



...written by a generation of Suthars

Look around you – really look around you. If you are in a building, think of the shelter it provides you to live a life of safety and security. Without shelter you would be exposed to the elements and no doubt a different life. Now step outside and view the sphere around you, from the sky down to the ground and beyond.....Jawan therefore takes the opportunity to mythically elaborate more on this aspect from diverse sources. We have collated information to expand on the central figure in this – Vishwakarma Dada.

Dada – Jai Vishwakarma – the creator, the provider and the protector

What one has to appreciate is how all of it gets constructed; whether it is your humble home or the earth and the universe. Think about the design, mechanical, mathematical, visual, engineering and physical aspects that go into building everything around you. On earth of course many people either train or are born with some of these aspects to give us our shelter. But think laterally to the cosmos..... Who made it, designed it, and constructed it? Who was clever enough and artistic enough, possessing the craft and guile to transpire imagination to physical presence? There is only one answer – our beloved

Vishwakarma Dada – wise, knowledgeable, a guiding light and the celestial architect of the whole universe.

Dada – our supreme ancestor

The story of Dada can be found in the Vishwakarma Puran. Interpretations and facts vary, and over the centuries may have become subject to discrepancies, but nonetheless, it is only when one has read and absorbed the Puran's details several times over, that we can truly appreciate being born not only a Suthar, but importantly, direct descendants of Dada. It reveals how close we are to him and him to us. Yet, for various reasons, we have either chosen to find other guiding lights or lost track of him to follow diverse

paths, when in essence we only have to ask our father up there for our answers.

Dada is stated to have manifested in his Virat Swaroop (his true form) at the beginning of time in this universe. It is said that, Triconi Maa – the highest maa, imagined the galaxy and created Brahma, including lord Vishnu and Shiva to create life.

Dada then created the 33 million devtas, delegating each a certain duty, i.e. Agni Devta for fire and Vayu Devta for wind etc, hence asserting how highly he is placed in the order of the gods we worship.

Dada – the master artiste

Dada then went onto create and build the universe including our solar system, as well time and therefore the Yugs – Satyug, Tretayug, Dwaperyug and the current time phase we are living in – Kaliyug. The termination of the last will complete one Yug cycle and re-commence another cycle. It is mentioned in various scriptures that Dada was present in every Yug cycle.

Beyond this unperceivable concept came the layers of the heavens up above, the earth and hell below. He also provided the needs and shelter of the various 33 million Devtas. All this took sheer presence of mind that only Dada's shakti had in order to contemplate each and every angle for life as we know it, which came after the oceans, mountains and rivers were brought to life on Earth. (In the Diwali issue of Jawan, we published a poster of Dada constructing the world and it summed up these very words into a picture).

Dada – the wise and intelligent one

Then came not only physical presence but also spiritual and moral guidance through the Upanishads with its 4 vedas – Rugved, Yajurved, Atharva-ved and Samved, so that we ordinary mortals had a path to guide us on. Lest we forget the Gotras so that family groups could be recognized.

Here is a poster that Dada put to several 'Rishis (The sages), one evening at supper; he asked each one of them to eat without bending their elbows. Think laterally and see how it can be done. (The answer is at the end of this article). The point to this is his immense wisdom and guiding influence that is at our disposal, if only we choose to respect him – which is all he asks.

On a higher level, it was our Dada who devised the supreme test for Arjun, famously depicted in the Mahabharat. This absolute test for the supreme archer Arjun, was to stand on scales, with one foot on each side, positioned mid-way on a pillar. His mission was to then to look into the waters reflection below to target a bird's eye, but shoot the arrow above him directly to the eye of the creature, which nested at the top of the pillar. Now that is lateral think-

ing! Is it any wonder then that he also revealed the secrets of the science of mechanics and architecture in the Sthapatya Veda? (i.e. Shilp-Shashtra).

Dada – the master architect and craftsman

During the history of the earth and heavens, from the Ramayan, Gita and Mahabharata, Dada has been called on to construct dwellings and cities in which many of the gods we know came to live in, such as Dwarika, Hastinapur et al. He has been the provider of the flying chariots of the gods, their weapons such as the Sudarshan Chakra used by Shri Krishna in his fight of Dharma and the infamous bow that Ram lifted to gain the hand of Sitaji in marriage.

You may dismiss these myths, yet only recently Dwarika has been uncovered by Indian and American divers and was seen on BBC2; fact is that carbon dating has proven it to be more than 10,000 years old. Now it may just add credence that Shri Krishna and Dada existed on Earth as reflected in our ancient texts.

Throughout, Dada has always strived to hand on his knowledge, wisdom so that continuation is maintained. Hence he has also seven, "Sutra" (The basic blessings) to his followers, which again has both lateral and practical thinking:

■ **Drishti** (The sight) – Ability to visualize the best form of art from Stone, Metal, Wood, gold or any other metal.

■ **Gaja** (A measuring tool) – Ability to think and measure the project in hand.

■ **Sutra** (Dori, a string) – Ability to lead artisans, design and line up projects in hand.

■ **Samakon** (Katkhuno, a set square) – Ability to make and understand every thing square in the project.

■ **Avalanban** (Orambho, a plumb bob) – Ability to make and understand everything (Vertically) straight.

■ **Sandhni** (Spirit Level) – Ability to understand and make everything in line (horizontally) in given project

■ **Druv Hyarkati** (Hokayantra, a Compass) – Ability to decide orientation of the project.

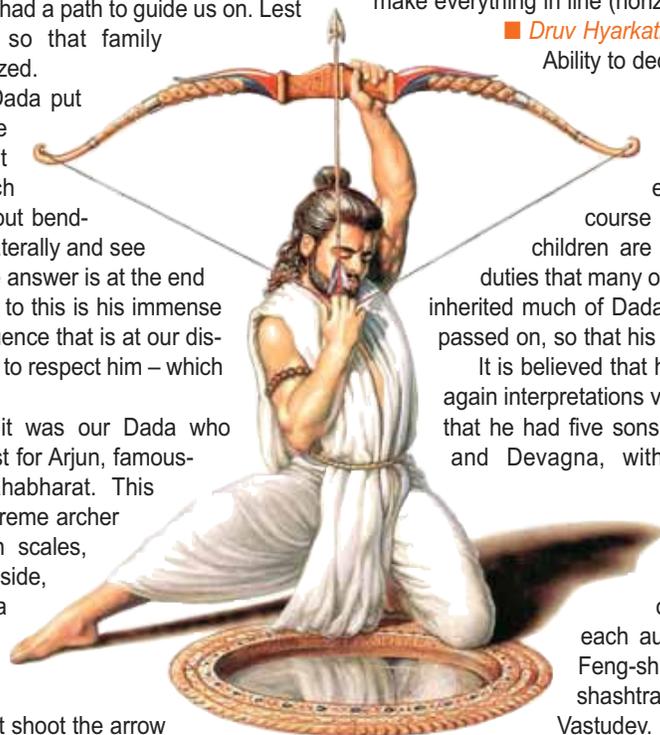
Dada – his kindness and family

Although everything and everyone is his family, Dada of course had an immediate family. His children are equally respected in specific duties that many of us are familiar with. They too inherited much of Dada's wisdom and shakti that he passed on, so that his work could continue.

It is believed that his wife is Prakrutimaa though again interpretations vary; however we are informed that he had five sons; Manu, Maya, Twasta, Shilpi and Devagna, with the most eminent being Vastudev, the adopted son.

Eminent because he who created the Vastu-shashtra, the science of orientation of placement of every article in each auspicious home (or latter day Feng-shuei). After creation of Vastu-shashtra, he is now worshipped as Vastudev.

Vastudev was in fact a powerful, headstrong character, stronger than Shivji, often arrogant and



warrior like. With such an attitude, he made many mistakes as he grew up but with Dada's kind and patient guidance became a dutiful son. In return, Vastudevs' promise to Dada was to ensure peace and success to any who called on him. Now when most of us set up a new home or business, one of the very first things we perform is Vastu puja, whence we ask for peace and harmony in our new home and elimination of negative energy. Similarly in business, by performing Vastu, we ask for success. Done with genuine feeling he will bless us. In fact, this havan is a must ceremony for Suthars every where and is re-gaining increasing popularity worldwide.



Dada also had a daughter Rannade (Randal Maa), who also is the wife of Suryadev. Suryadev of course is the only god that gives us visible darshan by rising everyday. In fact the Gayatri Mantra is an incantation addressed to Suryadev, for lets face it, without light there would be no life. Many steadfastly pray to him in the morning – such as the Big B Bachchan in Mohabatein. On a serious note though, solar worship by many civilizations, such as the Mayans, Aztecs, and Egyptians, had been a mainstay during their reign on earth.

What is the binding thing we do when we are blessed with a son, are expecting to be parents or follow an essential post marriage ritual? We perform 'Mataji', in which we call on Rannade (Randal Maa and Suryadev to bless us). For these ceremonies, such high standards have been laid, but in this day and age many of them are by passed; nonetheless we should truly consider ourselves lucky.

To all these eminent gods, we are their children and direct descendents, yet many have forgotten this. Furthermore, lest we forget, in virtually every Hindu household these very off-spring of Dada are worshipped for different processions.

Incidentally, even the gods have hurdles to overcome. When Rannade married Suryadev, such was the power of Suryadev, that even she couldn't withstand his brilliance & immense heat. She subsequently had to leave him, yet not forgetting her marriage vows; she gave life to an image of her own, called it Chaya and honored her vows. Yet he could not live without her and in the image of a horse went to fetch her again. This is probably the reason that in bygone days, during Mata, women used to dance in what they called 'goro khunde'. Rannade did go back to him, made possible again by Dada after he had reduced the sun's energy. This excess energy was then used by Dada to create weapons of Dharma, such as Lord Vishnu's discus, the trident of Shiva bhagwan, Shri Krishna's sudarshan chakra, the vajra of Indradev, the weapon of Kubera – the god of wealth, the lance of Kartikeya – the god of war as well as many of the chariots of the gods.

Dada – his humble home

As with all our gods, each has a 'sthan' or root where we can pay our homage. In Dada's case it is in Elorgadh, where his murti is sited deep within a cave of the Elora mountain range near Aurangabad in the state of Maharashtra. It is believed to be Cave No.10 in Elora.

In the past, reaching Elorgadh was an arduous journey, but recent developments have improved transportation and it is now a viable and peaceful destination to visit. Today, in land that is within easy reach of the cave, a stunning new mandir is rising, with modern accommodation built to house pilgrims. The murti of Dada in the mandir is awe-inspiring and can send a shiver down ones spine.

Nearby lies the 'Surya Kund' – a water feature that even today has not dried out and is said to contain magical healing powers. Hence this serene, historical and ancestral place should be a dream for all Suthars to visit and pay homage to.

Dada – respected and worshipped

Though times have changed, it is worth noting that in the past our forefathers worshipped Dada, with aarti/puja and offerings on 17 particular days. These were: -

12 Amas days which fall on the last day of every Hindu calendar month.

■ **Labh Pancham** – the fifth day after our new year and traditionally the day to return to work.

■ **Vasant Panchmi** – the fifth day when Rannade (Randal Maa) was married to Suryadev. (Normally February)

■ **Dada's Teras** – Of course his birthday as we understand it to be.

■ **Shravan Sud Agyaras** – the day he went back to Swadham – his residence in the heavens.

■ **Dussehra** – when Ram conquered Ravan using the bridge and weapons made by Dada. (The bridge has also been the subject of a Discovery channel program), but also 'puja' of tools.

Some of these, as we are undoubtedly aware, are still maintained and indirectly linked to Diwali, so one can see how significant they are.

In summary we Suthars are a blessed caste, having the talent and skill to succeed in whatever we do. Our failure to unite, lack of understanding, perhaps egos have halted collective celebration of these facts. Hopefully the next gener-