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Uplifting the Village Community

**VOICE**

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By Jamaica Dlima - Marve

### East Indian Calendar 2022- Gaothans and Heritage

The East Indian Calendar 2022 will follow last year's theme of Gaothans and Heritage. Each calendar month will be dedicated to a particular Gaothan. The Calendar will continue to be user friendly to East Indians across the world. Recipe contest will be held on social media as usual. Photographers will be selected and assigned specific Gaothans. If you wish to get your Gaothans covered, ask your local activists/group heads to contact us.

To be a part of the East Indian Calendar 2022 Team as photographers, layout designers, village visit members, theme writers, etc please call/msg on 9820545302. Your feedback/suggestions can be sent at eastindiancalendar@gmail.com

### East Indian Dictionary - Second Edition

AMobai Gaothan Panchayat Initiative

MGP is glad to announce our plans for the second edition of the Dictionary. We appeal to the State Government to take note that the Native East Indian Community speaks a dialect which has a majority of words common to the Marathi language.

Candida Remedios from Vikhroli, is the editor for this edition and the Chief Project Coordinator is Gleason Barretto, Old Kurla. MGP plans to launch the Second Edition of the East Indian Dictionary by this year-end.

Together let's ensure that there is awareness about the East Indians as the one of the original inhabitants of Maharashtra and we have a very close connect with the Marathi language.

For feedback and suggestions on the East Indian Dictionary you may mail us at eastindiandictionary@gmail.com

### Kole Kalyan - Kalina By Fr.Milton Gonsalves

Kole Kalyan which literally means "Abode of Foxes" is now called Kalina. This book is written by Fr.Milton Gonsalves featuring the 2 Main Villages of Kalina - Big Village and Koloverly. The book cost Rs 100/- per copy for personal pickup and Rs 50/- extra for local courier.

This book is supported for printing and publicity by Mobai Gaothan Panchayat as a part of its "Project East Indian - Creating an East Indian Identity". Kole Kalyan - Kalina was released on Saturday 13th March at Our Last of Egypt Church, Kalina.

MGP Team would love to support all Book and Historical Projects on the East Indian Community through Printing, Publicity Marketing and more. Those interested can contact 9820545302

### UCF Meets AAP Mumbai Team to discuss Christian representation in BMC Elections - MGP Presents Memorandum and Dictionary to AAP Leaders

UCF Team will suggest Christian representatives for AAP in BMC elections. MGP Team presented the East Indian Community Memorandum to AAP leaders.

AAP was represented by Preeti Sharma Menon - AAP National Executive Member and Mumbai Prabhari and Ruben Mascarenhas, AAP National Joint Secretary. UCF was represented by Adv.Alexander D'souza, Alphi D'souza, Douglas Lobo, Gleason Barretto and Kennedy Dmello.

AAP leaders look forward to work along with UCF. AAP assured MGP Team that Indigenous rights will be their first priority in their action plan and Manifesto.

### AIKA BAIKA

Let's Make the Contribution of our Women Count and Make a Difference. Now is the time to Make their Voices Heard and Dreams Fulfilled.

A Special Women Expert Series will be available soon on MGP YouTube channel consisting of Seminars, Talks, Discussion and lots more. Special Focus will be on Women Self Help Groups and Small Businesses led by Women will also be promoted. We want to ensure our Lugra becomes more famous and a must at all our celebrations.

MGP Team looks forward to your suggestions and feedback to launch this initiative. You may share your details and feedback at mgpmobai@gmail.com or call/msg Sybil on 9930229742

## The East Indian 'Wharad' (Wedding)

RITA RODRICKS

In the old days we East Indians would celebrate our weddings over a period of five days Customs, Traditions and the Ceremonies were adhered to with reverence, joy and happiness always Initially Invitations were verbal, later on came printed cards which had to be distributed in a particular order so as not to offend

The first card went out to the Bride or Groom's family followed by the Mother's brothers, Godparents and finally relatives, neighbors and friends

Three Banns were read in the parish Church on three consecutive Sundays it was important no doubt Merriment and Rejoicing for the wedding started on the day the first Banns were read out In the rural villages mass weddings during the month of May were a common occurrence due to occupational activity

The Bride and the Groom walked separately to the church under a red and gold brocade 'Shatar' (Umbrella) accompanied by the 'Wazantri' (Brass Band)

A pig, piglets, chickens and ducks were specially reared a year prior for the wedding celebration Masalas, Rice flour, Urad Dal, Oil and Ghee were also stored for this special occasion

On Saturday the Mandav (Pandal) was set up at the residence of the bride/groom by neighbors The pigs were slaughtered and the meat was used to cook traditional dishes like Vindaloo and Sorpotalon the Chulhas (earthen stoves) outdoors

Fugias (Bread) and Warias were made on Sunday and distributed to the people in the village singing This was followed by the Umbra-cha-Pani in the evening playing the Ghumat (drum) and dancing

The Wedding Ceremony was on Monday morning followed by a lunch reception at the Bride's house and a dinner reception at the groom's house

A Saraha Lagra (Sari) along with a choli (blouse) a gold poth (Necklace), a gold flower comb (Mogra Kadi) and some dry fruits was presented by the Groom to his newly wed spouse

The Chaudees on Tuesday consisted of a custom called 'Wara' (fresh air) where the Bride was introduced to her new village

This was followed by the 'Pass-path-ker' where five people dressed in fancy dress from the Bridal party accompanied the Bridal couple to the Bride's home according to adage

The 'Ainch' on Wednesday, the last celebration dinner concluded the wedding celebrations after which the guests departed

We sure miss the weddings that we attended when we were young it was fun while it lasted

Today some of these traditions are still adhered to in the gaothans (villages) in and around Mumbai near and far

The East Indians take great pride and joy in celebrating their 'Wharads' (Weddings) wherever they are!



### **Papiyas – Special Prayers and Hymns at Lenten time**

Bhavando, utha tumche neezemanche, deemi ghala, lazaar kara, ek Amche Bapala.....

\*Papiya is a Marathi word which means Penitents

\*Papiyas or Devaats as they are called, are a group of devout christians who move about from cross to cross at the dead of night, chanting prayers and imploring Christians to wake up from their sleep, get down on their knees and pray and ask for God's forgiveness

\*These groups become active from the Sunday night before Palm Sunday and their activity culminates in a crescendo on Maundy Thursday

\*Papiyas organize themselves into groups of 10 to 20 persons or more and start with visiting various Gaothans during Lenten time

\*They shroud themselves in black or blue or brown tunics with a hood so they cannot be easily recognized

\*Their lamentable chants in tones similar to Gregorian chants are in East Indian dialect

\*Listening to their mournful chants can be a hair raising experience and can send shivers down ones spines, especially when one hears them at the dead of night.

\*Tradition has it that Papiyas from one village would visit the neighbouring village and vice versa, No two groups could come face with each other.

\*If both groups had the occasion to travel and would cross paths, then the group that spotted the passing group would hide behind the bunds (baands) of the field till the other group passed by

\*People of the neighbourhood would keep a kettle of hot tea at the foot of the cross for the Papiyas

\*Papiyas are representative of the apostles Peter, James and John who accompanied Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed and during the 'Agony' on the Mount of Olives

MGP thanks all our community members who join Papiya Singing for ensuring our Religious Traditions are revived and passed on to our future generations.







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## AAPLAA GAAV! AAPLAA SANT!

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Gleason Barretto - Old Kurla

**G**ass is the place St. Gonsalo Garcia was born and there is a Dedicated to our Community Saint in his Native Village. On initial inquiry we have got to know the birth place and we plan to promote this sacred place. Our team from Vasai will visit the site with like-minded locals to plan way forward. Also basic research from seniors on the native Saint will be compiled to know more about the devotions and beliefs of the Gass villagers. Identifying many such locations connected to the life of St. Gonsalo Garcia will be documented for future reference and planning.

**A**wareness about our community saint across the Native East Indian Community is urgently required. A sizeable number know little about our saint who has a Native Connect to the East Indian Community. Mass awareness Initiatives on our community level is needed. As a part of the Native Devotion Project initiated by the MGP various action points will be announced to meet this objective. A Religious Walk with St. Gonsalo Garcia will be planned and assigned to a community member as a part of the awareness Initiative.

**R**ecognition of our first Indian Saint on the National as well as State level seems to be missing. To take this forward MGP will send Communications as well as meet political leaders to ensure recognition to our community saint. Our country and state should recognise the First Indian Catholic Saint and dedicate projects and institutions to St. Gonsalo Garcia. Vasai and Mumbai where the majority of the community reside should have special projects dedicated to our Community Saint to have the native connect. A Special scheme for the Christian minority dedicated for St. Gonsalo on National as well as State level is required.

**C**hapel dedicated to our Community Saint in Mumbai Archdiocese will be built by MGP. The project was announced a couple of years ago and is on hold due to land issue. We are looking out for alternative donors or may also purchase a small piece of land. The proposed chapel will be built on a boat to have the connect of St. Gonsalo Garcia travel to Japan by a boat. MGP is also working on more projects dedicated to St. Gonsalo Garcia. MGP has also spoken to some experts within the community who will help us built the boat, the Chapel structure and the interiors including altar.

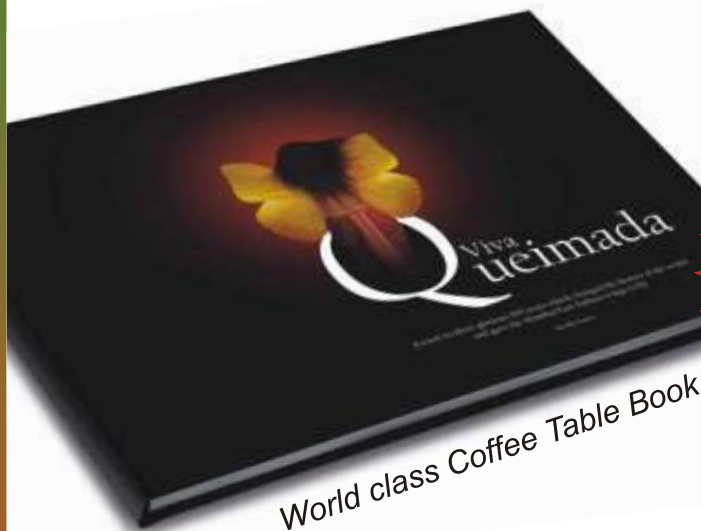
**I**nstallation of the statue of our Community Saint across Maharashtra Churches, Holy Crosses and Home Altars. MGP has already installed a statue of our saint at the Kaka Baptista East Indian Museum. We will encourage Community members to place a statue at the Gaothan Holy Crosses too. Many Churches do not have a statue of the Saint and we will request them to do install the same or display during the novenas and annual feast. A miniature statue of St. Gonsalo Garcia will be arranged by MGP and an appeal will be made across the community to install this statue at the altars of each home.

**A**rchdiocesan initiatives to promote the Community Saint is also needed in the Archdiocese of Vasai and Bombay. A formal Communication will be sent to the Hierarchy to ensure promotion of our native Saint on the diocesan level through various projects. A Special request will be made to Archdiocese of Bombay that St. Gonsalo Garcia is considered as the Principal Patron Saint of the Diocese. No other saint to be considered as the patron saint. Vasai Diocese will also be requested to initiate multiple projects in the native city especially at our Saint's native village. MGP Team looks forward to support from like-minded Community members, the diocese and the Government to make these plans possible. May our Community Patron Saint, St. Gonsalo Garcia bless us all to achieve what we plan to make him known across the State and Country, thereby making him a Truly Indian Saint.



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