

# THE LOTUS



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A Monthly Publication of the Federation of India Community Associations (FICA) Since 1967

## INSIDE

- 2 Akron Resident Wins a Literary Award
- 3 Editor's Note
- 4 Splendor And Glory Of Rulers
- 4 Children's Corner
- 5 Yogic Wisdom For Difficult Times
- 6 The 7<sup>th</sup> Century Rises To Meet The 21<sup>st</sup> Century!
- 8 DAWN Creations
- 9 10 Books Not to Miss from 2016

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Republic Day 2017 Invitation

Indian feast and cultural entertainment amidst tropical rainstorm in January in Cleveland!

## Ahimsa

"Ahimsa has"been part of the English language since at least 1875, but the word didn't gain attention of the English-speaking world until the first half of the 20th century, when it was recognized as an important component of the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. "Ahimsa" comes from Sanskrit word meaning "noninjury," and Gandhi's policy of nonviolent protest played a crucial role in the political and social changes that eventually lead to India's Independence from colonialism and adoption of a self-authored constitution for its governance on January 26th 1950, which we call the Indian Republic Day.

Let us celebrate the **68th Republic Day** with Ahimsa as our theme. Ahimsa a very important concept of our heritage and identity.

Saturday, January 28, 2017; 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM  
The RainForest, Cleveland Metropark Zoo  
3900 Wildlife Way, Cleveland, OH 44109

Tickets: \$48 Adult; \$25 Children (17 and under); member discount:20%  
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# Akron Resident Wins a Literary Award

By Debajyoti Chatterji; debsmee572@gmail.com

Somerset, NJ: December 5, 2016: Ananda Mandir, a non-profit organization located in Somerset, NJ, has announced the winners of the 2016 Gayatri GaMarsh Memorial Awards for Literary Excellence. The award was established in 2010 in memory of the late Gayatri GaMarsh who was a well-known author, editor and a key member of the organization. The underlying objective of these awards is to encourage people of Indian origin to engage in literary activities and publish their works in North America-based newspapers and magazines. The winners each year are selected by a panel of judges from the nominations received from authors in North America and India. Each winner receives a cash award of \$500 and a plaque with appropriate citation. The first set of awards was presented in 2011.

The winners of the 2016 Gayatri GaMarsh Memorial awards are:

- Sujay Datta of Akron, Ohio, in Bengali language publications category.

- Sonnet Mondal of Kolkata, India, in English language publications category.

- Additionally, Lagnajita Mukhopadhyay of Nashville, Tennessee, was given an "Honorable Mention" award in English



Sujay Datta in 2013 at Bengali Cultural Celebration in Cleveland, Ohio with his family wife Antara Datta and daughter Sriya Datta.

language publications category. She will receive a cash award of \$300 and a plaque with appropriate citation.

Published works of these authors were judged to be the best among the nominations

received this year in terms of originality, creativity and impact.

Further details on the three award recipients are given below.

Gayatri GaMarsh Memorial Awards for Literary Excellence are believed to be the only awards of its kind in North America, and the program has earned a strong reputation and a loyal following among the people of Indian origin in the USA and Canada.

The awards program is administered by Ananda Mandir and funded by an endowment from Jerry GaMarsh, husband of the late Gayatri GaMarsh.

Ananda Mandir is a religious and cultural organization serving the Indian-American community in NJ and neighboring states for fifteen years. Over 1600 families are members of this organization. Ananda Mandir has just completed a \$5 million expansion of its facilities on a 10 acre campus in Somerset, NJ.

As a professor, Sujay Datta (Akron, Ohio) leads a very busy life teaching students, guiding researchers and writing papers in the field of statistics. But he was always an avid reader of Bengali and (to a lesser extent) English literature. He started writing seriously in his college days in Kolkata but after coming to the US as a graduate student, he had to shelve his writing passion for several years. Fortunately, about a decade ago he was urged by his friends in Milwaukee to write something for the local Bengali cultural association's annual magazine. That released his bottled up literary passions, and he returned to his literary activities with renewed zeal. He has published short stories and essays in DuKool, Prabas Bandhu and Batayan and has translated Hindi stories into Bengali. The award recognizes him for his creative and skillful story-telling.



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To all our readers of The Lotus.:

Time is running out in 2016 to help this Indian Community Publication. When I started working as the Editor of this a non-profit community paper, people warned me I'd regret it. Over two years later, it has been published every month with a few exceptions and it's content has been generated by a community of passionate volunteers. Although there has been some issues which were mailed in the later half of the month, we have continually improved our layout and print quality. In addition to making it worth while to advertise for an event, we have added a special email service for timely delivery of the information. Thus, even if an issue is delivered later than the event date, it at least serves to archive the event

### Essay Contest

<http://www.maltzmuseum.org/stop-the-hate/contest/>



*Stop the Hate\** Youth Speak Out celebrates students committed to creating a more accepting, inclusive society. By reflecting on real-life situations and detailing ways to make a positive difference in the world, this next generation of leaders can win big.

*Stop the Hate\** is designed to create

an appreciation and understanding among people of differing religions, races, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. By challenging young people to consider the benefits of a more inclusive society, the consequences of intolerance and the role of personal responsibility in effecting change, the contest also reflects Jewish values of responsible citizenship and respect for all humanity.

Each year, the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage gives out \$100,000 in scholarships, awards and anti-bias education in recognition of 6-12th grade upstanders in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Trumbull and Wayne counties.

#stopthehate @stopthehateUS

## Editor's Note

By Sujata Lakhe Barnard

for posterity.

Our paper is funded by Ads as well as donations. Also it is possible to fund it all by Ads as suggested by past members of editorial board, but I believe people wouldn't want to build it and we'd end up beholden to corporate influence. To protect our independence, we'll run carefully. We can be sustained by donations averaging about \$12 per year per home delivery subscriber. Now is the time we ask. However, realistically not all will donate but I hope many of you will take one minute to think how powerful an Independent newspaper can be for community to have a voice in a society. It is much easier to keep a community newspaper going and improving it than to start a new one.

Then please consider a substantial donation for year 2016 and we hope to receive annual \$12/reader for the year 2017. You can donate to The Lotus by going to the FICA donation page at <http://www.ficacleveland.org/fica/donatePage.html> and use the "Pay Now" Pay Pal link there to make your donation. Please state that your donation is in support of The Lotus in the note field.

It's easy to ignore this message; but just few moments on your part will help us keep The Lotus alive and growing.

Thank you,  
Sujata Lakhe Barnard,  
Editor;The Lotus 2014, 2015, 2016



### Correction

'Sanskritam Comes To Life In Cleveland' on page 2 of November issue of Lotus was erroneously attributed. The author of this article is Subbarao Jayanti; Sjayanti987@hotmail.com

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# Splendor And Glory Of Rulers

By Om Julka

India attained Independence from British Raj on August 15, 1947 and became a Democratic Republic on January 26, 1950. This day is celebrated with great pomp and show every year. Present day Indians can hardly guess the mindset of the rulers of those days before India's Independence.

Perhaps our younger generations do not know the great splendor and glory that the British rulers and bureaucrats enjoyed in India during their rule. The spokes of bureaucratic wheels extended to every corner of India. Let us peep into some examples.

The buildings of Viceroy's House and the Secretariat in New Delhi were completed in 1926 when I was an 8 year old kid. Lord Irwin was the first Viceroy to occupy the Viceregal building. It was called Viceregal Lodge. On both sides of the building were two gorgeous buildings called South Block and North Block for use by the staff of bureaucrats to carry out the work of government of India. These gorgeous buildings are still there in New Delhi.

On the gate of Secretariat Building of North Block there was a bronze plaque (which still exists) with the following words written on it:



Secretariat Building - Photo By Laurie Jones aka ljonesimages on Flickr - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ljonesimages/3012901642/>, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8882750>

LIBERTY DOES NOT DESCEND TO A PEOPLE.  
A PEOPLE MUST RAISE THEMSELVES TO LIBERTY.  
IT IS A BLESSING THAT MUST BE EARNED  
BEFORE IT CAN BE ENJOYED

My young friends of our subsequent generations will be surprised to know how the rulers from the Viceroy downwards to the soldier of lowest rank, enjoyed. In the Viceroy's house there were six thousand servants plus four hundred gardeners to take care of the impressive Mughal Garden within the Viceroy's house. This house was

even bigger in area than Louis XIV's Palace at Versailles. It had 340 rooms. Besides the gardeners there were fifty others employed just to chase away the birds from the garden. At dinner parties in the Viceroy's house when rulers of India's Princely states, foreign diplomats, and Army generals were invited, about 120 servants were in service for the dinner parties.

Even the wives of British rulers were proud owners of India. A lady was trying to lull her baby to sleep and she sang the

following song:

*O, hush thee, my baby;  
Thy sire was a Knight.  
Thy mother a lady,  
Both lovely and bright.  
The woods and the glens,  
From the Tower which you see,  
All they belong dear baby to thee.*

The soldiers, who used to come to India for a short term service, were called B.O.R's (British Other Ranks) and they all considered themselves as superior masters, compared to better educated Indian employees of the Government of India. Their pay and allowances were much higher as compared to Indian employees of similar rank. In cantonments of India they had separate living areas for Britishers and Indians. Officers of certain ranks were allowed to keep horses and given extra pay, servants to look after these animals. Poor Indians could only eat their bread and butter by serving these masters.

No wonder, some of them could bemoan with a few songs of helpless despair: "Hum Hind Ke Rehne Waale Hain, Dukh Dard Ke Sehne Waale Hain. Kuchh Munh Se Na Kehne Waale Hain, Aye Falk Hamein Barbad Na Kar" (We are the residents of India, suffering helpless anguish without complaints. O, cosmos do not destroy us.)

## Children's Corner

### Mr Monkey and Sir Crocodile (Jataka, Panchatantra story)

Once upon a time, Mr. Monkey was living by himself near a riverbank. He was very strong, and he was a great jumper.

In the middle of the river there was a beautiful island covered with mango, jackfruit and other fruit trees. There happened to be a rock sticking out of the water halfway between the bank and the island. Although it looked impossible, Mr. Monkey was used to jumping from the riverbank to the rock, and from the rock to the island. He would eat fruits all day and then return home by the same route each evening.

A high-class couple was living next to the same river - Sir Crocodile and Lady Crocodile. They were expecting their first brood of baby crocks. Because she was pregnant Lady Crocodile sometimes wished for strange things to eat. So she made unusual demands on her faithful husband.

Lady Crocodile had been amazed, just like the other animals, by the way Mr. Monkey jumped back and forth to the island. One day she developed a sudden craving to eat the heart of Mr. Monkey! She told Sir Crocodile about her desire. To please her, he promised to get Mr. Monkey's heart for her in time for dinner.

Sir Crocodile went and laid himself down on the rock between the riverbank and the island. He waited for Mr. Monkey to return that evening, planning to catch him.



As usual, Mr. Monkey spent the rest of the day on the island. When it was time to return to his home on the riverbank, he noticed that the rock seemed to have grown. It was higher above water than he remembered it. He investigated and saw that the river level was the same as in the morning, yet the rock was definitely higher. Immediately he suspected the cunning Sir Crocodile.

To find out for sure, he called out in

the direction of the rock, "Hi there, Mr. Rock! How are you?" He yelled this three times. Then he shouted, "You used to answer me when I spoke to you. But today you say nothing. What's wrong with you, Mr. Rock?"

Sir Crocodile thought, "No doubt on other days this rock used to talk to the monkey. I can't wait any longer for this dumb rock to speak! I will just have to speak for the rock, and trick the monkey." So he shouted, "I'm fine, Mr. Monkey. What do you want?"

Mr. Monkey asked, "Who are you?"

Without thinking, the crocodile replied, "I'm Sir Crocodile."

"Why are you lying there?" asked the monkey.

Sir Crocodile said, "I'm expecting to take your heart! There's no escape for you, Mr. Monkey."

The clever monkey thought, "Aha! He's right - there's no other way back to the riverbank. So I will have to trick him."

Then he yelled, "Sir Crocodile my

friend, it looks like you've got me. So I'll give you my heart. Open your mouth and take it when I come your way."

When Sir Crocodile opened his mouth, he opened it so wide that his eyes were squeezed shut. When Mr. Monkey saw this, he immediately jumped onto the top of Sir Crocodile's head, and then instantly to the riverbank.

When Sir Crocodile realised he'd been outsmarted, he admired Mr. Monkey's victory. Like a good sport in a contest, he praised the winner. He said, "Mr. Monkey, my intention towards you was unwholesome - I wanted to kill you and take your heart just to please my wife. But you wanted only to save yourself and harm no one. I congratulate you!"

Then Sir Crocodile returned to Lady Crocodile. At first she was displeased with him, but when the little ones came they forgot their troubles for a time.

**The moral is: Don't panic and things will work out.**

# Yogic Wisdom For Difficult Times

By Vishali Gupta

I was in India during the month of November visiting my dad who had been terminally ill for several months. I felt a calling to see him one last time. It was a blessing that I went and spent final moments with him. After I returned to the US, he passed away. Even though I knew he was ill for a long time, and death was inevitable, the news of his death shattered me completely. I was overcome by dark cloud of grief and heavy emotions. I tried to deny them, but these feelings manifested in bodily pain and inability to fall asleep at night.

Even though the intellectual mind (known as Buddhi mind in Yoga) knows the truth, the feelings of loss and grief continue to stay in our sub-conscious minds. Our consciousness is always producing thoughts. It is constantly fluctuating. We mistakenly identify ourselves with the contents of our consciousness (chitta) – our thoughts, our feelings, memories of the loved one that passed away and bring suffering (dukha) to ourselves. We forget our true nature i.e. that is eternal, pure, and joyful called Purusha or the soul. We are not our sorrowful consciousness. So we need to work with our minds to shift our consciousness from chitta to Purusha. Once we realize our authentic nature, all our sorrow and bondage to the wheel of life and death (samsara) ends.

**The nature of our world is transitory- always has been, always will be. Change occurs every second. This is called the doctrine of Impermanence or Annica.**

We have two choices. Sit around with grief, do nothing and let the mind slip under the influence of one disturbing emotion after another, or relate to the experience, accept in and make the best use of it.

## How Can Yoga Help

In Classical Yoga, Patanjali has given the concept of “ISHWARA PRANIDHANA” in the Yoga Sutras. It means surrender to the divine and accept what is offered to you.

The Buddhist doctrine of IMPERMANENCE called “Anicca” means that all conditioned existence is transient, evanescent and bound to dissolve. Attachment brings dukha or pain.

The following asanas and breathing techniques are suggested.

### 1. Conscious Breathing

To bring calm to the mind, start counting backward from 10 to 1 on each exhale. If you lose count, start again. Try not to get caught up with your inner critic. Breathing has a marvelous capacity to ease pain and soften emotions.

2. Chanting of the Maha Mritunyajaya Mantra for 108 times can not only give peace to the departed soul, but can also bring comfort and peace to our heart and mind. It is especially helpful to chant this at night when insomnia hits. The vibration of the mantra is soothing to the nervous system. You can also play this mantra on your phone or iPad and let it go all night.



Image 1

### Mantra

*Om tryambakam yajamahe  
Sugandhim pushtivardhanam  
Urva rukmiva bandhanan  
Mrityor mukshiyā maamritat*

3. Grief can collapse the shoulders forward and close the heart center. Practicing Matsyasana or Fish pose can counter this.

To get into the pose, we will use two blocks. Sit on your yoga mat or carpet with knees bent. Place one block goes under the bottom tip of shoulder blades and another under the back of the head. Lean back. Release arms by your sides. Feel the opening in the chest and heart region. This will facilitate releasing and opening the heart chakra which in turn brings healing. (See Image 1)

To modify this asana, place a rolled blanket instead under the bottom tip of the

**In difficult times, we don't have the heart to do a spiritual practice. But these are the best times for a practice.**

shoulder blades. (Image 2)

To practice full pose, place hands under the buttocks, take the crown of your head back into the earth behind you. Lengthen the legs forward with feet touching. Gaze into the infinite sky inviting the Akasha tattva (element of space) into your consciousness. (Image 3) This element of space reminds us that our feelings and emotions are like clouds into the background of the vast sky. We are the sky and not the clouds.

4. Share your feelings with friends. When we live miles away, our friends are our strength.

5. Set up a home altar with flowers, photo and deities. Visit this sacred space often and



Image 2



Image 3

light a lamp.

## Moving Toward Acceptance

Vairagya or non-attachment is the key concept of Yoga. Pain, tears, anger, sorrow whatever feelings come, allow them to come. Accept them and move forward. We may not have the loved one who passed away physically present with us but we are connected in spirit world.

**Grief cannot be diminished, but transmuted or moved.**

**We are pure consciousness.**

Vishali is a certified Yoga teacher who lives in Solon with her family. Yoga is her passion. She learnt Yoga while growing up in India and also completed a 200 level teacher training at Chagrin Yoga. She teaches group classes in Chagrin Yoga and Solon Recreation Center. She offers an inspiring and powerful combination of asana, breath, meditation, and chanting that leaves students uplifted and empowered. Vishali specializes in Yoga and meditation techniques to promote overall wellness strengthen the core muscles to bring agility and alleviate back pain. She also helps private clients and also does instruction for individuals training to be Yoga teachers at licensed Yoga Schools. She can be reached at [guptava@sbcglobal.net](mailto:guptava@sbcglobal.net)



# The 7<sup>th</sup> Century Rises To Meet The 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

By Sujata Lakhe Barnard; Photographs by William G. Barnard IV

I grew up very aware of the name 'Sirpur' and remember going to that place for school trips. However, other than the bus trip and picnic lunch with classmates at a desolate looking old temple by a river under an old tree, none of which seemed extra-ordinary or awe inspiring.

Several years later, in 2012, when visiting my parents in Bhilai, my husband Bill and I decided to take a day trip to Sirpur. Back of my mind I was thinking we would spend an hour or so, eat lunch my mom had packed and head back. I thought at least we will drive amid the state's fragrant forests, with abundant Sal trees, which is rumored to be the site of Aranya Kand, (the jungle episode) in Valmiki's Ramayan. According to some depiction of the flora and fauna of Dandakaranya (the Dandaka forest where Rama was exiled), is only found in Chhattisgarh, a sea-horse shaped state carved out of southeastern portion of Madhya Pradesh in year 2000.

Over the course of the three-hour drive, however, all we passed were fields of paddy, mustard and toor-dhaal. Our driver was really knowledgeable and kept us entertained with anecdotes of the area. The houses on the way were simple, ornamented by free hand red and white rangoli like designs around the doors and windows, we saw many political slogans, information about diseases, contact information for STD doctors, importance of birth control, advertisement for mens underwear and ads for cell phones. Another peculiar thing along the way was heaps of dry lentil branches were left on the road by villagers, which according to the driver was so that vehicles will pass over it and help in de-husking them later! All that was soon replaced by towering thickets of the sal tree, revered all across the region and never too far from view. The final stretch to Sirpur was like driving through a tunnel made by the trees on either side of the road and their tips almost touching above us. Our first stop was at Buddha Vihar.

## Buddha Vihara

The guards unlocked a small gate within a large grated entrance we had to duck to get through to a tin shelter. In the early 1950s, the University of Sagar in Madhya Pradesh state had conducted excavations revealing the



**Laxman Temple: Laxman Mandir in Sirpur is one of the four extant brick temples in India.**

ruins of two large monasteries containing a colossal image of Buddha in Bhumisparsha mudra (a cross-legged Buddha seated on the ground) and three smaller monasteries. The

of this pit are adorned with depictions from the Panchatantra tales. There is depiction of Panchatantra tale of the crocodile that wants to eat his monkey friend's heart. I take a

**Interestingly, says A. K. Sharma, the principles of vastu shastra seem to have been the touchstone for builders in ancient Sirpur. "There is not a single structure which is not in consonance with vastu."**

door lintel and jambs found in ruins are also reconstructed at this site and has beautifully carved animals, snake and mouse motif, dwarfpal, Shiv-Parvati and a kissing couple reminiscent of the carvings at Khajuraho.

As you enter through the magnificent Toran Dwara (gate), you see Budha statue across with a pit in the middle. The walls

closer look and there is indeed a gleeful primate resting atop a reptile!

The vihara that once housed 10,000 scholars is a reminder of Sirpur's importance as a Buddhist centre between the 6th and 10th centuries A.D. Chinese pilgrim-scholar Huien Tsang visited the vihara in the 7th century and the Dalai Lama in March 2013.

## Tourist Information Center

We go to the information center, where we were able to get a hand drawn map of the ancient city and various archeological discoveries as they had ran out of printed maps. We find out about Dr. R K Sharma, an octogenarian a former superintending archaeologist with the Archeological Survey of India (ASI), a sole protector today of all this archeological richness according to our guide.

## Surang Tila-Shiv Temples

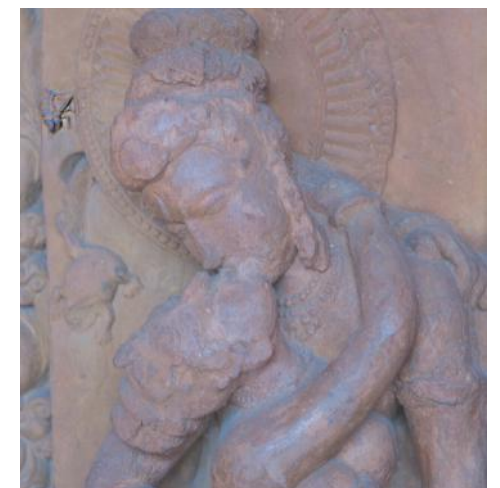
Situated in the middle of the village, Surang Tila was excavated in 2007. A mammoth stone structure with five temples (Girbhguha) built atop a massive platform. Its stairs connecting to the open courtyard at the top are unique in design, with uneven heights. The courtyard at the top of the monument has several broken pillars and semi-intact GirbhGrihas constructed of Sandstone. The roof has now collapsed and

only the pillars remain. An inscription of the original design of the temple is present on one of the pillars. There would have been 32 pillars arranged in four rows. It was one of the most fascinating archeological sites of Sirpur. Before its discovery, its presence was foretold by an inscription that was found near by. The inscription said that it was built by Shri Ba in 7th Century AD. It was a panchayatan temple style of construction - the main temple in the centre and four in the corners. The entry gate was right before the steps. The ghat of the river was close by - people took a holy dip in the river Mahanadi and then entered the temple through the entry gate.

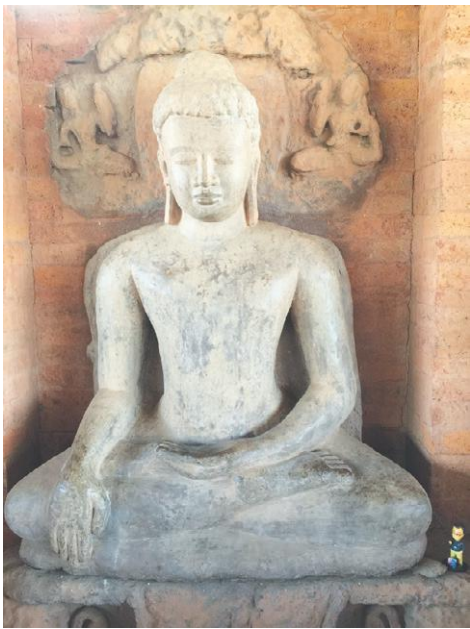
The Surang tila is a Shiva temple and there are four different types of shivlingas - white, black, red and yellow. According to legend white was installed by Brahmins, Red by Kshatriya, Yellow by Vaishya and Black by Shudra; however, there was



**Panchatantra tale of the crocodile that wants to eat his monkey friend's heart. See page 4 for complete story.**



**Our guide told us that the way we know that the 'kissing couple' is depiction of a Madhu-Ratri (equivalent to Honey moon night) is the carving of a Honey Bee left of the head gear of the male!**



**Buddha in Bhumisparsha mudra: This 6ft tall sculpture of Buddha is the central focus of the Buddhava Vihara**

no restriction on who worshiped which Shivlingas. The fifth Garbhagriha has the Ganesha diety in it.

A. K Sharma says that the occurrence of temple gate here casts a doubt in the thought that the entry gates originated in the South India first. The fortification of the temple was also seen in Sirpur (all twenty four temples) before it originated in South. The temple had a priest's house to the south and to the south of the priest house, there was a big tank where the priest would take a bath before entering the temple.

### Laxman Temple

One of the oldest and still surviving brick temple. The bricks were molded in various shapes from smooth and abundant red clay collected from the Banks of Mahanadi and baked in the hot sun. It stands on a prominent platform and consists of a Garbhagriha, Antarala and once had an enclosed pillared Mandapa as well. This temple contains a statue of what is widely thought as Laxman. However, "Laxman Mandir' is a misnomer. This is actually a temple to Vishnu, according to Dr. Sharma. The fact that it was a Vishnu temple originally is further evidenced by a well preserved doorway carved with the Dashavatara or Vishnu's ten manifestations. When the sixth-century temple was exposed in 1872, the residents of the town mistook



**Uma-Maheshwar; Eighth Century. Installed inside Gandheshwar temple.**

the reclining deity to be Laxman, partly due to the proximity of a Ram Temple.. Shorn of its association with the Ramayana though, Laxman Mandir is no less grand, an earthquake- and lightning-resistant structure that, miraculously, continues to stand in a remarkably well-preserved state even after 1,600 years!

This is the only early monument in the region that is relatively securely dated temple 595-605 AD. In as much as the sculptural style and the architectural forms of the Laksmana and other early temples at Sirpur display features that are markedly different from that of nearby archeological sites in Chhattisgarh (referred to as Kosala in ancient time) according to academics (Don Stadtner, University of California, Berkeley). It probably may be assumed that a gap of at least fifty years separates these two distinct phases of art in Kosala. This time period structures suggest a region that contributed to and was highly receptive to influences from neighboring areas. The southern elements in the architecture and the North character of the sculptural work are reflections of this extremely fluid artistic milieu where influences from North (Gupta) and south (Vidharbha) co-existed.



**Overnight stays in Sirpur can be arranged at the Hiuen Tsiang Tourist Resort - [http://cgtourism.choice.gov.in/?page\\_id=646](http://cgtourism.choice.gov.in/?page_id=646)**

### Gandheswar Temple

Our last destination for the day was Gandheswar temple. This temple is dedicated to the diety Shiva and located on the banks of river Mahanadi. Although the original above ground part of temple was destroyed, Maratha's had help restore a very simple structure in 18 century to protect the original Shiv linga and other rock carved deities. Over time this temple premises were used to protect and preserve other architectural finds in the area. On a low budget it has meant literally cementing them down to earth or walls from being pilfered by art traffickers. The statue of Buddha touching the earth, Natraj, Shiv, Garud Narayan, Mahisasur Mardini is the rare ones in the premises. (picture of shiv-parvati from temple ) The sight of vast sandy bed and sun skate over the broad liquid ribbon Mahanadi on one side and the temple with human made artifacts on other, the thought how mighty the river must become during rainy season takes away the awareness of time passing by.

Around dusk on our way home, before sunset we parked by the side of the kacha



**One of the Jataka stories depicted which shows the seduction of a young man, but dual depiction of females conveys a philosophical meaning, a rich young man getting clasped by two young horse faced women, one grasps at his jewelry and the other his flesh. (explanation by Abhijeet Kumar who studied at National Museum Institute, Ministry of Culture, India)**

road to take pictures of the setting sun. Bill, my husband, thought the other side of the road was a better spot to take the picture.

when it gets near horizon at that latitude! All was left was a sky with competing hues of orange, crimson and purple. it appears as if a packet of striped fruit-roll-up had melted across the horizon.

### Music and Dance festival

The Sirpur music and dance festival is an annual fest organised by the Chattisgarh Tourism Board. This grand festival showcases the diverse art forms of the country, bringing together artists from across the nation in a cultural celebration. This festival has established its own unique identity in the sense that eminent artistes of national and international repute participate and perform Indian classical, folk and tribal dance and music on the enchanting stage of Sirpur. The chhattisgarh tourist department runs special buses from Raipur airport for this special occasion.

### Where to Stay?

The best place to stay at Sirpur is Hiuen Tsiang resort in town, which is run by the Chhattisgarh Tourism. It's located quite close to the excavation sites and you can actually walk to most of those from here. The room rent is Rs 1500 for double occupancy. Here is a link to the site:

[http://cgtourism.choice.gov.in/?page\\_id=646](http://cgtourism.choice.gov.in/?page_id=646)



**Steps to the top - the deformations on the side are believed to be due to an earthquake. Walking diagonally is the easiest way to come down.**



# DAWN Creations

- Volunteers teach Bhutanese women how to sew bags, aprons, belts, scarves and other fashion accessories, then sell them.

- Asian Indian community donates fabric, local foundations fund sewing machines, women's groups have been hosting private parties for sales.

- Products also available at Market Path gift store in Akron's Highland Square, Kent State University Fashion School Store, Akron General Health & Wellness Center in Montrose.

- To donate or learn more, visit [www.dawn-creations.org](http://www.dawn-creations.org).

DAWN President Manju Rastogi, a 1969 immigrant from India, and Vice President Gabi Oberdorfer, who came to the U.S. from Germany in 1953, know well the benefits of having a network of friends.

"I knew the women were going to have a lot of issues just mainstreaming if people didn't step in to help them get over a lot of small humps that you come across," Rastogi said.

DAWN Creations, now composed of about 10 volunteers who teach Bhutanese refugees how to work an electric sewing machine and then sell their handmade totes, bags, belts, aprons and scarves at area gift shops and craft events.

During twice-monthly classes at Patterson Community Park Center in North Akron, the women also get a rare opportunity to socialize at a time when their limited English keeps them isolated.

Some parts of this article were previously published in the Akron Beacon Journal.



Learning to make microwave bowls with Denise

## DAWN Creations Open House

December 17th, 2016

11 am – 2 pm

800 Patterson Community Park Center, Akron, Ohio

You and your children under age of 12 and friends, mother in laws are invited to this event. Come and enjoy snacks, games, raffle.

### New Students Registration for 2017

- Sewing Project: Those who have some sewing knowledge.
- Creative Crafting: Please register if you have experience with sheep hair and felting.

Any Questions Contact:  
Manju Rastogi, Coordinator at 330-289-3051  
Gabi Oberdorfer, Treasurer: 330-666-3244



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# 10 Books Not to Miss from 2016

Here is a list of books published in 2016 that the staff of The Lotus think the Indian community in Northeast Ohio may find interesting. Included with each book is the publisher's description of the book. All of these books can be purchased on amazon.com. Purchases made through Amazon Smile (<http://Smile.amazon.com>) will give a portion of the sale to FICA. Please select "**Federation of India community Associations of N.E.Ohio Inc, Solon**" for the charity.

## **Swing Time** by Zadie Smith

Two brown girls dream of being dancers—but only one, Tracey, has talent. The other has ideas: about rhythm and time, about black bodies and black music, what constitutes a tribe, or makes a person truly free. It's a close but complicated childhood friendship that ends abruptly in their early twenties, never to be revisited, but never quite forgotten, either.

Tracey makes it to the chorus line but struggles with adult life, while her friend leaves the old neighborhood behind, traveling the world as an assistant to a famous singer, Aimee, observing close up how the one percent live.

But when Aimee develops grand philanthropic ambitions, the story moves from London to West Africa, where diaspora tourists travel back in time to find their roots, young men risk their lives to escape into a different future, the women dance just like Tracey—the same twists, the same shakes—and the origins of a profound inequality are not a matter of distant history, but a present dance to the music of time.

## **The Gene: An Intimate History** by Siddhartha Mukherjee

Siddhartha Mukherjee has written a biography of the gene as deft, brilliant, and illuminating as his extraordinarily successful biography of cancer. Weaving science, social history, and personal narrative to tell us the story of one of the most important conceptual breakthroughs of modern times, Mukherjee animates the quest to understand human heredity and its surprising influence on our lives, personalities, identities, fates, and choices.

Throughout the narrative, the story of Mukherjee's own family—with its tragic and bewildering history of mental illness—cuts like a bright, red line, reminding us of the many questions that hang over our ability to translate the science of genetics from the laboratory to the real world. In superb prose and with an instinct for the dramatic scene, he describes the centuries of research and experimentation—from Aristotle and Pythagoras to Mendel and Darwin, from Boveri and Morgan to Crick, Watson and Franklin, all the way through the revolutionary twenty-first century innovators who mapped the human genome.

## **Homegoing: A novel** by Yaa Gyasi

The unforgettable New York Times best seller begins with the story of two half-sisters, separated by forces beyond their control: one sold into slavery, the other married to a British slaver. Written with tremendous sweep and power, Homegoing traces the generations of family who follow, as their destinies lead them through two continents and three hundred years of history, each life indelibly drawn, as the legacy of slavery is fully revealed in light of

the present day.

Effia and Esi are born into different villages in eighteenth-century Ghana. Effia is married off to an Englishman and lives in comfort in the palatial rooms of Cape Coast Castle. Unbeknownst to Effia, her sister, Esi, is imprisoned beneath her in the castle's dungeons, sold with thousands of others into the Gold Coast's booming slave trade, and shipped off to America, where her children and grandchildren will be raised in slavery. One thread of Homegoing follows Effia's descendants through centuries of warfare in Ghana, as the Fante and Asante nations wrestle with the slave trade and British colonization. The other thread follows Esi and her children into America. From the plantations of the South to the Civil War and the Great Migration, from the coal mines of Pratt City, Alabama, to the jazz clubs and dope houses of twentieth-century Harlem, right up through the present day, Homegoing makes history visceral, and captures, with singular and stunning immediacy, how the memory of captivity came to be inscribed in the soul of a nation.

## **The Story of a Brief Marriage: A Novel** by Anuk Arudpragasam

Two and a half decades into a devastating civil war, Sri Lanka's Tamil minority is pushed inexorably towards the coast by the advancing army. Amongst the evacuees is Dinesh, whose world has contracted to a makeshift camp where time is measured by the shells that fall around him like clockwork. Alienated from family, home, language, and body, he exists in a state of mute acceptance, numb to the violence around him, till he is approached one morning by an old man who makes an unexpected proposal: that Dinesh marry his daughter, Ganga. Marriage, in this world, is an attempt at safety, like the beached fishing boat under which Dinesh huddles during the bombings. As a couple, they would be less likely to be conscripted to fight for the rebels, and less likely to be abused in the case of an army victory. Thrust into this situation of strange intimacy and dependence, Dinesh and Ganga try to come to terms with everything that has happened, hesitantly attempting to awaken to themselves and to one another before the war closes over them once more.

Anuk Arudpragasam's *The Story of a Brief Marriage* is a feat of extraordinary sensitivity and imagination, a meditation on the fundamental elements of human existence—eating, sleeping, washing, touching, speaking—that give us direction and purpose, even as the world around us collapses. Set over the course of a single day and night, this unflinching debut confronts marriage and war, life and death, bestowing on its subjects the highest dignity, however briefly.

## **A Change of Heart** by Sonali Dev

Dr. Nikhil 'Nic' Joshi had it all—marriage, career, purpose. Until, while working for Doctors Without Borders in a Mumbai slum, his wife, Jen, discovered a black market organ transplant ring. Before she could expose the truth, Jen was killed.

Two years after the tragedy, Nic is a cruise ship doctor who spends his days treating seasickness and sunburn and his nights in a boozy haze. On one of those blurry evenings on deck, Nic meets a woman who makes a startling claim: she received Jen's heart in a transplant and has

a message for him. Nic wants to discount Jess Koirala's story as absurd, but there's something about her reckless desperation that resonates despite his doubts.

Jess has spent years working her way out of a nightmarish life in Calcutta and into a respectable Bollywood dance troupe. Now she faces losing the one thing that matters—her young son, Joy. She needs to uncover the secrets Jen risked everything for; but the unforeseen bond that results between her and Nic is both a lifeline and a perilous complication.

Delving beyond the surface of modern Indian-American life, acclaimed author Sonali Dev's page-turning novel is both riveting and emotionally rewarding—an extraordinary story of human connection, bravery, and hope.

## **Book Uncle and Me** by Uma Krishnaswami

Every day, nine-year-old Yasmin borrows a book from Book Uncle, a retired teacher who has set up a free lending library next to her apartment building. But when the mayor tries to shut down the rickety bookstand, Yasmin has to take her nose out of her book and do something.

But what can she do? The local elections are coming up but she's just a kid. She can't even vote!

Still, Yasmin has friends — her best friend, Reeni, and Anil, who even has a black belt in karate. And she has grownup family and neighbors who, no matter how preoccupied they are, care about what goes on in their community.

Then Yasmin remembers a story that Book Uncle selected for her. It's an old folktale about a flock of doves trapped in a hunter's net. The birds realize that if they all flap their wings at the same time, they can lift the net and fly to safety, where they seek the help of a friendly mole who chews a hole in the net and sets them free.

And so the children get to work, launching a campaign to make sure the voices of the community are heard.

An energetic, funny and quirky story that explores the themes of community activism, friendship, and the love of books.

## **The Year of the Runaways: A novel** by Sunjeev Sahota

Three young men, and one unforgettable woman, come together in a journey from India to England, where they hope to begin something new—to support their families; to build their futures; to show their worth; to escape the past. They have almost no idea what awaits them.

In a dilapidated shared house in Sheffield, Tarlochan, a former rickshaw driver, will say nothing about his life in Bihar. Avtar and Randeep are middle-class boys whose families are slowly sinking into financial ruin, bound together by Avtar's secret. Randeep, in turn, has a visa wife across town, whose cupboards are full of her husband's clothes in case the immigration agents surprise her with a visit.

She is Narinder, and her story is the most surprising of them all.

The Year of the Runaways unfolds over the course of one shattering year in which the destinies of these four characters

become irreversibly entwined, a year in which they are forced to rely on one another in ways they never could have foreseen, and in which their hopes of breaking free of the past are decimated by the punishing realities of immigrant life.

A novel of extraordinary ambition and authority, about what it means and what it costs to make a new life—about the capaciousness of the human spirit, and the resurrection of tenderness and humanity in the face of unspeakable suffering.

## **When Breath Becomes Air** by Paul Kalanithi

At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade's worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated. When Breath Becomes Air chronicles Kalanithi's transformation from a naïve medical student "possessed," as he wrote, "by the question of what, given that all organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life" into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father confronting his own mortality.

What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away? These are some of the questions Kalanithi wrestles with in this profoundly moving, exquisitely observed memoir.

Paul Kalanithi died in March 2015, while working on this book, yet his words live on as a guide and a gift to us all. "I began to realize that coming face to face with my own mortality, in a sense, had changed nothing and everything," he wrote. "Seven words from Samuel Beckett began to repeat in my head: 'I can't go on. I'll go on.'" When Breath Becomes Air is an unforgettable, life-affirming reflection on the challenge of facing death and on the relationship between doctor and patient, from a brilliant writer who became both.

## **The Indian Cooking Course** by Monisha Bharadwaj

This comprehensive guide to Indian cooking explores the myriad regional varieties of authentic, healthy, and exotic Indian recipes. With chapters broken down into Rice, Breads, Meat, etc., Monisha covers a varied range of dishes, with techniques and step-by-step masterclasses to help you recreate more than 450 classic and popular recipes.

Monisha encompasses the entire range of Indian cooking and offers a vivid insight into India's colorful traditions, from the earthy lentil dishes distinguishable in the North to the coconut-based curries that are a staple in the South. This is a course in home cooking, based on principles of good health, and touching on the values of Ayurveda, which provides a context to your cooking; from taste and appearance to history and culture. The Indian Cooking Course is the ultimate guide to everything you ever wanted to know about Indian food.





## Shiva-Vishnu Temple, Parma, Ohio Lord Jagannath Nabakalebara 2017



Shiva-Vishnu Temple invites you to submit original arts, photographs and articles to be included in the nabakalebara souvenir. Prizes will be awarded to winners of the front and back page cover designs. Other selected art, photographs and articles will be published in the souvenir.

**ART:** Must be original. Art size should be 8 x 11 inches. It should be related to Lord Jagannath, Shiva Vishnu Temple, Jagannath Temple in Puri, Ratha Jatra, and Northern Ohio.

**PHOTOGRAPH:** Must be original. Submit a glossy print. Print size can be post card or a full page. The photograph must have similar theme as in Art.

**ARTICLE:** Must be original. Page size is limited to 4 pages (8 x 11 inches, written on one side). Articles should be preferably in English. The topic of the article must be related to Lord Jagannath. The author/authors of articles selected for publication will be requested to provide an electronic copy of each article.

**Where to submit:** Shiva-Vishnu Temple, 7733 Ridge Road, Parma, Ohio 44129, or by email to Ramaswamy Sharma (vrssharna@gmail.com, 440 888 0515)

**Submission deadline:** January 15, 2017

**What to Submit:** Your original art, photograph, and/or article and a completed release form. Release form can be obtained from the temple office or can be emailed to you on request.

**Who can participate:** All ages.

**For questions:** Contact Santosh Misra, MisraSan@gmail.com, 330 714 3096, or Ramaswamy Sharma, vrssharna@gmail.com, 440 888 0515, or Dr. Prasanta K. Raj, prasantaraj@yahoo.com, 440 420 6148.

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# Season's Greetings



Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful holiday and a very happy new year.

Wishing you the gifts of the season ☐ Peace, Joy, Hope and Happy New Year.

Jag Kottha

[jkottha@gmsaudit.com](mailto:jkottha@gmsaudit.com)

Owner, Crestbest Quality Institute

Cleveland/Akron, Ohio Area Management Consulting



As you may already know that FICA of NEO, ([www.ficacleveland.org](http://www.ficacleveland.org), @FICAcleveland) has been recognized by the United Way as a Designated Charitable Organization and is eligible non-partner agency with United Way of Cleveland. I would greatly appreciate if you can reach out to your place of work and friends and request them to consider designating Federation of India communities association of North East Ohio (FICA of NEO, @FICAcleveland) to receive part of their annual donation. United Way will then channel their donations to FICA after deducting some service fee. This will create a revenue stream for FICA to support our mission of promoting the rich cultural heritage of India in greater Cleveland; to facilitate ongoing dialog with civic leaders regarding issues of importance to Asian Indian families in the region; to facilitate the mainstreaming of Asian Indian families by creating a platform for the community's active participation in the civic life; to collaborate with local organizations to promote goodwill and understanding between diverse communities; to partner with business groups that promote ties between Indian and US firms and foster economic development.



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