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North American Sankethi Association (NASA)

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President's Note

Dear NASA Members,

Hello everyone! Hope you are all enjoying the last few days of summer weather and getting ready for the Navaratri festival. I really want to thank everyone who came to the NASA Annual Event in Delaware Water Gap, PA and helped make it a wonderful success.

We had high attendance this year because of the great location, the variety of thoughtful programs, and, as always, great food! We elected a new Board of Directors and I am honored to serve two more years as the President. We are excited for the next two years and hope to conduct several regional events, do charity work here and overseas, and bring more Sankethis together from different regions. We are exploring the possibility of a different type of annual get-together by traveling together and doing something meaningful for us and for the greater good. We received a lot of feedback about the annual event and plan to take everything into consideration going forward.

There are many people to thank for the success of the annual event. I would like to recognize the excellent members of the previous Board for their hard work and for coordinating a lot of things. A huge "thank you" to all the sponsors (please see further in Chiguru for a list) and volunteers. Vasudha and Satya Narayana were kind enough to give their time and audio systems, and did a fantastic job so we could enjoy all of the performances. Thanks to Dr. Jayaram for conducting the elections and Sri Sundaresan for auditing our financial records. Thank you to everyone who performed and participated in various events, presentations, music, and dance. We were also lucky to have Aruna Viswanatha interview Asha Rangappa, both of whose accomplishments we are all very proud of.

I request Sri Sundaresan to kindly audit our NASA accounts for 2018 and 2019 as well.

Please note that in 2019, July 4th is on a Thursday; this means that we can have an extended get-together! We are planning our Navarathri regional event in Atlanta on Saturday, November 10th. I am excited to have this event in a different place and bring more Sankethis together. Please see details below and mark your calendars.

We look forward to more support from Sankethis from all the regions. We are very excited for what is to come!

Bringing all Sankethis together,

Prema Keshav Kumar

NASA President

1. NASA Annual Get-Together 2018

This year's annual event was held on June 29 – July 1 at the Glenwood Inn and Conference Center in Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania, in the picturesque Pocono Mountains area. The event was attended by over a hundred and twenty five people from various parts of the US and from Canada. Over the three days, participants enjoyed a wide variety of programs, visited the Sharadamba Temple in Stroudsburg, engaged in indoor and outdoor sports, and, of course, enjoyed sumptuous food.

Participants arrived at the venue on Friday afternoon and were greeted by NASA Board members and volunteers. Volunteers served excellent coffee and tasty snacks, as participants socialized; some members wasted no time in getting started with board games. The first formal session of the event was *Lalitha Sahasranama* chanting led by several of our learned members in the main auditorium whose walls were adorned with familiar charts depicting pictures from various Sankethi villages. This was followed by tasty dinner. The post-dinner session started with an entertaining Powerpoint presentation by Dr. Jayaram on Ganesha. He narrated several stories about Ganesha and highlighted the key "lessons" for kids (young and old). This was followed by an informative talk titled "Living a Healthy Lifestyle" by Sri Janardhan. Using interesting real-life stories, Sri Janardhan gave valuable tips to maintain and improve health. The formal events for the evening concluded with volunteers serving fruits. After this, several participants sat around a bonfire and had a good time until the wee hours of the morning, while some played board games, and a diehard group of card players congregated in the kitchen area to play Rummy into the early hours of Saturday!

Saturday morning began with Vedic chanting in the main auditorium, even as some members went for a nature walk and others streamed in to have breakfast and coffee. A temporary lack of hot water in some rooms was not a deterrent to participants' spirit as they gathered at the conference center for the day's activities. The *Vedagoshti* and *Lalitha Sahasranama*, including commentary by Dr. Jayaram, Prof. Dathatri and Sri Balakrishna, were followed by the first phase of the talent show. Several participants displayed their extraordinary talents in music and dance to the delight of the audience. The highlight of the morning program was an outstanding Carnatic music vocal concert by our own Dr. Sridhara, Past President of NASA. A detailed account of the concert is found in Section 3 of this newsletter. The morning session was concluded with an outdoor lunch consisting of hot Masala Dose made to order, along with vade, idli, mosaranna, huLiYanna and more. After the leisurely lunch, the afternoon session began with the release of Dr. Amrutha Viswanatha's Classical Veena CD. This was followed by felicitation of Col. P.M. Subbaraya for his dedicated service to the Kowshika Sankethi Sangha. Concurrently, many of our members engaged in "Speed Networking" where participants got to know one another in a fun environment. With the weather being rather warm, instead of hiking as was originally planned, a large group of our younger participants went swimming at a local lake and had a great time.

This year's annual get-together coincided with the 2018 World Cup. Jayanth organized a World Cup Bracket where soccer fans selected their favorite teams and made predictions on final standings. Many people young and old participated in this and each was confident that they had picked the winners! First place went to Dr. Ramesh Chandra, while Jams Bourke stood second, and Suneel Ram took the third spot. This activity also raised \$175 for NASA! Thanks to Jayanth for organizing this and to everyone who participated!

The highlight of the afternoon was a delightful concert by *Ganakalabhushana* Vidwan Sri RK Padmanabha, ably accompanied by Sri Jitendra Kishore on the violin and Sri Damodaran on the *mridanga*. The concert was quintessential RKP – the epitome of *vidhwat*, *bhava*, *bhakti*, *manodharma* and classical purity. We were fortunate to have RKP with us again and hope he will delight us at future NASA gatherings.

The evening saw a change of location, with the entire group heading to the Sri Sharadamba Temple in nearby Stroudsburg. The program began with chanting of *Lalitha Sahasramana*. This was followed by special Archana sponsored by NASA and *Rathothsava*; several NASA members pulled the chariot we did *pradakshina* around the temple, even as the Sankethi group led by Seethalakshmi Madhavan and others sang appropriate kritis. Dinner was served at the temple dining hall a short walk away from the new temple. The sumptuous meal prepared by the temple kitchen

included many Sankethi favorites including majjige huLi and Mysore Pak. After dinner we returned to the conference center. After fruit and ice cream, some enjoyed sparklers, while others watched Fourth of July fireworks from the nearby hillock. The night concluded with people gathering around a bonfire ... or engaging in one of the most popular Sankethi pastimes – playing cards!

Sunday began with Vedic chanting led by NASA stalwarts. After breakfast, the morning session resumed with recognition of high school and college graduates. This was followed by the next phase of the talent show with more members of the NASA family exhibiting their unique talents. Dr. Ramesh Chandra spoke about his father Sri H.K. Ramachandra who recently passed away in India at the age of 94. The assembly also expressed condolences to Sri Rajanna, a leader in the Sankethi community and father of Dr. Amrutha and Dr. Natesh.

The highlight of the morning session was the interview of Renuka Asha Rangappa by Aruna Viswanatha which is covered separately in a later section. As has become customary, the group sang the Sankethi Anthem. This was followed by the NASA Annual General Body Meeting (GBM), and Election of the Board of Directors for 2018-20. Minutes of the GBM from the NASA Secretary are presented separately.

After lunch the final phase of the talent show saw more NASA children exhibit their talents. All in all, a wide range of talents including bharatanatyam, Carnatic music, western music vocal, Piano, jokes and riddles was showcased. NASA truly appreciates the time taken by all the participants for sharing their special gifts with everyone. We look forward to the same level of participation in the coming years!

It was finally time to say Goodbye. Board Members and volunteers ensured that those driving long distances took boxed dinner with them. Members bid farewell to one another with warm hugs, taking with them fond memories while looking forward to the next NASA event!

We would like to acknowledge the various delicacies that members made at home and brought to the get-together for everyone to enjoy. Dr. Jayaram brought a variety of pickles that everyone savored. Prof. Dathatri and Geetha brought delicious plantain chips. Prema Keshav Kumar served her crispy kodubaLe and thengoLalu. Ranjini made moist and yummy brownies that everyone, especially the children, enjoyed. Nandini's khara biscuits were in high demand and had to be rationed before they were gone!

2. ನಾಸಾ ಬೇಸಿಗೆ ಕೂಟ - ೨೦೧೮

ಈ ವರ್ಷದ ನಾಸಾ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ಕೂಟವು ಜೂನ್ ೨೯ - ಜುಲೈ ೧ ರಂದು, ಡೆಲವೇರ್ ವಾಟರ್ ಗ್ಯಾಪಿನಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಗ್ಲೆನ್ ವುಡ್ ಪ್ರವಾಸಿಗೃಹ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮ್ಮೇಳನ ಕೇಂದ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ, ಅದ್ಧೂರಿಯಿಂದ ನಡೆಯಿತು. ಜೂನ್ ೨೯ ಶುಕ್ರವಾರದಂದು ಮದ್ಯಾಹ್ನದ ಹೊತ್ತಿಗೆ ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಬಂಧುಗಳೆಲ್ಲಾ ಪ್ರೇಮಕೊನೊ ಪರ್ವತಮಾಲೆಯ ಸುಂದರ ಪ್ರಕೃತಿಯ ನಡುವೆ ಕುಳಿತಿರುವ ಈ ಗ್ಲೆನ್ ವುಡ್ ತಂಗುದಾಣಕ್ಕೆ ಆಗಮಿಸಿದರು. ಲಲಿತಾ ಸಹಸ್ರನಾಮದ ಪಾರಾಯಣದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾದ ಈ ಕೂಟಕ್ಕೆ, ಸಂಜೆಯ ಹೊತ್ತಿಗೆ ಕಳೆಯೇರಿತು. ಹಿರಿಯ ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಸದಸ್ಯ ಡಾ. ವೈ. ಎನ್ ಜಯರಾಮ್ ಅವರು ಎಂದಿನಂತೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಲಘು ಹಾಸ್ಯ ಶೈಲಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಗಣೇಶನ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ವಿವಿಧ ಕಥೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪವರ್ ಪಾಯಿಂಟ್ ನಿರೂಪಣೆಯ ಮೂಲಕ ತಿಳಿಸಿ ನಮ್ಮನ್ನೆಲ್ಲಾ ರಂಜಿಸಿದರು. ನಂತರ ಇಂದು ನಮ್ಮೆಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಸವಾಲಾಗಿರುವ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಜೀವನ ಶೈಲಿಯನ್ನು ಹೇಗೆ ಕಾಪಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು ಎನ್ನುವ ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು, ಬಹಳ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಪೂರ್ಣವಾದ ಸಂಗತಿಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಬೆರೆಸಿ ಉತ್ತಮವಾದ ಸಲಹೆ ನೀಡಿದ ಜನಾರ್ದನ್ ಅವರ ಉಪನ್ಯಾಸವೂ ಬಹಳ ಹಿತವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಸಂಜೆಯ ಭರ್ಜರಿ ಭೋಜನದ ನಂತರ, ಹಲವು ಸಂಕೇತಿಗಳು ಇಸ್ಪೀಟ್ ಎಲೆ ಹಿಡಿದು ಹರಟೆ ಹೊಡೆದರೆ, ಮಕ್ಕಳು ತಮಗೆ ಪ್ರಿಯವಾದ ಹಲವಾರು ಬೋರ್ಡ್ ಆಟಗಳನ್ನು ಆಡುತ್ತಾ ವಿನೋದವಾಗಿ ಕಾಲ ಕಳೆದರು.

ಮಾರನೆಯ ದಿನ ಶನಿವಾರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ ವೇದಘೋಷದ ಸುಪ್ರಭಾತ, ಸಹಸ್ರನಾಮ ಪಾರಾಯಣದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾದವು. “ಸಂಗೀತವೆಂದರೆ ಸಂಕೇತಿಗಳು” ಎನ್ನುವ ಒಂದು ರೀತಿಯ ನಾಣ್ಣುಡಿಯನ್ನು ಕೇಳುತ್ತಲೇ ಬೆಳೆದ ನನಗೆ, ಅಂದಿನ ಮದ್ಯಾಹ್ನದ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳು ಅದ್ಭುತವಾಗಿದ್ದವು ಎನ್ನಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ನಾಸಾ ಸಂಕೇತಿ

ಬಂಧುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಬ್ಬರಾದ ಡಾ ಶ್ರೀಧರ್ ಅವರ ಸುಶ್ರಾವ್ಯ ಗಾಯನ ನಿಜಕ್ಕೂ ಮೆಲಕುಹಾಕುವಂತಿತ್ತು. ದೊಡ್ಡ ವಾಹನ ಉದ್ಯಮಿಯೊಂದರಲ್ಲಿ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರಾಗಿ ನಿವೃತ್ತಿ ಹೊಂದಿರುವ ಡಾ ಶ್ರೀಧರ್ ಒಂದು ಬಹುಮುಖ ಪ್ರತಿಭೆ. ಮೂಲತಹ ಹಾಸನದ ಕೇರಳಾಪುರದಲ್ಲಿ ಹುಟ್ಟಿ ಬೆಳೆದ ಶ್ರೀಧರ್ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಬಾಲ್ಯದಿಂದಲೇ ಸಂಗೀತ ಮತ್ತು ಕಾವ್ಯವಾಚನ ಕಲೆಗಳು ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತಾಯಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸಹೋದರಿಯರಿಂದ ಬಳುವಳಿಯಾಗಿ ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿದ್ದಾಗ, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗೀತದ ದಿಗ್ಗಜಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಬ್ಬರಾದ ಆರ್.ಕೆ.ಶ್ರೀಕಂಠನ್ ಅವರಿಂದ ಸಂಗೀತದ ಭದ್ರವಾದ ಬುನಾದಿ ಪಡೆದ ಶ್ರೀಧರ್, ಮುಂದೆ ಅಮೆರಿಕೆಯ ವಾಶಿಂಗ್ಟನ್ ಡಿ.ಸಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉಷಾ ಚಾರ್ ಅವರಿಂದ ತಮ್ಮ ಸಂಗೀತದ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣವನ್ನು ಮುಂದುವರೆಸಿ, ಅದನ್ನು ಇನ್ನೂ ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಲೇ ಇದ್ದಾರೆ. ತ್ಯಾಗರಾಜರು, ಮೈಸೂರು ವಾಸುದೇವಾಚಾರ್ಯರು, ಪುರಂದರದಾಸರ ಕೃತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವಚ್ಛವಾದ ಉಚ್ಚಾರಣೆಯಿಂದ ಸುಶ್ರಾವ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಹಾಡಿದ ಅವರ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ಮಧುರತೆ ನಮ್ಮ ಮನದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಲವು ಕಾಲ ಉಳಿಯುವುದರಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂದೇಹವಿಲ್ಲ.

ಅಂದು ಮದ್ಯಾಹ್ನದ ಊಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಡಿಸಿದ ಬಿಸಿಬಿಸಿ ಮಸಾಲೆದೋಸೆ, ವಡೆ, ಇಡ್ಲಿಗಳು ರುಚಿಕರವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಉಟವಾದ ನಂತರ ನಾಸಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ನಮ್ಮೆಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಪರಿಚಿತರಾದ ಡಾ ಅಮೃತಾ ವಿಶ್ವನಾಥ್ ಅವರ ವೀಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮುದ್ರಿತವಾದ ಸಂಗೀತದ ಸಿ.ಡಿಯನ್ನು ಬಿಡುಗಡೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಅಲ್ಲೇ ಉಪಸ್ಥಿತರಿದ್ದ ಕರ್ನಲ್ ಸುಬ್ಬರಾಯ ಮತ್ತು ಅವರ ಪತ್ನಿಯನ್ನು, ಮೈಸೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಕೌಶಿಕ ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಸಂಘದ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಕ್ರಿಯವಾಗಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿ ಸಂಘಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ದುಡಿಯುತ್ತಿರುವ ಅವರ ಶ್ರಮವನ್ನು ಗೌರವಿಸಿ ಸನ್ಮಾನಿಸಲಾಯಿತು.

ನಂತರ ಅಂದಿನ ಸಂಜೆಯ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಡಿದ ಮತ್ತೊಬ್ಬ ಹಿರಿಯ ಸಂಕೇತಿ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರ ಹೆಸರನ್ನು ಕೇಳಿದ ಸಂಕೇತಿಗಳಿಲ್ಲ. ಇಂದು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗೀತ ವಲಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೇಳಿಬರುವ ಪ್ರಖ್ಯಾತರ ಹೆಸರುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದಾದ ವಿದ್ವಾನ್ ಆರ್.ಕೆ.ಪದ್ಮನಾಭ ಅವರ ವಿದ್ವತ್ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಎರಡು ಮಾತಿಲ್ಲ. ತಮ್ಮ ನಿರೂಪಣೆ, ಶಾರೀರ ಮತ್ತು ಶೈಲಿಗಳಿಂದ ಇಂದು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗೀತದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧರಾದ ಆರ್.ಕೆ.ಪಿ ಅವರ ಕಛೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಮಯ ಕಳೆದದ್ದೇ ತಿಳಿಯಲಿಲ್ಲ.

ಅಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಸುಮಾರು ೫ ಮೈಲಿಗಳ ದೂರದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಸ್ವಾಸ್ಥ್ಯಗಿರಿನಲ್ಲಿ, ಸುಂದರವಾದ ಪ್ರಕೃತಿಯ ಮಡಿಲಲ್ಲಿ ನಿರ್ಮಿಸಿರುವ ಶೃಂಗೇರಿ ಶಾರದೆಯ ಮಠದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂದಿನ ಸಂಜೆ ರಥೋತ್ಸವ, ಪೂಜೆ ಮತ್ತು ಊಟಗಳನ್ನು ಏರ್ಪಡಿಸಿದ್ದರು. ಆ ಸಂಜೆಯ ಹಿತವಾದ ವಾತಾವರಣದಲ್ಲಿ, ದೇಗುಲದ ಗಂಟೆಗಳ ಕಲರವದಲ್ಲಿ, ಮತ್ತೊಮ್ಮೆ ಪೂಜೆಮಂತ್ರಗಳ ಸುಮಧುರ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಮಗೆಲ್ಲಾ ಶೃಂಗೇರಿಯ ಶಾರದಾ ದೇವಾಲಯದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದಂತಹ ಅನುಭವವಾಯಿತು. ಅಂದಿನ ಸಂಜೆಯ ಸರಳ, ಸ್ವಾದಿಷ್ಟ ಭೋಜನ ಸಂಕೇತಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಬಹಳ ಹಿಡಿಸಿತು ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಪ್ರತ್ಯೇಕವಾಗಿ ಹೇಳಬೇಕಿಲ್ಲ. ಅಲ್ಲಿಂದ ಹಿಂತಿರುಗಿದ ನಂತರ ಹಿರಿಯ ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಸದಸ್ಯರೊಬ್ಬರು ಏರ್ಪಡಿಸಿದ್ದ ಕಲ್ಲಂಗಡಿ-ಐಸ್ಕ್ರೀಮ್ ಮೆದ್ದು, ಅಲ್ಲಲ್ಲಿ ಸಿಡಿಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಪಟಾಕಿ-ಹೂಬಾಣದ ಬೆಳಕನ್ನು ಸವಿಯುತ್ತಾ ಸಂತೋಷಿಸಿದೆವು. ಭಾನುವಾರ ನಡೆದ ಚುನಾವಣೆ ಮತ್ತು ಇತರ ಲಘು ಮನೋರಂಜನಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳು ಹಿತವಾಗಿದ್ದವು. ಭಾನುವಾರದ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನ ಮನಸ್ಸನ್ನು ಸೆಳೆದ ಒಂದು ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಆಶಾ ರಂಗಪ್ಪ ಅವರೊಂದಿಗೆ, ಅರುಣಾ ವಿಶ್ವನಾಥ್ ನಡೆಸಿದ ಸಂದರ್ಶನ. ಇಂದು ಸಿ.ಎನ್.ಎನ್ ಟೆಲಿವಿಶನ್ ಚಾನಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ, ತಮ್ಮ ರಾಜಕೀಯ ವಿಶ್ಲೇಷಣೆಗೆ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧರಾಗಿ, ಟ್ವಿಟ್ಟರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾವಿರಾರು ಅಭಿಮಾನಿಗಳನ್ನು ಪಡೆದ ಆಶಾ ನಿಜಕ್ಕೂ ಒಬ್ಬ ಧೀಮಂತ ಮಹಿಳೆ. ಯೇಲ್ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದ ಕಾನೂನಿನ ವಿಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಉಪನ್ಯಾಸಕಿ, ಅತ್ಯುನ್ನತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಿರುವ ಆಶಾ ರಂಗಪ್ಪ ಬಹಳ ಸರಳ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ. ಆಕೆಯನ್ನು ಭೇಟಿಯಾಗಿದ್ದು ನಿಜಕ್ಕೂ ಹೆಮ್ಮೆಯ ಸಂಗತಿ. ಇಷ್ಟೆಲ್ಲಾ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಪೂರ್ಣ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ನಮಗೆ ನೀಡಿದ ಈ ವರ್ಷದ ನಾಸಾ ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಬೇಸಿಗೆ ಕೂಟ ಒಂದು ಅನನ್ಯ ಅನುಭವವೆನ್ನಬಹುದು.

ಡಾ ಉಮಾ ವೆಂಕಟೇಶ್, ಸ್ಟೇಟ್ ಕಾಲೇಜ್, ಪೆನ್ನಿಲ್ವೇನಿಯಾ

3. Some Pictures From The 2018 NASA Annual Get-Together



4. North American Sankethi Association General Body Meeting Minutes

5.

July 1, 2018

1. Roll call

According to the sign-in, quorum has been achieved

2. President's Message

Requests recognition that we need more people to join the board, so we can not only plan the meeting, but also move things forward. Request – if you come to the board, please confirm that you can serve the community. With a good group we can move NASA forward.

2. Reading of the minutes of the preceding meeting

There is a mention that the by-law has been amended to delete that a director may not serve more than 3 consecutive terms. This has been amended but not posted to the website. We will not open an action as such.

There were several recommendations in the meeting minutes but due to manpower this term we were not able to make progress. Note to future board – these should be revisited.

With these notes, the minutes were offered for approval to the membership.

Motion to approve by Dr. Jayaram

Seconded by Mr Sundaresan.

Minutes are approved.

3. Reports of committees

Audit committee – Audit report will be provided after Treasurer's report

No other committees

4. Reports of officers

President's Report

Navaratri was held in Boston with many new faces – about 80 people total. New location for Annual Get-Together and General Body Meeting was proposed by Sheela Nagaraj-Dikshith

Based on the recommendation of the membership we did pursue more charity activities: We contributed to hurricane relief efforts in Texas in Florida, contributed to the Make-A-Wish foundation (2018),

Treasurer's Report

For Fiscal year 2017:

Auditor's Report

Have reviewed and confirmed that the information is accurate.

Position on investment?

- Currently very conservative approach*
- Chose to limit investments as revenue generated would be minimal*

Balance on statement?

- Approximately \$70k in Capital One Savings – may not earn much interest. Should part of the money go towards CD or something that may earn more
- Will consider a safe investment strategy

What is the purpose of savings? What will we use it for?

- There is an amount to confirm a basis for the organization that cannot be spent
- Proposal – spend the money to confirm good programs here when we get together, rather than leaving it unspent

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report: By Keshava Kumar

Seconded: Dathatri

Secretary's Report

Added 3 new members – 2017 Uma Venkatesh and Bangalore Satyaprakash, Suresh Keshavamurthy, Deepak Dathatri

2018 -- Latha Ashwathanarayana

Three issues of Chiguru were sent to the membership electronically.

Secretary's Report: Motion to Approve by Ramkumar Magge

Seconded by Natesh Magge

6. Old and Unfinished Business

6. New business

Dathatri - Consideration of volunteering to community activities as part of our gathering to become more service oriented

7. Good and Welfare

In Memoriam – Rajanna Ajja (RS KeshavMurthy); Roopa Rudrapatna's Father; Ramesh Chandra's Father; Dr. Vanaja Dhruvarajan; Vasanthi's Mother; Usha Ramamurthy's Mother

Chiguru editions have contained good news items and Board seeks contributions

8. Sankethi Anthem

Sri M.S. Nataraja proposed that with help from Seethalakshmi Madhavan and Amrutha, we should make a CD of the Sankethi Anthem and it was suggested that NASA provide funding support

9. Elections

Dr. Jayaram – Elections Co-ordinator

President and 8 Members of the Board of Directors

*Nomination for President by Amrutha Viswanatha; Seconded by Sundaresan – Prema Keshav – Accepted
Nomination for President by Lakshmi Hanasoge; Seconded by Jaya Balakrishna – Amrutha Viswanatha – Declined*

All in favour – 100%; None Declined

Mrs Prema Keshav Kumar has been acclaimed as the President

<i>Name of Nominee</i>	<i>Nominated By</i>	<i>Seconded By</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Uma Venkatesh</i>	<i>Prema Keshav Kumar</i>	<i>Amrutha Viswanatha</i>	<i>Accept</i>
<i>Raghunath Kanagal</i>	<i>Prema Keshav Kumar</i>	<i>Ranjini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Accept</i>
<i>Lakshmi Jayaram</i>	<i>Ranjini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Geeta Dathatri</i>	<i>Accept</i>
<i>Sudarshan Arkanath</i>	<i>Ramesh Chandra</i>	<i>Satish Magge</i>	<i>Accept</i>
<i>Ganesh Rao</i>	<i>Keshava Kumar</i>	<i>Lata Magge</i>	<i>Accept</i>
<i>Govindaraju</i>	<i>Nandini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Ratna Rao</i>	<i>Accept</i>
<i>Sheela Nagaraj</i>	<i>Raghunath Kanagal</i>	<i>Nandini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Accept</i>
<i>Amrutha Viswanatha</i>	<i>Nandini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Ashwini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Satish Magge</i>	<i>Amrutha Viswanatha</i>	<i>MS Nataraja</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>YN Dathatri</i>	<i>Sundreshan</i>	<i>Srikantiah</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Srikantiah</i>	<i>Dathatri</i>	<i>K. Sundaresan</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>MS Nataraja</i>	<i>Satyaprakash</i>	<i>Geeta Dathatri</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Satyaprakash</i>	<i>Satish Magge</i>	<i>Nalini Sundaresan</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Sundaresan</i>	<i>Srikantiah</i>	<i>Ramkumar Magge</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Ratna Rao</i>	<i>Ranjini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Shilaja Srikantiah</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Pavani Ram</i>	<i>Ashwini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Nandini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Ashwini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Lakshmi Hanasoge</i>	<i>Ratna Rao</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Lata Magge</i>	<i>Prema Keshav Kumar</i>	<i>Amrutha Viswanatha</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Ramkumar Magge</i>	<i>Prema Keshav Kumar</i>	<i>Amrutha Viswanatha</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Ranjini Srikantiah</i>	<i>Prema Keshav Kumar</i>	<i>K. Sundaresan</i>	<i>Decline</i>
<i>Satish Magge</i>	<i>Amrutha Viswanatha</i>	<i>MS Nataraja</i>	<i>Decline</i>

9. Adjournments

Motion to Close – K. Sundaresan; Seconded: Srikantha Rao

Submitted by



7. Aruna Viswanatha Interviews Asha Rangappa

She has been called “*The real girl from Quantico*” (contrasting with Priyanka Chopra’s FBI Agent character in the eponymous ABC TV series *Quantico, named after the FBI Headquarters*). She is often seen these days on CNN talking articulately with all the primetime hosts about Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 US Presidential Elections and related legal issues. She is a former FBI Special Agent and until recently an Associate Dean at the storied Yale Law School. She is presently Director of Admissions and senior lecturer at the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs at Yale. She is a sought-after speaker at various conventions. She is none other than our very own Renuka, better known to most of the world as Asha Rangappa! Asha was interviewed at the NASA Get-together by another accomplished Sankethi, Aruna Viswanatha.

Asha Rangappa graduated from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University in 1996, and obtained her J.D. from Yale Law School in 2000. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Bogota, Colombia, where she studied Colombian constitutional reform and its impact on U.S. drug policy in the region. After law school, Asha served as a law clerk for a Federal Appeals Court Judge in Puerto Rico. She subsequently joined the FBI as a Special Agent, specializing in counterintelligence investigations in New York City. In addition to her academic career, Asha is a CNN Legal and National Security Analyst.

Aruna Viswanatha graduated from Rutgers University and subsequently received a Masters degree in Journalism from Columbia University. She has worked as a reporter for HT Mint, American Lawyer, Main Justice and the Reuters news agency. She presently works as a correspondent for The Wall Street Journal where she specializes in financial crimes and enforcement. She has been described as “*a dynamo on the beat, consistently producing scoops on billion-dollar-plus settlements with global banks, and finding inventive ways to tell the justice story*”.

Aruna asked Asha to relate to the NASA audience about how she ended up with the FBI and eventually as an analyst on CNN. Asha talked about her experiences and accomplishments despite many obstacles she faced as a woman of color. Determination and steadfastness kept her on track and as the first woman of Indian parentage to become a counterintelligence agent at the FBI. She talked about her rigorous FBI training and how she overcame her initial failure.

After graduating from the Yale Law School, Asha, unlike most lawyers, did not want to join a law firm. Though she was interested in becoming a public prosecutor, a chance meeting years earlier with an FBI agent sparked the idea of joining the FBI and so she sent her application. Given budgetary cuts at the agency, she did not expect to hear from them and moved on. After 9/11/2001 things changed; FBI started recruiting frantically, especially people from diverse professions and with foreign language skills. Asha was asked to join the FBI based on her law degree and Spanish language skills.

Just before she was to join the FBI Academy in Quantico, Asha was in a serious car accident as a front passenger and was hospitalized with severe contusions of the ribs. Despite getting a one month delay in start of her FBI training so she could recuperate, Asha failed in her first Physical Education test at the FBI academy to her chagrin and disappointment. She persevered and despite the pain, she undertook a brutal training schedule and passed the PE test a few weeks later. After completing her training at Quantico in 2002, Asha joined the New York division of the FBI as a Special Agent. She specialized in counterintelligence investigations, assessing threats to national security, conducting classified investigations on suspected foreign agents and performing undercover work. After serving for three years, she quit the FBI as she wanted to focus on her family life. Subsequently she served as Associate Dean of Admissions at Yale Law School. Last year she became the Dean of Admissions and a Senior Lecturer at the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs.

Asha explained to the NASA audience about how her time as an FBI counter-intelligence agent in New York City gave her a unique vantage point to be able to offer insights as a legal analyst on CNN about Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and related legal issues. It started with a tweet from President Trump in March 2017, she said, when Trump accused former President Obama of having his phones at Trump Tower “tapped.” As someone who had actual experience with wiretaps used in counter-intelligence investigations, Asha said she knew how unlikely that scenario was. She offered up her expertise, through a

friend at Fox News. After her initial appearances on Fox, she was pursued by other networks and media outlets. She eventually became a national security and legal analyst for CNN where she now appears exclusively.

In addition to answering the questions Aruna posed, Asha took questions from members of the audience about her experiences. She was obviously highly knowledgeable about the Mueller investigation, and offered additional insights, having been in the FBI when Mueller was the Director. The T Shirt she was wearing was symbolic of what has become a national obsession!

NASA thanks both Renuka Asha Rangappa and Aruna Viswanatha for participating in this engaging discussion. We wish both these promising second generation Sankethis a bright future and much success in all their endeavors.



8. Featured Carnatic Music Concert By Dr. Sridhara



On the second day of the NASA Get-together, we had the pleasure of experiencing a wonderful Carnatic vocal music concert by our own Dr. Sridhara, Past President of NASA. He was accompanied by Sri Jitendra Kishore on the Violin and Sri Krishna Palya on the Mridanga.

Dr. Sridhara lives in Ellicott city with his wife Dr Rajeshwari. They have two sons, Srinivas and Shankar, and four grand children. He retired in 2017 as the President of a large automotive supplier but remains a Director on their Board. He has a PhD in Mechanical Engineering and an MBA, and has worked for about 40 years in India, Australia and USA in both academia and industry.

Sridhara grew up in Keralapura in a milieu rich in music; there was music at home with both mother and sister singing; *Bharata Vachana* pervaded the village. While in Bangalore in the seventies and early eighties he would attend concerts, and had the privilege of learning basic music lessons from Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sri R.K. Srikantan. He was fortunate to learn over fifty kritis from Sri D.K. Nagarajan, younger brother of Pattammal and Jayaram, in the DC area during 1995-99. He has been learning more seriously over the last six years from Smt. Usha Char, a popular teacher in the DC area.

The concert began with the Dikshitar kriti *Vinayaka Vignanashaka* in Chakravaka (Vegavahini in the Dikshitar system). The kalpana swaras brought out the beauty of this soothing melakarta raga. This was followed by a composition by Mysore Maharaja in the rare Hamsavinodini raga. Continuing the focus on Mysore composers, Dr. Sridhara next presented the Vasudevacharya kriti *Sri Hari Vallabhe* in Udayaravichandrika. The centerpiece of the concert was the Thyagaraja kriti Shambo Mahadeva in Kamavardhini (Pantuvaram). Beginning with a crisp raga alapane, Dr. Sridhara sang with a lot of bhava, and included imaginative kalpana swaras. This was followed by a competent tani on the Mridanga. After this came two devaranamas of Purandaradasa. First was *Snanava maadiro* in the pleasant Natakurinji raga. This was followed by the popular *Venkatachalanilaya* in Sindhu Bhairavi, and finally Mangala.

We wish Dr. Sridhara great success in his emerging music career and hope to hear him sing again at NASA.

9. Thank you Sponsors

NASA wishes to thank and place on record the generous sponsorship received from the below members at the NASA annual event:

Dr. Natesh and Dr. Rupa	\$ 500.00
Dr. Jai Rangappa	1,000.00
Ratna Rao	1,000.00
Raghu Ram	800.00
Veda Shekhar	125.00
Kuppuhally Srikantaiah	50.00
Dr. Ramesh Chandra and Dr. Seetha Chandra	1,000.00
Prema Keshav Kumar	205.00
Seethalakshmi	100.00
Dr. Amrutha Viswanatha	800.00
Total	\$ 5,580.00

10. Meet The New NASA Board Members

A new NASA Board was elected at the General Body Meeting. Here is a little background on continuing and new members of the Board.

Prema Keshav Kumar, President of NASA lives normally in Connecticut but is temporarily living in Columbus, GA. Her husband Keshava Kumar served as NASA President and helps with a lot of NASA activities. Their son Puneeth is working in New York and daughter Mahathi is currently in Mexico teaching English as a Fulbright Scholar. Prema is trying to bring more Sankethis together and to help our youngsters speak the Sankethi language and follow our ancestral values. Her hobbies and interests include teaching, Pooja, cooking, learning music, community service and walking.

Uma Venkatesh moved from the UK to State College, PA two years ago with her husband Prof. B.S. Sathyaprakash. During her 21 years in the UK she was an active member of the European Sanketi Association. She works as a Post-Doctoral scientist in Plant Biology at Penn State University. Her daughter Chaitra and son Rajath are both graduate students in science in the UK. Uma enjoys writing popular science articles in Kannada and regularly publishes articles in magazines and literary blogs. Her other hobbies include traveling, reading, cooking, and water color painting. She enjoys Carnatic music and is keen on supporting Sankethi culture and heritage.

Ganesh Rao has been an active NASA member since its inception and has served on the board for several terms including one as Vice President. He is an engineer and lives in Needham, MA with his wife and two children. He enjoys skiing, biking and spending time with family. He looks forward to working with everyone to support NASA and celebrate our Sankethi heritage.

Raghunath Kanagal is a CPA working as a Finance Controller for Indecomm Holdings Inc. He has been living in Virginia with wife Ahalya, daughter Sharanya and son Shaunak for the past 8 years. Raghunath has been associated with NASA for the past 2 years.

Amrutha Viswanatha is a practicing primary care physician specializing residing in Maryland. She and her husband, Dr. Viswanatha have been active in NASA from its inception at Dr. Jayaram's house in 1984 and have served the

organization in various capacities over the years. She describes her hobbies as “Music, Music and Music”. Dr. Amrutha is an accomplished Veena player and has given many public performances. She hopes to contribute towards the growth of NASA in whatever small way possible.

Dr. Lakshmi Jayaram lives in Tampa, FL with her husband, Jayanth, and three children - Jennani, Naveen, and Saathvik. She has been a part of the NASA family since its inception -- her father, Dr. K. Ramakrishna, was the fourth President of NASA, and her father-in-law, Dr. Y.N. Jayaram, was the first President of NASA!

Arkanath Sudarshan lives in the Detroit area and is the son of the late Prof. K.V. Arkanath, former President of Kowshika Sankethi Sangha and a leader in the Sankethi community for over five decades. He leads the global long-term sales forecasting at Ford Motor Company where he has been working for over 30 years. Sudarshan and his wife Uma have two daughters, Anisha, who is pursuing Masters in Public Health at Emory University in Atlanta, and Anuja, a highschooler. Sudarshan's interests include carnatic music, travel, politics, writing, linguistics and cryptic crossword puzzles (especially from British newspapers!).

Govindaraju was born and raised in Holenarasipur, Hassan District, Karnataka. After completing Masters degree in Mathematics from University of Bombay and working in Bank of India for a couple of years, he moved to Florida in 1979, where he has been practicing as a CPA for over 30 years. Professionally, he enjoys advising and guiding small business owners to realize their maximum potential. He spends his free time practicing yoga, hiking mountain trails and spending time with his four grandchildren. Govindaraju and his wife Tara have two sons, Santosh and Prashant.

11. Navaratri/Deepavali Regional Get-together In Atlanta

The NASA BoD is delighted to announce that a Navaratri/Deepavali Celebration Get-together will be held in Atlanta. We hope that this event in another region of the country this will help bring even more Sankethis together. We are counting on participation of our members not only from in and around Atlanta but also from other parts of the South, Midwest and East. We will have more details shortly but we plan on having an all-day event filled with food, fun and entertainment! Please take this as a personal invitation to each and every one of you and we hope you will join us. Please contact any of the NASA BoD members to indicate your participation so we can get an accurate count to help plan the event.

Date: Saturday, November 10, 2018 – tentatively from 11 AM to 6 PM (details to follow)

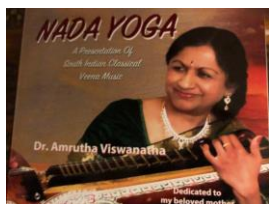
Location: Camden Place Clubhouse, 4801 Upper Brandon Place, Marietta, GA 30068

12. Community News

Members of the community are invited to submit articles of interest and announcements of births, graduations, weddings and other milestones for publication to: nasasecretary@gmail.com



Asha Rangappa was a Keynote Speaker in the Business Forum at the AKKA World Conference in Dallas, TX held over the Labor Day weekend. She also spoke at the Women's Forum on her accomplishments that led to her becoming an FBI Special Agent. She was also on a panel on college admissions. Asha has been invited to be a speaker in the Women's Forum at the 2019 AAPI Convention. We wish her much success, and hope to see her rise to greater heights.



Amrutha Viswanatha has produced a CD titled “Nada Suda” with her Veena performance. The CD was released by the Carnatic Music legend Sri R.K. Padmanabha at the NASA Annual Get-together in July 2018. Amrutha has dedicated the CD to her mother Smt. Nagarathnamma who was a source of inspiration and encouragement to her. She would like to thank her Gurus and Sri Subramanyam (father of flute maestro Shashank) for his help in designing and editing the CD. NASA wishes her continued success in the field of music.

Birth Announcement



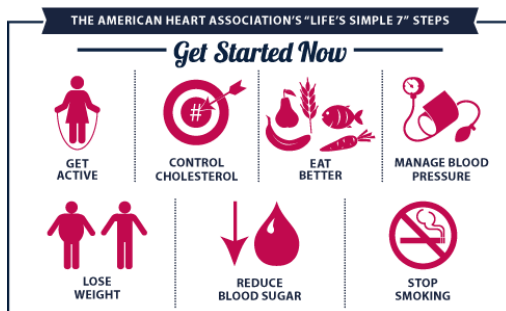
Meet Aishani Devi! Born on Saturday, August 18 to proud parents, Shankar and Merica Sridhara

13. Health Corner

Hello Dear Fellow Sankethis,

It is time to revisit our health concerns!

Four decades ago, when my generation of Sankethis migrated to this beautiful, promising country, we were busy exploring the new land. Our focus was everywhere except our health. Years passed; when grandchildren arrived, all of a sudden our focus turned towards our health, and is the most important thing for us now. It is a scary fact that Diabetes (*Sakkare Khayile*), a silent killer, has increased markedly among Indians. Could it be because of our life style and high carb Diet? Diabetes affects every part of our body; it leads to increased heart disease, kidney failure and blindness, just to mention a few. Avoiding, or at least cutting down on white rice and white flour, increasing intake of vegetables and other appropriate food, along with exercise might help prevent or keep diabetes under control.



A note about preventive care:

It is almost that time of the year for a flu shot which is recommended for all adults, especially for those over the age of 50. It is best taken during the early Fall season.

A single dose of Pneumonia vaccine is recommended for adults over 65 years of age.

All adults 60 or older should be vaccinated against Herpes Zoster regardless of whether they have experienced Herpes Zoster/Shingles or not. Believe me, this will prevent lot of pain and suffering. The good news is that Medicare pays for this.

A special note to our senior Sankethis: Prevention of falls is very, very important. Trivial trauma can lead to major problems. Brisk walking, at least 5000 steps/day, is recommended.

The above write-up hopefully opens the forum for our brilliant Sankethi doctors to come forward and share their medical knowledge for the benefit of the entire community!

Enjoy the rest of the Fall and have a safe winter.

Amrutha Viswanath. MD

14. It's All About The Food!

Thengolalu Recipe

by

Prema Keshav Kumar

Ingredients

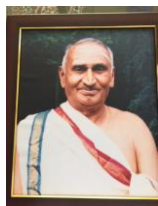
3 cups of rice flour
1 cup of urad dal flour
¾ or 1 stick of butter
1 teaspoon of salt
1 teaspoon of cumin seeds
1 teaspoon of sesame seeds
A pinch of asafetida (Ingu)

Mix both the flours together; melt the butter and add it to the flour. Add the rest of the ingredients and add enough water to make a dough that is neither too watery nor too dry. Put a small amount of dough into the Chakli/Thengolalu machine/press with the appropriate thengolalu disc and press to make the thengolalu. Deep fry in oil on low flame, and take it out once done (not too brown). Shelf life is at least two to three weeks, if stored in an airtight container.

Note: Some people press the Thengolalu directly into the oil pan



15. Condolences



Sri R.S. Keshavamurthy, affectionately known as **Rajanna**, father of long-term NASA members Amrutha and Natesh, passed away peacefully on June 12. He was a strong supporter of NASA and was involved with NASA as a volunteer at various levels. He leaves behind three children – Dr. Amrutha, Dr. Natesh and Sri Kumara Swamy, six grandchildren, and four adorable great-grandchildren. The NASA Board recognizes Sri Rajanna's contributions to NASA and the Sankethi community at large, and expresses deep condolences to the bereaved family.

Sri Y.N. Srinivas, 81, brother of NASA Past Presidents Dr. Y.N. Jayaram and Prof. Y.N. Dathatri, passed away at his residence on August 31. Srinivas, a former senior textile executive, was associated with several institutions in Mysuru including Sri Rama Temple, Ganabharathi and Anathalaya, and received the Vikas Ratan Award from the President of India. He was on the Managing Committee of the Kowshika Sankethi Association and the Sankethi Hostel Committee. He was a recipient of the Vikas Ratan Award from the President of India. Sri Srinivas leaves behind his wife, two daughters, grandchildren and a host of relatives and friends. NASA expresses its deep condolences to the family.

Sri H.K. Ramachandra, father of NASA member Dr. Ramesh Chandra, passed away on April 9 in Bangalore at the age of 95. He was in the Karnataka Administrative Service and served all around the state at various levels, retiring as an Assistant Commissioner. After retirement, Sri Ramachandra started his second career as an attorney and argued cases in various courts including the Karnataka High Court, until well into his late eighties. A simple man hailing originally from Hochihalli, Sri Ramachandra was a caring family man that had an optimistic and light-hearted outlook towards life, and a great sense of humor. In his later years he evinced deep interest in the Vedas and volunteered in organizations serving indigent elderly right until his demise. NASA expresses deep condolences to the family.

16. Kannada Poetry by Dr. M.S Nataraja

Once again we are delighted to bring a couple of beautiful poems from Dr. M.S. Nataraja.

The first one narrates poignantly the plight of refugees from Central America coming to the land that they thought Lady Liberty beckoned them to, so that they could escape their wretched existence. After overcoming great adversities on their way here, they arrive in the promised land, only to end up behind bars, and worse yet, for parent to be separated from child!

The second one is a humorous poem on the controversy dogging Judge Brett Kavanaugh over his nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. The views expressed in these are, of course, those of the author! Enjoy!

ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ದೇವಿಯ ಕರುಣೆಯ ಕಗ್ಗ (ಮೈ.ಶ್ರೀ. ನಟರಾಜ)

ಇದು ಕತೆಯಲ್ಲ, ಕವಿತೆಯೂ ಅಲ್ಲ,
ಪ್ರಬಂಧವೂ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಇದು ಕಗ್ಗ
ಸಗ್ಗವ ಹುಡುಕುತ ನುಗ್ಗುತ ಬರುವ
ಬಡವರ ಬಗ್ಗರ ಬವಣೆಯ ಕಗ್ಗ (೧)

ಉತ್ತರ ಅಮೆರಿಕ ಗಡ್ಡದ ಜೊತೆಗೆ
ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಅಮೆರಿಕ ಜುಟ್ಟಿನ ಕೊಂಡಿ
ಇವೆರಡನು ಜಗ್ಗಿ ಕಟ್ಟುವ ಹಗ್ಗ
ಮಧ್ಯ ಅಮೆರಿಕದಿ ಜೀವವು ಅಗ್ಗ (೨)

ಬಡತನ ಸುರಿಯುವ ಗ್ವಾಟೆಮಾಲ
ಹಂಡರಬಂಡರ ಹಾಂಡೂರಸ್
ಎಲ್ಲಿಯು ಸಲ್ಲದ ಸಾಲ್ವಡೋರ್
ಕಂಡರೆ ಕರಗುವ ನಿಕರಾಗುವ! (೩)

ತಿನಲು ಅನ್ನವಿಲ್ಲ, ಉಡಲು ಬಟ್ಟೆಯಿಲ್ಲ
ಮಾಡುವೆನೆಂದರೆ ಕೆಲಸವಿಲ್ಲ,
ಓದುವೆನೆಂದರೆ ಶಾಲೆಗಳಿಲ್ಲ
ಜೀವಕೆ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಲೆಯೇ ಇಲ್ಲ (೪)

ಕೊಲುವರ ಭಯವು ಹಿರಿಯರಿಗಾದರೆ
ಕೆಡಿಪರ ಭಯವು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ
ಆಗಲೆ ಗಂಡನ ಕೊಂದಿಹರಲ್ಲ
ಮಗಳನು ಪುಂಡರು ಕೆಡಿಸಿಹರಲ್ಲ (೫)

ದೀನರ ದಲಿತರ ರಕ್ಷಿಪರಿಲ್ಲ
ನಿರಾಶ್ರಿತರಿಗೆ ನಿದ್ರೆಯು ಇಲ್ಲ

ಅಸಹಾಯಕರಿಗೆ ಶಾಂತಿಯೇ ಇಲ್ಲ
ಬಿಟ್ಟೋಡದೆ ಬೇರೆ ಗತಿಯೇ ಇಲ್ಲ (೬)

ಕಾಲ್ನಡಿಗೆಯಲೋ ಬಸ್ ಪಯಣದಲೋ
ಸರಕನು ಸಾಗಿಪ ರೈಲುಗಳಲೋ
ಹೊರಟಿರುವರು ದೂರದ ಪಯಣಕ್ಕೆ
ನೂರಾರು ಗಾವುದ ಯಾತನೆಗೆ (೭)

ಪುಂಡರ ಕಾಟವ ತಡೆಯಲಾರದೆ
ಆಶ್ರಯ ಬಯಸುತ ಹೊರಟಿಹರು
ಗಡಿಗಳ ದಾಟುತ ನಡೆದಿಹರು
ನಾರುವ ನದಿಗಳ ಈಜಿಹರು (೮)

ಕಳ್ಳರು ಕಾಕರು ಕುಡುಕರು ಕೊರಮರು
ಹೆಣ್ಣಳ ಕಣಕುವ ಕೆಟ್ಟ ಖದೀಮರು
ಎಲ್ಲರು ಜೊತೆಯಲೆ ಬಂದಿಹರು
ಸಗ್ಗದ ಗಡಿಯನು ತಲುಪಿಹರು (೯)

ಹೊಟ್ಟೆಯಲಿರುವ ಕಂದನ ಭಾರ
ಸೊಂಟವ ತಬ್ಬಿಹ ಹಸಿದ ಕಿಶೋರ
ತಪ್ಪಿಸಿ ಓಡುವ ಹರೆಯದ ಬಾಲೆ
ಮೋಸದಿ ಎರಗುವ ಕಾಮಿಯ ಶೂಲೆ (೧೦)

ಗಡಿಯಲಿ ಕಾದಿದೆ ತುರುಫನ ತಂಡ
ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿಲ್ಲವು ನನ್ನಯ ಗಂಡ
ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಆಜೆಗೆ ಸಾಗಿಸಲೋಸುಗ
ತೆರಬೇಕೇನು ತಲೆಗಳ ದಂಡ? (೧೧)

ನೋಡದೊ ಕಂಡಿತು ಸಗ್ಗದ ಬಾಗಿಲು
ಬೇಲಿಯ ದಾಟಲು ಹರ್ಷದ ಹೊನಲು
ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ದೇವತೆ ಇರುವಳು ಅಲ್ಲೇ
ಸಲಹುವಳೆಮ್ಮನು ನಾನದ ಬಲ್ಲೆ (೧೨)

ಆಕೆಯ ಕೈಯಲಿ ಉರಿಯುವ ಪಂಜು
ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಕೈಯಲಿ ತಬ್ಬಿದ ಫಲಕ
ಫಲಕದಲೇನೋ ಸಂದೇಶವಂತೆ
ಓದಿನೋಡಿದರೆ ತಿಳಿಯುವುದಂತೆ (೧೩)

"ನಿಮ್ಮಲ್ಲಾರೋ ದಣಿದವರಿದ್ದರೆ
ಅವರನು ನಮಗೆ ತಂದು ಕೊಡಿ
ನಿಮ್ಮ ಬಡವರನು ನಮಗೆ ಬಿಡಿ
ಕಟ್ಟಿದ ಶ್ವಾಸವ ತೆರೆದು ಬಿಡಿ (೧೪)

ಮುದುಡಿ ಕುಳಿತವರ ಸೆಟೆದು ನಿಲ್ಲಿಸಿ
ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಉಸಿರಿಗೆ ಗಾಳಿಯಾಡಿಸಿ
ಸಮೃದ್ಧ ಜೀವನ ಸಾರ್ಥಕ ಬದುಕಿಗೆ
ಕಾದಿಹರೆಲ್ಲರ ನಮಗೆ ಕೊಡಿ (೧೫)

ನಿಮ್ಮ ತೀರದಲಿ ಕೊಚ್ಚಿಹೋಗುತಿಹ
ಪರಿತ್ಯಕ್ತರನು ನಮಗೆ ಕೊಡಿ
ವಸತಿ ಕಾಣದೆ ವಿಲಗುಟ್ಟುತಿಹ
ಹುಟ್ಟು ತಿರುಕರನು ನಮಗೆ ಕೊಡಿ (೧೬)

ಚಕ್ರವಾತವು ತಿರುಚಿ ಎಸೆದಿಹ
ದಿಕ್ಕುಗಾಣದ ದೀನರ ದಲಿತರ
ದೇಶವಿಹೀನರ ಶೋಷಿತ ಜನಗಳ
ತಪ್ಪದೆ ಕೂಡಲೇ ಕಳಿಸಿ ಬಿಡಿ (೧೭)

ಇದೋ ತೆರೆಯುವೆನು ಚಿನ್ನದ ದ್ವಾರ
ಪಂಜಿನ ಬೆಳಕಿದೆ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಅಪಾರ
ಬನ್ನಿರಿ ಬನ್ನಿರಿ ಪ್ರಿಯ ಬಾಂಧವರೆ
ನನ್ನೀ ಅಮೆರಿಕದಂಗಳಕೆ" (೧೮)

ಬನ್ನಿರಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳೆ ಬನ್ನಿರಿ ಬೇಗ
ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ದೇವತೆ ಕರೆದಿಹಳು
ಸದ್ದು ಮಾಡದೆ ನಡೆಯಿರಿ ಈಗ
ಗಡಿಯನು ದಾಟುವ ಸಮಯವಿದು (೧೯)

ರಾತ್ರಿಯ ಕತ್ತಲು ಕಳೆಯುವ ಮುನ್ನ
ಬೇಲಿಯ ಮುಳ್ಳನು ಬದಿಗೊತ್ತರಿಸಿ
ಸುತ್ತಿದ ತಂತಿಯ ತುದಿ ಕತ್ತರಿಸಿ
ಉಪಾಯದಿಂದಲಿ ನುಸಿಯುವೆವು (೨೦)

ಬೇಗನೆ ನುಸಿಯಿರಿ ಎನ್ನುತ ದೂಡಲು
ಮಗಳು ನುಗ್ಗಿದಳು ತಮ್ಮನ ಎಳೆದಳು

ತಾಯಿಯು ತಲೆಯನು ತೂರುತ ತೆವಳುತ
ಆಯ ತಪ್ಪಿದಳು ಕುಸಿಯುತಲಿ (೨೧)

ತುಂಬು ಬಸುರಿಯು ಸೋತು ಬಳಲಿದಳು
ಎರುಸಿರಿನಲಿ ಹೆಣಗುತ ಅತ್ತಳು
ಅಯ್ಯೋ ಬಾಯಾರಿಕೆ ನೀರು ಕೊಡಿ
ಎನ್ನುತ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಬೇಡಿದಳು (೨೨)

ಬಾಟಲಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹನಿಗಳು ಮಾತ್ರ
ತೆವಳಲು ಬಿಡದು ಹೊಟ್ಟೆಯ ಗಾತ್ರ
ನಡುಗುತ ನಡುಗುತ ನಲುಗಿದಳು
ಹೊಟ್ಟೆಯ ಮೇಲಕೆ ಮಾಡಿದಳು (೨೩)

ಈಗಲೆ ಬಂದಿತೆ ಹೆರಿಗೆಯ ನೋವು
ದಾಟುವ ಮೊದಲೇ ಬರುವುದೇ ಸಾವು
ಮಗುವಿದು ಹುಟ್ಟಲಿ ಅಮೆರಿಕದಲ್ಲಿ
ಬೆಳೆಯಲಿ ಸುಖದಲಿ ಪ್ರಜೆಯಾಗಲಿ (೨೪)

ಬೆನ್ನಿನ ಬೇನೆಯ ತಾಳೆನೆ ಅಮ್ಮ
ಚೀತ್ಕಾರ ಮಾಡದೆ ಹೇಗಿರಲಮ್ಮ
ಕಾವಲುಗಾರಗೆ ಕೇಳಿಸಿಬಿಟ್ಟರೆ
ನಮ್ಮನು ಹಿಂದಕೆ ದೂಡುವನಮ್ಮ (೨೫)

ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಬ್ಬರು ಗಡಿಯ ದಾಟಿಹರು
ತಾಯಿಯ ಎಳೆಯಲು ಯತ್ನಿಸುತಿಹರು
ತಲೆಯು ಅಮೆರಿಕದ ದೇಹ ಮೆಕ್ಕಿಕೋ
ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ದೇವಿಯ ಬೇಗ ಎತ್ತಿಕೋ (೨೬)

ಆಕೆ ಇರುವುದು ಸಾವಿರ ಮೈಲಿ
ಕೂಗಲಾದೀತೆ ಇವಳ ಕೈಯಲಿ
ಕೇಳೀತೆ ಕೂಗು ಅವಳ ಕಿವಿಗಳಿಗೆ
ತಾಳೀತೆ ಮಗು ಗರ್ಭದ ಒಳಗೆ? (೨೭)

ಅಗೋ ಬಂದನು ಕಾವಲುಗಾರ
ಗದರಿಸಿ ಬೈಯ್ಯನು ಯಥಾಪ್ರಕಾರ
ಭುಜವನು ಹಿಡಿದು ಧರಧರ ಎಳೆದು
ನಲುಗಾಡಿಸಿದನು ದೇಹವ ಹಿಡಿದು (೨೮)

ಬಸುರಿಯ ಯಾತನೆ ನೋಡಿದನು
ಸುರಿಯುವ ರಕ್ತಕೆ ಬೆದರಿದನು
ನಡುಗುತ ತುಟಿಯನು ಕಚ್ಚಿದನು
ಆದ ಅನರ್ಥಕೆ ಬೆಚ್ಚಿದನು (೨೯)

ಅಯ್ಯೋ ಏತಕೆ ಎಳೆದೆನು ರಟ್ಟೆ
ತಂತಿಯ ಮುಳ್ಳದು ಸೀಳಿತು ಹೊಟ್ಟೆ
ಚಿತ್ರಹಿಂಸೆಯನು ಬಸುರಿಗೆ ಕೊಟ್ಟೆ
ಗರ್ಭದ ಚೀಲವು ಒಡೆಯಿತು ಕಟ್ಟೆ (೩೦)

ವೈದ್ಯನು ಇಲ್ಲದೆ ದಾದಿಯು ಇಲ್ಲದೆ
ಭೂಮಿಯ ಮಡಲಲಿ ಶಿಶು ಜನನ
ಗಡಿಯನು ಬಿಡಿಸುವ ರೇಖೆಯನಳಿಸಿತು ಹರಿಯುವ
ರಕ್ತದ ಸಂಚಲನ (೩೧)

ಕಲ್ಪನೆಗೆಟುಕದ ಶಸ್ತ್ರದ ಸೀಳಿಗೆ
ಚಿಮ್ಮುತ ಹುಟ್ಟಿದ ಹೊಸ ಜೀವ
ಅಮೆರಿಕ ದೇಶದ ಪ್ರಜೆಗಳ ಗುಂಪಿಗೆ
ಸೇರಲಿ ಹರಸೋ ಎಲೆ ದೇವ! (೩೨)

ರಕ್ತದಿ ತೊಯ್ಯುತ ಮಲಗಿರೆ ಮಾನಿನಿ
ಬೆವರುತ ಬೆದರುತ ನೋಡಿದನು
ಬೆತ್ತಲೆ ಶಿಶುವನು ಎತ್ತಿಕೊಂಡವನು
ಮೂವರ ಜೊತೆಯಲಿ ಓಡಿದನು (೩೩)

ನಿಗದಿಯಾಗಿರುವ ತಂಗುದಾಣದಲಿ
ನಡೆದನು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಪಂಜರಕೆ
ತಂದೆತಾಯಿಗಳ ಬಿಡಿಸಿ ತಂದಿರುವ
ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಜೊತೆಯಲಿ ತಂಗಲಿಕೆ (೩೪)

ಸಾವಿರ ಸಾವಿರ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ನಡುವೆ
ಪುಟ್ಟ ಕಂದನನು ಮಲಗಿಸಿದ
ಕಾನೂನಿನಂತೆ ವರ್ತಿಸಿ ಅವನು
ಕೈಗಳ ತೊಳೆಯಲು ಧಾವಿಸಿದ (೩೫)

ಅತ್ತ ಬೇನೆಯಲು ನಕ್ಕಳು ತಾಯಿ
ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ದೇವಿಯೆ ನೀನೇ ಕಾಯಿ
ಕನಸ ಕಾಣುತ್ತ ಕಣ್ಣು ಮುಚ್ಚಿದಳು
ಬೇರಾದ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಾಣಲು ಆಯಿ (೩೬)

ನರಳುತ ಒರಳುತ ಕನಸಿನ ನಿದ್ರೆ
ಕಾಪ್ಪರ್ ಇಳಿಯಿತು ಪಟ ಪಟ ಸದ್ದೆ
ಹಾರುತ ಬಂದಿತು ರಕ್ತಸ ಹದ್ದು
ಎಲ್ಲಿದೆ ನನ್ನಯ ನೋವಿಗೆ ಮದ್ದು? (೩೭)

ತೆಳ್ಳನೆ ಸುಂದರಿ ಇಳಿದು ಬಂದಳು
ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ದೂರದಲಿ ಮುಂದೆ ನಿಂದಳು
ಇವಳೇ ಏನು ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯ ದೇವತೆ?
ಸಾಂತ್ವನ ಹೇಳಲು ಬಂದಿಹಳೆ? (೩೮)

ಕೈಲಿ ಪಂಜಿಲ್ಲ, ಮುಖದಿ ಕಳೆಯಿಲ್ಲ
ಫಲಕವು ಇಲ್ಲ ಸಂದೇಶವು ಇಲ್ಲ
ಆಕೆ ನಗಲಿಲ್ಲ, ಕುಶಲ ಕೇಳಲಿಲ್ಲ
ಯೋಗಕ್ಷೇಮವನು ವಿಚಾರಿಸಲಿಲ್ಲ (೩೯)

ಬೆನ್ನ ತೋರುತ್ತ ಕ್ಷಣಕಾಲ ನಿಂದು
ರಾಜನ ಆಜ್ಞೆಯ ಸಾರಲು ಎಂದು
ಸಗ್ಗದ ರಾಣಿಯೆ ಇರಬಹುದೀಕೆ
ಸಂದೇಶ ಬೆನ್ನಲಿ ಬರೆದಿಹುದೇಕೆ? (೪೦)

ಮಗಳೇ ಓದಮ್ಮ ಓದು ಮಗಳೇ
ಇಲ್ಲದ ಮಗಳನು ಬೇಡಿದಳು
ಮಗಳ ದನಿಯಿಲ್ಲ, ಅವಳೆಲ್ಲೋ?
ಮಗನ ದನಿಯಿಲ್ಲ, ಅವನೆಲ್ಲೋ? (೪೧)

ಅಯ್ಯೋ ಕೂಸು, ಹಾಲುಂಡಿಸಬೇಕು
ಯಾರು ರಕ್ಷಿಸುವವರು ಎಳೆಗೂಸು?
ದೈತ್ಯನು ಬಂದನು ಕೂಗುತ ಹತ್ತಿರ
ಕರ್ಕಶ ಸ್ವರದಲಿ ಕೊಟ್ಟನು ಉತ್ತರ (೪೨)

ಓದಿ ಹೇಳಿದನು ಸಂದೇಶವನು
ವಿವರಣೆ ಕೊಡುತ್ತ ಟೈಟಿನಲಿ
"ಐ ರಿಯಲಿ ಡೋಂಟ್ ಕೇರ್, ಡು ಯು?
ಹಹಹಹ! ಐ ರಿಯಲಿ ಡೋಂಟ್" (೪೩)

ಅತ್ತ ನವಜಾತ ಶಿಶು ಅತ್ತೇ ಅತ್ತಿತು ಉಸಿರುಗಟ್ಟಿತ್ತು,
ನೀಲಿಗಟ್ಟಿತ್ತು
ಅಕ್ಕ ಆ ಪಕ್ಕ ತಮ್ಮ ಈ ಪಕ್ಕ
ಕೂಸು ಅಳುವನ್ನು ನಿಲ್ಲಿಸಿತು! (೪೪)

ಕ್ಯಾವನಾಗನ ಕಾಯಬೇಕೇ ಕವನ (ಮೈ.ಶ್ರೀ. ನಟರಾಜ)

ಅಮೆರಿಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೈಸ್ಕೂಲ್ ಹೈಕ್ಕು
ಕುಡಿಯೋದ್ ಕಲ್ಪಿಡ್ತಾರೆ
ಹರೆಯದ್ ಹುಡ್ಗೀರ್ ಸಿಕ್ಪಿಟ್ಟಂತೂ
ಮೈಮೇಲ್ ಹತ್ತಿಡ್ತಾರೆ

ಚಿಕ್ ವಯಸ್ಸಲ್ಲಿ ಆಡಿದ್ ಆಟಕೆ
ಹುಡುಗಾಟ ಅಂದ್ಬಿಡ್ತಾರೆ
ಹದ್ದೆಂಟಾದ್ದೇಲ್ ಹದ ಮೀರಿದ್
ಒಳಕ್ಕೇ ಎತ್ ಹಾಕ್ತಾರೆ

ಕ್ಯಾವನಾಗ ಹೈಸ್ಕೂಲ್ ಹುಡುಗ
ಎಣ್ಣೆ ಹಾಕ್ಪಟ್ಟಂತೆ
ಕ್ರಿಸ್ತೀನ್ ಅಂಬೋ ಬಾಲೆ ಮ್ಯಾಲೆ
ತೂಕೊಂಡ್ ಬಿದ್ದುಟ್ಟಂತೆ

ಕುಡುಕನ್ ಆಟ ನೋಡೋಕ್ ಬೇರೆ
ಕುಡುಕನ್ ಜೊತೆ ಗಿಡ್ಡ
ಹುಡ್ಗ ಹೆದ್ರಿ ಎದ್ದೋಡ್ತಾಗ
ಓಡಿ ಅವಳನ್ ಹಿಡ್ಡ

ಮುಂದಿನ್ ಯೋಚ್ಚೆ ಮಾಡ್ತೇಹೋದ್ರೆ
ಬರ್ಬೋದ್ ಮುಂದಕ್ಕುತ್ತು
ಸಿಕ್ಕೋದ್ ಮುಂದೆ ಭಾರೀ ಹುದ್ದೆ
ಅನ್ನೋದ್ ಅವನ್ನೇನ್ ಗೊತ್ತು

ಸುಪ್ರೀಮ್ ಕೋರ್ಟಿನ್ ಜಡ್ಡಿ ಅಂದ್ರೆ
ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಅಂದ್ಕೊ ಬೇಡಿ
ದೇಶದ್ ದಿಕ್ಕೇ ಬದ್ಲಾಯಿಸ್ಕೋದು
ಕೋರ್ಟಿನ್ ತೀರ್ಪಿನ್ ಮೋಡಿ

ಬೈಬಲ್ಲನ್ನ ಎಡಗೈಲ್ ಮುಟ್ಟಿ
ಬಲಗೈ ಮೇಲಕ್ ಎತ್ತಿ
ಆಣೆ ಇಟ್ಟು ಹೇಳು ನಾಗಣ್ಣ
ಕ್ರಿಸ್ತೀನ್ ಸುಳ್ಳಿನ್ ಕತ್ತಿ

ಕ್ಯಾವನಾಗನ ಗುರಾಣಿ ಎಂದರೆ
ಬುಸ್ಪುಸ್ ತುರುಫನ್ ಟ್ವೀಟು
ಡೆಮೋಕ್ರಾಟರ ಕೊನೆಯ ಅಸ್ತವೇ
ಮೀ-ಟೂ ಮೀ-ಟೂ ಮೀ-ಟೂ !

17.A Sankethi girl in the Balkans

By

Anisha Sudarshan

“This is your stop,” the driver of the minibus told me. Cars, trams, and buses zoomed by, the exhaust smoke filling the streets as I stood in front of my new place in Belgrade with my suitcase in hand,. The most glamorous women I had ever seen in my life passed by in gaggles, wearing sky-high heels and carrying designer bags. A tram passed me with the destination “Калемегдан” on it, and a bus followed behind it with “Kalemegdan” on it. Both, I would later find out, displayed the exact same destination, one in Cyrillic and the other in the Latin alphabet, which I found out are used interchangeably in Serbia. At that moment though, I was overwhelmed and confused. I had no idea what was to come this summer.

Travel is not new to me. Two summers ago, I studied in Spain through a program at University of Michigan where I was an undergraduate student. During that summer I discovered my love for independent travel, traveling to various cities in Spain and Portugal alone on the weekends. After my graduation in 2017, I wanted to travel back to Europe, and so my parents got me a Eurail pass to explore Europe by train. In one month, I visited 13 countries and 22 cities and gained innumerable memories and friends. I stayed in youth hostels amidst other young, curious wanderers like myself from all around the world. This was when I developed a love for Central and Eastern Europe. While my time traveling through places like Vienna and Milan took me to breathtaking churches and castles, places a bit further off the beaten path such as Ljubljana and Zagreb really stole my heart. I realized I had “clicked” with this part of the world. I returned to the US aching to go back.

In September of last year, I began my Master of Public Health (MPH) degree at Emory University. As part of this program, I was required to do a practicum, an internship with a focus on my educational interests. In my studies, I had developed an interest in global health policy, geopolitical issues, and human rights. So I contacted a few NGOs that did work in these areas and one of them accepted me for a 6-week internship in Belgrade, Serbia. I wanted to spend my entire summer in the Balkans and found additional work with the World Health Organization (WHO) researching corruption in Serbian hospitals for another 6 weeks. I had successfully found a way to return to my favorite part of the world! My parents were apprehensive about my going to the former Yugoslavia, a region immersed in war for many years and still regarded as tense and unsafe. I was somehow able to convince them that Serbia was quite safe now.

While I gained incredible work experience, my time in Belgrade meant much more to me. I quickly fell in love with the complicated history of the country, the language, the architecture, and the people. I started learning Serbian and developed the ability to understand the Cyrillic signs. I found out the city was called Београд (Beograd) by locals. I made several friends, and these friends selflessly invited me into their homes without hesitation, introduced me to their families, and taught me interesting words and phrases. Serbians really cherish foreign visitors and treat them like part of their families, and so I felt at home.

Being vegetarian was not as difficult as I had anticipated. There is one Indian restaurant in the city -- the owner made me feel at home by offering to make masala dosa for me even when the restaurant was closed. I also cooked my own food at home, as I was able to pick up fresh vegetables at a *pijaca*, or vegetable market, many of which were found all over the city. When I ate outside, pasta, falafel, and *burek*, a local puff-like fried bread filled with potato, spinach, cheese, or squash served with yogurt, dominated my diet. This was not quite *mosaranna* but was okay! Also at virtually every street corner there is a *pekara*, or bakery, with all sorts of sweet and savory bread products, each for less than 50 cents! This was my breakfast every morning.

Serbian people are passionate about their religion. The majestic St. Sava’s Church that I would walk by on many warm nights is the largest orthodox church in this part of the world. Kalemegdan, I found out, is an old fortress within the center of the city that offers indescribable views of the Danube and Sava rivers and of the skyline of the eerie Soviet-style *Novi Beograd* (New Belgrade) across the river. I spent countless evenings here watching the sunset.

I also spent some time traveling to other cities in Serbia. Novi Sad, the second biggest city in Serbia, is very different from Belgrade. While Belgrade is more of a concrete jungle, Novi Sad is a bright, colorful city with Austrian-style

architecture and a vast art and music scene. Its fortress, Petrovaradin, provides a beautiful view of the Danube River. I loved climbing up to the top of the fortress to witness sunsets here too.

One of the highlights of my 3-month stay in Belgrade was the opportunity to not only travel to other parts of Serbia, but also to neighboring countries in the Balkans. During the stay I traveled to Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Romania and Bulgaria. In Montenegro, I visited Budva and Kotor, gorgeous vacation destinations along the Adriatic Sea across from the Italian coast. Here I found figs and grapes growing along the roads in the tropical weather. I also visited Mostar and Sarajevo, major cities in the country of Bosnia & Herzegovina. Mostar, a UNESCO Heritage Site, derives its name from *Most* or bridge in Slavic languages. It is a small, beautiful city with an impressive 25m-tall bridge that dominates the landscape. It endured a war and the deaths of thousands of people less than 30 years ago. Sarajevo has an even more tragic recent history which can be seen in the bullet holes throughout the city. I found the place to be sad, yet intriguing and beautiful. I really fell in love with the Balkans after my travels through these areas.

After this wonderful summer, I knew that my future educational and career pursuits would involve traveling, especially to the Balkans and other parts of Central and Eastern Europe. Belgrade and Serbia became a second home for me, and I hope to return someday.

Here are some pictures from my Balkans sojourn:





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