୍ୱାତୀକୁ ଅର୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ରା ପାକ୍‌ଟିସ୍‌ରୁ ପିକ୍‌ଅପ୍ କରି କୋରସ୍ ପ୍ରାକ୍‌ଟିସ୍‌ରେ ନେଇ ଛାଡିବ । ମନରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଭୟ ଥାଏ । କିଏ ଜାଣେ ସ୍ନାଇପର୍ କେଉଁଠି ଥିବ ? ଗାଡି ଚଳାଇ ମିମିକୁ ସକର୍ ପ୍ରାକ୍‌ଟିସ୍ ପାଇଁ ନେଉଥିଲା ରାନୁ । ଗିଲ୍‌ଫୋର୍ଡ ରୋଡ୍‌ରେ ଷ୍ଟପ୍ ସାଇନ୍‌ରେ ଅଟକିଥାଏ । ପଛ ସିଟ୍‌ରେ ମିମି ଓ ସାନଝିଅ ବେବୁ ବସିଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଓଲ୍ଡ୍ କଲମ୍ବିଆ ରୋଡ୍‌ରେ ଲେଫ୍‌ଟ୍ ଟର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନେବାର ଥାଏ । ହଠାତ୍ ଟର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରୁକରୁ ବାମପଟରୁ ଆସୁଥିବା ନୀଳରଙ୍ଗର କାର୍‌ଟି ସହିତ ଧକ୍କା ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେ ଧକ୍କାରେ ତ୍ୱରଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇ ରାନୁର ହଣ୍ଡା ଆକର୍ଡ ତାହାଣ ପାର୍ଶ୍ୱକୁ ଷାଠିଏ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ କୋଣ କରି ଆଗେଇଗଲା ଓ ସେଠି ଟର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଅପେକ୍ଷାରତ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗାଡି ସହିତ ଧକ୍କା ଲଗାଇଲା । ସେ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଧକ୍କାର ତ୍ୱରଣରୁ ଗାଡି ସିଧା ନବେ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ଟର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରି ତାହାଣ ଆଡକୁ ଚାଲିଲା । ରାନୁର ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ସେତେବେଳେ କିଛି ପଶୁନଥାଏ । ରାନୁ ବୁଝିଛି କି ମରିଛି, କଣ ସବୁ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି; ହଠାତ୍ କିଛି ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦିଶୁନଥାଏ । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ କରୁଣାରୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ପଶିଲା ଓ ରାନୁ ଗାଡିରେ ବ୍ରେକ୍ ଦେଲା । ଯୋଗବଶତଃ ଅନ୍ୟଦିଗରୁ ଗାଡି ଆସୁନଥିଲା । ନହେଲେ କେତେ ଗାଡିରେ ପିଟି ହୋଇ ଶେଷ ଫଳାଫଳ କଣ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା, ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା । ସେକଥା ହୋଇନି ।

ପୋଲିସ୍ ଆସିଲା । ବିବରଣୀ ନେଲା । ଗାଡି ଟୋ କରିବା କମ୍ପାନୀ ଆସି ଗାଡି ନେଇଗଲା । ପୋଲିସ୍‌ର ସେଲ୍‌ଫୋନ୍‌ରେ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ସବୁ ଘଟଣା ଜଣାଇଲା ରାନୁ । ଏଣେ ବଡ ଝିଅପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତା । କଣ କଲା, କେଉଁଠି ଥିବ, ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ରେ ଯଦି ଏକା ଥିବ, ଏତେ ରାତିରେ.....। ଯାବତୀୟ ଦୁଷ୍ଚିନ୍ତା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପଶୁଥିଲା । ବଡ ଝିଅକୁ ଖବରଦେବାର ଉପାୟ ବି ନାହିଁ । କେବଳ ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଛଡା ଆଉ କେହି ଭରସା ନାହିଁ । ପୋଲିସ୍ ତା' କାମ ସାରି ଚାଲିଗଲା । ରାନୁ ତା'ର ଦୁଇଝିଅଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ରାସ୍ତାକଡରେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିରହିଲା ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟଙ୍କ ଆସିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ମନଭିତରେ ଭୟ ବି ଥାଏ । ହୁଏତ ସ୍ନାଇପର୍ ଏଇ ବାଟ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଯିବ ଓ ଗୁଳି ମାରିଦେବ । ଅଧଘଣ୍ଟା ଜାଳ ଏମିତି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାପରେ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଆସିଲେ । ରାନୁର ଭୟଥିଲା; ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ହୁଏତ ଗାଳିଦେବେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଗାଳିଦେଲେନି, ବରଂ ପ୍ରବୋଧନା ଦେଲେ । ସେ ତା'ଙ୍କ ସେଲ୍‌ଫୋନ୍‌ରେ ଘରକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କଲେ କାଳେ ମିମି ଥିବ, କିନ୍ତୁ କିଛି ଖବର ନ ପାଇବାରୁ ଗ୍ଲିନେଗ୍ସ୍ କୁଲ୍‌କୁ ଗଲେ । ସେ'ଠି ସ୍ୱାତୀର କୋରସ୍ ପ୍ରାକ୍‌ଟିସ୍ ଥିଲା । ଗ୍ଲିନେଗ୍ସ୍ ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ରେ କିନ୍ତୁ କାହାର ଭେଟ ମିଳିଲାନି । ମନରେ ଚିନ୍ତା । ଶେଷରେ ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ମିମିର ସାଙ୍ଗ ଜୋଆନ୍‌ର ଘରକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରିବାରୁ ଖବର ମିଳିଲା ଯେ, ମିମି ତା' ଟିଚର୍‌ଠାରୁ ରାଇଡ୍ ନେଇ କୋରସ୍‌କୁ ଯାଇଛି । ଟିକେ ଆଶ୍ୱସ୍ତି ମିଳିଲା । ତା'ପରେ ଇନସୁରାନସ୍‌କୁ ବିବରଣୀ ଦେବା ଇତ୍ୟାଦିର ଫର୍ମାଲିଟି । ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶର ନିୟମ ଏ । ଦୁଃଖରେ ଛାତି ଫାଟିଯାଉ ବରଂ, ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହର ବନ୍ୟା ଛୁଟିଯାଉ ବରଂ ନିଜକୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣରେ ରଖିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ଓ ଆଇନ୍‌କାନୁନ୍ ଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ମାନି ସ୍ଥିର ବୁଦ୍ଧିରେ ସମସ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପାଦନ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ଇନସୁରାନସ୍‌କୁ ବିବରଣୀ ଦେଇସାରିବା ପରେ ରାନୁକୁ ନିଜ ହୃଦୟର ବେଦନାକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ସମୟ ମିଳିଲା । ଯେତେବେଳେ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ସାମନାରେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିବାକୁ ବସିପଡିଲା ସେ, ଝରଝର ହୋଇ ଝରିଥିଲା ଲୁହ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଅସୀମ କୃତଜ୍ଞତାରେ । ସଦ୍ୟ ମରଣ ମୁଖରୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇଥିଲେ ସେ ଯେଉଁ ଇଶ୍ୱର ସେ ମହାନ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ତ ଆଉ କିଏ ? ରାନୁର ଏ ନବଜନ୍ମ ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଯାହାବି ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଥାଉ ନା କାହିଁକି ରାନୁ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଋଣୀ ।.....

ରାନୁ କେବଳ ଭାବୁଥିଲା, "ଯଦି ଗାଡି ପାସେଞ୍ଜର୍ ସିଟ୍ ପାଖରେ ଧକ୍କା ଲଗାଇଥାନ୍ତା କି ଡ୍ରାଇଭର୍ ସିଟ୍ ପାଖରେ ? ତ୍ୱରାନ୍ୱିତ ହୋଇ ଗାଡିଟି ତାହାଣପାଖକୁ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେବା ସମୟରେ ଯଦି ଅନ୍ୟଦିଗରୁ ଗାଡି ସବୁ ଆସୁଥାନ୍ତେ ? ମୋ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର

କଣ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ? ମୋର କଣ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ? ହୁଏତ ମୁଁ ମରିଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ କଣ କରିଥାନ୍ତେ ? ମୋ ଶବକୁ ଏମିତି ସଜାଇ ଶୁଆଇ ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତେ । ଭଜନ, କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ ଲାଗିଥାନ୍ତା । ମୋ ପିଲାମାନେ 'ମାମା, ମାମା' କହି କାନ୍ଦୁଥାନ୍ତେ । ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଏମିତି ଜମା ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତେ । ଆଉ ଯେଉଁ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଦୂରରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି, ଯେଉଁ ଆତ୍ମୀୟସ୍ୱଜନ ମାନେ ଭାରତରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି, ଜେଉଁମାନଙ୍କୁ ମନଭିତରର ସ୍ନେହ ଦେଇ, ଅପା, ନାନୀ, ଭାଇ, ଭାଉଜ, ମଉସା, ମାଉସୀ କହି ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ବାନ୍ଧିଛି, ସେମାନେ କଣ କରିଥାନ୍ତେ ? ରାନୁ ବୋଲି ଜଣେ ମଣିଷ, ସେ ମଣିଷଟିର ସବୁ ମାୟା, ସବୁ ମୋହ, ସବୁ ବନ୍ଧନ, ସବୁ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ, ସବୁ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସେଇଠାରେ ହିଁ ଶେଷ ହୋଇଯାଇଥାନ୍ତା । ମୋ ଅଫିସ୍‌ର ସହକର୍ମୀ ମାନେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଶୋକସଭା କରୁଥାନ୍ତେ, ମୋ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର୍, ମୋ ଡେସ୍କ, ମୋ ବହିପତ୍ର, ମୋ ଲୁଗାପଟା, ମୋ ବିଛଣା, ମୋ ଗହଣା, ଯେତେ ସବୁ ଜିନିଷରେ ମୁଁ 'ମୋ' ଶବ୍ଦଟିକୁ ଜୋଡିଥିଲି, ସେ ସବୁର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ କଣ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ? ମତେ ଇର୍ଷା କରି ଯେଉଁମାନେ ମତେ ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝି ମୋ ସହିତ ଶତ୍ରୁତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ କଣ ମୋ ମୃତ୍ୟୁରେ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତେ ? ଆଉ ମୋ ବାପା, ବୋଉ, ଝିଅ ବିଦେଶରେ ରହିବାର ଦୁଃଖ ସହି ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧରି ରହିଛନ୍ତି, ଝିଅ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଦୁଃଖ ସହି ରହିଥାନ୍ତେ ତ? ".....

ଭାବନାରୁ ଫେରିଆସି ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହେଲା ରାନୁ । ଏବେ ସିଏ ବଞ୍ଚିଛି । ତା'ର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍ନେହ, ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟଙ୍କ ସ୍ନେହ, ତା'ଜୁ ସ୍ନେହ କରୁଥିବା ଅନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତ ମଣିଷମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେ ନୂଆକରି ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିଛି । ରାନୁର ନବଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଛି । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ତା'ପାଇଁ ହୁଏତ ଅନ୍ୟ କିଛି ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଅଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦୀପକ ଯେ ଆଜି ପିତୃହରା ହେଲା । ତା' ଆଖି ସାମନାରେ ତା' ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ସିଏ କାସ୍‌କେଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ଦେଖୁଛି । ସ୍ନାଇପର୍ ଅକ୍‌ଟୋବର୍ ଚବିଶ ତାରିଖରେ ଧରା ପଡିଥିଲା । ଆକସ୍ମିକ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଭୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନରୁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିଲା ଓ ସମସ୍ତେ ସ୍ୱସ୍ତିର ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଇ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ନିଜନିଜର ଆନନ୍ଦଭାବର ଆଦାନପ୍ରଦାନ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସେଦିନ ଦୀପକ ଫୋନ୍ କରି କହିଥିଲା-

"ରାନୁ ଭାଉଜ, ଖବର ଶୁଣିଲଣି, ସ୍ନାଇପର୍ କେମିତି ଧରା ପଡିଲା ।"

"ଯାହାହେଉ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଆମ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଶୁଣିଲେ । ଆମେ ଯେ ମରଣକୁ ଭୟ ନକରି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଆମ ଭଜନ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ଅବ୍ୟାହତ ରଖି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆମ ନିଷ୍ଠାର ପ୍ରମାଣ ଦେଲେ, ତେଣୁ ସିଏ ଆମ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଶୁଣିଲେ ।" - ରାନୁର ସ୍ୱରତନ୍ତ୍ରୀରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅଶେଷ ଭକ୍ତିର ତ୍ୱରଣ ।

"ଏବେ ମଣିଷ ଟିକେ ଶାନ୍ତିର ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ନେବ । ବାହାରକୁ ବାହାରିବାରେ ଆଉ ଭୟ ନାହିଁ ।" - ଦୀପକ ମନରେ ନୂଆ ଆଶା ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଯୋଗ କେମିତି ? ନିଜ ଘରେ ନିଜ ନାତି ସହିତ ଖେଳୁଖେଳୁ ମଣିଷ ଜୀବନର ଏ ପରିଣାମ ! ଦୀପକ କଣ ସତରେ ଶାନ୍ତିର ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଇପାରିଲା ? ଗୋଟିଏ ଆଶଙ୍କାରୁ ମଣିଷ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇ ସୁଖର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁ ଦେଖୁ ପୁଣି ଆଉ ଏକ ସମସ୍ୟା । ମଣିଷ ଜୀବନରେ ସମସ୍ୟାର ଯେମିତି ଶେଷ ନାହିଁ । ଜୀବନର ଅର୍ଥ ହୁଏତ କେବଳ ସୁଖର ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣ, ବଞ୍ଚିବାପାଇଁ ସଂଘର୍ଷ; ପ୍ରକୃତ ସୁଖପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର ସମୟ କ୍ଷଣସ୍ଥାୟୀ । ଦୀପକର ହୃଦୟଭିତରର ସମସ୍ତ ଭାବନା ଯେମିତି ରାନୁ ବୁଝିପାରୁଥିଲା ।

ରାମାନନ୍ଦ ପ୍ରଭୁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ ଓ ଶେଷକୃତ୍ୟର ପୂଜା ଆରମ୍ଭକଲେ । ପୂଜା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଦୀପକକୁ ତା' ବାପାଙ୍କ କପାଳରେ ଚନ୍ଦନ ଓ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ପିନ୍ଧାଇବାର ଔପଚାରିକତା ଓ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଫୁଲ ସମର୍ପଣ କରାଇବାର ଔପଚାରିକତା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବି ସମ୍ପାଦନ କରାଇଲେ । ଶେଷରେ ଦୀପକ ଅଗ୍ନି ସମର୍ପଣ କଲା ଓ ତା'ପରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ରାମ ନାରାୟଣଙ୍କୁ ତା' ବାପାଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି କହିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲା । ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ରାମନାରାୟଣ ମଉସାଙ୍କ ସହପାଠୀ ଓ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଥିଲେ ଓ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟବଶତଃ ସେ ୱାଶିଂଟନ୍ ଡି·ସି·ରେ ରହୁଥିଲେ । ମଉସା ତାଙ୍କ ପୁଅକୁ ଭିଜିଟ୍ କରିବାପାଇଁ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଓ ଦୁଇବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କର ବହୁତ ଦିନ ପରେ ମିଳନ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟବଶତଃ ସେ ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କର ଶେଷ ସଂସ୍କାର ବି ତା'ଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ପଡିଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ରାମନାରାୟଣଙ୍କ ପରେ ଦୀପକ ବି ତା' ବାପାଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ କହିଲା ଓ ଶେଷକୁ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ରଖିନପାରି କାନ୍ଦିପକାଇଲା । ଶେଷ ବିଦାୟର ସମୟ ଆସିଗଲା । ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଶରୀରକୁ ଇଲେକ୍‌ଟ୍ରିକ୍ କ୍ରିମେସନ୍ ହିଟର୍ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଦାହ କରିବାର ସମୟ । ଲଳିତ 'ରାମନାମ ସତ୍ୟ ହେ' ଗାଇଲା । ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ, ବିଶୁବାବୁ, ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତେ ଯୋଗଦେଲେ । ବହୁ ସମୟ ଧରି ଅସୀମ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧରି ବସିରହିଥିବା ଶିଲା ଅପା ବି ହଠାତ୍ କଇଁଜଇଁ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦିଉଠିଲେ । ଶିଲା ଅପା ଦୀପକର ଦୂର ସମ୍ପର୍କୀୟା ଭଉଣୀ । ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଶରୀରକୁ କ୍ରିମେସନ୍ ହିଟର୍ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରାଇବା ପରେ ପରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ପୁଣି ଆସି ଧଳା ଚାଦର ଉପରେ ବସିଲେ । ରାମାନନ୍ଦ ପ୍ରଭୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଜୀବନ ଓ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଚିରନ୍ତନ ନିୟମ ବିଷୟରେ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲେ ।

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ସବୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ଅତିଥି ପ୍ରାୟ ବିଦାୟ ନେଇସାରିଥିଲେ । ଶେଷକୁ ରହିଥିଲେ ରାନୁ, ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ଦୁଇ, ତିନିଜଣ ସାଙ୍ଗ । ଚାରିମାସ ତଳେ ଦୀପକର ବାପାଙ୍କର ଶେଷ ସଂସ୍କାର ସମୟରେ ବି ରାନୁ ଓ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଶେଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରହିଥିଲେ । ଦୀପକ ଓ ଅନିତାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରବୋଧନା ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ଯଦିଓ ଦୀପକ ଓ ଅନିତା ନିଜ ମନର ଭାବକୁ ବହୁତ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ କରି ରଖିଥିଲେ, ତଥାପି ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବରେ ନିଜର ବେଦନାକୁ ଲୁଚାଇ ରଖିପାରିନଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ 'କନ୍‌ଗ୍ରାଚୁଲେସନ୍‌ସ୍' କହି ରାନୁ ଓ ଅନିନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଥିଲେ । "କୁନି ଝିଅଟା ବେଶ୍ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ହେବ", କହି ରାନୁ ନବଜାତ କନ୍ୟାଟିର ଗାଲ ଟିପି ଦେଇ ଅନିତାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ଅନିତାର ମୁହଁରେ ରଙ୍ଗ ଜମି ଆସୁଥିଲା । ଏ ଯେ ଜୀବନର ଅଭୁଲା ରଙ୍ଗ । ଅନିତା ଓ ଦୀପକ ସ୍ରଷ୍ଟା ହେବାର ଆନନ୍ଦ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଦୀପକକୁ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରି ସ୍ରଷ୍ଟାର ଆନନ୍ଦ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିବା ଜନକ ତା'ର ଆଜି କାହିଁ କେତେ ଦୂରରେ । ହୁଏତ ଶୂନ୍ୟରେ ଥାଇ ବୋହୂ ମୁହଁର ଏ ରଙ୍ଗକୁ ଦେଖୁଥିବେ; ପୁଅର ହୃଦୟ ଭିତରକୁ ମନ୍ଥନ କରି ତା' ଭିତରେ ଜାଗ୍ରତ ହେଉଥିବା ଦର୍ଶନତତ୍ତ୍ୱକୁ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରୁଥିବେ । କିଏ ବା ସ୍ରଷ୍ଟା ? କିଏ ବା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ? କେଉଁଠି ବା ଆରମ୍ଭ ? କେଉଁଠି ବା ଶେଷ ? ସବୁ ସେଇ ଆଦିଅନ୍ତର ନାୟକ କେଉଁ ଯୁଗପୁରୁଷର ଖେଳଘର ଏ ? "କରି କରାଉ ଥାଏ ମୁହିଁ, ମୋ ବିନୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଗତି ନାହିଁ ।"

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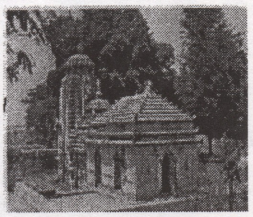
Dr Bigyani Das is a Computational Scientist and works at Goddard Space Flight Center, NASA. She lives in Columbia, Maryland with her husband Naresh Das and three children Bagmi, Mrunali, and Shashwati. Her hobbies include music, literature, drama and public speaking.

ଶ୍ରୀବନ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାରିମାଳ ବିଶ

ଶ୍ରୀ ରସାନନ୍ଦ ବେହେରା, ୱାଶିଂଟନ୍ ଡି·ସି·



ଭାରତ ବର୍ଷରେ ଓଡିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟର ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳ ଜିଲ୍ଲା । ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳ ସଦରଠାରୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ପନ୍ଦର କିଲୋମିଟର ଦୂରରେ ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳ-କାମାକ୍ଷାନଗର ରାସ୍ତାରେ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣୀ ନଦୀ କୂଳରେ କମଗରା ପାଟଣା ନାମରେ ଗ୍ରାମଟିଏ । ଏହି ପାଟଣା ଗ୍ରାମରେ ସିଦ୍ଧେଶ୍ୱରୀ ବିଦ୍ୟାପୀଠ ନାମରେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ । ୧୯୫୮ ମସିହାରେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଗାନ୍ଧିବାଦୀ ଶ୍ରୀ ବେହେରାଙ୍କର ପୌରହିତ୍ୟରେ ଏ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନଟି ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଏକଦା ନନ୍ଦ ମାଷ୍ଟ୍ରେ ଏହି ବେସରକାରୀ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଥିଲେ । ସେ ରିଟାୟର୍ଡ ହେବା ବର୍ଷ ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ ଓ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି ପୁରଷ୍କାର ପାଇ ଶ୍ରୀବନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସ୍ମୃତିପିଠରେ ଦୀର୍ଘ ସମୟ ପାଇଁ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏହି ମହାପୁରୁଷଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଏହି ମହାପୁରୁଷଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଘଟିଥିବା କେତେକ ଆଳାପ ଓ ମହାପୁରୁଷଙ୍କ ପାରିମାଳ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହ ଆଲୋଚନା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ କିଛି ତଥ୍ୟସଂଗ୍ରହ -

ନନ୍ଦ ମାଷ୍ଟ୍ରେ କୁହନ୍ତି- ୧୯୬୦ ମସିହାର କଥା । ଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗର କର୍ମଚାରୀମାନେ ମୌଳିକ ଶିକ୍ଷାକୁ ଅଲଗା ରଖାଯିବାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଅନୁଭବ କଲେନାହିଁ । ଏଣୁ ମୌଳିକ ସ୍କୁଲ ଗୁଡିକ କାଳକ୍ରମେ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଓ ମାଧ୍ୟମିକ ସ୍କୁଲ ସହିତ ମିଶିଯିବାକୁ ଗ୍ରାମପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଓ ସ୍କୁଲର ପରିଚାଳକବର୍ଗ ସ୍ଥିର କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଏହି ସ୍କୁଲଟିକୁ ସରକାରଙ୍କର ହାତକୁ ନଦେଲେ ଚଳାଇବାକୁ କଷ୍ଟକର ହେଉଥାଏ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ପାଳି ଓ ଗ୍ରାମ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ସହାୟତାରେ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟଟିକୁ ଚଳାଇବାକୁ ବଡ କଷ୍ଟସାଧ୍ୟ ହେଉଥାଏ ।

ଶ୍ରୀ ବେହେରା ଜଣେ ସମ୍ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ ପରିବାରରେ ଜନ୍ମ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେ ଜଣେ ପରୋପକାରୀ, ନିଃସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର, ସମାଜବାଦୀ, ଚିନ୍ତାଶୀଳ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଥିଲେ । ଏଣୁ ଗ୍ରାମର ମୁଖିଆ ଭାବରେ ଲୋକେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ ଆଦର କରୁଥିଲେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ କଥାକୁ ମାନି ଚଳୁଥିଲେ । ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ସୁବିଧା ଅସୁବିଧା, ଭଲମନ୍ଦ ବୁଝାମଣା ପାଇଁ ଆଖପାଖ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ତାଙ୍କର ପରାମର୍ଶ ଲୋଡୁଥିଲେ । କମଗରା ଗ୍ରାମର ଭଟ, ଜେଜେ ଜାଇଗ, ନାରାୟଣ, ବାଜି ରାଉତଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଆଦର୍ଶବାଦ ଓ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟିର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ସଂଗ୍ରାମୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେରଣା ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ପଡିଥାଏ ।

ସ୍କୁଲର ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ବିଶେଷ କରି ଶ୍ରୀ ବେହେରାଙ୍କର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଖୁବ୍ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ଛାତ୍ରାବାସରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବୁଢା ଭାଇ ବୋଲି ସମ୍ବୋଧନ କରନ୍ତି । ଥରେ ସକାଳୁ ଉଠି ସେ ଜାଣିଲେ ଯେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଲାଗି କରାଯାଇଥିବା ଛାତ୍ରାବାସରେ କେଉଁଦିନୁ ପାଣି ଗଳୁଛି । କେବଳ ଶିକ୍ଷକମାନଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟବହାର ଉପଯୋଗୀ ପାଇଖାନା ରହିଛି । ଶ୍ରୀବନ୍ତ ବେହେରା ସାଧାରଣତଃ କାହାରିକୁ ରାଗିକରି କିମ୍ବା ହୁଡିକରି କିଛି କହନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ମାତ୍ର ସେଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଟିରେ କିଛି ବାଡବଡା ରହିଲା ନାହିଁ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଗାଳିଦେଇ ସେ ସକାଳୁ ଯାଇ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସରେ ହାଜର । ତାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଗାଳିଖାଇ କର୍ମୀମାନେ ମରାମତି କରିବାକୁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ହୋଇ ଗାଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହାୟରେ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସଟିକୁ ମରାମତି କରିଦେଲେ । ଗାଁ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ପ୍ରୌଢଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବା ଓ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ବିଚାରର ପ୍ରସାର କରିବାଟା ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏ କାମରେ ଉତ୍ସାହ ଦେବାଲାଗି ତାଙ୍କର ଦାଦାପୁଅ ସାନଭାଇ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର, ଉଦୟ, ଘନଶ୍ୟାମ ଭଳି କେତେକ ଗ୍ରାମପଞ୍ଚାୟତର ଉତ୍ସାହୀ, କର୍ମୀଲୋକ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ଲାଗି ଆସି ଜୁଟିଲେ । ଏମାନେ ପିଲାଦିନର ସାଥୀ । ସମାଜସେବା ସହିତ ସମାଜର ବୈପ୍ଳବିକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଲାଗି ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଦୃଢ ସଂକଳ୍ପ ଓ ଆଗ୍ରହୀ ।

କମଗରା ଠାରୁ କାମାକ୍ଷାନଗର ଯିବା ବାଟରେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟଟି । ସେଠାରେ ଭଙ୍ଗ ମଉସା ବୋଲି ଜଣେ କବିରାଜି ହୁକୁମ ଦେବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ଚେରମୂଳି ଔଷଧ ଓ ମନ୍ତ୍ର ପାଇଲେ ସବୁରକମର ରୋଗ ଭଲ ହୁଏ । ଏଣୁ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ତାଙ୍କର ଆଶିଷ ଅଥବା ସାନ୍ନିଧ୍ୟ ପାଇଲେ ମନକାମନା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଯିବ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରଚାର ହେଲା । ଏଣେ ଭଙ୍ଗମଉସାଙ୍କ ମନ୍ତ୍ର ଓ ଚେରମୂଳିର ସହାୟତାରେ ସାପକାମୁଡାରେ କେତେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଭଲ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଗାଁରେ ହଇଜାରେ ପଡି ଲୋକମାନେ ଅସ୍ତବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି । ଏଣୁ

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଧୃବମଣି ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଅନେକ ଶୁଣାଉଥାନ୍ତି ଓ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆକଟ କରି ବୁଝାଉଥାନ୍ତି । ଏପଟେ ବାହୁଣୀ ନଦୀଟି ବଢି ଦୁଇକୂଳ ଖାଉଥାଏ । ଡଙ୍ଗାରେ ନଦୀପାର ହୋଇ ସେତେବେଳେ ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳ ସଦର ମହକୁମାକୁ ଆସିବାଟା ଗୋଟାଏ ଦିନକର କାମ ହେଉଥାଏ । ଏପରି ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ପୁଅର ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର ଯିବାକୁ ପଡିଥାଏ । ନାମ ଲେଖାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳ ସଦରରୁ ଗାଡି ଯୋଗେ ଯିବାକୁ ହେବ, ଏଣୁ କମଗରା ଘାଟ ପାର ହେବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ରାୟନୃସିଂହ ପୁର ଉପର ସାହିର ଜଳଧର ଘାଟ ନେଇଥାନ୍ତି । କମଗରା ଘାଟରେ ପାର ହେବାକୁ ହେଲେ ଦିନରେ ହିଁ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡିଥାଏ । କାରଣ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେପଟୁ (ନଇ ଆରପଟେ ଗେଙ୍ଗୁଟିଆ) ଡଙ୍ଗାସବୁ ଚାଲିଆସିଥାଏ । ହେଲେ ରାତି ପାହିଲେ ଶ୍ରୀବନ୍ତଭାଇଙ୍କ ପୁଅର ନାମଲେଖା ହେବ ; ତା' ଛଡା ଜମିଦାରୀ ପ୍ରଥାର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ ପରମାନନ୍ଦ ନାୟକଙ୍କ ଭଳି କେତେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଏପରି ମଉକାକୁ ହାତଛଡା କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁ ନ ଥାନ୍ତି । ଏପଟେ ନଦୀ ଭୀଷଣରୁ ଭୀଷଣତର ହୋଇ କୂଳ ଖାଉଥାଏ । ଏଣୁ ଡଙ୍ଗା ନ ପାଇ କେତେକ ଛାତ୍ର 'ଆକାଶ କଇଁଆ ଚିଲିକା ମାଛ' ପରି ଚାତକ ପକ୍ଷୀ ସଦୃଶ ନଦୀ ପାର ହେବାକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଅନତିଦୂରରେ ଖଜୁରୀଗଛର ରସ (ତାଡି ପିଇ) ନିଶାପାନ କରି ଘାଟିଆମାନେ ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ଏକ ତାଳବରଡାର ତାଳିରେ ବିଶ୍ରାମ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଖଟିସାରି ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ନିଶାପାନ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସାମାଜିକ ତଥା ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ରୀତି କହିଲେ ଅତ୍ୟୁକ୍ତି ହେବନାହିଁ । ସେମାନେ ବାଜିରାଉତଙ୍କ ଭଳି ମହାପୁରୁଷ ତଥା ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତାବାଦର ମୂଳତତ୍ତ୍ୱଉପରେ ଅନୁକମ୍ପା କରି ମୌଳିକତାବାଦର ପ୍ରେରଣା ପାଇବା ସହ ନିଜର ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ପ୍ରତି ପ୍ରଗାଢ ନିଷ୍ଠା ରଖିଥାନ୍ତି । ତେବେ ପରମାନନ୍ଦ ନାୟକଙ୍କ ଅସାଧ୍ୟ ଭାତୃପ୍ରେମ ଓ ଦୁଃସାହସ ଯୋଗୁଁ ଛାତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କୁ ରାତ୍ରରେ ମନା ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ ବହୁ କଷ୍ଟରେ ନିଜେ ନୌଚାଳନା କରି ପାର କରିବାକୁ ଆଗେଇ ଆସିଥିଲେ ।

ଏହି ନଦୀବଢି ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଜୁନ୍ ମାସରୁ ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ମାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରହିଥାଏ । ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ପନ୍ଦର ପୂର୍ବଦିନର ଘଟଣା । ଛାତ୍ରମାନେ ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ଚଉଦ ସଂଧ୍ୟାରେ ଫେରିଆସିଥାନ୍ତି ନିଜର ଭିଟାମାଟିକୁ । ତା'ପରଦିନ ପ୍ରାତଃକାଳେ 'ଭାରତ ମାତା କୀ ଜୟ' ଓ 'ବନ୍ଦେ ମାତରମ୍' ଧ୍ୱନିରେ କମଗରା ଗ୍ରାମଟି ମୁଖରିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

୧୯୭୦ ମସିହା ନଭେମ୍ବର ଚଉଦ ତାରିଖ । ଏ ଦିନଟି ବଡ ଖୁସିର ଦିନ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ସେତେବେଳେ ତ ସାରଙ୍ଗଧର ସେତୁ ହୋଇ ନଥାଏ ; ଏଣୁ ଛାତଛାତୀ ମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଡଙ୍ଗାପାର ନ ହୋଇପାରି ଆଖପାଖ ଗ୍ରାମକୁ ଯାଇପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଏପରିକି ଗୁରୁଦିବସରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏଇଆ ଘଟିଥାଏ । ଇତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଗ୍ରାମରେ ଖୁଦୁରୁକୁଣୀ ଓଷା ପଡେ । ସ୍କୁଲରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗଣେଶ ପୂଜା ଏହି ସମୟରେ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ସକାଳୁ ଉଠି ଫୁଲ ତୋଳିବାପାଇଁ ପିଲାମାନେ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରେ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଧୃବମଣି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ବାଟକୁ ଚାହିଁରହିଥାନ୍ତି ।

ଏହି ଦଶନ୍ଧିରେ ଜୟପ୍ରକାଶ ନାରାୟଣଙ୍କ ନେତୃତ୍ୱରେ ଜମିଜମା ଉଚ୍ଛେଦ ନିୟମ ଲାଗୁ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଏହାର ପରିଣାମ ଆଉ ଯେଉଁଠି ଯାହା ହେଉନା କାହିଁକି ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳର ଏହି ଜମିଦାର ପରିବାର ଭିତରେ ବେଶ୍ ଆଶଙ୍କା ଓ ଉତ୍ତେଜନା ବୃଦ୍ଧିପାଇଥାଏ । ପାଟଣାର ରୋଡ୍ ପାଖକୁ ଲାଗି ବଡ କୋଠାଘରଟା ଭିତରେ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ବେହେରା କେମିତି ଆବାକାବା ହୋଇ ଅନାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ସାନଭାଇ ଓକିଲାତି ପାସ୍ କରି ସମ୍ବଲପୁରର ଉପର କଚେରିରେ ବାରିଷ୍ଟର ଥାନ୍ତି । ଏଣୁ ଏ ଆଇନ୍‌ରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ହେବାପାଇଁ ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତକରି ବାରିଷ୍ଟରବାବୁ ଗ୍ରାମକୁ ଫେରିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଗାଁରେ ଲୋକେ ସାନବାବୁ ବୋଲି ଡାକନ୍ତି । ସେ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ଜମିଜମା ସବୁ ଭାଗ କରିଦିଆଯାଉ । ହେଲେ ନିଜର ତ ମାତ୍ର ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁଅ ; ତେବେ ଏ ଅଚଳାଚଳ ସଂପତ୍ତିର ମାଲିକ କିପରି ବା ହୋଇ ପାରିବେ ଓ ଏହାର ସମାଧାନ କିପରି କରିବେ ବଡ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ପଡିଲେ । ଏହି ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ସେ ଅଧୀରହୋଇ ରୋଗାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୋଇପଡିଲେ ।

ଶ୍ରୀ ବେହେରା ତ ଇଂରେଜ ଅମଳର ଲୋକ ; 'କାମ ନ କଲେ ଖାଇବା ବନ୍ଦ' ପରି ଗାନ୍ଧିବାଦ ତଥ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ବେଶ୍ ଆସୁଥାଏ । ଏଣୁ ନୂତନ ଯୁବଗୋଷ୍ଠୀଙ୍କୁ ସେ ସର୍ବଦା ସଜାଗ ହେବାପାଇଁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ବିଶେଷକରି ଚାରିଦେଶ ପାରିମାଳ ବିଶରେ ଯୁବକ ଓ ଯୁବତୀଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ନୂଆ ଜାଗରଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ । ଗାନ୍ଧିଜୀଙ୍କର ବଡ ପରାୟଣ ଥିଲେ ସେ । ସେ ସ୍କୁଲ ପାଖ ଜମି ସବୁ ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ଟିକୁ ହିଁ ଦଖଲ ଦେଇଦେଲେ । ଯଦିଓ ବଡଭାଇଙ୍କର ଏପରି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ପାଇଁ ବାରିଷ୍ଟର ଭାଇ ଅଧୀର ହୋଇ ପଡିଲେ ; ହେଲେ ଏହି ଦୃଢତାର ପରିଣାମ ସଦୃଶ ସ୍କୁଲର ବିଦ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୌଳିକ ଶିକ୍ଷାରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ହେବାକୁ ପଡି ନଥିଲା । ସେହି ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ନୂତନ କରି ଯୁବଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ହିସାବରେ ଯୋଗଦେଲେ, ସେତେବେଳେ

ପରସ୍ପର ମତାନ୍ତର ହେବାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଦେଖାଦେଲା । କାରଣ ଇଂରେଜ ସରକାରଙ୍କର ଅଧୀନରେ ଚାକିରୀ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ପାଇଲେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ମୁରବୀପଣିଆ ସାଜି କ୍ଷମତାପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହେବା ଯୁବଗୋଷ୍ଠୀଙ୍କୁ ସୁହାଉଥିଲା । ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କର ଅଭିବାବକମାନେ ଶ୍ରୀବେହେରାଙ୍କର ଏ ଅସହିଷ୍ଣୁ ପଦକ୍ଷେପକୁ ମାନି ନେଇଥିଲେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମୁଖିଆ ହିସାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିନେଲେ ।

ଏହିବର୍ଷ ମହାମାରୀ ହଇଜା ପଡିଥାଏ । ଗାଁ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଦାତ୍ତରଖାନା ବା ଚିକିତ୍ସାଳୟ ନ ଥାଏ, କି ଯାନବାହନର ସୁବିଧା ନ ଥାଏ । ଏଣୁ କବିରାଜି ତଥା ଚେରମୂଳି ଜରିଆରେ ବିଶେଷ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ହେଉଥିଲା । ଏପରିକି ସାପ କାମୁଡାରେ ଲୋକେ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରୁ ଫେରି ତାଙ୍କର ଦେଶୀ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ତଥା ମନ୍ତ୍ର ଔଷଧରେ ଭଲ ହେବାର ଅନେକ ପ୍ରମାଣ ମିଳେ । ବାସ୍ତବରେ ମହାପୁରୁଷ ଶ୍ରୀବନ୍ତଙ୍କର ଏହି ଜୀବନକାହାଣୀ ଓଡିଆ ଭାଷାର ତଥା ଓଡିଆ ମାନଙ୍କର ଘରଣା ଓ ଓଡିଶାର ଏକ ପଞ୍ଚଚିତ୍ର ।

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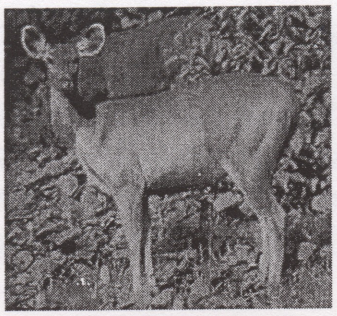
ଲେଖକ ଶ୍ରୀ ରଘାନନ୍ଦ ବେହେରାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇବାକୁ ଥିବା 'ଶ୍ରୀବନ୍ତ' ଉପନ୍ୟାସର କିୟତ୍ ଅଂଶ । ସେ ଜଣେ ଗାଣିତିକ ଓ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର ବିଶେଷଜ୍ଞ ଯିଏ କି ୱାଶିଂଟନ ଡି.ସି. ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ବସବାସ କରନ୍ତି ।

ମୃଗୟା

ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର



ସେତେବେଳେ ଏଇ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରାପଡା ରୋଡ୍‌ରେ ଭ୍ରମର ସ୍ୱାଇଁର ହଳଦିଆ ରଙ୍ଗର ବସ୍‌ରେ କୁନିଛୁଆଟେ ବାପା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ କଟକ ଗଲାବେଳେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲା- ହାୟରେ! ଗଛ ଗୁଡାକ ଧାଉଁଛନ୍ତି, ଧାନଖେତ ଧାଉଁଛି, କିନ୍ତୁ ବସ୍‌ଟା କଣ ଜମା ଚାଲୁନି?

ଏହା ଭିତରେ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରୁ ଅଧେ ବିତିଗଲାଣି; ଖୁବ୍ ବଡ ବାତ୍ୟାଟେ ଆସି ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ସରିବା ଆଗରୁ ଦେଶର ମେରୁଦଣ୍ଡ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେଲାଣି । ଝଡର ଶେଷହେଲା ଆଉ ଗୁଡାଏ ଓଲଟପାଲଟ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେଇ କୁନିପିଲା ଆଜି ପରାଶର ବାବୁ... ଖୁବ ବଡ ସାହେବ ବନିଛନ୍ତି ।

ପରାଶର ବାବୁ ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ୱାସ ଛାଡିଲେ । ଆଉ ଗଛମାନେ ଦଉଡୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ମାତ୍ର ରମେଶ ଡାଇଭର୍ ହର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମାରିମାରି ତାଙ୍କର ଅଷ୍ଟିନ୍ କାରକୁ କୁନି କୁନି ବଜାରର କୁଜିନେତାଙ୍କ ଗଳି ଭିତରେ ଚଲେଇ ନେଉଛି । ଗଛ ଥିଲେ ଦଉଡିବେ ସିନା - ବାତ୍ୟା ତ ସବୁ ଖାଇ ଗଲା; ଯାହା ବା ରହିଛି, ଅଣ୍ଟା ଭଙ୍ଗା ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ବା ମଶାଣିର ଅଧାପୋଡା କାଠ ଭଳି, ନା ଜଳୁଛି ନା ସରୁଛି ।

ନିଜ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିବା ବୋଧେ ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳର କଥା-

ନୂଆ ଚାକିରି ବେଳେ ଦିନାକେତେ ଟୁର୍ ପକେଇ ଆସୁଥିଲେ- ତା'ପରେ ତ- ଛାଡ; "ବସୁଧୈବ କୁଟୁମ୍ବକମ୍" । ସାରା ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ଖବର ପରେ ପରେ ରେଭିନ୍ୟୁ ଡିଭିଜନ୍‌ର ଖବର, କେବେ ବା ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ଦେଶସାରାର ଖବର, ଏପରିକି, ଯେଉଁ ଦି ବର୍ଷ ୟୁନାଇଟେଡ୍ ନେସନସ୍‌ରେ ଡେପୁଟେସନ୍‌ରେ ଥିଲେ- ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତିକ ଖବର- ସବୁ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ । ଗୋବରୀ ନଈ ସେପାରି ମନୋହରପୁର ଗାଁ'କୁ ଦୂରରୁ ଦେଖିହୁଏନି । ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ସଂସାର, ଅନ୍ୟ କଥା ଭାବିବାକୁ ବେଳ କାହିଁ ।

ହଠାତ ଦିନେ, ଘୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିବାତ୍ୟାରେ ଦେଶର ଉପକୂଳ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଲା ପରେ, ରାଜଧାନୀର ସର୍କିଟ୍ ହାଉସ୍‌ରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସ୍ପେଶାଲ୍ ରିଲିଫ୍ କମିଶନର୍ ଭାବରେ ଅଧିଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଦୁଃଖ ନିବାରଣ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ କରୁଥିଲେ, ମଳିମୁଣ୍ଡିଆ ଚକରା ମଳିକ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିଥିଲା--

(ପରାଶର ବାବୁ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ଥିଲେ- ଚକରାକୁ ଟିକେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥିଲେ ଭଲ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ।) ଭିଡକୁ ନମାନି "ପରିଆନା, ପରିଆନା", (ଏବଂ ପରେ ପରେ "ଆମ ପରାଶର ବାବୁ ସାହାବ ମ?") କହି କହି ଚକରା ବିନତି କରିଥିଲା - "ଟିକେ ନିଜ ଗାଁ ମାଟିକୁ ଆସନ୍ତୁ । ମନୋହରପୁର ଛାରଖାର ହେଇଯାଇଛି- ଯାହା ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ତ କରିବେ- ଟିକେ ଗୃହିଁଯାଆନ୍ତୁ ଥରେ ।"

ଚକରାକୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବାରେ କଷ୍ଟ ହେଲାନି । ସ୍କୁଲରେ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ପଢୁଥିଲା ବୋଧେ, "ସମସ୍ତ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଖବର ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଆସିଛି - ଚକରା ତୁମେ ଗୋଟେ କାମ କର, ମୋ ନାଁ କହିବ - ବିଡିଓ ଓ ତହସିଲଦାର୍ ତୁମର ଓ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଖବର ବୁଝିଦେବେ ।" ପରାଶରଙ୍କ ସାମନାରେ ପାଞ୍ଚଶହ ସରିକି ଲୋକ, ଆଉ ସବୁ କୁଜିନେତା, ଏମ୍.ଏଲ୍.ଏ.ଙ୍କ ଭିଡ । ଚକରାକୁ ସହଜରେ ବିଦା କରିଦେଲେ ।

"ଚକରାକୁ ଚିଠିଟେ ଲେଖିଛି- ନଈ ପାରି ହୋଇ ମିର୍ଜାପୁର ଆସିଲେ ଭେଟ ହେବ । ମୁଁ ଗାଁ'କୁ ଯିବି- ଗାଁର ମମତା ମୋତେ ଘାରିଲାଣି । ଗାଁର କିଛିଟା ଉନ୍ନତିମୂଳକ କାମକରିବି । ଚକରା ନିଶ୍ଚେ ଏ ଚିଠି ପାଇଥିବ ଓ ଆସିବ ।"

ପରାଶର ବାବୁ ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରୁଥିଲେ- ପଗୃଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ହାଫ୍ ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ ପିନ୍ଧା, ତଥା ତାରୁଣ୍ୟର ଚପଳତା, ପାଇକଚ୍ଛା ମାରି ଲକ୍ଷିଆ ଧୋବା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବାଗୁଡି ଖେଳୁ ଖେଳୁ କଚ୍ଛା ଫିଟିଯିବାର ହାସ୍ୟାସ୍ପଦ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ, ଆହୁରି କେତେ କଣ.....। ଆଦେଶ ଦେଇଦେଇ ସ୍ୱରଟା କର୍କଶ..., ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଦେଇ ଜାଣିଛନ୍ତି, ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାର ବୟସ ଓ ନମ୍ରତା ଆଉ ନାହି - କେମିତି ସେ ଗା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମିଶିବେ । କଥା କହିବେ, ଆଉ, ଖୁବ୍ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ଯୋଜନାର ଜାଲ ବିଛେଇବେ, ସେଇ ଚିନ୍ତା । ଏଇ ଯୋଜନା, ମନ ଭିତରେ ଯାହା ଦଶବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଲୁଚି ରହିଥିଲା, କାନାଡାରୁ ଫେରିବା ପରେ ଜୀବିତ ହୋଇଗଲା ।

ପୁଅ, ବୋହୂ, ନାତି ଆଉ ନାତୁଣୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ମନୋରମା ରହିଗଲେ କାନାଡାରେ । ଏଇ ମନୋରମା, ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ବାହାହେଲା ପରେ କେତେ କହୁଥିଲେ "ତୁମ ଗାଁଟା ନା- ଖୁବ୍ ସୁନ୍ଦର" । ବାହାଘର ବେଳେ ନୂଆବୋଉ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗୀତ ଲେଖିଥିଲେ "ମନୋରମା ତୁମେ ମନ ଖୁସି କରି ଯିବ ମନୋହରପୁର"... ଆଉ କଣ ମନେ ପଡିଲାନି ତା'ଙ୍କର ।

କାନାଡା ତାଙ୍କୁ ବିଷ ପରି ଲଗିଲା-- ଏତେ ପଦସ୍ଥ ଗୃହିଣିରୁ ଅବସର ନେଲାପରେ, ଚୁପ୍‌ଗୁପ୍ ଏ ଶୀତପ୍ରଧାନ ଦେଶରେ କଣ ବା କରିବେ- କାହା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବା ଗପିବେ । କଦବା କିଏ ଉଇକ୍‌ଏଣ୍ଡ୍ କହି ପାର୍ଟିରେ କରନ୍ତି- ତୁଛା ଏଠି ବସିବା ସାର । ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ସେ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି କଲେ- "ନାଃ ! ରାଜନୀତିରେ ମିଶିବି, ଗାଁକୁ ଯିବି, ବିପକ୍ଷ ଦଳରେ ମିଶିବି, ସରକାର ଗଢିବି ଏବଂ ଯୋଉ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମତେ ପୁଷ୍ପରେ ଅବସର ଦେଇସାରି ମୋ'ଠାରୁ ଅପାରଗ ଅଫିସରକୁ ସୁନାକଳସ ଦେଇ ପବ୍ଲିକ ସର୍ଭିସ୍ କମିଶନ୍‌ରେ ଥୋଇଦେଲେ, ତାଙ୍କୁ ପାନେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବି । ବାତ୍ୟା ବେଳେ କିଏ ବା କଣ ନ ଖାଇଛନ୍ତି- ସାମାନ୍ୟ କେତେ ଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କାର କଥା (ଦିଲ୍ଲୀର ଫ୍ଲାଟ୍‌ଟା ଅବଶ୍ୟ କରିବାର ଜରୁରତ୍ ଥିଲା- ଗୃହିଣିଟା ସରିବାକୁ ବସିଲାଣି - କଣ ବା କରିଥାନ୍ତି?), ଦୁର୍ନାମଟା ବଢିଗଲା ଖୁବ୍ ଜୋର୍‌ରେ ।"

ନାଃ ! ମନସ୍ତାପ କରି କିଛି ଲାଭ ନାହିଁ ।
ପତ୍ନୀ ମନୋରମା, ପୁଅ, ବୋହୂ - ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଏକା କଥା 'ବୁଢାହେଲେ ମତିଭ୍ରମ ହୁଏ' । ଯୋଉ ପୁଅକୁ ଡୋନେସନ୍ ଦେଇ ପଢେଇ, ହାତରୁ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେଇ ବିଦେଶ ପଠେଇ ମଣିଷ କଲେ ସେ ପୁଣି କହିଲା, 'ସେନାଇଲ୍' ।

ଝିଅ ଯୋଇଁ ବରଂ ଭଲରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି ଡେରାଡୁନ୍‌ରେ - ଆଉ ଝିଅତ ନିଜ ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ପଞ୍ଜାବୀ ପୁଅ ବାଛିଲା- ଗାଁ କଥା, ଓଡିଶା କଥା ଭାବିବ ବା କାହିଁକି ? ଏମିତି ଦୁଃଖ ଯେ କାହାକୁ ବି କହି ହେଲାନି, ନିଜର 'ଅବସର ପରର ଯୋଜନା' । ଯା' ହେଉ ବିରୋଧୀ ଦଳର ନେତା ସୁମନ୍ତ ଜେନା ଆଦରକଲା- ଅଳ୍ପ ବୟସରେ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହେବାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଛି ।
"ଆପଣ ସାର୍ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ- ମୁଁ ଉପମୁଖ୍ୟ ରହିବି", ସୁମନ୍ତର ଜିଦି ।
"ନା ବାବୁ ତୁମେ ଦଳ ଗଢିଛ, ମୋର ପରାମର୍ଶ ନେଲେ ସଫଳ ହେବ- ମତେ ଖାଲି ପରାମର୍ଶଦାତା କରି ରଖ ।"
କଥା ଅଛିଣ୍ଡା ରହିଲା । ତଥାପି ବିରୋଧୀ ଦଳକୁ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦେବେ ସେ । ଆଉ ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ସେ କାର୍ ନେଇ ଯିବେ ମିର୍ଜାପୁର, ଗୋବରୀ ନଇ ପାରିହେବେ । ତା'ପରେ ନିଜ ଗାଁ ମନୋହରପୁରରେ ପଦଯାତ୍ରା- ଏବଂ.... ଆହୁରି ସହଜ ଓ ସରଳ ଯୋଜନା କରିବେ ସେଇଠି ।

ଭାବୁ ଭାବୁ ଗାଡି ମିର୍ଜାପୁରରେ ପହଁଚିଲା । ଚକରା ମଳିକ ତ କାହିଁ ଦେଖା ଯାଉନି; ଚିଠି ପାଇଲାନି କି? ମଳିମୁଣ୍ଡିଆ ୧୨ ବର୍ଷର ପିଲାଟେ ଦଉଡି ଆସିଲା । "ମୋ ନା ଧରମା; ଅଜାଙ୍କର ଶ୍ୱାସ ବାହାରିଛି, ଆସିପାରିଲେନି- ତୁମକୁ ନବାକୁ ମତେ ପଠାଇଛନ୍ତି ।" ପରାଶର ବୁଝିଲେ, ଚକରା ମଳିକର ଏ ନାତି, କେମିତି କଣ ନାତି ହୋଇଥିବ ।

ଧରମା ସୁଟକେଶ୍ କାଢିବାକୁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଲା । ରମେଶ ଡ୍ରାଇଭରକୁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଦେଲେ ପରାଶର- "ଏଇଠି ରୁହ ଗାଡି ପାଖରେ, ମିର୍ଜାପୁରଟା ଗୁଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ବଜାର ଭଳି ଦିଶୁଛି-ଏଇଠି ହୋଟେଲରେ ଖାଇଦେବ । କାଲି ଭୋର ହେଲେ ଗାଡି ନେଇଯିବ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ।"

ଧରମା କହୁଥିଲା - "ସାଁହ୍ରାବ ଆଜ୍ଞା! ଅନ୍ଧାର ହବା ଆଗରୁ ଗୁଲ ପଳେଇବା, ଗୋବରୀ ନଇରେ ନା·· ବାଉଁଶ ପୋଲ ଉପରେ ଯିବାକୁ କଷ୍ଟ ହେବ ।"
"ଗୋବରୀରେ କଣ ଭଲ ପୋଲ ନାହିଁ ?"
"ଥିଲା ଆଜ୍ଞା, ଭଲ ପୋଲ ଥିଲା । ଅଣଓସାରିଆ ପୋଲ ଉପରେ ସାନ ଗାଡି, ବଡ ଗାଡି, ରିକ୍ସା ସବୁ ଯାଉଥିଲା, ନିଆଁଲଗା ବାତ୍ୟା ତ ସବୁ ସାରିଦେଲା । ଏବେତ ଖାଲି ଗୁରିଟା ବାଉଁଶ ଆଉ ହାତ ଧରା ବାଉଁଶ ଦିଖଣ୍ଡ ସାଇତ୍‌କୁ ।"
ପରାଶର ଆଶ୍ୱସ୍ତ ହେଲେ । ମନୋହରପୁରକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟସ୍ଥଳୀ କରି ଭୁଲ୍ କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ଯାହାହେଉ ସେ ତେବେ ଠିକ୍ ଖବର ପାଇଥିଲେ । ଶାସକ ଦଳର ଏମ୍·ଏଲ୍·ଏ· ମିର୍ଜାପୁରର - ମନୋହରପୁର ଗାଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଆର୍ଶୀବାଦ ପାଇନି । ପୋଲଟେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ସେ କରେଇ ଦେବେ- ତା'ପରେ ମନୋହରପୁରର ପ୍ରଗତି ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବେ, ଯେତେହେଲେ ନିଜ ଗାଁ ତ !

ଏବଂ ଏଇ ବର୍ଷଟା ଭିତରେ ଗାଁ ଓ ଆଖପାଖ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଉନ୍ନତି କରିପାରିଲେ ସେ ବିଧାନ ସଭାକୁ ଯିବେ- ଏବଂ ଉପମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତଥା ପରାମର୍ଶଦାତା ହେବେ । ପରାଶରବାବୁ ନିଜକୁ ନିଜେ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, ଚକରା ମଳିକକୁ କଣ କହିବେ । ଏହା

ଭିତରେ ଚକରା ମଳିକର ଗୁହା ଦୋକାନ ଆଗରେ ସୁଟକେଶ୍ ଥୋଇ ଧରମା "ଅଜା ଅଜା" ଡାକି ଭିତରକୁ ଦଉଡିଗଲା । ଅତି ଆନନ୍ଦରେ, ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ସମ୍ଭାଳି, ଚକରା ମଳିକ କାଶିକାଶି ଦଉଡିଆସିଲା- "ତମେ ଆପଣ -ସାହାବ ମ ! କେମିତି ମନେ ପଡିଲା ।"
"ଗାଁ କଥା, ତୁମ କଥା କେବେ କଣ ଭୁଲି ହବ, ଚକରା ?" - ବେଶ୍ ସଞ୍ଚତ ଭାବରେ କହିଲେ ପରାଶର । ଚକରା ମଳିକ ନୁଆ ଜୀବନ ପାଇଲା ଭଳି କହିଗୁଲିଥିଲା- ସେ କାହାଣୀରେ ଭରିଥିଲା ପଗୃଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ହଜିଲା ସ୍ମୃତି, ଗାଁର ପୋଖରୀ ତୁଠାରୁ ଗାଁ ମଶାଣି ଯାକର କଥା- କେତେ କଣ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ, ସର୍ବନାଶିଆ ବାତ୍ୟା କଥା- ଶ୍ୱାସରୋଗୀ ତ, କେତେ ବା ଗପିବ ? "ସାହାବ ମ ! - ତମଲାଗି ସ୍କୁଲରେ ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ କରିଛି । ଧରମା ସବୁ ବିଛଣା ପକେଇଛି, ରୋଷେଇ କରିଛି ଭାତ, ଡାଲମା- ଆଉ ସାରୁ ପତରରେ ବିରିବରା ତରକାରି- ତୁମେ ପିଲା ଦିନେ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲ ନା ଏଇ ସବୁ ଖାଇବାକୁ । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତ ଗୁଲିଗଲା ! ଆଉ ଏଇ ବାପ ମା' ଛେଉଣ୍ଡ ନାତିଟି ମୋର ଧରମା- ସ୍କୁଲର ଚପରାସି ଆଉ ମାଳି କାମରୁ ଛୁଟି ନେଲି ଏବେ । କହିଲେ ଷାଠିଏ ହେଲା, ଏଥର ତୁ ଯା' । ହେଲେ ସାହାବ କଥା ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ଗୃକିରିଟା ଧରମାକୁ ଦେବେ ।"

ସ୍କୁଲରେ ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ କରିଥିଲା ଚକରା; ମନ୍ଦ ନୁହେଁ । କେମିତି କେଜାଣି କଂସା ବାସନରେ ଗରମ ଗରମ ବଢା ଭାତ, ଡାଲମା, ସାରୁ ପତର ତରକାରି ଏକ ନିଶ୍ୱାସରେ ଖାଇଗଲେ ପରାଶର ବାବୁ । ସ୍କୁଲର ଝରକା ଖୋଲା -ବୋଧେ ବାତ୍ୟାରେ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯାଇଛି, ମରାମତ ହୋଇନି, ହେଲେ ମଶୁରି ଭିତରୁ ବାହାରର ଜହ୍ନ ଆଉ ଅଦୂରରେ ମୁଗ କିଆରି ଦେଖି ପରାଶର ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, 'ମନୋହରପୁରର ମାଧୁରିମା ଏବେବି ବଞ୍ଚିଛି' । ନଇକୂଳର କିଆବଣରୁ ବିଲୁଆ ଭୁକୁଛି । ଏଇ ନଇକୂଳର କିଆ, କେତକୀ ବଣରୁ କେତକୀ ଫୁଲ ତୋଳୁତୋଳୁ କେତେ ଖଣ୍ଡିଆ ହୋଇନାହାନ୍ତି ସେ । ଭାବୁଭାବୁ ଶୋଇ ପଡିଲେ ପରାଶର- ବେଶ୍ ନିଦରେ, ବିନା ନିଦବଟିକାରେ (ଖାଇବାକୁ ଭୁଲିଗଲେ ବୋଧେ) । ସେଇ ଗହିରିଆ ନିଦରେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିଲେ ପରାଶର-

କାହିଁ ଏକ ଅଗନା ଅଗନି ବନସ୍ତ; ଶିକାରକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ସେ । ସାମନ୍ତ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଛୋଟ ରାଜା ସିନା- ଦମ୍ଭ, ବଳ କିଛି କମ୍ ନୁହେଁ ତାଙ୍କର । ଦଳବଳ ପଛରେ ରହିଗଲେ- ଏକା ଏକା ବନ୍ଧୁକ ଧରି ପିଛା କରୁଥିଲେ ମୃଗୁଣୀଟିର । ମୃଗୁଣୀଟି ଧାଇଁ ପଳାଇଲା- ମନେ ପଡିଲା ରାଜାଙ୍କର 'ହେମହରିଣୀ ଧୀରେ ଧାମନ୍ତେ' - ଧାଇଁବେ ସେ ମୃଗୁଣୀ ପଛରେ- ଏମିତି ଧାଉଁ ଧାଉଁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଉଦ୍ୟାନଟିରେ- ମୃଗୁଣୀଟି ଲୁଚିଗଲା ସେଇ କୋଇଲିଲତା ଗଛ ଭିତରେ । ଉଦ୍ୟାନରେ ଆଶ୍ରମଟି କି ସୁନ୍ଦର ! ଆଶ୍ରମରୁ ବାହାରୁଥିଲେ ସାଧୁ ଜଣକ- ମୃଗୁଣୀଟି ଧାଇଁଗଲା ସାଧୁଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ।
"ଆସ ବତ୍ସ ! ଶିକାର ଲାଗି ଧାଇଁ ଧାଇଁ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଛ- ଶୋଷ କରୁଥିବ ନିଶ୍ଚେ ; ପାଣି ପିଇବ?"
ପ୍ରଣିପାତ କଲେ ରାଜା ସାହେବ - "ଆପଣ...."।
"ହଁ ବତ୍ସ ! ତୁମେ ଆସିବା କଥା ଜାଣିଥିଲି । ମୃଗୁଣୀଟି ବାଟ କଢେଇ ଆଣିଲା- ଭଲ ହେଲା ।"
"ଆପଣ ତା'ହେଲେ ଦୂରଦର୍ଶୀ- ମାନେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତଦର୍ଶୀ ମହାତ୍ମା ?"
"ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ତ ତିକାଳର ଗୋଟାଏ ପାହାଚ- ଅତୀତ, ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଭିତରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପାହାଚର ତଫାତ୍ - କାଳର ସୋତରେ ଯାହା ଧୋଇ ହୋଇ ରହିଗଲା ତାହା ଅତୀତ- ଯାହା ଭାସୁଥାଏ ତାହା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ- ଆଉ ଯାହା ବହିଆସୁଛି ତାହା ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ।"
"ମୋର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ କଣ କୁହନ୍ତୁନା ? ମନ ବଡ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହଉଛି ।"
"କଣ ବା କହିବି? କହିଲେ ସାଧୁ ମହାତ୍ମା । ରାଜା ହୋଇ ଜୀବନଯାକ ଶୋଷଣ କରିଛ ପ୍ରଜାଙ୍କୁ । ପ୍ରଜା ପାଳନ କି ପ୍ରଜା ଦଳନ କରିଛ, ତୁମେ ଜାଣ ।"
"ସେ ସବୁ ତ ରାଜନୀତିର ଖେଳ ଆଜ୍ଞା ।" - ରାଜା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ ।
"ସବୁ ତୁମର ମନଗଢା ଆଳ - ଯିଏ ଶୋଷଣ କରିପାରେ, ସେ ପୋଷଣ ବି କରିପାରିଥାନ୍ତା । ପ୍ରକୃତ ଶାନ୍ତିର ମାର୍ଗ ପାଇଁ ସାଧନା ଦରକାର ।"
"ମୁଁ ସାଧନା କରିବି- ମତେ ଶାନ୍ତିର ମାର୍ଗ ବତାନ୍ତୁ ।" - ଖୁବ୍ ଦୃଢ ଭାବରେ କହିଲେ ରାଜା ।
"ତେବେ ଏଇ ଅଶମରେ ବିଶ୍ରାମ କର- ଏଇଠି ଅନ୍ତେବାସୀ ହେବାକୁ ଚିନ୍ତା କର । ମୃଗୁଣୀଟି ନିଜ ପ୍ରାଣକୁ ପାଣି ଛଡାଇ ଧାଇଁଥିଲା ତୁମକୁ ଆହ୍ୱାନ କରିବାକୁ- ତା କଥା ଟିକେ ଭାବ ।" - ସାଧୁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଲେ ।
"ମୁଁ କଣ ରାଜ୍ୟର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଛାଡି, ଶିକାର ଛାଡି ଏଇଠି ରହିଲେ ଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇବି ?" - ରାଜାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦ୍ୱ ଥିଲା ।
ସାଧୁ କହିଲେ, "ସେଇ ସୁଯୋଗ ତୁମକୁ ମିଳିଛି- ବିଗୃର କର- ଶାନ୍ତିର ମାର୍ଗ ଲାଗି ତ୍ୟାଗ ହିଁ ଲୋଡା--।"

ମନ ଖୁବ୍ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳିତ ହେଲା - ସେଇ ଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦ୍ୱମୟ ମନରେ ରାଜା ସାହେବ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, ସତେ କଣ ସେ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରିବେ ରାଣୀଙ୍କୁ, ରାଜକୁମାରଙ୍କୁ, ରାଜପ୍ରସାଦକୁ, ଆଉ ସବୁଠାରୁ ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ରାଜପଦକୁ----???? ହଠାତ୍ ଧରମାର ଡାକରେ ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା ପରାଶରଙ୍କର ।

"ଆଜ୍ଞା ଅଜା କାଶିକାଶି ବେଦମ୍ ହୋଇଗଲେଣି- ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଜୁଛନ୍ତି ।" ଧରମାର ଆତୁର ବିନତିରେ ଉଠିପଡିଲେ ପରାଶର । ରାତି ଅଧରେ ଏମିତି ଉଠେଇବ- ପୁଣି ତାଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଉଚ୍ଚପଦସ୍ଥ (ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ପଛେ ଅବସରପ୍ରାପ୍ତ) ଅଫିସର୍‌ଙ୍କୁ- ପୁଣି ଚକରା ମଳିକର କାନ୍ଦଣାରେ....। "ନାଃ ! ମୁଁ ଯିବି- ଏଠି ତ ମୁଁ ସାହାବ ନୁହେଁ- ନିଜ ଗାଁକୁ ଆସିଛି, ଚକରା ମଳିକ ହିଁ ମୋର ହବ ସାରଥି, ଆଉ ତାକୁ ଧରି ମୋର ରାଜନୀତିର ରଥ ଗୁଲିବ- ବହୁତ ସୁବିଧା- ସେ ହରିଜନ- ତା'ରି ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମିଶିଲେ ସିନା ଉଦାରତା ବଢିବ- ଆଖିଦୃଶିଆ ହବ- ।"

କିଛି ନକହି ପରାଶର ଚକରା ମଳିକର ଗୃହା ଦୋକାନରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ । "ଆପଣ ଆସିଲେ ଭଲ ହେଲା- ଡରିଗଲି, ସତେକି ଆଉ ବଞ୍ଚିବିନି । ଶ୍ୱାସରୋଗ ଜୋରରେ ଧରିଛି- କେତେବେଳେ କଣ ହବ କେଜାଣି ?"
"ଆଉ ଗପନା ଚକରା - ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନିଅ । କାଲି ମୁଁ କଟକରୁ ଡାକ୍ତର ଡକେଇବି- ନଚେତ୍ କଟକ ନେଇ କାହାକୁ ଦେଖେଇବି - ।" ଲଣ୍ଠନଟା ମିଞ୍ଜି ମଞ୍ଜି ହୋଇ ଜଳୁଥିଲା; କିରାସିନି କମିଗଲାଣି । "ବାପାରେ - ଲଣ୍ଠନରେ କିରାସିନି ପୁରେଇଦେ- ଲଭିଯିବ କାଳେ ।"- ଧରମାକୁ ଡାକି କହିଲା ଚକରା ।
"ବାବୁମ, ଦିପଦ କଥା ଥିଲା - ଆସିଚ ତ ଗାଁକୁ- ସରଗର ସବୁଯାକ ସୁଖ ମିଳିଗଲା- କେତେଥର ଭାବିଛି- ସତେ କଣ ତୁମେ ଆସିବ - 'କୋଇଲି ଲୋ କେଶବ ଯେ ମଥୁରାକୁ ଗଲା...' ଗୀତ ଗାଇଲା ବେଳେ ତମ କଥା ବହୁତ ଭାବେ ।" ନାଲି ଜନାରେ ଗୁଡେଇ ରଖିଥିଲା ଲେଖାଟେ- ଚକରା ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ଖୋଲିଲା । ହାତ ଲେଖା କାଗଜ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ବଢେଇ ଦେଲା ପରାଶରଙ୍କୁ.. ।

"ତମରି ଲେଖାମ, ଚିହ୍ନିପାରୁନା, ବହୁତ ପୁରୁଣା ତ, ଛିଣ୍ଡି ଆସିଲାଣି.. । ତମର ମନେ ନାହିଁନା - ଏଇ ଆମ ସ୍କୁଲର ଯେତେ ମାଷ୍ଟେ ଗଲେଣି- ସମସ୍ତେ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ତମର ଏଇ ଗୀତ ପଢାନ୍ତି- ଆଉ କହନ୍ତି- ଏଇ ନଇତଳିଆ ଗାଁରେ ଜନମ ନେଇ, ପାଠ ପଢି ମଣିଷ ହୋଇ ପରାଶରବାବୁ କେତେ ଉପରେ- କେତେ ମଣିଷ ତରଉଛନ୍ତି - ତାଙ୍କ ଭଳି ପାଠ ପଢ, ବଡ ମଣିଷ ହୁଅ । ପରାଶର ବାବୁ ଏଇ ମୁଲକର ମଧୁବାବୁ । ତମେ ସେଇ ଗୀତଟି ଯାହା ଲେଖିଥିଲ- ବନ୍ଧାଇଦେଇ ସ୍କୁଲ କାନ୍ଥରେ ଟଙ୍ଗେଇଥିଲି- ବାତ୍ୟା ଅସିଲାନି ଯେ, ସବୁ ଧୋଇ ନେଇଗଲା - ଦେଖୁନ- ଫ୍ରେମକରା ଗୀତଟା ପାଣି ବାଜି କେମିତି ଲିଭିଗଲା-ଉପର ଦିଧାଡି ଯାହା ରହିଯାଇଛି- ।"

ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥିଲେ ପରାଶର ବାବୁ- ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଇତିହାସ ଭିତରେ କେତେ ଯେ ସତକଥା ଲୁଚିଯାଏ । କେତେ ପଛ କଥା ଧୋଇ ହୋଇଯାଏ ।

"ବାବୁ ମା ତମେତ ଲେଖିଥିଲ - ମୁଁ ପୁରା ମୁଖସ୍ଥ କରିରଖିଛି, ଆଉ ଥରେ ତଳେ ଲେଖିଦିଅନ୍ତନି, ଗୀତଟି ପୁରା କରିଦିଅନ୍ତ ତମରି ହାତରେ ।"- ଚକରା ଜିଗର କଲା ।
ପରାଶର ଚୁପ୍ ରହିଥିଲେ । କୈଶୋରର ସେ ଆବେଗ, ସେ ମମତା, ସେ ସ୍ନେହ ଆଉ ସମ୍ବେଦନ ଭାବ- ପାହାଚ, ପାହାଚ ଦେଇ ଘଷି ହୋଇଗଲାଣି- । "ତାରୁଣ୍ୟର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ , ଯୌବନର ଦର୍ପ, ଆଉ ପ୍ରଶାସକ ଜୀବନର ଅହଂ ଭାବ- ଆଃ ! କୁଆଡେ ଗଲା ସେ ଦିନ । ଯଯାତିଙ୍କୁ ସିନା ଯୌବନ ମିଳିଥିଲା- ମତେ କଣ ଏବେ କୈଶୋର ମିଳିବ ?"- ହସିଲେ ପରାଶର । ଖରସ୍ରୋତା ନଈଟିଏ ପାହାଡରୁ ଝରଣା ଭଳି ସିନା ବାହାରିଲା- ଆଉ ପାହାଡକୁ ନ ଗୃହିଁ ମାଡିଚାଲିଛି- ସମତଳକୁ -ଖୁବ୍ ସମତଳକୁ- ଏବଂ ଯେପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ନ ମିଶିଛି- ସେମିତି ମାଡି ଚାଲିଥିବ ।

ହେଲେ ନଇ କେବେ ପଛକୁ ଗୃହିଁନି- ସେ ବା କେମିତି (କାହିଁକି) ଗୃହିଁଥାନ୍ତେ ? ମାତ୍ର ଆଜି ପଛକୁ ଗୃହିଁବେ ସେ, ତାଙ୍କର ଭିନ୍ନ ଯୋଜନା ଅଛି, ଆଉ ଏଇ ଯୋଜନା ଲାଗି ଏଇ ପଦଯାତ୍ରା । ଶିକାର ନୁହେଁତ ଆଉ କଣ ? ଚକରା ମଳିକର ଜିଗର- "ଲେଖି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁନା ବାବୁ । ତମରି ହସ୍ତାକ୍ଷର .... ମନେ ପଡୁନିନା - ତମର ମନେ ନାହିଁ, ହେଲେ ମୋର ମନେ ଅଛି । ନିମମଙ୍ଗଳା ପାଖରେ ସଙ୍ଗତ ବସିଥିଲେ ଆମେ- ଖେଳିବାରେ ମୁଁ ଫାଷ୍ଟ ଆଉ ପଢିବାରେ ତୁମେ । ଏଇ ଗୋବରୀ କୂଳେ ନିମମଙ୍ଗଳା ପାଖରେ ତମେ ସେଦିନ ଏଇ କବିତା ଲେଖିଥିଲ - ସର୍କଲ୍‌ର ସବୁ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଯୋଉ କମ୍ପିଟିସନ୍ ହେଉଥିଲା- ତୁମେ ସେଥିରେ ଏଇ କବିତା ଆବୃତ୍ତି କରି ଫାଷ୍ଟ୍ ହେଲ । ମନେ ନାହିଁ ?" ପରାଶର ଚିନ୍ତିତ ହେଲେ - ସାତ ତାଳ ପୋଖରୀ ଭିତରେ କେତେ ଲୁଗୁ ଫରୁଆ ଭିତରୁ ସ୍ମୃତିର ଫଳକକୁ ଖୋଲୁଛି ଚକରା ମଳିକ- ଅମ୍ଳାନ ସେ ସ୍ମୃତି । ଅକ୍ଷୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସେ ଫଳକ । ବାତ୍ୟା ସିନା ଲେଖାଟାର ପଦ ଧୋଇ ଲିଭେଇ ଦେଲା, ଚକରା ମନରେ ତ ସେ ଲେଖା ଅଲିଭା । "ଚକରା ଡାକିବ - ଆଉ ମୁଁ ଲେଖିବି- ପଗୃଶ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ଲେଖିବି କବିତା- ପୁଣି ଓଡିଆରେ । ସତେ କଣ ଏହା ସମ୍ଭବ ହେବ ? ସତେ କଣ ହାତ ଚାଲିବ ? ଓଡିଆ ଲେଖା ପାଇଁ ଏ ହାତ ଅଥର୍ବ ।"

ଅନ୍ଧାରକୁ ଭ୍ରୁକ୍ଷେପ ନକରି , ନିଜର ଖୋଳପାକୁ ନିଜେ ନଦେଖି ଚକରାକୁ ଆବେଗରେ କୁଣ୍ଢେଇ ପକେଇ କହିଲେ- "ଚକରା ତତେ କଥା ଦେଉଛି । ମୁଁ ଏଇଠି ରହିବି, ଗାଁର ଉନ୍ନତି କରିବି, ତୋ' ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନଇକୂଳେ ବସି ଗପକରିବି । ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ବୁଲିବି-- ବାଗୁଡି ଖେଳିବି- ଜାମୁକୋଳି ଖାଇବି - ନଈରେ ପହଁରିବି- ମାଙ୍କଡକୁ ଟେକା ମାରିବି-।"
"ମତେ ଥରେ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ କହିବନି ?"- ଚକରାର କଣ୍ଠ ଥରୁଥିଲା ।
ଦୁଇ ବନ୍ଧୁ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କଲେ । ପରାଶରଙ୍କ କଣ୍ଠରେ "ସଙ୍ଗୀତ" । ଚକରା କିଛି କହିଲାନି- ଖାଲି କାନ୍ଦିଲା ।

"କିରାସିନି ସରି ଯାଇଛି ଅଜା- ଲଣ୍ଠଣ ଲିଭି ଆସିଲାଣି ।"- ଡିବିଟିଏ ଧରି ଧରମା ଆସିଲା ।
"ଏମିତି ଡିବି, ଲଣ୍ଠଣ ଲଗେଇ ପାଠ ପଢି ତୁମେ ମଣିଷ ହେଲ - ଏତେ ବଡ ହେଲ- ସବୁ କଥା କଣ ମନେ ପଡୁଛି, ଚକରା ମନରେ ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସ, ପୁଣି ସ୍ୱସ୍ତି ।"

ଅନ୍ଧାର ଭିତରେ ସ୍ମୃତି ମଳିନ ହୁଏନା, ଜ୍ୱଳନ୍ତ ହୁଏ- ଆଲୁଅରେ ପୁଣି ଲିଭିଯାଏ- ଏଇମିତି ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ ପରାଶର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ- ଶିକାର କଥା । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସମ୍ଭବ ସେ ଆଶ୍ରମର ସାଧୁ ମହାତ୍ମାଙ୍କର ବାଣୀ କଣ ସତ ? ସେଇ ସାଧୁଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଜି ଖୋଜି ସେ ଏଇଠି । ଏଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଗାଁ, ମନୋହର ପୁର ନାଆଁ- ଆଃ ! ସେ ତେବେ ଏଇଠି ଶାନ୍ତି ଖୋଜିବେ- ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତ ତ୍ୟାଗ ଲୋଡା । ପରାଶରଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ତେବେ ସାର୍ଥକ ହେବ- ଆଉ ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ ରାଜପଦ- ଆଉ ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ ଶିକାର---।

ଚକରା ମଳିକ ପଗୃଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ମଳିନ କାଗଜଟି ଧରି ଗୀତ ଗାଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲା, ପରାଶରଙ୍କର ନିଜ ରଚିତ ଅଥଚ ଆତ୍ମବିସ୍ମୃତ କବିତାଟି- "ଆହା କି ସୁନ୍ଦର, ଗାଁଆଟି ମୋହର ମନୋହରପୁର ନାଆଁ ---- ।"

ଆଉଥରେ ଗଳା ସଫା କରି ଭଲ କରି ଗୀତ ଗାଇବ ବୋଲି ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁକରୁ ଚକରା କାଶି ଉଠିଲା- କାଗଜ ଟିକକ ପରାଶରଙ୍କ ହାତକୁ ବଢାଇ ଦଉଦଉ, କ୍ଲାନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଦଉଡିଆ ଖଟରେ କାନ୍ଥକୁ ଆଉଜି ଶୋଇପଡିଲା । ତା' ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ବୋହୁଥିଲା- ଜାଣି ହେଲାନି ଶ୍ୱାସଜନିତ କାଶରୁ ନା ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତିରୁ --।

ପରାଶର କିନ୍ତୁ ଚଷମା ଖୋଲି ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହପୋଛି ଡିବିର ମିଞ୍ଜି ମିଞ୍ଜି ଆଲୁଅକୁ ଗୃଦ୍ଧିରହିଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, "ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଜୀବନଟାକୁ କଣ ନୂଆକରି ଗଢି ହୁଅନ୍ତାନି ?"

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Niranjan Mishra is a regular contributer of OSA Journal and lives in Sudbury, Canada.

ଆସକ୍ତିର ବୋଝ

ଡକ୍‌ଟର୍ ଜୀବନକୃଷ୍ଣ ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଯୁଦ୍ଧର ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ଦିବସ ଆଜି ।
ମହାଭାରତ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ନୁହେଁ ।

ପ୍ରବଳ ବଳଶାଳୀ ପ୍ରଧାନ ସେନାପତି ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ ଓ ପ୍ରବଳ ପରାକ୍ରମୀ ଏକଛତ୍ରାଧିପତି ସିଜର୍‌ଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବୁଦ୍ଧିର ଯୁଦ୍ଧ । ସାଢେ ଛଅ କ୍ୱିଣ୍ଟଲ୍ ଓଜନର ବିରାଟ ନବ ତାମ୍ରମୁଦ୍ରାକୁ ରାସ୍ତା ଉପରେ ଅତି କଷ୍ଟରେ ଗଡାଇ ଗଡାଇ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ । ଯୁଦ୍ଧର ସର୍ତ୍ତ ଅନୁସାରେ ସେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଅଗ୍ରାହ୍ୟ କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

୧୮ ଦିନ ତଳେ.....

ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ବିଜୟୀ ହୋଇ ଫେରିଲାପରେ ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ ଆସି ପୁରସ୍କାର ମାଗିଥିଲେ ଦଶଲକ୍ଷ ଡେନେରୀ । ନିଜର ପ୍ରଧାନ ସେନାପତିଙ୍କର ବିଜୟରେ ଗଦ୍‌ଗଦ୍ ହୋଇ ସିଜର୍ ପୁରସ୍କାର ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା କରିଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ତହିଁଆରଦିନ ସଭାସଦନଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ ନିଜର ବିଚିତ୍ର ପୁରସ୍କାର ଘୋଷଣା କରିଥିଲେ ।

....."ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ ! ମୋ ଗନ୍ତାଘରେ ପଚାଶଲକ୍ଷ ତାମ୍ର ମୁଦ୍ରା ଅଛି, ଯା'ର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ଦଶ ଲକ୍ଷ ଡେନେରୀ । ତମେ ଆଜି ଗନ୍ତାଘରକୁ ଯିବ ଓ ଗୋଟାଏ ତାମ୍ର ମୁଦ୍ରା ଏ ମଞ୍ଚକୁ ନେଇଆସିବ । କାଲିକୁ ତୁମ ପାଇଁ ମୋ କାରିଗରମାନେ ଦୁଇଟି ମୁଦ୍ରାକୁ ତରଳାଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ ମୁଦ୍ରା କରିଦେଇଥିବେ । ତମେ କାଲି ଯିବ ଏବଂ ସେଇ ମୁଦ୍ରାକୁ ଏଠାକୁନେଇ ଆସିବ । ତା' ଆର ଦିନ ତମେ ଆଣିବ ଗୁରୋଟି ମୁଦ୍ରାରେ ତିଆରି ଆହୁରି ଏକ ବଡ ମୁଦ୍ରା । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଏହି ନିୟମରେ ମୁଦ୍ରାର ଆକାର ବଢି ଗଲିଥିବ । ଆଉ ତମେ ଏଠିକି ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ନେଇ ଆସିବ ଏଇ କ୍ରମାନ୍ୱୟରେ ପରିବର୍ଦ୍ଧିତ ଆକାରର ମୁଦ୍ରା ଗୋଟିଏ, ଗୋଟିଏ । ଏହିପରି ଯେତେ ମୁଦ୍ରା ତମେ ଏଠିକି ଆଣିପାରିବ ସେ ସବୁ ମୁଦ୍ରା ତୁମର ପୁରସ୍କାର ।" .....

ସମ୍ରାଟଙ୍କର ଏ ଘୋଷଣାରେ ସଭାସଦ୍ ପ୍ରୀତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ଏବଂ ବାହୁବଳରେ ବଳୀୟାନ୍ ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ ମଧ୍ୟ ସିଜର୍‌ଙ୍କର ଦୟା ଓ ଦାନର ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରିଥିଲେ ।
ସେହି ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାର ଆଜି ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ଦିବସ ।
ଆଜିର ମୁଦ୍ରାର ଓଜନ ସାତେ ଛଅ କ୍ୱିଣ୍ଟଲ୍ ।

ରୋମ୍‌ର ରାଜପଥ ଉପରେ ସେହି ଅତିକାୟ ମୁଦ୍ରାକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବର୍ଚ୍ଛା ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ ଅତିକଷ୍ଟରେ ଗଡାଇ ଗଡାଇ ଗୁଲିଛନ୍ତି । ରାଜପଥର ଦୁଇ ପାର୍ଶ୍ୱରେ କୋଠା ଉପରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ରୋମ୍‌ର ଅଧିବାସୀ । ରୋମ୍‌ର ଗର୍ବ - ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍‌ଙ୍କୁ ସେମାନେ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାଳିମାରି ଉତ୍ସାହିତ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଚିତ୍କାର କରୁଛନ୍ତି .....ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍..... ଜିନ୍ଦାବାଦ୍..... । ଉତ୍ତେଜନାରେ ଫାଟିପଡୁଛି ଜନସମୁଦ୍ର ।
ଆଉ ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ .....
ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ଗଡେଇ ଗଡେଇ ଗୁଲିଛନ୍ତି ସେ ବିରାଟ ମୁଦ୍ରାକୁ ।
ଗୋଡଗୁଲୁନି ଆଉ .....
ହାତ ବି ଥକିଗଲାଣି.....
ଝାଳ ସରସର ପାପୁଲିରୁ ଖସିଯାଉଛି ବର୍ଚ୍ଛା.....
ଶେଷ ଶହେ ଗଜ ଲାଗୁଛି ଶହେ ମାଇଲ୍ ପରି.....
ଆଉ ପାରିଲେନି ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍.....
ତଳେ ପଡିଗଲେ ସେ .....

ଗୋଟିଏ ନିସ୍ତବ୍ଧତାର ଜୁଆର ମାଡିଗଲା ଜନ ସମୁଦ୍ର ଉପରେ । ସମସ୍ତ କୋଳାହଳ, ଉତ୍ତେଜନା ଗୋଟିଏ ଧକ୍କାରେ ଚୁପ୍ ହୋଇଗଲା ।

ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମନରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ.....

ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍‌ଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ଶକ୍ତିର କ'ଣ ଏଇ ପରିସମାପ୍ତି ?

କେହି କେହି ତଥାପି ବି କହୁଛନ୍ତି....."ନା.....ନା.....ତା' ହୋଇ ପାରେନା, ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ ପୁଣିଉଠିବେ" ।

କିନ୍ତୁ.....ନା.....ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍ ଆଉ ଉଠିପାରିଲେନି ।

କ୍ଲାନ୍ତ, ଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ, ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପରାଜିତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଜୀବିତ ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍‌ଙ୍କର ଅବଶ ଦେହ ସେଇ ଧୂଳିରେ ହିଁ ପଡିରହିଲା, କୁଆଡେ ଗଲା ତାଙ୍କ ବାହୁର ସେ ଅପରିସୀମ ଶକ୍ତି ?

କାହିଁକି ପ୍ରବଳ ବଳଶାଳୀ ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍‌ଙ୍କର ଏ ଅବସ୍ଥା ହେଲା ?

କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ କ'ଣ ?.....

ଏ ଗୋବର ପୋକ.....

ମୁହଁରେ କ୍ଲାନ୍ତିର ଚିହ୍ନ ବି ନାହିଁ.....

ଟେରେନ୍‌ଟିଅସ୍‌ଙ୍କର ଠିକ୍ ମୁହଁ ପାଖରେ ସେ ଗୋବର ଲଣ୍ଡିଟାକୁ ଗଡାଇ ଗଡାଇ ଗୂଲିଛି.....

କାଲି ଗଡାଉଥିଲା .....

ଆଜି ଗଡାଉଛି.....

ଆସନ୍ତା କାଲି ବି ଗଡାଉଥିବ .....

ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ଧରି ସେ, ସର୍ବଶକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କର ଇଙ୍ଗିତରେ, ଏମିତି ଗଡାଇ ଗୂଲିଛି ।

କ୍ଲାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ.....

ଚିନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ.....

ଆଶା ନାହିଁ.....

ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ନାହିଁ.....

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ନାହିଁ.....

ଉତ୍ତର ଖୋଜିବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବି ନାହିଁ.....

କେବଳ କର୍ମ..... ଆଉ କର୍ମ.....

ଆସକ୍ତି ବିହୀନ କର୍ମ.....

ସେ ମନେ ରଖିଛି..... ସେଇ ଅନ୍ତିମ ସତ୍ୟ .....

"କର୍ମଣ୍ୟେବଅଧିକାରସ୍ତେ ମା' ଫଳେଷୁ କଦାଚନ ।"

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The author of this story Dr. Jibana Krusna Mohapatra is the Retired Dean of Regional College of Education, Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Being a man of Physics, writing short stories and novels has always been his passion. He had also once directed an Oriya drama. He is now leading a peaceful and relaxing retired life with his family in Acharya Vihar, Bhubaneswar. Interested people may contact in his address: Plot No. 21/p, Acharya Vihar, Bhubaneswar - 751013, Orissa, Tel: 2542540, Email: jk_mohapatra@rediffmail.com.

ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ

ତାପସ ରଂଜନ ସାହୁ, ଅଷ୍ଟିନ୍, ଟେକ୍ସାସ୍

ତମଠାରୁ କାଲି ଟେଲିଗ୍ରାମ୍ ପାଇଲି । ଯେତେଶୀଘ୍ର ସମ୍ଭବ ଆସୁଛି । ତମେ ବର୍ଷେ ହେଲା ଅବସର ନେଲଣି, ମୋର ବି ଛଅମାସ ହୋଇଗଲା । ବହୁତ ବିବ୍ରତ ଜଣା ପଡ଼ୁଛ, କାରଣ କ'ଣ ? ପୁଅ ଝିଅ, ନାତିନାତୁଣୀ, ଗାଡ଼ି, ବଙ୍ଗଳା ସବୁଥାଇ ବି ଶୂନ୍ୟଶୂନ୍ୟ ଦିଶୁଛ । ହଁ, ଘରେ ବସି ବସି ବୋର୍ ଲାଗୁଥିବ - କିଛି କାମ ନାହିଁ । କ'ଣ ହେଲା, ଗାଁକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ପ୍ରବଳ ଇଚ୍ଛା ? ନା, ସେଠି ବି ତମକୁ ଶାନ୍ତି ମିଳିଲାନି । ଅବସର ପରେ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଇଥିଲ ବସା ବାନ୍ଧିବାକୁ - ପନ୍ଦର ଦିନରୁ ଅଧିକ ରହି ପାରିଲନି । ବୁଝୁଛି, ପୁଅ ବୋହୂଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରହିବାକୁ ତମ ଭଳିଆ ମଣିଷକୁ ଜମା ଭଲ ଲାଗିବନି । ଅନ୍ୟର ଆଶ୍ରା କୁଆଡ଼େ ତମର ଦରକାର ନ ଥିଲା ପରା; ଗାଁରେ ବା ରହନ୍ତ କିପରି ? ଆଇ·ଏ·ଏସ୍ ଜୀବନକାଳ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କେତେଥର ଗାଁ ମାଟିରେ ପାଦ ପକାଇଛ ? ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି, ତମେ ଗାଁରୁ ହିଁ ଏଠାକୁ ଆସିଥିଲ । ସ୍କୁଲ୍ କଲେଜ ବେଳରେ ତ ରୋଜ୍ ଧାଉଁଥିଲ, ରାତି ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ କାଦୁଆ ନଈରେ ପଶି ଘରମୁହାଁ । ବହୁତ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣ ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲ ବିଲ, ବଣ, ପାହାଡ଼ ଘେରା ତମ ଗାଁ କଥା ବଖାଣି ବସିଲା ବେଳେ । ଆଇ·ଏ·ଏସ୍ ପାଇଲା ପରେ ତମ ଦେହର ଅସ୍ଥି-ମଜ୍ଜା, ମାଂସପେଶୀରେ ପଶିଗଲା ନାଲିପାଣି ଓ ଧୂଆଁଳିଆ ପବନ; ମହାନଦୀର ପାଣି ଓ ତା କୂଳର ମିଠା ମିଠା ପବନ ବଦଳରେ । ତମ ମଗଜରେ ପଶିଲା ନୂଆ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା, ନୂଆ ଯୋଜନା; ଗାଁର ହଳୁଆ ବୁଦ୍ଧି କାଢ଼ିହୋଇ । କ'ଣ ପାଇଲ ଏଇ ତିରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଧାଁ ଧପଡ଼ କରି । ଅଣନିଃଶ୍ୱାସୀ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଛ ପର୍ତ୍ତମାନ; ଏଠି ରହିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁନ - ତମ ଆତ୍ମସମ୍ମାନରେ ଆଞ୍ଚ୍ ଆସିବ ବୋଲି । ତମେ କ'ଣ ଭାବିଥିଲ ସବୁଦିନ କ୍ଲବ୍, ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ରେ ଜୀବନଟାକୁ କଟାଇଦେବ ବୋଲି ? ଏବେ ଗାଁରେ, ନିଛାଟିଆରେ ରହିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁବ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ । ସେଠି ବି ପାରିବନି । ତମର କ୍ଷମତା ମୋହ ଏବେ ବି ଭାଙ୍ଗିନି । ତମକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି, ସମ୍ମାନ ଦିଅନ୍ତି, ଭୟ କରନ୍ତି; ହେଲେ କେତେଜଣ ଭଲ ପାଅନ୍ତି, ଭକ୍ତି କରନ୍ତି ? ନିଜ ଗାଁର କେତେଜଣଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟ ଜୟ କରିଛ, କେତେଜଣଙ୍କୁ ଚିହ୍ନିଛ ? ଏଠି ଦୁର୍ବିସହ ହୋଇପଡ଼ୁଛ ।

ଆଚ୍ଛା, ମୋ କଥା ଶୁଣିବ ? ତ୍ୟାଗ କରିପାରିବ ତମର ଅହଂକାରର ଖୋଳପା; ଭୁଲି ଯାଇପାରିବ ତମେ କେବେ ଆଇ·ଏ·ଏସ୍ ଅଫିସର୍ ଥିଲ ବୋଲି ? ଏ ପୋଷାକ ଛାଡ଼ି କାନ୍ଧରେ ଗାମୁଛା ପକାଇ ଭାଗବତ ଟୁଙ୍ଗିରେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ବସି ପାରିବ ? ଫେରି ଯାଇପାରିବ ତମର ଅତୀତର ସେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିନମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟକୁ ? ମୁଁ ଜୀବନରେ ବିଫଳ ହୋଇଛି ବୋଲି କହୁଥିଲ । ତମଭଳି ପ୍ରାଚୁର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଚଳିନି, ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ବି କରିନି କେବେ । ଖୁବ୍ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଅଛି । ପଂଝାଏ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଅଣ୍ଟାଭିଡ଼ି ଆଗେଇବାର କ୍ଷମତା ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଛି । ଏବେ ତମେ ମୋତେ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରୁଛ, ମୋ ଭଳି ଜୀବନଟେ ପାଇବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା କରୁଛ । ସତରେ କ'ଣ ମୋ ଭଳି ଶିକ୍ଷକର ଜୀବନ ତମକୁ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ କରିପାରିଛି ? ଏଁ, ଦୁଃଖ କରୁଛ ! ତମ ଜୀବନ ସରିଯାଇନି । ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଦେଇ ଗତି କରିବା ହିଁ ଜୀବନ । ତମ ଜୀବନର ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ବାକି ଅଛି । ଆଇ·ଏ·ଏସ୍ ଖୋଳପାରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସି ମଣିଷଟିଏ ହୋଇଯାଅ - ହୃଦୟରେ ହୃଦୟଭରା ସ୍ନେହ ପ୍ରେମ ଧରି । ଆଉ ପାରିବ ତ ତମର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ବଂଶଧରମାନଙ୍କୁ ସଂଶୋଧନ କର । ତମ ଜୀବନ ଅସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇ ରହିଛି - ତାକୁ ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କର ।

Tapas Ranjan Sahu, 11316 Jollyville Road, Apt 357, Austin TX 78759

ଶ୍ରୀ ତାପସ ରଂଜନ ସାହୁ ପତ୍ନୀ ସ୍ମିତା ଏବଂ ପୁତ୍ର ସମୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଟେକ୍ସାସ୍‌ର ଅଷ୍ଟିନ୍ ସହରରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ । ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍‌ରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପତ୍ରିକା 'ସଂବିତ୍'ର ସଂପାଦକ ତଥା ସହ-ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାତା ରୂପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ତଥା ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ପ୍ରଗତି ପଥରେ ସର୍ବଦା ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟାରତ ।

ତୁ ଖୋଜୁଚୁ ଯାହାକୁ

ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଧର ନାୟକ, ସିବୁକ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ (ଅଗଷ୍ଟ, ୧୯୮୩)

ତୁ ଖୋଜୁଚୁ ଯାହାକୁ ବନ
ପାହାଡେ, ଦୂରେ ସୁଦୂରେ
ସେ ଯେ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଶବ୍ଦ ମୁରଲୀ
ବାଜେ ସବୁଠି ମୃଦୁ ମଧୁରେ ।୧।

ସେ ନାହିଁ ଗୀର୍ଜା, ମନ୍ଦିରେ ଅବା
ମସ୍‌ଜିଦ୍‌ରେ ସେ ନାହିଁ ରେ
କାଠ ପଥର ମୁରତି ପାଖେ ତୁ
କିଆଁ ଡାକୁଚୁ ଏତେ ଅଧୀରେ
ସେ ଯେ ନିରାକାର୍ ସେଇଯେ ସାକାର
(ପ୍ରତି) ପ୍ରାଣ ସିନ୍ଧୁରେ ଉଚ୍ଛୁଳେ ।୨।
ସେ ଯେ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଶବ୍ଦ ମୁରଲୀ.....

ସେ ଯେ ଅଦେହି ସେ ଯେ ଅରୂପ
ସେ ଯେ ପରମ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ଅସୀମ
ସେ ଯେ ଅସୀମ ଭିତରେ ସସୀମ
ସେ ଯେ ଯୀଶୁ ଆଉ ରାମ ରହିମ ।୩।
ସେ ଯେ ନିରାକାର ସେଇଯେ ସାକାର.....

ତା'ର ଦୀପ୍ତି ଆକାଶେ ଆକାଶେ
ସେ ଯେ ଭାସୁଛି ପବନେ ପବନେ
ସେ ଯେ ଶ୍ୟାମଳ ସ୍ନିଗ୍ଧ କାନ୍ତି
ହସେ ପ୍ରକୃତି ବନ ଗହନେ
ଫୁଲ ସୁରଭିରେ ତା'ର ଗନ୍ଧ
ନଦୀ ଲହରେ ଲହରେ ଛନ୍ଦ
ସେ ଯେ'ରେ ପରମାନନ୍ଦ
ଲୁଚି ବସିଛି ତୋ ମନ ଦେଉଳେ ।୪।
ସେ ଯେ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଶବ୍ଦ ମୁରଲୀ.....

ସେ ଯେ ମହା ଜୀବନର ବାଣୀ
ସେ ଯେ ସୃଜନ ଶଙ୍ଖ ଧ୍ୱନି
ସେ ଯେ ଅଣୁ ପରମାଣୁ ଧୂଳିରେ
ତା'ର ବିଭୂତି ଦେଇଛି ବୁଣି
ସେଇ ବିଭୂତି ଦିହାତେ ସାଉଁଟି
ନାଚ ଉନ୍ମାଦ ପ୍ରେମ ବିଭୋଳେ ।୫।
ସେ ଯେ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଶବ୍ଦ ମୁରଲୀ .....

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Shri Laxmidhar Nayak, poet, novelist, lyricist and dramatist, has received Sahitya Akademi and Sangeet Natak Akademi awards for his various creations. In 1997, he received Ati Badi Jagannath Das award from the Orissa Sahitya Academy for his contributions to Oriya literature.

ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଜଣାଣ

ସରଳା ତ୍ରିପାଠୀ

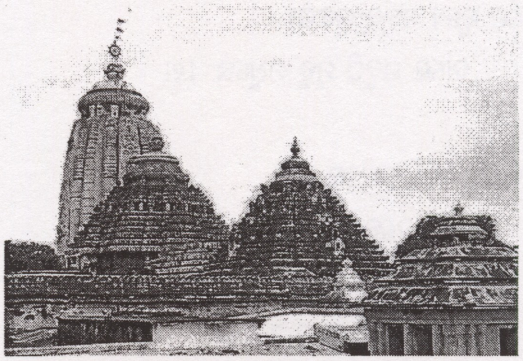
(୧)

ଜୀବନଟା ଖାଲି ନିରାଶାର ବାଲି
ପାଣି ଫୋଟକାରୁ ହୀନ
ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରଇ ଏ ଜୀବନ ଯାଇ
ତୁମ ଦେହେ ହେଉ ଲୀନ ।୧।
ଛଅ ଖଣ୍ଡ କାଠେ ମୋ ଶବକୁ ନେଇ
ଶ୍ମଶାନେ ଜଳିବ ଜୁଇ
ସୋଦରେ କାନ୍ଦିବେ ମନସ୍ତାପ କରି
ସ୍ମୃତି ଖାଲି ଯିବ ରହି ।୨।

ମୁଁ ହୀନ ଦୁଃଖିନୀ ତୁମ ନାମ ବିନା
ନାହିଁ ମୋର ଅନ୍ୟ ଗତି
ହେ ପରମପିତା ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରତା
ତୁମ ପାଦେ ସିନା ମୁକ୍ତି ।୩।
ଆହେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଅନାଦି ଅନନ୍ତ
ତୁମ ଶୁଭାଶୀଷ ମାଗେ
ଆତ୍ମାକୁ ମୋହର ଦିଅ ଚିରଶାନ୍ତି
(ଆଉ) ଜନମ ନ ଦିଅ ଭବେ ।୪।

(୨)

ଜଗତର ନାଥ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ତୁମେ ବଡ ଠାକୁର
ଏ ମହା ବିପଦରୁ ମୋତେ କର ଉଦ୍ଧାର ।୧।
କାହିଁ କେତେ ଦୂର ଦେଶେ ନୀଳାଚଳେ ରହିଲ
ତବ ପଦେ ଦିବାନିଶି ମୁଁ ତ କରେ ଜୁହାର ।୨।
ତବ ଦରଶନ ଲାଗି ମୁଁ ତ ବଡ ଆକୁଳ
ଶୟନେ ସପନେ ଦେଖି ଆତ୍ମା ହୁଏ ଶିଥିଳ ।୩।
କରୁଣା ସାଗର ତୁମେ କୃପା ତୁମ ଅପାର
ଏ ଭବସାଗରୁ ମୋତେ ତରି ଦିଅ ଏଥର ।୪।



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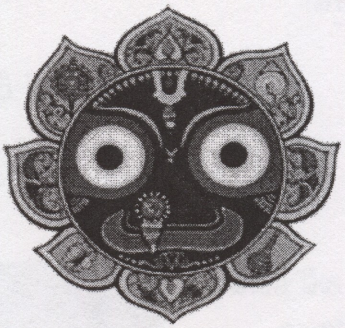
Sarala Tripathy is a retired customer service manager with Wal-Mart store in Norman, Oklahoma. She and her husband Dr. Narayan Tripathy reside in Norma, Oklahoma since 1969. The editor with the written instructions of the author has extensively modified the first poem.



ଏ ତୁମର ବଡପଣ

ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର

ତୁମେ ମତେ କିଛି ଦେଇ ନାହଁ ବୋଲି
ତୁମ ନାମେ ମିଛ କେତେ କରିଛି ରଟନା;
ଡାକ ମୋର କେବେ ଶୁଣି ନାହଁ ବୋଲି
ଅପବାଦ ଦେଇ କେତେ କରିଛି ଭର୍ତ୍ସନା;
ନଦେଇ ମତେ ଶାସ୍ତି ନିରବରେ ରହିଛ
ଏ ଯାବତ୍ ମତେ ପ୍ରଭୁ କ୍ଷମା କରି ଚାଲିଛ
ଏ ତୁମର ଦୟା ନୁହେଁ ତ ଆଉ କଅଣ ! (୧)
ତୁମ ପରି ପାଇଛି ମୁଁ ସୁହୃଦୟ ଉଦାରବନ୍ଧୁ
ତୁମ ପରି ପାଇଛି ମୁଁ ପିତା, ମାତା
ତୁମ ପରି ପାଇଛି ସ୍ୱଜନ, ଦାତା
ଭରି ଦେଇଛ କୁଟୀରେ ମୋର
ଆନନ୍ଦ ଉଚ୍ଛାସର କଲ୍ଲୋଳ
ଏ ମୋର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ ତ ଆଉ କଅଣ !! (୨)
ଦେଇଅଛ ଆଖି ଦେଖିବାକୁ, କାନ ଦେଇଛ ତ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ
ଦେଇଛ ଗୋଡ ଚାଲିବାକୁ, ଯେଉଁଠିକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ସେଠିକୁ ଯିବାକୁ
ଦେଇଅଛ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କ ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ ବିଚାରିବାକୁ
ଦେଇଛ ହୃଦୟ ସ୍ନେହଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଅନୁଭବିବାକୁ
ଏ ତୁମର ଭଲ ପାଇବା ନୁହେଁ ତ ଆଉ କଅଣ ! (୩)
କରି ନାହିଁ କେବେ ସନ୍ତାନର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ
ଦେଇନାହିଁ କେବେ ବନ୍ଧୁର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା
କରିନାହିଁ କେବେ ଆମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ମୋ କୁଟୀରେ
କରିବାକୁ ସେ ପଦ ବନ୍ଦନା
ଏ ତୁମର କ୍ଷମା ନୁହେଁ ତ ଆଉ କଅଣ !! (୪)
ଏହି ପରି ସଦା ପ୍ରଭୁ ଥାଉ ସେ କରୁଣା
ଦୟା, କ୍ଷମା ଦାସ ଜନେ ନହେଉ ହେ ଉଣା
ପାତକକୁ ପାଦ ତଳେ ଶରଣ ଦେଇ
ପ୍ରଭୁ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ରେ ଯାଇଅଛ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇ
ଏ ତୁମର ବଡପଣ ନୁହେଁ ତ ଆଉ କଅଣ !!! (୫)

Mrs Shanti Mishra lives in Rochester, MN, with her husband Dr Prassana Mishra. She loves to write in Oriya. Some of her stories have been published in Oriya magazines, such as, "Sucharita", "Amrutanyana", "Weekly Samaya" etc., and some of her poems have been published in Oriya newspapers.

ଅନନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରେମ

ଝୀନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ, ଭର୍‌ଜିନିଆ

କାଲି ପରି ଲାଗେ ଆଜି ତୋର
ଆବିର୍ଭାବ ଏଇ ଦୁନିଆରେ
ବେଦନାର ଉପଶମ ହୁଏ
କୁଆଁ କୁଆଁ ସେଇ ତୋ' ରାବରେ ।

ଦେଇଥିଲୁ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ଗୌରବ
କରିଥିଲୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ମୋ' ସାର୍ଥକ
ଟାଣିଥିଲୁ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାର ଗାର
ନଅମାସ ଅତିକ୍ରମ ପରେ ।

ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରିଥିଲି ତତେ
ପୁଲୁକିତ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ପ୍ରେମରେ
ଆଙ୍କିଥିଲି ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ଚୁମ୍ବନ
ସେଇ ଘନ କୁଞ୍ଚିତ କେଶରେ ।

ଦେଖୁଥିଲି କେତେ ଦିବାସ୍ୱପ୍ନ
ବଢେଇବି ଆଦର୍ଶ ରୀତିରେ
ଢାଳିଦେବି ସ୍ନେହ ଗନ୍ତାଘର
ମୋର ଗେହ୍ଲୀ ଧନୀର ଉପରେ ।

ଶୈଶବର ଅଳି ଓ ଅଝଟ
କୈଶୋରର ଦାବୀ, ଅଭିମାନ
ବିତିଗଲା ଅଠରଟି ବର୍ଷ
ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ ଆଖି ପିଛୁଳାକେ ।

ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳା ଓ ମମତା ସଂଘର୍ଷେ
ଜନନୀର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ପାଳନେ
ଭଲମନ୍ଦ କେତେ ଅନୁଭୂତି
ସାଇତିଛି ସ୍ମୃତିର ଗହ୍ୱରେ ।

ଜନ୍ମଦାତ୍ରୀ ଶାରୀରିକ କ୍ଲେଶ
ବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ଆଜି ସବୁସତେ
କରୁଳି ଉଠେ ମୋ ମନ ପାଣ
ଦେଖି ତୋତେ ସାବାଳିକା ରୂପେ ।

ମନେ କିନ୍ତୁ ମିଶା ଅନୁଭୂତି
ନୀରବତା ଘୋଟେ ଚଉଦିଗେ
ତୋ ବିହୁନେ ସମସ୍ତ ନିଷ୍ଫଳ
ଛାଡିଯିବୁ ଶୂନ୍ୟ କରି ମତେ ।

ଦେଇ ନିତି ମଥାରେ ଚୁମ୍ବନ
ଘୋଡି ତତେ ଆବରଣ ତଳେ
ନେଉଥିଲି ଅବସର ମୁହିଁ
ଦିବସର ଅବଶେଷ କାଳେ ।

ଆଜି ତୋର ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାୟକ
ଜନନୀଠୁଁ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଯେ ଜଗତେ
ରଖିଥିବେ ସଦା ନିତି ଢାଙ୍କି
ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଆବରଣେ ତତେ ।

ଛାଡିବୁ ମା' ପିତାମାତା ନୀଡ
ପାଦ ଦେବୁ ବାହ୍ୟ ଦୁନିଆରେ
ରଖିଥିଲେ ମନେ ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କୁ
ଡୁବିବୁନି ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ଢେଉରେ ।

ସମୟର ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ଆଜି
ଜିତିବାକୁ ଜୀବନ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ
ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳୁ ଅର୍ଜି ଅଛୁ ଯାହା
ଅସ୍ତ୍ର ପରି କାମ ଦେବ ତୋରେ ।

ନୈତିକତା, ଇଶ୍ୱର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ
ମନୋବଳ, ଦୃଢତା, ସାହସ
ଛାଡିବୁନି କେବେହେଲେ ମନୁ
ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ନେଉ ଯେଉଁ ଆଡେ ।

ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ଥାଆ ମା' ତୁହି
ଯେତେ ବଡ, ହୁଅ ଦୁନିଆରେ
ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଏ ଅନନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରେମ
ଅସରନ୍ତି ତୋ ମାଆ ଭଣ୍ଡାରେ ।

Jhinu Chhotray lives in Centerville, Virgina with her husband Santanu and daughters Shilpi and Shriya. This poem is written on the occasion of Shilpi's High School graduation. The English translation of this poem by Surya Nayak follows in the next page.

Jhinu Chhotray's "Unique Love"

(Translated By: Surya Nayak)

Seems like yesterday,
you arrived
from unknown-where, and
sensed the light of the world.

On a sable folio of an effusive flower.

Your twinkling eyes
Illuminated-
my life with joy.

A completion of womanhood,
A mother indeed!
Pride of motherhood
A redeemed dream.....

How can I say about my feelings?
Feelings felt within,
and, in-between.....
You & Me.

I must say to you, to know;
How happy I was then
caressing your baby-hair
and, your tender cheeks;
The pleasure,
I could hardly say.

How lucky, I feel, I am today
To have you as my daughter.
The day I hold you in my arms
you put, in my heart
- "a tender pause"..

Dreams after dreams
In the light of day,
to raise you
in an ideal way.

Poured all the love, from
treasure of my heart.
A serene touch, that
perfectly matched.

I sensed you through my veins,
those flitting years of yours.

The childish crackles, and
teenaged demands;
that made me, A mother sure.

You propelled through, 18 years
In a seamless way you did.
I kissed your forehead every night
I lulled you back to sleep;

Covering you,
the blanket
with a hug, then I go to sleep.

Now you are ready, to
Step out of the nest
to fly into your zone;
keep the morale upright, my love
Where ever you go---

Farther you go, or
closer you stay,
Where ever
your destiny takes.

The unique love
Of your mother's heart
will always be with you:
at your every step.

With my blessings
I let you go
And
God be your rescuer.

He will cover you,
with His linen of blessings
through every cross-road
You Go.

Faith in self, faith in God
Keep those feelings tight
God will give you all success
adding tinge of colors
To Your Life.

Unique Love Always For You.

Note: This poem is a translation from Jhinu Chhotray's Oriya poem "Ananya Prema". When a poem travels from one language to another, it always sheds its original genre in its transition through the twilight zones. While translating the poem, I made every effort to keep the poet's (Jhinu's) feeling for her daughter, Shilpi, intact. Jhinu is a wonderful poet, I enjoyed working with her on this poem, "Unique Love."
-Surya Nayak

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ବିଜୟଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଦାଶ୍, ମଣ୍ଟଗୋମରୀ ଭିଲେଜ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ମାଆ ମୋ' ସୁନ୍ଦର, ଅତି ପ୍ରିୟ ସାଥୀଟିଏ
ଏ ଜଗତେ ସବୁଠାରୁ ଆପଣାର ସିଏ ।
ପାଶେଥାଏ, ଦୂରେଥାଏ, ଯେଉଁଠି ବା ଥାଏ
ସବୁବେଳେ ତାକୁ ମୁଁ ମୋ' ନିକଟରେ ପାଏ ॥

ଯେତେ ବାଧାବିଘ୍ନ ଆଉ, ଯେତେ ଅସୁବିଧା
ମାଆ ପାଶେ ଥିଲେ ମୋର, ରହେନାହିଁ ଦ୍ୱିଧା ।
ଭୁଲିହୁଏନା ସେ, ତା' ହାତର କୋମଳତା
ସ୍ନିଗ୍ଧ ମୁହଁ ଆଉ ତା' କୋଳର ଉଷ୍ଣତା ॥

ଧୂଳିମଳି, ଝାଳ ଲଗା ପଣତଟି ତା'ର
ରେଶମଠାରୁ ବି ଲାଗେ, ବେଶୀ ସୁଖକର ।
ଭଳିକିଭଳି ସ୍ୱାଦିଷ୍ଟ , ତା'ର ହାତରନ୍ଧା
ସେଇଠିତ ମନ ମୋର, ପଡିଯାଏ ବନ୍ଧା ॥

ମମତାର ମୂରତି ସେ, ଶାନ୍ତିର ସେ ଦୂତ
ଅଜଣା ଏକ ରାଗର, ମଧୁର ସଂଗୀତ ।
ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ, ଭୁଲ ଠିକ୍ ନିୟମର ଶିକ୍ଷା

ସବୁକିଛି ମୋ' ଜୀବନେ ଅଟେ, ତା'ର ଦୀକ୍ଷା ॥

ପାତରଅନ୍ତର, ଭେଦ, ନଥାଏ ତାହାର
ଛୋଟ, ବଡ ବାରେନି ସେ, ସବୁ ତା' ନିଜର ।
ମାଆ ହିଁ ପ୍ରଥମ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ସବୁ ସମୟର
ତା' ଦାନ ଓ ତ୍ୟାଗର ଯେ ନାହିଁ ପଟାନ୍ତର ॥

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ବିଜୟଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କର ଘର ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ । ସେ ଏବେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ପ୍ରତାପ ଦାଶ୍ଙ୍କ ସହ Montgomery Village, Maryland ରେ ରୁହନ୍ତି । ଏହି କବିତାଟି ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ମମତାମୟୀ ମା'ଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି ।

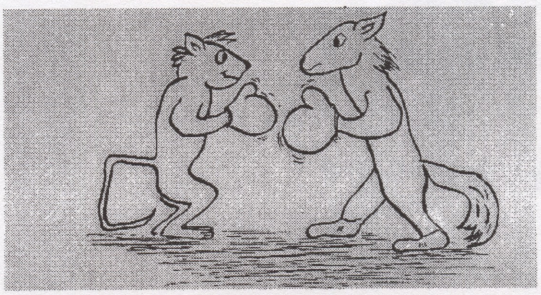
ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀର ଜୀବନ

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର (ରଥ)

ସେ ଜାଣେନା
କେବେଠୁ ସାମିଲ୍ ସେ
ଏ ସାର୍ବଜନୀନ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତାରେ !
ମଗ୍ନତାର ଦ୍ୱାର ଖୋଲି
ନିଜକୁ ଖୋଜିଲାବେଳେ
ସେ ବୁଝିଲା
ସେ ଧାଉଁଛି
ଅଣନିଃଶ୍ୱାସୀ ଅଗଣିତ ପ୍ରତିଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦ୍ୱୀ ମେଳେ ।

ଦଣ୍ଡେ ଅଟକିଲା, ନିରେଖିଦେଖିଲା
ସେମାନେ ସଭିଏଁ ଧାଉଁଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ଧାଉଁଛନ୍ତି
ଭୁଲିଛନ୍ତି
ପୂର୍ଯ୍ୟକିରଣ, ଜହ୍ନର ଜୋଛନା
ଆଉ
ଚାରିପାଖ ଦୁନିଆ,
ଭୁଲିଛନ୍ତି
ନରମମାଟିର କୋଳ,
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନିଳ ଆକାଶର ନୀଳ,
ଗଛଲତା, ମାଟି, ପାଣି, ପବନଙ୍କ ମେଳ ।

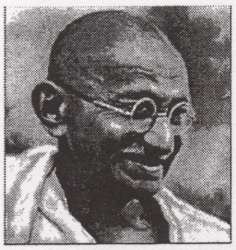
ଅଥଚ,
ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିସାରିବି
ଅବଶ ଓ କ୍ଲାନ୍ତ ଦେହେ



(ଆନନ୍ଦିତ) ପ୍ରାଣକୁ
ଉସୁକାଏ ଉଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ମନ
ଆଗକୁଯିବାକୁ ହେବ ଆହୁରି, ଆହୁରି ଆଗକୁ
ବାକିଅଛି ପାଇବାକୁ ମାନପତ୍ର ପରା
ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣାକ୍ଷରେ ଲିପିବଦ୍ଧ ହେବ ଯହିଁ
ଜୀବନର ଗଣଦୌଡରେ ଅମୁକ ପ୍ରଥମ !

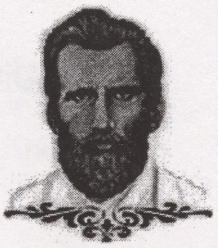
ଛଟପଟ ବିବ୍ରତ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀ
ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଓ ଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦ୍ୱର ଜାଲରେ,
ସାମିଲ ହେବକି ନାହିଁ
ଆଉଥରେ ଗଣଦୌଡରେ
ଏ ପଟରେ ଅବଶ ଶରୀର
ଓଦାମାଟି ବାସ୍ନା, ଜହ୍ନର ଜୋଛନା,
ଆକାଶର ନୀଳ ପୁଣି
ମାର୍ଟ, ପାଣି, ପବନଙ୍କ ମେଳ,
ସେପଟରେ,
ଉଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ମନ,
ମାୟାବିନୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଓ ଅସରନ୍ତି ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର ମୋହ ?!?!

Swapnalata Mishra lives in Macomb, Michigan with her husband Nirmal Rath and two daughters Anya and Nayna. She loves to work for the Odia community of Michigan. Her hcbbies include reading, writing, community service and her family. Sometimes she enjoys writing skits/play in an attempt to make the community LAUGH and ENJOY.



ନିବେଦନ

ଅଞ୍ଜନା ଚୌଧୁରୀ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ, ଆମେରିକା



ମୁନିମନ୍ତ୍ର ବେଦଧ୍ୱନି
ପବିତ୍ର କରିଛି ଜୀବନ ତରଣୀ,
ସଂସ୍କୃତି ମୋ ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ
ମୁଁହି ଅଟେ ଭାରତ ଜନନୀ ।

ମସ୍ତକରେ ହିମାଳୟ
ପାଦତଳେ ସପ୍ତ ସିନ୍ଧୁ ଉର୍ମି,
ମନ୍ଦାକିନୀ ବକ୍ଷେ ପ୍ରବାହିତ
ତୋଳି ଏକ ନୂତନ ରାଗିଣୀ ।

ହିନ୍ଦୁ, ଶିଖ୍, ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟିୟାନ୍,
ମୁସଲମାନ୍ ସବୁ ମୋ' ସନ୍ତାନ,
ମାନେନା ମୁଁ ଛୋଟ ବଡ ଉଚ୍ଚ ନୀଚ
ସମସ୍ତେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ସମାନ ।

ଆଜି କିନ୍ତୁ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଚକ୍ର
ଭାସୁଅଛି ସମୟ ସ୍ରୋତରେ,
କୋଟି କୋଟି ସନ୍ତାନ ମୋ'
ଖେଳୁଛନ୍ତି ହୋରି ଆପଣା ରକ୍ତରେ ।

ଲୋଡକର ବନ୍ୟା ଝରେ
ନିତି ଦୁଇ ନୟନରୁ ମୋର,
ମନେପଡେ ବିଗତ କାହାଣୀ
ଗାନ୍ଧି, ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ, ଆଉ ବାଜି ରାଉତର ।

ଛୋଟ ମୋର ନିବେଦନ
ଉଦ୍‌ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ ସନ୍ତାନ ମାନଙ୍କୁ,
ଭୁଲିଯାଅ ଭେଦଭାବ, ସଂକୀର୍ଣ୍ଣତା
ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ।

କର ନାହିଁ ମୋତେ ଛିନ୍ନ ମସ୍ତା
ଭୁଲିଯାଅ ବନ୍ଧୁକ, କମାଣ,
ସୃଷ୍ଟିକର ନୂତନ ଭାରତ
ଗାଇ "ଓଁ ଶାନ୍ତି" ମହାନାମ ।

ଖେଳ ନାହିଁ ହୋରି ଆଉ
ନିରୀହ ମାନବ ରକ୍ତରେ,
ହିଂସା ଭୁଲି ସୃଷ୍ଟି କର
ପ୍ରୀତି ଆଉ ମୈତ୍ରୀ ମୋ ବକ୍ଷରେ ।

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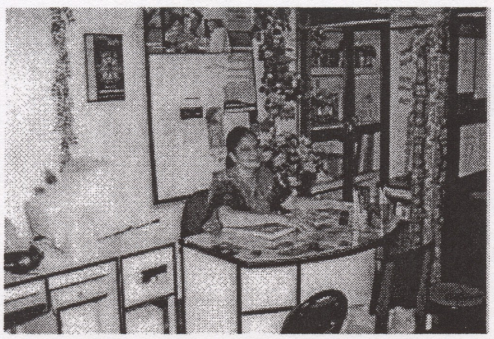
Anjana Chowdhury has a Masters degree in Statistics from Utkal University and a Masters degree in Computer Application from IGNOU. She stays in Maryland with her husband Debaki Nandan Chowdhury, and two children Debanjan and Debanshi. Her hobbies include Web Surfing, Chatting with friends on net reading and writing etc.

ଏକାକିନୀ ମୋ ଭଗିନୀ

ବିଶ୍ୱରଞ୍ଜନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ



ଯେବେ ତୋ'ର ଡାକ ନ ଶୁଣନ୍ତି କେହି,
ଜବାବ ନ ପାଉ ତୁହି ।
ଜୀବନର ପଥେ ବିମୁଖ ନ ହୋଇ,
ଚାଲୁ ଏକାକିନୀ ହୋଇ ।୧।

ଯେବେ ପ୍ରିୟଜନେ ନ କହନ୍ତି କଥା,
ସନ୍ଦେହେ ଯା'ନ୍ତି ଦୂରେଇ ।
ପ୍ରାଣଖୋଲା କଥା ହସହସ ମୁହେଁ,
କହୁ ଏକାକିନୀ ହୋଇ ।୨।

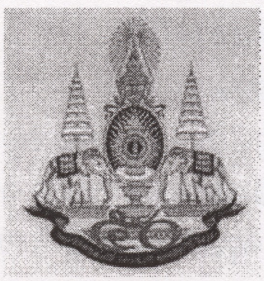
ଘନ ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ ଘଡିସନ୍ଧି ବେଳେ,
ସାହା ତ ନ ଦିଏ କେହି ।
ପଥର କଣ୍ଟକ ରକ୍ତିତ ପାଦେ,
ଦଳୁ ଏକାକିନୀ ହୋଇ ।୩।

ଝଡଝଞ୍ଝା ବେଳେ ଅନ୍ଧାର ରାତିରେ,
ଦୁଆର ନ ଖୋଲେ କେହି ।
ବଜ୍ରାନଳ ଶିଖା ହୃଦ ପିଞ୍ଜରରେ
ଜାଳୁ ଏକାକିନୀ ହୋଇ ।୪।

The author Biswa Ranjan Patnaik is an Electrical Engineer, living in Toronto with his wife Smita. He dedicates this poem to his sAna Dei (youngest of his three elder sisters). These lines were written under the shadow of Rabindranath's famous poem, "ekla chalo re". The author's email address is biswa@writeme.com.

ରାଜା

ନିରୁପମା ମହାପାତ୍ର



ଅମାନିଆ ଆଖିରେ ମୋ
ଅଶ୍ରୁର ଶ୍ରାବଣ
ଝରିଯାଏ ସତେ ଅବା
ଉଷ୍ଣ ପ୍ରସ୍ରବଣ ।
ଅଶାନ୍ତ ହୃଦୟେ ମୋର
ବେଦନା ବତାସ,
ଭୁଲି ମୁଁ ପାରୁନି ତୁମ
ମୁଖ ହସହସ ।
ଅବୁଝା ମନରେ ମୋର
ଶତ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ,
ଜୀବନର ଅଭିନୟ ମଧ୍ୟେ
ତୁମେ କାହିଁ ଗଲ ଲୁଚି ?
ଅକୁହା ରହିଲା ଆମ
ପ୍ରେମର କାହାଣୀ
ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ ଜୟ କରିଗଲ ରାଜା
ଅନ୍ତପୁରେ ଏକା ତୁମ ରାଣୀ ।

Dr. Nirupama Mohapatra is a biology professor in North Carolina.

ଅନେକ ଦିନର ପୁରୁଣା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟିଏ

ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

କିଏ ତୁମେ ପ୍ରିୟତମା ?
ମୋର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଇଲାକାରେ
ବେଳେବେଳେ ଅଚାନକ
ଛପିଛପି ଚାଲିଆସ
ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର ତେର ନଇ ପାରିହୋଇ
ମନ ପବନ ଘୋଡାରେ ଚଢି
ଭଲପାଇବାର ଛଳନା କରି
ହେ ମୋର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ରାଜକୁମାରୀ !
ଗର୍ବକର ତମେ ତମର
ମନର ମନ୍ଦିରରେ
ରୁପାର ସିନ୍ଦୁକ ମଧ୍ୟେ
ସୁନାର ଫରୁଆଟିରେ
କେଉଁ ଜନ୍ମରୁ ଗୋପନରେ ସାଇତିରଖିଥିବା
ଭଲପାଇବାର ସନ୍ତକଟିଏ ପାଇଁ ।
ତାପରେ ଫିଟାଇଦିଅ ସେ ଫରୁଆ
ମତୁଆଲା ହସ ହସି
ହେ ଲଳିତା ଲବଙ୍ଗଲତା ମୋର
ସମର୍ପି ଦେବାକୁ ପ୍ରୀତିର ପ୍ରଦୀପ ଜାଳି
ତମର ସେ ହୃଦୟର ଲୋଭନୀୟ ଉପହାର ।

ହେ ମାୟାବିନୀ, କି ମାୟାଜାଣ ?
ହେ ଯାଦୁକରୀ, କି ଯାଦୁ ଜାଣ ?
ତମର ସେହି ଲାଜଭରା ଚାହାଣିରେ,
କିବା ଚୁପିଚୁପି ହସରେ,
ତମର ସେ ଥରୁଥିବା ହାତର ସ୍ପର୍ଶରେ,
ଅଥବା କମନୀୟ କବରୀର ବାସ୍ନାରେ,
କିବା ବାହୁରେ ବାହୁ ଛନ୍ଦି
ସୁଲଳିତ କଣ୍ଠରେ ପ୍ରେମର ରାଗିଣୀ ଗାଇ
ହେ ମହାମାୟା ଶକ୍ତି ସ୍ୱରୂପିଣୀ ଗୌରୀ
ଚୂର୍ଣ୍ଣକର ମୋ ମନରେ ଉଇଁ ଆସୁଥିବା
ଗର୍ବ, ଦମ୍ଭ, ମାନ, ଅଭିମାନକୁ
ଚରିତାର୍ଥ କରିଦିଅ ମୋ ଉନ୍ମାଦ ପୁରୁଷ ପଣିଆକୁ
ଦେହରେ ଦେହ, ଆତ୍ମାରେ ଆତ୍ମା ମିଶାଇ ।

ତାପରେ ଘନଘନ ଧାଇଁଆସେ
ଅନ୍ତନାଡି ଭିତରୁ ଅଣଚାଶ ପବନ
ଉଷ୍ଣତ, ଉଚ୍ଛୁଳା ଧମନୀରେ ବହିଯାଏ ଉଷ୍ଣରକ୍ତ
କମ୍ପିଯାଏ ମେଦିନୀ
ଥରହର ହୁଏ ବାସୁକି
ସମୁଦ୍ର ମନ୍ଥନ ପରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ଶାନ୍ତ ପଡିଯାଏ
କିଛି ନୀରବତା ଓ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ମଧ୍ୟେ
ଏ ମତୁଆଲା ଭ୍ରମରଟି ହଜିଯାଏ
ତମର ସେ ଫୁଲର ସୁଗନ୍ଧ ପାଖୁଡା ଭିତରେ,
ଅଚାନକ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗବାଣୀ ହୁଏ
ଅମୃତ ଝରିପଡେ ଅଜାଣତରେ ।

ହେ ସଖୀ !
କିଏ ଜାଣେ କେବେ ପୁଣି ଆସିବ ?
ଏ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ସବୁ ହଜିହଜି ଗଲାବେଳେ,
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସବୁ ଲିଭିଲିଭି ଗଲାବେଳେ,
ଜହ୍ନ ଓ ତାରା ସବୁ ଲୁଚି ଲୁଚି ଗଲାବେଳେ,
ଏମିତି ଏକ ମେଘୁଆ ଅନ୍ଧାର ରାତିରେ
ଝିପିଝିପି ବର୍ଷା ଝରୁଥିଲା ବେଳେ
ହୃଦୟର ରାଣୀ ମୋର
ରାଣ ମୋର, ଶପଥ କର
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟିଏ ହୋଇ ଥରୁଟିଏ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଆସିବ
ଶୁଣାଇବାକୁ ତୁମ ଗହନ ମନର କଥା
ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ମୋର ଦରଦୀ ମନର ବ୍ୟଥା
ଆଉ ବେଶ୍ ପରିଚିତ ହେବାପାଇଁ,
ଦୁହିଙ୍କ ମନ ଓ ହୃଦୟର
ଅପୂର୍ବ ମିଳନ ପାଇଁ ।

କିବା ପହିଲି ବସନ୍ତର ଆଗମନରେ,
କୋଇଲିର କଣ୍ଠସ୍ୱରେ,
କି ଫୁଲର ବାସ୍ନାରେ, ରଙ୍ଗରେ
ଯୌବନର ବିଚିତ୍ର ରଙ୍ଗନେଇ
ଫୁଲେଇ ରାଣୀମୋର
ସତ୍ୟକର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟିଏ ହୋଇ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ
ଥରୁଟିଏ ଏକୁଟିଆ ଆସିବ
ଶେଷଥର ପାଇଁ
ପ୍ରୀତିର ପସରା ଧରି
ତମର ସେ ଫୁଚ୍ଚୁଳା ଦେହରେ ।

(ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଉଚ୍ଛୁଳା, ଉଦ୍ଧତ ଯୌବନର ପ୍ରଥମ ପାହାଚରେ ପାଦ ଥାପିଲା ବେଳେ ଅନେକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ ସେହିମାନଙ୍କପାଇଁ....)

Dr Shashadhar Mohapatra is a Radiological Health Physicist and works at Washington Hospital Center, Washington DC. He stays in Maryland with his wife Sujata (Meera) and two children Sharmistha and Sidharth. His hobbies include writing, socialization and bhajan.

ରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ...

ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ଦେବସ୍ମିତ ମିଶ୍ର
ଫେୟାର୍‌ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ସ୍, ଆଲାସ୍କା, ଯୁକ୍ତରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଆମେରିକା

ଚାଲ, ଘରକୁ ଯିବା

ଫେରି ଯିବା ସେହି ଜନମମାଟିକୁ

ଯେଉଁଠି ଏବେବି ମା ଓ ମାଟି
ଦୁହେଁ ବାଟ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି ଅଶ୍ରୁସଜଳା ହୋଇ
ଦହିବାଲା, ପଇଡବାଲା ବା ମୁଢିବାଲା ଡାକରେ ସନ୍ତାନର ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ସୁମରି

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ମାଟିକୁ
ଯେଉଁଠି ଖେଳୁଥିଲ ବନ୍ଧୁ ସମେତ
ଅମରି ଡାଙ୍ଗକୁ ହକି ବାଡି ଜରି

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ଦ୍ୱିପହର
ପାନ ଦୋକାନ ଛାଇ ତଳେ
ଚାଲୁ ଚା' ଧରି ରାଜନୀତି ବିଚାର

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ଆମ୍ବତୋଟା
ଟାକୁଆ ଗୋଟେଇବା ବାହାନା କରି
ଧୂମ୍ରପାନ କରୁଥିଲ ସଙ୍ଗୀତଙ୍କ ସାଥେ

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ଶୀତଳଷଷ୍ଠୀ
ରାତି ରାତି ଅନିଦ୍ରା ହୋଇ ବାଡଉଥିଲ ବାଣ
ତାଳ ମିଳେଇ ଜୋଠିଘର କନ୍ଦିରେ

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ଗଣେଶ ପୂଜା
ସକାଳୁ ଉଠି, ପୁଷ୍ପଞ୍ଜଳି ଦେଇ
ବୁଲୁଥିଲ ସାହିର ସବୁ ପୂଜାସ୍ଥଳୀ, ଭୋଗ ଆଉ ଭୋଜିର ଆଶାରେ

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ଦିବସ
ଛାତି ଫୁଲେଇ ଖରାରେ ଛିଡାହୋଇ
ଗାଉଥିଲ ଜବାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ - ସାରେ ଜହାଁ ସେ ଆଚ୍ଛା...

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ଝାଲମୁଢି ଓ ରାଗଚଣା
ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା ଲହଡି ଓ ଦକ୍ଷିଣୀ ମଳୟ ପବନ
ତୁମ ପ୍ରେମାତୁର ମନ ଓ ସେହି ଝାଉଁବଣ

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ଖଟି
ବନଦୁର୍ଗା ମନ୍ଦିରର ଘଣ୍ଟା ଧ୍ୱନି
ଯମେଶ୍ୱର ଦୋକାନର ପିଆଜି ବରା

ଭୁଲିଗଲ କି ସେହି ମାଟିକୁ
ଯେଉଁଠି ଜ୍ୟୋତିହୀନ ଓ ଚକ୍ଷୁଶୀଳ
ମିଶନ୍ତି ଭେଦଭାବ ନ ରଖି

ହୃଦୟରେ ମାଆର ମମତା ସୁମରି
ବୃଦ୍ଧ ପିତାର ପରାଜିତ ଓ ନାତାର ପରିସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରି
ରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡିଆ, ଚାଲ ଫେରିଯିବା

ଚାଲ ଫେରିଯିବା
ସେହି ବୃଦ୍ଧ ବକ୍ଷର ଭାରି ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ଓ ପ୍ରଶ୍ୱାସ କୁ ଲାଘବ କରି ଗଢିବା
ଏକ ଆଧୁନିକ ପ୍ରେରଣାଭରା ସଂସାର

ଚାଲ, ଘରକୁ ଯିବା
ଫେରି ଯିବା ସେହି ଜନମମାଟିକୁ ।

Dr Debasmita Misra is currently a faculty in the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and lives in Fairbanks with his wife Nilima and two children Sambit (12) and Manisha (6). His hobbies include classical music, singing, writing stories and articles, reading various books, and watching his children in sports and martial arts. This poem has been formerly published in the myodisa forum, an electronic media for the members and well wishers of the Odiya Samaja, an international society for all oDiAs. The author is thankful to Bigyani Das for suggesting appropriate modifications to make it better.

ନବଗୁଞ୍ଜର

ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ନିତ୍ୟାନନ୍ଦ ସାହୁ, ରସୁଲଗଡ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

-ମୁଁ-

ତମେ ମୋତେ ଦେଖିଥିବ
ତମ ଚିହ୍ନା ସହରର ଗଳି, କନ୍ଧି, ଛକ ଓ ସାଇରେ
ରାଜାର ବଗିଚାଠାରୁ ସରଘା ବଜାର ଯାଏ
ବୁଲୁଥିବା, ଖୋଜି ଖୋଜି ମଧୁପାଟଣାରେ
ଏବଂ ଶେଷରେ ନିଦ୍ରା ଯିବା
ସମୟର ଲୁଣ୍ଠିତ ବିଭବ ବୁଜୁଳିତ ନିଶଂକ ପ୍ରହରେ
ପେଟରେ ଓଁକାର ଧ୍ୱନି,
ସମ୍ଭୋଗର ଦନ୍ତକ୍ଷତ, ରାତ୍ରିର ଆଶ୍ଳେଷେ
ରେଳବାଇ ପ୍ଲାଟ୍‌ଫର୍ମ, ରାସ୍ତାକଡ଼, ବନ୍ଦଥିବା-
ଦୋକାନର ବାଘମୁହାଁ, ଅଥବା ନିଶୁତି ବେଳେ
ଯେତେ ସବୁ ବେଓ୍ୱାରସି ଚଟାଣ ଶେଯରେ ।

ମୋ ଛାତିର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପିଞ୍ଜରା ଅସ୍ଥି
ଏବଂ କୋଟରବାସୀ ଚକ୍ଷୁର ବିଜ୍ଞପ୍ତି
ତମେ ନିଷ୍ଠେ ଦେଖିଥିବ ସମାଜ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ,
ଦେଖିଥିବ ରାଜଧାନୀ ବସ୍‌ଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଡ୍ ପଡ଼ିଆରୁ
ପଟୁଆର କରିଯିବା ଆସେମ୍ବ୍ଲି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ
ହାତେ ଧରି ବଇରଖ ସମୟାନୁସାରୀ,
(ଯେପରି ହୁଏ ମୁଁ ଖଞ୍ଜ, ଅନ୍ଧ ଏବଂ
କୁଷ୍ଠରୋଗୀ, ଅଥବା ସେପରି କିଛି
ହରେକୃଷ୍ଣ ହରେକୃଷ୍ଣ କୃଷ୍ଣ କୃଷ୍ଣ ହରେହରେ
ସମୟର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରାଂଗଣେ) ।

ତଥାପି ମୁଁ ଯଦି କେବେ ନମସ୍କାର କରିଥାଏ
ନାଲି ପଗଡ଼ିକୁ, ଅଥବା ଜୁହାର କରେ
ଖାକିକନା ବଡ଼ବାବୁ ଥାନା ଅଫିସରେ
(କରୁଣାର ନିର୍ଗନ୍ଧ ନୈବେଦ୍ୟ)
ବିସ୍ମିତ ହେବାର ସେଠି କିଛି ନାହିଁ,
ସବୁ ଯେଣୁ ବୃନ୍ତ ଆଉ ବୃତ୍ତିହୀନ
ପେଟଚାର ଅସଂଭାଳ ଦାଉ ।

- ତୁମେ -

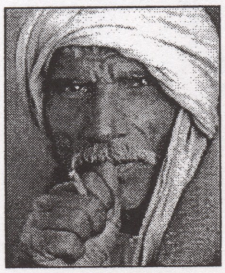
ଅଥଚ ତୁମକୁ ମୁହିଁ ଚିହ୍ନିନାହିଁ
(ମୋ ଭିତରେ ନେତା ହେବା ପ୍ରେରଣାର
ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ଗୁଂଜନ), ଯଦିଓ
ତମରି ଅଶ୍ରୁଳ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ଚିହ୍ନା ମୋର ସଭାର ଚତ୍ୱରେ,
ତମରି କୁଟିଳ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ମୁଁ ଦେଖିଛି ଗାଡ଼ି ଅଭ୍ୟନ୍ତରେ
ତମରି ପ୍ରବାଳ ଚକ୍ଷୁ, କୁଂଚିତ ନାସିକା ଏବଂ
କିଛି ତମ ଅଶ୍ଳୀଳ ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା
ପରିଚିତ ଅତି ମୋର ତମ ଘର ବାରଣ୍ଡା ଉପରେ,
ଝରିଆସେ ଗନ୍ଧ ଯହିଁ ମଧୁମାଳତୀରୁ,
ଅଥଚ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ମୋର ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ ଚିହ୍ନିଥିଲା ପରି
ଧର୍ମସଭା-ଅଭିଭାଷଣ ଓ ଅଶ୍ୱ ଗଜ ବ୍ୟାଘ୍ର ପାଦ ଏବଂ
ଶାନ୍ତିସ୍ତୂପ, ସାଷ୍ଟାଙ୍ଗ ପ୍ରଣାମ ଗାଭୀହୃଦ ସହ କିଛି କୁକ୍ଷି
ଏବଂ ରାତ୍ରିର ମହୁଲି ସର୍ପଲାଞ୍ଜ, ଚକ୍ରାୟୁଧ କ୍ଷମତାର ଏବଂ
ସଦାଚାର, ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳା, ସେବା ଓ ଶିଖୀକଣ୍ଠ, ଲାଳସାର
ସିଂହକଟି, ଆତ୍ମଶ୍ଳାଘା ଏବଂ ବୃଷଭର ଚୂଳ, ଏବଂ
ଅର୍ଥଲିପ୍ସା ଶୁକଥଣ୍ଡ, ପୁନଶ୍ଚ ପୁନଶ୍ଚ ଯହିଁ କୁକ୍‌କୁଟର ମୁକୁଟ
ଓ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ବିଚିତ୍ର ବର୍ତ୍ତନ ।

ମୋ ଆତ୍ମାର ପ୍ରଜ୍ୱଳନ ମୋ ଦେହର ପରିଧି ଭିତରେ
କିପରି ଚିହ୍ନିବି କହ ତମର ସେ ବିଦେହୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ
ଅନନ୍ତ ଅବ୍ୟକ୍ତ ତମ ମହିମା ଅପାର
ବଡ଼ ମାୟାବୀ ଜୀବ ହେ ତୁମେ ନୁହଁ କାହାର ।

ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ନିତ୍ୟାନନ୍ଦ ସାହୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପନା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରୁ ଅବସର ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ଅଧୁନା ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ । ସମାଜ ସେବା, କଲ୍ୟାଣ ଓ ଉନ୍ନତି ଦିଗରେ ସର୍ବଦା କର୍ମରତ ରହିବା ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ।

ସର୍ବହରା

ଅନନ୍ତ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ



ଜୀବନ ଧରି ହେ ଢାଳିଲୁ ରକ୍ତ ତୋଳିଲୁ ସଉଧମାଳା
ଆମରି ଲାଗିରେ ଶାସନ ଶଙ୍କ ଆମେଇ ସର୍ବହରା ।
ଝାଂଜି ପବନ ସହିରେ ସଘନ ଗହିରେ ରୋଇଲୁ ଧାନ
ବରଷା କାଦୁଅ ଚକଟି କେତେରେ ଖିନ୍ନ କରିଲୁ ପ୍ରାଣ ।

ପଉଷ ପ୍ରଭାତେ କାଟିଲୁ ଶସ୍ୟ ହସିଲେ ନିଖିଳବାସୀ
ଶକ୍ତିଶାଳୀର କରାଳ କବଳ ନେଲାରେ ସକଳ ଗ୍ରାସୀ ।
କେତେ ଯେ ଦେଣା କେତେ ଯେ ପାଉଣା ମହାଜନ ଜମିଦାର
ନେଲେଟି ଶୋଷିରେ ଚାହିଁଲୁ ନୀରବେ ଘେନି କଙ୍କାଳମାଳ ।

ସନ୍ତାନ ଆମ ଆମରି ଆଗରେ ଶମଶାନେ ପଡେ ଟଳି
ମୂକ ପାଷାଣର ପରାଣ ବହିରେ ରହିଛୁ ସଭୟେ ଥରି ।
ଯେ ଯୁଗେ ମାନବ ଉଡଇ ଆକାଶେ ବୁଡଇ ସାଗର ଜଳେ
ସେ ଯୁଗେ ଆମେରେ 'ହା ଅନ୍ନ ହା ଅନ୍ନ' ଡାକି ବୁଲୁ ନତଶିରେ ।

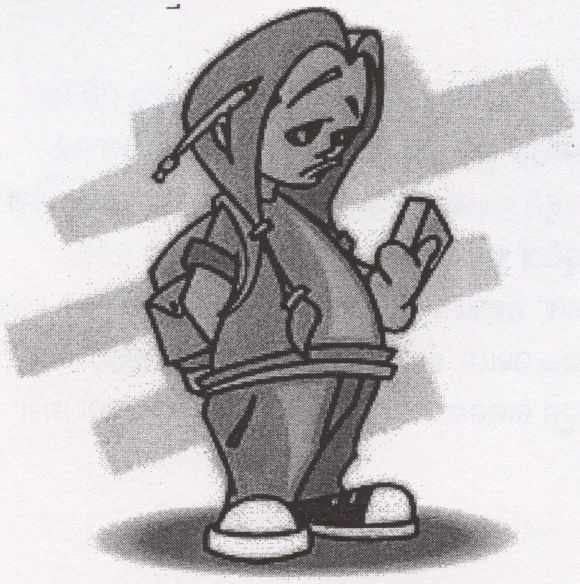
ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଆଦରି ଦେଉଳ ଦୁଆରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ପିଟୁରେ ବସି
କରଭାର ସହି ଦୀନ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ନ ପାରୁ ଜୀବନେ ହସି ।
ଆମେଇ ଗଢିଲୁ ବନ୍ଧୁକ, ତୋପ ତରବାରୀ ଆମ ପାଇଁ
ଆମେଇ ତୋଳୁରେ କାରାର ପ୍ରାଚୀର ବନ୍ଧନ ଗୀତ ଗାଇ ।

ସମାଜର ଶତ ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳ ଜାଲେ ଛନ୍ଦି ଆପଣା ଛାଏଁ
ଆଲୋକର ପଥ ରୁଦ୍ଧ କରୁରେ ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗାନ୍ତ ଯାଏ ।
ପୁଞ୍ଜିତ ରୋଷେ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ଆମେ ଦୀପ୍ତ ଚେତନା ବହ୍ନି
ନ ବୁଲିବୁ ଆଉ ଭିକ୍ଷୁକ ବେଶେ ଦୁଃଖ ବେଦନା ସହି ।

ପାପ୍ୟ ଆମର ନେବୁରେ ମୁକର ଆମେ ଶ୍ରମିକର ଜାତି
ଫୁଟାଇବୁ ଆଜି ରକ୍ତ ପ୍ରଭାତ ଚିରି ଅନ୍ଧାର ରାତି ।
ନିଃସ୍ୱ ଯେତେକ ବିଶ୍ୱର କୋଳେ ସକଳ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଚାଷୀ
ମିଳିତ ହୁଅରେ ଆମରି ସଙ୍ଗେ ଶଙ୍କା ଜଡତା ନାଶି ।

ଥରୁରେ ଧରଣୀ ଅକାଶ ପବନ ଥରୁରେ ଶୋଷକ କୁଳ
ହସିଉଠୁ ଆଜି ସମତା ଜଗତେ ଭାଜୁରେ ପାହାଡ ଚୂଳ ।

Ananta Patnaik was an eminent poet of Orissa. He was a pioneer of the progressive writers movement in Oriya Literature.



ସୁନୀଲ୍

କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ୍, ମିନିଆପଲିସ୍

ଯଦି ଜୀବନରେ ଦେଖା ହୋଇଯିବ ତୁମ ସାଥେ କେବେ ହେଲେ,
ଆଶିଷ ଟିକିଏ ମାଗିନେବି ଖାଲି ମଥା ନୋଇଁ ପାଦତଳେ ।୧।
ଅଳି କରିବିନି ଅତିଥି ହେବାକୁ କେବେ ମୁଁ ତୁମରି ଘରେ,
କେଉଁଦୋଶେ ମତେ ବରଜିଲ ବୋଲି ପଚାରିବି ନାହିଁ ଥରେ ।୨।
ଅଦେଖା ହାତର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶେ ତୁମେ କୋଳ କରିଦେଲ ଖାଲି,
ରିକ୍ତ ହୃଦୟ ସିକ୍ତ ଆଖିରେ ମୋତେ ଛାଡି ଗଲ ଚାଲି ।୩।
ସେ ଅଦେଖା ହାତ ରଖିଛି ଜୀବନ ଚକ୍ର ଉହାଡ କରି,
ଶ୍ୱାନ ଶ୍ୱାପଦ କି ଶୀତ କାକରରେ ଆୟୁଷ ଯାଇନି ପୂରି ।୪।
ବିଧାତା ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଥାନ ରଖିଥିଲା ତ୍ରିଚିନାପଲ୍ଲୀର କୋଳେ,
ବାପା, ମାଆ ଥାଇ ଦିନ ବିତାଇଲି ଅନାଥ ବାଳକ ମେଳେ ।୫।
ଦାରୁଣ ବିଧାତା ମରଣକୁ ପରା କରିଛି ମଙ୍ଗଳ ଚିର,
ତାହାରି ବିଧାନେ ମୋତ ଘୁରାଇଛି ଜୀବନର ଚକ୍ର ମୋର ।୬।
ଦେବତା ସମାନ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଆସି ତୋଳିନେଲେ ଦିନେ ମତେ,
ମାଆ, ବାପା ମୋର ଅମିୟ ମୂରତି ମଥା ରଖିଦେଲି ବୁକେ ।୭।
ଓଡିଆ ପିଲା ମୋ ବାପା ଓଡିଶାର ମାଆ କିନ୍ତୁ ବିଦେଶିନୀ,
ଦୁଇଟି ହୃଦୟେ ଏକ ଧାରା ବହେ ମମତାର ମନ୍ଦାକିନୀ ।୮।
ପଣ୍ଡିଚେରୀ[୧] ଠାରୁ ଚେନ୍ନାଇ[୨], ସେଠାରୁ ଓଡିଶା, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର,
ବିସ୍ତାରିଛନ୍ତି ପ୍ରଭୁ ଚଉବାହା କେତେ ବଡ ପରିବାର ।୯।
ମାଆ, ଜେଜେ, ଖୁଡି, କକେଇ, ପିଉସୀ, ମାମୁଁ, ଅଜା, ମାଇଁ, ଆଇ,
ବିମାନ ବନ୍ଦରେ ଚାହିଁ ବସିଥିଲେ ପଣ ଅଜା, ପଣ ଆଇ ।୧୦।
କଟକ, ଗୋବିନ୍ଦପୁର, ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳ ଗାଆଁ ଗରଗରା ଭୁଇଁ,
ଯେତେ ଗୁରୁଜନ ସବୁରି ପାଦରେ ଆଣିଲେ ମଥା ଛୁଆଁଇ ।୧୧।

ସଂକଳପ କରି ସତ୍ୟ ନାରାୟଣ ପୂଜା କଲେ ମୋର ପାଇଁ,
ସଂ, ଶୀତକଣ୍ଠ, ନୀଲ୍, ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ, "ସୁନୀଲ୍" ନାମକୁ ଦେଇ ।୧୨।
ସମୟ ଆସିଲା ଯଥା ବିଧି ଆମ ବିଦାୟ ନେବାର ବେଳ,
ଛାତି ଆସିଲି ମୁଁ କେତେ ଯୋତା ଆଖି ଲୁହେ ଖାଲି ଛଳଛଳ ।୧୩।
ପୃଥିବୀ ଏ ପଟେ ମାଆ, ଜେଜେ, କକା, ବାଟ ବସିଥିଲେ ଚାହିଁ,
କୋଟିନିଧି ପରି ପାଛୋଟି ଆଣିଲେ ବିମାନଘାଟିରୁ ଯାଇ ।୧୪।
ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶେ ଯେଉଁ ସହରରେ ଆଖି ଫିଟାଇଲି ମୁହିଁ,
ଜେଜେ, ଜେଜେମାଆ ସବୁ ସଜାସଜି କରିଥିଲେ ମୋର ପାଇଁ ।୧୫।
ମାଉସୀ ଗୋଟିଏ, ଅଜା ଏବଂ ଆଇ, ମାଆଙ୍କ ଛୋଟ ସଂସାର,
ୱାଶିଂଟନ୍‌ରୁ ଦଉଡି ଆସିଲେ ବନ୍ଦିତା ପିଉସୀ ମୋର ।୧୬।
ମିନିଆପଲିସ୍ ତମାମ ଜାଣିଲା ଦିନ କେଇଟାରେ ମତେ,
ସହରୁ ସହର ଦେଶ ଗୋଟାକର ଚିହ୍ନାଜଣା କିଏ କେତେ ।୧୭।
ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ହେବାକୁ ଏଇମାନେ ମୋର ମୁଁ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜର,
ଅତି ଶରଧାରେ ଜେଜେବାପା ମୋର ହାତ ବାଟ କଲେ ଜୁର ।୧୮।
ବଡଚିନ୍ତା ମୋର ବାପା, ମାଆ ମନେ ପାଦଟିଏ ନାଇଁ ମୋର,
କେତେ ଚଳାଇଲେ ପରୀକ୍ଷା, ନିରୀକ୍ଷା, ବଡ ବଡ ଡାକତର ।୧୯।
ଯଥା ସମୟରେ ନକଲି ପାଦରେ ଚାଲିବି ବୁଲିବି ମୁହିଁ,
ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳ, ଜେଜେ ବାପା ସଙ୍ଗେ ବଲ୍ ଗଡାଇ, ଗଡାଇ ।୨୦।
ଆଗରେ ପଡିଛି, କିଏ ଜାଣେ କେତେ ଲମ୍ବା ଜୀବନପଥ,
ବୁକେ ତୋଳି ନେଇ ଆଦରିଲେ ଯିଏ - ସେଇ ଦେଖାଇବେ ବାଟ ।୨୧।
ଏତେ ସଉଭାଗ୍ୟ, ତାତ, ଜନନୀ ଗୋ ଲଭିଲି ତୁମରି ପାଇଁ,
କେଉଁ ଭାଷାରେ ବା ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ମୁଁ ପାରିବି ତୁମକୁ ଦେଇ ।୨୨।
ପାଖରେ ଯଦିଓ ରଖିଥାଆନ୍ତ ଗୋ କରି ମତେ ଗଣ୍ଠିଧନ,
ବିକଳାଙ୍ଗ ବୋଲି ନିରିମାଖି ପରି କଟାଇଥାନ୍ତି ମୁଁ ଦିନ ।୨୩।
କୁଟୁମ୍ବରେ ଅବା ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବରେ ଯେତେ ପ୍ରିୟ ପରିଜନ,
ବୋଝଟିଏ ବୋଲି ତୁମ ଅନ୍ତେ କେତେ କରିଥାନ୍ତେ ହୀନିମାନ ।୨୪।

ପେଟ ପୋଷିବାକୁ ଆଦରି ଥାଆନ୍ତି ପରଘରେ ବୋଲହାକ,
କି ଅବା ମୋ ଦିନ କଟିଥାଆନ୍ତା ଗୋ ବାରଦ୍ୱାରେ ମାଗି ଭିକ ।୨୫।
ଛାତି ଟାଣ କରି ଛାଡିଦେଲ ବୋଲି ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଖୋଲିଲା ମୋର,
ହେ ଜନମଦାତା- ହେ ମୋର ଜନନୀ ଘେନାକର ନମସ୍କାର ।୨୬।
ଗରଭଧାରିଣୀ ନିରତେ ନୟନୁ ଢାଳୁଥିବେ ପରା ନୀର,
ବିଧୂରା ପରାଣ ଗୁମୁରି ମତେକି ଖୋଜୁଥିବ ବାରବାର ।୨୭।
ପଞ୍ଜରା ଥରାଇ ତତଲା ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସେ ହୃଦ ଯାଉଥିବ ଭରି,
ଜୀବନ ତମାମ ଅପରାଧ ବୋଧେ ମନ ଯାଉଥିବ ମରି ।୨୮।
ସଂସାର ଜାଣିଲା ପାଳିନେଲେ ଯିଏ ଆହା କି ଉଦାର ମନ,
ସବୁରି ତୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପ୍ରଶଂସା ତାଙ୍କର ସତେ ଦେବତା ସମାନ ।୨୯।
ଦୁନିଆଁ ଆଖିର ଉହାଡରେ କାହିଁ ଲୁଚିଗଲା ତୁମ ତ୍ୟାଗ,
ମୋ' ଅନ୍ତରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଉଣା ହେବନାହିଁ ତୁମପାଇଁ ଅନୁରାଗ ।୩୦।
ସଞ୍ଜ ସକାଳେ ଜୀବନଦାତାର ଚରଣେ ଲଗାଇ ମଥା,
ତୁମ ଚାରିଜଣ ବାପା, ମାଆ ଲାଗି ଜଣାଉଛି କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ।୩୧।

ଆମ ବଡପୁଅ ରାଜେଶ ଏବଂ କେଲୀଙ୍କର ଦୁଇବର୍ଷର ପାଳିତ ପୁତ୍ର "ସୁନୀଲ୍" ।
[୧]ପଣ୍ଡିଚେରୀ ଆଶ୍ରମରେ ରାଜେଶ୍‌ର ପିଉସୀ "ଜୟନ୍ତୀ" ରହନ୍ତି । ତ୍ରିଚିନ୍ନାପଲ୍ଲୀ ଅନାଥାଶ୍ରମରୁ ପୁଅକୁ ଆଣି ରାଜେଶ ଓ କେଲୀ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖା କରିଥିଲେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ।
[୨]ଚେନ୍ନାଇରେ ରାଜେଶର କକେଇ "ଜଳଦ" ରହନ୍ତି । ସେ ତ୍ରିଚ୍ଚିରେ ପୋଲିସ୍ କମିଶନର୍ ଥିବାବେଳେ ସଦ୍ୟଜାତ "ସୁନୀଲ୍"କୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରି ଅନାଥାଶ୍ରମରେ ଛାଡିଥିଲେ ।
[୩]ରାଜେଶର ବାପା ଡକ୍‌ଟର୍ ଶୀତକଣ୍ଠ ଦାଶ୍ ।
[୪]ରାଜେଶ୍‌ର ଜେଜେବାପା ସ୍ୱର୍ଗତ ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ ଦାଶ୍ ।

Mrs Kalpanamayee Dash lives in Minneapolis with her husband Dr Sitakantha Dash.

ଆମେରିକାରେ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗର ବିଳାପ

ବ୍ରଜମୋହନ ପ୍ରଧାନ, କଟକ, ଓଡିଶା

ଭାବିଥିଲି ମୁହିଁ କବି ହୋଇବି
କବିତା ଲେଖିଣ ମନ ମୋହିବି ।
କ୍ଷୀଣ ସେ ମୋହର ଭଙ୍ଗୁର ଆଶା
ଦେଶ ଛାଡି ମୁହିଁ ହେଲି ବିଦେଶୀ ।

ଏଠାରେ ବି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଏଁ ଆକାଶେ
ଜାଣି ମୁଁ ନ ପାରେ କେଉଁ ଦିଗ ସେ ।
ଭାରତ ଆକାଶ ଭାରତ ଭୂଇଁ
ପୃଥିବୀରେ ଆଉ କେଉଁଠି ନାହିଁ ।

ସୁନ୍ଦର ସେ ଜହ୍ନ ସୁନ୍ଦର କଇଁ
ଏଠାରେ ମୁଁ ଜମା ଦେଖଇ ନାହିଁ ।
ପ୍ରାଚୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ରହିଲେ ସୁଧା
ନ ତୁଟଇ ମୋର ଅନ୍ତର କ୍ଷୁଧା ।

ଦୟା, କ୍ଷମା, ପ୍ରେମ, ସ୍ୱର୍ଗୀୟ ଗୁଣ
ଏଠାରେ ରହିଲେ ହୋଇବ ଲୀନ ।
ବିଶାଳ ଆକାଶ, ବିସ୍ତୃତ ଦେଶ
ଜନ ସମାଗମ ନହୁଏ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ।

ଅନନ୍ତ ଏ ରାସ୍ତା ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ଗାଡି
ଛୁଟନ୍ତି ତହିଁରେ ଧାଡିକି ଧାଡି ।
ନାଲିଆ, ଶାଗୁଆ, ବିଜୁଳି ବତି

ରାସ୍ତାକୁ ଜଗନ୍ତି ସେ ଦିନରାତି ।

ହେଲେ ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ରାସ୍ତା ଉପରେ
ପୋଲିସ୍ ଆସଇ ପାଞ୍ଚ ମିଣ୍ଟିରେ ।
ଚିନ୍ତା କଲେ ମୋର ସ୍ୱଦେଶ କଥା
ଆସଇ ପ୍ରାଣରେ ଦାରୁଣ ବ୍ୟଥା ।

କେତେ ବିଶୃଙ୍ଖଳ ଜନତା ସେଠି
ଆଇନ୍ କାନୁନ୍ ନମାନେ କିଛି ।
କରୁଛି ମିନତି ପ୍ରଭୁ ପାଦରେ
ଦେଶବାସୀ ମୋର ଶିଖନ୍ତୁ ଥରେ ।

ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ପରିଶ୍ରମ, ଶିକ୍ଷା କେବଳ
ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ମୋଚନେ ହେବ ସଂବଳ ॥

The author Brajamohan Pradhan writes poetry in Oriya and English. He has authored two books. He lives in Cuttack, Orissa.

ଚାଖି ଖୁଣ୍ଟିଆ

ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପାଢୀ, ବର୍ଲିଂଟନ୍ , କାନାଡା

(ଚାଖି ଖୁଣ୍ଟିଆ ବା ଚନ୍ଦନ ହଜୁରି ଓଡିଶାର କେଡେ ବଡ ଗୌରବ ତାହା ଆଜି ଆମର କଳ୍ପନାର ଅତୀତ ।
ମୁଁ ଏ କବିତାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ସିପାହୀ ବିଦ୍ରୋହରେ ଅବଦାନର କିଞ୍ଚିତ ଆଭାସ ଦେଉଛି ।)

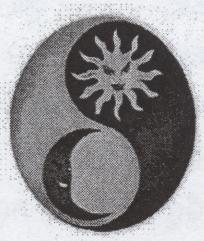
ଜଳିଲା ଝାନ୍‌ସୀ, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ନୌ, କାଶୀ, କମ୍ପିଲା ଧରଣୀ, କମ୍ପୁଥିଲା ହିମାଚଳ
ଦାବାନଳ ସମ ସିପାହୀ ବିଦ୍ରୋହ ଭାରତ ବୁକୁରେ ପକାଇଲା ଚହଳ ।
ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ଭାବେ ପାଇଲା ସ୍ଥାନ ଇତିହାସ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ
ଓଡିଶା ରାଇଜର ଅତୁଳନୀୟ ଅବଦାନ ଲୁଚିଲା ଗଭୀର ଗହ୍ୱରେ ।
ଝାନ୍‌ସୀ ରାଣୀର ଚିଟାଉ ପାଇ ପଉଷର ନିବିଡ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ରାତିରେ
ଘରୁ ବିଦା ନେଇ ଚାଲିଲା ପଣ୍ଡାପୁଅ ଚାଖିଆ ଦେଶ ମୁକ୍ତି ଆଶାରେ ।
କାଳିଆ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କର ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ନେଇ ବିଳାସ ପିଞ୍ଜି ବନ ଗହ୍ୱରେ
ଲଛମନ ରାଓ ଦଳବଳ ସାଥେ ଚାଲିଲା ଚାଖି ଅଭଡା ଧରି ହାତରେ ।
ତାର ପ୍ରିୟ ସାଥି ମନୁ ଆଜି ହୋଇଅଛି ଝାନ୍‌ସୀର ରାଣୀ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀବାଈ
ହଜୁରି ପରିବାରେ ରହି ଚାଖି ସାଥେ କେତେ ଦିନ ସିଏ ଥିଲା କଟାଇ ।
ବିପଦେ ପଡି ଆଜି ତା'ର ବାଲ୍ୟବନ୍ଧୁ ଚନ୍ଦନକୁ ଆହ୍ୱାନ କରିଛି ବିଚାରି
ବଡ ଦେଉଳର ପଣ୍ଡା ଚନ୍ଦନ ହଜୁରି ମନୁର ଅନୁରୋଧ ଏଡନ୍ତା କିପରି ?
କେତେ ନଈ, ନାଳ, ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ଡେଇଁ ଝାନ୍‌ସୀ ରାଇଜରେ ପହଁଚିଲା ଯାଇ
ପ୍ରିୟ ବନ୍ଧୁ ପଣ୍ଡାଜୀଙ୍କୁ ବେଦନା ଭରା ହୃଦୟେ ସ୍ୱାଗତ କଲା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀବାଈ ।
କୁଟିଳ ବିଦେଶୀ ବଣିକ ଆଜି ଝାନ୍‌ସୀକୁ ନିଜ ଶାସନରେ ମିଶାଇ ଦେଲା
ସରଳା ନିଃସହାୟା ବିଧବା ନାରୀ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀବାଈ ଆଜି କି କରି ପାରେ ଭଲା ।
ଚାଖିର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶେ ଅବଳା ନ ହୋଇ ଦୁର୍ବଳା ବିଦ୍ରୋହ ପାଇଁ କରିଲା ପଣ
ବାହାଦୁରସାହା, ନାନାସାହେବ, ତାନ୍ତିଆଟୋପି ସାଥି ଦେଇ ଯୁଝିଲେ ରଣ ।
ଜନତା ଜାଗିଲେ, ଥରିଲା ଅବନୀ, ଘୋର ବିଦ୍ରୋହର ନିଆଁ ଉଠିଲା ଜଳି
ଭେଦାଭେଦ ଭୁଲି ଶତ ଶତ ଯୁବାନ ଜନମଭୂମି ଲାଗି ଦେଲେ ଆତ୍ମବଳି ।
ରାଣୀ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ପରେ ହତୋତ୍ସାହ ହୋଇ ପଛକୁ ହଟିଲେ ସିପାହୀ ଦଳ
ଶତ୍ରୁ ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁଚିଛପି ବନ ଗହଳେ ଛଦ୍ମ ବେଶେ ପଣ୍ଡାଜୀ କାଟିଲେ କାଳ ।
ତୁରନ୍ତ ହିମାଚଳଠାରୁ କୁମାରିକା ଯାଏଁ ଚାଖିଆ ମରଣ ହେଲା ପ୍ରଚାର
ସମ୍ବଲପୁରର ଦୁବେ ଭାଇ ଠାରୁ ଖବର ପାଇ ଗୃହିଣୀ ହେଲା ଶୋକାତୁର ।
ବହୁଦିନ ପରେ କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ମାସେ ଚାଖିଆ ବାପୁଡା ଯେବେ ଘରେ ପହଁଚେ
ନିରୀହା ଶୋକାତୁରା ବିରହିଣୀ ଘରଣୀର ବିଷାଦ ହୃଦୟ ଉଷତେ ନାଚେ ।
ସଭିଏଁ ବୋଲିଲେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ମନେ "ନଇରେ ବାଳିଆ ଚହଟିଲା,
କଜଳ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ନାଆଲୋ ରାଣ୍ଡ ପୁଣି ଚାଖିଆ ଲେଉଟିଲା ।"

Mrs Sumitra Padhi is a regular contributor to OSA Souvenir. She stays in Burlington, Canada with her husband Hara Narayan Padhi. She enjoys writing Oriya poems.

ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ...

ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାୟକ, ଜର୍ମାନ୍‌ଟାଉନ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ସିନ୍ଦୁରା ଫାଟୁଚି ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ...
ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗୁଚି ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ...
ଆଖିରେ ନେଞ୍ଚରା, ଜାଲ ପରି
ଆଉ
ପରଳ ପଡିଚି, ପୃଥିବୀ' ରେ ।



ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଲୀନ ହୁଏ ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ...
ସମୟ, ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ...
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଅଙ୍କା, ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଧନୁ ପରି
ଆଉ
ବାଦଲ ଘେରିଚି, ଆକାଶ' ରେ ।

ଆଖି ପତା ବୁଜେ ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ...
ସ୍ଥଗେ, ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ....
ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଜାଗ୍ରତ, ନବବଧୂ ପରି
ଆଉ
ପ୍ରାଣ ବାନ୍ଧିନିଏ, ପଣତ' ରେ ।

ପଣତ ଉଡୁଚି ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ.....
କୋକେଇ ଚାଲିଚି ଧୀରେ... ଧୀରେ....
ଦେହ ଟଳମଳ, ପଦ୍ମପତ୍ର ପରି
ଆଉ
ପିଣ୍ଡ ହଜିଯାଏ, ଅସ୍ତାହି' ରେ ।

Surya Nayak is a regular contributor to OSA journal and to other literary magazines. He has published several books of poems in both English and Oriya. His latest publication- "Six Broken Lines", is a Dalton Publication. He is working on his third Oriya book. Barbara Watson, a well known poet, wrote on Surjya Nayak's book 'Feelings In-Between' --- "Nayak's poems reflect the effect of such experience, shifting from motions to emotions with seamless vibration of sentiments that laminate feelings in-between human relationships" . ***Western Maryland Poetry Review***

ଆଶାର ଆଲୋକ

ପ୍ରୀୟମ୍ବଦା ମହାନ୍ତି

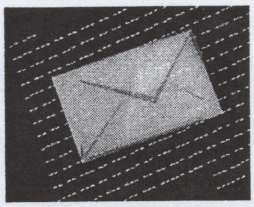
ଶ୍ରାବଣ ଘନ ରାତି ଘନ ତିମିର
ପଥ ନ ଦିଶେ ସାରା ଧରା ଅଧୀର
ଗଭୀର ନଦୀ ତଟେ କୁଟୀର ମୋର
ଭସାଇ ନେବ ଅବା ଜଳ ପ୍ରବଳ ।
ଭାବିଥିଲି ମୁଁ ଏହି ତଟିନୀ ତୀରେ
ବିତାଇବି ଜୀବନ ତୁମ ଆଶାରେ
ତୁମେ ଆସିବ ଧୀର ତରଙ୍ଗ ତୋଳି
ବିଜନ ଘାଟେ କେବେ ସପନ ପରି ।

ମୁଁ ଛୁଇଁବାରେ ତୁମ ପଦ ଯୁଗଳ
ଭୁଲିବି ଦୁଃଖ ସୁଖ ଭବ ଜଂଜାଳ
ତୁମରି ଗୀତ ଗାଇ ତୁମରି ସୁରେ
ଝୁରୁଥିବେ ତୁମକୁ ସଦା ଅନ୍ତରେ
ଜାଣ ତ ସବୁ ତୁମେ କେତେ କହିବି ?
ଯେ ପଥେ ନେବ ତୁମେ ସେ ପଥେ ଯିବି
ତୁମ କରୁଣା ଝର ସତେ ଝରିବ
ଅନ୍ଧକାରେ ଆଲୋକ ଶିଖା ଫୁଟିବ ।

Priyambada Mohanty is the mother of Dr. Subhendra Dev Mohanty, East Lancing Michigan. Her writings are published in many Oriya journals.

ଚିଠି - ସଖୀ ପାଇଁ

ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ



ଆଜି ଏଠି ରବିବାର ନିରୋଳା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ
ଲେଖିବାକୁ ବସିଥିଲି ଦୁଇ ଧାଡି ତୋତେ
ଭରିଗଲା ମନେ ମୋର ଅତୀତର ସ୍ମୃତି
ଫରକ୍ ପଡେନି ଗଲା ଦଶନ୍ଧି ଆବର୍ତ୍ତ ।

ମନେ ପଡେ ସଖୀ ଆମ ପିଲାଦିନ କଥା
ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ସେ ପୁରୁଣା ଦିନ ମାନ
ଭଲ ପାଇବାର କେତେ ଟିକି ଟିକି ସର୍ତ୍ତ
ଚିନ୍ତା କଲେ ଲଜ୍ଜାରେ ମୋ' ନଇଁଯାଏ ମଥା ।

କେତେ ରାଗ, କେତେ ରୁଷା, ମାନ, ଅଭିମାନ
କେତେ କ୍ଷତ, କେତେ ପୁଣି ପୁଞ୍ଜୀଭୂତ ବ୍ୟଥା
କେତେ କଥା କଟାକଟି କେତେ ମୁହଁ ଫୁଲା
ଶେଷ ହୁଏ ସବୁ ପୁଣି ଲାଗେ ଅକାରଣ ।
କେତେ ବର୍ଷା, କେତେ ଶୀତ, ଧୂ ଧୂ ଦ୍ୱିପ୍ରହର
କେତେ ଆମ୍ବଖିଆ କେତେ ରଂଗଖେଳ
ସବୁ ଆଜି ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ମୋ ପାଇଁ
କିନ୍ତୁ ତୋ'ର ଭାବିବାକୁ ନାହିଁ ଅବସର ।

ସଖୀ ମୋର ତୋ' ପାଖେ ଏତିକି ହିଁ ଦାବି
ଭୁଲ୍ ମୋତେ ବୁଝିବୁନି ଚିଠି ଯଦି ପାରି ନାହିଁ ଲେଖି
ଯନ୍ତ୍ରବତ୍ ଜୀବନର ଛୋଟବଡ ଜଂଜାଳ ଭିତରେ
'ତୁ' ଆଉ ସ୍ମୃତି ମୋର ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ସାଥି ।

Mrs. Sulochana Patnaik works as a bank manager and lives with her family in Philadelphia.

ଆତ୍ମ ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ - ତିନୋଟି କବିତା

ଶ୍ୱେତପଦ୍ମା ଦାଶ, ସାନହୋଜେ, କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ

(୧)

ମୁଁ ହଜିଗଲେ ମୋରି ଭିତରେ
ମୁଁ ପାଇଯିବି ମୁଁ କୁ
ସ୍ଥୂଳ ହଜିଗଲେ ସୂକ୍ଷ୍ମ ଭିତରେ
ଅନ୍ତରେ ଦେଖିବି ବ୍ରହ୍ମଙ୍କୁ ।

(୨)

ଦେହ ହଜିଗଲେ ଦେହାତୀତ ଭାବରେ
ମନ ହଜିଗଲେ ଅତୀନ୍ଦ୍ରିୟ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗରେ
ବନ୍ଧ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯିବ ତୁମ ମୋ ଭିତରେ
ନଦୀ ମିଶିଯିବ ଅନନ୍ତ ସାଗରେ ।

(୩)

ମୁକ୍ତ ମୁଁ ମୁକ୍ତ ମୁଁ ମୁକ୍ତ ମୁଁ
ଦେହ, ମନ, ବୁଦ୍ଧିର ଆବଦ୍ଧରୁ
କାରାଗାର ଦ୍ୱାର ଆଜି ଫିଟିଛି
ମିଶିଯାଏ ମୁଁ ପବନ ସାଥିରେ
ଏକାକାର ହୋଇଯାଏ ତୁମରି ଭିତରେ ।

Mrs Sweta Padma Dash is the Research Director at iSuppli/Stanford Resources in San Jose, Calfiornia.

ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ

ବିଜୟମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର, କେମ୍ବ୍ରିଜ୍, ମାସାଚୁସେଟ୍ସ୍

ଅରୂପ, ଅଥଳ, ଅନର୍ଗଳ, ସର୍ବଦା ସଚ୍ଚଳ,
ଅଡାସି, ବିଡାସି, ଅଣଚ୍ଛାଷି, ସଦୈବ ବିଚଳ ।
ପୂରିତ, ଧାବମାନ, ମଳୟ, ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାପ୍ତ, ରସଗ୍ରାହୀ,
ପ୍ରାଣଦାୟୀ, ସଙ୍ଗମୟୀ, ତୁଳାତୁଳ ଗୁଣମୟୀ,
ନିଃସଙ୍ଗର ସଙ୍ଗ, ପ୍ରାଣାନ୍ତର ଅଙ୍ଗ, ସେ ଦୟାସିନ୍ଧୁ!
ଭାଗବତ କହେ, ପବନ ସେ', ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ! ।୧।

ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରପ୍ରସ୍ଥେ ବହୁଶିଷ୍ୟ ଧନୁର୍ବିଦ୍ୟା ପାରଙ୍ଗମ,
ଗୁରୁ ଦ୍ରୋଣ ପରୀକ୍ଷନ୍ତି ଶିଷ୍ୟେ ସବୁଦ୍ଧି ସକ୍ଷମ ।
କୌତୁହଳେ ହୁଏ ପରବେଶ ସୁତପୁତ୍ର କର୍ଣ୍ଣ,
ଅକୁଳ ବଂଶହୀନ ଆଗ୍ରାହ୍ୟ ଟଙ୍କାରେ ଅର୍ଜୁନ ।
କରୁଅଛି ସୁତେ ଅଙ୍ଗରାଜ କାହିଁ ତା'କୁ ନିନ୍ଦୁ ?
ହେ ଦୁର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଧନ, କହେ କର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ତୁମେ ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ!
।୩।

ପତ୍ନୀହରା ଶ୍ରୀରାମ ସଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣେ ବୁଲନ୍ତି ବନରେ,
ଶୋକାର୍ତ୍ତ ଦୁଃଖିତ ଖୋଜନ୍ତି ସୀତା ପର୍ବତ କନ୍ଦରେ ।
ମିଳଇ ମର୍କଟ ହନୁମାନ କିସ୍କିନ୍ଧା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ,
ସେ ପୁଣି ମିଳାଏ ପତ୍ନୀହରା ସୁଗ୍ରୀବ ସଙ୍ଗରେ ।
ଅଗ୍ନିସାକ୍ଷୀ ରଖି ସୁଗ୍ରୀବେ କହନ୍ତି କ୍ଷମାସିନ୍ଧୁ,
ହେ ବିତ୍ରସ୍ତ, ତୁମେ ମୋ'ର ସାହା, ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ!
।୨।

କୁରୁକ୍ଷେତ୍ରେ ସମବେତ ସୁସଜ୍ଜିତ ରଣଯୋଦ୍ଧା,
ଅର୍ଜୁନ ନୀରବ, ସ୍ଥାଣୁ, ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ, ନାହିଁ ତା'ର ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ।
ରଥେ ବାହି ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଭଣନ୍ତି ଗୀତା ଉପଦେଶ,
ବିଭ୍ରାନ୍ତେ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ସେ' ଯେ' କର୍ମ ରହସ୍ୟ ଅଶେଷ ।
ଶିଷ୍ୟ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ତୁହି କେବେ ସଦା ଚକ୍ର ବାନ୍ଧୁ,
ସଖା ମୋ'ର ତୁହି ଅଟୁ, କୃଷ୍ଣ, ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ! ।୪।

ଦିଗନ୍ତରା ପ୍ରାନ୍ତରରେ ଗୃହଶୂନ୍ୟ ଗୌତମ,
ଜ୍ଞାନ ଖୋଜେ ଦେହର ପୀଡ଼ନେ, ନିଦାଘ ଗ୍ରୀଷମ ।
ଅବସନ୍ନ, କ୍ଷୁଧାର୍ତ୍ତ, ଆକୁଳ, ଅକ୍ଷମ ଶରୀରେ,
ଗୋପାଳ ବାଳକ ପୟ ପୁଣି ଦିଅଇ ମୁଖରେ ।
ହେ ବାଳକ, ତୁହି ମୋ'ର ସଙ୍ଗୀ, ମୋ'ର ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ!
ତୃଷାରେ ଯେ' ଦିଏ ପାଣି, ସେ' ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ! ।୫।

ଦୋଷ ମୋ'ର କହେ ଯୀଶୁ ନିର୍ଭୀକ ସଭାରେ,
ସଭା କହେ ତୁମେ ଭ୍ରଷ୍ଟ ବିପଥ ସମାଜ ଗ୍ଲାନିରେ ।
କ୍ରୁଶବିଦ୍ଧ କଲେ ତା'କୁ ସର୍ବେ ସଜଳା ଅବନ୍ଧୁ,
ଚାହିଁ ରହିଛନ୍ତି ଏକା ମାତା ମେରୀ ସ୍ନେହସିନ୍ଧୁ ।
ସର୍ବେ ଯା'ନ୍ତେ ଆଣେ ତାକୁ ସ୍ୱଗୃହେ କେତେ ଅଶ୍ରୁବିନ୍ଦୁ,
ପୁତ୍ର ମୋ'ର କୋଳେ ସେହି, ସେ' ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ!
।୬।

ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ମହମ୍ମଦ ଖୋଜେ ଧର୍ମ ବେଦୁଇନ୍ ଦେଶେ,
ଦେଖୁଛି ମୁଁ ଏକ ଆଲ୍ଲା ଅଟେ ସର୍ବ ପରକାଶେ ।
ହେ ବାସିନ୍ଦା ଜୀବଜନ, ଶୁଣ ଏହା ଏକ ସତ୍ୟ,
କେହି ନାହିଁ ଗୁଣଗ୍ରାହୀ ନେବାକୁ ଏ' ଆଲ୍ଲାର ଅମୃତ ।
ଏ' କେ' ଦେବୀ, ତରୁଣୀ ନାରୀ, ତିମିରର ଇନ୍ଦୁ!
ପତ୍ନୀ ମୋ'ର, ରୂପେ କଲ ଦୟା, ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ! ।୭।

ପୁତ୍ର ନାହିଁ, ମାତା ନାହିଁ, ଶତ୍ରୁ ଘେରିଛି ସମରେ,
ଏକା ମୁହିଁ, ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ଧରିଛି ବୁକୁରେ ।
ବଞ୍ଚି ରହିବାକୁ ମୋ'ର କିଛି ଅଛି ଝୁଡ଼ା ବା ଉପାୟ,
ଧନ କର୍ମ ଦାନ ମୋ'ର କିଛି ଅଛି ବା ସଞ୍ଚୟ ।
ଅସହାୟେ ବିପଦେ ଆପଦେ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ତୁମ ବନ୍ଧୁ,
ରାମ, କୃଷ୍ଣ, ଯୀଶୁ, ଆଲ୍ଲା ବୁଦ୍ଧିରୂପୀ, ମୋ' ଜୀବନବନ୍ଧୁ! ।୮।

Dr Bijoy Misra is a physicist and teaches at Harvard University. His poems and articles have appeared in the OSA journal. This poem was read at 6th Annual India Poetry Reading at Harvard University in May, 2002.

ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ କବିତା 'ମୋ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ': ଏକ ଅନୁଶୀଳନ

ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାରାୟଣ ଦାସ, ଜର୍ମାନୀ

କବି ମାୟାଧର ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କର ମର କଳେବର ତିନି ଦଶନ୍ଧି ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମିଶିଗଲାଣି । ତାଙ୍କର ସାରସ୍ୱତ କୀର୍ତ୍ତି ଓ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନୀ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ କିନ୍ତୁ ବଞ୍ଚିରହିଛି । ସେ ଜୀବନବ୍ୟାପୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସାଧନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ତଥା ରାଜ୍ୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏକାଡେମୀର ବା ଅନ୍ୟ କୌଣସି ପୁରସ୍କାର ପ୍ରଦାନକାରୀ ସଂସ୍ଥାର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ପଡିନାହିଁ । ଯିଏ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦାର ମଣିଷ ସିଏ କ'ଣ ପୁରସ୍କାର ପାଇଁ ଲାଳସା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିପାରେ ? ମାନସିଂହ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦାର ମଣିଷ, ମାନବିକତାର ମଣିଷ, ପ୍ରେମର ପରିପୂଣ୍ଣ ମଣିଷ । ଜଣେ ମୂର୍ଦ୍ଧନ୍ୟ କବି ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମାନସିଂହ ଜଣେ ପ୍ରାବନ୍ଧିକ, ସମାଲୋଚକ ଓ ଅନନ୍ୟ ଗଦ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଭାବରେ ସୁପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଗଭୀର ପ୍ରବେଶ ଥିଲା । ଓଡିଶାର ମାଟି, ପାଣି, ପବନ ତାଙ୍କର ଅତି ଆପଣାର । ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଣୀତ 'ଶିକ୍ଷାବିତ୍‌ର ଗାଥା' ତିକ୍ତ ମଧୁର ଜୀବନର ମର୍ମଲିପି । ତାଙ୍କ ଲେଖନୀ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଧୀନ । ସେଇ ଲେଖନୀ କାହାକୁ ତୋଷାମଦ କରେ ନାହିଁ । ଯେତେ ବିପଜ୍ଜନକ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାହା ସତ୍ୟ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ବିକାଶ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ରାଧାନାଥ ରଥ କହିଥିଲେ - 'ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ କଲମ ଓ ଶ୍ରୀରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦାଶଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଏହି ଦୁଇଟି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଅସୁବିଧାର କାରଣ ।'

ମାନସିଂହ ଚାକିରିଜୀବୀର ଦୁଃଖ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଥିଲେ । କେହି ଶିକ୍ଷକ ପ୍ରତି ସମ୍ବେଦନା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ବିନିମୟରେ କେବଳ ଅବହେଳା ଓ ବାକ୍ ସହାନୁଭୂତି, ରାଜନୀତି ପ୍ରତି ମାନସିଂହ ବୀତସ୍ପୃହ ଥିଲେ । ସେ ଭଲ ଭାବରେ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ଶିକ୍ଷା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଅଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବିବେଚିତ ହେଉଥିବା ଛାତ୍ର ରାଜନୀତି ଭିତରେ ପଶି କ୍ଷମତାଧର ହୋଇଯାଆନ୍ତି । ଏପରି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଦେଶ କ'ଣ ଆଶା କରିପାରିବ ? ତେଣୁ ରାଜନୀତି ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ଘୃଣା । ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ କବିତା 'ମୋ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ'ରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଭାବନା ଗୁଡିକ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ ।

ପିଲାଙ୍କ କଥା 'କିଛି ତ ବୁଝିଲିନି' ବୋଲି କବିପତ୍ନୀ ହେମଲତା ମାନସିଂହ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତି ଓ କହନ୍ତି - 'ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ କେବେ ନୋହିଲ ପତ୍ନୀ' । ସେ ପୁଣି କହନ୍ତି -

"ବନ୍ଧୁଏ ବଡଲୋକ ହେଲେ ଯେଝାରେ
ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଚଳୁଛନ୍ତି ମଜାରେ,
ମୁଁ ଏକା ମଲି ତମ ଘରକୁ ଆସି
X X X
ମରନ୍ତି ହେଲେ ମହାନଦୀରେ ଝାସି
ପିଲାଙ୍କ କଥା ଟିକେ ବୁଝ ହେ ଭଲା
ଚିନ୍ତା ନାହିଁକି, କିଏ ଜୀଇଁଲା ମଲା !"

ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କର ତିନୋଟି ପୁଅ - ଲାଲୁ, ଲଳିତ ଓ ଲାବଣ୍ୟ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସୁପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ । ବଡପୁଅ ଲାଲୁ Geophysicsରେ ଉଚ୍ଚତର ଶିକ୍ଷାଲାଭ କରିଥାଆନ୍ତି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଚାକିରି ନ ଥାଏ । ପତ୍ନୀ କହନ୍ତି -

"କହୁଛି ମୁହିଁ ବଡ ଦିହିଙ୍କ କଥା
ବଡ ତ ବସେ ହାତ ଦେଇଣ ମଥା-

ଛଅ ଛଅଟା କିସ କରିଲା ପାସ
ଚାକିରି ଖୋଜି ଖୋଜି ହେଲା ନିରାଶ
ଅକର୍ମା ହୋଇ ବସି ରହିଲା ଘରେ
ଭେଟାଅ ହେଲେ କେଉଁ ସାଙ୍ଗ ପାଖରେ ।"

ମାନସିଂହ ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଅନ୍ତି -

"ଶୁଣୁଛି ଏବେ ପାଠ କରୁନି କାଟ,
ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକ ଏକହିଁ ବାଟ ।"

ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ଯେ ଯିଏ ଜ୍ଞାନ ପଥରେ ଯାଏ, ସିଏ କର୍ମ ପଥରେ ଯାଇପାରେ ନାହିଁ । ଭାରତର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର କହନ୍ତି ଯେ - କର୍ମ ତ୍ୟାଗ ହିଁ 'କର୍ମ ସନ୍ୟାସ' ଓ ଏହାଦ୍ୱାରା ହିଁ ଈଶ୍ୱର ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ହୁଏ । ପରିହାସ କରି ମାନସିଂହ ହେମଲତାଙ୍କୁ କହନ୍ତି -

"ପୁଅ ତ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ଆଣି ହୋଇଛି ଜ୍ଞାନୀ,
ହେବ ଅକର୍ମା ଦେଶ-ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଜାଣି
ନିତାନ୍ତ ଯଦି ଚାହିଁକରିବ କିଛି,
ଇସ୍କୁଲ୍-ମାଷ୍ଟ୍ର କାମ ପଡି ରହିଛି ।
ଗଣନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ କର୍ମ ବୋଲି ତାହାକୁ
ଆମକୁ ଶାସନେ, ସେଟା ହୁଏ ତୁଚ୍ଛାକୁ ।"

ଅଥଚ ବଡପୁଅ ଲାଲୁ ମାନସିଂହ ବିଦ୍ୱାନ୍ । କାନାଡାର ବିଶ୍ୱବିଖ୍ୟାତ୍ Western Ontario Universityରେ ଦୀର୍ଘଦିନ ଧରି Geophysics ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ । OSA (Orissa Society of the Americas)ର ବରିଷ୍ଠ ସଭ୍ୟ । ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବ କି ବନ୍ଧୁ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ, ଅଗ୍ରଜ ବା ସହପାଠୀ କିମ୍ବା ଛାତ୍ର ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ - ତାଙ୍କୁ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଜାଣିଛନ୍ତି, ନିଜର ମହତପଣିଆ ଯୋଗୁଁ ସେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ପାଇଥାଆନ୍ତି ।

ମଝିଆଁ ପୁଅ ଲଳିତ । ଛାତ୍ରବସ୍ଥାରେ ସେ କବିତା ଲେଖୁଥିଲେ । କବିପତ୍ନୀ କହନ୍ତି-

"ବୁଝ ତ ହେଲେ କଥା ମଝିଆଁଟାର
ସେ ତ କବିତା, ଚିତ୍ର କଲାଣି ସାର ।
କି କରେ ଚିତ୍ର, ଲେଖେ କେବେ ସେ ପଦ୍ୟ
ମିଳିବ କିମ୍ବା ତହୁଁ ତା ପେଟ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ?"

ମାନସିଂହ ଭଲ ଭାବରେ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ଯେ ଓଡିଶାରେ କବିତା ଲେଖି, ସାହିତ୍ୟ କରି କି ଚିତ୍ର ଆଙ୍କି କେହି ପେଟ ପୋଷିପାରେ ନାହିଁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରର ମଧ୍ୟ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ନ ଥାଏ । ସେହିପରି ପରିହାସ କରି ମାନସିଂହ ମଝିଆଁ ପୁତ୍ର ଲଳିତ ବିଷୟରେ କହନ୍ତି -

"ବୁଝାଇ କହିଲି ମୁଁ ଜାଣ ନାହିଁକି,
ଘୁଷୁରି ରଖିଛି ମୁଁ କାହା ପାଇଁ କି ?

ଆମ ଦେଶର କବି, ଚିତ୍ରକ ପାଇଁ
ସେହି ତ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ପେଶା, ଭାବନା କାହିଁ?"

"ହସି କହନ୍ତି ସତୀ ସବୁକୁ ଥଟ୍ଟା,
ଜଂଜାଳେ ହେଉଥାଏ ମୁଁ ହଟହଟା ।"

ସେହି ମଝିଆଁ ପୁଅ ଲଲିତ ମାନସିଂହ ସମ୍ପ୍ରତି ଅମେରିକାରେ ଭାରତର ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦୂତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ସେ ଓଡିଶାର କେବଳ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି, ଭାରତର ମଧ୍ୟ ଗୌରବ ।

ସାନପୁଅ ଲାବଣ୍ୟ । ପାଠପଢାରେ ଅବହେଳା କରେ ଓ ମାଷ୍ଟ୍ରମାନେ ତାକୁ ମାରନ୍ତି । ତାର ଯତ୍ନ ନେବାକୁ ପତ୍ନୀ କହନ୍ତି -

"ବତ ବା ଯାହା ହେବ - ବେଳକ ଥାଉଁ
ସାନକୁ ଦେଖ ଭଲା, ଇସ୍କୁଲେ ଯାଉ ।
କେବଳ ଫିସ୍ ଦିଆ ହେଉଛି ସାର ।
ନାହିଁ ପଢୁଛି ପାଠ, ଖାଉଛି ମାଡ ।
ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ ତାର ବଢେ ବଜ୍ଜାତି,
ବଜୁଛି ବଜାରୀଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗତେ ମାତି ।"

ମାନସିଂହ ଉତ୍ତରରେ କହନ୍ତି--

"xxxx ଦେଖୁଛି ତାର
ଲକ୍ଷଣେ ଫୁଟି ଉଠେ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହେବାର !
ନ ପଢୁ ପାଠ, ମିନିଷ୍ଟର ସେ ହେବ,
ନ ହେଲେ ହେବ ପବ୍ଲିସିଟି ସାହେବ ।
ନିତାନ୍ତ ପକ୍ଷେ ହେବ ନେତା ସେ ଜଣେ
ଦେଶ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ହେଲା କି ଶୁଭ କ୍ଷଣେ ।"

ଅପ୍ରିୟ ସତ୍ୟ କଥାଟିଏ ମାନସିଂହ କହିଛନ୍ତି, ଯେଉଁମାନେ ସ୍କୁଲ କଲେଜରୁ ଧକ୍କା ଖାଇ ବାହାରିଲେ, ନାନାବିଧ ଅସାମାଜିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଲିପ୍ତ ହେଲେ, ସେମାନେ ହେଲେ ନେତା ଓ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ । ଏହି ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ମାନସିଂହ କହନ୍ତି -

"ସ୍କୁଲ-କଲେଜୁ ଧକ୍କା ଖାଇ ଯେ ଗଲେ,
ବେକାର ହେଉଥିଲେ ପୂର୍ବ ଅମଳେ ।
ମହାତ୍ମା ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ କଲେ ସୁବିଧା,
ହେବେ ସେ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ନେତା ସହଜ ସିଧା ।
ମୂର୍ଖ-ଜନନୀ ବୋଲି ନ କାଳ ସତୀ,
ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଦେଶେ ତୁମେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ।"

କିନ୍ତୁ ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ ସାନପୁଅ ଅସାମାଜିକ ହେଲା ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଗୁଜୁରାଟରେ ଆଇ·ଏ·ଏସ୍ ଅଫିସର୍ ହେଲେ । ଜଣେ ସଜ୍ଜୋଟ ଓ କର୍ମଦକ୍ଷ ପ୍ରଶାସକ ଭାବରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଆଦରଣୀୟ ।

ମାନସିଂହ ଜୀବନକାଳ ଭିତରେ ନାନା ଭାବରେ ଉପେକ୍ଷିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ହେଁ ସେ ତିନୋଟି ପୁତ୍ର, "ଲାଲୁ, ଲଳିତ ଓ ଲାବଣ୍ୟ" ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଦିବ୍ୟ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦର ପ୍ରତିଶୃତି । ସେମାନେ ହେଲେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ । ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଜୀବନର ସୁଖ ସମ୍ଭୋଗ ପାଇଁ ନୁହେଁ, ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରର ଓ ମାନବ ସମାଜର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ ସେମାନେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରତ । ଓଡିଆ ଜାତି ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି ଅଥଚ ତାଙ୍କ ତିନି ପୁଅ ଓଡିଶା ଓ ଓଡିଆ ଜାତି ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଚୁର ସମ୍ମାନ ଓ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ଆଣି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏହା ହେଉଛି ଜଣେ ପିତାଙ୍କର ପୁତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କର ସଫଳତା । ଏହି ସଫଳତାକୁ ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ମାନସିଂହ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି ତାଙ୍କ ଆତ୍ମା ଦେଖି ପାରୁଥିବ ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଲାଭ କରି ପାରୁଥିବ । ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର କୃତିତ୍ୱରେ ଗର୍ବ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଲେଖକ ମାନ୍ୟବର ଲଳିତ ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ପିତାଙ୍କର ଏହି କବିତାର (ମୋ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ) ନକଲଟିଏ ପଠାଇଥିଲା । ଲଳିତବାବୁ ଲେଖକଜୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ପତ୍ରରେ ଯଥାର୍ଥରେ ଲେଖିଥିଲେ -

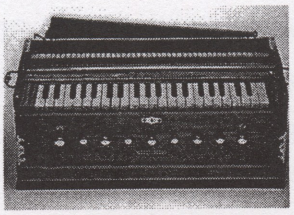
x x x x. I was specially touched by Bapa's poem. I like to believe that he was proud of his children although it did not happen as he had anticipated !

- (Washington, 11 April, 2002)

ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ବାପା ମାଆ ଆତ୍ମକେନ୍ଦ୍ରିକ । ସେମାନେ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପିଲା କେବଳ ଭଲ ପଢନ୍ତୁ ଓ ଭଲ ଚାକିରି କରନ୍ତୁ । ମାନସିଂହ ଥିଲେ ଏପରି ଚିନ୍ତାର ବିପରୀତ । ଏପରି ଚିନ୍ତା ପଛରେ ସେ ଗୋଡାଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ସେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ସହକାରେ ଭଲ ପଢିବା ପାଇଁ ଓ ସମ୍ମାନଜନକ ପଦବୀରେ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଆପଣାର ପ୍ରଜ୍ଞା ଓ ମେଧା ବଳରେ ସେମାନେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ପଦବୀରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାପିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ପିତାଙ୍କ ପରି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନୀ ଓ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦାବୋଧର ଉପାସକ । ଏହି ତିନିପୁଅ ହିଁ ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ଦିବ୍ୟ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ - ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ପୁରସ୍କାର ! ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଓଡିଶା ଗର୍ବିତ - ଏଥିରେ ମତଦ୍ୱିଧାର ଅବକାଶ ନାହିଁ ।

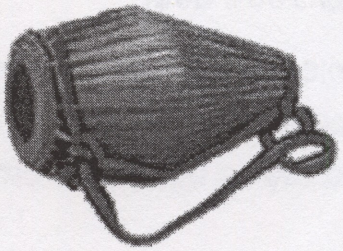
ମାନସିଂହ ବସ୍ତୁବାଦୀ (materialistic) ନୁହଁନ୍ତି - ମାନବବାଦୀ, ଭାବବାଦୀ । ଏହି ଭାବ କେବଳ କଳ୍ପନା ନୁହେଁ, କଳ୍ପନାର ଅନ୍ତଃସ୍ଥଳରେ ବାସ୍ତବର ରମ୍ୟ ଝରଣା । ତେଣୁ ସେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷରେ କିଛି କହିନାହାନ୍ତି, ପରୋକ୍ଷରେ ଆତ୍ମାର ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ତାହାର ପରିଣତି ଆଜିର ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ବୃତ୍ତିରେ ଓ ଖ୍ୟାତିରେ ଶୀର୍ଷ ଆସନ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଥିବା ଲାଲୁ, ଲଳିତ ଓ ଲାବଣ୍ୟ । ଧନ୍ୟ ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ ପିତୃତ୍ୱ, ଧନ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ପୁତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କର ପୁତ୍ରତ୍ୱ । ପିତୃତ୍ୱ ଓ ପୁତ୍ରତ୍ୱର ମଧୁର ମିଳନ ଘଟିଛି । ଏପରି ମିଳନ ହିଁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପରିବାର ପାଇଁ କେବଳ ମଙ୍ଗଳଦାୟକ ନୁହେଁ, ମାନବ ସମାଜ ଓ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ମଙ୍ଗଳପ୍ରଦ । ମାନସିଂହ ହିଁ ମାନସିଂହ । ସେ ନିଜ ସହିତ ନିଜେ ହିଁ ତୁଳନୀୟ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଶତକୋଟି ପ୍ରଣାମ ।

Dr Rajendra Narayan Das is an International Business Consultant and lives in Germany.



ସଂଗୀତରେ ରସାନୁଭବ

ଆରତୀ ମିଶ୍ର



ରସାନୁଭବର ଅର୍ଥ ଓ ଭାବ ସହିତ ଏକ ସଂଜ୍ଞା ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ କରିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । କାରଣ ଏହା ଏକ ଅନୁଭୂତିମୂଳକ ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁ । ମୂଳ ଗ୍ରୀକ୍ ଶବ୍ଦଟି "aesthetikos" ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ "aesthetics", ଅନ୍ତର୍ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଦ୍ୱାରା ଅନୁଭବକୁ ବୁଝାଏ । ରସାନୁଭବ କଳାକୃତି ଉପରେ ଆଧାରିତ ଏକ ଅନୁଭୂତି । କବିତା, ଚିତ୍ରକଳା, ସଂଗୀତ ଓ ନୃତ୍ୟକଳାର ଆଧାର ବ୍ୟତିତ ରସାନୁଭବ ଶୂନ୍ୟ । ପ୍ରକୃତ ରସାନୁଭୂତି ଶାରୀରିକ ସ୍ତରରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇ ମାନସିକ (psychological) ସ୍ତର ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ଏକ ଲୋକୋତ୍ତର (elevated) ଅତିବାସ୍ତବ (metaphysical) ସ୍ତରରେ ପହଞ୍ଚେ । ଅଭିନବ ଗୁପ୍ତଙ୍କର "ଧ୍ୟାନ ଲୋକଲୋଚନ" ଓ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର କବି ଶ୍ରୀ ବିଶ୍ୱନାଥଙ୍କର "ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଦର୍ପଣ" ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ 'ରସବିନା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଅସାର' ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ରହିଛି । ପ୍ରଫେସର ନାଇଟ୍‌ଙ୍କର "The Philosophy of The Beautiful" ପୁସ୍ତକରେ ଓ ଠାକୁର ଜୟଦେବ ସିଂ'ଙ୍କର "Aesthetics of the Hindustani Musical Form" ପୁସ୍ତକରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସଂଗୀତ କଳାର ରସାନୁଭବ ବିଷୟରେ ବିସ୍ତୃତ ଆଲୋଚନା ହୋଇଛି । ପ୍ରକୃତ ପକ୍ଷେ ରସ ବିନା କଳାର ସୃଜନ ଅସାର ।

ରସାନୁର୍ଭବ କର୍ତ୍ତା ଓ କ୍ରିୟା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଥିବା ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ବହିର୍ଭୂତ ଏକ ସ୍ୱୟଂପ୍ରକାଶିତ ପ୍ରସାଦଗୁଣଯୁକ୍ତ ରୋମାଞ୍ଚକର ଅନୁଭୂତି ସହ ଏକ ଲୋକୋତ୍ତର ଭାବକୁ ବୁଝାଏ । ଏହି ଅନୁଭୂତିରେ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ପାତ୍ର ମଧ୍ୟ ରସିକ (sensitive), ରସଗ୍ରାହୀ, ଗୁଣୀ ଓ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟପ୍ରେମୀ ହେବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ରସାନୁଭବର ମାତ୍ରା ସମାନ ନୁହେଁ । Edward Hanslik ତାଙ୍କ ପୁସ୍ତକ "The Beautiful in Music"ରେ କହିଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ସଂଗୀତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି, ସ୍ଥାନ, ବସ୍ତୁ, ଭାଷା, ଘଟଣା, ଧାରଣା ବା ରସହୀନ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣ ପ୍ରକାଶର କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ନୁହେଁ । ସଂଗୀତ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ରସାଣିତ ଅତିବାସ୍ତବ ଅନୁଭୂତି ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ । କଳା ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁ ଓ ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ଶୈଳୀ ଉଭୟର ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ରହିଛି । ମାତ୍ର ଉଭୟେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ନିହିତ ଭାବଧାରାରେ ଜଡ଼ିତ ହୋଇ ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଓଜ ଓ ପ୍ରସାଦ ଗୁଣଯୁକ୍ତ ସ୍ୱୟଂସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରସଧାରାରେ ରସାଣିତ ହୋଇ ରସିକଙ୍କର ରସାନୁଭୂତିକୁ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କଲେ ତାହାହିଁ ପ୍ରକୃତ ଅତିବାସ୍ତବ ସ୍ତରର ରସାନୁଭୂତି ଉଦ୍ରେକରେ ସକ୍ଷମ ହେବ ।

ପାଶ୍ଚାତ୍ୟ କଣ୍ଠସଂଗୀତ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ସ୍ୱରରଚ୍ନା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ସଂଗୀତର ଭାଷାକୁ ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଦିଆଯାଇଥାଏ । ମାତ୍ର ବିଥୋଭେନ୍, ମୋଜାର୍ଟ, ହାଇଡେନ୍, ଚାଇକୋଭସ୍କି ଆଦି ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଂଗୀତକାର ମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱରରଚ୍ନା ସ୍ୱର, କର୍ତ, ଶବ୍ଦ ଓ ସିମ୍ଫୋନିର ସମ୍ମିଶ୍ରଣରେ ନିର୍ମିତ ଏକ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ତୋରଣ । ତହିଁରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ସ୍ୱର ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଏକ ଅଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ସଂଯୋଜନା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରନ୍ତି । ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଂଗୀତ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଭାଷା ଓ ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନା ପରସ୍ପରର ପରିପୂରକ ହେଲେ ବିଶେଷ ଭାବରେ କଳାକୃତିର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ଭାବପ୍ରକାଶର ସୁଯୋଗ ଓ ମାନ ଉଚ୍ଚତର ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ସଂଗୀତକୁ ପରିପୁଷ୍ଟ କରିଥାଏ । ଏହାର ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନା ଓ ଛନ୍ଦ ଭାଷା ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଗତି କରିଥାଏ ।

ସଂଗୀତ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଓ ରଚ୍ନାର ପୃଷ୍ଠଭୂମିରେ 'ରସ' ଏକ ମୂଳଧାର ଭାବେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ । Dr. Swan K. Langer ଙ୍କ ମତରେ ସଂଗୀତର ଶକ୍ତି ଶ୍ରୋତା ଉପରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶାରୀରିକ ଓ ମାନସିକ ପ୍ରଭାବ ପକାଇଥାଏ । ଏହା ରସଭେଦରେ ନାଡ଼ି ଓ ଶ୍ୱାସପ୍ରଶ୍ୱାସର ଗତିକୁ ଦ୍ରୁତ ବା ପ୍ରଖର କରିଥାଏ, ଶ୍ରୋତାର ଅଙ୍ଗପ୍ରତ୍ୟଙ୍ଗକୁ ଉତ୍ତ୍ୟକ୍ତ ବା ଅବଶ କରିଥାଏ, ଏବଂ ଶ୍ରୋତାକୁ ମନଯୋଗୀ ବା ଅମନଯୋଗୀ କରିଥାଏ । କ୍ଷମତା, ଅନୁଭବ ଓ ଭାବ, କଳା ସୃଜନର ଅବିଚ୍ଛେଦ୍ୟ ଅଙ୍ଗ । ଏହା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲତା, ଉଲ୍ଲାସ ଓ

ଆହ୍ଲାଦର ମଧ୍ୟ ସ୍ଥାନ ଅଛି । ରସଧାରାହିଁ ସଂଗୀତର ଜୀବନୀ ଓ ଆହ୍ଲାଦିନୀ ଶକ୍ତି । ପୂରାତନ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରଜ୍ଞଙ୍କ ମତରେ ହାସ୍ୟ, ରୁଦ୍ର ଓ ବିଭତ୍ସ ରସ, ସଂଗୀତ ଉପଯୋଗୀ ରସ ନୁହେଁ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ର ଜଗତରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ହାସ୍ୟରସାତ୍ମକ ସଂଗୀତ ସହ ଅଭିନୟର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ପ୍ରାୟ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳିଥାଏ, ଯଦିଓ ଅନେକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ତାହା ହାସ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ଦୀପନାର ଏକ ଦୁଃଖଦାୟକ ଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ମାତ୍ର ନୃତ୍ୟକଳା ଓ ଅଭିନୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏହା ଅନ୍ୟଥା ହୋଇଥାଏ । ରଙ୍ଗମଞ୍ଚରେ ନୃତ୍ୟକଳା ଓ ଅଭିନୟ ଏକ ଦର୍ଶନୀୟ କଳା ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ଏହା ଦର୍ଶକର ଦର୍ଶନେନ୍ଦ୍ରିୟକୁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିଥାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ, ଭାରତନାଟ୍ୟମ୍ ବା କୁଚିପୁଡ଼ି ଶୈଳୀରେ ପରିବେଶିତ ନୃତ୍ୟରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ବାଲ୍ୟଲୀଳା, ଶାରୀରିକ ଗଠନରେ ତ୍ରୁଟିଥିବା ସଖା ମଧୁମଙ୍ଗଳର ଅଭିନୟ, କୁବ୍‌ଜା ନାରୀକୁ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରିବା ଅଭିନୟ , ରାମାୟଣ ଦୃଶ୍ୟରେ ମଛରାର ପ୍ରବେଶ ଅଭିନୟ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ବେଶ୍ ହାସ୍ୟରସପ୍ରବଣ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ସେହିପରି ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କର ନରସିଂହ ରୂପଧାରଣ ଓ ହିରଣ୍ୟକଶିପୁ ବିଦାରଣ ବିଭତ୍ସରସଯୁକ୍ତ ଅଭିନୟର ଏକ ଉଦାହରଣ । ଦଶ ଅବତାର ନୃତ୍ୟରେ 'କଲ୍କି' ଅବତାରର ଅଭିନୟ ରୁଦ୍ରରସର ପରିଚାୟକ । ଏହି ଅଭିନୟ ମାନଙ୍କର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସାର୍ଥକତା ନେପଥ୍ୟ ସଂଗୀତ ଉପରେ ବିଶେଷ ଭାବେ ନିର୍ଭର କରିଥାଏ । ସଂଗୀତର ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନା ଓ ଛନ୍ଦ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ଭାବ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାରେ ସମର୍ଥ ହେବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ।

ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସ୍ୱର (note) ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଭାବର ପ୍ରକାଶକ । ଶାନ୍ତରସର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ସ୍ୱର, ତାଳ ଓ ଲୟ ବୀର ବା ବିଭତ୍ସ ରସ ପାଇଁ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ନୁହେଁ । ଶାନ୍ତ, ଶୃଙ୍ଗାର, ହାସ୍ୟ, ବିଭତ୍ସ, କରୁଣ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ରସ ଉତ୍ପାଦନ ଓ ସଙ୍ଗଠନ ପାଇଁ ସଂଗୀତରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ବାରଟି ସ୍ୱରର ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ସଂଯୋଜନା ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ଭୈରବ ରାଗରେ ଉଚ୍ଚିତ ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଉଭୟ ଶାନ୍ତ ଓ ରୁଦ୍ରଭାବର କ୍ରମଃପ୍ରକାଶ ଓ ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ହୋଇପାରେ । ସ୍ୱର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ, ଯଥା ଗମକର ପ୍ରକାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରସର ଉଦ୍ରେକ କରିପାରେ । ଶାନ୍ତ ରସରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ଗମକ ପ୍ଲାବିତ ଯଥା 'ମିଡ୍', ଉଲ୍ଲସିତ ଯଥା 'ଘସିଟ୍', ଓ ଆହତ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସହ ସଂଯୁକ୍ତ । ସେହିପରି ବୀର ବା ରୁଦ୍ର ରସର ଗମକ ହମ୍ମିତ, ଗଦ୍‌ଗଦିତ, ଓ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନଯୁକ୍ତ ।

ସ୍ୱର ଓ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ 'ରସଭାବନା'ର ପରିଚାୟକ ନ ହେଲେ ଏବଂ କର୍ତ୍ତା ଓ କ୍ରିୟା ଏକାକାର ହୋଇ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ବିଦ୍ୟାରେ ଅନୁଭବୀ ଓ ଧୁରନ୍ଧର ହୋଇନଥିଲେ ରସଧାରା ନିର୍ଗତ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ ବା ରସାନୁଭବ ସମ୍ଭବ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । କେବଳ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଏହି ସ୍ତରର ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ଅସମ୍ଭବ । ବହୁ ସଂଗୀତ ଗୁରୁ ଓ ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଅକ୍ଲାନ୍ତ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ବଳରେ ଉଚ୍ଚମାନର ସଂଗୀତ ପରିବେଷଣ କଳା ଆୟତ୍ତ କରି ଚମତ୍କାରୀ ବିଦ୍ୟାର ଅଧିକାରୀ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ରସାନୁଭବ ଅଭାବରେ କଳାରସିକ ମାନଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରିପାରି ନଥାନ୍ତି । ସାବଲୀଳ, ସ୍ୱତଃସ୍ଫୂର୍ତ୍ତ ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଅନୁଭୂତି ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ ହୋଇନଥିବା କଳା ପରିବେଷଣ ରସଭାବଶୂନ୍ୟ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟବୋଧର ଧାରଣା ଏବଂ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟମୟ କରିବାର କ୍ରିୟା ମଧ୍ୟ 'ନନ୍ଦନତତ୍ତ୍ୱ' ନାମରେ ପରିଚିତ । ନନ୍ଦନତତ୍ତ୍ୱରେ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ଅର୍ଜନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଶିଳ୍ପୀଙ୍କର ରସାନୁଭବ କ୍ଷମତାର ପ୍ରୟୋଜନ ରହିଛି । ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଜନା, ତାଳ, ଓ ଲୟର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ଆଦିର ରସ ଉପରେ ପ୍ରଭାବ ବିଷୟରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରାଯାଇଛି । ବିରହ ଦଶାର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ପାଇଁ କୋମଳ 'ରେ', ଭକ୍ତିରସ ପାଇଁ କୋମଳ 'ଗା' ବା ଶୃଙ୍ଗାର ରସର ପରିବେଷଣରେ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଗାନ୍ଧାର, ରେଷଭ ଓ ମଧ୍ୟମ ସ୍ୱରର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ସମ୍ମତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ରସାନୁଭବ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ନିୟମ ମାନଙ୍କର ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ । ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ସ୍ୱର, ଗମକ ଓ ଛନ୍ଦର ସୀମାରୁ ବହିର୍ଭୂତ ହୋଇ ଭାବ ଓ ରସ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି ଜନିତ ଏପରି ଏକ ସ୍ତରକୁ ଉନ୍ନୀତ ହେବେ, ଯେଉଁଠାରେ କଳାକୁ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟମୟ ଓ ରସାଣିତ କରିବାର କ୍ରିୟା ଏକ ସ୍ୱତଃସ୍ଫୂର୍ତ୍ତ ବହିର୍ମୁଖୀ ରସଧାରାର ପ୍ଲାବନ ହୋଇ ରସିକଙ୍କୁ ଏକ ଉଲ୍ଲସିତ, ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୋମାଞ୍ଚକର ଅନୁଭୂତି ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବାରେ ସଫଳକାମ ହେବ ।

ମଞ୍ଚରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ବହୁକାଳରୁ ଓଡିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟଶୈଳୀ ଅଭିନୟ କରି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ କେବଳ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗୀୟା ସଂଯୁକ୍ତା ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ ତାଙ୍କର ବାଳଗୋପାଳଙ୍କର 'ଲବଣୀଚୋରା', ରାମାୟଣର 'ଚୂଡ଼ାମଣି ପ୍ରଦାନ' ଓ ବହୁ ଆଦୃତ 'ଦଶାବତାର' ନୃତ୍ୟରେ ନିଜର ଗଭୀର ରସାନୁଭୂତିର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଇ ରସିକଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟରେ ଅମର ହୋଇ ପାରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେହିପରି ଭାରତ ନାଟ୍ୟମ୍ ଶୈଳୀରେ ରୁକ୍ମିଣୀ ଦେବୀ ଅରୁନ୍ଦଲେ ଓ ସରସ୍ୱତୀ ଦେବୀଙ୍କର ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ଅଷ୍ଟପଦୀର ଅଭିନୟ, ଓ ୟାମିନୀ କୃଷ୍ଣମୂର୍ତ୍ତିଙ୍କର 'ବିରହିଣୀ ରାଧିକା' ଅଭିନୟ ରସଗ୍ରାହୀଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟରେ ଅମର ହୋଇ ରହିଛି । ପ୍ରାୟ ୩୦ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବର 'ଖଜୁରାହୋ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ'ରେ ବିରଜୁ ମହାରାଜ ଓ ସିତାରା ଦେବୀଙ୍କର କଥକ ଶୈଳୀରେ 'ରାଧାକୃଷ୍ଣ ଲୀଳା' ନୃତ୍ୟର ସ୍ମୃତି ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ।

ସଂଗୀତ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହିପରି ରସାନୁଭୂତିରେ ଅଭିଭୂତ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଅଫୁରନ୍ତ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପ୍ରଦାନରେ ସମର୍ଥ ହୋଇଛି । ପ୍ରାୟ ୪୫ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବର ତାନ୍‌ସେନ୍ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ରାତ୍ରିର ଗଭୀର ପ୍ରହରରେ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଓଁକାରନାଥ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କର ଦରବାରୀ କାନାଡାର ପରିବେଷଣ ହୃଦୟରେ ରସାନୁଭୂତିର ଏକ ଗଭୀର ରେଖାପାତ କରିଥିଲା । ସେହିପରି କଟକ ନାରୀ ସଙ୍ଘ ସଦନର ଏକ ଛୋଟ ମଞ୍ଚରେ ପରିବେଷିତ ୩୫ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ବଡ଼େ ଗୁଲାମ୍ ଅଲ୍ଲୀ ଖାଁଙ୍କର ସେଇ ଠୁମୁରୀ 'କା କରୁଁ ସଜନୀ ...'ର ମଧୁର ଝଙ୍କାର ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ହୃଦୟ ତନ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ଝଙ୍କୃତ କରୁଛି । ହଂସଧ୍ୱନୀ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଏକ ସୁମଧୁର ରାଗ । କିନ୍ତୁ ହରି ପ୍ରସାଦ ଚୌରାସିଆଙ୍କର ବଂଶୀରେ ଏହି ରାଗର ସ୍ୱର ପ୍ରୟୋଗର କୌଶଳ ଓ ବୈଚିତ୍ର୍ୟ, ଛନ୍ଦର ଠାଟୁରୀ ଓ ସ୍ୱରଯୋଜନାର ଚମତ୍କାରୀ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରସ୍ତରର ରସାନୁଭବ । ଉଷାର ପ୍ରଥମ ଲଗ୍ନରେ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଭୀମସେନ ଯୋଷୀଙ୍କର ଭୈରବୀ ଭଜନ 'ଯୋ ଭଜେ ହରିକୋ ସଦା ...' ଗୀତଟି ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଉଲ୍ଲସିତ, ରୋମାଞ୍ଚିତ, ଲୋକୋତ୍ତର ଅତିବାସ୍ତବ ସ୍ତରର ରସାନୁଭବରେ ଅଭିଭୂତ ମୂହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ସ୍ମୃତି ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅମଳୀନ ।

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ଆରତୀ ମିଶ୍ର (ବି.ଏ.), ସଂଗୀତ ଅଳଙ୍କାର (M. Mus.) ଉପାଧି ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ, ଏବଂ ଆକାଶବାଣୀ ଓ ଦୂରଦର୍ଶନର ଏକ ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ 'ଟପ୍ ଗ୍ରେଡ୍'ର ଜଣଶିଳ୍ପୀ । 'ସୁର ଭାରତୀ', 'ସଂଗୀତ ସରସ୍ୱତୀ', ୨୦୦୧ ମସିହାର 'ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଂଗୀତ ନାଟକ ଏକାଡେମୀ ସମ୍ମାନ' ଆଦି ବହୁ ସମ୍ମାନରେ ସମ୍ମାନିତା । ସେ ଭାରତ ତଥା ଭାରତ ବାହାରେ ବହୁସ୍ଥାନରେ ସଂଗୀତ ପରିବେଷଣ କରି ଆଦୃତା ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ଗ୍ରାମୋଫୋନ୍ ରେକର୍ଡ, କ୍ୟାସେଟ ଓ ସି.ଡି. ବହୁ ଜନ ହୃଦୟ ମୁଗ୍ଧ କରିଛି । ତାଙ୍କର ଅନେକ ଗବେଷଣାମୂଳକ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପତ୍ର ପତ୍ରିକାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ।

କବାଟ କୋଣରେ ମୁଁ ଦିଶୁଥିବି, ଗଳା ଖଙ୍କାରିଲେ ମୁଁ କାଶୁଥିବି

ଦେବକୀନନ୍ଦନ ଚୌଧୁରୀ, ରକଭିଲ୍, ମେରିଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡ୍

ଜନୈକ ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ଭିତରୁ ସମୟ ବାହାର କରି ବିବାହ ପାଇଁ ରାଜିହେଲେ । ପ୍ରେମ କରିବାକୁ ତ ସମୟର ଅଭାବ, ଏଣୁ ବିବାହ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପତ୍ରାଳାପରେ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ନ ଥିଲା । ବିବାହର ସପ୍ତାହକ ପରେ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ବିଚ୍ଛେଦରେ ହୃଦୟ ବିଷର୍ଣ୍ଣ - ପ୍ରାଣ ଓ ମନ ଛନଛନ ବୋଧ ହେଲା । ଦଇବର ବରାଦ - ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ'ଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡି ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ରକୁ ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ ପଡିଲା ।

ପ୍ରଥମ ମାସ ପରେ ଘରଣୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ଚିଠି ଆସିଲା --
"ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତାବଶତଃ ମୁଁ ଜୀବନଟାକୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲପାଇଛି ତ, ତେଣୁ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ବାସ୍ତବତାକୁ ସହ୍ୟ କରିପାରେନି । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନିଳ ଦୁନିଆରେ ତାଜମହଲ ଗଢିଲାବେଳେ ଯେତିକି ଆନନ୍ଦ ମିଳେ, ରୁକ୍ଷ ବାସ୍ତବତାର ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନରେ ସେତିକି କଷ୍ଟ ସହ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିଥାଏ । ତଥାପି କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି, ଏ ମାନବ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ଆଦରିନିଏ, ଯେ'କି ବାସ୍ତବତାଠାରୁ ଅନେକ ଦୂରରେ । ସବୁକିଛି ବୁଝିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବେଳେବେଳେ ମନଟା ବୁଢିଆଣି ଜାଲପରି ଅଡୁଆ ସୂତାଖିଅରେ ଗୁଡାଇ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଆଉ ତୁମେତ ଅଛ ସେଇ ଅଡୁଆ ସୂତାଖିଅ କୁ ସଜାଇଦେବା ପାଇଁ ।"

ଏମିତି ଛ'ମାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଚିଠି ଆସିଲା । ତା'ପର ଚିଠିର ଭାଷା ...
"..... ଆଜିଭାରାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ମନଟାକୁ ହାଲକା କରିବାକୁ ଯାଇ ତୁମ ପାଖକୁ ଲେଖିବସୁଛି । ଯେତେବେଳେ ମୁଁ ମୋ'ର ମନର କଥା କାହରିଆଗରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ କରିପାରିନଥାଏ, କେଜାଣି କାହିଁକି ମୋ ହାତର କଲମ ଖୁବ୍ ଚଞ୍ଚଳ ହୋଇଉଠେ, ମୋ ମନ ଗହ୍ୱରର ପ୍ରତିଟି ଫାଙ୍କରେ ଲୁଚିରହିଥିବା ଭାବନାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜୀବନ୍ୟାସ ଦେବାରେ । ....."·

ଆଉ କିଛିମାସ ପରେ.....
"..... ଆଜିଆମ ମାମୁଁ ଘରକୁ ଯାଇଥିଲି । ସେମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ବାହାଘର ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ସୀମି ଆଜି ତା' ଶାଶୁଘରକୁ ଗଲା । ମୁନୁ ଏ ବର୍ଷ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେବନାହିଁ । ତମେ କେବେ ଆସୁଛ? ଦୁନିଆ ଲୋକେ ଚାକିରି କରିଛନ୍ତି, ନା' ତୁମେ ଦେଖେଇ ହେଉଛ? ଢଙ୍ଗ ବାହାର ନକରି ଶୀଘ୍ର ଆସ । ....."

ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ସେମାନେ ପିଲାଛୁଆ ଜଞ୍ଜାଳରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଆଜିକାଲି ଚିଠିର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଏତେ ପଡେନି । ଇମେଲ୍ ଓ ଟେଲିଫୋନରେ କାମ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକ ଏବେ ଘରପାଖ ସହରରେ କାମକରନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ଶନିବାର, ରବିବାର ଦିନ ନିଜ ଘରକୁ ଆସନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ଦୁଇଦିନ ଗୃହିଣୀଙ୍କର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସମ୍ଭାଷଣ ସବୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରନ୍ତି । ଏବେର ସାହିତ୍ୟର ସ୍ତର ହେଲା ..... "... ହେଇଟି, ଟେବୁଲ୍ ଉପରେ ଖାଇବା ଅଛି । ଖାଇଲେ ଖାଅ, ନ ହେଲେ ମର । ମୁଁ ଏତେ ଜଗିପାରିବିନି । ଖାଇଲାପରେ ବାସନ ସବୁ ମାଜିଦେବ । ....."

ଆଜିକାଲି ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ସମୟ ବାହାର କରି 'ପେଟେଣ୍ଟ ମେଡିସିନ' କ୍ୟାସେଟ୍ ମୁଖସ୍ତ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଗତ ଦଶବର୍ଷର ବୈବାହିକ ଜୀବନର ରୀତି କୁଦେଖି ସେ ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ ଯେ ଆସନ୍ତା ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ କହିବାକୁ ପଡିବ .....

<u>କବାଟକୋଣରେ</u> ମୁଁ ଦିଶୁଥିବି
<u>ଗଳା ଖଙ୍କାରିଲେ</u> ମୁଁ କାଶୁଥିବି

The author Debaki Nandan Chowdhury is a software professional and a singer. He lives in Rockville, Maryland with his wife Anjana and two children Debanjan and Debanshi.

ଆମେରିକା ମାଉସୀ

ନନ୍ଦିତା ବେହେରା

ପିଲାଟି ଦିନୁ ଖଞ୍ଜା ଗହଳି ଭିତରେ ମା' ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ବଢିବା ଏକ ଭିନ୍ନପ୍ରକାରର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା । ଏଠି ଝିଅ ମୋର ପ୍ରତି କଥାରେ 'mine mine' କହି କହି ଶଂଖିବିଲେଇ ପରି ଫଁ କିନା ଚିହିଁକି ଉଠିଲା ବେଳକୁ ମୋର ପିଲାଦିନ କଥା ଭାରି ମନେ ପଡେ । ସବୁ ଗୁରୁଜନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ମାଉସୀଟି ଥିଲା ମୋର ଅତି ପ୍ରିୟ । ଗୋଟିଏ ବୋଲି ମାଉସୀ, ତା'ର ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମଠିଁ ଭାରି ଶରଧା । ପ୍ରତି ଖରାଛୁଟିରେ ମାଉସୀଘର ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଇ ସେଠି ଦୋଳ ଯାତରା ଦେଖା, ମାଉସୀ ହାତର ଘସାମୋଡା ଖିଆ ସବୁ ମୋର ଚିର ଆକାଂକ୍ଷିତ । ସିଏ ମଧ୍ୟ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଟିକେ ସମୟ ପାଏ, ଛୁଟିଆସେ ନଖରା ଛକରୁ ବସଟେ ଧରି ରସୁଲଗଡକୁ । ସିଧା ସଳଖ ଆସି ହାଜର । ମାଉସୀ ଆସିବ ଖବର ପାଇବା ମାତ୍ରେ ଘରେ ଟିକେ ଆନନ୍ଦର ଲହରୀ ଖେଳିଯାଏ । ଦିନେ କିଏ ତାକୁ ଆଣିବାକୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ସେଥିରେ ତାର ତିଳେ ମାତ୍ର ଚିନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ । ପିଲାଦିନେ ମୁଁ ତାର ଆସିବାପଥକୁ ସର୍ବଦା ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥାଏ । ତନୁପାତଳୀ ନହକାକଣି ମାଉସୀଟି ମୋର କେତେଗୁଡିଏ ବୁଜୁଳିରେ ଭାର ସଜାତି ଆମ ପାଇଁ ଆଣିଥାଏ । ସେଇ ପୁଟୁଳିଗୁଡିକୁ ଗୋଟି ଗୋଟି କରି ବସି ଖୋଲିବା ଥିଲା ମୋର ଏକ ବଡ ପଟୁଆର । କେଉଁଥିରେ ବେତକୋଳି ତ କେଉଁଥିରେ ମୁଢିମୁଆଁ, ତା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ପୋଡପିଠା ଓ କଳା ମଚମଚ ଆମ୍ବ ସଢା । ଯେତେଯେତେ ପାଟି ଟକଳିଆ ଜିନିଷ ସବୁ ଗୋଟେଇ ପୋଟେଇ ଆଣେ ସିଏ । ମୁଁ ସବୁଥିରୁ ଟିକେ ଟିକେ ଖାଏ ଓ ଟାକରା ଫୁଟାଇ ପୁଷି ବିଲେଇ ଭଳି ବହେ ତା' ଦେହରେ ଘଷି ହୋଇଯାଏ । ରାତିରେ ଶୋଇଲା ବେଳେ ମାଉସୀ କେତେ ପ୍ରକାର ତାହାଣୀ ଚିରଗୁଣୀ ଗପ କହେ । ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ରାଶିତେଲ ମାରି ଜୁଡୁଜୁଡୁ କରି ବେଣି ପାରିଦିଏ । ଖାଲିଟାରେ ଗୋଡ ହାତ ବହେ ଘଷିଦିଏ । ତାର ଏଇ ଶରଧା ବେଳେବେଳେ ମନଟାକୁ କେତେ ଦୂରକୁ ଟାଣିନିଏ । ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଲା ପରେ ଏଇ ମାଉସୀଟିର ଅଭାବ ମତେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଦୁଃଖ ଦେଉଥିଲା । ଟିକେ ବୟସ୍କା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଦେଖିଲେ ମୋର ତା' କଥା ହିଁ ମନେପଡେ । ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବୁଥାଏ ସତରେ କଣ ଆଉ ସେ ସ୍ନେହ ପାଇବି ?

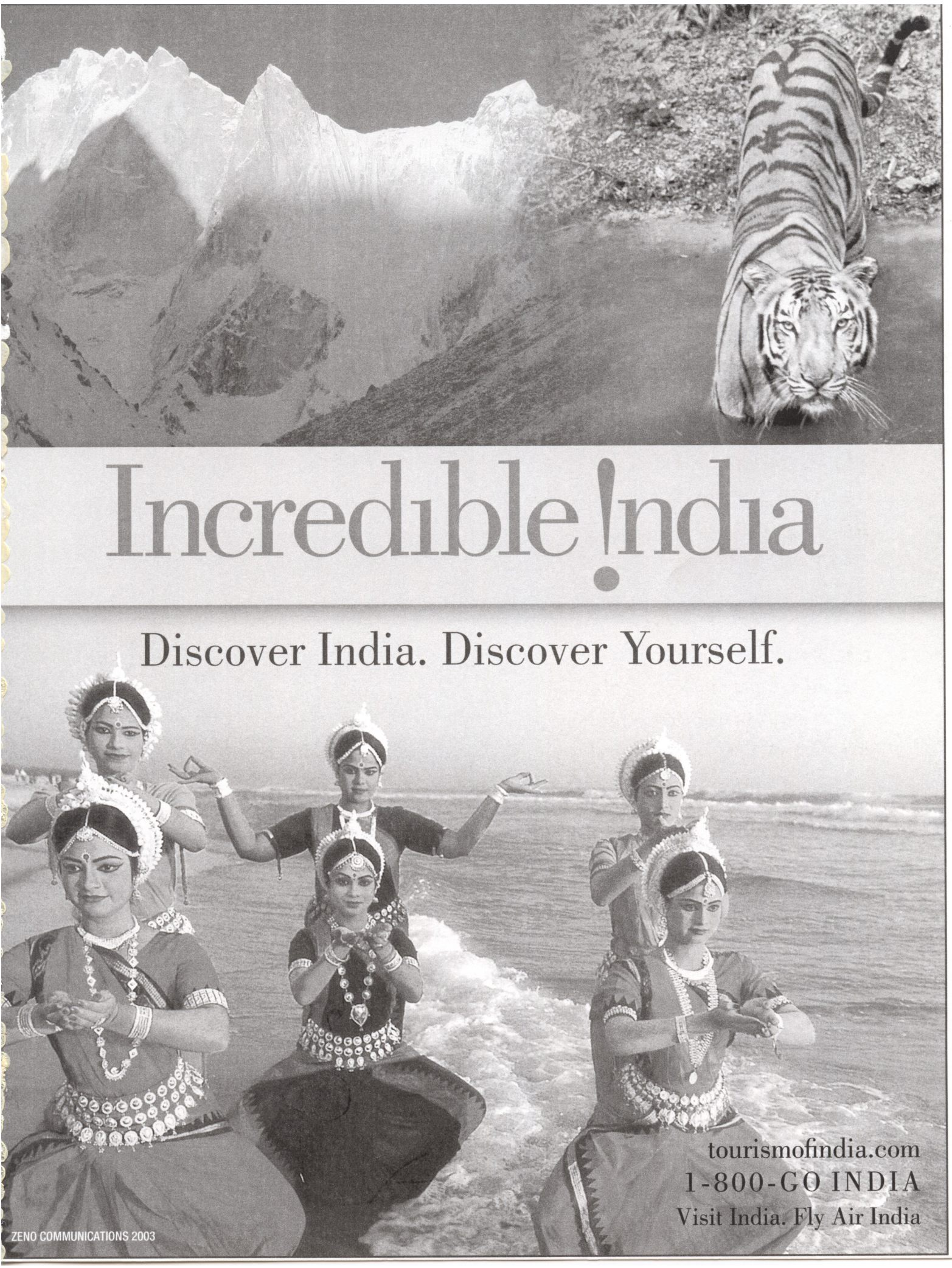
କିନ୍ତୁ କଥାରେ ଅଛି, "ଏ ମନ ଲୋଡୁଥାଏ ଯାହା କାଳେ ପ୍ରାପତ ହୁଏ ତାହା" । ହଠାତ୍ ଆକସ୍ମିକ ଭାବେ ମୋର ଏଇ ଆମେରିକା ମାଉସୀଟି ସହ ପରିଚୟ ହେଲା । ଦିନେ ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ପଠେଇ ଦେଇ କଅଁଳିଆ ଖରା ଦେଖି ବଗିଚା କାମ କରିବାକୁ ବାରିପଟକୁ ଗଲି । ନରମ ସକାଳରେ ନଜରୁଲ୍ ଗୀତ ଗୋଟେ ଗାଇବାକୁ ମନ ହେଲା । ବିଶେଷ କରି ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୀତ ମୋର ଭାରି ପ୍ରିୟ, 'ଅରୁଣା କାନ୍ତ କେଗୋ ଯୋଗୀ ଭିକାରୀ' । ଗୀତଟିର ସ୍ୱର ଓ ଭାବଲେଖାଟି ଭାରି ମନଛୁଆଁ । କବିଙ୍କ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାରେ ଦିନେ କୃଷ୍ଣ ରାଧାଙ୍କୁ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଶିବଙ୍କ ବେଶରେ ଆସି ଉଭାହେଲେ । ରାଧା ହଠାତ୍ ତେଜସ୍ୱୀ ତପସ୍ୱୀଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ପଚାରୁଛନ୍ତି "କିଏ ତୁମେ ଯୋଗୀ, ତୁମର ପ୍ରଖର ତେଜ ଶତସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଆଭାକୁ ନେଇ ବିକଶିତ; କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁମ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ଯୁଗଳରେ ଏକ ଚପଳ ହସର ଆଭାସ ଯାହାକି ମୋର ଅତିପ୍ରିୟ କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ମରଣ କରାଇ ଦେଇଛି । ତୁମେ ଯଦି ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଶିବ, ତେବେ କିଛି ଲାଭ ନାହିଁ; କାରଣ ମୁଁ ପାର୍ବତୀ ନୁହେଁ ଯିଏ କି ଶତ ତପସାଧନା ବଳରେ ମହାଯୋଗୀ ଶିବଙ୍କୁ ପତିରୂପେ ବରଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ମୁଁ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ବ୍ରଜ ବଧୂ ଶ୍ରୀରାଧା । ମୋର ପ୍ରାଣର ଆଧାର ଚପଳ କୋମଳ କିଶୋର ଶ୍ୟାମ । ମୋର କୃଷ୍ଣ ହିଁ ଦରକାର, ଶିବ ନୁହେଁ ।" ଗୀତର ଭାବମୟ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାରେ ବିଭୋର ହୋଇ ମୁଁ ଗାଇ ଚାଲିଥାଏ । କାରଣ, ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବୁଥାଏ ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ତ କାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ମୋର ସଂଗୀତ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାରେ କିଏ ବା କାହିଁକି ବାଧାଦେବ ? ହଠାତ୍ କିଏ ଜଣେ ପାଟି କରି ଉଠି ପାଚେରି ସେପଟୁ "Beautiful song, thank you for singing" କହିଲା । ଭୂତ ଦେଖିଲା ପରି ଚମକି ପଡିଲି ମୁଁ । ଦେଖିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଆମ ପାଚେରିକୁ ଲାଗିଥିବା grapefruit ଗଛଟି ଉପରେ ଚଢି ପଛ ଘରୁ ବୁଢାଟିଏ ହସି ହସି ସ୍ୱାଗତ ଜଣାଉଛି । ଛନକା ପଶିଲା ମନରେ । ପିଲାଦିନେ ପଢିଥିବା ବିକ୍ରମ ଓ ବେତାଳ କଥା ମନେ ପଡିଲା । କେଉଁଠାରୁ ପିଶାଚ କିଏ ଖସିଲା କି ଭାବୁଛି । ମୋର ଭୟାତୁର ଅବସ୍ଥା ଦେଖି ବୃଦ୍ଧ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ହସିହସି

ନିଜର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଲେ । ପଡିଶା ଘର ବିଲ୍‌ର ବାପା, କିଛି ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ବୁଲି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ଶେଷରେ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଚା' ଖାଇବାକୁ ଡାକି ପରିଚୟ କରାଇଦେଲେ । ବୃଦ୍ଧାଟି ବେଶ୍ ମିଶୁକ । ମୁଁ ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନା ଗାଁ ନ ପଚାରି ମନେ ମନେ ବିଲ୍‌ବୋଉ ମାଉସୀ ନାଁ ଦେଇଦେଲି ।

ପ୍ରତି ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ମାଉସୀ ଓ ମୁଁ **walking**ରେ ଯାଉଯାଉ କେତେ କଥା ପଡେ । ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ପିଲାଦିନ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ହଠାତ୍ ଯଦି ତାଙ୍କର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହେଇଯିବ କେଉଁ ରଙ୍ଗର ଡ୍ରେସ୍ ପିନ୍ଧି ସିଏ କବର ସ୍ଥାନକୁ ଯିବେ ସବୁ ପାଞ୍ଜଳ ଭାବେ ଗପି ବସନ୍ତି । ଏମିତି ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖ ଭିତରେ ଦୁହେଁ ବେଶ୍ ନିକଟତର ହୋଇଗଲୁ । ସବୁଦିନେ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପକ୍ଷେ ଥରେ ବିଲ୍ ବୋଉ ମାଉସୀ ସହ କଥା ନହେଲେ ମୋ ପୁଅ ପଚାରେ, "ଆଜି ତୋ ମାଉସୀ କୁଆଡେ ଗଲାକି ?" ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବେ ଯା'ହେଉ ଭାରତୀୟ ନହେଲେ ବି ଆମେରିକା ମାଉସୀଟି ଭଗବାନ୍ ଜୁଟେଇଦେଲେ । ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ସକାଳୁ ଉଠିଲା ବେଳକୁ ବିଲ୍‌ଘର ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଲୋକ ଗହଳି । ବୁଝୁ ବୁଝୁ ବିଲ୍‌ର ବାପା **serious** ହୋଇ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରେ । ପରେ ପରେ ବୃଦ୍ଧଙ୍କର **death** ଖବର ଆସିଲା । କେମିତି ମାଉସୀଙ୍କୁ ମୁହଁ ଦେଖାଇବି ବୁଝିପାରୁ ନଥାଏ । ତଥାପି ସାହାସ କରି ଗଲି । ବିଚାରି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମଝିରେ କଳା ଚଷମାଟି ପିନ୍ଧି ବସିଥାଏ । ସ୍ୱାମୀର ଗୁଣ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରୁ କରୁ ଜଣାଗଲା ମାଉସୀଟି ଆମର ଭାରି ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ଥିଲା । ମଉସା ବଞ୍ଚିଥିଲା ବେଳେ ଅତି ଯତ୍ନ ନେଉଥିଲେ । ଏମିତିକି ଦିନେ ମାଉସୀଟି **steak** ମଧ୍ୟ କାଟି ନାହିଁ । ଖାଇବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସ୍ୱାମୀ କାଟିଦେଲେ ମାଉସୀ ଆମର ଖାଇବା ଟେବୁଲ୍‌କୁ ଯିବେ । ଘରକୁ ଫେରି ଭାବିଲି, ଆଉ ଏ ମାଉସୀ କଣ ସତେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ବିନା ବଞ୍ଚିପାରିବେ ? ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଝୁରିଝୁରି ବିଚାରି ଖୁବ୍ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଚାଲିଯିବେ । ଏ ବୟସରେ ତାଙ୍କ ମନ କଥା କିଏ ବୁଝିବ ?

ଏମିତି କିଛିଦିନ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ଭିତରେ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ମୋ ପୁଅ ଉତି କରି ଡାକ ଛାଡିଲା, "ମାମା ଦେଖ ! ବିଲ୍ ବୋଉ ମାଉସୀ କୁଆଡେ ବାହାରିଲା ।" ଦେଖିଲା ବେଳକୁ ମାଉସୀ ମୋର ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଟୋପି ପିନ୍ଧି ସେଥିରେ ଗୋଟେ ଗୋଲାପ କଢି ଖୋସି **Dial-1 ride** ବସରେ ବସି ଯାଉଛି । ମତେ ଦେଖି ହାତ ହଲେଇଲା । ମୁଁ କାବା ହୋଇ ଚାହିଁଥାଏ । ଦେଖିଲା ବେଳକୁ ସବୁଦିନେ ସକାଳେ ସେଇ ଏକା ଦୃଶ୍ୟ । କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସଜବାଜ ହୋଇ ମାଉସୀ ହାତ ହଲେଇ ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ମୁଁ ପୁଅଟିକୁ କାଖକରି ଖାଲି ଜଳକା ହୋଇ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥାଏ । ଦିନେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ହଠାତ୍ ଦେଖା ହେଲା । ମାଉସୀ ବଡ **fresh** ଦିଶୁଥାଏ । କଥା କଣ ହେଲା ବୁଝୁ ବୁଝୁ ସବୁଦିନେ ସକାଳୁ ମାଉସୀ ଯାଆନ୍ତି **Senior Citizen Home** । ସେଠି ଅନେକ ଗୁଡିଏ ସମବୟସୀ ବୁଢା ବୁଢୀ ଜୁଟିଛନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଶି ଗୀତାର ବଜାନ୍ତି, ବିଭିନ୍ନ **exercise** କରି **figure** ସଜାଡନ୍ତି । ହସଖୁସିରେ ଦିନଟା ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ମାଗଣା **soup** ମିଳେ । **soup** ଖାଇ ଗପସପ କରି ମାଉସୀ ଆମର ଭାରି ଖୁସି । ଖାଲି ତା'ର କେତେଗୁଡିଏ ନୁଆ ବାନ୍ଧବୀଙ୍କ କଥା ଗପିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲା । ମୁଁ ପଚାରିଲି, "ମଉସାମାନେ ସେଠି କଣ କରନ୍ତି ?" ମାଉସୀ ମୁଁହଟାକୁ ମୋଡି ଦେଇ କହିଲା, "**loosers** ! କିଛି କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । କଫି କପେ ଧରି ନାକ ଆଗରେ ଚଷମାଟା ଲଟକେଇ ଦେଇ ଖାଲି ଖବର କାଗଜ ଗଦା ଭିତରେ ମୁଁହଟି ରଖି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ସାରା ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶଟାଯାକର ବୋଝ ତାଙ୍କ କାନ୍ଧରେ ନଦା ହୋଇଛି । ଆଉ ରାଜନୀତି କଥା ପଡିଲେ ଟେବୁଲ୍ ବାଡେଇ ତୁମ୍ବିତୁମ୍ବାନ୍ କରନ୍ତି ।" ମାଉସୀ କଥାରୁ ସବୁ ବୁଝିପାରିଲି । ଟିକିଏ ରହି ପଚାରିଲି, "ତୁମ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ କଥା ତୁମର ମନେ ପଡେ ?" ମାଉସୀ କହିଲେ, "ବୁଢାଟି ଥିଲେ ତାକୁ ଟିକେ ନେଇ **Senior Citizen Home**ଟା ବୁଲେଇ ଆଣିଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଆହା ! କିଛି ଦେଖିପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ ।" ମାଉସୀର ଗପ ଶୁଣି ପୁଅ ମୋର ଜିଦି ଧରିଲା, "ଚାଲନା ମାମା ! ଆମେ ଟିକେ **Dial-1 ride** ନେଇ **Senior Citizen Home**ଟି ବୁଲିଆସିବା ।" ମୁଁ କହିଲି, "ହଁ ରେ ବାବୁ; ଉପର ବରଡା ଖସୁଛି, ତଳ ବରଡା ହସୁଛି, ମଝି ବରଡା ଥାଇ ବୋଲୁଛି - ମୋ ଦିନ କାଳ ଆସୁଛି ।"

Nandita Behera is an accomplished Odissi dancer and stays in California.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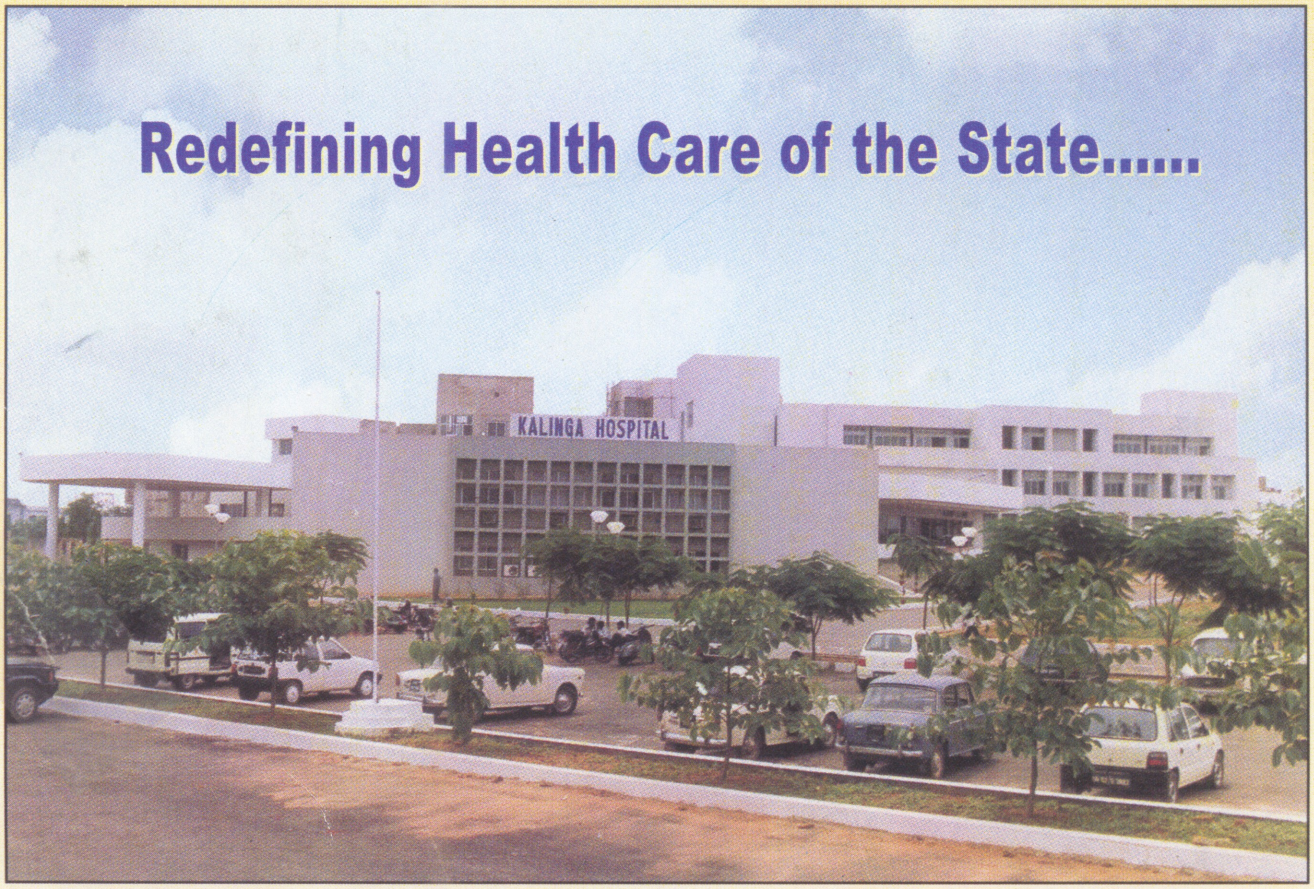

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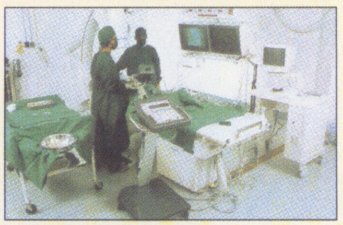

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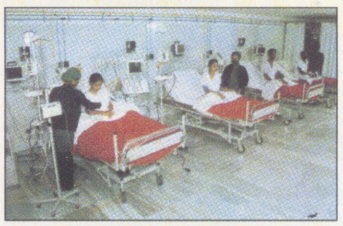

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