

শারদোৎসব ১৪১৫



DURGA PUJA 2008

BAGH, Inc.

www.baghonline.org

TASTE OF INDIA

FINE INDIAN CUISINE

HOME
ABOUT US
CHEF'S SPECIALS
OUR MENU
CATERING
CERTIFICATES
CONTACT US



Taste of India welcomes you to taste our exotic flavors of authentic Indian cuisine, with a few delicacies from North and South India. The exotic flavors are those special spices exported from India. India's cuisine is a combination of subtle tastes where the flavors are as varied as India's climate and as exotic as India's people.

Fragrant, zesty, and warm spices India are delicately blended to create the dishes we present to you. Ingredients are used to tempt your appetite. Each dish boasts its own distinctive flavor and aroma thanks to the fresh spices that are prepared every day. The blending and preparation of fresh spices is an exacting, centuries old craft indispensable to Indian cuisine.

The menu at Taste of India includes all the favorites:

- Chicken, Lamb and Shrimp Curries in every degree of spiciness
- Delicious meats and seafood roasted in the Tandoori oven
- Lamb, Chicken and Shrimp
- A variety of freshly baked Indian breads

We hope to see you here with us soon...

[Download Our Menu](#)

Our Hours

Lunch Buffet:

11:30 - 3:00pm
Mon thru Fri: \$7.95
Sat and Sun:
**Champagne Brunch
with Southern Indian
Cuisine: \$9.95**

Dinner:

5:00pm - 10:30pm
Sun: 5:00 - 10:00pm

MAPQUEST
DIRECTIONS

139 SOUTH MAIN STREET, WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107 • 860.561.2221

4Biz GROUP

Brochure Editing, Layout, and Design

Nitis Mukhopadhyay

Durga Puja Program



Friday, October 10	Pratima Installation and Decoration	6:00 PM
Saturday, October 11	Morning Schedule	9:00 AM
	Pratima Sthapan, Shasthi, Saptami, Ashtami, and Navami Puja	
	Pushpanjali	12:00 PM
	Afternoon Schedule	
	Prasad and Lunch	1:00 PM
	Evening Schedule	
	<i>Bajlo Tomar Alor Benu: A Unique Mix of Songs and Dances. Performed by Local Artists</i>	5:00 PM
	<i>A Play, Staged by Porichay</i>	
	Dinner	7:00-8:30 PM
	Featured Guest Artist: Srimati Antara Choudhuri	
Sunday, October 12	Morning Schedule	
	Puja	10:00 AM
	Afternoon Schedule	
	Prasad and Lunch	1:00 PM
	Featured Guest Artist's Songs: Haimanti Rakshit Mann	2:00 PM
	Featured Guest Artists: Madhu and Gopal Burman Tabla and Sree Khol - Jugalbandi on Drums	



Welcome from the President

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Bengalee Association of Greater Hartford (BAGH, Inc.), it gives me great pleasure to welcome you and your friends and families to the 2008 Durga Puja Festival. We celebrate and worship the Supreme Goddess, Ma Durga, to purify our souls and remove all obstacles, pain and suffering inflicted in our world. We pray to Her for guidance so that everyone may reach a more fulfilled and happier life in all corners of this Greater Hartford community and beyond.

Our age-old tradition and sacred scriptures will guide us in welcoming and serenading Ma Durga. Ultimately, the Durga Puja would evolve into a genuinely collective desire of all for peace and harmony in the lives of all creatures in this universe.

The prayers and festivities surrounding our Puja are intertwined with a definitive sense of pride in our heritage. Such heightened sense of community and friendship certainly include good food and great entertainment for both mind and spirit.

I hope you will find time to share cheer and camaraderie, renew friendships, and that you will take this opportunity to make new friends. Welcome to the celebration. With Puja greetings,

Saumitra Banerjee
President, BAGH, Inc.

Executive Committee

Saumitra Banerjee	President
Tapas Bandyopadhyay	Vice President
Arindam Dasgupta	General Secretary
Subhojit Maitra	Treasurer
Tirthankar Choudhuri	Cultural Secretary
Ruma Basu	Member
Gopal Das	Member
Gautam Maulik	Member
Vivek Mukherjee	Member
Nitis Mukhopadhyay	Member



From Editor's Desk

This brochure includes nearly forty pages of literary work and artwork combined. It highlights the work of writers and artists from our local community and beyond. Some local children have also contributed masterful essays, stories, and poems with remarkably expressive ideas. I am indebted to all who have graciously contributed their original work for everyone to enjoy. Thanks to all these contributors.

I am humbled by the fact that Dilip Bhowmik, Bimal Sinha and Lakshman (Raju) Thakur accepted my invitation to send their original work. They are well-known literary figures, lyricists, composers, as well as widely-recorded musicians and performers. Raju is an acclaimed Hindi-Poet who has organized a number of leading Hindi Kavi Sanmelans in this country, especially in the northern and eastern United States. Thanks to these friends.

In a number of places, I have added fillers with some paintings available from the Internet. I have also used Sayan Ray's prior paintings with his permission. In each instance, I have acknowledged the source.

A brochure clearly depends on its sponsors and I thank them. I also thank those who helped me, especially, Debanjan Bhattacharjee. Kudos to all!

Before I end this note, I should add that BAGH, Inc., its members, members of its Executive Committee or I are not responsible in any shape or form for any opinion expressed (or implied) by an artist, author or advertiser.

Happy reading and have a great time. Wish everyone the happiest of this Durga Puja season.

Enjoy, enjoy, and enjoy some more!

Nitis Mukhopadhyay
Member, Executive Committee

মা দুর্গা যে আমাদের সকলের মা

উমা বোস
মিডলট্যাউন, কানেকটিকাট

মা আমাদের প্রতিকারক সত্তা প্রকারে ও, আমাদের তিনটি দিনের জন্য,
কিন্তু তিনটি দিনের অক্ষয়ময় চেয়ে বড়ো অর্থাৎ তাম্বুয়া বায়ালিবা
প্রভু বায়ালিবা কেন অন্য দুর্গা পুজো বায়ালিবাও দুর্গা পুজো করেন তবে
প্রিন্স রাণে ও প্রিন্স ডায়ে। নবরাত্রি মহা কল্যাণেতে আরাধনা করা, নাট্যমান,
অন্য পুজা দাতার ও গাছ পোষণে, কর্তব্য হিসেবে আনন্দোৎসবে চলে যাচ্ছে
ও গাছপাড়া-তিনি স্ট্রেন্ডে মাঝে পুজোয় গুচনা।

দুর্গা পুজোর, অনেক দিন অমৃত-সেই মাত্র পুজু, মাঝে, চলে
একটি মাত্র দিনে গুচিল্পীরা-মাঝে প্রতিজ্ঞা-সদয়কালে লেগে যান
এটি অনেক কল্যাণ কামোক্ষণ ব্যাপক। এটি গিল্পীরা ব্যস্ত কল্যাণ রুচনা
করতে কল্যাণ জাগ্রত মে লাজব পুজোর। তাছাড়া পুজোর পরিষ্কারে
সুতোতে জন্য চাই নতুন জামা কাপড়। সরীষ পুজোর ব্যস্ত কামোক্ষণ-
চেহারা করে, প্রত্যয়ে অন্য নতুন ব্যস্ত কামোক্ষণ করেন। কল্যাণ ব্যস্ত কামোক্ষণ-
দেও, এখন রক্ত-মাংসা নানা নতুন বিচারের জামা কাপড়-তিনী মাত্র ব্যস্ত
কামোক্ষণ ব্যস্ত।

কুম্ভাবিকা-ইন্দ্র, দেলমী, মরাদুখি ইত্যাদি প্রকৃত কল্যাণ পুজোর
এক পুজোর পুজি দোষেই তিনী কল্যাণ কল্যাণ বুঝি, দুটো ইত্যাদি।
মাঝের পুজোর প্রকৃত প্রকৃতি,

পুজো কল্যাণ মনোহারা ও ব্যস্ত। প্রতিদিন লাজব বুঝি বুঝি-
কল্যাণ কল্যাণে। গুচিল্পী কল্যাণে কল্যাণ কল্যাণ কল্যাণ কল্যাণ কল্যাণ
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ଫୁଲ୍ଲା ଘର ନିର ଚଉନ ହୁଇଲି,
ବଲ୍ଲ ଲୋ ଘା ଘୋର ଯୁ ମୁର ଯୁ
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ଘା ମୁର, ଘେ ମ୍ ଘେ ମା ମା ହୁଇଲି ॥

ଏକ ଘା ଦମ୍ଭ ମୁରୁଦନ ଶିବ ଲିନି, ଅମ୍ଭୁ ଗିଲ୍ଲ ଘିନି, ହୁଅ ଗିଲ୍ଲ ଘିନି
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The Deity Is in the Making in Kumartuli, Calcutta.
Editor's Acknowledgment: http://www.calcuttaweb.com/puja/2002_prepuja.shtml

দু'টি শ্যামাসংগীত

বিমল সিন্ধা
কলকাতা, মেরীশাঙ

শ্যামা মা কেন ত্রিনয়নী?

সব দেবীরই দুটি নয়ন - প্রায় সব দেবেরও তাই -
তুই কেন মা ত্রিনয়নী ভেবে সারা হই।
এমনি তো মা কালোবরণ - তার ওপরে তিনটি নয়ন -
বুঝে আমি পাইনা মাগো কেন এত পৃথক তুই।

লোকে বলে মা পূজার ছলে - আমরা যখন বেদীতলে -
তোর ভোগের অর্ঘ্য সাজাই - নানা ফলে মূলে -
পূজার শেষে যখন মা তুই - দূর্ধ্ব ফেলিস্ খাবার পরে -
তিনটি নয়ন হোলে নাকি পেটটি মা তোর ভরে।

কেউ বা বলে মোদের নাকি এত পাপের বোঝা -
কাম ক্ষোধের লোভ মোহের হবেই তো মা সাজা -
তোর দুঃখের অগ্নিবারি মা - সহঁতে নারি মোরা -
তিনটি নয়ন মেললে পরে - মোদের গতি নেইতো তারা।

আমি জানি কেন মাগো তিনটি নয়ন তোর -
আহা মাগের স্নেহের শেষ নেই যে - সারা জীবন ভোর -
যখন মাগো দিনের শেষে তোর ছেলে দাঁড়ায় সামনে এসে -
'মা মা' বলে কেঁদে ওঠে আর নয়ন জলে ভাসে -
সব অপরাধ ক্ষমিস্ মা তুই - বক্ষে টেনে নিয়ে -
তোর প্রেমবারি যে ঝরে পড়ে তিনটি নয়ন দিয়ে ॥

শ্যামা মা কী চাও?

সত্যি কোরে বল্ দেখি মা -
তোর পূজায় কী করি জড়ো -
লোকে বলে মা তুই রান্ধসী - যতই সাজাই চাস্ মা আরো।

ভঞ্জে মা তোর সাজায় এতো - ফুলে ফলে ভরা কতো -
তবু মা তোর মুখটি ভারী - বুঝি আরো পেলে ভালো হতো।

কেহ পূজে দিয়ে সোনা - কেহ গানে বারোআনা -
কেও বলে মা তুই তামসী - খুশি পেলে ষোলোআনা।

আমি ভাবি আমার গতি - নাই তো কোনো উপায় তারা -
কী দিয়ে মা পূজি তোরে - ভেবে যে হই দিশাহারা।

আমার পূজা চাস্ যদি মা - আসিস্ তবে লোভটি ভুলে -
তোর পূজা মা করবো আমি - শুধুই আমার চোখের জলে।
সত্যি কোরে বল্ দেখি মা - খুশী কি তুই নয়নজলে ॥

The Divine Mother: The All Auspicious Divine World

Monoranjan Roy
Portland, Connecticut

“Sar-Mongala Mongallye
Siva Sarvrtha – Sadhike,
Saranye Tryambake Gouri,
Narayani Namastu Te”

“O Thou All-Auspicious one,
O Gouri, Bestower of the gifts Divine,
O thou Refuge, Mother of Three World,
Obeisance to Thee, Narayani Benign”

Such is our divine mother, our very own, our loving and gracious mother. And possibly, no other season could have been more idyllic to serve as the ‘back to welcome’ the Goddess Durga. She makes her annual visit in autumn, the most pleasant and delightful season in the country, especially in Bengal.

Strangely enough, the Durga Puja, held in the remote past was celebrated in a less pleasant circumstance during the spring season. It is well known that the present form of Durga Puja celebrated in autumn was initiated by Sree Ramachandra who had to invoke the grace and blessings from the Divine Mother, Durga, to conquer the demon king, Ravana. This took place in autumn and the present Puja known as *Akal Bodhan* or the untimely invocation has since been accepted by all. The former Puja, popularly known as *Basanti Puja*, is still held in some quarters during the spring. But it is a rather quiet and tame affair compared with the grandeur and pomp of the traditional Durga Puja season that we celebrate today.

In many parts of India, especially in Bengal, Durga is viewed as a loving daughter who returns to her paternal home after a year long stay at her husband Lord Shiva’s abode at Kailash, the Himalayan region in the north. But her visit is brief. Countless worshipers wait anxiously throughout the year to get a glimpse of Mother Durga during a handful of days of her visit here. There is mirth and merry-making all round. For a short while, people try to forget all differences and diversions. The air is charged with a full-blown festive mood and spirit.

Nature, too, cooperates, sending its message through various agencies, the clear blue sky, the lovely carefree white clouds, the golden sunshine, the ripening corn, and the lush green meadows. Above all, the gentle breeze laden with aroma of sweet-scented flowers of variegated hues and odors all bring the news that the all-auspicious Durga will be arriving soon to embrace the path of righteousness, thereby leading to immortality.

The concept of accepting the divine mother as a daughter is something that is absolutely novel. Gone are the rigidities, the formalities and normally associated complex of fear. After all, who has ever heard of keeping away from one’s daughter, notwithstanding her greatness, might, divinity, and supremacy? A daughter remains as loving and dear forever. And the communion thus established between the devotees (or bhaktas) and the Supreme Being through this simple and touching medium of love, affection and attachment is a very unique phenomenon in Indian life.

A Puja season or another similar occasion also offers us the opportunity to take a fresh look at ourselves. It is sort of introspection, one may say, when it is imperative to delve deep into our hearts, search and discover how much we have prepared ourselves to celebrate the homecoming of Mother Durga to benefit our souls.

Over the years, in Bengal, it is noticeable that the display of pomp and splendor often reaches a point of vulgarity that has far out-weighted the simplicity of pure devotion that once was the hallmark of the Puja season. Other parts of India are not far behind in this unfortunate race!

One is reminded in this connection of those beautiful lines of Tagore, who in one of his masterful poems referred poignantly to a neglected little girl who had no one to take care of her:

“Ma Jadi Na Tabay Aaj Kisher Ustab?”

That is, if the motherless one did not receive motherly affection and love, then what was the point of having this festival? Today, many such unfortunates having no one to look after them are groaning and suffering for no apparent faults of their own. Let us pause and think over their plight. Let us do whatever we can to wipe our tears. If we can alleviate that from one soul and illuminate the dark chamber in just one person’s heart with kindness and sympathy, then that will be the best way to celebrate the Puja season. This way, we can try our best to make the visit from our Divine Mother into this care-ridden and misery-afflicted world of ours both significant and memorable.

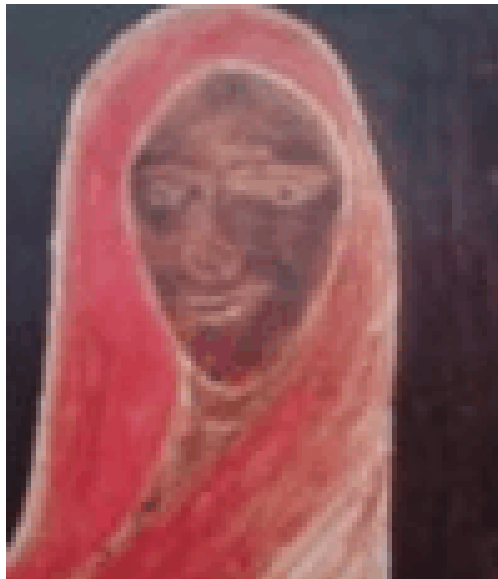
Meanwhile, let’s join the prayer that should reverberate around the silent harps of our hearts:

“Ya Devi Sarvabhutesu Matriupena Samasthita,
Namastasyai, Namastasyai, Namastasyai Namostasma.”

The Goddess who is present within all creatures, the form of Mother Divine, Obeisance to Her, Obeisance to Her, Obeisance to Her, Mother Benign.



Dancer - water color.*
by Rabindranath Tagore



Vieled Woman - water color.*
by Rabindranath Tagore

*Editor’s Acknowledgment: Public Domain <http://www.calcuttaweb.com/tagore/paintings.shtml>

শ্রীগৌরাঙ্গ দেব

দিলীপ ভৌমিক
ক্লার্কসভিল, মেরীল্যান্ড

জন্ম নিলে তুমি নিমাই
চন্দ্র গ্রহণ ক্ষণে।
ছিল যে অনন্য নক্ষত্রের স্থান
সেই অপূর্ব লগনে।।
তুমি এলে আলো করে
সোনার নদীয়ায় ।
ধন্য হলো নবদ্বীপ
তোমার মহিমায়।।
নিমাই নামে জানতো সবাই
প্রতি ঘরে ঘরে।
মায়ের দেওয়া বিশ্বস্তর নাম
রইলো অগোচরে।।
গৌর অঙ্গ ছিল বলে
গৌরাঙ্গ তাই নাম।
নদীয়াতে শ্রেষ্ঠ তুমি,
নবদ্বীপেতে ধাম।।
কৈশোরেই হলে তুমি
ন্যায় রত্নের গুণী।
শিক্ষা নিতে তোমার কাছে,
আসতো সবাই শুনি।।
কত পণ্ডিত তোমার কাছে
তর্ক করার ছলে।
এসে তারা পালিয়ে যেত
পরাজয়ের ফলে।।
লক্ষ্মী নামে বল্লভাচার্যের
ছিল যে এক কন্যা ।
রূপে ও গুণে, সবার মাঝে
ছিল সে যে অনন্যা।।
নিমাই লক্ষ্মীর হোক এ বিয়ে
পিতার ছিল সাধ।
এই মিলনে মাতাও যে তার
করেন আশীর্বাদ।।
যৌবনেতে লক্ষ্মীদেবী
হলেন তোমার জায়া।
সর্পাঘাতে ইহলোকের
কাটিয়ে যে যান মায়া।।

পত্নীবিহীন কাটে একা দিন
জীবন শুরুর মুখে।
ভক্তির স্রোতে ভাসিয়ে নিজেকে
ব্যথা তবু বাজে বুকে।।
কৃষ্ণ প্রেমে বিভোর হলে
সংসারে নেই মন।
পুত্র দশায় শচীমাতা
ব্যাকুল অনুক্ষণ।।
অতি সুদর্শন, পণ্ডিত এমন
সুযোগ্য এই পুত্র।
নব বধু ঘরে, আসবে কী করে
খুঁজে পাওয়া চাই সূত্র।।
বিষুপ্ৰিয়া হলেন শেষে
তোমার জীবন সাথী।
সংসারেতে বসলো না মন
তবু রাতারাতি।।
ঈশ্বর পুরী ছিলেন গয়ায়
বৈষ্ণব ব্রহ্মচারী।
দীক্ষা নিলে তাঁর কাছে যে
সব কিছুকে ছাড়ি ।।
ভক্তির রসে আকুল হয়ে
ঘুরলে নানান দেশ।
ভক্তরাও সব সঙ্গ নিল,
তুচ্ছ করি ক্রেশ।।
দণ্ডীকেশব ভারতীর কাছে
কাটোয়াতে এসে।
সন্ন্যাস ধর্মে দীক্ষা নিলে,
তুমি অবশেষে।।
গৃহত্যাগী হলে তখন
মা ও পত্নী রেখে।
ভক্তি প্রেমের ডাক শুনলে
সারা বিশ্ব থেকে।।
ভক্তির কথা প্রচারের মুখে
বাধা আসে ক্ষণে ক্ষণে।
জগাই মাধাই পথ রুখে দেয়,
কারণে ও অকারণে।।

তোমার মধুর ললিত বাণীতে
ওরা শেষে হলো ভক্ত।
পবিত্র এই প্রচারের পথে
হলো কত অনুরক্ত।।
থামোনি কোথাও চলেছো যে পথে
এলে শেষে নীলাচলে।
হরি, মুকুন্দ, নিত্যানন্দ
ছিল যে তোমারই দলে।।
জগন্নাথদেবের মন্দিরে এসে
হয়ে গেলে তুমি স্তব্ধ।
দেবদর্শনে মুর্ছিত হলে
ছিল না মুখে যে শব্দ।।
তুমি শ্রীল, পূর্ণ ব্রহ্ম
বৈষ্ণবের তুমি শির।
কৃষ্ণ প্রেমে সদা ছিল ভরা
তোমার হৃদি মন্দির।
পুরীর সাগরে দেব দর্শনে
ছুটে তুমি গেলে চলে।
এলেনাত আর ফিরে তুমি প্রভু
হারালে সাগর জলে।।
* * * *

- ভোগ্যবস্তু - দুর্গা-মা
ভোগ্য - চক্ৰবৰ্তী (পুলি)

সংগ্ৰহাৰ্জন . কল্যাণকীৰ্ত্তিকা

কমা, তুমি স্নেহে আজি ম' হাঁহে,
বহুদিনে দুই দিনকীৰ্ত্তি-স্মরণ বন্দ্যব-ওষে,
ভোগ্যবস্তু সুখে-সুখে গিলিমে-ভেজেছে আজি ম-ধৰ্মা,
স্বচ্ছ মীল আকাশে তুমি হেৰুওঁ ভোগ্য-বন্দ্য,

ভোগ্য- আজি দেখিছ ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য-কৰ্মকামিত -
পৱন হুন্দু চক্ৰা পাত্ৰে গাঢ় টুকুৰে কৰ্মকামিত ।

কি হেৰুওঁ তুমি ?

ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য কৰ্মকামিত হুঁমাম -
ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ?
ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ওষ আজি !
ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ওষ আজি !

ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য -
ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য -
ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য -
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ভোগ্য-ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ভোগ্য ॥

Four Couplets: Shimmering Durga

Patrick Colm Hogan*
Storrs, Connecticut

Bows, bows, Unreachable One, maker of peace.
Bows, bows, Mother who takes away grief.

Across the three worlds, radiant and without form,
You spread out the brilliant dawn.

....

Pain and poverty will never touch
Whoever sings your praise with so much love.

Whoever sees you with adoration in the heart
Sees release too from any part in death and birth.

*Translated freely from Hindi by Patrick Colm Hogan,
Professor of English in the University of Connecticut-Storrs.
Visit <http://english.uconn.edu/directory/faculty.php?id=35>.

॥ স্বপনচারিণী ॥

দুভাষ রায়*
স্টোর্স, কানেকটিকাট

বুঝি
কোনোদিন
আকাশ পৃথিবী
বিভাস ললিত ঐকতানে
করণ নহবৎ হয় শ্রাবণী ক্রন্দনে
সজলনয়ন মুখ প্রসন্ন চন্দনে
বাদলের কদমের গানে
স্মৃতির পূর্ববী
ভাষাহীন
ঋজি

*<http://www.econ.uconn.edu/Faculty/ray/ray.htm>

Laws of Life

Anishaa Mukherjee*
Rocky Hill, Connecticut

Laws of life are like every rain drop that falls to the ground except *they* are not ignored. They are very precious and they are *yours* to go by. Without them our lives would be confusing and you wouldn't know right and wrong. The law of life that means the most to me is appreciation.

“Why, why them?” *My* first thoughts were when I read *Journeys* (a magazine). Going to bed I read an article that changed my feelings about the poor and unfortunate families out there in the world living their lives the harder way. There was this one article that was about a family living in India. It was the only one that stood out to me and made me realize how lucky I *am*. How lucky we all are to have enough money to *feed* out empty stomachs, to have a *shelter* which protects our heads and to get an education which fulfills our needs of learning something new everyday. This article was about a boy whose mother sews 100 socks a day and walked over to drop them off at this sock store. And guess **how** much she got paid? \$.051. This is how *she fed* her family. Her husband did not really have a job except for pulling *weeds* from a pond though he didn't get paid. I cried to the last word of the story and was able to rethink my past. I always say to myself, “I have so many things. I have so many books to read, toys to play with and a mom and dad who work so hard to protect me and feed me.”

To appreciate is to thank. To appreciate is to be grateful for someone or something. But to appreciate to me is when you thank your parents for what you have and how they taught you everything that is needed to be known. Always seeing my mother and father working so hard can make my thoughts about them very satisfied. Satisfied in the sense of being protected. I appreciate them doing all this work just to help me and teach me how to live life. When they wash the dishes, clean the house, or maybe even make good I help them just to show that I care for them as much as they care for me. When you do something for others you get this sort of feeling which is very happy. This feeling is appreciation.

Trapped

Anishaa Mukherjee*
Rocky Hill, Connecticut

Trapped is the color of grey smoke,
It sounds like a stranger knocking on your door,
It tastes like bitter, dark chocolate still in its wrapper.

Trapped smells like air emptied from a balloon,
It looks like a bird being forced to stay in its cage,
It makes you feel suffocated.

*Anishaa Mukherjee is a 7th grader at Griswold Middle School, Rocky Hill. She received the best writer award as a whole when she finished her 6th grade.

The Alien Invader

Oisharya (Moon) Dasgupta*
West Hartford, CT

It was a Wednesday last spring. After coming back from school, like usual I was drinking milk, sitting at my favorite place in the kitchen. I looked at my blue Beta fish, Lucky, when he suddenly came up to the surface and said, “Hi Moon, can I have my snack too?”

I was so surprised that I almost choked on my milk. How could a fish talk? “H-How d-d-did you say that?” I stammered. My fish replied with ease, “Last night some crazy looking guy came and pointed at me with a weird, red thing. About two seconds later it asked me to say something. So I said 'what'. Satisfied, the thing went outside and got into a saucer-like object. In about a flash, the saucer started to rotate up and then it disappeared into the night sky. Now can I have something to eat, I am starving.”

My mom, who was in the next room, asked, “Moon, who are you talking to?” “Mommy, you wouldn't believe what just happened?”, I exclaimed. “What?” asked my mom. “Lucky is talking. Lucky is talking”, I jumped up and down. “Stop the nonsense, Moon. And do your homework”, said my mom without much attention. “No, really. He just asked me for food”, I protested. I ran to the family room and practically dragged her back to the kitchen. “Lucky, say something,” I demanded. But Lucky decided to keep quiet and swam to the bottom of the bowl. “Oh Moon, you and your imagination,” smiled my mom.

That night I lay awake thinking about what happened that day. “I have got to catch that alien if it comes back,” I told myself. But this needed careful planning. I thought for some time and decided on what to do.

At about midnight, I saw a strange, blue glow coming from the backyard. “The Alien must have arrived,” I muttered. I grabbed my badminton net and raced downstairs. I went into the mudroom and sprung my trap. Suddenly I heard the doorknob turning. I quickly hid myself. After a few minutes of silence, I heard a soft screech. I ran into the mudroom to see if my plan had worked. My heart was pounding. When I got there, a dwarfish, green creature with three eyes and two heads pointed a long bony finger at me and angrily said, “Sabasikjopljh!”, which must have meant something nasty in Alienese. Ignoring the other wild things he said, I unhooked the net from the ceiling.

I carefully brought the net to the bathroom so that he could not escape. I snatched his light saber from him and stuck it in my belt. Next I shook the net over the toilet so that the Alien fell in. “Have fun in the sewer, Mr. Alien. That will teach you not to sneak into other people's houses and play with their pets,” I said flushing the toilet. I took the light saber from my belt and wondered what to do with it.

I realized that the light saber has unique powers and it will not be good of it to fall in the wrong hands. So I decided to hide it and not tell anybody about my mini-adventure. But before I did that, I had one last thing to do. I went to the kitchen, pointed the light saber at my fish and wished that my fish would be normal again. Then I went back upstairs and dropped the saber in a box of unused toys. For the rest of the night I slept comfortably and never told anyone about it again. Till today that is.

*Oisharya (Moon) Dasgupta is currently in 4th grade in Aiken Elementary School, West Hartford.

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The Goddesses Who Lived Amongst Us

Bandana Purkayastha¹
North Grafton, Massachusetts

Among the many rituals of Durga Puja that remind us that we are a part of a greater indivisible whole; for instance, the *Tvat Tamasi* lesson of Chandogya Upanishad is reflected through the ritual raising and immersing of the goddess from the depth of our being. The priest, on our behalf, brings her forth from within the individual being, invests her image with qualities befitting a goddess, and on dashami, ritually submerges her back into the individual-of-the-universe. As individuals, and as collectivities, we are supposed to follow this ritual of looking within ourselves, “raising” the set of values represented through the array of goddesses and gods with their animal and plant associates, to the forefront of our consciousness, as a way of connecting our lives to a greater whole *every day*. This central principle of Hinduism — to become more human by acknowledging and enacting our connections to the universe — is likely to be familiar to many people who gather to celebrate Durga Puja.

But, recently, as I worked with a group of women who originally came to the US from different parts of India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, to publish a book about our experiences of living our religion, I was confronted with the question of whether I could draw the same inspiration about these values and principles if I focused on people who live/d among us. It is an intriguing question; after all, if I truly believe that our goddesses and gods are personifications of what we imagine to be within the realm of the possible, then these values and qualities should be in evidence among real people. So, to try and answer this question, I began to think about who would come closest to Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati, among the women whose lives and deeds have significantly enriched our lives as Bengalis. Instead of reverting to the example of the children — the Kumaris — who are worshipped as embodiments of Durga, I focused on adult women, whose conscious choices and activities, have framed ours.

While I began to think about many people across many countries who could qualify for these designations, I decided to limit myself, for now, to people who were born in Bengal, or spent most of their lives in the region. I also decided to limit myself to the 19th and 20th centuries, since this history ushered tumultuous changes in our lives. Many of us can directly trace the legacy of our parents and grandparents who participated in the nationalist uprising or social and religious movements of the time. This was also the historical period when Durga became our cultural icon. She was worshipped earlier by sections of people, one among many goddesses. During this period she became the mother goddess whose worship pierced hierarchical walls of caste, gender, and class, as her worship was infused with a series of social and cultural meanings that wove together newer forms of Bengali religious and cultural nationalisms.

Goddess Durga is the demon slayer. She represents fearless-ness, strength, valor, extraordinary energy and power to challenge and defeat a mighty adversary, whose untrammelled unregulated use of power was wrecking havoc in the world. Goddess Durga is also a mother-figure, her ability to confront and destroy what is unjust is balanced by her creative force as she presides over her “children” — learning, wealth, valor, and obstacle-remover--so that, together, these qualities make for ideal families, communities, societies. In my mind, the living goddess who exhibited such powers — the power to mobilize against political and social injustice, to challenge and confront it, while spreading education, fostering valor, and empowering people to act on their own behalf — during this historical period, was Sarala Devi Chaudhurani.

Sarala Devi was born in 1872. Her mother, Swarnakumari Devi was a sister of Rabindranath Tagore’s, the editor, from 1884, of the journal *Bharati*, the founder of the Ladies Theosophical Society, and the founder of *Sakhi Samiti*, a women’s support group that paid particular attention to the need of widows. Sarala Devi was one of the earliest female graduates of Calcutta University (via Bethune School and College). She worked as the Assistant Superintendent of a girl’s school in Mysore in 1894 and returned to Calcutta to take on the editorship of *Bharati*.

¹Bandana Purkayastha is, most recently, the author of *Negotiating Ethnicity*, on the children of immigrants from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, and the co-author of *Living Our Religions*, on the experiences of Hindu and Muslim women in the US and in their countries of origin. She is a professor at the University of Connecticut-Storrs.

The “demons” of the time were the British colonial power and the lack of mobilization and among men and women to act against social stasis. In her seminal history of the women’s movement in India, Radha Kumar writes that Sarala Devi threw herself into a maelstrom of organizing to cultivate strength among men and women. She started with the *antaranga dal*, organizing young men who had to lay their hands on the map of India and pledge that they were ready to sacrifice their lives in the cause of India’s freedom. As her realm of influence increased rapidly, she introduced a series of bratas, including martial arts training, as a way of getting young Bengali men to hone their mental and physical prowess. In 1904, for the Congress session in Calcutta, she trained the group to sing Bankim Chandra’s *Bande Mataram*, and in 1905, through the Suhrid Samiti, she indelibly linked this homage to a motherland to the rallying call of the *Indian* nationalist movement. She started a Birastami festival to commemorate valor on the second day of Durga Puja where young people recalled past heroes and took a vow to fight imperialism. She was an outspoken supporter of the railway workers strike against the British in 1899. Undaunted by the attacks by large sections of Hindus who castigated her for behavior unworthy of a Hindu woman, she moved onto the national stage. In 1905, after the partition of Bengal and a rapidly rising fear among Hindu and Muslim women of being raped by British soldiers who were “keeping law and order,” she began to organize self-defense lessons for women as well.

In 1910, she organized the Bharat Stree Mahamandal, the first, and formal Indian women’s organization. The aim of the organization was to spread female education, but, acknowledging that purdah and child marriage were the main obstacles to women’s education, she began to organize money to send teachers into homes to teach women. Well aware of the efforts of the missionaries to reach the “recesses of the zenanas” to impart a “civilized education” to Indian girls and women, this organization created Indian texts to emphasize vernacular cultures, brought women’s crafts and skills to the public arena through *mahila silpa melas*, and created avenues for bringing women’s visions, women’s writing to the public sphere. At the same time the organization organized relentlessly against child-marriage and purdah, two causes that were later taken up by a large number of other newly formed women’s organizations. Sarala Devi’s work is key to understanding women’s participation in the nationalist uprising, formally through public participation in protests, boycotts, and later the students “terrorist” uprising, but also through the significant “private” participation of choosing only *swadeshi* products, the circulation of nationalist *bratakathas* through women’s circles, of harboring and aiding male nationalist “brothers and sons” who were fleeing from the British, through *arandhans* which served as means to raise family consciousness to protest British political decisions. While recent historical reconstruction has credited Gandhi, solely, with moving women into the sphere of politics, Sarala Devi’s work had been in force for decades before Gandhi returned to India and started the Satyagraha movement. Her Durga-like combination of intellectual force, fearlessness, valor, and steadfastness of principle was recognized by Swami Vivekananda, who, when he was buffeted by attacks of Christian missionaries in the US, wrote to Sarala Devi: “if talented and bold women like yourself, versed in Vedanta, go to England and preach...speak [to] America, if an Indian woman in Indian dress preach[es] there ... there will rise a great wave which will inundate the whole Western world...you have power, wealth, intellect and education, will you forego this opportunity?” (quoted in Shamita Basu, in *Religious Revivalism as Nationalist Discourse*, 2002, p.158).

If Sarala Devi is my choice for Durga, then my choice of Saraswati centers on two remarkable women, Begum Rokeya Hussain and Sister Nibedita for their remarkable work in stretching the boundaries of our intellect. For any individual, who may have been amazed at my choice of a Muslim woman and an Irish woman as Hindu goddesses, it is important to remember that the best traditions of Hinduism do not rely on ethnocentric distinctions. Ramakrishna’s life is an exemplar of learning from many religious practitioners; his famous dictum, popularized by Vivekananda, about the many rivers which lead to the same ocean is a reminder to us that we can be good Hindus by not shrinking our human lives, by not letting our “clear stream of reason” die in the “dreary desert of dead habit” within the confines of “narrow domestic walls.”

Goddess Saraswati reflects learning and wisdom. Her associate the swan, is credited with the ability to sift through the mud and impurities in the water, just as the lotus, on which she sits, frequently rises, as a thing of beauty, above the scum and filth under the waters of the ponds. Begum Rokeya was born in 1880; she was secretly educated in English and Bengali by an older brother, before her marriage, at age 16, to Khan Bahadur Sakhawat Hussain, the Judicial Magistrate of Bhagalpur. Her husband encouraged her writing till his death 11 years later. Begum Rokeya wrote a series of remarkable essays and satires on the social boundaries that crippled women’s lives; her 1905 work in English, *Sultana’s Dream*, remains relevant to our lives today! In order to foster learning among Muslim women, she created

Sakhawat Memorial School for Girls, facing down, just as Sarala Devi did, the orthodox outpourings of outrage. Begum Rokeya was also active in other spheres for women's empowerment; she founded the Bengali Muslim Women's Association, which focused primarily on women's status and education, till her death in 1932. Since she did not have the advantages of extraordinary social capital like Sarala Devi, her actual achievement, of founding a girls' school, has endured beyond her lifetime, appear to be quite remarkable. Like Bethune school, founded in 1849 as the first formal "public" school for girls in India, Sakhawat Memorial School for Girls, now run by the West Bengal Government, remains a historical icon in Bengali history.

Sister Nibedita, though best known as Swami Vivekananda's associate, is, in my mind, the central facilitator of the Bengal renaissance movement, the new forms of literature and art that broke away from European hegemonies. Through Nibedita, an ardent champion of Indian glories, we find the intersections of the streams of ideas emanating from Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, the Tagores, and Sri Aurobinda's and his and of revolutionaries. If we now recognize Nandalal Bose's path-breaking art, that created an alternative form of modernity for India, a great deal of credit goes to Sister Nibedita, who insisted that Nandalal spend time learning from the Ajanta frescos. If we are able to revel in the erudition of Amartya Sen in his recent social commentaries on Indian multi-rooted civilization, or feel proud of the luminous array of contemporary Bengali artists, or simply recognize the cosmopolitanism of Bengali culture, then we owe a debt to Nibedita, who was, with Rabindranath, one of the chief architects of the intellectual horizons that were created and concretized during this time. Thus if learning is about the process through which we imagine and live lives beyond the confines of what the familiar, then, women like Begum Rokeya and Sister Nibedita, much like the goddess of learning, have played a significant role in shaping how we perceive the connection between our learning and the rest of the world of which we are a part.

Unlike Durga and Saraswati, it is more difficult to designate someone as Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, whose associate the owl reminds us not to be dazzled by wealth, to see through dark-ness and, consequently, use wealth wisely. Despite the icon, real women have not, very often, been in a position to control and manage wealth. I could choose the untold number of women who turned over their jewelry for the nationalist cause, literally financing aspects of the nationalist movement, and designate their use of *stri-dhan*, as reflective of Lakshmi's values. But their individual names have not been recorded in history. So, for my iconic living goddess, I will delve further back in time and pick Rani Rashmoni who used her wealth to for just purposes.

Rani Rashmoni was born in 1793 and was married off at the age of eleven to a wealthy landowner. She was widowed while she was still young, and, despite her remarkable wealth, lived the austere personal life of a Bengali widow, till her death in 1851. As a wealthy landowner she was struck by the unjust-ness of a new British — East India Company — tax on the daily catch of fisher folk in the area. Since many fishermen survived on a near-subsistence basis, this tax negatively affected their chances of survival. Rashmoni decided to challenge this tax. She leased a stretch of the Ganga for Rs. 10,000 (a remarkable sum for the time) from the British, who were enthusiastic about getting the money from her, instead of chasing down individual fishermen. Once the lease was complete, she ordered her minions to stretch a set of chains across the river, to mark the boundaries of her leased property. The riverine traffic ground to a halt and the British protested. Rani Rashmoni proclaimed her right to protect her property. The tax on fisher folk was then rescinded. While her wealth was managed by her son-in-law Rani Rashmoni is credited with a number of socially conscious, financial decisions. She demonstrated a principle later preached by Vivekananda: that performing religious rituals in temples is of no use if we do not address the hunger and suffering of *nara-narayans* (human-gods). Once, she had arranged to go on pilgrimage; the food and provisions for this journey filled 30 boats. At this time, famine stalked a part of Bengal; hearing about the sufferings of her people she donated the entire resources for this pilgrimage to the hungry people. Her endowments created many of the Bengal landmarks: the temple of Dakshineswar, the scene of Ramakrishna's remarkable priesthood, was endowed by her; Presidency College and National Library, in their original iterations, were endowed with her money. The stories about her reflect this unique combination of wealth and wisdom that exemplifies Lakshmi.

The stories of Goddesses and Gods tell of demons they have to overpower. But they remain distant from us because they seem not to be constantly buffeted by the kind of challenges we face everyday. But the lessons of the lives of these living goddesses exemplify the challenges and possibilities of being "tied by a thousand bonds while we seek mukti." Their lives, like ours, are tempered by failures and successes. Thus they can continue to act as our inspirations, as we rededicate our lives to living our dharma through everyday ethical acts of humane-ness.

হে বন্ধু মোর

নীতীশ মুখোপাধ্যায়
গ্যাপ্টনবেরী কানেটিকাট

হারিয়ে ফেলা

সুর ও বাণী

কাল এইতো ছিলে, এইখানটায়
আজ হঠাৎ হারিয়ে গেলে, কোথায়?

এক্কেবারে গা ঘেঁষে হাঁটছো, তোমার
গুন্ গুন্ কলি কানে বাজছে, হঠাৎই
মনে হোলো যেন তুমি পাশে নেই -
অনেকবার 'ত' হয়েছে ঠিক এমনটাই
যখনই ঘুরেছি এ পথে দু'জনায়, অথচ
প্রতিবার ফিরে পেয়েছি নতুন তোমায়।

সেদিনও তোমার আঁকা ছবি, দেখেছি
পাশাপাশি রঙিন প্রজাপতি মৃত ব্যাঙ, শুনেছি
তোমার গানের সুরে পূজোর সানাই, খেয়েছি
আগুন-রঙ মিছিলের ছন্দ দোলা, চলেছি -
মনে হোলো যেন তুমি পাশে নেই
বহুবার হয়েছে ঠিক এমনটাই, যখনই
ঘুরেছি-হেঁটেছি এ পথে দু'জনায়, অথচ
বারবার ফিরে পেয়েছি নতুন তোমায়।

কাল ছিলে অথচ আজ নাই -
চলেই যাবে? তবে 'ত' ধরে রাখা মিছে
ভালোবাসার ধন! কেন বেঁধে রাখা পিছে -
দ্বিধাভরে বলি "আচ্ছা, এসো", শুধু
অনাবিল অনন্ত প্রেম রেখে যাও, তবে
নিয়ে যাও খলিভরে মোর জীবনের যত গান
মেলে দিও আকাশের গায়ে পৃথিবীর সব তান।

ঠিক এমনই শরৎ-লগনে
তোমাকেই পাশে পেতে চাই
মন তোমাকেই চায়, শুধু তোমাকেই -
অশ্রু ভরা দশমীর বেসুরো সানাই
কাল ছিলে সাথী মনে পড়ে তাই।

১২ ফেব্রুয়ারী, ২০০৮

ভালবাসা মোর গান হয়ে ফেরে
তোমারই দুয়ারে দুয়ারে
তব আঁখিতারা নাচে ধীর লয়ে
মৃদুল সমীরে বাহিরে।

অন্তরে এসো হৃদয়েতে বোসো
মাতি মম সুরে ও বাণীতে
না'বলা বাণী ঝংকৃত হোক
উদ্ভাল তব শোণিতে।

রাত্ত্রীশেষে গান হলে সারা
কিছু সুর হবে তোমাদের মনে -
সেই গান কেন ফেরে ক্ষণে ক্ষণে
তারায় তারায় কোন অভিমানে?
“ভালো থেকেও সবে” বলে যাই তবে
মোর হাসি-গাঁথা যেন সদা জাগে
তব উজ্জল নয়ণকোনে।

১৭ সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০০৮

Translations of Three Favorite Poems

Nitis Mukhopadhyay*
Glastonbury, Connecticut

[1]: Sharing My Feelings

[Rabindranāth Tagore's verse #248, without a title, from Gitabitān (pages 370-371)]

On this day she could be told
In this overpowering incessant rain
As hard rain sounds thunderous –
Sunlight fades in thick darkness
On a day like this she could be told.

No one else will listen to this ever
Solitary and desolate everywhere
Face-to-face each filled with deepest of hurt –
Endless tear falling from sky
Feeling none else is in this world.

Society and family are pretty lies
Lies too are this life's murmurs
Glances alone exchange eye-full ecstasy
Feeling each other heart to heart
Everything else disappears in darkness.

In this universe who is inconvenienced by this
If I can only rid of my heartache
Once in a corner as monsoon deafens –
If I share my feelings for her
Why and how does that affect anyone?

Fierce wind anxiously whips by
Lightening repeats flash-dances
Muted words from my life that lives in me –
Those exact sentiments could be shared
'Midst such enchanting monsoon pour –
On a day just like this
I believe I can share my feelings with her.

March 12, 2007

[2]: In the Evening

[Nirendranāth Chakravarti's poem (page 78, Nirbāchito Prémér Kabitā, 1992)]

Now, again, in what game of yours
Want to tie me going round and round?
Deep inside heart knots come loose
in the evening.

Stone in the middle of the lake
You threw when? I recall nothing
Nothing stirs my memory any more
in the evening.

September 12, 2008

[3]: My Work

[Subhāsh Mukhopādhyay's poem, Āmār Kāj (pages 109-110, Shréstho Kabitā, 1970)]

I wish to make words stand on their feet
Want to watch each shadow's eyelids open
Wish still photos to go for a walk.

Don't desire anyone calling me a poet.
Until the last day in life
Shoulder to shoulder
So I can go on marching.

So that I can leave my pen
next to a tractor
I wish I can proclaim –
Now I say goodbye
Brothers, make me a small fire.

September 15, 2008

*<http://merlot.stat.uconn.edu/~nitis/>

Rabindranath Tagore in China

Sib S. Ray
Newington, Connecticut

Starting nearly two thousand years ago, India and China enjoyed a unique relationship in the history of mankind. It was neither initiated by monarchs to expand territory nor by merchants to enhance profit. It started with the spreading of message of love and freedom by monks and scholars from India who traveled through inhospitable mountains and deserts. China reciprocated by receiving them cordially and sending her own to India. Recalling this one Chinese scholar observed: *“Since ancient times India has communicated with us, made great presentation to us, whether it is philosophical thought, or religious belief, or morality, or art and literature, even brothers and relatives would not be so generous”*. This relationship continued for about eight centuries and then stopped for over a millennium with the change of political situation in both the countries. By the beginning of the twentieth century both countries fell from grace, India under foreign occupation and China under constant turmoil from within. Their old memories faded and new concepts about each other took shape. In the eyes of the Chinese, India, once a heavenly Kingdom, was now a dead country. In the eyes of the Indians, China was largely a nation of opium consumers where men sported pigtailed.

Then, suddenly came the surprising news that one among such Indians "Taige'er" (Chinese transliteration of Tagore) won the Nobel Prize in 1913, and that this "Tage'er" was busy traveling in the Western countries lecturing to the ruling elite of the Western powers whose representatives were treating the Chinese in China like dirt. The Chinese noted it, translated some of his works in Chinese from English and in 1923 invited him to visit China on a lecture tour. Tagore accepted it with great enthusiasm.

In his welcome speech for Tagore before a gathering of several thousand students in Beijing, Professor Liang Qichao, President of Universities Association, paid a glowing tribute to ancient India's cultural and spiritual contribution towards the development of Chinese society and summed up the present situation saying, *“After a thousand years of separation during which period, however, we two continued to cherish thoughts of love for one another, this elder brother of ours has once more come to us animated with fraternal sentiments. Both of us bear lines of sorrow on our face, our hair is grey with age, we stare with a blank and vacant look as if we are just awakened from a dream; but, as we gaze on each other, what recollections and fond memories of our early youth rise in our mind, --- of those days, when we shared our joys and sorrows together! Now that we have once more the happiness of embracing each other we shall not allow ourselves to be separated again.”* He then went on to pay a glorious tribute to India for her spiritual and artistic contributions to China.

Professor Liang ended his speech this way: *“I wish, in concluding, to say something of great practical importance to you. Rabindranath Tagore has come to visit us; and we ought to remember that when in the old days thirty-seven representatives came from India there were actually some one hundred and eighty seven people to return the visit. We hope that on this occasion the love between China and India will not terminate with the one or two months which Rabindranath Tagore is able to spend in this country. The responsibility that we bear to the whole mankind is great indeed, and there should be, I think, a warm spirit of co-operation between India and China. The coming of Rabindranath Tagore will, I hope, mark the beginning of an important period of history.”*

On another occasion at the scholar's dinner in Beijing, Mr. Lin Changmin, while welcoming Tagore had this to say: *“We welcome Dr. Tagore, not as a sage or a metaphysician, not as a religious reformer or even as an educator, but as poet, a very great poet, a world poet, and as one who will exert a great influence on our own poetry. Last year when the news came that we might expect a rival of our own poets, our expectation and enthusiasm were aroused. He is here now. We cannot tell him how moved and touched we are by his presence. His appearance, his eyes, his deportment, his beard, his clothes, ---- everything about him is poetic. He is in fact poetry itself. We hope our poet will give us strength, courage and audacity.”*

I quote these two at length because they basically summarize the effusive enthusiasm for Tagore from a section of Chinese scholars. I say “a section of Chinese scholars” because not all were favorably disposed towards him. While one group was yearning for reestablishing cultural ties with India and welcoming Tagore's influence on Chinese poetry the other group was opposing him just on those grounds.

Opposition to Tagore came from two groups --- the Chinese Communist Party and a section of Chinese writers. Communists were apprehensive that Tagore's influence would turn the Chinese youth away from the path of revolution. In this matter Tagore might have some guilt of association. Liang Qichao, Hu shi, Xu Zhimo, Liang Shuming, who were among his hosts, were thought to be members of a group opposed to the newly organized Marxists. Since they were the people taking interest in Tagore, the poet appeared to have posed a threat to the radicals. Therefore, he must be opposed. Yun Daiying, one of the founders of the Communist Party of China, wrote: "*We will not attack Tagore personally out of any malice. But there is a possibility that he will be used by others. We, therefore, have no option but to oppose him.*" The party leader, Qu Qiubai, made a sarcastic remark: "*Thank you, Mr. Tagore! But we have already had too many Confuciuses and Menciuses in China!*" Ironically, however, Tagore was translated in Chinese first by a founding member of the Communist Party.

Some were concerned that Tagore's idea of spirituality and pacifism will tranquilize the Chinese youth. Mao Dun, in an article entitled "Our Expectations from Tagore" wrote: "*But we do not welcome the Tagore who loudly sings the praise of the Oriental civilization, nor do we welcome the Tagore who creates a paradise of poetry that has made our youth intoxicated and self-complacent. We welcome the Tagore who works for the uplift of the peasantry (though we do not support his method), the Tagore who passionately sings, 'March alone' ... We also want the youth of China to know that the gift we expect from Tagore is not a spiritual realization of life, not an empty Gitanjali, but a gift of those words that arouse agony and enthusiasm, words such as 'March alone' ...*"

This I quote to show the expectation of another kind. By 1920s, the Chinese intelligentsia was greatly polarized between radicals and moderates, and Tagore found himself in the middle of it. But criticism was not new to Tagore before or after his visit to China and he dealt with it in his usual dignity. During his farewell speech in Shanghai, he made a slight reference to it: "*I have done what was possible, --- I have made friends It has not been all sunshine of sympathy for me. From the corners of the horizon has come occasional growling of angry clouds.*"

In spite of protests from some quarters, Tagore's sojourn in China went well. He spoke to students, teachers, scholars and ordinary citizens. His 64th birthday was celebrated in Beijing and on that occasion Liang Qichao presented the poet with a stone tablet inscribed on it: Zhu Zhendan, a Chinese name for Rabindranath. Two of his plays, *Chitra* and *Sanyasini*, were staged during his visit. He visited the tomb of Confucius and also the young emperor who, though deposed by then, was still living in the forbidden city.

Well, what was Tagore's message to the Chinese? Basically he said what he was saying all his life. He spoke against imperialism and materialism, against violence as a means of achieving one's goals, he spoke of the need for unity amongst Asian nations, of Asia's message of love and spirituality to the world. Besides, there were also some autobiographical talk, a talk about his newly founded institution, *Viswa Bharati*, his view of education and religion.

Tagore was saddened by the rising militarism in Japan. To the boys and girls at Pei Hei, Beijing, he remarked, "*There it hurts me deeply that the East should not be humble when it had come into sudden good fortune. We ought to know that it is a dangerously critical period in her history when a country is suddenly surprised with a political success that is stupendous. It is a difficult trial, requiring from her all the strength she has in order to save herself from the dust-storm of arrogance that obliterates the path of wisdom.*" Again in his first public lecture in Beijing, he spoke against use of force: "*My warning is, those who would have you rely on material force to make a strong nation, do not know history, or understand civilization either. Reliance on power is the characteristic of barbarism; nations that trusted to it have already been destroyed or have remained barbarous.*"

Tagore lamented that Asia's relationship with Europe was not on the equal footing. "*The West came, not to give of its best, or to seek for our best, but to exploit us for the sake of material gain. We did Europe injustice because we did not meet her on equal terms. The result was the relation of superior to inferior, of insult on one side and humiliation on the other. We have been accepting things like beggars. We have been imagining that we have nothing of our own.*" But Tagore never bore any animosity towards Europe. He said, "*I say again that we must accept the truth when it comes from the West and not hesitate to render it our tribute of admiration. Unless we accept it our civilization will be one sided, it will remain stagnant.*" About our dealing with the West his view was, "*Let us try to win the heart of the West with all that is best and not base in us, and think of her and deal with her, not in revenge or contempt, but with goodwill and understanding, in a spirit of mutual respect.*"

Was Tagore's mission to China successful? The answer depends on who we ask. To his opponents of the time, it was not. One of them, Lu Xun, blamed his hosts for projecting Tagore as a living idol. Another critic blamed his hosts for not presenting a complete picture of Tagore. He was presented as a saintly poet who created poems out of his meditations amidst nature in seclusion. But there was another side of Tagore which, at the sight of demonic designs of fascists, the militants and other devils, flared up in anger and created poems and essays as sharp as swords. His hosts did not emphasize this.

Expectations from Tagore's visit was spelled out in Liang QiChao's welcome speech --- restoration of cultural ties between the two countries and Tagore himself had similar aspirations and expressed them as follows: *"My friends, I have come to ask you to re-open the channel of communication which I hope is still there; for though overgrown with weeds of oblivion, its lines can still be traced."* How much of that was achieved in his six-week visit? For that we may turn to Dr. Hu Shih's reply to Tagore's farewell speech in Shanghai: *"... I am sure I speak for all present when I say that all of us sincerely hope Dr. Tagore and his friends will return feeling that they have not failed in the great task they have put before us today, so sympathetically and so feelingly. Rather I would ask them to return with the assurance that they have succeeded nobly and admirably in their task. The task is tremendous one, this task of preaching truth, in cementing two great peoples, whose relationship has been interrupted for ten centuries, in bonds of mutual sympathy and understanding. I wish to point out how right the poet is when he says that this must be accomplished through the mutual study of language. For mutual understanding cannot be accomplished in a short period of time. He has made a beautiful and successful beginning, one that will grow and show results far beyond the expectation of all those present here today, not excepting the poet. A beginning has been made and the seed that has been sown in our hearts will never be lost. It has been placed in fertile soil and it will bear fruit in the ages to come. I sincerely hope that Dr. Tagore and his friends will return to India with the conviction that they have succeeded nobly in the mission they set out to accomplish."*

This was not simply a nice gesture to an honored guest. Efforts were made to strengthen cultural ties between the two countries. Professor Liang QiChao was invited and he agreed to come to Santiniketan. Unfortunately the visit did not materialize. Actually, China was going through a tumultuous period in her history.

But, aside from the contemporary assessment, eighty-four years later, if I am to answer the same question I will emphatically say "Yes". His only failure was to identify that one compatriot from China who could carry out his mission.

Every visionary needs some followers to carry out his vision and such a person did come not too long after. In 1927 while Tagore was in Singapore on his way to Java, a young Chinese Tan Yun Shan came to meet him. An idealist Buddhist, Tan was an admirer of Tagore and read all his lectures delivered in China even though he was teaching in Malaysia while Tagore was visiting China. At Tagore's urging, Tan joined Santiniketan in 1928 and there started a long and productive chapter in Sino-Indian cultural relations. In 1933, through tireless efforts of Tan Yun Shan, the China chapter of Sino-Indian Cultural Society was formed in Nanjing with Professor Tsai Yun-Pei as its first president and Tan Yun Shan as its first secretary. Next year the India Chapter of the Sino Indian Cultural Society was established with Rabindranath Tagore as president and his son, Rathindranath Tagore, as secretary. Tan continued his efforts in raising funds for fulfilling Tagore's dream of having a Chinese studies center in Santiniketan. Tagore allocated a prime piece of land at the heart of the campus for the project. And finally, mostly endowed by donations from the Chinese government and individuals, Cheena-Bhavana --- the Chinese Studies Center --- was completed in 1937.

During his address at its opening ceremony on April 14, 1937, Tagore said, *"The most memorable fact of human history is that of path-opening, not for the clearing of a passage for machines and machine guns, but for helping the realization by races of their affinity of minds, their mutual obligation of a common humanity. Such a rare event did happen and the path was built between our people and the Chinese in an age when physical obstruction needed heroic personality to overcome it and the mental barrier a moral power of uncommon magnitude. The two leading races of that age met, not as rivals on the battle fields, each claiming the right to be the sole tyrant on earth, but as noble friends, glorying in their exchange of gifts."* Recalling the situation of the time, Tagore observed, *"But, unfortunately the contacts that are being made today have done more to estrange and alienate peoples from one another than physical inaccessibility ever did. We are discovering for ourselves the painful truth that nothing divides so much as the wrong kind of nearness."*

Cheena-Bhavana was the first center for Chinese Studies in India and until 1949 all expenses for its maintenance came from China. Tagore appointed Tan Yun Shan as its first director, a position which Tan held till 1966. In this respect he surpassed Huen Tsang, the Buddhist scholar who spent fourteen years in India in the seventh century. Scholars and

students from both China and India and from other countries came to study at the Cheena-Bhavana and for a while Santiniketan could boast of a mini Chinatown.

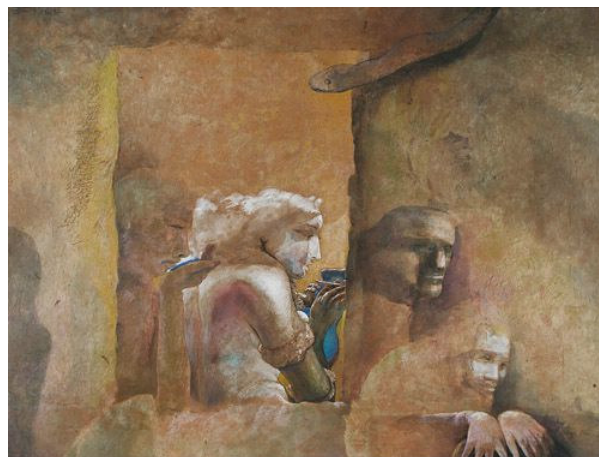
What Tagore started continued after him. Jawaharlal Nehru, a great admirer of Tagore, visited China in 1939. During Japanese invasion in the 1930s a group of five Indian doctors went to China to offer their voluntary services and one of them died there. Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek visited Santiniketan in 1942. After India's independence, Nehru's foreign policy towards China was largely influenced by Tagore's vision. Chian's Prime Minister Chau En Lai visited Santiniketan in 1956 and thus Santiniketan had the distinction of being the only educational institution in India to be visited by two Chinese heads of state.

How far Tagore was successful in uniting China and India culturally can be seen from the following episode narrated by Tan Chung, son of Tan Yun Shan: "*Ambassador C. V. Ranganathan related to an interesting evening in Beijing when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's special envoy, Mr. P. N. Haksar, and a Chinese scholar, Professor Wu Xiaolin vied with each other in reciting verses from Kalidasa's Meghdoot. How Gurudeva (Tagore) would have smiled if he had come to know this small realization of his "Great Course."* Professor Wu learnt Sanskrit in Cheena-Bhavana (in 1941-45).

India's Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee gave back to China a measure of what Tagore received from her. On June 23, 2003, he laid the foundation for a center for Indian Studies on the campus of Beijing University and said, "*Today we repay in some measure by pledging our support for a center for Indian Studies in this University.*" If Sino-Indian cultural relations ever attain the level of the good old days, the names of Rabindranath Tagore and his disciple, Tan Yun Shan, will be remembered with great reverence for initiating it.

Acknowledgement:

1. Speeches of Tagore and that of his hosts are from *Talks in China* as reproduced in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol.2* published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, India.
2. Materials for opposition to Tagore are from *The Controversial Guest: Tagore in China* by Sisir Kumar Das, Across The Himalayan Gap (Internet).



Bikash Bhattacharjee's Painting

Editor's Acknowledgment: <http://www.delhiartgallery.com/artworks/bikash-bhattacharjee-paintings-1816.aspx>

হিসেব মেলে না

শ্রী অশোক কুমার চক্রবর্তী
চেশায়ার, কানেকটিকাট্

এক সময়ে 'শিভালরি' জাগত ।
ভাবতাম ওদের সবটাই সত্যি।
ওদের দুঃখ, নির্বাতন, অসহায়তা
পাঁড়া দিত।
এখন আর 'তা হয় না।

দেখেছি যেমন কদর্য্য পৌরুষের দম্ভ,
রমণীকে ধর্ষণ করে-,
তেমনি দেখেছি,
কত 'অবলার' বাঁকা-উল্লাস,
পরিবারে গোপন কান্না, অসহায় চোখ।।
বুঝি, সব কিছুই আছে এই ভবের মেলায়।
সৌভাগ্য হলে শুধু ভালোটাই দেখবে;
আর মন্দ হলে----।
আমি তাই আর ছুটি না
কোন কিছুই আকর্ষণে।
হয়তঃ বয়স আর ছোটোর মত নয়,
বরং খানিক্ পমকে দাঁড়িয়ে জিরিয়ে নেওয়া ।
আর তখনই দেখি যত উল্টাপাল্টা
এলোমেলো সব ছবি ।।

হিসেব মেলে না,
আজ আর কোন কিছুই-ই হিসেব মেলে না।
ভিখারীর কান্না সত্যি মনে হয় না,
মিছিলের বার্তা, সাহায্যের হাত,
পড়শির আশ্বাস-আজ সন্দেহজনক।
মন্ত্রি, আইন---- থাক।
ওদের ছবি অনেক আগেই স্পষ্ট।
বেশ্যাদের সঙ্গে তফাৎ একটাই শুধু-
ইনারা সমাজের মাননীয়।।
শিক্ষক, বুদ্ধিজীবী, ছাত্রসম্প্রদায়-
যেখানে বিশ্বাসের তলানিটুকু শেষ পর্য্যন্ত ছিল,
ছিল শেষ ভরসাটুকু,
তারাও দেখি আজ গডলিকা প্রবাহে,
একই বিকৃত বাঁচার মন্ত্রে নিজেদের ক্রমাগত
বদল করে চলেছে।
দোষ দিই না-;
পরিবেশের সঙ্গে খাপ না খাওয়ালে
আজ তারাই-বা বাঁচবে কি করে ।।
আর তাই'ত নিয়ম করে শেখাই কচি-কাচাদের,
কতটা স্বার্থপর হলে,
কতটা অমানুষ হলে,
'গুডবয়' তকমাটা পাওয়া যায় ।।
শেখাই- 'চোরকে বল সাবাস,
পড়শিকে দাও সান্ত্বনা'।

এই নীতিতে চল-,
কি জানি কাকে কখন দরকার পড়ে।
চল, প্যাঁকাল মাছের মতো-,
পিছলে পিছলে, ভীড়-ভাটা এড়িয়ে,
বিবেক-আবেগ, আর্দশকে মাড়িয়ে,
এগিয়ে চল, শুধুই এগিয়ে চল সাফল্যের দিকে-
---তাৎক্ষণিক, তথাকথিত ।।

আর তাই ঘুষ দেওয়া নেওয়াকে
লাইসেন্স দিয়েছি,
চুরি-ছোচুরি, খুন-ধর্ষণ-,
এক কালের সব অপরাধ আজ জাতে উঠেছে।
চাকরীর বাজারে আজ এরাই,
দেশ চালাবার ভার আজ এদেরই উপর।
বুদ্ধিজীবী-বাহুবলীর মেলবন্ধনে
বিকৃত আনন্দে নেচে চলেছে-
সমাজ, জীবন, ঘর-গেরস্থালি,
মন্দির-মসজিদ, স্কুল-কলেজ,
হাসপাতাল, অফিস-আদালত।
এমনকি শ্মশানে-মশানেও
নন্দী-ভৃঙ্গীর আসর জমজমাট।।
কে কার বিচার করে!!
কে বলবে এটা ভাল, ওটা মন্দ।
সবাই'ত একই গন্ধে ভরপুর।
সবাইতো শুধু সামনের দিনটার কথাই ভাবছে-,
'কি করে ভালোয়-ভালোয় কাটে'।

দুরের হিসেব আজ আর কেউ করে না ।
না'হলে, খাবারে-ওষুধে বিষ মিশিয়ে
কেউ লাভের অঙ্ক গোণে?
দেশ জমি চুলোয় দিয়ে
কেউ সুখের স্বপ্ন দেখে?
জানে না, এগুলিই একদিন বুনেরাং
হয়ে তারই ঘরে ফিরে আসবে !
নাঃ, এই হিসেব আর কেউ করে না,
দুরের হিসেব আজ আর কেউ করতে চায় না ।
আমিও করি না, তবে আমার কারণ অন্য-,
'আমার হিসেব মিলবে না তোমাদের সাথে'।।

Leela - the Rhythmic Dance that Makes the Universe Go!

Chandrasekhar Roychoudhuri*
Storrs, Connecticut

Hey kids,
Move it, move it, move it
Let's move it.

Why?
'Cause it just feels good!
Let's move it.

Where does it feel good?
It's all over my body

Let's move it.
Move it, move it, move it.

But Why? Why? Why?
'Cause it feels good in my mind too!

Move it, move it, move it
Let's move it.

What is "feel good"?
What is body?
What is mind?

I don't know!
Just move it, move it, move it
Let's move it.

It feels good when it is rhythmic
When the steps are rhythmic
When the undulations are rhythmic
When the gyrations are rhythmic
When the movements are rhythmic

So, move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

Why rhythmic feels better than random?
I don't know!
Why plucked guitar strings make rhythmic music?
Why struck piano keys make rhythmic music?

Why clapping hands makes rhythmic sound waves?
Why dropped stone in water makes rhythmic waves?
Why? Why? Why?

Don't know
Just move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

Ah!
Rhythmic movement must be life.

So, move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

The Sun comes up rhythmically every morning.
The Moon comes up rhythmically every night
Stars do too
Every night
Tides in oceans and rivers come and go rhythmically
Seasons come and go rhythmically
New babies are born and very olds die
Stars born and die
Galaxies born and die
That's rhythmic too!

So, move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

Hold hands
Make many many radial lines like the spokes of a wheel
Now make the spokes of the wheel rotate in a steady periodic motion

Ah!
That is like a circular galaxy
Now each one of you is a star!

So, move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

*<http://www.physics.uconn.edu/people/faculty/storrs/roychoudhuri/>

Now curve the outer edges of the lines a little
As if they are merging into an imaginary outer circle
Now all of you rotate in a steady periodic motion

Hey!
That is a spiral galaxy!
And. You are all stars!
Or, at least made out of star dust!

So, move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

Hey!
Hold it, hold it, hold it
What did you say?
Stars born and die
Just like babies are born and elderly die.

But how are we star dust?
Why do they die? Where do they go?

I don't know. I don't know
Just, move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

All stars are made out of atoms
All of earth and planets are made out of atoms
Plants and all animals are made out of atoms
But atoms in the living things are organized as
complex molecules
With life information coded by DNA molecules in our
genes
And makes me a unique "me" even though we are all
so similar.
How can everything be made out of same things
called atoms?
And yet everything is so uniquely different.
We have six billion people and everybody behaves a
little different.
We have billions of galaxies and they all are
distinguishable.
We have billions of stars in every galaxy and they are
all different.

Many stars have planets like those that our Sun has
but they are all different.

Why? Why? Why?
I don't know!

Just move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

Everything in this universe is just rhythmic
movement.
Rhythmic dance makes the universe be.

So move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

You mean atoms are made out of rhythmic
undulations too?
Yes, atoms also like the "feel good" undulations too.
They are made out of electrons, protons and neutrons.
Which are again made out of rhythmic undulations.

So move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

But what is undulating in electrons protons and
neutrons?
I don't know!

Just move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

West calls it the steady cosmic tension field,
Sometimes "ether"
And electrons, protons & neutrons are
Resonant undulations of it

East calls it unfathomable Brahmha energy
Which is conscious intelligent but quiet
And everything material is but Leela (dance)
Of this field of consciousness

So move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

So! The universe is nothing but dances
Sustained in the Brahmha or ether field!

Yes. West likes to mathematize it
With complex fields & string theoretic equations.
But leading us not any further

East likes to visualize it
Some dances are promoted by Vishnu
That maintains the life we experience

Some dances are promoted by Shiva
Whose violent dance (Tandob Leela)
Transforms old into beginnings of new
But, are we going any further?

At least, now you know the limit of our current
knowledge.

You are immortal atoms.
You are immortal electrons, protons and neutrons.
You are undulations of the immortal Brahmha or ether
field.

You are just assembly of rhythmic dances
You can never be destroyed.
You are all deathless!
You can only be transformed

So move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

But be congruent with the rules of the biosphere.
Otherwise it cannot sustain you
And when you become space travelers
Traveling from planet to planet in other stars
Remember to strictly follow the rules of the cosmo-
sphere
To keep the rhythmic dances in you sustainable

So move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic.

Wait a minute!
I am just rhythmic dances in Brahmha or ether field!

But what is ether?
What is Brahmha?
Why does it undulate as vastly different entities?

Why is it rhythmic?
Whoever has created it?

My! That's a load of questions!
I don't know!

West does not want to recognize the ether field as
reality.

Even though we know we are real & full of electrons.
And our technologies using matter & electronics
works for real.

And the equations can explain them!

East converted the Brahmhanic science into a religion.
Visualizable Gods and Goddesses
So it is only an abstract spirituality
Not some objective reality

So, the time has come to synthesize
The tendencies to mathematize and visualize
To bring the East and the West into real cross-cultural
intercourse

Let diversity play out
And keep on asking – Why? Why? Why?
Let's dance to that consummation!
That's the final path to peaceful evolution

So, move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic

And be happy!

Wait! Hap-py?

Happiness is an inside job
Job of the mind
But what is mind?

Oh! Please, leave me alone!
I don't know what mind is
Just let me be!
And, you just be!

But, no matter what -
Move it, move it, move it
Be rhythmic, rhythmic, rhythmic

This will keep us happy most of the time!

Two Hindi Poems: Agraha and Prem

Lakshman S. Thakur*
Tolland, Connecticut

आग्रह -१

लक्ष्मण सिंह
टालैंड, कनेक्टिकट

अलकों तट प्यासों के बादल
प्राण इन्हें विचरित रहने दो।
शोध मूकता के निबन्ध की
फिर फिर अर्थ लगाती प्रियतम
अंधकार के पीछे, निर्भय
ज्योतिशिखा का अंकुर अनुपम।
उपवन तट घावों के कलिदल
प्राण इन्हें सुरभित रहने दो।१ अल०

व्यंजित वाणी का दुस्साह
शब्दों बीच छिटकता जाता
विपुल कल्पना के आघातों
निधेन सत्य सिमटता जाता।

मानसपट भावों के संबल
प्राण इन्हें मुखरित रहने दो।२ अल०

जीव-हीन निश्चेतन देहों
के पीछे जो छिपी सांस है
नैराश्यों के अंतराल में
निर्निमेष टक रही आस है।

अंतर्घट जीवन की कल कल
प्राण इसे प्रसवित रहने दो।३ अल०

होठों के कम्पन की सुषुमा
जिन रागों की पंगति बनती
सांसों की उष्मा की गरिमा
जिन भागों की संगति बनती।

पनघट में गागर की छल छल
प्राण इसे बिंबित रहने दो।४ अल०

सिंदूरी मांगों के पिछे

रक्त प्रतिज्ञा की लकीर जो
हृदय आवरण की छाया में
प्राण मिलन छवि सी अधीर जो।

चूनर के पीछे की हलचल
प्राण इसे सकुचित रहने दो।५ अल०

हृदय पटल का विचलित कंपन
विश्व विजयिनी प्रेयसि चितवन
सृष्टि विनाश हास कटु क्रंदन
योग भोग का ताड़ित बंधन।

चुंबन की गुरुता का प्रतिफल
प्राण इसे वंचित रहने दो।६
अलकों तट प्यासों के बादल
प्राण इन्हें विचरित रहने दो।

प्रेम

लक्ष्मण सिंह
टालैंड, कनेक्टिकट

वक्ष की आगों जला है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!

रीतिओं की धमनियों में
कर चुका संचार है यह
तंतुओं में हृदय के, बन
प्राण चिर उपहार है यह।
देह के धागों सिला है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!१

सांझ पतझर जन्म देती
बसती ऊषा मनोहर
प्यास की पगडंडियों रिस
तृप्ति का भरता सरोवर।
भूख की तापों गला है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!२

जकड़ कर संपूर्ण जीवन
कांपती गोरी कलाई !
पर्वतों में घाटियां सी
दृष्टि किंचित थरथराई।
व्यथा के भागों जुड़ा है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!३

कहे कोई, गीत मेरा
शब्द मधु षण्यंत्र केवल!
दुःख सुख की भावना यह
पक्तियों का यंत्र केवल !
झूठ के घावों भरा है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!४

सत्य के विस्फोट अगणित
जब हृदय भीतर बसे हैं!
ढूँढना क्या दिग दिगंतर
दीप जो अब तम डंसे हैं?
छद्म तरु शाखों कटा है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!५

गीत गायक एक कहता
गह चुका वह अर्थ मेरा !
सिलवटों में शब्द की छुप
चांद ज्यों बन कर अंधरा !
भांति की विस्मय-कला है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!६

सुहागिन, आंचल सजा दो
झुक नयन के ज्योति-बादल
सांस की पीयूष भिक्षा
मांगता यह पतित घायल !
रक्त के दागों धुला है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!७
वक्ष की आगों जला है,
प्रेम का सम्बंध, प्रियतम!

HOT TO THE TOUCH

Nilanjan Bhowmick¹
Storrs, Connecticut

Calcutta.

Debu and Paanchu are pulling heavy carts up an incline. The road is busy. Trucks, buses and cars pass them by. Smoke fans their faces.

Stop! Cries out Debu.

Why?

I think your cart is less loaded than mine.

What!

Yes. Look, you are ahead of me.

I am just stronger than you.

That is not going to wash with me. I think my cart is heavier than yours.

I am just inches ahead of you!

Inches! That is at least three feet. Who are you trying to fool?

This is three feet! Are you blind? Look where you are and where I am. I can touch you easily. Don't waste my time.

Paanchu glares, stops, and rests his cart. The crates creak and the ropes holding them groan. Debu stops too. He carefully measures the distance between the carts with his feet. He puts one foot in front of the other so that they touch toe to heel. Then he repeats the process. He does it five times till he finds himself face to face with Paanchu.

See! Debu says.

See what! Obviously you are wrong.

Wrong my foot! You are ahead of me. Your cart has to be lighter.

Even if it were, what on earth are we supposed to do about it?

We have to re-arrange everything.

Are you insane? In the middle of the road!

Ohh! Me insane! What about the appalling injustice of you carrying the lesser load and me, carrying the greater burden?

¹ Nilanjan is a graduate student in the Department of Philosophy, University of Connecticut-Storrs.

Oh God! I will never work with you again.

We will see about that.

Paanchu lets his cart down in disgust.

Debu quickly cuts the ropes loose with a knife in both the carts. Then he moves one crate from his own cart to the other. Then he shifts another one.

Hey wait! Paanchu shouts.

What!

Why are you shifting two crates? One was enough!

I am not sure whether two are enough! But I will let it go for now.

What are you, a weighing machine?

I have experience. You are new to the trade.

Huh! Experience! All this is hot air.

Debu ties up his own cart again with an expertise that is obvious to the eye. His companion takes time and finally when the job is done, they start off again.

The heat is up. The sun is roaring. The incline is steep and they both sweat and struggle.

Wait! Paanchu cries out.

Huh!

You are ahead of me now. You scoundrel, you cheated me.

Stop lying! You are just going slowly on purpose. You can't fool me.

Paanchu was not ready for this. He struggles for an answer.

Let's keep going, says Debu. We have to get to the factory in time. We have only half an hour more and there are two more kilometers to go. If we are late we won't get our due wage.

Now I know why no one else likes to work with you.

To hell with your knowledge! Trying to fool me with slow speed! I am too experienced for all this.

They eye each other with distrust. Their arms strain as they reach the top of the incline. The muscles spring out and the veins tremble. The descent is even harder. They balance themselves on their shins as they wobble down. A bus driver passing by curses them for blocking the way.

At the factory, they collect their wages. Paanchu is fuming with anger. He has no idea how he can take revenge but he feels he must and on the spot if possible.

They count their wages. Then Debu says, "I know another place where there might be some work. Let's go there."

Hey! Who are you to command me! I am my own master and will go where I will, Paanchu says hotly.

Oh ho! What a great man I have run into! I am sorry I didn't know that you are a film star in disguise.

Stop this nonsense!

Look, if you don't want to starve we better go now.

Paanchu thought to himself: Well, here is a chance I have to cheat this rascal. I should not let it go.

Well, okay, let me see you fool me *this* time, he says.

Ahh! I see, still thinking about *that*. Hot to the touch, huh. A true film star! Well, well, in our profession you will have to grow above such pettiness.

Pettiness! Paanchu seethes with rage.

They walk to the next factory. They get work as expected. A small man with a sun-burnt face barks at them and shows them the crates they have to load. His voice is hard and has an edge of violence to it. They jump and run whenever the man speaks.

Paanchu realizes that this is his chance to get even. But Sun-Burnt-Face intervenes.

Which of you two lazy bones can tie the crates faster? He growls.

I can, says Debu.

Good. Get cracking.

They quickly load the crates and Paanchu watches with dismay as his cart grows heavier. He can feel the sun boring a hole into him. He can do nothing while Sun-Burnt-Face stands over them. He can't believe that this is happening to him. He feels helpless. Debu stacks up everything and ties it all up.

Better satisfy yourself that the weights are the same, says Debu. He picks the carts one by one and pretends to pull at them.

Yeah, they look the same to me. Now don't complain about it, OK. I am a fair man.

Paanchu wants to hit out but Sun-Burnt-Face is watching closely.

They set off. Paanchu groans and grumbles. His eyes pop out as he pulls at the cart. He looks angrily as Debu romps ahead.

Hey wait! Calls out Paanchu.

What! I can't hear you.

I said wait!

The traffic is too noisy. Can't hear you. We will talk when we get to our destination.

Cars and scooters and buses and rickshaws honk past them. Passerby spit past them.

By and by, Debu gets quite far ahead. He is a mere speck in the distance.

Paanchu strains and pulls. When he reaches the yard, Debu is waiting for him.

You took a long while, he says and smiles.

Paanchu takes off a piece of cloth tied around his head and wipes the sweat off his whole body. He feels like caving in. Revenge is still swelling in his head.

They collect their wages from a lackey of Sun-Burnt Face and decide to rest.

What will you eat? Says Debu cheerfully.

Nothing.

What are you all upset about? You think you got left behind because I had overloaded you. It is just the sun. I have more experience. You are a rookie. That is why you were lagging behind.

A sea of fury surges within Paanchu. Hunger gnaws at his stomach as well.

They both eat under the shade of a tree. Paanchu keeps silent and feels lost. Debu seems boisterous. His spirits are high. He talks of everything – his wife, his children, the slum he lives in, the water supply in the summer, the general corruption everywhere. His talk never seems to end.

After lunch, Debu said that he will take a nap before taking another shot at finding work.

Paanchu thought this over: the only way to take revenge is to make sure that this fellow gets no work. I should simply desert him. Alone, he will never find work.

He excused himself and said he wanted to see if he can drink some cold water somewhere.

You won't get it anywhere at this time of the day.

I can try.

Debu lies down with a huff.

Paanchu walks away. The heat pulsates. The air simmers. Paanchu's throat is parched. He keeps walking, trying to get as far away from Debu as possible. He rests for a while under the shade of a bush. He knows he must look for work. He hasn't earned enough for the day.

He dozes off for a while and then wakes up. Then he hunts for work. He walks to factories and depots and yards known to him in the area. At some places he spots Debu, tying up crates, pulling away cheerily. He backs off immediately. At some places he has to wait for another lone laborer to come by. Sometimes pairs of laborers come and take the work. Finally, he finds a small mango cart to pull. The wage is appalling.

Evening approaches fast. The sun glowers. The sky is low and melting. Paanchu makes his way home, weaving his way amongst the traffic, which is beginning to overflow as the offices and the factories close for the day. He feels angry and tired.

At home, his child is playing outside with a ball made of wrapped and rolled up newspaper found in the trash. The child's eyes sparkle as he sees his father. He throws the ball at his father's feet. Paanchu rushes up to the child and slaps him hard twice.

Get in, you damned curse.

The child bawls. Paanchu is swept away by remorse for what he has done. But, he ignores his feelings, manages to hold himself together, and quickly steps inside his shack.

তবু কেন চেষ্টা করা

অরিজিৎ সিন্হা*
স্টেটার্স, কানেকটিকাট

মনটা বেশ কয়েকদিন হল বিষাদগ্রস্ত, সংসারধর্ম থেকে আজ তাই নিলাম ছুটি।
রাস্তা দিয়ে হাঁটছি দিশাহীনভাবে, লোকে তাই করছে সন্দেহ।
সমুদ্রের মত গভীর জিজ্ঞাসা নিয়ে তাকাচ্ছে দুই একজন।
কিছু না বলেই পাশ কাটিয়ে যাচ্ছে নিঃশব্দে - দমকা হাওয়ার মত।
চোখ ফেরাতেই দেখলাম চারিদিকের আলোর মধ্যে ছায়ার মত একটি সমাধিক্ষেত্র।
ভিতরে ঢুকতে সাহসের দরকার পড়ল না -
কারণ জগৎ সংসারে আজ আমি একা।
সারি সারি সমাধি ছড়িয়ে রয়েছে চারপাশে।
জায়গাটা ঘুরে দেখি,
চিৎকার করে বলি -
একটা কফিনও কি খালি নেই ?
শেষের শব্দগুলি প্রতিধ্বনিত হতে থাকে চতুর্দিকে
- খালি নেই . . . খালি নেই . . .
সামনের একটা ফলকে দেখি লেখা একজনের নাম।
বয়স মাত্র ছ' বছর - যক্ষ্মার শিকার সে।
হঠাৎ একটা কচি গলা বলে উঠল -
Uncle আমি বাঁচতে চাই।
ধারেকাছে কাউকে চোখে পড়ল না।
কিন্তু গলাটা যেন আমার ছেলের মত।
তবে কি !
ছুটে বেরিয়ে এলাম সেখান থেকে।
সব অভিমান, দুঃখ ভুলে ফিরে গেলাম ঘরে।
একটি শিশুর নিষ্পাপ হাসি নিয়ে ছেলে আমার দিকে তাকিয়ে।
বুঝলাম -
নিজের জীবন থেকে পালিয়ে
আরো দুটো জীবন নষ্ট করার অধিকার নেই আমার।
অধিকার নেই মৃত্যুর আগে মরে যাওয়ার।

*Arijit Sinha is a graduate student in the Department of Statistics, University of Connecticut-Storrs.

Hair Getting Cut

Riddhi Adhikari*
Merrick, New York

One of the oldest memories I can recall is of fiddling with my grandmother's hair, hair that was very long and black with snowy white mixed in. I can very clearly remember thinking to myself, *Ma's hair is that long, too. Was it a tradition or something?* In the end, I came to the conclusion that yes, it was a tradition and something I wanted to do, too.

That was probably the biggest conscious decision I made, you know, pre-third-grade and all. And so, after years of not cutting it, my hair went from also shoulder length to past my waist. An unthinkable length – something I haven't seen people my age do much, if ever.

But I wanted something to remind me of that time when I was surrounded with a group of strangers that I had known in point of time and apparently were supposed to stand with me forever and ever and ever. To a time when I was surrounded with my entire family in a place where I wasn't particularly different.

When I walked around with my ridiculously long hair, I showed it proudly, almost like a banner to remind everyone of the heritage and the people I couldn't tell them about, all one-by-one. Because that is what I am, completely proud of all that makes me.

Unimaginable was it that I would actually cut my hair. In fact, I didn't quite understand myself why I wanted my hair, which was the product of years of commitment, cut off. It wasn't because I was a teenager (because is a pretty general thing to say and sounds it like you're trying to over simplify the mentality of a teenager) and it wasn't because I hated my hair the way it was. I think it was just because I change was necessary.

And I think I understand why I did it now better than I did before. It was probably since, when sever such a huge weight from your head, it becomes lighter and you're able to hold your chin a little higher. And because you don't need a banner to show who you are – you can just show it in every good action you do that you didn't need to and every kind thing you said just because it was a nice thing to say.

Heritage and culture might be technically something about your clothes and food and government system or something, but a key thing is forgotten in all this. To truly show when you have a heritage that you're proud of, you don't need to list off all your country's accomplishments back to your ancient ancestors discovered zero, just kind and courteous and thoughtful. Make them think, *Wow, what a wonderful person.* Because that's what really make a good culture, people who practice what they preach.

*Riddhi Adhikari is a 9th grader at the John F. Kennedy High School, Bellemore, New York.

Father, War, We Are Alone

Matthew Mercure*
Storrs, Connecticut

Father

His eyes stare down at his tray and linger.
Carefully he wraps his fingers around the cup before lifting.
He draws in water, slowly letting it seep to the back of his throat.
Adding contemplation to the flow. To the taste.

Picking up the hamburger, he takes a bite. Chewing deliberately.
Now and again we look up and stop pretending there is nothing more.
Our gazes brush past one another, quickly find new focus.

The captivating scene:
The colorful advertisements. Ketchup bottles half full.
Grains of pepper in the saltshaker. Loose crumbs of bread
From a previous meal. Streaks of moisture slowly fading.
The reflection of our world in the window.
Smearred yellow headlights on a dark, wet canvas.

The uncertainty, curious. This realization, foreign.
In the time between two bites.
I stare at the God I once knew.

Now fallen.

War

It was one of those summer days that go down as average.
Nothing of note passing the threshold of our senses.
The sun's brightness suggesting it was hotter than it really was.
Just when I thought this day would recede into the realm of routine,
A strange buzzing sound promises difference. A light thump.
A recognizable metronome. But not quite.

Looking up at the overhang of the wooden shed I saw a small wasp's nest.
Beneath it a spider web. And in the web a spider.
A wasp stuck, tangles of steel rope entwined around his middle.
It stirred, flapping its wings rapidly. Repeating the process every few seconds.
Sensing fatigue, the spider would close in, only to retreat at the threat of a sting.
The spider waiting for it to go limp, always testing to see if there was fight left.
I could only watch for 5 minutes.

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At first rooting for the spider, who was clever enough to build its web under the hive.
Then, I changed sides, rooting for the wasp, thinking what a tragic fate it was.

Maybe something symbolic lay at the heart of this .
Maybe something universal that could be applied to life from watching this struggle.
Or, maybe, nothing at all.

We Are Alone

We are all alone because we can't explain the happiness we feel.
How from the top of the mountain the whole valley lay before us.
No one acknowledging our scars. Or our panting breath.

We are alone because we can't explain the guilt that eats us whole.
The people that we let down, the choices we regret.
The justifications that make sense only to us.

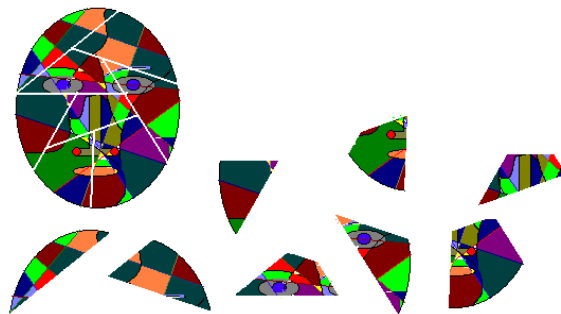
We are alone because all emotions have an epitome.
And our imaginations are vivid.
And comparison begets only disappointment.

We are alone because the child within us is quiet.
Sleds collect dust in sheds. Tree houses quietly gather moss.
And we look on our children with sympathy.

We are alone because life is easier that way.
We don't have to explain why dark corners scare us.
Or why we hope for gray clouds in the morning.

Abstraction: What Is It?

Nitis Mukhopadhyay*
Glastonbury, Connecticut



*<http://merlot.stat.uconn.edu/~nitis/>

Mahishasura Mardini

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Editor's Acknowledgment: Sayan Ray's painting on the cover of BAGH, Inc.'s 1995 brochure

The Sun Sets on the Prince of Calcutta

Dipayan P. Ghosh*
Storrs, Connecticut

Consider this: Calcutta has produced one of the greatest cricketers in world history. He appears at or near the top of all Indian record books, whether in Test matches or in one-day matches. In terms of career runs scored in Tests, his name appears fourth, after only those of fellow greats Gavaskar, Dravid, and Tendulkar. But, in one-day internationals (ODIs), his performance is even more legendary. His statistics in ODIs compare to those of the very best players around the world who have ever played the game. He is fourth in overall runs scored with only ul-Haq, Jayasuriya, and Tendulkar scoring more, while it is a fact that these other cricketers have all played many more ODI innings. He is also fourth in making centuries, with 22 centuries to his credit, second among those who scored in fifties, and has hit more sixes than any other Indian cricketer in history. And he holds many more records that speak volume of his dominance in the one-day format of cricket. He was, for instance, the fastest player in history to reach 9000 runs – he achieved this feat in fewer innings than such legendary batsmen as Tendulkar, Lara, and Ponting. Put this together with his form for India in the past year, and it is quite clear that he should be a central figure in Team India.

The man, of course, is Bengal's Sourav Ganguly, an Indian legend in both major forms of international cricket. But, to the surprise of many pundits, and the acrimony of millions of Indian supporters, Ganguly has been left out of the Rest of India team for the Irani Trophy. This has once again roused a huge controversy surrounding India's former captain and the world number one ODI batsman.

The Irani Trophy traditionally ranks as one of the most important domestic Indian cricket tournaments, as it is often used as a selection trial to finalize the strongest possible team India can field for major international series, and indeed it will undoubtedly be a selection tool for the national committee of selectors for the upcoming home series against Australia beginning in October. The exclusion of Ganguly from the squad is a clear message that the selectors are not confident in his batting ability, and additionally his athleticism, which has certainly deteriorated with age. But while Ganguly was never very athletic, his main threat came with the timing of his stroke-play and his ability to

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deftly caress the ball to the cover boundary with minimal lateral movement of his arms and a single, simple, proficient step towards the cover.

His exclusion comes as a bigger surprise because Ganguly was actually in blinding form in the 2007 calendar year, when he made his comeback from being dropped out during the Chappell era (during which it was widely believed that Ganguly ran into a biased selection committee and, quite certainly, a biased head coach in Greg Chappell). After kicking his comeback off with a lively 98 in the first of five ODIs against the West Indies in February 2007, and later collecting a Man of the Series award in a Test series against Pakistan on Indian soil, Ganguly was eventually named the Asian Cricketer of the Year.

While it is true that during the summer, Ganguly's form dipped against Sri Lanka, the same statement can easily be said of almost all Indian batsmen who took part in that series. Furthermore, Ganguly's replacement in the Test team is likely to be Mohammed Kaif, an athletic fielder but below-par middle order batsman who appeared in the Indian Test team thirteen times between 2000 and 2006. He and Yuvraj Singh are likely to fill the middle order for Rest of India during the Irani Trophy. Ganguly has ample reason to feel as if he was treated unfairly by the selection committee. In addition to the fact that both players first got their chances and emerged under Ganguly's captaincy, they both have alarmingly poor Test records. Certainly, they have not put in any performances good enough in the recent past to oust Ganguly from his spot in the Indian batting order. Furthermore, one could easily make the case that there are Indian players who have performed far worse than what Ganguly had in the past year, and that they should be dropped well before Ganguly's place in the lineup is questioned.

It would seem, then, as though Ganguly's batting form is not the main issue at hand, and, accordingly, questions regarding the selection committee's political alliances and geographic biases have been raised. Most notably, former India coach Sandeep Patil has expressed the concern that the exclusion of Ganguly from Rest of India actually has nothing to do with his cricketing ability, but instead may have more to do with Ganguly's political alliances, namely that with the reemerging and hugely influential Jagmohan Dalmiya, head of the Cricket Association of Bengal. If this is indeed the case, then it must be said that the national committee's priorities are, conservatively speaking, disappointingly biased.

In any case, Bengalis around the world will no doubt hail Sourav Ganguly, still the Prince of Calcutta and the city's most accomplished and most visible living celebrity. Having risen to the very pinnacle of a major sport as India's ambassador of cricket to the world for five years, Ganguly is the finest athlete that our vast city has ever produced. As we remember the career of a true sporting legend and icon of Bengal, let Ganguly's name bring a sense of pride to Bengalis the world over.

What Happens At Night

Mitali Bandyopadhyay*
Farmington, Connecticut

Ever wonder what happens at night?

The markers begin drawing on the
Cleared board
And the pencils begin to dance.
Soon the books begin to prance.

The globe starts to skip and
Papers begin to flip
Because that is what they do
At night.

Six hours later ...
It is the crack of dawn
Then they all began to
Yawn.

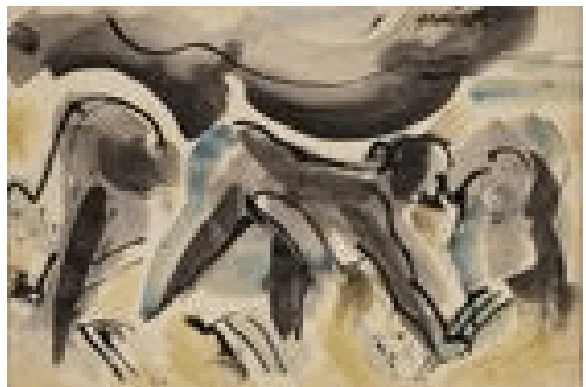
“The sun is up
We’ve had our fun” they
Say
And then return to their
Places without delay.

So that is what happens at night!

*Mitali Bandyopadhyay is a 5th grader at West Woods Upper Elementary School, Farmington, Connecticut.



Untitled 1949
Ramkinkar Baij



Harvesting 1975
Ramkinkar Baij

Editor's Acknowledgment:
<http://www.delhiartgallery.com/artworks/ramkinkar-baij-paintings-1856.aspx-1856.aspx>

ধীৰাজ ঘোষৰ বিবাহ

দীপ মুখোপাধ্যায়*
উইলিয়াম্‌টিক, কানেটিকাট

" Sweetheart I am walking alone "

Lab-mate বন্ধোনদাও মগ্নন এবাৰ দেশ তথক বিয়ে কৰে বোঁ নিয়ে এন আৰু
খানিকটো ঠাট্টাভুলেই বনে উঠিল " কি বান্ধু, এবাৰ কিছু কৰো, বেনা তো বয়ে মাথ..."
ওখন মতিয়েই ধীৰাজেৰ স্বৰ্ণেৰ বাঁৰি ডাঙন, অপেক্ষা কৰে কৰে, টেমিষ্টাটো বনত
এন আৰু গোন, ধীৰাজেৰ জীৱনে প্ৰেমেৰ দেখা নেই, আশেপাশে অনেকই বাঢ়ী আছে
একা, থিয়ছে দোৰা, তাদেৰ মুখী গেরন্ত জীৱন দেখে বাৰিগা অনুমানিত হছে।
এইতো মেদিনই মিঠুন ঘোষণা কৰে দিন ওল ওল কৰে খুঁজে অগোপনে Bengali
Matrimony থেকে সে এৰ জীৱনমণ্ডিনী পেয়ে গিয়েছে। সবাই মিঠুনেৰ সুদ্ধজয়েৰ
কাহিনী গোয়ালে গিলিল, সুদ্ধই বটে! দশ হাজাৰ মাইল দূৰে বমে শুৰি ISD
call, g-talk আৰু video conference কে হাতিয়াৰ কৰে দেখি-বিদেশী প্ৰতিযোগী
দেৰ উড়িয়ে দিয়ে বোঁ নাও! " নিজেৰে পুত্ৰীৰাজ মনে হছে " বনছিল মিঠুন, তৰে
মিঠুনেৰ এই জয় বিনামূল্যে আমেনি, এক কাঁড়ি টাকাৰ ISD বিন এক মামানি
আহোপিত মমন্ত কাৰ্ত মনে তৰেই এমেছে। নানা বকম কাৰ্তেৰ ফিগিফি আৰু বায়নাঙ্কা
স্বনে ধীৰাজ বেশ অবাৰ হলে শোলেও, মিঠুন বনলে " দিনবন্দা খাৰাপ দাদা...
বলবলতাৰ খুৰণ, South City Fame, InOX ছেফে ধ্যাৰেধে Stomach মাথে
আমাৰ কথা মামানিৰা ভাবতই পাৰেনা, বলবলতাৰ মেয়েৰা গও পাঁচ বছৰে
ঐশ্বৰ বনলে শোছে... " স্কুলেৰ বন্ধুদেৰ group mail এৰ forum এও একদিন
প্ৰমথটো উঠিল এক মোটা, অকেহে, দাঙ্গা প্ৰায় সব বন্ধুৰাই ধীৰাজকে জানিয়ে
দিন যে অবাণ্ড খগমুনেৰ গান ভায়ে, কাৰুৰ পথ চেনে বমে থাকা বন্ধ
কৰে Bengali matrimony অথবা নিজ নিজ বাপ-মায়ের আৰনাপন হয়েছে।

" ও লড়কি হায় বঁহা... "

দ্যাত পাঁচ ভেবে ধীৰাজ Bengali Matrimony তে একটা account বানিয়েই
গোনিল, মিঠুন মেহেতু মন্য মন্য সিদ্ধিনাও কৰেছে, ওকেই সুরু বানিয়ে সুরু
বৰল নিজেৰ মাৰ্ঘনা, যে পুজোৰ যে উপকৰন! প্ৰথমেই চাই দু-তিনটে ভাল
ছবি - hero types. ধীৰাজেৰ যে কথানা ছবি আছে একটাও মিঠুনেৰ পছন্দ
নাই হননা, " কিন্তু " ধীৰাজ কঁকিয়ে উঠিল " এখানে কোথায় কিশিৰ স্টুডিও
যে এক ছবিওই বিয়েৰ গ্যাৰেণ্টি দেবে? " " চাপ নিওনা দাদা, " বুদ্ধি
বাতলায় মিঠুন " আমাদেৰ ফান্টই তো বেশ photographer " অসত্যা
photo session এ বমন্ত হয় ধীৰাজকে, এবাৰ মেইমেৰ ছবি আৰ বিয়েৰ
বাজাৰে নিজেৰ চাহিদা ও মেগান সম্পৰ্কিত একটা note তেৰি কৰে notice
board এ বুলিয়ে দেওয়া, search engine এ চেপে বাজবল্যেৰ সন্ধান,
কও কাও মেইল, বাখানা কথনো কি বিচিৰ এদেৰ নাম - অম্বান টুটুটু,

*Deep Mukhopadhyay is a graduate student in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Connecticut-Storrs.

Later, On_a_quest, ... স্বীরাঙ্গের প্রায় জুড়েই পথ হারানোর দশা, কলকাতা পবিত্র মতন দেখতে, কিন্তু mutual match হচ্ছেনা, তাে কারুর অন্য problem, Bookmark list স্বীকার মাঠের মতন জেরে ওঠে, প্রকৃতমই একদিন অভিত্যান জারি ছিল, মেদিন quest হিমারে শুরু-অিশ্রের মধ্যে আছে দেবাও। Statistician দেবা বিশ্লেের মত বুদ্ধি বাতলায় " profile শুনোকে একটা করে composite score দিয়ে mark করে, তারপর mark অনুযায়ী আবেদনপত্র পাঠাতে থাকে, এছাড়া যার তোমার profile এ interested, তার যখন যোগাযোগ করতে ওখন তাদেরও score দিয়ে দাও। একা ডেরমা না পেলে আমাদেবও ডেকে নিও, আমায় score দেবো, গাড় নিলে better হবে।"

"সহেনা নশা, সহেনা শুমার, নয়া স্যায়ার শায়, নয়া ইন্তেজার..."

প্রজাপতি স্বীরাঙ্গের এই কটাের তপে খেলি হলেন। কন্যের বা তাদের দায়স্বস্ত পিতৃদেবরা তার profile এ উকি ঝুকি মারা শুরু করলেন, মাম হুয়েক পর স্বীরাঙ্গ বাবুর বিবাহ অভিত্যান খানি 195 এ চলা গাড়ির সাতিতে প্রতিয়ে চলল, পাদে হিমারে একজনকে তার বেশ পছন্দ হল, মামনির চাঁদপানা মুখ, লোল গাল চেহারা, একটি ছোট দেখি কোম্পানির HR, gutalk এ বখারি পর চুকিয়ে এখন phone এ বখা হয়, প্রথমদিন তাে বেগরা এত ঘাবড়ে ছিল, বনেই খেলন এই প্রথম ও কোনো মেয়ের সাথে relationship এর আলায় বখা বনছে, 'চোম্রে বদুর' এ মসকর শোখের একই দশায় 'মিস চম্বকো' মুচকি হোমেলিনে, এখনকার মামনি হোমে কুটোপাটি হয়ে বনন "so cute", স্বীরাঙ্গ ঠিক করল মামনের চুক্তিও এখন বাচী থাকে, এখন মেয়েটির সাথে মামনা মামনি কথা বনে এই কথাবতরি ভবিষ্য নিয়ে একটা decision নেবে, মনে মনে একটা নামও দিয়ে দিন - Mission Koel. বেগয়েন এখন দেখা করতেও রাজি হয়ে হোল এখন স্বীরাঙ্গ আলায় বুক বাঁধন।

"ক'শ মে আয়ে বদরা..."

তিন মাম পরের কথা। স্বীরাঙ্গ বামে চড়ে যেও যেও বগলকের ক্ষুতি বোমলন করছিল, বনকাতায় পৌছে মময় বার করে মামনির সাথে appointment করে ঠিক মময় মত পৌছে গিয়েছিল স্বীরাঙ্গের। কোয়েন office শেষ করে এল, ওরা Barista-র একটা নিষ্ঠুর বোনে গিয়ে বসল, হালকা চানে বখা শুরু হল, হঠাৎ টিগনার্ণে আবেক জনের প্রবেশ, "আরে রাজু না?" বনতেই স্বীরাঙ্গের নজর পাড়ে, মে কয়েক মেকেহেই চিনে পারে "তুমি পাবিত্রদা না?" এতক্ষনে কোয়েন ঘুরে ওকলয়। এবার স্বীরাঙ্গকে এবার কয়ে পাবিত্র কোয়েনকে বনে ওঠে "আরে তোমার মধ্যে এজাবে দেখা হয়ে যাবে ওবতেই পারিনি, পরের মস্তাহেই তাে meet করার বখা ছিল," কাউকে বোনে কিছু বলার অবকাশ না দিয়েই বনে চলন "রাজু তোমার বন্ধু হয়? great" এবারে স্বীরাঙ্গের দিকে থিরে "Bengali Matrimony দিয়ে আলাপ আমাদেব, বুঝনি রাজু, দ্যাখ দেখি

শের মধ্যে চেনা বেরিয়ে গেল, কোন আমার সাজীটা wait করছে, তাড়ায়
আছি। পরে কোনোদিন কথা হবে'খন, Bye Koel, I will call you later"
অঙ্কের বেলা পবিত্র বেরিয়ে যাওয়ার পরমুহুর্তে স্মরণের নীরবতা,
চপমে যাওয়া মুখে অামান নিজের HR গায়েশুনায় কাঁপি উজাড় করে
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স্বীরাঙ্ক খেয়াল বারননা তার বামটা কখন অ্যামবাজার পাঁচ মাথার মোড়ের
দ্রাঘিকের আটকে গেছে,



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We pray that every heart will be filled with infinite cheers.

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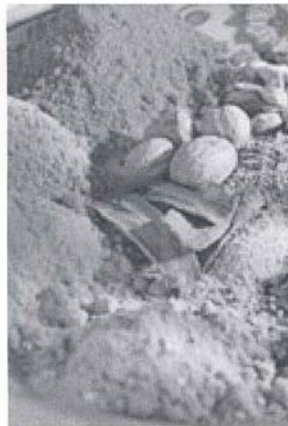
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Editor's Acknowledgment: *Paschimbanga, Rabindra Sankhya*, 1994, page 67

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