



ଚିରନ୍ତନ

Chirantan (Newsletter)

ଓଁ ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଓଁ



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ପ୍ରଭୃତ୍ଵିଂ ଚ ନିବୃତ୍ତ୍ଵିଂ ଚ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାକାର୍ଯ୍ୟେ ଭୟାଭୟେ ।
ବନ୍ଦଂ ମୋକ୍ଷଂ ଚ ଯା ବେତ୍ତି ବୁଦ୍ଧିଃ ସା ପାର୍ଥ ସାତ୍ତ୍ଵିକୀ ॥

ଏହି ଶ୍ଳୋକଟି ଭଗବାନ୍ ଗୀତାର ଅକ୍ଷୟ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରାଯାଇଛି । ଶ୍ରୀ ଭଗବାନ କହିଲେ - ଯେଉଁ ବୁଦ୍ଧିବଳରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଜାଣିପାରେ କ'ଣ କରଣୀୟ ଏବଂ କ'ଣ କରଣୀୟ ନୁହେଁ, କାହାକୁ ଭୟ କରିବା ଏବଂ କାହାକୁ ଭୟ ନ କରିବା, ବନ୍ଦନ କ'ଣ ଓ ମୁକ୍ତି କ'ଣ-ସେ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ସାତ୍ତ୍ଵିକ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଅଟେ ।

Lord Krishna said to Arjuna in Chapter 18, Mokshya-Sanyasa Joga of Gita: "O Arjuna, the knowledge by which one understands the path of work and the path of renunciation, right and wrong action, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, that knowledge is Saattvika."

September is Children's Month:

We celebrate September as the Children's month. For this year's activity every child should prepare a *sloka* from Gita and explain it. They should give one example of the *sloka*'s applicability in real life.

Different children can prepare a *sloka* from different chapters of Gita. In that case it will add variety. The other option is that the children prepare different *slokas* from one particular chapter and thus we can cover one chapter in our discussion.

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Lord Jagannath's New Home in DC area

Members of JOGA have raised funds to install Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra Devi at newly built Hindu temple in Siver Spring. As the temple construction work is progressing slowly, Jagannath devotees are



anxiously waiting for the auspicious day of Lord's welcome ceremony to the temple. According to the temple management, November first week is the tentative time for deity installation. More detailed information on deity

installation will be available at www.jogaworld.org as we move closer to that day. We thank the following devotees for their support in fund raising for the deity installation.

- Jhunu and Indu Mishra
- Sanghamitra and Pradyot Behera
- Susmita and Pradip Behera
- Urmila and Devaraj Sahu
- Mousumi and Sandeep Patnayak
- Sujata and Sarat Dalai
- Bigyani and Naresh Das
- Anjana and Debaki Chowdhury
- Bijoylaxmi and Pratap Dash
- Nirlipta and Balakrishna Dixit
- Babita and Prasanna Nayak
- Dharitri and Prafulla Mishra
- Tupun and Anil Das
- Meera and Shashadhar Mohapatra
- Priti and Hemant Biswal
- Manas R. Dash
- Gyana Ranjan Bohidar
- Sangeeta and Prafulla Nayak
- Urmila Mohapatra
- Namita and Chitaranjan Das
- Hemant Pradhan
- Shila and Bhabani Das
- Ratan and Chandrika Mohanty
- Nirod Mohanty
- Susama Panda
- Monalisa Mishra

POEMS/STORIES/ESSAYS/ARTICLES

Ganesh Puja (August 27, 2006)

Ganesh Puja is the birthday of Lord Ganesh. This falls on the 4th day of Bhadrava Shuklapaksha of the Hindu calendar. Ganeshji is the God of learning and good fortune. Ganesh is worshiped all over India. He is addressed as the "Remover of Obstacles" (Bighnaraja). In sanskrit "gana" means "multitude" and "Isa" means "Lord". Thus Ganesha literally means the "Lord of all beings". Ganesh is also known as "Gajanana" (elephant faced – Gaja: Elephant, Ananan: face).

The four arms of Ganesh represent mind, intellect, ego and consciousness. The axe in his hand symbolizes the destruction of all desires and attachments. The rope in his other hand is meant to pull the seeker out of the worldly attachments and bind in the everlasting bliss.

In Orissa, Ganesh is mostly worshiped in educational institutions on this day. Festivities include gorgeous clothing and decoration of the God. There are entertainment programs and invocational songs lasting from 3-5 days.

In Odissi dance, Ganesh Mangalacharan dance is presented with the following sloka for Lord Ganesh

Mushikavaahana modaka hashta,
Chaamara karna vilambitha sutra,
Vaamana rupa maheshwara putra,
Vighna vinaayaka paada namasthe

MEANING: "O Lord Vinayaka! the remover of all obstacles, the son of Lord Shiva, with a form which is very short, with mouse as Thy vehicle, with sweet pudding in hand, with wide ears and long hanging trunk, I prostrate at Thy lotus-like Feet!"

Some Ganesh slokas used in Oriya Ganesh Puja

om, shukLAmbara dharam biSnum shashIbarnam
chaturbhujam
prasanna-badanam dhyAet sarbabighnopa-shANtaye

Meaning: I meditate upon the deity Lord Bighneswar for the removal of all obstacles; the Lord who is all pervading and wears a white garment, who has bright complexion like full moon, who has four hands, and who has ever-smiling face.

namo Ganesha bighnesha
giriJA nandana prabho



mama bighna binAshAya
GaNAdhipataye namah

Meaning: I salute Lord Ganesh, who is the remover of all obstacles, who is the son of Girija (Parvati, the daughter of the mountain). Please take away my obstacles, I salute you the Lord of the mass.

vakratuNDa mahAkAya sUryakoTisamaprabha
nirvighnaM kuru me deva sarvakAryeshhu sarvadA ||

Meaning: O Ganapati, One with a curved trunk, a large body, and a brilliance equal to a crore (10 million) suns! O God, please make all my undertakings free from obstacles always.

ekadantam mahAkAyam lambodara gajAnanam
bighna nAshakaram debam heramam praNamAmyaham
||

Meaning: I bow to that God, Who has one tusk, one Who has a large body, one Who has a big stomach, one Who has the face of an elephant; He who destroys all obstacles and Who is also called Herambh (beloved of the Mother).

ତୁମେ ଏକା ପୁଣି ସଂସାରେ
ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, ଡେବନ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ



ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ହରେ
ମୁକୁନ୍ଦ ମାଧବ ହରେ ।ପଦା

ତୁମେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜନାର୍ଦ୍ଦନ ସତ୍ୟ ସନାତନ
ନିତ୍ୟ ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ତୁମେ ଜଗତ କାରଣ
ତୁମ ପଦେ ପ୍ରଣତି କରେ ।୧।
ତୁମେ ରାମ ତୁମେ କୃଷ୍ଣ ତୁମେ ଗୋପୀନାଥ
ଏ ଜଗତେ ସବୁ ମିଥ୍ୟା ତୁମେ ଏକା ସତ୍ୟ
ତୁମ ନାମ ସବୁ ନାମରେ ।୨।
ଏ ଯେତେ ତୁମ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ସବୁ ଅସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ
ଯେଉଁ ଫୁଲ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସେ ପୁଣି ଗନ୍ଧହୀନ
ତୁମେ ଏକା ପୁଣି ସଂସାରେ ।୩।
ତୁମେ ମୋର ପ୍ରଣ୍ଣ ପୁଣି ତୁମେ ମୋ ଉତ୍ତର
ତୁମ ପାଦପଦ୍ମେ ରଖି ମଥାକୁ ମୋହର
ମୁକ୍ତିର ପଥକୁ ଝୁରେ ।୪।

The Owners

Vikash Sahu, Germantown, MD

They always come and go,
They seem to ebb and flow.
The Owners

If littering is a crime,
Then they should pay a fine.
The Owners

They always hit and run,
They think that it's good fun.
The Owners

They never come with bags,
Brown Mush is a red flag.
The Owners

They do it all the time,
They think that it is fine.
The Owners

Where it's done grows lush,
When it belongs...FLUSH.
The Owners

Expel their waste for fun,
As if to say "I'm done,"
The Owners take one look and run,
The Dog Owners...

"Shri Krishna Leelaswadana" in Jagannath Sanskruti :

Leeta Mohanty, Framingham, MA

Legend has it that the mortal remains of Lord Krishna cremated at Dwarka, floated and traveled to the east coast where Puri stands. The unburnt heart of Krishna floated and Jara Savara picked it up. Later, this fossilized heart became the tribal deity of the Savaras. When king Indradyumna wanted a place to establish worship of Vishnu on earth, his emissary Vidyapati found the place which is now called Puri.

In the book ShriKhetra Mahatmya, Jagannath is referred to as "Shrisha", as a deity "Jagannath", as avatar "Krishna". When Shankaracharya visited Puri, he sang glories to Jagannath as the same Lord Krishna who resides in Vrindavan. Poet Jayadev being immersed in Shri Radha Krishna leela, sang Geeta Govinda in Shri

Mandira. The ritual of singing Gita Govinda in front of Lord Jagannath goes on till date. In the pursuit of Shri Krishna, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu reached Shrikhetra. He had the vision of Jagannath as "Dwibhuja Muralidhara Nava kishora Natabara". He stayed back in Puri for eighteen years until he left the world for heavenly abode.

In the book "Purushotama Khetra Mahatmya", the main name of Jagannath is Krishna. In the different vestas, we find the legends of Krishna come alive like "Bankachuda vesa", "Kaliyadalana vesa", "Radha damodara vesa", "Banabhoji vesa". The Jagannath idol which goes out of the temple during Chandan Jatra and Dola Jatra is referred to as "Madan Mohan". During the Jatra festival which is organized inside Shri Mandira, many leelas from Krishna's life are re-enacted like Rukmini Bibaha, Bana Bhoji, Kaliyadalana etc.

It is this strength of Bhakti Bhava which makes everyone equal in Shrikhetra. There is no distinction of rich and poor, ruled and ruler and there's no place for caste, creed or religion. Jagannath culture immersed in "Shri Krishna rasa aswadana" remains a prime example of peaceful coexistence and love for all human kind.

Article by Ms. Leeta Mohanty, an Architect working in Boston Massachusetts. She has an M.Arch from Texas A&M University and a certificate in Historic preservation. As an architect, her focus is in Urban design and sustainable environment. She is also actively involved in working for the Organization "Bansi Bilas". Bansi Bilas is a non-profit organization operating from Bhubaneswar, Orissa to promote Orissa culture through Dance, music and documentation of Oriya literary works.

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He is Chirantana and we are mere actors in his play

Pritinanda Panda, New Jersey

The following lines refer to the importance of Almighty in our Life. In this materialistic world, whatever happens yesterday, today and tomorrow is all written and directed by almighty. We all are players to act at his discretion.

The great Mahabharata war was going on between *pandavas* and *kauravas*. Lord Krishna was *Saarathi* of Arjuna. Great warriors *Karna* and *Arjuna* were face to face in *Dharmakhetra Kurukhetra*. So far, *Arjuna* had already fought with *Pitamaha Bhishma* and *Dronacharya* and was victorious. Arjuna was a great warrior and a sharp shooter of that day of war. *Karna* was no less, probably better capable at executing battle strategy.

On that day, *Arjuna* pushed *Karna's* Chariot miles backward couple of times. *Arjuna* was feeling joyous as he was overpowering *Karna*. But his happiness vanished like a bubble when *Karna* in one stroke pushed *Arjuna's* chariot 7-8 feet back. Lord *Krishna*, sitting next to *Arjuna* started cheering *Karna* for his bravery.

Arjuna was frustrated at his friend *Krishna's* words. He was in terrible confusion. He could not understand his friend, philosopher and guide. Since morning he was winning the battle, he could push *karna's* chariot couple of times for miles, but *Krishna* did not say a single word. "How could *Krishna* praise *Karna* so much, for only 7 feet? Am I not dear to him? Should not I be his praise worthy? Why he is behaving differently today?"

Confused and ignorant of *Krishna's* existence, *Partha* requested *Krishna* all that was working in his mind. That moment *Krishna* explained *Arjuna* about his existence in the chariot. If *Krishna* was not there besides *Arjuna*, the chariot would have been destroyed long back. *Karna* standing in the other side of *Kuruskhetra* alone in the chariot could push us for 7 feet, was enough to demonstrate his capability. *Arjuna* then realized that without *Krishna*, *Arjuna* does not exist. This became crystal clear to *Arjuna* on the last day of *Mahabharata*.

Krishna was very dutiful as a driver in the chariot. He did not touch any weapon in 18 days of *Kurukhetra* war. Everyday in the dusk, when the war ends, he gets down from chariot and guides *Arjuna* down. But that day he asked his friend *Arjuna* to get down first before him. Surprised *Partha* got down from the chariot and went ahead. Suddenly when he turned back he was surprised to see his chariot getting burnt slowly.

Krishna explained how the chariot could exist in front of warriors like *Pitamaha Bhishma*, *Guru Drona*. It should have been burnt from the very first day itself. But as a creator and director, he had written, the war would proceed for 18 days. So the chariot had to survive till end of 18 days. *Arjuna* then realized how ignorant he was. In this world, there is only one truth and that is *Krishna*. Everything starts with him and ends with him.

He is *chirantana* and the only eternal truth.

Jagannatha Seva Sanstha – A Transcending Vision

Shashadhar Mohapatra, Silver Spring, MD

JSS (Jagannatha Seva Sanstha) is a charitable organization, created two years ago, to strengthen the foundation of Jagannath Culture in rural Orissa, help poor and sick people, poor and needy students, help a school, help a poor person who was unable to meet the financial need of his/her daughter's wedding etc. It was started by our family with the help of local volunteers in our community. It was like a long cherished dream that came true bringing smiles in many faces. But, doing such work under the banner of a formal organization was needed. This idea was proposed by the members of this organization. That is when "JSS" was born. This organization has been registered as a charitable organization in Orissa. There are no overhead expenses. All the contributions are used on charity. All the incomes and expenses are accounted with due diligence.

One of the major undertakings that is recently being worked out by "JSS" is to build a Jagannath temple in our community. There was not a Jagannath temple in our area. It will be the first temple at least in fifteen mile radius centering round our village. It can be used as a shelter during natural disasters in the area. Also, it may be used to celebrate marriage or thread ceremony to generate revenue for the temple.

The future plan is to attract, involve more volunteers, sevakas, donors and other organizations. One of the organizations that is willing to help is "Jagannath Organization for Global Awareness (JOGA)" a brain-child of Dr. Naresh Das of Columbia, Maryland, who is the founder and currently serving as the Director of JOGA (visit jogaworld.org for details).

As the famous adage goes, there are many blocks to be successful in a noble deed. There were some hurdles which were eventually cleared. It was August 12, 2005. The morning was gorgeous. The sky was clear and bright. The Lord smiled on us and gave His blessings. The ground breaking ceremony "Bhumi Puja" (picture) was performed on that day with pomp and ceremony. During the ceremony a few drops of rain fell from the sky. Everybody including the priest said that rain was a good sign. After the puja vegetarian meals were served to everybody.

The foundation work started on November 20, 2005. A major portion of the land for this temple project was donated by my family. Another piece of land was donated by one of my uncles in our village. There is also plan to buy some lands adjacent to this property in the future. It is a long term plan. The original target is to finish the temple work within five years. This target date may be reduced if we get external help from various donors including individuals and organizations.

The main temple has been designed like the temple at Puri. There would be three temples. The biggest temple at the back will be 65' high, the one in the middle will be 35' and the one at the front entrance will be 45' high. The temple will be built in three phases. The first phase consists of the base of the temple. It includes a prayer hall of 50' L x 42'W x 10'H. We have completed about 75% of the first phase until now. In the second phase the actual three temples on the top of this hall will be built. The initial estimate for this main temple was 45 lakhs (INR). But, recently the prices of building materials (cement, rods, chips etc.) have gone up. There



are also plans to build a "Laxmi Mandir" at the sides of the main temple, a kitchen, a residential quarter for the priest and his family, boundary and a pond. There is an existing pond nearby. It will be renovated to make it bigger, deeper and better. There is also a plan to create a trust fund to support the annual expenses of the temple including "Rath Yatra". The complete plan is estimated to be 100 lakhs (INR).

During the ground breaking ceremony, our priest advised us that we should go to different places, meet with people and ask for alms "Viksyā" before laying the foundation stone of the temple. We asked him the reason for this. He explained by saying that people usually take pride when they build a temple or start a big project. They should not have that feeling in their minds at all. Therefore, one should go and ask for alms like a poor beggar. By doing that one not only gets rid of those negative thoughts, but also gets support and blessings



from the people and the Lord. It made a perfect sense to us. Since, we had to leave the country and were unable



to be there on November 20, two of my sisters along with some volunteers from our village went from door to door in the neighboring villages with begging bowls in their hands in their bare feet and collected six thousand rupees. Both of my sisters had requested me and my wife to do so. I took this opportunity to ask our dear friends, brothers and sisters for their help ("Viksyā") for this noble cause. It is worth mentioning here that now, we see help and support coming from the community irrespective of caste and creed.

I visited Orissa recently from April 22nd to May 2nd. During my short stay there, I observed that small children, people both young and old, male and female were eagerly doing free manual work without being asked. It was priceless. I was shocked. Tears came to my eyes. When I said I would take their pictures, the news spread like a wild fire. Many showed up within a few minutes and I was ready to take their pictures.

Let me tell you a story of my childhood days. I was very young. I grew up in a small village. There were about 200 people at that time. Half of the people were "Sabarnas" and half were "Asabarna" (Harijana). I had no friends in my village. My older sister, a handful of my uncles and nieces were there but, they were older to me. I had lots of spare time. I was very naughty. I used to give hard times to small children especially who come to our village for begging. Sometimes, they come to our house almost routinely. My mother used to give food to each and every person whoever came to our door. Once there was a girl of my age who came for begging. I was scaring her away. My mother was begging me not to do so. I asked my mother, "Why do you give them food always? You make them lazy". She would always give some reasons to please me. She would say: "she does not have a mother". I ask "How do you know she does not have a mother? Then she would say "I have heard from other people". I knew she was telling just like that. Some other time she would say: "I give them for you guys". I ask, "Why you give them for us". She would say "If I give them then God will give more to my kids". I argue with her saying, "How do you know that God will give us in return?" She would say "I am your mother, trust me what I say". If I still insist, she would say, "Please let me do what I want to do. It is ok for me if you decide not to give anything to the poor and needy

people when you are big and become a parent. If I am alive at that time, then I promise you that I'll not bother you".

On many occasions, I have seen her giving everything to the beggars and keeping nothing for her. She herself would eat with pickles. It so happened that she was not alive when I became a father. She was already in the heaven. She died of heart attack in 1986 when I was a graduate student in this country. I was too young to understand these things at that time. As I grew old and my hairs turned gray, I tried to understand what the poor lady meant to say. Sometimes, I got confused and lost when I debate in my mind. Was it really God who gave us what ever we have? Was it our hard work, sincerity, dedication? I had spent hours and hours and didn't find an easy answer. So, I decided that she was probably right.

I am describing another story. Like a ritual in every household, we were taught to bow down to the Lord every morning and every evening. I just bow down and don't say anything or ask for anything. Once, I asked my mother. Do you say or ask something to the Lord when you bow down? She laughed and laughed. She said "You are so stupid". Then she was quiet for sometime. Perhaps, she didn't know an easy answer. I didn't give up. I insisted to get an answer from her that day. I said "If you don't tell me why, then from today onwards I am not going to bow down to the Lord." I was a very stubborn child. She realized that I was serious. Then she said to me to repeat, "O' Lord ! Give me knowledge, wisdom, long life, fulfill my wishes, and keep everybody happy and peaceful". It was a "Mantra" to me. As of now, when I bow to the Lord, I chant those lines that my mother taught me several decades ago. This poor woman didn't have a degree from a school or college. She knew only how to read and write. She knew one universal language that is love for all and hatred for none.

Whether it is because of God's grace or because of our hard work, we are His blessed sons and daughters. I feel that God is an integral part of life. We are all God's children. I also feel that it is our duty and responsibility to help those who are less fortunate and deprived and also the community as a whole that helped us to reach our goal. Now, it is our payback time. May be God will give to us more in our next birth and to our children as my mother believed in till she breathed her last. I add a beautiful quotation by Albert Pike "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal".

As a fellow Oriya, I appeal to all our brothers and sisters in India, USA, Canada and all over the world for your help and support. It is said "Seva hin Dharma". One can do seva in various forms. One can give his/her time or advice, share his/her past experience and above all one can generously contribute towards the temple fund. Dr. Naresh Das has agreed that one can donate by writing a check to JOGA and mention it as "temple fund" in order to get a tax break. JOGA can write a check back to us. We are open minded and are willing to accept any help. No amount is small when it is used for the Lord's cause. May Lord Jagannath bless you, your friends and families! For questions, comments and suggestions please contact:

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Building Our Dream House, Part I *Naresh Das, Dayton, MD*

It was a sunny and cold afternoon in January 2005. After looking at a couple of open houses, I brought my family to 4525 Rutherford Way, Dayton and said, "See! Here is the land for our future home. Let us get down and see this land." "No..!" Big thunder busted my Toyota/ciena van. "You can not build a house and we don't want to see the land." It was like a chorus song coming from my wife and three kids with one pitch. We left the place without getting out of the van. I was mentally prepared to buy that land and build my dream home there. So I prayed God, besides giving me strength and courage to build the house, help me convince my family members at least to think that they can live there in future.

With 50 feet wide divided road on the front and nice looking pond on the side, I was imagining Lord Jagannath's future home at this site. With God's grace buying the land was a piece of cake. Starting from accepting our offer price by the seller, getting land loan approved to closing, everything was passed without a hitch. We bought the land in March 2005. Real problem started when I planned to build the house. Thanks to google.com which gave me lot of information on house

building project. The overall impression I got from internet is to make one knowledgeable on any project one wants to execute. I read many books borrowed from public library and got an overall picture of house building project. The lesson I learned from reading the books are:

1. It is very risky to act as your own general contractor if you do not have previous building experience.
2. You will save 20-30% of your building cost if you act yourself as your general contractor.
3. Compare at least three quotes for each job category before selecting the contractor. Ask each contractor to provide few references and check with them their quality of workmanship.
4. Advantages of different types of materials used in building. For example the foundation wall can be made by pour in concrete, or by cement blocks.
5. How to get and work with construction loan.
6. Got the complete idea of building steps required for house construction.

We had collected enough information from our open house tours and knew pretty well what should be the floor plan. Accordingly I contacted many architects and found ATI inc. to be more cooperative than others to work with. While my building plan was under preparation by the ATI inc., I contacted a few builders to get the building cost. I was thinking I could design the building to be within our affordable budget. But no builders agreed to give any cost analysis unless they see the architectural plan. Another important job was to develop a site plan where the building would be located. Similar to architecture selection, I had to interview at least three civil engineering farms. The hard part was to find a farm that would take my job and finish in reasonable time. The problem with civil engineering farm was that they all worked with big builders for whom they design many houses. So for single house owner like me some of them even told they cannot give a quote. I consoled myself not to lose hope as I had a long journey ahead and the Lord was in the lead. Finally I signed a contract with Fischer and Collins civil farm for site plan development. Both the architect and the civil engineer were responsible to develop building plan which would be submitted to county for building permit. Though I was told it would take 6-8 weeks for designing the plan, it took almost four months. After a few iterations, the architect gave me the preliminary building plan in July, 2005. Each set of plan contained 10 sheets of 24x36 inch drawing paper. I gave the plans to three

builders to get the cost estimate. When I got the cost estimate from the builders, I found out that neither could I afford that amount nor any bank would give us loan for that amount as we had substantial land loan. I paused, asked myself and God, "Should I sell the land or try to build the house myself?"

I got the answer from a "Builders Show" in Baltimore. While looking at various booths along with my daughter Mrunali, a person named Jigesh Patel introduced him and told that he was in similar situation like mine. But he had decided to build the house with himself as his general contractor. I got his email address and came back with a firm decision to act myself as my general contractor. I submitted the building and site plans to county for building permit in August. After few weeks when I contacted Jigesh, he told that he had already built the foundation wall and talking to a building supervisor Marti to hire him on hourly basis just for advice. I talked to Marti and found him very experienced and cooperative to work with. So Marti became Biswakarma of my house building project.

Financing the construction project is a very critical issue. When I talked to a few lenders to give me the construction loan, they denied financing as I didn't have any building experience. They only finance if a licensed builder builds the house. So I had no other choice except taking home equity loan of my old house. I knew the equity amount will not be sufficient enough



(Concrete is poured for the foundation wall)

for completion of the project, but took a risk to start the project with an optimistic hope on Lord's wish that it would be completed. Ground breaking work started in first week of October, 2005. After careful selection, I lined up excavation, foundation concrete and painting

contractors. I got at least 3-4 quotes for each job and made selections based on total cost as well as reference check.

It rained heavily for a week after the foundation wall was poured and before the basement slab could be poured. The basement had about two feet of water and was not drying as the temperature was not hot enough. Though I had plumber waiting for putting under ground pipes and concrete contractor to pour slab, I didn't have any contractor to remove water from basement. I also didn't have time to get three quotes for that job. I took Mrunali again and told her that we both could take the water out in our Indian way using sea-saw boat. She said, "Papa, you are crazy, you can not use Indian way here in America." I took that challenge, the water was taken out, as well as under ground pipes and the basement slab could be poured on time.

With heavy rains, occasionally mud transferred to the main road through trucks and other vehicles. One day I got a call from the county inspector that I had to put stones in the driveway by close of the next business day or else he would stop further construction work. It seems that one of the neighbors had complained about the mud on the road. I was shocked and could not comprehend that my work had to be stopped as I had to get at least three quotes for this unscheduled work and check their reference. All these I had to do within 24 hours. In fact I called a few stone companies and could not get any immediate reply for this small job. So with a heavy heart I went to the construction site in the afternoon with a hope that I would see a big stop sign from the inspector. To my utter surprise I found that one truck load of stones was delivered and laid on the road. So I thanked God and praised for this miracle.

In the subsequent parts I will present many such miracles I experienced during the construction of my dream home.

Amaresh Sahu To Train in Beijing

Amaresh Sahu, age 14, has been sponsored by the USA Table Tennis sports organization to attend a table tennis training camp in Beijing, China, from August 15, 2006 to September 4, 2006. Amaresh will attend the training camp along with other team mates from the US National table tennis team. Amaresh just completed his sponsored table tennis training at the Texas Wesleyan University in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Amaresh is sponsored by the table tennis equipment vendor, Butterfly. His picture is on the web at the site http://www.butterflyonline.com/Butterfly_players.asp.

Amaresh will be a tenth grader at the Montgomery Blair Magnet High School in Silver Spring, MD. In the summer of 2005, he completed the Johns Hopkins course on differential and integral calculus with an A+ grade. He lives with his parents, Urmila and Devaraj Sahu in Germantown, MD.

Bhajan Program sponsors:

Thanks to all the families for their participation and contribution for the success of the bhajan program. What a better way to celebrate your family's special functions such as birthday, memorial Day etc at temple and offer prasad to the devotees! That is what many of our community members are doing by sponsoring bhajan program. Our heartfelt thanks to the following families for sponsoring feasts on different months:

*Babita and Prasanna Nayak, MD
Nirlipta and Bala Dixit, VA
Smriti and Anup Nayak, MD
Deepa and Debanand Das, MD
Soni and Rajnikant Rath, MD
Sujata and Shashadhar Mohapatra, MD*

Today's thought:

The artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without work.

- Emile Zola (1840-1902)

Bhajan Schedule: Third Saturday of every month

**Place: Jagannath Temple, 200 Bloomsbery Ave.
Catonsville, MD 21228, Ph. 410 719 1776**

6:00 –9:00 PM Bhajan, Arati, Prabachan and Prasad

Chirantan

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