

BINDU

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By
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PREFACE

Bindu is a story set in Kumaon village of Uttarakhand, a land of rich cultural heritage. Aipan art is one of the popular artforms of the region. With the smooth surface of wet red ochre mud in the background (known as *geru*), Aipan motifs are drawn using rice paste. With a blend of rich symbolism and decorative details, Aipan has a significant presence in festive rituals.

As the world around us runs faster, it brings a new lifestyle along with it. Still the culture and traditions of ancient land prevails, but so do some bias rooted in the minds of people.

Bindu is a story of two kids embracing the traditional art practices while encountering social stigmas rooted around.





“Look there he is...
Oh! What a swizz!!
Enjoying a task made for girls
Look his Aipan has swirls”

The kids around come and go,
This kind of mocking is not new for him though.
He seeks pleasure in Aipan art
Their culture’s significant part.





Then came an oblivious Girl,
A fish out of the pond she seemed
She approached the boy with curious mind,
Observing the decorative pattern, one of its kind.

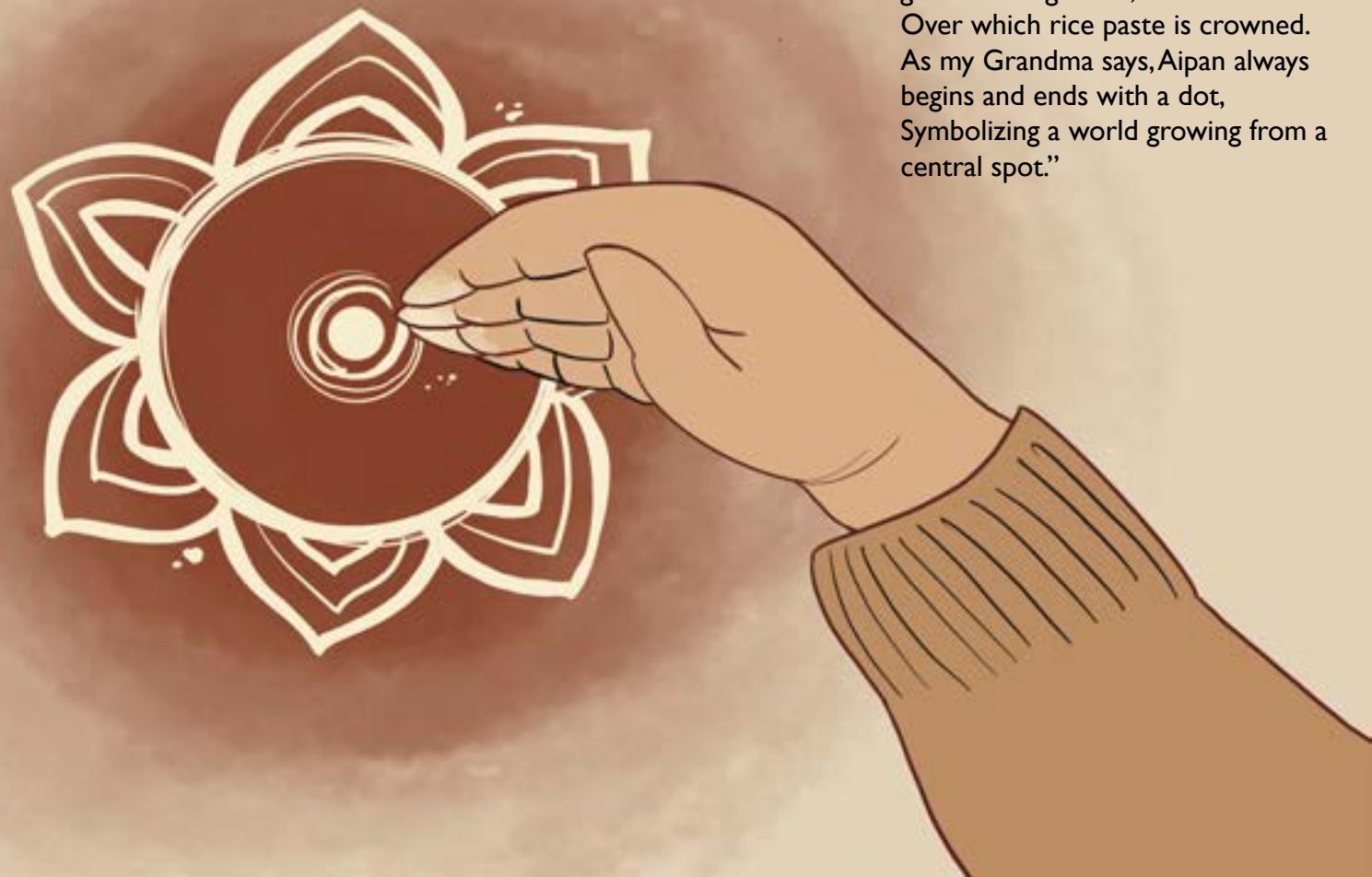
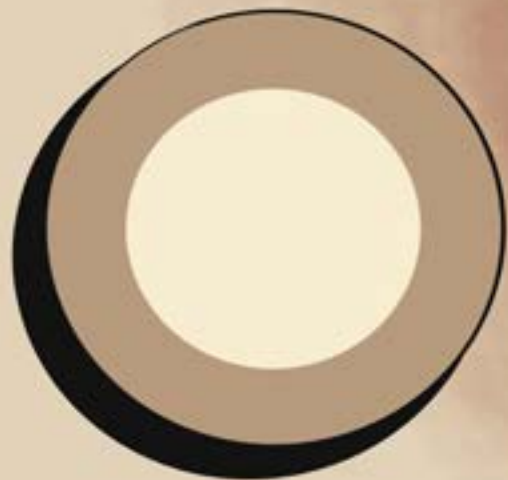


“I see this in most households, what is this painting about?”

“It’s our folk art, a significant part in festivals it counts.”



“How do you draw? It has so many details, where do you begin from?”



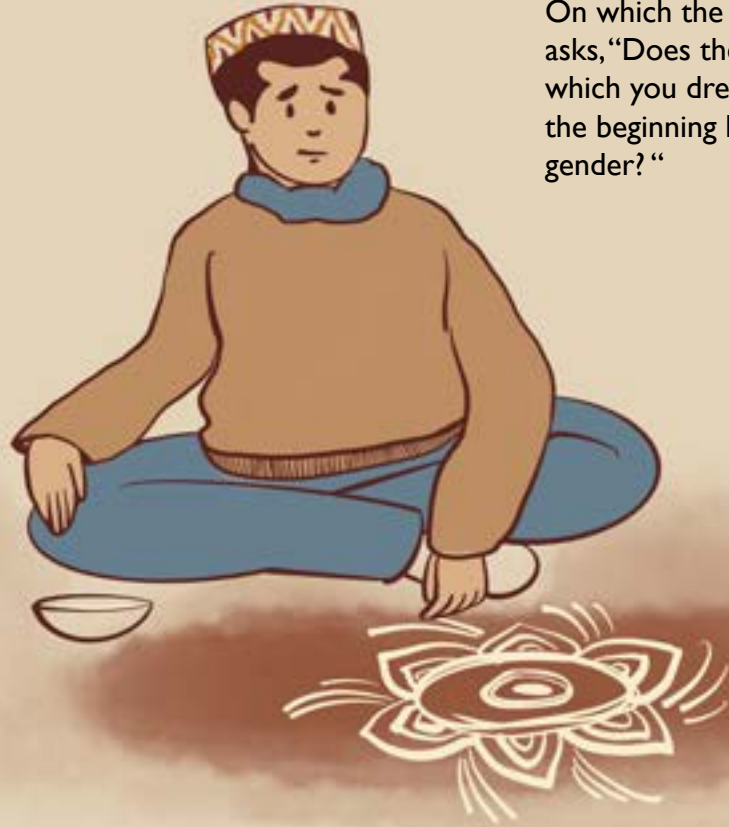
“Traditionally, it starts with applying geru in background, Over which rice paste is crowned. As my Grandma says, Aipan always begins and ends with a dot, Symbolizing a world growing from a central spot.”

“Look at two girls doing Aipan
Oh, what shameful thing he has
done!!”

Again, those kids come and go,
Ashamed boy’s voice goes low,



“This art is only for girls they say,
Not a boy like me who should go out and play.”



On which the girl asks, “Does the dot
which you drew in
the beginning have any
gender?”



“No.” replies the boy with a
voice much denser.
“Then how is this art
restricted to the girls, if
whatever you draw is the
same for everyone.
Why should gender define
the task to be done?”

Broad smile on his face
reflected the lesson he
learnt,
It's wrong for a bias to
exert
Into an artform equal for
everyone.

The girl dips her hand into the rice
paste with excitement,
To complete the Aipan's inditement.
As every drop of paste dripped to the
ground,
her appreciation of the art
became profound.
Aipan was not a decorative pattern
anymore,
Rather a joy she never
experienced before.



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Suman Chowdhury

