

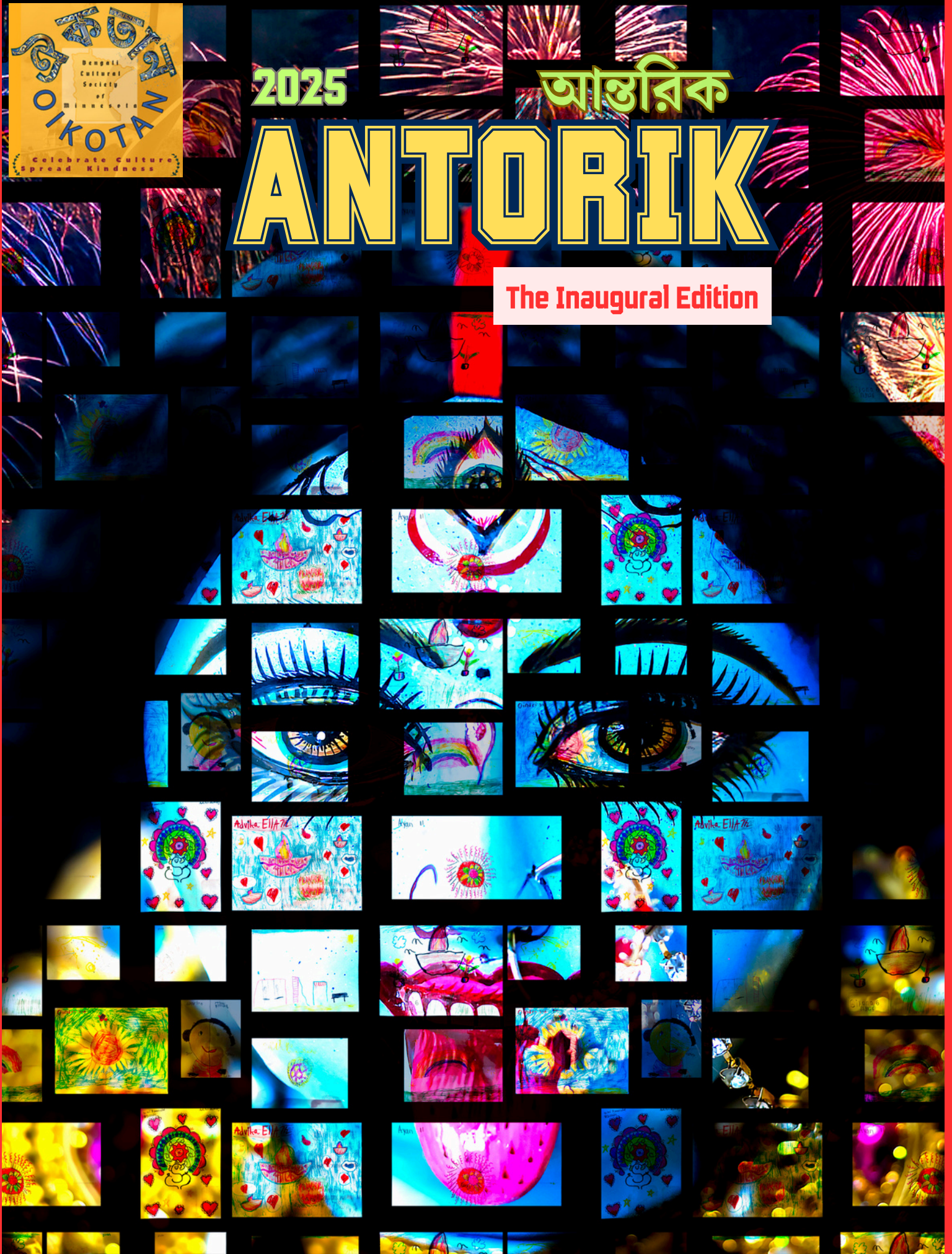


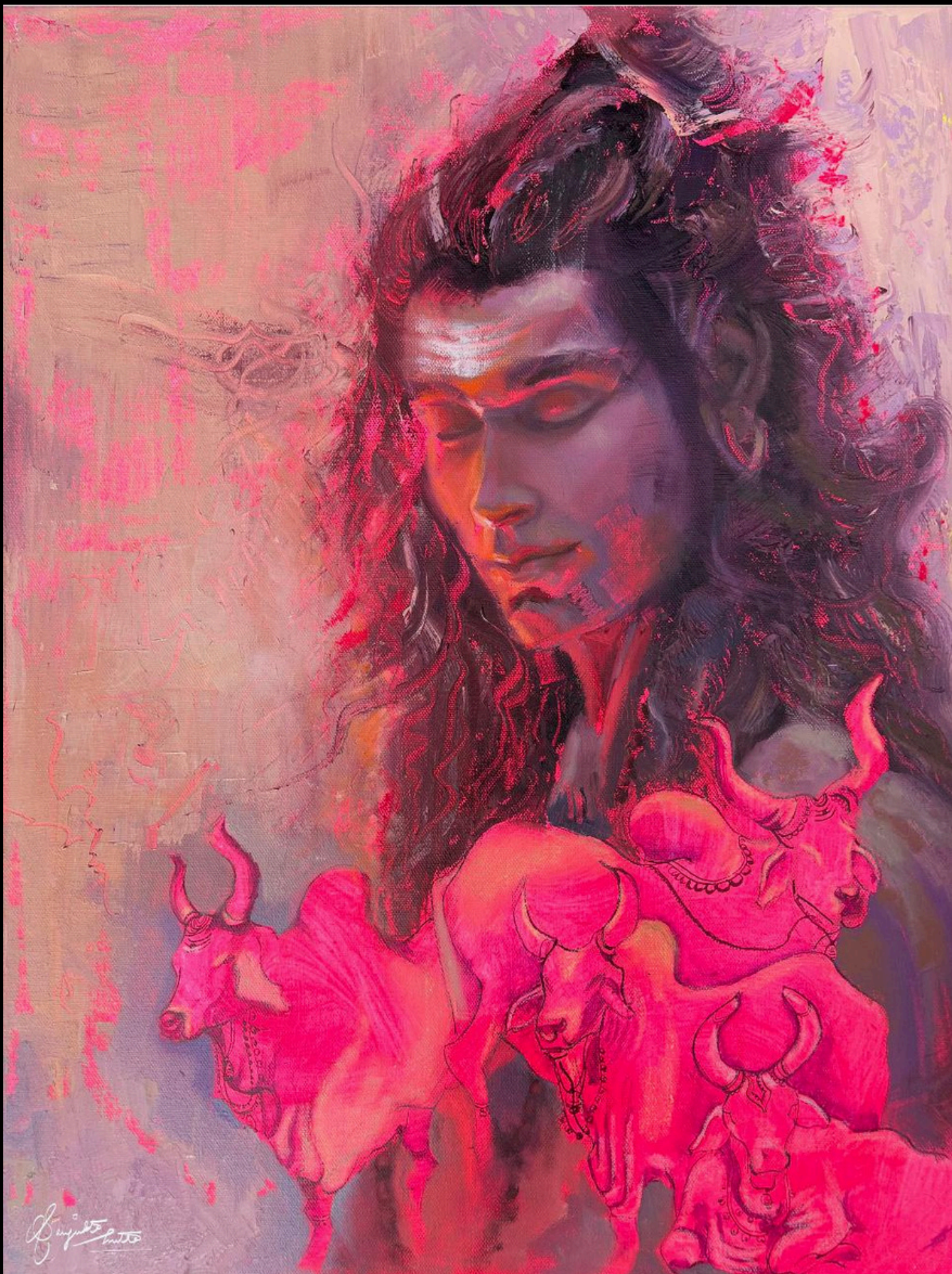
2025

আন্তরিক

ANTORIK

The Inaugural Edition





Shivaya - "the light of faith "

Sanjukta Mitra



COVER ART

THE SHAKTI (POWER) OF HARMONY WITH A SPARK OF DIVERSITY

A mosaic representing harmony created by our budding community artists

ARTISTS

Aaryav Paul (6 yrs), Aditri Mukherji (8 yrs), Advika Bhaduri (7 yrs), Ayan (11 yrs), Misha Chatterjee (1 yr), Mukesh, Oindri Niyogi (6 yrs), Siyona Mukherjee (6 yrs), Simran Nag (7 yrs), Yuvaan Mukherji (3 yrs)

INSIDE COVER

SHIVAYA - "THE LIGHT OF FAITH"

In this painting, the powerful figure of Shiva is depicted in a serene yet radiant pink hue, symbolizing the purity and selflessness inherent in true devotion. The color pink, often associated with love, compassion, and faith, envelops Shiva's form, highlighting the transcendent energy that emanates from his being. Around him, the sacred Nandi bulls (loyal companion and symbol of devotion) are bathed in the same gentle pink light, radiating the energy of unwavering faith and devotion.

The painting speaks to the essence of selfless surrender, where true devotion is not born out of expectation, but from an unconditional love and commitment to the divine. Shiva, in his meditative grace, is not merely a figure of power, but one whose light flows outward, infusing all beings with the energy of faith. The radiant pink energy connects both the deity and the divine bulls, suggesting that the light of faith is not external, but a light that resides within each of us, capable of illuminating our souls.

In this piece, faith is not a passive belief, but an active, selfless force—one that sustains and elevates the spirit. It is a quiet yet powerful reminder that the true light of devotion shines from within, guiding us through the darkness and leading us toward inner peace and enlightenment.

-SANJUKTA MITRA

Disclaimer

Antorik, the annual magazine published by Oikotan MN, is a community-driven initiative featuring contributions from various individuals. All contributors are solely responsible for the originality and legality of the content they submit, including but not limited to articles, poems, photographs, and artwork.

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Any concerns or claims regarding copyright violations will be directed to the individual contributor responsible for the submission.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Reader,

The very first issue of Antorik is a mirror - reflecting our struggles, our joys and our celebrations. Now, it is yours as much as it was ours! Antorik is not written by one pen - it's etched by many hearts... Each story, each photo, each caption is a diya lit by someone who believes in the power of togetherness. We welcome you to delve into this kaleidoscope of experiences, arts and literature that our community has to offer!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people who were instrumental to this venture. It was always a challenge to start an Organization and begin with it's own magazine. Although it was always in our thoughts, the venture would not have begun without Rahul Mukherjee! In fact the name Antorik was a product of a discussion by Subhabrata Ray and Rahul Mukherjee during our Summerfest.

The blurry idea of Oikotan's magazine now became a bit more focused and had a name, but the full focus was on Mahakali Mahotsav. This was a distraction and uncertainty we could take up later. I would have been so, had Sandeep Basu not been the champion! Between myself and Sandeep, we did some groundwork on researching tools. Eventually, the proposal was accepted by the board and I was tasked to bring Antorik together. To be chosen to lead this effort was both a privilege and a moment of quiet panic!

I was glad I could count on some young and experienced minds to assist me in this journey. Anwesha (Barbie) Paul, Koushik Dutta and Bikash Paul can't thank you enough for all the effort you put in!

All along this journey, the support of all board members have been phenomenal (yes at times, I had to channel my inner para organizer—stern hat on, phone in hand, saying “Ei chhobi pathao ekhon-i!” !). Not once, through all our countless planning meetings, did anyone voice a single concern. That quiet trust—unspoken but deeply felt—meant everything!

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Here i should mention our little budding artists who have (unknowingly!) made the cover page so meaningful! Every stroke of their brush, pastel or pencil has created the mosaic of creativity and harmony with the peaceful face of our very own Kali Protima (Idol) . They are indeed our treasures!

Last—but never least—are the contributors we gently (and sometimes not-so-gently!) nudged, reminded, and lovingly chased down for content. You bore it all with grace, with patience, and often with a smile that said, “Yes, I know this matters.” And what you gave us in return was far more than we asked for: heartfelt words, striking visuals, and creative spirit that now breathe life into this very first edition. You didn’t just contribute—you elevated it. For that i am thankful to each and every one of you!

Thank you for walking with me so far... Hope you get some joy out of the rest of this magazine... It is Antorik - Straight from our heart as the word is loosely translated!

“Every creation carries a few imperfections — that’s what makes it real.”

This issue of Antorik came together in a whirlwind of passion and purpose. While there may be a few minor glitches or typos, we hope you’ll see past them to the heart of what we’ve built—an offering of stories, spirit, and shared celebration

Warm Dipaboli Wishes,

Bodhi

Editor - Antorik

with co-editors Anwasha(Barbie) Paul , Bikash Paul and Koushik Dutta



Bodhi



Anwasha(Barbie)



Bikash



Koushik

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ROAD TO THE VERY FIRST KALI PUJA IN MINNEAPOLIS



OIKOTAN THE JOURNEY BEGINS

**“Out of the ashes of disaster grow the roses of success.”
— Arthur Freed**

2024 brought its share of **trials and tribulations**, but it also became a year of reflection, resilience, and renewal. Through those moments of challenge emerged a renewed sense of purpose — a desire to create something that unites, uplifts, and celebrates the beauty of our shared culture. And from that spirit, Oikotan was born.

A few of us felt the need for a collective that stood for strength of character and possibility — one that would spread a message of harmony and positivity through the power of our culture.

Though the idea took shape in late 2024, we chose to formalize our vision in January 2025, marking the beginning of **Oikotan – Bengali Cultural Society of Minnesota**. Since then, our mission has been to celebrate the rich culture of Bengal and India while making a meaningful, positive impact in the community.

Every step of our journey has been guided by that same spirit — of hope, harmony, and heartfelt connection.



OIKOTAN THE JOURNEY BEGINS

With a passion for creativity and a desire to uplift others, we began our journey in planning festivals, cultural extravaganzas, and fundraising activities, all aimed at celebrating the rich cultural heritage of Bengal and India while addressing pressing social issues.

With our combined past volunteering experience of many many years, we understood the power of collaboration, forging partnerships with local artists, businesses, and volunteers, ultimately transforming their dream into a vibrant reality that aimed to bring joy and support to many.



OIKOTAN THE JOURNEY BEGINS

All through the inaugural year of our journey ,we have enjoyed the immense support of the community, we have had friends who stood by us, encouraged us and helped us grow thus far! With you support we could bring our very own Kali Maa to organize the first ever Mahakali Mahotsav in Minneosta!

You , our Friends and Supporters are our biggest treasure and source of strength! With you will will go far, this Journey has just begun....





Celebrate Culture



Spread Kindness



THE FOUNDERS OF OIKOTAN

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Life's most persistent and urgent question is: "What are you doing for others?" ~ MLK Jr.



We live our life with our guiding stars that keep us on track when life puts us in unprecedented situations. Being a first-generation migrant, we left the comfort of home in India for a faraway land for a better future for us and our family. We made acquaintances and connections during our journey in this land of opportunity that embraced us, accepted us. We have made this country our home.

The land that gives us the opportunity to flourish professionally and personally, we aspire to give back to the land. 'Give back' was the founding principle that few of us agreed on and it encouraged us to start a new organization, Oikotan MN'. Oikotan means harmony – it is the essential part of life that keeps us in peace but encourages us to do things without expecting any materialistic gain in return.

It always takes a village to make things happen – it was few of us who took the first step to form a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, but without the support & help from the community it was not possible to achieve anything substantial. With the encouragement of the community, we embarked on the journey to do Mahakali Mahotsav in Twin Cities for the first time. It was a long-cherished dream for many of us who came from India to worship Maha Kali in our new homeland. It is finally coming true – with blessings from Maha Kali, we are having the event on 25th October. Hope is a uniting factor that brought many of us together. The blessings of Maha Kali will help bring lasting peace and harmony in our life.

Subha Deepawali.

Regards,

Saumyadip Bagchi
President, Oikotan MN



THE FOUNDERS OF OIKOTAN

Sanjit Bhowmick

Vice-President, Oikotan MN



I am truly honored to be part of Oikotan. It is inspiring to join an organization that not only celebrates and promotes the richness of Bengali culture in Minnesota but also dedicates itself to supporting meaningful causes within our community. And for me, the most important part is doing it all with joy, fun, and laughter.

When we are far from our parents and relatives, Oikotan's mission is to build lasting friendships and create a strong, supportive community right here in Minnesota — a true home away from home. As Rabindranath Tagore beautifully said, "Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark." May our shared faith in culture, compassion, and connection continue to light Oikotan's path forward and strengthen the bonds that unite our community.

It gives me immense pleasure to share this message in the very first edition of Oikotan's magazine — a milestone that reflects both our collective effort and our shared vision.

Oikotan was born out of a simple yet powerful idea: to bring people together through culture, compassion, and community service. In a world that often moves too fast, we wanted to create a space where art, tradition, and humanity come together — where we can celebrate our roots while extending a helping hand to those in need.

Through volunteering, I've found a sense of purpose and belonging. It gives me immense joy to be part of a group that works selflessly to promote our culture, bring people together, and create moments of togetherness and happiness. Every event we organize, every challenge we overcome, every planning session behind the scene reminds me of the power of teamwork and the warmth of community.

Let us move forward with the same spirit of togetherness, spreading the message of culture, kindness, and community wherever we go.



Satabdi Datta

Secretary, Oikotan MN



THE FOUNDERS OF OIKOTAN



The Call to Harmony (Oikotan): A Founder's Vision (Condensed)

It is with immense joy and optimism that I welcome you to our first magazine. My 15+ years serving the Bengali community taught me that true strength lies in the quality of our resonance—in unwavering harmony and shared principle.

The decision to found Oikotan (Harmony) was born from this clear vision: to create a cultural home where every voice finds its rightful place, guided by transparency, inclusivity, and service. My inspiration is seeing the hunger in our youth to connect with their roots and the collective energy of our members ready to build a lasting environment of belonging.

Our vision is built on three core pillars to ensure Oikotan becomes a permanent anchor:

- * **Cultural Preservation and Innovation:** We will celebrate our rich heritage while actively encouraging new Bengali expressions right here in Minnesota.
- * **Deep Community Engagement:** We will act as cultural ambassadors, enriching the state and becoming a visible, valued thread in Minnesota's cultural tapestry.
- * **Next-Generation Stewardship:** We must invest heavily in mentoring young leaders, ensuring Oikotan's legacy is one of perpetual renewal and growth.

We have begun an extraordinary chapter. I am honored to stand with you as we work to make this organization a resounding success. Let's make this harmony echo across the land.

Smaran Misra

Director, Oikotan MN



THE FOUNDERS OF OIKOTAN

Bikash Paul

Treasurer, Oikotan MN

As a dedicated volunteer in my community, I have had the privilege of contributing to several meaningful initiatives that aim to uplift and support those in need. I always believe in giving back to my community. I have consistently sought to make a positive impact. My work has allowed me to connect with diverse individuals, understand their challenges, and collaborate with others to find solutions. Volunteering has not only broadened my perspective but also reinforced my commitment to fostering a sense of unity and compassion within our community. Each experience has been a reminder of the power of small acts of kindness and the collective strength of people working together for a common cause.



Oikotan – Bengali Cultural Society of Minnesota – was founded in 2025 inspired by hope, unity, and cultural pride. What began as a small idea among friends grew into a non-profit dedicated to celebrating Bengali and Indian culture while serving the Minnesota community. In its first year, Oikotan organized cultural programs, fundraisers, and volunteer events supporting Second Harvest, FMSC, and St. Jude Children’s Hospital. Led by a passionate group of founding members, Oikotan has become a vibrant, close-knit community. As we now prepare for the next chapter, including the first-ever Mahakali Mahotsav in Minnesota, we carry with us the same spirit of faith, friendship, and shared purpose that started it all. Our journey has only just begun.

Deepanjan Dutta

Director, Oikotan MN



THE FOUNDERS OF OIKOTAN



Being part of Oikotan and serving as a Board Member has been a journey of the heart — humbling, grounding, and deeply fulfilling. It has allowed me to serve a community that feels less like an organization and more like a family bound by shared purpose and devotion. My path in the world of non-profits was never lit by the desire for visibility. I have often been told, “To make a difference, people must know you.” Yet, my soul has always whispered the timeless truth from the Bhagavad Gita — “Karmanye vadhikaraste, ma phaleshou kadachana” — do your duty with sincerity, for the fruits are never yours to claim.

It is this belief that guides me: that service done in silence carries its own music, that every act of kindness, no matter how small, ripples far beyond what the eye can see. Gratitude has been my greatest teacher — gratitude for the people who trust me, for the hands that join mine in service, and for the unseen grace that turns effort into impact.

Every moment with Oikotan reminds me that true fulfillment doesn't come from applause, but from alignment — when your intent, your effort, and your heart all move in the same direction. And in those quiet moments of giving, when no one is watching, the universe always finds a beautiful way to give back.

At its core, Oikotan embodies a spirit I hold close to my heart — a belief that contribution matters more than comparison, that every effort, big or small, blends into one harmonious rhythm of devotion. Here, our actions are not divided by titles or recognition, but united by purpose — woven together in the shared fabric of love, faith, and community.

Sandeep Basu

Director, Oikotan MN



THE FOUNDERS OF OIKOTAN

Subhadip Niyogi
Director, Oikotan MN



Over the years, I've had the opportunity to work with several non-profit organizations through my workplace, but I've always felt a deeper calling—to help the younger generation experience the same joy, color, and togetherness that defined our own childhood festivals. Growing up away from India, many children miss that magical blend of culture and celebration that shapes who we are. Oikotan, with its mission to promote Bengali culture, has given me a beautiful opportunity to bridge that gap—to help our children and youth connect with their roots, embrace our traditions with pride, and relive the cherished memories that continue to unite us as a community.

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THE FOUNDERS OF OIKOTAN

Subhabrata Ray
Director, Oikotan MN



Founding Oikotan - Bengali Cultural Society of Minnesota was not just the beginning of an organization—it was the realization of a dream deeply rooted in culture, community, and connection. As a Bengali living far from home, I often felt the quiet ache of missing the vibrant traditions and the warmth of shared festivities. That longing became the seed from which Oikotan grew.

Starting Oikotan was an emotional journey. It was driven by a desire to recreate the essence of Bengal in the heart of Minnesota—to give our children a glimpse of the culture we grew up with, and to build a space where Bengalis could come together, celebrate, and feel at home. I remember the first meetings, the late-night planning sessions, the excitement, and the nervous energy. We were a small group, but we shared a big vision.

One of the most profound moments in this journey was organizing Kali Puja for the first time in Minnesota. It was a spiritual milestone—not just for me, but for our entire community. The idea of performing Kali Puja, thousands of miles away from Bengal, felt both daunting and exhilarating. We had to start from scratch.

Oikotan is more than an organization to me. It's a living, breathing embodiment of our heritage. And I'm deeply proud to have been part of its foundation.

I have always been an avid volunteer (thanks to my love of photography!) providing a helping hand wherever and however I can. I have worked with many non-profits as a volunteer photographer and in other capacities. I strongly felt the need to create an organization which was built on strong values and principals. It was also my dream to bring the Kali Puja to Minnesota. I wish to thank all my friends and family who have supported me through the thick and thin over the years.



Bodhisatya Bhaduri
Director, Oikotan MN



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lunch

kids

- pizza
- juice
- cake

youth/adults

- khichudi
- labra
- papad
- chutney
- payesh

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Use Code DIWALI7

dinner

kids

- pulao
- naan
- round aloo bhaja
- kadai paneer (Veg only)
- butter chicken
- sweets

youth/adults

- peas pulao
- cholar daal
- methi malai paneer
- echor er daalna (Jackfruit curry) - veg only
- mutton curry
- balushai (Sweet)

Snacks

- samosa
- jalebi
- masala tea
- cupcakes(kids only)

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President, OikotanMN



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PHOTOGRAPHY

APARNA MANDAL



A bright bold hello from Autumn.

capturing the essence of the autumn Leaves seem like a golden carpet, blanketing the surface with beauty and warmth. I am truly mesmerized an amazing view of the autumn season with the fallen leaves and an impeccable background, In the aspect of aesthetic view,

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মুখ POETRY BY KANAILAL PALODHI



মুখ

কনে দেখা আলোয় মুখ দেখা হয়
মুখোমুখি বসে দুজনায়
চোখে মুখে কথা হয়।
শশীমুখী বিধুমুখী চন্দ্রমুখী আদি
কালিদাস থেকে রবীন্দ্র-কবিতায় বন্দি
মুখ তো খাবার অঙ্গ
তবু একমুখে কত রঙ্গ
কারও মুখ খোলা কারও বা ঢাকা
মুখ ঢাকা প্রথম পাতা, মুখবন্ধ
কারও মুখে মিষ্টি কারও দুর্গন্ধ
মুখেমুখে কথা হয় বিনিময়
মুখ দেখে প্রথম প্রেমের উদয়
একই মুখে কত অনুভূতি
ঝাল-নোনতা, তেতো-কবা, মিষ্টি
মুখ দেখে মন বোঝা যায়
মুখে ফোটে যত ভাবোদয়
মুখ দিয়ে গালাগালি মুখ দিয়ে বমি
মুখ দিয়ে ঠোসাঠুসি কত চুমাচুমি
ছোটো মুখ বড়োমুখ কত মুখ আছে
মুখেই জগত মেরে কত কত বাঁচে
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মুখেমুখে ব্যবসা কত শত লগ্নি
মুখ দিয়ে নেতারা করে বাজিমাতি
মুখেমুখে সুখপাঠ্য নবধারাপাত
মুখোমুখি ট্রেনে বাসে কলিসন হয়
মুখোমুখি ঝগড়ায় প্রেম খিতু রয়
জ্বালামুখে নিগত তাপদগ্ধ গলিত লাভা
কিশোরীর চোখে-মুখে প্রণয়-আভা
মুখোমুখি ঘটিবাটি কেন যে রাখিস
মেনিমুখী, ফের তুই হলো ধরেছিস?



1. हम अ.

(1) आमल कि वल
 अथवा वल आ

कारण का
साक्षात्, इतिहास व अर्थशास्त्र,

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2018-2019 2018

৬) মাতে আমানো

আমাদের আবিষ্কার নয়।

ଆଜ୍ଞାତେ ଭାବୀ,

৩২৭ আঃ ৩০৪৭০৮

নেতাইনভা ২২/১০/১৯

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অনুভূতি, অসীম ও প্রকৃতি।

वर्षा काल प्रकृति अनावृष्टी

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২৫৯০
২৫৯০

এস না সবাই মিলে স্বপ্ন দেখি? POETRY BY MANISHA GUHA ROY

একো না সবাই মিলে স্বপ্ন দেখি
মনীষা গুহা

দ্রুতবদনে যাওয়া অস্বাভাবিক
অস্বাভাবিক একজন অচেনা নাক্ষত্রিক
চলতে গিয়ে ছন্দপতন -
তান স্নেহাতে পারহি না -

আমাদের অতীত আছে, সেই বিষয়
আছে উদ্বেগ ওরা- বর্তমান,

ওরনের স্বপ্ন আজ- বৃষ্টি-
রাজেশ্বর- কান্না- ডেউরা,
যে-দিকে তাকাই হাহাকার,
ওরনের জীবন জীবিকা -

শাসকের খাঁতাকনে নিষে আছে
দিকে দিকে উৎসর্গে হচ্চে -

তোলাবাগে, চোবরুন্ডা আর অস্বাভাবিক
অস্বাভাবিক রক্তক প্রথম- উদ্ভবের ধ্বংস-
আমরা- বাক-
প্রতিবাদী- আজ- গরাদের আড়ালে,

তাই উদাত্তকণ্ঠে আশ্বাস-কবি -
প্রমোদনা, সবাই মিলে স্বপ্ন দেখি,

আমরা নুতন করে বাঁচবো,
জীবনের যা-বিগড়-হতাশা,

হুঁড়ে ফেলবো-আবজনের বাক-
হাতে-হাতমিলিয়ে -

স্বপ্নের স্রষ্টা বেড়ে -
প্রমোদনা, সবাই মিলে স্বপ্ন দেখি,

এখনো, সবাই মিলে স্বপ্ন দেখি,



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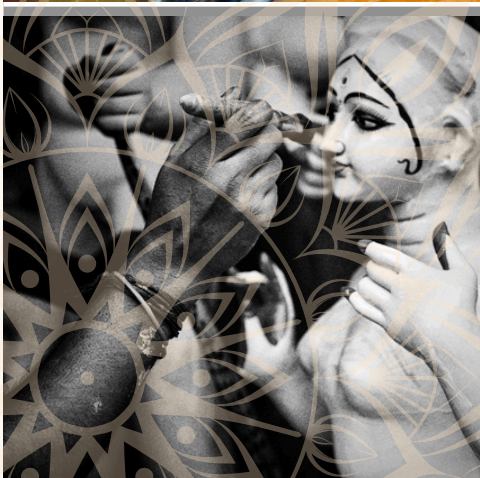
ARTWORK

TOSHANIE DATTA



KUMARTULI – FROM AN ARTIST'S LENS

A PHOTO SERIES BY ROMANI BANDHYOPADHYAY



EUROPE TRIP ANWESHA PAUL

To conclude the summer before highschool, my family and I packed our bags for a two week long vacation across Europe. I boarded the plane excited for the long-awaited vacation with my family friend Manya. Each day we hurried through train stations and bus stops, wandered through bustling city squares, and hiked eroded mountain steps much older than our home state of Minnesota. While Europe may have forty four countries, there was still so much to do and see in the countries we chose to visit.

Our first stop was Paris, France. After a six hour car ride to Chicago and an eight hour plane ride to Paris, we wasted no time and got straight to exploring the beautiful city. As we walked through the small streets, the romantic architecture of the apartment complexes around us stood tall in the afternoon sun. We visited gardens and took bus tours around the city. Before I knew it, I was standing underneath the Eiffel tower. The strong rust-colored beams intertwined themselves above us, converging at a single point in the far distance in a symmetrical pattern. The intensive planning back at home paid off as we slipped past long lines to board the decades-old elevators to the very top of the tower. The three floors offered different views, each subsequently more breathtaking.

EUROPE TRIP ANWESHA PAUL

On our second and final night in Paris, we visited bustling streets, one including the famous macaron shop, Pierre Herme. As we snacked on what must have been our hundredth croissant we wandered through the Eiffel tower grounds and ended our trip with an evening cruise along the Seine river. The famous glow of the Eiffel tower and the lively atmosphere of the bustling city lit our way back to our hotel. Of course, what would be a trip to Paris without a souvenir from the many booths scattered throughout the city. As we boarded our train to Switzerland, I carried my small Eiffel tower and tennis ball keychain with me.

Our train delivered us to Lucerne, Switzerland where we went on a boat cruise and had dinner in the train station at tidbits; the American equivalent of Olive Garden, you could say. The following morning we made our way to Mount Titlis glacier where we walked across a terribly shaky bridge, thousands of feet above the ice. The path was shrouded in fog, giving the place a different kind of beauty as the bridge disappeared into the thick mist in front of and behind us.

The next morning we took a train to Interlaken. The mountains surrounding the valley of the city were like vast walls, dwarfing the sky itself. We took a boat across the bright blue waters and walked through the homely residential area of the town at the edge of Lake Brienz, passing by small cabins and boats in Isletwald village. My family friend, Manya, and I sat and watched the calm waters lap at the surface, the vibrant turquoise hue interrupted occasionally by the paddle of a kayak or the trails of a swan. My brother immediately began rummaging through our bags, looking for any leftover bread from the bakeries of Paris so that he could feed the swans. Eventually he found a soggy croissant which was used by the three of us kids to bait the beautiful birds as they glided near the banks of the lake.

Before we returned to the main city, we ate at a lake side restaurant and watched as my brother chased the birds with leftover pizza. The following morning, we set out on a bus ride up a mountain to be lifted by cable car to the top of Glacier 3000.

The cart rhythmically climbed the strong metal cables, making a click sound at each interval. The alpine road below us grew smaller as we approached the mountain. At the top, we found a large glass paneled building that overlooked all the activities the tourist stop provided.

We walked across the glacier itself and we rode on a ski lift to get up and down the side of the mountain. In the end, my brother and I went on the Glacier Alpine ride. We both sat in a small red cart, my younger brother snuggled close to my torso as we started the self driven ride. The guide explained how to maneuver the cart. Press down to go faster, pull up to go slower.

Of course, like the children we are, we pressed the lever down all the way right from the beginning. We whizzed down the tracks. A curling scream left my throat. My brother squealed in excitement, but I couldn't really hear either of us with the howling wind passing by our frosted faces. All of a sudden, the metal tracks began to curve every which way. The cart jolted left and right and we were jerked into the cart walls and my brother's baseball cap almost fell off into the glacier pit below! There were no seatbelts and I almost fell with the hat. I caught myself just as I was about to lean right out of the side, and pulled the lever back.

We finished our Alpine ride safely and headed back to our hotel for the day.

The next day we set out for the tallest mountain I've ever been to, the top of Europe, Jungfrau. We took several mountain trains and walked through long winding tunnels, each including stories of the history and sacrifice it took to create the paths we walked on. Finally, we took an elevator to the very peak. The building at the top was beautiful. It was like a large museum. Each hallway guided us to the next and the pictures and words on the walls provided a complete timeline of the hard work it took to build the tourist attraction. At the end of the hallways, we found ourselves in a massive sunroom, the glass panes opened the room to the view of mountain peaks and blue sky outside. The room led to a balcony where we spent quite a lot of time. Afterward, when we made our way back down, we were led to another building that was almost like a mall, and it had the most beautiful Lindor Chocolate Shop I've ever seen. The following day we took a steam engine ride and hiked to the top of Rothern; one of the mountains that stood against the valley of Interlaken.



EUROPE TRIP ANWESHA PAUL

The engine slowly climbed up the tracks as we passed by cows grazing in pastures, stones stacked along hiking paths, and small farmhouses for what must have been mountain goats. The bells on the necks of the animals rang through the valley and provided a backdrop of chimes throughout our whole day there. Once we got off at the small station, we walked the rest of the way up to the peak of the mountain. We sipped on coffee while sitting on a bench that looked out at the rim of mountains surrounding the city. We could see the whole turquoise lake with its small city at its edge and a ring of mountains surrounding the place like the walls of a bowl.

As we wrapped up our stay in Switzerland, I purchased a small stuffed puppy wearing a red sweater with the Switzerland flag on it. I sat in the four hour train ride to Germany as I carefully packed the stuffed animal away for my tennis bag back at home.

We checked into our suite in Germany and took a well-earned day off to rest. We then spent the next two days traveling to Austria in the morning, and returning back to Germany at night.

Our first experience in Austria was a trip to Salzburg. There we visited the infamous salt fortress, now turned museum, where we learned about the history of salt trade and how it conformed with the history of Salzburg. We learned about all the holy figures who stayed in the fortress and further into the town, we paid a visit to the mozart museum at mozarts birth place.

The next day we went on a Big Bus tour in Austria. While sitting atop a blue double decker bus, we visited old town Austria; a collection of preserved buildings from the 15th century. There we munched on pretzels and took boat rides. On our final day in Europe, we stayed in Germany to visit the palace in Munich, the Swarovski garden museum and finished the trip by going to old town Munich. A lot to cover in one day! The palace of Munich was originally the summer residence of scandalous royals which we learned all about in the beautiful halls and corridors. The white marble architecture with the paintings and murals adorning every wall gave no limit to how much there was to see. I could've spent the rest of my life analyzing the meaning and interpretation of every artwork in those rooms, but we hurried off to a bus ride to the Swarovski garden in Innsbruck, Austria.



The neatly trimmed garden littered with contemporary artworks led to an extremely interesting experience. What more was the waterfall face. I personally did not know much about this museum, so I was thoroughly surprised when my family led me behind the vine covered head, and led me into a vast room, shrouded in darkness with thousands of sparkling crystals adorning every wall. The only light source throughout most of the tour were the reflections of light on the millions of crystal shards, the source of light unknown.

Each room was designed by a different artist's interpretation of human interaction and love. One room had 3000 speakers; if you stood underneath one of them, you'd hear the response of 1 of 3000 Swarovski employees explaining their meaning of love. The idea behind it: Our beliefs and values are not as different as it seems. The next hallway led us to a giant red ball in the middle of an oval room. The brilliantly jeweled ball emitting strong red light, representing the sun on a scale one trillion times smaller than its true size. The small oval room itself represented the size of our planet's orbit. The idea behind this room: we are much smaller and larger than we think.

On and on went the interpretive artworks and room concepts. At the end of the tour, we found ourselves standing in another museum, this one telling the story of Swarovski and showcasing all the famous pieces that many popular celebrities and music artists have worn.

At the end of the busy day, we went to old town Munich and looked at all the beautiful architecture. The intricate windows, pillars, and roofs had me staring at the ancient buildings in awe for a long time.

But I had to pry my eyes away from the sight as the sun set and it began to rain. We made our way back to our hotel, packed our bags, and our trip came to an end. But not before I bought one last souvenir.

We boarded our eight hour flight and as I settled into my seat, I looked into my bag at my four keychains: A small Eiffel tower and tennis ball from Paris, France, A stuffed puppy with a red Switzerland sweatshirt from Interlaken, Switzerland, A gold keychain with the picture of Salzburg, Austria, and a jeweled bunny keychain to remember our visit to Munich, Germany.



Antorik Magazine

ARTWORK ANWESHA PAUL

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My Alaskan Cruise Adventure - Krrish Basu

Have you ever been on an Alaskan cruise? Well, I have—and it was one of the most exciting adventures of my life! Let me take you along on my journey aboard the Norwegian Joy.

June 18 – Day 1: Seattle & Embarkation

We arrived at the Seattle port buzzing with excitement. Boarding the Norwegian Joy was quick—just a few minutes through security and check-in. Once on board, we explored the ship and headed straight to the buffet, which had everything from pizza and pasta to salad and a welcome cake. Watching the ship sail away from Seattle was magical. I raced on the onboard race car track (came in 6th!), played mini golf (almost hit the ball off the ship!), and finally settled into our cozy room on the 11th floor. Dinner at the Manhattan Room was delicious, and we ended the day with arcade games and a movie night in our cabin.

June 19 – Day 2: At Sea

Our first full day at sea began with breakfast at the buffet. While wandering around, we discovered an Indian food section—Idli, Pav Bhaji, and Pakoras! Yum! After lunch (grilled salmon, dosa, pizza), we hit the arcade again. I tried the kids' club, but it wasn't very fun—no exciting activities. Dinner at the Manhattan Room made up for it, and we wrapped up the day with movies.

June 20 – Day 3: Ketchikan

We docked in Ketchikan and had breakfast at Taste before heading out. The Lumberjack Show was thrilling! We explored local shops and even spotted salmon swimming under them. Back on the ship, I played giant chess (I won!) and enjoyed another great dinner at the Manhattan Room, followed by dessert from the buffet.



My Alaskan Cruise Adventure - Krrish Basu

June 21 – Day 4: Juneau

Welcome to Alaska's capital! After breakfast, we picked up a rental car and drove to Mendenhall Glacier. It was smaller than expected, but Nugget Falls nearby was stunning. We also visited Douglas Island before returning the car and heading back to the ship. After snacks and rest, we had dinner and spent time in the arcade.

June 22 – Day 5: Skagway

In Skagway, we visited a museum about the Klondike Gold Rush—super informative! After lunch and a short rest, we went on an excursion to the Canadian border. The views were breathtaking. Back on the ship, we played games, had dinner, and ended the night watching whales and orcas from the deck!

June 23 – Day 6: Glacier Bay & Icy Strait Point

We bundled up for Glacier Bay and were greeted with hot chocolate on deck. We saw whales and seals, then attended a fascinating lecture about the glaciers. Later, at Icy Strait Point, we found starfish on the beach! Dinner and arcade time wrapped up another amazing day.

June 24 – Day 7: At Sea

After breakfast, we attended a lecture about the Norwegian Joy and even met the Captain! The rest of the day was relaxing, with arcade games and a magic show by a performer from China—he was hilarious and talented. Dinner and movies ended the day.



My Alaskan Cruise Adventure - Krrish Basu

June 25 – Day 8: Sitka

Our excursion in Sitka took us to three places: a Raptor Center with eagles and owls, a Bear Center with black and brown bears, and Sitka National Park, where I saw totem poles and earned a badge from a Ranger for completing a puzzle book! Dinner featured Indian food—papad, rice, aloo tarkari, and more.

June 26 – Day 9: Victoria, Canada

In Victoria, we visited the famous Butchart Gardens, filled with colorful flowers, and took a scenic bus tour around the city. Back on the ship, we enjoyed snacks and dinner at the buffet, which had sushi and wonton soup.

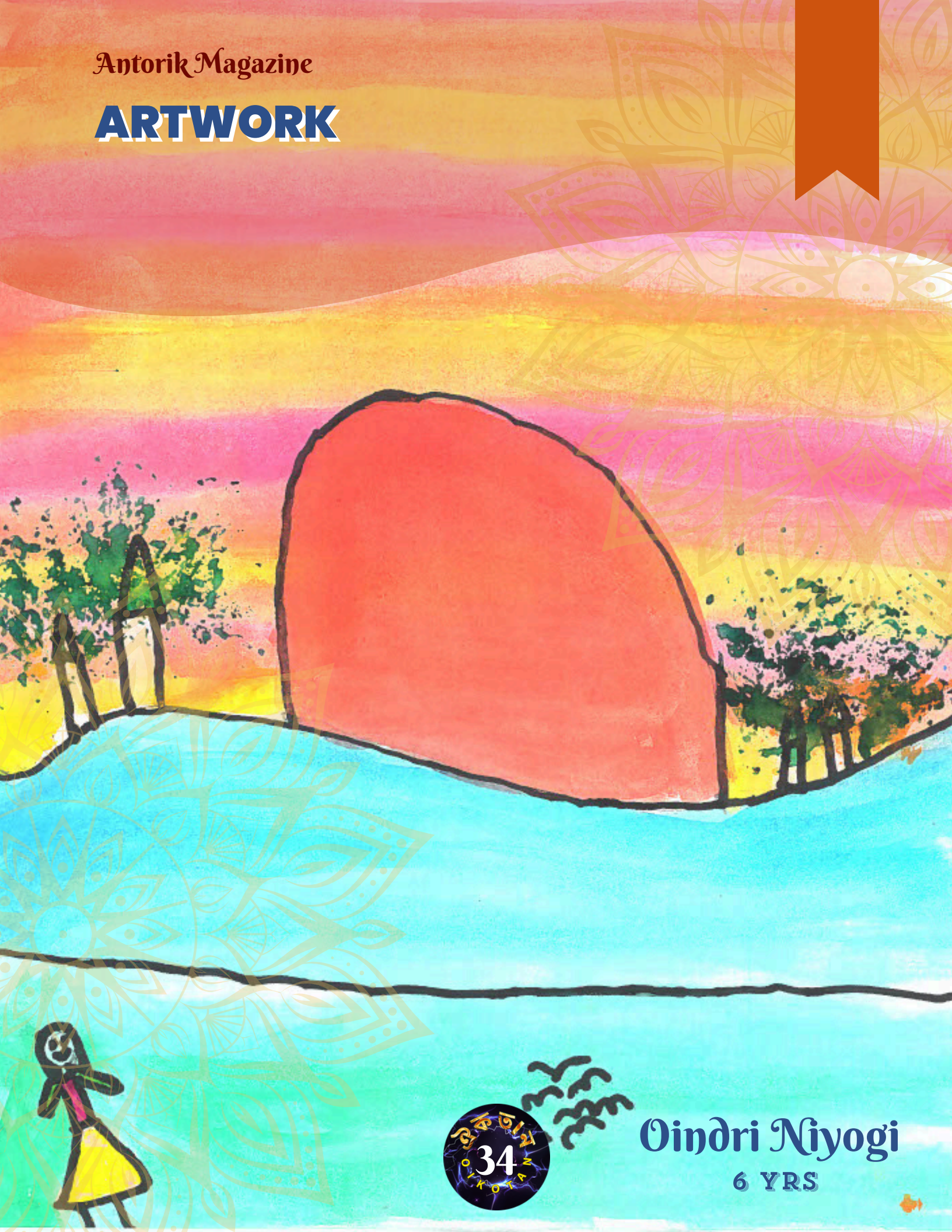
June 27 – Day 10: Seattle & Farewell

Our adventure came to an end as we returned to Seattle. We had breakfast at Savor and said goodbye to the Norwegian Joy. It was a trip I'll never forget—filled with nature, fun, and unforgettable memories.



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ARTWORK



Oindrî Niyogi

6 YRS

The Climber - Ronan Bhowmick

It was a dark and cloudy night. The time was around 12 a.m. A person cruised slowly through the wealthy neighborhood in a beat-down sedan with the headlights turned off. He was searching for something. One house in the neighborhood stood out, and he smiled when he saw it. It was much larger than the others. The man lifted his binoculars and surveyed the house through the windows. Most of the rooms' lights were off. He quickly glanced at the driveway — no cars were parked there. He figured that the homeowners were either asleep or away. It was time to make his move.

The man with a black hoodie quietly stepped out of his car with a metal pry bar and pulled on his gloves. He sprinted down the street toward the back of the property. There, he peeked through the windows and confirmed that no one was inside. Judging by the structure, he assumed it was a three-story home. Confident in his climbing skills, he knew reaching the top floor would be easy. In less than five minutes, he had scaled the wall to the third window. He wedged his pry bar beneath the wooden frame, gained leverage, and forced it open. Sliding through the gap, he slipped inside. On the upper floor, he spotted a cabinet. From his experienced eyes, he understood immediately the value of this cabinet. He broke the cabinet door in no time and collected all the jewelry into his bag. Pleased with the collection, he decided to leave. He descended the same way he had come and vanished into the night.



The Climber - Ronan Bhowmick

This person is Tom. He had a rough childhood. His parents died when he was very young, so he had to live in an orphanage. He had little education. During his free time as a child, he would sneak out and steal small items from nearby places, always managing to return without being caught. Tom made a few friends during that time, though most children avoided him because of his thieving habits. Those petty crimes helped him discover a surprising talent for climbing. Everyone at the orphanage knew he could scale any wall. That was how his journey began.

There were multiple police reports about a male suspect who stole jewelry and drove a beat-down sedan. The authorities were pursuing the case. A wanted poster offered a \$30,000 reward for information leading to his capture. He continued testing his limits — once breaking into three houses in a single night. He was never caught because he spent less than fifteen minutes at each place and kept moving into more distant neighborhoods.

About a month later, a family of four was having dinner in their home. It was a cold evening. The brother was six years old, and the sister was four. They laughed and chatted over the meal. Everything seemed peaceful. After dinner, the parents sent the children upstairs to bed and decided to watch a movie. They settled in. Moments later, a sudden blast shook the house — an explosion. The mother rushed to see what had happened and froze in terror. The staircase leading to the third floor was engulfed in flames. The parents were in panicked and fled outside with their phones to get an help. The children were trapped inside. The father called the fire department.



The Climber - Ronan Bhowmick

Then, a beat-down sedan rolled into the neighborhood. The driver with a black hoodie noticed the burning house, slammed on the brakes and grabbed his metal pry bar. He sprinted toward the flames. "What are you doing?" the father shouted.

The man gave no reply as there was no time. He leapt onto the wall of the house, using his pry bar for grip. Just as he had done many times before, he climbed skillfully, ignoring the searing heat. He shattered a window and crawled inside. First, he found the little girl and carried her down carefully. It was unlike anything he had done before, so it took time. The parents received the child in tears. Then, he went back for the boy. He scaled the wall again, retrieved the boy, and struggled down through the smoke. After setting the child safely on the ground, the man turned without a word, walked to his car, and drove off, disappearing into the foggy night.

The fire department and police soon arrived to extinguish the blaze. The father explained that a stranger had saved their children. He described the car, but when investigators searched the area, there was no trace of the vehicle or the man. He had just vanished. The mother whispered to the father, "God has sent someone to save our children today!"

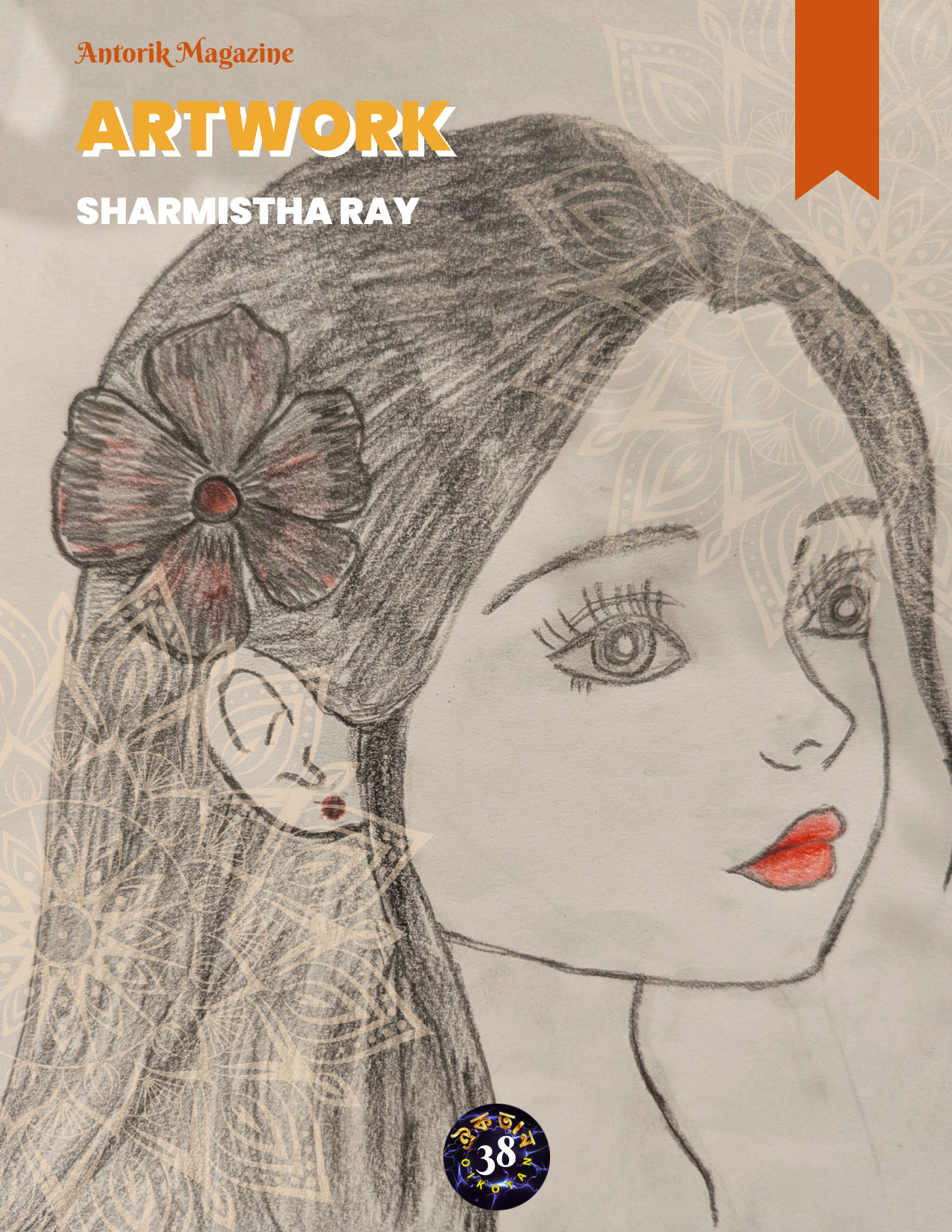
The End



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ARTWORK

SHARMISTHA RAY



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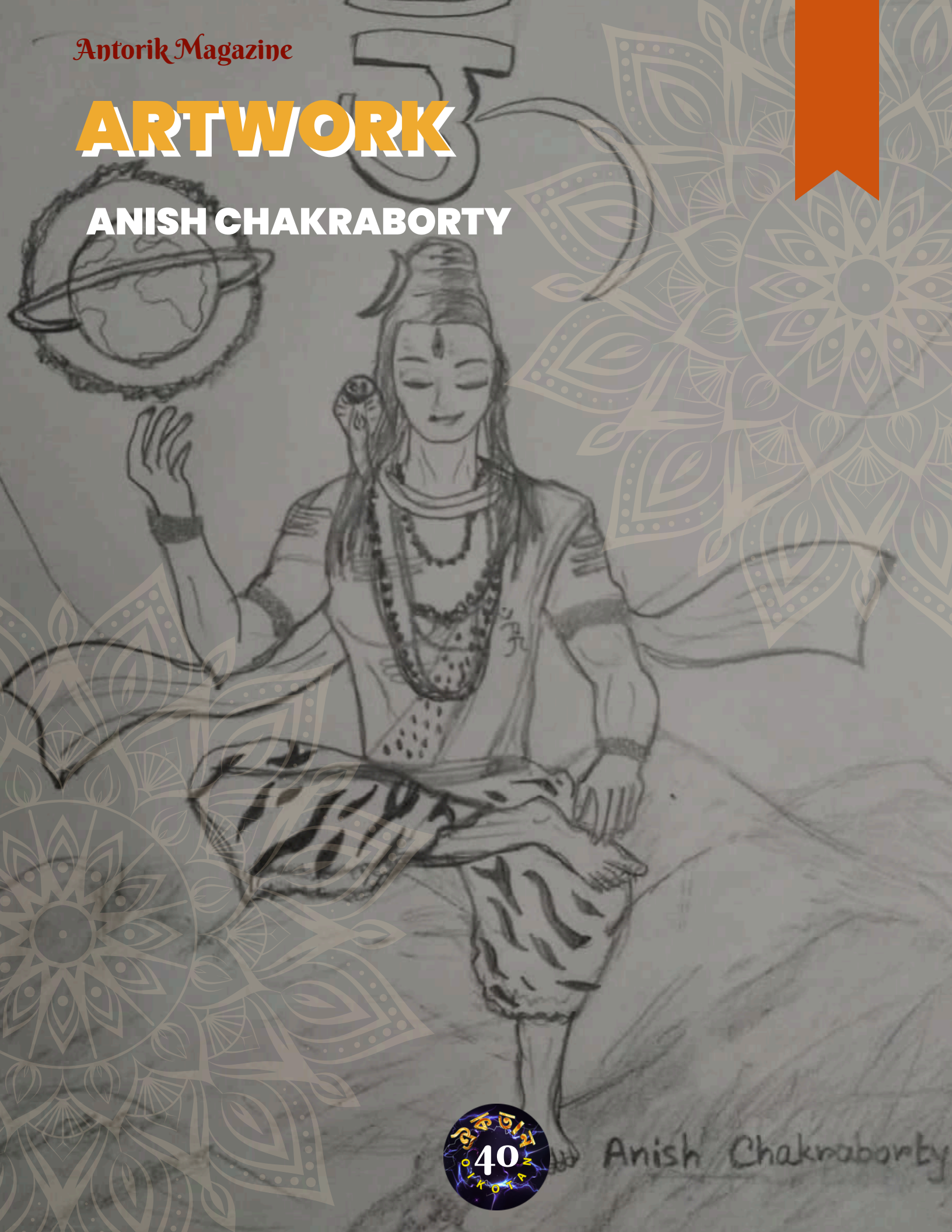
POETRY BY
PAYEL BORAL

তুমি মহামায়া, তুমি মহাকালী, তুমি মহাচণ্ডী মা
তোমার রূপে জগৎ ভুলেছে, তুমি সর্বগুণ সম্পন্না।
কখনো তুমি চতুর্ভুজা, অসুরে শাসন করো
কখনো আবার দশ হাত দিয়ে, জগৎ সংসার ধরো।
অন্নপূর্ণা হয়ে তুমি মা, অন্ন ভরে দাও
বিদ্যা দেবী সরস্বতী হয়ে, জ্ঞানের ভাণ্ডার ভরাও।
মহালক্ষ্মী মহাভাগ্য, ধন করেছে দান
তুমি মা দানুজদলনী হয়ে, নারীর রেখেছো সম্মান।
বহু নামে তুমি, বহু রূপ ধরে, বছরব্যাপী থাকো
এই সমাজের কৌলুষ সরিয়ে, শান্তি বজায় রাখো।

Antorik Magazine

ARTWORK

ANISH CHAKRABORTY



Anish Chakraborty

POETRY BY GANGOTREE DEY (গঙ্গোত্রী)

Just to let you know!

When mind lost the power,
only souls exist between us!
When words are all meaningless,
only silence can express us!

When distance can't
take you away anymore,
your arms still hold me tight!
When pitch dark surrounds me,
but your eyes give me the light!

That's our moment, even
the world takes a pause for us!
My tear rolls down a bit,
I know your tears got stuck!

In that moment
no matter how far you are,
if you think about me, you remember,
I'm thinking about you too,
your arms are my home, that's forever!

জীবাস্ম

যখন এক নির্বাক মুহূর্ত
এক যুগের নীরবতা ধারণ করে,
কিছু না বলা কথা
না বলাই থেকে যায়।

তোকে বলার মুহূর্ত,
সে যেন স্বপ্নকে ছোঁয়া।

বাস্তবের সাথে তার দূরত্ব সহস্র ক্রোশ
সেই মুহূর্ত গড়ে এক অপ্রতিরোধ্য পাহাড়!

তারপর একদিন জীবাস্মে পরিণত হয়,
আর সেই স্তরের মাঝে থেকে যাই তুই আর
আমি,
দুই নীরব নিখর অসহায় প্রাণের মতো।



ARTWORK



Advika Bhaduri

7 YRS

কালীঃ চিত্ত চিত্ত জগৎ-আমাদের
করত। পুষ্টিত মন-ব্রহ্মবিশ্বের দেহকালীঃ পুষ্টি
করত। কালীঃ। অস্বাভাবিক-দেহনা কালীঃ
পুষ্টি করত, মন-চর মন-আমরা তাঁর-
আমরা 'দীপাবলী' কালীঃ পুষ্টি করত।
এই পুষ্টি-অনন-চর চিত্ত-নবদীপাবলী-ব্রহ্ম
ব্রহ্মবিশ্ব-আমরাবিশ্ব-মিচি-চিত্ত-দেহনা
-অস্বাভাবিক চিত্ত, চর-আমরা-দেহনা
চিত্ত-আমরা চিত্ত-আমরা দেহনা-পুষ্টি

① ਦਰਿਆ ਨਾ ਕਾਲੀ ਸਾਂ ਭਲਾ ਜਾਂ ਸਿਲਾ ਦੇ

কালী দ্বন্দ্ব

ISHITA CHAKRABORTY BHADURI

[illegible]

29/12/2020
29/12/2020

কালীচন্দ্র - পৌরোহিত্যের মাত্রে অমর্য তান্ত্রিক
মাত্রে পুত্রের মাত্রে মত, অমর্যমত্রে অমর্যমত্রে
কালী, কত, পুত্রপুত্রিত্রি মাত্রে মাত্রে
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আমরা আশ্রিত পুত্র পাত্রি হইব।
আল্লাহ, হে আল্লাহ বলিদান অত্র পুত্র পাত্রি
হইব, বলি দাতা পুত্র অসম্মান বলি হইব
হয়- কালী গলাম এই পুত্র পাত্রি আছে তা
বড় পুত্র দান করি হইব হইব কালী গলাম

ਜੀ. - ਸਾਹਿਬ

[illegible]

ଆହୁରି ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହି କିଛି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ କଥା
କାହାକୁ ଜଣାଏ ନାହିଁ । ଆମେ ମଧ୍ୟ ନାନା ସମ୍ପାଦକ,
ନେତାମାନ, ମାନ୍ୟବର, କର୍ମୀମାନ, ଆ.ଲା.ମୁ.ଆ.ମାନଙ୍କ
ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଜାଣିବା ନାହିଁ ।

কালীকে অমায়িক কৃতজ্ঞতা-পুত্র
কবি বর মাতৃকৃতজ্ঞ পুত্র কবি মর আমায়ো
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— କ୍ଷମତା ହ୍ରାସ କରୁଛି

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WITH KALI AND
DEVOTEES**



Artwork by
Abhishek Home Chowdhury

ব্রিটিশ শাসনামলে কালীপূজা

অভিষেক হোম চৌধুরী

ভারতবর্ষে ব্রিটিশ শাসনের সময় (১৭৫৭–১৯৪৭) বাংলায় ধর্ম, সমাজ ও রাজনীতি একে অপরের সঙ্গে গভীরভাবে জড়িত হয়ে গিয়েছিল। এ সময় ধর্মীয় আচার-অনুষ্ঠানগুলো অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই শুধু ধর্মীয় অভিব্যক্তি ছিল না— এগুলো হয়ে উঠেছিল রাজনৈতিক প্রতিবাদ, সামাজিক ঐক্য ও জাতীয় চেতনার বাহন। সেই প্রেক্ষাপটে কালীপূজা— বাংলার অন্যতম প্রাচীন ও জনপ্রিয় উৎসব— গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে।

যেখানে দুর্গাপূজা ছিল তুলনামূলকভাবে অভিজাতদের উৎসব, সেখানে কালীপূজা ছিল জনমানুষের, লোকবিশ্বাসের, সংগ্রামী মানসিকতার এক সাংস্কৃতিক প্রকাশ। বিশেষ করে ঊনবিংশ ও বিংশ শতাব্দীতে কালীপূজা বাংলার স্বাধীনতাকামী সমাজে এক গোপন প্রতিবাদ ও ঐক্যের প্রতীকে পরিণত হয়।

ব্রিটিশ শাসনের শুরু থেকেই উপনিবেশবাদীরা ভারতীয় ধর্মীয় আচার-অনুষ্ঠানের প্রতি একদিকে কৌতূহলী, অন্যদিকে অবিশ্বাসী মনোভাব পোষণ করত। অনেক খ্রিস্টান মিশনারি ও ঔপনিবেশিক আধিকারিক হিন্দু ধর্মকে “পৌত্তলিক” বা “অসভ্য” বলে ব্যাখ্যা করত।

বিশেষ করে কালী দেবীর রুদ্ররূপ ও শ্মশানসংক্রান্ত তান্ত্রিক আচার ব্রিটিশদের কাছে “ভয়ংকর” ও “অসভ্যতা”র প্রতীক বলে মনে হতো। এই কারণে ঔপনিবেশিক প্রশাসন অনেক সময় কালীপূজা ও তন্ত্রসাধনার উপর সন্দেহ ও নজরদারি চালাত।

ব্রিটিশ শাসনামলে কালীপূজা

অভিষেক হোম চৌধুরী

কালীপূজা বাংলায় মূলত কার্তিক মাসের অমাবস্যা তিথিতে অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। দুর্গাপূজার মতো অভিজাত জমিদারদের আড়ম্বর ছিল না; বরং কালীপূজা ছিল সাধারণ মানুষের উৎসব। গ্রামের মাঠে, গলির মোড়ে, পাড়ার আঙিনায় বা শ্মশানের পাশে বসত প্যাণ্ডেল।

এই উৎসবের দুটি বড় বৈশিষ্ট্য ছিল—

এক, এটি ছিল রাত্রিকালীন পূজা, যা গোপনে বা আড়ালে সমবেত হওয়ার সুযোগ তৈরি করত।

এবং দুই, এটি ছিল লোকসমাজের উৎসব, যা ধর্ম, জাত, শ্রেণি, পেশা ইত্যাদি ভেদাভেদ ভেঙে ঐক্যের আবহ তৈরি করত।

ব্রিটিশ শাসনের সময় এই কালীপূজার মধ্যেই অনেক সময় জাতীয়তাবাদী বক্তব্য, গোপন বৈঠক ও সংগঠনের কার্যক্রম চলত।

উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর শেষ থেকে বিশ শতকের শুরু পর্যন্ত বাংলায় সশস্ত্র স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনের উত্থান ঘটে। অনুশীলন সমিতি, যুগান্তর দল, বন্দে মাতরম আন্দোলন— এ ধরনের অনেক সংগঠনের সঙ্গে কালী আরাধনার এক গভীর সম্পর্ক ছিল।

বিপ্লবীরা প্রায়শই কালী মন্দিরে গিয়ে শপথ গ্রহণ করতেন। কালীকে তারা শক্তির দেবী ও অন্যায়ের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিরোধের প্রতীক হিসেবে মানত। কালী মূর্তির সামনে তারা “বন্দে মাতরম” উচ্চারণ করে স্বাধীনতার জন্য প্রাণ বিসর্জনের প্রতিজ্ঞা করত। তাছাড়া, অনেক অস্ত্রভাণ্ডার ও বিপ্লবী কেন্দ্র কালীপূজার আসরের আড়ালে গোপনে চালানো হত। দেবীর কালো রূপ, মুণ্ডমালা ও রক্তাক্ত প্রতীক ছিল ব্রিটিশ সাম্রাজ্যবাদকে ধ্বংস করার এক মানসিক সাহসের উৎস।

ব্রিটিশ শাসনামলে কালীপূজা

অভিষেক হোম চৌধুরী

ঔপনিবেশিক শাসনের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিবাদের ভাষা সব সময় রাজনৈতিক ছিল না। অনেক সময় এটি ধর্মীয় প্রতীক ও দেব-দেবীর রূপে প্রকাশ পেত। কালীপূজার মঞ্চে, প্রতিমার রূপে, গানে ও নাটকে কালী দেবীকে ব্রিটিশ শাসনের বিরুদ্ধে এক “সংগ্রামী মাতৃরূপে” তুলে ধরা হত।

প্রতিমায় কালীকে অনেক সময় অসুরের উপর দাঁড়িয়ে দেখা যেত, আর অসুরকে ইংরেজ সৈন্য বা রাজশক্তির প্রতীক হিসেবে উপস্থাপন করা হত। পল্লীগীত, কীর্তন ও নাটকে ইংরেজ শাসনের অত্যাচারকে কালী দেবীর রূদ্ররূপে ধ্বংসের কথা বলা হত।

এইভাবে কালীপূজা হয়ে উঠেছিল এক গোপন প্রতিবাদের সাংস্কৃতিক ভাষা, যা ব্রিটিশ প্রশাসন পুরোপুরি নিয়ন্ত্রণ করতে পারেনি।

ঔপনিবেশিক প্রশাসন প্রাথমিকভাবে কালীপূজাকে শুধুমাত্র “লোকউৎসব” হিসেবে দেখলেও ধীরে ধীরে বুঝতে পারে এর মধ্যে প্রতিরোধের এক সাংস্কৃতিক শক্তি লুকিয়ে আছে।

ইংরেজ শাসকরা কালীপূজার আসরে বিপ্লবীদের কার্যকলাপ নিয়ে সন্দেহ করতে শুরু করে। ১৯০৫ সালের বঙ্গভঙ্গ আন্দোলনের সময় কালী আরাধনা ও দেশপ্রেম এক হয়ে যায়। এর ফলে, অনেক বিপ্লবী সাহিত্য ও গানে “ভারত মা” ও “কালী মা”র প্রতীকী মেলবন্ধন দেখা যায়।

ব্রিটিশ শাসনামলে কালীপূজা শুধুমাত্র একটি পূজা ছিল না— এটি ছিল গোপন প্রতিবাদের ভাষা, মানসিক সাহসের প্রতীক, এবং জনমানুষকে একত্র করার একটি সাংস্কৃতিক উপকরণ।

যেখানে দুর্গা ছিলেন সমাজের শৃঙ্খলিত শক্তির প্রতীক, কালী ছিলেন রূদ্র, প্রতিরোধী ও মুক্তির দেবী। ঠিক সেই রূদ্রশক্তির আড়ালেই জন্ম নিয়েছিল বিপ্লবীদের শপথ, প্রতিরোধের গান, আর স্বাধীনতার স্বপ্ন।

আজও মা কালী বাংলার সংস্কৃতিতে কেবল ভক্তির নয়, প্রতিরোধ ও আত্মসম্মানের এক চিরন্তন প্রতীক।

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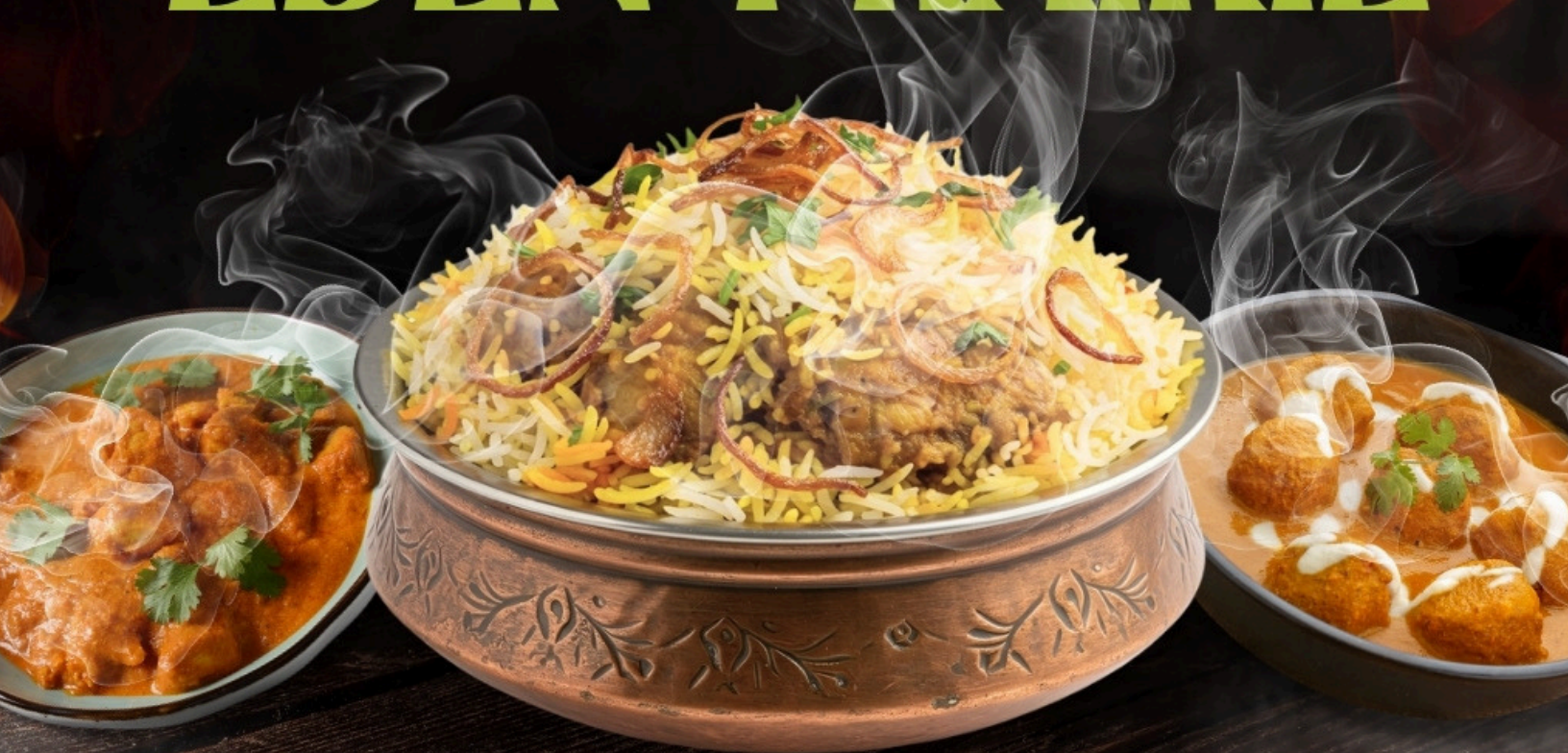
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