

A Glimpse Of India

(A Baker from Goa)

CLASS - 10

SUBJECT - ENGLISH

About Poet

Lucio Rodrigues (1916-73) was a great Konkani essayist. He wrote several articles in English and Konkani for various periodicals and magazines. He served as the visiting professor of Folklore at many universities and also as a professor of English in Mumbai and Goa. His essays were posthumously published under the title 'Of Soil and Soul' and Konkani

Introduction

'A Baker from Goa' revolves around the relevance of a baker in the Goan culture which dates back to the time when Portuguese ruled over the city of Goa. The Portuguese may have left but the bread-makers continue to have an inevitable stature. In this story, the author recalls his childhood days and their excitement on seeing the baker. They were enthusiastic to the point that they would run to him as soon as they woke up without even brushing their teeth.

Lesson & Explanation

Our elders are often heard reminiscing nostalgically about those good old Portuguese days, the Portuguese and their famous loaves of bread. Those eaters of loaves might have vanished but the makers are still there. We still have amongst us the mixers, the moulders and those who bake the loaves. Those age-old, timetested furnaces still exist. The fire in the furnaces has not yet been extinguished. The thud and jingle of the traditional baker's bamboo, heralding his arrival in the morning, can still be heard in some places. Maybe the father is not alive but the son still carries on the family profession. These bakers are, even today, known as pader in Goa.

Reminiscing nostalgically- thinking fondly of the past

Loaves- (plural form of loaf) bread that is shaped and baked in a single piece and can be sliced for eating

Vanished- disappear suddenly and completely

Moulders- a person who moulds dough into a shape

Furnaces- an enclosed structure in which materials can be heated to very high temperatures

Extinguished- cause a fire to cease to burn

Heralding- announcing

Pader- word for baker in Portuguese language

During our childhood in Goa, the baker used to be our friend, companion and guide. He used to come at least twice a day. Once, when he set out in the morning on his selling round, and then again, when he returned after emptying his huge basket. The jingling thud of his bamboo woke us up from sleep and we ran to meet and greet him. Why was it so? Was it for the love of the loaf? Not at all. The

loaves were bought by some Paskine or Bastine, the maid-servant of the house! What we longed for were those bread-bangles which we chose carefully. Sometimes it was sweet bread of special make.

Companion- a person with whom one spends a lot of time

Jingling- make or cause to make a light metallic ringing sound



Kankon, that literally translates to 'Bangle' in Konkani, is a distinctive ring-shaped bread that is popular all over Goa.

The baker made his musical entry on the scene with the 'jhang, jhang' sound of his specially made bamboo staff. One hand supported the basket on his head and the other banged the bamboo on the ground. He would greet the lady of the house with "Good morning" and then place his basket on the vertical bamboo. We kids would be pushed aside with a mild rebuke and the loaves would be delivered to the servant. But we would not give up. We would climb a bench or the parapet and peep into the basket, somehow. I can still recall the typical fragrance of those loaves. Loaves for the elders and the bangles for the children. Then we did not even care to brush our teeth or wash our mouths properly. And why should we? Who would take the trouble of plucking the mango-leaf for the toothbrush? And why was it necessary at all? The tiger never

brushed his teeth. Hot tea could wash and clean up everything so nicely, after all!

staff - stick

Rebuke- an expression of disapproval; a scolding

Fragrance- a pleasant, sweet smell

Parapet- railing, a low protective wall

bangles- here, refers to the bread in the shape of a bangle called 'Kankon'

Marriage gifts are meaningless without the sweet bread known as the bol, just as a party or a feast loses its charm without bread. Not enough can be said to show how important a baker can be for a village. The lady of the house must prepare sandwiches on the occasion of her daughter's engagement. Cakes and bolinhas are a must for Christmas as well as other festivals. Thus, the presence of the baker's furnace in the village is absolutely essential.

Feast- a large meal, typically a celebratory one

bolinhas - another name for coconut cookies

The baker or bread-seller of those days had a peculiar dress known as the kabai. It was a single piece long frock reaching down to the knees. In our childhood we saw bakers wearing a shirt and trousers which were shorter than full-length ones and longer than half pants. Even today, anyone who wears a half pant which reaches just below the knees invites the comment that he is dressed like a pader!

The baker usually collected his bills at the end of the month. Monthly accounts used to be recorded on some wall in pencil. Baking was indeed a profitable profession in the old days. The baker and his family never starved. He, his family and his servants always looked happy and prosperous. Their plump physique was an open testimony to this. Even today any person with a jackfruit-like physical appearance is easily compared to a baker.

Plump physique- pleasantly fat body

Open testimony- public statement about a character or quality



Summary

The lesson begins with how the narrator's elders often recall the time when Goa was under the rule of the Portuguese. They talk about how the importance of bakers is still maintained in their villages even after the Portuguese have left. They are known as 'Paders' in Goa. The mixers, moulders and their time-tested furnaces continue to serve the people of Goa with their famous bread loaves. It is possible that the original ones may not exist, but their profession is being continued by their sons. The thud of their bamboo stick can still be heard in some parts of the village. The same jingling thud would wake the narrator and his friends during their childhood days who would go running to him without brushing or washing their mouth properly. It was the maid-servant of the house who collected the loaves while children sorted out the bread bangles for themselves. Bakery products have importance in the culture and traditions of Goa. Bol or sweet bread is a part of marriage gifts, cakes and Bolinhas or coconut cookies are eaten at every festival and the lady of the house prepares sandwiches at her daughter's engagement. Earlier bakers wore a unique frock of knee-length known as 'kabai' but during the narrator's childhood days, they wore a shirt and trousers of length slightly shorter than the usual ones. They generally collected their bills at the end of every month. Bakery has continued to be a profitable profession, managing to keep their families joyous and prosperous.

Question and Answers

Q1. What are the elders in Goa nostalgic about?

A. The narrator often finds his elders thinking about 'those good old days' and telling them about the famous breads that date back to the time when Portuguese ruled over Goa. They ponder over the past and tell them that though the Portuguese have left Goa but the bakers still exist, if not the original ones, their legacy is being continued by their sons.

Q2. Is bread-making still popular in Goa? How do you know?

A. Yes, bread-making is still popular in the city of Goa. It is evident from the existence of time-tested furnaces, mixers and moulders. The legacy of bakers is being continued by their sons. You will find a bakery in every Goan village as bread is an important part of the Goan culture.

Q3. What is the baker called?

A. The baker is referred to as 'Pader' in the city of Goa.

Q4. When would the baker come everyday? Why did the children run to meet him?

A. The baker would come twice every day during the narrator's childhood days. Once in the morning to deliver the loaves of bread and secondly, in the evening on his return after selling his stock.

The children would go running to him to take the special bread bangles he had made for them.

Q5. Match the following. What is a must

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. as marriage gifts? | – cakes and bolinhas |
| 2. for a party or a feast? | – sweet bread called bol |
| 3. for a daughter's engagement? | – bread |
| 4. for Christmas? | – sandwiches |

Q6. What did the bakers wear:

1. In the Portuguese days?
2. When the author was young?

A.

(i) In the Portuguese days, the bakers wore a unique knee-length frock dress typically known as 'kabai'.

(ii) In the narrator's childhood days, he had seen them wearing shirts and shorter than usual pants.

Q7. Who invites the comment – "he is dressed like a pader"? Why?

A. During the narrator's childhood days, the bakers had a peculiar dress. They wore shirts and shorter than usual pants. Thus, if someone is seen wearing pants of this much length, they invite the comment – "he is dressed like a pader".

Q8. Where were the monthly accounts of the baker recorded?

A. The monthly accounts of the baker were recorded on some wall with a pencil.

Q9. What does a 'jackfruit-like appearance' mean?

A. 'Jackfruit-like appearance' means a well-built or plump physique, similar to a jackfruit. In those days, bakers had plump physique because baking was a profitable profession. His family and servants never starved and were prosperous.