

## **The Achievement of Two Friends & Naming Ceremony**

*“Dui Bandhunka Karamati” & “Namakarana”*

by Madhabananda Panda in Odia

Translated by PRAMOD KUMAR DAS

### **Translator’s Note**

It is quite difficult and daunting to translate the emotion, imagination, and ‘voice’ of an author, which are required to embellish a narrative world that resonates and inspires a child’s innocence. The pleasure of translating changes into high seriousness when translation shifts from words to the sense and essence. The translation from Odia into English is difficult because of the absence of one to one correspondence between the two languages. The two stories translated here are from the collection *Kathuria ‘O’ Budha Saguna (The Woodcutter and Old Vulture)* originally written by Madhabananda Panda. The stories namely “*Dui Bandhunka Karamati*” “the Achievements of Two Friends” and “*Namakarana*” (“Naming Ceremony”) show the cultural and ritualistic practices in Odisha. My decision to translate these stories into English is backed by an intention that the non-Odia readers will have a sense and awareness of the cultural trends as well as the literary practices in Odisha. They will also know about the tradition of children’s literature in Odisha that significantly contributes to the national literatures. Another striking feature of these stories which motivated me is the way these stories are presented with the simplicity and beauty of the narrative style. The chosen texts are representative of contemporary Odia short stories dedicated to children’s literature. They are didactic and instructional to some extent in the sense that not only has aesthetic value but also help in developing critical thinking of children as in the case of “The Achievements of Two Friends”.

I believe in the philosophy of cultural transaction. India is a land of varied cultures and practices, where the translation of different regional literatures is the only modality for transmission and transplantation of regional ideas and values in the psyche of a national audience. The readership of regional literatures expands to embrace the globe through translation. The production of children literature in Odisha is in a lacklustre state because of the absence of national and global readership. Translation of such literatures will give impetus for the proliferation of Odia Children's literature. In addition, such translation will give opportunities to the regional children of Odisha to get access to the English language through fun and joy. So, keeping the global readership as well as the local interest in mind, the translation has been done carefully to maintain lucidity in language and accuracy in meaning.

Some of the issues I faced during the process of translation can be listed below.

- Finding suitable equivalence i.e. 'closest natural equivalent' (Nida) for culture-specific terms e.g. *chuin chuin*, *jhatimati* etc.
- Transferring the meaning, sense, and essence of the Odishan cultural landscape as presented in these stories; 'the feel of the text' in the target text.
- Conveying the effectiveness of the message/ meaning in the target text.
- Maintaining coherence of the target text

In the process of translation, I have tried to adopt a method known as 'liberal' translation, not literal (word-for-word) translation. Keeping in mind the socio-cultural aspects, the text and context, I have used equivalent expressions in the target text. As a translator, I have tried to offer an "effective and comprehensive rendering of the source text message in the

target Text” (Panau 2013). The cultural aspect of the source text was emphasized during the process of translation.

In this context, the Skopos theory of Hans J. Vermeer comes closer to the very act of translation, which is fitting to the product of the target text. I have tried to translate the source text keeping in mind the very ‘purpose’ and intended ‘use’ by the target text readers. The functional aspect of the TT is given equal importance, after all the entire output is for the receivers and readers of the target culture. How are these stories going to ‘function’ in the target text culture? Is the very ‘purpose’ of translation going to be served? This was always there in my mind while engaging with the complex act of translation from the original Odia into English. In an interview, notable critic and translator, Jatindra K Nayak responded to a question i.e. "What challenges did you face during your journey as a translator and how did you overcome those?" The response was:

"I wonder if there is any translator who is fully satisfied with the outcome of the process of translating a literary text written in his mother tongue into another language, especially into English. The challenges are many and they are rarely overcome. To me, the most difficult of them relates to the tone of the narrative voice and the intimate cultural world in which the characters are deeply embedded. However, one does not give up and does the best one could and leaves it to the reader to decide whether one has succeeded to some extent. Given half a chance I will redo the translations I have already published. The translator’s work, as has been said, is never wholly finished. It is doomed to be provisional" (Nayak in an Interview, *Muse India* Mar-April 2020).

As a translator, I had a similar experience as that of Nayak. While translating certain culture-specific expressions; pregnant

with Odishan cultural flavour e.g *jhatimati*, *chup chup katha heba*, *Aiinthu*, *Gaintha*, *lahuluhana*, *genji*, *hasi hasi bedam*, *dhulia janda*, *banabhoji* was not only difficult but also it was quite thought-provoking in the sense that I had to stretch my imagination to find suitable equivalence in order to be 'faithful' to the original expression. In the process of translation, I have paid adequate attention to 'reader sensitive' 'cultural transmission' of phrases; as Vinay Dharwadker suggests 'phrase-to-phrase' translation taking into account the complexity of diversity of cultural nuances as compared to 'word-to-word' translation. I was not only 'text-sensitive' but also 'context-sensitive'. The source material is translated as per the needs of the contemporary audience; as we know a reader expects a kind of 'reliability' of expression while s/he gets the translated text to read, understand and interact with the other culture. Here translation acts as a vehicle to carry forward a culture. Through translation, I have offered an opportunity to the non-Odia readers to interact with the Odishan culture of short story writing of contemporary times.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

These translated stories can be used to develop the language skills of children. For example, skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing can be developed by using these stories in the language classroom. Reading comprehension skills, listening comprehension skills can be taught by the instructor while engaging with these stories in a classroom context. The students can be asked to narrate similar stories if they have read or listened from their peers or family members. In the practice session, the children can be asked to write such stories on their own to develop creative writing skills.

This type of practice and production of the translation will help the students to have a better understanding of the 'cultural turn' and it will open up new opportunities for them to debate

on it in the context of Indian short story writing and children's literature in translation. They might be interested to translate, read and reflect on folk tales, riddles, proverbs, fables, short stories written in other Indian languages including their own language. Finally, I believe that translation is a process of negotiation through which the best of the source language could be transmitted. As a result, the reader can best experience the local flavour in a different language.

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### The Achievement of Two Friends<sup>1</sup>

Chaguli and Mangalu are close friends. Chaguli is ten years and Mangalu is twelve years old. Though they do not belong to the same class, they pretty much love each other. Mangalu is very brave. There was a dense forest near their house. Many a

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<sup>1</sup> The first story.

time both of them have been to Ramagada for a feast. Ramagada is a key attraction of this forest. A stream flows here, nearby a saint lives in an ashram made of a mud hut. Those days Ramagada was full of dense forest. On New Year's Day, the village people have their picnic here. They perform devotional songs with the tune of clapping and drum beating. After that spiritual discussion follows. To be specific, Ramagada is the soul of this area's spiritual environment. The Saint too had been planting many fruits as well as medicinal plants here. Above all this place is replete with natural beauty and grandeur.

Once, Chaguli and Mangalu came to this jungle as they were angry. It is very easy to hide in the forest. Both of them walked into Ramagada but lost their way as they had never visited the jungle on their own before. They had to suffer a lot as they were crossing lots of trees, bushes, bamboo trees etc. Their pants and inner vests were torn. It is said that there is a kind of creeper in the forest. If anyone steps on it on barefoot his mind goes illusional. Perhaps they might have stepped on that creeper. Moreover, there are big mosquitoes and red ants in the jungle. They too were troubling these boys. They felt that it was not right on their part to come out of the house on silly matters. If parents would not say certain things on the matters of good or bad deeds; then who else would speak to them?

All of a sudden they saw blood near a big cave. A little ahead they saw the footmarks of an animal. They came to know that in order to escape from the forest officials some hunters had taken away the flesh of a deer after killing it. To their surprise, they saw someone coming out of that cave. Hiding behind the bushes with fear and anxiety, both of them saw three people were cooking inside the cave. Chaguli and Mangalu guessed that these people are involved in the stealing of valuable wood and the skin of different animals. The forest is getting

destroyed because of these people. The animals too die because of them. Though it is their duty to hand over these people to the police; what would they do? They are children and they are not able to find their way in the jungle too. They guessed these people must be using some road to meet their requirements. As they were speaking slowly, they saw another person coming there by using a common road. That person has wrapped something in a towel.

After seeing this, they were more excited. Looking into the cave, they saw the man unwrapping a bronze idol. Other companions were appreciating him as they could visualize selling this valuable idol in more than lakhs of rupees. They came to know the involvement of these dacoits in idol smuggling. Those people started to have their food. At this opportunity, the two boys came out and started running along the common road travelled by the previous man. They found one sticky paper which perhaps might have fallen while the previous man was unwrapping his towel. This paper must have some hidden agenda otherwise why was it sticky? Keeping that paper in the pocket, as fast as possible, the two boys moved ahead.

After crossing some distance, Chaguli said how to remember this place? There was a mango tree nearby. Mangalu climbed that tree and tied his red towel on one of its branches. After that, they reached a place crossing many zigzag ways. There they tied their torn out vests on one of the bowed down branches so that anyone would think that someone has thrown a torn cloth there.

After some time, they reached home. By that time the news was that both of them were lost. The members of both the families were ululating and the village pond and well were searched off too. The parents as well as the members of the families were relieved after seeing these two boys. They felt

that it would have been better to convince them instead of getting angry at them. The boys narrated whatever they had seen in the jungle. Both the parents and these boys went to a police station located a kilometre away from their house and narrated the incidents. They too handed over the sticky paper to the police. In the presence of everybody, the police officer was surprised to see the peculiar handwriting on the paper. After thinking a while he procured a mirror to read the handwriting. It was written over there- *rati dui papuli* (night two palms)...*pawa chambu* (*pawa chambu*)....*lakh. du. Che....lal...over....* (-Sardar-)

The police inspector consulted the CID officer on this issue. After spending a lot of time on this they guessed the meaning of this mysterious information. If in reality they are indulged in theft activities, then it is clear that this paper has password information. *Rati dui papuli* means ten at night, password *chamu* means *chamada saha murti* (idol with skin)...*du....che...dui lakh tankara cheque* (cheque worth two lakh rupees), *lal* probably a symbol to recognize people gone by that road, red towel probably an indication of tying it either on the waist or putting it on the shoulder.

The police team along with the children waited near the spot around 8 O'clock at night. Two people reached that road around 9.30 pm. All of a sudden the police team captured them. They had tied red handkerchiefs on their heads. Police seized a cheque worth two lakh rupees from them. Two police officers tied red handkerchiefs on their heads and proceeded further in civil dress. Armed with guns, two other police personnel followed them. As the dacoits had not received the letter, they would find it difficult to recognize them. After reaching the cave police team captured them with animal skin and an idol. The dacoits even failed to get a chance to use their guns.

It was published in the newspaper that notorious dacoit Mohar Nayak known for smuggling animal skin, idols, sandalwood was in the hands of the police. Police recovered ten deer skins and five precious idols from them which included one recently stolen Radhashyam idol of the nearby village. The market price of another idol was around 50 lakh rupees. The bravery of Chaguli and Mangulu became the talk of the town, their families, village and school. How would it be to nominate their names for the bravery award on the forthcoming 26<sup>th</sup> January?

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### **Naming Ceremony<sup>2</sup>**

The other day, out of sheer happiness Mahapatra babu was distributing sweets as he was blessed with a baby boy. For Mahapatrababu a boy or a girl has equal importance. It was very unlikely that he wouldn't have distributed sweets if he were blessed with a baby girl. He was very friendly. His colleagues in the office like him. After listening to the news of his newly-born son, two friends from his office reached his home in the evening and congratulated him. While talking they started discussing the naming of the son.

Chakulia babu started the conversation. "See Mahapatra babu, give a good name to your son. You see my parents have given me the name Chakulia, nickname Chakuli. During my childhood, my friends have teased and troubled me a lot for this name. During my wedding, my sister-in-law too has teased me a lot. I could have changed my name through affidavit but was not willing to do so."

After that Ainthubabu said, see my parents have named me Ainthu as if there was no other name. My nickname is Aiintha. I have suffered a lot during my childhood for this name.

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<sup>2</sup> The second story.

Friends would make fun of me by saying *aintha khaibu kire Gaintha* (Aaintha, would you eat leftover food). It seems my granny had given me this name. The reason being, whosoever siblings were born before me they could hardly survive a month or two as if they had come here by losing their way. Therefore, my granny gave me this awful name so that God of Death would not take me after knowing my name. With this superficial logic, I did not die. I survived, 'see Ainthu Das is present in front of you.' But see Mahapatrababu we'll find out a modern name for your son.

You see, the taste of Odia people. As if there were no other names. They would have given names of the flower of fruit such as Kamala Kumar, Rose Swain, Kamini Mishra, Hena Das, Gendua Tripathi, Kanchana Mallick, Sunflower Dei etc. The names bearing fruit are such as Grapes Sethi, Kamala Jena etc. Though I have not heard names like Seo Das or Naspati Pradhan...Ambada Parida but I have come across nicknames such as Mango, Guava etc.

There are plenty of names bearing the names of rivers such as Mandakini Das, Kaberi Garabadu, Narmada Sethi, Krushna Satpathy etc. In our village, the names of three sons are- Ganga, Ranga, Danga. Apart from this, people are bored with names bearing the names of gods and goddesses. There will be thousands of people having the name of Ram. The names of Krushna, Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswar, Narayana, Dambarudhara, Baruna, Kubera, Ganesha, Kartikeya, Mahadeva are plenty in use so much so that if four/five persons bear the same name, we have to call them by numbering them such as Mahadeva Jena A or B.

Besides this historical and mythical (pouranika) names are plenty such as Duryodhan, Dushasana, Vima, Nakula, Sahadeba, Birat, Pruthiraj, Jayachandra, Ashoka etc. See how they have named after seeing rain or sky - Surya, Suryakanta,

Chhayakanta, Chandra, Chandrika, Jyoshna, Jaladhara, Amber etc. I have not heard of names like Invisible Thunder Garabadu or Lightening Acharya (there could be such). There are names galore in the names of birds and animals such as Neula (Mongoose), Nakula, Chila (Eagle), Godhi (Lizard), Baga (Heron), Shuka parrot etc. (there could be Saguna (Vulture) as well).

These days educated people are giving such names which are difficult for a child to write properly as she clears sixth or seventh, for instance, Prakshita, Aparichita, Pratiti Parimita, Sunanda Madhuchhanda, Sonali Madhusmita, Batuli Bakulita etc. The possibility of such names for boys may not be avoided. There are names such as Mahamegha Bahana Aaira Kharabela, Prachanda Chandashoka Amit Balashali etc. Apart from these, there are smaller names that are easier to remember are - Liza, Chintu, Mintu, Mana, Mona, Sona, Laltu, Kitu etc. Therefore, Mahapatrababu, you have to think of giving a good name to your son.

Madhuhasababu is a funny guy. He suggested to give names such as Painting Kar, Physics Mishra, Chemistry Tripathy, Batani Swain, Zoology Pradhan, Geography Mallik, History Acharya, Geometry Mohanty, Mathematics Pattnaik, Science Kumar etc. See, these days I have heard of tribal names such as B. D. O Hansda, Collector Murmu, Filter Keraketa, Salut Munda etc. After listening to such names we were laughing to our bellies out then he said you all are laughing but in earlier times the names were based on nature - flower, fruit, river, sky, god etc. But the names of today should be scientific. The names of the three daughters of our mathematics teacher were Alpha, Beta, Gamma. We need to have scientifically proven names such as Missile Garabadu, Missile Satpathy, Falcon Pradhan, Jaguar Das, Mobile Tripathy, Telephone Panda, Hirohonda Jena, Scooter Parida.

Or an international name could be given. Now you see everywhere there is a discussion about globalisation. Our world has become a global village. The communication facility is so strong that within seconds we are being able to talk to people living in America, England, Germany through mobile phones. We move from one end of the world to the other end through Jet planes. There would be a time our children would start travelling at 8 am, have their party in New York, watch cinema in Beijing and reach at Cuttack by 4 pm. Therefore, such names could be given like - America Mishra, Bilat Tripathy, German Pradhan, Taronto Swain, Canada Satpathy or Gobrachov Kumar, Chungtang Mishra, Tony Blair Acharya, Georgebush Mallick and likewise.

These days people are avoiding the use of titles so that the caste will remain unknown. Because entire humanity belongs to one caste i.e. human caste. What is about Brahmin, Karan, Harijan, Siha, Sunni, Protestant, Catholic? Why touchable or untouchable. Therefore, such names could be given like - Tony Kennedy Kumar, Ching Ming Gobrachav, Robert Govinda Ballabh, Gallio Amitav, Klinton Raghunath, Orange Rosalin, Rose Cleopatra etc.

Also, one more thing comes to mind to hint that one title can be given to all human beings. Suppose, like school uniform title can be PruMa (*Pruthibira Manisa*=Man of Earth). Therefore, all people of every country are bound to use this title. This proposal will be accepted by United Nations Organisation. For example- Madhabanand PruMa, Tonyblair PruMa, George Bush PruMa, Ismaile ProMa, Kamalini PruMa.

At this time Mohapatrababu's mother (45 years old) brought tea and biscuits. All of them stood up, greeted her and said- mausi we came after hearing the birth of your grandson. We were talking about the naming of him. Mahapatrababu's mother said, "see my mother-in-law had named her grandson

means this son of mine as Shibram, nickname Shibu. I had given my grandson's name Jagannath, nickname Jagu. Before my last breath if I call his name I will get salvation”.

Madhudasbabu said, “had we given a modern name, candle would have been blown off, cake would have been cut, party....”

Mausi said, “see my children - what is there in these names? Padmalochan could be blind, Shrabana Kumar could be deaf, Bagmishree could be illiterate. Does a name make anybody great? If one does great work s/he makes her/his parents, villagers and countrymen proud. If you call a rose flower as rose or gulab its perfume or colour will not change. Besides in the naming of a person one's culture should have a bearing on it. Moreover, when elders give names, their affection, goodwill and blessings are attached to it which helps man invisibly”.

And whatever you said about the candle and cake cutting - fire or light are symbols of knowledge that show us light from darkness for which on festive occasions we light the *ghee diya*. This is also a symbol of sacredness. Therefore, I'll light up *ghee diya* on the 21<sup>st</sup>-day celebration of my grandson. I will arrange satyapir pala (a local performance of oral tradition). I will offer arisa, kakara, manda (homemade delicacies). I invite all of you, please come.

Everybody was looking at each other's faces and sipping tea. Mahapatrababu who maintained silence till now was smiling.

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