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Glimpses of India

- I. A Baker from Goa **Lucio Rodrigues**
- II. Coorg **Lokesh Abrol**
- III. Tea from Assam **Arup Kumar Datta**

BEFORE YOU READ

Activity

Discuss in class

1. What images — of people and of places — come to your mind, when you think of our country?
2. What parts of India have you lived in, or visited? Can you name some popular tourist destinations?
3. You may know that apart from the British, the Dutch and the French, the Portuguese have also played a part in the history of our country. Can you say which parts of India show French and Portuguese influences?
4. Can you say which parts of India grow (i) tea, (ii) coffee?

I

A Baker from Goa

This is a pen-portrait of a traditional Goan village baker who still has an important place in his society.

OUR elders are often heard reminiscing nostalgically about those good old Portuguese days, the Portuguese and their famous loaves of bread. Those eaters of loaves might have vanished but the makers are still there. We still have amongst us the mixers, the moulders and those who bake the loaves. Those age-old, time-tested furnaces still exist. The fire in the furnaces has not yet been extinguished. The thud and jingle of

reminiscing
nostalgically
thinking fondly of
the past

the traditional baker's bamboo, heralding his arrival in the morning, can still be heard in some places. Maybe the father is not alive but the son still carries on the family profession. These bakers are, even today, known as *pader* in Goa.

heralding
announcing

During our childhood in Goa, the baker used to be our friend, companion and guide. He used to come at least twice a day. Once, when he set out in the morning on his selling round, and then again, when he returned after emptying his huge basket. The jingling thud of his bamboo woke us up from sleep and we ran to meet and greet him. Why was it so? Was it for the love of the loaf? Not at all. The loaves were bought by some Paskine or Bastine, the maid-servant of the house! What we longed for were those bread-bangles which we chose carefully. Sometimes it was sweet bread of special make.

The baker made his musical entry on the scene with the 'jhang, jhang' sound of his specially made bamboo staff. One hand supported the basket on his head and the other banged the bamboo on the ground. He would greet the lady of the house with "Good morning" and then place his basket on the vertical bamboo. We kids would be pushed aside with a mild rebuke and the loaves would be delivered to the servant. But we would not give up. We would climb a bench or the parapet and peep into the basket, somehow. I can still recall the typical fragrance of those loaves. Loaves for the elders and the bangles for the children. Then we did not even care to brush our teeth or wash our mouths properly. And why should we? Who would take the trouble of plucking the mango-leaf for the toothbrush? And why was it necessary at all? The tiger never brushed his teeth. Hot tea could wash and clean up everything so nicely, after all!

rebuke
an expression of disapproval; a scolding

fragrance
scent

Oral Comprehension Check

1. What are the elders in Goa nostalgic about?
2. Is bread-making still popular in Goa? How do you know?
3. What is the baker called?
4. When would the baker come everyday? Why did the children run to meet him?

Marriage gifts are meaningless without the sweet bread known as the *bol*, just as a party or a feast loses its charm without bread. Not enough can be said to show how important a baker can be for a village. The lady of the house must prepare sandwiches on the occasion of her daughter's engagement. Cakes and *bolinhas* are a must for Christmas as well as other festivals. Thus, the presence of the baker's furnace in the village is absolutely essential.

The baker or bread-seller of those days had a peculiar dress known as the *kabai*. It was a single-piece long frock reaching down to the knees. In our childhood we saw bakers wearing a shirt and trousers which were shorter than full-length ones and longer than half pants. Even today, anyone who wears a half pant which reaches just below the knees invites the comment that he is dressed like a *pader*!

The baker usually collected his bills at the end of the month. Monthly accounts used to be recorded on some wall in pencil. Baking was indeed a profitable profession in the old days. The baker and his family never starved. He, his family and his servants always looked happy and prosperous. Their plump physique was an open testimony to this. Even today any person with a jackfruit-like physical appearance is easily compared to a baker.

plump physique
pleasantly fat body

open testimony
public statement
about a character or
quality

Oral Comprehension Check

1. Match the following. What is a must
 - (i) as marriage gifts? – cakes and bolinhas
 - (ii) for a party or a feast? – sweet bread called bol
 - (iii) for a daughter's engagement? – bread
 - (iv) for Christmas? – sandwiches
2. What did the bakers wear: (i) in the Portuguese days? (ii) when the author was young?
3. Who invites the comment — “he is dressed like a pader”? Why?
4. Where were the monthly accounts of the baker recorded?
5. What does a ‘jackfruit-like appearance’ mean?



Thinking about the Text

- Which of these statements are correct?
 - The pader was an important person in the village in old times.
 - Paders* still exist in Goan villages.
 - The *paders* went away with the Portuguese.
 - The *paders* continue to wear a single-piece long frock.
 - Bread and cakes were an integral part of Goan life in the old days.
 - Traditional bread-baking is still a very profitable business.
 - Paders* and their families starve in the present times.
- Is bread an important part of Goan life? How do you know this?
- Tick the right answer. What is the tone of the author when he says the following?
 - The thud and the jingle of the traditional baker's bamboo can still be heard in some places. (nostalgic, hopeful, sad)
 - Maybe the father is not alive but the son still carries on the family profession. (nostalgic, hopeful, sad)
 - I still recall the typical fragrance of those loaves. (nostalgic, hopeful, naughty)
 - The tiger never brushed his teeth. Hot tea could wash and clean up everything so nicely, after all. (naughty, angry, funny)
 - Cakes and *bolinhas* are a must for Christmas as well as other festivals. (sad, hopeful, matter-of-fact)
 - The baker and his family never starved. They always looked happy and prosperous. (matter-of-fact, hopeful, sad)

Writing

- In this extract, the author talks about traditional bread-baking during his childhood days. Complete the following table with the help of the clues on the left. Then write a paragraph about the author's childhood days.

Clues	Author's childhood days
the way bread was baked	
the way the <i>pader</i> sold bread	
what the <i>pader</i> wore	
when the <i>pader</i> was paid	
how the <i>pader</i> looked	



- II. 1. Compare the piece from the text (on the left below) with the other piece on Goan bakers (on the right). What makes the two texts so different? Are the facts the same? Do both writers give you a picture of the baker?

Our elders are often heard reminiscing nostalgically about those good old Portuguese days, the Portuguese and their famous loaves of bread. Those eaters of loaves might have vanished but the makers are still there. We still have amongst us the mixers, the moulders and those who bake the loaves. Those age-old, time-tested furnaces still exist. The fire in the furnaces had not yet been extinguished. The thud and the jingle of the traditional baker's bamboo, heralding his arrival in the morning, can still be heard in some places.

Maybe the father is not alive but the son still carries on the family profession.

After Goa's liberation, people used to say nostalgically that the Portuguese bread vanished with the *paders*. But the *paders* have managed to survive because they have perfected the art of door-to-door delivery service. The *paders* pick up the knowledge of bread-making from traditions in the family. The leavened, oven-baked bread is a gift of the Portuguese to India.

[Adapted from Nandakumar Kamat's 'The Unsung Lives of Goan Paders']

2. Now find a travel brochure about a place you have visited. Look at the description in the brochure. Then write your own account, adding details from your own experience, to give the reader a picture of the place, rather than an impersonal, factual description.

Group Discussion

- In groups, collect information on how bakeries bake bread now and how the process has changed over time.
- There are a number of craft-based professions which are dying out. Pick one of the crafts below. Make a group presentation to the class about the skills required, and the possible reasons for the decline of the craft. Can you think of ways to revive these crafts?
 - Pottery
 - Batik work
 - Dhurri* (rug) weaving
 - Embroidery
 - Carpentry
 - Bamboo weaving
 - Making jute products
 - Handloom

II

Coorg

Coorg is coffee country, famous for its rainforests and spices.

MIDWAY between Mysore and the coastal town of Mangalore sits a piece of heaven that must have drifted from the kingdom of god. This land of rolling hills is inhabited by a proud race of martial men, beautiful women and wild creatures.

drifted from
been carried along
gently by air

Coorg, or Kodagu, the smallest district of Karnataka, is home to evergreen rainforests, spices and coffee plantations. Evergreen rainforests cover thirty per cent of this district. During the monsoons, it pours enough to keep many visitors away. The season of joy commences from September and continues till March. The weather is perfect, with

martial
having to do with
war

First Flight

90



Traditional Coorgi dress

some showers thrown in for good measure. The air breathes of invigorating coffee. Coffee estates and colonial bungalows stand tucked under tree canopies in prime corners.

canopies
roof-like coverings
that form shelters

prime
here, best

The fiercely independent people of Coorg are possibly of Greek or Arabic descent. As one story goes, a part of Alexander's army moved south along the coast and settled here when return became impractical. These people married amongst the locals and their culture is apparent in the martial traditions, marriage and religious rites, which are distinct from the Hindu mainstream. The theory of Arab origin draws support from the long, black coat

mainstream
a tradition which
most people follow

with an embroidered waist-belt worn by the Kodavus. Known as *kuppia*, it resembles the *kuffia* worn by the Arabs and the Kurds.

Coorgi homes have a tradition of hospitality, and they are more than willing to recount numerous tales of valour related to their sons and fathers. The Coorg Regiment is one of the most decorated in the Indian Army, and the first Chief of the Indian Army, General Cariappa, was a Coorgi. Even now, Kodavus are the only people in India permitted to carry firearms without a licence.

The river, Kaveri, obtains its water from the hills and forests of Coorg. Mahaseer — a large freshwater fish — abound in these waters. Kingfishers dive for their catch, while squirrels and langurs drop partially eaten fruit for the mischief of enjoying the splash and the ripple effect in the clear water. Elephants enjoy being bathed and scrubbed in the river by their mahouts.

The most laidback individuals become converts to the life of high-energy adventure with river rafting, canoeing, rappelling, rock climbing and mountain

tales of valour
stories of courage and bravery, usually in war

most decorated
having received the maximum number of awards for bravery in war

laidback
relaxed; not in a hurry

rafting
travelling in a river in a raft (a floating platform made by tying planks together)

canoeing
travelling in a river in a canoe (a large, narrow boat)

rappelling
going down a cliff by sliding down a rope



Basket-seller from Coorg

biking. Numerous walking trails in this region are a favourite with trekkers.

trails

paths created by walking

Birds, bees and butterflies are there to give you company. Macaques, Malabar squirrels, langurs and slender loris keep a watchful eye from the tree canopy. I do, however, prefer to step aside for wild elephants.

The climb to the Brahmagiri hills brings you into a panoramic view of the entire misty landscape of Coorg. A walk across the rope bridge leads to the sixty-four-acre island of Nisargadhama. Running into Buddhist monks from India's largest Tibetan settlement, at nearby Bylakuppe, is a bonus. The monks, in red, ochre and yellow robes, are amongst the many surprises that wait to be discovered by visitors searching for the heart and soul of India, right here in Coorg.

panoramic view

a view of a wide area of land

FACT FILE

How to Reach

Madikeri, the district headquarters, is the only gateway to Coorg. The misty hills, lush forests and coffee plantations will cast a spell on you. Find a resort, coffee estate or stay in a home for a truly Coorgi experience.

By Air: The nearest airports are Mangalore (135 km) and Bangalore (260 km). There are flights to Mangalore from Mumbai, and to Bangalore from Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune.

By Rail: The nearest railheads are at Mysore, Mangalore and Hassan.

By Road: There are two routes to Coorg from Bangalore. Both are almost the same distance (around 250-260 km). The route via Mysore is the most frequented one. The other route is via Neelamangal, Kunigal, Chanrayanapatna.

Thinking about the Text

1. Where is Coorg?
2. What is the story about the Kodavu people's descent?
3. What are some of the things you now know about
 - (i) the people of Coorg?
 - (ii) the main crop of Coorg?
 - (iii) the sports it offers to tourists?

2. Complete the following phrases from the text. For each phrase, can you find at least one other word that would fit into the blank?

- (i) tales of _____ (ii) coastal _____
(iii) a piece of _____ (iv) evergreen _____
(v) _____ plantations (vi) _____ bridge
(vii) wild _____

You may add your own examples to this list.

III

Tea from Assam

Pranjol, a youngster from Assam, is Rajvir's classmate at school in Delhi. Pranjol's father is the manager of a tea-garden in Upper Assam and Pranjol has invited Rajvir to visit his home during the summer vacation.

"CHAI-GARAM... garam-chai," a vendor called out in a high-pitched voice.

He came up to their window and asked, "Chai, sa'ab?"

"Give us two cups," Pranjol said.

They sipped the steaming hot liquid. Almost everyone in their compartment was drinking tea too.

"Do you know that over eighty crore cups of tea are drunk every day throughout the world?" Rajvir said.

"Whew!" exclaimed Pranjol. "Tea really is very popular."

The train pulled out of the station. Pranjol buried his nose in his detective book again. Rajvir too was an ardent fan of detective stories, but at the moment he was keener on looking at the beautiful scenery.

It was green, green everywhere. Rajvir had never seen so much greenery before. Then the soft green paddy fields gave way to tea bushes.

It was a magnificent view. Against the backdrop of densely wooded hills a sea of tea bushes stretched as far as the eye could see. Dwarfing the tiny tea plants were tall sturdy shade-trees and amidst the orderly rows of bushes busily moved doll-like figures.

In the distance was an ugly building with smoke billowing out of tall chimneys.

“Hey, a tea garden!” Rajvir cried excitedly.

Pranjol, who had been born and brought up on a plantation, didn’t share Rajvir’s excitement.

“Oh, this is tea country now,” he said. “Assam has the largest concentration of plantations in the world. You will see enough gardens to last you a lifetime!”

“I have been reading as much as I could about tea,” Rajvir said. “No one really knows who discovered tea but there are many legends.”

“What legends?”

“Well, there’s the one about the Chinese emperor who always boiled water before drinking it. One day a few leaves of the twigs burning under the pot fell into the water giving it a delicious flavour. It is said they were tea leaves.”

“Tell me another!” scoffed Pranjol.

“We have an Indian legend too. Bodhidharma, an ancient Buddhist ascetic, cut off his eyelids because he felt sleepy during meditations. Ten tea plants grew out of the eyelids. The leaves of these plants when put in hot water and drunk banished sleep.

“Tea was first drunk in China,” Rajvir added, “as far back as 2700 B.C.! In fact words such as tea, ‘chai’ and ‘chini’ are from Chinese. Tea came to Europe only in the sixteenth century and was drunk more as medicine than as beverage.”

The train clattered into Mariani junction. The boys collected their luggage and pushed their way to the crowded platform.

Pranjol’s parents were waiting for them.

Soon they were driving towards Dhekiabari, the tea-garden managed by Pranjol’s father.

An hour later the car veered sharply off the main road. They crossed a cattle-bridge and entered Dhekiabari Tea Estate.

On both sides of the gravel-road were acre upon acre of tea bushes, all neatly pruned to the same height. Groups of tea-pluckers, with bamboo baskets on their backs, wearing plastic aprons, were plucking the newly sprouted leaves.



Pranjal's father slowed down to allow a tractor, pulling a trailer-load of tea leaves, to pass.

"This is the second-flush or sprouting period, isn't it, Mr Barua?" Rajvir asked. "It lasts from May to July and yields the best tea."

"You seem to have done your homework before coming," Pranjal's father said in surprise.

"Yes, Mr Barua," Rajvir admitted. "But I hope to learn much more while I'm here."

Thinking about Language

- I. 1. Look at these words: *upkeep*, *downpour*, *undergo*, *dropout*, *walk-in*. They are built up from a verb (*keep*, *pour*, *go*, *drop*, *walk*) and an adverb or a particle (*up*, *down*, *under*, *out*, *in*).

Use these words appropriately in the sentences below. You may consult a dictionary.

- (i) A heavy _____ has been forecast due to low pressure in the Bay of Bengal.
- (ii) Rakesh will _____ major surgery tomorrow morning.
- (iii) My brother is responsible for the _____ of our family property.
- (iv) The _____ rate for this accountancy course is very high.
- (v) She went to the Enterprise Company to attend a _____ interview.
2. **Now fill in the blanks in the sentences given below by combining the verb given in brackets with one of the words from the box as appropriate.**

over by through out up down

- (i) The Army attempted unsuccessfully to _____ the Government. (throw)
- (ii) Scientists are on the brink of a major _____ in cancer research. (break)
- (iii) The State Government plans to build a _____ for Bhubaneswar to speed up traffic on the main highway. (pass)
- (iv) Gautama's _____ on life changed when he realised that the world is full of sorrow. (look)
- (v) Rakesh seemed unusually _____ after the game. (cast)



II. Notice how these *-ing* and *-ed* adjectives are used.

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) Chess is an <i>interesting</i> game. | I am very <i>interested</i> in chess. |
| (b) Going trekking in the Himalayas this summer is an <i>exciting</i> idea. | We are very <i>excited</i> about the trek. |
| (c) Are all your school books this <i>boring</i> ? | He was <i>bored</i> as he had no friends there. |

The *-ing* adjectives show the *qualities* that chess, trekking, or these books have: they *cause* interest, excitement, or boredom in you. The *-ed/-en* adjectives show your mental state, or your physical state: how you feel in response to ideas, events or things.

1. **Think of suitable *-ing* or *-ed* adjectives to answer the following questions. You may also use words from those given above.**

How would you describe

- (i) a good detective serial on television? _____
- (ii) a debate on your favourite topic 'Homework Should Be Banned'?

- (iii) how you feel when you stay indoors due to incessant rain?

- (iv) how you feel when you open a present? _____
- (v) how you feel when you watch your favourite programme on television? _____
- (vi) the look on your mother's face as you waited in a queue?

- (vii) how you feel when tracking a tiger in a tiger reserve forest?

- (viii) the story you have recently read, or a film you have seen?

2. **Now use the adjectives in the exercise above, as appropriate, to write a paragraph about Coorg.**

Speaking and Writing

1. Read the following passage about tea.

India and tea are so intertwined together that life without the brew is unimaginable. Tea entered our life only in the mid-nineteenth century when the British started plantations in Assam and Darjeeling! In the beginning though, Indians shunned the drink as they thought it was a poison that led to umpteen diseases. Ironically, tea colonised Britain where it became a part of their social diary and also led to the establishment of numerous tea houses.

Today, scientific research across the world has attempted to establish the beneficial qualities of tea — a fact the Japanese and the Chinese knew anyway from ancient times, attributing to it numerous medicinal properties.

[Source: 'History: Tea Anytime' by Ranjit Biswas from Literary Review, The Hindu, 1 October 2006]

Collect information about tea, e.g. its evolution as a drink, its beneficial qualities. You can consult an encyclopedia or visit Internet websites. Then form groups of five and play the following roles: Imagine a meeting of a tea planter, a sales agent, a tea lover (consumer), a physician and a tea-shop owner. Each person in the group has to put forward his/her views about tea. You may use the following words and phrases.

- I feel ...
- I disagree with you ...
- I would like you to know ...
- It is my feeling ...
- May I know why you ...
- It is important to know ...
- I think that tea ...
- I agree with ...
- I suggest ...
- I am afraid ...

2. You are the sales executive of a famous tea company and you have been asked to draft an advertisement for the product. Draft the advertisement using the information you collected for the role play. You can draw pictures or add photographs and make your advertisement colourful.

In This Lesson

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Given a picture of three different regions of India, giving an idea of how varied and charming and beautiful our country is.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Get your students to arrange an exhibition of photographs of different places in India — good sources are travel articles in Sunday newspapers, or in travel magazines, or in brochures available at travel agents. Ask students to bring in two or three pictures each, accompanied by a short, neatly hand-written write-up on the place shown in the pictures. Arrange them on your classroom walls. Let the students study them. They can then discuss, and later vote on the place they would most like to see.

