

Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust

(Registration under Trust Registration Act 1982)

P.O. Sattore, Dist. Birbhum, West Bengal-731 236

Phone- 9434007127/ 9434113433/ 9432357160

E.mail: borobaski@gmail.com / gbat@rediffmail.com

Christmas and New Year Greetings 2013

Dear friends,

We hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits. Every year the month of December and January make us more busy and excited. It is because the pressure of completing the ongoing assignments, commitments, resolutions of the current year and on the other hand the excitement of taking up the new perspectives for the next year. The educated generations of our villages also now share the same feelings as their annual examinations end in December and the new academic year begins in the coming year which means new clothes, books, friends etc. This dilemma however hardly affects our parents' generations whose lives are mostly controlled by the seasons of the year. Special occasions are remembered by big incidents of the village like birth, death and marriage or natural calamities.

As the current year comes to an end, we also take the opportunity to express our gratitude and update you on this year's developments in our organization. The following have been the highlights of our activities.

- Regular programmes: Rolf Schoembs Vidyashram (RSV) primary school, hostels, bio-farm, Santal Cultural Museum and special coaching classes at RSV campus went on very satisfactorily. To keep the teachers updated about teaching methods, several training programmes were organized. They took place at RSV, Khejurtola (Dist. South 24-Parganas), Bose Institute, Falta and at Dumka (Jharkhand). The production of guavas, papayas, lemons, mangoes, mushrooms and rice at our bio-orchard was more satisfactory than in the last year. Students also quite actively participated in taking care of the farm. Kindergartens, evening schools and coaching centres in Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati too went on normally. However, the lack of full-time and responsible teachers at Ghosaldanga (Prantik campus) affected the activities of the Ghosaldanga coaching centre and of the students' school performance. The Ghosaldanga kindergarten was greatly affected due to lack of coordination and compromise between the teachers of the Government Balwari centre and the Ghosaldanga kindergarten teacher. However, eleven educated Ghosaldanga men formed a group under Sona Murmu recently and instituted three committees, and we hope we can soon give more encouraging news.

- New initiatives: After successfully completing the construction of the Girls' Hostel last year with the support of the Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operation (BMZ) and Friends of Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati of Germany, this year again the construction of a Boys' hostel has been started with the support of the Schöck-Family Trust of Germany. Another development of the year was the starting of four evening coaching centres at four different villages, namely at Batijol, Panchabanpur, Bandlodanga and Nildanga. This initiative is called the 'Outreach Programme of RSV' (OP of RSV) which we started after completion of the Silver Jubilee of Ghosaldanga-Bishnubati village work. The Outreach Programme is supported by Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, Rotary Club of Bolpur in conjunction with Rotary Club of Baden-Baden, Germany.

• Partnership and hospitality: A number of exchange programmes has taken place this year with various individuals and institutions. In the beginning of the year the members of Friends of Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati of Germany Marianne Pal Chowdhury, Ulrich and Hedwig Oser paid their annual visit to us discussing various issues of village work. Ronald Kurt, a professor of Bochum University and his family along with 13 university students of his spent two weeks with us. Kathrin Klein, Erna Lutz and Alike Habigt came back for the second time and each spent a very fruitful time with our students. Kathrin Klein came with her husband Torsten and Erna Lutz with her friend Elfride Woerz (Germany).

This year, like the previous year, we received a number of German student volunteers. Among them were Jakob Dörr, Hannah Beckmann, Judith Drexler, Marie Theres Herbst, Caroline Schneider, Angelina Hörner and Imke Gerhardt all of them have left a deep impression in various fields, like education, sports, music, gymnastics, travelling etc. Monika Golembiewski, the paediatric doctor, and Silvia Golemiewski also treated the patients as they have been doing for years through their hospital at Mokrapur and in the villages. Katrien van Beurden, the Artistic Director of the International Theatre Company 'Hotel Courage' and her associates from Amsterdam performed some of their pantomime sketches in our village programme at Bishnubati. The group was accompanied by Anand Singh Bawa, President of the Indo-German Cultural Associations of India (New Delhi). We also welcomed a number of personalities from India, like Tapati Mukherjee, professor and director of Rabindra-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, who along with other officials came to inaugurate our evening coaching centres at Bautijol. S.K.Mitra (Engineer) & Associates from Kolkata came twice to campaign on the installation of toilets; he was accompanied by his capable team in Kolkata. Ranu Dattagupta (Santiniketan) gave us her unstinting support, her daughter Sharmistha Dattagupta with her friend Holger (Göttingen, Germany) spent time with the students and teachers of RSV; Sharmistha, a botanist, shared her experiences of working in the deep sea.

Members of our organization also attended several exchange programmes outside the villages like a Santal Literary Meet at Dumka, Jharkhand, and Boro Baski delivered a lecture on our village work at a seminar in honour of the 150th birth-anniversary of Tagore at Visva-Bharati University. In August-September, Sanyasi Lohar went to attend two Art Workshops in Salzburg (Austria), revisited the Ecole d'Humanité in Switzerland (where he had stayed as an art teacher), had three exhibitions of his work in Germany and visited our friend Ludwig Pesch in Amsterdam.

Considering all ups and downs the year 2013 has been a memorable and eventful one. Once again we thank you for being with us in your thoughts and for extending moral and material support. We all wish you a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year 2014.

Boro Baski

Sona Murmu

Sanyasi Lohar

Gokul Hansda

Monotosh Das

Martin Kämpchen

Snehadri S. Chakraborty