



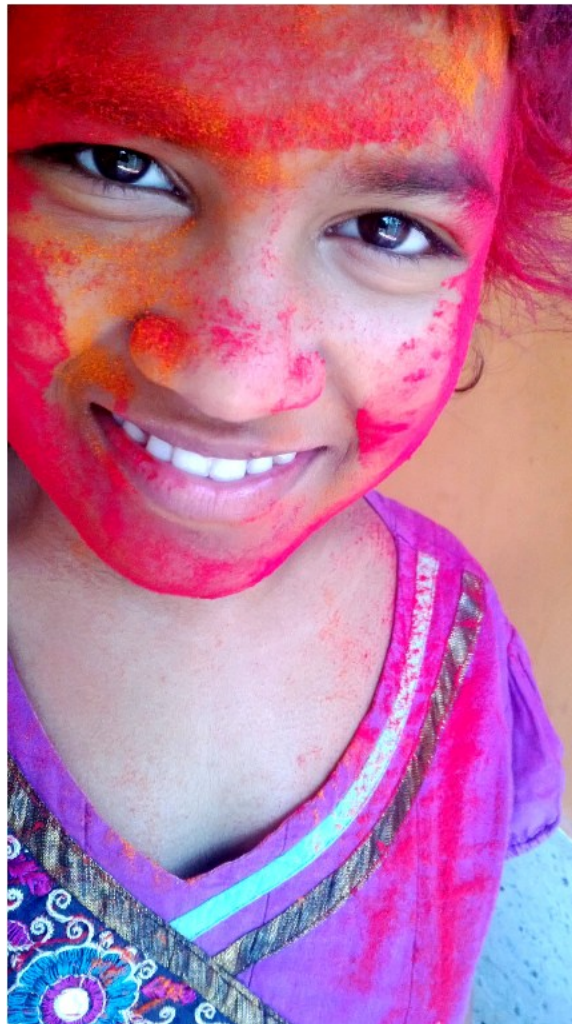
March 2015

We have just had the festival of Holi here in Kolkata and that marks the beginning of Spring and the fast build up to heat. As the boys and girls get older, perhaps Holi is not quite as frenetic as it used to be but everyone still enjoyed themselves, throwing paint over each other, and it was all over by lunchtime, when they feasted on mutton curry and ice cream and slept most of the afternoon!



**Lali with Sabita mashi and Pappu outside Lula Bari celebrating Holi**

Since I last wrote, which was back in October 2014, we have had a small fundraiser in the UK, where the idea was to bring in some new people to hear about shuktara. This was held at Opera Tavern, which is in Catherine Street, London WC2. Opera Tavern already supports us very generously by adding a discretionary £1 to the bills of customers who eat there and they have promised to continue doing this. We are still short of about £10,000 a year of regular giving and my aim, as well as that of the Trustees in the UK, is to keep on fundraising until we get this and can rest knowing that the children and young people of shuktara will be safe and secure financially forever. I feel after starting something like shuktara, where we care for Anna, Sunil, Bablu, Ratan, Prity, Moni and others who would never be able to live independently, that I cannot stop until I know they are going to be well looked after and to this end, I will work. I don't think we will do any more fundraisers this year, but if you want any help doing one in your own area, or know anyone that would be able to help us bring in more regular donations – please let us know.



**Prity during Holi festivities at Lula Bari on 5th March**



People ask me a lot about Shuktara Cakes Training Centre. This is funded totally by Alain Cojean, who runs a chain of restaurants in Paris called Cojean and a Foundation called *Nourrir, Aimer, Donner* (Eat, Love, Give) which supports other projects around the world. As with all projects they change, grow and evolve along the way. Quite soon after they started Ramesh decided he didn't want to work there, but the others that do, especially Sanjay and Raju, are very committed and serious. Cojean have just sent Lau over from Paris to work with the team for the coming year. They just got back from two days together outside of Kolkata, where they were able to talk and discuss about the future. Lau will help Pappu and Somnath implement their plans and her ideas over the next months. The cakes sell really well to a number of regular customers, but I think Lau and the team want to increase this client base and in the end hand over a successful business to the boys themselves, who could be capable of running it without Pappu.



**Pappu, Lau and Somnath with Bapi in Shankarpur**

As well as being Chairman of Shuktara here in Kolkata, Pappu is also in charge of Shuktara Cakes, which means he is in charge of all of the paperwork, legal matters, social services meetings and staff organizing as well as the day to day caring of the boys and girls. His wife and daughter live very close by and he is always available for everyone, at home, at Shuktara boys and girls homes and Shuktara Cakes.

I do not have the strength or energy to visit Lula Bari, our girls home every day, but Pappu is often there twice a day. However at Holi I did spend the day with the girls and I can report that Moni is doing really well. She seems much less sad at the loss of her family and is happy most of the time. If you remember when I last wrote I told you that she cried for her mother all the time. Nothing can quite make up for that loss, but life at Lula Bari really helps.

David Earp



**With Moni at Lula Bari celebrating Holi earlier this month**