

Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust

(Registration under Trust Registration Act 1982)

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Christmas and New Year Greetings 2011

Dear friends,

This year, India is celebrating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, the iconic bard of the country. His life and literary work have greatly influenced and shaped the cultural psyche of Bengal and India. Tagore's poems, songs, essays, dramas and his concept of child pedagogy and rural reconstruction are still so relevant in the present time. Rabindranath Tagore has been awarded the Nobel Prize for his book 'Gitanjali' in 1913. The village work of Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati has been directly and indirectly influenced by Tagore's ideas of rural development. For example, village work would not have started if Martin-da had not begun to live at Santiniketan. The senior members of our organization, like Sona Murmu, Gokul Hansda, Snehadri Sekhar Chakraborty and Boro Baski, have all been at one point of time the students or an employee of Tagore's university at Santiniketan. A large number of our friends and supporters at Santiniketan and Kolkata are great admirers of Tagore.

Therefore, Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati, too, have paid tribute to this great icon in its own way by organizing, Two Week Workshop on "The Expressions of Santal Art and Culture through Multi-media Applications" from 7th -19th November, 2011. Ludwig Pesch, a musician by profession and his organization 'Tribal Cultural Heritage in India Foundation', Amsterdam, The Netherlands, has conceptually and financially collaborated with us in this programme. The organizations and individuals who helped us to make this workshop successful are Samiran Nandy, Senior photographer, Visva-Bharati; Mr. Nilopal Majumdar, Dean, Satyajit Roy Film & Television Institute, Kolkata; Ms. Ishani Majumdar, Documentary Research Initiatives, Kolkata; Mr. Sanchayan Ghosh, Head, Department of Paintings, Visva-Bharati; Prof. Kumkum Bhattacharya, Director, Rabindra Bhavana, Visva-Bharati and Prof. Ranjit Bhattacharya, former director of the Anthropological Survey of India.

Many of you must be aware that we will be celebrating the Silver Jubilee of our village work on 11 – 12 February, 2012. For this occasion, the preparations are going on in full swing. Some of the highlights of the programme are a seminar, an exhibition, a publication, dances, music, and a drama. The Ministry of Culture, Government of India, will sponsor our programme. A well-known singer from Dhaka, Bangladesh, will perform with us. The programme will be held partly on our school campus near Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati, and partly at Santiniketan. All are cordially invited to attend the programme, although we shall send formal invitations to you all those of whom we have the addresses.

Looking back on our regular activities, we are glad to inform you that this year has been good and peaceful. The first reason for happiness is that we had a good production of rice crop. Despite the high price of food and other necessary goods, our villagers could store the rice for the next one year because we experienced no floods and no draughts. Apart from our regular programmes like education, health care, bio-farming, income generation, we have also organized several extra-curricular and cultural exchange programs. Like every year, this year too in February 2011, we had the annual students' picnic. About 200 students and teachers from Ghosaldanga, Bishnubati and RSV school had food and fun together at the bank of the river Ajoy. This year we were lucky to have the members of the *Friends of Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati* from Germany and Dr. Monika Golembiewski and her family with us. On 10th February, a new office building was inaugurated at RSV. One part of the building is being used for the store room for bio-orchard products. Last month a hand-tractor was bought for the bio-farm and seasonal rental use for the villagers. The hostel students performed a beautiful drama on 19th February in the inaugural programme of Dr. Monika's hospital "The Shinning Eyes" (Hospital for Mothers and Children). In March, the annual "Baha Parab" (Santal spring festival) was celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy. At the end of March there was an educational tour to Kolkata for high school students. 35 students and teachers visited the Indian Museum, the Zoo, Metro Rail, the Bandel Basilica etc. For many students this trip was the first time they ever left their village to see a big city like Kolkata. In 9th Aril, the Annual Children's fair at Bishnubati had been organized successfully. After the gap of five years, the managing committee members of Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati had gone for an exposure tour in June. 15 members team led by Bimol Baski had joined a three days long march with a big group of Santals from different states. The groups had gone to 'Bhagnadihi' in Jharkhand, the birth place of 'Sidu Murmu and Kanu Murmu' the two Santal heroes who organized a revolt against exploitation of landlords and local police of then British administration in pre-independent India in 1855. There was a Teachers' Workshop at RSV in June conducted by Mr. Samar Bagchi, former director of the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, Kolkata. High school teachers and students from neighbouring schools participated in this workshop. This year we received three student volunteers from Germany who participated in various activities of the organization. These were some of the important events of the year 2011.

We hope you are doing well. All members of the organization wish you a very HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a beautiful and successful NEW YEAR 2012.

Boro Baski

Sona Murmu

Gokul Hansda

Monotosh Das

Martin Kaempchen

Snehadri S. Chakraborty