



Kace to Case

Sheela Jaywant

Freelance writer

Corresponding Author:

Sheela Jaywant

Sangolda, Goa 403511

Email: cmjaywant at gmail dot com

Received: 08-MAY-2020

Accepted: 21-JUL-2020

Published: 15-AUG-2020

In Marathi, hair is called not baal, but kes as spelt in Indo-English, pronounced case. To avoid misunderstandings or inconvenience could be spelt kace. Were haircuts given in a lawyer's chamber, would snipped fallen locks be 'resting one's case'? In hospital wards, though, barbers/nurses routinely shave almost every pre-surgical case.

I meet the hospital barber, 'Nhavee'. He greets me, 'Ma'am, meeting after long years', Gives me news of who's retired, who is still around, present earnings and future fears. Part of the news is about Dr X, who's had a bypass recently, thank God, doing well. 'I've shaved all four of them, his brothers and he.' What a thing to tell! 'Two for by-pass, one for hernia, one for a growth on the leg.' He is taking pride In his job, a necessary part of the system. Unnoticed, inconspicuous, yet dignified.

The supervisor (Housekeeping) checks Nhavee's nails, clothes; clean, gleaming, implements, His earning-tools, for cutting -- razors, scissors. Scalpels and forceps are called instruments As they're used by superior-skilled people in hallowed surroundings. Semantics, word-play. Each health-worker contributes to save human lives, no task any less at the end of the day.

Early morning, carrying a list, Nhavee strides into the ward, accompanied by the Head Nurse, Who makes sure everything's going right on her floor, confirming no event adverse. Nhavee greets the male patient, scheduled for a hernia surgery. The pen-marked part Has to be shaved. Nhavee knows that in the elderly, depilation is an art, His hands are gentle on the fragile, wrinkled skin that trembles beneath the blade. The little ones in the paediatric ward are continuously talked to, to keep them unafraid. Their locks fall on the sheets, he sweeps them off. He knows their skulls will soon Be opened for a neuro-surgery or ENT procedure. Nhavee himself is not immune To the infections that he is exposed to and he has only a vague idea Why he has to wear mask-cap-gown and to his hands scrub sanitizer.

He follows the rules, a matter of training and habit. Removal of hair from the incision-Site-to-be is tradition. A small, essential part of routine pre-operative preparation, To facilitate adequate exposure to the site for the surgeon. Nhavee pays attention To details. His combs, air-blasted to remove stuck particles, washed for infection prevention

Cite this article as: Jaywant S. Kace to case. RHIME. 2020;7:189-90.

In a cocktail of unpronounceable liquid chemicals, are kept dry. Then, there are those
Who need a haircut or shave because they have a flaccid limb or are comatose.

When into the ICU goes Nhavee, and in between pipes, tubes, monitors, manipulates
And works his trade, everyone moves away. He needs space and time to translate
Stubble-ridden, whisker-covered chins and heads to smooth, clean surfaces
Each patient's condition is different, to be dealt with on kace to case basis.

Viva healthcare worker, even though he
Be just a barber: 'Nhavee' in Marathi.
