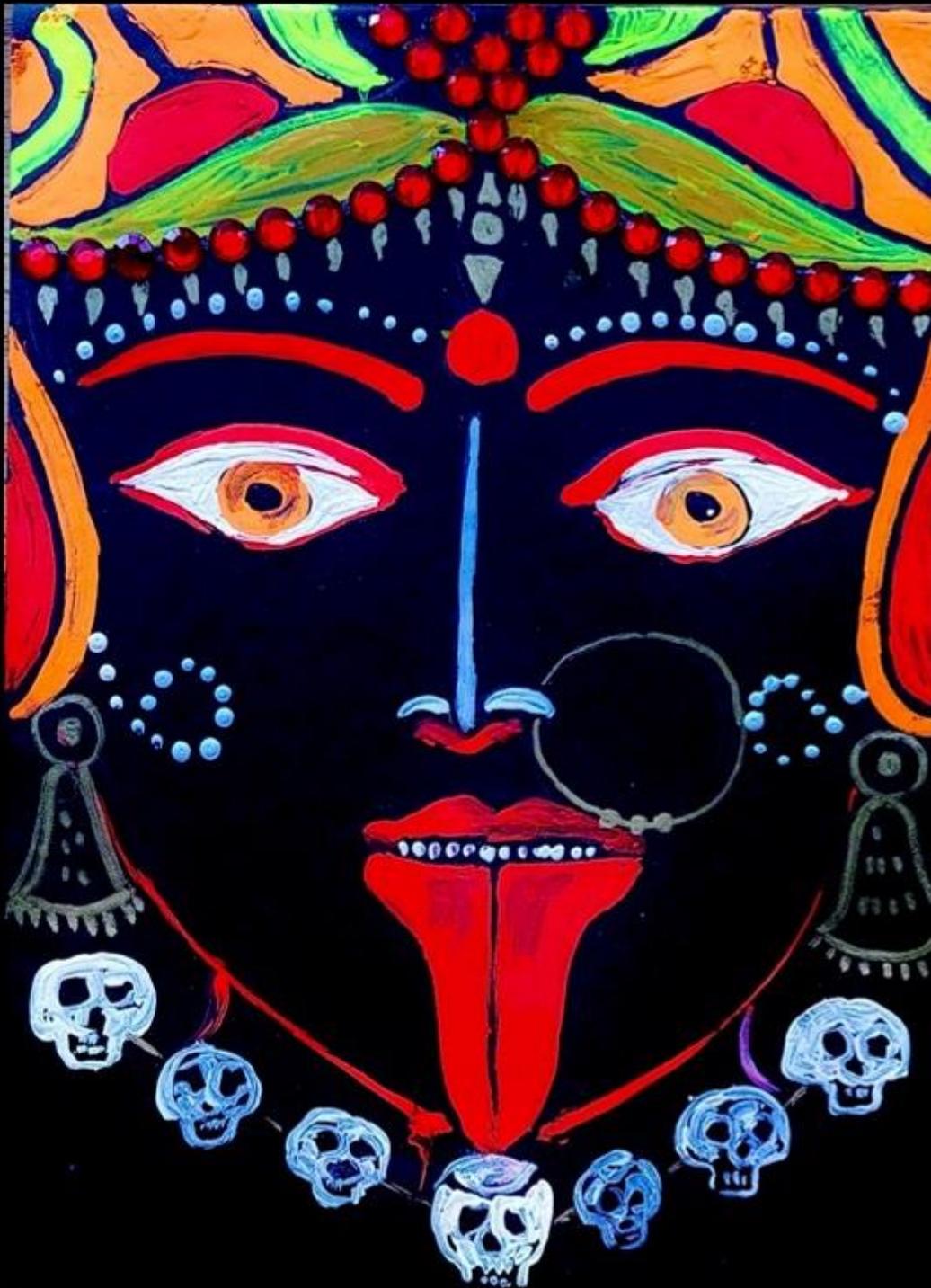


North America Sarbojanin Kalipuja Association



30th October, 2021



Kalipuja 2021

Welcome to our 12th Kalipuja. We wish all our patrons happiness and prosperity. May the blessing of Maa Kali be with you always.

Venue

Riverfront Community Center
300 Welles St, Glastonbury, CT 06033

Event

30th October 2021

3:00 PM–5:00 PM	Puja
5:00 PM–5:30 PM	Pushpanjali
6:00 PM–7:00 PM	Bhog Distribution
7:00 PM–8:00 PM	Dinner Distribution

North America Sarbojanin Kalipuja Association Inc.

PO Box 8310

Manchester CT 06040

A non-profit 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organization incorporated in the state of Connecticut

<http://naska.org/>

Mailing Address:

PO Box 8310

Manchester CT 06040

Email : naskact@gmail.com

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[facebook.com/NASKAofCT/](https://www.facebook.com/NASKAofCT/)

NASKA Executive Committee 2021

Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay
Ranadip Acharya
Arindam Chakravarty
Sanjit Sanyal
Sanchita Maitra Chatterjee

Girija Bhunia
Ayan Pal
Ananya Ganguly
Joybrata Das

Board of Authority 2021

Priest Arrangements	Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay, Tarun Chowdhury, Animesh Chandra
Publicity &	Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay, Joybrata Das, Animesh Chandra
Food	Ayan Pal, Nirupam Basu, Sanjit Sanyal, Rahul Roy, Ranadip Acharya, Arindam Guha, Arya Bhattacharya, Prabir Patra
Prasad Distribution	Ananya Ganguly, Rituparna BasuDas, Samita Basu, Tania Chandra, Jayeeta Chatterjee, Srimayee Ray
Puja Arrangements	Sanchita Maitra Chatterjee, Joyeeta Basak, Pameli Basak, Chaya Das, Mithu Saha, Ishita Sarker
Advertisement	Ranadip Acharya, Sanchita Maitra Chatterjee, Nirupam Basu, Animesh Chandra
Decoration	Girija Bhunia, Ayan Pal, Arindam Guha, Malay Nag
Venue Management	Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay, Sanchita Maitra Chatterjee, Ranadip Acharya, Nirupam Basu, Arindam Chakraborty
Transportation Logistics	Ranadip Acharya, Joybrata Das, Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay
Priest Transportation	Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay, Animesh Chandra, Sanchita Maitra Chatterjee
Front Desk	Arindam Chakraborty, Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay, Subhasis Ganguly, Animesh Chandra

Souvenir 2021

Animesh Chandra : Collections & Editing
Ayan Pal : Design
Ankur Basu : Cover Picture

A MESSAGE FROM NASKA

Hope that all of you are doing well and staying safe. May this message find you all in good health and spirit. The world had welcomed 2021, hoping that the passing year would miraculously sweep away the last vestiges of COVID-19, while shutting its door on us. But that desire had soon evaporated as a pipe dream. However, 2021 has ushered in a few things worth cheering. Like, even while trying to cope with the global pandemic, the world has already started adapting to living in and with the new normal. This resilience is built on the foundations of eternal hope, the indomitable spirit that makes humankind thrive. And in such grave times, there can be no better message than one that celebrates this positivism.

Through the last 12 years, NASKA's Kalipuja celebrations have grown in stature, thanks to the continued patronage of all of you who are part of the NASKA family and take pride in your association with the organization. This key community event, celebrates and symbolizes festivity, diversity, love, friendship and inclusiveness. In 2020, we had conducted the Puja in a very limited scale, in line with the prevalent pandemic safety restrictions that barred public congregations.



Over time, we have been keeping a close watch on the situation and feel very happy to share that, for this year, the improved conditions have encouraged us to plan for the event with limited in-person attendance. The puja is being conducted on October 30th, 2021. It will surely be a momentous occasion, when the NASKA family will come together once again, with folded hands, in devotion and prayers to the Divine Mother.

Since the inception of NASKA Kalipuja, we have been immensely fortunate to get generous support from our trusted sponsors, not to forget our guests and volunteers. We would like to thank all of you for your enthusiastic participation and much appreciated assistance, making our Kalipuja a memorable success.

We are happy to share that NASKA has continued to support multiple philanthropic activities both in the USA and India. In support of COVID-19 response, NASKA had generously contributed monetary donations to Connecticut Food Bank. In addition, we joined hands with "Together for Folk" group in West Bengal, India to support the baul families during this global pandemic.

As we strive towards prevailing over this unprecedented health crisis, may the Divine Mother continue to shower her blessings upon us, and may we never despair in the face of adversity!!!

- NASKA Executive Committee

“Om Sri Maha Kalikayai Namah”

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

“When it is dark enough, you can see the stars”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Through the perilous fight against a deadly virus, mankind emerged triumphant with a new vigor, resilience, and alacrity. 2020 taught us many lessons and introduced us to many virtues which were always within the reach but were ostensibly neglected.

Like everything else, Kalipuja 2020 was also different; done at a much smaller scale with the families of the executive committee only.

However, as we herald the 12th year of NASKA Kalipuja, we emphasize the significance of this event and the importance of this very special year. Starting from 12 Jyotirlingas of lord Shiva and 12 names of Surya, to 1200 Devine years of a Yuga, the number 12 holds a special significance in Hindu mythology.

This year is also special, as the NASKA Board of Trustee initiates the project to fulfil the long-term vision and our community's dream to build a Kali Temple in CT.

Even though we were not able to organize a cultural program due to unavailability of artist Visas, we made sure that the Puja is performed with utmost devotion, adoration, and dedication.

I sincerely hope that this souvenir magazine would also contribute to the cause and take you to a heaven of reading pleasure. This magazine showcases literary works of writers and creative geniuses of artists from around the world. I am grateful to all those who have so graciously contributed their work for everyone to enjoy.

This year's souvenir magazine has been designed by Ayan Pal. Ayan has been instrumental in the digital journey of NASKA leading many time saving initiatives and creative aspirations.

The cover of this year's magazine was created by NASKA's long time patron Ankur Basu. Ankur's creative endeavors have been recognized and appreciated by many people in CT and beyond.

I would also like to thank all the sponsors and business owners for their advertisements in this magazine. I would like to mention that neither NASKA, Inc., nor the members of its Executive Committee nor I are responsible, in any shape or form, for any opinion expressed (or implied) by an artist, author or advertiser in this magazine.

I wish you all the best and hope you will enjoy reading this magazine as much as you enjoy the Puja.



Animesh Chandra

भारत का प्रधान कौंसल
न्यू यार्क



CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA
NEW YORK

September 15, 2021

MESSAGE

We are delighted that, as in previous years, the North America Sarbojanin Kalipuja Association (NASKA) is organizing its 12th Kali Puja on October 30, 2021. NASKA's Kali Puja is one of the largest socio-cultural events in the New England region.

It is heartening to note that the volunteers at NASKA are making every effort to preserve and promote their cultural values by organizing Kali Puja. On this auspicious occasion, I convey warm greetings to the organizers as well as to all members of NASKA and hope the Puja brings in happiness, prosperity and peace in our lives.


(Randhir Jaiswal)



Ned Lamont

GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

October 30, 2021

12th Annual NASKA Annual Kali Puja Celebration

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the State of Connecticut, I am pleased to offer my best wishes to the North America Sarbojanin Kali Puja Association (NASKA) as you celebrate your 12th Annual Kali Puja.

For the past decade, NASKA has been deeply committed to create an environment of festivity, love, friendship and inclusiveness. Through this celebration event, NASKA makes every effort to create a caring and compassionate community in the State of Connecticut.

Congratulations to NASKA's families, guests, and volunteers on their 12th annual celebration. I wish you continued success in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ned Lamont".

Ned Lamont

Governor

Kali Temple in Connecticut



On behalf of NASKA, our Board of Trustee initiates the project to fulfil the long-term vision and our community's dream to build a Kali Temple in CT.

Your active participation and suggestions are welcome to make this dream a reality.

Contact NASKA Trustee Board:

Animesh Chandra - 818 224 8760

Dhrubajyoti Chattopadhyay - 848 469 9100

Nirupam Basu - 860 202 3453

Ranjit Basak - 203 444 3060

Tarun Choudhury - 201 310 0949



Undocumented and Unaccompanied: The Path to Citizenship

Raima Maitra

The number of unaccompanied children crossing the border between the United States and Mexico in March 2021 reached more than 18,500, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data (Ainsley 2021). Most of these children are crossing the border illegally because of violence and uncertainty in their home countries. Almost all of these children are being kept in poor conditions while they are in the custody of the government. They are faced with many obstacles that leave them burdened with anxiety and fear. These children are faced with the task of navigating a system that is confusing and seemingly unending. This is why I believe that unaccompanied minors that are coming into the U.S illegally deserve and would benefit from a more streamlined way to become American citizens.

A reason unaccompanied minors that are coming into the U.S illegally deserve a faster and easier way to become American citizens is that a lot of the time these children are kept in inhumane conditions for extensive periods of time. “In cases where the CBP (Customs and Border Protection) cannot find sponsors for these unaccompanied minors they must be housed by the government in terrible conditions. Once these minors reach legal age the agency can no longer house them, this occasionally leads to teenagers being transferred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers for adults on their 18th birthdays” (MONTROYA-GALVEZ 2021). This is

sickening because children are having to spend large portions of their life in captivity. If the pathway to citizenship was straightforward then there would be less minors in these centers in the first place, allowing for agencies to resolve their cases quicker so that kids would spend less time in these places. Additionally, these glorified cages where the minors are held are infamous for being over-crowded, cold, and uncomfortable (among other things). “Children are being kept together so closely that they were able to reach out and touch their neighbour, activists say, adding that they have not been given adequate access to soap or food”(“Child migrants: What is happening at the US border?” 2021). These intolerable conditions are not suitable for anyone; if it were uncomplicated for an unaccompanied minor to gain citizenship, then the quality of the government accommodations provided in the meantime could be improved as well, by keeping more minors out of these dreadful situations.

Currently, unaccompanied minors who came into the United States illegally live in fear of being deported, not being able to see their families again, or being treated differently because of where they grew up. An example of this, in the words of a former undocumented immigrant growing up in this country in the mid-80’s and 90’s, “My biggest fear was that my little sister, a citizen, would grow up alone—that one day she would wake up alone because deportation agents had taken us in the

middle of the night” (Roxas 2017). If undocumented immigrants who had lived in America with their families for years still feel unsafe or vulnerable, just imagine how frightened unaccompanied minors would feel living in overcrowded warehouses full of strangers, huddled together and sleeping in foil blankets on mattresses on the floor (“Child migrants: What is happening at the US border?” 2021). With citizenship within reach, unaccompanied minors can hopefully live without a worry in the U.S. Another thing these children are afraid of is that by law the agencies that care for the unaccompanied minors have to share information about individuals attempting to unite with an unaccompanied child. The information, in the past, has been used by ICE to arrest and detain potential sponsors (“Unaccompanied Immigrant Children”). This means that minors often have to choose between getting to live with someone they are related to at risk of getting their own family members deported. This is why I feel that it should be easier for unaccompanied minors to become citizens so that they do not have to unknowingly get their relatives arrested just because they want to live a better life with their families.

Unaccompanied minors are having such a hard time becoming American citizens because the current process is so long and complicated. There are unfair laws in place against unaccompanied children seeking safety in the United States, like they do not have the right to appointed counsel in immigration court, even as they face an immigration judge and government-funded Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) prosecutor (“Unaccompanied Immigrant Children”). These kids are thrown into the court system with no legal representation and no instruction manual on how to fend for themselves and make a life in this country. This is why the current way to citizenship for unaccompanied minors should be improved, so that it would be better for these children who are blindsided. An immigrant who came to the United States when he was just a toddler said:

How difficult is the life of an unaccompanied minor in US to fulfill the dream of becoming an American citizen.

The constant fear, dilemma and vulnerability of this young lives as they travel the long path of obtaining citizenship of this country.

Does US have an effective system to support these minors on their journey?

Raima Maitra, a freshmen in high school, did the research and shares her views.

“My parents brought me over when I was two, and when I was 18, my step-mom told me to get ready, because she had applied for me to become a legal permanent resident, and from there I lived in Mexico for two years and was waiting for the whole process. I had to get my fingerprinting, I had to get physicals. There were so many things that I had to do, to just get a meeting with an immigration officer” (SoulPancake 2019). If it took him 2 years just to meet a immigration officer then the system is truly dysfunctional and needs change now. These unaccompanied minors need to spend less time in the system and that can be done by making a faster way to becoming a American citizens as an unaccompanied minor.

Even after these types of situations some others still think that the system is perfectly fine when it really is a disaster. Yet the lack of transparency in the process of unaccompanied minors just in trying to get settled in this country, long before even getting considered to become legal residents or citizens proves that this is simply false: “Once a

child is released ... to a sponsor or to foster care, it is the child’s responsibility – regardless of age or legal representation – to submit paperwork to inform the court that the child has moved and to file a formal motion to change venue if the new address is under the jurisdiction of a different court. Children who do not properly update their address could be ordered deported in absentia for failing to appear in court” (Unaccompanied Immigrant Children). The belief that the process from these children entering the country to becoming American citizens and getting a new beginning in their lives is as simple as the American dream would lead one to think is fundamentally incorrect; rather, the system is set up for these kids to fail, and end up back where they came from, worse off in life. This is why I think that unaccompanied minors that are coming into the U.S illegally deserve a more streamlined way to become American citizens.

“Child Migrants: What Is Happening at the US Border?” BBC News, BBC, 23 Mar. 2021,

Montoya-Galvez, Camilo. “The Facts about How the U.S. Processes Unaccompanied Migrant Children at the Border.” CBS News, CBS Interactive, Feb. 2021,

Roxas, Karell. “My Secret Life as an Undocumented Immigrant.” ELLE, ELLE, 11 Oct. 2017,

“Unaccompanied Immigrant Children.” National Immigrant Justice Center,

“US Immigrants Bust Myths About Immigration | Truth or Myth” SoulPancake, 19 Sept. 2019,

“ As out of one gold, ornaments of various forms are made,
so it is the same God that is worshipped by different nations
under different names and different forms. “

- Sri Ramakrishna



তুং হি তারা

অমিত গুহ

কালী কালী বলে বেড়াই ছুটে
মনে ধরা রয় মুক্তকেশী
কোথা খুঁজি তাঁরে খুঁজি অজানারে
পাগল এ হৃদয় কাঁদে দিবানিশি

কালী যে কেমন না জানে যে কেউ
অতলের বৃক্ষে সাগরেরই ঢেউ
নেই কোনো রূপে তবু শতরূপে
ধরা এ মানস নয়নে সিন্ধু হৃদয়ে বরণে

দেখেছে যে তাঁরে বোঝা তাঁরে দায়
কোন ডাকে সাদা না জানা উপায়
বিমল রোদন না আছে বেদন
নির্মল প্রাণে শুধু সুখরাশি

চিন্ময়ী মায়ে ধরি মৃগুয়ী
সময়ের পারে চলে রবি শশী
আজ, বিশ্বাসে ধরা হাসিমুখ ডরা তুং হি তারা
ডাকে মায়ে ... যেন একবার ছুটে আসি



পারিজাত

দিলীপ চক্রবর্তী

এখন গভীর রাত। অমলকৃষ্ণ ছবি আঁকায় খুব ব্যস্ত। খুব ইচ্ছে করে সেইসব ছবি আঁকতে যা সে মনের আয়নায় দেখতে পায়, দেখে সবসময়। এই ইচ্ছেটাই তাকে টেনে নিয়ে যায় ঘরের বাইরে নীল আকাশের নিচে, দিনের আলোয়, মাঝের রাতের অন্ধকারে। ঘরের খোলা জানালা দিয়ে এক ফালি চাঁদের আলো এসে পড়েছে তার বিশাল ক্যানভাসের গায়ে, নীল ধ্রুবতারার ছায়া গায়ে মেখে। এক দৃষ্টিতে সে তাকিয়ে থাকে ক্যানভাসের দিকে। সেই ‘শেষ পাতা’ ছবিটা তার খুব প্রিয়। খুব ইচ্ছে করে সেইরকম একটা ছবি যদি কোনদিন সে আঁকতে পারে নিজের ক্যানভাসের গায়ে সেই মহান শিল্পীর মতো যেটা হবে তার মাষ্টারপিস। ক্যানভাসের গায়ে তুলির ছোট ছোট আঁচড়, একটু একটু করে ফুটে উঠছে কিছু একটা। কিসের অবয়ব জানে না সে। মনে হয় আজ অমলকৃষ্ণ নিজে কোন ছবি আঁকছে না। আজ তার তুলি ও রঙ নিজেরাই ঠিক করে নিয়েছে কিসের ছবি ফুটে উঠবে ঐ বিশাল ক্যানভাসের গায়ে। তুলির টানে অমলকৃষ্ণের হাতের সবকটি আঙুলে আজ খুশির জোয়ার। একটু একটু করে ফুটে উঠছে সেই ছবি- একটি ফুলের ছবি, রঙ তার সাদা। স্বর্গীয় সুসমায় ভরা একটা নীলচে আভা তার গায়ে জড়ানো। অমলকৃষ্ণ এই ফুলটিকে আগে কোথাও দেখেনি, জানে না সে এই ফুলের কি নাম। সদ্য আঁকা ফুলের দিকে তাকিয়ে সে একটা সুন্দর গন্ধ পায়।

অমলকৃষ্ণ জানে না গন্ধটা কার, ফুলের না নিজের।

মাতৃবন্দনার রাত।
উৎসবের রাত আজ,
অমৃতস্য পুত্রাদের আরতি মন্দিরে
মন্দিরে।
মা
যে সর্বজনীন।

তবুও কেন শুনি,
কেন শুনি আজও সেই কান্না
বহুযুগের ওপার থেকে ভেসে আসা
কোন এক নিরন্ন মানুষের?

কেন এক নির্যাতিতা মা
আজও মৃত সন্তানের শব
কোলে নিয়ে বসে থাকে
কোন এক ধানক্ষেতে?

কেন এক শিশুকন্যা -
আজও সন্তান সম্ভবা হয় মাঝরাতে
কোন এক মিলিটারি ব্যারাকে?

মা তুমি কি
বিশ্বজনীন হতে পারো না?
পারো না
ঐ নিরন্ন মানুষের কান্না ভুলিয়ে দিতে?

পারো না
ঐ নির্যাতিতা মা -এর কোলে
তার সন্তানকে ফিরিয়ে দিতে?

পারো না
ঐ সন্তান সম্ভবা শিশুকন্যাটির
চোখের জল মুছিয়ে দিতে -
ঠিক তার জন্মদাত্রী
মায়ের মতো?



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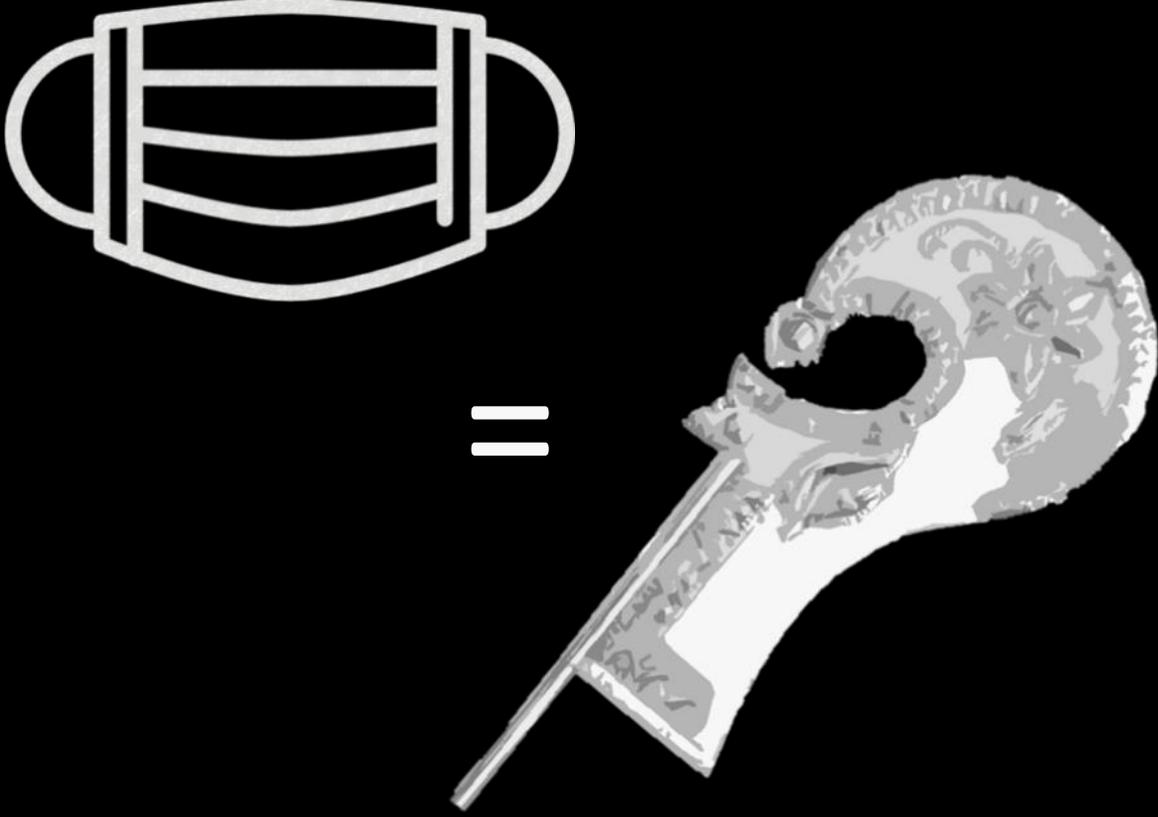
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Fri-Sat : 5:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Wear a Mask to end this Pandemic



ॐ महाकाल्यै च विद्महे
शमशान वासिन्यै च धीमहि।
तन्नो काली प्रचोदयात ॥

Om Great Goddess Kali, the One and only one, who resides in the Ocean of Life and in the Cremation Grounds that dissolve the world. We focus our energies on you, may you grant us boons and blessings.

*With Greetings
&
Best compliments*

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Dinner: Monday-Saturday 5-10, Sunday 5-9

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দোদুল বেনী

গল্প হোলো

রকমারী

বিকিকিনি !

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মানদীতে দামাল কেউ

গল্প হোলো

অজানারে জানতে চাওয়ার

আজও বুকে অসীম চেউ!

গল্প হোলো,

হয় গল্প হোলো

সৃষ্টি করে এবার

গল্প সৃষ্টি হোলো—।

চলতি পথে দেখতে দেলাম

আমার সকল গল্পকথা

কথা'র উপর জমছে কথা

জমছে জীষণ জীবন বগ্গা!

হারিয়ে গেল ছোট্ট বেলা,

হারিয়ে গেছে স্বপ্নভেলা,

হারিয়ে গেছে চেনা মানুষ,

ফোলায়-ফাঁপায় মিথে ফানুস

যত অসম্ভব সম্ভবে—!

বিজ্ঞানের প্রাক্কথা

আজ হাস্যরসে বাতুলতা,

গভী ছাড়ায় যত

সম্ভাবনার অসম্ভবে!!

দুষ্টজনের ধাক্কা

বাক্য-বাণীর হাতছানি

কেবল ডাকে আয় চলে আয়—,

মরীচিকায় আলোয় তারা

অট্টালিকার পথ দেখায়।

চাঁদের গায়ে ছাদ লেগেছে

দাঁড়িয়ে আছে সবার নেতা,

আমার-তোমার জীবন দিয়ে

ওরাই লিখছে নতুন করে

আধমরাদের রূপকথা!!



ভাঙা হাট

অশোক চন্দ্রবর্তী

আনমনা এ মন

ছুটেছে এখন

তোমার পথের প্রান্তে,

আঁকা বাঁকা চোখ,

কাঁপা কাঁপা ঠোঁট,

চাইছে বোধহয়

কিছু জানতে!

বুঝি পথ হারালাম তাই—,

ভাই পথ হারালাম তাই!

শহর গ্রাম ছেড়ে এখন

তারে কোথায় খুঁজে পাই!

আমি কোথায় খুঁজে পাই!

বিকেল বেলায় ক্লান্ত এ' মন

যরে ফিরে দেখে সবই তেমন

তবে ফুলের গন্ধ চেনা—,

অচেনার রেশ কেন এখন,

চুরি হয়ে গেল কি

আমার এ' মন—???

দাম পেয়ে গেছে বুঝি

এ বেকার জীবন

এক পড়ন্ত বিকালের মাঠে

ভাঙা হাটে,

ভাঙা হাটে!!

কবি

মালবিকা বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

যে পথে হাঁচি না কেন
সে পথেই কবি তুমি যেন
দাঁড়িয়ে থাক!
হাতছানি দিয়ে ডাক,
স্বিঞ্চ প্রদীপ থানি
জ্বলে রাখ!

তোমার প্রদীপের আলোয়
সমস্ত অন্ধকার
হয়ে যায় দূর—
এপ্রান্ত থেকে ওপান্ত !
তোমার কবিতায় অবগাহন করে
হয়ে উঠি প্রতিদিন
সজীব ও প্রাণবন্ত।

পথহারা পথিক পায় দিশা,
নতুন পথের গান গায় তাই,
নতুন জীবনের।
জীবনের মাঝেই যে আছে
জীবন-দেবতা, সেটা
বুঝে যাই মনে মনে !!

কত পথ হেঁটে ছিলে কবি?
পথের কাঁটা কত বিধে ছিল পা'য়?
জীবনের চড়াই-উৎরাই
কত মগ্নে ছিলে ?
কত দুঃখ বুকে বয়ে
প্রদীপ জ্বলেছিলে ??

জীবনের পাদপিঠে সেই আলো তে ভেসে ভেসে তোমাকে
জানাই আজ
তাই শুধু প্ৰণতি!!

Kalipuja

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we performed 2020 puja with the members of NASKA Executive committee only in the Middletown Temple

We had to cut down the scale but not our reverence.



We have broadcasted the puja online for all our devotees to take part in the puja remotely.

We also arranged online pushpanjali for all devotees and performed personal pujas for those who reached out to us prior puja with their name and Gotra.



Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/NASKAofCT/](https://www.facebook.com/NASKAofCT/)

or visit us at <http://naska.org> for more ..



May Maa Kali bless us all in going past the pandemic and get to a new normal to the other side of this situation.

2020



2020



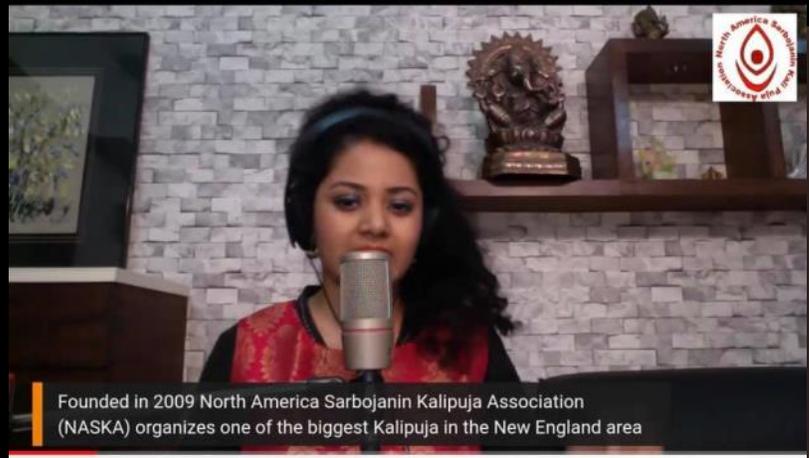
Nov 15, 2020

NASKA Presented Anwesshaa Virtual Live Concert

Thank you to all our patrons and views for the support and the active participation. We have received great feedback on this program and was excited to bring it to you during pandemic.



We all have gone through a tough time and with the support from our patrons we tried to help out the community with fundraising and other philanthropic initiatives.



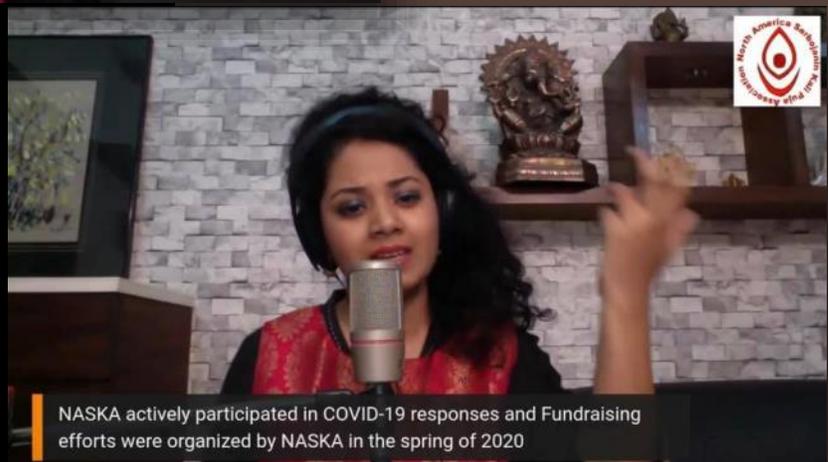
Founded in 2009 North America Sarbojanin Kalipuja Association (NASKA) organizes one of the biggest Kalipuja in the New England area



NASKA joined hands with "Together for Folk", West Bengal, INDIA to support the bauls of Bengal

The performing arts community was severely impacted because of lack of events and live programs last year. So we have worked together with the organizations in Bengal to help the artists.

In Spring of 2020, NASKA organized a fundraising event to support COVID-19 related relief activities.



NASKA actively participated in COVID-19 responses and Fundraising efforts were organized by NASKA in the spring of 2020



NASKA generously donated to Connecticut Food Bank, CT, USA

Our food bank contribution to the Connecticut Food Bank was \$3,000 from the fundraising event.

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‘দেশ’ পত্রিকা পড়তে পড়তে চোখে পড়ল বিখ্যাত নাট্যগোষ্ঠী নান্দিকারের ‘নাচনী’ নাটকের একটি দৃশ্যে - মনটা কেমন উদাস হয়ে গেল। এই ফেসবুকের যুগেও ‘নাচনী’ ফিরে এল। তাদের অন্ধকার জীবনের কথা তলানিতে গিয়ে ঠেকল না। সমাজ বদলেছে, সাংস্কৃতিক পরিবেশ বদলেছে, বদলেছে পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসের প্রেক্ষাপট--কিন্তু সেই বিজলীবালা আজও আছে - ওদের স্বামী হয় না, ওরা মা হয় না, ওদের ‘নাচনী’ হয়েই জন্ম ‘নাচনী’ হয়েই মৃত্যু - এদের জীবনের প্রেক্ষিতে আমার এই লেখা-

এমনি এক নাচনী কনকলতা - যার বয়স এখন প্রায় আশির কাছাকাছি - তার আজ নাচবার ক্ষমতা নেই - পাশেই জমিদার বাড়িতে কাজ করে। দু’মুঠো অন্ন সংস্থান হয় - এখন জমিদার বাড়ির আর তেমন জাঁকজমক নেই। জমিদারিও নেই - নদী শুকিয়ে গেলেও তার রেশ থাকে - তেমনি জমিদার বাড়ির ঠাটবাট বজায় আছে- পুজোর সময়- আত্মীয়-স্বজন আছে- গানের আসর বসে আধুনিক সাংস্কৃতিক পরিবেশে সকলে আনন্দ করে, বিখ্যাত লোকজনের সমাগম হয়।

গ্রামের মানুষও বিভিন্ন ধরনের আলাদা উৎসবে মেতে থাকে, যাত্রা বা নাট্য উৎসব যদিও হয় ‘নাচনী’ নাচ দেখা যায় না। এবার রুদ্র প্রসাদ সেনগুপ্ত গুরু করলেন হেরিটেজ সাংস্কৃতিক আনন্দ। তাই আবার “দেশ”-এর পাতায় দেখতে পেলাম ‘নাচনী’ নাটকের একটি দৃশ্য।

‘নাচনী’ কনকলতা সংসারের কাজ সেরে কাঠের জ্বালে দু’টি ভাত বসিয়েছে - এরই মধ্যে পাড়ার হরিহর মণ্ডল উপস্থিত- “কি গো, কনকলতা - কি করছ?” “কি আর করব দু’টি ভাত বসিয়েছি, মা-বেটিতে খাব” ‘বেটি’ ? তোমার বেটি? হরিহর মণ্ডল হো হো করে হেসে উঠল - বলল, তোর আবার বেটি? ‘নাচনী’দের বেটি হয়, নাকি- সে হয় আর এক ‘নাচনী’। কনকলতার বুকের ভিতরট ধুক ধুক করে উঠলো। সে বেশ উৎকর্ষিত হয়ে বলল- দেখ ঠাকুর আমার স্বর্গকে আমি নাচতে দেব না, ও লেখাপড়া শিখবে, ওকে বিয়ে দেব, ও ‘মা’ হবে, সুখে সংসার করবে, আমার স্বর্ণলতা ‘নাচনী’ হবে না।

বলতে বলতে স্বর্ণলতা পুকুর থেকে স্নান করে উঠানে এসে দাঁড়াল- সূর্যের আলোয় ওর সারা শরীরকে আলোকিত করে দিল - এ এক দেবীমূর্তি - কনকলতা দৌড়ে গিয়ে হেচকা টানে স্বর্গকে সরিরে নিয়ে বলল, ঘরকে যা. স্বর্গকে ফ্যাল ফ্যাল করে মায়ের দিকে তাকিয়েছিল, কনকলতা জামা কাপড় ছেড়ে স্কুলে যেতে বলল - স্বর্ণলতা এত তাড়াতাড়ি স্কুলে যাওয়ার কারণ বুঝতে পারল না। নটবর তখন স্বর্ণলতার দিকে শ্যেনচক্ষে তাকিয়ে ছিল- ভাবল এই হবে’ নটবরের সোনার ডিম। কনকলতা ভাতের উনুনে জল ঢেলে স্বর্গকে নিয়ে জমিদার বাড়ি চলল।

জমিদার গিন্নি করুণাময়ী খুব ব্যস্ত ছিলেন, ছেলে আসবে, আত্মীয় স্বজন আসবে বাড়িতে। পুজোর অনেক কাজ- জমিদারি না থাকলেও লোক-লৌকিকতা তো আছে? কনকলতার সাথে স্বর্গকে দেখে

অবাক হয়ে গেলেন-_হ্যারে কনক “তোর সঙ্গে এই মেয়েটি কে?” কনকলতা কেঁদে ফেলল-
“মা আমাকে বাঁচাও তোমার পায়ে পড়ি -আমার স্বর্ণকে বাঁচাও”। করুণাময়ী বললেন, “কি
হয়েছে? এ মেয়েকে তুই কোথায় পেলি- এত সাক্ষাৎ ভগবতী-রে”।

কনকলতা জমিদার গিম্মির পা জড়িয়ে ধরে বলল, “মা আজ হরিহর আমার বাড়িতে এসেছিল;
ও স্বর্ণকে নাচনী, করতে চায়। আমি কিছুতেই তা হতে দেব না। আমার স্বর্ণকে তুমি বাঁচাও”।
করুণাময়ী কনকলতার কাছে সব শুনে দাঁড়িয়ে পড়লেন, তখন জমিদারি কিছু ছিল না কিন্তু
করুণাময়ীর তত্ত্বাবধানে জমিদার বাড়ির পরিবেশ বেশ আটসাঁট ছিল--জমিদার গিম্মির মুখের
উপর কেউ টু শব্দটি করতে পারত না। তাই কনকলতার মুখে সব কথা শুনে বললেন, “তুই
এখন বাড়ি যা, সন্ধে হলে দেখা যাবে”

সন্ধ্যে হতে না হতেই রটে গেলো আজ সন্ধ্যাবেলা “খরের মাঠে” নাচের আসর বসবে ‘নাচনী’
হবে স্বর্ণলতা, স্বর্ণলতা আজ পায়ে ঘুঙুর পরবে। আসরে নাচবে। সন্ধে হতে হতেই ‘খরের
মাঠে’ গ্রাম থেকে, ভিন্ গ্রাম থেকেও লোক আসতে থাকল- বেশ সুন্দর করে খড়ের মাঠ
সাজানো হয়েছে সকলে উপস্থিত।

নটবর নিতে এসেছে স্বর্ণময়ীকে সাথে পেয়াদা, কনক জড়িয়ে ধরলো স্বর্ণকে, “না নটবর
তোর পায়ে পড়ি, আমার স্বর্ণকে ছেড়ে দে”। নটবর হেঁ হেঁ করে হাসতে হাসতে বলল, “নাচনী’র
মেয়ে ‘নাচনী’ হবে--আর কি হবে?

স্বর্ণকে নিয়ে গিয়ে পায়ে ঘুঙুর পরাল কনক হাপুস নয়নে দৌড়ল নটবর পিছনে, স্বর্ণকে টানতে
টানতে আসরে তুলল। স্বর্ণ নাচতে জানে না- যেই পায়ে বেত চালাতে থাকে নটবর- সামনে
করুণাময়ী চিৎকার করে বললেন, “স্বর্ণ আর যাবি না চলে আয়”, নটবর জমিদার গিম্মির ডাক
শুনে থমকে দাঁড়াল বলল, আপনি ‘মা’ - “হ্যা আমি। চিনতে পেরেছ নটবর-- আর এক পা
এগোবেই না”। নটবর আর পা বাড়াতে পারল না।

“আজ স্বর্ণকে আমার সাথে যাবে। আমার ঘরের লক্ষ্মী হয়ে থাকবে। ও আর কোন ‘নাচনী’র
জন্ম দেবে না।”

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Belief's Betrayal

Aswini Boruah

The whole way, till he reached his destination, he continued thinking. Infact, he did not know his destination where he was going or being taken to or about his destiny. Destination and destiny, both remained elusive to him. He simply moved on , thinking about his future and past.

He could not make out what his friends wanted to tell him shouting at the time of his departure from his village house where he was playing mock fights or so, nor he could say a word of farewell to his master in his queer language. He simply remembered that he was just running here and there and got caught at the hands of a man who looked a bit different.

Then it was everything "normal" when the man made him occupy a part of the rickshaw and started moving.

He continued moving ahead occupying a place in the rickshaw, where, as he noticed sometime that people sit with legs down. The rikshaw puller has not put him where people sit, thinking probably that he might fall down . He realized the man to be kind and not a ruffian as he thought before.

At one point of time, the rikshaw puller halted his rickshaw near a betelnut shop for a little rest and gave him a big pan leaf which he immediately grabbed and started chewing.

His master never for once allowed him to eat a little pan where he was staying. He was beaten up also once or twice before for eating a pan leaf. Now, this man is so kind that he has spent a little money to give him a pan. So kind. All men are definitely not bad, he came to a conclusion. Out of a high dose of soft

sentiment, he felt like licking the legs of the man he thought to be a bad guy short while ago.

At one place the rickshaw slowed down and stopped moving. He saw many people around. All are looking at him. Some children came more near to him and started plucking his jet black fur when some people chased them away telling not to disturb him any more.

Then a person wearing uncommon dress took him a little away and sprinkled cold water on him. He thought how the humans can be so lovable people to think that he needed a little freshness after so long a tedious journey. While he was amidst such thoughts, he heard some strange musical sounds and people making more noise and halla-gulla and found him being dragged to a place where a tilak was put on his forehead. He thought that must be some tradition to welcome a stranger. His joy knew no bound and enjoyed every bit of the new happenings . Amidst extreme joy he followed a man who took him a bit away , made his neck put on a special wooden frame and before he could realize what awaited him in future, there was a sudden noise by the people and there was no time for him to think or praise the kind humans. He however missed the quick "kriss" sound due to extreme noise by the people around ..The kind (?) humans around him till a few minutes ago , were praying for their wealth and good health at his cost since a goat's life can create miracle as they believe.

(Translated version of a story in Assamese by the author)

The Seventh Sense

Joybrata Das

“

Really!!!” Jishnu screamed noiselessly. He didn’t want to wake-up Ranjeeta. He looked at her, on the other side of the bed; as she slept peacefully, her body turned towards him. Through the dimmed light, he could make out her regular breathing. However, to be sure, he peered closer to observe the REM of her eyes – signs of someone in deep slumber. He wanted to be sure of that, before turning on his phone, to check the time.

“3:30 AM?” Jishnu cringed at the bright light from the handset and sucked in his breath; while thinking of what to do, to get some of that elusive sleep. He had already tried meditation, solving thermodynamics quadratic equation in his head, and counting the value of Pi. While meditation helped momentarily, the rest of the options only made him feel more awake (if that was possible). He almost thought of getting up to jot down the equation, when Ranjeeta’s sudden movement made him quickly drop that thought. Counting stars, was not an option; stargazing for extended period would have harmed his retinas.

“Eureka!” this time he muttered the word, though softly. “It’s time for some music”, the thought brought a sigh of relief. He felt confident. Help was at hand, literally. He had heard a lot about White Music. ‘Sleep Like A Child’, ‘Fall Asleep Quickly’ ... the catchwords came to his mind. For Jishnu, this was going to be the Moment of Truth – him and White Music. “Let’s

bring it on ...”, he thought, putting on his headphones while turning on the music. Resting his head on the pillow, he was ready to let go and float away to neverland. An hour passed ... he was still wide awake. Neverland never came. In fact, he felt that the music sounded eerie, sending a shiver down his spine, more than once. Slowly, he crept into Ranjeeta’s quilt, even as she turned away and settled down for yet another spell of serene blissfulness, taking the quilt away. Now a bit nervous, Jishnu hastily turned off the music, and sat up on the bed. He put on his glasses, straining his eyes to look through the dimmed lights into the eyes of the unseen shadows, creeping towards him. “No one there” he convinced himself and yet decided to keep his glasses on, while rest his back on the bed’s headrest. He made up his mind to spend the rest the night sitting up.

Having banished all thoughts of falling asleep, Jishnu decided to do some causal analysis. Years in IT and Project Management had made structured thinking, his second nature. “Time for some RCA (Root Cause Analysis)” he was sure. “Why am I not able to sleep?” he wondered. His analytical mind immediately threw up several potential causes – from indigestion to jet lag. He was on full alert now, his mind accelerating, as he covered each of the possible factors. Even in his mind, he just had to follow the protocol. Give due respect and examine each of the potential causes before discarding them. After another hour of mind-boggling dissection, he allowed himself a contented smile; while zeroing in, on the main cause of the problem. This time, when he looked at Ranjeeta’s sleeping frame, there was a crease on his forehead.

“You are missing a sense.” Ranjeeta’s words rang clearly in his ears. Jishnu’s face had the same bewildered look, yet again. He hasn’t been able to understand what Ranjeeta meant by that. Neither then nor now. Jishnu was a rational person. Being the only son of his parents, he was a bit pampered during his childhood, but his Professor father never let material comforts, spoil his child. From an early age, the dinner table discussions usually centered around mathematics and science, general knowledge, and philosophy. The fear of getting hurt, had kept Jishnu away from most outdoor sports. Using a complex algorithm, his father had deduced that Jishnu had 37.993% chances of getting hurt every time he went out to play. He mixed with other studious kids and had discussions on serious topics while growing up. They spent more time discussing theoretical problems than practical experiences. In due course of time, he obtained his engineering degree, took on an IT job and moved to the United States, just like so many others. After a year, he went back to Kolkata to get married ... to Ranjeeta.

Ranjeeta had done her Masters in Arts. She loved painting, music and poetry. She loved people. During her wedding with Jishnu, Ranjeeta’s father had to arrange for two days of sangeet ceremony. It was impossible to fit in all the performances in one day. People say that her bidaai lasted for four whole hours, as he dutifully wept on the shoulder of each of her 40 friends. And the send-off at the Kolkata airport was a spectacle seen to be believed, with flash mob dances and all. Within a month of coming to the US, she had made more friends than Jishnu, not that he cared. “There’s someone finally living here” their neighbors smirked, hearing Ranjeeta’s laughter flowing out of the otherwise unusually quiet apartment. One of them had cheekily asked Jishnu, “So who does your wife talk to in the house?”. “With her friends ... on the phone” Jishnu replied nonchalantly. End of conversation.

Earlier that day Jishnu and Ranjeeta had celebrated six months of their marriage. Ranjeeta had wanted it to be a grand affair, inviting their friends over for a day full of fun and enjoyment. Jishnu was unconvinced. He found the thought of six-month anniversary celebration as excessive and inviting

others as outrightly absurd. Finally, they settled for a compromise day-out and dinner. The day was well spent, the dinner sumptuous. Late night, as they entered the apartment, Jishnu was satisfied while Ranjeeta had a song on her lips. The moment happened when they were getting ready for bed. Changing into his PJs, as Jishnu was brushing the hair on his balding pate, Ranjeeta suddenly posed him a question, “What do you call a group of rabbits, hopping backwards?” “A receding hairline”, she added with a smile. Jishnu was not impressed. “Tch, tch”, he clucked; you’ve obviously made a spelling mistake ... mixing hare-line and hairline”. It was then, that Ranjeeta made the telling remark, about Jishnu lacking one of his senses. It hit him hard, as if a USG report had shown one of his kidneys missing. He was alive and well but still missing something vital. Repeated entreaties to Ranjeeta, to explain herself, had fallen on deaf ears. And this, was the sole cause of Jishnu’s insomnia.

Jishnu looked at his phone. It was 6:30AM. Time for his morning jog. Feeling pleased with himself for finding out the root cause, he got ready and was soon out on the road, picking up a brisk pace. Fifteen minutes later, he stopped in his tracks, as if hit by a truck. “I still don’t know why she said that?” The rest of the day passed in a blur. Dinner was distracted. Finally, he just couldn’t take it. While doing the dishes together, he asked her, “Which sense am I missing?” Ranjeeta came closer, playfully ran her fingers through his hair, and said, “You have no sense of humor, my dear.” Then she turned and left. Jishnu almost collapsed, overwhelmed with the response. His rational mind was processing this new data. Perhaps, another innings of sleeplessness was waiting for him. Deep in thoughts, he changed for the night and lay down beside Ranjeeta. And then, slowly the floodgates opened. His face broke into a grin, then a wide smile and finally into uncontrollable laughter.

That night, their neighbors, woke up to loud guffaws coming from the apartment, as Jishnu laughed his heart out, all the while trying to wake up a sleepy Ranjeeta. His voice could be heard, saying over and over again, “Wake up my dear, I have now found my missing sense of humor!!!”

চলো পাল্টাই

ইন্দ্রাণী রাখা

চোখের জলও ফগকাসে কেমন
ভাইরাসে আক্রান্ত,
চেটে পুটে চল সুখ খুঁটে খাই
জীবন ভরাপ্রান্ত।
ঠোঁটের হাসিও যেমন তেমন
নকলে সর্বস্বান্ত,
খেটে খুটে চল বসত বানাই,
জীবন মন্দাপ্রান্ত।
রতন চিনেছে রতনে এমন
চারিদিকে চপ্রান্ত
কাঠ কুটো স্বেলে আগুন জ্বলাই,
উষ্ণতা যে বাড়ন্ত।
জীবন ভুলেছে জীবনে তেমন
মৃত্যুও দিকপ্রান্ত
মুঠো মুঠো আশা দেদার বিলোই,
হবো নাকো বিভ্রান্ত।

একটি পাপের মৃত্যু

ইন্দ্রাণী রাখা

ফ্লুরোসেন্টের ঠিকরে পড়া আলোর নীচে, একটা চেয়ার আর টেবিল।
সে মাথা নীচু করে বসে আছে।
সামনে খাতার পাতা খোলা, দু আঙুলের মাঝে জ্বলন্ত সিগারেট, পুড়ে পুড়ে ছাই
হচ্ছে--উড়ছে।
মনের মধ্যে যুদ্ধ, চাপা কথার।
কথার চাপে অসহ্য যন্ত্রনা,
মাথায় ভিস্কুভিয়ামের আগুন।
আবছা একটা মুখ, কি যেন বলছে। রক্তের ফোঁটা ঝিঁজছে তার মাথার লম্বা চুল।
দু চোখে যাতনার আশ্রয়।
হঠাৎ লোডশেডিং--জ্বলছে সিগারেটের নিভে যাওয়ার আগের লাল বিন্দু।
প্রমশঃ স্পর্শ হচ্ছে এক নারী---নগ্ন শরীর বালসে যাচ্ছে নির্মম অত্যাচারের লাজ
স্নোতে। সেই স্নোত গ্রাস করলো চেয়ারটিকে,
পড়ে রইলো মৃত দেহ নিয়ে সে তার পাপ আর বিবেক।

Income Expense Report – 2020

Balance Sheet	As of	
	2020	2019
Assets		
Cash Balance	29,324.95	34,122.49
Other Assets	0	0
Liabilities		
Outstanding Liabilities	0	0
	29,324.95	34,122.49

Income Statement

Revenues	2020
Donations	4,288.95
Advertisements	-
Others	
Total Revenue	4,288.95

Expenses	
Puja Expenses	
<i>Venue</i>	301.00
<i>Food</i>	-
<i>Snacks & Beverages</i>	-
<i>Materials</i>	633.10
<i>Transport</i>	97.72
<i>Priest</i>	311.00
<i>Other Miscellaneous</i>	191.00
Publicity	
<i>Magazine</i>	256.67
Performance	
<i>Artist & Hospitality</i>	2,030.00
<i>Sound</i>	-
Operating Expenses	
<i>Insurance</i>	550.00
<i>Storage</i>	1,324.00
<i>PO Box & Others</i>	92.00
Total Expense	5,685.91

Charity & Donations	3,300.00
Total Donations	3,300.00

Net Income (deficit)	(4,797.54)
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A note of thanks..

Executive Committee of NASKA Inc would like to thank you for all your support and cooperation. It has helped us immensely in our endeavor. Thank you for recognizing the spark in NASKA and giving us the opportunity to be what we are today.

We sincerely thank our Volunteers , Advertisers , Sponsors and Patrons



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বার্ধক্য ব্যাধি

(O .A .D)

ডাঃ নিত্যগোপাল ধরচৌধুরী

বার্ধক্য ব্যাধি বলতে Osteo Arthritis Disease নিয়ে কিছু বলতে প্রয়াসী। Osteo (হাড়), Artho (সন্ধি / জয়েন্ট) itis প্রেদাহ / inflammation) এর মিশ্রণে হয় ঐ ব্যাধি। আমাদের দেহে অনেক হাড় ও জয়েন্ট আছে, তাদের সাহায্যেই আমাদের ওঠা বসা, চলাচল হয়। ষাট উর্ধ্ব বয়স্ক পুরুষ ও মহিলারা অনেকেই ভোগেন বা অস্বস্তি বোধ করেন এই ব্যাধিতে -তাদের অনেকেরই ঘাড়ে, কোমরে বা হাঁটুতে যন্ত্রণা, এই

অবস্থাকে অনেকেই বলেন - “বাত” | সহজ কথায় বাত বলা হ’লেও - প্রকৃত তথ্য জানা দরকার, প্রয়োজন হতে পারে X - Ray, প্রস্রাব (মূত্র), রক্ত ও অন্যান্য পরীক্ষা এবং বিস্তারিত রিপোর্ট নিরিখে রোগ নির্ণয় ও চিকিৎসা ব্যবস্থা করতে হয়। বরিষ্ঠ না হলেও কিছুক্ষেত্রে এই সমস্যা হতে পারে - সেই সংখ্যা যদিও কম।

পয়ষটি বয়স উর্দ্ধা এক মহিলা বেশ কিছুদিন ঘাড়ে ব্যথায় কষ্ট পাচ্ছেন - এখন শরণাপন্ন একজন অস্থিরোগ বিশেষজ্ঞ চিকিৎসকের | ডাক্তারবাবু সব শুনলেন ও পরীক্ষা করলেন এবং বললেন -“কোথায় যাবেন, সারাদিন টিভি দেখলে ঘাড়ে বা কোমরে ব্যথা হতেই পারে’ ওষুধ ও নিয়মবিধি লিখে. দেন। আজকাল স্বাচ্ছন্দ/সামর্থ থাকলে নিজে পরিশ্রম না করেও সবকিছুর ব্যবস্থা হয়ে যায় -তাতে নিজের আয়াসও বৃদ্ধি হয়। আয়াস যখন আরাম তখন তাকে হারাম বলতেও বাধা নেই - সে যে অনেক বিপদ ডেকে আনতে পারে, যেমন ডায়াবেটিস, অস্থিরোগ ইত্যাদি। এরা দৃষ্টি-শ্রবণশক্তিরও হ্রাস ঘটাতে পারে আর বৃদ্ধ / বৃদ্ধাদেরই বেশি আলিঙ্গন করে। জানা উচিত এ কিন্তু সহজে ছাড়ে না এবং সম্পূর্ণ আরোগ্যও হয় না।

নিয়মিত চিকিৎসায় কষ্ট উপশম হয় মাত্র, ওষুধ ব্যবহার বন্ধ করলে আবার অসুবিধা বা কষ্ট, ভোগ করতে হয়। সত্যি ক্যান্সার বা ডায়াবেটিস. যেমন সম্পূর্ণ আরোগ্য হয় না অস্থিওআথ্রাইটিসও পুরোপুরি ভাল হয়’না। এটি নূতন কোন রোগ নয় -অতি পুরাতন, বহুকাল ধরে ভোগাচ্ছে। এটি আয়াসী বা অভিজাত পরিবারের সদস্যদের মধ্যে বেশি দেখা যায়।

আমাদের শরীরে অস্থি (Bones) আছে বলেই পেশীর সহায়তায় দাঁড়ানো ও পায়ে চলা সম্ভব হচ্ছে-দুই বা ততোধিক অস্থির সংযোগস্থলই সন্ধি বা Joint-এরূপ অনেক আছে। অস্থিও অনেক প্রকার - বিস্তারিত পরেও বলা যাবে, তবে সন্ধিস্থল Cartilage, ligaments ও Synovial Sac এ আবনধ, তন্মধ্যে থাকে এক পিচ্ছিল জৈবরাসায়নিক রস্তু (synovial fluid) যা joint ও অঙ্গ প্রত্যঙ্গ সঞ্চালনে সহায়তা করে। অত্যধিক বয়সে সন্ধিস্থলে যদি রক্ত চলাচল প্রয়োজন মত না হয় তবে synovial fluid শুকিয়ে যেতে পারে ও সন্ধিস্থল শক্ত বা fixed হয়ে যাওয়ার সম্ভাবনা থাকে -

সঞ্চালন ক্ষমতা কমে যায়, আবার S /F বেশি সঞ্চিত হয়ে ফোলা ও ব্যথার সৃষ্টি করে।

অস্থিরোগ ও সমস্যার বড় কারণ হ’ল :

সন্ধিস্থলে জৈবরাসায়নিক বিরূপ প্রক্রিয়া -যা সংঘটিত হওয়ার মূলে থাকে - Bones, Articular Cartilage, Synovial membrane এর স্বাভাবিকতার ঘটতি। বার্ধক্য ব্যাধি (O.A.D) নিম্নোক্ত যে কোন কারণেই হতে পারে :

জন্মগত বিকৃতি, বংশগত, আঘাতজনিত, সন্ধিস্থলে ফোলা ও ব্যথা, জৈবরাসায়নিক প্রক্রিয়ায় ব্যাঘাত(Metabolic Disorder) সামাজিক অবস্থান, পেশাগত কর্ম, স্থূলকায় (Obesity), বেশিক্ষণ উপরে তাকানো বা ঘরের ঝুল ঝাড়ায়ও বিপদ ডাকতে পারে।

অসুস্থতার লক্ষণ :ব্যথা, ফোলা বা শক্ত হয়ে যাওয়া, অন্ধাভাবিক অবস্থান, খোঁড়ানো, সঞ্চালন ক্ষমতা কমে যাওয়া।

চিকিৎসা :

- (১) ব্যথা উপশম এর ব্যবস্থা
- (২) ক্ষয় বা বৃদ্ধিরোধ করা।
- (৩) সঞ্চালন ব্যবস্থা বাড়ানো।
- (৪) অস্ত্রোপচারও দরকার হতে পারে।

চিকিৎসক এর পরামর্শ বাতীত যখন তখন ব্যাথাকমার টেবলেট খেলে সাময়িক সুস্থবোধ হলেও পরিণতি হতে পারে পাকস্থলীতে জ্বালা বা ঘা (Ulcer), Steroid and other Enzymes ও পরে বিপত্তি ঘটায়।

প্রতিষেধক ব্যবস্থা:

- (১) বেশি সময় দাঁড়ান বা হাঁটা উচিত নয়।
- (২) সোজাভাবে বসা যাতে অস্থি-সন্ধিস্থলে বেশি চাপ না পড়ে।
- (৩) ভিটামিন ডি সহ ক্যালসিয়াম বড়ি প্রত্যহ একটি।

আরোগ্যবিধি : অস্থিরোগ বিশেষজ্ঞ চিকিৎসক এর পরামর্শ গ্রহণ। শুধু ওষুধ ব্যবহারে আরোগ্য হয় না, দরকার হতে পারে :

- (১) তাপ বা Gel জাতীয় মলম
- (২) আসন / ব্যায়াম (নির্ধারিত মতে)
- (৩) অস্থি সন্ধিস্থলে ক্রেপ ব্যাভেজ
- (৪) লাঠি -সঙ্গী

(৫) প্রয়োজনে পিছনে হেলান দিয়ে সোজাভাবে বসা, মাথা ঝুঁকে লেখা বা পড়া বেশিক্ষণ চলবে না।

প্রায় সত্তর বছর বয়স্ক একজন বিশেষজ্ঞ চিকিৎসক এর সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ - কোমর ও ঘাড়ে স্পনডিলাইটিস, সোজাভাবে হাঁটতে পারছেন না - কেন? জিজ্ঞাসা করায় বললেন “যখন ব্যস্ত চিকিৎসক ছিলাম ১৫/১৬ বছর আগে - নিজের গাড়ি ছিল না। এই শহরেও রাস্তার ভগ্নদশায় প্রায়দিনই রিক্সায় ৮/১০ মাইল যাতায়াত করতে হত ঘন ঘন ঝাঁকুনি ও দোলা খেতে খেতে, তারই পরিণাম আজ এই অবস্থা। এখন বাড়ি -গাড়ি আছে -স্পনডিলাইটিসও আছে সঙ্গে শত্রুর ন্যায়, তবে বধ করবে না।

ব্যথা / যন্ত্রণা কমাবার ওষুধ অনেক আছে। তবে Crocin (Paracetamol) অধিক মাত্রায় হাটের ক্ষতি করতে পারে। সম্প্রতি Nimesulide, Rofecoxib, Veldicoxib ইত্যাদি ব্যবহারে ভাল ফল পাওয়া যাচ্ছে। তবে দীর্ঘদিন ও সুপারামর্শ ব্যতিরেকে ব্যবহারে অধিক ক্ষতি হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা। এই সমূহ বিপদ এড়াতে এ ওষুধের সঙ্গে অবশ্যই Antacid গ্রহণ করা প্রয়োজন অন্যথায় Gastritis এমন কি Gastric Perforation ও হতে পারে।

সম্প্রতি প্রয়োজনে বিশেষ শল্য চিকিৎসায় অতি জটিল অস্থিরোগ- এরও নিরাময় সম্ভব হচ্ছে - যদিও এটি এখনও রাজকীয় চিকিৎসা পর্যায়ে আছে।

আমরা জানি প্রত্যহ প্রার্থনামণ্ডল। তবে সোজা ও সমতল রাস্তায় একটানা হাঁটতে হবে সমান গতিতে অনধিক ৪০/৪৫ মি:। বেশি হাটলে বেশি ক্ষতিও হতে পারে -যারা বাত বা হৃদরোগে আক্রান্ত তাদের তো বেশি হাঁটা নিষেধ।

সবচেয়ে সেরা কথা নির্দিষ্ট আদেশ এবং পরামর্শ নিয়ে প্রকৃত তথ্য জেনে শারীরিক ও মানসিকভাবে নিজেকে সজাগ রাখুন।

The Enlightened

Anirban Mukherjee

256 BCE; somewhere in ancient Magadha

A

bloodcurdling shriek tore the fabric of the silent night!

Ambika was convinced that her arrow just like ever did not miss its target. The victim's neck was pierced end to end, as the corpse laid still amidst a pool of blood.

Ambika aimed at her next target; to her amazement she heard another screech from the other side of the terrain. As she was about to release her next arrow the third cry was audible. Moments later her arrow grounded the fourth bandit which was promptly followed up with another one going down at the far side.

Ambika looked towards her left. She saw her companion waving at her with a grin as if to convey that he has proven his worth. The man Ambika was looking at was no less than six feet tall; he was muscular, brawny, had very broad shoulders and strong arms. Watching his rapid acrobatic movements, one can very easily guess that the man was nimble, agile, and as swift as a leopard. He was fair skinned; much fairer than the native men; his body was as flexible as the string of a bow – like the one he was using. He had deep blue eyes, long curly hair, and a fully hirsute face: a common feature from the lands he came from.

The remaining bandits vanished in the darkness of the night. They were a band of highway robbers; one of the many infamous gangs on the famous *Uttarapatha*, the majestic artery connecting the eastern and the western limits of *Bharatvarsha*. These bands were infamous for looting and killing on the highway and prosper at the expense of the pilgrims, merchants, and travelers; especially after dark, when the so-called patrolling of the royal troops diluted. The ones who were responsible for

security, usually found their own amusements inside the numerous taverns and brothels that have mushroomed along the highway.

The goons never anticipated this kind of a counter-attack. They had spotted a couple approaching a narrow band of the massive road flanked by woods on either side. A perfect place for an ambush; at least that is what they thought. Following their plan, they sprinted towards the couple with their naked swords and clubs, bellowing the usual battle cry. They expected the couple to become flabbergasted, like they have always seen, and either flee or drop on their knees praying for their lives. They loved such acts; their experiences have taught them more docile the opponent is, more fun is derived out of torturing them. But, in this case, to their utter surprise, their preys swiftly disappeared in the woods. Even before they could react, they were drenched in a volley of arrows. In no time, five of their comrades fell. They found no reason to stick around as they were convinced that the couple must be spirits, as no human has the guts to retaliate with such violence.

Ambika did not wave back; she gave an appreciative smile. She saw the man fisting in thin air to demonstrate triumph. The man was known as Kurus. He came from the faraway land of Persepolis in the Persian empire. Or shall we say, the erstwhile empire; thanks to Alexander the Great's conquest the great empire has been reduced to a mere Satrap. Kurus was always amazed to hear the glorious stories of the Achaemenid emperors of the bygone era; he was always distressed to recall how all that glory ended and highly amazed to learn that even if Alexander occupied a quarter of the known world, he failed to win over the land of *Bharatvarsha*. From childhood, he dreamt of visiting this land, especially come to the kingdom of *Magadha*, the kings of which have become characters of folklore back home for their valor.

Kurus was an expert in building fortified cities and citadels and his reputation was far reaching. So much so, that to his surprise he got an invitation from a government official from *Pataliputra*, the capital of the great *Magadha* kingdom to be part of the project to rebuild the capital using stonework replacing the existing city walls made of cedar and wood. Kurus was anyway interested about *Magadha* and has read about the city of *Pataliputra* during his previous project, building a gigantic lighthouse in Alexandria. There in the great library, he found a strange annal called *Indica* written by one Greek traveler *Megasthenes*, who narrated his experiences of visiting the kingdom *Magadha* some fifty years back under the famous emperor *Sandrokottos*. He never knew his dream will come true and he will be commissioned for a work in the great city of *Pataliputra* through an appointment letter containing the seal of the emperor himself. Ashoka, the pious; *oh what a man*, he thought! A great emperor, a great builder, a great preacher of peace; what an honor it will be – working on a project commissioned by the greatest emperor of the world!

Ambika shifted her gaze towards the corpses. She was instantly transported back to another world. A violent war: hundreds of thousands were killed, countless more died later due to the aftermath; her beloved city of *Sisupalgarh* was raised to the ground. Her nation, *Kalinga*, once revered by all

ceased to exist. Five years back it was annexed to the Maurya empire after that vehement war. Her memories took her to a specific night; a night as dark as this one – perhaps darker – it was a week after the decisive battle at *Dhauri* where about hundred thousand men were massacred by the Mauryan army. The villagers of *Radhanagar* have been the witness to the vandalism on *Sisupalgarh*; what used to be the most prosperous city has now been reduced to a few pillars. That night the village was retiring for the day; it was a hot and humid night; there were some distant rolls of thunder; there were unprecedented silence everywhere. The villagers did not know that stillness was the silence before a storm. The storm did arrive; not through the heavens; but through a squad of Mauryan army. The soldiers had tasted blood in *Sisupalgarh*; their hunger for more loot; their thirst for more debauchery crossed all limits. They pounced on all the adjacent hamlets like the pack of hyenas: killing more; looting more; raping more and perform every kind of delinquency that could have been possible. Village after village were plundered in the name of the emperor; they ensured that *Kalinga* would indeed witness a reign of terror.

That night was the last for many in *Radhanagar*. Suddenly they came and like an avalanche swept everything that came in their way. Ambika was in her adolescence; her mother was able to hide her beneath a heap of hay just before the soldiers broke in their house. Underneath the haystack she witnessed all form of horrors one after the other. First, all the male members in the house were decapitated; then the heads of the infants were smashed; then all the women in the house were raped one after the other and when their act of adultery was over; they killed all of them. Then they plundered the house, took everything that was there and stormed out just like they had arrived. Ambika witnessed everything, but she was speechless, partly due to the shock and partly due to the fear of her own fate. From that night, every night has been a horror for her; the same memories kept coming back over and over again; haunted her to the core. She decided to learn archery; an act to protect herself from this world. But there was one other reason; in her mind Ambika was

convinced that only one man can be held responsible for all that happened to her, her family, and her land. She learnt her skills with the hope that one day she will be able to avenge everything by killing the man who was responsible for all of this – the emperor; Asoka the cruel; the terrible oppressor of millions; the vanquisher of thousands, was her target.

Kurus had arrived at *Pataliputra* about a month back. The emperor had commissioned a grand project to fortify the capital with stonework replacing the wooden planks that were installed during the Nanda period and enhanced during the reign of both Chandragupta Maurya and Bindusara. However, post the great Kalinga war there has been many attempts made by encroachers to breach the city walls; *Magadha* had its own set of enemies Kurus contemplated and to him it was only logical that the emperor has decided to enhance the city defenses. During his first few days, Kurus took the opportunity to survey the city: it was indeed an opulent metropolitan, almost rectangular in shape and divided into blocks by an artery of the roads ran from east to west and north to south in a uniform interval of one *kos*. The city was surrounded by a deep moat which served as a defense mechanism and the channel to dispose the swage out of the city. There were guarded bastions in every half a *kos* along the circumferential outer wall of the city with soldiers guarding them throughout the day and night working in shifts. The royal palace was in the center of the city surrounded by another deep moat and a tall wall guarded by archers covering every bit of the guarding wall. The palace was circled by a colony of house of nobles, army officers, members of the royal family and *amatyas*. The next layer of land was occupied by the marketplace, taverns, inns, and establishment for other amusements. The thickest and the outermost layer of the city contained the residences of the common people, well away from the royal palace ensuring that there is no security breach in case of an uprising in the city. The army barracks were on either side of the commoner's residences keeping a strict regimented control over the law and order of the city.

After his day's work, Kurus used to visit the confluence of two rivers not very far off from the city lim-

its. One of the rivers was a mighty one; Kurus learnt that it was the most sacred river in this land, and he used to gaze with amazement towards its far-reaching horizons. These were very different landscape from the rugged, mountainous, and desert infested terrines of his homeland. Within days he fell in love with this new land; *a land full of life*, he thought; a land where paradise descends on earth. Kurus thought that this will be the only love affair during his trip, but he had no idea what was stored in the future.

Ambika and Kurus continued their journey which was interrupted by the bandit attack. She had no time to lose; they must be in *Kashi* by next day or else her entire plan would be jeopardized. She had missed her opportunities in Pataliputra, she cannot afford to miss her second chance. Ambika noticed that Kurus always had an eye on her. It started from the very beginning when they first met and thereafter not even for a moment Kurus' eyes ever left her. She found his eyes were charmed; Ambika knew she was attractive; she has experienced people gazing at her; almost gulping her luxuriance, but those gazes were perverted but this gaze was different. She almost read the words written on Kurus' eyes as if they caparisoned a couplet appreciating her beauty; enchanted by her spell and mesmerized by her flairs. She knew the language in his eyes was not vulgar, but it had the divinity of a poet worshipping his muse.

At the beginning Ambika found this attention overwhelming, disturbing at times. But with time she became more comfortable with Kurus and thereafter she did not feel awkward anymore; without realizing she perhaps started to even like the attention she got and every time she looked into those eyes, she felt different; every time their gazes matched, she felt bliss. She had controlled herself remarkably until then; *my mission is important than anything else*, she kept on reminding herself.

Kurus saw Ambika for the first time at *Pataliputra* near the confluence. It was dusk when he saw a woman walking lazily by the bank of the river. She was not very tall; was fairer than the usual females that Kurus has seen in this land; her hair was untied and cascaded down to her buttocks; she was voluptuous, the curves around her shoulders, torso and

pelvis were crafted with unflawed precision; her lower limbs were athletic and swift, and her upper limbs resembled the smoothness of a lotus stem. She walked ably and stopped near a ford where the rays of the setting sun glorified her beauty manifold. As she lifted her arms to tie her hair into a bun, Kurus felt his heart skipped a beat. He has never witnessed anything more amorous in his life. If he was born in another eon, he could have described her using the words of the great poet *An-yonyam utpidayat utpalakshyah stana dvayam pandu tatha pravridham, madhye yatha shyam mukhasya tasya mrinal sutrantam api alabhayam*¹

The scene changed very soon; a couple of armed men approached her and started flirting and touching her. They were perhaps one of those lower rank soldiers who felt that they were mightier than the emperor himself. Kurus saw that the girl was protesting but more she resisted the duo became even more determined to molest her. He thought of intervening, but even before he could react, she saw the girl made a spot jump and hit the neck one of the men with her elbow and the chest of the other by flinging her left foot. The encroachers fell immediately at her feet. Kurus did understand that the girl was not only gorgeous, but her valor was unparallel. She was bit like Ish-tar, the goddess of Babylon: outrightly beautiful yet unprecedentedly gallant.

For next three days Kurus became a regular visitor to the spot where he had first spotted Ambika, but she was nowhere to be seen. Kurus considered that his brief chapter of romantic obsession had come to end, and the consideration became cemented when the next day he learnt from his foreman that he is transferred to a different project to a far-off place called Isipatana, a place he never heard of. His supervisor informed it was not far from the ancient city of Kashi and that he must report there within next five days. The Emperor himself will preside over a council of Buddhist and a ceremony which will mark the commencement of building a great chorten at the chosen location.

The next morning Kurus went to the market to make arrangement for his journey. He planned to leave for Kashi that evening itself and cover the four days of travel on foot. Isipatana is towards the

north east of Kashi and one can reach there by walking for couple of hours. He learnt about the regular appearances of the bandits on Uttarap-atha; for his own safety he bought a bow and some arrows from a shop famous for its arsenal. As he was coming out of the shop; he froze; to his great surprise and a greater delight he saw Ambika entering the shop. He decided to stay on till the girl was there, atleast it would give him the last few good moments of his life that he could cherish forever. Kurus' glee crossed all limits when he overheard that Ambika too was off to Kashi and she too was leaving that evening! Kurus was convinced that the heavens were conspiring!

Ambika never expected the most unusual proposal from a stranger. A very fair foreigner approached her as she came out of the shop and wanted to become her travel companion to Kashi. He narrated how he watched her bluster a few days back. 'Although I know that you can very well take care of yourself, but I would like to offer my services to protect you from the notorious goons on this wretched trail.'

Ambika offered a smirk, ignored him, and started to move on.

'I am the most qualified archer in the whole of Per-sepolis, you know,' she heard him but never bothered to look back.

'Not everyone gets summoned by the emperor himself for his prized project!'

Ambika stopped. She was curious to know what project the stranger was talking of. She knew artisans from foreign land often recruited and they had access to the inner circle of security, much closer to the emperor.

'What project is this?'

¹ From *Kumarsambhavam* by Kalidasa

By the time Kurus ended describing the project, Ambika was convinced that he could help her to get an access from where her target, emperor Asoka, will be within the shooting range. This was her only chance; she had been in Pataliputra for two weeks and she was convinced that the security layers were far too strong for her to breach them. She too heard about the Buddhist council in Isipatana and learnt that the emperor will be there. It was easy to stage an attack there. But at the same time she knows what the consequences were. But her vendetta was far stronger than fear of her own life. She agreed to travel with Kurus. The man looked decent; his deep eyes had a feeling of innocence – something told Ambika that she will be safe with him.

‘I have one condition though,’ she declared, ‘you will not ask me any questions or even talk to me unless I permit you!’

There was no way that Kurus would have refused. They walked for next three days without much of an interaction. Every passing moment Kurus felt her feelings for Ambika grew exponentially. He did not have the courage to express anything to Ambika and had no hint about what was going on in her mind.

Ambika on the other hand, was impressed that Kurus kept his word; she felt that Kurus wanted to interact but remained true to his promise. He also appeared to be a decent man, funny at times and those expressions in his eyes were magical. At times she too felt of looking into his eyes more often; did she feel the cupid’s arrow pierce her heart? she knew not! Every time she started to melt, the cruel portrait of the emperor the flashed in her mind hardening her emotions.

‘I must say that you are a skillful archer’

Kurus could not believe his ears. Ambika was talking to him – actually complimenting him. His heart leapt the heights of thousand Ziggurats in joy.

‘So are you; never knew anyone so accurate with their aim’

Then they conversed all the way to *Kashi*. *Kurus told her about the distant lands; his experiences in a mysterious land called Egypt; the strange pyramidal*

structures that he saw there and about the lighthouse. Ambika spoke about the glory of Kalinga, about her village and about her dear ones. Kurus told her about his fascination on Bharatvarsh. The impressed Ambika mostly listened and when they saw the city gates of Kashi from a horizon, she narrated to him the horrors of the Kalinga war and the aftermath.

‘But I thought the emperor preaches nonviolence’

‘It is a façade; everyone sees this image that he portrays; the real man is concealed behind his Buddhist veil!’

‘Who is these Buddhist? I thought this land only practiced the Vedic religion!’

‘Siddhartha Gautama was the Buddha,’ Ambika started to narrate the story on how Buddhism was born; how it was patronized by the kings alongside the Vedic religion and how the sect became prominent over the ages. By the time she ended her crash course they had entered *Kashi*.

They decided to spend the night in the ancient city before heading to *Isipatana* next morning. *Later in the evening they sat side by side on the bank of the great river. Kurus was fascinated by the ambience; Ambika told him that this city existed from the time when civilization began; the city worshiped lord Rudra, myths say he performed some great deeds and safeguarding the city by killing eighty demons on the banks of this river. He was captivated to know that the place they were sitting was the spot where lord Brahma performed ten Ashwamedha yagnas and learnt about a great king who gave off everything and spent a good part of his life at a cremator. As Ambika was narrating the story, Kurus saw pyres burning at a distance on his right-hand side. As a fire worshipper he became deeply engrossed to witness a very different usage of the sacred energy in this foreign land. The burning pyres reminded him that the life is short; he became silent for a while.*

‘I love you, Ambika,’ he confessed suddenly, ‘I cannot stay without you.’ He clasped his palms around hers.

Ambika knew this was coming; she herself had fallen for him. But she cannot compromise her mission

for her own happiness; the entire evening she rehearsed in her mind in anticipation of Kurus expressing his feelings. She took her hands back and coldly reply that she could not think of marrying a foreigner. Kurus was stunned but when he saw her eyes, he spotted tears and her desperate efforts to conceal her emotions. They did not speak as they came back to their shelter for the night. That night it rained profusely; every time the thunder thudded, Kurus felt his heart was splitting into pieces. What he did not know that at the other corner of the room Ambika's eyes poured far more than the torrential downpour outside.

Kurus went to his worksite after reaching Isipatana. During the day he joined the builders surveying the land where the great chorten will be built. He saw a massive pillar with a four-lion relief atop it and at the base of a great wheel with lot of spokes. He saw the inscription referring as the 'Lion Capital'. Next to the pillar, he saw an enclosure where they royal seat was kept and a series of seats next to it for the monks to sit and perform their chanting.

He returned to his place for some rest post lunch and found Ambika sharpening her arrows.

'I need one last help from you'

Kurus was surprised that Ambika was speaking to him. Since last evening they did not speak.

'I know you are angry; you may not even see my face again; but I really need your help'

'What can I do for you'

'Tomorrow, when the ceremony begins; I want you to take me along and provide me an access near the great pillar.'

Kurus was curious now. She was still sharpening her arrows, what was she upto?

'Will you help me?'

'I will do everything for you, my dear; I love you. But it is my misfortune that you do not feel that way.'

Ambika could not take this anymore; her resistance was about to break. She knew this relationship had no future as she will be dead by this time tomorrow.

'I love you too'

Kurus could not believe what she was saying, he started to beam.

'But this love has no future; tomorrow I will die'

Kurus was thunderstruck. What was Ambika saying? why will she die? What is happening? There were hundreds of questions in his mind. His eyes had tears as he approached Ambika; She pulled him tightly towards her as he embraced her; she moved closer to him as he kissed her, and they travelled the path of ecstasy together. After a while, Ambika narrated her experiences she had in Radhanagar and her feelings about the emperor. Kurus was shattered hearing the horror; he took her back his arms and comforted her the way she had never experienced.

'I will shoot an arrow to the emperor when he will raise himself on the platform to inaugurate the ceremony; the distance from the pillar is ideal to pierce his neck; surely I cannot miss from there.'

'I cannot let you do this! Do you understand what will happen after that?'

'I am fully aware, and I am ready for it. If you love me; you will do this for me'

She stormed out of the shelter. She needed isolation now; she needed to concentrate. Kurus made her weaker and she cannot afford to lose her focus now.

She went to the pillar; perhaps to select an appropriate spot for the next day's assault. When she reached there, she found a few monks assembled there and the principal monk, Bhikshu Ananda was reciting something.

The chanting of the monks pierced her ears as she was busy with reiki.

*Earth is frenzied with fury, in constant vile conflict.
Awfully crooked its path; tangled in wily greed.*²

Ambika tried to concentrate on the job; but those chants had magical powers

All sore souls pray for the new birth of a Savior
Save us O Great Life with Thine life giving words
Let bloom the love-lotus with ever flowing nectar
Her mind became wobbly; the chant was intoxicating
O the ever Serene, Free and Holy Presence
Let your Mercy absolve Earth of its stains

Ambika spun towards the council of monks. They were unfazed; their faces were the epitome of serenity; as if no pain the world could touch them; they have attained a state where they are insulated from everything.

The grieving heart of Mankind is smoldering with agony
Worn out in treasure hunt the discontents are aggrieved
Lands far and wide flaunt their blood of filth
Touching all with Thy right hand to bless
Play Thy auspicious tune to the rhythm of Grace

Ambika could not take it anymore. She paced fanatically towards the podium.

Kurus was worried that Ambika did not return all night. He knew her determination and when he left for the site, he was certain that she should join him their soon. Her grit was paramount, and she will not let this opportunity slip.

Kurus already decided that it won't be one arrow that will slice the emperor; it will be two. He too will fire one and meet the same fate as his beloved.

By the time Kurus placed him next to the pillar; the pompous ceremony had begun. There were hundred monks on the podium chanting hymns and suppressing their collective voice hundreds of battle horns were trumpeting. Suddenly a thunderous roll of drums started; an elephant approached the platform with grandeur and on top of it sat the mighty Asoka the great; the emperor himself.

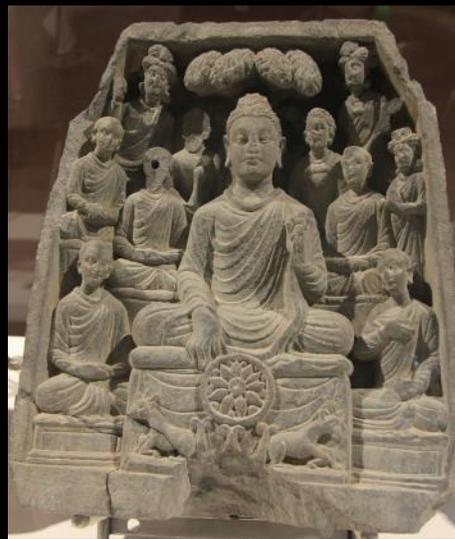
Kurus searched for Ambika fanatically but she could not find her. Asoka was completely within the range now; this was the best time to shoot; but

Ambika was seen nowhere. He decided to carry out the task himself and was about to load an arrow; just then his roving eye spotted something.

At the base of monk Ananda's seat, touching his feet sat a *bhikshuni*, clad in saffron, head shaven and her eyes transformed into a lake of solace. The eruption that brewed in her heart had extinguished forever.

Kurus stood there spellbound as the emperor walked his way to the platform. He greeted monk Ananda folding his arms and, in his baritone, voice pronounced,

Buddham Saranam Gacchami.



*Author's Note:
History tells that
the council of
Isipatana*

(Sarnath) was the starting point of Asoka's dhamma vi-jay which truly transformed him into Asoka the great. The great chorten was erected at Isipatana and it still stands to this day. Historians still debate as they peel through the evidence to decipher the true Asoka – shrouded amidst the two facades the terrible Chandasoka and the great Dharmasoka!

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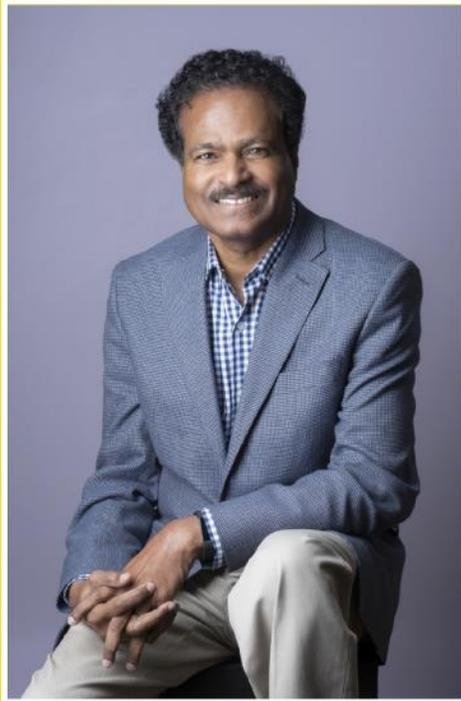
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