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A Tribute to My Gurudev — Swapan Kumar Mukherjee

The Jade Jumping Spider (Siler semiglaucus)

By Arunava Dey, Nature & Macro Photographer



My journey into macro photography began with my Gurudev, Swapan Kumar Mukherjee. I first met him at a Nature Photography Workshop, with a special focus on Macro Photography, in Berhampore, Murshidabad. That first meeting gradually developed into a relationship of deep respect, affection, and learning.

As a senior photographer, he always encouraged newcomers to explore macro photography with simple equipment rather than waiting for expensive gear. Inspired by his words, I began my journey with a Nikon D3200, an 18–55mm kit lens, and a macro close-up lens. For lighting, I even made a simple flash diffuser from a round incense-stick packet. Those humble beginnings became the foundation of my macro photography journey.

Later, following his advice, I began focusing on individual invertebrate species—not merely to create beautiful photographs, but to observe and document their natural lives and behaviour.

The Jade Jumping Spider (Siler semiglaucus) holds a particularly special place in this journey. When my Gurudev first saw my photograph of this spider on Facebook, he was fascinated by its vivid, jewel-like colours. He personally called me to share his admiration for this tiny spider. That phone call remains one of my most cherished memories of him.



A LIVING JEWEL

The Metallic Jumper (Siler semiglaucus) is a tiny jumping spider of the family Salticidae, found from India to the Philippines.Growing only 4–6 mm, it is known for its striking metallic colours and remarkable agility.



The Jade Jumping Spider is a tiny yet remarkably beautiful and agile predator. Its striking metallic colours and delicate body patterns make it look like a living jewel, but beneath this beauty lies a highly efficient hunter.

THE ANT HUNTER

Instead of building a web, Siler semiglaucus often waits motionlessly for the ideal moment before closing in on its prey. It then uses rapid shifts in internal body pressure (haemolymph) to power highly accurate, lightning-fast leaps onto its target. This remarkable combination of patience, precision, speed, and sudden attack makes its ant-hunting behaviour especially fascinating—and extremely challenging to capture in a photograph.



LIFE BEYOND HUNTING

The reproductive life of these tiny spiders reveals another intimate side of their world. Observing a female around her eggs and young offers a rare glimpse into the vulnerable early stages of their life cycle.

These quiet moments stand in striking contrast to the speed and intensity of the hunting scenes, revealing a softer and more delicate side of this miniature world.



TERRITORY AND COMPETITION

The species also displays fascinating territorial and competitive behavior. Male Siler semiglaucus can be aggressive towards rivals, engaging in contests that may involve displays and physical confrontation.

Such encounters reveal that even within this tiny world, survival is shaped not only by hunting, but also by competition, territory, and instinct.



A TRIBUTE TO MY GURUDEV

Sadly, my Gurudev is no longer with us. But his guidance, encouragement, and love for photography continue to live on through my work.



This final image leaves me with the same feeling he inspired in me from the very beginning—the curiosity to look closer, observe more deeply, and discover extraordinary stories hidden within the smallest corners of nature.

This photo essay is therefore more than a documentation of Siler semiglaucus. It is my humble tribute to my Gurudev, Swapan Kumar Mukherjee—the person who taught me to see not only the beauty of the miniature world, but also its behaviour, drama, and hidden stories.

With deepest respect and gratitude,
Arunava Dey