

Masks from Africa

MALA MAHESH

Masks are an important part of African culture and were made for religious purposes. Each mask symbolised some ancient spirit or animal...



designs on it. The BaSongye tribe made simple masks, of unpainted hard wood, with only incised lines or grooves on them to distinguish the male from female masks. The masks from Bwa, village in Mali, look like long panels of decorated wood. They are called "Nwantantay" masks. The top part of the panel is decorated with geometric design, signifying the tribe's history or about their God 'Do'. The dancer looks through the mouth of the mask as its eyes are only painted and not cut out. These masks present the shapeless flying spirit, from the bush.

Some tribes like the Nuna, who live in the Savannah land of Burkina Faso, made masks representing animals like hawk, buffalo and the crocodile. These animal masks have large eyes, surrounded by circles and short triangular shaped snout, with geometric design on them. They wore these masks and danced in honour of these animal spirits, which live in the jungles, seeking their blessings and protection.

Western artists were attracted to the raw beauty of these masks, which they used in their own work. Soon masks became a collector's item. Since the masks weren't meant for decoration, they should be viewed with their entire costume, rather than as a stand-alone object, for a better understanding and appreciation.

"Ngil" masks. These are white elongated masks covered with a white pigment called kaolin. The face is heart shaped with long nose. These masks are worn while punishing wrong doers. The Fang tribe also makes prosperity masks, which are smoothly polished and embedded with cowrie shells



Masks used in rituals...



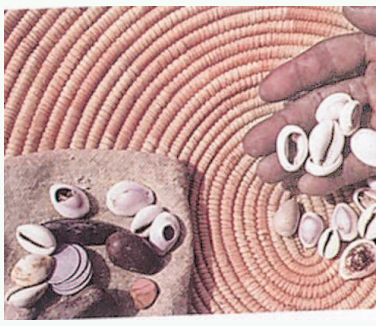
Masks that protect the wearer...

(used as money in earlier times). The black background of this mask was made from wooden dust and other ingredients. In African art, smooth finish symbolises beauty and high morals. These masks were used while praying to their ancestors for prosperity.

Another similar prosperity mask was that of the Punu tribe. Their masks had high hair

dos, smooth finish and were decorated with cowry shells to represent the beauty of the Punu women.

Many African masks were made to protect the people from evil spirits and to communicate with the ancestors and the spirits. The Chokwe tribe from Congo made powerful masks, worn only by the chief or his sons. These masks were also used during the initiation ceremony (where boys are trained to be responsible adults). It was made of bark cloth and stretched over a wicker framework. The mask was then covered with black resin and had red and white



Cowrie shells...

Coming up tops

R. BALAJI

A large and enthusiastic audience urged the participants to perform their best...



The winners with the chief guest, Koneru Humpy...

Three hours of fun, frolic and excitement for the 1,300 kids at the Andhra Loyola College auditorium, Vijayawada, the venue for the regional round of *The Hindu Young World* quiz. And at the end of the three-hour show, young Anudeep and G. Sri Ram, both second year MPC students of Nalanda Junior College, Vijayawada walked away with the coveted regional trophy. Nalanda College secured 80 points. The other four teams, which made it to the final rounds, were St. John's School, Central Public School, Guntur, St. Mathews School and Nirmala High School.

This year the response was unprecedented in that 654 teams, each comprising two members, participated as compared to 470 teams last year. "It is a big surprise as we never expected to even make it to the qualifying round. We are overjoyed that we will now go to Hyderabad for the finals," admitted both Sri Ram and

Anudeep. For runners up Samuel Siraj and B. Vijaya, who finished close with 75 points, the loss was not disappointing. "In fact, we never expected to qualify among the top six. Getting entry into the elite six itself makes us really proud," said Siraj. Both the winners and the runners-up admitted that they didn't make any serious preparation for the event, but merely concentrated on reading *The Hindu* regularly. Young chess prodigy and woman grandmaster Koneru Humpy who was the chief guest gave away the prizes to the winners. Quiz master V. V. Ramanan was once again the favourite.

The title sponsor is Eveready Industries India Ltd., and the co-sponsors are Camlin, 'Little Hearts' from Britannia, 'Fast Trac' watches from Titan, Hansaplast, *Competition Success Review*, Sify iWay, Hercules cycles, Liberty, NIIT, Base Terminal, and Coca-cola is the official drink. The event managers are Quizwalahs.

Sense & Nonsense

Coats of silk and sand

MADHAV GADGIL

A caddis fly
Is snug and spry,
And full of grace
In its silken case!

Caddis flies, relatives of silkworm and other moths and butterflies, put their silk to very many different uses. Their

larvae are all aquatic, living on stream and lake bottoms, even in saline estuaries and tidal pools. Larvae of some species inhabiting fast flowing waters anchor themselves to a rock with a silken thread. Others use it to construct protective cases sticking a variety of



Prema Iyer

objects, pebbles and grains of sand, algae and diatoms and pieces of detritus on to the silken base. Thus secured they move around leisurely

scraping off algal growth, ingesting detritus. Yet others capture food particles from currents by the aid of specially constructed silk nets. The larvae transform themselves into winged adults during the pupal stage, ensconced within silken cases. The bodies and wings of the rather drab and dusk loving adult caddis flies are covered by fine hair, and in a few cases scales. But it is these hair that are transformed into the many splendoured colourful scales on the wings of their kin, moths and butterflies.

Looking for a bigger canvas?



If you have a paint brush ready, we have got the biggest canvas for you. A painting competition that will propel you to national fame. All you have to do is to paint a picture on one of the topics given below, get it attested by your Principal/Art teacher and send it to us. And wait to see if you make it to the finals of *The Hindu Young World Painting Competition 2003*. So, just go ahead and paint the town red.



The Annual Young World Painting Competition finals will be held this year at 12 centres: Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada (November 9), Bangalore, Mangalore and New Delhi (November 16), Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi (November 23), Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli and Chennai (November 30)

PRELIMINARY ROUND	NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON TO WHOM THE PRELIMINARY ENTRIES ARE TO BE SENT					
Topics for Juniors (Class IV to VII)	Hyderabad Mr. P. Ranga Reddy Regional Manager THE HINDU 6-3-879 & 879-B, Begumpet Public Road, Hyderabad-500 016.	Vijayawada Mr. M. Krishna Kiran Regional Manager THE HINDU 55-1-4, 100 Feet Road, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada-520 007.	Mangalore Mr. T. Ravi Regional Manager THE HINDU T.S. No. 335, Jeppu, Mangalore - 575 001.	Thiruvananthapuram Mr. T. S. Lakshminarasimhan Regional Manager THE HINDU T.C. No. 36/1946 (1), Airport Road, Vallakkadavu, Thiruvananthapuram-695 008.	Coimbatore Mr. T.S. Roman Regional Manager THE HINDU 19 & 20, A. T. T. Colony, L. I. C. Road, Coimbatore-641 018.	Tiruchirappalli Mr. V. Srikanth Branch Manager THE HINDU A/5, North East Extn, Salai Road, Thillai Nagar, Tiruchirappalli - 620 018.
Topics for Seniors (Class VIII to X)	Visakhapatnam Mr. T.A. Venkateswarar Regional Manager THE HINDU 50-19-9, T.P.T. Colony, Seethammadhara, Visakhapatnam - 530 013.	Bangalore Mr. N. Rajashekar Regional Manager THE HINDU 19 & 21, Infantry Road, Bangalore-560 001.	New Delhi Mr. P. Balachandran Regional Manager THE HINDU 210, II Floor, Ansal Bhavan, 16, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi - 110 001.	Kochi Mr. Murali Krishnan Regional Manager THE HINDU N.H. Bypass Road, Vythila Junction, Post Box 1971, Kochi - 682 019.	Madurai Mr. T. Murali Regional Manager THE HINDU 147/2-A, Eighty Feet Road, K. K. Nagar, Madurai-625 020.	Chennai Mr. V. Ramanath Rao Deputy Editor THE HINDU Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai - 600 002.

Rules and regulations: • There is no entry form or any entry fee • All you have to do is to draw the painting on a white drawing sheet (size 26 cms x 27 cms) choosing any one of the 4 topics given, get it certified by your Art teacher or Principal as your own work, write your name, age, class, school and residential address and send the entry to any of the addresses given above, which is nearest to your place or where you would like to come for the final painting competition, if selected • The entries should reach us on or before October 10, 2003 • Entries will be judged at two levels - Juniors (Class IV to VII) and Seniors (Class VIII to X) • Selected students will be intimated individually and they should come to the venue (with the intimation letter) at their own cost on the specified date to participate in the finals which will commence at 9 a.m. sharp • The topic for the finals will be given at the venue • Judges' decision will be final. The paintings become the sole property of The Hindu and will not be returned • Prizes will be distributed to the winners the same afternoon at the venue • Apart from the first, second and third prizes, there will be consolation prizes too • Participation certificates will be given to the other finalists.

Following the trade route

S. SURESH



India and China were trade partners and with the Chinese merchants came Chinese coins...

coins have a religious and symbolic value. The ancient Chinese believed that the earth was square and the heaven was round. Hence, a big round Chinese coin with a small square hole was considered to depict both heaven and earth. Heaven and earth were linked to each other through the emperor who issued the coins. It is also believed that if Chinese coins are hung on the front door of a house, the people in the house will always be joyful.



During the early centuries of the Christian era, thousands of Roman gold, silver and copper coins circulated as money in many places in South India. Between the 14th and 18th Centuries, Venetian coins were used in Kerala and other places.

Throughout history, India maintained close trade and cultural relations with China. India exported coral, pearls, glass vessels and beads to China. In return, India got jadestone and silk from China and Chinese

merchants and traders brought Chinese coins to India. The Indians sometimes used these coins as money.

Archaeologists have discovered Chinese coins in places like Mahabalipuram and Thanjavur in South India. These Chinese coins are made of copper or bronze. They are round and have a prominent square-shaped hole in the centre. These coins were cast in moulds. The coins bear inscriptions in the Chinese script. Unlike ancient Indian coins, the Chinese coins do not exhibit pictures of kings, animals, birds, plants or other objects. Hence, many coin-collectors are not attracted to these coins.

Several museums in India have collections of Chinese coins. These