

DOWN THE MEMORY LANE

The Fake 'Swami'

by Asoke K Bagchi

HE was a lanky seven footer — always wearing crumpled dresses. In the two hundred year old house where I lived in Vienna there were three courtyards. In the eighteenth century, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the prodigious musical composer lived on the ground floor of the second court and composed his well-known opera in Italian, *Così fan tutte*. In the rear court there was a lady photographer who was assisted by that seven footer. It was said that he was a *mischnig*, a mixture of a Jew and an Aryan, but he was a devout Catholic, who attended the church almost daily.

One day my colleague Kumar introduced him to me and I found him to be quite friendly. He narrated that he had been an officer in the German *Wehrmacht* but was dishonourably discharged because of his racial stigma. He had for quite a while, marking time for a better opportunity and joined the Indian Legion in Berlin. After the war he worked as a postman and did some other odd jobs.

In 1954 he suddenly left for India and came to Calcutta and transformed overnight into a saffron-silk clad headed Swamiji, named, *Swami A B*. His new name meant, a monk without an abode.

As usual, the emotional and religiously susceptible Hindus of Calcutta queued up to become his disciple, so very soon he had a large following of which the majority were rich women from good families. He first declared that he belonged to the Ramakrishna Mission but soon he changed his affiliation to a concord of monks called the *Dasaranamis*. Nobody was aware what he preached but his discourses in heavily German accented English were quite interesting and enjoyable. He wrote umpteen number of articles in popular German and Austrian journals about mysticism in India and became quite popular in Central Europe. He often performed *yajnas* at the residences of his rich disciples and interviewed charming middle aged ladies in camera for long hours!

His spiritual doctrine to women went on smoothly for quite sometime until one respectable lady disciple opened her mouth to a journalist stating that his 'soul assimilation' sessions were nothing but practical application of the edicts of *Kamasutra* by Vatsyana! It was a hurl at the hornets nest, local people became agitated and the Government of India extradited him.

He changed his venue to Bangkok for renewed 'spiritual' work. In Thailand he proclaimed that he was a *Hinajana* Buddhist and soon became very popular among the locals and the large tourist population. After spending some nice time in Thailand and its neighbouring countries he looked for a new pasture and went to Canada where he started to teach philosophy. Gradually, his Canadian connection opened up the gateway to USA. He settled in the West Coast of USA and resumed his teaching of philosophy in an academic institution.

It is still not clear what his actual philosophy but it must have acted as the precursor of the later ideas of an erstwhile assistant lecturer of philosophy of Jabalpur who rose like an amoretic rocket and soon burnt down to the earth!

In 1990 The *Dasaranami* Swamiji died in California.

Screen Test

Continued from page 9

Palestinian elections by teaching the people about democracy. Those goals remain the same but it is clear by the slow progress at the autonomy talks that Israel will not be withdrawing very soon. And until they do, we can't go on air."

More bluntly, an unnamed source in the Israeli Communications Ministry was quoted in the daily *Yedioth Ahronot*; as saying that "the licence will be formally issued only within the terms of a general peace agreement. We have no intention of just handing it out free of charge."

In addition, Ayyash disputes some of the Israeli claims. "The European Union is paying for a transmission studio so I see no reason to broadcast on Israeli channels."

"As for obeying Israeli censorship laws, we intend to be a public service station serving under the laws of the Palestinian entity. This entity will separate itself as much as possible from Israel but will work with the Israelis. That is how we envision the final situation."

It is clear that the Israeli Ministry of Communications' announcement of the granting of a licence to the station is far too hopeful: the two sides imagine the station will be run under very different conditions.

As it stands now, the Israeli government has issued a licence on terms the Palestinians are rejecting. The station is ready to operate; it has equipment, staff and start-up money. The only hold-up is peace itself. — GEMINI NEWS

BARRY CHAMISH is an Israeli freelance journalist.

Nepal's TV

Continued from page 9

lines for radio and television broadcasts. It lays the basis for promoting private sector participation in radio and television broadcasts.

Some critics see it as draconian because it forbids broadcasting anything that 'compromises the basic structure of the Constitution which includes, among other things, the constitutional monarchy, multi-party democracy, and human rights.'

It prohibits airing programmes that government may deem as 'damaging friendly ties with neighbouring countries. Any broadcaster airing programmes counter to the Constitution's fundamentals can have its licence revoked,' the spokesman said. The legislation also arms the government with authority to 'supervise or control' any programme being broadcast, according to the draft. 'This has to be done to improve the national programmes by encouraging them with competition without having any adverse impact on national interest of the country,' the spokesman explained.

Business India group has already approached the Nepal government to set up an uplink station in Kathmandu. Nepal's NTV vehemently opposed the idea but agreed after being offered 25 per cent of the shares.

Business India, which is investing US \$ 1 million in the project in the first year, has reportedly agreed to provide two hours of air time to NTV broadcasts.

Still, the deal is a blow to NTV where 75 per cent of its revenue comes from Indian advertisers. Most of it will now go to Business India.

Undeterred, Nepalis are eager to begin private broadcasts and are waiting for the legislation. Neer Shah, the dynamic executive who helped set up NTV, is planning to introduce cable television. 'We are pinning high hopes on the legislation before starting works on cable TV.'

All these sound very encouraging in a country where

Sesame Street

Continued from page 9

Kiko quietly dropped from the show, the entire courtyard set, which formed the show's anchor scene, along with its mainstay live characters disappeared.

"It was partly because we couldn't afford to keep paying the salaries of the regular cast," says PCTVF's multi-awarded creative director Rene Villanueva. "But it's also because we wanted to change the concept of the show. Batibot is no longer a definite place. Batibot is the show. The world of children is Batibot."

As it turned out, "the kids don't miss Pong and Kiko," says Villanueva. "It's cruel, but true."

Batibot now banks on a cast of locally-developed muppets. Villanueva says the most popular is 'Kapitan Basa', a super-

hero type who loves to read. The show has also succeeded in developing new approaches against CTW's advice. A case in point is the story-telling segment originally handled by talented actor Bodji Pascua.

Villanueva says CTW consultants argued against it, saying the segment would take too long, and that having a male character handle it went against the findings of studies that men register poorly with child audiences.

The story-telling portion is now one of Batibot's most highly-rated features. Says Villanueva: "There's no question that the attention span of kids is short. But we thought that what was needed was to help kids stretch their attention span through things like story-telling."

Batibot's success in developing new techniques suited for its low-budget operations has attracted children's television proponents in other developing nations.

In the late 1980s, PCTVF received inquiries from Indonesia and Malaysia. But when the Philippine outfit began exploring co-production ventures in these countries, it ran afoul of CTW, which was also eyeing Asia as a growth market.

PCTVF has since focused mainly on expanding its local productions. Aside from Batibot, it also has 'Radyo Batibot', a one-hour radio programme, and 'Pin Pin', a TV show aimed at Chinese-Filipino children.

But as an educational programme functioning in a chiefly commercial TV system, Batibot continues to find the financial going hard.

When Sesame started out in 1983 it had an annual budget of 25 million pesos. Ten years later, PCTVF is functioning on a budget of 12 million pesos — much less than half in real terms of the 1983 budget.

Says Villanueva: "It's really heartbreaking. But we're still here, small but tough." — IPS

Radio The Voice of Asia

Community radio is changing the lives of villagers in remote towns across the Asia-Pacific.

Kalinga Seneviratne writes from Sydney

SATELLITE television has taken the Asia-Pacific by storm, transforming urban cultures and lifestyles, but it is radio that is staging a revolution in many remote rural areas.

From Sri Lanka to the Tongan islands, community radio has become the new voice of the people, as villagers are given the chance to be heard after decades of being ignored by the mainstream media.

Indeed, some communications experts have even taken to calling this the real face of the New World Communication Order.

"Many government officials do not appreciate the significance of small, community media nor the fact that these media have become important for indigenous cultural and political expression," says media lecturer Helen Molnar of Swinburn University of Technology in Melbourne.

She adds that officials often only see indigenous community radio as marginal. "Such a view ignores the extensive developments in the area and their prominence as the 'mainstream' indigenous media."

Communications lecturer Michael David of the University of Colombo agrees: "In Asia, there are a lot of people whose voices are not heard on the radio — like the rural people, ethnic minorities, the social and economically underprivileged."

"These people have certain things to say to others and share among themselves," he says. "For them community radio is very useful."

David used to work for Mahaveli Community Radio (MCR), a pioneer project that was funded originally by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Danish development aid agency some 20 years ago.

It was meant primarily to disseminate agricultural information to villagers uprooted by the damming of the Mahaveli river and resettled in the malarial jungles of north eastern Sri Lanka.

These days, MCR has two more broadcast sites and has added training the sons and daughters of local farmers in radio production to its list of accomplishments.

Says volunteer broadcaster Yaso Manika Herath: "Those who talk are our own people. So the people have developed a love and respect for it."

David also points out: "If you have community radio, you can have a dialogue at a local level which could later come up to the national level."

In the Philippines, a Catholic church-supported community-based radio network has increased its stations from 13 to 43 all over the archipelago in the past decade.

"Our philosophy is that this is the peoples' radio and the church pays for it whenever it uses it as does anyone else to sustain the radio," says Fr. Francis Lucas, founder of the Philippines' first community-based radio in Infanta, a remote fishing community five hours away by car across mountains from Manila.

"We are the telegram and cablegram office," he adds, "We are also very influential because anyone who goes to Infanta and asks about issues from the farmers, fisherfolk and the women, they will say they heard it through the radio."

Information is power, says Tiga Bayles, secretary of the National Indigenous Media Association of Australia (NIMAA). Unfortunately, she says, government sometimes chooses to withhold information from people in order to control them.

Says Bayles: "Alternative media can be a vehicle for empowering the powerless." Bayles herself was instructor.

Continued on page 11

The Intro

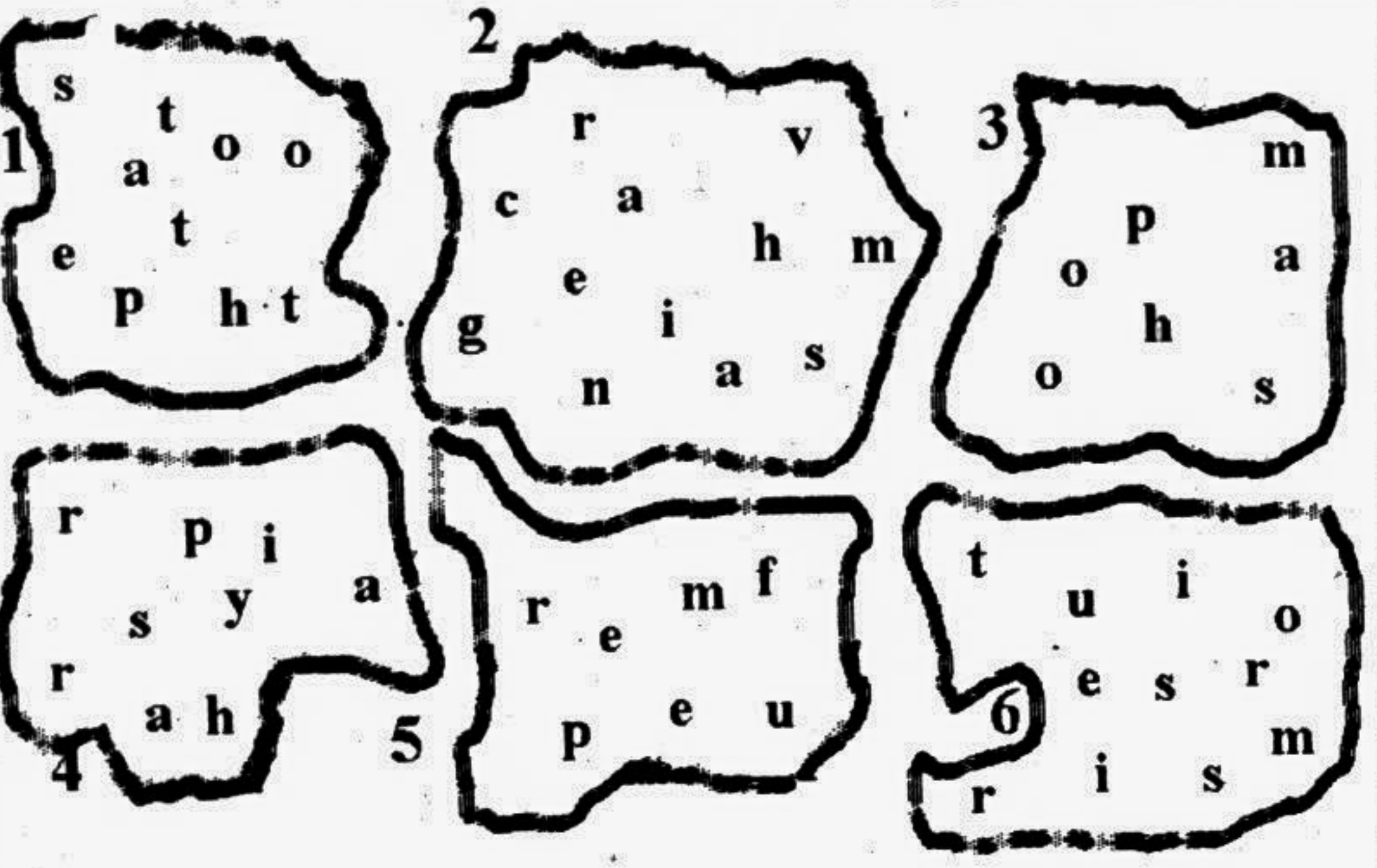
Today's column has an article on collocation. This can be a very difficult area and one which there are no obvious rules for. Basically it means 'which words go together and which don't!' It is, however, once again an area in which a good dictionary is extremely helpful. By checking the examples you will be able to see that certain verbs are preferred with particular nouns, for example.

There is also a second game of hidden words. Remember that the word you find will be similar in meaning to the first one but that does not mean that it can be used in any place that the first one can be used! It is very rare to find true synonyms like this. Sometimes it is only in one 'meaning' that the two words correspond. And more often than not, there will be some difference in the style which they represent - one will often be more formal than the other.

The British Council Language Matters

Wobbly Words

Try this word puzzle. In each shape the letters are jumbled up. Put them in the correct order. What do they all have in common? Be careful. Some shapes might have more than one word.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Good for a Game?

Here is a second batch of hidden words for you. Remember you will find another word which has more or less the same meaning somewhere in each of the words below. The letters of the word are in order but they do not have to follow each other directly. The first one is done for you as an example.

- 1. Regulates....Rules
- 2. Perimeter....
- 3. Evacuate....
- 4. Supervisor....
- 5. Facade.....
- 6. Blossoms....
- 7. Curtail....
- 8. Rampage....
- 9. Revolution..
- 10. Respite....

- * I can't open the door because the hinges are
- * Have you seen the car? It was well and truly in the accident - it's an absolute write-off!
- * I think you should throw those flowers out, they've
- * They've! The water must have been too hot.

Some of the words in the list above have a very wide application, others can only be used in restricted areas or circumstances. Try filling in the grid below to show which words collocate. 'Broken' has been done for you.

Then try to think why certain collocations do (or don't) occur. Is it because the word is restricted to humans, for example? Or could it be something to do with the molecular structure?

Collocation

The word 'collocation' comes from the Latin *com* - together and *locare* - to place. It is used to describe words which are often placed together. This is one of the most difficult areas for a non-native speaker of English because there are no rules, or if there are, they are not the sort of rules you can easily find in a dictionary or grammar book.

The answer to the question (for example) 'Why can't you say "She's a very long woman?"' is 'Because *long* and *woman* do not collocate'. 'Tall' is the adjective used to describe people.

A good example of one of these difficult areas of vocabulary is when describing 'damage'. There are many verbs or adjectives which could be used, the problem is knowing which are appropriate in which contexts. Here's a selection of words that are all used to describe damage or injury of some sort. As you read each one, try to think what type of noun it would collocate with:

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| bashed | bent | broken | bruised |
| bumped | burnt | burst | chipped |
| cracked | crushed | cut | damaged |
| dislocated | fractured | gashed | grazed |
| hit | hurt | injured | knoocked |
| mangled | melted | perished | pierced |
| pricked | punctured | ripped | ruined |
| rusted | scraped | scratched | shattered |
| shrunk | slashed | smashed | snapped |
| splintered | split | spoiled | sprained |
| squashed | stretched | swollen | torn |
| twisted | warped | wilted | wounded |

In the sentences below, pick one of these words to fill each gap. Note that in some instances there are quite a few possibilities.

- * Her eyelid was from the bee sting.
- * His tyre on the way home - the rubber had obviously
- * You can't wear that shirt - it's
- * The glass into hundreds of pieces when he dropped it. He his finger when he tried to pick them up.

Some Self-searching Questions

by Schrezad Joya Monami Latif

WHY don't they snatch and eat, I remember asking ma. Why?

Why is it that I have to drink two whole cups of milk a day? I hat milk while that little girl who comes begging every Friday has probably never had any milk, would do anything for even half a cup of my milk?

I remember going to eat soft serve milky ice-cream cones in that ice-cream parlour, Dhaka's only one then, Snow White. I'd always have the vanilla and chocolate mix. It cost two takas more, I remember. Each time we'd get these delicious cones, we come out into the heat and grime only to be met by a car surrounded by beggars and hungry children asking for money. The beggar children most of them of my age or younger would stare at my swirled in chocolate and vanilla mix in awe. In their eyes I would see hunger, their mouths would foam with saliva, drooling.

Why did they never snatch and eat?

One of them could have snatched the ice-cream cone right out of my sticky fingers. That would have been fine. I could've gotten myself at least twelve more ice-cream cones if I'd wanted to.

Why did I never give one of them my chocolate and vanilla ice-cream cone? Why'd I let them watch as I licked and licked and licked?

Look at those Africans my mother will say to make a point. "They're killing each other and starving their own people to death, how inhuman, how cruel!"

Those Africans? And what of us? We are no better. We too are killing each other but in much subtler ways.

We eat. We eat while the majority suffers from what the World Food Programme calls 'chronic hunger' or dies in Godforsaken floods or gets shot by stray bullets in University campuses.

We send our kids to schools abroad, we watch American movies on our imported VCR's. Movies we get from video shops few are reported to stock some of the world's largest video collections — I certainly haven't seen this most of them of my age or younger would stare at my swirled in chocolate and vanilla mix in awe. In their eyes I would see hunger, their mouths would foam with saliva, drooling.

We have obscenely lavish weddings in which our fruits and orchids are flown in from Bangkok, our jewellery bought from Antwerp/Italy.

We have parties where Black Dog whiskey flows like water and the amount of food wasted could feed an entire street of beggars.

Is there a God? Why doesn't He tell them to snatch and eat?

Why don't they snatch and eat?