

IWA DHWANI

Indian Women's Association

Sounds of IWA

October 2013 • MCI (P) 143/05/2013



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Indian High Commissioner to Singapore

iwa diwali bazaar 2013



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President's Message



This has been an exciting trimester as we have taken our collective vision of integration forward. It started with a hunt to select an awardee for our inaugural IWA EKTA Integration award. Tamil Murasu and Tabla Integration Night on 30th July was an important occasion for us. This evening saw Mr. S. R. Nathan, the sixth president of Singapore, handing over the award on our behalf to Mr K Kesavapany. That same night there was the auction

of a beautiful painting named 'Play' by Neeraj Goswami. We are thankful to Phi events who donated the painting for IWA's charitable endeavours. The auction raised 6,500 SGD and the money was donated for SINDA's pre-school programme.

The integration theme has been picked up by our other clubs and incorporated in many of their activities. To mention a few - the last session of the Gourmet Goddess club had an introduction to 'Nonya' cuisine, an amalgamation of Chinese and Malay cuisine, the last book event was with Singaporean author Josephine Chia who talked about her book which dwells on a Singapore of kampongs. We are joining hands with National Heritage Board in their 20th year celebration by donating the proceeds of our iconic event to Asian Civilisations Museum and the upcoming Indian Heritage Centre.

Along with all of IWA's efforts towards integration, I am also most excited about our growing membership. A lot of the new members are a superb tech savvy group with varied skill sets. It's wonderful to see them coming forward and enthusiastically participating in various events that are being organised. We have several Singaporeans who have joined us and some long-term residents too. This milieu brings with them an amazing depth to the vision of IWA.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of our events which will shortly be taking place. Our IWA Diwali Bazaar, on 18th October is just a few weeks away. The ambience will be of a village fair complete with mouth-watering street food. We have had so much pleasure looking through photographs of the unusual products that will be on display at our bazaar that we can't wait to give you a chance to acquire some of them. This

time we have several 'first timers' as well as eleven vendors who are coming in from India only for our Bazaar!

All the proceeds of the IWA Bazaar Raffle will go towards the IWA Vidya Scholarship. The chosen student recipient this year is a Singaporean Chinese, Heng Hong Na, who is enrolled for Bachelor of Accountancy at Singapore Management University.

Like me, I am sure you are also waiting with bated breath for our Iconic Event-The Indian Affaire:Chapter 2013, a champagne brunch at Four Seasons Hotel along with an exclusive fashion show where models sashay down the ramp wearing outfits by Kavita Bhartia, Kiran Uttam Ghosh, Namrata Joshipura and Rajesh Pratap Singh. These reputed designers are flying down from India especially for the event. The excitement is building up and I am sure you are counting down the days.



IWA EKTA Integration award

With our next issue of Dhvani we will start our search for Sony-IWA Woman of the Year. She has to be a Singaporean of Indian origin or a long time Singapore resident (of Indian origin). To put it simply she has to be a woman who has fought against all odds and made a difference - A woman of substance. We are tying up with Sony TV for this unique search and the winner will be the Sony-IWA Woman of the Year. The details will be in IWA Dhvani and on our website.

It is going to be a busy month for all of us and I would like to end by wishing you a Happy Deepavali.

Piu Lahiri
president@iwasingapore.org

On the cover: The Harmonious Lotus
Original art work by IWA member Kumuda Krovvidi

The artwork is an image of a symbol of something good and auspicious as well as of peace in many cultures of South East Asia. The lotus is the national flower of countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The colours red and gold depict prosperity and wealth. The dots signify our country of residence, Singapore which is often referred to as a 'red dot' in the map of the world and has red and white in its flag. The background includes dots of different colours signifying the harmony among all races of people in Singapore. The style of artwork is similar to the batik style of painting which is popular in textiles of South East Asia.

IWA Dhvani editorial team: Lakshmi Padmanabhan, Lakshmi Raghavan, Meenakshi Dahiya, Rashantha Therese Devanesan, Shalinee Chatterjee, Sukanya Pushkarna

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Hope you like this issue of IWA Dhvani. For any feedback you may have, suggestions of what you would like to see featured or articles and photos that you may like to contribute please do email us at editor@iwasingapore.com

The Jewellery Code

By Rashantha Therese Devanesan

From the earliest documented history, we find that men and women have adorned themselves with jewellery. A study of these artefacts often illuminates ancient culture and customs, thereby enabling us to form a better understanding of evolving cultural and social communities.

For us today, jewellery is meant to enhance and beautify the wearer, but in ancient times this was not its sole function. In addition to adornment, wearing jewellery, both for men and women had a myriad of reasons and uses. Some jeweled objects were worn as status symbols, while others like amulets and medals, were worn to ward off evil and protect the wearer. Certain gemstones such as carnelian, lapis lazuli and rock crystal were thought to have magical properties of healing and were worn both as protection and also to promote fertility.

In the Middle East, triangular shaped and cylinder shaped jeweled objects were credited with a protective function. For instance, the Turkmen piece of chest jewellery known as the 'Tumar' is a combination of a triangle and a cylinder shaped amulet case which usually contained a protective proverb from a sacred text.

In ancient India, in addition to wearing amulets made of gold and silver that carried magical protective power objects, the significance of jewellery was greater than it simply being an object for the display of wealth, or as protection against evil forces.

The formal design of a piece of jewellery conveys several messages about the wearer. It can indicate religious beliefs, geographic origins, social and economic status and in the case of women, whether she is single and available for marriage, married, or widowed. (Widows, in rural and conservative communities, do not wear jewellery.) Without a word spoken, all this information is conveyed to a casual observer.

Over time, various styles, and designs in jewellery have evolved. A closer look at jewellery hailing from ancient Uruk, the land of Gilgamesh (Tablets portraying 'the Epic of Gilgamesh' showing pictures of Gilgamesh wearing both bracelets and amulets) to the jewellery of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley and East Asia bear striking resemblance to each other thereby maybe indicating ancient trade routes and cultural influences of one ancient civilization on another. It is possible, for instance, to see marked similarities between the enameled jewellery of Turkmenistan in Central Asia, and the Himachal region namely the Kangra district of Northern India. Likewise, similarities are evident in the design of sacred amulets of the southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala with the Central Asian regions of Oman and Yemen

The story of 'jewellery' is actually a story of the movement and evolution of human societies and confirms the idea that in the end we all desire, seek and display many similar facets that make us all an interesting 'Whole'.

Rashantha Therese Devanesan is interested in the history of Jewellery and has been researching and crafting pieces for the past five years.



India
Early 20th century
silver ta'wiz amulets



Oman
Early 20th century box necklace



Oman
Late nineteenth century
silver hirz necklace



Turkmenistan
amulet or chest ornament
called Tumar

Photographs courtesy Ethic Jewellery from Africa, Asia and Pacific Islands - Michiel Elsevier Stokmans

Spinning a *W*arn with Indian Cotton

By Garima Lalwani

The Indian subcontinent has been one of the earliest producers of cotton textiles. Ancient Indians had traded cotton cloth with places as far away as Egypt, the Arab world and even Rome. The Romans called this cloth “woven air”. They lamented the emptying of precious metal from their coffers used in exchange for this material so desired by their women.

The Indian textile workers were not only adept at cultivating and weaving cotton, they also possessed great skill in dyeing and decorating the plain cloth. They knew how to create unparalleled hues of blues from indigo and bright reds from the roots of *chay* and madder plants. To decorate the plain cloth, craftsmen used techniques ranging from *kalamkari* to block printing to *patola* or double *ikat* weaving.

Kalamkari is a method where intricate designs are applied by hand using a pen or *kalam* dipped in paint onto a plain cloth. Block printing uses pieces of wood. The desired pattern is cut into a piece of wood; this carved surface is dipped in colour and applied to the textile by hand to create a print. Another way of creating design in textile is through weaving.

Hand-woven *patola* is one of the most sought after, expensive and difficult to weave textiles. During weaving, the thread that travels lengthwise is called a warp and a thread that goes across is called the weft thread. To create a *patola* both the warp and weft threads are first dyed in the desired pattern. The dyed threads are then hand woven on a loom and the pattern is revealed. During weaving, the warp and weft thread must be perfectly aligned since any mistake would throw the entire pattern off. *Patola* was valued not only in India but also in South East Asia where only royalty could wear them.

Early Indian and Arab traders and later Portuguese, Dutch and British traders brought Indian textile to South East Asia in large quantities. When the Portuguese tried to trade for spices in the islands of South East Asia, they found that most of what they had to offer did not appeal to the locals. Indian textiles were however a sought after trade commodity.

Cloth permeated every part of the social life of the people of South East Asia. It was used for rituals and ceremonies, gift exchange and ancestor worship as well as to establish social status. Many of these cloths took on the significance of being *Maa* cloth or ancestral cloth which were kept safe and brought out only on special occasions. What was trade material for Indian manufacturers, took on unique meanings attributed to it by the owners. Perhaps this is the reason why these textiles have survived in South East Asia and not in India where many of them were produced.

The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM), Singapore recently acquired a collection of Indian trade textiles from an American collector named Roger Hollander. Most of the pieces in the collection were initially sourced

from Indonesia specially the islands of Timor, Sulawesi and Sumatra. With this acquisition, ACM now has one of the most important collections of Indian trade textiles for the South East Asian market.

Garima Lalwani is a docent at the Asian Civilisations Museum and also guides at the Singapore Art Museum. (Photos courtesy Asian Civilisations Museum)



Hanging (kain leluhur): Large flowers and cartouches



Hanging: Dandia Dancers; Gujarat-15th century (cotton; drawn and painted, resist and mordant dyed)



Photo Courtesy Anurag Dahiya

Indian

Influence in Ancient South East Asian Temples

By Meenakshi Dahiya

Wars can conquer lands but not hearts; victories over lands are short-lived but hearts once won are rarely lost. As Indians, it is a matter of pride for us that our rich culture has influenced vast regions all around us. It is humbling at the same time to note that this influence was 'soft' most of the time and not a harsh imposition in the wake of an aggression. Through the ages, Indian influence has permeated the whole landscape across East Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Africa, just like fragrance which is uncontrollable, but welcomed wherever it reaches, as it rides the winds.

Ramayana and Mahabharata are two epics, which arose out of Indian ethos. These have represented and shaped our culture. These legends, alongside the essence of Indian spirituality and philosophy, have found eager audiences in faraway lands where they were carried by travellers and traders. Fascination with the stories, rituals, dance, music and architecture from India grew and with time many local populations adopted them as their own. All over South East Asia, dances depicting Ramayana are an integral part of the local heritage. Over the centuries, the artistic depictions have become more indigenous, but the core themes rooted in the legends have remained.

All around the world, places of worship become deliberate showcases for the power of the state. These are designed

to be awe-inspiring. Majestic temples like Angkor Wat (Cambodia) and Prambanan Shiva Temple and Borobudur (Indonesia) bear a testimony to the strength of Hindu and Buddhist faiths, as adopted and cherished by the local empires. The sheen of these monuments may be fading over the centuries, but their mesmerising glory is never-changing.

Ruins of Indian-influenced temples built during the 5th to 14th centuries are found even today in Pagan or Bagan (Myanmar), Ayuthaya (Thailand), Wat Phou near mouth of Mekong river (Laos), Batu Caves near Kuala Lumpur, Gengga Negara, Langkasuka, Old Kedah (Malaysia), My Son (built by the Cham people in Central and Southern Vietnam), Funan and Khmer regions (Cambodia and Laos), Singhasari and Majapahit empire in Central Java, Bali and parts of the Philippines archipelago and the Sri Vijayan empire in Sumatra. Indeed, many historians now opine that various shrines in and around Quanzhou, a bustling industrial city across the straits from Taiwan in South-Eastern China, may have been part of a network of more than a dozen Hindu temples and shrines built from the 10th century onwards. The styles of these monuments range from Kalinga (Eastern India), Pala (Eastern and Central India), Vakataka (Ajanta and Ellora fame, Central India) and Chola (South India), but the running theme remains inherently Indian.

It is interesting to note that Angkor Wat and Wat Phou formed an axis of the Khmer empire and even in those days, a 200 kms long road linked these. The temple Wat Phou is currently being restored with the help of the Indian Government.

ANGKOR WAT

The Angkor Thom, at its height, was as big as present day New York. The temples were built during 9th to 13th centuries. Angkor Wat is the largest temple complex in the world. The main structures include Angkor Wat, Bayon, Preah Khan, Banteay Srei and Ta Prohm.

Beautiful sculptures, exquisite bas-reliefs, exceptional architecture and ultimately, a living microcosm based on sound irrigation techniques wrapped in an aura of wonder - that, probably, is the only way to describe Angkor Wat. It literally means 'City Temple'. The other temples, at Angkor Thom, are as intricate and magnificent, but Angkor Wat supercedes everything by its sheer size and greatest continuous linear bas-reliefs in its galleries depicting stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata. Angkor Wat was later converted from a Hindu temple dedicated to Vishnu to a Buddhist temple.

Angkor received UNESCO World Heritage Site inscription in 1992. Angkor lies 5.5 kms north of Siem Reap.

CANDI PRAMBANAN

Prambanan temple is a collection of 240 temples built in the 9th century, dedicated to the Hindu *Trimurti* or Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The tallest temple at the core is dedicated to Shiva, hence it is also called the Prambanan Shiva temple. This temple lay buried in volcanic ash of Mount Merapi for centuries and is named after the village closest to it. Some people believe that it is an altered version of 'Para Brahman' or the Supreme One.

The bas-reliefs at Prambanan depict stories from the Ramayana and Bhagwad Purana. The Krishna stories from the latter are found in the Vishnu temple. Krishna is one of Vishnu's ten *avatars*. The Prambanan panel is famous for its unique lion in a niche flanked by two *kalpatarus* (divine wish-fulfilling trees).

This temple is also called Candi Rara Jonggrang (Temple of Slender Virgin). In Indonesian, ancient temples are called Candi. Local legend says that a prince wanted to marry a princess. The princess declined because the prince had killed her father. Since the prince persisted, she asked him to build a 1000-statue temple in one night. When the prince



Photo Courtesy Surojit Sen

succeeded in building 999, the princess asked her maids to start pounding rice as it was done in the morning and a fire was built in the east. This disturbed the prince's meditation. He woke up to find that he had been tricked. He cursed the princess and she became the 1000th statue as Durga.

Trimurti theatres are used to stage the Ramayana ballet in evenings. For details please visit <http://www.borobudurpark.com/temple/ramayanaPrambanan>

CANDI BOROBUDUR

The Buddhist temple of Borobudur was built in the 9th century. In comparison, the Angkor Wat was built three centuries later and the great cathedrals of Europe about four centuries later. Borobudur literally means 'temple on a hill'. The Borobudur temple was built in accordance with the beliefs of Mahayana Buddhism. It has four levels representing a rise in human consciousness when it gets rid of lust, appearance and shape.



Photo Courtesy Surojit Sen

It is believed that this temple was covered in volcanic ash from nearby Mount Merapi and over the years, vegetation covered it fully. It was re-discovered in the early 19th century. Sir Stanford Raffles is credited with bringing this masterpiece of yesteryears to the world's attention. This temple received the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991. The bas-reliefs at Borobudur are exquisite, drawing from daily life in Java as well as from Buddhist lore. Its base has a hidden foot with bas-reliefs depicting *karmic* law. Murder, killing of animals, stealing and the like are depicted receiving nasty punishments. Interestingly, Dante wrote about similar principles much later, in the 13th century!

Borobudur is about 40 kms north-west of Yogyakarta. Manohara Hotel has the sole rights to take its guests for an early morning visit to the temple. For details, you can visit: <http://manoharaborobudur.com>.

Vesakh day is celebrated religiously every year over 'the temple corridor', which is a straight line connecting two other temples with Borobudur. Pawon is 1.15 kms and Mendut is 3 kms from Borobudur. An impressive and intriguing collection of monuments indeed!

So then, pack your bags and prepare to be amazed by your own culture portrayed in all its glory, beyond its national boundaries!

Meenakshi Dahiya, previously a banker, now teaches Economics and is passionate about reading and travel.

Hotties: Now and Then

By Neena Mittal

Call it an ancient remedy or grandmother's secret recipe for relieving toothache, cold or cough. It works even today! Spice history dates back to 50,000 BCE and came to surface only in 2000 BCE. It was the search for spices that brought Vasco da Gama to Calicut in the year 1498 and opened a new route for other explorers, as well. Thus, the spice trade plays an eminent role in epochal discoveries around the world.

Turmeric

Ayurvedic practitioners call it a 'wonder food'. Many Indians believe turmeric powder enhances the complexion and relieves colds and coughs. Due to its antiseptic properties, it is a good healer and can be applied on cuts and wounds. In India, turmeric rhizomes are dried and ground, whereas in Malaysia and Indonesia the leaves are used as herbs. In Thailand, young shoots and inflorescence are boiled with vegetables. Some Asian countries use turmeric extract for the bright yellow colour in commercial rice dishes.



Black Pepper

Black pepper has been mentioned in Sanskrit literature, as early as 1000 BCE, as the 'king of spices'. For the Romans, it was a status symbol signifying a mark of fine cuisine. They used it to preserve meat in cold winters during the early middle ages. Besides being used for flavouring, this pernicious spice garnered the place of 'Black Gold' in history. Even today, its association with gold holds huge importance for the people of *Iddicki* in Kerala, India. Today the village of *Iddicki* is the largest producer and exporter of the finest quality of pepper in the world. Black pepper is attributed with antihistamine properties.



Cinnamon

Cinnamon is derived from the dried strip of the bark of the cinnamon tree. Today, cinnamon is chiefly used for flavouring but ancient Egyptians used it for embalming purposes together with star anise, marjoram and cumin. The essence of cinnamon is a powerful stimulant promoting digestion, easing respiration and regulating blood circulation. The essential oils found in the leaves, bark, stem and roots are used as an astringent and as a germicide. It is interesting to know that cinnamon was used as an aphrodisiac in ancient and medieval ages.



Betel Nut

In *ayurveda*, betel nut is used for treating fever and rheumatism. Today, it has the same relevance as eating mint after food. Betel nut is aromatic, slightly addictive and intoxicating. It is chewed by approximately 25 percent of the population the world over. Amazingly, the sweet scented flower of betel nut is used in herbal medicine in Borneo, Indonesia.



Clove

Spices like clove, nutmeg, pepper and mace are the hallmarks of fine cooking. However, cloves were in high demand not only for flavouring food but were also considered a powerful mood elevator. Clove oil too, has healing powers with anaesthetic effect in toothaches. Today, cloves are used commercially in production of 'Kretek' or cigarettes. Indonesia is the largest producer of clove cigarettes capturing 99 percent of the United States market.



Allspice

A Spanish explorer was in search of pepper and mistook allspice for black pepper because its leaves and fruit diffuse the combined smell of clove, black pepper, cinnamon and nutmeg. Allspice was discovered in Mexico in the 16th century. Today, allspice is the only spice having commercial production confined to the western world. It is the main ingredient in Caribbean jerk. Further, it is extensively used in making ketchup, marinades, barbecue sauces, flavouring cakes and liqueurs. In olden times, Russian soldiers used allspice to deodorize their boots because of its antimicrobial property. The oil derived has cosmetic utility in perfumes.

Besides taste, spices have balancing properties as hot and cold. Thus, *garam masala* is a derivative of mixed spices, specific to Indian cuisine. It is mainly an assortment of cumin seeds, coriander seeds, cloves, black pepper, green cardamom, black cardamom, cinnamon, bay leaves and nutmeg. Ingredients differ and are customised according to taste in every Indian kitchen.

Neena Mittal is a full-time freelance features and travel writer for various Singapore based magazines.

The Woman of

By Kumuda Krowvidi & Shivali Mathur

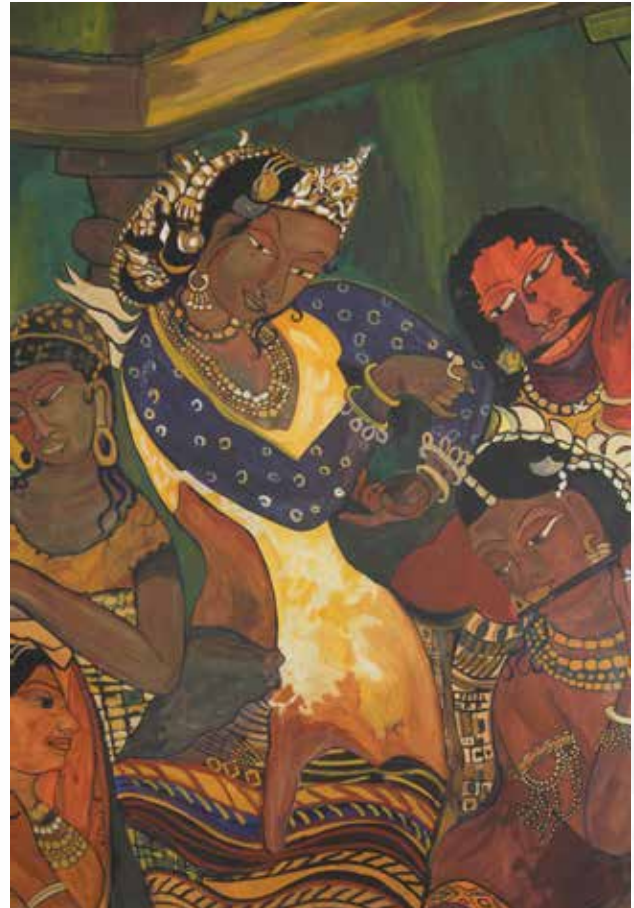
Ajanta

The Ajanta Caves are about 30 rock cut Buddhist cave monuments which date from the 2nd century to around 600 BCE. The caves include paintings and sculptures that are described by the Archaeological Survey of India as “the finest surviving examples of Indian art, particularly painting”, which are masterpieces of Buddhist religious art, with figures of the Buddha and depictions of Jataka tales. Since 1983, the Ajanta Caves have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The frescoes are the most exquisite of murals seen in India. The characters in the murals have their eye-brows arched and eyes semi-closed, their glance is at times sideways, at times straight, at other times almost looking inward and compelling us towards them. The language of the eyes and the body portray a fluid flow of expression and grace. Each line and each colour is an expression of faith. The style of painting is unique, almost akin to poetry in motion.

The impact of the technique of Ajanta paintings on pilgrims spread all over South East Asia, from India to Sri Lanka, Nepal, China, Mongolia, Tibet and even distant Japan. The paintings originally covered the whole surface of the cave walls - from the edge of the ceiling down to the floor. However, time and nature have taken a toll and most parts of the murals have peeled off in layers leaving only the middle portions. The paintings place the characters in a way that gives an impression of implied perspective. The panels of painting are never empty, fitted with various characters, in various acts of everyday living in worship, but not squeezed and characters enter from space behind painted walls, clustering together, even then seemingly not intruding upon each others movements. They are drawn in two dimensional formats of similar appearances, at the same time with surprising details. Jewellery is shown in excess to indicate the status of the person portrayed as well as give the figure a fluid form.

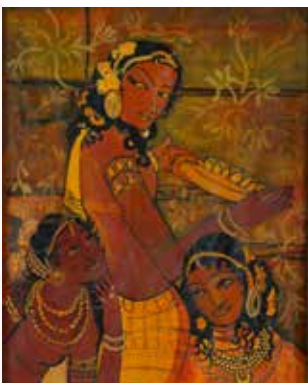
With only six pigments in hand, which were essentially lamp black, red and yellow ochre, green, blue and white, the artists of Ajanta Caves created a palette of fantastic earthy tones.



While the outer defining line often drawn in Indian red would lend it a block of volume, the shades captured the light and dark depths of contours. Illustrating the Jataka stories and other Buddhist themes, they transport the viewer into another dimension above the ordinary into the sublime.

In this background of portraits of beatified people and enlightened characters, is the woman of Ajanta-full bodied, almost divine in form and regal in outlook. She is bedecked with jewels and ornaments and wears an elaborate head dress. The artists appear to be almost ardent devotees of her form and personality. The lines fill out her full form, caress her contours and underline her grace. All poses whether walking or standing, sitting or reclining, are images of exquisite grace - arrested activity, floating fluid lines and an expression of languid contemplation. She is a symbol of life, intertwined with flowers and creepers, a visual splendour to behold.

Kumuda and Shivali, who are artists based in Singapore, conduct workshops and classes in Indian art. The pictures by Kumuda are painted representations of the original Ajanta paintings.





More Than a Bullseye

By Abeer Dahiya

It's been nearly a decade since I arrived here in Singapore. Back then, I had no idea that this was going to be my home for the next phase of my life. At first, Singapore seemed a lot like Delhi—only much smaller, brighter and cleaner.

But, there was a difference that was to be noted only when I turned 11. That year, in 2012, my mum was very fed up of me just sitting at home and drawing or reading. She demanded that I needed to get serious and start playing sports. Initially I was reluctant and I was pushed to try a variety of sports—cricket, tennis, squash, badminton, football, swimming—the list was endless. So when she got me to shake hands with Master Coach K.R. Letchumanan and his team, I was startled.

When it came to archery, I wasn't half surprised. You see, archery is a rather costly and difficult sport and I had no idea how I would be able to cope with a 22-pound bow and equipment weighing me down. But, then again, it was also my choice. And if I had refused that chance, someone else would have written this article.

I've come a long way since then and have learned quite a bit. As a feeble youngster that had a jumpstart on phonics and a slight disadvantage in the field of sports, naturally, I was surprised when my parents introduced me to archery.

Archery? Archery is a hard and expensive sport. It was built for warriors. Why me?

It was then when I first met the coach, who smiled and taught me techniques and tips from the stance to reloading. Sure, I got shouted at, sometimes, but it was ultimately worth it. One of the more interesting things he told me was that a good archer has a steady arm and strength, the best archer will have a firm and nimble mind.

While these wise words encouraged me further, they also made me doubt my capability.

As I soon found out, though, there was little to doubt. Archery was a unique journey. Although straining—and even painful at times, it taught me to push my limits to the furthest possible line and to reach out to new horizons.

Today, I do archery thrice a week, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and enjoy every bit of it. I have achieved a strong sense of discipline as instilled by my coaches and family and as a result, I'm now a much friendlier figure than I used to be. And it does not stop there, either. Before archery, every month or so, I had to replace my spectacle lenses, due to an ever-rising increase in power. Now, as I focus on different and farther-away targets that I usually do at home, my eyesight has improved, as well. Amazing!

It is not a smooth journey, though. There were hitches like the time when I lost my first competition in anxiety, and the time when I nearly hit myself with my own bow, carelessly.

But, no doubt, the greatest disappointment is hearing my fellow classmates saying that sports like cricket and soccer are much harder than archery, and that archery is meant for the disabled. All I can say is that this is not true. Archery is every bit as exciting and challenging as other sports. It takes little skill to hit a ball. It takes years and years of preparation to hit a bull's eye.

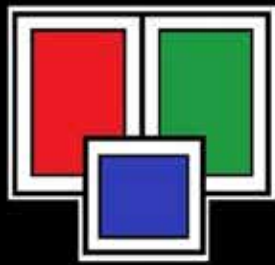
And neither is it true to say that archers have it easy. By no means can this be true. Archery is definitely one of the most challenging sports, that tests the player physically, mentally and emotionally. The slightest error is punishable with suspension, or worse. The archer must possess a keen eyesight, a steady arm, a firm grip, locked and armed knees and a strong spine—but most of all, a relaxed mind. Should one lose their composure over a mere misfire, archery is then to be stopped immediately.

Archery is meant as training for the armies and heroes. And it is my dream that someday, I shall be among them, for a great nation has supplied me with the best equipment, stadiums and the greatest and most supportive team an archer can acquire. It's great to be living in Singapore, where I can fulfill my goals and hit the bulls eye...every time!

Abeer Dahiya is a 12 year old studying in Grade 8 at NPSIS. Along with archery, he loves to read, sketch, play piano and guitar.



Abeer (Centre) with Coach Jeff (Left) & Master Coach K.R. Letchumanan (Right)



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Inviting Contributions

IWA Dhvani is your quarterly magazine and we want you to showcase what excites and interests you. Please send in your contributions on the below lines to editor@iwasingapore.org

Cover Picture Contribution

We invite contributions of artwork or photographs for the next issue's cover picture. If you find something you would like to capture please send in your original work to us.

We request that the artwork or photograph be horizontal, at least 300dpi and at least 200mm in width. We discourage photos taken on camera phones. If you can, please send a description of the photograph in a couple of lines.

This invitation is extended to IWA members as well as their children, spouses and partners.

Contributions for Women Achievers Section

Is the lady you meet at the gym a tireless social worker? Is your neighbour a successful entrepreneur? Or is your friend actively involved in helping destitute children? If you know of women who you feel have made a difference to society, risen against odds and made a success of themselves or dedicated their lives to a charitable cause, then isn't it time we celebrated them?

IWA Dhvani is looking to celebrate women of Indian origin who remain the unsung heroines in society. If you know of a woman achiever who isn't well-known and written about in the media then go ahead and send us a 450 word write-up about why you think she should be featured in the IWA Women Achievers section. Our research team and editorial board will vet all entries and choose the most deserving candidates.

Kidz Corner Contribution

IWA is not just about us women but also about our families and in IWA Dhvani we are hoping to create a special space for IWA children.

We invite members' children to contribute a 400 word essay on any aspect of life in Singapore which excites or interests them. For example among other things it might range from people they have met, places they have visited in Singapore, new food they have tasted or a talent they have had a chance to hone in this land. An accompanying photograph (no phone camera photographs) or original corresponding artwork should also be submitted.

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Josephine Chia & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

By Tara Dhar Hasnain

On the morning of September 24, the IWA book club and Singapore Management University's library organised a 'Meet the Author' session with Josephine Chia, a Singaporean writer who has published eight books, of which most are about Singapore in some way. Not only was this in keeping with IWA's theme of 'integration' in the sense of showcasing a Singaporean author for the Indians and other expatriates who attended, it was also about integration at a deeper level.

This event focused most of all on Josephine's latest book, published earlier this year, entitled *Kampong Spirit: Gotong Royong, 1955-1965*. One of the central themes of this book is the spirit of community - living that marked Singapore life in the 50's and 60's, as symbolised by kampong Potong Pasir, where Josephine was raised.

She belonged to an impoverished family, as did many others in her kampong. Yet, the villagers of different races and ethnicities lived happily in close proximity with each other, celebrating each others' festivals by sharing their special foods with others. When any family was in trouble or dire need, the others chipped in to help in different ways. When her father brought home a TV, one of very few in the kampong, it was taken for granted that the neighbours could come in and watch shows with them! All this embodied the 'kampong spirit', called 'Gotong Royong' in Malay.

Josephine did a riveting presentation, and read excerpts from this book, showing us how Singaporeans of different backgrounds banded



together, especially in times of tension and trouble, to help each other as best as they could. The people of this village became a microcosm for the emerging nation, sharing their joys as well as their sorrows with each other.

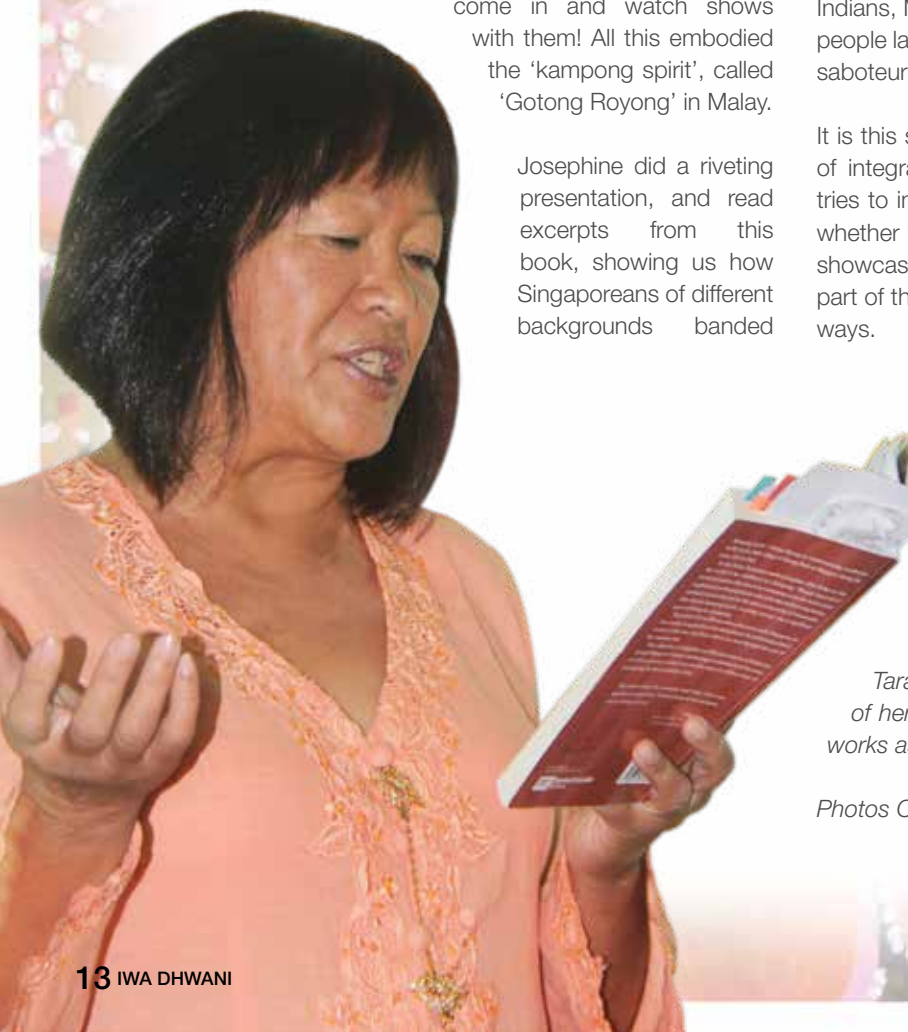
We also learnt about the emerging sense of a specifically Singaporean identity, whereas earlier immigrants had thought of themselves more in terms of where they came from- as Chinese, Indians, Malays, Eurasians. One example her book cites is of how people largely acted in unison when bombs planted by Indonesian saboteurs went off in the 60's.

It is this spirit of community, of living in harmony with each other, of integration, that Singapore values greatly in its people, and tries to inculcate in all of us who call this lovely island our home, whether for a few years or permanently. This is also what IWA is showcasing in its overarching theme this year- to feel an integral part of the community we live in, and to contribute to it in positive ways.

Thank you, Josephine Chia, for reiterating this for us, a largely expatriate audience, and for giving us the opportunity to learn about the roots of this spirit from earlier times, as well as to ask you questions about it. Thank you also to all of you who came and made this event a big success! We appreciate your active participation, and hope to bring you more such events in the future.

Tara Dhar Hasnain has worked as a university teacher most of her life, including as adjunct faculty at SMU. Currently, she works as an editor for Marshall Cavendish International.

Photos Courtesy Sukanya Pushkarna



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A meeting with Drs. Julie and Harish Mehta



Meet the author-Josephine Chia



Music Club



Entrepreneur Club



At India House with Her Excellency, Mrs. Vijay Thakur Singh, The Indian High Commissioner to Singapore



Gourmet Goddess Club



IWA members with artist Neeraj Goswami



With Senior Minister Ms. Indraneel Rajah at MOE



Smiling Volunteers



Adda Club



The Iconic Event Committee at work



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