

READING CORNER

HISTORY | LITERATURE | ART | CULTURE | HERITAGE | BIOGRAPHY | TRAVELOGUE | WILDLIFE | RELIGION | SELF-HELP | FICTION | TRANSLATION

Kalinga Literary Festival

Literature from different parts of India complemented the regional literature of Odisha in the Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF), a two-day affair (18-19th June), at Mayfair Convention, Bhubaneswar.

This year, the central theme of the Kalinga Literary Festival was Literature and Democracy. The festival was inaugurated by Shri Debi Prasad Mishra, a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Odisha, in presence of Dr Subramanian Swamy, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha); Mani Shankar Aiyar, Senior Congress leader and Haraprasad Das, reputed Odia author. Dr Swamy in his keynote address generated enough heat and flame by declaring that while freedom of expression is a cherished right, the writers should exercise restraint in that freedom for the greater interest of the nation.

The two-day festival was divided into sixteen sessions which took up various themes for in-depth discussion. The sessions were interspersed with eleven book launches, which included *The Sun Temple of Konark*, written by Dr Anil Dey and published by Niyogi Books. The discussion sessions comprised such illuminating topics like 'Dialogue, Development and Democratic Spirit in Literature', 'Is Romanticism Dead in Contemporary Literature?', 'Readership Crises: Folk and Regional Literature', 'A Literary Journey of Kalinga: Contemporary Reflections', 'Literature as Performance: Script-writing for Films and Television', 'Performance for the Masses: Future of Alternative Theatre', 'The Role of Women throughout the Ages of Literature' and others.

Reputed poets, writers and intellectuals, cinema and theatre activists like Jayanta Mahapatra, Bibhuti Patnaik, Purushottam Agarwal, Arundhati Subramaniam, Satyanand Singh Nirupam, Jatin Naik, Paromita Satpathy, Nandini Sahoo, Sachidananda Mohanty, Arif Mohammad Khan, Seema Biswas, Rituparna Sengupta, Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, Subas Pani and others participated in the discussion sessions.

In a session titled 'Cultural Discourses from Odisha', three titles published by Niyogi Books, viz. *The Sun Temple of Konark* by Anil Dey, *In the Absence of Jagannatha* by Eberhard Fischer and Dinanath Pathy and *Gita Govinda and Odisha* by Dinanath Pathy and Bijaya Kumar Rath were taken up for discussion against the larger framework of Odia art and literature. The discussants were Subas Pani, Abasara Beuria and Santosh Mohanty and the session was moderated by Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee who concluded by saying that in Odisha cultural discourse always overlaps with religious discourse.

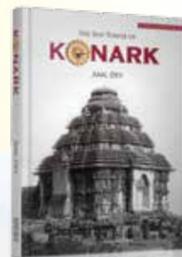
Niyogi Books also set up a stall at the festival venue to display a cross-section of its rich fare of books.

Right: Panel discussion, 'Cultural Discourses from Odisha': (L-R) Santosh Mohanty, Abasara Beuria, Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, Director Niyogi Books, and Subas Pani

Below: Launch of Anil Dey's book, *The Sun Temple of Konark* (Niyogi Books) at the inauguration of KLF 2016



Odisha on Niyogi Bookshelf



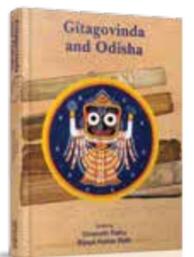
THE SUN TEMPLE OF KONARK by Anil Dey



CHITRAPOTHI: Illustrated Palm-Leaf Manuscripts from Orissa by JP Das



IN THE ABSENCE OF JAGANNATHA by Eberhard Fischer & Dinanath Pathy



GITA GOVINDA & ODISHA edited by Dinanath Pathy & Bijaya Kumar Rath

See page 2 for more details

Not all those who wander are lost...

These words of Tolkien, come back to me, time and again. But this time, as I walked on the blue carpet, across the organized sea of publishers, distributors, booksellers and other service providers, at the London Book Fair, I felt 'lost' and 'found' at the same time.

What had started out as an innocent query into printing a few of my favourite books, ended up in a burning desire to get immersed in the discipline of book development. The process, as I soon understood, required multi-disciplinary attention, and I am glad I am finally getting a chance to learn all about it.

For a new entrant like me, the London Book Fair was naturally a special experience. I furiously took in everything I could. I was happy to learn that the world of the illustrated large-format books, which I so love,

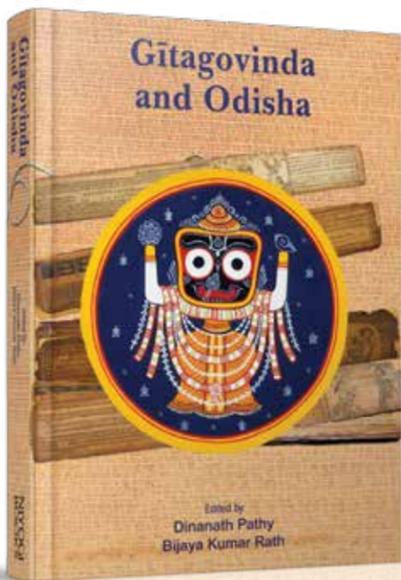
was still safe from being digitized. But unfortunately, with the shrinking display space, these books are not quite visible anymore. The algorithm involved with the distribution of any book being directly proportional to the number of copies sold, the large-format glossy books tend to lose out on that count too. Despite the content, quality and the credibility of the author, these visually intense and richly researched books stay beyond the radar of the general public. At such a crossroads, book fairs and lit fests play a vital role in displaying such books, regenerating the reader's interest in this treasure trove.

Trisha De Niyogi



(Above) L-R: Trisha De Niyogi with Anisha Burman and Leslie K. Mwambazi, authors of *Volutionism*, and Philip Grant at the LBF 2016
(Below) Bikash D. Niyogi at the LBF 2016

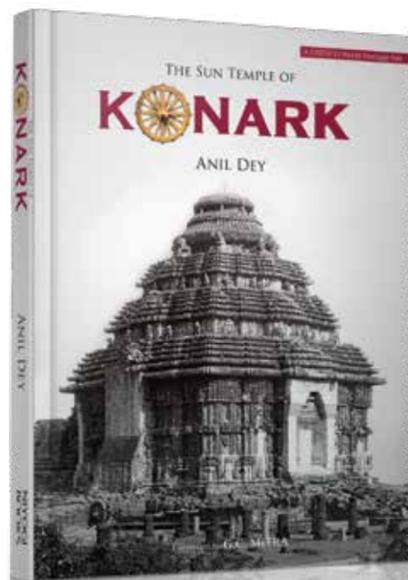




Gītagovinda and Odisha

This book appreciates the *Gītagovinda* from the perspective of the cultural traditions of Odisha. Here readers will find facts, arguments and postulations related to the history, legends, paintings, sculptures, textiles, music, dance, literature and poetry of a living tradition.

DINANATH PATHY is a practising painter, cultural historian and creative writer. He has published sixty books in English, German and Odia. Some of these have been written in collaboration with Dr Eberhard Fischer. He has exhibited extensively in India and abroad and held important positions.



THE SUN TEMPLE OF KONARK

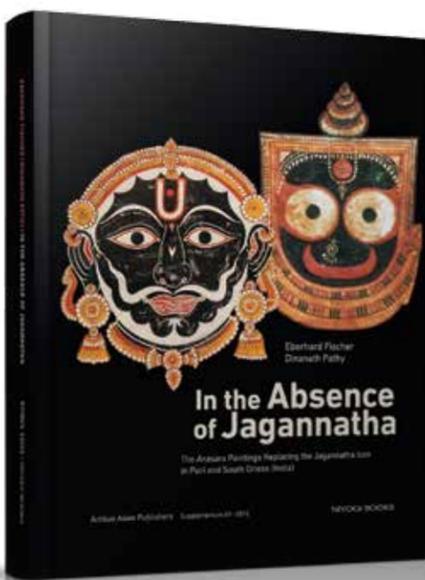
Historical evidences are scant and scattered. Historians have tried to fill the voids with legends. Though legends are not evidence per se, they do carry a seed of truth somewhere. The lost engineering techniques of several great temples have not received the importance they deserve. This is true for Konark too. In *The Sun Temple of Konark*, the author attempts to separate chaff from grain utilising scientific tools and methodologies.

The Sun Temple has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is considered one of the seven wonders of India. This seminal volume is the result of extensive research by the author into not only the history and legends related to the temple, but also the legends on the temple. An engineer and architect by profession, the author examines the architecture and engineering of the temple in great detail. He questions several of the established theories regarding construction in its various stages and forwards his own theories with reasonable conviction.

The great architect of Konark... believed that, powered by solar grace, the united journey of man and woman in their bodily chariot, rolls on and on through days, months, and years to eternity, and that this is Amruta



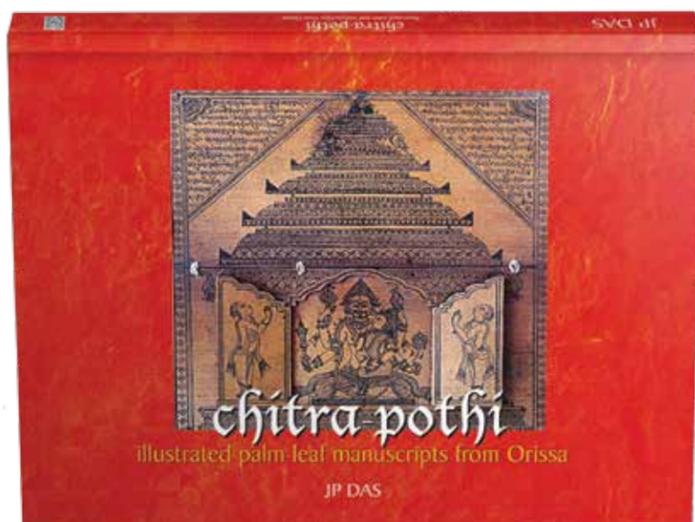
ANIL DEY, an engineer by profession, undertakes studies on temples in Odisha, which is his passion and has spent over 60 years in this activity. This book is the result of a long and arduous study. An avid traveller in the Himalayas, he has to his credit five travelogues, a number of short stories and articles.



In the Absence of Jagannatha

This 'micro art history study' documents in its first part all known samples of *anasara* pati-paintings, i.e. annually produced pictures on cloth, which serve as temporary replacements for the then absent wooden icons in the temples of Lord Jagannatha in Puri and south Orissa.

EBERHARD FISCHER is an art historian and cultural anthropologist. Till recently he was the Director of the Museum Rietberg Zurich. He has written extensively on the craft traditions of India from Gujarat to Orissa, Himachal Pradesh to Kerala.

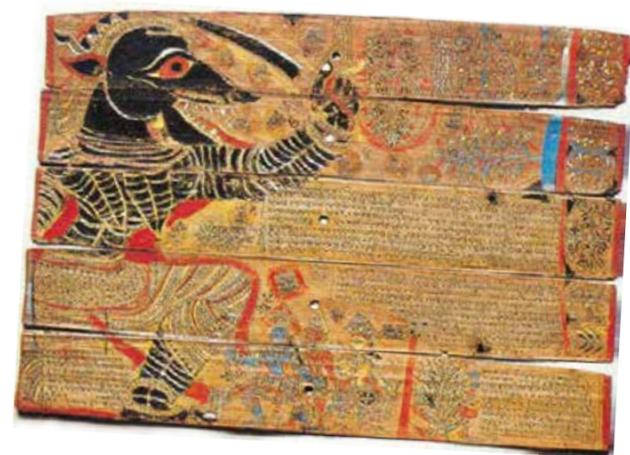


CHITRA POTHI: ILLUSTRATED PALM-LEAF MANUSCRIPTS FROM ORISSA

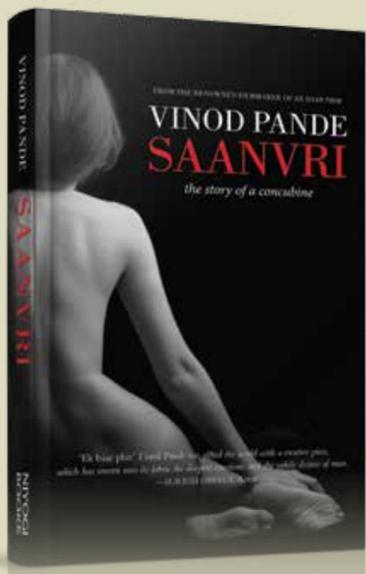
This book traces an important but little-known art form of Odisha that practices illustration on palm-leaf and goes on to analyse it for its illumination of text as an art form.

This art form flourished along with the Odishan tradition of copying *kavya* texts on palm-leaf manuscripts and illuminating them. It touched its zenith during the golden age of Odia *kavya* literature in the 18th century.

The palm-leaf tradition of Odisha and the development of Odia literature, which provides the basis of palm-leaf art, throws light on the making of the *chitra pothis* and also the nature of the texts that were illustrated, weaving into its larger canvas the patron, the scribe and the artist.



JP DAS is a well-known poet, playwright and fiction writer whose *Puri Paintings* continue to be a masterly volume on Odishan art. He has also co-authored *Palm-leaf Miniatures: The Art of Raghunath Prusti of Orissa* with Professor Joanna Williams.



SAANVRI by Vinod Pande

The story of a woman who learns to use the wanton carnality in men, both as a means of material gratification and a weapon for ascendancy, against her detractors in society. It is also about the three most important men in her life—the one she married, the one she loved and the one she chose to manipulate with unbridled impudence—paving the way for her unique transformation.

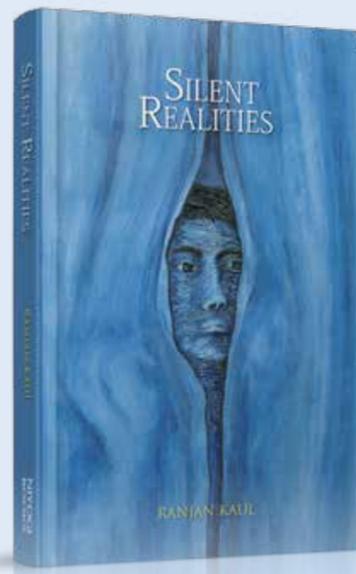


Q. Your movies and writings explore complex human relationships, emerging out of deep sexual tension and human frailty... Comment.

A. Aren't we all, what it is... We, especially, the ones inhabiting the metropolitan space have changed drastically from what we were a mere two decades back. Chastity, physical inviolability and faithfulness in marital relationships are no longer the virtues that cannot be interfered with. But that brings dilemmas, conflicts of emotions and crisis of conscience, which make an intoxicating potion for a creative person, to explore through different mediums. I suppose I am no exception.

Q. Unapologetically bold, sexually explicit, Saanvri is also a deep study in the evolution of a timid nati to a powerful concubine... Comment

A. What I had shown thirty-seven years ago in my first film, *Ek Bar Phir*, was a modern married Indian woman questioning the validity of her relationship in a pharisaical marriage. It was path-breaking for that time and was heralded as such. Similar was the case in my first novel, *Don's Wife*. This time I wanted to go beyond. Instead of being a 'play thing', I wanted her to become a 'player', transforming herself from being 'exploited' to becoming an 'exploiter' in the men's world. I wanted her to become the Shakti, who would retain her moral chastity even when wantonly using her sexuality as a weapon in the midst of sexual prurience of the lusty men. Again, if I may say, it's not completely incoherent with the time we live in. There are many women characters in this book and they come in all shades: weak, ignorant, ruthless, passionate, ambitious, strong, compassionate, but above all, human.



SILENT REALITIES by Ranjan Kaul

A collection of ten stories exploring the unspoken dimensions of human experience, moving fluidly across the real, the seemingly unreal and the magical. Mostly located in Delhi, they give expression to the silent insecurities and aspirations of its myriad characters, living in an ever-changing, multi-layered society.



Q. What was your motivation to write the stories in Silent Realities?

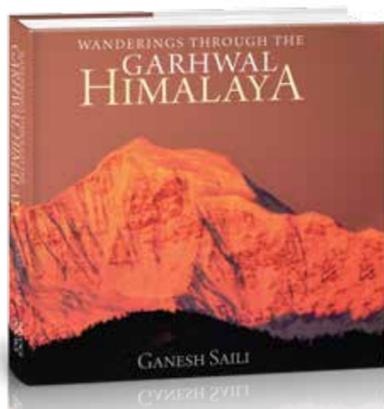
A. Through my stories I wish to draw attention to the less fortunate people around us, who will not tell their story on their own. I give voice and expression to them, so that the readers are able to empathise with them; get a deeper insight of their psyche, their dreams and aspirations and impulses; understand their emotions and feelings.

Q. In your stories, there is an acute sense of observation. How are you able to achieve this?

A. Somewhere, over the years of working as an editor, and my weekend pursuits of drawing and painting, I must have developed an eye for detail and a keen sense of observation. These came in handy while writing my stories.

Q. Tell us a little about the magical and unreal elements in your stories.

A. When writing about the less fortunate and their humdrum existence, I wanted to inject a sense of drama to make those who seem ordinary appear extraordinary, to make the readers sit up and take notice of them. I am, of course, not the first writer to do this. There has been a tradition of using magical elements in much of Latin American literature. The foremost exponent being Gabriel Garcia Marquez, apart from many contemporary writers like Salman Rushdie, and closer home, Urdu writers such as Intezar Husain and Naiyer Masud. Sometimes what goes on in one's mind at the subliminal level is more real than what is seen outwardly. These 'unreal' elements allow me to fully explore the inner workings of the mind, the dreams, aspirations, impulses of the characters—why people behave the way they do. These 'untruths' are more telling; they reveal the underlying truth.



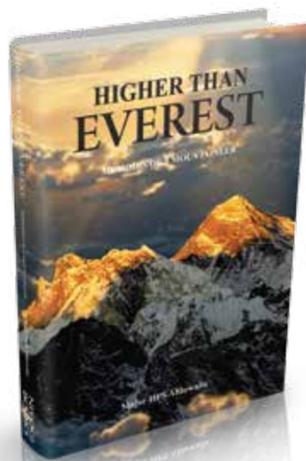
TRAVEL

Wanderings Through The Garhwal Himalaya

by Ganesh Saili

A delightful collection of introspective essays on the Garhwal Himalaya and life around it. The author draws from his memories of being brought up in the mountains; pictures that linger like a waft of sweet perfume on a breezy afternoon.

GANESH SAILI was born in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand and has written extensively about the mesmerising beauty of the Himalayas.



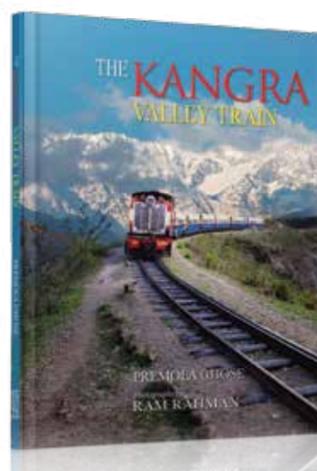
MEMOIR

Higher Than Everest Memoirs of Mountaineer

by Major HPS Ahluwalia

The inspiring true story of one of India's most iconic mountaineers—Major HPS Ahluwalia, who was the member of India's first successful expedition to Everest. But the story does not end with this spectacular achievement. In fact, this is where the real story begins—in the struggle to climb Everest.

MAJOR HPS AHLUWALIA during his distinguished career has made immense contributions in the fields of adventure.



HERITAGE/TRAVEL

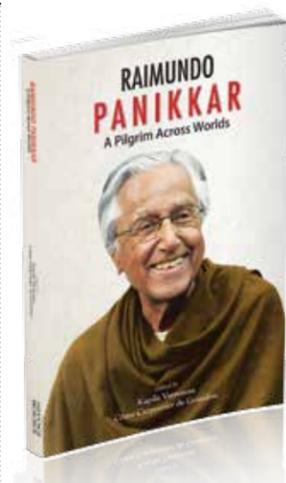
The Kangra Valley Train

by Premola Ghose

Photography by Ram Rahman

The Kangra Valley rail is a wonderful way to explore the rustic charms of Kangra in Himachal Pradesh. The journey from Pathankot to Joginder Nagar takes almost 8 hours, following the line of the snow-clad Dhauladhars, through landscapes that move from the sub-tropical to the alpine, through time and history.

PREMOLA GHOSE is an artist and illustrator. Two of her books, written and illustrated by her, have been published in 1998.



SPIRITUALITY

Raimundo Panikkar A Pilgrim Across Worlds

by Kapila Vatsyayan & Côme Carpentier de Gourdon

An unconventional thinker, who infringed on many dogmas and prejudices. His intellectual development between the East and the West allowed him to reflect on a continuing philosophical dialogue among different traditions and ideologies. His thought suggests a vision of harmony and concord.

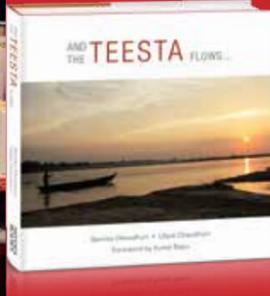
KAPILA VATSYAYAN is a renowned art historian and Chairperson of IIC-Asia Project, and awarded the Padma Vibushan.

SNIPPETS



Left to right: Hiran Mitra, Debes Ray, Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, Samita Chaudhuri, Indrani Sen, Kunal Basu and Utpal Chaudhuri

Eminent writers and musicians at the book launch of *And the Teesta Flows* at Starmark, South City Mall, Kolkata on 15 March 2016.



Rest In Peace



Ram Advani

Born in 1920 in Karachi in a Sindhi Amil family of Khudabad, Ram Advani was an iconic bookseller. His store in Hazratganj is a famous literary landmark of Lucknow and is flocked by doyens and rookies alike. He died in Lucknow on 9 March 2016.



Suresh Kohli

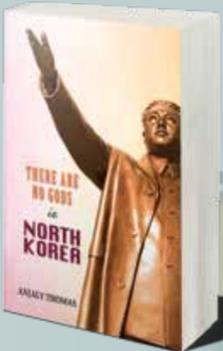
Born in 1947, Suresh Kohli was a multifaceted personality, a film maker, a poet, writer, translator, editor, literary critic and film historian with more than thirty-five published works. He passed away in Delhi on 23rd March 2016.



K.N. Panicker

Born in 1928, Sangeet Natak Akademi and Padma Bhushan awardee, Panicker was an Indian dramatist, theatre director and poet. He died on 26 June 2016.

Book Launch of *There are No Gods in North Korea* at India International Centre, New Delhi on 6 May 2016.

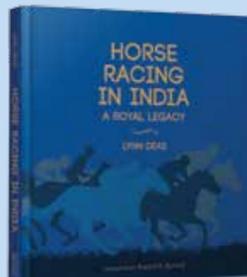


Left to right: Neha Dara, Deputy Editor, *National Geographic Traveller*, Author Anjali Thomas and Sesh Seshadri, General Manager and Director, *Lonely Planet India*



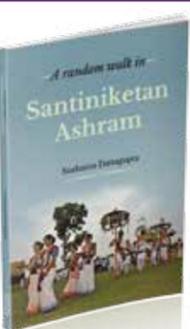
(L-R) Mr. Pheroze Vakil; Mr. Champaklal Zaveri; Mr. Vivek Jain; Author Ms. Lynn Deas; Mr. Zavaray Poonawalla, Chairman, R.W.I.T.C. Ltd & Mr. Gulam Vahanvati

Members of the committee of the Royal Western India Turf Club Ltd, at the Book Launch of *Horse Racing in India: A Royal Legacy* on 17 April 2016 at Mahalaxmi race course, Mumbai.



FORTHCOMING BOOKS

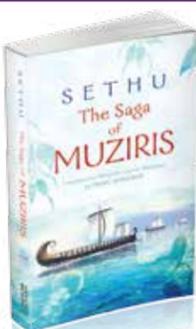
ESSAY
EDUCATION



A Random Walk in Santiniketan Ashram

Showcases the overarching ideals that formed the foundation of Visva-Bharati.

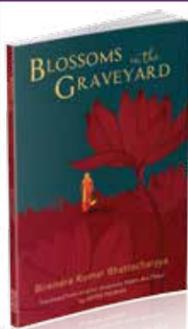
FICTION
TRANSLATION



The Saga of Muziris

Combines history, myths, legends and fiction in the most magical and mesmerising way.

FICTION
TRANSLATION



Blossoms in the Graveyard

Articulates a girl's journey from dependence to self-reliance, both emotionally and physically.

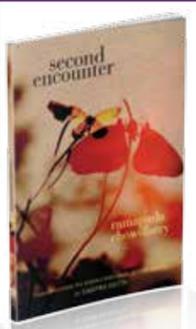
ESSAY
THEATRE



Nari Bhav

Engages in conversations with performers revealing how female impersonation has gained currency.

FICTION
TRANSLATION



Second Encounter

Delves deep into the intricacies of the concept of lost love in the face of impulse and reason.

OUR OVERSEAS PARTNERS

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