



# ASECA CHANNEL

(A monthly Journal from All India ASECA)

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## Editorial

Year 2016 turned out to be memorable one for the Santals as official recognition came in the form of declaration of Baisakh Kunami as a restricted holiday by Government of Odisha in memory of the birth anniversary of Pandit Raghunath Murmu. This is in continuation to the naming of a Medical College and Hospital after Pandit Raghunath Murmu. These developments are coming of course as a result of popular demand and aspiration of people transcending States boundaries and cutting across the political affiliation and formations. This particular development has inspired people to engage themselves in commemorating and celebrating the occasion. Government of Odisha in the one hand has accorded recognition and on the other has tried to resolve the avoidable disputes people have so far relating to the day and date. The issue though was clarified time and again, some quarter was engaged as a recalcitrant group in furthering the conflict and carrying forward the unreal utterance.

Any one will be overwhelmed to notice the scale and magnitude of arrangement of this occasion. The flip side is that though scale and magnitude are visible, equally visible is the presence of various groups in the same locality minus the common bonding and understanding. This perceptible development has given rise to a situation where impact is clearly visible as negligible and it remained as an occasion perceived and promoted by scattered groups without common understanding and target.

Going by the common people's perception and participation, political groups have also been keen in claiming the share of the celebration to reap the possible maximum advantage. Various formations are now engaged in installing the statue of Guru Gomke at various places. The spate of activities has started since the Centenary celebration of Pandit Raghunath Murmu in the year 2005. The people who were not serious then are now showing extra interest in pursuing this activity of installation

of statue and also eulogizing the virtues and existence of great personality and his presence.

Closer observation and analysis, however, throws open many questions which need to be responded and reciprocated. Going by the way things are being pursued by the people at the helm of affairs, it should be conveniently said that problems relating to Ol Chiki and Santali language are over and there is no requirement from the other quarters than the official to intervene in implementation. But in reality it is not the conducive atmosphere under which Santali language is promoted and propagated. The threat to the Ol Chiki has been intense than the period before the Santali language is included in the eighth schedule of the Constitution of India. At that time complacency was prevailing and people raise their voices as and when there was attack on "Ol Chiki". The sensitivity with which the cause and relevance of "Ol Chiki" was propagated was noteworthy. Now seriousness has taken the backseat.

The people have the anticipation and expectation that language and script would be equally protected and promoted. But it is not the same. Intense attempts are being made to allow other scripts than "Ol Chiki" to be used for Santali. Due to this process of indirect affront to the language and script, gradually, Ol Chiki would face the formidable opposition or resistance from the vested interests to derail the process of consolidation and confirmation. The tool to bring together people and their aspirations to be united and follow the uniform path would be diluted and gradually what is being promoted presently would decimate under the weight of confrontation and deceit. The people should channelize their resources for the promotion and familiarization of Ol Chiki along with organizing the cultural programmes through lavish arrangement and source and not to grace the occasion and enjoy the event through merry making only.

## OBITUARY



(31.12.1941 – 16.3.2016)

**Dr. Bidu Bhusan Hembram** stands out as a stalwart as far as personal, social and professional life is concerned. Dr. Hembram left all of us for his heavenly abode on 16.3.2016 in Kolkata at about 4.30 pm. Dr. Hembram as a person was simple, amiable, active and omnipresent at all social gatherings. He was a great organizer of various events including formation of associations for the promotion of art, culture, religion, social life, education among the Santals. Till his death he had engaged himself for the welfare of Santal society. His association with Pandit Raghunath Murmu as his ardent, loving disciple and personal physician helped

him to learn about the philosophy espoused by Guru Gomke. From the very beginning, he was associated with Adibasi Socio Educational and Cultural Association (ASECA) in the States of Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand. The unmatched conviction level and yearning for the social cause had influenced Dr. Hembram to serve the society throughout his life. His life is synonymous to a genre of selfless service, dedication, concern, caring and sharing. At the fag end of his career, he formed All India Santal Semled to give fillip to the social movement and also to develop the new Association so as to shoulder the emerging responsibility of the society. An avid propagator of Ol Chiki and with his relentless efforts and contribution, it can be said that Ol Chiki in West Bengal and elsewhere is continuing and flourishing. With his stewardship, Santali in Ol Chiki School has been established. It is noteworthy to mention that every year various programmes were organized at Betkundri (near Jhargram) for the welfare, unity of the society, promotion of Santali and popularizing Ol Chiki. He was instrumental in continuation of the process and was directly involved and engaged throughout the programme. He along with many others who dreamt of a vision to establish a Santali University at Betkundri is definitely going to face the new challenges. The void created will definitely not be fulfilled. He had vision for the society and quite often he used to share the same with an expectation to bring together people and resource to rekindle a sense of service and wellbeing of the people and society at large. He left for his heavenly abode experiencing the achievement in some cases and leaving behind the legacy to do something in most of the other cases.

An era has come to an end and all his good work and deed will inspire the next and future generation to follow the footsteps being left behind.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and two daughters. Though his void cannot be fulfilled so easily, we have to bear this irreparable loss along with the members of his family and near and dear ones.

All India ASECA prays Almighty to grant his soul eternal peace and shower greater strength to his family members to bear the loss.

# 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 April 2016 issue}

## XXIX. Sahde Goala.

Once a marriage was arranged between Sahde Goala and Princess Chandaini and on the wedding day when it began to get dusk Sahde Goala ordered the sun to stand still. "How," said he, "can the people see the wedding of a mighty man like myself in the dark?" So at his behest the sun delayed its setting for an hour, and the great crowd which had assembled saw all the grand ceremonies.

The next day Sahde and his bride set off home and it took them three days to reach the place where he lived. Before they left they had invited the princess's father to come and see them; accordingly a day or two later he set out, but it took him three months to accomplish the distance which Sahde Goala had traversed in three days. When the old Raja reached his son-in-law's house they welcomed him and washed his feet and offered him refreshments; and when he had eaten, he asked his son-in-law to take him out for a stroll. So they went out, Sahde Goala in front and the old Raja following behind him and as they walked Sahde Goala struck his foot against a stone, and the stone was shattered to pieces. When the Raja saw this proof of his son-in-law's superhuman strength, he became alarmed for his daughter's safety. If Sahde ever lost his temper with her he might clearly smash her to atoms, so he made up his mind that he could not leave her in such keeping. When he told his daughter what he had seen she was as frightened as her father and begged him to take her home, so they agreed to escape together some time when Sahde Goala was out of the way.

One morning Sahde Goala went out to watch his men working in the fields and the old Raja and his daughter seized this opportunity to escape. Sahde Goala had a sister named Lorokini and she ran to the field to tell her brother that his wife was running away. "Let her go" said Sahde Goala. The old Raja travelled faster than his daughter and left her behind

and as she travelled along alone Sahde Goala made a flooded river flow across her path. It was quite unfordable so the Princess stood on the bank and sang:—

"My mother gave me birth,

My father gave me in marriage:

If the water upstream would stand still

And the water downstream would flow away

Then I could go and live in my own home."

But no such thing happened and she had to go back to her husband's house.

When she arrived her mother-in-law gave her a large basket of cooked rice and a pot of relish and told her to take them to the labourers in the field. Her mother-in-law helped her to lift the basket on to her head and she set off. When she reached the field she called to her sister-in-law:—

"Come Lorokini,

Lift down from my head

The basket of rice

And the pot of relish."

But Lorokini was angry with her for trying to run away and refused to help, singing:—

"I will not come

I will not lift down the basket:

Prop it against a *murup* tree:

I will not lift it down."

Then Chandaini Rani propped it against the trunk of a *murup* tree, and so set it on the ground.

Then she sang to her husband:—

"Here, husband, is the lota of water:

Here, husband, is the tooth stick;

Come, and wash your hands:

If you are angry with me

Take me back to my father and mother."

But Sahde Goala was ploughing at the head of his men and paid no attention to her: then she sang again:—

"Seven hundred labourers

And twenty hundred women labourers,  
You are causing to die of thirst.”

But still Sahde Goala paid no attention. Then Chandaini Rani got angry and by leaning the basket against the *murup* tree managed to get it on to her head again and carried it home, and from that time *murup* trees grow slanting. Directly she had taken the rice and relish to the house she set off again to run away to her mother. As before Sahde Goala caused a flooded river to flow across her path and as before she sang:—

“My mother gave me birth,  
My father gave me in marriage:  
If the water upstream would stand still  
And the water downstream would flow away  
Then I could go and live in my own home,”

And this time the water did stand still and the water below all flowed away and she crossed over. As she crossed she said “If I am really chaste no one will be able to touch me.” And as she reached the opposite bank she saw a young man sitting waiting for her; his name was Bosomunda, he had been sitting waiting for her on the bank for days without moving. When he saw Chandaini Rani mount the bank he rose and said “Come: I have been waiting for you, you are to be my mistress.” “Fie, fie!” answered she “Am I to belong to any Dome or Hari?” Bosomunda swore that she should be his. “If so, then follow a little behind me so as not to tread on my shadow.” So they went on, the Rani in front and Bosomunda behind. Presently they came to a tamarind tree on which grew two enormous fruits; the Rani pointed to them saying “If I am to belong to you, you must pick me those fruits.” So Bosomunda began to climb the tree, and as he climbed she prayed that the tree might grow and touch the sky; and in fact as fast as Bosomunda climbed so the tree grew and he got no nearer to the fruit.

Then the Chandaini Rani picked up the weapons which he had laid on the ground and threw them away one to the north and one to the south, one to the east and one to the west, and ran off as fast as she could. Bosomunda at first did not see her because his eyes were fixed on the tamarind fruit, but after she had gone a long way he caught sight of her and came down as fast as he could and, gathering up his weapons, went in pursuit. But Chandaini Rani had got a long start, and as she hurried along she passed a thorn tree standing by the side of the road and she called to it “Thorn tree, Bosomunda is coming after me, do your best to detain him for a little.” As she spoke it seemed as if a weight descended on the tree and swayed it to and fro so that its branches swept the ground, and it answered her “I will do like this to him.” Then she went on and met a goat on the road, and she asked it to do its best to delay Bosomunda, and the goat pawed the ground and dug its horns into the earth and said that it would do the same to Bosomunda. Then she went on and met a ram and made the same request; the ram charged a tree and butted it right over and promised to treat Bosomunda in the same way.

Afterwards she came to a bull and the bull drove its horns into a bank and brought down a quantity of earth and said that that was the way he would treat Bosomunda. Next she came to a buffalo and the buffalo charged a bank of earth to show what he would do to Bosomunda. Then she came to an elephant and the elephant trampled a clod of earth to dust and said that he would treat Bosomunda so. Then she went on and saw a paddy bird feeding by the roadside and she asked it to do its best to delay Bosomunda; the paddy bird drove its bill into the earth and said that it would treat Bosomunda in the same way.

(To be continued...)

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