

# Rajata

*North American Sankethi Association  
25th Anniversary*



*Silver Jubilee Publication*

*Edited By:  
Ganesh Rao  
Mayank Keshaviah  
Dr. Mysore Nataraja*

*North American Sankethi Association 34 Longwood Dr., Clifton Park, NY 12065*

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## *The Human Seasons*

*By John Keats*

*Four Seasons fill the measure of the year;  
There are four seasons in the mind of man:—  
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear  
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:*

*He has his Summer, when luxuriously  
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves  
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high  
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves*

*His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings  
He furleth close; contented so to look  
On mists in idleness—to let fair things  
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook;*

*He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,  
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.*

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*It is with great pleasure that I present to you, the members of NASA, the 25th Anniversary commemorative publication “Rajata”. This publication is one in a series of publications released to commemorate major milestones in NASA’s history and follows in the tradition of the Sankethi Bhaskara, Sankethi Sangama, Chiguru, and Vimshati. To mark this major milestone, we decided on the theme “Seasons of NASA.” It is a look at the past, present, and future of the organization.*

*When I started this endeavor, it was with a bit of trepidation. Assembling a publication can be time consuming and difficult and a large part of the process is entirely out of your control. My initial doubts turned to panic when, with the deadline fast approaching, there were no submissions for publication! Frantic phone calls and emails followed, coupled with urgent and persistent pleas. As you can see, they worked; better than I could have hoped. The members of NASA rallied, and many went above and beyond the call of duty. They gave generously of their time and put in a great deal of effort. And they also gave generously of themselves. I am touched by the personal stories, views and hopes that are expressed in these pages.*

*I would like to thank all those who contributed to this publication: without you it wouldn’t exist. I would also like to thank all the advertisers for their support of this effort and continued support of the Sankethi community. The NASA Board of Directors and especially President Keshava Kumar provided significant moral and logistical support. And as tradition demands, I will thank last those with whom I have worked most closely: my co-editors Mayank Keshaviah and Dr. M.S. Nataraja. Without their efforts, I would not have been able to complete this project.*

*This experience has taught me a great deal about the history and origins of the organization. It has also shown me what makes it wonderful and unique: its members. Now it is NASA’s Silver Jubilee and a third generation of Sankethis is “Growing up NASA.” I hope that they grow up to appreciate this community of which they are privileged to be members. I know I do.*

*Sincerely,*

*Ganesh Rao*

*Editor and Assistant Secretary*

## A NASA FOR ALL SEASONS

*Before I begin, I want to give my co-editor Ganesh Rao credit for his supremely selfless efforts in doing the bulk of the yeoman's work required to bring this document to fruition. When we began the process of putting together a publication for NASA's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary back in February, I could not have imagined the amount of time and effort that would go into it. I also could not have imagined the breadth of humor, depth of emotion, height of intellect, range of artistry, and enormity of devotion that would characterize the articles I came to read. Through their words and images, members shared their experiences, passions, hopes, dreams, regrets, advice and prayers. Reading each piece, I was moved by the sincerity of feeling that pervades our community, one that I first entered fifteen years ago after my freshman year in college.*

*During my childhood, I would always hear from my cousins about this organization called NASA, but we lived in Minnesota and my parents didn't seem keen on driving halfway across the country to engage in activities similar to those at Kannada Koota functions much closer to home. Knowing no better, I wrote NASA off as yet another Indian organization, especially during my adolescence when I wanted nothing more than to fit in and camouflage anything Indian about myself. Then, in 1994, on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, my family decided to pile into the minivan and make the two-day drive, especially because my Kamalu Aiji was visiting from India and my father felt that she would be happy to meet other Sankethis. When we arrived in semi-rural Blairstown, NJ at close to 11pm, here was Balakrishna Uncle in the kitchen, serving us plates heaped with pulliogre and mosaru anna. I didn't know who he was at the time, but I eagerly wolfed down the home cooking after the obligatory introductions in broken Kannada. I also remember meeting my cousins Madhu and Sruti that night when they wandered into the dining hall while we were eating. They seemed so excited to finally meet us, but all I could think was, "who are these 10-year olds and why are they so hyper?" (I came to learn later that they were both in high school at the time).*

*Over the next two days, which were a blur, I found myself in the midst of a group of people with whom I felt an instant kinship. I didn't know why at the time, but being around and interacting with them just felt right. Eager to get to know my fellow Sankethis, I was co-opted by my cousin Renuka (Asha) to help plan the youth skit, an institution that was in its formative years. Before I knew it, I was donning a kache panche and letting my hair down (literally—it was below my shoulders at the time) to play Swami Daasan in our Sankethi Family Feud. In the years that followed, there would be more skits, new friends made, stints on the BOD, and an overall embrace of the organization that so warmly embraced me on a dark New Jersey night. However, my intention here is not to relate my story. Rather, it is to share with you the stories of NASA and its members, many of whose writings you will find on the following pages. As you read them, I hope that you too will share the pride, joy, and deep respect that I have had for NASA and its membership all these years.*

*Sincerely,*

*Mayank Keshaviah*

*Co-Editor and Cultural Secretary*

## ನಾಲ್ಕು ಋತುಗಳು

ವೈ. ಶ್ರೀ. ನಟರಾಜ

(೧) ವಸಂತ -- ಚಿಗುರುವ ಮೊಳಕೆ

ವಸಂತನೆಂದರೆ ಋತುಗಳ ರಾಜ  
ನೋಡಿರಿ ಎಲ್ಲೆಡೆ ಹಸುರಿನ ಮೋಜು  
ಚಿಗುರಿದ ನಾಚಾರಮ್ಮನ ಸಂತತಿ  
ತೊಡಿಸಿದೆ ಅಮೆರಿಕ ನಾಡಿಗೆ ತೇಜ

(೨) ಬೇಸಿಗೆ -- ಬೇರೂರುವ ವೃಕ್ಷ

ಬೇಸಿಗೆ ಎಂದರೆ ಸೂರ್ಯನ ತಾಪ  
ಕೊಚ್ಚಿಸಿ ಹರಿಯುವ ನದಿಗಳ ಕೋಪ  
ಸೇರಿದ ನಾಡಿನ ಸೆಳೆತದ ಸುಳಿಯಲಿ  
ಮುಳುಗದೆ ಇರುವರು ಬಲು ಅಪರೂಪ

(೩) ಬೀಳು -- ಬರಡಾಗುವ ಬುರುಡೆ

ಹಸಿರಿನ ಎಲೆಗಳು ಬದಲಿಪ ಬಣ್ಣ  
ಹಳದಿ ಕೆಂಪುಗಳು ತಣಿಸುತ ಕಣ್ಣ  
ಉದುರಿದ ಎಲೆಗಳ ಗೋಳುಮೋರೆಯ  
ಎಳು-ಬೀಳುಗಳ ದೇಶವಿದಣ್ಣ

(೪) ಕೊರೆಯುವ ಚಳಿ -- ನವಸಂಕೇತ

ಗಡಗಡ ನಡುಗಿಪ ಕೊರೆಯುವ ಚಳಿಯೋ?  
ಕಸಿಯಾಗಿಹ ನಮ್ಮಯ ಹೆಮ್ಮೆಯ ತಳಿಯೋ?  
ಷಡ್‌ಋತುಗಳು ನಾಲ್ಕಾಗಿಹ ಸಿರಿನಾಡಿನ  
ಸಂಕೇತಿಯ ಸಂದೇಶದ ಅರಗಿಯೋ?

ಟಿಪ್ಪಣಿ: ಉತ್ತರ ಅಮೆರಿಕ ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಕೂಟದ ಬೆಳ್ಳಿಹಬ್ಬದ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊರತರುತ್ತಿರುವ "ರಜತ" ಎಂಬ ಸ್ಮರಣ ಸಂಚಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ನಾಲ್ಕು ಭಾಗಗಳಾಗಿ ವಿಂಗಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಅಮೆರಿಕದ ನಾಲ್ಕು ಋತುಗಳಂತೆ ನಮ್ಮ ಕೂಟದ ನಾಲ್ಕು ಮಜಲುಗಳನ್ನು ಮೇಲಿನ ನಾಲ್ಕು ಪದ್ಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಡಿದಿಡುವ ಯತ್ನಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ.

# THE FOUR SEASONS

*M.S. Nataraja*

---

## (1) Spring – New Seedlings

Spring is the king of all seasons  
Grandeur glory and gorgeous green  
Enter offspring of Nacharamma  
Brighten the splendid American scene

## (2) Summer -- Roots and Trees

Summer brings out the burning Sun  
Monsoons and the raging rivers  
Dragging vortex of the new-found-land  
Makes you tough bold survivors

## (3) Fall -- The Balding Scalps

Changing colors from the luscious green  
Yellow crimson and shades of frowns  
Fall follows with gloomy balding trees  
For, this is the land of ups and downs

## (4) Winter -- Freeze and Thaw

Freezing cold does make you shiver  
And hybrid genes of the unknown future  
Six dear Ritus or four mysterious seasons  
Symbols of the new Sankethi feature

Notes: The Souvenir “Rajata” being released on the eve of the silver jubilee celebrations of NASA is presented in four parts to signify the four seasons of life. An attempt is made in the above four stanzas to present the parallel of how a Sankethi might experience the four seasons. The poem is a free translation of the Kannada original by the same author.

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

*By Keshava Kumar*

---

Dear Sankethi friends,

Namaskara. It is a cause for celebration that so many Sankethis have migrated to this great land of opportunity and managed to build and sustain the North American Sankethi Association, which is now celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I thank the founding members, past presidents, members and the Sankethi community as a whole for building such an organization and providing me the opportunity to lead the same on its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Building and sustaining any organization is not an easy task. It takes dedication, lots of volunteers and financial support from various members. Thanks to all that made this possible. The steps that Nacharamma took many years ago did not stop at Bettadapura, Kowshika, Lingadahalli, Mattur-Hosahalli or other auspicious places; they continued on to North America.

Poojya Mahatma Gandhi said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” Our own Nacharamma took it upon herself to institute change. We should celebrate the progressive Sankethi attitude and fortitude in accepting to follow the vision of a female leader and strive for change ourselves.

First and foremost, we should all take the time to re-acquaint ourselves with the well thought out NASA aims and objectives set forth by the founders of our organization. While realizing how far NASA has come since its beginning, we must continue to do our share to support the same aims and objectives, which can be found on the NASA web site.

Finally, as we embark on the Silver Jubilee Celebration, let us celebrate the diverse attributes that we Sankethis have come to nurture and develop over time. Some of the words used by settlers in Bettadapura are different from their counterparts in Kowshika or other places. Some of the excellent recipes might be slightly different as well, but there really is no challenge this community can’t overcome if we all stand together. Let us unite and celebrate this diversity of ours.

I wish NASA continued success over the years to come.  
Long live NASA!



Dr. Keshava Kumar  
President, NASA Silver Jubilee Year



# Spring



## Written in March

By William Wordsworth

The Cock is crowing,  
The stream is flowing,  
The small birds twitter,  
The lake doth glitter  
The green field sleeps in the sun;  
The oldest and youngest  
Are at work with the strongest;  
The cattle are grazing,  
Their heads never raising;  
There are forty feeding like one!  
Like an army defeated  
The snow hath retreated,  
And now doth fare ill  
On the top of the bare hill;  
The plowboy is whooping – anon –  
anon  
There's joy in the mountains;  
There's life in the fountains;  
Small clouds are sailing,  
Blue sky prevailing;  
The rain is over and gone!

*A season of renewal, rebirth, and new beginnings fosters both the origins of an organization celebrating twenty-five years and a generation of NASA members-to-be who will someday celebrate twenty-five more.*

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF NASA

*Compiled by Ganesh Rao*

The North American Sankethi Association is a relatively young organization. At 25 years, however, its origins are distant enough that recalling the details becomes a serious mental exercise. NASA was talked about for a long time before it finally became a reality, a process that spanned many years and many family gatherings by the young immigrants from India who had settled in America. The organization was merely an extension of their social network, a way to expand their circle of friends. And a way to get more players for their games of 28! I remember those long drives and fun-filled weekends fondly and I'm sure the first generation of members does as well. This timeline is just a map. To get a true sense of the journey, talk to a senior member.

1984: Thanksgiving get-together at Y.N. Jayaram's residence in St. James, NY. Over a game of cards, NASA is officially born. Several serious conversations preceded this but this was when the process of incorporation officially began.
1985: February 12th: NASA is formally incorporated as a non-profit organization in New York State.
1985: April 7th: First BOD meeting in St. James, NY at Y.N. Jayaram's residence.
1985: April 20th: Press Release announcing the formation of NASA
1985: October 13 <sup>th</sup> : First GBM at Kali Bari Temple, Patterson, NJ
1986: October 12 <sup>th</sup> : GBM-II: Kali Bari Temple, Patterson, NJ
1987: October 10 <sup>th</sup> : GBM-III: Berlin Temple, Berlin, NJ
1988: July 3 <sup>rd</sup> : GBM-IV: J.K. Rangappa's residence in Hampton, VA
1989: September 3 <sup>rd</sup> : GBM-V: Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburgh, PA
1989: Catastrophe Fund created
1990: NASA is granted 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status
1990: September 2 <sup>nd</sup> : GBM-VI: Chinmaya Mission, Chicago, IL
1990: NASA Scholarship Fund created
1991: November 30 <sup>th</sup> : GBM-VII: Moorestown Community Center, Moorestown, NJ
1992: GBM-VIII: Sringeri Saadhana Center (Rajarajeshwari Peetham), Stroudsburg, PA
1993: GBM-IX: Siddhachalam Jain Tirth, Blairstown, NJ
1994: July 3 <sup>rd</sup> : GBM-X: Siddhachalam Jain Tirth, Blairstown, NJ (10th anniversary)
1995: September 3 <sup>rd</sup> : GBM-XI: Sringeri Saadhana Ctr, Stroudsburg, PA
1996-2009: July 4 <sup>th</sup> : GBM-XII to XXV: New Windsor Conference Center, MD

**COMBINED  
FIRST MEETING of the MEMBERS  
FIRST MEETING of DIRECTORS  
of**

NORTH AMERICAN SANKETHI ASSOCIATION INC.

The combined first meeting of members and directors of the corporation was held at

on                      APRIL 7,        19 85        at                      1 P. M.

**The following members were present:**

Dr. R.S.C. Murthy & Mrs. Vijaya Murthy	Dr. S.K. Subbanna & Mrs. Padma
Dr. Y. Jayaram & Mrs. Radha Jayaram	Mr. Y.N. Dathatri
Dr. K.V. Vishwanatha & Dr. Mrs. Amrutha	Dr. C.V. Subbarao & Mrs. Swarna
Mr. Y.V. Jagannath & Mrs. Saraswathi	

being all of the members of the corporation and a quorum.

**The following directors were present:**

Dr. Y. Jayaram  
Dr. K.V. Vishwanatha  
Dr. S.K. Subbanna

being all of the directors of the corporation and a quorum.

and        Mr. Y.V. Jagannath        was elected temporary chairman  
            Mr. Y.N. Dathatri        was elected temporary secretary

The chairman reported that the incorporator(s) took the following action:

Adopted by-laws regulating the conduct and affairs of the corporation.

Appointed directors of the corporation.

Fixed the principal office of the corporation at

7 Acorn Road  
St. James  
New York 11780

The chairman circulated a copy of the Consent To Action Taken In Lieu of Organization Meeting executed by the incorporator(s) and upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was

MD-1

MD-1

RESOLVED, that the actions taken by the incorporator(s) as set forth in the Consent to Action Taken In Lieu of Organization Meeting is hereby approved, ratified and in all respects confirmed.

The chairman stated that the election of officers of the corporation was now in order. The following persons were nominated:

President	Dr. Y Jayaram
Vice-President	Dr. R.S.C. Murthy
Secretary	Mr. Y.N Dathatri
Treasurer	Dr. K.V. Viswanatha

A vote of directors was taken and the nominees were elected officers of the corporation.

The president and secretary thereupon assumed their respective offices in place and stead of the temporary chairman and the temporary secretary.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was

RESOLVED that the seal now presented at this meeting, an impression of which is directed to be made in the margin of the minute book, be and the same hereby is adopted as the seal of this corporation and further

RESOLVED that the president and treasurer be and they hereby are authorized to issue certificates for members in the form as submitted to this meeting and appended to the minutes of this meeting and further

RESOLVED that the corporate record book and membership roll book now presented at this meeting be and the same hereby is adopted as the corporate record book and membership roll book of the corporation.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was

RESOLVED that the treasurer be and hereby is authorized to open a bank account in behalf of the corporation with Sag Harbor Savings Bank located at North Country Rd., St. James, N.Y. 11780 and a resolution for that purpose on the printed form of said bank was adopted and was ordered appended to the minutes of this meeting.

MD-2

On motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was

RESOLVED, that the signing of these minutes by the directors and members shall constitute full ratification thereof and waiver of notice of the meeting by the signatories.

There being no further business before the meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was, adjourned.

Dated April 7, 1985

R.S.C. Murthy  
member

Y.V. D. Thota  
secretary

R.K. Naidu  
member

Y. V. D. Thota  
chairman

C.V. S.  
member

Y. V. D. Thota  
director

R.S. Krishnamurthy  
member

Y. V. D. Thota  
director

Y. V. D. Thota  
member

K.V. Subramanya  
director

Padma Subbanna  
member

Swarna Rao  
member

The following are appended to these minutes:

Resolution designating depository funds.

MD-3

ON  
NORTH AMERICAN SANKETHI ASSOCIATION, INC.  
(Not For Profit Organization)

c/o  
7 Acorn Road - St. James, NY 11780  
(516) 862-7133 - (516) 467-6123

11 September 1985

Dear Fellow Sankethi:

We, the President and members of the ad hoc Executive Committee, have great pleasure in inviting you and your family to the First Annual General Body Meeting of our Association.

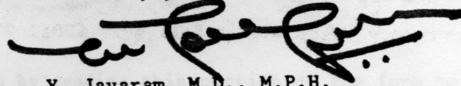
Date and Time: Sunday 13 October 1985 at 11:00 A.M.

Place: Kali Bari - Downstairs Hall  
140 Marshall Street, Patterson, New Jersey

Please confirm your participation by 30 September 1985 so that we can make proper arrangements for boarding, lodging, etc.

We once again solicit your cooperation to give your Association a flying start. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Y. Jayaram, M.D., M.P.H.  
President

**DIRECTIONS TO KALI BARI**

- FROM EAST AND NORTH** - Take George Washington Bridge or the Garden State Parkway to Route 80 WEST to Exit 57B (Downtown Paterson). Turn right at first traffic light then turn right at the first block. Turn right on Marshall Street to Kali Bari.
- FROM WEST** - Take Route 80 EAST to Exit 57B (Downtown Paterson). Turn right at first traffic light (Grand Street) then turn right at third traffic light (Marshall Street) to Kali Bari.
- FROM SOUTH** - Take Garden State Parkway to Exit 155P (Route 80 WEST and Patterson. Drive 1-2 miles and follow signs and exit right to Paterson Business District. Turn right at first traffic light (Grand Street), then follow directions given above.

(Kali Bari is the fenced building immediately north of I80 Overpass on the WEST side of Marshall Street)

(Program Overleaf)



NORTH AMERICAN SANKETHI ASSOCIATION INC.  
7 Acorn Road  
St. James, New York 11780  
(516) 862-7133

PRESS RELEASE - APRIL 20, 1985

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

It is with pleasure we announce the formation of a new organization called "North American Sankethi Association Inc. (NASA) which is dedicated exclusively for charitable, religious and cultural activities and purposes and to preserve Sankethi culture, heritage and traditions in North America. For information on programs and activities, please contact: President, NASA, 7 Acorn Road, St. James, N.Y. 11780.

- Dr. Y. N. Jayaram  
President

*In Loving Memory of  
Sri C.V. Subbarao*



*Looking back on 25 years of memories...  
Looking forward to many more.  
Congratulations to NASA*

*Swarna, Ganesh, Shalini, Mahesh,  
Anupama, Dinesh, Jathin, Ananya and  
Kavya Rao*

# THE EARLY YEARS OF NASA

*By: M.R. Balakrishna*

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As NASA celebrates its Silver Jubilee this year, it is the appropriate time to reflect upon NASA's early years for the benefit of present and future generations—struggles, problems, trials and the very ambitious visions of the founders and early Presidents beginning with Dr. Jayaram, Mr. Balakrishna, Mr. Dathatri, and Mr. Ashwathnarayana as well as others who followed. Starting from the very first official incorporation document prepared by a professional lawyer who made some serious editing mistakes—for example the initial document listed our name as “NOT AMERICAN SANKETHI ASSOCIATION”—the early directors had challenges. And because of such errors and a few other requirements of the NY Department of State, we had to submit several amendments to make the approved official document read “North American Sankethi Association, Inc.” with a registered address at 34 Longwood Drive.

A Second challenge was to submit NASA, Inc. documents, supporting information and necessary financial information about membership, activities, and planned and contemplated programs to the IRS to obtain tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) 3. After several correspondences back and forth, we finally obtained tax-exempt status sometime in 1985. Dr. Jayaram, who was the President, and Dathatri, who was the Secretary, gave invaluable help in getting the above status which resulted in a strong NASA with over 100 life members currently, compared to about a dozen or so life members in the period from 1984–1988.

Even though we were small then, substantial numbers of programs and activities were initiated. We had many cultural and religious programs, such as the Ganapathi Homa in the Albany Temple. Dr. Jai Kumar Rangappa and Dr. Jayaram took the initiative to teach our children to ski by taking them on trips during which my house often served as the base camp for the Youth Ski Program and my wife Jaya happily hosted NASA youth members. Now those children have grown and have their own children who are learning to ski as well. My recollection is that at least 10-15 people participated in each trip.

Since NASA was a very small and close-knit organization in the early days, and the Executive Committee consisted of only seven members, decision making was easy and there were hardly any disagreements. Even NASA GBMs used to be simple and the decisions made were often unanimous, with elections by voice vote. Our members, representing the true Sankethi spirit, demonstrated their culinary expertise by willingly taking charge of preparing delicious meals during the early NASA gatherings. Indeed it felt like a real family get-together—as if the whole of NASA was one big family.

We have come a long way—25 years is a pretty young and energetic age to make bold and challenging decisions to meet the needs of growing second and third generations. In the next 25 years, or preferably within next ten years, that rapid growth should include a permanent place for NASA's gatherings as well as for its senior community.

With best wishes,

M.R.Balakrishna



# N A S A

*By: Kuppahally.V.Srikantiah*

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On one of our family visits with Nagarathna and George Rao in Queens, NY at Christmas time in December 1976, we were invited for dinner at Dr. Jayaram's house in St. James, NY. The wintry night presented challenges of its own, when our old car broke down en-route, with the exhaust and tail pipe breaking away from the engine head and rubbing on the road with a rumble of fireworks. After rigging the tail pipe with wire, bubble gum and a lot of luck, we arrived at Dr. Jayaram's about an hour late.

We were greeted by Dr. Jayaram, his wife Radha, Dr. C.V. Subba Rao, "Syracuse" Subbanna, and a few others, all of whom my family met for the first time. After the festive dinner there was some enthusiastic discussion about forming an Association of Sankethis in the U.S. Dr. Jayaram and others briefed me on their idea and invited me to join in. I was new to the people and to the concept, so at the time I stayed neutral.

Upon returning to our home in Ottawa, Canada, my wife Shilaja and I thought about what we had heard and came to the conclusion that it was a crazy idea and wouldn't work. Our logic was that there were very few Sankethis in the U.S., too spread out to make meetings and get-togethers possible, and that commitment to become a part of the association would be minimal at best. Luckily for us, the founding fathers must have thought otherwise.

From that winter on, we got invitations every year for informal Sankethi get-togethers up and down the Eastern U.S., mostly in the backyards or by the poolsides of Sankethi families. Since we were far away up in Ottawa, we never attended those early gatherings. This changed when we moved to the States.

We moved to New Jersey in 1986. That made it possible to partake in NASA activities, sometimes willingly, other times grudgingly. I still had my doubts and aspersions. Nandini was in college in Canada and remained there, but Ranjini and Ashwini started taking part in NASA activities and really seemed to enjoy them. This encouraged us to get involved in NASA more regularly and more actively. As the size of NASA gatherings outgrew people's homes and backyards, we started looking for "cheap" places where the get-togethers could be held. Each year brought a new set of experiences, like staying overnight in campsites with cold showers, or collectively cooking feasts in minimal kitchens. Over the years, the community became sizable enough to look for places with better amenities, and I remember how pleased we all were when New Windsor Conference Center became NASA's "summer home" about ten years ago.

The first ten years were a struggle, with NASA's survival constantly in question. The next five or so years, we experienced tremendous growth, and our organization reached a "critical mass" that would ensure survival and success for NASA.

I am not aware of any metrics against which the success of a small ethnic organization such as ours can be measured. The entire Sankethi community is so miniscule it may appear like a pencil point on any map. All the Sankethis in the U.S. could perhaps be counted at less than 2,000, if that. On the East coast there are probably less than 1,000. Yet there are around 200 family Life Members. That is very impressive, especially given the distribution of our

community across the country. It is gratifying to note that our community has strengthened over time—that we continue to gather on a yearly basis to ensure not only the survival, but also the success of NASA. Given that, one might ask, what really spurs a miniscule organization such as NASA to keep ticking, breathing and growing? What is the secret of NASA? I'll say, it's the people. Judged by any measure, the individuals of NASA have come together to serve the community very well, both in the U.S. and in India. NASA has participated in and contributed to preserving and nurturing Sankethi culture in the areas of music, religion, education and health. And, perhaps most importantly, we have built an extended family network that welcomes more and more people each year.

Those who dreamed up the idea nearly thirty years ago are now in their sixties and seventies. They are receding into the background, making room for the next generation. NASA, which was in the hands of oldies and baldies, is now in the hands of young, energetic, and enthusiastic members and a dynamic management team. The young and middle-aged leaders who have accepted the responsibility of NASA in its recent years have done admirably well. I was once a skeptic, but am now convinced more than ever that NASA will continue to prosper and grow. Hats off to the Founding Members, in particular Dr. YELLESHPUR NARASINGA RAO JAYARAM, the Spirit of NASA.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to NASA on its Silver Jubilee!  
May we all have many more years of happiness together.



Srikantiah, Shilaja, Nandini, Srikantha, Kiran, Akhila,  
Ranjini, Dale, Tejan, Reyva and Ashwini

## A LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

*By: Pavani Ram*

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*The Ram family (Raghu, Pavani and Suneel) adopted Janani in 2006 from Pune. Janani came home on June 8, just one week after her first birthday. Pavani wrote the letter below to commemorate the second anniversary of Janani's homecoming.*

My Darling Janani,

Yesterday at the park, I stared at you with wonder. Today, in the car, I listened to you with silent joy. Tomorrow and in the years to come, I will forever marvel at your incredible resilience, your loving spirit, and your mischievous, inquisitive nature. Nearly two years ago, on June 8, 2006, I held you in my arms for the first time. Just a year old then, you were a wisp of a thing—just over 8 pounds. You didn't weigh anything; you cocked your head to the left, and sucked your thumb and forefinger. You still suck your thumb and forefinger and when you're really, really tired, you sometimes cock your head in just the same way. You came into my arms so willingly, and then on the way to the airport, you slept. For the rest of that day, you were so quiet, seemingly so at peace. The airplane ride didn't phase you. The lights of Delhi didn't excite you. A new home, a new family—none of these seemed new to you. You slept through the night and I actually woke you up to make sure you were okay. And you were... Within a few short days, you were blossoming. During those early days, I laughed a lot, sang a lot, and cried a little. I was overjoyed at every small triumph, at every new milestone met, at every smile and nuzzle—confirmations that love is indeed all that a growing child needs to thrive. I worried and fed you every three hours and weighed you twice a day. You ate like you'd never eaten before and gained weight almost with every meal. Along with joy and worry, I grieved. I grieved for not having been with you during that first year of your life. I grieved for that year of constant illness, that year of living in between an orphanage and a hospital, that year of not knowing that you would soon have a mother and father and brother who would love you with the deepest love. I grieved for my beloved little baby girl who was going through life alone (what an injustice!).

Although it was not erased completely, my grief subsided when, during our second trip to Priyadarshini Shishu Griha, a caretaker named Sushila introduced herself to me. She said that she cared for you at Priyadarshini and while you were in the hospital. She said that she had made innumerable vows to God to pray if you would just be okay. And you were. I embraced Sushilaji as if she had given birth to you herself. I am forever grateful to her for having loved you and cared for you during that year before I came.

And now, so long after it seems, we are settled in our daily lives. We continue to worry about you and dote on you and scold you and laugh with you. We are overjoyed to see the little girl that you are becoming and eagerly await the wonderful person that you are bound to be.

Your Loving Mama



## VIKRAM GOES NATIVE

*By Deepa Ramesh and Ben East*

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The white bump on Vikram's wrist wasn't going away. Instead it grew larger and larger, the skin around it warm and red and suggestive of infection. Accra's hot, humid days weren't helping. Wounds fester in the tropics, and here we were just five degrees north of the equator. An infected bug bite was the professional medical diagnosis.

Over a period of ten days we treated the wrist—inside, just near the ham of his hand—with anti-bacterial gels, hot compresses, and a daily dose of antibiotic. The 11-month old patiently let us apply hot, wet cloths to his tender skin, five and ten and fifteen minutes at a time, several times a day. He guzzled the antibiotic like a junkie. Meanwhile the white bump doubled, tripled, quadrupled in size until it had become a tall and ugly wart with a life of its own.

That's just one of the joys of living in West Africa. I work part time with the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a U.S. government agency that provides assistance to a limited number of developing countries selected for their commitment to democracy and good governance. We moved to Ghana in December 2007 when Ben took up his post as the Press Officer at the U.S. Embassy.

Living in the capital, our life is more ordinary than might be imagined for a family that calls Africa their home. The conveniences include excellent and relatively inexpensive fresh fruits and vegetables. A typical selection might include onions, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant (all kinds, including white), zucchini, *sorekai*, lettuce, carrots, cucumber, pumpkin, plantains, cilantro, green chilies, ginger, okra, *palakai*, white and yellow pineapple, mangoes, papaya, watermelon, and star fruit. Ghana also imports apples, pears, and grapes, primarily from South Africa. We can find fresh milk at a nearby dairy farm, which we then pasteurize at home. Our four-bedroom house is supplied with a generator for the frequent power outages. Our nanny, Rose, comes to our house with her daughter Janelle, who is just a month younger than Vikram and a great playmate for him while Ben and I are both at work. Other days we enjoy walking Vikram in his stroller or his wagon around the Embassy compound, where the roads are well-paved and where Vikram is met with dozens of greetings from the friendly Embassy guards and other staff—"Hey Kwesi, how are you?" ('Kwesi' is the Ghanaian name for boys who are born on Sunday). Some of them speak to Vikram in Twi (pronounced 'chwee'), one of the many local languages spoken in Ghana. By the time we leave Ghana in summer 2011, Vikram should understand at least portions of three languages—English, Twi and Sankethi (which my parents speak to him during visits and over Skype).

Hardships to living in Ghana include spending a lot of time indoors to avoid the harsh mid-day sun. Driving here can be wild: drivers take suggestions rather than follow rules, and traffic is heavy and unpredictable. Everyday, and especially during the rainy season, we risk exposure to malaria rather than endure three years of prophylaxis. Recreation is limited: there is one movie theater and one shopping mall in the entire country. Mail comes slow and late, and sometimes not at all. But we're able to derive amusement from little things, like the fact that we live in a country ruled by a man named "Flour Mills": John Evans Fifi Atta Mills was elected in December 2008. Then there's that white bump on Vikram's wrist.

After ten days, staff at the Embassy Medical Unit had changed their diagnosis. The nasty wart was the progeny of a tumba fly. The insect had laid an egg on Vikram's skin. The egg had hatched, burrowed its way into Vikram's wrist, and had become a living, breathing, growing larva. In a worst case scenario, the tumba fly lays dozens of eggs on wet clothing, which, when warmed through human contact, hatch and squirm their way into their victims, several at a time, molting for days before either being removed, or growing wings and flying away. Vikram, thankfully, had only one.

In order to suffocate the maggot, the nurse spread a thick coat of Vaseline on Vikram's wrist, Vikram looking on in cooperative amazement. Several minutes later the bump began to move: side-to-side at first, but eventually pushing itself up and out as it searched for oxygen. With a steady hand and a pair of tweezers the nurse went in after it. The worm fought back, squirming and grabbing and clinging to its host. The centimeter-long body stretched out long and thin as the nurse tugged and tugged with her tweezers. We held our breath and prayed for it not to break in half. Finally, with a great sucking sound, the worm was out. Vikram was delighted with his pet, which now resides in a plastic jar of formaldehyde on our bathroom window ledge. Ben and I, on the other hand, had to pick our chins up off the floor and carry them home in Vikram's wagon.

*Best Wishes*

*From*

*Divakar Rudrapatna,  
Radhika R., Prerana R.,  
and Sriresh R.*



WITH COMPLEMENTS  
FROM:

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## ನನ್ನ ಹಿಂದಿನ ಅನುಭವ

ಪ್ರೇಮ ಕೇಶವ್

ಹಾಸನ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಪುಟ್ಟ ಊರಿನ ಹೆಸರಾದ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮೇನಹಳ್ಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜನಿಸಿ ಅಕ್ಕಪಕ್ಕದ school ನಲ್ಲಿ ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿ ಪಾಠ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಮತ್ತು ಅತೀ strict head master ಅಂತ ಹೆಸರು ವಾಸಿಯಾದ ತಂದೆಯ (ಅನಂತ ಸುಬ್ಬರಾಯ) ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರೈಮರಿ ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರಾಥಮಿಕ ತರಗತಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕಾಲಿಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಾಯಿತು. 7 ನೇ ತರಗತಿಯ public ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಗೆ ಕೇವಲ ನಾಲ್ಕು ಮೈಲಿ ದೂರದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಊರಾದ ದುದ್ದ ಹೋಬಳಿ school ನಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಾ ಕಾಲು ನಡೆಗೆಯಿಂದ ಮತ್ತು bicycle ನಿಂದ ಮುಗಿಸಿದ್ದಾಯಿತು.

ಹಳ್ಳಿಯ ಚಿತ್ರಣವೆಂದರೆ ಬಾವಿಯಿಂದ ಸೇದಿ ತರುವ ನೀರು, ಸೀಮೆಯೆಣ್ಣೆಯಿಂದ ಉರಿಯುತ್ತಿರುವ Bed Lamp ನ ಬೆಳಕು, ಸೌದೆ ಒಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಅಡಿಗೆ ಊಟ, ಕಲ್ಲು, ಮಣ್ಣು ಮತ್ತು ಗುಂಡಿಗಳಿಂದ ಉತ್ಪತ್ತಿಯಾಗಿರುವ ಒಂದು ತರಹದ ರಸ್ತೆ, ತೆಂಗು, ಅಡಿಕೆ, ಬಾಳೆ, ಹಲಸು ಮತ್ತು ಹುಣಿಸೆ ಮರಗಳಿಂದ ಕೂಡಿರುವ ಸಾಲಾದ ತೋಟಗಳು. ಈ ತೋಟಗಳ ಸಾಲನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದರೆ ಒಳ್ಳೆ ಮಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಹೂವಿನ ಮಾಲೆ ಜೋಡಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಇರುತ್ತಿತ್ತು ಮತ್ತು ಇಂದಿಗೂ ಇದೆ. ಈ ತೋಟಗಳಿಂದ ಅರ್ಧ ಮೈಲಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾರೂ ಜಾಸ್ತಿ ನೋಡಿದರ ಅಥವಾ ಕೇಳಿರದ ಹಳ್ಳಿ ನನ್ನ ಪುಟ್ಟ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮೇನಹಳ್ಳಿ.

ಪರಸ್ಪರ ಓಡಾಡಲು ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಮಾನು ಸಾಗಿಸಲು ಮತ್ತು ಆಗಾಗ Small Field Trips Like ದೇವಸ್ಥಾನ, ರಾಮದೇವರಹಳ್ಳಿ ಊರುಗಳಿಗೆ ಹೋಗಲು ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದ pure green ಶಕ್ತಿ vehicle ಎರಡು ಚಕ್ರದ ಎತ್ತಿನ ಗಾಡಿ. ಹೀಗಿರುವಾಗ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮೇನಹಳ್ಳಿಗೆ ಅಪರೂಪಕ್ಕೆ smoke ಹಾಕಿಕೊಂಡು ಬರುತ್ತಿದ್ದ Auto Vehicles ಗಳನ್ನು ನೋಡಲು ಜನರ ಗುಂಪು ಅತೀ ಜಾಸ್ತಿ. ದೊಡ್ಡ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಮರಗಿಡಗಳಿಂದ ಕೂಡಿದ ತಂಪಾಗಿ ಗಾಳಿಯ Breeze ನಲ್ಲಿ ಹಳ್ಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಪರೂಪಕ್ಕೆ ಅವರಿವರ ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮೂಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ High Calorie ತಿಂಡಿಗಳಾದ ಕೊಬ್ಬರಿ ಮಿಠಾಯಿ ಮತ್ತು ಮೈಸೂರುಪಾಕು ಇವುಗಳ ಅ ಘಮ ಎಷ್ಟು ದೂರದವರೆಗೆ ಬಂದರೂ ಅತಿಶಯೋಕ್ತಿಯಿಲ್ಲ. ಯಾವಾಗಲೂ Healthy ಕಾಲು ನಡಿಗೆ ಅಥವಾ ಎತ್ತಿನಗಾಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಾಲ್ಕು ಮೈಲಿ ಹೋಗಿ ನಂತರ ಕೌಶಿಕದ ರಥೋತ್ಸವಕ್ಕೆ Train ಪ್ರಯಾಣದ ಅನುಭವ ವರ್ಣಿಸಲಾರದಷ್ಟು.

ಮುಂದಿನ ಹೈಸ್ಕೂಲ್ ವಿದ್ಯಾಭ್ಯಾಸದ ಸಲುವಾಗಿ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಊರಾದ Bangalore ಗೆ ಪ್ರಯಾಣ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಇನ್ನೂ ಇಪ್ಪತ್ತೈದು ಮೈಲಿ ಇರುವ ಹಾಗೆ ತುಂಬಾ ಸಂತೋಷ. ಬಸ್ಸಿನ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ವಿದ್ಯುತ್ ಶಕ್ತಿಯಿಂದ ಉರಿಯುತ್ತಿರುವ ಸಾಲಾದ ದೀಪಗಳು, ದೊಡ್ಡ ಕಾರ್ಖಾನೆಯಾದ Karnataka Sandle Wood and Detergents ಇನ್ನೂ ಮುಂದೆ ಬಂದರೆ Glucose Biscuit Factory ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಘಮ ಬೇರೆ. ಈಗ ಗೊತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ pollution ನಿಂದ ಮಾಯವಾಗಿರಬಹುದು. ಹಾಗೇ ಹೀಗೇ ಎಂದುಕೊಂಡು ಕಡೇ ದಿನದ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಗೆ ಓದುವ ಮೊದಲು ಚಿಕ್ಕಮೇನಹಳ್ಳಿಗೆ ಹೋಗಲು ಕಾತುರ. College ವಿದ್ಯಾಭ್ಯಾಸಗಳನ್ನು ಮುಗಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಮದುವೆಯಾದ ನಂತರ ಬಸವಾಪಟ್ಟಣಕ್ಕೆ ಪ್ರಯಾಣ. ಹೆಸರೇ ಸೂಚಿಸುವಂತೆ ಪಟ್ಟಣದ



ಸೌಲಭ್ಯಗಳಾದ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, Light , ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರು ಮತ್ತು ಟಾರ್ ರೋಡು ನೋಡಿದಾಗ ನಿಜಕ್ಕೂ ಇದೊಂದು ಪಟ್ಟಣವೇ ಅಂದುಕೊಂಡೆ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮೇನಹಳ್ಳಿಯನ್ನು ಹೋಲಿಸಿ ನೋಡಿದಾಗ....!!!

ಇನ್ನೂ ಮುಂದೆ High Tech ಪ್ರಯಾಣ Air Plane ನಲ್ಲಿ ಅದೂ ಅಮೇರಿಕಾಕ್ಕೆ ಕೇಶವ್ ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ. Flight New York, John F, Kennedy Airport ನಲ್ಲಿ Land ಆದಾಗ ಸಂಜೆಯಾಗಿತ್ತು. February ಯಾಗಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಒಂದು ತರಹದ ರಾತ್ರಿ ಆಗಲೇ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಕಡೆಯಲ್ಲೂ ಕಣ್ಣಿಗೆ ಕೋರೈಸುವಷ್ಟು ವಿದ್ಯುತ್ ದೀಪಗಳು, ವಿಶಾಲವಾದ ಜಾಗ, ಅದ್ಭುತವಾದ ದೊಡ್ಡ ದೊಡ್ಡ buildings , ಎಲ್ಲೆಲ್ಲೂ ನೋಡಿದರೂ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ತರಹದ Auto Vehicles ದೊಡ್ಡ ದೊಡ್ಡ ರಸ್ತೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮತ್ತು ಅದ್ಭುತವಾದ Bridge ಗಳು ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಸೇರಿ ಮನಸ್ಸಿಗೆ ಹೇಳಲಾರದಷ್ಟು ಸಂತೋಷ ತಂದುಕೊಟ್ಟಿತ್ತು. ಅಮೇರಿಕಾ ದೇಶ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಅಲ್ಪ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಚಿತ್ರಣ ಕಿವಿಗೆ ಬಿದ್ದಿದ್ದರೂ ಸಹ ಒಂದು ನೋಡಿದಾಗ ಅದರ ಚಿತ್ರಣವೇ ಬೇರೆ. ನಾವು ಅಮೇರಿಕಾಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದಿದ್ದ ಅಂತ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮೇನಹಳ್ಳಿಯೂ ಈಗ ಹಳ್ಳಿಯಾಗಿ ಉಳಿದಿಲ್ಲ ಕೆಲವು ವಿಷಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ. ದಿನಕ್ಕೆ ಮೂರು ಬಸ್ಸು ಬರಲು ಒಂದು ತರಹದ ಟಾರ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, Bore well , ವಿದ್ಯುತ್ ಶಕ್ತಿ, Light, Telephone , ಹೊಸ ದೇವಸ್ಥಾನ ಮತ್ತು ಅದೇ ತರಹದ ತೋಟ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಬಂದಿರುವ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮೇನಹಳ್ಳಿಗೆ ಇಂದೂ ಹೋಗಲು ಕಾತರ

ಇಂತಿ ನಿಮ್ಮ - ಪ್ರೇಮ ಕೇಶವ್

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*NASA would like to thank those donors who gave generously during this Silver Jubilee year. Their support is greatly appreciated.*

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Swarna Rao and Family  
K.V. and Amrutha Vishwanatha*

*List ordered alphabetically. We regret any accidental omission.*

## A LESSER-KNOWN STORY FROM THE RAMAYANA

*Compiled from various sources by Y.N. Jayaram*

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This is at the end of the Ramayana epic.

Once, a person dressed like a king comes to Rama's kingdom Ayodhya and requests a meeting with Rama. Rama obliges. The person asks that when he is speaking to Rama no one should be present and no one should disturb (interfere with) them as it is an extremely important and special secret mission. Rama agrees and asks his brother Lakshmana to stand guard outside the chamber. Then Rama takes the king inside. At this time the king changes his form to "Yama Dharma" (Kaala) and informs Rama that he is Kaala and Threthayuga is coming to an end and the Dwapara should start as destined by Paramathma, the supreme Lord Vishnu who is currently in the form of Rama. He further informs him that his duty is over and the time has come for him to return to his abode.

As this is happening inside the room, Doorvasa mahamuni arrives at the palace and informs Lakshmana who is standing guard that he wants to see Rama right away. But Lakshmana offers him some fruits, flowers, etc. and requests that he wait for a while as Rama is in a special meeting with some king and should not be disturbed. Doorvasa becomes upset and insists that he must be allowed inside, otherwise he would curse the whole Royal family and destroy the kingdom. Lakshmana is in a dilemma now. He has to pick one of the two devils. One is allowing the sage inside and breaking the royal rule or "Rajagne" (the king's orders), for which the punishment is the death penalty, or the other is to get the curse from the sage and have the whole kingdom destroyed. He thinks for a while and then decides that it is better to get the death penalty rather than seeing the whole kingdom destroyed. He knew very well the powers of Doorvasa muni.

Against his will, he opens the door as Kaala and Rama are engaged in the conversation mentioned above. The very moment he opens the door, Kaala disappears.

Now Rama is in a dilemma because he has to award the death penalty to his own brother. As you all know Rama is the person who has to give justice to all citizens in a uniform way. He cannot do one thing for his brother and another thing for others.

As he is in this conundrum, Hanumantha (Aanjaneya) comes and gives advice that if Lakshmana is thrown out of the kingdom (Gadipar) it is like the death penalty according to Sastras (scriptures). Hanumantha was respected by one and all because he was highly knowledgeable about Vedas and Sastras. Rama gives that verdict which Lakshmana accepts and as a result Lakshmana goes out of Ayodhya.

As he goes out of the kingdom, there are many followers behind him. He cannot bear the separation of Rama, so he enters the Sarayu River. As he is walking into the Sarayu River, his body in human form falls off and the soul and spirit go to heaven via a special staircase, like an escalator. The followers all go the same way and reach heaven.

Rama, hearing this, gets depressed and calls for a special meeting with his staff/ministers and arranges for the crowning ceremony of Kusha, his son. He then goes into the forest where he leaves the human form and reaches his abode in Vykuntha.



## KACHA AND DEVAYANI

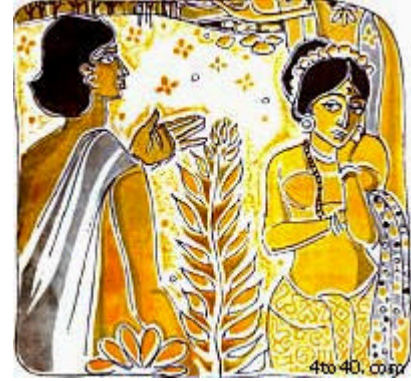
*Compiled from various sources by Y. N. Jayaram*

We all know that Brihaspathi is Rajaguru for Devathas (angels) and Shukracharya, also known as Okkannu (one eyed Shukracharya), was the Rajaguru for the Danavas (demons).

Some background as to how he got this name: at the time of Vaamanavathara, Vaamana pierced his eye when Shuklacharya was sitting inside the kamandala to block water from flowing, when Bali was giving away the famous three steps of land. This is how he lost one of his eyes.

There was always a rivalry between Brihaspathi and Shuklacharya. There are multiple incidents in which one engages the other to claim superiority. Many times Vishnu would intervene and help the Devathas.

Shuklacharya knew the art/science of bringing back dead demons to life. Brihaspathi did not. This gave an unfair advantage to the demons when they fought with the Devathas. Because of this, the Danavas' numbers were increasing and the Devathas' numbers were decreasing. This became a great worry for the Devathas and hence they went to Mahavishnu and asked his advice. He created a "Sphuradrupi" (the most handsome) from his body and his name was Kacha. Brihaspathi directed Kacha to learn the art/science of bringing dead persons to life by going to the Danava kingdom.



Kacha knew that he could not go and request Shuklacharya to teach him. Hence he went to the Danava kingdom and made himself visible to Devayani, the only daughter of Shuklacharya. At the very sight of Kacha, she falls in love with him and insists that her father marry her to Kacha. Hesitantly, he agrees and the wedding takes place. The demons (Danavas) suspect Kacha and do not accept him. They all think that it is one of the acts/plans of the Devathas to steal that art from Shuklacharya. They wanted to eliminate this threat so they rounded up Kacha and killed him. Further they mixed his body in the food of Shuklacharya. Not knowing this despicable act, Shuklacharya eats him for dinner. In between, Devayani becomes concerned and begs his father to find him with his special powers. Shuklacharya uses his powers and realizes that Kacha is in his stomach and explains to his daughter the situation. She again begs Shuklacharya to bring Kacha back to life. But if he does that, then Kacha has to come out of his stomach at which time Shuklacharya would die. Now, Devayani is in a dilemma and does not know what to do. Should she choose her husband over her father? Then she comes up with a plan that his father should bring him back to life, who is in his stomach in pieces, and give the special Manthra (upadesha) to Kacha. Then Kacha will come out of his stomach and as a result her father would die. In turn Kacha would bring his father-in-law back to life. This was reluctantly accepted by her father and he does as requested. Kacha comes back to life and brings back the dead Shuklacharya to

life. Later, in a short time, he tells Devayani that if he stays there, it would not be safe for him because of the demons and that is not the right place for him. So he returns to Devaloka. At this time Devayani curses, “Let the special Manthra you learned from father NOT work for you.” Hence Kacha teaches this special Manthra or art/science he learnt from Shuklacharya to Devaguru Brihaspathi.

Now both the Danavas and Devathas are on equal footing.

### NASA Aims and Objectives

1. To provide a forum for the members of the community to meet frequently and maintain religious, cultural, educational and social activities.
2. To encourage the younger generation to understand the culture, language, and family relationships.
3. To bring about a formal relationship with Sankethi Associations in the various parts of the world and participate in their activities suitably.
4. To assist religious and cultural institutions in North America and elsewhere.
5. To promote religious, social, cultural, educational exchange of scholars and artists from different parts of the world.
6. To establish a charity fund for the benefit of cultural, educational and human service of economically disadvantaged people of the world.
7. To aid in the education of the community children through suitable means.
8. To sponsor suitable cultural programs of interest to members.
9. To sponsor summer camps / trips for the youth.
10. To increase awareness of the contribution of Sankethis to the society and country.

*Peace, Prosperity and Culture  
Through  
Community Service*

*Thy name is NASA, Inc.*

*The children, grand children and great grand children of  
Smt. Savithramma and Sri. Y.N. Narasingarao take great  
pride in the achievements of the North American Sankethi  
Association in its 25 years of community service both in  
the USA and in India. The Yelleshpur Family wishes the  
continued growth of NASA, Inc. in the next 25 years.*

*Page sponsored by*

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# Summer



## SONNET XVIII

*By William Shakespeare*

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of  
May,*

*And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course  
untrimmed:*

*But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his  
shade,*

*When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,  
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

*Though typically a time to escape the constraints of schooling, this season, with its abundant sunshine, also entails the growth, maturation and education of both the organization and its members.*

# THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY OF THE RUDRAPATNA BEARS

*By Srikesh Rudrapatna*

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Once upon a time, in a mystic land far, far away there lived the 4 brown bears of 4<sup>th</sup> temple road, 16<sup>th</sup> cross Mallashewaram. The Rudrapatna Bears lead a happy but unadventurous life until, one day, father bear decided that it was time for a change. And so the bears began to pack; and surprisingly they managed to fit all their cups, pots, pans, clothes, and bed sheets into 9 suitcases. With only 65 jars of honey they set off on their audacious journey to the land of white bears.

Over mountains, through the clouds and across the Atlantic Ocean the bears travelled, and, on Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1996 the Rudrapatna Bears landed in Pearson International airport. The voyage was long and painful. The bears suffered from the nasty plane food and with upset stomachs they were now looking for some rest. However, the road ahead was not what they had hoped for. Life threw at them challenges of all kinds, from financial to social. Yet, these were no match for the perseverance of the Rudrapatna Bears; when the going got tough, the Rudrapatna Bears got going!

Just as Mama and Papa Bear thought they had things under control, Sister Bear started grade one and things were not exactly under control. Sister Bear found it hard to make friends in this new land of white and black bears. Sister Bear, trying her hardest, completed many tasks to join clubs and groups to gain reputation and respect in the cutthroat cubs' world. Finally, one Halloween day Sister Bear dressed up as a beautiful Barbie and immediately her peers fell in love with her long hair and thus began an endless relationship. Now, 13 years later, Sister Bear is only half the age Papa Bear was when he began the adventures of his life and she has already spent one month in Quebec, Canada all alone! In addition, Sister Bear is in London, Ontario all alone studying Health Science in the University of Western. Papa and Mama Bear are very proud of their first cub; this doesn't mean that Brother Bear hasn't entered the cutthroat cub's world.

When Mama, Papa and Sister Bears were at the top of the cutthroat cub's world it was time for Brother Bear to join this incredible world. Unlike Sister Bear, Brother Bear did not join clubs, groups or even gain respect. He was one of the shy bears who got work done and minded his own business. Until the second grade Brother Bear was rather lonely. In the second grade a white bear with many freckles named Jason came along with a brown bear named Kevin and befriended Brother Bear. Together they got through grades two to six. During this time

another white bear named Marcus followed, joined by others. Thus, Brother Bear had joined the cutthroat cubs' world.

Together the four Brown bears overcame many more challenges and finally, eight years after their landing in Pearson International, they were able to return to their homeland for a visit and Brother Bear went from a cub to a bear! For Brother Bear, visiting his homeland was an amazing experience. For the first time in his life he was able to see how it was to live in his homeland and how different two countries can be even though they are in the same world. Other than observing how differently he was brought up in the other land, he went to his Sacred Thread ceremony and became a Bear. During this ceremony he was taught how to behave during the rest of his life and he was taught many sacred teachings and rituals, one of which is called Sandhya Vandané. After visiting his homeland, Brother Bear felt he was ready to conquer the rest of the Bear world. In the seventh grade, Brother Bear received the opportunity of his life: he was selected to go to British Columbia all alone for one week with his school friends. Brother Bear was incredibly excited when he found out he was selected because ever since he was a little cub he had always wanted to visit British Columbia. This was officially the first week Brother Bear joined the Bears' world! Brother Bear continued to shine in this incredible world, and in the 8th grade Brother Bear applied to enroll in one of the most prestigious programs offered to high school students: International Baccalaureate. Till this date no one from his middle school had been accepted into this school after his Sister Bear.

In addition to Brother and Sister Bear's outstanding performance in school, together they have written and directed two dramas that have been staged in the United States ("Ajji America ge bandalu" in NASA annual event) and in Canada. It doesn't end there; like their Papa Bear, they both have participated in many school plays as well as in two Sanskrit plays. They both contributed to the history their Papa Bear was about to make in all of North America! Through AMMA, (Ah! Mature Millennium Artists) Aham Brahmaasmi and Bhasha Vaibhavam were two greatest hits for Papa Bear besides all time hits "Pancha Bhoota" and "Bhootas in Canada." Bhasha Vaibhavam was such a success that it was even staged in the United States.

There is no doubt that the Rudrapatna Bears are a hard working Sankethi, Brahmin family: Papa Bear being able to bring up a family of four in a foreign country with only 65 dollars and Mother Bear being able to obtain a Canadian Professional Accounting Designation - CGA, despite the challenges of bringing up two young cubs. The 4 Brown Bears of 4<sup>th</sup> temple road, 16<sup>th</sup> cross Mallashewaram are now the

4 Brown Bears of 3305 Colonial Dr. Together the Brown Bears have gone through so much but there is still much more to come.

Dear Reader,

*You may be wondering why it is a fourteen-year-old boy would write with a “childish,” theme. To the reader it may not seem necessary to have such a theme, however to our family it means a great deal; this is because Prerana, the first child, when she was little would address her mother as Mother Bear. And so following this “inside joke,” I developed a theme for the story of my family’s life. Apart from our suffers and struggles we can all say we are proud to be Canadian but we also feel that we can say that we are proud Indians as well. We are aware of almost all “Sankethi” traditions, understand the dialect, speak Kannada, watch Bollywood movies, play “Pagade”, eat “kolakatte” and participate in weekly “Abhishekha” and chant “Purusha Sookta.” I personally appreciate the way my parents have brought my sister and me up in a foreign country and we were still able to fit in with the North American crowd. I regularly follow certain traditions that a Hindu Brahmin would in India, such as Sandhyavandané and wearing the Sacred Thread, Vibhuti, Gandha and Kumkum everyday. You might wonder, “Wouldn’t a child that always has a red dot on his forehead and wears a thread around his chest be misunderstood in North America?” On the contrary, the people here are very caring and understand that different people follow different teachings and traditions and that many people are also willing to learn more about what it is you do and why you do so. Overall I would like to say I truly appreciate everything my parents and sister have done for me as well as all my friends and relatives. I thank God for giving me such awesome parents who are bringing me up in the best conditions possible.*

Sriresh Rudrapatna



## MY COUSINS

By: Aruna Viswanatha

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I don't remember a time when going to NASA was a chore.

There were the required weekend concerts that I'd usually fall asleep at, dragged to, by my mother, whose love of Carnatic music somehow escaped her children. And there were the local *pujas* with other South Indian families, that my sister and I would wear ill-fitting *salwar* suits to, and ask my dad every 20 minutes when we could leave. But there was always something a little bit different about NASA.

Maybe it was the fact that the initial seeds of an American Sankethi organization were planted, not through a sense of duty, but through marathon sessions of card games. Or maybe that going to Jayaram Uncle's house also meant watching him make (and eating!) his unbeatable gooseberry *upinkai* and hearing the trains rumbling through his backyard. There was something always fun, even exciting, about it.

Sometimes, we got to hear about those pre-children times, when all the uncles were young bachelors trying to make sense of the new, strange, country they were now calling home. My dad would often reminisce about his first Halloween, for example, when he turned off the lights, locked the front door, peered out through the blinds, and wondered about all the foam on the windows. "I didn't know about this mischief," he would say.

Theoretically, NASA might have been a way to collectively make sense of the new culture they were a part of. But realistically, it was a way to keep some traditions alive from their childhood. "There were a relatively small number of Sankethis," my dad said when I asked him about the ideas behind the early get-togethers. "People were

missing relatives, they were missing cultural activities, religious functions," he said.

Even if we think of NASA as something about us, the kids, it wasn't. Our parents, instead, did this as a way to do for themselves what their parents had done for them at home. It was a way to recreate a piece of their social life from Bangalore, or Mysore, or one of the villages in Hassan: the *pujas*, the food, the occasions to wear saris and jewelry, and, of course, the gossip. But in the process, they gave us something different.

It wasn't so much about teaching us the exact chants of the Lalita Sahasranama or figuring out when to say "*oota aitha?*" and when to use "*chudi aacha?*" Instead, it provided us—it provided me—with a huge group of people that understood each other in a way no one else did.

We are Americans, as second-generation Sankethis, but we had a complicated relationship with the culture we grew up in.

There were the easy distinctions: *saaru anna* might mean dinner to you, but for most of your classmates, it was chicken and mashed potatoes. Tying your hair into two braids was what your mom considered stylish, no crimping irons allowed. Memorizing state capitals was a sure sign of smarts, but debating whether Michael Jordan or Magic Johnson was the best basketball player of all time didn't hold the same value.

There were also the tougher distinctions. "Hanging out" was often considered a little suspicious. Friendships—never mind relationships—with the opposite sex were close to forbidden. Trying things, and making your own mistakes weren't oft-used concepts.



There was the shared—if unspoken—understanding at NASA that maybe we were all going through a delayed learning curve when it came to social life in the United States. The get-togethers provided something that you didn't have to verbalize; at least here, everyone else's parents thought the same way yours did.

Although the first generation may not have always understood the second, they gave the unconditional love of an Indian family. It was a love you didn't have to earn. For this reason, it wasn't just peers that drew me to NASA; it was also the aunties and uncles, who provided the comfort of parents, multiplied by 100.

For one, you almost felt kind of good at sports. It was a place where even a 5'1", 100-pound teenager could still come in third (**third!**) in a contest involving a basketball.

For another, the NASA schedule always indulged your interests, no matter how lame they might seem in retrospect. When else could I get a roomful of aunties and uncles to watch me perform a mediocre rendition of "Stairway to Heaven" on the guitar?

I remember wanting to do everything during these weekends; waking up at 7a.m. to go on "nature walks," which really just meant a walk down a path near the conference center with a couple of uncles, and staying up late listening to the older guys and girls talk about school, and life, and their social world, wishing I had an older brother or sister like them to give me advice all the time.

There was the easy camaraderie with fellow Sankethi youth, forged over jokes about

unrealistic expectations (sure, I'll get that 1600 SAT score while singing Carnatic music on All-India radio, mom) and pot-bellied uncles (blame it on all the *mosru anna* and *thuppa*). Friendships were reinforced through commiserating over 7pm curfews and the occasional story of a cruel neighbor from home who would turn an ethnic name into a cutting insult.

Then, when it came time to start building careers, there were leads exchanged and words of encouragement provided. Even if we didn't see each other all that often, it meant something. I often talk about my "sort-of cousins", referring to all the Sankethis I've grown up with.

My sister and I never really got to go on "normal" family vacations growing up. There are few pictures of the four of us on the New Jersey boardwalk, or at the Grand Canyon, or even at a theme park. Disney World only made it to the itinerary when I was 14—well past my Disney-appreciating prime—when cousins came from England and wanted to see it. But there are tons of pictures in the family photo albums of me, my cousins, and my sort-of cousins over the years.

There must be something about our subcontinent (or about Sankethis?) that has no patience for the art of facilitated relaxing. I think "vacation" has one main definition in the Indian dictionary: "family visit." In the Sankethi dictionary, "NASA" is often the second meaning. Not to be totally cheesy about it, but hopefully that's one of the meanings the second generation can pass on to the third.

## LESSON FROM THE PEANUT SELLER

*By: Kuppahally V. Srikantiah*

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“*Badavara Baadami, Badavara Baadami*” (“poor man’s almond, poor man’s almond”), “*paav yeradane, paav yeradane*” (“two annas a measure, two annas a measure”), the Peanut Seller would bellow periodically, with a booming voice that would attract the attention of passers-by, young and old. He could not have been more than about five feet tall at full height. His back was severely bent, perhaps because of constantly sitting in the same position for years and years. He had salt and pepper hair covering his head, a very small frame, sunken cheeks, protruding cheek bones and hollow eye sockets. In these sockets shone a pair of eyes that evoked sympathy and admiration at the same time.

On my daily walks to college, criss-crossing the grid-work of the roads of Chamarajapet, I would come across this Peanut Seller. He sat at the junction of Fourth Cross and Fourth Main (near my uncle Annayya’s house) on a flat cut granite about four feet by five feet long, six inches thick, partially covering the culvert. In front of him he had spread a gunny (jute) sack about three by four feet, on top of which was a pyramid of unshelled peanuts. To his left was the bamboo basket in which he would lug the peanuts. To his right were small measures. His head was partially covered by a small towel to ward off the sun’s heat. And when it rained, the basket filled with peanuts, would become his umbrella. There was something interesting, something intriguing and something admirable about this little man that would trigger my curiosity every time I passed him. I was too young and too timid to ask him any questions. But I would walk along, musing about his family—was he married? Did he have any children? Did they get enough to eat? And so on.

I had passed this man regularly during my four years of walking to and from college. Same position, same face, same person. Being very conscious of my own small frame, my young age and his advancing years, I was very afraid of talking to him for a long time. One day I mustered enough courage to ask him “*Ayya, ee kallekaay vyaapardal boro duddnalli nin samsara saakok aagthada?*” (“With the income from your peanut sales, can you support your family?”) He paused for a moment and answered softly: “*Ondhalla ondh divsa aa dyaavru nammal kanbidthan bidi sami.*” (“One day or another God will open his eyes on us.”)

With those words ringing in my ears, I walked home slowly, nodding at him without saying a word. I developed an instant respect for his age and hard work, and admiration for his belief—a belief in a “better tomorrow.” His hope for better days ahead reverberated with my mother’s ever present optimism. In a way I could draw a parallel between my own family matters and my perceived notion of his family life. He had told me that he was married and that he had some children, but beyond that I knew very little of his family affairs. It was none of my business, and I was too young to know all that. One thing I knew for sure: he was poor, and we were poor, but with hope we would survive.

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Number 21, Sixth Main, Sixth Cross, Chamarajapet, Bangalore, is where I grew up and spent much of my adolescence. It was a middle class suburb, about a mile and a half southwest of city center and catered to the housing needs of mainly white collar workers who toiled mostly in government offices, banks and insurance companies. No glitz and glamour to the suburb, but it provided affordability of rent and proximity to the “city” for most people who belonged to the lower middle class income group.

My father, a migrant from Kuppahally, a small village on the banks of Hemavathy river in Karnataka, started working as a typist and moved to the positions of clerk, cashier and then section head during his thirty-year career with the then Oriental Life Assurance Company. Because of his long association with the iconic Oriental, he became known as “Oriental Venkataramiah” in some circles.

My mother Ananda was born in 1916 to Muddalapura Venkatapathy and Somyanayaki. She was the first daughter among eight children of my grandparents—four sons and four daughters. Although born to family of reasonably good means, my grandfather chose a path of independence. With a Bachelor of Arts college degree in an era when perhaps not even one in a thousand went to college, and a well positioned father, he could have had a rewarding career in government service. Instead, he spurned the prospect of serving the colonial British Empire and chose a career of independence and entrepreneurship. He was not too successful in the short run.

During his days, my grandfather mostly experienced the Depression, and as a consequence his means of supporting the family were meager at best. The attitude of getting by with very little became a virtue, forced by necessities of the day. Sharing scarce resources among siblings’ families was the order of the day. Although uncomfortable at times, it conditioned all of us under my grandfather’s umbrella to take things as they came, take one day at a time, pool together our strengths—both physical and financial, live with little and hope things would be better “tomorrow.” My mother would always put on a smiling face, and declare, “tomorrow will be better.”

Sankethis in the cities, mostly migrants from small villages in Mysore and Hassan districts and the Bettadapura area, were a smart bunch. Very smart indeed. Parents thought they knew exactly what kinds of professions their children should take up. If the child was a girl, they would send her to a college to get a degree in Arts, Social Sciences, Home Sciences, Music and such. Most parents did not think of a “career daughter.” Rather, their goal was to educate their girl so that she could be worldly and wise to manage the household. The belief that a woman belonged in the house was quite prevalent then.

If the child was a boy, on the other hand, it would be different. Very different indeed!! Almost all parents thought their boys were born to become engineers, and perhaps dreamed of it as if it were their birthright! All other career options became second class. Even though a son trained in medicine could one day become a savior of the sick and the suffering, this did not compare to the prestige attached to becoming an engineer.

As the older of only two sons, in a family of nine children, there was tremendous pressure for me to succeed. When I passed my Intermediate examination in 1952 (a pre-requisite for a college

degree program), it was time for “College Admission.” My parents were no different from the majority. First choice of course was Engineering. An application for a science degree program was also made only for “safety.” At least that is what I thought.

In Bangalore there was only one government Engineering college, the University Vishweswariah College of Engineering (UVCE) and one private college, the B.M. Srinivasaiah College of Engineering (BMS). UVCE was fully funded by the government whereas BMS was privately funded and got some government subsidy. Since UVCE was more affordable and more prestigious, there was tremendous competition for admission. My marks were sufficiently high to encourage an application into UVCE, so I applied, but got rejected. The marks were high, they said, but not high enough.

My next hope was BMS. BMS had a “Board of Admissions” made up of some academicians and some politicians. It was no secret that some of these members would accept “small donations” to grant an admission. Based on his strong sense of principle, my father declared that he would not “bribe” anyone for his son’s college admission. Further, he found comfort in telling himself that if I worked hard, and was lucky enough, “I would reach great heights.” The key element was “luck.” A true believer in fate! So I could not even think of joining BMS. There ended my quest to become an engineer. And thus I became a “defunct” Sankethi.

I joined the University of Mysore Central College for an “ordinary” Science Degree program. Subsequently I was admitted to an Honors Program in Mathematics and Physics. A big honor, but only a small comfort. I must have disappointed many parents who would have loved to marry off their daughter to me if I had become an e-n-g-i-n-e-e-r!

When I started College, seldom did I have enough money to cover both bus transportation and lunch. It was either bus or lunch, not both. I had an appetite that would belie my wiry frame. So on most days I chose to walk the nearly three miles each way between my home and Central College so I could have money to eat at mid-day. Chamarajapet is laid in a perfect grid pattern, much like Manhattan, but without the glitz of the chic stores, or the glamour of the shiny skyscrapers. So there were alternate routes to take to mitigate the boredom of walking the same route alone. No matter which path I took, almost every day I would pass the Peanut Seller. “*Badavara Baadami, Badavara Baadami*” (“poor man’s almond, poor man’s almond”), “*paav yeradane, paav yeradane*” (“two annas a measure, two annas a measure”)...

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Now, upon reflection, I can see that the belief in a better tomorrow is perhaps the greatest asset I have received from my family, and from a total stranger, the Peanut Seller. Depressed as I was all through my first year of the Mathematics honors degree program because I was not going to become an engineer, I plodded along in the hope that after graduation I would find a job to support my family, which I did. While in college I had hoped to become a college lecturer, a good one at that, and I did. While teaching at National College in Bangalore, I had hoped to “go abroad” which I did. Going abroad in those days was generally possible only for the super rich or the super smart, a belief held by many I knew. I was neither super rich nor super bright, but I wanted to “go abroad.” Nevertheless I tried again and again, believing that I would break the

myth, for my own good. It took me three years of persistent effort to achieve my goal. Those three years were grueling, but there was that eternal hope that I would see through to the end of the tunnel.

Making applications for admission and financial support was a grueling experience of over three years. I must have applied for some twenty universities in a span of three years. Many of them would give admission but no financial assistance. Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana not only gave me admission but also awarded me the highest University Fellowship at the time. Prof. Hughes, Chairman of the Department of Physics and my mentor, remains close to my heart for making my dream come true.

To this day I keep remembering the words of my mother and those of the Peanut Seller:

“Ondhalla Ondh Divsa Aa Dyavru Nammal Kan Bidthan sami.”



#### FACTS TO CONSIDER

Real Household Income for the typical family has declined over the last 8.5 years<sup>1,2</sup> S&P500 had a Total Return of -37% in 2008 and YTD, another -18% as of 3/1/09.<sup>3</sup>

#### ARE YOU OVER 55 YEARS OLD?

#### Does This Sound Familiar To You...?

*“I’m **VERY CONCERNED** that I will **RUN OUT OF MONEY** in **RETIREMENT**”*

*“I don’t know **IF I HAVE ENOUGH** income and assets to **TAKE CARE OF MY FAMILY** when I **RETIRE**.”*

*“I have **LOST** nearly **HALF** my money in my **401(K) PLAN, IRA(s), MUTUAL FUNDS, and/or BROKERAGE ACCOUNTS.**”*

#### If that sounds like you... consider the following:

- Would you prefer to keep **ALL** your money **SAFE** instead of risking your **ENTIRE PORTFOLIO** in hopes of **BREAKING-EVEN?**
- Would you like to **STOP** losing any more **MONEY** and **START earning money NOW?**
- Would you be **HAPPY** with fair rates of return through market linked products, and **GUARANTEE YOUR MONEY?**

<sup>1</sup> Economic Policy Institute <http://www.epi.org/>, <sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau <http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p60-235.pdf>, <sup>3</sup> Seeking Alpha <http://seekingalpha.com/article/123496-analyzing-s-p-500-index-return>

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# GROWING UP SANKETHI

An Interview with K.V. and Ranjini Srikantiah

By: Aruna Viswanatha

Growing up Sankethi might mean *ambede* and *chomai* at every special occasion, but it also means other things, shaped by the where and when and how of growing up. We talked to K.V. Srikantiah, who was raised in Bangalore in the 1950s, and his daughter Ranjini who was raised in Canada in the 1980s, about juggling two languages, being surrounded by the arts, and of course, having a very specific relationship to food.

## Kuppahally V. Srikantiah

I was born in 1935, officially, but really it was 1936. Raj is my adopted nickname. At home, I am called Raju, so I chose the name Raj, here. I grew up in Bangalore, and my growth years were in Chamrajpet.

Usually Brahmin families used to bunch together in the same area, and non-Brahmin families would bunch together in other areas. In fact, the areas we would concentrate in contained 100% Brahmin families.

When I grew up, the speaking language at home was Sankethi. A lot of people respected that you had another language to communicate in. A Sankethi is a Kannadiga Brahmin with roots in Tamil Nadu. Iyengars and Iyers talk a separate kind of Tamil, even though they are Kannadiga, too. There are some differences but they can understand each other.

There were very few Sankethis at school, and once you went out of your door, it was a different world. We would speak Sankethi typically only inside the house, and neighbors might not have understood it. The food was also different. Iyers and Iyengars all make *ambede* and *pulliogra*, but *kolkatte* and *chomai* were typical Sankethi brands.

They are also typically into music, more so than Iyengar and Iyers. Your ajja was the teacher for all our families, including my sisters. My father

## Ranjini Srikantiah

I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We moved to Canada when I was one, and until I was 12, we were in Canada. After that, we were in New Jersey.

My parents spoke in Kannada. When we were growing up, they had a big circle of Kannada speaking friends, who would all speak Kannada to each other, but the kids would speak in English. Every four years, we would spend a summer in India: when I was two, then six, then 10. When I came back from the ten-year-old trip, I made a more conscious effort to retain Kannada.

When my father spoke with his family, it was in Sankethi, and my mom with her family, it was Sankethi, but together, they spoke in Kannada. Even today, whenever we get together with my *atte*, it's always Sankethi. It's really funny. In their house, it's Sankethi, but the minute we get in the car to come home, it's always Kannada.

I don't recall when the identity of 'Sankethi' became clear to me, but I did know, when we would go visit my mom's brother, who is a farmer in a village, that it was all Sankethi there. They would talk in Kannada to us, but their first language was Sankethi.

banned me from taking music classes. He thought if I took to music, I would neglect my studies. At the time I was too small to object to it. You had no choice; you did what your parents told you to.

I have seven sisters, and I am second in the family. Four of seven sisters learned classical Carnatic music, for a good number of years. They also encouraged other hobbies for girls: stitching, embroidery, crochet work—just about all my sisters did these. In fact, there were stores that sold only cross-stitch material, or only embroidery material; they would even order books from England.

For the boys, the hobby was just playing outside. We would play our favorite, cricket, and *buggari*, and *chinni dandu*, which is a little bit like Wiffle ball. I was also the gofer in the family. Women and girls wouldn't go shopping, but I would go. My sisters would come if I couldn't carry the load with all the bags, but by themselves, they wouldn't be sent.

In Sankethi families, maybe because of the migration from villages, there was more insistence on boys becoming engineers. If you became an engineer—the country was going through a process of building—you would typically end up with a job within a month of graduation. Engineers were responsible for powering up villages, building bridges, dams, and large irrigation projects; they were respected very highly. Nobody went into law, or accounting, and the so-called MBA was not heard of at the time.

Few went into medicine, maybe because it was costlier. It cost you nothing to take an Arts degree. In Science, it was a little extra money. Engineering was a little bit more, but Medicine was probably twice as much. On that scale it was expensive.

Other Brahmin communities in the neighborhood

I remember a NASA picnic in North Carolina. That was when we started realizing there were other families who spoke the same dialect when they got together. I knew we knew a lot of Kannada families but didn't know Sankethi other than family at home. Mostly, I had the identity of being Kannadiga.

My Indian friends were from other Kannada families; I had no other Indian friends in school. The one or two sporadically were North Indian. I think we noticed the language, definitely, and the foods were different. When we grew up, we learned Bharatanatyam. I knew that was South Indian, and that Kathak was North Indian, and I knew that restaurants served mostly North Indian food.

From what I could see, our family and most other Kannadiga families had the same lifestyle, the same type of home, and the same type of food. One Konkani family, whose father ate a whole bunch of stuff, took us to a Chinese restaurant when I was five or six years old, and that was a big deal, because our parents would have never taken us to a Chinese restaurant. Our options were only Italian and Mexican, and even those were rare.

At that point, I kind of assumed most Indian people had the same type of upbringing. Mom would get up and do *shloka* in the morning, and my dad would do it before eating.

For me, being Indian was a lot more about preserving our culture and learning about mythological stories through dance. Dance was something that I held on to. I knew it was a way to tie back to the culture my mom and dad were trying

had similar backgrounds and similar eating habits, except for a little change in the language, and just a forehead mark: ash on the forehead, or a vertical line, or a stamp.

I definitely identified myself more with other Kannadigas—even Lingayats and Shudras—than with Tamil migrants.

I first came to the U.S. in 1968, to study in Terra Haute, Indiana. Before that, I was working for the Ministry of Defense. You couldn't stay after 4pm. You would clock in, and clock out, and what you did in between was irrelevant.

At the time, the United States was the dream of everybody. It was the land of opportunity, the land of technological advancement, the land that built planes, and the land that built transistors.

My best time here was living with Americans. I had tremendous roommates. Whatever I didn't do in India, I did in those one and a half years. Like playing golf, and billiards. I learned swimming, and tennis, and tobogganing. I learned to drive without a license. I was about to hit my friend's car to a tree: he only told me, "one pedal is an accelerator and one is a brake." There was only one solitary tree, but I didn't know which pedal to push!

My roommates were all local Americans, all young kids. I was a married man with a kid. They would ask me for advice on their girlfriends. I told them, "look I don't know anything!"

In 1976, I heard talk of NASA, and from then on...

to preserve. I remember going back to India, where one cousin was learning dance as well. When we went back, my sister and I without our parents, we asked my cousin, "are you still dancing," and the answer was, "no!" And we were there to take lessons. It was mind-boggling that she wasn't interested anymore when it was such a big part of our lives.

They were just saying, "none of my friends are really doing it." India was changing faster than the preserved India that we had kept. Mom would wear *kumkum* every day, and I would wear it every day. These were things we didn't really think were strange. Then, we'd go to India and see cousins who were not wearing it every day. We might have preserved older traditions than they did.

I think in retrospect, I can see our family had more of an interest in music. When I got to know other Indian people in college, I realized that not every family had such an interest in the arts. In the Sankethi meetings, the cornerstone of the program was the kids' talent show.

I started going to NASA when I was around 12 years old. It was much more of a family from the very beginning. There was less formality. It was a group of people you didn't mind seeing with bed head in the morning...



## AMERICA, THE LAND OF FREEDOM, THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

*By Jayanthi (Jaye) Rao*

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Congratulations NASA and the Sankethi Community on celebrating 25 years of bringing friends and family together to share in our rich heritage. I feel honored to be asked to write an article for this auspicious occasion. I am blessed to be the recipient of all the seeds that my family and community have sowed over so many years of our rich heritage.

On this momentous occasion, let us take the time to reflect on our journey in America—our personal journey and our journey as a Sankethi Community.

“Welcome to America!”

Think back to that first breathtaking moment you laid eyes on New York City. The awe of seeing the Statue of Liberty extending her open arms to receive you. Remember the majesty of the endless skyscrapers piercing the blue skies. Finally, docking at the pier in NYC like my uncle, Subramanya Bettadapur, one of the first Sankethis in America, did. Or as my parents and I, along with so many other Sankethi families over the years, touched down at JFK. That landing crystallizes the ray of hope that anything is possible in America, the land of freedom and opportunity. All you have to do is dream, believe and try. Everywhere you look you see the glory of man-made possibilities.

I believe that inextinguishable flame exists in each one of us who made that journey here as new immigrants. We do believe all things are possible because we know the challenges we have faced in our assimilation process to become U.S. citizens. Those challenges gave us the value of hard work and perseverance. Our challenge now as Indian Americans is to recognize that great opportunities exist for us even in areas we may not have previously explored.

I firmly believe, as Sankethi Americans making our homes here in the U.S., we have a responsibility to take part in the political process. It is important that we take responsibility to shape the direction of our country, our state and our community.

Did you notice the significant impact the African American community had on the Presidential Primary process and then on the Presidential election? Senator Barack Obama won traditionally Republican southern states of Virginia and North Carolina because the African American community, in a show of pride, admiration and respect, voted and contributed heavily to Obama.

As Indian Americans, we do not have those sheer numbers to sway elections, but we can do our part. It starts with a step. The more we get involved the more we can have a say in the process. At one time, we could not imagine there would come a day that we would elect an Indian Governor in Louisiana. Now, Governor Bobby Jindal is our first Indian Governor and certainly will not be our last. He showed us it could be done.

Indian Americans are making enormous strides in the political process. In 2004, I was honored to become the first Sankethi/Indian American to become the Republican Party's Nominee for Secretary of State. Many of you supported my efforts, giving me the necessary resources to run a credible, spirited campaign against an entrenched insider. One day with your support, I hope to have the honor of serving you as an elected official.

I got my start in politics at an early age and your children can do the same. While in high school, I had the honor of serving as a Governor's Page for Governor Jim Hunt. This life-changing experience left me with twinkles in my eyes and a passion to be involved politically. I still remember how excited I was at having my picture taken with the Governor of NC. Perhaps one of your children can serve as an aide in the President's or Governor's administration.

In Maryland, Kumar Barve has made his own mark on history. My story and Barve's story can be your child's story too. Kumar Barve, a Maryland native, grew up in the early 70s when Indians were a relatively new immigrant community. Fortunately for Barve, his parents did not view this as a handicap. They instilled in him a value for voting and civic involvement early on. Barve recalls, "unlike other Indian parents who discouraged their children from getting involved with school activities, my parents encouraged me to participate. I won my first election for student government in 1970." His first win lit a larger flame in him to get involved on political campaigns. His first volunteer effort was for a Maryland House of Delegates candidate. Barve says, "I found myself doing everything from knocking on doors [to] stuffing envelopes. Local campaigns are a perfect place to begin because I participated in all aspects of the campaign and knew the candidate well." His candidate did not win, but for Barve and his parents, this was a valuable learning opportunity. Because of his childhood experiences, Barve says, "I always knew I would run for office."

Today, Maryland Delegate Kumar Barve has the distinction of being the first Indian American to get elected to the General Assembly in the US. Furthermore, his Democratic colleagues have honored him by electing Barve as their Majority Leader.

A humble politician, Barve is unaware of the doors he has helped open for other Indian Americans. I was inspired by his work to do more in politics. He helped me to recognize the voice I have in me to make a difference by running for elective office. Barve believes "we as Indian Americans have always had the door to politics open, but we in past have not chosen to walk through it. The barrier to elective office does not exist, the notion that Indians can't win is untrue."

Because of my own experiences, I always try to encourage Indian kids to help me on my campaign. I feel somehow, if I can light a fire in them to get involved, then I have done my part to pass on the torch. Please encourage your children to get involved on political campaigns.

Do you have to have grown up here to be a successful candidate for office or participate? No! Here's another inspiring story that we can emulate.

Over three decades ago, Dr. Nalin Mehta made that historic plane journey from Bombay to JFK to pursue a dream of practicing medicine. Nalin could not even imagine where his life's journey of practicing medicine would lead him in this amazing country. All he knew was he was going to make a better life for himself. Today, Stanly County Commissioner Nalin Mehta has truly accomplished this, and in the process has penned a page in Indian American history.

Dr. Nalin Mehta and his wife Sue, a New Jersey native, moved to North Carolina to provide much needed medical services. What they found was a rural southern town with no exposure to Indians or northerners. Both Nalin and Sue were outsiders. But Mehta's father instilled in him a strong sense of assisting the community and his fellow man. This strong value served Nalin and Sue as they channeled their energies into their new community. Together they set up an oncology practice and two medical support groups. Not satisfied, they started serving on the

first of many community boards which included Hospice, the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society and many more.

Commissioner Mehta reflects, “I got involved with all these community activities because of my Indian values of working hard, being honest and leaving my community better off...politics was just an extension of my community service. I felt called to run.”

Mehta never allowed his “differences” to make him believe he was unaccepted. Says Mehta, “if you believe you won’t be accepted, then you are not, whether northerners or Indians. You live here, you work here, this is your home and you need to embrace the people.”

In 2004, Dr. Nalin Mehta filed to run for County Commission of Stanly County. The paper coined him “...local well loved physician.” With this leap of faith to try, Mehta won a Republican Primary and then the General Election. Commissioner Mehta has proudly served the citizens of Stanly County for the past four years, making an impact on local politics. The greater impact, unknown to Mehta, the first Indian American to get elected in North Carolina, was that on the Indian community.

When I hear stories of victory from my fellow Indian Americans, I get that misty-eyed feeling of pride and patriotism. Patriotism that embraces our American heritage while remembering our Indian roots. It pushes me forward, more determined, more optimistic. We live in a country where only your heart determines what is possible. We must embrace every opportunity because we came here to claim our God given right to have that opportunity. The doors are open to us. Let us walk through.

**Jayanthi (Jaye) Rao was the first Indian American to be a party’s Nominee for Secretary of State. She received over 1.4 million votes in 2004. Jayanthi is the proud daughter of Murahari and Annapurna Rao, and granddaughter of S. Ramaswamy, Founder/Principal of the National Institute of Engineering (now the University of Mysore) and B.S. Suryanarayana, senior Assistant Commissioner.**

*“Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.”*

*- Gautama Buddha*

## ISPIT 101: AN INTRODUCTION TO 28

*By Jayanth Jayaram*

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As you enter the cafeteria in Ziegler Hall in search of delicious snacks, you see a group of people playing cards and hear the following:

Player 1: “Pass”  
Player 2: “*Biddu*” (bid) [other terms include game, bid, or the points being bid, like “12”]  
Player 3: “1-up”  
Player 2: “*Irali*” (let it be)  
Player 3: “*Innondu*” (one more)  
Player 2: “*Irali*” (let it be)  
Player 3: “*Saaku*” (enough)  
Player 4: “Pass”  
Dealer: “1-*jasthi*, *haylabahuda*?” (can I say 1 more?)  
Player 2: “*Ninnishta*” (do what you please)  
Dealer: “*Bayda...ninn game hogli*” (no...hope you lose your game)  
Player 2: “Trump Hearts”

Not understanding the game being played, you ask: “What’re you playing?” Several chime in with “28.” You ask if you can play and they say that you need to learn the game. Being pretty sharp and an astute poker (insert any other card game, if applicable...even if not, not a problem) player, you ask if they can explain the rules so you can join in and play. However, the group informs you that although the rules are relatively simple, the strategy is fairly complicated. A bystander suggests that if you sit down and observe, she can (quietly) teach you the rules. After grabbing some *bondas* and *chakli*, you return to try to grasp the rules and fundamentals of the game. (Although the players initially scowled at you for interrupting their concentration during the game, you gain everyone’s favor by bringing extra snacks for the group.)

Your guide begins to describe the game, which has a different ranking sequence than most card games. In 28, Jack is the highest card (worth 3 points), followed by the 9 (2 points), the Ace (1 point), and finally the 10 (1 point). You ask why the Ace is higher ranked if they both are worth 1 point; you also ask why the strange ranking, instead of Ace being highest and 2 being lowest. The reply: “that’s the way it is.” She tells you that after the 10, the sequence is more traditional; after the 10, the ranking order is King, Queen, 8, 7, etc. You then ask why the game is called 28 and learn that the point system described above creates 7 points in each suit, making 28 points for all the suits combined. Unlike the previous response, you are pleased with this rational explanation. However, your teacher informs you that there are some alternate ways to get points: the final trick is awarded 1 point and if you have both the King and Queen of the same suit (a pair) remaining in your hand upon your (or your team’s) first trick, it is worth 2 points (or 4 points if that suit happens to be the trump), if and only if it is declared prior to your playing a card in the next round. In any of these circumstances these points are taken away from the other team’s score at the end of the game while calculating the points accumulated.

“What is a trump and what do you mean by team? Doesn’t each player play for themselves?” Your guide explains that after the cards are dealt, an auction begins starting from the dealer’s left. During the bidding stage, each player must independently assess the strength of their hand and decide whether or not to declare the current bid of points that the player will have at the end of that game. She informs you that you were present for that when you first arrived on the scene (please refer back to the very beginning of this piece). The player that declares the highest bid of points (the “declarer”) is on one team, while the rest of the players are collectively on the other team for that particular game. “So, it’s all against one? That seems unfair.” Indeed, it is all against the declarer, but the declarer has two distinct advantages. First, the declarer gets to select the trump suit. A lower valued card in the trump suit beats a higher valued card in a non-trump suit. For instance, if hearts is the trump in a particular game, and a player starts that round with a Jack of spades, a 7 of hearts would beat it. Second, only the declarer has the option to replace a card that was initially dealt with what is in the dip—a card placed face down when the cards are dealt that is unknown to all the players. This could allow the declarer to exchange a 10 of clubs for the trump Jack! However, the declarer is stuck with the replacement that occurs. For example, if the declarer places a 10 of clubs in exchange for a dip card that is a 7 of clubs, the declarer must keep the 7 of clubs in the hand. The dip card’s value (if any) goes to the other team, but nobody may see that card until after that game is over. The declarer also has the option to not make an exchange with the dip card (sometimes referred to as “dip-thanks” or “no dip”). The declarer must state the trump prior to making a dip card exchange, unless the declarer states “trumpless” (this is an uncommon situation and not addressed here).

How does a player assess the hand? This is sometimes difficult. Clearly, a bad hand can easily be determined (e.g., no “point” values possessed). On the flip side, an excellent hand can also be pretty easy to recognize (e.g., J, 9, A, 10, K, Q, 8 of the same suit). The problem lies with virtually all hands in between. Only experience and observation of people playing the game can assist with that analysis. Some factors to consider include, but are not limited to (and not necessarily in this order of importance):

1. The number of cards in your selected trump suit if you declare the game—more is better;
2. The strength of those trump cards—stronger is better;
3. The number of suits that you do not possess—less is better;
4. The strength of the other cards in your hand—stronger is better;
5. The number of tricks and the potential points that the other team may be able to get/save during those tricks—fewer tricks and less points is better;
6. How many others have bid on the game—less is usually better;
7. The potential for pairs in either your hand or those on the other team;
8. Your risk/return if you make or do not make the number of points which you declare—28 is a game of chance that requires stakes to prevent a player from recklessly raising bids without potential consequences;
9. The experience of the other players;
10. Position in relation to the dealer: at the start of a game, the first card played is selected by the player to the left of the dealer. Normally, being the last to act (dealer) or first to act (left of the dealer) in the initial round has advantages over other positions;

11. Whether you think the distribution of cards (or dip card) could be in your favor or disfavor—sometimes a very strong hand can fail while a relatively weak hand can succeed based on things completely out of your control.

You then ask what the minimum bid is, but she tells you that it depends on the number of players and whether the game is in “*baysth*.” When a declarer makes at least the number of points bid during a “standard” game, the declarer wins 1 unit from each of the other players. However, if the declarer fails to do so, then the game goes to “first *baysth*” and the minimum points to declare is one greater than that of a “standard” game. Should a declarer make sufficient points in a “first *baysth*” game, the previous declarer who previously did not make the requisite number of points contributes “ $n+1$ ” units to the current successful declarer, with  $n$  representing the number of players. Should a declarer not make the requisite number of points during a “first *baysth*” game, then the current declarer risks losing “ $2n+1$ ” units to a subsequent declarer during a “second *baysth*” game, where the minimum bid is two points greater than the minimum bid for a “standard” game. Much is at stake at this stage because if a declarer fails to acquire the bid-upon points, that declarer must pay 7 units to each player, with offsets considered based on who failed to make their games in the other two “*baysth*” games. You then realize that a player can be successful solely by his or her contribution to preventing declarers from making their games and realize why those seasoned players were hesitant to admit someone who has never played the game. Below is an example of a series of games and their hypothetical outcomes with five players:

- Game 1 (“standard”): minimum bid 10; Player 1 makes the highest bid of 11 and acquires 16 points. Players 2-5 each give 1 unit to Player 1.
- Game 2 (“standard”): minimum bid 10; Player 2 makes the highest bid of 12 but acquires 11 points. Player 2 has caused the “first *baysth*.”
- Game 3 (“first *baysth*”): minimum bid 11; Player 3 makes the highest bid of 11, but gets only 10 points. Player 4 has caused the “second *baysth*.”
- Game 4 winner (“second *baysth*”): minimum bid 12; Player 4 bids 12 and makes 12. Player 4 collects 6 units ( $n+1$ ) from Player 2 for “first *baysth*”, collects 11 units ( $2n+1$ ) from Player 3 for “second *baysth*”, and collects 1 unit each from Players 1 and 5...a total of 19 units.

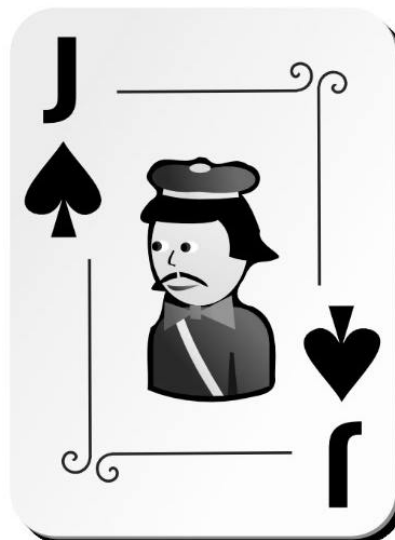
**OR**

- Game 4 loser (“second *baysth*”): minimum bid 12; Player 4 bids 12 but makes 11. Player 4 must contribute 7 units to each of the four other players. Players 1 and 5 receive 7 units each, but Player 2 receives only 1 unit (7 units–6 units) and Player 2 must actually contribute 4 units to Player 4 (7 units received from Player 4 offset by 11 units owed for causing the “second *baysth*”)...a total payout of 11 units. (Note that if the same player loses all three “*baysths*”, that player would pay 7 units to each player without any offsets...a total payout of 28 units with five players.)

Games revert back to “standard” from “*baysth*” upon either a declarer making the game during any “*baysth*” or upon three consecutive “*baysths*.”

You then ask what if nobody is willing to bid the minimum for a particular game. You learn that the cards are collected and passed on to the next dealer for distribution. You then ask how the game is played. The teacher states that there are just too many combinations and permutations to explain a particular strategy. However, she explains that when a particular card is initially played in a round, all players must play a card in that suit if they have one (or more)—often called an “answer.” If not, that player has the option to play a card in another suit. If that other suit is a trump, then it is called a “cut” and would beat any non-trump suit card as well as those of lower rank in the trump suit. A card played that does not answer the suit of the initial card in a round cannot win the trick. When all the cards are played in a particular round, the trick is taken by the player who has the “highest” card in that round and he or she begins play in the next round. For example, if the declarer starts with a Jack of hearts, a player who does not have hearts could play a Joker (the lowest trump card) to get those three points as well as allowing other players to secure points for the team on that particular trick.

You thank her for her time and patience in explaining the game and ask why she is not playing. She explains that she had played for some time and is able to keep track of how each game develops (e.g., points for the declarer, points for the other team, cards played and by whom). However, she has chosen to stop playing and take advantage of the NASA event to catch up with friends, especially because discussions are discouraged, as there are so many items to track as each game develops. She informs you that there are some other nuances in the game such as “trumpless” but hopes that you will remember these basic concepts if you decide to play 28 and learn various strategies from more experienced players.



# WE ALL BELONG TO NASA

*By Deepak Dathatri (a.k.a. Deepy Joel) ©1998*

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(To the tune of “We Didn’t Start the Fire” by Billy Joel)

Balakrishna, Dr. J, NASA Founding Fathers, Yeah  
Berlin Temple, Kalibari, 1984.  
Hindu Arsha Vidya Peetam, Tabla, Bharathanatyam,  
Sringeri, Vrajabhoomi, Hot Potato.

Veena, Sitar, Ramakrishna, Jagganath,  
Om, Pooja, Prayer Time, We all have Religious Rights.  
Dathatri, Murthy, Tenth Anniversary,  
Windsor Conference Center, I wish I could be here all the time.

Chorus:        We all belong to NASA.  
                  It has always been there, since I can remember.  
                  We all belong to NASA.  
                  We love the meetings and we love the eating.

Members of NASA, Remember the Marathon,  
Bettuthpura, Upit, Oota, Prayer, Yoga.  
Chinmaya Mission, Panel Discussion,  
Vasanth, Rajanna, Jaya Balakrishna.  
Sithalakshmi, Magge is pronounced Mageee,  
Natesh is the President, Organizing Cool Events,  
Youth are Crazy Pests, Free Throws are the Sports Events,  
Wheelbarrow Races, Cultural Heritage.

Chorus:        We all belong to NASA.  
                  It has always been there, since I can remember.  
                  We all belong to NASA.  
                  We love the meetings and we love the eating.

Karnatik, Kowshik, Sankethi Music,  
Ispit, Lunch Time, Our Grade are Very High.  
Amrutha Vishwanath, Engineer or Doctor,  
Rao is a popular name, but I don't know why.

Guitar Solo

Kalibari Temple, had a Meeting Long Ago,  
Hosahalli, Mathur, Sankethi Hard Core.  
Hindu Jeopardy, General Body,  
NASA Going Psycho, Wing Commander Rao.



Chorus: We all belong to NASA.  
It has always been there, since I can remember.  
We all belong to NASA.  
We love the meetings and we love the eating.

Arranged Marriage, Stranger in a Strange Land,  
Berlin Temple, Third Get-Together.  
Yoga, Ashwathnarayana, Vedas, Srikantiah,  
Youth Skits, Crazy, Executive Committee.  
Dance, Chess, What a Mess!, Did You Study, Yes, Yes,  
Satish Magge, What else do I have to say?

Chorus: We all belong to NASA.  
It has always been there, since I can remember.  
We all belong to NASA.  
We love the meetings and we love the eating.

Graduation, Sundaresan,  
Sitar, Tabla, Coffee Break, Oota.  
Nature Walks, Private Time, NASA Meetings out of line,  
Balakrishna Slapping Backs, 2-Year Terms for Presidents.  
NASA Members, Friends of Mine, What the hell is Private Time?  
Bingo, Rice, College, Surrendra, Nose-Music,  
Windsor Conference Center, Been Here for a Second Year,  
Jump Rope, Kho-Kho, I Can't Take it Anymore.

Chorus: We all belong to NASA.  
It has always been there, since I can remember.  
We all belong to NASA.  
Well, we've done no wrong,  
So it still goes on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on.  
We all belong to NASA.  
We love the meetings and we love the eating.  
We all belong to NASA.

## ನಗೆಹನಿಗಳು

ರಾಧಾ ಜಯರಾಂ

- ಅಜ್ಜ: ಲೇ ಮಾರ್ಗರೇಟ್, ನಿನ್ನ ಗಂಡ ದಿನವೂ ಶ್ರದ್ಧೆಯಾಗಿ ಈ ನಡುವೆ ಅಶ್ವಮೇಧಯಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋಗಿ ಬರುತ್ತೇನೆ ಅಂತಾನಲ್ಲ\_ಯಾಗ ನೋಡಲು ನನ್ನನ್ನೂ ಸಹ ಕರೆದುಕೊಂಡು ಹೋಗಿ.  
ಮೊಮ್ಮಗಳು:ಅಜ್ಜ ಅವರು ಹೋಗಿ ಜೋಲು ಮೋರೆ ಹಾಕಿಕೊಂಡು ಮನೆಗೆ ಬರುತ್ತಾರಲ್ಲ, ಹಾಳು ಕುದುರೆ ಜೂಜು! ಕುದುರೆ ಜೂಜಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಕುದುರೆ ಬಾಲಕ್ಕೆ ದಕ್ಷಿಣೆ ಕೊಟ್ಟುಬರುತ್ತಾರೆ.
- ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತ: ಸೆನೆಟರ್ ಸಾರ್ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಫ್ಯಾಮಿಲಿ ಬ್ಯಾಕ್ ಗ್ರೌಂಡ್ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಹೇಳುತ್ತೀರಾ?  
ಸೆನೆಟರ್: ನನಗೆ ಬ್ಯಾಕ್ ಗ್ರೌಂಡ್ , ಫುಂಟ್ ಗ್ರೌಂಡ್ ಎರಡೂ ಇಲ್ಲ, ನಾನಿರೋದು ಬಾಡಿಗೆ ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ!
- ತಂದೆ ಮಗ ಕ್ರಿಸ್ ಮಸ್ ಹಬ್ಬಕ್ಕೆ ಸರ್ಕೂಟ್ ಸಿಟಿ ಅಂಗಡಿಗೆ ಟೇಪ್ ರೆಕಾರ್ಡರ್ ಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಹೋದಾಗ, ಮಗನು ಡ್ಯಾಡಿ ನಮಗೆ ಟೇಪ್ ರೆಕಾರ್ಡರ್ ಬೇಡ, ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಮ್ಮ ಇರೋವಾಗ ! ಅಂದ.
- ಡಾಕ್ಟರು: ಕ್ಯಾಥರಿನ್ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಯಜಮಾನರು ಲೂಯಿಸ್ ಹೇಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಈಗ?  
ಕ್ಯಾಥರಿನ್: ಈಗ ವಾಸಿ ಡಾಕ್ಟ್ರೀ  
ಡಾಕ್ಟರು: ಎಲ್ಲಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಈಗ?  
ಕ್ಯಾಥರಿನ್: ಇವತ್ತು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ ಅವರು ಸತ್ತು ಹೋದರು.
- ಶಾಲೆಯ ಮೇಡಂ: ಯಾರೋ ಅದು ದಿ ಟೀಚರ್ ಇಸ್ ಎ ಫೂಲ್ ಅಂತ ಬರೆದಿರುವುದು.  
ಡೇವಿಡ್: ನಾನೇ ಮೇಡಂ  
ಶಾಲೆಯ ಮೇಡಂ: ಸದ್ಯ ನೀನಾದರೂ ಸತ್ಯವನ್ನು ತಿಳಿದು ಹೇಳಿದೆಯಲ್ಲ.
- ಆಧುನಿಕ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ವಿವಾಹ ವಿಚ್ಛೇದನ ಎಷ್ಟು ಜನಪ್ರಿಯವಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂದರೆ ಮದುವೆ ಲೈಸೆನ್ಸ್ ಕೊಡುವಾಗಲೇ ಡೈವೋರ್ಸ್ ಕೂಪನ್ನನ್ನೂ ಕೊಡಲಾಗುತ್ತೆ.
- ಮೇಷ್ಟ್ರು: ಜಾನ್ ಮನೇಲಿ ಹೋಮ್ ವರ್ಕ್ ಮಡೋಕ್ಕೆ ಹೇಳಿದ್ದಲ್ಲ, ಮಾಡಿ ತಂದಿದ್ದೀಯ ತಾನೇ?  
ಜಾನ್: ಓ! ತಗೊಳ್ಳಿ.  
ಮೇಷ್ಟ್ರು: ಇದೇನಿದು, ಗ್ರೋಸರಿ ಲೆಕ್ಕ, ಬಾಡಿಗೆ ಲೆಕ್ಕ, ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಲೆಕ್ಕ
- ಡಾಕ್ಟರು: ನಿಮ್ಮ ಆಪರೇಷನ್ ಗೆ \$೫೦,೦೦೦ ಖರ್ಚಾಗುತ್ತೆ ಅಂತ ಹೇಳಿದೆನಲ್ಲ ತಂದಿದ್ದೀರಾ?  
ರೋಗಿ: ನಿಮಗೆ \$೫೦,೦೦೦ ಕೊಡುವಂತೆ ನನ್ನ ಉಯಿಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆರೆದಿದ್ದೇನೆ
- ಡಯಾನಳ ಗಂಡ ಜೇಮ್ಸ್ ಬಂದು ನೇಮ್ ಬ್ರಾಂಡ್ ಕಾರುಕೊಂಡ. ಹೆಂಡತಿಗೆ ಡ್ರೈವಿಂಗ್ ಕಲಿಸಲು ಹೊರಟ. ಇದು ಗೇರ್, ಇದು ಬ್ರೇಕ್, ಇದು ಆಗ್ನಲರೇಟರ್ ಮುಂತಾಗಿ \_\_ವಿವರಿಸಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದ. ಜೇಮ್ಸ್ ಡಿಯರ್ ಅದೆಲ್ಲಾ ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಹೇಳೋವಂತೆ, ಮೊದಲು ಡ್ರೈವಿಂಗ್ ಹೇಳೋಡಿ ಅಂದಳು ಡಯಾನ.

## SANKETHI SKIKETHIS & SCUKETHIS

*By: Jai K. Rangappa*

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### Skikethis – Snow Skiing

The word Skikethi was coined by K.S. Sundaresan, even though he himself does not ski. His children and grandchildren ski. Skikethis encompass all Sankethis who snow ski and water-ski. I coined the word Scukethi to include all Sankethi SCUBA divers who are pool divers or certified open water SCUBA divers.

Y.N. Jayaram and I learned to snow ski in the U.S., independent of each other, and met and found a common adventurous spirit. When NASA was founded under the leadership of Jayaram and other Sankethis in 1984, some families got together with us and we started the annual Christmas snow skiing trips. Jaya and Balakrishna of Albany, NY were gracious and very hospitable hosts for these trips for over 10 years, and we heartily thank them for it. God bless them for this and many other services to the community. We ski bums practically took over their house for about a week and our lodging, food and all comforts were taken care of by them to the last detail. All of us will remember them for their generosity and loving kindness. Many of the NASA youth recall those times very fondly and have bonded together even though they have grown up and have their own families now. Mount Gore ski area in New York, an hour from the Balakrishna house, has seen its share of Skikethis and their wipeouts. Soon many other Sankethi kids and adults joined our group and we skied in Vermont, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, North Carolina, Colorado and other places. We had a lot of fun and many ski adventures have been videotaped and may be seen on the web or at Sankethi meetings in the future.



I started snow skiing and waterskiing in my forties and have been doing it without a break for over 27 years. Initially it took me about two years to get over the fear of speed and lack of control on skis. Both Menaca and Renuka, who as children picked up skiing very quickly, helped me to get over my trepidation. The struggle of learning skiing has been worth it for the joy it has given me and others who have joined me over the years. As Jayaram once said at Killington, VT while skiing, “This is next to heaven.” Now that we have our third generation skiers polishing their acts, we may have an Olympian in the wings in 15-20 years.

In February 2009, Ganesh Rao organized a ski weekend at Okemo, VT with second generation and third generation Sankethis. Jayaram and I joined them and had a great time skiing and spending time at the chalet, which was completely ours for 3 whole days. We were about 25 people in all, but wish more had joined. Maybe next time more will join and become Skikethis. The kids certainly had a lot of fun and are keen on getting together again.

More power to Skikethis!

### Skikethis – Waterskiing

Waterskiing is the next best thing to walking on water. Hampton, VA has become the waterskiing capital of America for many Indians of the world and for Sankethis in particular. Hampton, VA was the site of the annual NASA get-together in 1988 and over 100 Sankethis, mostly young ones, tried waterskiing for the first time and had a blast on the lake that is behind my present townhouse. Andy Gibbs, a champion water skier who owns this Hampton lake, has personally taught many of our Sankethis to water ski and I am grateful to him for his time and sincere effort. Jayaram and I are regular water skiers on this lake and every year some newcomer joins in the game. Now, the third generation of Sankethis are trying waterskiing with my grandson, Aakash Padakandla of Dallas, TX, leading the way. All NASA kids and others are welcome to come to Hampton, VA in the summer and I shall be glad to teach them waterskiing at my time and expense as long as they commit to being good students. Let me see how many would like to have fun with me.



### Scukethis - SCUBA Diving

There are over two dozen Sankethis who have learned to SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) dive and most of them are certified in Open Water Diving. One day we can have a NASA meeting in the Caribbean Islands and many of us can meet underwater with the fish. SCUBA diving is just over 50 years old and the equipment was invented and refined by Captain Jacques Cousteau of France. Many of us have seen his underwater adventures on television. His society headquarters and a museum are in Hampton, VA, and are worth visiting. SCUBA diving has become very sophisticated and the equipment has become highly technical. Recreational diving for most healthy people is confined to a depth of 100 feet and one can get training and experience in any city in the U.S. As a prerequisite, one has to be a good swimmer. Going underwater is an eye-opening experience and one never forgets his or her first dive. Even blind people can learn to SCUBA dive and experience weightlessness like astronauts. All good swimmers must learn to SCUBA dive to see the underwater devastation done by people on land and learn to respect nature and educate the “blind.” Most fishermen do not SCUBA dive and are ignorant of the underwater beauty; as a result they have depleted the oceans of most marine life. The late Captain Jacques Cousteau and his followers have been educating people in how humans have been destroying the oceans. I hope nature will fight back and end this human folly.



Let all Skikethis and Scukethis of the world unite and join with all those Sankethis and non-Sankethis who do not ski or SCUBA dive. More power to us all!

# MY JOURNEY

*By Mahathi Kumar*

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Whenever I hear that we are going to India, I am always excited. I get to go see my family, friends and my parents' birthplaces. Going to India has always been an amazing experience for me, getting to see how and where my parents grew up and getting to see how my family is growing up.

I usually drive my parents crazy on the plane ride there, but it's all forgotten the moment we make eye contact with our family. I love seeing the look on my parents' faces as they reunite with their brothers, sisters, parents, and family.

Then I wonder what it is like for them, having grown up in India and then moving to the U.S. Well, I obviously haven't lived that, but I have visited the places where my parents grew up—villages where they didn't have everything I have, but have things I could never imagine growing up with (like cows! That's awesome!!).

When we went to Basavapatna, where my dad grew up, the atmosphere there was very welcoming. Everyone was so friendly with each other! You could just prance right into someone's house, ask for food, and boom! You would have what you needed like magic! The way everyone was cooperating was amazing!

My dad would always tell me stories about the fun things he did while he was growing up—playing tricks on people, getting to play with his friends on the way to school, and of course, his stories about the *thota*. My dad's family also had cows, and he got to milk them and take care of them! That would be AWESOME!! I can just imagine myself trying to milk a cow...and then getting to drink the milk; it would give me such a sense of accomplishment!

My mom grew up in a very small village called Chikmenahalli, and she lived in a small house. I was amazed to see that seven kids and two parents all fit into it!! Like Basavapatna, the people in Chikmenahalli are very friendly. Everyone seemed very happy and very calm, as if they didn't have any problems or anything—all your worries just evaporated when you were with the people you loved.

Since Chikmenahalli isn't close to any local stores or schools, my mom's siblings and she had to walk 1½ miles to get to school! I can't even imagine walking that much just to get to school; it sounds so new and different! My grandpa didn't have a car, but he had a bike which got him around, so whenever someone needed something, he would bike into Hassan to get what they needed! I wonder what it was like, the people my grandpa met while he biked everywhere, or the things he saw.

In Chikmenahalli my mom's house didn't get any electricity or running water, so they had to use lanterns and get water from wells. I can barely imagine what it was like, having to use a well to get water! I mean, I am so used to just turning on the sink or flicking on the light switch. I think it would be a really interesting experience not having immediate water or electricity!

My parents didn't grow up in big mansions or in huge houses with everything, but I think what they did have is pretty amazing. They grew up having so much fun, with their friends, family, and of course, their cows! It's really different for someone who is growing up in Connecticut to go see what it was like living in Basavapatna or Chikmenahalli, but I love it! I think it's a huge privilege to be able to grow up in America and still get a taste of what life was like for my parents. I love seeing my parents' home, and I know I will always treasure it!

*OUR BEST WISHES TO NASA  
DURING ITS SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS*

*Lakshmi & Shantaram Kashyap*

*Sangeeta & Vikram Kashyap and children  
Tejas, Anjali & Rohit*

*Nandini & William Hashe and children  
Mira & Cayla*

On the joyous occasion of  
*NASA's 25th Anniversary*

Wishing Mrs. Saraswathi Rao  
(Mani Chikamma)  
a very happy 80th birthday

from

Her loving sisters  
Rukmini's (Baniakka) and Nalini's  
Children and Grandchildren

# Fall



## The Road Not Taken

By Robert Frost

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth.*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same.*

*And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*

*Brilliant crimsons, lustrous golds, fiery oranges, and earthy browns portend a slowing down  
for the season to come, but also represent the hues of maturity and experience.*



# WILL BRAHMINISM BECOME EXTINCT?

*By: Saroja Hanasoge*

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Those who consider themselves “modern” may view Brahminism as a tradition of intellectualism. However, the fact that it is considered a privilege conferred by birthright amongst the more tradition-bound set has not eased its entry into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The future of Brahmin culture rests on resolving this rather fundamental dichotomy: Is Brahminism a set of practices to free the mind or is it a collection of rituals and beliefs for the preservation of the karmic earnings of those who follow them?

Many who came to the United States before the 1980s have generally found it convenient to categorize opinions about Indian culture as those held by the younger generation or those held by the elder generation. This type of sorting obscures the complexity and spectrum of opinions actually held by various members of the so-called second generation (i.e. younger) Indians. Homogeneity has never been a characteristic of the Indian mindset—regardless of generation and geographical location. Thus, when older Indian immigrants try to preserve what they believe to be their dying culture by lamenting its potential extinction, what they may in fact be bemoaning is the dynamic and malleable nature of Indian thought.

Some may agree that the defining feature of Brahminical thought is the recognition of the importance of the mind. Freedom, a Brahmin might suggest, comes from having control of one’s mind. The optimal way to achieve this is by leading a disciplined and methodical life, he may add. Yet there is no consensus on the best method to pursue nor the philosophical framework to select. At the two ends of the spectrum are *Advaita* and *Dvaita* philosophy. *Advaita* literally means non-duality and it expounds on the illusory distinction between object and subject. According to *Advaita*, there is no separation between the one who perceives God and God itself. On the other hand, adherents of *Dvaita* suggest that one’s ultimate aim is union with a separate God; the object and the subject are distinct. While there are additional philosophies, for the purposes of this discussion, it is sufficient to consider *Advaita* and *Dvaita* thought.

Based on these philosophical paths, it can be seen that the ancient thinkers did not have unity in their attitudes. *Advaita* and *Dvaita* are quite dissimilar. The question then arises: What exactly is Brahminism? The answer may be that there is no one correct answer. At best, one may say that the term refers to a collection of diverse sets of ideas regarding the nature of reality and perception. It would appear then that the term “Brahminism” is in fact a misnomer. The use of the term “Brahminism” suggests a uniformity of practice and thought that is not there.

Currently it appears that some believe that Brahminism is defined by specific dietary, social, and marital practices. It is easy to see then why those who subscribe to this point of view feel that Brahminism is threatened. Diet, society, and marriage are all subject to the vagaries of time and place. Presumably, Brahman is independent of time and place. It is not clear then why many decide to practice Brahminism in this time-bound manner. I shall define “context” here as time and place. Anything that is defined by context-specific practices will inevitably become extinct when the context changes.

A tradition-bound lifestyle cannot replace the labor and analysis required to think of Brahman. Regardless of whether one marries within the community, eats meat, or spends time only with other Brahmins, realization of Brahman may not come any closer. Understanding Brahman may require an open and active mind and a great deal of mental effort. Careful and exhaustive inquiry might be key features of this process. On the other hand, dogmatism and rigidity may be the hallmarks of non-adaptive traditional ways. Incisive thought may be compromised by strict adherence to a ritualistic lifestyle. The idea of maintaining so-called Brahminical values with a stereotyped way of life and the actual body of thought espoused by something like *Advaita* appear to contradict each other. It appears that *Advaita* philosophy encourages the use of one's own mind to understand Brahman. It could be that a past that may never have existed is what is being revered by a strict adherence to tradition. It also seems that neither the past nor tradition is equivalent to Brahman.

The timelessness of the Upanishads and the Vedas is due to their recognition that the truth of existence lies beyond the drape of society. The vitality of Hindu philosophy comes from its reliance on and encouragement of discussion and debate. Active engagement with a set of ideas ensures its longevity. Reverence from afar for ideas that are viewed as immutable will certainly hasten their demise. The reed that bends with the wind is the one that remains upright after the storm. Many in fact have injured and repressed genuine curiosity about the Vedas and Upanishads. Some believe that expert intermediaries are the only ones fit to interpret Hindu texts such as the Upanishads for the rest of society. Notably, it is in the Upanishads that a comment is found on the equality of a Brahmin, and a dog, amongst others.

Though the term "Brahminism" has been used throughout this paper, its definition is still not clear, as suggested previously. Therefore it is peculiar that the departure of Brahminism is fretted about by the self-described older generation. What is in danger of going away exactly? It appears that those who are content with their fixed way of life may be the ones most likely to worry about Brahminism.

That certain lifestyles are changing does not mean that people are no longer interested in the mind and its development or the nature of the universe. The vigor of Hindu thought comes from its plurality. Therefore, the complaint that marriage outside the so-called community dilutes Brahminism is not justified. In fact, by bringing new people into the fold of this way of thought, Brahminism is strengthened rather than weakened. The more exposure and involvement there is with a set of ideas the more likely it is that those ideas will persist. Given this, it may be a wasted effort to worry about the extinction of Brahminism.

*"All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark."*

*-Swami Vivekananda*

# HOMEOPATHIC HEALING

*By Dr. Janardhana Iyengar*

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A German doctor, Samuel Hahnemann, who lived from 1755-1843, is the founder of homeopathy. The basic objective of homeopathic treatment is to support and stimulate the body's intrinsic healing ability. Homeopathy does not focus on destroying microbes, bacteria and viruses in the body. In a homeopathic treatment, the symptoms of a disease are not suppressed. These symptoms are considered to be the dynamic expression of an imbalance in the body in an attempt to heal the person. The homeopathic remedies, derived from natural sources such as plants, vegetables, minerals and animals, are prescribed to strengthen the immune system. Hence, homeopathic therapy is a natural, gentle and safe form of treatment.

In a classical homeopathic treatment session, the initial consultation is to fully understand the constitutional response of the person. The session can last from 1.5 to 2 hours in order to record the history, physical symptoms, mental and emotional state of the person. The local and global conditions (i.e. the problems in a specific region and also in all parts of the body from head to toe) will be addressed. After discussing the objective symptoms, specific subjective symptoms such as the response of the individual to weather changes, their likes and dislikes, temperamental changes with external factors and changes in their emotional sphere, etc., will be assessed.

After a careful analysis of the data acquired, the most appropriate homeopathic remedy

will be recommended. The remedy selection is individualized and based on the totality of the body-mind interaction and not fragmented only to symptoms in a specific body part. The strength and dosage of the remedy will be determined to match the energy of the individual. The progress of the client will be monitored in the follow up sessions and additional remedies or modifications in the strength and dosage of the initial remedy will be recommended to accelerate the healing process. There is no habit-forming medication in the homeopathic therapy. The dosage of the remedy will be reduced as the symptoms improve.

There are no stringent diet restrictions during homeopathic therapy except that the remedy should be taken when the mouth is clean. A gap of half an hour to one hour is recommended especially if food with a pungent odor (i.e. mint, coffee, tea, tobacco, garlic or onion, etc.) is consumed. As it is obvious that a nutritious diet and a healthy way of living are essential ingredients for any person to maintain or recover their health, a homeopath also encourages and supports healthy lifestyle changes.

The homeopathic treatment can be used complementarily with other systems of healthcare treatments. Hence, if a person is under treatment with any other healthcare professional, including traditional medicine, with the proper homeopathic remedies the recovery can be accelerated.

## ಕಿವಿ ಮಾತು

ರಾಧಾ ಜಯರಾಂ

- ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಸಿಪ್ಪೆ ಹಾಕಿ ಟೀ ಚರಟವನ್ನು ಗುಲಾಬಿ ಗಿಡದ ಬುಡದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಕಿ ಮಣ್ಣು ಮುಚ್ಚಿದರೆ ಗಿಡ ಸೊಂಪಾಗುವುದಲ್ಲದೆ ಹೂಗಳು ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಬಿಡುತ್ತವೆ.
- ಬಹಳ ದಿವಸ ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸದೆ ಇದ್ದ ಥರ್ಮಾಸ್ ಫ್ಲಾಸ್ಕ್ ಕೆಟ್ಟವಾಸನೆ ಹತ್ತಿದರೆ, ಮಜ್ಜೆಗೆ ಹಾಗು ಉಪ್ಪುಹಾಕಿ ೫,೬ ನಿಮಿಷ ಕುಲುಕಿ ಶುದ್ಧ ನೀರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಳೆದರೆ ವಾಸನೆ ಇರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.
- ಕೊತ್ತಂಬರಿ ಸೊಪ್ಪನ್ನು ಬಿಳಿಯ ಬಟ್ಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸುತ್ತಿಟ್ಟರೆ ಕೊಳೆಯುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.
- ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚುವಾಗ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಕಣ್ಣಲ್ಲಿ ನೀರು ಸುರಿಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೆ, ಬಾಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಸೇಫ್ಟಿ ಪಿನ್ನನ್ನು ಕಚ್ಚಿಕೊಂಡು ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿ ನೋಡಿ.
- ಏನಾದರೂ ತಿನ್ನುವಾಗ, ಕುಡಿಯುವಾಗ ನೆತ್ತಿ ಹತ್ತಿ ಕೆಮ್ಮು ಬಂದರೆ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಸಕ್ಕರೆ ಬಾಯಿಗೆ ಹಾಕಿಕೊಂಡರೆ ಕೆಮ್ಮು ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.
- ಏಲಕ್ಕಿ ಡಬ್ಬದಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಮೆಣಸಿನ ಕಾಳುಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಕಿದರೆ ಬಹಳ ದಿನಗಳವರೆಗೆ ಏಲಕ್ಕಿ ಕೆಡದೆ ಪರಿಮಳಯುಕ್ತವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.
- ದೋಸೆ. ಚಪಾತಿ ತವೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಜಿಡ್ಡು ಕಟ್ಟಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದರೆ ಉಪ್ಪು, ಬೇಕಿಂಗ್ ಸೋಡಾ ಹಾಗು ನೀರನ್ನು ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸಿ ತೊಳ್ಳೆ ಜಿಡ್ಡು ಹೋಗುತ್ತೆ.
- ಹೂವಿನ ಕುಂಡದಲ್ಲಿ ಉಪ್ಪು ಹಾಕಿದ ನೀರನಲ್ಲಿ ಕತ್ತರಿಸಿ ಇಟ್ಟ ಹೂಗಳು ಧೀರ್ಘಕಾಲದವರೆವಿಗೆ ಹೊಸದಾಗಿರುತ್ತೆ, ಬೇಗ ಬಾಡುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.
- ಗಾಜಿನ ಚೂರುಗಳು ನೆಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಿದ್ದಿದ್ದರೆ ಅವುಗಳನ್ನು ಹೆಕ್ಕಲು ಬ್ರೆಡ್ ತುಂಡು ಅಥವಾ ಹತ್ತಿ ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸಿ.
- ಚಳಿಗಾಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಆಗತಾನೆ ಬಿದ್ದಿರುವ ಮಂಜನ್ನು ಬಂದು ಬಕೆಟ್ಟಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿ ಒಳಗೆ ತನ್ನಿ. ಮಂಜು ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಕರಗಿದ ಮೇಲೆ ಆ ನೀರನ್ನು ಪೌಸ್ ಪ್ಲಾಂಟಿಗೆಹಾಕಿದರೆ ನೀರಲ್ಲಿ ಇರುವ ಖನಿಜಯುಕ್ತ ಅಂಶಗಳಿಂದ ಗಿಡವು ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆಯುತ್ತದೆ.
- ಬಂಗಾರದ ಆಭರಣಗಳನ್ನು ಸಕ್ಕರೆ ಬೆರೆಸಿದ ನೀರಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಳೆದರೆ ಥಳ ಥಳನೆ ಹೊಳೆಯುತ್ತದೆ.
- ಪಾತ್ರೆ ತೊಳೆಯುವ ಮೆಷಿನ್ ಗೆ ೨ ಚಮಚ ಅಡುಗೆ ಸೋಡವನ್ನು ಬೆರೆಸಿ, ಸೋಪ್ ಪೌಡರ್ ಹಾಕುವಾಗ, ವಾರಕ್ಕೆ ೨ ಸಲಮಾಡಿ, ಕೆಟ್ಟವಾಸನೆ ಹೋಗುತ್ತೆ.
- ಗಿಫ್ಟ್ ರ್ಯಾಪ್ ಪೇಪರ್ ಮುಗಿದು ಹೋಗಿದ್ದರೆ ಪ್ಯಾಕ್ ಮಾಡಲು ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸದೇ ಇರುವ ರೋಡ್ ಮ್ಯಾಪನ್ನು ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸಿ ಅದು ಬಣಬಣ್ಣವಾಗಿರುತ್ತೆ, ಆಕರ್ಷಕವಾಗಿರುತ್ತೆ, ಸುಂದರವಾಗಿ ಕಾಣುತ್ತೆ.

## ಧರ್ಮ, ಮಾರ್ಕ್ಸ್‌ವಾದ, ಮತ್ತು 'ಕೊಳಚೇನಾಯಿ' ಎಂಬ ಚಲನಚಿತ್ರ

ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ಮೂಲ: ಫ್ಲಾನ್‌ಸ್ವಾ ಗೋಟಿಯೇ; ಕನ್ನಡಕ್ಕೆ ಭಾಷಾಂತರ: ಡಾ|| ಮೈ.ಶ್ರೀ. ನಟರಾಜ

ಭಾರತದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಅತ್ಯಂತ ಋಣಾತ್ಮಕ ಭಾವನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಹರಡುವ ಚಲನಚಿತ್ರ -- 'ಕೊಳಚೇನಾಯಿ ಕೋಟೀಶ್ವರ' ಆಸ್ಕರ್ ಪಡೆಯುವ ಮುನ್ನ ಮತ್ತು ಪಡೆದ ನಂತರ ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯ ದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಏಕಿಷ್ಟು ಸುದ್ದಿ ಮಾಡಿದೆ? ಈ ಚಿತ್ರದ ವಸ್ತುವಾದರೂ ಏನು? ಕೊಳಚೆ ಪ್ರದೇಶ, ಸುಲಿಗೆ, ಬಡತನ, ಲಂಚಕೋರತನ, ಅಲ್ಪಸಂಖ್ಯಾತರ ವಿರುದ್ಧ ಕ್ರೌರ್ಯ. ವಸ್ತುಸ್ಥಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಕೆಟ್ಟ ಉದ್ದಿಶ್ಯದಿಂದ ಬೇಕೆಂತಲೇ ತಿರುಚಿ ಅಪಪ್ರಚಾರಮಾಡಿದ್ದಕ್ಕೆ ಭಾರತ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಏಕೆ ಯಾವ ಪ್ರತಿಕ್ರಿಯೆಯನ್ನೂ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಪಡಿಸಿಲ್ಲ? ಜೈನಾ ದೇಶದ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಇದೇ ಸ್ಥಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಎದುರಿಸಬೇಕಾಗಿಬಂದಿದ್ದರೆ, ಅದು ಸುಮ್ಮನಿರುತ್ತಿತ್ತೆ? ಈ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗೆ ಹಲವು ಉತ್ತರಗಳಿವೆ: ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತಮತ ಪ್ರಚಾರಕರು ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಲಿಟ್ಟ ಕೂಡಲೇ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಅರಿವಾದದ್ದೇನೆಂದರೆ, 'ಹಿಂದೂ ಧರ್ಮ ಕೇವಲ ಬಹುಸಂಖ್ಯಾತರ ಧರ್ಮವಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಹಿಂದೂ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಯ ಬೇರು ಭಾರತೀಯರಲ್ಲಿ ಆಳವಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆದಿದೆ, ಆ ಬೇರುಗಳನ್ನು ಕಿತ್ತುಹಾಕದೇ ಭಾರತವೆಂಬ ಉಪಖಂಡದ ಜನರನ್ನು ಗುಲಾಮರನ್ನಾಗಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಅಸಾಧ್ಯ' ಎಂದು ಆ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತ ಮತಪ್ರಚಾರಕರಿಗೆ ಮನದಟ್ಟಾಯಿತು.

ಹಿಂದೂ ಧರ್ಮದ ಬೇರಿನ ಶಕ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ಮನಗಂಡ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತ ಪಾದ್ರಿಗಳು ಅದನ್ನು ನಾಶಮಾಡಲು ಒಂದು ಸುಲಭೋಪಾಯವನ್ನು ಹುಡುಕಿದರು. ಅದೇನೆಂದರೆ, ತಮ್ಮ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಕಂಡುಬಂದ ಹಿಂದೂ ಧರ್ಮದ ನ್ಯೂನತೆಗಳನ್ನು ನೂರ್ಪಟ್ಟು ಉತ್ಪ್ರೇಕ್ಷಿಸಿದರು. ಜಾತಿ ಪದ್ಧತಿ, ಶಿಶು-ವಿವಾಹ, ಮೂಡನಂಬಿಕೆಗಳು, ವಿಧವೆಗಳ ದುರ್ಗತಿ, ಸತೀ ಪದ್ಧತಿ, ಹೀಗೆ ಪಟ್ಟಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾ ಹೋದರು. ಅಂದು ಅವರು ಅರ್ಧಸತ್ಯ ಕಾಲುಸತ್ಯಗಳ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಬಿತ್ತನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ ಕೆಟ್ಟ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯಗಳು, ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯರ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಇಂದಿಗೂ ಮನೆಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡಿರುವುದೇ ಅಲ್ಲದೇ, ದುರ್ದೈವವಶಾತ್, ಭಾರತೀಯ ಬುದ್ಧಿಜೀವಿಗಳ ತಲೆಯನ್ನೂ ಮಡಿಮಾಡಿಬಿಟ್ಟಿದೆ.

ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯರಾದ ನಾವುಗಳಾದರೋ, ಮೂರನೇ ವಿಶ್ವದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ, ಅದರಲ್ಲೂ ಭಾರತದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮೇಲರಿಮೆಯಿಂದ ಕೂಡಿದವರಾಗಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಸಂಜೆ ಊಟಮಾಡುತ್ತಾ ಪುಷ್ಕಳವಾಗಿ ತಿನ್ನುತ್ತಾ ದೂರದರ್ಶನಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಇತರ ಬಡ ದೇಶಗಳ ದಾರುಣ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ನೋಡಿ ಕನಿಕರ ತೋರಿಸುವುದರಲ್ಲೇ ತೃಪ್ತಿ ಪಟ್ಟುಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಇತರರನ್ನು ಕಂಡು ಅಯ್ಯೋ ಅನ್ನುವುದೇ ಒಂದು ದೊಡ್ಡ ಸಾಧನೆಯೋ ಅನ್ನುವ ಭ್ರಮೆಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದೇವೆ. ಈ ಕಾರಣಗಳಿಂದಲೇ, ಡಾಮಿನಿಕ್ ಲಾಪಿಯೇ ಬರೆದ, ಭಾರತವೇ ಒಂದು ದೊಡ್ಡ ಕೊಳಚೆ ಪ್ರದೇಶವೆಂಬ ಭ್ರಮೆ ತರಿಸುವ 'ದಿ ಸಿಟಿ ಆಫ್ ಜಾಯ್' ತರಹದ ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳು, 'ಕೊಳಚೆ-ನಾಯಿ-ಕೋಟೀಶ್ವರ'ದಂತಹ ಚಲನ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳು ನಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಆಕರ್ಷಿಸುತ್ತವೆ, ನಮ್ಮ ಮೇಲೆ ಇನ್ನಿಲ್ಲದ ಪ್ರಭಾವ ಬೀರುತ್ತವೆ.

ಈ ಚಿತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾರತದ ಶತ್ರುಗಳು ಕೈಜೋಡಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇಂತಹ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳ ಕಾರಣದಿಂದಾಗಿ, ಇಂದು ಅನೇಕ ಏನೂ ಅರಿಯದ ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯರು ಧಾರಾಳವಾಗಿ ಕೊಡುವ ದಾನದ ಹಣವನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿ ಭಾರತದಂತಹ ದೇಶಗಳ ಬಡ ಜನರನ್ನು, ಅವರಿಗೆ ಸಾಲ, ಶಾಲೆ, ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಗಳ ಆಮಿಷ ತೋರಿಸಿ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತಮತಕ್ಕೆ ಮತಾಂತರಗೊಳಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಸುನಾಮಿ ನಂತರದ ಇಂದಿನ ತಮಿಳುನಾಡಿನ ತೀರಪ್ರದೇಶವನ್ನು ನೋಡಿ ಬನ್ನಿ, ಅರ್ಧಕಿಲೋಮೀಟರಿಗೆ ಒಂದರಂತೆ ಹೊಸದೊಂದು ಇಗರ್ಜಿ ಎದ್ದಿದೆ! ಹೀಗೆ ಮತಾಂತರಗೊಂಡ ಹೊಸ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತರಿಗೆ "ದೇವಸ್ಥಾನವನ್ನು ಪ್ರವೇಶಿಸುವುದು, ಪೂಜೆಮಾಡುವುದು, ಹಣೆಗೆ ತಿಲಕವಿಡುವುದು, ಇವೆಲ್ಲಾ ಪಾಪಕಾರ್ಯಗಳು" ಎಂಬ ಬೋಧನೆಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಹೀಗೆ ಮಾಡುವುದರ ಉದ್ದೇಶ, ಭಾರತೀಯ ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಸಮತೋಲನವನ್ನು ಹಾಳುಮಾಡುವುದೇ ಆಗಿದೆ. ಬ್ರಿಟಿಷ್ ವೃತ್ತಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯೊಂದಕ್ಕೆ ಕೊಟ್ಟ ಸಂದರ್ಶನದಲ್ಲಿ 'ಕೊಳಚೆ-ನಾಯಿ' ಚಿತ್ರದ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕ ಡ್ಯಾನಿ ಬಾಯಿಲ್ ಒಪ್ಪಿಕೊಂಡಿರುವ ವಿಷಯವೇನೆಂದರೆ, ಆತ ಚಿಕ್ಕವನಿದ್ದಾಗ ತಾನೂ ಒಬ್ಬ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತ ಮತ ಪ್ರಚಾರಕನಾಗಬೇಕೆಂಬ

ಆಶೆವಳ್ಳವನಾಗಿದ್ದನಂತೆ. ಅಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಈಗಲೂ ಆತ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತ ಪಾದ್ರಿಗಳ ಆದರ್ಶದಿಂದಲೇ ತನ್ನ ಬಾಳಿಗೆ ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶನ ಪಡೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾನಂತೆ. ಈತ ಇನ್ನೆಷ್ಟು ನಿಷ್ಪಕ್ಷಪಾತಿ ಇರಬಹುದು?

ಇನ್ನು, ಮೂಲಭೂತವಾದೀ ಮುಸಲ್ಮಾನರ ಆಕ್ರಮಣ ಭಾರತದಮೇಲೆ ತಪ್ಪಿದ್ದೇ ಇಲ್ಲ, ಇತ್ತೀಚಿನ ನವೆಂಬರ್ ೨೬ ರ ಘಟನೆಯನ್ನು ಮರೆಯಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವೇ? ಹಿಂದೆ, ಒಂದೇ ಆಕ್ರಮಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಲಕ್ಷಾಂತರ ಹಿಂದುಗಳನ್ನು ಕೊಂದ ತೈಮೂರನ ನೆನಪಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲವೇ? ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತರು, ಮುಸಲ್ಮಾನರ ಜೊತೆಗೆ, ಕಮ್ಯೂನಿಸ್ಟರ ಪಾತ್ರ ಕಮ್ಮಿಯೇನಿಲ್ಲ. ಇವಿಷ್ಟೇ ಸಾಲದೋ ಎಂಬಂತೆ, ಪಶ್ಚಿಮದಲ್ಲೇ ಸಫಲವಾಗಿರದ, ಮೇಲ್ನೋಟಕ್ಕೆ ಫಳಫಲಿಸುವ ಅಮೆರಿಕೀಕರಣ ಭಾರತದ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಮೌಲ್ಯಗಳಮೇಲೆ ಹಲ್ಲೆಮಾಡಿದೆ. ಈ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯ ಲಾಭವನ್ನು ಬಹುಬುದ್ಧಿವಂತಿಕೆಯಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯುತ್ತದೆ, 'ಸ್ಲಮ್ ಡಾಗ್' ಎಂಬ ಚಿತ್ರ.

ಭಾರತವನ್ನು ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಮಾಡುವ ಅನೇಕ ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯ 'ತಜ್ಞ'ರು ಹಿಂದೂ ವಿರೋಧಿಗಳು. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಕಾರಣಗಳು ಎರಡು -- ಅವರೆಲ್ಲ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತಮತಾವಲಂಬಿಗಳು, ಹಾಗೂ ಅವರಲ್ಲನೇಕರು ಮ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್ ಮುಲ್ಲರನ ಶಿಷ್ಯಕೋಟಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದವರು. ಅಂಥಾ ಉದ್ದಾಮ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸನೆನಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದ ಮ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್ ಮುಲ್ಲರ್ ಹೇಳಿದ್ದ ಮಾತುಗಳನ್ನು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ನೆನೆಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು -- ವೇದಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬಾಲಿಶವೂ, ದಡ್ಡತನದಿಂದಕೂಡಿದವೂ, ಪೈಶಾಚಿಕವೂ ಆದ ಪರಿಕಲ್ಪನೆಗಳೇ ತುಂಬಿಕೊಂಡಿವೆ. ವೇದದ ವಸ್ತು ಸುಲಭಗ್ರಾಹ್ಯವಲ್ಲದ್ದು, ಕೀಳುಮಟ್ಟದ್ದು, ತೀರಾ ಸಾಧಾರಣವಾದದ್ದು. ಮಾನವ ಪ್ರಕೃತಿಯ ಕೆಳಮಟ್ಟದ ಮತ್ತು ಲೌಕಿಕದ ಸ್ವಾರ್ಥಚಿಂತನೆಯನ್ನೇ ವೇದಗಳು ಪ್ರತಿನಿಧಿಸುತ್ತವೆ. ಎಲ್ಲೋ ಅಲ್ಲೊಂದು ಇಲ್ಲೊಂದು ಅಲೌಕಿಕವಾದ ಆಧ್ಯಾತ್ಮಿಕ ಚಿಂತನೆಗಳು ವೇದಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಣಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತವೆ. ಈ ಮಹಾಶಯನು ಹಾಕಿಕೊಟ್ಟ ದಾರಿಯನ್ನು ಅಮೇರಿಕದ ವಿಟ್ನೀಲ್, ವೆಂಡಿ ಡಾನಿಗರ್ ಮುಂತಾದ ಭಾರತೀಯಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಜ್ಞರು, ಮತ್ತು ಫ್ರಾನ್ಸ್ ದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಹಲವು (ಸರ್ಕಾರದಿಂದ ಧನಸಹಾಯಪಡೆದುಕೊಂಡು ಬದುಕಿರುವ) ತಜ್ಞರೂ ಅನುಸರಿಸುತ್ತ ಬಂದಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅವರ ಅತಿಪ್ರಿಯ ವಿಚಾರವೆಂದರೆ, ಜಾತಿಪದ್ಧತಿ, ಬಡತನ, ಕೊಳಚೆ ಪ್ರದೇಶ. ಇವರ ಮಾದರಿಯನ್ನು ಪ್ರಶ್ನಿಸಿದವರನ್ನು ಅವರು ಹಿಂದೂ ಮೂಲಭೂತವಾದಿಗಳೆಂದು ಕರೆದು ಬಾಯ್ಕುಚ್ಚಿಸಲು ಯತ್ನಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಇವರ ಸುಳ್ಳಿನ ಮುಂದೆ ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಸುಳ್ಳಲ್ಲ.

ಸತ್ಯವೇನೆಂದು ಬಲ್ಲರಾ? ಭಾರತದ ಬಹುಸಂಖ್ಯಾತರಾದ ಹಿಂದುಗಳು ವಿಶಾಲ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನವರು. ಅವರು, ಇತರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಂಸೆಗೊಳಗಾಗಿ ತಮ್ಮ ನಾಡನ್ನು ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಹೋಗಬೇಕಾಗಿಬಂದ ಜನರನ್ನು ತಲೆತಲಾಂತರದಿಂದ ಸ್ವಾಗತಿಸುತ್ತಲೇ ಬಂದಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಸಿರಿಯಾದ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತರು, ಪಾರ್ಸಿಗಳು, ಆರ್ಮೇನಿಯನ್ನರು, ಯೆಹೂದಿಗಳು, ಇತ್ತೀಚೆಗೆ ಟಿಬೆಟ್ಟಿನವರು, ಇವರನ್ನೆಲ್ಲಾ ತಮ್ಮ ನಾಡಿನಲ್ಲಿ ನೆಲೆಸಲು ಬಿಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಅವರಿಗೆ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣ ಧಾರ್ಮಿಕ ಸ್ವಾತಂತ್ರ್ಯವನ್ನೂ ಕೊಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಒಂದು ಮಾತು ನಿಜ, ಶತಮಾನಗಳ ಕಾಲ ಪರಕೀಯರ ದಾಸ್ಯಕ್ಕೊಳಗಾದ ಭಾರತೀಯರಿಗೆ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯತೆ ಏನೆಂದು ಗೊತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. (ಇಲ್ಲೇ ಚೀನೀಯರಿಗೂ ಭಾರತೀಯರಿಗೂ ಇರುವ ಮುಖ್ಯ ವ್ಯತ್ಯಾಸ.) ಇಂದು, ಭಾರತದ ಬುದ್ಧಿಜೀವಿಗಳು ತಮ್ಮ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಯ ಬೇರನ್ನು ಕಳೆದುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅವರು ತಮ್ಮ ಪ್ರತಿ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯ ಪರಿಹಾರಕ್ಕೂ ಪಶ್ಚಿಮದ ಕಡೆ ನೋಡುತ್ತಾರೆ. ತಮ್ಮ ಪೂರ್ವಜರು ಕೊಟ್ಟ ತಾತ್ವಿಕ ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಡಗಿರುವ ಅನಂತಜ್ಞಾನವನ್ನು ಕೈಬಿಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅವರು ಈಗ ತಮ್ಮದೇ ಆದ ಪ್ರಾಣಾಯಾಮ, ಯೋಗ, ಧ್ಯಾನ ಮುಂತಾದ ಅಪರಿಮಿತ ಸಂಪತ್ತನ್ನೂ ಮರೆತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಇಂಥಾ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆ, 'ಸ್ಲಂ ಡಾಗ್'ನಂಥ ಚಲನಚಿತ್ರಗಳಿಗೆ ಒಳ್ಳೆಯ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಕಲ್ಪಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಈ ಚಿತ್ರ ಮೊಟ್ಟ ಮೊದಲ ದೃಶ್ಯದಿಂದಲೇ ಭಾರತದ ಮೈಮೇಲೆ ಹೇಸಿಗೆ ಮಾಡಲು ತೊಡಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಅದರಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಕೆಲ ದೃಶ್ಯಗಳಂತೂ ಡ್ಯಾನೀ ಬಾಯಿಲ್ ನಂತಹ ತಲೆತಿರುಕರ ಊಹೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಇರಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯ, ಏಕೆಂದರೆ, ಅವು ವಿವೇಕ ಸ್ವರೂಪರು ಬರೆದ ಪುಸ್ತಕದಲ್ಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಪುಸ್ತಕದ ನಾಯಕ ಮುಸಲ್ಮಾನನಲ್ಲ. ಅವನು ಯಾವ ಧರ್ಮಕ್ಕೂ

ಸೇರಿದವನಲ್ಲ, ಅವನ ಹೆಸರು ರಾಮ್ ಮೊಹಮ್ಮದ್ ಥಾಮಸ್. ಅವನ ಬಾಲ್ಯ ಕಳೆಯುವುದು ಮುಂಬೈನಲ್ಲಲ್ಲ, ದೆಹಲಿಯ ಕ್ಯಾಥೋಲಿಕ್ ಅನಾಥಾಲಯವೊಂದರಲ್ಲಿ. ಚಿತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ತೋರಿಸಿರುವಂತೆ ಜಮಾಲನ ತಾಯಿ (ಅವನ ಹೆಸರು ಜಮಾಲ್ ಅಲ್ಲ) ಹಿಂದು ಮತಾಂಧರ ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಿಕ್ಕು ಸಾಯುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಅವಳಾದರೋ, ಯಾವ ಧರ್ಮಕ್ಕೆ ಸೇರಿದವನೆಂದು ತಿಳಿಯದ ತನ್ನ ಮಗುವನ್ನು ಚರ್ಚೋಂದರಲ್ಲಿ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಹೋಗುತ್ತಾಳೆ. ಜಮಾಲನನ್ನು ಚಿತ್ರಹಿಂಸೆಗೆ ಗುರಿಮಾಡುವ ಯೋಚನೆ ದೂರದರ್ಶನದ ಸಂಚಾಲಕರದ್ದಲ್ಲ. ದೂರದರ್ಶನದ ವಹಿವಾಟನ್ನು ವಹಿಸಿಕೊಂಡ ರಷ್ಯನ್ನರನ್ನು ಬಗ್ಗುಬಡಿಯಲು ಕೂಟವನ್ನು ಹೂಡಿದ ಒಬ್ಬ ಅಮೇರಿಕನ್ ಈ ಚಿತ್ರಹಿಂಸೆಗೆ ಕಾರಣ. ಮನೆ ಮಠವನ್ನು ತಾಯಿತಂದೆಯರನ್ನೂ ಕಳೆದುಕೊಂಡು ಕಣ್ಣೀರಿಡುತ್ತ ಮಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೆನೆಯುವ ಮೂರು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ದೃಶ್ಯ ಕೂಡ ಪುಸ್ತಕದಲ್ಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಜಮಾಲ್ ಮತ್ತು ಅವನ ಪ್ರೇಯಸಿ ಮೊದಲಬಾರಿಗೆ ಸಂಧಿಸುವುದು ಅವರು ಹದಿಹರೆಯದವರಾದಮೇಲೆ. ಆಗ ಅವರು ಒಂದು ಅಪಾರ್ಟ್‌ಮೆಂಟಿನಲ್ಲಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ, ಕೊಳಚೆ ಪ್ರದೇಶದ ಗುಡಿಸಿಲಿನಲ್ಲಲ್ಲ.

ಹೌದು, ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಬೇಕಾದಷ್ಟು ಬಡತನ ಇದೆ, ಶ್ರೀಮಂತರಿಗೂ ಬಡವರಿಗೂ ನಡುವೆ ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ದೊಡ್ಡ ಕಂದಕವಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ಶ್ರೀಮಂತಿಕೆಯೂ ಇದೆ. ಕೇವಲ ಎಣಿಸುವ ನೋಟಿನ ಶ್ರೀಮಂತಿಕೆಯಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಭೌತಿಕ, ತಾತ್ವಿಕ, ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಶ್ರೀಮಂತಿಕೆ. ಇದು ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯದೇಶಗಳಿಗಿಂತ ಅನೇಕ ಪಟ್ಟು ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಅನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಮರೆಯುವಂತಿಲ್ಲ. ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯರು ಭಾರತದತ್ತ ನೋಡುವಾಗ ಕಾಮಾಲೆಕಣ್ಣಿನಿಂದ ನೋಡುವ ಕೆಟ್ಟ ಜಾಳಿಯನ್ನು ಯಾವಾಗ ಬಿಡುತ್ತಾರೋ ಕಾಣೆ. ಇದೇ ಶತಮಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾರತ, ಜೈನಾ ದೇಶವನ್ನು ಹಿಂದೆಹಾಕಿ ಮುಂದೋಡುವುದರಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಮಾನವೇ ಇಲ್ಲ. ಕಾಮಾಲೆ ದೃಷ್ಟಿ ಪರಿಹಾರವಾಗಲು ಒಂದು ಹೊಸ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನದ, ಹೊಸ ಪೀಳಿಗೆಯ ಭಾರತೀಯಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಜ್ಞರ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿದೆ. ಇಂಥ ತಜ್ಞರು ನಿಸ್ಪೃಹರೂ, ಓಬೀರಾಯನಕಾಲದ ಕ್ರೈಸ್ತಚಿಂತನೆಯ ಕೇಂದ್ರವನ್ನು ತೊರೆದವರೂ ಆಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಅದಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಿ, ಭಾರತೀಯರು ಪಶ್ಚಿಮದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಇರುವ ದಾಸ್ಯಮನೋಭಾವವನ್ನು ತೊರೆದು ತಮ್ಮ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಯ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಹೆಮ್ಮೆಯುಳ್ಳವರಾದಾಗಲೇ ಈ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗೆ ಪರಿಹಾರ.

ಟಿಪ್ಪಣಿ: ಈ ಲೇಖನದಲ್ಲಿ ವ್ಯಕ್ತವಾಗಿರುವ ವಿಚಾರಧಾರೆಗಳನ್ನು ಹಲವರು ಹುರುಪಿನಿಂದ ಒಪ್ಪಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು, ಇನ್ನು ಕೆಲವರು ಹಿಂದೆ ಮುಂದೆ ನೋಡದೆ ತಳ್ಳಿಹಾಕಬಹುದು. ವಸ್ತು ವಿವಾದಾಸ್ಪದವಾದದ್ದು ಎಂಬುದು ನಿರ್ವಿವಾದ. ಆ ಕಾರಣದಿಂದ, ಹಲವಾರು ಓದುಗರು ಪ್ರತಿಕ್ರಿಯೆ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಪಡಿಸಲು ಇಚ್ಛಿಸಬಹುದು. ಅಂಥವರು ಗಮನವಿಡಬೇಕಾದ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಅಂಶಗಳು ಏನೆಂದರೆ, (೧) ಮೂಲ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ಲೇಖನವನ್ನು ಬರೆದಿರುವಾತ ಭಾರತದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಅಭಿಮಾನವುಳ್ಳ ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯ ಬರಹಗಾರ. (೨) ಲೇಖನದಲ್ಲಿನ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯಗಳು ಮೂಲ ಲೇಖಕನದ್ದೇ ವಿನಃ ಭಾಷಾಂತರ ಮಾಡಿದವರದ್ದಲ್ಲ. (೩) ಅದುವೇಕನ್ನಡದಲ್ಲಿ ಜಾಲತರಂಗದ ಓದುಗರಿಗಾಗಿ ಕನ್ನಡಿಸಿರುವುದಷ್ಟೇ ನನ್ನ ಕೆಲಸ. (೪) ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ಚರ್ಚೆಗೆ ಒಳಗಾಗಿರುವ 'ಸ್ಲಮ್ ಡಾಗ್' ಚಿತ್ರದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಬರೆಯುವಾಗ ಚಾರಿತ್ರಿಕ, ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯನ್ನು ವಿವರಿಸಿ ವಿಶ್ಲೇಷಣೆ ಮಾಡಿರುವುದು ಈ ಲೇಖನದ ಮೈಶಿಷ್ಟ್ಯ. (೫) ಚಲನಚಿತ್ರಕ್ಕೆ ಆಧಾರವಾದ ಮೂಲ ಪುಸ್ತಕವನ್ನು ಓದಿ ಪುಸ್ತಕಕ್ಕೂ ಚಲನಚಿತ್ರಕ್ಕೂ ನಡುವೆ ಇರುವ ವ್ಯತ್ಯಾಸಗಳನ್ನು ಓದುಗರ ಗಮನಕ್ಕೆ ತಂದಿರುವುದು ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ವಿಶೇಷ. (೬) ಕಳೆದ ವಾರ (ಮಾರ್ಚ್ ೧೬-೧೮, ೨೦೦೯) ಪ್ರಕಟವಾದ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ಆವೃತ್ತಿ ಒಬ್ಬರಿಂದೊಬ್ಬರಿಗೆ ಸುತ್ತೋಲೆಯಾಗಿ ತಿರುಗಾಡುತ್ತಾ, ಹಲವು ಮಿತ್ರರಿಂದ ನನ್ನ ಗಮನಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂತು. (೭) ಸಂದರ್ಭೋಚಿತವಾಗಿದೆಯೆಂಬ ಕಾರಣದಿಂದ ಜಾಲತರಂಗದ ಓದುಗರಿಗೆ ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ ಪಡಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇನೆ. (೮) ಈ ಚಿತ್ರದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನನ್ನ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯಗಳು ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ಜಾಲತರಂಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟವಾಗಿವೆ. (ಈ ಲೇಖನ, ದಟ್ಸ್ ಕನ್ನಡ.ಕಾಮ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟವಾದ ನನ್ನ ಅಂಕಣ ಬರಹ.)

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

*By Mark Jayaram*

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*Hiring Manager: "I'm sorry Mr. Swamy, but you were not selected for the position."*

*Swamy: "What? I was not selected, but I was told during the interview that I was the best qualified for the position! I was told that I would be receiving an offer letter, what happened?"*

*Hiring Manager: "I'm sorry, but we had to hire a Shudra per government regulations. You are a Brahmin"*

*Swamy: "What? That's discrimination! I was the best qualified, you told me in the interview!"*

*Hiring Manager: "I'm sorry; I have to follow the government's affirmative action policy. I have to hire an 'OBC or untouchable' per government regulations."*

*Swamy: "Affirmative Action? Isn't that giving preference to 'protected groups' like 'colored people?' Caste does not qualify for affirmative action policy?"*

*Hiring Manager: "Per the Indian government it does!"*

Above we hear the excerpts from a conversation between a job applicant, by the name Swamy, and a hiring manager. This conversation is echoed throughout the echelons of the Indian Subcontinent. Many individuals are falling victim to "affirmative action" policies, and are not being selected for positions they are qualified for due to their caste! The caste that one is born into is not within the control of the individual. It is not something they can overcome later on in life. They are indeed "branded" for life.

Hinduism is one of the world's most antiquated but revered religions. Its history can be dated back to the Indus Valley Civilization, which has been documented to be as early as about 5,000 B.C.E.

Caste is deeply engrained within the Hindu culture. It has been said that Hinduism is not "a culture," but rather a "way of life." The caste that you are born into plays a pivotal role in determining a myriad of aspects of an individual's life. This can range from who is included in your social circle, and determining who your "soul mate" is, to the type of occupations one can pursue as a career.

The caste system is a hierarchy which divides the population into different classes. There are five main classes or sects of people that are listed below in a normative order:

Exhibit # 1

Caste:	Occupation:
Brahmins	Scholars and Priests
Kshatriyas	Warriors and Landowners
Vaishyas	Businessmen
Sudras	Laborers
Dalits	"Untouchables"

Please note: These classes can be further sub-divided into various "jatis" or sub-groups.



*The Economist* points out in an article that Mohandas Gandhi (the father of India) renamed the Dalits or “Untouchables” as Harijans or “the beloved of GOD” (Casting the first Stone, p.17)! The Untouchables, in Hindu society, have been traditionally denied equal rights as they have been required to do the most menial jobs of society. Some examples include cleaning toilet bowls, working as garbage collectors, removing dead bodies, etc.

In fact per Hindu polity, people from “lower castes” are prohibited from associating with those from “higher castes.” *The Economist* cites ancient scriptures, “According to the Laws of Manu, an ancient Hindu text, anybody from the lower orders who has the temerity to mention the name of a high caste should have a red-hot nail thrust into his mouth; if he makes the mistake of telling a Brahmin what to do, he get hot oil poured into his ears and mouth” (Casting the first Stone, p.17). This punishment is certainly severe and barbaric! It is important to note that these “prescribed punishments” were written in a period when capital punishment was the accepted norm of the day. They were written as a figurative form of speech and should not be taken literally.

Regrettably, this type of extreme convoluted fanaticism continues to this day. *The Economist* published a gruesome story in its October 1994 edition: “In the northern Indian state of Bihar in June, a lower-caste girl eloped with an untouchable boy. With the approval of the village council, the boy’s head was smashed in with a stone, while the girl was whipped and branded with a burning log” (Casting the first Stone, p.17). In addition, *The Economist* in a later edition mentioned, “When a dalit was recently hired to cook at the village school, Brahmins withdrew their children” (With Reservations, p.93). These somber stories (particularly the former) underscore the importance that caste plays in the daily life of Hindus. Orthodox Hindus are not willing to tolerate any association (in matrimony or hospitality) with lower caste individuals.

It is important to note that if one does not follow certain “regulative principles” that one can be “demoted” to a lower caste. Brahmins are required to perform “Sandyavandanah” three times a day, refrain from consuming meat (including poultry), etc. If someone were to be born as a Brahmin and pursue a career in business, they would not be considered to be “Brahmin” anymore, but rather a Vaishya. The person would be demoted to a “lower caste” due to their choice of occupation.

The Indian government has modeled its employment policies after the United States. Per Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (the statute that governs employment discrimination in the United States), “Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) refers to the government’s attempt to ensure that all individuals have an equal chance for employment, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability or national origin” (Noe, et al., p.103). Employers that wish to be compliant with “the law” are not allowed to discriminate on any of these grounds!

This same language has been codified into India’s constitution! Researchers Roy, et al. mention in their work that the portion of the Indian constitution that is currently being scrutinized by “legal pundits” is articles 15 and 16, which discuss equality, and discrimination. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. These sensitive topics relate to affirmative action and affect any formulation of policy that is enforced by the government (p.70).

Affirmative Action (AA) is not a novel concept, but has been about for a long time. According to Schermerhorn et al., “Affirmative action is a set of remedial actions designed to compensate for proven discrimination or correct for statistical imbalances in the labor forces (e.g. local workers are 90 percent Hispanic, and your organization employs only 10 percent Hispanics)” (p.89).

India’s AA program is known as “Reservations.” Reservation had its founding with the father of India, Mahatma Gandhi, who reclassified the “Untouchables” as “Harijans.” Gandhi wanted to show that all human beings are created equal. He despised the caste system. Gandhi wanted to eliminate inequality throughout India’s expanse, not only amongst Hindus, but also among Muslims, Christians, Jains, etc. Professor Narayanswamy, pointing out India’s predicament in formulating an effective policy, mentions, “the challenge in terms of public policy is compellingly clear: increasing the range of social, economic and cultural opportunity, so that the less fortunate can be co-opted in to the economic mainstream” (p.1).

The constitution reflected Gandhi's desires. "The proposal for AA falls in line with the principles enshrined under Articles 39 (b) and (c) which call for 'democratization of wealth and resources' and Article 38(2) which calls for the 'gradual elimination of inequality between individuals and groups'" (Roy and Alam, p.77).

Accordingly, a reservations policy has been implemented by the government. Reservations have been utilized in academia to determine who would receive admission into higher education programs in India. "India's constitution has long set aside 22.5% of public university seats, including those at the most elite institutions, for the lowest castes on the Hindu social ladder and indigenous tribes, respectively known as dalits (untouchables) and adivasis (indigenous people). Quotas also apply to government jobs and elective office—the latest proposal extends the principle by setting aside an additional 27 percent of seats for a group known in the bizarre parlance of Indian bureaucracy as 'other backward classes' or O.B.C.'s" (Sengupta and Kumar, p.A.3). Together the dalits and the OBCs receive around 50 percent in quotas! This certainly makes it competitive for those who do not qualify for the AA program! Yee points out in her work, "policymakers decided that reservations would also include affluent members of 'other backward castes', sometimes labeled the 'creamy layer'" (p.11). The fact that income is not a consideration when awarding AA status is astounding. The purpose of the AA program was to eliminate inequality. If somebody is well off why should he/she rely on the government for help? The law should be changed so a person's income is factored into the equation.

Moreover, the AA program was intended to be utilized for a "brief" amount of time. The program was supposed to be a temporary measure to close the gap between lower and higher caste members! *The Economist* mentions:

Originally, reservations were supposed to be needed only for a decade. After that, it was reckoned, they would be unnecessary, because primary education would be universally available. Nearly six decades on, it is not. And the quality of much of India's higher education is execrable. By one reckoning, only a quarter of engineering graduates, the raw material of a booming computer-services industry, are employable. The government should concentrate on sorting out schools and universities, not piling new burdens on business (Leaders: Untouchable and unthinkable; Indian business p.17).

It is important to mention that there is no "official statistic" on how many OBCs exist within the country's borders. Government rules prohibit the collection of such "sensitive information" in census data. Nevertheless, "dalits and other tribal communities represent ~ one quarter of India's population and half of its poor" (With Reservations, p.93).

Consequently, politicians are after this powerful cohort of "backward classes." According to Amy Yee, voters of OBC compose a very potent constituency of 300-500 million people (p.11).

It is interesting to note that even though U.S. laws and regulations were used as a paradigm when formulating India's policy, the Reservation system of India, which earmarks a certain percentage of seats to "disadvantaged" individuals, would be found to be unconstitutional under the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment of the United States constitution (which prevents discrimination)!

Despite this irony, the Indian government is now entertaining the thought of compelling private industry to institute a "Reservation System" into companies' recruiting practices. This would force organizations to hire people from "lower castes" (to fill a certain quota) without regard for merit. If a low caste individual applies for a job, and a person from a high caste applies for the same job, the company would be forced to hire the low caste individual instead of the high caste person.

Proponents of an affirmative action policy point to a slew of facts, which underscores that something has to be done to address the divide that has developed over the years leaving scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) behind. Authors Roy and Alam say in their work:

the SCs lost about 113,430 job opportunities in the central government during the period 1992-1997, constituting a decline of 10.07 percent ... 70 percent of SC's, according to Thorat, in 2000 were landless laborers. A comparison between the communities shows that SC's are greatly at disadvantage [Thorat (2003)].<sup>15</sup> The unemployment rates for SC were 5 percent compared to 3.5

percent for other workers. The daily wage earnings of SC wage laborer were lower in rural non-farm sector. About 37 percent of SC's were poor in rural areas as compared to 20 percent among others. About 39 percent of SC's were poor as against only 21 percent among others. The low human resource development is also reflected in low literacy rate- (about 37 percent) compared with 57 percent for others. In 2002 about 36 percent of villages SC's were denied wage employment in agriculture and about 25 percent of villages, the SC worker faced discrimination in wage payment. More importantly, a study in Karnataka has shown that switchover from traditional occupations was a rarity among the depressed classes,<sup>16</sup> which showed that discrimination is still highly prevalent<sup>17</sup> (p.70).

Another argument for a comprehensive AA policy (per Roy and Alam):

Studies have been conducted that show that only 3 to 4 percent of the positions in the private sector are appointed through open advertisements. Most recruitment in the private sector happens through informal channels as it is a cost saving exercise. The private sector is completely lying when they say that we are appointing competent people. Efficiency requires transparency and a mechanism wherein you provide opportunities to suitable and qualified people. In the private sector what counts is a social network. An untouchable cannot approach this social network<sup>46</sup> (p.74).

This is certainly a very valid point! Many job openings are filled through informal recruitments. This is even the case in the United States where ~70-90 percent of jobs are filled through "contacts." Networking is prevalent throughout the world. Nevertheless, the authors make a compelling argument. If people are not willing to tolerate a dalit cooking in a school cafeteria, then how can lower castes possibly gain access to a job network? Networking for possible job opportunities would be near impossible for SCs and STs.

Roy and Alam point out in their work that AA has had a positive effect by allowing the Dalits to obtain middle class status:

Affirmative Action is certain to lead to 'middle-class-isation' of depressed classes. Half a million Dalits may have moved into business through the loans provided by SC/ST finance and development corporations set by State governments. In fact it is has estimated that reservations have produced 5 million to 25 million Dalits as part of India's urban middle/lower-middle classes. Hence a broadened affirmative action policy will produce many more customers and broaden the investment, consumer and labor market as well<sup>75</sup> (p.77).

It is good to know that AA policies are making an effect on the dalit population. However, the statistics cited are vast. There is too much dispersion: 5-25 million is a big range. The authors should consider conducting a study that will give a precise estimate of exactly how many people have been lifted out of poverty before claiming that the AA policy has been effective.

As with any contentious issue there are two sides to the story. Critics of the affirmative action plan (governmental and private sectors) that is meant to achieve "social justice" claim the answer does not lie in "reservations," but rather in the need to address the root of the problem. Authors Dagar and Srivastava point out, "Social and economic backwardness prevents the acquisition of merit, leading to a vicious cycle of no-education-no-jobs and so on ... Caste is only one of the variables limiting performance. SCs and STs are left behind due to income, cutting across caste lines, being often a more potent factor in preventing access to education and jobs. Religion, regional biases and gender also play their roles as well" (p.86). Dagar and Srivastava make a valid point! Caste is just one of the elements that are causing the divide. The lack of a steady income prevents people from obtaining an education. Children are seen as possessing greater value if they tend to household chores rather than going to school to obtain an education. An education does not pay (in the short-run), but obtaining a menial job can assist families in meeting basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, etc.

Moreover, those who oppose reservations (which have been prevalent in the university system for many years) claim they are not the answer, as they do not seem to work! *The Economist* again in its article "With Reservations":

Low-caste students struggle in schools without special help, which is rarely available. Their English—the language of India’s middle class—tends to be poor. Many drop out. Up to half of university places reserved for low-caste students are left vacant. So, too, are many of the university posts reserved for low-caste teachers. Most Indians emerge from this system with an abysmal education. Low-caste Indians perhaps almost invariably do (p.94).

If the reservation system is not working in the university system, why should it be implemented in the labor market? This makes absolutely no sense!

More importantly, any kind of AA policy that entertains the thought of any sort of reservation will cause nothing but division within the communities of India. India will not be united but rather disjointed as a community. Professor Narayanaswamy points out in his work:

Few will disagree that the practice of reservation has not been salutary. This is because it (a) promotes caste identity at the expense of national identity, (b) embeds in the beneficiaries that it is a hereditary and transferable “property right,” (c) generates a dependency syndrome among the “creamy” layer whose self-interest prompts it to deny the facility to the more deserving within its own group, (d) lowers performance standards in favour of extra-professional considerations and, critically, (e) does not benefit those who deserve it the most.

Opponents of the reservation system are quick to point out that the portion of the population that is receiving the benefits from the AA program is flawed! The beneficiaries of the AA policy are being unfairly “over represented.” *The Economist* says in “With Reservations”:

Since reservations for OBCs were introduced in 1990s ... the proliferation of the OBCs has risen to 3,000 castes ... When they were awarded reservations, the OBCs were estimated to make up 53% of India’s total population. More recent counting suggests they are only about one-third the population, although their 27% reservation remains unchanged. Moreover, by most measures, the average OBC member is no poorer than the average Indian. ‘How can you discriminate against the average?’ asks Mr. Bhalla, despairingly (P. 94).

In any event, private industry has banded together and formulated a “voluntary compliance program” to avoid government scrutiny, and regulation. Authors Dagar and Srivastava point out in their work:

Pushed to the wall on the issue of job quotas, and threatened with legislation, industry bodies like the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have come out with a series of ‘voluntary affirmative action (AA) policies. Explaining the anti-legislation stance of the industry and countering the suggestion that the action plan suggested by it is a ploy to starve off legislation, R. Seshasayee, Managing Director, Ashok Leyland, and President, CII, says: ‘Legislation normally ensures that people follow the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law.’ However, the fact remains that at organized private industry, which employs eight million people have been consistently and, often quite vehemently, against job quotas. The rationale: a country that is positioning itself as the knowledge back-end of the world cannot compromise on merit (p.86).

It is no secret that India has become the outsourcing capital of the world. Businesses need to ensure the staffs they have hired are competent, so they can provide outstanding service to their clients. If companies comply with the government’s reservation policy they will be forced to hire incompetent people. Customers would take their business elsewhere due to lackluster service. All parties would lose. Companies would lose their clients, forcing them to lay-off their staff. As a result employees would lose their jobs! The unemployment rate would increase causing the government to pay a greater amount unemployment insurance, etc.

One more “voluntary” AA policy that is being implement by private industry per *The Economist* in its article “With Reservations”:

The Confederation of Indian Industry has introduced a package of dalit-friendly measures, including scholarships for bright low-caste students. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and industry plans to support entrepreneurs in India’s poorest districts. Naukri.com, India’s biggest online recruitment service, with over 10 m subscribers, anticipates that companies will

soon actively seek low-caste recruits. It has therefore started asking job-seekers to register their caste. (p.93)

As can be seen, industry has been trying to provide low caste students the opportunity to help themselves by getting an education. Providing scholarships which are merit based will ensure people who are hired do indeed possess the requisite skills and knowledge to succeed in the “business world.” Further, providing a website that allows people to indicate their caste will facilitate employers in using “workforce utilization” ensuring no one caste is over/under represented in a particular geographic area.

On the whole these policies are very “innovative.” Private industry has done an excellent job in incorporating lower caste individuals into the workforce, while ensuring a balance is maintained by recruiting people from higher castes as well! This not only ensures “fairness” to all, but also maintains diversity within the work force! Companies are able to meet the needs of the people, and continue conducting business. It’s a win-win for all!

As mentioned earlier, the caste system has been practiced for nearly ~5,000 years. It is an antediluvian and antiquated system which is still practiced to various degrees in different jurisdictions to this day. However, with the passage of time the “rigidity” of the “classification system” will become more evident as new occupations are invented and others are no longer required. In the October 1994 edition of *The Economist*, the author elucidates a valid point of new job classification. One example is that of a computer programmer. Where does this person’s job get “classified” into the five occupational structure of the caste system? Along the same lines, who needs a “messenger caste” in today’s world of video conferencing, email, Blackberries and faxes? This classification is certainly out of date. It is practically extinct (Casting the first stone, p.18).

Further aiding the demise of the caste system is urbanization. *The Economist* mentions in its article “Untouchable and unthinkable,” as more people obtain ‘middle class’ status in the cities they are less likely to marry within their own caste than in rural India (p.17). People will no longer identify themselves in whole saying “I am a Brahmin,” but rather in percentages saying “I am 25% Brahmin, 50% Kshatriya, 25% Vaishya, etc. The populous will become more heterogeneous than homogenous.

To conclude, AA is always a very sensitive subject as it tends to elicit ill feelings which have been harbored by a myriad of groups and sects. Implementing a comprehensive AA policy is further complicated by the fact that India is so vast, and is a “melting pot” that is home to a variety of religions. It seems that dalits and OBCs traditionally are not provided the same opportunities as other higher castes due to lack of education. The government should channel its resources to facilitate an environment that is conducive to learning. The government should hire more teachers, offer recruitment bonuses for teachers and their aides who teach in rural communities, provide for smaller class sizes and personal attention by hiring teaching assistants, enhance public services (improve drinking water, utilities, roads, etc.) and provide scholarships to those who score well in their state standardized exams. If these steps are implemented it would allow dalits and OBCs to help themselves by allowing them to pull themselves out of dire poverty instead of relying on a government handout.

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# NASA 2009: 25 YEARS OF TRADITION & PROGRESS

## Reflecting Back & Looking Ahead

*By: Shubha Dathatri*

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In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a group of Sankethis in the US started conversations about forming an official cultural and social organization in order to facilitate a sense of community amongst Sankethi families in North America. These conversations and the ideas flowing from them came to fruition in 1984 when the North American Sankethi Association (NASA) was formed. The very first official NASA gathering took place at the Kali Bari Temple in New Jersey. There were roughly 16 families in attendance at this inaugural event, which was a one-day program running from afternoon until evening. The programs on the agenda included the very first General Body Meeting (GBM) and elections, some informal cultural programs featuring the talents of children and adults, and concluded with a dinner prepared by some of the attending families. During the GBM, attendees engaged in discussions around the purpose, goals, and structure of the organization and began to make plans for the future of NASA. Dr. Jayaram was unanimously elected the first President of NASA. After these administrative tasks were taken care of, attendees enjoyed an informal cultural program followed by dinner. Everyone in attendance at this meeting was in high spirits, feeling energized by the promise of their fledgling organization.

Nearly 24 years later, in July 2008, NASA members came together for the annual meeting in New Windsor, Maryland. There were about 45 families who attended this three-day event featuring a variety of social and cultural programs ranging from an afternoon of picnicking and sports/games at a park to a children's variety show to some stellar music programs. A GBM and elections for the next Board of Directors were held at this meeting as well. As you might imagine, the organizational issues under discussion during this GBM were strikingly different from the more procedural and logistical ones on which the very first one was focused. While most of the attendees at the earlier event were young families comprised of immigrant parents and their children, those who attended the 2008 event were families spanning a wider range of generations. In fact, some of the children attending the first meeting themselves have children now. Similar to those at the event in Kali Bari, attendees at the 2008 event were enthusiastic in their participation and happy to have an opportunity to reconnect with community members.

Considering the very first NASA gathering and the most recent annual meeting, it is clear that our organization has grown and changed over time. Similarly, when we consider the leadership of NASA over time, we also see variations in their understanding of the goals and purposes of NASA and how they have gone about meeting those goals and realizing those purposes. This article is based on interviews with six active members and leaders in NASA who were kind enough to share their insights about the goals of the organization and their experiences in trying to meet those goals. Because of their generation, history with, and role in NASA, they provide specific perspectives on how NASA has developed over the years. Our thriving, evolving community organization celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. This occasion also gives us an opportunity to reflect back on the origins of the organization and look forward to see how it can continue to grow to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse membership.

### Origins of Involvement

In NASA, as in any activity or endeavor pertinent to our daily lives, how we became involved shapes to a large extent how we participate and how we understand the organization itself. As such, it is informative to consider how the six individuals interviewed for this article came to be involved in NASA. First, an introduction to these six leaders ...

Dr. Keshava Kumar, our current President, first attended NASA programs in Albany, NY and Pittsburgh, PA in 1992 and 1993. Prior to that time, he was not aware that a group like NASA even existed. Although he did not attend any other NASA events again for a few years, Keshava Kumar and his family became more actively involved in NASA after they attended the annual event in New Windsor in 1999 and 2000. Keshava Kumar indicates that he was impressed with what NASA had to offer in terms of sense of community and cultural programs and so it was a “natural progression” for him and his family to become more active participants. Another impetus for this more active participation came from then fellow Connecticut resident and NASA president, Mr. Srikantiah, with whom Keshava Kumar first worked on the Board of Directors (BOD). Keshava Kumar has served on the BOD for four years and now is serving as the President.

Dr. Y.N. Jayaram, our very first President, is one of the founding members of the organization. He was one of the main participants in the initial conversations mentioned earlier about starting an organization for Sankethis. Jayaram has the special distinction of having attended almost every NASA function that has been held, including many regional events. As a result, he presents a unique perspective on how NASA has evolved since its inception.

In 1984, Dr. K. Ramakrishna received a phone call from Jayaram inviting him to join NASA as one of its founding members. Ramakrishna had himself been involved in those earlier conversations leading up to the establishment of the organization. The Ramakrishna family was one of those in attendance at that first official NASA gathering at the Kali Bari Temple. So strong was their interest and commitment that the Ramakrishnas traveled to NJ from Chicago just for the day to attend this get-together. Since that time, each member of the Ramakrishna family has at one time or another (and sometimes for multiple terms) served on the Board of Directors, with Ramakrishna leading the organization as its President at one time and General Secretary for another two-year term. Like Jayaram, then, Ramakrishna also provides a distinct view of the history and evolution of the organization.

A member of NASA’s second generation, Mrs. Shanthi Rajagopalan, has served on the BOD for several terms. She became involved in the organization through her parents somewhat early in her childhood. Shanthi viewed NASA as mainly a social organization initially, particularly in light of her sense that her family context placed an emphasis on Sankethi culture and spirituality. As we will see, her understanding of NASA and its goals became more nuanced over time to encompass more than its social functions.

Mrs. Jayashree Sastry immigrated to the US in 1991. She was aware of the existence of an organization for Sankethis when she arrived. She believed it was important for her family to have strong associations with their own cultural group as a way of preserving the culture and of expanding the social network. Jayashree has always been an active participant in cultural organizations both in the US and abroad. Staying true to that, she got involved with the BOD in 1998. She says, “The ownership and accountability comes when you are a part of the leadership.” She indicates that, when one is on the board, it seems to carry more weight in encouraging participation and attendance in meetings. Further, families of actives and leaders begin participating in greater numbers as a show of support as well.

Mr. Ganesh Rao, also a member of the second generation of NASA, became involved in the organization through his family. He has served on the BOD for multiple terms and is currently our General Secretary. Ganesh has been an active participant in NASA since his childhood and, as one of the second generation parents interviewed, shares his insights about what NASA will mean for the third generation.

### *Reflections on NASA’s Initial Purpose & Goals*

When asked about the purpose and goals of NASA when he first got involved, Keshava Kumar shares that he did not really think about this at first. He felt, “Well, here is an organization where a group



of Sankethis get together, an opportunity to meet new families, and allows [my children] ... to make new friends.” Similarly, Jayashree indicates that she was not explicitly aware of the goals when she first got involved. She believes that the focus was more on the GBM and finances at the time that she came into the organization. She goes on to say that she did not see anything particularly “lofty or attractive” about the goals initially. Because of this, she got involved in rewriting some bylaws and looking at the constitution to make sure everything “fell in line.” Jayashree states, “I don’t think anybody had any clear concept as to what we want to achieve as NASA. To establish it as a non-profit organization, it’s required to write some objectives, a mission statement on the ... constitution. We promote culture; we promote education ... exchange of culture and education and all these things ... But I don’t think anybody did anything or thought through anything to bring it to that.”

In contrast to Keshava Kumar and Jayashree, Jayaram and Ramakrishna share a different perspective about the initial goals and purpose of NASA. Very basically, Jayaram states that the goal initially was to provide Sankethis opportunities to interact around issues of our culture and heritage. He goes on to outline a few specific goals:

Sankethis should have opportunities to meet as often as possible and to maintain community ties.

The younger generation of Sankethis should have opportunities to build relationships towards the possibility of marriage.

Sankethis and NASA as an organization should sponsor charitable causes in India.

Ramakrishna echoes these initial goals, stating that two issues that were stressed at the first organizational meeting of NASA were 1) growing Sankethi values, and 2) helping 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Sankethis get to know one another towards marriage. After some time, contributing to charitable causes was added to this list of goals, but Ramakrishna states that the initial focus was mainly on developing a sense of community and promoting Sankethi values, what he refers to as “Sankethism.”

It is apparent that, while Ramakrishna and Jayaram had a clear understanding of the goals and purpose of NASA initially, this clarity was not shared in Jayashree’s and Keshava Kumar’s description of their initial understanding of the goals and purpose of NASA. Adding another layer of complexity to this initial understanding of organizational goals is what Shanthi and Ganesh report. Shanthi tells us that while she does not believe that NASA members initially thought consciously or deliberately about the goals of NASA or what the future should be, there was an underlying shared sense that NASA is about community, about interpersonal relationships, about fostering community ties. She initially understood NASA as an association that provided a forum for Sankethis to socialize and to preserve community ties. Both Shanthi and Ganesh mention an understanding that one of the peripheral goals was to allow young Sankethis to cultivate relationships in the future interest of marriage. Ganesh indicates that while he, too, was not overtly aware of the goals and purpose of NASA, he understood that NASA’s informal goals entailed providing opportunities to socialize and fostering a sense of culture. Like Keshava Kumar and Jayashree, neither Ganesh nor Shanthi had an explicit understanding of what the goals of the organization were at first, but they did have a more vague sense of what these goals may be. This vague sense seems to coincide for the most part with the initial goals noted by Jayaram and Ramakrishna.

Almost all of the interviewees make reference to providing opportunities for the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation to socialize in the interest of marriage. Although they do not see this purpose as having been realized, Jayaram, Ramakrishna, Shanthi, and Ganesh mention this as being at least a peripheral goal for the organization. Shanthi says, “We all have total friends for life, but I don’t know if it’s been a romantic kind of thing.” Jayashree talks about this perceived purpose in quite a different way, however. She states, “NASA is not a ... matrimonial database or anything ... It’s like a family ... Children know each other; they become close family members kind of thing. So nobody should think that coming to NASA has that value; children are marrying outside ... that’s not the intent at all. Marriage is something personal, people’s choice. But ... [it’s about] promoting culture – children shouldn’t go back fifteen

years later, twenty years later to trace their roots. We're here to show the root when it's shooting up." In contrast to the other interviewees, Jayashree does not see that relationship-building in this capacity is or even should be a goal of NASA.

Given that these six individuals are active participants and leaders in NASA, it is interesting to note the variations in how they talk about the goals of the organization at their initial involvement. I do not suggest that the fact that these variations exist are negative or detrimental at all. Rather, I believe those variations have the potential to enrich the promise of NASA to meet the needs of its membership. That promise, however, can only be fulfilled by making room for open, constructive dialogue that revisits our understanding of NASA's goals as the association prepares for the next 25 years.

### *Reflections on NASA's Current Purpose & Goals, and Future Directions*

In describing how he understands NASA's current purpose and goals, Keshava Kumar places an emphasis on NASA's role in preserving Sankethi heritage and traditions and in growing and perpetuating community ties. He says, "...this desire starts arising – you want grandchildren or your own children to learn more about either Sankethi heritage or some of our traditions and things like that. And having a common forum like NASA where we can simply go there ... this is when you're going to absorb your culture. It's just waiting there and you absorb it. You don't have to make a separate effort to be able to absorb that ... An organization like NASA provides that when you need—when you want that." To help NASA become such a forum, Keshava Kumar has focused on making the organization more inclusive, to support the increasing diversity in the backgrounds and interests of members. In terms of the future of NASA, Keshava Kumar suggests a need to revamp our systems of communication within the organization. He proposes maintaining electronic files for all paperwork, switching to electronic communication, and redesigning the website with a fresh look, to be more interactive and accessible. Keshava Kumar says that, ideally, he would like to see a Youth Committee established that is provided with a sizeable budget with which to organize programs they are interested in. He shares that he is uncertain how feasible this is financially, but he believes that it is important to channel some funds in this direction as a way of helping the younger generations gain a sense of culture and community and balancing out the funds sent to support our brethren in India. Along these same lines, Keshava Kumar believes it is important for NASA leaders to take risks. For example, he says that while it may be risky to give youth the reins and while it may not be a grand success, it is still important that we make the effort at least. He aptly states, "We have to take some risks, like Nachamma did in those days. She took a risk; she just left the place and didn't know where to go, but she went."

Earlier, Jayaram had described his understanding of the organization's goals as having to do with maintaining community ties, promoting Sankethi culture, cultivating relationships, and engaging in charitable work. He maintains that the goals are quite similar even now, despite the fact that the organization is changing. Jayaram sees NASA as being more open in the sense that those who participate in the organization are those "who believe in the Sankethi cause." The goals themselves, however, are not fundamentally different from how he understood them initially. He indicates that the focus is more on youth, as he—and Keshava Kumar—believes it should be. He says that the older generation needs to take a step back and let the younger generation take the lead: "If we do not bring them together here, it will be a dying association, a dying community. So that's why we want to bring children and youth forward and give any advice and support they ask."

Jayaram shares a bit about how, being a leader in NASA, he has gone about meeting the goals and the extent to which he feels he has been successful. He sees communication as being significant whether it occurs by mail, email, phone, or face-to-face contact. Increasing the membership, bringing NASA members together, and increasing participation in community events are all critical to developing a strong sense of community. While he respects that members of any association of this kind will have differing perspectives, he feels that he has been largely successful in meeting the goals as he has

understood them in terms of bringing Sankethis together, carrying out cultural/social programs, and donating to charitable causes. The one area where he has been disappointed and feels NASA has fallen short is when it comes to providing the younger generation with opportunities to get to know one another. Jayaram believes that young people have not had sufficient meaningful opportunities to interact as a result of being geographically dispersed and of NASA meetings not occurring as frequently as they perhaps should. He also alludes to a tension between the generations that has come up in conversations with the other interviewees as well and which I will return to later. He says that we expect our children to also “fit into the outside American society and be leading. At the same time, when they enter the home door in the evening, we expect them to be typical Indians, following the rules of the house, respecting the elders... not challenging the elders and questioning them and those kinds of things ... And there will be friction within the families because of that.” Although this one goal with regard to cultivating relationships has not been met, Jayaram does feel that the other goals have been and continue to be adequately addressed. He believes that we have come a long way and have increased a sense of belonging amongst community members. What he would suggest to current and future leaders and actives in NASA is to facilitate more frequent get-togethers in order to meet the diverse interests of members. Like Keshava Kumar, Jayaram makes a strong push for youth involvement. He says that at this point, the BOD should be comprised 50% of youth and these individuals should take on a greater share of the responsibility in NASA in an organizing capacity.

I had mentioned earlier that Jayaram and Ramakrishna were similar in their understanding of NASA’s purpose and goals. In striking contrast, Ramakrishna sees a current ambivalence in what the purpose and goals of the organization are. He says, “I think there is a disconnect between what the parents thought to do and how they thought to do it.” He believes that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation was not prepared for how the organization would grow and develop and that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation did not work as proactively as it should have to achieve these initial goals. Instead, there was a sense that just because the goals were articulated and established, somehow they would automatically be achieved. Candidly, Ramakrishna states, “I would give an F for us—for meeting the objectives.” A large part of the reason for this, he reports, is that the goal most of us focus on is maintaining Sankethism. When we are not a monolithic group, when there are a variety of perspectives with respect to what constitutes Sankethism, it becomes difficult as an organization to facilitate programs and activities that maintain Sankethism.

Ramakrishna believes that, despite the relative lack of success, NASA leaders and actives have been serious about achieving the goals set forth. Initially the annual meetings were conducive to learning about culture and religion more generally, if not specifically to learning about Sankethism per se. Meetings were held in places like Arsha Vidya Gurukulam and Shringeri Sadhana Center, contexts which were really about enriching our spiritual heritage. There were programs that reflected the focus on these issues of spirituality. And there was a recognition that the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation is being raised in contexts that intersect in complex and challenging ways with the Sankethi culture and so discussion forums were held to talk about these issues.

Reflecting back, however, Ramakrishna feels that this was not sufficient in terms of trying to meet the goals. In fact, he believes that the goals have become blurrier and more indistinct without our realizing it—perhaps as we began to see when Keshava Kumar, Jayashree, Shanthi, and Ganesh articulated their initial understanding of the goals. As such, when we lack a common vision and when there is a change in leadership every two years, NASA members will likely focus on more immediate things like organizational logistics.

One of the things that Ramakrishna talked in detail about was the gap between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations. He indicates that the fact that this gap existed to begin with was not recognized for quite some time and there was no way to address something that has not been acknowledged. He provides the examples of the youth skits and plays/dramas that have been staged at NASA over the years. Ramakrishna describes how a majority of these skits feature stereotypes of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. Regardless of whether or not these stereotypes were deliberate, he senses that they have become more prevalent in

these skits. He, too, found these skits and their stereotypes to be humorous at first, but has begun to perceive the harm they may have done as NASA tries to meet its goal of maintaining Sankethism. He gives the example of respect for elders as one of the basic tenets of Sankethism and provides cases where this is violated in some of the skits performed at NASA. He shares that perpetuating these stereotypes and having NASA be a forum for doing so is ultimately damaging to the extent to which the organization is able to maintain Sankethi culture.

Ramakrishna goes on to say that there now seem to be two cultures within NASA—one comprised of the first generation and the other of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/younger generation. He indicates that 2<sup>nd</sup> generation participation in “major value events” is either inconsistent or not present at all as young people are off campus late into the night, often leaving early from the evening’s functions and arriving late at the morning’s functions. It seems like we are two separate organizations as a result, under the same umbrella. Ramakrishna feels that it is in the best interest of the organization to bridge this gap and begin to operate again as one single group. The leadership needs to transition from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation—and Ramakrishna does not see the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation’s readiness to take on this responsibility with same “passion and spirit” as the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. Young Sankethis may identify with and want to spend time with people of Sankethi origins/associations, but there is not any attention paid to Sankethi culture itself in the contexts where these social gatherings occur.

In order to engage some of these issues Ramakrishna has raised, he suggests that professional speakers be brought in to address the actual and potential cultural gaps between the generations. He says that the funds that have been spent on music programs at each of the annual gatherings are perhaps better channeled towards bringing in quality programs targeted at culture and bi-culturalism and bridging the gap between the two generations, seeking the help necessary in managing and navigating cultural differences. He also suggests that NASA has great need of a forum for expressing views freely without feeling the need to be defensive or to be careful in what is said because of others who may take offense. Ramakrishna concludes by indicating that we often talk about many ideas and plans without taking the necessary extra steps to make those plans and ideas a reality. Think how much richer and more vibrant an organization we would be by meeting talk with action!

Bringing one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation perspectives to this, Shanthi conveys an understanding that NASA has provided a context mainly for socializing with other Sankethis at first. As the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation has grown older, she has come to see more of NASA’s role in preserving and promoting Sankethi cultural values. Interestingly, she perceives the social and cultural aspects of NASA as being intertwined. Shanthi talks about how there is a sense of home, of belonging that many young people feel when they are at NASA and, while this is rooted in history, in family friendship ties that go back for many years, and in culture, it goes beyond the shared attributes to encompass a shared experience of growing up Sankethi in American society. She hopes that NASA will strive to preserve and perpetuate this broader sense of belonging for future generations.

Reflecting on NASA’s purpose and goals today, Shanthi indicates that a shared sense of community, history, and loyalty are at the heart of it. The difference lies in how we go about maintaining that sense of community with a membership holding rather diverse perspectives. Like Ramakrishna, Shanthi points to a tension rooted in the idea that while the culture of NASA is based in many ways on spirituality, the diversity of NASA today reflects a more flexible understanding of what Sankethism is.

When she talks about being in a leadership role and trying to meet the goals she has articulated, Shanthi feels that she has been moderately successful. For example, she feels it is important to include the younger generation’s perspective in the annual event programming and that has happened to some extent. Shanthi was interested in taking on more leadership responsibilities in NASA as a way of influencing the future of the organization. As Ramakrishna and some of the other interviewees point out, Shanthi also feels that it is easy to lose sight of the forest for the trees when serving on the BOD. While she was enthusiastic about trying to meet some of these bigger picture goals when she was in a leadership

role, oftentimes, most of her and other committee members' time was spent taking care of the details such as planning and coordinating for the annual meeting, putting together and sending out newsletters, etc. She feels that there were a lot of good ideas proposed, but unfortunately not a great deal of follow through to implement them. Being a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation was another factor that impacted the extent to which Shanthi was able to meet the goals she describes. She talks about the challenges inherent in managing the expectations of members holding a variety of perspectives, particularly being a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation member of the BOD herself and working with a BOD whose members themselves have diverse perspectives. Shanthi indicates that, as a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, there also seemed to be some personal risk involved in trying out new activities to meet the goals.

In order to address some of these challenges, Shanthi, like Keshava Kumar and Jayaram, suggests that 2<sup>nd</sup> generation members should get more involved and be given greater responsibility. She stresses the importance of youth members genuinely collaborating and sharing responsibilities as they go about planning events. Shanthi also suggests that it may be useful to form various advisory committees that represent the interests of different groups within NASA. She says, "The sole responsibility of these advisory committees would be ideation as opposed to administration." Establishing these advisory committees may be a way to get voices heard in NASA and to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse membership. Finally, Shanthi indicates that being open-minded is key: "If NASA doesn't change, it's not going to exist ... Can the old guard accept that something that is a little bit different is still Sankethi culture and identity?" She says that NASA needs to be willing to accept change, but also acknowledges that it is rather tricky to figure out how to actually *be* open-minded. She suggests that a first step in moving towards this flexibility may be in developing programs and activities that are relevant to different age groups, generations, and interests.

Similarly, Jayashree believes that it is important to draw more participants into the organization in order to diversify the NASA leadership. In my conversation with Jayashree, the focus was mainly on increasing participation as a goal of the organization rather than on the other goals and purposes that the other interviewees discussed. When she does talk about the purpose of NASA today, Jayashree says, "First, there was no understanding of what it [the purpose] was. And then later on, okay it's there ... but now I don't think we did a really good job in realizing all those ... values that we define." She shares that, while NASA has always been a family organization, it has now become almost exclusively a casual, family/social organization, which is an important function for an organization to serve. Seeing it this way, Jayashree talked about the importance of increasing participation through encouraging new membership and strengthening commitment amongst current membership. She felt she was successful in both these regards as she made attendance to NASA events more accessible, whether by holding more regional meetings, by making personal calls to invite people to attend meetings, or by keeping the costs of attending NASA events as low as possible.

With regard to more procedural matters, Jayashree emphasizes that the tenure for leadership positions needs to be longer—specifically, two years may not be enough to make a significant difference. She also believes that attendance and participation in NASA activities has been dwindling. She suggests a need to strengthen the base of the organization by expanding geographically—rotating the GBM/annual meetings, holding more regional meetings, reducing the attendance fees, and generally making it a truly "North American" association.

Like the other interviewees, Jayashree also talks about promoting/preserving Sankethi culture. As Ramakrishna did, Jayashree makes implicit reference to the gap between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations. She indicates that, in order for the younger generation to get the most out of the NASA programs that are offered, particularly at the annual meeting, there is a need for more discipline among the youth. She understands that young people will want to stay up late into the night, but suggests that particular activities be offered in that time slot that are more in line with the goals of NASA. This speaks to the larger issue of how to go about including children and young people into NASA activities in a meaningful way while simultaneously meeting the needs of the older generation. To encourage more youth

participation, Jayashree suggests establishing some ground rules for young people as well offering age-relevant activities that tie into the NASA objectives.

Ganesh also discusses the role that NASA plays in meeting the expectations of members of different generations. To begin with, he shares Shanthi's ideas regarding NASA's purpose and goals today. In contrasting his understanding of the goals initially and now, Ganesh says, "In the beginning the goals were simpler. It was more about parents getting together and having fun as well as passing things on to their kids. But now as the whole organization is older, the membership is now not just two generations, it's three. My kids are the third generation in NASA, so the membership base is more diverse than ever before, so I think the goals—even though they're stated to be the same—you have to try harder to meet them, to make more people realize what the value is, and it gets harder given the broader age group ... The goals are similar, but now more than ever it gets harder to pass on because they're even a further generation removed—so to pass on the identity gets harder; it takes more effort." Ganesh gives the examples of language and storytelling to make his point. It is difficult to pass on the Kannada or Sankethi language to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation when the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation is not very strong in it themselves. Moreover, while the 1<sup>st</sup> generation and earlier generations seemed to know tales from the Ramayana and Mahabharatha by heart, most 2<sup>nd</sup> generation parents need to rely on books and such to share these stories that are an important aspect of our heritage.

Although the goals of cultural preservation and continuity are still at the core of NASA, what culture means and how we go about preserving it are more challenging matters. The generational differences that Ganesh talks about pose one set of challenges to meeting this goal. Another set of challenges is posed by the fact that our community is geographically dispersed. Opportunities for interaction are limited to the annual meeting and some regional meetings. Further, NASA funds available for holding a greater number of events are also a constraint. As a result, there is a great deal of programming at the annual meeting in order to meet the goals. When he evaluates the extent to which these programs are successful in meeting the goals, Ganesh feels that they have been moderately successful given the constraints. For example, while the annual meeting does not permit the time to necessarily teach music and dance, providing the younger generation with opportunities to see these arts showcased and demonstrated raises awareness about important aspects of Sankethi heritage and traditions.

Earlier, I described Ramakrishna's thoughts on the skits that have been staged at NASA over the years. While Ramakrishna expressed concerns regarding the stereotypes highlighted in these skits, Ganesh gives us a different take on the value of these skits. Ganesh has often been involved in helping to organize these skits. He understands them as "comedic parodies of parents or other Indian people" that include some moral themes. In describing their purpose, Ganesh believes that the skits helped to build camaraderie among youth who have similar backgrounds and experiences. He says, "It's a nice feeling to know, hey there are these other people like me." In this sense, we can see how the skits and the messages communicated and perceived in them can be viewed from somewhat opposing perspectives. Recognizing that such opposing perspectives exist is meaningful to initiating dialogue around issues that matter to both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Sankethis.

Much like a few of the other interviewees have mentioned, Ganesh shares the perspective that it is easy to get lost in the details when working on the BOD. He says, "Sometimes when you're on the Board, a lot of it is just doing what we've done ... we have the annual meeting and then you have another regional meeting. There's a lot of just the maintenance going on. And as the organization gets bigger, if the board is the same size ... it gets tough to stay on top of it. There are a lot of demands on your time. You end up spending a lot of it on just the maintenance aspect." What Ganesh seems to suggest here is the potential advantages of diversifying the programming and to go beyond what is familiar and rehearsed. He says, "What I'd do differently is focus more on what's achievable and try to get programs in place that will accomplish those goals given the constraints."

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The six individuals interviewed for this article portray a variety of perspectives on the functions and goals of NASA, diverging on some and converging on others. Regardless of the particular goals they discussed or the extent to which they believed these goals to have been met, the thoughts and ideas these leaders share demonstrate a deep sense of caring for NASA—as it is and as it has the potential to be. It is clear that NASA is a different organization today than it was when it began in 1984. At the heart of it, however, the core values of maintaining our community ties remain. By listening to these and other leaders in NASA and valuing their perspectives and suggestions, by developing programs that deepen our appreciation of our rich Sankethi heritage, we can see NASA flourish and thrive through the next 25 years.

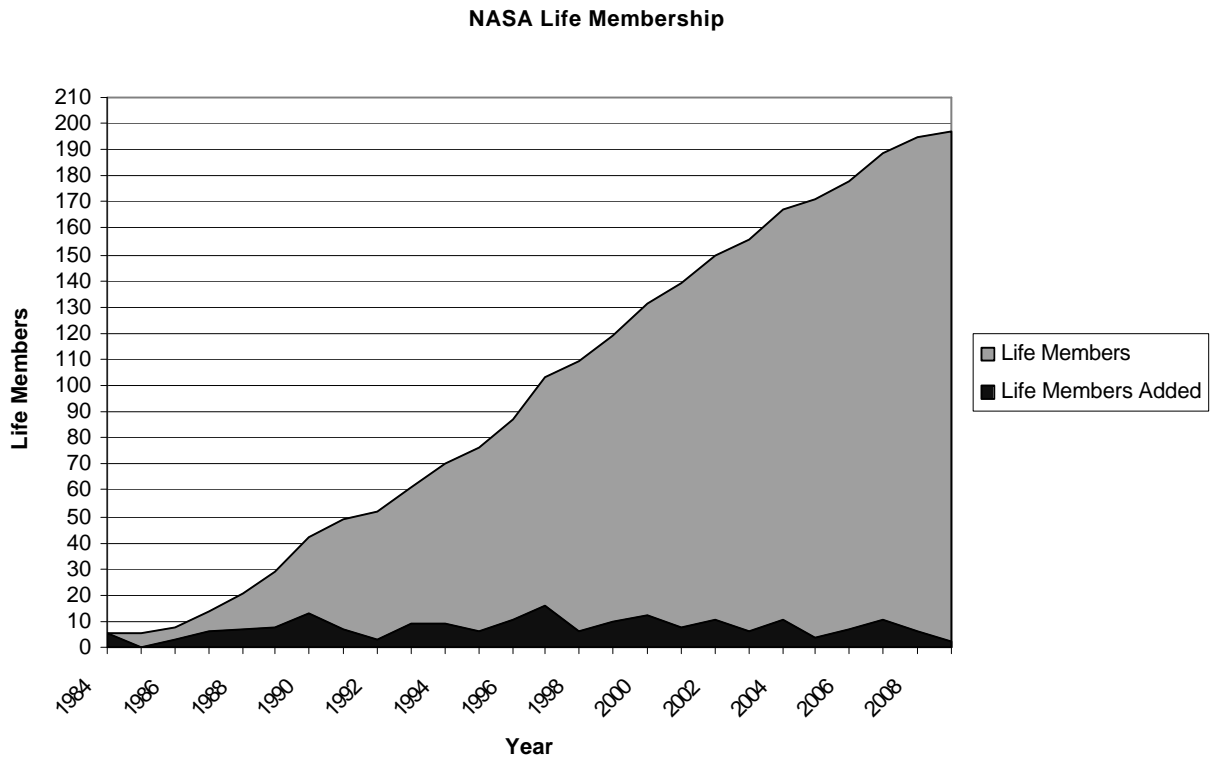
*My sincere thanks goes to the NASA actives and leaders who were gracious and insightful in sharing their thoughts for this article. I hope I've represented your perspectives fairly and accurately, and that your insights will provide a basis for understanding how our organization has evolved and how it can effectively move forward.*



*Best Wishes from the  
NASA Silver Jubilee Presidential Family*

*Mahathi, Puneeth,  
Prema and Keshava Kumar.  
South Windsor CT 06074*

# GROWTH IN NASA LIFE MEMBERSHIP





# KOWSHIKA SANKETHI SANGHA

The Flagbearer of the Community

*Dr. K.R. Srikantiah – President*

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I am sure the Honorable Members of NASA have gone through the Annual Report of the KSS for the year 2007-08 (available on our website ([www.kowshika-sankethi-sangha.org](http://www.kowshika-sankethi-sangha.org))). You will notice in it that in the first General Body Report of 1944 (Sankethis who are past 65 now will recall) donors of Rs.10, 5, 1 etc. are listed. They had incomes of less than Rs.100 a month, had at least 10 mouths to feed, fed students coming for *Varanna* and *Bhikshanna*, and on top of it all, they felt that it was their duty to donate to the Sangha so that the poor children did not remain uneducated.

It is this benevolence of people of those times that has transformed the Sangha from 1 Hostel and Rs. 500 as annual scholarships in 1944 to what it is today: seven hostels, an old age home, over Rs.1,000,000 (10 lacs) annually in scholarships, old age pensions, medical support and livelihood assistance to the needy. The Sangha provides free computer and spoken English education to the residents of the hostel today. The premises of three of our hostels have been donated to us.

This continuous support for the last 65 years has eradicated illiteracy in the Sankethi community, with students in the hostels aiming for higher education after graduation and working for well known Indian and multi-national companies.

As you celebrate the Silver Jubilee of your Association, the KSS and all its members in India convey their best wishes to each and every one of your members. On this happy occasion, we reiterate our appeal to you to help the KSS to pursue its goal.

We welcome donors to set up endowments for any purpose of their choice. The donor may adopt a student and look after his or her education. The Sangha will provide a separate identity to such endowments (only interest used) that are over \$2500, implement them as per the donor's wishes and provide the donor with regular information on progress.

About the unification of the two Sankethi factions, the KSS is always open. At the KSS, the unification is already in place. In every one of its activities, be it the hostel, old age home admissions, scholarships, etc., KSS and BSS students are treated equally. They are the first ones to be entertained without discrimination.

There are several aspects that motivate us to work for the Sangha; Dr H. Krishnamurthy, at 97, continues to guide us. Some residents at the old age home have made a will to donate a part of their savings to the Sangha as a token of their gratitude, since they have been well looked after in their last years. Donors in villages contribute a few coconuts or a few kilograms of food grains in spite of their poverty. There are members working for the Institution for over 40 years—and of course the continuous, magnanimous support of the Sankethi community in India.

The late Dr. Rajanna, donor to the old age home, used to say, “Being born as Humans on this planet, we need to pay rent to God in the form of helping the poor and the needy.” Let us join hands to help the poor and underprivileged members of our community and serve a noble cause.

Please write to [manu.anantha@gmail.com](mailto:manu.anantha@gmail.com) for further information.

# Winter



## Winter Trees

By William Carlos Williams

*All the complicated details  
of the attiring and  
the disattiring are completed!*

*A liquid moon  
moves gently among  
the long branches.  
Thus having prepared their buds  
against a sure winter  
the wise trees  
stand sleeping in the cold.*

*The silvery snows begin to blanket the landscape with a serenity and a calm that comes only  
through wisdom, a hallmark of the years when thoughts turn to spirituality and higher  
pursuits.*

ಓಂ  
ಶ್ರೀ ಗುರುಭ್ಯೋನಮಃ  
"ಜನಕ ಶತಾನಂದ ಸಂವಾದ" (ಸೀತಾ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ)

By Y.N. Dathatri

ರಾಗ: ರೀತಿಗೌಳ

ತಾಳ: ಆದಿ

ಭಯವಾಗದೇ ಗುರುವೇ ಭಯವಾಗದೇ  
ಮೈಥಿಲಿಯ ರಾಮನಿಗೆ ಕನ್ಯೆಯಾಗಿ ಕೊಡಲು  
ಭಯವಾಗದೇ ಗುರುವೇ ಭಯವಾಗದೇ

ಈತನೇ ಉದಧಿಯ ಹೊಕ್ಕು ತಾನೇ ತಂದ  
ವೇದಗಳ ಮತ್ಸ್ಯನಾಗಿ ಹೊರತಂದನೆನ್ನವಿರಿ  
ಆ ಜಲಚರನಿಗೆ ಭೂಜಾತೆಯ ಕೊಡಲು  
ಭಯವಾಗದೇ ಗುರುವೇ ಭಯವಾಗದೇ

ಸಮುದ್ರ ಮಥನದಿ ಸುರಾಸುರರಿಗೊಲಿದು  
ಮೇರುವ ಪೊತ್ತ ಆ ಕೂರ್ಮನೆನ್ನವಿರಿ  
ಸವಕಲು ಬೆನ್ನಿನಗೆ ಜಾನಕಿಯ ಕೊಡಲು  
ಭಯವಾಗದೇ ಗುರುವೇ ಭಯವಾಗದೇ

ಧರಣಿಯ ಮೊರೆ ಕೇಳಿ ಮಹಾಸುರನ ಕೊಂದ  
ಆದಿವರಾಹನೇ ಈತನೆಂದು ಪೇಳುವಿರಿ  
ಈ ಸುಕೋಮಲೆಯ ವರಾಹನಿಗೊಪ್ಪಿಸಲು  
ಭಯವಾಗದೇ ಗುರುವೇ ಭಯವಾಗದೇ

ಸ್ತಂಭದಿಂದಲೆ ಬಂದು ನರಸಿಂಹ ರೂಪಿಯಾಗಿ  
ಹಿರಣ್ಯಕನ ಕೊಂದವನೀತನೇ ಎನ್ನವಿರಿ  
ಆ ಘೋರರೂಪಿಗೆ ಸುರಸುಂದರಿಯ ಕೊಡಲು  
ಭಯವಾಗದೇ ಗುರುವೇ ಭಯವಾಗದೇ

ಆ ಬಲಿಯನು ಬೇಡಿ ಮೂರು ಪಾದವಪಡೆದು  
ತ್ರಿವಿಕ್ರಮನಾದವನೀತನೇ ಎನ್ನವಿರಿ  
ಬೇಡಿ ಜೀವಿಪರಿಗೆ ಮಗಳನು ಒಪ್ಪಿಸಲು  
ಭಯವಾಗದೇ ಗುರುವೇ ಭಯವಾಗದೇ

ಪಿತನ ಆಳಾಪದಿ ತನ್ನ ಮಾತೆಯ ತರಿದ  
ಭಾರ್ಗವರಾಮನು ಈತನೇ ಎಂದಿರಿ  
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ಭಯವಾಗದೇ ಗುರುವೇ ಭಯವಾಗದೇ

# THE FIRST SANKETHI IN THE USA

An Interview with Subramanya S. Bettadapur

By: Aruna Viswanatha

Sankethis might be known for a love of music. But they might also have a share of absent-mindedness coded into their genes.

The first Sankethi to emigrate from Bangalore to the United States, Subramanya Bettadapur, arrived in September 1955. He made arrangements with his airline to bring his veena along. "In those days, I told TWA, and they put me in the back seat," Bettadapur says, describing how the veena was so dear to him that friends thought of it as Bettadapur's "first wife."

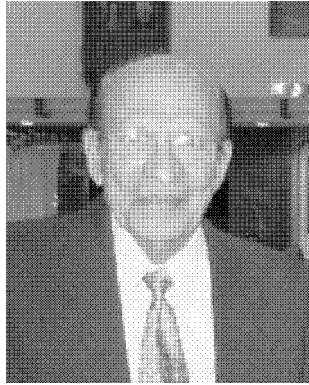
"I kept the veena in the back, and tied it to the seat," he says.

But while the engineer carefully ensured the safe passage of his favorite musical instrument, he forgot to arrange another minor detail: what to do when he landed in Chicago?

A fellow passenger from Madras, who had previously contacted a director at the local YMCA, came to the rescue. "I met them at Chicago Airport," Bettadapur, who is now 80, says. "He took us all to the YMCA that night, and put us up that night."

Subramanya Bettadapur was born in 1928 as the oldest in a family of 10. He grew up in the several small towns the family moved to since his father worked for the Indian government. Later, during high school and college, his family settled in Bangalore.

He studied metallurgy at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore and left for the United States when he was admitted, with a research assistantship, to a Masters program



at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"Financial assistance was important," Bettadapur says. "There were limited resources, so free tuition was very interesting."

His father paid for his travel to the U.S., but, Bettadapur says, he paid his own way back after the program ended with the money he

had earned.

While a student in Illinois, he lived with three other classmates from south India. They shared the cooking, and walked to the supermarket to save money. "By October, November, it got very cold," Bettadapur says.

"We had to walk to the grocery, but had to buy a jacket, and a snowshoe," he says. "There were a lot of things to learn."

With no Indian stores around, they would stick to the rice, lentils, buttermilk, and vegetables they would find at the American markets.

Bettadapur returned to Bangalore in 1957 to a teaching post at his alma mater. "It was not the same thing I had visualized," Bettadapur says, of his time as a returnee to the Indian Institute of Science.

After getting married in 1959, he returned to the U.S. The couple still had to be inventive with groceries after arriving back in the U.S. This time, he says, they could order, via mail, from Patel Brothers in New York.

Bettadapur picked up an M.B.A. in night school and went to work for General Motors in Flint, Michigan. He brought his brother to

study at Notre Dame, and then brought him to General Motors too.

After a series of moves, to Richmond, VA, Winston-Salem, NC, and Wichita, KS, he joined the American Navy in 1980.

Born as B.S. Subramanya, he changed his name when he became a citizen of the United States, to conform to American naming norms and pass on to his children the name that identified the family: Bettadapur.

He was involved with local Indian associations, including serving as president of one where they lived in Virginia. “In Richmond there were no other Sankethis,” he says. “I was the only one for quite a while.”

He currently lives in Washington, D.C., with a son (and grandsons) in Singapore and a daughter (with three grandchildren) in Indianapolis. He still works for the government, though now with the Marine Corps.

The veena has taken a back seat to other interests, because the frets are out of tune, he says, and he has to take it back to India to get it repaired.

The logistics of traveling with a veena, too, have grown more complicated in the half-century since he first brought it to the U.S. “Now you have to buy an extra seat or put it in a box, or something like that.”

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## ಗಾದೆಗಳು

ರಾಧಾ ಜಯರಾಂ

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- ಮಾತು ಸಕ್ಕರೆಯ ಹಾಗೆ, ಕೆಲಸ ಕತ್ತೆಯ ಹಾಗೆ.
- ಸಂಬಳಕ್ಕೆ ಮುಂದೆ, ಕೆಲಸಕ್ಕೆ ಹಿಂದೆ.
- ಅಪ್ಪನಿಗೆ ಆರು ಬುದ್ಧಿ ಮಗನಿಗೆ ನೂರು ಬುದ್ಧಿ.
- ನೆಂಟರು ದೂರವಿರಬೇಕು, ನೀರು ಹತ್ತಿರವಿರಬೇಕು.
- ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಇದ್ದು, ಬೇಕಾದ್ದು ಇಲ್ಲ.
- ಇರುವಾಗ ಯಾರೂ ಬೇಡ, ಇಲ್ಲದಿರುವಾಗ ಎಲ್ಲರೂ ಬೇಕು.
- ಬಡವನಿಗೆ ಆನೆ ದಾನ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿದ ಹಾಗೆ.
- ಬಡತನ ಬಂದಾಗ ನೆಂಟರ ಬಾಗಿಲ ಸೇರಬಾರದು.
- ತನಗೆ ಬೇಡ, ಇನ್ನೋಬ್ಬನಿಗೆ ಕೊಡಲಾರ.
- ಕಲಿತು ಕಲಿತು ಹೊಂಡಕ್ಕೆ ಬಿದ್ದ.
- ತಿಳಿದವರು ಹೇಳಿದ್ದೇ ಗಾದೆ, ಹಿರಿಯರು ಹೇಳಿದ್ದೇ ಪಾಠ.



## SHANTHI MANTHRAS

*Compiled from various sources by: Y.N. Jayaram*

**Disclaimer:** please note that by no means am I a scholar nor am I qualified to give the inner meanings of these powerful shanthi mantras. I am only scratching the surface with elementary knowledge. This is oriented towards the youngsters in the US and Canada who have interest in these mantras, have heard them before and are wondering what they mean. If they know the meaning, they can appreciate it better and perhaps chant these regularly and maintain our culture and heritage. Once we understand the meaning of these, we really wonder at the vision of the Sages/Rishis, who initiated and gave them to the shishya parampara or student lineage, hundreds if not thousands of years ago, the respect they had for nature, their understanding of civilization and how much they knew when science was very primitive. The full meaning, details and discourses have been given by the great Shankaracharya, Sayanacharya, and others who were stalwarts in our heritage.

### When do we chant Shanthi Mantras?

It is customary to chant these powerful mantras, before a *pooja* (worship of God), during the *poojas* when there is a transition from one stage to another, and at the end of ceremonies/rituals. These are also chanted during special occasions like weddings, Munji/Brahmopadesha (thread ceremony to initiate the young bachelor to the life of a dedicated student). Further, these are chanted at Abhishekas/Yajnas/Homas (a special offering to the Gods via sacred fire God Agni). They are chanted before taking food and after food, especially on festival days. They can also be chanted at any time in order to have mental peace.

**Why do we say Om before starting to chant any Manthras or Stotras or Poojas or Shlokas?**

Om, also known as the Pranava (the original sound), consists of three syllables. If you split the sound of “OM” it consists of: “a” (like in *angadi*) + “u” (like in *Uma*) + “m” (like in *mango*).

We have to think of God Almighty when we start any task we want to perform. When the sound of the revolving earth is recorded from a satellite, it gives the humming sound -- “OM.” Remember the earth is moving at 25,000 miles per day (1,042 miles per hour). Is it not a real wonder this makes only one pleasing humming sound OM? Just imagine your car or plane going at 60 MPH or 500 MPH. What kind of a sound does it make?

Om is the sign of Paramathma/Supreme God. Om is like a prelude or prefix for all

GODS and also it means the Supreme Lord Paramathma.

### **“Shanthihi, Shanthihi, Shanthihi”**

#### **Why do we say Shanthihi three times?**

Because there are Thaapatrayas (three *thaapas* or sources of trouble):

**Aadhyathmika**—Related to (*aadhi* means related to) bodily diseases like diabetes, cancer, pneumonia, etc.

**Aadii Bhouthika**—From other animals, birds, snakes scorpions, thieves, etc.

**Aadhi daivika**—Problems arising out of nature like elemental forces, earthquakes, forest fires, floods, fire, volcanoes, tsunamis, etc.

We are praying to the Lord to reduce or prevent the above *thaapas*.

#### **The following is a very commonly chanted manthra (sahanaavavathu) found in the Krishna Yajurveda**

*Sahanaavavathu, Sahanou bhunakthu  
Saha-veeryam-karavaavahai  
thejaswinaavadheethamasthu  
maavid- vishaavahi-  
Om Shanthihi, Shanthihi, Shanthihi*

**Context and Meaning:** Guru (teacher) and Shishya (student) are both learning together (joint study), even though the Guru knows more than the Shishya. Guru also should study in order to teach the student effectively and properly. This could also apply to a group in a gathering.

Some people also interpret this as “Memorandum of Understanding” or “MOU” between the teacher and the student, or a group of people. Here both the Guru and the Shishya are offering prayers to the Lord together prior to starting a session of learning.

### **1. Sahanavavathu**

Let Paramathma (Supreme Lord) protect both of us, (*Kaapadali*), from external forces. The other meaning is “Let us be calm or be patient.”

### **2. Sahanou bhunakthu**

Let Him provide (*Poshisali--Sowkaryagalanna kodali*), meaning give food, shelter, and amenities. Let us enjoy the fruits of our efforts together.

### **3. Saha-veeryam-karavavahai**

Let us do bold things (*veeraMte vartisONa*), meaning let us do some things together that we can both be proud of. There should be no ego (*garva--ahankara*). Let us do good things, both intellectual and practical. Further let us be useful to the community.

This is a joint study. The Teacher may know more, but still there should be no ego. He should give his knowledge to the student. This could also mean, “let us put together all our quality efforts to the best of our ability.”

### **4. Thejaswinaavadhithamasthu**

Whatever we study together let it become famous and be useful. (Teacher says once, Shishya says twice. They should understand the meanings also.)

### **5. Maa-vidvishaavahai**

There should be no hatred or serious differences, particularly with dissensions between the Guru and the Shishya. No divergence should be there. Mistakes may happen by accident, such as by a slip of the tongue. Shishya may ask questions, but the Teacher may not have answers. (Don’t we all remember from school days when we have asked some questions when the teacher did not know the answer--how awkward it was or if you were the teacher when a student asked a difficult question). Let us

not hate one another under any circumstance.

No serious/major differences (*manasthapas*) should be there between the Guru and the Shishya. That is the reason for this prayer to the Lord: to prevent this type of a situation. (Teacher and student on the one side and God on the other side, both of them should be singing from the same sheet of music. Love and affection (*preethi, souhaarda*) towards each other should be there. Both should get fruits (*phala*) of their studies (*Vedaadhyayana*)

#### 6. Om Shanthihi, Shanthihi, Shanthihi”

See above for details and meanings.

**The following is yet another commonly chanted Shanti Manthra from the Rigveda samhitha (“Shanno mithraha shamvarunaha”)**

*Shanno mithraha shamvarunaha:  
Shanno Bhavathyaryama  
Shanna indro Brihaspathihi  
Shanno vishnururukramaha  
namo Brahmane, namasthe vaayo  
thvameva prathyaksham Brahmaasi  
thvaameva prathyaksham Brahmavadishyami  
Ritham vadishyami, satyam vadishyami  
thanmaamavathu  
thadvakthaaramavathu  
aavathu maam, aavathu vakthaaram  
Om Shanthihi Shanthihi Shanthihi  
Harihi Om*

(Shanno = Sham + Naha—see below for meaning)

This prayer is a popular one. For us to understand this *shloka*, we should have some background. We see external (physical) forces--*Bhouthika shakthi*--however, *munis/sages* saw differently. They were seeing a *daivee chaitanya* (divine power) behind these forces. For example, a machine keeps on working, like a blender,

automobile, ship or any other such device. Some person has created it and someone has to fix it when it goes wrong (obviously a smart guy). All are going on their own power. Vehicles may be going on cruise control for hours. But if there is a red light or an animal crosses the road, the vehicle must be stopped by the driver or avoid the obstacle. Here the driver is the *Shakthi*/special power/controller behind the vehicle. If he does not stop, there will be a major disaster. Similarly behind every force/phenomenon, there is a divine power. They are called *abhimaana devathas* or supervisors of powers of nature. In other words, Paramathma/Supreme Lord has given portfolios to different Gods, who can also be called as *abhimaana devathas*. These are the supervisors of powers of nature.

For example, Vaayu--wind controller/*abhimana devathe*. These *abhimaana devathas* are the ones who did very good deeds (*punya kaaryas*) in previous *kalpas* and hence have earned that position/portfolio and have been appointed by the Supreme Lord.

In this Shanthi mantra, the *Rishis* are asking/praying for these *devathas*' blessings.

**Sham**--Let good things happen, let them bless us (*Mangalavaagali, Shubhavaagali*, etc.)

**no (naha)**--For us

**Mithra**--Lead person of daily activities (*praana*). Chief of daylight—Soorya (Sun)

**Varuna**--For night (*apaana vrithi*), after digestion, discarding the unwanted things

**Aryaman**--For eyes and sunlight—not physical fireball sun, but *aadithya*



**Indra**--Leader for strength. Indra's weapon is *Vajraayudha* and hence it represents strength like a diamond.

**Brihaspathihi**--Leader of education, one who gives wisdom, or *Brihas Pathi*—master of *sthotras*.

**Vishnuhu Urukramaha**--One who walks with giant steps. (*sarva vyaapi* or Naraayana--*abhimana devathe* for feet)

Let these gods (*Abhimaana devathegalu*) do good things (*mangala*) for us.

**Namo Brahmane**--Bow/respects to Brahma. Also *Veda maathe*.

**Nmasthe vaayo**--Bow/respects to *Praana vaayu*—also *karmaadhyaksha* (one who decides to give appropriate rewards for the things we do).

**Thvameva prathyaksham brahmaasi**--Referring to Vaayu . We breathe you all the time and you are very close to us. From our point of view, you are the visible God.

**Thvameva prathyaksham brahmavadishyaami**--Hence we consider you as a visible God.

**Ritham vadishyaami**--The word *Ritha* is seen in the Vedas. It is another form of *sathya* (truth) according to the *shastra*, with the right interpretation. You guide me (*avyaktha roopa*).

**Satyam vadishyaami**--After understanding *ritha*, I will execute the truth (*Vyaktha roopa*).

**Thanmaamvaathu**--Let this God protect both Teacher and Student.

**Thadvakthaaramavathu**--The Teacher should be able to teach with clarity of expression to disciples. Let this come to the Teacher.

**Avathu maam**--God bless me.

**Aavathu vakthaaram**--May God bless the Teacher.

**Om Shanthihi shanthihi Shanthihi**  
(see details above)

*This life of yours which you are living is not merely apiece of this entire existence, but in a certain sense the whole; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance. This, as we know, is what the Brahmins express in that sacred, mystic formula which is yet really so simple and so clear; tat tvam asi, this is you. Or, again, in such words as "I am in the east and the west, I am above and below, I am this entire world."*

*-Erwin Schrödinger*



During the Silver Jubilee celebration, I want to remember and honor a simple, selfless person—my sister Krishnaveni's husband, who dedicated himself to the cause of others. He served his life in pursuit of bringing up all the members of the Magge joint family. He was the patriarch of the Magge family. He also touched the lives of many people other than family members, such as poor and impoverished farmers, students, and less fortunate Sankethis and non-Sankethis. He was determined in serving the people of Magge with dedication and love. He worked very hard and was successful in getting the high school for the village. Furthermore, whenever anyone was sick, he made sure he or she received proper medical treatment. He would not rest until everyone around him was healthy and happy. He helped to give a sense of hope to those less fortunate. His life philosophy was “service to man is service to God.” He walked the walk. Because of his efforts, Magge village managed to get electricity, running water, and a hospital. He helped so many people during his lifetime that he is in fact a true inspiration to everyone who met him. He was a remarkable person and will forever be in the hearts of many. He used to quote Bhagavadgita: “Work hard, be sincere, accept results like *prasadam* and then you will be a happy person.” He admired the contribution of NASA to the Sankethi community in the United States by molding and bringing the Sankethi culture to the younger generation. He always attended the Sankethi get-togethers and enjoyed them. He was very fond of music and enjoyed his daughter's (Sitalakshmi Madhavan's) music concerts. For the benefit of people who may not read English, Sathish Magge, his youngest son, has shared his thoughts in the following Kannada article. His wife, his brothers-in-law, his children—Ramkumar, Subbanna, Sathish, Uma, Manjula, Sitha—and members of the Magge family pray to God to let his soul rest in peace. He died peacefully on June 9, 2007 in his village of Magge amidst his villagers and family members.

Natesh Magge  
Former President of NASA

## ದೊಡ್ಡಮಗ್ಗಿಯ ಧೀಮಂತ ಪುರುಷ ಶ್ರೀ ಎಂ.ಆರ್. ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀ ನಾರಾಯಣ

“ಪುಟ್ಟಸಕ್ಕರೆ” ಎಂದೇ ಪ್ರಖ್ಯಾತರಾಗಿದ್ದ ಶ್ರೀ ಎಂ.ಆರ್. ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀನಾರಾಯಣ ರವರು ಅಧಿಕ ಜ್ಯೇಷ್ಠ ಕೃಷ್ಣ ನವಮಿ ಶನಿವಾರ 09-06-2007 ರಂದು ತಮ್ಮ ಸ್ವಗ್ರಾಮವಾದ ಹಾಸನಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ದೊಡ್ಡಮಗ್ಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿ ದೈವಾದೀನರಾದರು. ನಾಸಾದ ೨೫ನೇ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕೋತ್ಸವದ ಸಮಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರ ಸವಿ ನೆನಪುಗಳನ್ನು ನಿಮ್ಮ ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸವಿಯಲು ಇಚ್ಛಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ.

ಶ್ರೀಯುತರು 04-10-1925 ರಂದು ಮಗ್ಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಮಸ್ವಾಮಯ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸತ್ಯಭಾಮ ದಂಪತಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಜ್ಯೇಷ್ಠಪುತ್ರರಾಗಿ ಜನಿಸಿ, ಬಾಲ್ಯವನ್ನು ಮಗ್ಗೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಳೆದು, ಪ್ರೌಢ ವಿದ್ಯಾಭ್ಯಾಸವನ್ನು ಮೈಸೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಗಿಸಿ, 16ನೇ ವಯಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ದೊಡ್ಡಮಗ್ಗೆಯ ನಾರಾಯಣಾವಧಾನಿ ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯಂರವರ ಪುತ್ರಿ ಕೃಷ್ಣವೇಣಿ ಯವರನ್ನು ವಿವಾಹವಾದರು. ಮಾವನವರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ. ಎಂ.ಎನ್ ಸುಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣ್ಯಂರವರು 1948 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ವರ್ಗಸ್ಥರಾದಾಗ, ಸಮಸ್ತ ಮಗ್ಗೆ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿ ಬಾಲ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಇವರ ಹೆಗಲಿಗೆ ಬಿತ್ತು. ಅಂದಿನಿಂದ ಇಂದಿನವರೆಗೂ ಯಾರ ಮನಸ್ಸಿಗೂ ನೋವಾಗದಂತೆ, ಯಾವ ಲೋಪವೂ ಆಗದಂತೆ ಭಾವಂದಿರುಗಳ ವಿದ್ಯಾಭ್ಯಾಸ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸಾರದ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಯನ್ನು ಹೊತ್ತು ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಯಿಂದ ಹಿಡಿದು ಕೂಲಿಕಾರನವರೆಗೂ ಸೈ ಎನಿಸಿಕೊಂಡ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ಶ್ರೀಯುತರು. ‘ನ ಹಿ ಜ್ಞಾನೇನ ಸದೃಶಂ’ ಎನ್ನುವ ಮಾತಿನಂತೆ ದೊಡ್ಡಮಗ್ಗೆ (ಹಾಸನ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ) ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿ 1962 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಸಮಾಜದ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವರ್ಗದವರಿಗೂ ವಿದ್ಯೆಯು ದೊರಕಬೇಕು ಎನ್ನುವ ಮಹದಾಸೆಯಿಂದ ಪ್ರೌಢಶಾಲೆಯನ್ನು ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಿ ಕಟ್ಟಡದ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ ಎದುರಾದಾಗ ತಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಯನ್ನೇ ಶಾಲೆಗೆ ನೀಡಿದ ಮಹಾಪುರುಷರು ಇವರು. ಇದರ ದ್ರೋತಕವಾಗಿ ಇಂದು ದೊಡ್ಡಮಗ್ಗೆಯ ದ್ವಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ವಂತಕಟ್ಟಡದ ಮೇಲೆ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ, ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ಬೌದ್ಧಿಕ ಕೇಂದ್ರವಾಗಿ ನಿಂತಿರುವ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯೇ ಶ್ರೀ. ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀ ನಾರಾಯಣ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಪ್ರೌಢಶಾಲೆ (S.L.N.S High School). ಅಂದು ಪ್ರೌಢಶಾಲೆಯಾಗಿದ್ದ ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯು ಇಂದು ಪದವಿ ಪೂರ್ವ ವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯವಾಗಿ ಮಾರ್ಪಾಡಾಗಿದೆ. ಶ್ರೀಯುತರು ಯಾರದೇ ವಿರೋಧವಿಲ್ಲದೆ ಅವರ ಆಡಳಿತಮಂಡಳಿಯ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರಾಗಿ ಸತತವಾಗಿ ೨೫ ವರ್ಷಗಳು ಸೇವೆಸಲ್ಲಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಶ್ರೀಮಂತಿಕೆಯಿದ್ದರೂ ಸರಳತೆ, ಸಂಯಮ, ಶಿಸ್ತು, ಸಮಯಪಾಲನೆಯನ್ನು ಮೈಗೂಡಿಸಿಕೊಂಡ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯಾದ ಅವರು ಸಮಾಜಕ್ಕೆ ಸ್ಪಂದಿಸುವ ಮನೋಧರ್ಮವನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿದ್ದರು, “ಉದಾರಚರಿತಾನಾಂತು ವಸುಧೈವ ಕುಟುಂಬಕಂ” ಎನ್ನುವಂತೆ ಇಡೀ ಸಮಾಜವೇ ತಮ್ಮ ಕುಟುಂಬ ಎಂದು ಭಾವಿಸಿ ಸಮಾಜದ ಕೆಳಸ್ತರದವರಿಗೂ ವಿದ್ಯಾಭ್ಯಾಸ ಮಾಡಲು ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಸಹಾಯವನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿದ ಪುಣ್ಯಪುರುಷರು ಇವರು. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಸಾಕ್ಷಿಯಾಗಿ ಇಂದಿಗೂ ಅನೇಕ ವಿದ್ಯಾವಂತರು ಇವರನ್ನು ಸ್ಮರಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಇದಲ್ಲದೆ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕವಾಗಿ ಮನುಷ್ಯನಿಗೆ ಮೂಲಭೂತವಾಗಿ ಅವಶ್ಯವಿರುವ ನೀರು, ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ, ಬ್ಯಾಂಕು, ಸಮುದಾಯಭವನ, ವಿದ್ಯುಚ್ಛಕ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ಊರಿಗೆ ದೊರಕಿಸಲು ಮುಂಚೂಣಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಿಂತು ಹೋರಾಡಿ ಗೆಲುವನ್ನು ಸಾಧಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ವರ್ಗದ ಎಲ್ಲರೂ ವಿದೇಶ (U S A) ದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದರೂ ಜನ್ಮಭೂಮಿ ಮಗ್ಗೆಯಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಜೀವನವನ್ನು ಕಳೆಯಬೇಕೆಂದು ತೀರ್ಮಾನಿಸಿ ಅಂತೆಯೇ ಮರಣದವರೆಗೂ ಊರಿನಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಉಳಿದ ಪುಣ್ಯಪುರುಷರು ಅವರು.

ಶ್ರೀಯುತರು ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಸಮುದಾಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ. ನಮ್ಮ ಮೂಲನಿಧಿಯಾದ ವೇದ ವಿದ್ಯೆಯ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಶ್ರದ್ಧೆಯನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿದ್ದರು. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ನಿದರ್ಶನವಾಗಿ ತಮ್ಮ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಯಾವುದೇ ಶುಭಾಶುಭ ಸಮಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ವೇದವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರನ್ನು ಗೌರವಿಸಿ, ಧರ್ಮಕಾರ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹಿಸಿದರು.

ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಸಂಘಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂದರ್ಭಗಳಿಗೆ ತಕ್ಕಂತೆ ಕೊಡುಗೆಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಿ ಸಮಾಜವನ್ನು ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಪಡಿಸಿದರು. ಪ್ರತಿ ಸಲವು ಅಮೇರಿಕಾಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದಾಗ ನಮ್ಮ ಸಮಾಜದ ಆದರ್ಶವನ್ನು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಳೆದ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಬೋಧಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಸಮಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲೂ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿ ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಇಲ್ಲಿನ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಮ್ಮ ತನವನ್ನು ಮುಂದುವರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಹೋಗಲು ಶ್ರಮಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ವಿಶೇಷವಾಗಿ ರಾಮನಾಥಪುರದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷ ನಡೆಯುವ ರಥೋತ್ಸವದ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಯುವ ಅನ್ನಸಂತರ್ಪಣೆಗೆ ವಿಶೇಷ ಕೊಡುಗೆಯನ್ನು ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು.

ಹಾಸನ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕಿನ ಅನುವಳ್ಳಿಯ ತುಳಸೀರಾಮ ಇವರ ಕುಲದೈವ. ಈ ದೇವಸ್ಥಾನವನ್ನು ಜೀರ್ಣೋದ್ಧಾರ ಮಾಡಿ ಅಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಗ್ರಾಮಸ್ಥರಿಗೆ ದೇವರ ಮೇಲೆ ಭಕ್ತಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಲು ಕಾರಣೀಭೂತರಾದರು ಹಾಗೂ ಪುದುವಟ್ಟನ್ನು ಇಟ್ಟು ರಥೋತ್ಸವ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಕೈಂಕರ್ಯಗಳಿಗೆ ಅನುಕೂಲವಾಗುವಂತೆ ಧನಸಹಾಯ ಮಾಡಿದರು. ಈಗ ಈ ದೇವರ ಒಕ್ಕಲಿನವರು ಶ್ರದ್ಧೆಯಿಂದ ಅಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಹೋಗಲು ಮೊದಲಿಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಶ್ರೀಯುತರು ಯಾವುದನ್ನೂ ಬಾಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಳದೆ, ಪ್ರಚಾರ ಪ್ರಿಯರಾಗದೆ, ಕಾರ್ಯತಃ ಮಾಡಿ ತೋರಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಅವರ ಅಡ್ಡಹೆಸರು 'ಪುಟ್ಟಸಕ್ಕರೆ' ಎಂದು. ಹೆಸರಿಗೆ ತಕ್ಕಂತೆಯೇ ಅವರ ಮನಸ್ಸು ಸಕ್ಕರೆಯಂತೆಯೇ ಇದ್ದು ಎಲ್ಲರನ್ನೂ ಆಕರ್ಷಿಸಿತು. ಇವರು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಮಕ್ಕಳಾಗಿ, ಯುವಕರಿಗೆ ಯುವಕರಾಗಿ, ವಯೋವೃದ್ಧರೊಂದಿಗೆ ವೃದ್ಧರಾಗಿ ಜೀವನ ನಡೆಸಿದರು.

ಸಮಾಜದ ಶ್ರೀಮಂತಿಕೆ, ವೈಭವ, ಪ್ರಲೋಭನೆಗಳು ಅವರ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಯನ್ನೂ ಮಾಡದೆ ಶಿಸ್ತಿನ ಸಿಪಾಯಿಯಾಗಿ ಗುರಿಯನ್ನು ಸಾಧಿಸಿದ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ. ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಗ್ರಾಮಗಳಾದ ಅಗ್ರಹಾರ ರಾಮನಾಥಪುರ, ಬಸವಾಪಟ್ಟಣ ಗ್ರಾಮಗಳಿಗೆ ರಾಮಮಂದಿರಕ್ಕೋಸ್ಕರ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಮೊತ್ತದ ದಾನ-ದತ್ತಿಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಸಮಾಜದ ದೀನ-ದಲಿತರಿಗೆ ವಿಶೇಷವಾಗಿ ಸಹಾಯಹಸ್ತ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. 'ಕ್ಷುಧಿತಮನ್ನಂ' (ಹಸಿದವನಿಗೆ ಅನ್ನವನ್ನು ಕೊಡಬೇಕು) ಎನ್ನುವ ತತ್ವದಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಅನ್ನದಾನ ಮಾಡಿ ಜೀವನೋಪಾಯಕ್ಕೆ ದಾರಿಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಟ್ಟಿದ್ದು, ಎಷ್ಟೋ ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳು ಇವರ ಸಹಾಯದಿಂದ ಜೀವನ ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಇಂತಹ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯು, ಪ್ರಕೃತಿಯ ನಿಯಮದಂತೆ, ಹುಟ್ಟಿದವರು ಎಂದಾದರೂ ಸಾಯಲೇಬೇಕು ಎನ್ನುವ ತತ್ವದಂತೆ ಸಾವಿಗೆ ಹೆದರದೆ ಅಜಾತಶತ್ರುವಾಗಿ, ವೈದ್ಯರುಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬದವರು ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆಯನ್ನು ಮುಂದುವರಿಸಬೇಕೆಂದು ಸಿದ್ಧವಾಗಿದ್ದರೂ "ನಾನು ನನ್ನ ಊರಿನಲ್ಲೇ ನನ್ನ ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲೇ ಜೀವನದ ಕೊನೆಯನ್ನು ಕಾಣಬೇಕು" ಎಂದು ಸ್ವಗ್ರಾಮಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದು ಒಂದು ತಿಂಗಳ ಕಾಲ ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಇದ್ದು ತಮ್ಮ ಮೂವರ ಪುತ್ರರು, ಮೂವರ ಪುತ್ರಿಯರು, ಅನುಬಂಧುಗಳ ಉಪಸ್ಥಿತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ತಮ್ಮ ಇಹಲೋಕದ ಜೀವನವನ್ನು ಮುಗಿಸಿದರು.

ಶ್ರೀಯುತರು ಯಾರಿಂದಲೂ ದ್ವೇಷಿಸಲ್ಪಡದೆ, ಯಾರನ್ನೂ ದ್ವೇಷಿಸದೆ, ಅಪಾರ ಬಂಧುವರ್ಗವನ್ನೂ, ಸ್ನೇಹಿತರನ್ನೂ, ಮಕ್ಕಳನ್ನೂ ಅಗಲಿ ಸ್ವರ್ಗಸ್ಥರಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅವರು ನಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಅಗಲಿ ಎರಡು ವರ್ಷಗಳು ಕಳೆದಿದ್ದರೂ ಅವರ ಆದರ್ಶ ಯಾವಾಗಲೂ ನಮ್ಮ ಬಳಿ ಇರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಈ ಲೇಖನವನ್ನು ತಯಾರು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಟ್ಟವರು: ಡಾ|| ಸತೀಶ ಮಗ್ಗೆ.

©. ಬಿ. ಕೆ. ಅನಂತನಾರಾಯಣ (ವಾಸು ಬಾಧ್ಯಾರ್), ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

## THE SANKETHI LEGACY AND PARENTING

*Dr. S. Sridhara*

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Many Sankethis have often wondered how we will retain our culture and “pass it on” to our children. As our children grow, we feel anxious whether they will continue with any of our traditions and if they will marry someone in our culture at all. We have also often been critical toward our teenage children who may not have shown “adequate respect” toward elders, including parents, or much interest in participating in special religious functions in our own houses or at friends’ places. We have at times blamed them for being “too westernized” and “abandoning our values,” the result of which may have been our children choosing to marry into a different culture or religion, causing much discomfort among family members. Or it may be that they married within our culture, but seemed not to pay much attention to our traditions and “Sankethiism.” Certainly, most of them do not speak Sankethi or even much Kannada.

All of this requires some serious introspection on what we have actually done to influence these phenomena. We all came to the U.S. with the goal of working to gain higher education and good careers that would lead to prosperity. We have achieved this goal for the most part, but what was not clear to us then was the impact of a Western culture and a foreign land on our culture and the way our children would grow up. There was no book or guidance on how to parent in these situations, and we were very preoccupied with our careers and earning well. So over the years, the situation turned into an experiment for which we did not have a strategy or plan. There might have been wishful thinking that everything would be fine if we thought seriously about the subject, yet for many of us the experiment is all but over!

In India, when we grew up, many of us might not have been serious about our traditions or Sankethiism, but because we grew up surrounded by activities and people who embodied it, our culture became ingrained in us. However, our children have been at a disadvantage in this respect, and so their acculturation totally depended on how we raised them. If we spoke Sankethi or Kannada at home with our children, they would pick it up easily and keep it up. Unfortunately, we probably “made the choice” for them and spoke mainly in English, so they did the same. If we ourselves never spoke Sankethi or Kannada, there was no reason for them to have gained any appreciation for these languages, and in turn for our culture. The same is true of food habits and our attitude towards alcohol. If we cooked vegetarian food and enforced that lifestyle, they remained vegetarians. If we wanted them “to be like the locals” and encouraged or allowed them to eat meat, then they did that too. After all, the society they lived in and their peers were doing it. The same is true if we did not do Sandhyavandana or perform any religious ceremonies at home as the children grew. It is tempting to blame our children for not having an appreciation for Sankethi culture, but what moral right do we have to expect them to be very religious in these circumstances, like our traditional Sankethis, if we did not actively keep these habits up ourselves?

Having learned from our experience, we can certainly take some action now; this applies particularly to the younger parents, many of whom belong to the group of children just described. First of all, the young parents should make a sincere attempt to learn our culture themselves and facilitate the transfer to their children. Association with other families and

friends through NASA and other organizations like Chinmaya Mission can be a big help here, and I have seen some success stories already. It also helps to have grandparents involved in the children's lives. Another method that the author has found very valuable is to send children, during summer vacations, to India, where they can travel and absorb a lot more of our culture and traditions quickly. They can also take private classes while staying with close relatives.

So in summary, if in the future we want to retain our culture and traditions, our best bet is to follow these guidelines ourselves, at least to the extent that we want our children to do so when they grow up. Parenting is the key, and it applies to the "older parents" who may now be lamenting "what is not happening," but more so to the "younger parents" who are raising their children in a foreign society. Just as most of us work 200% to succeed in this foreign land, in order to compensate for the lack of Indian and Sankethi atmosphere we as parents must work 200% towards retaining our heritage. While the choice is yours, it's important to realize that in choosing, you are also making a choice for your children! Let us be responsible and act now in this Silver Jubilee Year of NASA! My hearty congratulations to those lucky parents who got this all right from the beginning.

*Dr. S. Sridhara, Former President of NASA*

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## ಅನರ್ಥಕೋಶ:

ರಾಧಾ ಜಯರಾಂ

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- ಸಂಸಾರಿ = ಸಮ್ + ಸಾರಿ
- ತಾನು ಮಾಡಿದ ಕೆಲವು ತಪ್ಪುಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಾರಿ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾ ಇರುವವರು.
- ಉದಾ: ನಾನು ಯಾಕಾದರೂ ಮದುವೆಯಾದೆ, ಐಯಾಮ್ ಸಾರಿ. ಎಲ್ಲ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಇವಳು ಇವನ ಮದುವೆಯಾದನಲ್ಲ ಐಯಾಮ್ ಸಾರಿ.
- ತನ್ನಲ್ಲಿ ಇರುವ ಒಟ್ಟು ಸೀರೆಗಳು ಅಂದರೆ ಮದುವೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉಡುಗೊರೆಯಾಗಿ ಬಂದ ಸೀರೆಗಳು, ಅತ್ತೆಮನೆಯವರು, ತೊರು ಮನೆಯವರು ಮತ್ತು ಗಂಡನ ಮನೆಯವರು ಕೊಡಿಸಿದ ಸೀರೆಗಳು ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ.

# MY TOP TEN LIST: THINGS I ADMIRE AND DISLIKE ABOUT INDIA

(With Apologies to David Letterman)

*By Prakash Keshaviah*

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We lived in the United States for 30 years, and then returned to India to do volunteer work with a non-profit trust that runs a hospital, medical college, nursing college and a rural development institute. It has been a challenge that has given meaning and purpose to our lives. In this article, I would like to highlight the changes that I have observed, relative to the India of my youth. As with all generalizations, there are always exceptions.

## Things I Admire

### 1. Innocence of young children

It is great to see the innocent faces of young children and hear them respectfully greeting elders, “Namaste Uncleji, Namaste Auntyji, etc.”

### 2. Self-confidence of young adults

As young adults we were quite shy and bashful. That has changed! Young adults today are well-nourished, well-groomed, articulate and self-confident.

### 3. Closeness of family and the spirit of self-sacrifice

I see a lot of closeness and selflessness in families. Parents and older siblings make sacrifices and deny themselves the good things of life for the benefit of their children and younger siblings.

### 4. Amazing hospitality: Athiti Devo Bhava

From just a glass of cold water on a hot day to cups of tea or coffee, salty snacks, sweets, etc., the hospitality is amazing, even when you drop in unannounced.

### 5. Ease of making friends

Whether at a bus stop, or on a long train ride, Indians make friends easily, without resorting to perfunctory small talk about the ballgame or weather.

### 6. Lack of road rage

Having lived in the U.S. for so long, even as a passenger, I get upset when a car cuts in or overtakes on the wrong side. In India the driver is impassive and unmoved.

### 7. Great vegetarian food

It's great not to have to worry about chicken stock in the 'vegetable' soup or lard in the refried beans!

### 8. Fantastic media

Commercials, News broadcasts, Talent shows, T.V. extravaganzas, etc. have improved significantly with great sets, lighting, costumes, etc.

### 9. Technology leap frog

There is no digital divide now. The milkman and the house maid have their cell phones complete with digital cameras and MP3 players.

### 10. Smiling people with soulful eyes

I feel humbled when I see the beautiful eyes and smiles of even beggars and slum inhabitants. As they say, “The eyes are the windows to the soul.”

### Things I Dislike

#### 1. People are not time-conscious

They say that IST stands for Indian Stretchable Time. Sometimes, people may be late, because of their use of unreliable public transportation, but more often than not, it is just their laid-back attitude.

#### 2. Broken commitments

Never take the commitments of suppliers, tailors, jewelers, etc. literally. You are bound to be very frustrated and disappointed. They tell you what you want to hear, but don't really mean it.

#### 3. Chaotic traffic

It can be really scary. As a wag remarked, "In England we drive on the left of the road; in India, you drive on what's left of the road!"

#### 4. Indians are loud

Maybe it is the ambient noise or maybe there is wide-spread hearing loss from noise pollution, but hushed tones are rare. Indians are loud; they keep honking their car horns and talking on their cell-phones in movie theaters.

#### 5. Garbage dumping

I've been to places of great natural beauty, as well as to very sacred places, in the Himalayas. Plastic bags and bottles are dumped everywhere. They are ugly scars on the landscape.

#### 6. Public urination

Maybe Indian men believe in the green movement. They spray anywhere, without any scruples, even on walls that proclaim, "No urinating here." As has been said, "In India you can piss anywhere, but cannot kiss anywhere. In America, it is the other way around!"

#### 7. Educational system

Poor kids! The competition is so fierce. There is so much stress on parents and kids. Their school bags put Gurkha porters to shame. Like the proverbial donkey that only knows the burden of the sack of sugar on its back, and none of the sweetness, kids in India are plagued by a system that values information cramming over creativity and problem solving.

#### 8. Corrupt bureaucracy

Fortunately, I have not had much personal contact with the corrupt politicians or corrupt government officials. But the stories I have heard make me cringe. Hopefully, the Right to Information Act and computerization will reduce corruption.

#### 9. Seniority rather than meritocracy

In government service and in academia, the year of joining establishes your seniority and this is sacrosanct. Promotions are based on seniority rather than on accomplishments and merit. This is changing, especially in the private sector.

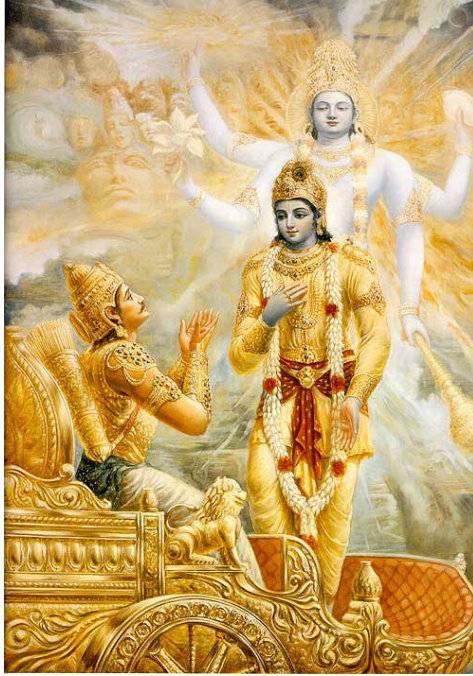
#### 10. Loudspeaker menace

There is a Supreme Court ruling that specifies 10:00 p.m. as the cut-off for public address systems. But the rule is flouted by temples, mosques, wedding parties, political rallies, etc. One needs the yogic discipline of *pratyahara* (sensory withdrawal) or good earplugs.

Prakash Keshaviah

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## A SUMMARY OF THE BHAGAVADGITA

*By: Y.N. Jayaram*

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**In the first chapter,** Arjuna gets into despondency and describes the horrendous fallout of the war. Krishna admonishes him.

**In the second chapter,** a long philosophical discourse starts. The summary of this dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna is as follows: since the soul is immortal, there should not be grievance over death and destruction, when a work is done as duty without attachment, it leads to perfection, and a perfect man becomes equanimous under the vicissitudes of life.

**In the third chapter,** Krishna clears the doubts about *jnaana* and *karma* and says that the path of *karma* is easier. He advises Arjuna to perform duties without selfish motives.

**In the fourth chapter,** Krishna extols the greatness of *jnaana* or spiritual wisdom while saying that He is God himself and has come down to save *dharma*.

**In the fifth chapter,** while clearing Arjuna's doubt as to whether renunciation of action (*karma sanyasa*) or yoga of action (*karmayoga*) is better, He says that *karmayoga* is better and advises Arjuna to maintain equanimity while doing *karma*.

**In the sixth chapter,** the process of *dhyana* (Meditation) is described. A graphical description of the methods to control the mind is related.

**In the seventh chapter,** Krishna says that He has created the Universe drawing from *Prakrithi* and only if one surrenders to Him can one transcend the power of delusion (*Maya*). Then He describes how a person who remembers Him at the time of death attains Him.

**In the eighth chapter,** the paths taken by the *jeevas* after death, as well as the paths of light/clarity and shadow/confusion (*andhakara*), are explained.

**In the ninth chapter,** Krishna says, those who worship Him with devotion will be accepted by Him and blessed by Him. His devotees will never perish.

**The tenth chapter** is devoted to the delineation of divine manifestations.

**In the eleventh chapter,** Krishna reveals His *vishvaroopta* and Arjuna offers prayers. This celestial form can be seen only by those who have intense devotion.

**In the twelfth chapter,** Krishna says contemplation on the non-manifest form (*avyakta*) is difficult and so, He advises cultivating devotion to Him. The characteristics of a *bhakta* (ideal devotee) are explained.

**The thirteenth chapter** describes the body (*kshetra*) and the Self (*Kshetrajna*). The concepts of *Jnana*, *Jneya*, *Prakrithi* and *Purusha* (the Knowledge, Brahman, nature and the Self) are introduced). Prakriti or nature is comprised of three *gunas*—the *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

**In the fourteenth chapter,** a detailed description of all the three *gunas* is given as well as a description of the person who has transcended them.

**In the fifteenth chapter,** *samsara* is described as an inverted tree with its roots above (in *Brahman*). By taking refuge in Him, the tree can be cut and *moksha* attained.

**In the sixteenth chapter,** a description of the transmigration of the soul is also given. Krishna then goes on to describe the traits which make a person divine or demon-like. He advises Arjuna (and through him, us too) to avoid three gateways to hell—lust, anger and greed.

**In the seventeenth chapter,** He describes *shraddha* (faith), food, sacrifices (*yajna*), austerity (*tapas*) and gifting (*daana*). He gives the aphorism OM TAT SAT.

**The eighteenth chapter** is the longest chapter. It deals with several miscellaneous topics like renunciation, *tyaaga*, *karma*, *karta*, *jnaana*, etc. The division of society into four *varnas* according to nature and vocation is mentioned. He finally advises Arjuna to surrender himself to the Lord and promises him to free him from all sins. Arjuna finally vows to fight the righteous war before him.

(Note: I thank Dr. Nataraj for his time in editing this article.)

## OUR COMMUNICATION IN THE INFORMATION AGE

*By: Prof. Y.N. Dathatri*

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It is 2009 and our beloved association is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a result of the tireless efforts of all the board members who are serving the organization now and those who have served in the past. When the association was started in 1984, we had not yet become aware of the Internet or the World Wide Web. Mobile phones were in their infancy and not in popular use as they are today. Communication occurred either through wired phones or through what we now refer to as snail mail. Travel to community get-togethers or gatherings required long distance driving, which afforded opportunities for relaxation as well as family time. This resulted in the association mainly being region bound with activities focused in the northeast of the U.S. Further, the population density of Sankethis in other parts of the country was relatively low prior to the onset of the Internet revolution.

Though communication through high technology channels has increased (from a professional point of view) over the years, it has not quite kept pace with the skills and talents of our IT-savvy Sankethis who have come in large numbers from Bharat. Over the past several years, the NASA leadership has tried to include these technological developments to facilitate communication amongst members of our community. To cite a few examples:

11. NASA now has an official website which can be further developed and enhanced in order to make it a useful way of communicating information and raising awareness about issues relevant to the community.
12. The Board of Directors has used free conference calling facilities as well as Skype and other such communication methods to facilitate organizing community activities.
13. E-mail traffic among members has increased significantly to allow discussions around issues pertaining to community activities, culture, and potential controversies.
14. Successful attempts have been made to develop a Sankethi genealogy tree using computer databases, but the membership at large has yet to get actively involved in using this electronic tool.

Given these advances, there is still room for growth and improvement. There are a variety of ways by which the leadership of NASA can enhance communication and participation of members and their families and friends from a truly *North American* point of view. For instance:

15. We can enhance the website by including articles on religious, cultural and charitable activities pertaining to NASA membership. The website can also feature a series on Sankethi cooking, including a forum for frequently asked questions.
16. Webinars may be hosted to discuss issues of interest to NASA members by inviting experts in the field. Though we may begin with occasional webinars, their frequency can increase as interest and logistics allow.
17. It may be useful to host teleconferences at suitable intervals that feature story-telling sessions for our children and youth (though adults would not be excluded) on our *smruthis* (i.e., *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*). Perhaps we can begin this in the fall and

hold teleconferences using Skype or freeconferencecall.com on alternate Sunday afternoons or evenings. This activity could be extended to include group chanting of *sahasranamams* or *stotrams* for interested members and their families.

18. During major events such as the July 4<sup>th</sup> or regional get-togethers, some segments of the programs of interest can be webcast so that members who are unable to attend or who are distance-disadvantaged can participate remotely in the program. A modification to this idea is to record the complete program and post it on the website with limited access to members only.
19. Articles, photographs, paintings and other literary works by the members can be posted on the website for the benefit and appreciation of everyone.

Overall, in this age of technology, with the abundant skill and talent of Sankethis both in the U.S. and Bharat, we can help build NASA activities for the next 25 years with minimal use of natural resources and help promote conservation.

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## ಅಂತೆ ಕಂತೆಗಳು

ರಾಧಾ ಜಯರಾಂ

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- ರವಿಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಿ ಅವರ ತಾಯಿ ಮಡಿ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಮ್ಮನವರು ಇಂಡಿಯಾದಿಂದ ಬಂದಾಗ ಗೋಮೆ ಹಚ್ಚಲು ಹೋಮ್ ಡಿಪೋ ಅಂಗಡಿಯಿಂದ ಕವ್ ಡಂಗ್ ಮೆನ್ಯೂರ್ (ಹಸುವಿನ ಸಗಣೆಯ ಗೊಬ್ಬರ) ತರುತ್ತಾರೆ.
- ಮೈಸೂರಿನ ಗಲ್ಲಿ ಹೋಟೆಲ್ಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ದೋಸೆ ಹುಯ್ಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ರಾಮಭಟ್ಟರಿಗೆ ನ್ಯೂಯಾರ್ಕ್‌ಗೆ ಬಂದ ಮಾರನೇ ದಿನವೇ ಪ್ಯಾನ್ ಕೇಕ್-ಹೌಸ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿತಂತೆ.
- ಬೌದ್ಧ ಮಂಕ್ (ಸನ್ಯಾಸಿ) ಕ್ರಿಶ್ಚಿಯನ್ ನನ್ ಅನ್ನು ಮದುವೆಯಾದರೆ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಹುಟ್ಟುವ ಮಗನನ್ನು ಮಂಕ್ ನನ್ ಮಗ ಅಂತ ಕರೆಯಬಹುದಂತೆ.
- ಅಮೇರಿಕಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಬೈಯೋದಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಬೈ ಮಾಡುವುದೇ ಜಾಸ್ತಿಯಂತೆ.
- ಭಾವಗೀತೆ, ಭಾವಚಿತ್ರ, ಭಾವ ಸಂವತ್ಸರ-ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಭಾವನ ಹೆಸರಲ್ಲಿದೆ ಅಂತ ಅಕ್ಕನಿಗೆ ಕೋಪ ಬಂದಿದೆಯಂತೆ.

## MY OUTLOOK FOR NASA

*By: Saligram Jagannath*

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It is a great pleasure to have been associated with the North American Sankethi Association for the past 25 years. I remember Dr. Jayaram and a couple of others started the association in the year 1984. There were about 40 families I think. I had the honor and privilege of being elected the President in the year 1994 and we celebrated the 10th Anniversary. The years are rolling by and we are already celebrating the 25th Anniversary. We have children who are the first generation in this country. We also probably have second-generation children.

Now the time has come to pass the torch over to our children. We need to sit back and enjoy the prosperity of the present generation and offer advice or help if necessary in continuing our traditions. Our community has a rich heritage of culture and traditions. Even though our children are growing in a different environment, most of them still believe in our traditions. Of course they have peer pressure and sometimes they have to yield to circumstances. This does not mean they don't respect our way of life. It is indeed a commendable thing that we have a variety of talented members of the younger generation who are more aggressive and are high achievers.

We have famous Purohits, Sanskrit Pandits, Musicians, Doctors, Engineers and others in our Sankethi community that we all should be proud of. I consider all of us belonging to one community and not different factions. However, everyone should learn to respect and be proud of each other and not follow separatism.

In conclusion I would like to see us meeting more often, not just once a year. When I was the Commander in Chief I made an effort to bring the Executive Committee to other important cities or towns where there were enough members so they could also have the privilege of organizing a get-together.

***I WISH ALL THE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VERY HAPPY 25TH ANNIVERSARY!***

*CONGRATULATIONS*  
*to the*  
*NORTH AMERICAN SANKETHI ASSOCIATION*  
*ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY*  
*CELEBRATIONS*

*FROM*



*Member NFA, CFTC Registered as Non clearing FCM*

99 WALL STREET

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

(OFFICES: ISTANBUL, SINGAPORE, CHINA, DUBAI, LONDON)

*BEST WISHES TO ALL THE SANKETHIS*  
*AND*

*HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO NASA*

**DIWAKAR & KAREN JAGANNATH**

## THOUGHTS INSPIRED BY NASA

*By H.S. Ashwathnarayana*

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I take this opportunity to congratulate all the members of the organization who held positions in the organization in these last twenty-five years. It is their dedication and commitment that has taken the organization this far. During this twenty-fifth year celebration, my family and I wish you all the best and many wonderful years for NASA.

NASA in these last twenty-five years has survived as an active association. Many members may not know its Vision, Mission and its operating principles. But all still have an affinity towards the organization and feel at one with it. This is the strength of NASA. The future challenges of the group are diverse and this strength needs to be nurtured with a renewed focus on growth-oriented activities.

NASA was formed in 1984. At that time, those Sankethis, who could attend, congregated in the “Kalibari” temple in Piscataway, NJ. We were meeting as one group to assert our identity and were determined to come together to promote the well-being of Sankethis in a foreign land. But it was unclear how many of us actually knew what that “well-being” was.

Those diehards who attended the Kalibari temple in 1984 are still active in NASA today and regularly attend NASA meetings. But what is needed now are new members who have the same commitment.

It took a several large annual and smaller local meetings to identify some of the issues to be addressed, though we didn’t know how to execute these ideas. While we all knew that the Sankethi community was comprised of two groups, the talk was that we were all one. Somehow I felt at that time if NASA were to force togetherness by glossing over ethnic distinctions like Bettadapura and Kowshika, that, most likely there would be problems in the short run. The influence of organizations back home could not be overlooked.

The 1989 annual meeting at Arshavidya Gurukulam was the first meeting where we met continuously for two days in one place. If we had been savvier with the Gurukulam administrators at that time, we could have used that facility for our various meetings over the years. Since each of us was in the learning process we were unable to further cultivate a relationship with the Gurukulam. In later years the two-day annual meeting became a regular occurrence at other locations. The various boards of directors during those years did their best to balance the budget and find an appropriate and cost-effective place for these annual meetings.

At that time in the early nineties, most children were still young, and some adults were just beginning to create their families. Awareness was increasing among the leaders about the challenges to the maintenance of tradition, the influence of American values on raising children, and stress in the work place, amongst other topics. For the first time in 1989, at the Arshavidya Gurukulam meeting, a seminar addressing these salient issues was conducted with the help of the Gurukulam staff. If such seminars had been continued over the years by inviting similar experts during our annual meetings, all attendees would have had something to take back home after the conclusion of the meeting. While the leadership was always happy to have new attendees at these annual get-togethers, the vacuum created by the absence of such discourse disappointed many who came. With new members attending every

year, the steady withdrawal of old members was not recognized. No effort was made to brainstorm ways of holding on to the old membership while simultaneously encouraging the new members. The change of presidency once in two years helped to boost the list of life members. But, I am not sure how many are still committed to the written and unwritten objectives of NASA.

We know that 90% of the work is done by 10% of the officers. It is time for NASA to form a Board of Trustees with individual assignments of long-term projects. I am confident that a cohesive organization like NASA can accomplish even more than what it has thus far. Moreover, volunteers run NASA. Therefore, the struggles of the leadership are understandable. In family-oriented organizations like NASA, many want to come forward to take up positions since it gives pride and a sense of belonging. As a result, we need to encourage elections. It is an essential part of any democratic endeavor. Organizations that have lively and active elections are more likely to keep the membership engaged and involved. When we encourage members to withdraw from contesting to achieve a quick consensus, it works against the organization. Sacrificing such a dynamic growth process for the sake of a speedy conclusion to the GBM can only hurt the organization. Some may become offended that they have been asked to withdraw. As days go by, one may not find enough candidates to hold the various positions. In particular, when youngsters are discouraged from contesting, the mothers of the youngsters will have a very negative opinion of the NASA elections. This will trigger the withdrawal process of the members from organizational activities.

There are multiple ways to further strengthen the value of NASA. The time is ripe to strengthen the Emergency and Scholarship funds of NASA. We should introduce student exchange programs and will require a substantial bank balance to do so. The Karnataka government showed an interest in supporting such programs during conversations that I had with the former Chief Ministers of Karnataka, the Late Dr Ramakrishna Hegde and Mr Patil. Members should give serious thought to this and NASA should now take the ball and run with this. Instead of soliciting contributions for private overseas businesses, if the same efforts are made to induce members to open up endowment funds in NASA for specific causes, it will create an attraction for the community to be within the fold of NASA. Promoting endowment funds have many advantages for NASA from the IRS point of view as well. Our priority is to promote the well being of Sankethis here in the U.S. rather than outside the U.S. Individuals can always do what they want to do. But NASA should not be used as the conduit to send money to India for these individual interests.

Sometimes the activities of a few individuals can have a significant influence on the affairs of ethnic and caste-based organizations. This can be advantageous and disadvantageous. The sway of a few individuals on an organization in which the membership has distinct cultural or ethnic affiliations will be detrimental to its growth. In the U.S., unsatisfied members withdraw instead of venting their feelings. NASA membership is no exception. Those who call attention to undue bias in decision-making are made outcasts or victimized. In feedback questionnaires, one rarely expresses his or her true opinion since most know the repercussions if the truth is expressed. Every one wants to be in the good books with the other. Most of us are very good at looking the other way instead of actively expressing disagreement.



Some well-meaning members, due to ignorance, may guide the leadership of the organization into activities that could be construed as unethical, unconstitutional, or in violation of financial guidelines and various statutes. Availing oneself of appropriate resources can easily overcome ignorance of the legal and financial implications of various decisions. The membership needs to be very careful in these aspects since penalization could entail the end of NASA.

We should seek state and U.S. federal government help and support for our various activities. But, we need to build reliable infrastructure before we seek such help. Government funding is available for cultural and community groups like NASA. We need to prepare appropriate proposals. We should seek the help of lobbyists, politicians and various counselors for creation of such proposals and grants. Many resources are available for these very purposes. We can even pay counseling fees and become more politically involved.

We need to plan to build retirement homes. I have seen the various discussions on this issue in the Yahoo! groups. They definitely indicate a lack of knowledge of the members regarding the limitations of a non-profit organization in dealing with such projects. While the federal government supports the activity of non-profit organizations for group retirement homes they do not support multi-million dollar home projects for individual community members.

In the early days, many of us struggled in the constant rat race to succeed professionally, sustain the family, and educate the children. Most of us overlooked the cultural challenges our children faced in their schools. Much time had already passed by the time we opened our eyes. Our children became more familiar with their American rather than their Sankethi culture. No methodical and structured programs were conducted during the annual meetings for our children to identify with Sankethi traditions. Our future lies with our children. Yet our children did not receive the ethnicity-based social networking, community togetherness, and family closeness that we had. This will pose new challenges to the organization since “Who is a Sankethi?” is not defined by NASA.

NASA is a Brahminic organization. Sankethis are Brahmins. In recent years the word “Brahmin” is not very much used in our activities. Talks pertaining to “Brahmin” heritage, culture, and tradition are not encouraged since many children have married outside the Brahmin community. Some rituals and Mantras like Lakshmi Pooje, Gowri Pooje, Ganesh Pooje are translated into English and conveniently certain Mantras are omitted. Knowingly, if one does “Mantra Lopa” it is not excused. If NASA is to survive as a Brahminic organization, the time has come for the leadership to put its foot down and steer the organization in the right direction.

In our history women have played a dominant role in preserving our tradition and culture. Women are the backbone of the society and preserve its heritage. With most of the Sankethi girls marrying outside the community, no one is left to be the guardian of the Sankethi heritage and traditions. If the family is not “fully” Sankethi, the efforts of the mother to mold the children into Sankethi culture will be futile. Among Asian Indian-American children, girls are prone very much to marry outside the community, religion and race. A root cause analysis is required to understand how to face this challenge.

We need to hold more seminars for young women and men about dating, marriage and family life. Please note, sermonizing our children on dating without having experienced it ourselves is not going to impress our children. We need outside experts to mediate such

dialogue. Thought should be given to encourage the marriage of future children with Sankethis.

Social programs need to be implemented by NASA for the U.S. community. Temples are not doing anything for Hindus in the U.S. If organizations like NASA also fail to implement social programs for the benefit of the community, the membership will be left in the lurch to fend for itself and will become ripe for religious conversions.

Finally, we should consider the upcoming needs of the community. Those of us who immigrated here are aging, and the needs of aged widows and widowers should not be overlooked. The needs of aged couples who may have disabilities might be another area to focus on. Similarly, single mothers who may be unmarried, separated or divorced may benefit from community support. Cultural assistance to children born to interracial and inter-religious couples in the shaping of their identity should also be provided. Group *upanayanam* for eligible boys might be a good way to integrate young men into Sankethi traditions. Still another major issue is the chasm between Sankethis who were born and brought up in the U.S. and those born and brought up in India.

No organization is perfect and the office-bearers work very hard. While we continue to introspect and strive to improve our activities, there are always multiple perspectives. These twenty-five years of my association with NASA have enriched me to understand the community and its strength. We are a close-knit, hard-working, goal-oriented people. Notably, NASA has demonstrated the unity of the two main groups (Bettadapura and Kowshika) and has moved forward. It is a feat that our counterparts in India could not achieve for centuries. As the two groups are coming closer together through marriage alliances, I am confident that organizations back in India will get the message and learn to live as one ethnic community. NASA as an organization will always help to achieve that unity.

*The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still.*

*-Carl Sagan*

## MY GOALS FOR NASA

*By: Natesh Magge*

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I had the privilege of serving as the President of NASA for two terms, which was challenging, humbling, and fulfilling. The members of the Executive Committee for both terms were very hard working and dedicated, making my job very enjoyable and exciting. Our goals were:

1. Engage the younger generation in cultural activities in large numbers
2. Encourage and support the new generation to participate in the management of NASA (such as the Executive Committee) and develop their management skills to run NASA activities
3. Engage all the Sankethi families in the US to participate by becoming members of NASA
4. Manage finances to balance the budget or create a surplus
5. Develop activities to attract all the families to contribute and participate in the anniversary activities of NASA
6. Develop new creative activities to support the goals and charter of NASA.

We were successful in attracting large number of families to the NASA anniversary activities. A lot of families became Life Members providing encouragement to the management. The Executive Committee enjoyed serving the NASA members. Every committee member went beyond the call of duty and served their term with integrity and sincerity. I feel privileged for getting an opportunity to serve the NASA families and I am very thankful for the same. I sincerely hope that I served my term by meeting the expectations of the Sankethi community. I really wish that I were able to raise more money to do more things to support needy people. My recommendation to NASA is to develop:

1. Activities for young and old to serve a few selected poor communities in the U.S.
2. Opportunities for young and old to serve the less fortunate in India.

I will close by saying that I am very grateful to NASA members for the opportunity given to me.

## A LOOK BACK AT NASA AND A LOOK AHEAD...

*By M.S. Nataraja*

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I was there 25 years ago at the Kali Bari Temple in New Jersey when a bunch of us assembled to celebrate the inauguration of NASA. I can still smell the aroma and visualize the scene—the hustle and bustle of the enthusiastic team of chefs mixing the fresh tamarind rice under the able direction of Rajanna, in the background the taped music, blasting away “vaataapi gaNapatim bahje” in every instrument conceivable. Since then we have gathered at various places and have utilized locations like Vraj Bhoomi, Siddhaachalam, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Sringeri Sadhana Center and many community centers and regional parks. After ten years of wandering here and there, we have settled on using the New Windsor facility. I was happy to be the president of NASA when we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on a rather impressive scale. Now we are about to launch the Silver Jubilee.

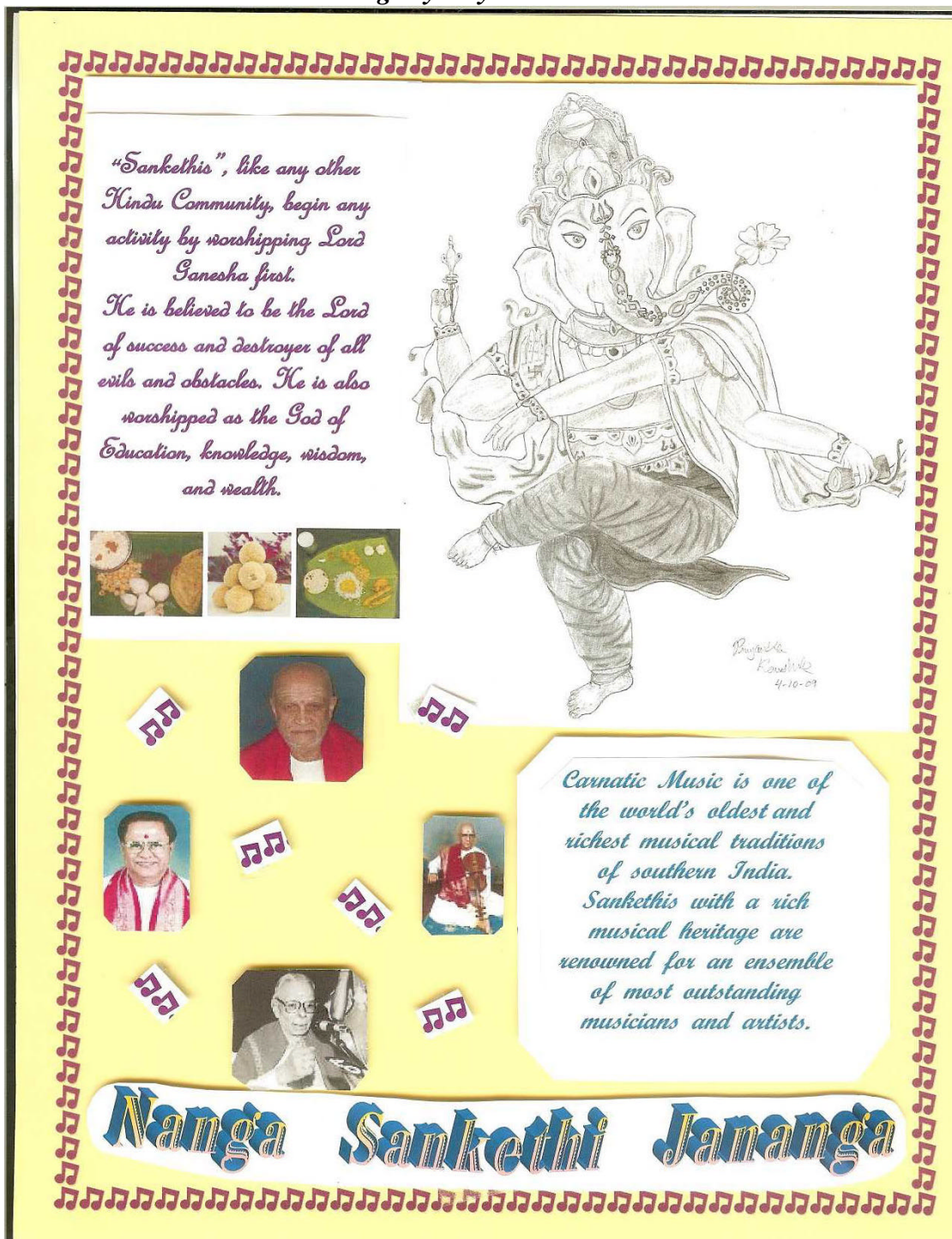
We have pretty much established a pattern for our annual gatherings. Most of us seem to love to get together year after year and do the same thing again and again. We sing, dance, eat, chant, worship, play (and argue during general body meetings) and feel a sense of belonging when we are there and a sense of separation when we leave. Some new faces appear suddenly and some familiar ones drop out all together, but a core group sustains the organization. Children have grown up and become friends and seem to be networking on their own to a limited extent. But, to our bitter disappointment, we are not aware of many matrimonial ‘relationships’ that have resulted entirely because of NASA get-togethers. This has been rather painful to our founding fathers.

With the movement of Sankethis from their original settlements, we have seen the dilution of what one might call Sankethi characteristics. When Sankethis migrated from Shenkottai, they remained clannish in their new abode for centuries. Their clannishness became so rigid that Bettadapuaras and Koushikas remained separated from each other, and Mattur-Hosahalli Sankethis couldn’t care less about the Sankethis elsewhere. Many have not even heard of the Malnad Sankethis, the Lingadahalli folks and so on. Even those who left their villages in search of new opportunities and moved into towns and cities have tried to retain their original identity. There was no incentive or encouragement to venture into inter-subgroup marital relationships among them. Attempts among the various Sankethi subgroups to unify into one cohesive group has failed miserably at the institutional levels although there have been some examples of attempts to unify at individual levels. That is the scene in India.

What do we see on the horizon for Sankethis in America? Do we need to meet every year in the same place and do the same thing, knowing fully well that our meetings are not much different from other meetings organized by temples or cultural organizations in the various parts of the United States? Yes, it makes a small difference when people of a similar background and similar interests get together and eat food that they enjoy eating and listen to the music they enjoy listening to. But how is it different or unique compared to our other activities that most of us seem to be engaged in? Or, is it time that we quietly merge with the rest? We can see the senior members of NASA aging and their children starting their own households with spouses of their choice who may or may not look like us and may or may not live like us or adopt our values and ideals. Most of us have changed and have experienced transformations of going from villages to towns, to cities, and eventually leaving our homeland. Parents have become grandparents and are hoping for a NASA that will keep together the extended Sankethi community tied by the bonds of some common ideals. I am still wondering what might be the characteristics of such a NASA!

## NASA ART GALLERY

Collage by Priyanka Kaushik



*Jennani Jayaram (Age 8)*

**Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary NASA!!!**



*Saligram Jagannath*





*Nishaanth Simha (Age 8)*



*Neeharika Simha (Age 13)*



*Nishaanth Simha (Age 8)*



*“Blair Arch” by Rohini Rao*



*“Outdoor Picnic” by Rohini Rao*





***“Roses” by Rohini Rao***



***“Water Lilies” by Rohini Rao***









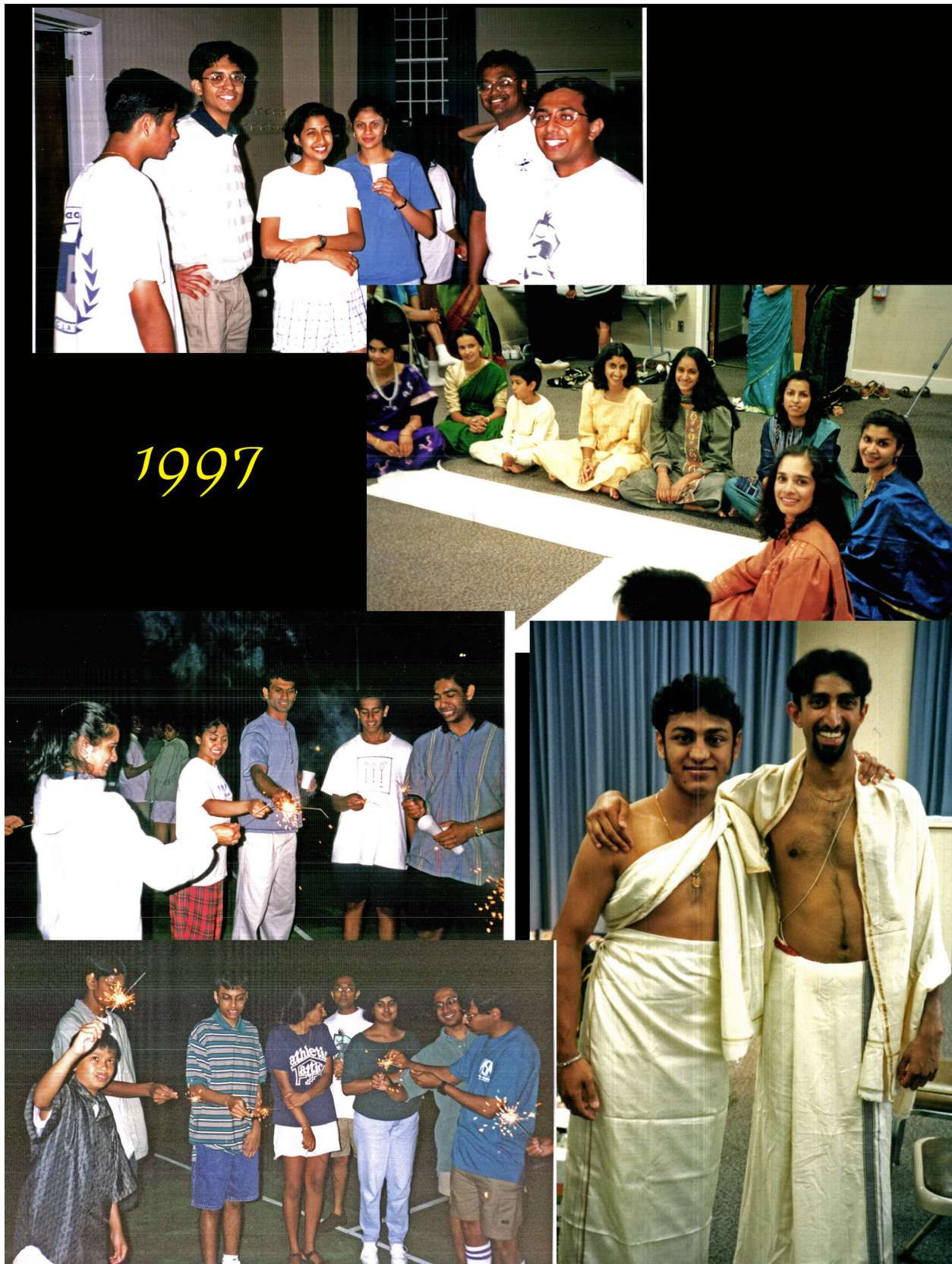






1996

























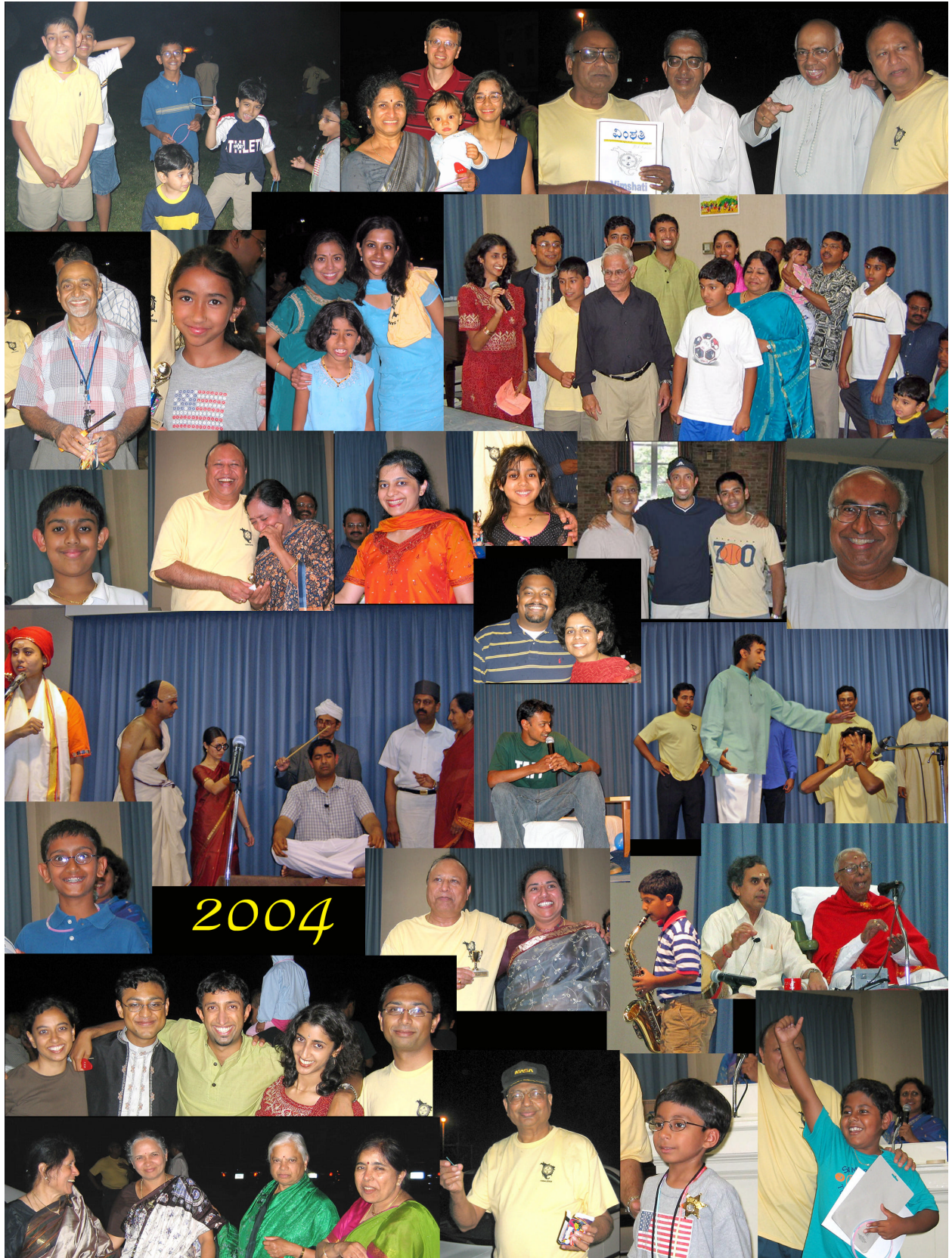
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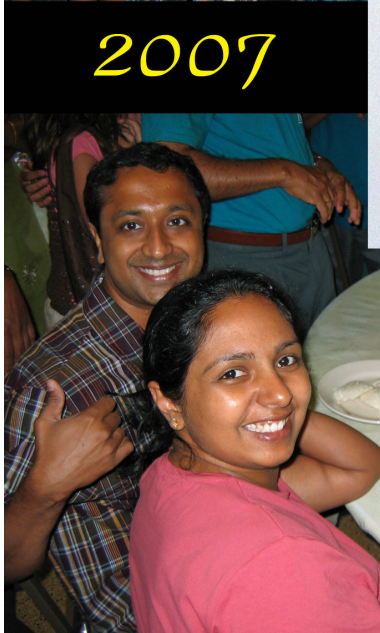






















## NASA - SILVER JUBILEE WORD SEARCH

*By Ranjini Srikantiah*

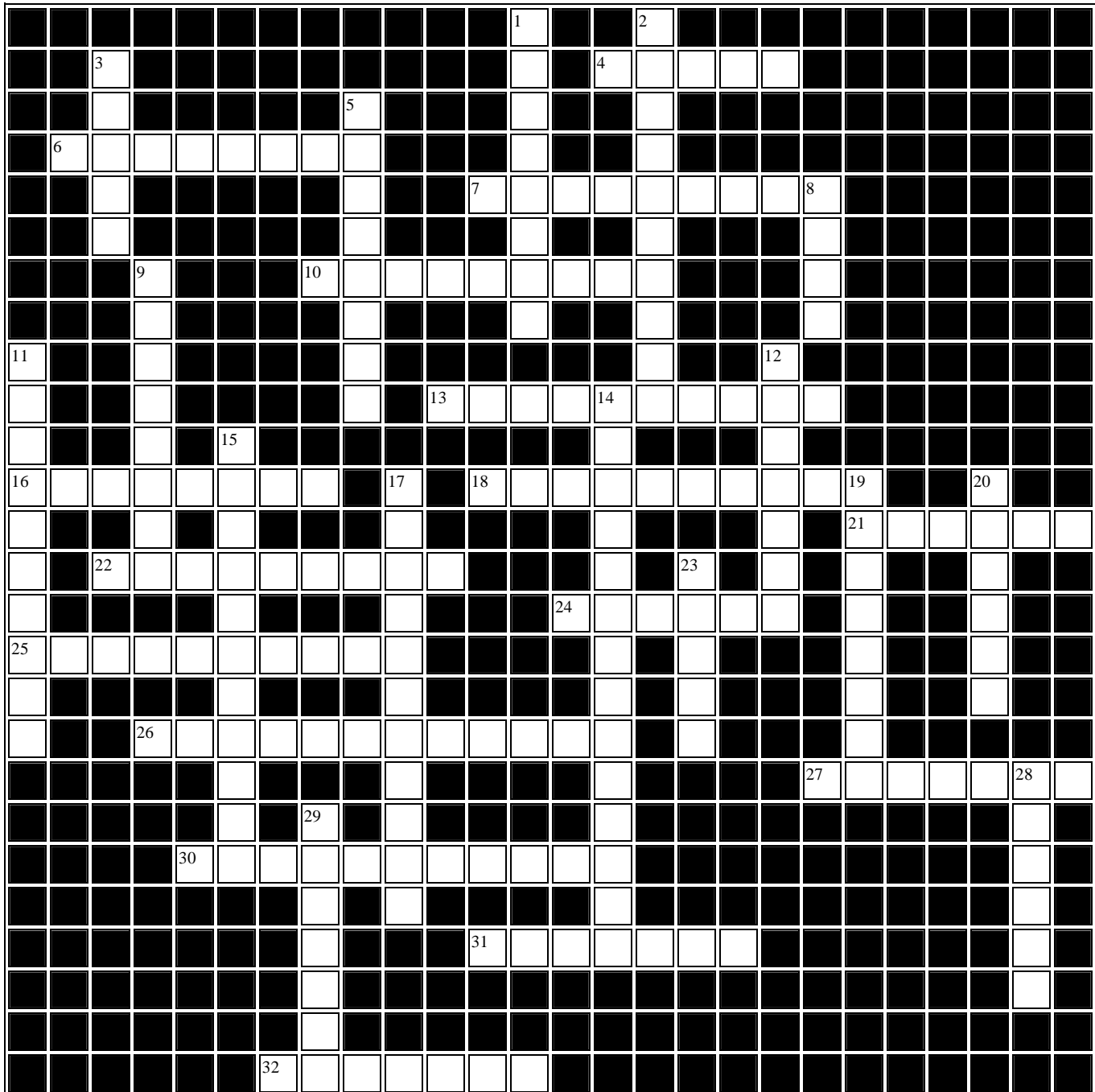
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TPORREVLISNIOU  
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ABHISHEKA	BASKETBALL	CARDS
CELEBRATION	CRICKET	DANCE
DRAMA	FAMILY	FIREWORKS
FOOD	FRIENDS	FUN
JUBILEE	LAUGHTER	MEETING
MUSIC	NASA	NEWWINDSOR
POOJA	SILVER	SINGING
SIXFLAGS	SPORTS	YOGA

# NASA - CROSSWORD FUN

*Ranjini Srikantiah*



Across

4. Popular card game
6. One of the Sankethi sects
7. Study of family ancestry
10. 8th President of NASA (First Name); Only female President to date
13. 10th President of NASA; Father of current Secretary
16. 9th President of NASA; Resident poet
18. Location of Silver Jubilee festivities; \_\_\_\_\_ Conference Center
21. Snack that goes well with *majjige huli*
22. 5th President of NASA; Lived in Rhode Island during Presidency
24. Location of 10 Anniversary festivities; Vraj \_\_\_\_\_
25. Woman who led a group of "Sankethis" from Tamil Nadu
26. Current President of NASA
27. It's hard to get a Sankethi to stop doing this
30. 2nd President of NASA; Owner of NASA's registered address
31. 1st President of NASA; Doctor in US Military
32. Son of 1st NASA President; half of NASA "Dream Team"

Down

1. Our people
2. Has served as NASA treasurer; continues to advise on financial matters
3. Religious ritual
5. 6th President of NASA; Expert in Solar Energy
8. Affectionate term for Sankethi young adults; Used to be in the listserv name
9. 11th President of NASA; Lives closest to location of Silver Jubilee
11. Boy's rite of passage
12. Daughter of 4th NASA President; half of NASA "Dream Team"
14. 3rd President of NASA; Father of current Treasurer
15. 4th President of NASA; Related to 2 other NASA Presidents (through marriage)
17. One of the Sankethi sects
19. NASA's self-designated camera man
20. Favorite Sankethi pastime (involves food)
23. Spice mixture to make *puliogre*
28. 7th President of NASA (First Name); Only NASA President to serve 2 terms
29. Remover of all obstacles

## EASY DESSERTS



### BEETROOT HALVA:

Ingredients:

Beetroot	½ kg	Sugar	3 cups
Milk	2 cups or more	Cream	1 cup
Almonds roasted	1 tbsp	Raisins	1 tbsp
Cashew nuts roasted	1 tbsp	Ghee	2 to 3 tbsp
Cardamom	1 tsp	Rose essence	1 tsp
Kesari flakes	1 tsp		

Wash, peel and grate beetroots and cook in milk. Add the rest of the ingredients except the nuts. Chop nuts, then roast them in ghee add to the cooked beetroot mixture.



### ALMOND BURFI:

Ingredients:

Almonds	½ kg	Sugar	1½ quantity of cashew pulp
Ghee	½ cup	Cardamom	2 tsp
Milk	(enough to grind to a smooth paste)		

Method:

Soak almonds in hot water for a few minutes or microwave for 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the skin. Then grind to a smooth paste adding milk while grinding. Allow sugar to melt in a pan with a cup of water and when sugar melts, add the ground paste and ghee and cardamom. Keep stirring vigorously until mixture leaves sides of the pan. Pour on a greased plate and cut to pieces.

**Vani Kaushik**

## RAMAYANA TRIVIA

*Compiled By Ganesh Rao from the Ramayana, by C. Rajagopalachari*

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1. Who was Sita's adoptive father?
2. Dasharatha had twin sons; what were their names?
3. To which wife were they born?
4. Vishwaamitra was defeated in battle by Vashishta. What was their argument over?
5. Who convinced Kaikeyi to ask Dasharatha to exile Rama?
6. Who were the two rakshasas killed by Rama at the behest of Vishwaamitra to protect his Yagna?
7. Who was flung far away, only to be killed by Rama later?
8. Name the forest where Rama's ashram was located.
9. Where was Sita held captive in Lanka?
10. There were 2 rakshasas. One had the boon that no matter how many pieces his body was cut into, he would always be made whole again. The other would cut up and cook his brother and serve him to the sages and then the sages would be killed when he tore out of their stomachs and became whole again. Name the rakshasas.
11. Who killed them?
12. Who was the rakshasa who fell in love with Rama?
13. Name Rama and Sita's sons.
14. Who told Rama to seek out Sugriva? He was killed by Rama and freed from his cursed form.
15. In whose ashram did they stay on the way to Pampa to meet Sugriva?
16. On what hill was Sugriva living in exile?
17. Who was Hanuman's father?
18. Who was Ravana's father?
19. One rakshasi warned the others not to torment Sita. She dreamed the end of Lanka and the death of all rakshasas. What was her name?
20. Hanuman took Rama's ring to prove to Sita who he was. What did he bring back to Rama prove he found Sita?
21. Who was Ravana's minister that defected to Rama's side?
22. Ravana sent a scout to convince Sugriva to withdraw his support of Rama. Name him.
23. What did Rama and Lakshmana do to Vibhishana after he joined them?
24. Who supervised the construction of the bridge to Lanka?
25. Ravana, on the eve of war, told a sorcerer to try to trick Sita into thinking Rama was dead. Who was he and how did he try to do it?
26. Who was the rakshasa warrior that, while invisible, shot poisoned darts at Rama and Lakshmana, rendering them unconscious?
27. What was the name of the hill Hanuman brought back which contained the herbs to cure them?
28. Who were Kumbhakarna's sons?
29. Who killed them?
30. Who killed Indrajit?
31. Who was Rama's charioteer in the final battle?
32. Who was Ravana's wife?

## NASA - SILVER JUBILEE WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	<u>N</u>	Y	T	<u>U</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>D</u>	A	I	I	E	S	<u>C</u>
2	A	<u>A</u>	O	<u>U</u>	L	<u>O</u>	M	<u>L</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>D</u>
3	R	<u>S</u>	<u>S</u>	E	<u>G</u>	<u>N</u>	A	G	<u>I</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>E</u>	G
4	I	<u>I</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>O</u>	P	E	<u>M</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>M</u>
5	<u>C</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>S</u>
6	S	<u>G</u>	<u>L</u>	I	I	<u>T</u>	A	O	<u>E</u>	O	A	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>D</u>
7	<u>G</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>N</u>
8	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>E</u>
9	P	<u>G</u>	<u>I</u>	T	<u>U</u>	<u>B</u>	O	C	B	I	G	<u>F</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>I</u>
10	<u>O</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>R</u>
11	<u>R</u>	Y	<u>D</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>F</u>
12	<u>T</u>	P	O	<u>R</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>U</u>
13	<u>S</u>	I	C	<u>I</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>M</u>	A	E	L	<u>D</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>O</u>
14	A	C	A	E	<u>R</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>R</u>	I	B	<u>L</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>O</u>	A	A

(C5, E) ABHISHEKA

(M7, W) BASKETBALL

(F14, NW) CARDS

(F13, N) CELEBRATION

(N1, SW) CRICKET

(H1, SE) DANCE

(N2, W) DRAMA

(L6, NW) FAMILY

(D8, E) FIREWORKS

(N11, SW) FOOD

(N11, N) FRIENDS

(L9, NE) FUN

(M9, N) JUBILEE

(F11, E) LAUGHTER

(G13, NW) MEETING

(E1, SW) MUSIC

(A1, SE) NASA

(E10, E) NEWWINDSOR

(H4, W) POOJA

(J12, W) SILVER

(B3, S) SINGING

(C10, N) SIXFLAGS

(A8, S) SPORTS

(G1, SW) YOGA

# NASA - CROSSWORD FUN ANSWERS

[illegible]

## RAMAYANA TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. King Janaka
2. Lakshmana and Shatrughna
3. Sumitra
4. Sabala the cow, which brought forth whatever was asked of it
5. Manthara, her maid
6. Taataka and Subahu
7. Mareecha. Ravana convinced him to take the form of a golden deer.
8. Dandaka
9. Ashokavana, a garden next to Ravana's palace
10. Vaatapi and Ilvala
11. Agastya
12. Soorpanaka. They cut off her nose when she attacked Sita
13. Lava and Kusha
14. The monster Kabandha, the barrel-shaped one. He had neither head nor feet, just a mouth in his belly and an eye in his chest. By killing him, Rama freed his spirit.
15. Sabari
16. Rishyamooka
17. Vaayu, god of the winds
18. Rishi Visravas
19. Trijata
20. Her Sikhaa-mani, or crown pearl
21. Vibheeshana, Ravana's brother
22. Suka
23. They crowned him King of Lanka (regime change!)
24. Nala
25. Vidhyut-Jiva the sorcerer made an image of Rama's severed head appear before Sita.
26. Indrajit, son of Ravana, who had also defeated Indra
27. Sanjeevi
28. Kumbha and Nikhumbha
29. Kumbha was slain by Sugreeva and Nikhumbha by Hanuman
30. Lakshmana
31. Maatali, Indra's charioteer. Indra sent his chariot to the aid of Rama.
32. Mandodari