

READING CORNER

HISTORY | LITERATURE | ART | CULTURE | HERITAGE | BIOGRAPHY | TRAVEL | WILDLIFE | RELIGION | SELF-HELP | FICTION | TRANSLATION | CINEMA | FOOD

This Diwali gift a Book and illuminate the lives of your loved ones with wisdom, inspiration and creativity. Wishing all our readers a very happy and prosperous Deepawali!



Portable Token of Memories

My cousin P disliked books as much as I adored them. We grew up five minutes away from each other in Calcutta, and two or three days in a week, my grandfather and I walked over to their house in the early evening, before the brief eastern dusk that hovered over the city in a heartrending fashion had extinguished itself. P and I played in their courtyard. In the middle-school years we listened to old Michael Jackson tapes on her hi-fi music system, while Dadubhai read the *Anandabazaar* with his evening cup of tea. (We subscribed to *The Telegraph* at home.) The only matter on which we cousins differed was the subject of reading: P found it a drag, I needed at least three new books each week. P preferred practising the Moonwalk on their red terrazzo floor in the afternoons while I flew to distant places on the strength of my paper-wings: to Vijayanagar by the Tungabhadra, to Cornwall with the Famous Five, to the Land of Oz with Dorothy, and most memorably, to Benaras with Satyavati.

Every year on P's birthday, I convinced myself that this would be the year when P would cross over from the non-reader side to the reader side, and so, in an acutely self-serving fashion, in addition to whatever present my parents were getting her, I always insisted on buying P a book. No points for guessing who "borrowed" that very book the day after said birthday, and who stayed up that night to finish it.

Years later, once I joined Presidency College, I grew far more nuanced and far less self-serving in the art of book-buying for others. In those pre-social media days, we had such a lot of time. We wandered up and down College Street, the seasons casting their signature light on the towering piles of books that sat on narrow counters, striking friendships with the canny booksellers and poring over the piles. If one was persistent, such gems emerged from their depths. For friends' and parents' birthdays, for the children of neighbours, for the security guard's son. I remember buying my grandmother many books in those days, rare first editions that she lovingly dusted and placed on her bookshelves, reminiscent of all the books she had lost in the process of shifting from Ranchi to Calcutta.

In those heady days of first love, Saurav and I also, slyly, wooed each other with books. I have vivid memories of Saturday afternoons, when we would spend hours in the same radius of Coffee House, spending our pitiful pocket money – a portion of which had already been spent on Mughlai parathas and chicken pakoras in Coffee House – picking out a *Life of Trotsky* or an edition of Greek Plays. Buying it for yourself felt like an indulgence. After all, we were still unused to the flagrant buying of our later lives, still touched by the socialism that India had held onto till 1991 and a version of which persisted in Calcutta for more than two decades after. But buying a book for the significant other – now that was, merely, in the interest of civilization. If we, as scholars, did not support one another's quest for knowledge then what kind of idealistic young people were we?

However, the one book that stands out in my memory today had nothing to do with College Street. It was a slim little volume called *A Video, A Fridge and a Bride* written by a novelist I hadn't heard of at the time: Nirmala Aravind. One hot summer day in 2004, we took the metro to Esplanade and joined the vast throngs of people who milled around that place, whether around New Market or Treasure Island – how exotic it sounded to our ears – or the Grand Hotel arcade, talking about the future, as we sometimes did, or arguing about ideas, as we often did. Around us, the familiar sounds of the city rose and fell, people jostling and hurrying, and we felt as alone and complete in our little bubble, walking aimlessly, as only young people with their entire lives in front of them can. We walked to Chowringhee and then, right outside Indian Museum, we spotted a man selling books kept on plastic sheets upon the footpath.

We dawdled there for a while. There were Bengali novels, a few books on Indology, old comics and a few romances.

Nirmala Aravind's book jumped out from the sea of covers – in fact, I can still see the cover, as soon as I shut my eyes, the silhouette of a melancholy woman in blue against a moss-green backdrop, in a white frame where the title was picked out in a soft brown: *A Video, a Fridge and a Bride*. "20 rupees," the man said shortly. Wordlessly Saurav paid him, and I, pleased with my new book, dumped it in my bag. On a whim, we now began to walk to Park Street, talking once again about life, love and future plans and whatever it is that young people striding through their city talk about. I have no recollection of that conversation. But what I know is that something shifted through the cosmos that hot summer day so that later, perhaps over a halved mutton patty in Flurys (14 rupees), I wrote in the flyleaf in my small, neat handwriting:

Devapriya Roy
Saurav Jha
(Chowringhee May '04)

It would have been a gift; instead, it became the first book we co-owned. What would happen if we broke up, a darkness flared in my head, was I actually tempting fate with this declaration, would one of us have to scratch the other's name out? But those were simpler times and we were young and foolhardy. Eventually, we were to both become writers, living in a house full of tottering piles, and as a matter of policy we still like to gift books to people on occasions ranging from weddings to house-parties. People are a little startled by the books sometimes – and then, invariably, they smile like their younger selves, excited by the promise of paper-wings. (I make an exception, however, for my cousin P, who, fully cognizant of my book-greed and full of grave generosity, never asked for her books to be returned, back in the day.)



Devapriya Roy
Author & Columnist

Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest.

As I read O'Henry's *The Gift of the Magi* for the nth time, I could not help but be overwhelmed by the remarkable mismatch the story extols, while celebrating the love and sacrifice of the couple, Jim and Della. And as I stood thinking about the act of gifting, I realized that books can efficiently and effectively avoid the comedy of errors, without being termed unsentimental.

A book may appear to be just words printed on paper: you can shelve it, shred it, or ship it around the world. You can sniff it, sift it and even gift it. You can read it, pay heed to it or preach it. You can lend it, bend it and even fend off pests with it, whatever syncs with your state of mind. You can wrap it, drape it or even pack it in a silk bag. For a book is not just words printed on paper. For a bibliophile, it is a whole new realm between two covers.

On second thought, it may not be an easy task after all. There are two reasons for that:

- To gift a book, the gifter needs to know the giftee well.
- To gift a book, the gifter also needs to know the gift well.

The idea of a great book differs from person to person and hence the two-way knowledge makes this act an art. However, I see a new trend of gifting books to complete strangers, which is quite laudable. Emma Watson started leaving books as gifts in public places, to anyone who picks them up. Such gifters came to be termed as book fairies. As the idea spread to the rest of the world, even to smaller cities in India, many bibliophiles earmarked their territories, like Books on the Delhi Metro with interesting ideas.

Gifting of books is an act of love and generosity, which can be felt in the piece written by Devapriya Roy, as well as the interviews of readers from different walks of life (pages 6 & 7), where they describe the thought that goes into choosing a book as a gift, which brings me back to where I began...

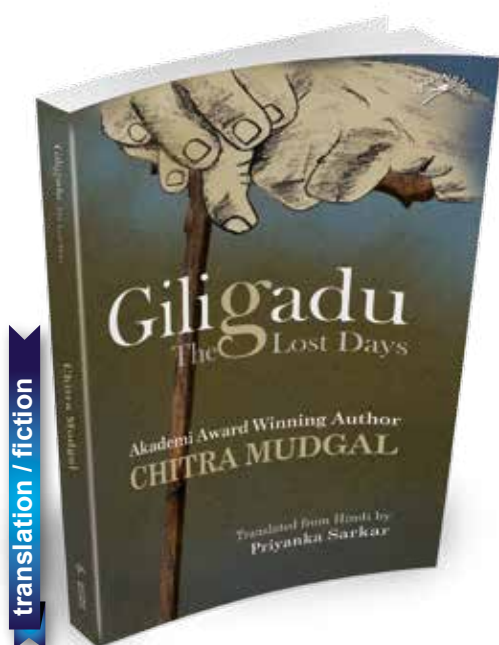
Of all who give and receive gifts (of books), such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest.



Trisha De Niyogi



2 NEW LEAVES, NEW NARRATIVES

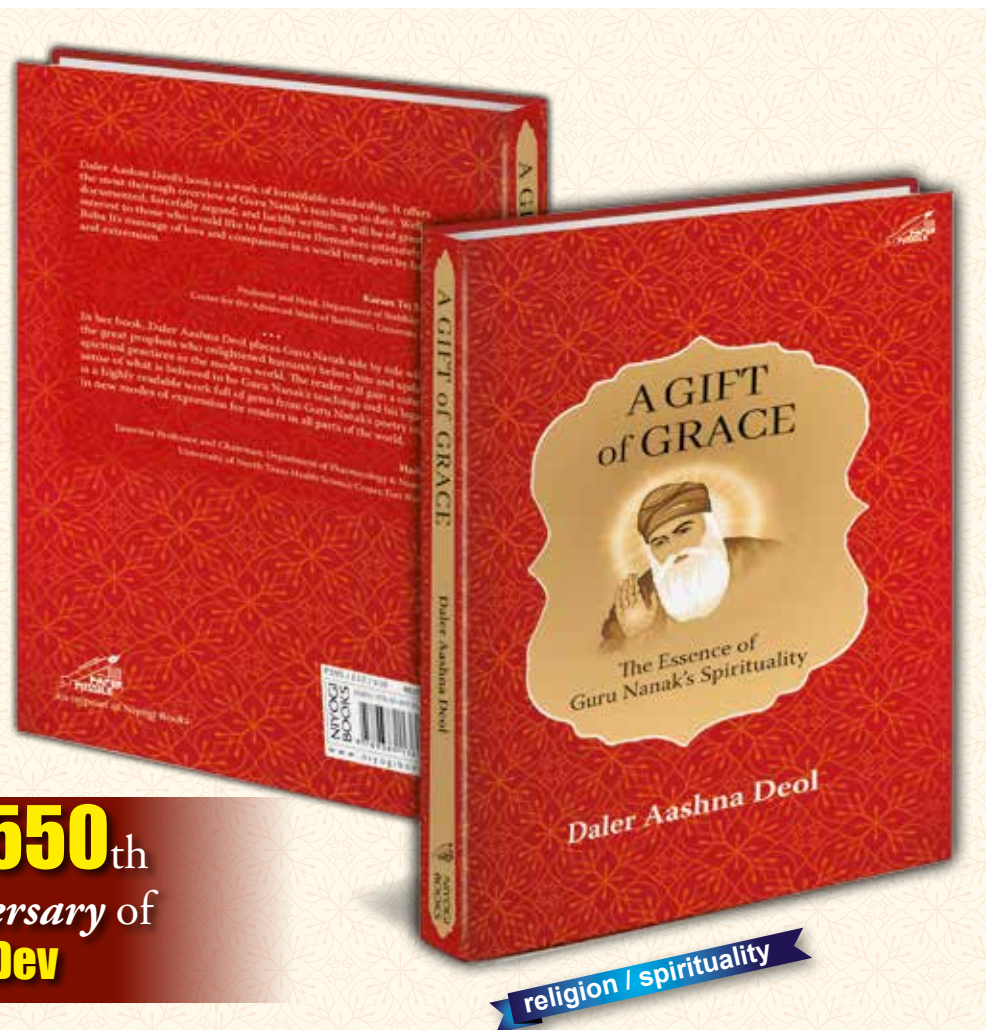


Giligadu: The Lost Days, by the 2018 Sahitya Akademi Award winner Chitra Mudgal, is a multi-layered novelette with poignant messages for urban India. Set in a time frame of 13 days, with two old men as the main characters, it uniquely analyzes the relevance of older values in present day life and the need to change with the times. It will surely leave you with a lasting recipe of peace and amicable relationships, giving relief to the mini-wars waged within families.

As we celebrate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji, presenting *A Gift of Grace: The Essence of Guru Nanak's Spirituality* a book in three parts which simplifies Guru Nanak's core spiritual message for the modern reader. It foregrounds the spiritual foundation of **Nanak's worldview**, **Japji Sahib**, the seminal text and the axis of Guru Nanak's ecclesiastical legacy, and a representative selection of Guru Nanak's hymns. All meditations are presented as transliterated text, followed by its English translation, and a brief commentary for ease of understanding. The beauty and depth of the meaning, together with a lyrical depiction of the hymns based on different Indian ragas, remains intact in the translation.

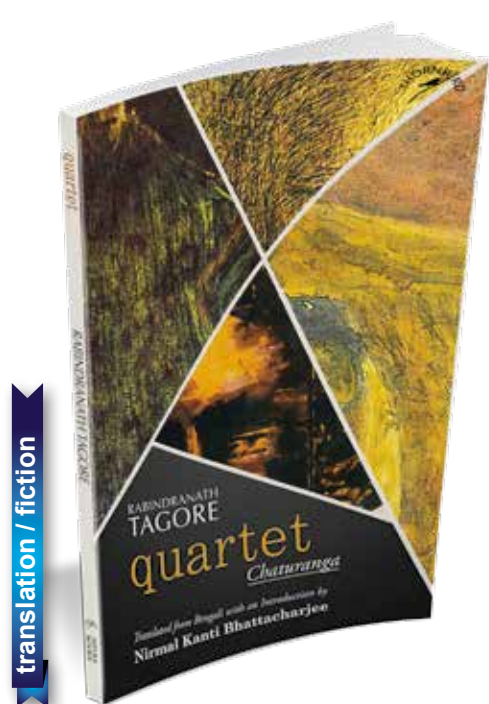
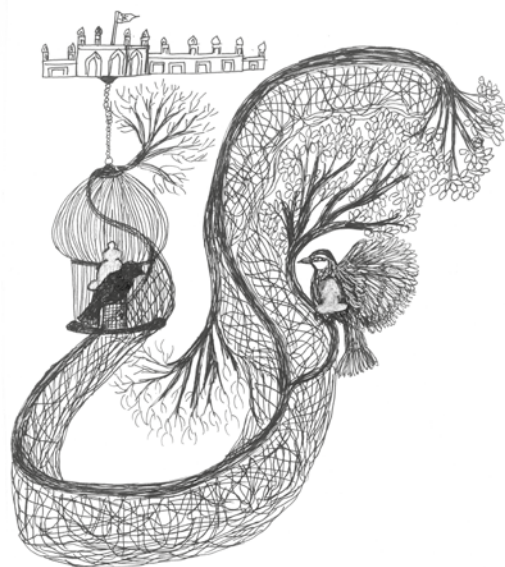
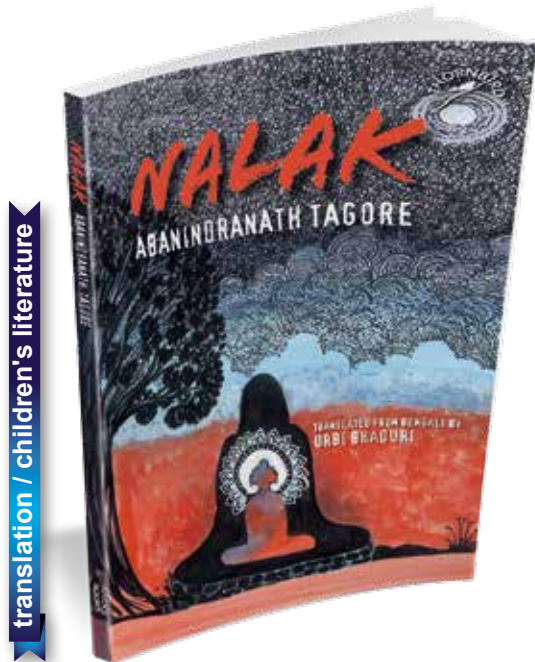


Celebrating **550th**
Birth Anniversary of
Guru Nanak Dev



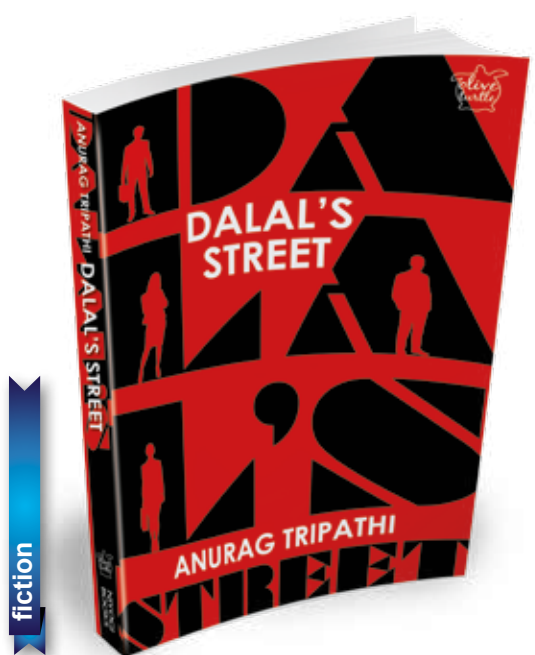
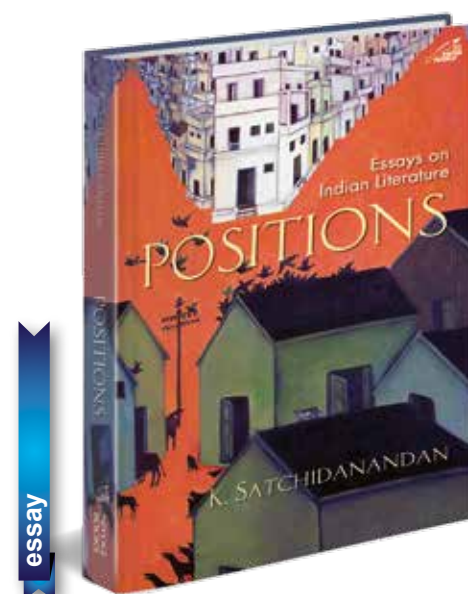
A deeply moving and philosophical tale which transcends from the label of a children's book *Nalak* tells the journeys of the Buddha and the young village boy, Nalak. Translated from Bengali, it is an alluring read as the writer seems to be painting pictures with words, taking us through the story of Nalak's coming-of-age—his quest to find the Buddha, the joys and sacrifices along this path.

Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951) was an artist and writer from the illustrious Tagore family, and a nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. The principal innovator of the Bengal School of Art, he created a distinctive Swadeshi style of art at a time when only western models were being imitated and practised in contemporary India. He was appointed by Calcutta University as the Bageswari Professor of Oriental Art, and his writings and lectures on art remain relevant and important to art theory and practice to this day.

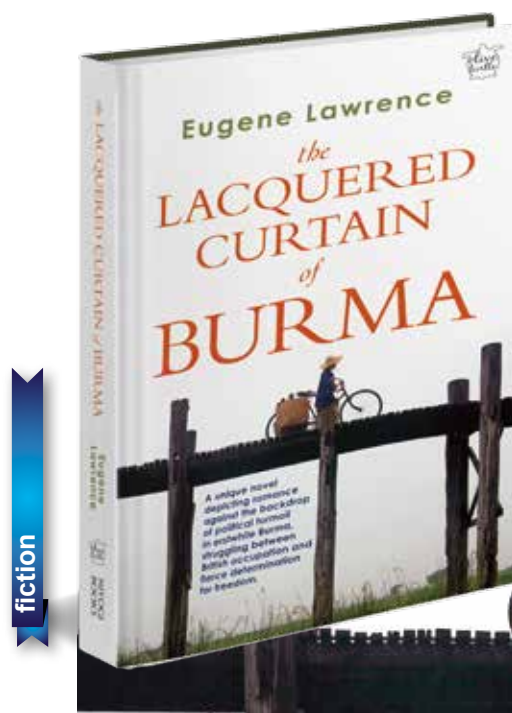


Translated from Bengali, Tagore's *Quartet* is a short novella set in 19th century Bengal. A social novel, it explores poignant **questions about religion and atheism**, **dabbling in the complex hues of the man-woman relationship** along with the dichotomies of natural human longings and forced imposition of spiritual emancipation.

Contributing to the growing, yet insufficient, corpus of literary studies in India, *Positions* features a careful selection from K. Satchidanandan's essays on Indian literature. It delves in some **pertinent questions on the idea of Indian literature(s)** like whether it is a unitary essence or diverse vernacular literatures; whether it should evolve its own poetics or should continue to be governed by western influences, along with this it also discusses works of several individual authors.



Four young friends, pass out of a mediocre business school and are attracted to jobs in a high paying trading company. Distinct in their personalities with varied backgrounds, they are smart, hardworking and ambitious. But will they succeed in the high pressure jobs in a hyper competitive world of stock broking, where money talks, greed is a virtue and success is worshipped? And at what cost? *Dalal's Street* is a **satirical (financial) thriller with dark humour** that explores the complex interplay of human relationships in a world where there are no winners, only survivors.

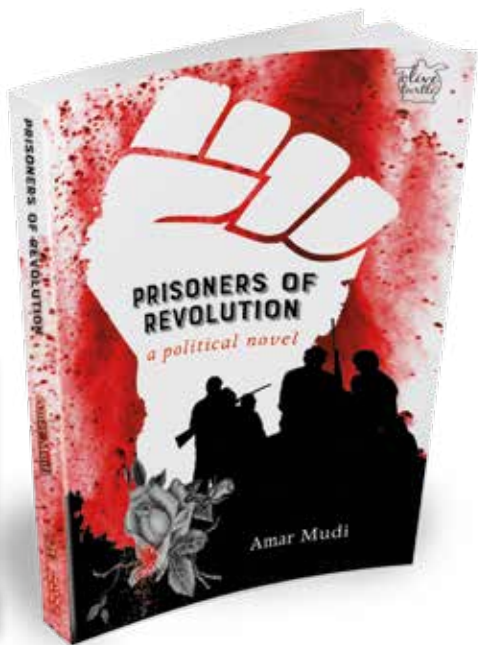


A book where history comes alive, *The Lacquered Curtain of Burma* traverses through historical Burma while touching upon several individual lives of people who migrated to Burma, recounting the country's strife for **independence from colonial Britain and imperial Japan**, the **post-independence conflicts in the country**, and Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's **courageous yet inconclusive efforts** to bring about a decisive change.



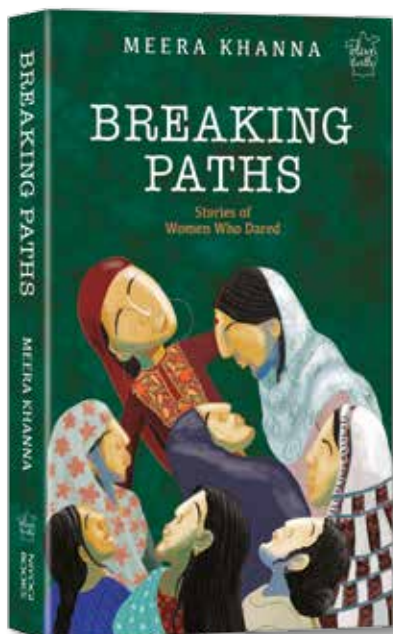
3 NEW LEAVES, NEW NARRATIVES

fiction



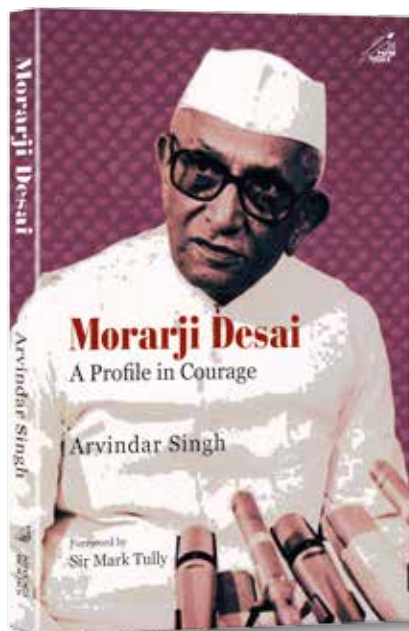
Prisoners of Revolution: a political novel offers a hypothesis on the tempestuous Naxalbari Movement and its genesis in the year 1967 discussing its unravelling through six momentous years till 1973 in Babulpur, a microcosmic representation of thousands of other villages in Bengal. It is a novel characterized by a gripping sense of suspense, thrill, action, drama and romance offering a **commentary on the social structure of society**, its tensions birthing from inequality.

fiction / women-centric



Covering a wide social spectrum and narrated in lucid language, *Breaking Paths* presents the stories of eighteen strong women inspired from real-life incidents, who are fighters of their circumstances and winners, determined in their refusal to accept conventional limitations, and courageous in their acceptance of the consequences. Based on facts, the stories meander along unbeaten tracks, striking hard at the reader's soul with a note of optimism and thrill.

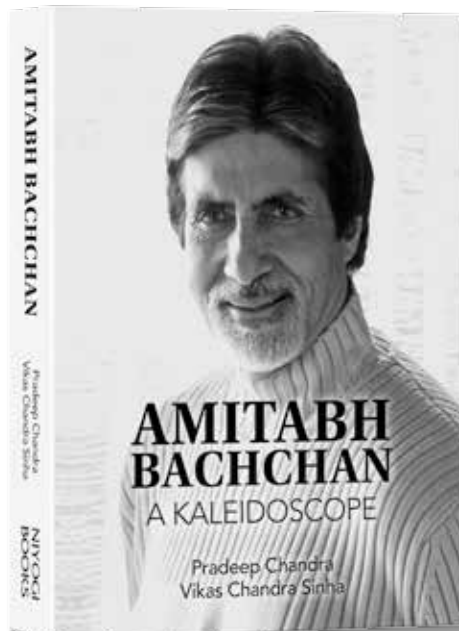
biography



Being the only recipient of the highest civilian honour from both India and Pakistan – Bharat Ratna and Nishan-e-Pakistan – Morarji Desai strove to bring about lasting peace between these two countries. *Morarji Desai: A Profile in Courage* captures the quintessence of Desai through the various phases of his distinguished career giving us a rare insight to his inordinate persona of a statesman and stalwart who was a true Gandhian till the end of his days.



biography



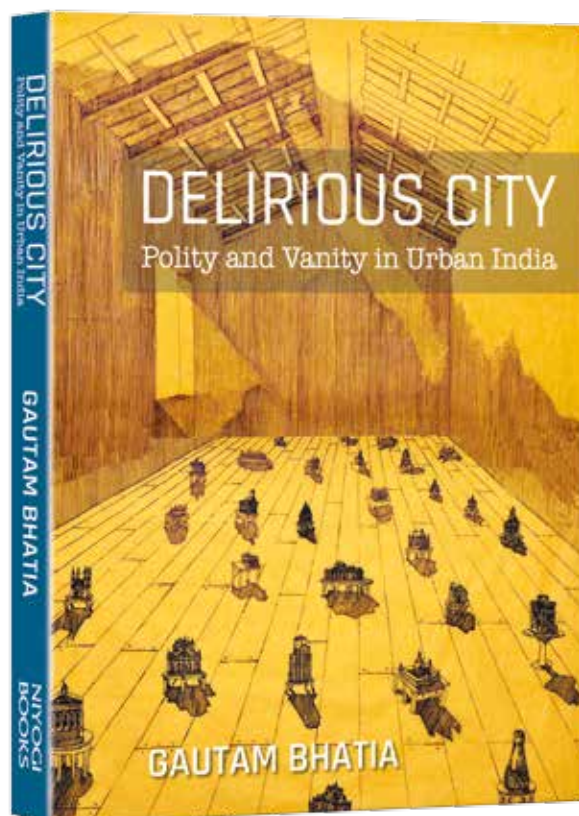
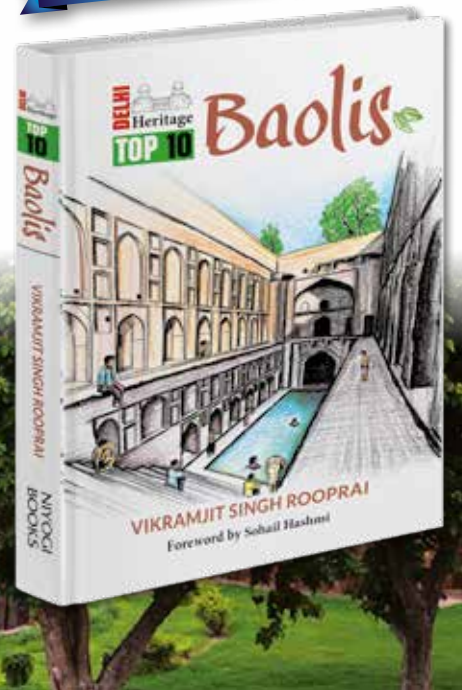
Giving us a 360-degree view of Bachchan the actor, the struggler, the family man, the businessman, the politician, the activist and above all, the fighter, with a collection of rare and never-seen-before photographs, paintings, sketches, movie stills and interesting anecdotes from Mr Bachchan himself, *Amitabh Bachchan: A Kaleidoscope* is a **must-read for every Big B fan** as well as every art and cinema aficionado.



An outcome of an intensive five-year-long research, *Delhi Heritage Top 10 Series* is a **comprehensive guide to Delhi's heritage icons and architectural gems**. The first volume in the series delves into the fascinating history and significance of forgotten, man-made water structures, commonly known as *baolis* or stepwells. The book walks us through the top ten *baolis*, with two special mentions. Besides giving us a vivid description of the functioning and revival of the *baolis*, the book also focuses on the social importance of each structure, along with their photographs and architectural drawings.



heritage & culture



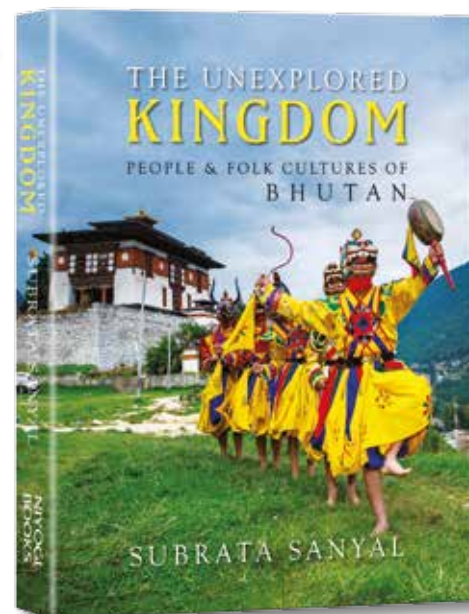
architecture / satire



City dwellers often reside in a grainy combination of despair and delight, *Delirious City* authored by the award winning architect Gautam Bhatia in a similar way imitates city life – a collision of various mediums as it is of mixed messages, concocted out of a desperate urge to make sense of the City, its residents, their aspirations and their perennial expectations. Bitter tragedy, urban despair and personal desire emerge in daily urban encounters and manifest a euphoric edge, often yielding to subversive comedy. **Sometimes cultural and sometimes architectural, the aim of the narrative is to rile and provoke the reader** by describing our civic reality with a disparate arc of writing, drawing, painting, sculpture and architecture, and relieve the mood in satire.

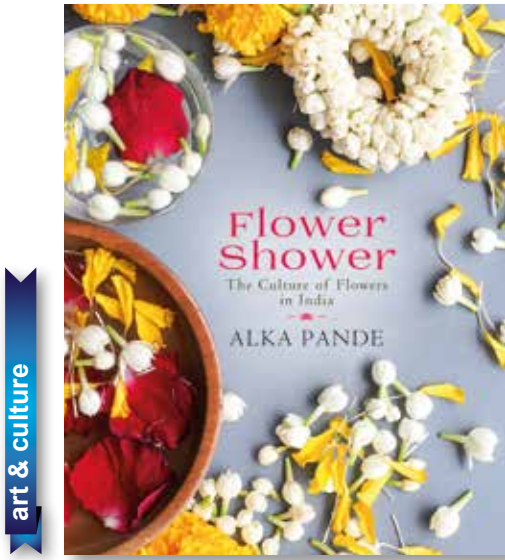
heritage & culture

The Unexplored Kingdom: People and Folk Cultures of Bhutan by Subrata Sanyal takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the rich cultural and ethnic heritage of Bhutan, the Land of the Thunder Dragon. The photographs and information obtained at a grassroots level reveal the simple but sophisticated lifestyles and traditions of the Bhutanese – carried forward even to this day. This book aims to **record knowledge of the folk-life of Bhutan**, preserving them for researchers and future generations.





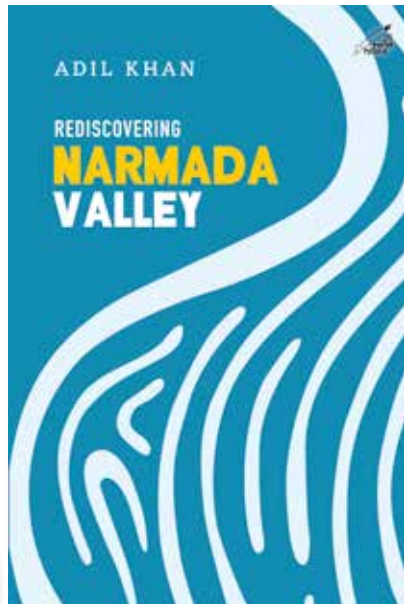
4 NEW FRAMES, NEW PERSPECTIVES



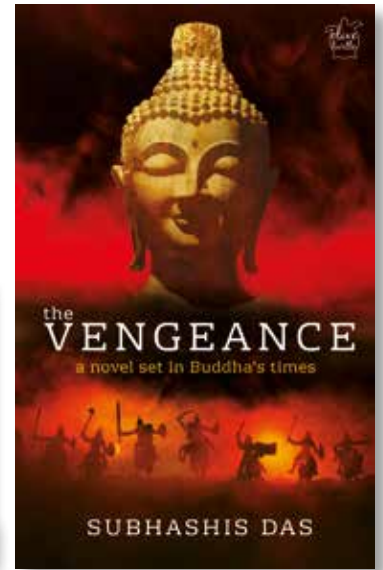
art & culture

Foregrounding the multifarious and indispensable role of flowers in Indian culture, *Flower Shower* explores the integral role that flowers play in our world as cultural signifiers; as motifs in Indian art, architecture, sculpture, literature and textiles; as culinary ingredients and as divine offerings. From botany to aesthetics and history to poetry, this is a deeply insightful book. Come! Immerse yourself in a *Flower Shower*...

When the water crisis is taking a plunge and excessive rainfall is causing catastrophes across states, *Rediscovering Narmada Valley* brings a dexterous presentation of the past and the present-day Narmada Valley in a comprehensive, systematic and chronological manner, highlighting an unbiased account of the inter-state disputes, the politics of Narmada water and public opposition against Narmada Valley's large dam projects.

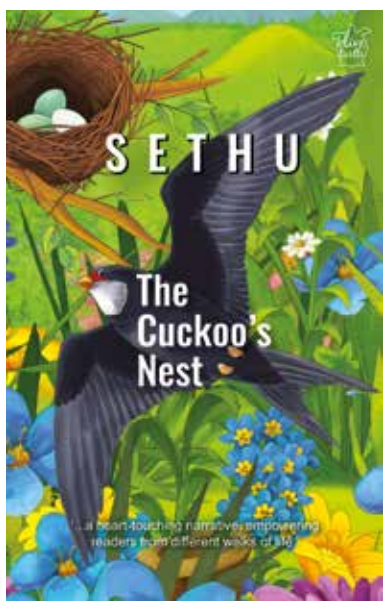


social science



fiction

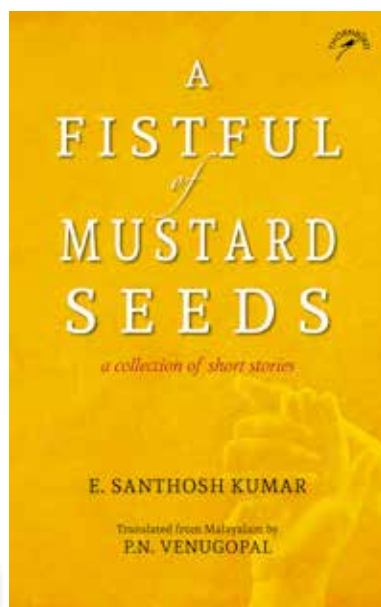
The Vengeance: A Novel Set in Buddha's Times is a tale of revenge, compassion, pain and betrayal. The story unfolds when a heavily guarded secret comes out in the open flipping the life of Prince Vidudabha resulting in one of the bloodiest wars in history. Alongside this woeful tale is the story of Buddha, who preaches his *dhamma* but fails to make an impression on the spiteful mind of Vidudabha.



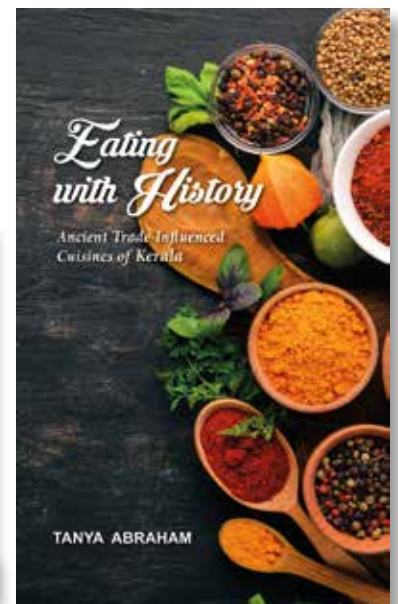
fiction

The Cuckoo's Nest is an English original from Sethu, contemporary and topical in its theme it treats some of the most pressing issues plaguing the Indian society today with dexterity. It is a story of a nun named Madam Agatha who renounces the order fighting for the cause of tolerance and pluralism. Its heart-touching narrative works like a soothing balm for the human spirit, tired and beaten down by false ideologies.

Different in themes yet connected by undercurrents much like blood streams, *A Fistful of Mustard Seeds* by E. Santosh Kumar is a set of 12 stories written and published in Malayalam over a period of almost two decades. Sensitive and thought-provoking, they explore moral dilemmas, personal traumas illuminating the elevations and abysses of the human condition.

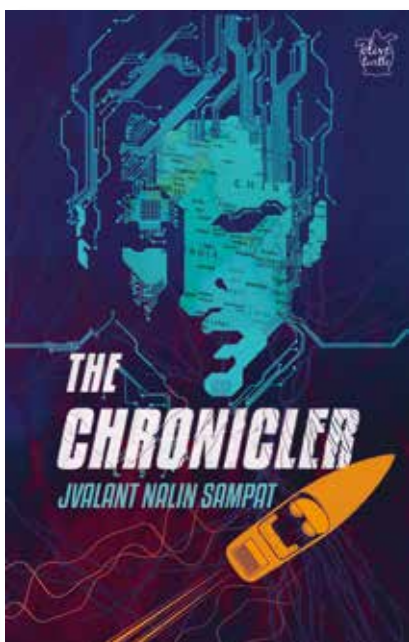


fiction



cookery / food history

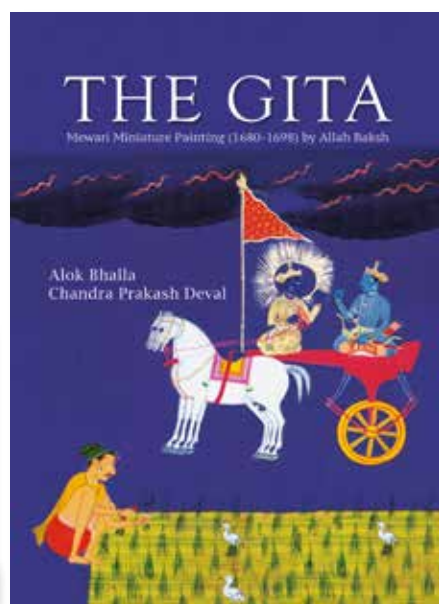
Eating with History is an invaluable compendium of a variety of recipes that evolved out of Kerala's kitchen, thanks to the creative and nuanced cross-cultural interactions that happened through the channels of trade. By analyzing the historical contexts within different communities and their consumption culture, Tanya Abraham provides us with new ways of understanding the unique but varied and rich food culture of Kerala.



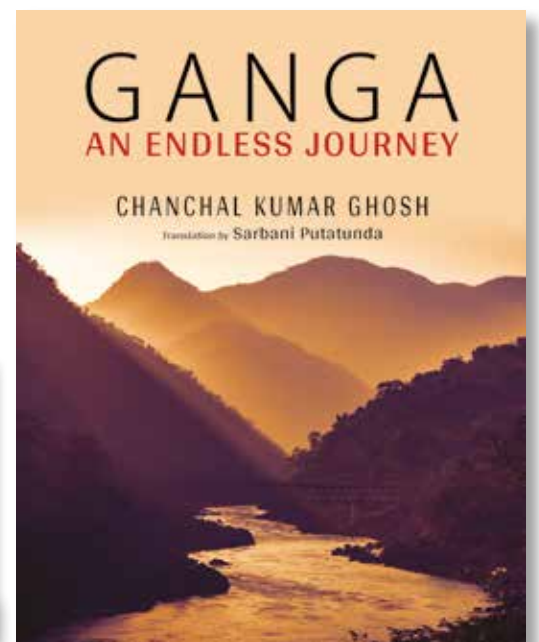
fiction

A fast-paced, suspenseful, action-packed, sci-fi thriller, *The Chronicler* is an amalgam of fact and fiction. Set in the immediate future, as Pakistan's economy collapses, China invades Pakistan and India undergoes terrorist attacks. It is the gripping story of 'the Chronicler' caught in the vortex of this high-stakes game between governments, spy agencies, and powerful organizations, harbouring someone else's memories aka information that nations would kill for.

The Gita presents the miniature paintings of the Gita by Allah Baksh, published for the first time, are from the late seventeenth century Mewar. Elucidated by Alok Bhalla's commentary on the relationship between the paintings and the verses of the Gita makes it a richly nuanced and imaginative work, where he challenges us to think about how artists have interpreted India's sacred texts in radically new ways. Along with this, Chandra Prakash Deval's fine translation of the Gita from Mewari into Hindi is a valuable addition to this fascinating book.



art



travel

A visually resplendent book, *Ganga* is a testimony to the sacred river Ganga, the cradle of Indian civilization. Chanchal Kumar Ghosh covers the length of this riverbank during his epic journey presenting the pulsating spiritual existence of Indian culture, thriving gloriously down the ages on the banks of the Ganga. Brimming with alluring photographs, it captures the vivid essence of India's culture, presenting the intrinsic spirit of the Ganga – the spirit of continuity, the spirit of love and reverence.



तोहफे में क्या दें?!

नब्बे के दशक का एक लोकप्रिय अमरीकी सिटकॉम है, साइनफेल्ड। कहानी एक हास्य कलाकार जेरी साइनफेल्ड, उनकी पूर्व प्रेमिका और दो दोस्तों के इर्द-गिर्द घूमती है। साइनफेल्ड का एक एपिसोड है, जिसमें पूर्व प्रेमिका का जन्मदिन आ रहा है; और जेरी व अन्य दोस्त उसे दिए जाने वाले तोहफे को लेकर उलझे हुए हैं। कोई भी तोहफा उन्हें इस उपलक्ष्य के अनुकूल नहीं लगता। थक-हारकर जेरी उसे एकसौ बयासी डॉलर के नोटों का बण्डल तोहफे में देता है। उनका दूसरा दोस्त उसे इक्यानवे डॉलर देता है, जेरी के दिए पैसों का बिलकुल आधा, ताकी संबंध का उल्लंघन न हो। ज़ाहिर है, वह इन तोहफों से खुश नहीं होती, बल्कि अपमानित महसूस करती है। इनका तीसरा दोस्त उसे गिफ्ट में एक मामूली-सा बेंच देता है, जिसकी उसे सचमुच ज़रूरत थी, और वह उसे गले लगा लेती है।

दोस्त-यार में पैसे देने का रिवाज़ अपने यहाँ भी नहीं है। लेकिन पैसे देने की प्रथा की सामाजिक अनुष्ठानों में धूम है। भारतीय मध्यवर्ग शादी-ब्याह व अन्य कार्यक्रमों में लिफाफे में पैसे भरकर या महुँगे तोहफे देने का आदी है। अगर सामाजिक स्तर पर तोहफे देना इतनी निरर्थक प्रथा है तो आखिर तोहफे क्यों दिए जाते हैं? फ्रांसीसी समाजशास्त्री मार्सेल मौस के मुताबिक, तोहफे हमेशा से हमारी सामाजिक व्यवस्था का हिस्सा रहे हैं। इनकी उत्पत्ति सामने वाले को और खुद को अच्छा महसूस करने की प्रवृत्ति से हुई थी। लेकिन अनुष्ठानों में तोहफा देने या लेने से मना कर देना हमेशा से संबंधों में युद्ध की स्थिति पैदा करता आया है।

कहावत है कि देने वाले का हाथ ऊँचा। तोहफा देकर हम किसी को यह तो जताते हैं कि हमें उसकी परवाह है, लेकिन जाने-अनजाने कहीं हम सम्बन्ध की कीमत भी लगाते हैं और एक प्रकार के ऋण की उत्पत्ति करते हैं। इस ऋण को चुकाना अनिवार्य हो जाता है। मौस के मुताबिक, अगर हम ऋण के अनुपात बेहद मामूली तोहफा लौटाएँ तो सम्बन्ध का अनादर होगा। वहीं अगर हम बेहद महुँगा तोहफा दें, तो भी सम्बन्ध का संतुलन बिगड़ जाएगा। अमरीकी मनोवैज्ञानिक बैरी श्वार्ज़ इस पर आगे कहते हैं कि तोहफों द्वारा निर्मित इस ऋण का लेन-देन समाज को तोड़ने के बजाए, इसे बनाए रखने का काम करता है।

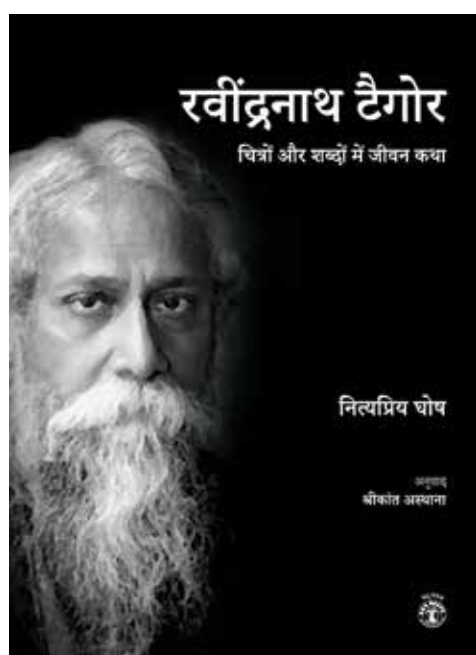
तो क्या तोहफा केवल एक संवेदनहीन सामाजिक करेंसी है? अगर ऐसा है तो साइनफेल्ड में दोस्तों के बीच तोहफे में पैसे देने पर खटास क्यों आती है? हमारी समझ से ऐसा इसलिए है कि दोस्ती में दोस्ती मायने रखती है, तोहफा नहीं। दोस्ती अथवा जिन संबंधों की हमें परवाह है, उनमें सामने वाले

को अपना समय और श्रम देना ही सबसे बड़ा तोहफा है। फिर चाहे वह कोई कविता लिखकर भेंट करना हो या अपने हाथों से बनाई कोई पेंटिंग या ग्रीटिंग कार्ड। ऐसा तोहफा, जो कह दे कि मुझे तुम्हारी परवाह है; और मैंने इसे दर्शाने के लिए श्रम किया है। मुझे प्रेमचंद की अजेय कहानी ईदगाह की याद आती है। मुझे ओ हेनरी की कहानी द गिफ्ट ऑफ मैगी याद आता है, जिसमें एक गरीब दम्पति एक दूसरे को क्रिसमस में तोहफा देना चाहते हैं, लेकिन उनके पैसे नहीं जुड़ रहे। पत्नी अपने बाल काटकर उन्हें बेच देती है, जिससे वह पति की घड़ी के लिए चेन खरीदती है। दूसरी ओर पति अपनी घड़ी बेचकर पत्नी के लिए सुन्दर कंधों का जोड़ा खरीद कर लाता है।

हम आज भी उपभोक्तावादी संस्कृति में जी रहे हैं। इसका सबसे बड़ा प्रमाण हमारे लोकप्रिय त्यौहार हैं। तोहफों के कारण ही ज़्यादातर त्यौहार लोकप्रिय हो गए हैं। दीपावली, रक्षा बंधन, क्रिसमस, वैलेंटाइन्स डे, मदर्स डे जैसे त्यौहार परंपरा और संवेदनाओं से परे माल सेलिब्रेशन का प्रतीक नज़र आते हैं। दूसरी ओर, वे त्यौहार जो त्याग की माँग करते हैं, जैसे – ईद, छठ या शिवरात्रि, अपना महत्व खोते जा रहे हैं। ये अपना धर्म मानने वालों के बीच सीमित रह गए हैं। ऐसे में अगर मैं अपने किसी प्रियजन या दोस्त को तोहफा देना चाहूँ तो मेरे पास क्या विकल्प बचता है?

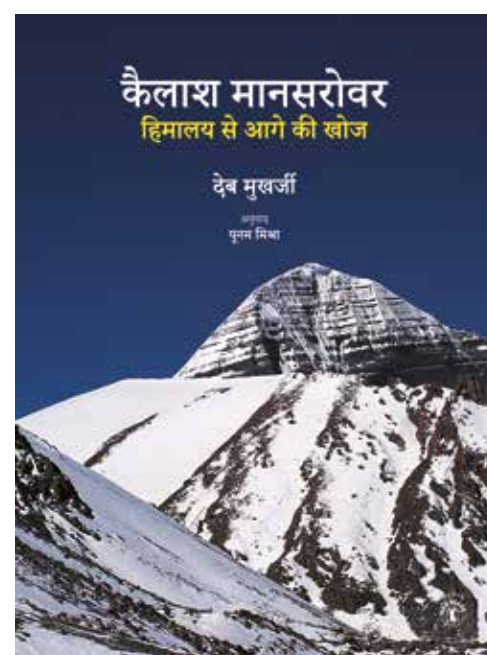
हमारी समझ से, किताबें ही अकेला ऐसा तोहफा हैं, जिनका चुनाव कई मायनों में किया जा सकता है। किताबों का जीवन कभी समाप्त नहीं होता। उन्हें पीढ़ियों तक पढ़ा जा सकता है। वे उपभोक्तावाद की बेड़ियों से आज़ाद हैं। एक अच्छी किताब चुनना मेरी ओर से समय और परिश्रम, दोनों की माँग करता है। यथासंभव किताब देने से पहले मैं उसे पढ़ना भी चाहूँगा और इसी आशा के साथ उसे भेंट भी करूँगा कि वह किताब को पढ़े। शायद मेरे दोस्त के प्रति यही मेरा फर्ज़ भी है। कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं कि पढ़ना कितना विलक्षण और शांतिदायक अनुभव है। पढ़ते हुए हम किसी और का जीवन जीते हैं और अपने जीवन से मुक्त होते हैं। हमारी समझ से कोई व्यक्ति ऐसा नहीं है, जो पढ़ना नहीं चाहता। ऐसे में, हम तोहफों में किताबों का चयन करें और कामना करें कि तोहफा लेने वालों को पढ़ने की फुरसत मिले और हमारी दोस्ती की घनिष्ठता भी किताबों के लंबे जीवन की तरह यूँ ही सालों-साल बरकरार रहे।

सौरभ राय
संस्थापक, बेंगलुरु रिव्यू



रवींद्रनाथ टैगोर चित्रों और शब्दों में जीवन कथा

नित्यप्रिय घोष द्वारा लिखित 'रवींद्रनाथ टैगोर: चित्रों और शब्दों में जीवन कथा,' एक ऐसी किताब है, जिसमें टैगोर से जुड़ी अनेक घटनाओं, चर्चाओं और मुद्दों का विस्तार से वर्णन किया गया है। साथ ही, इससे टैगोर को उनके काम को बेहतर तरीके से समझ पाने में मदद मिलती है। इसमें उन कारणों का भी वर्णन है, जिनकी वजह से टैगोर जाति, सिद्धांत या पंथ की सीमाओं के पार आज सबको प्रिय है।

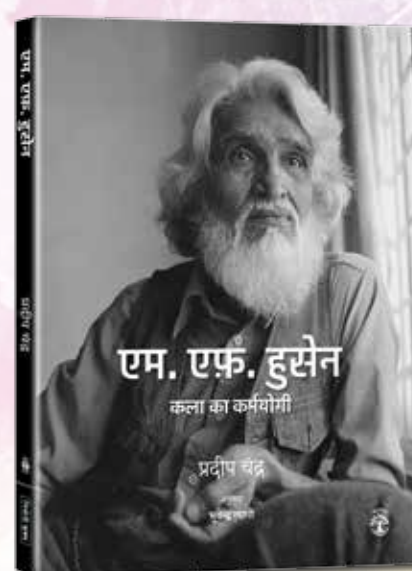


कैलाश मानसरोवर हिमालय से आगे की खोज

देब मुखर्जी द्वारा लिखित इस पुस्तक में पौराणिक कथाओं और सदियों के तीर्थयात्रियों के अनुभवों से खोज करके यह चित्रित किया गया है कि युगों से लोगों के लिए कैलाश का क्या महत्व है! कैसे इसका प्रभाव साहित्य एवं महानतम वास्तुकला में व्याप्त है! पुस्तक के अंतर्गत 21 वर्षों के अंतराल में की गई लेखक की तीन यात्राओं का विस्तृत विवरण है, जो भारत से पारंपरिक तीर्थयात्रा मार्ग लिपु दर्रे व तिब्बत पार में की गई। इसमें लगभग दो सौ चित्र भी संलग्न हैं।

धन्यवाद

PUBLISHING NEXT
the next chapter in publishing





A Novel Idea

There is an undeniable plethora of gift options available to us, from this to that, we are always trying to play creative, desperately doing something out of the box to gift our loved ones. Oscillating in between the obvious and the very unobvious stands books, the kind of gift which activates the channels of memories, moments and stories – all gushing in and waiting to be revisited, marked for being special. In our small attempt to highlight the practice of gifting books, we reached out to a few bibliophiles who understand its importance.

So join in this conversation through these hash tags and recount your memories and ideas on gifting books because 'tis the gifting season!

when you gift
a book; it is a gift
of a lifetime



Bhumika Popli
Journalist

#yourfirstbookgift

It was the copy of the children's magazine *Chakmak*. It was gifted by my maternal grandfather Hardarshan Sehgal, an author who writes in Hindi. I was in the third standard or so at that time. I remember as I was rummaging through some of the books of my grandfather in order to find something interesting to read, he came up to me with a freshly-delivered copy of the magazine at his residence. 'This is a children's magazine. Let me know if how you like it,' he said after handing me the copy. And I absolutely adored it. Rich in illustrations, the magazine is still around and is published from Bhopal. Informative in its content, the magazine includes drawings and poems among other writings by children themselves. Looking back, I feel that *Chakmak* skillfully brought interesting nuggets of information on critical topics such as migration, environment, inventions and more in an engaging format.

#myideaofgifting

I think about the personality of the person, I am gifting the book to. In my opinion, in this way, one will be delighted to read the book. If the person is a regular reader, it becomes all the more difficult to find the perfect book. One may have read the book before. In such a case, I prefer directly asking the person about his potential next buy.

#bookgiftprompts #awholenewworld

I feel when you gift a book, it is a gift of a lifetime. Unlike most other presents which come with an expiry date, a book stays with you forever. And so does the memory of the person who gifts the book. A book fills you with knowledge and it is good to gift such a present to people. The attractive cover and the promising language are the other two factors in a book which drives me to gift a particular book to someone. Last but not the least, I want the other person to experience a new world or another point of view through a book, hence this gift.



Shruti Sharma
Founder, Books on the Delhi Metro

#yourfirstbookgift

The first book gift that I received was *Malgudi Days*. It was a parting gift as I was leaving one school for admission in a different one. They were celebrating my achievements as a good scholar and had invited me for a small ceremony. I remember it vividly – just when my teacher handed me the gift-wrapped object, I sensed that it was a book and that put a wide smile on my face, enough for a good photo for the school's organize. I was 16 years old then and was fond of books, but never had one of my own. I used to read borrowed books from friends, from the library and my mom's school library. So, it was a huge thing for me – a book of my own!

#myideaofgifting

Most of my friends aren't book readers. So when I gift them a book, I just ask them what kind of stories they like – romance, thriller or crime, and their response is always very lukewarm. They are like 'Anything would do!' But deep down, I know that it wouldn't. Book reading is so much like finding a perfect partner for you. One wrong book and you are scarred for life. So, I pick books keeping in mind the personality of my friend. If I know that my friend is an impatient soul, I buy them short stories. If my friend is an avid reader, I buy them the hot new book in the market.

#bookgiftprompts #don'twaitforprompts #booksonthedelhimetro

In the past, prompts like 'I'm bored, what should I do?' or 'Suggest me something good to do with my time on the flight' have prompted me to gift books to my friends. But now, I don't wait for the prompts anymore. I just send books over to my friends and keep poking them till they read it. Also, Books on the Delhi Metro—which is a book sharing initiative in a way, also becomes a part of book gifting. So, by keeping free books on the Delhi Metro, we are initiating a culture of book reading and sharing where anyone and everyone can have access to books and they aren't restricted to just people who can afford to buy them.



Sanchit Gupta
Author, Screenwriter

#yourfirstbookgift

My first book gift was *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh. The book was gifted by my father when I was about 16 years old. The book had an indelible impression on me.

#myideaofgifting

The person I am gifting the book should enjoy what I am giving them. Accordingly, I would choose whether to go for fiction or non-fiction, and the subsequent genre. For example, my wife loves to read strategic management or non-fiction. Therefore, I would like to gift her a book like *33 Strategies of War* or *Thinking in Bets*. I would look out for something which she will find relevant and enjoy reading it.

#bookgiftprompts #agoodstoryisworthit

It's karma, no? If I gift good people good books, some good people will gift my book. Jokes aside, Netflix is anyways making people stream so much content, once you gift a book, it will make the same viewers pick up a book too. Any good story that moves me is worth living for. Books are one of ways of making it worthwhile.



Vikramjit Singh Rooprai
Heritage Activist, Educator, Author

#yourfirstbookgift

The earliest book I remember was a *DK Encyclopedia* about Airplanes. I used to love that book and even today, remember every plane described in it. Due to this, for me, it was an absolute honour when I was employed by Bertelsmann Group, the parent company of DK.

However, the most special book that touched me to the core was gifted to me just a few years back. It was a book written on the Sikh Heritage sites in Pakistan. When I was given that book, I could not find the courage to remove the shrink wrap. When I did, it was sheer nostalgia. I could recall all the painful stories of partition that my grandparents told. I brought that book to my grandmother and mother, who wept at every page. This is a book about our heritage, which Sikhs are no longer allowed to access. Most of the shrines and forts are in bad shape. My grandmother had few of her memories from pre-partitioned Punjab, which got triggered.

I realized books are not just papers bound with a spine. They are embodiment of emotions, knowledge, experience and imagination. They have the power to transport you to a different world, and make you live a different life.

#myideaofgiftingabook

I always try to understand the interest of the person, to whom I am gifting the book. Accordingly, I pick a title and hope, that it will bring some positive change in their life. There can be no better friend than a book, should one choose to accept it. I always hope that my gift helps that person to relax, learn new things and enjoy few moments of their life.

#bookgiftprompts #perfectbirthdayreturngifts

I can never find a better gift than a book. This year, at my daughter's birthday, we made sets of a few story books and gave that as return gifts. Every single parent called us and thanked multiple times. The parents' Whatsapp group that I am a part of, was flooded with praises, that it was the best return gift anyone has ever thought of. Through books a reader gets an opportunity to see the world through someone else's (writer's) vision. There is no better way to expand our thinking. For me, books should become the indispensable inclusion in any gift that is exchanged.



Mir Khubaib
Blogger

#yourfirstbookgift

I don't exactly remember the first book I got as a gift but growing up in the early 90s in a small town in India, even a second hand book that someone has decided to part with was something very special to get. I remember getting an Enid Blyton's *Noddy*. and I became obsessed with finding another title from the series.

Interestingly, the gift store back then had a books and posters section. So, I always used to go there and find some Disney or Asterix book. Once, I spotted a Noddy and I couldn't believe my luck, so I rushed to my uncle and asked him that I want Noddy books instead of any toy. He went ahead and bought all the 3-4 titles there were. They're still my most prized possessions. With online stores, the thrill of searching and joy of finding books in a bookstore are almost gone forever.

#myideaofgifting

Books can make great gifts. And books can be terrible gifts. It depends on how well you know the taste of the person you're gifting it to. The usual pitfall to avoid is to buy a book from the bestsellers list. So, for me, that's the most important to keep in mind while gifting someone a book: to know the person.

Buying books for non-readers is tricky. Instead of going for the books you've loved reading, think about their interests in say, sports, politics, travel or drama and buy the books in those genres. A well thought out book says a lot about how much you care for the person and how much effort you put in finding the 'perfect' book for them.

#bookgiftprompts #thebestgift

Gifting books to someone who reads makes a lot of sense. You can't gift them anything better. And if you're a reader yourself, you won't think beyond books when it comes to gifts. Books can make a great gift for new year, Christmas, birthdays, new job, pregnancy, childbirth, weddings or just another gift for your special one. Gifting a book says that you want someone to invest their time in something. When gifting a book, think about all the options. Apart from novels, you can gift books that would help them grow in some way or you can go for a coffee table book about something that interests them or you can go for a collector's edition of a classic.



Priyamvada
Managing Editor

#yourfirstbookgift

I am very fortunate to have grown up in a house full of books. Both my parents love reading and some of my earliest memories are of my parents reading aloud to me or telling me a story. The first book I may have received as a gift from my parents was a Ladybird book called 'Little Red Hen'. I believe I had memorised all the words in the book (there must have been just a few on each page) by listening intently, when they were read out to me, and then thought I could 'read', when I was just two years old.

#myideaofgifting

While gifting a book, I keep in mind the interests of the receiver. I think, 'Would they like to read this, or add it to their book collection?' For instance, I gift age-appropriate children's books, with a fun-learning aspect, to my young nephews and nieces. I have often gifted cookbooks to my mother, who likes to discover new recipes. I gifted an uncle with an interest in nature and plants *Flora of the Southern Western Ghats and Palnis*, which he enjoys reading and have gifted an aunt from Kerala *The Saga of Muziris* by Sethu.

It also feels special to gift a book that I have edited to friends or family members. For instance, I have gifted *The Legend of Kuldhara*, a historical novel set in Rajasthan, to many female friends who loved reading this historical romance. I gifted *A Tree with a Thousand Apples*, a novel set in Kashmir to my sister-in-law, who hails from the state, and *The Story of the Jodhpur Lancers*, a book that deals with the history of a heroic cavalry unit to my brother-in-law, who is an army officer. I find putting a little thought into what the receiver may like reading, makes a gift book extra special.

#bookgiftprompts #creatingabond

A book is a very special gift. When you gift a book, not only are you saying, 'I'd like you have this gift', you are also sharing the thoughts, knowledge or imagination of the author. A book gift can inspire, bring you closer to and create a lifelong bond with the recipient. In the words of the scientist and writer Carl Sagan, 'Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic.'





8 EVENTS



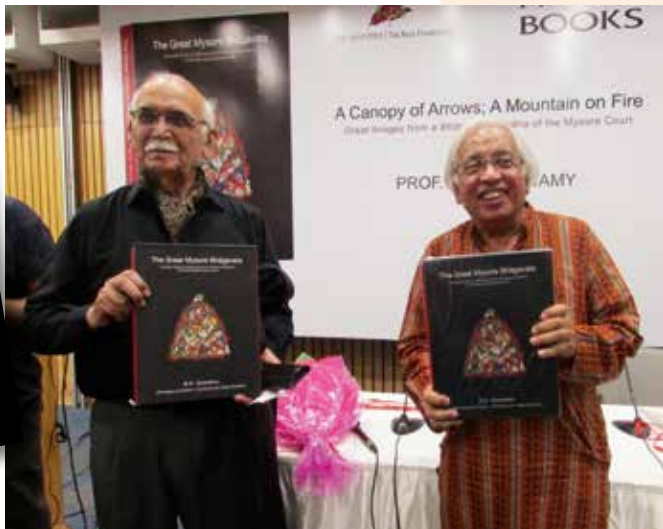
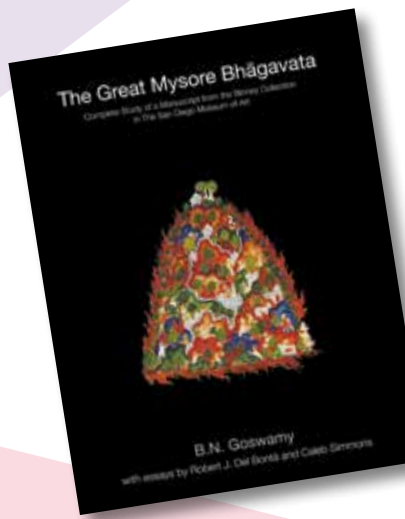
(L-R) Trisha De Niyogi, Sohail Hashmi, Narayani Gupta and Vikramjeet Singh Rooprai (author) at the book launch of Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Baolis at IIC, Delhi



A dance presentation 'Swashakt' on gender rights by Rama Vaidyanathan performed after the book launch



(L-R) Malashri Lal, N.N.Vohra, Renuka Narayanan and Meera Khanna (author) at the Book Launch of Breaking Paths at IIC, Delhi



(L-R) BN Goswamy and Ashok Vajpeyee at the Book Launch of The Great Mysore Bhagavata at IIC, Delhi



(L-R) Moderator Humair Ishtiaq, Senior Editor Daily Dawn, in discussion with Mansoor Khalid, Haroon Khalid (author), Ashaar Saeed, Sirajuddin Aziz, Javed Jabbar and Talat Hussain at the launch of Melody of a Tear, T2F, Karachi



IN REMEMBRANCE

*As we loved you, so we miss you;
In our memory you are near.*

An extraordinary artist, illustrator and author, Premola Ghose passed away on 8 July 2019. She was serving as the Chief, Programme Division, at the India International Centre, New Delhi. In 2001, she was decorated Dame in the civil merit honours list of the King of Spain. We are terribly pained to hear about her untimely demise. We will fondly remember her as a great supporter of Niyogi Books. We have also had the opportunity of associating with her for a book titled *The Kangra Valley Train*. May her soul rest in peace.

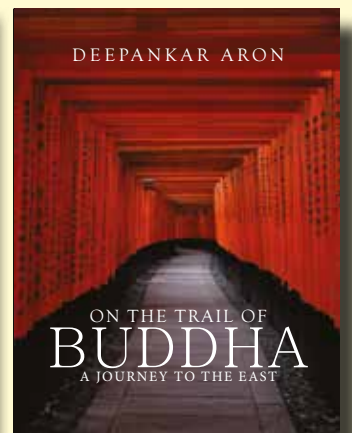
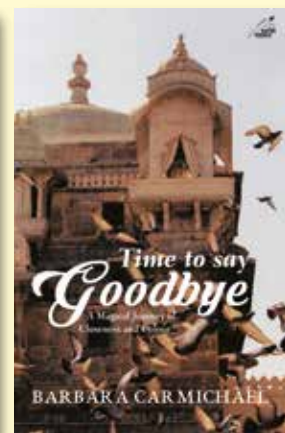
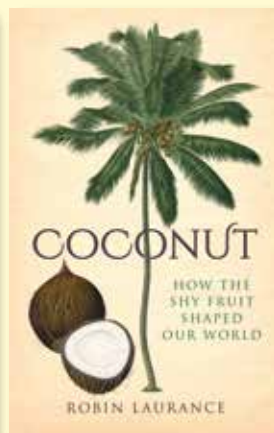
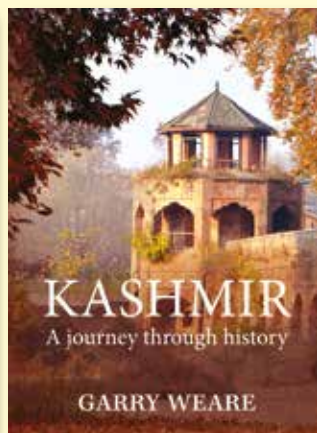
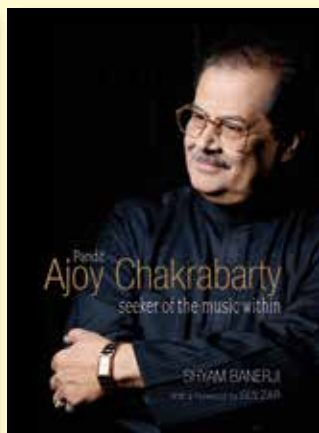
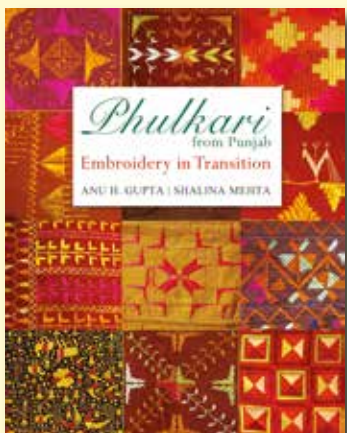


(L-R) Bikash D Niyogi, G.M. Kapur, Joanne Taylor and Andrew Ford at the book launch of The Churches of India at Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata



Anjan Mitra and author Joanne Taylor at the book discussion for The Churches of India at Starmark, Kolkata

FORTHCOMING TITLES



To subscribe, send an email to niyogibooks@gmail.com

OUR OVERSEAS PARTNERS

USA and
Canada



6 West 18th St., Suite 4B,
NYC, NY 10011,
Tel: 212 645 1111,
Email: sales@accdistribution.com

UK, Ireland and
Continental Europe



Shalimar Books Ltd.
38 Kennington Lane, London SE11 4LS, UK
Tel: +44 20 7735 2101
www.indianbooksuk.com / shalimarbooks@gmail.com

Printed & published by Bikash D Niyogi on behalf of Niyogi Books Pvt. Ltd., Block D, Building No. 77, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase I, New Delhi 110 020 and printed at Niyogi Offset Pvt. Ltd., D-78, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase I, New Delhi 110 020, India. Editor: Trisha De Niyogi. Ph: +(91)-(11)-26816301, 26818960, Fax: +(91)-(11)-26813830, Email: niyogibooks@gmail.com, Website: www.niyogibooksindia.com | Design© Niyogi Books Private Limited

Volume 11, Issue 4, October–December 2019