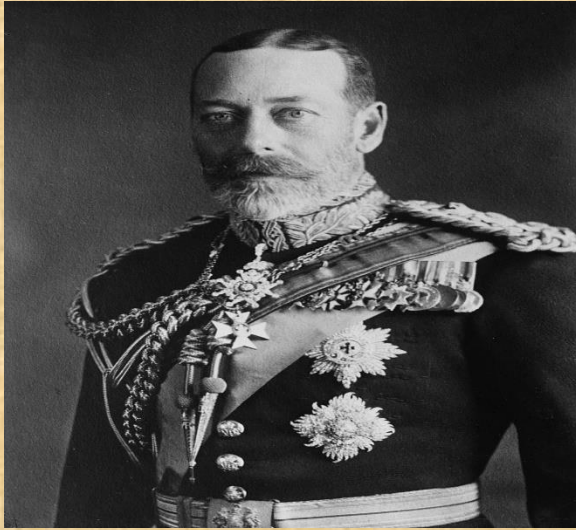


CBSE 10 A KRITIKA TEXT LESSON No. 2 जॉर्ज पंचम की नाक

SUMMARY



English Translation of the Lesson

A nose for George V (जार्ज पंचम की नाक by Kamleshwar)

This goes back to when the Queen of England, Elizabeth II, was due to visit

Hindustan for the first time. The London newspapers were busy reporting the

preparations being made for the Royal Visit. The Queen's Tailor was worried about

what Her Highness would wear during the tour. Her Personal Secretary would be

conducting a lightning tour of the subcontinent beforehand to give the ground a

thorough sniffing. An army of photographers was being assembled to substitute

for a military escort.

Snippets of news from English newspapers appeared in the Delhi newspapers

on the next day, featuring the Queen's new sky blue dress, made of silk imported

from India and which had cost four hundred pounds, the Queen's horoscope and

Prince Philip's adventures. Her servants, valets, chefs, bodyguards, all had

their biographies appear in the papers. Even the dogs of Buckingham Palace had their photographs taken.

The horn that was being blown in England could be heard throughout Hindustan.

All of Delhi was in disarray. Delhi had taken a good look at itself and had found itself

unworthy of a Queen with a five-thousand-rupee dress and her brave chefs who had

proven their valour in the Second World War. No one had had to instruct anyone.

No resolutions had had to be passed. Overnight the city of Delhi began to transform.

The dust of old age was blown away from its roads and its buildings put on their best make-up.

But there was a problem: George V's nose!

New Delhi had everything. Everything that could happen was happening and everything that remained was expected to happen but George V's nose presented a problem. New Delhi had everything but a nose.

This nose had had a long and eventful past. Much fuss had been made over it before.

Campaigns had been conducted. Political parties had passed resolutions. Donations

had been raised. It had been mentioned in heated arguments and political speeches.

Whole pages had been filled in newspapers. The question was whether the nose

of George V was to be removed or left alone. And as happens in every political

issue, some people were for it, some were against it and the majority was silent.

The silent majority lent its support to both sides.

Meanwhile armed guards had been posted around all such noses throughout

the land. Some statues could not be saved in time. These were removed and

relegated to museums.

It was then that tragedy befell the statue of George V installed at India Gate.

One night its nose disappeared. The armed guards and patrols were left behind and the nose was gone.

This came as a shock to everyone. What would the Queen think? The administrative machinery swung into gear and a meeting of the nation's guardians was called to decide what should be done next. In the meeting all who were present agreed that if the figure's nose could not be restored, their own noses were as good as gone.

Brains were scratched and intense deliberations went on. Finally it was decided that the nose must be restored at all costs. A well-known sculptor was asked to appear in Delhi.

The sculptor was a true artist who happened to be in need of money. When he witnessed the long faces of the administrators, doleful, troubled and bewildered, tears welled into his own eyes. He heard a voice command him, "O sculptor! A nose must be fitted to George V!"

The sculptor said, "Consider it done. But first I must know where and how long ago the statue was made. Where did the stone for this statue come from?"

The members of the Committee exchanged looks, each one silently accusing another as if to say that the other was expected to have known all this. The matter was resolved by telephoning a clerk and passing on the investigation to him. The files of the Archaeological Archives had their bellies ripped open but nothing useful could be extracted. The clerk returned to the Committee and in a quivering voice and, begging their pardon, stated that the files had long since digested everything.

The members' faces fell again. A Special Committee was appointed and was given the responsibility of fulfilling the task by any means.

The sculptor was summoned again and this time he brought a proposal. He said, "Please don't lose heart if the stone could not be identified. I will travel to every mountain-range in the land and find us the precise stone." The members of the Special Committee were very relieved. The Chairman said with pride, "Is there anything that cannot be found in our wonderful Hindustan? Everything is hidden in the womb of this great country. One needs only seek. The seeker must strive and the search will bear fruit; prosperity will come to us!"

This little speech immediately appeared in the newspapers.

The sculptor left at once on a tour of the country's mountains and mines. He returned in a few days much disheartened and reported with bowed head, "I have searched every nook and cranny but I have not found a stone of this type. This stone is foreign."

The Chairman was very irritated. He said, "You fool! We have adopted every foreign custom and article; when ball-dancing can be found here, how could you not find a simple stone?"

The sculptor stood silently for a while. Then a gleam appeared in his eye. He said, "I have something to say, but on the condition that it should not reach the press."

The same gleam could then be seen in the Chairman's eye. A peon was instructed to lock the doors. The sculptor continued, "There are other statues in our country. I refer to those of our national leaders. If you will... that is to say... permit it, a nose to fit this statue can be obtained from another one."

All noise was hushed. All eyes were on the sculptor. After a few moments, the tension eased. At last the Chairman spoke, "But do it quietly."

So the sculptor left on another extensive tour. He had the measurements of the lost nose of George V with him. From Delhi he went to Bombay. Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhle, Tilak, Shivaji, Cowasji Jahangir: he groped and measured their noses and then he ran off to Gujarat. Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Vitthalbhai Patel, Mahadev Desai's statues were examined and then off to Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore, Subhash Chandra Bose and Raja Ram Mohan Roy were looked at and then to Bihar. From Bihar he went to Uttar Pradesh, where he found the statues of Chandrashekhar Azad, Ram Prasad Bismil, Motilal Nehru and Madan Mohan Malviya. In desperation he went to Madras, looked over Satyamurti and from there via Mysore, Kerala etc. he landed in Punjab; there he came face-to-face with the statues of Lala Lajpat Rai and Bhagat Singh. Eventually he returned to Delhi and shared the bad news with the Committee. He said, "I have circumambulated the country and examined every statue closely. Every nose has been measured. They are all bigger than this one."

The members were at their wits' end. Continuing his report, the sculptor said, "I had been informed that outside the Bihar Secretariat were the statues of the young students who had been martyred in 1942, trying to raise the flag in the Quit India Movement. When I went there, it turned out that their noses were also larger than the nose we need. Now tell me what else I could have done."

Meanwhile, preparations for the Queen's visit were well under way in the capital. The statue had been washed thoroughly with soap and water and rubbed down with oil. Everything was ready except for its nose.

The Special Committee reported the situation back to the administration. The administration was in a fix; what was the point of welcoming the Queen if George V was to be noseless? It would be a complete loss of face for them.

By now the sculptor was desperate to be paid. Or it may be said that he was not the kind of artist to give up easily. An extraordinary idea occurred to him. The Special Committee sat again, the sculptor appeared before them and repeated his request for discretion. The doors were shut again and the sculptor proposed the new plan, "We all agree that a nose must now be found at any price. In my opinion our only option is to chop off a living nose from the 400 million citizens of our nation."

A stunned silence descended on the room. After a few minutes, the Chairman raised his head and looked at the members but nobody looked likely to speak a word. The sculptor was embarrassed by now but quietly added, "No one will know a thing. Leave it to me. I will select the nose. I just need your permission."

After a moment's whispering, the sculptor was given his permission.

All that ever appeared in the newspapers was that the fiasco was over and the George V near India Gate was finally getting a new nose.

Armed guards were deployed once again. The small pond around the statue was drained and the scum from the bottom removed. It was then filled with fresh water so that the living nose would not shrivel before the Queen's arrival. The public was not informed formally. The sculptor had to struggle to meet his deadline. He asked for assistance which was provided.

And the big day arrived. George V was given a nose.

The newspapers reported that George V had been given a living nose, a nose that did not appear to be made of any kind of stone. But there was something curious about the newspapers on that day. No inaugurations were reported on that day. No ribbons were cut, no communal meetings took place,

no prizes was distributed. No celebrities or state guests were received at any airport or railway station. No fresh photographs of anyone were taken or printed.

Every newspaper was blank on that day.

No one knows why.

After all only one nose had been needed and for just a statue.

