



## **BMM Yuva Vani Newsletter February 2022**

**Welcome** all readers to Yuva Vani's February 2022 Edition.

In this edition our young talents have shared some personal experiences and stories. **Thank you writers for your contributions!**

We hope you will enjoy their work.

Yuva Vani team encourages the writers as well as our readers. Thus , **Quote for the Month** - The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you will learn, the more places you'll go - Dr. Seuss

Your comments and feedback to our young writers will be highly appreciated. Also, if you wish to contribute to upcoming monthly editions please feel free to whatsapp -

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Enjoy Reading !



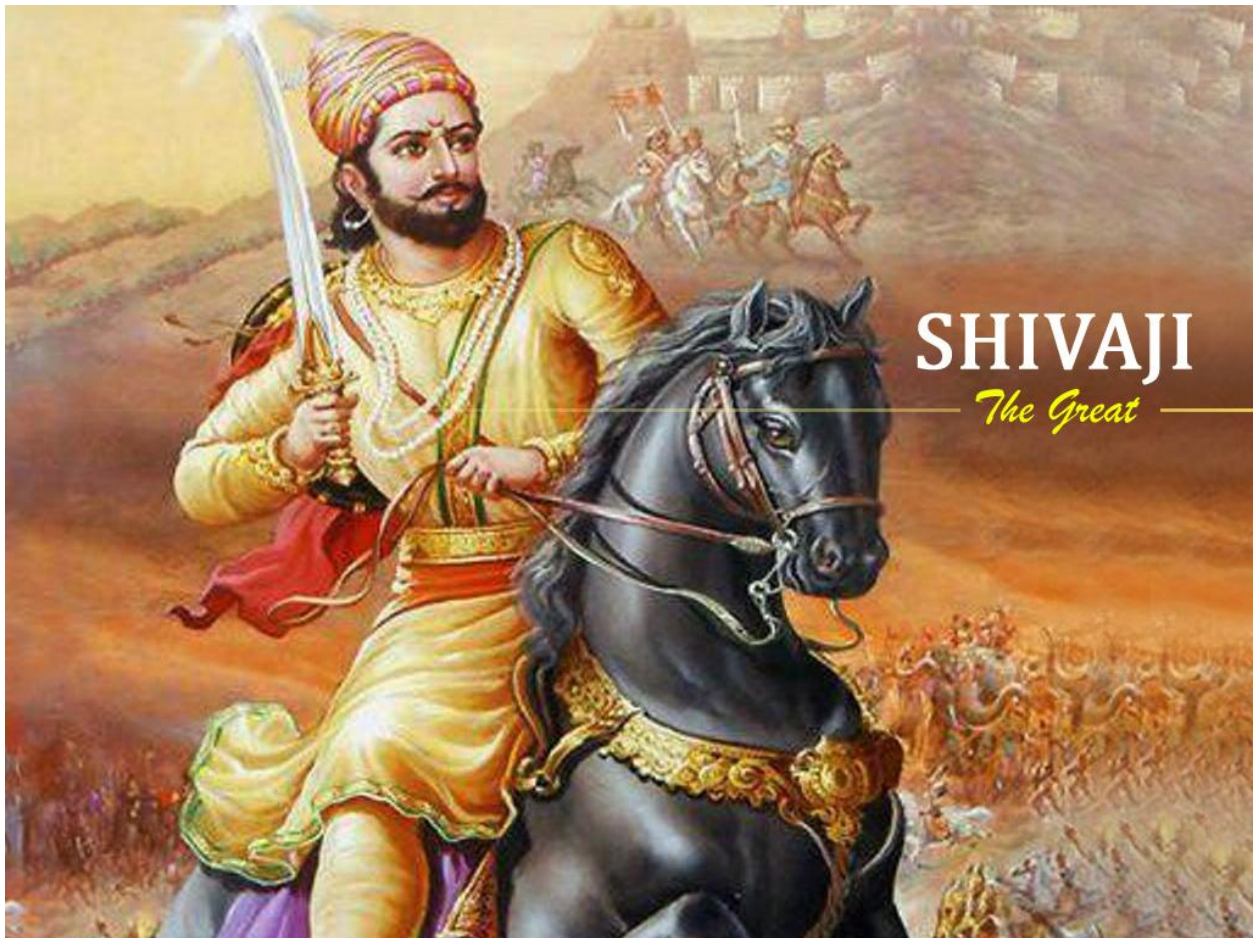
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## Shiv Jayanti Wishes from BMM Yuva Vani Team !

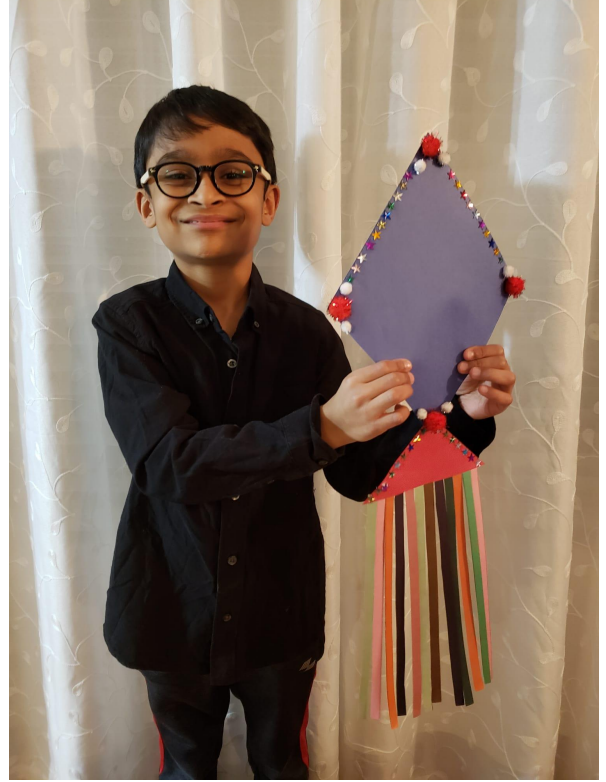
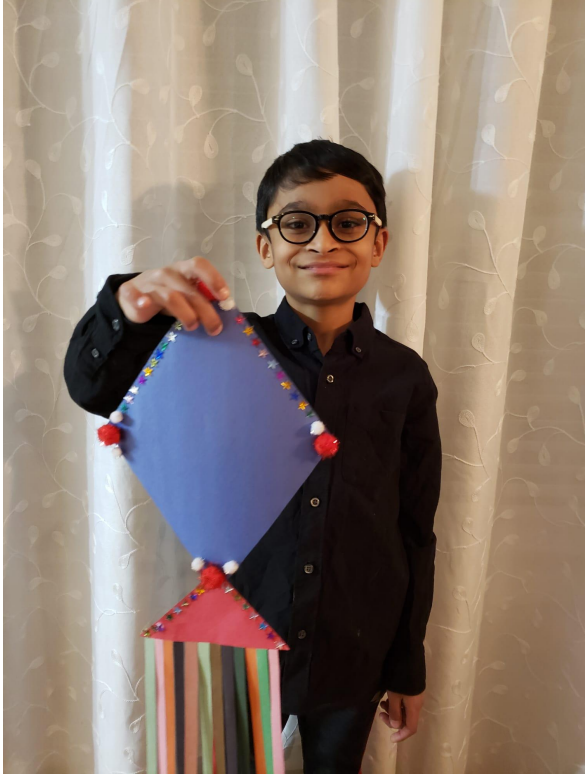
Be Strong Like Him , Be Courageous Like Him , Be an Inspiration Like Him!





## **Makar Sankrat**

By Shivansh Mankar



Hello , My name is Shivansh Mankar , I am a Chicago Marathi Vidya Mandir student. I want to share my writing about Makar Sankrant in Marathi. Hope you like it.

Thanks for reading !





## सकर संक्रांत

सकर रात्रीतून सूर्य दुसऱ्या  
रात्रीमध्ये प्रवेश करतो त्याला  
सकर संक्रांत म्हणतात. शंडीमध्ये  
दुशीशाला उष्ण आणि स्निग्ध  
पदार्थांची गरज असल्यामुळे  
यावेळी 'तिकमळ वाटतात.' 'तिकमळ ध्या'  
आणि 'गोड गोड होतात.' असं प्रमाने  
म्हणतात. | या सणाला काक्या

रंगाचे कपडे परिधान करतात.

कहान मुलांना हळव्याचे दागिने  
धाकतात. | या सणाला पतंग

ऊडवतात. सला पतंग ऊडवणे फार  
आवडते. मी अमेरिकेत दर  
उन्हाळ्यात पतंग ऊडवतो. |



## Happiness

By Ridhi Bhagwat



**Happiness.** Presumably, many of us have had the pleasure of experiencing it. It is that feeling of ecstasy, joy and pleasure that makes us feel at our best and brings us the euphoria that makes life so worthwhile.

My journey with volunteering began with the search to help the community around me, but it has grown into something much bigger; it has become part of my life and created a world of happiness and love that continues to inspire me day by day.

I have always prided myself in doing what makes me happy and what brings out my passion rather than simply doing things that are required of me.

It is with that mindset that I undertook my first ever volunteer experience at the local library in the summer before my eighth grade. With a love for reading from a young age, I had always participated in every summer reading program I possibly could. That summer was when I decided to give back to the community and help out in order to spread that same happiness for reading amongst others as well.

That experience was the first ever volunteering opportunity I had taken part in outside of my school and I had genuinely enjoyed it. Little did I know it then, but that spark from that first experience would send me on a special journey.



As I entered high school the following year, my passion to give back to others around me began to grow. I participated in numerous different opportunities through my school as well as through organizations outside of my school. One such notable experience was an opportunity that my high school hosts every year. For this annual event, I was a classroom leader for one of my classes and I raised money to buy gifts for those in impoverished communities in order to provide for their needs throughout the holidays.

This was yet another opportunity where I was genuinely so gratified in just knowing what a great deed was being done and seeing the outcome of all our hard work on delivery day reassured me that the feeling of happiness was reaching these families as well.

With the rise of this pandemic, however, happiness has become somewhat rare among recent events. Even I found myself persevering to make changes, adapt and accept reality whilst moving on with a positive mindset. As a result, I began an initiative to spread this positivity not only in myself and my family, but for our community and beyond.

With a mission to motivate and foster a positive mindset within the next generation, I began trying to create a small impact such as making cards as motivation and support for first responders in these difficult times. I held a session for elementary school kids and taught them small drawings and how to make cards for this initiative. After some successful endeavors in spreading my message, these cards were being created across different states and countries. Through this process, some of my peers joined me and we began collaborating and spreading this positivity. Near the end of July, I was inspired to promote our message and mindset through workshops as well.

I am very thankful to have received this platform because of both, the





wonderful opportunity, as well as the immeasurable experiences and memories. Despite the obstacles that we encountered throughout the workshop, we were able to overcome them swiftly and continue our workshops smoothly thanks to the wonderful support we had from our parents and peers. We led a six-session workshop with various topics including healthy lifestyle, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) application in positivity, and presentational skills as a part of personality development. I genuinely feel that through these sessions I shared a special bond with each and every one of the participants.

Spreading this positivity has been such a great experience and seeing children learn and grow from their sessions and begin to see new perspectives was very gratifying and these memories are some that I will forever be grateful for. I truly feel that throughout this involvement, happiness is something that was gained by both these students as well as myself.

While I was spreading my positivity initiative, I had also participated in two other major voluntary service experiences. One of these was through a foundation known as US Kids for Water. Through them, I connected with students in rural Maharashtra in India and I have been teaching these three students spoken English for almost a year now. These three students, although it may not seem like much at first glance, have created such a positive experience in my life. Teaching them every week has given me experience with how to talk so students can learn and also left me thankful after every session to have such wonderful opportunities. I have grown to be more grateful and there have been many instances where I have been proudly able to say that those three are my students just by how much they have improved since last year. Every week, they are very enthusiastic to learn and their enthusiasm fuels my motivation to keep making a difference.

Another experience I have been a part of through the past year has been





HSS, or Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh. HSS is a voluntary non-profit organization that strives to promote strong values and morals amongst its members. I have been very involved with HSS and I helped found the first ‘Kishore Shakha’ for the Midwest region, which is essentially a group of kishores, or teenagers eighth grade and up, who come together every week for a shakha in which I, along with other kishore karyakartas (volunteers) take physical, mental and social activities in order to practice our dharma and give back to the community by bringing the joy of these activities, such as yoga, meditation and discussions, to others as well. It is through HSS that I worked with SEWA International for various projects such as SEWA Diwali and the Dharma Internship Program.

With all of these experiences, I have begun an initiative, GenSpire, which is intended to promote equal access to opportunities regardless of race, gender, region, and socioeconomic status. Our motto, ‘Inspirations Across Generations’, is formed around our aim to create connections across the globe and between generations to form a more inclusive and connected society in the modern world.

We are currently hosting a writing contest based on the theme of technology and winning submissions will receive international recognition on a platform created in collaboration with a youth conference at the United Nations. More information regarding our new initiative can be found at [www.genspire.org](http://www.genspire.org).

All of the opportunities I have had have reflected my passion and spirit for selfless service for humanity and I hope to continue in this path in the future as well.

I believe that if anyone wants to earn any level of awards and recognition in any field, whether it be volunteering or otherwise, they must focus first on love and happiness within.



Cultivating your passion for your own happiness is what makes these experiences worthwhile and builds your personality.

Letting one's inner true voice shine through is the way through which that passion and motivation comes to be.

Happiness is the most important, and through volunteering efforts, I have found that what I have gained most of all is the happiness within and that happiness is what I hope to share with those who I strive to impact.

After all, it is the feeling of ecstasy, joy and pleasure that upholds the most beautiful moments in life.



## My Grandfather - Person of the Year

By Shlok Deshpande



‘Person Of The Year’ is someone who has made a significant impact in your world during the year 2021. This was a topic given to me in my school and I thought who could that person be?

Well, none other than my grandfather who has had a significant impact on my life and much more.

My grandfather, Chandrashekhar Pralhad Deshpande should win the Person Of The Year award because he has overcome a lot of obstacles in his life and has become successful in supporting a family.

To begin, my grandfather was born on February 13, 1950. He was born on a farm in India in small village Mardi , Maharashtra , India . He was the youngest of six children. For education the family moved to Nagpur , India. My grandpa overcame many obstacles in his life, such as growing up on a farm with no electricity and with five siblings.

My grandfather decided to start a business at age of 21 and became successful as an adult. He worked very hard and because of this, he could buy a beautiful big house to live in with my grandmother, father and aunt and provide them with all the luxuries. Not only did he give a good living but good values too to his kids which he inherited from his father (my great grandfather) who was a proud freedom fighter.



When my dad moved to America with my mom, my grandparents, and my aunt continued to live in India. Now my grandfather is retired and leads a happy and content life. He is one of the main reasons my family and I have such a privileged life: going to good schools, having three meals a day, and good values.

My grandfather inspires me because he worked hard and became successful despite his humble beginnings.

In addition, he inspires me because he is always happy and kind, and through all his hard work, he made many lifelong friends. Though he worked hard, he made time for fun, and I admire that. He is always as happy as a king, and he is not a workaholic and always makes time for his family.

My grandfather also cares for his siblings and their families. He is the glue that holds the entire Deshpande family together. He is available for everyone all the time.

Without a doubt, my grandfather is a great person and an inspiration because he worked hard all of his life, made lifelong friends along the way and maintained all his relations. I love, admire and respect him for all he has done and he does. The person of the year award definitely goes to him!





**26th January Republic Day**

Art By Vaishali Shinde





## Mystery at Miri

By Pushkar Kulkarni



As all mystery stories go... this mystery has got its origins in a dark night with thundering and rain wrecking havoc. The deafening thunder was followed by a loud cracking sound on the horizon and suddenly the entire village of Miri was plunged into darkness. As with all other mysteries, the eerie silence was broken by a loud shriek most likely from my sister Ginny. Ginny is short for Sarojini. Apparently, she was named after my great grandmother who was a popular vocal artist of her generation. Ginny though has only mastered the talent for shrieking in a voice that could be compared to the thunder outside.

There was a flurry of action across the house. Grandpa Vithal was calling out for grandma asking to light a candle. Dad could be heard walking hurriedly down the stairs trying to search for the torchlight. Mom could be heard searching for the gas lighter. You could hear an occasional thud and bang made by utensils hitting each other.

You must be wondering how come this commotion does not send a shiver down the neck of a 12-year-old. Well not me. I like adventures. Who would have thought that today's events would spiral into an age-old mystery quest?



When the thunder took out the electricity, I simply pulled out my iPhone and turned on the flashlight. Then I chose to walk down calmly in the ongoing chaos. I was immediately greeted by Cherry, our very eager golden retriever. Cherry walked into grandpa's house when he was a baby. He was hungry and tired. Grandma took one look at the cute ball of fur with a cherry for the nose and decided to keep him. Cherry was always merry. He loved to be around family. Thunder scared him and he instantly jumped on me asking me to pick him up. I grabbed him and walked to the sofa in the living room.

Grandpa was already sitting in his rocking chair. Grandma walked up and said "Shree, good idea of switching on the phone flashlight." Granny is very fond of me, and I always get praise from her. Ginny too descended downstairs and plopped herself next to me on the sofa. A few chaotic minutes later we had some candlelight in our house. Mom got back to the kitchen to get our food ready, dad found a bunch of candles which he was placing all over the farmhouse to make sure there was ample light in each room. I heard grandma say softly "oh god, I hope it is not happening again" as she looked at grandpa. Grandpa just shook his head as if asking her to keep quiet. To my inquisitive mind it was like walking in a toy store. I was about to ask what that conversation was about when we got called for a family candlelit dinner in our 200-year-old farmhouse.

Let me walk you through a brief history lesson of our family. My great great great grandfather was a high-ranking office holder for the Peshwas. In those days, for your fabulous work, you got rewarded with land that could fit in multiple towns. Miri is one of the many villages which were bestowed upon my family. They had many places to build a home, but they chose this village as it was the place visited by many great saints of the time. A land of mystery and mystics is what Miri is all about. Every house has experienced a miracle or has a history with mystery in it. There are relics that date back to the 12th century.





You must be wondering why the family history lesson. It is necessary because therein lies the reason for the mystery.

We had a fun filled candlelit dinner. Dad was making shadow creatures for Ginny and me. Mom and grandma were discussing the age-old recipes. Grandpa was silent. He is a very fun-loving jolly person. I have never seen him worried. We helped with cleaning up and went to the living room to enjoy some family time. I sat next to grandpa as my mind was racing. What was the suspense of those words? “Grandpa, you had said you will give me anything I ask for if I do not use my phone thru the day.” A smile spread across his face and he said “Yes dear Shreeniwas. What do you want? Let me guess.. A Rubik's cube? A jigsaw puzzle?” Me: “No. I want something else that only you can give” Grandpa: “interesting... what can it be” Me: “first you have to promise you will share” He looked at me and said “I promise.” “I want you to tell me what you and grandma think is happening again” I said. He looked at me very surprised. He opened his mouth to say something to brush it off when another loud clapping of thunder made the rounds on the horizon.

It looked as though I had the attention of all family members. Grandpa sighed and started to wipe his glasses. He got up, walked to the big wall full of bookshelves which was full of books and scriptures that went back to a long time.



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He gently removed a box on the top shelf. It was a wooden box with delicate carving all around it. He wiped the box with a soft cloth and sat down with the box in his lap. My curious mind was going in overdrive of excitement. He was moving his frail fingers around the seemingly seamless box as if looking for something. Grandpa had closed his eyes but his fingers were still moving on the face of the box. The room was silent. The only sound you could hear was that of Cherry licking Ginny's palm. Finally a small pop sound and the lid of the box opened revealing a





wad of paper, some trinkets and few coins. At first glimpse I thought it's just some boring old letters and stuff that my great grandpa had collected over time.

Grandpa looked at me for a moment. He looked sad for a moment but that look was gone in a glance, replaced by his gentle loving smile. “I think it is time for you and Ginny to know about our great family and its wealth. This story dates back to many generations ago. Your great great grandfather, Shreeniwas, after whom you are named was a very wealthy person. He was bestowed upon many grand jewels and coins. He had amassed a lot of wealth during his lifetime. There were no banks with locker systems in those days. So for safekeeping the wealth, he built an underground bunker in one section of this house and buried the treasure there secretly without anyone’s knowledge. He left a set of clues which will lead to the exact location of the treasure. Each clue reveals the location of the next clue. He gave the first clue to his son and told him the treasure belongs to the one who is worthy of it.” A look of sadness spread across grandpa’s face as he uttered “We have spent many hours and resources over the generations trying to figure out the first clue and no one was able to crack it. I was hoping in my lifetime I would find the treasure and restore the glory of our family. I have lost any hope of finding the stone of illusions in this house.” A tear trickled down his cheek.

Dad was prompt to break the sad silence in the room. He took his torch light and said “Ginny and Shree, come let's see if we can help grandpa with his mystery quest. Shree you are the mystery master...lets see what that creative mind of yours comes up with.” We all walked up to the sofa. Grandpa tossed the content of the box on the table and angled the box in the torch light. Carved in the box was a poem -

*“The eye sees what it wants to see,  
What lies behind in the mind is a mystery,*



*If only you look through the mirage  
An ancient stone you will see  
Which holds the serpent and the key”*

I grabbed the box and tried to peer in deeper to find out if there is anything else in there that was missed by people who tried to solve the mystery before my time. My mind was racing. There were thoughts coming in from all directions. What could the poem mean? It seemed simple but no one was able to figure out the clue. I had a genuine treasure hunt mystery in my hands. This was a chance of a lifetime. It took me a few minutes to come back to reality but Ginny on the other hand was more interested in the use of the box. She was shooting questions around the room. Turns out the box was designed as a vanity box to hold on to jewelry and beauty items of the lady of the house. In the midst of the chatter around the box, electricity was restored and we all went to lay in our beds. As I closed my eyes the beautiful vanity box floated in front of me as if asking me to dig deeper.

I woke up to a beautiful morning and realized I was the first to get up. I walked down the stairs and glanced upon the box of mystery. Something compelled me to go for the box. I picked it up and looked inside the box. The box was beautifully carved on the inside too. The inside walls were carved with delicate leaves and flowers entwined in each other. Not an inch of the box was free of the carving. Since I did not have a magnifying glass with me, I decided to click pictures on my phone and zoom them. 20 minutes and 40 pictures later I was intrigued by the mystery surrounding the box more than ever.

I used the photos to research ancient artifacts to find clues. Ginny was busy finding out if we have any of the vanity items from the olden days. She wondered what all items would be sitting in this box. Grandma came to the rescue and explained to her the different items used by ladies in the bygone era. I was hearing words like, oil, combs, essence, talc, eye



liner, mirror etc. and I wondered why leave the key to the treasure in a vanity box. What was so special about the vanity box? My research yielded the answer to that question. The craftsmen of that time were able to create mystery boxes with secret compartments and intricate locking systems.

It was lunchtime and I was excited to share my research findings with my family. Turns out my great grandfather had come to the same conclusions as me. It took him several years to gather the information that I collected from the internet. Secret compartment... that was where my mind was stuck. I went back to the net to find out more about secret compartments. My findings concluded that there is no one solution to this puzzle. Each puzzle had its own mechanism. I was going to need to get my hands on that box. I went looking for it only to find Ginny had it beautifully arranged on her dresser. She had stacked it with her cosmetics collection. Which was a couple of combs, mirror, lip gloss and a compact case. She refused to part with it even for a few minutes.

It took a lot of pursuance and a promise to share my piano for 3 days to get my hands on the box. After 1 hour of peering through each inch of the box I was nowhere near to finding any answers than yesterday. Exhausted, I gave the box back to Ginny. She promptly started stacking her items in the box. At the very end she placed a small mirror on the back wall of the box. As she was about to close the box I almost shouted with excitement. I grabbed the box and started to throw out the cosmetics from the box. Ginny was furious to see all her precious cosmetics lying on the floor. She started to cry and that drew the attention of everyone in the family. 15 minutes later I had everyone's attention. While Ginny was closing the box the inside walls of the box reflected in the mirror and in that glimpse, I was able to see a serpentine figure carved in the delicate twine. It is easy to miss the serpent as it was in an obscure place. A wave of excitement washed over the family. A mad scramble for a mirror to fit the box started. Mom, dad and grandma started to search the house. I sat down



on the bed for a moment. Grandpa came and gave me a pat on my back. “I have to say you have an eye for detail. I wish I could zoom into the box”. A wave of excitement went over me. “Grandpa, that’s it. We don’t need a mirror. I can use my phone to zoom in.” promptly I took out my phone, flipped to selfie mode and clicked the pictures of the insides of the box. Grandpa and I zoomed in on the image and realized that the flower and leaves were intricately carved to form a serpent with one eye. Having read the different types of lock and key mechanisms used in that time, we figured that the eye of the serpent would hold the key.

We both looked at each other as I got a safety pin from the dresser. Grandpa used the pin to push the eye of the serpent. Lo and behold, we heard a click. Something had opened somewhere. Grandpa moved his fingers gently around the box to find the opening while I ran down screaming and asking everyone to get up to the room. By the time we got back to the room, grandpa had exposed a section at the bottom right of the box. He nudged it gently to pull out what looked like a flat piece of wood. There in placed in the grove was what looked like an ancient artifact. It was like a large needle with a crown on top of the needle. Engraved in the wood were the words “3” followed by a downward spiral.

All that excitement only to find another puzzle. We have a key to which we need a lock. And it looked like the needle could fit in anywhere. I was ready to take a shut eye for now. It felt like I did not blink for the whole day. As I shut my eyes the images of the day filled my mind. Somewhere sifting through the images I feel asleep. I was woken by Ginny’s cold hands on me, shaking me, asking to get up and get ready to go to the family museum. The atmosphere in the house was charged up. I could hear grandpa’s excited voice talking to someone over the phone. We finished breakfast and headed to the family museum.

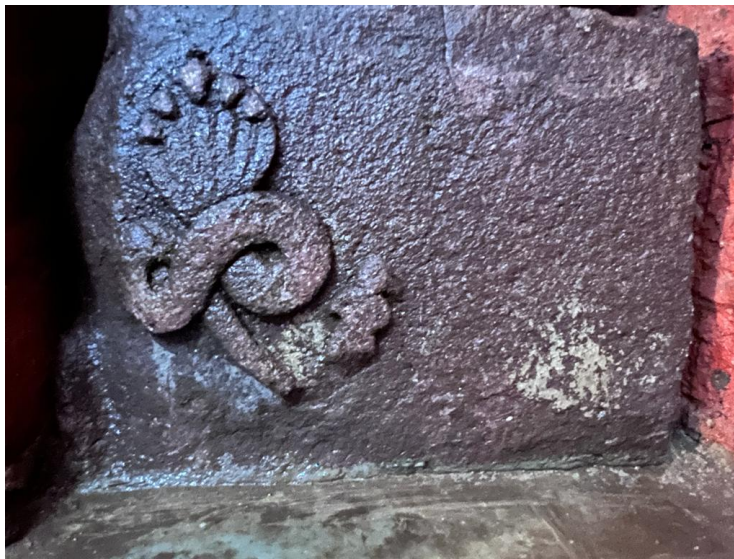
A quick history lesson. My grandpa converted one of the old family homes





into a museum. There were so many artifacts that told the story of an era gone by. It would benefit the community to know of the ways of their ancestors. Grandpa collected most of the relics found all over the village and placed them in the museum. It depicts the rich history of that time. Just when the thought of what prompted this tour popped in my mind, Mom answered my question. Grandpa called on his dear old friend and

archeologist Govind Aabaa who was going to help identify the next clue.



Govind Aabaa had abundant knowledge of ancient civilization and their architecture. He is always happy to share the knowledge with us and anyone interested in knowing more about the bygone days.

Grandpa and Govind Aabaa went down to the basement to check out the artifacts that were placed in the basement for view. It was almost dusk when they finally identified the sculpture that might hold the clue. I ran down the stairs to find out more. All were gathered in front of a nondescript slab of stone. It was a pinkish purple stone block with a small engraving of a 3 headed cobra. There on the middle head of the cobra was a very small aperture. You could easily have missed it in the surroundings. I was curious to know why we selected this stone slab of all the artifacts in the room. Govind Aabaa explained “There is mention of serpent, key and stone in the poem. Now that we have the key we know what type of keyhole to look for. Then we needed to find artifacts that are dated during the time of your great great great grandfather to further shortlist the relics. We found multiple artifacts that match the above



criteria but since we know what type of keyhole we need to look for, we identified this one in front of us”

Finally we inserted the key and it slid through the hole perfectly. When inserted fully, the key looked like a crown placed on the head of the serpent. Ginny had brainstormed the clue and we ended up with 3 and spiral means 3 turns in the direction of the spiral. we turned 3 times and nothing happened. Not that we know what to expect but we were expecting a miracle and we got none. I was ready to believe we were looking at the wrong artifact. Disappointed, I stepped back. Just then Ginny came forward and pulled the key out without an afterthought. Suddenly the serpent engraving on the stone moved out to reveal a small piece of animal cloth with a sequence of rectangles and 8 directions.

Another Clue! Oh dear. I hope this is not a clue hunt with no clue to the treasure. But it did not seem to bother anyone that we just got a new clue. A clue, not the treasure. There was excitement everywhere. The phone was continuously ringing. Carloads of people seem to arrive at all times. There were lunches and snacks being served almost round the clock. It has been a month since we found the 3rd clue. No one can figure out what it means. We had visits from Vastu experts to astrologers to geologists but no one could figure out what is the significance of rectangles scattered across the drawing and 8 direction arrows.

My summer vacation was coming to an end. This treasure hunt had put us off our schedule of 7-day vacation in Miri and then back to city life in Pune. We ended up staying for over a month in Miri. Start of school was coming closer day by day. Miri had become a tourist location with so many people visiting both our home and museum. I was out sitting on a rock with my rubik's cube outside what was now the tourist destination home. Cherry came running with a ball in his mouth. I guess he wanted someone to play with. I grabbed the ball and threw it high in the air. It went a long distance and rolled down the road. Cherry was happily running after the



ball until suddenly I heard him squeal. I ran in the direction of the ball and found that the ball rolled into the bunker and Cherry had followed his ball in the bunker. Once inside there was no easy way to get out. I reassured the scared Cherry that I will be back with help and ran back to the house to get help.

We all ran back to the bunker with a stepper stool to get Cherry out. Cherry was too scared to climb up so I jumped in. It was very dark and damp in the bunker. I could hear Cherry whining, so I switched on the flashlight of my phone to search for her. A scared Cherry ran in my arms when I called his name. Gently I heaved him up so he could be pulled to safety. Once he was safely out, I turned around to look at the bunker. My flashlight was still on.



The bunker was an underground rectangular room. It had a low ceiling and was made of stone blocks on all sides. I felt like I stood inside a rubik's cube made with stone blocks. I heard someone calling my name from the door of the bunker. As I walked towards the door a thought crossed my mind. I frantically started calling out for my dad. Thinking I hurt myself he slipped in the bunker through the door. His worried look quickly changed to amazement as he heard me shouting Eureka! Eureka! I figured out the last clue. The bunker was the safe location for the treasure and the blocks on the map with directions were the pointers to the treasure!

It took us 3 days to get through all the blocks on the map. Each block had to be removed to access the pots of treasure buried below the house. In the last block that we moved there was a family crest made of pure gold



and a note which said “Well done! You deserve this treasure. Be wise and use it wisely for the benefit of you and the community”. Grandpa’s shirt was soaked in tears when we gave him the family crest and the letter we found. “The search of 5 generations has come to an end and all thanks to Shreeniwas for asking the question on that rainy night, Ginny for making the right use of the box so we could find the first clue and Govind Aabaa for helping identify the right artifact. Of course, this all led to the grand finale of this family heirlooms being found. A very happy vacation for all of us too!!





**Thank You !**

We look forward to hearing from you ...

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