



FEBRUARY 2022



Monthly Bulletin

VOLUME LI, NO. 2



Eight-armed Sarasvati on lintel of pāga niche:
Someśvara temple, Mukhaliṅgam

THE ASIATIC SOCIETY
(AN INSTITUTION OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE)
1 PARK STREET • KOLKATA-700016

Contents

| | | | |
|---|----|---|----|
| ■ From the Desk of the General Secretary | 1 | ■ Raja Ravi Varma's Saraswati | 51 |
| ■ Meeting Notice | 2 | ■ Saraswati in Nivedita Girls' School Sagarika Sur | 52 |
| Paper to be read | | ■ সরস্বতী বন্দনায় শিশুশিল্পীরা | 53 |
| ■ Reconciling the Present Day Goddess Sarasvatī to its Earlier Representations. Keka Adhikari Banerjee | 3 | ■ Saraswati in Philately | 54 |
| ■ Notifications | 6 | Foundation Day Celebration | |
| In Memoriam | | ■ Observance of the 239th Foundation Day Celebration of the Asiatic Society: A Brief Report Arun Bandopadhyay & Dilip Roy | 55 |
| ■ Where Versatility Met Rare Genius: A Tribute to Jayanta Kumar Ray Kausik Bandyopadhyay | 8 | ■ Report on 178th Foundation Day Celebration in Ananda Bazar Patrika | 58 |
| ■ The Person who dedicated himself to spread the thought of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray Sabyasachi Chatterjee | 12 | Republic Day Celebration | |
| ■ Aryabhata MS to be on display at Asiatic Society Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey | 14 | ■ Flag Hoisting on 73rd Republic Day | 59 |
| ■ Homage | 15 | Events | |
| President's Column | | ■ Exhibition and Lecture-Demonstration on Manuscripts on Gaṇitaśāstra : A Brief Report | 60 |
| ■ The Educational Imbroglio Swapan Kumar Pramanick | 16 | Heritage Matters | |
| Saraswati in Scriptures, Sculptures & Paintings | | ■ Conservation of Excavated Buddhist Archaeological Site (Sakhisenar Dhīpi) at Moghalmari, Paschim Medinipur Anjan Mitra | 61 |
| ■ अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वती (Sarasvatī, Best of Mothers, Best of Rivers, Best of Goddesses): An enigma that is Sarasvatī Tapati Mukherjee | 20 | ■ A Rare Vishnu Image in the Murshidabad District Museum Mousumi Banerjee | 67 |
| ■ Devi Sarada Srikumar Chatterjee | 24 | ■ Garuda: A Unique Sculpture Preserved in the Bishnupur Achariya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhawan Tusar Sarkar | 69 |
| ■ Concept of Sarasvatī in Buddhist Tradition Bandana Mukherjee | 26 | Space for Research Fellows | |
| ■ Notes on a 'Unique Instance' of Sarasvatī from North Bengal Sharmila Saha and Rajat Sanyal | 32 | ■ ঈশ্বরের নিজের গ্রামে স্কুলশিক্ষায় একুশের চালচিত্র প্রদুৎ শীল | 71 |
| ■ Sarasvatī : Kalighat Painting | 35 | Books from Reader's Choice | |
| ■ Images of a Distinct Regional Tradition: Sarasvatī on Ram in Bengal Bijan Mondal | 36 | ■ Sarasvatī: The River Par Excellence Priyank Pravin Patel | 75 |
| ■ Manifestation of Goddess Sarasvatī in Jaina Art and Iconography Shubha Majumder | 42 | Bibliography | |
| ■ Sarasvatī in Embroidery Artwork | 48 | ■ Manuscripts on Gaṇitaśāstra in the Collection of The Asiatic Society | 79 |
| ■ Artwork on Sarasvatī : Tradition of Bengal Art Somnath Mukherjee | 49 | Books Accessioned during the Last Month | |
| | | ■ Asian Accession | 81 |
| | | ■ English Accession | 83 |



Cover Description

Eight-armed Sarasvatī (Tenth Century) on lintel of pāga niche is found in Someśvara temple at Mukhalingam. She is seated in ardhaparyāṅka with her left knee slightly raised. She plays the Vīṇā with her front set of hands, other right hands display varadā and hold a sword and a book. Her low left hand holds a vessel, the middle hand holds an indistinct object (goad), upper hand holds a shield. A lion-mount is carved on the face of viśvapadma pedestal beneath her left knee.

Sachindra Nath Bhattacharya
Member, The Asiatic Society

Source: Tantra and Śākta Art of Orissa, Vol-3 by Thomas Eugene Donaldson



From the Desk of the General Secretary

Dear Members and Well-wishers,

We are happy to share with you that we have observed the 239th Foundation Day of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata on 15th January, 2022 in a very modest manner because of the continuing pandemic situation. The details of it will be reported separately.

Looking back at the remarkable incidences that happened at various points of times, but in the month of February, are worth to reckon with. For example, the protest of the Indian people by observing general strike against the arrival of the Simon Commission on 3rd February, 1928 may be remembered side by side with the beginning of the revolt in Indian Navy in Bombay on 18th February, 1946. Another set of memorable days in the month of February are – the birthdays of Charles Darwin (12.02.1809), Abraham Lincoln (12.02.1809), Galileo Galilei (15.02.1564), Nicolaus Copernicus (19.02.1473). Perhaps we will also notice that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was born on 18th February, 1486 while Shri Ramakrishna Paramhamsadev was born on 18th February, 1836. The month of February, therefore, appears to be very charming in many respects in our time.

The city of Calcutta will step into the 150th year of the occasion when horse driven tram was introduced on 24th February, 1873, while the city had witnessed the birth of the first public museum, i.e. the Indian Museum, on 2nd February, 1814, which was born out of The Asiatic Society, established in 1784. Another very important landmark in the history of our nation falls in the month of February, i.e. on 9th February, 1951, the starting of enumeration of the first Indian census in the Independent India. The language movement of 21st February, 1952, in the then East Pakistan, ultimately saw the birth of an independent nation i.e. People's Republic of Bangladesh in 1971. Incidentally, this year will be the Golden Jubilee of the birth of Bangladesh. Put together, and cumulatively speaking, each of this incident/event/issue has made an indelible mark in our society, culture and polity, which was grown, being variously impacted by them – individually as well as collectively.

Friends, we are already committed to carry out a number of academic programmes, such as research projects/workshops/seminars/endowment lectures/special lectures etc. slated during the coming months. Notwithstanding the prevailing constraints since the beginning of COVID-19 in March, 2020, we are trying our hard to achieve the target, sometimes in virtual mode or otherwise. Please cooperate with us in our future endeavours, offer your constructive suggestions to improve upon them, wherever necessary.

Please keep well and safe. 🙏

(S. B. Chakrabarti)
General Secretary

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE



Utpal Kumar Bhadra
(b.01.12.1962)

With profound grief we condole the sad and sudden demise of Utpal Kumar Bhadra of Accounts Section of the Society on 16.01.2022. His service to the Asiatic Society since 17.04.1986 was undoubtedly remarkable. His association with the Asiatic Society was of immense help to his colleagues and to the Society. Members of the Staff, Research Fellows and Members of the Society share heartfelt sorrow with the bereaved family and pay homage to the departed soul.

**AN ORDINARY MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASIATIC
SOCIETY WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY 2022
AT 5 P.M. AT THE VIDYASAGAR HALL OF THE SOCIETY**

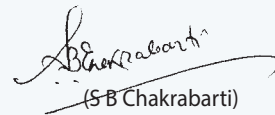
MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO KINDLY ATTEND THE MEETING

A G E N D A

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Ordinary Monthly General Meeting held on 3rd January, 2022.
2. Notice of Intended Motion, if any, under Regulation 49(d).
3. Matters of current business and routine matters for disposal under Regulation 49(f).
4. Consideration of reports and communications from the Council as per Regulation 49(g).
5. The following paper will be read by Dr. Keka Adhikari Banerjee:

Reconciling the Present Day Goddess Sarasvati to its Earlier Representations.

Dated : 27.01.2022


(S.B. Chakrabarti)
General Secretary

COVID-19 Safety Protocol will be strictly adhered to

Reconciling the Present Day Goddess Sarasvatī to its Earlier Representations

Keka Adhikari Banerjee
Curator, The Asiatic Society

Abstract

Sarasvatī, the presiding goddess of wisdom, knowledge and music (*buddhi*, *jñāna* and *saṃgīta*) remains equally important in Indian tradition from the Vedic periods to the modern era. She is generally represented to have four arms, holding a manuscript, rosary, water pot and a musical instrument called *Vīṇā*.

She is variously known as *Vāc*, *Vāgdevī*, *Vāgīśvarī*, *Vāṇī*, *Sāradā*, *Bhāratī*, *Vīṇāpāṇī* and so on. In Brahmanical mythology she is considered as the wife of either of *Brahmā* or *Viṣṇu* or *Śiva*. In Buddhism she is considered as the wife of *Mañjuśrī*, the Buddhist god of transcendal wisdom. Several *Sadhanas* of *Sādhnamālā* allude to

her various aspects and prescribe that she confers learning, intelligence and memory to the worshippers. In Jainism she is named as *Sarasvatī*, *Srutadevatā*, *Vāṇī* and *Sāradā* and holds a special honoured place even received the equal status of the *Jinas*. Thus in the domain of Indian religious and cultural life, irrespective of creeds, she holds a respectable position through the ages.

In spite of the predominance of the male deities in the Vedic Literature, the mention of the female deities like *Aditi*- the divine mother, *Uṣā*- the goddess of dawn, *Ṛṥhvī*- the mother earth and *Vāc*- the goddess of speech are noteworthy.

Many Puranas and upa-puranas mention



Sarasvatī as a sacred river as well as the personified form of a deity or as both.

Many other literary works like *Bṛhatsamhitā*, *Aṃsumadbhedāgama*, *Viṣṇudharmottara*, *Aparājitapṛcca*, *Rupamaṇḍana*, *Śilparatna* etc give more or less same iconographical description of the goddess- Sarasvatī. It differently appears that either she is two, four or ten armed, white complexioned, dressed in white garment, bedecked with ornaments, holding in her hands either of the objects from lyre (*vīṇā*), manuscript (*pustaka*), rosary (*akṣamālā*), water vessel (*kamaṇḍalu*), pen (*lekhanī*), white lotus (*puṇḍarīka*) etc.

A good number of images of Sarasvatī are found throughout the country where she is represented either in standing, seated or dancing postures. Earliest Archaeological references are found from Bharut, Ghantasal (almost contemporary dated to 2nd century B.C), Mathura (Jain Sarasvatī image having Kushana Brahmi inscription at it's pedestal). Two armed Sarasvatī has been depicted on the Rājājalāsana type of coins of Samacaradeva, a predecessor of Sasanka of Gauda during the Gupta period (550- 575 A.D).

Beautiful *lalitāsana* Sarasvatī images hailed from Nalanda, Malwa and Mathura (preserved in the British Museum) either two or four armed holding *vīṇā*, *akṣamālā*), manuscript on her mount –swan were carved between 9th-10 century A.D. Besides, proficiency of Sarasvatī images have been found from Eastern India and South India (Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Helebid etc) carved on temple walls and in individual form or *parśvadevatā* of Viṣṇu, all are datable to 11th-14th century A.D. The South Indian images depict beautiful delineations of Chola, Chalukya and Hoysala style of art whereas the Eastern Indian Sarasvatī images are the representations of the Pala art. Depiction

of ram as the mount of the goddess are found in some images from Bangladesh which corresponds to the story of *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, datable to 11th-12th century A.D.

Individual temple of Sarasvatī is very rare but references are found in the *Kāmasūtra* of Vatsyayana and *Kathāsaritsāgar*. At Varanasi and Maihar there are temples of Sarasvatī in the name of Vāgiśvarī on peacock mount and Sārādā devī respectively.

Goddess Sarasvatī has also been depicted in Manuscript painting. One of the Manuscripts of *Devīmāhatmya* (Acc No. IM-10336) preserved in the Asiatic Society museum shows beautiful delineation of Sarasvatī on peacock mount. A good number of manuscripts on *dhyānas*, *stotras* related to the goddess and Sarasvatī tantra are preserved in the Society's museum.

Till date in Assam, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Jharkhand, Bihar the Vasanti Panchami or Sarasvatī puja (on the 5th day of the Hindu calendar month of Magha, about February) is celebrated in homes as well as all educational Institutions.

Even in Goa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu Sarasvatī puja is celebrated during the Navaratri festival. The goddess follow the same representations as of the earlier images. In 2018, Haryana Govt. lunched & sponsored the annual Sarasvatī Mahotsav in its state named after Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī is also worshipped as the goddess of learning & speech outside India – in Cambodia, Thailand, China, Japan, Myanmar and Indonesia which proves her popularity beyond the country.

From the above discussion it can be inferred that Sarasvatī retained her popularity from the Ṛgvedic times and in spite of her association with a number of cult divinities she was accepted universally as the goddess of purity, learning and fine arts.



The Asiatic Society

Founded in 1784

(An Institution of National Importance declared by an Act of Parliament)

and

(An Autonomous Organisation under Ministry of Culture, Government of India)

Patron : Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal

Ref. No. : TASK/Elec-2022/2021-22/091

Date : 10/01/2022

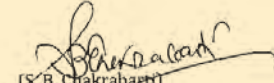
NOTIFICATION

The provisional list of members who are entitled to participate in the election of the Office - bearers and other Members of the Council of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, scheduled to be held sometimes in April, 2022 is hereby published on 10th January, 2022 (Monday) as per Regulation 37 (c) (i) of the Asiatic Society.

The provisional list will be made available at the office of the Asiatic Society [3rd Floor of New Building, 1 Park Street, Kolkata 700016] for inspection by the members on any working day between 12:30 p.m. to 03:30 p.m. The list will also be made available at the website of the Society (<https://www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org/>).

Applications for inclusion of names in the provisional list or raising objection thereto or making correction therein shall be submitted in Form nos. 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The last date of submission of such application will be 18th February, 2022 (Friday). The date of hearing of claim/objection/correction will be on 22nd February, 2022 (Tuesday). The final list of voters will be published on 28th February, 2022 (Monday).

The forms mentioned above shall be available from the office of the Asiatic Society [3rd Floor of New Building, 1 Park Street, Kolkata-700016] on any working day between 12:30 p.m. to 03:30 p.m. The Forms will also be made available at the website of the Society (<https://www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org/>).


(S. B. Chakrabarti)
General Secretary

Important Dates:

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Date of publication of Provisional List of members | : | 10 th January, 2022 (Monday) |
| Last date of filing of Objections/ Claims/ Corrections | : | 18 th February, 2022 (Friday) |
| Date of hearing of Objections/ Claims/ Corrections | : | 22 nd February, 2022 (Tuesday) |
| Date of publication of Final List of voters | : | 28 th February, 2022 (Monday) |

1 Park Street | Kolkata-700016 | Phone : 2229-0779, 2249-7250, 2229-7251 | (D) 2229-3993 Fax : 91-033-2217-2355
website : www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org | e-mail : gs.asiatic@gmail.com / theasiaticsociety@gmail.com



THE ASIATIC SOCIETY

Founded in 1784

(An Institution of National Importance declared by an Act of Parliament)

&

(An Autonomous Organization under Ministry of Culture, Government of India)

1, Park Street, Kolkata- 700016

Phone: 2229-0779, 2249-7250, 2229-7251, Fax: 033-2252-0600

Website: www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org



Ref. No: 98

Dated: 27.01.2022

NOTIFICATION

As per recommendations of the Election Committee constituted for conducting the election of Office-Bearers and other Members of the Council of the Asiatic Society for the period 2022-24, the present Council of the Asiatic Society in its meeting held on 27th January, 2022 decided to give all the ordinary members an opportunity to pay their subscription due up to 31st December, 2021 by 15th February, 2022 so that they shall be entitled to participate in the aforesaid election process and cast their votes.

Ordinary members, who have not yet paid their subscription due up to 31st December, 2021 are requested to pay the due subscription immediately in the cash section of the Society on any working day between 11:30 a.m. and 04:30 p.m. within 15th February, 2022. The list of members who have not yet paid their subscription due up to 31st December, 2021 is available in the website of the Society: <https://www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org>

Due to the surge of COVID 19 pandemic, members can also pay their due subscription directly to the below mentioned bank account of the Society and send this information with the following details to the email id : gs.asiatic@gmail.com within the aforesaid period for further necessary action without fail :

1. Member's Name :
2. Membership No :
3. Date of Payment :
4. Amount Paid :
5. Payment Reference such UTR No or Transaction ID
6. Period for which the subscription was paid

Payment of subscription directly to the bank account without sending the aforesaid e mail intimation will not be considered for inclusion of the member's name in the voter list.

Bank Account Details:

1. Bank Name : Central Bank of India
2. Branch : Park Street
3. Account Name : The Asiatic Society
4. Account Number : 3489910353
5. IFS Code : CBIN0280108

(S. B. Chakrabarti)
General Secretary



THE ASIATIC SOCIETY

Founded in 1784

(An Institution of National Importance declared by an Act of Parliament)

&

(An Autonomous Organization under Ministry of Culture, Government of India)

1, Park Street, Kolkata- 700016

Phone: 2229-0779, 2249-7250, 2229-7251, Fax: 033-2252-0600

Website: www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org



NOTIFICATION FOR NEW MEMBERSHIP

Due to the surge of covid 19 pandemic, the time period for submission of new membership form has been extended till **28.02.2022**. Interested persons can download the application form online or collect it from the office of the Society and submit the same by Speed post/Registered Post/Courier or physically till 28.02.2022 up to 05:00 p.m.

Dated: 21st January, 2022

Sd/-
General Secretary

Forthcoming Academic Programme

Raja Rajendralala Mitra Memorial Lecture

Speaker :

Professor Tapati Guha-Thakurta

Hony. Professor of History and Former Director, CSSSC

Topic :

From Pandit to Scholar: Positioning Raja Rajendralala Mitra within the Worlds of Antiquarian Scholarship in 19th Century India

Date : 20th February 2022 at 3.00 p.m.

Venue : Rajendralala Mitra Bhavan, CL-24, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700091

ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

Where Versatility Met Rare Genius: A Tribute to Jayanta Kumar Ray

Jayanta Kumar Ray is no more. He left this vale of tears on 18 December 2021 at 8.40 am, leaving behind his wife, daughter and son. This is the end of an era in the study and research of international relations, India's foreign policy and contemporary history in the subcontinent. He retired from the University of Calcutta in 2000; but remained active in research and scholarship till the end of his life.

Born in Chandpur, East Bengal, in 1934, Ray left for India after India's Partition in mid-August 1947. He spent his school life at Malda Zilla School, Malda and Suri Benimadhab Institution, Birbhum, and attended Suri Vidyasagar College. He did his B.A. (Hons) from the Presidency College and M.A. in Political Science from the University of Calcutta. It was only after coming to Calcutta that he first got a chance to do his studies with electric lights. Ray used to play his ancestral musical instrument and violin quite well at his young age. He also used to sing well. He took to research and teaching together as he joined the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University in 1958. He completed his Ph.D. on the United States-Pakistan alliance at the Jadavpur University in 1965.

Through more than sixty years of his academic career, he taught a variety of subjects, e.g. theories of world politics, India's foreign policy, national security, comparative politics, government, public administration,

civil-military relations, and politics in South and Southeast Asia. Whereas he mostly taught at several universities in India, he conducted researches in a number of reputed institutes in India, Bangladesh, Japan, Europe and the United States. Author and editor of numerous books and contributor to several national and international journals, Ray worked on diverse countries and in various disciplines. He therefore probably did not belong to this era, but to what he described as 'the long lost age of Renaissance'.



Ray served and held a number of important and prestigious positions at several renowned institutions during his long career. The list includes: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla (1966-1967); University of Burdwan, Burdwan (1970-71); Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi (1971-73); Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi (1973-77); and Centre for South and South-East Asian Studies, University of Calcutta (1978-91). He joined the Department of History, University of Calcutta, as Centenary Professor of International Relations in 1977 and retired from there in 2000. He was also founder of the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies of the same University. He was a mainstay at the Institute of Foreign Policy Studies of the University of Calcutta. A founder member of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata, he was its Honourary

Director (2005-7) and Chairman (2005-10). He became the Maulana Azad Fellow of the Institute in 2011. He also became a National Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi (2006-08) and an Editorial Fellow of the Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi (2008-09). He was also a life member of Asiatic Society, Kolkata. In 2015, the Government of India recognized his great scholarship by bestowing upon him the honour of 'National Research Professor'.

Ray was a prolific writer from the beginning of his career. His initial writings included text books for graduate and postgraduate students and translation works.¹ After completing his Ph.D. he came up with a number of research monographs within the span of a decade, rare in the life of an early career scholar in the global academia of Social Sciences. During this decade (1967-1977), he published contemporary historical studies of Indonesia,² East Pakistan³ and Thailand⁴; a study of strategic issues of security in the missile age⁵; and a critique of America's alliance policy with Pakistan and South Vietnam.⁶ This was what set Jayanta Kumar Ray apart from others in his field – a scholar who could work serially and simultaneously with so diverse themes and so different areas so early in career, yet without compromising the quality of work.

His passionate and deep attachment to his ancestral home, i.e. East Bengal/ East Pakistan/ Bangladesh found its way into his researches on different aspects of the country's history, leading to a number of significant publications. His pioneering study of East Pakistan (1968) analysed the deep East-West divide in Pakistan,⁷ and, in 1971, when Bangladesh emerged, this book could lay claim to a successful predictive capability.⁸ In a tract on technology transfer to Bangladesh, Ray was the first to expose how in a low income country like Bangladesh, donor agencies took away a lion's share of the so-called foreign aid by way of salaries, etc. for foreign technical experts, even

though comparable expertise was available in Bangladesh itself.⁹ He also worked on rural development¹⁰ and public health¹¹ in Bangladesh. He was the first in the world to publish a book on the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh in 1987, when social scientists in Bangladesh or elsewhere did not take it seriously. Ray's unconventional argument was that the Grameen Bank was chasing successfully a miracle of largescale rural poverty alleviation with limited resources.¹² The argument proved prophetic when Muhammad Yunus, the brain behind the Grameen Bank, won the Nobel Prize in 2006. In the late 1980s Ray prepared a research study on the civil society in Bangladesh, which gave an accurate preview of the downfall of a military ruler, General H.M. Ershad.¹³ In fact, the academic collaboration fostered between Jayanta Kumar Ray of India and Bangladeshi scholars like Muntassir Mamoon stands out as an epitome of Indo-Bangladesh friendship and cooperation broadening in the cultural field. Ray and Mamoon together wrote more than about a dozen books on the administration and civil society in Bangladesh and India-Bangladesh relations in both English and Bangla.¹⁴ There are several other works Ray co-authored with Bangladeshi scholars.¹⁵ He was actively associated with the International Centre for Bengal Studies, Dhaka. He also founded the Centre for Research in Indo-Bangladesh Relations in Kolkata. He built a cultural bridge with Bangladesh, which could be utilized by his successors to great effect.

Ray was a versatile social scientist with trans-disciplinary roots and multi-country orientation. He was the first Indian to publish intensive research studies on contemporary Indonesia and Thailand. He was also the first Indian to formulate a typology of India's state bureaucracy.¹⁶ His works on various aspects of administration in India and India's international engagement won high accolades.¹⁷ His joint work with Suranjan Das on the underworld of Calcutta was

unique in itself.¹⁸ His massive life time work on India's Foreign Relations (2011) remains a magnum opus in the concerned field.¹⁹ His last published book reflected his concern with cross-border terrorism in South Asia.²⁰ His last work was the outcome of a project on *Modern India: Politics and Demography, 1881-2011: Focus on Pre- and Post-Partition Khulna* sponsored by the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). He submitted the final manuscript to the ICHR before his death. Ray's followers would eagerly await the publication of this intriguing work.

During his tenure at MAKAIAS he took major initiatives to open up new vistas of area studies – Central Asia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, China, and so on.²¹ Under his leadership the Institute took long strides in establishing a viable Northeast India Research Programme.²² Thus Ray took MAKAIAS to new heights.

In his everyday life, Ray was a soft-spoken gentleman with exemplary discipline and great perseverance. His work ethics set a rare combination of insight, foresight, hard work, humility and commitment. He had an exceptional ability to survive in most difficult and adverse circumstances, fighting against heavy odds with his courage, guts and determination. The Bangladesh government once refused him visa for his sharp critique of its autocratic rule. But such acts made him more determined in his continuous search for facts and truths. Ray used to mix with his students, colleagues and researchers of all ages in a spirit of camaraderie, and his doors always were open to them. He had the rare ability to work smoothly with people who disliked or critiqued him. Some of his most beloved people from the academic community were opposed to his views. Yet his affection for them knew no bounds. At the same time he always stood stubborn in his views and arguments. He had great a sense of humour which made his companions and critics alike feel at ease with him. Yet he could be sharpest in refuting others' views with great sarcasm in his inimitable style.

Many considered him a hardliner in his views; yet he was admirable in his pursuit of reality, albeit 'contested', in an objective manner as far as practicable, rare in academic studies on international relations and contemporary history.

Ray combined social science research with social welfare activities. He worked in about 400 villages of West Bengal, applying the Bangladesh Grameen Bank model, and succeeded in raising about 9000 families above the poverty line through his South Asia Research Society. From a personal standpoint, Ray always acknowledged the role of his wife Krishna Ray in making his academic journey and social work so meaningful.

E.H. Carr once wrote, 'Good historians ... have future in their bones.'²³ Jayanta Kumar Ray was such a historian whose analytical visions proved prophetic time and again. His interests and works in such diverse areas across different countries have been a rarity in India's social science research. Most importantly, his works, with a rare blend of methodological competence and analytical penetration, showed the ideal way of studying contemporary history from interdisciplinary perspectives. A rare combination of teacher, researcher and administrator, Ray leaves behind a great legacy of erudite and versatile scholarship to his followers as also to the posterity. An evergreen personality, Jayanta Kumar Ray will always remain a phenomenon in the Indian academic world.

References

- 1 Most notable among these are: *The Web of International Relations* (with J. Das Gupta), Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1961; Bengali translation of *The Revolt in Tibet* by Frank Moraes, Calcutta: Parichay Publishers, 1962; *Studies in Political Thought*, Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1962; *Principles of Political Science* (with J. Das Gupta and N.C. Roy), London: Macmillan, 1963.
- 2 *Transfer of Power in Indonesia: 1942-49*, Bombay: Manaktalas, 1967.

- 3 *Democracy and Nationalism on Trial: a Study of East Pakistan*, Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1968.
- 4 *Portraits of Thai Politics*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972.
- 5 *Security in the Missile Age*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967.
- 6 *Public Policy and Global Reality: Some Aspects of American Alliance Policy*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1977.
- 7 *Democracy and Nationalism in Trial*.
- 8 The Government of India is going to publish this book in abridged form soon to commemorate the fifty years of Bangladesh's Independence.
- 9 "Technology Transfer: Some Aspects of Bangladesh Experience", *The Calcutta Historical Journal*, July-December 1982, pp. 1-53.
- 10 *Organizing Villagers for Self-Reliance: A Study of Deedar in Bangladesh*, Comilla: Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development, 1983.
- 11 *Organizing Villagers for Self-Reliance: A Study of Gonoshasthya Kendra in Bangladesh*, Calcutta: Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1986.
- 12 *To Chase a Miracle: A Study of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd., 1987.
- 13 Jayanta Kumar Ray and Muntassir Mamoon, *Inside Bureaucracy: Bangladesh*, Calcutta: Papyrus, 1987.
- 14 To mention only a few of their joint works, *Inside Bureaucracy; Prasasaner Andarmahal: Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Pallab Publishers, 1988; *Bangladeshe Civil Samaj Pratisthar Sangram: 1947-90*, Dhaka: Abasar, 1990; *Civil Society in Bangladesh: Resilience and Retreat*, Calcutta: Firma KLM, Calcutta, 1996; *India and Bangladesh: Current Perspectives*, Institute of Foreign Policy Studies, University of Calcutta, 2011; *Essays on Politics and Governance in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Thailand* (edited), Kolkata: Towards Freedom, 2007.
- 15 A few interesting examples are: Hassan Uzzaman and Jayanta Kumar Ray, *An Uncertain Beginning: Perspectives on Parliamentary Democracy in Bangladesh*, Calcutta: Naya Prakash, 1992; Jayanta Kumar Ray and Phanindranath Chakraborty, *Uttarbanger Nagaryan: Natore*, Dhaka: Ananya, 2006; B.K. Jahangir and Jayanta Kumar Ray, eds. *India-Bangladesh Cooperation Broadening Measures*, Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi, 1997.
- 16 *Administrators in a Mixed Polity*, New Delhi: Macmillan, 1981.
- 17 Jayanta Kumar Ray and Hiroshi Sato, *Centre-State Financial Relations in India*, Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1987; Jayanta Kumar Ray, *India : In Search of Good Governance*, Calcutta: Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies and K.P. Bagchi & Co., 2001; Jayanta Kumar Ray and Prabir De, *Promotion of Trade and Investment in Eastern South Asia Subregion*, New Delhi: Bookwell, 2003; Jayanta Kumar Ray and Prabir De, *India and China in an Era of Globalization*, New Delhi: Bookwell, 2005; Jayanta Kumar Ray, ed. *India's International Relations 1700 – 2000*, New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2006; Jayanta Kumar Ray and Prabir De, *India Myanmar Connectivity*, New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2013.
- 18 Suranjan Das and Jayanta Kumar Ray, *The Goondas: Towards a Reconstruction of the Calcutta Underworld*, Calcutta: Firma KLM, Calcutta, 1997.
- 19 *India's Foreign Relations, 1947-2007*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2011.
- 20 *Cross-border Terrorism: Focus on Pakistan*, New Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2016.
- 21 Prof. Hari Vasudevan, as Director of the Institute, assisted him and played an important role in this process.
- 22 A series of conferences were organized in the states of Northeast India, and several publications came out as a result. To mention a few: Jayanta Kumar Ray and Rakhee Bhattacharya, eds. *Northeast India: Administrative Reforms and Economic Development*, New Delhi: Har-Anand, 2008; Jayanta Kumar Ray and Rakhee Bhattacharya, eds. *Development Dynamics in North East India*, Delhi: Anshah, 2008; Jayanta Kumar Ray, Rakhee Bhattacharya and Kausik Bandyopadhyay, eds. *Sikkim's Tryst with Nathu La: What Awaits India's East and Northeast?* Delhi: Anshah, 2009.
- 23 E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* London: Macmillan, 1961, p. 108.

Kausik Bandyopadhyay

Student of Jayanta Kumar Ray and Professor of History, West Bengal State University

The Person who dedicated himself to spread the thought of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray



Professor Anil Bhattacharya

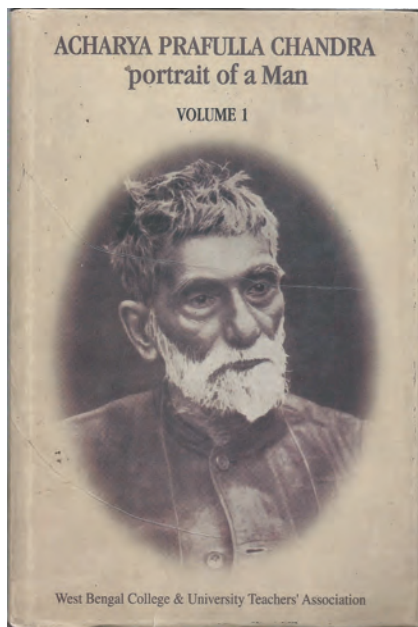
Professor Anil Bhattacharya (b.1944), passed away on 09.01.2022. He was born and brought up in Murshidabad. His teaching career began in Jalpaiguri. Later he taught in Acharya Prafulla Chandra College. He was a teacher of Physics. He was mostly known for his role in the movement of college and university teachers. He was the General Secretary of West Bengal College and University Teachers' Association (W.B.C.U.T.A.) for two time-spans. The first term was between 1991 and 1994 and the second was 1998-2004. He was attached to the *All India Federation of University and College Teachers Organisations* (A.I.F.U.C.T.O) and was elected as its President in 1998. Even he was attached to the World Federation of Teachers and was one of its secretaries.

However the aim of this obituary is not to portray the multidimensional activism of Anil Bhattacharya or to highlight his role as teacher or organiser. On the contrary it would like to show his passion for a man, who tried

to make science social and society scientific. The man was none other than Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray.

Prafulla Chandra Ray was undoubtedly one of the great scientists that India had ever produced. He was not only a fine researcher but a great mentor under whose initiative the Bengal School of Chemistry had developed. He had mentored a number of chemists who had played a great role in the development of discipline of Chemistry. He and his pupils' role were instrumental in the making of a number of scientific institutions and university departments in the Indian subcontinent. Prafulla Chandra was active in anti-imperialist *Swadeshi* movement and his students played a great role in the process of national reconstruction after Indian independence.

Anil Bhattacharya tried to portray the person in various ways. He edited a two-volume book titled *Acharya Prafulla Chandra: Portrait of a Man* that was published by West Bengal College and University Teachers'



Association (WBCUTA) in 2004. In the editorial of that book he expressed the motto of that publication. He said "We have felt his presence in today's turbulent time, and have endeavoured to reach out through his writings to the people even though in a truncated form leaving the onus of publishing the complete works to move diligent researches. This bilingual collection in two volumes comprising excerpts from his well-known works, some representative articles on Prafulla Chandra and by Prafulla Chandra, and some historical documents will, it is hoped acquaint the readers with Prafulla Chandra's mind and its greatness. To a reader nearly a century about having access to Prafulla Chandra's writing, some of the issues he posed, the predictions he made, and the solutions he offered are relevant in the new millennium."

Along with that he edited a multi-volume book titled *Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray: A Collection of Writings*. His aim was to publish the writings of Acharya, many of which were not easily available. He knew the limitation of his works. Thus he said, "...all these volumes will fail to make the complete works of Acharya Ray". Anil Bhattacharya pointed out that Prafulla Chandra wrote textbook on Inorganic Chemistry to overcome the lacunae of adequate textbook for the students, found out a new methodology for writing books on Chemistry and insisted on introducing practical classes which was not mandatory before. The advancement of teaching-learning process is undoubtedly one of the main concerns of teachers' organisation. Anil Bhattacharya got the guiding spirit from

Acharya Ray and that is why he tried to spread the thought of Acharya.

In a way he inherited the legacy of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray. He belonged to the fraternity of chemistry. But we are not talking about that. It should be remembered that Acharya Ray was the founder President of the Teachers' Association. At that time the organization was known as *All Bengal College and University Teachers' Association*. Scientist Prafulla Chandra Ray was committed to his society. Thus he engaged himself in a number of organizations. Among them the teachers' association deserves special mention. Professor Hirendranath Mukherjee in his Foreword of the book titled *Acharya Prafulla Chandra: Portrait of a Man* had put on record his admiration of the works of this association. He opined that its "entry into the Trade Union movement was a landmark as it symbolized the entry of intellectual workers into organizations mainly of manual workers which Karl Marx had expected to grow into 'Schools of Marxism' ". This remark in the foreword of a book on Acharya Prafulla Chandra is a significant one because Prafulla Chandra was the man who aptly identified the reasons for the decline of ancient Indian science. It was because of the social discrimination on the basis of caste and as well as the rift between physical labour and mental labour. Thus portrait of a man not only revealed the multifarious activities of Acharya but it uphold the ideal of a committed scientist. Anil Bhattacharya will be remembered as a person who tirelessly worked to disseminate the ideals of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray.

Sabyasachi Chatterjee

Department of History, University of Kalyani

Aryabhata MS to be on display at Asiatic Society

Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey / TNN / Updated: Dec 22, 2021

KOLKATA : Some of the oldest manuscripts related to mathematics, written in India since the fifth century AD, are in possession of the Asiatic Society.

These will be brought out by the Society and displayed on Wednesday on the occasion of National Mathematics Day, celebrated on the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan. This is an opportunity for people to appreciate the intricate theories that were indigenously developed by great mathematicians of the country.

The exhibition will be supplemented with lectures by Amartya Dutta, a faculty of the Indian Statistical Institute, who will speak on mathematical innovations in ancient India, Bhaskarnath Bhatlacharya, who heads Vedic studies at the Rabindra Bharati University, will speak on the manuscripts and mathematician Pradip Majumdar will speak on glimpses of ancient learning as revealed by the manuscripts. All eyes will be on the Aryabhata Siddhanta and the Aryabhata Siddhanta, the two manuscripts written by Aryabhata on Ganita, dating back to 499 AD.

Among the other rare manuscripts that will be displayed are, Grahakalpataru by Raghunatha that dates back to 1589, Lilavati by Bhaskaracharya dating to 1710, Laghuganitam or astronomical calculation based on Bhaskara's work dating to

1639, Karanakuruhalala by Bhaskara from 1689 etc. "Each original handwritten manuscript contains intricate calculations. Aryabhata's works for example, deals with astronomical computations and provides solutions to single quadratic equations. He is considered to be the country's first mathematical astronomer," said Keka Banerjee, curator of the Society. Similarly Laghuganita is a manual of astronomical calculations based on Bhaskaracharya's work, she explained.

Lilavati is an ancient text of arithmetic where solutions to problems have been given in a playful manner. The manuscripts are all written on palm leaves in Sanskrit.

"The idea behind holding the exhibition-cum-lecture demonstration is to generate an awareness of ancient learning in India in mathematics and its relevance to the present system of education and curriculum



It is sad to note that Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey, Senior Assistant Editor, The Times of India, died in a road accident on 29.12.2021. Jhimli was a very close friend of us in The Asiatic Society. She was almost a regular correspondent of the academic and cultural programmes of the Society. Here is the extract of her last report on the Society published in The Times of India on couple of days before her sad demise.

May Jhimli rest in peace.

Homage

World of Art and Culture lost four distinguished personalities in the first month of the New Year



(b. 1948)

Eminent thespian **Saoli Mitra** passed away on 16.01.2022



(b. 1937)

Kathak doyen **Pandit Birju Maharaj** passed away on 17.01.2022



(b. 1925)

Veteran Comic strip artist **Narayan Debnath** passed away on 18.01.2022



(b. 1951)

Painter par excellence **Wasim Kapoor** passed away on 24.01.2022

The Asiatic Society pays homage to them.
May they rest in peace



President's Column

The Educational Imbroglio

Nothing in the country has affected more than what it has done in the educational scene due to the continued intensifying effect of the pandemic in the Indian situation. Wave after wave of the COVID pandemic has had a devastating effect on the educational scenario. The first wave was subsiding in January-February, 2021 and people were talking about gradual opening of the educational institutions when in April-May 2021 it relapsed with intensified virulence and everything was closed again. Again, towards the 3rd week of December 2021, when some institutions were opening up, there started a sudden outburst of the third wave, the extensiveness of which has out-passed all previous records. Educational Institutions are all closed now for an indefinite period and we do not know when and how and to what extent normalcy will be resumed.

The almost 2 year-long corona epidemic is having a crippling and devastating impact on the entire educational system of our country. Schools, Colleges and Universities are closed for an indefinite period. Research Institutions have stopped functioning. Hostels are closed and students residing in them have been bundled back in the remote residences. Libraries, laboratories are closed. Public Libraries remain shut down. Medical Colleges remain non-functional. IITs, IIMs, Technology Colleges and Management Institutions

remain closed. In fact, the entire educational system is facing a 'lock-down'.

But to say that the system has collapsed, would be an exaggerating statement because many of them are operating through 'virtual mode'. In fact, faced with the continued uncertainty in the opening of educational institutions, virtual and on-line educations are being resorted to by an increasing number of such institutions. Apart from such institutional initiatives, private players offering learning initiatives through virtual mode are also operating in increasing numbers. Some of the Government run institutions are trying to negotiate with these private players so that their students can be enrolled there in view of money. In fact, distance learning and on-line education today increasingly constitute the response pattern of the educational institutions in this pandemic situation. To save the students from the loss of the year, on-line examinations are also be held particularly at the higher levels and in case of the competitive examinations.

But these alternatives are the results of expediency born out of a desperate situation to save the entire system from collapsing. Virtual mode and on-line system of education can at best be a supplementary tool but it can never replace the face to face mode of teaching. The warmth of the classroom teaching involving an intimate encounter with the teacher, the peer group

environment in the classroom and above all the community orientation of learning in educational institutions – are all missing in such a situation. Left back at small nuclear family environment, the students feel bored and develop psychological maladjustment. The difficulty is not only on the students side, but many of the teachers, particularly the older ones, are ill equipped to deal with the methodological and technological issues associated with this mode of teaching. And then, what about the practical classes, the hands on training programmes, clinical training or workshop experiences? With examination being conducted online, complaints of widespread cheating, mass copying and open books system have become widespread. No doubt, assessment of students based on this faulty system does not become a genuine reflection of their capacities or merit. The result of the public examination being held last year where most of the students got 90% marks or above, is a testimonial to this situation.

The more worrying situation is the question of the digital divide existing in our country. The benefits of online system of learning largely remain confined to the elite, well-to-do and middle class students and in institutions operating largely from an urban environment. The Government run primary and secondary institutions which encompass the bulk of the students, remain largely uncovered by these technological devices. General Colleges, Schools funded by Government, Government financed primary schools constitute 80% of the educational system and millions of students are enrolled therein. Some perfunctory attempts have been made by the Government here and there but, in general, these students and mostly their teachers are experiencing 'educational holiday' for an indefinite period. Apart from the motivational and psychological difficulties, the logistic difficulties are also quite formidable. Necessary technical knowledge are not there, computers, android

phones and other gadgets are non-available, and the recurring cost of operating them can hardly be borne by them. Internet facilities in remote areas are either non-available or extremely unsteady. This has resulted in a situation where the vast majority of the students living in the countryside have dropped out. Loss of employment and livelihood resulting from the continued pandemic situation has further intensified their plight and education has been the first casualty for them. Girls have been married off, boys are in search of job market and families are unwilling to continue their enrolment in educational institutions. This has given rise to neo-illiterates, particularly among the marginal sections of population.

Studies have been made regarding the 'Loss of Learning during the Pandemic'. These have shown that students, particularly at the primary and post-primary levels, have lost their foundational abilities in language and/or in mathematics. Classroom experiences of teachers confirm this loss of learning. The already skewed pattern of education entailing a rural urban divide caste and community oriented divide or the divide between the resourceful and the marginal sections have thus further been intensified due to the continued existence of the pandemic situation.

National Education Policy, 2020

There has been another attempted qualitative change in the educational sector of the country through the adoption of the National Education Policy by the Central Government in the year 2021. Though there has been widespread discussion, support and dissents throughout India at the time of the adoption of the National Education Policy, later, may be, due to the impact of the Covid and widespread closure of educational institutions, not much is heard now-a-days about this NEP. But it is now a law and a part of the accepted policy of the Government. So it may be presumed that once the

situation normalises, the new policy will be implemented with all seriousness. In fact, the Central Government has already decided that starting from the year 2022, the NEP will be implemented first in Delhi University.

The greatest opposition against the NEP 2020 is that though education is a state subject, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, the Central Government has gone almost unilaterally in declaring and adopting this new policy involving every sector of education. The resentment has gone to such an extent that some of the State Governments have declared, West Bengal included, that they are not going to implement it in their own state.

The major highlights of the new policy may now be briefly enumerated. While supporting the implementation of the National Educational Policy, Prime Minister Modi commented, "aspects such as widening the availability of the scholarship, strengthening infrastructure for Open and Distance Learning, online education and increasing the usage of technology have received great attention in the NEP. These are vital reforms for the educational sector".

There will be a structural change envisaged in the NEP in the sense that it will replace the present 10+2 curriculum structure with a 5+3+3+4 structure. 12 years of school education will be preceded by 3 years pre-schooling/anganwadi starting at 3 years of age. A new curriculum structure has been prepared for every stage of education. The school curriculum and pedagogy will be reformed with flexibility of choice at every stage. There will be no distinguishing between humanities, science and commerce streams. A National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) will be created by the NCERT. A new assessment system will be introduced where the main aim will be to increase the analytical, critical and conceptual thinking of the students. There will be a single set of education for all levels of school education. All students will take 3rd, 5th and

8th year of examinations which will be taken by the competent authorities. 10th and 12th class will still appear for the Board Exam. but the pattern will be restructured.

In the higher educational sector, the policy envisages a multidisciplinary, broad based under graduate education with flexible study plans, more options in choosing the subject. The NEP proposes regular and formative assessments, replacing the summative assessments as at now. Education will be multidisciplinary with flexible study plans, more option in choosing the subjects with emphasis more on vocational subjects. Even the number of years to be chosen will be optional, depending on the requirement and convenience of the students. There will be appropriate certification, for example, certificate after one year, advanced diploma after two years, license after three years and research license after four years.

One Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be established as a single and comprehensive coordinating body for the entire higher education sector, except for medical and legal education. It will have four independent bodies: The National Council for Regulation for Higher Education, (NHERC), the General Council of Education (GEC) for standardisation; The Council for Higher Education Grants (HEGC) for funding and the National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation.

In the proposed new system, open and distance learning will have a vital role in increasing the GIR (Gross Enrolment Ratio) which is targeted to reach 50% by 2035 instead of 26% as at now, whereas for education at the school level the target is universalisation of education with 100% enrolment. Online education and digital education will be given utmost importance. A special unit will be created aiming at building digital content and infrastructure to ensure the futuristic goal of e-education. There will be a distinct change in the institutional architecture of Universities ranging from

research intensive universities to education intensive universities and independent degree granting colleges. Grants will be conditioned by performance and excellence.

On meeting the financial requirements for operating this highly specialised, technical, job-oriented and diversified academic structure, the NEP does not enlighten us much except to point out that 6% of GDP will be spent on education and “for that both the Central and State Governments will work together and promote the increase of public investment in the educational sector”. This shows that for the entire high sounding recommendations and structural changes, the Commission has evaded the financial aspects of the proposed change.

As stated earlier, the NEP has provoked strong reaction on either side – positive and negative. On the positive side we can quote one such statement supporting the policy. It says, “the NEP is the driver of economic and social progress. It is the policy that envisions a model of holistic learning, development, engaging and immersive. It will focus on scientific temperament and evidence based learning. It is very flexible and focuses on equal promotion of art, science, physical education and extra curricular activities”.

But the negative aspects of NEP far outweigh its positive aspects. The entire system is top heavy – allowing and envisaging

control from the centre in every aspect including the entire education structure, the curriculum and pedagogy, the reoriented assessment system and increasingly reduced dependence on formal education structure and more on virtual and online system of education. The proposal to opt out of the system at any point of time and to introduce credit banking is unrealistic in a situation where millions of students are involved. Most importantly, in a Federal country like ours, the states which are based on and promote diversity, this extremely centralised and top heavy educational architectural structure will strike at the root of the diversity. The proposed structure shows that every single aspect of education including its planning and execution, the teachers and students intake, institutional credibility and funding based on that – all these things will be decided and controlled by the central agencies. And given the track record of the present central Government, we are not very optimistic that ‘autonomy’ will be granted to the various institutions which has been declared to be a part of the declared policy of the NEP.

Swapan Kumar Pramanick

Swapan Kumar Pramanick
President



अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वती (Sarasvatī, Best of Mothers, Best of Rivers, Best of Goddesses) An enigma that is Sarasvatī

Tapati Mukherjee

Library Secretary, The Asiatic Society

Even in this tumultuous situation, when we are passing through a crisis, thrust upon us by a pandemic, we can hardly think of skipping the worship of Sarasvatī on an auspicious day i. e. *Sri Panchami*, which is just a few days ahead. But what makes Sarasvatī so popular to Indian milieu? Is it her graceful presence, clad in all white that overwhelms us? Or does her image as knowledge incarnate endear her? Or her association with music popularizes her? Did she have another image of a vast river in the remote past? All these queries hovering around Sarasvatī, generally reckoned with as a goddess of learning inspire us to delve deep into the question, related to identity of Sarasvatī.

Since the inception of Indian civilization, Sarasvatī was an object of adoration, being referred to in numerous hymns of the *Rgveda*. Etymologically meaning both word as well as a reservoir of water, Sarasvatī has been eulogized primarily as a principal river of Vedic India. A complete hymn (*Rgveda* VI. 61) describing her as *Sarasvatī Devatā* and dedicated to her shows her importance in the Vedic pantheon. In the second verse of the aforementioned hymn, Sarasvatī has been described as flowing with great vigor after crushing the foothold of mountain.

“With impetuous and mighty waves she breaks down the precipices of the mountains, like a digger for the lotus fibres...

Sarasvatī the under miner of both her banks”.

In the same hymn, seven sisters of Sarasvatī had been mentioned *saptasvasā sujūṣṭā* (*Rgveda* VI/61/10). These sisters of Sarasvatī had been interpreted as seven prevalent rivers of Vedic India. Gradually Vedic seers became more keen to address Sarasvatī as a goddess *devī* and prayed for a blessing for plenty of water, indicating simultaneously her vastness and breaking waves.

*Sarasvatī sarayuh sindhūrmibhirmaho
mahīravasā yantu bakṣaṇīḥ//
(Rgveda – X/64/9)*

In the famous River hymn of the *Rgveda*, Sarasvatī has been mentioned as a river in the cluster of several rivers like Ganga, Yamuna and others --

*imaṃ me gaṅge yamune sarasvati śutudri ...//
(Rgveda X/75/5)*

Referring to the dispute about the identity of Sarasvatī as a river, Monier Williams remarked – “most authorities hold that the name Sarasvatī is identical with the *Avestan Haraquaiti* River in Afghanistan, but that it usually means the Indus in the *Rgveda*, and only occasionally the small sacred river in the Madhyadesha...”

This opinion of Monier Williams has been fiercely debated and is not universally accepted. But the enigma about Sarasvatī deepens when we find Vedic seers heaping

epithets upon epithets to laud Sarasvatī as an epitome and giver of knowledge –

“Sarasvatī, the inspirer of those who delight in truth, the instructress of the right minded, has accepted our sacrifice”. (*R̥gveda* I/3/ 11)

Wilson made an interesting comment while translating this verse – “Sarasvatī is here, as elsewhere the *Vāgdevatā*, divinity of speech”.

Wilson is probably justified in emphasizing the “goddess of speech” image of Sarasvatī as in the very next verse; Sarasvatī has been described both as a river and a female divinity “enlightening all understanding”--

*maha arṇaḥ Sarasvatī pra cetayati ketunā/
dhiyo viśvā virājati//
(R̥gveda I/3/12)*

-- Saraswati makes manifest by her acts a mighty river, and (in her own form) enlightens all understanding.

Equally interesting is the point that Yaska in his etymological text *Nirukta* had pointed out dual image of Sarasvatī -- both a river and a goddess.

*nadibaddevatābacca nigamā bhavanti/
(Nirukta II/23)*

The commentator Sāyaṇa also described Sarasvatī first as a goddess, then as a river --

*Sarasvatī devatārupeṇa nadirūpeṇa ca
bartate//
(Sāyaṇa on R̥gveda VI/61/2)*

It is quite probable that Vedic seers were profoundly enchanted by the vast expanse of the river Sarasvatī and they did not consider her simply as a reservoir of water only, On the contrary, they assigned divinity to her. She was personified as a connoisseur of knowledge and therefrom started her voyage as an epitome of learning.

It was quite apparent that Sarasvatī who was a symbol of intellect in the R̥gvedic hymns gradually assumed the form of

“goddess of learning” in the next phase of Indian civilization. e. the Brāhmaṇas. In the *TaittirīyaBrāhmaṇa*, we come across a statement which indicates that sacrifices were performed on the banks of river Sarasvatī. --

ṛṣayo vai sarasvatyāṃ satramāsata/ (II/19)

The performance of these Vedic rituals alongside her bank adorned Sarasvatī with a blessed sanctity and finally turned her into a goddess of speech, bestowing knowledge and intellect upon her worshippers.

However, in course of time we come across evidence which shows river Sarasvatī gradually disappearing. In the *Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa*, we come across a statement that Sarasvatī had perished (24/7/1). In the *Vanaparva* of the *Mahābhārata*, Sarasvatī has been described as ‘lost’ –

*tato vinaśanaṃ-gacchennyato niyatāśanaḥ/
gacchatyantarhitā yatra merupṛṣṭhe Sarasvatī//
(Vanaparva 82/111)*

-- One should approach *Vinaśana* with due restraint and satisfied with minimum food. There Sarasvatī had disappeared.

A rather queer statement is found in the *Śalyaparva* of the *Mahābhārata* where Sarasvatī is said to have disappeared due to her wrath against Śūdras and Ābhīras.

*tato vinaśanaṃ rājan jagāmātha halāyudhaḥ/
Śūdrābhīrān prati dveṣādyatra naṣṭā
Sarasvatī//
(Śalyaparva 37/1)*

The reason why these two particular sections, belonging to the lower strata of the Indian society, had been described as the root cause behind the disappearance of Sarasvatī is not clear. A plausible reason might be that they had defiled the water of Sarasvatī. The *Mahābhārata* also mentioned its reappearance in three places -- Camasā, Śivodbhedā and Nāgodbhedā.

Significantly enough, Manu had described Sarasvatī and Driṣadvatī as two “divine

ivers" (*devanadyah*) and the land lying in between as *Brahmāvarta*. (*Manu* 2/ 19)

It is rather interesting to note that the commentator Ramchandra on *Manusmṛti* had described these two rivers as identical with Ganga and Yamuna.

Equally interesting is the fact that Vinaśana where Sarasvatī disappeared according to the *Mahābhārata*, had also been mentioned by *Manu* (2/21) in his exposition of the intermediate land (*Manu* 2/21). More explicit was the comment, made by the commentator Medhātithi that Vinaśana is the place where Sarasvatī disappeared. --

vinaśanaṃ sarasvatyaḥ antardhānadeśāḥ//

In the later Purāṇas, we find Sarasvatī in a divine form. According to *Devībhāgavata Purāṇa*, she is the consort of Brahmā, whereas in *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī – both had been described as the wives of Nārāyaṇa. The *Matsya Purāṇa* describes her origin from the prowess of Brahmā. Sarasvatī, originating from the throat of Krishna was first worshipped by Krishna and was hence forth lauded as a goddess in all quarters.

The importance of Sarasvatī in later ages can be presumed from the name of a Sanskrit grammatical treatise *Sarasvatī kaṇṭhābharāṇa*, (necklace of the goddess Sarasvatī), authored by Bhojadeva, a king of Paramāra dynasty in the 11th century AD.

It is quite in the fitness of things that Buddhists as connoisseurs of wisdom will appreciate Sarasvatī as knowledge incarnate. Some scholars find affinity of Sarasvatī with *Prajñāpāramitā*, the goddess of perfect wisdom in Buddhist pantheon. However the fact remains that Sarasvatī is the only Hindu goddess accepted into Mahayana Buddhism without a change in name or personality. She has been described as "goddess of speech" (smra iha-mo) and "wisdom goddess" (shes-rabkyi iha-mo). Though hardly mentioned in the early Buddhist literature, Sarasvatī made a vivid appearance in the Golden

Radiance Scripture (circa late 4th or early 5th century) and was mentioned with profound respect as "a great goddess". Apart from her role as "bestower of wisdom", she was expected to protect her devotees from unfavorable planetary influence and human disputes. Thus there is a marked departure of Sarasvatī from our envisioned image of Sarasvatī mainly as a goddess of wisdom. Though eclipsed to some extent by *Mañjuśrī*, the male Bodhisattva of wisdom in Tibetan Buddhism, Sarasvatī is still vibrant in Buddhist literature as an epitome of intellect and undoubtedly she reigns supreme in this particular arena.

Modern geological investigations aimed at unraveling the enigma related to Sarasvatī regarding its identity and subsequent disappearance. While some scholars had doubted the very existence of Sarasvatī and described it as a myth, created by imaginative ancient Indian mind, there were attempts to identify Sarasvatī with the Ghaggar-Hakra River System that flows between the Yamuna and the Sutlej and ends in the Thar Desert. This theory is also debated. Another theory describes Indus valley civilization as Sarasvatī civilization on the basis of an assumption that Indus and Vedic cultures can be equated. Needless to say, this theory rejects the Aryan migration theory, causing ripples of controversy in certain quarters. Currently a book *Sarasvatī: The River Par Excellence* has been published by The Asiatic Society, Kolkata where new light has been thrown on the identity of Sarasvatī.

Notwithstanding the enigma about various images of Sarasvatī, the fact remains that Sarasvatī with her white attire and sonorous melody emerging from her lyre, had captured our heart throughout the centuries as the "goddess of learning" and hopefully she will sparkle in her form for ages to come.

*pra ṇo devī Sarasvatī bājebhirbājinivatī/
dhīnaṃ abitravatu// (R̥gveda VI. 61. 4)*

-- may the divine Sarasvatī, the acceptress of (sacrificial) food, the protectress of her worshippers, sustain us with (abundant) viands.

Translations of Vedic verses by H. H. Wilson.

Reference:

1. Acharya, S. K. & Ghosh, Kunal. & Kar, Amal. Ed. *The Saraswati: The River Par Excellence*. Kolkata: The Asiatic Society, 2021.
2. Bandyopadhyay, Amal kumar. Ed. *Paurāṇikā*. Vol 2. Kolkata (Now Kolkata): Firma K. L M Private Limited, 1955.
3. Bandyopadhyay, Manabendu. Ed. *Manusamhitā*. Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 2016. Rprnt.
4. *Rgveda Samhitā*. Vol 1 & 2, Kolkata: Haraf Prakasani, 1976.
5. Sarkar, Sudhir Chandra. Ed. *Paurāṇika Abhidhāna*, Kolkata: M. C Sarkar and Sons Private Limited, 5th ed, 1392 B S.
6. Shaw, Miranda. *Buddhist Goddesses of India*. U S: Princeton University Press, 1954.
7. Tarkaratna, Panchanan. Ed. *Mahābhāratam*. Vol: 1. Kolkata: Natabar Chakraborty, Saka 1830.
8. Wilson, H. H. Trans. *Rgveda Samhitā*. Vol 1. Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1977.



या कुन्देन्दुतुषारहारधवला या शुभ्रवस्त्रावृता ।
 या वीणावरदण्डमण्डतिकरा या श्वेतपद्मासना । ।
 या ब्रह्माच्युतशंकरप्रभृतभिरिदेवैःसदा वन्दति ।
 सा मां पातु सरस्वती भगवती नशेषजाड्यापहा । ।

Devi Sarada

Srikumar Chatterjee

Vocalist & Music Researcher

The derivation of the word Saraswati is from the word 'Saras' in Sanskrit, which actually means of 'Flowing River'.

According to Michael Witzel, a German American Scholar and the Wales Professor of Sanskrit at Harvard University, "Vedic Saraswati is the Heavenly River Milky Way which is considered as a Road of Immortality and Heavenly after life."

In the Rig Veda, this river is depicted as the eight handed Devi Saraswati. She is the epitome of cleanliness and purity. She is fair complexioned. She is draped in golden yellow. She has the veena in her hand and books too. She is the Goddess of knowledge and art. She is the light of Wisdom. It requires a special mention that in Rig Veda, we find Devi Saraswati being addressed in three forms. Firstly as 'Bharati' (whose speech is that of heaven) Secondly as 'Ila' (who speaks of this earth or has a worldly speech) and finally as 'Saraswati' (who speaks of the heart) or of the inner self.

In various other references Devi Saraswati is two handed or at times four, riding the Hansa or a peacock, the Mother of all Vedas and thus known as Bagdevi.

Not only in the ancient Hindu religions scriptures, we also find Devi Saraswati reference in Buddhism, with a difference though, while depicting her appearance and beauty.

She is referred to as 'Manjushree' in Buddhism Interestingly she is known as 'Mother Yaan Chen' or Yaan Chen Maa in Thai literature, which means she is the Goddess of Music and so worshipped by the



Bajra Sarada

Jibetans. Apart from the above mentions, Devi Saraswati is famous as 'Maha Saraswati', 'Vajraveena Saraswati', 'Vajra Sarada' and 'Arya Saraswati' in many ancient religions books. In Jainism 'Sruti Devi' is idolized as Saraswati. She is evident as 'Neel Saraswati' in Bengal's own Tantra. In our Upanishad and Vedas she comes in many other names. To mention some of them " Mahamaya, Mahabhadra, padmakshi, Sarada, Veenapani, Kamrupa, Bramhi.

Interestingly, between the 6th and 8th century, the Japanese used to worship a goddess, similar to Saraswati by the name of Benzaiten.

In Sanskrit literature, she is Devi Saraswati. Likewise, Benzaiten is the assimilation of the various elements of our human body, like water, time, word, speech, wisdom and music.

Apart from the above mentions, Devi Saraswati is worshipped and celebrated



Benzaiten in Japan

across the globe, like in Bali, Indonesia, and as Devi Biankaitian in China. Even today an ancient idol of this Goddess is in display at the Leningrad Museum, Russia. In Bengal, Devi Saraswati is worshipped as a Goddess

with two hands or arms with the Hansa as her Vahana and she plays the veena, that is called 'Kachhapi'!

At certain other instances the, Devi is four armed with books in one hand, depicting her as Ved Swarupa, —One who ushers knowledge, in another she holds a crystal garland symbolizing the power of concentration. In another hand the veena depicts the goddess of Creative Art and science and finally the other hand is in the form of Abhaya Mudra giving blessings and hence she is also known as 'Baroda'. Once upon a time she was called the Goddess of Eloquence, in the Indian Peninsula for the preaching and expansion of Buddhism.

To conclude, we must mention Saraswati Vahana, the Hansa, the symbol of Yog sadhana, because of its capacity to separate milk from water (while feeding) which is the essence of practicing ultimate Gyan Sadhana. So the Devi is immune to all and any desire.

Finally allow me to point out the remarkability of Devi Saraswati powers like Respect, Wisdom, Art, Talent, Nourishment, Enlightenment, and Consciousness which are all required to let mankind flourish on the whole.



Concept of Sarasvatī in Buddhist Tradition

Bandana Mukherjee

Research Officer, The Asiatic Society

It is generally believed that Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, is a deity who belongs essentially to the Brahmanical Pantheon. In early Theravāda Buddhism there was no notion of a 'Pantheon' or the concept of God and Goddess to whom worship was offered by the monks and the lay followers. Thus, the introduction of the iconic forms of the Buddha from the Gandhāra region are not datable before the first century CE, followed by a rapid growth of the practice of image making under the influence of Graeco-Bactrian and Kuṣāṇa art (for a general discussion, Huntington 1995). Gradually, with the rise and expansion of Mahāyāna Buddhism, a large number of deities were included in Buddhism and later, in its more esoteric frame in South, Southeast and East Asia, (under what is more generally called Vajrayāna Buddhism), this pantheistic order substantially expanded (for a general discussion, Davidson 2002). Thus, in the early medieval period (seventh-thirteenth centuries CE), we see a spurt of image production in Buddhism throughout Aisa in the time span from the seventh to the thirteenth century CE.

In this context it would be relevant to take note of two textual evidences on the iconography of Buddhist pantheon in the early medieval period. The *Sādhanamālā* with its earliest Newari manuscript dated to 1165 CE and *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, written by Abhayākargupta, a contemporary of Pala King Rāmpāla (1081-1130 CE), are very

important documents which delineate the development of Tantric Buddhism in India in the early medieval period. Prior to that other Buddhist texts like *Manjuśrīyamūlakalpa* and *Guhyasamājatantra* (attributed to Acārya Asanga) introduced the notion of the *pañcatathāgatas* and their families indicating the early phase of genesis of the image cult in Buddhism (Chakravarti 1996: 51).

Amongst the Hindu deities incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon, three appear to have enjoyed great importance. They are Mahākāla, the prototype of Mahādeva holding *triśūla*, Gaṇapati and *Sarasvatī*, the goddess of learning holding *vīṇā*. In the *Sādhanamālā*, separate *sadhānas* are assigned to all these three deities (Bhattacharyya 1958: 344-345). Here our point of this brief discussion is Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning in the context of Buddhist Tantricism.

Sarasvatī is the name of the river that rises in the hills of Sirmur in the Himalayan range called Shivalik and emerges into the plains at Ad-Badri in Ambala now filled up by the sands and disappeared. Sarasvatī river is deemed as one of the most sacred rivers in the Brahmanical literary tradition. The Vedic Aryans after their migration to India settled on the bank of this river. Many Vedic hymns were composed by the Aryans on the bank of the river Sarasvatī and they also performed many sacrifices on the bank of the Sarasvatī river. Later on, in the Puranic age, this river

was deified as the goddess of learning. The Buddhists borrowed this goddess and incorporated into their pantheon at an age, when she was equally popular among both the sects of both Brahmanism and Buddhism and modified her form in various ways.

According to Buddhist iconographic treatise, Sarasvatī is portrayed with one face and two arms and sometimes with three faces and six arms. The two-armed Sarasvatī has about four to five different variations. The worship of Sarasvatī is very popular among the followers of Varjrayāna owing to the belief that like Mañjuśrī and Prajñāpāramitā,¹ she confers wisdom, learning, intelligence, memory etc. She has many different forms as delineated in the texts, but predominantly she embodies two colours: white and red. In her white forms, she is generally a goddess of wisdom and learning. In her red forms, on the other hand she signifies power. She has a number of wrathful forms related to *Vajrabhairava* and *Yamāri* cycles of deities which are not directly associated with wisdom. However, the five different forms of Sarasvatī in Asian Buddhist art and iconography are (Bhattacharyya 1958: 350-52):

A) Mahāsarasvatī

She has white complexion, two arms and one face. Her right hand is in *varadamudrā*, while the left carries the white lotus flower. This is the general appearance of Sarasvatī. In her distinctive form as Mahāsarasvatī she shows the attributes of Tārā and is surrounded by four deities identical in form with herself. These four deities are: Prajñā in her front, Medhā to her right, Smṛti to her left, and Mati in the west. These four divinities may also accompany other varieties of Sarasvatī. *Sādhanamālā* describes the *dhyāna* of Mahāsarasvatī in the following terms (Bhattacharyya :350):²

The worshipper should think himself as goddess Mahāsarasvatī, who is resplendent like the autumn moon, rests

on the moon over the white lotus, shows the *varadamdrā* in her right hand, and carries in the left the white lotus with its stem. She has a smiling countenance, is extremely compassionate, wears garments decorated with white sandal flowers. Her bosom is decorated with the pearl-necklace, and she is decked in many ornaments, she appears as a maiden of twelve years, and her bosom is uneven with half-developed breasts like flower-buds; she illumines the three worlds with the immeasurable light that radiates from her body.

B) Vajravīnā Sarasvatī

Vajravīnā Sarasvatī, like the Mahāsarasvatī, is also white in complexion and peaceful and benign in appearance. She is also two-armed, but the distinguishing feature in her case is that she carries in her two hands the lute (*vīnā*), a kind of stringed musical instrument, and plays upon it. She may also be represented as accompanied by the four divinities as Mahā- Sarasvatī mentioned above.

C) Vajraśāradā

According to the *dhyāna* in the *Sādhanamālā*, she rests upon a pure white lotus, and a crescent decorates her crown; she is three-eyed and two-armed and carries the book in the left hand and the lotus in the right. She may, however, be accompanied by the four attendants like Prajñā and others. The Nalanda image which has been identified as Kotiri is probably a stone representation of this goddess. Vajraśāradā here sits in Bhadrāsana, as do her companions. All the figures in the group are mutilated, but at least one among them carries the *utpala* and the book, in the right and left hands respectively.

D) Āryasarasvatī

Āryasarasvatī is another variation of Sarasvatī, and is also sometimes designated

Vajrasarasvatī, who seems to have been the object of worship of the Vajrayanists. She appears as a maiden of sixteen, is in the prime of youth and has white complexion. She has one head and four arms, seated in *ardhaparyāṅkāśana* and carries in the left hand the stalk of a lotus on which rests the book. Sometimes she is also seen standing on lotus. The *Sādhanamālā* is silent about the *dhyāna* of Āryasarasvatī.

E) Vajrasarasvatī

The name Vajrasarasvatī is given to this goddess in order to distinguish her from the aforementioned four varieties. It has already been said that Sarasvatī has a form with three faces and six arms. In all other respects her form is identical with that of Mahāsarasvatī. The difference here is that her hair is brown and rises upwards, and she stands in the *pratyāliḍha* pose on the red lotus. Three *sādhanas* in the *Sādhanamālā* are assigned to her worship, and according to these, she is red in colour, with the right and left faces in blue and white respectively. She carries in her three right hands the lotus surmounted by book (*pustaka*), the sword (*khaḍga*), and the *kartri*; in the three left hands she carries the *kapāla* of Brahmā (*brahmākapāla*), the jewel (*ratna*) and the disc (*cakra*). Instead of the book-on-lotus and Brahmakapāla, she may also hold the lotus and the *kapāla* only.

Sarasvatī is a popular goddess both in Tibet (Gordon 1939: 33,73,88), as she is in China (Clark 1999: 173,181), and is widely represented in the art of these regions. In the Tibeto-Buddhist tradition, Sarasvatī is attributed with eleven different names, as follows:

- a. Dbyaṅs-can-ma དབྱུངས་ཅན་མ་ Goddess of music (Sarasvatī)
- b. Tshaṅs-paḥi-sras-mo ཅངས་པའེ་སྲས་མོ་ Brahmāṇī
- c. Dbyaṅs-ldan-mo དབྱུངས་ལྡན་མོ་ Svaradevī
- d. Smra-lha-mo སྲུ་ལྟོ་མོ་ Vākdevī
- e. Rgya-mtsho-lha-mo རྒྱ་མཚོ་ལྟོ་མོ་ Sāgaradevī
- f. Zla-baḥi-sriṅ-mo ལྷ་བའེ་སྲིང་མོ་ Sister of Moon
- g. Śes-lha-mo. ཤེས་ལྟོ་མོ་ Prajñādevī
- h. Ṅag-dbañ-lha-mo འག་དབང་ལྟོ་མོ་ Goddess of speech
- i. Blo-yi-gter ལྷོ་ཡི་གཏོར་ an Epithet of Mañjuśrī, also designating Sarasvatī
- j. Dbyaṅs-sgrol-mo དབྱུངས་སྐྱོལ་མོ་ Name of one iconographic form Tārā
- k. Mtsho-ldan-mo མཚོ་ལྡན་མོ་ Jaladevī.



Taken from : Tibetan Buddhist Encyclopedia
Sarasvatī portrayed in Chinese thangka



Vajra Sarasvatī

In Tibet, Sarasvatī is also known as the goddess of music (Dbyans-can-mo) and sometimes she is also known as one of the twenty-one Tārās (Dbyañs-sgrol-mo). She is considered as the peaceful manifestation of Palden lha-mo (Glorious goddess) in the Gelukpa tradition). In Gelukpa tradition Palden lha-mo is known as Magzor Gylamo (the queen who repels armies).³ Among the Gelukpa sect of Tibetan Buddhist Sarasvatī is also manifested in a wrathful emanation while being a protector.

She is also considered as *Yi dam* (i.e., principal personal meditational deity) of Tshong-kha-pa who accompanied him on

his travels as well as regularly engaged in conversation with him (Kilty 2001).

Some scholars suggest that the earliest specimen of Sarasvatī figure is engraved in one of the pillars of the Bharhut stupa, drawn as playing seven stringed *vīṇā* standing on lotus and, thus, dated to the second century BCE (Chakravarti 2019: 91). The earliest identifiable figure of the goddess, however, comes from Mathura (Banerjea 1956: 378). As in India, Nepal and Tibet, Sarasvatī's iconic forms are equally popular in China, Japan and Myanmar. In China Sarasvatī is named as 'Pien-mo' and in Japan Sarasvatī is called 'Beuten'. Images of Sarasvatī portrayed in Tibetan *thangka* is very popular. In the



Taken from : Indian Buddhist Iconography, plate XL.I



Sarasvati in Chinese
Taken from : tfipost.com



Taken from Clark(Walter Eugene)-
Two Lamaistic Pantheons vol.ii



Taken from Clark(Walter Eugene)-
Two Lamaistic Pantheons vol.ii

Nymgyal Institute of Tibetology, Sikkim, a number of *thangkas*, displaying different images of Sarasvatī, are preserved.

Notes

1. In Buddhist theology, Mañjuśrī enjoys an important position as the god of learning, also holding the sword for destroying ignorance and the book of transcendental wisdom. The female counterpart of Mañjuśrī is Prajñā.
2. The concerned *sādhana* of *Sāghanāmālā* (A-172, c-128, c-140) reads:
3. *Bhagavatīm Mahāsarasvatīm anuvicintayet śaradindukarākārām sitakamalopari candramaṇḍalasthām; dakṣiṇakareṇa varādām, vāmena sanālasitasarojadharām smeramukhīm atikaruṇamayām śvetacandanakusuma vasanadharām muktāharopaśobhitahṛdayām nānāratnālaṅkāravatīm dvādaśavarṣākṛtīm muditakucamukuladanturorastatīm sphura danantagabhastivyūhāvabhāsitalokatrāyām.*
4. www.himalayanart.org (last accessed 20.01.2022).

Bibliography

1. Banerjea, J.N. 1956. *The Development of Hindu Iconography*. Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

2. Bhattacharyya, Benoytosh 1958. *Indian Buddhist Iconography mainly based on the Sāghanāmālā and Cognate Tantric Texts and Rituals*. Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Kolkata.
3. Chakravarti, Sipra 1996. 'Indian Buddhist Iconography: Contribution of Benoytosh', in Shyamalkanti Chakravarti (ed.) *Vinayatoshini: Benoytosh Centenary Volume*. Calcutta, Venoytosh Centenary Committee.
4. Chakravarti, Sipra 2019. *Mogolcaritnamā O Bouddha Devadevi* (in Bengali), Kolkata, Kajal Prakashani.
5. Clark, Walter Eugene 1999. *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, 2 vols, (Harvard Yenching Institute Monograph Series III-IV), Cambridge, Harvard University Press (rep. Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd).
6. Davidson, Ronald M. 2002. *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*. New York, Columbia University Press.
7. Gordon, Antoinette K. 1939. *The iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*. Columbia University Press, New York (rev. ed. Charles E Tuttle Company), Kyoto.
8. Huntington, Susan L. *The Art of Ancient India*, vol. 1. New York, Weatherhill.
9. Kilty, Gavin [trans. and int.] 2001. *The Splendor of an Autumn Moon: The Devotional Verse of Tshongkhapa*. Massachusetts, Wisdom publication.

Notes on a 'Unique Instance' of Sarasvatī from North Bengal

Sharmila Saha¹ and Rajat Sanyal²

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of History, Calcutta Girls' College

² Assistant Professor, Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta

The Site

The inscribed stone sculpture that forms the agenda of this note comes from a village called Wari (25°30'50"N/87°54'46"E), located in the Harishchandrapur P.S. of the district of Malda in West Bengal. Made of Quartz-Chlorite-Schist, the piece is presently preserved in the State Archaeological Museum, Kolkata, bearing Accession No. 05.226. The site of Wari was first plotted on West Bengal's archaeological atlas just sixty years back by Debala Mitra, while writing a note on a temple foundation inscription, also hailing from the site. Based on her visit to the site in April 1960, Mitra reports that the temple inscription dated in Śaka 1461 (1545-46 CE), and the image under review, were both discovered from a mound containing the structural ruin of a brick-built *pañcāyatana* temple, not far from a tank called 'Ratangāḍā' at Wari (Mitra 1963).

The Image

The inscribed image from Wari is not among the best-preserved specimens of early medieval sculptural art of the region (Plate 1). Thus, the extant



Plate 1. The image of Sarasvatī from Wari, District Malda (courtesy State Archaeological Museum, Kolkata).

details of the figure do not allow one to have anything more than a perfunctory idea of the iconographic programme originally envisaged by the artist of the image. The ten-armed goddess is seated in *lalaitāsana* or *ardhaparyāṅkāśana* on a *viśvapadma* (double-petalled lotus) placed on a *saptaratha* pedestal. The pedestal is decorated with abstract floral motifs, two female figurines, both holding garlands, on the right and extreme left. A bearded male figure in kneeling posture and in *añjalimudrā* is seen to the left side of the pedestal just in front of the female figure. Probably, this male figure is the donor of this sculptural piece. The right leg of the goddess, dangling down, rests on *viśvapadma* in the frontal offset of the pedestal. The goddess is flanked by two female attendants seated on either side, carrying fly-whisks in their hands. All the hands of the goddess are unfortunately broken. The left arms of the deity broken from the elbow level are definitely five in number (cf. Plate 1), although only four of the right arms could be traced properly, broken from the elbow level. The number of extant portions of left arms fairly suggest that deity is ten-armed and not eight armed, as Debala Mitra had justifiably doubted. The normal broken left arm is turned towards the breast, probably indicating their engagement in playing the string(s) of the *vīṇā*. One of the rest left hands is seen holding a decorated water-pot. Other attributes are completely lost. The Devī is adorned with a voluminous hair bun having ornamented hairpins, heavy necklace, *hāra* (necklace), *kuṇḍālas* (ear studs), *valaya* (armlets) and decorated *kaṭibandha* (waist-girdle). Her shoulder rests on a door-lintel carved on the backslab. Traces of vertical strokes serving as decorative elements of the lintel are visible. However, the two terminal points of the backslab, that might have held the makaramukha motif, are badly damaged.

Figures of *vidyādhara*s and associated anthropomorphic representation on the backslab are also unfortunately lost. The upper portion of the back slab is broken. The plain back slab, highly stylized ornamentation of the central figure and the *saptaratha* pedestal have led scholars to date the sculpture to the eleventh century (Sengupta and Saha 2014: 179), though a precise stylistic dating is constrained by the badly mutilated condition of the image.

The Inscription

Debala Mitra's focus was primarily the temple inscription and the identification of the temple on which the inscribed plaque might have originally been fixed. And, she was able to expose the plan of the temple on ground at Wai and argue rightly that a temple complex with a central shrine, flanked by four subsidiary temples at four corners, was dedicated to the well-known Brahmanical pentad of Viṣṇu, Śakti, Śiva, Sūrya and Gaṇapati. While searching for the original images that might have originally been enshrined in that temple, Mitra gathered that (Mitra 1963: 181) —

[i]n the office of the Block Development Officer exists a fragmentary stone sculpture which[...]was found in the debris of the structure. It represents an eight- or ten-armed goddess seated in *lalit-āsana* on a double-petalled lotus. All the features with the attributes, except a water-pot (preserved on the lap), are now missing. Though it is tempting to identify the figure with that of Śailaputrī of the [temple foundation] inscription, the image, as evident from the characters of the inscription on its pedestal, seems to be earlier than the temple structure.

The inscription on the pedestal of the image, referred to by Mitra, was edited in a note by D.C. Sircar based on an ink impression of the cord supplied to him,

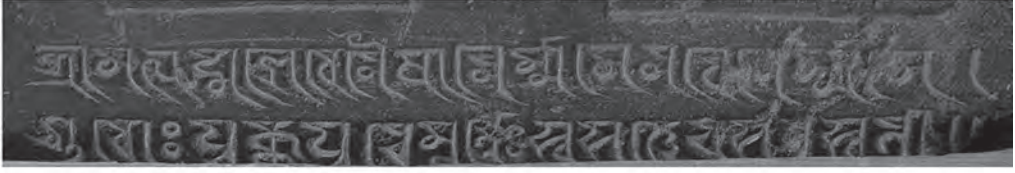


Plate 2. Inscription on the pedestal of Sarasvatī (photo Rajat Sanyal, courtesy State Archaeological Museum, Kolkata).

in the pages immediately succeeding Mitra's article. Sircar identified the image based on his reading of the epigraph as that of is a 'unique instance'. Sarasvatī, installed (i.e., donated) by a devotee named Padmagiri. Based on his reading of the inscription, Sircar provided the following translation of the text (Sircar 1963:184)

This image—the Sarasvatī—was constructed by the illustrious Padmagiri, who is free from connection with the outer world, (for installation) in the strong brick-built house (i.e. a temple) of (i.e. raised by) (*his*) preceptor.

Subsequently, the text of Sircar was quoted by Rajat Sanyal almost verbatim, though the latter offered an alternative translation that reads (Sanyal 2014: 272):

The illustrious Padmagiri has [caused] the [installation of this] image [of] Sarasvatī in his alms-house [i.e., the temple] constructed by [his] preceptor [here at] Pakkapura.

Here we reedit the inscription composed in Sanskrit in Anuṣṭubha verse and Gauḍī script, in the light of an examination of the original preserved on the pedestal of the image (Plate 2).

Text:

(1) śrīmatpadmaśivenaiṣā nirmmamena
vin[i]rmmam[e] |

(2) guroḥ pukkapore mūr̥t̥tiḥ svasatte ca
sarasvatī ||

Translation: [This] idol of Sarasvatī, [installed] on her own seat (or 'in her own abode i.e., temple?'), has been [caused to

be] made for his preceptor by Padmaśiva, [who is] free of all earthly affairs, [here] at Pukkapura.

The Problem

In fact, problems are manifold. How do we explain the iconographic composition of the image with ten arms, conceived as Sarasvatī by her patron, when all the Brahmanical and Buddhist textual injunctions suggest her forms with two, four, six or eight arms (for textual prescriptions, Banerjea 1956: 376-80, Bhattacharyya 1958: 149-52, Bhattasali 1929: 181-190, Haque 1992: 284-85, Sircar 1963)? If the structure exposed at Wari is dated to the sixteenth century showing evidence of the use of lime-*surkhi* mortar, how chronologically earlier images reported to have been recovered from the site can be related to the temple complex? Was the structure at Wari simply a *pañcāyatana* temple or it has more challenges to offer? While for some of these questions we do have some possible cues, for others we do not. A further critical study of this image, coupled with an examination of the archaeological context from which her image was discovered, will probably lead one to a comprehensive understanding of these problems.

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to Somnath Chakraborty and Arlo Griffiths for their insightful interventions in the reading of the inscription.

Bibliography

- Banerjea, J.N. 1956. *The Development of Hindu Iconography*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Bhattacharyya, Benoytosh (1958). *The Indian Buddhist Iconography mainly based on the Sadhanamala and other cognate Tantric Texts of Rituals* (second edition revised and enlarged with 357 illustrations). Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay.
- Bhattacharya, N. K. 1929. *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures (in the Dacca Museum)*. Dacca: Dacca Museum (rep. 2008, Dhaka, Bangladesh National Museum).
- Haque, Enamul 1992. *Bengal Sculpture: Hindu Iconography upto c.1250 AD*. Dhaka: Bangladesh National Museum.
- Mitra Debala 1963. Inscription from Wari, Saka 1467. *Epigraphia Indica* 35/3: 179-82.
- Sanyal, Rajat 2014. Appendix i: Inscribed Sculptures. Contribution to, Gautam Sengupta and Sharmila Saha, *Vibrant Rock: A Catalogue of Stone Sculptures in the State Archaeological Museum, West Bengal*, pp. 253-280. Kolkata: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of West Bengal.
- Sengupta Gautam and Sharmila Saha, *Vibrant Rock: A Catalogue of Stone Sculptures in the State Archaeological Museum, West Bengal*. Kolkata: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of West Bengal.
- Sircar, D. C. 1963. Note on Inscription from Wari, *Epigraphia Indica* 35/1: 183-4.

Saraswati : Kalighat Painting

Saraswati the goddess of learning, arts and music have been depicted in many art forms both classical and popular.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, a number of rural artists came and settled around Kali Temple in Calcutta. Initially scroll painters (patuas) adapted their traditional style of bardic narration to single patas depicting a single image. Most often these images were of the Hindu gods and goddess.



Compiled by: **Ratnabali Chatterjee**, Life Member, The Asiatic Society

Images of a Distinct Regional Tradition: Sarasvatī on Ram in Bengal

Bijan Mondal

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Jogamaya Devi College

Introduction

The present paper is an outcome of my field survey for research work in the different parts of West Bengal. During my survey I have noticed several Sarasvatī icons either worshiped by the local people or preserved in the different Museums. While studying these images I noticed Ram as her *vāhana* instead of her usual *vāhana* i.e., swan. Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, music and fine arts is also known as *Vāc/Vāk*, *Vāgdevi*, *Vāgisvari*, *Vāni*, *Sāradā*, *Bhārati*, *Vīṇāpāni* and *Pusti*. She is popular among the three great religious ideologies i.e., Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism. The Buddhist faith conceived her as the consort deity of Mañjuśrī, while in Brahmanical mythology; she is sometimes consorted with Brahmā and sometimes with Viṣṇu. In general she is represented sitting on lotus with one leg pendant, playing on a *vīṇā* (Bhattasali 1929: 181). Her vehicle swan is represented near her feet. Presently, she is worshipped by children and students as patron goddess of learning on the *śrīpāñcamī* day of the month of Māgha (January – February).

J.N. Banerjea in his '*Development of Hindu Iconography*' mentions the goddess Sarasvatī as *Vyantāra devatās* and also gives some textual references related to the goddess. T. A. Gopinatha Rao in his '*Elements of Hindu Iconography*' discussed only some textual references of the goddess. R.G. Basak and D.C. Bhattacharya in their works '*A Catalogue of the Archaeological Relics in the Museum of the*

Varendra Research Society' have mentioned different types of Sarasvatī from Bengal. R.C. Majumder in his works '*History of Bengal*' give a description on different type images of Sarasvatī and specially *meṣavāhinī* Sarasvatī from Chattingram in the district of Bogra, Bangladesh (Majumder 2003: 440 PL LXXII, 175) N.K. Bhattasali in his legendary works on '*Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculpture in the Dacca Museum*' gives details about the texts and sculptures of the images of Sarasvatī found from Bengal. '*Bengal Sculptures: Hindu iconography upto c. 1250 AD*', and '*Heritage of Bangladesh*' by Enamul Haque give a brief note on the icons of Sarasvatī. Kanailal Bhattacharyya's *Sarasvatī - A Study on Her Concept and Iconography* is one of the most important works. Amulyacharan Bidyabhusan's work on Sarasvatī (in Bengali) simply mentioned about *meṣavāhinī* Sarasvatī and other forms of Sarasvatī of Ancient Bengal (Bidyabhusan 1933).

It is well known that, the image of Sarasvatī is mentioned in several ancient Indian literary sources. The goddess Sarasvatī appears in the *Rgveda* as the manifestation of a sacred river called Sarasvatī, on the banks of which most of the Vedic hymns were composed. The goddess is frequently invited to the sacrifice, along with other goddesses like Iḍā Bhārati, Hotrā, Varūtri, Dhiṣaṇā. Gradually, she came to be identified with the Vedic goddess *Vāk/Vāc*, the personified speech as in the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*. *Vāc* as

speech personified, appears in the *Rgveda* as the vehicle of knowledge who 'enters into seers' while in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* she is called the mother of Vedas, the consort of Indra (Donaldson 2002: 286). *Rgveda* also mentioned the 'impeller of true and sweet speech and a awakener of happy and noble thoughts' (Kinsley 1988: 59). According to *Matsya Purāṇa* the goddess first appeared as a consort deity of Brahmā. According to this text (3rd Chapter) Brahmā performed austere meditation, as a result of which sprang ten issues, one of them being Sarasvatī. The *Matsya Purāṇa*, in this context (i.e., the origin of the goddess) refers to the deity as *Śatarūpā*, *Aṅgajā*, *Ātmajā*, *Sāvitrī*, *Gāyatrī* and *Brahmānī* (Bhattachali 1929: 182). The association of Sarasvatī with Viṣṇu is also referred to *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* (Bhattachali 1929: 183). Other literary texts like *Matsya Purāṇa*, *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* refers the association of Sarasvatī with Viṣṇu / Kṛṣṇa. Some texts like *Śāradātilakatantra*, *Tantrasāra*, *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Vāmana Purāṇa*, etc. conceived her as the *Śakti* of Śiva (Donaldson 2002: 287).

There are some literary texts which mentioned the iconographic detail of the goddess Sarasvatī. She may have two, four, six, eight or ten hands. *Skanda Purāṇa* and *Sūta-Saṃhitā* prescribe the deity should have *jaṭāmukuta* on her head, in which there is a crescent moon inserted. Her neck is blue in colour and she has three eyes. *Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa* mentioned that she has four hands, holding an *aṅkuśa*, a *viṇā*, an *akṣamālā* and a *pustaka* (Rao: 377). According to the *Śāradātilakatantra* as *Vāgdevī* she sits on a white lotus. She holds a pen and a book in her two hands. A crescent moon adorns her coiffure. She is surrounded by eight female companions (Donaldson 2002: 289). There are several *dhyānas* in the *Rūpamaṇḍana* that prescribe a book and a rosary in two hands, while the other two hands hold either a *viṇā* and a lotus or hold a lotus and display in *varada*. In the *Śīplaratna* description she

holds a rosary, noose, goad, and displays *abhaya* (Donaldson 2002: 291). Verse number 16; chapter 50, of the *Agni Purāṇa* describes her as *Pustākṣa-mālikā-hastā viṇā hastā Sarasvatī* (Bhattachali 1929: 188).

The goddess Sarasvatī has also been depicted as a consort deity of Viṣṇu. The literary texts have mentioned that the goddess Sarasvatī is the female counterpart of the god Brahmā. *Matsya Purāṇa* describes how Sarasvatī is related to the god Brahmā (Bhattachali 1929: 182). As she is connected with the god Brahmā, and swan is the *vāhana* or vehicle of the god that's why the vehicle his female counterpart i.e., Sarasvatī is swan. Most of the Viṣṇu sculptures in eastern India are depicted with goddess Sarasvatī. He is also accompanied by the goddess Lakṣmī. There are different types of sculptures of Sarasvatī in eastern India. The majority of these sculptures are depicted along with the swan as her cognizance. Beside these, there are good numbers of sculpture of Sarasvatī in eastern India depicts ram as a *vāhana* or cognizance on the pedestal. According to the 7th *Adhyāya*, *Kāṇḍa* XII of the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, Indra once became powerless and Sarasvatī then cured Indra. Indra, regaining his former power rewarded Sarasvatī with a ram. This text also mentioned the practice of sacrificing rams to Sarasvatī. According to Bhattachali "it is interesting to note that the custom of sacrificing ram to Sarasvatī still persists in some parts of the Dacca district, and one of the principal diversions of young people in some village on the festive day of the worship of Sarasvatī is ram-fight." (Bhattachali 1929: 187).

During field investigations for my research work I have found different types of Sarasvatī image from the village of Golahat, in the district of Murshidabad, West Bengal and two more now preserved in the collections of Malda district Museum and Cooch-Bihar Palace Museum of Archaeological Survey of India of West Bengal. It is well-known that

Bengal has already yielded some classic Sarasvatī images (both in association with Swan or Ram and presently in the collection of several museums) which are not only carved by following proper iconographic scriptures but also shows some iconographic variations with reference to other Sarasvatī images found/reported from other parts of undivided Bengal. An image of *meṣavāhinī* Sarasvatī is kept in the collection of Vangiya Sahitya Parishat Museum, Kolkata (see below). This sculpture was originally hailed from Barabelun, district Bardhaman, West Bengal. Another sculpture is kept in the collection of the museum of Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Visva-Bharati University, Birbhum, West Bengal. Here I will concentrate on the comparatively lesser known Golahat image, with a note on other major examples of the deity from Bengal.

The Image of Sarasvatī from Golahat

The present village Golahat is located 6.5 km west of Kandi town and 1.5 km. south of Kandi-Sainthia state highway. The village is under the jurisdiction of Kandi police station of the district of Murshidabad, West Bengal. The image is now kept in the modern temple, located at the southern side of the village, locally known as Jayamangala temple (Plate 1). The village was associated with the medieval text, Candimangla by Mukundaram Chakravarti. The hāt (weekly market) of this village has been mentioned several times in this text. The local people of the village worship this icon as a goddess Caṇḍī. The village has yielded archaeological remains in form of different types of potsherds, structural remains and habitational remains. The archaeological importance was first noticed by Bijoy Kumar Bandopadhyaya (Bandopadhyay 1982: 74).

The specimen carved on black basalt stone (55×41×12.5cm) is supported by a huge equally massive rounded *tri-ratha* pedestal comprising different terraced

mouldings, now kept in a modern temple. This icon has been found from a pond of this village. The main image is four armed and sitting on double pettaled lotus throne/cushion in *lalitāsana* posture. Her right leg is hanging and rested on a lotus. Her two front hands hold a diagonally placed, single-



Plate1. The image of Sarasvatī form Golahat

stringed *vīṇā* terminating in a *makara*-shaped lower end. She holds a *akṣamālā* (rosary) and probably *pustaka* in her back right and left hand. The face of the goddess is severely damaged but her hair is arranged in a big chignon. The deity wears a long *upavita*, girdle, *nūpura* and other ornaments.

The ram, the mount of the goddess, is depicted on the central projection of the pedestal. The ram is in a couchant posture, its neck is adorned by a chain with a small bell, and the large horns are curved to the back. A devotee/donor in kneeling posture

with hands joined in *añjalimudrā* is carved on the proper right side of the pedestal, while the left side depicts a *naivedya* (offering).

Another feature of the sculpture is a decorated stela. The side of the stela is irregular and bordered by a band. The upper part of the stela is broken. It is composed of the architecture of the throne (behind the main image) and the animals. Two swan/peacock emitting jewel are beautifully cured just behind the both side of the image. Two *vyāla* (leogryph) figures with warriors on the back are supported by couchant elephants flanking the arm portions of the main deity. These couchant elephants are placed on beautifully carved lotuses. An oval shaped *prabhāmaṇḍala*/ halo decorated with floral design is present at the back of the head of the main deity.

Other Images of Sarasvatī on Ram from Bengal

An image of *meṣavāhinī* Sarasvatī found from Gajole, Malda district is now in the collection of Malda District Museum, Malda (Deb 2004: 7). Probably of the 12th century, this image of black basalt seated on a double-petalled lotus throne which further placed on a high and ornately carved *navaratha* pedestal (Plate 2). The iconography of the image is almost identical with the images from Golahat. The deity is depicted with half-closed eyes looking downwards. Her hair is tied to a bun above her head. In the centre of the elaborate *navaratha* pedestal, a frisking ram is depicted, placed on a lotus and looking up to the goddess. The backwards curved horns almost reach the fat body of the animal.

Unlike the Golahat specimen, the backslab is excessively large and deeply cut along the stature of the deity, thereby enhancing the three-dimensional effect. The elongated and decorated *prabhāmaṇḍala* behind the head of the goddess has double moulds, the outer one being intensely floriated and the



Plate 2. The image of Sarasvatī from Gazole, in the Malda Museum

inner one almost plain, but with a shallowly incised lotus. The top of the stela is slightly pointed and bordered by a raised band. The apex bears the depiction of a large, sprawling lotus, from which hang down decorated garlands. These are flanked on both sides by *vidyādhara* couples floating on clouds.

Another image, originally from north Bengal is now in the collection of the Cooch Behar Palace Museum of Archaeological Survey of India, Cooch Behar, West Bengal (Plate 3). This is also a seated image of black basalt (36x19x9 cm). The deity is seated on double petal lotus pedestal which is further



Plate 3. The image of Sarasvatī from unknown provenance in north Bengal, now in the Cooch Behar Palace Museum.

placed on *pañcharatha* pedestal and in *lalitāsana* posture. Her left leg is folded and right leg is hanging and rest on her *vāhana*/cognizance. There are enough similarity in iconographic details with the images from Golahat and the images now housed in the Malda Museum. The pedestal of this sculpture is richly decorated. The upper and lower parts of the pedestal are plain. At the centre of the pedestal is a frisking ram is depicted. The right leg of the main deity is kept on the back of the ram. It is looking towards the main deity. A devotee is carved on the right side of the pedestal. Remaining

portion of the pedestal is covered by lotus scrolls. The stele is so pointed that the upper portion forms a triangle rather than a half circle. Similar depiction is also found in the Malda Museum icon.

Some other interesting images of the goddess with her ram mount are preserved in Vangiya Sahitya Parishat Museum, The Visva-Bharati University Museum and the Ashutosh Museum of Fine Arts, Kolkata, of which the latter comes from Agradigun, Naogaon district, Bangladesh. An image from Gaya, Bihar, dated to the tenth century CE is preserved in the National Museum, Delhi.

Concluding Observation

All the icons from Bengal are four-armed and seated. The two front hands generally hold a *veena* and the back hands hold a *pustaka* (left) and an *akṣamālā* (right). The ram is invariably depicted in the pedestal; its bent horns are prominently shown in most of the images. The black basalt sculpture from Chhatingram, with a total height of 95.2 cm, is the largest of these images; it has often been illustrated as it is one of the best specimens of Bengal. In conclusion, the image type of *meṣavāhinī* Sarasvatī appears to have been developed in the Gaya region of Bihar in, or prior to, the 10th century, probably with reference to ancient Vedic concepts. Later it was taken to Bengal, where such icons were carved between the 11th and 13th centuries. Until now, twelve images of this type have been found from Bengal. The distributional pattern of the find-spots of these icons shows that they were popular in the geographical territory of ancient Rādhā, but especially in ancient Varendra, where most of the large-sized images were carved. Since this type is virtually unknown from other regions of India, the worship of Sarasvatī associated with the ram can thus be regarded as a geographically and temporally quite restricted religious phenomenon, confined mainly to the region of North Bengal presently coming

under the neighbouring districts of Malda in West Bengal and Rajshahi, Naogaon and Bogra in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, further investigations are certainly necessary to fully understand this phenomenon. It thus appears that the *meṣavāhinī* type of Sarasvatī images originated in the Gaya region of Bihar and was subsequently transferred to Bengal, from where a number of such images are known.

Bibliography

- Banerjea, Jitendra Nath (1956) *The Development of Hindu Iconography*. Second Revised and Enlarged Edition. Calcutta.
- Bandopadhyay, Bijoy Kumar (1982) *Paschimbaṅger Purāsampad: Murshidābād [Archaeological Treasure of West Bengal: Murshidabad]*. Kolkata (in Bengali).
- Basak, Radhagovinda and Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharyya (1919) *A Catalogue of the Archaeological Relics in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi*. Rajshahi.
- Bhattacharyya, Benoytosh (1958) *The Indian Buddhist Iconography Mainly Based on The Sādhnamālā and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Rituals*. Calcutta.
- Bhattacharyya, Kanailal (1983) *Sarasvatī – A Study on her Concept and Iconography*. Calcutta.
- Deb, Sadhan Candra (2004) *Māldā Saṃgrahaśālār Pratna Pariciti [An Introduction to the Archaeological Remains of the Malda Museum]*. Māldaha (in Bengali).
- Donaldson, Thomas Eugene (2002) *Tantra and Śakta Art of Orissa*. 3 vols. Delhi.
- Haque, Enamul (1992) *Bengal Sculptures: Hindu Iconography upto c. 1250 AD*. Dhaka.
- (2007) *The Art Heritage of Bangladesh*. Dhaka.
- Kinsley, David (1986) *Hindu Goddesses. Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*. Berkeley.
- Mondal, Bijan and Gerd J. Mevissen (2015) *Meṣavāhinī Sarasvatī in the Sculptural Art of Bengal. Berliner Indologische Studien*, Berlin, 22: 173-190.
- Rahman, Mukhlesur (1998) *Sculpture in the Varendra Research Museum. A Descriptive Catalogue*. Rajshahi.
- Rao, T.A. Gopinatha (1914) *Elements of Hindu Iconography*. Vol. One, Part II. Madras.

Manifestation of Goddess Sarasvatī in Jaina Art and Iconography

Shubha Majumder

Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Kolkata Circle

Introduction

Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, is designated a high position in Indian religious tradition. She is one of the important divinities in the *Vada*, as she is in later Hinduism. In the *Vades* she is associated with the sacred river Sarasvatī and she is the earliest example of a goddess who is associated with a river in Indian tradition. However, in later Hinduism the earlier concept about the Sarasvatī is diminished and the text like *Brahmanas*, where she is identified with *Vāc/Vāk/Vāgdevī*, Goddess of speech and consequently in the post-Vedic mythology, she became the goddess of eloquence and wisdom and subsequently became the consort of Brahmā. On the other hand, the deity also appears to have been portrayed more prominently in Jainism. According to B.C. Bhattacharyya (1939/1974: 122) she seems to be at the collective body of the sixteen *Vidyādevīs* and her worship is prior to that of other subordinate deities. She seems to be at the head of the collective body of the sixteen *Vidyādevīs*. Her name as *Śrutadevī* meaning the 'Goddess of Śruti' originally refers to the Vedas that was preserved through hearing. However, in the context of Sarasvatī in Jainism, U.P. Shah does not like to connect the conception of *Vidyādevīs* with that of

Sarasvatī. According to him Sarasvatī is unmistakably the goddess of learning and is in no way connected with the sixteen *Vidyādevīs* of the Jaina ideology (1941: 212).

Sarasvatī in Jaina Texts

In Jainism the principal cult images were that of a Tirthaṅkara or Arhat (Mitra 2006: 632) and their worship is considered superior even to Gods and Goddess. There is no place for Gods or Goddess as the Supreme Being, Creator and Distributer in Jainism. However, there are some subsidiary or associated deities in Jainism like the twenty-four Yakṣas and Yakṣiṇīs, *Vidyādevīs*, Navagraha and some deities who have been adopted by the Jaina through a passage of time from Brahmanical ideologies (Bhattacharyya 1939/1974: 10-18). Among those subsidiary or associated deities, whose concept was borrowed from the Brahmanical ideologies with changes in their iconography, forms and features, Sarasvatī is predominant. In Jainism Sarasvatī is recognized as the supreme deity of knowledge and wisdom. Sarasvatī in Jaina context was visualized as personification of the preaching's of the *Jinas* (*Jina-Vani*); she was provided not only with manuscript (symbols of *Jinas'* preaching) but was also given a status equal to the *Jinas*. The earliest goddess to

be worshipped by the Jainas was Sarasvatī, also called the *Śrutadevatā*, the personified knowledge embodied in of sacred Jain scriptures preached by the Jinas and the *Kevalins*. The Jainas, particularly the monk's friars and pontiffs such as *Bappabhaṭṭisuri*, *Hemacandra*, *Mallisena*, *Mallavadisuri* (II), *Narachandrasuri*, are reported in the medieval literature to have acquired 'Sarasvat' power from Sarasvatī (Tiwari 2010: 164). The various Jain texts mention about the different name of Sarasvatī. In the *Bhagavatisutta* and *Paumacarya*, there is a mention of the goddess of wisdom, besides the goddesses like Dhṛṭ, Kīrti and Lakṣmī. In *Aṅgavijjā* also, Sarasvatī is mentioned as the goddess of wisdom and intelligence (Nagar 1999: 335-6). In the *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi*, she is known under different names like Śrutadevatā, Śāradā, Bhāratī, Bhāṣā, Vāc, Vācdevatā, Vāṇi, and Brāhmī (Mandal 1985: 119).

The popularity of worship of Sarasvatī in Jainism is established on the testimony of literary references in the *Vyākhyāprajñāpatī* (c. 2nd-3rd century CE), the *Pāṅśikasūtra* of *Śivaārmā* (c. 5th century CE), the *Dvādaśāranayachakravṛtti* of *Siṃhasurī Kṣamāśramana* (c. CE 675), the *Pañcaśaka* of *Haribhardrasurī* (c. CE 775), the *Saṃsāradavanalastotra* (also of *Haribhadrasurī*), the *Mahāniśīthasūtra* (c. 9th century CE) and the *Śāradāstotra* of *Bhappabhaṭṭisur* (c. 3rd quarter of the 8th century CE) and also by the archaeological discoveries from various sites of India, particularly in western India. These various Jain ancient texts also mentioned about the worship of Sarasvatī among Jain communities. The texts also point out about her forms and different attributes. Both the Śvetāmbaras as well as the Digambaras adore the goddess and according to textual injunctions she should be adored as foremost of the goddesses. A special festival observed by the staunch Jainas exclusively for Sarasvatī is called *Jñānapañcamī* in the

Śvetāmbara tradition and *Śrutapañcamī* in the Digambara tradition.

Sarasvatī in Jain Art

The above mentioned literally references regarding the presence of Sarasvatī in Jainism are also supported by archaeological evidences. Mathura is the place from where the earliest evidence of Jain Sarasvatī was discovered (Bajpai 1945: 1-4). The site has yielded three significant Sarasvatī sculptures including the oldest known one. The earliest extant image of Sarasvatī, dated 132 C.E. also belongs to Jain tradition is now housed in the State Museum of Lucknow (Acc. No. J.24). The image, measuring 57 cm in height, and made of mottled red sand-stone, is interesting not only an account of its early date but also for its different stylistic idiom which has no parallel. Though the head, left breast and shoulder are missing, the image has preserved the spirit of an ancient tradition. The crescent folds of her *sari* cover left shoulder and suspend to conceal her waist. The dedicatory inscription in Brāhmī script, is in seven lines on the two-tiered rectangular pedestal, specifying the date of its installation. The image in Kushana style, flanked by two male figures, is devoid of ornaments. She is holding a palm-leaf manuscript wrapped in cloth (or with a wood-cover depicting zigzag design) in her left hand. Though what she held in her right arm is difficult to decide, the surviving beads of rosary confirm that she was holding a rosary. Goddess is seated not in the usual *lalitāsana*, but on her haunches in *godohikāsana*, with knees spread wide apart, 'squatting posture', is rare and symbolizes the aptitude of Jain monks and householders towards reading and writing from the hoary past. The person standing on her right holds a water pot, wears a short-pleated dhoti with his hair combed back, is the donor Gova, son of Siha. The other male standing on her left, clothed as a friar with hands clasped in veneration, is

Āryadevavācaka, preacher of the donor who was a lohakārūka, 'ironsmith.' The other two Sarasvatī images from Mathura belong to the seventh and tenth centuries CE.

The worship of Sarasvatī was far more popular with the Śvetāmbaras and as a result her images are absent at the famous Digambara Jaina sites like Badami, Aihole, Ellora, etc. Though the earliest image of Jaina Sarasvatī was reported from Mathura, however She became particularly popular in western India from the early medieval time onwards and to a lesser extent in central India as well as south India. The earliest specimens of Jaina Sarasvatī in western India are known from Ākotā (Añkottaka), a small village near Varodara, an ancient Jaina seat, has yielded many Jaina metal images. Among them, three Sarasvatī images belong to the seventh century CE. One notable piece was gifted by the nun Isiya, as mentioned in inscription engraved in the pedestal. The image stands on the flat surface of the pedestal which might have been separately cast. She carries in her right hand a lotus which a long stalk that rests on the pedestal. A scarf is worn around her shoulders, the ends of which fall to the pedestal. The scarf shows a bead design followed at both the ends by a geometrical motif. The lower garment of the goddess also shows a pattern of triangles formed by slanting lines between the broad horizontal bands. The ornaments include an *ekāvalī* with a pendant and *uraḥsūtra*. The crown is of the *trikūṭa* type. The two other images of this type also are same and preserved in the same museum.

Two images of the goddess Sarasvatī are found on the Caumukha temple at Ranakapur in Udaipur district of Rajasthan. First one carved on a pillar of this temple. The deity standing in the *tribhaṅga* pose plays on her *vinā* with both the hands. Her cognizance swan resting near the right foot and appears to be charmed by the divine music. The other one shows that the goddess with *vinā* and book in

the two upper hands, and rosary and *kamaṇḍalu* in the two lower ones. Here also the deity rides on a swan.

The Vimala Vasahi temple of Dilwara at Mt. Abu in Rajasthan is a famous Jaina temple where some marble images of Sarasvatī are found. One of them is carved on the ceiling dome of the *maṇḍapa*. The goddess seated in *padmāsana* with her body quite erect shows rosary, lotus, *vinā*, and book as her attributes. Vidyādhara fly above, whereas the small figures, probably representing donors, kneel at the bottom of the throne. In this example, Sarasvatī is being saluted by two architects who built the Vimala Vasahi temple. The bearded architect to the right of the goddess is inscribed as Loyana Sūtradhāra, the other holding the measuring rod is named as Sūtradhāra Kela. The goddess is elegantly ornamented. A small swan as the vehicle is seen in the pedestal. Another image carved on a pillar of this temple, shows the goddess Sarasvatī in a standing attitude and holding lotuses in the two upper hands; the right lower hand is mutilated, while the left lower carries a book.

A beautiful sculpture of sixteen-armed form of the goddess of learning is found on the ceiling of Vimala Saha's temple, Mt. Abu. Unfortunately, the image is mutilated. Two male figure on dancing posture stand on each side, the goddess sits in *bhadrāsana* showing lotus (*padma*), book (*pustaka*) and water-vessel (*kamaṇḍalu*) in the three left hands. All other hands, along with the *āyudhas* they held, are mutilated beyond recognition. However, the figure of the swan can be seen on the pedestal. A small seated figure of a Tirthaṅkara is noticed above the crown. The Jaina Sarasvatī figures in Luna-Vasahi show the goddess with four and six hands and riding a swan. The four-armed Sarasvatī in these instances shows the *varadamudrā*, a long-stalked lotus (or manuscript), manuscript (or *vinā*) and water-vessel. The other instance again

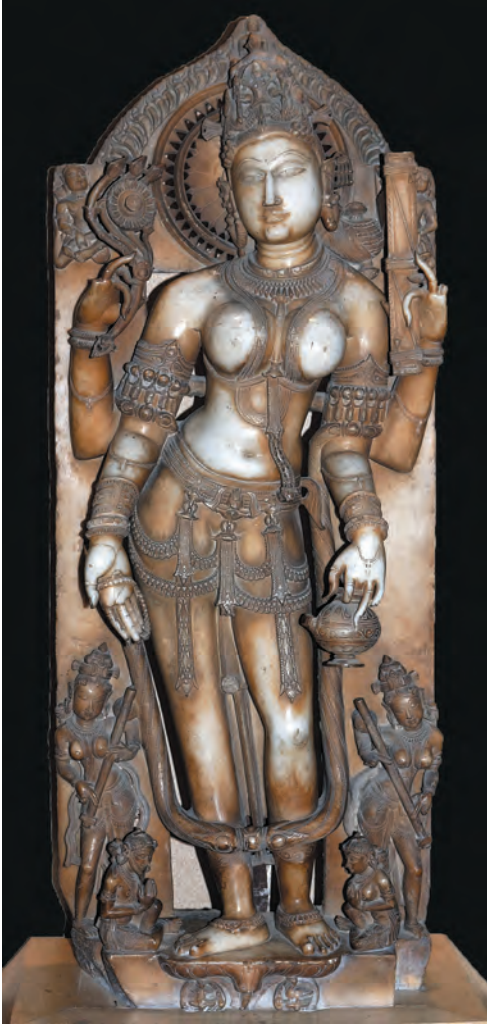


Plate 1. Jaina Sarasvatī from Pallu, Bikaner, Rajasthan, (courtesy National Museum, New Delhi).

revealing her musical-power shows her as holding cymbals in middle pair of hand with a *vinā* in the upper left. The remaining three hands, as usual, show the *varadaksha*, a spiral lotus and a manuscript.

The most exquisite of all the known figure of Sarasvatī are the two images from Pallu, Bikaner, Rajasthan (Plate 1). Of the two identical figures, one is in the National Museum, New Delhi (Acc. No. 1/6/278) while the other is in the Ganga

Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner (Acc. No. 203). These figures belonging to c. middle of 11th CE, show the four-armed goddess as standing in *tribhāṅga*-posture on a lotus pedestal with a small figure of swan. The deity stands gracefully in the *tribhāṅga* pose on a fully blossomed lotus. The four-armed goddess exhibits *varadamudrā* along with rosary on her front right palm, while the front left hand holds a *kamaṇḍalu*. She carries a lotus with her back right hand and a manuscript in her back left hand. She is accompanied by two female attendants, each of them standing on either side with a *vinā* in her hands. Two devotees, one a male and the other a female, seated on the pedestal and facing towards the goddess, are shown worshipping her from two sides with folded hands. A miniature swan, the vehicle of the goddess, is carved on the pedestal within a circle just below the lotus upon which the goddess stands. The presence of the Tirthāṅkara on her crown identifies her with the Jaina goddess Sarasvatī. This image bears a remarkably serene expression.

The interesting aspect of the Sarasvatī image of Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner is that a beautiful back slab with a *torana*, containing the two-armed figures of 16 *Mahāvidyās*. Some of them may be identified with *Apraticakra*, *Vajrāṅkuā*, *Kali*, *Rohinī* and *Prajñāpti*. The figures on the *torana*, possibly suggest that Sarasvatī here has been conceived as the Controlling goddess of all the Great-Powers (*Mahāvidyas*).

Central India is the next important region where worship of Jaina Sarasvatī was also flourished during the post Gupta period onwards. U. P. Shah identified a beautiful image of Sarasvatī from the ruins of the Deogarh temple. The goddess stands in the *tri-bhāṅga* attitude and carries a lotus in the raised left hand. The right hand, showing the *varadamudrā*, holds rosary as well. On her right, left and the



Plate 2. Jaina Sarasvatī from Parsvanatha temple of Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.
(courtesy ASI, Jabalpur Circle)

top are carved images of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras. On her right, a small figure of a male attendant holding a pitcher. The presence of the twenty-four Jainas clearly proves that the goddess must hold a unique position in the Jaina pantheon. She may be taken to represent Sarasvatī or Srutadevatā, the deified form of speech of all the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkara.

Some images of Sarasvatī with important iconographic peculiarities have been noticed from different temples of Khajuraho. The Pāśvanātha temple of Khajuraho contain three images six handed Jaina Sarasvatī among these three images in one case the six-armed Sarasvatī (Plate 2) shows a lotus and manuscript in upper pair of hands, while the middle pair of hands are engaged in playing on *vinā*. The remaining two hands, however, show the *varadamudrā* and a water-vessel. The presence *caurī*-bearers, Vidyādhara and other associated

figures including two small Jaina figure overhead, signify that she was accorded a favored position in the Jainism.

A life size whitish-cream sand stone image of Sarasvatī (Plate 3) was discovered during the excavation 1999-2000 from the Birchhabili-Tila of Fatehpur Sikri in Uttar Pradesh (IAR 1999-2000: 166). It was found in several pieces from the trench adjacent to the temple plinth and it is suggested that it was placed there carefully after being uprooted from its original position in the temple. The deity stands in *tri-bhaṅga* posture on a lotus pedestal and measured about 5 ft 3 inch. The sculpture fully responds to



Plate 3. Jaina Sarasvatī from excavation of Birchhabii-Tila of Fatehpur Sikri in Uttar Pradesh.
(courtesy ASI, Agra Circle).

the textual presentation. She is youthful and fair-complexioned, and has a halo behind her head. Her four arms are broken, obviously because they were projecting forward precariously and could not be saved when the piece was being removed. Both the lower hands of the deity were missing and in upper two hands she holds lotus in right and rosary in her left. She is wearing a fine sari with border below the waist, and an *uttariya* above it. She also wears all the feminine ornaments known in ancient India, and a *Kirītamukūṭa* on her head, composed of jeweled strings.



Plate 4. Jaina Sarasvatī from Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

(courtesy Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

Jaina Sarasvatī in Foreign Museums

Some Jaina Sarasvatī images from different parts of western India and central India are presently displayed in various Foreign Museums. Among those images one image of Jaina Sarasvatī from Gujarat is presently displayed in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Pal 1999: 172). In this image (Plate 4) the goddess stands in the classic flexed posture and originally had four arms. Each upper right hand holds a lotus stalk with a enriches a pair of pecking geese. Both the lower hands of the deity are unfortunately damaged. Female attendants bearing fly whisks flank both the sides of the legs and at a thigh level two diminutive figures with musical instruments that allude to Sarasvatī's cultural role as the preceptress of music. On the proper right of the base a small male figure probably the donor of the image is present and on the other side there is the depiction of swan i.e., goddess's mount, which is now headless. The *pañca-ratha* pedestal of the image contain an inscription which states that it was carved by Jagadeva in April-May of 1153 by order of the officer Paraśurāma as a replacement for a sculpture of Sarasvatī that was damaged the year before.

A marble image of Sarasvatī, is probably from Southwest Rajasthan, at present displayed in the British Museum (Rao 2001: 22). In this example the goddess is shown standing gracefully in *tri-bhaṅga* pose on an inscribed *padmapitha*. Her right hands are lost, while in her left hands she holds a rosary and a book. The elaborate *karaṇḍa-mukūṭa*, the charming jewellery and the diaphanous *sari* secured with a girdle remind us of the famous Pallu image of Sarasvatī. The Birmingham Museum of Art has a very fascinating 12th c. Jaina marble sculpture of the deity from Gujarat.

Bibliography

Indian Archaeological Review- 1999–2000.

Bajpai, K. D. 1946. 'Jaina Image of Sarasvati in the Lucknow Museum' *Jaina Antiquary*, Vol. XI, No. 2, Jan, pp. 1-4

Bhattacharya, B.C. 1939/1974. *The Jaina Iconography*. 2nd ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Mitra, J. 2006. Jaina Iconography, in K. Vatsyayan ed. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Kolkata: R.K. Mission Institute of Culture, pp: 331-56.

Mandal, Tara Pada 1985. Unpublished PhD thesis 'Sarasvati in ancient Indian art and iconography', submitted in the University of Calcutta.

Nagar, S.L. 1999. *Iconography of Jaina Deities*, Volume 1, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation.

Pal, P., 1999. *The Peaceful Liberations*, Jaina Art from India, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California.

Rao, M. Basava, 2001. *Sarasvati in Jaina Sculptures*, in A. K. V. S. Reddy, G. Kamalakar, Haripriya Rangarajan, K. Venkatachalam, M. Veerender ed. *Jainism: Art, Architecture, Literature & Philosophy*, Delhi: Sharada Publishing House. pp: 19-24.

Saha, U.P., 1941. 'Iconography of the Jaina Goddess Sarasvati', *Journal of the University of Bombay*, Volume X (New Series), Part – II, September, pp: 196-213.

Tiwari, M. N. P., 2010. *Sarasvati in Jaina Tradition and Art*, in S. D. Trivedi ed. *Glorious Heritage of India in Memory of Prof. R.C. Sharma*, Volume 1, Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan.



Saraswati in Embroidery Artwork



Artist : **Rekha Chakraborti**
Courtesy : Rekha Chitram

Artwork on Saraswati : Tradition of Bengal Art

Somnath Mukherjee

Member, The Asiatic Society

Saraswati, the goddess of learning, occupies a distinct position in the Hindu pantheon. She is not a major deity, nor any puranic cult ever developed centering on her, neither her divine importance is any way comparable with that of Visnu, Siva or the Devi. Still having devotees culting across the barrier of cults and sects of the Hindus, and also among the followers of Jainism and Buddhism, she may boast of an almost universal popularity. Her significance is however, more cultural than religions, because she is the bestower of knowledge, purity of mind, eloquence, fine arts etc. In her usual pure white apparel, seated on a

white swan or a white lotus, adorned with pearl necklace, with a vina in her hands, and sometimes also carrying rosary and manuscripts, symbolises refinement and the finer elements of human life.

Now coming to our subject of discussion, a self-made artist like Abanindranath Tagore, consciously opting out the Western academic style and experiments with indigenous tradition of painting, provided powerful strong ideas. So the orientalist established him as a cult figure and defined a Bengal School of painting around him.

The omentalists created their own nostalgic vision with a blend of a single figure



Artist : Asitkumar Haldar



Artist : Isha Mahammad

against a hazy background, with a distinct horizon bathed in a mellow orange twilight. The vehicle of such noble themes were dignified, suffering figures, their stopping emaciated forms exuding an aura of acute spirituality. In the work of Asitkumar Haldar (Illustration 1) or Kshitindranath Majumder, the melancholia of orientation was most pronounced. This has been followed at the latter works done by D. N. Brahma (Illustration 4), Isha Mahammad (Illustration 2), Sankar Nath such and other.

Nandalal Bose, a disciple of Abanindranath, had a great respect for the Indian tradition. The past, to him was a source of principles and ideas; it had an artistic grammar, that was a discipline for hand and eye. The past was valid in the present only when the artist could truly inherit its riches by understanding its artistic meaning. Some of his finest paintings are flat and two dimensional, such as Ardhhanarisvara and Saraswati, where the treatment is essentially a creation of pattern. (Illustration-3)

Dhirendra Nath Bramha opined and insisted that design became part of every day life; infusing into every form making a certain order. His design though based on natural forms but not naturalistic; it followed nature only as starting point and developed into



Artist : Nandalal Bose



ল্যান কুরু যো নিত্যং ব্রজ্ঞানং দেহি যো বেদম্
সোক্তং দেহি ভগবতি বীণা পালে নমো জুহু ॥

Artist : Dhirendra Nath Bramha

shapes and pattern imbued with abstract elements such as rhythm, movement, motifs and delicate details.

Only of the main lessons the artist drew from his study of tradition was notion of the spiritual and imaginative nature of art. His definition of art and artist dipped heavily into mystic terminology of Dhyana (meditation) and Sadhana (dedication), interpreting art as a religion in itself.

The journey of Bengal school is still continuing with a smaller scale and study at the Govt. College of Art and Craft, Kolkata.



Raja Ravi Varma's Saraswati

Saraswati is depicted as a beautiful woman dressed in a white sari, sitting on a lotus, playing the veena. White symbolizes purity and wisdom. Generally she is shown with four hands holding a rosary, a book, a quill, and the veena. Sometimes, there is a swan and peacock near her. The swan is a symbol of transcendence and the peacock of the splendor of color and dance. She is often sitting near a body of water, alluding to her past as a river goddess.

Varma retained the iconography of the goddess Saraswati with the addition of the crown which is often seen in Tanjore paintings. The flowers scattered around are Chrysanthemums, frangipani, and hibiscus. With her perfect facial features and graceful white sari, Varma's Saraswati is divinely human.

Source :<https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/raja-ravi-varma/>

Saraswati

in
Nivedita Girls' School



Nandalal Bose sketched this painting of Saraswati for Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School, founded by Nivedita herself. This is one of the extraordinary art pieces that Nandalal composed. The excellent line drawing was influenced by the cave arts of Ajanta. This sketch of Saraswati is still well-preserved in the school till date and the facsimile of the sketch is used as the cover design of the *Stabguchchha* (The Prayer Book) and the Progress Report of the students. Even the idol of Devi Sarawati worshipped in the school premises every year is moulded according to the sketch by Nandalal Bose.

Sagarika Sur

Publication Section, The Asiatic Society

Courtesy : Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School

সরস্বতী বন্দনায় শিশুশিল্পীরা

সৌজন্যে "রেখা চিত্রম"

গত দু বছর করোনার পরিস্থিতিতে স্কুলগুলিতে সরস্বতী পূজো করা সম্ভব হয়নি। তবুও ছোট ছোট ছেলে-মেয়েরা দেবী আরাধনায় বিরত থাকেনি। তারা তাদের দেবীর প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা জানিয়েছে ছবি আঁকার মধ্যে দিয়ে।



অদ্বিতীয়া ভূঁইয়া, 5yrs



সিদ্ধার্থ সাহা, 9yrs



অতী ভট্টাচার্য, 14yrs



প্রিয়ম পুরকায়স্থ, 8yrs



উজাষ দাস শর্মা, 7yrs



পৃথীষ ঘোষ, 8yrs



ওজস্বিনী দে, 6yrs



শারণ্য শতপতি, 7yrs



প্রিয়ান ঘোষ, 6yrs

Thailand

Saraswati in Philately



India



Source : From the personal collection of **Goutam Kumar De**, Philatelist

Observance of the 239th Foundation Day Celebration of the Asiatic Society: A Brief Report



Placing wreaths at the tomb of Sir William Jones in the South Park Street Burial Ground

On 15th January, 2022, The Asiatic Society observed its 239th Foundation Day in three phases as usual. In the first phase, dignitaries from different leading institutions attended the programme at 9.30 am before the tomb of Sir William Jones in the South Park Street Burial Ground and placed wreaths at the tomb of Sir William Jones, the founder of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. Amongst them were Professor Swapan Kumar Pramanick, President of the Asiatic Society, Professor Basudeb Barman, Vice-President of the Asiatic Society, Dr Satyabrata Chakrabarti, General Secretary of the Society, Professor Somnath Mukherjee, Member of the Council, Dr. Bishnu Pada Dutta, Member of the Council, Dr. Arijit Dutta Chowdhury, Director General of NCSM and Director-in-charge of Indian Museum, Shri Amit Ghosh, Secretary of The Asiatic Society Employees' Union, Dr.

Member of the Society, Shri Swapnil Chatterjee, Secretary, ASCCS Ltd. Shri Sanjay Roy Chowdhury on behalf of the Asiatic Society Recreation Club, Section Officers and Staff Members of the Society.

In the second phase, Professor Swapan Kumar Pramanick, President of the Society hoisted the flag of the Asiatic Society in the premises of the Sir William Jones Bhavan at 10.30 am and made a brief speech that contains the glorious past of the Asiatic Society and the contributions of Sir William Jones. Shri Suchand Mukherjee of the Asiatic Society presented a song composed by him on Sir William Jones. The programme of Flag Hoisting ended with the National Anthem.

The third phase of the programme on virtual mode was held at the Humayun Kabir Hall of the Society from 11 am.

C Raghunathan, Joint Director, ZSI, Professor Arup Bose FNA on behalf of INSA, Dr. C Murugan, Scientist of BSI, Professor Subrata Chatterjee of St. Xavier's College, Architect Abhishek Gupta, from Indian Institute of Architecture, Dr. Prashanta Bhattacharaya, Member of the Society, Dr. Shankar Prasad Chakrabarti,



Professor Rudrangshu
Mukherjee

The 239th Foundation Day Oration was delivered by Professor Rudrangshu Mukherjee, currently Chancellor, Ashoka University, Sonepat at the Society in the digital mode due to prevailing unusual

pandemic condition. The programme began with a welcome address by Dr. Satyabrata Chakrabarty, General Secretary of the Society, highlighting the general significance of the day. Professor Rudrangshu Mukherjee initiated his talk by calling the Asiatic Society as “the singular important institution” of modern awakening in India, and William Jones, its founder, as the pivotal man for searching the roots of Indian culture going against the current trend of colonial rulers of merely maximizing the land revenue of the country for economic exploitation. Professor Mukherjee’s main theme for the Foundation Day Oration was, however, the subtle relationship between the two most distinguished luminaries of modern India, namely, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, as evident in their long-drawn-out written exchanges and verbal conversation spanning over more than a quarter of a century, with fundamental agreements and marked differences. The summary of the talk is as follows.

The two great men of modern India met for the first time on 6 March 2015 at Santiniketan. M.K. Gandhi was already a known figure after his famous South African *satyagraha*, and Tagore, already the first Noble Prize winner from the whole of Asia, was recognized worldwide for his extraordinary poetic, artistic, human and spiritual quest. Their intimacy and communication became closer through a common friend, the celebrated C.F. Andrews. When the exchange of letters had started between these two persons in January 2015, both of them were struck by the word *sadhana* in their respective

journeys, and Tagore personally identified Gandhi as a ‘fellow traveller’. Thirteen years later, in July 1928, Tagore called it “*sadhana* of both of our lives”, and declared Gandhi as “Prophet of Truth” while mentioning himself as “a Poet of *Ananda*”. Four years after Tagore’s death, Gandhi in December 1945 came to Santiniketan, and stated that he found “no real conflict between us”.

Professor Rudrangshu Mukherjee, however, does not fail to notice that Gandhi-Tagore relationship was marked “most of the times” by disagreements in the exchange of written words on subjects as diverse as the causal aspects of Bihar earthquake and the potentiality of *charka*. Their conversations went on in meetings not less than 10 times in their entire life but there was no record of them, and Andrews also had left none. It is notable that their relationship was anchored with an understanding of India’s past, and their common vision of India’s future. Here Mukherjee adds two unique and common features of both of their vision: Tagore from the 1890s, and Gandhi in the post-1915 era were increasingly concerned by the wretched condition of the rural people of India. In Tagore’s case, its evidence is found in his short stories, his depiction of the central character in novel *Gora*, and his poem *Ebar phirao more*, whereas rural India continued to occupy the heart of Gandhi who identified himself with the typical farmer and weaver of India. It was also in this period that both Tagore and Gandhi identified their vision with multiple meanings of *Swaraj*, *ahimsa* and *abhay*. They also developed distinctive visions of Indian history, not as it was studied and understood in their time but as a sort of a study of everyday contentment and misery of people.

Deep in the respective minds of Tagore and Gandhi, there was another feature of difference and unity. Tagore became increasingly concerned with certain unanswered questions about God in his late years as he was when writing the poem

Pratham diner Surya only ten days before his death or in his last poem where life and creation was marked as 'deceptive' (*bichitra chhalan jal*). This was quite unusual when judged from his lifelong Upanashadic bent of philosophy of mind. At the social level also, Tagore's characters Gora and Jethamoshai in novel *Chaturanga* finally indicated different kinds of freedom where true freedom was assumed as social freedom. However, Gandhi's belief in *Bhagavat Gita* remained unaltered throughout his life. He was always willing to hear Tagore whom he called Gurudev, though he occasionally differed with him. It seems, Mukherjee argues, that the relationship between these two great men of modern India was marked by such a basic harmony as not to ward off subtle differences of various kinds. In this sense, their agreements and disagreements had significant meanings both in their time and beyond.

The programme ended with interesting observations from Professor Swapan Kumar Pramanick, President of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. While appreciating the place of the Asiatic Society in the long academic journey

of research and studies in various frontier areas of science and humanities in India, he noted the virtual absence of Indians in it in the first hundred years of its existence. A second notable absence relates to the Society's role in the freedom struggle of the country. But, as Professor Pramanick argues, this cannot belittle the role that the Society played in the phenomenal advance in the study of tradition in the realm of knowledge that Asia and India offered before the world. Here he mentioned the unusual contribution of Sir William Jones and many others in the field of orientalism. This was further strengthened by the gradual indigenization of the Society since the late nineteenth century till the attainment of freedom and even beyond till date. At the finishing end of the programme, the Secretary of the Society thanked all concerned for the successful completion of it.

Compiled by

Arun Bandopadhyay

Historical and Archaeological Secretary, The Asiatic Society
and

Dilip Roy

Section Officer, Administration, The Asiatic Society

Report on 178th Foundation Day Celebration in Ananda Bazar Patrika

কলিকাতা, বুধবার, ১০ই ফেব্রুয়ারি, ১৯৭২ (১৯৭১ চন্দ্র, ১৭৭২ বঙ্গাব্দ) THURSDAY, JAN. 17, 1962. ৫ জগদ্বৈশ্বকোষ পত্রিকা কলিকাতা, বুধবার, ১০ই ফেব্রুয়ারি, ১৯৭২ (১৯৭১ চন্দ্র, ১৭৭২ বঙ্গাব্দ) বিবিধ খবর



মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ডঃ বি. সি. রায় সোমবার সকালে কলিকাতায় এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটির প্রতিষ্ঠা দিবসের উদ্দেশ্যে সভাপতিত্ব করেন।

ছবি: আনন্দবাজার

বিদেশ হইতে লব্ধ জ্ঞান সর্বসাধারণের বোধগম্য করিতে হইবে মাতৃভাষায় যথাযথ অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা প্রয়োজন এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটির প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকী অনুষ্ঠানে ডঃ রায়ের ভাষণ

(স্ট্যাক রিপোর্টার)

আজিকার সবচেয়ে গুরুত্ব প্রাপ্ত হইতেছে,—আমাদের দেশে শিক্ষার বাহন এবং বৈজ্ঞানিক পরিভাষা কি হইবে? কারণ পাশ্চাত্য দেশ হইতে লব্ধ জ্ঞান বাহাতে সর্বসাধারণের বোধগম্য হয়, সেইজন্য মাতৃ ভাষায় যথাযথ অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা করা দরকার।

সোমবার সকালে কলিকাতায় এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটির প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকী অনুষ্ঠান উদ্দেশ্যে সকালে সোসাইটির সর্বাধিক প্রবীণ সদস্য এবং পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ডঃ বিধান-চন্দ্র রায় ঐরূপ মন্তব্য করেন। তিনি বলেন, ইংরাজী ভাষায় যাহাকে 'ফান' বলা হয়, আমরা উহাকে মাতৃভাষায় অনুবাদ করিয়া পাখা বলিব কিনা, তাহা বিবেচনা করিয়া দেখা দরকার। কেননা, বিজ্ঞানের বিষয়গুলি এবং বিশেষ করিয়া বৈজ্ঞানিক পরিভাষা-সমূহ বিদেশী ভাষা হইতে আমাদের মাতৃভাষায় অনুবাদ করাটাই একটি বাস্তব অসম্ভব।

তিনি বলেন, বহু বছর আগে এই

সোসাইটির সদস্য রজেন্দ্রলাল মিত্র ইউরোপীয় ভাষা হইতে ভারতীয় ভাষা-সমূহে বৈজ্ঞানিক পরিভাষা রচনার এক পরিকল্পনা প্রণয়ন করেন। এখনও তাহার পরিকল্পনা অনুযায়ী ভারতীয় ভাষাসমূহে বহু পরিভাষা ব্যবহৃত হইতেছে।

ডঃ রায় বলেন, ভারতের সাংস্কৃতিক এবং বৈজ্ঞানিক ক্ষেত্রে এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটির অবদান 'অনস্বীকার্য'। প্রতিষ্ঠাতা স্যার উইলিয়ম জেনস-এর আশা এবং উদ্দেশ্য কাজে পরিণত করিবার জন্য সোসাইটি ১৭৭৭ বছর ধরিয়া চেষ্টা করিয়া চলিয়াছে।

তিনি আরও বলেন, সোসাইটির ঐতিহ্য দীর্ঘ দিনের। বাহাতে এই

ঐতিহ্যের সাহিত্য আধুনিক ধারার সমন্বয় ঘটে, তাহার জন্য চেষ্টা করা উচিত। প্রসংগত তিনি বলেন, সোসাইটির বর্তমান পাঠ্যপুস্তকটি সম্প্রসারণ এবং সেই সঙ্গে দেশ ও বিদেশের রিসার্চ স্কলার-দের জন্য ছাত্রবাসের ব্যবস্থা করা প্রয়োজন।

প্রাসংগিক সোসাইটির সভাপতি ডঃ এ. সি. উকিল বলেন, এশিয়ার ইতিহাস, সাহিত্য, কলা এবং বিজ্ঞানের সুসংগঠিত পরিবেশের জন্য এশিয়া দু'খণ্ডে দীর্ঘ দিন পূর্বে যে প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলি স্থাপিত হয়, কলিকাতায় এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি উহাদের মধ্যে অন্যতম।

অধ্যাপক নিমাইচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য সর্বকাল ধন্যবাদ জানান।

Flag Hoisting on 73rd Republic Day



At Sir William Jones Bhavan, Park Street



At Rajendralala Mitra Bhavan, Salt Lake

Photo : **Shibani Dutta**, Life Member, The Asiatic Society

Exhibition and Lecture-Demonstration on Manuscripts on Gaṇitaśāstra : A Brief Report



(L to R) : Professor Pradip Kumar Majumdar, Dr. Satyabrata Chakrabarti, Dr. Keka Adhikari Banerjee and Professor Tapati Mukherjee

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata organized an exhibition cum Lecture-Demonstration to observe the National Mathematics Day on 22nd December, 2021. The programme was organized as a part of Azadi Ki Amrit Mahotsav (Celebration of 75th year of Independence).

The programme began with the welcome address of Dr. Satyabrata Chakrabarti, the General Secretary of the Society where he expressed that the idea behind this exhibition cum Lecture- Demonstration was to create an awareness of the ancient learning in India in the field of Mathematics and its relevance to the present system of education and curriculum. The introductory speech about the observance of the day and relevance of such exhibition in the Society was given by Professor Tapati Mukherjee, the Library Secretary. Professor Rajkumar Roychowdhury, Physical Science Secretary deliberated his speech online about the collection of the Manuscripts on

Gaṇitaśāstra (Mathematics) in the Museum of the Society. Professor Pradip Kumar Majumdar, Expert in Mathematical Studies, gave his lecture on '*the Glimpses of Ancient Learning as revealed through the manuscripts of Mathematics*'. The *slokas* and excerpts from the exhibited manuscripts were also vividly explained by him. But the most interesting lecture-demonstration was given by Professor Amartya Datta of the Indian Statistical Institute on

'Some Examples of Mathematical Innovations of Ancient India' supported by power-point presentation. The participants including school students interacted with Professor Datta. Formal vote of thanks was given by Professor Sujit Kumar Das, Treasurer of the Society. The programme was co-ordinated by Dr. Keka Banerjee Adhikari, Curator, The Asiatic Society .

The programme was organized in physical mode and an ambience was created by displaying banner on National Mathematics Day and its theme, original Manuscripts and some acrylic standees with printed excerpts of some of the important manuscripts on *Gaṇitaśāstra (Mathematics)*. For the first time this programme was live streamed on the Facebook page, you tube channel and twitter page of the Society at the same time with the physical mode. It received over 137 views in you tube, Facebook reach 2780 and Tweeter 116 views.

Compiled by: Keka Adhikari Banerjee

Conservation of Excavated Buddhist Archaeological Site (Sakhisenar Dhipi) at Moghalmari, Paschim Medinipur

Anjan Mitra

Conservation Architect

The Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of West Bengal, conducted the archaeological excavation at Sakhisena Mound, Moghalmari under Gram Panchayet Monoharpur, Police Station Dantan and District Paschim Medinipur in West Bengal during the field station 2013-2014. This mound has been declared as a State Protected Site, 'under the purview of the Act XXXI of 1957, vide Notification No- 4195/I & CA, dated the 7th March 2013'.

The site lies at Latitude 21° 59' N and Longitude 87°17' E. It is situated on the

i.e.- Kharagpur-Balasore route passes through the near proximity of the site.

This site was excavated earlier by the team led by Dr. Asok Datta of Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta between 2003-2010 at different phases with intermittent gap at different locations of the mound. The antiquities and other associated artefacts collected during the earlier excavations provide clues to identify the site with Buddhist Cultural association.

The excavation was carried out by Directorate of Archaeology and Museums

at Moghalmari, under the direction of Dr. Amal Roy in 2013-14. The purpose of this excavation was to reveal the buried structure plan, particularly that of the monastery. The excavation mainly explored the northern and north-eastern part of the mound. During the excavation they identified seven layers of deposits at a depth of 6.54 meters from surface level to the



Fig-1 | Moghalmari post-excavation at the start of work (2018)

Howrah-Bhubaneswar Railway route and the nearest railway station is *Nekurseni*. The NH 5A

natural soil. They have followed principles of stratification with detail recordings of successive deposits, antiquities, potteries, and

structural remains. The stratifical study clearly indicate about two phases of structural activities. The earlier phase belongs to late Gupta Period i.e., 5th/6th century AD and the later phase belongs to post-Gupta period i.e., 7th century AD.

We also understand that there may be a possibility of further exploration of mound to search for many missing links that may have been buried underneath.

These excavations have unearthed the partial structural footprints of the Buddhist Mahabihar. This is a sensitive conservation issue for this excavated site as



Fig-3 | Relief work uncovered during excavation

it necessitates protection from weathering, natural decay of exposed and buried structure, natural vegetation growth as well as from unwarranted human interference and vandalism. Directorate of Archaeology and Museums have entrusted Anjan Mitra of The Appropriate Alternative - the conservation architects for developing a detailed project report in 2014 - "Conservation of Excavated Buddhist Archaeological Site (Sakhisenar Dhipi)" at Moghalmari.

This conservation would be executed through PWD. PWD usually has an established set of protocols for selecting contractor and terms of reference for execution of works under them. However, conservation of heritage structures and especially archaeological sites need a more site-specific approach with detailed expertise and traditional wisdom. For this project, a



Fig-2 | Uncovered Buddhist remains

different form of tender document has been prepared incorporating special conditions of contract. PWD has incorporated special provisions to identify suitable contractor with adequate experience and resources to tackle such intervention challenge. The whole process has been recorded and documented in detail for future reference.

The first task of the conservation work on site is to properly delineate the protected site for enacting protective measures and creating a controlled zone as per the dictates of Protected Site to prevent any incompatible

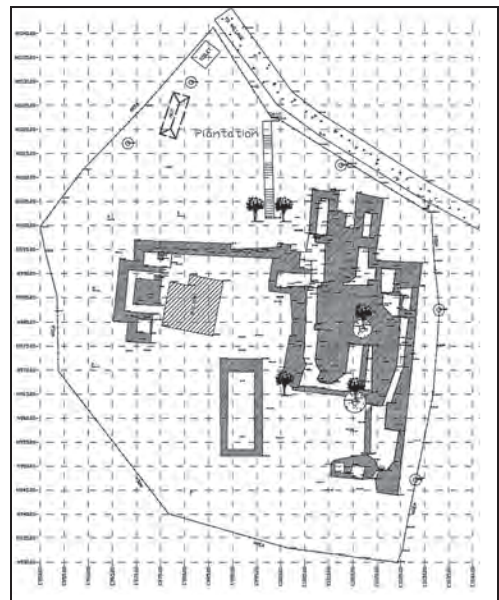


Fig-4 | Survey Plan of uncovered remains at Moghalmari

activities and unauthorised access. The local club/community were agreeable and supportive of this delineation process and protective measures adopted. Modified laterite blocks (a local stone used in heritage structures in this region) have been used to construct the boundary wall. The main entrance gate has been designed and constructed to simulate the Buddhist imagery with similar architectural vocabulary and form of other structures in this protected site.

The excavated site has been subject to extensive vegetation growth. There is also an existence of full-grown trees that has penetrated the sub-structure of ruins. The situation calls for an immediate clearing and cleaning operation. This is a tedious process and involves several stages. First, the ground cover and vegetation growth has been cleared manually. Thereafter, the site has been treated with appropriate biocide and weedicide several times to stop its regrowth. Anti-termite treatment for pre-construction and post-construction has also been undertaken. The structural remains have been exposed and cleared. Large trees have been pruned and trimmed to restrict their growth so that the destabilising effect of their root system can be controlled. The exposed surfaces - the existing walls and floors are being cleaned

and cleared of fungal growth and dirt or other non-structural adhesions. This is a very critical process as careless scrubbing or removal may damage the patina of the old structure. The whole process needs to be softly handled. In the site, controlled water jets have been used for extensive cleaning of the surface.

The cleared and cleaned site has now created the scope for carrying out detailed stress mapping and diagnostic analysis. Stress mapping of the site identified its existing condition, structural issues, their vulnerability, authenticity etc. The diagnostic survey helped to identify the causes for its stress, decay, its maintenance issues as well its sustainability. Together, they helped to strategise about the forms of intervention, its type and method. There are three categories of approach that have been adopted depending on the condition of the existing structure. These categories are - most-distressed, distressed and stressed.

The destabilised parts must be stabilised first. Structural walls need to be strengthened using appropriate lime grout in proper dosage. Missing parts must be reconstructed by reusing the fallen bricks and using lime mortars in a similar matrix. Where required, structural stabilisation has been done with new bricks but with traditional mortar so that



Fig-5 | Cleaning and clearing of site for work

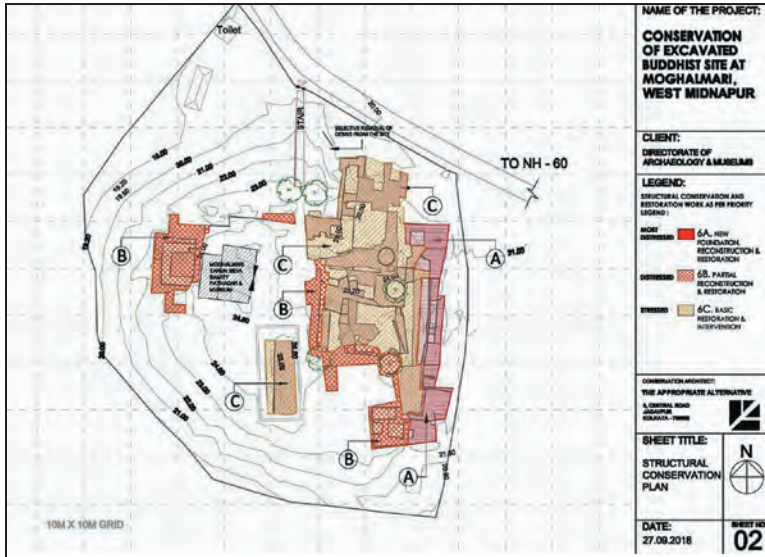


Fig-6 | Strategy plan showing the three priorities and scope of intervention

the authenticity of original is retained and is recognisable. The existing relief work is a very sensitive subject; therefore, we have only consolidated its base to retain the original.

Once the structural integrity of the structure is revitalised and restored, its protection and maintenance were the next critical issues. Most of the excavated structure had been damaged by water

seepage and thereafter, by fungal growth. The site is full of depressions that in turn caused localised ponding of water. This was extremely detrimental to the structure. As a remedy, an elaborate drainage system has been designed using the natural gravity and existing slopes of the site as much as possible. During implementation, the open sunk surface has been realigned with proper



Fig-7 | Consolidation and structural stabilisation of the old remains



Fig-8 | The sitewide drainage system with new drainage channels

slope and treated against water seepage. The original water channel has been reactivated in a similar manner and has been reconnected to the storm water system out of the site.

The reliefs panels in the western part have been covered with a specially designed lightweight temporary insert. This has shading device as well as ample cross ventilation to create a protected space for the delicate relief works of the uncovered monastery plinth.

Archaeological sites are fragile areas. Yet, a

restored archaeological site always creates a lot of enthusiasm and attracts many tourists. This uncontrolled tourism often creates irreversible damage and results in various incompatible activities in and around the site. Therefore, our conservation strategy has been to restrict accessibility of the visitors directly into the fragile areas of the site. At the same time, effort has been made to bring them as close to the site as possible to enable proper visibility. This has been done by introducing a designed ritual pradakshina path around



Fig-9 | Temporary structure to protect the exposed relief work



Fig-10 | The pradakshina path and the glass barricade



Fig-11 | Mogholmari at night



Fig-12 | Mogholmari (Sakhisena Dhipi now) (2022)

the proximity of the site. Since the idea is to tread as lightly possible over the site, we have not engaged in any excavation for structural purposed. Rather, the pradakhsina path is made of wooden sleepers supported over precast blocks and naturally follows the terrain. There is a glass barricade protecting the inner site, enabling clear vision whilst also restricting access.

An elaborate infrastructure has been designed and incorporated to address requirements of power, illumination, cctv, signages etc. These services have been incorporated below the pradakshina path for easy

maintenance and upgradability. The site has been carefully and sensitively illuminated to bring ancient monument alive even at night.

The conservation of the Excavated Buddhist Site at Mogholmari is thus an example of seeking an appropriate approach to deal with our past with respect, care, and sensitivity. This is a process that helps us gain knowledge and wisdom through an engagement with this cultural repository of human civilisation and our heritage. This understanding makes us proud and helps us to seek the way forward to a sustainable future.

A Rare Vishnu Image in the Murshidabad District Museum

Mousumi Banerjee

Curator, Murshidabad District Museum

One Vishnu image was collected from Kapasdanga, Beldanga police station near Dumnidaha bill (lake) from a house during digging an well. The image was inspected and through the then Sub Divisional Officer the image was acquired by the District Museum. The image is standing in *samapādashānaka* attitude on a simple *adhiṣṭhāna* or pedestal. The deity is curved on black stone and measured 1mt 51 cm x78 cm x 13 cm in its length, breadth and thickness respectively. He is four armed, holding a *gadā* in upper right hand, *chakra* in upper left hand, *śaṃkha* in lower left hand which rests on a full blown lotus. Lower right hand is broken but it seems that possibly he holds a lotus. As per the twenty-four forms of Vishnu the present image may be identified as Trivikrama image of the deity.

The main deity Vishnu is ornamented with octagonal shaped *mukūṭa*, *kaṛṇakunḍala* touching his shoulder, *upavīta*, *nūpura*, *bājubandha*, *valaya* (bangles), *komarobandha* (waistband), long and beautifully decorated *vaṇamālā*,

which touches his knees. Vishnu is wearing beautifully designed *dhoti*. Here the deity is accompanied with Bhūdevī holding *chāmara* (flying whisk) in one hand and another hand resting on the thigh. The face of the Sridevi is prominent, however the body of the Śrīdevī is completely damaged but it seems that she is holding *vīṇā*. Both the deities are standing in *tribhaṅga* (threefold) attitude. The rounded *prabhāvalī* (halo) is very simply designed and ornamented with two flying *Vidyādhara*s (garland holders) at both sides. The pedestal is almost plain, one worshiper / devotee depicted in profile kneeling down in *namaskāra mudrā* is carved. Two pillars with tursels are carved at both the sides of the deity. The vehicle Garuḍa is missing here because the major part of the pedestal is damaged. But the damaged projected part attached to the pedestal has full-blown lotus motifs. On the basis of the stylistic



Vishnu Image

Date: 9th-10th Century CE

Provenance: Kapasdanga, Beldanga, Murshidabad

Present Location: Murshidabad District Museum, Jiagunj

consideration, the sculpture may be placed in circa. 9th-10th century CE.

The speciality of the sculpture is that the

deity is wearing octagonal shaped *Mukuta* in lieu of pointed *kirītamukuta*. Another feature in this image is very interesting to note that the backside of the halo is carved in round and the artist has adjusted the hair of the deity carving gap at both sides. Though the image is carved in relief yet some part of it is carved in round. In spite of its damaged condition another interesting thing is visible that the lower right hand of the deity holds a lotus with long stalk. The back halo is very simply carved with rounded design and the Stella is slightly pointed at the apex. The back halo of *Bhudevi* and *Sridevi* are pointed. It means the image was carved in the transitional phase of early and late Pala

period. Even this type of image is rarely found in the Murshidabad district as well as in Bengal in general.

The Murshidabad District Museum is located at Jiagunj under Lalbugh subdivision of Murshidabad. The museum is the brain child of Rai Surendra Narayan Singha Bahadur (1881-1972). For establishing the Museum he donated the land adjacent to his Nehalia Palace and he also donated his collected archaeological artefacts, precious books, manuscripts etc. The foundation stone of this Museum was laid in 1962. The Museum was opened in 2006 for the scholars and the tourists.



Garuda: A Unique Sculpture Preserved in the Bishnupur Acharjya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhawan

Tusar Sarkar

Curator, Bishnupur Acharjya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhawan (District Museum), Bishnupur, Bankura

Bishnupur Acharjya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhawan is the only museum of art and archaeology in the district of Bankura. It is the District Museum under the control of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal. The museum is preserving the rich sculptural heritage of this district.

Garuda, a unique sculpture (measuring 61cm × 33.5 cm × 38 cm) collected from Joykrishnapur village under the Bishnupur sub-division of the district Bankura and is

preserved in the Bishnupur Acharjya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhawan. The village is situated beside the Dwarakeswar River. This twin sculpture made of a monolithic grey colour chlorite stone. Garuda is depicted in an anthropomorphic form having two hands and two wings of bird. He is in sitting posture on a full blown double petal lotus. The facing of twin figure is opposite to each other. In both sides he is in uniform posture i.e. in namaskara mudrā (attitude of adoration). In one side of it the left hand and right knee and in another side the left knee of the figure





is broken. He is highly ornamented as his master Vishnu. His arm, wrist, waist, ear and neck are all ornamented. His head is covered by a *mukuta* (crown). At the back of the head there is an ornamented double-layered circular grooved *prabhāmoṅḍala* (halo). His pointed nose is broken. He is in a calm and quiet mood. Probably the sculpture was placed over the top of a pillar as Garuda capital in front of a Vishnu temple in the past, though no such big Vishnu temple is visible at present in that area. The sculpture may belong to 10th–11th Century CE.

We know that Garuda is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu and the son of sage Kasyapa and his wife Vinata. Arun, the charioteer of Surya (Sun-god) is the younger brother of Garuda. Garuda freed his mother from

bondage who was under the custody of his step-mother Kadru and her sons who were serpents. They demanded nectar for his mother's freedom. He killed the guards of Indra's Kingdom who protected the pot of nectar and carried the pot of nectar. During this period Garuda met with lord Vishnu and agreed to become his vehicle.

This presence of this Garuda sculpture and so many Vishnu sculptures collected from the different parts of this district are preserved in this museum. Many Vishnu sculptures are also present in the different parts of this district and worshipped by the local people. These indicate that Rig Vedic Vishnu worship was very popular in south-western Bengal like other parts of Bengal.

ঈশ্বরেন্নির নিজের গ্রামে স্কুলশিক্ষায় একুশের চালচিত্র

প্রদ্যুৎ শীল

গবেষক, এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি

আশ্চর্য রকম বজ্র-কুসুম বৈপরীত্যে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রের ব্যক্তিত্ব ছিল অলংকৃত। মমতায় তিনি ‘করণার সিন্ধু’, ‘দীনের বন্ধু’; বিপন্ন উপেক্ষিতের-পাশে তিনি সহমর্মী ও সমব্যথী। মানবপ্রেমাশ্রিত মানবমুক্তির দিকদর্শনে উদ্বুদ্ধ ছিলেন তিনি। তাঁর এই কর্মসাধনায় সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে বাধা দিয়েছেন যাঁরা, তাঁদেরকে জ্ঞানের নতুন আলোকপ্রাপ্ত শাণিত যুক্তির অস্ত্রে, বজ্রসম চারিত্রিক দৃঢ়তার অগ্নিবাণে পরাস্ত করেছেন। উনিশ শতকের কুসংস্কার ও গোঁড়ামিতে আচ্ছন্ন, আত্মসম্মান ও বিশ্বাস বিমুখ, পরানুকরণপ্রিয় বাঙালি জাতিকে বহুযুগ সঞ্চিত অন্ধকারের গর্ভ থেকে আলোকায়িত শিক্ষার প্রাঙ্গনে উদ্ভাসিত করার যুদ্ধে তিনিই রথী তিনিই সারথি। গোটা জাতির মেরুদণ্ড শক্ত করতে, বিশেষ করে নারীর সার্বিক বিকাশ ও নারীত্বের সর্বময় মুক্তিযজ্ঞে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রই ছিলেন কালান্তরের দুর্জয় সেনাপতি।

উনিশ শতকে ঔপনিবেশিক প্রেক্ষাপটে প্রাচ্য ও পাস্চাত্য দর্শন, বিজ্ঞান, সমাজ ও রাষ্ট্রচর্চার নির্যাস সর্বাঙ্গীণ মানবমুখীনতাকে বা হিউম্যানিস্ট আদর্শকে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র প্রথম অনগ্রসর বাঙালি জাতির সর্বাঙ্গীণ মুক্তির কাজে ব্যবহার করেছিলেন। তিনি উপলব্ধি করেছিলেন একটি জাতিকে উচ্চস্তরে উন্নীত করতে গেলে প্রথমে চাই তার শিক্ষা। শিক্ষার মধ্য দিয়েই মানুষের বোধের উদয় হয়, চারিত্রিক দৃঢ়তা প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়। শিক্ষাই পারে সমাজের সর্বস্তরে যথার্থ পুষ্টি সাধন করতে। তাই সমাজবিপ্লবী ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রের প্রধান কর্মক্ষেত্রই ছিল শিক্ষাজগৎ। শিশুশিক্ষা, বিদ্যালয়শিক্ষা ও নারীশিক্ষা থেকে উচ্চশিক্ষা প্রায় সব স্তরের প্রতি ছিল তাঁর সজাগ দৃষ্টি। অল্প সময়ের ব্যবধানে তিনি শিক্ষায়, শিক্ষাব্যবস্থায় এবং শিক্ষার প্রসারতায় এনেছিলেন সর্বজনীনতা। শিক্ষার সংস্কার এবং শ্রেণিকক্ষে পঠনপাঠনে এনেছিলেন

আধুনিক বৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি। তাঁর শিক্ষাভাবনার উদ্দেশ্য প্রসঙ্গে বিনয় ঘোষের মন্তব্যটি স্মরণযোগ্য –

“শাস্ত্রকার নয়, পুরোহিত নয়, গুরু নয়, পণ্ডিত নয়, সবার উপরে ‘মানুষ’ গড়ে তোলাই ছিল তাঁর শিক্ষা-সংস্কারের প্রধান লক্ষ্য। এই সর্বাঙ্গীণ মানবমুখীন শিক্ষানীতির প্রবর্তকরূপে বিদ্যাসাগর আজো শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে ‘একক’ স্থান অধিকার করে আছেন। শিক্ষায়তনকে তিনি মানবধর্মের ‘নার্সারি’ করে তুলতে চেয়েছিলেন, সেকালের চতুষ্পাঠী, আশ্রম বা সাম্প্রতিক-কালের ডিগ্রী-উৎপাদনের কারখানা করতে চান নি।”

১৮৫১ সাল থেকে ১৮৫৮ সাল পর্যন্ত বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়ের সংস্কৃত কলেজের অধ্যক্ষ পদে থাকাকালীনই তাঁর উদ্যোগে শিক্ষাসংস্কারের শ্রেষ্ঠ সময়কাল বলা চলে। আধুনিক শিক্ষা প্রবর্তনে পাঠ্যসূচি ও পাঠ্যক্রম প্রণয়নে, পাঠ্যপুস্তক রচনায়, পরীক্ষাব্যবস্থার সংস্কার সাধনে, ন্যায় প্রতিষ্ঠায়, কলেজের নিয়মানুবর্তিতা প্রবর্তনে, শিক্ষক নিয়োগে, শিক্ষক প্রশিক্ষণে ও স্কলারশিপ পরীক্ষার উন্নতি সাধনে তিনি অগ্রণী ভূমিকা পালন করেছিলেন। অতি অল্প সময়ে সংস্কৃত কলেজকে কেন্দ্র করে শিক্ষার প্রসারের এই সমস্ত কর্মপ্রচেষ্টা ভারতীয় শিক্ষার ইতিহাসে তাঁকে চিরস্মরণীয় করে রেখেছে। তিনি প্রাচীন শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার অচলায়তনের মূলে কুঠারঘাত করে বৈজ্ঞানিক পদ্ধতিতে শিক্ষার পথকে প্রশস্ত করতে চেয়েছিলেন। ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র মনে করতেন, শিক্ষাবিস্তারের মাধ্যমে মানুষকে প্রকৃত মনুষ্যত্ববোধে উদ্দীপিত করা যাবে। তাই তিনি বলেছেন যে, জনসাধারণের মধ্যে শিক্ষা বিস্তারই আমাদের লক্ষ্য হওয়া উচিত। এই উদ্দেশ্য নিয়েই ১৮৫৫ সালের ২২শে আগস্ট থেকে ১৮৫৬ সালের ১৪ই জানুয়ারি পর্যন্ত

মেদিনীপুর, নদিয়া, হুগলি ও বর্ধমানে তৈরি করেছিলেন কুড়িটি আদর্শ বঙ্গ বিদ্যালয়।

নিজ গ্রাম বীরসিংহে স্কুল প্রতিষ্ঠার মাধ্যমেই তাঁর দেশের আর্থসামাজিক অবস্থার পটভূমিকায় শিক্ষাবিস্তারে প্রথম অভিজ্ঞতা লাভ হয়েছিল। সমস্ত ব্যয়বহনের দায়িত্ব নিয়ে ১৮৫৩ সালে বীরসিংহে একটি 'অ্যাংলো-সংস্কৃত' স্কুল প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছিলেন। এই স্কুলে বাংলা-ইংরেজি-সংস্কৃত পড়ানো হতো। বাংলার জন্য স্কুলের সঙ্গে ভার্নাকুলার স্কুলও প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছিলেন। এই স্কুল ছাড়াও একটি নৈশবিদ্যালয়ও ছিল, স্থানীয় মানুষদের কাছে এটি 'রাখাল স্কুল' নামে পরিচিত ছিল। এর কারণ রাখালরাই এখানে সংখ্যা গরিষ্ঠ ছিল। এছাড়াও একটি বালিকা বিদ্যালয় ও একটি দাতব্য চিকিৎসালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছিলেন ওই একই সময়ে। ১৮৫৩ সালে অবৈতনিক বিদ্যালয়টি বিদ্যাসাগর ভাইদের নিয়ে নিজের হাতে মাটি তুলে গড়ে তুলেছিলেন। তার নাম রেখেছিলেন মায়ের নামে 'ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়'। তখন বিদ্যালয়ে ৩০০ জন শিক্ষার্থীকে খাতা, পেন্সিল, স্লোট দেওয়া হতো এবং খাওয়ানোর ব্যবস্থাও ছিল। পরে বিদ্যাসাগরের পুত্র নারায়ণচন্দ্র এর নাম পরিবর্তন করে রাখেন 'ঠাকুরদাস ইনস্টিটিউশন'। প্রায় দেড়শ বছর ধরে এই নামই ছিল। পরে 'বীরসিংহ ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়' নামই ফিরে আসে। ১৮৬৮ সালে ম্যালেরিয়া আর মহামারীতে প্রচণ্ড ক্ষয়ক্ষতি হলে বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র কমে যায় এবং ওই বছরই প্রবল ঝড়ে বিদ্যালয় গৃহ ধুলিস্যাৎ হয়ে গেলে ভগবতী বিদ্যালয় বন্ধ হয়ে যায়। ১৮৯০ সালে ১৪ই এপ্রিল বিদ্যাসাগরের অর্থসাহায্যে তাঁর ভাইয়েরা বীরসিংহ গ্রামে আবার 'বীরসিংহ ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়'র পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। এছাড়াও ১৮৫৩ সালে বিদ্যাসাগর বীরসিংহ গ্রামে নিজের বাড়ির বৈঠক খানায় ৩০ জন কৃষিজীবী প্রাপ্তবয়স্ক নিরক্ষর মানুষদের নিয়ে একটি নৈশবিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করেছিলেন। এই বিদ্যালয়টি পূর্বেক্ত 'রাখাল স্কুল'। এখানে পড়া, লেখা, অংক ছাড়াও ভূগোল, ইতিহাস ও বিজ্ঞানের প্রাথমিক পাঠ শেখানো হতো। সামাজিক নানা বিষয়ে আলোচনা হতো। কিন্তু বেশ কিছু মাস চলার পর আশেপাশের জমিদার ও মহাজনরা ষড়যন্ত্র করে বিদ্যালয়টি পুড়িয়ে দেয়। তারপর বীরসিংহ গ্রামে নৈশবিদ্যালয় বা রাখাল স্কুলের পাঠ শেষ হয়ে যায়। নৈশবিদ্যালয়টির পুনর্জন্ম না হলেও বিদ্যাসাগরের তৈরি দাতব্য চিকিৎসালয়টি পুনর্জন্ম লাভ করে ১৯৭৬ সালের নভেম্বর মাসে এবং এর নতুন নামকরণ করা হয়

'বিদ্যাসাগর ব্লক প্রাথমিক স্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্র'। আর বালিকা বিদ্যালয়টি পুনর্জন্ম লাভ করে ১৯৭১ খ্রিস্টাব্দে, তখন এর নতুন নাম হয় 'বীরসিংহ বিদ্যাসাগর বালিকা বিদ্যাপীঠ'।

শম্ভুচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগরের জীবনী গ্রন্থে জানিয়েছেন যে, বিদ্যাসাগরকে বীরসিংহ স্কুলের জন্য মাসিক ১৫ টাকা এবং দাতব্য চিকিৎসালয়ের জন্য মাসিক ১০০ টাকা খরচ করতে হতো। হ্যারিসন তাঁর *Unpublished letters of Vidyasagar* গ্রন্থে বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রসংখ্যার একটি হিসেব দিয়েছেন, সেখানে, বীরসিংহ অ্যাংলো-সংস্কৃত স্কুলের ছাত্র সংখ্যা ছিল ১১৭ জন, Vernacular Department এর ছাত্র সংখ্যা ছিল ৭২, বালিকা বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রী সংখ্যা ছিল ২৫-৩০ এবং নৈশবিদ্যালয় বা রাখাল স্কুলের ছাত্র সংখ্যা ছিল ৪৭।

ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র প্রতিষ্ঠিত বিদ্যালয়গুলির পাশাপাশি আরও নতুন শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান বীরসিংহ গ্রামে নির্মিত হয়েছে। বীরসিংহ গ্রামের শিশুশিক্ষার জন্য দু'টি অঙ্গনওয়াড়ি স্কুল, কারিগরি শিক্ষার জন্য 'ঘাটাল গভমেন্ট আই টি আই কলেজ', সংস্কৃত চর্চার জন্য বিদ্যাসাগর স্মৃতিমন্দিরে 'দীনময়ী চতুষ্পাঠী' নামে সংস্কৃত বিদ্যাচর্চার কেন্দ্র ও একটি সুবৃহৎ লাইব্রেরি প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। এই 'দীনময়ী চতুষ্পাঠী'তে প্রতি শনিবার সংস্কৃত পাঠদান করা হয়। দীর্ঘ গ্রামের বৃদ্ধ শিক্ষক বগলাচরণ চক্রবর্তী এবং গৌরা গ্রামের বিশ্বজিৎ চক্রবর্তী মহাশয় শিক্ষার্থীদের সংস্কৃত পাঠ দান করেন। বিদ্যাসাগরের শিক্ষাভাবনার আদর্শ গ্রামে প্রতিষ্ঠিত বিদ্যালয়গুলি বর্তমানে কতখানি বহন করে চলেছে, তা বিদ্যালয়গুলোর শিক্ষাচর্চার বৈশিষ্ট্য থেকে বোঝা যায়। তবে বিদ্যাসাগর চেয়েছিলেন সংস্কৃত ও ইংরেজি শিক্ষার সমান গুরুত্ব, সেটি এখানে তেমন করে অনুসৃত হয়েছে বলে মনে হয় না।

অঙ্গনওয়াড়ি কেন্দ্র বা শিশুশিক্ষা কেন্দ্র:

বীরসিংহ গ্রামে দু'টি অঙ্গনওয়াড়ি কেন্দ্র আছে। দু'টিতে প্রায় ত্রিশ-চল্লিশ জন করে শিক্ষার্থী পড়াশোনা করে। প্রতিদিন গড়ে প্রায় ৩০ জন শিশু প্রতিটি অঙ্গনওয়াড়ি কেন্দ্রে উপস্থিত থাকে। বীরসিংহের ৩৯ নং অঙ্গনওয়াড়ি বা প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিক্ষাকেন্দ্রের শিক্ষিকা শ্রীমতী বনশ্রী পান জানান যে, জাতি ধর্ম বর্ণ নির্বিশেষে সকল শিশু শিক্ষার্থীই এই অঙ্গনওয়াড়ি কেন্দ্রে পড়ার সুযোগ পায়। গতানুগতিক শিক্ষাপদ্ধতির পরিবর্তে খেলার ছলে শিশুদের এখানে শিক্ষাদান করা হয়। বিভিন্ন রঙের

বিভিন্ন কার্ড তৈরি করে রং এর ধারণা দেওয়া হয়। শিশু শিক্ষার উপযুক্ত পাঠ্যপুস্তক ছাড়াও বিদ্যাসাগরের *বর্ণপরিচয়* এখানে খুব সচেতন ভাবে পড়ানো হয়। বিদ্যাসাগর চেয়েছিলেন শিশুদের বৌদ্ধিক বিকাশের পাশাপাশি শারীরিক বিকাশ। বীরসিংহের অঙ্গনওয়াড়ি কেন্দ্রে ভাত, খিচুড়ি, সোয়াবিনের তরকারি, ডিম সিদ্ধ ও ছাতুর নাড়ু ইত্যাদি সুস্বাদু খাদ্যের ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে; এটি সরকারী অনুদানের বিশেষ অঙ্গ হলেও শিশুর বিকাশে অন্যতম সহায়ক।

বীরসিংহ বিদ্যাসাগর প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়:

শিক্ষাগুরু কালীকান্ত চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের পাঠশালার পাঠ শেষ করে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বাবার হাত ধরে ন' বছর বয়সে মাইলস্টোনে ইংরেজি নাম্বার শিখতে শিখতে কোলকাতার পথে পাড়ি দিয়েছিলেন। বাল্যকালের শিক্ষাগুরুর সেই পাঠশালাটির অনতিদূরেই প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়টি (১৯২৯ খ্রিঃ) নির্মিত হয়েছে। তখন মাটির তৈরি বাড়িতে স্কুলের পঠনপাঠন চলতো। বর্তমানে মাটির বাড়ির সামনে একটি দ্বিতল ইটের বিল্ডিং তৈরি হচ্ছে, নির্মাণকার্য প্রায় শেষের দিকে। স্কুলে বীরসিংহ ছাড়াও পার্শ্ববর্তী পাথরা গ্রাম থেকে বিভিন্ন ছাত্রছাত্রীরা পড়তে আসে। প্রথম শ্রেণি থেকে চতুর্থ শ্রেণি পর্যন্ত মোট ছাত্র সংখ্যা ৫০ এবং ছাত্রী সংখ্যা ৬৮। বিদ্যালয়ের ভিত্তিপ্তরে বিভিন্ন সচেতনতামূলক বাণী এবং পানীয় জলের কল ও মিড ডে মিলের ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে।

বীরসিংহ ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়:

১৮৯১ খ্রিস্টাব্দে এই বিদ্যালয়টি নবরূপে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হওয়ার পর থেকে বর্তমান কাল পর্যন্ত এর অনেক পরিবর্তন হয়েছে। ওই বছরই (১৮৯১খ্রিঃ) 'বীরসিংহ ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়' কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অনুমোদন পায়। তারপর অনেক ঝড়-ঝাপটা অতিক্রম করে ১৯৭০ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়কে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার গভঃ স্পনসর্ড করে নেয়। সময়ের এই ব্যবধানটি সংশয়ে ফেলে। বর্তমানে বিদ্যালয়টি নতুনভাবে সজ্জিত হয়ে উঠেছে। নতুন নতুন বিল্ডিং তৈরি হয়েছে। বিদ্যালয়ের গেট থেকেই দেখা যায় বিদ্যাসাগর ও মা ভগবতী দেবীর প্রস্তর মূর্তি। বিদ্যালয়ের প্রাচীরে দেওয়ালে তাঁর বিভিন্ন বাণী ও শিক্ষামূলক সচেতনতা লিপিবদ্ধ করা হয়েছে।

ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়ের প্রধান শিক্ষক শক্তিপদ বেরা স্কুলের বর্তমান অবস্থা জানিয়েছেন -

- 'বীরসিংহ ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়' হল উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়।
- মোট শিক্ষার্থী প্রায় ৫৮০-৬০০ এর কাছাকাছি। ৪ জন শিক্ষিকা ও ২১ জন শিক্ষক রয়েছেন স্কুলে।
- শ্রেণি অনুযায়ী শিক্ষার্থী সংখ্যা - পঞ্চম শ্রেণিতে ৪৬, ষষ্ঠ শ্রেণিতে ৭৬, সপ্তম শ্রেণিতে ৪৩, অষ্টম শ্রেণিতে ৪১, নবম শ্রেণিতে ৫০, দশম শ্রেণিতে ৩৫, একাদশ শ্রেণি কলা বিভাগে ৮০, একাদশ শ্রেণি বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে ২০, একাদশ শ্রেণি এগ্রিকালচার বিভাগে ৩০, দ্বাদশ শ্রেণি কলা বিভাগে ৮২, দ্বাদশ শ্রেণি বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে ২২, দ্বাদশ শ্রেণি এগ্রিকালচার বিভাগে ৩০।
- এই বিদ্যালয়ে মাধ্যমিক স্তর পর্যন্ত শুধু ছাত্র এবং উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক স্তরে ছাত্র-ছাত্রী উভয়ই পড়ার সুযোগ পায়।
- ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়ে সর্বপ্রথম বিদ্যাসাগরের মৃত্যু দিন '১৩ই শ্রাবণ' (১৩২০ বঃ) পালন করা হয়। তারপর থেকেই মহকুমায় এখন ১৩ই শ্রাবণ মৃত্যু দিনটি উদযাপন করা হয়ে আসছে।
- বিদ্যাসাগরের জন্ম ও মৃত্যু বার্ষিকী ছাড়াও বিভিন্ন মনীষীর জন্ম ও মৃত্যুদিবস এই বিদ্যালয়ে পালন করা হয়।
- ৪ঠা জানুয়ারি থেকে ১০ই জানুয়ারি পর্যন্ত বীরসিংহ গ্রামে যে 'বিদ্যাসাগর মেলা' হয়, ভগবতী বিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ সক্রিয়ভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করে।
- স্কুলে পড়াশোনার পাশাপাশি বার্ষিক ক্রীড়া প্রতিযোগিতা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়।
- শিক্ষার্থীদের উৎসাহিত করার জন্য 'কালিদাসবর্ধন মেমোরিয়াল স্কলারশিপ', 'ইন্দুমতী পুরস্কার' ও 'পঞ্চগনন স্মৃতি পুরস্কার' প্রভৃতি স্কলারশিপ ও পুরস্কারের ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে।
- উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক স্তরের দূরবর্তী ছাত্রদের জন্য হোস্টেলের ব্যবস্থা আছে।
- ২০১৯ সালে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার কর্তৃক 'বীরসিংহ ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়' হেরিটেজ বলে ঘোষিত হয়েছে।



বীরসিংহ ভগবতী বিদ্যালয় ও বিদ্যালয়ের প্রধান শিক্ষক শক্তিপদ বেরা

বীরসিংহ বিদ্যাসাগর বালিকা বিদ্যাপীঠ:

বিদ্যাসাগর প্রতিষ্ঠিত (১৮৫৩ খ্রিঃ) বালিকা বিদ্যালয়টি ১৯৭১ খ্রিস্টাব্দে নবরূপ লাভ করে 'বীরসিংহ বিদ্যাসাগর বালিকা বিদ্যাপীঠ' নামে। বিদ্যালয়টি 'বিদ্যাসাগর মেমোরিয়াল হল' এর অনতিদূরে অবস্থিত। মোট ছাত্রী সংখ্যা ৩০০ এর কাছাকাছি। ১৩ জন শিক্ষিকা এবং একজন শিক্ষক আছেন। নারী শিক্ষার অন্যতম পীঠস্থান বালিকা বিদ্যালয়টিতে বীরসিংহ গ্রামের পাশাপাশি পাথরা, কাঁচিয়া, অর্জুনআরি, মামুদপুর প্রভৃতি গ্রাম থেকেও মেয়েরা পড়তে আসে। ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়ের অনুরূপ এই বিদ্যালয়েও মেয়েরা পড়াশোনার পাশাপাশি খেলাধুলা ও সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানে অংশগ্রহণ করে। নির্মল প্রাকৃতিক পরিবেশে বালিকা বিদ্যালয়টি গড়ে ওঠায় শিক্ষার্থীদের মনকেও প্রকৃতি প্রেমিক করে তুলেছে। বিদ্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণে ছোট বড় গাছ লাগিয়ে ছাত্রীরা বিদ্যালয়টির শোভা আরও বৃদ্ধি করেছে।

বিদ্যাসাগর প্রতিষ্ঠিত সমস্ত স্কুলগুলি পুনর্নির্মিত হয়েছে এবং শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে নিজ নিজ ভূমিকা পালন করছে কিন্তু তাঁর প্রতিষ্ঠিত 'রাখালস্কুল' বা 'নৈশবিদ্যালয়' কি পুনর্নির্মিত হবে না? জনশিক্ষার প্রতিমূর্তি বিদ্যাসাগরের গ্রামবাসীরাই অশিক্ষার অন্ধকারে থাকবে? এই প্রশ্নই বীরসিংহের মানুষকে নতুন করে ভাববার অবকাশ করে দিল। 'রাখালস্কুল' বা জনশিক্ষার ভাবনাকে পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে এগিয়ে আসেন ভগবতী বিদ্যালয়ের প্রধান শিক্ষক শক্তিপদ বেরা মহাশয়। তিনি বীরসিংহ গ্রামের নিরক্ষর বৃদ্ধ-বৃদ্ধাদের শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করেছেন। তিনি সমগ্র

গ্রামটিকে চারটি এলাকায় ভাগ করে প্রত্যেক এলাকার জন্য একটি করে পাঠশালা তৈরি করেছেন। স্কুল ছুটির পর তিনি ভজহরি সোরেন, প্রতিমা সাঁতরা, প্রতিমা মল্লিক, লক্ষ্মী মল্লিক, চায়না সাঁতরা, অপর্ণা সাঁতারাদের নিয়ে নিয়মিত পাঠের ব্যবস্থা করেন।

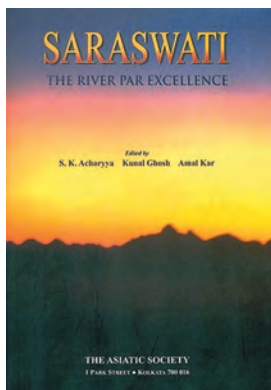
বীরসিংহে শিক্ষার চালচিত্রে সরকারী স্কুলব্যবস্থার সফলগুলি যেমন রয়েছে তেমনি এসবের বাইরে সাধারণের একটি অংশের মধ্যে বিদ্যাসাগরের নীরব উপস্থিতি জেগে আছে আজও, ফল্গুর মতো, যদিও সেই ধারাটি ক্ষীণ।

সূত্রনির্দেশ -

১) ঘোষ বিনয়। *বিদ্যাসাগর ও বাঙালী সমাজ*। ১ম সংস্করণ। কলিকাতা, বেঙ্গল পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, কার্তিক ১৩৬৪। ১ম খন্ড, পৃঃ -৬৬

সহায়ক গ্রন্থ -

- ১) ঘোষ, বিনয়। *বিদ্যাসাগর ও বাঙালী সমাজ*। ১ম সংস্করণ। কলিকাতা, বেঙ্গল পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, কার্তিক ১৩৬৪। ১ম খন্ড
- ২) বসু শ্রীযোগেশচন্দ্র। *মেদিনীপুরের ইতিহাস*। কলিকাতা, কালিকা প্রেস, ১৩২৮
- ৩) সী শ্রীদিবাকর (সম্পা.)। *বিদ্যাসাগর মেলা ২০২০*। ঘাটাল, পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুর। শ্যামসুন্দর জিউ অফসেট, ৪ঠা জানুয়ারি ২০২০
- ৪) সামন্ত, শ্রীঅমিয়কুমার। *প্রসঙ্গ বিদ্যাসাগর*। ওরিয়েন্টাল বুক কোম্পানি, কলকাতা, ২৬ জানুয়ারি ১৯৯৪
- ৫) বিদ্যারত্ন, শম্ভুচন্দ্র। *বিদ্যাসাগর - জীবনচরিত ও ভ্রমনিরাশ*। কলিকাতা, বুকল্যান্ড প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, নভেম্বর ১৯৪৭
- ৬) *Unpublished letter of Vidyasagar*, Ed A.Guha, Ananda publishers, ১৯৭১



Saraswati: The River Par Excellence, S.K. Acharyya, Kunal Ghosh and Amal Kar (Eds), The Asiatic Society, Rs. 2500.00.

The River Saraswati has often straddled the twin domains of the mythical and the real, in

the collective consciousness of the Indian Subcontinent. Named after a Goddess, it finds numerous mentions across different ancient Indian texts that attest to its magnificence of form and flow and munificence in cradling some of the earliest sites of widespread and sustained habitation in this region. Yet, unlike the Ganga, which is similarly named and revered, the Saraswati today scarcely exists in its real avatar. Possibly, this has spurred on a greater search for this river, to tie together these two strands of myth and reality so that some glimpses into the origins of civilisation and its evolution in the Indian Subcontinent may be obtained.

In this context, the book *Saraswati: The River par Excellence*, edited by S. K. Acharyya, Kunal Ghosh and Amal Kar, admirably brings together different strands of research and thought on the Saraswati, much like the River itself would have braided across its sandy plain. Conceptualised on the basis of a seminar held in the Asiatic Society, which delved into the geodynamic context behind the lost River Saraswati, the present edited volume provides a concise collection of papers highlighting the principal points deliberated during that seminar and the

current state-of-the-art methods and research frontiers with respect to the geological/geomorphological, geochronological, archaeological and anthropological investigations carried out in the Saraswati Basin. The aspects examined are far-reaching, from the river's origins and evolution, the detection of its palaeo-courses and their present utility as sub-surface aquifers, the origins and chronology of early settlements along its banks and the living conditions and social framework of those societies. Each of the eight entries are from eminent scholars in their respective fields, while the editors themselves provide a succinct summary of the volume, with insightful additions, in its Introduction. The book is richly informative, with numerous maps, colour plates and explanatory diagrams that enhance the lucid text. Aesthetically appealing from start to finish, the book's cover design reverberates the river's flow and underlying energy in its yellow, red and blue hues, while the silhouette of the Himalayas juxtaposed against the Punjab plains in the early morning glow (Savita), seeks to again entwine those two strands of the physical and the metaphysical.

The first of the eight entries by K.S. Valdiya examines the geodynamic changes that have occurred in north-western India and marks out the Himalayan-born Saraswati to be a victim of tectonically induced river piracy. This becomes apparent by the presence of the existent drylands between the fertile, well-watered plains of the Indus and the Ganga, which however present multitude evidences of ancient settlements. Valdiya surmises that the area must have once been fed by a large river that sustained these numerous habitations. Combining topographic, sedimentological and geochemical evidences, this chapter

chronicles the movement of the Tons and the Sutlej rivers, both principal contributors of flow into the Saraswati, away towards the southeast and west, respectively, due to recurrent tectonics in the Himalayan piedmont and foothill region. Deprived of their waters, the Saraswati devolved into a misfit river, which eventually lead to the out-migration of its valley's residents.

In an extremely comprehensive manner, Amal Kar next details the diverse methods used and the results elicited during the detection and mapping of the Saraswati's old courses from varied geospatial datasets. However, before highlighting the technical aspects behind such mapping, this second chapter collates all the available information on the Saraswati's course, its morphological character and seasonality and its changes, from a slew of ancient Indian texts and more recent colonial volumes and cartographic endeavours. Copious information is provided about the main channel and its tributaries as gleaned from such literatures, with apt translations and their pertinent explanations, bringing forth valuable insights that may have otherwise remained obscured, particularly to many unversed in Sanskrit. It also presents a methodological approach on how to peruse socio-religious-historical texts, parse out the nuggets of information embedded therein and use them to frame conceptual insights into past environmental changes. This chapter is a veritable tour-de-force that encapsulates the entire range of mapping methods available to discern the old courses and broad valleys of the Saraswati and its river network, employing historical maps, multi-spectral satellite images and new 3-D representations using digital elevation models, which make a compelling case for the choice of Harappan settlement sites.

The most interesting aspect of the third chapter by A.K. Gupta, which specifically focuses on mapping the Saraswati's course in the Haryana plains from satellite images, are the efforts made by that state's

government to revive the buried course of the Saraswati Nadi, which the author posits as being a major tributary of the Vedic Saraswati River, based on archaeological and sedimentological evidences. This represents a visible manifestation of the river's myth transforming into reality, through a collective acceptance not only of its prior existence based on scripture and science, but also of its ingrained stature in the societal ethos, which makes its rejuvenation and the diversion of waters from adjacent canals into the Saraswati Nadi for sustaining it, a desirable exercise.

Relying heavily on sedimentological evidences, Rajiv Sinha, Ajit Singh and Imran Khan have examined whether the Harappan civilisation existed at the same time when a large Saraswati River may have flowed across north-western India, in the fourth chapter. Dating of multiple sediment layers at numerous sites, along with ascertaining their provenance and reconstruction of the chronostratigraphic column through ground penetrating radar surveys, helped the authors pinpoint the avulsions undergone by the palaeo-Yamuna and palaeo-Sutlej rivers, that lead to aggradations along the Himalayan foothills and formation of large alluvial fans. They determined that these rivers had shifted away before the Harappan civilisation had commenced in strength and thus those residents were more dependent on the smaller streams arising from the Shiwaliks for their freshwater supply.

The fifth chapter by Rana Chatterjee and K.C. Naik examines the present geohydrological condition of the aquifers that have formed within the old courses of the Saraswati and its tributaries. The hydrological connectivity of these groundwater storage zones is examined through a number of lithological cross-sections across palaeo-channels in Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. Successive maps highlight the depleted groundwater conditions in the region due to over-extraction (primarily for agriculture)

and the authors call for suitable recharge measures to replenish these zones, to augment the meagre surface water resources available therein.

Moving away from the foregoing primarily geomorphological examinations of the Saraswati region, the next two chapters focus much more on the settlements that existed along its courses and their various socioeconomic-cultural attributes. R.S. Bisht and V.N. Prabhakar succinctly identify the different settlement clusters that existed in this region, based on evidence garnered from ceramic shards, cuneiform tablets, seals, jewellery and other archaeological evidences. Their account is illustrated by historical maps that track the spread of Harappan sites in the Saraswati Basin across different ages and cultural phases, providing a timeline for their expansion, which translated into greater control of the residents over their hinterlands, mobilisation of natural resources from a larger area and sustained trade with the contemporaneous Mesopotamian civilisation realm. Quite interestingly, the urban morphologies and architecture of the main settlement sites like Dholavira and Karanpura have been depicted in detail with relevant sketches, revealing the ambient advanced level of city planning. Multiple photographs of beads and bead-making artefacts (occasionally incorporating lapis-lazuli), bangles and kilns for manufacturing ceramics and standardised chert and chalcedony weights for trading, exemplify the detailed discussions on these aspects. Seals with the yet un-deciphered Harappan script, add greater intrigue to this chapter and a sense of mystery to what has been lost in the sands of time.

Delving even deeper into the human aspect, the seventh chapter by Gwen Robbins Schug, tracks the health of the Saraswati valley's residents through insights from palaeo-pathology. Interestingly, evidences of trauma and injuries abound in the exhumed skeletons at Mohenjo Daro and Kalibangan,

Farmana, Sanauli and Rakhigarhi, along with manifestation of numerous diseases related to congenital and dental aspects, arthritis and nutritional deficiency. Such bio-archaeological investigations enable a forensic look into societal structures, inter-personal relations and community functioning in these early urban centres, which like cities of today, drew numerous people, and were befallen by similar ills of deprivation and disparity and possible crime.

Rounding off the list of chapters is the entry by Michel Danino, author of the seminal book, *The Lost River: on the trail of the Saraswati*. He examines why the Saraswati has continued to dominate the popular imagination, the controversies that exist around its delineation and a possible appropriation of its identity for communal agendas. While addressing the above questions, Danino also examines the efficacy of the most recent scientific evidences that have been elicited about the Saraswati and its evolutionary history, thereby proposing five stages during which this river system may have arisen, flowed, altered, avulsed and abated across north-western India. Danino's summations provide conclusive evidence of the Saraswati's existence and changing character and are an apposite way of concluding the edited volume.

While the edited volume obviously focuses on the Saraswati River, the diverse methods presented herein are importantly, pertinent and applicable for the examination of palaeo-, intermittent or ephemeral streams anywhere. The detailed geophysical investigations, topographic surveys, geohydrological mapping, diagrammatic representations from and interpretations of multi-spectral images and digital elevation models, sedimentological analysis, chronostratigraphic and biostratigraphic approaches and paleontological and archaeological evidences, which have been utilised in the eight chapters, highlight the entire spectrum of tools available for such

research. As such, alongside providing much information about the Saraswati itself, this book is a valuable guide to Quaternary researchers looking to link tectonics, climate change, concomitant landscape sensitivity and fluvial response (and its archival records) and the attendant human occupancy and migration.

From an alternate perspective, the Saraswati's history may aptly represent the real fears confronting the Indian Subcontinent today, in light of the threats faced by its present-day rivers. The Saraswati's story reveals the riches to ruins scenario faced by its riparian settlements once its waters were captured

away or diminished. While it may have been a tectonic twist of fate which devoured those inhabitants' fortunes, human-induced and spurred on climate change and surface/groundwater exploitation poses marked threats to the freshwater ecosystems of the country today, particularly in its northern plains. Might our own rivers and cities be beneath sands one day and their stories have to be pieced together in the manner in which the Saraswati's tale is being reconstructed?

Priyank Pravin Patel

Department of Geography, Presidency University

Manuscripts on Gaṇitaśāstra in the Collection of The Asiatic Society

The Asiatic Society possesses in its collection a good number of manuscripts related to different branches of Mathematics (*Gaṇitaśāstra*), viz. Arithmetic, Metric & Mensuration, Algebra or *Bījagaṇita* and Astronomical Geography. As per the Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit manuscripts on Astronomy and Mathematics by MM Haraprasad Shastri (Revised and Edited by Prabodh Chandra Sengupta), vol.X , Part-1 , published in 1945, the first section of the catalogue contains Ganita (Astronomy and Mathematics). The manuscripts on Ganita comprise works on Hindu Astronomy and Mathematics, of which the most notable is *Aryabhatīya* (dated to 499 A.D.) called *Aryabhatasiddhanta* or the other *Siddhantas* or the Hindu scientific works

on Astronomy and books of Astronomical tables.

The manuscripts of *Gaṇitāvalī*, *Siddhāntasundaraḥ*, *Ganitamalaby* Haridatta, *Ganitamritamby* Gangadhara, son of *Bhairavadatta*, *Līlavatī* by Bhaskaracharyya II, Part of *Siddhānta Śīromaṇi* by Bhaskara, *Siddhānta Śīromaṇi (Golāḍhyāya)* by Bhaskaracharyya, *Bījagaṇita (Siddhānta Śīromaṇi)*, etc. have enriched the collection. *Lilavati* is an ancient text of Arithmetic where it has been presented as an enjoyable and playful activity. A good number of *Līlavatī* by Bhaskara II and its commentaries or *ṭīkā* by a number of commentators are in the Society's collection. The manuscripts are written on palm leaf and handmade paper in Sanskrit and are date.

Descriptive Catalogue on Some of the Important Manuscripts on Mathematics and their Contents

| SI No. | Name of the Manuscript | Author / Commentator | Accession No. | Folio No. | Remarks |
|--------|------------------------|---|---------------|-----------|---|
| 1. | Lilavatitika | Ganaka Suryamani, Son of Tripathi Ghanasvam | G-6378 | 43 | Incomplete. Another title Ganitamrita Varsini. It starts with kshetrabyabahara section of Lilavati. |
| 2. | - Do - | Ramesvara | G-6379 | 24 | Incomplete |
| 3. | Lilativivaranam | Mahidasa | G-6372 | 50 | Incomplete |
| 4. | - Do - | Parasurama | G-6377 | 29 | Incomplete |
| 5. | - Do - | Ramakrishnadeva | G-6376 | 21-62 | Incomplete |
| 6. | Lilavyudaharanam | Ramakrishnadeva | G-6375 | 35 | Incomplete |
| 7. | Lilavati | Bhaskaracharwa | G-3080 | 17 | - |

BIBLIOGRAPHY

| SI No. | Name of the Manuscript | Author / Commentator | Accession No. | Folio No. | Remarks |
|--------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|--|
| 8. | - Do - | - Do - | G-5503 | 63 | Complete, Samvat 1819 |
| 9. | - Do - | - Do - | G-4380 | 56 | Complete, Bengali Script 19 th Century A.D. Part of Siddhanta Siromani by Bhaskara [Metric & Mensuration] |
| 10. | - Do - | - Do - | G-9747 | 39 | Incomplete, Samvat 1767 |
| 11. | - Do - | - Do - | G-7815 | - | Fragment |
| 12. | Ganitavali | - | G-4749 | 48 | Palm Leaf |
| 13. | Lilavati | Bhaskara | G-2734 | 39 | 18 th Century AD. |
| 14. | Siddhantasundarah (Goladhyaya) | Jnanaraja, Son of Naga | G- | 27 | Complete. Samvat 1878 (Astronomical Geography for another section of the work, Bij asanitadhyaya) |
| 15. | Siddhantasiromani (Goladhyaya) | Bhaskaracharya | G- | 38 + 74 | Early 19 th Century AD. |
| 16. | Lilavati (Text) | - Do - | SCIA46 | 30 | Complete. |
| 17. | Bijaganita (Siddhantasiromani) | - Do - | SCIB3 IVth Part | 39 | Complete. |
| 18. | Lilavati (Text) | - Do - | SCIB4 | 28 | Complete, Fair. |
| 19. | Lilavatitika | Ramakrishnadeva | SCIB4 | 4 | Complete |
| 20. | Lilavatitalca i Vivriti | Ganakasaneadhara | SCIB4 | 75 | Complete. |
| 21. | Lilavatitaka / Vivriti | Ranganatha Daivajya | SCIB4 | - | - |
| 22. | Lilavatitika | Survadasa | SCIB4 | 22 | - |
| 23. | Lilavati (Text) | - | SCIB4 | | Arithmetic |

ASIAN ACCESSION

S

181.4

S2271a

Shankara Bhagavatpada—
Lalita Trisati bhasya of
Shankara Bhagavatpada;
edited with English transla-
tion and introduction Vidya.
Dikaka by Chaganti Surya-
narayana Murthy, Madras :
the editor, (19-?)
xxii, 148p.; 25 cm (A4035)
(12.8.76)

S

181.43

G197c

Gaṅgesa Upadhyaya
Chintamane : sāmānya-
nirukti/by Gangesopad-
hyaya; with Didhiti and Ga-
dadhari; Bengali translation
and explanation by Asutosh
Nyaya Vaisisikacharya.—
Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak
Bhander, 2019.
72p.; 23cm (S7291)
(3.3.20)

S

181.43

G197c

Gaṅgesopādhyāya
Chintamane : pakṣatā;
with Didhiti and Jāgadisi;
edited with Bengali transla-
tion by Mrinalkanti Bandyo-
padhyay. —Calcutta : San-
skrit Pustak Bhandar, 2017.
48p.; 22cm. (S7281)
(12.2.20)
Contents : Saṁsaya pakṣatā
o sisadhayisa paksata.
Rs. 100.00

S

181.43

G197c

Gaṅgesopādhyāya
Vyaptipañchakam/com-
mentary Rahasya or Mathuri
by Mathuranath Tarkava-
gisa; edited with Bengali
translation by Mrinalkanti
Bandyopadhyay. —Calcutta
: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar,
2019.
93p.; 22cm. (S7282)
Text on Anuman Khanda
of Tattvachintamane.
Rs. 100.00

S

181.43

T221

Tattvachintamane Vyapati-
panchakam
siddhāntalakṣaṅcha : Di-
dhiti māthuri gādadhari-
jagadisitikasahitam; edited
by Tapanshankar Bhattach-
arya. —Kolkata : Jadavpur
University, 2013.
189p.; 23cm. (S7280)
(12.2.20)
Formerly edited by Jiba-
nanda Vidyasagar, Asubodh
Vidyabhusan, Nityabodh
Vidyabhusan.
Rs. 200.00

S

294.5925

P985bh.y

Puranas. Bhagavat. Sana-
tan, 2017
Basabhadgat; with Ben-
gali poetrical translation by

Bipra Sanatan Ghoshal Vi-
dyavagisa; edited by Kanan-
bihari Gosvami, Nabannaray-
an bandyopadhyaya and
Shampa Sarkar. —Kolkata:
Goudiya Mission Paravi-
dyapeeth Research Institute,
2017-2019.

2v.; 25cm. (S7283-84)
(28.2.20)

Contents : v.1, 1st and 2nd
skanda, v.2, 3rd skanda.

ISBN :978-93-88523-17-2
(v.2) : Rs. 300.00 (v1), Rs.
325.00 (v2)

S

294.5926

B188d.b

Repr.ed

6c

Ballāla Sena

Danasagarah of Ballala
Sena; critically edited with
introduction and index by
Bhabatosh Bhattacharya.
—Repr. ed. —Kolkata : The
Asiatic Society, 2019.

lxviii, 746p. : 25cm. (Bib-
liotheca Indica Series; 274)
(B15350 (RR B15351 (Res.)
B15355) (9.1.20)

First Published : 1953-56
ISBN : 978-93-81-574-93-5;
Rs. 2000.00

S

792.0954

M225t

MainKar, T. G.

The theory of the samdhis
and the Saṁdhyāṅgas/T. G.

Mainkar. —Delhi : Ajanta
Publication, 1978.
193p; 22cm (S325) (6.3.86)
Rs. 45.00

S
808.04912
G197c
6c

Gaṅgādhara Mīśra

Caturacintāmanih/Gaṅgā-
dhara Mīśra; edited with in-
troduction by Amal Shib
Pathak. —Kolkata : The
Asiatic Society, 2019.

xvi, 188p.; 22cm. (Bibli-
otheca Indica Series; 339)
(B15445 (RR) B15446
(Res.) B15447-50) (16.1.20)
ISBN : 978-93-81574-88-1
: Rs. 450.00

S
891.23
B212k
2c

Bānabhatta

Kādambarī : Chandrapī-
dasya mahāsvetādarśanam/
by Bānabhatta; with Bengali
and English translation by
Prabodh Chandra Lahiri and
Niradbaran Bhattacharya.
—Calcutta : Sanskrit Pustak
Bhandar, 1972.

70p.; 18cm (B15225,
B15226) (3.9.19)

S
294.59212
A662sc

Āranyaka. Aitareya, 2016

Aitareya āranyaka; with
Sāyana bhārya; with Bengali
translation by Tripti Saha;
edited by Samiranchan-
dra Chakraborty. —Kolk-
ata : Ramkrishna Mission

Institute of Culture, 2018.
xviii, 429p; 25cm (B15303)
(21.10.19)
Text in Bengali script.
ISBN : 91-937319-1-8: Rs.
300.00

S
294.59212
A662sp

Āranyaka. Aitareya Phadke,
1898

Aitreyaranyakam; with
commentary by Sayana;
rev. by Babashastry Phadke.
—Puna : Anandasrama
mudranālaya, 1898.

296p., : 29cm. (Anandas-
rama Sanskrit Granthavali;
38) (B15468) (28.2.20)
Rs. 3.00

S
294.59212
V414r.m

Veda Rigveda Matilal

Rigveda; with Bengali
translation by Matilal Das.
—1st ed. —1349 (BAN) Cal-
cutta : Shibsahitya Kutir,
1942.

144p., : 18cm. (B15227)
(3.9.19)

Contents : 1st astaker of
1st adhyaya.

Rs. 1.00

S
294.5513
S125s

Sadhan samar va Devi ma-
hatmya

with Bengali translation
by Brahmasri Sri Sri Satya-
deva. —14th ed. —Calcutta :
Yogesvar Bandyopadhyay,
1987.

xxxvi, 276p., : 23cm.

Libhas v.1. (B15275)
(26.9.19)

Contents : Brahmagan-
thibheda Madhukaita
bhabadha and chandi.

S
294.59214
A662tp

Āranyaka. Taittiriya. Phadke
1898.

Taittiriyāranyaka of krish-
nayajur veda : with com-
mentary by Sayanacharya;
rev. by Babashastry Phadke.
—Puna : Anandasrama
mudranalaya, 1898.

2v (909p.), : 29cm. (Anan-
dasrama Sanskrit Granthav-
ali; 36) (B15466 v.2, B15467
v.1)

Contents : v.1, 1st prap-
athaka to 6th prapathak—
v.2, 7th to 10th

Rs. 4.50

S
294.59214
B813t.g

Brahmanas Taittiriya God-
bole, 1998.

Taittiriya brāhmaṇa; with
commentary by Sayanāchar-
ya; edited by Narayan Shas-
tri Godbole. —Poona (i.e.
Puna) : Harinarayana Apte
(Anandasram Press), 1898.

3v (1447p.), : 24cm. (Anan-
dasrama Sanskrit Series, 37)
(B15458-60) (18.2.20) (c.1)
9498 (v.1, c.2) 9398 (v.2,
c.2), 9338 (v.3, c.2), 4473
(v.1, c.3), 4474 (v.2, c.3),
4475 (v.3, c.3), 9503 (v.1,
c.4), S3492 (v.2, c.4), S3545
(v.3, c.4)

Contents : v.1, kanda 1-2

prapathaka 1-5. —v.2 kanda 2, prapathaka 6. — Kanda 3, prapathaka 7. —v.3 Kanda 3, prapathaka 8-12.

Rs. 5.50 (v.1). —v.2 Rs 6.00. —v.3 Rs. 3.00.

S
294.5926
Y14d.o

Yājñavalkya

Yājñavalkya Dharmasāstra : The textual History of a Hindu Legal Code; critically edited by Patrick Olivelle. — Delhi : Primus Books, 2020.

xiv, 448p., : 24cm. **(S7296) (13.08.21)**

An imprint of Ratna Sagar.

S
891.21
A796c

Aryadeva C200-225A.D.

Catuhśataka/Aryadeva; with Tibetan version; commentary by Chandrakīrti;

with preface by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya. —[Calcutta : Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1931].

xxiv, 210p. ; 22cm. **(S2996)**
Contents, Vol. 8-16, Incomplete book.

S
181.4
L193s

Lal, Basanta Kumar

Samakalin bhāratīya darshan/Basanta Kumar Lal. —9th repr. ed. Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.

xx, 422p. ; 22cm. **(H7295) (15.3.21)**

ISBN : 978-81-208223-3 : Rs. 275.00.

Hin
378.15509
D213k.s

Dar, S. L.

Kāśhī Hindu Visvavidyalaya ka itihāsa / S. L. Dar and S. Somaskandan;

translated by Vichitrasana Gupta; edited by Abadesha Pradhan, Vasistha Narayan Tripathi (etal). —1st Hindi ed. —Varanasi : Kashi Hindu Visvavidyalaya, 2019.

—pts; 26cm. **(B15556) (2.12.20)**

Library has Vol-1.

1st English ed : 1966

ISBN : 81-85305-56-0 : Rs. 400.00

Pr
891.31
R161n

Rājāśekhara

Karpuramañjarī/Rājāśekhara. —with commentary Balabharata and index by Vasudeva; rev. by Narayan Ram Acharya. —4th ed. —Mombay : Nirnayasagar Mudranayalaya, 1341.

xvi, 122+37p.; 20cm. **(B15231) (3.9.19)**

With Balabharatam by Rajasekharam
Rs. 2.00

ENGLISH ACCESSION

079.54
I39s

India's vernacular journalism :

a journey of two centuries / editor : Pallab Sengupta. — Kolkata : Kolkata Society for Asian Studies, [2019].

185p.; 22cm. **(78718) (4.3.2020)**

ISBN : 978-81-942129-2-8 : Rs. (not found).

294.5514
P231r

Parihar, Seema.

Rituals : doctrine of devotion and sacrifices in Sakta cult / Dr. Seema Parihar. —Delhi : Agam Kala Prakashan, 2019.

xiv, 209p. ; ill; 24cm. **(78583) (16.10.2019)**

Bibliography : p.189-200.
ISBN : 978-81-9345-7-3-8: Rs.950.00.

294.59212
V414h

Hariyappa, H. L.

Rigvedic legends : through the ages / H. L. Hariyappa. —New Delhi : Cosmo, c2019. xxi, 303p.; 25cm. **(78690) (12.2.2020)**

ISBN : 978-81-307-1900-9: Rs. 1200.00.

294.5921
V414k
Vedas for beginners/
edited by Subodh Kapoor.
—New Delhi : Cosmo, 2008.
248p.; 23cm. **(78258)**
(5.6.2019)
ISBN : 978-81-307-0910-9:
Rs. 495.00.

294.595
A945t
Avalon, Arthur.
Tantrik worship : accord-
ing to the principles of Tan-
tra / by Arthur Avalon; with
introduction by Shriyaukta
Barada Kanta Majumdar.
—New Delhi : Cosmo, 2019.
276p.; 25cm. **(78691)**
(12.2.2020)
ISBN : 978-81-307-1855-2:
Rs. 900.00.

294.30954
B927t
Buddhism and globalisation :
selected papers / chief edi-
tor Ven. P. Seewalee Thero;
editors : Bimalendra Kumar
Ujjwal Kumar. —Buddha-
gaya : Maha Bodhi Society
of India, 2019.
xv, 195p.: ill.; 22cm.
(78584) (16.10.2019)
ISBN : 978-81-935234-2-1:
Rs. 1200.00.

305.3
P155g
ed.3
Palczewski, Catherine Helen.
Gender in communication
: a critical introduction /
Catherine Helen Palczewski,

Victoria Pruin DeFrancisco,
Danielle Dick McGeough.
—3rd ed. —California :
SAGE, c2019.
xxviii, 323p.: ill.; 26cm.
(78285) (2.7.2019)
References : p. 259-305.
ISBN : 978-1-5063-5845-1:
\$. 105.00.

No Lending

307.772095496
B575t
Bhattacharya, Krishnopriyo.
Tribal Bengal : life in the
Sub-Himalayan Terai Duars
/ Krishnopriyo Bhattacharya.
—New Delhi : Niyogi Books,
2019.
256p.: photo (col.), table;
24cm. **(78723) (28.7.2020)**
Bibliography : p. 249-252.
ISBN : 978-93-86906-79-3:
Rs. 1495.00.

389.150954
T455a
Thomas, Edward, 1813-1886.
Ancient India Weights :
from Marsden's numismata
orientalia / by Edward Tho-
mas. —New ed. —New Delhi
: Cosmo, 2011.
iv, 74p.: map; 23cm.
(78250) (4.6.2019)
With Persian and Arabic
alphabets.
ISBN : 978-81-307-1209-3:
Rs. 495.00.

RR
398.4103
H431e, V.1-2
Hazlitt, W. Carew.
An encyclopaedia of faiths

and folklore : national be-
liefs, superstitions and
popular customs, past and
current, with their classi-
cal and foreign analogues,
described and illustrated /
by W. Carew Hazlitt. —New
Delhi : Cosmo, 2005.
2v.; 23cm. **(77689 (v.1),**
77690 (v.2)) (1.2.2019)
ISBN : 81-307-0104-9 (set):
Rs. 2500.00.

551.3520954
R622k
River bank erosion and
land loss / edited by Kazi
M. B. Rahim, Malay Mukho-
padhyay, Debashis Sarkar.
—Kolkata : Visva-Bharati,
2008.
viii, 134p.: ill., talde;
22cm. **(77879) (12.3.2019)**
ISBN : 978-81-7522-430-8
: Rs. 200.00.

No Lending
551.48309541
G427g
Ghosh, Chanchal Kumar.
Ganga : an endless journey
/ Chanchal Kumar Ghosh;
translation by Sarbani Puta-
tunda. —New Delhi : Niyogi
Books, 2019.
284p.; ill. (col); 23cm.
(78729) (28.7.2020)
This book was original-
ly published in Bengali by
Ananda Publishers, Kolkata
under the title 'Ganga Dar-
shan' (2017).
References : p. 278-279.
ISBN : 978-93-89136-22-7:
Rs. 1450.00.

**JOURNAL OF THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY**

Vol. LXIII No. 4, 2021



THE ASIATIC SOCIETY
1 PARK STREET • KOLKATA 700 016

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

- Gopinathpur Temple Inscription at the Time of Gajapati Kاپیلندradeva
Subrata Kumar Acharya 1
- Geometry in the Works of Āryabhata I and its Relevance in the Field of the Present Day High School Geometry
Sanatan Koley 29
- Early Pandemics in History
Mukta Raut Dey and Atanu Ray 49
- Lahore Suba Revenue Statistics c.1690
Naseer Ahmad Mir 65
- A Comparative Study of the History of Different Junior Doctors' Movements during 1983-2019
Nataraj Malakar 85

- Political Detainees in Their Jails
Laurent Metzger 109

- Bodding's Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore vis-à-vis Vidyasagar's understanding of Anthropological Study
Archana Banerjee 131

GLEANINGS FROM THE PAST

- Shoulder-headed and other forms of stone implements in the Santal Parganas
Rev. P. O. Bodding 159

NOTES ON GLEANINGS

- Further Study on The Stone Tools Collected by Rev. P. O. Bodding from Dumka Area, in the Present Day State of Jharkhand
Soumyajit Das, Debasis K. Mondal and Ranjana Ray 165

BOOK REVIEW

- Romila Thapar, *Voices of Dissent: An Essay*, Seagull Books, 2020; London, New York, Calcutta
Susnata Das 177

- Ranabir Chakravarti, *The Pull towards the Coast and Other Essays: The Indian Ocean History and the Subcontinent before 1500 CE*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2020,
Krishnendu Roy 181

- Amrita Mondal, *Owning Land, Being Women: Inheritance and Subjecthood*, De Gruyter Studies in Global Asia, Vol. 2, Berlin, Boston Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2021
Prasanta Ray 185

- Nirban Basu, *Trade Union, Working Class Politics and Protest, Bengal: 1937-1947*, Progressive Publishers, Kolkata, 2019
Raj Sekhar Basu 189

