

# শারদীয়া স্মরণিকা ২০০৮

দশম বার্ষিকী সংখ্যা



HONG KONG BENGALI ASSOCIATION

চার্তুব পূজ ২০০৮

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Dear Friends

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the Durga Puja celebrations of 2008. Adding to this pleasure is a special sense of happiness, achievement and pride as this year's festivities mark the tenth anniversary of this auspicious and joyous event in Hong Kong. That we have come such a long way is a testimony to the spirit of the local Bengali community, and a reflection of the tremendous support, goodwill and encouragement that we have received from our fellow Indians and the local people of Hong Kong.

Durga Puja is not just about the cult of the Goddess Durga. Religion may indeed be the common thread, but the occasion is about much more than just worship. The occasion brings forth an outpouring of all the passions of Bengal, a bewildering amalgamation of emotion, culture, depiction of art forms, an exercise of the intellect, the expression of the sheer joy of living and being together; in short, everything about being the quintessential Bengali. Where else would you find devotional chants of mantras, prayers, singing, dancing, animated discussions on matters politic, card games, carrom board, *antakshri*, screening of Bengali and Bollywood films, and of course, the all consuming thoughts of prasad and food, all happening together and in one setting amidst a prevailing sense of chaotic urgency. This then is the soul of the Bengali, and no matter whether the place is Kolkata or Hong Kong, that soul is going to find its full expression during these five days of Durga Puja.

I have alluded to a sense of pride. This emanates from a reflection of what we, as a community, have achieved over the past decade since the birth of the HKBA. The Bengali community, despite its modest size, has made an indelible impression on the cultural map of Hong Kong. This has been through a rich and diverse contribution to the cultural milieu of this great city. We can boast of a stream of highly accomplished singers, dancers, instrumentalists, stage-artists, painters and various other creative artistes, who have all done us proud through their performances in so many different forums. It has been especially heartening to see the youngsters and children of our community make such strong connections with the cultural heritage of their motherland despite growing up on foreign soil. The *India Evening* programme in 2003, *Chandalika*, *Hingshutey Dwaita* and such others are examples that spring to mind. This year itself, while one performed her *arangetram* in the classical Indian dance form of Bharatnatyam, another, a mere twelve year old, emerged as the runaway winner of the Star Voice of India (Hong Kong) singing talent contest. I am confident that many more such prodigies are in the making. Besides, we have made constant endeavours to further enrich the cultural and entertainment platform of Hong Kong by inviting well-known exponents of music from Kolkata from time to time.

Fun loving though we are, in the field of charity too, we have not been found wanting. Besides helping some dedicated charitable organizations back home in India as well as here in Hong Kong on a regular basis, our members have always risen to the call of conscience in the face of calamities like floods, tsunami and earth quakes.

All such cultural, social and charitable activities have enabled us to establish strong ties with a number of other Associations and organizations. Today the Durga Puja is no longer confined to just the Bengali fraternity, but rather embraces the entire Indian Community in Hong Kong. Organizing an event of this nature is a mammoth undertaking and would never be possible without the generosity, help and support of our fellow Indian and Chinese friends. I would particularly wish to thank the District Facilities Management Committee of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council, especially the Chairman, Mr. Chan Siu Tong, member, Mr Benny Yeung, the District Officer (Yau Tsim Mong), Mrs Vicki Kwok, and the officials of the Home Affairs Department of the Hong Kong Government for their appreciation of the importance of this festival and making this excellent venue available to us for this purpose. I would also like to express my heart-felt thanks to all our patrons, sponsors, friends, well wishers, business organizations and all other Indian Associations for their unstinted support and help over the years. I would also like to record my gratitude for the helping hand that the Indian Consulate has always extended to our Association.

Finally I salute all the members of The Hong Kong Bengali Association for making this Association such a vibrant and exciting body. On this landmark occasion, I would especially like to acknowledge the contributions of the Presidents and members of past committees, in particular those whose vision, initiative and courage were instrumental in the formation of this Association and setting it upon its course. I, personally, owe a debt of gratitude to the members of the current Executive Committee for putting in so much time and hard work to make the organization of this year's Durga Puja possible. May the bountiful blessings of Ma Durga be on us all.

*Durga Mai ki Jay!*

*Long live The Hong Kong Bengali Association!*

Dr. S. R. Das

*President, The Hong Kong Bengali Association*

হংকং বেঙ্গলী এসোসিয়েশন



## Special Acknowledgements

The Hong Kong Bengali Association wishes to express its heart-felt thanks to all friends, supporters, sponsors and well-wishers for the help they have rendered to the cause of our Association. For this year's Durga Puja, we especially acknowledge the contributions of the following:

Mrs. Maitrayee Banerjee

Mrs & Mr. Batheja

Mr. Kanwaljeet Singh Dhillon

Mr. Shankar Ghosh

Mr. Sohan Goenka

Mr. Raymond Ho

Jet Airways (India) Ltd

Mrs. Neesha Jhaveri

## Durga Puja 2008 Schedule

### Venue:

Multipurpose Hall, Henry G. Leong Community Centre  
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon.

### Puja Timings:

Sasthi	Sunday, 5 <sup>th</sup> October	Sasthi Puja (starts from 5:30 pm) Prasad distribution
Saptami	Monday, 6 <sup>th</sup> October	Saptami Puja (starts from 9:30 am) Prasad distribution Sandhya Arati (starts from 6:30 pm) Prasad distribution
Asthami	Tuesday, 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Asthami Puja (starts from 9:30 am) Prasad distribution Sandhya Arati (Starts from 5:30 pm) Sandhi Puja (starts from 8:00 pm) Prasad distribution
Navami	Wednesday, 8 <sup>th</sup> October	Navami Puja (starts from 9:30 am) Prasad distribution Sandhya Arati (starts from 5:30 pm)
Dasami	Thursday, 9 <sup>th</sup> October	Dasami Puja (starts from 10:30 am) Prasad distribution Sindoor Khela / Pratima Bisarjan (starts from 5:00 pm)
Lakshmi Puja	Tuesday, 14 <sup>th</sup> October	Lakshmi Puja (starts from 7:00 pm) Prasad distribution

### Priest:

Shri Sakti Prasad Mukherjee





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**Durga Idol & Puja Mandap**

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Arabinda Ghosh  
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**THE HONG KONG BENGALI ASSOCIATION**

(Registered under the Societies Ordinance: Ref: (2) in CP/LIC/SO/19/21460 dated 31.12.1998)

**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED MARCH 15, 2008.**

Receipts	HKD	Amount HKD	Payments	HKD	Amount HKD
<b>Opening Balance of fund:</b>			<b>Durga Puja Expenses:</b>		
Cheques in hand	7,000		Purohit including travel & puja purchase	9,558	
Cash at Bank as at March 1, 2007.	144,446	151,446	Decoration costs	6,243	
			Food catering expenses	43,372	
<b>Membership Fees Collection:</b>			Fruits, sweets, provisions, gifts and all miscellaneous expenses	15,703	
During the year		6,400	Printing of souvenir	15,900	
<b>Collection for Poila Baisakh function</b>		7,520	Bijoya Sammelani expenses	27,200	
			Lakshmi Puja expenses	1,069	119,045
<b>Durga Puja Collections:</b>			<b>Saraswati Puja Expenses:</b>		6,492
Members' Subscriptions	64,800		<b>Poila Baisakh function expenses</b>		9,655
Members' Donations	13,742				
Advertisements	109,704		<b>AGM Expenses</b>		2,200
Pranami & other Donations	8,843	197,089	<b>Net bank charges</b>		150
<b>Collection from members Donation to Red Cross</b>		6,000	<b>Donation towards charitable activities:</b>		
<b>Recovery of written off debt</b>		1,000	Sarada Seva Sangha	20,000	
			Ramakrishna Mission	10,050	
			Po Kuk Leung	3,000	
			Red Cross	6,000	39,050
			<b>Bank balance remaining as on March 15, 2008.</b>		
			Bank balance	190,363	
			Cash in hand	500	
			Cheque in hand	2,000	192,863
		<b>369,455</b>			<b>369,455</b>

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 15, 2008**

Liabilities	HKD	Amount HKD	Assets	HKD	Amount HKD
<b>Members' Fund:</b>			Life Membership of Hindu Temple		6,000
Opening Balance as on March 1, 2007	56,522				
Add:			Hi Fi System	3,500	
Membership fees collected during 2007-08	6,400	62,922	Tabla	704	
			Kongo	796	5,000
<b>General Fund:</b>					
Opening Balance as on March 1, 2007	112,624		Cash and Bank balances:		
Add:			Bank balance	190,363	
Surplus from Durga Puja during year	78,044		Cash in hand	500	
Write-back of past provision for expenses, not required	2,500		Cheque in hand	2,000	192,863
Sub-total	193,168				
Less from General Fund for:					
Net Deficit on Poila Baisakh function	2,135				
Expenses for Saraswati Puja	6,492				
AGM expenses	2,200				
Net Bank charges	150				
Repair charges for damages to Community Hall during Durga Puja	2,916				
Donations during the year to:					
Sarada Seva Sangha	20,000				
Ramakrishna Mission	10,050				
Po Kuk Leung	3,000				
Write-off of the following assets:					
Uncollected net receivables in respect of advertisement for 2006-07.	6,000				
Cabinet for Durga Pratima	2,200				
Sub-total	55,143				
General Fund Balance as on March 15, 2008		138,025			
Repair charges payable		2,916			
		<b>203,863</b>			<b>203,863</b>

(Subid Ranjan Das)

(Sipanta Kumar Saha)

**Audit Report for 2007-08**

We have checked and verified the Statement of Receipts and Payments for the period March 1, 2007 to March 15, 2008 and the related balance Sheet as at March 15, 2008 together with the detailed supporting documents / statements attached to and forming part of these accounts. Based on our checking and on the information and explanations obtained, we certify that the said accounts are true and fair in all respects.

Sd/- Ambar Mitra

Sd/- Partha Guha Thakurta



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### **10<sup>th</sup> Year of DURGA PUJA in Hong Kong**

The Hong Kong Bengali Association was officially established in December 1998. Members of the Bengali community nominated a steering committee in early 1998 to establish the Hong Kong Bengali Association. This committee was authorized to form the first Executive Committee of the Hong Kong Bengali Association. Many members of the steering committee and the first Executive Committee have since left Hong Kong. A few of us are still here including: Sharmistha Chaudhury, Pradip Putatunda, Sanjib Sengupta, and myself.

Until 1998, we used to only celebrate Saraswati Puja & organize a get-together for Bijoya. The Saraswati Puja was always held at the Hindu Temple in Happy Valley. The 'Bijoya Sammilani' used to be held at one of the Indian restaurants soon after the puja. One of the attractions of the Bijoya get-together was a 'lucky draw' which community members always enjoyed.

When our HKBA was formed, the Executive Committee & the members of the Association had a strong desire to have Durga Puja celebration here in Hong Kong as it is considered the biggest festival for Bengalis. As a result, we were able to organize and celebrate Durga Puja in Hong Kong for the first time in 1999. In fact, we also placed an advertisement in the South China Morning Post announcing that there would be a Durga Puja celebration.

Although Durga Puja is primarily seen as a Bengali celebration, the organizers have always invited and encouraged members from all communities and religions to join in the festivities. We have welcomed many members of other communities over the years to our Puja. This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year of celebrating Ma Durga in Hong Kong.

Here in Hong Kong, we Bengalis have few community-related occasions where we get together, talk with our friends, colleagues, and relatives, chat about our respective professions, and express opinions about the conditions back in India, politics, Bollywood, and NRI-related issues. Hence, although the Pujas are religious occasions, we treat them as social, cultural, and communal rejuvenating gatherings – never to be missed!

One thing I can proudly say is that we have never compromised the serenity and values of the Puja itself. Organizers have always been careful and attentive to every detail of the Puja as asked and directed by the Priest. Our Priest is Shri ShaktiPrasad Mukherjee ('Shakti da' to all of us) and he has served as our priest for the past 10 years. Shakti da travels from Kolkata every year for our puja.

There was a big change in 2007 when the Puja venue needed to be relocated. We were told by the Hindu Temple Management that the Hindu Temple could not accommodate Durga Puja due to unstable conditions of the building- specifically the Mohan Hall. So, the Association found no option but to relocate the Puja venue to the Community Hall in Yau Ma Tei. We, as a community, must express our deep gratitude to the Management Committee of the Yau Tsim District Council whose cooperation and active help to our organization was overwhelming. At the same time, I must express my sadness at the fact that the Durga Puja, a Hindu Religious festival, could no longer be organized at the Hindu Temple.

Over the years, many members of the Association have contributed to the success of our Durga Puja. From time to time, we are also graced with the presence of parents of our members during the Puja. It gives us great pleasure to see some of our parents appreciating what we do miles away from home.

On that note, I would like to earnestly request all of you to come forward before, during, and even after the Puja to help your Association to organize the Pujas & other events. This is your Association. Some of us have been here longer than others but I believe that we all share the same goal & responsibility for the betterment of our community.

***Durga Mai Ki – Joy !!!***

Nishesh Poddar  
Founding President  
The Hong Kong Bengali Association  
September 23, 2008



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# Happy Durga Puja



*Sharbo Mangola Mongolee, Shive Shorbartho Shadhike  
Shoronee Tromboke Gauri, Narayoni Namastute  
Durgaoee Namoh*

**Late Shri Bishwanath Ghosh & Late Smt Rekha Ghosh  
Your Blessings and Durga Ma will always stay with us.**

**Jayshree, Shashi, Chandni, Vivek, Arun, Eric, Rahul, Nivedita,  
Annabelle, Akshat and Benjamin.**



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### Origin of Durga - The Mythology

Devi is the great goddess of the Hindus, the consort of Shiva and she is worshiped in various forms corresponding to her two aspects: benevolence and fierceness. She is Uma, "light"; Gauri, "yellow or brilliant"; Parvati, "the mountaineer"; and Jagatmata, "the-mother-of-the-world" in her milder guise. The terrible emanations are Durga "the inaccessible"; Kali, "the black"; Chandi, "the fierce"; and Bhairavi, "the terrible."

#### Descent of the Goddess

Durga, a beautiful warrior seated upon a tiger, was the first appearance of the great goddess. The circumstance of her miraculous arrival was the tyranny of the monster-demon Mahishasur, who through terrific austerities had acquired invincible strength. The gods were afraid of this water-buffalo bull because neither Vishnu nor Shiva could prevail against him. It seemed that only the joint energy of Shakti was capable of vanquishing Mahisha, and so it was the eighteen-armed Durga who went out to do battle.

#### Battlefield

She went to battle on her ferocious mount lion, armed with the weapons given to her by the other Gods. Durga is one of the angry and aggressive aspects of the goddess Shakti, whose role in Hindu mythology was to fight and conquer demons and also personify the Sakti or female aspect of any male deity. In the battle, she fought and killed the evil Mahishasura and restored heaven to the Gods. Since then the goddess is invoked for protection from the powers of evil. Durga Puja is observed in her honor, to celebrate her victory over evil.

#### Revered Mother

She has been worshiped from about 400 AD, but probably earlier, to the present. Her literary references are chiefly the Ramayana and Mahabharata, epic and Puranic texts, and she is mentioned by name in Vedic literature. In general, Durga is regarded in northern India as the gentle bride epitomizing family unity while in southern India she is revered more in her warrior aspect.



### The Bengali Belief

Sati, the consort of Shiva was the daughter of Daksha Prajaapati a descendant of Bhrama. Sati had married Shiva against the wishes of her father. Daksha was sponsoring a sacrifice and attendees came from various parts of the universe. He invited all of the gods and goddesses except his son in law Shiva. Against Shiva's wishes, Sati attended this sacrifice and was insulted by her father. Unable to bear this insult, Sati immolated herself.

Enraged at the insult and the injury, Shiva destroyed Daksha's sacrifice, cut off Daksha's head and when pleaded by other gods, replaced it with that of a goat and restored him to life. Still berserk with grief, he picked up the remains of Sati's body, and danced the dance of destruction throughout the Universe. The other gods intervened to stop this dance, and the disk of Vishnu cut through the corpse of Sati, whose various parts of the body fell at several spots all through the Indian subcontinent and formed the sites of what are known as Shakti Peethas today.

Shiva was finally pacified when the last piece fell off from his shoulder. Narayana revived sati as Uma for a new life. Ever since peace was restored, Uma, with her children, Ganesh and Kartik, and with her two 'sakhis' - Jaya and Bijaya, comes to visit her parent's home each year during the season of 'Sharat' or autumn when Durga Puja is celebrated.

**Indranil Guha**

With Best Wishes



Congratulations to HKBA on the  
10<sup>th</sup> Durga Puja anniversary

**Mira & Ramesh Mahtani**



## Bengali Byrons

### The Ocean

As I stare into the vast blue of the ocean,  
I sometimes wonder...  
What mysteries does this infinite sea hide?  
How many secrets are concealed within its waves?  
As I stare into the vast blue of the ocean  
I think to myself...  
Are there really mermaids to give us a ride?  
Are there really pirates hiding in the caves?

Sometimes while I walk along the sandy beach,  
Questions forming in my mind...  
Are waves really formed by the wind?  
Or does something rumble in the waters?  
Sometimes while I walk along the sandy beach,  
I ask my brain...  
At night does the ocean sing?  
Calling us to swim in its waters?

When I gaze at the stars in the velvet skies,  
I start to understand,  
That many mysteries this ocean hides,  
They just wait to be found in its mysterious depths.  
When I gaze at the stars in the velvet skies,  
I start to realize,  
That one day the secrets will be washed upon the tide  
Until then these mysteries in the ocean will be kept.

**Sohini Paul**



### The Months of the Year

January brings the snow,  
Makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,  
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes sharp and shrill,  
To stir the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,  
Scatters daisies at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs,  
Skipping at their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,  
Fills the children's hand with posies.

July brings rain and shine,  
The weather for a swim is fine.

August brings the bright, shining sun,  
The season of summer is nearly done.

September brings leaves red and gold,  
The weather is beginning to get cold.

October brings us Halloween treats,  
Children love them because they're sweets.

November brings Remembrance Day,  
Making poppies is fun and gay.

December delights both young and old,  
Wrap up well, because it's cold.

**Debasmita Bhattacharya**

### Success is a Journey

Everyone wants success.  
Some people spend their every waking moment trying to attain it, no matter what the cost.  
Others believe success is for the lucky few.  
But if we strive for success for the wrong reasons, we won't reach it.  
Similarly, you can't hurry success, catch it or find it by chance.  
You can't inherit it or take it from someone else.  
Success is something you must work hard towards and long to earn.  
You can have anything you want in life if you're ready to pay the price.  
But if you consider the process too hard, too slow, or the distance too long and lonely, you don't deserve it.  
So always work hard for success and you will achieve it one day.

**Nibedita Saha**



### The Journey Home

In India there lives a man who goes by the name A R Rehman. He is famous for composing music, and one of his most renowned songs is "Chaiyya Chaiyya". Its popularity transcended international borders, and was playing on a British radio station when another famous man, Andrew Lloyd Weber, heard it. He probably said, "What ho, this is a jolly good song! I must meet this composer, wot wot," but I cannot be sure because I was not there myself.

Regardless of the exact words used, they did meet, and from their meeting was born a brilliant and most wonderful musical – Bombay Dreams. If you are not fortunate enough to have seen it, I suggest you remedy that situation as quickly as possible. However, I shall refrain from praising the play at length, lest my composition appear more advertisement than article, and will instead share some lyrics from one of its songs:

*"The journey home is never too long,  
One helps to heal the deepest pain.  
The journey home is never too long,  
Your heart arrives before the train."*

Years passed, as they tend to do, and memories of the musical gathered (metaphorical) dust in the innermost recesses of my cluttered mind. I had more pressing things to think about; I was just starting out at boarding school in the distant foreign land of Ma On Shan. You may scoff, but remember that these were the dark days before the KCR served that faraway region.

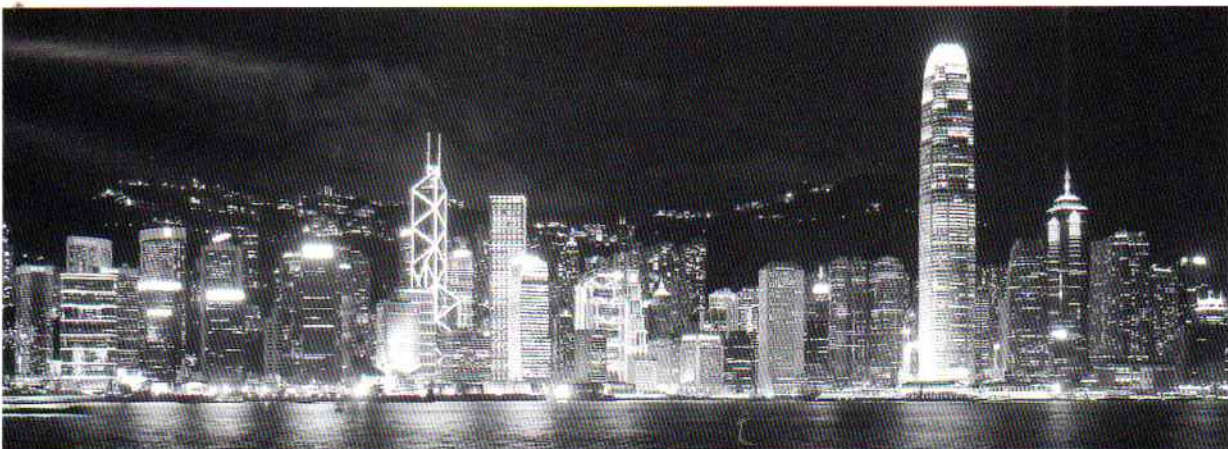
After a long and gruelling week at school, exciting though it may have been, I was often ready to crash at home, and would have liked nothing better than to step out the school's front gate and straight into the front door at home. (By which I mean doorway, for to walk into a door would have hurt.) Unfortunately, reality was not so kind; the actual journey consisted of taking a minibus, followed by the KCR, then the MTR, and finally a second bus ride - two hours on (or under) the roads of Hong Kong before I could collapse on a sofa at home.

Now I suffer from a peculiar ailment – I cannot stay awake in a vehicle. Ten minutes into any road trip and I will no doubt have dozed off peacefully. Thus it was with great surprise that I found myself becoming more alert as my journey would progress, with my wakefulness reaching a crescendo as the 70 pulled into the bus stop at home. There is something invigorating about returning home.

As I grew longer in the tooth, so too my travels grew longer as I moved further afield. Enthralled though I was by the many sights and sounds of Cambridge and Los Angeles, the greatest pleasure of all was reserved for the return to Hong Kong. This affinity for homecoming was tested most strongly this summer, when my itinerary involved four airports, three airlines, two days and one very weary traveller. Had I been faced with this convoluted route on my way out, I would no doubt have given up halfway through; coming home, though, I almost – dare I say it – *enjoyed* it. Such is the wonder of the journey home!

That's not to say I'm not waiting for them to bring back the Concorde.

**Shagnik Das**





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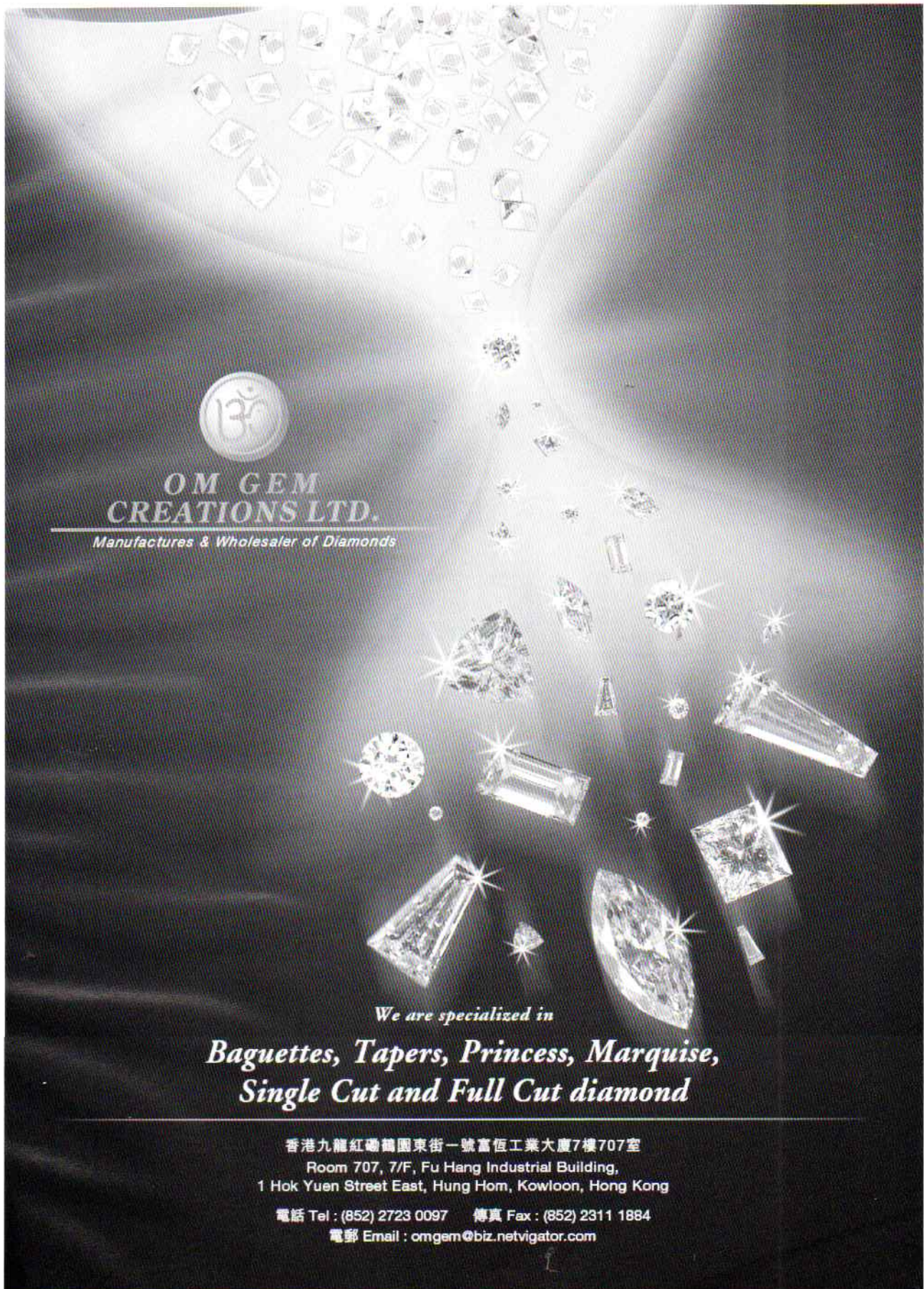
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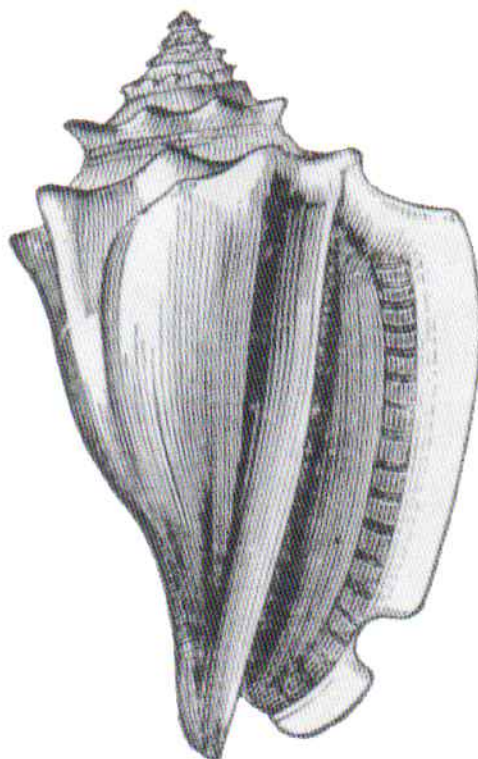
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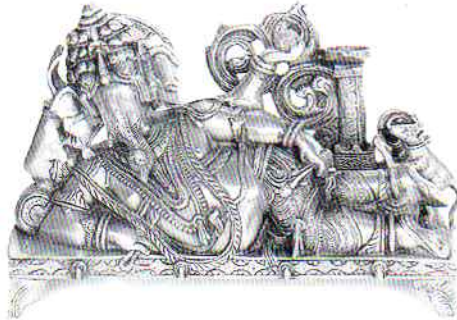
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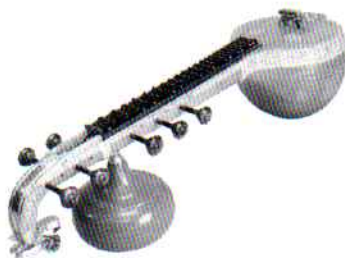
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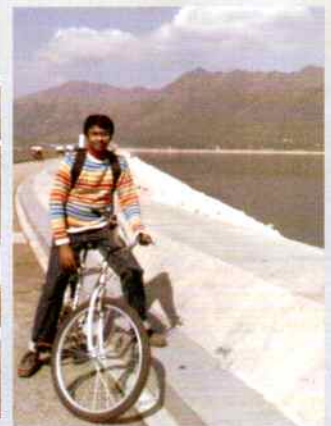


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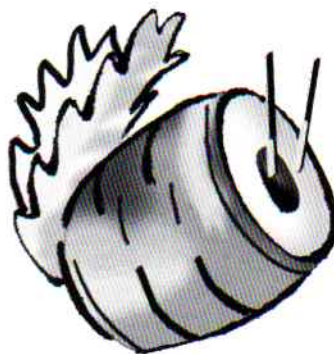
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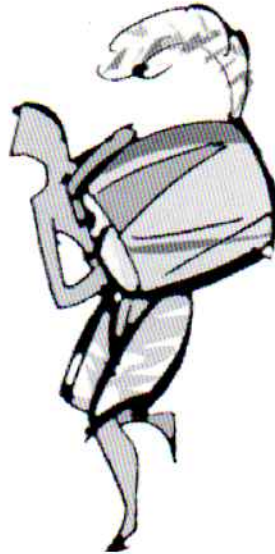
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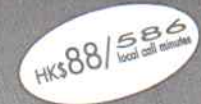
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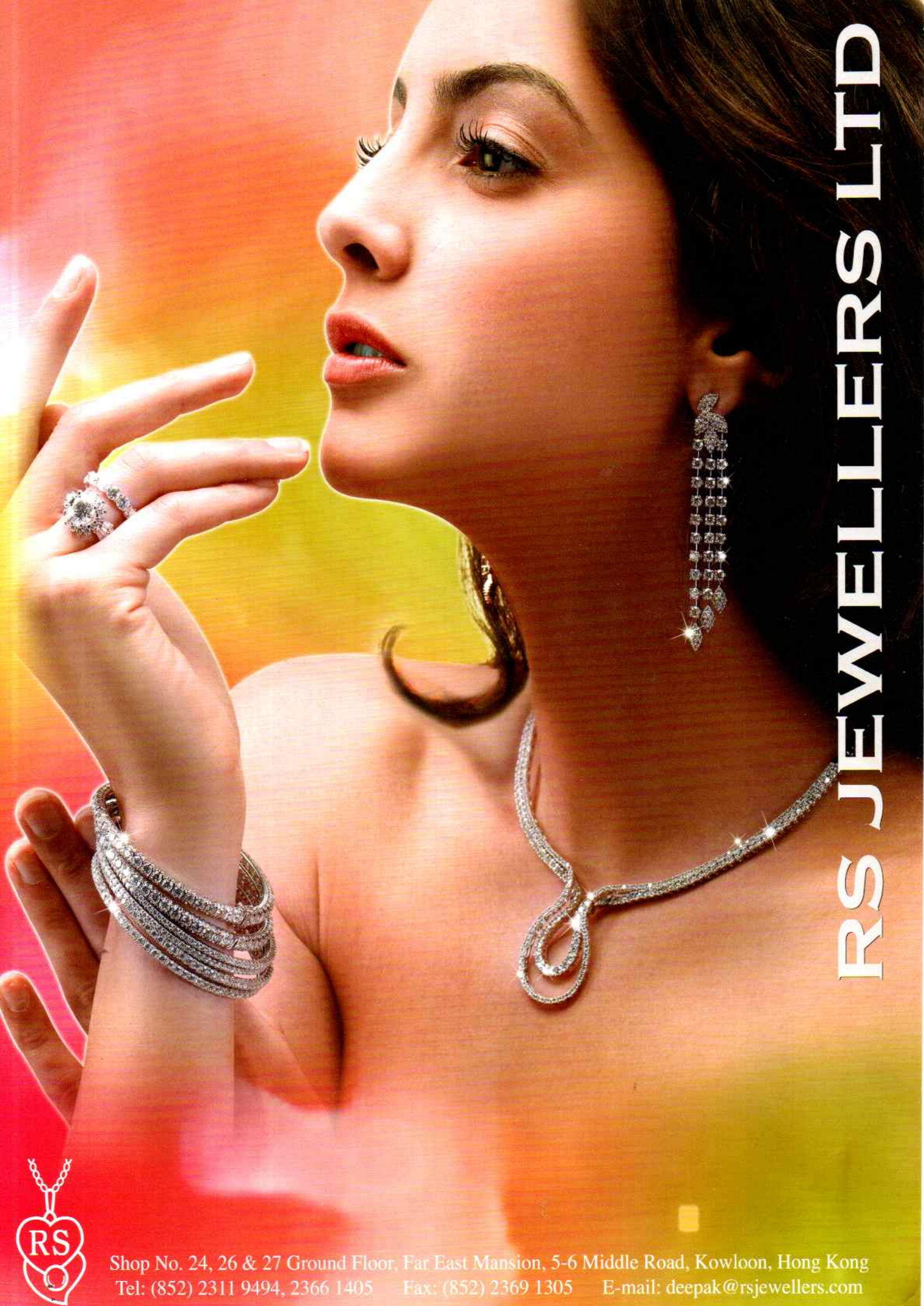
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