

# পাঁচালীর পথ

## - শঙ্কর বসু

নরম হলুদ আলোয় মুখ ঢেকেছে বিস্তীর্ণ শহর  
হেমন্তের মেঘমেলা আকাশে জন্ম নিচ্ছে  
আসন্ন বরফের চাদর  
স্বপ্নযাত্রীর চোখ খুঁজে ফেরে পাঁচালীর সেই পথ ।

অ্যাসফাল্ট আর উন্নয়নের আন্তরনে  
ঢেকে গেছে পথের ঠিকানা  
অসলোর প্রত্যন্ত গ্রামে মোমের আলোয়  
হাওয়াই দ্বীপের এলোমেলো সন্ধ্যায়  
আফ্রিকার বৃকে সদ্য পাতা রেললাইনে  
ব্রুকলিনের রাতে বা ভোরের আশ্রয়  
টুকরো হয়ে পড়ে আছে পথ  
ধুলোর রাশির মত ছিন্নভিন্ন ।

নিশ্চিন্তপুরের মাটা ছুঁয়ে হারিয়ে ছিল যে পথ  
দিকশূন্য দিগন্তরেখা হলুদ মাঠের সীঁথি  
শত বছরের আবর্তে পাক খেয়ে  
পায়ে পায়ে মিশে গেছে পুরাতন খেয়াঘাটে  
বিররায়ের বটতলায়  
আরও কিছু কল্পনায় ।

“যে ফিরিবে বলিয়া যায়নি  
শুধুই চলিয়া গিয়াছে  
অচেনার মোহ মুগ্ধতায় ...  
পাঁচালীর পথ তাকে খুঁজিয়া লইয়াছে  
রাজপথের জনঅরণ্যে  
ফিরাইয়া দিয়াছে অনির্বাণ কৌতূহলী চক্ষুদুটি  
বাস্তবের কঠোর নির্মোকে নিবন্ধ  
কল্পনার কুঠুরিতে” ।



## দুনিয়া

### - কৌশিক ভট্টাচার্য

দুনিয়াটাকে নিজের মত করে পাল্টে দিতে চেয়েছিল সে ।  
বড়-ছোটোর ব্যবধান ঘুচিয়ে  
মানুষের জন্য গড়ে তুলতে চেয়েছিলো  
এক আদর্শ পৃথিবী ।

তারপর  
অজস্র অত্যাচার  
গুরুতর গঞ্জন  
আর  
কান্নাভরা দীর্ঘশ্বাসের কোনো এক ফাঁকে  
তার  
অস্থিতে  
মজ্জাতে  
শিরাতে  
শিরাতে  
টুকে পড়লো  
নিজেকে  
ফুলিয়ে  
ফাঁপিয়ে  
ছোটো থেকে বড় করার নেশা ।

দুনিয়া তাকে পাল্টে দিলো নিজের মত করে ।

# Swami Vivekananda and Japan

- Swami Medhasananda

*(This is a transcript of the speech delivered by Swami Medhasananda at the public celebration of Swami Vivekananda's 155<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary in Tokyo)*

Today we have assembled here to celebrate the 155th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda and also 125th anniversary of his visit to Japan. We are holding this celebration not just because Swamiji was the founder of the worldwide Ramakrishna Order of which our Society is a branch; Swamiji was also one of the few eminent personalities of the modern world, who have impacted it with profound thoughts and ideas.

Swamiji's electrifying messages are sources of inspiration to millions of souls. It is worthy of special mention that Japan, which is largely a Buddhist country, was blessed by the visit of Swami Vivekananda, considered as the Second Buddha by many. This is a momentous event in the whole religious history of Japan of which only few are aware.

In the following talk we shall briefly narrate some of the aspects of Swami Vivekananda's visit to Japan:

Our latest investigation on Swamiji's voyage from Bombay to Kobe on his way to attending the world's first Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September 1893 shows that on May 31, 1893, Swamiji set sail from Bombay aboard the *Peninsular*. On June 13th he reached Hong Kong. At Hong Kong he transferred to the *Verona* and set sail for Japan on the 24th. On 27th he reached Nagasaki, and on June 30th he reached Kobe. In proceeding on to Yokohama, Swamiji must have been made aware that a ship bound for Vancouver would depart Yokohama on July 14th. Even so, he appears to have had a prior intention of doing some sightseeing within Japan journeying from Kobe to Yokohama by road and rail. This truth appears in his letter of July 10th where he writes: "*Here I gave up the steamer (at Kobe) and took the land route to Yokohama, with a view to seeing the interior of Japan*"

Swamiji reached Kobe on June 30, 1893. From that day, until his departure from Yokohama on July 14th, he spent two weeks within the country, visiting cities like Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Tokyo and Yokohama.

Now some pertinent questions follow about Swamiji's itinerary. What places of interest he visited; how long he stayed here and there; what his modes of transport were; what sorts of food he was introduced to; how much things cost; who he interacted with and what they thought of him? Regretfully, we have very limited sources of first-hand data to throw much light on these questions. We do, however, have the aforementioned letter written by Swamiji to Alasinga Perumal of Madras, his devotee and one of the sponsors of his trip to the USA, from the Oriental Hotel in Yokohama dated July 10, 1893, relating some of his travel experiences in Japan. This was the first correspondence Swamiji sent to his circle in India since he had left the shores of his Motherland more than a month before.

Let us begin by quoting the first-hand description of Japan given by Swamiji in that letter:

*"The first port we touched was Nagasaki. We landed*

*for a few hours and drove through the town. What a contrast! The Japanese are one of the cleanliest people on earth. Everything is neat and tidy. Their streets are nearly all broad, straight, and regularly paved. Their little houses are cage-like and their pine-covered evergreen little hills form the background of almost every town and village. The short-statured, fair-skinned, quaintly-dressed Japanese, their movements, attitudes, gestures, everything is picturesque, Japan is the land of the picturesque! Almost every house has a garden at the back, very nicely laid out according to Japanese fashion with small shrubs, grass-plots, artificial waters, and small, stone bridges.*

*Here I gave up the steamer and took the land-route to Yokohama, with a view to seeing the interior of Japan. I have seen three big cities in the interior—Osaka, a great manufacturing town, Kyoto, the former capital, and Tokyo, the present capital. Tokyo is nearly twice the size of Calcutta with nearly double the population.*

*The Japanese seem now to have fully awakened themselves to the necessity of the present times. They have now a thoroughly organised army equipped with guns, which one of their own officers has invented, and which is said to be second to none. Then, they are continually increasing their navy. I have seen, a tunnel nearly a mile long, bored by a Japanese engineer.*

*The match factories are simply a sight to see, and they are bent upon making everything they want in their own country. There is a Japanese line of steamers plying between China and Japan, which shortly intends running between Bombay and Yokohama.*

*I saw quite a lot of temples. In every temple there are some Sanskrit Mantras written in Old Bengali characters. Only a few of the priests know Sanskrit. But they are an intelligent sect. The modern rage for progress has penetrated even the priesthood. I cannot write what I have in my mind about the Japanese in one short letter. I only want that numbers of our young men should pay a visit to Japan and China every year. Especially to the Japanese, India is still the dreamland of everything high and good."*

From the above we know for certain that Swamiji's first encounter with Japan took place in Nagasaki. He managed to find a few hours here to see the city by a horse carriage. This very first exposure to Japan made him realise with wonder how different this place was from those ports of call from Ceylon to Hong Kong he had seen on the voyage, so much so that in narrating his visit to Nagasaki in his letter he exclaimed, "What a contrast!"

Now let us begin with some conjecture on a tentative itinerary which Swamiji might indeed have followed during his visit to Japan. We have already mentioned that Swamiji reached the port of Kobe via Nagasaki on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Swamiji spends July 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in collecting a passport needed for inland travel in Japan and for some sightseeing in Kobe. Then from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> of July he was sightseeing in Osaka and nearby Kyoto. On the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of July he travels by trains some 20 to 22 hours from Osaka/Kyoto to Shinagawa. Then from the 7<sup>th</sup>

or 8<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of July he was registered at the Oriental Hotel in Yokohama and sightseeing in Tokyo, Yokohama and Kamakura, and also preparing for his departure to the USA via Vancouver. From the port at Yokohama on July 14<sup>th</sup> Swamiji boards the 'Empress of India' bound for Vancouver, B.C., Canada, arriving there on July 25<sup>th</sup>.

The possible places of interest Swamiji had visited in Japan include the following which were most popular sightseeing place during Swamiji's visit to Japan:

**\*In Kobe:** Hyogo Daibutsu and Nofukuji Temple

**\*In Osaka:** Osaka Castle, Osaka Iron Works, Osaka Cotton Spinning Company, Tenmangu Temple and the Match Factory

**\*In Kyoto:** Sanjyusangen-do Temple, Kiyomizu dera, Yasaka Jinja, Chion-in Temple, Hokoji Temple, Higashi Honganji Temple, Nishi Honganji Temple, Kinkakuji Temple

**\*In Nara:** Todaiji Temple and Kasuga Taisha Shrine

**\*In Tokyo:** Sensōji Temple (Asakusa-Kannon), Tōkyo Imperial Palace, Sengakuji Temple, Tsukiji-Honganji Temple

**\*In Kamakura:** Daibutsu, Enkakuji, Tsurugaoka-Hachimangu Shrine

What modes of transport were common in Japan during Swamiji's visit, which Swamiji possibly utilized?

In addition to trains powered by steam engine, the wheeled rickshaw drawn mostly by men called a 'jinrikisha', as horses were reserved for military use, was becoming common and popular. Not only was it used for local transport of passengers and goods, sometimes they were hired for transport to more distant locations as well. One contemporary traveller observed the following regarding the 'jin (person) ricksha':

*"Jinrikisha runs through the centre of the town. We cannot see anything when the jin rikisha runs fast, as if we are in our dream world. The driver runs just like a horse with a smile and a jump. The jinrikisha fee is 0.1 yen a time and 0.75 yen to 1 yen per day. If we hire a strong man or 2 drivers, we can move on 70 kilometres a day. Now there are a lot of jinrikisha in every town and county in Japan."*

According to one account there were 46,000 jinrikisha in Tokyo by 1872.

Swamiji offered but short descriptions of what he saw in Japan with some observations in his letter already quoted. We shall now present some of these observations in greater detail, as well as some newer ones occasioned by his reflections on Japan made later in India.

In one expressive sentence penned by Swamiji, his deep appreciation and love of Japan is clear when he writes in a letter dated June 18, 1901 to Okakura Tenshin, *"Japan to me is a dream—so beautiful that it haunts one all his life."* Swamiji was greatly impressed by the beautiful landscape of the country and the houses; the cleanliness and orderliness of the people and their environs, the tidy and broad streets, the beautifully dressed people, the nice hair style and graceful and elegant kimono of the ladies. He also observed the engineering skills, modernized military and weaponry, match factories, etc., and that the Japanese seemed to be bent on making everything they wanted and needed in their own country. It is also amazing that Swamiji made the following profound political observation, after noticing Japan's efforts to become strong and modernize like Western nations: "Having achieved that goal to a great

extent, Japan is waiting for international recognition and appreciation of its accomplishments, thus raising its political and diplomatic status on the world stage."

Swamiji appreciated Japanese food in general and specifically mentioned 'daler jhol' (miso shiru), a soup made with fermented soy bean paste, which he remarked could be easily digested. He also remarked in one letter dated April 24, 1897: *"Japan is an example of what good and nourishing food can do,"* which is self-explanatory.

Swamiji was not only fond of, but a lover of Japanese painting, about which he made several remarks later, such as: *"They are a great nation because of their art."*

Swamiji later reminisced that during his visit to Japan he was so enamored by a Japanese painting that he felt like buying it with what money he had for the trip to Chicago and simply return home.

Swamiji saw many temples in Japan and obviously the most famous of them were in Kyoto. He was surprised to see some Sanskrit mantras written in old Bengali characters, the reason being that the Siddham script of Sanskrit, which became current in Japan, looks similar to old Bengali script which was derived from the former script. Swamiji remarked about religion in Japan during an interview about his experiences in Japan: *"Japanese Buddhism is entirely different from what one sees in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). It is the same as Vedanta. It is a positive and theistic Buddhism, not the negative atheistic Buddhism of Ceylon."*

Swamiji definitely came across Buddhist priests with whom he must have tried to interact with, but presumably with not much success because of the language barrier. He did, however, comment about them saying: *"Only a few of the priests know Sanskrit, but they are an intelligent sect. The modern rage for progress has penetrated even the priesthood."*

Incidentally, when Swamiji was travelling around the Tokyo-Yokohama area in the second week of July, Okakura Tenshin was living at that time in that area. He had been appointed as Principal of the newly established Government Art College and until recently was busy in preparing lots of Japanese art objects for display at the Colombian Exposition in Chicago. He himself, however, did not go there. Japanese delegates to the Parliament of Religions had either already departed or were about to set sail soon. It would appear, however, that neither Swamiji nor Okakura or even the Japanese delegates were aware of each other at the time.

Swamiji was not only a monk, he was a patriotic monk. As a patriot he would often ponder how his motherland could be raised from its current pitiable condition under British Imperial rule and be transformed into a great nation, as it had been in the past. This would enable India to share her priceless heritage of spirituality with other nations of the world. His visit to Japan and observations of the Japanese gave him five important clues in achieving his mission of regenerating India.

The first of these was the strong faith that the Japanese have in themselves. The second was the tremendous love of the Japanese for their country and their apparent willingness to sacrifice everything for the sake of their country. Thirdly, the Japanese had fully awakened themselves to modern times, namely to transform from a medieval country to a modern nation. Fourthly, though the Japanese learned and had borrowed much from the advanced countries of the West and adapted these ideas and technologies, yet they remained distinctly Japanese all the same and did not turn into Europeans. And finally they instituted a theoretical,

practical and universal education in all sectors to prepare the people for a necessary transformation of their country.

In fact, universal education introduced by the Meiji Administration was the most important single factor which transformed Japan into modern country within a remarkably short period.

Swamiji explained some of these points in reply to a question put to him by a reporter of a newspaper in India asking, "*What is the key to Japan's sudden greatness?*"

Not only in his letter written from his hotel room in Yokohama, but in his private conversations and in interviews with the media in later years, Swamiji repeatedly advised Indians to visit Japan. For example, on one occasion he remarked, "*If I can get some unmarried graduates, I may try to send them over to Japan and make arrangements for their technical education there, so that when they come back they may turn their knowledge to the best account for India.*"

While reading this account a question almost inevitably crosses one's mind, as did the Indian reporter who asked next:

Reporter: "Is it your wish that India should become like Japan?"

Swamiji: "Decidedly not! India should continue to be what she is. How could India ever become like Japan or any nation for that matter?"

In fact what Swamiji really meant here is that a nation, like an individual, should imbibe the good qualities which it lacks from others and enrich itself. Thus, mutual giving and taking will make all nations great without losing their own characteristics or national identities. Just as Swamiji had observed that while Japan had learnt much from Europe, it had maintained its own identity.

However, there is a pertinent question as to why Swamiji thought it would be better to seek the assistance of Japan, rather than from a highly developed Western nation like England or the USA. The answer is because, while in Japan, Swamiji got the impression, "*that India was still a dreamland of everything high and good to the Japanese.*" He explained this further in one of his letters to Miss Josephine MacLeod on June 14, 1901, "The help that Japan will give us will be with great sympathy and respect, whereas from the West, unsympathetic and destructive."

Towards the end of the same letter Swamiji made a highly significant remark saying, "Certainly it is very desirable to establish a connection between India and Japan", which was later reiterated by Rabindranath Tagore and put into practice.

It is clear from Swamiji's comments on Japan vis-a-vis India, expressed since his visit to Japan in July 1893 and much later, that he had a firm belief it would do good for Indians if they imbibed the positive qualities of the Japanese without abandoning their own national characteristics. Here we see Swamiji not just in the role of a traditional religious leader, but the mentor of a nation; not only thinking in terms of spiritual regeneration, but also concerned with the material rejuvenation of his country.

Here we must point out that in spite of his high appreciation of Japan, Swamiji was skeptical and even critical of Japan on two scores. The first was from an off-hand comment he made in Bengali which apparently aired his skepticism about the long-term prospects of Japan borrowing culture from the West, though it had yielded

immediate and positive results. Swamiji's scepticism was later proved when Japan, following the path of imperialist Western nations, turned into such a nation itself and finally suffered greatly.

The second observation regarded the state of monasticism in Japan about which he made the following critical remarks: "Modern Buddhism - having fallen among races who had not yet come up to the evolution of marriage - has made a travesty of monasticism. So until there is developed in Japan a great and sacred ideal about marriage (apart from mutual attachment and love) I do not see how there can be great monks and nuns."

It is certain during his short visit to Japan, he was pained to observe that though Buddhism was still prevalent in Japan, monasticism, one of the most important aspects of Buddhism, had been corroded to a great extent, and in its place a priest craft had emerged. Whatever those reasons may be for this corrosion of the monastic ideal, this has adversely affected the religious sequence of events in Japan with far reaching results.

However, we have no idea of what those fortunate Japanese who chanced to meet Swamiji, an unknown monk at that time, during his visit to Japan, had thought about him. Only this much is recorded—that at least some of them held him in such high esteem that they referred to him as the Second Buddha, as noted earlier.

Though Vivekananda could not revisit Japan in spite of the cordial invitation from Okakura Tenshin and Reverend Oda of Japan owing to his failing health, the country was very much in his mind even unto the last, as on the day of his passing away he was heard to say: "*I want to do something for Japan*". The wishes of such great souls do not remain unfulfilled. In the present case Swamiji's wish was fulfilled when a Society was started in 1959 by some devotees, which later became The Vedanta Society of Japan in Zushi City, Kanagawa Prefecture, and an official branch of the Ramakrishna Mission, propagating and implementing the messages of Vedanta and Ramakrishna/Vivekananda in various ways in this country.

Again, if we were to analyze the trends of the Indo-Japanese relationship in recent years, it would be evident that what Swamiji had hoped for about a century ago is now actually taking place. While Japan has been largely contributing to the material welfare of India, by lending both financial and technical assistance, India is also lending spiritual support to many people of Japan, who visit India on pilgrimage to places associated with Lord Buddha, as well as to various religious organisations and ashramas to derive spiritual inspiration.

The Indo-Japanese relationship is not restricted to economic and spiritual areas alone, but also extends to cultural sectors – especially, the traditional health-care system, food and performing arts.

Swamiji's repeated advice to Indians, given personally or through interviews published in newspapers, to visit Japan did not go in vain either. In fact, if one goes through the newspapers and journals published in Bengal after Swamiji's passing away in 1902, one will find plenty of such reports of people visiting Japan for various purposes, including receiving training in various cottage industries. Some of them wrote books or articles in magazines on their experiences in Japan.

It is interesting to note here that even before Rabindranath's visit to Japan for the first time in 1916, his son Rathindranath Tagore had visited this country in 1906

with a group of 15 young men.

Now greater numbers of young Indians in connection with information technology are visiting Japan and are being impacted by this country, thus fulfilling the long cherished wish of Swamiji.

For the sake of truth we must mention here that more than one hundred years after Swamiji's visit to Japan, there have been significant changes in the Japan he had seen and what it has become today. While, unfortunately, some aspects of its wonderful tradition and culture have lost importance, it retains some of them today. In short Japan has been passing through a critical era presently.

On the other hand, is there any scope of studying and implementing the profound messages on various subjects Swami Vivekananda delivered for the benefit of the Japanese?

We can identify at least five areas in which Vivekananda's ideas can contribute substantially to Japanese Society namely; by imparting a genuine and broad-based spirituality, by preaching the ideal of Karma Yoga; regenerating Buddhism; motivating the local people and, finally, promoting the India-Japan relationship. Here we shall take up only two of those areas and briefly discuss them:

### **The Ideal of Karma Yoga**

The dedication of the Japanese to work and their striving for perfection is proverbial, making matchless products and capturing world markets. However, a close observation of a people focused on work reveals that tremendous stress and strain due to relentless work pressures tells upon their physical and mental health, as well as personal relationships.

Hence, everyone wants to know how, while performing all those duties that one cannot just give up, one can become free from stress and enjoy good health and mental peace, and if so inclined, even become spiritually elevated. In this Swami Vivekananda's ideas on Karma Yoga can be of substantial help.

### **Motivational**

In a recent US survey, student graduates and new company employees were asked if they had received any education or training at home or at school on how to face the crises of life encountered such as failures, frustration, loss, and consequent stresses and fears. Most of these young people replied that they had either received absolutely no such training or very little of it.

This is also true in Japan. We feel disturbed when young boys and girls, or even adults, suffer so tremendously and feel utterly helpless in the face of serious troubles in life—especially when there is a lack of interest in God or prophets and they run here and there for support, mostly unsuccessfully, and finally think of ending their lives. Should the parents and leaders of society helplessly watch this

condition and not think of especially equipping the young to boldly face life's adversities by providing them positive ideas and inspiring messages beforehand?

I am aware that there are quite a few books on 'inspiration' in Japanese, but I do not know the extent to which these books are utilized. However, in addition to those messages, memorizing and following some of the inspirational messages of Vivekananda would be of tremendous help. Vivekananda's messages are like elixirs to the soul and energy tonics to the negative and weak mind. We may recall here that one of the chief reasons prompting the Indian Government to proclaim Swamiji's birthday as 'Youth Day' in India, is that the government felt Swamiji's message has the tremendous power to inspire all, especially the young, to lead an ideal life. Here we provide a few of Swamiji's quotes to give you a better idea of them:

- All power is within you; manifest it!
- Strength is life, weakness is death.
- The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength.
- Unselfishness is God.

### **Conclusion**

It would be the height of folly to discard Vivekananda, as some are unfortunately prone to do, because he is a man of religion and therefore irrelevant. Swamiji had profound messages both for individuals and for nations. This is not only true with respect to Indians, but for people of other countries as well, including Japan. This is substantiated by a report that America's famous Smithsonian Institute had organized an exhibit highlighting thirty-one non-Americans who had greatly contributed to the culture and growth of America and Swami Vivekananda was among them.

A special character trait of the Japanese is that if they realize that a certain idea is good and beneficial for them, no matter where it comes from, they will no longer simply discuss or dream about it, they will adopt and adapt it. Now when once convinced that Swamiji's ideas will be greatly beneficial for the Japanese individual and nation, the next thought will be its implementation, which requires greater awareness of these ideas.

Likewise, by imbibing some laudable Japanese character traits, Indians, on the other hand, will fare better in their commitment to duty, discipline, unity and social ethics, as already suggested. Through this and by cooperation with each other in all sectors, we the people of two countries can fulfil the cherished dreams of not only Swami Vivekananda, but also of Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin, in creating a better bond between our two countries. That would also be a most fitting tribute to the hallowed memories of these three great men, the three great pioneers of the Japan-India relationship on the occasions of Swamiji's 155th birth anniversary, and especially, the 125th anniversary of his visit to Japan celebrations.

Thank you for listening so patiently. ■

# Illuminated Path and The True Devotee

- Suneel Bakhshi

I last had the pleasure of writing for this publication a few short years ago. Since then I have continued to study the Bhagavad Gita under Swami Nityasuddhananda of the Ramakrishna Sevashrama and Math in Kankhal, Haridwar. In doing so I have continuously sought to deepen my own understanding of our heritage and the beautiful philosophy of the Gita, with the idea of embedding its principles in my mind, and one day, hopefully in the minds of other seekers who might be open to its light.

For this attempt I have chosen verses or Shlokas which directly appeal for their practical application to daily life. The theme I follow in selecting these shlokas is of a traveller searching for stepping stones in safely crossing the river of life. I visualise these Shlokas as illuminated stones, emerging in a dark and swiftly flowing river, to guide safe passage.

There are many shlokas in the Gita reinforcing the same message. Here I begin with two Shlokas directing us to such a path, move on to seven Shlokas describing the various ways of the path, then to eight Shlokas which succinctly explain the qualities aspired to while on the path. I end with a comment by Swami Nityasuddhananda in describing the value to the seeker who trusts his or her fate to this path in the crossing. As so many people often might feel unsure of the merits of spending time to read our scriptures, I end with a typically insightful and inspiring comment by Swami Nityasuddhananda in describing the value to the seeker who trusts his or her fate to this path in the crossing.

I also quote from Dr. Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan's interpretation of the Gita, which remains in his eloquence and brevity, one of my favourite routes in English to the treasures of the Bhagavad Gita. The quotes from Dr. Radhakrishnan are in *italics*.

## SIGNS POINTING TO THE ILLUMINATED PATH : TWO SELECTED SHLOKAS FROM CHAPTER XI

Some readers would know that the eleventh (XI) chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is called "The Vision of the Cosmic Form".

In Shloka 48 of this vast chapter, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna :

na veda-yajñādhyayanair na dānair  
na cha kriyābhir na tapobhir ugraiḥ  
evaṁ-rūpaḥ śhakya ahaṁ nṛi-loke  
draṣṭuṁ tvad anyena kuru-pravīra OR

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानै-  
र्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।  
एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके  
द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥

*Neither by the Vedas, (nor by) sacrifices, nor by study nor by gifts nor by ceremonial rites nor by severe austerities can I with this form be seen in the world of men by any one else but thee, O hero of the Kurus ( Arjuna ).*

In Shloka 55 of chapter XI, Lord Krishna concludes that :

mat-karma-kṛin mat-paramo  
mad-bhaktaḥ saṅga-varjitaḥ  
nirvairaḥ sarva-bhūteṣhu  
yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava OR

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो  
मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।  
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु  
यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥

*He who does work for Me alone and has Me for his goal, is devoted to Me, is freed from attachment, and bears enmity towards no creature - he entereth into Me, O Pandava.*

This verse in the views of many, is the substance of the whole of the teaching of the Gita. We do not need to complicate matters in our search for the good life. Instead, we should simply carry out our duties, directing their spirit to God, with detachment from all interest in the things of the world, and free from enmity towards any living being.

Even so, while this guidance of the direction to be taken is clear, it is not easy to understand how to fulfil in daily practice, especially under the pressures and distractions faced by us all. I turn next therefore to just a few verses in chapter XII, which with great clarity help lead us to the path.

## THE SEVERAL WAYS OF THE ILLUMINATED PATH : SEVEN SELECTED SHLOKAS FROM CHAPTER XII

The twelfth chapter is entitled "The Yoga of Devotion."

In Shloka 6, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna :

ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi  
mayi sannasya mat-paraḥ  
ananyenaiva yogena  
mām dhyāyanta upāsate OR

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि  
मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।  
अनन्येनैव योगेन  
मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥

But those, who, laying all their actions on Me, intent on Me, worship, meditating on Me, with unswerving devotion.  
In Shloka 7, the Lord continues

teṣhām ahaṁ samuddhartā  
mṛityu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt  
bhavāmi na chirāt pārtha  
mayy āveśhita-chetasām OR

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता  
मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।  
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ  
मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥

These whose thoughts are set on Me, I straightaway deliver from the ocean of death-bound existence, O Partha ( Arjuna).

Dr. Radhakrishnan interprets this to say that God is the deliverer, the saviour. When we set our hearts and minds on Him, he lifts us from the sea of death and secures us a place in the eternal. For one ( and this is most of us ! ) whose nature is not steeped in renunciation ( vairagya ), the path of devotion is more suitable.

Shloka 8 :

mayy eva mana ādhatsva  
mayi buddhiṁ niveśhaya  
nivasiṣhyasi mayy eva  
ata ūrdhvaṁ na sanśhayaḥ OR

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व  
मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।  
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव  
अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥

On Me alone fix thy mind, let thy understanding dwell in Me. In Me alone shalt thou live thereafter. Of this there is no doubt.

Shloka 9 :

atha chittaṁ samādhātuṁ  
na śhaknoṣhi mayi sthiram  
abhyāsa-yogena tato  
mām ichchhāptuṁ dhanañjaya OR

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं  
न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।  
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो  
मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥

If, however, thou art not able to fix thy thought steadily on Me, then seek to reach Me by the practice of concentration, O Winner of wealth ( Arjuna ).

If the spiritual condition does not arise spontaneously, we must take up the practice of concentration, so that we may gradually fit ourselves for the steadfast directing of the spirit to God. By this practice, the Divine takes gradual possession of our nature.

Shloka 10 :

abhyāse 'py asamartho 'si  
mat-karma-paramo bhava  
mad-artham api karmāṇi  
kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi OR

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि  
मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।  
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि  
कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥

If thou art unable even to seek by practice, then be as one whose supreme aim is My service; even performing actions for MY sake, you shalt attain perfection.

If concentration is found difficult on account of the outward tendencies of the mind or our circumstances, then do all actions for the sake the Lord. Thus the individual becomes aware of the eternal reality. "Matkarma" is sometimes taken to mean service of the Lord, "puja " or worship, offering flowers and fruits, during incense, building temples, reading scriptures etc.

Shloka 11 :

athaitad apy aśhaktō 'si  
kartuṁ mad-yogam āśhritaḥ  
sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ  
tataḥ kuru yatātma-vān OR

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि  
कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।  
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं  
ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥

*If thou art not able to do even this, then taking refuge in My disciplined activity, renounce the fruit of all action, with the self subdued.*

*if you cannot dedicate all your works to the Divine, then do the work without desire of the fruit. Adopt the yoga of desireless action, "niskamakarma." We can renounce all personal striving, resign ourselves completely and solely to God's saving power, submit to self-discipline and work, abandoning all thought of reward. One must become like a child in the hands of the Divine.*

Shloka 12 :

śhreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj  
jñānād dhyānaṁ viśhiṣhyate  
dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas  
tyāgāch chhāntir anantaram OR

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं  
विशिष्यते |  
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ||

*Better indeed is knowledge than the practice ( of concentration ); better than knowledge is meditation; better than meditation is the renunciation of the fruit of action; on renunciation ( follows ) immediately peace.*

*Devotion is better than knowledge and desireless action is better than devotion. He who realises this principle of Vedanta is to be regarded as the best man. Devotion, meditation and concentration are more difficult than renunciation of the fruits of action, "karamaphalatyaga." This latter destroys the sources of unrest and brings about an inner calm and peace, which are the very foundations of spiritual life. The bhakti emphasis leads to the subordination of knowledge and meditation to the devout mind and consecration of all works to God.*

To carry our analogy further, one can step carefully from one stone to the next as each illumines and emerges from the flowing river, and step by step, cross the flowing waters to safety. As to how best to do so, and to do so with increasing assurance, is the subject of the description of the true seeker, in the next and final shlokas of chapter XII.

### THE STRENGTH OF THE TRUE DEVOTEE : EIGHT FURTHER SHLOKAS FROM CHAPTER XII

In these verses the Gita mentions the qualities of a true devotee : freedom of spirit, friendliness to all, patience and tranquility.

Shloka 13 :

adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānāṁ  
maitraḥ karuṇa eva cha  
nirmamo nirahankāraḥ  
sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣhamā OR

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां  
मैत्रः करुण एव च |  
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः  
समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ||

*He who has no ill will to any being, who is friendly and compassionate, free from egoism and self-sense, even minded in pain and pleasure, and patient.*

Shloka 14 :

santuṣṭaḥ satataṁ yogī  
yatātma dṛiḍha-niśchayaḥ  
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir yo  
mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ OR

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी  
यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः |  
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो  
मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ||

*The Yogi who is ever content, self controlled, unshakable in determination, with mind and understanding given up to me - he, My devotee, is dear to Me.*

Shloka 15 :

yasmān nodvijate loko  
lokān nodvijate cha yaḥ  
harṣhāmarṣha-bhayodvegair mukto  
yaḥ sa cha me priyaḥ OR

यस्मान्नोद्विजते  
लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः |  
हर्षमिर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो  
यः स च मे प्रियः ||

*He from whom the world does not shrink and who does not shrink from the world, and who is free from joy, envy, fear and agitation, he too is dear to Me.*

Shloka 16 :

anapekṣhaḥ śhuchir dakṣha  
udāsīno gata-vyathaḥ  
sarvārambha-parityāgī  
yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ OR

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष  
उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।  
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी  
यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥

*He who has no expectation, is pure, skilful in action, unconcerned, and untroubled, who has given up all initiative ( in action ) he, My devotee, is dear to Me.*

*He renounces the fruits of all his actions. His acts are skilled, "daksha," pure and passionless. He does not lose himself in reverie or dream but knows his way in the world.*

Shloka 17 :

yo na hṛīṣhyati na dveṣṭī  
na śhochati na kāṅkṣhati  
śhubhāśhubha-parityāgī  
bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ OR

यो न हृष्यति  
न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी  
भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥

*He who neither rejoices nor hates, neither grieves nor desires, and who has renounced good and evil, he who is thus devoted is dear to Me.*

Shloka 18 :

samaḥ śhatrau cha mitre cha  
tathā mānāpamānayoḥ  
śhītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣhu  
samaḥ saṅga-vivarjitaḥ OR

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च  
तथा मानापमानयोः ।  
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु  
समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥

*He who ( behaves ) alike to foe and friend, also to good and evil repute and who is alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain and who is free from attachment.*

Shloka 19 :

tulya-nindā-stutir maunī  
santuṣṭo yena kenachit  
aniketaḥ sthira-matir  
bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ OR

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी  
सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।  
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥

*He who holds equal blame and praise, who is silent ( restrained in speech ), content with anything ( that comes ), who has no fixed abode and is firm in mind, that man who is devoted is dear to Me.*

Shloka 20 :

ye tu dharmyāmṛitam idaṁ  
yathoktaṁ paryupāsate  
śhraddadhānā mat-paramā  
bhaktās te 'tīva me priyāḥ OR

ये तु धर्म्यमृतमिदं  
यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।  
श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा  
भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥

*But those who with faith, holding Me as their supreme aim, follow this immortal wisdom, those devotees are exceedingly dear to Me.*

### SWAMI NITYASUDDHANANDA : THE INCREASING VALUE OF THE PATH TO THE SEEKER.

"As one goes deeper into spiritual life, a combination of strength and gentleness begins to manifest itself more and more. It is the rarest quality and is the sign of a true devotee. A time comes when one experiences absolute fearlessness, combined with absolute gentleness. This is a direct manifestation of Oneness." ■

# A Heartfelt tribute to Maa

- Sayantani Dasgupta



“Om sarva mangala-mangalye shive-sarvartha-sadhike  
sharanye tryambake gauri Narayani namo'stu te”

This Slokah is addressed to the three-eyed divine mother – Narayani who brings total auspiciousness. Today on this festive day of Durga Puja, I feel my mother has returned home again after taking her spiritual voyage to eternity on 22nd November last year. I landed in Japan on 25th November evening and performed her funeral at the Iskcon temple, Tokyo. Durga Puja is all about celebration and this column is to celebrate my mother's life who lived it to the fullest. She was a strong believer of soul transformation through various life experiences and I am still learning from her vivid experiences. Glimpses of her beautiful and cherished life was captured in a diary written by her on 27th August 2016. This diary was a path to rediscovery of my mother: Mrs Kaberi Sarkar and I am still learning valuable life lessons from her.

After getting married, Maa moved to Ooty, a beautiful hill station in India. She mentions in her diary about the Nilgiri hills and how she had a special connections with those Blue Mountains. Her explorations of nature inspired not only her closest family members but also lot of other women and mothers to explore life, who never had the confidence to explore outdoors like her independently in a place, without knowing the language. The strong passion for travel or wanderlust is deeply imbibed within our family because of her. As a kid, I have explored from Kashmir to Kanyakumari with her, which helped me to keep calm during ambiguity and transform myself into an avid nature explorer.

I moved to Switzerland in 2004. Maa was completely mesmerized with the beauty of Alps in Switzerland framed with rivers and rugged gorges. She believed in afterlife and conceded that good people go to heaven. However, after visiting Switzerland she felt that she landed in heaven already as beautifully elucidated in her dairy pages. She taught me how to be eternally grateful and appreciate with what we have already.

Right from the dazzling beaches in Southern France, ice caves in Austria, the Greek archipelagos, grandeurs of Berlin, popular destinations like Paris as well as London to being in the ancient backdrops of Venice and Rome, she tried to engage with the local culture. I still remember how she sang and danced

with the farmers in one of the Swiss village in Klosters. Hugging Koala bear and feeding kangaroos in Australia to watching wild dolphins and blue whales in New Zealand, she enjoyed every bit of her life, and no surprise she was an ardent animal lover. She bestowed her love to everyone she came across, particularly the under-privileged, needy and disadvantaged section of our society. Without her, I wouldn't know what unconditional love means. It became crystal clear to me that unconditional love does not have any boundaries and it can never be lost! Even if she is not here with me today in physical form, my love and respect towards her grows each day.

From the perspective of her career, there is so much to learn about perseverance and dedication. She got married at the age of mere 19 just after finishing her graduation. Maa accomplished her bachelors of education and Masters degree after her marriage with two kids, managing a household and a full time academic job as a schoolteacher. She was one of the most popular teachers and earned respect from her students (even when they have passed out) and colleagues. She left her job voluntarily in 2004 after 25 years of service to spend time with us and travel the world. What I learnt from her is how to let go and how to lead life on your own terms.

Today this is the first Durga Puja without her being around me. This emptiness will never be filled. However, I can hear her lingering voice from the dance drama she organized on Shyama, Chandalika, Shaapmochan when she was in Ooty. I feel that she had a life that might not have been long, however it was large and truly inspiring. I am sure we will meet again beyond this world.

In stillness with you Maa! ■





# The Nose Ring

- Tapan Das

**M**aa Durga's beautiful nose ring has always fascinated me. This small piece of ornament makes her look divine, beautiful yet fierce. The face of Maa Durga without the nose ring and the 'Trinayan' cannot be thought of. The aura behind this face has been bringing in reverence and every year we worship 'Durgoti Nashini Durga' with all rituals and much fanfare.

Sometimes while chanting her divine name during my daily prayers or while gazing at her assuring yet firm looks while listening to a devotional song, I would admire the deity's nose ring and sometimes I would wish if I could have it for my dear wife Jharna. The 'dashabhujā' and the 'ronong dehi' versions of the goddess would flash in my mind's eyes and would be replaced by Jharna's more homely, non-regal face, which was nonetheless as powerful as the goddess. In managing home, which often no less than a battle, she was certainly a dashabhujā in a ronong dehi avatar. The nose ring seemed to be a natural accessory to complement her powerful presence. All this was just my wish though. She would, of course, strongly reject the idea of a ring of such design but would not mind if I presented her with a diamond-studded nose pin instead. As per my horoscope and as per my Zodiac sign which is Leo, I tend to have a natural penchant for gold, elegant dresses, perfumes and other good things of life. I had tried to maintain this style throughout my corporate life until my retirement. I would see to it that my shirt, trousers and even other parts of my attire were well-ironed whenever I went to office or anywhere else. I would always wear my favourite perfume 'Charlie'. I liked nice things, for both myself and my family. That ring, I had always felt, would be a perfect gift from the divine Durga to the homely one.

Nagamani, the young laundry woman of the ironing service nearby always took special care to iron my clothes placing newspapers inside. Her husband Jagadish would return them to our apartment with unfailing regularity for years. She could identify this Bengali babu's clothes blindfolded and this must have been so because of the unique perfume I used. Nagamani would sometimes come and help my wife make chapatis or help in the kitchen when my wife was unwell or when we were expecting guests. Sometimes she would cook spicy 'Guntur Chicken curry' for us. It was extremely delicious and my friends and I would enjoy it though the chilli in it was so hot that it became difficult to even say 'good morning' the next day.

It so happened that this puja turned out to be the worst Durga Puja for me in the last sixty years. Till 'Panchami' everything was in order but from 'Shasti' morning all the grahas and nakshatras started conspiring against me. A chain of unfortunate events substantiates this. The newspaper vendor forgot to drop the newspaper at my house that day and without that my free outgoing calls could not happen. The morning milk boiled over and spilled. My wife did not make me the usual tea and she and my daughter stopped talking to me and wore a grumpy look. Even my eldest daughter and son in law did not take my calls. My whole family seemed to be against me on account of something which I was not aware of. I questioned them, puzzled and upset, but the only response I got was a stoic, indignant silence and aggressive looks. They started behaving indifferently with me. Putting the ironed clothes in the wardrobe, my wife addressed my daughter in a gruff voice: "Tell your father that we shall not go to the Puja pandal with him and that the food has been kept in the fridge. Whenever

he wants he could come and have it." She added, "Tell him that he need not have any relation with me or my daughters." I was stunned!! "Why are both of you behaving like this? What have I done?" Very aggressively, throwing one of my favourite black shirts, which I had used for the last two evenings, my wife said, "Look at this yourself. Shame on you!! A person like you could stoop so low and that too after your retirement." She then started crying loudly. My daughter Saachi then took the shirt from the ground and showed it to me. I saw with disbelief that a small diamond-studded gold 'nose ring' was stuck tight to the upper buttonhole of my shirt with a patch of vermilion on the collar. "Where did it come from?" she enquired. "Gold nose ring with a diamond!!!" I was stunned . . . "Listen!! Hey!! Maybe it is a gift from Ma Durga for you!!" I added rather lamely. "You know," turning toward my daughter, "I had always wanted to gift a similar nose ring worn by Ma Durga to your mom. Maybe she has listened to my wishes," I said.

"Shut up!!" was the stern rebuttal from my wife: "Don't try to fool us; enough is enough. Tell us who are you spending time with these days. . . that's the reason you go out every evening well-dressed and well-perfumed and at times with flowers in hand and you make an excuse that you are going to 'Tetultala' to be with your friends or to stag parties. Do you and your friends use vermilion or nose rings at your stag parties?!! The cat is out of the bag now. You have started coming late almost every day . . . do you think we are fools . . . ? The thief has now been caught red-handed . . . Whose nose ring is this???? Till you answer this question, stay away from us and don't speak to us," she screamed.

This ordeal started since Sasthi morning. I started thinking: "Did the goddess fulfil my wishes this way by creating a crisis in which I had no part to play? . . . I just liked and admired her nose ring and so maybe I got it! I should have admired all her ornaments instead . . . but how did it happen . . ." I questioned myself several times but no answer appeared on the horizon. I was clueless as to what to do now. The nose ring, both Durga's and the one stuck to my shirt, appeared to devour me with all its grandeur and fierceness.

I had spent so many years with a decent corporate life and had innumerable friends. Everyone in the office was aware of my penchant for good dressing as also my sense of punctuality, a strict no-nonsense attitude along with my fondness for sweets, butter and ghee. My in-laws considered me an incarnation of Lord Shiva, my friends saw me as a very fun-loving, music-loving, harmless and simple person, my daughters thought me the best dad in the world and as far as my better half was concerned, I have been made to understand that she had prayed for the same life partner for the next seven lives!

On Shasti morning all these lofty thoughts went for a toss with this mysterious 'nose ring'. At the Puja pandal I felt people who knew me looked strangely at me and many of them started avoiding me as if I was 'Brajeesh Thakur' or 'Niraav Modi' or 'Aashaaram Baba'. They would look at Ma Durga, pray to her first and then would look at Mahisasura and then would stare at me at the reception counter, as if I was the fallen man. I felt like Tulsi Chakraborty in the rich men's party in the movie 'Poroshpathor'. Nobody wanted to look at me or make real conversation. They gave a slant smile and walked passed. This incident might have given the gossip industry within our community a good trigger. Jharna must be feeling

like Sumitra in 'Ogo Badhu Sundari', embarrassed by her drunken husband singing "Lola Lulu tomar boyosh keno hoyna sholo, amar nineteen." At least there Uttam Kumar knew what was happening. Here, I was clueless. I prayed to Ma Durga about the well-being of my family and friends as usual so that I could get out of this mess at the earliest . . . I also admitted my mistake of eyeing Ma Durga's nose ring and apologized to Ma with folded hands. "I like Mahisasur better than your nose ring, Ma! Do forgive me. I will never eye your nose ring again in life," I uttered silently asking for her forgiveness. I could almost see her subtle smile through her fiery face.

On returning home, I heard sounds of laughter as if some guests had dropped in. On entering my house I was greeted by none other than my bodybuilder Salababu or brother-in-law, Mahesh, who had come to stay with us this puja without any prior notice. Touching my feet, he asked, "How are you, Jamai babu?" "Why this long hair and moustache, Mahesh? Are you planning to act in films or what?" I questioned. "Yes, sort of . . . There is an audition at Ramoji Film City for a role of Bahubali's brother and I thought I would be a strong contender." "Yes, yes, certainly. You may take your Didi too. She might land the role of Bahubali's mother." I added sarcastically. "She has stopped talking to me for a silly reason. . . she will tell you." While speaking, I once again looked at Mahesh properly this time. Oh my God!! He resembled someone with long hair, huge moustache . . . yes! Yes! He does resemble Mahisasur . . . I think God is playing tricks on me. I told Ma Durga that I do not like her nose ring and as a penance, mentioned that I liked 'Mahisasur' instead and she has sent this Mahesh 'Asur' to me!!! I felt as amused as puzzled. What, in Durga's holy name, was happening to me?



Days of festival went by in a flurry, with me in a confounded bubble, trying to figure things out or at least get out of the mess. After the Pujas were over, my closest family friends, at the behest of my wife, wanted to speak to me once and for all so that I do not fall into the trap of my so-called lady love whose nose ring had got stuck to my shirt in this so-called misadventure and so that we again start living a normal family life.

On the designated evening our close friends were invited with their families towards "Bijoya get-together" and my wife Jharna, who was a good cook had prepared the choicest of food for the guests. She had invited my friends so that she could introduce Mahesh, "Mr Kolkata – third runner-up 2003" –to them as well. Tara baby, our beautiful neighbour and Nagamani, our laundry woman, were there to help her prepare the puris and chapatis and help to serve the guests. At around 8 pm the guests started arriving and one by one all of them arrived. My wife and my daughter Saachi started serving snacks to them. Once Mahesh was introduced to my friends he was very happy as most of my friends admitted that he resembled Bahubali while I thought he resembled Mahisasura. To put the record straight without any hesitation, I called every one of the five families into a room and said, "Friends, before you tell me anything regarding the 'nose ring episode' I want to clarify something and want everyone to lend me your ears. Friends, yes, you have heard it right. My wife and daughter did find something unusual and they are rightfully unhappy. I admit that I made a mistake but my mistake was not what you are thinking. I made the mistake not of falling for another woman, but for the nose ring of the all-powerful woman, Durga herself.

I also made another mistake, the naive mistake of assuming Ma Durga had gifted me the ring as I had always admired it and wished to have it for my wife. But how could a person like me fall for this thought, that the goddess herself had made the gift just available for me to gift my wife without my having to buy it? I can't be so trusting in make-believe wish-comes-true or miracles? Well, the answer is, I don't know. Maybe I REALLY, passionately wanted a Durga ring for my wife. That's my only explanation, though it sounds silly, I know." I showed the black shirt to everyone present there and also showed them how the diamond-studded gold nose ring had stuck in the collar buttonhole without my knowledge. "Is it my fault, I asked? Only Ma Durga could have done this!!"

"I only know that I had liked Ma Durga's gold nose ring at the pandal so much that I had purchased a beautiful calendar with Durga Ma's divine face with her unique nose ring and had placed it on the wall of our drawing room for me to pray & for everyone to admire" I admitted openly. Suddenly there was a commotion behind me . . . Out of nowhere, Nagamani barged in. "Show me, Seth. Let me see it too. Oh, my God! This is my nose ring Sahib and I was desperately searching for it." One of my friends quipped: "But how did your nose ring reach your Saheb's chest? I mean the shirt!" Nagamani replied: "I think that night I was ironing Saheb's shirt and had sneezed. Maybe the nose ring fell off and I must have ironed it along with the shirt and the pin got entangled on the stitches of the collar buttonhole." "What about the vermillion stain?" another friend asked. "That might have fallen from my forehead too," she accepted meekly. She pleaded that this mistake of hers had nothing to do with Bengali Babu who was always a fatherly figure to her. Everyone started laughing loudly. Nagamani saved my face that evening; otherwise I would have thought that Ma Durga had fulfilled my wish. I could only say "Jai Durga Devi's Jai". The food tasted superb that evening.

Days passed and people forgot about the matter till one evening Nagamani came home crying. She was inconsolable. Jagadish followed his wife too. We were having our evening tea together. We were a bit surprised as Nagamani was a jolly girl. "What happened, ma?" I asked. "Sethji!!" she mumbled, and pointing towards Jagadish, she declared: "I mean we wanted to come earlier but did not have the courage to visit you. In fact, I took the nose ring which was stuck on your collar thinking it to be my lost nose ring. But I was mistaken. I found my own nose ring in my Puja room at the feet of 'Goddess Mysamma' in the vermillion pot. I must have kept it there and had forgotten, sir. We have come to return your nose ring to your family. In my dream Ma Durga came and showed her 'Rudra murty or fiery face' last night and we thought it fit to return to you. Do forgive me"

My wife took it and looked at it properly this time. It was really a beautiful diamond-studded nose ring . . . maybe a real gift from Ma Durga!! She said, "I think we should treasure this divine gift." She did not remark, now that the allegation part was not valid anymore. Anyway, I was relieved and happy but where did this come from? When I looked at the calendar with Durga Ma's face in our drawing room to thank her with folded hands, I could see the beautiful smile on Ma's face . . . but oh my God! I couldn't believe it!! Her nose ring was missing from the photo too. Wishes do come true, that too inexplicably! Suddenly there was a nudge. I woke up and saw my eldest daughter Pritha at my bedside with a cup of tea in hand! "Papa, get up!! We have to go for puja shopping today, Mother, Saachi & Soumya would join us too." "Oh! No!! Not again!" I cried out in disbelief. ■

# Some Musings Some Rumblings

- Sougata Mallik

A summer evening well spent is when I can sit in the garden with a cup of tea, feel the blissful wind blowing, have a comfortable reading material in hand. The solace and delight of such sessions seem to me far better than many other things.

Just few years ago I would find delight in attending a weekend dinner party at friend's house. The preparation for this as what to wear, what gifts to buy that will suit her household, google mapping the address, groundwork of when to start from home - all these occupied the mind. When the venture began came the long drive in many cases, unintended detours on unknown roads, tension of reaching the dinner party in time, so on and so forth. There was indeed a thrill in this. When you finally reach the destination there was the excitement of meeting friends, sumptuous dinner, ladies' conversation on saree, jewellery, latest movie. These mundane discussions were never important but seemed like tonic to our day to day life. It provided a respite to the otherwise tête-à-tête of everyday job and household activities.

Now as we advance in age, I find it is harder to engage in these conversations. The reason behind this is not the hostess or the ambience of the party or that the speaker is a boring person. The cause can be accredited to the gap that age and time creates for all of us. What is good and sought after in one age does not live long to overflow into another age. The usual dinner party conversations of school admission, child's extra curricular activities are often hard to engage during discussions. Some of us have embarked on the age where our children have settled academically or socially. The difference of age become very prominent at that time. Along with it comes the difficulty in mentally accepting that we are growing older day by day!

As I was sitting in my garden reflecting on this, some glimpses of childhood flashed before my eyes. I recounted that we rarely had these formal dinner invitations in earlier days. Relatives or neighbours took the privilege to arrive at our house unannounced. Time constraint was never a concern for them. My sister and I as young children then should have gone to bed in time to be ready for next day's haul in school. Irrespective, our relative would drop in around 9 pm. I still remember, at that hour he come in clean bathed, wearing Punjabi-kurta with lots of Ponds talcum powder sprayed all over him. 9 pm seemed to be the start of his revelries. We as children then were strictly ordered to touch his feet, answer his questions politely, attend like a true host. If it was around the school examination time, the questionnaire from this relative was much more than my father had ever asked. I remember during the school years my report card was like an open website – every relative and neighbour had access to it. Privacy policy, family matter – such terms did not exist in their diction then. Yet such were the topics that used to be discussed in an impromptu evening gathering in contrast to how we converse in the current times.

Few weeks back during one of the weekend dinner parties, a lady was proudly speaking of the various art competitions in which she has enrolled her daughter. I looked at the beautiful little girl having good time with her friends in the party. She seemed to be oblivious of the heavy burden and an innocent, un-combating expression played on her face. From what her mother said, the very next week is when she must appear for the Ontario art contest. I wished the very best for this wonderful young girl.

The lady's conversation took me back to my childhood. As a child my typical response to drawing a scenery was a stretch of green grass, mountain in the background, river flowing and a boat plying through. I would meticulously colour the drawing. The green would show the bountiful foliage, brown colour to reflect the ruggedness of mountain, a glorious blue would depict the energetic river flowing. I recall I would sit quietly for hours to paint this colourful picture. This was my free imagination, my free expression. No judge had ever given verdict on it. But the sincerity of a child mind had conferred her a Trophy of her own on this endeavour. The recognition, the award, the joy of a child was all won through the little picture. I am very sure about that. Had that not been achieved, this meagre incident would not have revisited me after so many years.

During the weekend dinner parties, one of the common discussions is where we grew up, where we worked and lived, where we travelled. These are interesting conversations to learn about various places, vocations and of course the varied experiences. The perspective of mind enhances considerably when we can indulge in the opportunity of travel and other ventures. Life has most kindly permitted me to move around freely and experience the novelties of this world. The knowledge and information that I have gathered from travels is a valuable part of my being and everyday life.

But as I sit in my garden and muse, somehow Calcutta the childhood city where I grew up comes to the forefront remembrances. Memories of childhood can be one of the sweetest things. Reminiscences of the first rickshaw that took me to Kindergarten, CTC Tram # 12 riding through Upper Circular Road that brought me to school everyday, participation in plays for Puja celebration, roaming around the city on Durga Puja Ashtami night all of us packed into my father's favourite old and loyal Buick car, the occasional visits to New Empire Globe Cinema, shopping at Newmarket.

Back in childhood, good food and fancy cuisine used to hold such added interest. I can still feel the taste of cream and chocolate of Park Street Flurry's pastry that my father would bring home while returning from work. Then there would be the Sunday lunch at home of rice pulao and goat meat curry or hilsa fish mustard curry. The sporadic treats of home cooked savoury evening sweets or snacks from neighbourhood aunties Mashima-s and Kakima-s were an incentive to the taste buds. These days we find variety cuisine everywhere and culinary seems to have advanced immensely in terms of diversity, productivity, presentation. A dinner invitation or a restaurant dine out is mostly punctuated with enthusiasm and innovation. At every nook or corner we now find Korean, Japanese, Thai, Mexican, Middle Eastern restaurants. Many people have skilled themselves in multi cultural cuisine and promptly host great parties at home with variety delicacies. Those invitations or stop overs are always very exciting. But the most exciting is what I experienced sometime back.

Niagara Falls is about 3 hours drive from we live. Few weeks back we attended the day long food festival at Niagara Falls, Canada side. This is one of the most exhilarating events of summer months. Considering the lengthy and severe winter temperature that Canada experiences, the burst into summer is like a surge carnival for Canadians. Outdoor sports, activities, food, fun, frolic makes its way everywhere. The day long food

festival is a delight for the taste and mind – relish great cuisine while overlooking the majestic Niagara Falls. Uncountable varieties of culinary were spread out. For the whole day I had the privilege of enjoying different kinds of gastronomic items. There were American burgers, Mexican tacos, Spanish paella, Japanese sushi, African jerk chicken, Indian biriyani, Middle Eastern kabobs, trendy Gluten free cooking etc etc, - you ask for it and it was there. I enjoyed every bit of this without doubt. The uniqueness of being able to float my appetite and taste buds in that galore of extraordinary variety is such a pleasant feeling.

Towards the sunset hours I sat closer to Niagara Falls with a chicken pâté in hand. The evening music band was about to start. I wanted to appreciate the remaining part of the day amidst this exceptional nature. As I bit into the pâté, to my utmost amazement I craved for ethnic regional items of 'mocha-r chop', 'deem er devil', 'chola-r bori' (Banana flower croquette, egg devil, chickpea fried)! I also remembered my grandmother's preparation of an extremely delicious vegetable dish made with pumpkin, black eyed peas, potato. She would

lochis (puri). My grandmother was nearly 70 years old then. She would serve the food herself to make sure I ate properly. I was probably in lower elementary school at that time. Every time



call it 'kumro r chokka'. She would cook this fresh when I came home from school and serve it with milk white puffed

she said 'kumro r chokka', I would giggle uncontrollably and roll into fits of laughter. The very word 'chokka' would bring out a childish vivaciousness in me and my after-school lunch at home would thus take very long to complete. But my grandmother would always sit with me even throughout this silly, juvenile prankish mode.

Here I am, amidst one of the wonders of the world The Niagara Falls, joining in the food festival that is sought after by so many people – and the most ordinary and usual segment of my Calcutta childhood comes right before my eyes. It is indeed strange when and how things can turn out to be the way they are. If anyone can read my mind, he or she will know at that moment I would have agreed to give up many things in exchange of a plate of my grandmother's cooked 'kumro r chokka'.

Sorry, if I have bored you with these silly anecdotes. Lately I seem to have got into an addiction of musing childhood ..... and it is awesome! ■



# The Extended Family

- Amit Roy

It was a cold and chilly night. All alone, I was pacing up and down the huge white corridor, absorbing the antiseptic smell and silence all around me. They had just taken her in and with perspiring fists tightly clenched, I was praying to the Almighty to provide me fortitude and luck.

Suddenly I felt a soft hand upon my shoulder, `Beta saab thik ho jayega (Son, everything will be alright). Was I hallucinating? Was this my mother who had just that day received her visa to join us in this alien land? Was this any of our friends whom I never got a chance to inform of this sudden development? Startled, I turned around to face an elderly couple and realized that they were our next door neighbour! Though I had never spoken to them earlier, my wife talked about how she had got friendly with this lady just a couple of months back.

We were a year old in Dubai and on that night, this elderly couple had come all the way to Al Wasl Hospital to provide me courage and to bless our son who saw the first light of his life.

Aunty and Uncle, as we called them, were an elderly Pakistani couple, veteran expatriates in the Middle East for more than two decades. On the contrary, we had just left India soon after marriage and my wife was still feeling homesick having left the comforts of known faces and familiar environment. During those initial days of settling down, while I was away at work, she found a new companion in this elderly lady, nearly the same age as her mother. Despite their age difference, the chemistry gelled and soon Aunty took charge of my wife's antenatal care as if this was an unannounced mother-daughter bonding. Motherless and mother-in-law less, knowing nothing about babies and mothering, unwilling to trust the foreign environment, my wife turned to Aunty with a relief and clutched her as if a life jacket.

With every new syllable and step that our son learnt, the bonding between the two families strengthened. Despite the Kargil, LOC and the Sharjah rivalry, we became part and parcel of the couple's lives. It was only natural then that I escorted Uncle to the Welcare Hospital in the middle of the night when he complained of chest pain. At the same time, I could dash off to those official tours, reassured that there was someone to take care of my family in my absence.

Very soon the two ladies initiated the unofficial `Ladies Association of the Building` that had a multi ethnic and multi lingual character. On several evenings, while returning from work, I was witness to concoctions of English, Urdu, Arabic and more of the grunts and nodding of the head! I was also strictly instructed not to venture home unannounced lest I disrupted the kitty party. But it was not as if they left us out! I still remember the day I won the Gulf Toastmasters Championship and the impromptu felicitation organized by the `Association`, with neighbours curious to learn how to raise a toast! It was imperative that on Thursday evenings, I rubbed shoulders with

men as old as my father in the ritual weekend gathering.

Thus after six years when we decided to relocate to Dhaka, both Aunty and my wife were heart broken. While debating the pros and cons of the decision, what was uppermost in our mind was the feeling of ennui we would feel without such neighbours in our new surroundings.

But no sooner had we moved into our apartment in Dhanmondi, than the doorbell rang. And all our apprehensions were dispelled! The new Kolkatar Boudi was greeted with open arms and soon history repeated itself! We were back to square one with a new set of faces- the only difference being the common language we shared! Unofficially our apartment was rechristened the Kolkata Consultancy Bureau- where Boudi suggested whether the wedding saree should be bought from Park Street or Gariahat and Dada had to recommend the best cardiac treatment in town! The `Jassis` and `Kasauti Zindagi Kiis` also played their role in this common thread of bonding with the Bhabis curious to learn the language and to know if Preranas and Tulsis actually existed in modern Indian families!

And the saga continued.....our next port of call, `Naija` (as the Nigerian would lovingly say) was no less different- our neighbors in the gated compound in Victoria Island, Lagos was a medley of multi national and multi cultural families all seeking solace from one another and trying to enjoy life within the restricted environment with all its challenges. Weekend pool side parties and the impromptu get togethers were the order of the day- where the wives would spend hours boiling the `Potjeikos` (traditional South African dish), barbecuing the delicious `Suya` ( a must have in Nigeria) and marinating the succulent `Shish Tawook`- gastronomical delicacies which further knit all of us together as one community. This was truly a `Small World`- where Diwali was celebrated with as much zeal and enthusiasm as Eid and Christmas. Thus it was not surprising that our Nigerian neighbor was our savior the night when some hoodlums tried to enter our compound and he was prompt enough to call the local cops – all for his foreign neighbors who were guests in his land. The decade old bonding still continues though most of us have moved on and relocated across the globe.

Having been out of India for the last 21 years, our neighbours have been our extended family and our companions in our joys and sorrows. Of the few treasures a man can possess, friends are the most precious. And if these friendships have been forged over a warm cuppa and shared laughter at the neighbor's house, one could not be more fortunate.

So remember, the next time when you bump into that unknown face in the elevator or when pulling out of the parking lot, a genuine smile and acknowledgement can trigger that special bonding- nameless, ageless, creedless and selfless. For a neighbor in need is a friend indeed! ■



# The Bengali Bou

- Nivedita Singh

Being raised up like a free spirited kid in a nuclear non-traditional multicultural family, getting married into a traditional homogenous Bengali family was quite an experience for me. After dating for a while I ended up visiting his family on the biggest event of the year for Bengalis- Durga Puja. While I'm unaware of my family tree I could see his' deep-rooted and flourishing family spread across one locality.

While I was still trying to cope with the onslaught of peek a boos from his relatives who seemed to turn up for no apparent reason, my father in law (who seemed oblivious to all this) nonchalantly asked "What do you think of the political situation in Pakistan?" It took me a while for me to digest all of this and now I know that it's natural for Bengalis to raise controversial questions while munching snacks as if it's something which helps release their enzymes. Slowly the awkwardness fizzled away as the sugar rush kicked in from the sandesh I kept munching on and I started feeling more at home there.

Every day that I spent at his home, his sentimental bong "maa" cooked the best meals ever with a sumptuous spread as lavish as a buffet at one of those posh Delhi weddings (although, the options were much more "livelier", ahem!). Given that she spent so many hours every day busy in preparations in the kitchen, it really amazes me that she never got infuriated when we sometimes turned up with our stomachs full after one of our hogging sprees on Kolkata street food.

I still vividly remember the first time I devoured the buttery divine flavour of Hilsa with green chilly, pinch of salt mashed with rice, the fish melting in my mouth. This one event became catalyst for the cascading Bengali cooking experiments I started doing in my own kitchen later, none of which have ever disappointed me (except when I climb on the weighing scale).

Unlike my 'mamma', 'maa' spends like a gazillion hours in her "temple", which is in the attic and has at least 10 different gods who are bedecked every day. She talks a lot about her religious beliefs which I don't always agree with, yet to establish a bond with me, she spent hours translating bits from a book on nutrition she recently published in Bengali. Although she wanted her only lad to wear "Panjabi- dhoti" and sit topless in the marriage ceremony, it mattered to her if I differed on it and we worked out a middle ground.

On the last day of puja, 'maa' introduced me to a gaggle of local Bengali women who had turned up at our place to satiate their curiosity about the new "bou". It was the one day when I was really happy that I didn't know Bengali and so I couldn't really understand their numerous questions, all I could do was smile and say "haa" sometimes when I could piece together some familiar words. Slowly as my new family felt I was getting amalgamated in the surroundings the Bengali urge to show love by keeping a daak name emerged. It's been two years now and they are still looking for one.

The ideal end to our first meeting was when my father in law brought a jar of "Pickles" during dinner and said "Nibedita tumko pickle chaiye, hum laya", thinking that this much needed North Indian comfort food would make me feel at home. It was such a relief and while sucking on a mango seed from the pickle jar I couldn't help but reflect how times with family can be sour and sweet but can only work out if we stick together in one jar, as tight as possible.

From tragic to humorous to argumentative, this might not be able to capture every mood and sentiment of the splendid 'Poribhar' I found, but I hope that to some extent it depicts the zest of this concoction. ■



# The Homecoming

- Utsa Bose

This is a story of an exile, of an escape and of a return. We'd left the sleepy city of Yokohama in 2009; we'd flown back to our hometown, to that tiny speck on the eastern margin of the subcontinent, to Kolkata, we'd seeped out of trespassed land like tea out of a teabag. "I will remember you," I remember saying, but, like most promises made between the ages of 9 and 18, this, too, was lost in translation, in migration, in the voyage called adolescence, obscured, almost-invisible in the mists of lost time. The parochial walls of nationality, of ethnicity, of identity and of culture had, in the course of the next few years, made me forget about what I had left behind. I still couldn't fit in though, not completely. It's funny when I look back at all those places I've left behind. In Japan, I was an Indian among the Japanese; here, I was a Japanese among the Indian. Every place tries its best to impose its own definition of identity, and I was soon sucked in, enamored by "roots", I quickly rejected everything I'd experienced till then, I cast it off like an old layer of skin, I folded my past into a napkin swan and kept it hidden underneath my bed. And so, life chugged on.

With time, however, I realized that I couldn't merely cast off this amphibious, dubious second-parentage that I had. My Japanese-ness would leak out of me, unconsciously, when I would, for example, hear someone say 'Konnichiwa' in a crowded bus stand, it would leak out of me whenever anyone would claim their love for Japanese culture, in an instant, other languages would take a backseat and I would become the seven year old I was, again, speaking the Tokyo Kansaiben like there's no tomorrow. My Indian-ness, on the other hand would leak out of me when I'd hear someone talk about "Indo-curry", of Naan and other stereotypes. I couldn't, try as I might, be a binary, an Indian or a Japanese. There would always be some sort of a lacunae. I would forever inhabit this penumbral shadow zone, this gray area of neither-here-nor-there, always be a hybrid, a mongrelized national. I'd rejected everything I had left behind to fit in, to find my place in the sand of "home". When talks of a possible return, albeit for period of one week floated in the air inside our house, I couldn't help but feel a strange sense of dread at having to go back to my city of exile. The ghosts of places I'd left behind, of people I'd promised to keep in touch with but forgotten to on purpose, all of this and none of this settled on me like a dust cloud and it was with

tremendous trepidation that I reached Yokohama.

I was amazed by a strange paradox here; I recognized nothing but remembered everything. Walking down the roads of Sakuragicho, the overexcitedly lit lanes of the Chinatown and the cobbled sidewalks of the Yokohama National University, I felt a strange, sublime and serene sense of homecoming settle on my heart. I walked a little further and reached the house we lived in. Hidden behind a new building now, it still looked just as sleepy. The paint had faded a little bit, and I wanted to go in, but then I remembered that the flat had new tenants now. Memories and suitcases had been packed and taken away, and the rooms vacated had been quickly filled by others waiting in line. I walked back to the University and decided to sit near the open air theatre, looking at the imposing trees surrounding me. The air was chilly and the theatre was vacant. It was at that moment that I heard a tiny rustling sound, turned and saw a little boy, no more than eight, looking at me from a distance. He was wearing my old orange jumper, he was armed with an insect catching net in hand and he looked at me and waved. I waved back, not knowing what to do. We looked at each other for a while; he, my past, I, his future. He stared at me for a while longer, a strangely satisfied yet curious expression on his face, then he doubled back, laughed a little, and ran away, back where he came from. It was at this moment that I felt the city smiling at me, telling me that it loved me and I realized that I too, loved it back. Even if I had forgotten to remember that.

As children of translation, we carry within ourselves the burden of the past. We carry within ourselves not only whatever we'd done, but also every place we've lived and left behind. We are haunted by this tussle between home and the world, between love and responsibility; we are the twice-borns, inhabiting the border, unable to choose whom to be. But this zone of the penumbra, while being neither black nor white, can also be seen as both black and white. We carry within ourselves the burden of the past but also the opportunities of a milieu in the future. We may not always be able to choose between sides, but as long as there exists a struggle, as long as there exists this tug-of-war, there is hope. ■



# The 'New' Bank of Japan

- Sanjeev Gupta

**T**he Bank of Japan (BoJ) is under a clear transformation. While the first term of Kuroda's governorship was defined by his ultra-reflationary monetary policies aimed at reversing two decades of deflation in Japan, his second term will be remembered by his success (or lack thereof) in maneuvering Japan out of the aforementioned policies. The dramatic shift in stance is evidenced by an article on Reuters titled "BoJ's architect of 'shock and awe' plots retreat from stimulus (August 6th)" which reports that the BoJ had originally intended to raise short-term rates twice this year, before getting discouraged by the market volatility seen in February and later by the decline in inflation.

Unfortunately for Japan, Kuroda's aggressive experiment in ultra-loose monetary policy has failed to stoke inflation towards the BoJ's espoused 2% target with the latest reading for core inflation (ex-fresh food and energy) at a disappointing 0.0%... This is despite 80 trillion yen of annual JGB (Japanese Government Bond) purchases, 6 trillion yen of equities purchases, negative short-term rates and a 10-year JGB yield anchored at 0%!

Instead of generating inflation, Kuroda's policies on negative interest rates had the unintended consequence of severely hurting the margins at Japanese Banks. BoJ's miscalculation lies in the fact that (unlike US or EU banks) Japan's banks receive a majority of their funding via individual customers deposits on which they hardly pay any interest to customers. In addition, banks are unable to charge individual customers on these deposits. This meant that while the rate at which Banks lent money fell significantly, Banks did not see a commensurate decline in funding (deposits) costs. This significantly hampered Japanese Banks' ability to earn a spread (margin) on loans. The market reaction was telling: Japan Bank stocks fell 28% in the weeks following the announcement.

Alas, Bank shareholders can rejoice as these policies may be finally set to reverse. The market received its first concrete indication of a monetary policy taper in the BoJ's latest Monetary Policy Meeting. At the meeting's conclusion, Kuroda announced that the BoJ will allow the 10-year JGB yield to move as high as 0.2%, double the previous range. This move makes sense, as multiple years of ultra-loose monetary policies have failed to stoke inflation and instead have created unintended harmful side-effects, as mentioned above. Furthermore, global Central Banks are moving towards monetary Policy Tapering (i.e. reduction of quantitative easing) and BoJ risks getting 'behind the curve'. Bank stocks have reacted in kind, rebounding from their July lows. However, you can expect further gains over the next few months as the market fully digests the 'new' BoJ and its focus on reviving profits at Financial Institutions! ■



## Firdous

- Udita Ghosh

If I wandered onto the poetry  
The winds and sun have written,  
Unknowingly, stepping on gifts  
Magnanimous skies bestowed —

I did not steal away ungrateful,  
Scattering webs delicately spun;

With wonder I drank the enchantment,  
Humbly, the waves I rode.

## Veiled Splints

- Soumitra Talukder

Why do you smile so much?  
What is the malady you hide!  
Like the veiled splints in the posies of bloom,  
And the euphoria for the quest in life.  
Bound by destiny yet limitless wishes,  
All you have are the wings of fairies.  
What is that you ask for in pretense of grace!  
Is the treasure of priceless love..!!  
Whisper my name from wherever you are,  
A few words in solace,  
Gliding thru the paths of silence.  
The amorous revelry in the moments of romance,  
Caress the nuance of heart while it smile,  
I shall hold your satire to my benevolence.

# インド文化と出会って

生誕100周年に寄せて

－ 佐々木みどり

私の生まれは北海道十勝です。大自然の中、厳しい冬には雪が無い一面は銀世界が広がり、また大平原を爽快な風が吹く緑の中で育ちました。小さい時には野生の熊と遭遇したくらい本当に田舎暮らしで山や川はお友達という環境でした。成人した頃は何かの表現者を目指して舞台を学び、卒業後は踊りが好きでミュージカルが観たくてNYのブロードウェイに半年間ダンス修行した経験があります。夢半ばで結婚し子育て仕事と普通の暮らしを送っていました。そんな中タゴールの詩に合わせて踊る舞踊は、私の心の苦しみをも解放してくれました。それはタゴールが人生をかけて表現されたその詩に深い意味があるからなのです。更に無心に舞うことは「生を受けた喜び」そのものを思い出したかのように感じました。きっとこの世に誕生した時、そんな風に「無」であったはずで、日常生活の中で自然を感じる時間が少ない私にとっては、この舞踊の時間が幸せを感じられる尊い時間(とき)になりました。

日本にいながら「インド」の文化を体験できる機会があったことを私は幸せに思います。そして「タゴールダンス」とは、シュクリシュナ先生がいらっしゃらなければ、私は出会うことはできませんでした。私が現在住んでいる静岡県沼津市で、『ポリバルの会』を主宰されております石井シュクリシュナ先生の下、タゴール舞踊を習っています。習い始めは2008年の2月からで、もう10年という月日が流れました。その中でインド刺繍やインド料理、ベンガル語も少しですが習ったこともありました。

シュクリシュナ先生は幼い頃より曾祖父、祖父と深いかわりのあった東洋で初めてノーベル文学賞作家タゴールの影響を受け書物はもとより音楽、舞踊に触れながら育ったそうです。カルカッタ大学で心理学を専攻し、卒業後タゴールが創設した国立ヴェンシュヴァーバーティ大学でテキスタイルデザインを専攻、インド音楽、舞踊と日本語も学ばれました。1987年に来日しインド文化を広く伝えるための活動拠点として『ポリバルの会』を主宰し、タゴール舞踊、インド刺繍、インド料理、英語、ベンガル語を教えています。この『ポリバルの会』の中で1991年に発足したのが、タゴールダンスを習う会の「アノドニクテン」です。“アノド(幸せ)”と“ニクテン(住まい)”という意味だそうです。このダンスはインドの偉大な詩人「ラビンドラナート・タゴール」の詩に古典舞踊の動きを取り入れながら、大いなる宇宙・人間の感情や自然に対する精神の世界、愛と平和と全ての調和を身体全体で表現する東インドのベンガル地方を代表する舞踊になります。またその活動範囲は、地元はもとより各地で行われるイベントにも参加し、踊りを披露して国際文化交流の手助けをしています。また東北の被災地でのボランティア活動やNHKの特集番組への出演などの活動も広げています。私もその一員として沢山の経験をさせていただいております。

その中でも印象的なイベントとして、チャリティ活動で集まった寄付をインド旅行中にマザー・テレサの家に実際に届けたことです。そのチャリティはタゴールダンス・インド刺繍の展示や体験・サリーの着付けやファッションショー・インドの手工芸や写真の展示・インド式ハンドマッサージ・言葉(ヒンディー・ベンガル・ウルドゥー語)やインド数学の紹介・チャイやお菓子・インドスナックなど、沢山のボランティアの方達と手作り感満載のフェアで皆さんに大変喜んでいただきました。そのチャリティでは「ただ寄付していただいたということではなく、インド文化を通して人が集い、心と心の交流があったもの」と私は思っていたのですが、「自分の喜びをシェアするだけではなく、大人も子供も皆で触れ合うのが交流の目的」というシュクリシュナ先生の言葉に私はとても感銘を受けました。同じ志を持った仲間とインド文化を通して同じ時間を共有し、そして感謝の気持ちをもってお渡しする、ということなのです。シュクリシュナ先生の傍でいつも感じるのが、その原点はどういうところから来るのだろうか、その思想の根源は・・・と日本の教育では得られなかった何か大切なものがあるのです。「慈悲の心」というには、簡単に説明できないものなのです。

～インドの心に触れる旅～ 2011年11月に『ポリバルの会』のイベントを目的とした念願のインドへの旅が実現しました。一言では語りつくせない程の喜びと楽しさと笑いとおエピソードやハプニングがあって、私はなお一層「インド」の虜になってしまいました。旅行中のイベントはコルカタの“Rabindra Okakura Bhawan”で行われ、私達が用意した日本文化を紹介するブースがあり、折り紙や習字体験・風景写真の展示・日本料理の紹介・風呂敷や和紙によるラッピングコーナーがあり、舞台では花笠音頭・よさこい・日本舞踊を披露し、タゴールダンスとタゴールソングや楽器の演奏は現地のゲストの方々との共演となりました。ホール全体が一体となり、大いなる神様に包まれているかのような感じでした。それ以上に大いなる「家族」も感じました。

インドの大家族で育ったシュクリシュナ先生は日本に来て文化の違いでなかなか友達が出来ず寂しい時もあったそうです。しかし、いつか必ず自分の友達の家族を作りたいと強く思い、5年間はインド人の自分を忘れ去り日本の文化を学んだそうです。そしていつかインド文化の会を行った時「これが私のポリバル(家族)だ、ずっと探していた、見つけることができた、日本のポリバルだ」と。そして、いつかインドと日本のポリバルとを一つ屋根の下で会わせたい、という夢を心に願ったそうです。その大切にみんなで守ってきたこのポリバルの会でインドの地を踏めたこと、そして双方のポリバルの心と心の交流が出来たことで、シュクリシュナ先生の感極まる様子に私達も胸が熱くなりました。感動の一日に感謝の気持ちでいっぱいになり、私もまた望郷を感じ、この「ポリバル」がもっと大好きになりました。

公演後の翌日は憧れのシャンティ・ニケタンへ。サイクルリクシャーにテンションも上がりましたが、それよりもびっくりしたのが大きな木の下で、楽しそうに歌を歌っている子供達でした。ゆっくりとした時間の流れとそよ吹く風を感じられて、そして木漏れ日が私たちを包んでくれているようで、その瞬間は心が洗われたようでした。ここでは大いなる宇宙の中で、自然と人間との調和を身体で、そして五感で感じている場所なのだ、ビルディングの群れではなく、大地と木の精霊たちの中でこの幸福感を感じられるのは一生の宝物ではないか・・・と思い、【今から百年のちに】という詩を思い浮かべました。■



# 全ての困難を取り除く御方

—宇宙の母マザー・ドゥルガー—

— 新田 ゆう子

BATJのドゥルガープージャに来るようになって、5年が経ちました。

初めて女神ドゥルガーの姿を見たのは、北インドリシケシの街中だったと記憶しています。

毎夕アラティを行う街の繁華街が近いトリヴィニ・ガートの参道の、神様の絵やお供え物を売る店先でした。

インドには様々な神様、女神様がいて、その絵や像を売る店があちこちにあり、また、車やリキシャの運転席やお店の入り口には必ずそれらが飾られています。勿論、普通の家庭にも。

女神ドゥルガーは、乗り物である虎を従えていて、それが怖そうとか強そうで、苦手でした。

ラーマクリシュナ・ミッションの夕方の礼拝では、三つの歌を歌います。三番目が、「サルヴァ・マンガラ・マンガレー」という、女神を称える歌です。美しいメロディーで、大好きな賛歌です。

この賛歌の内容について、ヴェーダーンタ協会ですべ機会がありました。

インドの有名な物語「プラーナ」は18あって、その中の1つ「マールカンデーヤ・プラーナ」の、そのまた1つの部分は、ドゥルガーのことを扱っています。

女神、マザー・ドゥルガーは「幸福」が形として現れた化身だそうです。その風貌、悪魔と戦う姿が、幸福の形とは俄かに思い難かったのですが、何回か勉強を重ねるうち、その戦いの理由や神・女神の深い意味を知り、ドゥルガーに対する印象が変わっていきました。

インドに限らず、女神は母、というイメージはどの国にもあります。イエスの母マリア様。日本でしたら、観音菩薩、天照大御神、でしょうか？

母親は、例えば自分の子供が危険に曝されたら、その身を挺して戦うこともするでしょう。誰かを守るために、優

しさは戦う姿に変わるわけです。子供の幸福のための戦い。

カーリー女神やドゥルガー女神は、恐ろしい形相をしていますので、愛や受容も表していると聞いても、信じられません。しかし、人間の(ここでは女性)気持ちを考えると、その両面を持っていますし、怖くなったり優しくなったりして日々生きていることを思えば、簡単に理解することが出来ます。

わたしの好きな学問と芸能の女神サワスワティは見るからに女性的で、戦うイメージは微塵もありませんし、お金の女神ラクシュミーも同様。この2人は、ドゥルガーの娘たちなのですね。娘は、まだ、恐ろしい部分を出さなくてもいいということかなあ…。

BATJのプージャでお祈りする女神像は、インドで制作し飛行機で運ばれ、プージャが終わると何処かのトランクルームに仕舞われる、と聞いたことがあります。1年のお祭りの日以外はそこで眠っているのかあ〜と、溜息と共に驚きの気持ちが湧いたものです。本国、インドでは、ガンガーに流す、その時は大変な熱気らしく、一度は本場でドゥルガープージャを体験してみたいです。像は泥で出来ていますから、溶けてしまうので、産業廃棄物にはならないのでしょうか。

以前、「霊性の修行を重ねて心が清らかになった方には、その像は真の神に見える」と、何かで読んだことがあります。ドゥルガープージャでお祈りをしても、女神様が土から出来た像にしか見えないわたしは、まだまだ心が清らかではないということなのでしょう。

以前よりはドゥルガー女神に対する理解が出来、プージャに参加することを今から楽しみにしています。女神像は、今年はどうな風に見えるのでしょうか？ ■

了



# 池の水全部抜く大作戦 日本VSインド

－ 川満 恵理菜

今、テレビ東京で池の水全部抜く大作戦という番組を放送していると母から聞いた。そして、池の水を抜くと様々な魚が続々と現れ、その中に鯉もいたと言う。そしてその鯉があまりにも立派だったので、父にもその番組を見せたい。父はベンガル人。ご多分にもれず鯉料理が大好きだ。私が小さい頃、ドライブに誘われ、どこに行く？と聞かれたら即答で 鯉の養殖所！ と答えるほどだ。そういう理由でその番組に登場する鯉を見せるべく録画してあったその番組を見せたら予想外のコメントが返ってきたらしい。

インドの田舎(父の田舎は西ベンガル州のバネスワールという場所だ)でもやっているよ。しかもそこそこ定期的に。しかも、やり方もほとんど変わらないよ。

この話を聞いた私はよし！今年のAnjaliの原稿はこの話しよう！と決め、こうして今書いているのである。

又聞きの話である為、私もこの番組をYoutubeで見ることにした。今は便利である。見逃した番組や、見返したい番組をネットで見ることができるのだから・・・結構長い番組なので、半分ほど見てやめてしまったのだが、まずこの番組を見たことある人に説明したい。父の田舎の池はこの番組に登場するほど大きな池ではない。それだけは頭に入れておいて欲しい。特に高知城の池の水を抜く回に関してはとてつもない面積なので、そんなどえらい池を想像しないで欲しい。それでも水たまりほど狭い範囲ではないので大変であるはずだが・・・

さてさて、番組を見て予習をした後は父へのインタビューだ。どうやってあの田舎で池の水を抜いているのか。ポンプで水を抜くとちらっと聞いた現代っ子の私は電動ポンプしか思い浮かず、あの停電が多い田舎(今は昔ほどひどくはない)でどうやってそんな電力を使ってポンプで水を抜くのだろうと不思議に思っていたが、どうやらこれに関してはディーゼル(軽油)を使ったポンプだということが判明した。話を詳しく聞くと、池の水を抜く手順は簡単に説明するとこういうことらしい。

夏が始まる前にポンプで池の水を抜く→一定の水量を残し、鯉などの魚を捕まえる→泥の中に隠れている魚を待ち構えて捕まえる(この作業の名人？まできるといって驚きだ)→さらに水を抜く→しばらく放置するとどこかしらからちょろちょろ水が出るから、さらにその水も抜く→乾

かす→しばらくして雨が降り、新しい水が溜まっていく→一定量溜まったらココナツの皮や牛のふんを乾燥させた物やその他もろもろ、魚のえさとなるものを入れる。そうすると2週間ほど水が汚くなる。小魚を入れたら即死するほど汚いらしい→約2週間で水のかさも増え、水もどういう訳かきれいになるらしい。とにかく色々なものを投入してから2週間は臭いし汚いらしい→きれいになった水に魚の卵や小魚を投入。

こんな感じらしい。魚の養殖ビジネスをしている池は毎年この作業をしている業者もいるらしいが、一般の池は5～6年に一回やるようだ。

さて、この一般の池の話だが、田舎なので水道がない家も多く井戸水を使っている。その井戸水で洗うのが面倒なのか理由は定かではないが、池で食器を洗っているのを小さいころから目撃していた。そして、その同じ池でお風呂も入っていた。日本に暮らし、たまにしか田舎に行かない私はあの水はきれいなのだろうか？といつも思っていた。母曰く、池の水がきれいかどうかはわからないが、あの田舎で臭い人はあんまりいないからきっと大丈夫なんじゃない？とのこと。食器に関しても、みんなそれで生活しているのだから大丈夫なんだろうと思う。そう信じてその池で洗われたであろう食器を私は使ってきた。ただ、今回この水を抜く話を聞いて、きれいかどうかは定かではないが、思っているほど悪くないんじゃないかと思ってきた。かえって日本の池の方が汚いかもしれない。生活全般の清潔さはどう考えても日本の方が上だが、池に関してはもしかしたら・・・と思いはじめたのだ。投入するココナツの皮だの牛のフンだの色々あるが、よくよく考えてみたら自然に帰っているだけではないか。それに対し、日本の池に捨てられているものといえば空き缶だのビニールだの財布だの、自然でないものばかりだ。へドロもひどいらしい。だからと言って今その田舎に行き、その池でお風呂に入れと言われたらさすがに無理だが、その池を見る目はこの話を知る前と後では確実に変わったと思う。

いつもAnjaliに何を書こうか迷う私であるが、今年は非常に珍しい話を書けたと思っていますがいかがでしたでしょうか？みなさんの田舎にある池ではどんなことをしているのか、日本人や現代っ子のインド人は知らないのではないのでしょうか？機会があれば(池が近くにあった人限定になりますが)親や祖父母に話を聞いてみてはいかがでしょうか？面白い話が聞けるかもしれませんよ？ ■

# 心は最悪の友にもなり、心は最高の親友にもなる

## 求道者Xのモノローグ

－ 佐藤 洋子

一、堆積されたカルマ[1]も  
その上に 新たに産まれるカルマも  
心無ければ 出現できぬ

二、次々と 顕れ消える紙芝居 総監督は 心  
霊妙な 内なる世界 浄らかな 流れ遮り 惑わしてるのは 誰か？  
それは心 だが何故？ なぜ心なのだ！

三、心を潰して しまえ！ 心の住居は肉体だ！  
肉体が 悪の根源？ それを 潰してしまえ！  
強制的な 排除は 自死 しかない

四、たとえ肉体こわしても 心ごと 消滅させられるのか？  
それはできない 不可能だ  
心の宿は身体 魂(アートマン[2])の宿も同じ宿  
心はいつもピッタリと 魂と一緒に 離れない

宿が無くなるそのときは 心も一緒に魂と 新しい宿に寄宿する  
そこでも心は惑わしを 繰り返し つづけるだろう  
輪廻の車は止まらない 悪の根源断ち切れない

五、なぜ心は野放図に 勝手気ままができるのか  
許しているのは 誰なのか？  
何もかも ただ眺めてるもの アートマン？

起きては消える放埒を ただ眺めてるもの アートマン  
お前の意志よ目を覚ませ 心と自己とを同一視  
している夢のたれ幕を 引き裂け 識別のサーベルで

六、心の悪い傾向を 直すことができぬなら  
心を奴隷に してしまえ お前の！

同じ命令されつづけ 逃亡不可能を悟るとき  
心は言うこときくだろう

七、無限の、可能性秘めた心を 識別の鞭もて打つ ばかりでなく  
ときどきは 飴を与える要もある  
主を思い うっとりとなる甘い飴！

今までに 味わったことない 甘美なもの、  
神への愛と渴仰と そんな名前の麻薬飴！  
味を覚えた心は 麻薬の飴の常習者

心は最悪の友にもなり、心は最高の親友にもなる

八、魂よ 今は 一服していても 大丈夫だよ  
放っておいても心は あの 毒の蜜をもとめて  
強力な 引力そのものアートマン 別名神 を 求めるように なるから

永いあいだ 浄らかさ 妨害していた心  
本当は 自己の姿を探してた 妨害しながら 無意識に  
効き始めた毒の飴 朧気に 感じ始めた異次元の 神の世界をチラチラと

ひと時も 離れることは できなくなるよ 心は  
甘美な無間地獄へと 没入しつつ落下する  
アートマン またの名 ブラフマン[3]と 融合するまで！

九、心が制御をされたとき 初めて悪の根源は 破壊されて消滅す  
浄らかな 流れ遮るものはなく 永遠と呼ばれる海に流れ入る  
五感感わす元の元 サムスカーラ[4]の製造機 心は消える永遠に

一〇、悪い傾向の製造機 心は正反対の 鍵にもなる  
永遠不変 至福と無限と自由への 巨大な力を秘めている

だから 親愛なる友 お前自身 アートマンよ魂よ！  
いつも心の主人たれ！  
宇宙存在以来から お前は心の主だった

一一、心の奴隷になることを 決して許すな一秒さえも 一息も  
かすかな悪の兆しさえ お前のセンサーに触れたとき  
秘密兵器マントラ[5]の 強烈連射で撃ち壊せ

それでもしぶとく残るなら 流れの向きを変えさせよ  
甘美な餌をちらつかせ 懐かしい 神のほうへと  
チェンジさせよ ギアを！ 心を！ ■

[1]karma 行為。義務。儀式的礼拝。

[2]Atman (本来の、普通の、至高の)自己。至高の魂。アドヴァイタ・ヴェーダーンタは、個別の自己はそれと一体であると説く。

[3]Brahman 絶対者。ヴェーダーンタ哲学の最高の実在。

[4]samskāra 前世から持ち越された傾向。

[5]mantra サンスクリットの聖語。ジャパ(japa、唱名。神の御名の反復)に用いられる聖句。

以上注釈は、日本ヴェーダーンタ協会改訂版第一刷「ラーマクリシュナの福音[全訳]」より引用。

# —タゴール記念会発足60周年記念—

## — 平井 誠二、星原 大輔

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ラビンドラナート・タゴール(1861~1941)は、インド・ベンガル州出身の詩人・思想家で、アジア初となるノーベル文学賞を受賞した人物です。音楽・戯曲・絵画などでも豊かな才能を発揮し、彼の深い知恵と高い精神性は、世界中の人びとに強い影響を与えました。大倉精神文化研究所の創業者・大倉邦彦(1882~1971)も、その影響を受けた一人で、研究所設立の精神の一つに「東西文化の融合」を掲げたのもタゴールの影響とされています。

1961年(昭和36年)のタゴール生誕100周年に向けて、インドでは、国家事業として、百年祭が企画されました。そして、インド首相のネルーが、世界規模で記念されるべきという趣旨で、世界各国に百年祭の協同を呼びかけました。ネルーの呼びかけに応じて、1958年(昭和33年)、生誕100周年を祝うタゴール記念会が日本で組織されました。その際には、邦彦が理事長に就任し、タゴール研究室が研究所本館(現在の大倉山記念館)内に設置されました。下記はその趣意書の抜粋です。

Excerpts from "TAGORE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION – Japan PROSPECTUS" published in Tagore Memorial Association Bulletin Issued on Jan. 1st 1959

For the Centenary of Rabindranath Tagore which comes off in 1961, a big plan of Celebration is going on in India, on a nationwide scale and moreover on a world-wide scale. In the name of the Prime Minister J. Nehru an appeal has been sent to different quarters of the world; and especially to Japan cooperation has been proposed from Shantiniketan since last year. In the first letter from Mr. K. Roy, Curator of Tagore Museum, thus suggested: --"Surely you will agree that a Tagore Revival will be of the best interests to Japan, for Tagore was one of those universal spirits whose message never grows old or stale. There is also the factor of promoting cultural fellowship between Japan and India. But the special reason that I have in view is that I wish to see Japan preparing the ground for the Centenary of Tagore which comes off in 1961."

We wish to respond to this proposal with hearty eagerness. Tagore was very fond of Japan. He visited Japan three times, and left deep impression on people's minds which is still alive. The friendship between Tagore and Tenshin Okakura or Taikan Yokoyama is memorable. It has a great significance in the history of national relationship between India and Japan, that we both were brought to such a close contact through Tagore at the time when we were not permitted direct diplomatic relations. Therefore, Tagore Centenary is also our own problem for Japan, as well as for India. But the special reason why we have such eagerness in memorialising Tagore, lies in the fact that encouraging Tagore-study must have great importance for present Japan. Its significance may be considered from two viewpoints; one is in regard with the progress of spiritual culture of Japan herself, and the other is with promoting the national friendship between India and Japan.

1) As to the first viewpoint: a) we are sure that our young generation must be inspired by Tagore's deep religious and philosophical insight, as its results we can expect something new awakening arise in young men's minds; b) the study of India in Japan, though it reaches high level, is limited in researching into ancient scriptures, and studying Tagore will arouse people's interest in modern India; c) Tagore offered the last half of his life to human education at Shantiniketan, and we hope his educational ideals would be introduced into Japanese education; d) Tagore, in his later years, came to cherish hearty homage to Buddha, and especially showed his sympathy with Mahayana Buddhism; it must give something new suggestion to Japanese Buddhists who have been nourished in the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism; e) his contribution was not limited within spiritual fields only, he was an actual leader of resurgent India; so his message will appeal to all leading persons in different fields of society. In conclusion, Tagore must be understood more deeply in present day than in his days.

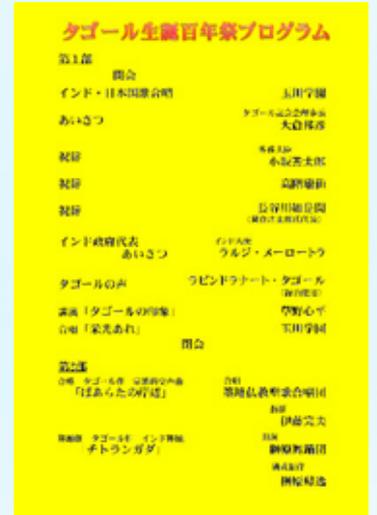
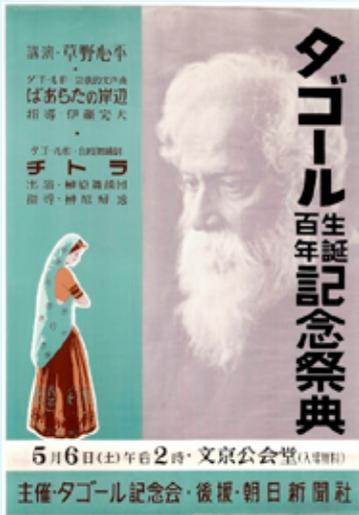
2) As to the relationship between India and Japan, in 1956 the 'Cultural Agreement between India and Japan' was signed, and in 1958 the 'Indo-Japanese Trade Agreement' was concluded. Thus we have been brought into closer contact, and yet our knowledge of India is still quite limited. Under such circumstances Tagore Centenary may be of great significance for advancement of learning India in Japan. For to study Tagore is to know India.

Such is the reason why we are so eager in taking up the Centenary Birth Celebration of Tagore. Since we have received a calling from Shantiniketan, after more than one year's preparation, we have recently succeeded in organising 'Tagore Memorial Association' on a nationwide scale. Our concrete aims, objects, and activities are expressed in the Constitution; which will be promoted step by step.

May the activities of this Association contribute a great deal to both India and Japan, and moreover to the human life and culture of the world.



タゴール生誕百年祭は、晴天に恵まれた1961年(昭和36年)5月6日、東京の文京公会堂で盛大に執り行われました。タゴールの精神を現代に顕彰するとともに、日本で行われたインド文化の祭典としても、国内外に大きな反響を与えました。



1929年(昭和4年)、タゴールは、日本を経由してカナダとアメリカの大学へ講演に向かいました。そしてカナダで講演を終えロサンゼルスに到着したところ、アメリカへの入国を拒否されました。役所の対応に憤慨したタゴールは、予定をすべてキャンセルして、日本にしばらく滞在することになりました。そこで、タゴールはラス・ビハリ・ボースに滞在先の手配を依頼し、「富豪の大邸宅での形式的な歓待よりも、むしろ思想的に気分の分かり合える人がよい」と伝えました。ボースは親交のあった大倉邦彦に頼み、タゴールは大倉邸に約1ヶ月間滞在することになり、帰国後も二人の交流は続きました。その滞在期間の思い出を大倉邦彦は下記のように綴っています。



Excerpts from “My Recollections of Rabindranath Tagore – Kunihiro Okura” (tr. By Prof. Kiyoshi Yamaguchi) published in Tagore Memorial Association Bulletin Issued on Jan. 1st 1959

My recollections of Rabindranath Tagore go back thirty years to the man who aroused in those who met him an admiration for his profound oriental philosophy, his rich poetic sentiment and his noble personality.

In the spring of 1929, I was asked by my friend Ras Bihari Bose, a refugee from India, to entertain Tagore, who was coming to Japan for a brief visit on his way back to India, at my house. The reason was that Tagore who had already visited Japan twice before, did not like a ceremonial entertainment at some millionaire's luxurious residence, but rather preferred to stay with those who were sympathetic with his ideas. The poet had already read my writing translated into English and entitled “My Thoughts” which he had obtained through Bose. As the result of our meeting at the Imperial Hotel, I was given the privilege to entertain him as my guest at my house, Meguro.

As my house was not so large, all that I could offer him was a bedroom, a study and a drawing room. During his stay at my house, he delivered a series of lectures on the subject of “The Philosophy of Leisure” at the Asahi Auditorium, Tokyo, and made lecture-tours at many other places of Japan. At the same time he had very many visitors, and I was afraid that his rest and meditation might be troubled.

Sitting face to face with the Poet who was dressed in Indian clothes and sinking his tall stature deep in an armchair of the study, I talked about my project of building the Institute of the Spiritual Culture, which was already started, and he talked, in turn, about his school at Shantiniketan. The impressions I received then from him remain still vivid in my mind.

Just about the time I invited to a party about fifty foreign students from China, Korea, and South East Asia, mostly the students of the Student House that I was looking after. And the Poet who was fond of young men came willingly to the party and passed half a day joyfully in company with them.

I served him home-cooked meals at my house as a rule, but sometimes I took him out for characteristic Japanese dishes. He appreciated the Japanese taste and was much pleased with it.

Tagore expressed his desire to introduce in India the judo, the tea-ceremony and the flower-arrangement of Japan, asked me to recommend some suitable teachers. I talked with Jigoro Kano, Chief of Kodokan, and Shinzo Takagaki was sent to India.

After his return to India, Tagore sent me 170 volumes of his work written in English and Bengali and a model of an ancient Indian ship. These books containing his ideas and his sincerity are now kept in the Tagore room of the Okurayama Institute for Cultural Science.

On the 70th anniversary of the Poet's birth, I received a request from India to send some works of eminent philosophers, writers and poets of Japan for the memorial publication. Then I asked Dr. Tetsujiro Inoue, Yone Noguchi, and Saneatsu Mushakoji to prepare manuscripts, which Junzaburo Nishiwaki translated into English to be sent to India.

It is thirty years since the Poet passed away leaving behind him the great cultural achievements. Soon we are going to celebrate the centennial of his birth. Recollecting my meeting with the poet, I am deeply impressed with the mystery of fate which brought us together.

タゴールは大倉邸に滞在中に体調を崩し、医者からは肺水腫・下腹部浮腫・軽い狭心症と診断されていました。邦彦らは手厚く看病しました。タゴールは帰国後、滞在中に手厚い看病を受けたことに感謝して、ベンガル語の自著130冊と英語の自著29冊、計159冊すべてにサインを記して、邦彦へ送りました。のちにタゴール記念会が収集した図書と併せて、現在、タゴール文庫として附属図書館に収蔵しています。タゴールの寄贈本は、当研究所のホームページから全ページの画像を見ることができます。

2018年(平成30年)はタゴール記念会発足から60年目に当たります。それを記念して、当研究所では大倉とタゴールの交流を紹介する展示を10月25日まで開催しています。ぜひご来場いただき、タゴールが邦彦に与えた影響と、日本とインドの友好交流の一端を知っていただければ幸いです。

#### Invitation to visit the Okurayama Kinenkan

Currently the center is holding an exhibition to commemorate the 60th anniversary of establishment of the Tagore Memorial Association in Japan, and the exhibition will end on October, 25. However, many of the books in Bengali and English signed by Tagore himself are kept in the affiliated library and always available for public viewing. Please come by and enjoy the fruits of friendship between Tagore and Okura. ■



# ध्यान का महत्व

- पूर्णिमा शाह



**था**ईलैंड में बारह फुटबॉल टीम के बच्चे और उनके पच्चीस साल के अध्यापक गुफ़ा की कैद से निकले और सब बच्चे तंदुरुस्त और शांत लग रहे थे। गुफ़ा में खाने और बिजली का अभाव होते हुए भी वे पूरी तरह से स्वस्थ और निडर हो कर बाहर निकले। बहुत ही आश्चर्यजनक बात यह थी कि इन बच्चों ने इतने दिनों तक अँधेरे गुफ़ा में कैसे मुश्किलों का सामना किया।

ये बच्चे अपने फुटबॉल के अध्यापक या कोच येकापॉल चानथावॉनग के निर्देशन से गुफ़ा में बैठ कर ध्यान कर रहे थे। उस अध्यापक के माता पिता दस वर्ष की छोटी सी उम्र में ही गुज़र गए थे। उन्हें बौद्ध धर्म के मठ में आगे की पढ़ाई के लिए भेजा गया। वहाँ पर उन्होंने बौद्ध धर्म के साधु बनने का प्रशिक्षण प्रारम्भ किया। उन्होंने इस घटना के तीन साल पहले ही यह मठ छोड़ कर वाइल्ड बोरस नामक एक सॉकर टीम के कोच के रूप में जगह प्राप्त किया। जो शिक्षा उन्होंने मठ में हासिल की थी वही शिक्षा बच्चों के प्राणों की रक्षा करने में मददगार साबित हुई। ये बच्चे गुफ़ा में घुसे तो थे लेकिन आकस्मिक बारिश के कारण, वहाँ पानी भर जाने के कारण बाहर निकलने में असमर्थ थे। जहाँ पर यह बच्चे फँसे हुए थे, वहाँ पर ऑक्सिजन की मात्रा बहुत ही कम थी। परन्तु स्वास की प्रक्रिया और ध्यान से ही

उन लोगों ने शरीर के ऑक्सिजन लेवल को कायम रखा था। जब यह बच्चे गुफ़ा में ध्यान में बैठे थे, एक ब्रिटिश डाइविंग टीम ने इन लोगों को नौ दिनों के बाद खोज निकाला।

ध्यान करने से आप बहुत कुछ हासिल कर सकते हैं। जब हम अपना पूरा ध्यान स्वास के उपर ले जाते हैं तो हम शरीर में ज्यादा ऑक्सिजन ले सकते हैं, जिससे हमारी शारीरिक तंदुरुस्ती बढ़ती है मन शान्त होता है और हम अपने विचारों को अपने बस में कर सकते हैं। दिन में सिर्फ़ थोड़े से गहरे स्वास लेकर भी आप इसका अनुभव कर सकते हैं।

आर्ट ऑफ़ लिविंग यह स्वास की और ध्यान की प्रक्रिया खूब ही सरल और अच्छे तरीके से सिखाती है। श्री श्री रविशंकर जी के द्वारा सिखाई गई यह रीत जिसे हम सुदर्शन क्रिया कहते हैं वह शरीर और मन को आराम पहुँचाता है।

यह ध्यान सभी को करना चाहिए और अपने बच्चों को तो जरूर सिखाएं। क्योंकि ध्यान से वे अपना आत्मबल मज़बूत कर सकते हैं जिससे वे किसी भी तरह की मुश्किलों का सामना असानी से और हँसते हँसते कर सकते हैं। ध्यान ही हमें सही रास्ता दिखा सकता है। ■

**वि**श्व के एशियाई महाद्वीप में बसा है जापान का प्रसिद्ध शहर टोक्यो। इस देश और शहर से जुड़ी कुछ अत्याधिक विषमिit करने वाली बातें हैं जिनसे आप सब भी सहमत होंगे।

जापानी पर्यटन महोत्सव में से सर्वाधिक लोकप्रिय है यहाँ का चेरी ब्लॉसम फेयर या फेस्टिवल। हर वर्ष चैत्र-वैशाख माह के दौरान आरम्भ होता है यह उत्सव जैसा माहौल। पूरा स्थान इस अवसर पर मानो खिल उठता है। हर एक वृक्ष एक नवीन रंग के फूलों की पोशाक में सज उठता है। हज़ारों की तादात में देशी और विदेशी पर्यटक यहाँ एकत्रित होते हैं। इस वर्ष भी मार्च के माह के दूसरे सप्ताह से अप्रैल के माह के दूसरे सप्ताह तक यह बहार छायायी रही। प्रकृति के इस छटा के सामने मानो बिजली के चकाचौंध वाला यह शहर नत मस्तक हो जाता है। यह प्रसिद्ध प्रज्वलित द्वीप एक खूबसूरत पर्यटन स्थल में तबदील हो जाता है और एक अनूठा पर्यटन पर्व मनाने लग जाते हैं यहाँ के वासिंदे।

चारों ओर से नीर से घिरे जापान में मंदिरों या पूजा स्थलों, जिन्हें श्राइन कहा जाता है, की भरमार है। पवित्र नदी "आराकावा" में पावन घाट नुमा स्थल हैं जिसके समीप बुद्धा के श्राइन है। टोक्यो शहर के असाकुसा श्राइन के पास श्रद्धालुओं के भीड़ काफी संख्या में एकत्रित होती है। यद्यपि यह एक शांत-सौम्य स्थल है पर वैशाख में होने वाले आयोजनों से मंडित प्रांगण में प्रतिदिन अपूर्व चहल पहल बढ़ जाती है। प्रत्येक वर्ष हज़ारों श्रद्धालु यहाँ के विभिन्न क्रिया कलापों से रूबरू होने के लिए यहाँ एकत्रित होते हैं। विशाल एवं उत्साह जनक प्रकृति का मेला इसी दौरान विदित होता है। नृत्य, संगीत व रंगीन दुकाने सजाई जाती हैं। स्वादिष्ट पारम्परिक मिठाईयां भी बिकती हैं जिनमें विशेष कर "वागाशी" और "दोरायाकि" बहुत पसंद की जाती है। इस मनोरम पृष्ठभूमि पर भव्य सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों और स्पर्धाओं का आयोजन होता है जिसमें सैलानी बड़ चढ़ कर हिस्सा लेते हैं। आकाश चुम्भी "फायर वर्क्स" या आतिश बाजी भी देखने को मिलता है। आकर्षित कठपुतली, जापानी लोकनृत्य व गीत और कई कार्यक्रम भी शामिल किए जाते हैं इस उत्सव में।

बुद्धा के अलावा जापान में पूज्य एक और भी ईश है जिन्हें "शिनतो" के नाम से जाना जाता है। इस परम देव को मानने वाले विशेषतः प्रकृति के पांच तत्वों- अग्नि, वायु, नीर, आकाश और धरती को विशेष महत्वा देते हैं। यह समूह सूर्या, चन्द्रमा, पर्वत, पृथ्वी और नदी यानी प्रकृति के अर्चना करते हैं। वह "शिनतोइज़ाम" को मानने वाले कहे जाते हैं। शायद इन्हीं के तप और पूजन से पृथ्वी का यह टुकड़ा फूलों के शहर में तबदील हो जाता है हर वर्ष। जापान के कुछ इलाकों में एकांत है, प्राकृतिक छटा है, और अद्भुत शहती का माहौल है जो हमें यहाँ खींच लाती है। चेरी ब्लॉसम के मौसम में सैलानियों को मिलता है एक ऐसा अनूठा अनुभव जिसे वे जीवन पर्यन्त संजो के रखते हैं।

जापान में सुखद अनुभूति देता है यहाँ की सड़कों पर पैदल चलना, साइकिल चलाना, दुकानों को निहारना और विभिन्न परिधानों से सुसज्जित परिदृश्य। शाम के वक्त यहाँ के झील पर बसे बेहतरीन झिलमिलाते पूल या ब्रिजस का इस जगह का सौंदर्य सौ गुना कर देता है।

सूर्यास्त का विहंगम दृश्य और सूर्योदय का मनोरम अनुभूति शब्दों में बयान करना काफी नहीं है।

हालाँकि जापान एक उन्नत, वैभवशील और आर्थिक रूप से सम्पन्न देश है यहाँ के लोगों में प्रकृति के प्रति एक विशेष प्रेम है। "कीमोनो" एवं "युकाता" से सुसज्जित जापानी महिलाओं के बारे में प्रसिद्ध कलाकार हिरोशी शिमज़ाकि लिखते हैं, कि ये मनुष्य परमात्मा की कैनवास पर बनाये गए विशेष कलाकृति है जो बहुत सौम्य और सुन्दर हैं।

जापान का जादू किस कदर बड़ चढ़ कर बोलता है, यह यहाँ सालों से रहने वाले वासिंदों के अनुभवों को सुनकर स्पष्ट हो सकता है। इस उगते सूरज की धरती को अनुभव कर हम तो सम्मोहित हुए ही हैं, पर अनन्य सभी लोग जो जापान आये हैं, उन सभी का यकीनन अनुभव कुछ ऐसा ही ख़ास रहा होगा। ■



# बंदी वीर

## - मनमोहन सिंह साहनी



गुरुदेव श्री रविंदर नाथ टैगोर की प्रसिद्ध कविता बंदी वीर, बाबा बंदा सिंह बहादुर और उनके साथियों की कुरबानी की गाथा दोहराती है। दुःख कि बात यह है की इतिहास के इतने बड़े वीर के बारे में बहुत कम लोगो को जानकारी है। बंदा सिंह बहादुर का जन्म १६७० ई० में कश्मीर के राजौरी क्षेत्र में एक राजपूत परिवार में हुआ। शुरू से ही उनको शिकार का शौक था। १५ वर्ष की आयु में शिकार करते हुए एक गर्भवती हिरनी को अपने सामने प्राण त्यागते हुए देखकर वो बेचैन हो उठे। उन्होंने वैराग्य धारण करने का निश्चय किया और जानकी दास बैरागी के शिष्य बने। उन्होंने अपना नाम माधव दास बैरागी रख लिया और दीन दुनिया को छोड़ दिया। उन्होंने योग साधना भी सीखी और काफी ताकतवर हो गए। उन्होंने गोदावरी नदी के तट पर अपना आश्रम बनाया और अपने शिष्यों के साथ रहने लगे।

उस वक्त भारत में मुगलों का राज था और वो हिन्दूओ पर बहुत जुल्म करते थे। १६९९ में सिक्खों के दसवें गुरु गोबिंद सिंह जी ने अमृत पिला कर खालसा फ़ौज तैयार की औरंगजेब और उनके जर्नेलो के साथ गुरु जी ने कई युद्ध लड़े और जीत प्राप्त की पर मुगलो की मक्कारी की वजह से उनको आनंदपुर छोड़ना पड़ा। उनके दो छोटे बेटे और माँ सरहन्द के नवाब वजीर खान के हत्ये चढ़ गए। सात और नौ साल के बच्चों को नवाब ने काफी लालच दिया, डराया, धमकाया पर वे मुस्लिमान बनने पर राजी नहीं हुए तो नवाब ने उनको जिन्दा दीवार में चुनवा दिया। ऐसे ही दो बड़े बेटे चमकौर के युद्ध में मुगलों के साथ लड़ते-लड़ते शहीद हो गए।

गुरु गोबिंद सिंह अपने कुछ साथियों के साथ नांदेड़ की तरफ आ गए वहाँ पर उनकी माधव दास से मुलाकात हुई उन्होंने उसको मुगलों के जुल्मों के बारे में बताया, बच्चों की शहादत के बारे में बताया और कहा की राजपूत अगर इस तरह से दुनिया छोड़ देंगे तो असहाय और गरीब लोगों की मदद कौन करेगा। उन्होंने उसको अमृत पान कराया और उनका नाम गुरुबक्श सिंह रखा लेकिन वो बाद में बंदा सिंह नाम से प्रसिद्ध हुए। १७०८ में गुरु गोबिंद सिंह जी के आदेश पर पंजाब की तरफ रवाना हुए। रास्ते में सिक्खों को इकट्ठा करते हुए पंजाब की हदों तक पहुंचे। पहला युद्ध मुगलों के साथ समाना में हुआ जिसमें करीबन १०,००० मुंगलों को मारकर ये युद्ध जीत लिया लेकिन उनके मन की आग अभी शांत नहीं हुई थी क्योंकि सरहन्द के दो साहबजादों का हत्यारा वजीर खान अभी जिन्दा था। १७१० में बंदा सिंह की अगवाई में सिक्खों ने सरहन्द पर चढ़ाई की और चप्पर चिड़ी के युद्ध में बंदा सिंह ने सरहन्द के नवाब को मौत के घाट उतर दिया। वजीर खान की मृत्यु से और सरहन्द पर कब्ज़ा करने पर सिक्ख साम्राज्य की स्थापना हुई जो सतलुज से यमुना नदी तक विस्तृत हो गई। उन्होंने एक गांव बसाया और वहाँ पर लोहागढ़ नामक एक किला बनवाया

और लोहागढ़ सिख साम्राज्य की राजधानी बन गई। उन्होंने मुगलों की मुद्रा की जगह पर सिख धर्म के सिक्के चला दिए जहा-जहा उनका राज्य था वहां-वहां उनके सिक्के चलने लगे।

इस तरह से पंजाब का काफी हिस्सा सिक्खों ने जीत लिया फिर उन्होंने अपने साथियों को उत्तर प्रदेश की तरफ रवाना किया वहां पर सिक्खों ने सहारनपुर, जलाला बाद, मुजफ्फर नगर और आस पास के इलाकों में कब्ज़ा करके असहाय लोगों की मदद की और इधर पंजाब में अमृतसर और जालंधर पर भी कब्ज़ा किया।

बंदा सिंह ने शासन सभालते ही सबसे पहले जमींदारी प्रथा को समाप्त किया जमींदारों की सारी ज़मीन गरीबों में बाँट दी उसके अलावा जितने अधिकारी घूसखोरी, भ्रष्टाचार के आदि हो गए थे उन सब को हटाकर ईमानदार अधिकारियों को पद सौंप दिए, इनके सुशासन की वजह से आम लोग खुश रहने लगे।

मुगलों को पंजाब और उसके आस-पास के क्षेत्रों में सिक्खों का शासन देख कर बड़ी तकलीफ हुई खासकर लाहौर और दिल्ली क्षेत्र में मुगलों को संचार में तकलीफ हुई इसके लिए मुगल बादशाह बहादुर साह ने खुद बहुत बड़ी सेना को लेकर पंजाब की तरफ कूच किया। क्योंकि बंदा बहादुर उस वक्त उत्तर प्रदेश की तरफ थे इसलिए सरहन्द फिर से मुगलों के कब्जे में चला गया। बंदा सिंह जब वापिस आये तब अपनी सेना को इकट्ठा कर मुगलो के साथ युद्ध किया और मुगलो को लोहागढ़ में एक बार फिर से हरा दिया और मुगलो ने और सेना मंगाई और ६०,००० सैनिकों के साथ लोहागढ़ किले को घेर लिया पर बंदा सिंह अपने साथियों के साथ बच निकलने में कामयाब हुए। मार्च १७१५ ई. में बंदा सिंह अपने साथियों के साथ गुरुदास पुर में थे वहीं मुगलो के साथ उनकी आखिरी जंग हुई एक लम्बे संघर्ष के बाद मुगल बंदा सिंह को पकड़ने में कामयाब हुए। पर बंदा सिंह का खौफ इतना था की एक बहुत बड़े लोहे के पिंजर में बंदा सिंह को कैद किया गया उनके साथ के ७०० सिखों को जंजीरो में बांध कर दिल्ली की तरफ लाया गया रस्ते में उनको काफी यातनाये दी गई ताकि दूसरे लोग उनको देखकर आगे से विद्रोह न कर सके।

बंदी वीर की जो कविता है उसमें सिखों के शौर्य, अपने गुरु के प्रति उनकी श्रद्धा एक ओंकार पर उनका विश्वास और बंदा सिंह को कैद करने के वक्त से बंदा सिंह और उनके साथियों को क़त्ल करने तक की गाथा है। कि कैसे तरह-तरह के तसीहें देकर बंदा सिंह के सामने ही उनके साथियों को रोज क़त्ल किया जाता था ताकि वो विचलित हो और माफ़ी मांगे और इस्लाम कबूल कर ले लेकिन हर सिख ने शहीद होना बेहतर समझा और एक-एक करके सारे शहीद हो गए और अंत में बंदा सिंह की बारी आई तो उनको कहा गया कि वो अपने ३ साल के बच्चे का कतल करे पर बंदा सिंह ने मना कर दिया तो उनके सामने ही उनके छोटे बेटे का क़त्ल कर के उसका हृदय निकाल कर उनके मुँह में डालने की कोशिस की गई। अंत में मुंगलों ने जुल्म की सारी हदें पार करते हुए बंदा सिंह की आँखें फोड़ कर गर्म सलाखों से उनके शरीर की त्वचा को नोच लिया इतनी असहनीय पीड़ा के बाद भी बंदा सिंह कुर्बान हो गए पर मुगलों के सामने हर नहीं मानी। इस सारे दृश्य की ब्याख्या गुरुदेव ने बहुत सुन्दर ढंग से की है। गुरुगोबिंद सिंह के सवा लाख से एक लड़ाऊ तबै गोबिंद सिंह नाम कहाऊ के नारे को सिक्खों ने सिद्ध कर के दिखाया और मुस्कराते हुए सारे कष्ट सहते हुए अपनी जान का बलिदान दिया।

गरीब और असहाय लोगों की रक्षा और जालिमों के साथ युद्ध करके हमारी आने वाली पीढ़ियों को बचाने का कार्य जो बंदा सिंह बहादुर ने किया उसका भारत हमेशा आभारी रहेगा। इतनी बहादुरी की गाथा को ज्यादा से ज्यादा नई पीढ़ी को बताने का प्रयास करना चाहिये।

आइये अंत में गुरुदेव टैगोर की कविता हिंदी में पड़ते हुए उन शहीदों की कुर्बानियों को याद करते हुए उनके प्रति अपने आभार प्रकट करें।

पंच नदीर तीरे,  
वेणी पकैया शिरे  
देखिते देखिते गुरु मन्त्रे  
जागिया उठिछे सिख  
निर्मम निर्भीक..

हजार कंठे गुरुजीर जय  
ध्वनिया तुलिछे दिक्  
नूतन जागिया शिख  
नूतन उषार सुर्येर पाने  
चाहिलो निर्निमिख...

अलख निरंजन  
महारब उठे, बंधन टूटे  
करे भयभंजन  
वक्षेर पाशे घनउल्हासे  
असी बाजे झनझन  
पंजाब आजी गरजी उठिला  
अलख निरंजन...

एसेचे से एक दिन  
लक्ष पराने शंका न जाने  
न राखे कहारों ऋण  
जीवन मृत्यु पाएर भूत  
चित्त भावनाहीन  
पंच नदीर धिरी दशतीर  
एसेचे से एक दिन

दिल्ली प्रासाद कुटे  
होथा बार बार बादशाहजादार  
तंद्रा जेथेचे छूटे  
कादेर कंठे गगन मंथे  
निबिड निशीथ टूटे  
कादेर मशाले आकाशेर भाले  
आगुन उठेचे फूटे

पंच नदीर तीरे  
भक्त देहेरे रक्त लहरी  
मुक्त होइलो की रे...  
लक्ष्य वक्ष चीरे  
झांके झांके प्राणपक्षी समान  
छूटे जेनो निज नीरे  
वीर गण जननी रे..  
रक्त तिलक ललाटे परले  
पंच नदीर तीरे

मोगल शिखेर रणे  
मरण आलिंगने  
कंठ पकड़ी धरिलो आंकरी  
दुई जन दुई जने  
दंशान खटो श्येन विहंगो  
जूझे भुजंगा सने  
से दिन कठिन रणे  
जय गुरुजीर हांके शिख वीर  
सुगभिर निश्वासे  
मोटो मोगल रक्त पागल  
दीन दीन गर्जने..

गुरुदासपुर गढे  
बन्दा जखन बंदी होइलो  
तूरानी सेनार करे  
सिंहेर मत शंखल गत  
बंधी लए गेलो धरे  
बन्दा समरे बंदी होइलो  
गुरुदासपुर गढे

सम्मूखे चले मोगल सैन्य  
उड़े इ पथेर धूलि  
छिन्न शिखेर मूँद लोइया  
वर्षा फलके तुली  
शिख सात शत चले पश्चाते  
बाजे शंखलगुली  
राजपथ पढे परे लोक नाही धरे  
वातायन जाए खुली  
शिख गरजे गुरुजीर जय  
प्राणेर भय भूली  
मोगल ओ सिख उडालो आजिके  
दिल्ली पथेर धूलि..

पड़ी गेलो कडा काडी  
आगे केव प्राण करिबेक दान  
तारी लागी तरातरी  
दीन गेले परे घाटकेर हाते  
बंदीरा सारी सारी  
जय गुरुजीर कही शत वीर  
शत शिर दे दारी..

सप्ताह काले सात शत प्राण  
निःशेष होए गले  
बंदार कोले काजी दिलो तुली  
बंदार एक छेले  
कहिलो इहारे वधिते होइबे

निज हाते अवहेले  
दिल तार कोले फेले  
किशोर कुमार बंदा बाहुतार  
बंदार एक छेले..

किछु न काहिलो बानी  
बन्दा सुधीरे छोटो छेलेतीरे  
लोइलो वक्षे तानी  
क्षण काल भोरे मथार उपरे..  
राखी दक्षिण पानी  
सुधु एक बार चुम्बिलः  
रंगा उशनीश खानी..

तार पर धीरे कोटि बास होते  
छुरिका खासाए आणि  
बालकेर मुच चाहि  
गुरुजीर जय, कनेकनेर कही  
रे पुत्र भय नाही  
नबिन बदन अभय किरण  
ज्वाली उठी उत्साही  
किशोर कंठे कांपे सभातल  
बालक उठिल गाही  
गुरुजीर जय किछु नाही भय  
बंदार मुच चाहि..

बन्दा तखन वाम बाहु पाश  
जरैलो तार गले  
दक्षिण करे छेलेर वक्षे  
छुरी वसैलो बले  
गुरुजीर जय कहिया बालक  
लुटाइलो धरा तले.  
सभा होलो निस्तब्ध  
बंदार देहो छिरिलो घातक  
संराशी करिया दग्ध  
स्थिर होए वीर मरिल, ना करी  
एकटी कातर शब्द  
दर्शन जन मुदिल नयन  
सभा होलो निस्तब्ध

(अनुवादक - काल चिरान)



# रंगों की पहचान

- अमिता जैन

आखिर कौन जाने क्या हो जायेगा  
पल में, इस उलझी दुनिया में

कभी तूफ़ान की उचाईयों निगल जाती हैं,  
धरती से आसमान की सारी गहराइयां....  
कभी तूफ़ान खुद बन जाते हैं पतवार  
टूटी कश्ती के ।

जीवन भी एक ऐसा ही रेला है  
ज़िंदगी के उतार चढ़ावों का....

इस जीवन के मेले में अनगिनत रंग हैं फैले चारों ओर...  
कुछ धीरे खिलखिलाते हुए, कुछ हलके मायूस से,  
सुख दुख की भावनाओं का परिचय देते...  
ज़िंदगी से रूबरू कराते हुए ।

रंगों के इस रंग मंच की कुछ मानयाताएँ हैं अजीब सी...  
कभी इनकी घेराईयों पर मनाये जाते हैं पर्व कई,  
कभी इन्हीं खूबसूरत रंगों पर उडा दी जाती है सफ़ेद चादर..

ऐसी हे रंगों की पहचान,  
कभी खुशी कभी ग़म से भरी

चमकीले चटकीले खुशीयाँ बिखेरते रंग..  
अचानक फीके पड़ते ही,  
ज़िंदगी को बहा देते हैं आँसुओं के तूफ़ान में ।

शायद, किसी किनारे की आस में .... ।



## नक्राब

- सारिका अग्रवाल

ज़माने का बहुत तमाशा देखा  
हर चेहरे पर नक्राब देखा ।  
गुज़र गई ज़िन्दगी बेनक्राब करने में,  
बेनक्राब करते वक्रत,  
अपने चेहरे पर भी एक नक्राब देखा ।  
इंसानियत ढूँढते ढूँढते  
खुद को भी लड़खड़ाते देखा ।

शोरगुल में ख़ालीपन देखा,  
तनहाइयों में शोर देखा ।  
मजबूरियाँ में फ़ायदा उठाते देखा,  
फ़ायदे में इंसानियत को मरते देखा ।

दोस्तों की रंजिश को देखा,  
अपनों की साज़िश को देखा ।  
हँसते हुए को अंदर से रोते हुए देखा,  
और रोते हुए को मुस्कुराते हुए भी देखा ।  
क्या खूब हमने ज़माने का यह तमाशा देखा  
हर चेहरे पर नक्राब देखा ।