

models of the Bhishti or water-carrier, the colonial English gentleman complete with his hat and stick, and the Khansamah or cook, are some of the figures that reflect a life style that is now a part of history.

### RAG DOLLS

Rag dolls are made from pieces of small cloth, cotton and wood, and are popular as gifts for children and also for decorative purposes. Dolls depicting the Santhals and the Bauls or brides and bridegrooms are always in demand. This ancient art form is constantly evolving as new methodology is being used for structuring and stuffing as well as for detailing in costumes and jewellery. The craft of making rag dolls is not traditional to West Bengal and has been influenced by Japanese rag dolls.



**JUTE PRODUCTS**  
Jute, which is also known as the golden fibre, is woven and knotted



and used to make utility as well as decorative items. Carpets, decorative tapestries, wall hangings, handbags and bedspreads, are among the many jute products which are in demand.

### LEATHER PRODUCTS

Kolkata is known for its many leather products. The leather products produced in Kolkata, which include bags, handbags, suitcases, wallets, jackets, shoes, etc., are different from the leather products made in the other states of the country. Santiniketan is famous for batik work on leather.



**Source: Rhythms of Life - Folk Traditions of Eastern India by Gouri Basu**

## Cultural Calendar - February 2017

### Lecture - "What is Pure Love?"

based on Vedanta philosophy  
By Dr. Janki Santoke, Management Trainer from India  
Venue: ICC Auditorium

9

Thursday  
6.00 pm

17

Friday  
5.00 pm

### Sri Thyagaraja Aaradhana Festival of Carnatic Music - Rendering of Thyagaraja Keerthanams

by Students from various universities and leading Institutions  
All musicians are welcome to participate  
Rehearsals will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at 4.00 pm  
Venue: Saraswathi Hall, No.74, Lorensz Raod, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 04

### Film screening - Orazhcha (A week)

(a Malayalam film with English subtitles, duration -93 m)  
A film that tells the story of an old, retired, middle class couple in Kerala, India, and their life in a week reflecting on social issues.

### And Meet the Debutant Director of the film, Ms. Anila S.K.

Venue: ICC Auditorium

22

Wednesday  
6.00 pm

### A Musical Evening

Hindi songs from 3 decades, 60's 70's & 80's  
by Sanjaya Hemal Wahalathanthri, Liyanage Himalka Sewwandi Perera and Sajini Hansika Wijesekara,  
Graduates from Performing Arts Department of Bhatkhande Music University, Lucknow, India  
Venue: ICC Auditorium

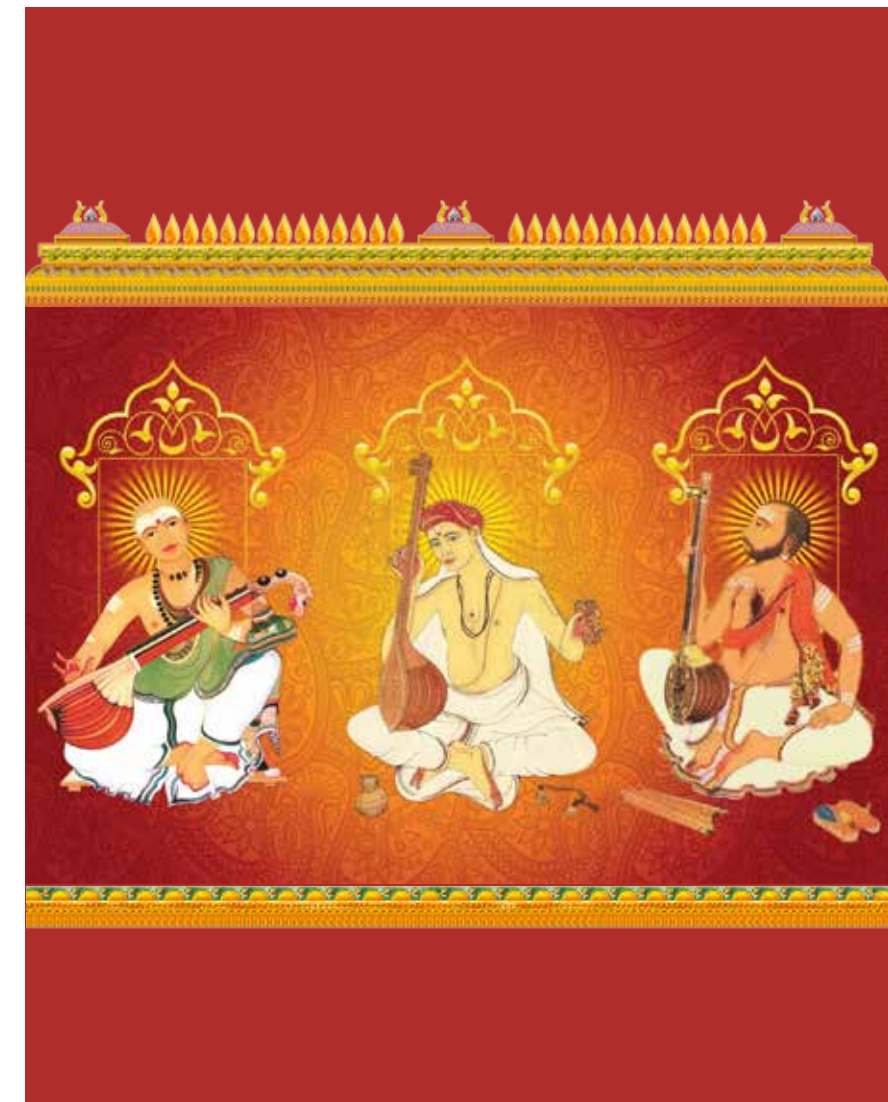
28

Tuesday  
6.00 pm



# Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo February 2017





# Cultural Tapestry

Continued...

## Handicrafts of Eastern India

### TRIPURA

Tripura has carved out a niche for itself in the field of handicrafts, with the artisans producing the most beautiful products from simple materials like cane, bamboo and wood. Three distinct religious influences are seen in Tripura – Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam – which have converged to create a unique tradition of art and craft. To the original tribal motifs of Tripura were added the skills of the Bengali and Manipuri artisans who settled in Tripura, to create crafts which are not only beautiful but also functional.

### CANE AND BAMBOO CRAFT



Like in many of the other north-eastern states, in Tripura too, cane and bamboo-craft constitutes the traditional handicraft of the state. Bamboo screens, lamp stands, table-mats and the traditional Sital Pati are popular items. Interior decoration items like false ceilings, panellings, furniture, plaques, etc., combine

utility with artistic beauty. Baskets woven from cane and bamboo strips in different patterns and designs are made in the traditional way but given a contemporary look. The speciality of the cane and bamboo items of Tripura are the intricate and exquisite designs of the products.

### BRASS AND METAL CRAFT

As in many of the north-eastern states, brass and metal articles are also made in Tripura. Simplicity is the hallmark of these articles. The deft hands of the tribal artisans create a wide range of interesting products.

### WEST BENGAL

West Bengal has a rich heritage of exquisite handicrafts and handlooms. Jute products, wood and cane products, conch shell products, brassware and Dokra work from the state are sold all over the world.

### MASKS

Masks depicting mainly mythological characters are made of paper mache and painted in bright colours. The art of making the masks has been handed



down through the generations in the families of the artisans. These masks are used for different dances, particularly the Purulia Chhau and Gambhira dances. The masks are also used during different rituals and folk festivals as well as for decoration purposes.

### TERRACOTTA

Terracotta is one of the most ancient and renowned craft forms of Bishnupur. The raw material used is the rich alluvial clay found on the river banks. The skills of the terracotta artisans is evident in the ancient temples of Bishnupur, which are richly decorated with carvings depicting different aspects of Lord Krishna's life. Many items are made drawing the themes from epics and old legends. Besides the traditional burnt clay models, there are many modern items, like tiles, panels and decorative items. The most famous item of terracotta craft is the Bankura Horse.



### DOKRA

Dokra craft is an ancient tribal Indian handicraft seen in many states of India and believed to be over a thousand years old. Dokra belongs to the genre of brassware but is made of scrap metal.



The non-ferrous metal casting uses the lost wax casting technique and is made by the socially backward tribes known as the Dokra Kamars. One of the earliest known artefacts made by using this technique is the 'Dancing Girl' found in the ruins of Mohenjodaro. The Dokra items have a primitive simplicity and are decorated with traditional folk motifs. Horses, elephants, peacocks, owls and images of popular gods and goddesses are among the Dokra items made in West Bengal.

### CONCH SHELL CRAFT

Conch shell craft developed in the regions of West Bengal which have a close proximity to the sea. Conch shell workers, known as Sakharis, make the famous Sankha, worn by Bengali women as a marriage symbol. Besides, several items of fashion jewellery are also crafted out of the conch shells. Along with the shell articles, mother of pearl is also used to make cutlery



items, small plates, decorative items and shell Jewellery.

### WOODCRAFT

West Bengal is famous for wood craft made from the wood of the coconut tree. The traditional wood carvers of West Bengal continue to use the simplest of tools and follow the styles that have been handed down through the generations. This has helped the craft to maintain a high standard of perfection.



Bengal are toys and decorative panels. Folk motifs are used to give the products an earthy appeal.

### SHOLAPITH

The craftsmen of West Bengal use the pith of shola, a herbaceous plant growing in the wild, to make decorative items. The light and lustrous inner portions of the plant are used to make minute and intricate decorations for the deities, particularly Goddess Durga. Images of gods and goddesses made of shola are a popular craft item of the state. The head-dress worn by



Bengali brides and grooms on their wedding day is also made from shola. Garlands and floral bouquets made of shola are also very popular items.



### CLAY CRAFT

Krishnanagar in Nadia district is widely acclaimed for its exquisitely crafted clay dolls. Families engaged in the making of clay models have been practising this art form for generations.



The models include historical, mythological and religious figures and toys and abstract art objects. The perfect detailing of the features and expressions of the dolls and the realism of the clothes to the last fold and tuck make each one of the dolls a collector's item. The intensely detailed