

The Journal of  
*The Orissa Society of the Americas*  
2012 Souvenir Issue



ଏକ ମନ ଏକ ପ୍ରାଣ, ଏକ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଏକ ଚିହ୍ନ - Bringing Odias together

The 43rd Annual Convention  
July 5-7, 2012  
Seattle, Washington

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## President's Greeting



Dear OSA Family,

With great pleasure I welcome you all to the beautiful city of Seattle for the 43<sup>rd</sup> OSA convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA). My heartiest congratulations to each of the OSA members of the Pacific Northwest chapter and the 2012 Convention Organizing Committee for all their hard work, commitment and dedication in organizing what is sure to be a weekend filled with this momentous event packed with exciting and valuable programs, celebrations, and fellow feeling.

The theme of this year's convention is Eka Mana Eka Prana, Eka Pranta Eka Chinha - Bringing Odias Together. Clearly we are on the same wavelength because this is the guiding principle of OSA, and we are not only strengthening our culture and identity in the Americas but we have also been connecting with people back home. Let me share with you an example of this in just the last year: When a massive flood hit Odisha in 2011, OSA was able to organize fundraising throughout the country and, with the participation of the entire community, \$15K was raised for Odisha flood relief activities. (This included the efforts of our youth who organized various cultural programs to raise money for the people in Odisha; it is a clear indication how well connected our children feel with people back home despite being raised 12,000 miles away.)

Another example of bringing Odias together is the active leadership of OSA-Odisha Development Committee this last year in strategizing how to revitalize various sectors of higher education in Odisha. OSA organized a workshop on Higher Education opportunities for students in Odisha. Held at Utkal University in Vani Vihar, it was attended by a large number of students, the Vice Chancellor and other dignitaries from the University and members of faculties representing various disciplines. A video produced on the proceeding of this workshop is available at [www.orisasociety.org](http://www.orisasociety.org).) We are planning a second workshop at this OSA convention, on July 5<sup>th</sup>, followed by a workshop in the western region of Odisha to be held in December 2012. Our goal is to provide more educational opportunities for our Odia youth from different regions of Odisha. Education is the engine for the overall growth of the individual and society and we want to ensure that our next generation is well prepared to lead our state in various fields.

We came to the OSA office with a vision of promoting team spirit, transparency and building trust among our fellow Odias. During our tenure, we have opened a direct line of communication between the OSA executives and the governing body through our monthly meetings and our use of OSAnet for sharing our agenda and minutes. As a result, OSAnet has become a valuable medium of communication where members are encouraged to voice their ideas. This has also helped us reach out to the members of our society and has fostered team spirit within our community. It has been gratifying to see the active participation of so many of our fellow Odias – both first and second generation - coming forward to volunteer for the organization. Since OSA is a purely voluntary organization, we cherish the volunteer spirit among our members and hope that this spirit will continue and many more of our fellow Odias will come forward to take our society to greater heights.

Another aspect of our vision has been to transcend various barriers and build bridges across generations, channeling our services for passing our beautiful Odia culture and heritage to our next generation. One way to achieve this goal has been to increase awareness of OSA among the second generation Odias and enthruse them to become members of our organization. We have been quite successful in reaching out to our youth and several of them have come forward to become life members of our society. We still have a long way to go, and my sincere appeal to you all is that you ask your successful sons, daughters, son –in-laws and daughter-in-laws to join OSA and make it an even more vibrant organization. My experience has been that if we want to succeed in this society, we have to build bridges and coalitions with like-minded people and make our own culture and contributions visible to the larger society.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that our society has done well. We have achieved many things in the past 43 years since the inception of OSA. But we still have a long way to go. A recent tragedy in Boston is a reminder that we are vulnerable and need a strong community for mutual support. We were mired in an unfortunate death in Boston - Mr. K. Seshadri Rao, a bright and promising 24-year-old young man from Odisha was shot near his apartment in Boston, USA. He was studying Management at Boston University. This tragedy taught me a lesson that despite our common bond and commitment to one another, there are still some people who feel isolated in this highly individualistic society. We still do not know what triggered the unfortunate death of Mr. K. Seshadri Rao but after hearing about it, we OSA officials reached out to Mr. Rao's parents in Odisha and the Indian consulate in New York and did whatever we could to console the bereaved family and offer our help to the Indian

consulate. After this tragic incident, one step we have taken is to develop a guideline on our website, Orissa society.org, to help the new arrivals from Odisha to become familiar with the culture of this foreign land. We are also planning to advertise the role of OSA along with these rules and regulations in the local print and television media in Odisha. My sincere appeal to our local chapters dispersed in various parts of the country is to reach out to the young Odias who have come to various colleges and Universities for higher education as well as young professionals who have come to seek their future here to get connected with the Odia community so that we avoid such tragedies. Also in case such tragedies happen and at a time of crisis as the one I just cited above, at least we will be in a position to provide comfort and support to the families and friends left behind. This effort will truly bring Odias together.

It has been an honor to serve you all. Thank you all for your continued support of OSA, and for your trust in us this last year.

With regards,  
Annapurna Pandey

### Convener's Greeting



Welcome to the 43rd Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of Americas (OSA)!

On behalf of the Convention-organizing committee and all the Odias of the Pacific Northwest, I welcome you to this year's convention in Seattle, Washington. We are excited to meet you all and very much appreciate your support and participation. We, the Convention committee have made and will continue to make every effort for your experience to stay memorable and pleasurable. During your time here, if you need any help or anything that can make your stay more comfortable, please do not hesitate to contact us or any member of our organizing committee.

The Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) is an organization whose stated goals are to promote the beautiful culture of the Indian state of Orissa in the United States and Canada and to facilitate the connection of culture, heritage, and perspective between Orissa and North America.

Today OSA has flourished into an organization with over 1000 individual and family members. This is due to all those who have stepped forward to support the various activities of OSA and implemented many innovative ideas that have benefited everyone. The organization has now spread into thirteen regional chapters, which operate as a social umbrella for different regions in the US and Canada. Our Pacific Northwest Chapter is the newest, joining the family in July 2011 and is very glad to exhibit its debut convention this year.

As the vision of OSA is to promote and propagate Odia culture in the Americas by bringing together all the people with the love for our Eastern Indian state, this year's theme is "Bringing Odias Together". In Odia, 'Eka Mana, Eka PrAna. Eka PrAnta, Eka Chinha.' Young, new, and old generations, and from all over the many villages, we call the World, join together and come along for this festivity!

This year's edition is showcasing a variety of activities that the Odia community has nurtured within itself – drama, singing, folk and modern dances, and the festival's crowning glory, traditional Odissi dance.

Most importantly, our volunteers are the foundation of this convention and truly the backbone of our community. They are the unsung heroes who are willing to share their time, talents, and energy to help make this event a success. It's important to let each of them know just how much they are appreciated.

On behalf of all the Pacific Northwest Odia families, I would like to personally thank each and every volunteer, participant, attendee and sponsor for their contribution to OSA's 43rd Convention. This event could not have been possible without the help of your time, money and participation.

All in all, we hope to make the OSA Convention 2012 a strengthened platform for building unity among Odias in North America and continue to carry forward the torch of our Odia heritage and culture our OSA organization lit 43 years ago, for our future generations.

God Bless You all!

With best regards,  
Amulya Das  
Convener of the 43rd OSA Convention

## Co-Conveners' Greetings



OSA's 43rd annual convention is taking place in Seattle, in the Pacific NW region of OSA. It is not only a dream come true but an ongoing dream to see all families living in this region having roots in Orissa (Odisha) India, with one goal - "togetherness". In our combined effort to bring and build a strong community in this region, we hope to celebrate and share the treasure of our strong & unique cultural heritage with our next generations along with various sister communities and cultures in North America.

For the past year and half, I have been proud to provide a necessary leadership role in bridging the gaps and building the foundation of this community at large. It is like building a startup company from the ground up, navigating through all the ups and downs and seeing it to go public with the success of the OSA2012 event on July 5-7. It is a celebration of a strong beginning step towards a giant progressive community success.

As Henry Ford once said - "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

I hope you all enjoy this magnificent event, network with friends & families, enjoy authentic delicacies and explore the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

Thank you and best wishes!

Pradeep Sahoo

Co-Convener, OSA 2012



It is indeed a proud moment for Seattle to host the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention of The Orissa Society of Americas and even a higher privilege for me to be a part of it. This is a great opportunity for the Odia diaspora to integrate with the local social fabric and showcase the rich culture and tradition of Odisha. An event of this scale requires a lot of hard work and sacrifice and kudos to the local and national volunteers for putting in the effort. This event has also helped the local Odia diaspora to unite and show the strength. It is on to us to ensure the next generations are exposed to our culture and I hope this convention is their gateway to the ancient culture of Odisha. I hope the convention attendees have a wonderful time and make this event a memorable one. Some profound words that has inspired me:

*"Community cannot for long feed on itself; it can only flourish with the coming of others from beyond, their unknown and undiscovered brothers. "*

Rakesh Patnaik

Co-Convener, OSA 2012

## Chapter President's Greeting



Namaskar! On behalf of the Pacific Northwest Odisha Society (PNW), it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 43rd Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA). This convention promotes cultural diversity and understanding by integrating American and Odia aspirations and values, and provides a platform for friendship and cultural enrichment.

This year's convention venue, Seattle, known as the Emerald City, is special not only because of its mesmerizing beauty typical of the Pacific Northwest but also for its special place as the great American host city to "bridge" Canada and the USA -- the two primary countries of the North American Odia Diaspora.

Although PNW is the youngest chapter of OSA, established only a year ago, we are honored to host such a momentous event of the global Odia community. True we have had our growing pains, and true also that in our great pacific northwest, we have had only ~20 families as OSA members as late as June, 2011. However, the community commitment and collaboration, especially from the Portland and Seattle areas, has been phenomenal.



As of this writing, we have grown this 'small family' to ~50 OSA member-families -- a 150% growth in a matter of months in a region not known to have traditional concentration of Odias.

I take the opportunity to express heartfelt thanks to all the sponsors, the donors, and the guests from far and near --for their invaluable support and role in the success of this convention. I am grateful to Mr. Amulya Das, Mr. Rakesh Patnaik and Mr. Pradeep Sahoo for their roles as convener/co-convener, and for their enthusiasm and dedication. Support of the OSA National and community leaders around the two nations has been amazing. It has also been a pleasure working with the teams of Dr. Sam Pitroda, Philanthropist Melinda Gates, Governor Gregoire, and other luminaries who could not come but sent their welcome messages. Last but not least, my hats off to all the volunteers without whose labor of love this convention would not have been possible.

This year we made a conscious attempt to make the convention finances significantly more sustainable and transparent by careful planning, cost control and generous, indefatigable volunteerism. We reduced the convention budget by 45% from the last few years. Our volunteers took a broad-based, participative approach: we solicited small individual donations in large numbers -- these not only matter but also constitute an important element of community participation, sustenance and common good. We believe this also helps to build a more participative democratic organization. We have had numerous resource challenges but our friends and families gave their all, and hope you find the 3-day celebration most rewarding.

This year we have arranged travel, cruise and air discounts to help our guests travelling from long distances. We have organized unique pre-convention symposia, one focusing on high-education exchange and collaboration between Odisha and the USA, while the second on Buddhist Heritage and Knowledge Institutions of Odisha. The main program of the convention promises a veritable feast of quality events, edifying seminars and speeches, spellbinding stage performances, sumptuous food, great networking opportunities, and shared joy. We will have our website [osa2012.org](http://osa2012.org) and this magazine to help you cherish your memories.

Once again, meet your friends old and new at the convention, take in the sights, sounds, smells around you and above all, enjoy yourselves and do well.

Best Wishes,



Priyadarsan Patra  
President, Pacific Northwest Odia Society

### VP's Greeting



Namaskar! It's an immense pleasure to welcome you to the 43rd OSA Convention in Seattle. The theme of this year's convention is Eka Mana Eka Prana, Eka Pranta Eka Chinha - Bringing Odias Together, itself symbolizes the mission of this forty three year old organization, trying to keep us connected in every aspect in this Diaspora. This beautiful organization gives us the sense of belonging while we are trying to adapt into our new environment. We must take responsibility to make our society stronger by implementing a strong sense of cultural awareness among our future generation and let them know their roots and learn how to be proud of it. Our Cultural committee and the "Let's Learn Odia" committee are working on promoting and propagating our beautiful culture and heritage in this land of opportunity. To keep our language alive, many of our members have shown a great deal of interest to help, coordinate, and successfully open Odia Learning Centers in their areas. The Let's Learn Odia Committee is readily available to support these new establishments by providing curriculum to make this process easier. The Current executive team is working diligently to make OSA visible to all the Odias across the globe. I am privileged to be part of this team who has created the wonderful vision of taking OSA one step closer to all the members.

OSA takes pride in recognizing and honoring many members for their contributions as well as their achievements in different areas of the OSA community. But most of the times, for various reasons, these candidates stay un-acknowledged. We believe that it is only possible to realize the existence of these leaders and award their efforts if and only if we know about them. So my humble request to all of you for the future is to please make the extra effort to nominate the extraordinary individuals for the different categories of leadership. It is an honor for OSA to present the 2012 OSA Life Achievement Award to an eminent Indian classical singer of

Gwalior Gharana from Odisha, Vidushi Sunanda Patnaik, considered one of the great dames of Hindustani classical music and Sangit Samrat Prafulla Kar, who has regaled audience, fans in Odisha and abroad with his distinctive singing, composition and lyrics for more than four decades.

This year's 'Meghna Memorial Award' for creative writing award recipients are Ayusha Acharya, San Jose CA, "When May the Lotus Flower Bloom" (Junior category, Age 7-12) and Ishanee Chanda, Plano TX, "Sisterhood" (Senior category, Age 13-18). After the onsite competition, awards such as Subrina Biswal Award for performance, Champu Chhanda, Odissi Award, Samik Singh Kalinga Youth Entrepreneurship award, winners will be declared during the convention. There will be many other OSA Service Awards that will be presented at the convention.

Congratulations and best wishes to the 2012 Convention Organizers for all their enthusiasm and hard work. I'll always cherish the memories of this great journey of organizing the 2012 convention. Looking forward to meeting you all in the beautiful city of Seattle!

Kuku Das

Co Convener, OSA Convention 2012 & Vice President, OSA

### Indian Ambassador's Greeting



भारत का राजदूत  
वाशिंगटन, डी.सी.

AMBASSADOR OF INDIA  
2107 MASSACHUSETTS AVE, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

### MESSAGE

**May 30, 2012**

I am happy to learn that the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Orissa Society of Americas (OAS) is organizing its 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention in Seattle on July 6, 2012.

The Orissa Society of Americas is one of the oldest associations of people from Orissa and since its establishment in 1969, the Society has been actively involved in connecting the community with its rich cultural heritage and fostering community service through its various social, cultural and educational activities. I commend all the constituents of the OAS for their efforts over the last four decades in promoting better understanding and community spirit amongst the people of Orissa origin living in the U.S.

I convey my best wishes to all the members of OAS and their families on the occasion of their 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention and wish them every success in all their future endeavours.

(Nirupama Rao)  
Ambassador of India to the United States

## Washington Governor's Greeting

---

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE  
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 ♦ Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 ♦ (360) 753-6780 ♦ TTY/TDD (360) 753-6466

### *Greetings from the Governor*

*July 5, 2012*

I am pleased to extend warm greetings to all of those attending the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA). For those of you visiting us, it is a special privilege to welcome you to the beautiful Evergreen State.

This forum is a wonderful opportunity to preserve and share the Oriya culture and heritage. Events like this serve as important reminders that diversity is one of our nation's greatest strengths. I count it a privilege to have vibrant ethnic communities flourishing in Washington and across our country, and I applaud OSA and each of you for your commitment to celebrating and promoting greater understanding of your culture.

I am truly delighted that your gathering is being held in Washington, and I hope your schedule will permit you to explore some of the exciting sights and attractions that make Seattle and the surrounding Puget Sound region a destination to remember.

Thank you all for coming, and please accept my best wishes for a memorable event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine O. Gregoire". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christine" and last name "Gregoire" clearly visible.

Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

## Odisha Governor's Greeting



*Murlidhar C. Bhandare*

GOVERNOR, ODISHA

June 2, 2012

### MESSAGE

I am glad to know that The Orissa Society of the Americas is organizing its 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention on July 5-7, 2012. A journal is being brought out on the occasion.

I fondly remember my time spent with the members of OSA during my visit to USA. The love and affection shown by the members of OSA will never be forgotten.

It is heartening that OSA is promoting and propagating Odia culture there. Initiatives should be taken for translation of the best of Odia literature in English magazines of USA.

I wish the endeavour great success.

*Murlidhar Bhandare*

(Murlidhar C. Bhandare)

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## Bellevue Mayor's Greeting



Office of the Mayor • Phone (425) 452-7810 • Fax (425) 452-7919  
Post Office Box 90012 • Bellevue, Washington • 98009 9012

July 2012

Greetings!

I would like to extend a special welcome on behalf of the City of Bellevue.

Most importantly, welcome to members of the Orissa Society who honor us by visiting Bellevue, and welcome to residents and leaders from across the State who may have come today to celebrate the history, culture, and community of Orissa and its people.

It is natural that we welcome you. Bellevue is an internationally diverse city, with 1 of 3 residents foreign born and more than 40% non-white or foreign born. The languages spoken in our community and schools total 84. Our Indian population is the largest in the state, and it has grown more than 1,000% in the last 20 years.

Orissa is a place with a rich and deep history. It also has many economic advantages, including its geographical presence, unexplored natural resources, low cost of living, and vast growth opportunities. Its natural beauty, such as its coastal line of nearly 500 kilometers, is well known.

We hope our own government efforts to build economic and cultural ties with Orissa will result in the growth of maritime activities and tourism along the Orissa Coast and provide some benefit to people living back here in Bellevue, Washington.

Personally, I hope to visit Orissa someday and its capital city Bhubaneswar.

Thank you for visiting Bellevue, for your contributions to the community and leadership, and for helping to make the Bellevue area a very special place to live and do business.

I hope you enjoy yourself very much during your time here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Conrad Lee".

Conrad Lee  
Mayor

City of Bellevue offices are located at 450 110th Avenue N.E.

## 2012 Meghna Memorial Award

Youth submissions to the Journal were considered for the annual Meghna Memorial Award. Since 2007, the Meghna Memorial Trust has instituted an annual award for creative writing for youth in memory of Meghna Mahapatra (1999-2005). This award celebrates and recognizes achievement among our young writers.

### Winners in the Senior category (ages 13-18 years):

- **1st place:** Ishanee Chanda for the story “Sisterhood,” selected for being “brilliantly written with attention to detail” and “nicely brings out the struggle a younger sibling faces when the older one leaves home for college.” It is “well-written” and addresses the subject of “contemporary Indian diaspora.”
- **First runner-up:** Shivani Misra for the article “Work with the TOS,” selected for being a “great, uplifting article wherein the author has taken up social work and has overcome the obstacles and helped those in need.” The article is “inspiring, motivated, well written and fact based.”
- **Second runner-up:** Shweta Sahu for the “Poetry Compilation,” selected for being “great poems, very insightful.” The author uses “engaging, vivid words and imagery to describe a variety of topics.”

### Winners in the Junior category (ages 7-12 years):

- **1<sup>st</sup> place:** Ayusha Acharya for the poem “When May the Lotus Flower Bloom,” selected for “original thought” and “choice of theme—the issues of the day brought out in this poem is a delight to read.”
- **First runner-up:** Suvam Nayak for the article “My Week with Gandhi,” selected for being “nicely written with great originality.” The article is “articulate”, “displays self-reflection”, and “the true meaning of Mahatma or the 'Great soul' and his influence of 'truth' on this young author is clearly evident in this article.”
- **Second runner-up (tie):** Sahara Rout for the story “My Exotic Trip to Libya,” selected for “use of imagination, word choice, and original thought.” The story is told with “engaging description.”
- **Second runner-up (tie):** Sanjana Senapati for the story “Kenduguda,” selected for “creating vivid imagery through engaging word choice.” The author is able to create a “picture with words.”

### Selection Committee:

Mr. Bibek Das

Mr. Satya Pattanaik

Mrs. Anna Mishra

### Administrator, Meghna Memorial Award Trust:

Mr. Santosh Kar

## The 43rd Annual Convention Committees

Some of the many contributors to the 2012 Convention – we apologize for any errors or omissions.

Convener: Amulya Das

Co-Conveners: Rakesh Patnaik, Pradeep Sahoo

### Budget and Finance

Pradeep Sahoo  
Amulya Das  
Satyakam

### Fund Raising

Amulya Das  
Priyadarsan Patra  
Sandip Dasverma  
Sishu Shankar  
Annapurna Pandey  
Sushanta Satpathy  
Kuku Das  
Pradeep Sahoo  
Rakesh Patnaik  
Kirti Mohapatra

### Registration and Marketing

Pradeep Sahoo  
Priyadarsan Patra  
Satyakam  
Amulya Das  
Renuka Mishra  
Sandip K. Dasverma  
Samita Satpathy  
Amrita Mishra  
Ratna Ray

### Cultural

Mitali Monalisa  
Anu Patra  
Seema Choudry  
Rakesh Patnaik  
Manoranjan Mishra  
Bikram Mohanty  
Surya Senapathi  
Ratna Roy  
Sangeeta Katha  
Manas Mohanty  
Chinmaya Panda  
Sachala Das  
Sasmita Sahoo  
Samita Satpathy  
Soumya Nanda

Prangya Nanda  
Manoranjan Acharya  
Sriradha Mohanty  
Manoj Rath

### Event /Program Management

Amulya Das  
Pradeep Sahoo  
Rakesh Patnaik  
DK Ray  
Ansuman Kar  
Rashmi

### Logistics

DK Ray  
Nihar Dash  
Rashmi Patnaik  
Pradeep Sahoo  
Rakesh Patnaik  
Bikram Mohanty  
Sai Patra

### Food & Hospitality

DK Ray  
Nihar Dash  
Monalisa Rath  
Sachala Das  
Jyoti Rout  
Anshuman Kar

### Guest Selection & OSA Awards

Priyadarsan Patra  
Amulya Das  
Annapurna Pandey  
Sandip K. Dasverma  
Kuku Das

### Seminars, breakout sessions

Pranabesh Dash  
Sandip Dasverma  
Annapurna Pandey  
Amar Pani

Sujata Patnaik  
Gagan Panigrahi  
Bigyani Das  
Chita Baral  
Abani Patra  
Gopal Mohapatra  
Sanat Patnaik  
Sushant Routroy  
Sukant Mohapatra  
Josna Mishra  
Mamata Mishra  
Nirmala Dash  
Anu Patra  
Ranjan Dash  
Barnali Dasverma  
Sibani Das  
Atreya Dash

### Symposium

Pranabesh Dash

### Stage Preparation,

#### Light and Audio

Rakesh Patnaik  
Bikram Mohanty  
Chinmay Panda  
Surya Senapathi  
Debu Panda

### Venue & Interior Decoration

Rashmi Patnaik  
Samita Satpathy  
Deepa Nanda  
Ratna M.  
Trupti Pradhan  
Daisy Ray

### Script-writing/Emcees

Debu Panda  
Sibani Das  
Manoranjan Mishra  
Manoj Rath  
Mitali Das  
Mamta Mishra

### Photography, Video, Media, Communication

Manoj Rath  
Sangram Mohapatra

### Web and Graphics

Priyadarsan Patra  
Manoranjan Acharya  
Rakesh Patnaik  
Amrita Satpathy

### Youth/ Sports

Sibani Das  
Prachi Mishra  
Suchi Pahi  
Adarsh Patra  
Mudra Choudury  
Kelly Lampear-Dash  
Sujata Sullivan  
Sahara Rout

### Souvenir & Directory

Swaroop Mishra  
Anna Mishra  
Debu Panda  
Manoranjan Mishra  
Swapnalata Mishra

### Extended team

Annapurna Pandey  
Tapan Padhi  
Gagan Panigrahi  
Leena Mishra  
Sushant Satpathy  
Bigyani Das  
Sukant Mohapatra  
Lalatendu Mohanty  
Suchitra Patnaik  
Gayatri Joshi  
Kuku Das  
Prasanna Pati

## 2012 OSA Journal: Credits

Cover Art (Front Cover): Alisa Das, Age 13

OSA2012 logo (Back Cover): Rakesh Patnaik, Priyadarsan Patra, Manoranjan Acharya, Amrita Satpathy

## 2012 OSA Convention: Sponsors and Donors

The below list reflects known sponsors and donors as of June 14, 2012. We regret any omissions, and warmly thank all the supporters of the 2012 Convention.

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- Pranabesh Dash
- Prasanna Pati
- Prasanta K. Misra
- Pratap Mishra
- Rajesh Dash
- Ravijeet Das
- Sarat Misro
- Satya Mahanti
- Sibani Das
- Sujay Singh
- Sumit Mohanty
- Surya Pattanaik



## **THE ORISSA FOUNDATION**

### Grants and Sponsorships

1. **Sahaya**—institution for mentally handicapped in Cuttack
2. **Institute of Orissan Culture**
3. **SCB Medical College Library**—lifetime grant
4. **Basundhara**—7 year support ended 2002
5. **Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack**—computer center (teaching 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grades) and library renovation
6. **Orissa Dance Academy** (Guru Gangadhar Pradhan) **and Konarak Dance Festival**—to promote and preserve Orissa dance styles (1985-2006)
7. **Kala Vikash Kendra, Cuttack**
8. **BKMM Eye Hospital, Dhenkanal**—prevention and cure of blindness: Dec. 2006 to present 14,000 cataracts operated, giving back the vision
9. **Orissa Development Seminars in OSA Conventions** (for the last ten years)
10. **Prof. Jatindra Mohanty** (5 grants for review publications in Oriya literature)
11. **JOGA**, Washington, DC (for training of secondary school teachers in Dhenkanal and Angul districts)
12. **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Odissi Dance Festivals (Washington, DC)**—third Odissi Festival (International) in Bhubaneswar, Orissa 2011
13. **Aamara Biswas**, Orissa, Mrs. Jayashree (Ranu) Mahanti, [www.aamarabiswas.org](http://www.aamarabiswas.org) —major grants
14. **Prachi Youth Organization, Kakatpuri, Orissa**—in areas of health and education in rural villages.



Information: [dmisra@knology.net](mailto:dmisra@knology.net) / 256-883-5499



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As a proud member of the dynamic Odia community, we are pleased to be a partner of the **OSA 2012 Convention** of the Odia Diaspora. And, we know, our work at the grassroots has helped us reach the top.

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## **OSA Today**

### **OSA Administration (2011-2013)**

OSA National Administration			
<sup>1</sup> National Staff Members			
<sup>2</sup> Members of Executive Council			
<sup>3</sup> Board of Governors			
Position	Name	Email	Phone
President <sup>1,2,3</sup>	Dr. Annapurna Pandey	Adpandey101@gmail.com	831-427-1232
Vice President <sup>1,2,3</sup>	Kuku Das	kukudas@hotmail.com	408-844-8338
Secretary <sup>1,2,3</sup>	Leena Mishra	leenamishra@hotmail.com	301-610-2098
Treasurer <sup>1,2,3</sup>	Sushant Satpathy	susant.satpathy@gmail.com	630-416-6259
Editor-in-Chief <sup>1,3</sup>	Sridhar Rana	sridhar_rana@yahoo.com	908-269-5264
Co-Editor <sup>1,3</sup>	Dr. Julie Acharya Ray	ankapa67@yahoo.com	807-415-9490
Past President <sup>2,3</sup>	Dr. Bigyani Das	bigyanidas_osa@yahoo.com	410-531-7445

Chapter Presidents			
<sup>4</sup> Representatives (No Vote)			
Chapter Name	Chapter Head	Email	Phone
Chicago	Jhara Das	jharadas@yahoo.com	630-904-6208
Grand Canyon Chapter	Debasis Panda	dpanda@cox.net	480-963-5914
Maryland - Virginia	Anadi Naik	acnaik@aol.com	410-489-5887
Michigan	Pitabasa Panda	span3243@gmail.com	248-438-1486
Minnesota/Northwest	Sarat Mohapatra <sup>4</sup>	saja0702@yahoo.com	651-739-0426
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New York-New Jersey	Prabhat Mohapatra	yeshe_prabhat@hotmail.com	732-438-6666
Ohio	Arata Tran Rout	Arata.Rout@gmail.com	614-855-3720
Ozark (central)	Radhagobinda Mohanty	rmohastat@charter.net	636-220-6588
Pacific Northwest	Priyadarsan Patra	priyadarsan.patra@gmail.com	503-617-0667
South East	Bidhu Das	bidhudas2003@yahoo.com	919-367-2844
Southern	Amar K. Pani	amarkpani@gmail.com	901-372-0555
South-West	Gopal Mohapatra	gkmohapatra@gmail.com	281-807-6787
Washington, DC	Gatikrishna Tripathy	gatikrishnat@gmail.com	703-579-6583
Canada	Sabita Panigrahi	sabitapanigrahi@rogers.com	416-223-2756

### **Committees and Associated Members (2011-2013)**

Various OSA Committees constitute the real force in OSA. Committee activities are planned for effective contribution of the organization to its members and its roots. OSA cannot sustain without their volunteering support. The committee members are appointed by OSA President and elected officials to look after specific OSA programs and activities of their interest and expertise. For more on committees please refer to <http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/committee.htm>.

We encourage our members to come forward, volunteer, support and help us in building this organization stronger and more active. Please volunteer to be a member of any of the following committees if you have knowledge, skills, interest, ideas and expertise to make a lasting positive contribution. Yes, together we can make a strong and stable OSA!

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Members</i>
<b>Advisory &amp; Planning Committee</b>	Amiya Mohanty Saroj Behera
<b>Chapter Relations</b>	Lalatendu Mohanty Pitambar Sarangi Tapan Padhi
<b>Convention Management</b>	Lalatendu Mohanty Tapan Padhi
<b>Cultural</b>	Kuku Das Gayatri Joshi Lata Mishra Anu Biswal
<b>Finance</b>	Sushant Satpathy (chair as the treasurer of OSA) Naba Kar Salil Mishra
<b>Let's Learn Odia</b>	Kuku Das (coordinator) Prashant Sahoo (Advisor) Satya Pattanaik (Advisor) Arata Rout Leena Mishra Sabita Panigrahi Swapnalata Mishra Trupti Dash
<b>Membership Drive</b>	Jay Narayan Bhuyan Manoj Padhi Pratap Das Radhagobinda Mohanty

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Members</i>
<b>OSA &amp; Odisha</b>	Abani Patra Amiya Nayak Annapurna Pandey (coordinator) Jit Goel Nishikant Sahoo Sushant Routray
<b>OSA Grievance Committee</b>	Nick Patnaik Panchanan Satpathy Anjalika Pattnaik
<b>OSAnet Moderation</b>	Manoj Padhi Sunil Sabat
<b>OSA Website &amp; Web Content Management (Policy and strategy)</b>	Bikash Panda Leena Mishra
<b>Public Relations</b>	Priyadarshan Patra
<b>Women's issues</b>	Annapurna Pandey (coordinator) Mamata Mishra Ranu Mohanty
<b>Youth</b>	Kelly Lamphear-Dash Ankita Mohanty

## Secretary's Report

Each day presents an opportunity to develop new and creative ways to responsibly manage OSA and to change the way OSA does business. The most gratifying part of serving the organization for me is the opportunity it provides to meet with a broad range of proud Odia people who tries to make a difference in Odisha and for Odias in North America.

As a part of my responsibility I discuss with chapter representatives and our valued members regarding many issues, suggestions and concerns that they have. I learn about the successes of the activities in which they have an interest, and I learn about the challenges they face. I learn about how OSA is helping people, and I learn about how OSA could be doing better.

Through this process, I am always struck by the important role OSA plays in people's lives. I am amazed by what OSA means to people – whether it's helping their kids get a good Odia Culture; helping their family get a feeling of being **at** home; helping someone in trouble get in touch with his family members back in Odisha; helping a child who has not been to Odisha for years know how to do *Chanda Puja* in *Kumar Purnima*; helping a distressed parent find the whereabouts of their son/daughter in North America; helping make our women to come forward and be a leader; helping to support our businesses to invest in Odisha; grow and create jobs and helping in many, many other ways.

Accomplishments of 2011-2012

1. Apart from other accomplishment as reported in president's report, at least five chapters conducted elections this year and new representatives have taken office.
2. Participation of BOG members in BOG meetings has been increased noticeably.
3. OSA national is in the process of reaching out to BOG members to find out their suggestion about how OSA can be helpful to them.
4. 2013 convention to be held in Chicago.

Future Goals

- 1000 family members Community: We seek your help to increase OSA's membership strength. We need 100 more members to reach our goal.
- Membership Benefits: It is very important to reach our first goal in order to have any membership benefits in place for the members of OSA. We invite volunteers to help us attain this goal.
- Value Addition proposal: OSA will be happy to receive proposals for any value addition to OSA's profile.
- Establishment of a cultural guideline for inviting guests for convention: Some passionate volunteers are working on this initiative.
- Promotion of Chhanda in each Chapter: We need volunteers from every chapter to take this initiative and help us implement in every chapter to preserve our heritage.
- Improvement on Chapter Relationship: We are working hard with all chapter representatives to build a healthy relationship between OSA national and the chapters. OSA is currently developing some proposals which will help strengthen the relationship further.
- Create a handbook for the OSA officials: This initiative was taken by the past office bearers of OSA. We see a great value in this and would like to take it forward & have it ready for our future officials to follow.

With great joy, I present the humanitarian work of Oriya Community in North America through 'OSA' which is powered by motivated individuals, who are trying to make a difference. The future of OSA depends on our volunteerism for OSA activities. The tasks are challenging, but highly rewarding too. It helps us learn leadership skills, time management skills, communication skills as well as social skills. On behalf of the OSA, I request all the members and prospective members to come forward and be an active member and take the responsibility of OSA. I also request all the parents of the young generations to encourage their kids to be a part of OSA and help us keep OSA alive for another generation and be proud of ourselves for making our heritage our pride.

Since you have traveled so far along with me – I believe you care about the business of the Orissa Society of the Americas. Please contact me if you need any further information and I'll be more than happy to help you.  
Long Live OSA.

Sincerely,  
Leena Mishra  
Secretary, OSA

**Highlights of OSA Activities (July 2011 - June 2012)**

Greetings and welcome to the 43<sup>rd</sup> OSA convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas in Seattle. Let me share with you some of our accomplishments and the initiatives we have undertaken in the last year:

Flood Relief Drive Raised \$15K: As you all know, more than 2.7 million people in Odisha lost their homes and access to clean drinking water in last summer's severe floods. Led by our treasurer, Sushant Satpathy, OSA initiated a massive fundraising drive that raised \$15K to help with flood relief. Kudos to the OSA volunteers for spearheading and contributing to this project!

OSA Membership Increased by 10+%: In the last year, OSA membership has gone from 800 families to 900 families. We're thrilled to welcome the new members to our OSA community.

Increased Communication via OSAnet and OSA's website: OSAnet has been revitalized to make it easier for OSA members to contribute their ideas and input. Our website is also in the process of becoming more interactive. We would like to thank our OSAnet moderators Manoj Padhi and Sunil Sabat, and our web administrator Bikas Panda for their exemplary service.

Additional Contributors for Utkarsa, OSA's Quarterly Newsletter: Joining *Utkarsa* Editors Sridhar Rana and Julie Acharya Ray, who have continued their great work, are two new contributors:

- Dr. Babru Samal is now the Special Editor; he put together a special *Utkarsa* issue focused on "The Immigrant Experience" in March 2012.
- Ankita Mohanty, a young graduate of the University of Michigan, has joined the editorial board of *Utkarsa* as our Youth Editor; she represents the second-generation Odia youth and will bring fresh ideas and new perspectives reflecting her age group.

Please check the newsletter out at <http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/index.htm>.

OSA-Odisha Development Committee and Odisha Higher Education Workshops: The OSA – Odisha Development Committee has been strategizing ways to revitalize various sectors of higher education in Odisha. OSA has already organized one workshop on Higher Education opportunities for students in Odisha; it was held at Utkal University in Vani Vihar. A video of this workshop is available on the [orissasociety.org](http://www.orissasociety.org). We are planning a second workshop at the OSA convention in Seattle and a third workshop in the Western region of Odisha in December 2012.

New Chapter Presidents: There are 15 OSA chapters around the country. Please join me in welcoming the following new local chapter presidents this year:

- Mr. Prabhat Mahapatra , President of NYNJ chapter
- Mr. Pitabasa Panda , President of Michigan chapter
- Mr. Nihar Nanda , President of New England chapter
- Mr. Subodh Samal , President of North West chapter
- Mrs. Jhara Das, President of Chicago chapter
- Mrs. Sujata Nayak, President of the Maryland/ Virginia chapter
- Mr. Pramod Mohapatra of Chattanooga (Tennessee), President of the Southern chapter

You will find details on local chapters online at: <http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/osachapters.htm>

Champu, Chhanda and Odissi initiative (CCO): OSA has financed the production of a CCO Karaoke 2 CD set that is now available. The CD set includes 10 songs with accompanying karaoke versions. I would like to thank Mrs. Lata Misra for the promotion of CCO.

Changes to the OSA Constitution Are Under Review: There has been some debate regarding loopholes in the present constitution. We have asked a team of Odia leaders and the Board of Governors to look into this and suggest modifications. Once the suggestions have been approved by the BOG, they will be sent to all our members for their feedback. Finally, we will send get it reviewed by an attorney before bringing it to the GBM at the 2012/2013 OSA convention.

2012 OSA Annual Convention – July 5-7 in Seattle: The annual OSA Convention is the highlight of our year. It is OSA's annual showcase event and attracts Odias from all over North Americas, Odisha, and around the world. The convention team has worked hard to put together a convention to remember. Here's a sneak peek:

- Chief Guest Vidushi Sunanda Patnaik, an eminent Indian classical singer of Gwalior Gharana from Odisha, considered one of the great dames of Hindustani classical music
- Cultural performances by talents such as Prafulla Kar, Trupti Das, Sangita Gosain, Adyasha Das and Susmita Das
- Many choices for the children, youth and the second-generation adult Odias - including mehefil, discussions, the Subrina Biswal competition in Performing Arts, and the Samik Singh Kalinga Entrepreneurship Award competition.
- Keynote speaker Sj. Malay Mishra, the High Commissioner of India to Trinidad and Tobago since 2009.

- Guest of Honor Baijayant Panda, the member of the parliament and many other dignitaries will also attend.

For complete information on convention program plans, please visit the convention page at [www.osa2012.org](http://www.osa2012.org).

**2013 OSA Election Planning:** The 2012-2013 OSA election process will kick off during the annual convention. If you are interested in an OSA leadership position, the convention is the time for you to start campaigning.

**OSA Awards:** The 2012 OSA awards have been managed by OSA Vice President Kuku Das. Mr. Sourjya Khandai has handled the award nominations very well in the role of Award Coordinator.

**OSA's Finance:** OSA's annual financial report will be provided by the Treasurer in a separate document. OSA is a volunteer-run organization.

**OSA Committees:** Various committees have been formed in the last year to spearhead specific OSA initiatives. Among them are:

- **OSA Language Committee and Cultural Propagation Committee** – Kuku Das, the Vice President of OSA heads the Odia Language Committee and Mrs. Gayatri Joshi heads the Cultural Committee. The goal is to promote Odia language and culture and create Odia learning material and media that could impact Odias of various age groups.
- **Chapter Relations and Activities Committee** – All the fifteen chapters have been very active in various cultural and educational activities. We have introduced a new chapter relations committee led by Leena Mishra, secretary of OSA. She and her committee members are working very hard to achieve better collaboration between chapters and the OSA national. Thanks to Leena Mishra, the South East chapter led by Bidhu Das and the North West chapter led by Subodh Samal have been reenergized and are playing active role in strengthening the OSA community. Kudos to Leena Mishra and her committee for playing an important role in team building.
- **OSA Grievance Committee** – Our newly instituted Grievance Committee consists of Nick Patnaik, Dr. Panchanan Satpathy and Dr. Anjalika Pattnaik.
- **Youth committee** – Engaging OSA Youth: We are thankful to Kelly Lamphear-Dash who has shown interest in coordinating OSA youth activities. Suchi Pahi and Ankita Mohanty are two-second generation OSA youth volunteers in the committee and will soon start planning for OSA events that the youth would appreciate. If your children would like to be involved, please pass them the message.
- **Women's Committee:** Mamata Mishra, the Women's Committee Chair as well as the organizer of the Women's Forum at the 2011 OSA convention, has kept the conversation going throughout the year. Here are some highlights:
  - Ongoing discussions on the OSA Women's Forum yahoo group and the Facebook group. Anyone can join the yahoo group at <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/OSAWomenForum/>.
  - Two articles published in *Utkarsa*
  - The creation of a Q&A document answering questions about domestic violence. This was posted to the yahoo group.
  - A local Women's Forum meetup, organized in Houston, focused on communication styles and how to communicate with empathy and assertiveness. Yunuen Perez Vertti, the maker of the film *Aparajita* which was screened at OSA WF 2011, volunteered to film the workshop.
  - Two Odia women from the U.S. participated in the Mahila Shanti Sena (MSS) state convention in Odisha; one of these women wrote about her experience in the 2012 OSA journal.
  - *Mayara Kahani*, a skit that was presented at OSA WF 11, was very well received and we received more than one request to take the message to a wider audience and present it at the Drama Festival. Prachi Behera of Austin organized it at the Regional Drama Festival at Dallas.
  - *Some OSA officers - current and past - have continued to show interest and support to start a helpline. We will need the support and commitment of local leaders to make this possible.*

For a full list of committees, their objectives & members, please visit the OSA website: [www.orissasociety.org](http://www.orissasociety.org)

**Drama Festival 2012:** Two OSA chapters – Michigan and Texas – hosted drama festival events this spring. Please check the following web page for details: <http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/dramafestival.htm>

We are looking for new OSA Legal Counsel: Since 2011, Mr. Nick Patnaik has served OSA through pro-bono legal counsel. Now Nick Patnaik has taken a new job, which may not allow him to work as the legal counsel for OSA. We are now looking for a new legal counsel. *Please let us know if you would be interested in providing that service to your community.*

Sincerely,  
OSA National Executives (2011-2013)

## Recent Chapter Activities

### Report from OSA SW Chapter

By Gopal Mohapatra

The southern warmth in an Odiya heart keeps the OSA southwest chapter turning like a wheel throughout the year. We started this year with preparations for the drama festival which was held on 14th April in Dallas. The University of North Texas (UNT) auditorium (arranged by Dr. Niranjana Tripathy) was the venue and there were more than hundred members attending the festival.

Kids from Dallas opened the festival with a dance drama "Bandhu Mohanty", which was heart touching. This was followed by four humorous dramas presented by members from Austin (Tahle Kiye), Houston (Item Girl), Arkansas (Paisa ra maya, karuchi baya) and Dallas (Akala Kushmanda). All these dramas excelled in originality, acting and above all humor. The festival started with laughter and ended with it. Austin folks also presented a short heart-touching skit called Maya ra kahani. Dallas folks led by Debasis Chanda, Saroj Mohapatra, and Tapan Padhi did an excellent job in conducting the festival.

Different cities are now gearing up to celebrate Raja festival in June and also Ratha jatra towards the end of the month. While Austin Odiyas would be celebrating Ratha Jatra in Austin Hindu Temple, Houston Odiyas would be doing the same in India House and Dallas folks in the Dallas Hindu temple. Ratha Jatra now has become part of the key festivals done by Indian diaspora in these cities because of the effort of enthusiastic volunteers.

Houston Odiyas are also working towards their goal of establishing the Orissa Culture Center. While the land has been acquired and architectural plans been drawn, much more is left to be done in terms of arranging the resources and execution. The work is ongoing and hopefully Odiyas from all across Americas and Odisha would help in this project.

### Report from OSA Southern Chapter

By Amar Pani

Greetings from OSA-Southern Chapter!

The OSA-Southern Chapter hosted its annual picnic and nightly social gathering on April 26th 2012. Saturday morning at 11:00 AM, members, non-members, family, and friends from places such as Atlanta, Birmingham, Chattanooga, Huntsville, Memphis and Nashville all gathered at David Crocket State Park located near Huntsville, AL and Nashville, TN. To begin the picnic, everyone enjoyed appetizers such as Masala Mudhi, chips & salsa, and a friendly game of Frisbee followed that. At 1:30 PM, lunch was catered by the Indian restaurant Sitar, based in Huntsville. Not to mention, the marvelous BBQ chicken cooked by Biyat, Shooag and Tushar (all Mohantys) and Pradipta Das was a popular choice among the ladies.



At 3:30 PM, Southern Chapter President Amar K. Pani kept the fun rolling by organizing the cultural show. Everyone was given ample time to freshen up, and at 4:00 PM, all persons gathered in the meeting room. The show started with a stunning

Ganesh Bhajan & dance performed by the duo Sheya and Riti Mohanty from NJ, followed by a ravishing dance from the twin sisters, Yashi & Yuti. At 7:30 PM, the dinner buffet was opened, courtesy of the park restaurant.



After a long wait, there wasn't a single soul that did not want to hear the guest singer that would be performing that evening; the melodious and harmonious Mrs. Rity Mohanty kicked things off with a beautiful bhajan followed by the Rabgabati. After finishing that, the audience coaxed her into an encore. She performed a duet with Mr. Shooga Mohanty and her daughter as well. To give our singer some time to rest, our mini band comprised of Mr. Pramod Mohapatra, her beautiful daughter Babuli and Mr. Tushar Mohanty provided the audience with some enlightened musical extravaganzas. Finally, the show ended the next day with Lord Jaganath Bhanas, performed by the guest singer Mrs. Riti Mohanty at the Jaganath temple of Huntsville, organized by Mrs. Minati Praharaj, Dr. Sarat Praharaj and the temple trustees.



## Report from CANOSA

By Sabita Panigrahi

### *Celebration of Bishuba Milana and Queen's Diamond Jubilee*

It was a beautiful long weekend Saturday afternoon in Toronto. Odias of all ages in Greater Toronto gathered at the Chinguacousy Secondary School auditorium in Brampton to celebrate Bishuba Milana along with four decades of Odias in Canada under the banner of the Canada Odisha Society of Americas (CANOSA). Concurrently Queen's Diamond Jubilee was also celebrated. The program started in the afternoon and the children were entertained with a magic show. They were treated with balloons of different shapes and colors. Beautiful posters made by children for the occasion were displayed.

The evening cultural program started with National anthem of Canada and India. The children did a wonderful job by singing both countries anthems. It was organized by Sudeshna Pattanaik. The President of the society Mrs. Sabita Panigrahi commenced the celebration by addressing the audience. She emphasised the



Opening Ceremony- Honorable minister Harinder Takhar with Prof Arta Dash, Prof Lalu Manasinha, Prof Arjun Purohit and Prof Sri Gopal Mohanty

benefits of multiculturalism under the Queen of Canada. The atmosphere was filled with joy and excitement. The minister of Government Services of Ontario Mr. Harinder Takhar and Ms D. Charandasi, Consul and Head of Chancery, Consulate General of India in Toronto graced the occasion as chief guest and speaker respectively. Both guests took the time to thank the volunteers and dedicated members of our community, and thanked them for the contributions they have made to the Odia community, province of Ontario and Canada. Seniors of the community were recognised with plaques for their contribution to the multicultural society of Canada under Her Majesty's reign. They were Prof Sri Gopal Mohanty, Prof. Lalu Manasinha, Prof. Arjun Purohit, Prof Arta Dash, Prof Rabi

Kanungo, Prof. J. P. Das, Mr Manaranjan Pattanayak, Mr Pratap Pattanaik and Prof Antaryami Nayak. The recipients were greeted to the stage with the sound of Mridanga and Jhanja which added lots of fun to the atmosphere. The artistic director of Chitralkha Odissi Dance Creations (CODC), Mrs Chitralkha Patnaik was specially recognised for her contribution to Canadian Art through Odissi dance. A souvenir was published for the occasion, celebrating the last forty years of Odia activities in Canada.



Mrs Chitralkha Pattanaik was recognized with a plaque for her contribution to Canadian Art through Odissi in the opening ceremony. From (l. to r.) Sabita Panigrahi (President), Prof Lalu Manasinha, Mrs Chitralkha Patnaik and Honorable minister Mr Harinder Takhar

It was inaugurated by the honorable minister. The evening entertainment was full of drama performances and dance. The cultural program started with the opening song Utkal Arati, a poem written by Gagan Panigrahi describing the glory of the state of Odisha. Sabita Panigrahi, Nandita Gantayet, Nibedita Pattanaik, Bijoylaxmi Pal, Rinki Mohapatra and Swapna Patro participated in the song. It was organized by Sabita Panigrahi.

That followed the children drama Ekalavya. It was written by Sumitra Padhi and directed by Nibedita Pattanaik. Young couples walked to the tune of song "I love my

Odisha". The ladies proudly displayed Sambalpuri, Bomkai and Pasapalli sarees and the men displayed Pipili work during the show which generated lots of clapping from the audience. The participants were Abani Pattanayak and Rashmi Das, Amitabh Mohanty and Sudeshna Pattanaik, Prasad Rao and Sarojini Mohanty, Prasant and Debasmita Sahoo, Debashish Nanda and Debashrita Kar, Gopal and Parasmitta Rao. It was organized and choreographed by Rashmi Das. Musical ensemble organized by Pratap Satapathy thrilled the audience. The participants were Ankita Nayak on harmonium, Chandan Pattanaik on tabla, Srujani Das piano, Ronit Nayak on Saxophone and Sudikshya Bisoyi on



Inauguration of Souvenir published for the occasion during opening ceremony. From (l. to r.) Sabita Panigrahi (President), Niranjan Mishra (Chief Editor) and Honourable Minister Mr Harinder Takhar



guitar and picollo. Odia skit “Sahitya Chasha” by Rashmi Das and Abani Pattanayak was hilarious and entertaining. It was written by Nayati Mohanty.

Finally, the invited artists Devraj Patnaik and Ellora Patnaik entertained the audience with their mesmerising performance of Odissi, a classical dance form of India. The items were Bihari Pallavi and Dasavatara. Medallions were given to the children who participated in the show. It was a wonderful event showcasing the talents of our Odia community and our culture through spectacular performances of drama, art, song and dance. The program was possible due to the financial support from



Opening song Utkala Arati was presented by (L to R) Bijoylaxmi Pal, Nandita Gantayet, Sabita Panigrahi, Nibedita Pattanaik, Swapna Patro and Rinki Mohapatra

Bhagaban Panigrahi, Dinabandhu Rath, Hara & Sumitra Padhi, Niranjana & Nalini Mishra, Subhendu & Nandita Gantayet, Anandita Kumar, Satyajit and Nibedita Pattanaik, Sabita and Gagan Panigrahi, Suwendu and Prachi Mishra, Sudeshna Patnaik & Amitabh Mohanty, Manoj Panda and Rinki Mohapatra, Subash and Sabita Bisoyi, Sujata Patnaik and Ashok Das, Pradeep Pradhan, Jyoti Maharana and Canadian Heritage fund. The whole event was organized by Sabita Panigrahi, Niranjana Mishra and Sudeshna Patnaik.



Odissi item Dasavatara by Ellora and Devraj Patnaik

### Participation in OSA Regional Drama Festival in Michigan

CANOSA members participated in the Northern Regional Drama Festival organized by OSA, Michigan. The drama “Sahitya Chasha” was presented and it was well appreciated by everybody. Mr Abani Pattanayak and Rashmi Das performed in the play which was written by Mrs Niyati Mohanty.



### Regional Drama Festivals

By Sandip Dasverma, on behalf of the Coordinators

OSA partly financed each festival and it has been a big success. Since last July, the organizers have held the following five festivals:

Dates	Regional Festival	Location	Participants	Coordinator	Chapter President
Sept. 3, 2011	North-East	Columbus, OH	MI Chapter, CanOSA, Ohio Chapter	Saswata Mohapatra	Aratatrana Rout
Oct. 29-30, 2011	Eastern	Wayne, NJ	NY/NJ Chapter, OSA NE & DC Chapter	Lalatendu Mohanty	Lalatendu Mohanty
Nov. 5, 2011	Midwest	Chicago, IL	Chicago Chapter & Cleveland, OH	Gyana R. Pattnayak	Bob Parida
Apr. 14, 2012	Southern	Dallas, TX	AK, Houston, Dallas and Austin	Debasish Chand	Gopal Mohapatra
May 12, 2012	Northern	Flint, MI	MI Chapter, CanOSA and Cleveland, OH	Swapnalata Rath	Pitabasa Panda

**New OSA Benefactor, Patron, Life and 5-year members (July, 2011 - April 30th, 2012)**

BENEFACTOR MEMBERS	
Shaikh and Amirunnessa Haque, CA	Sushant and Namrata Patnaik, CA, Benefactor

LIFE MEMBERS	
Debasish and Mausumi Chanda, TX Gautam and Monika Das, TX Sanjaya Das and Lucy Patnaik, TX Priyaranjan Dash and Amita Sahu, TX Sandeep and Mousumi Mahapatra, TX Suvankar Mishra and Alka Patra, TX Debasis and Sasmita Mohanty, TX Jayant and Shernaz Mohanty, TX Deepak and Prachi Mohapatra, TX Ashok and Sarojini Nayak, TX Manoj and Subhashree Nanda, TX Sribachha and Monalisa Panda, TX Shovan Prusty and Suchismita Sahoo, TX Aswinee Rath and Yunuen Perezvertti, TX Subhendu Rath and Satyasmita Tripathy, TX Nabaghana and Binita Tripathy, TX Siddhartha and Ranjeeta Rath, LA Nalinkant and Suchismita Sahoo, MA Saradakanta Panda , FL Dr Sunita Kanumury , NJ Subrata and Anu Acharya, TX Pankaj Patra and Chayanika Prusty, TX Sukant Mohapatra , TX Pranabesh Dash and Mitali Monalisa, OR Rakesh Patnaik and Sangeeta Katha, WA Niranjan Senapati and Itishree Bastia, MA Ratna Roy and David Capers, WA Mitrabhanu Sahu, WA Swaroop and Anna Mishra, WA Ashok and Pushpanjali Jena, CA Sandip and Anita Biswal, CA Marc Dareau and Pragati Misro, CA Prasanna and Sarita Mohanty, CA Brian T Feeley and Sarina Behera, CA Reina Haque and Ralph Vogel, CA Gati and Anuradha Kar, CA Dillip and Priyadarsini Behera, NH Biswabhusan and Mamata Sahoo, MA Srinivas P and Padmaja Tutika, MO Sishu Shankar and Sushila Marhata, CA Kedarnath Nanda and Tapati Dash, MD Tusar and Rnajita Das, OH	Naba and Bijaylaxmi Kar, CA Sanat and Sagarika Patnaik, NJ Ashok and Anita Das, OH Satya and Snigdha Pattanaik, OH Bidisha Mohanty and Biswa Ranjan Karan, CA Ravijeet Das and Hemanthika Patnaik, OR Bikash Panda and Pragyan Pattnayak, CA Subodh Samal and Suryasnata Sahoo, MN Sarang Mahatwo and Rasmita Swain, NJ Sujit das and Pinky Patnaik, VA Vivek and Julie Das, MI Jyotsna Patnaik and Kanak Nath, CA Biswajit and Mamata Khandai, CA Swadesh Dash and Susmita Sahu, IL Pramod and Maitreyi Satapathy, MI Samar and Sanghamitra Moharana, CA Abani Mishra and Lucina Satapathy, OH Baikunth and Savita Nayak, NJ Ankita Mohanty, MI Satya and Subhasmita Sahu, TX Mohammad Siddiquee and Sayd Diba Farrah, OH Akash Pandey, CA Alok Pandey, CA Himanshu and Rasmita Baral, CA Satyabrata and Nishibanya Pradhan, CA Susanta and Anusuya Mohanty, CA Achyuta and Swapnajali Acharya, CA Shirish Pal and Sujata Das, CA Priyabrata Gharai and Seema Kumari, CA Sukant Nanda and Snigdha Mishra, CA Kishore Mishra and Suprava Upadhyaya, CA Debashish Patnaik and Aruna Mohanty, India Priyadarshi Mishra, India Deepalie Joshi, TN Likun Mishra and Kumar Gunaparthi, TN Prashant Padhy and Donna Mishra IL Pramod Mahapatra and Sushree Tripathy, TN Balakrishna Dixit and Nirlipta Daschoudhury, VA Amuly and Achala Das, WA (upgrade) Manoj and Epsita Padhi, TX (upgrade) Jeetendra Pradhan and Swetapadma Jena, NJ (upgrade)

5-YEAR MEMBERS	
Manoranjana Acharya and Sonia Sahu, OR Satyakam and Mitali Madhusmita Das, WA Anwesha Das and Ashish Narrain, WA Habib M and Sakina Habib, WA Madhusmita Sahoo & Jayaprathap Parameswaran, WA Murthy and Aarthi Kalkura, WA Sukanta K Nanda and Namrata Panda, WA Rita Meher and Brandon McIntosh, WA Sambit and Sasmita Behera, WA Pallavi Baral and Rahul Lal, WA Dina Krushna and Ratna Ray, WA	Nihar Ranjan Dash and Samita Satpathy, WA Debabrata Panda and Renuka Mishra, CA Ashok Das and Sanghamitra Pattnaik, WA Chinmaya Panda and Monalisa Tripathy, CA Rabindra Sahoo and Deepti Mayee Sahoo, OH Ram and Rupa Patnaik, OH Anjana and Arpita Basa, OH Kunmun Garabadu and Raj Murtinty, CA Satwik Patnaik and Himanandini Mohanty, OR Tushar Mohanty and Rupali Pattnayak, TN

### OSA Organizational Information: A Short Summary

1. **OSA Registration:** OSA is registered in TN as a non-profit organization. The first filing was in 1981. After several years of inactive state, it was made active on June 22, 2009. OSA is an active TN organization.
2. **Constitutional Rules:** OSA Board of Governors (BOG) has the final say on constitutional rules, by-laws and rules of business. This was according to the amendment made in July 1992 (**5. Article IX: B.** Replace section 4 as follows: On any question involving the constitution the By-Laws, or the Rules of Business, the decision of the Board of Governors will be final.)
3. **What is OSA BOG:** OSA BOG constitutes of 4 elected OSA executives, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and chapter presidents of 14 chapters and the past president, 19 members in total (Amendment Effective July 1, 1992 – 2. Article V)
4. **OSA Communication:** OSA communications with its members are made through various ways.
  - **OSA web page** – <http://www.orissasociety.org>
  - **OSA newsletter** – OSA newsletters are kept in OSA web page from 2003. Members were informed about the electronic publication of its newsletters through different mediums. (check <http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/publication.htm>).
  - **OSAnet** – OSA electronic communication medium (yahoo group) established from 2007 and was approved in OSA General Body Meeting 2007. (OSAnet@yahoogroups.com)
  - **Through chapter presidents and local Oriya organizations:** OSA chapters have their own electronic list and some chapters have their own web pages. In some states which do not have chapters, they have their own local Oriya group emailing.
  - **Through individual emailing:** On many occasions OSA officials send emails to individual members by using individual email addresses.
  - **Through US Mail:** Whenever required, OSA officials also send info. through US mail
  - **Phone:** Sometimes, OSA officials also make one-to-one communication with members
5. **OSA newsletter (more):** Before 2003, there were two issues of newsletters made (fall and spring) and sent to OSA members by US mail. These newsletters usually carried minimum information and were usually less than 8 printed pages. From fall of 2003, the newsletters were made available from OSA web page. Members interested in OSA affairs have many avenues to get answers to their questions. OSAnet, phone, email, OSA website, mails to BOG or executives. These are regularly used by interested members.
6. **OSA General Body Meeting:** OSA General Body Meeting (GBM) is held once in every year during its annual convention that is held during the first weekend of July (around July 4<sup>th</sup>).
7. **OSA BOG Meetings:** In the constitution it is mandated to have two BOG meetings per year (**Article V – B – ©**). Because of the free conference availability, in recent years monthly, bi-monthly and emergency BOG meetings are conducted to address issues, discuss and take major decisions. These meetings are called by the President and in the absence of the President, Vice President or any official authorized by the President. Fifty percent is needed for the quorum.
8. **OSA Election:** OSA elections are held once in every 2 years in an odd year. The new officers are installed in the General Body meeting of the odd year. The election process starts from the GBM of the preceding

year. For example: OSA 2011 election process started July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and ended in May 2011. OSA 2013 election process will start July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and end in May 2013.

9. OSA Election Committee: A 3 member election committee with one as chairman is appointed by the BOG (current BOG=Executive Committee before 1992) and is announced to the general body for approval by majority at the annual convention preceding the election year. (By-Law III: Election Procedure, Section 1)
10. OSA Official Positions: Before 2004, there were 3 positions in OSA, President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary and Treasurer Positions were separated in 2004 according to a constitutional amendment and for the first time in 2005, elections were held for 4 positions, President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Usually members are requested to volunteer for these positions since these are unpaid voluntary commitment for 2 years. In OSA history many times there were uncontested candidates that win by default. In OSA's 40 years of history there were maximum 2 slates of candidates with one exception in 2001 where there were 3 slates of candidates.
11. OSA Membership: There are mainly 2 types of membership, permanent and annual. Most of the membership is family membership. In permanent category there are 3 types, life (\$300), patron (\$600) and benefactors (\$1000) and in annual category, there were 4 types, single (\$10), family (\$25), student single (\$5), and student family (\$10). One special type of membership for 5 years was introduced in 2008 (\$100). To become a member one needs to fill up a membership form and send the form with signature and the check to OSA treasurer (**Amendment effective July 1, 1992: 6. By Law I: A. Section 1. Add the following at the end of paragraph: "Membership in OSA involves submission of an application for formal approval by the Executive Council."**). Annual membership dues shall be payable by July 30th of each year. (**Article IV: Membership**).
12. OSA Member Address and Contact Information: Every year OSA directory is produced in the form of a book by the annual convention organizing committee. It has member contact information and in recent years member emails are also included. This is available in OSA directory unless some members intentionally want to block their phone numbers and emails for possible spam. OSA 2007-2009 Secretary Dr Priyadarsan Patra had exceeded the expectations by creating and maintaining an online member database called DOLA (Directory of Odias Living Abroad). The DOLA system has been very effective as regards address updates by members themselves and quick reference from anywhere in the world with internet access. There is no mandate in the constitution that OSA Election committee or OSA executives will provide the voters list, but it is traditionally done to facilitate the contests, in addition to the address book which is available to all life members. For members who register in the latest convention or thereafter, whose names and details are not in the address book, names are available in the member list and details are available in DOLA. Together, last Address Book, Member list & DOLA give all required information, to the contestants.
13. Financial Report: OSA financial report is mandated to be presented in GBM, once in a year and needs approval by the membership. It is then published in the next issue of OSA newsletter (fall issue). (**Powers and Functions of Treasurer: Amendment Effective July 1, 2004: Section 7: Item 5. The Treasurer will present the complete financial report of the past year in the Annual General Body meeting of the OSA during the convention.**)
14. Unforeseen Circumstances: For unforeseen circumstances, OSA takes advice of its BOG (Amendments Effective July 1, 1992: **5. Article IX: B.** Replace section 4 as follows: On any question involving the constitution the By-Laws, or the Rules of Business, the decision of the Board of Governors will be final.)
15. Quorum Consideration: Unless a member raises "Point of Order" the quorum is accepted to conduct any meeting. Major decisions are taken by consulting BOG (Amendments Effective July 1, 1992: **5. Article IX: B.** Replace section 4 as follows: On any question involving the constitution the By-Laws, or the Rules of Business, the decision of the Board of Governors will be final.)
16. Election Irregularity Charges: Any charge of election irregularity or fraud shall be reported to the President and the members of the Executive Committee for resolution. (By-Law III: Election Procedure, Section 11 - Executive Committee = BOG according to Amendment Effective July 1, 1992, 2. Article V)

Note: Although not mentioned in the constitution, from spring 2008 OSA hired a General Counsel Mr Sujit Mohanty, Esq. who provided pro-bono service to OSA. OSA officials consulted him in critical decision making process. Since 2011, Nick Patnaik became the OSA General Counsel and is continuing his pro-bono service to OSA. OSA has also appointed an accountant Raj Marurveda in spring 2008 for its audit and tax related work.

**2011 OSA Convention: Account Statement**

<b>REVENUE</b>	
<b>Registration</b>	
01 SW Chapter	29,181.00
03 Non SW Chapter	27,092.78
TOTAL Registration	56,273.78
<b>Sponsors</b>	
01 SW Chapter	14,577.00
03 Non SW Chapter	15,675.00
04 Souvenir	7,000.00
05 Corporate	39,853.80
TOTAL Sponsors	77,105.80
<b>Other Income</b>	
01 Advance from OSA	10,000.00
02 OSA Life Membership	1,000.00
04 Dance School	290
05 Business Symposium	4,300.00
06 Shirts	1,941.06
Interest Inc	9.16
TOTAL Other Income	17,540.22
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>150,919.80</b>

<b>EXPENSES</b>	
<b>Entertainment</b>	
01 Stage , Light and Sound	12,238.37
02 Decoration	1,029.94
03 Youth Entertainment	350
04 Artist Travel	28,434.38
05 Artist Honorium	6,700.00
06 Cultural	1,662.21
TOTAL Entertainment	50,414.90
<b>Food Expenses</b>	
01 Provision	1,303.85
02 Kids Meal	599.5
03 Adult Meal	30,950.55
TOTAL Food Expenses	32,853.90
<b>Hotel and Logistics</b>	
01 Room Rent and Hotel	9,971.46
04 Vehicle Rental	1,056.70
05 Logistics labor	7,628.73
TOTAL Hotel and Logistics	18,656.89

<b>Mandatory Expenses</b>	
Bank Charges	177.84
Credit Card Processing Fees	1,643.86
TOTAL Mandatory Expenses	1821.7
<b>Misc.</b>	
01 Refund to OSA (OSA Fee, Annual & Life Membership, Return of Convention Advance)	18,913.59
03 Video and Photo	400
04 Trophy	897.5
05 Business Symposium	1,082.45
06 Website	229.17
TOTAL Misc.	21,522.71
<b>Registration Exp</b>	
01 Material Exp	6,294.54
02 Printing & Postage	1,266.72
TOTAL Registration Exp	7,561.26
<b>Souvenir</b>	
01 Printing	10,627.60
02 Mail and Postage	650.66
TOTAL Souvenir	11,278.26
<b>Youth</b>	
01 Rental	3,034.34
02 Labor	602
03 Youth Material	1,749.00
TOTAL Youth	5,385.34
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>149,494.96</b>

<b>SURPLUS</b>	
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>1,424.84</b>
<b>Transferred to OSA Main Account</b>	<b>712.42</b>
<b>Transferred to SW Chapter</b>	<b>712.42</b>

Sushant Satpathy, Treasurer, OSA  
 Tapan Padhi, Convener, 2011 Convention  
 Loknath Patro, Finance, 2011 Convention

## **Activities, Advice, and Observations**

### **True Happiness: Prostrations To Thy Father-In-Heaven & Sat Guru!**

By Prashant Padhy

With all humility, let's start with a simple yet obvious question: "What do we really want out of life?" The answer unequivocally and unanimously will be the desire to be "happy." Not today, not tomorrow, but to be "for-ever-happy." Our constant striving, every effort in this so called life, is an effort to achieve this eternal happiness.

We never wish to think of this, but one event is certain in this "life." Every living being MUST die. No exceptions to this rule. Each body is labeled with the expiry date that is not known. This is the mystery. Whether you are Rama, Krishna, or Steve Jobs, every mortal being must perish in time. Whether it is an undeveloped country, under-developed country, developing country or developed country, everyone is trying to break this label in any possible way they can. Hidden underneath, it is the timeless and eternal quest for infinite happiness.

The answer does not lie outside "you." If it was outside, one would have succeeded in acquiring this long ago. If it was in the great mall, all the so-called rich people of the world would have already obtained this. Instead, when one really starts questioning to know what the TRUTH really is, we are told to look within. How can that be so?

Let's analyze our daily experiences. When one is faced with death, despair and suffering outside, the mind goes through a tsunami of thoughts. Definitely, one cannot claim to be happy in these times. On the contrary, we buy the most comfortable bed, the best blanket, pillow and create an environment so we can get a good night's sleep. If we are lucky to have a total deep sleep, without any dreams at all, we wake up happy and re-charged.

The only conclusion one can make out from the above experiences is that one is happy when one's mind is silent and thoughtless, as in deep sleep, and disturbed and distressed otherwise. However, all our education, daily activities and efforts seem to be in the opposite direction.

Saints and sages say that happiness is our natural state and birthright. There is always a reason for being unhappy, but when these reasons are removed, one feels happy automatically. Just as once the cloud cover moves the sun shines through, so also happiness shines through when the reasons for unhappiness are removed. Deep sleep is the direct experience and proof of this. Only when one drops the gross world of objects outside and the subtle world of emotions and thoughts inside is one able to sleep. Even if there is a single bothering thought, one cannot fall asleep.

However, we spend our entire life trying to learn and understand everything that will only take us further away from this state of being happy. Instead of quieting the mind, we get involved in complex situations. If happiness is my natural state, why do all our efforts seem to be otherwise?

In my humble opinion, there seems to be a fundamental flaw. Somewhere in the passage of time, we forgot who we really are and the true purpose of this life, and importance was given to what we possess instead. Hence, we started to hoard more and define who 'I' am by the possessions. Sadly, none of the possessions come in handy when we are faced with a traumatic situation like death.

Let's dive deeper. Nothing perceived can be pointed at and say: "That is Me." Can we point to anything in this universe as "me"? Somehow, this is so weird and bizarre. Without knowing who 'I' truly am, 'I' has been learning about everything that is not "me". Wouldn't it be sensible to know "me" before learning other topics?

From the time we are born, we are given a name, and everyone around addresses us by that name. As we grow, our teachers and friends addressed us by that name. Then we become an engineer, a doctor, a scientist, a politician, an artist or a sports person, father, mother, grandparents or whatever. Bottom-line, as we grow, we keep adding more and more qualifications. Have we ever wondered what we really are? Interestingly, we are never asked about our true identity when we are admitted to school, when we go for professional education, when we get married or when we apply for a job. We are all intelligent human beings, great scientists inventing so many things. Isn't it strange that we have never understood the fundamental?

If you can sleep like a log like me, you are totally unaware of your surroundings, including your identity, your money, spouse, children, nationality, gender, race, income, social status; basically, everything. If you sleep 8 hours a day, this means 1/3 of the day is gone without knowing the truth of your existence. If you happen to live for 100 years, 33 years of your life will be gone completely unaware of your existence. Would it not be worthwhile to find out?

Let's take the help of a theorem to explain. To observe change, one MUST be out of the change. As long as one is within the change, changes cannot be observed. For example, we are told that the earth rotates and we believe it too. But, only when one goes into space (i.e. out of the earth), can one observe the earth rotating.

The point is: "Only a changeless entity can observe change." Now let us try to bring this closer to us. We definitely were not born the same size and shape that we are today. We were babies, then children, then pre-teens, then teenagers, then adults, to whatever we are now. The point is that physically, we have been changing all this time since birth. But, something within KNOWS that I am the same person. Isn't that fascinating? Who is this changeless entity?

Here is another theorem to help: "Anything you are aware of, you cannot be that!" Let us analyze and check it out, and see if it is true!

*I am aware of you, I am NOT you; I am aware of a car, I am NOT the car.*

*I am aware of a tree, I am NOT the tree; I am aware of the house, I am NOT the house.*

If you have followed till now, let us go a bit deeper.

*I am aware of my body and I am aware of my mind – in the waking states.*

*If I am aware of this psychosomatic apparatus, "I" must be something other than them.*

"I" am even aware that "I" slept, "I" dreamt and "I" am awake. Who is this mysterious "I"? Look around you. Can you identify anything; I mean anything as "you"?

This is really interesting. Something inside me is observing everything but THAT cannot be observed. Who is this great Observer inside me?

The best of mankind, the saints and sages, say that if you know your true identity, the true meaning of "I", you will be the happiest being in this universe. A crystal clear understanding of the meaning of "I", beyond a shadow of doubt, is called the quintessential knowledge.

All your problems will be solved. All your worries will be gone. And, you will be always happy. Generations have come and gone. One day, we will be gone as well. Nothing will go with us. This body that we love so much will be gone. Would it not be worthwhile to find out our true identity and figure out what our role is in this rat-race of life (as we call it)?

Interestingly, we have never been trained about this. Even though this may be the simplest of all things, this might sound extremely difficult.

Here is a clue to that state of eternal happiness and peace. In deep sleep, there was no time, no space, no world, nothing, yet one wakes up happy and no one is afraid to go to deep sleep. When one can experience the stillness of deep sleep while fully awake and conscious, one will be able to experience that same eternal and timeless happiness, which is bliss.

This is the guarantee of the timeless Scriptures and Sages. Life's goal is simply to recognize: "You Are That!" – and not who or what you think you are!

## Adaptability

By Jayasmita Mishra, Ph.D

Blame it on fate or destiny, "Chance" had it all planned, drifting along with times, as the tides tossed me adrift, from one shore to another. As a child, my parents taught me the basic secret of life — you have to be willing to change yourself. Change is the only constant. In modern management style, it is adaptability as practiced by Fortune 500 organizations, while the best means of survival is — never fret over what you don't get.

Time and again, I have always counted upon my blessings.

Interestingly, it was always the same remark on my report card; my teacher wrote, "with more application, capable of better results." As a young child, I never heeded these words, playful and easy-going as I was. With maturity, reality dawned. I understood the importance of being focused; perseverance and positivity worked wonders as I moved up the ladder, accomplishing one step after another. Conforming to the definition of a "professional," I had it all set—highly educated, with a trail of coveted degrees to boast, always the topper, meticulous and sincere.

In spite of a gleaming portfolio, nothing worked, no matter on which door I knocked, all efforts seemed to be futile. I was locked behind the bars of bureaucratic regulations. These posed stumbling blocks in fulfilling my career goals. While I was groping in the dark, fortunately, the Almighty wanted to open a window for me to see

and testify it. Obviously, beggars cannot be choosers, and I had no other option but to accept and groom myself in a completely unknown field of endeavor.

Less technically speaking, for sure I am a professional, as I have gained impressive competence in a particular activity, engaging myself in a creative and intellectually challenging vocation. My clients have immense trust in me, and their expressions boost my self-esteem. The reward may not be great in monetary terms, but sensitively I have achieved it all.

I am a merchant, oh no, not of stocks or bonds, neither of expensive merchandise. I sell the whole world, mother earth sits on my palm while the various destinations hover around my fingertips. My services are legendary in the sense; they exist beyond time and boundaries.

I am a human – travel agent. I converse with my clients, I feel their pain and share their joy. I am not only a merchant of travel, but I am also a purveyor of dreams. As an expert weaver, I weave itineraries to suit each and every type. My job description reads, “worldwide business travel hassle remover.” I am an enabler. People depend on me for various reasons.

All those degrees I accumulated over the years in “Psychology” did not go as a waste. The amount of counseling I do in this job is tremendous, helping people move from one place to another. I keep track of details, an ability I might not have demonstrated as I was growing up. With time, I have mastered the art. It has definitely helped in giving me an edge over others. From arranging cars for pickups and drop offs to finding a comfortable retiring den, everything is done to suit each one’s budget and preference. A slight mistake would upset the whole set up, and I work like a surgeon managing the whole show singlehandedly.

I am empowered and committed to my job. The best part is that it always keeps me running ahead of time. When I am in January, I am busy planning for March and May. When in May, I work for September, when in September, I check out things for December. The marathon continues, as the days pass by, years keep rolling over, leaving less time to whine and brood.

Business entrepreneurs rely on me as I plan out their next business trip with great care and precision. They have the liberty of contacting me from any part of the world. I make family reunions possible after long periods of gap. I am often awakened in the middle of the night, to help someone in times of death and pain. My services have helped a son perform the last rites of his father on time. I have wiped many a tear by consoling and giving solace to someone who has lost a near and dear one. A dutiful daughter comes back thanking me for being able to spend quality time with her ailing mother. The list is endless; incidents like these have given a humanitarian touch with all its psychological significance,

When it comes to great ideas, nothing inspires me more than real weddings, from fixing flowers, settings and designing cakes, to creative reception themes set to steal the heart of one and all. My job is endless, as I plan out weddings and honeymoons, not only for the bride and groom, but also a perfect vacation for their loved ones. With anything and everything for everyone, from sight –seeing and diving to gourmet dining, with my magic wand each moment is turned into an adventure. Honeymooners come to me for the most important trip of their lives. At times I laugh when I get to plan two or three honeymoons for the same folks. They go back and forth as it is time to renew their marriage vows. Mr Andre was awestruck when I could tell him exactly the color of the sand on the beach for, I knew it all.

Conducted tours are also arranged to various “Gateways of Paradise”. Pilgrims frequently describe their pilgrimage to the Holy Land as a life-changing experience. They find it difficult to express the absolute bliss they feel during this unique spiritual adventure. Some find the path a way to get closer to God or to discover the roots of their faith. They come back rejuvenated, swearing by the Lord that they did not forget me in their prayers; I receive the divine bliss.

People often travel for medical reasons, either because it is cost effective or to get top notch quality care in a state-of-the-art facility. My job then becomes more specialized as I have to look into the micro aspect of the trade, from hospitals and doctors to the best of after-care facilities. Recollecting a heart rending incident, unfortunately, a client who had to receive treatment abroad never survived to board the plane. In scenarios like this, a full refund of the ticket is made to the passenger’s immediate relative. At times, passengers cannot travel on scheduled dates due to sickness of self or someone in the family, and care is taken that the date change is done with the help of a valid doctor’s note. Besides this, I also play a vital role in educating my international travelers in managing travel-related illness and tropical diseases, both in preparation for travel and upon return.

My clients typically spend far more of their time at our agency than they spend with their attorney, physician or accountant. In return, I offer them the best moments of their lives, those special weeks they have worked hard for in order to enjoy and unwind. I plan the days that really matter in their lives. Whether it is a fun



trip to Disney World, a vacation to the exotic islands, a cruise or safari expedition, I design lifetime experiences for them to enjoy.

I pay particular attention to clients who have retired. They have worked a lifetime to finally cherish their dreams. I make their dreams happen, and as I help them, I never forget they are on a fixed budget. The airlines hate me, for I am always an ardent advocate for my clients, fighting to make changes and save them from paying hefty penalties to suit their never ending demands. My educated clientele understand the leverage they have while dealing with me.

As travel agents, we have been abused and had commissions mutilated by smiling marketers of all persuasions. The media says we are “dinosaurs”. The truth is that we still exist for the typical services we render. After surfing the net for hours, people come back to me, they pay me for my services, acknowledge my worth- I am their planner, psychologist and lifestyle advisor all rolled into one.

How true were the words of my Father, long lost, thirty years back, when in business- never expect returns from someone you know. Family and friends come to take advantage of your expertise for free. If at all I have gained something, it is always from unknown voices whom I have never seen or met but heard on the wireless. They trust me with their credit cards as I finalize the transaction. My head bows down to all of them, who have made it possible for me to exist with dignity.

Every night, as I toss on my bed, I am always dreaming about all the exotic places on this earth. I want to make sure all my clients are safe and secure. I have visited and re-visited all these places in my mind’s eye. I suppose I could have been a doctor or a lawyer, just as my other siblings are, making more money, but I guess it was all predetermined. And truth be told, I would lie in bed wondering from time to time what kind of life I might have had if only I had gone into –Travel.

I am part of a profession that was among the first to fight racial and lifestyle prejudices. Our workplace is open to all, and we are dedicated to the proposition that the world will be a better place if we all get to visit one another as often as possible. With the expansion of a global economy, my striving for excellence continues, despite all adversities.

## Problems

By Professor Satya Mahaptra

“Who needs a problem, anyway...?”

Seldom a fairy tale ending, like “.... and they lived happily ever after”, is true in real life. Most love stories crash on the hard rock of reality. People experience a sense of anticlimax even after their long cherished dreams are realized. Their achievements fail to enthuse them. They invent reasons to be unhappy, feel disappointed, instead of going in for jubilation and celebration of their achievements.

Normally, life is always delivered in a mess. We are expected to clean up the mess and celebrate life. The opportunities are wrapped in packaging materials of Problems and Hardships. On your way to opportunities, either you opt for the hardship voluntarily, or it is thrust upon you. Your well-wishers shower rebukes, threats or even real punishments. Few realize that the essence of life is in solving problems rather than relishing the aftermaths. Hence, the uninitiated in the cult of Problemism end up as the unhappy lot in their never ending search for happiness, thus creating the required state of problemness for prosperity.

The whining complaints of undesirable states of being, the bickering about “the other one’s fault” all lead to bitterness in interpersonal relations. How silly! Fault finding nature may at best be treated as “the faulty nature”. You do need a fault to work upon. “Enemy” is also a faulty concept. You can have two types of only friends. The one directly benefiting you is an ordinary friend. But he is making you complacent. The one who puts you in some difficulty, helps you to develop your survival skills, he is an extraordinary friend. A small dose of harmful microorganisms in the form of inoculation is a lot better than the best of the antibiotics, as it triggers the immune system’s protection shield against the disease.

For the ball to bounce up, it has to be banged on the ground. The intensity of the fall will determine the height to which it will rise. The gravitational pull is essential for the air borne for their liftoff. Similarly, the backward drag is necessary for the forward propulsion of the airplanes. A setback is the time to gain momentum for onward march. Elimination of resistance of the road to motion will not facilitate the movements. On the contrary, it will be impossible to have any control over your vehicle. Without resistance to motion, there can be no progress at all. When

someone pulls your legs, he is providing you the essential resistance for forward movement. Rightly said, when the going gets easy, it surely is a downhill slide.

All upheavals from minor arguments to major wars are a result of focus on the differences, disagreements, disobediences and unfavourable conditions that give us the chance to hone our skills or create some new ways of living life. The peace seekers would have easily thrashed out the answer to any problem. Instead, the warmonger is the hero who creates more problems than he solves. Instead of understanding this as an opportunity, you tend to breakdown to show primitive emotions of anger and create real problems out of perceived problems.

Every scientific invention is backed by a problem. Every developmental initiative is triggered by a calamity, catastrophe, or at the least a state of deprivation. The body reflexes are triggered by loss of balance, threats of pain and injury. You need to work out against opposing forces to develop your muscles. Any training means making you face challenges. The survival instinct can only sharpen when the organism is exposed to dangerous situations, unwanted factors or despicable entities. A problem throws up a novel challenge, to which the brain responds by creating new synaptic links. It even generates new nerve cells to cope with extremely novel challenges. The neurons begin to die when an individual reaches a point when all his works are done and he has no problems to work upon!

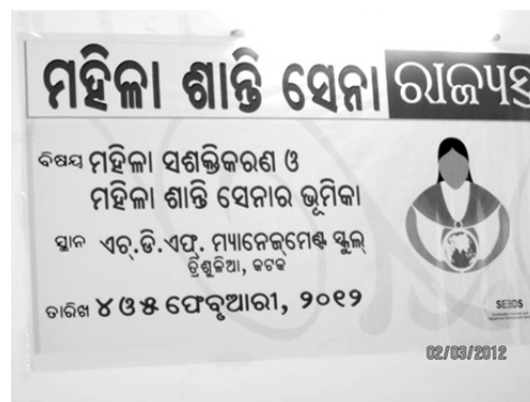
Even the extremely unpleasant and undesirable conditions like the loss of a loved one may be a boon if it is used as a challenge. You can not only win over the situations, but also grow far beyond the possibility of development in the pre-deprivation condition. The rootless people in America in the face of hardship strive hard for growth. That results in the accelerated growth in the migrants. Their development outpaces the well-anchored natives in their mother land. The villages experience migration of its talents to cities. From the developing world to the developed countries, we see emigration of talented persons. These uprooted people experience the transplantation shock. So they do develop!

Hence, a problem is always a blessing in disguise. You must see only opportunity in these problems. For any progress, development, invention to happen, problems are an absolute necessity.

## Attending a Rural Women's Convention in Odisha

By Mamata Misra

In February 2012, during an annual visit to family in Odisha, I was invited to attend a convention of the Mahila Shanti Sena (MSS) members. I had heard about the MSS movement in several Indian states that motivates, empowers, and unites rural women to take leadership in their community or village for peaceful development work and problem solving. The Women's Forum seminar at the OSA convention in 2011 had featured it. But to be able to actually meet some of the empowered rural women and learn first-hand about what they do was indeed a rare opportunity. So I gladly accepted the invitation and participated.



*Convention banner*

The convention started with a welcoming ceremony. We all, about 200 in number, stood outdoors forming a circle, receiving and passing a welcome bouquet of flowers from one to the next in the circle. We also lighted our candles with the candle flame of a neighbor and let the other neighbor light her candle with our flame. We



*Welcome ceremony*

mounted our lit candles at the center of the circle. There was a group song in which everyone participated. After this simple symbolic ceremony that reaffirmed our equality, solidarity, and peaceful strength, we quietly entered the building and climbed the stairs to the conference room.

There again, a few participants kept singing a simple song of call to the meeting until everyone was seated, and we started the first session. Use of singing to indicate it is time to start a session continued before each session throughout the day. The songs were simple yet inspiring; singers sounded great even though there was no instrumental accompaniment.



*Call to session with songs*

The organizers of the convention, the founders and supporters of the MSS movement, a few dignitaries, and invited guests like me, had their turn to speak.

But my interest was primarily with the empowered village women, what they had to share about their local MSS group's activities. And, one after another, they came to the podium with natural ease, sharing their success stories, not only sustaining my interest but also stunning me with their eloquence, courage, and commitment. Each of them came across as a confident, strong, aware, and compassionate leader speaking from her heart. There was no bragging, no pretense, and no exaggeration. They simply told their story as is.

Sarojini from Jagatsingpur talked about how her group's thinking and activity has broadened from one's own livelihood and economic independence (which is, of course, an important step to self-empowerment) to the greater common good such as stopping alcoholism and creating roads in the village. A peaceful protest by 150 MSS women in front of the Block Development Office resulted in allocation of much needed funds for a road in the village, which now reminds everyone of the power of unity and purpose.



*Sri Gopal Mohanty and Jayasree Mahanti in a session on Livelihood*

Damayanti from Sambalpur spoke in her own Sambalpuri dialect about her group's initial struggles, the opposition the women faced from the men of the village and from the Police. Then came an opportunity to prove oneself by solving a problem affecting the whole village. Her village had a dispute with a neighboring village. Her villagers had a fish farm where they had worked very hard. But just before harvest time, some people from a neighboring village started claiming the fish farm and the fish as theirs. The men of the two villages started fighting. Damayanti's village folks felt like losers because the men from the neighboring village had more power and started filing court cases against them. At this point, the women resolved to do something about the injustice. They came in great numbers riding tractors, bicycles, and on foot seeking justice in the case and offering their testimony about the truth of the matter. They won not only the fish for the village but also the respect of others in their ability.

While each woman's story was unique, there was a common thread that connected all the stories. Before taking an MSS training and the MSS oath to bring positive change in their village through peaceful means, most of them had not set foot outside their home or immediate vicinity, spoken a word to anyone outside of their family or friend circle, or were not aware of their ability to do anything of value or importance.

After taking the MSS oath, when they started taking a positive interest and action toward the matters of the village that affected women and children, each group initially faced dismissal, ridicule, resistance, and sometimes violence from the men of the village and officers who are supposed to help them such as the Police; they had to struggle hard against many odds and did not give up and were eventually successful.



*Participants in a session*

Bharati from Mayurbhanj articulated this process of struggle, creative persistence, and eventual success very well. She talked about how initially women were not allowed in the village meetings, but when they asserted their right not only to attend the meetings but also to put items important to them in the agenda, no one could stop them. Male leaders also tried to prevent women from meeting with the BDO (Block Development Officer). But the women had their number, solidarity, and unity as their strength. No one could ignore or dismiss that. Eventually, the women's voices were heard. Now they are solving problems of different kinds in creative ways. Some examples are: rescuing a child who was kidnapped; generating income by creating and selling products such as mudhi, chhatua, and incense; hiring tutors to improve learning levels of the children who are not learning in school, and working in solidarity with

MSS groups in distant villages to provide food and relief during the great flood that had left both rich and poor equally starving.

Minati from Baleswar talked about how their group stood up against domestic violence and prevented it from happening at a time when it was a regular occurrence and Police were taking no action, even when a woman's life was in danger. She talked about a case where the women rescued a woman who had been hung with a gamuchha by her drunk husband and provided shelter to her in their own homes until the husband stopped drinking and being violent. Minati also talked about uncovering and stopping a school meal money scam as an example.

Kalpana from Talacher talked about her group's work in flood and erosion prevention by starting a large plantation on the banks of river Brahmani. Like the other groups, they also faced significant opposition initially.

When I heard these women speak, one after another, with courage and confidence, I knew that MSS had kept its promise. In this short article, I have only talked about the first session of the convention, but there was much more to it. For a full report of the MSS convention and planning meeting, please contact Sri Gopal Mohanty, Vice President of MSS International, at [mohanty@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca](mailto:mohanty@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca). To support the MSS empowerment and leadership training camps, please donate to SEEDS (see [www.seedsnet.org](http://www.seedsnet.org) for details).

*The author is a community volunteer living in Austin, Texas.*

## Journey of Motherhood – A unique experience

By Asha Purna Mishra (Khuku)

Motherhood is the world's most intensive course in love. We may experience it by turns, as a state of grace or oblivion, entrapment or exaltation, profound joy or numbing fatigue. Sometimes we go through all these emotions in the course of a single day. And yet the next morning we are ready to resume.

As I step back and dust the shelves of my memories, I clearly remember that the mother in me was not born at the moment my baby gave his first cry. It emerged gradually from the cumulative efforts of many months that preceded and followed his birth. But the sense of being a mother did unfold a new "ME" that I was completely unaware of.

The first touch of those gentle hands, soft as petals, the firm grip of those tender fingers holding me back and the gaze of those beaming eyes amazed me. Hardly did I realize when the spirit of motherhood dawned on me until I discovered my whining baby cradling happily in the comfort of my arms. He taught me the lesson of self-worth and made me realize how important I was for him. By then the journey of motherhood had already begun.

Gradually, time slipped by and I found myself digging into all possible sources of information, learning how to soothe a whining baby, comfort a sick child, engage his active mind, guide him through his first steps, help him utter his first words and all those endless endeavors that every mom takes. In this effort to extend the periphery of my knowledge, I eventually became a nurse, a teacher, a cook, a psychologist and what not.

I treasure each moment that I enjoyed watching him grow, but yes, many a time also got annoyed with the typical toddler pranks. I am not a superwoman. Sometimes I tried to be as strict as possible but finally realized that nothing but patience works. I learned to push the limits of my patience, though it was hard, with the belief that this tough time will pass by. And it surely did.

I also remember his preschool blues. Those anxious eyes loaded with tears and the tight hugs almost took away my peace of mind. I used to watch the other kids bidding goodbye to their moms with a smile on their faces and wondered when my turn would come. I now recall how another mom, who was watching me for quite a long time, patted my back and said, "Hang on, dear, and enjoy these precious moments, for they will soon slip by." She was right, and they did. Finally, everything turned

out to be fine and my child got well-adjusted in school. Slowly, the mom instinct had taught me to look beyond the tearful eyes of my unhappy three-year-old. I eventually learned that each kid is different, and no matter what, we should respect their individuality. Comparison can only bruise the self-esteem of a child. It is natural to have high hopes for our little ones, but sometimes as parents, we forget to keep those ideals in check and accept our child for who he is. Now that he has grown up, juggling amongst school and activities, I sometimes surely miss those precious clingy moments that I once, badly wanted to get rid of.

Children can be too shy, too weak, too stubborn or too loud and so on, but that's not all they are, and, when we fail to look beyond these characteristics to recognize their true personality, we fail to respect their individuality as a whole. They are all miracles and should be appreciated, cherished and loved as much as one can, whether they are popular or not. Growing up is a tough process, tougher than we think, and they need us a lot. They constantly need our gentle reassurance when things go wrong, our unfailing confidence in the face of apparent failure and our trust in God when life seems to be falling apart. My heart fills with deep reverence when I think of my mom, and I miss her a lot. Though I talk to her each day, hardly could I express my appreciation and gratitude but by being a mom myself, and I know deep in my heart that she understands.

Well, the journey of motherhood which had begun thus continues...rendering me some of life's best lessons and helping me to comprehend, accept and appreciate my child more and more with each passing day. Someone has rightly quoted, *"While we teach our children all about life, they teach us what life is all about."*



*Foot Note: I dedicate my article to all the moms, to let them know and feel that they truly are admired for being the beautiful mother they are. –Khuku Mishra*

## Letter to a Child – The World Awaits

By Srikanta Mishra

Some fifteen years ago, as you were excitedly looking forward to the first day of kindergarten, I penned the first in a series of such letters to you. Back then, I wanted to share with you a few facts and stories about our Indian heritage and culture and give you a sense of pride in that identity. Over the years, these efforts have become more irregular than I had hoped for. But you seem to have successfully managed straddling two different cultures while navigating the troubling waters of adolescence.

So today, as you stand poised to enter the threshold of young adulthood, far away from home, I offer to you these words of advice about a few basic values and habits. Some of these came from my parents. Others have come from learning what to do (*and what not to do*) by watching how people act and behave. I hope you will dwell on these words and adapt them as you see fit for your own journey through life.

- Balance: There just isn't enough time to enjoy everything that life entices us with. Whether it is "study" vs. "party", or "work" vs. "family", a sense of balance can help you prioritize your time commitments and avoid over-indulgence.
- Moderation: Practice moderation in speech, food and clothing. She who has the most toys does not always end up winning. Stay away from ostentation, but don't deny yourself. Moderation is all about self-control, not self-denial.
- Respect: Be respectful of elders AND youngers, superiors AND inferiors, as well as your culture and traditions. Treat others as you would want them to treat you. And never act in a manner that would make you lose respect for yourself.
- Humility: Be proud of who and what you are, but do not shy away from recognizing the accomplishments of your peers. Doing so will not "put you down", for life is not a zero sum game, but will elevate you in the eyes of others.
- Sadhana: A journey of discipline and practice in pursuit of a goal, *sadhana* is the foundation for success. So, regardless of whether medicine or music or community service is your passion, let *sadhana* sustain you and help you avoid mediocrity.
- Angst: (Almost) everything can be dealt with – given a little bit of time. Don't rush or be forced into a decision – unless something is truly life threatening. Take a few deep breaths while figuring out your next step.
- Punctuality: Always give yourself 5 extra minutes. That will save you from constantly rushing to your destination (and unintended consequences thereof), while allowing you to gather your thoughts before your next engagement.
- Breakfast: Too often, we start the day on the run and it goes downhill from there. Take the time to sit down for a good/healthy breakfast, look out the window, and enjoy life in the slow lane while it lasts. You will be ready to face the day with a smile.
- Prayers: A prayer, it is said, is but a wish turned heavenward. It is also an opportunity for contemplation and reflection. Try ending your day with a few *shlokas* from your Balavihar days. The age-old wisdom of these verses never fails to revive.
- Exercise: Think of exercise as a companion to prayer. A few minutes of basic stretching, yoga routines, biking or brisk walking every day is all it takes – even when a modern gym is not around the corner. Finally, sit up straight; don't be afraid to ask questions or speak up; remember that no one can take advantage of you without your permission; stand up and be firm about your rights, and SMILE! The world awaits.

*Srikanta Mishra lives in Dublin, OH, and is a frequent contributor to the OSA Souvenir. He is trying to grow down, as his children are growing up.*

## Visiting Pratham Programs in Rural Odisha

By Mamata Misra

In 2011, I joined the Austin chapter of Pratham USA ([www.prathamusa.org](http://www.prathamusa.org)) when I came to know that there are 210 million children in India of age 6-14, out of which 100 million can't read, even after being enrolled in school. Pratham's goal is to remedy this problem by bringing about transformation in a large scale so that every child is not only in school but also learning well.

It is this last clause where most Indian schools have failed, as evident by Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), India's largest survey of literacy and numeracy (see more at <http://www.prathamusa.org/programs/asere>). I learned that Pratham works in 21 out of 28 states in India using cost-effective, efficient, and scalable methods, training 65,000 volunteers annually, and forming partnerships with communities, corporations, and governments. I also learned that with Pratham's intervention, in some parts of India, in a short time, the measured reading level of 5<sup>th</sup> graders had increased from 35% to 62%, and math level from 40% to 71%.

So what about Odisha? I learned that Pratham was very active in Odisha, working in selected blocks of 100 villages in all 30 districts, a total of 3000 villages. During an Odisha visit in February 2012, when I expressed my wish to visit some Pratham programs near Bhubaneswar, Puspanjali Parida, Pratham's State Head in Odisha, kindly arranged a two-day visit to programs in Salepur and Jajpur areas. Having lived mostly in cities, this was quite an experience for me. The villages I visited had about 50-70 households living mostly in huts. Access was by narrow unpaved (some paved) roads. Families owned small amounts of land, growing some cash crops. Signs of poverty were everywhere but somewhat softened by the agricultural landscape and presence of nature, in comparison to the stark urban slums.



I observed Pratham's community classes for children in 4 villages, a 4-day learning camp for children in one village, a computer class and a spoken English class for volunteer tutors in another village as part of Pratham's Education for Education program, and government schools in 3 villages that had integrated Pratham methodology into regular school hours, taught by regular teachers trained by Pratham. I got the opportunity to speak with Pratham staff at all levels (state, district, and cluster) and teachers in the government schools that work with Pratham. I browsed Pratham's educational materials and supplemental books. Pratham field workers showed me how they decide the initial placement level of a new child and how they track his/her progress. I was touched by the openness and welcoming attitude of all the Pratham workers I met, whether paid or volunteer. They answered my unending whats, whys, and hows with patience. They appreciated that an Odia from the US took the time to visit them and learn about what they do; apparently, I was the first to do so in the area I visited. And then there were the happy faces of children confirming that whatever Pratham does was appealing to them. I was even invited to participate in children's activities and interact with them.

Why do kids that lag behind or drop out of regular schools learn with Pratham's intervention? The first thing I observed is the right attitude in the Pratham workers: truly believing that education is a fundamental right, and that every child deserves the opportunity to learn, to break the cycle of poverty. I noticed that Pratham consistently uses a simple and effective method to engage the children at every step. Children are tutored to master the basic skills: native language (reading, writing) and arithmetic. A simple pre-test evaluates what the



child has mastered in each language area: nothing, letters, words, sentences, stories; and similarly in the arithmetic area: nothing, digits, numbers, add/subtract, multiply/divide. Children are allowed to learn starting at their current level, and a goal is set to advance to the next higher level in 3 months. A tutor works with a small group of children (10-12) at the same level. Each child's progress, not just the attendance, is tracked.



Children and tutors take interactive roles in the participatory learning process. For example, I saw children playing a basket game called 'tokei khela' in Odia, where a basket of flash cards (letter, word, digit, number, depending on class and level) was passed and children drew from it to recognize what was on their card. I saw the use of charts and posters to learn new concepts or master learned concepts. One poster was titled Surya (the sun), and while discussing pictures in the poster, the children were forming sentences about why the sun is important to them and creating a group composition, first orally, and then writing it on the board. It was a pleasure to see a lot of hands going up when the tutor asked a question.

In a higher-level language class, I saw a tutor asking the children open-ended questions about a Nadee (river) poster to activate their observation and imagination. Pointing to two figures sitting near a river, she asked, "If these two were you and your friend, what would you be talking about?" One child would suggest a conversation possibility taking a hint from the picture, the group would contribute details, and finally two children would act out the conversation. In another class, the tutor was asking an environmental question using the same poster: what would happen to the water quality of the river if we do this or that?

In a higher-level arithmetic class, the tutor asked the class to create a word problem. A child created a problem and wrote it down on the little chalkboard with a clear handwriting. Then the children were asked how they would solve the problem. A second child offered a correct arithmetic operation to use. The tutor asked everyone for agreement or disagreement. A third child volunteered to come to the board to work it out. And lastly, since the problem happened to be about buying some books by producing the right amount of money, two other children acted out the transaction using 'play money'.





Pratham Odisha has its state office in Cuttack. Cuttack also has a few Pratham urban learning centers in slum areas. I did not visit the urban centers or the state office but focused on the rural programs within a few hours reach of Bhubaneswar. Each day, a staff member from the state office escorted me to the rural centers I visited and helped me understand Pratham's structure and operation in Odisha.

In Odisha, 12,000 dedicated volunteer tutors trained in Pratham methodology are working with children before or after school in the 3000 villages. I observed some of these volunteer tutors in action as already mentioned. Who are these volunteers, and why do they work so hard day after day without being paid? A typical volunteer is a young girl of the same village who has completed high school (or some college) but has no scope for higher learning or a paid job. Pratham provides her the tutor training and the tutoring experience for free; during her volunteer year, she also receives functional skill training such as computer literacy and spoken English through Pratham. These incentives have been useful in recruiting and retaining volunteers, helping both the tutor and the children.

To recruit, train, and support these 12,000 volunteer tutors, Pratham Odisha employs 150 Cluster Resource Leaders (CRLs), each CRL in charge of a cluster of 20 villages. I met several CRLs. We sat on the floor in a circle and had an open discussion. They are paid a very small salary, hard to live on, as one of them said. They travel from village to village at their own expense. But they seemed proud of their work. The tangibility of the result of their work must be rewarding. One CRL had been there for 5 years. Another had started with Pratham as a volunteer tutor and then become a CRL.

How do they mobilize a community to start a class, to get the children to come to classes and find the volunteers? I asked. They talked about going to the *Panchayats* (local elected leaders) and getting their support and then calling a *Pallisabha* (village meeting) to get the support of the residents. Sometimes they hold 4-day learning camps (like the one I observed in one village) to give the community a taste and feel for Pratham's classes. Parents want their children to learn well, and children enjoy the Pratham method. So it has not been a problem in the areas I visited, I was told. During my visit, I did see parents at the classes.



However, not all regions are the same; if you go to a tribal district that is inflicted with frequent violence, you may see a different picture or hear a different story, one trainer told me. But Pratham has a presence in every single district in Odisha. That is impressive!

The 150 CRLs are trained and supported technically by 8 resource persons that form the State Resource Group (SRG), who are trained by Pratham India at a national training center at Aurangabad, Maharashtra. Also, 15 District Resource Leaders (DRLs) are employed, each in charge of two districts (10 clusters, 200 villages), to manage Pratham's rural programs and the CRLs. Thus, the entire rural program of Pratham in 3000 villages in Odisha operates with about 180 paid employees and 12,000 unpaid volunteer tutors, one reason for Pratham's programs being cost-effective.

Another reason is not spending money on buildings. I saw classes being conducted outdoors where children sat on sacks or inside a volunteer's house if she had such space to offer. I also saw classes inside school buildings, outside a temple, inside a shed with a hole in a wall for a window. Pratham puts money where it matters the most: creating learning material, training of trainers and volunteers, and a lean qualified staff and support structure for enabling volunteers to do the real work.



I browsed Pratham's storybooks for children that have been translated into Odia and are being used in Odisha. These books have large illustrations and a few words per page as in children's books found in the western countries. Pratham has published over 200 titles at different reading levels. I saw about 20 or so in Odia. Pratham makes these books available to various schools and libraries.

The government of Odisha and Pratham agreed (signed an MOU) to a partnership last year. Pratham has already trained two teachers in each government primary school in its area of operation in Odisha to implement Pratham methodology in their school. I met some teachers who had received this training and one headmaster in a government school in Jajpur district who are already using the Pratham method in their school. However, most schools were waiting for government authorization to be able to start using the method. A sudden change in the State Secretary of Primary Education had caused some uncertainty and anxiety about when the government will give the needed authorization.

Pratham is making a difference all over India, including Odisha, by providing scalable model educational programs, creating educational standards, measuring actual learning levels, advocating for educational reform, testing innovative programs, and facilitating local solutions. If each of us who has had the opportunity to a good education would get involved and support Pratham's efforts, lives of millions of children could change. To learn how to get involved, visit [www.prathamusa.org](http://www.prathamusa.org).

*The author is a community volunteer living in Austin, Texas.*

## **OSA – Odisha Development**

By Annapurna Devi Pandey, Prashant Sahoo, Abani Patra, Nishikanta Sahoo, Sushant Routray, Dharendra Kar, Nalin Sahoo, Jeet Goel, Leena Mishra, Kuku Das, Susant Satpathy and Amiya Nayak, and The OSA-Odisha Development Committee/Team.

### Backgrounder Information:

During mid-October 2011, the OSA President, Dr. AD Pandey, proposed three names for the OSA-Odisha Committee (AN, PS and ADP as the Executive Committee coordinator). The new committee recommended re-naming the OSA-Odisha Committee into OSA-Odisha Development Committee because OSA is not organizationally positioned to uptake and addressing the complex issues of Odisha State related to corruption, illiteracy, poverty, politics, tribal culture, socio-economics, industry, globalization & Odisha and under-development. Rather, the new O-OD Committee may explore, develop and execute some new ideas related to Odisha Development that may be realistically feasible through continuity by a voluntary organization like OSA. Later, additional names were proposed for the committee and team. The committee experienced difficulties in attracting committed volunteers for O-OD. Also, the committee researched and found no specific records of the last 8-10 years related to OSA platform-based Odisha oriented development projects, other than some symposia/meetings/exchanges with no follow ups and executions of real development initiatives.

O-OD Committee Recommendations:

1. Re-name OSA-Odisha into OSA-Odisha Development (committee and program).
2. Re-Orient OSA-Odisha Development mission as an OSA Organization-driven and Odisha-oriented activity through the OSA name, banner, umbrella and platform.
3. Master Memorandum of Understanding (M-MOU, 10 year and then perpetual/open-ended) between OSA and Government of Odisha/Team Odisha (Proposed - Odisha Development Center-vODC/pODC, Think Tank, Invest Odisha Business Symposium and Public-Government-Private-Partnership Model)
4. Top-10 Development Sectors (Virtual Development, Conferences & Development Information Exchange Networks, Education/Higher Education & Social Entrepreneurship – top 3-4 areas to be initiated and pursued. Other development sectors identified were: Policy Papers & Think Tank, Technology & Social Innovation, Healthcare & Wellness, Tourism, Women & Children, Agriculture/Food & Natural Resources)
5. Guidelines & Continuity: OSA needs a well-defined & well documented System, Policy & Guidelines, before it starts anything. Formalization for continuity irrespective of the OSA EC's 2 year voluntary tenure in tandem with the prospective committee, volunteers, focus groups & collaborating partners.

Objectives:

OSA-Odisha Development (O-OD) is an OSA Organization-driven Odisha Development activity with an objective to promote, facilitate, and share ideas/information in various development sectors in Odisha such as: virtual development, development information networks, education, public-government-private-partnership (PGPP), social entrepreneurship, and other developmental exchanges between North America (USA/Canada) and Odisha (India).

O-OD Strategic Concept Development and Resources (mid Oct 2011 – mid Jan 2012)

1. The new idea of OSA - Odisha Development, as an OSA Organization-driven and innovative PGPP model (Figure 1).
2. OSA Volunteer System (Team, Committee, Development Focus Groups/Higher Education, EC) - to rotate every 2 years.
3. Drafts and Slides-Blueprint; Protocol, Meeting Minutes; Time Schedule, Program & Outcome.
4. Odisha Development Fund (ODF) – Approved by OSA EC/BOG (January 2012).
5. eGroup (Google): ([osa-odisha-development@googlegroups.com](mailto:osa-odisha-development@googlegroups.com)) (January 14, 2012).

Figure 1:

O-OD Programs Initiated and to be Followed up within Odisha:

On December 22, 2011, OSA-Utkal University Higher Education Workshop was organized by OSA in collaboration with UU at Vani Vihar under the title - Higher Education and Research Opportunities in North American Universities. OSA Faculties were Dr. Sukant Mohapatra (workshop lead), Professor Durga Misra and Prof. Niranjan Tripathy. OSA Coordinator was Dr. ADP, along with UU Host & Coordinator, Prof. Samson Moharana. Such HE Workshops are planned to be organized in other regions of Odisha. Videos of OSA-UU Workshop being distributed within Odisha-based universities/institutions and North American-based chapters of OSA. A booklet (on higher education) is planned to be published and circulated among Odisha-based universities and educational centers (coordinators - PS, SKM & others from HE DFG).

Next Steps:

- Development Focus Groups & DFG Leads are being identified to target top 3-4 specific development sectors.
- During the OSA Annual Convention (starting from 2012), the convention/symposia coordinators may align the Socio-Economic Development Symposium Tracks with the Invest Odisha, OSA-Odisha Business Symposium Themes to synergize the development focus groups (DFGs) for Invest (in Development of) Odisha.
- Follow Up, Evaluation and Continuity of the O-OD program, a part of OSA's Constitutional Preamble, Vision and Mission.

*(The article was coordinated and communicated by AN, Member, O-OD Committee/Team).*

**I Am Goddess**

By Parimita Mohanty

I am Goddess is the Mother, the Divine Feminine, the Shakti, the Supreme Soul! She is the Eternal Light that enlightens all! The Giver of life and death. She takes care of the whole creation under her big universe, where she creates us, preserves us and destroys us. While by destroying she creates, by creating the world she destroys...

Long before this, I knew a Goddess separate from me; I searched for Her in images and idols, in something or in some being. I am Goddess is the discovery of the "self" inside the self. It is my realization, recognition and appreciation of the Goddess within; The Goddess within me.

Saying "I am Goddess" needs a lot of strength and courage, especially in our culture where it's OK to seek and love God in any form but not in the self. We are conditioned to be devout without but not within. Just like any truth seeker, I walked on the path of loving God, knowing God and finding God in the nameless and formless being.

I am Goddess is my spiritual journey of the self in finding truth. The journey was not very easy before I got any closer to tasting a little nectar of the Mother.

Here I would like to share the marketing slogan of Continental Airlines .....

*"Work Hard, Fly Right."*

Believe it or not, I have worked hard to fly right and am still working hard. I am proud that I didn't give up; I am proud that I always had hope; I am proud that I was focused; I am proud that I moved on. Many struggles came; many challenges came my way but I went on gracefully.

I learned from my conditions, which were the result of my realizations. Otherwise I would never have the urge to know, to learn, what's outside the box. It's like I asked for strength and God gave me difficulties to make me strong. "Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word happy would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness" (Carl Jung).

In search of happiness, I learned many things, such as Odissi dance, music and artwork to keep myself happy and others too. It did help me for a while but couldn't last very long. As nothing stays permanent, this happiness had to go away too.

I joined a part time job. I liked it, as I had a reason to go out from the regular house chores. Still, I was not very joyful as my freedom was under someone's command. So I decided to be free.

After a couple of years, something unusual happened to me. I started dreaming several deities every night. Whenever I would try to sleep, Gods and Goddess would appear in my dreams. Sometimes they would scare me, sometimes they would have a good message for me. It happened for about a year. Every time I saw a dream, I would try to recall it, draw the pictures and write the message of it. Whenever I felt a little anxious, I would read those and feel relaxed. But the scary ones started bothering me.

So I decided to consult my Father about it and possibly find out a reason and solution for it. On my trip to India, I went to a Hanuman temple with my Father, where the pundits did a study of the Wonder Oracle (Pothi). There were some astrology and numerology researchers involved too. Finally, we were told that there is a very positive sign of building a temple in my birth chart. From studying the Pothi (Wonder Oracle), they actually found out why someone would see certain kinds of dreams.

All the new discoveries were almost like a new life for me. I couldn't have ever imagined a temple in my whole life. I have known only the Royals who built temples from their related dreams. Why did I have such dreams? What is the spiritual connection of this with my life? I couldn't understand a bit of it then.

We decided to build the temple. It took exactly nine months to finish it. When the time came for inauguration, we thought of inviting the King (Gajapati Maharaj Dibyasingha Deb), The Maharaja of Puri, to bless the ceremony. Back then, the Maharaja was visiting the United States with his family. We were lucky to invite him for a night and were able to discuss our temple inauguration ceremony. He agreed to come.

When we went India, we met the Maharaja to talk about the temple ceremony venue. The inauguration ceremony went on for about a week. The Maharaja was invited on the last day to offer "Purnahutti" (offering your complete self and asking the deity to fill you with the divine light).

Upon his arrival, the pundits announced for all the devotees to gather in the temple for a darshan ("seeing") of the representative of Lord Jagannath. Hearing this, I got goose bumps all over the body. This was a very rare opportunity to be a part of this auspicious occasion. It was a dream which came true.

I came back to USA after the temple inauguration ceremony. I got emotionally connected with the deities, and life went on a good track for me. But my search did not end there.

After a couple of years, we moved to Portland, Oregon. I was very happy to be in a new and different place.

Once, we were invited to a friend's house, where I met an amazing Divine Spirit. They called him Gururji. I had a very good conversation with him that night. He asked me, "What is your path?" I answered, "Hanuman Ji." He said, "Hanumanji always guards outside the temple of the Mother, and one day he will take you to her." The Mother is the Mother of Universe. He was talking about "Maa Kali."

Soon I got attracted towards the philosophy of the Divine Mother. Everything started to change in me. My devotion towards the Guru and the Mother started to grow. The way he would teach, talk, worship, meditate, share the wisdom of the Mother, I couldn't hold the false ego any longer. I surrendered. I felt as if I was starving from birth to this moment of my life, and now I was drinking this nectar of bliss, of love, of joy, of unity and of merging with the supreme, with the higher self.

By now I could understand the meaning of our move to Oregon. Everything was clear and in front of my eyes. When I started my journey with the Mother, She would be scary sometimes. As the years went by, our bond grew stronger and fear started to fade away.

By the time my faith was developing, we moved to another house in the country. It was a nice property, with manmade waterfalls and a lake, beautiful landscaping and very quiet, almost like an ashram setting. It was scary at nights, as there were not many street lights, no noise, few houses and neighbors around. It took me many and many sleepless nights to get used to the new space. But I loved to live there; I never had a thought of going away from there just because I was not comfortable at night. We spent almost eight years in that house in the country, but I really never had something that scared me except my own mind. It was the most amazing, beautiful, sacred place that I had ever lived. It was a gift for me from the Divine for a purpose. And it did its magic work for the reason it took me there.

My life transformed. My fear of the Mother's appearance disappeared. We became Mother-daughter. I would talk to her, kiss her, hug her, share with her everything I wanted her to listen to. I would never ask her for any material wish as I know that she knows the needs of my family. Sometimes, in emergencies, I would run to the

Mother as a child and cry, and she would handle it to make me happy. There were many times She changed things for me in minutes from worse to better.

Once, on Guruji's birthday, we all went to the temple to surprise him. The devotees brought a vegan cake for him and handmade food and gifts as well. He had tears in his eyes, seeing the love of the devotees for him. When I looked at the Mother's image in the temple, I saw tears coming out from both of her eyes. It was unbelievable. I was very fortunate to see that. Then Guruji questioned the devotees, "Do you see tears in Maa's eyes?" Some people said, "Yes" and some said, "No." We all praised the Mother by doing arati (*it is mainly done for atonement of faults and evoking mercy of lord*). As I could see her tears, I was joyfully celebrating the "Oh My God" moments. Then came the life changing moment when all the devotees came forward to offer her flowers. I did offer a flower, too, with tears, of love in my eyes. What I saw was that my flower didn't drop like the others but stayed in the image right by her heart. It never dropped that evening. And I took a picture of that moment. I clicked that moment, and it was clicked forever for me. And Guruji said that means she accepted you, she accepted your love, now she is going to take care of you, forever.

I framed the picture of the Mother which was a blessing just for me. It is eight years from that day to today, and I have walked with her every single step without any doubt in my heart. As the years passed by, I slowly started seeing the Mother in me. She manifests in me. I became fearless. I protected and guided my family from any negativity. I became like an angel watching over my family. *I became their Mother and their Goddess.*

I am not biting my tongue today by daring to say this. What else could be a greater gift for a mother than seeing her child completely merged into her? Wouldn't your mother like that? I am always with and within her. She asked who the "I" is. Who is experiencing all these? Is that the mind, the brain, the senses, the heart or the supreme soul? She said, "I am all these."

The "I" that I was thinking about is dead here. What remains is only her, the creator, the energy, the Shakti, the Mother. And she named herself "I am Goddess"!

*"Is kAli, my Divine Mother, of a black complexion?  
She appears black because She is viewed from a distance;  
but when intimately known She is no longer so.  
The sky appears blue at a distance, but look at it  
close by and you will find that it has no color.  
The water of the ocean looks blue at a distance,  
but when you go near and take it in your hand;  
you find that it is colorless."  
(Ramakrishna Paramhansa)*

She is the Generator, Operator, Destroyer, Dancer, Enlightener, Shakti, and Supreme soul!!! I am so very thankful and grateful to know, see, breathe, live and realize the Mother. Just like a child is a part of his/her mother, I am (the soul) part of the spiritual mother. I breathe in her, she breathes in me. There is no difference between her and me. When I meditate on her, I find myself energetic, peaceful and content. I started focusing on that part of me which gets charged up with her thought, meditation, exploration and expression. And I found, every time, it is the "self". The self is never inseparable from the higher self. Just like yogurt is made from milk, coconut oil is made from coconut. Before I considered myself as a coconut, but I didn't know that I can process myself to its best final part the oil. The mother enlightened my mind gradually. The self always had the awareness; the mind became the witness of it all. The self stayed rooted like a tree and grew into branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. I am fortunate to find my roots in my tree.

Today I am a Yogi (a household yogi). Every day, I practice yoga, meditation and a vegan life style. Now I understand why social gatherings would horrify me but a crowd in a spiritual retreat would just uplift me. I got detached from people whose energy would bring pain to my heart. As I united with the Mother, she revealed the hidden attributes of my soul. I started painting from my intuition, studied about natural medicine, and learned feng shui, energy work, cooking consciously, dancing and writing.

All these qualities of the Mother have started reflecting in me. But it's not the end. I still want to explore more adventures with her.

*"You know I am a fool. I know nothing.  
Then who is it that says all these things?  
I say to the Divine Mother:*

*'O Mother, I am the machine and Thou art the Operator.  
 I am the house and Thou art the indweller.  
 I am the chariot and Thou art the Charioteer.  
 I do as Thou make me do. I speak as Thou make me speak;  
 I move as Thou make me move. It is not I!  
 It is all Thou! It is all Thou!  
 Hers is the glory; we are only Her instruments."  
 (Ramkrishna Paramhansa)*

So many dreams, so little time, so little life. Just enjoying her every day. I still have to go through clouds and I am still shaky. Looking from the top is all parts of the play. Big drama, big stage, some have specific roles to play. Ha ha..... Guruji somehow knew I was always a writer inside, so he blessed me to start writing about the glory of the Mother. But I was quiet, not ready before. But here I am now with the grace of the Mother.

Here, "I am Goddess" is presented as a summary of my own journey in finding self in the Goddess. One day I have a vision of completing a book about I am Goddess. This is a mere practice of courage to bring the goddess in me out to the universe to celebrate the glorious Mother.

May the Mother Bless All!!!

Jai Maa.

*My name is Parimita Mohanty. I live in Portland, Oregon with my husband, son and brother. I enjoy traveling, reading, writing, yoga, nature and Mothering.*

#### **Forty-eight Years in America and Forty-three Years in O.S.A.: Some Observations and Comments.**

By Dr. Amiya K. Mohanty

##### Journey to America:

After finishing my Masters in Sociology from University of Bombay in 1959, I started my professional career in the Department of Rural Economics and Sociology in Utkal University. This department was founded by Ford Foundation with the primary objectives of conducting social and economic research. Besides conducting social and economic surveys, the department developed a post-masters and pre-doctoral diploma curriculum named "Diploma in Social Science Methodology (D.S.S.M.)". This program included courses in Rural or Agricultural Economics, Statistics, Sociology and Research Methods in Social Sciences. The program also included a requirement of completing a dissertation. Since I had a research position in the department, I got the opportunity of completing that diploma.

In the beginning of 1962, Dr. J. Sharma, our Reader in Sociology accepted a job in Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization and resigned the position in Utkal University. Thus I was appointed in her place as a lecturer in Sociology. I had the responsibility of teaching courses in Sociology and Research Methods besides guiding dissertations for the D.S.S.M.

In the academic year of 1962, the University started a Master's program in Applied Economics within the Department of Rural Economics and Sociology. I taught courses such as General Sociology and Research Methods that were included in the Applied Economics Curriculum.

In the month of August 1964, I started my journey to the United States with Smith-Mundt and Fulbright fellowships. All the Smith-Mundt and Fulbright fellows selected in India flew from Bombay to London under the supervision of the program Director of United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI).

From London as per the Fulbright guidelines, all the scholars from Asia and Europe got in an Italian boat and did sail to port in New York. Except some sea sickness for a couple of days, the overall trip by boat from London to New York was very pleasant and memorable because we had a grand celebration of Indian Independence day in the boat itself. From New York, as planned by Institute of International Education (IIE) I went by train in Pullman coach to Toccoa, a small city in Georgia to spend one month with an American Host Family under the program of "International Home-stay Program." This was considered to be a period of orientation for



starting the life in America. I certainly enjoyed being there for one month. My host Dr. Pittard was a physician in Toccoa Hospital. His wife Miriam was a piano player and singer in local Methodist Church. They had three daughters in the age range from 6 to 13. I had an interesting and rewarding life there. At the request of many organizations and institutions such as rotary club, high school, junior college and churches etc., I lectured on variety of topics on Indian socio-cultural, religious and political life. In fact depending on the audience, the topics of discussion ranged from Lord Krishna and Mohabharat war to Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence and sacred cow. After spending about a month in Toccoa, Georgia, I flew in the last part of September to Tallahassee, Florida to join the Ph.D. program in Sociology at Florida State University.

My course work and Ph.D. thesis program went on smoothly, though at times I got a little homesick and bored in the first academic year. I was the only graduate student from Orissa on F.S.U. campus although we had a few Indian graduate students. We had one popular Oriya faculty in Engineering department named Dr. Ganesh P. Mohanty. He was very busy for his teaching and research, but he was very kind, compassionate and considerate. He always had time for me if I needed some help or suggestion.

#### Visiting Oriyas in New York in summer of 1965.

After spending a rigorous academic year in Tallahassee, I wanted to take a trip somewhere. I came to know about the World Fair of 1964 which was continuing in New York until 1965. I wanted to see that world fair for which I wanted to go to New York. Fortunately I knew Dr. K.M. Das, a veterinary doctor in New York and his wife Mrs. Basanti Das since my childhood, since they were related to us. I called him and introduced myself and expressed my intention to visit New York. He was very happy and encouraged me to visit him. Dr. K.M. Das was a veterinary doctor in Animal Medical Center. After receiving my call about my arrival in New York Airport, he sent one of his colleagues Dr. Amiya Patnaik (who was also a veterinary doctor) to the airport to receive me. Soon after meeting me, Dr. Patnaik insisted that I call him Bhai, not Babu. He was a very amiable and a friendly person. He took me to his apartment and we both had lunch together. His wife Mrs. Kabita Patnaik was visiting India at that time. Thus he was alone that time. He invited Dr. K.M. Das (Krushna Bhai) to have dinner with us that evening. He also invited Dr. and Mrs. Sashi B. Mohanty and their daughter who all lived in Washington D.C. and a close friend of him named Dr. Subhas Pal to join with us for dinner. In fact, for the first time in the United States I saw a group of Oriyas together. That night, I went to Krushna Bhai's apartment and he requested Amiya Bhai to take me around and show me the world fair next day. Next day after we were back from the world fair, I accompanied Krushna Bhai to his farm of 160 acres located about 100 miles from New York, where his wife Basi Dei and their two sons and a daughter were vacationing for summer. After spending that weekend there, I came back to Tallahassee to start my fall term. From 1965 fall semester I had to work very hard for my courses and for my thesis work. I also had to spend about 15 hours per week for the departmental projects since that was the assignment I had to complete for my Research Assistantship.

#### Teaching Career in America and my involvement in O.S.A.

In June 1967 I finished my Ph.D. in Sociology. As soon as I finished my degree, I got a teaching job at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Before joining as a faculty member at the university, I visited my family in India. I got married, spent about a month at home and came back to Bowling Green with my wife, Sarat Kumari. Due to my visa problem (exchange visa) I had to move to Georgia Southern University next year and to Eastern Kentucky University in the subsequent year. Finally I and my wife received our Green Card for permanent residence in the United States.

In fall 1969, while I started teaching in Western Kentucky University, I received a nice letter from Dr. Gauri Das, who informed me about the efforts made by a group of Oriyas in the New England area to start an Association for Oriyas. I immediately wrote back to him indicating my full support for this.

#### Membership in Orissa Society of Americas (O.S.A.)

Our residency in the United States has been for about forty eight years and we have been members in O.S.A. since the 1970s. In the following pages an attempt will be made to carefully examine our O.S.A. Organization with respect to its relevance and impacts on the Oriya diaspora in Americas.

#### Brief History of O.S.A.:

As per the report of Dr. Gauri Das, one of the founding members of O.S.A., this organization came into being in October 1970 in Hartford, Connecticut as a non-political and non-profit organization with its Constitution and Bylaws and with tax-exempt status. Besides Dr. Gauri Das, there were several other Oriyas such as Dr.

Bhabagrahi Mishra, Dr. Nagabhusan Senapati, Late Dr. Krushna Mohan Das, Dr. Jogeswar Rath, Mrs. Sakuntala Mangaraj, Dr. Rabi Patnaik and Dr. Amiya K. Patnaik, etc. who became members of the first O.S.A. executive committee. Progressively O.S.A. gained the support of more and more Oriyas from all over America. Steadily O.S.A. embarked upon a variety of important activities such as publishing Newsletters and Oriya Directories etc.

In March 1971 the Executive Committee was reconstituted with some new members. At this point the members felt that the geographical distances between the members were too large, thus it was decided to open local chapters. It was also felt that the local chapters would further the aims and objectives of O.S.A. through collaboration with the parent organization. Thus the number of local chapters steadily increased over times and today we have about 14 chapters in O.S.A. organizations as of 2011.

#### O.S.A. Constitution:

According to Dr. Gauri Das, the first OSA Constitution was drafted by Dr. Bhabagrahi Mishra and Dr. Gauri Das in 1971 and was approved by the then Executive Committee that year. This drafted Constitution with some intermittent amendments continued to be the OSA Constitution until 1988.

In 1988 the Executive Committee of OSA felt that a new Constitution and Bylaws should take the place of the old Constitution since OSA was growing in size, more local chapters were joining and thus more articles of incorporation and more Bylaws were needed. Thus Mr. Ashok Das, the OSA president at that time appointed a committee consisting of me as chair and Drs. Digambar Mishra and Keshab Dwivedy and Mrs. Bijaya Mishra as members. This draft Constitution was adopted by the General Body on July 2, 1989. This Constitution was amended after two years replacing Executive Committee by the concept of "Board of Governors" that included the members of Executive Committee plus the local chapter presidents or coordinators. The previous Executive Committee concept was changed to "Executive Council." Another change was introduced, that is instead of one position of secretary-treasurer, there were created two separate positions, one being Secretary and the other as Treasurer. The role of each position was well defined. These amendments were passed in the General Body meeting on July 1, 1992.

As expected with the growth of the OSA organization, there was a significant increase in our membership and thus were created new situations as well as new points of view. This brought about the need for a careful review of our Constitution. Thus as Mrs. Bigyani Das mentioned in her report, a Constitution Review Committee was formed and discussions through telephones, E-mails and OSAnet etc. produced good recommendations for consideration by the Board of Governors. However based on those recommendations and consideration of the Board of Governors (BOG), the new Constitution was adopted in the General Body Meeting of OSA in Dallas, Texas on July 2, 2011. However, I came to know that for a few minor points, the adopted Constitution is being reviewed further for a final document.

#### O.S.A. Conventions:

Perhaps holding the annual OSA convention tends to be the most important function of the organization. Celebration of an annual convention becomes a conglomeration of a variety of social activities such as socialization, communication, individual and social interactions, and individual and group entertainments through dance, music, mehfil, sports and athletic activities etc. Progressively organizing and participating in seminars dealing with social, cultural, political, economic or spiritual issues is becoming popular. Almost in every convention a guest speaker and/or a keynote speaker is invited to address the group. The individual selected to address the group may be an intellectual giant, or a political figure, or a diplomat, or a civic leader, or an administrator, or a business leader, or a spiritual or a religious leader. To name a few, we had keynote speakers like Ambassador Abid Hussein, Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, journalist and samaj editor Mrs. Manorama Mohapatra, Minister Prafulla Ghyadai, Dr. Hrudananda Ray, Mr. Rajat Kar, well known writer Late Chittaranjan Das, Dr. Sarat Mishra, well known and widely respected physician, Mr. Sarat Mishra, former D.G. of police and minister in Indian Embassy in Washington D.C. etc.

I must mention here that General Body Meeting is an important function in the convention since that becomes a forum for discussion regarding the state of the organization about various issues pertaining to finance, constitution, election, future convention and other important issues as members raise. For illustration, the case histories of three conventions in which I was heavily involved are presented below.

#### OSA Southern Chapter and the 20th OSA Convention

Although since 1970s, I had maintained consistent relationship with OSA through my participation in various OSA activities such as serving in various committees like constitution committee, convention steering

committee, membership committee, convention seminar committee etc. My highpoint of involvement happened in 1989 when I was elected as the President of OSA. By 1980 the Southern Chapter of OSA of which I was one of the founding members became well established with a significant member of capable and enthusiastic individuals and their families. In 1989 our OSA convention was held in Nashville, Tennessee under the auspices of Southern chapter. The elected executive committee members namely Dr. Amiya Mohanty (myself), president, Mrs. Bijaya Mishra, vice president, Dr. Keshab Dwivedy, secretary, treasurer and Dr. Digambar Mishra, the editor of Newsletter were introduced and inaugurated. Mr. Sarat Misra, former D.G. of Police of Orissa State and a senior diplomat who was in the United States as the minister of Consular wing of the Indian Embassy graced the occasion as the chief guest along with his lovely wife Mrs. Pratiba Misra.

The 20th OSA Convention hosted by the Southern Chapter became enjoyable, rewarding and memorable. The convention included elaborate youth activities, adult-youth seminar, constructive general body meeting and delightful entertainment programs. Overall, the 20th OSA Convention hosted by the Southern Chapter became enjoyable, rewarding and most memorable. Unfortunately only about three days after this joyous occasion, our community was devastated by the sad news of the unexpected, sudden death of Subrina, an intelligent, attractive, brilliant and talented daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Nilamber Biswal of Maryland. In fact one cannot forget the super, but sadly the last Odissi dance performance of Subrina in the 20th OSA Convention.

#### 21st OSA Convention in Washington D.C.

For some time, the 21st OSA Convention was already planned to be held in Washington D.C. with a very capable and experienced individual namely Mr. Pratap Das, as the convenor and Mrs. Anu Biswal, mother of departed Subrina as the chair of cultural committee. It was very delicate, sensitive and difficult for me as president of OSA to request Anu to continue in that position of being the Chair of Cultural Committee. To our utmost pride, pleasure and gratification, she agreed to assume the responsibility and in fact she did a fantastic job. The 21st Convention was dedicated in the name of Subrina Biswal. The entertainment program was superb with the extravaganza Odissi dance performance of Ellora Raj and Jitu from Chitraklekha Academy in Toronto, Canada.

We were very fortunate to have our India's Ambassador in America, Honorable Dr. Abid Hussein as our chief guest along with Mr. Lalit Mansingh, the deputy chief of Mission in Indian Embassy. Ambassador Hussein gave an inspiring lecture pointing out the needs and importance of maintaining Oriya language, culture and heritage but at the same time to be proud to belong to India. The honorable Lalit Mansingh addressed the convention on June 30, 1990. In his illuminating speech, Mr. Mansingh emphasized the rich cultural heritage of the Oriyas and expressed his delight in their success stories in North America. It must be mentioned here that OSA Executive Committee with the help and promise of financial support by Dr. and Mrs. Nilamber Biswal, a scholastic award was instituted in the memory of Subrina Biswal namely "Subrina Memorial Scholastic Award". Another award was instigated same time namely "Kalashree" award, the objective of which was to honor distinguished person(s) for their dedication to promote art namely dance, music and acting, etc.

#### 22nd OSA Convention in Chicago

The 1991 OSA Convention was held in Chicago from July 4-7. Mrs. Mary Ann Pattanayak served as the Convener or chairperson of the Twenty second OSA Convention. The theme of the Convention was Festival of Orissa. Lots of emphases were placed on youth activities, membership drive and membership participation in OSA activities. The inauguration ceremony was held on July 5th morning. Mr. P. Santoshi, the Consul General of India in Chicago was the chief guest. The members of the executive committee for the year 1991-1993 were, Dr. Digambar Mishra, President, Mrs. Renuka Panigrahi, Vice President, Dr. Hemanta Senapati, Secretary-Treasurer and Dr. Kula Chandra Mishra, Editor. The newly elected President of OSA executive committee was introduced by me as the outgoing president. After the acceptance speech of the incoming president, Mr. Santoshi the chief guest of inauguration gave his keynote speech. Finally the inauguration ceremony was over after a vote of thanks offered to the guest of honor, to the members of outgoing executive committee, to the members of incoming executive committee and to the audience.

The General Body meeting was held in the afternoon and an elaborate entertainment program was catered in the evening. At this time as decided by the cultural committee, two individuals namely late Dr. Pramod Patnaik and Mr. Pratap Das received 'Kalashree' awards for their lifelong dedication for the promotion of arts such as dance, music and acting, etc. No doubt, the 22nd annual convention was enjoyable and rewarding.

During last two decades, OSA organization has steadily grown despite some conflicts and problems. It has continued to be strong and resilient. I want to point out here that there are some definite advantages and goal fulfillments in becoming a member of OSA. They are as follows:

1. It promotes and reinforces one's self-identity and belongingness to one's culture.
2. It helps to develop a sense of security through interactions and interdependence on mutual and/or group basis.
3. Membership and participation in one's common heritage and sub-cultural group within the large American society and culture provide the opportunities for social integration with an accepted set of norms, standards and values.
4. Membership and participation in OSA activities provide the opportunities for choosing friends and/or mates based on perceived compatibilities with respect to choice criteria.
5. The processes of socialization and transmission of culture are facilitated through membership and participation in group activities.
6. OSA newsletters, journals and souvenirs are excellent sources of news and information as well as sources of literary and issue oriented social, economic and cultural topics.

Thus membership in OSA and consistent participation in OSA activities are functional and rewarding.

#### Some Broad Consequences of OSA activities:

During the recent years, four conspicuous cultural ethos have developed in America because of our wide participation in activities strongly promoted by OSA. Those cultural ethos are as follows.

1. Development and popularity of Jagannath philosophy and Jagannath worship through establishment of Jagannath temples in several cities in America.
2. Gradual popularity of Odissi music and Odissi dance in America through the consistent promotion by OSA organization.
3. Development and enthusiastic promotion of Oriya Drama Festivals in different parts of America.
4. Efforts of a number of individuals and groups to promote Oriya language in North America through group discussions and publications of novels and poetry etc. in Oriya language.

These socio-cultural movements are going to have tremendous impact on our cultural heritage.

*Dr. Amiya K. Mohanty, Professor Emeritus in Sociology in Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY, is a founding life member of O.S.A. since 1969 and is a past president of O.S.A., 1989-91.*

**Poetic License****OSA 2012 - Theme Song**

ଏକ ମନ ଏକ ପ୍ରାଣ - ଏକ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଏକ ଚିହ୍ନ  
ଦେବୁ ପଣ୍ଡା

ଏ ମାଟିର ଲତାବନ  
ହୀମଭରା ଗିରିବନ  
ସେ ମାଟିର କଳାକୃତି  
ମ୍ଳେହଭରା କେତେ ସ୍ମୃତି  
ମନେଭରେ ଗୁଞ୍ଜନ  
ଆମେରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସନ୍ତାନ  
ଏକ ମନ ଏକ ପ୍ରାଣ ,  
ଏକ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଏକ ଚିହ୍ନ  
ମନେଭରେ ଝଞ୍ଜନ  
ଆମେରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସନ୍ତାନ ।

ଏ ମାଟିର ହୃଦନଦୀ  
ସେ ମାଟିର ମହୋଦଧି  
ଏ ଦେଶର ମୋପାମାଳେ  
ସେ ଦେଶର ଦେଉଳରେ  
ଆମେ ଖୋଜୁ ଜଗା କାଳିଆ  
ଆମେରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ  
ଏକ ମନ ଏକ ପ୍ରାଣ ,  
ଏକ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଏକ ଚିହ୍ନ  
ଆମେରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସନ୍ତାନ  
ଆମେ ଦି ମାଟିର ସନ୍ତାନ ।

ଏ ମାଟିର ବେଶଭୂଷା  
ମୁଖେ ଆମ ମାତୃଭାଷା  
ଏ ମାଟିର ଶୂନ୍ୟତାରେ  
ସେ ମାଟିର ଆତ୍ମୀୟତା  
ମନେଭରେ ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ବନି  
ଆମେରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସନ୍ତାନ

ଏକ ମନ ଏକ ପ୍ରାଣ ,  
ଏକ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଏକ ଚିହ୍ନ  
ଆମେରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସନ୍ତାନ  
ଆମେ ଦି ମାଟିର ସନ୍ତାନ ।

### ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ବିଳାପ ସ୍ବପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର (ରଥ)

‘କ’ଣ ଦେବି, କ’ଣ ନଦେବି’ !  
ସଂସାରର ଦବା ନବା ନିୟମ ଭିତରେ  
ବିତିଗଲା ବିଗତ ବୟସ ।  
ଏବେ ଜୀବନକୁ ଧରିବାନ୍ତି  
ରଖିବାକୁ ବେଳ ଆସିବାରୁ  
ନିଜପାଇଁ ଯାହୁଁତାହିଁ  
କାଣିଚାଏ ସାଇତି ରଖିବି ବୋଲି  
ଭାବିଲା ବେଳକୁ  
ଆଉ କିଛି ବାକି ନାହିଁ,  
ନା ସମୟ, ନା ସମ୍ବଳ,  
କିଛି ଆଉ ନାହିଁ...  
ନା ନିଜ ପାଇଁ  
ନା ଆଉ କା’ ପାଇଁ  
କିଛି ଆଉ ବାକି ନାହିଁ,  
ଇଚ୍ଛା ଅନିଚ୍ଛାର ଲୁଚକାଳି  
ଖେଳ ଭିତରେ...  
ଦେବା ନଦେବୀର ଅଙ୍କ କଷ୍ଟ କଷ୍ଟ

କେତେବେଳେ  
ଦେଇଯାରିଛି ସବୁ କିଛି  
ନିଜେ ବି ଜାଣିନି ।

‘ଦେବି ନଦେବି’ ହେଲ

ନା ଦେଇଯାରିଛି ମନ ଖୋଲି  
ନା ନେଲାଲୋକ ନେଇଯାରିଛି ମନ ଭରି,  
ନା ସାଇତି ପାରିଛି କିଛି ନିଜ ପାଇଁ  
ନା ଆଉ କା ମନରେ ସାଇତା ହେଲ

ରହିଛି ନିଜ ଦାତା ପଣ ପାଇଁ ... ।

ତେବେ ଏବେ ...  
ଖୁବ୍ ନିରୋଳା ଚାରିପଟ !  
ନ ଚାହିଁବି ନିଜେ ଶୁଣିପାରେ  
ନିଜର ସେ ଲମ୍ବା ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ବାସ,  
ଥକିଗଲେ ଏକାନ୍ତରେ

କେବେ କେବେ ଗୁଣୁ ଗୁଣୁ ହୁଏ,  
କେବେ ପୁଣି ପାଟି କରି ଡାକଦିଏ,

‘ଯଦି ନେଇ ପାରିବ, ଆସ  
 ନେଇଯାଅ ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ ଆୟୁଷରୁ  
 କିଛି କିଛି କରି, ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି  
 ନିଜେ ରଖି ଅବା ବାଣ୍ଟିଦିଅ  
 ଜଣାଶୁଣା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ,  
 ବଦଳରେ ପାରୁଛନ୍ତି ଦବ ଯଦି  
 ମୋତେ ତୁମେ ସଙ୍ଗ ଚିକେ ଦିଅ’ ।

ଲୋକେ ଶୁଣି ବି ନଶୁଣିଲା ଭଳି  
 ଯା’ନ୍ତି ପଳେଇ,  
 ମୋ ଏକୁଟିଆ ପଣ ନେଇ  
 ତାଙ୍କର ବା ଯାଏ ଆସେ କେତେ !

ଜୀବନ ପାତ୍ରରେ ଭରିବାକୁ  
 ଲୋଡ଼ା କ’ଣ ଆଉ କା’ ଆୟୁଷ,  
 ଲୋଡ଼ା ଯଦି ଲୋଡ଼ା ଖାଲି  
 ଆତ୍ମକୁଳେ ପାୟୁଷ,  
 ଜିଇବାକୁ ତ ଅଛି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ  
 ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ ବଳକା ଆୟୁଷ ।

ଆଉ କେବେ, କେହି ଯଦି ଆଗ୍ରହରେ  
 ଠିଆ ହୁଏ ଆସି,  
 ବାଣ୍ଟି ଦିଏ କେତୋଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ,  
 ନେଲେ ନିଅ, ନ ନେଲେ ନାହିଁ କହି  
 ନିଃସର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଯାଚିବିଏ କଥା ଦୁଇ ପଦ...  
 ‘ଦବ ତ ଦେଇଦିଅ ଗୋଟା ପଣେ ନିଜକୁ,  
 ରଖିବତ ନିଜପାଇଁ ରଖିନିଅ,

ନାହିଁତ ‘କଣ ଦେବି କଣ ନଦେବି’  
 ହୋଇ ଦେଇଯାଉଥିବ ସବୁକିଛି,  
 ଏକା ଏକା ଧରି ବସିଥିବ  
 ଶୂନ୍ୟତାରେ ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଜୀବନର ପାତ୍ର,  
 ଭାରି ଭାରି ଲାଗୁଥିବ ପ୍ରତିଟି ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସ,  
 ନା ତୁମେ ଦେଇଯାଉଥିବ ମନ ଖୋଲି,  
 ନା ନେଲା ଲୋକ ନେଇ ପାରୁଥିବ ମନ ଭରି

ଅଥଚ ଦେବି ନଦେବି ହୋଇ  
 ବିତିଯାଇଥିବ କେତେ କେତେ ଦୁର୍ମୂଲ୍ୟ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ।  
 ଲୋକେ ଶୁଣି ବି ନଶୁଣିଲା ଭଳି  
 ଯା’ନ୍ତି ପଳେଇ,  
 ମୋ ଏକୁଟିଆ ପଣ ନେଇ  
 ତାଙ୍କର ବା ଯାଏ ଆସେ କେତେ !  
 ସତରେ !  
 ‘କଣ ଦେବି, କଣ ନଦେବି’  
 ହୋଇ କାଟିଦେଲି ବିଗତ ବୟସ !  
 ଏକା ଏକା ନିଜେ ଆଜି

ନିଜକୁ ମୁଁ କରେ ପରିହାସ !  
 ହୋଇ ହେଲା,  
 ସେଥିରେ ବି କ୍ଷତି କ’ଣ !  
 ଏମିତି ତ ଜିଇଯାଇ ହେବ ଏକୁଟିଆ  
 ବାକି ଯିବା କିଛିଟା ଆୟୁଷ  
 ଭାରି ଭାରି ଲାଗୁ ପଛେ  
 ପ୍ରତିଟି ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସ ।

*Swapnalata lives in Macomb, Michigan with her husband Nirmal Rath and their two daughters Anya and Nayna. She loves to engage herself in Odia community activities. She would love to hear readers' opinion on her poem and can be reached by her email at swapnalata@comcast.net.*

## ଗୀତି କବିତା ସ୍ନେହ ମହାନ୍ତି

### ମାୟା ଭରା ଏଇ

ମାୟା ଭରା ଏଇ ଜଗତେ ପ୍ରଭୁହେ  
 ତୁମେ ଏକା ଚିରନ୍ତନ  
 ସସୀମ ଜୀବନେ ଆଜି ମୁହିଁ କରେ  
 ଅସୀମର ଆବାହନ ।  
 ଖିଆଲରେ ତୁମେ ଖିଆଲି ସୁଷ୍ମା  
 ଗଢିଲ ଏ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଯେବେ  
 ଖେଳନାଟି ସମ ହସାଇଲ ପୁଣି  
 କନ୍ଦାଇଲ ପୁଣି କେବେ  
 ମାଟି ପିତୁଳାରେ ଭରିଲ ଜୀବନ  
 ଦେଲପୁଣି ଦେହମନ  
 ମାୟା ଭରା ଏଇ ଜଗତେ ପ୍ରଭୁହେ  
 ତୁମେ ଏକା ଚିରନ୍ତନ (୧)

ଆଜି ଯା ଦେହରେ ଯଉବନ ଭରା  
 କାଲି ପୁଣି ଆସେ ଜରା  
 ଆଜି ଯେ ଜନମ ଆସେ ଭି ମରଣ  
 ଏଇ ତୁମ ଲିଳା ଖେଳା  
 ସେଇ ମନକୁ ମୋ ଭୁଲାଇଲ ଆହା  
 ଘୁରାଇଲ ମାୟା ବନ  
 ମାୟା ଭରା ଏଇ ଜଗତେ ପ୍ରଭୁହେ  
 ତୁମେ ଏକା ଚିରନ୍ତନ (୨)

## ଫୁଲର ସଭା ରେ

ଫୁଲର ସଭା ରେ ମଲ୍ଲୀଫୁଲଟିଏ

ନାହିଁ ତା ରଙ୍ଗଭୂଷଣ

ହେଲେ ତା ବାସରେ ଅଳି ଭୁଲିଗଲେ

କରିନାହିଁ ସେ ବାରଣ ।

ଶିଶିରର ବିନ୍ଦୁ ଭରିଯାଏ ଯେବେ

ଟିକି ପାଖୁଡ଼ା ରେ ତାର

ଝରାଉଛି ଅବା ଲୁହକି ସତେସେ

ଦେବକାରେ ଉପହାର,

ଚାହିଁ ବସିଛି ସେ ଏ ବନ ପଥରେ

କାହାର ଶୁଭ ଆଗମନ

ସଭା ରେ ମଲ୍ଲୀଫୁଲଟିଏ

ନାହିଁ ତା ରଙ୍ଗଭୂଷଣ (୧)

ମଉଳିବ ଦିନେ ଆଜି ନୁହେଁ କାଲି

ବିଷାଦରେ ସେ ଲାଗି ନାହିଁ

ସଉରଭ ତାର ଗଉରବ ବୋଲି

ମଳୟ ଯାଇଛି କହି

ଧନ୍ୟ ସେ ଜୀବନ, ଦେବାରେ ଆନନ୍ଦ

ଫୁଟେ ହୋଇ ସେ ମଉନ

ସଭା ରେ ମଲ୍ଲୀଫୁଲଟିଏ

ନାହିଁ ତା ରଙ୍ଗଭୂଷଣ (୨)

*Sneha Mohanty lives in Huntington Beach, California*

## ପଥକ

### ପରାଶର ମିଶ୍ର

ପଥର ପଥକ ମୁଁ ଜୀବନ ପଥରେ ଚାଲୁ ଚାଲୁ

ପର୍ବତକୁ ଭେଟି ପଥର ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ ମାଗିଲିଯେ'

ପର୍ବତ କହିଲା

ଧର୍ମ, ଜାତି, ଭାଷା ଓ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକତାର ଆଳରେ

ଧର୍ମ ନାମରେ ଧର୍ମର ସଉଦା ନ କରି

ନରହତ୍ୟା, ନର ସଂହାର, ସଂହାରଲାଳୀକୁ ବନ୍ଦ କରିବାକୁ

ମଣିଷ, ମଣିଷ ଭିତରେ ବଢିଚାଲିଥିବା

ପୁଣ୍ୟ, କ୍ରୋଧ, ହିଂସା, ବିଦେଷକୁ

ସତ୍ୟ, ଶିବ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ରେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରି

ଏକ ମନ, ଏକ ପ୍ରାଣରେ, ଏକାଠି ହୋଇ

ମଣିଷ ଜାତିକୁ ପର୍ବତ ଭଳି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଟେକି ଠିଆ ହେବାକୁ ।

ପଥର ପଥକ ମୁଁ ଜୀବନ ପଥରେ ଚାଲୁ ଚାଲୁ

ସମୁଦ୍ର ର ଲହଡ଼ି ରେ ଭାସିବାକୁ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ପଶିଲିଯେ'

ସମୁଦ୍ର ମୁହଁ ମୋତି ମୋତେ ଫେପାଡ଼ି ଦେଲା

ଫେରାଇ ଆଣିଲା ସମୁଦ୍ରକୁଳକୁ

ଗୋଟିଏ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେଲା ମୋର

ମଣିଷ ହେବାର ଗର୍ବ, ଅହମିଆ ଓ ଅହଂକାରକୁ ।

ପଥର ପଥକ ମୁଁ ଜୀବନ ପଥରେ ଚାଲୁ ଚାଲୁ

ନଦୀଟିଏ ଭେଟି ନଦୀକୁ ପାଣି ଆଢୁଳାଏ ମାଗିଲିଯେ'

ନଦୀ ମୋତେ ମୋ ଜୀବନଯାତ୍ରାରେ ଅଟକି ନିଯାଇ,

ପଛକୁ ନ ଚାହିଁ, ସବୁ ବାଧା, ବିପ୍ଳ, ଘାତ, ପ୍ରତିଘାତରେ

ନଦୀ ଭଳି ସରଳ, ସହଜ ଓ ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ହୋଇ

ଆହୁରି ଚାଲିବାକୁ, ଆଗକୁ ବଢିବାକୁ କହିଲା ।

ପଥର ପଥକ ମୁଁ ଜୀବନ ପଥରେ ଚାଲୁ ଚାଲୁ

ଗୋଲାପ ଗଛରୁ ନାଲି ଗୋଲାପଟିଏ ଚୋଳିବାକୁ

ହାତ ବଢାଇଲିଯେ' ଗୋଲାପ ଗଛ ପାପୁଲିରେ ମୋର କଞ୍ଜା ଫେଟି

ଜୀବନରେ ଦୁଃଖ, ପୀଡ଼ା, କ୍ଳେଷ ଓ ଯଂତ୍ରଣାର କଞ୍ଜାକୁ

ସହିବାର ମହାମନ୍ତ୍ର ଶିଖାଇଲା ।

ପଥର ପଥକ ମୁଁ ଜୀବନ ପଥରେ ଚାଲୁ ଚାଲୁ

ଥକି ପତି ପ୍ରିୟତମାର କୋଳରେ ମଥାରଖି

ଟିକିଏ ଶୋଇରହିବାକୁ କହିଲିଯେ'

ପ୍ରିୟତମା ଅଝଟ, ଅଭିଯୋଗ, ଅଭିମାନରେ

ପର୍ବତରୁ ପଥର ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ, ସମୁଦ୍ରରୁ ଲହଡ଼ିଟିଏ,

ନଦୀରୁ ପାଣି ଆଢୁଳାଏ ଓ

ଗୋଲାପ ଗଛରୁ ନାଲି ଗୋଲାପଟିଏ

ଚୋଳିଆଣି ଦେବାକୁ ଜିଦ ଧରିବସିଲା ।

ପଥର ପଥକ ମୁଁ ଶେଷ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ଥିବା ଯାଏ,

ପ୍ରାଣ ବାୟୁ ଉଡିଯିବା ଯାଏ,

ଜୀବନ ପଥରେ ଏଇମିତି ଆଗକୁ ଚାଲୁଥିବି,

ପଡୁଥିବି, ଉଠୁଥିବି, ହସୁଥିବି, କାନ୍ଦୁଥିବି,

ସମୁଦ୍ର ର ଲହଡ଼ିରେ ଭାସିବାକୁ,

ପର୍ବତ ଭଳି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଟେକି ଠିଆ ହେବାକୁ,

ସବୁ ବାଧା, ବିପ୍ଳ, ଘାତ, ପ୍ରତିଘାତରେ

ନଦୀ ଭଳି ସରଳ, ସହଜ ଓ ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ହୋଇ

ଆହୁରି ଚାଲିବାକୁ, ଆଗକୁ ବଢିବାକୁ,

ଫୁଲ ଭଳି ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସୌରଭର ପ୍ରତୀକ

ହେବାକୁ ପ୍ରୟାସ ମୋ ଜାରି ରଖିଥିବି ।

*Parasara Mishra lives in Toronto, Canada with his wife Rekha and daughter Lipi. He has been actively involved with the oDiA community in Canada and his passion lies in writing oDiA poems, stories and dramas. His e-mail address is parasara11@yahoo.ca*

## ଚେତାବନୀ

## ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

ଶରୀର ରଥଟି ଦଦରା  
ଗତି ଗତି ଜୀବନ ରାସ୍ତାରେ  
ଚକ୍ର ସବୁ ହେଲେଣି ଦୁଗୁଳା  
ଧକ୍କାବାଜି ସମୟ ଢିପରେ ।

ଖସିଲେଣି ବତା ଓ ବାଉଁଶ  
ବନ୍ଧା ଥିଲା ସେ ଶକ୍ତ ଗଣ୍ଡିରେ  
ପାପରା ଯେ ହେଲାଣି ଦଉଡ଼ି  
ବଳ କମେ ରଥ ଟାଣିବାରେ ।

ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ରଥର ଗହଳି  
ପରସ୍ପର ଦଳା ଚକଟାରେ  
ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ହେବ ଏଇ ରାସ୍ତା  
ପ୍ରୟୋଜନ ନାହିଁ ଏ ରଥରେ ।

ଅତିକ୍ରମ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବର୍ଷ  
ମାପ ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ପଥରେ  
କମି କମି ଆସୁଅଛି ଯାତ୍ରା  
ଲକ୍ଷ ସ୍ଥଳ ନାହିଁ ବେଶୀ ଦୂରେ ।

ଥକ୍କା ମାରି ଲେଉଟି ପଛୁଆ  
ଦେଖେ ଯେବେ ମନର ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ  
ଝାପ୍‌ସା ଦିଶେ ବାଲ୍ୟ, କୈଶୋର  
ଯୌବନକୁ ଦୂର ଅତୀତରେ ।

ଗଡୁଥିଲା ଯେବେ ଏ ରଥଟି  
'ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳ' ଥିବା ଇଲାକାରେ  
ଅନିୟତା, ବିଶୁଦ୍ଧତା ଲେପ  
ଛାଇଥିଲା ନୂତନ ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ।

ଅଜ୍ଞାତରେ ଘାଣେନ୍ଦ୍ରିୟ ଆଜି  
ସଜୀବ ସେ ସଦ୍ୟ ବାସନାରେ  
ଅକପଟ, ସୁକୋମଳ ମନ  
ଭିଜିଥିଲା 'ପ୍ରାତଃ' କିରଣରେ ।

ତେଇଁ ତେଇଁ ଗତି ଗଲା ରଥ  
ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା କୈଶୋର ସୀମାରେ  
ପ୍ରଜାପତି ଧରିବାକୁ ସିଏ  
ଧାଉଥିଲା ଚପଳ ମନରେ ।  
ଛୁଇଁ ଛୁଇଁ ଆସୁଥିଲା ମନ  
କୌତୂହଳୀ ସବୁ ଜାଣିବାରେ  
ମସୃଣ ତା ଥିଲା ସେଇ ପଥ

ଜୁଡୁବୁଡୁ 'ସକାଳ' ରଶ୍ମିରେ ।

ସକ୍ରିୟତା ଅନୁଭବେ ରଥ  
ପହଞ୍ଚି ସେ 'ଯୌବନ' କିନାରେ  
ଦେହେ, ମନେ ଅଜଣା ପୁଲକ  
ଭରା ଶକ୍ତି, ତେଜ ଓ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ।

ଆଶାବାଦୀ, ଅଦମ୍ୟ ଲାଳସା  
ବେପରୁଆ ସେ ବାଧାବିଘ୍ନରେ  
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଭରା ଥିଲା ସେଇ ରାସ୍ତା  
ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳିତ 'ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନ' ତେଜରେ ।

ଆଶା, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ପୂରଣେ  
ଗତିଗଲା ପଥ ଅଜଣାରେ  
ଖାଲ, ଢିପ, କଷ୍ଟରୂପା ତେଇଁ  
ରଥ ଆସି 'ପ୍ରୌଢ଼'ର ଦ୍ୱାରରେ ।

ପୂର୍ବ ତେଜ, ଶକ୍ତି ଓ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ  
ନାହିଁ ଆଉ ଏଇ ସେ ରଥରେ  
ତାହିଁ ଦେଖେ 'ଆଦ୍ୟ ଅପରାହ୍ନ'  
ଜଳିଲେଣି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆକାଶରେ ।

ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ ଭଗ୍ନରଥ ଯାଇ  
ପହଞ୍ଚିବ 'ବାଉଁଶ୍ୟ' ସୀମାରେ  
ପଥଶେଷ, 'ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଅପରାହ୍ନ'  
ଛାଇଯିବ କ୍ଷୀଣ ଆଲୋକରେ ।

ସର୍ବଶେଷ ମାପ ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଛୁଇଁ  
ଶୋଇଯିବ ସେ 'ଚିରନିଦ୍ରା'ରେ  
'ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା'କୁ ସ୍ୱାଗତ ଜଣାଇ  
ବୁଡ଼ିଯିବେ ଭାନୁ ପଶ୍ଚିମରେ ।

ଜନ୍ମ ହେଲେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ  
କାଟ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ କାହାରି ଶକ୍ତିରେ  
ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କର 'ଉଦୟ ଓ ଅସ୍ତ'  
ଚେତାବନୀ ପ୍ରତି ଦିବସରେ ।



## ଶ୍ୱାନ ଦେବରାଜ ସାହୁ ମେରିଲାଣ୍ଡ

ଯୁଧିଷ୍ଠିର କରନ୍ତି ଆରୋହଣ  
ତୁଷାରାବୃତ୍ତ ହିମାଳୟ ଶୁଙ୍ଖକୁ  
ଜାୟା ଓ ଭ୍ରାତାଗଣ ସହିତ  
ସ୍ୱର୍ଗପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ଆଶାରେ

ତୁ ଶ୍ୱାନ ବି ଆଶାୟୀ  
ସେହି ନିର୍ବାଣ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିରେ  
ଜାୟା ଓ ଭ୍ରାତାଗଣ ଲଭନ୍ତି ସମାଧି  
ଅସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆଶାର ଅନ୍ଧକାରରେ

ତୁ ଶ୍ୱାନ ସହଚର ଧର୍ମପୁତ୍ରଙ୍କ  
ତୋର ଭୟ ନାହିଁ  
ମରଣର ଶଙ୍କା ବି ନାହିଁ  
କଠିନ ପଥର ପ୍ରହରୀ ତୁ

ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର ବିମାନ ଦିଅନ୍ତି  
କିନ୍ତୁ ଶ୍ୱାନକୁ କରନ୍ତି ବାରଣ  
ଧର୍ମପୁତ୍ର ବିମାନ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରନ୍ତି-  
ପ୍ରାଣ ପ୍ରାଣ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଭେଦ କାହିଁକି?

ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର କହନ୍ତି ଏହା ନୁହେଁ ଭେଦ  
ଏହା ଏକ ପରୀକ୍ଷା  
ମର ଶରୀରରେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗାରୋହଣ  
କରୁ ତୁ ଧର୍ମପୁତ୍ରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ।

କଳି ଯୁଗରେ ତୁ  
ମଣିଷର ବନ୍ଧୁ  
ସୁଖର ଦୁଃଖର ସାଥୀ  
ପୁଣି ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ଆତ୍ମୀୟ

ଆଜ୍ଞାବହ ପଶୁ  
ଶୁଖଳରେ ନାହିଁ ଅଭିଯୋଗ  
ଦୌଡ଼ିବାରେ ନାହିଁ ଛାନ୍ତି  
ଅପେକ୍ଷାରେ ନାହିଁ ବିରକ୍ତି

ସଂପର୍କ ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ହୁଏ  
ତୁ ହେଉ ସନ୍ତାନତୁ ବି ଅଧିକ  
ତୋ ଉପରେ ଅଜାତେ ଅପାର ସ୍ନେହ  
ତୋର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ମଧୁମୟ ହୁଏ

ମଣିଷ ବନ୍ଧୁହୀନ ହୁଏ  
କାମରେ  
ନଷ୍ଟ କରେ ଅନ୍ୟର ପରିବାର  
ଅଧୀନସ୍ଥଙ୍କୁ କର୍ମହୀନ କରି

'ଆଲ ତନଲାପ' ପରୀ ଅଧିକାରୀ  
ସହସ୍ର ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଚାକିରୀ ନେଇ  
କହେ - ବନ୍ଧୁ ଯଦି ଚାହୁଁ  
ତେବେ ଶ୍ୱାନକୁ ଗୃହପାଳିତ କର

'ବିଟ' ଏବଂ 'କ୍ୟାଡେଟ' ଶ୍ୱାନଙ୍କୁ ବନ୍ଧୁ କରି  
ନିଜେ ବନ୍ଧୁହୀନ ହୁଏ  
ଖଡ୍ଗ-'ଆଲ'ର  
ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ ହୁଏ ପରମ ଆନନ୍ଦ

ଖଡ୍ଗ ଧାରଣ କରି  
ମେଢ଼-ନିବହ-ନିଧନ  
ନିଜେ ଦରକାର  
ଶ୍ୱାନ ଅବତାରରେ ।

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## ପଙ୍କ ଓ ପଙ୍କଜ ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର

ଶରତର ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରଭାତେ ପଦ୍ମଟିଏ ଫୁଟିଥିଲା ଗାଁ ପୋଖରୀରେ  
କି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଏ ସଂସାର ଅତି ମନୋହର  
ମନଭରି ନାଚିଗଲା ତୃପ୍ତିର ସାଗରେ

ଚାରିଆଡେ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା ଜାଣିଥିଲା ପାଇବ ସେ ସଭିଙ୍କ ଆଦର  
ମନଲୋଭା ରୂପ ତାର ହେବ ନିଶ୍ଚେ ଦେବୀ ଗଳାହାର  
ଅତିଦର୍ପେ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ମୁଁ ସିନା ନିଜେ ପୁଷ୍କରାଜ  
ପଙ୍କଜ ଏ ପୁଷ୍କରିଣୀଟାରେ ମୋର ଜନ୍ମ  
ଏତିକି ମୋ ଲାଜ

ଯଦି ମୁଁ ଜନମି ଥାନ୍ତି କାବଳେ ମୁଁ ପାଣିଭରା ପୁଷ୍କରିଣୀଟିରେ  
କି ସୁନ୍ଦର ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ଧବଳ ବାଲୁକା ଶଯ୍ୟା ମୋ ଜନ୍ମମାଟି  
ନାଚୁଥାନ୍ତି କେତେ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ

ସୁନ୍ଦ ସୁନ୍ଦ ପବନରେ ମଥାକୁ ହଲାଇ  
ଗହୀରିଆ, ଅନ୍ଧାରୁଆ ତଳକୁ ସେ ଦେଲା ଚାହିଁ  
କାଦୁଅ ମାଟି ଭିତରେ ପଙ୍କ ସେମିତି ପଡ଼ିଛି  
ଅସନା ବିଛଣା ଧରି, ପୋକ ଜୋକ ଗେଣ୍ଡା କୋଟିଆଙ୍କୁ କୋଳରେ  
ଧରିଛି  
କୋଉ ଏକ ହତାଶିନୀ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ଅସୁରୁଣୀ ଭଳି ତୁପ୍ତାପ୍ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ  
ଶୋଇଛି

କହିଲା ସେ ପଦ୍ମ ଫୁଲଟିଏ  
ଦୁଃଖ ହୁଏ ତୋ ରୂପ ତୋ ଭେକ ଦେଖି  
ଅସନା କାଦୁଅ ଶେଯ ତୋର  
କେମିତି ତୁ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଉଛୁ ପଙ୍କୁଆ ପାଣିରେ?  
କେମିତି ତୁ ବଞ୍ଚିଛୁଲୋ ଏ ଅପଞ୍ଚରା ଅନ୍ଧାର ମୂଳକେ  
ଘଟିଏ ବି ରହି ପାରିବିନି  
ତୋ କୋଳରେ, ତୋ ଘରେ, ତୋ ବିଛଣାରେ?

ଆଖି ମଳି କତ ଲେଉଟାଇ ପଙ୍କ ନିଦରୁ ଉଠିଲା  
ପଙ୍କଜରେ ମୋର ପାଳିତ ସନ୍ତାନ ଧୀରେ ସେ କହିଲା  
ତୁ କାହୁଁ ବୁଝିବୁ ମା ଦୁଃଖ, ମା ତ୍ୟାଗ, କେମିତି ମୁଁ ବଞ୍ଚିଲୁ ତତେ  
ସାରଗର୍ଭା ବନିଯାଇ ବଢ଼ାଇଲି ଫୁଲ ହୋଇ ଫୁଟିବାକୁ ମୋ ନିଜରଞ୍ଜେ  
ତୋ ରୂପର ଚହଟ, ତୋ ଝଲକ ତୋ ସୁଗନ୍ଧି ସେଇ ମୋ ସମ୍ମାନ  
ଗହୀରିଆ ପୋଖରୀରେ ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାଟା ମୋ ଜୀବନ ଧର୍ମ

ତୁ ତ ଅତି ପିଲା ଲୋକ କେମିତି ବୁଝିବୁ କହ  
ଏ ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ପ୍ରତିଭାର ପ୍ରଚାରର ହାଟ ବଜାରରେ  
କିଏ ଜଣେ ନାଚୁଥାଏ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ପରକୃତି ଆପଣାର କରି  
ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଖଟୁଥାଏ ଅନ୍ୟପାଇଁ ନୀରବରେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ

ହେ ମୋର ବାଳୁତ ସନ୍ତାନ  
ସବୁ କଥା ବିଧିର ବିଧାନ  
କହିବାଟା ବଡ଼ ନୁହେଁ ସହିବାଟା ବଡ଼  
ଦାନ ନେବା ବଡ଼ ନୁହେଁ ଦାନ ଦେବା ବଡ଼  
ଭୋଗୀ ହେବା ସବୁଠୁ ସହଜ ତ୍ୟାଗୀ ହେବା ବଡ଼ କଷ୍ଟକର  
ଉପଦେଶ ଉଦ୍‌ଗାରିବା ସବୁଠୁ ସହଜ, ସତ୍‌କର୍ମ କଲେ ସିନା ପାଇବ  
ଆଦର

ଅଜବ ଏ ସଂସାରର ରୀତି  
ଉପକାର ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ଏଇ ମନ କାମ ସରିଗଲେ  
ଗାଁ ପିଲା ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ଗାଁର ମମତା  
ସହରର ଚକମକ ନୁଆ ସଭ୍ୟତାରେ  
ମନଯେବେ ଥରେ ଛୁଏଁ ପ୍ରତିଭା ପ୍ରଶଂସା ଆଉ ସଫଳତା କୃତି  
ଚଟାପଟ୍ ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ଅତୀତକୁ କିଛି ଟା ରହେନା ତାର ପିଲାବେଳ  
ସ୍ମୃତି

ଦିନେ ଯିଏ ଗଢ଼ିଥିଲା ଜୀବନର ମୂଳଦୁଆ  
ହାତଧରି ଚଢ଼ାଇଲା ପ୍ରଥମ ପାହାଚ  
ତାଙ୍କୁ ସବୁ ଭୁଲି ଯାଇ  
କୃତି ମହୋଦଧିରେ ଉବୁଟୁବୁ ହୋଇ  
ସ୍ୱର୍ଗକୁ ନିଶ୍ଚିଣୀ ଦିନେ ବନାଇବା ପାଇଁ  
ସେଇ ମନ ଉଜାରଣ କରିଥାଏ 'ରାବଣ ଭବାଟ' ।

କୃତିମହୋଦଧି ପତନ କାରଣମ୍  
ଫଳମଶାଶ୍ୱତଂ ଗତିନିରୋଧକମ୍ (ରମଣ ମହର୍ଷି)

ଲେଖକ ସତବରୀ, କାନାଡାରେ ରହନ୍ତି ।  
ସେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ତାଙ୍କର କବିତା, ନାଟକ ଓ ଗଳ୍ପ  
ଲେଖନ୍ତି । ସେ ଏକ ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ନାଟ୍ୟ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକ ଏବଂ ଅଭିନେତା ।

## ଜ୍ଞାନ ପୁଷ୍ପ

## କାନ୍ତିଲତା ସାହୁ, କାଲିଙ୍ଗେଣ୍ଡିଆ

ଏ ଛାଇ ଦେହକୁ ରଖିଛୁ ସଜାଇ  
କେତେ ରଙ୍ଗ, ରୂପ ଦେଇ ,  
କେତେ ଦିନ ଆଉ ରଖିବୁ ସଜାଇ  
ମିଛରେ ହେଉ ତୁ ବାଇ । (୧)  
ଦି'ଦିନ ଅତିଥି ଦି'ଦିନ ଦୁନିଆ  
ଭୋଗି ଚାଲିଯିବ ପଥେ ,  
ଆତ୍ମା ଶରୀରର ଅଟେ ଯେ ନଶ୍ୱର  
କେହି ତ ନ ଥିବେ ସାଥେ । (୨)  
ମାଟିର ଶରୀର ମାଟିରେ ମିଶିବ  
ଯେତେ ତୁ ସଜାଅ ବାରେ ,  
ମିଛ ଏ ଦୁନିଆ ମିଛ ଏ ସଂସାର  
ଧର୍ମ ସାହା ସବୁଥିରେ (୩)  
ସତ୍ୟ,ଧର୍ମ ଆଉ ଅହିଂସାର ରସି  
ସବୁଠୁ ଟାଣୁଆ ଜାଣ ,  
ଯେତେ ଟାଣୁଥିଲେ ଛିଣ୍ଡିବନି କେବେ  
ରକ୍ଷାକରେ ଆର୍ତ୍ତତାଣ । (୪)  
ପଥର ପଥକ ଖୋଲ ତୋର ଆଖି  
ବେଳ ଯେ ଯାଉଛି ସରି ,  
ବେଳୁ ସାବଧାନ ଦିଅ ତୁହି ମନ  
ସେ ଚକାନୟନ ହରି । (୫)  
ନିରିମାଣି ତୁହି ହୋଇଯିବୁ ପାରି  
ମନ ପଦ୍ମପାଦେ ଦିଅ ,  
କମଳ ଲୋଚନ ସଙ୍ଗେ ହେବୁ ଲୀନ  
ରାମନାମ ଭଜୁଥାଅ । (୬)

## ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ଭୁଲି ନାହିଁ ମୁହିଁ ଭୁଲିବିନି ବନ୍ଧୁ  
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ କେବେ ,  
ଜାତିର ଗଉରବ ଜାତିର ଏ ମାନ  
ମନେ ରଖିଥିବି ଗର୍ବେ । (୧)  
ଭାବିନି ନିଜକୁ ପରଦେଶେ ଆସି  
ସବୁ ହୋଇଗଲା ଶେଷ ,  
ମାଆର ମମତା ସ୍ନେହ ଓ ସରାଗ  
କେବେ କି ହୁଅଇ ଶେଷ ? (୨)

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିର ଜନନୀ ଆମର  
କାନ୍ଦୁଅଛି କଇଁ କଇଁ ,  
କେତେ ଯେ ବିଦ୍ୱାନ୍ ଆଉ ବଳିଆନ୍  
ମାଟିକୁ ଗଲେଣି ଛୁଇଁ । (୩)  
ଇତିହାସେ ତାଙ୍କ ଲେଖା ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣକ୍ଷରେ

ଜୟ ବିଜୟର ଟେକ ,

ସୁଧୁରି ଯାଆ ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଇକ  
ଚତୁର୍ଦିଗେ ଚିକେ ଦେଖ । (୪)  
ମାନବ ଜାତିର ଅମଣିଷ ପଣ  
ବଢୁଅଛି ଦିନୁଦିନ ,  
ରାଜନୀତି ପଥେ ବହୁତ ଗରମ  
ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ନାହିଁ ମନ । (୫)  
ମାଟି ତଳେ ଥାଇ ବୀର ଗଣଯାକ  
ମର ଶରୀର ଅମର ,  
ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଇ ତାକୁଛନ୍ତି ଆଜି  
ଜନନୀକୁ ରକ୍ଷାକର । (୬)  
ଅତୀତ ଗଉରବ ଅତୀତ ଗାରିମା  
ସବୁ ଆସିଯାଇ ଫେରି ,  
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିଟି ଚଞ୍ଚଳ ହୋଇବ  
ବାଜିବ ତୁରୀ ମହୁରୀ । (୭)  
ମନେ କରିଅଛି ଜୀବନର ଶେଷେ  
ତା' କୋଳେ ଶୋଇବି ଯାଇ ,  
ମାଆର ମମତା ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼  
କାନ୍ତି ତା ପଦେ ନମଇ । (୮)

(କାନ୍ତିଲତା ସାହୁ ଜୁପରଟିନୋ, କାଲିଙ୍ଗେଣ୍ଡିଆରେ ନିଜ ପରିବାର  
ନେଇ ବାସକରନ୍ତି । )

## ହୁତୁ ହୁତୁ ଜଳେ କଷମାଳ ଗଗନ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ

କି ହେଲା କି ହେଲା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଇଁରେ  
ଲାଗିଛି ତୁମ୍ଭଙ୍କ ହଜଗୋଳ,  
ହିଂସା, ଦେଶ, ଘୃଣା କୁହୁଳି କୁହୁଳି  
ହୁତୁ ହୁତୁ ଜଳେ କଷମାଳ ।  
ଜଳି ଜଳି ଯାଏ ଗାଆଁ ପୁର ପଲ୍ଲୀ  
ଜୀବନ ଜୀବିକା ଟଳମଳ,  
ଛିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ହୁଏ ଦୀନ ଜନଙ୍କର  
ବଞ୍ଚି ରହିବାର ମନୋବଳ ।  
ଶାନ୍ତିର ରାଇଜ ବୋଲି ଉତ୍କଳୀୟ  
ସଦା ଆଶିଷନ୍ତି ଗର୍ବ ପ୍ରାଣେ,  
ସେହି ଗର୍ବ ଆଜି ହେଲା ଧୂଳିସାତ  
ଆଖି ପିଛୁଳାକେ ଅନ୍ଧକ୍ଷଣେ !  
ଆଦିମ କାଳରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିରେ  
ରହି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଆଦିବାସୀ,  
ଫଳମୂଳ ଖାଇ ହୋଇଆସିଛନ୍ତି  
ଶଇଳ ଜାନନ ଅଧିବାସୀ ।  
ମାଟି କାଦୁଅରେ କାଠ ବାଉଁଶରେ  
କୁଡ଼ିଆ ତାଙ୍କର ଗଢ଼ା ହାତେ,  
ଚିତା କୁଟିକମ ତହିଁ ପରେ ଅଙ୍ଗ  
ମନୋରମ ଦିଶେ ନାଲି କାନ୍ଧେ ।  
ଧନୁଶର ଧରି ଦିନଯାକ ବନେ  
କରନ୍ତି ଶୀକାର ବୁଲିବୁଲି,  
କେତେବେଳେ ଯଦି ମିଳିଯାଏ କିଛି  
ଭକ୍ଷଣ କରନ୍ତି ସାଥେ ମିଳି ।  
ଯଦି ନମିଳଇ ରହନ୍ତି ଉପାସେ  
ତେର ମୂଳ ଖାଇ କଟେ ଦିନ,  
ଲଙ୍ଗଳା ଦେହରେ ଘୁରିବୁଲୁଥାନ୍ତି  
ଦେହେ ପିନ୍ଧି ଖଣ୍ଡେ କଉପିନ ।  
ନୂତନ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଆସିବାରୁ କ୍ରମେ  
ସଂକୁଚିତ ହେଲା ଗିରିବନ,  
ଆଦିବାସୀ ଜନେ ହେଲେ ବାସଭ୍ୟୁତ  
ଖାଦ୍ୟପାଇଁ ହେଲେ ହଇରାଣ ।  
ଶ୍ରମିକ ହିସାବେ ଖରାତରା ସହି  
ଖଟିଲେ ମଜୁରୀ ପର ପାଇଁ,  
କେଉଁ ଦିନ ମିଳେ ପେଟ ପାଇଁ ଗଣ୍ଡେ  
କେଉଁ ଦିନ ପୁଣି ମିଳେନାହିଁ ।  
ଏହିପରି ଦୀନ ଦୁରାବସ୍ଥା ଦେଖି  
ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଲେ ମାଓବାଦୀ,  
ଘରେ ଘରେ ବୁଲି ମିଥ୍ୟା ପ୍ରଲୋଭନେ  
ପ୍ରସାର କରିଲେ କୁଟବୁଦ୍ଧି ।  
ହାତରେ ବନ୍ଧୁକ ଦେଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ  
କଲେ ହିଂସା ପାଇଁ ଉତ୍ସାହିତ,

ନିରୀହ ଜନଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ବଦଳେ  
ହେବ ସାମ୍ୟବାଦ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ?  
ପ୍ରାଦୀମାନେ ପୁଣି ସରଳ ପ୍ରାଣରେ  
ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟ ଧର୍ମ ବିର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦେଲେ ବୁଣି,  
ପାଖତ୍ୟ ଦେଶରୁ ଖାଦ୍ୟବସ୍ତୁ ଆଣି  
ଚରିବଙ୍କ ମନ ନେଲେ କିଣି ।  
ଏହା ଦେଖି ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମାନଙ୍କ ମନରେ  
କୁହୁଳି ଉଠିଲା ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସ ,  
ଦୁଇ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ମଧ୍ୟେ ହିଂସା କାଣ୍ଡ ଲାଗି  
ସରଳ ଜୀବନ ଗଲା ନାଶ ।  
ହାୟରେ ହାୟରେ ମାଓବାଦୀ ଦଳ  
ହରାଇ ବସିଲ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ବୃଦ୍ଧି ?  
ହିଂସାର ମସାଲ ଜାଳିକିବା ତୁମେ  
ଉନ୍ନତ କରିବ ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ?  
ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଯଦି ଚାହୁଁଥାଅ ତୁମେ  
ଗରୀବ ଜନଙ୍କ ହିତ ପାଇଁ,  
ଦିଅ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଅହିଂସା ବଳରେ  
କିପରି ଲଢ଼ିବେ ନିଜପାଇଁ ।  
ଉଗ୍ରପନ୍ଥୀ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଘୃଣା ଭାବ  
ସ୍ୱାଗତ କର ହେ ଗିରିଜନେ,  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂଇଁର ସଭିଏଁ ସନ୍ତାନ  
ଅଧିକାର ରହୁ ସର୍ବଜନେ ।

ଆଜିକାଲି ସମ୍ଭାଦ ପତ୍ର ଦେଖିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ କଷମାଳ  
ଲଲାକାରେ ହିଂସାକାଣ୍ଡ ଓ ରକ୍ତପାତ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳୁଛି । ଏହି  
ଦୁଃସମ୍ଭାଦରେ ମିଥ୍ୟାମାଣ ହୋଇ ଉକ୍ତ କବିତାଟି ରଚନା କରାଯାଇଅଛି  
।

ଗଗନ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ ତାଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀ ସବିତା, ପୁତ୍ର ସୋମନ ଓ ଜନ୍ମା  
ଲନିକାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଟରନ୍ଟୋରେ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି । ଗତବର୍ଷ କିଛି  
ବର୍ଷହେଲା ସେ ନିୟମିତ ଓସା ପତ୍ରିକାରେ କବିତା ପ୍ରକାଶ  
କରିଆସୁଛନ୍ତି ।

## ଜଗନ୍ନାଥହେ, କିଛିଟା ହେଲେ କର ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର,

କେଉଁଠାରେ ତୁମେ ଲୁଚିଅଛ ପ୍ରଭୁ  
ତାକିତାକି ଶୁଖେ ଚଷ୍ମି  
କେଉଁ ବନ୍ଧନରେ ବାନ୍ଧିଅଛ ତୁମେ  
ଶୂନ୍ୟରେ ଝୁଲାଇ ଗଣି

ତୁମ ରାଇଜରେ ଜନ୍ମିଅଛୁ ବୋଲି  
ଗର୍ବ କରୁ ଦେଶବାସୀ  
ଏ କି ଘଟୁଅଛି, ଏ କଳିକାଳରେ  
ଆହେ, ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ନିବାସୀ ?

ତୁମରି ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ୟେ, ଦିନ ଦିପ୍ରହରେ  
ମଣିଷ ମଣିଷ ମାରେ  
ରାଜଧାନୀଠାରେ ରାଜରାୟା କତେ  
ନବଜାତ ଜନ୍ମା ମରେ

ଗାଁ, ଗଣ୍ଡରେତ ରହିଲେ କେବଳ  
ପାଗଳ, ଛାଗଳ ଷନ୍ଦ  
ମାଙ୍କଡ଼, କୁକୁର ଶାସନ କରନ୍ତି  
ବୁଲି ବୁଲି ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡ

ଅର୍ଥକୁ ଅନର୍ଥ ବୁଝିଲେଣି ସର୍ବେ  
ମଦ, ଭାଙ୍ଗିଖାଇ ଭୋକ  
କେତେ ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ସହିବ  
ଘୋର ହେଲା କଳିକାଳ  
ତଳି ତଳିଆତ ଗାଁରେ ରହିଲେ  
ବାଷୀ ମୂଲିଆ ଶେଣୀ,  
ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ହାକିମ, କିରାଣି  
କୋଟି କୋଟି ନେଲେ ଛାଣି

ହାକିମ, କିରାଣୀ ଶାସନ କରନ୍ତି  
ନଅତାଲା ମଧ୍ୟେ ରହି  
ତାଙ୍କର ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ କା'ହାତ ପାଏନି  
ଜାଣିଛନ୍ତି ଏକା ସେହି

ପିଅନ ହୋଇଲେ କୋଟିପତି ପ୍ରଭୁ  
ଶୁଣି ନଥିଲା ଯେ କାନେ  
କୋଟିଏରେ କେତେ ଶୂନ ପଡ଼ାରିଲେ  
କହି ପାରିବେନି ଜଣେ

ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଗଡୁଛି ଧୈଁ ପାଁ କରି  
ଅନେକ ମଟର ଗାଡ଼ି

ତଥାପି ମରୁଛି ଭୋକ ଉପାସରେ  
ଗାଁରେ ବିଧବା ବୁଢ଼ୀ

ନେତାଏ ଚଢ଼ିଲେ ଭଲଭୋ, ମରୁସେତିସ୍  
ଗରିବି ହଟିଲା ନାହିଁ  
ଯେଉଁ ଗରିବକୁ ସେହି ଗରିବ  
ଭିକମୁଠେ ପାଏନାହିଁ

ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ଜମି ହତପ କରନ୍ତି  
ଆଇ ଏ ଏସ୍, ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ନେତା  
ତାଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ସ୍ୱର ଉଚ୍ଚାକରେ  
ସାଧାରଣ ଏ ଜନତା

ଦୁଇ, ଚାରି ଘର କିଣିଛନ୍ତି ପ୍ରଭୁ  
ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ପୁଅ ନାମେ  
ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଇ ତାଙ୍କ କୁଟୁମ୍ବନାଁରେ  
ପ୍ରାସାଦ ତୋଳିଲେ ଗ୍ରାମେ

ଦିଗ୍‌ଜୀ ତାଉଳ ମିଳେନାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ  
ତୁଲୀ, ଚାଳ ଯାର ନାହିଁ  
କଣ୍ଢେଲ ଦୋକାନୀ ପୟର ଟଙ୍କାରେ  
ବିକେ କେଜି ତାକୁ ନେଇ

ଲଝିରା ଆବାସ, ନରେଗା ନାଁ ରେ  
ସରକାର ଦିଏ ଟଙ୍କା  
ଖାତାରେ ଗଡୁଛି ମିଛ ସବୁ ନାଁ  
କେହି କରିପାରିବେକି ବଙ୍କା ?  
ଆମ ରାଇଜରେ ଘଟେ ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ  
ବନ୍ୟା, ବାତ୍ୟା ଓ ମରୁଡ଼ି  
ଧୋଇନିଏ କ୍ଷେତ, ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦିଏ ବନ୍ଧ  
ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦିଏ ଆଶା ବାଟି

ରିଲିଫ୍ ବଣ୍ଟନ ଅଟେ ପ୍ରହସନ  
ଏ ତ ଗୁରୁତର ବ୍ୟାଧି  
ଏହାକୁ କିପରି ହଟାଇବା ପାଇଁ  
କାହାକୁ ନ ଦିଶେ ବୁଦ୍ଧି

ଖଣିରୁ କାଢ଼ିଲେ ମଣି ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ  
ବିକିଲେ ତତ୍ତା ଦରରେ  
କଳାଟଙ୍କା ସବୁ ନେଇ ଜମା କଲେ  
ବିଦେଶୀ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ ଲକରରେ

ଟୁଙ୍ଗି ଷ୍ଟେ ମ୍, ଯେତେ ସବୁ ଷ୍ଟାମ୍  
ତାଲିଛି ଗୋଟାକ ପରେ  
ଦିନ ବିତି ଯାଏ, ଶାନ୍ତ ପଡ଼ିଯାଏ  
ଦୋଷୀ ବୁଲେ ଦିଲ୍‌ଠାରେ

ଜେଲ୍‌ରେ ରହି ଦୋଷୀ ଭୋଗକରେ  
ଭି ଆଇ ପି ଟିଏମ୍‌ସ୍  
ମିଡିଆ କରୁଛି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ ଆଉ  
ବିରୋଧ କରୁଛି ମେଣ୍ଟ

ତଳରୁ ଉପର ସବୁ ହୋଇ ମେଳ  
ଦେଶଟାକୁ ଦେଲେ ଶୋଷି  
କହିନପାରୁଛି, ସହିନପାରୁଛି  
କାରୁଅଛି ଦେଶବାସୀ

ଦୁର୍ନୀତି ରୋକ, ଭୁଷ୍ଟଚାର ରୋକ  
ଆନ୍ନା ଦେଉଛି ଡାକରା  
କଂଗ୍ରେସ, ବିଜେପି ଦୁର୍ନୀତିରେ ଭରା  
ଜାଣିଯାଉ ଦେଶ ସାରା

ମଫିଆ ଶାସନ ଚାଲିଛି ଦେଶରେ  
ସଭିଏଁ ଗଲେଣି ଡରି  
ଗରିବ ଯାଉଛି ତଳକୁ ତଳକୁ  
ଧନୀ ଖେଳେ ନିତି ହୁରି

ଅନ୍ଧ ରାଜକରେ ଅନ୍ଧ ସରକାର  
ବାକ୍‌ବାଣ ଛାଡ଼ନ୍ତି ନିତି  
ସୁଚ୍ଛ ଶାସନ ଚଳାଇବେ ବୋଲି  
କରୁଛନ୍ତି ରଣନୀତି

ଦେଶସାରା ଏବେ ଚହଳ ପଡ଼ିଛି  
ଦୁର୍ନୀତି ବିରୋଧ ପାଇଁ  
ନେତା, ପ୍ରଶାସନ ସଙ୍ଗେତ ହୋଇଲେ  
ଦୁର୍ନୀତି ରହିବ କାହିଁ

ଯେହ୍ନା ହାତରେତ ଯେହ୍ନା ଚଉଦପା  
କାହାକୁ ନଥାଏ ଡର  
ଠାକୁରଙ୍କୁ ଖାଇ ଖଟୁଳି ଖାଇଲେ  
ହେ ପ୍ରଭୁ, କିଛି ହେଲେ ତୁମେ କର

### (ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଭାଗ)

କିଏ ଶୋଇଥାଏ ରାଜଧାନୀଠାରେ  
ମୂଲ୍ୟାୟନ ଶେଯପରେ  
କିଏ ପୁଣି ଶୋଇ ରାଜରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରକଡ଼େ  
ହାତଭଙ୍ଗ ଶୀତେ ଥରେ

ଲାଲଟ୍, ସାଉଣ୍ଡ, ଆଞ୍ଚନ ସଙ୍ଗେ  
ନୂଆ ବର୍ଷ ରଙ୍ଗ ବିଞ୍ଚେ  
ଆଜିର ଯୁବକ ମଦ, ମାଂସ ଖାଇ  
ବାରାଙ୍ଗନା ସଙ୍ଗେ ନାଚେ

ଅନ୍ଧରାଈକରେ ଦର୍ପଣ ଲାଗିଛି  
ସ୍ଵପ୍ନପୁରୀ ହୋଟେଲରେ  
ସବୁରି ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଉଲଗ୍ନ ହେବାକୁ  
ଶୋଡ଼ଣୀ ପସନ୍ଦ କରେ

ଢେଙ୍କଣ୍ଟ ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍, ଡିସ୍କୋ ଡ୍ୟାନ୍‌ସ  
କରିଦିଏ ଲୋକ ଭିଡ଼  
କାନ ଫଟୁଥାଏ, ନିଶା ଘାରୁଥାଏ  
ଥକେ ନାହିଁ କା'ର ଗୋଡ଼

ଟିଭି, ମିଡିଆ ପ୍ରଚାର କରନ୍ତି  
ଲୋକେ ସୁଧୁରିବା ପାଇଁ  
ଏ କଥା ମାନିଲେ ମର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟରେ ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠ  
ହେବାପାଇଁ ଡେରି ନାହିଁ

ମନ୍ଦିର, ମସଜିଦ୍ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଗଡ଼ୁଛି  
ବିଦେଶୀ ମଦ ବୋତଲ  
ସରଗ ଦୁଆର ବିକିଦେଲେ ପ୍ରଭୁ  
କାହାକୁ କହିବା ଭଲ

ସରୁବାଲି ଜମି, ଖୋର୍ଦ୍ଧା ପାହାଡ଼  
ଥିଲା କାଳେ ତୁମ ନାମେ  
କେତେ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ବିକିଛନ୍ତି ତାକୁ  
ପଡ଼ିନଥିଲା କା କାନେ

ଜାଣି ସିଆଣିଆ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ସର୍ବେ  
ନୀତି, ଅନୀତି କାହିଁ  
କିଏ ବିକିଲାଣି କିଏ କିଣିଲାଣି  
ତାହାର ହିସାବ ନାହିଁ

ସଂସାର ଯଦି ଚାଲିବ ଏମିତି  
ଭୟ ଉପୁଜିବ ମନେ  
ତୁମକୁ ଆମକୁ ବିକିଦେବେ ଦିନେ  
ବାଦ ପଡ଼ିବେନି ଜଣେ

ସପନର ଭିତ ଜନ୍ମୁଛି ଏଠାରେ  
କୋଟିପତି ହେବାପାଇଁ  
ରାତିରେ ହାଡ଼ିଏ ଆଣିବା ପାଇଁକି  
ତଞ୍ଜିକାଟେ ନିଜ ଭାଇ

ନେତା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ଟଙ୍କା କାରବାର  
ଭୋଟ୍ ଦିଆନିଆ ବେଳେ  
ବିକ୍ରୀ ହେଉଅଛି ଜନମତ ଦାନ  
କଲେ, ବଲେ, କୌଶଳେ

ଗାଦିରେ ବସିଲେ ଥରେ ରାଜନେତା  
ଚଉଦ ପୁରୁଷ ପାଇଁ  
ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି ସେମାନେ ଠୁଳ କରୁଛନ୍ତି  
ଚିନ୍ତା ଦକ ଆଉ ନାହିଁ

ତଳରୁ ଉପର ଉପରରୁ ତଳ  
କମ୍ବଳ ସାରା ବାଳ  
ଦୁର୍ନୀତି କେମିତି ରୋକାଯିବ ପ୍ରଭୁ  
ସବୁ ବାନ୍ଧିଛନ୍ତି ମେଳ

ତେଲିଆ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ତେଲ ଲେପୁଛନ୍ତି  
ଯେତେ ସବୁ କୁଜି ନେତା  
ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପାଇଁ ବଳି ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି  
ଦୁନିଆର ନୀତି, ପ୍ରଥା

ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥବାଦୀ ସବୁ ହୋଇଲେଣି ପ୍ରଭୁ  
କାହାକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନାହିଁ  
କ୍ଷମତାର ଲୋଭ ପାଗଳ କରୁଛି  
ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ର କାହାପାଇଁ ?

କିଏ ପିନ୍ଧୁଥାଏ ପାଟ ଆଉ ସିଲ୍କ  
କିଏ ପିନ୍ଧେ ସାତସିଆଁ  
କିଏ ପାଉନାହିଁ ଛଅ ଇଞ୍ଚ କନା  
ଏଇତ ତୁମ ଦୁନିଆ

କିଏ ଖାଉଅଛି କୁକୁର ଅଇଁଠା  
ରାଜଧାନୀ ରାସ୍ତା କଡେ  
କାହାର କୁକୁର ଖାଇ ରୋତି, ମାଂସ  
ବିଛଣାରେ ଶୋଇ ଗଡେ

ତୁମରି ଗଳାରେ ଶୋଭାପାଏ ନିତି  
ହୀରା, ଲୀଳା, ମୋତି ମାଳ  
କିଏ ପାଏନାହିଁ କାଇଁତ ମାଳତେ  
ନିନ୍ଦେ ତା' ଫଟା କପାଳ

ତିନି ବରଷର ବନ୍ଧୁ ପିଲାଟି  
ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ତୁମ ଦ୍ୱାରେ  
କିନ୍ତୁ ତାହାର କାଢି ବିକିଦେଲ  
ଆଶା ମଲା ନିରାଶାରେ

ଉପାସରେ ରହି ରିଷ୍ଟାବାଲାଟି  
ନିଜ କନ୍ୟାକୁ ବିକେ  
ଦେହଶ ଟଙ୍କାରେ ଯେତେ ନାଲି ପାଣି  
ପିଇଦିଏ ସିଏ ଢୋକେ

ଜାଗିଉ ତୁମେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ସେନା  
ଦେଶର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ  
କେତେଦିନ ଆଉ ଚେଇଁ ଶୋଇଥିବ  
ଉଠିବାକୁ ମନେ ନାହିଁ

### ଗାଁରେ ଆଜିର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ

( ଏ ହେଉଛି ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଗାଁର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ଏହା ଭିତରେ ଆମର  
ପିଲାଦିନର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଓ ଆଜି ଭିତରେ ଅନେକ କିଛି ବଦଳି ଗଲାଣି ।  
କୁଆ, କୋଇଲି, କୁମ୍ଭାଟୁଆ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ହୋଇଗଲେଣି । ଗାଈ,  
ଗୋରୁ ପ୍ରାୟ କେହି ରଖୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ଗାଁରେ ଥିବା ବେକାର  
ଯୁବକମାନେ ତାସ୍ ଓ କ୍ରିକେଟ ଖେଳରେ ସମୟ କାଟୁଛନ୍ତି । ଦୁଇ  
ଟଙ୍କାରେ ମିଳୁଥିବା  
ଚାଉଳ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ କର୍ମକୋଢି କରିଦେଇଛି । ଗାଁରେ ସମସ୍ତେ  
ରାଜନୀତିରେ ବେଶ୍ ସକ୍ରିୟ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଲକ୍ଷା ସରକାର ସବୁ  
କରନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କପାଇଁ, ଇତ୍ୟାଦି .... ଏହାରି ଉପରେ ଆଧାରିତ ଏ  
କବିତା )

କାଉ କା'କଲେ ଲୋକେ କହୁଥିଲେ  
କୁଣିଆ ଆସିବେ ଆଜି  
ବଗ, ଚିଲ, ପାଣିକୁଆ, କୁମ୍ଭାଟୁଆ  
ଗଲେଣି କୁଆଡେ ହଜି

ଶହରା ଦିନେ ଭଦଭଦକିଆ  
ଦେଖିଲେ ହୁଅଇ ଶୁଭ  
ହଲଦୀବସନ୍ତ ଦେଖିଦେଲେ ଥରେ  
ମନରେ ଆସଇ ଭାବ

ଘରଟଟିଆଟି କିଟିରି ମିଟିରି  
କରୁନାହିଁ ତାଳେ ବସି  
ବଇଶାଖ ମାସେ କୋଇଲିର ସ୍ୱର  
ଆସୁନାହିଁ କାହିଁ ଭାସି  
ଚିଲ, ଶାଗୁଣା ନ ଦିଶନ୍ତି ଆଉ  
ମତା ହୋଇଯାଏ ବାସି  
ରାତିରେ ବିଲୁଆ ତାକ ନ ଶୁଭଇ  
କି ସମୟ ହେଲା ଆସି

ଗୋରୁ ଗୁହାଳରେ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ହେଇଗଲେ  
ଗୋବର ମିଳିଲା ନାହିଁ  
ଟା ରରେ ଆଜି ବିଲୁକୁ ଚଷିଲେ  
ବେଶି ଉପାଦନ ପାଇଁ

ଆମ ସରକାର କରନ୍ତି ଯୋଜନା  
ତାଷୀଙ୍କ ମଙ୍ଗଳପାଇଁ  
କୃଷିପାଇଁ ରଣ, ଉନ୍ନତ ବିହନ  
ମିଳୁଅଛି ଏବେ କାହିଁ ?

ସୁଲଭ ମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ମିଳିବ ବିହନ  
ସୋଗାନ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ  
ଖୋଲା ବଜାରରେ ସାର ବିକ୍ରିହେବ  
କରିଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ନୀତି

ତାଷୀ କରୁଅଛି ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା ଆଜି  
ଶୁଣି ନପାରଇ ରଣ  
ପିଲାଛୁଆ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପେଟ ପୋଷିବାକୁ  
ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ହଲରାଣ

ରଣ ଯାହା ଆଜି ମିଳଇ ସଭିଙ୍କୁ  
ଅଧାଯାଏ ଲାଞ୍ଜ ଦେଇ  
ସବୁ ବାବୁମାନେ ଅନାଇ ଥାଆନ୍ତି  
କେତେଦେବ ବଡ଼ ଭାଇ

ଚାଉଳରେ ଗୋଡ଼ି, ଧାନରେ ଅଗାଡ଼ି  
ମିଶାଉଛି ଯିଏ ଯିଏ  
ସମସ୍ତେ ଚାହାଁନ୍ତି ପ୍ରବଚନ ଦେବେ  
ଶୋତା ହେବ ତେବେ କିଏ ?

ଅପମିଶ୍ରଣରେ ଆଗ ଆମ ଦେଶ  
କେହି ପାରିବେନି ଜିତି  
ଏ ସବୁ ଦିଗରେ ପାରଙ୍ଗମ ଆମେ  
ବିଚକ୍ଷଣ ଆମ ମତି

ଚିନିରେ ମିଶୁଛି ଯୁରିଆ ପ୍ରଭୁ  
ପେଟୋଲରେ କିରାସିନି  
କ୍ଷୀରରେ ମିଶୁଛି ସୋତା ଓ ମଇଦା  
ଶିଶୁ ହୁଏ ହିନିମାନୀ

ଔଷଧ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଭେଜାଇ ହେଲାଣି  
ଶୁଣି ଚିନ୍ତା ଆସେ ମନେ  
ହୃଦରୋଗ ପାଇଁ ଔଷଧ ଖାଇକି  
ରୋଗୀ ମରେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନେ

ଆମ ରାଇଜରେ ଶିଶୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁହାର  
ବଢୁଛି ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ  
କୁମ୍ଭୀର କାନ୍ଦଣା କାନ୍ଦନ୍ତି ସମସ୍ତେ  
କିଏ ଦେଉନାହିଁ ଧ୍ୟାନ

ପୁଅ-ଝିଅ ଦିହେଁ ସମସ୍ତେ ସମାନ  
କହୁ ଗର୍ବକରି କଥା  
ଝିଅ ଜନ୍ମହେବା ଜାଣିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ  
ଆମେ କରୁ ଭୃଣହତ୍ୟା

ଅଲଗାସାଉଣ୍ଟ ମେସିନ୍ କିଣନ୍ତି  
ସେନ୍ସ ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ  
ଟେକ୍ନିକାଲିର ଅପବ୍ୟବହାର  
କରନ୍ତି ଡାକ୍ତର ସ୍ବାଇଁ

ଅର୍ଥର ଲାଳସା କରିଅଛି ଅନ୍ଧ  
ଡାକ୍ତର, ନର୍ସଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ  
ନୈତିକତା ଜ୍ଞାନ ବଜାୟ ରଖିଲେ  
ଭୃଣହତ୍ୟା ହେବନାହିଁ

ଗାଁ ଦୋକାନରେ ଆଜି ମିଳୁଆଛି  
ଦେଶି ଓ ବିଦେଶି ମଦ  
ସଞ୍ଜ ହେଲେ ସେଠି ଭିଡ଼ ବାବୁଙ୍କର  
ଚାଖିବାକୁ ତା'ର ସ୍ବାଦ

ହାଣ୍ଡିଆ ପିଇକି ଦାଣ୍ଡିଆ ମାରନ୍ତି  
ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଭାଇ  
ଶିକ୍ଷା ସତୀବ କମାଇ କରନ୍ତି  
ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଯାଇ

ଛାତରୁ ଗଳୁଛି ଟୋପା ଟୋପା ପାଣି  
କାନ୍ଥରେ ଚଢ଼ିଛି ଉଇ  
ମଶା ଓ ଦୁର୍ଗନ୍ଧ ପରିବେଶ ଦେଖି  
ଦିଦି ମାରନ୍ତି ହାଇ

ବାତ୍ୟାରେ ଯାଇଛି ସ୍କୁଲଘର ଭାଙ୍ଗି  
ପିଲାଏ ପଡ଼ନ୍ତି ପାଠ  
ବରଗଛ ତଳେ, ଏକତୁଟ ହୋଇ  
କରନ୍ତି ମିରିଗ ନାଟ

ସାଇକେଲ୍, ଡ୍ରାପ୍ ମିଳୁଛି ଝିଅଙ୍କୁ  
ଶିକ୍ଷାର ପ୍ରସାର ପାଇଁ  
ଖାଇବାକୁ ମିଳେ ପୋକାତାଲି ସଙ୍ଗେ  
ପତାଏଶ୍ୱ କେତେକାହିଁ

ପ୍ରତି ଗାଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡେ ପୋଖରୀ ଖୋଳିଲେ  
ଆମ ପ୍ରୀୟ ସରକାର  
ଦଳ ଭରିଗଲା, ପଙ୍କ ଭରିଗଲା  
ନାହିଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ବିଚାର

ଇନ୍ଦିରା ଆବାସ, ଦିଟଙ୍କା ଚାଉଳ  
ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି ସରକାର  
କର୍ମ କୋଢିଆଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ବଢ଼ିଗଲେ  
ଭୋଟ ବେଳେ ଦରକାର



ଲୋକହିଁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ସରକାର  
କରିବେ ସମସ୍ତ କାମ  
ଗାଁରେ ରହିବେ ମଉଜ କରିବେ  
ଯେତେସବୁ ନରାଧମ

ଏଭଳି ମୁରୁଖ ରହିଲେ ଗ୍ରାମରେ  
ଗ୍ରାମର ଉନ୍ନତି ନାହିଁ  
ତାହା ଖେଳିବେ, କ୍ରିକେଟ ଖେଳିବେ  
ସମୟ କାଟିବା ପାଇଁ

କ୍ରିକେଟ୍ ଟୁର୍ଣ୍ଣମେଣ୍ଟ ଚାଲୁଛି ଗାଁରେ  
ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଲୋକ ଭିଡ  
ହରିଆ ହେଉଛି ଟୁର୍ଣ୍ଣମେଣ୍ଟ ଏମ୍.ଭି.ପି  
ନରିଆର ଦେଖ ତୋତ

ମାଇକ୍ ବାଜୁଛି କାନ ଫଟାଉଛି  
ନଘା ନାହିଁ ପଘା ନାହିଁ  
ମୁରବି ମାନଙ୍କୁ କିଏସେ ପତାରେ  
ଲୁଚୁଛନ୍ତି ଘରେ ଯାଇ

ସଭା ସମିତିରେ, ବାହା, ବ୍ରତଘରେ  
ଅଶ୍ରୁମଳ ସଂଗୀତ ବାଜେ  
ପୂଜା, ପର୍ବାଣୀରେ ଚିକ୍‌ନି ଚାମେଲି  
ଦର୍ଶକର ମନ ବୁଝେ

ସରପଞ୍ଚ, ଡ୍ରାଟ୍ ମେମ୍ବର ହେବାକୁ  
ରାଜନୀତି କେତେ ଚାଲେ  
ନୋଟ୍ ଦେଇ ଭୋଟ୍ କିଣିବା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ  
ବିଅର ବୋତଲ ଝୁଲେ

ଗାଁରେ ଅଧେତ କଂଗ୍ରେସ ହୋଇଲେ  
ଅଧେତ ବିଜେଡି ଲୋକ  
କଥାକଥାକରେ ହୁଏ ମାତପିତ  
ସଭିଏଁ ଚରମ ଠକ

ଇଲେକ୍ଟ୍ରୋନିକ୍ସ ବସିଛି ଗାଁରେ  
ତାର ବି ହେଉଛି ଟଣା  
ଆଲୁଅ ଡଳୁଛି ମିଞ୍ଚି ମଞ୍ଚି ହୋଇ  
କରିଦିଏ ଦିନ କଣା

ତିନି ଚାରିଘଣ୍ଟା ବିଜୁଳି କାଟନ୍ତି  
ସଞ୍ଚିବେଳେ ସରକାର  
ହାତଗୁଞ୍ଜିଦେଇ ଜମ୍‌ପର ପକାଇ  
କିଏ କରେ କାରବାର

ଏବେବି ଡଳୁଛି ଡିବିରି ଆଲୁଅ  
ଗାଁ, ରାଜଧାନୀଠାରେ  
ଲଝନ ଆଲୁଅ ଏବେବି ଡଳୁଛି  
ଏକବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦିରେ

ଗାଁରେ ହେଉଛି ଯେତେ ସବୁ ରାସ୍ତା  
ନିମ୍ନ ମାନର କାମ  
ଯାନବାହନ ଗଗନେ ଉଡୁଛି  
ବାଇକ୍ ହେଉଛି ଯମ

ବିନା ଟେଣ୍ଡରରେ କାମ ମିଳିଯାଏ  
ନିଜ ଚିହ୍ନାଲୋକ ଦେଖି  
କଂସ୍ତ ର ବାବୁ କରୁଛନ୍ତି କାମ  
ନେତାଙ୍କର ମନଲାଖ

କେହି ଦେଖୁନାହିଁ ଜନତାର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ  
ଲୋକହୁଏ ହାଇପାଇଁ  
ରାତାରାତି ବଡ଼ ଲୋକ ହେବାପାଇଁ  
ଦୌଡୁଛନ୍ତି ଧଇଁସଇଁ

ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ସଂଖ୍ୟା ବଢୁଛି ଅନେକ  
ଲୋକ ମରେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନେ  
ଚିଫ୍‌ମିନିଷ୍ଟର ରିଲିଫ୍ ପାଣ୍ଟିରୁ  
ଦୁଇଲକ୍ଷ ପାଏ ଜଣେ

ଜୀବନର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ଦୁଇଲକ୍ଷ ମାତ୍ର  
କିଏ କରେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣ ?  
ଟଙ୍କା ମିଳିଗଲେ ପରିବାର ଖୁସି  
ବରଂ ଯାଉ କାହା ପ୍ରାଣ

ଦେହଟି ଥରୁଛି ମନଟି ଝୁରୁଛି  
ଏ ସମସ୍ତ ଦେଖି ଦେଖି  
ଏତିକି ମାଗୁଣି ତୁମରି ପୟରେ  
କିଛି କର ଚକା ଆଖି

ସିଲଭର ଡିଜିଟାଲ ମେରୀନାଟ

**Present is Here as if Forever**

By Babru Samal

When I visit India  
It appears  
As if I never left home  
The dirt, the noise and the nosy people  
Become familiar only after a short while.

My USA life becomes a dream  
As if I was never there at all  
Even I cannot properly sketch the road I take to work  
And once I am back  
India becomes a dream again  
As if I had a long sleep and just woke up  
On my own bed  
Only the photographs remind me of the reality.

Spring comes  
With flowers  
On every nook and corner of the trees  
Summer comes  
And erases all the pains of the winter  
Fully dressed green trees  
The fun fairs and festivals  
Appear as if they are there forever  
But not really

Then the winter creeps in  
Welcomed by naked trees  
Shivering mornings and  
Show case snowflakes on window shield  
And inside my heavy duty jacket  
I feel as if the winter is forever  
And will never go away.

My mind  
A mesh of wishes, wistful thoughts  
The meadow of past pains with the stream of  
delicious dreams  
Those last like colorful soap bubbles  
I am a pawn of my moments  
Glossing over the past and  
Thinking as if the present is here as if forever.

*Babru Samal lives in Rockville, MD. His hobbies are writing, photography, travel and reading. He is a molecular biologist & bioinformatician by profession.*

**The Eucalyptus Graveyard**

By Khalilah Okeke

Where trees spiral out like bouquets of bent  
skeletons  
Retracted and stiff in their death stance  
Stripped bare of leaf and color

**Dying Alone**

By Khalilah Okeke

My body breaks under the strain of life  
Love my only conquer has left me vacant  
Like a hollow shell filling with sand  
Each break of the wave  
Each suffocating grain  
Stifling my once beautiful song  
Love drifted away from me like floating lanterns in  
black water  
They parted the thick fog like a curtain  
My broken body could not follow  
The black lake filled my lungs I could not shout  
My heavy heart was like an anchor  
Pulling me to the murky depths below

**They Call You a Destroyer**

By Khalilah Okeke

Mother Hurricane a deceived lover  
You merge between the thunder and rain  
Your tail entwines the sea  
You gallop tumultuously  
With winter in your heart  
And tremor in your foot  
You hurdle past the horizon and breathe  
Absorbing thyself with the oceans tide  
Eating yourself to stay alive  
Ravenous rage depletes  
Leaving white sheets of sky  
As you dissipate within a whisper of time

*Khalilah Okeke is the grand-daughter of Dr. Prasanna K. Pati.*

## ଏହାହିଁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ତୋର ନନ୍ଦକିଶୋର ଶତପଥୀ

ହିମାଳୟ ଗର୍ଭ ଶାନ୍ତ ବନାନୀ କୋଳେ  
ଘୃତ ଆହୁତିର ଧୂମ୍ରପଟଳ ତଳେ  
ଗଗନରେ ଉଠେ ରକ୍ଷି କଣ୍ଠରୁ ଓଁକାର ମଧୁ ଧ୍ବନି  
ସୁମଧୁର ସେଇ ବେଦ ମନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଦେବତାର ଆବାହନୀ  
ରକ୍ଷି ପ୍ରପୂଜିତ ଭାରତବର୍ଷ ଆର୍ଯ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତ ଭୂମି □

ମାନବ ଅନ୍ତର ସଦା ଅସ୍ଥିର  
ଶାନ୍ତି ପାଏନା ଖୋଜେ ଉତ୍ତର  
ଶାଶ୍ଵତ ତାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଆତ୍ମାତେ  
ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ବନି ଉଠେ ହିମ ପର୍ବତେ  
“କୁହ ତୁମେ ମୋତେ ହେ ରକ୍ଷି ପ୍ରବର  
କିମ୍ବା ବିବ୍ରତ ମୋର ଅନ୍ତର  
କିଏ ମୁହିଁ କୁହ, କେଉଁଠୁ ଆସିଲି  
କି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସାରି ମୁଁ ପୁଣି ଯିବି ତାଲି  
କେଉଁ ସେ ପି କୁ, ପୁଣି କେଉଁଠାକୁ  
ଶେଷ ଅବା କେଉଁ ଅଶେଷ ପଥକୁ !”

ହିମ ଗର୍ଭର ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ବନି ତଳୁ ଉଠୁଥିଲା ମଧୁ ଧ୍ବନି  
ଅତି ଗନ୍ଧୀର ରକ୍ଷି କଣ୍ଠରୁ ଅମୃତଭରା ବାଣୀ,  
“କେଉଁଠୁ ଆସିନୁ, କେଉଁଠି ଯିବୁନି ତୁ ତ ଶାଶ୍ଵତ ନିରନ୍ତର  
ସବୁକାଳେ ଥିଲୁ, ସବୁକାଳେ ଥିବୁ  
ବ୍ରହ୍ମର ରୂପ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ସ୍ଵରୂପ ଉତ୍ସ ତୁ ଆନନ୍ଦର  
ସବୁହିଁ ଅଟେ ସ୍ଵରୂପ ତୋହର ପବିତ୍ର ସ୍ଵଚ୍ଛ ଧାରା

ରଜ, ତମ ଗୁଣେ କଳୁଷିତ ହୋଇ ଶରୀରରେ ଦେଉ ଧରା  
ସବୁ ଯେଣୁ ତୋ ସ୍ମୃତିର ନିତ୍ୟ ତାହାକୁହିଁ ତୁହି ଝୁରୁ  
ସେଇ ସେ ସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁକି ମନେ କଳ୍ପନା କରୁ  
ସେ କଳ୍ପନା ତୋତେ ହାତଠାରି ତାକେ ତା ପାଶେ ଆସିବା ପାଇଁ  
ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ହେଉଛୁ ସଦା ସର୍ବଦା ତାହାକୁ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ  
ସେଇ ସ୍ଥିତି ଅଟେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମର ଭାବ ତାହାହିଁ ତୋର ସ୍ମୃତିର  
ସ୍ମୃତିର ସ୍ଥିତି ଅଟେ ତୋ କାମନା ପରଂବ୍ରହ୍ମର ଭାବ □

ପ୍ରକୃତିର ଏ ତ୍ରିଗୁଣକୁ ନାଶି ଶରୀର ତ୍ୟାଗ କରି  
ପରଂବ୍ରହ୍ମର ନିର୍ମଳ ଭାବ ସ୍ଵରୂପ ସ୍ମୃତିର ଧରି

ସ୍ଥିତି ହେବୁ ତୁହି, ଯାତ୍ରାର ଶେଷେ ତାହାହିଁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ତୋର”  
ସାରା ବିଶ୍ଵକୁ ଚକିତ କରାଇ ରକ୍ଷି ଦେଲେ ଉତ୍ତର □

ଗଗନ ପବନ କମ୍ପିତ କରି ଉଠେ ଓଁକାର ଧ୍ବନି  
ରକ୍ଷି ପ୍ରପୂଜିତ ଭାରତବର୍ଷ ଏଇ ଆର୍ଯ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତ ଭୂମି □

ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚତ୍ – ଡାକ୍ତର ସଞ୍ଜୟ ଶତପଥୀ

## ନିଆରା ସ୍ଵର୍ଗ ତଳି ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଶାନ୍ତ ସ୍ମିତ ମଧୁର ପରଶର , ଗୋଟେ ଭିନ୍ନ ମାଦକତା ଅଛି  
ଯଦି..... ତହିଁରେ କିଛିଟା ସ୍ନେହର ମହକ, ଆଶ୍ଵାସନାର ମୃଦୁ  
କୁହୁକ  
ଓ ସମ୍ଭାବନାର ଶୀତଳ ସ୍ତବକ ଅଛି  
ଧ୍ବରେ ଧ୍ବରେ ସେଇ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗ ପାଲଟିଯାଏ, ଏକ ନିବିଡ ଆଶ୍ରେଷରେ,  
ଅଜ୍ଞୁରିତ ହେଇ ଉଠେ ସୁନେଲୀ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ, ସମ୍ପର୍କର ଦୃଢ ବଳୟ  
ଭିତରେ  
ବିଶ୍ଵାସର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣାଳୀରେ, ଦୁଃଖର ପ୍ରହେଳିକା ହଟିଯାଏ  
ସ୍ଵୀକୃତିର ଦୀପାଳୀରେ, ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାର ଯବନିକା ପଡିଯାଏ,  
ଭରିଜାଏ ଜୀବନର କାନ୍ଦୁଆସ୍ ପରେ, ସମ୍ପର୍କର ଆଭାସ,  
କରିବାକୁ ପଡେନାହିଁ ଶାନ୍ତିର ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣ ପାଇଁ ଅନନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରୟାସ  
ମୁଁ କେବଳ ସେଇ ଶାନ୍ତ ସ୍ମିତ ମଧୁର ସ୍ଵର୍ଗ ଚାହେଁ,  
କାରଣ.....ସେଇ ନିବିଡ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନରେ ବି  
ହସି ହସି ମୃତ୍ୟୁକୁ ସ୍ଵାଗତ କରିବାର ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟ ଥାଏ □

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଲେଖକ ସଙ୍ଘର ସଦସ୍ୟ। ଶ୍ରୀମତି ତଳି ମହାପାତ୍ର ସ୍ଵାମୀ  
ପ୍ରଦୀପ୍ ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସମ୍ବଲପୁରରେ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି □  
ଉତ୍କଳ ନାରୀ ପ୍ରତିଭା, ଉତ୍କଳିକା ସାରସ୍ଵତ, ପ୍ରଞ୍ଚାମୟୀ ଏବଂ  
ବରଦାଶ୍ରୀ ଭଳି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମ୍ମାନରେ ସେ ସମ୍ମାନିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି □  
ତାଙ୍କର ଗଳ୍ପ, କବିତା, ବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ ଏବଂ ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ ଭାଷାର ଲେଖା  
ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପତ୍ରପତ୍ରିକାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଅଛି □ “ସମ୍ପର୍କର ସେତୁ”  
ତାଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଲିଖିତ ଏକ ଗଳ୍ପ ସଂକଳନ

## ଚାରୋଟି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଅଭିବ୍ୟକ୍ତି

### ସତ୍ୟ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ବୋଉ

ଦୁନିଆଯାକର ସମସ୍ତ ଶବ୍ଦକୁ  
ଏକାଠି ବାନ୍ଧିବୁନ୍ଧି ଠୁଳ କଲେ ବି  
ଲେଖୁ ପାରୁନି ତୋ ପାଇଁ ଦି ଧାଡ଼ି କବିତା  
ଯଦିଓ ମୋର ଚେତନା  
ଉପଚେତନା ଓ ଅବଚେତନାରେ  
ତୁ ସଦା ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମନ୍ତା □

ମୁଁ ଜାଣେନା ତୁ ଏବେ କେଉଁଠି  
ଆକାଶରେ ନୁଆ ଏକ ତାରା  
ଅଥବା ଫୁଲରେ ନୁଆ ଏକ ମହକ  
ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ନୁଆ ଏକ ଢେଉ  
ଅଥବା ସଙ୍ଗୀତରେ ନୁଆ ଏକ ସ୍ଵର  
ମୋ ଭିତରେ ତୁ ସେଇଠି ଅଛୁ  
ଯେଉଁଠି ଅଛନ୍ତି ଈଶ୍ଵର □

ମୋ ପାଖରେ ତୋର ଯଶୋବିତା ସ୍ନେହର ଭଣ୍ଡାର  
ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସେ ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସେ  
ପଦେ ପଦେ ପ୍ରବାସର ଜୀବନରେ  
ଅକାଟ୍ୟ କବଚ ପରି ଜଗିରଖେ  
ସମସ୍ତ ଅଘଟଣରୁ □

ଲେଖୁବାକୁ ବସିଲେ ତୋ ପାଇଁ କବିତା  
ଆସେନା ଶବ୍ଦ  
ଆସେନା ସ୍ଵର  
କଲମରୁ କାଳି ଶୁଖିଯାଏ □  
କେବଳ ଯାହା ଖାଲି ଆଖିପତା  
ଓଦା ହୋଇଯାଏ □  
ଯେଉଁଠି ଅଛୁ ଆ  
ଆସନ୍ତା ଜନ୍ମ ତା ପର ଜନ୍ମ  
ଏବଂ ଆଗାମୀ ସବୁ ଜନ୍ମରେ  
ମୋ ଝିଅ ହୋଇ ଆ □

ଗାଁ ଆଜିକାଲି

ଆଜିକାଲି ଗାଁ କୁ ଯିବାପାଇଁ ଏମିତି ସମୟ ହୁଏନା  
କେବେ କେମିତି ଆସିଲେ  
ଅଧା ଗାଁ ଲାଗନ୍ତି ଅତିହୀନ  
ମନ ଭିତରେ ଦୁଃଖର ନିଆଁ ଜଳେ  
ଯେବେ ନିଜ ଗାଁ ରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହେବାର କଳଙ୍କ ମିଳେ □

ଆଜିକାଲି ବାହାଘର ବ୍ରତଘର ହେଲେ  
ଆଗପରି ଗାଁ ରେ ଆଉ ଚଞ୍ଚଳତା ନାହିଁ  
ପିଲାଙ୍କ କୋଳାହଳରେ ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ହେଉନି ମୁଖର  
ଆଜିକାଲିତ ସବୁକିଛି ସହରରେ  
ଗାଁ ରେ ଆଉ ଗଛ କାହିଁଯେ ବନ୍ଧାହେବ ତାଳ ଛାମୁଡିଆ  
ପାହାଡ଼ତ ଚାଙ୍ଗରା  
ଜଙ୍ଗଲ କଟା ହୋଇ ଘରମାନେ ହୋଇଲେଣି ଠିଆ □  
ମଣ୍ଡପବାଲା କଣ୍ଟ୍ରାକ୍ଟ ନେଇଛି  
ପଇସା ପକେଇଲେ ସବୁକିଛି ଆପେ ହେଇଯାଉଛି □

କିଛି ପିଲା ବିଏ ପାସ୍ କରି  
ଗାଁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଗଲେଣି ବାଙ୍ଗାଲୋର କି ମୁମ୍ବାଇ  
କହୁଛନ୍ତି କଲ୍ ସେକ୍ଟରରେ ଭଲ ଦିପଇସା ହେଉଛି କମାଇ  
ବିଦିଆ ପାନ ବୋକାନୀ  
ନୁଆ ଏସ୍ ଟି ଡି ବୁଥ୍ ଖୋଲିଛି  
ଗାଁ କୁ ବାକି ଦୁନିଆ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଜୋଡ଼ି ଦେଇଛି  
ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ଆଜିକାଲି ଲୋକେ ବିଦିଆ ବୁହୁଁ,  
ତାକୁ ବିଦ୍ୟାଧର ଡାକନ୍ତି !

ଗଲାବର୍ଷ ମିଶ୍ର ଘର ପୁଅ ଆମେରିକା ଗଲା  
ଏବର୍ଷ ମିଶ୍ରବୁଢ଼ା ଚାଲିଗଲେ  
ଗୋଟିଏ ବୋଲି ପୁଅ, ଖବର ଗଲା  
ଭିସା ଅସୁବିଧା, ପୁଅ ଆସି ପାରିବନି କହିଲା  
ଏ କି ଅଘଟଣ କଥା, ଚାକର ଟୋକା ମୁଖାସି ଦେଲା  
ଖାଲି ଘର ଖାଁ ଖାଁ ଗୋଡ଼ାଉଛି  
କେହି ବୋଲେ କେହି ନାହାନ୍ତି  
ମିଶ୍ର ବୁଢ଼ୀ ପୁଅର ଫେରିବା ବାଟକୁ  
ଚାହିଁ ମାଲି ଗଡ଼ାଉଛି  
ବିଚାରୀ, କିଏ ଆଗ ଆସିବ ଜାଣିନି  
ପୁଅ ଓ ମୃତ୍ୟୁକୁ ଏକା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଅନାଇ ବସିଛି □

ଗାଁରେ ଆଉ ଶୁଭୁନି  
କୋଇଲି କୁମ୍ଭାତୁଆଙ୍କ ଗୀତ  
ଦିଶୁନାହାନ୍ତି ଭଦ୍ରଭଦ୍ରା କି ହଳଦୀବସନ୍ତ  
କଦବା କେମିତି କାଉଟେ ଅଗଣାରେ  
ଆସି ରାବିଦେଲେ  
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ସମସ୍ତେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ କାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ  
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କି କାହା ବାରିରୁ ବରକୋଳି ପିଛୁଳି ଡୋଳିବାକୁ  
ପ୍ରାୟ ପିଲା ସକାଳୁ ଅଟୋରେ ବସି ସହରକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି  
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ଦିନକୁଦିନ ବଢ଼ିଯାଉଛି ବସ୍ତାନିର ଓଜନ  
ଛିଡ଼ିଯାଉଛି ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଓଠରୁ ହସ  
ପ୍ରଜାପତି ମାନେ ଅନିଚ୍ଛାସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ବି  
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ବସି ମହୁ ପିଉଛନ୍ତି  
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ଉଡ଼ିଗଲାଣି ରଜନୀଗଂଧାର ବାସନା  
ଆଖି ବୁଜିଦେଲେ ପିଲାଦିନ, ଗାଁ ର ରୂପକଳ୍ପ ସାମ୍ନାରେ  
ଭାସିଆସେ  
ଆଖି ଖୋଲିଦେଲେ ଗାଁ ମୁହଁ, ଗାଁ ର କଙ୍କାଳ ଦିଶେ □

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ହୋଇଯାଏନା ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ  
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ଖୋର୍ଦ୍ଧା ପାଇକପୁଅର ତୀକ୍ଷ୍ଣ ତରବାରୀ ଧାରରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ  
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ସାଲବେଗର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଦରକାର  
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ଚେତନା ବଦଳେନା, ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ବଦଳେନା,  
ଛଣ୍ଡର ବଦଳନ୍ତିନି,  
ସମ୍ପର୍କ ବଦଳେନା, ସ୍ଥିତି ବଦଳେନା  
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ଦେଖ, ମା ର ବଡ଼ଓଷା ଅଟକାଳି  
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ତଥାପି ଯଦି କିଛି ମନେ ନପଡେ  
ନିଅ ନିଅ, ମୋ ମା'ର ଛାତିରୁ ରକ୍ତ ଆଞ୍ଜୁଳାଏ ନିଅ

ଏବଂ ନିଜ ଘର ଚାରିପଟେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର  
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କହିଲ ବେଶୀ ଓଦା ହୋଇଯିବ  
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ସେ ସବୁ କଣ ଯେ ହେବ,  
ଯାହା ମୁଁ ଚାହୁଁଛି ଖାଲି  
ତୁମର ସେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ଅନୁଭବ □ 🍓

ବିଗତ ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବିତା ଲେଖୁଛନ୍ତି □ ଝଙ୍କାର,  
ଆସନ୍ତାକାଲି, ଇଡ଼ାହାର, ଅମୃତାୟନ, ଏକାଏକା, ପ୍ରତିବେଶୀ,  
ସହକାର, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତୀ, ମହଲ, ଗୋକର୍ଣ୍ଣକା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ  
ବାହିନୀ, ଅପୂର୍ବା, ସମ୍ବାଦ, ସମାଜ, ଧରିତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭାଷର,  
ପ୍ରଗତିବାଦୀ ରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ □ ଆକାଶବାଣୀ କଟକ ଯୁବବାଣୀ  
ରେ କବିତା ପ୍ରସାରିତ □ ରେଭେନ୍ସା ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ମୁଖପତ୍ର  
“ଦି ରେଭେନ୍ସାଭିଆନ୍” କୁ ସଂପାଦିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି □ ଏବେ  
ଆମେରିକାରୁ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପତ୍ରିକା “ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି” ର ସଂପାଦନା  
କରୁଛନ୍ତି □

## **Odia Culture & the Diaspora**

### **Temple Art and Architecture of Odisha: Sixth to Tenth Century A.D.**

By Dr. Surya Pattanaik

The earliest structural temples in India were probably built by the Mauryas in the 3rd century B.C., as evidenced from the excavations at Bairat district in Rajasthan and *Temple #40* and *#18* at Sanchi (1). However, the ones still standing in its original condition are the ones at Aihole in Karnataka, probably built around 300 to 350 A.D.

The Indian *silpasastras* classify the temple architectural styles into three different categories: 1) *Nagara* 2) *Dravida* and 3) *Vesara*. The *Nagara* style, also referred to as *Indo-Aryan* style, developed in the 5th century A.D. and is prevalent in all of Northern India. The *Dravida* style was developed around the 7th century A.D. and all the Southern Indian temples belong to this class. The *Vesara*, the hybrid style, exists in the border areas between the two major styles (*Nagara* and *Dravida*), particularly in the modern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Many historians and scholars classify the temple architecture of Odisha under the *Nagara* or *Indo-Aryan* style. However, the Odishan temple architecture, by reason of its own distinct individualities and a long history of evolution, had established a unique style, called *Kalinga*.

Prof. R.D. Banerji (2) refers to an inscription in the Amritesvar temple at Holal in the Bellary district (Karnataka) where four different styles are mentioned: *Nagara*, *Kalinga*, *Dravida* and *Vesara*. Mr. D.P. Ghosh (3) has shown that certain well marked peculiarities distinguish Odisha group of temples from the other *Nagara* temples of Northern India, Madhya Pradesh, Rajputana, Gujarat and Kangra.

The axial development of the Odishan temple begins with *deul* (*vimana*) or sanctum itself. The *jagamohana* or *mukhasala* is added in front of the *deul*. Two other structures, *nata-mandira* and *bhoga-mandapa*, are added to *jagamohana* only in the late 12th century.

The architectural orders described in the *Silpasashtra* of Odisha, *Bhuabanapradipa*, are: a) *Rekha* b) *Pidha* and c) *Khakhara*. All the three orders were employed in various periods in Odisha for the temple complex. However, in the mature plan, in the latter part of 10th century, it is the *rekha* order that becomes the standard plan for the *deul*, the

most sanctified part of the shrine housing the presiding Deity while the *pidha* order becomes the standard plan for *jagamohana* (4). While the *rekha* and *pidha* orders are employed for structures of all religious sects, the *khakhara* order is for temples dedicated only to *Sakti* worship.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the intricate details of *Kalinga* temple architecture. The readers can refer to several excellent books (2-6) on the subject. Only some major features will be covered along with the development through the sixth to tenth century A.D., supported with photographs taken by the author.

Architecture: Architecturally, both the *rekha* and *pidha* can be divided into three principal parts along the vertical plane above the *pitha*: a) *bada* (vertical wall), b) *gandi* (curvilinear spire or pyramidal roof) and c) *mastaka* (crowning elements), as shown in Figs. 1-2 (4). The *bada* is divided into three main components: 1) *pabhaga* (base moldings), 2) *jangha* (vertical portion or wall) and 3) *baranda* (upper moldings demarcating the *bada* from the *gandi*). The surface of the *bada* is further demarcated by projecting piers called *pagas* or *rathas*, which run vertically up the structure.

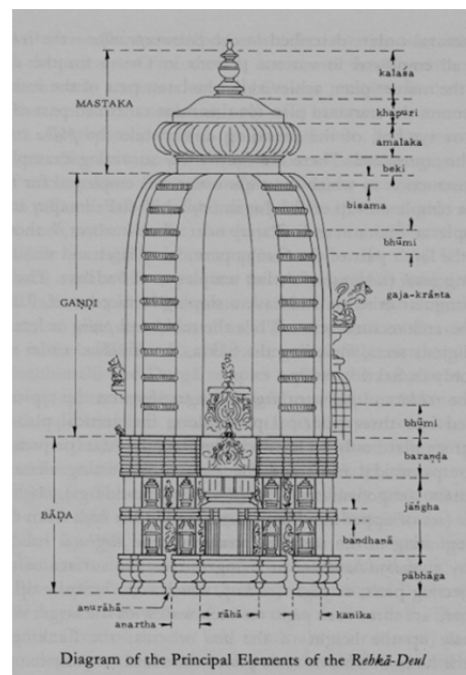


Fig.1 Principal Elements of the Rekha-Deul

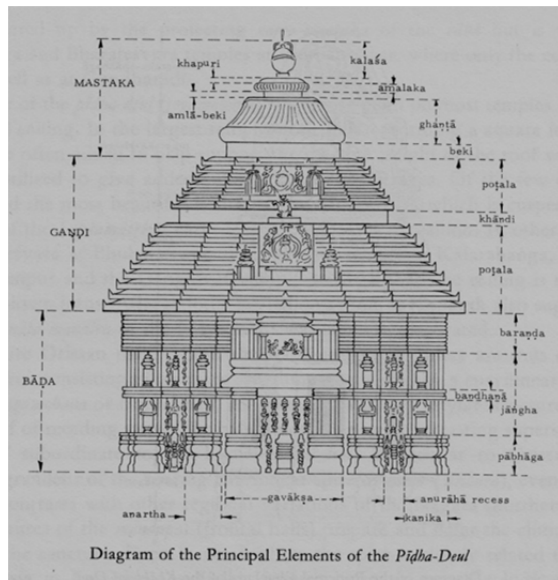


Fig.2 Principal Elements of the Pidha-Deul

In the early temples, there are three such *pagas* on each wall, with the larger center *paga* (*raha*), running continuously up the height of the *deul*, whereas the flanking subsidiary *pagas* terminate beneath the *baranda*. This is known as *tri-ratha* design and is standard on early temples. In the course of evolution, with increased elaboration, this *tri-ratha* slowly evolves into *pancha-ratha* design with the subsidiary *pagas* running continuously up the height of the *deul*. In the 12th century the *pancha-ratha* plan is frequently superseded by a *sapta-ratha* design and in some cases the design approximates a *nava-ratha*. The elaboration also takes place in the *pabhaga*, where the number of moldings is increased from three to five, and in the *baranda* where the number of moldings is greatly increased, in some cases to ten.

The *rekha* and *pidha* orders exhibit their individual peculiarities in the *gandi*. In the *rekha-deul*, the *gandi* assumes the shape of a curvilinear spire. The silhouette of this spire is rather squat and truncated in the early temples, whereas in the later temples, much greater in height, the silhouette curves in rapidly at the top to produce a more soaring effect. Even on the earliest existing Odishan temple, the decorative program of the *gandi* demonstrates a mature conception being *pancha-ratha* in design in contrast to the *tri-ratha* design of the *bada* (4).

The *mastaka* of the *rekha-deul* consists of a *beki* (recessed cylindrical portion above the *bisama*), an *amalaka* (large ribbed disc flattened in appearance), *khapuri* (flat bell-shaped member) and surmounting *kalasa* on which is placed the *ayudha* (sacred weapon) of the temple's presiding deity.

The *gandi* of the *pidha-deul* consists of a number of *pidha*-moldings (projecting member with downward curving edge) diminishing in a pyramidal shape. *Vajra-mastaka* motifs crowned by an *udyata* lion are generally placed above the *gavaksa* projections on the north and south sides and over the entrance portal on later temples. The *mastaka* of the fully-fledged *pidha-deul* consists of a *beki*, *ghanta* (large bell-shaped member), a second *beki*, *amalaka*, *khapuri*, *kalasa* and *ayudha*.

In contrast to the square plan of the *rekha* and mature *pidha*, the *khakhara* is invariably oblong in plan with one of the longer sides having a door which faces the deity placed against the opposite wall. The most distinguishing feature of this type of temple is its barrel-vaulted elongated roof. The hollow interior above the *garbha-griha* is in the shape of a pyramid tapering upwards to form a solid block at the top. In the mature Odisha temple, both the *rekha* and *pidha* orders are thus employed, the *rekha* for the *deul*, consisting of a square sanctum surmounted by a curvilinear spire, and the *pidha* for the *jagamohana* or frontal hall, consisting of a square astylar structure covered by a pyramidal roof of receding steps.

**Decoration:** One of the most distinctive features of the Odishan temple, as has been noted by Kramrisch (6), is the overall clarity of the total design in plan and elevation. Each individual architectural unit is clearly defined as a self-containing element in the overall decorative program. Each sculptural image is well contained within its pillar boundaries, adhering closely to the surface, "each panel to its place, each image to its ground" (6). The *pagas* which project from exterior walls are generally designed as miniature shrines (*mundis*) or replica of the temple itself complete with niche and superstructure. These *mundis* function as ornaments to beautify the structure and also act as a frame to exhibit numerous sculptures of the various gods and goddesses. The decorative motifs, in addition to beautifying the structure, serve symbolically as auspicious images to protect the temple from real or imagined evils. None of the carvings, in fact, is merely decorative, each "has its meaning at its proper place and is an image or symbol" (6).

There are four basic types of *mundis* carved on the temple walls, three of which are replicas of the major architectural orders: *rekha*, *pidha* and *khakhara*. The fourth type, which is most popular in the earliest temples, is the *vajra-mundi*. It consists of a miniature *vajra-mastaka*. The *raha* division continues up the height of the *gandi*, so that the



large *vajra-mastaka* immediately above the *baranda* serves usually as the crowning member of the *bada* design, thus transforming it into a *vajra-mundi*.

The niche of the *raha* of Odishan temples houses a *parsva-devata*, a deity connected in doctrine with the main divinity of the temple. On the early temples, dedicated mainly to *Siva*, the *parsva-devatas* would be *Ganesha* on the south, *Karttikeya* on the west or back, and either *Parvati* or *Mahisamardini* on the north. On *Vaisnava* shrines, they are usually *Varaha*, *Nrusingha* and *Trivikrama*, three of the ten *avatars* of *Vishnu*. *Sakta* temples have three different forms of the enshrined deity. This iconographic program is quite consistent throughout the long history of temple construction in Odisha.

The images housed in the niche of the subsidiary *pagas* varies from period to period. In the earliest temples, *tri-ratha* in plan, the niches house various aspects of *Siva*, whereas on *Sakta* shrines, these niches are filled with *alasa-kanyas* or *mithunas*. With the development of a full-fledged *pancha-ratha* plan, beginning in the 10th century, *alasa-kanyas* carved in high relief become popular on the corner *paga*, designed as a pilaster.

The temple building activity in Odisha continued for a period of roughly one thousand years. Most of the important temples, including the earliest existing, are located in and around Bhubaneswar except for Sri Jagannath and Konark. This is not surprising as the current city of Bhubaneswar was known as *Ekamra Kshetra*, and is described in many Sanskrit texts like the *Skanda Purana*, *Ekamra Purana*, *Brahma Purana*, *Svarnadri Mahodaya*, *Niladri Mahodaya*, *Ekamra-Chandrika*, and *Kapila-Samhita*.

Examples of brief architectural development through photos from sixth to tenth centuries are provided below starting with the earliest surviving temples.

#### Laksmaneswara Group (6th century A.D.):

The earliest existing temples in Bhubaneswar are the three ruined temples grouped in a single line; *Laksmaneswara*, *Bharateswara* and *Satrughneswara*, (Fig. 3 left to right, Figs.4-6) built in 575 A.D. These simple structures are of *rekha* order and there is some evidence that a *jagamohana* also existed. Although all the three have been reconstructed, the *Satrughneswara* is in the best shape. All the three temples face west. The *bada* design is *tri-ratha* but *gandi* is *pancha-ratha* in plan. Some of the most beautiful carvings on these earliest temples appear on the doorframes (Figs. 7-

8). The door is framed by four bands of decorative scrollwork on each side. The two *dwarapalas* are placed at the base of the two inside jambs of the entrance. The lintel over the door has an image of *Hara-Parvati* in the center (Fig. 9).



Fig.3 Laksmaneswara group



Fig.4 Laksmaneswara



Fig.5 Bharateswara (left)

Fig. 6 Satrughneswara (right)



Fig.7 Laksmaneswar doorframe



Fig. 8 Satrugneswara



Fig. 11. Ganesha



Fig. 9 Hara-Parvati in the lintel over doorway



Fig. 12. Karttikeya

On the front facade (*raha*), over the entrance to the sanctum, there is a large *vajra-mastaka* motif (Fig. 10); the circular upper medallion houses a Nataraja image, whereas the larger lower medallion houses *Ravananugraha-vadha-murti*. Images of *Ganesha* (Fig. 11) in a medallion and *Karttikeya* (Fig. 12) in a *niche* are located in different areas of the temple.



Fig. 10 Vajra-mastaka

#### Vaital Temple (8th century A.D.):

Three major temples, with increasing innovations, were built in the mid 8th century: Markendeyeswara, Sisireswar and Vaital. The first two are *rekha-deul*, whereas Vaital is a *Khakhara* temple dedicated to Chamunda. The name "Vaital" is probably derived from the word "vetala," or spirit, with the help of which the Kapalikas and Tantrikas wanted to attain siddhis (5). Vaital "temple is one of the most beautiful of all Orissan structures" (4).

Both the *bada* and *gandi* are of *tri-ratha* design and the *jagamohana* has miniature *rekha-deul* at each of the four corners (Figs. 12-14).



Fig. 12 Vaital, south side



Fig. 13 Vaital with jagamohana



Fig. 14 Vaital, west side

The raha on the south side is designed as a large *vajra-mastaka* (Fig. 15). The *parsva-devatas* housed in the niches on north and south sides are *Mahisamardini* and *Parvati* respectively (Fig. 16 a-b.). Figure 17 shows a portion of *bada* on the west side with intricate carvings and *alasa-kanyas*.



Fig. 15 Raha, south



Fig. 16a-b. Parsvadevata Parvati &amp; Mahisamardini

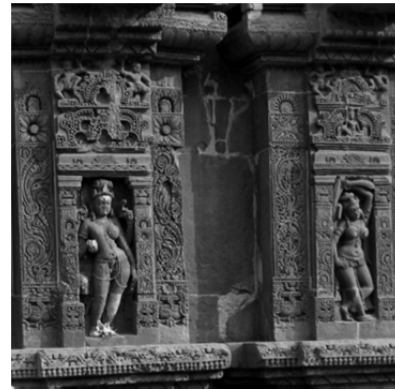


Fig. 17. Alasa-kanya in bada, west

#### Mukteswara Temple (10th century A.D.):

Mukteswar temple, although small, has been aptly described as "the gem of Orissan architecture" and "a dream realized in sandstone" (4), a monument in which sculpture and architecture are in complete harmony with each other. The temple has an integrated *jagamohana* and a detached *torana* (Fig. 18) in front of the *jagamohana*. Fig. 19 shows the *deul* and Fig. 20 shows details of the top of *torana*.



Fig. 18 Mukteswara complex



Fig. 19 Mukteswara Deul



Fig. 20 Torana detail



Fig. 22 Mukteswara bada detail



Fig. 23 Niche detail (left)

Fig. 24 Salabhanjika (right)

The *bada* is *pancha-ratha* in design. A part of the *bada* is shown in Fig. 21 and details of intricate design in Figs. 22-26. "Every inch of the surface is ornately carved; the carvings are delicate and distinct but at the same time integrally linked with each other to produce an overall harmonious design" (4). The *gandi* also *pancha-ratha* in plan as can be seen in Fig. 27. Figure 28. shows the large *vajra-mastaka* on top of *raha* on the south side .



Fig. 21 Mukteswara bada



Fig. 25 bada decoration



Fig. 26 Naga stambha



Fig. 27 Mukteswara gandi



Fig.28 Vajra-mastaka, south

Starting with the 11th century A.D., the trend in the *Kalinga* architectural design was to go for progressively increased heights while maintaining the excellence in artistic rendering. This

resulted in temples: Rajarani (1000 A.D., 60' in height), Brahmeswar (1060 A.D., 60' in height), Lingaraj (1060 A.D., 160' in height), Sri Jagannath (1125 A.D., 215' in height) and Konark (1220 A.D., 227' in height). Each of these temples are masterpieces on their own, presenting Odishan temple style at its best, with Konark being the grand climax of *Kalinga* style architecture.

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### One Glimpse of Purusottam Mahatmya in Skanda Purana

By Bhagabat C. Sahu

Skanda Purana is written by Veda Vyasa, the compiler of vedas and the author of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Mahabharat*, etc. His disciple, Maharshi Jaimini, describes the greatness of Lord Jagannath (Purusottam Mahatmya) including origin, Sthapana, modes of puja, car festival, etc., to sages (Munis) in the form of dialogues. Sri Purusottam Mahatmya contains 57 chapters and 3,600 slokas in Skanda Purana. It is named as Skanda Purana because Lord Skanda (brother of Lord Ganapati) asked questions to his father, Lord Mahadeva (Siva), about the significance of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra in Purusottam dham (Srikshetra). "*Asmin Kshetre Sthitam Sakshad Brahmarupam Prakashate.*" In this Kshetra (place), Brahman is present directly and illumines as Darubrahma. Lord Mahadev explained all these stories starting from origin and how bhaktas get moksa (kaivalya) by worshipping Lord Purusottam, the Brahman.

In the 24th chapter of Vishnu Khanda, Purusottama Mahatmyam (Skanda Purana), King Indradyumna, who is considered as the fifth child of Lord Brahma (four headed God) and who consecrated Lord Jagannath at Srikhetra, sings His praises. Devarshi Narada, Bhagavan Brahma's son, who was the celestial messenger between Brahmaji at Brahmaloaka and Indradyumna at Bhuloka (Earth), He indeed helped mighty King Indradyumna to locate the Darubrahma (Purusottam, Jagannath) and build His temple at the top of Niladri (blue mountain) at the seashore of Srikishetra. Padmanidhi was the chief priest for installation. Lord Narasimha was installed before proceeding with the consecration of Lord Jagannath.

Even though there is elaborate description of "Purusa" the Brahman in Purusa Sukta and Narayana Sukta of Yajurveda, here Veda Vyasa described Lord Jagannath variously as Purusottam, Vishnu, Narayana, Hari and Vasudev, etc. Here under is a brief description of Mahatmya of Lord Purusottama in 24th chapter of 2nd division of Skanda Purana with proximate English translation.

24<sup>th</sup> Chapter

Jaimini says –

1. Then came King Indradyumna after long time with great anxiety and exhilaration and prostrated before Lord Jagannath with great emotions having goose bumps all over his body.
2. I salute Lord Vasudeva, one who is an embodiment of all knowledge with purity and clarity, one who looks after brahmavits, gods and alike, cows, brahmins, one who destroys all ill omens of afflicted people, one who gives four kinds of desirables (dharma, artha, kama and moksa). One who is Hiranya garbha (brahman) primordial purusa and one who is beyond expression and comprehension.
3. King Indradyumna thus chanting repeatedly various slokas in favor of the Lord, with tears of joy in his eyes, did pradakshina again and again (circumambulated) around the Lord.
4. Thereafter came other gods and visited very joyously and with folded hands did pranam to the Lord.

Gods said –

5. The supreme person has thousand heads, thousand eyes, thousand feet, and He pervades the whole universe. He exists in the lotus heart, ten finger breadths above the navel on the supreme consciousness. This may be the transliteration, but in a sense it means “the supreme person exists enveloping the whole manifest universe, cognizing through every mind, seeing through every eye, and working through every limb - nay He exists transcending the universe.
6. He is parambrahma, is Param Purusa (ultimate divinity) and Paramatma (supreme consciousness). He is essentially the whole universe and whatever was, whatever is, and whatever will be all are His manifestations.
7. The whole manifest universe is His splendor. He, the supreme person, transcends it very much. By a part (one-fourth) of His splendor, He supports the universe and whereas the major part (three-fourth) of His splendor, embodying immortality, is beyond the range of the manifest universe.
8. Oh Lord! You are the supreme consciousness. You are the creator of all Vedas. From You arose the Yajna Purusa and then horses, cows, and sheep, etc.
9. From His face arose the brahmins, who were devoted to thinking and discrimination, from His arms arose kashatriys who are devoted to protection and preservation, from His thighs arose vaishyas who are

## चतुर्विंशोऽध्यायः

भूलोकेसमागतदेवैः श्रीविष्णुस्तववर्णनम्

जैमिनिस्त्वाच

भागवत्य च जगन्नाथं चिरादुत्कण्ठमानसः । दण्डवत्प्रणनामाऽसौवनरोमाञ्चकञ्चुकः  
नमोब्रह्मण्यदेवाय गोब्राह्मणहिताय च । प्रणतार्तिविनाशाय चतुर्वर्गेकहेतवे ॥ २ ॥  
हिरण्यगर्भपुरुषप्रधानव्यक्तरूपिणे । ॐ नमो वासुदेवाय शुद्धज्ञानस्वरूपिणे ॥ ३ ॥  
इत्युच्चरन्स्तुतिं भूपः सानन्दाश्रुविलोचनः । प्रदक्षिणं पुनःकुर्वन्नाम च पुनः पुनः ॥  
ननोऽन्या देवता या वैतत्रागच्छन्मुदास्विताः । तुष्टुष्टुःप्रणतादेवंकृताञ्जलिपुटा मुदा  
देवा ऊचुः

सहस्रशीर्षापुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् । स भूमिं सर्वतोव्याप्यअधयतिष्ठद्वाङ्गुलम्  
यः पुमान्परमं ब्रह्म परमात्मेति गीयते । भूतं भव्यं भविष्यं च सर्वं पुरुष एव तत्  
एतावानस्य महिमा ज्यायानेव पुमान्प्रभुः ।

पादोऽस्य विश्वाभूतानि त्रिपादस्याऽमृतं दिशि ॥ ८ ॥

२५६

\* स्कन्दपुराणम् \*

[ २ वी० उत्क० खण्ड ]

छन्दांसिजहिरत्स्वस्तस्वस्तोयज्ञपुमानपि । त्वसोऽम्बाश्चव्यजायन्तगावोमेवादयस्तथा  
ब्राह्मणामुखतोजाताबाहुजाक्षत्रियास्तच । विशस्तवोरुजापद्भ्यां तथाशूद्राःसमागताः  
मनसश्चन्द्रमा जातश्चक्षुषस्ते दिवाकरः । कर्णाभ्यां श्वसनः प्राणैर्जिह्वायाहव्यचाडपि  
नाभितो गगनं द्यौश्चमूर्ध्निस्ते समवर्तत । पादान्यां तेषराजातादिशब्दाऽदौधृतैर्गताः  
सत्ताऽऽसम्परिधयस्त्वत्परकविशत्समिधवै । चराचराःसर्वभावास्त्वत्पदवहजिह्वे  
त्वमेवजगतां नाथस्त्वमेव परिपालकः । उग्ररूपश्च संहतां त्वमेव परमेश्वर ॥ १४ ॥  
त्वमेव यज्ञो यज्ञांशस्त्वंयज्ञेशःपरात्परः । शब्दब्रह्मपरं त्वं हि शब्दब्रह्माऽसिचिश्चराद्  
स्वराद् सम्राड् जगन्नाथ ! चिरादसि जगत्पते !

अधश्चोर्ध्वं च तिर्यक्त्वं त्वया व्याप्तं जगन्मय ॥ १६ ॥

प्राप्नुवन्ति परंस्थानंत्वांयजन्तश्चयाज्ञिकाः । भोज्यंभोक्ताहविर्होताहवन्तंफलप्रदः  
समस्तकर्मभोक्तात्वं सर्वकर्मात्मकः प्रभो ! । सर्वकर्मापकरणं सर्वकर्मफलप्रदः ॥ १८ ॥  
कर्मप्रेरयिता त्वं हि धर्मकामार्थसिद्धिदः । त्वामृतैमुक्तिदःकोऽन्योहृषीकेशनमोस्तुते  
नमोऽस्त्वन्ताय सहस्रमूर्तये सहस्रपादाक्षिशिरोरुबाहवे ।

सहस्रनाम्ने पुरुषाय शाश्वते सहस्रकोटीयुगधारिणे नमः ॥ २० ॥

वयं व्युताधिकारास्त्वां प्रपन्नाःशरणंभ्रभो ! । ब्राह्मिनःपुण्डरीकाक्षअगतीनांगतिर्भव  
संसारपलितस्यैकोजन्तोस्त्वंशरणंभ्रभो ! । त्वत्सुष्टौत्वाद्भूशोनास्तियोदीनपरिपालकः  
दीनानाथैकशरणं पिता त्वं जगतः प्रभो ! । पातापोष्टा त्वमेवेश सर्वापह्निनिवारकः  
ब्राहि विष्णो जगन्नाथ ! ब्राहि नःपरमेश्वर ! । त्वामृतै कमलाकान्तकःशक्तःपरिरक्षणे  
अन्तर्यामिन्नमस्तेऽस्तु सर्वतैजोनिधे नमः ।

इतिस्तुवन्तस्ते देवाः प्रणिपत्य पुनः पुनः । इन्द्रयुग्मेनसहिता बहिर्भूय द्विजोत्तमाः  
क्षेत्रं श्रीनरसिंहस्यगत्वातं प्रणिपत्य च । नमस्कृत्यपरंभक्तिदत्त्वाऽभ्यर्च्यवृक्षैस्त्रिम्  
नीलाचलाद्रेः शिखरं यत्रद्राक्षास्ताडुत्तमः ययुस्तेपद्मनिधिनस्ताडैस्सम्भारकारणान्  
ददृशुस्ते महाप्रांशुं व्याप्तं गगनमण्डले ।

- devoted to power of acquisition and distribution, and from His feet arose shudras who would be the support power for the supreme purusa. T
10. /11. The moon was born of His mind, sun born of His eyes, five vayus (prana, apana, vyana, udana, and samana) or organs of breathing born of His ears, fire born of His tongue, space born of His navel, and heaven (ether) born of His head, Earth born of His legs and feet and eight quarters born of his sense of hearing.
  12. You are the Yajna purusa and seven oceans as the perimeters, twenty-one chhandas (Vedas and upanishads) were semidha (fire wood for Yajna) and this animate and inanimate universe were born out of You.
  13. The Lord of the universe (Jagannath) You are the preserver of the universe and you take violent form as the cause for dissolution of the universe. You are the ultimate God!
  14. You are the Yajna, all parts of Yajna, ultimate Lord of Yajna, absolute Brahman of sound and You are the "Samrat" (Brahman) in form of sound of the whole universe.
  15. You the Brahman are created by yourself. You are Jagannath (Lord of the universe) and the master of the universe. Oh Jagannath, You are the one who has pervaded the upper world, lower world, and middle worlds as well.
  16. Yajnikas (performers of the fire sacrifice) attain eternity by worshipping You. You are the sacrifice (offering) itself and You also are the enjoyer (attaining) of sacrifice. You are the oblation (clarified butter or ghee), performer, sacrifice (havan) and you are the attainer of the fruits of Yajna.
  17. This sloka brings a simile to the one in Bhagavad Gita, chapter IV, sloka 24, where it says the process of sacrifice is Brahman, the clarified butter is Brahman, offered by Brahman in the fire of Brahman, by seeing Brahman in action, He reaches Brahman alone.
  18. Oh Lord! You are the enjoyer of all actions and You are also all actions. You are the material for all actions and You are the giver of all fruits of actions.
  19. You engage everybody in action and You are the giver of dharma, artha, kama, and siddhi (success). Who else other than You can give eternity (moksha)? Hrusiksha, I salute You.
  20. We salute Ananta (infinite) who has thousand forms, thousand feet, thousand heads, thighs, and arms, and thousand names. We salute that eternal purusa Purusottam who holds this universe thousand million yugas (there are four yugas - satya, dwapara, tretaya, and kali, all in combination is called maha yuga which according to astronomical science is about 4,320,000 years, 4.32 million years). This same sloka is used by Vyasa in Bhishma Parva, Mahabharat where Bhishma narrates to Yuddhisthira.
  21. We are deprived and afflicted and we surrender to You, our Lord. Oh Pundarikaksha (lotus eyed Lord) we are directionless and You are our guide and we pray You to save us.
  22. You are the only savior and the refuge of all fallen living beings in this ocean of Sansar. There is none other than You in Your creation who looks after these all suffering living beings.
  23. You are the Father, You are the Lord of everybody, You are the only refuge for the poor and the down trodden people. You are the savior, You are the caretaker, and You are the only one who removes obstacles and dangers from everybody.
  24. Oh Lord Vishnu! Oh Lord Jagannath!! Please save us. Oh Lord, almighty! Oh Kamalakanta! (consort of Goddess Laxmi), who other than You has the power to save us for sure.
  25. Hey Antaryami! (Omniscient, one who knows what is inside everybody) You are the storehouse of all light and You are the most illuminous one. We salute You.
  26. Oh Brahmins listen, thereafter all the gods, chanting and meditating on Lord Jagannath, prostrating before Him time and again, went out along with King Indradyumna, the lion of kings. Then they went to Kshetra (holy place) where Lord Sri Narasimha was placed and with all devotions prostrated before Him and worshipped.
  27. Thereafter King Indradyumna along with head priest Padmanidhi went to the nice temple situated on the top of the blue mountain to arrange all the Puja materials for the consecration (of Lord Jagannath).

Om, Tat, Sat.

*Dr. Bhagabat C. Sahu, Athens, Alabama, USA. Founding Chair of Hindu Cultural Center of North Alabama. Founder of Jagannath Society of Americas.*



## Cultural Co-Existence on Display: *Maniabandhi* Saris with Buddhist and Hindu Symbols Travel to the U.S.

By Annapurna Devi Pandey

Although I bought my first *Maniabandhi pata* (silk sari) with my very first lecturer's salary in December 1981, for the thirty-five years that I've been wearing *Maniabandhi* saris, made in the villages of Maniabandha and Nuapatna in Odisha, I knew very little about the weavers who make them. I have always been drawn to the vibrant colors, texture and striking symbols (conch shells, lotuses, elephants, lions and wheels, etc.) of these saris. When I came to the U.S. in 1989, I was surprised to see my Odiya friends going to parties in their fashionable synthetic saris made of materials like chiffon and georgette. Trying to fit in with my new circle of friends, I went along with the trend and quickly started collecting synthetic saris too. But my love for *Maniabandhi* has endured. Whenever I go to Odisha, I visit the emporiums for the latest *Maniabandhi* designs and have proudly collected them as markers of my own personal identity.



In the last few years, I have been pleasantly surprised to see the turning of the wheel with more and more Odiya women in the U.S.A favoring *Maniabandhi* saris over synthetic ones for festive occasions. It is quite common these days to see these saris at weddings, sacred thread ceremonies, and birthday celebrations. On a recent visit to Bhubaneswar, I was greeted by a fashionable Indian-born entrepreneur from the Bay Area with an inquiry about where I got my sari ("I want one exactly like it.") I explained that I had been given that particular *Maniabandhi* sari as a gift at a wedding in the Bay Area; *Maniabandhi* saris have acquired iconic status and at weddings, it is often this type of sari which is exchanged as a gift between the bride and groom's family and friends.

In 2007, in the course of my research on Buddhism and its practice in Odisha, I visited Maniabandha and Nuapatna and discovered that the weavers of these saris are predominantly Buddhists. I was surprised to find the practice of Buddhism in this village as a living religion because the textbooks tell us that Buddhism had practically disappeared from India long ago. In our own time Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, the eminent political leader who is remembered as the father of India's constitution, revived it as a religion of protest. Born to a lower caste family in pre-British India, Ambedkar had suffered from insurmountable caste discrimination and had adopted Buddhism in 1956. That is how, in the mid-twentieth century, Buddhism resurfaced as a movement of protest against the caste hegemony and oppression in India - especially in the western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. While growing up, I was totally unaware of the practice of Buddhism anywhere in Odisha.

My trips to Maniabandha in 2007 and subsequently in 2011 made me aware that Buddhism is a vibrant and living religion there – and has been for some time. From talking with the village weavers, I learned that they have been practicing Buddhism for generations. Some of them believe that their ancestors had migrated to Maniabandha from Burdwan in West Bengal. This claim is supported by the genealogical account of several families I collected during my research. The time I spent in Maniabandha gives me hope to find the practice of Buddhism in other areas of Odisha as well.

During my visits, I saw that each member of the family - men, women, and children – were involved in weaving the saris (coloring the thread, putting the thread into the loom, working on the patterns, finishing the sari, etc.). Learning the trade is part of their daily life. Women of all ages are the producers of the textile. They take pride in their creation and display their creative work in exquisite patterns. It is a common sight to have a loom in the entrance room and a few more small ones around the house.



The weavers say that their weaving is in line with their practice of Buddhism. As one of the villagers put it, "We are weavers. We do not kill animals. If we plough the land, we may have to destroy lives. With weaving as a profession, we do not tell lies, we do not cheat. Also, we do not have any rich man or family in the village." Weaving jibes with their collective self-image as honest people. This claim indeed stands out in contemporary India, reeking with news of corruption.



According to the villagers, if they were engaged in agriculture or any other sector of the village economy, they would have to participate in violence at some level; weaving allows them to remain true to their Buddhist value of non-violence. They also take pride in being vegetarians and abstaining from alcohol. Many of them even avoid eating onion and garlic because they are considered *tamasic* food.

I also learned that there is hardly any outward migration from Maniabandha. The young and old continue to live in the village because they each have a significant

role in their traditional occupation – weaving. Weaving *Maniabandhi* saris has provided them with a meaningful occupation which helps them to construct their identity and makes it possible for them to keep their tradition and modern life side by side, as they themselves have lived side by side with their Hindu neighbors. In contrast, my home village, just twenty kilometers away, has been completely transformed by the new economy of India. In just one generation, my village has been revolutionized by the money flowing in from the mining business in Odisha. I could not recognize a single house from my childhood because all of the houses have become *pukka* mansions. I saw people driving to their homes in brand new Mercedes and BMWs - which I had not even seen before leaving India in 1988. I was moved to see the contrast between the display of new wealth in my village and the state and national award-winning patterns and designs of traditional *Maniabandhi* saris spread on the walls of

Maniabandha.



The weavers, who are predominantly Buddhists, have learned to live side by side with their Hindu neighbors in more ways than one. I discovered that saris are specially woven for Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and their sister Subhadra for various religious occasions by the artisans of Maniabandha and Nuapatna. As per the Madala Panji of Jagannath Temple, Puri, this must have been going on for several hundred years. The weavers of these villages also produce saris for the goddess Lakshmi with nine motifs – e.g. lotus, elephant, temple, peacock, water pot, conch cell, butterfly, and deer. They not only celebrate each other's feasts and

festivals but also participate in each other's ritual performances. The Buddhist weavers of Maniabandha are well aware that they are combining Hindu and Buddhist symbols. Buddhist symbols such as lions, swans, and lotuses, and orange and red colors, are visible on the *Maniabandhi* sari. Hindu symbols such as temples, swans, lions, water pitchers and roses are woven along with them, making a very intricate pattern.

In their daily rituals, these Buddhists continue to worship Hindu gods and goddesses, and they do not see any contradiction in doing so. Maniabandha has established five Buddhist temples, which look like Hindu temples, where both Buddha and Hindu Gods are worshipped together. The village temples are adorned with the statues of Buddha and other



Hindu deities, mainly Jagannath, Balabhadra along with Subhadra. They are worshipped side by side and are offered prayers, chantings and evening *arati* together. This common worship of Buddha and the Hindu shrines symbolize the religious acceptance of both the communities. The people reason out that Jagannath is the very embodiment of Buddha and refer to their age old tradition of making the *Khandua* sari for the lord, making them indispensable in serving the Lord Jagannath. Since Buddhists and Hindus live side by side in these villages, that co-existence is reflected in the objects they produce as part of their everyday lives.

Like their Hindu neighbors, the Buddhist weavers practice endogamy, but unlike the Hindus, they have not been affected by the practice of dowry, so common in Odisha and the rest of India. This consumerist mentality underlying the demands of dowry from the bride's family has become so rampant in present day India that it may be one of the major causes of physical abuse and assault of women in their affinal families. Some of the women in Maniabandha took pride in telling me that their young women do not suffer ostracization in finding a marriage partner because of lack of money. Marriage takes place mainly within the Buddhist communities spread out between Maniabandha and Nuapatna and a few other villages like Ragadi and Choudwar in Cuttack district. Instead of dowry, the families emphasize communal feasts in order to celebrate with their extended family and the community.

Each person in the village is looked upon as a producer because of his or her active role in weaving. I came across one interesting case. A single mother was sharing her life story, "I have been very sick, constantly in and out of the hospital. But both my daughters are taking care of me. They said, Ma, do not worry. We will weave saris and will take care of you." Clearly, girls are as valued as their brothers in this community. However, when it comes to education, there is a twist. Parents are not very enthusiastic about sending their daughters for higher education. The villagers realize that their daughters already have gainful employment as weavers, which they may not have after their high school or college education. I met a very bright girl who earned first class in her high school and intermediate college examination. When I asked her whether she would continue her studies, she replied, "It is up to my father whether he will let me go for higher education." When I asked her father, he responded, "I do not have any objection to her higher education, but she has tons of work at home and eventually will get married." These days, undoubtedly new opportunities for educated women have started to appear in rural areas. In Maniabandha, I met a woman in her twenties married into the same village. She is a very skillful weaver, a mother of a toddler, with a college degree who is teaching in the Buddhist school in the village established in 2010. She said, "It is not easy to juggle all the different responsibilities of being a wife, daughter-in-law, mother, teacher and a weaver." I was surprised to learn that she was also privately preparing for her BA degree. She said that her Buddhist faith gave her the courage and patience to manage all her responsibilities.

The villagers of Maniabandha have maintained their unique status by a distinctive way of life that they have carved out for themselves. I noticed that every Buddhist house is adorned with Buddha's statue painted on its front wall or front door as every Hindu house has a Jagannath painting. In decorating their houses for weddings and other festive occasions, they have images of Buddha and segments of the Jataka stories painted on their walls.



Even though the Buddhist weavers in Maniabandha and Nuapatna live side by side with their Hindu neighbors, their way of life is distinct. In the rapidly changing modern India, they are maintaining their traditional occupation while catering to the growing demands of the *Maniabandhi* saris popularized by the forces of globalization. What I find remarkable about these weavers

is that their way of life allows them to have best of both the worlds. They have an occupation tied to their religion that provides them with a meaning in their life and lets them incorporate markers of tradition as well as modernity. By welcoming the visit of His Holiness Dalai Lama - the living Buddha - to their village and sending their saris to the international market, they are participating in the global economy while maintaining their traditional occupation and Buddhist way of life. The villagers in Maniabandha are incorporating the best of both the old and new world. *Maniabandhi Sari*, the symbol of traditional values, has become the means by which they hope to succeed in the twenty-first century.

## The Sunset Heritage

By Anil Dey



The last piece of Indo-Aryan architecture - a world heritage - Konarka, is in its death throes. What is so special about this 13<sup>th</sup> century derelict monument and how essential is its preservation?

Of the two major sculptural forms in medieval India – Dravidian and Indo-Aryan – the later found a safe sanctuary in Utkala, which was honed to perfection in an art stream known as Kalinga Art. These architects did make few experimentations but by around 600 AD, to quote Charles Luis Fabri, *the Orissan architect rapidly finds his own style, and then, unhesitatingly bursts in to a passionate and almost frantic activity, raising temple after temple, always sticking to his well-established style, always ready to make minor changes, but never stopping until in 1250 A.D he raises the ultimate and triumphal Sun Temple at Konarka.*

The triumphal march stopped abruptly with successive political change and unrest and the greatest sculptural heritage was progressively destroyed by combined barbarism of men and nature.

What is *Heritage*? Is it in the broken pile of stones, in the decaying sculpture, in the deity, in the temple or in a great philosophy threading together all these? It is difficult to answer in few words.

### The Concept:

To the followers of other religions, the place of gathering for prayer is merely a building with sanctity. To the devout Hindu it is a representation of the human body. He calls the human body, *Deha-Mandira* – body the temple. *Kathopanishada* likens the human body to a moving chariot:

*Atmanaam rathinaam biddhi shariram rathe mebatu/*

*Buddhi tu sarathi biddhi manah pragahamebatu//*  
(1.iii.3)

*(Soul is the presiding deity in the chariot of body. Intellect is the charioteer and mind, the reins.)*

In their *Shilpa Sastra* they treat the curvilinear main temple as *Purusha* (man) and the audience hall in its front, as *Nari* (woman). It is also called, *Rekha Deula* and also, *Bimana*. Even different parts of the temple structure were named after different parts of the torso. To them, *Amruta* – death-less chain of life - flows from the union of living bodies and therefore sacred. To this concept was added a new turn at Konarka. Every living being on earth owes its existence to solar energy; life system will come to a stop the day the source of energy i.e. Sun is extinguished. Thus the Sun is the presiding deity of that living chariot. The chariot, drawn by seven energetic horses signifying the refracted seven colours of sun ray, rolls over twelve months and 24 fortnights. There are twelve pairs of wheels – 12 on the south face and 12 on the north face of first plinth. Each wheel has 8 thick spokes and 8 thin beaded ones. A spoke signifies a *Prahara*, i.e. one eighth part of the 24 hour cycle by which people those days kept time. The centre of the axle, around which the wheel of life spins, is decorated by either *Gaja-Laxmi*, or *Hara-Parvati* or *Hiranya-Kashipu*. The disc at the centre of the thick spoke is decorated by gods, semigods and even *Mithunas* (copulating couple). The uninhibited race found nothing wrong in placing the creators of the human race side by side with the creator of mankind. The body of the *Pancha-Rtaha* temple had 8 *Anartha-Pagas*. These technical terms will be explained a little later in this text but it would be enough to say here, the 8 *Pagas* faced 8 cardinal directions of the compass. Eight gods responsible for protecting the temple from eight directions – thus named *Dikpalas* – were seated at their pre-ordained places on these *pagas*. Their consorts were given seats above their heads, again at scripturally preordained places. This signifies what high place the thinkers of that time allotted the woman in the society. The *Dikpalas* and the directions they guarded are as follows:

1. Indra- South-East on the wall facing East.
2. Isana- North-East -do-
3. Yama- South-West on the wall facing South.
4. Agni- South-East -do-
5. Varuna- North-West on the wall facing West.
6. Nirita- South-West -do-
7. Kuber- North-East on the wall facing North
8. Pabana- North-West -do-

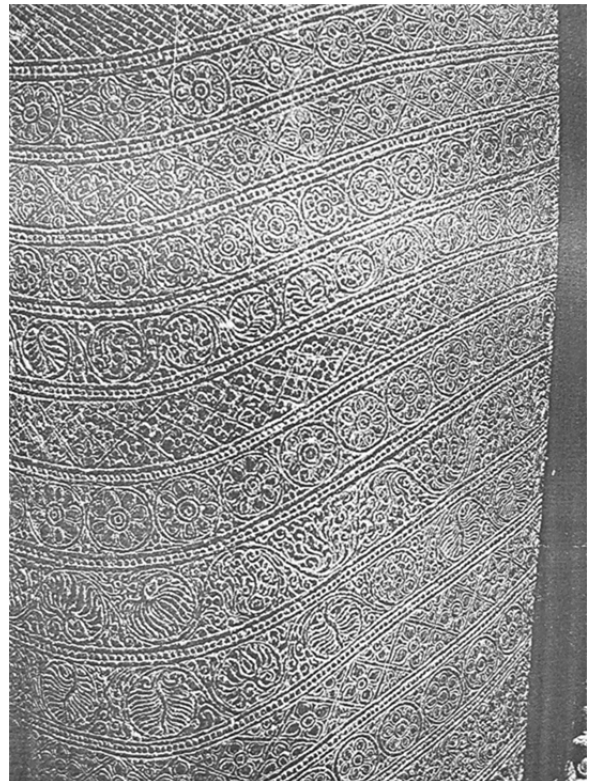
All the Dikpalas, their consorts and many other non-erotic sculptures have been looted, leaving behind the eroticas at their preordained nooks; thus leaving a false notion that Konarka is a stone album of erotica.



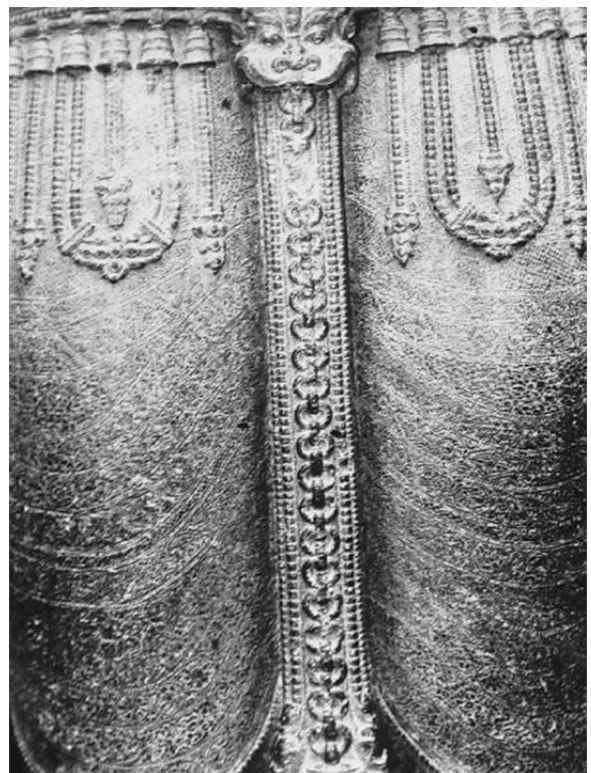
*Nooks in Konarka*

Three *Parshwadebatas* – incarnations of the presiding deity or deities compatible - are prescribed in the scripture. These were seated high up the three *Raha-pagas* of the main temple i.e., South, West and North. The Eastern side is generally blocked by the *Jagamohana* (assembly hall). Though the main temple of Konarka is destroyed up to *Tala-Jangha*, the three *Parshwadebatas* exist and each is a superb piece of Sculptural elegance in Chlorite. Who can, even at this advanced age, drape a Chlorite stone torso with needle fine muslin cloth? The four *Nabagrahasilas* (now only one set remains), placed above the four tall entrances of *Jagamohana* again are masterpieces of sculptured art. The nine important constellations in the galaxy – Sun(*Surya*), Moon(*Chandra*), Mars(*Mangala*), Mercury(*Budha*), Jupiter(*Bruhashpati*), Venus(*Sukra*), Saturn(*Sani*), Ascending node(*Rahu*) and Descending node (*Ketu*) – as per scriptures guard and guide human destiny. Their placement at the entrance and exit are significant.

Not an inch on the body of the temple is left vacant. It is filled with every conceivable activity of the vibrant life, erotica included. But as you enter the sanctum sanctorum, all that noise of the teeming life comes to an abrupt stop. There is no sculpture on the inner walls of the sanctum sanctorum, even inside the assembly hall (sealed now). You are face to face with God – your soul – where frivolity has no place. Only the saint of an Architect can conceive God and his creation in this sublime scale and chisel them in to reality.



*Chlorite stone torso draped with needle fine muslin cloth*



*Filigree on stone*

### The Design:

Konarka temple is acknowledged to be the last untarnished piece of Indo-Aryan temple architecture in Kalinga stream. History shows how the determined architect of the temple had successfully resisted infusion of southern influence when the king's father-in-law from the south sent a group of sculptors to help. It is more the reason why this great heritage must be preserved in a new *avatar*.

Many temples of Odisha do not have a visible plinth above ground or has a nominal one and appear to rise from the ground surface itself (Lingaraj temple for example). Konarka has a two tier plinth of 16' 6" height, the first being 14' 3" from ground level with a low *Upana* (strip). On the top of the first plinth there is a deck, 10 to 15 ft. wide, which goes round the temples. The 2' 3" tall 2<sup>nd</sup> plinth starts on the inner brim of the deck, on top of which are based the *Jagamohona* and the *Bimana*. The first plinth was designed to accommodate the mammoth wheels compatible to the Chariot design of this tallest temple. The *Bimana*, it is estimated with reliable data, was 211' 6" above the 2<sup>nd</sup> plinth and 228' from ground level. Jagannath temple and Lingaraj temple, the other two great temples of Odisha are, from ground level, 214' 8" and 127' 1" respectively.

The ground plans of the temples of Odisha are peculiar. The inside hall is usually square but the outer periphery is many-cornered. Here comes in the concept of *Ratha* (not chariot). Supposing you intersect a square by two rectangles; you have a *Tri-Ratha* design. You have here on all four sides, one central projection, called *Raha-paga* and two flat surfaces at the two corners, called *Kona-paga*. Now intersect the plan with another two rectangles and you have on all sides, one *Raha-paga*, two *Kona-paga* and two *Anartha-paga*. This becomes a *Pancha-Rtaha* plan. This way you can make *Sapta-Ratha*, *Naba-Ratha* and so on. There is no *Naba-ratha* temple in Odisha. The major temples of Odisha, including Konarka, are all *Pancha-Rtaha*. The walls of these temples are quite thick. In the *Rekha-deula* of Konarka for example, the hall is 32' 9" square, whereas wall thickness at *Raha-paga* is 24' 6" and at *Kona-paga*, 17' 6". The *Pagas*, i.e. pilasters, go up vertically to a predefined height and then slant slowly inwards. The vertical portion is called *Bada* and the curvilinear or slanting portion (as in case of *Jagamohana*), *Gandi*. As the pilasters go up, the thickness of the wall does not reduce, but above *Bada*, each layer of stones is progressively reduced in its periphery. These concentric rings after rings go

up, narrowing down the space inside till they meet at a predetermined height. On the top of it is loaded a dead weight called *Mastaka*, weighing a hundred ton or more. This dead weight keeps the corbelled rings in place. Each layer of rings has a tendency to fall inside, prevented by adjoining blocks touching each other and from oozing up by the rings of stones above. This system is called *Corbelling*, or "Inverted ladder" system, where no bonding mortar, beam or truss are necessary. Various other techniques like *Muda* formation, *Pidha* formation, etc. are involved to maintain the balance and rigidity. The technique practiced then has been described at some length to bring home the fact that the architects of that age were no illiterate craftsmen. It makes one wonder, with what great accuracy those people maintained the centrality and counter balancing of stones, essential for the corbelling system to remain stable, and what technology was applied to lift carved stones - weighing 25 to 30 tons at times - to that great height! An often quoted technique of progressively covering up the rising structure by sand has been proved absurd. Apart from many other arguments against the theory, one simple argument put forth is that half or more of the great sand cone will fall inside the sea at Konarka site, and how will that half or more remain stable on water surface? The other major argument against the suggestion is that the builder will lose sight of the perfect alignment of the profiles, so essential to the system. Those who knew the technique of casting rust resistant steel beams undoubtedly had access to a better technology than sand filling. A number of sketches – illustrating different techniques – have been presented in an old manuscript named *Baya Chakada* (Dr. Alice Boner). Some historians have questioned the authenticity of the scripture but the techniques illustrated, are simple and believable.



*Sun Temple from a distance*

The system of *Paga* formation, corbelling and *Pidha* formation, besides various other formations like *Pabhaga*, *Jangha*, *Bandhani*, etc., helped architects of that era to achieve with élan, what every architect, even in modern times, craves to achieve, i.e. breaking the monotony. Even though square in plan, the many cornered exterior makes it look like a sprouting flower. If one takes a look at the creation from a distance as he approaches it and mentally reconstructs the *Rekha-deula* or visualizes Lingaraj, Puri, etc., he will find hundreds of horizontal lines on the Jagamohana pitted against hundreds of vertical lines on the tower at its background with myriads of carved crevices and a masterly interplay of light and shed – simply superb! This is how our forefathers integrated technology with religion, a great philosophy and a great art form.

#### The Sculpture:



Door post

This write-up cannot afford the space needed for such a vast subject. Hence, only salient features will be touched upon.

Take a cursory glance in a quick round up. You will have the indelible impression of life on the move. Look at the bottom most strip of Upana on which the wheels appear to be rolling. It is filled

with thousands of elephants, moving, socializing and even procreating. The back ground of wheels are all filled with a churning life, from very base nature to highly sublime, from selling a Giraffe to a parting scene of an old lady, from absurd creations like *Bhayalas* to absurd acts of sex.

Go up above the first plinth, you will come across life size (some times bigger) gods and goddesses co-existing with equally large sized sex-happy *Mithunas*. The common thread is the superb modeling. We have discussed earlier the *Parshwadebas* for their muslin fine clothing; here observe their gorgeous ornaments and physical modeling.



*Superb modeling*

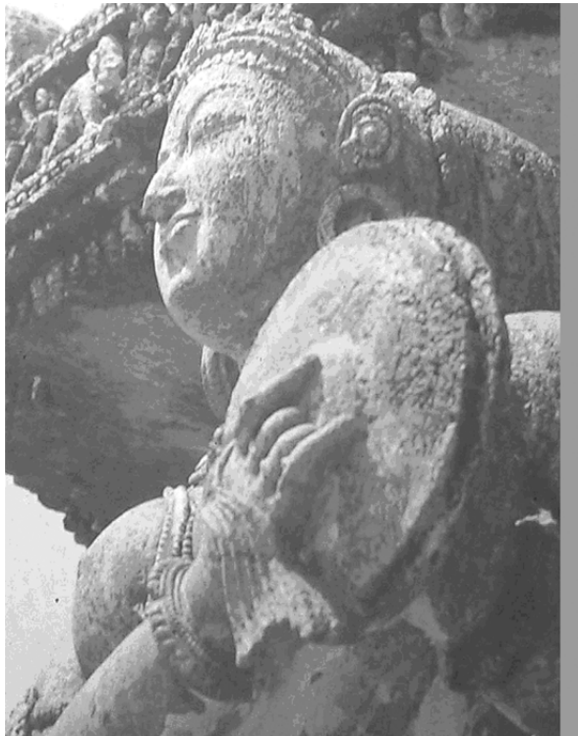
The stone craft reached its pinnacle perhaps in the dancing musician girls placed high above the two *Pidhas* of Jagamohana. Placed at heights above 60 ft. from ground in two tiers, these statues of more than human size silently but eloquently assert their presence. Of the 36, six only are *Damaru* playing Bhairavas. The rest of the 30 damsels, playing 8 types of musical instruments, present the Indian concept of beauty, distinctly different from the classic European concept. The firm breasts of even Venus de Milo is slightly drooping, keeping with reality and the slim body is proportionate – an idealized reality. In these Kalinga classics, the breast does not droop even slightly, the



hip is heavy and the waist is thin, following the idealized description in the medieval classics of India (*Guru Nitamba, singha kati* etc). Yet they are superbly beautiful, the eternal "She". Shanti Swarup describes them thus:



*Dancing musician*



*Dancing musician*

*The many striking figures of comely damsels and full-bosomed musicians placed high up on roof galleries, of drum, flute and cymbal players speak mutely but eloquently of a life full of fun and frolic – of music, dance and young love. The robust beauty. The softly contoured female figures seem redolent with exuberant vitality and healthy breath of life, their plastic flesh of stone vibrant with innate lust for life. Each one is an enchantress, exquisitely graceful, tender and serene.*

#### The Erotica:

The much maligned and less understood erotica are shrouded in a scholarly controversy. It is significant that these seemingly obscene sculptures are found on the walls of temple only and not in forts or dwelling quarters of pleasure seeking kings. The reasons advanced by scholars and demolished also by scholars at different times are as follows:

1. Orgiastic rites of fertility cult of Sun as universal fructifying force.
2. A loud revolt against thousand years of Nirvana Philosophy propagated by Buddhists.
3. Outspoken sculptures meant for the temple dancers.
4. Krushna-Gopi and mokshya philosophy.
5. Testing the level of devotion of those entering the temple.
6. Teachings of the famous *Kamasutra*.
7. General decadence of the then society.
8. Tantric practices.
9. Protecting the temple from lightning.
10. Unabashed display of lecherous Royal life style.

Keeping aside their scholarly complexities, three scholars seem to have touched the very core of a simple truth.

*It is a great fallacy to judge morals in past ages by present standards. Love and love making were extolled in the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries as among the most wonderful gifts of bounteous nature, leading on to satisfaction and bliss. –Charles Louise Fabri.*

*The sacred act of procreation is to be valued, as it affords the intense moment of joy we can experience while we strive for the ultimate and complete absorption in to the Divinity. –Mulak Raj Anand.*

*Nowhere are such figures more blatantly portrayed than here, often representative as they are even of abnormal sexual practices. But the sculptures of the Temple of the Sun should be seen and studied with a mind exhilarated and sharpened by the thin*

*air of solitude – and their isolation from the teeming world of life – a mind submerged in their modeling and formal beauty. For deep within the sculptured stones lies an artless perfection that is full of art, inexpressible yet potent, like the musical notes of Mendelssohn's Songs without words or the hunting melodies of the Nocturnes' of Debussy. –Percy Brown.*

Long long before these erudite observations, a saint had made a pithy commentary in *Brahdaranyaka Upanishada*; words from the depth of realization. The sloka, translated into English by two Swamis of Ramakrishna order goes as below:

*That<sup>1</sup> indeed is his form which transcends desire, is bereft of merits and demerits, and is fearless<sup>2</sup>. As a man fully embraced by his dear wife knows nothing external or internal, even so this infinite entity<sup>3</sup> fully embraced by the Supreme Self knows nothing external or internal<sup>4</sup>. That indeed is his form – in which all objects of desire have been realized, in which they have become the self<sup>5</sup>, and which is devoid of desire and beyond grief. – Brahadaranyaka Upanishad – 4/3/21*

1 – Brahman attained in deep sleep. / 2 – Transcendent form of self / 3 – Individual self. / 4 – Unity of individual self with Supreme Self in deep sleep. / 5 – In the waking or dream states, objects are believed to be separate from self; hence they are coveted. But in deep sleep that difference is gone; hence there is no desire.

#### The Rise and Fall:

Raja Narasinghadeba-I of Ganga dynasty, popularly known as *Langula Narasinghadeba*, created this great temple. He reigned between 1238 AD to 1264 AD. While the year of starting is generally agreed to as 1242 AD, the year of completion is mired in great controversy. The period of construction, it is claimed by different historians, was 12/16/18 years. One version of *Madalapanji* puts it at 1258 AD but historians generally do not trust the *Madalapanji*. This writer, with the assistance of *Pathanisamanta Planetarium* of Bhubaneswar, had tried to fix a date. *Madalapanji* and legends thereafter linked the consecration of the deity to the bright half of *Magha* at equinox when the rising sun is supposed to have bathed the image with his *garland of rays*. Our attempt to pinpoint one of the various dates linked to Sun, bathing of the deity, was inconclusive. Even though the legend was not proved, we did come to a conclusion through another method that the temple was consecrated on January 27, 1258 AD, Sunday.

Let the scholars engage in hairsplitting arguments, the moot question remains as to why at all the king created such a stupendous temple for a God who did not enjoy a large following in the then Kalinga?

Shaibaites and Baishnabites were ruling the roost then. By all accounts, Narasinghadeba-I, a Hindu king, was much ahead of his time. For a state craft, his forefathers were mostly defending their northern border from Muslim attack and engaged in minor skirmishes in the south. It was Narasinghadeba who took an offensive stand. He fought with success, a 12 years long war in the south and attacked the Muslims in their own court – an act unthinkable then. He succeeded in establishing a large peaceful domain spreading from Laxanabat in north to Goadabari in south. In keeping with Ganga tradition (Ganga dynasty, to which he belonged, had a southern root) he married the daughter of Pandya king from south but totally out of convention, a Malwa princess, Sitadevi also. Malwa was a state in now Madhya Pradesh, bordering Maharashtra. Did he nourish a pan-Indian dream like Lalitaditya? There exists a strong legend that he also married a Kashmir princess. This legend, though not historically proved, seems to have at its core his pan-Indian dream. It is completely in keeping with the character of such a Monarch that he would have thought of an unconventionally secular religion to support. The Sun god alone permits this catholicity.

Although Sun temples existed in India before Konarka, Sun worship existed in many countries centuries before, and to India, Historians claim, it was imported from Iran. Thus Sun worship, even now, could be said to encompass the world community. In the strife ridden world now, recreation of another Sun temple would be fitting tribute to Narashinghadeba's dream, besides reviving a great architectural heritage.

Reverting to History, the temple was completed and had functioned for around 300 years. It was desecrated and deserted after the demise of the last Hindu king of Utkala, Raja Mukundadeba in 1568 AD. In the meanwhile, rivers were drying up and the port of Konagara (Konarka) fell out of favour. The deserted temple became a gold mine for curio hunters.

History indicates the temple suffered repeated Muslim attack in the next 60 years, possibly for the hidden jewelry and also possibly out of religious intolerance to iconoclasts. It was not easy to demolish 24 ft. thick walls but the repeated attacks were adequate to destabilize the corbelled rings and their fine balance. The temple started



crumbling slowly. Muslims were not the only offenders; there were Marathas, a Hindu feudatory ruler, the local villagers and international curio hunters who did their bit to accelerate destruction of the greatest monument of Kalinga.

The Maratha rulers of Odisha in 18<sup>th</sup> Century AD first shifted the *Arunastambha* to the front of Puri temple in 1765 AD and then many stones from the Konarka compound wall to raise the height of Jagannath temple compound. Many images were removed to the Bhogamandapa of Puri temple. In 1837 AD, king of Khurda, with a flimsy permission from a British district collector, dismounted the Nabagrahasilas from the top of the front entrance and removed many sculptures for a temple in his fort. He wanted to shift the Nabagrahasil to Puri temple. The attempt was foiled by a British officer. Later, two attempts to remove the *Sila* to Calcutta Museum were foiled, first by nature and later by local resistance. The blowing sands in the next century mercifully covered up the tragedy.

Notwithstanding the sand cover, tips of the great Architecture were visible, and there had been feeble attempts by some well-meaning British officers to exhume the treasure without much success. It was in 1900 AD that Sir John Woodruff, Lt. Governor of Bengal, ordered a full scale restoration. The work continued for six years, as a result of which we are able to see the vestige of a great heritage. The attempt to preserve what remains was euphemistically called 'Restoration'. The original *Bimana* will not return but what has been done between AD 1900 to 1906 displays the civilized side of the British rule, which the Nation must acknowledge with gratitude. The job of preservation went into the hands of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1939, and in 1984, UNESCO declared it a *World Heritage*. Notwithstanding all that high sounding expressions involving ASI and UNESCO, the remains are crumbling. The ASI does not dare to address the core problem agitated by various Indian and Foreign experts in the past 60 years. Inside the sealed porch, in the dark damp environment, harmful vegetation is affecting the structure. In the absence of chemical preservation inside, Khondalite stones that this temple is made of are turning into sponge-like oxide. All these are destabilizing the corbelled rings. Experts of international fame are time and again urging the opening of the sealed porch, removing sand from inside and starting preservation from inside. The ASI is totally opposed to what it believes to be the opening of Pandora's Box. That apart, no

attempt is being made to unearth from nearby sand dunes some of the lost sculptures and restore them to their rightful place. The lost parts of some of the beautiful sculptures are presently filled up by grotesque looking concrete blocks or plain stone blocks. Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is seriously urging the replacement of the lost portions by newly carved pieces for which there are sculptures galore in Odisha. ASI does not pay any heed to the advice.

#### Restoration:

Even if the ASI is forced to act through domestic and international pressure, the sad reality remains that the original glory of Konarka will never return to the present relic and the present relic might last for a century or so more. Before the final curtain falls, it is highly necessary to recreate the former glory in a new form and thus, perpetuate the glorious heritage. Many believe this is a futile day dream. The casual antagonism also demands consideration. What are the constraints, ideological or practical?

Konarka was an epic on stone. If epics have been written and rewritten time and again, if Odishi dance could be brought out of temple precincts and kept gloriously alive, if Odishi paintings could be transferred to modern fabrics from the palm leaves, what valid ideological bar can prevent recreation of the greatest heritage of Odisha, nay, the world?

The practical problems, of course, demand serious consideration. These problems could be technical, even ideological (like presenting the erotica) and of course financial.

As to the technical problem of integrating the old architectural style with modern engineering, not a big problem for the world community of technologists, when man has gone to the moon and his instruments to Mars.

As to the erotica, mores have, of course, changed, and in the present social environment, the artist cannot present them that openly, but the philosophy behind erotica is eternal. The modern artists can certainly find a way around without offending modern sensibility.

Money, yes, it must come from the World community and Odias in particular, if they are really proud of their great heritage. It is not their option but a duty.

A small group in Odisha has already assembled under the banner of *Kalinga Heritage Preservation Trust (KHPT)* with broad based objectives, but right now, they are concentrating on three tasks:

1. To organize a number of seminars and workshops and invite experts from various disciplines. This will be an exercise to spread awareness and also to delve into the problems involving preservation of the original monument at Konarka for as long as it is possible.
  2. To create a new Sun temple espousing not only a great art form but also the great catholicity of the philosophy behind. The Trust intends to make this a true centre for Global brotherhood.
  3. To develop a much needed crafts village, so essential for this project and also for perpetuation of the great art form. The Trust realizes that unless this community is provided a safe and dependable sanctuary, the art form - passing from generation to generation – will degenerate and get lost.
- The trustees hope that likeminded people and patrons will get in touch with KHPT.
- Anil Dey is affiliated with KHPT.*

## Path to the Soil

By Diksha Mohapatra

Being Odiya has always been a detail of huge importance to me. However, I have produced my own definition of Odiya. To me, it is all about upholding the strong beliefs, spreading the colorful culture, and boldly accepting others with open arms. While a large population of Indians living in America proudly admit they are Punjabi, Gujarati, or Bengali, I can more than ecstatically claim my motherland of the unique Odisha. I may not speak fluent Odiya now, but I embrace every aspect of my beautiful mother-tongue and everything related. To me, being Odiya is the ability to be modest yet simultaneously striking and alluring. It is paying heed to the Jagannath temple. It is recognizing its foundation of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. It is not only reciting bhajans but comprehending the meaning behind them. It is the splendor of the Ratha Yatra and the glory of the Konark Sun Temple. It is even the appreciation of savory pakhala and rosagalas. Because of our diverse and welcoming culture, I feel that it is much easier for me to welcome a myriad of identities, appearances, and backgrounds into my life.

In fact, what has played a huge role in my decisions throughout the years is something I could quite easily give gratitude to our Odiya community for. Every decision I make, and every thought that crosses my mind, is based on my Guru Yogananda Paramahansa's expression, "Let my soul smile through my heart and my heart smile through my eyes, that I may scatter rich smiles in sad hearts." Residing near the capital of California, I am able to enjoy the benefits of a diversified community. I grew up with the ideal balance between my reposeful East Indian beliefs and the active Western society. My relatives expected me to stay true to my roots, while my friends kept me in line with the social norms. I did not conceive the obvious differences, until I began to enlighten myself with the spiritual path.

In amusement I set foot into a temple for the first time. I admired the disparate and colorful individuals around me. Although I was initially bewildered, I soon realized the true reason this Indian place of worship consisted of a congregation of people who had different beliefs. It was not built on a religion. People came together to Self Realization Fellowship to become spiritually aware of themselves. It grew on me, and day by day, I felt myself opening up to everyone and developing a curiosity about the power of meditation and its effect on the human mind. The very thought that a trivial matter such as meditation can purify a soul was mind-boggling to me. From that day on, I knew what I wanted to do. I read every religious text I could find and attempted to comprehend each one. I discussed the meaning of life and philosophical ideas with every person I met. The very essence of my being yearned to discover everything I could to guide and help those around me who were less fortunate. And in the most obscure way, it acted as a force that pulled me toward my own heritage. It was a wonderful reminder of the similar way our ancestors cared so selflessly with immense compassion. In this way, I hold a high regard for Odisha and hope that our future generations never let the culture's special treasures go.

*I am Diksha Mohapatra, a first year aspiring psychiatrist at University of California, Davis and the daughter of Saroj and Gayatri Mohapatra.*

## **Youth Articles (Senior)**

### **Home Sweet Home By Alisa Das**

This is home...  
 The sight of Aai cooking, the aroma calling me  
 towards it,  
 The smell of incense sticks circling the air,  
 The sound of Aja chanting his holy prayers,  
 The touch of the rain gently splashing on my  
 face,  
 The taste of sweet flowers embracing my mouth,  
 This is home...  
 That dwells over the mountains,  
 Swims across the oceans,  
 Runs across the valleys and plains, letting out  
 emotions,  
 Soars over grand heights and skyscrapers,  
 Travels along the train tracks through the  
 wilderness,  
 This is home...  
 The crowded streets, busting around, getting to  
 places,  
 The car honk impatiently sighing as the traffic  
 increases,  
 Rickshaws scudding along as second place along  
 the creases,  
 Vendor stalls selling and bargaining with a "no"  
 here and a "yes" there,  
 This is home...  
 The hot air blowing on my face from the  
 fireplace on a winter night,  
 The baking sun melting me like a popsicle,  
 Swaying oceans rising up and over, trying to get a  
 good look,  
 Monkeys swinging branch to branch as they are  
 chased by brooms,  
 This is home...  
 Bangles clanging together as cymbals in an  
 orchestra,  
 Earrings swinging in the swaying air making a  
 jingle,  
 Colorful veils in the wind as one dances,  
 Anklets singing its sweet, chirpy voice making  
 your footsteps heard a mile away,  
 This is home  
 This is my home  
 Home sweet home

*Alisa Das is 13 years old and in 7th grade. She lives in Seattle. She likes to write, draw and sing songs. Her parents Amulya Kumar Das and Sachala Das are OSA life members.*

### **Rajputs, Mughals, and ..... Jagannath? By Anshuman Mishra**

Last winter, my family and I took a trip to Northern India. My family is very interested in history (and we enjoy good food), so we decided to go to places with interesting pasts. We went to see Delhi and Agra, with their rich Mughal heritage. We also decided to see Jaipur, with its colourful Rajput history, as everyone knows about the great abundance of huge stone forts on solitary hills dotted around the desert landscape. It was in Jaipur that I discovered something interesting. Since my parents are originally from Odisha, we are all interested in Jagannath. I noticed that there was a connection to Odisha, or more specifically, the Jagannath Temple at Puri. As Jaipur had strong historical connections with the Mughals at Delhi and Agra, I decided to do some more research on the subject to see if Delhi and Agra were also connected to Odisha.

When we arrived in Delhi, we visited many monuments. Among the places we visited, the Red Fort stands out specifically in my mind, as it had been built by Shah Jahan and had been the Mughal capital ever since its construction. When we left Delhi, we came to Agra and saw the Taj Mahal, which Shah Jahan had built as a tomb for his wife. We continued on to the Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri. Both the Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri were capitals of Akbar and his son Jahangir.

After we left Agra, we came to Jaipur, with its own rich history of the mighty Kacchwaha Rajput rulers, and their friends in power, the Mughal Emperors. In Jaipur, we saw places of great importance such as the Amber Fort, which had been the seat of Kacchwaha Rajputs including Man Singh I for about 700 years. It had been very important during that time, but Raja Man Singh I then expanded Amber Fort to an even grander and more impressive scale. I remember Amber Fort the best, not only because it was where Raja Man Singh I and his descendants, the Kacchwaha Rajputs, had ruled, but also because that was where I discovered the connection to the Jagannath Temple at Puri.

It was the year 1572 when Raja Bhagwant Singh of Amber sent the young prince Man Singh to



*With my family in Amber Fort, Jaipur*

serve in the military of the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Man Singh would rise to great places in Akbar's service and later became a benefactor of the Jagannath Temple at Puri. Man Singh was an intelligent and ingenious soldier and quickly moved up the ranks to general. After his promotion to general, his general aptitude for fighting campaigns and making clever strategies quickly made him one of Akbar's most trusted generals and advisors. He was even one of the Navaratnas, or Nine Gems, of Akbar's court. He stayed in Akbar's service until his death in 1614. While he was in Akbar's service, he headed many military campaigns, including the battles with Rana Pratap of Mewar (Man Singh I's cousin), Mirza Hakim (Akbar's step-brother who claimed the emperorship), five Afghan tribes in Afghanistan by the Khyber Pass (whose colors later appeared in Amber's and later Jaipur's flag), and the people of Kashmir.



Raja Man Singh



Emperor Akbar

In the year of 1592, parts of the Mughal province of Bengal, and most of Odisha, claimed independence after the death of their unifying governor, Suleiman Karrani. They were led by an Afghan general in the area named Nasir Khan, and Man Singh was sent to retake the province for Akbar. He fought for about five years and retook the area that had seceded.

After he had won back Odisha, Man Singh went with his wife to pray at the Jagannath Temple at Puri. His wife, Rani Gauri Devi, a great Krishna devotee, ordered the building of the Mukti Mandap. The Mukti Mandap is a large hall for temple priests to make important decisions regarding conduct of daily worship and festivals. It is frequently used by scholars to discuss ancient religious and literary texts. Rani Gauri Devi also commissioned an entrance doorway to the Jagannath Temple in the Rajasthani style.



Priests in conference at the Mukti Mandap

The Kacchwaha Rajputs were very clever rulers and great political strategists. They always tried to be in the favor of the people in power so as to

hold on to their palaces and forts. During the reign of Akbar, they were some of his closest allies. They were also staunch supporters during the reigns of Akbar's son and grandson, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, respectively. That is the reason why the Mughals never fought against them. Therefore, their forts and palaces were left intact and their peaceful reigns led to great wealth and prosperity. Even Aurangzeb, Akbar's great-grandson and no friend of the Hindus, created the title of Sawai, literally meaning 1 and  $\frac{1}{4}$ , for the famous Maharaja Jai Singh II, who left the derelict fortress of Amber to build his own capital of Jaipur. Jai Singh II had a wide grasp of knowledge on many subjects and was a brilliant military commander.

In the year 1692, Emperor Aurangzeb gave an order (*fatwa*) to the Governor of the Mughal province of Odisha for the temple to be destroyed. However, temple officials bribed the governor, Ibrahim Khan II, who only closed the temple. He accepted the bribe knowing that he had already lost money from the pilgrim tax on temples when other temples had been destroyed. The Jagannath Temple was reopened after Aurangzeb's death.

Aurangzeb's order (*fatwa*) for demolition of Jagannath Temple

My trip to India was marvelous. Frankly, I felt unhappy about returning to school and normal life after such a glorious trip. The historical and other sights were amazing, and the food was great. Since I am an Odia person, these connections with the Jagannath Temple at Puri were just added benefits!

Anshuman Mishra is a seventh grader at Grizzell Middle School in Dublin, OH. A first-degree black belt in Tae-Kwon-Do, he is an avid reader and guitar player and loves quizzing people about history.

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### The Scene By Arnesh Mohapatra

I woke up from my bed, my bad breath filling my mouth, making me choke. I headed towards my bathroom. Half awake, I started brushing my teeth when it came to my notice that I was already two hours late for work. I quickly rinsed my teeth out and headed for the kitchen. There, I took some bread out and put it in the toaster. I got some orange juice from the fridge and quickly poured it into my cup. I had a habit of watching the news every morning. There I sat with my orange juice. It was about thirty seconds before I heard the toaster go off. I went to it, where I found a perfect piece of burnt bread. It was just what I needed to start off the day.

I got in my 1970's Dodge Challenger. It was nice, although it had a few bumps and ticks here and there. All along the way to office, I was thinking about what my reason would be for coming so late. All I could think of at the moment was getting late at the dentists. I knew it wasn't good, but it was all I could think of. I parked in the employees' spot, which was nearly impossible to get since there was only one spot and hundreds of employees. What was strange was that there were absolutely no cars there. Not taking much notice of that, I entered the office. I found the two people working at the front office asleep. The phone was hanging down in the room. This was really eerie.

I walked to the elevator, and all around the floor was a bunch of scattered papers. This wasn't how this office looked like. I got in the elevator and headed to floor 13. It wasn't the best floor, but it's where I worked. I headed to my office and heard no one talking. This was really strange. I looked

around the hallways to find nothing but the sound of my heavy breathing; this just couldn't be happening. I went into my office thinking this was just a big joke, and sooner or later people would come. I sat there in my office for around five minutes when this started to get to be a little to get too much. I went out of the room and screamed at the top of lungs. I was expecting to hear a "Shut up!", or a "Keep it quite would you", but all I heard was my echo. I saw a shadow next to the windows over on the far corner of the floor. I heard creaking noises, like someone walking. I told myself it was just a joke and hopefully would be over soon.

Thinking about this made me hungry, and I was kind of half hoping to see the people that worked at the cafeteria. I went inside. All I saw was a guy sleeping on top of his burger. Nobody else was there. I got closer to the guy and gave him a little push. He leaned to his left and fell over. On top of his bun was ketchup, or at least I thought it was. I really hoped it was ketchup and not something else. I got a strange feeling behind me, and I quickly turned around. It was nothing but the windows looking out into the Chicago city. I looked down and saw police cars and people from the media. The building was covered with the police's caution tape. I quickly turned on the TV in the cafeteria and changed the channel to the local news. It turned out that there was someone in this office that was killing everyone. I turned the TV off. I looked at the guy—that wasn't ketchup on his face, it was blood!

I made a dash into my office room. I closed all the blinds and went quiet. I kept asking myself the same question again and again, "How will I get out of here?" All I could think of was to run to the elevator. I repeatedly pressed floor 1. The doors closed.

It went, each second feeling like an hour. I reached floor 1, and it stopped. The doors didn't open. I pressed the alarm button, and the alarms went off. I could hear people outside suddenly screaming. I didn't know what to do, so I got my phone. I dialed 9-1-1, but there was no signal. I was trapped in an elevator with a killer in the building that had full control over me. I just prayed that somehow I could get out of here. I was desperate. I tried opening the doors with my hands; it didn't work. I just sat there. After around ten minutes, the door opened.

I looked outside; nobody was there. I made another dash to the door. But that was not how God had planned it out for me, and a hand tightly gripped my neck. He lifted me, choking me. I was running out of air and was feeling like I was going to die. Then, at the moment I knew I was going to die, he let me go. I tried to get fresh air back into my lungs. He came closer to me and told me his name, "Aeetes," which I knew, for some reason, was the king of Colchis in Greek mythology. He was vicious and ready to kill anyone. He took out his sword and slashed through me. I ran for the door. I made it out with blood gushing from my back.

The police and media were all looking at me. I felt like I was on the top of the world. It was always my dream to be on TV. But I never thought it would be like this. I took one more step and felt sharp metal go through me. The pain was unbearable. As I slowly began to slide down the sword, I had only two things in mind. My childhood memories, and all the inhuman things I had done to myself and to other people.

### **In the Forest** **By Arnesh Mohapatra**

I ran across the road and jumped into the dirt. I forced myself to go further, and I did. There wasn't any reason to go in there; it was just a quest I knew I had to do. I went deeper and deeper until I couldn't hear anything but nature. I picked up twigs along the way for the hut I was going to build. I saw a deer, harmlessly walking in the forest. I saw a squirrel following behind it. I found my perfect spot; it was nice and flat, and there were trees surrounding it. I set up my hut with all the twigs I had collected along the way. It was a decently made house. Next, I needed a fire and food. I had food and enough twigs for two nights if it didn't get too cold. I started a fire and put my can of soup on it. After a few minutes, it was ready. After I finished it, I went to sleep.

When I woke up, I wasn't in the same place I was when I was sleeping. I was in an imaginary world. This was why all along I had to do this quest. People were the same, but something was different. I saw people walking on streets, not using cars. Everything was natural. The air was really crisp with the increased oxygen. I walked around stores and saw people doing everything more efficiently than before the world. Now a problem came, how do I get out of this world? I looked around for something unusual until I found the only car in the whole city. Other people didn't seem to notice. I got inside, and suddenly, I fell asleep.

I woke up into reality and saw the air being normal. I was hearing a little bit of noise from cars and all other things. I felt like I was the only person that could change this. I went back to the street and crossed the road again. The world was about to change.

I started with small things, like the neighborhood. I got everyone started on recycling in our area. Then we sent out different groups to spread the word. The next one was going to be a challenge, making everybody walk or bike instead of using a car. I decided I would tell them to start using hybrids and battery powered cars. Every now and then, I would go back to my imaginary world and see how I could change our world.

I started becoming really popular in our county until one day the mayor was in town. He wanted to meet me. We had a talk about the changes we could make in our town. The end decision was he wanted to fund me and then spread the news to the president. I was so happy. I couldn't thank him enough. A week or so later, our

house got a call from the president. He told us he made it that if anyone bought a hybrid or battery car, they would get tax cuts. I thought that was the best thing possible. I hoped that this would reach an international level one day, and we could be a clean world.

*My name is Arnesh Mohapatra. I am in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I live in Portland, Oregon with my parents, uncle and two dogs. In my leisure time, I enjoy playing with my dogs, cooking, reading, watching movies and playing video games.*

### **Free and Proud**

**By Ineka Panigrahi**

*"The true North strong and free...We stand on guard for thee."*

*-National Anthem of Canada, "O Canada"*

Majestic landscapes,  
That capture the sightseer  
Welcoming to everybody,  
No other country is freer.

PEI's dazzling red sands,  
The rich Canadian Shield  
The wonders of Banff in Alberta,  
The Yukon's goldfield.

Manitoba, Lake of the Prairies  
Ontario's White Trillium flower  
Horseshoe Falls of Niagara,  
And Toronto's CN Tower.

The Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick,  
British Columbia's totem sculpture  
Newfoundland's oil sands,  
Quebec's New France culture.

The Mayflower of Nova Scotia  
Iroquois people of Lake Huron  
Baffin Island of Nunavut  
Red Lily of Saskatchewan.

Mount Nirvana in the Territories  
The Southern Great Lakes

To the east rising sun,  
The country awakes

The arrival of the First Nations,  
Our country's history begun  
Settlement was rushing in,  
Together as a Dominion.

Then came Canada's nurturing mother,  
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
She cared for Canada like no other,  
And does so 'till this very second.

This year we celebrate,  
Her Diamond Jubilee  
60<sup>th</sup> year as Head of State,  
We're as patriotic as can be.

Such a divine creation,  
Is Canada's ideology  
A multicultural relation  
That welcomes all so openly

The country we have made our own  
Pride and gratitude we have shown  
For it has opened its doors  
And welcomed us as its own.

*Ineka is 13 years old and lives with her parents Gagan & Sabita Panigrahi in Toronto. She passionately loves dancing and enjoys baking. She likes to spend time with her brother, whether it is playing soccer or discussing world history. She adores her family very much.*

### **American Boy, Odia Blood** By Debanjan Nandan Chowdhury

A culture is the set of ideas, skills, art, and tools of a group of people at a certain time. Additionally, a culture can be the set of beliefs and values, the type of clothes, religious rituals and foods. Different people come from different cultures, such as people from Odisha. Odisha is a state in the Eastern part of India. As Odia immigrants come to this country, their kids are accustomed to the American culture. Despite being in the US, I adopted the Odia culture, which has improved my self-discipline and respect for others.

After a lot of immigrants come and settle in the United States, their children become accustomed to speaking English and ultimately forget their native language. I, on the other hand, continued speaking Odiya and am fluent in the language. This is important because I can communicate with my relatives back in Odisha; I can orally host local Odia shows and my parents will feel proud of me. The Odia culture and the American culture are not only different in language but also in family values and religious practices.

The Odia people believe in the God named Jagannath. He is not like other Hindu Gods because of His unique appearance. He doesn't have any legs, eye lids, eye lashes, or hair. His arms are half built and the other half is not created. We worship Him as a God because we believe He is the reincarnation of Lord Vishnu. He is THE ODIA GOD. Even though he is married to Goddess Laxmi, he sits in the altar and is worshipped with his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra. This is quite in contrast to American family values, where the family is defined by husband, wife and children mostly below 18 years of age. This indicates the difference in family values. To worship Him, Odia people perform pujas and sing bhajans, (Indian classical music) which I participate in by playing the tabla (Indian classical drums). Ultimately, the Odia culture

also differs from the American culture by foods and clothing.

Some Odia foods are rice, lentil soup, mixed vegetable curry, and bread. Some of the American foods are pizza, sandwiches, hamburgers, fried chicken and hot dogs. The Odia foods use a lot of water, onion, garlic, turmeric and spices. Cancer research has found that turmeric and spice (especially pancha phutana) are great in fighting cancer.

The Odias wear saris, pajama (pajama), kurtas, lungis, and salwar kameez. They are very vibrant in color with embroidery. The Americans wear pants, shirts, coats, and ties. Though it is different from the Orthodox American attire, I prefer wearing such clothing proudly because of the attention and smiles I receive from those of Indian descent.

The Odia and American cultures are really different from each other because of the religious rituals, languages and family values. The Odias speak Odia and the Americans speak English. The Odias eat more foods which have spices in them and are more flavorful. On the other hand, Americans like lots of fatty foods and sugar. The Odia clothes are more vibrant in color with embroidery. American informal dress is mainly jeans and T-shirt. I am not like most of the Odia kids in the United States because I speak my parents' native language, eat Odia foods, and wear Odia clothes proudly.

What counts the most in Odia culture are the values it carries and teachings it offers. It is not the children who are responsible for not following Odia culture. Rather it is the parents, who forget their own culture and roots in the process of chasing American culture. If all parents will be a little vigilant about this, we will be a great product and branded as "AMERICAN CHILDREN WITH ODIA BLOOD".

*Debanjan Nandan Chowdhury is 13 years old and is in 8th Grade. He is the son of Anjana and Debaki Nandan Chowdhury and lives in Germantown, MD.*

### **A Summer with Lauren** By Ellora Amrit

"Let's go Sarah! We have to pick up Lauren from the airport," my mom yelled.

"Ugh," I groaned. "Can't I just stay here and finish this last chapter?"

"No, I want you to come with me to go get her."

"Fine," I exclaimed reluctantly. I was not looking forward to this. Lauren, my super bubbly, overly nice cousin, who only cared about make-up and Juicy Couture™ and used way too many exclamation points in her e-mails, was going to spend the summer here in Florida. And worst of all, she had to share my room with me. Personally, I was looking forward to a summer filled with painting, visiting art museums with my caring boyfriend (who didn't care for the frivolous things in



life), and laying on the beach reading classics—not those vampire novels that Lauren was bound to read.

I shoved on my flip flops and followed my mom out to her Honda. We spotted Lauren at the airport right away; you couldn't miss her, as she was in hot pink from head to toe and was wearing some stupid oversized sunglasses that covered her whole face. "Hey!" she squealed as she headed toward us.

"Hi Lauren! How was your flight, honey?" my mom greeted her.

"Oh, fine, I guess. I'm so happy to be here, though," she exclaimed. "So how's everything here, Sarah?"

"Fine," I replied curtly.

When we got home, Lauren followed me upstairs to my bedroom, carrying her Juicy Couture™ hot pink suitcase and matching laptop case. I didn't even know that so much pink existed. When we got upstairs, I told her where the bathroom was and which side of the room was hers. Lauren happily nodded and went on to unpack her things.

After a while, we finally started to get along, and we discussed what our favorite books and poets were (apparently she didn't read those vampire novels like every other girl in my school read...well, the girls that actually read, at least). We talked about our dream vacation spots: she said hers was Paris, I said mine was New York. We walked down to the frozen yogurt shop almost every day; there, we found that we were both fans of the Mango Tango flavor, which nobody else we knew liked. We were also both great writers.

So, like I said, we were both starting to get along, until Lauren came home one day and announced that she had won the Young Writer of the Year award. I couldn't believe it! I had been working on my essay since the beginning of the year. I try every year because it's a huge deal here in Florida. How could she have written something in under two weeks and made it better than mine?

Then, one day when I was turning in the library books, I found a pink animal print bookmark in one of my books. Now, why on Earth would I have a bookmark in one of my books? I hated them—they always fell out of my books. Then I remembered that I had let Lauren borrow that book. Thinking that Lauren probably wanted the bookmark back, I took it out to return it to her. But then I noticed something written on the back of the bookmark. In Lauren's loopy, bubbly handwriting, it said, "Copy Sarah's essay."

Then it all clicked. Lauren had used my essay as her own. She had offered to drop off my essay the day it was due, saying that the office was on the way to the beach. But she probably never turned my essay in. She just turned hers in, the copied version of mine. Oh, I was going to get her good!

But when I went upstairs, I didn't even have to question Lauren. She came right up to me and said that she had copied my essay and had never turned mine in. She was sobbing so hard, it was hard to understand her mumble. She told me that she would go to the judges and apologize and tell my parents that she copied my essay. She even insisted that I take the prize. I forgave Lauren, but I asked her why she had copied my essay. She said it was because her older sister Michelle always gets all the attention in her house and this was how she could win her parents over, but she said the feeling of guilt was not worth it. I suddenly started to relate to her. I had the exact same problem about a year ago, when my brother Jake lived here. It was horrible, all the conversations the family ever had were about Jake and Jake only. When Jake moved out, I was so relieved.

"Look, Lauren, I know what you mean. When Jake was here, it was always about him.... Lauren, why don't you just keep the prize and this can just be a secret we keep between the both of us?"

"Really, Sarah? Oh my God, that would mean the world to me, I totally owe you.... Okay, next summer, I'm taking you to New York, the whole trip is on me, I'll work extra jobs, do whatever I have to, but I really owe you, Sarah."

"Really, Lauren, you don't have to do that..."

"Yes, I do, Sarah, I really do, please do it for me?"

I thought about all the art museums we could visit, about seeing the Statue of Liberty. "Okay, fine, Lauren."

"Oh! My God! Yes, I can't wait till next summer!!"

The time for Lauren to leave came really quickly that summer. Before I knew it, Lauren was carrying her matching pink suitcase and laptop case and waving good-bye. My outlook on Lauren also really changed. She might have been a Barbie Doll on the outside, but on the inside, she and I were really like all kids that crave attention.

I guess you really can't judge a book by its cover.

*Ellora Amrit is 14 years old.*

## I Am Blessed And Unique

By Dilasha Panigrahi

*This poem, "**I Am Blessed And Unique**," is about the many different aspects of my mind, such as how I wonder, worry, dream, and etc.; the poem portrays how all the aspects merge together to form who I am, a blessed and unique individual. Each stanza discusses a different aspect of my mind and starts with a bold, capital letter; the bold capital letters eventually form the sentence which is the title of my poem, "**I Am Blessed And Unique**." In the same way, the different aspects of my mind, each being represented with a different stanza, link together to form who I am; a blessed and unique individual.*

**I am blessed and unique,**

**I wonder** how miracles occur in the most unlikely of events, how the tiniest bundle of joy can survive a heart-breaking tsunami, how one small fish in a vast sea can bring hope to everyone's burned hearts, how one drop of poison in a glass of milk destroys the whole glass, much how our dark world operates,

**I am blessed and unique.**

**And I hear** the silent breathing of the stars, the invisible heartbeat of the sun, the beautiful song of the celestial queen, the moon,

Meanwhile, as I gaze at the stars, **I see** the numerous galaxies that are yet to be explored, the shadows of the planets dancing in the night, the sun's outrage during a dark eclipse,

**I am blessed and unique.**

But somehow **I want** to be able to travel back in time, twisting and stumbling, to amend all of my mistakes that I couldn't have apologized for, to heal and stitch a broken piece of my friends' hearts back into place, nice and snug, so they feel safe in their darkest hour,

Lying on my bed, **I pretend** to be floating on top of the clouds when I sleep, to be as carefree, fluffy, and flexible as they are, forming countless shapes as they glide above the world,

Edging into my body, **I feel** the heat of academic pressure, burning inside of me, grasping my throat, ready to choke me if I slack off, all being radiated off of me and easing its way into other people's souls, ready to attack them as well,

Since **I touch** the heavens when I hope, that is when my mind is free of the obstacle of pessimism, when my mind is clear and has no anger clouding my conscious thought, when my mind is determined to show the world what I am, what I mean,

Should **I worry** whether I have performed a good deed for the better of mankind and Mother Earth each day, as our Mother that provides us with everything and demands nothing in return is slowly perishing, hiding her agony and pain that we give to her by stepping, building, and polluting on top of her, in front of her very eyes?

Every time **I cry**, when my eyes are shamed by witnessing undeserved punishment, prejudice, when my eyes see a single tear leak out of someone's weary eyes, leading to a cascade of hot, burning tears, because of prejudice, when my eyes see the inanity of individuals, shoving someone's soul into darkness, holding their talent back and not letting it escape to the world, all because of the killer, prejudice,

**Do I understand** that true love is irreplaceable, and that burning sensation in my heart that longs for my beloved will only come once; that family is the only barrier that will keep me protected from the dark world, that my true friends will withstand the test of reality and won't be knocked over by the force of peer pressure?

**I am blessed and unique.**

As **I say** words that will embrace my loved ones, words that will oust my loved ones high above others, where I can see and feel their self-esteem rising to a safer level than it was before, I feel relieved that I have at least helped them in part, I have not let them enter a phase of confusion that many people have had to suffer through,

Nostalgically, **I yearn** for the early years of my childhood, where pressure, frustration, and conflict didn't rule my life, when I was able to commit any action out of innocence and learn from my mistake, when my father could carry me in his arms everywhere, when my little sister invited me to play with her Barbie dolls, whereas now there is no way for me to take the easy path as I could have done before,

Does anyone dream, the way **I dream**, for the day that Christians, Catholics, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims will realize that each of their gods are all perfect, are all manifestations of the divine beauty, and will hold hands praying together finally after a long internal struggle,

**I am blessed and unique.**

Unconditionally **I try** to make my parents proud, to paint a smile on their loving faces, to ease their tension, to reassure them that they are the most I could have imagined, hoped for, dreamt of, that they are the greatest parents that exist on this planet, whose love that I possess, is certainly an honored gift,

News of troops in troubled countries always pervades the TV, and as I look on to watch the terrifying reality, **I hope** to see the day that two men, both dominating and ruling a strong nation, can hug their petty problems out, and not feel the need to light the match of hatred and ignite the candle of war over their conflicts, for the candle only flickers, twists and turns through deaths and blood, and slowly starts to shrink, and by the time the candle is extinguished, nothing but lifeless bodies and injured countries remain, as a reminder of the consequences of the fire of conflict that started this nightmare,

Inviting and palatable, **I taste** the pleasure of someone buying an ice cream with the money they earned, the excitement that explodes in the air once someone realizes that they have triumphed, but I also taste the bitter taste of regret, the fact that I know I committed a sin and can't fix it, the fact that I had the chance to choose the right answer on an exam but I didn't trust my first instinct,

Queenly and queer aromas surround my nose, as **I smell** the sweet scent of a blooming rose, the burning odor of a barbeque grill, the cute and clean fragrance of a newborn baby, whose tiny hands grasp the mother's hand, acknowledging a bright future for the both of them, and the refreshing smell of a brand new car, ready to accompany me on various journeys through where I will grow as an individual, and discover who I am meant to be,

Understanding how blessed I am to have all the comforts I have along with a supportive family that lets me be whoever I want to be, **I pity** those who do not love, and those who do not receive love, because love is the greatest gift anyone can give or receive, love is what human beings thrive on, love is the epitome of our biggest downfalls and our greatest achievements, and those who are givers or receivers of love are never going to be as content and at peace as I feel that I am,

Even though I wonder; I hear and see; I want, pretend, feel, touch, worry, cry, and understand; I say, yearn, and dream; I try, hope, taste, smell, and pity; but most of all, **I love** the way dancing lifts my spirits up on the gloomiest of days, the feeling of adrenaline pumping in my veins as I race my friends in the swimming pool, the swiftness of manipulating my racket in the proper angle to hit the perfect shot in tennis, the way I can soothe and calm myself down by pouring my feelings into my writing, the way how nature has a mind of its own, and it carries on its cycle of life without assistance by continuing to put human beings in awe, the way how God performs miracles, as if he is putting a bandage on a wound of the world, the way friends are like needles with wool, sewing a warm, snug blanket around me and each other to produce a blanket where we are all connected and feel safe, and the way my family creates a protective concrete wall of love around you to shield me from being condemned,

**I am blessed and unique.**

*Dilasha Panigrahi is 13 years old.*

### **Sisterhood**

**By Ishanee Chanda**

Our room looked empty. The walls that had held our posters and memories for so long were almost depleted. I had never really realized how much she had played a role in decorating our space. Her sheets on her bed were folded and ready for departure in one of her many bright yellow suitcases, as she was persistent in taking them along. The color of the wood on her dresser could be seen for once, the nail polish, makeup, jewelry, and accessories stored away. The shine of the mirror glimmered in the light coming from the corner window, her

pictures that had taken up the reflective glass now in her purse. Jonesy, her stuffed animal from when she was seven, now sat upon her purse as she tidied up the area, forcing the last bits of her clothes into another bag. For 12 years, it had been *our* room. Now it was just mine.

With a grunt, she forced in the pair of skinny jeans she had been struggling with. She was sweating lightly, and the sight was almost humorous to watch. Finally, with one last heave, she pulled the zipper closed and stepped back with a sigh. I sat quietly on the corner of my made bed and watched her with solemn eyes. She had a small smile on her face as she stepped back to survey her work. Four bags lay in front of her, six more on their way to be loaded in the car. She went over to the night stand and picked up her information for the University of North Texas, skimming over it once more. After a final glance through, she looked over at me and smiled.

"Help me get these to Papa?" she asked.

Mutely, I nodded. With a small jump off my mattress, I walked over to her sunshine baggage and proceeded to roll two of them towards the stairs. Papa met me on the way as he made his way up to grab more. He smiled at me gently as I rolled them to a stop.

"You ok, Ishu?" he whispered as he hugged me tight.

Again, I nodded without saying a word and headed back to our, no my, room to get the rest of her bags. She was struggling to balance her purse on top of her suitcases, trying to take two at once along with it. I rushed to her rescue and took the bags, making sure not to look her in the eyes.

"Oh, it's ok, I got it I-," she started to say, but I walked quickly out of the room, not replying. I could feel her sorrow behind me but I stayed strong. She was the one leaving me, not the other way around. After a bumpy roll down the stairs, I used all my strength to lift each bag into the car. Dad helped me shut the door, and he started to say something but I walked back inside.

As the screen door closed behind me, I walked towards the living room, out of sight from the stairs and the front door. I could hear Mom quietly crying at the foot of the stairs, and I closed my eyes and tried to block out all sound. All I could hear now was the thumping of my heart, resounding in my ears. I could feel the tears threatening to come, but I didn't let them. She didn't deserve to know how I felt. A loud thumping broke me out of my reclusion, and I realized it was my sister walking down the wood stairs.

"Mama, don't cry. I'll be back soon, Thanksgiving Break, remember? And it's not like I'm going miles away; I'm only about 10 minutes from here. And I get days where I can come and see you! You'll see me sooner than you think," she said cheerfully. I could feel Mama smile and hug her tightly.

"Good luck, Gudia. I know you'll do great," she whispered.

I could hear her step away from Mama and go towards Papa, who I knew would smile at her with open arms. A hug, a kiss on the forehead. A speech.

"No matter how far you go, you'll always be my little girl. You're going to do great things. You're going to fulfill my dreams, in my footsteps do the things I could never do. I love you. Make me proud, ok?" he said in her ear.

"Always, Papa, always," she said with a watery smile.

And now it was time for me. Time for me to say my goodbye. But I wasn't going to.

"Ishu? I'm leaving? You don't want to... say anything?" she asked, walking over to my side.

I stared at the window, willing myself not to turn around. There was a heavy silence as they all stared at me.

"Ishu. Nani is leaving. Say something," my mom spoke, her voice strong. I still refused to talk. After another moment of silence, my sister sighed. She bent down and put her arms around me.

"I love you. I'll be back soon. There's Facebook, texting, calling—whenever you need me I will always be here, ok? I'm not going far. I'm always right here with you," she said softly.

Suddenly, a rage built up within me, so strong, knocking my willpower out of the way. With a strong push, I broke out of her hold and stood to face her.

"Stop. Just stop. Just go, get in that car and leave. You're not going to always be here. You're leaving me. You're leaving me alone. My sister, my best friend, is abandoning me. What do you think is going to happen? Whenever I call you in the middle of the night, at 3 in the morning, you'll pick up? When I need someone to talk to, so desperately, you'll be there? You're miles away. And you know what? We're going to grow apart. You're going to have another roommate now. She's going to be the one you care about. She's going to be the one you're there for. Just go. Leave. You think in the middle of the night, when I wake up from a nightmare, you're going to be there to calm me down? When I have any troubles that I for some reason can't tell Mama and Papa yet, I ask you about, and knowing your advice, and then I tell them, you think I'm going to have that anymore? You're leaving, Nani. Leaving. We're going to grow apart, and I'm never going to be as important to you as I am now. So don't expect me to believe you when you say you'll always be here. Because you're not," I finished, my voice cracking as tears threatened to cascade down my cheeks.

In the shock that followed, I ran up to the room that was now mine alone, closed the door, and sobbed. I cried for the memories that were in this room, for the future without my sister, for the rude way I had acted when she was about to leave. In the midst of my sobs, I heard the stairs creak, the light heels of my sister stop in front of my room. She didn't try to come in or say anything, but just stood there listening to me cry. After a minute or two, a note came sliding in under the door. Her footsteps progressed away, and my curiosity was too much for me. I went over to the piece of paper on the floor and unfolded it.

*Ishu.*

*I know you are angry with me. I know you are upset. But remember, whatever happens, I love you. You are my little sister, and I will always be there for you no matter what you think. You may not believe me, but you will understand later. I'm sorry I had to leave on this note, but Ishu, I love you. I'll be back soon. Take care of Mom and Dad.*

*Nani.*

The car revved up, and I ran to the window. I saw Mama standing outside next to the car, waving. I could see Nani inside the car, smiling sadly at Mama and then glancing at my window. Our eyes met, and she didn't say anything, just gave me a smile. Papa backed out of the driveway, and I watched them slowly drive away. The last I saw of my sister that day was her eyes, watching me, filled with regret. And then they were gone. I stood there, watching the place where they once were. Mama shuffled back inside but I stayed there, rooted to the spot,

watching through the stained window, the absence of my sister deafening my ears. She was gone. She was really gone. All I could see was the sad look in her eyes as she was driven away. Those deep brown eyes, darkened with the sorrows of the day. Sorrows caused by me.

Suddenly, with a jump, I ran towards the door. Banging it behind me, I thundered down the stairs, narrowly missing the last one. With a stumble, I nearly tripped as I ran towards the front door, not bothering to close it, and I ran. I ran towards the car, now a speck down the road. Adrenaline gave me a burst of speed and I began to yell.

"Stop! Stop! Please stop!" I cried as my feet carried me toward the black vehicle, driving further and further away. I closed my eyes, concentrated, and shot off as fast as a bullet, gesturing wildly so someone would notice me. But the car refused to stop. Finally, I slowed, my heart on fire, and I tottered over to sit on the grass. I kept my eyes down, shining with tears of disappointment. I shook wildly as I cried. My ears were thumping loudly, my heart racing in my ears. In the midst of the beats came the sound of a car, coming closer and closer. I looked up in surprise to see the car door thumping shut and my sister running towards me, enveloping me in a tight hug.

"Oh, Ishu," she whispered, as my arms found my way around hers.

"I love you, Nani. I'm sorry. I really am," I told her, hugging her tight. She looked at me and smiled.

"I love you too."

*Three Months Later*

"Maa! Remember to get the turkey out of the oven; we don't want it to burn!" I yelled as I mashed the potatoes. Dad came in holding bags of groceries, filled with our emergency supplies for dinner. He came up to me as I finished putting some masala into the alu and mixed it together with some salt and pepper.

"Oh, what do we have here," he said, smiling, and dipped a spoon into the mixture. I laughed and pushed him away.

"It's for dinner, don't touch it. You should go check on the machaa (Fish) bhauja," I told him, grinning.

"Yes ma'am," he chuckled, winking at me.

Nani came down with the green beans and the dali. She set them on the table and smiled at me.

"Look at you, making dinner."

"Well, I've had to, since you're over there eating that dorm food. Isn't it disgusting?" I teased her.

"No, it's actually pretty good. Better than your cooking," she laughed. I pushed her playfully and we started a poking war when Mama came in with the Tandoori Turkey.

"Hey, you two go wash up and set the table. Dinner starts in 10 minutes."

We obeyed, and 20 minutes later (Indian Standard Time), dinner started. Before we dug into the bhauja, maacha, alu, and everything else on an Indian Thanksgiving table, we did follow the one American tradition this holiday was all about.

"I'm thankful for my family. My job. My daughters. My beautiful wife. Um, food. Your mom's cooking. And ESPN," said my dad, enticing a laugh from us all.

"I'm thankful for my family, my friends, my husband, my daughters as well, and... love," smiled Mama.

"Hmm, I'm thankful for clothes, makeup, nail polish, my cell phone, college, my roommate, my boyfr-, uh I mean girlfriends, my family, and my friends," my sister finished quickly, avoiding the shocked glare Papa was sending her way.

"Boyfriend? When did you get a boyfriend?"

Among the newly arisen chatter, I spoke, quieting them down. "I'm thankful for my friends. Family. Love. Harry Potter. Friendship. And," I paused looking at Nani. "I'm thankful for sisterhood. I love you Nani," I smiled. She looked at me with watery eyes and raised her glass.

"To sisterhood."

We all followed suit.

"To sisterhood."



**This story was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place for the Meghna Memorial Award, Senior category.**

*Ishanee Chanda is a 10th grade International Baccalaureate student at Clark High School in Plano. She is 15 years old.*

### **Roots By Manisha Mishra**

As an Indian teenager growing up in America, I am the luckiest person in the world to have had a real relationship with my great-grandmother, who lived overseas in India. About eleven months ago, I lost my Badkma, and I cried like a baby, even more than my parents. Her sweet voice still echoes in my ears, and her glowing, stunning smile still reflects in my eyes. Not a day goes by in my life when I do not think about her.

She always told me to stay close to my culture. She said, "Remember to stay close to your land." Whenever I would visit her in India, she constantly told me this, and I always nodded my head. To tell the truth, I never really knew what she meant. I just nodded my head to assure her that I was listening. It wasn't until she passed away that I finally realized what she meant.

My great-grandmother was a caring, joyful, and selfless person. Her life revolved around her family. My father, one of her grandchildren, was the first one in the family to continue his education overseas in the United States. Though she was supportive of him continuing on with his higher education, a part of her wanted to stop him from leaving. Why? She was afraid that he would distance himself from his culture, his family, and his past. She didn't know what the "new world" had to offer and what

it was like. Knowing that she had no control over what would happen to my father, she just told him to stay close to his home.

Identity. Culture. Past. Home. Roots. All of these words have something in common. They all deal with who one is and how one came to be that way. It's a special history textbook that traces how a person came to be the way they are now.

After learning about my great-grandmother's death, I sat there on my bed and thought about what she said. She knew that I was not going to be raised like a typical child in India. She knew that I wouldn't be as close to my culture as the rest of my family who were in India. She knew that I was growing up in an unfamiliar environment that she had no knowledge about, except from movies and books. However, she always said that somewhere inside of me, let it be in my mind or heart, I am not one hundred percent American. Though I am a citizen of the United States, I am not technically from the United States. My blood and identity come from the land of my ancestors. My ancestors originated from my homeland of India.

It is my job to stay connected to my culture, family, religion, language, and most importantly, my past. I barely know anything about my family's history before my grandparents. And indeed, I sometimes feel that I don't even know my grandparents at all. There are so many things to learn about, to discover,



and I abhor myself for not being proactive and taking the first step in getting to know my family. I feel that I lost the chance to really know about my family beyond my great-grandparents. What if I had been more attentive? What if I had been more fluent in Oriya? What if I actually cared about my past? After all, doesn't one's past shape a person's life?

I still cannot fathom why it took me so long to realize this. What I regret the most is

that I did not tell this to my great-grandmother. I would do anything to go back in time to see the smile and warmth that would have overcome her when she heard this. This is for you, Badkama – I am proud to be an Indian.

*Manisha Mishra is a 16 year old student who resides in North Carolina. Writing is one of her passions, along with photography and traveling.*

**With Love From Nani  
By Shreya Maharana**

*This is a letter I wrote to my baby brother before he was born.*

You have so much to see, so much to do, so much to experience that I can't even begin to tell you. When you come into this world, I know your eyes will be wide, so promise me that your questions you'll never hide. Trust me, you will have many. That's not to say, though, that you should never wish on a penny. It will all make sense one day, they say. Who knows, it just may. For now, though, know this: I promise it will all be okay.

When you are 1 year old, you will cry for everything. Mama and Daddy will not get an ounce of sleep, but even so, it will be the happiest time of their lives.

When you are 2 years old, the couch in the living room will be a mountain you must conquer, and you will scramble up onto it all by yourself while we take pictures for the album. When you fall off the mountain, though, there's no need to cry. You'll be up there sooner than you know it.

When you are 3 years old, Crayons will be the most fascinating things your chubby hands will ever grasp. The blue walls of your bedroom will look like the biggest piece of paper ever, and you won't hesitate to color it in. Be warned, though. You'll be in for a spanking!

When you are 4 years old, your biggest problems in life will consist of missing Teletubbies in the morning, sticky Popsicle hands in the afternoon, and wetting the bed in the evening. Be grateful that those are your only worries.

When you are 5 years old, you will refuse to take naps at the daycare. Instead of rolling out your mat along with the other children, you will hide out in the playhouse with all the plastic food and pretend to have a feast. Stay quiet, though, because the teacher has ears like a hawk.

When you are 6 years old, the alphabet will seem too complicated, and you will forget to say the letter "m". Later on, you will begin to say "el-em-en-o". Don't worry too much about it. No one ever gets it right, anyway. I know I didn't.

When you are 7 years old, you won't want to let go of Mama's hand when she drops you off for your first day of school. Mama won't want to let go, either. You may not think much of it then, but look back on it in 20 years, and you will find its importance.

When you are 8 years old, you will meet your best friend by landing on top of her as you slide off the slide, wrinkling her new dress and getting woodchips in her pigtails. Always say your apologies, but never apologize for befriendng her.

When you are 9 years old, make sure to look up at the sky on Christmas Eve because a passing plane sure looks an awful lot like Santa on his sleigh. If anyone ever tells you otherwise, then you tell them that magic is a beautiful thing.

When you are 10 years old, don't fight it when Daddy tries to put baking soda on your first bee sting.

When you are 11 years old, the awkwardly shaped clay cup you made in art class will sit proudly in Daddy's office.

When you are 12 years old, never let the 8th graders intimidate you. You may be small, but always keep your chin up.

When you are 14 years old, you will be at the top of the totem pole at school, and image will be everything. Don't let it all get to your head, though, because once you reach high school, you will start all over again at the bottom.

When you are 15 years old, have a good pair of rain-boots. You will have problems. But the rain will wash away everything if you let it. It helped me, you know.

When you are 16 years old, look back on your past without regret. Laugh a little more, and worry a little less. And always, always know that your big sister is here till the end.

The older you grow, the more you will know—about life, about love. About how the world is harsh but that when push comes to shove, you will take all the sugar you can take. Because, of course, even though it crumbles around you, it will always have a sweet taste. Remember this, and when life gives you lemons, you make lemonade, or you squirt it back at life's face. But either way, you'll learn to love this wonderfully crazy place. Just like I did.

Your big Nani.

### **Growing Up** **By Shreya Maharana**

For anyone my age, this is going to be a very important summer. This is the summer of college visits and first jobs; it's the summer of driving lessons and the birthday that will mark my last year of childhood. And it's important for others as well—incoming freshmen are getting ready for four years that will change their lives, incoming sophomores are getting ready for the *real* part of high school, and we, the incoming juniors... well, need I say more? All in all, it's a very important summer. And as time progresses, I'm beginning to feel a mounting, but ultimately helpful, sense of terror.

Growing up, I've been told, is always a scary experience. But I think it's particularly normal for us. We are a generation known for many things—open-mindedness, a short attention span, and a certain penchant for butchering the English language, to name a few—but fundamentally, we are a generation defined by fear. The 9/11 attacks happened when we were children. The economy crashed and burned just as we started becoming aware of the world. We can barely remember a time when the United States has not been at war. Gas prices skyrocket; the world population, pollution, sea levels, and competition are all rising steadily. No issue can pass through the government without angry protesters left and right. Everywhere, there is an undertone of panic.

And these are all things that happened in our childhood. Combine them with the timeless things that made previous generations scared of growing up, and it's pretty natural to be fearful. We fear failure and loss and instability. And it's perfectly normal to fall into this fear. There are a myriad of things I fear as college and adulthood become clearer on the horizon.

I'm scared that I won't make any friends. I'm scared that I won't actually know anything about life. I'm scared that I'll devote myself to something that will be forgotten. I'm scared of making a mistake that will cost me everything. I'm scared of making a mistake that will cost someone else everything. I'm scared that the world will always be a sad place. I'm scared of wasting

something precious. I'm scared that some things will change, and I'm scared that some things won't ever.

The list goes on and on. I'm sure we all have our collections of fears, whether or not they are as melodramatic and thoroughly embarrassing as mine. And growing up is about facing those fears. But growing up is even more about deciding which fears are healthy enough to keep, because no matter what, we are the generation defined by fear. There will always be something standing in the way of feeling completely, one hundred percent free from it. We'll never be fearless.

But we don't have to be.

Fear keeps us motivated, keeps us driven. It also reminds us of what we have. If you fear losing something, it means you have something valuable to lose. If you fear making a mistake, it means you're accomplished enough to be doing something important.

Maybe being defined by fear is a burden, but let's make it a strength. I'm clearly terrified of many things for myself, for our generation, and for the world. But I find that I'm hopeful as well. The more fear I have for the upcoming chapter in our lives, the more anticipation I have in turn. Fear gives us things to achieve, whether it's overcoming that fear or using it to appreciate the experiences that are waiting for us. Being scared of nothing means having seen all there is to see, having known all there is to know. But being scared of at least something means there are entirely new worlds to be discovered, magical new experiences that are yet to be had. It means being still incomplete—and isn't that what it's like to be a kid?

So I'm going to breathe and live with the fear. Let's grow up, and grow up tentative and wide-eyed and just a little bit afraid, because then, in a strange yet wonderful way, we'll always hold on to a piece of our childhoods.

### **Celebrity** **By Shreya Maharana**

Lights. Camera. Action! Oh, the life of a celebrity. It's so perfect. The glamour, the parties, the showbiz, the riches. Celebrities seem perfect beyond comparison. They have the perfect hair, the

perfect clothes, the perfect make-up, and of course, the perfect car. Their perfection makes us pity our stress-filled lives, and we continue to strive to know more about them. Celebrities are just like us, and we should give them their space.

I've noticed that there's a cycle to these tabloid stories. First, you have the article about how Celebrity A has been spotted on dates with Celebrity B. Then there's the one confirming they're an item, followed by the big, splashy cover story about their wedding. Next, you have rumors on E! that there are signs of trouble in the relationship. "Close personal friends" begin to hint at the heartache at home, followed by reports that the couple has separated. To complete the story, the tabloids run an article that details their messy divorce, with the couple's angst-ridden faces on the cover. This cycle runs from idealizing someone's life, to following doubts about its goodness and concluding with its downfall.

There are two powerful psychological forces at work here — idealization and envy. These two deadly sins always go together to aid our burning desire to gossip about celebrities. To begin with, we want to believe that some privileged people (aka the Kardashians) have perfect lives, full of excitement, and without the ordinary pain and frustration we face in our own lives. Actually, the idealization is often so strong many people would rather deal with the paparazzi than deal with bills. Having to deal with the paparazzi shows your power, or status. Or how much money you have in the bank. And sure, celebrities may occasionally suffer, but their lives are so perfect in other ways that their minute pain seems easier to bear. On one level, we take pleasure in their glamorous existence; on another, there's the secret hope that if those people manage to have a near-perfect life, it's always possible that we could eventually have one too.

As time goes on, however, we feel increasingly envious of that perfect life we don't have. I'm not talking about ordinary envy, what most people refer to as jealousy. I'm talking about a feeling which is akin to hatred, where the person feeling it wants to destroy the object of envy because he/she feels an envy that is almost unbearable or uncontrollable. Since we envy those celebrities with their perfect lives, we take great pleasure in their downfalls. When we want something that we can't have, we tend to devalue it, making it undesirable so we no longer want or envy it. "Boy, I'm sure glad I'm not Katy Perry right now, going through that hot mess with Russell Brand.

Sucks for her, dude!" And it's basic human nature. We get extremely jealous, to the hundredth degree, and we begin to bash on every little mistake they make. "Did you see Angelina Jolie's daughter's lipstick? What was Angie thinking?!!" And then, we hide in stealth, waiting for them to mess up big time. "Kobe Bryant cheated on his wife with his maid!" And then we get that bitter satisfaction: celebrities are just like us, human.

But as Rihanna's new single releases, we forget our secret jealousy towards the singer, and we again want to know everything about her. We may not have met or seen celebrities in person, but we have a great interest in their lives. We try to know everything about them, even their private lives, because we think that their lives are so much more interesting. Everything happening around us appears to not be as high-class as theirs. We don't need to know everything about them, and in fact, we don't have any right to do so. Maybe they don't want to reveal their lives to everybody, just as we wouldn't want to. I mean, we all have our share of dirty secrets. Some things are just best kept quiet.

### **Technology** **By Shreya Maharana**

I am scared. I am frightened. I am terrified. You know what, I am freaking out. I am totally having a mid-teen crisis right now. I believe it all started when I sat down to do chemistry homework (a depressing task as it is) and realized that I could not subtract without my calculator. You see, technology is running circles around society, lapping us as we struggle to keep up with the latest iPads and hold on to the newest shows. As soon as we can both afford and grasp the idea of the iPhone, a "new and improved" one is already on the market and selling out. The power of technology is huge these days. I am worried that we are falling under the spell of it and losing our human intellect in the process. With the whirlwind of Smartphones, tablets, and HDTVs, I just want to be able to keep reality in check.

I am not going to lecture you all about how computers are taking over the world. Or that the only way society will survive is if we go back to the basics: wear shaggy animal hides, grunt absurd sounds, and dwell in caves. I am not going to ban technology from my life or revolt against production, for then I would be hypocritical (I am constantly on my phone!). I am just becoming

conscious of the fact that as we give in to new technological innovations, we give up on natural human intelligence.

I'm a philanthropist. I love people. I love interacting with them and learning about them. I appreciate the individuality of people, the uniqueness of each face, and the sound each voice carries. Each time I make a new friend, he/she influences me in some way, and I long to keep in touch and to maintain connections with that person in throughout my life.

E-mail has come through incredibly, and texting is my savior, but nothing beats a hand-written sappy love letter or a conversation over boba. These days, computer keys have replaced pens, while written words have replaced faces and voices. I do not want to lose my eyesight to the strain of staring at this screen all day. I do not want to lose my intellect from letting a machine do

all the work for me. I especially do not want to lose my delight in people and what they bring to me when I am in direct contact with them. That is too dear to me, too much a part of my everyday life.

Technology is life and life is thus becoming that much more interesting. I just want to make sure that before we get caught in the chaos, we will step back and recognize what is real and what is valuable in life. Always value the potential of the human mind. Always cherish the human touch, voice and face. And never let a computer replace a friend or a lover. You see, someday, technology will destroy us all.

I'm kidding. Maybe...

*Shreya is a 16 year old sophomore. She likes to dance, read, and play with little kids. She teaches little kids at a daycare and hopes to become a pediatrician one day.*

### **Creating My Own Future By Vanani Vasundhara**

I lived in two worlds growing up. One consisted of dozens of mirrors reflecting my repetitive routine, a bouncy floor that was my arena, air that suffocated me with bits of chalk floating around, and a big pit of yellow cubes that caught me when I failed. There, I would live a gymnast's life, hanging on the uneven bars or tumbling down the trampoline. In my alternate world, however, I stomped my foot on the hardwood floor, feeling the sound waves bounce from my feet to the corners of the room. I shifted my body weight in alliance with the beat, flowing from one movement to another as if I was liquid. I placed my hands into precise gestures, telling a story to the audience like a game of charades. I was a dancer, free to move in any way I desired. Though I loved both worlds, after a stressful gymnastics competition at States, I realized that I no longer wanted to perform someone else's routine; I wanted to create my own story.

Slowly, I began to immerse myself into dance; it became my only world. I realized this when I was invited to perform in India for the annual Odissi dance festival. That being my first solo performance in thirteen years of dancing, I was intimidated by the thought of being on stage alone in front of an audience of judges and experienced dancers, so I started to rehearse wholeheartedly.

On the day of the performance, other than the blazing heat and the million butterflies in my stomach, I was looking forward to being on stage. The announcer called my name as I gulped down a cup of water. The music started, and I put on a nervous smile while entering the stage. As I stamped, moved with the beat, and told a story through my hands, I felt my adrenaline go up. My energy rose, and my smile was no longer forced. Along with my emotions, the variations of dance movements emerged naturally to me.

Every element of my performance began to reflect something greater in life. The shining light gave me rays of hope to face the uncertainties of life. The music gave me beats to keep going and strive for my goals. The stage itself reminded me to stay grounded and not take anything for granted. The stage was my world.

Dance had transformed from a place to goof around with friends to my escape from reality. The music stopped, and I heard the applause as I breathlessly walked off stage. Along with my family and friends, unfamiliar faces appeared to congratulate me for winning 'Odissi Shree', awarded to the upcoming dancers of the year. At that moment, I realized that if I tried my best, I could reach my utmost potential and achieve anything.

*Vanani Vasundhara is 17 years old and lives in Newark, California.*

**MORE LOST MEMORIES****By Rani Mohanty**

I am from the era of Pokemon, only 151 and nothing more  
From trading card tournaments and sudden death  
From the Atari and Genesis  
From the days that are now long gone  
I am from an immaculate room with velvet carpet  
From sleek satin sheets and fluffed pillows  
From the fresh aroma of lilac and roses  
From a wall that was once lavender and now is an assortment  
Of checkers  
I am from homemade potato salad and savory hot wings  
From taco salad and festive Fridays  
From Japanese curry and Takoyaki  
From a fight to the death for the last chocolate chip cookie  
I am from “your brother’s a hellion” and “he’ll never learn”  
From “you’re full of it” to “you must be tripping”(on some idea)  
From “I should ground you for excess use of the laptop”  
From “You should listen because I gave birth to you”  
I am from a time when Band-Aids were once a fix for everything  
From the good life in the nineties  
From broken promises and shattered dreams  
From a plethora of lost memories lying on a mantel above  
Waiting to be resurrected

**COMET****By Rani Mohanty**

I remember that exhilarating summer night  
Sitting near the fervent glow of a warm fire  
Under the canopy of a sky lined with indigo  
Dotted with the luminous shine of more than a thousand stars  
Along with the traces of midnight  
And the remnants of a faded cerulean sky  
Lined with clouds of pink and turmeric glow  
  
Yet, I know that this instant would not last  
For the refreshing scent of smoke would eventually perish  
Leaving me disconnected and lost in thought

Except for the taste of salvation found between two graham  
Crackers

And the delicacy of chocolate and marshmallows

As the night dragged on  
I began to reminisce  
Hearing your voice again, however faint and distant  
Wishing you were here  
Until I saw a lustrous streak  
A comet had ripped through the heavens

And illuminated the sky on Earth  
Just like that momentary beam of light  
I wanted to light up your past  
And guide you through the present

If my thoughts could travel more than a thousand miles  
Surely this would reach you  
And maybe I wouldn't feel so alone

**A NEVERENDING SUMMER**  
**By Rani Mohanty**

Under the sheer cerulean sky  
Daylight never fades  
Yet the glossy sheets of ice  
Remain so far and thin  
The sharp taste of bitter Arctic air  
Is anything but a mystery  
Refreshing to the core  
While lethal to the soul  
One is left to wonder why the heavens never sleep  
The moon forbidden and the stars forgotten  
While dusk is turned away  
Releasing the shadows and letting them out to play  
Under a canopy of frost-white and ochre-colored  
Clouds that exhale "smoke" of their own  
Home in the Arctic, the terrain never ends  
One who tries to find the horizon  
Will only be greeted by pungent air from a sea of cobalt  
And the resonance of a thousand waves  
Anyone who dares to traverse in Hell's icy domain  
Run while you can  
Or prepare yourself for eternal insomnia and a sun that never sets  
In this neverending summer

## AUSTRALIA

By Rani Mohanty

What do you think of when you hear the words "Down Under?"  
 Is it dark and murky and full of sharks and crocodiles?  
 Is it oceans of tranquility and color?  
 Is it poisonous snakes and bright orange sand?  
 Is it mint green water and turquoise too?  
 Is it full of life of many cultures?  
 Many people walking together and speaking many tongues  
 Flickering flames of environmental consciousness  
 Robots replacing humans before its time  
 The tone of didgeridoos keeping the people together for a few minutes  
 Rhythm of music and culture keeping its beat steady  
 Hustle and bustle of the street trams and the traffic, too.  
 Yes, the "Land down under" is all of these things-  
 And , the leisurely stroll on a hot afternoon-  
 Hearing the words, "Hey, mate," behind you  
 Really makes you wonder why you didn't stay.

*Rani Mohanty is 17 years old and enjoys writing poetry. She has had several works included in magazines and national poetry contests.*

## Flash Fiction Anthology By Shweta Sahu

### Live Wire

The midsummer's morning sun shines down brightly and bathes the little old wheat field in a golden, sun-roasted wonder. Overhead, the birds chirp and flit from tree to tree, unaware of the predator below. The man lying on his stomach is covered head to toe in military camo and holds a powerful sniper rifle in his hands. The rifle is living steel in his hands, an old friend waiting to unleash a bullet to brand someone to the icy clutch of death; his body tuned and strung like live wire under the remote mask of outward calm. Unmoving and unseen, the man melts into his surroundings as if he is part of the picture. The naked eye would never see the man doing as he has trained countless years to do; patience and discretion becoming not second, but first nature to him. A solitary man, a lone wolf- but those around him know the solitude runs deeper. This character alone made him the most in-demand of the CIA assets. But this character combined with the man of other lethal talent, skill, training, and natural stealth, makes him a priceless predator.

A slight rustling to his left registers with his senses, though he does not twitch with anxiety, does not turn a hair at danger. His battle field senses alert, he turns his head ever so slowly, ready to apprehend an assault at a moment's notice. Turning his head by degrees, he spots a shy doe from the corners of his eyes. Unconcerned, he returns to his previous position and waits for the two Serbian demolitions experts he has been sent to terminate. Not letting his mind stray from the current task, he settles down for a long wait, heedless of the dust and insects crawling

underneath him. Every job has a price to pay, and he is a man willing to pay it.

Hours later, in the midday heat, a tractor rumbles to a stop on the rutted road and a forty-year-old Serbian male clad in a chambray work shirt and cutoffs slithers down and begins pacing nervously, pausing every once in a while to run his hands agitatedly through his severe, military cropped hair. Soon, two men on Harleys come thundering down the same path. One apparently the bomb-man, while the other obviously hired muscle.

"Three men, total" the assassin thinks. In his experience, the unexpected is always dangerous; the unaccounted for extra man poses a problem, namely of reducing the assassin's chances of escaping unscathed and undetected; however miniscule that possibility is, it is not to be discounted. Once he shoots one bullet, more will likely come hailing in his general direction, and, if they get lucky, will nick him and hamper him severely, if not outright kill him. Quietly, the men exchange a worn duffel for an old, dusty pair of men's work boots.

Making his decision, the sniper slowly eases his finger on the trigger; the muzzle of the rifle points at the leader of the pair of late men. Once he takes him down, he figures another two seconds to take care of his partner, and another four for the last one, and goes to suit words to action. Each would receive a quick kill shot and an insurance tap to the head. Taking down the first man last is his best bet since he seems fidgety and the most likely to miss what he aimed for... The hired muscle reveals a quick flash of the butt of a Beretta and immediately following, a small cough indicates that the pair of men has double crossed the other man. "Well, makes his job easier," the assassin thinks fifty yards away from the ordeal. Silently, he fires with four successive twitches of his

index finger, completing the job he does best. He pulls out a secure cell phone and murmurs, "Targets terminated," before hanging up and clearing off the scene.

Days later, newspapers across America come out with the latest issues of the current hot-button topic. "Two unidentified Serbian terrorist members,' newspapers claim, 'were found dead in a cornfield outside the Kansas State border, along with another man of unknown origins. The Central Intelligence Agency has implied that it cannot yet confirm anything, but they do, however, believe that the Serbians were interested in a new microchip that would have had devastating effects if released. They had been willing to make an exchange of multiple new detonators for this microchip. Director of Operations of the CIA currently refuses to acknowledge which articles were used to instrument this exchange."

### Six Years

"6 years," she thought. Six years since she had stood in this spot and last seen her daughter. She didn't know what had happened to her, no one did. Every day, her soul longed, her heart ached with pain so acute it bordered on intolerable. But she endured. A fresh sheen of tears glistened in depthless, chocolate brown eyes that, for six interminable years, teemed with despair and grief. She had stood in this same spot and watched her baby girl crawl and tumble across the floor. She had seen her child try to walk, only to pitch forward laughing. Oh, the laughter, the giggles, the shrieks. How she yearned to hear her daughter again. Here she had seen her daughter sprint home from her first day of kindergarten, babbling excitedly. She had seen her daughter arrive from her first day of middle school, then high school- chin jutting up, shoulders set back in the air of light domination teenagers have. In this very spot, she had seen her daughter get behind the wheels of her new car for the first time. So many memories, not enough time to make them. She watched as the last rays of light winked out from behind the trees, in its wake leaving only a desolate emptiness, barren and cold. In her mind's eye, she envisioned a fire, its embers dying slowly, whatever sustenance it had slowly being taken and obliterated. Bitterly, she collapsed into a sobbing heap.

### The Great Flood

The water level was steadily rising in the car. I glanced down and saw it was already rising up towards the seats, a few more seconds and it would completely submerge the seat that was now bearing my weight. "Help!" My fists were battered and bruised and already turning a purplish hue, my voice already scratchy as if I had been yelling for days. "No!" the word escaped on an unwilling sob. "I'm not gonna' drown." I squared my shoulders and gathered my wits about me, determined to survive this catastrophe. "I will save as many people as I can, and I'm not going to think negative thoughts," I chanted the words to myself like they were mantras

that could get me out of this mess. I looked out of the window again, and the resurgence of will power I had just summoned earlier diminished as quickly and surely as it had come. I was in a long line of abandoned cars blocking the streets and adding to the confusion. Doors were closed, shops barely prepared for the sudden flash flood seizing the streets of Mumbai, India in its stronghold grip. Mothers frantically searched for their children, husbands scrambling around to find their beloved wives or relatives. Uniformed men and volunteers instructed people to hold onto the thick, heavy rope that seemed to stretch on for miles beyond what the eye could see. There were few places the flood water hadn't already touched, but surely would, in the horrendous night yet to follow. Suddenly, my vision was obstructed by a face in the window. Startled, I jerked back and sloshed through the water, and for a moment, ice cold terror shredded at my insides until a feeling of easy, calm, light-heartedness swept through me. The man had the most kind and serene face I had ever seen, a reassuring smile, and eyes a startling rich, hazel brown. I gazed into his eyes and a sense of calm swept through my veins, and a rejuvenating zest made me feel as if he knew me better than I knew myself. He motioned for me to duck, and seconds later, a shower of piercing glass shards appeared on the water. Gratefully, I swam out the broken window and turned to thank my savior, only to find him nowhere in sight. I scanned the hundreds of terrified faces but still didn't see him. I knew a curious sense of loss, one that I had never experienced before, nor deemed possible. It was as if I had just found something to cherish and revere, and in the next moment, it was being seized out of my grasp. For those few priceless seconds, I had felt loved liked I had never been loved before, idolized, and doted upon all at once. A celestial bliss had overcome me, and for those brief seconds, I had yielded to it. But now it was gone. At that moment any and all doubts of a supreme god vanished, replacing my dread and uncertainty with a newfound determination and belief. A sharp crack nearby brought me out of my reverie and back into reality. I looked up in time to see lightning strike a large tree, which groaned and tore free of the earth, only to come crashing down on a large bus filled with kids. Quickly, taking stock of the damage done, I swam over to the bus and started helping frightened children out to the relative safety of their parents' care. Halfway through extricating the children from the seats of the crushed bus, without any tell-tale signs or any previous warnings, the power went out and hurled the city into a pitch black pothole. An already horrendous night had just hit rock bottom. Now the somewhat calm, yet partially frantic, mothers had descended into their hysterics again and children went into fits of acute discomfort. Several lamps and makeshift lanterns gave off some glow of illumination and enabled people to get a sense of space. Working together relentlessly through the night, we managed to eliminate any potential dangers before they could arise and kept hundreds out of



harm's way. By dawn, dozens of rescue helicopters circled overhead, lifting groups into the cabin then flying them to safety. When dusk finally rolled around, every rescue worker, official and volunteer was drop dead exhausted. Debilitated and spent, I collapsed on the last rescue helicopter's seat and reflected back on the past 40 hours. So much hurt, so much pain. Such dire situations had made me realize the positive aspect of human nature. It seemed as if timeless

agony and gruesome moments had brought out the best in most. Through the entire ordeal, I gained an insurmountable belief in god and faith. Far from walking away unscathed, I would always bear a burden common to only those of other flash flood victims. While my experiences may vary differentially from others, I would always remember my cathartic adventure and the moment of heavenly encounter.

## POETRY COMPILATION

By Shweta Sahu

### In Hiding

I hide from you  
When you try to hide from me.  
But when we are both in hiding,  
There is no one to hide from  
But ourselves.

When we try to show our selves,  
We don't know which façade to show,  
Because we are afraid of being ourselves,  
And for it, being  
R-e-j-e-c-t-e-d.

So we hide ourselves,  
Keeping our minds locked away  
From our person- just to be safe.  
But are we safe if we are afraid  
To be who we really are?

### Graveyard

A harsh wind blows,  
Whistling through the trees,  
Sidling and sliding like silken strands  
'Round the tombstones.  
Its silken strands embrace the tombstones,  
Like a hug, a promise, a kiss of ice;

Or maybe like a vise, choking and strangling.  
A mother and father,  
Along with their chubby little boy,  
Huddle together, at the head of the grave  
Of a three year-old girl.

A single, small, silvery tear streaks down  
The woman's haggard face,  
Slips off her chin,  
And falls with a sodden plop  
Onto her daughter's grave.

She gathers her son and snuggles closer  
To the warmth of her husband.  
Around them, the bells of the wreaths  
On the tombstones faintly tinkle a sad,  
melodious humdrum,  
Of the circle of the continuation of life and death-  
And the thrilling of the whistling wind continues.

### deHYDRation

The gentle pitter-patter of the rain  
Is sharp relief for the scorched, parched land.

The land soaks in the much needed rain,  
Like a thirsty sponge, eagerly absorbing water through its pores.

The desiccated roots retain this sweet ambrosia  
As a child savors his first lollipop.

The water stains the dying bark, and the formerly wheat colored wood  
Is transformed into a crayon brown hued relief, tinged with the faint beginning of moss.

The droplets dot the shriveled rose petals,  
And they are renewed; opening like lips to a lover's kiss.

The rain overwhelms a tarnished, dusty heap of mangled metal  
And reveals the tangible form of a rusted car's remains.

### **Funeral I**

They line up; all of them do  
In their completely black suits and dresses,  
Ties and heels.

Their faces slightly shrunken,  
As if they've been crying their body mass in  
tears,  
And shoulders and spine are hunched over,  
From the interminable grief of this loss.

They're all fighting some unseen demon,  
Struggling to suppress the agony, anguish, and  
tears.  
But it's the injustice of it all that gets them the  
most.

They grab their remaining loved ones,  
As if to protect them from the robber of life.  
They hold them in a vise like, unbreakable  
grasp.

Their despair and sorrow is so great,  
They burst out in groans and then moans,  
And wails of torment  
And cry until they can cry no more.

### **Funeral II**

They're sitting in pews,  
All of them in their black dresses and suits,  
With their funeral makeup and tissues,  
Best watches and loafers.

They look up at the stained glass windows,  
Shattering the bright white light that enters,  
And showering it upon the cold barren floors.  
Their wandering eyes finally rest upon a replica  
of Him.

They gaze at him as they have a million times  
before,  
But this time is different.

At first they are merely questioning,  
Their brows puckering in consternation,  
Then the depth of their loss reverberates  
through them,  
And their stares turn bitter and blank.

They look at him, marginally resentful and ask,  
Why? How?  
And a dozen other strained questions.

Finally, they avert their eyes,  
As if they are now ashamed and sorry  
To have asked Him such questions.  
But again, they feel the familiar despair building  
up.  
How long, they wonder, will this turbulent  
suffering last?



**This collection was second runner-up for the Meghna Memorial Award, Senior category.**

*Shweta Sahu is 17 years old.*

**My Work with the Theosophical Order of Service.  
Infant Mortality Awareness and Prevention  
Campaign in Orissa  
By Shivani Misra**



Hello, my name is Shivani Misra and I love babies. I am currently a senior at North Canyon High School (Phoenix, Arizona), and I have been an avid member of the March of Dimes since my freshmen year. In fact, this year, I became president of the youth council for the state! Due to that position, I am well informed about the different projects that the March of Dimes is undertaking. Right before the summer of 2011, the March of Dimes had a focus of educating women on the importance of incorporating Folic Acid into their diets. Only 30 to 40 percent of American women know about the benefits of Folic Acid (some include: reducing the chance of having a premature baby by 70 percent, preventing birth defects, and many others). America is an extremely privileged country, with information available to almost anyone with an interest to learn. That's not true in most other countries, however.

This past summer, I decided to take this Folic Acid Educational Campaign with me to India—more specifically, to Orissa, which is the state with the highest number of infant mortalities. I was at a loss of how to do this, however, so I turned to my family for help. My aunt stepped forward with

some good news. She said that her aunt is secretary of a wonderful NGO named Theosophical Order of Service (TOS), and if anyone could help me figure out how to go about doing this, she and her organization could! The moment I got in contact with Deepa Padhi, everything just fell into place. She told me that their TOS was actually very interested in doing an Infant Mortality Awareness and Prevention Campaign, and my ideas coincided with their mission perfectly.



So with that bit of encouragement, I started asking for donations here for Folic Acid supplements. I also created a pamphlet, which we then translated into Oriya (the language spoken in Orissa), and I finalized my speech (which was also presented in Oriya). My goal was to inform the women that Folic Acid can be found in supplemental tablets, but that doesn't have to be the only intake method; Folic Acid is extremely easy to incorporate in your diet as well. It's highly present in foods such as spinach, mushrooms, etc.

Well, we visited six different slums in the span of two weeks, and it was incredible. We set up contacts for the women with gynecologists and hospitals in general so they could be better taken care of—but the response from this whole event was just unbelievable! In one of the slums, the women told me that they couldn't eat spinach while they were pregnant because it is dark in color, and thus a

bad omen for pregnant and nursing women. I was in shock! We live in the 21st century, and yet there are still ideologies and superstitions that restrict women from leading healthy lives! It doesn't seem fair!



And on the note of unfairness, the Theosophical Order of Service and I realized the extent of the destitution of these women. These women know that it is extremely healthy and important to give birth in a hospital, thus they try to go in by any means possible—usually, the most accessible to them is walking. These women are already of a lower class, and thus they don't receive priority during emergencies. Well, what ends up happening next is absolutely atrocious. A vast majority of the women start for the hospital too late and don't reach it in time, thus having to give birth on the sides of the roads. More often than not, neither the baby nor the mother survives. TOS and I decided that this needed to be stopped. We said that we would raise money for a matador ambulance reserved specifically for these slums so that all of their inhabitants can have access to hospitals. I pledged to raise \$1000 of the \$4000 needed, and with that, I came back to America.

One thousand dollars is no small amount of money, so I tried to think of creative ways to accomplish my goal, and a fantastic idea struck me. A very important passion of mine is dance—I

absolutely love dancing. So I figured a really efficient and fun way to collect money would be by holding a dance performance! Thus, Beats for Life was formed. This show took place on November 5, 2011, and I had called various companies from all around Arizona to showcase their talents. I tried to have extremely diverse acts, so we had Indian Classical Dance (which I performed), ballet, hip-hop, belly dancing, Irish step-dancing, lyrical, contemporary, tap, and a few other dance forms represented. The main theme of the program was "Dances from all around the world are coming together to support a single cause." Tickets were \$10 for adults and \$5 for students, and donations were accepted and extremely revered. At the end of this whole journey, I found my total actually almost doubled my goal—I had raised \$2331.00! Now, with the help of the TOS in America, we're finally getting the money sent where it needs to be, and we are one step closer to getting that ambulance!

Overall, it was an experience that I am not soon going to forget, and I hope to visit Orissa again this summer to see if we can extend the word. Because in reality, education is one of the most fundamental ways we can find solutions. My hope is that one day, all babies in this world will be born healthily. And I am never going to stop trying to accomplish that goal, in whatever way that I can—taking it one baby step at a time!



**This article was first runner-up for the Meghna Memorial Award, Senior category.**

*During her work with the TOS last summer, Shivani visited and worked in 6 different slums in Orissa. Included are photographs from 3 of those slums. A senior in high school, Shivani is the daughter of life members Simant and Chandana Misra.*

## **Youth Articles (Junior)**

### **A Letter to Aju – From Ami**

**By Amrita Sahu**

Dear Aju,

I love you from the bottom of my heart. You live on and on and on. I think that going to India last year was the best choice since I could spend time with you. Little did I know that I would never see you again. Aju, you were, and still are, the best friend anyone could ever have.

I remember all the happy times we had together. I loved the time you put me on your lap and gave me a hug, the time you came to receive me and Mama at the airport and the time I took your hand in mine and gave you a hug and a kiss. I remember the warmth and love you showed when you held my hand in the hospital, and tears rolled down your eyes and mine.

You were a great politician and helped the society. You always stood for the rights of the poor people. Anyone would think you are an ordinary man, but only a few can really look into your heart and tell that you really are a GREAT man. I think that I am a very lucky child as a granddaughter of such a great Aju. I fondly cherish the memories of you and me every night when I held your dhoti.

The Cycle of Pain, Love, and Happiness.

You, me, mama, baba, bhai, and everyone will experience the cycle of pain, love and happiness. Almost everybody goes through this cycle.

PAIN: Pain is something that not only hurts but can also sometimes help you. When you get hurt, you feel the pain. If you think about it, pain is a feeling. Some people feel it and some do not. If you think about pain as something that hurts, you feel the pain. If you think of it as something that will help, the pain is less.

LOVE: Love is another type of feeling. But it is VERY different. When somebody comes to comfort you or somebody sends a letter or a card,

you feel good. It shows their love for you, and you love them too. You know that you are loved by many.

HAPPINESS: People you love will make you feel happy, or in other words, that is happiness. Happiness is a beautiful feeling. When I go to you I feel happy!

*I love my Aju like as if he were gold  
And in our heart our love would never fold  
And for the first time that I heard his name  
Throughout my heart he spread with fame*  
Yours lovingly,

Ami

*Seven year old Amrita wrote this in  
memory of her grandfather (Aju – Sri Ghanashyam  
Sahu) who passed away on March 27th, 2011 at  
Bhubaneswar. She spent the last month and a half  
with him and fondly remembers him. She goes to  
second grade and had written about the cycle of  
pain, love and happiness when she was in first grade  
in her attempt to provide some comfort to her Aju.  
Amrita lives in Virginia with her parents Prakash  
and Manaswini Sahu and older brother Sarthak.*



### **Shiva and Shivani's wish**

**By Nandika Mishra**

Once there was a family of four who were very poor and lived in a barn. Their barn had few cows and goats. Ma, the mother, weaved and sold blankets and Pa, the father, sold wood and milk. Together, they made a small profit to buy food. One day, Ma overheard her children, Shiva and Shivani, talking about dinner.

Shiva said, "Wouldn't it be nice to have mashed potatoes with rice instead of the usual milk and rice?" Ma wanted to fulfill their wish, so she called Pa and told him to get some rice grains and potatoes. When he came back, Ma asked, "Did you get everything?" and Pa said, "All I could get was some rice grains." Ma was very unhappy, as she thought she would not be able to fulfill her children's wish. As evening arrived, Ma sent the

children to get some banana leaves from the forest for their dinner. On their way home, the children spotted a sack. They looked inside to see what was in it. They found it full of potatoes.

When they started taking the potatoes, they suddenly remembered their mother's words, "Never take anything that does not belong to us." So they sadly put the potatoes back and walked back home. They told everything to Ma and asked if they could get some few potatoes. Ma asked if it belonged to anyone. They said they did not see anyone there.



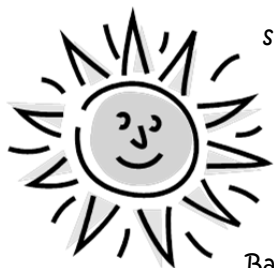
Ma thought about this and said that they could go get it. They joyfully ran back to get it. Ma cooked delicious mashed potatoes and rice. They had a wonderful dinner.

Finally, Shiva and Shivani got their wish.

*My name is Nandika Mishra. I am 8 years old and I live in Union City, CA with my parents and younger brother. I go to Montessori school of Fremont. Besides playing the piano, writing stories is one of my other hobbies.*

### My Grandma's Visit

By Rishi Mishra



My grandma lives in India. I call her Jiji. She is the most loving person I know. Last summer she came to stay with us, and you cannot imagine how much we loved each other's company. I can say she became my best friend.

We played games together, shared stories, and I especially liked listening to her songs. I even memorized a few of them. She told me stories at night. One night she told me a funny story about a king. We laughed all night and we didn't sleep! But my dad caught us laughing and told us to sleep as it was getting late at night. But we managed to trick him. I also told her the story of the "Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf." She liked it and also felt proud because I told the whole story in Odiya.

During the evenings we used to go to the park and have fun. I even taught her how to ride my scooter. I bet she is a pro on it. At home she used to tell me the childhood stories of my dad and my three uncles that I loved to listen to. She also helped me make things out of Lego blocks. I taught her how to play PlayStation 3. We played table tennis on it. Jiji brought a board game named Ludo for me. She taught me how to play the game and the winning strategies too. I was new to the game, but I don't know how I always won. I guess she did something on purpose so that I could win all the time. I had never seen an opponent doing this till now. I was even more surprised to see her happy after losing each game. Well, I never felt happy when I lost. It was so confusing. I guess only Jijis can do that. At the end of the day, I asked her how she could feel happy when she had lost. With a wonderful smile, she answered that her happiness was in my winning. She was happy because I was happy. She also told me that we should enjoy and have fun in whatever we do, no matter if we win or lose at the end.

Then one day, it was time for Jiji to fly to Seattle, where my uncle lives, and then back to India. She left but I could notice her silent tears. I wished I could hold her back. I gave her a tight hug and bid her goodbye with a promise to meet her soon. I bet that was my best summer vacation, and I wish it comes back again and again. My Jiji is the best, and I love her very much.

*Rishi Mishra is 8 years old and attends second grade at Freeman Elementary. Rishi lives in Dallas, Texas with parents Sandipan Mishra and Asha Mishra.*

### A Visit To Dadaji's House

By Shreeya Kar

There was a little girl named Ankita who lived in a city called Sunnyvale, in USA, with her parents and her little brother, Aryan. She was in

second grade. She loved going on trips. This year was very special as they were going to her grandparents' house in Orissa in India for summer vacation. Ankita was excited and already planning what she would do when she got there. Although

she had gone to her grandparents' house before, she didn't remember much. She was just four years old when they last visited India.

A few days later, it was vacation time. They all packed their clothes and the gifts for their family. Ankita felt curious when she got on the plane with her parents. She couldn't wait to see her grandparents. When the plane landed, Ankita was happy to see her grandfather (Dadaji) at the airport. Dadaji was happy to see Ankita and Aryan. They touched Dadaji's feet as a mark of respect. Even their parents touched Dadaji's feet. Dadaji was very happy and impressed that Ankita and Aryan still remembered their culture even after staying in USA for so long. Then they all took a train to Dadaji's village. It was night when they reached home. Ankita was surprised to see that her whole family was there to greet them. There were uncles, aunts, her cousins, and especially her grandmother. There were even a few villagers. It was as if the whole village was happy to see them. They all ate dinner together. It was like a huge feast. Ankita was very tired by now, so she and her brother went to bed.

The next day, when Ankita woke up, all her cousins were there to play with her. They went outside to play in the backyard garden. The garden had all kinds of vegetable plants. She picked a few for her grandmother to cook. There were also mango trees, banana trees and a lot of coconut trees. There was even a small pond with lots of fish. There were ducks in the pond too. Suddenly, Ankita heard a soft, chirping sound. She looked up at the mango tree. There was a nest on the branch. Inside the nest, there was a mommy bird and two baby birds. The mommy bird was feeding the babies. It reminded Ankita of her mommy taking care of her. Ankita loved being in her grandparents' house.

One day, her father said, "Ankita, come with me. I have to show you something." Outside, Ankita

was surprised to see a herd of cows going somewhere. Behind them was a person holding a long stick. Her father said, "This is the person who takes the cows to the nearby fields to graze. Everybody in the village sent their cows with him." Every day, the same thing happened. In the morning the cows would go, and they would return in the evening. One day, out of curiosity, Ankita asked her cousin to go with her to follow the cows. They saw the cows were all eating grass in the field while the person with the stick was sitting under a big tree. Ankita never saw something like this back in USA.

She loved being in her grandfather's village. It was very different than the cities in USA. The days were filled with fun and excitement. In the evening, her grandmother would light a diya in front of the gods in the small puja room in their house. She would always let Ankita sing the prayers. Grandmother was very impressed with Ankita's singing.

When her vacation was over, it was time for Ankita to go back to USA. Everybody wanted them to stay back. The grandparents were very sad. But she promised to return soon. Dadaji came all the way to the airport with them.

Ankita was happy to be back with her friends here in USA, but she always remembered her big family in Orissa. Nowadays, Ankita likes going to the temple with her parents, and whenever she gets a chance, she sings bhajans in the temple. It reminds her of her grandmother. She always has sweet memories of her big family. Now she is looking forward to visiting Orissa again.

*My name is Shreeya Kar. I am 8 years old and I am in second grade. We live in Sunnyvale, CA. I love singing, dancing (Odissi and Bollywood) and reading. I wrote this story from my experience when I visited my grandparents in Orissa. They live in a village called Padhuan, near Balasore. I love going there.*



## The Beach

### By Anika Satapathy

Sun shining in my eye,  
Big clouds in the sky.

Bells of ships ring,  
The seagulls sing.

The crabs seem to talk,  
There is a hawk.

Fish flapping in the wind,  
Ducks' toes are finned.

Soft sand between my toes,  
Ship posts are in rows.

Water is all around,  
Only sand's on the ground.

Sharks wander in the sea,  
People let them be.

Coconuts falling from Palm tree,  
People take them for free.

Kids collect shells,  
While carrying a pail.

Some plants grow there,  
Some fish are rare.

The beach is a paradise,  
Where you always find a surprise.

Anika Satapathy is a third grader in Homestead/ Wakefield Elementary School. She lives in Bel Air, MD with her sister, Neha, and parents, Tina and Sikhanda Satapathy. She loves to dance, sing, draw, play piano, and wants to play soccer and baseball.

## On The Way

### By Manaswee Mishra

Why are you hiking?  
Why not jogging, without stopping on the way?  
I was reading as I was pushing the leaves out of my way  
I stopped to talk to my friend, who was hiking on the other end  
Suddenly! It started snowing  
We stopped talking and started grinning,  
Looking at the beautiful sky

The snow was floating and we came back humming  
Jingle bells all the way

## The Night was Freezing

### By Manaswee Mishra

The night was freezing, I went to bed.  
Quietly I slept until the daybreak.  
A pleasant sun shone on me,  
And I woke up with a smile.  
Let me say what I saw.....  
A blanket of snow, all over  
I couldn't keep myself in.  
I jumped out and played for a while.  
A snow angel, I wanted to make,  
I ran and slid while doing that.  
I know I have to go now,  
I wish I could draw a few more.

Manaswee Mishra is eight years old. She is in the third grade.





### The Girl Who Became the Queen By Debanshi Nikita Chowdhury

Long ago there lived a poor girl named Meera. Meera was a beloved devotee of Lord Jagannath. One day, Meera was bored in her hut so she prayed to Lord Jagannath and said, "I no longer want to live in this hut!" Since Meera was a devotee of Lord Jagannath, Lord Jagannath listened to her prayers and said, "Meera go to my temple." Meera did as she was told.

On the other side of the kingdom, there lived a prince named Raj. Raj was a devotee of Lord Jagannath too. His parents were sad, as they could not find a suitable bride for him. Raj prayed to Lord Jagannath for a suitable bride. So, Lord Jagannath instructed him to go to his temple. Raj did as he was told.

At the temple, Raj met Meera. They fell in love at the first sight. Raj asked his father if he could get married to Meera. Raj's father said, "Yes my son!" Raj got excited and told Meera, "We are getting married tomorrow!" Meera got excited too and said to herself, "Only one more day in this hut." When it was the day for the marriage, Meera woke up early in the morning and called Raj. Raj picked up the phone and said, "Meera come to my house and our servants will dress you up." Meera agreed to the plan and went to the palace. She was surprised to see the gigantic

palace. It was out of her imagination. Meera got dressed there and they were finally married.

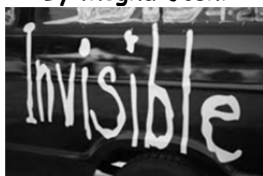
After several years, a bad moment came in their life. An evil servant, Rebati, tried to persuade Meera to steal the jewelry from Raj's mom, the Queen. When Rebati could not convince Meera, she sent some bad spirits into Meera's body and instructed her to get the Queen's jewelry. Meera, being possessed, stole the jewelry and handed them over to Rebati. When Raj's family came to know the fact that Meera stole the jewelry, they put her in jail.

Life continued as usual. Rebati pretended to work hard in the palace so that she could get a day off and get herself dressed with jewelry. Finally, she got the day off and enjoyed that day with all the jewelry. It was a pleasant experience for her. She wanted to do it again and again. Hence, she asked for more leave.

After several times, Raj had his doubts. He thought there was something fishy and asked his spy to follow Rebati. The spy found out all the facts and told Raj about the jewelry. Raj felt bad about Meera and put Rebati in prison. Meera was released from the prison and the King also realized his mistakes. He and the queen declared Raj and Meera as the King and Queen of the kingdom. They lived happily ever after, because of the blessings of Lord Jagannath.

*Debanshi Nikita Chowdhury is the daughter of Anjana and Debaki Nandan Chowdhury. She is 9 years old and attends the 3rd grade in Germantown, Maryland.*

### Invisible By Megha Joshi



Hi, my name is Alyssa, and my brother's name is Patrick. We never got along because he was always playing pranks on me. I thought I could never get my revenge, but I was wrong.

One Friday evening, a brilliant idea came to me, I could be invisible! But how? I thought. "Of course! I could make a magic potion!" I whispered to myself.

Without wasting any time, I quickly got into action. For the potion container, I took a small, clear glass bottle with some mysterious liquid. My potion ingredients were blueberries, a plastic spoon which I melted, glitter, and an apple core which smelled like rotten fish. Then, with all my ingredients, I tiptoed downstairs and into the kitchen.

In the kitchen, I laid out all the ingredients on the granite table and took the blender from one of the low cabinets. I put all the ingredients in the blender and turned it on. BUZZZZ! BUZZZZ! It sounded like angry bees swarming all over the place. When I thought the potion was ready, I turned the blender off. Next, I carefully poured the potion into the clear and small glass bottle. The potion was as blue as the ocean, and it had pearly white bubbles fizzing on the top.

Suddenly, I heard footsteps coming. I quickly put the blender back in its place and hid the potion in my pocket. The footsteps I heard were my mom's. She was wearing ocean blue jeans and a red and white striped shirt.

"Alyssa," she began with her pleasant voice, "can you tell me where all those buzzing noises were coming from?"

"Well I-I was pretending to be a girl, an-and the girl was t-t-trying to catch bees, and since th-th-there was no one to pretend t-to be

the bees, I decided to be the bees too," I stammered. My mom smiled, "Well, okay, but next time be quieter." When she was gone I sighed, "Whew, that was close."

That night, after dinner, I headed upstairs to my untidy but cozy bedroom and fell fast asleep.

The next day, I woke up at exactly 8:30 in the morning. After I brushed and got dressed, I hurried downstairs. When I looked in the kitchen, my mom was cooking pancakes, my favorite breakfast. She was wearing a sky blue fuzzy night robe and a sleepy look on her face. My brother, who was sitting on our soft, snow-white sofa, was watching those silly cartoons on TV. When my mom looked at me she exclaimed, "Your breakfast is waiting!" I looked at the pancakes and licked my lips. In a few minutes I gobbled up all the pancakes on plate.

"Mom?" my brother suddenly asked. "Can I go to Jimmy's house? We've got a project to finish."

"Sure," replied my mother.

"Oh, and I'll be back for dinner!" Patrick called, who was now opening the door.

"Wait-" but before my mom could finish her sentence, Patrick left and slammed the door shut like a gust of wind. "Oh, forget it," she muttered.

Just then, an idea struck me. "Mom, can I go to Lizzie's house? I'll be back for dinner," I said waiting for an answer.

"Of course, you can," replied my mom.

"Yes!" I whispered and ran out of the door.

It was a beautiful day. The glorious sunlight fell on my face. The cherry blossoms bloomed all over the places on the trees. The sky was clear, and the birds were chirping sweetly. Within a few minutes, I reached Lizzie's house. When I knocked on her door, I could hear her running downstairs. "Alyssa?" she said with a questioning look on her face. "What are you doing here?"

"I'll tell you that in your room," I said.

She led me to her room, and I told her everything about my magic potion and my plans. When I finished, she beamed at me. "After you use the potion on your brother, can I use it on someone too?"

"May be or maybe not," I said.

Her face fell. "Where do you think they would be?"

"Well, maybe they are playing soccer," I answered.

"Well what are you waiting for? Let's go to the park," she urged. Soon we arrived.

The park in our neighborhood was huge. There was a nice and large playground which had monkey bars, swings, slides, etc., and a group of children playing on it. Also, there was an enormous grassy play area shaped like a square with a few huge mud puddles due to rain. In this grassy area, my brother and his friends were playing soccer. Lizzie grinned at me, "Now."

"You sure?" I replied. She nodded.

"Alright," I said. "That's it!"

I drank a little bit of the magic potion. It tasted bitter, like cold coffee, but at the same time my body was burning. Lizzie gave me the wow look. "It worked!" she screamed with a deep breath. I looked down at my feet to see if Lizzie was right, and she was. Instead of my feet, I saw the ground. It felt really strange to be invisible; I could not see myself, but I could see everything and everyone around me. "Oh, and Lizzie, is my potion visible?" I asked curiously.

"Yep", she replied.

"In that case, why don't you keep it in your pocket for a while?" I handed the potion over to Lizzie and she put it in her pocket.

Suddenly, the referee, who was one of Patrick's friends, blew the whistle. They probably finished their second game, and they were about to take a break. I was walking toward Patrick when he called, "Hey girls, watch this." He was doing his cool tricks with a soccer ball that was wet and muddy like him. When he got everyone's attention, I stole another soccer ball and kicked him on the back of his head. "Hey, who did that?" he snarled. All the kids around him were now laughing uncontrollably. As he was looking around for the person, I pulled his pants down. Terrified, he blushed and pulled his pants up. He was wearing white underpants with red hearts. Then he started spinning stupidly with one arm straight forward. And splat! He fell down face forward onto the mud puddle and he groaned. Now the people around him were laughing even more, especially Lizzie. Quite embarrassed, Patrick hurriedly ran home.

When the crowd cleared away Lizzie shouted, "Alyssa, where are you?"

"Right here!" I shouted back.

"That was hilarious!" Lizzie breathed.

"Ya, think so?"

"Everybody thought so!"

Together we burst out laughing.

All of a sudden, I froze. "What's the matter?" Lizzie questioned.

"How am I going to be visible again? I can't stay like this forever!" I cried.

Lizzie sighed and said, "Don't worry, Alyssa, there's got to be some way out of this situation." I was a little comforted by Lizzie's words.

Suddenly I got an idea. "Lizzie, can you hand me the potion?"

"Sure, but why?" she responded.

"Well, I was wondering if I could do something else with the potion so that it would turn me back to normal," I said.

"Well, give it a try, it could work," she answered.

"But how?" I asked.

"Um, you could pour the potion on your head."

"Lizzie, that's a brilliant idea! Thanks."

Delighted with herself, she handed the magic potion to me. Carefully, I poured down a few drops onto my head. It felt and tasted like cold, salty water. All of a sudden, Lizzie

exclaimed, "Alyssa, you are back!" and hugged me tight like I was a teddy bear.

"It was great to be visible again. Nobody could get suspicious anymore if they heard a noise and didn't know where it was coming from," I thought to myself.

After I dropped Lizzie off at her home, I headed straight home because I was starving, and as I was walking, Patrick came along. "Got beaten up by an invisible person?" I asked Patrick, who was covered in mud from head to toe.

"Yep, but how did you know that?" he asked.

I smiled and said, "Because I did it." I held out the potion in front of him. He stared at the potion in amazement.

"You are a genius!" he exclaimed.

"Wait-, but aren't you going to get mad at me and tell Mom?" I asked.

My brother chuckled, "Of course not! I have been waiting for you to prank me ever since I found out we were opposites. That's why I played pranks on you so much."

I looked up to look him in the eyes and whispered, "Promise you won't tell anybody about the magic potion."

"I promise," he replied.

*Megha Joshi lives in Newark and is a fourth grader at Bunker Elementary.*



### My Poem

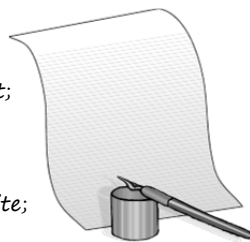
By Aniket Mishra

One time, I was told to write,  
Using all my focus and might;

I was told to keep it small and tight,  
And I thought about it day and night;

At first my words had a fight,  
But in the end they all agreed to write;

When I was finished with it,  
I took out a chair to sit;



It was so good, it even lit,  
And for sure, I wasn't being a hypocrite;

I sent it to the publishing place,  
And I got a note back with a happy face;

This was the piece, that I had sent,  
I'll even give this to you on rent;

This part of the paper got bent,  
But luckily, there was no dent,  
I assure you, my next poem will be different;

### Understanding Life

By Aniket Mishra

There is one thing you need to understand in life – you can't control life, and life is like a roller coaster. You get some things your way like getting a Will game, and some things you don't get your way, like some family member passing away. Sometimes you get so frustrated that you want to run away from home, and sometimes you feel so happy that you never wish to leave home. So believe me, life is so unexpected. One time I was making a high score

*Aniket Mishra is a 5th grader and lives in Santa Clara, CA, with his dad, Kishore Mishra, his mom, Dolly Mishra and little sister, Tamanna Mishra. He loves basketball and loves playing "Minecraft" on the computer.*

on the iPhone but the battery just died. So you see what I mean. Oh yeah, life can be painful—like on the monkey bars, when I fell down into the sharp tanbark. Life can also be miracle, like getting into Stanford at the last second by being an educated student, or saving a really good guy from dying from a heart attack. Life can be very mean too, like you lose the last basketball game of the season by missing a 2 pointer. No matter what, you need to love life, and look for a new tomorrow.

### Gup Chup –The Tasty Treat

By Adeep Das

It is about one crispy hot summer afternoon in India...

In the month of August, my family and I were visiting my grandparents in Puri, Odisha, India. Puri is a very beautiful and very religious city in the eastern part of Odisha, India, on the shorelines of the mighty Bay of Bengal. This city is very well known all over the world as Lord Jagannath's Hometown. The people here are extremely friendly and caring.

Well, coming back to that very afternoon. It was very hot and muggy; I was feeling very restless and kept nagging my Jejema to let me play outside with our neighbor's kids under the coconut trees. All of a sudden, it started raining very heavily. It was pouring down really hard. I thought there was no way I was going out now. Seeing the disappointment in my eyes, Jejema tried to lift up my spirit and told me she was going to make me the best snack I ever tasted. I became very curious and asked her the name. She said, "Gup Chup." For a while, I thought she is telling me to be quiet, but, oh no! that's the name of the snack. It made me even more curious; I started wondering what could it be???



Jejema wanted this to be a huge surprise for me so I had to go to my room. There, through my huge windows, I could see the rain water flowing down the muddy streets really fast. Then I noticed some of the kids from our block were making paper boats and floating them in the gushing rain water, and they were really good at it, as their boats went a long way down the street. Suddenly, my nose started wiggling; it was smelling something very good coming from the kitchen. I couldn't stand there any longer and ran down the stairs, burst through the doors and into our kitchen.

There, I saw on the table a big heap of small, round, puffed crispy puris. To the left there were mashed potatoes and yellow matter along with shredded onions, gingers, chilies and cilantro all mixed into it. It looked very yummy. Of course, who doesn't like mashed potatoes? Yum! Yum! Then, to its right there was some kind of dark water with some shredded green chilies, ginger and cilantro in it. It had a nice flavor. Still, I was a little hesitant to try something so new to me, but it looked very tempting. Seeing my little brother and rest of my family eating with so much delight, I rushed to an open seat, and Jejema gave me a bowl of the dark water called tentuli paani [the tamarind water], which had the perfect combination of salt and sour taste along with the incredible aroma of the rest of

the ingredients. Then she gave me the so called “Gup chup,” which were the crispy and puffed puris with a small opening to put the mashed potatoes in it. To me, it was as big as making a lowercase ‘c’ with your thumb and the rest of the fingers as you do in sign language.

I had to dip the crispy puris with potatoes in it in the tamarind water and then put the whole thing in the mouth– Oh! Wow! Delicious! I kept on gobbling up all the gup chups that I could eat, and Jejema thought that I was going to get a huge stomach ache. But to her surprise, my stomach did just fine.

Thus, my first encounter with the so very famous snack was very delightful. Then I came to know that “Gup chup” also has some other names such as Paani puri, Golgappa, Puchkas... but whatever the name, the bottom line is Yum! Yum! Yum!

Thanks! Jejema, you are right as usual. “Gup chup” is the best snack ever.

*Adeep Das is 10 years old and attends 4th Grade at Hillside Elementary School in Farmington Hills, Michigan.*

### The Robbers By Ariya Mohanty

One night, I was walking home alone. Suddenly, I heard footsteps behind me. I turned and saw a gang of trouble making robbers. They were trying to sneak into someone’s house. Oh no! That was my house! I ran across the street to the pay phone. I checked my pockets for change. I had no change. I pressed 0 for Operator on the phone. “Hello, how may I help you?” said a woman’s voice. I explained what was going on, and I got a free phone call. As quickly as I could, I dialed 911. The voice on the other end was a man’s voice this time. I explained how I was walking home and the deceiving robbers came. “We’ll be there as fast as we can,” the voice replied. After about five to ten minutes, a siren blared through the streets.

“Thank goodness you’re here! The robbers ran across the street when they heard the siren.” The police returned to their car and zoomed down my neighborhood. “Put your hands up or I’ll shoot!” I heard them say. Immediately they surrendered.

“You don’t have to worry now because we have them under arrest.” We thanked the police and hurried into our house. My mom told me I had to sleep because the next day was school.

*Ariya, 10 years old, attends 4th grade in Anaheim School, Orange, California. She practices Kathak, piano, and tennis after school. She has finished all of Rick Riordan’s books.*



### Giant Butterflies! by Nistha Panda



Nita was day dreaming while her science teacher taught the class about Peacock Pansy butterflies. Ring!

The one-hundredth day ended at the Bhubaneswar Public School in

Bhubaneswar. Nita jumped out of her seat and ran out of the classroom. Her short

brown hair was flying behind her as she ran to the nearby playground. On the playground bench sat a boy with deep brown hair who was reading a book about robots. It was Ayush, her twin brother. Five minutes later, a girl with long black hair and dark brunette eyes

bumped into Nita. It was Lina, one of her best friends.

As the three of them were strolling to Nita’s house, Nita mentioned that they were learning about butterflies in science. Lina excitedly blurted, “All of the fourth grade will be going to a place where Peacock Pansy butterflies will fly over us.”

On the day of the field trip, Nita, Ayush, and Lina were buddies and sat on the last bus leaving. When they reached the place, the Peacock Pansies had already arrived. The sky was brown and orange. After the butterflies disappeared, Lina questioned, “Why do Peacock Pansies have to go to Prajapati Island in the Bay of Bengal? Why can’t they stay with us?” After the second bus was loaded and gone, everybody heard a loud flapping noise. Both Nita and

Ayush thought it was an airplane, but when Lina gazed at the sky, she shouted in fear, "Giant butterflies!"

Everybody ran toward the third bus. No one dared to wait for the last bus. The school had already gotten the news and sent the students home in advance. In an hour, all the children were gone except three students left; they were Nita, Ayush, and Lina. At last Nita's mom picked them all up because Lina's parents were on a business trip. After dinner, everybody went to bed.

Achoo! Nita woke up in a start. Puffy, yellow specks of dust were floating around everywhere. It was pollen. Nita sneezed again, she had allergies. The whole house was covered in pollen. But it wasn't just the house that was covered in pollen, the whole city had sticky yellow specks floating too. Nita asked Lina why there was so much pollen. Lina replied, "The giant butterflies pollinated all the flowers in the city." When they went outside, they saw a thin layer of pollen on the ground. Achoo! Nita sneezed again. She could not go to school today.

The next morning, Lina woke up to a surprise. Tiny butterflies were in every corner. There were so many butterflies that you could not see the pink walls of the guestroom. When Lina went downstairs for breakfast, Nita asked her about the butterflies while coloring her recycling poster (Nita can't stand trash that is not recycled). Lina had no idea what to say, so she watched how Ayush made a butterfly robot. By the time it was lunch time, she thought she got an answer to Nita's question. She whispered, "Half of the giant butterflies laid eggs, so the small butterflies must be babies." Nita stared at her and questioned, "Baby butterflies?"

On Sunday, Ayush noticed that there were no cars on the road. Then he called Lina and Nita to show them the missing cars. Flap, flop, flap, flop. They all looked up. They saw giant butterflies carrying

people out of their homes and dropping them in the middle of pineapple mazes while the miniature butterflies took all the nectar and food out of the houses and their gardens. Now Bhubaneswar had so much pollen floating around, Bhubaneswar looked like a yellow segment from the moon. When the three children turned to their left, they saw that their neighbors were the butterflies' next victim.

Suddenly, Lina ran into the house and straight to the guestroom. She had an idea. When she rushed back out of the house, she was holding a jar with a Peacock Pansy in it. It was Dots, her best friend. Dots had mark on its body like Jagannath's beautiful eyes. Then she explained her plan to her friends. Lina had caught Dots when she was trying to migrate to Prajapati Island. She was going to let Dots go so the giants would follow her to Prajapati Island. Then she said goodbye to Dots and opened the lid of the jar. Dots was free and started flying towards Prajapati Island.

After ten minutes, a group of Peacock Pansies followed Dots. In an hour, all butterflies in the city, except one, were gone. Lina captured the last butterfly. Now Bhubaneswar was safe, and Lina had a new best friend, and she named her Bandhu.



*Nistha is ten years old and is in fifth grade in Fremont, California. She likes to draw, dance, play the piano, and read. She lives with her parents and little brother. She wants a dog. She would like to be an archaeologist, a chef or a meteorologist.*

### **Ganesh's Head and its Meaning**

**By Renee Sen**

One day, Parvati wanted to rest after a hard day's work, without any disturbance. She put Ganesh at the entrance to guard her so that nobody could bother her. Ganesh was very obedient to his mother. When a stranger came and demanded entrance, he refused to let him pass.

Poor Ganesh! The stranger was his very own father, Shiva, returning from his long trip around the world. Having been separated for so long, Ganesh did not know Shiva, and likewise, Shiva did not know Ganesh. Furious at being kept from his own wife's house, he cut Ganesh's head off with his sword.

After learning the news, Parvati broke down in tears. She told Shiva what he had done; he had killed his own son. Here was his

dead son, with no head, blood all over, and just a mess all around. So Shiva did the only thing that was possible at the time. He replaced Ganesh's head with the head of the first thing he saw, the head of a baby elephant. He cut the elephant's head off and stuck it on his son's neck, saving his son's life and creating Ganesh, the Elephant Headed God.

The real meaning: This story is symbolic to make us realize who we truly are. This is to teach us to shed our Ego. We are the sons and daughters of the God and have forgotten about it. Peace, Love, Kindness is our original nature. After taking birth in this world, we have become separated from God and have developed Ego in the process. Our Head represents the "Ego". Because of our Ego, we don't even recognize our real father, the

God. So, the God takes our Ego out by cutting the head off.

God is powerful. He could have put the same head back on Ganesh's body, but he did not. He did not want to use the same head because that head represented Ego. He wanted to use something that was new and pure. So, he used a baby elephant's head that was pure and fresh.

The Elephant's Head is big. It represents a storehouse of knowledge. To survive in this world, we need knowledge. To gain knowledge, we need to be receptive. That's why the big Head also has a big Ear so that it can listen to the most interesting knowledge in this world.

There is a "Trunk" on the Head. It can do big things like breaking a gigantic tree as well as small things like picking up a needle. This denotes that we should destroy our big, negative behaviors such as Anger, Greed, Hatred, and Jealousy and acquire subtle qualities such as Purity, Love, Nicety, and Kindness.

Each part of Ganesh's body represents similar symbols to teach us something. Ganesh also stands for destruction of all obstacles.

That's why he is worshipped before any other God. I also like his vehicle, the rat. Rat indicates the vices we should avoid. That's why he rides on it. Ganesh is my favorite God of all.



*Renee Sen, 10 years old, is a fourth grader at Pointers Run Elementary School in Columbia, MD. Her parents are Brahma and Sikha Sen.*

### **Imagination is More Important Than Knowledge**

**By Saswat Pati**



Imagination is like a factory, kingdom or workshop. Knowledge is the boss and imagination is the worker. Imagination makes things possible. Knowledge is a slab of marble and imagination is the hammer and chisel that makes it a sculpture. Without imagination, we humans are hollow shells. We would be black and white and without color. Imagination is what makes a human a human and not a marionette.

Some may approach knowledge with more thought than others. Meher Baba says, "Imagination can go up to the beginning of infinity where God lets only knowledge pass." Imagination is "creative ability" (Webster Dictionary 2004). Knowledge, according to the same source, is "understanding gained by actual experience or a range of information," which is very relevant against knowledge. With imagination, we dream and have ideas. Without it, many of our greatest people would have never been great, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King Jr., and Srinivas Ramanujan. Mark Twain once said, "You can't depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus." And Frank Lloyd Wright said, "An idea is salvation by imagination." Some other quotes are, "Imagination is everything. It's the preview of life's coming attractions," and, "The human race is governed by its imagination," by Albert Einstein and Napoleon Bonaparte, respectively.

Imagination is essential to life. Imagination gives the power to the thoughts you envision. Knowledge is contained like a fly in a cage, while imagination is a butterfly spreading its wings. These aspects show why imagination is better than knowledge. The fusion of dreams and ideas is imagination.

*Saswat (10 years) lives at East Glen Haven Blvd in Houston, Texas. He is the son of Drs. Arati and Debananda Pati. He is a fifth grader at St. John's School. He loves Star Wars, Legos, playing soccer, and reading books. He wants to be the first man on Mars.*

### High in the Storm By Saswat Pati

High in the storm  
There was a dorm  
With shackles of light  
That destroyed all in spite  
The beaker was tipped  
In a drift  
That showered the earth below  
To keep balance in tow  
Which gave a spark  
That lit up the dark  
There was sand  
Which illuminated his hand  
Which lit up a spark  
In everyone's heart

So everyone knew his love  
Which was as soft as a dove  
His brain is greater than the farthest  
reaches of math  
And evildoers shall face his wrath  
And then light shall pass through those  
shackles and go above  
And everyone with their hearts pure shall  
behold his crackling love

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### Raja. A Memory of My Late Dog By Shreya Tripathy

*This is in memory of my late pet dog, Raja. He was a nice pet. Raja never hurt anyone. My parents had adopted Raja. And I would like to share his story with you. Let's begin his story.*

#### Childhood

Raja became part of the Tripathy family on May 29, 1998. I know from my parents that before, a European family had Raja for their pet, but they left for Europe and could not keep him. Raja was chow with a mix of golden retriever. He loved when people came by. But as he grew up, he started acting like my grandfather! He took walks and slept a lot. Now, after about four years later, I was born on Feb. 28, 2002 in Shady Grove Hospital, Maryland. I came home in surprise to see Raja. And after some time, Raja and I played a lot together. We played with balls, played catch and raced across the fields. I felt as if he was my older brother.

Soon after I started to go to preschool, Raja and I became more and more attached to each other. We played together for hours and hours in the pool. We either swam or relaxed by floating. We were also expecting a new family member! We were all hoping for a boy for Raja, especially him. We were so happy when we found out it was a boy. We named him Rishabh. I had a new brother. Rishabh and Raja started attracting together as magnets.



We moved to Herndon, Virginia as soon as I finished preschool. I started to miss Raja a lot because my school took a little longer to reach, and clearly I was still very young. And soon time flew by and I started kindergarten. I had gotten over missing Raja, but another problem occurred. I watched at my friend's house "Marley and Me" (well the movie that Marley dies in), and I started crying a lot about losing Raja because he was very sick at the time I watched the movie. But my father soothed me by thinking positive and saying that everything and everyone has a time to go. He told me that heaven is a beautiful place above the clouds. I soon started thinking positively.

In first grade we had another Tripathy named Ayush. Like all the other Tripathys as children, Ayush thought Raja was a horse and tried riding on Raja's back! We all took pictures of Ayush like we did when we were younger. Those times were the best, but did we know it would last?

### **Dog Gone?**

Soon time passed, and Raja had gotten serious injuries because he fell. He injured his leg so that he basically had to drag around! These times were the worst. Soon, when we were getting ready to go to Cancun in December, Raja went to the vacation kennels for the trip. But really, it was the hospital and no one even told me.

Right when I came back from Cancun, I started wondering why my father didn't pick up Raja from the kennel. Well, when I went to school on Jan. 19, 2012, while my father was driving me to school, I asked and everything was revealed, "Daddy, you put Raja in the animal kennel, right?"

"Uh, Shreya," I could see him shedding a few tears, "Raja, umm, actually had been in the hospital, because of his injuries and sickness."

"What? What do you mean by 'had been' in the hospital? Wait, that means!" I started to put the puzzle pieces together, and I tell you it was the worst picture I ever saw. "W-when did he leave? Why did anyone not tell me this? Daddy, why?"

"Shreya, I didn't have the courage to. I'm so, so sorry. He passed away on Dec. 16."

### **A Few Words**

Raja's death was very painful for me, my father and my mother. That day I found out, I cried the whole time at school. I even cried all the way home. My father told me that he found out over the phone that the vet said to him, "Your pet will always stay as a baby of your own, but your children will grow up and never again be a baby. And your pet's death will take years to get over. You may feel that you have gotten over it, but deep in your heart you haven't gotten over your pet."

I believe that this is very true. I felt as if Raja was my older brother. I feel that I'm still getting over Raja. My brothers think Raja is in a farm near our home. I miss Raja so much, and I wish Raja was in the farm too. But there are so many losses in life, and you have to figure a way to lose some of the pain. For me, I write it out.

*"As a well-spent day brings happy sleep, so a life well spent brings happy death."*

*-Leonardo da Vinci*

*Shreya Tripathy, age 10, is in 4th grade. She lives in Herndon, Northern Virginia. Her parents are Gatikrishna and Jagyanseni.*



## The First Day of a New School By Anjali Tewari



Once there was a girl named Sonali. She was born and raised in Orissa. And, she could only speak Oriya, the language of Orissa.

Then, one day, Sonali and her parents had to move to the USA because her parents had gotten a great opportunity there. Sonali was sad because she was going to miss all her old friends in Orissa but was equally excited to meet a lot of new friends.

When they had reached the US airport, she looked around. Most of the people at the airport looked much different than her; blond hair, accents, blue eyes, and from different places in the world. She wondered if it was going to be like that at school.....

The following day was the first day of school for her. It was a wonderful sight! She could see the library's books towering to the ceiling and ladders to help get up to them. The teachers were very nice to her, and whenever she got an answer wrong, they wouldn't beat her with a ruler on her hand. Also, there was the biggest playground she had ever seen. She couldn't wait to play there.

She also wanted to make many friends, but everyone didn't understand what she was saying, and even though she understood a little bit of English, they were all talking fast and had accents. When Sonali came home from school, she told her mom what had happened. Her mom said, in Oriya, "It's OK, we will ask someone to go to school with

you tomorrow to translate some of your words into better English."

The next morning at school, Sonali went to her locker. She walked up to a girl named Sophia, who looked lonely. Sophia didn't have any friends either because it was her first day of school. Sonali told something to the translator and that person said to Sophia, "Sonali said that she wants to be your friend." Sophia smiled, "Tell Sonali that's fine with me, and she can play with me at recess near the swing sets!" When the translator told Sonali, she got very excited. Sonali thought, 'This is one of those days anyone would be waiting for, on their first days of school.' And off Sonali ran to her next class with the translator walking slowly behind her.

When everyone was to go out for recess, Sonali ran over to the swing set. Sophia and the rest of Sonali's class wanted to play with her. Sonali didn't know why. Sophia had actually told the other kids to never misjudge someone until you get to know a person. And to make a lot of friends you have to do that. From that day on, every day, Sonali had someone to play with. The first person was obviously Sophia.

When Sonali came home from school, her mom told her that there were some Oriya families living in the city. Sonali said, "Do any or all of them have kids?" She was excited and couldn't wait to meet kids who spoke and understood Oriya.

The next day at school, Sonali saw Sophia crying. Sonali ran over and asked her what was wrong. She said, "I-I was running, and I fell and scraped my knee!" Sonali helped Sophia up, and they looped and limped through the hallways. They burst into the nurse's office, and Sonali told the nurse what happened. The nurse cleaned Sophia's wound and put a fresh bandage on it. Sophia washed her face to feel better, and then they walked to their next class.

Sonali gave the teacher a note, and the teacher let them sit down. Sophia smiled at Sonali just as the lesson began. Sonali was happy to have Sophia as her friend and she would make more soon.

*Anjali is 11 years old and a 6th grader at  
Tharp Hilliard School.*

### ODISSI- A Movement By Akanksha Ravi

A divine rhythm,  
It makes you go –driven'  
Its fast beat,  
Is dancing in your feet,  
You show the grace,  
That has been traced,  
I show you the way!  
My hands make you dream away.....  
The words you speak,  
Remind me of the birds' beak,  
You show the steps,  
The way to tread,  
The little girl dreams on,  
Like a young fawn,  
A dance that has been lost in the walls of the temples,  
It will come again,  
You will see it when!  
I have learned dances,  
They have good meanings,  
We hear they are made from stories,  
But they also have music, dance, songs which praise glory.....  
Is it better learning here?  
Is it better learning there?  
I am learning what this world is and means from just dancing!!!!



*Akanksha Ravi is in grade 5. She lives in California and been dancing / learning Odissi from Guru Jyoti Rout of Jyoti Kala Mandir since 2006.*

### Into the Safari (Kaziranga) By Anwesha Ranabijuli

"Creak!" went the rickety set of stairs that I was stepping on.  
"Watch your step!" said the tour guide. I listened to the guide, but it was really hard to stay calm. I was just too excited. And I had a good reason to be excited. I was about to ride on an elephant in a safari! So when I got to the top of the stairs, I grabbed my parents, dragged them to the elephant, asked the rider to open the seat bar, and hopped in. I was so high up; I thought that I was going to fall. Suddenly, I heard a loud pang. I looked around to see where the source of the noise was coming from and saw that my seat bar had fallen down! I groaned and thought, "It's going to take an hour to get that back up!" Then, something amazing happened. Slowly, the elephant that I was sitting on bent its trunk and reached down. Its trunk curled around the seat bar and brought it up to the guide. "Wow!" was my last thought before we started on the trail.  
"Ouch!" I screamed as I got whacked in the face by a bunch of bushes. I sat down, hoping not to get whacked again. Suddenly, I saw the sun and thought, "Yes! We're out!" As our elephants exited through the bushes, I could see the acres of elephant grass. I could smell the sweet water. And I could feel the soft breeze. After five minutes of looking around in amazement and taking pictures, we finally started moving on, deeper into the safari.  
"Look!" I screamed. "Look at the rhino that has only one horn!" Suddenly, I heard the clicks of cameras and the excited whispers of people fill the air. In front of us was a one horned rhino, a very rare species with only a few left in the world. We took a lot of pictures until I reminded my parents that we better save the film. So we moved on until we saw a bunch of deer. But we didn't get many pictures of them since they all ran away as soon as they heard the mighty stomping of all the elephants. So after several attempts of trying to take a picture, we gave up and started moving on toward the lake.  
There were lots of hairy buffalo and elegant pelicans at the lake. And as I looked out onto the lake, I could see their beautiful reflections. The lake was a shade of dark blue and looked like a flower with green algae rimming the

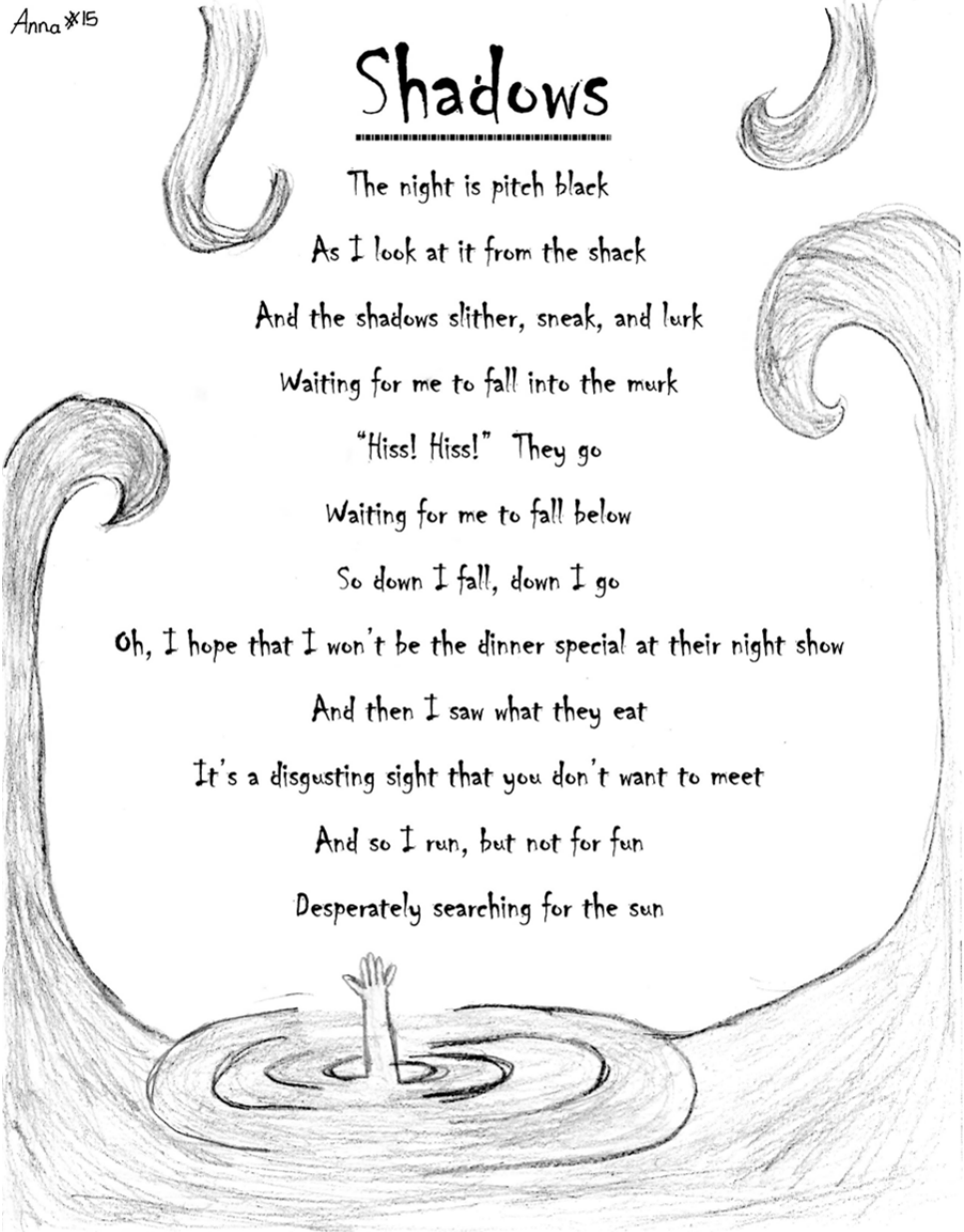
sides. There were patches of Cattails here and there, giving the lake a painting-like feeling. Suddenly, I felt the elephant jerk forward and realized that we were heading home.

When I got into the car, I was so happy that the adventure was finally over and I could go home and rest. But at the same time, I felt sad that we had to leave this magnificent place. When I got back home and lay down to sleep, I thought back and realized how much fun we had and how short of a time it lasted. From that day on, I always remembered these words. Life is short; don't waste a single minute of it.

Shadows  
By Anwesha Ranabijuli

Anna \*15

# Shadows



The night is pitch black  
As I look at it from the shack  
And the shadows slither, sneak, and lurk  
Waiting for me to fall into the murk  
"Hiss! Hiss!" They go  
Waiting for me to fall below  
So down I fall, down I go  
Oh, I hope that I won't be the dinner special at their night show  
And then I saw what they eat  
It's a disgusting sight that you don't want to meet  
And so I run, but not for fun  
Desperately searching for the sun

*Anwesha Ranabijuli is 11 years old and studies in the 5th grade at Cactus Ranch Elementary in Round Rock, Texas.*

## The Ghost in Locker 1408

By Arijit Dutta



"Billy, get up. It is your first day of school," Billy's mom called from the kitchen.

"Ah, I am so tired," yawned Billy. He stumbled out of bed and tugged on his shirt and shorts. Billy was going to Bridgeton Middle School. This would be his first year. Billy slugged down the stairs to the kitchen. His little brother Tommy was watching Power Rangers. After two and a half months of waking up at 10:00 AM, it was difficult to wake up at 6:00 AM. When he was eating his breakfast, which consisted of eggs and bacon, he yelled out, "Ow!!!"

"What happened?" Billy's mom asked, startled.

Billy spat out a Lego man. "Someone put Legos in my eggs. I think I got a bloody tooth." Billy looked to his brother, who smirked. "You put it in!" Billy sprinted after Tommy. Billy's mom managed to seize Tommy and put him in a chair.

"I don't know how it got in," Tommy said.

"Yeah right!" Billy raised his fist.

"Stop, Billy! The Legos might've fallen in the eggs since they were scattered all over the table." Billy looked at Tommy, who was sticking his tongue out.

After breakfast, Billy walked to his bus stop. He was wearing a green t-shirt and denim shorts. He had a black backpack. Billy was in sixth grade. He had tan skin and light brown hair. "Hey Raj," Billy spotted his best friend walking towards him. Raj was wearing jeans and a red, long sleeve shirt with a green backpack. He had black hair and light brown skin.

"Here comes the bus. Man, I can't wait until the first bell rings," Raj climbed onto the bus.

The two boys shared the same seat. They discussed which teachers they had, and it turned out the two had all of the same classes. When they got to their homeroom, they met their teacher Ms. Dull (whose name matched her personality). Many people joked that she was never married because of her name. That could've been true, due to the fact that she was 56 years old and lived alone.

"Hello... students...I'm Ms...Dull. Today... I will give...your lock...combination...and your...locker number..." Ms. Dull said like a zombie.

"I can't believe I have her for math and science. I can't take the way she talks. We probably will get nowhere in the school year," Raj whispered to Billy, who sat next to him.

"Well, I heard that if you are in Ms. Dull's class, then next year you are put in the standard class," Billy whispered back.

"No, my parents would kill me," Raj said as Ms. Dull started calling up the students for their locker and lock.

"But, why?" Billy asked.

"My parents will spank me with a stick. It is the Indian way of teaching," Raj replied.

Suddenly Ms. Dull walked straight up to Billy. She said, "Billy Adams, I called... your name three times! Here is your locker... number and... lock combination." Billy picked up his lock, which was shiny silver around a black clock thing. Attached to the lock was a little purple slip which said locker number 1408 and the combination, which was 10-16-25.

Ding! Ding! Ding! The bell rang and Billy walked to his first period class. At lunch, Billy and Raj looked for a place to sit. Every table was full except one which had a kid reading a book. The two sat at the table. The kid's name was David Chang, and he was in seventh grade. He was very unsocial and so had no friends. "So, what are you reading?" Billy asked.

"The Ghost Town' by Louis Fetcher, came out last year. Ghost stories always fascinate me. I've heard from my older brother about this ghost story. Do you want to hear it?" David asked.

"Sure," Raj stuffed crackers into his mouth.

"Okay. Once, five years ago, there was a normal, average kid named Freddy. He was like me, unsocial. He was in Ms. Dull's math and science class."

"Hey, Raj and I are in that class, too," Billy said.

"That is not good, man."

So Freddy got his locker number. At the end of the day, he got his stuff from his locker but then he saw a note. The note said to go to the graveyard by Capilton church. Freddy thought it was just a joke from a bully.

The next day, he saw the note again, but this time it said "or else" and had something that looked like blood splattered on it. He tried to forget about the note. When he was walking to his house, he noticed a man watching him. The man followed Freddy towards his house. Freddy started to run and made it safely to his house. He told his mom about the man and his mom checked the area, but no one was there. His mom asked if he could see the face, but his face was covered by his hat. His mom then said that he was just imagining things.

The next day, he went to his drawer to get some clothes but saw the note!!! Cautiously, he walked to the bus stop and spotted the man again. The man started walking towards him but the bus luckily came in time. Freddy could not take the notes anymore, and so after school, he went to the graveyard alone. A boy named Jim was walking by the graveyard. He later told the police that he saw Freddy being taken by the mysterious man who kept stalking Freddy. Freddy was never heard from again. People say that he now always haunts his locker. Every kid that had his locker never made it through the first week of school!"

"What was his locker number?" Billy asked.

"His locker number was ...1408."

"But that's my locker!!!"

"It's okay—It is just a superstition."

"Wait, I have a question. How come people sit on the floor even though there are a couple of seats right next to me?" Raj asked as he saw a couple of kids staring at him while eating their lunch on the ground.

"People say he used to sit at this table alone," David said.

Right then, the bully Joe came and said to Raj and Billy, "Who are you talking to, dorks?"

"David," Billy pointed to David, but he wasn't there.

"Losers," Joe walked away.

At the end of the school day, Billy went to open his locker and found a note with the chilling words, "Come to Capilton's graveyard alone." Billy ran to Raj, who was walking to the instrument room to pick up his violin. Billy shoved the note in Raj's face and said, "Dude, that's not funny!"

"I didn't do anything. I swear I didn't do anything!"

"Then who did?"

"I don't know, maybe Joe did it."

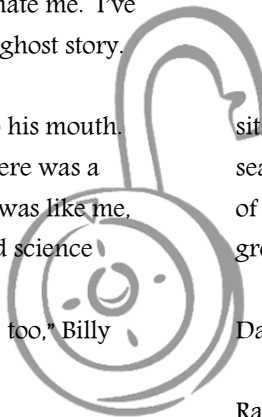
"You are right. He might've heard the story and slipped the note in my locker to frighten me."

The next day, Billy opened his locker and found a note similar to Freddy's, and he yelled out in fear. Ms. Dull marched over to Billy. "What are you yelling...at...Mr. Adams?"

Billy waved the note in front of her face, "Can't you see?"

Ms. Dull could not see the note but only saw Billy's hands waving. "How...dare...you! Get ... in...the classroom this instant!"

At lunch later that day, Raj and Billy sat at the same table and found David reading his book. Billy told him about the note and glared at Raj. (Billy still thought that Raj was the one who was putting the notes in his locker). David then left the table, saying that he had to go to the bathroom. Billy



looked at David's book and made an astonishing discovery. The book was published back in 2006, even though David said it was published a year ago. After that, Billy showed Raj the note. "Where is the note?" Raj asked.

"It's in front of you! You can't see it and Ms. Dull couldn't see it either," Billy said. "Something is going on. Maybe the ghost is real. Dude, I'm scared now."

"Dude, just remember not to go to the graveyard," Raj said.

"Okay. But don't you think something is weird with David? I mean, look at his book, he said his book was published last year even though it was published six years ago."

"What are you guys talking about?" David interrupted.

"Nothing," they both said simultaneously. Once the period was over, Billy opened his locker to get his math book but couldn't find it. Where his book should have been, there was a note again. Since Ms. Dull gave you after-school detention if you came to class without your math book, Billy got detention.

After Billy's time in detention, he got on the late bus. When he was walking home from the bus-stop, it started to rain. He looked around. He suddenly saw a tall man around 6 feet tall dressed in a black trench-coat. His black fedora covered his face. The man started walking towards Billy. "Stop following me! Help!" Billy yelled. He sprinted to his house and slammed his door, only to meet the screaming of his mom. Billy could not tell his mom about the man because of her anger, and she would not believe him.

Billy could not control his misgivings about David any longer. Billy checked the school directory and found that David was an average seventh grader. That morning, Billy received yet another note.

Later that day, Raj sat down next to Billy at lunch. David was there again reading his book.

"Billy, where is David?" asked Raj.

"He's in front of you. You can't see him? Well, he can't be the ghost since I've checked the school directory," Billy whispered. He looked at David, who was smirking.

This time at math class there was a substitute teacher so it didn't matter if you did not have your book. But for some reason, Raj was not there. After math class, Billy went to get his science book. This time he found the most horrifying note. It read, "Come to the graveyard or you will never see your friend Raj again." Billy had to take the risk of sacrificing his life for Raj...

After school, Billy marched bravely to the graveyard and saw the man who had chased him earlier, standing in the mist next to something. Billy's skin turned pale white. He could now see Raj tied up to a gravestone, unconscious. It gave Billy some relief that his friend was still alive. "Well, why did you want me to come here?" Billy asked the man.

"To meet me!" David cried, suddenly appearing out of nowhere. "I have to tell you a story, boy. I'm the ghost."

"No! That can't be true!" Billy exclaimed.

"Why not? You guys didn't notice anything weird about my book? Or about how Joe thought you guys were talking to nothing?"

"I did, but your name was in the directory." Billy backed away, only to be stopped by the man in the fedora.

"I took the souls of the kids who used my locker. Well, now I will take your soul! David Chang's soul is boring now," Freddy laughed.

"Why are you working with the man that messed your life up? And how come the note was invisible to Ms. Dull and Raj?" Billy asked.

"Well, once I became a ghost, I threatened to mess his life up, but he came up with a plan that pleased me. He would do what he did to me by putting the notes in that locker. Also, I can make

things invisible to others! Now that the questions are answered, do you have any more lunch?" Freddy asked.

"Why would you want my lunch?" Billy whimpered.

"If you do, give it to me!" Freddy yelled.

Billy opened his lunchbox and found a leftover piece of his lumpy ham and cheese sandwich. Billy handed the sandwich reluctantly to Freddy, who snatched it away. Freddy then said, holding the sandwich in his hand, "I need to eat an object from someone to take their body." Billy, too stunned to do anything, watched Freddy turn back into a ghost and put the sandwich in his mouth ...

"Oww! There is something in it!" Freddy spat the sandwich out and started choking. Freddy then fell down to the ground with his eyes wide-open. Freddy then started turning back into David Chang. Then from the graves a couple of more kids were now lying on the ground, unconscious.

"Their spirits must've been trapped by Freddy, but now Freddy's dead and so..." Billy said to himself.

"He's not dead. A ghost can never be dead. He'll come back, but not for a long time, I can assure you that," the man in black spoke in a rusty voice.

"Why did you ruin Freddy's life?" Billy asked, looking at the man.

"I was working with a specialized group that could detect people who had sin-filled souls,

and so we exterminated them. Freddy here was one of them, and you can see that by the way he wanted to haunt people. Well, I have to call the police and, um, I think you should take your friend somewhere safe before the police arrive. The parents of these children will be very happy today, confused, but happy that their children are still alive," the man pointed to the bodies. He flipped his I.D card to verify that he was telling the truth. Billy took a look at the sandwich and to see what was in it and he saw...a Lego man's head.

"Oh, Tommy, you've saved my life today. I'll remember not to beat you up as much as usual." Billy untied Raj and dragged him safely to Raj's house. He managed to slap Raj awake and told him everything that had happened and swore him to secrecy. Raj promised to keep the secret and Billy continued home. When he got home, his mom stood at the front porch.

"So, why are you late again?" Billy's mom asked.

"You wouldn't believe my story," Billy chuckled.

*Arijit Dutta is 11 years old and lives with his parents, Sarmistha Dutta and Ashutosh Dutta, in Bridgewater, New Jersey.*

### **The Journey** **By Kareena Mohapatra**



Amelia Earhart's pulse quickened. The world seemed to pick up its pace as faint bits of land appeared in the horizon line. The English Channel reflected the golden rays of sunshine that seemed to bounce off the water and brighten the world! Amelia was about to be the first woman to fly solo across the Channel!

Suddenly, red lights flashed, the attractive bright sky darkened, Amelia's goggles fogged up! She couldn't see! Wiping the condensed moisture off her goggles, Amelia watched in terror as the engines sputtered to a stop. Thick clouds of fog rolled in as Amelia muttered her solemn last words. It seemed as if even the greatest of miracles couldn't be her salvation. The airplane shot straight down like a bullet toward the dark, murky water.

Smoke suddenly bit Amelia straight in the face. Coughing, Amelia looked up to find the engine working! Amelia grabbed the controls, pushed a couple of buttons, and she was rocketing back to shore!

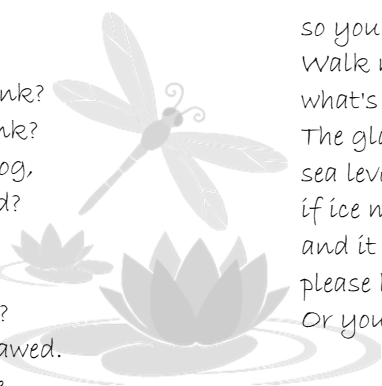


Reporters, friends, and family greeted her with the greatest of pride that one of their own would go down in history! Amelia was overwhelmed with pleasure and assured everyone that she would immediately prepare for her next journey across the Atlantic Ocean. Little did she know that it would be her last!

*Kareena is a 5th grader at Ben Franklin Elementary School in Edison, NJ. She is the daughter of Manisha and Saroj Kumar Mohapatra. She likes biking, playing outdoors, and crafting and has an interest in creative writing.*

### When May the Lotus Flower Bloom By Ayusha Acharya

When may the lotus flower bloom?  
Winter's not here with its gloom.  
When will the lotus arrive?  
Are you sure it will survive?  
Yes, of course, what do you think?  
Do you think it is on an ice rink?  
Do you think it will die on smog,  
out there from the cities beyond?  
Why won't the birds sing?  
Is it a terribly dreadful thing?  
Why haven't the ravens cawed?  
Spring is here and winter's thawed.  
What if all that factory smoke,  
caused them all to gasp and choke?  
Now they all must fly away  
leaving no birds here today  
why does this fog smell so weird?  
It smells like the earth has a pollution beard.



Where does it come from?  
Why don't I want some?  
Does it help if we plant trees?  
Should we stop using our chimney?  
The cars are also polluting earth,  
so you must give them a wider berth.  
Walk more and drive less  
what's in store only you can guess.  
The glaciers are melting,  
sea levels are rising  
if ice meets its death,  
and it takes its last breath,  
please help NOW!  
Or you won't remember how.



**This poem was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place for the 2012  
Meghna Memorial Award, Junior category.**

*Ayusha Acharya lives in San Jose. She is  
11 years old.*

### My Week with Gandhi By Suvam Nayak

In the evening of one boring day, my father decided to check our mail box outside of the house. I wondered if anything exciting was in store for me inside the small white mailbox. As I heard the door creak as it opened, I ran to my dad and saw a brown envelope with a book on top of it.

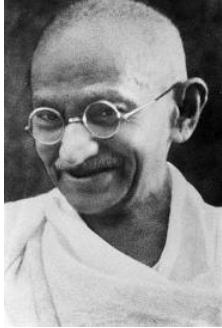
"What's that?" I immediately asked as I pointed to the little items.

"Anuj uncle brought them, so check and find out," said my father in a strong voice. I slowly took both of the items and went to my room.

The first thing I opened was the envelope and saw a lot of stamps and pictures of a man. I recognized that the old, humble looking man was Mahatma Gandhi. Back then, I only knew that Gandhi brought back Indian independence with nonviolence. Dad was saying to my mom that Anuj uncle, on his trip to India that time, visited the Ashram of Gandhi and got those things from there. I put the stuff back and examined the book. The cover had a drawing of Gandhi laughing, and the title was An Autobiography or My Experiments with the Truth.

At first, I didn't think of reading it, since I thought it would be boring to read. As it turned out, one day I read one page of the book to see why Anuj uncle would give me this book to read. That day, I kept on reading it, page after page, not one time feeling bored or distracted. The book was just amazing! It was 10:30 pm, and my mother told me to go to sleep, but I was too focused.

Some of facts from the book are known but there are a lot of facts that I never knew about like how he got married at a very early age of 13 years. Also, he smoked when he was at school and ate meat and even lied to his mother since he was not supposed to eat meat. But he stopped this as soon as he realized it was wrong and wrote a letter to his dad about this. He went to England to study and became a lawyer. However, he tried many times to make a speech in court but he was very shy and could not make much of words.



But the facts about his life that really touched me are many. He started what is called a Satyagraha movement in South Africa in protest of the law that was making all Indians suffer. Gandhi helped start a very peaceful campaign declaring that he would either go to the jail or die before following any anti-Asian laws. He was joined by thousands of Indians. During this period, he was arrested several times. In South Africa, Gandhi was earning fifteen thousand dollars a year at that time. However, he was not happy. On seeing the untold misery of millions of his fellow countrymen, on seeing thousands of them dying of starvation, the worldly success seemed cheap and unimportant to him. He took a vow of poverty and gave up all his money.

Gandhi returned to India and spent a year touring India. He started Satyagraha movement in India to help poor farmers, which forced the British government to set up inquiry. Next, Gandhi called for a non-cooperation movement against the British rule in India in 1921.

Many Indians willingly renounced their honors and titles, lawyers gave up their practice and students left schools and colleges. He called for a day of national prayer and fasting throughout India, bringing the country to a complete standstill. Years later, he led thousands on a 240-mile march to the sea to mine salt so people could use their own salt, in violation of British law. His whole life, he believed in truth and nonviolence.

I finished reading the book but began a new journey into Gandhi's life. Asking my parents, searching using Google, everything. I just wanted to know more and more about him. That whole week, I was trying to convince myself that one frail looking old man, wrapped only in a small cloth, had so much power that he had millions of followers and influenced so many. He did not have money, never believed in violence and always spoke truth, yet he fought the biggest battle and won! I read about many heroes before, but Gandhi was so different. His life was so exciting, full of challenges. He concentrated on helping the poor and the downtrodden. Gandhi experimented on the habit of a diet to see how cheaply he could live and remain healthy. He started living on fruit and goats' milk and olive oil. His power was his strong belief in his principles. He would say, "If somebody slaps you show him the other cheek to slap again." Unbelievable! But he wouldn't ask another person to do something he himself was not willing to do. Gandhi believed that one can't harm another without harming oneself, and that God is in everyone, so he loved everyone, even his enemy. That's the reason why, in the life and death battles in South Africa and India, he gained admiration and the friendship of his opponents.

Mahatma Gandhi inspired many people to take the path of nonviolence. Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama Martin Luther King, Jr. followed Gandhi's philosophy. He influenced many more all over the world. Albert Einstein once said about Gandhi that "Generations to come will scarcely believe that such a one as this (Gandhi) walked the earth in flesh and blood."

Once a stranger, Gandhi was starting to influence me also in many other ways. Does that mean the next time my brother hits me, I will show him my other cheek? Don't know. But I certainly believe more in the power of truth now. Also, in our next trip to India, I am definitely going to ask my parents to visit the Gandhi Ashram. And who knows, they might as well agree!!



**This article was first runner-up for the 2012 Meghna Memorial Award, Junior category.**

*Suvam Nayak, a 6th grader, is 11 years old and lives in West Covina, California. His parents are Satyabrata and Sunita Nayak.*

## The War Against Myself

By Ankita Mohapatra

The walls are closing in on me.

I cannot see; I cannot sleep.

My conscience throbs with guilty thoughts;

All I can think of are my faults.

No one gets why I'm this way and I don't see it  
either.

It's like there's not a single way to get rid of the  
fever.

In this new age of reds, I can't be a queen.

I'll only ever be gray; at most a slimy green.

Obsession creeps its way inside,

Yet to no other soul do I confide,

The struggles and troubles I have to face,

Because of the mistake I cannot erase.

I was once young and innocent.

I was sweet and blushing yet intricate.

I made an error; I ruined it all.

To the opposite court went the ball.

In a moment of confusion, that second of hate,

In my incomplete thinking I flipped my fate.

Secrets can only be held so long;

There's only one ending that can really come out  
strong.

Memories of princesses and castles invade;

Those magical times and joyous days.

Unrealistic stories and happy endings;

I hope there's a future that's worth defending.

Society has set the rules by which we all must play.

No room for misdemeanor or blunders, they say.

So much pressure and tension, and so much distress;

White queen forward, black king back – it's all a  
game of chess!

Endless circles of effort where you'll only ever fail;

Blood, sweat, and tears, all to no avail.

I've made a wrong decision; I veered off path.

Now it's time to accept the troubling aftermath.

No matter what, the frustration cannot be denied.

Despite my efforts, the failure does not subside.

It's a fight to raise the victor, to conquer them all,

But in the end, it's only me who'll fall.

It has come to the point of civil war

Inside myself, a blood bath with a heart to abhor.

The angel and the devil waltz in my mind;

The trouble is, I know not what they will find.

My blackened collar tightens up on me.

I want a way out, but I cannot flee.

For it is me on one side of the battle zone,

And me on the other; I am cornered yet alone

My biggest enemy is myself;

My conscience, thoughts, and emotions are rivals as  
well,

But at the end, there's hope after all,

For it's my will that has the power to end the war.

I will let go;

I will be lighter.

I will make peace;

I will not be a doubter.

Life has given me another chance.

I'll rise like the phoenix out of my trance.

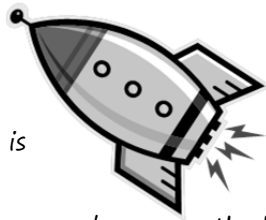
Now is the time to hold my own.

Be thankful for what I have and work on what I  
don't.

*My name is Ankita Mohapatra and I'm a  
7th grader from Parsippany, NJ. I have always loved  
to be a part of our OSA family. Amongst other  
interests like painting and dancing, I would like to  
develop my writing skills. This poem relates to  
confusion and other conflicts that someone has  
within oneself.*

## My Exotic Trip to Libya

By Sahara Rout



is

succeed, the head of mission control will grant me a superior prize, and his genius plan will work. I will have to watch the earthlings very vigilantly, but nothing will stop me or make me fail. Someday, planet Gorp will rise from the ashes and those foul creatures on Earth will be pitiful for their success.

Its 3:34 P.M in earthling time -

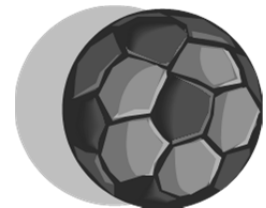
My hovercraft has just landed in a golden desert, with no earthlings surrounding me so far. My materials were all prepared and I was ready to see what awaited me on my journey. As I stepped outside, I expected to be in hurling pain, but all I felt was the sun's scorching warmth on my green skin. The light tan sand warmed my feet, and the slaps of wind in the air made me feel soothed. I walked quickly, seeing what else there was, but all I found was sand. My heart felt disappointment, have I landed in the wrong place? No! My mind exclaimed as I began to think. My navigator told me to be here precisely...

"Ahhh!"

A horrid shriek broke my train of thinking. What was happening? Earth was so much more complex than Gorp, and all of these questions made my body shake radically. I decided to continue traveling against the sun, pondering what that shriek could have been, but as my long legs kept on taking voluminous steps, I reached a petite village. My heart was now calm, and I knew I was close to the earthlings. While stepping into the depths of the earthlings' lair, I wasn't able to see a numerous amount of plants, with the exception of three palm trees bordering the village. The shelter they lived in turned out to be far more exotic than my imagination expected it to be. The mud and clay combined made it a very dark brown shade, with an aged piece of wood that made up each door. I efficiently turned myself invisible to investigate further, but after walking nearly ten feet, I halted. A little earthling was standing there, absolutely still in silence.

3:36 P.M -

It's been two minutes so far without the little earthling giving me crucial pain or agony. He looked clever and cunning for the most. He was tall but looked very young. His tan skin glimmered in the sun as he was covered in sweat, which made him reek with despair. His face suddenly alternated to a grin, and another little earthling began charging towards him with a round, circular object on the tip of his feet. It appeared to have white and black hexagons on it, with streaks of grass stains and mud. I stared at their faces closely. Each one of them was screaming to each other but smiling rapidly; it appeared like they were having oodles of fun as well. As the minutes went by of me watching the group of boys, I began to become more confused by the



minute. Suddenly, my eye caught a glimpse of a piece of paper dangling in the corner of a sewer. I quickly ran over and picked up the grimy covered paper. It revealed a boy also kicking a circular ball and underneath it was big, vivid, lime green letters that read... "SOCCER, TENNIS, AND WATER SPORT COMPETITION ...Go Hard. Go Play. Or go Home...Starts July 16th." The only thing that was ringing in my head was soccer. I looked at the flyer I had in my hands. There was an image of exactly a similar looking boy kicking the ball. I stared at the boy in front of my eyes and the boy on the paper, and that's when I knew that people in Libya enjoy playing soccer as a type of recreation. I smiled to myself. I had only one piece of information so far that could be crucial to Gorp, and now, all I needed to find was what other activities they did for fun. All I had to do was go to this competition tomorrow morning. My brain was in satisfaction and I had done well. I lay down on a nearby patch of grass and looked up at the sky. The stars and the moon were shining their creamy color onto the land, and the warm, stuffy air suddenly became a soothing, cool breeze. My eyelids started to become heavy, and I fell asleep, excited for my destiny tomorrow.

July 16th, 2020/ 6:56 A.M.-

The bright sunlight fell upon my eyes, bothering me, but I had absolutely no desire to open them at all. But to my disappointment, the ringing tone of the boys' talking and laughing filled my ears, and I knew I had to be awakened. I sat up. Each of the boys was wearing a green and blue striped shirt with blue shorts and black tennis shoes. My thoughts assumed this was their soccer uniform. I swiftly got my materials and caught up with the boys. I looked around. There was nothing very exciting or intriguing to me, and my eye caught some glimpses of little stores and a few restaurants that were a few blocks separated from one another. Suddenly, I heard the cluster of boys exclaim in awe. I turned to the left and was stunned as well. Nearby was millions of little earthlings, each one talking to each other or showing off their new, cool moves. The boys disappeared through the vast crowd but my heart was leaping, and cold sweat was dripping down my face. If somehow my invisibility would wear off, the earthlings would torture me for years, or even hold me captive. My mind continuously told me to be careful. I attentively walked over to a pile of black rocks and sat down, ready to take my notes on what tennis and water sports were, when abruptly, a loud horn blared through the air.

"CONTESTANTS, CONTESTANTS! Welcome to the 53rd annual Libyan sport competition," said a husky, loud male voice. "To start off, this fine day is the eleven through twelve year old water competition," the voice boomed.

I perked up and got out a pad of paper and a black ball-point pen. The cluster of people that had just swarmed the air made room for the contestants and backed up. In the center were three girls with beautiful black hair and three other boys that looked very nervous. All of them were standing on the verge of the vast ocean with bright, neon boards at the tips of their feet.

"Heat one, take your mark, GO!" clamored the man.

The group dashed off with the boards in their hands and soon put it underneath their stomachs. When they reached the middle of the ocean, they rapidly began moving their arms back and forth. I watched where the earthlings were and exclaimed! A huge wave was approaching the group, but their faces didn't seem to hold any expression. I wanted to shout, but I knew I had to

hold it within myself. But at precisely the right moment, they all got up on their boards, holding steady balance and started riding the wave while doing various flips. I stood in awe and saw the rest of the crowd cheering and clapping. I took out the flyer from my backpack and saw the word water sports on it. I didn't even have to say it in my head as I had just figured out that the earthlings of Libya enjoy soccer and water sports. Now for tennis, I said cheerfully in my mind.

1:23 P.M.-

After precisely watching every single round of the water sports, I knew that things would get way more exhilarating and intense for the tennis competition. The thing that differed for this sport was instead of six little earthlings, there were eight of them! Four boys and four girls divided by a white net, and each one on them looking way more confident. Quickly, a man in a black and white striped shirt walked a foot away from the players and threw the ball soaring into the air. One of the young girls took advantage of that moment and leaped up, hitting the ball viciously to the other side, where the boys were taken aback and didn't realize it. Thereupon, the man in the striped shirt blew a whistle and pointed to the girls, engaging the audience to clap and shout. My brain was perplexed, but after another round, the boys hit the ball to the girls' side, only this time, the man pointed to the boys. After a few minutes, I comprehended, realizing that when a team didn't hit the ball that was being thrown at them, the opponents would receive a point. I jotted it down on my notes but became aware that I only had three small things down, and that was what the earthlings do for fun. This information wouldn't be enough for the head of mission control! It wasn't even satisfying! My mind activated me to hyperventilate, but I knew this wouldn't take me anywhere. I looked at the landscape in front of my eyes. The cool, blue water was inviting me to come to it, and I arrived at the conclusion to soothe my nerves and take a walk against the shore. My long legs took slow steps away from all the commotion coming from the competition. I inhaled the smell of salt in the air with the wind touching every part of my skin. I closed my eyes and began to relax. I exhaled a deep breath, making sure it took out all my worries. I gradually opened my eyes and stopped. Five feet away from me was a wooden sign, engraved with white words on it. I walked closely and began to read what it said.

"Welcome to the famous Gulf of Sidra! The Gulf of Sidra is a body of water in the Mediterranean Sea, also lying in the northern coast of Libya. It is also known as Gulf of Sirte. The gulf measures 439 kilometers (273 mi) from the promontory of Boreum on the East side and to the promontory of Cephalae on the West. The greatest extension of the gulf inland is 177 kilometers (110 mi) inward and occupies an area of 57,000 square kilometers."

"Whoa!" I exclaimed. I was flabbergasted! The whole time, the little earthlings were swimming in one of Libya's most famous oceans! I promptly jotted down my notes and immediately ran away from the ocean and back tracked my steps into the commotion, running all the way to the desert where my hovercraft was. What must have been about five miles exhausted me, but I didn't stop. I had found one of Libya's most major oceans and their types of recreation, and I was ready to go home.

4:56 P.M.-

After all of the sprinting, my whole body was covered with a mixture of warm and cool sweat pouring down my body, but I was still delighted with the information I had received. I turned on the hovercraft and was glad to hear the familiar beeping noise as it was getting ready to fly. I sat down, relieved to be in my seat, but my body came to a sudden halt. I realized something I hadn't encountered before, and it all just came to me. With the water and the golden deserts, Libya had more to it than red rocks like Gorp did. As I began to fly the hovercraft at fifty miles per hour, its topography gradually changed, and I saw the desert that took me to the little village. I laughed and grinned sheepishly. I turned west and after several minutes, the topography converted to a flat plain with beautiful shades of green, and to accompany it were a few bushes and a skinny looking tree. While flying further and further, the land began to slope into a rigid terrace with dark green evergreen trees and layers of dark and light red rocks. I decided to stop, knowing that I wouldn't be able to resist looking further into the land.

Even though, I would be receiving a grand prize, it didn't matter anymore to me. Just knowing that I was the first alien to have landed in Libya was what made it so marvelous. My attitude about Earth was altered in various ways, and maybe the earthlings weren't so bad, but at least I had the bragging rights to say that I went and explored the wonderful country of Libya!



**This story was second runner-up for the 2012 Meghna Memorial Award, Junior category.**

*Sahara Rout is a 6th grader who lives in Portland, OR with her parents (Jyoti Ranjan and Sucheta Rout) and brother Sambith Rout. Her hobbies include swimming and playing piano. The character in this story is fictional but some of the facts are based on childhood memories of Sahara's Social Science teacher about Libya.*

### **I am Myself By Ishaan Dey**

I am curious and witty  
I wonder of how the universe was created  
I hear voices in my head, good and bad  
I see myself in Times Magazine  
I want to learn Physics  
I am curious and witty  
  
I pretend I am Einstein  
I feel relaxed and stress free  
I touch and relate to people all over the world



I worry for war  
I cry for homeless people  
I am curious and witty  
  
I understand debates and politics  
I say my opinion  
I dream of fame and fortune  
I try my hardest  
I hope for the best  
I am myself

*Ishaan started to take keen interest in creative writings when he was in grade 4. He has won a prize in a local magazine's poetry contest. He loves to read widely and extensively. His other pastimes are drawing, playing football, camping with his Boy Scout troop, and playing around with technology.*

### Kenduguda By Sanjana Senapati

A small village in southern Orissa is where it all begins, as the immaculate depiction. A meager breeze flutters in the cold morning air. In a valley enveloped by prodigious mountains lies a village that is bustling with life. Warm, sweet air fills your mouth as you inhale and brings you the luscious taste of home. The crisp, but delicate, leaves of the palm trees sway as if they are full of life. The sweet fragrance of Earth embraces you, as does the formidable sunrise. The boisterous animals in the distance seem to be calling out to the cool morning air, and the birds overhead chirp in a chorale which harmonizes with all the other serene things in nature. The chilling sense of realization hits me, as I see that this breath-taking panorama could be none other than my home in India, my most beloved place in the whole entire world.



**This story was second-runner up for the 2012 Meghna Memorial Award, Junior category.**

*Sanjana Senapati is 12 years old, in 7th grade, and lives in Nashville, Tennessee.*

### Typical Odias Together

**By Ritika Senapati**

Bringing Odias together is not a hard job  
So you don't need to sob  
Everybody is different in one way or the other  
Because you are just like mother, father,  
sister, and brother  
Staying apart will only hurt you  
Let me tell you that is true  
If you people are friendly,  
You will treat each other gently  
It doesn't matter if you're different in many  
ways  
Everyone will still be friends whether it is  
Friday, Saturday, or Sunday  
If you folks get together, it will remind us of  
our culture  
And also of our Odias adventures



You guys can't be mean to each other  
everyday  
You won't be able to survive trying to stay  
away  
Come on people; try to bring Odias together  
And you will see the result altogether  
If you folks get together and make me smile  
Then I promise you that I will run a mile  
No matter if you're young or old,  
You will always be the best  
In the East or the West

*Ritika Senapati is 10 years old and in 4th grade. Ritika goes to Harpeth Valley Elementary School in Nashville, Tennessee.*



## **Short Stories & Snippets**

### **The Devolution**

Originally written in Oriya language by Ananda Chandra Pahi, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India, titled Abakshya, meaning “degenerated decadence even in opulence.”

Translated with approval from the Author by Lekha Misra, Kingwood, Houston, USA

Soon after arriving at the Bhubaneswar Airport, Professor Sunil Mohapatra and his daughter Aseema boarded a train home bound for their village. Sitting by a glass pane window compartment, he was pointing out the hills, dales, rivers, streams, creeks, brooks, rice fields and countryside pastoral hamlets, cluster villages, and rustic dwellings passing by to his own daughter. While attending college, he has often traveled this same train to and from Cuttack. Aseema had never ever visited her supposedly own village, and while watching wide eyed the fleeting panoramic scenes and landscapes, the train pulled into the Gadamadhapur rail stop.

Three decades since leaving the village and settling in America, Professor Sunil Mohapatra was at a loss to recognize the Gadamadhapur railway station. Drastic changes and transformation have occurred to this sleepy station. Engaging a Cycle-rickshaw for oversize luggage, briefcase, bed holders, and suitcases, he hired another for father and daughter for riding together. On the way from Gadamadhapur to his village, the narrow red dirt road happened now to be paved with black tar. Before, shady leaf trees like Neem, fruit laden trees like Mango, Jamuroll lined two sides. Now, not even a single tree dotted either side of the pitch black road.

From the Cycle rickshaw, Sunil keenly observed the continuous stone-crushing the entire route from the adjacent hills. Using perhaps dynamite sticks, big stone blocks were being pulverized and fragmented to small stone chips. Dust and smoke permeated the surroundings as far as the eye could see. In a short while, the rickshaw came to a stop at the village entry point. Both father and daughter stepped out of the carriage by the edge of the Twin Ponds. Looking at the water holes, Sunil's eyes got wider with astonishment. What really happened to these ponds? Both the banks were in utter disrepair. The water has staled, murky at the bottom and covered with reeds. Multilayer mud silts bulged onto the surface. The water has

turned greenish--kelp leaves have grown almost four inches thick and spread all over.

Bending a knee down, Sunil scooped a little water, cupping together his palms. The yucky water is filled with water bugs. Whereas the villagers used to be in and out of the ponds from sunrise to sunset, crowding almost all the time, not a single person was to be seen!

Sensing something awkward, daughter Aseema interjected, “Why r’e you so puzzled? Aren’t we in our village?”

Without caring to respond, Sunil headed towards his next destination, a compound for village deity-Maa Mangala. Obeisance to the deity is an age old convention before entering the village thoroughfare. The old Banyan tree in the complex had etched a special place in his memory. Hundreds of clay horses and unicorns accolade the girth of this tree. The deity, made out of black granite, bejeweled with puja items, is also adorned with the clay horses. On each Tuesday and on every 14th day of the Lunar calendar, this village goddess is abluted, consecrated, worshipped devotedly. The whole village was festive on many occasions, blowing conches, playing gongs and cymbals with chantings, bhajans and kirtans (step dancing like in ISKON temple). But where was that compound? Sunil failed miserably. Looking around, Sunil noticed at that exact location stood now a Club House. Waves of not so pious Bollywood track music blared with tremendous sound pollution. By way of inquiry, Sunil found out that the granite statue, as an antique piece, got burglarized and sold out to foreigners. Clay horses were all damaged by unruly kids as whipping dolls. The sage like old Banyan tree was cut and sold by the village youth.

Then and there, standing in front of the Club House, Professor, with folded hands over head, prayerfully propitiated to Maa Mangala. Afterwards, Professor walked down the main thoroughfare into the village, closely followed by young village urchins. Peering from half shuttered windows and sparing verandas, villagers stared incognito at the America-returned father-daughter duo, alien to the native village ambience.

Professor, a bonafide native of the village, strangely found himself as a resident alien in his own town, not being able to properly recognize others in the village or able to accept his transformed domicile. While marching steadily towards his own plot, scanning all along the rows of neighboring homes, a fading portrait of his home was flickering in

his memory's canvas: Mother inside the kitchen preparing mustard sauce in a stone grinder, Father reading aloud cantos from Bhagabatam by a dimmed Kerosene lamp. Season of Rain, drenching rain, dancing over the thatched roof. Pumpkin vines spreading leaves and tentacles with blooming yellow flowers, some bearing green bulb shaped baby pumpkin squash. As if every square inch of the house bore the insignia and foot prints of his boyhood days.

Sunil felt empty inside and got vexed at himself. Merely spending thirty something years overseas in a distant land called America did not necessarily have to create a quagmire of not being able to locate his inherited house. And to not recognize his own home, requisitioning others around, was out of the question and instantaneously banished from his active mind. It was a shame, not being able to properly point out the precise location of his own boyhood home.

Once again, he focused on discovering his house by a few surrounding landmarks: the stone ringed Water Well with a cemented circle base; a full grown coconut tree-but someone has chopped it down, leaving now an ugly stump. Somewhere, he hazarded a guess, sits his ancestral home amidst these highlights. Out in front of his house, there lay an oblong, stone carved cattle feeding station, a tad below the veranda, where cows slurped and chewed their food. This piece of feeding stone station has somehow remained intact.

Professor strode up onto this verandah of the house. Mud brick walls have been replaced with some modern composite asbestos material, though still adorned with a thatched roof. One wall still has a glass mirror embedded, where he used to tidy his appearance daily growing up. Next to it, a rigged shelf cut deep into the wall. He spontaneously inserted his full hand, and a sticky glass marble rolled into his palms. He used to roll glass marbles in these very same dusty lanes. Very tenderly, he put the marble in his suit pocket. Gingerly, he moved towards the front doors. While still young, he remembered having once demanded delicious goat-meat curry, failing which, he struck twice on the doors with a blunt axe, leaving two scratches. The doors still clinging on to those two markings were a confirmation of his own home!

The doors, though, were bolted from inside. He shook and yanked the chain iron hooks. Moments after, when the doors opened, Professor and daughter Aseema felt relieved and elated.

A middle aged man came inquiring, "What do you want? Pure Chauhi rice wine or Mahuli fruity liquor?"

Startled, Professor stepped back asking, "Are you selling contraband here?" Sarcastically, the man sharply countered, "Not sell liquor on a liquor outlet? Expect to sell nectar, fruits, milk, ghee...?"

Professor inquired, "Who set up this stall here? Whom does the house belong to?"

The man gave a hard glance at the strangers and matter of factly replied, "In the past, this house was owned by Mr. Anil Mohapatra, Senior. But he is long dead. His only son left for the seven seas and is said to be living in America. Mahendra Biswal, the village touter, is said to have bought the home stead property. He only had the guts to open the liquor den here."

Professor, by way of introducing himself, said, "I'm that Sunil Mohapatra. I know for sure my late father had not sold any fixed or transient landed property. He lacked nothing. I cared to send my father money regularly. Neither have I, as his only son, sold any property to anyone. I have left America once and for all and shall live here for the rest of my life and forever."

The man simply remarked, "Mahendra Biswal is a cunning manipulator and the village chairman. From ministers to legislators, down to the police officer, all are in his clutch. It's next to impossible to get back anything from him. There lies maybe a sliver of hope if the village youth group can be convinced. This will get resolved."

Professor and his daughter bolted towards the village Club House. He got nostalgic, how the whole village was surrounded by lots of mango trees, many a lazy mid-afternoon of scorching sun he had whiled away in these mango orchards. He could recite every mango tree's name committed into his memory. Now, neither exists, any orchards nor even a single mango tree. Professor got even more sentimental in these treeless, desolate village surroundings. He tried to remember as many individual trees like NEDEI (sleepy), KALEI (shadowy), KADALIA (pungent), RASUNIA (garlic), SUNDARI (beauty), NADIA (chewy), NAKAI (nose shaped), JAHANAGHUDDI, TARAGHUDDI, NABATEI (elixir), GHUMA (hangover), BAGANAKHI (pare nail), GALAPODI (hoarse throat), CHEPETI (flat face), and the like... He made a dash towards all the sage-like mature fruits and leafy trees: Big Banyans, Great Plums, but alas! Nowhere, none existed.

Aseema got startled by the streetlight pole lighting up at the timely onset of inky village dusk. She turned to her father timidly, reminding him to make lodging arrangements for night fall.

Reality replacing wishful thinking, Professor advanced rapidly towards the Club House. At once they introduced themselves to all present young

members of the village club. He appealed to them, expressing his desire to spend the night in the club's guest room. Hearing from him that his was a permanent mission to settle down, but for the village charlatan, they expressed joy and assured him of getting back his rightful residence from Mahendra Biswal, the village stalwart usurper.

Professor and Aseema moved in to the club guest room as evening approached. After eating dinner dishes of flat puffed bread and mixed lentil soup from the lone road crossing village eatery, four youth leaders ventured right off to face Mahendra Biswal at his house.

Before darting out, they said, "Please don't be worried, your property will be reinstituted by whatever means necessary before the end of the night."

At 8: pm sharp, the four Club boys arrived at Mahendra Biswal's home and appraised him of Sunil Mohapatra's arrival in village, insisting also that his inherited house be rightfully returned. Mahendra Biswal countered by saying, "While still alive, Anil Mohapatra had sold his holding. Then this useless person was sitting in the faraway, foreign land of America without care or concern. As such, in the bygone revenue settlement, the property deed-title is transferred and recorded in my name. Club boys demanded he produce original evidence, to which Mahendra Biswal questioned their legal rights, raising his voice, "It all will be verified by honorable court if and when the need arises!"

Club boys challenged him by promising to convene a village general body meeting as early as next afternoon, where Mahendra Biswal would have no choice except to produce the veracity to convince all. At the very mention of a village meeting, Mahendra Biswal sobered up and twisted his statement adding, "You are all innocent hearts. For over thirty long years, Sunil Mohapatra was living, crossing seven seas, in America. He never even bothered to put his foot once in this village--which now he calls his own. Why, suddenly, he thinks to have remembered it out of the blue?"

The club boys, with vacant eyes, looked at one another. They had no simple solution for such a sudden, complicated question.

Sensing them neutralized, Mahendra Biswal further added, "Sunil Mohapatra was working as an American spy. Mighty America expelled him. Returning back, he has the guile to whine about the lost grandeur of his childhood village as if nothing is left except decadence and dilapidation. He distorts the truth in front of all other villagers that you all, the village boys, chopped down the Big Banyan Tree

to build the Club House. Have not you heard of this ruse yet?"

The club boys felt their hearts pierced by fiery flame as they stared at one another's contorted faces. A serpentine rage coiled feet up to head, nostrils inflated, dilating pupils and bulging out eye sockets expanded bushy brows. Mahendra Biswal assessed the reaction of his patent incitement. Elatedly, he added further, "When big money goes to one's head, it can make anybody do anything. Sunil is an escaped spy, in our country working now on behalf of our enemy, Pakistan. Today I'll be the first one to take the first step of reporting at the local Police substation. And God forbid if the police peace officers find out that you all have given shelter to a coward traitor- a hypocritical citizen of this country. You all will be thrown into the jail and do hard prison labor for absolutely no fault of yours!"

The club boys abruptly made an about turn on their heels and were rewarded by Mahendra Biswal with four big bottles of country hard liquor with finger chicken delicacies to go with it. No time was lost in finishing the spree, and by exactly 10 pm, the boys showed up at the Club House totally inebriated.

Professor and his daughter were in the middle of a bread and soup dinner. The said foursome club leaders suddenly jumped up and stomped on the foods spread on floor. They started ransacking the suitcases and personal valuables, including expensive electronic gadgets, and scattered the rest of the items all over. They tried to drag Aseema for dirty dancing, gesticulating, passing obscene comments.

No matter how much both Professor and Aseema appealed to their commonsense civility, all got ignored. They were being fouled up through absolutely no fault of theirs, and their appeals were further answered by more aggravated physical assaults-kicking and punching.

Somehow, father and daughter managed to get out of the club premise. Still half hungry in belly, bruised in body, weary in mind and miserably humiliated, in this eerie dark village at night... Till late night, father and daughter knocked on many doors but met with resistance, refusal and disbelief as Mahendra Biswal had already branded the father daughter duo as opportunist spy-traitors and threatened definite reprisal for providing support or shelter.

Now, out under the open village sky in such wintry, bone chilling, cold, windswept, dreary night, father and daughter tried huddling together with a bedroll and blankets from their bed holder.

Morning broke for them at 7 am when a police contingent arrived, accompanied by none other than Mahendra Biswal and the foursome Club boys. The police inspector lifted up the covered blankets using his cane baton. Professor woke up with bleary eyes. Some village onlookers had already gathered, forming a ring around. He gently woke up his daughter Aseema, dreading this early morning unusual spectacle.

The police inspector curtly asked, "Are you Professor Sunil Mohapatra?"

He replied shakily, "Yes."

"Since you have been reported as a spy, I'm arresting you via our National Security Act," informed the peace officer.

Professor got puzzled, and politely but firmly said, "Officer, believe me, I'm not at all any spy. I'm a native born, bonafide individual of this village. I have an inherited house and estate. I have also a passport and Visa. Please peruse for veracity and truth."

Mahendra Biswal jumped in, interjecting loudly, "Nowadays, everything can be forged, copied, altered, imitated-- counterfeit 500 rupee notes, 1000 rupee notes. Nothing is impossible to forge, not even fraudulent passports and rubber stamped visas."

The police officer inspecting the authenticity of the documents murmured, "To examine the originals, these need to be sent to appropriate authorities, experts and specialists. Accompany me to the police substation. Get seated in this vehicle."

Professor explained, "I'm not taking recourse in any lie or deception. Ask the real villagers, they can vouch I'm just one of them. I might have been a long absentee inhabitant, but I'm one of them nonetheless. After 30 years, I'm back to my own, our own village."

The police officer asked, "I gather you are a person from this village, but why stay there in America, a foreign country, for 30 long years, never even visiting your home once since? Explain to me how come you suddenly seem to have remembered and then arrived here?"

Professor Sunil Mohapatra shot back, "Would you believe, I had planned to buy a beautiful, ultra-modern house in New York as our family home. While driving on a byway to consummate the final Deed Title Closing transferring it to our possession, I glanced upon a striking cottage-house in a leafy suburb. This particular cottage had an eerie resemblance to my boyhood home in my native hamlet. Mud block walls, straw thatched roof, earth tone color...as if my child hood

home descended upon this very cottage I came across. Jogging my memory momentarily to my native village-a warehouse of haunting music, melodious as ever, the dust, earth and dirt enticing – as if harkening back for the return of this native-I got stunned-awakened! The white, wide elevation-column of my just bought Colonial palace, my postmodern home, which bound in its girth the chain of a leash suddenly snapped.

Realizing how the quintessential Americans have left in hordes the city, the nightmarish life style of opulence and decadence, spending millions to recreate a simulated rural village living community ambience, I wondered why can't I live the rest of my life in my own heavenly home in my native village amidst all natural settings and surroundings?

Do you know, in all my thirty years living in America, I earned a lot of money, created a lot of wealth and prosperity. I have no more appetite for material accumulations. Knowing too well that one life to live, earn here and spend it all here, may be an American mantra, but sharing some with where I came from has been my sub conscious priority. This dormant feeling got reactivated, especially with my sweet wife's untimely passing on. Thus it dawned upon me to chronicle the bittersweet memories with rainbows and butterflies acting upon the dream of my dreams. Now I arrived at the destination to the shock of my life--where everything seems topsy-turvy, upside down!

I came; I saw but noticed devolutions, extinctions, ruins, dilapidations, ape imitations and lots of hybrid improvisations. In the process, my village has been ravaged, disfigured, truncated and transformed. Noticed further, strange rows of houses sprang up where once stood mud brick walls with natural multi-color clay polished with mural figurines. A distraught chaos-a house built with mud walls roofed in corrugated tin metal or asbestos composite covering--another built with stone walls, straw reed roof and pukka flooring. Dysfunctional symmetry is a travesty of progress and advance. Broken tar pathways with dotted pot holes where stood once stone pebble laid sideways or sun baked hard clay brick paved village trails. Denuded trees of old and young, shady or fruity, shockingly desolate all around the village where once stood spiraling mango grooves and plum orchards. Dried up village ponds in utter despair. Desecrated holly compounds where mother Divine deity was being worshipped with piety-defying, centuries old customs and traditions.

When I left the most modern metropolis called New York in the only global super rich adoptive country called America, I arrived neither in

a village nor a city, neither natural nor artificial, neither organic nor planned, neither pastoral nor panoramic.

However, like any true tale is stranger than fiction, when I discovered that my own inherited house-my would be dream home- has been usurped and converted to a liquor den, manipulated by no other than an influential elected village elder, I'm aghast and deeply hurt."

Listening to the courageous conviction of an accomplished professor and a true son of the soil, the police officer had a humbling change of heart.

He arrested Mahendra Biswal on the spot for lodging false reports, inciting villagers, and illegal procurement of landed property. He also arrested the foursome club boys, filing charges for harassment and damage to personal valuables under the influence, compounded by underage drinking and prohibition violation.

Thus, seizing a golden moment, Professor addressed every one present, appealing to the police officer, "Please, release all of them for my sake. Now I need each and every one's cooperation and help more than ever to rebuild and re make the village in a glorious tradition. The true essence of Indian heritage, tradition, custom and culture still can be resuscitated, which essentially lives in her village unit. And if the slippery slope of western decadent life style creeps in, overwhelming this basic nucleus, fifty to hundred years from now, the living, breathing village life will be a skeletal, hollow concept. And," he continued, adding, "when or if a future generation boy or girl asks to show him or her a village, either it will be a model design, a descriptive document in a Metro Museum, or displayed in an Art museum in the form of an Oil Painting depicting the nuances of a long disappeared village."

The police officer removed the hand cuffs and released the so far misguided villagers.

The foreign returned Professor had already started sketching an ideally re-engineered, holistic village, the architectural blue print in his mind's eye.

*This short story, by the eminent Odia writer Ananda Chandra Pahi, was written almost a quarter century earlier in the contemporaneity of Manoj Das's Abu Purusha Ebam Anayanya Mane's collected short story genre. This truly transcends time, depicting the evolution and devolution of village life and a nostalgic, idealistic foreign returned protagonist in a terrible dilemma. The translator has tried to portray close to the original writer's literary flavor, essence and nuances as capable with all admitted handicaps. North American expatriate readers' generosity is appreciated in advance.*

## The Peepal Tree: A Short Story

By Dr. Prasanna K Pati

Ohio was experiencing one of the most bitter winters that anyone could remember. Columbus was blanketed with snow. The sky was overcast. There had been no sun for days. It was very depressing weather.

I had been in practice of psychiatry for many years. After completing my training in a reputable mid-western University Medical Center, I decided to relocate to Columbus. I enjoyed the many cultural events and programs offered by Ohio State University. Despite the weather, my day was full with appointments.

"Dr. Sonjee, you are a Hindu. You are a shrink in America. Is that compatible? You Hindus believe in millions of Gods and Goddesses. You even believe in a God of Death, Yama or something like that. You believe in ghosts and witches. Don't take me wrong, Doc. I am your patient here in this hospital. There is nothing personal against you. Besides, I am curious."

I interrupted my patient in his psycho-therapeutic session, and asked, "Mr. Girod, are you expressing concerns about my competency to understand and treat you?"

"No." Mr. Girod replied, "Nothing like that, Doc. I like you personally. It's just that I have been to so many psychiatrists for my mental problems...maybe, a Hindu psychiatrist can fix me. With all the mystery and magic of your religion, you may have special powers."

Mr. Girod was a bright, likable patient who suffered from anxiety attacks, intense headaches, outbursts against family members, whom he loved dearly, and varying periods when he would withdraw from the world. Being a relatively wealthy man, he had gone to a number of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts while living in Detroit. His symptoms waxed and waned, but he never became stabilized. Generally we had good therapeutic support, but today's discussion disturbed me. I wondered about Mr. Girod's comments. His reference to ghosts and witches especially bothered me. The encounter made me think of Samantapur.

Samantapur was an ancient little town in the heart of India, situated on the bank of a sacred and turbulent river. While taking daily walks in the streets of Columbus, I would think about my upbringing in a traditional society, my religion and the rituals, and the many temples in Samantapur. Somehow, the temple to Shiva, the Hindu God of Destruction, intruded again and again on my

consciousness. It has been many years since I last visited the temple, but all the images were sharp. At first, I couldn't understand why I would be preoccupied with the temple for so many days in Columbus, so far away from Samantapur. There were multiple flashes of memory, the temple with the sacred Peepal tree in the backyard and on the bank of the river. I knew that my father had regularly worshipped Shiva in the temple. That night I felt anxious and apprehensive.

I had a restless night. It must have been the early hours of the morning that I heard myself mumbling, waking with a sense of fear but with great relief that it was only a dream about the ghost in the Peepal tree. The people of Samantapur, I pondered with much fondness, were so hopelessly superstitious. They had their beliefs in the magical, the mysterious, and above all, in ghosts and witches. I smiled to myself. But the ghost in the Peepal tree was unique. I remembered that as a child I had heard that a highly respected and beloved teacher had died rather suddenly while only in his late twenties. His death had shocked the ancient town. Nobody could remember the details. It was many years ago since he had passed away, but all Samantapur still believed that his ghost had taken abode in the Peepal tree along with other ghosts.

I remembered as a child, all the stories about the Peepal tree, about all the ghosts living there, and their nocturnal wanderings in Samantapur. Above all, I remembered the Teacher Ghost, who, according to old-timers, died an unhappy man because of a romance that had failed and broken his heart. The story was that he was dead for at least three days before the neighbors became concerned because nobody had seen him or his elderly mother. When some town elders from Samantapur broke into the house, they found the old woman cradling her son in her lap, softly talking to him and telling him to "Wake Up." Nobody knew how he died. The old woman sobbed loudly every night and never accepted that her son was gone. She died a few months later.

It was almost two months later that I visited Samantapur. Even though my visit was a whirl-wind of activities, I thought about the nightmarish dream in Columbus, about the Peepal Tree and the Teacher-Ghost who had paid a visit to me. Although the ghost was a vague and blurred image in my mind, nevertheless, on this brief visit to Samantapur, I was keenly aware of that image. As time passed, I began to ask myself, "Why not visit with the Teacher-Ghost? Why not find out if that Ghost even existed in the Peepal Tree? Why not find out how he died an untimely death? Why not find out what his

mother had told him just before he passed away? Why not----?" All those questions began to agitate me. I wondered if I was losing my mind. After all, I was a psychiatrist.

It was almost midnight. I could not sleep. I looked at the immobile lizard on the ceiling of the guest house in Samantapur. It was drizzling outside. I opened the window and looked out, anxiously. Samantapur, the town where I grew up, slept, still with hardly any sounds, unlike my town in distant America. I got dressed, went out of the guest house, started walking towards the temple and the Peepal Tree. It was probably a mile or so. The street was lighted dimly. I didn't see anyone. It was safe to walk alone in Samantapur even at that time of night, unlike many towns in America. I could see some people sleeping on cots on the street, others on verandas adjoining their houses.

The narrow street leading to the temple of Lord Shiva, the Hindu God of Destruction, had no lights at all so I walked slowly. As a child, I had walked that street many times on my way to the river. I was a bit surprised that I was not anxious, but rather expectant and curious. I slowly went around the ancient temple to the backyard. I didn't see or hear anything. I looked around and went even closer to the Peepal tree. It was so dark.

I slowly went forward and touched the tree with reverence. A flood of memories came back to me. I thought of my many visits to this ancient temple, and the people of Samantapur who had long since departed. I felt like I had gone back in a time tunnel. I began to feel anxious, thought it was time to return to the guest house, when I heard a clear voice, "Come near me. I have been waiting for you for fifty years."

Startled. I suddenly felt frightened. I thought I was hallucinating, but managed to say simply, "Who are you?"

"I am the Teacher-Ghost. I visited you in your dream in Columbus. Do you remember what I told you to do?"

I took courage and said clearly, "Yes, it just came back to me. You directed me to come and visit you. I can even remember your face in that dream. Here I am, all the way from America." I looked around. I didn't see or hear any apparition, no movement or sounds after what seemed like an eternity.

Then I heard the same voice coming from the top of the tree, "I will tell you my story. People in Samantapur think that I died very unhappy, and that is why my soul is not liberated and why I became a

Ghost. They even think I was either murdered or killed myself. I want you to know the truth."

I looked up into the rustling tree branches. I found myself shouting at the tree "Tell me the truth."

"I will tell you the truth. Do you remember the well only a few yards from my house? Perhaps you have forgotten, but it is about a quarter of a mile from here. I have visited that well every night since I have given up my body."

I shouted again, demanding, "Please go on."

"Yes, that well from which her body was recovered. People in Samantapur have forgotten her, but not me."

I protested, "No, I haven't forgotten. Her name was Basanti. She was extraordinarily beautiful and you were in love with her."

I heard a deep sigh not too far from where I was standing.

"Yes, I was in love with her and she was in love with me. It was 1927. But we were not allowed to get married."

I spoke back, "Basanti committed suicide." I looked up into the tree again, still unable to see anything.

A sad voice came back, "Yes, she jumped into that well. They found her body the next morning."

I replied, "My mind is playing tricks on me. I was then a small boy. I cannot remember all my feelings. I didn't understand why Basanti had to kill herself. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy, but why couldn't you get married?"

"You have been away in America too long. Don't you remember all the taboos, the caste system and no marriage between castes? You know I was Brahmin and Basanti belonged to a low caste. All of Samantapur was against our marriage. I pleaded with the citizens of Samantapur. It all fell on deaf ears. Basanti and I became the target of ridicule, hatred and taunts. Life became unbearable for us. There were only two people who supported us, and that was my mother and your father." I heard a resounding laughter from the top of the Peepal tree. "My mother, what a woman! I can tell you how progressive she was, supporting her Brahmin son for a love marriage with a girl of lower caste, a thing unheard of anywhere in India in those days. I would say my mother and your father belonged to the next century in their progressive thinking and acceptance of all human beings."

I interrupted, "Get on with the story and nothing but the truth."

"After Basanti's death, I became a recluse. I wouldn't come out of the house. Once, I tried but was hit with stones. I decided I should meet death. You know the Sufis of ancient India, almost like sages and gurus, men of much wisdom. They used to decide on the time of their departure from the world. You should read the stories of the great Sufis of Delhi during the days of the Sultanate, before the Moguls conquered India. I made an appointment with death and entered deep meditation."

I couldn't keep myself from screaming at the treetop, "Go on, what was it like, your tryst with Death?"

The voice came back clearly, "I remained in deep peace. I meditated on the great philosophical questions of life, as the sages had done for thousands of years. I was enlightened. I was no more an earthly creature, but somewhere else. I died in my mother's lap. I had invited Death, it wasn't suicide. You tell the people of Samantapur my true story. I have to leave now."

I shouted back, "Do not leave. I have one question, you must answer."

I heard the voice, "Go ahead."

"Why did you wait so long to tell your story? And why did you call me all the way from America to tell your story? You could have told your story to someone else in Samantapur." I looked up into the tree again, straining my ears for the voice to come back.

After a long pause, the voice came back, clear and compassionate. "I am glad you ask that question. I had almost forgotten to tell the rest. Not very far from you on your left, in the temple courtyard, the bier with your father's body was brought in. You know very well that he died suddenly after a brief illness just after you left for America. I remember that night. The entire town was in shock, almost in disbelief that he had passed away. You know those ancient Hindu rites for twelve days before a soul is released. Those rites for your father were held very close to this tree, and I was a witness to all those rites."

I felt dizzy, I felt my heart pounding against my chest wall but shouted back, "Tell me more, tell me all, tell me the truth, the whole story."

The voice came back, soothing and calming, "Because his soul was released on the twelfth day, he came and talked to me."

"Do you mean to say that his apparition came and talked with you? Do you mean to say he came to talk with you after he passed away?"

The voice clearly replied, "Yes, he came to this tree. He told me to give this message to you: *My son is on his way to America. Some people in*

*Samantapur are saying I died because of the shock of his departure. You call him for a visit, tell him your story and tell him what I have told you just now. And give him this family ring to take to America. And with that, your father handed me a gold ring."*

I stood there, overwhelmed with emotions, until I felt a ring slip into my palm. It was getting to be almost early dawn. I looked at the ring which my father had once worn and then looked up at the tree. It was just a beautiful old Peepal tree slowly emerging into the light of the dawn. I stood there with folded hands and softly said, "Thank you."

On my way back to the guest house, I stopped at the well, looked down, and offered a silent prayer.

It had been many years since my return from India. I was busy seeing patients in my office in Columbus. During an interlude, my receptionist called me and said, "A Mr. Girod would like to see you for a few minutes." I clearly remembered my patient, Mr. Girod, who had improved very much, and was now a successful travel agent in Detroit.

I came out quickly to the receptionist area, greeted Mr. Girod warmly, and guided him into my office. Mr. Girod, I noticed, looked healthy and well. He talked about his family and business and a recent trip to India. He told me how much he enjoyed his visit to India. After a lot of friendly conversation, I suddenly remembered what Mr. Girod had said about my being a Hindu, believing in Gods and Goddesses, ghosts and witches. I reminded Mr. Girod about it.

Mr. Girod laughingly said, "Well, Doc, do you still believe in Gods and Goddesses, ghosts and witches after being in America for so many years?"

I became tense, went over to the window, and then returned to my chair. Mr. Girod noticed that I had a faraway look, as in another world. He added, "Sorry Doc, perhaps I offended you."

I quickly said, "Not at all, Mr. Girod. I just thought about a ghost, an encounter with a friendly ghost, shall we say." Both of us laughed aloud, and then I looked fondly at the gold ring I was wearing on the middle finger of my right hand.

*Dr. Prasanna K. Pati is a retired psychiatrist. He is probably the first Indian to play a role in an Oscar winning Hollywood film, as Dr. Sonjee in the 1975 classic One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.*

## **Story of a Risky Episode in a Pleasant Trip to Mexico**

By Amiya K. Mohanty

In the fall of 1980, the fifth World Congress for Rural Sociology met in Mexico City, where I presented a paper on Socio-Economic change in Appalachia. My wife Sarat Kumari also accompanied me to Mexico. We stayed in a nice hotel in Mexico City for five days. Mexico City is a very populated and very beautiful city. It has beautiful parks, lakes and museums. In fact, the Anthropological museum in Mexico City is a huge and excellent one. After visiting all worth-seeing places in the city, we decided to go to Acapulco, which is about four hour's drive from Mexico City. Due to convenience and time constraint, we decided to go by bus from Mexico City early in the morning, spend the afternoon in Acapulco, and be back to Mexico City by night.

The next morning, we took a taxi from the hotel to the bus stand. In the bus stand, we met an interesting person, a middle aged white lady with a long orange colored dress with beads, a necklace around her neck, and a hand bag made of beads, the kind monks and nuns hold. As soon as she saw us, she came near us and greeted us with "Namaskar". We both, my wife Sara and I, were very delighted and we asked her about her whereabouts. She introduced herself as "Radhika", a disciple of Swami Dayananda Saraswati. She mentioned to us that she was of British descent and was settled in a small village in Mexico, about two hours by bus from the city. The name of the village was Iquala. The bus to Acapulco was about an hour late from the scheduled time. Thus, we got some time for friendly conversation. She presented a bronze bangle to my wife Sara as a token of friendship and also invited us to go to her place and spend a night with her on our way back from Acapulco to Mexico City. She convinced us that it would be a great pleasure to have us one night since she had an extra bedroom, a small kitchen and a bathroom. She also mentioned that she had an old car which she used for short distances. She promised to pick us up from the bus stand as soon as she received our telephone call from the Iquala bus stand. She was also very excited to take us round and show us the Mexican village the next morning. We accepted her invitation with great pleasure and got in the bus for Acapulco. After a very enjoyable afternoon in Acapulco, we got in the bus in the evening around 7 p.m. to come back to Mexico City via our new friend Radhika's village Iquala, where we were supposed to spend the night.



We started the bus ride with interesting conversations with some Mexican passengers who had questions and queries about our Ex Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. While our discussions on the bus were getting more and more interesting, the weather outside was getting awful. The sky was progressively turning dark with lightening, thunders and rain. Around 10 p.m., the bus reached the small town Iquala, where it was raining heavily. The entire town was dark because the electrical power system was broken down.

As planned, we both got down from the bus and looked for a telephone. The bus left, and we came to the office of the bus stand and found that the telephone was out of order. We could not get hold of Radhika. Then, we decided to go back to Mexico City to our hotel. We asked the person in the office about the next bus. But unfortunately, we found out that there were no more buses that night going to Mexico City. Thus, we had no other choice other than to look for a motel or hotel. Outside, the weather was very bad. There was no place in the bus station to sit down or wait for a while. He told us that we might find a motel two to three miles away from the bus stand. Then the man closed the door and left for home. There was no porch to stand on, so we did not have any choice but to walk in the rain to find a place to stay.

It was raining continuously hard. It was dark and the roads were muddy with a lot of rain water. We did not have any other choice than to walk and find a motel. We started walking in the rain with our two hand bags in our hands. There was no one along the way except the two of us walking somewhat aimlessly with the hope of reaching the motel or finding someone on the way who could help us to find the motel.

After walking for about a mile, we saw a dim light at a distance about a quarter mile away from us. With a great hope, we kept walking to reach that place. By that time, my pants, shirt and thin rain coat were all wet. Sara had her saree and a thin rain coat too. We had two small cotton hand bags with our night packs. They were completely wet by then. However, with a lot of hopes we walked near the dim light. We saw there a huge black man with a heavy iron bar, standing near a dim gas light. I asked him, if a motel was nearby. I did not know whether he understood me or not, but he said two words in a loud voice, "Funeral home." Then he got inside and closed the door. Then we had no choice than to walk again.

In a furlong after that we saw a healthy young man standing near a broken wall on the road side. By that time, the rain was subsiding but the

road was dark, empty and dangerously quiet. We got slightly scared of the young man since we heard some horror stories about drug trafficking and murder in Mexico. We did not look at him and passed by, walking a little faster. About ten minutes later, we heard behind us some footsteps, as if somebody was following us. We now got scared and slowed down. The young man overtook us and walked in front of us. We asked him if there was a motel nearby. He looked at us and said, "Follow me." We did not have any choice, and we were desperate by that time. So we quietly followed him. In a few yards, we saw a narrow street on the left, and the young man walked into that street. In a few more yards, we saw a small house in front, and the front door of the house was open. Inside, there were a few men sitting near a gas lamp and playing cards. This young man whom we followed told us, "Wait here." We quietly stood there and waited.

The young man went in and talked to those people inside and came back with a key for an old car parked on the right side of the narrow street. He directed us to sit on the back seats and he himself sat on the driver seat. He started the car and drove on the main street for about 10 to 15 minutes and turned into the street on the left.

Within a few yards, we saw an old motel on the left. The young man escorted us inside and showed us the small office of the motel. We got into the office and saw a man sitting on a chair in front of a small table. I got in the room and asked him, "Please, can we have a room for one night?" The man had a suspicious look at us and said, "No room, go." By that time, we were completely exhausted and utterly desperate. I begged him a room for the night again, but he did not listen. I came out of the office of the manager and saw that our escort was standing outside and was waiting for us. I came near him and said, "The manager refused to rent us a room." Our escort nodded his head and went inside the office. He talked to the manager in Spanish, and after a few minutes, the manager called us and asked me for fifty dollars for the night. I gave him fifty dollars and went to see our escort. Our escort was still waiting outside and perhaps was waiting to find out if we got a room. We came near him and told him that we finally got a room. We expressed our gratitude and asked him if I could pay him some money for his kind help. He smiled and answered, "Money? No desire." I got very emotional and cried with joy and gratitude. Sara also had tears in her eyes. I went very close to him and hugged him and said, "God bless you, amigo." He smiled and said, "Bye, bye," and slowly walked near to his car. We had a great sigh of relief.

We were all wet and extremely tired. We walked upstairs and stepped into our room and went into a deep sleep in a minute.

The next morning, we got up and found that the weather was simply gorgeous, with bright sunshine. The manager came to us and said, "Have breakfast here in the hotel. It is included in the room charge." We had a big breakfast and hurriedly came to the bus stand. One man came near Sara and said, "Hello, Madam Indira Gandhi," and burst into loud laughter. We got in the bus and had a very pleasant trip back to Mexico City. The next day, we flew back to Lexington and from there we came home to Richmond, Kentucky. The entire trip became very memorable for us.

*Dr. Amiya K. Mohanty, Professor Emeritus in Sociology, is a founding life member of O.S.A. since 1969 and is a past president of O.S.A., 1989-91.*

## ମାୟାର କାହାଣୀ

ମୂଳ ରଚନା- ଏଲେନ ପେନ୍ସ୍  
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମର୍ମାନୁବାଦ-ବୀରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଜେନା

*Note: The following play was presented at the Women's Forum during the 2011 Dallas Convention of the Odisha Society of Americas by Ms. Mamata Misra to raise awareness on domestic violence.*

### ସୂତ୍ରଧର-ସୁଧିବ୍ରହ୍ମା

ସାମାଜିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ଆମ ମାନଙ୍କର ଜୀବନ ସବୁ ପରସ୍ପର ସହିତ ଛନ୍ଦାଛନ୍ଦି । ତେଣୁ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଆମେ ମାନେ ଏମିତି ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ କାମ ସବୁ କରି ବସୁ ତାର ପରିଣାମ ଆମେ ନ ବାହୁଁଥିଲେ ବି ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣକ ଜୀବନଟାକୁ ପୁରା ଓଲଟ ପାଲଟ କରିଦେଇପାରେ । ଏମିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ଘଟଣା ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ ହେଲେ ମାୟାର ଜୀବନ କାହାଣୀରେ ଯାହାକି ମୁଁ ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କ ସାମନାରେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନ କରିବାକୁ ଯାଉଛି । ଏଇ କାହାଣୀର ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁ ସାନଫ୍ରାନସିସ୍କୋ ରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Violence ଏବଂ Praxis International ର Ellen Pence ଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରାଯାଇଥିବା ମୂଳ କାହାଣୀ ଉପରେ ଆଧାରିତ ।

ମାୟାର କାହାଣୀ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିବାପାଇଁ ଆମର ଦରକାର ନଅ ଜଣ ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ । ମୁଁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଛି ।

ଅଭିନୟ କରିବାପାଇଁ ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ ମାନେ ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ଓ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଯାଗାରେ ଠିଆ ହେଲେ ।

ମାୟା ମଞ୍ଚ ମଝିରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଖୁଲ ଉପରେ ବସିଲା । ତାର ମୁହଁରେ ବିଷାଦର ଚିହ୍ନ ଏବଂ ଯାହା ଜଣାପଡୁଛି ସେ ଗୋଟେ କେଉଁ ଚିନ୍ତା ଭିତରେ ହଜି ଯାଇଛି ।

ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଥିବା ଅନ୍ୟ ମାନେ ହେଲେ -ମାୟାର ଜଣେ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ, ତାର ମା, ପତିଶା, ତାର ଶାଶୁ, ତାଙ୍କ କମ୍ୟୁନିଟିର ଜଣେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି, ପୋଲିସ ଅଫିସର, ଗୋଟାଏ ନାରୀ ସହାୟତା ସଂସ୍ଥାର ପରିଚାଳକ ତଥା ମାୟାର ଫେମିଲି ଡାକ୍ତର । ସମସ୍ତେ ହାତଦୁଇଟାକୁ ପଛରେ ରଖି ଛିଡା ହେଇଛନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ଗୋଟାଏ କଂବଳ/ଶାଲ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶାଲ ବା କଂବଳ ଗୁଡ଼ାକ ସାମନାକୁ ଦେଖା ଯାଉ ନାହିଁ । କେହି ମାୟା ଆଡ଼କୁ ଚାହୁଁ ନାହାନ୍ତି ।)

ସୂତ୍ରଧର ପୁଣି ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ-

ପଇଁତିରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସ୍କା ମାୟା ଜଣେ ବିବାହିତା ମହିଳା । ଦୁଇଟି ସନ୍ତାନଙ୍କ ଜନନୀ । ବିଗତ ଷୋଳବର୍ଷର ବୈବାହିକ ଜୀବନରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ନିଳମାଧବର ଶାରିରୀକ ତଥା ମାନସିକ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନାର ଶୀକାର ହେଇଛି ମାୟା । ସବୁ ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର ନୀରବରେ ସହିନେଇଛି ସେ- କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ ଆଶାରେ- କାଲେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ କିଛି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହବ କଣ ବରଂ ତା ଉପରେ ଅତ୍ୟାଚାରର ମାତ୍ରା ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ ଆହୁରି ବଢ଼ି ଚାଲିଛି । ଏସବୁ ନେଇ ମାୟା ଅତିଷ୍ଟ ହେଇଗଲାଣି । କେତେଦିନ ଆଉ ସେ ବାହାର ଦୁନିଆ ଆଗରେ ଅଭିନୟ କରିଚାଲିବ ସେ ତାର ଦାମ୍ପତ୍ୟ ଜୀବନ ବେଶ ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ଭାବରେ ଚାଲିଛି ବୋଲି ।

ଦିନେ ମାୟା ତାର ଜଣେ ଅତି ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ନିକଟରେ ତାର ଏଇ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା କଥା କହିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା, ଗୋଟାଏ ଛୋଟିଏ ଘଟଣାର ଉଦାହରଣ ଦେଇ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସମବେଦନା ବଦଳରେ ତା ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ଠାରୁ ଓଲଟି ଭର୍ସନା ପାଇଲା ମାୟା ।

(ବାନ୍ଧବୀର ସ୍ଵର)

ବାନ୍ଧବୀ- ଶୁଣ ମାୟା । ମୋର ମୋଟେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ହେଉନି ଯେ ନିଳମାଧବ ତତେ ଏମିତି କହିଲେ ବୋଲି । ସେ ଏତେ ବଢ଼ିଆ ଲୋକ । ତୋର ତ ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରକାର ସ୍ଵଭାବ । ତୁ ନିଷ୍ଠେ କଣ ଏପଟ ସେପଟ କହି ତାଙ୍କୁ ରଗେଇ ଦେଇଥିବୁ ।

*(ମାୟା ମୁହଁ ଟେକି ଧାଡ଼ିରେ ଛିଡା ହେଇଥିବା ପ୍ରଥମ ଲୋକ ଆଡ଼କୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ଆଉ ସେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଟି ଆଗେଇ ଆସି ଗୋଟାଏ କଂବଳ ଆଣି ମାୟା ଉପରେ ପକେଇଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଏବଂ ମାୟା ଆଡ଼କୁ ପଛ କରି ଠିଆ ହେଲା ।)*

ସୂତ୍ରଧର-ନିଜ ପରିବାର ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସଂପର୍କ ରଖିବାକୁ ନିଳମାଧବ ତାକୁ ବାରଣ କରିଥିବାରୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସହିତ ମିଶିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଏନି ମାୟା । ତଥାପି ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ତା ସ୍ଵାମୀର ଅଜାଣତରେ ଲୁଚେଇକରି ନିଜ ମା ସହିତ ଟେଲିଫୋନରେ

କତାବାଞ୍ଛି କରେ । ତା ମାଙ୍କ କଥାରେ ବି ସେଇ ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସର ଛାପ ।

(ମାୟାର ମା' ଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର-)

ମାୟାର ମା-ମାୟା, ସବୁ ତୋରି ଦୋଷ । ତୁ କାହିଁକି ତୋ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସହିତ ସବୁବେଳେ ଝଗଡ଼ା କରୁଛୁ । ତୋର ସେଇ ପିଲାଦିନର ସ୍ୱଭାବ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗଲା ନି । ସବୁବେଳେ ଏକଜିଦିଆ । ଯାହା ବୁଝିଥିବୁ ସେଇଆ । କେବେ **compromise** କରିବାକୁ ଶିଖିଲୁନି । ତୋ ଅନ୍ୟ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖ । ସେମାନେ ବାହା ହେଇ କେତେ ଭଲରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ତ କାହିଁ କିଛି ସମସ୍ୟା ନାହିଁ । ତୋର କାହିଁକି ଏତେ ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଉଛି? କେବେ ଆଉ ଶିଖିବୁ? କଥାରେ କହୁଛି ସଂସାର ଭିତରେ ଘର କରିଥିଲେ ପଥର ପଡିଲେ ସହି । ଶୁଣ ମାୟା, ତୁ ଆଉ ଅତି ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ କଥାରେ ନିଜମାଧ୍ୟବ ସହିତ ଯୁଦ୍ଧି ତର୍କ କର ନି । ତା ସହିତ ମିଳିମିଶି ଚଳିବାକୁ ଶିଖ ।

(ମାୟା ମୁହଁ ଟେକି ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଲୋକ ଆଡେ ଚାହିଁଲା । ସେ ଲୋକଟି ଗୋଟାଏ କଂବଳ ଆଣି ମାୟା ଉପରେ ପକେଇ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଓ ଯାଇ ମାୟାକୁ ପଛକରି ଠିଆ ହେଲା।)

ସୁତଧର-ମାୟାର ସାହି ପଡିଣା ଲୋକ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ଚାଲିଥିବା ନିତି ଦିନିଆ ଝଗଡ଼ା ଓ ପାଟି ତୁଣ୍ଡ ଶୁଣିଛନ୍ତି ।

(ପଡିଣାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ମାୟାର ପଡିଣା- ବିଚାରା ନିଜ ମାଧ୍ୟବ । ତାକୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଦୟା ଆସୁଛି । ଲେଟ ସିଫ୍ଟରେ କାମ କରି ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବ, ତା ଉପରେ ପୁଣି ଘର କାମ ସବୁ କରିବ । ସେ ଦିନ କହୁଥିଲା ଯେ ତାକୁ ଏବେ କାମରୁ ଆସି ରୋଷେଇ ବି କରିବାକୁ ପଡୁଛି ବୋଲି । ଏମିତି ହେଲେ କିଏ ବା ଝଗଡ଼ା ନ କରିବ ।

(ତୃତୀୟ ଲୋକଟି ଆଗେଇ ଆସି ମାୟା ଉପରେ ଗୋଟାଏ କଂବଳ ପକେଇ ଦେଇ ଫେରି ଯାଇ ତାକୁ ପଛ କରି ଛିଡ଼ା ହେଲା।)

ସୁତଧର-ଏ ଥର ଶୁଣିବା ମାୟାର ଶାଶୁ ତାକୁ କଣ କହିଥିଲେ

(ମାୟାର ଶାଶୁଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ମାୟାର ଶାଶୁ- ବୁଝିଲୁ ମାୟା ତୁ ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଲକ୍ଷଣୀ । ତୋରି ପାଇଁ ଆମ ପରିବାରଟା ନଷ୍ଟ ହେଇଯିବାକୁ ବସିଲାଣି । ତୁ ମୋ ପୁଅ କୁ ଜାଣିଶୁଣି ଏତେ ହଇରାଣ କରୁଛୁ ଆଉ ଦୁନିଆ ସାରା କହି ବୁଲୁଛୁ କଣ ନା ସେ କୁଆଡେ ତୋ ଉପରେ ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର କରୁଛି? ତୁ କଣ ଜାଣିବୁ ବିଚାରା ପୁଅଟା ମୋର କେତେ କଷ୍ଟ ଭିତର ଦେଇ ଯାଉଛି? ମିଛ କହିବା ତ ତୋର ଗୋଟେ ସ୍ୱଭାବ । ସେ ଦିନ ତୁ ତୋ ଶଶୁରଙ୍କ ନାଁରେ କେତେ ବଡ଼ ମିଛ ଅଭିଯୋଗ ନ କରିଥିଲୁ? ଏବେ ଆଉ ତୋ କଥା କିଏ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିବ?

(ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଲୋକ ଆସି ମାୟା ଉପରେ ଗୋଟେ କଂବଳ ପକେଇ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଓ ତାକୁ ପଛ କରି ଛିଡ଼ାହେଲା )

ସୁତଧର-ମାୟା ଯେତେବେଳେ ତାର କମ୍ୟୁନିଟିର ଜଣେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରାମର୍ଶ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ସେ ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ତାକୁ କହିଲେ-(ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ନିଜମାଧ୍ୟବ ବାବୁ ଆମ କମ୍ୟୁନିଟିର ଜଣେ ମାନ୍ୟଗଣ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି । ମୁଁ ବୁଝି ପାରୁନି ଆପଣ କାହିଁକି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଗିରଫ କରେଇଦେଲେ ! କଣ ଦରକାର ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଗିରଫ କରେଇବାର । ଆମ କମ୍ୟୁନିଟିର ନାଁ ଅଯଥା ତଳେ ପଡିଲା । ଏ ସବୁକରି ସାରିଲା ପରେ ଆପଣ ଆମ ପାଖକୁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ମାଗିବାକୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ? **You should be ashamed of yourself.**

(ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଲୋକ ଆସି ମାୟା ଉପରେ ଗୋଟେ କଂବଳ ପକେଇ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଓ ତାକୁ ପଛ କରି ଛିଡ଼ାହେଲା )

ସୁତଧର-ମାୟାର ପୁଅ ତା ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଗୋଟେ ପାଠକଲଟ ଆଣି ତା ମା'କୁ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ସେଥରେ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତିତା ନାରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥିବା ଏକ ସଂସ୍ଥା ସଂପର୍କରେ ସୂଚନା ଥିଲା । ମାୟା ସେ ପାଠକଲଟରେ ଥିବା ଡେଲିଫେନ ନଂବରକୁ ଫୋନ କଲା । (ସଂସ୍ଥାର ପରିଚାଳକଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ସଂସ୍ଥାର ପରିଚାଳକ- ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ, ଆମ ସଂସ୍ଥାରେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପରି ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତିତା ମହିଳାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅନେକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ରହିଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ତା ନ ହେଲେ ଆମେ କିଛି କରି ପାରିବୁ ନାହିଁ ।

(ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଲୋକ ଆସି ମାୟା ଉପରେ ଗୋଟେ କଂବଳ ପକେଇ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଓ ତାକୁ ପଛ କରି ଛିଡ଼ାହେଲା )

ସୁତଧର-ମାୟା ନିଜମାଧ୍ୟବ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଗୋଟେ **restraining order** ଆଣିଥିଲା । ତଥାପି ନିଜମାଧ୍ୟବ ଆସି ତା ଘର ସାମନାରେ ଗାତି ପାର୍ଶ୍ୱ କରି ତାକୁ ହଇରାଣ କରୁଥିଲା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମାୟା ପୋଲିସ୍‌ରେ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରିଥିଲା । ଏବେ ଶୁଣିବା ପୁଲିସ୍ ଅଫିସର ମାୟାକୁ କଣ କହିଲେ

ପୋଲିସ୍ ଅଫିସର- ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ ଆଜ୍ଞା । ଆପଣ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଘଣ୍ଟ ଘଣ୍ଟ ପରି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଘର ସାମନାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଗାତି ପାର୍ଶ୍ୱ କରି ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ହଇରାଣ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ଆପଣ କୁଆଡେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଫୋନ କରି ତକେଇଥିଲେ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ସ୍କୁଲ ନେଇଯିବା ପାଇଁ ଆଉ ସିଏ ଠିକ ଆସି ଘର ସାମନାରେ ଗାତି ପାର୍ଶ୍ୱ କଲା ବେଳକୁ ଆପଣ ଆମକୁ ଫୋନ କରି ତାଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ କଂପ୍ଲେନ କଲେ ବୋଲି । ଆମେ ଏବେ କାହା କଥା କୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିବୁ?

(ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଲୋକ ଆସି ମାୟା ଉପରେ ଗୋଟେ କଂବଳ ପକେଇ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଓ ତାକୁ ପଛ କରି ଛିଡ଼ାହେଲା )

ସୁତଧର- ଥରେ ପୁଅ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଆଘାତ ଲାଗିଥିବାରୁ ମାୟା ତାକୁ ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ନେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ଆଉ ତା ଡାକ୍ତର ସବୁକଥା ଶୁଣି ମାୟାକୁ କହିଲେ-

ମାୟାର **family doctor**- ଦେଖ ମାୟା । ତମେ କି ତମ ସ୍ୱାମୀ କାହା ଦୋଷରୁ ତୁମ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଆଘାତ ଲାଗିଛି ସେବା **determine** କରିବା ମୋର କାମ ନୁହେଁ । ମୁଁ **child protection service** କୁ ଜଣେଇ ଦଉଡି । ସେମାନେ ଯାହା **action** ନେବେ ।

(ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଲୋକ ଆସି ମାୟା ଉପରେ ଗୋଟେ କଂବଳ ପକେଇ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଓ ତାକୁ ପଛ କରି ଛିଡ଼ାହେଲା )

(କିଛି ସମୟ ପାଇଁ ନିଶ୍ଚଳତା, ମାୟାର କିଛି ସ୍ୱର ଆଉ ଶୁଣା ଯାଉ ନାହିଁ)

ସୁତଧର-କଣ ହେଲା ମାୟା ? ତମେ ଏବେ ନୀରବ କାହିଁକି? ଉତ୍ତର କାହିଁକି ଦେଉନ?

(ବହୁ ପରସ୍ତ କଂବଳ ଭିତରୁ ମାୟା ଉଠିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ କଂବଳ ଗୁଡ଼ାକର ଓଜନ ଏତେ ହେଇଥିଲା ଯେ ସେ ଆଉ ଉଠି ପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ ।)

ସୁତଧର-ମାନନୀୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କମ୍ୟୁନିଟିର ସଦସ୍ୟ ବୁଝ । ଆପଣମାନେ ସବୁ ଆଜି ଏଠି ଏକାଠି ହେଇଛନ୍ତି କାରଣ ଆପଣ ମାନେ ନାରୀ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା ସଂପର୍କରେ ଅବଗତ ଏବଂ ଆପଣମାନେ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ଯେ ଏ ସମସ୍ୟାର ନିରାକରଣ ହେଉ । ମାୟା ବି ଏଠିକି ଆସିବି ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଆଶାରେ । ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ, ସମବେଦନା ଓ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ପାଇଲେ ଶକ୍ତି ହୀନା ମାୟା ପୁଣି ଥରେ ତାର ଶକ୍ତି ଫେରି ପାଇବ । ଏଇ ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ଚାଲନ୍ତୁ ଲେଖିବା ପୁଣି ଥରେ ମାୟାର କାହାଣୀ-ମନେ ରଖନ୍ତୁ, ମାୟା ଏବେ ଆଉ ଅସହାୟ ନୁହେଁ । ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ପୁରା ତା ପଛରେ ରହିଛି ।

(ମାୟାର ଦାକ୍ଷରଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ମାୟାର ଦାକ୍ଷର- (ନିଜ ମାଧବ ରୂପରେ ନଥିଲା ବେଳେ) ମାୟା, ମୁଁ ତୁମର ଚାଟ୍ ଦେଖିବି । **Something does not seem right.** ମତେ ଲାଗୁଛି ତମେ ମତେ ନିଜେ କିଛି ଲୁଚାଉଛ । ଦେଖ ମାୟା, ତମର ଡରିବାର କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ତମେ ଚାହୁଁଲେ **privately** ଆମେ ଏ ବିଷୟରେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରି ପାରିବା । ମୁଁ କଥା ଦେଉଛି ନିଜମାଧବ ଏ ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି ଜାଣିବ ନାହିଁ । ମତେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କର । ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ।

(ସେବା ଶେଷରେ ଆସି କଂବଳ ପକେଇଥିବା ଲୋକ ଟି ମାୟା ଉପରୁ ସବା ଉପର କଂବଳଟିକୁ ଉଠେଇ ନେଲା ଓ ତା ଆଡ଼କୁ ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଲା ।)

(ପୋଲିସ ଅଫିସରଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର-

ପୋଲିସ ଅଫିସର- ମ୍ୟାଡାମ । ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଗିରଫ କରିଛି । ସେ ସିନା ମାକୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ମୋର କିନ୍ତୁ ପୁରା ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଯେ ଯେ

ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଅଭିଯୋଗ ସବୁ ସତ । ସେ ଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ କାର ଭିତରଟା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବରେ **foggy** ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ବହୁତ ସମୟ ଝରକା ବନ୍ଦ କରି କାର ଭିତରେ ବସି ନ ରହିଲେ ଭିତରଟା କାହିଁକି **foggy** ହବ? ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପଡ଼ିଶାଘର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଥିଲି । ସେ ବି କହିଲା ଯେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ତଳୁ ଆସି ତା ଘର ସାମନାରେ ଗାଡି ପାର୍କ କରି ବସିଥିଲେ ବୋଲି ।

(ତା ପର ଲୋକଟି ଆସି ମାୟାଉପରେ ଜୁଡା ହୋଇଥିବା କଂବଳରୁ ଗୋଟାଏ କଂବଳ ଉଠେଇ ନେଲା ଏବଂ ମାୟା ଆଡ଼କୁ ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଲା ।)

(ନାରୀ ସହାୟତା ସଂସ୍ଥାର ପରିଚାଳକଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ନାରୀ ସହାୟତା ସଂସ୍ଥାର ପରିଚାଳକ-ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଠିକ ବୁଝିପାରୁଛି । ଯାହା ଜଣାପଡୁଛି ଆପଣ ଗୋଟାଏ ଡ୍ରଗ୍ସ୍ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଦେଇ ଗତି କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ନା ଏପଟେ ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି ନା ସେପଟେ ଏପରି ଅମାନୁଷିକ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର ମୁକାବିଲା କରିପାରୁଛନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି ଆପଣ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି ଏବେ ତରବରିଆ ଭାବରେ କିଛି ନକରି ଭଲଭାବରେ ଭାବି ଚିନ୍ତି ଗୋଟେ କିଛି ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ନେବାକୁ । ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପୁରା ଏକମତ । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ନିରାପଣ ନେଇ ବହୁତ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ଏବଂ ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଯେତେବେଳେ ଯାହା ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଦରକାର ତା' ଦବାକୁ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ । ତେଣୁ କିଛି ଦରକାର ପଡିଲେ ଆପଣ ବିନା ଦ୍ୱିଧାରେ ମୋତେ ଫୋନ କରିବେ । ମୁଁ ବି ଦେଖିବି ଯେ ଆମ ସଂସ୍ଥା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଦିଆ ଯାଉଥିବା ସୁବିଧା ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ଆପଣଙ୍କର କାମରେ ଲାଗିପାରିବ ।

(ତା ପର ଲୋକ ଟି ମାୟା ଉପରୁ ସବା ଉପରେ ପଡିଥିବା କଂବଳଟିକୁ ଉଠେଇ ନେଇ ଗଲା ଓ ତା ଆଡ଼କୁ ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଲା ।)

(ମାୟାର କମ୍ୟୁନିଟିର ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

କମ୍ୟୁନିଟିର ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି-ମୁଁ ନିଜମାଧବ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ପରିଷ୍କାର କହି ଦେଇଛି ଯେ ଆମେ ମାନେ ତାଙ୍କର ହିଂସାତୁଳ୍ଲ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକଳାପକୁ କେବେ ବରଦାସ୍ତ କରିପାରିବୁ ନାହିଁ । ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ, ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ହେଉଛି ଆମ କମ୍ୟୁନିଟିର ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଂଶବିଶେଷ । ସେ ନିଜେ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିବା ଦରକାର ଯେ ତାଙ୍କର ଏପରି ଅମାନୁଷିକ ବ୍ୟବହାର ଯୋଗୁ ତାଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ଲୋକେ କେତେ କଷ୍ଟ ପାଉଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜର ବ୍ୟବହାର ବଦଳେଇବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଆପଣ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଗିରଫ କରେଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକଳାପ ଯୋଗୁ ସେ ଗିରଫ ହେଇଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ଏ ଅବସ୍ଥା ପାଇଁ ସେ ହିଁ ଦାୟୀ ।

(ତା ପର ଲୋକଟି ଆସି କଂବଳ ପକେଇଥିବା ଲୋକ ଟି ମାୟା ଉପରୁ କଂବଳଟିଏ ଉଠେଇ ନେଇ ଗଲା ଓ ତା ଆଡ଼କୁ ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଲା ।)

(ମାୟାର ଶାଶୁଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ମାୟାର ଶାଶୁ- ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ ନିଜମାଧବ ତାର ଏ ବଦଗୁଣ ସବୁ ତା ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଶିଖିଛି । ମୁଁ ଏ ସବୁ ଦେଖି ବି ନ ଦେଖିବାର ଅଭିନୟ କରୁଥିଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ ନୁହେଁ । ନିଜମାଧବକୁ ତାର ସ୍ୱଭାବ

ବଦଳେଇବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ମୁଁ ତାକୁ ବହୁତ ଭଲ ପାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ତା ପରିବାରକୁ ଏମିତିକରି ନଷ୍ଟ କରିଦେବ ? ନାଁ, ମୁଁ ମୋଟେ ତା କରେଇଦେବି ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ ତାହୁଁନି ଯେ ମୋ ନାତି ତା ବାପାଠୁ ଏସବୁ ଖରାପ ସ୍ୱଭାବ ସବୁ ଶିଖୁ ।

(ତା ପର ଲୋକଟିଆସି ମାୟା ଉପରୁ କଂବଳଟିଏ ଉଠେଇ ନେଇ ଗଲା ଓ ତା ଆଡକୁ ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଲା ।)  
(ମାୟାର ପଡିଶାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ମାୟାର ପଡିଶା- ମାୟା, ତମର ଜଦି କାମରୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ତେରି ହବ ତେବେ ମତେ ଜଣେଇବ । ଆମେମାନେ ଯାଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଯତ୍ନନେବୁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଖାଇବା ପିଇବା କଥା ବୁଝିଦବୁ ।

(ତା ପର ଲୋକ ଟି ମାୟା ଉପରୁ କଂବଳଟିଏ ଉଠେଇ ନେଇ ଗଲା ଓ ତା ଆଡକୁ ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଲା ।)  
ମାୟାର ମା'ଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର)

ମାୟାର ମା-ମାୟା, ମା, ତୁ ତ ଅନେକ ଦିନ ଧରି ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲୁ । ଆଉ କଣ କରି ପାରିଥାନ୍ତୁ? ତୋର ଏକଜିଦିଆ ପଣ ଯୋଗୁ ତୁ ସହଜରେ ହାର ମାନିପାରୁନାହିଁ । ତୋର ସେଇ ଏକଜିଦିଆ ପଣ ହିଁ ତୋତେ ଲଢିବାକୁ ଶକ୍ତି ଦେଇଛି । ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଚି ତୁ କେତେ କଷ୍ଟ ଭିତର ଯାଉବୁ । ମତେ ଭାରି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଲାଗୁଛି ମା । ତୁ ଯାହା କରିବାକୁ ଠିକ କରିବୁ ତା ପଛରେ ମୋର ପୂରା ସମର୍ଥନ ରହିବି । ତୋର ଯେତେବେଳେ ଯାହା ଦରକାର ପଡିବ, କହିବୁ । ମୁଁ ଆଉ ତୋ ବାପା ତୋତେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଯିବୁ ।

(ତା ପର ଲୋକ ଟି ମାୟା ଉପରୁ କଂବଳଟିଏ ଉଠେଇ ନେଇ ଗଲା ଓ ତା ଆଡକୁ ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଲା ।)  
ମାୟାର ବାନ୍ଧବୀର ସ୍ୱର)

ମାୟାର ବାନ୍ଧବୀ- ବୁଝିଲୁ ମାୟା । ମତେ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେ ନିଶ୍ଚେ କିଛି ଗୋଟାଏ ହେଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ପଚାରିପାରି ନଥିଲି । ତୁ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଗୋଟେ ବହୁତ ସାହାସୀ ଝିଅ ମାୟା । ଧନ୍ୟ କହିବ ତୋ ସାହାସପଣିଆକୁ । ତୋର କିଛି ଦରକାର ପଡିଲେ ମୋତେ କହିବୁ । ମୁଁ ତତେ ସବୁ ପ୍ରକାର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ । ବୁଝିଲୁ ?

(ତା ପର ଲୋକ ଟି ମାୟା ଉପରୁ ଶେଷ କଂବଳଟିକୁ ଉଠେଇ ନେଇ ଗଲା ଓ ତା ଆଡକୁ ସହାନୁଭୂତିର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଲା ।)

ମାୟା ଏଥର ଉଠି ଠିଆ ହେଲା । ତାର ସମର୍ଥକ ମାନେ ତାକୁ ଚାରି ପାଖରେ ଘେରି ଠିଆ ହେଲେ । ଘନ ଘନ ତାଳି ବାଜିଲା )

ସୂତଧର-ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ଆମେ ଏଇଠି ମାୟାର କାହାଣୀ ଶେଷ କରିବା । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଚରିତ୍ରରେ ଅଭିନୟ କରିଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗଣ । ଏବେ ଆପଣ ମାନେ ଅଭିନୟ କରିଥିବା ଚରିତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସି ଏଠି ଠିଆ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ କୁହନ୍ତୁ ଏ ଚରିତ୍ର ସବୁରେ ଅଭିନୟ କରିବା ପରେ ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କର କଣ ସବୁ ଅନୁଭୂତି ହେଲା ।

ମାୟା, ତୁମେ ଆରଂଭ କର । (ମାୟାର ବକ୍ତବ୍ୟ)

ଆଉ ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ?

(ଅଭିନେତା/ଅଭିନେତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ (ତାଳି)

ସୁଧୀବ୍ରହ୍ମ ! ମାୟାର କାହାଣୀ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ପ୍ରିଣ୍ଟ, ବିବ୍ରତ ଅଥବା କ୍ରୋଧାନ୍ୱିତ କରିଦେଇଥିବ । ତେଣୁ ଆପଣମାନେ ଟିକିଏ ପ୍ରକଟିଷ୍ଟ ହେଲା ପରେ ତାଲକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଶି ମାୟାର କାହାଣୀକୁ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାଲୋଚନା କରିବା । ଏ କାହାଣୀ ଉପରେ ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା କଣ ହେଲା ତାହା ଆପଣ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ବା ମୋ ସହିତ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିପାରିବେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆମେ ମାନେ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଗୁପ୍ତ ତିଆରିକରିବା । ତାହେଲେ ସମସ୍ତେଭାଗନେବାକୁ ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇବେ ଓ ଆଲୋଚନାଟା ବେଶ ଫଳଦାୟକ ହେବ ।

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## ଶତ୍ରୁର ସ୍ନେହ ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, ତେଟନ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ଅଜନ୍ତା ସେମିତି ବକ୍ବକ କରୁଥିଲା । ତା ଭିତରେ ଯେମିତି ଜଳୁଥିଲା କିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ । ବାହାରେ ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଶହେ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ତାପମାତ୍ରା । ଦିନର ଜଳନ୍ତା ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଲାଗିବ ଯେମିତି ମଣିଷ ଶରୀରକୁ ଜାଳିଯୋତି ଛାରଖାର କରିଦେବେ । ଅଜନ୍ତା ବି ସେମିତି ଜଳୁଥିଲା ଭିତରେ । ତା ଆତ୍ମାର ବୃକ୍ତ ଅଙ୍ଗର ଆକାରରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶବ୍ଦ ରୁପ ନେଇ ବାହାରୁଥିଲେ । ପାଟିରେ ବାଟୁଳି ବାଜୁନଥିଲା । ଏମିତି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ପବିତ୍ରକୁ ସାମନାରେ ଦେଖିଲେ ସିଏ କିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ମହାବତ ଭୁଲ୍‌କାମ କରିପକେଇବ । କାମୁଡାକାମୁଡି, ବିଧା, ଗୋଇଠା କିମ୍ବା କିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ଅସ୍ତ୍ରଶସ୍ତ୍ର ପାଇଲେ ଖଣ୍ଡିଆ, ଖାବରା କରିପକେଇବାକୁ ବି ପଛେଇବନି । ଅଜାକରି ସିନ୍ଧାର୍ଥ କହିଲେ, “ତମେ ତ ଏମିତି ଭାଷା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରୁଛ ଯେ କିଏ କହିବ ତମେ ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି-କରିଛ ବୋଲି; ଏମିତି ମନେ ହେଉଛି ଯେମିତି ଆମ ଗାଁର ରାଧା ଖୁଡ଼ୀ, କଳିହୁଡ଼ି ।”

ଅଜନ୍ତା ପୁଣି ବକ୍ବକ ହୋଇ ଗୁଡିଏ ଗାଳି ବର୍ଷଣକଲା ଓ କହିଲା, “ଜାଣିଛ ସିନ୍ଧାର୍ଥ, ସେ ପବିତ୍ର ଯେଉଁଦିନ ମରିବ, ସେଦିନ ମୁଁ ଛାଡ଼ଖାଇ ପାଳନ କରିବି ।”

ଝିଅ ଆରାଧନା କହିଲା, “ମାମା, ତମେ ଏତେ ମିନ୍ଦୁ ଏମିତି କହିବା ଭଲ ନୁହେଁ; ସିଏ ପବିତ୍ର ଅଙ୍ଗ ହେଉଛି କି ଆଉ କେହି ।”

ସିନ୍ଧାର୍ଥ କହିଲେ, “ସିଏ ଆଉ କେହି କାହିଁକି ହେବେ, ସିଏ ପରା ତୋ ମାମାର ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବ ।”

ଅଜନ୍ତା ଫ୍ୟାମିଲିରୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ରାଗିକରି ଉପର ମହଲାର ବେଡ଼ରୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ସିବାପୁର୍ବରୁ ବଡ଼ପାଟି କରି କହିଗଲା, “ସେ ପୋଡ଼ାମୁହାଁ, ଜଳାମୁହାଁ ରାକ୍ଷସ କାହିଁକି ବା ମୋର ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବ ହେବ । ଆଉ ଆରୁ, ସେ ରାକ୍ଷସକୁ ଅଙ୍କଳ ସମ୍ବୋଧନ କରିବା ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ । ସିଏ ହେଲା ମିଷ୍ଟର ଭୋଲ୍‌ଡ଼ମର୍ଟ, ବୁଝିଲୁ; ହ୍ୟାରିପୋର୍ଟର ସିରିଜର ଭିଲିଆନ୍‌ର ଅବିକଳ ନକଲ ସିଏ ।”

ଉପରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଦର୍ପଣରେ ଅଜନ୍ତା ଦେଖିଲା ନିଜକୁ; ସତରେ ତାର ଏମିତି କଣ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେଇଯାଇଛି ? କଥାକଥାକେ ରାଗ, ଗାଳି । ଏ ପବିତ୍ର ଭଳିଆ ମଣିଷକୁ ଯେତେ ମନରୁ ତତି ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ମନଦେବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା ଅଜନ୍ତା, ସେ ଅଳପାଇଶା ଏମିତି ଅପକର୍ମ ସବୁ ଗୋଟିକ ଉପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କରି ଚାଲିଥିଲା ଯେ ତାକୁ ମନରୁ ବିତାଡିତ କରିବାର ଚାରା ନଥିଲା ।

ଏତେ ତାହା ମିଛ ମଣିଷ କହିପାରେ? ଏତେ ଦୁଷ୍ଟ ପ୍ରକୃତି ମଣିଷ ଭିତରେ ରହିପାରେ ? ଏତେ ତଳକୁ ଜଣେ ଯାଇପାରେ ? ସାମାନ୍ୟ କଥାଟିଏ ତ? ସିଏ କଲ୍‌ଚରାଲ୍ ବୋର୍ଡର ଚେୟାରମ୍ୟାନ୍ ହେବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା, ଅଜନ୍ତା ହୋଇଗଲା । “କଣଟା କ୍ଷତି ହେଲା ତୋର ? ମରିଗଲୁ ତୁ କାହିଁକି ? ଚେୟାରମ୍ୟାନ୍ ହେବାଟା କଣ ତୋ ବାପା ସଂପତ୍ତି ନା ତୋ ଶୁଣ୍ଠରଘର ଯତ୍ନରୁ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ? ଦୁଇଟିନି ବର୍ଷର କଥା ତ! ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ବିତିଯିବ; ପୁଣିଥରେ ବୋର୍ଡର ନିର୍ବାଚନ ହେବ । ଯଦି ବାପାର ପୁଅ ତୁ ଆଉଥରେ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ଲଢ଼ । କିଛି ସେମିତି ମଣିଷ ପଣିଆର କାମ କରି ଦେଖା ଯେ ତୁ ବାପାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ପୁଅ । ଏମିତି ଖଳ ଦୁଷ୍ଟ କାମ କରି, ଛଳ କରି, ମୋ ନାଁରେ ଅପପ୍ରଚାର କରି ପାଇବୁ କଣରେ ତୁ?”

ଅଜନ୍ତାର କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ମନ ଲାଗୁନଥିଲା । ନାଁ ରୋଷେଇରେ ମନ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା, ନାଁ ଗବେଷଣା କାମରେ । ନାଁ ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀଙ୍କୁ ଫେନ୍ଦ କରିବାକୁ ସମୟ ମିଳୁଥିଲା ନାଁ ପୁଅଝିଅ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କୁ ହୋମ୍‌ସ୍‌ଡ଼୍‌ସ୍ ଦେଖିବାରେ ମନ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଅଜନ୍ତା ଯେମିତି ବଦଳିଯାଇଛି ?

ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ କହୁଥିଲେ, “ଅଜନ୍ତା, ଜାଣିଛ, ମୋର ମନେ ହେଉଛି, ପବିତ୍ର ତମକୁ ଏତେ ସ୍ନେହ କରୁଛି ଯେ ତମକୁ ଶୟନେ, ସପନେ, ଜାଗରଣେ ସ୍ମରଣ କରୁଛି । ଜାଣିଛ ତ କେମିତି କଂସ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ସ୍ମରଣ କରୁଥିଲା ? ସିଏ ଥିଲା ଶତ୍ରୁର ଭକ୍ତ । ଆଉ ପବିତ୍ରର ତମପ୍ରତି ଭାବ ହେଲା, “ଶତ୍ରୁର ସ୍ନେହ” । ଦେଖ, ତମକୁ ସିଏ ଏତେ ଛରିଦେଇଛି ଯେ, ତମେ ଯେମିତି ତା କଥା ଭାବିବ, ତାକୁ ସ୍ମରଣ କରିବ ।”

ସେଦିନ ଅଜନ୍ତା ଭାବିଲା ଯେ ସିଏ ଏ ପବିତ୍ର ନାମଧାରୀ ମଣିଷଟିକୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ମୁଣ୍ଡଭିତରୁ କାଢିଦେବ । କିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ଉତ୍ତମ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ମନକୁ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି କରିଦେବା ଉଚିତ; ଯାହା ଫଳରେ ତାର ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ଏକ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଓ ସୁଖମୟ ଭାବନାରେ ନିୟୋଜିତ ହୋଇପାରିବ ।

ବନାନୀ ଭାଉଜ ସେଇ ବାଟଟି ଦେଖାଇଦେଲେ । ବୁନୁଭାଇ ଓ ବନାନୀ ଭାଉଜ ଖରାଦିନ ଛୁଟିରେ ଆସିଥାନ୍ତି । ଅଜନ୍ତାକୁ ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ସେମାନେ ଯେମିତି ବୁଝିପାରିଲେ ତା ମନର କଥା । “କଣ ତୋର ହେଇଛି, ଦେହ ଭଲ ଅଛି ତ?” – ଭାଇଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଶଙ୍କା ।

ସେଇଠୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ସବୁ କାହାଣୀ ଗପିଗଲେ । ସେଥିରେ ବିଚଳିତ ହେବା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ଭାଇ ହସିହସି ଗତିଗଲେ । କହିଲେ, “ଯାହା ହେଉ ଅଜନ୍ତା, ତୋ ଜୀବନରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କାହାଣୀ ଘଟୁଛି; ଏ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଆସେ କି ? ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତୁ ଖୁସି ହୋ ।”

“ଆପଣ ଏମିତି କଣ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ଭାଇ ? ଆପଣ ଜାଣିନାହାନ୍ତି ସେ ପାଷାଣ କେତେ ତଳକୁ ଯାଇଛି କେବଳ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀରେ ଓ କୁଳନରେ ।”

ଭାଇ ବୁଝାଇଲେ, “ଦେଖ ଅଜନ୍ତା, ଏ ସଂସାରରେ ଯେତେ ସବୁ ଚମତ୍କାର ଘଟଣା ଘଟୁଛି, ସେ ସବୁ ଏକ ଖଳ, ପାଷାଣ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ନହେଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଯଦି ଆଦର୍ଶ ଜୀବନଯାପନ କରୁଥାନ୍ତେ, ଏ ସଂସାରଟା ବୋରିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଦୁଆରା ନି କି?”

ଭାଉଜ କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରାକ୍‌ତିକାଲ୍ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଲେ । “ଦେଖ ଅଜି, ତମେ ଗୋଟିଏ କାମ କର । ତମେ ତ ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗୀତ ଗାଅ, ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଛି ଯେ ତମେ ଗୀତ ଶିଖିବାରେ ମନଦିଅ ଓ ଏ ସବୁ ଚିତ୍ତ ଅନୁଭୂତିକୁ ଏକ ସୁନ୍ଦରତାର ଝର୍କ ଦେଇଦିଅ; ଦେଖିବ, ସବୁ ଠିକ୍ ହେଇଯିବ ।”

ଭାଉଜଙ୍କ କଥା ଅଜନ୍ତାର ମନକୁ ପାଇଲା । ସଂଗୀତଗୁରୁର ସନ୍ଧାନରେ କିଛିଦିନ ବିତିଗଲା; ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ ସଂଗୀତର ପାଞ୍ଚ ଜଣ ଓଷ୍ଠାଦ୍ ସେତେବେଳେ ଥାଆନ୍ତି ସେଇ ସହରରେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଅନୁସନ୍ଧାନ କରି ଶେଷରେ ଛିରକଲା ଶକୁନ୍ତଳା ଦେବୀଙ୍କୁ ଗୁରୁଭାବେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାକୁ । ରାକ୍ଷୀପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା ତିଥି ପାଖେଇ ଆସୁଥାଏ । ସେଇଦିନ ଗୁରୁପୂଜା କରି ବିଦ୍ୟାଶିକ୍ଷା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବାକୁ ମନରେ ଛିରକରି ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେ ଏକଥା ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତକୁ ଜଣାଇଲା, ସିଏ ହସିହସି ଗତିଗଲେ ।

“ସଇଫ୍‌ରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ସଂଗୀତ ସାଧନା ।”

ଝିଅ ଅନୁରାଧା କିନ୍ତୁ ସପୋର୍ଟ କଲା । ତା ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଜବାବ ଦେଇ କହିଲା, “ବାବା, ତମେ ଜାଣିଛ ତ କୌଣସି ଶିକ୍ଷାପାଇଁ ବୟସ ବାଧାଦେବା ଉଚିତ୍ ନୁହେଁ । ମାମା ମଞ୍ଜୁ ଗୋ ଫର୍ ହର୍ ପାଶନ୍ ।”

ହାରମୋନିୟମ୍ କିଣାହେଲା । ରାଗ, ରାଗିଣୀ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ବହି ସବୁ କିଣାହେଲା । ଇଣ୍ଡରନେଟ୍‌ରେ ଭଲ ଗୀତମାନଙ୍କର ନୋଟେସନ୍ ସବୁ ଖୋଜାଗଲା । “ସାରେଗାମାପାଧାନିସା, ସାନିଧ୍ୟାପାଗାରେସା” ସବୁବେଳେ ମୁଣ୍ଡଭିତରେ ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ବନି ସୃଷ୍ଟିକଲେ । ‘ଶତ୍ରୁର ସ୍ନେହ’, ‘ସଂଗୀତର ସ୍ନେହ’ କୁ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ରାଗ ଭୂପାଳି, ରାଗ ଦେଶ, ବସନ୍ତ, ଚାରୁକେଶୀ, ସ୍ଥାୟୀ, ଅନ୍ତରା, ଆଳାପ, ଆରୋହ, ଅବରୋହ, କୋମଳ ନି, ତୀବ୍ର ମା, ଏମିତି ସବୁ ଘୋଷୁଘୋଷୁ ବର୍ଷ ସବୁ କେମିତି ବିତିଗଲା ।

ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଭଜନ ଗାଇଲା ଅଜନ୍ତା; ସାଙ୍ଗମାନରେ ଘରୁଆ ପାର୍ଟିରେ ବି ଗାଇଲା । କା' ପୁଅର ଜନ୍ମଦିନ, କା' ଝିଅର ଗାତୁଏସନ୍, କିଏ ସ୍ବାମୀର ସର୍ପପାଇକ୍ ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ପାର୍ଟି କରୁଛି ତ, କିଏ ସ୍ବା ପାଇଁ ସର୍ପପାଇକ୍ ବିବାହ ବାଣିଜୀ ଆୟୋଜନ କରୁଛି; ସବୁଠି ଅଜନ୍ତାର ଲୋଡ଼ା । ସଂଗୀତ କି କୁହୁକ କରିଦେଲା କେଜାଣି, ନିତିଦିନର ରାଗରୋଷ, ଅଭିମାନ, ଛୋଟଛୋଟ ଅଭାବ ଓ ଅପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର ମନବେଦନା ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ନିର୍ବାପିତ ହୋଇଗଲେ ଅଜନ୍ତାର ଜୀବନରୁ ।

ଅଜନ୍ତାର ଏ ସଂଗୀତ ସାଧନାର ନିଷ୍ଠା ତା' ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଉଦାହରଣ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେମାନେ ବି ନିଜ ପାଠପଢ଼ା, ଗୀତ, ନାଟ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଏକ୍ସପ୍ରେସିଭିଭୁଲାର୍ କାମସବୁରେ ନିଷ୍ଠାପର ହେବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ ।

ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ପାଞ୍ଚବର୍ଷ ବିତିଗଲାଣି । ପବିତ୍ର ନାମକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଯେ ଏ ସହରରେ ରହେ, ସେକଥା ବି ଅଜନ୍ତା ଭୁଲିଗଲାଣି । ବେଳେବେଳେ ଏମିତି ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ପବିତ୍ର ଓ ତା' ପରିବାର ବିଷୟ ଆଲୋଚନା ଭିତରକୁ ଆସିଯାଏ, କିନ୍ତୁ ତାହା ଅଜନ୍ତା ଉପରେ କିଛି ପ୍ରଭାବ ପକାଇପାରେନି । ପବିତ୍ରର ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ଅଲଗା; ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ଦେଖାହୁଏନି ।

ସେଦିନ ଥାଏ ଶୁକ୍ରବାର । ସୁନୟା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଫେରିଥାଏ । ସିଏ କେତେସବୁ ନୂଆ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସିନେମାର ଡିଭିଡି ଆଣିଥାଏ ଓ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ “ମୁଭି ନାଇଟ୍” ପାଇଁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଥାଏ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଖାଇପିଇ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଲତା ଓ ମିହିରବାବୁଙ୍କର ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଦେଖାନାହିଁ । “ନାରୀ ନୁହେଁ ସେ ନାରାୟଣୀ” ମୁଭିଟିକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ସ୍ଥିର କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଶେଷରେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିକରି ସେମାନେ ସିନେମା ଦେଖିଲେ । ଲତା ଶେଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲାନି । ତା' ଘର ଫେନ୍ କି ସେଲ୍‌ଫେନ୍ କିଛି ଲାଗୁନାଥାଏ । ସମସ୍ତେ ବିବ୍ରତ ହେଲେ, ଆଜିକାଲି ଯୁଗରେ ଘଟଣା ସବୁ ଅଘଟଣା ହେବାକୁ ବିଳମ୍ବ ଲାଗୁନାହିଁ । ତାପରେ ତେରିହେଲେ ସିଏ ତ ଫେନ୍ କରି କହିଦେବା କଥା । ଯାହା ବି ହେଉ, ସେଦିନ ସମସ୍ତେ ଟେକସ୍କନରେ ରହିଲେ । ତା' ପରଦିନ ଅଜନ୍ତାର ସଂଗୀତ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କର ସ୍କୁଲ ବାର୍ଷିକ ଉତ୍ସବ ଥାଏ । ସିଏ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରି ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲା ।

ତା'ପରଦିନ ପୁଣି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ କଲ୍‌ଚରାଲ୍ ହଲ୍‌ରେ ଦେଖାହେଲା । ଲତା ବି ଆସିଥିଲା । କହିଲା, “ସରି, କାଲି ମୁଁ ମୁଭିନାଇଟ୍ ମିଏ କଲି । ପବିତ୍ରକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲି ।”

“କୋଉ ପବିତ୍ର? ସେ ଦଲାରି ରାସସ । କଣହେଲା ତାର? ମରିଗଲା ନା କଣ?” ସୁନୟା ପଚାରିଲା ରୁଷ କଣ୍ଠରେ ।

ପବିତ୍ରର ଖଳ ପ୍ରକୃତି, ଆଚାର, ବ୍ୟବହାର ଓ ରୁଷତା ଏମିତି ସୀମା ଟପିଯାଇଥାଏ ଯେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଚାରିପାଞ୍ଚଟି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିବାରକୁ ଛାଡି ସହରର ସମସ୍ତେ ପ୍ରାୟ ତା' ନାଁ ଶୁଣିଲେ ଏମିତି ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ।

“ପବିତ୍ରର ଆକର୍ଷକତା ହୋଇଛି । ବହୁତ ସିରିଅସ୍ ।”

ଲତା କହିଦେଇ ଅଜନ୍ତା ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି, ଅଜନ୍ତାକୁ କେତେ ହଇରାଣ କରିଛି ପବିତ୍ର ଓ ସମସ୍ତେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥାନ୍ତି ଅଜନ୍ତାର ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ଦେଖିବାପାଇଁ ।

ଦୁଃସ୍ତ ଚାରିପାଞ୍ଚବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଅଜନ୍ତା ଏକଥା ଶୁଣି ପ୍ରଭୁ ତାର ଡାକ ଶୁଣିଲେ ବୋଲି ଭାବିଥାନ୍ତା ଓ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଭୋଗ ଲଗେଇଥାଆନ୍ତା । ହେଲେ ଆଜିର ଅଜନ୍ତା ଏକ ଅଲଗା ମଣିଷ । କୌଣସି ସୁଖ କିମ୍ବା କୌଣସି ଦୁଃଖ ତାକୁ ଆଉ ତୀବ୍ରଭାବେ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିପାରନ୍ତିନି । ଦୁଃସ୍ତ ବୟସର ପରିପକ୍ୱତା କିମ୍ବା ଅନୁଭବର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ତାକୁ ଏକ ନୂଆ ଅଜନ୍ତାରେ ପରିଣତ କରିଦେଇଥିଲା । ପବିତ୍ର ଭଳି ଦୁଃଖ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ମଣିଷଟିର ଏ ସଙ୍ଗତ ସମୟରେ ସିଏ ନା ଖୁସି ହେଲା ନା ଜଣେ ଚିହ୍ନା ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶା ବିଷୟ ଭାବି ଦୁଃଖକଲା । ମଣିଷ ନିଜେ ହିଁ ନିଜ ମନଭାବନାର ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରକ । ନିଜର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ କେହି ସେ ମନଟିକୁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିପାରିବେନି । ଯଦିଓ ଇଶ୍ବର ସର୍ବଶକ୍ତିମାନ ଓ ବେଳେବେଳେ ମଣିଷ ତାଙ୍କର ଖେଳକଣ୍ଠେଇ ହୋଇଯାଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଇଚ୍ଛାଦ୍ୱାରା ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ହୁଏ, ତଥାପି ମଣିଷର ମନ ତା' ନିଜର, ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ନିଜର ।

ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଗୁରୁମା ଶକୁନ୍ତଳା ଦେବୀଙ୍କର ଘୋଷଣା ଶୁଣାଗଲା । ସିଏ ଅଜନ୍ତାକୁ ମଞ୍ଚପାଖକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଅଜନ୍ତା ‘ମୁଁ ଆସୁଛି’ କହି ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ବିଦାୟନେଲା ଓ ମଞ୍ଚଦିଗକୁ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେଲା ।

*ଡକ୍ଟର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ ଡେକନ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ସ୍ବାମୀ ନରେଶ ଓ ତିନି ଜଣ୍ୟା ବାଗୁୀ, ମୃଣାଳୀ ଓ ଶାଶୁତୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ରହନ୍ତି । ଯଦିଓ ସେ ଗଣିତରେ ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି କରି ଗବେଷଣାକୁ ନିଜର ଜୀବିକା ଭାବେ ବାଛିନେଇଛନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ନାଟ, ଗୀତ, ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ବହୁମିଳନ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ୨୦୦୯ ଜୁଲାଇ ମାସରୁ ୨୦୧୧ ଜୁନ୍ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେ ଓସାର ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ ଭାବେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଭାର ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ଏହା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେ ୨୦୦୩ରୁ ୨୦୦୫ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓସାର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସଂପାଦିକା ଥିଲେ ଓ ୨୦୦୫ରୁ ୨୦୦୭ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓସାର ସେକ୍ରେଟେରୀ ଭାବେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ଏ ଗଣ୍ଠି ତାଙ୍କର ଅଜସ୍ର ଓସା ଅନୁଭୂତିର ଏକ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ।*

## ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସ୍ନିଗ୍ଧା ସେନାପତି

କନିକା ଏତେ ଦିନ ପରେ ଦେଖି ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ବିଭୋରିତ ହେଇ ପଡିଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା । ସାତସମୁଦ୍ର ତେର ନଇ ପାରିହୋଇ କନି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖା କରିବାକୁ ଆସିଛି, ନିଜ ଆଖିକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରି ପାରିନଥିଲେ ସେ । ତାଙ୍କର ଅତି ପୁରୁଣା ଛୋଟ ଠିକଣା ଖାତାରେ କନି ଓରଫ କନକ ଲତା ରାଉତଙ୍କ ନାଁ ବଡ ବଡ ଅକ୍ଷରରେ ଲେଖାଥିଲା ସିନା କିନ୍ତୁ ଠିକଣା ନଥିଲା । କାରଣ କନିର ଠିକଣା କାହାକୁ ଜଣା ନଥିଲା । ଦୀର୍ଘ ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଭୁଲିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଭୁଲିପାରିନାହାନ୍ତି କନିକୁ । ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳରୁ ଢିଙ୍କିଶାଳ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖ ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ ବଖାନି ଚାଲିଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା , ହେଲେ କନିର ଗାମ୍ଭୀର୍ଯ୍ୟଭରା ଜୀବନ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଯେଉଁ ପୁଣି ନାହିଁ ଦୁଃଖ ନାହିଁ , ମାୟା ନାହିଁ ମମତା ନାହିଁ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତା ନାହିଁ , କେବଳ ଅଛି ଶାନ୍ତି ଆଉ ଐଶ୍ୱରୀକ ଅନୁଭୂତି । ବଡ ତମତ୍କାର ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ । ସେ ଚାଲି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ଅନେକ ଅନେକ ଦୂରକୁ କନି ସହିତ । ଯେତେ ଦୂରକୁ ଦୂରକୁ ଯାଉଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ମନ ଓ ଶରୀରରେ ଥିଲା ଅଦ୍ଭୁତ ଆନନ୍ଦ , ଶାନ୍ତି ଆଉ ଅବଶ୍ୟନୀୟ ଅନୁଭୂତି । ଶେଷରେ ଦୁଇ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ପହଞ୍ଚିଥିଲେ ଗୋଟିଏ ତୋରଣ ପାଖରେ । କନି କହିଉଠିଥିଲା ଏଇତ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ, ମୋ ଘର । ଅଟକି ଯାଇଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା । ତାଙ୍କର ମନେ ପଡିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଫେରିବ ତା ପାଖେ ଚାବି ନାହିଁ । ପିଲାଟାକୁ ଭୋକ କରୁଥିବ । “ ମୁଁ ତୋ ସହିତ ଯାଇପାରିବିନି କନି ” ବିଳିବିଳେଇ ଉଠିଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା । କୁଆଡେ ଯିବା ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ ତୁମର, ନିଜ ଘରେ ଶୋଇଛ , ସକାଳ ଛଟା ବର୍ଷମାନା ।” ପଞ୍ଜା କରୁଥିଲେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଆଦିତ୍ୟ । ଉଠିପଡିଥିଲା କାବ୍ୟା, ଗମ୍ ଗମ୍ ଝାଳ ବାହାରୁଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ଏତେ ବାସ୍ତବତା , ଯେପରି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ସେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗରୁ ବୁଲି ଫେରିଛନ୍ତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଆଗରୁ ।

କନି ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ଇତିହାସ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ ଏକ ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ଚରିତ୍ର ଆଉ ପ୍ରେରଣା ମଧ୍ୟ । ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଥମ ସାକ୍ଷାତ ହୁଏ କନି ଶିତ

ଅର୍ଥଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ, ତାପୁଣି କଲେଜର ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନରେ ।

ରୋଲ୍‌କଲ୍ ସମୟରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ କନିର ନାଁ ପାଖରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ପାଇଁ ଅଟକିଗଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଥିଲା କନିର ହାତ ଉପରେ । ହାତ ଉଠାଇବା ଆଗରୁ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିନେଇ ସମସ୍ତ ଛାତ୍ର ଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । କନି ମାଟ୍ରିକୁଲେସନ୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଭାବରେ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ କୃତୀ ଛାତ୍ରୀ । ଅଧ୍ୟାପକଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପୁରା କାସ୍ ହାତ ତାଲି ଦେଇ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଇଥିଲେ । ତେଲ ମର୍ ପର୍ ଦୁଇଟା ଲମ୍ବା କଲା ବେଶୀ , ଶାନ୍ତ ସରଳ ଚେହେରା , କନିକୁ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେପରିକି ଏକ ସଦ୍ୟ ପଞ୍ଜୁରିତ ଶ୍ୱେତପଦ୍ମ ।

ଅର୍ଥନୀତି କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କୁ ଆଦୌ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁନଥିଲା । ପନ୍ଦର ଦିନ ଆଗରୁ ରାଜନୀତି ବିଜ୍ଞାନକୁ ବଦଳେଇବାକୁ ଛିର କରିନେଇଥିଲେ ସେ । ଶେଷଦିନ ଚିଉଟରିଆଲ୍ କାସ୍ ପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତିକୁ ବଦଳେଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା କନି । ଖାଲି ସେତିକି ନୁହେଁ

ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ବିଷୟରେ ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରକାର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାର ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଦେଇଥିଲା । କନି ଏକ ଛୋଟ ମଫସଲ ଚାଉଳରୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସବୁ କାସ୍‌ରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଶେଷହେବା ଆଗରୁ ଉତ୍ତର

ଦେଇ ଦେଉଥିଲା । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଉପରେ ଥିଲା ତାର ଅଗାଧ ଦକ୍ଷତା । ଅଧ୍ୟାପକମାନେ କନିର କହିବା ଶୈଳୀକୁ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରୁଥିଲେ , ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ‘ଉତ୍କଳ ଗୌରବ’, ‘ଉତ୍କଳର ବରପୁତ୍ର’ କହି ପଞ୍ଜା କରୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ମଞ୍ଜରେ କନିଥିଲା ‘ଗିଫ୍ଟେଡ୍’ । ପ୍ରତି ମଙ୍ଗଳବାରଦିନ ଅର୍ଥନୀତି କାସ୍‌ପରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ କାସ୍ ଆସ ପ୍ରାୟ ଚାରିଘଣ୍ଟା ପରେ । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଘରକୁ ନଫେରି କାବ୍ୟା କନି ସହିତ ହଠାତ୍ ୨୭ନମ୍ବର ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ପଢୁଥିଲେ । ପଢାଉଥିଲା କନି କନିର ରଣ ସାତଜନ୍ମରେ ସୁଝିବା କଷ୍ଟ ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା । ବନ୍ଧୁତା ବଢିବ ସହିତ ଦୁଇ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ଥିଲେ ପରସ୍ପରର ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖ କାହାଣୀର ଅଭେଦ୍ୟ ଅଙ୍ଗ । କନିର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଥିଲା ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଅଫ୍ ଇକୋନୋମିକ୍‌ସ୍‌ରୁ ମାଷ୍ଟରସ୍ କରି ଲଣ୍ଡନ୍ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଅଫ୍ ଇକୋନୋମିକ୍‌ସ୍‌ରେ ପିଏଚ୍‌ଡି କରିବ । ସମୟେ ସମୟେ ଘର କଥା କହି ଭାବ ପ୍ରବଣ ହେଇଯାଏ କନି । ବାପା ଗୋପାଳ ରାଉତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ତା ମନରେ ଥିଲା ବହୁତ ଦୁଃଖ । ତା ବାପାଙ୍କ କାହାଣୀ ଥିଲା ବଡ ବିଚିତ୍ର । ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ଏମ୍‌ଏରେ କୃତିତ୍ୱର ସହ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିଥିଲେ ଗୋପାଳ ରାଉତ । ଯୁବକ ମନରେ ତାଙ୍କର କେତେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ । ମାତ୍ର ପିତୃହୀନ କୃତିତ୍ୱ ଗୋପାଳ ରାଉତଙ୍କୁ ପାଠ ପଢେଇବାକୁ ଦେଇଥିବା ରଣ ବଦଳରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବଳିୟାର ସାମନ୍ତରାୟଙ୍କ ଗୁରୁଣ, ଅଙ୍ଗୁଠାଛାପ କନ୍ୟା କଲ୍ୟାଣୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବିବାହ ବନ୍ଧନରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ଦିଆଯାଇଥିଲା, ଘରଯୋଇଁ ଭାବେ । କନିର ଅଜା ବଳିୟାର ସାମନ୍ତରାୟ ଆଖ ପାଖ ଗାଁର ଚାରିଖଣ୍ଡ ମୌଜାର ଧନୀ ଆଉ ମାନ୍ୟଗଣ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଭାବେ ପରିଚିତ ଥିଲେ । ନିଜର ଏକମାତ୍ର କନ୍ୟାର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତକୁ ଆଖିଆଗରେ ରଖି କନିର ଅଜା ତା ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଗାଁରୁ ବାହାରି ନିଜ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ସାକାର କରିବାକୁ ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେଇନଥିଲେ । ଗାଁ ସ୍କୁଲର ଶିକ୍ଷକ ହୋଇ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହେଇଥିଲେ କନିର ବାପା । ସେଇଠି ପଡିଥିଲା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣହେତୁ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର । ଅଜା ଆଇଙ୍କ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପରେ କନିର ବୋଉ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ଦେବୀ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଅତଳାତଳ ସଂପତ୍ତିର ମାଲିକ । ଯେ ଥିଲା ତା ବାପାଙ୍କର, ଗାଁରେ କେତେ ପ୍ରକାର ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କନିର ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ହୃଦୟରେ ଲୁଚିରହିଥିବା ଦୁଃଖକୁ କନିଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ କେହି ବୁଝି ପାରିନଥିଲେ । ଅଜାଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପରତା କଷ୍ଟଦେଇଥିଲା କନିକୁ । ବାପାଙ୍କର ଖୁସି ଆନନ୍ଦ, ଛୋଟଠାରୁ ବଡ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସବୁ କଥାକୁ ବଡ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେଉଥିଲା କନି ।

କନିର ନିତିଦିନର ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳିତ ଜୀବନଯାତ୍ରା, ଭାବନା, ଉଚ୍ଚ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା, ସୁବ୍ୟବହାର ହଠାତ୍‌ରେ କାମ କରୁଥିବା ମଞ୍ଜରୀ ମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍, ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରି ରଖିଥିଲା । ସବୁଠୁ ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ଥିଲା ତାର ମନ ଖୋଲା ହସ । ଖୁବ୍ ଧର୍ମ ବିଶ୍ୱାସୀ ଥିଲା କନି , ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ରଖିଥିବା ଗ୍ରାମ ଦେବତା ଏବଂ କୁଳଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ଫଟୋକୁ ପ୍ରଣାମ ନକରି ସେ ବୋଧହୁଏ କୌଣସି କାମକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭକରୁ ନଥିଲା । ଏପରିକି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଫର୍ମ କୁ ନେଇ ସ୍ୱୟମ୍ କୁଳ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ପାଦକୁ ପାଦରେ ଛୁଏଇଲା ପରେ ଦାଖଲ କରିବା, କାବ୍ୟାକୁ ବଡ ଅଜବ ଲାଗେ କନିର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଏତେ ଦୃଢ ଏବଂ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଥିଲାଯେ ଏବିଷୟରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରିବାକୁ ଯାଇ ଅଟକି ଯାଉଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା । ଆଇ-ଏ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ହୋଇ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଥିଲା କନି । କନିକୁ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣେଇବାକୁ କଲେଜ୍ ଇଉନିଅନ ତରଫରୁ ଏକ ସଭାର ଅୟୋଜନ କର ଯାଇଥିଲା



।କନିର ବାପା, ବୋଉ, ଛୋଟ ଦୁଇ ଭଉଣୀ ବନି ଚୁନିଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଥିଲା କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କୁ । ମଉସାଙ୍କ ଖୁସୀ ଦେଖି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା କନିତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ କୁ ସାଧକ କରିଛି ଆଉ କରିବ ମଧ୍ୟ । କନି ତାର ଛୋଟ କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଭାଷଣରେ ତାର ସମସ୍ତ କୃତିତ୍ୱ ପଛରେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ପରେଣା କଥା କହିବାକୁ ଭୁଲିନଥିଲା ସେଦିନ । ମଉସା, ମାଉସୀ, ବନି, ଚୁନିଙ୍କ ସହ ଆଳାପ ପରେ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେମିତିକି କନିର ପରିବାର ସହିତ ସଂପର୍କ ଅନେକ ଦିନର ।ତାପରେ ଅକ୍ଷୟ ତୃତୀୟା ଯାତ୍ରା , ଦୁର୍ଗାପୂଜା , ଗାଁର ଯାତ୍ରାପାର୍ବଦେଖା ଏମିତି କନି ପରିବର ସହିତ କେତେ ଭଲ ସମୟ କଟାଇଛି କାବ୍ୟା କନି ପରିବାର ସହିତ । କନି ଆଶୁଥିବା ଆରିଷା ପିଠା, ଧନୁ ମୁଆଁ , ମଗଜଲତୁ, ସବଠାରୁ ବେଶୀ ଖାଉଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା ।

ସମୟର ସ୍ରୋତରେ ଆଇଏ ୨ ବର୍ଷ ଯାଇ ବିଏ ୨ବର୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶେଷ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଥିଲା ।ପ୍ରତିଧର ପରି ଫର୍ମ ଦାଖଲ କରିବା ଆଗରୁ କୁଳଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ଆଶିର୍ବାଦ ଆଶିବକୁ ବାହାରି ପଡିଲା କନି । ଯିବା ଆଗରୁ କନି ସ୍ୱତଃ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତ ଭାବରେ କାବ୍ୟାର ଅକୁହ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲା...ନିଜ ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ବା ନିଜ ଭକ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ଗୁରୁଦେବଙ୍କ ପଖକୁ ଯାଉନଥିଲା କନି । ତା ବୋଉଙ୍କର ଅକ୍ଷ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ୍ୟବଂ ତାଙ୍କର ଗୁରୁ ଦେବଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଅଗାଧ ଭକ୍ତି କନି କୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲା ନିଜ ଇଚ୍ଛା ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଗୁରୁଦେବଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯିବକୁ...କେବଳ ବୋଉଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଖୁସି ଦେବାପାଇଁ ଯାଉଥିଲା ସେ । ବି ଏ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଆଉ ସଫାହେ ପରେ ..କନି ୨ଦିନ ପରେ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ ଫେରିବ କଥା । କନି ଅଉ ଫେରି ନଥିଲା, ଆସିଥିଲା ତାର ଆକସ୍ମିକ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଖବର । ପାଦତଳୁ ଖସି ଯାଇଥିଲା ପୃଥିବୀ -- କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । କନି ପରିବାରର ସ୍ନେହ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଆଉ କନିର ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଭିର ରଣୀ କରି ଦେଇଥିଲା କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କୁ ।

ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଶେଷହେବା ପରଦିନ କନିର ଗାଁକୁ ଯିବାପାଇଁ ବୋଉଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ବହୁ କଞ୍ଜରେ ଅନୁମତି ମିଳିଥିଲା ।ଶୋକାକୁଳ ପରିବାରକୁ ଦେଖି ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ତୁଟିଯାଇଥିଲା କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କର ।କଣ କହି ସାନ୍ତ୍ୱନା ଦେବ, ଭାଷା ବାହାରୁନଥିଲା ପାଟିରୁ । କେତେ ସ୍ମୃତି ତାର କନି ସହିତ ତାର ତା ପରେ । ପରଦିନ ସକାଳୁ କାବ୍ୟା ଫେରିବା କଥା । ଶୋଇବାକୁ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ କନିର ତଳ ଭଉଣୀ ବନିର ହାତ ଲେଖା ଚିଠିଟିଏ ଧରେଇ ଦେଇ ଥିଲା । ଗୋଟିଏ ନିଶ୍ୱାସରେ ଚିଠିକୁ ପଢିଦେଇଥିଲା କାବ୍ୟା । ଚିଠିର ସାରାଂଶ ଥିଲା ବଡ଼ ହୃଦୟ ବିଦାରକ ।କନି ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାକରିଥିଲା, ଯାହାକୁକି ତାର ପରିବାର ଅପମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଆଖ୍ୟା ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।କୁଳଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ବଳାକାର ତା କୋମଳମନକୁ କ୍ଷତ ବିକ୍ଷତ କରି ଦେଇଥିଲା , ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା ଛଡା ତାପାଇଁ ଅନ୍ୟ ପଥ ନଥିଲା । ଚିକ୍କାର କରି

କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା କାବ୍ୟାର ।ଅନବରତ ଗତି ଚାଲିଥିଲା ଅଶ୍ରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରୁ । ଫେରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ କନିର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପାଇଁ ଦାୟୀ ଭଣ୍ଡ କୁଳଗୁରୁଙ୍କୁ ଉଚିତ୍ ଶାନ୍ତିର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ପାଇଁ ମଉସା ଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିଥିଲେ । କାବ୍ୟା ଚିଠି ବିଷୟରେ ଜାଣିଥିବା କଥା ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ବଡ଼ ସଂକଟରେ ପକେଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ପ୍ରତିକାର ତ ଦୂରର କଥା , ଏ ବିଷୟ ଯେପରି ପଦାରେ ନପଡେ ତାର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ମଧ୍ୟ ଆଦାୟ କରିନେଇଥିଲେ ମଉସା । ଏକଥା ବାହାରକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ସାରା ପରିବାର ପାଇଁ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା ଛଡା ଅନ୍ୟ ଉପାୟ ରହିବନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ଖିଥିଲେ ମଉସା । ଭଣିତ କୁଳଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ଅସଲ ରୂପ ପଦାରେ ନପଡିଲେ କେତେ ନିରିହ ଜୀବନ କନିପରି ଝଟି ପଡିବ, ବୁଝାଇବା ବଡ଼ କଞ୍ଜ ଥିଲା ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ।

ଗଭୀର ଦୁଃଖରେ ଫେରିଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା । ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ କଥା ଦେଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବୋଉଙ୍କୁ ସବୁକଥା କହି ପକେଇଥିଲେ କାବ୍ୟା । ବୋଉଙ୍କର ବି ସେଇ କଥା ' କନିର ପରିବାର ଯାହା ଠିକ୍ ଭାବିବେ ସେୟା କରିବେ । କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ । କନିର ମୃତ୍ୟୁପାଇଁ ଦାୟୀ କିଏ ? କନି ପରିବାରର ଅକ୍ଷ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ, ସମାଜ ଅବା ସେଇ ଭଣ୍ଡ କୁଳଗୁରୁ? ଆଇନଜୀବି ଜୀବିକାରେ କେତେ ବାଦି ପ୍ରତିବାଦୀ ଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସେ ଲଢ଼ିଛନ୍ତି । ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରିୟ ବାନ୍ଧବୀର ଆତ୍ମାର ଶାନ୍ତିପାଇଁ ନ୍ୟାୟତ ଦୂରର କଥା ସବୁଜାଣି ମଧ୍ୟ ନଜାଣିବା ପରି ନୀରବ ରହିବା ବଡ଼ ବିବ୍ରତ କରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ । ନିଜକୁ ବଡ଼ ଅପରାଧୀ ମନେ କରନ୍ତି ସେ । ହେଲେ ମଉସାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇଥିବା ବଚନକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ରେଖାର ଦ୍ୱାହିଦେଇ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି ସେ । କେତେ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ । ଏଇତ ସଂସାରର ବିଚିତ୍ରତା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ହେଲେବି କନି ସ୍ୱର୍ଗରେ ଅଛି ଖୁସିରେ ଅଛି ଦେଖି କ୍ଷଣିକର ମଧୁର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଅନୁଭୂତି ବଡ଼ ଶାନ୍ତି ଆଉ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଆଣିଦେଇଥିଲା କାବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ମନରେ । ଫେରିଆସିଥିଲେ ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ନିତି ଦିନର ସଂସାର ଜୀବନ ଜଂଜାଳକୁ ।

*ସ୍ନିଗ୍ଧା ସେନାପତି ଟପ୍, ମିଡିଗାନ୍ ରେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଡକ୍ଟର ଶିଶିର ସେନାପତି, ପୁତ୍ର ରିଡେଣ ଏବଂ ଜନ୍ମା ଉପାସନା ସହ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି । ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବା ଅଗରୁ କଲିକତା ହାଇକୋର୍ଟରେ ଆଇନ୍ ଜିବୀ ଭାବେ କର୍ମମୟ ଜୀବନ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲେ ।, ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଇମିଗ୍ରେସନ୍ ଲ ଫର୍ମ ପାଇଁ କାମ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । )*

## ମୁଁ କିଏ? ବିଜୟା ମହାପାତ୍ର

<p>ମୁଁ କିଏ? .. 'ମୁଁ କିଏ?' ..          କିଏ କହିଲା ମୁଁ ଜଣେ ସାଧାରଣ ମଣିଷଟିଏ          ସଂସାରର ସୁଖ-ଦୁଃଖ, ହସ - ଲୁହର ଦର୍ଶକଟିଏ;</p> <p>ପୁଣିଥରେ ନିଜକୁ ପଚାରିଲି - 'ମୁଁ କିଏ?'          ଏଇଥର ବସି ଭାବିଲି, ମନକୁ ଆସିଲା ମୁଁ ଜଣେ ସାଧାବରଟିଏ,          ସାରା ଦୁନିଆର ଦୃଶ୍ୟକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିବା ଜଣେ ଅତି ଅଜଣା          ଲୋକଟିଏ;</p> <p>କିନ୍ତୁ ତଥାପି ମନ ପଚାରେ, 'ମୁଁ କିଏ?'          ଏଥର କିନ୍ତୁ ମନ ନୁହେଁ, ନିଜ ଆତ୍ମାକୁ ପଚାରିଲି ..</p>	<p>ଉତ୍ତରରେ ପାଇଲି .. ମୁଁ ଗୋଟେ ଚଢ଼େଇ          ନିଜ ଘରକୁ ଖୋଜି ବୁଲୁଥିବା ଛୋଟ ମାତ୍ର ଜୀବଟିଏ</p> <p>ଗୋଟେ ଜାଗାରୁ ଆଉ ଗୋଟେ ଜାଗାକୁ ଉଡ଼ି ଚାଲେ ବିନା ଠିକଣାରେ,          ଆଉ ସେଇ କିଛି ଦିନର ଘରଟିକୁ ଆପଣେଇନି ମୁଁ ନିଜରକରି ..          ତାପରେ ପୁଣି ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଯାଏ ନୂଆ ବସାର ସନ୍ଧାନରେ ..</p> <p>ଏମିତି ହିଁ ମୁଁ .. ଏ ଭଳି ହିଁ ମୋ ଜୀବନ ..          ..          ମୁଁ କେହି ବି ..          ମୁଁ ଜଣେ 'ପରିବାଜକ' .. ମୁଁ ଜଣେ ଭାରୁକ !</p>
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## **Online Supplement**

### **OSA Constitution and By-Laws**

Approved July 3, 2011

General Body Meeting

Time: 11:30 - 1:45 PM

Main Ballroom, Marriot at Legacy Town Center,  
Plano, Texas

**Present in the Podium:** Dr Bigyani Das (President),  
Pradeep Mohapatra (Vice-President), Dr Akhileswar  
Patel (Treasurer), Mr Sunil Sabat (Sgt-At-Arms &  
OSAnet Chairman), Dr Lalu Mansinha  
(Parliamentarian)

GMB Minutes Recorded by OSA Vice-President Mr.  
Pradeep Mohapatra

#### **PREAMBLE:**

#### **VISION, MISSION and CORE VALUES:**

#### **ARTICLES**

ARTICLE I: NAME

ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES

ARTICLE III: ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND BOARD OF GOVERNORS

ARTICLE VI: ELECTION

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

ARTICLE VIII: LOCAL CHAPTERS

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS AND RULES OF BUSINESS

#### **BY-LAWS**

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#### **PREAMBLE:**

The Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) is  
dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the  
promotion and propagation of Odia culture in  
Americas by bringing together all the people

interested in Odisha (Orissa) through socio-cultural  
events, and developmental activities.

#### **VISION, MISSION and CORE VALUES**

**Vision:** OSA will be the essential resource for the  
Odia Americans in the United States and Canada for  
social and cultural engagement, education and  
exploration that promote their overall well being  
and enrich the American society with Odia American  
contribution.

#### **Mission:**

1. To provide a mutually supportive environment for the better interaction of Odia immigrants of United States of America and Canada and their families through generations, and all the people interested in Odia culture through socio-cultural growth, friendship and fellowship;
2. To enhance the awareness of Odisha and Odia traditions in North America through promotion of socio-cultural events, and educational activities;
3. To enrich the American society through exchange and integration of Odia culture;
4. To foster constructive citizenship on the part of Odia Americans in the nation;
5. To facilitate the exchange of information between Odisha and the United States/Canada;
6. To improve the overall well being of Odia Americans in United States of America and Canada;
7. To facilitate/collaborate in humanitarian activities;

#### **Core Values:**

In performing its mission, OSA adheres to these core values:

1. Integrity and Ethical Conduct
2. Dedication to excellence
3. Service to the member
4. Respect for the individual
5. Respect the dignity and culture of all people

**ARTICLES****ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of the organization shall be The Orissa Society of the Americas, Inc., here after abbreviated as OSA.

**ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the society shall be:

1. To form a non-political and non-profit organization of all persons interested in Odisha.
2. To serve Odia community across Americas and broaden the visibility of Odia culture in diverse communities throughout the world.
3. To promote interest and activities in the understanding of the Odia culture and enrich Odia heritage through cultural, social, educational and developmental activities.
4. To facilitate the exchange of information between Odisha and the United States/Canada.
5. To facilitate/collaborate in humanitarian activities

**ARTICLE III: ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION****Section 1**

OSA is incorporated under the laws of the United States and is a non-profit organization.

**Section 2**

The article of organization of OSA comprises of the Article of Incorporation and the By-Laws as amended from time to time.

**Section 3**

The organization will have a permanent address and an operating address as determined by the National Executives.

**ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP****Section 1**

Membership in the OSA shall be open to all persons interested in Odisha. The membership dues and categories shall be described in the By-Laws.

**Section 2**

Annual membership dues shall be payable by July 30th of each year.

**ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND BOARD OF GOVERNORS****Section 1**

The ultimate authority of OSA shall be vested in the membership. The members from USA and Canada shall choose the elected officers by mail ballot.

**Section 2**

(a) The Office bearers of OSA shall be an elected President, a Vice President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The executive committee of OSA shall consist of the following:

1. President (Chairperson of the committee)
2. Vice President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Editor of OSA Newsletter (Non-Voting)
6. Joint Secretary (Non-Voting)
7. Joint Treasurer (Non-Voting)
8. Public Relations Officer (Non-Voting)
9. Immediate Past President

OSA will have a Board of Governors (hereafter referred to as Board or BOG) to serve as the custodian of the Society. The Board will be responsible for making policy decisions to be implemented by the Executive Committee (as defined below). The membership of the Board will consist of:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer.
5. Presidents/Coordinators of the various chapters that are formed with the approval of the Board.
6. Immediate Past President

(b) The President of OSA shall serve as the chairperson of the Board and the Secretary as the Secretary of the Board.

(c) The Board shall meet at least twice every fiscal year. Each member of the Board must participate in at least one of the meetings. The meetings can be held through a conference call.

(d) Fifty percent of the membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of its meetings.

(e) Approval by the board must carry at least a simple majority of votes of its membership, but at least a two-thirds majority will be required to override the action of the Executive Committee or dissolve the committee.

(f) The Board will be responsible for the implementation of the policies in case of dissolution of the Executive Committee.

(g) The tenure of continuous membership on the Board will be limited to a maximum of two consecutive two-year terms. In case of special circumstances when a current officer or a Board member runs for the position of the President, waiver to this rule will be accepted.

**Section 3**

The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two years. These four executive officials must be life members or patrons or benefactors (i.e., permanent members) of OSA in good standing for at least one year before the nomination date and must be 21 years of age or over. These officials must be residents of USA or Canada. The Vice President shall be a running mate of the President. A vote for the President shall mean a vote for his/her running mate. The Secretary and Treasurer will be separately elected, but will work as a team with the President for smooth operation of the OSA. The President shall appoint the Editor of the OSA Newsletter, Public Relations Officer and other joint officials.

**Section 4: Powers and functions of the President:**

1. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the OSA. He/she shall announce the names of the members of the Board of Governors at the time of assuming office in the annual convention. The Board of Governors shall assume office for a term of two years. The other elected office bearers also shall take office at the annual convention following the election for a term of two years.
2. The President, in consultation with the Board of Governors, shall present a plan of activities along with a proposed budget at the annual convention. In the event of resignation, inaction or negligence of duties by any member of the Board of Governors, the President shall call for re-election or re-nomination for such position within a period of one month.
3. The President shall appoint members to the following standing committees: Advisory/Planning, Odisha Development, Education, Cultural, Convention and others to conduct various functions.
4. If the President fails to perform his/her duties to the satisfaction of the members of the OSA, he/she shall be removed by a vote of no-confidence. A no-confidence motion may be moved by a petition signed by at least 20% of the total membership as per the annual membership list published in July-September Newsletter of the Calendar year or from the current roster. This petition shall be submitted to the Secretary who shall circulate the same among the members of the Board of Governors within 10 days and among the membership within

30 days from the date of receipt of the petition. The Secretary will collect the votes from the membership within 30 days from the date of receipt of the petition. The Secretary will collect the votes from the membership by mail ballot, within 21 days from the date of remittal, and will announce the outcome, in writing, to the Vice President and to the Board of Governors within 7 days of the deadline date of the receipt of the votes. The President will be removed from office by a 2/3 majority of votes of no-confidence. In case of the removal of the President by a vote of no-confidence, the Vice President shall assume the office of the President for the rest of the term and shall appoint a Vice President subject to confirmation by the Board of Governors.

**Section 5: Powers and Functions of Vice President**

The Vice President shall derive his/her duties from the President and succeed him/her in case of his/her incapacity, resignation, or death. He/she will function in the following capacities.

1. He/she will serve as the Co-Convener of the Annual OSA conventions and work with the host chapter President/Convener for making detailed arrangements. He/she will act as the official representative of the OSA President/Governing Board to the annual conventions.
2. He/she will manage the nomination of OSA awards; appoint judges, and distribution of awards in consultation with the OSA President.
3. He/she may act in any other capacity, as delegated by the OSA President.
4. In case of his/her resignation or death, the President shall nominate a successor to the Vice President whose appointment will be approved by the Executive Board with a simple majority vote, for the remainder of the term.

**Section 6: Powers and Functions of the Secretary**

1. The Secretary shall assume office along with the President and Vice President, and shall serve as the Secretary of the OSA Board of Governors.
2. The Secretary shall record the minutes and be the custodian of the minutes of the Executive Board and the General Body. He/She shall maintain permanent records of these meetings in good order and will

hand over them to the next Secretary after his/her term expires.

3. The Secretary together with the Treasurer shall be responsible for fund raising, membership drive, and for compilation of a list of paid members. This list of new members shall be published in the first issue (July-September) of the Newsletter for every fiscal year.
4. He/she will coordinate various development activities in Odisha by the OSA members, provide administrative help through public and privately established non-profit organizations such as, but not limited to, the NRO Cell/Center, established by the Government of Odisha.
5. The Secretary shall be removed by the same way as the President. However, a no confidence motion in this case shall be presented to the President for further action.
6. In case of the removal of the Secretary by a no confidence motion or in his/her resignation or death, the President shall nominate a successor whose appointment will be approved by the Executive Board with a simple majority vote, for the remainder of the term.

#### **Section 7: Powers and functions of the Treasurer**

1. The Treasurer shall assume office along with the President and Vice President, and shall serve as the Treasurer of the OSA Board of Governors.
2. The operating budget of OSA shall be within limits of available revenue during the year, and must be prepared in consultation with the President. The revenue will include annual membership fees, OSA fees collected at the convention, fees collected from converting life members to patrons and benefactors, and funds raised by other means. The life membership cannot be included in the annual budget. This money must be invested for long-term benefit of OSA (such as fixed deposit), as decided by the finance committee, explained below. Under special circumstances, a part of the life membership can be included in the annual budget after the approval from the BOG.
3. The Treasurer will serve as the Chairman of the OSA Finance committee, which will plan and operate all the OSA investments. The committee will consist of the Treasurer and

two other life

members/patrons/benefactors, appointed by the President. These two committee members must not be members of the current OSA Board of Governors. Any long-term investment or fixed deposit will be held in the name of OSA and can be operated with signatures from any two of the three members of the finance committee. Any earning from investment/fixed deposit can be included in the operating budget of OSA.

4. The Treasurer shall supervise annual OSA convention and/or symposium fund collections and expenses, and report them to the General Body in the following year.
5. The Treasurer will present the complete financial report of the past year in the Annual General Body meeting of the OSA during the convention. The financial records shall be audited at the end of every two financial years ending in an election year. The auditors can be chosen from the membership and be approved in the GBM or external to the community.
6. The Treasurer along with the Secretary shall be responsible for fund-raising, membership recruitment, and for compilation of a list of new paid members. This list shall be published in the first issue (July-September) of the Newsletter for every fiscal year.
7. The office bearer's travel expenses. Any one item of expenditure beyond \$300 must be approved by the President. Any amount **over \$500** on a single non-budgeted item must be approved by a majority of the Governing Board. The approval from the Governing Board will be sought through e-mail. In case of no response within two weeks from a Board member, it will be assumed that the particular member has approved the request. The same rule will apply for donations by various OSA members to charitable/educational/developmental organizations in Odisha. Such collections and expenditures must be reflected as regular income/expenditure items in OSA account. Any OSA operational expenditure over \$10,000 shall require an approval from the General Body. Under unforeseen circumstances, any OSA expenditure over

\$10,000 shall require an approval from the BOG.

8. The Treasurer shall be removed by the same way as the President. However, a no-confidence motion in this case shall be presented to the President for further action.
9. In case of the removal of the Treasurer by the no-confidence motion, or his/her resignation or death, the President shall nominate a successor whose appointment will be approved by the Board of Governors with a simple majority vote, for the remainder of the term.

#### **Section 8: Powers and Functions of the Editor/Editors**

The Editor is responsible to publish the OSA Newsletter at the end of each quarter. He/she is also responsible for the contents of the newsletter. Each Newsletter shall include, among other items, the President and Secretary's notes, local chapter activities, non-political Odisha news, and a section on the youth and women.

#### **Section 9: Powers and functions of the Joint Secretary**

The joint secretary will be appointed by the President and be voted in the GBM. The joint secretary will derive duties from the secretary and assist in member recruitment, preparation of meeting minutes, maintenance of records and any other OSA related activities.

#### **Section 10: Powers and functions of the Joint Treasurer**

The joint treasurer will be appointed by the President and be voted in the GBM. The joint treasurer will derive duties from the Treasurer and assist in member recruitment, preparation of budget, financial reports, maintenance of member records and any other OSA related activities.

#### **Section 11: Powers and functions of the Public Relations Officer**

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) will be appointed by the President and be voted in the GBM. The PRO will derive duties from the Vice President. The duty will also include leading/assisting in member communication, web page maintenance, preparation of public relation material, making public communications and other activities to promote the interests and activities of the society.

### **ARTICLE VI: ELECTION**

#### **Section 1**

All dues paying members of OSA residing in USA and Canada have the right to vote and participate in the election.

#### **Section 2**

All elections are to be conducted by a secret ballot. The election procedures shall be described in the By-Laws.

#### **Section 3**

No two members of the Executive Committee and/or Board of Governors at any time shall be from the same immediate family (e.g. Husband & wife, parents & children, siblings).

#### **Section 4**

In case, a current office bearer such as, President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer, decides to run for re-election or for another position, he/she shall give up all his/her election related responsibilities as defined in the By-Laws.

### **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

#### **Section 1**

There shall be at least one general body meeting within one calendar year. The President of OSA shall be responsible for organizing such meetings with the help of the Board of Governors and the organizing chapter.

#### **Section 2**

The Board of Governors shall meet at least twice a year to discuss the past activities, future plans, and the budget. The meetings can be held through conference calls.

#### **Section 3**

(a) Fifty members in good standing will constitute a quorum for the General Body meeting. The resolutions passed in the General Body meeting will be mailed electronically to members not present personally at the meeting for their approval within 30 days. A lack of response by the date specified in this circular will be taken as a vote in favor of the resolution(s).

(b) It will be the responsibility of the Secretary to maintain proper records of the resolutions obtained.

(c) The President will appoint a Parliamentarian for the General Body meeting. The interpretation of the OSA Constitution and by-laws by the Parliamentarian will be binding for the resolutions.

#### **Section 4**

The President shall conduct the meetings. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall preside over the meetings. In the absence of both the President and the Vice President, a member of

the Board of Governors appointed by the President shall conduct the meetings.

## **ARTICLE VIII: LOCAL CHAPTERS**

### **Section 1**

- a. To form a new chapter, a minimum of 15 families, with signatures of at least 20 local OSA members residing in the local community, must submit a written request to the Board of Governors through the Executive Committee. The decision of the Board shall be conveyed in writing.
- b. All members of the chapter should have a contact address within the defined geographical territory.
- c. Every Chapter should have a geographical territory as defined during its formation as approved by OSA BOG. That definition cannot overlap another existing chapter's territory.

### **Section 2**

A petition to form a chapter must be made to the Secretary of OSA for approval by the Board of Governors at least two months prior to the targeted date of its establishment.

### **Section 3**

- a. The President of a chapter or an elected representative shall become a member of the OSA Board for a term of two years. A notification to that effect shall be submitted to the Secretary of OSA by the respective Board Members on or before the June 30th of the OSA election year. The chapter President or his representative to OSA Board must be a life member or patron or benefactor member (i.e., permanent member) of OSA in good standing.
- b. The President/Coordinator of a Chapter is eligible to continue on the Board for a second two-year term if reelected by the chapter, but no more than two consecutive two-year terms. A notification to that effect shall be submitted to the Secretary of OSA on or before the June 30th of the OSA election year.

### **Section 4**

- a. The President of a chapter shall provide a membership list of the chapter to the Secretary of OSA by June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
- b. When members move to a different local address by virtue of their job-relocation or other reasons, permanently, they should cease to be the member of the chapter.

### **Section 5**

Any donation and membership dues collected by a chapter in the name of OSA shall be deposited with the Treasurer of the OSA. A chapter shall, however, be free to raise its own membership fees and other donations for local activities.

### **Section 6**

All financial accounts owned by Chapters must reflect OSA EIN and all funds raised by Chapters shall follow OSA rules and IRS regulations. Chapter shall submit a copy of its annual financial statement to the Treasurer at the end of each fiscal year. Failure to report such transactions in time is subjected to expulsion from Chapter status. CanOSA will be exempted from this rule, however, CanOSA must report annual chapter financial report upon Treasurer's request.

### **Section 7**

At anytime if the chapter falls short of 15 local families of OSA National in the vicinity of the chapter's operating area, the chapter will stay under probation and the so called chapter president will lose the seat in the BOG until the member requirement is satisfied. The chapter can be reinstated with a fresh application with the signatures of 20 individual members and consent of 15 OSA member families.

### **Section 8**

A single person must not serve in the position of chapter president for more than 4 years in total in a span of 10 years.

### **Section 9**

All Chapter officials must be OSA permanent members with good standing and are subjected to the same standards as National executives.

### **Section 10**

A chapter must maintain the minimum requirement to remain as a chapter in good standing. The minimum requirements will be described in the chapter's standard document.

## **ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS AND RULES OF BUSINESS**

### **Section 1**

Any proposed amendments to the OSA constitution or By-Laws shall be proposed by a petition signed by at least 10 percent of the total membership or by the Board of Governors. The petition must be circulated to the general membership at least 30 days prior to the annual general body meeting or the proposed effective date for implementation.

### **Section 2**

Any amendment to the OSA constitution and By-Laws shall need the approval of two-thirds majority



present in the General Body meeting, or two-thirds majority of members through mail ballot. A lack of response within the date specified in the mail ballot will be considered as a vote in favor of the amendment(s). A minimum of 30 days from the date of mailing must be given for the response for postal mail voting and a minimum of 15 days from the date of mailing must be given for the response through electronic voting. The mail ballot can be initiated only by approval from the majority of the BOG.

### **Section 3**

The business of the OSA shall be conducted in accordance with the rules contained in the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* provided these do not contradict the By-Laws and the Rules of Business of the OSA.

### **Section 4**

On any question involving the constitution the By-Laws, or the Rules of Business, the decision of the Board of Governors will be final.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **BY-LAW I - MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1**

Any person eighteen years of age or over interested in the stated objectives of the OSA shall be eligible for membership. Membership in OSA involves submission of an application for formal approval by the Executive Committee. OSA reserves the right to verify the information provided and the qualifications for membership of any applicant. Such verification may include requesting additional supporting documentation from some or all of the applicants for membership by going through the Membership Verification Committee.

#### **Section 2**

Membership in the OSA shall be of the following types:

1. SINGLE PERSON of eighteen years of age or more by paying annual dues of \$20.00.
2. FAMILY (husband, wife, and children below 18) by paying annual dues of \$40.00.
3. LIFE MEMBER: A single person or a family paying \$300.00. In case of marriage of the single member the spouse shall be granted life membership. In case of divorce, both spouses shall be accorded individual life memberships.
4. FIVE-YEAR MEMBER: A person or family who contributes \$100 or more to OSA
5. PATRON: A single person or a family who contributes \$600 or more to OSA

6. BENEFACTOR: A person or a family contributing a lump sum of \$1,000 or more to OSA.
7. HONORARY MEMBER: Persons selected to this status by the Board of Governors.
8. SUPPORTING MEMBER: Persons, families or organizations by contributing at least \$100 a year

### **Section 3**

Honorary or supporting members are not eligible to vote or seek office of the OSA.

### **Section 4**

Membership dues in any category may be changed by the Board of Governors with approval of the general body by a majority vote. However, to encourage membership drive, the Executive Committee may temporarily reduce the amount for any category of membership through written notification to the general membership. The period over which this reduction will be valid must be specified in the notification and the reduction cannot be repeated within the normal tenure of a particular Executive Committee. The membership fees cannot be reduced to less than 65% of the prevailing schedule.

### **Section 5**

The fiscal year of the OSA shall be July 1 to June 30th.

### **Section 6**

Resignation from membership will be accepted from any member at any time by submitting an application to BOG through the Secretary of OSA and through regular mail with signature or through electronic mail from a valid ID registered with OSA. The format of the application shall be available by the BOG.

### **Section 7. Membership Verification Committee**

a) **Composition.** There shall be a Membership Verification Committee (MVC) comprised of the Secretary, a member of the Board of Governors and two other general members, nominated by the President with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee. The nomination of these two additional members shall be completed within thirty (30) days of taking office.

#### **b) Verification Procedure.**

- i. The Treasurer shall forward copies of all membership applications and payments received within the preceding calendar month to the MVC no later than the last day of each calendar month.
- ii. The MVC shall review each application to determine: 1. Completion of Application; 2. Eligibility in accordance with the Articles &

- By-laws; 3. Whether the applicable membership fee has been paid.
- iii. The MVC shall complete the application review process within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the application from the Treasurer. The MVC shall have the right to request for additional documentation pertaining to the information provided in Application in order to verify the applicant's eligibility. Such documentation may include, but shall not be limited to: a) photo identification, b) proof of age, c) a current utility bill for address verification. If the MVC requests such additional documentation from the applicant, the time limit set forth in sub-paragraph (iii) above shall be extended by an additional fifteen (15) days, if necessary. If the applicant fails to provide the requested documentation within the additional fifteen (15) days, the MVC shall have the right to reject the application.
  - iv. MVC shall have the right to reject any application without giving suitable reasons to the applicant. In case of rejection, all applicable fees paid by the applicant will be refunded excluding the administrative charges, if any.

#### **Section 8. Revocation**

a) Substantial Violation. Membership of any member may be revoked for substantial violation of the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of OSA. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, it shall be a violation of the Bylaws of OSA for any member to knowingly or intentionally engage in conduct which is intended to compete with or cause harm to OSA or which, in the opinion of the Executive Committee in its sole discretion, is likely to substantially injure the reputation of OSA. Any member of the Board of Governors or a minimum of 25 members in good standing of OSA may submit a petition outlining the charges to the Chairperson of the OSA Board of Governors by registered/certified mail, return receipt requested or by electronic mail addressed to the President and Secretary. The Board of Governors shall investigate the charges and if, in the opinion of a majority of the Board of Governors, there is probable cause to believe that a basis for revocation of membership may exist, the Board of Governors shall place the petition for removal of that person on the agenda for hearing at a BOG meeting specially called for such purpose and shall provide the affected member with written and electronic notice of the petition and the hearing date so that such

member may have an opportunity to be heard in opposition to the petition. If no quorum is present, the hearing on the petition shall be continued to the next regular meeting of the Board of Governors or a special meeting called for such purpose at which a quorum is present for voting. The Secretary shall notify the affected member about the date, time and place of the continued hearing. After the hearing at which a quorum is present, the Board of Governors shall decide by two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting whether to revoke the membership under question. The President shall notify the affected member of the action of the Board of Governors both electronically and in writing. The decision of the Board of Governors shall be final and binding.

### **BY - LAW II: ANNUAL CONVENTION**

#### **Section 1**

The site of the annual convention shall be selected by the Executive Committee and Board of Governors a year in advance for smooth planning. The host chapter or the host community shall be responsible for all aspects of the convention. The President or coordinator (in the absence of a president) of the chapter or the community leader must send a written request to the President of the OSA at least one year before the proposed date of the convention with the written approval of the majority of the members of the host chapter, to hold the convention.

#### **Section 2**

(a) The convention shall not be viewed as a fund raising method on the part of the local chapter. The Treasurer shall supervise annual OSA convention and/or symposium fund collections and expenses, and report them to the General Body in the following year. The accounts of the convention shall be prepared by the President or his/her representative of the host chapter and will be handed over to the OSA Treasurer for reporting to the General Body. If the host chapter for a Convention does not meet its obligations to provide financial statements, a list of new members and all monies due to the national organization within six months of the end of the Convention, said chapter shall not be permitted to host another Convention for a period of 10 years from such date that the host chapter meets the foregoing obligations.

(b) A convention audit committee consisting of 3 members shall be formed by the executive committee to carefully audit the convention incomes and expenses.

**Section 3:**

The OSA Vice President shall function as Co-convenor of the convention and shall coordinate all the OSA activities including planning, convention opening ceremony, invitation of the OSA guests, and OSA award distributions in consultation with the OSA President and the convention organizers.

**Section 4:**

The Convener will ensure the printing and distribution of copies of the OSA souvenir and directory to all the attending OSA members. The Convener shall provide electronic copies of souvenir and directories to all members. Members may request for a printed copy of the souvenir and directory to the Convener by paying for the printing & shipping expenses in advance by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Section 5:**

OSA makes it a mandate for the convention organizing committee to organize a cultural segment completely dedicated to Odia classical music style such as Odissi, Chhanda, and Champu to increase interest among the new generation Odia children in their cultural heritage during the convention.

**Section 6:**

Convention guidelines approved by the BOG will be used for convention planning and programming.

**BY - LAW III: ELECTION PROCEDURE****Section 1**

A three member election committee with one as chairman shall be appointed by the Executive Committee or BOG and will be announced to the general body for approval by majority at the annual convention preceding the election year.

**Section 2**

No member of the Board of Governors shall be eligible to be a member of the election committee.

**Section 3**

The Secretary of the OSA shall prepare a list of members who have paid their dues by Dec. 31 of the year preceding the election year. This list along with the list of life members and patrons shall be submitted to the chairman of the election committee by Jan. 15 of the election year. Only the members in this list can be able to participate in the election.

**Section 4**

Nominations for the various offices shall be invited by the election committee chairman through the OSA newsletter of September-December quarter, preceding the election year. In case of contests, the names of the candidates shall be announced in a special letter to be sent by the election committee along with the position statement of each contesting

candidate accompanied with the ballots. All communications from the election committee regarding the nomination will be electronic. The format of invitation for nomination will be determined by the Election Committee.

**Section 5**

The Election Committee of OSA shall print and supply the ballots. All ballots must be sequentially numbered or coded.

**Section 6**

The ballots shall be mailed in the fourth weekend of March of the election year. The ballot number or code must be noted against the master membership list held by the election committee. For a returned ballot to be valid, it must be postmarked by the date on or before the 4th Monday of April of the election year.

**Section 7**

The election committee shall open a post office box address to which the ballots shall be mailed to by the voters. The ballots shall be counted in the presence of the election committee members and the candidates or their representatives on the second Saturday of May of the election year. The results of the election shall be announced then and there with a written statement of the results sent to the President of the OSA. All the election materials must be sealed and signed by the election committee members and the candidates or their representatives, and will be preserved by the election committee chairman for a period of six months after the election. The election committee may adopt electronic voting procedure with the approval of the BOG members. In that case, the voting and counting methods/rules must be approved by the BOG and disseminated to the members electronically by January 1<sup>st</sup> of the election year.

**Section 8**

The President of OSA shall submit the results to the Board of Governors for approval and for a publication in a special Newsletter by May 30th of the election year.

**Section 9**

The election committee shall adopt prudent ways to insure the secrecy of the voting system.

**Section 10**

All expenses for the election shall be reimbursed by the Treasurer of OSA upon the submission of the expense report. The committee shall caution to keep expense within the budget.

**Section 11**

Any charge of election irregularity or fraud shall be reported to the President and the members of the Board of Governors for resolution.

**Section 12**

The ruling of BOG shall be binding on all issues outside the scope of Election Committee.

**BY - LAW IV: DISCIPLINARY ACTION****Section 1**

Disciplinary action shall be taken by 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Governors against any member for gross misconduct.

**Section 2**

The policy document for the disciplinary action shall be approved by the OSA Board of Governors and will be binding.

**BY-LAW V: Grievance Hearing Process****Section 1**

The new executive committee (EC) will form a 3-member Grievance Handling Committee (GHC) and get the approval from GBM when they take the oath of the office. The appointed GHC will have a life span of two years. Any subsequent changes to the committee should be duly approved by BOG with a 2/3 majority.

**Section 2**

All grievances must be filed with GHC outlining in detail the nature of the complaint. GHC will investigate and provide a report of its investigation & recommendation within 60 days of receipt of the grievance. If the party/parties involved is/are not satisfied with the report of GHC, he/she may request BOG to review.

**Section 3**

A member of the grievance committee must be a member of OSA at least for last 10 years

**Section 4**

If the party/parties involved is/are not satisfied with the findings/decision of the GHC, the case may bring it to the BOG. The BOG will be the final authority to either accept GHC decision or request for new hearing by a majority vote.

**Section 5**

Any member that files a legal case without following the grievance hearing process will be subjected to disciplinary action which may include termination of his or her membership.

**Section 6**

GHC shall recommend disciplinary actions against individual member(s), officer(s) or a chapter to BOG. BOG shall accept or reject the recommended action on individual member(s) and officer(s) with a 2/3<sup>rd</sup>

majority vote. All disciplinary actions against a chapter are subjected to GBM approval.

**BY-LAW VI: OSA Award**

OSA award will be coordinated by the Vice President of the Society in consultation with the award committee formed by the Vice President for the purpose. The award procedure must be documented and approved by the Executive Committee and the BOG.

**BY-LAW VII: OSA Communication**

Unless otherwise mentioned all communications in OSA related to OSA business including the amendments will be electronic. In special cases with electronic disability for any member, paper communication may be made with requests from the respective member to the Secretary of OSA. OSA communication medium for discussion and other purposes must be determined by the BOG at any time and can change by putting a notice on the OSA web 30 days before such changes.

**BY-LAW VIII: Unforeseen Circumstances**

In unforeseen circumstances the decision of the BOG will be final. The unforeseen circumstances include but not limited to natural events, tragic events in families for which a responsible official may not be able to perform his/her duties on time, the events for which no guidance is available in the constitution and immediate time sensitive challenges which would require immediate attention.

**BY-LAW IX: OSA Standards, Policy and Rules of Business**

At any time, interpretation by the BOG regarding OSA standards, policy and rules of business in organizational affairs will be final. The standard documents for member ethics, convention programming, forms and procedural documents, organizational position statements on issues must be prepared by the BOG through respective committees or a standard committee, i.e., the committee to write down procedural documents and standard templates.

**BY\_LAW X: Voting Rules****Section 1: BOG Voting Rule**

The approval from the Governing Board and the members will be sought through e-mail. In case of no response within two weeks from a Board member, it will be assumed that the particular member has approved the request.

**Section 2: For General Membership**

The approval from the General Membership may be needed from time to time through e-mail or paper mail. In case of no response within the designated time, it will be assumed that the particular non-responder member has approved the request. The minimum designated time will be 15 days.

**BY-LAW XI: OSA JURISDICTION**

By default OSA Jurisdiction will be the state of its General Counsel or the legal advisor that would be announced by the BOG. In absence of a General Counsel or a legal advisor, the Jurisdiction will be declared by the BOG.

**BY-LAW XII: FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING**

Finances, Accounting, Banking, Investments, Audits and Annual Expense Reports - The Treasurer in consultation with the OSA Executive Committee (EC), and its Chapters and the respective officers of the society will be responsible for maintaining the information related to the finance, accounting, banking, investments, fund raising, day-to-day expenses and annual expense reporting of the organization. The individual Chapters need to provide a precise yearly expense report (1/2-1 page only) to the OSA Treasurer, by May 30 of each year. Similarly, the OSA accounting should be maintained by the treasurer during the year and to be finalized by May 30 of each year. The OSA's annual expense report in the form of a Balance Sheet (1 page only) will be finalized during May 30 of each year and be published in the OSA Journal (July of each year), OSA website, and OSA Communication medium for the members' review. At the end of the term of 2 years of the EC, the financial information of OSA should be transferred to the next elected treasurer by August 15. Similar processes should be followed by the respective chapters.

**BY-LAW XIII: OSA ASSETS**

No part of the earnings of the OSA shall go to the personal benefit of any member, office bearer or private individual. Should the OSA disband, after paying or making provisions for payments of all the liabilities of the OSA, the remaining funds and assets of the OSA shall go to such charitable organizations as having objectives similar to this society, chosen by the majority votes of the general body at a special

meeting called for that purpose. OSA assets (such as: the name(s), constitution, organization documents, symbol/logo/trademarks, domain names [www.Odishasociety.org](http://www.Odishasociety.org) and [www.odishasociety.org](http://www.odishasociety.org), discussion group name [OSAnet@yahoogroups.com](mailto:OSAnet@yahoogroups.com), annual convention legacy, funds (OSA and its chapters) and related organizational values and information do not belong to any members, organizations, office bearers, coordinators, volunteers or private individuals, rather the OSA assets are owned by the OSA organization.

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**Notes**

1. The name change of the society to "The Odisha Society of the Americas" involves a lengthy process and the current executive team will research and collect more information on this before pursuing it.

**Nomenclature:**

OSA: "The Orissa Society of the Americas" or "The Odisha Society of the Americas"  
BOG: Board of Governors (Executive Board, Board all the definitions are used for BOG)  
GBM: General Body Meeting  
GHC: Grievance Hearing Committee  
MVC: Member Verification Committee  
EC: Executive Committee

Acknowledgements: Surya Misra, Amiya Nayak, Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan, Lata Mishra, Purna Mishra, Bigyani Das, Pradeep Mohapatra, Hara Narayan Padhi, Bijoy Mishra, Priyadarsan Patra, Sandip Dasverma, Lalatendu Mohanty, Pratap Das, Gyana Patnaik, Amiya Mohanty, Debashis Panda, Surendra Ray, Arata Rout, Nishikant Sahoo, Chitta Baral, Sradhananda Misra, Gagan Panigrahi, Akhileswar Patel, Annapurna Pandey, Manoj Sahu, Nick Patnaik, Devjani Mishra, Sunanda Holmes, Sujit Mohanty, Linda Dorney, Richard Rossenblatt

**OSA Officials:**

Dr Bigyani Das, President  
Pradeep Mohapatra, Vice President  
Pitamabar Sarangi, Secretary  
Dr Annapurna Pandey, Secretary until February 12, 2011  
Dr Akhileswar Patel, Treasurer

## 2011 General Body Meeting of The Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA)

July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

Main Ballroom, Marriot at Legacy Town Center

Plano, Texas

Time: 11:40 AM-1:45 PM

### Present in the Podium:

Dr Bigyani Das (President): BD

Pradeep Mohapatra (Vice-President): PM

Dr Akhileswar Patel (Treasurer): APL

Sunil Sabat (OSAnet Chairman) as Sgt-At-Arms: SS

Dr Lalu Mansinha (Parliamentarian): LM

**Attendance:** Around 150 at the start of the meeting and 65 towards the end. There was some inflow and outflow of members in the interim period.

**Official in charge of the Floor:** Lalatendu Mohanty, Chapter President of NYNJ chapter and BOG member was handling questions from the floor.

**(This minutes is prepared by Pradeep Mohapatra, Vice-President of OSA and has been approved by the above members present in the podium and the current officials of OSA).**

### Meeting started with the call to order by Mr Sunil Sabat, chairman of OSAnet

#### President's Report

President Bigyani Das presented the agenda of the meeting.

Then she read the Good OSA Member pledge before presenting the report about the state of OSA. She congratulated the convention organizers for a successful convention and thanked the coordinators of two new chapters, Grand Canyon Chapter and Pacific Northwest chapter that were formed during the administration. She also congratulated all the BOG members and other volunteer members for working hard and overtime for coming up with a final modified draft for the constitution.

The president then announced the parliamentarian Dr Lalu Mansinha.

#### Vice-President's Report

Vice-President Pradeep Mohapatra announced recognition awards for OSA members that have contributed significantly for the betterment of the society during the current administration. A few members were recognized for their lifelong contribution. They were Drs Uma and Shanti Mishra, Dr Nilamber and Anu Biswal, Dr Sitakantha and Kalpana Dash and Saradindu and Lata Misra.

#### Secretary's Report

Secretary Pitambar Sarangi was absent as he was out of the country and had shared his report that was read by Akhileswar Patel summarizing the activities. The BOG meeting minutes were regularly published in OSA newsletters. Secretary's report was accepted unanimously. The motion was brought by Digambar Mishra and Dharendra Kar seconded it.

#### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer report was presented by Akhileswar Patel.

Prabir Dash asked about the legal breakdown cost. Manoj Padhi also asked "Give the breakdown of Legal expenses"? Lal Mohanty questioned "What is the Total Legal Expenses"? Akhil Patel replied with the number \$75,109.xx. BK Rath commented against publishing the names of people who pledged but did not honor it.

Shanti Mishra brought the motion to approve Treasurer Report and Suniti Behera seconded it. Motion carried.

On the topic of "pledge to cover legal expenses" Sandeep DasVerma suggested to do a follow up call with the members".

CA convention had a surplus which had helped OSA in managing the annual expense. Everybody appreciated the fundraising committee and the financial committee of CA convention and their prompt action as regards clearing up the convention account.

### **Modified Constitution (Presented by Bigyani Das)**

Bigyani Das presented the modified constitution and highlighted the parts that are modified from the previous constitution. She stated the legal formalities that are involved in the name change by substituting

“Odisha” in place of “Orissa” in the name of the society “The Orissa Society of the Americas”. This would include a new registration, a new EIN number, legal expenses and some paper work.

BK Rath proposed to table the name change, start discussion on email/web later.”

LM suggested, in Canada if a new name for the Organization is registered then old Organization could be added to the new one as a subset.

LM conducted the discussion part of the constitution. There have been discussions on various aspects of the constitution revision in which Chitta Baral, Somdutt Behura, Dharendra Kar, Pratap Das, Saradindu Misra, Uma Misra, Digambar Misra, Shanti Misra, Hara Padhi, Shradhananda Misra, Annapurna Pandey, Suniti Behera etc. participated. Most of the discussion was centered on the disciplinary action in which Mihir Dash, Hara Mishra, Manoj Padhi were vocal.

After about one hour of discussion finally the proposal to accept the constitution as it is was brought by Dharendra Kar as a main motion. This was seconded by Pratap Das and was voted by the majority present in the meeting during that time.

For: 46; Against: 6, Others abstained

#### **Topic: Rename Kalashree Award to “Arun Das Memorial Kalashree Award”**

Motion was brought by Saradindu Misra & Dharendra Kar seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Topic: Drama Festival**

- OSA Regional Drama Festivals become an annual event.
- The OSA Executive Body and Board of Governors will select three coordinator(s) and announce the names at the General Body Meeting.
- After initial appointment, each year one of the coordinators retires so the participation spreads to new volunteers and geographical areas.

Pratap Das brought the motion and Debaki Nandan Chowdhury seconded it.

#### **Topic: Chhanda**

OSA shall take additional initiative to invest some funds for creation of karaoke music for Chhanda, Chhanda and Odissi. This will help the aspirants for this initiative to practice on their own, since we do not have teachers in this area throughout the country.

Saradindu Misra brought the motion and Dhira Kar seconded it.

#### **Next Year's Convention**

President Bigyani Das declared next year's convention to be held in Seattle by Pacific Northwest chapter.

#### **Welcome of the Incoming OSA Officials**

Bigyani Das welcomed the incoming officials of OSA Dr Annapurna Pandey, Kuku Das, Leena Mishra and Sushant Satpathy and invited them to the podium. She presented the new officials OSA parliamentary plaque as a symbol to preserve the values of the society and take care of the organizational dignity. Dr Annapurna Pandey introduced her staff members and declared the reduced life membership fee of \$200. She asked for every member's help in taking the organization forward.

#### **Topic: Grievance Committee**

Dr Annapurna Pandey announced the members of the Grievance Hearing Committee as

- Nick Pattnaik
- Dr Panchanan Satpathy
- Dr Anjalika Patnaik

Hara Padhi brought the motion and Babru Samal seconded it. It was accepted unanimously.

**The meeting was adjourned at about 1:45 PM.**



## **Roth Revolution**

By Jay Misra

Roth-IRA is an excellent tool for retirement. Many a times, it does not make sense to push funds in an employer sponsored 401(K), 403(b) and other similar arrangements. Employers, most of the time, match a portion of the employee contribution into the retirement plan(s), and it is prudent to take advantage of the matching, as it helps generate more funds for retirement faster. But there is always a catch. Employers will not match the full contribution one makes or is allowed to make by the government, IRS, for tax-deductible purposes. They generally match 3% of the employees' gross contribution, which comes to pittance.

Employees feel happy to get a retirement plan started, decrease the taxes, increase their take home pay, and eventually get a lower W2 at year end. A lower W2 also creates an opportunity for employers to contribute less for FICA, FUTA and Social Security taxes. Employers thus match a little and save a lot, and also create the huge industry for stock brokers and investment advisors.

It is, thus, advisable that employees contribute only the amount that is being fully matched by their employer in the corporate retirement plan. The rest of the funds, even if not tax-deductible, should go into other vehicles. The loss of tax-deductibility is also a gain in taxes, which become due when the funds are distributed at retirement. The government, with the lure of tax-deductibility and tax-deferred growth, entices the public into investing more and more funds for retirement savings. But it also builds its own treasury by restricting any withdrawals before age 59 ½, with a 10% penalty and a 50% penalty after age 70 ½. During the accumulation phase the funds, collect tax-deductible and tax-deferred, but are distributed voluntarily after age 60, and mandatory after age 71, called RMD, required minimum distribution, based on ones' life expectancy, and taxed as ordinary income. The tax savings during the accumulation phase are so small, and the tax payments at distribution are so large, that most common retirement plans make people poor when they need the money most. Combined with inflation and the time value of money, all those fancy plans, 401(K), 403(b), SEP, Simple-IRA, Profit Sharing Plans, are of little help. Hence, there is a false assumption that one will be in lower tax-bracket at retirement. Roth IRA, with its non-deductibility during accumulation and non-taxability during distribution, defies those options of qualified plans and comes out far ahead. Both those features, tax-free distributions and no required minimum distribution, make it unique. But there is another catch, in the form of income limitations, to be eligible to contribute to Roth accounts, \$105K for single individuals and \$166K for married filing jointly. The contribution limits are \$5K for each participant and \$6K for those above the age of 55, called catch up contribution.

If one is not eligible for Roth contributions, they can still contribute to the traditional IRAs, as tax-deductible contribution if there be no retirement plan with employer, or non-deductible contribution, without any income limitations. In addition, there is a provision of Roth 401(K), with an employer offering 401(K) contributions, made pre-tax. There is also a Roth conversion opportunity, where taxable IRAs can be converted to tax-free Roth IRA by paying tax now and eventually saving on higher taxes that will be due at maturity of the account. Due to the loss of huge amounts in the stock market, people are trying for a re-characterization of their Roth accounts, which has added some confusion to the whole situation. The last equation to the array of retirement plans is PLI, permanent life insurance. Not universal, not index, not variable, but only whole life, that generates more funds than Roth and creates legacy and wealth.

## **The Making of the Film "The Myth of the Buddha's Birthplace"**

By James M. Freeman

My name is James Freeman, and for fifty years I have been involved with the world of Odisha. Back in 1962, I went to live in Kapileswar, a village-suburb of Bhubaneswar. I stayed there for fourteen months, collecting information that I used for my doctoral dissertation at Harvard. The villagers shared their lives with me, our friendships blossomed, and they have lasted to this day.

In 1970, I returned to Kapileswar with my wife Patricia. As before, the villagers opened up their community to us. We stayed there nearly two years. These times were among the happiest and most influential of our lives.



It was Dr. Annapurna Pandey, the President of the Orissa Society of the Americas, who inspired me to return to Kapileswar for a third time. In 2003, she visited Kapileswar and found that the people of that village, all of them Hindus, were not only celebrating the birthday of the Buddha, but making the claim that the Buddha had been born in their village. In 2005, Dr. Pandey returned to Kapileswar and also spoke with several officials of the Odisha (then Orissa) government. Both the officials and the people of the village urged her to document the story of the Buddha's birth in Kapileswar. She told me about this, and we decided to make a film about it.

Many people have been interested in whether or not it is true that the Buddha was born in Kapileswar, and not in southern Nepal, as most people, including most Buddhists, believe. Because Dr. Pandey and I are anthropologists, our interest in this story goes far beyond the truth or falsity of this claim. What really interests us is how this claim has affected the lives and worldview of the people in Kapileswar. From that point of view, it really does not matter whether or not the claim is true. I remember Kapileswar in the 1960s and 1970s as a religious community. That's why I chose to live and do research in that community, to see what happens to people of faith as their world changes rapidly.

We returned to Kapileswar in 2007. Accompanying us was my son Karsten, a videographer. As always, the villagers made us feel welcome, and they opened up their community to let us film wherever we wanted. This included the sacred confines of the Kapileswar temple, including the filming of the rituals for Lord Kapilanath, the central deity of the temple. Officials of the Orissa government of 2007 gave us unprecedented logistical support, including significant travel assistance. Especially helpful were Sri Ajit Kumar Tripathy IAS, the Chief Secretary of Orissa, Dr. C.B. Patel, the Superintendent of the Orissa State Museum, Sri Prafulla Tripathy OAS (retired), Sri Debi Prasad Mishra MLA and Minister of Culture, and Dr. D.R. Pradhan, the Superintendent of the Odisha State Archives. We were free to film anywhere we wanted in Orissa and to form our own conclusions without hindrance, even if they did not represent the views of the officials or the government.

In 2008, to supplement our film footage, an Orissa freelance film team from Bhubaneswar, led by Director Sanjay Kanungo and Photographer Tapas Mohanty, provided additional film footage of Kapileswar, including the Kapileswar Buddha Birthday Ceremony. In 2012, we completed the editing of the film, a thirty-six minute documentary called "The Myth of the Buddha's Birthplace."

The claim that the Buddha was born in Kapileswar goes back to 1928, when an inscription was discovered in Kapileswar stating that the Buddha was born there. Over the years, experts have argued whether or not the claim is true. We hoped to validate this claim. Unfortunately, the evidence we uncovered in our film is insufficient at this time to substantiate this claim. We know that this will disappoint many people in and outside the village, who went out of their way to help us make this film.

Many critics simply dismiss the Kapileswar claim as a myth, a false story. We think it would be a mistake to stop with that conclusion. Myth has another meaning, that it is a sacred story—a tale of sacred people and events, taking place in a sacred time and space. We discovered that in Kapileswar, and that is what our film is about. It tells a positive story about the enduring faith of the people of Kapileswar. They have created a sacred origin story, in which the Buddha and the Buddha birthplace claim have become a central part of their lives and worldview. Their story is a testimony to the capacity of people to maintain deep faith while the world around is changing rapidly. Their story is about a life-force, represented both by the Buddha and by Kapilanath.

*James M. Freeman is an Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at San Jose State University in California. He is the author of Scarcity and Opportunity in an Indian Village; Untouchable: an Indian Life History; and Essays on Orissan Society.*

*"The Myth of the Buddha's Birthplace," (Executive Producer Annapurna Pandey, Co-Directors James M. Freeman and Karsten Freeman) is an official selection of the India International Film Festival of Tampa Bay, Florida 2012, and the Santa Cruz Film Festival 2012. For more information, check the website: [themythofthebuddhasbirthplace.com](http://themythofthebuddhasbirthplace.com)*

## My Proud Odisha

By Jyotshna Mahapatra



Odisha has a rich cultural heritage, which is a harmonious blending of art, religion and philosophy interwoven around Lord Purushottam Jagannath' – the internationally famous Vaishnavite God at Puri. The State has splendid historical monuments depicting glamorous heroic deeds and cultural upheavals. Puri, popularly known as the 'Jagannath Dham' because of the sacred shrine of Lord Jagannath, has a special place in the cultural history of the country. It is one of the four dhams of India, i.e. place of principal preceptor of Hindu Religion and a cultural nerve centre. Both Vaishnavism and Shaivism flourished in the State. Geographically, ancient Odisha of the remote past was a link between Dakshinapath and the Aryavart, and at the same time its mountain ranges were safe homes for the original primitives. Thus, it was a meeting ground of Anarya, Dravida and Arya Cultures, all of which have ultimately contributed to the growth of Hinduism. Mahabharata describes Odisha as a land inhabited by saints (rishis).

The richness of the Culture of a region can be visualised from the sculptures and monuments of the past. The 'golden triangle' of Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar has many magnificent and massive temples as examples of superb artistic, sculptural and architectural skill of the people of Odisha. The temple of Lord Lingaraj at Bhubaneswar is a centre of attraction for Shaivites. The Black Pagoda at Konark is a charming epitome of architectural perfection and proof of superb creative genius of the Odia people. The Jagannath Temple at Puri is a wonderful monument. These places, along with many other such places, have all along provided spiritual bliss as well as reawakening and have educated the people to follow a secular way of life. As already mentioned, both Buddhism and Jainism had also flourished in ancient Odisha. In fact, Lord Jagannath is also described by some scholars as a symbol of Buddhism, while He was originally a God of the Savaras, i.e. one of the primitive tribes of the State.

Historically, under patronage of the Hindu Kings of the past, cultural unity through blending of Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism has taken place in the State which is the Culture inherited by modern Odisha. The Culture of Odisha has been much refined subsequently under the influence of the Koran of the Muslims and Bible of the Christians but has never lost its basic values of exercising control over the passions, discarding materialistic ideology, showing respect to the religious beliefs of others, etc. Many scholars and devotees, including Chaitanya Dev, have also contributed to the Culture of Odisha, but no foreign invasion has been able to dwindle it down. Muslims and Christians, who have equally flourished in this state, have also contributed much to the Jagannath cult, among whom mention may be made of Salbeg. The Jagannath Culture of the State is often described as more than a faith and philosophy and is accepted and followed as a 'Human Culture'.

While talking about Culture of Odisha, one cannot forget the rich, artistic and eloquent Odissi Dance of the state, which is typical and famous for expression of the concepts of 'rasa' or supreme devotion to Lord Vishnu. The music of the State, also known as Odissi music, is also remarkable for its lucidity and rhythm.

Religion is another important cultural characteristic of the population of any country. Odisha, being traditionally a secular state, has never shown any intolerance towards any religion. Several religions have thrived in the comfortable cradle of this State.

Thus, while ancient Odisha was a meeting ground of primary races and basic Cultures, modern Odisha is a meeting ground of different religions and religious people. It is in a true sense a beautiful abode where all people can live in harmony, love and friendship, crossing all barriers and differences in faith.

In 2009, the tourist arrival to Odisha was 46.66 lacs. It has increased to 76.43 lacs in 2010. The foreign tourist arrival during this period has increased from 33,310 to 50,432. This shows an increase of 51%, whereas the growth rate of India is 42%. Culture and Heritage are our biggest strengths. Eco tourism has great potential—

Chilka lake is the largest brackish water lake in Asia, and there are grand monuments like Konark temple, long coastline, virgin silver sand dune beaches, etc. The strengths are many, and the weakness would be that Odisha tourism is not well connected in any recognized tourism circuit of the nation.

### Culture - Art

Grass Ro People celebrate ancient living traditions that miraculously continue to thrive. They seek out the source of a common culture to understand its context and value, and share it with other travelers. Art and craft is a traditional form of cultural expression in Odisha. Maintained over centuries, at times unchanged, other times evolving, it forms the fabric of many lives. We meet the people behind the products and discover what it means to paint mythology, drum primal rhythms and weave symbolic stories.



Konark Bathed in the rays of the rising sun, Site at Konark is a monumental representation of the Sun God's (Surya) chariot. Just as the sun measures time, the chariot's 12 wheels (each 10 feet high) mark the monthly cycle of each year. Each wheel has 16 spokes that work as giant sun-dials, measuring the hours of daylight in each day, and the 7 horses that draw the chariot symbolize the 7 days in a week. Built in the 13th century by King Narasimhadeva of the Ganga dynasty, the Sun temple (also known as the Black Pagoda) is a salute to procreation and fertility and has a plethora of erotic sculpture adorning its walls.



Gotipua ('goti' meaning one and 'pua' meaning boy) is a traditional dance form performed by pony-tailed boys in female costume. The male dancers bring a rigorous approach to classical dance, taking on an almost gymnastic form. Dedicated to temples as young children, these boys maintain daily practice under the guidance and tutelage of a master (guru). Accompanied by harmonium and devotional poetry, Gotipua is performed on special or festival occasions.



Patachitra is traditional painting on cloth carried out by a dynasty of painters depicting religious scenes from local legends and Hindu epics. Organic vegetables and minerals are crushed, boiled and filtered to obtain bright natural colors. The cloth is treated before being brought to life in the evocative miniature painting style. Despite faded patronage, artists and their families proudly maintain their valuable tradition and technique.



Dhemsa Among all the tribes, the Gaddava are famous for their "dhemsa" dance. Gathering almost every evening, the dance is as much a social ritual as it is a celebration. Performed by women interlocked in semi circles and accompanied by men playing musical instruments, the dance lasts long into the night. In addition to their traditional repertoire, the Gaddava compose their own songs for different occasions. Often an expression of fancy for another, the dance is also a ritual of courtship.



Applique In Odisha, specially the village of Pipli, appliqué thrives as a living tradition continuing over centuries. The roots of the craft, as with many handicrafts in Odisha, are intertwined with ritual worship of Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of the Puri temple. The craft is traditionally practiced by a specific caste of professional tailors, who in return for their service receive food (no starving artists here). Interestingly, the craftsmen are socially well organized and comparable to the craftsmen guilds of medieval Europe.



Brass and Bell Metal Metal craft engages more artisans than any other craft in Odisha. The distinction between brass and bell metal is that the former is an alloy of copper and zinc, the latter copper and tin. The end products, mostly cooking utensils and items used of ritual worship, are produced through beating and casting.



Ikat is a style of weaving that uses a resist dyeing process similar to tie-dye on either the warp or weft before weaving threads to create a pattern or design. Double Ikat is an extremely difficult process whereby both the warp and the weft are tie-dyed before weaving. Ikats are highly regarded, as the process is time consuming and requires highly skilled technique.

### Non Vegetarian Special Cuisines of Odisha

Talking of the Cuisine in Orissa, we must mention the fish and seafood, which are specialties here. Crabs, prawns and lobsters cooked in curd or coconut milk with little oil are the special dishes of Oriya Cuisine. What is rich and plentiful is the diverse selection of seafood, with crabs and lobsters steeped in the ever present ingredients of Orissan cuisine- curd (yoghurt) and coconut milk. The curd here is rich and creamy and gives the succulent flesh an additional flavour. It is not only the seafood which is traditionally cooked in curd and coconut milk, but yams, brinjals and pumpkins are also liberally used in curd with mustard seeds giving the whole preparation that extra zing.



Non vegetarian dishes include Macchojhol, Chicken masala, Chilli Chicken, Mutton curry. Odisha is a place where sea foods like prawns, lobsters, fish and crab are found in abundance. Not only the locals but the tourists also relish the preparation of sea food like Prawn malai, Machha curry, and Crab kalia illis fish. Among the dishes, Chencheda, Chingri Malai, Crab Kalia, Dahi Machha, Soriso Macha are notable.

### Mouth Watering Cuisine

Odiya (Oriya) cuisine refers to the cooking of the eastern Indian state of Odisha (Orissa). Odisha has a culinary tradition spanning centuries, if not millennia. The kitchen of the famous Jagannath temple of Puri is reputed to be the largest in the world, a thousand chefs working around 752 wood-burning clay hearths called *chulas*.

The flavors are usually subtle and delicately spiced, quite unlike the fiery curries typically associated with Indian cuisine. Fish and other seafood such as crab and shrimp are very popular. Chicken and mutton are also consumed, but somewhat occasionally. Only 6% of the population of Odisha is vegetarian, and this is reflected in its cuisine. The oil base used is mostly mustard oil, but in festivals, ghee is used. *Panch phutana*, a mix of cumin, mustard, fennel, fenugreek and kalonji (nigella) is widely used for tempering vegetables and dals, while *garam masala* (curry powder) and *haladi* (turmeric) are commonly used for non-vegetarian curries. Pakhala, a dish made of rice, water, and yoghurt that is fermented overnight, is very popular in summer, particularly in the rural areas.

Odias (Oriyas) are very fond of sweets, and no Odia repast is considered complete without some dessert at the end. Festivals and fasts witness a cuisine without onion and garlic, whereas other days witness an aroma of garlic and onion paste in curries. One can find restaurants serving food without onion and garlic in major places like Puri and Cuttack area, which is run by many *brahmin* owners.

Indian Sweets of Odisha are mouth-watering, like the Chena Poda, Rasgulas, Chenna Jhilli, Jalebies, Golab Jamun, Rasa Malai, Rasa bali, ladoos, kheer, etc., etc. Odisha's home made sweets are the pithas like Kakara, Manda, Arisha, Gaja, Poda Pitha, Chitau Pitha, Chunchi patra pitha, etc., etc.

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## ଅବସୟ ର ଉପକଥା

### Lalatendu Pahi

ଅସୀମା ଥିଲା କାଶୋରୀ ଯେଉଁ ଦିନ ସେ ବାପା ପ୍ରଫେସର ସୁନୀଲ ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କ ସାଥରେ ନିୟୁଜ୍ ରୁ ଫେରି ଥିଲା ତାର ଅପରିଚିତ ଗାଁ କୁ ନିଷ୍ପାଦ ଆଖିରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରି ଥିଲା ନିଜକୁ କେଉଁ ଅଜଣା ଅପନ୍ତରା ରେ ଆସି ସେ ହଜି ଯାଇଛି ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହେଉନି ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ମାତ୍ରକେ ଏତେ ହିନସ୍ତା । ଅଥଚ ସବୁ ସମ୍ଭାବନା ନେଇ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ଅଲିଅଲି ଝିଅ ମାଙ୍କ ଆକର୍ଷକ ବିୟୋଗ ରେ ସଂସାର ର ସବୁ ଦୁଖ ସୁଖ ଆଦରି ନେଇଛି ଉକ୍ତ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଶେଷ କରି ନିଜକୁ ସ୍ୱୟମ୍ବସମପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିପାରିଛି ରୁଦ୍ଧ ପରଂପରା କୁ ସ୍ୱାକାର କରିନି କି ତଥା କଥିତ ନାରିସ୍ତାପନତା ର ନେତ୍ରି ସାଜିନି । ଭାରତୀୟ କଲା ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟ ର ପ୍ରାକାଶିକା ହୋଇ ଖ୍ୟାତି ଅରଜିଛି ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମନ ଫିକା ପଡି ଯାଇଛି । ଭାବୁଛି ପିଲାବେଳୁ ଛାଡି ଆସିଥିବା ଆମେରିକା ବୁଲି ଆସିଲେ କେମିତି ହୁଅନ୍ତା? ସମୟ ସାରଣି ରେ ଇତି ମଧ୍ୟ ରେ ତିରିଶ ଟି ବସନ୍ତ ବିଗତ ପ୍ରାୟ । ଆମେରିକୀୟ ସାମାଜିକ ଅଧିକାର ର ଶହେ ମାରଟିନ ଲୁଥର କିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ଙ୍କ ର ମୋର ଏକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଉଦଘୋଷଣା ତାର କଣ୍ଠରୁ ଶୁଣିଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଅବସର ନେଇ ଅସୀମା ନ୍ୟୁଜ୍ ଯିବ । ବହୁ ବାଲ୍ୟ ସାଥୀ ହୁଏତ ଏବେବି ସହର ବାସୀ । ସହସା ଛାଡି ଚାଲି ଆସିଥିବାରୁ ମାଫି ମାଗିନେବ ହୁଏତ । ଗତ ସିଲଭର ଜୁବିଲି ବେଳକୁ ତାକୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଆସିଥିଲା ହେଲେ ଯାଇ ପାରିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେତେ ସଂଭବ ପେନପାଲ ମାନେ ଏବେ ବି ସକ୍ରିୟ । ଗାଁ ଭିତେ ଭିତେ ମଣିଷ ଏକା ବୋଲି ପ୍ରଫେସର ସୁନୀଲ ମହାପାତ୍ର ବହୁବାର କହିଥିବାର ସେ ଶୁଣିଛି । ଏଥର ତାକୁ ପରଖି ନେବାର ସମୟ ହୁଏତ ଆସିଛି । ସାଗର ପାରି ର ସଭ୍ୟତା ତାକୁ ଏବେବି ହାତ ଠାରି ତାକୁଛି ଯେମିତି...

ଆମେରିକା ଅଭିମୁଖି ବିମାନ ଟି ଅସୀମା କୁ କୋଳରେ ଧରି ଦମଦମ ଏରୋର୍ଟମ ଦିଗବଲୟ ଟପି ଅନନ୍ତ ଆକାଶ ରେ ବ୍ୟାପି ସାରିଥିଲା ।

ଆକ୍ଷତାତିକ ସମୟ ରେଖା ଅତିକ୍ରମ କଲା ବେଳକୁ ଇଞ୍ଚିତର ଅନତି ସୀମା ରେ ଆକାଶ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟସ୍ନାତ ହେଉଥିବାର ସୂଚନା ମିଳୁଥିଲା... ହୃତସନ ନଦୀ କୁଳ କେନେଡି ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତିକ ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟ ରେ ବିମାନ ଟି ଚକର କାଟିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଅସୀମା କୁ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ଲାଗିଲା କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣେ? ଅତିହୀ ଏକ ନୁଆ ସହର ବୁଲିଲା ବେଳେ ତାର ପେଟ ଭିତରେ କେମିତି ମୁଣ୍ଡା ପିଲା ଚଲାବୁଲା କରନ୍ତି । ଏତେ ପରିଚିତ ଅଥଚ ଏତେ ବଦଳିଛି ଯୁଗ ର ଆକାଶ ରେଖା-ଯାତ୍ରା ତା ଅନୁମାନ ବାହାରେ । କେଉଁ ଏକ ନୁଆ ଗ୍ରହ ରେ ଆସି ଯାଇନି ତ ସହସା... ଟାଇମ ସ୍କ୍ରୟର ରେ ବିରାଟ ସୁନେଲି ଝିନ ରେ ଲେଖା ଏବଂ ଚିତ୍ର ଗୁଡିକ ଧାଇଁ ଚାଲିଥିଲେ ଅନବରତ... ନିଜ ଆଖିରେ ନ ଦେଖିଲେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନ କରିବା ଭଲ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରଫେସର କହୁଥିଲେ ଅନେକ ଥର... ମନେଅଛି କାଲିପରି-ପ୍ରଫେସର ସିନା ନାହାନ୍ତି ପାଖରେ ।

ଖୋଦ ନିଉୟରକ ସହର ଛାଡିରେ ଛିଡା ହୋଇ ତା ହେଲେ ସେ ଆଜି କଣ ଦିବାସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଛି?

ବିରାଟ ଅଗାଳିକା ଠାରୁ ଉପଗଳି ଗୁଡିକ ତାକୁ ଉପହାସ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ଯେପରି...

ବାପାଙ୍କ ଅନୁରୋଧ ରେ ସେ ଇଣ୍ଡୋଲୋଜି ପଢିଲା ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆରକିଟେକଟ ହେବାକୁ ବା ଇନଟେରିଓର ଡେଜାଇନର ହେବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ହରେଇ ଏବେ ବି ନିଜକୁ ଅସହାୟ ମନେକରେ... ଅରବୀନ୍ଦପ୍ରାନ୍ତର ହେଲେ ଆହୁରି ଭଲ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା...

ନିଜ ର ମନ କୁ ବଧାଇ ଦେଇ ଆଗକୁ ମାଡି ଚାଲିଲା-ଗଲି ଉପଗଳି ତାର ପିଲାଦିନ ର ବୁଦ୍ଧିପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ଚାଉନସିପ...

ଏ କଣ ସେ ଦେଖୁଛି...

ଭାରତୀୟ ବୈଦିକ ବାସ୍ତୁ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ର ଆମେରିକାରେ ଜୟଜୟ କାର । ସବୁଆଡେ ଏହା ସୁହେଉ । ଅସୀମା ଏକ ଦୀପ୍ତଶ୍ରୀ ନେଲା ।

ତୀବ୍ରତୀୟ ଫେଲ୍‌ସ୍‌ଲୋ, ଜାପାନୀଜ ଏକବେନା ଭଳି ସାଧାରଣ ଶିଳ୍ପ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ର ବହୁପ୍ରଚାର ସତେ ଭାରତୀୟ ବିଲଡିଙ୍ଗ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଙ୍ଗ ଏତେ ଲୋକପ୍ରିୟ?

ଏପରିକି ସରକାରୀ ମହଲ ଏହାର ଖୋଲା ଖୋଲି ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ କରି ଏହାକୁ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କରି ସଫଳହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ।

ଯୋଗ, ଧ୍ୟାନ, ଆୟୁରବେଦ ଭଳି ପ୍ରାଚ୍ୟ ବିଦ୍ୟା ର ଆଦର ଓ ସମ୍ମାନ ନିଜ ଆଖିରେ ଦେଖି ନିଜକୁ ଧନ୍ୟ ମନେ କରୁଛି ।

ଦୀପତଳ ଅକ୍ଷର ଭଳି, ବାପାଙ୍କର ଭବିଷ୍ୟ ବାଣୀ କୁ ଝିଅ ହାସାବରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ସେ ଏତି ଦେଇଥିଲା ସିନା କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଇ ବିଦେଶୀ ଫେଲ୍‌ଡା ସରଲ ମଣିଷ ଟି ର ଗାଁ ପ୍ରତୀ ଓ ଦୂରଦର୍ଶିତା ଏଇ ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର ପାରି ରେ ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ ହେଇଛି ଭାବି ତାର ହାତ ଦୋଓଟି ଯୋଡି ହୋଇ ଆସେ ଆସେ ପୂର୍ବ ଆକାଶ ପଟକୁ ଟେକି ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା ।

ସ୍ମୃତିସଜ୍ଜଳ ଅସୀମା ଖୋଜି ଚାଲିଥିଲା ସେଣ୍ଟଲ ପାର୍କ ର ଅନତି ଦୂରରେ ତା ଗାଁ ଘର ଭଳି ଘର ଟିଏ...

ଆଥବା ସହର ଠାରୁ ବହୁ ଦୂରରେ ସେ ଜଦି ହଜି ଯାଇ ପାରନ୍ତା, ଏକ ଦିଗ ହରା ବିହଙ୍ଗ ଭଳି...

## ଓଡ଼ିଆ କାବ୍ୟ ଓ ତହିଁରେ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ର ସ୍ଥାନ ସୁମୀତ୍ରା ପାଢ଼ୀ

କଥାରେ ଅଛି 'ମଣିଷ ମନର ଭେଦ, କାଗଜ କଲମେ ଯେଉଁ ଛବି ତାକୁ ହିଁ କାବ୍ୟ କହୁଁ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରେ କାବ୍ୟ ଓ ପଦ୍ୟ ଉଭୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟ କୁ କାବ୍ୟ କହୁଥିଲେ । କାବ୍ୟ ର ଅଭିଧାନିକ ଅର୍ଥ ହେଉଛି ରସମୟ ରଚନା । ତେଣୁ ଅଲୌକିକ ଚମତ୍କାର ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଜନକ କାବ୍ୟାବଳୀ କୁ କାବ୍ୟ କୁହା ଯାଉଥିଲା । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତି କାଳରେ ଲୋକମତ ହେଲା ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ତାର ଭାଷା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରେ ଗଦ୍ୟରେ ଓ ଭାବନା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରେ ପଦ୍ୟରେ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ପଦ୍ୟରେ ଚିତ୍ରିତ ଅନୁଭୂତି କୁ କାବ୍ୟ କୁହା ଯାଉଛି । ବଦ୍ୟ ଓ ପଦ୍ୟ ଉଭୟ ଚିତ୍ର କୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟ କୁହାଯାଏ ।

କାବ୍ୟ କୁ ଛଅ ଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରାଯାଇଛି । ୧- ମହାକାବ୍ୟ ୨- ଖଣ୍ଡ କାବ୍ୟ ୩- କୋଷ କାବ୍ୟ ୪- ଗୀତି କାବ୍ୟ ୫- ନାଟ୍ୟ କାବ୍ୟ ୬- ଗୀତା କାବ୍ୟ ।

**ମହାକାବ୍ୟ** – ମହା କାବ୍ୟ ରେ କୌଣସି ଗୋଟିଏ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାଙ୍ଗ ମହତ୍ କର୍ମ ର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ରହେ । ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର କର୍ମର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ମଧ୍ୟ ରହେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ କର୍ମ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମହତ୍ କର୍ମ ରୁ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ନ ହୋଇ ତାର ଅଙ୍ଗରୂପେ ପ୍ରତିଭାତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାରେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଦେବତା ବା କୌଣସି ବିଷାଦ ରାଜା ବା ରାଜବଂଶର ବୃତ୍ତାନ୍ତ କୁ ନେଇ ମହାକାବ୍ୟ ରଚିତ ହୁଏ । ମହାକାବ୍ୟ ନାନା ସର୍ଗ ବା ଆଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ ହୁଏ । ସର୍ଗର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅଠରୁ ଅଧିକ ହେବା ଉଚିତ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରାମାୟଣ ଓ ମହାଭାରତ ଆଦିକାବ୍ୟ ମହାକାବ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ । ବିଚିତ୍ର ରାମାୟଣ ଓ ବୈଦେହୀଶବିଳାସ ଛାନ୍ଦରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମହାକାବ୍ୟ କୁହାଯିବ ।

**ଖଣ୍ଡକାବ୍ୟ** – କୌଣସି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ଜୀବନ ର ଗୋଟିଏ ଘଟଣା ବା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କୁ ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କରି ଯେଉଁ କାବ୍ୟ ରଚିତ ହୁଏ ତାକୁ ଖଣ୍ଡକାବ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ଖଣ୍ଡକାବ୍ୟରେ ସର୍ଗ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଆଠରୁ ଅଧିକ ନୁହେଁ । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଭାଗା, ନନ୍ଦିକେଶରୀ ଓ ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀ ଆଦି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ କୁ ଖଣ୍ଡକାବ୍ୟ କୁହାଯାଏ ।

**କୋଷକାବ୍ୟ** – ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଷୟରେ ରଚିତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପଦ୍ୟର ଏକତ୍ର ସମାବେଶ କୁ କୋଷକାବ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରେ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଗୀତି କବିତା, ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶପଦୀ ଓ ସାଧାରଣ କବିତା ଥାଏ । ଇଂରେଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ **Sonnet (poem of 14 lines)** ଅନୁକରଣରେ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶପଦୀ କବିତା ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବି ମାନେ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶପଦୀ କବିତା କୌଣସି ବିଷୟର ସାଧାରଣ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଆଠ ଚରଣରେ, ଚରମ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା (**Climax**) ଚାରି ଚରଣରେ ଓ କବିଙ୍କ ଉପସଂହାର ଦୁଇ ଚରଣରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୁଏ । ଭକ୍ତ କବି ମଧୁସୂଦନ ବହୁତ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶପଦୀ କବିତା ରଚନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ପଣ୍ଡିତ ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ 'କୋଶାକ୍ଷର' ଆଦି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶ ପଦୀ କବିତା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ 'କୋଶାକ୍ଷର' କୋଷକାବ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ । କୁନ୍ତଳା କୁମାରୀ ସାବତ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର 'ଅର୍ଚ୍ଚନା' ଓ କବି ପଦ୍ମଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର 'ପଦ୍ମପାଖୁଡ଼ା' କୋଷକାବ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ ।

**ଗୀତାକାବ୍ୟ** – ନୃତ୍ୟ ବା ବାଦ୍ୟ ର ତାଳର ଅନୁରୂପ ଛନ୍ଦରେ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ର ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ସହ ରଚିତ କାବ୍ୟକୁ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରେ କୌଣସି ଏକ ଦୀର୍ଘ ଅନୁଭୂତି ରଚିତ ଥାଏ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅନୁଭୂତି ଖଣ୍ଡ କବିତାରେ ଚିତ୍ରିତ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକ ବିଷୟ ମୂଳକ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଏକତ୍ର ସମାବେଶକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ କୁହାଯାଏ । କୁନ୍ତଳା କୁମାରୀଙ୍କର 'ପ୍ରେମ ଚିନ୍ତାମଣି' ଖଣ୍ଡିତ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରେ ପୁଷ୍ପକ ପ୍ରଚଳନ ନ ଥିବାରୁ ଲୋକମାନେ କବିତା ସବୁ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ମନେ ରଖୁଥିଲେ । ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଆବେଶ ଓ ସ୍ୱରର ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ଆବୃତ୍ତିକାର ଓ ଶୋଭା ଉଭୟଙ୍କର ଚିତ୍ତରେ ଅନୁରଣନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟର ବହୁତ ଆଦର ଥିଲା । ପୁର୍ବେ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ ଚଉତିଶା ନାମରେ ଅଭିହିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଏଥିରେ ଚଉତିରିଶଟି ସ୍ତବକ ସନ୍ନିବେଶିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ତବକ ର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଚରଣ ଆଗରେ 'ଜ', ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ସ୍ତବକର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଚରଣ ଆଗରେ 'ଖ' ଏହିପରି କ୍ରମାନୁସାରେ ଚଉତିରିଶଟି ବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ର ଲୋକପ୍ରୀୟ ଚଉତିଶା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବସ୍ତାଦାସ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର 'କଳସା ଚଉତିଶା', ଭୂପତି ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର 'ଭକ୍ତ ଚଉତିଶା', ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାସ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର 'ଆର୍ତ୍ତତ୍ରାଣ ଚଉତିଶା', ଭକ୍ତ ଚରଣ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର 'ମନବୋଧ ଚଉତିଶା', ମାର୍କଣ୍ଡ ଦାସ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର 'କେଶବ କୋଇଲି' ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସୁରଣୀୟ ।

**ନାଟ୍ୟକାବ୍ୟ** – ପଦ୍ୟରେ ରଚିତ ନାଟକ କୁ ନାଟ୍ୟକାବ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦ୍ୟରେ ରଚିତ ନାଟକ ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନାଟ୍ୟ ଲୀଳା ବା ସୁଆଙ୍ଗ ନାମରେ ଅଭିହିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପାଣି ବା ବାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦ୍ୱାରା ରଚିତ ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନାଟ୍ୟ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଗୀତିନାଟ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ।

**ଗୀତାକାବ୍ୟ** – ଗୁରୁ ଶିଷ୍ୟ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନୋତ୍ତର ଛଳରେ ପଦ୍ୟାକାରରେ ଯେଉଁ ଦାର୍ଶନିକ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ବାଖ୍ୟା ହେଉଥିଲା ତାକୁ ଗୀତାକାବ୍ୟ କୁହା ଯାଉଥିଲା । ଅର୍ଜୁନ-ଗୀତା ଓ ବିରାଟ-ଗୀତା ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଅନେକ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ଗୀତାକାବ୍ୟ ର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ଏପରି ରଚନା ହୋଇନାହିଁ ।

କାବ୍ୟ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କାବ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ । ବହୁତ ଜଣ କାବ୍ୟ କୁ ଭ୍ରମରେ ପଦାବଳୀ ମଧ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ଓ ପଦାବଳୀ ଶବ୍ଦ ଦୁଇଟିର ରୂପଗତ ସାମ୍ୟ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅର୍ଥଗତ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ରହିଛି । ଯେ କୌଣସି ବିଷୟ କୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର କରି ରଚନା ହୋଇଥିବା ପଦ୍ୟର

ସମାହାର କୁ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ କୁହାଯାଏ । ତେଣୁ କାବ୍ୟ ର ଅନ୍ୟତମ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ କହିଲେ କେବଳ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ବ୍ରଜଲୀଳା ବିଷୟକ ରାଗ, ତାଳ ସମନ୍ୱିତ ଗାନୋପଯୋଗୀ କବିତା କୁ ବୁଝାଏ । ତେଣୁ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେ କୌଣସି ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ନୁହେଁ ।

ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ଏକ ବିଶେଷ ଅଂଶ ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ସଂପର୍କରେ କିଛି କହିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛି । ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରଚାର ଭାଷା ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ଉନ୍ନତି ଘଟାଏ । କାରଣ ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରଚାରକ ମାନେ ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକ ବୁଝିବା ଭାଷାରେ ଧର୍ମର ମର୍ମ ଲେଖି ଗୁଞ୍ଜ ମାନ ପ୍ରଣୟନ କରନ୍ତି । ବୌଦ୍ଧ, ଜୈନ, ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଓ ଅଲୋଖ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଧର୍ମ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମୟରେ ପ୍ରଚାରିତ ହୋଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ବିକାଶ ର ଅନୁକୂଳ ହୋଇଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଯେତେ ଧର୍ମ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ସଂବଳିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଆବିଷ୍କୃତ ହୋଇଛି ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ କେବଳ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମରେ ଯତିତ । କେତେକ ଭାବନ୍ତି ଚୈତନ୍ୟ ଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମର ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାହା ସତ ନୁହେଁ । କାରଣ ଚୈତନ୍ୟ ଙ୍କ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମ ର ମୂଳଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ଭାଗବତ ରଚିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଚୈତନ୍ୟ ଙ୍କ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଜୟଦେବ ଗୀତ ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାରେ ରଚିତ ହୋଇ ପରେ ବ୍ରଜବୁଲି ଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରସାର ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲା । "History of Brajabali Literature" ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ ସୁକୁମାର ସେନ୍ କହିଛନ୍ତି ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଧର୍ମର ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ପାଲି ଭାଷା ଯେପରି ମାଧ୍ୟମ ଥିଲା, ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମର ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ବ୍ରଜବୁଲି ଭାଷା ସେପରି ମାଧ୍ୟମ ଥିଲା । ପରେ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳି ବଙ୍ଗଳା, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାରେ ଲେଖା ହେଲା । ପୂର୍ବେ ସମାଲୋଚକ ମାନେ କେବଳ ବଙ୍ଗଳା ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ଦର୍ଶାଉଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଜୟଦେବ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବି ଭାବେ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ପାଇବା ଦିନ ଠାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ପ୍ରକାଶ ବିଷୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମୀକ୍ଷକ ଗୁଣ ବହୁ ଯୁକ୍ତି ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ଅତ୍ୟୁତାୟ ପ୍ରଥମ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ପଦ-ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ର ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟବହାର କଲେ । ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ରଚନା କରିଥିବା ପ୍ରମୁଖ କବି ମାନେ ହେଲେ ମାଦବୀ ଦସୀ, ଭୂପତି ପଣ୍ଡିତ, ଯଦୁପତି, ଚାନ୍ଦକବି, ରାୟରାମାନନ୍ଦ, ଦାମୋଦର ଦାସ, ଚଂପତିରାୟ, ମୁରାରି ମିଶ୍ର, ବଳରାମ ଦାସ, ଓ ଲୋକନାଥ ଦାସ । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତି କାଳରେ ଦନାଇ ଦାସ ଙ୍କ ଗୋପୀଭାଷା, ଦେବ ଦୁର୍ଲ୍ଲଭ ଙ୍କ ରତ୍ନସ୍ୟା ମଞ୍ଜରୀ, ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଙ୍କ ରସ କଲ୍ଲୋଳ, କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସଦାନନ୍ଦ ବ୍ରହ୍ମା ଙ୍କ 'କଳା କୌତୁକ' ଆଦି ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ଆଦୃତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସର୍ବଧର୍ମର ସମନ୍ୱୟର କ୍ଷେତ୍ର । ଓଡ଼ିଶା କୁ ଯେଉଁ ସବୁ ଧର୍ମର ଲୋକମାନେ ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ସମସ୍ତେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କୁ ନିଜର କରିନେବା ପାଇଁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ବୌଦ୍ଧଙ୍କର ବୁଦ୍ଧ, ଜୈନଙ୍କ ଜୀନ, ଶାକ୍ତଙ୍କର ଭୈରବ ଓ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଙ୍କର ବିଷ୍ଣୁ । ମତ୍ସ୍ୟ, କଳ୍ପସ, ବରାହ, ନୃସିଂହ, ବାମନ, ପର୍ଶୁରାମ, ରାମ, ବଳରାମ, ବୁଦ୍ଧ ଓ କଳ୍କୀ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କର ଦଶଅବତାର । ତେଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ମାନେ ରାମ, କୃଷ୍ଣ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରଭେଦ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ କେବଳ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ବ୍ରଜଲୀଳା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସୀମିତ ନ ରହ କୃଷ୍ଣଲୀଳା, ରାମଲୀଳା ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କ ଲୀଳା କୁ ଉପଜୀବ୍ୟ କରି ବହୁ ବ୍ୟାପକ ହୋଇଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଇତିହାସରେ ରାମ, କୃଷ୍ଣ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କର ସଗୁଣ ଲୀଳା କୁ ନେଇ ରଚିତ ରାଗରାଗିଣୀ ଯୁକ୍ତ ପଦ ମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ଭାବେ ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିର୍ଗୁଣ ଲୀଳା କୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର କରି ରଚିତ ପଦମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭଜନ ଭାବରେ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲା । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ଭଗବାନ ଙ୍କ ସଗୁଣ ଲୀଳା ମଧ୍ୟ ଭଜନରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ହୁଉଛି । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଯୁଗରେ ପୁସ୍ତକ ଅଭାବରୁ ଯେପରି ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ ସମାଜରେ ବେଶୀ ଆଦୃତ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ସମୟ ଅଭାବରୁ ସେପରି ଭଜନ ସମାଜରେ ଆଦୃତ ହୋଇଛି । ଲୋକଙ୍କର ବହି ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ, ତେଣୁ ଅନ୍ୟ କାମ କଲାବେଳେ ଟେପ୍ ଲଗାଇ ଭଜନ ଶୁଣୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ, ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ରଭଞ୍ଜ ଓ ଅଭିମନ୍ୟୁ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ରଚିତ ଯୁଗୀୟ କବିମାନେ କେତକ ହୃଦୟସ୍ପର୍ଶୀ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନେ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ କାର ଅପେକ୍ଷା କାବ୍ୟ ସୂକ୍ଷ୍ମ ରୂପେ ଅଧିକ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ପାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ରୀତିରେ କାବ୍ୟ ରଚନା କରି କାବ୍ୟରେ ରୀତି ଯୁଗ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ କୁ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ରୂପରେଖ ଦେଇ ତାହାକୁ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର କରିବାରେ କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଳଦେବ, ଭକ୍ତକବି ଗୋପାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ, କବି ବନମାଳି, ଗୌରହରି ଓ ଗୌରଚରଣ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଙ୍କର ଅବଦାନ ଚୀର ସ୍ମରଣୀୟ । ଏମାନେ ଯଥାର୍ଥରେ ସଂଗୀତ ର ସ୍ୱର ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ଓ କବିତା ର ଭାବ ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନାର ମଧୁର ସମନ୍ୱୟରେ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ତେଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ଇତିହାସରେ ଏମାନେ ସଂଗୀତ ଯୁଗର ସୂକ୍ଷ୍ମ ଭାବେ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତ ।

ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ଯୁଗର କବିମାନେ ସ୍ୱଳୀୟ ରଚନାରେ ଭକ୍ତି ର ପରମ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ କୁ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ନିର୍ମଳ ଶାନ୍ତରସ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ମଧୁର ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ଭିତରେ ଏମାନେ ସ୍ୱଳୀୟ ଭକ୍ତି ଗଦ୍ ଗଦ୍ ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ଅଭିମାନ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାରେ କୃତିତ୍ୱ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ କୃଷ୍ଣ ଙ୍କ ମୁରଲୀ ଧ୍ୱନି ରାଧା ଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଯେଉଁ ପୁଲକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଛି ତାକୁ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି କବି ଗୋପାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି ' ଶ୍ୟାମ ସୁନ୍ଦର ମୁରଲୀ ନିନାଦ ଜାତି ନେବ ବୋଲି ମଣିଲି, ଗୁରୁଜନ ସଙ୍ଗେ କଥା ପରସଙ୍ଗେ ବସିଥିଲି କି ତମକି ପଡ଼ିଲି, ପୁରିଲା ପୁଲକ ଦେହ ଗୋଟା ଯାକ ବିନା ଶୀତରେ ମୁଁ ଥରିଲି ' । କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ଅପରୂପ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ରାଧା ଙ୍କୁ କିପରି ମୁଁ କରିଛି ତାହା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିବାକୁ ଯାଇ କବି ବନମାଳୀ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି ' ଶ୍ୟାମ ନାଗର ହେ, ଏ ବେଶ ହୋଇବ ନାହିଁ, ଏ ବେଶ ହୋଇଲେ ପାଷାଣ ତରଳେ ଯୁବତୀ ବଞ୍ଚିବେ କାହିଁ ' । ଆଉ ଏକ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀରେ କବି ବନମାଳୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କୁ ଆର୍ତ୍ତ ଜଣେଇଛନ୍ତି ' ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହେ କିଛି ମାଗୁନାହିଁ ତୋତେ, ଧନ ମାଗୁ ନାହିଁ ଜନ ମାଗୁ ନାହିଁ, ମାଗୁଛି କରୁଣା ବାଲିରୁ ହାତେ ' । ତାଙ୍କର ମନଃସାମନା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନହେବାରୁ ପୁଣି ଅଭିମାନ ଭରା କଣ୍ଠରେ କହିଛନ୍ତି ' ଦୀନବନ୍ଧୁ ଦଇତାରି ଦୁଃଖ ନଗଲା

ମୋହରି, ହେଲେ କି ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଚିତ୍ତ ନୀଳାଚଳେ ବିଜେ କରି '।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ରଚୟିକା ମାନେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କୁ କୃଷ୍ଣ ଭାବି ନିଜ ନିଜ ର ଅନବଦ୍ୟ ଭକ୍ତି ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଯୁଗରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କାବ୍ୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ନାମ ଧାରଣ କରି ଲୋକପ୍ରୀୟତା ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଛି । ତେଣୁ ଯେତେ ଯୁଗ ବଦଳିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପୁରାତନ କାବ୍ୟ ରଚୟିତା ଙ୍କର ଅବଦାନ ବିଶ୍ୱ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଚୀର ସ୍ୱରଣୀୟ ହୋଇ ରହିବ ।

(ଏହି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ତ ର କୁମୁଦିନୀ ମିଶ୍ର ଙ୍କର ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଧାରା’ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରୁ, ପଣ୍ଡିତ ବିନାୟକ ମିଶ୍ର ଙ୍କର ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପ୍ରକାଶ’ ପୁସ୍ତକ ରୁ ଏବଂ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ ଙ୍କର ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର କ୍ରମ ପରିଣାମ’ ପୁସ୍ତକରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧୃତ ହୋଇଛି ।)

## ନିରବତା ର ଉତ୍ତର ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର

“ଭାରତ ଭୂଇଁରେ ଜନ୍ମି ଥିବା ବାଳକ ଠୁ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ରାମ କିଏ, ସୀତା କିଏ, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ କିଏ, ହନୁମାନ କିଏ, ରାବଣ ବି କିଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ମାନେ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ସମସ୍ତେ ପୁରା ରାମାୟଣ ବହିଟା ପଢ଼ି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ପୃଷ୍ଠା ପରେ ପୃଷ୍ଠା, ଧାଡ଼ି ପରେ ଧାଡ଼ି, ଅକ୍ଷର ପରେ ଅକ୍ଷର……ଜୀବନ ଟା ବି ସେଇଆ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ଜୀବନର ଲକ୍ଷ କଅଣ ତାର ମୂଲ୍ୟ କେତେ ତାର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ କଅଣ । ଜାଣୁଥିଲେ ଏସଂସାରରେ ଏତେ ହତ୍ୟାକାଣ୍ଡ, ନୃସଂସତା, ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର ଓ ଅମାନୁସିକ କାଣ୍ଡ କାରଖାନା ଘଟୁ ନଥାନ୍ତା । ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଜାଣନ୍ତି କେବଳ ଜୀବନ ଟା ଜନ୍ମ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ସମାହାର ମାତ୍ର । କିନ୍ତୁ ପୃଷ୍ଠା ପରେ ପୃଷ୍ଠା ପଢ଼ି ଜୀବନ ର ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖ ର ସାମନା କରି ଯେତେ ବେଳେ ଜୀବନର ଶେଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଯିବ ସେତେବେଳେ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେବ……ଭାଷଣ ଦେବ । ଆଜି ଥାଉ ।”

ଏକ ନିଶ୍ୱାସରେ ଏତକ କହି ଦେଇ ତୁମ୍ଭେ ହୋଇଗଲେ “ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ” । ଏ କାଲିକାର ଛୁଆ ପୁଣି ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ପନ୍ଥୀ ଙ୍କ ପୁତ୍ର ବୟସ ପରିଣା/ଛବିଶ, ସେ ପୁଣି ଆସି ସାଠିଏ ବର୍ଷର ବାପ କୁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି ଓ ପୁଣି ଜବାବ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଜୀବନ ର ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ବୁଝାଉଛନ୍ତି ।

– “ତୁମେ ଯାହା କରୁଛ କିଛି ଠିକ୍ କରୁନାହିଁ । ତୁମକୁ ଏଥି ପାଇଁ ପକ୍ଷପାତ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ।”

– “ଯାଃ ଯାଃ ପକ୍ଷପାତ କଲେ ମୁଁ କରିବି ତୁମେ ମାନେ ନୁହଁ । ଏଥିରେ ତୁମ ମାନଙ୍କର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖେଳେଇବାର କିଛି ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନାହିଁ” । ଏତକ କହି କବାଟ ବନ୍ଦ କରି ଦେଲେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କ ଚବର ଚବର କଥା ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କ କାନକୁ ଶୁଭୁ ନଥିଲା । ସେମାନେ ସେମିତି ବକର ବକର ହୋଇ ପାଟି ଅକିଗଲେ ତୁମ୍ଭେ ହୋଇ ରହିବେ । ସେ ଯାହା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ଠିକ୍ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ସିନ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ସେ ବଦଳେଇବେ ନାହିଁ ।

ବୟସର ଆଧିକ୍ୟ, ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିନ୍ଦା ଓ ବାର୍ଦ୍ଧକ୍ୟ ଜନିତ ଶାରୀରିକ ଅସୁସ୍ଥତା ଯୋଗୁ ପୂର୍ବ ପରି ସବୁ ପ୍ରକାର ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଖାଇ ହଜମ କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ସିନା ତାଙ୍କର କମି ଯାଇଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ପରିବାର ଲୋକଙ୍କର କଟୁକ୍ତି, ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ, ସମାଲୋଚନା ଶୁଣି ହଜମ କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ବେଶ୍ ବଢ଼ି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଆଜି ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ବହୁ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ସେ ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲି ଥିଲେ ସମସ୍ତ ଙ୍କୁ ଆଖ୍ୟା କରିଦେଇ । ବହୁ ବର୍ଷରୁ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଜମି ରହିଥିବା ଅଳ୍ପ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ଧି ଝୁଟି ଦେଇ ସଫା କରିଦେଲେ, ସେ ଗୋଟାଏ ପରାକ୍ରମରେ । ଘରର ସବୁ କଥାରେ ସବୁଦିନ ନିରବ ରହୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ତି ଏପରି ଏକ ଶବ୍ଦାନୁଲୋଚନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରି ପାରିବ କେହି କେବେ ଭାବି ନଥିଲେ । ହଁ ଜାଣି ଜାଣି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଶେଖର ବାବୁ ସର୍ବଦା ନିରବ ରହି ଘରର ଅଶାନ୍ତି କୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରଖିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ । ମନର ରୁଦ୍ଧ ଅନ୍ଧାର ପ୍ରକୋପରେ ନିଜର ବିଚାର ଧାରାକୁ ସେ ଏକ ରକମ ବନ୍ଦ କରି ରଖିବାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲେ । ଆଜି କିନ୍ତୁ ମନର ସବୁ ଗବାସ ଉନ୍ମୁଳ୍ଲ । ଆଜି ସେ ମୁକ୍ତ । ଏ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ପିଞ୍ଜରା ଦ୍ୱାର ଖୋଲି ସେ ବହୁଦୂରକୁ ଉଡ଼ିଯିବାକୁ ଚାହାଁନ୍ତି ।

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଅକାଳରେ ଅସମୟରେ ପର ଲୋକ ଗମନ କରି ଗଲା ବେଳେ ଝିଅ “ସିଦ୍ଧା”ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷର ହୋଇ ଥାଏ । ପରିବାର, ବନ୍ଧୁ, କୁଟୁମ୍ବିକ ବହୁ ଅନୁରୋଧରେ ଅନିଚ୍ଛା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ସେ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହେଲେ । ସଂସାର ବିତଣ୍ଡୁରି ମନ ଆଉ ଥରେ ବିବାହ ବନ୍ଧନରେ ଘାଟି ହେବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁ ନଥିଲେ ବି ସିଦ୍ଧାର ଦେଖା ରଖା ପାଇଁ ଜଣେ ନାରୀ, ଜଣେ ମମତାମୟୀ ମା’ର ନିହାତି



ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ‘ଭାନୁମତୀ’ ଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ କରି ସେ ଘରକୁ ଆଣିଲେ । ସତରେ ‘ଭାନୁମତୀ’ ଦେବୀ ମାଆର ଭୂମିକା ବେଶ୍, ସୁଗାରୁ ରୂପେ ତୁଲେଇ ପାରିଥିଲେ ବିନା ଆପଣରେ । ପୁଣି ଥରେ ସବୁ ଖୁସି ଫେରି ଆସିଥିଲା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ । ‘ସିଦ୍ଧା’ ପ୍ରତି ‘ଭାନୁମତୀ’ ଦେବୀ ଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହ ସହାନୁଭୂତି, ଅନାବିଳ ମମତା ଓ ସେବାୟତ ଦେଖି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଆତ୍ମା ବିଭୋର ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ନିଜ ଭାଗ୍ୟ କୁ ଯେତିକି ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରିଥିଲେ ଭଗବାନ ଙ୍କୁ ବି ସେତିକି ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଝିଅ ସିଦ୍ଧା କଥାବର୍ତ୍ତା କହିବା ଶିଖି ପାରିଲାନି ଏବଂ ସାରା ଜୀବନ ସେ ଏପରି ମୁକ ହୋଇ ରହିବ, ଜଣାଗଲା ପରେ ପରିବାରରେ ଦୁଃଖର ଛାୟା ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଘୋଟି ଆସିଲା । ପରେ ପରେ ଦୁଇ ପୁତ୍ରଙ୍କ ଜନ୍ମ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ ଦୁଃଖକୁ ଦୂର କରି ପାରିଲାନି । ସବୁ ପ୍ରକାର ଯଥା ସମ୍ଭବ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ନିରାଶା, ବିତମ୍ବନା ଆଉ ଉଦ୍‌ବିଗ୍ନତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଆଉ କିଛି ମିଳିଲାନି ।

‘ସିଦ୍ଧା’ ମୁକ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ବଧିରା ନୁହେଁ । ସବୁ ବୁଝି ପାରେ । ସବୁ ଶୁଣି ପାରେ । ତାର ଫୁଲ ପରି କଅଁଳିଆ ମୁହଁର ଢଳ ଢଳ କରୁଣ ଚାହାଣି ଅସହ୍ୟ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ଝିଅ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ସଂସାର ପ୍ରତି ବିଶେଷ ଆଗ୍ରହ ବି ରହିଲାନି । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଦୁଇ ପୁତ୍ର ଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଯେତିକି କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସେତକ ସେ ସୁଗାରୁ ରୂପେ ତୁଲେଇ ପାରିଲେନି । ବିତଣ୍ଡିତ ମନ କାହାକୁ କେତେ ବା ଖୁସି ଦେଇ ପାରେ । ତଥାପି ସେ ତାଙ୍କର ମନ ଭିତରର ଗୋପନ ଦୁଃଖକୁ ଭିତରେ ରଖି କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ପୁଅ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଲାଳନ ପାଳନରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଙ୍କ ‘ମନ’ର ଅଭାବଚାକ୍ଷୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିପାରୁଥାନ୍ତି ।

ପିଲା ମାନେ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ବଡ଼ ହେଲେ । ଅସହିଷ୍ଣୁତା ଓ ଚିକ୍ତତା ବଢିଲା । ଝଗଡ଼ା ଓ ଝମେଲା ବଢିଗଲା । ସିଦ୍ଧା ଆଉ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ନିରବତା ବି ବଢିଚାଲିଲା । ଭାନୁମତୀ ଦେବୀ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଅବହେଳା ସହ୍ୟ କରି ପାରନ୍ତିନି । ସେ ରାଗ ଚା ଯାଇ ପଡେ ସିଦ୍ଧା ଉପରେ । ସବୁ ରାଗ ରୋଷ ସୁଝିଯାଏ ତାକୁ ହିଁ ମାଧ୍ୟମ କରି । ଘର ଭିତରେ ଚିତି ମିତି ଭାବ, ଅଶାନ୍ତି ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ ଅଧିକ ରୁ ଅଧିକ ତର ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ଏହାର କୌଣସି ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ସମାଧାନ ଖୋଜି ପାରି ନଥିଲେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ।

ମାତୃହୀନା ଝିଅର କରୁଣ ମୁହଁ ଚିତ୍ତ ଦେଖି ଦେଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ଛାତି ବିଦୀର୍ଘ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ତାଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ତେ ଏ ମୁକ ଝିଅର ଅବସ୍ଥା ଯେ କଅଁଳ ହେବ ରାତି ଦିନ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏହି ଚିନ୍ତା ଘାରିଥାଏ । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାନୁମତୀ ଆଉ ଆଗର ଭାନୁମତୀ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଆଉ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ଭରଷା କରାଯାଇ ପାରେନା । ପୁଅ ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କୁ ଯେଉଁ ଆଦର୍ଶ ସଂସ୍କାର ଦେଇ ଗଢିବାକୁ ସେ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ତାହା ହୋଇ ପାରିନି । ସେ ନିଜକୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଦୋଷି ବୋଲି ଭାବିଲେବି ତାହା ତାଙ୍କର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଦୋଷ ନୁହେଁ । କିଛି ପରିବେଶ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର କିଛି ଦୋଷ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାନୁମତୀଙ୍କର ବି । ତଥାପି ସେ ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ଦୋଷ ନଦେଇ ସବୁ ଦୋଷ ନିଜ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ନେଇ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ।

ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପୁତ୍ରଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ବାକ୍ୟ ବାଣକୁ ଶୟା କରି ଭିଷ୍ମଙ୍କ ପରି ତା ଉପରେ ଶୋଇ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥାନ୍ତି କେବଳ । ତାଙ୍କର ମର୍ମାନ୍ତକ ଦୁଃଖ ସେ କାହାକୁ ନ କହିଲେ ବି ବୁଝି ପାରେ ଝିଅ ‘ସିଦ୍ଧା’ । ବାପା ଙ୍କର ଛାଇ ପରି ରହି ତାଙ୍କର ସେବା ଯନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଲାଗିଥାଏ । ବାପା ଝିଅ ପରସ୍ପରର ହୃଦୟର ଭାଷା କୁ ବୁଝି ପାରନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ କେହି କାହାକୁ କହି ପାରନ୍ତିନି ସିନା । ବାପା କହି ପାରନ୍ତିନି ଅସହ୍ୟ ଦୁଃଖ ବସତଃ । ଝିଅ କହି ପାରେନା ମୁକ ନିରବତା ବସତଃ ।

ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ତାର ଗତିପଥ ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଇ ପାରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସମୟ ତ ନୁହେଁ । ସେ ଗତିଚାଲେ ତାର ଧର୍ମ ରକ୍ଷା କରି । ସିଦ୍ଧା କୁ କୋଡିଏ ଟପି, ପଚାଶ ଟପି, ତିରିଶ ଟପିବା ଉପରେ । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଦୁଃଖର ସୀମା ରେଖା ମଧ୍ୟ ଟପି ଟପି ସର୍ବ ଭର୍ଷ ରେ । ଏବେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାନୁମତୀ ଦେବୀ ଦେହ ଖରାପର ବାହାନା କରି ଘରର ସବୁ କାମ ସିଦ୍ଧା ଦ୍ୱାରା କରେଇ ନିଅନ୍ତି । ବିନା ପ୍ରତିବାଦରେ ସବୁ କାମ ନିରବରେ କରି ଯାଉଥିଲେ ବି ସିଦ୍ଧାର ଲୁହ ଢଳ ଢଳ ଆଖିର କରୁଣ କାହାଣୀ କେବଳ ଶୁଣି ପାରନ୍ତି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି କାଲି ସେ ନାଚାର । ଦେଖି ନ ଦେଖିଲା ପରି, ଜାଣି ନ ଜାଣିଲା ପରି ସବୁ କଥାକୁ ସେ ଟାଳି ଯାଇ ହଜମ କରି ନିଅନ୍ତି । କାରଣ ତାଙ୍କର ବି ବୟସ ବଢି ଚାଲିଛି ଶାରୀରିକ ଅସୁସ୍ଥତା ସହିତ । କର୍ମ କଷଣ ଦେହ ସହିଲା ପରି କର୍ମକୁ ଦୋଷ ଦେଇ ସବୁ ସେ ଆଜି ସହି ଯାଆନ୍ତି କେବଳ ।

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପୂର୍ବ ପୁରୁଷଙ୍କ ସଂପତ୍ତି ବାଡି ବେଶ୍ ଭଲରେ ଖାଇ ପିଇ ଆରାମରେ ଚଳିବା ପରି । ସେମିତି ଗୁଡାଏ ନହେଲେ ବି ସେମିତି କିଛି କମ୍ ବି ନୁହେଁ । ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ସେ ସ୍ଥାନିୟ ମାଲନର ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଶିକ୍ଷକତା କାମ ରିଟାୟର୍ଡ୍ ପରେ ବି ଜାରି ରଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଝିଅ ସିଦ୍ଧାକୁ ପଢେଇ ଶିଖେଇଛନ୍ତି । କହିନପାରିଲେ ବି ସିଦ୍ଧା ପଢି ଜାଣେ ଏବଂ ବହି ହିଁ ତାର ବଡ଼ ସାଥୀ । ସ୍କୁଲ ଲାଲବେରୀରୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାର ବହି ଆଣି ଦିଅନ୍ତି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଝିଅ ପାଇଁ । ଘର କାମରୁ ସମୟ ପାଇଲେ ବହି ଭିତରେ ସେ ନିମଜ୍ଜିତ ହୋଇଯାଏ । କିଛି ଶବ୍ଦ ନବୁଝି ପାରିଲେ ଲେଖି କରି ରଖିଥାଏ ବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ବାପା ଆସି ରାତିରେ ବୁଝେଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଏଇ ସମୟ ଚି ବାପା ଝିଅଙ୍କର ବଡ଼ ପ୍ରିୟ ସମୟ । ଝିଅ ଖାଇବା ପିଇବା ଦେଇ ତାଙ୍କର ଶେଯ ବିଛେଇ ଦିଏ । ବାପା ଙ୍କର ଗୋଡ଼ ଘଷି ଦେଲା ପରେ, ବାପା ଅନେକ କଥା ବୁଝେଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ସିଦ୍ଧା ବୁଝୁଛି କି ନାହିଁ କିଛି ଆଶା ନକରି ।

ସେଦିନ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଥିଲେ ବହୁ ଖୁସିରେ । ଏପରି ହସ ଖୁସି ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ କେହି ଆଗରୁ କେବେ ଦେଖିଥିବାର କାହାର ମନେ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ନିଜେ ବି ମନେ ରଖି ନାହାନ୍ତି କେବେ ଜୀବନରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଶେଷ ଖୁସି ଦିନ ଆସିଥିଲା ବୋଲି । ଘରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଖାଲି ଆକ୍ଷୟରେ ଚାହୁଁଥାନ୍ତି ମୁହଁକୁ ତାଙ୍କର । ଝିଅ ସିଦ୍ଧାର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଖୁସି ଟା ବହୁଗୁଣିତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାନୁମତୀ କିଛି ନବୁଝି ପାରି କହିଲେ –

“ବୁଢ଼ା କଣ ପାଗଳ ହୋଇଗଲା ନା କଣରେ” ବଡ଼ ପୁଅକୁ ଡାକି ପଚାରିଲେ । ଏମିତି ସେ ମୁହଁରୁ ହସ ଝରିବାର କେତେ ଯୁଗ ହୋଇ ଗଲାଣି । ପୁଣି ହାତରେ ମିଠାଇ ପୁଡ଼ିଆ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଲିକରି ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦେଲେ । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମୁହଁ ମୋତି କହିଲେ – “କଣ ହୋଇଛି କହିବ ନା ଏମିତି ଛୋପରାଙ୍କ ପରି ହେଉଥିବ” ।

କହୁଛି – “ଆଜି ଆମ ସ୍କୁଲର ହେଡ଼ ମାଷ୍ଟର ‘କାଶିଧର ବାବୁ’ ଏକ ବିବାହ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଆଣି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ‘ସିଦ୍ଧା’ ପାଇଁ ।

– “ମାଆଲୋ……ଏ ଝିଅକୁ ବି ଲୋକ ତାହୁଁ ବସିଛନ୍ତି ବାହା ହେବାକୁ ।”

ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲହରୀ ହାତଜଳା ମନ୍ତ୍ରବ୍ୟକୁ କାନରେ ନ ପୁରେଇ ଗପି ଚାଲିଲେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ । କାଶିଧର ବାବୁ ଙ୍କ ପାଖ ଗାଁ ରେ ପିଲାଟି ରହେ । ତା ନାମ ‘ପବିତ୍ର କୁମାର’ ପିଲାଟି ବହୁତ ଗରିବ ଏବଂ ମୂଳ ଓ ବସିର ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ରୂପରେ ଶୁଣରେ ବାଛିବାକୁ କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ଦୁଇ ବଖରା ନୁଆଁଣିଆ ଚାଳ ଘର ଓ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମାଆ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଆଉ ତାର କିଛି ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଣୀ ର ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେଇ ରଖିବ ସିଦ୍ଧା କୁ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ । କାଲି ଯାଇ ପିଲାଟିକୁ ଦେଖି କଥା ବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିଆସିବି ତା ମାଆ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ, କାଶିନାଥ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସଂଗରେ ଯାଇ ।

ବାଛିବାକୁ ଆଉ ରହିଲା ବା କଅଣ……ମୂଳ ଓ ବସିର । ସବୁ ଶୁଣିଲା ସିଦ୍ଧା । ତାର ମତାମତର ହୁଏତ କିଛି ମାନେ ନାହିଁ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟାର ?? କିଛିତ ମାନେ ଥାଇ ପାରେ । କେହି ପଚାରିଲେନି ସେକଥା । ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଗୋଡ଼ ଘଷି ଦେଲା ବେଳେ ସିଦ୍ଧା ଅନ୍ୟ ମନେ । ବାପା କଣ ସବୁ ଗପୁ ଥାନ୍ତି ସେ କିଛି ଶୁଣୁ ନଥାଏ । ତା ମନରେ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଲହଡ଼ି, ଓଠର ଉପକୁଳରୁ ହିଁ ଲେଉଟି ଯାଉଥାନ୍ତି ସବୁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ । ବାପା ତାକୁ କାହିଁକି ବାହା କରି ଅନ୍ୟ ଘରକୁ ପଠେଇ ଦେବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି । ତା ଜୀବନର ନିରବ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣେ ନିରବ ମଣିଷ କିପରି ଦେଇ ପାରିବ ବା ଜାଣି ପାରିବ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଘରର ମଣିଷ ମାନେ ତାକୁ କିପରି ଭାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବେ । ତା ବାପା ଙ୍କ ପରି ତାକୁ ଏମିତି ସ୍ନେହ ଶୁଣା ଦେଇ ପାରିବେ କି ନାହିଁ ?? ଏମିତି ଏମିତି ଅନେକ କଥା ତା ମନକୁ ଭାରି କରି ରଖିଥାଏ । ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଏ ସବୁ ବୁଝେଇବା ପରି ଭାଷାର ମାଧ୍ୟମ ସେ କେଉଁଠୁ ପାଇବ । ସେ ବାହା ହେବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ନାହିଁ । ଏଲମିତି ବାପା ଙ୍କ ସେବା କରି ଜୀବନ ଯାଆ ସେ ବିତେଇଦେବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ।

ଦରକାର ପଡ଼ିଲେ ସେ ଜୀବନରେ ବିଷ ପିଇ ପାରେ । ଅମୃତ ବି ପିଇ ପାରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅମୃତ ନାମରେ ବିଷ ପିଇ ସେ ସମ୍ପାଦି ପାରିବକି ନାହିଁ ସେ ଜାଣେନା । ସିଦ୍ଧା ଧରି ନେଇଥିଲା ଏଇ ହିଁ ତାର ଜୀବନ, ଏଇ ହିଁ ତାର ପୃଥିବୀ । ସହା ବାହାରେ ବି ଆଉ ଏକ ଜୀବନ ଧାରା ଅଛି ତାକୁ ବି ଶିଖି ପୁଣିଥରେ ସେ ବସି ଶିଖିବ ……ସବୁ ଅତୁଆ ତତୁଆ ହୋଇ ଯାଉଛି ମନ ଭିତରେ ।

ବର ଦେଖା ଓ ଝିଅ ଦେଖା ସବୁ ସରିଗଲା । ଉଭୟ ପଟ ରାଜି । ଦୁଇ ପଟର ପଲା ସମାନ । ଅରାଜି ହେବାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ହିଁ ଉଠୁନି । ବାହାଘର ତିଥି, ବାର ନକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଅନୁସାରେ ଆସନ୍ତା ମାସକୁ ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତା ସାଂଗକୁ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାନୁମତୀ ଙ୍କର କେଁ ଯେଁ ବି ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇ ଗଲା । ସିଦ୍ଧା ଚାଲିଗଲା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଅକ୍ଷ କିଏ ଘଷି ଦେବ । ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ତା ଜଳଖିଆ ମାଆ ପୁଅ ଙ୍କୁ କିଏ କରିବି ଦେବ । ନଅଠା ତିଅଣ ଛଅଠା ଭଜା କରି କିଏ ପରଷିବ ।

ପୁଣି ଗୋଟିଏ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଖୁସି ବି ହେଉଥିଲେ ଯେ ଗୋଟେ କଷ୍ଟ ଗଲା । ସେ ଭାବି ନେଇଥିଲେ ଏ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ବୋଝ, ଯାହା ଜୀବନ ତାଙ୍କୁ ହିଁ ବୋହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ବୁଢ଼ା ବାପଟାର କଣ ଭରସା କୋଉ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଆଖି ବୁଜି ଦେବ । ମା ପୁଅ ଙ୍କ ରାସ୍ତାର ସେ କଷ୍ଟ……ପାଦରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଗଳି କଷ୍ଟ ଦେଉଥାନ୍ତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଝମେଲା ଟା ଏମିତି ହଠାତ୍ କରି ସମାଧାନ ହୋଇଯିବ ସେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ କେବେ ଭାବି ନଥିଲେ । ଏବେ ଏ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱର ସେ ମୁକ୍ତ । ପୁଅ ମା ଙ୍କ ରାସ୍ତା ସମ୍ପା ହୋଇଗଲା । ଯେତେ ହେଲେବି ସେ ମାଆ । ନିଜ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ କଥା ସେ ଆଗ ଭାବିବେ ।

ସେଇ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷିତ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଟି ଶେଷରେ ସେଇ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲା । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଏପରି ଶୁଭ ଦିନ ଆସିବ ସେ କେବେ ବି ଭାବି ନଥିଲେ । ଝିଅର ସୁଖ କଥା ଭାବି ସେ ଏତେ ଖୁସି ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ ଯେ, ସେ ଝିଅ ବିଦା ହେବାର ଦୁଃଖ କୁ ଭୁଲି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଏବେ ସେ ଶାନ୍ତି ରେ ମରି ପାରିବେ । ଏବେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଆସିଲେ ବି ତାଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ଚିନ୍ତା ବା ଡର ନାହିଁ । ଏ ମା ପୁଅଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ସିଦ୍ଧାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇ ମରିଯାଇଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆତ୍ମା କେତେ ଯୁଗ ଧରି ଅତୃପ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଘୁରି ବୁଲିଥାନ୍ତା ତାର ଠିକ୍ ନଥାନ୍ତା । ପୁଅ ଦି କଣ ଙ୍କ କଥା ଭାବିବା ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କର ମାଆ ଅଛନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ଝିଅ ସିଦ୍ଧା ର ଏଇ ବୁଢ଼ା ବାପ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ତା କଥା ଭାବିବା ପାଇଁ କେହି ନାହାନ୍ତି ।

ବରର ରୂପରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହେଉଥିଲେ ବି କେହି କେହି ହାୟ ହାୟ କରୁଥିଲେ ବିଧିର ବୈଦିତ୍ୱତା ଦେଖି । ବିଧାତାର କ୍ରୁର ବିଧାନକୁ ଏତେ ସହଜରେ ମାନି ନେବା ପାଇଁ ଯେଉଁ କଠିଣ ଛାତିର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ତାହା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଖ ରେ ନାହିଁ । କାର୍ତ୍ତୀକେୟଙ୍କ ପରି ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ରୂପ ଦେଇ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଖୁଣ । ଯାହା ବି ହେଉ ‘ପବିତ୍ର’ ଆଉ ‘ସିଦ୍ଧା’ର ଯୋଡ଼ି ବେଶ୍ ମନ ମୁଗ୍ଧ କର । ହର ପାର୍ବତୀ ହାର୍ ମାନି ନେଇଥାନ୍ତେ ଏ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ପାଖରେ ।

ସବୁ କାମ ସୁରୁଖୁରୁରେ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଘର ଏବେ ଖାଲି ଖାଲି । ଆଉ ‘ସିଦ୍ଧା’ର କାତ ବା ପାଉଜିର ରୁଣୁଣୁ ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୁଭେନା ଘରେ । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଶୂନ୍ୟତାକୁ ଖୁବ୍ ସହଜରେ ଆପଣାର କରି ନେଲେଣି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ସେ ଘରେ କାହାକୁ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କହି ନଥାନ୍ତି । ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ସେ କଥାଟିକକ ଯେ ଘରେ ଖଣ୍ଡ ପ୍ରଳୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବ ତାର ସନ୍ଦେହ ନାହିଁ । ବାହାଘର ଟା ଭଲରେ ସରିଯାଉ ତାପରେ ସେ କହିବେ ବୋଲି ମନସ୍ଥ କରି ନେଇଥିଲେ । ଏବେ କହିଦେବାଟା ଭଲ ହେବ ବୋଲି ସେ ଭାବୁଛନ୍ତି । ଲୁଚେଇ ଆଉ କିଛି ଲାଭ ନାହିଁ । ସତ କଥା ଟାକୁ କହିବା ପାଇଁ ସାହାସ ସଂଚୟ କରିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ ସେ । ଝଡ଼ ଉଠୁ ବା ପ୍ରଳୟ ଉଠୁ କଥାଟାକୁ ସେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ କହିବେ । ଆଜି ତାଙ୍କର ଆଉ କୋଉ କଥାକୁ ଡର ନାହିଁ କି ଚିନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ । ହେଉ ଯାହା ହେବାର ହେଉ । ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ଟି ଶାନ୍ତି । ସେ ଯେ ଠିକ୍ ସୁବିଚାର କରିଛନ୍ତି ଏଥିରେ ତାଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ସନ୍ଦେହ

ନାହିଁ । ଅନ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅନ୍ୟାୟ ଲାଗିଲେ ସେ ନାଚାର ।

ବାହାଘର ସରିବାର ମାସେ ସରିଗଲାଣି । ଝିଅ ବାପ ଘର ଲେଉଟି ପୁଣି ଥରେ ବିଦା ହୋଇ ସାରିଲାଣି । ଶାଶୁଘର କୁ ବେଶ୍ ଆପଣେଇ ସାରିଲାଣି ସିଦ୍ଧା । ଶାଶୁର ଗୋଟ ତଳେ ଲାଗୁନି । ନିଜର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଦେଖି ନିଜେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟନ୍ତିତା । ତାଙ୍କର ମୂଳ ବଧିର ପୁଅ ତି ଯେ ଦିନେ ବିଭା ହେବ, ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବୋହୂ ଆଣିଦେବ ସେ କେବେ ସ୍ବପ୍ନରେ ବି ଭାବି ନଥିଲେ । କେତେ ଦେବ ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ରେ ମଥାନତ କରି ଶରଣାପର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ତାର ହିସାବ ତାଙ୍କ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମନ ମନେ ରଖି ପାରିନି । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଝିଅକୁ ଯାଇ ଦେଖି ଆସିଲେଣି ଦୁଇଥର । ତାର ଓଠ ନ କହିଲେ ବି ତାର ହସ ଓ ଆଖିର ଚାହାଣି ତାର ସର୍ବାନ୍ତ କରଣ ସୁଖୀ ହେବା ଘୋଷଣା କରୁଥାନ୍ତି ।

ସେଦିନ ସେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ମନରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାନୁମତୀ ଓ ପୁଅ ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କି ଅସଲ କଥାଟା କହିବାକୁ ମନସ୍ଥ କରିନେଲେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ପରିଣାମକୁ ଖାତିର ନକରି । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ତାଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ସଂପତ୍ତିକୁ ଦୁଇ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ସମାନ ଦୁଇ ଭାଗରେ ଭାଗ କରିଦେଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅଂଶ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସମାନ ଭାବରେ ବାଣ୍ଟି ଦେଇ ଛାଡ଼ି । ସେଇ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଏ ସଂପତ୍ତିର ପୁରା ଅଧା ଭାଗ ସିଦ୍ଧାର । ଏତକ ଏକା ନିଶ୍ଚାସରେ କହିଦେଇ କାହାରି ଉତ୍ତର କୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ନକରି ସେ ଘରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲେ ।

ସ୍ଥାନିୟ ମନ୍ଦିରର ଖୋଲା ପବନରେ କିଛି ସମୟ ଆସି ବସିଗଲେ ସେ । କେତେ ଉଶ୍ବାସ ଲାଗୁଛି ମନଟା । ଏବେ ଯିଏ ଯାହା ଭାବୁଛି ଭାବୁଥାଉ । ସିଏ ଯାହା ଠିକ୍ ଭାବିଛନ୍ତି ସେଇଟା ହିଁ ଠିକ୍ ବୋଲି ସେ ଭାବନ୍ତି ।

ସିଦ୍ଧାର ସ୍ବାମୀ ‘ପବିତ୍ର’ ଜନ୍ମରୁ ବଧିର । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ମୂଳ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । କିଛି ଶୁଣି ନପାରିବାରୁ ସେ କଥାବାଣୀ କରି ଶିଖି ପାରିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର କଥା ବାଣୀ କରି ପାରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ଅଛି । ତାର ବଧିରତାର ଚିକିତ୍ସା କିଛି ହୋଇ ପାରିଲେ ସେ କଥାବାଣୀ କରିବାକୁ ସକ୍ଷମ ହୋଇ ପାରିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର କୌଣସି ଲୋକ ବଳ ଓ ଧନ ବଳର ସୁବିଧା ନଥିବାରୁ ସେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ହେବାର ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ହୋଇଛି । ହେତୁମ୍ଭାବେ କାଶିନାଥ ବାବୁ ଙ୍କ ମାମୁଁ ପୁଅ ଭାଇ ‘ବିରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ବାବୁ’ ଜଣେ ନାମଜାବା ତାଙ୍କର ସହରରେ । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଶେଖର ବାବୁ, କାଶିନାଥ ବାବୁ ଙ୍କ ସହାୟତାରେ ବିରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ଏହାର କିଛି ଯେ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇ ପାରେ ତାର ପରାମର୍ଶ ନେଇ କରି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ।

ପବିତ୍ର ହାତରେ ଧନ ବଳ ନାହିଁ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସିଦ୍ଧାର ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧାଂଶ ସଂପତ୍ତିରେ ଏ ସବୁର ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସହଜରେ ହୋଇ ପାରିବ ବୋଲି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଭାବୁଛନ୍ତି । ସେଥି ପାଇଁ ସେ ଏହିପରି ସଂପତ୍ତିକୁ ଦୁଇଭାଗ କରି ବାଣ୍ଟି ଦେବାର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ନେଇଥିଲେ ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ଦ୍ବିତୀୟ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ପୁତ୍ର ହେଲେବି ତାଙ୍କର ତ ସନ୍ତାନ ତିନି । ତେଣୁ ସଂପତ୍ତି ଟା ତିନି ସମାନ ଭାଗରେ ବାଣ୍ଟିବା ଦରକାର ଥିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଥିରେ ସିଦ୍ଧା ର ଭାଗ କମ୍ ପଡ଼ିଯିବ । ପବିତ୍ରର ଚିକିତ୍ସା ପରେ ଚଳିବାକୁ ସେମାନ ଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି ଧନ ରହିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ସେ ଏ ସଂସାରରୁ ଗଲାପରେ ଏ ମୂଳ ଝିଅଟି ଯାଇ କାହାକୁ ତାର ଭାଗ ମାଗିବ । ବୁଝିବ ବା କିଏ ତା ଦୁଃଖ । ତେଣୁ ଏପରି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିବାକୁ ସେ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ।

ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଭାନୁମତୀ ଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ପୁଅ ସେମାନେ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଥିଲେ ନିଜ ଗୋଟରେ ନିଜେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ପାରିବେ । ବାପ ସଂପତ୍ତିକୁ ଏତେ ଅକ୍ତିଆର କରିବା କଣ ଦରକାର । ସେଥି ଯୋଗୁଁ ସେ ଘରର ସଦସ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ଉପଦେଶ ନ ନେଇ ସେମାନ ଙ୍କ ସହିତ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ଆଲୋଚନା, ସମାଲୋଚନା ବା ପରାମର୍ଶ ନକରି ନିଜେ ନିଜେ ଏଇ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ନେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ସେ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ଏହାର ପରିଣାମ ଭଲ ହେବ ନାହିଁ । ଘରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦୁଃଖ କରିବେ । ତଥାପି ସେ ଏସବୁ ବିଷୟ ପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ନଥିଲେ । ସବୁ ପ୍ରକାର ଅଶ୍ରାବ୍ୟ ଭାଷାକୁ ହଜମ କରିନେବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ଶକ୍ତି ସଂଚୟ କରିନେଇଥିଲେ ।

ସେଦିନ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅନୁମାନ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ମାଆ ପୁଅ ତାଙ୍କର ପୂର୍ବ ମନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ଅନୁସାରେ ସବୁପ୍ରକାର ଅକଥନୀୟ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କରିଥିଲେ । – “ ବୁଢ଼ା ମନ ଭିତରେ ଏତେ ଛନ୍ଦ କୁଟ କପଟ ଥିଲା । ଝିଅଟା ଏତେ ଅଧିକ ହୋଇଗଲା । ପୁଅ ଦି ଜଣ କିଛି ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି……। ଆଉ କିଛି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କହିବାକୁ ନଦେଇ ସେ ତାଙ୍କର ପୂର୍ବ ବିଚାର ଅନୁସାରେ ରାମାୟଣର ଏକ ଭାଷଣ ଦେଇ ଶୋଇବା ଘରର ଦ୍ବାର ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଆଜି ଗୋଟ ଘଷି ଦେବାକୁ କେହି ନାହାଁନ୍ତି କି ଖାଇଲା ନଖାଇଲା କଥା ବୁଝିଦେବାକୁ କେହି ଆଗେଇ ଆସୁ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତରେ ଖୁସି ।

ବିରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ବାବୁ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଥୀ ତାଙ୍କର ମାନଙ୍କ ସହାୟତାରେ ପବିତ୍ର କୁମାରର କାନରେ ଏକ ଅସ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରଚାର ପରେ ତାକୁ ଏକ “ହିଅରିଙ୍ଗ ଏଇଡ” ଦିଆଗଲା କାନରେ ଲଗେଇବାକୁ । ଯାହା ଫଳରେ କି କିଛି ପରିମାଣରେ ଶୁଣି ପାରିବାରେ ସେ ସକ୍ଷମ ହେଲା । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଖୁସିର ସିମା ନାହିଁ ।

ଏବେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଓ କାଶିନାଥ ବାବୁ ଙ୍କ ସହାୟତାରେ ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି କରି କିଛି କିଛି କଥା କହିବା ମଧ୍ୟ ଶିଖି ଗଲାଣି ପବିତ୍ର । ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଷ୍ଟକ୍ ନହେଲେ ବି ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେଲେ ବେଶ୍ ବୁଝି ହେଉଛି । ସିଦ୍ଧାର କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଅନ୍ତହୀନ ଖୁସିର ଲହରୀରେ ସନ୍ତରଣ କରିବା ବେଶି ଦିନ ରହିନଥିଲା । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁ ଙ୍କର ହଠାତ୍ କରି ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଏ ପ୍ରବଣ ଦୁଃଖ ନିରବରେ ସହି ଯିବାକୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର ଶକ୍ତି ନଥିଲା । ବାପା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଦେହାନ୍ତର ମର୍ମନ୍ତୁଦ ଅର୍ତ୍ତହାତ୍ ସନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ବୁଝିବାକୁ ବାପା ସିନା ଆଗେଇ ଆସି ନଥିଲେ ସେଦିନ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ ତାର ସ୍ବାମୀ ପବିତ୍ରକୁମାର । ଲୁହ ପୋଛି ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଆଖିରୁ । ଆଶ୍ବାସନା ବାଣିରେ ଭରିଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଆଜି ଠାରୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖ ସୁଖ ତାଙ୍କର । ସେ ଅଧା କୁହା ଝାପସା ଭାଷାକୁ ବୁଝି ନେଇଥିଲା ସିଦ୍ଧା ।

ବାପା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ପରମ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଇହଧାମ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରିଥିଲେ । କୁଆଁଇ ନ ହେଲା ନାହିଁ ଭଗବାନ ଙ୍କ ସଂସାରରେ ଜଣେ ଅସହାୟ

ଅପାରଗ କୁ ଜୀବନର ସବୁଠାରୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ଏପରି ଏକ ଦାନ ସେ ଦେଇ ଯାଇଥିବାରୁ । କଥା କୁହାଇବା ଶିଖେଇ ଦେଇଯାଇଥିଲେ ଓ ଶୁଣିବା ପାଇଁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଦେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ଓ ବିଦ୍ୟାଦାନ ଦ୍ଵାରା । ଭଗବାନ୍ ବି ଖୁସି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିବେ ତାଙ୍କ ବାଦାନ୍ୟତା ପାଇଁ । ବହୁତ ଭାରି ଆଜି ତାଙ୍କ ପୂଣ୍ୟ ର ପଲା ନିଷ୍ଠୟ ।

ରତେଞ୍ଜର, ମିନେଶୋଟା

ମା

## ସୀମା ଚୌଧୁରୀ

ଖୁଡ଼ି ମା, ମାଉସୀ ମା, ବୋଉ ମା – ଏଇ ତିନି ଜଣ ହେଲେ ମୋର ମା । ବୋଉ ମା ଜନ୍ମ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ଯିବା ଆଗରୁ କେତେ କଣ ବୁଝାଇ ଦେଇ ଗଲା । ମା'ରେ, ଧନରେ କହି ଖୁଆଇ ଥିଲା, ପିଆଇ ଥିଲା, ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାଇ ଥିଲା, କେତେ ଗପ କହି ଶୁଆଇ ଥିଲା । ତା ହାତରୁ ଅମୃତ ଖାଇଥିଲି, ଗଙ୍ଗାଜଳ ପିଇଥିଲି । ତା କୋଳରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ରଖି ସ୍ଵର୍ଗ ସୁଖ ପାଇଥିଲି । ଆଜି ଲାଗେ ତା ଗପସବୁ ସୁନା ଖଣି ପରି ସାଇତି ରଖୁଛି ପେଡ଼ିରେ । ମୋ ପରେ ମୋ ପିଲାମାନେ ହେବେ ତାର ଅଧିକାରୀ । ବୋଉ ମା ଚାଲିଗଲା ପରେ ସବୁ ଓଲଟ ପାଲଟ ହୋଇଗଲା । ମନ୍ଦିର ଯେମିତି ଶୂନ୍ୟ ହେଲା ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ବିନା । କାଲି ଅପେକ୍ଷା ସେ ଆଜି ମନେ ପଡ଼େ ବେଶି । ନିଜର ପିଲା ହେଲା ପରେ ବୁଝିହୁଏ ମା'ର ସ୍ନେହ, ତାର ତ୍ୟାଗ, ତାର ଅଭିମାନ ।

ବୋଉ ମା ଥିଲା ଅତି ସରଳ । ଶୁଣିଛି ଥରେ ବଗିଚାରେ ବସି ବହି ପଢ଼ୁ ପଢ଼ୁ ପଛପଟୁ ତାର ବାଳ ହରିଣ ଖାଇଯାଇଥିଲା ବୋଲି । ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ମାରି ନିଜେ କାନ୍ଦିବା ଦେଖୁଛି ଆମେ । ସେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଯାହା କରି ଯାଇଛି, ଏ ଜନ୍ମରେ ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିନି ତା ରଣରୁ କିଛି ସୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ । ଖାଲି ହାତ ଯୋଡ଼ି ନମସ୍କାର କରେ ମୋର ବୋଉ ମା ପାଇଁ । ମା'ର ଭୂମିକା ସହଜ ନୁହେଁ । ମା'ର ରଣରେ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ରଣୀ । ଆସ ଆଜି ଆଖିବୁଜି ମା'କୁ ଦେବା ପୁଷ୍ପାଞ୍ଜଳି ।

ବାହା ହୋଇ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଲା ପରେ ପାଇଲି ମାଉସୀ ମା କୁ । ମାଟି ପିଣ୍ଡଳାରେ ଆକାର ଦେବାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଥିଲା ବହୁତ ଅବଦାନ । ପାଠରେ ସିଏ ହେଲେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷିତା । କୌଣସି ବାଧା, ବିଘ୍ନକୁ ନଡ଼ିରି ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ଠିଆ ହେବାର ପଣ ନେଇଥିଲେ ଦିନେ । କେମିତିରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ମେଡାଲ୍ ପାଇ ସେ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଆମେରିକା । କିନ୍ତୁ ନିଜର ପ୍ରସଂଶା କେବେ କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି ନିଜ ପାଟିରେ । ସାଧାରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଝିଅପରି ଶାଢ଼ି କାନିରେ ନିଜର ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା, ନିଜର ସଫଳତା, ନିଜର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସବୁକୁ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖୁଛନ୍ତି । କେବଳ ସରଳତା ଓ ଧୂସରତାକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି । ଆମେରିକାର ଗହଳିରେ ହଜି ନଯାଇ ନିଜର ପରିଚୟକୁ ଖୁବ୍ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବେ ଧରି ରଖିପାରିଛନ୍ତି । ଆମେରିକାକୁ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ ଯିଏ ବି ଆସିଛି ମାଉସୀ ମାଙ୍କ ଠୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ପାଇଛି । ଖାଲି ଆମ ପରିବାର ନୁହେଁ, ଅନ୍ୟମାନେବି ବହୁତ ଉପକୃତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ପର ଆପଣାର ବିଚାର ତାଙ୍କର ନାହିଁ । ସ୍ନେହ ଆଦରରେ ଘରେ ରଖି, ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାଇ ମଣିଷ କରିଛନ୍ତି ସେ କେତେ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ । କେବଳ ମୁଁ ନୁହେଁ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଆଜି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମଧ୍ୟ ଗର୍ବ କରେ । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଦୟାରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ହାତ ଧରି ଅନେକ ବାଟ ଚାଲିବା ପାଇଁ ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଥିଲା । ଅନେକ ଜିନିଷ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ମିଳିଲା । ସେ ହେଲେ ଏକାଧାରରେ ଜଣେ ଆଦର୍ଶ ଝିଅ, ଆଦର୍ଶ ବୋହୂ, ଆଦର୍ଶ ପତି ଓ ଆଦର୍ଶ ଶାଶୁ । ଦୟା, କ୍ଷମା, ପରୋପକାର ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କର ଭୂଷଣ । ମୋର ପରିବାର ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଶେଷ ଅବଦାନ । ତାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ମୁଁ ପାଇଛି ଅସୀମ ଯୌର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସାହସ । ଧନ୍ୟ ତୁମେ ମାଉସୀ ମା, ତୁମେ ହେଲ ପରମ ପୂଜନୀୟ ।

ତାପରେ ମୋ ଜୀବନକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମା । ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଫିଟି ଫିଟି ଚାଲିଲା । ଆମେରିକା ସହରରେ ମାଉସୀ ମା ଓ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ପରି ଲୋକ ବହୁତ କମ୍ । ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ତିନି ଚାରି ମାସ ରହିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଥିଲା । ଖୁଡ଼ି ମା ଆମେରିକାରେ ରୁହନ୍ତି ବୋଲି

ଭାରତରୁ ଶୁଣିଥିଲି □ ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜାଣିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଲା ଏଇଠି □ ଝାଉଁଳି ଯାଇଥିବା ଗଛରେ ପାଣି ମୁଣ୍ଡେ ଦେଲାପରି ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ହାତ ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପରେ ବୁଲି ଆସିଥିଲା □ ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ସଜାଡି ତାଙ୍କରିରେ ସାଉତୁଥିବା ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କୁ ଶିଖିଲି ଅନେକ କଥା □

ଜନ୍ମ ସିନା ବୋଉ ମା ଦେଇଥିଲା ହେଲେ ଧର୍ମ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମା ଦେଲେ □ ତାଙ୍କ ହାତ ଧରି ପହଞ୍ଚି ପାରିଲି ମୋ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ □ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ରହି ପାଇଥିଲି ସ୍ବର୍ଗ ସୁଖ □ ସ୍ନେହ, ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା, ଦୟା, କ୍ଷମାର ଚାରିକାନ୍ଥରେ ଡିଆଁରି ତାଙ୍କ ଘର □ ବଗିଚା ହେଲା ପଶୁ ପକ୍ଷୀଙ୍କର ନିର୍ଭୟର କ୍ରୀଡ଼ାସ୍ଥଳ □ ଯିଏ ଥରେ ଭିତରକୁ ଆସିଲା ସିଏ ସହଜରେ ବାହାରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁନା □ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ହାତରକ୍ଷା ବେସର ଓ ମଣ୍ଡାପିଠା ଥରେ ଖାଇଲେ ପାଟିରୁ ଛାଡ଼େନା □ ସବୁ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଏକାଠି ବସି ଭାରତୀୟ ଖାଇବା ଛ ତିଅଣ ନ ଭଜା ହୁଏ □ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଦା ପକା ଘିଅ ତାଲି ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମନେ ପଡ଼େ □ ଭୋଜନ ପରେ ହୁଏ ସତ୍‌ସଙ୍ଗ, ଖଟାମିଠା କଥା, ଜାଣିବା କଥା, ଠାକୁର ଆଲୋଚନା, ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ଗପ ପେଡ଼ି, କକେଇଙ୍କ ମଜା ମଜା କଥା □ ଯିଏ ଆସିଲା ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ କେବେବି ଖାଲିହାତରେ ଫେରେନା, ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବାନ୍ଧିନିଏ ଅନେକ ଖୁସି □ ପାଇଯାଏ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ମାର୍ଗ □ ଯିଏ ଯାହା ଚାହେଁ ତା ପାଏ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ □

ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କର ଶୋଇବା ଓ କେତେବେଳେ ସକାଳୁ ଉଠିବା କେହି ଦେଖିନି □ ରାତି ଅଧରେ ହୁଏ ତାଙ୍କର ସକାଳ □ କାହା ପାଇଁ କିଛି ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ସେ ଜମାରୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ □ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଥାଏ ଯାଦୁର ବାତି □ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକେ ଅସାଧାରଣ ମନେକରେ □ ଅସମ୍ଭବ କଥାବି ସମ୍ଭବ ହୁଏ □ କୌଣସି ରୋଗ ବୈରାଗ୍ୟକୁ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ଡର ନଥାଏ □ ସବୁ କଥାର ସମାଧାନ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ □ ଅନେକ କଥା ଶିଖିଛି ତାଙ୍କଠାରୁ □ ସମୟର ସତ୍ ଉପଯୋଗ, ଆଗନ୍ତୁକଙ୍କୁ ସମୟ ଦେବା ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣିବା, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭଲ ଗୁଣକୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବା ଓ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରିବା, ହସସ୍ବ ମୁହଁରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଆପଣାର କରିଦେବା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି □ କେବଳ କଥାରେ ନୁହେଁ, ସେ ଏ ସବୁ ଭଲ ଗୁଣର ଅଧିକାରୀ □ ଗାନ୍ଧିଜୀ କହିଲା ପରି ନିଜେ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରି ତାପରେ ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ପାଇଁ ଆଦେଶ ଦେବାର ସାହସ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମା ରଖିଥିଲେ □

ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ପର ଆପଣା ନାହିଁ □ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସମାନ ବ୍ୟବହାର □ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଖୋଲା, ହୃଦୟବି ଖୋଲା □ ଜନସେବା ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଥମ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ □ ସାହି ପଡ଼ିଶାର ବୁଢ଼ା ବୁଢ଼ୀଙ୍କ କଥା ବୁଝିବାଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି, Hospice patientsଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଯାଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସେବା କରିବା, ଭାରତକୁ ଯାଇ ସେଠି ରୋଗୀ ସେବା, ଗାଁରେ ପୋଖରୀ ଖୋଳାଇବା, ସ୍କୁଲ ଘର ତିଆରି କରିବା, ଗାଁ ସ୍କୁଲ ପାଇଁ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଠିକ୍ କରିବା, ସବୁଥିରେ ଖୁଡ଼ି ମାଙ୍କ ଅବଦାନ □ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ପ୍ରିୟ ସିଏ □ ଶାଶୁ, ଶ୍ଵଶୁର, ନଣନ୍ଦ, ଦିଅର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ନେହ, ମମତାରେ ଏମିତି ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିଛନ୍ତି ଯେ କେହି ତାଙ୍କୁ ପାଖରୁ ଛାଡ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ ନାରାଜ □ ସିଏ ହେଲେ ମୋର ପ୍ରେରଣା, ପଥ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକ □ ତାଙ୍କ ଚଲାପଥରେ ଚାଲି ମୋ ଜୀବନ ସାର୍ଥକ ହୋଇଛି □

ଖୁଡ଼ି ମା, ମାଉସୀ ମା ଓ ବୋଉ ମା – ଏ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ମୋ ଜୀବନ ଆଜି ଧନ୍ୟ ହୋଇଛି □

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## Ancient Indian Philosophy and Modern Constitution: A Triumph of Ancient Indian Philosophy

By Sankarshan Acharya

A rational process of discovery of ancient Indian philosophy indicates that this philosophy is the crux of the modern constitution and rules of law, which are needed to (a) create equal opportunity for all humans to prosper by own diligence and perseverance, and (b) maintain social stability.

### 1. Who the Indians are?

The term "Hindu" was first coined by the Arabs to mean the inhabitant of the land to the east of river Sindhu. Sindhu flows through Pakistan, a country carved out of India in 1947. Europeans learned about Arabs acquiring from the land of "Hind" the knowledge on numerals and mathematics and merchandise like spices and condiments. The word "Hind" sounded like "Ind" to the Europeans. Arabs called the land of "Hind" as "Hindustan," which was christened by Europeans as India with the Hindu inhabitants as Indians.

Hindu or Hindustani thus means Indian. This writing is not about "Hinduism," which is a caption used to connote the "religion" of the majority of Hindustanis. Hindutva is a Sanskrit term that means the essence or ethos or philosophy of a Hindu.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar - a self-described atheist - first used the term hindutva in a pamphlet, "*Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*" in 1923 to mean Hinduness. He used Hindu as an individual of Bharatvarsa, called India in English and Hindustan in Arabic. Savarkar and his followers believe that all Indians must possess a common soul or identity or ethos or philosophy or Bharatiyata or Hindutva or Indianness. Indians who have converted to Islam or Christianity or Buddhism abhor the term Hindutva, lest they may be pressured to practice ancient cultural mores and to give up their acquired religions.

As a proponent of Universal Religion and God that propagates unity, I do not subscribe to disunity among humans based on their beliefs. It is, therefore, prudent to not make any religious connotation of the Sanskrit word, Hindutva, that truly means Indian ethos.

The purpose of this missive is not semantics. It is to rationally discover our ancient Indian ethos as akin to the modern constitution and rules of law.

To restore our national pride, we, the Indians, must discover our ethos, which represent our identity or soul or philosophy without worrying about our subjugation over centuries.

To begin with, why were we subjugated? Our civilization was in the forefront of agriculture and commerce. We contributed about 22% of global production. We were in the forefront of mathematics, science and medicine. This attracted the invaders to India. This led to our subjugation, which mangled our thinking. The ethos that had made us creative and productive vanished from India. The industrial world established their societies based on our ethos to be as prosperous as they are now. We would undoubtedly have been in the forefront of industrial revolution if we were not shackled.

We cannot abdicate our responsibility in discovering our ancient ethos lost over the centuries of domination. Why? It is because these ethos, discovered by decades of my research, are essential for prosperity and stability of our society that we all long for, despite our diverse religious beliefs, castes and languages.

How we call our lost philosophical identity is immaterial. It may be Indianness in English or Hindutva in Persian-Sanskrit or Bharatiyata in Hindi and in most other Indian languages. Let's not blur our national identity with any Indian's religion, caste, language, or theism or atheism. Identity is like the common citizenship of every Indian soul.

CFD has focused on the discovery of our national identity or philosophy or ethos. CFD feels that christening the same as Hindutva or Bharatiyata or Indianness is really incidental to the process of discovery of our latent ethos.

### 2. Discovery of Indian Ethos or Philosophy

2.1. United, peaceful and prosperous living, learning and acquisition of new knowledge must have been the common ethos or philosophy of ancient Indians that was lost in centuries of our subjugation. How? India was prosperous by producing 22% of global GDP. No prosperous country today is disunited or internally violent. This means Indians were non-violent and living peacefully; only that could lead to discovery (knowledge or science) of the truth about the unknown elements of nature. Whether our ancient knowledge is superior to the current knowledge in the developed world is unimportant. What is important is that our knowledge then was superior to that of the rest of the world, as we can rationally infer from observations that only relatively superior knowledge

has led nations to achieve relatively higher productivity. Because we were producing relatively the highest of all nations before invasions, we were more knowledgeable than others then.

After invasion and colonization, our GDP has dropped to about 1% and has not advanced much after our independence. The West and Japan have become relatively as prosperous as they are today only because of a process of peace and steady acquisition of relatively superior knowledge that we are not able to achieve. It is because the ethos that had imbibed our ancient civilization has become a part of the currently developed world. We are hopelessly behind, relative to other developed nations because we lost our ethos and could not muster them even after independence.

We have so far failed to recover our ethos because, after independence, the elite in power achieved and relished nonpareil relative prosperity for themselves and their families and friends. It did not occur to them that they should cultivate collective wisdom - which is possible only in independent universities - to recover and permeate our national ethos to make the nation prosperous. The idea of the ruling elite was to simply print more and more rupees, to usurp most of it and distribute the remainder to local political workers to bribe the voters to garner their support for entrenchment in power to relish relative individual prosperity within India. This process badly weakened the international value of our rupee, leading to a rude shock to the ruling elite in 1991 after our foreign currency checks bounced.

It is, therefore, necessary that we recover and cultivate our ethos through independent universities that had made us the nonpareil productive center of the world. Private universities run by politicians and connected mafia through usurped public development funds are as hopeless as the government-funded universities like the IITs and IIMs to cultivate and disseminate national ethos.

2.2. For a nation to be as prosperous as India was before subjugation, we must have followed a philosophy of effective governance to create equal opportunity and liberty for all.

Universal prosperity within a nation is possible only if every individual has an environment of equal opportunity and freedom to produce, create and think based on own talent and perseverance within the domain of common laws. Such an environment can be created and maintained only by an effective governance, characterized by official accountability, credible actions against corruption and adherence to optimal rules of laws as exemplified in the nations that have prospered.

2.3. Triumph of good over evil is subsumed in Indian philosophy. A follower of Universal Religion and God could rationally infer that Krishna and Rama might be individuals that vanquished the evil forces to establish good governance and universal prosperity. Only then would they be revered by the humanity around them. Composers of Ramayana and Mahabharat might have exaggerated to sell their stories, but the crux still was elimination of evil forces to establish effective governance, to ensure equal opportunity for prosperity based on talent and perseverance.

2.4. Establishing liberty, justice and equality before the law must identify India. Mahatma Gandhi was massively supported by all Indians in nonviolent Satyagraha to defeat the mighty evil colonial rulers that meted indignity and inequality based on skin color. The evil, then and now, creates unequal opportunity for themselves by unfairly subduing talented and productive individuals. Thwarting such forces within us is a remarkable Indian philosophy.

2.5. Division of labor was based on talent, skills and perseverance. This is relevant even in the modern world to achieve productivity and competitiveness of a society. The principle of division of labor in India was distorted to be privileges by birth, propagated as a divisive caste system that is haunting India even today.

2.6. Longing to live in unity despite diversity in religion, caste and language has to be a part of Indian ethos. We see such longing pervasively present in every village or nook and corner of India. The colonial rulers resorted to divide and rule after they were threatened by the Hindu-Muslim unity in Sepoy Mutiny (first war of India's independence) in 1857.

### 3. Current Indian Longings and Modern Constitution

The Gita, composed in India, is the oldest script to stipulate how the humanity should live together. The Bible and Quoran were composed much later to prescribe rules of governance of humanity that followed the authors of these scripts. The inter-religious fight is thus about whose rules on governance are wiser or fairer for humanity. Unfortunately, most religious and political leaders strive for imposing wisdom and fairness. This has divided Indians longing for unity. True leaders of humanity like Mahatma Gandhi or Abraham Lincoln have succeeded in envisioning and articulating common longings to induce people to fulfill the same through common struggle.

Europe, USA, Japan, China and Russia have kept religious scripts off governance of their societies. They adopted constitutional rules of law that are amenable to amendments based on the latest wisdom and democratic principles for effective governance, equal opportunity and prosperity. A single party in China strives for the same end goals via fierce and fair competition for party posts based on problem solving skills. The top ten leaders of Communist Party of China, including the current president, are all qualified engineers, as was the previous president. Humans have thus translated their wisdom into constitution and rules of law, as opposed to ancient scripts like Gita, Ramayan, Bible or Quoran.

The philosophical wisdom of “Hindus” was to contain evil forces for effective governance, equal opportunity and prosperity, which are being pursued now through the constitution and rules of law. Indians should be proud that the Hindu (Indian) wisdom is the overriding theme of the modern constitution that the world, including India, has embraced. The Islamists have waged a fatuous jihad to eliminate the Hindu wisdom (Indian philosophy) which stands for effective governance longed by all people, including Muslims, globally, and as proved resoundingly by the Gujarat election.

Rules of governance of India cannot be dictated by religion or caste or language because doing so will be against the common longing of people. Rules have to be based on the preambles of our constitution like economic justice and liberty. The constitution itself should be amended to reflect the latest Indian wisdom by repealing all unwise, tacit references to disunity based on religion, caste, tribe or language. Unwise constitutional codes and rules of law create unequal opportunity through disunity and ineffective governance that are not common longings of people. Our constitution and rules of law should be amended to accomplish people’s common longings for economic justice, liberty, equal opportunity, unity and effective governance.

#### 4. Looking Forward to Fulfilling Common Human Longings

We should, hereafter, pursue for policies to fulfill people’s common longings through real-world strategies on commercial banking, central banking, capital markets, inter-state trade, exchange value of our currency, global trade, labor laws, highest value of our mineral and land resources, environmental uplift, water harvesting, quality education, good healthcare, solid infrastructure, social stability, individual prosperity, national competitiveness, etc. We should look forward to contributing 22% of global GDP that we once produced to attract the invaders who had divided us to rule by ransacking our advances in mathematics and science or wisdom on unity and effective governance.

Gujarat was the only state that had responded to the CFD call in 2003 for a united, peaceful, and prosperous India. Chief Minister Narendra Modi, within weeks of our missive, then had announced for a united, peaceful and prosperous Gujarat. The BJP then adopted the development plank as its agenda for 2004 general election. CFD believes that all parties should articulate and execute their agenda just like Gujarat did to fulfill the common longings of people. We should cherish on our party system. But like China’s monolithic single party, our parties should pursue a mission of fulfilling the common longings of people and tell how to accomplish it.

The crux of the ancient Indian (Rama-Krishna) philosophy is to not usurp others’ property and to not subjugate others, even surreptitiously, and to eliminate the usurpers and subjugators even through war.

The ancient Indian philosophy resulted in nonpareil economic prosperity of India with 23% contribution to global output. The contribution of India to the global economy then is as much as that of the U.S. now, though with a significant difference. India did not include any exotic financial derivatives like credit default swaps or collateralized debt obligations to its output then, as the U.S. is doing now. Even President Obama has pointed out that such exotic financial derivatives may contribute to economic growth, but not to the prosperity of people.

The latest research – based on the most extensive DNA matching – shows that humans (after popping in Africa) migrated to and settled in India before emigrating northwards to Europe and northern Asia. This finding supplants the previously held view that humans went directly from Africa to Europe via Sinai and then immigrated to India. The latest research concludes that most, if not all, the biological features of humans found globally (Causian, Mongoloid, etc.) are present among Indians.

One can rationally infer from this research:

1. That India was the cradle of human civilization.
2. That India was later invaded by people of Indian origin who had emigrated from their ancestral land.
3. That the Moguls and British invaders were of Indian origin.

Clash of ethos is the primary historical reason for invasions. Otherwise, the local Indians would have welcomed their invading cousins and the latter would not have demolished their ancestral culture and heritage. The emigrants must have harbored ethos antithetic to the ancient Indian philosophy. By mangling and obliterating



the ancient cultural vestiges in India, many of the invaders provided an unmistakable proof about their angst and vindictiveness towards ancient Indian philosophy which had caused nonpareil economic prosperity for India.

Genes carry indelible memory, which mutates to the next human carrier upon birth. This is why a baby (untrained at birth) cries for food when his survival is endangered due to hunger. An untrained baby remembers upon birth what hunger means and how he should respond based on memory mutated to the genes he carries at birth. Such genetic memory means that India's invaders could have recalled their origins and the potential causes of their emigration, at least subconsciously. The fact that they destroyed their ancestral vestiges indicates their genetic memory being vindictive towards ancient Indian ethos.

#### Why were the invaders so vindictive?

Vindictiveness arises due to a sense of defeat of one's ethos. The reckless destruction of Indian heritage and culture by the invaders were punctuated by their volition to establish superiority of their ethos. That the invaders were hell-bent on establishing superiority of their ethos is obvious because they not only built their monuments by demolishing ancient Indian temples, but also called the local Indians idolaters, pagans, and heathens with unenlightened souls.

India's invasions were, thus, primarily due to vindictiveness towards ancient Indian philosophy and for establishment of invaders' ethos for usurpation of properties after torturing and killing the locals.

Even lately, the Pope had stated that the only path to god is Christianity. The Southern Baptist Church of USA has distributed pamphlets and booklets to convince American Hindus to adopt Christianity; the church has even lighted candles on Diwali to enlighten the unenlightened souls from India. The Moguls, driven by superiority of their ethos, destroyed and disfigured ancient Indian relics which prominently embodied the ancient Indian philosophy. Europe and USA are no more governed by such hubris about superiority of religious beliefs, though Mogulstans are still ruled by religious doctrines.

The focus of this memo is ethos for economic prosperity. So, what is superior in the Western or Mogul ethos? Since religion does not govern the Western nations, we need to focus on their economic philosophy that has crashed during the financial catastrophe of 2008. The essence of the now crashed Western economic philosophy is surreptitious usurpation of others' wealth for eventual subjugation. This is antithetic to the ancient Indian philosophy.

That the failed Western philosophy is economically inefficient, unconstitutional and unstable (bound to fail) has been proved within my general equilibrium model of mathematical economics which was first mimeographed by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System when I was a financial economist in 1991. My model has also mathematically proved within the most general economic equilibrium model ever scripted in the literature that the ancient Indian philosophy (Rama-Krishna Dharma) is (first-best) efficient and stable, i.e., would eventually triumph and prevail.

The proponents of the prevailing second-best (inefficient) system may have insinuated that my persistence with the US Congress to adopt first-best rules helped destroy the prevalent second-best system. But my objective has been simply to establish the most efficient system to beget first-best status for the principals (citizens), and I am glad that the US Congress has adopted many efficient policies. My model proves that the prevailing second-best system—which surreptitiously usurps others' hard-earned wealth for subjugation—transgresses the most crucial constitutional tenet adopted by the Western nations as well as by other major countries like India, Japan and Brazil. This is why a serious policy paralysis has permeated the world after the collapse of this system in 2008.

But India should rejoice over the triumph of its ancient (Rama-Krishna) philosophy:

1. That had once led to nonpareil economic prosperity of India.
2. That has triumphed once again in 2008, as revealed by the ignominious defeat of the prevailing system of surreptitious usurpation and subjugation.
3. That has been mathematically proved to be economically most efficient (first-best) and constitutional in a more general model of economic equilibrium than ever scripted in the literature.
4. That has prevailed over the invaders' ethos of usurpation and subjugation, which has been surreptitiously practiced in the West (by transgressing their constitution) and which has been ignominiously exposed in 2008.

My first-best efficient, constitutional system (rules of governance) is actually the same as the ancient Indian Rama-Krishna philosophy for economic prosperity. Now there is no need to invoke Rama or Krishna to prop my first-best efficient and constitutional system attained in equilibrium within the most general model of economics

than ever scripted. Any challenge to the ancient Indian philosophy or equivalently to my first-best efficient equilibrium must be based on my model or a more general model than mine. The challenger has to prove (not simply opine with economic jargons) that a system of surreptitious or direct usurpation and subjugation is economically more efficient and constitutional.

No one has challenged my equilibrium results so far. This is why the US Congress has adopted most, if not all, of the efficient and constitutional rules obtained in my first-best policy research.

Why are Indian rulers gloomy when the ancient Indian philosophy has once again triumphed and prevailed? I say “once again” because Rama and Krishna had already defeated the usurpers and subjugators during their times to establish the superiority of their ethos for economic prosperity commonly longed by people. The gloom is perhaps because our rulers willy-nilly adopted the system of surreptitious usurpation and subjugation from the West while trying to convince Indians about its efficacy thus far. This system has enriched and entrenched many rulers, their kith, kin and cronies.

Most Indian rulers have thus far remained satiated about their well-being as a result of the philosophy of surreptitious usurpation and subjugation. They had so far believed that people would not notice being surreptitiously usurped and subjugated.

What is superior about Mogul ethos? Moguls have been driven by destruction of others’ life, property and heritage. This amounts to direct usurpation and subjugation, as opposed to the surreptitious approach in the Western economic philosophy. Any form of usurpation or subjugation is actually antithetic to the ancient Indian philosophy and is economically inefficient and unconstitutional.

### Origin of Capitalism

Rama and Krishna epitomized a philosophy of eliminating usurpers and subjugators. Rama’s philosophy can be inferred from his actions narrated in Ramayana. Krishna’s actions narrated in Mahabharat as well as Gita more explicitly outline this philosophy. While Rama and Krishna defeated the usurpers and subjugators, they could not extinguish the genes which sought comfort through usurpation and subjugation of others. Many of the dominant carriers of the comfort-seeking genes must have emigrated India, after getting defeated by Rama and Krishna and after most Indians revered Rama and Krishna. Making others work is the essence of capitalism. The capitalistic philosophy is antithetic to ancient India philosophy of eliminating the usurpers and subjugators. This is perhaps why Indian rulers have not been attracted towards capitalism after independence. Ironically, the Indian emigrants established capitalism in Europe. They too have developed the system for surreptitious usurpation and subjugation practiced in the West. The emigrating Indians have also crafted the Mogul ethos to extinguish the ancient Indian philosophy and to establish their ethos of subjugation and usurpation.

After humans settled in India, they must have cultivated two competing and antithetic ethos: capitalism, which relies on usurpation and subjugation, and the Krishna-Rama philosophy of elimination of usurpers and subjugators. The capitalists clashed with the followers of Krishna-Rama philosophy and emigrated from India after a decisive defeat. India, guided by the Krishan-Rama philosophy, prospered enough to contribute to 23% of global output.

### Decline of India’s Prosperity

Prosperity then lulled the Indians to forget how Krishna and Rama had vanquished the usurpers and subjugators: better weapons of the time like quoits and spears and skillful operation of weapons and better strategy, e.g., of endearing the Pandavas to defeat the Kauravas or uniting Banar Sena against Ravana.

Rama and Krishna’s success had made Indians believe that “god” periodically reincarnates in the form of a human to destroy the subjugators and usurpers. But, during the same time India prospered, the emigrant capitalists were perhaps developing better weapons and pining for returning to their ancestral land that had vanquished them, philosophically. The emigrants came with better weapons and strategies to loot as well as physically subdue the Indians. The invaders were even armed with new religious dogmas to supplant the ancient Indian Dharma.

### The policy issue now

Should the Indian parliament or ruling Cabinet promote rules based on the repeatedly vanquished philosophy of usurpation and subjugation? The answer is NO. India should, therefore, repeal all laws which amount to surreptitious or direct usurpation and subjugation. There should be absolutely no subsidies based on birth to certain religion, caste or political class.

Most people following any religious faith cannot be blamed for the philosophy of their religion or their caste or class. It is because they were forced to have their parents' religion, caste or class at birth, when they were children without independent philosophical maturity. A modern nation— aspiring to be a global knowledge leader— should offer a platform of a unifying philosophy and repeal existing rules which reward followers of specific religious or political ideologies.

Krishna and his uncle Kansa belonged to Gouda caste. Yet, Krishna eliminated Kansa because the latter usurped others' wealth and subjugated people. Krishna did not believe in rights based on birth to a caste in his time. He could become a Maharaja with the largest army and also the most influential philosopher in his time. A Rajput, Rama, could become an ascetic-mendicant in the jungles, while his brother Bharat rejected the kingdom bestowed on him surreptitiously. A Brahmin, Ravana was a very powerful king. The reason for bringing these ancient events to the discussion here is that the caste system then was for division of labor with rewards based on talents, not on birth-rights.

So, the ancient Indian philosophy during 3000-5000 BC (times of Krishna and Rama) did not allocate rights based on birth to certain castes. The concept of religion did not exist then. The only ethos that mattered then was elimination of usurpers and subjugators to bestow equal opportunity for people to prosper based on their skills, perseverance and integrity. Even Rama did not assign a Brahmin author to write Ramayana. Rama's message converted a marauder to become a saint (Valmiki) who scripted Ramayana on his own volition.

Ramayana and Mahabharat have been certainly exaggerated by their authors. But the sole purpose of such exaggeration is to ingrain in the minds of people the ancient Indian philosophy to not usurp others' wealth and to not subjugate others by any means. The invaders termed Ramayana and Mahabharat mythology—discourse of Mithya (lies). They obviously wanted to brainwash the Indians with the antithetic philosophy of usurpation and subjugation. The modern economics profession, which has perpetuated the philosophy of surreptitious usurpation and subjugation, can be proved to be a mythology which crashed in 2008.

So, without being dragged by the rubric of mythology, it is important to simply focus on the two antithetic ethos—(i) usurpation and subjugation and (ii) elimination of usurpers and subjugators.

The philosophy of eliminating the subjugators and usurpers to offer equal opportunity to everyone for enterprise and perseverance must have led to the pre-invasion era economic prosperity of India, which according to Adam Smith, was about 23% of global output.

Indians should celebrate now because their ancient economic philosophy, which had once made India nonpareil and enviable, has triumphed and prevailed once again. There is no reason for Indian rulers to be gloomy when the Indian philosophy has triumphed. It is true that the country needs and will soon see a radical adherence to first-best efficient rules of law by repealing the failed second-best subsidy and birth-right driven) rules.

*Sankarshan Acharya is affiliated with Pro-Prosperity.Com and Citizens for Development.*



## **Memorials**

### **The Influencer**

By Asha Purna Mishra (Khuku)

*The canvas of life can be filled with so many different colors. I love the color of humility, the mother of all virtues.*

ବିଦ୍ୟା ଦଦାତି ବିନୟଂ , ବିନୟାଦାତି ପାତ୍ରତାମ୍ ।  
 ପାତ୍ରତ୍ୱାଦ୍ଧନମାପ୍ନୋତି , ଧନାଦ୍ଧର୍ମ ଚତଃ ସୁଖମ୍ ॥  
 (vidyA dadAti vinayaM, vinayAdyAti pAtratAM  
 pAtrtvAddhanamApnoti, dhanAddharmaM tataH sukhaM)

The above lines were asserted by Guru Parshurama when his exemplary disciple Devavrata (Bhishma, the grandfather of Pandavas and Kauravas) was about to leave the Guru's ashram after completing his education. "Knowledge imparts humility, humility begets worthiness, worthiness creates wealth and enrichment, enrichment leads to right conduct and right conduct brings contentment."

On a lazy afternoon , as I sit back in my rocking chair with a cup of coffee in my hand and close my eyes , life reels back...the picture that I see is so vivid that it compels me to grab my pen and share my vision with you. I find myself with my dad, walking along the rusty road in the farm. My dad, being a busy person, had little time to spend with us. But those moments of togetherness were always awaited by both of us, when we shared each little secret, our joys and our regrets.

That day was no different. As I was hopscotching my way through the labyrinth of dust, the salubrious chat that we were having slowly filled my heart with contentment. He suddenly caught my attention, pointing towards a lemon tree at the end of the road. The tree was not very big, but it bore lots of lemons, hard to count, and it was stooping down because of the weight of its fruits. With a questionable gesture, he asked me, "What do you learn from this tree?"

I immediately answered back with great pride, "A tree never feels the weight of its own fruits, however more they are."

He gently patted my back, as if satisfied with my answer. He paused for a moment, and then continued, "Look at the tree; it is stooping down because of the weight of so many lemons. A person who is rich in his values, thoughts, deeds and character is always humble and down to earth, just like this lemon tree." I stood in silence for a moment as if trying to understand what he said. Later in life, I could truly see and feel the greatness of the lemon tree and could easily comprehend the hidden message it was trying to convey.

Those words of my dad still keep ringing in my ears and guide me like a lighthouse in life's turbulent times. Down life's journey, when I seem to wait at the signals, the unheard voice of the lemon tree wakes up from its slumber. When ego tries to engulf me within its deadly jaws, it emerges, preaching to me that humility has grace and clothes us with fame, whereas pride bares us, exposing our scars.

That lemon tree still stands there at the end of the road where I had left it, perhaps a little old but still full of juicy lemons. For some passersby, it's just a good old lemon tree that bears lots of lemons, but for me .... it has been my strongest influencer, who always stands by me in life's decisive moments. I owe it to my dad, whose deep insight helped me to comprehend the hidden message of the lemon tree.

## Death, Be Not Proud

By Tapasi Misra

Sometime back in Cuttack, my old hometown in Orissa, I visited an organization called Prerana, a club of sorts for senior citizens created by a feisty bunch, all above 70 and from all walks of life. They met several times a month for discussions and group activities. They organized health fairs, seminars and promoted productive and vibrant lifestyles among the elderly. They mobilized a team of household help and volunteers to aid senior citizens living alone. They went out into the community and used their skills and know-how for the greater good. They philosophized, socialized, went on picnics, had fun, spread cheer. It was not mandatory to join them in any of their activities: if you were a member, you reaped the full benefits of their program regardless of your physical involvement with the group.

We were invited by the group to tea and a discussion on Euthanasia; I would tell them about my work with the terminally ill in San Antonio, TX, and my father would give them the legal perspective. I had told my father to expect a big crowd clamoring for the right to die. My father, already ailing but disinterested in the topic, said he would show his face and then leave as “all this is rubbish and a waste of time.” Typical, I chuckled, for my father was never one to linger on illnesses or complain of pain to anyone but his physicians. No one talked of death in our household. It’s something that happens, so why waste precious moments owed to living.

But I was sure there would be a number of people at Prerana with a lot to say, to argue for and endorse euthanasia as merciful. Physicians who have seen much pain, philosophers looking for answers, and pragmatists who must have answers so they can plan and be ready. My father, I thought, would be the lone voice screaming, huffing and puffing for life, and as usual would be tolerated out of love and respect. I was surprised when the discussion started and ended in half hour. Euthanasia: fancy word, an equally ridiculous notion and potentially dangerous, was the general consensus. Not even the people who were afflicted with serious and painful ailments wanted to dwell on it for much longer. Why raise it at all then, I asked? Because it was important to know what all of the ruckus is about, said the late Dr. Tompe, a cardiologist and the founder of Prerana and similar organizations. “Some of us are dead set against it and some give it the benefit of doubt...” What do they think of the many advocates of euthanasia, I asked. They have their way of thinking, we have ours, he said, smiling. So why only half an hour of debate? Don’t know, said the tall, elegant doctor rubbing his chin, I guess we are far too involved with life at the moment and have no time to dwell on death! My father, of course came out of the whole thing vindicated and radiating camaraderie and compassion. “These are bright people,” he concluded.

I returned to the US and continued working with Vitas, a Hospice organization based in San Antonio, TX. It was amazing to see people suffering from chronic pain, and in the face of a hopeless prognosis, carrying on as usual, functioning as normally as they could, laughing, arguing, going out, and socializing. It was humbling to hear them expressing gratitude to those who now helped them to live with dignity. It was mind boggling when they would call to ask politely and calmly if the physicians could come by and change the medicine, as the current one seemed to have stopped working.

Every night, I would go to bed reflecting on how much wisdom I was imbibing from them, and ashamed at how much I was benefitting from them in the name of helping! Maybe it was just the group of people I was assigned to, but I saw my father in all of them, fighters who have lived long and lived well and passionately. Because, as my father had always said, what do you do when you know the end is near, stop living? Rubbish, for that’ll be defeat. Not death. “Death, a necessary end, will come when it will come.” And my father would end the topic, as he did with most topics, with a favorite quote uttered dramatically and with a twinkle in his eye.

Now, as I see my fiercely independent Baba, as I call my father, succumbing to respiratory dysfunction, oxygen therapy, a wide array of needles, intravenous infusions, endless lengths of tubes, various infections, a constant stream of doctors and nurses, I wonder what he is thinking, feeling. Does that monsoon afternoon at the Prerana gathering sometimes break through the fog of confusion,

restlessness and fatigue that seems to be enveloping his fine and much celebrated brain? Would he give the concept of Euthanasia the benefit of doubt now? Well-wishers advise me to stop stressing out, he's had such an amazing life, lived the full circle, what better way to go... and you should just let him go.

I have never understood the full connotation of the term, letting go. What if he is not ready to go yet? Is it wrong to want to live when you are 92 because you are ill and we have determined that you have had a long and "full" life? We hear so much about the rights of people who want to die, what about the rights of those who want to live, even at 92? And I cringe when people say that we have had him for a long time and it's time... what else?...to let go. At what age do children not need their parents, I ask.

We are inundated by phone calls, emails, condolence messages. At the hospital, there's a constant stream of well-wishers, fans, family and of people we have never seen before. The few minutes we are at home for a shower or nap, the outer verandah is filled with more people and with the media. There will be a three hour procession and State Honor, they say, he'll be wrapped in the flag he has cherished all his life. Doordarshan is preparing to air the documentary again. I am shocked; funeral procession? Shroud? My father is still alive! The newspapers are searching their archives for all articles; they continue, oblivious of my despair. Do you have some unpublished photographs? I scream; you want me to search the house now for photographs? But he's a public figure, they scream back, I should accept the inevitable and share. I slam the door.

I return to the ICU to see my cousin chanting the Mahamrutunjay Mantra and my brother physically throwing out a bespectacled, skinny youth with a camera. He's still here, have some respect. These last few weeks, I have tossed and turned, wondering what tomorrow will bring and what kind of decisions we might have to make and then live with for the rest of our lives. I shiver at thoughts I don't want to think.

Then I see and hear things: the flicker of a smile, a sign of cognition, a self-confident gesture, the spark of a cherished memory, his nickname for me feebly muttered, that familiar look of indulgent, unconditional love, even bursts of admiration for favorite cricketers and choice invectives for least favorite politicians. Maybe these are in my imagination, but I know he's still fighting... for life that he loves so much. The least we can do is fight along.

Suddenly Balaram, our resident priest, cook and my father's Man Friday, rises from his spot at Baba's bedside and speaks. After two full days of quiet chanting and meditation, he looks at us directly and speaks softly but firmly. His strangely steady and normal voice surprises and silences us quickly. Didi, please calm down, he mumbles tenderly, his face dry of all tears. Babu is laughing at all this drama and worrying about you. You just relax and sit by him, and he'll be fine. Look, he's already fine, never better. I look at my father and the full impact of Balaram's wisdom hits me. I feel suddenly drained of all confusion, debate, anger, anxiety, fear... I am overcome with a certainty that Baba has won this round as well.

*Death be not proud...  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die  
-- John Donne*

*Tapasi Misra lives in San Antonio, TX, with her husband, Lalatendu Misra. This piece was written as she watched her father, Dr. Bibudhendra Misra, fighting for his life in a private hospital in Cuttack early this year. Dr. Misra, a freedom fighter, ex-Union Minister of Law and Industries and an eminent lawyer of Orissa High Court, passed away on February 15<sup>th</sup>.*

## Celebration of a Departed Soul

By Dr. Amiya K. Mohanty

Dear Joy,

You have gone far away to the Heaven of tranquility, the abode of peace and serene beauty, to the fathomless ocean of love, kindness, courage and confidence.

Like a little stream, with a murmuring sound carrying the messages of hope, patience and limitless endurance, you have merged with your finite eternal soul, the atman, with all pervasive infinite, indestructible cosmos, the paramatman.

Joy, take a break from your divine, supernatural cosmic universe and look down with your worldly vision and see what treasures and virtues you left behind for your family, relatives and friends to possess and emulate—your spirit of selfless love, care, concern, kindness and ever smiling joys so pure, simple and divine. Even in times of difficult challenges, of creeping decay of physical body, you did not lose the strength of mind, hope and spirit.

At the time of helpless despair, you consoled your most loving wife, Usha, your own shadow for over thirty years, saying, “Cry not, my darling. My body may depart, but my spirit will be forever with you until you finish the God-given duties of this world in raising the kids of our love. Help Tony to start his life of love and the duties of marriage, and give our sweet Natalie your never-ending care and support so that she may blossom to be a lady of sweetness, grace, confidence and talents. My loving Usha, at the end of your journey in this beautiful world, your divine soul will transcend and will join us—all the departed, divine souls to enjoy together the life of celestial beauty, perennial bliss and eternal peace.”

Joy, we miss you so much. With tears in our eyes and with a lot of pride and love in our hearts, we reminisce about the priceless pleasures we had in having you as one of our own. May God bless your soul to rest in peace forever, ever and ever.

Yours very dear,

Amiya Bhai and Sara Apa

*This eulogy is a tribute to honor Late Dr. Joykrushna Rout of Bolton, near Manchester, England. Dr. Rout passed away on March 10, 2012. He was an established physician with his own clinics in Bolton. He also served as a teaching faculty in Manchester Medical College. He was involved in a variety of charitable and socio-cultural activities through Orissa and India associations of United Kingdom. He kept professional and personal relations with many of his close friends and relatives from Orissa, such as Drs. Uma Mishra, Ramesh Mishra, Pratap Mishra, Nitin Doshi, etc. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Usha Rani Rout, a Psychologist (who happens to be the younger sister of Sarat Kumari Mohanty, from Richmond, Kentucky); son Dr. Raj Tony Rout, a General practitioner in Oxford England; and daughter Natalie Rout, an Odissi dancer and a third year medical student in Cambridge University. Dr. Joy Rout will be very much missed by his family, relatives, friends and colleagues.*

*Dr. Amiya K. Mohanty, Professor Emeritus in Sociology, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY, is a founding life member of OSA since 1969 and a past president of OSA, 1989 – 91.*



## ତ୍ୟାଗର ତୀର୍ଥ: ମା ତଃ ଆରତୀ ନୟ ପତି

ମା ଥିଲା ହୃଦୟାଦିତାର ଏକ ପରମ ପୂଜାରିଣୀ । ସାହି, ପତିଶା, ଗାଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସେ ଥିଲା ତ୍ୟାଗମୟୀ, ସ୍ନେହମୟୀ, କର୍ମମୟୀ, ଧାର୍ମିକା, ପରୋପକାରୀ ତଥା ପାତର ଅନ୍ତର ବିହୀନ ଏକ ଦରଦୀ ମଣିଷ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଥିଲେ ତାର ପାଖ ଲୋକ, ପରମ ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ।

ନିଜକୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ, ତା ହୃଦୟରେ ଦରଦର ଅଙ୍ଗୁରୋଦଗମ ହୋଇ ସରିଥିଲା । ଏକ ସଂଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ ପରିବାରରେ ଫେବୃଆରୀ ୭, ୧୯୪୭ ମସିହାରେ ତାର ଜନ୍ମ । ବାପା ଶରତ ଚରଣ ପତି ଓ ମା କ୍ଷୀରୋଦା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଚତୁର୍ଥ ସନ୍ତାନ ତଥା ପ୍ରଥମ କନ୍ୟା । ବାପାଙ୍କ ଭାରି ଅଲିଅଳି । ଶୁଦ୍ଧାରେ ତାକୁ ଡାକୁଥିଲେ 'ପରି' । ସରଗର 'ପରି' ପରି ବାପାଙ୍କ ଅଖଣ୍ଡ ସ୍ନାମାନ୍ୟର ଫୁଲ ଦୋଳିରେ ସମୟ ବିତୁଥିଲା । ଶରତ ଚରଣ ସେତେବେଳେ କେତେକ ଜଙ୍ଗଲର ମାଲିକ ଥିଲେ ଭାଦୁଆସୋଳରେ । 'ପରି' କେତେବେଳେ ଗହୀର ସବୁଜ ପତରେ ଲୁଚି ଯାଉଥିଲା ତ, କେତେବେଳେ 'ଶାଳୁଳୀ'ର ପାଖୁଡାରୁ ହସିଉଠୁଥିଲା । ଏହି ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳରେ 'ଜାନନ ବାଳା' ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରକଳା ପରି ବଢି ଚାଲିଥିଲା । ହଠାତ୍, ଦିନେ ସବୁ ଓଲଟ ପାଲଟ ହୋଇଗଲା, ଯେଉଁଦିନ ଶରତ ଚରଣ ପତି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଏକା କରି ଆରପାରିକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ, ଏକ ଜଣ୍ଡିସ୍ ରୋଗରେ ଆକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୋଇ । ପରିକୁ ମାତ୍ର ସାତବର୍ଷ ସେତେବେଳେ । ପ୍ରବଣ ଧକ୍କା ଆଣିଥିଲା ଏକ କୋମଳ ଶିଶୁ ମନରେ । କ୍ଷୀରୋଦା ଦେବୀ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ ଏକା ହୋଇଗଲେ ଚାରୋଟି ସନ୍ତାନ ତଥା ପଞ୍ଚମର ଆସିବା ପଥ ଚାହିଁ । ଫେରିଗଲେ ଶାଶୁଘର 'ଚର୍ଚିତା' ।

'ପତିଘର'ର ଭାରି ବୁନିଆଦି । ଆଖପାଖରେ ବଡ଼ ନାମତାକ । ସରସ୍ୱତୀଙ୍କ ଆଗମନ ସହ ଅଚଳାଚଳ ସଂପତ୍ତି । ଗୋରୁହାଟର ମାଲିକ । ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ଆୟ ୪୦,୦୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା, ୧୯୫୦ ମସିହା ବେଳକୁ । କ୍ଷୀରୋଦା ଦେବୀ ଆଗରୁ ଅନେକ ଥର ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ସହ ଆସି ଏହି ଘରେ ରହିଚନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଦେବୀ ପ୍ରତିମା ଦେହରେ ଧୂଳିବି ଲାଗେ ନାହିଁ । ନିଜେ ଦେଇଶୂର କିମ୍ବା ଦିଅର ହାତରେ ପାଣି ବୋହି ଆଣିଦିଅନ୍ତି କ୍ଷୀରୋଦା ଗାଧୋଇବେ ବୋଲି । ଏବେ କିନ୍ତୁ ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ ଅନେକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆସିଲାଣି । ଗଣ୍ଡିଶା ବି ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ପିରେ ପିରେ ଅନେକ ସମସ୍ୟାର ବୀଭତ୍ସ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ଉନ୍ମୁ ଚାଉଣ କଲାଣି । ଅଲିଅଳି ବାପାର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରକଳା, 'ପରି' ଫୁଲ ଦୋଳି ବଦଳରେ, ଜୀବନର ଅପରାହ୍ନର ସଜ୍ଜା ନିଜ ବୟସ ଅନୁପାତରେ ଅଧିକ ବୁଝି ପାରିଲାଣି ।

ଆର୍ଥିକ ତଥା ଅନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ୟାର ଘାଇ ବଢି ବଢି ଯିବାରୁ, କ୍ଷୀରୋଦା ବାପଘର 'କୁଟୁମ୍ବ' (ସିଂହଭୂମି) କୁ ଫେରିଗଲେ । 'ମାମୁଁ ଘର' ଥିଲା 'ପରି' ପାଇଁ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ । ମାମୁଁ 'ଘାସିଆ', 'ଛୋଟକା' ତଥା 'ସାନ ମାଇଁ' ଙ୍କ ପରି ମଣିଷ ଜ୍ୟୋତିସି ପୁରାଣରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ନାହିଁ । ଦୁଃଖକୁ ବାଣ୍ଟିନେଇ ସୁଖର ମଞ୍ଚିକୁ ଯୋଥ ପରିବାରରେ ବିସ୍ତ୍ରୀକ୍ତ ଶିଖାଇଥିଲେ, ସେମାନେ ।

ମାତ୍ର ଷଷ୍ଠ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ପଢିବା ପରେ, ସତ୍ତମ ପଢିବାକୁ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ଆଉ ରାଜି ହେଲେନାହିଁ । ବିବାହ ପାଇଁ ବରପାତ୍ରର ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ କରିଥିଲେ ।

ମା, ଆମ ଘରକୁ, ମେ ୭, ୧୯୬୨ ମସିହାରେ ମାତ୍ର ୧୫ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ବୋହୂ ହୋଇ ଆସିଲା । ଏହି କିଶୋର ବୟସରେ ବାପା, ଶ୍ରୀ ବିବେକାନନ୍ଦ ନୟ ଙ୍କ ସହ ତାଙ୍କ ଇଚ୍ଛାର ବୈତରଣୀରେ ଲମ୍ଫ ଦେଇ ଅନେକ ଢେଉରେ ଉଠିଛି ଏବଂ ଖସିଛି । ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହୁଏନି, ସତରେ କ'ଣ ମଣିଷ ଏମିତି ବି ତ୍ୟାଗ କରିପାରେ ! ଆଜିର ଏହି ନ୍ୟୁକ୍ଲିଆର୍ ଯୁଗରେ ଏମିତି ଭାବିବା ଏକ ବିତମ୍ବନା । ଏହା କେବଳ ସେହି ତ୍ୟାଗମୟୀ 'ପରି' ହିଁ କରିପାରିଛି । ବାପା ଓ ମାଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଥିଲା ଅଗାଧ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଓ ଅତୁଟ ଭଲପାଇବା । ଯଦିଓ, ବାପା ବଲାଣୀର ବାର୍ଡ କଂପାନୀ (ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ, ସେଲ୍) ରେ ଚାକିରୀ କରୁଥିଲେ, ଆମ ଘରର ଆର୍ଥିକ ସୁଜ୍ଞାନତା ସେତେବେଳେ ବିଶେଷ ଭଲନଥିଲା । ବାପାଙ୍କ ଭାରି ଇଚ୍ଛା ନିଜେ ପଢି ନ ପାରିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଜ ଡିନି ସାନ ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷିତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ କଲେଜ୍ ତଥା ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟି ପଠାଇବେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ କଲେଜ୍ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ତୁଲାଇବା ପରେ, ପରିବାର ପାଇଁ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସମସ୍ୟା ଉଠିଥିଲା । ବାପାଙ୍କ ମହତ୍ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟର ପୂରଣ ପାଇଁ ମା ହାତ ବଢାଇ, ଗାଁ, ସରେଇରେ ରହୁଥିଲା ।

ବଙ୍ଗଳା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପାଠ ପଢିଥିବାରୁ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସହ ମା' ର ଚିଠି ପତ୍ରର ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନରେ ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧକ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି କରି ଗୋଟିଏ ରାତିରେ ବସି, ଓଡିଆ ଅକ୍ଷର ଶିଖି ବାପାଙ୍କ ସହ ଓଡିଆରେ ଚିଠି ପତ୍ର ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନ କଲା ।

ମୋ ଜେଜେବାପା, ଜନାର୍ଦ୍ଦନ ନୟ ଭାରି ନିର୍ଭୀକ ଓ ଦାମ୍ଭିକ ଥିଲେ । ଗାଁ ରେ ଜଣେ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ରୂପେ ପରିଗଣିତ ହେଉଥିଲେ । ତଥାପି, ବେଳେବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କ ଅନୁଶାସନ କଠୋର ଥିଲା । ଯୌତୁକ ପାଇଁ ମାକୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ କିଛି ଦିନ ଲାଞ୍ଜିତ ହେବାକୁ ପଡିଥିଲା । ମୋ ଜେଜେମା ରୁକୁଣୀ ନୟ ଏହାର ଘୋର ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିଥିଲେ ଓ ମା କୁ ସବୁ ସମୟରେ ସମର୍ଥନ କରି ଆସୁଥିଲେ ।

କିଛି ଦିନ ପରେ, ମୋର ଜଣେ ବଡ଼ ଭଉଣୀ ଜନ୍ମ ହେଲା । ପ୍ରାୟ ତିନି ମାସ ପରସ୍ତ ଦିନ ହେବ । ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳ । ବାହାର ପିଣ୍ଡରେ ବସି ପତିଶା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହ ମା ଓ ଜେଜେମା ଖୁସି ଗପ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ଛୁଆଁ ଘର ଭିତରେ ଶୋଇଥାଏ । ହଠାତ୍, କାନ୍ଦି ଉଠିଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ଦୌଡିଗଲେ

। ପରକ୍ଷରେ ଶିଶୁଟି ଇହଜଗତରୁ ବିଦାୟ ନେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା । ଏହି ହୃଦୟ ବିଦାରକ ଘଟଣାଟି ମା ର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଜୀବନକୁ ନୀରବରେ ସଜ୍ଜିତ କରିଥିଲା ।

ପରେ ପରେ ଆମେ ପାଞ୍ଚ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ଜନ୍ମ ନେଲୁ । ମୁଁ, ଚିତ୍ତ, ଝୁନୀ, ପିଣ୍ଡୁ ଓ ଲିଙ୍ଗୁ । ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ହୋଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରଥମର ସ୍ଥାନ ନେଲି । ଟିକେ ବଡ଼ ଥିବାରୁ ମୋ ମାରି କେତେକ ଅନ୍ଧରଙ୍ଗ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ଅସହାୟତା ମୋର ମନେ ଅଛି ।

ଗାଁରେ ଥିଲାବେଳେ, ମା' ର ଖୋର୍ଦ୍ଧା ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଦୁଇ ଖଣ୍ଡରେ ଚଳିଯାଉଥିଲା । ସାୟା ବଦଳରେ, କାକାମାନଙ୍କ ଛିଣ୍ଡା ଲୁଙ୍ଗିକୁ ସାୟା କରି ଚଳାଇନେଉଥିଲା । କେବେ କେମିତି ମାମୁଁ ଘରକୁ ବାହାଘର ବା ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀରେ ଗଲାବେଳେ ଅନ୍ୟର ଭଲ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଦି ଖଣ୍ଡ ନେଉଥିଲା । ମୋତେ କହୁଥିଲା, ସେ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପିନ୍ଧିଥିଲା ବେଳେ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଟା କେଉଁଠୁ ଆଣିଛି ବୋଲି ନ ପଚାରିବାକୁ । କାରଣ, ବାପଘରେ ନିଜ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ତଥା ଶୁଶୁର ଘରର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦାକୁ ନ୍ୟୁନ କରିବାକୁ ନାରାଜ ଥିଲା ।

ଗାଁ ରେ ମା ସବୁ କାମ କରୁଥିଲା । ଧାନ ସିଝେଇବା, ଧାନ କୁଟିବା, ମୁଢ଼ି ଭାଜିବା ପରି ଭାରି କାମ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ତାର ନିତିଦିନିଆ ଥିଲା । କାଠ ନଥିଲେ ବା ଅମରୀ ତାଳ ନ ମିଳିଲେ ଶୁଖିଲା ଆମ୍ବ ପତ୍ର ଯୋଗାଡ଼ କରି ହୁତୁହୁତୁ ନିଆଁ ରେ କାଠ ଚୁଲୀ ଲଗାଉଥିଲା । କାମ ସାରି ବେଳ ଗତିଗଲାବେଳେ ଗାଧୋଇ ଆସି ଭାତକୁ ଲୁଣ ସୋରିଷ ତେଲରେ ଗୋଳେଇ ଆଖି, କାନ, ନାକରେ ଗୁଞ୍ଜି ଦେଉଥିଲା ।

ବାଡ଼ କଂପାନୀର ଚାକିରୀରେ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ସବୁ ସୁବିଧା ଥିଲା । କ୍ରାନ୍ତ୍ୟ ମିଳିଥିଲା । ଦିନରାତି ଇଲେକ୍ଟ୍ରିକ୍ ଲାଇଟ୍ ସହ ପାଇପ୍ରେ ପାଣି ଆସୁଥିଲା । ଗାଧୁଆ ଘର, ପାଇଖାନା ର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଥିଲା । ସର୍ବୋପରି ଥିଲା, ଆଧୁନିକ ଡାକ୍ତର ତଥା ମାଗଣା ଔଷଧ ଓ ଚିକିତ୍ସା । ଅପର ପକ୍ଷେ ଚାରୋଟି ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଛୁଆଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ମା ଯୁଝୁଥିଲା ଅନେକ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଓ ପ୍ରଳୟଙ୍କରୀ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ । ନାଖୋତି ଥିଲା ଆମର ଅତି ଆଦରର କବିରାଜ ତଥା ହର୍ଷାକର୍ଷା ସାହା ଭରସା ।

ଅନେକ ଛୋଟ ବଡ଼ ଘଟଣାରୁ ଏଇଟା ଥିଲା ଭିନ୍ନ । ଏବେବି ମା' ର ଅସହାୟ ଅବସ୍ଥାର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ମୋର ମାନସ ପତ୍ତରେ ପରିଚ୍ଛାର ନାତି ଯାଉଛି । ଜେଜେ ବାପା ବା ଜେଜେ ମା ସେଦିନ କେହି ନଥାନ୍ତି । ଘରେ ମା' ଥାଏ ଏକୁଟିଆ ଛୁଆମାନଙ୍କ ସହ । ସାନ ଭଉଣୀ, ଝୁନୀକୁ ସେତେବେଳେ ମାତ୍ର ଅଢେଇ ବର୍ଷ । ହଠାତ୍ ଭୀଷଣ ଜର ହେବାରୁ, ସେ ସଂଜ୍ଞାହୀନ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଘରେ କାନ୍ଦ ବୋବାଳି ପଡ଼ି ଯାଇଥାଏ । କାନ୍ଦରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ପିଟି ମୁଁ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଗୁହାରି କରୁଥାଏ 'ହେ ଭଗବାନ! ମୋତେ ବରଂ ନେଇଯାଅ, ଝୁନୀକୁ ଫେରାଇ ଦିଅ' । ମା ଅସହାୟ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ବି ଯେମିତିତ୍ୟୁତ ହୋଇନଥିଲା । ଝୁନୀର ଆୟୁଷକୁ ଯମ ପାଖରୁ ଫେରାଇ ଆଣିବାକୁ ସାବିତ୍ରୀ ପରି ଲାଗି ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ସାହି, ପତିଶା ସମସ୍ତେ ରୁଣ୍ଡ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଗୌରୀ ର ମା, ମୋ ମା ପାଖେ ଜଗି ରହିଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରାୟ ଅପରାହ୍ନ ବେଳକୁ ଝୁନୀର କଳା କଳା ଝାଡ଼ା ହୋଇଗଲା ପରେ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ସେ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହେଲା । ନାଖୋତି ଓ ଜ୍ଞାନେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପାଣିଙ୍କ ସଞ୍ଚିବନୀ କୌଣସି ଶୁକ୍ରାଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ କମ୍ ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି ମୁଁ ସେଦିନ ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ସହ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଥିଲି ।

କାଳକ୍ରମେ ମା ସହ ଆମେ ବଲାଣୀ ଫେରିଲୁ ଏବଂ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସହ ଏକାଠି ରହିଲୁ । ହଜିଲା ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖକୁ ସାଉଁଟି ଆଣି ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ରୂପ ଦେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲା ମା । ଜୀବନର ଅନେକ ମୋତ ଦେଇ ଗତି କରିଥିବାରୁ, ପତିତି ହୃଦୟର ଅନ୍ଧର ଭାଷାକୁ ତନ୍ମୁ ତନ୍ମୁ କରି ପଢ଼ି ପାରୁଥିଲା । ବଦାନ୍ୟତାରେ ହୃଦୟ ତା' ର ଭଲ୍ଲସିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଦୁଃଖୀ, ରଜ୍ଜି, ପଥାଚାରୀ, ଚିହ୍ନା, ଅଜଣା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟରେ ନିଜକୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲା । ଅନେକ ଦୁଃଖ ଦୈନ୍ୟତାରେ ଗତି କରିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ, ହୃଦୟ ଖୋଲି ବେଳ, ଅବେଳ, ରାତି ଅଧ ଯେ କୌଣସି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ନିଜ ହୃଦୟ ଦ୍ଵାରକୁ ଖୋଲା ରଖୁଥିଲା, ଅତିଥିଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ।

ବାପାଙ୍କ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦରମାରେ ଆମ ପାଞ୍ଚ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କ ପଢ଼ା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ, କଲେଜ୍, ହଷ୍ଟେଲ୍ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ତୁଲାଇ କେତେଯେ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ଦିନ ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଭେଟିଥିବ, ତା' ର ଠିକଣା ନାହିଁ । ତଥାପି କେବେବି ହାର ମାନିନି ନିଜ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସଂପାଦନରେ । ନିଜେ ଜଳି ଜଳି ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଜ୍ଞାନର ଆଲୋକ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଛି ।

ଏଇଟା କ'ଣ ତା' ର ଯିବାର ବେଳ ଥିଲା ? ଏତେ ସବୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଦେବାପରେ କାହାଠାରୁ କ'ଣ ନେଲା ? ଘଡ଼ିଏ ରହିଯାଇଥିଲେ ସତରେ କେତେ ଭଲ ହୋଇ ନ ଥାନ୍ତା ! ତିସେମ୍ବର ୩, ୨୦୧୦ ମାଣବସା ଗୁରୁବାର ଚିରେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଚି ଚାଲିଗଲା । ପ୍ରଥମାକ୍ଷମୀ ଦିନ ତା' ର ଦେହ ଖରାପ ଶୁଣିବା ପରେ ମୁଁ ଏକା ହ୍ୟୁଷ୍ଟନରୁ ବାହାରି ଥିଲି । ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର ଏଆର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟରେ, କଟକ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲକୁ ଡରଡରରେ ଯିବାକୁ ବାହାରିଲାବେଳେ ମୋତେ ଜଣେଇ ଦିଆଗଲା, ମା ଚାଲିଗଲା ଆଉ ସେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵରରେ ହିଁ ମୋତେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଛି । ୧୯୯୫ ମସିହାରୁ ଭାରତ ଛାଡ଼ିଲା ପରେ, ମୁଁ ଯେତେଥର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆସିଛି, ସବୁଥର ମୋତେ ସଙ୍ଗେଲି ନେବାକୁ ମା ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର ଏଆର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟରେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥାଏ । ଏଥର ମଧ୍ୟ ତା କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟରେ ଉଣା ନଥିଲା । ଏଥର କିନ୍ତୁ ମା' ର ସଙ୍ଗେଲି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ଆମେ ଚାଲିଲୁ ସିଧା ସ୍ଵର୍ଗଦ୍ଵାର । ମୋ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ଯାହା ଯାହା ଘଟି ଯାଉଥିଲା, ତା' ର ସ୍ଥିତି ଓ ଅବସ୍ଥିତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ମୋର ନଜର ନଥିଲା । ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଶୂନ୍ୟତାର ଗଭୀର କୁପରେ ମୁଁ ପଡ଼ିଯାଇଥିଲି । ନିମିଷକରେ ସବୁ ଶେଷ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଆମେ ଫେରିଲୁ ସମସ୍ତେ, ଏକା ମୋ ଅଲିଅଳି ମା ବିନା । ଜାନୁଆରୀ ୧ ତାରିଖରେ ମୁଁ ପୁଣି ଯେବେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର ଛାଡ଼ିଲି, ମୋ ପ୍ରେମ୍‌ଟି ଯେତିକି ଯେତିକି ଉପରକୁ

ଉଠୁଥିଲା ମୁଁ ଖୋଜୁଥିଲି ମାକୁ, ସେହି ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାରର ପରିସୀମାରେ । କାଳେ ମା' ସହ ଆକାଶରେ ବା ସ୍ୱର୍ଗରେ ଅକସ୍ମାତ ଦେଖା ହୋଇଯିବ ବୋଲି ଖୋଜି ବୁଲୁଥିଲି । ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ପରେ, ଯେତେବେଳେ ମୁଁ ତା' କୁ ଦୁଃଖରେ ଖୋଜିଛି, ମାତୃତ୍ୱର ବଦାନ୍ୟତାରେ ସେ ବାହାରି ଆସେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଫେଟ ଉତରୁ । ହୀରା ପରି ଝଟକି ଉଠେ, ମୋ ଦୁଃଖର ଅନ୍ଧାର ଆକାଶରେ । ମା' ମୁହଁର ନିରାହ ବଦାନ୍ୟତା, ମୋତେ ଉଷାର ଆଦିତ୍ୟ ପରି ଲାଗେ ।

ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ, ଟେଣ୍ଡାସ୍, ଯୁଦ୍ଧରାଜ୍ ଆମେରିକା

*Dr. Nanda wrote this article in memory of Mrs. Kananbala Nanda.*

## In the Presence of Greatness

By Snigdha Mishra

*November 2011, I checked my e-mail and learnt that Sathya Sai baba had passed on to his eternal rest. As I read those lines, memories of my visit to Puttaparthi decades ago came flooding back -- as if someone had opened a door somewhere deep inside my mind. And I started to put those memories down ---*

I first saw Puttaparthi in the late afternoon. The mellow October sun washed over the sleepy little railway station. The taxi driver managed to fit all of us – my parents, two sisters, a brother and myself – into his car along with our luggage. The battered Ambassador coughed a few times, belched a cloud of smoke, groaned a little and finally took off with a shudder for our destination.

The car made its slow, stately way towards the town along the bumpy road filled with potholes. When we reached the hotel where we were to spend the night, my mother's grumbles turned into a wail. Hotel was too fancy a description for the two storey structure with iron rods sticking out from the roof and pigeons nesting on the window sills. The big sign proclaiming it to be the "Majestic Hotel" banged against the wall with each gust of wind. The pigeons were unfazed by the noise. What was an inconvenience for an adult was an adventure for a ten year old!

A scream woke me up in the middle of the night. My mother had spotted a cockroach crossing the floor of our room. I went right back to sleep. She spent the night sitting cross legged in the middle of her bed, throwing slippers at the roaches. The next morning, I was informed by my siblings that I had slept peacefully. This was no news to me since I had slept through thunderstorms before. The owner's wife made fresh *idlis*, *chutney* and savory *sambar* for breakfast. All four children were rested, full and ready to face the day. My parents were not on speaking terms with each other as the taxi took us to Baba's *ashram*.

We went directly to the great hall where the morning *bhajans* and meditation were beginning. The sweet strains of a beautiful soprano voice floated out, singing, "*Ganesha sharanam sharanam Ganesha.*" We went inside and sat on *dhurries* on the cool marble floor. A young lady led the *bhajans*, and we all joined in the chorus. My mother is a musician – a singer to be exact. Good music is more important than food and drink to her. I watched the lines on her face smooth out, and for the first time since we arrived at Puttaparthi, she smiled. My father saw her smile and relaxed. This was going to be a good trip.

The *bhajans* continued for a while with the entire hall joining in with the chorus. Then a young man announced that we were to all stay seated and remain quiet since "Baba" would be arriving shortly. In a few minutes, a murmur of excitement ran through the hall. Craning my neck to peek around the grown-ups, I caught a glimpse of a figure in saffron robes walking slowly up the aisle and climbing the steps onto the dais at the front of the hall.

What a disappointment! Where was the 8 foot tall figure with glowing eyes? That was no halo around his head – just an afro hairdo! From behind, he looked exactly like the *sadhu* from the Balarampur *ashram* near our house who came every Sunday for alms. My mother would wash his feet, serve him chilled juice and fruit, pour rice and vegetables in his old bag and ask for his blessings as she touched his feet. Except that he had a shaven head where Baba had an afro!

Then Baba sat in the chair on the dais, raised his arms in blessing and smiled. That luminous smile touched my doubting, childish heart. It seemed to me that he looked straight at me with his wise, calm eyes and

told me to be patient. He did not speak. No words were necessary. I understood his message. The crowd listened to his talk in reverent silence. He talked for an hour, but I could not tell you what he said. I usually fidgeted, but I sat still and stared at him for most of that time. My sisters and brother were sitting beside me, but I have no recollection of them. I knew instinctively that I was in the presence of greatness.

Afterwards, we went to the dining hall for lunch. Hundreds of people waited in orderly lines to be served hot vegetarian food, freshly made in the kitchens. Servers with smiling faces urged the children to hold the plates straight so the *rasam* would not drip on the floor. We sat at long tables with other families and ate our simple meal. Then we joined others at the playground and kept ourselves entertained on the slides and merry go rounds. Finally, we were all called in for a Yoga session for children. Two young men led us in simple exercises – I recall doing breathing exercises—and then it was time for a snack.

We all lined the main path from the main hall to the entrance. Mats were laid out on the ground for everyone to sit on. We sat down and waited for Baba to appear for the last public “*darshan*” of the day. He appeared and walked down the path, but people were not as orderly as inside the hall. Taller grownups stood so they could get a better view. I could see nothing but his feet as he walked by me. I was disappointed as we left the *ashram* and went back to the town for dinner. After the eventful day, we fell asleep to the soft cooing of pigeons outside our window.

The next morning followed pretty much the same pattern, except we had onion *uttapams* for breakfast. After lunch, my older sister and I sneaked out of the grounds instead of heading for the playground. The rice paddies lay lush and green around us, flooded with water standing high in the fields. Women in colorful cotton saris were bent double transplanting the tender shoots into the flooded fields. Each of them had a basket with young rice plants waiting to be planted. Some older children would occasionally wade into the fields carrying baskets full of rice shoots to replace the ones which had already been planted. It was a beautiful scene –peaceful and calm.

Luckily, my sister was old enough to wear a watch, and we got back to the ashram undetected by any of the adults. Like the last evening, we all gathered along the path from the main hall to the ashram entrance. I was restless, but several adults glared at me and told me to sit still. Someone started to sing a *bhajan*, and many voices joined in. I fidgeted some more and muttered darkly about how bored I was since nothing interesting was happening. Little did I know that something stupendous was going to happen to me in just a little while!

A few minutes later, there was a sudden hush. A whisper ran through the crowd. Baba was coming! I could feel people’s excitement at the thought of seeing the Great man again. Like the last time, I was pushed to the back as several adults moved to stand in front of me, effectively blocking my view. Soon these people were chanting “Baba, Baba” and reaching out to touch his feet and his robes. But he did not move on as usual. I was aware of a sudden silence. It was so quiet I could hear the distant mooing of a calf. Then people moved away from before me so I could finally see ahead. He stood smiling, right arm pointing straight at me. I sat staring open mouthed as he beckoned to me.

I vaguely remember someone pushing me while others pulled me to my feet. Somebody lifted me up over people’s heads and set me down in front of him. I kept staring at him as if in a trance. His luminous, beautiful eyes looked at me, through me, to my soul. Those wise, calm eyes drew me, and I was aware of nothing but him. He beckoned to me to hold out my hands. Then he seemed to glow with radiance as he closed his eyes and opened his palm. There was a little heap of *vibhuti* lying on his palm. He leaned down and put some on my forehead, some on my hair and the rest into my right hand. I must have been crying because he leaned down to wipe my tears with his thumbs, smearing *vibhuti* on my cheeks. He smiled at me and moved on down the path.

I stood rooted to the spot until my mother came to me and hugged me. I opened my sticky palm so my family could share Baba’s gift of *vibhuti*. I still did not speak. When I closed my eyes, I could see the radiance around Baba. Everyone kept asking me how I felt. There was such a turmoil of thoughts in my head that I could not say a word. They kept wondering why Baba had singled me out in the crowd. I had no answer to that. Later that night, my sister told me this was the longest I had ever gone without speaking (I had a reputation as a chatterbox and talked in my sleep too). I could not explain to her that having stood in the presence of greatness, I had no words to describe how I felt. Many years later, as I write this, I can still feel the pure wonder and sheer joy of being in his presence. I still have no words fine enough to do those feelings justice. But one thing I know – this must be what heaven feels like.

*Snigdha Mishra resides in Dublin, OH with her family. On a break from her job as Contracts Manager for an Environmental Consulting company, she teaches Hindustani classical music and writes in her spare time.*

**My Dear Bapuji**

By Suchismita Misra



You are the greatest person in the universe  
So charismatic, handsome and affectionate.  
Always there for others, putting yourself last  
Never thinking about yourself.  
My mountain, my anchor, my pillar  
Always positive, with endless energy  
Would climb flights of stairs to reach the blast furnace at Rourkela steel plant  
Went to Nalco and commissioned the captive power plant before schedule  
Went to Vizag steel plant and transformed it into a mega steel plant  
All the accolades under his belt,  
so much of knowledge and wisdom  
a gentle giant, a bundle of love.  
My father, the snooker and billiards champion,  
A great badminton player who partnered with Mama to torment his opponents during matches.  
Noble deeds as a kid, always daring and strong  
Trying to measure his strength by performing daring deeds.  
As a young, dashing adult had a Harley motorcycle,  
Would ride it fast, making Mama jump off the motorcycle while making a turn.  
A loving and caring husband to our sweet Mama Sanjukta.  
Doting son to our late Jehebapa and Jejema whom he took care of till their end.  
A most affectionate father to his three loving daughters Bunu, Ninu and Bitu and sons-in-law Ranganath, Pradeep and Prabhat.  
A loving doting grandfather (aja) to Swarup (Swati), Prachita, Prateek, Priyanka and Divya.  
And a great boss to all those who worked for him during his career,  
We all love you, adore you, respect you and we are forever indebted to you for all the sacrifices you have made for us, expecting nothing in return.  
Your humanitarian qualities are like no other,  
Always reaching out to others, helping employ so many.

Life around you was always so much fun, exciting, lively and happy  
 Your meticulous planning in every event of our lives was just extraordinary par excellence.  
 We had a unique classic vintage car 'Hindustan 14',  
 The talk of the town.  
 It was always shining with the chrome sparkling.  
 You taught us to take care of our things by setting a bright example for all of us.  
 My wedding and reception in Rourkela on December 11, 1980 was just marvelous and splendid.  
 With curfew in town, you pulled through an amazing show. The guests to date remember the food and fanfare.  
 Ninu's wedding and reception in Athithi Bhavan was just as spectacular  
 And Bitan's wedding in Bhubaneswar and reception in Vizag were commendable. The decorations, food, ambience, everything top notch.  
 The family vacations we took to the north - New Delhi, Simla Dehradun and Mussorie,  
 South to Bangalore, Kerala, Thekkady, Coimbatore,  
 West to Bombay, Goa and east to Calcutta  
 Bapuna was so caring and kind, put his family first always.  
 What a doll, he stretched himself for his extended family members too,  
 Organizing memorable picnics and trips to Balighai, Puri and Konark.  
 An excellent orator, he could speak on any topic extempore.  
 Was the first alumnus from the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur in 1955.  
 No one catered to us three girls, our husbands, and children  
 Like our godly Bapuji and Mama  
 Being the first born, my memories of him are always very fond.  
 He taught me naughty things, calling me "kruschev".  
 Would give me omelets with chilies, when I was barely two  
 I was a greedy one.  
 (I would take the chilies out and beg for more.)  
 For our annual sports day at Ispat English medium school, our principal had invited Bapuji and Mama as the chief guests.  
 I remember him reprimanding me for chewing gum while I was marching as captain of Rajaji house.  
 To this day I have inculcated good values that my Bapuji has instilled in me.  
 Always be pleasant, positive, caring, and honest to everyone.  
 My dearest Bapuji, you are the best father in the entire universe.  
 You have achieved many accolades in your life and your contributions to mankind have been extraordinary.  
 You are truly a gift from the Lord and as your name implies "Bhubanananda",  
 You bring joy and happiness to the universe.  
 The rich legacy you leave behind will be cherished by all his family,  
 Hoping and praying that we all follow in his footsteps and fulfill his dreams  
 God bless you and Mama always and keep you in his arms.

Your loving daughter,  
 Bunu

*In Memory of Mr. Bhubanananda Rath, who was the first Oriya to become the Chairman-Cum-Managing Director of a Schedule A Public Sector Company of Government of India and first alumnus of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. The Ex-Chairman-Cum Managing Director of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited Vishakhapatnam, he passed away on December 24<sup>th</sup> 2011.*

*Bunu (Suchismita Misra) is the oldest daughter of Late Mr. Bhubanananda Rath and wife of Ranganath Misra. She resides in Grand Blanc, Michigan.*

**Down Memory Lane: Dr. Kashinath Sahoo**

By Dr. Dharendra K. Pattnaik



Kashi was a born romantic and a lyricist. He could pen a few lines in no time, and everyone liked it. It was 1958. We had both joined the SCB Medical College at Cuttack. It was the only medical college of Orissa at that time. We were all like strangers on Day 1, but not for long. As our fates had it, we were assigned to adjacent tables in the Anatomy dissection hall. Kashi was like a next door neighbor. Little did I know then that we would do so many things together.

We were both short story writers, but Kashi had bigger projects in mind. Hardly 18 months had gone, and Kashi thought of starting a new literary magazine. Some courage! Along with another classmate of ours, Basanta Tripathy, we soon became a successful trio. The magazine called *Kranti* soon became famous as a quality monthly, one of the best.

That was not enough. Kashi, in his heart, was always fond of dramas. His first play, *Chhadmashree* (Master of Disguises or Mr. X), was staged by our college students and was very much appreciated. I followed Kashi and wrote a few radio-plays; those were very popular in the good old days. Televisions had not appeared.

Kashi was a natural choice to be our Class Representative, and then Assistant Secretary of the Dramatic Society. More

importantly, he was a very amusing fellow and a real romantic in heart.

Talking about Kashi's romantic side, we once saw a girl on a train at Cuttack railway station. She was sitting next to a window and looked beautiful. Kashi spotted her and told me – "Look, she has the perfect sleepy eyes." It looked like she had just woken up. We never saw her again or those eyes anywhere.

However, being a short story writer, I described the heroines of some of my stories in that vein. Kashi also wrote about her in a couple of stories. I never thought so many of my friends would wish to know who this exciting girl with such beautiful eyes was. It soon became the talk of the town. Maybe we should have gotten on that train, but it was too late.

Kashi always involved me in his pet projects, like starting a medicine shop near the Medical College to sell genuine medicines 24 hours a day at reasonable prices. Most medicine shops in the city did not have good reputations. So, our shop, called Janata Medicine, became very popular overnight.

It so happens, our professional careers went on similar paths, although in different Medical Colleges. When Kashi went to the UK, he encouraged me to come to the UK as well. I followed and stayed with him at Leeds initially, before my first job. His wife, Nirupama, was always very good to me. When my family joined me in the UK, our first trip was to Kashi's home, of course. Both of us did work at Manchester, but at different times. It just so happens, we both became Radiologists. Kashi became a Radiotherapist/Oncologist, me a Diagnostic Radiologist.

Years later, when I visited Kashi in the US, he was just like the good old Kashi of 1958. He still enjoyed playing cards; he was always a very good card player.

I must add that what I saw in Leeds was amazing. Kashi was most helpful to other doctors from Orissa, who could always count on him whenever required. Nirupama was also very kind to them, all of them. This is something most extraordinary.

Kashi's ancestral village, Kalapathar, half way between Khurda and Nayagarh, was always a beautiful one, and it still is. Kashi has

done so much for his old school; everyone talks very highly of him. No one can miss the new school building of Kashi's old school, all thanks to Kashi's philanthropic side. It was around 1965 when I first visited Kashi at his village and had a great time, never to be forgotten.

The last time I saw Kashi was at Bhubaneswar, about three years ago, with Basanta Tripathy, the other member of our old Kranti trio. We had a great time, just like the old days. Although I used to come to India almost every year, my trips rarely coincided with Kashi's, so I had missed him a lot. I was hoping to see him again the following year.

But, sadly, we had to talk about Kashi last December at a special condolence meeting held in his honor by our classmates at Cuttack. Everyone spoke very highly of him. It was all from the heart.

One of the amusing lines Kashi used to quote from was Srimad Bhagabat Gita, "As long as you live in this world, enjoy yourself, and be happy in your heart and mind." I still quote this to everyone, with Kashi's name of course. We would again talk about him next month. No meeting is ever complete without Kashi's quote.

One of my colleagues in Glasgow Royal had once said, "If someone is smiling from above, nothing can go wrong."

Kashi is now up there, and, he is smiling on us, on all of us, Nirupama, Nami, Babu, Lucky, and Anita. As always, Kashi had the last laugh. He is smiling up there.

*The author is a retired Consultant Radiologist of Glasgow, UK, currently in India at Bhubaneswar.*

## **In Memory of Our Dear Friend, Dr. Kashinath Sahoo, MD**

By Dibakar Panigrahi



Dr. Kashinath Sahoo, a life member of OSA/OSANY, passed away on October 13, 2011 after a short illness at age 73 at his residence in Reading, PA. It was a very sad day for me and my family since we have been close friends for more than 35 years. We all miss him very much. Since his death, a day has not gone by when I have not thought about him or the frequent telephone conversations that we used to have. He is survived by his wife, Nirupama, a son (Manash), 3 daughters (Namita, Mamata, Anita), and 5 grandchildren. He was born in Kalapathar, located half way between Khurda and Nayagarh in Orissa. I have heard that his village is a beautiful place.

After completing high school at Banki in 1955, Kashi babu completed I.Sc from Puri College, and after teaching for a short period, joined SCB Medical College, Cuttack in 1958 from where he graduated. He worked for the Health Department, Government of Orissa, for a while before migrating to England in or around 1968. He was trained as a Radiation Oncologist at Manchester, England and in the US at Johns Hopkins University and Memorial Sloan-Kettering cancer center. When he was working for the Orissa Government, he also opened a drug store in Cuttack called Janata Medicine in partnership with his friend, Dr. Dharendra Pattnaik. It became popular because they sold



medicines at a discount. He had told me many times about his medical store, of which he was very proud. He had a good sense of business which some of us are lacking. Coming from a village and a non-affluent background, he understood the plight of the poor and helped his patients if they could not come up with enough money to pay for his fees.

We met Kashi babu and his family sometime in the early seventies in New York while he was a faculty member at Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York. We have been good friends ever since. Our children grew up together, and every time we visited him and his family in Reading, PA, we all had a wonderful time. Both Kashi babu and Niru were very good hosts, and we always looked forward to visiting them. The parties they hosted over the years were always fun and enjoyable. During our many visits to Reading, we discussed many issues and shared our happiness and sadness together. He was a good advisor to me, even though we did not always agree on all issues. However, I never felt the pressure to support his views on any issue. I respected him because he was honest and a man of principle and always told the truth, even if it offended others. He was never afraid to speak his mind. Unfortunately, some people misunderstood him for being blunt and truthful.

He was interested in photography, computers, good food and enjoyed playing cards. He was a very good card player, and people were afraid to be his partner. On many occasions, I had the opportunity to be his partner, although reluctantly, and it turned out that it was always my fault for ruining his game. The game was supposed to be fun irrespective of who wins, but he always wanted to win. He was a self-taught computer expert and taught me willingly whenever I had any problem with computer-related issues. In fact, I consider him as my computer guru, and since his departure, I have become somewhat helpless.

I met one of his good friends, Mr. Ranjit Patnaik from Bhubaneswar, who was his childhood friend, and they were friends for nearly sixty years. They used to go to school together at Banki Bidya Pitha. Ranjit babu told me that even though they were good friends,

there was a rivalry between them because Ranjit babu stood first in his class and Kashi babu didn't like that because he thought he deserved to stand first. Even Ranjit babu told him that he could never take the first place because he had a tendency to fight with his teachers. Kashi babu had told me that the only person who supported and helped him was the school head master. Ranjit babu came all the way from India to spend time with his old friend while Kashi babu was ill, and they spent a memorable time together before he died. In fact, Ranjit babu said, "To be with Kashi in his last few days was the best period of my life." What a wonderful friendship!

According to his good friend, Dr. Dharendra Pattnaik, Kashi babu was a lyricist and was born romantic. He and Dharendra babu were both short story writers. Kashi babu, along with Dharendra babu and another friend, started a new literary magazine, *Kranti*, which became a famous monthly magazine in Orissa. Kashi babu was also fond of dramas.

Kashi babu has helped many of his family members in India with financial assistance. Although many of us have done that, he was overly generous and caring. He has helped rebuild the old school in his village, and everyone in his village has high regard for him. Kashi babu believed in God but usually did not go to the temple. He believed that God is everywhere and there was no need to go to the temple. During our many discussions, he told me repeatedly that he was not afraid to die and he would die in 2014. I used to laugh at him because he could not explain to me how he came up with that particular year. But sadly, he could not even live to see the end of 2011. Kashi babu lived a happy life. Now, he is gone too soon and hopefully he is smiling down on us. We all miss him! May his soul rest in peace.

*The author thanks Mr. Ranjit Patnaik and Dr. Dharendra Pattnaik for providing information for this article.*

## In Loving Memory of “Bhauja”

By Jyotsna Mishra



I spent several days trying to decide exactly what to write about my loving Bhauja that will fully describe what is in my heart. Finally, I realized that words cannot truly describe a person of that stature. To me, Bhauja had all the qualities people strive to achieve in a lifetime. I am certainly no exception. She led a simple and selfless life style with humility and no desire for material things. But she had a wonderful and powerful personality capable of impacting the lives of those around her. What an ideal combination!!! It gives me immense pleasure to honor her memory through this small contribution to “Smaranika.”

In my adult years, people have asked me about the role that Bhauja played in my life since I lost my mother at the age of seven. I have always responded with one statement that sums up our relationship: “There was never a moment in my life when I felt any less than or different from her own children.” To this day, I still find this statement amazing. It is beyond my comprehension how Bhauja, who was only about 16 years older than me, at such a young age, managed to raise six children (four of her own along with my immediate older brother and me) with such love and care. I have always considered her a gift from God.

I called her “Bhauja”, but in my heart she was my mother. She was always there for me. By watching her, I learned to cook, to put ‘jhoti’, make ‘roti’, and ‘pitha’ at an early age. Later, Bhauja was confident enough in my work to ask me for help as needed. As I reflect on my childhood and formative years, I recall that several family friends and relatives used to feel sorry for me, viewing me as a motherless child. Strangely and surely, I never felt sorry for myself. I realized later in life that it was only possible with Bhauja’s genuine love, trust and care for me. In fact, as odd as it may sound, if my mother had lived, I might not have had the opportunity to know the real Bhauja, whom I believe had possessed a divine soul.

As I have grown older, have gone through different stages of life with both positive and negative experiences, with emotions sometimes overwhelming, my thoughts about Bhauja living a life with grace and dignity regardless of circumstance have simply humbled and inspired me. I still wonder how, at such a young age, she carried such huge responsibilities in our village as well as in town with no recognition of her hard work, yet always maintained a sense of calm without complaint.

Throughout life, Bhauja was remarkably able to balance her emotions, getting neither too excited during good times nor too saddened during the bad times. I strongly believe her attitude and natural ability to selflessly give with love, to disengage from complaining about others, and to think only positive thoughts about everyone helped her to maintain that balance. The phrase “actions speak louder than words” applied to Bhauja very well. She spoke little, but her every move, gesture, and

action conveyed meanings that symbolized the power of unconditional love, tolerance, sacrifice, and giving without expectations. For example, on many occasions in the village and in town, I observed her joy in serving others out of genuine love rather than simply a sense of duty.

As I continue to face the realities of life, I hope to cherish forever these divine qualities my Bhauja was blessed with and modeled for me. I feel very lucky and blessed to have had her in my life and for teaching me the meaning of real love.

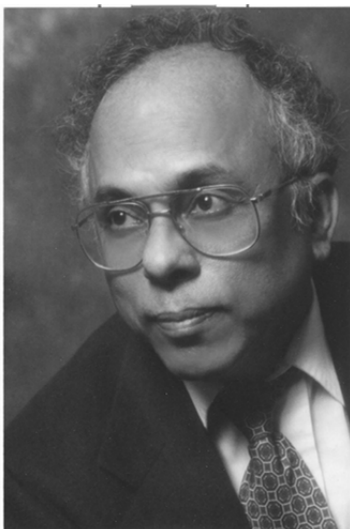
Bhauja, I cannot possibly express how much I miss you, but I know that your wonderful spirit will forever live in my heart and will guide me the rest of my life.

*This piece was published in "Smaranika" that was dedicated to Bhauja (Saraswati Mishra) by the family and friends in 2008.*

*Jyotsna Mishra is a professor of Social Sciences at Miles College, Birmingham, AL.*

### Dr. G.C. Parija

By Dr. Devi Misra



Dr. Parija, a pathologist who went to his eternal sleep on October 8, 2011, was born on February 2, 1941 to Ramchandra and Saramani Parija in Alavav Sasan, Cuttack District, Orissa, India.

After graduation from Balikuda High School, he went on to complete his premedical education at Ravenshaw College. After a one year teachership at Balikuda High School, he went into medicine.

After graduating in 1966 from SCB Medical College, he did his postgraduate studies in pathology from 1968-1972. From 1972-1976, he served in the capacity of Chief Resident of

Pathology in different hospitals in Massachusetts. He culminated his ambition with a one year (1976-1977) fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, NY. From 1977-1980, he served as Assistant Professor of Pathology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. After working in various laboratories, he was Associate of Pathology at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, TN. He was awarded the "Best Teacher" award for five consecutive years. He was an authority in diagnosis of bladder cancer and was instrumental in the formation of histologic classification of bladder cancer at the national level. He authored numerous publications. The five most read publications are:

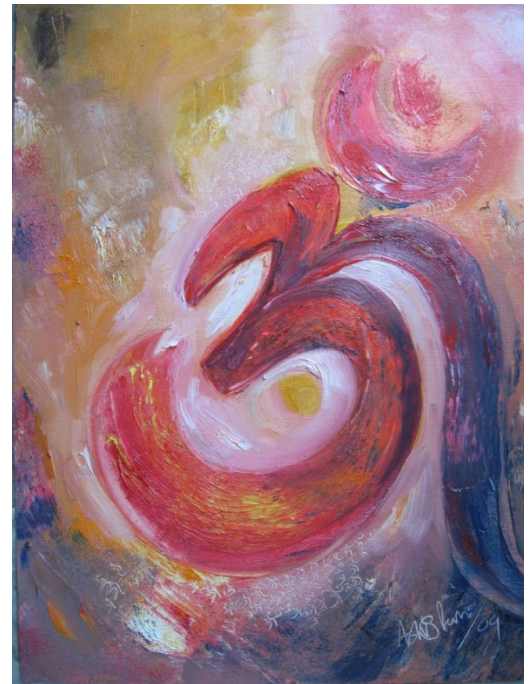
1. The Pathology of Bladder Cancer/Mendeley, G.H. Friedell and G.C. Parija, Oct. 1997
2. Surgical Pathology Dissection, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, G.H. Friedell and G.C. Parija, et. al.
3. Proliferation Activity of Urothelial Neoplasms, G.H. Friedell and G.C. Parija
4. Prognostic Significance of Morphometry in T. Bladder Tumors, Murphy, William and Parija, G.C. et. al.
5. Relationship Between Papillary and Nodular Transitional Cell Cancers, G.H. Friedell and G.C. Parija, et. al.

## Images of My Works

By Ashis Pahi



*Ashis Pahi is an Odia artist (painter) headquartered with his own gallery in Hyderabad, AP. His artwork has been displayed in multiple cities in North America while on International Exhibition Circuit. Ashis has also worked as an animation art director at Zee TV.*





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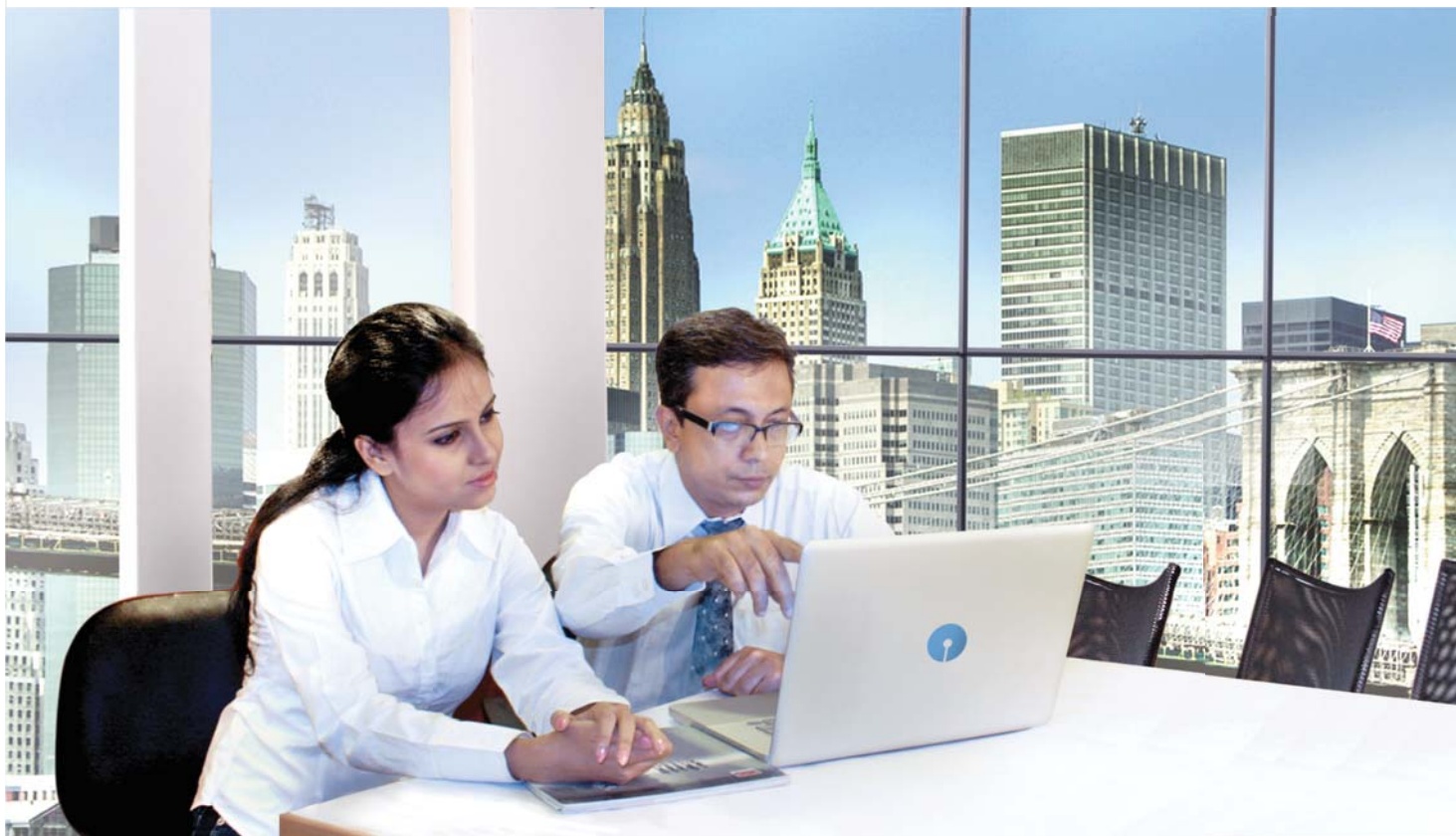


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