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**PUTHALIKA PATRIKA**

**Feb 2024**



## PUTHALIKA PATRIKA

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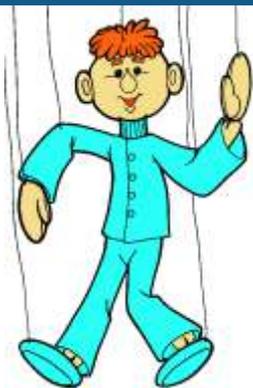
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Date would be Month of Edition of Puthalika Patrika

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## Editorial Column

**Padmini Rangarajan**

Sculpting or carving puppets is another aspect of the profession of puppetry. As a result, having a significant amount of understanding about shilpa sastra contributes to the abundance of this art. The installation of Sri Ram Lalla at Sri Ramajanmabhoomi in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, has recently captured the attention of every single person in the world. The sculptor Shri Yogiraj Arun and the idol of Sri Ram Lalla are both from Mysore, which is located in the state of Karnataka in South India. A long time ago, while I was in Mysore, I had the opportunity to meet Shri Raghavendra Mallesh, a sculptor from Mysore, and we had a conversation about sculpting, sculptors, and many facets of the art form. This brings to us the following understanding of the Shilpa Shastras.

The ***Shilpa Shastras*** serves as instructional manuals for the creation of sculptures icons in Indian context. The books provide instructions on several aspects, including the measurements of a sculpted figure, the arrangement of elements, fundamental concepts, and



symbolism, as well as principles of construction.

It is precisely the Science of Shilpa or carving idols per se that is referred to as Silpa Sastra. A vast body of Vedic literature that describes arts and crafts as well as the laws, principles, and norms that govern their design is referred to by this old umbrella name. Shri Raghavendra Mallesh –a Sculptor from Mysore region shared once that the 'Shilpa Shastra' asserts that there are three distinct types of stones, and that these stones can be classified as either masculine, feminine, or neutral based on their sound and colour. Stones that are male generate the sound of bronze bells when they are tapped, but stones that are female produce a sound that is the sound of bass quality. Sound that is bland is produced by the neutral. It is recommended to use male stone for

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creating the major god. It is a female stone for the goddess. It is the pedestal that is made of neutral stone.

He further opined that according to 'Manasara Pratima lakshana' there are eight kinds of things in which sculpture can be made. *Shaivee, Darumayee, Lohi, Lepya, Lekhanu Saikathee, Manomayee, Maniyee Prathima and Astha vidhaha smruthaha*. 1. Stone 2. Wood 3. Metal 4. Lepya (mixture of adhesives) 5. Etching-embsoing as it is known 6. Sand 7. Using gem stones as symbolism and 8. Manomayee - this is imagination of god/figure in one's own mind and performing rituals.

Knowledge of the Sanskrit language is required in order to understand the sculpture, mainly due to the fact that the whole Shilpa Shastra is written in Sanskrit. It should come as no surprise that the majority of the Shastras have been translated into virtually every Indian language, as well as into English. Having understanding of Sanskrit, in any case, provides additional benefits to comprehending it properly. Even today,



the proper measurement of each idol is carved as described in the shilpa sastra which acts as an encyclopedia for all the sculptors who delinquently follow it. There are different styles and anatomy described for sculpting and the kind of stones also matters.

From ancient times, it is stated that people began building temples on the highest points of hills or on elevated regions where they lived. This practice is said to have begun in the past. Mainly due to the fact that during times of strong rains, floods, and other natural disasters, it is possible for all of the people living in the area to protect themselves from potentially hazardous circumstances. Due to the fact that the entire region was covered by forests, this is one of the other points that are used to identify their community.

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**Arun Yogiraj**, the sculptor of Sri Ram Lalla comes from a sculptor's family. He has a family background of five generations of famous sculptors in Mysore, is currently the most sought-after sculptor in the country.

Arun is being sought out by different states of the country due to the demand that the statues of the achievers should be raised by Arun's skill. Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple Construction Committee has unanimously selected the idol of Ram Lalla ahead of the consecration ceremony on January 22, 2024. The Ram Lalla idol reflects Lord Ram's child form, adorned with a bow and arrow as part of the decoration. This scrutiny included comparisons with depictions of Lord Ram in the *Ramcharitmanas* and *Valmiki Ramayana*. Furthermore, the idols were tested for many effects caused by worship materials like turmeric, sandalwood, incense, and more. 'Shastras' are formed by the ancient 'Munis and Rishis' by their deep 'tapas' and meditation.

“Deho Devalaya prokto, Jeevo deva  
sanaathana tyajeth  
agnana nirmalyam so hum bhavena  
Poojayeth”

'jeeva' Living being and 'deva' God are very ancient, 'deha'(human body) is devalaya (Temple). It all 'agnana' (ignorance) is gone, the God and the man are same (Advitha). Then the 'Soha' He (God) aham (me) are the one (Aham bramhasi).



## World Puppetry:

### Raitara Atma- Farmers' Soul- A puppet play short movie

Padmini Rangarajan

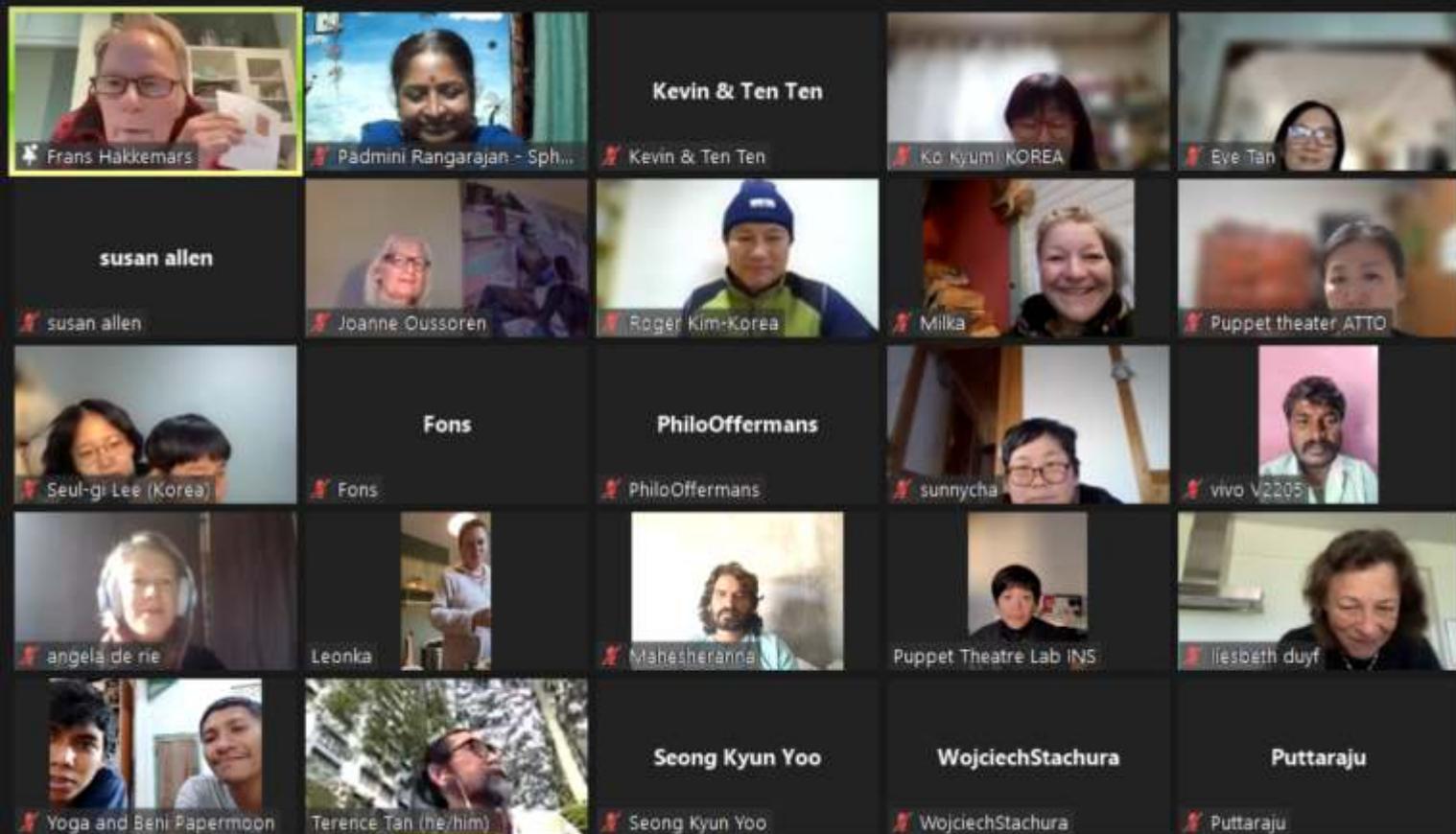


The Virtual International Puppet Residency (VIPR) was conceived by Tom Sarver, a renowned puppeteer from the United States, during the Covid19 pandemic. This virtual platform offered a valuable opportunity for puppeteers worldwide to network and demonstrate their puppetry skills while addressing particular issues or challenges and themes. During the VIPR puppeteers meet, I became acquainted with the renowned puppeteer, Mr. Frans Hakkemars, hailing from the Netherlands. We had the opportunity to engage in the sharing, discussion, evaluation, and interchange of various aspects pertaining to Indian Puppetry, the International Puppetry Organization, and culture, the function of puppeteers, the Dutch invasion, and the Dutch colonies, among other topics. During Frans Hakkemars' journey to South Eastern Asian Countries (SEA) in 2023 for a study on Puppetry and Cultural exchange, he got the opportunity to visit Hyderabad. There, he conducted a 10-day workshop and performance on Shadow and Glove Puppet making for students and teachers of

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Oxford Grammar School and other participants. Upon his return to the Netherlands, he suggested to the Dutch Culture and Education organization the proposal of organizing a Virtual International Puppetry Residency for the South Eastern Asian Countries (VIPR-SEA) from 2023 to 2025. The residency would focus on the subject 'Future of the Planet'. This concept was well welcomed and he rolled it in the month of August 2023 with six South Eastern Countries Puppet groups and companies. Sphoorthi Theatre for Educational Puppetry, Art and Craft-STEPARC has been chosen as one of the puppet organizations for this global project.

The Virtual International Puppet Theater Residences between the Netherlands and South East Asia (SEA). Past, present and future connected by the sea project concept

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was the brain child of Mr Frans Hakkemars. Puppeteers from South Korea, Macau/China, Bali and Yogyakarta from Indonesia, Singapore, Hyderabad (India) and the Netherlands will show their mini puppet theater performance on the theme "The Future of the Planet" at the end of the first round. (This project is supported from the Fund for Cultural Participation, Nethrland, much appreciated thanks for that. The project will continue until May 2025 with the UNIMA Congress in Chuncheon, South Korea. The Interim presentation of the VIPR-SEA project was on January 30, 2024 on Zoom meet virtual platform.

Let me give some background briefing about Sphoorthi Theatre-STEPARC's enrolling in this project. During my conversation with the members of my youth team, who are practicing farmers and allied occupations such as farming, carpentry, electrical work, blacksmithing, pottery, and other related fields. My youth team expressed their ability to establish a connection between the theme 'Future of the Planet' and the experiences of farmers, particularly the concerning problem of farmer's suicide. Once

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signed up for the project and submission getting approved, we had a the first round meets on every Tuesday on the Zoom meeting in the afternoon From September 2023 till January 30, 2024

During this period, our youth team leader, Mr. Mahesha B R, also known as Mahesh Ranna, who is a talented puppet maker, collaborated with Puttaraju ACP, a skilled farmer and proficient in photography and video production. Together with Shankar B, Ganesha Gaani, Krishna Char M, Nilhil, and Anirudh Srinivasan, they collectively devised the most effective approach to address the concerns of farmers through puppetry. In order to gain knowledge and comprehension of the practical difficulties and concerns pertaining to farmers and agricultural farming, Mahesha Ranna



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embarked on a journey to approximately 10-20 villages. During this time, he dedicated substantial periods to interacting with farmers, acquiring knowledge on crop cultivation, the utilization of fertilizers and pesticides, marketing strategies, bank loan procedures, and other facets of the lives of farmers in the K R Nagara taluk of Mysore District, Karnataka. This endeavour was particularly relevant as a majority of the members in my youth team hail from Mysore district. To know and understand the factual problems and issues related to farmers and agriculture farming Mahesha Ranna, travelled to around 10-20 villages spend quality time with the farmers, learnt about crop cultivation, use of fertilizers and pesticides, marketing, bank loan and various aspects of farmer's life in Mysore and Hassan Districts, Karnataka, as most of my youth team members are from Mysore district the first base project is based in that



Recording EN



# World Puppetry:

## Raitara Atma- Farmers' Soul- A puppet play short movie

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area

So are the other countries puppet companies have identified projects based on the title. Some are working on water, some on land and ocean dumpings with plastics, some of nature, some on safe waste disposal and so on all pertaining to the Earth Planet.

The deadline for the initial round of final submission for a concise video presentation showcasing our collective efforts was on January 30, 2024. My team members made shadow puppets using used cardboard sheets and boxes, as well as rod puppets using discarded cushion foam sheets, waste cotton, old clothing, and fabric. Story and storyboard was made by Mahesha Ranna and me. Then my team sought the help of two school teachers, Mr. Shivaram and Mr. Manoj Kumar, in Scripting, screenplay, voice over work, and team rehearsals with puppets.

To make it appear more realistic, the team brought the farmer puppet around the villages and had it converse with the locals. They made the puppet do all the

**రైతు ఆత్మ - రైతుల ఆత్మ - ఒక కొయ్య మరియు తోలు బొమ్మ లాట - లఘు చిత్రం**

పల్లెటూరు అభివృద్ధిలో పుట్టిన పుస్తకం (VPPAD) లోని 19 మంది పుస్తకాల మొదటి ప్రకటన ప్రకారం రైతుల ఆత్మను తెలుసుకోవడానికి ఈ పుస్తకం ప్రకటనలను ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి. ఈ పుస్తకం ప్రకటనలను ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి. ఈ పుస్తకం ప్రకటనలను ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి.

VPPAD పుస్తకం కోసం మొదటి ప్రకటనలను ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి. ఈ పుస్తకం ప్రకటనలను ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి. ఈ పుస్తకం ప్రకటనలను ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి.

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**రైతు ఆత్మ - రైతుల ఆత్మ - ఒక కొయ్య మరియు తోలు బొమ్మ లాట - లఘు చిత్రం**

ఈ కథలో రైతుల జీవితం గురించి తెలుసుకోవడానికి ఈ పుస్తకం ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి. ఈ పుస్తకం ప్రకటనలను ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి. ఈ పుస్తకం ప్రకటనలను ప్రయోజనపూర్వకంగా ఉపయోగించాలి.

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## World Puppetry:

### Raitara Atma- Farmers' Soul- A puppet play short movie

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tasks associated with farming, like cattle grazing, cleaning cow sheds, milking cows, cattle feeding, weeding, spraying pesticides, harvesting, carrying the bundles of grass and hay home, operating a tractor, and so forth. They



made the farmer puppet to converse other farmers under a banyan tree in the evening. As the cows and other cattle's got used to the farmer puppet for a few days, it was easy to film along with cattle's.

The film is in Kannada language with English Subtitles available on social media like Youtube, Instagram and Facebook. Now that our project is approved for the second round presentation of a good live and recorded puppet show of 30-40 minutes in April -May 2024.

Now, we want this film to reach farmers in India, get connected with Agricultural universities, with NGOs working with farmers and organic farming and make create awareness that ending one's life by hanging or consuming pesticides is not a solution. This has to be worked in coordination and cooperation support from experts, government and organization who can make farmers' life blissful- as the saying goes "The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings."

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

Dr. Arun Bansal



Gutumayum Basanta Sharms Imphal Manipur Puppeteer

Long before the invention of scripted play, people had already been employing puppets as a means of communicating a variety of perspectives. It would appear that puppets have been around since the beginning of time in various cultures all across the world. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, in Europe, the written records for use of puppets stretch back to the 5th century B.C. however in Asia there are ancient traditions of puppet theatre, the origin of which cannot be traced. At the time of the civilizations that flourished at Harappa and Mohenjodaro, India has a long-standing heritage of puppet theatre that dates back to the ancient times.

String puppetry is a form of puppetry that is done in the states of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Tripura, Manipur, Maharashtra, and

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

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Telangana. Although there are other varieties of puppetry in India, string puppetry is the most frequent form of puppetry in India. Not only are art and culture a means of entertainment or decoration in Manipur, but they are also a kind of religious expression due to the profound roots that the people of Manipur have in the religion of Vaishnavism.

Manipur has a long history of using both string and rod puppets, both of which have been widely used in the region. Ithihaasa, legends, and epic tales are the primary sources of inspiration for the subjects that are brought to life in puppet theatre. In Manipur, the art form known as puppet dance is referred to by its own unique term, which is **Laithibi Jagoi**. **Laithibi** refers to dolls, and **Jagoi** refers to dance. "**Hang-Lai Jagoi**" is the name of the traditional string puppet that is used in Manipur.



Puppetry in general as Hanglai Jagoi in [Meitei](#): ၫၢၦၣ ၫၢၦၣ is of basic four types: (1) [Rod puppetry](#), (2) [Shadow puppetry](#), (3) [Glove puppetry](#), and (4) [String puppetry](#). The traditional *Hanglai* - 'puppet') was made of wood, paper, ragged clothes, dried paddy, etc. Later, other materials were used as substitutes.

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

Dr. Arun Bansal



'Puppetry dancing' is the Meitei term for Hanglai Jagoi, (Hanglai meaning puppet in Meitei, which is a traditional style of puppet theatre that originated in Manipur. At the Meitei civilization, it is considered to be one of the most remarkable examples of intangible cultural heritage. It is generally acknowledged that the art form known as Hanglai Jagoi in [Meitei](#):  $\text{ꯀꯪꯂꯩ ꯂꯩꯂꯩ}$  arose prior to the advent of Hinduism in Manipur. However, the precise chronology of the development of this art form is a matter of debate among experts. The Meitei monarchs **Ching-Thang Khomba** (Meitei for "Rajarshi Bhagyachandra") and **Chinglen Nongdrenkhomba** (Meitei for "Gambhir Singh") were responsible for significant improvements in the art form during their reigns. Manipuri Raas Leela in Meitei:  $\text{ꯀꯪꯂꯩ ꯂꯩꯂꯩ}$  and Ratha Yatra in Meitei:  $\text{ꯀꯪꯂꯩ ꯂꯩꯂꯩ}$  were two organizations that were responsible for the performance of the art form throughout their respective thematic periods. Later on, it became linked to the art form known as Goura Leela, which is also known as in Meitei:  $\text{ꯀꯪꯂꯩ ꯂꯩꯂꯩ}$ ). It is

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

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highly styled and is traditionally adorned in bright colours.

The stories of Radha and Lord Krishna serve as the inspiration for the concepts included inside puppets. A puppeteer is seen performing with Mridanga and Khon-Pung in the state of Manipur. Every aspect of the performance, including the delivery of words, the motions of the puppet, and the musicians, is perfectly synchronised. Rasleela is a performance that features



string puppetry that resembles human or divine beings. On the other hand, Gostha Leela is a performance that features puppet performances with animal and demonic shapes.

It is stated that the art of puppetry was first brought to Manipur during the reign of Maharaj Chandrakriti Singh (1850-1886) in Goura-Leela. This was reportedly done under the direction of Oja Ngangbam Mala Singh of Uripok, with Imphal serving as the supervisor. In spite of this, it is believed that puppet theatre in Manipur is even older than human theatre. This is something that may be stated here. There were puppets used in the Goura-Leela performance as pungyeiba (Mridanga player), Tanyeiba (percussion music player), and dancer (puppet dancer), as stated by the late Guru Kongrailatpam Madangopal Sharma of Uripok Tera, Imphal, who was one of the

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

Dr. Arun Bansal



pioneer puppeteers of Manipur. He stated that puppets were used after the Nipa Pala and just before the start of the Goura-Leela. The Goura-Leela was the first puppetry to be performed in Manipur, and it was introduced in this manner.

The life and works of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, a fervent devotee of Lord Krishna who resided in the Nadia region of West Bengal, serve as the inspiration for this particular style of puppet theatre. As a reincarnation of Lord Vishnu, Mahaprabhu is worshipped by a significant number of Hindus in the states of Bengal and Manipur. He is known for singing praises regarding God and spreading Bhakti Yoga.

While the puppeteers are seated on an elevated platform, a black screen is suspended from the floor of the platform all the way up to the stage, which is where the puppets are placed. Because of the black screen that is in the background, the puppets are brought down to the stage and moved around with the assistance of black strings.

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

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Gutumayum Basanta Sharms Imphal Manipur Puppeteer

However, these strings are not visible to the audience.

As Gurumayum Jadu Sharma would say, it is a fight to keep puppetry alive in Manipur in this day and age, when there are far more flashier modern diversions available. As the person who established the Moppet Decoration and Cultural Centre in Manipur, which is the sole puppetry centre in the state, he has the hope that future generations will be interested in the art of puppetry.

There are stories and tales that are told by puppets. We are able to connect with a more straightforward era of the past, and they also hold messages for the present. Changes in society are accelerated by their presence. Stories are what keep us alive, and if they pass away, some of the stories that they told will also pass away with them. We can only hope that some concerned individuals will become aware of the

## Indian Puppetry

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Dr. Arun Bansal

Gutumayum Basanta Sharms Imphal Manipur Puppeteer



importance of preserving this beautiful art. One of the primary reasons why the art form known as Hanglai Jagoi in Meitei:  $\text{ꯀꯪꯂꯩꯃꯤ ꯂꯩꯂꯩꯃꯤ}$  is in the process of extinction is due to the numerous problems it encounters. These challenges include, but are not limited to, acculturation, modernity, various socio-cultural elements, and deficiencies in support, demands, patronage, and other similar causes. Due to the lack of state assistance, artists are expected to be financially secure on their own. This is owing to the fact that the majority of the requirements for the various art forms are typically met by the artists themselves. There are a number of important elements that

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

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contributed to its demise, including the improvement of technology and reduced public interest. In this particular profession, the true danger resides in the fact that the number of gurus and ojajs is decreasing. In the event that these stewards of tradition pass away, the essential components of Manipuri puppetry theatre, which are already in short supply, run the risk of being completely eradicated.

In the Thiyam Leishangkhong area of the Imphal West district, Gurumayum Basanta Sharma is working to preserve and promote the art form of Hanglai Jagoi both inside the state of Manipur and on a global scale. He was awarded the "Senior Fellowship for

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

**Dr. Arun Bansal**

2020-21" by the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), which is part of the Ministry of Culture in India. This honour was bestowed upon him on July 1, 2023, for a duration of two years, in recognition of his devoted efforts to preserve and promote the traditional Meitei puppetry. He received instruction in the art form from a variety of instructors, one of which was his late father, Gurumayum Jadu Sharma, who had also been an artist in the very puppet theatre in Manipur since the year 1986, when he was 14 years old. For example, during the time of his father, the art form was



done more than twenty times in a single year. However, in the present day, it is only performed during specific festivals or occasions. Having been employed by the "Moppet Decoration and Cultural Centre, Yumnam Huidrom Thiyam Leishangkong" for a considerable amount of time, he has been instructing the art forms to students who are interested in learning about them.

## Indian Puppetry

### Indian Puppetry- Hanglai Jagoi –Manipuri Puppets

Dr. Arun Bansal

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## Educational Puppetry

A Humbling Display:

6th January 2023-2024

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL Cultural Day Celebrations

Ms Reshma Joshi, Head Mistress Primary School Aurobindo International School

*"To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can make to a child, to learn always and everywhere"*

### *The Mother*

**BHARATATVAM** SENIOR PRIMARY [Grades 3&4]

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL included Puppet play as a storytelling event during the Annual day festivities as part of the cultural performance. During the evening, the stage was adorned with a combination of the Tricolour flag, symbols of patriotism, and expressions of nationalism, resonating with stories of our illustrious history. This was done to create a welcoming atmosphere for the cultural event, which aimed to celebrate and honour the venue.

Ms. Padmini Rangarajan, a highly accomplished puppeteer, storyteller, speaker, and scholar in the field of education, graced the event as the esteemed Chief Guest.

The evening was devoted to honouring Bharat Mata and her illustrious children. In the overarching myth of Indian freedom, specific names of rulers became ingrained in concealed courtyards. The students in grades 3 and 4 expressed their admiration through a remarkable **Geetakathanam**, not only for their own deeds of bravery, but



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also for the combined courage and strength that has gone unrecognized for millennia.

Subsequently, a dramatic performance on the topic of the mutiny year, The Revolt of 1857, took place. Throughout India, an inconspicuous network throbbed. Subdued communications reverberated via covert conduits, as

villages exchanged knowledge, their solidarity serving as a protective barrier against tyranny. The distinctions of social class and religious affiliation diminished in the presence of a mutual adversary, the collective aspiration for liberation. The children demonstrated this skillfully through a narrative Hindi skit titled "1857 ki Pukaar".

The main attraction of the evening was a puppet show that depicted a chronological sequence of significant events from 1857 to 1947, titled '**Main Ragoon yan na ragoon, Bhaarat ke rehna chahiye**'. Undoubtedly, this endeavour was a significant



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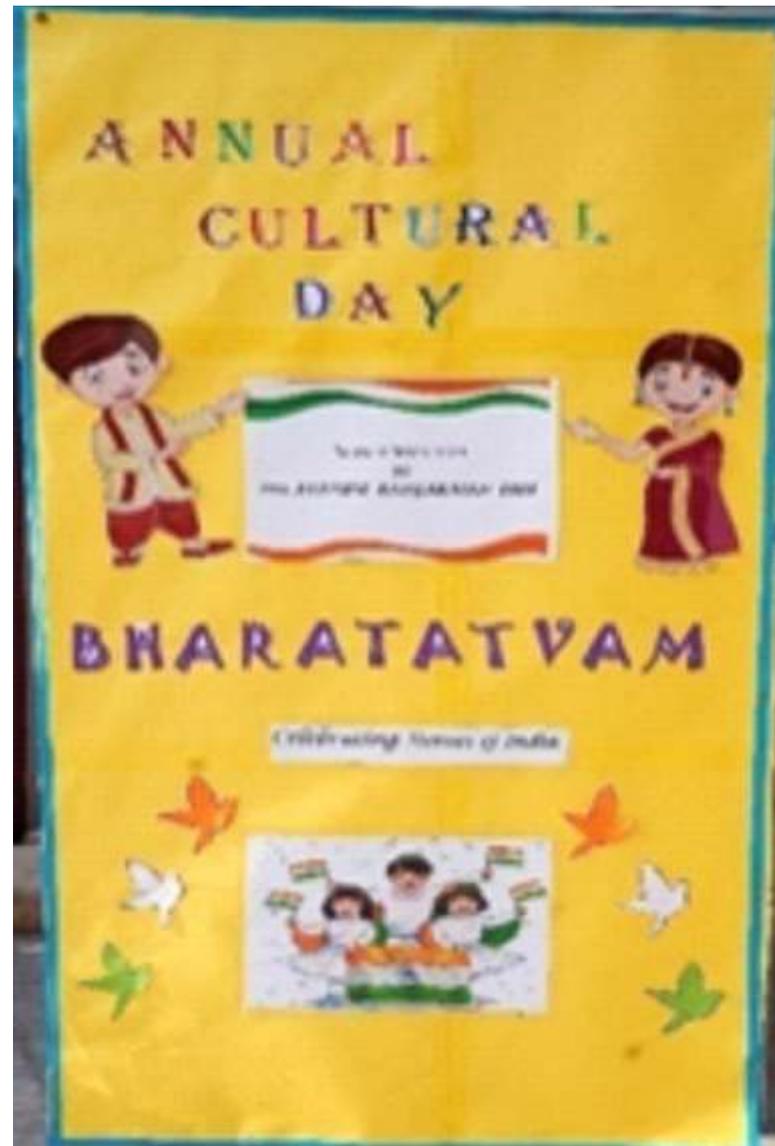
**Ms Reshma Joshi, Head Mistress Primary School Aurobindo International School**

challenge for both teachers and students. However, the youngsters' enthusiasm to portray the story of Indian Independence using puppets was limitless. Students brought the ancient art of puppetry to life, assuming the role of puppeteers and enchanting audiences with vibrant puppets and intriguing stories.

The exhibition showcased several distinct Indian puppetry traditions, each characterised by its own allure and methodology. Artfully built and adorned stick puppets, hand puppets, glove puppets, human puppets, and talking puppets gracefully performed on the screen, recounting the arduous journey of Indian Independence. The aesthetically pleasing puppets, animated by student puppeteers,

executed vibrant dances and comedies. The children were introduced to several relevant skills, including voice-over, modulations, recording, and the use of music.

From the Congress Split in Surat to the Bardoli Movement, and from the heart-wrenching Jalianwala Bagh Massacre to the heroic actions of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and numerous other activities, the presentation culminated with the unfurling of the Indian flag on the Red Fort, causing widespread jubilation. The young puppeteers were filled with boundless joy and delight, as their diligent practice and hard effort



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were yielding vivid results. Amidst the background, fingers swiftly moved anxiously across the cloth and the poles. Students, who have been turned into puppeteers, infuse vitality into their creations.

On that day, the commonplace turned into something spectacular. The classrooms became like window-screens, and the notebooks brought forth the enchantment of puppetry. Every puppet, meticulously constructed and brimming with unlimited creativity, contained a fragment of its maker's character, eagerly awaiting release.

The Puppetry performance transcended its ephemeral nature, leaving an indelible impact on the educators, students, and all those in its vicinity. Students acquired a more profound understanding and admiration for India's abundant cultural legacy, while also cultivating key proficiencies in creativity, communication, and collaboration. The resounding laughter and applause that filled the air during the

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performances, along with the evident delight on the puppeteers' faces, served as undeniable evidence of the captivating and inspiring nature of puppetry. Puppetry transcends being only a school activity; it serves as a poignant reminder that every individual possesses the inherent ability to generate, envision, and narrate tales that continue to reverberate long after the illumination of the stage fades.

Anticipation rose in the air as the cheers faded. Mrs. Padmini's speech, conveyed through her pleasant smile, provided a lasting and comforting impression. The bridge symbolised the connection between past accomplishments and future opportunities, embodying wisdom and motivation. Each statement had a profound impact on the audience, regardless of age, serving as a reminder of the influential nature of storytelling and instilling a sense of assurance in the youngster. In addition, she discussed the need of appreciating many cultures, safeguarding traditions, and utilizing art as a means to foster mutual comprehension. Her message serves as a tribute to the profound influence of culture, persisting even after the last words are uttered. It acts as a guiding beacon as we navigate the experience of living in a diverse world.



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SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL Cultural Day Celebrations

**Ms Reshma Joshi, Head Mistress Primary School Aurobindo International School**

Project conception and design-

Mrs Reshma Joshi

Head Mistress

Primary and Middle-School -Screen Play and Music Evening Puppet show-

Smt Sandhya Rajnala

English teacher

Smt Sistla Sirisha

Math Coordinator

Morning Puppet show-

Smt G Sirisha

Smt Swarajyalakshmi

Puppet Designing and Making

Smt Sirisha N

Project teacher and

Smt Anuradha

Craft coordinator

Voice over team

Smt Sowmya

Computer teacher

Students : Dhanushri, Vishwatej, Shraddha, & Vaibhav



## A traditional form of the art

### Masks—Cultural Identity and Art form

**Dr. Anirudh Srinivasan**

Introduction:

In the past, I participated in a non-profit organization's workshop on indigenous art forms specifically designed for schools. While I was a high school student, I believed it would be advantageous to acquire the skill of mask manufacturing by attending a workshop. Throughout the session, I was compelled to explore this art form due to my contemplation on questions such as "What defines a mask?" and "What is the purpose behind their usage?" along with related inquiries. I



started to question why the majority of Indian films, both in Hindi and other regional languages, focus more on presenting other art forms? Residing with my mother, who is a skilled puppeteer specializing in education, I hold the belief that puppetry serves as the foundation for various traditional art forms. Consequently, I am intrigued to discover the individual who may be credited as the originator of mask puppetry. I have repeatedly seen a strong correlation between masks and puppets, marked by a close and interconnected relationship.

The utilisation of masks as a ceremonial practice is a prevalent occurrence witnessed on a global scale. These masks commonly display common characteristics such as ceremonial traditions, unique patterns, and symbolic colours that communicate profound ideas and cultural norms. The mask fabrication method is distinguished by its uniqueness. The event is regarded as a religious ritual, resembling a banquet, that carries immense spiritual importance and is thought to contain mystical power. In

## A traditional form of the art

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In addition, masks are frequently employed in many ceremonies, functioning as a method to invoke curative spirits and as a safeguard for the community.

Throughout history, masks have served as a means of creative representation in all societies and cultural traditions. Each country, such as Japan, China, India, and ancient Rome, possesses its own unique traditional masks that are native to that particular country. Historical evidence indicates that masks have been utilised for symbolic reasons since the Stone Age. Aside from their religious, spiritual, comic, medicinal, and protecting attributes, they also fulfil a range of other utilitarian purposes.

#### What is a Mask?

Masks are tangible objects that represent a wide range of beings, such as humans, animals, gods, and harmful things. Facial coverings are worn by people to hide or disguise their face, helping them to hide their identity and create a new one. Masks are artificially crafted objects intended to appease both earthly and otherworldly powers. The human view of the expansive cosmos is truly extraordinary, including a diverse array of flora and fauna, positive and negative forces, celestial and spiritual beings, all metaphorically depicted as masks. The derivation of the word "mask" can be deduced from



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various languages. The term "masquerade" encompasses various linguistic origins, such as the French word "masque" denoting a face covering for concealment or protection, the Latin words "mascus and masca" signifying a mask, nightmare, or ghost, the Italian word "masschera" and the Spanish word "mascara" both referring to a ghost, and the Arabic word "maskharah" denoting a jester or an individual participating in a masquerade. Masks, irrespective of their spoken content, reveal the fundamental traits, temperament, and physical



aspect of the character to the spectators. There is a wide variety of masks available in different styles, colours, and shapes. Some headdresses are placed on the head, while others are specifically made to hide the wearer's face. Many societies utilise masks embellished with elaborate body painting and other garments, which are considered peripheral. According to the description of folk art, a mask represents the essence of past generations, evokes both terror and joy, and serves as a symbol of authority and safeguarding. Masks globally are created utilising a vast array of materials including natural clay, paper, fabric, leather, wood, and various combinations of these elements.

#### **Why Masks?**

Prehistoric humans utilised masks as creative manifestations that were integrated into ceremonial customs. Masks were used to express ideas and engage in activities, as well as for therapeutic reasons. The utilisation of masks is widespread in modern

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### Masks—Cultural Identity and Art form

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performing arts and theatre. Comedic individuals use masks with the purpose of entertaining the audience. Anti-heroic characters also use masks to portray nefarious identities. Modern theatre artists are conducting thorough experimenting with the utilisation of masks. Students who specialise in theatre and drama participate in a course that teaches them the techniques of creating masks and how to use them in theatrical performances..



Theatrical plays often incorporate various elements of folk theatre, such as masks, mystical components, puppets, dolls, and other such artefacts, to depict and comment on the customs and behaviours of modern society. Masks are employed in traditional oral narratives like Yakshagana and Bayalata. Ganesha wears a full mask, while monks usually wear a partial mask. Moreover, masks are employed in the execution of both traditional and contemporary dance genres..

Masks function as a medium for the manifestation of cultural identity. Masks are crucial for amplifying vocal projection, communicating subtle emotions, expressing ceremonial beliefs, and exerting dominance over concepts. Masks are utilised in several cultural contexts. The Bharata Natya Shastra makes references to the native tradition of camouflage in India. In addition, Bharata refers to the traditional techniques used in the production of masks. The mask possesses three key attributes: its vivid and decorative nature, its construction adhering to precise specifications, and its creation executed with utmost care. Indigenous masks are

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### Masks—Cultural Identity and Art form

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found throughout the states and regions of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Ladakh, and the adjacent places in India.

The Kukuna and Worli tribes of Maharashtra possess a robust heritage in the art of mask-making, with a plethora of exemplary creations available for observation. As part of the Bavada rite, these tribes create masks as a way to please Goddess Bhavani. Different varieties of masks are witnessed in Uttar Pradesh during the Ramleela Mela celebrations. During the festivities of the new year and other funfair events in Goa, it is customary to see people wearing funfair masks. Each Eastern Indian state utilises unique and dynamic masks in their ceremonial rituals, with variances seen among the states. For instance, the masks used in the mountainous regions of West Bengal are painstakingly crafted from wood and draw inspiration from Buddhist rites. The tribes involved in the Chhau dance form take responsibility for creating some of the most exquisite masks in our nation. You will locate them in the states of Bihar, West Bengal, and Orissa. In the Chi dance form, all



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dancers must wear masks. Chi is exclusively executed by males. Chhau masks are created using Potter's clay as the base material. In the states of Andhra and Tamil Nadu, one may come across Narasimha and Veerabhadra masks that exhibit a more aggressive demeanour. The Gond tribes of Adilabad engage in the ritualistic worship of masks. Following this phase, the masks are stored in a distinct location that is again considered sacred. The quantity of masks stored amounts to tens of thousands. No one disturbs them. Some tribes have the concept that wearing a mask causes a person to assume the identity represented by the mask. Recent Kerala festivals, the trending masks depicting the Malayalam film actors was quite unique.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C2FSHRBhTt3/?igsh=MTQ4djFjcWxmOTVzcv>==

On January 26, 2024, at the 75th Republic Day Celebrations, one could see the enormous masks in the middle of the cultural dance VandeBharatam Nritya Utsav, which made history by



## A traditional form of the art

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including more than 1500 women dancers who used a variety of dance forms to symbolise the rich cultural legacy of different states in India.

In order to preserve and transmit the tribal traditions of mask production, it is crucial to guarantee the continued prosperity of manufacturing practices and the transmission of stories about the community, culture, rituals, and the mask makers themselves to future generations.

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## Celebrations of the Month-II

### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavam- 2023-24

Ms. Manjula Narasimhan and Anannya Sriram

#### "Srimate Ramanujaaya Namaha"

In 2023–2024 In Dhanur Masam, we are commencing a quest this year to get deeper insights of "Ra:ma:nuja Acharya". For us as well, the journey is new. We depend on data from diverse sources, with a primary emphasis on information provided by Jeeyar Education Trust. We express our gratitude to Jeeyar Education Trust Hyderabad for creating comics about his life, which significantly aided our quest. The design of our Kolams will be heavily influenced by Amar Chitra Katha and JET comics. This is a continuation of the Visual Art Storytelling topic. Marghazhi Utsavam- 2023-24 Part-2

#### **Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: Janauray 1, 2024 Day 16 "The High priest (Thiruvarangathu Amuthanaar) surrenders at Ramanuja's feet"**

Ramanuja was now fully qualified to be the pontiff of Vaishnava Community. One day, Lord Ranganatha Himself is said to have addressed him thus, "We have endowed you with the wealth of both our Realms, Ubhaya-vibhuthi, ie. of both this world and the spiritual world. After examining everything, manage all the works of our house."

Ramanuja thereupon took charge of the great temple of Ranganatha, reviewed everything, including the treasury and finding a great deal of corruption and



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### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavum- 2023-24

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mismanagement began a program of re-structuring. He dismissed some of the office bearers and appointed new ones, and thus re-organized the administration of the temple.

His reforms however did not go un-resisted. The high priest of the temple (Thiruvarangathu Amuthanaar) who was a rich and an influential man resented these reforms which curtailed his power and source of income.

He therefore decided to get rid of Ramanuja by murdering him.

One day he requested the pontiff to come to his house for alms, having informed his wife to poison the food. When Ramanuja arrived to take alms she was so overcome by his spiritual refulgence and compassion that she revealed to him what she had done and begged him not to eat of her food.

Few days later, once when Ramanuja went to the temple to have darsan of the Lord, the high priest was in attendance and gave him some of the sacramental water laced with a virulent poison. Ramanuja went into a trance-like state and staggered out of the temple.

The next morning the high priest saw Ramanuja in a state of spiritual ecstasy with tears flowing down his cheeks. Ramanuja had lost all body consciousness and was absorbed in the beatific vision of the Lord. The high priest was filled with remorse and threw himself at the feet of Ramanuja beating his head on the ground. Ramanuja regained body consciousness and tenderly raised the postulant sinner, forgave him and healed his wounds with his touch.

Note on Thiruvarangathu Amuthanaar: After his surrender, it was this same Amuthanaar who later became an Iyarpa reciter in the temple and wrote the "Ramanuja Nootranthathi" (108 pasurams on EmperumAnAr). As per divine instructions Srivaishnavas recite this Ramanuja Nootranthathi during every utsavum (temple festival).

He also wrote the "Prapanna gAyathri". Ramanuja has instructed all Srivaishnavas to recite this prabhandham atleast once every day similar to chanting gayathri japam.

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### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavam- 2023-24

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#### **Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: Januaray 2, 2024 Day 17 - "The devotion of the Varada couple of Astasahasra village"**

One day Ramanuja decided to go on a pilgrimage to Tirupati. On the way he arrived at a village called Ashta-sahasra where he had two disciples — Yajnesa who was very wealthy and Varada who was quite poor.

When the party of pilgrims arrived in the village, Ramanuja decided that they would first visit Varada. When they arrived at Varada's lowly hut he was away on his begging round and his wife was home alone. She had only a single threadbare garment and felt she could not show herself with decorum to the great acharya. So she clapped her hands so that the acharya would not think that nobody was home and go away.

Ramanuja immediately understood the situation and threw his upper garment into the house. She picked it up and covering herself came out to welcome the acharya. She prostrated herself and offered him water to wash his feet and a place to sit down. She then pondered about how she could entertain these illustrious guests, having not a grain of food in the house and knowing that her husband would never bring home enough to feed everyone.

She remembered that there was one particular merchant in the town that had been



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### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavum- 2023-24

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lusting after her for a long time; she resolved to offer herself to him in order to obtain the necessary ingredients to entertain her guests. She requested the acharya to wait while she went to obtain the ingredients for the feast.

Approaching the merchant she informed him that illustrious guests had arrived and begged him to give her all the vessels and foodstuffs. She agreed to come back afterwards so that he could have his way with her. The merchant was greatly pleased and gave her everything that she requested in anticipation of gratifying his lust.

She hurried home and prepared a sumptuous meal for Ramanuja and his party. When Varada returned home he was amazed to see the preparations and inquiring from his wife was even more astonished to hear the circumstances. He wept with joy saying — "you are not a human woman but a goddess you have sacrificed everything, even your honour for your guru!" He immediately told Ramanuja who was overwhelmed by their devotion to him and blessed them again and again.

After the meal Varada accompanied his wife to the house of the merchant carrying Ramanuja's tirtham (holy water) and prasadam. Varada requested that he accept the same and then do as he wished with his wife. The merchant was overcome by feelings of disgust with himself. He walked around the couple and prostrated on the ground in front of them, saying — "you are like my parents — please forgive my ignorance and stupidity and take me to your guru so that I may take refuge in him". Ramanuja accepted him as his disciple and taught him Dharma. The party then continued on their pilgrimage to Tirupati.

**Marghazhi utsavum 2023-24: January 3, 2024 Day 18 - "The antics of Govinda (Ramanuja's cousin)**

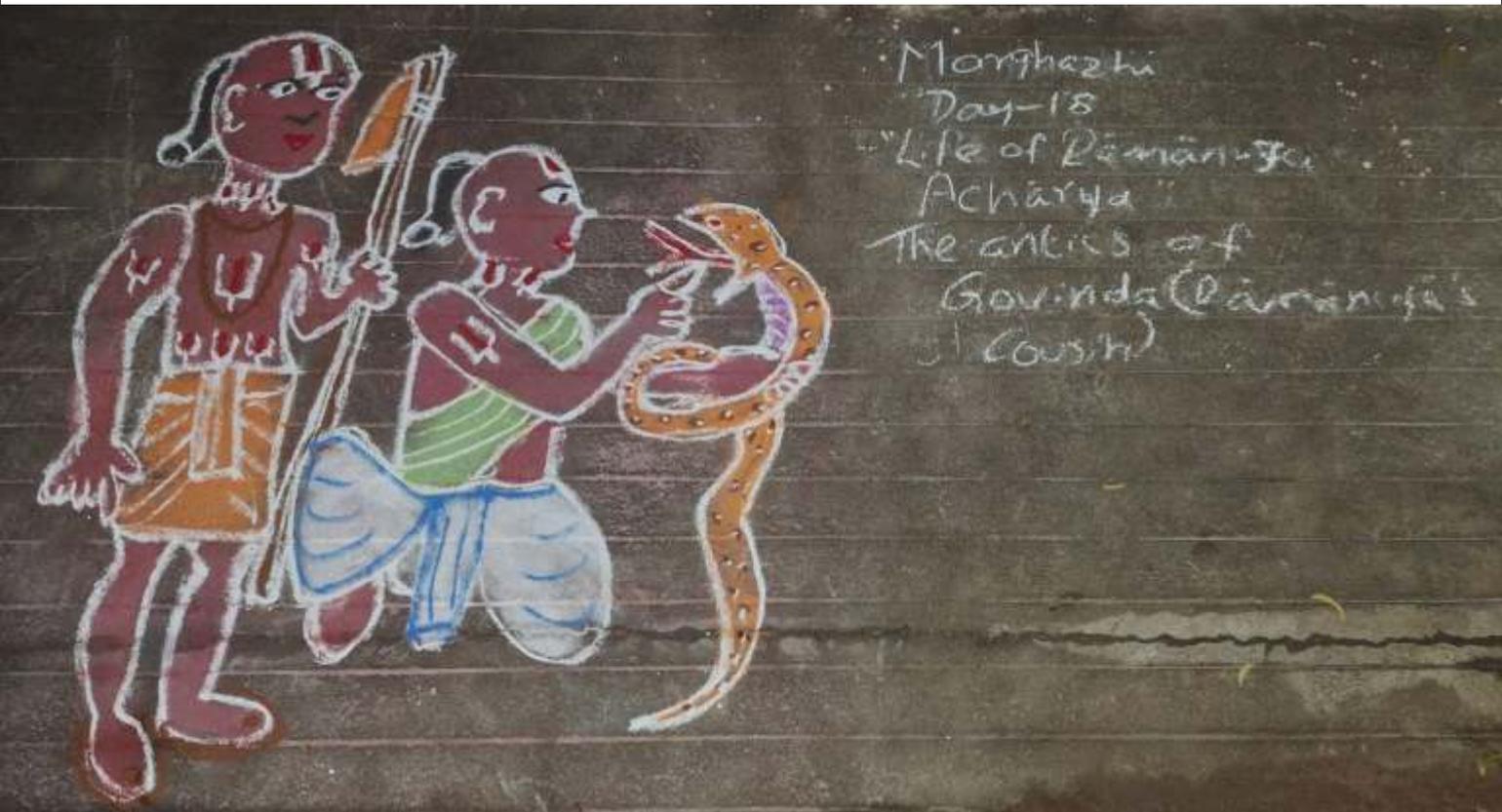
Ramanuja stayed for a year at lower Tirupati residing in the house of Sri Shailapurna (Periya Thirumalai Nambi) studying the Ramayana with him.

One day while walking through the garden he saw Govinda with his hand in the mouth of a snake. Struck with wonder he questioned Govinda about his strange behavior.

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Govinda explained that he had seen the snake open its mouth at upon looking closer he saw that it had a thorn stuck through its tongue. Govinda had then put his hand into the mouth of the snake in order to extract the thorn and to relieve it from its suffering.

Ramanuja was amazed at this act of compassion by the tender hearted Govinda. When Ramanuja returned to Srirangam Govinda accompanied him filled with love and adoration.

One day in Srirangam Govinda's mother in the hearing of Ramanuja scolded Govinda for neglecting his young wife and demanded that he come and live with her according to the way of the world and to consummate their marriage; Ramanuja supported her and instructed Govinda to spend at least one night in bed with his wife. The chamber was prepared and Govinda went in to his wife.

The whole night Govinda sat on the bed giving her a discourse on God and His Glories, rapt in the narrative.

## Celebrations of the Month-II

### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavam- 2023-24

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In the morning the matter was reported to Ramanuja who laughed and said — "Govinda you have passed the greatest of ordeals that a pure soul can be put through — worldly life is not for you" — and immediately ordained him as a Sannyasin.

Udayavar named him Emperumanar but he could not accept this and pleaded that he did not deserve this honour, upon which Udayavar called him "Embar". Swami Embar's work 'Vijnaasthuthi' is forever remembered by posterity.

A great contribution to Vaishnavism is Embar being the acharya to the greatest Sri Parasara Bhattar (son of Koorathazhwan). Legend has it that when Udayavar asked Embar to bring baby Parasara for naming, Embar by way of protection muttered Dvaya mantram in the infant's ears and that placed on the baby unusual brilliance. Upon instruction of Udayavar, Embar became the Acharya of the baby and thus vaishnavites are endowed with a great Acharyar – Sri Parasara Bhattar.

#### **Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: Januaray 4, 2024 Day 19 - "The great debate between Yagnamurthi and Ramanuja"**

There was a celebrated Advaita scholar from the south named Yajnamurthi. He had just returned after travelling all over North India challenging and defeating scholars of various traditions in debate. Hearing about Ramanuja, who had become the leader of



## Celebrations of the Month-II

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the Vaishnava school, he hastened to Srirangam to engage in Vedantic debate with him.

Upon being challenged Ramanuja bowed down to him and said "O Great Minded one! What is the necessity for debate and wrangling? You are a renowned scholar, victory follows you everywhere, I hereby accept defeat."

Yajnamurthi refused to accept that and Ramanuja was drawn into debate against his will.

For 17 days the debate continued. Unable to defeat this great scholar Ramanuja became dejected and took refuge in the Lord and implored His help. That night in a dream Lord appeared and told Ramanuja that the superiority of the path of bhakti would be demonstrated on the following day.

The next day, during his morning devotions Ramanuja went into a state of divine consciousness.

Upon seeing an unusual divine aura around Ramanuja, Yajnamurthi readily admitted defeat and became a Vaishnava and a disciple of Ramanuja. He was initiated with the name Devaraja-muni.

Ramanuja commissioned him to spend his time in writing texts on devotional philosophy beneficial to mankind. In obedience to his guru Devaraja-muni wrote two books in Tamil — "Jnana-sara" and "prameya-sara".

Days passed in this way, with Ramanuja winning hostile opponents to his fold and exhorting Vaishnavas to live a life of devotion and renunciation. His monastery at Srirangam came to be inhabited by seventy-four disciples, all of them learned, all-renouncing and devout.

## Celebrations of the Month-II

### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavam- 2023-24

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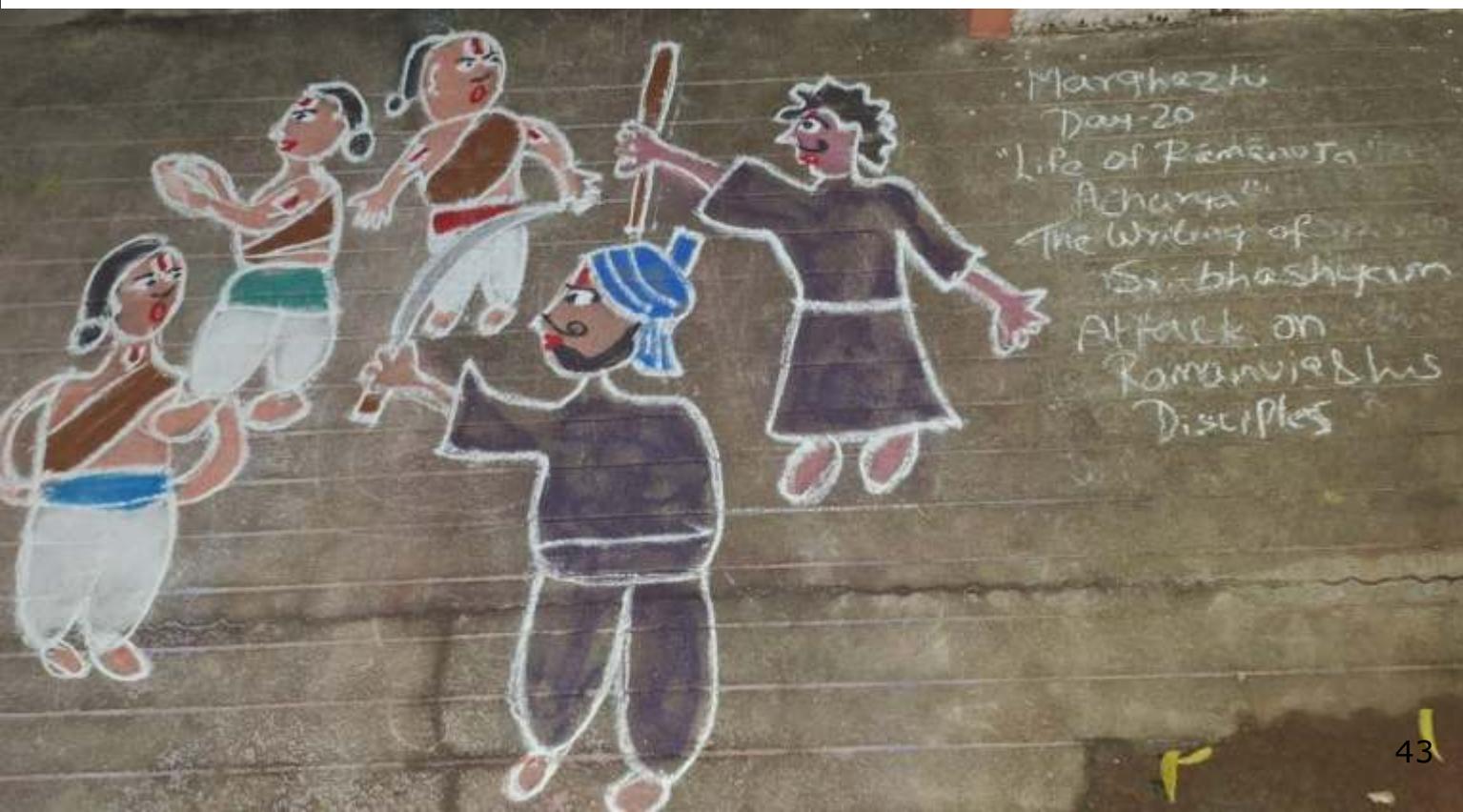
#### Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: January 5, 2024 Day 20 - "The writing of Sri-Bashyam"

Ramanuja now felt that his first promise to Yamunacharya had been fulfilled. He had popularized the Tamil Veda and converted large numbers of people to Vaishnavism.

Now he decided to fulfil the second — "Writing Sri-Bashyam"(A text on fundamental philosophical principles of Vishishtadvaita based on his interpretation of the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and other Smriti texts, the previous acharyas, and the Vedanta-sutra itself)

For this purpose, he felt it necessary to get Badrayana's "Brahma Sutra", as it was an authority on the philosophical tradition which devotional Vaishnavism represented. He could, however, find no copy of it anywhere in the South. He learnt that the only place it was available was at Sarada- pitha in Kashmir, and so set out on the long journey accompanied by his disciple Kuresa.

After a journey of three months they reached Sharada-pitha. The great Pandits received him cordially and were very impressed by his engaging personality and great learning. When he asked for permission to study the Brahma Sutra in their library,



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they became alarmed and replied that the book had been worm-eaten and thus lost. After talking to him at great length they felt that if this Personalist scholar studied that text, he would be able to create havoc with Advaita philosophy.

Ramanuja became dejected and was lying down in his room in a state of depression when Goddess Sarasvati, the presiding Deity of the Math herself appeared before him. She handed over the scripts to him, and instructed him to depart immediately.

On discovering the disappearance of their manuscripts, the Pandits sent some stalwart young disciples after the Vaishnavas. After four days' journey they overtook Ramanuja's team and retrieved the manuscripts from them.

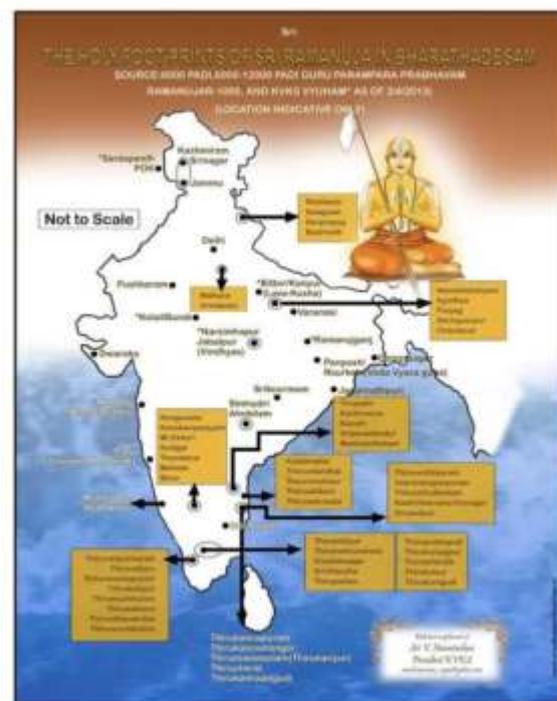
At this, Ramanuja's dismay knew no bounds, however he was relieved when Kuresa informed him that during nights instead of sleeping he had been studying the book and had committed the whole of it to memory.

On reaching Srirangam, Ramanuja dedicated himself to writing the commentary now famous under the name Sri-bhashya. Kuresa was his invigilator to check whether what was dictated was faithful to Bodhayana's ideas.

### **Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: Januaray 6, 2024-Day 21 "Ramanuja Digvijayam (conquest of all four corners of the country in a moral sense)"**

After completing the Sribhashyam, accompanied by 74 of his chief disciples, Ramanuja went on a pilgrimage, which was also of the nature of a Digvijay (Universal Conquering).

Wherever he went he would confront philosophers and theologians of other schools and challenge them to a polemic. He first visited all the Vaishnava pilgrimage centers of Tamilnadu and Kerala and gradually moved northward, visiting Dwaraka,



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Mathura, Vrindavan, Salagrama, Saketa, Badarinath, Naimisha, Pushkara and at last the Sarada-pitha in Kashmir. The Pandits of Sarada-pitha had acrimonious debates with him, but he was able to convert the ruler of Kashmir to Vaishnavism. Here Ramanuja had a vision of Hayagriva, the Divine Incarnation of Wisdom Then he went to Kasi (Benares), where he stayed for some time and converted many learned men to the faith.

He then travelled south-ward to Sripurushottama-Kshetra, now known as Puri He founded there a monastery called Embar Math. The scholars of that place, who controlled the temple, refused to face him in debate for fear of defeat.

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He next went to Ahobila, situated on Garuda mountain, where he established another monastery. Next he worshipped Narasimha-murti at Isalinga, and afterwards reached the temple of Venkatesa at Tirupati. There he settled a dispute on the question whether the icon of the temple was of Siva or Vishnu, in favor of the Vaishnavas.

He then returned to Srirangam via his old residence of Kanchi-puram where he did obeisance to Varadaraja.

In the course of this 'victory tour', Ramanuja however was defeated by divine intervention on two occasions. One of his objectives of this tour was to standardize the liturgy of all the Vaishnava temples, and to get them to conform to the canons of Pancharatra.

He failed at two places — at the great temple of Ananta-padmanabha at Trivandrum and at Jagannatha Puri.

It is said that in both-these places, at the earnest prayer of devotees, the Lord transported Ramanuja to a distance of several miles while he was asleep. These are still the only two temples in the South where the codes of the Pancharatra are not followed.

#### **Marghazhi utsavum 2023-24: January 7, 2024 -Day 22- "Dhanurdasa"**

Marghazhi utsavum 2023-24: Day 22 - "Birth of Parasara Bhattar"  
Sometime after his return, Ramanuja was able to fulfil his third promise to Yamunacharya, which was the naming a worthy person after Parasara and Vyasa in gratitude for having produced the Vishnu Purana.

Kuresan (Kurathalvan) was previously a wealthy landlord owning vast property near Kanchipuram. He was also very pious and extremely charitable in disposition. His gates were open from morning till night to give hospitality to all those in need. His wife Andal too was of the same disposition.

They attached themselves to Ramanuja and followed him wherever he went. After

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Ramanuja's relocation to Srirangam, Kuresan lost all interest in worldly life. He abandoned all his wealth and, accompanied by his wife, went to Srirangam to serve Ramanuja. There they maintained themselves by begging.

One rainy day they could not go out on their rounds and so remained fasting all day. Then feeling great compassion for her husband, Andal prayed to Lord Ranganatha for relief and soon a handsome young priest arrived at their house with Mahaprasadam (food offerings) from the temple of Ranganatha.

Kuresan was surprised at this and inquired Andal if she had in anyway asked the Lord for anything. When she tearfully affirmed his suspicions he rebuked her and enjoined her never to ask for anything from the Lord ever again. He was anguished that the Lord had to be hungry. It is said that the Lord appeared in his thoughts and convinced him to eat the Prasadam and share it with his wife as well.

Tradition has it that 9 months later Andal gave birth to pair of handsome twins, whom Ramanuja named Parasara and Vyasa. (There are versions that say they were not twins).

Ramanuja thus fulfilled his third promise to Yamunacharya. Parasara who came to be



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known as Parasara Bhattar grew into a great saintly scholar and succeeded Ramanuja as the pontiff of the Srivaishnavas.

According to legend, Parasara Bhattar is regarded to have been raised in the sanctum sanctorum of the Ranganathaswamy Temple, where he is said to have consumed the milk offered to the deity. He was trained by Embar Swami. He is described to have flawlessly recited teachings from the Vedas upon his parents' prompting.

Following his education, when he was of age to get married, Ranganatha himself is described to have contracted his parents' desired alliance, with a girl from Periyambadi's family. After his wedding, in an episode, Parasara Bhattar is described to have once visited Ranganatha twice, having been driven away by the deity first and welcomed the second time. Parasara Bhattar proclaimed that he felt as though were being welcomed by his own parents the second time, a mindset that the deity encouraged him to maintain

#### **Marghazhi utsavum 2023-24: January 8, 2024 -Day 23 - "Dhanurdasa"**

Another famous disciple was Dhanurdasa (Pillaiurangavilli dasar), a handsome accomplished young athlete cum archer. He was a resident of Uraiyur. He was enamoured of a beautiful courtesan by the name of Kanakamba (some texts refer to her name as Hemaamba, some as Pon-nachiyar) and never left her presence.

During the Chaitra festival Kanakamba and Dhanurdasa came to Srirangam to participate in the celebrations. As they walked through the crowd, Dhanurdasa was holding a white umbrella over Kanakamba's head to shield her from the sunshine and this was seen by Ramanuja as he returned from the Kaveri river.

Ramanuja was intrigued to see such devotion to a woman and such uninhibited of public display affection and solicitude. Wondering what it was that made one so madly in love as to disregard everything else including public opinion, Ramanuja sent for Dhanurdasa and asked him to explain himself.

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Dhanurdasa replied that it was Kanakamba's eyes that had so entranced him — "those eyes and my heart are one, if her beauty should fade my heart would burst"! Ramanuja replied — "My son what if I could show you a pair of eyes more beautiful than those — of one whose beauty would never fade?" "Ah master, if you could it would be a great gain to me!"

The great Acharya took him into the temple, into the sanctum sanctorum and showed him the eyes of the Lord of the universe, Dhanurdasa was transported with rapture and could not move. He surrendered there and then to Ranganatha.

He became one of the prime disciples of Emperumanar.

Emperumanar's affection towards Dhanurdasa was so great that we can find, Emperumanar used to lean on Dhanurdasaathi, before going for his bath. While after bathing he used to lean only on Dhanurdasa.

This love of Emperumanar towards Dhanurdasa made many disciples envious. Hence

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they complained to Emperumanar. One day Dhanurdasa was summoned to Emperumanar and while he was talking to Emperumanar, Swami instructed those complainers to go in the shadow of the night to Dhanurdasa's home and steal the jewels – ponnachiyar was wearing and come back.

The disciples agreed and they left for Dhanurdasa's home, while Dhanurdasa without knowing all these drama stayed back. When the disciples went to Dhanurdasa's home they found Ponnachiyar asleep and they happily started their job. They stole all the ornaments which she was wearing on her one side. While doing this Ponnachiar became awake, but she understood that they were Shrivaishnavas, and she well understood a Shrivaishnava will not do this unless otherwise they were in such a financial distress

She thought whatever she owned was a Shrivaishnava's property. So in order to make the snatching of the jewels, which she wore on the other side of her body easy, she just turned around as if she was in sleep. Seeing this, the disciples thought she was awake, and they took whatever they stole and ran away to Emperumanar's mutt. Emperumanar seeing his disciples coming back, gave permission for Dhanurdasa to leave, and asked the disciples to follow Dhanurdasa silently.

Once when Dhanurdasa reached home he found his wife missing some jewels and to this his wife explained the incident. She told they ran away when she turned around. To this Dhanurdasa remonstrated her in the face telling that, "you understood Seshathva, but you did not understand the meaning of Parathanthrya. If you have laid as if you were a stone, they might have stolen rest of the jewels without any problem. Who told you to turn around and show that you are awake?". The Shrivaishnavas were wonderstruck to this and they immediately fell at the feet of Dhanurdasa, and returned the jewels and explained the drama in detail. Through this incident the other disciples learnt the true meaning of surrender "etāvaj janma-sāphalyam

dehinām iha dehiṣu

prāṇair arthair dhiyā vācā

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śreya-ācaraṇam sadā" (It is the duty of every living being to perform welfare activities for the benefit of others with his life, wealth, intelligence and words.)

It is recorded that Dhanurdasa's life was full of such incidents.

NOTE: Whilst Ramanuja demonstrated the enamouring beauty of the eyes of Lord Ranganatha, his successor Parasara Bhattar demonstrated that the Lord's consort's eyes were even more beautiful. His faith and devotion towards the universal mother was so high that even the Lord became jealous and dressed himself like her and asked Parasara Bhattar if his eyes were equally enamouring. Parasara Bhattar is said to have replied that the universal mother's eyes were superior as she had only love for her children (karuna) and not even a tinge of anger whereas the Lord's eyes had a small red lining (as he had the responsibility of protecting His children). This interesting episode is enacted even today in Srirangam during the Pagalpathu Rapathu utsavum wherein the Lord comes out in Mohini Alankaram

#### **Marghazhi utsavum 2023-24: Januaray 9, 2024 Day 24 - " Kulothunga chola-I and Kuresar "**

The Chola king, Kulothunga I (also called Krimikantha 'the worm-throated' by the Vaishnavas) a fanatical Saivite, residing in his capital of Kanchi decided to make Saivism the state religion.

To accomplish this purpose, he first had to convert all the Vaishnavas. This could be easily done his ministers advised him, by converting the pontiff of the Vaishnavas. If conversion through debate did not work his execution would achieve the desired end.

Accordingly, Ramanuja was summoned to the capital for this purpose. Kuresan, suspicious of the Chola invitation insisted on going in Ramanuja's place and together with Periya Nambi set out for the capital. Thinking Kuresa to be Ramanuja the king received the two well and invited them to participate in dharma-charcha (discussion of the dharma).

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Very soon the king and his pandits realised that they would not be able to achieve their aim through theological arguments and so they issued an ultimatum.

Either sign a proclamation that there is none greater than Siva or face death. Kuresan immediately answered "Why, every child knows a drona is greater!" (both Siva and drona refer to measures).

The king was furious and decided to punish him immediately. He decided not to carry out the death sentence because Ramanuja had exorcised a demon from his sister when she was a child.

Instead he ordered their eyes to be gouged out.

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Tradition has it that Kuresan exclaimed. "You need not take this trouble, I myself will pluck out my eyes, for after seeing a great sinner like you they are unfit for seeing the sacred person of my guru Ramanuja!" He then gouged his own eyes out and cast them before the astonished king.

Unfortunately, Periya Nambi (Mahapurna), being an old man, could not bear the ordeal and died.

Some people escorted Kuresar back to Srirangam. Kuresar retired to a great Vaishnava temple Tirumalirunsolai near Madurai after sending word to Ramanuja of what had happened.

**Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: January 10, 2024 Day 25 - "King Bittideva and construction of Chelluva Narayana temple at Melkote"**

After being informed of the intentions of the King, Ramanuja and his followers resolved to leave the Chola territory and fled through the hilly regions of the Western Ghats.

They were helped by a tribe of chandalas and were delivered to the modern Mysore territory, which was then ruled by the Jain King Bhattideva of the Hoysala dynasty. The Vaishnavas were well received by the King and were very soon engaged in polemics with the court pandits. Ramanuja refuted all their arguments and defeated them.

The King Bhattideva then resolved to convert to Vaishnavism and was named Vishnu Vardhana.

A large number of his subjects were also converted. With that king's active patronage Ramanuja founded a great temple at Yadava-giri now known as Melkote, and five others in other places.

Gradually large numbers of Srivaishnava refugees fleeing from persecution crossed the border into Mysore territory and colonies of Srivaishnavas were established around these temples. Melkote was particularly favoured by Ramanuja because of the

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abundant availability there of the white earth with which Srivaishnavas put the mark of Vishnu on their foreheads.

There is an interesting tradition about the deity at Melkote temple. The villagers informed Ramanuja that the ancient local temple had been destroyed by some Muslim invaders. The icon known as Yadavadripati had been saved and buried by the priests somewhere. That night Ramanuja had a dream about the very same Deity and its whereabouts were revealed to him.

Ramanuja then retrieved the idol by digging up an ant-hill and made arrangements for its installation. Later a magnificent temple came into existence there. This was the famous Chelluva Narayana temple at Melkote.

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#### **Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: January 11, 2024 Day 26 "Sampath kumara (Chella Pillai)"**

Behind the discovery of Chelluva Narayana, there was a very interesting episode in Ramanuja's life. Once, Swami Ramanuja found that there was no Thiruman (Tilak) to apply. He was sad and thus submitted his prayers to Lord to show him the place where he could find the Thiruman (white clay).

The Lord who always comes to the aid of His true devotee, appeared in his dream. LORD told him to go to Yadhavadri where there was a tank called Kalyani Pushkarani where he could locate the ThirumaN. He also expressed that there was a Thulasi vanam nearby. Under the Thulasi plant he could find the Lordships buried underneath. LORD advises Swamy Ramanuja to bring the deity and after all the purification rites, construct a temple for Him. Thus came up the temple.

After the temple Melkote was rebuilt, Ramanuja made all arrangements for Nithya puja according to agama sasthanas. But being in a far location, the people had to come to the temple to have darshan of the Lord. But those who were old and sick could not



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have His darshan. This was a cause of concern as Utsavar deity of LORD was not there. Ramanuja could sense some sort of emptiness there. The Deity was not satisfied with this because the Utsava-vigraha (a proxy icon for being taken in procession outside the temple) was missing. Once again the Lord appeared in his dream pleased with Swamy Ramanuja for building a temple and installing him, and declared the Uthsava murthi known as Sampat kumara (also known as Sri Ramapiriyar) had been stolen by the Muslims and was then in the keeping of a Muslim ruler at Delhi.

Ramanuja and a disciple went to Delhi. He reached there after trekking for 2 months and and impressed the Muslim king by their learning and holy demeanor. But once they had found the image they were informed that the daughter of the king had become very attached to this particular image.

Nevertheless The king requested Swamy Ramanuja to be escorted with his men to the museum where he had kept all his collections of deities and was free to take. Sadly, Ramanuja was not able to find Sri Ramapriyar diety in the museum. He was disappointed and worried. He returned to the place where he was staying. Again that night Swami Ramanuja prayed and beseeched the Lord to show him the place where He was being worshipped. That night the Lord appeared in his dream and revealed that Badshah's daughter was worshiping Him in her palace. He went to the king and narrated this episode. The king was skeptical if his daughter would part with the 'doll' and yet took Ramanuja to her room. The princess as expected was upset and refused. Ramanuja closed his eyes and prayed, "My beloved Lord! All along you only showed me the place where you were staying and brought me this far. I came here to take you to the place where you belong. You have to come back to your place to give darshan to your devotees!". With folded hands He bent his head and lovingly called, "Oh! My Lord! My Chella piLLaay! Please come and sit on my lap!" ("Chellappilaai Vaaraai"). And Lo! to everybody's surprise, The most spectacular scene was witnessed by people who were there.....

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Lord got down from the Prince's decorated bed and walked slowly while his anklets made sweet sound and his crown dazzled. He sat on Swami Ramanuja's lap and with tears, Swami Ramanuja embraced and fondled the LORD as a father would dote on his child.

The King with great respect gave presents to the Lord and Sri Ramanuja . The King provided a palanquin to the Lord and they departed immediately. The king's daughter Bibi Nachiyar who was deeply attached to the Deity became inconsolable and set out in pursuit accompanied by a contingent of soldiers. After Ramanuja had crossed the border a chandala tribe helped them to reach Melkote by carrying the sacred icon. The chandalas have been given special privileges at the Melkote temple. Bibi Nachiyar accompanied by one prince named Kubera crossed the border and continued their pursuit to Melkote. When they arrived Bibi Nachiyar was overcome with emotion at the sight of Sampat-kumara. The Vaishnavas were astonished to see such devotion in a Muslim princess.

Ramanuja recognised her as a great devotee, and allowed her to enter the temple. Ultimately her body is said to have 'dissolved' into the body of Sampat-kumara. An image of her is still kept and revered in many temples in the south in recognition of her unparalleled devotion. Kubera then renounced everything, went to Srirangam and took initiation from Ramanuja. It is said that once a dog stole his bread as he was baking it, he ran after it calling out "Narayana! Wait let me smear a little ghee on it, so that you will enjoy it more!" Such was his capacity to see the Lord everywhere and in all things.

Religion and caste is no bar for a true devotee. The Lord accepts a true devotee without any inhibition. There is a separate sannadi for Bibi Nachiar (Thuluqa naachiyar) in the Srirangam temple also.

Every year, Kalyana uthsavam with Lord Ranganatha is celebrated in a grand manner, when butter rotis and sugar, cooked Mughalai style are first offered to the Naachiyar

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and then only offered to Rangan. It is said that the Lord receives a daily offering of rotis, sweet with a heady scent of ghee – made with wheat (in contrast to the orthodox rice meal) and even wears colored lungis (not the white cloth worn by Hindus) to please Thuluqa naachiyar.

#### **Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: January 12, 2024 Day 27 - "Govindaraja perumal (Tirupati)"**

During the time frame that Ramanuja was in Melkote (I.e 12-13 years), he wanted to retrieve the moola Moorthy of Lord Govindaraja which the Chola King had thrown into the ocean.

He decided to have the processional deity established in a temple in Tirupati for the present. He informed his beloved disciple, the Yadava king of his intention of establishing the utsava moorthy, worshipped as Devatideva, in Tirupati. He had the divine power (presence) of the Lord in the moola moorthy secretly extracted from the idol thrown into the sea by prescribed rites and transferred to a new moolamoorthy. He had the (stone) moolamoorthy Govindaraja and the utsava



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moorthy (recovered from Tiruchitrakuta) "Devatideva" established by the side of the lake in the southern part of Tirupati by the rites of Vaikhanasa agama.

The new moolamoorthy was a replica of the icon thrown into the sea by the Chola king — the Lord of the milk ocean reclining on His serpent bed, his feet gently massaged by Sridevi and Bhudevi, decorated by the tall crown and other jewels, bearing the divine weapons chanka, chakia and others in His four arms.

The king, according to the command of his guru Ramanuja, established Govindaraja as described earlier in a big temple in the southern part of Tirupati and developed a township around the temple by name Ramanujapura. He raised magnificent gopurams, protective walls and mantapams for the temple. He had broad streets laid around the temple and had the various festivals to Sri Govindaraja celebrated in a fitting manner.

#### **Marghazhi utsavum 2023-24: January 13, 2024 Day 28 - "Restoration of Koorathalvan's eye sight"**

On returning to Srirangam from Melnadu (melkote) after a long period of 12 years, Ramanuja met his dear disciple and embraced Koorathazhwan (Kuresan) tightly who had just returned from Thirumaliruncholai after knowing about his Acharyars arrival.

Ramanuja advised him to go to Kanchipuram and pray to Lord Varadarajar for restoring his eyes. Koorathazhwan with the help of few disciples reached Kanchipuram and composed Varadaraja sthavam as per his acharyar's instructions. Lord pleased with his devotion, appeared before him to bestow boon, Koorathazhwan requested the Lord to give him eyesight which he could see HIM and Acharyar Swamy Ramanuja .

He also pleaded to bestow moksham to Naaluran (the person who was responsible for instigating cruel thoughts to Krimikanta cholan) and all those associated with him. Lord Varadarajan bestowed both the boons.

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When Swamy Ramanujar who was in Srirangam came to know of this, he felt so joyful that he was confident of getting moksha as he had "Koorathazhwan sambhandham".

Kuresan lived on for another 2 years. At one point Koorathazhwan who was always in the mood of serving his Acharyar, approached Peria Perumal with a prayer to leave this material body before his acharyar so that he could receive him with purna kumbham when his Acharya would decorate Thirunaadu (I.e reach the Lord's feet in Vaikuntha)

When Swamy Ramanujar questioned him about this strange act, Azhwan quoted the beautiful verse "Soozh visumpanimugil.... from Thiruvaimozhi ...that means " when the muktatma enters Vaikuntam, he is received by the inmates with due honours.... he submissively replied that he wished to be in continuous service to his Acharyar and wanted to welcome him in Srivaikuntam.

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Contemplating on Swamy Ramanujar, Koorathazhwan left his body by uttering a sloka on his acharyar(thanian on Ramanujar) which every Srivaishnava recites daily

yO nityam achyuta pAdAmbuja yugma rukma  
 vyAmOhatastaditarANi tRuNaya mEnE |  
 asmad gurOr bhagavatO asya dayaikasindhOh  
 rAmAnujasya charaNou SaraNam prapadyE |

May Koorathazhwan who pardoned his enemy and prayed for him , teach us how to love.

Note on Koorathazhwan: Swamy Kooratathazhwan is considered as "Pavithram" worn by Swamy Ramanujar while Mudaliandan Swami is considered as "Yatiraja Padhuka Tridandam". This has been revealed by Acharyar when he meets Swamy Thirughostiyur Nambi at Thirughostiyur. Swamy Koorathazhwan also glorified as "Haaritha kula thilakar "(the best among born in Haritha kulam ) and got his name from the village Kooram first which he was the chief. Compassion, humanity, tolerance, shedding ego, detachment from material things, being faithful, being truthful, feeding the needy, not harming anyone either by word, deed, thought , pardoning people who inflict harm on us, respecting elders , unflinching devotion at the lotus feet of Acharyar Swamy Ramanujar with the firm faith contemplating only on Lord Sriman Narayanan and not resorting to worship of any demi god were the qualities of Swamy Koorathazhwan which is why the Lord bestowed His choicest blessing on him to be able to see only the Lord and his Acharya.

Even now Azhwans appearance day (THAI HASTHAM) is celebrated all over the world in Vaishnava temples and all vaishnavas praise the glories of Azhwans bhakthi towards Acharyar. The time period starting from kArtigai month - kArtigai nakshatra to tai month - hasta nakshatra is called 'anadhyayana kAlam or tirukArti'. AzhvArs' divya prabandhams are not recited during this period at homes. The Anadhyayana period ends with Koorathazhwan Thirunakshatram.

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#### **Marghazhi utsavam 2023-24: January 14, 2024 Day 29 -"Ramanuja's Vaikunta Prapti (Journey to Vaikuntha)"**

After the death of Kuresa, Ramanuja lived for another 17 years, which he spent peacefully at Srirangam, teaching his disciples and devotees and producing some of his later works dealing with the pure Vaishnava form of devotion. One day, while giving a discourse, he suddenly lost body consciousness. After a while, two drops of blood trickled down the corners of his eyes. On returning to normal consciousness he was asked by his devotees the reason for this trance-like state. He replied. "Today the people of Sriperumbudur have made me a captive of their love. After invoking my life force into the stone icon, they have this moment completed the rite of "the opening of the eyes".

When Ramanuja felt that the time of his earthly sojourn was drawing to a close he summoned all his disciples and gave them a summary of his teachings and an exhortation to follow them.

Yatiraja then instructed them to summon the artisans and have a statue made. Within three days they had completed their work. Having the statue properly consecrated he transferred his powers into it. He then said to the assembled Srivaishnavas; "My



## Celebrations of the Month-II

### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavum- 2023-24

**Ms. Manjula Narasimhan and Anannya Sriram**

children, this is my second half, there is no difference between this statue and myself, from now on this statue has been empowered with my spiritual energy".

He then laid his head on Govinda's (Embar's)lap and placed his feet on that of Andhrapurna (Vaduga Nambi). With Yamunacharya's wooden sandals placed in front of him passed into the supreme state of supreme bliss.

It was noon on a Saturday, the 10th day of the bright half of the month of Magha in the year 1137 AD.

A few days later Govinda joined him and Parasara Bhattar took over the pontificate of the Srivaishnava community

#### **Marghazhi utsavum 2023-24: January 15, 2024 Grand Finale**

Ramanuja is always considered the most influential thinker of Vaishnava Sampradhayam. He spread devotion and discipline in the society. He was not a believer in the caste system. Anyone with devotion to the Lord was a Sri Vaishnava to him.

The Opus Magnus of Ramanuja is the Sri-bhashya — a commentary on the Vedanta-sutras of Badarayana which is one of the three basic texts of Vedanta (the others being the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads). Besides this, he produced nine other works (navarathnas).

These are:—

- Vedanta-sangraha, an independent work expounding the philosophy of the Upanisads;
- Vedanta-sara and
- Vedanta-dipa which are brief synopses on the Vedanta-sutras;
- Gita-bhashya, a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita;
- Nitya-grantha dealing with daily rituals and devotional practices for Vaishnavas.

## Celebrations of the Month-II

### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavam- 2023-24

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- Gadyatraya, three prose works which are of great sectarian importance with a theological base.
- Saranagati-gadya, an exposition on the greatness of self-surrender (prapatti) and the method thereof.
- Sriranga-gadya, is a prayer to Lord Sri Ranganatha to grant eternal servitude
- Vaikuntha Gadya which is a poetic description of Vaikuntha — the Lord's eternal Transcendental Abode. This work is used as a contemplative device which brings great solace.

His devotion was such that even Andal (the only female Azhwar) stepped out of her Sanctum sanctorium to honor him by calling him "Anna" (elder brother).

This was when Ramanuja was travelling to back to SriRangam from Melkote when he traveled to Srivilliputthur to visit Naacchiyar Thirumaligai to worship ANDAL and Her Lord Sri Rangamannar. He stopped at Azhagarkoil for worshipping Sundararaaja



## Celebrations of the Month-II

### Visual Art Storytelling: Marghazhi Utsavum- 2023-24

**Ms. Manjula Narasimhan and Anannya Sriram**

Perumal and was reflecting two Nacchiyar Thirumozhi Paasurams (9.6 and 9.7) of Andal on Sri Sundararajan (Azhagar) and sensed the pathos behind Andal's manobhavam, when she made these sweet offerings to Lord Sundararajan. He was not sure whether Andal did indeed offer the 100 vessels of butter and Akkaraadisil (a sweet delicacy) as She promised. He decided therefore to make those offerings in a spirit of fulfilling Andal's wish. He felt fulfilled.

Thereafter, He continued his journey to Srivilliputhur. When he reached the ardha mandapam (central hall) of Andal's Temple, what he witnessed was beyond anything he could have imagined. From Her sanctum sanctorium (inner chamber where she was in idolized form), Andal had travelled to the Ardha Mandapam (central hall) to greet Ramanuja as Her elder brother since he had taken on the role of a responsible "elder brother" to fulfill the promise of his "Little sister", (Andal) to Lord SundararAjan of Thirumalirumcholai(Her Lord).

This wonderful happening and the respectful gesture shown by Andal earned Ramanuja the title of the elder of Andal (Perumbhuthur Maamunikku Pinnaanaal Vaazhiye).

Note: The incident which led to this grand honor befits becoming part of the Grand Finale and hence was reserved for the last day.

Sri Ramanujacharya was always reciting the 30 pasurams or hymns of Tiruppavai. His favoritism towards Thiruppavai also earned him the name Thiruppavai Jiyar.

Thus we end this year's journey. We are grateful to all who followed our post. Special thanks to Sri. [Raghu Srinivasan](#) , Sri. Sruthisagar, Smt. Ramya Sruthisagar and Chinnajeeyar trust for helping us with the content for this journey. Thanks to [SphoorthiTheatreSteparc](#) for publishing this in their Puthalika Patrika as well.

Dhanyosmin Dasosmin.. Azhwar Thiruvadigale Saranam, Andal Thiruvadigale Saranam, Emperumanar Thiruvadigale Saranam. Acharyan Thiruvadigale Saranam.

Periya Perumal Periya Piraati Thiruvadigale Saranam

## Yatra of the Month

### Sri Ramayana Yatra---Part 1

Padmini Rangarajan

कूजन्तं राम राम इति मधुरं मधुर-अक्षरम् ।  
 आरुह्य कविताशाखां वन्दे वाल्मीकिकोकिलम् ॥ ३४ ॥  
 कविताशाखाम् आरुह्य, राम राम इति मधुर।  
 अक्षरं मधुरं कूजन्तं वाल्मीकि-कोकिलम् (अहं) वन्दे ॥  
 ओम आपदांपहर्तारम् दातारम सर्वसम्पदाम् ।  
 लोकाभीरामम श्रीरामं भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम् ॥  
 पितामहस्यपि पितामहाय प्रचेदा सदेसा फल प्रदाय ।  
 श्रीभाष्यकरोतम देशिकाय श्रीशैलपूर्णाय नमो नमस्तात् ॥

*Sincere salutations to the esteemed Adi Kavi Sri Valmiki, Vedavyasya, Sukha, Shounuka, Suthapurani and all the revered sages of this Bharata Bhoomi. Humble salutations to all the mahapurshas who have been inspired by Lord Rama and have written Sri Ramayana in various languages. Salutations bhakthi gurus Sri Purandardasa, Sri Kanakdasa, Sri Vijayadasa, Sri Bhogendra Swamigal, Sri Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Chokhamela, Eknath, and Tukaram all of whom are accorded the title of Sant. Salutation to my esteemed Acharyas, Gurus and teachers who have played a crucial role in developing the essential*



## Yatra of the Month

### Sri Ramayana Yatra---Part 1

Padmini Rangarajan



*abilities of a puppeteer to protect and advance the art of puppetry I offer my salutations to Lord Hanuman-Sri Ram dasa, who is the source of my inspiration for giving up my life and my service to Lord Sita Rama.*

It is stated that Sri Hanuman recounted mother Sita the story of Sri Rama's brilliance for the very first time at Asoka Vatika. Following, the sons of Rama, who were referred to as Lava-Kusha, conducted a performance and showed the art of storytelling to everyone in the palace court of Ayodhya, wherein Rama was present among the audience members as a listener. This is the story that has been passed down from generation to generation.

## Yatra of the Month

### Sri Ramayana Yatra---Part 1

Padmini Rangarajan



The Ramayana is a renowned Ithihaasa that narrates the tale of Rama, a royal heir who is compelled to embark on a period of banishment alongside his spouse Sita and sibling Lakshmana. The narrative chronicles their expedition and ultimate confrontation with the malevolent monarch Ravana, who has abducted Sita. The Ramayana holds immense importance in Hinduism and has been instrumental in the establishment of temples throughout India. The Ramayana is a sacred scripture revered by several Hindus reciting or listening to the Ramayana is thought to yield spiritual advantages, prompting numerous devotees to incorporate it into their regular worship routine. The Ramayana has been converted into other creative forms, including theatre, dance, and music, and has exerted a substantial influence on Indian culture. There are many versions of Ramayana in Indian languages, besides

## Yatra of the Month

### Sri Ramayana Yatra---Part 1

Padmini Rangarajan



Buddhist, and Jain adaptations. There are also Cambodian (Reamker), Indonesian, Filipino, Thai (Ramakien), Lao, Burmese, Nepali, Maldivian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Tibeto-Chinese, and Malay versions of the Ramayana.

The traditional puppeteers utilize a blend of folklore and scholarly literature written in the local languages to enact the specific scenes from the Ramayana that hold significance to the region. The stories of the Ramayana have predominantly been conveyed through the mediums of dance, drama, and puppetry. Furthermore, the tradition of donning masks is well ingrained, and this cultural legacy is closely linked to the art of theatre. In the Assam theatre known as "Bhaona," founded by the saint

## Yatra of the Month

### Sri Ramayana Yatra---Part 1

Padmini Rangarajan



Sankardeva, mukha, or **masks**, were employed by Sankardeva to effectively portray characters before the audience. The characters of Hanumana, Ravana with 10 heads, Surpanakha, and others are portrayed with great strength and impact in Bhaona using the technique of mukha. The Ramayana tradition is often seen as a "regionalized tradition of ownership" that incorporates regional folklore, folk essence, folk style, and folk heritage. This tradition also includes puppetry, dance, and drama as forms of entertainment. Nevertheless, this custom is generally accepted in the South and South-East Asia region since it aligns with a philosophy that connects with many populations.

Tholpava koothu can still be observed in Kerala, even in contemporary times. A traditional leather or shadow puppet play called Kamba Ramayanam is performed at night during the Pooram season, which lasts from January to May. The performance

## Yatra of the Month

### Sri Ramayana Yatra---Part 1

Padmini Rangarajan



takes place for a duration of seven, fourteen, twenty-one, or forty-one days, depending on the temple rituals. It involves the use of twenty-one oil lamps mounted on a wooden plank called vilakku madam. Each performance includes a total of 120 to 150 puppets.

Puppet theatre is a prominent and enduring folk practice in Asia. Puppets are utilised in a variety of sizes, building methods, and compositions. Shadow puppetry is widely practiced in South India, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Korea, and Japan. Puppets made of wood, wood and cloth, paper mache, or leather are used in puppetry. Their movements are controlled with the use of strings attached to their joints. According to several scholars, string puppets or marionettes gained popularity in Asia

## Yatra of the Month

### Sri Ramayana Yatra---Part 1

**Padmini Rangarajan**

as an alternative to shadow puppetry during the trade along the Silk Road route. String puppets, mentioned in the Mahabharata, continue to be popular in Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Orissa.

The Ramayana holds great importance in the establishment of temples, as evidenced by the multitude of temples devoted to Rama and Sita found throughout India. These temples are seen in almost every part of the country. These shrines are typically constructed in locations believed to have been visited or associated with significant actions of Rama or Sita, in accordance with traditional tradition. The first ever Pada Yatra, undertaken by Ram along with Lakshmana and Sita, serves as an inspiration for numerous individuals from many fields who continue to go on similar journeys. To exemplify this assertion, the Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya is constructed on the site that is considered to be the birthplace of Rama. Similarly,

the Sita Mata temple in Sitamarhi is constructed on the exact location where it is said that Sita descended into the ground from where she originated. This construction was



## Yatra of the Month

### Sri Ramayana Yatra---Part 1

**Padmini Rangarajan**

constructed using the same method.

The widespread acceptance of this exceptional Ithihaasa kavya by the community deserves utmost appreciation. The Ramayana holds a unique cultural significance in countries like Japan and Indonesia. An example of the Ramayana's ongoing cultural legacy is the broad acknowledgment of its popularity in this region. Indeed, these two nations each possess their distinct and individual understanding of the mahakavya. So saying e commence our understanding of this mahakavya with reference to puppet plays in different regions across the globe.

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Sri SriRanga Ramayanam Discourse by Sri U.Ve T Ranagarjan in person



Art in School Education



Ms. Puneet Madan



Mentor: Subhasis Neogi

# वर्कशॉप में बच्चों को सिखा रहे मास्क मेकिंग, स्टोरी टेलिंग और योग के बारे में

## Workshop

संस्था प्रसन्नचेतस और ग्रुप पीएनए की ओर से सेक्टर-38 के पार्क में विंटर वर्कशॉप चल रही है। इसमें कम्युनिटी के 28 बच्चे हिस्सा बने।

सिटी रिपोर्टर | चंदीप्रद

कम्युनिटी से बच्चों को जोड़ा गया। मकसद था बच्चों की आजादी के मायने सिखाना। इसलिए संस्था प्रसन्नचेतस ने ग्रुप पीएनए के साथ मिलकर प्रोजेक्ट आजादी बनाया। नाम दिया "आजादी अज्ञानता से, शोषण से और गरीबी से"। यह प्रोजेक्ट असल में विंटर वर्कशॉप है। यह सेक्टर-38 के कम्युनिटी पार्क में आयोजित हुई। इस वर्कशॉप में किड्स के लिए योगा,



स्टोरी टेलिंग, मास्क मेकिंग और पपेटरी पर विभिन्न सेशंस रखे गए। इन सेशंस को सुरेखा धामी और सोनू कंडक्ट कर रहे हैं। कम्युनिटी के 28 बच्चे हिस्सा बने। उन्होंने बच्चों को पहले योग की अर्हमियत बताते हुए योग आसन करना

बताया। फिर पेपर की कटिंग और कलरिंग से मास्क मेकिंग सिखाई। इसी सीरीज में आगे बढ़ते हुए मंच पर परफॉर्मेंस देने के बारे में बताया। वीरवार यानी आज और शुक्रवार को इसमें टेलिंग वर्कशॉप होगी।



# बालिका दिवस पर कविता व प्रस्तुत कर किया जागरूक

PNA theatre events

स्वास्थ्य सचिव ने दिया लिंग भेदभाव मिटाने का संदेश

## Events of the Month

Mentor: Subhasis Neogi



सेक्टर-10 स्थित आर्ट्स एंड गैलरी म्यूजियम में राष्ट्रीय बालिका दिवस पर आयोजित कार्यक्रम में प्रस्तुति देते युवा। संवाद

## GRANDI GEDI

# एक्ट और ह्यूमन पिरामिड से दिखाया कैसे लड़कियां बेड़ियां तोड़कर आगे बढ़ती हैं

### For Awareness

नेशनल गर्ल चाइल्ड के मौके पर बुधवार को सेक्टर-10 के गवर्नमेंट म्यूजियम एंड आर्ट गैलरी में कार्यक्रम हुआ। इसमें दो एक्ट 'उड़ान' और 'तुम मुझे कब तक रोकोगे' पेश किए गए।

मिर्शि रिपोर्टर | वरिष्ठा

अभी भी लड़कियों को रोका टोका जात है, पाबंदियां लगाई जाती हैं, लेकिन वे भी संघर्ष करने में पीछे नहीं रहती। बेड़ियों को तोड़कर एक मुकाम तक पहुंचती हैं। आगे बढ़ने के लिए अपने हक के लिए लड़ना जरूरी है यह दिखाया ह्यूमन पिरामिड से। बुधवार को नेशनल गर्ल चाइल्ड के मौके पर सेक्टर-10 के गवर्नमेंट म्यूजियम एंड आर्ट गैलरी में कार्यक्रम हुआ। इसका आयोजन द फेस्ट थिएटर चंडीगढ़ की ओर से किया गया। इस दौरान दो एक्ट 'उड़ान' और 'तुम मुझे कब तक रोकोगे' हुआ। इसमें आनंदम कल्चरल ग्रुप पंचकुला के बच्चों ने परफॉर्म किया। एक्ट 'तुम मुझे कब तक रोकोगे' में अलग-अलग दृश्य दिखाए गए। पहले में दिखाया कि

### उड़ान एक्ट में आठ ह्यूमन पिरामिड बनाए गए



समस्याओं से जुझकर एक लड़की आगे बढ़ रही है, लेकिन समाज व परिवार उसका साथ नहीं देता। दूसरे में दिखाया कि लड़की क्रिकेट खेल रही है, लेकिन उसे मना कर दिया जाता है। अगले दृश्य में दिखाया कि लड़कियों को पसंदीदा

कपड़े पहनने की आजादी भी नहीं दी जा रही। आखिर में दिखाया कि इन सभी के बावजूद लड़की आगे बढ़ती है। इस एक्ट को डायरेक्ट किया शुभाशीष ने। उन्होंने उसे मना कर दिया जाता है। अगले दृश्य में दिखाया कि लड़कियों को पसंदीदा

पहला - पड़ोई का महत्व समझाया कि जानकारी होगी तभी आगे बढ़ सकते हैं।

दूसरा - पड़ोई की लड़क चुनौतियां डट कर खड़ी हैं। इससे पार करना है।

तीसरा - एक पुल बनवाया जिते पार करना है चाहे जितनी भी उड़ानें आए।

चौथा - लड़क के इर्द-गिर्द बहुत परेशानियां आती हैं। इन्हें बाहर उखाड़ करवा है।

पांचवां - समाज की ओर से भी कई बार नकारात्मक ऊर्जा मिलती है, लेकिन ठकना नहीं।



• एक्ट 'तुम मुझे कब तक रोकोगे' के जरिए दिखाया कि समाज व परिवार के रोकने बावजूद एक लड़की आगे बढ़ने की कोशिश कर रही है।

**इन्होंने किया एक्ट**  
परफॉर्म में रंजीत, चिकी, अंजलि, अपरणा, वर्षा, अमित, माही, खुरा, दीपशी, शिवानी, अनुष्का, वीर, स्वित्ता, कविता, सुमित्री, रोशनी, रुबी, सोनू, रोटा, देवायन, कीर्तिक, वॉरिक्क, सुफिया, स्मिता शामिल थे।

हैं, जिनके पास सुविधाओं की कमी है, लेकिन टैलेंट की नहीं। ह्यूमन पिरामिड बनाना आसान नहीं होता है। इसमें बात होती है एक-दूसरे पर विश्वास, अभ्यास और तालमेल की। गवर्नमेंट म्यूजियम एंड आर्ट गैलरी की डिप्टी च्यूरटोर सीमा गैर

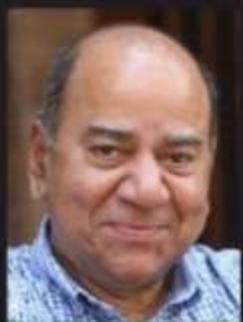
बताती हैं - यह कार्यक्रम हमने इसलिए आयोजित किया, ताकि महिलाएं व लड़कियां अपने हक और अधिकार के बारे में जान पाएं। क्योंकि हर कोई इन बात को जानता नहीं है और अगर जानता है तो उस पर अमल नहीं करता।



## Excitements of Earth Sciences: Fun and jobs bundled

[meet.google.com/vgyashtrxx](https://meet.google.com/vgyashtrxx)

Saturday, Jan 27, 2024



Arun Deep Ahluwalia

Events of the Month

FB LIVE Session

11 AM

8360188121

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Several Sessions were facilitated in seven day's NSS State Open Unit's (Chandigarh) camp at GMHS Rc2 Chandigarh



**Events of the Month**



# Social Substance Upcoming



## ROSE FESTIVAL PANJAB UNIVERSITY



### Call for Participation

NATURAL BIODIVERSITY  
facebook.com/groups/naturalbiodiversity

### Exhibition/Workshop

Feb 9-10-11, 2024

Rose Garden, Panjab University

8360188121

Anil Thakur  
Navtej Singh  
Anupreet Mavi  
Parveen Jaggi  
Kuldeep Soni  
Arun Bansal

Last Date of Submission  
Feb 1, 2024

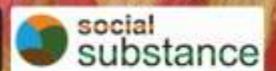
naturalbiodiversity2023@gmail.com

Contributory Fee: 350 per photograph at 9041016061

This is not a commercial set up. All contributory fee will be used for arrangements of exhibition such as printing, lamination, display etc.



## ROSE FESTIVAL PANJAB UNIVERSITY



### Call for Participation

SOCIAL SUBSTANCE  
facebook.com/groups/socialsubstance

### Live Art Demonstration

Feb 9-10-11, 2024

Rose Garden, Panjab University

Anil Thakur  
Puneet Madan  
Arun Bansal

Contact: 8360188121  
for participation & confirmation

This is not a commercial set up and no fee in any form will be charged from the participants



## Creative Corner:



Use the given symbol/ figure as a reference and complete a meaningful picture

This is open for kids between the age group of 5 to 14 years.

Use the symbol/ figure as a reference and complete a meaningful picture.

(Free to use colour pencils, crayons or paints)

Post the completed pictures and give full details:

Name, Parent/s name, Age of the child, Class, School, Place and State

Contact number to

[puthalikapatrika@gmail.com](mailto:puthalikapatrika@gmail.com)

The best six will be issued e-Certificate

**Final Submission Date: Jan 22, 2023**



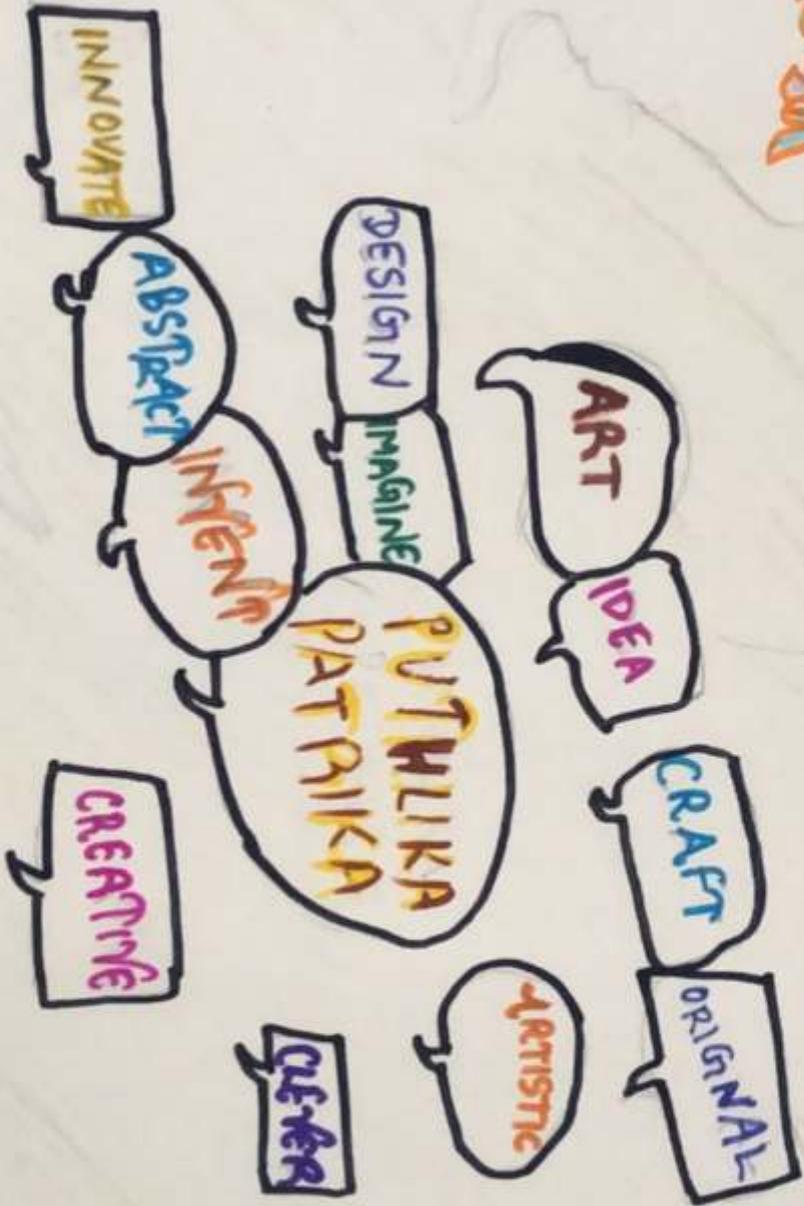
Our gratitude is towards  
Ms. Jatinder Kaur for sponsoring the gifts

Winners from previous edition



# Hardwork

Do it  
Now



# Robotization

# Boys

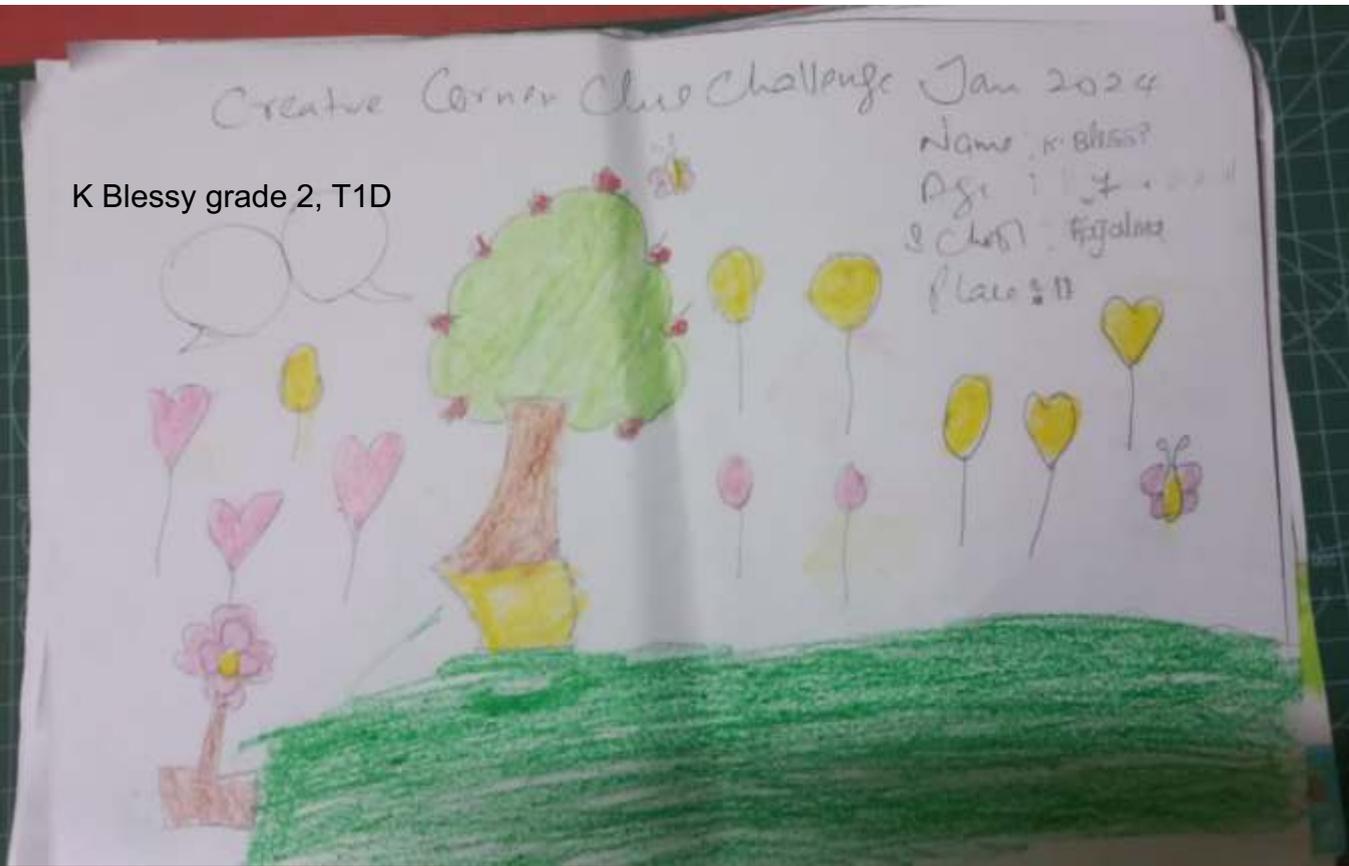
Dishant Bansal (12)  
Ankur School  
Chandigarh



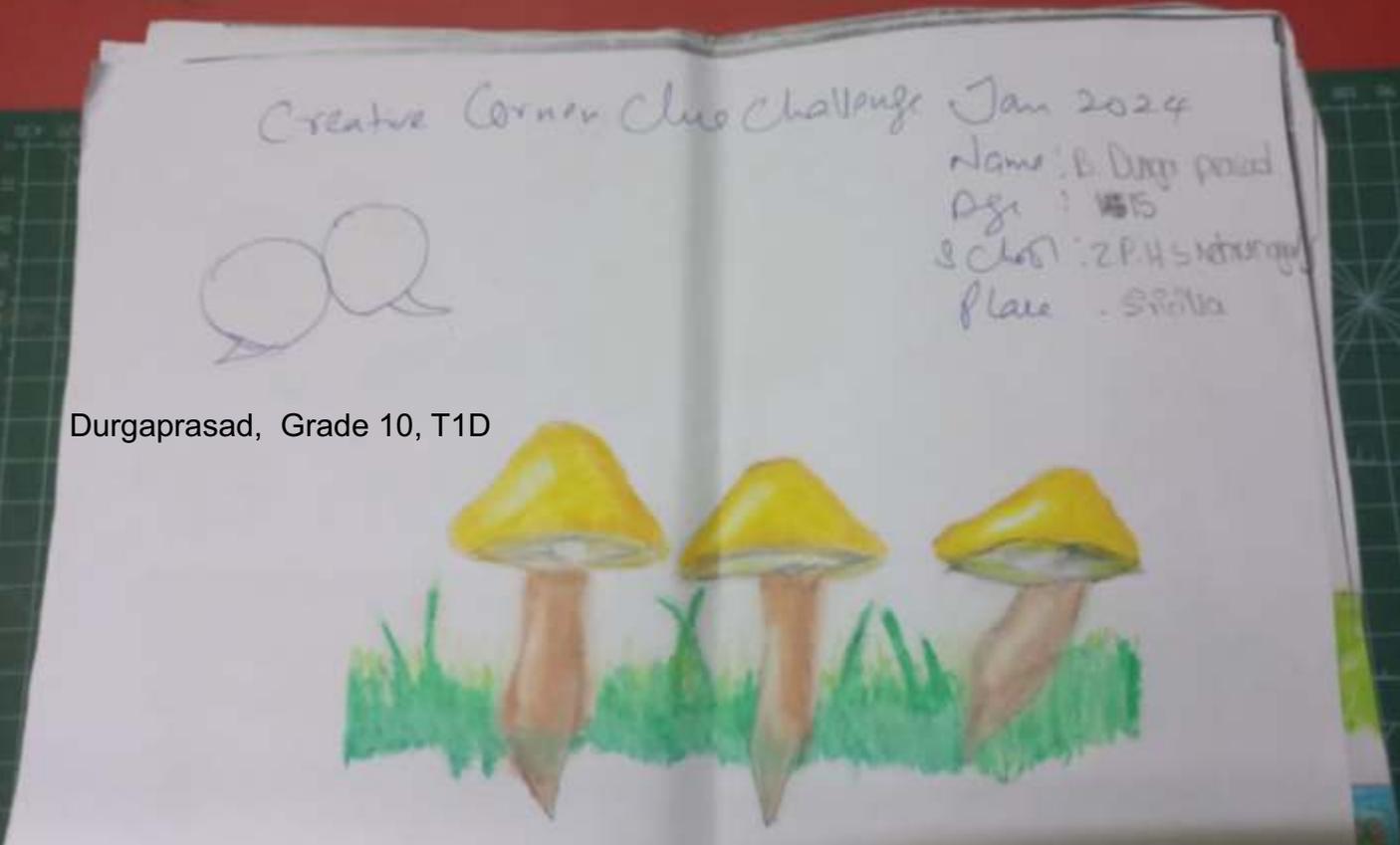
**Eshit Bansal (14)**  
Ankur School  
Chandigarh

# Creative Corner:

K Blessy grade 2, T1D

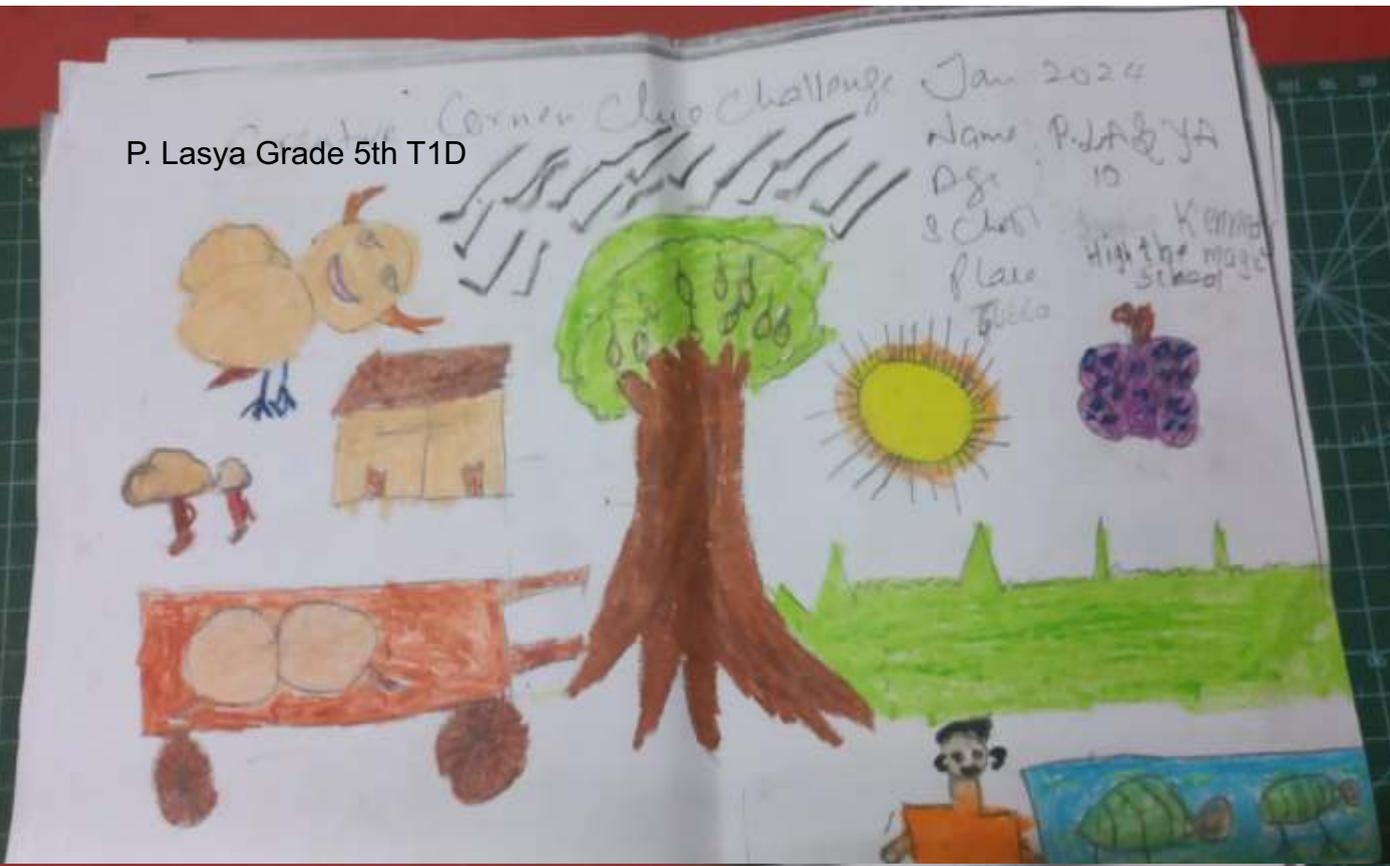


Durgaprasad, Grade 10, T1D



# Creative Corner:

P. Lasya Grade 5th T1D

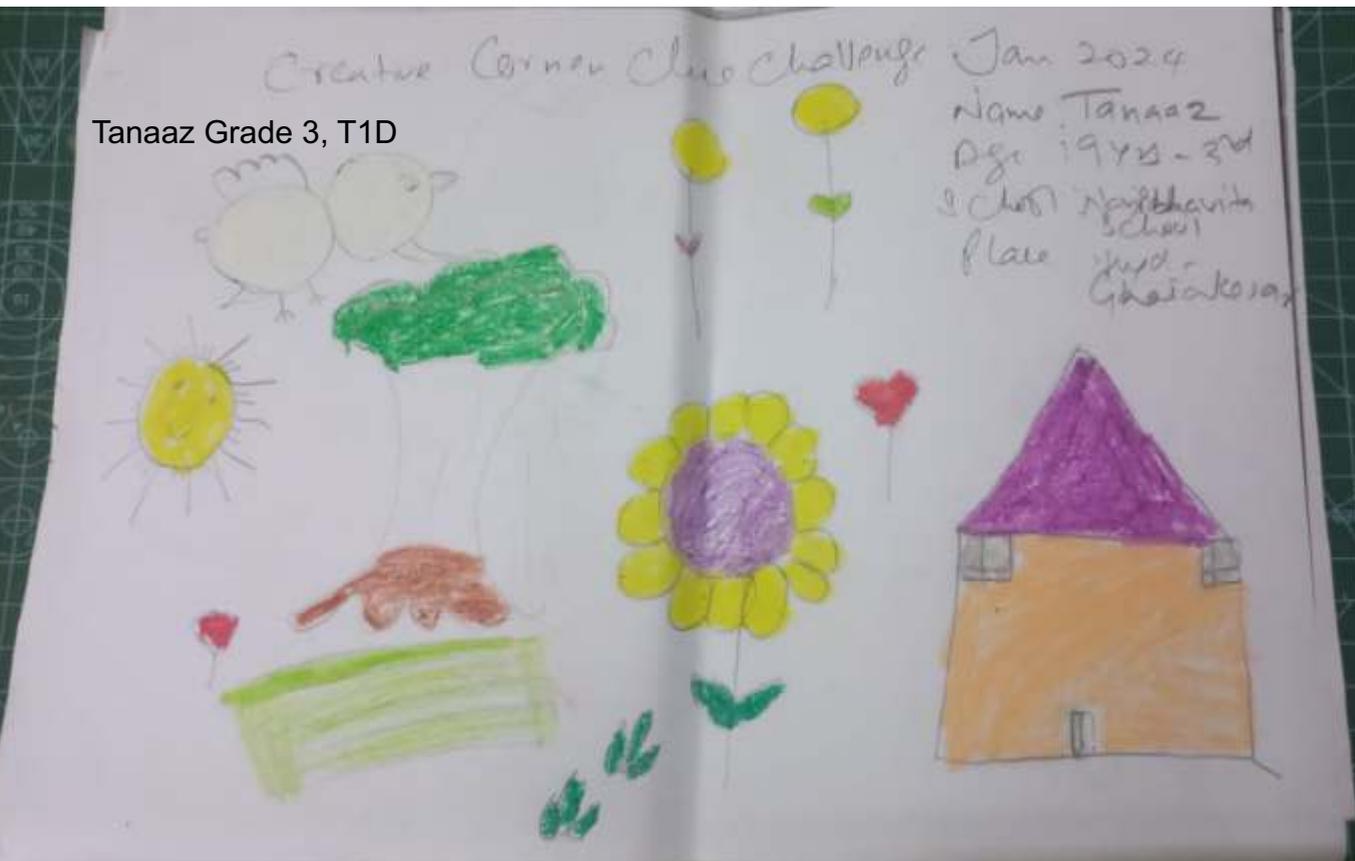


G David Grade UKG T1D

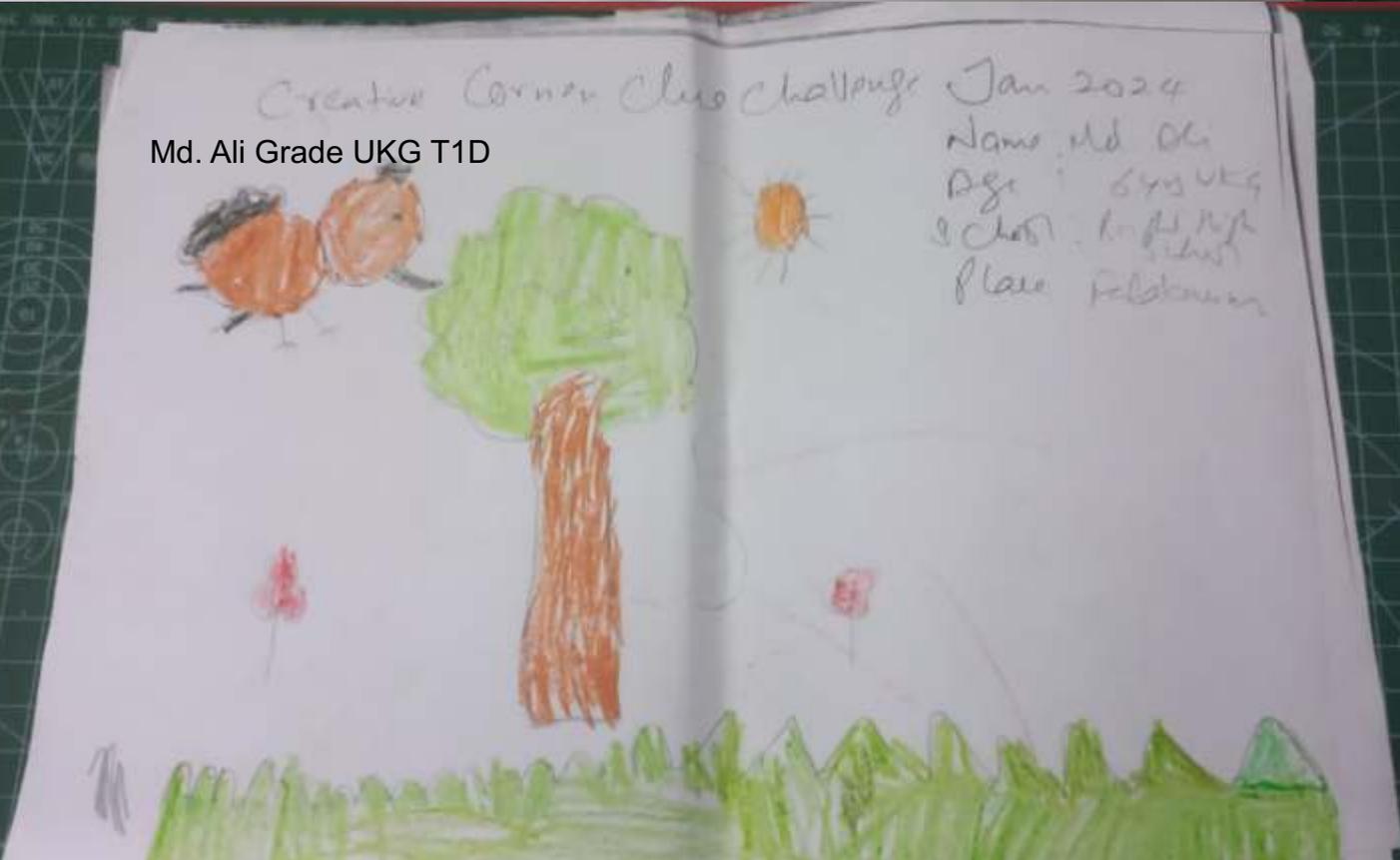


# Creative Corner:

Tanaaz Grade 3, T1D

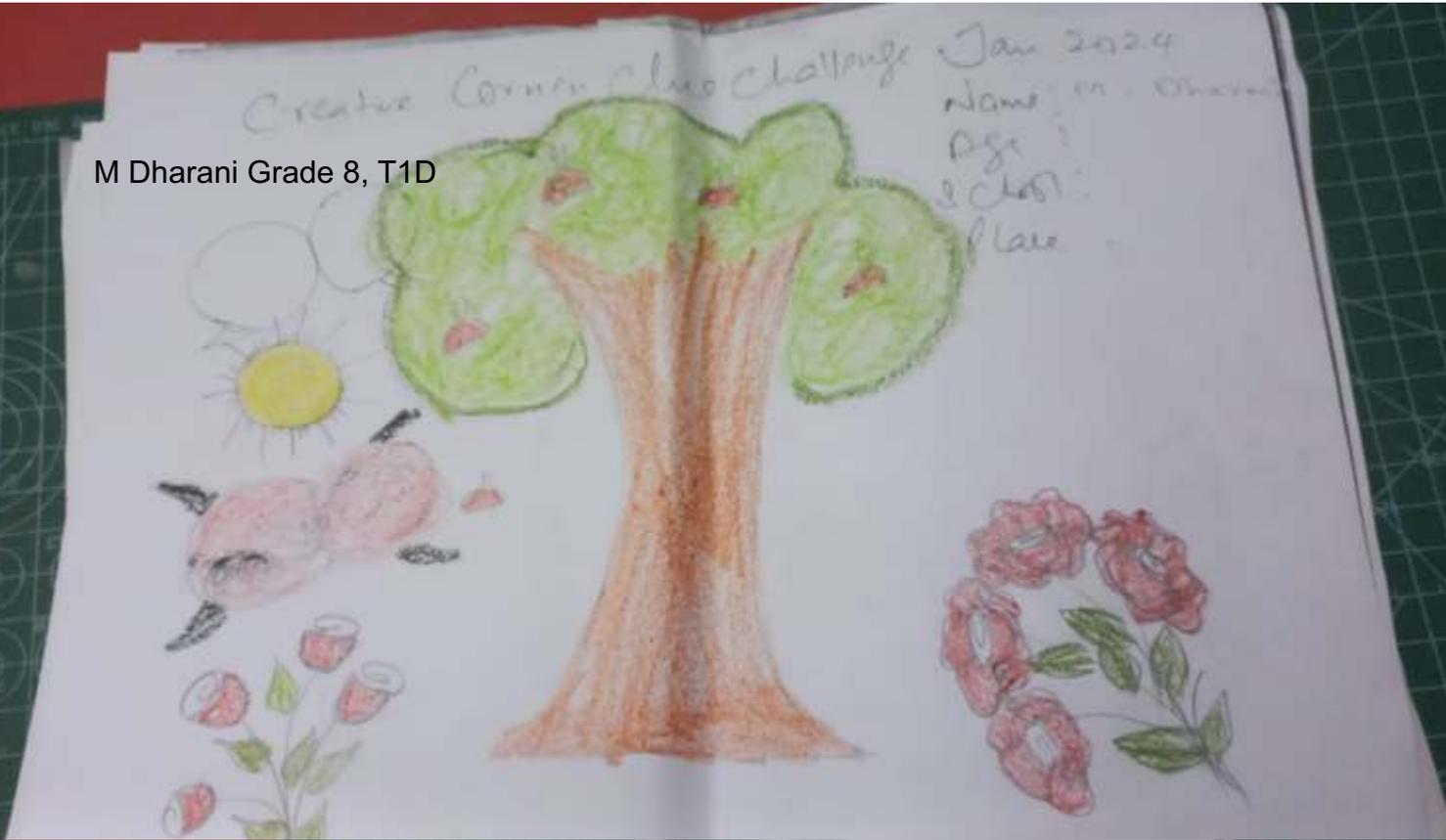


Md. Ali Grade UKG T1D

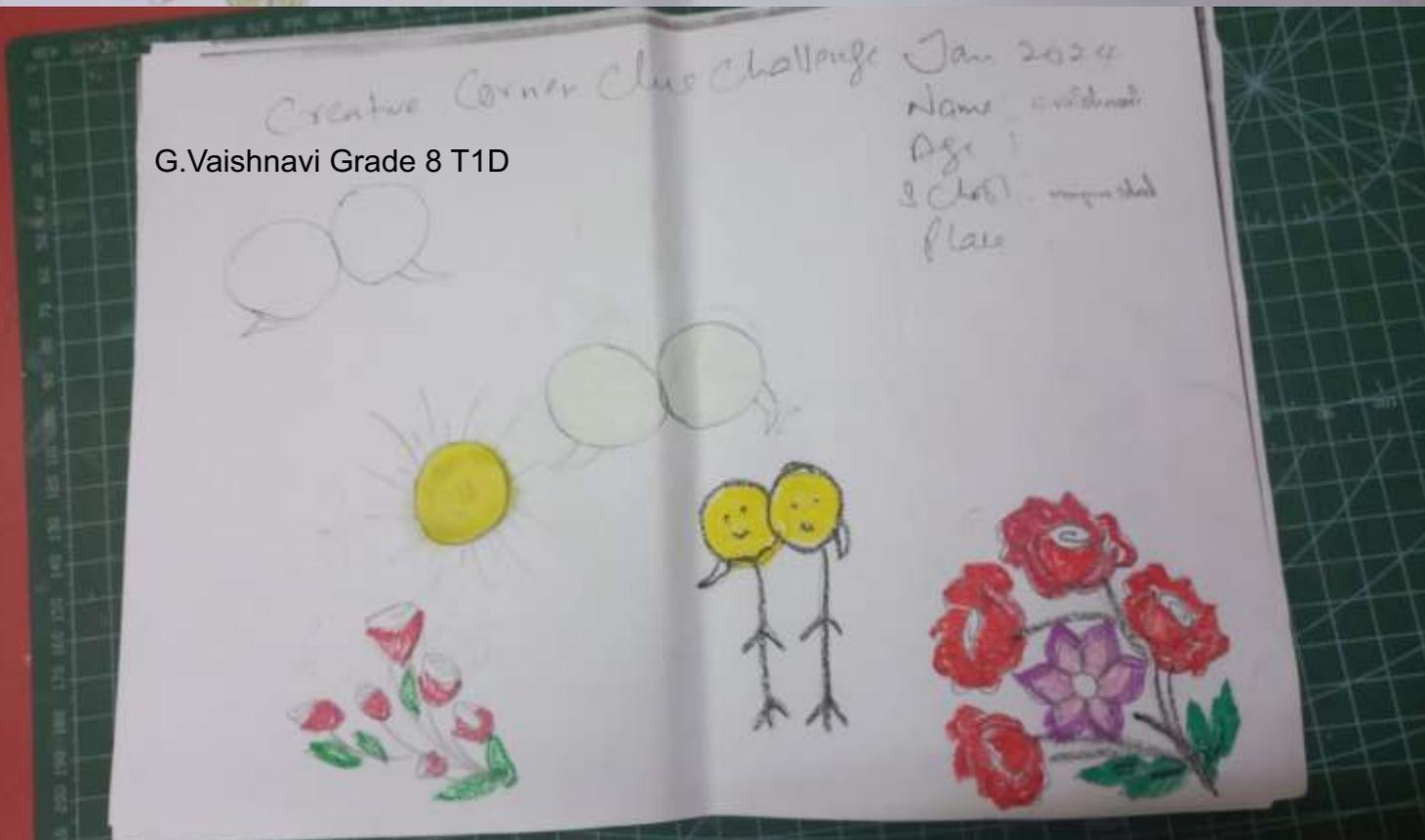


# Creative Corner:

M Dharani Grade 8, T1D

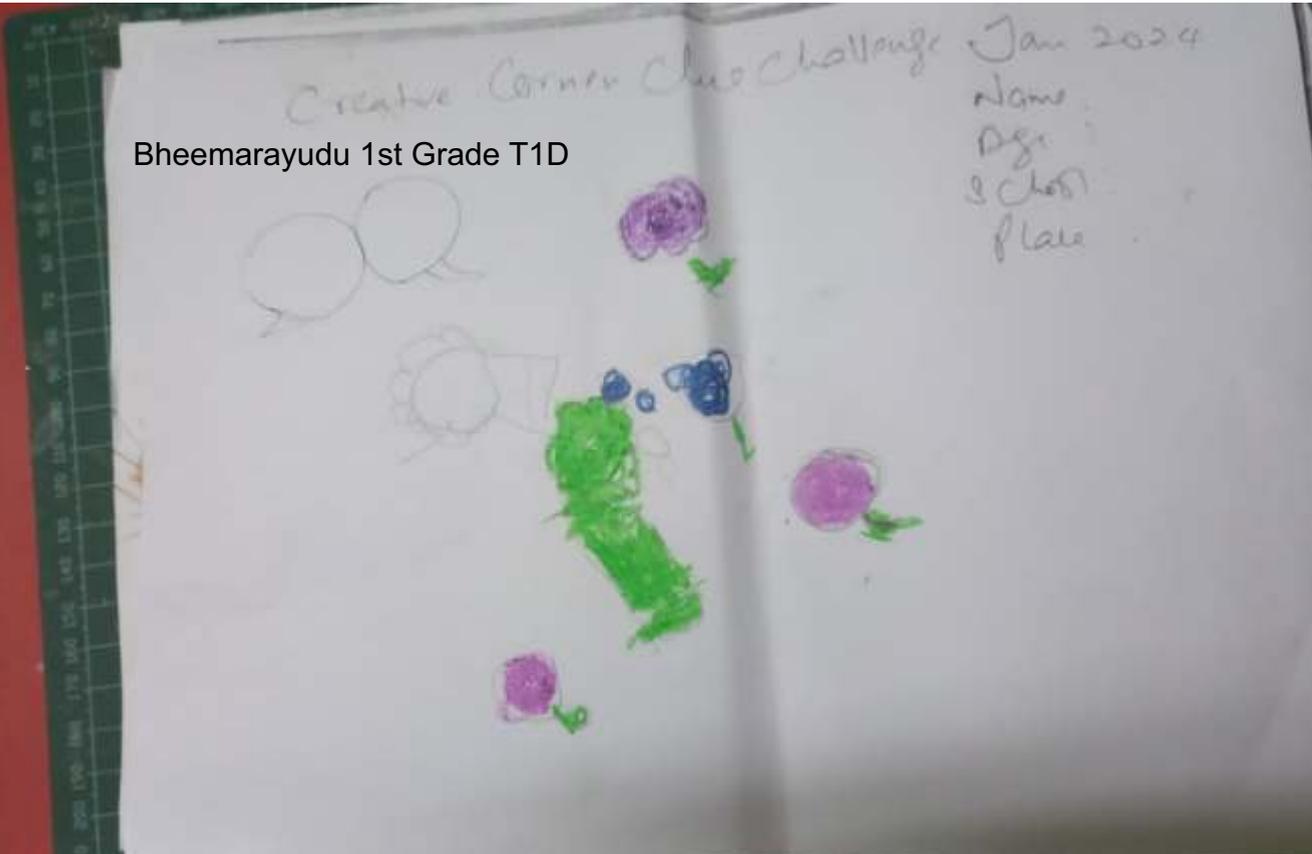


G.Vaishnavi Grade 8 T1D

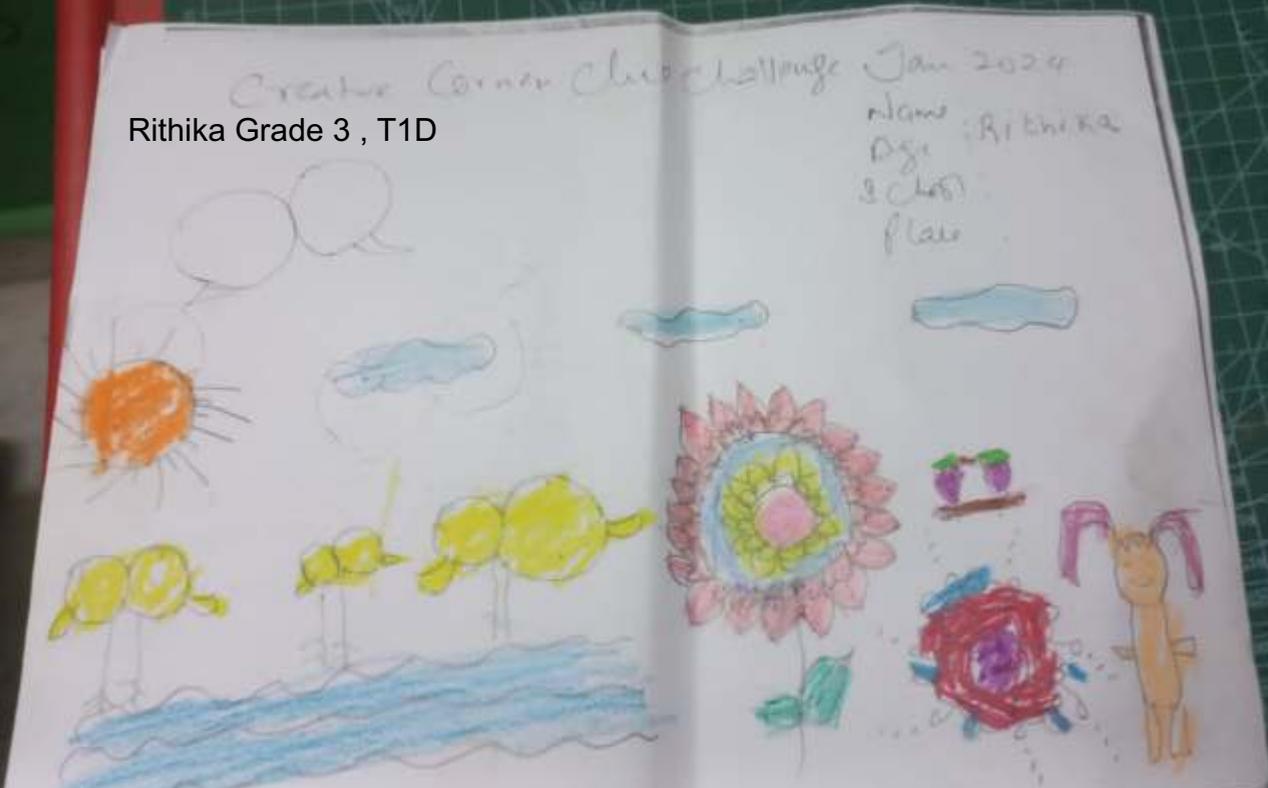


# Creative Corner:

Bheemarayudu 1st Grade T1D



Rithika Grade 3, T1D



# Nature's Lap

[facebook.com/groups/naturalbiodiversity](https://facebook.com/groups/naturalbiodiversity)

Dr. Arun Bansal



# Cam Art

Dr. Arun Bansal



# Cam Art

[facebook.com/groups/socialsubstance](https://facebook.com/groups/socialsubstance)

Dr. Arun Bansal

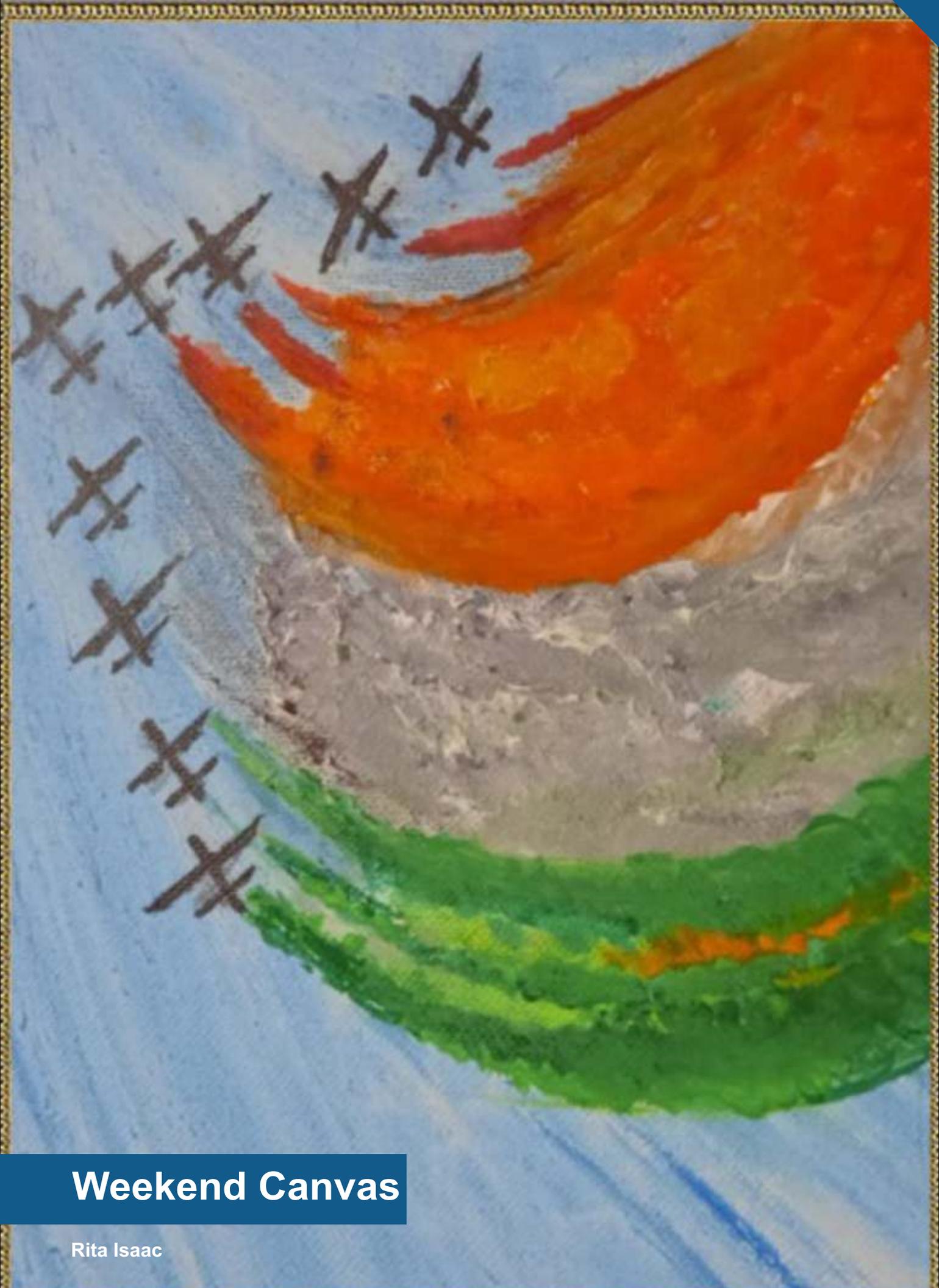


# Cam Art

Dr. Arun Bansal

[facebook.com/groups/naturalbiodiversity](https://facebook.com/groups/naturalbiodiversity)





# Weekend Canvas

Rita Isaac

## WASTE TO WEALTH TIPS

**Soumitra**

LKG, Ashiyana Toddlers School  
Sector 9, Chandigarh



**Material needed** : Urban lamp/diya, wax color or paint & brush, fevicol, decorative Materials

**Step 1:** Paint or Color the Top Border of urban lamp with any Dark Colour & outer-side with Lightshade

**Step 2:** Paste (with Fevicol or Fevibond) the Decorative Materials. It can be Buttons or Stickers or anything thats fits in.

**Step 3:** If You can make a batti of cotton by rolling the cotton. Make it in the length of Diya.

**Step 4:** Pour 3 spoons of Mustard Oil in the Diya put the Batti and lit up.

N'joy



Diya Decoration

We are changing the nomenclature for edition's month. From hereon Month of Publishing  
Date would be Month of Edition of Puthalika Patrika

For Subscription please contact at

[puthalikapatrika@gmail.com](mailto:puthalikapatrika@gmail.com)



## Participate in **PUTHALIKA PATRIKA**

Artists, Art lovers, Parents, Teachers and Anyone Passionate  
towards traditional arts, visual arts and folk arts are welcome to  
contribute articles for Puthalika Patrika Puppetry  
News Magazine

[\*\*puthalikapatrika@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:puthalikapatrika@gmail.com)

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