

GOPI KANT JHA

Autobiography of a Freedom Fighter



Web. edition 2013

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(Cover designed by Smt Kishori Jha in dedication to her grandfather)

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Photographs

- a. GopiKant Jha, his son (Shiva Kant Jha), and his only daughter (Smt. Phuleshwari Coudhary)
- b. My Father's Garden: Smt. Veenapani Jha (daughter-in-law), Shiva Kant Jha (son), Janki Jha, Nandan Kumar Jha, Kishori Jha and Anju Jha (grand children)
- c. Father with Nandan, his grandchild]
- d. My Father's son and his daughter-in-law (Shiva Kant Jha and his wife Veenapani Jha)

FOREWORD

One of his students felt thus:

Reflections on an ideal teacher by one of his students: "Remembering Gopi Babu" by Prof. (Dr) Bishwanath Prasad, M.A.,M.D.P.A., Ph. D, M.P.A. (USA), etc, the former Vice-Chancellor of Magadh University

"Late Sri Gopi Kant Jha embodied the qualities of an ideal teacher and of a successful administrator of a higher secondary school in a backward district of North Bihar in the forties of the twentieth century. He ranked high amongst good teachers of English literature. He was endowed with competence of elevating the level of discourse from one of information to that of knowledge, to that of wisdom as and when occasion so demanded. Equipped with soft power of his noble ideas and values, he could forge a lasting relationship with some of his acquaintances through working for a shared purpose and goal. In exercising self-discipline of an authentic and compassionate guide, he made values become consistent actions. Excellence in education was not an act for him but a habit. He succeeded in galvanizing a generation of youth during the freedom movement period enjoying the reward of satisfaction of a job well done striking a balance between the demands of career development and character building. His discernible contributions to the consolidation of secondary educational system will surely endure, and so also his memory."

‘PROFILE OF MY FATHER’

It was the winter of 1970. Father and I sat by fire chatting intermittently on sundries of no interest to us now. I requested him to pen his short autobiography. He felt amused. But I persisted in my request. He asked me if I knew about Hume. I said: "Yes, it was David Hume of the 18th century. It was he who said: 'Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty.' He came out: "Yes. What he said is just what we say: चाँद को देखो चकोरी के नयन से. But it was he who had said: "It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore, I shall be short." I was glad that he accepted my request. I never saw him writing. He used to scribble in an old Soor's Diary mostly in afternoon. It went on thus till 9th December, 1973 when my mother passed away. It seemed time stopped for him. He just lived thereafter, giving us joy with sublime presence, till June 21, 1982.

Father never had the idea that his account would ever pass into public domain. I too forgot about his Diary. I was surprised that my wife had preserved the Diary. I felt I must put it in the public domain as tells us about the life of a patriot who rendered service for his motherland. His account not only tells us about the tyranny of the British Government, it also tells us the odds that the freedom fighters had to face. Hence, I put the text of his draft autobiography as I found in his Diary, without any addition or subtraction. I am sure he would have revised it, and enriched it making it more profound, and illuminating. My wife asked me to do that on his behalf. I have not done that as I felt that undertaking this exercise would be a sacrilege.

He was a freedom-fighter, and an academician. I have written 2 chapters about my parents in my Autobiographical Memoir, *On the Loom of Time*. In my introductory comment in the Summary of the Chapters of my *Memoir* (the 'thematic structure of the book'), I had written:

"I would tell you how, like Gandhi, Tilak and Subhas, he was sustained by the *Bhagavad-Gita*, both when in jail and when outside that. He was a patriot who illustrated in his life the values which had led our country to independence. Besides, he was a distinguished academician, who taught several generations over 45 years. He was one of those who deserve the tribute which is often expressed by quoting these lines of Muhammad Iqbal:

Hazaaron saal nargis apni be-noori pe roti hai

Badi mushqil se hota hai chaman mein didavar paida"

He had named me 'Deep', and always called me by that name. In his memory his daughter-in-law has lit the earthen lamp:



यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा विशन्ति नाशाय सूमद्धवेगाः ।

तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका-स्तवापि वक्त्राणि सूमद्धवेगाः ॥The Bhagavad-Gita XI.29॥

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya

Shiva Kant Jha

LIFE



यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बेवगाः समुद्रमेवाभिमुखं द्रवन्ति ।
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥ The Bhagavadgita XI.28

MY PARENTS



शिवोहम् शिवोहम् शिवोहम् शिवोहम्¹

शिवोहम् शिवोहम् शिवोहम् शिवोहम्

वही आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ.

अमर आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ / अखिल विश्व का जो परम आत्मा है

सभी प्राणियों का वही आत्मा है / वही आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ .

अखिल विश्व का जो परम आत्मा है / सभी प्राणियों का वही आत्मा है

अमर आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ.

अमर आत्मा है मरणशील काया / सभी प्राणियों के जो भीतर समाया

वही आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ.

जिसे शस्त्र काटे न अग्नि जलावे / बुझ वे न पानी न मृत्यु मिटावे

वही आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ.

है तारों सितारों में आलोक जिसका / है चंदा व सूर्य में आभाष जिसका

वही आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ.

जो व्यापक कण कण में है वास जिसका / नहीं तीनों कालों में हो नाश जिसका

वही आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ.

अजर और अमर जिसको वेदों ने गाया / वही ज्ञान अर्जुन को हरि ने सुनाया

वही आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ.

अमर आत्मा सच्चिदानंद में हूँ. शिवोहम् शिवोहम् शिवोहम् शिवोहम्

¹ You can hear it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-QKQrg0lSw>

TAMRAPATRA



(Tamrapatra granted by Mrs Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, recognising, on behalf of this nation, the memorable contribution of Shri Gopi Kant Jha to India's Struggle for Freedom]



Shri Satya Narayan Reddy and Shri Shiva Kant Jha

[**B. Satya Narayan Reddy** had told me in detail (sometime in 2005) how the freedom fighters participated in the Quit India Movement in 1942. I listened to him with reverence calling before my mind's eyes my father's participation in India's Struggle for Freedom in 1942. Shri Reddy (21 August 1927 – 6 October 2012) had himself been a freedom fighter in the Quit India Movement in 1942. In free India he held some high public assignments (he was a former [Governor of Uttar Pradesh](#), [Odisha](#) and [West Bengal](#)).]

MY LIFE

I

My family: - I was born on 1st March, 1898, in village Kurson, P.S. Bahera (now P.S. Manigachi), District Darbhanga. In the school the date of birth was 1st June, 1903. My father, Grihinandan Jha, a permanent resident of village Koelakh P.S. Madhubani, District Darbhanga, belonged to a very high class Brahmin family. Formerly the rich people among the Maithil Brahmins gave their daughters in marriage to high caste Brahmins, however poor and needy they might be. So my father was married with the daughter of Govind Narayan Chaudhary of village Kurson. It must have been peculiar then, as my father was perfectly black in appearance whereas my mother was the most beautiful lady of the family. So far I could get information there was no grumbling in any corner and the marriage was solemnised with pomp and splendour. For several years, my parents with my four brothers and three sisters lived happily with my maternal uncle and aunt. There were other sisters of my mother, who, together with their children, lived with them. I happened to be the fourth male issue of my parents, as time passed on, the financial condition of my maternal uncle, Krishna Narayan Chaudhary, became far from satisfactory; and we had to experience of the slow creeping pinches of poverty. My scholastic career covers that period.

II

Education: - My early education began at the village Middle School. I began my study with reluctance. The instruction of my maternal uncle to the Headmaster of the School to treat me and my elder brother Lakshmi Kant Jha, very strictly (so that we could stay in the school and read) prompted him to beat us cruelly. He tied both of us together and gave us such beatings as could be remembered even up to the end of life. Thanks to such cruel treatment that I could develop interest in study! Very soon I came to be loved and admired as a good student.

My brother Lakshmi Kant Jha gave up his study and took to farming as his profession. I continued my studies and proved myself as one of the best students of the class. Madhusudan Mishra, a resident of Madaria, village at a distance of about two miles from Kurson, was transferred to the Kurson Middle School as Headmaster. He was pleased with my work and smartness and helped me with his advice and guidance. As a result of all this I proved to be a good student and was chosen to sit at the Middle Scholarship Examination in December 1912. Fortunately I could succeed and get a monthly scholarship of Rs.4. This receipt helped me pursue study at the high school.

My maternal uncle did not feel inclined to send away from him for high school education. But in course of my struggle to satisfy the ever increasing ambition of my life, Awadh Narayan Chaudhary, the grandfather of Chaturbhuj Narayan Chaudhary, Advocate, persuaded my maternal uncle to give me 20 seers of rich per month and send me to Madhubani to live at the lodging of Anuplal Thakur, a leading lawyer of the time. I was sent there in February 1913.

Though I passed the Middle Vernacular Examination with scholarship I had nothing to show as my achievement in English. In those days middle vernacular school produced students to receive training at the Normal Training School at Patna where training was imparted to M.V students to be employed as vernacular masters for high or middle schools. English was taught in a few middle schools. Hence I had to lose two years learning subjects other than English. I was admitted to class VII of those days (present being class V) with hope to get a double promotion to class V (present class VII) provided I could secure 75% marks in English. I tried my best to pick up words and expressions in English. To my good luck, Baidyanath Thakur, a renowned teacher, taught English Reader in class VII through Direct Method. I was easily impressed with this mode of speech and expression. As he realized that he taught students of class VII (Present class V) he spoke very simple sentence. At the Annual Examination of the class I had to answer questions in English only. The teacher and the Headmaster were satisfied that my answer paper was well deserved 75% marks. I was promoted to class V (Present class VII) where I read all the subjects viz. English, Mathematics, History and Geography.

The spirit of rivalry had grown in me. I found my rival in Balbhadra Chaudhary, son of a teacher of the same school. He was very laborious. But I resolved to outshine him. This spirit continued up to the Matric Examination in 1920, and I could defeat him all through. The period of one year more was devoted to the reading of the subjects already read well for Middle School Scholarship Examination. My thorough grounding in all the subjects proved to great help to defeat my rival by obtaining marks more not only in the aggregate but even in all the subjects taken individually. This gave me a unique position in the class which other students could not but envy.

III

At School: My financial difficulties: - After three years of stay at the High School when I was promoted to class III (new class IX), my struggle for financial help arose afresh. The scholarship which I was granted in 1913 lasted only for 3 years and was stopped in the beginning of 1917 when I was the student of class III (new class IX). I did not know where to go and whom to approach for help. Babu Anuplal Thakur was very kind to me. He marked my activities and progress at the school and was ready to help me. My faith in God, my resolution and my performance in the class drew kind attention of Kshemdhari Singh alias Shreekar Sahib (of Madhubani Deorhi) working as a teacher in that school. Without solicitation he awarded me a stipend of Rs.5/- from January 1917 till my Matriculation Examination. This was a divine gift. It was beyond my father and my maternal uncle to help me over and above giving 12 seers of rice a month. So difficulties in meeting expenses were got over for the time being.

And now I was up against a perplexing difficulty. The free studentship which I had the privilege to enjoy as an M.V.Scholarship holder came to an end. The Headmaster had a notion that I was well off. He knew that I came of the Kurson family. My neat, clear and smart dress (though very simple) spoke against me. That impression of the Headmaster was very well confirmed by the luxurious living style of my brother Ramakant Jha who could afford to change his dress several times a day. However I did not lose my heart. I wrote an application for

free studentship in my own handwriting and in my own language. I stated my difficulties and mentioned the name of Anuplal Thakur, Mokhtar, who could bear testimony of the facts stated. I approached the Headmaster who remarked on the petition “The boy’s progress is very satisfactory.” He advised me to approach the S.D.O who was the ex-officio President and Secretary of the School. I went to the S.D.O’s residence. The S.D.O at that time was Rai Bahudur Charucharan Mukherjee whose son Sachi Prasanna Mukherjee was my class friend. To my good luck Sachi Prasanna was there. He was amazed to find me at his place. When I told him all my difficulties he communicated them to his father who called me, heard everything from me. He kept my petition in the pocket of his coat.

The meeting of the Managing Committee to decide the grant of free studentship to the pupils was held on the same day in the evening. I came to learn, that the S.D.O, the President of the Committee, proposed that I should be granted full free studentship till the Matriculation Examination in 1920. The proposal was carried unanimously. And that put an end to my financial difficulties while at the school.

For a year I was quite happy but in life difficulties keep on overtaking. In the beginning of March 1917 I suffered from dyspepsia. In spite of my best efforts and medical care my health broke down. I could not digest even ordinary diet consisting of rice, curry and curd. I was disappointed. I came to Kurson. I was put under the Ayurvedic treatment of Anand Mishra of village Kothia-Reyam. He applied his wit to prepare medicine and gave it to me to take it with goat’s milk. My maternal uncle purchased a goat; it gave a seer of milk per day. I continued the treatment till the month of September 1917 by when I was in a position to resume my study at school. I went to Kshemdhari Sinha of Madhubani Deorhi who used to send me Rs.5/- per month by M.O. It helped me much. It eased my guardian’s financial burden. He was highly pleased to see me back. I did not realize how could I get spontaneous help from all possible corners. Now I feel that all those difficulties were God’s devices to test my courage and steadfastness of purpose. I studied happily. I approached my teachers seeking guidance to make up loss that I suffered during illness. I could easily make up for the lost time. I picked up quickly matters which I had

missed. I sat at the Annual Examination of class 2 (Present class X). I got on well in the examination. I came out first retaining my position. This was amazing to my rival, but to me it proved that earnest desire and sincere labour surely ensure achievement. This was heartening to me. My performance satisfied my teachers who had guided me to finish the course in the short period of about two months.

My dyspeptic constitution told upon my study. It ran thus over six months. Apprehension about my capacity to compete for the Government Scholarship at the Matriculation Examination overtook me. Hence I wished to go to the North Brook School, Darbhanga, where I hoped to secure one of the local scholarships awarded at the Matriculation Examination to first four students not coming in for the Government Scholarship. But my desire never came true. Pandit Shivshankar Jha persuaded me to remain at Madhubani. I spent 1919 there in deference to his wish. He had been an ex-Headmaster of the Watson H.E. School and had coached me for English at the Lodging of Anuplal Thakur, under the auspices of A.L.T Club organized there. The atmosphere of that School and the lodging was educational.

Illness: - In 1919 I suffered from dyspepsia. It was indeed a very painful experience. I had to be on proper diet but I found it difficult to arrange that at Madhubani. For this reason I went to Kurson, my village. I went there with the permission of the Headmaster of the School and Keshmdhari Singh. While there, I was treated by Ayurvedacharya Anand Mishra of Kothia-Ryiam. It was very kind of the Headmaster that my name was allowed to be borne on the Roll of the Register. Even the stipend of Rs.5/- per month granted by Shreekar Sahib of Madhubani Deorhi was being remitted to me at my village address. God, the never-failing universal Friend of mankind, had been helping me all through. May the soul of my departed benefactors rest ever in peace. My faith in God grew firmer and firmer.

After recovering from illness I returned to Madhubani in September 1919. I devoted my time to the study of books in order to make up my loss suffered on account of my absence from the school. Subjects in which I required help and

guidance were Mathematics (both Compulsory and Additional) and Sanskrit. Rajkrishna Banerjee M. Sc., the younger brother of the Drawing Master (as he was called), helped me on Saturdays and Sundays to make up for the loss in Mathematics. Pandit Shyamdutta Choubey, the Head Pandit of the School, did all for me to square up my loss in Sanskrit. Thus I became less despondent about my prospects.

IV

Preparation for the Matriculation Exam: - I sat at the Test Examination in the beginning of December 1919. I had tried to do well at it but God had ordained it otherwise. When the results of the Test Examination came out I found that I had lost my first position in the class. I stood second. This news gave me a rude shock. And I made up my mind “to do or die”. I resolved I must give a defeat to my rival Balbhadra Chaudhary.

I thought over the matter how to get over the shock. I conferred with my brother, Ramakant Jha was reading in the first year of the Arts Course in T.N. Jubilee College at Naya-bazar, Bhagalpur. I decided to go to Bhagalpur as its climate is healthy. I made up my mind to stay there to study well. I felt that in my study there I would get help from Shashinath Jha of Dhaniapatti (near Jaynagar) and Rymjivan Singh (a retired District Judge at present living at his village home Majhoul near Laheriasaria). Both of them knew me well and were themselves recipient of Government Scholarship from the W.H.E School, Madhubani. When I approached them they gladly agreed to guide me in the best possible way.

V

Stay at Bhagalpur: - I left my village on 4th January, 1920 for Bhagalpur to be with my brother at Naya-bazar. I found that there were many students of Darbhanga District as co-boarders.

I made up my mind on 5th January, 1920. I set out to work seriously from 6th January. The motto “do or die” was before me. In order to achieve my aim I

planned to work for at least fourteen hours a day from 6a.m to 11a.m and from 1p.m to 5p.m and from 6p.m to 11p.m I resolved to adhere to the schedule at all costs Hence I had to do all work for the preservation of my health during the short periods beyond the periods of study. Usually I got up at 5a.m after attending to the call of nature I washed myself. Then I went out in the nearby college football field for a short walk. I had to come back to my lodging before 6a.m for breakfast which consisted of dry fruits easily and cheaply available then. I sat at my study at 6a.m and without any diversion I devoted five hours to learning and remembering all the matters which were to be got by heart. Punctually at 11a.m I went to have a bath in the sacred river Ganges which flowed nearby. It was January and water was clean. I felt delight in having several dips in the river water; and I swam a little. I did not realize the efficacy of swimming but I found that it was a good physical exercise bringing all the limbs of the body into free play. It drove away my dyspeptic complaints a great deal.

Then I had my meal. After meal I lay down in bed and went through questions and answers given in the Guess Papers etc. That made me understand the ways how to write standard answers. That light reading lasted for about half an hour. Then I sat to work out sums in Mathematics, translating Vernacular to English, and English to vernacular, and vernacular to Sanskrit till 5p.m during the period from 12:30 to 5p.m Shashinath Babu and Ramjeevan Babu used to come to me to give me their guidance and to correct exercises already done. Ramjeevan Babu helped me in preparation of Mathematics, whereas Shashinath Babu helped me in preparation of English and Sanskrit. For helping me they had to draw on their leisure hours. After 5p.m I devoted about one hour to discussing matters connected with Mathematics with two top students of T.N.J Collegiate School –one, Ganpathi Mandal and other M.Roy. Roy was a son of Principal N.N.Ray of T.N.J College. Both of them were very sincere students. I liked their company. We all had a short walk on the pucca built platform of God Burhanath by the side of the river Ganges which almost bathed it then. It was extremely pleasant to enjoy the beauty of Nature with congenial companions. We returned to our serious study of books by 6p.m

From 6 to 11p.m I worked out algebraic sums and did a lot of writing work in addition to the study of other subjects. Writing work could easily off my sleep. In the hostel there were many college students preparing for their University Examinations. So dinner time was ordinarily after 10:30p.m we could get fresh food even at late hours. Regularity in study, meal and other work of daily life could maintain my energy all through.

VI

Matriculation Examination: - I remained at Bhagalpur till 8th February, 1920 and came back to my village, Kurson on February 9. So my study with my governing motto of “do or die” continued without a break for 32 days enabling me to sit at the Matriculation Examination commencing on 16th February, 1920. The auspicious moment of my departure for Darbhanga was found by the astrologers at night of the day I reached my village. I left my home and spent night at Mahia near Machhaita at the house of Naubat Singh. I reached Lahariasarai on 10th February, 1920. I put up my lodging with Ramanand Mishra, an Advocate. He was my cousin related from my maternal uncle’s side. I had with me in that lodged one of my classmates Chandrakant Chaudhary of Loha. Both of us lived in one room and passed the time. I did not study the subjects seriously but carried on the “Reverie Work” which enabled me to know what was still needed to be done for the examination.

The Matriculation Examination was being conducted by the Patna University. It commenced exactly on the fixed date, i.e. 16th February, 1920. Whenever I recall sanctity and fairness of the examination and the personality and character of the teachers of those days, I cannot but express my indignation and contempt at its deterioration in every sphere of educational activities of the present days. Teachers like Gyandacharan Majumdar and Raisahib Sidhinath Mishra were on the staff of North Brook School where I had to sit at the examination. Their very presence commanded respect. No student had courage ever to defy a teacher. That was the time when the fruits of real education were well delivered. Impressions formed then are still afresh in me. When the Examination was over I went back home to spend much of my time in playing idle games in the company of boys of my age.

VII

Marriage: - In March 1920 two persons from Sirniya, a village near Gogri Jamalpur in the District of Monghyr, came to my village home, Kurson, to talk with my father and my maternal uncle on the subject of my marriage. As my father depended on my maternal uncle for support, my maternal uncle was the virtual guardian. So the entire talk was between them and my maternal uncle. My brother Ramakant Jha, a student of T.N.J.College, Bhagalpur, too took part in the deliberation. In fact, it was at my brother's instance that the Sirniya people had come. The matters of settling marriage decision rested with guardian rather than with boy. I did not know what was the amount of caste money. I could know only this that they agreed to meet my expenses of my college education. My maternal uncle, a son of a Zamindar, had by his extravagant habits run into debt. For him income from any corner was acceptable. So he did not take much time to come to a decision settling my marriage. Consideration was a petty amount, say 3 or 4 hundred whose value is at present Rs. 3000 or Rs. 4000. Necessary arrangements were made. With a party of about 30 persons my guardian took me to Maheshkhunt. There, horses were kept ready to take us to Sirniya where we stayed in the building of the Middle School. We were entertained in a simple manner as was the practice in vogue at the place. The ceremonial function was to start in a mandap. On first impression I had a very poor idea of the people there. There were tatty houses which did not speak of affluence and that measure of goodness about which we had heard. However there was no way out. The only thing which impressed me was the progress of education in the village. I had to be satisfied with my fate and looked to God for future satisfaction. I had never thought of seeing and would-be bride. No senior member of my party had seen her. We relied on the report given by the Sirniya people. The practice of kannya nirikhana was not in practice in those days. The marriage was solemnized in the night of 20th April, 1920; I was bound by the ties of wedlock.

The present miserable plight of many girls, who are not exceptionally fair looking and educated, takes me back to my old days. In a sense the old practice under which decision making lodged with guardian was more useful to the

society consisting of middle class and poor families. Western education does not attach due importance to moral character building. The impact of cinema has had a baneful effect on the society. Its adverse effect had practically done a lot of ruin the social and family happiness, especially of the middle class families. Besides, it has increased the burden of the affluent. Demands of bridegroom and their men have escalated so much that marriage of many girls have become almost impossible. This sordid practice is at the root of all sort of vices and corruption in the country. People cannot satisfy their demands through honest means. They become compelled to take recourse to all heinous crimes and dishonest means to satisfy them. This makes imperative a great social change in the country. Anyway, whatever was in vogue at the time of my marriage was quite good for me.

I stayed at the house of my father-in-law for 13 days. His name was Pichit Lal Mishra. I learnt about my matric result there. I could pass in the first division. I got a Government District Scholarship. I could have the satisfaction that my “do or die” determination had succeeded in defeating my rival Balbhadra Choudhary who passed in first division but could not secure any scholarship. My father-in-law had four sons but all of them are dead and gone. Among them Kaleshwar Mishra, the third son, was the most influential in the locality. The two others, Baldeo Mishra and Bateshwar Mishra, were killed in some fabricated conflicts on account of some land dispute. The fourth brother was Jageshwar Mishra who died of thrombosis at Darbhanga Hospital in 1970. They have got some who after the death of Kaleshwar Mishra partitioned the apex Hindu Joint family of my father-in-law. As there is no cordial and brotherly relation among them I have not been in closer touch with them now.

VIII

College Education: - After passing the Matric Examination in 1920 I went to Bhagalpur for admission to T.N.Jubilee College. In 1920 Mahatma Gandhi started the Non-co-operation Movement and I went on strike at his advice but again after a few days went back to the College.

At first I thought of taking up Science, but I had no choice in the matter. I took up mixed Arts Course with Mathematics, Logics and Sanskrit as subjects. I had a taste for Sanskrit and Mathematics, but not for Logic though a popular subject. As I had nobody to guide me my choice of subjects was not suitable and congenial. Moreover, my mode of living had undergone a change on account of my ill health. My constitution grew weaker. Life in a private mess proved a curse. My entire scheme was upset. Due to financial stringency and the undesirable society of hostel mates I could not do satisfactory progress in my study. To my great disappointment I passed the Intermediate Examination in the third division. It was a terrible shock to me. What consoled me was its great value and high standard in 1922. The ideal standard of conduct of our teachers of those days and the sympathy they showed towards the students prompt me now to realize the deterioration that has taken place in the system of education in recent years. This has led to an inevitable deterioration in the character of the student. This come-down in quite shocking.

After passing the Intermediate Examination I decided to take up Economics and Mathematics to qualify myself as a teacher. I opted for this profession as in those days teacher enjoyed high respect in society. I got admission to the B.A course in 1922 in T.N.J College, Bhagalpur. I got accommodation in the College Hostel at Khalifa Bagh, Nath Nagar, Bhagalpur. The college and the hostel buildings were newly built. It was all charming to find there an atmosphere of peace and pleasure. Mohini Mohan Sarkhal, a Lecturer in English, was the Superintendent of the Hostel. The scholarship which I enjoyed in the Intermediate Class was discontinued. My entire expenses, hence was met by my father-in-law. Despite regular habits my dyspeptic constitution made me suffer seriously from filarial complaint. I remember the Hostel Superintendent with gratitude as he had looked after me so well that I could get over my illness in a week though the parasitic worms of filarial caused a lot of discomfort of and on even later. But it hampered my study. I had to bear its onslaught with fortitude and resignation.

IX

Contact with Barari people: - In my undergraduate days I came in close contact with Keshav Mohan Thakur, a son of Shri. Mohan Thakur of Shri. Bhawan Estate, Barari. He often came to my hostel to take me by his car to

Barari Deorhi. It was pleasure to be with him. There I met his mother who was a maternal sister of my mother. She was a kind lady. I felt happiness in their company. This contact brought another change in my life. I contacted a luxurious way of living and developed aversion to study. Now I realize hard time mould one's career better. My new life-style adversely affected my results at the B.A Examination. I could not secure a pass at the Annual Examination in 1924. However I did not lose heart: I appeared at the supplementary Examination 1924 and came out successfully. What a miserable change in my life!

I feel this miserable change was on account of two causes: (1) marriage during study period; and (2) my association with sons of well-to-do persons who basked in wealth and were indifferent to study. It was sad that I did not devote proper time to study. I developed useless distractions.

X

Pressing need for job: - Meanwhile things went hard with my parents and I needed a job to mend home economics. I had to take a hard look at home affairs. My parents separated from my maternal uncle who had supported us so long. They face financial troubles. My elder brother Ramakant Jha (who was the Headmaster of Pacharhi M.E School and later the Headmaster of Nirmali M.E.School), could not spare enough to feed our parents. I felt painful anxiety for them. I was there on the lookout for a job. After a few months I got one. It was immediately after my graduation in 1924. It was due to efforts of Keshab Mohan Thakur I became a substitute teacher in C.M.S high school, Bhagalpur, on a monthly salary of Rs. 50. But in the beginning of January 1925 Ramautar Singh of Nayanagar, the then Headmaster of Rosera M.E.School came to Barari with a request from Raghunath Purbry of Rosera and Haribans Narayan Sinha of Thatia Deorhi (Near Rosera) to set up a High School in the premises of the M.E.School on the 13th of January 1925. I prepared registers and enrolled kalika Singh of Damodarpur near Rosera Station. So the school began. I had pleasure to find that one of my old class-friends of Watson H.E. School, Umashankar Mishra, was appointed as the Head Pandit. Both of us gave a grand start to Rosera H.E School. We held class VIII and office in a corner room of the Middle School. The number of students enrolled in January 1925 was 9 only.

Among them were Harishchandra Jha, now an Advocate, living at Lahariasaria, and Parmanand Jha, now Congress worker. Both of them belonged to village Habybhowar. While at Rosera they lived with Sitaram Jha, the then Headmaster of the M.E School. I felt utmost delight and zeal in working for the school. I daily went round the villages to approach the guardians so that the number of students could increase. There was a lot of misgivings about the establishment of the School sponsored by Raghu Nath Purbey and Harbans Narayan Sinha. They had entered into rivalry with each other to establish domination. My efforts to increase the number of students did not initially bear fruit. Efforts were made to find our resources for running the institution. The Bazar people had been running National Middle School. Its Secretary was Jageshwar Purbey. This institution was financed by contributions by local businessmen. They decided to spend for the High School but nothing concrete could emerge as the good cause was lost in conflicts between the assertions of the local businessmen (called Bazar party) and the self-assertion of Harbans Narayan Sinha.

XI

Service at Barh: - It so happened that I got a teaching appointment at Bayley H.E. School, Barh, on a salary of Rs.60 per month. My assignment was to teach Mathematics and Geography to the students. I took leave of Rosera people and went to Barh to join the post on 5th August 1925.

I learnt how to adjust with others. Right from the beginning of my teaching career I cultivated the habit of tolerance and skill for adopting myself to changed circumstances. This stood me in good stead. In no time I could gain popularity among students and their guardians. After staying a few days at the school hostel I shifted to a rented house in the Barh Bazar with a view to undertaking private tuition. In those days money was yet to get devalued. Earning Rs. 10 per student as coaching fee was quite sumptuous and satisfying. I coached a batch of four to five students for Matriculation Examination. From such an enterprise I could earn about Rs. 150 on an average per month. I was no longer hard-pressed for money and could maintain a simple and decent standard of living.

I could even help the members of my family. I was shocked to discover later that a clique had been hatched by some of my brothers. Yet I went on sending money to my third brother Lakshmikant Jha, for the benefit of family. My eldest brother, Ramchandra Jha, died unmarried. I cannot call him up well as when he died I was an infant. My second brother Ramakant Jha had separated from other brothers and worked as a teacher. My third brother, Lakshmi Kant Jha and the youngest brother, Shrikant Jha, and I lived together. I had to fend for myself and also render financial help to them. They were not at all educated. They were addicted to intoxicant. They took to Bhang and tobacco which very often made them dull and impaired their faculty of reasoning. Under such conditions their demands were becoming more and more despite my efforts to moderate them. My Parents had failed in bridling their ways. I could not be harsh with them as society would cast slur on me. But things could go on somehow as I could meet the expenses of the family out of my monthly salary of Rs. 60/- Value of money in those days was great. It was sufficient for decent maintenance of a family of about 12 members.

I worked at Barh H.E. School for about four years. In the fourth year of my service I was promoted to the post of Assistant Headmaster on a monthly salary of Rs. 75. At that time S.N.Majumdar I.C.S was the President of the Managing Committee of the School. He was a resident of Lahariasarai and was functioning as the Sub Divisional Officer of Barh. I was on the Committee in the capacity of teachers' representative. The President was pleased with my work. My smartness in the School impressed him. He was pleased to appoint me as the Superintendent of the School Hostel. I held that post for about 2 years.

During that period P.K.Sirkar was the Headmaster. He too lived in the hostel premises and occupied one of the rooms of the hostel meant for the Muslim boys. I did not pull on well with him as he unnecessarily interfered in the hostel management. I had planned the daily routine of the students. It bore features of what appeared to me to be the best in the tradition of Indian culture and modern educational system. This experiment was highly appreciated by Ganesh Datta Singh, the then Minister of Finance, Government of Bihar. He had paid a visit to the School and its hostel in 1927. But the Headmaster was not happy with

me. He disliked my work. He was meddlesome in the matters of teaching at School. His ways made him very unpopular among the student and their guardians. To everybody's surprise he went away stealthily at a night. No trace of the gentleman could be found out. I realized then that a man in power has to adopt himself to the circumstances so that he is liked by others. After his departure T.D. Mukherjee was appointed as the Headmaster in 1928. The claim of Mirza Naqhi Khan, the Assistant Headmaster, was turned down. Khan could not bear this and left the School. I was made, then, the Assistant Headmaster on a salary of Rs.75 per month. I continued to hold the post till 1929 when I was appointed the Headmaster of Rosera H.E School.

I had left Rosera in August 1925. In December 1925, Harivans Narayan Sinha of Thatia called on me. He was one of the organisers of the Rosera H.E. School. He proposed that I should head the school. I told him that his request could be accepted on the condition that the High School classes be shifted from the building of the Rosera M.E. School. I pressed this point as in my opinion the Headmaster of the M.E. School was not well disposed to the High School. The condition was satisfied in 1929. The classes were shifted to Mahavir Chowk, Rosera. I took advice from Rai Bhadur Kamlaprasad, the then Inspector of the Schools of Patna Division. I accepted the offer. I took over my assignment at Rosera in April 1929 as the Headmaster of the H.E. School. My prime task was to get the institute recognised by the Government. We succeeded in getting it recognised up to class X. This gave vigour and Zeal to the people who set themselves to work for the construction of a building. Babu Raghu Purbey, Babu Kanhaiyalal Sethia and Babu Mukund Purbey took up the work of building construction and they collected subscriptions and donation from the local businessmen. In fact, charity came from those who had usually set apart one and a half anna per rupee. The traders and businessman used to set apart this as Dharmada out of sale proceeds on commercial transactions effected by them. What was set apart was for the benefit of pathsalas and gosalas. Every year the Gosala Committee realised half of the collection for managing the affairs of the Rosera Gosala. Allocation out of the fund on account of Pathsalas was very small; only beneficiary being the National Middle School having a separate existence in Chitra Panjiar Mandab. Kuldeep Mishra was its Headmaster. Efforts were made to obtain assistance from the said fund. At the outset some objections were raised. Some persons were sore at the School being

named after Atkins. It was also not being appreciated that money be diverted from the Pathsala Fund for the High School. Somehow I succeeded in allaying their apprehensions. The letter-head of the High School made no reference to the name of Atkins. We made capital of this! After a good deal of persuasion it was agreed that donation out of Pathsala Fund could be made for construction of 7 rooms in the land near the Railway Station. (The land had been donated by Raghunath Purbey). An amount about Rs.7000 was collected from the different firms of the local businessman. Mukund Purbey and Kanhaiyalal Sethia were entrusted with the responsibility of constructing the seven rooms. By August 1930 only four rooms could be made ready. The opening ceremony of the School was performed by Dixon, ICS the then Collector of Darbhanga.

The Managing Committee of the School approached the Inspector of the Schools, Tirhut Division, with a submission that the school be recognised fully by the Board of Secondary Education. Raghunath Purbey was the Secretary and Kanhaiyalal Sethia was the Assistance Secretary. I had to steer through the complications caused by factions rife in the Committee of Management. Faction were led by Raghunath Purbey on one side and Harbans Narayan Sinha on the other. Ultimately we could get over difficulties and the school got full-fledged recognition with effect from January 1930. It was accorded this status on the recommendation of Tulsi Prasad and Rai Bahadur Dwarika Nath. They were the Members of the Special Board constituted by the Bihar Secondary School Board.

As usual, the Special Board took its work seriously. The members of the Board inspected the school. Registers and records were scrutinized. Rai Bahadur Tulsi Prasad had been the Headmaster of Arrah Zilla School and knew everything about the school records. He was satisfied on all counts. It was December 1930. By this time the Test Examination in other schools had already been held. The Special Board recommended to the President of the Board to grant recognition to the School with retrospective effect from 1st January 1930 to enable the School to send up candidates to sit at the Matric Examination scheduled to be held in February 1931.

We sent up the first of 9 students. Out of them seven student could pass the Examination. (I may be mistaken in mentioning the exact number). The local businessman were highly pleased and made up their mind to listen to my suggestions. Three more rooms were built with their help. They had as their leader Kanhaiyalal Sethia. He was a very lean and thin man but was over energetic and enthusiastic. Yet paucity of resources bedevilled the construction work. The floor of all the 7 rooms were left kachcha. But the school was being conducted smoothly to the satisfaction of all. The school was now fully established. It was the supreme fruit of my skill at management. I attribute my success to God. It was very satisfying to me that it drew me close to the heart of people there. Honesty of purpose and sincerity in work brought me the reputation as a successful Headmaster.

I remember an event which I think worth mentioning. It was 1932. I had gone to attend the Divisional Headmasters Conferences at Bettiah Raj School. At the conference one Headmaster proposed that a provision be inserted in the Bihar Education Code conferring full power to the Headmaster to remove from the Roll of the School Register any student whose character appeared suspicious to him. I was the youngest Headmaster present there. I could not appreciate the proposal. I rose from my seat and said "Sir, credit lies in reformation and not in deformation. A boy turned out of the School is ruined as prospect of reformation is lost. If he is retained and efforts are made to reform him he may have the chance to be reformed" Rai Bahadur Tulsi Prasad, the president of the Conference, thumped the table and said "Here is our youngest Headmaster!" The proposal was immediately dropped. Since then I had the pleasure to find Rai Bahadur Tulsi Prasad always well disposed towards me. His appreciation remark in the Inspection Note drawn up during his visit to the School made this quite evident. Then need was felt to set up a feeder Middle School. Mukund Purbey and K.L. Sethia arranged finance to setting up the School. I got a resolution of the Managing Committee passed for starting classes VI and VII. Four rooms with tiled roofs were constructed to hold classes. The Managing Committee and there members of the teaching staff had to adhere to the norms set out in the Education Code which aimed at imparting thorough education to the students to enable them to grow physically, mentally and morally.

In those days, the Inspecting Officers were very capable workers with very good educational background. They paid surprise visits to School to ascertain their actual working. Such visits were sufficient check on the activities of persons idling away their time. I had to be very alert in my business. And I tried to win the confidence of all

XII

The earthquake: - On 15th January, 1934 at about 2 p.m. Nature poured her wrath. It was a devastating earthquake. Entire School building was damaged with cracks. But providentially there was no loss of life or injury to persons in the School campus. Several buildings in the Rosera markets collapsed and many persons were crushed under debris. Everywhere there was cry for help. I, as the Headmaster of the institution, was put to a great test. Financially the School was not sound. Yet I purchased jute bags to build up a sort of shed. Banana poles were used as support. Classes were held therein.

E.T.Prideaux, ICS was the Sub-Divisional Officer of Samastipur and was also the President of the Managing Committee. I called on him and made him acquainted with the difficulties that the institution faced. He was kind enough to help us with about Rs.4000/- for carrying out repairs of the buildings of the school. Such repairs were carried out immediately and the classes shifted to the building.

XIII

Stay at Rosera: - But another crisis was round the corner. Rivalry between the factions of the Managing Committee became worse and worse. The faction led by Harbans Narayan Sinha made my brother Ramakant Jha a scape goat. He raised a religious question of Sanathan Dharma and was critical of the ideas of the Bazar people whose acknowledged leaders were Kanhaiyalal Sethia and Raghunath Purbey, both on the Managing committee of the School. The charges were framed against my said brother who was working as an Assistant teacher. Eventually he was suspended. I did not want to become embroiled in the quarrel though I was in a dilemma. I could not be with my brother at the cost of the interest of the institution. He, I am sorry to say, had misgivings about me. He even threatened revenge. Under duty I made common cause with those who had the interest of the School uppermost in their minds. But I could not let down my

brother. With God's help the crisis was over. Even my brother got reinstated on the same post. A lot of credit for all these goes to J.I.Blackburn, ICS, the then Sub-Divisional Officer of Samastipur (during 1935 to 1937). He was the ex-officio President and Secretary of Rosera H.E.School.

Thereafter my period of stay at Rosera was peaceful. My differences with Harbans Babu lingered on but nothing pertained to academic matters. We were good friends and exchanged pleasantries. We held each other in great esteem. None could guess that we had sharp differences on the matters relating to the Managing Committee. He wanted to be the Secretary of the School, whereas I found better equity on the side of the Bazar people who had helped the institution a lot. So long I was at Rosera (i.e. up to 5th September, 1942), he could not be the Secretary.

XIV

The Quit India Movement:- August 9, 1942 was a great day. The news that the leaders of the Congress Party were arrested by the then British Government en block alarmed the Indians. On the proclamation of "Quit India Movement" there was a massive agitation throughout the country. My students at Rosera H.E. School, whom I had ever taught the lesson of patriotism while teaching patriotic songs in Matriculation Classes, could not check their patriotic impulse. They went on strike and marched in a procession shouting "Inqulab Jindabda" and "Angrejon Bharat Chhoro." They were joined by the Bazar and village people. They all marched to the Government offices to paralyse Government work. They held meeting where slogans were shouted and speeches were made. The school had to be closed. Government work everywhere got paralysed. There was widespread repression. Many persons were arrested and some even shot at. Houses were burnt; properties were confiscated; and many kinds of unheard-of tortures were inflicted on people. Such repressive measures had never been imagined in civilized countries. Four teachers – namely Ramakant Jha, Kuldeep Mishra, Janardhan Jha and Rameshwar Prasad – were arrested on 2nd September, 1942 and were sent to the police Station and thence to Samastipur Jail. Nazamul Hoda was the S.I. of Police Rosera. He arrested many innocent persons and made huge amount of money as illegal gratification. It was not the time of thinking how to save oneself from the police clutches.

I was also arrested on 5th September, 1942 at the Rosera Station by the Inspector and the S.I. of Police. I could not be freed even for a moment. Fortunately my wife and my son, who was a child then, were at Kurson, my village. On arrest I was sent to the Samastipur lock-up in Jail to stand a trial in future on the submission of the police report. I was brought to Samastipur Jail where my other companions were placed. After about a month the S.D.O tried me, convicted me and sentenced me to undergo R.I for 2 years. I was to pay a fine of Rs.250 in default R.I. for 6 months.

XV

Imprisonment; - I was sent to Phulwari Camp Jail where I suffered R.I. for about 9 months. Meanwhile the Calcutta High Court held the promulgation of the Ordinance of Summary Trials ultra vires the powers of the Viceroy. All the prisoners imprisoned under the Ordinance got now right to prefer appeal according to the Criminal Procedure Code. My bail petition was allowed and I came out of the Jail on 22nd June, 1943. I took bath in the sacred Ganges at Pahlezaghat and then went home. My elder brother, Laxmikant Jha, who had gone to Patna with the bail order, was with me. The troubles and tribulations of jail life at Samastipur and at Patna have remained green in my mind ever since. On reaching home I found my wife and child quite well. It took about 2 months for the appeal to be heard and decided: but I was released in October 1943.

My economic condition was bad. There was nothing in my bank account. My wife had already spent whatever she could afford in fighting out my case which had gone up to the Patna High Court. This litigation which was useless as the High Court had no jurisdiction under the Ordinance to interfere with the decision of the Special Magistrate where conviction was to under R.I. for two years or more. The appeal which was filed in the District Court was ultimately allowed and the sentence was set-aside. But I was virtually a beggar by that time.

Then for some time I had the painful experience to be again in search of a job. I went to Muzaffarpur to see the Inspector of Schools, Tirhut Division. There Nagendra Nath Sinha of village Sahiyar, near Rosera, helped me in getting a job. Nagendra had been my student at Rosera. But that was satisfying. I had a

sudden meeting with Parameshwar Chaudhary, a businessman of Laheriasarai. He had a school under his charge M.C.H.E School, Kadirabad. It was named after his brother Mukundi Chaudhary. As the Secretary of the School he offered me the post of Headmaster. I readily accepted that and joined the post on 7th November, 1943. I put up my lodging for a week with Radheyshyam Chaudhary, an assistant teacher. Then I stayed for sometime in Lalbagh with Surendra Nath Chaudhary of Basaitha. He too was an assistant teacher at the School. He was very serviceable to me. His wife looked after very well my infant son who lived with me. My wife spent most of her time in my village looking after agriculture.

By chance in December, 1943 I happened to meet Rai Bahadur Ram Lochan Sharan, the proprietor of the Pushtak Bhandar, a famous publishing concern at Lahariasaria. In course of talk it came out that he had studied with my elder brother Ramchandra Jha who had been his intimate friend. My eldest brother died after completing his training at Patna Normal Training School. I still remember the night he died. Knowing that I was a brother of his friend he developed soft corner for me. He appointed me as a private tutor to teach his son, Maithili Sharan Sinha alias Lal Babu. He gave me a house near Pushtak Bhandar to live in. It was a lucrative tuition. Maithili Saran was so loveable and affectionate to me that I felt pleasure in coaching him. Besides I coached Rameshwar Mahaseth, a son of a local businessman, Asharfi Mahaseth. Both the tuition could fetch me Rs.125/- per month.

To provide better facilities to my son I took a house on rent in Bengali Tola near Bengal Lodge at Laheriasarai. The house belonged to Sushilchandra Banerjee whose son Pachkouri Banerjee is now living in that house. I lived there up to October 1971, and then I shifted to my own hutment in Laxmipur, a small mohalla at Laheriasarai.

I was the Headmaster of M.C.H.E School, Kadirabad from 7th November, 1943 to 31st May, 1965. I retired from service on attaining the age of 62 (certificated). Towards the end of my phase at the school I had to experience odds created by some members of the staff. They believed in creating hindrances in the smooth

working of the institution. But with God's grace I could manage things well till the end of my career at the school.

XVI

Service at Darbhanga School:- After my retirement from service I had to face new problems. I had not planned for post retirement phase of my life. Besides I did not know how to get over astringent financial conditions. Luckily Dr.L.K.Mishra, the then Principal of C.M.College, Darbhanga, offered me the post of a teacher in his Public School at Darbhanga on a remuneration of Rs.200. I joined that post on 19th July, 1965. The Principal of that school was Mrs.E.T.Quadros, an Anglo-Indian young lady of good nature. She was always kind to me and sought my suggestion in all matters pertaining to the School. She was a honey-tongued lady, but was a strict disciplinarian. She could not tolerate even a slight lapse on the part of a student or a teacher. Though she had done only her Senior Cambridge she could acquit herself very well as the Principal of the institution till December 1970 when she left for Australia where her two sisters-in-law had settled permanently. She went there with her two sons and husband. We wished them Godspeed and safe journey. After her departure, on Rajkumar Mandal held the charge of the School for a year. In 1972 Shri J.Kumar, the retired Headmaster of M.L.Academy was appointed as the Principal of Public School. I worked there till December 1974. I finally retired from all active service in January 1975. I decided to pass the remaining time of my life at my newly built hutment at Laheriasarai.

XVII

Death of my wife:- My wife was quite well till the morning of 9th December, 1973. That was the day of Aghan Purnima. At 11a.m she expired suddenly in the presence of two of her grandsons – Pankaj Kumar and Nandan Kumar. I was greatly amazed at the way she breathed her last. She could know the result of a telephonic talk that her grand-son had with her son at 9:30 a.m. She took her bath, performed her pooja, took her Sunday meal without salt and, then, she bent down her head at 11:30a.m. counting beads, sitting on the chounki in the courtyard of the house. Telephonic message was given to her son who came at about 8p.m. with his wife and children. In the meantime her daughter, son-in-law and grand children had come from Kadirabad alongwith some teachers of the Kadirabad School. Several visitors came and wished peace to her departed soul.

The dead body was taken to Semariaghat where on the bank of the Ganges funeral pyre was lit by her only son Shiva Kant Jha. That was the end of her mortal stay in this transitory world.

VIII

Political Pension:- As if to satisfy her soul I got the Freedom Fighter's pension only a week before her death. On 5th December, 1973 I drew my pension for the first time amounting to Rs.3, 157/- As advised by her I kept this safely. She had premonition of her end. Her Shradh was performed at Laheriasarai house which she had made during her life time. Her last wish that she should die at her own house was accomplished.

XIX

The death of my wife put an end to my active life though I continued my work at Darbhanga Public School till December 1974.

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF MY FAMILY

Abstracted from the comprehensive family tree, drawn up by Pandit Kritinath Jha Panjekar of Koilakh (District: Madhubani) after conducting research in the ancient records of the Panji system maintained for over about seven centuries, can be read at the end of the Chapter 2 of Shiva Kant Jha's Autobiographical Memoir *On the Loom of Time*. It can be read also at:

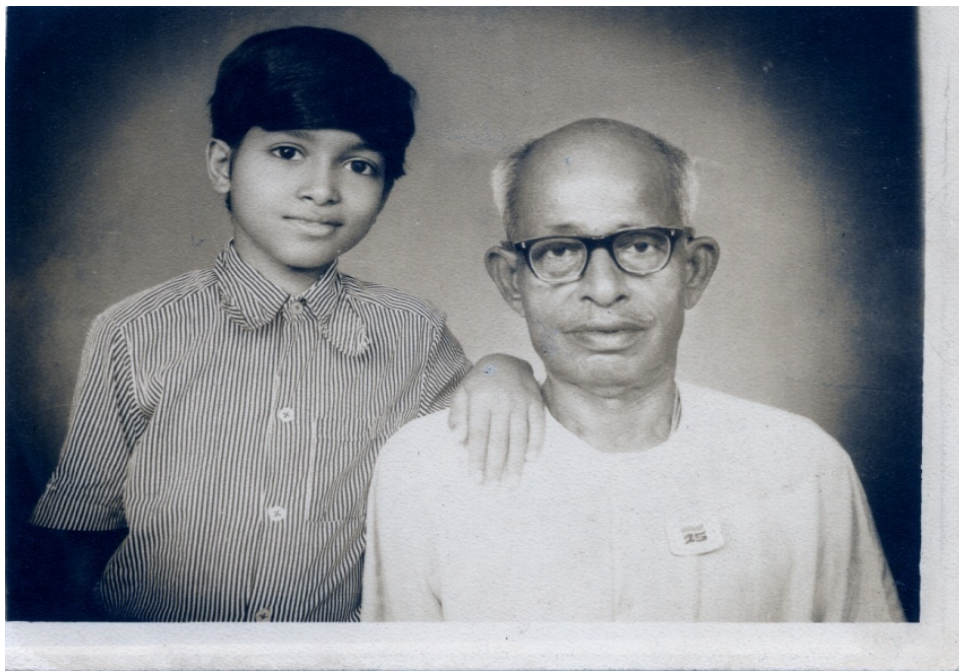
(<http://shivakantjha.org/>; <http://shivakantjha.wordpress.com/2011/07/07/my-family-ree/>)



[GopiKant Jha, his son (shiva Kant Jha), and his only daughter (Smt. Phuleshwari Coudhary)]



[My Father's Garden: Smt. Veenapani Jha (daughter-in-law), Shiva Kant Jha (son), Janki Jha, Nandan Kumar Jha, Kishori Jha and Anju Jha (grand children)



(Father with Nandan, his grandchild)



[My Father's son and his daughter-in-law (Shiva Kant Jha and his wife Veenapani Jha)]