



# ASECA CHANNEL

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Website: [www.allindiaaseca.org](http://www.allindiaaseca.org)

E-mail: [contact@allindiaaseca.org](mailto:contact@allindiaaseca.org)

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## Editorial

Cinema in any language in India is a source of entertainment and dissemination of views, thought process or human expression. The development levels vary in accordance with the level of association of the people in making it visible, sustainable and durable. The language finds its way to reach to the people carrying social or entertainment messages. The medium has been used for the benefit of individual as well as the mass. In Indian context, the major languages have their own production houses dominated by the Hindi Cinema followed mainly by the South Indian Cinema. Going by the numbers, Hindi cinemas are produced more than two hundred in a year followed closely by the cinemas in the Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu languages.

The beginning and rise of any cinema in any language has a long history. There are many players in the making of a cinema in any language. But the participation and involvement of common people has been at the base of any such endeavour. With the support of people only cinema can rise and attain a status. The involvement including participation helps in realizing and recovering the cost of the film production. Gradually when people tend to get back their investments, more and more interests are generated and people become the happy stakeholders. It has been seen that blind support to promote a cause has resulted in further development of such events. The regional films are doing well and they can produce a venture with huge amount of investment. The quality as well as the contents represent the creativity. The return also influences the creativity as livelihood being the essence of human existence. The return in any initiative is bound to attract best talent and performance. It raises the standard and bar of excellence. The competition, which is being generated for a slot, promotes and endures excellence and sustenance.

Coming to the status and state of affairs of the mass media pertaining to the Adivasi languages in general and Santali films in particular. The history or success story of any of the Adivasi languages has not been documented properly. So there is lack of authentic documents to come to a conclusion. But on the basis of available contents in the electronic media particularly "Internet", one can safely say that there are initiatives and large number of productions have already been made and initiatives are clearly visible. One can sense that various social groups are being motivated to create and propagate their own culture through the mass media. On visiting the "youtube" site, one can come across a large number of files containing songs, dialogues, films, dances, events etc. People staying far off from their ancestral habitat due to change in profession or migration can connect with their fellow community people. The flow of information through "Internet" has become the source of connect and concern.

Respective governments have the policy of support and concession to promote the Cinema produced in State or regional language. But it is not heard whether any policy is in place relating to promotion of cinema produced in other languages. This policy deficit has been the curse for other languages for which they are not being able to come to a respectable stage. Non availability of soft loans has been acting as a deterrence and as a result people have pooled together resources through individual initiatives to do something better for their language or group which is unparalleled perhaps in the history of Indian cinema. Words cannot express their contribution, dedication and work for the promotion of their language and culture. The spirit of people should be hailed for their relentless contribution, association under the adverse condition of official or institutional apathy. It is understood that government officials are giving reasons of absence or lack of policy and are not extending financial support and

according approvals for various purposes. The policy paralysis is continuing and many claim it to be made intentional so that parallel cinema should not be encouraged to flourish against the state or regional language. The captive audience should not be disturbed which is painfully misplaced. People tend to appreciate good work and good work can come from any language. It is alleged that everywhere there is discrimination in one form or the other.

The spirit cannot be suppressed through hostile approach and it has been proved beyond doubt in the case of production of films and other items. People have been supporting various initiatives and it

is felt that more support is being needed to bring the “Adivasi” films to the national level. Remuneration promotes excellence and talents. People who are engaged should be remunerated at least modestly. The results will be seen very soon as little support results an exceptional outcome. Talents are plenty and the need is to explore and avail resources including demand to the Government to extend equal opportunity to all the languages. Government machinery should not be a tool or source of deprivation to any language as this kind of approach defeats very purpose and essence of democracy.

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## Folklore of the Santal Parganas

Translated by **Cecil Henry Bompas** of the Indian Civil Service, 1909

**{ASECA CHANNEL intends to publish the stories in order to familiarize the stories among the general public for their better appreciation}**

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{Continued from July 2016 issue}

When this one returned, the fourth leg went out and it heard a voice in the sky saying: “The Raja is very cunning, I will send a snake which shall hide in his shoe and when he puts the shoe on in the morning, it will bite him and he will die.” When this leg came back, each one told the others what it had seen and done, and the Raja heard them and lay awake till morning, and at dawn he called his servants and sent them outside the palace and there they found the tiger and leopard and bear lying dead, and the four thieves with their legs broken. Then the Raja believed what the legs had said and he would not get up but first ordered his servants to make a fire in the courtyard and he had all his shoes thrown into the fire and then he got up.

After this the Raja ordered that great care was to be taken of the bedstead and that anyone who sat on it should be put to death; and he himself used not to sleep in it anymore but he kept it in his bedroom that it might protect him.

### **XXXV. The Ghormuhas.**

Ghormuhas have heads like horses and bodies and arms like men and their legs are shaped like men’s but they have only one leg each, and they eat human beings.

One day a young man named Somai was hunting a deer and the deer ran away to the country of the Ghormuhas and Somai pursued it,

and the Ghormuhas caught him and took him home to eat. First they smoked him for two or three days so that all the vermin were driven out of his body and clothes and then they proceeded to fatten him; they fed him well every day on rice cooked with turmeric.

Somai saw how they dealt with their other victims: they tied them hand and foot and threw them alive into a pot of boiling oil and when they were cooked they hung the bodies up in the doorway and would take a bite as they passed in and out; the liver and heart and brains they cooked separately. They used to eat their own parents also: for when a father or mother grew old they would throw them on to the roof of the house and when they rolled down and were killed they would say to their friends, “The pumpkin growing on our roof has got ripe and fallen off and burst, let us come and eat it;” and then they had a feast.

Somai saw all this and was very frightened. The Ghormuhas could run very fast and they made Somai run a race with them every day and their plan was that they would eat him when he was strong enough to beat them in the race. In the course of time he came to beat them in running on the road; then they said that they would make him run in the fields and, if he beat them there, they meant to eat him.

Somai found out their plan and he decided to try and run away; if he stayed he would be eaten, so if they caught him when he tried to run away he would be no worse off. So the first day they raced in the fields Somai was winning but he remembered and stopped himself and let himself be beaten that day. But he resolved to try and escape the next day and the Ghorarahas had decided to eat him that day whatever happened. So when the race began, Somai set off towards the lower lands where the rice fields were embanked and he jumped the embankments, but the Ghormuhas who pursued him could not jump well and tumbled and fell; and thus he ran away to his own country and made good his escape. And it was he who told men what Ghormuhas are like and how they live.

### **XXXVI. The Boy Who Learnt Magic.**

Once upon a time there was a Raja who had seven wives and they were all childless, and he was very unhappy at having no heir. One day a Jogi came to the palace begging, and the Raja and his Ranis asked him whether he could say what should be done in order that they might have children; the Jogi asked what they would give him if he told them and they said that they would give him anything that he asked for and gave him a written bond to this effect. Then the Jogi said "I will not take elephants or horses or money, but you shall give me the child which is born first and any born afterwards shall be yours, do you agree?" And the Ranis consulted together and agreed. "Then," said the Jogi, "this is what you must do: you must all go and bathe, and after bathing you must go to a mango orchard and the Raja must choose a bunch of seven mangoes and knock it down with his left hand and catch it in a cloth, without letting it touch the ground; then you must go home and the Ranis must sit in a row according to their seniority and the Raja must give them each one of the mangoes to eat, and he must himself eat the rinds which the Ranis throw away; and then you will have children." And so saying the Jogi went away promising to return the next year.

A few days later the Raja decided to give a trial to the Jogi's prescription and he and the Ranis did as they had been told; but the Raja did not eat the rind of the youngest Rani's mango; he did not love her very much. However five or six

months after it was seen that the youngest Rani was with child and then she became the Raja's favourite; but the other Ranis were jealous of her and reminded the Raja that he would not be able to keep her child. But when her time was full she gave birth to twin sons, and the Raja was delighted to think that he would be able to keep the younger of the two and he loved it much. When the year was up the Jogi came and saw the boys and he said that he would return when they could walk; and when they could run about, he came again, and asked whether the Raja would fulfil his promise.

The Raja said that he would not break his bond. Then the Jogi said that he would take the two boys and when the Raja objected that he was only entitled to one, he said that he claimed both as they were born at the same time; but he promised that if he took both he would teach them magic and then let one come back; and he promised also that all the Ranis should have children. So the Raja agreed and sent away the boys with the Jogi and with them he sent goats and sheep and donkeys and horses and camels and elephants and furniture of all sorts.

The Jogi was called Sitari Jogi and he was a Raja in his own country. But before they reached his country all the animals died, first the goats, then the sheep and the donkeys and the horses and the camels and the elephants. And when the goats died the boys lamented:

"The goats have died, father,

How far, father,

Is it to the country of the Sitari Jogi?"

and so they sang when the other animals died.

At last they reached the Jogi's palace and every day he taught them incantations and spells. He bought them each a water pot and sent them every morning to fill it with dew, but before they collected enough, the sun came out and dried up the dew; one day they got a cupful, another day half a cupful, but they never were able to fill the pots. In the course of time they learnt all the spells the Jogi knew and one day when they went out to gather dew, the younger boy secretly took with him a rag and he soaked this in the dew and then squeezed it into the pot and so he soon filled it; and the elder boy seeing his brother's pot full, filled his pot at a pool of water and they

took them to the Jogi; but the Jogi was not deceived by the elder boy and told him that he would never learn magic thoroughly; but the younger boy having learned all that the Jogi knew, learnt more still from his friends, for all the people of that country knew magic.

Then one day the Jogi took the two boys back to their home and he told the Raja that he would leave the elder boy at home. The Raja wanted to keep the younger one, but the Jogi insisted and the younger boy whispered to his mother not to mind as he would soon come back by himself; so they let him go.

The Jogi and the boy used to practise magic: the Jogi would take the form of a young man and the boy would turn into a bullock and the Jogi would go to a village and sell the bullock for a good price; but he would not give up the tethering rope and then he would go away and do something with the tethering rope and the boy would resume his shape again and run off to the Jogi and when the purchasers looked for their bullock they found nothing, and when they went to look for the seller the Jogi would change his shape again so that he could not be recognised; and in this way they deceived many people and amassed wealth.

Then the Jogi taught the boy the spell he used with the rope, and when he had learnt this, he asked to be taught the spell by which he could change his own shape without having a second person to work the spell with the rope. The Jogi said that he would teach him that later but he must wait. Then the boy reproached the Jogi and said that he did not love him; and he went away to his friends in the town and learnt the spell he wanted from them, so that he was able to change his shape at will.

Two or three days after the boy again went to the Jogi and said "Teach me the spell about which I spoke to you the other day," and the Jogi refused. "Then," said the boy, "I shall go back to my father, for I see that you do not love me."

At this the Jogi grew wrathful and said that if the away he would kill him, so the boy at this ran away in terror, and the Jogi became a leopard and pursued him: then the boy turned himself into a pigeon and the Jogi became a hawk and pursued him; so the boy turned himself into a fly and the Jogi became a paddy bird and pursued him; the fly alighted on the plate of a Rani who was eating rice, and the Jogi took on his natural shape and told the Rani to scatter the rice which she was eating on the ground and she did so; but the boy turned himself into a bead of coral on the necklace which the Rani was wearing; and the Jogi did not notice this but became a pigeon and ate up the rice which the Rani had thrown down. When he did not find the boy among the rice he turned himself into a Jogi again and saw him in the necklace; then he told the Rani to break her necklace and scatter the beads on the ground and she did so; then the Jogi again became a pigeon and began to pick up the beads, but the boy turned himself into a cat and hid under the verandah and when the pigeon came near, he pounced on it and killed it, and ran outside with it. Then he became a boy again and twisted off the bird's head and wrapped it in his cloth and went off home; and looking behind he saw the Jogi's head come rolling after him, so when he came to a blacksmith's fire by the side of the road he threw the pigeon's head into it, and then the Jogi's head also ran into the fire and was consumed.

And the boy went home to his parents.

*(To be continued...)*

**FROM:**

*If undelivered please return to:*

**ALL INDIA ASECA,  
SFS Flat No. 326, Pocket 10,  
Sector 11 (Extension), Rohini,  
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