



A Slice of SAICE

EDITORS' NOTE

Through the years we have heard and known that our school is unique, established for a wholly different purpose, that it is not like any other school and how lucky and privileged we are to be a part of this place.

Well, we are not here to remind you of all this because you already know it. But have you asked yourself why are you here? What that purpose is? Don't take it for granted, question yourselves in the hope that one day you'll find your answers.

In this light, we carry forward a tradition revived four years ago, of a students' magazine, "SLAICE - a slice of SAICE".

We begin with a glimpse at the life of the most genial and tallest man in Ashram recounting his life experiences and how his life turned around. SLAICE offers a platform for writers, both experienced and new, to put forward their work so we are pleased that some previous contributors continue to participate while fresh entrants have joined in. French content has been included for the first time, we expect that this will encourage greater participation . We also attempt to bring in elements showing the evolution of this lab, the Ashram, accompanied by some anecdotes and interesting moments from the past. Eric presents a fascinating article featuring instances when Nature adapted to human intervention. In a passionate piece, Hamare zamane mein, Chirag raises difficult issues for us to reflect upon.

We hope you will find this edition as stimulating as earlier versions and look forward to hearing from you!

Having picked up the dropped baton, we can now pass it to the subsequent batches!

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FACE TO FACE



A life: The Selma March, The Dharma Bums, Hitchhiking to the Ashram

Perhaps for many, movies like Selma have been awe-inspiring. But often in a place distant from the country of origin of the crisis, little does one know about the personal journeys of the crowds that constituted those historic marches; their lives are vignettes framed in the arch of the storyline. In the Ashram we have or have had people who have lived through and witnessed such significant historical moments like several Indian freedom fighters, Gunter, an engineer for the Germans during the World War 2 or Bob, whose lives provide material for historical fiction.

Disillusionment and Selma

Robert Kermit Zwicker, known in the Ashram as Bob, "a child of the 1960's", grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin, 200 miles North of Chicago. In his late adolescence, Bob was "heavily politicised" during the eventful times when President J.F. Kennedy was assassinated, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr marched from Selma to Montgomery, the Civil Rights Bill was passed to prohibit segregation of the African-American population. He grew up, he says, as "a good Catholic" with the idealism of helping the world. In his freshman year in the Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.), 1965, the same year as the Selma March,

Bob came in touch with a social activist priest called Father Richard McSorley who invited him to join the march. Father McSorley, Bob, and a few others were not permitted to join the core group of marchers by the Alabama state troopers so they went to Montgomery, two days before the marchers arrived, to join the momentous Selma March. During this short stay in Montgomery, he was influenced by a more radical and militant group of activists than that of Martin Luther King's. Bob recounts, "On the day Dr. King arrived on the steps of the State capital, our group of about two or three hundred decided to march to meet him there and we were stopped by a posse of twelve men of the Sheriff's department. They stampeded our group and beat us mercilessly, driving us up against the bushes, up against buildings and onto the street, and beat us however they could - savagely - and people had broken bones and about fifty people went to the hospital and the people that I was with were very very angry." That night Dr. King met them and "with his charisma appealed to" them, advising them to be non-violent according to the nature of the movement, warning that violence will "not have a good effect on the public" and impede the process of an oncoming bill in their favour. "He was man of great moral stature and a fine leader" says Bob adding that after this transformative experience he went down South as an activist while working on Voter Registration. He was one of the last white activists in the South who attempted to rouse a movement but people were unwilling to risk their lives and jobs. Simultaneously the horrors of the Vietnam war disillusioned Bob of the American Dream and he grew increasingly

resentful of "American imperialism and exploitation". He participated in protests against the war in New York City and fearlessly faced all odds in the movement including confrontations with the police.

The Dharma Bums

Bob was embittered by his experiences in politics. Around 1968, Bob started reading about Oriental Philosophy, questioning his existence and the purpose of his life. His quest took him across the U.S.A., "deep into Mexico" and to Jamaica, from where he was deported for being penniless. Heavily indulging in drugs, he led a Bohemian lifestyle. In 1970, while he was working for the Railway Express in Oakland, California, one of his friends proposed that they should travel to India. The morning after the proposal the duo set out on a 2000 miles journey to Chicago where on coal boat on the Great Lakes they worked as merchant marines earning in 6 weeks about \$1000, sufficient at that time to travel to India. Then they travelled to London, France and to Morocco where he renounced drugs and decided to come to India alone. During his stay in France, a gentleman introduced him to certain works of Sri Aurobindo. Having left Morocco, he hitchhiked and travelled to Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, along the Mediterranean coast, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and finally in July, 1971 he reached India.

India, the experiences, The Divine Mother

Starting from Amritsar, then Delhi, Bob eventually reached Rishikesh, known for its spiritual organisations. In Rishikesh, Bob initially stayed at the Divine Life Society before moving to the Yog Niketan, an ashram that practices Raja Yoga, one of the many forms of seeking in Hinduism. Here he met a man who sold him books by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Earlier in France in his reading of Sri Aurobindo, Bob appreciated more Sri Aurobindo's discussion on concepts that he was already familiar with, like that of chakras and their physiological effects. At that time he was cynical of what Sri Aurobindo called the Psychic, Overmind and other stages or concepts of spirituality that were uniquely defined by Sri Aurobindo but in India he slowly was more appreciative of these ideas. Similarly his initial idea of the Mother was that of someone with an astute sense of psychology and leadership rather than a spiritual Guru. During his stay at the Yog Niketan, an emotional Bob cried and told his friend Bill how he would like to improve his life and asked profound questions like who God was; he wondered whether "after great [spiritual] efforts someone awaited him on the top of the mountain".

Another of Bob's experiences came when one day he had excruciating pain across his body, a sensation that he describes as what one might feel if "an electrified spike ran from the centre of the skull, through the spine, till the tailbone". Describing this experience as spiritual, he said "I had sublime thoughts" while his earlier experiences were merely intellectual.

The man who sold him the

Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's books, was going to Pondicherry to meet the Mother on his birthday and he asked Bob to accompany him.

It was around the November Darshan, 1971, that they arrived in Pondicherry. Bob saw the Mother for the first time when She appeared on her balcony, on the Darshan day. Regardless of how apprehensive he initially was of meeting the Mother; on seeing Her he felt that "a cocoon of peace [had] settled over" and that he was in a "spiritual grip". Through Madhav Pandit, he was given an appointment three weeks later. During those three weeks he wondered whether the Mother was the perfect Guru for him and simultaneously told himself, "You are 25 years old. You have been through so much. You are in a good state of mind, life doesn't end if she is not the one."

On 12th December, Bob went to meet the Mother. Around 30 people waited in the queue to see the Mother. Here is Bob's account of the occasion:

"And the practice was you didn't talk with her, everybody was silent....She is sitting in that little chair with the wooden arm-rest facing the Samadhi, so everything is moving slowly, with no sense of hurry... As I approached the vestibule of passage I could feel a very powerful force. It was like an electromagnetic field, it was like being really gripped by something. My mind became ecstatic. I was in a grip of some kind of spiritual power, but also my mind was clear and I was not afraid. I had some sense that it was a good power.... When my turn finally came, I go into the room and people are slowly going to see Her one by one. I turn to my left. I see this little old lady;

about five feet two inches tall, down to skin and bones.....She is looking intently into the eyes of each person who comes in front of Her. With great power of penetration but also a kindly look on Her face and I was impressed at how much attention She was giving to each person. But my own first reaction was that She herself was totally defenseless, was vulnerable. I had never seen anybody so vulnerable so open. We all defend ourselves and who we think we are, but it closes us in and She is just out there and the only thing protecting Her is this force, it was flowing through Her and all around and it was like being not in air it was like being in the sea, that's how strong and dense it was. And some people stayed for just a few seconds and almost seemed to run away. Some stayed for twenty to thirty seconds and looked into Her eyes.....

I felt like half the weight of gravity was off, kind of like slowly you know pouncing out of the room and then down the steps and everything's OK. That lasted for about three days. And during that time everything was a little more meaningful than usual..... But I had changed, I knew [that] I had found someone I could trust. I saw in my small limited measure what it is possible for a human being to be.... I had found so much to live for and the hope that I could be a little that way, a little more like Her".

Once he shifted to the Ashram, he started with editing Ashram publications under Peter Hees. Later he was further trained by Jayantilal Bhai and given the responsibility to edit the Collected Works of the Mother. Till today he works in the Ashram Archives.

Having gone through the dark sides of life, Bob today is an individual understanding

of people's follies. An inspiring icon for the youth, he sets the example to the misguided that once derailed, one can regain momentum in life and be purposeful.

- Akash Saha, E.A.V.P.6

SOUP VERANDAH

DEATH UPON THE SUMMER WIND

Death upon the summer wind,
I breathe, I feel it everywhere,
In every corner, wunderkind,
In all that sweet despair.
From every stone and rope
He peeps at me the Scythe.
To reap my life, the kaleidoscope,
That never will my will abide.

Death upon the summer wind,
On every flower bed, outstretched
In every corner, wunderkind,
I see the pretty smile of death.
On the sweet maidens lip, I see
The way death craves and longs
Desire to fulfill, and be with me,
Ignorant that I elsewhere belong.

Death upon the summer wind,
Luring me into his Jaws,
In every corner, wunderkind,
He looks for there I was.
Can you not see me evil fiend,
Its poetry I hide behind
Encrypted in these very lines,
I hide never for you to find.

- Joshua, E.A.V.P.6

MAYA - THE PRIDE OF TADOBIA

Heralding her majestic presence, the still, sentient air,
 The dewy-eyed offshoots girdling the silent pond,
 The once ludicrous, now listless, long-tailed langur,
 All waited, waited for magnificent Maya to respond.
 The pristine princess in her years of prime,
 The solitary warrior, fierce and flamboyant,
 The charismatic queen of the central Indian province,
 Was on the move. It was quite the time!

Out of the golden gleaming glade,
 The mystic tigress marched to the marsh
 And dipped her puissant paws in the shallows
 Then, lazily lapped the waters dull,
 Soothed her withered whiskers
 And lolling in the water, lulled awhile.

A sovereign silence steadily settled,
 Surged and swelled the hush of twilight,
 A myriad-hued spectacle stretched across the sky,
 And a successful sun strolled off the stage.
 I swooned over the expressions of nature's delight,
 Awed at Maya's grace and her gilded coat
 Glowing against the embers of the dying day,
 As she elegantly emerged out of the fen
 And trod towards the rustic road,
 Of her fertile, fended, fabulous abode.

I beheld her majesty ambling away
 And with one big brilliant bound
 She traversed the twisting track
 And without the slightest sound
 Penetrated deep into the virginal forest
 I breathed. Just breathed; enamoured,
 Ensnared, smitten under Maya's sway.

- Aditya, K2



THE QUEST

I am in search of a place
With neither address nor map in hand,
It is close to me I know,
Yet hard to find I'm told...

I tried treading the path of courage,
But my backpack I filled with fear;
I attempted to wander on the trails of hope,
But giving up I found an easier road.

The street of happiness I chose at last,
The surest way for most!
But there too was greed disguised,
And fooled was I once more...

Finally I did surrender, not to loss,
But to that which I sought - and found
In myself, the lost realm of my own,
With my heart as the open door!

- Kruti, E.A.V.P.5



C'EST QUI UN POÈTE?

Dans les profondeurs de chaque cœur
 Voilé, dort un bourgeon de splendeur
 Lui, épanoui – survolera l'esprit
 Avec les oiseaux dans les cieux ravis;
 Avec les papillons, il boira des fleurs mûres
 Le nectar en sa forme toute pure;
 Il scintillera comme les étoiles de nuit,
 Et sera plus romantique que la pluie;
 Parfois il parlera de choses plus tristes
 Mais même là, sera la beauté – touriste!
 Il tiendra le pouvoir d'encourager le monde
 Et de semer en tout être des idées profondes.
 Sa langue – sa baguette avec laquelle il enchantera,
 La musique – son instrument, il hypnotisera
 Il nous enseignera à penser avec le cœur
 Et c'est lui, qu'on nommera poète ou auteur!

C'est vrai qu'un poète offre des mots
 À ses réflexions personnelles et ses échos,
 Mais il arrive cette période d'éveil
 Où il se demande, "D'où viennent ces merveilles?"
 Et le moment où le poète réalise bien
 Que même si les sentiments sont les siens,
 L'inspiration germe d'un autre niveau
 Plus élevé, plus cristallin, plus beau...
 Comme l'homme gagne le mérite,
 Même si par le crayon, les lignes sont écrites,
 L'écrivain est simplement l'instrument
 Avec Sa main guidant, lorsqu'en union.
 Celui qui comprend ceci, et se sent reconnaissant
 C'est lui le poète le plus conscient...

- Kruti, E.A.V.P.5

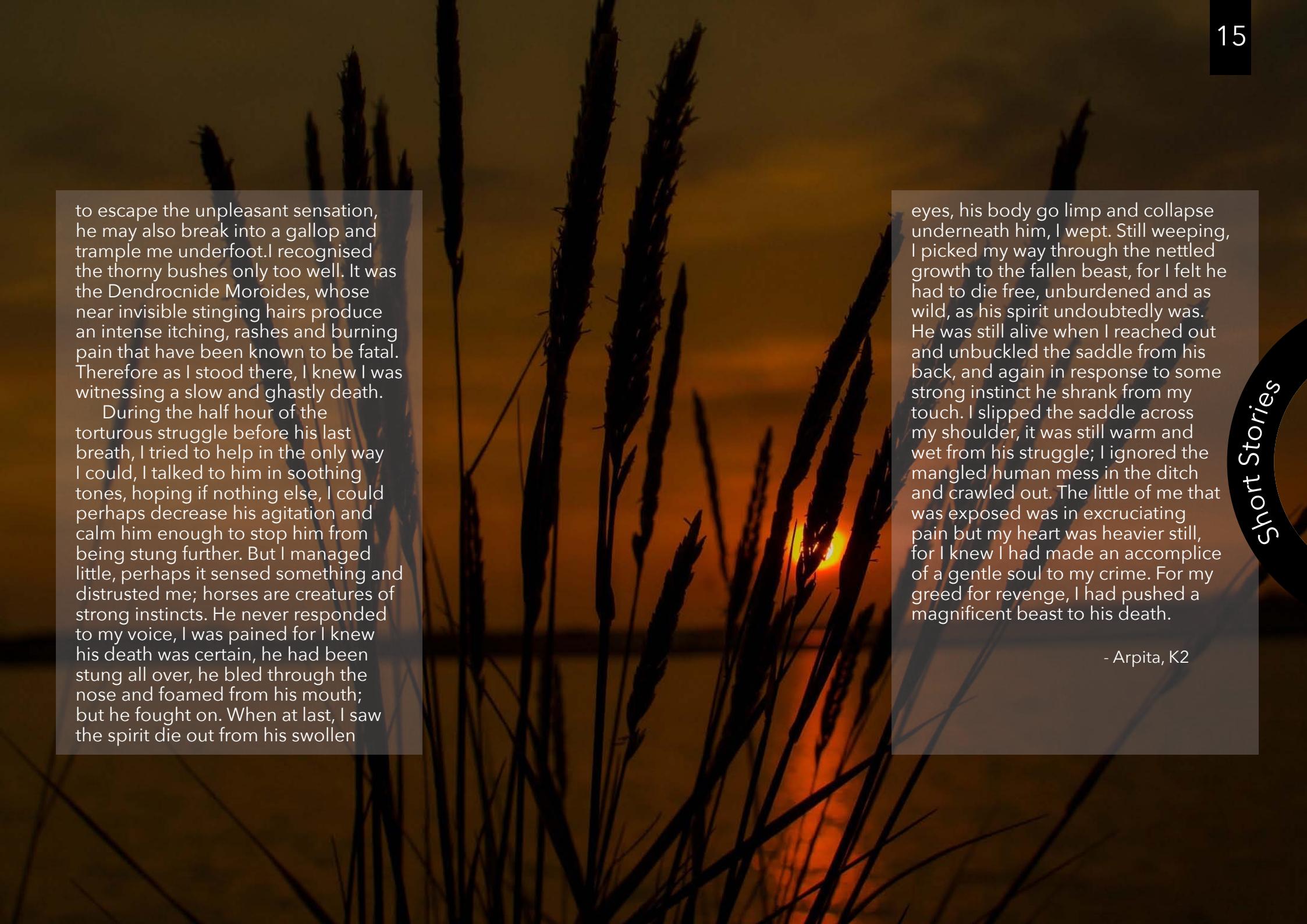


Guilt

The horse was stranded in the dark woods, caught in a ditch overgrown with nettles. I watched the horse neigh in pain as it tried to fight its way out of the bushes. The more it panicked and lashed out, the tighter the nettles closed in on him. He tried to push his hooves deep into the ground to get a grip on the inclined surface, and heave himself up. But with every attempt a wave of stinging nettles assailed him and spread their poison through his skin. But his spirit was true and strong so he reared up in pain, turned in circles and desperately attempted another escape. He was trapped and beyond aid.

The sight of him suffering was painful but there was little I could do. I knew well enough, only a strong bond with the horse and extreme caution would make it possible for me to handle the agitated animal; I lacked both. If I did approach him, he may fling me down with a kick and in an attempt





to escape the unpleasant sensation, he may also break into a gallop and trample me underfoot. I recognised the thorny bushes only too well. It was the Dendrocnide Moroides, whose near invisible stinging hairs produce an intense itching, rashes and burning pain that have been known to be fatal. Therefore as I stood there, I knew I was witnessing a slow and ghastly death.

During the half hour of the torturous struggle before his last breath, I tried to help in the only way I could, I talked to him in soothing tones, hoping if nothing else, I could perhaps decrease his agitation and calm him enough to stop him from being stung further. But I managed little, perhaps it sensed something and distrusted me; horses are creatures of strong instincts. He never responded to my voice, I was pained for I knew his death was certain, he had been stung all over, he bled through the nose and foamed from his mouth; but he fought on. When at last, I saw the spirit die out from his swollen

eyes, his body go limp and collapse underneath him, I wept. Still weeping, I picked my way through the nettled growth to the fallen beast, for I felt he had to die free, unburdened and as wild, as his spirit undoubtedly was. He was still alive when I reached out and unbuckled the saddle from his back, and again in response to some strong instinct he shrank from my touch. I slipped the saddle across my shoulder, it was still warm and wet from his struggle; I ignored the mangled human mess in the ditch and crawled out. The little of me that was exposed was in excruciating pain but my heart was heavier still, for I knew I had made an accomplice of a gentle soul to my crime. For my greed for revenge, I had pushed a magnificent beast to his death.

- Arpita, K2



LA VIE

Une légère teinte rose envahit le ciel. La lueur de l'aube caresse les vagues de la mer endormie. L'heure attendue approche. Doucement, l'astre luisant émerge de l'eau claire. Lentement, il monte et éclaire l'azur, tissant ainsi un chemin lumineux qui traverse la voûte céleste.

Jean s'arrête et contemple le chemin illuminé. Il reste immobile songeant un moment à sa vie vaine, à peine débutée, mais perdue dans la méchanceté, rongée par le désir, submergée dans l'ignorance et s'inclinant déjà devant une fin inévitable ...Un tapis nuageux rendait obscure sa vision, voilant à son œil intérieur l'aube merveilleuse. Un nouveau lendemain apparaissait, surréaliste mais réel.

Il releva les yeux vers ce chemin lumineux, couvert à présent et discerna une petite lumière scintillante qui grandissait dans le vaste noir. Ange lui tenait la main très fort. Pour la première fois, il ouvrit les yeux et perçut la chambre mal éclairée de l'hôpital. Il scruta lentement la pièce et son regard s'arrêta sur une figure jeune- des yeux livides, un nez sculpté, des lèvres fines portant un sourire paisible, rayonnant d'Ananda. D'une voix pleine d'ardeur, il appela : « Ange ».

Elle le regardait fixement, les yeux débordant d'amour. Sans rien dire, elle l'embrassa une toute dernière fois. Soulagé, il referma les yeux. La petite lumière, maintenant gigantesque, éblouissait sa vue. Il sentit que l'étreinte d'Ange se relâchait.

Soudain, il eut l'impression qu'il tombait. Il descendait rapidement, puis brusquement un vent puissant le souleva. Tourbillonnant, il remonta et une force céleste le projeta dans l'éternité...

L'aube ressurgit, cristalline plus merveilleuse qu'avant, divine.

- Akanksha, E.A.V.P.5



COMIC CON

"I am he," the man growled, standing up. He towered over me and my confidence started to crumble. He glared balefully, his rippling muscles and lantern jaw making him look surprisingly like a younger Hulk Hogan.

"Um ... your car is blocking mine ... and I ...uh... I'm in a bit of a hurry, you see... so if it isn't any trouble...", I stuttered through my sentence.

As he heard me out, his expression changed and his face creased into what could only be described as a goofy smile.

"Well why didn't ya say so, pal. I was just headin' out myself." He paid the bartender his tab and thumped me on the back in a friendly way, which nearly sent me flying out of the door.

As we were walking out, he asked me in his gruff voice where I was off to in such a hurry. Turning red, and stuffing my ticket further into my pockets I mumbled that I had some backstage work to do for this big event.

"Gee," he said unlocking his door when we reached, "I'm real sorry about this inconvenience. Specially 'cause you gotta job to do. Well see ya around."

I got into my car and drove straight to Comic Con. The traffic was a bit crazy, as it always is on weekends, but five traffic lights and one-near speeding ticket later, I had reached. I rushed to my favourite corner and settled down. Then I looked up from my stack of comics, freshly printed and ready to sign, and stared into the deep set eyes of the Hulk with the goofy smile holding a terribly battered copy of his own.

- Tvara, K3



A MEMORY...

Children rushed helter skelter, passionately trying to locate people they wished to find, and parents and ashramites eager to leave for dinner walked to the ground congratulating the participants of the 2nd December program. The night had settled in; uninvited and unnoticed among the mirth of this annual program. For me it was like one of those tiny books with a picture on each page, and as you flipped through the pages, through minor changes in the pictures, it almost seemed like a slideshow. Life had been one such experience, and through the chaos and

inconsistency of events, coming to this 2nd December program had almost become a ritual for me. I sat on one corner of the galleries, like I always had. The smell of the rain was lingering in the air, as it had been, the entire month, and now, a slight chill had crept into the winds. It was getting late, and the children were leaving already for Corner House, where a nice meal awaited them. Like every year, I would stay till the galleries were empty, and my driver would come to call me.

The grounds were soaked, and the grass, trampled by old and young alike, seemed almost olive from here. The light posts standing guard over the football ground seemed to be saying, 'don't remove me just yet'. I had never participated in the 2nd

December program, and I was, like many students would put it, just another outsider coming to witness this program. Though, even now as I drove past the Mother's chair, I could almost sense her lingering presence in the surrounding ambiance. I could still picture her smiling face, and her eyes that looked through all they saw. They possessed such serenity and calm, that I had so many a times longed to drown in their peace.

There was no moon in the sky, there were no stars either, and the grey of the clouds was hardly distinguishable from the black of the sky. It was like staring into infinity, there was no hope that the eye might rest on something in that long journey into the dark, but I liked it.

I waited, watching, and before I knew it, my driver had come to call me, and to help me walk down the galleries. I was 80 years old, and had been coming to see this program since the age of almost 5. At first my parents would force me to come, but soon it became a fascination of mine, and since the age of 5, I haven't missed watching a single one of them. My frail and wrinkled hand, resting in that of my drivers were reluctantly holding on to move forward. I didn't want to go, and it had been the same story every year. I wished I could stay a little longer in this atmosphere, because there was something different about it. Mona da had finished reading an extract written by the Mother, and the last of those words still replayed themselves

in my ears. My body had aged, and yet my mind still remembered that young 4 year old girl trying to pass herself as 5, sitting on the galleries, with her feet dangling, in the cold, with eager eyes watching the performers dazzle her in each item. My driver led me to the steps leading down, and slowly as I descended, the prayer that the students had recited today played itself to my ear, and I was for a moment drunk in those words.

"Douce Mère, permets que nous soyons, dès maintenant et pour toujours, simplement tes petits enfants."

- Janaki, E.A.V.P.4



PHOTO CREDIT: RITWIKA

THE JEWEL OF MY HOME

Krishna, (Saraswati's father):

I sat in my easy-chair in the covered verandah rocking gently. It had been raining steadily for over an hour. To my right my two, younger daughters, Durga and Raji danced in the open courtyard around the tulsi plant. I watched their unbridled joy and heard their carefree shrieks and yells through the mist of my unshed tears and ears muffled by my distress. While the rain shed my tears my thoughts ran on... daughters would always be daughters: pampered, bedecked dolls - fleeting guests, life and soul of a family until they leave to enrich another household. At times one yearns for a son - a stable, strong, reliable, understanding anchor capable of redeeming one's honor and... wealth. Girls at best are ships that sail away with the winds of time leaving behind delightful ripple-memories.

I lifted my head off the backrest slightly, to tell my daughters to come back inside, they would catch a cold, but my head fell back, heavy with dejection.

"Amma, coffee." yelled Saraswati as she came out of her room. My oldest and most beautiful daughter had become a woman without my knowing it. The jewels on her person (sign of a more prosperous time) were redundant. Her beauty needed no prop.

There was no answer.

"Amma... coffee."

I watched her storm into the kitchen. She returned a few moments later, a question in her eyes.

Saraswati:

I saw Amma was troubled but also knew that she wouldn't tell me what was bothering her. I had never seen my mother so distraught. Intuition told me a financial problem was the reason for her distress. She was a gentle, caring and compassionate woman, wise and practical. Unable to afford even a decent schooling for herself, she was nevertheless determined to educate her three daughters despite the regressive and orthodox eye of Indian society. We were born in an age where the sole purpose of a girl's life was to tend to household affairs.

I wondered who would tell me, without mincing words, what was really going on.

Atta! My father's sister was as straightforward and kind-hearted as he was. She would surely tell me. I decided to go to her farmhouse that weekend.

I stole a sidelong glance at my father. We rarely saw him in the evenings. It was the price he had to pay for keeping us comfortable. He had aged in the past week. The circles under his eyes were darker, the creases on his forehead had deepened, he hardly ate and had lost weight.

Saturday finally dawned; a bright and cloudless day. After nibbling at an idly I walked to Atta's house.

Krishna:

In the following days I was shaken about the uncertain future. Although

my wife and I tried our best to protect our children from the impending doom, the gloom that hovered over our lives gave us away. Fear of what lay ahead gripped our hearts and conveyed itself to them. Durga and Raji complained from time to time, but Saraswati never said a word. Was I so caught up looking into the welfare of those vile, profligate farmers, that I led my own family to destitution? I witnessed the life that I painstakingly built, fall apart.

Saraswati:

I walked into Atta's house.
"Saraswati! What a surprise.
Come in ma, come in. Would
you like some coffee?"

"No, thank you. Atta... Atta,
Nanna and Amma have hidden
anxieties which are eating into them.
I can see it but they will not tell us.
What happened Atta, tell me."

She sighed knowingly. "I knew
you would find out soon enough.
Sit down, I'll explain everything."

"Your father," she started. "Is a very generous and kind-hearted man. So much so that he got involved in one of the government schemes. The Grameen Vikas scheme. This scheme gave the farmers a loan with a subsidy so that they could buy cows to run their farms with and pay the loan back. Your father was a guarantor for three of the farmers, which means he was to make sure they paid the loans back. I told your father not to get involved, that these people were

frauds and would put him in trouble but he didn't listen. 'They are poor people Akka, if we don't help them who will.' And just as I had predicted those three rascals sold the cows they bought at double the price and blew the money away on drink; they didn't pay the loan back. Since your father was the guarantor, the responsibility of giving the money back became his. He has to pay that large sum back within the month otherwise he will be ordered a suspension"

Saraswati:

I lay awake thinking of a
way to solve this problem.

Krishna:

the days seemed to drag on
and my heart grew heavier. One
evening Saraswati came home
and handed me some papers.

"They were on the porch" she said
I read them slowly.
I sat in my easy-chair in the covered
verandah rocking gently. It had been
raining steadily for over an hour.
To my right my second and third
daughters, Durga and Raji danced
in the open courtyard around the
tulsi plant. I watched their unbridled
joy and heard their carefree shrieks
and yells. I saw my eldest join in their
exhilaration. I watched her beauty,
her only jewel, through the mist of
my overwhelming joy and gratitude.
The rain washed my troubles away.

That day I knew that a daughter
was not just a bedecked doll, but

a personification of intuition, love
and sacrifice and is irreplaceable.

Saraswati:

There was laughter in the house
after almost ten days. That day I knew
that the true ornaments in a woman's
life were not jewels or gems but the
joy and security of her loved ones.

- Samanvita, K2



LE GRAND JEU

Le grand jeu que tout le monde attendait était enfin arrivé. La France contre La Croatie. C'était la troisième fois que la France se retrouvait en finale dans une Coupe du Monde et pour la jeune Croatie, c'était un vrai baptême de feu.

L'équipe de France pouvait compter sur: Lloris, Varane, Umtiti, Pavard, Hernandez, Pogba, Kante, Griezmann, Mbappe, Matuidi et Giroud

L'équipe de Croatie avait ses vaillants guerriers: Subasic, Vrsaljko, Vida, Lovren, Strinic, Brozovic, Modric, Rakitic, Perisic, Rebic, Mandzukic.

Le jeu commence avec tous les joueurs dans un état d'excitation surréaliste, personne n'avait imaginé ce face à face.

Résumons le match

18'- Une faute de Brozovic donne un coup franc à la France. Griezmann fait dévier le ballon qui touche la tête de Mandzukic et GOOOAAAL!!!!!!

Un douzième but contre son camp dans cette compétition et un premier dans une finale !

La France mène 1-0.

Mandzukic est complètement sous le choc, assommé, il ne peut pas croire à ce qui s'est passé.

Tout le monde, ici, au terrain de jeux, est silencieux.

Moi, je suis très content.

26'- L'arbitre dégaine son premier carton jaune - un premier avertissement pour N'Golo Kanté. Le Français a commis une faute sur Ivan Perisic.

27'- Gooall!!!!!!! Une touche sublime de Vida, Perisic récupère le ballon, tire avec force et l'envoie direct au filet par-dessus la tête de Lloris. C'est une frappe puissante - un vrai massacre ! Les Croates sont revenus dans le jeu. Tous mes amis me crient dessus et l'atmosphère se réchauffe. Le score est maintenant 1-1.

34'- La France reçoit un penalty grâce à la faute de main de Perisic. Le VAR vérifie et Nestor Pitana, l'arbitre, confirme le penalty. Griezmann le prend et fait plonger Subasic du mauvais côté - le score est 2-1.

Griezmann et ses amis sont aux anges. Ici, un grand silence des supporteurs des Croates.

Les Croates sont à la traîne de nouveau.

42'- Lovren fait un bel effort mais le ballon frappe le Français et c'est un corner pour la Croatie.

La mi-temps est arrivée. Je suis ravi et mes amis sont déçus. Mais j'ai peur aussi - la Croatie peut rebondir à tout moment, c'est une équipe robuste !

La deuxième mi-temps commence et il semble que la France va tout faire pour ne pas lâcher prise.

47'- Un tir puissant de Rebic envoie le ballon vers un corner alors que Loris sauve la France avec un arrêt spectaculaire.

59'- Pogba frappe un coup de pied mais dans un premier temps, le ballon est bloqué par un défenseur mais la deuxième fois, celui-ci contourne miraculeusement Subasic et retombe dans le but. La France mène encore une fois!!!!!!

J'applaudis bruyamment et je me moque des supporteurs de la Croatie. Seuls les petits assis devant et moi acclamons la France.

64'- Lucas Hernandez va vers le centre et expédie le ballon vers Mbappe qui le capte et fusille aussitôt le gardien ! Le score est 4-1!!!!!!

Encore une fois, c'est moi qui crie de joie et les supporteurs de la Croatie sont tous désabusés.

Mbappe avec Pelé devient le plus jeune joueur de foot à marquer un but dans une finale.

68'- Quel désastre!!!!!! Mandzukic ne lâche pas la pression. Umtiti ne veut pas prendre de risque, il passe le ballon à Lloris qui essaye de tacler Mandzukic mais le ballon se dirige droit vers le filet. Stupéfait, Lloris ne comprend pas ce qui s'est passé. Ici, personne ne hurle de joie. Les supporteurs de la Croatie savent que tout est fini, même avec ce but étrange, c'est trop tard !

86' - Nabil Fekir tire, mais le ballon touche les mains de Subasic.

90+2- Sime Vrsaljko reçoit un carton jaune pour faire un tacle glissé sur Griezmann.

90+5- C'est terminé!!!!!! La France est championne du monde

2018. Tous mes amis rentrent chez eux complètement désenchantés tandis que moi, je suis au septième ciel.

Je dois tout de même avouer que la Croatie a joué magnifiquement bien tout au long de cette coupe. Mais Mbappe reste et restera toujours notre héros incontesté!

- Sarthak, E.A.V.P.5

RESISTANCE OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

There are many reasons for changes in the biodiversity of ecological systems. Drastic changes are usually due ecological trauma. Scientists have found countless evidence of species extinction due to environmental changes. Since the beginning of life on earth more than 4 billion years ago, there have been five recorded mass extinction events, these events have largely shaped the earth and the species which we see inhabiting it today. Mass extinction events were theorized to be caused by a number of different factors, from catastrophes like asteroid strikes to more gradual changes in climate and environmental conditions. Current rates of extinction indicate that we may be entering into a 6th mass extinction event, this time caused by anthropogenic or human actions.

Despite the increased rates of extinction due to anthropogenic causes, there are some animals which have been observed to adapt and even thrive due to manmade changes in the environment.

Here are three examples:

Green Anoles:

Humans have a long history of introducing invasive species to environments, something that has caused damage to numerous fragile ecosystems across the globe.

But in South Florida the native Green Anoles adapted to increased



competition from invasive Brown Anoles by moving up the world. Originally inhabiting the lower branches of trees, the Green Anoles moved up and adapted to life in the higher branches where they no longer faced competition from the Brown Anoles. In just 15 years and 20 generations the Green Anoles adapted bigger toe pads and stickier scales to hold on to the thinner and smoother branches found in the treetops. Scientists theorize that the rapid adaptation to life in the treetops may be due to the fact that the Green Anoles were already predisposed to elevated living.

Brown rats:

In contrast to green lizards, humans have had a much more direct effect on the evolution of Brown rats, specifically super rats. Super rats have a super power (as their name suggests), they are nearly invulnerable to poison. These rats have evolved to be resistant to a multitude of poisons intended to destroy them.

This works because of the massive population size, genetic diversity and fast reproductive rate of rats. If a given poison is introduced to a population, and 99% of the rats die, but 1% survives because a mutation that caused it to be resistant to the poison, then the population can spring back in less than a year. Rats reproduce so fast that a population of two rats can grow to 15,000 in just one year. This is why rat populations are prevalent on almost every corner of the planet.



Peppered moth:

A classic tale of animals adapting to man made environmental changes began in the industrial revolution when smoke and soot from coal for factories in Manchester England stained entire landscapes with black soot, a phenomenon known as industrial melanism. White birch trees, named for their white bark became black. This was problematic

for the peppered moth, which had adapted a white peppered pattern to blend in with the birch trees and hide from their predators: birds. The white moths, previously camouflaged with the birch bark, became very conspicuous on black stained bark. Birds could easily pick out the white moths on the black trees and they became an easy meal. Until natural selection kicked in; gradually naturalists observed changes in the coloration of the peppered moth. As more darkly colored moths survived to pass on their genes than their lighter colored counterparts the entire species seemed to change color. Within a few generations, the peppered moth *Biston betularia f. Typica* received a new name *Biston betularia f. Carbonaria*. The peppered moth's evolution was not complete however. In the 1950s when the air in Manchester was no longer choked with smoke and soot, the birch trees became white again and once again, and so too did the peppered moth.

Five of the mass extinctions were orchestrated solely by Nature. Often the mightiest perish, but the fittest survive, yet annihilate it does. The current mass extinction is unique for it is man made. Few such adaptations give us an insight into the future of the animal kingdom. The uniqueness of this mass extinction is that we, humans indirectly and unintentionally seem to dictate the fate of the animal kingdom. Such occasions also show us that Nature

which we think have subjugated and enslaved isn't as helpless as we assume. Thereby camouflaging and thriving in the mess created by man she makes him aware of her might.

- Eric, K3



HAMARE ZAMANE MEIN...

"Hamare zamane mein..."

Oh, no, here we go again.

Dread of dreary myths, barely contained ludicrousness, politely discovered interest: these are the reactions elicited by what follows that infamous sentence. The minstrels of the past? The links of the "golden chain". The captivated (not captive, oh no, for how fantastic these stories are) audience? Current students of the SAICE. Don't you dare point out that I shall soon graduate from the captive audience, becoming an ex-student and a bard of boring legend; there is a more pressing matter at hand. Imagine our horror when we learnt that for the special celebration of the 75th anniversary of our school - a school which, in the songs of the minstrels, is the greatest in the world - all former students will be allowed to participate. Do observe a minute of silence and lend all your strength to us, poor souls, the current students of the Ashram who will brave the onslaught of sententious misquotations by the hordes of the hero warriors of the battle of the future.

Thank you. Your prayers have borne fruit. We seem to have gained a little strength. We should give them a second chance.

This time, when we listen to stories about the incomparable



achievements of the past, of the making of unbreakable records, of the outpouring of knowledge that illuminated the world, of the golden age of what was the greatest school in the world, we hear the insinuations. "Oh, you children, the undeserving inheritors of a golden treasure," they seem to say while they boast, "squanderers of immeasurable wealth, how much better we were, how much closer to the light, how little..." Enough! The gall they have. If they care so much then why did they leave? And if they haven't left, then they are as much part of us as we are of the school. If any, ours is a collective failure. Then, I have learnt, most stories end: "This is The Mother's Ashram. She will take care." What a grand justification for inaction. Later, once alone, the anger melts into self-doubt.

Are we good enough? What have we done for this institution, our home, the sacred ground on which we took root? How have we moulded the future of the SAICE? And what does the future hold?

There is the bleak view which is now gaining acceptance that our species will not survive the turn of the century. A similar argument can be made for the Ashram, and thus, by extension, school. It was always going to be a difficult task to run an Ashram whose Gurus have left their bodies and not left behind a paramparā (but this is the very work set before us, the transformation of human nature, and not the perpetuation of another sect).

Before you get sanctimonious, an institution doesn't survive whose spirit is not alive in the hearts and minds of its people. Just stop a moment to look around you. I did, in my environment, the school, the heart of the Ashram, and speak from what I see, I judge from the effects of various causes on the students. The cause of many problems in the Ashram manifests in the trickle at which hot, young blood is infused into the system; the cause is a quickly ageing community welded to past ways, manifesting a tamas couched as high spirituality, losing its life-power and thus no longer an inspiration to its children.

But certainly, the teachers and the system are not solely to blame for many of the problems that afflict the school (I have purposefully avoided enunciating the problems, but a complete diagnosis is easily available). We, the students, are somewhere to blame.

The problem that we are part of, the basis on which our generation is burdened with the deterioration of the SAICE, the root of my self-doubt, the cause of the alleged insincerity with which students consciously live the ideals of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, is the seeming incompatibility of these ideals with our modern lives. And here it must be noted that parents have a central role in moulding us, and that they must shoulder much of the blame for this incompatibility. My generation would say, "What is the point of following these ideals?

Where will it take me anyway? I don't want to become an inmate (as in, prison inmate?) of the Ashram. And I have my passions and my pursuits, sincere, noble, artistic, intellectual. The spiritual is for when I am old and have drunk life to the lees; now I have my youth to blaze ahead through my life." This is the crux of the matter.

We need to find a bridge between us and the ideals that are the *raison-d'être* of this place, because the gap between the two is growing at an alarming rate and strongly shaping the future of the SAICE, and, as I see it, taking us away from what our Gurus established this Ashram for.

Wait, what do I now hear? The minstrels' legends. But their tune is different, sweet, powerful, inspired, filled with a hope that I hadn't heard before. They point to where all the answers lie, a sincerity of quest. They sing, "Hamare zamane mein, the path was the same. Understand the Gurus, follow them. And do not rest until you have achieved your goal."

It has been 75 years since our institution was founded. The time is ripe for us to refocus on our goal, and with renewed zeal strive to manifest it. Ours shall be a collective success.

- Chirag, K1

THROUGH THE LENS

A former tulip garden

PHOTO CREDIT: AMIT SHAH

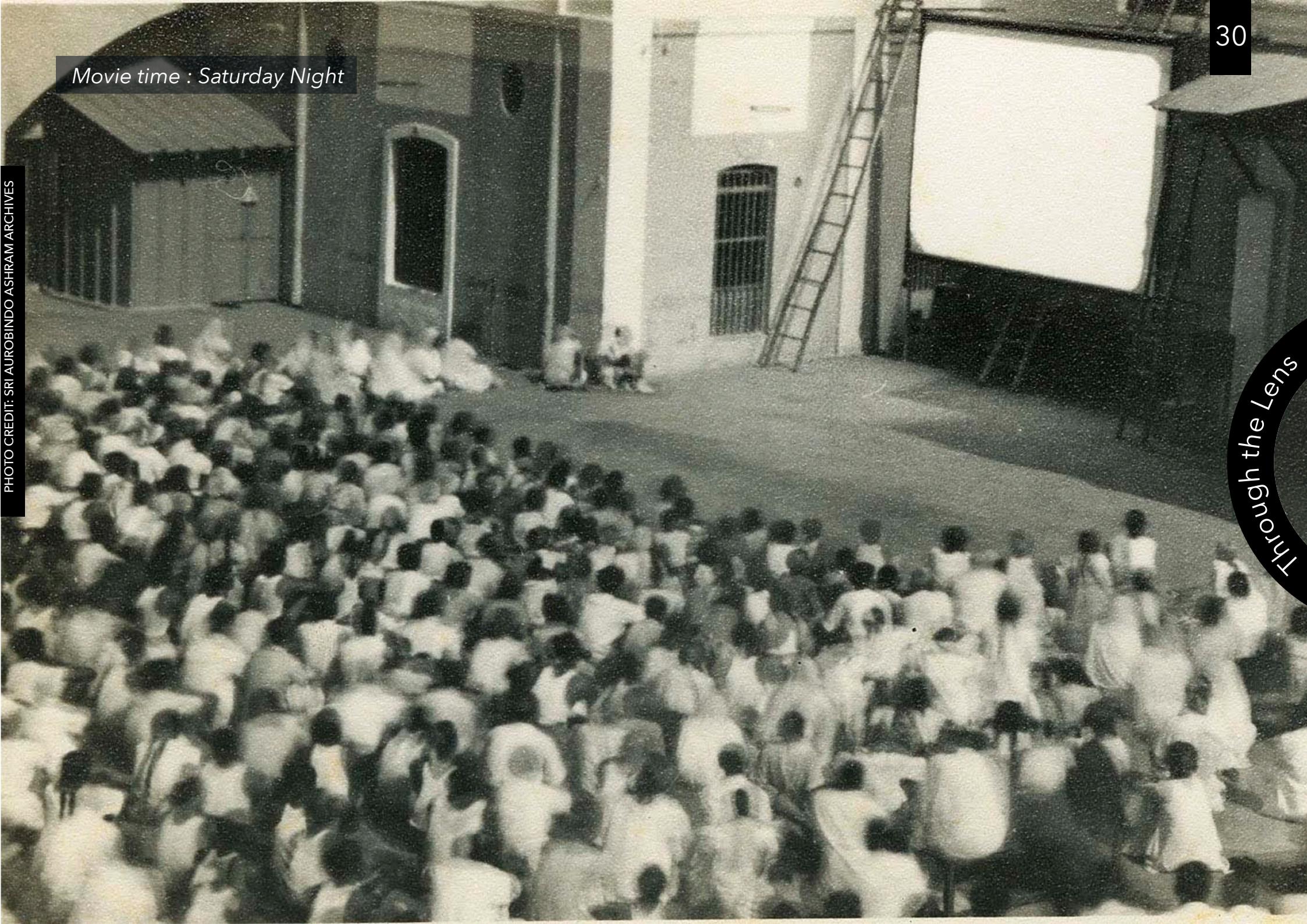


Through the Lens

Movie time : Saturday Night

PHOTO CREDIT: SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM ARCHIVES

Through the Lens

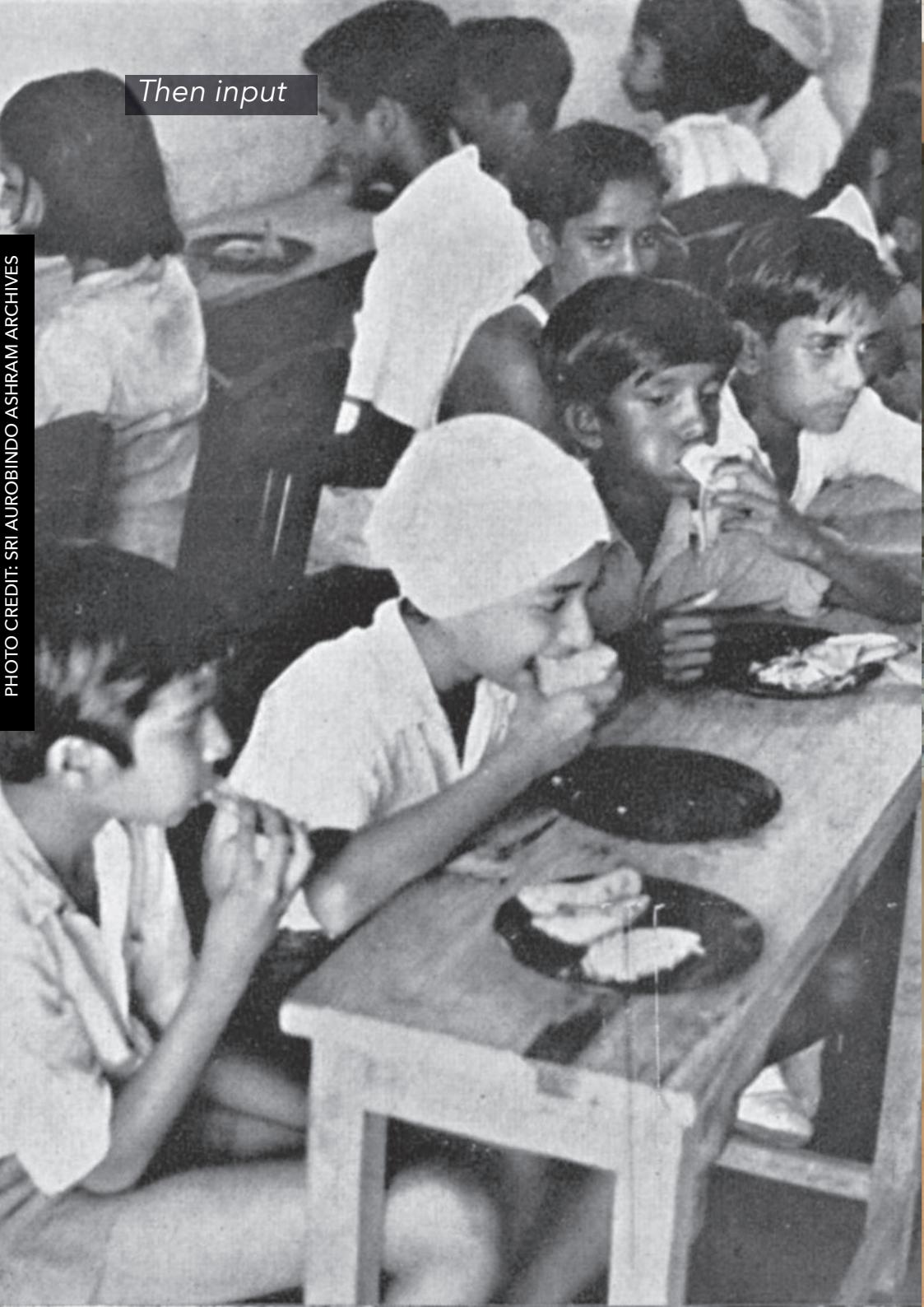


Movie time : Jab mann chahe

PHOTO CREDIT: BHASWAR



Through the Lens



A furnace in summer

PHOTO CREDIT: SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM ARCHIVES



Through the Lens

Depends on teacher



Through the Lens

First green group game

PHOTO CREDIT: SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM ARCHIVES



Through the Lens

First ball game in SAICE

| Ref : Batti-da

PHOTO CREDIT: SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM ARCHIVES



Through the Lens

ANECDOTES FROM THE PAST

For an entire year students have to go through the 'Accéleré' course before entering their age group for the academic session, but only 15 days in the 'exercise group' before entering normal group for physical activities. In our times, in the '60s, it wasn't so. One was part of the "Non-group", for an entire year. Only after completing a year in the "Non-group", one was allowed to join their regular group. The "Non-group" was the solution to the differing ideas of Kirit Joshi, the Registrar then, and Dada, Director of the PED. One wishing to take in a large number of students and the other wanting a limited number for Group. The "Non-group" children did their activities in the 'Accéleré' section in school.

Many of you will remember your days in A3 where twice a week and on any of the birthdays you played games like kho-kho, square-dodgeball, circle ball, etc. and later on in higher groups you put in practice all your persuasion skills, to replace the mundane warming-up sessions with these games. Well, these were the games they played throughout the year. They played them in the current school building. They played in these rooms stacked by furniture, with barely enough space to move, and providing brilliant hiding corners, a very enjoyable game for all, young and old, 'Hide-and-Seek'. They also

did some stretching and exercises but otherwise their entire first year of group was 'Hakuna Matata'.

| Ref: Habul-da

We had all been gifted a ball-pen, then a new product in the market. Its inkflow was terrible, it randomly squirted ink and created blotches in our notebooks. I used the pen to write in class, Mother was giving us a dictation that day. After verifying, we all gave our notebooks for correction. She corrected and returned our notebooks. And in my notebook She commented " Terrible écriture! "

| Ref: Namita-di



PHOTO CREDIT: BHASWAR

A common activity among the students, to kill time during the vacations, was fishing. Those forlorn 8 wooden logs, still standing erect on our beach not only represent the edge of the old French pier, but also one of the most desired fishing spots of the '60s. Its perfect positioning saved the risk of the fishing-hook tangling itself to the pier's metal frame. It was the spot for which the locals, the French and the students, raced for, as the underlying rule was first-come, first-serve. Finally, what else could be a better reward for the aeon-long patient waiting, other than a bite from the catch of the day.

| Ref: Habul-da



PHOTO CREDIT: SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM ARCHIVES

Boxing is one of the oldest sports conducted in our School alongside Gymnastics and Athletics. Have you ever wondered why? Was it taught for self-defence? Well, probably, this may have been one of the reasons, but not entirely so. Boxing was Dada's favourite sport. He was also known as 'Knock-out King'. In his youth, while he was in Kolkata, he and Biren-da, his guru, both phenomenal boxers, hot-blooded, and burning with patriotism fought bouts with the British. Their objective being to knock-out as many 'white-heads' as possible.

| Ref: Batti-da

Sisir-da, who knew about this place in Ariyankuppam, we heard had gone with other students to have a look at the Roman ruins. So, along with Dada and Biren-da, six of us decided to go there for a small picnic. The six of us were, myself, Narad, Richard, Kittu, Aster, and another boy, I can't remember his name. We set out in the morning on foot with a few buns and two flasks of coffee, along the Beach road and down the road by Park Guest House. We reached the mouth of the river by mid-day. And there we found the ruins. Such small excursions were new and rare.

After a small repose we had our snack, and then Dada said, "Let's take one brick to the Mother." So each of us took turn in carrying the brick on our head. It was heavy! It was put on display in our library.

| Ref: Batti-da

Throughout our time in A2, A1 and B group, our method of staying out of the grasp of boredom during the 45 minutes break between School and Group was having a tennis ball and an unoccupied covered terrace or few years earlier to have a tennis ball and a wooden stick and the Nanteuil to yourself. These two activities were, and one of them continues to be, the primary boredom killer in our present days, but boredom plagued every generation, making the first generation students like Batti-da and his friends use the Playground before group without the consent of their captains. Not only did they use Playground in the afternoon but the way they made it in, could be classified as the first simple forms of Parkour attempted in our School. As Playground's front door was closed in the afternoon they climbed over a wall, which is the present day metal grill dividing the Guest House and Playground. The wall was as high as our Hall of Harmony balcony and it was enough to injure anyone not careful. Luckily, to aid their unauthorized intrusion, they had metal loops attached to the wall as their steps. These loops were meant to tie the ropes, meant to hold up an enormous tarpaulin cover to protect against the sweltering sun. This makeshift Darshan style shelter was meant to house the expected enormous number of devotees for the 15th August Darshan of 1947.

| Ref: Batti-da

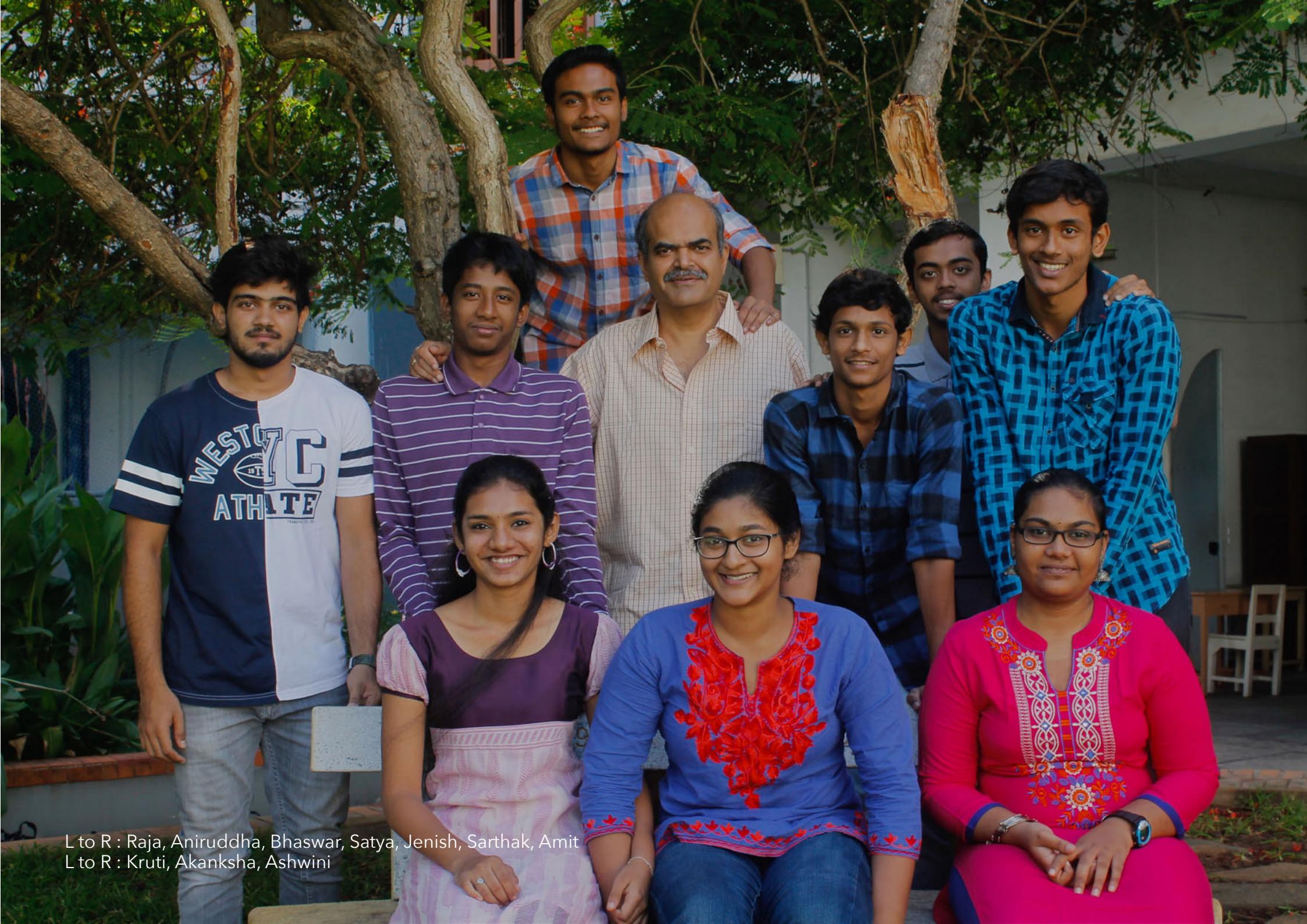
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Feedback helps us grow. We'd love to hear what you think.

Write to us at slaicemag@gmail.com

Thank you,

Mag Team 2018



L to R : Raja, Aniruddha, Bhaswar, Satya, Jenish, Sarthak, Amit
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