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Agomoni

Agomoni is published annually by BICHITRA, the Bengali Association of Manitoba Inc., on the occasion of the Durga Puja festival.



EDITOR

:

GAURISANKAR ROY

Bichitra

Bengali Club of Manitoba



Special thanks to Pratul Kumar Biswas from the editor for helping in the editorial work.

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PUJA COMMITTEE

Chairperson : Shib Das Biswas
and
Jaya Halpenny

Treasurer : Sumita Biswas

Cultural Programme : Tuntun Sarkar

Food Coordinator : Manjusri Roy

Durga Puja Committee of BICHITRA is grateful to:

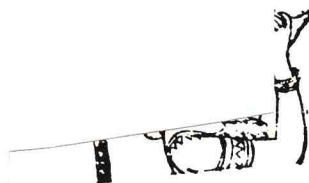
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The Hindu Society of Manitoba for the use of their facilities;

The workers and volunteers for their co-operation;

The members and donors for participation and encouragement.



PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 28th SEPTEMBER

MAHASASHIT BODHAN
AMANTRAN
PUJA
PUSHPANJALI
PRASAD BITARAN 5.00 PM - 10.00 PM

TUESDAY, 29th SEPTEMBER

MAHASAPTAMI PUJA
PUSHPANJALI
PRASAD BITARAN 8.30 AM - 1.30 PM

SANDHYA ARATI
CULTURAL FUNCTION . . . 7.30 PM - 10.00 PM

WEDNESDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER

MAHASHTAMI PUJA
PUSHPANJALI
MAHA YOGGYA 8.30 AM - 1.30 PM

SANDHYA ARATI
CULTURAL FUNCTION . . . 7.30 PM - 10.00 PM

THURSDAY, 1st OCTOBER

MAHANABAMI PUJA
PUSHPANJALI
PRASAD BITARAN 8.30 AM - 1.30 PM

SANDHYA ARATI
CULTURAL FUNCTION . . . 7.30 PM - 10.00 PM

FRIDAY, 2nd OCTOBER

BIJOYA DASHAMI PUJA
PUSHPANJALI
DARPA BISRAN
PRASAD BITARAN
SINDUR UTSAV 8.30 AM - 12.30 PM

TUESDAY, 6th OCTOBER

KOJAGARI LAKSHMI PUJA
PUJA
SANDHYA ARATI
PRASAD BITARAN 7.30 PM - 10.00 PM



EDITORIAL

Whether it is a great pleasure, challenge or excruciating experience, to coordinate the publication of Agomoni, is a matter of grave concern. But well, the Almighty has his ways, and he may reward us after all these eight years of pain with a magnificent publication next year and onwards.

Again the time has come for DURGA PUJA – our Festival of Autumn. Divine Mother Durga symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. She gives strength to the weak and grants salvation to the pious. The social aspects of the festival are that it brings us close to one another, reminds us to share our happiness with each other and enhances our feelings of fellowship. We should take pride in continuing this celebration far away from home, because it offers us a unique opportunity to rediscover ourselves and awaken within us our glorious cultural heritage.

We are indeed very lucky to be in Canada, where multiculturalism has been nurtured for the enrichment of the Canadian cultural mosaic. So at this auspicious occasion of Durga Puja, on behalf of Bichitra I welcome everybody around to celebrate the Autumn Festival with us.

Finally, it is customary to thank one's wife or husband at the end. Since I am not very fortunate in this regard, I am taking the liberty of thanking all the wives and husbands who have put up with a little bit of inconvenience to make this year's Puja a grand success.

ଆମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ

ସୁଖୀ,
ଆଗାମୀ ୨୨ ଓ ଆଶ୍ୱିନ ଧୂଳି ୨୯ ଓ
ଆଶ୍ୱିନ ଧୂଳି ଶନିଦିନେ (୧୯୫୫ ମସିହା ଅକ୍ଟୋବର ୨୯)
୨୦୯୫ ମନେ ଦୁର୍ଗା ପୂଜାର ଆୟୋଜନ କରା ଯାଉଛି,
ଏହି ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ "ପିତୃତ୍ୱ" ଓ ଆଶ୍ୱିନ ଧୂଳି ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକ
କାଳେ ଧୂଳି ଆୟୋଜନ ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନରେ ଯେଉଁଠି ଧୂଳି
ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକ ଆମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରାଯାଉଛି।

ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ଆଶ୍ୱିନ ଧୂଳି ପୂଜାର ଆୟୋଜନ
ପିତୃତ୍ୱ କାଳେ ଧୂଳି ପୂଜାର ଆୟୋଜନ
ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନରେ ଓ ଉପାସିତା ଧୂଳି କରାଯାଉଛି।

ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ପିତୃତ୍ୱ ଧୂଳିରେ ୨୯ ଓ ଆଶ୍ୱିନ
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ଏହି ଧୂଳି ପୂଜାର ଆୟୋଜନ ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନରେ
ଓପାସିତା ଧୂଳି କରାଯାଉଛି।

ପିତୃତ୍ୱ

ଧୂଳି ୨୯

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PUJA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S - MESSAGE

Jaya Halpenny

&

Shib Das Biswas

On the auspicious occasion of Durga Puja, we wish to extend our greetings to all the members of Bichitra and well wishers. Durga Puja is an expression of our reverence to Mother Durga and a festival of joy which unites men, women and children. We express our deep appreciation to all of you who have extended their cooperation to make this annual festivity a success. We are particularly grateful to the Executive Committee and Trustees of the Hindu Society of Manitoba for their cooperation. Our Cultural Program Committee and members of Bichitra have worked very hard to present you a rich and enjoyable Puja evening. Your presence during the cultural program will be a source of great inspiration to us. The publication of 'Agomoni' has been possible not only through the efforts of many contributing writers but also through the cooperation of our many advertisers to whom we extend our sincere thanks.

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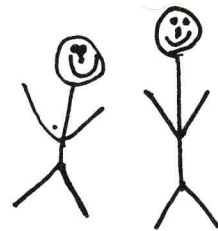


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ଆଶ୍ୱିନେର ବାସା ଶାନ୍ତି
 ଓଢିଲ ବାଣୀ ଆଜି
 ମୁଁ ଗାଠ ଯେଉଁ ଗୁଣ ବାଣେ
 ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ହୁଏ ଗାଠ
 ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୁଣି କହୁ ଗାଠ
 ଅନ୍ୟ ଗୋ ହୁଏ ଗାଠ ଗାଠ

ଦୁଇ ଗୋ



WHY THE TIGER HAS STRIPES

Rupa Roy

Long ago when the world was young the tiger had no stripes.

One day in the jungle of Bengal a group of tourists were on a safari when they saw some tigers lying in the sun. The tigers were posing majestically. They had beautiful glazing fur. The tourists especially liked the tiger on the left lying beside a tree. The tourists took pictures of the tigers. A couple of tourists stayed near the other tigers, but most of the tourists bunched around the tree.

That night the other tigers held a meeting. They all agreed to make a plan to make the other tiger ugly. They put their heads together and thought up a plan. They would make some stained black paint and paint stripes all over the tiger when it was sleeping.

After the tigers put their plan to work they sat in a circle thinking about the next day when the tourists came. They would realize how ugly the tiger was . . . if the tiger showed up.

But the next day the tiger was there, under the tree. When the tourists came and saw the tiger they gazed at its beauty. The tigers were dumbfounded. The tourists liked the tiger even more with the stripes! The tigers grew even more jealous and made themselves stripes too.

And that's why The Tiger Has Stripes.

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Nandita Biswas

The saffron fire
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But soon, it will grow dim
And the only proof of its existence
Can be blown away . . .

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MUSIC: AN ORNAMENT

Anju Sen

*There is beauty all around us
To see and touch and hear . . .
So, no matter how downhearted
And discouraged we may be,
Barren, windswept, lonely hills
Turn gold with daffodils . . .
For music that is shared
is a beautiful thing ---
Music enriches the soul
and makes the heart sing!
Music is a wondrous combination
of mind and soul and heart . . .*

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 તારાપર રહી રહ-સંગ
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 રહી રહી રહ-સંગ"

ଶାନ୍ତି ଆମର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ମନ୍ତ୍ରଣାଳୟର ଏ ଯୋଗ
 ସମ୍ମାନିତ ପ୍ରମୋଦ ଗୁପ୍ତା, ଯାହା ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଏହି
 ଆଦିଯୋଗ ଦିନ ଯେଉଁ ସମୟ ମାର୍ଗରେ ଆସିବେ
 ସମାପ୍ତ ହେବ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ସ୍ୱା, ସମାପ୍ତ ହେବେ କରେଇ
 ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟ ଆସାର ମିଳିତ ଜନମାନ? ନା, ମାତ୍ର
 ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟ କଥା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ନାହିଁ
 ଶାନ୍ତି-ଆମର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟରେ? ଯେ ସମୟ?
 ସମାପ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟ-ସେଇଟି ମିଳିତ
 ଅମଳରେ ଶାନ୍ତି ଯୋଗ, ସମାପ୍ତ ଯୋଗ ଓଡ଼ିଆ
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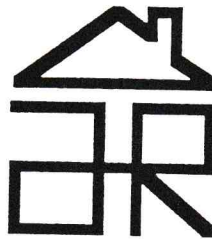
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FALLING IN LOVE

Pallab K. Ganguly

My story:

I met her on a sunny September day at a street fair on Chowrungee, the graceful downtown of Calcutta. I had been in the city for two weeks and had gone to the fair to soak up some atmosphere. Banners were flying and a traditional band was playing. I was the only one not dancing. Suddenly my eyes fell next to me on a little girl with a pair of sorrowful eyes. "Sir, may I get a penny please?" the girl asked me. I was emotional and therefore, she got a "rupee" immediately. "Today, you are my God," the girl remarked. It intrigued me. I wish I could help her everyday or at least once in a week.

Her story:

I met him at a Saturday street fair in Calcutta, a few blocks from my so called "Jhopri." It was one of those crisp fall afternoons. I was aimlessly walking through the crowd, thinking Amitabh's recent movie. Then the crowd thinned out and I saw a young gentleman standing all alone. It did not take much time for me to realize that I had a perfect guy to approach. I got the rupee which added substantially to my total collection – enough for the "evening show." Although I have never seen such a stupid guy in my life, better believe me, I wish I could meet him everyday or at least once in a week.



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Elizabeth Baird, Toronto Star, April 28, 1982

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DO YOGIC EXERCISES HELP CONTROL BACK PAIN, HEADACHE AND TENSION?

Shib Das Biswas

When we are young, our problems relating to health are least. We do not care or we are strong enough to bear the pain. As we grow old, things become different. We feel or complain every morning as we get out of the bed. Is there any remedy from all these aches and pains?

The most frequent physical complaints among sedentary workers, that includes, teachers, clerks, bank-tellers, professors and even doctors, concern the various areas of the back and spine. If they think about the movements typical to most of their work day, they will quickly realize that their back is confined to a very few positions, and in many cases, is actually held frozen in one position for prolonged periods of time. Of course, such rigid position will result in stress. In many cases the positions assumed by the doctors, dentists, file clerks, place continual pressure on delicate areas of the back and spine, creating great strain. It is interesting to note that this discomfort has a delayed reaction – often the worker is not aware of how much stress has actually been accumulated until several hours after they have left their office.

Anyone who has ever examined the structure of the back and spine can readily understand why stiffness, tension and cramps occur so easily. The back must have frequent manipulation during the day. The spine must stretch often during the day – since this manipulation and stretching do not take place during the working hours, it is essential that they be done after and/or before the work. A large number of sedentary workers suffer from constant back discomfort. Many simply accept this and resign themselves to live with it. Others resort to adjustments, massages, steam, plasters, braces and so forth – all of which have their place and generally offer some temporary relief. However, what is really needed is daily, methodical, self-manipulation to loosen cramps and stiffness gradually and to strengthen the weak areas of the back. Strengthening offers the sufferer an excellent chance of preventing further back aches and pains. The person should be equipped with the knowledge of certain simple, non-strenuous movements he can

perform if and when the back discomfort does arise. One who suffers from a major disorder (e.g. disc slip, etc.) of the back should always seek permission of their physicians (orthopedics) before doing any type of exercise. It is my experience that mild yogic exercises will meet the approval of almost all physicians. When practicing yoga for a particular back problem, one must proceed with caution and not be deceived by the apparent simplicity of many of the movements. The postures are extremely powerful. You will feel how certain exercises effect the lumber, middle or upper areas of the back.

The spine is a 'key' to our entire system. It acts as a communications system and controls many functions of the body and mind. It is able to release energy within the body and promote alertness and clarity of the brain. For many centuries yogis have stated that the spine must remain supple and flexible throughout life if one is to experience true health. A stiffening spine is a sign of approaching old age regardless of years, whereas a flexible, supple spine is a major characteristic of youth. Children have flexible spines, but as they grow older they fail to properly exercise, the spine gradually loses resilience. There is no natural reason for this to occur. Many yogic students, who are 'Senior Citizens' possess greater flexibility than their grandchildren. The response of the spine to the yoga stretching movements is astonishingly quick. Yoga exercises (Asanas) are designed to awaken the dormant energy and make it available to the organism.

Recently, Bengali Association of Manitoba, Inc. had held a summer camp in Camp Morton, Gimli. Dr. R. N. Sinha was kind enough to give us a complete philosophy of yogic life. If you are interested to know or learn stretching manipulations, please contact me.



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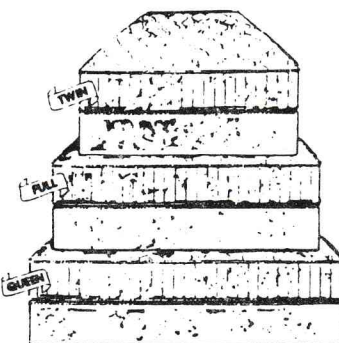


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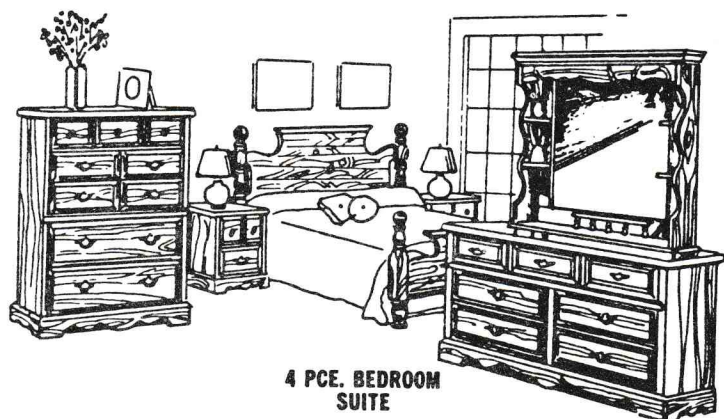
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Ranen Sinha

When asked what we want out of life, most of us will reply in a single word - fun. By fun we usually mean pleasure or various delights that are brought in through one's senses, through possession of wealth, through having fame and power. These things are not only fun, most of these are, at least in part, necessary for living in this world. Who can think of living without ever enjoying a good meal, a conversation or a beautiful picture. Having some money is so essential that once a famous author wrote - money is like the sixth sense without which you cannot enjoy the five other senses. For some of us having fame and power is the ultimate goal of life. But there are problems with each of these. Too much of any sensual pleasure, which cannot be shared with others, leads to exhaustion, boredom or sickness. Wealth, fame and power do not increase when shared with others. Those who have plenty of these hanker for more, always worrying about losing what they have. In the long run many find out that these longings cannot be fulfilled for any extended period.

Great yogis of ancient India knew the mysteries of life and death. They looked at the goals of human life and a person's genuine needs from a different perspective. They were convinced that human beings long to live forever, learn continuously and be content to an infinite degree. Life of a person on this earth has only one goal, to seek union of one's own soul (Jivatman) with that of the Supreme Spirit, Brahman (Paramatman). Through their intense meditation, yogis found that such union automatically brings about fulfillment of one's deep rooted longing for eternal life, unlimited knowledge and perfect contentment (Sat, Chit and Anand). There was only one problem - one must achieve the union only by one's own effort. The mystic knowledge of self-realization (Moksha, Kaivalya or Atmajnana) is rarely transferable from person to person. The truth of one's soul's identity with the Supreme Spirit has to be felt from within. The two have to become one because they are one, just as the little spark from a bonfire is one and the same as the fire of the sun.

No one knows the names of the yogis of bygone days who passed on a few guidelines of meditation and yogic practices with which to embark on

achieving life's supreme goal. Eventually, Bhadaranya wrote Braham Sutra, Kapila wrote Sankhya Sutra, and Patanjali wrote Yoga Sutra describing the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit and outlining the paths leading to self-realization. But these documents are only maps, and no one enjoys a new country just by reading maps, one has to travel there with one's own effort. Let us know the essence of each path leading to self-realization.

VEDANTA SYSTEM:

This world and the universe are the manifestations of only one eternal reality - Brahman. Everything else is Maya or illusion. The goal of one's life should be to know the reality through the practice of listening, critical thinking and meditation preferably under the guidance of a self-realized guru or teacher (Jnana Yoga).

SANKHYA and YOGA SYSTEMS:

Human life and every other thing in this world and the universe result from the interplay of two realities, 1) An intelligent but inactive conscious entity, Purusha; and 2) an unconscious but active entity, Prakriti. The goal of life should be to know Purusha (Kaivalya) and thereby become free from the bondage of hope and pain, birth and death and live a happy life eternally. The goal of the Sankhya system can be attained by practicing eight highly structured steps of Patanjali's Yoga system. A student of yoga does not have to have a preconceived belief or even faith in God. All that is needed is to follow the steps meticulously and persist in one's effort. Guidance from a self-realized teacher (Guru) will be a definite advantage though not absolutely necessary. The first two steps: I. Abstention (Yama), and II. Observance (Niyama) involve improving one's attitudes towards the outer world and one's self by acquiring a high standard of ethics and morality.

The third, fourth and fifth steps are used to discipline the body and senses by practicing: III. Postures to make the body disease-free (Asana), IV. Breath control to improve concentration, V. Sense-withdrawal (Pratyahara). The sixth, seventh and eighth steps discipline the mind by

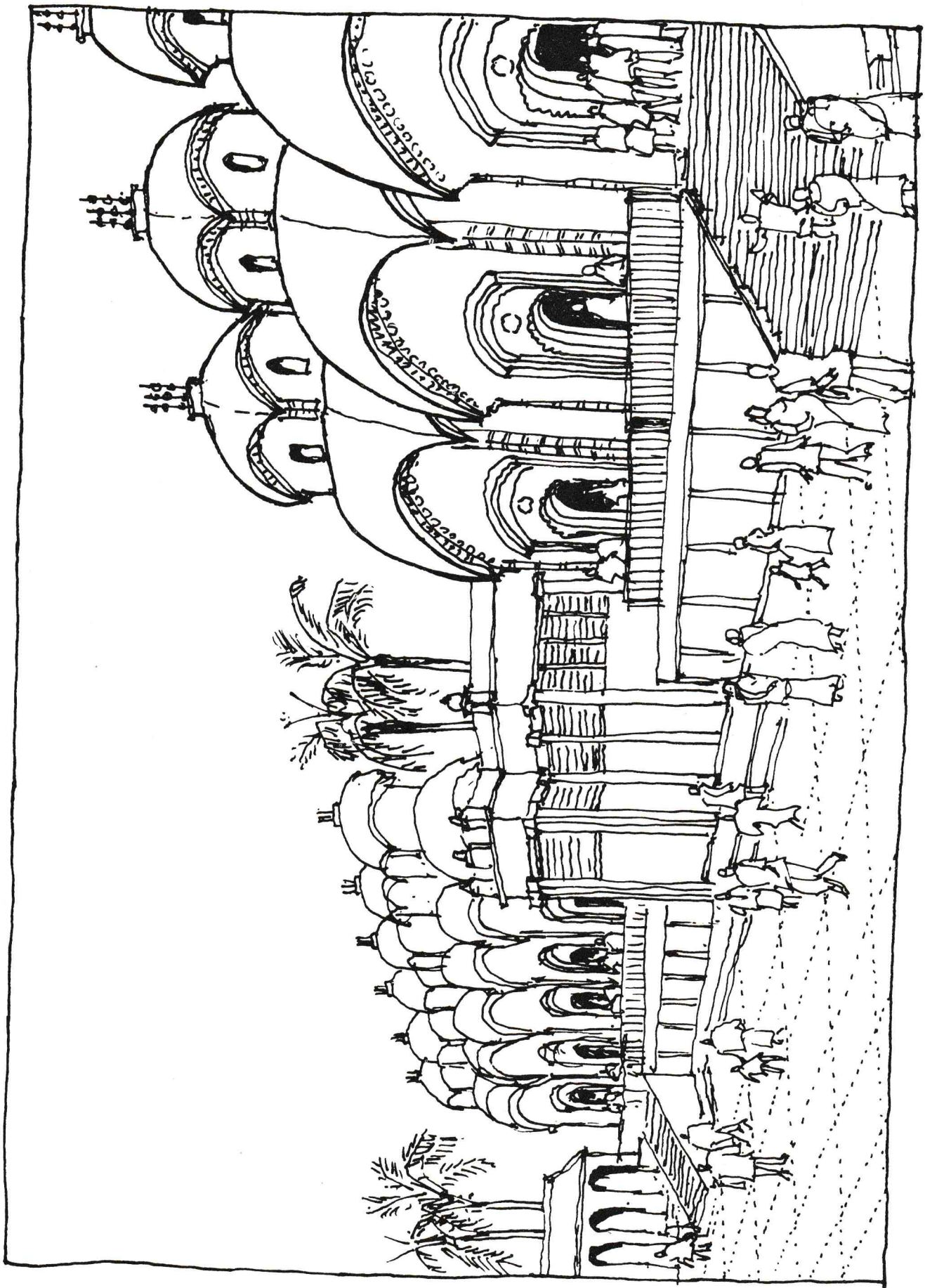
practicing: VI. Concentration (Dharana), VII. Meditation (Dhayana) and finally VIII. Contemplation and absorption (Samadhi).

At the final stage, the mind is so deeply absorbed in the object of meditation that it's identity is lost and the knower unites with the known.

Karma Yoga is another path leading to self-realization described in the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible of the Hindus. Its theme is: work diligently for work's sake without any craving for the results of the work, be they favorable or unfavorable (Niskama Karma). Through practicing Karma Yoga in every act in everyday life one attains equanimity or sameness of mind under all circumstances; spiritual progress leading to self-realization follow.

Finally, there is Bhakti Yoga, the path of love prescribed by Sri Chaitanna, Ramanuja and Sri Ramakrishna. This is probably the easiest route to union with the Supreme Spirit. One can realize the Self by simply loving one's personal God passionately; nothing else is required. It is a genuine search for God using the most natural emotion of the mind - a search beginning, progressing and culminating in love. When the Self is realized by this path one loves all, and hates none. A lover of God, the Bhakti yogi experiences undescribable happiness in this life and beyond.





DAKSHINESHWAR TEMPLE ASIM ROY

Kamal Malaker

More than half a century ago renowned American Philosopher Will Durrant said "India was the Motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the Mother of Europe's Languages; She was the Mother of our Philosophy; Mother through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; Mother through Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; Mother through the village community, of self Government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all."

Swami Vivekananda also tried to remind us of ourselves and our past said "study the history of the World, and you will see that every high ideal you meet with any where had it origin in India. From time immemorial India has been the mine of precious ideas to human society, giving birth to high ideas herself, she has freely distributed them ..., over the whole World. This is the land like tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have again and again rushed out and deluged the World, ... and this is the land whence one hopes such ideas must proceed in order to bring life and vigour into the decaying races of mankind. The debt which the World owes to our Motherland is immense."

The known history of Indian Civilization goes as far as five to six thousand years back. Recent archeological discoveries near Runn of Kutch indicates this may be even several thousands of years older.

Indians! who are we? whence did we come? With a pioneering and adventerous "Clone" of human being five to six thousands years ago; a group of people set on foot eastward from the Mediterrenian region, only with their bows and arrows and loin cloth to settle in the Indus Valley. The environment, the nature, the air and the country itself inspired them to be one of the greatest civilizations of the World. The World of Dravidians that we know from Harappa and Mohanjodaro, in the Indus Valley. And thus began what we know of our India. Afterwards Aryans from the Caspeans; Mongolians, from Central Asia; Pertheans from Eastern Europe, Greeks, Arabs, all came to enrich themselves and also to enrich our "Sanatan Dharma" and Indian Philosophy. The growth

of intellectualism is very much an Indian affair. This, I believe could not have happened without the support of Indian natural environment.

Indians not only grew in India, but also went abroad. Thousands of years ago to spread and share their wisdom.

The Central Asia, the Mediterranean, the Eastern Europe supplied India with its population, but in exchange received the wisdom, philosophy and intellectualism, several hundreds of years later. We see the evidence of Hindu influence in Egypt of Ptolemy, in the Middle East, in Central Asia, in Turkey and in Eastern Europe, specially countries around the Black and Caspian seas.

Indians traded, and established our culture, philosophy almost all over in South East and Eastern Asia as we see in Burma, Malayasia, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, China, Japan, Korea, South Pacific Islands, either profound or subtle influence of Hindu and Buddhist culture and philosophy. These still guiding the lives of several millions of people outside India.

The Hindu literature in South East Asia, specially Cambodia, Thailand and Bali is particularly alive and thriving. The relics of Hindu architecture in Sule Pagoda of Rangoon, the cells of Fundukistan in Afganistan, temples of Barbodur and Angkor in Cambodia, the entire Island of Bali, Gandantehchinling Monastery of Mongolia, and many many others confirms what Swamiji said.

Pythagorean Geometry and Ptolemaic concepts are all significantly influenced by Indian mathematical principles discovered centuries prior to their applications in the Mediterranean Region in what is known as the so called "Cradle of Civilization."

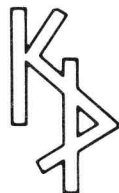
The Modern Western Science-based civilization would not have existed unless Indian mathematicians imagined and discovered the concept of "Zero" and the decimal system.

The Father of Modern Medicine Hippocrate's conception is known to have been influenced by Aurvedic concept of "Tridosha" thereby of disease for example, Prana, Pitta and Kapha and that of his being Pneuma, Bile and Phlegm.

I hope this will give some inspiration to our children growing up in America to understand better of themselves, their background, their heritage, and be proud of being known as Indian. If we culture our heritage, we can be more useful to the country of our adoption. Since we are all human beings, we deserve to share each other's goodness.



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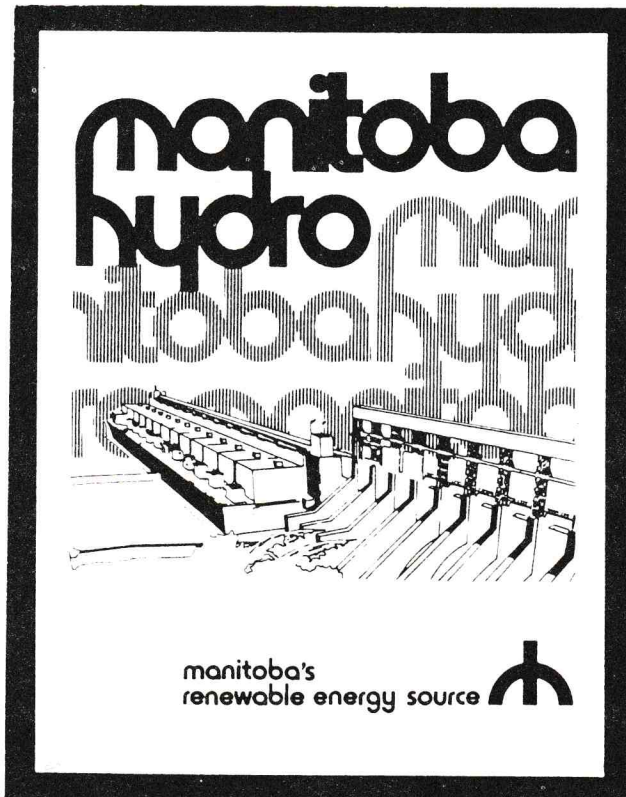
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Nilufer Rahman

Clowns play tricks and tell many jokes.
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They dance with joy and harmony.
They play music like in a symphony
They flip, they fall and sometimes cry
They moan and groan and tell a lie.
Some try to balance on a string.
But usually fall and break something
They play with balloons and juggle with balls.
They run and jump when the ringmaster calls.
Some of them smile, some of them frown,
But that's what they're supposed to do as a clown.
They're crazy and silly and funny too.
They make people laugh like me and you.
When the ringmaster calls their show is done
And that's what I call a big number one.

*WINNING POEM IN THE SHRINERS POETRY/PROSE CONTEST



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SOMETHING IN THE AIR

Mili Roy

Yesterday the river was beautiful
with sunflash the colour of diamonds
until I saw
the light danced
off the white bellies
of all the soft dead things
that floated just under the surface.
In old, saddened parts of town
the silent smoke
rising relentlessly from grim factories
is a contagion
that spreads across the land
until everything is touched
with heaviness;
the winds can no longer fly,
the waters no longer flow.
Day by day
trees grow wizened
dead fish parade through city streams.
And we do not notice
the pain of a bleeding tree.
We do not hear
the screams of a drowning fish.

But we have not gone untouched.
What else could it be but
a form of pandemic madness
in the sunset hours of evolution?
as we lie laughing and rotting
amidst the excretions of civilisation.

Today we make the bed,
and one of these tomorrows
when the world has been reduced
to an electric sun and a gas mask,
a baby in a plastic bag will lie in it.
Limp hands folded neatly over chest,
the wrinkled face so white
with sleep . . .



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