

# Contents

- [General Overview](#)
- [Melana](#)
- [Bhajan on the theme of "Lila Bhajan"](#)
- [Welcome Speech](#)
- [Stage Management](#)
- [Cultural Program](#)
  - \* [Odissi by Meera Das](#)
  - \* [Children's Program](#)
    - [Dances: Classical, Devotional, Ceremonial](#)
    - [Drama: Draupadi](#)
    - [Children's Talent Show](#)
  - \* [Program by Adults](#)
    - [Sitar Playing by Guru Nabaghana Singha and Music by the Group](#)
    - [Drama: Kholachithi](#)
    - [Drama: Saradha Bali Kanduchhi](#)
    - [Pala \(Bhakta Dhruba\)](#)
- [50/50 Prizes](#)
- [Trophies and Recognition](#)
- [Dinner](#)
- [Memories: Video Recording and Photographs](#)
- [Cleaning](#)
- [Holi Sponsors](#)

**Note:** Holi program was arranged by [JOGA, Jagannatha Organization for Global Awareness](#) at [Murugan Temple Auditorium, 6300 Princess Garden Parkway, Lanham, Maryland 20706](#)

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## General Overview

The sun was shining bright. On March 19, 2005 JOGA volunteers in charge of decoration had gathered from 10:00 AM to decorate the auditorium. Special Holi screen was hanged with a projector screen on the top for slide projections. At 3:00 PM other volunteers joined the group. Volunteers in charge of stage management, sound systems, registration had gathered before 3:45 PM. At 4:00 PM sharp, Holi Melana (procession of deities) started. Decorated palanquins, small and big were carried by children and adults and procession continued from the main entrance side of the temple and continued around the temple finally reaching the auditorium entrance. It was a record in the history of Oriya programs, i.e., any Indian programs. The program started ON TIME. In Orissa we always celebrated this day with a lot of festivities and colorful melana. In Washington DC area we also celebrated Holi with the same charm and same spirit as we do in Orissa. This was our seventh year of Holi celebration. Thanks to the punctual families those arrived on

time to prove that we do follow rules and principles. The special charm was added by our honorable guests, Guru Naba Singha and Meera Das who were very punctual.

Whether somebody was a fan of comedy shows, a lover of sensational/devotional/classical music, a fan of classical dances, or admirer of folk dances, or wanted to engage himself/herself in kirtan and meLA, or just wanted to go back to refresh his/her childhood memory of watching "PALA", Holi 2005 in Washington DC had everything for everybody.



The seventh Hori celebration in DC area is over, but the memories will last forever. About 60-70 families with representatives from 5 states, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland participated in the event.



We thank you all who volunteered, who drove long distance to participate in the function, who worked hard to perform and present a cultural item, who coordinated and cooked prasad and bhoga, and whose presence and smile added special charm to our function and to our memory.



As the previous years, the temple people were very cooperative.

Most of the credits go to Abhijit Ray, Naresh Das and Anshuman Das for the stage decoration. Anshuman Das also designed the high tech projector show of Orissa's temples.



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## Melana:

The first part of the program was "Melana". The "bimanas" that had arrived for the procession are:

- Lord Jagannath brought by Nrusingha Mishra's family from Germantown, Maryland;

- Radha-Krishna by Shashadhar Mahapatra's family from Silver Spring, Maryland;
- Radha-Madan Mohan brought by Naresh Das's family from Columbia, Maryland;
- Lord Jagannath from Lanham, MD



The bimanas entered the auditorium with kirtan and playing of color. The enchanting Kirtan with the true "bhAba" and "bhakti rasa" filled the air. The crowd was cheerful. The families and friends enjoyed doing the bandapana and putting "abira" on each other. Some of the children were standing holding plates with abira and bandapana items. Pala on Bhakta Druv by Pitamabar Sarangi followed Kirtan.

After the PALA was over, all the bimanas reached the auditorium stage. Bandita Mishra invited everybody to do the Arati. Pratap Dash, Mahashringha Dash, Debaki Nandan Chowdhury and Nrusingha Mishra engaged everybody in Arati singing.

## Registration:



Sarmistha Mohapatra, Owen Greeley were at the registration desk distributing the program schedule and name tags. Owen Greeley was volunteering from Hammond High School in Columbia, MD.

Sharmistha Mohapatra came from Johns Hopkins University to help in the Holi program.

## Welcome Speech:

Dr Joy Gopal Mohanty, convener of the program delivered the welcome speech. He welcomed everybody on behalf of Jagannath Organization for Global awareness, also known as JOGA. He thanked everybody for their support of this program through all these years. JOGA has been successfully celebrating this Holi function for the past seven years because of the high spirit of JOGA volunteers, who are working together by complementing each other's skills and expertise. Every year JOGA is adding some new items. The additions for the present year was Odissi dance by Meera Das, an accomplished dancer from Orissa. He invited Dr Julie Acharya Ray, the MC to manage the cultural program.



**Julie Acharya Ray, the Master of Ceremony** for the cultural program welcomed the audience and gave a brief overview of the program. Then she invited Deepa Parija, Meera Mohapatra, Maushumi Patnaik, Debaki Nandan Chowdhury, Mahashakti Dash and Bigyani Das to sing the Welcome Song. MC Julie Acharya Ray, a trained singer in Hindustani Classical music and with an enchanting voice also joined the group. Debaki Nandan Chowdhury accompanied them in Keyboard, Mahashakti Dash accompanied them in Harmonium, and Naresh Das in Tabla. The song "Khela Khela Ranga Horire Sajani" welcomed the audience and tuned everybody with a colorful dreamy mind ready to enjoy the complete program. After the welcome song, bhajans followed.



## **Bhajan (Theme: Group Leela Bhajans):**

Bhajan started with Mahashakti Dash and Julie Acharya Ray. It was a special Holi bhajan "Priya Sanginire Dekha Dekha Bare Nanda Nandana Mohana Shikhi Chuliaku". The song was tuned to the famous Odissi song "Sanginire Rasa Ranginire". Mahashakti Dash and Julie sang the next bhajan "Krisna Jinka Nam He" which was a very touchy bhajan. The next group Deepa Parija, Debaki Nandan Chowdhry, Rasanand Behera and Maushumi Patnaik sang the bhajans. After the songs, all the children joined to sing a bhajan.



## **Stage Management**

The stage management, lights and sounds were taken care of by Abhijit Ray, Mahendra Kar, Brahmapiya Sen, and Arun Ojha. Hemant Biswal, Satish Mishra were also helping in the stage management, the curtain and also the children.

## **Cultural Program:**

### **Odissi by Meera Das:**

Julie gave an excellent introduction of Meera Das by starting with the name Meera. A philosophy graduate, Meera Das had taken to dance rather instantly. As a child artist, she excelled in Bandha Nrutya, a classical dance form involving acrobatic movement. The love for dance brought Meera Das to the Odissi Research Centre.

The intrinsic talents of Meera flourished under great masters like PadmabihAmerican Guru Kelu Charan Mohpatra and Guru Gangadhar Pradhan. Soon she joined the chosen few of the Odissi Research Centre to perform in over 300 prestigious programmes through out the country like Khajuraho Festival, Surya Festival in Kerala, Artists Foundation Festival in Bangalore, Sansad Bahwan, Bhopal and many more.

Sponsored by the Indian Council for Culture Relation (ICCR), Meera Das performed in Korea in 1990, in Germany during the Indian Festival 1992, in Indonesia during Kalinga Bali Yatra in 1993 and in a chain of programmes in Spain, Italy, Hungary and Czech Republic in 2000. She has the distinction of participating in the Asian Festival at Luxembourg and at the National Festival at Ethelburg followed by lecture demonstration at Arles, France in 2000. She along with her dance school students participated in the prestigious festival of Indian Classical Dances in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman in 2002 and again in 2003. Meera Das had the credit of performing in U.S.A. at Seattle, Dallas and Tulsa in 2003 being sponsored by Microsoft and Sam's club, who sponsored the classical event for the first time. She also has the distinction of performing in Luxury Cruise Ship, Norwegian Sun at Alaska, again a first Orissi ever dance program performed on a Ship witnessed by people from 42 countries.

She is the proud recipient of prestigious Mahari Award 2002 for her relentless contribution to Odissi Dance besides many awards and felicitations for her talent and performance.

Meera performed two long items. The first item was a Mangalacharan – Jay Bhagabati Devi and the second item was an Abhinaya – Nachanti Range Srihari.

### **Mangalacharan**

It is all about Devi, Adisakt. Goddess Bhagwati or Mother Durga's victory over demon Mahishasur is recited. Powered by the special blessings, the demon was immortal. He challenged and scared the mankind. To get rid of the demon from the earth, he has to be extinguished. To save the mankind as well as the Saints, Devi Bhagwati comes to the earth and destroyed the demon thus proving the ultimate victory of evil over the devil. She is the mother, the kindness, and furious when mankind are in trouble.



## Abhinaya

Abhinaya is the very corpus of the five-segmented Odissi repertoire. Histrionics takes over, adding and complimenting the dramatics. It is intricate performed thru evocative hand gestures known as Mudras. The blend is finally set to the song and music with a theme. The individualism of the Odissi artist, her distinctiveness, and style gets reflected in this item. The Abhinaya is to be presented now is Nachanti Range Srihari – The eternal God Krishna dancing to various tunes like malsree, bhairava, nata, lalita, etc. When Lord Krishna interfaces with the Gopis playing instruments like mardala, manjira or flute, he takes the same music and dances to the specific tune. Together it creates an exotic tapestry of rhythm, music and movement.

Meera Das's superb performance made the audience dumb found. Odissi can be that dynamic, yet lyrical and graceful. "Nachanti Range Srihari" was a masterpiece. After the dances, Julie called Dr Indu Mishra to present the plaque to Meera Das.

## Dances:

The items in this category were a ceremonial Odia dance by Asmi Panigrahi and Atman Panigrahi, Hindi movie dance by Ayesha Kar, Odia Bhajan dance by Ankita Ray and Hindi Movie dance by Shibani Patnaik. The Odia movie dance by Asmi and Atman Panigrahi was choreographed by their father Dr Pinaki Panigrahi. Odia bhajan dance by Ankita Ray was choreographed by her mother Juli Acharya Ray. The dances by Ayesha and Shibani were choreographed by themselves watching the movies.



The audience was very appreciative of the professionalism with which the small children were presenting the dance items. All the credits go to the performers as well as their parents without the encouragement and care of which it wouldn't have become possible.

## Drama Draupadi

This drama was not about Draupadi of Mahabharat, but a girl Draupadi who is born and brought up in USA and whose immigrant parents Dr Raikant Patnaik and Ratnabala Patnaik emphasize on keeping up with Odia traditions. The setting is in Odialand, a place where Odia is emphasized and where Oriyas gather for good time. The annual festival in Odialand is in full swing. Oriyas from all over





USA are gathered to have memorable time. In this particular year, the “Odia Idol” show is hosted in Odialand by Suman Ojha and Rajashree Mishra. There are 3 final contestants Nil Sen, Soumya Patnaik and Draupadi Patnaik. Raikant Patnaik and his wife Ratnabala want to come to the stage and have some photo opportunity with their daughter Draupadi. The three judges are Satish Nayak, Alok Mohanty and Siddharth Barik. The story is centered all on Draupadi

who wins the Odia Idol title. Draupadi’s parents are also looking for a suitable bridegroom for their daughter.

The participants are:

Suman Ojha (Odia idol show host), Rajashree Mishra (Odia idol show host), Neil Sen, Sonu patnaik, and Shashwati Das (contestants), Satish Mishra, Alok Mohanty and Sidhharth Mohapatra as judges, Bagmi Das as Raikant Patnaik and Mrunali Das as Ratnabala.

This drama was very significant which gave the chances to the children to exercise their Odia learning. The drama conveyed the message that people should be civil in public behavior.

The costumes for the drama were very simple. The children who acted in adult's role enjoyed their sarees, jewelry and style. After the drama Julie thanked the participants for their hard work.

### **Children's Talent Show**

Dibya and Dev Das sang a special Holi song for the program. Rutupurna Sarangi played keyboard. The bhajan and kirtan dance was presented by Debanjan Chowdhury, Disha Das and Rasesh Behera. The programs were very enjoyable.



### **Program by Adults**

#### **Sitar Playing**

Sitar playing by guru Naba Singha’s group was an item to remember. Guru Naba Singha is a rare personality in Washington DC area. He is multi-talented in music as well as dance. He teaches Tabla, Harmonium and Sitar. He also teaches



Manipuri and Kathak dances. He regularly organizes Manipuri dance events in DC area. He has won several awards from the West Bengal Sangeet Natak Academy for his accomplishments. He was accompanied by his disciples Vini Devdas (a high school student) and Naresh Das on Tabla, on Flute and on Harmonium.



## **Drama Kholachithi:**

*The script writer: Bigyani Das*

*Participants: Jayashree Samal, Meera Mohapatra, Sangeeta Dey, Deepa Parija, Bigyani Das, Anjana Chowdhury, Maushumi Patnaik, Nrusingha Mishra, Debaki Nandan Chowdhury, Rasanand Behera, Shashadhar Mohapatra, Bagmi Das, Satish Mishra*

*Directions: All the participants*

A young boy in the village has written an open love letter to a girl. This has created the havoc in the village and has become a topic of discussion in the Mahila Samiti as well as during the card playing of village men. The secretary of Mahila Samiti, Menaka



(Jayashree Samal) puts forth this question to all the attendees (Rama apa, Phula, Jhula, Ketaki, Rekha – Meera Mohapatra, Anjana Chowdhury, Maushumi Patnaik and Deepa Parija). Although the girl (Kalpana – Bagmi Das) is not in fault, still the situation has made her to react. However, the learned uncle (Ratana – Nrusingha Mishra) suggests her not to be bothered by this and keep faith on God. The old lady (Janaki – Bigyani Das) advises the learned uncle that he should not just sit down, but call a meeting of the village people and take action on the boy’s disruptive behavior. The village should not be controlled by a single person’s whim.



## **Drama - Saradha Bali Kanduchhi**

*The script writer: Mahashringha Dasa*

*Participants: Nrusingha Mishra, Debaki Nandan Chowdhury, Mahashringha Dasa, Satish Mishra, Mrunali Das*

*Directions: Mahashringha Dasa*

This comedy was about the Puri temple. The pandas do not carry the holy traditions with care anymore. They are after money and they become involved in irresponsible activities such as smoking. Saradhabali is crying for this.



## **Pala:**



Pala was the first presentation after Melana. The narrator Pitambar Sarangi of New Jersey was a great orator. He performed the pala on “Bhakta Druba” with companions Nrusingha Mishra, Debaki Nandan Chowdhury, Naresh Das, Surendra Ray and Pratap Dash which was enjoyed by all.

## **50/50 Drawing:**

Laxmikant Dash was the coordinator for 50/50 drawing. He raised about total \$75.00.

## **Trophies and Recognition:**

Plaque was presented to Meera Das. Trophies were presented to all the children participants.

## **Dinner (Prasad) and Snacks (Bhoga):**

The major part of the program, food, was managed by Bandita Mishra and Sulochana Patnaik. The food was catered from "Woodlands" of Langley Park, MD. Illa Ojha, Meera Mohapatra, Sangeeta Dey, Sulochana Patnaik, Bandita Mishra, Sikha Sen planned and

cooked for the bhoga (snack). Bandita Mishra was the coordinator and she perfectly managed the food distribution.

## **Memories: Video Recording and Photographs**

Credits for most of the pictures in this report go to Dr Babru Samal. Many others have taken pictures as well as video recordings.

## **Cleaning:**

Everybody that stayed till the end participated in the clean up.

## **Holi Sponsors:**

*Balabhadra Sponsor:* Bhavani Ghanta, VA

*Subhadra Sponsor:* Anonymous donor, MD

*Jagannath Sponsors:*

Joy Gopal and Sulochana Mohanty, MD

Subhransu Tripathy, Baltimore, MD

Sandeep and Mausumi Pattnaik, MD

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*Author: This report is prepared by Dr Bigyani Das on March 28, 2005. For any mistakes, additions, suggestions or comments, please contact Bigyani Das.*