



JANUARY 2022



# Monthly Bulletin

VOLUME LI, NO. 1



**An Old Muhammadan Gun**

Presented to the Society by Capt. E W Petley on 7th January, 1891

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

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## Cover Description

The gun was captured from Aurangzeb's General, Mir Jumla, in 1662, by Swargadev Jayadhvaia Sinha, the then reigning Ahom prince of Assam. From Assam it was carried away to Burma. It was taken by the English in the first Burmese war. It seems to have been removed from the old fort at Cuttack and buried in the ground near the light-house to hold a flag-staff. It was subsequently brought to Calcutta by Capt. Petley.

There is an inscription in a character intermediate between Kutila and modern Bengali: "Maharaja Swargadev Jayadhvaia Sinha obtained this weapon having vanquished the Musalmans at Gauhati in the Saka year [1]584".



## From the Desk of the General Secretary

**Dear Members and Well-wishers,**

Kindly accept our hearty Greetings of the Season. I, on behalf of the Council of the Asiatic Society, also extend our warm wishes for a Very Happy New Year, 2022.

We have been struggling since March, 2020 to keep ourselves free from physical discomfort and mental anxieties, spread through the infectious COVID-19. Right at the moment we are perhaps living at a stage which may be described as post-Delta and pre-Omicron phase. Let me sincerely hope that we will be able to combat this hard reality.

The 15th January is the Foundation Day of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, which has been a historical turning point in the cultivation and dissemination of knowledge, when Sir William Jones took the initiative in establishing this ancient seat of learning in 1784. We can claim with confidence that we have been able to carry forward the great message which was declared by the founder through his first discourse by way of outlining the academic agenda. The rest is part of long history.

The month of January appears to be very very significant for reasons more than one. The two great souls, Swami Vivekananda and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose were born on 12.01.1863 and 23.01.1897 respectively. All of you will agree with me that these two great visionaries immensely contributed towards the building up of a growing Nation with confidence and self-dignity and moral commitment which were exemplary before the world in their own merit and right. A politically fractured history of the same Nation met with a negative impact when the resolution was passed on June 6, 1947 for the partition of India, even though the Independence Day was celebrated by the United India on January 26, 1930. The *Janaganamana* was accepted as our National Anthem on 24th January, 1950 followed by the declaration of the Republic of India on January 26, 1950.

Friends, we had organised two important lectures on 2nd and 15th December, 2021. The first lecture was delivered by Dr. Tilak Ranjan Bera, former Fulbright Fellow and Senior Research Fellow, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, on "India in Egypt" and the second was delivered by a noted litterateur and environmentalist, Dr. Jaya Mitra on "Visva-Samsar". We have celebrated 169th birth anniversary of Mm. Haraprasad Sastri along with an exhibition on relevant manuscripts collected by him. We have collaborated in a programme with Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad on Ashin Dasgupta Memorial Lecture 2021 delivered by Professor Rajat Kanta Ray, an eminent historian, on "Varnasram dharma theke Jatdharma: Bharatvarsiya samajer dirghakalin rupantar". We have also collaborated with them on 23.12.2021 on Professor Aniruddha Ray Memorial Lecture 2021, delivered by Professor Sayid Ali Nadim Rejavi on "Envisioning Empire in Stone : Fatehpur Sikri, The City of Victory". We have organised a live-streamed programme, both in the facebook page and YouTube channel of the Asiatic Society and a panel of lectures with demonstration on the observance of National Mathematics Day on 22nd December, 2021 based on the precious possession of some manuscripts by the Society related to the subject.

Please keep well and safe. 🙏

(S. B. Chakrabarti)  
General Secretary

"The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either..."

**Sir William Jones,**  
"Third Anniversary Discourse",  
*Man and Nature : The Discourses,*  
The Asiatic Society

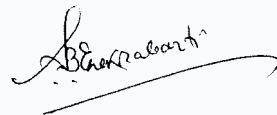
**AN ORDINARY MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY  
WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, 3RD JANUARY 2022 AT 5 P.M. AT THE  
VIDYASAGAR HALL OF THE SOCIETY**

**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 6th December, 2021.
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 General Secretary reported in the Ordinary Monthly General Meeting held on 6th December 2021 that in terms of the provision of Clause 6 of bye-laws IV of the Asiatic Society, the name of Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee has been duly nominated as Honorary Fellow of the Asiatic Society. The Election of the Honorary Fellow will take place in the Ordinary Monthly General Meeting scheduled to be held on 3rd January 2022 (Bio-data of Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee is enclosed as Annexure - I).
6. The following paper will be read by Dr. Kanchana Mukhopadhyay :

*A French Route to Orientalism: Anquetil Duperron (1731-1805) and the Search for the Roots of Indian Civilisation*



(S B Chakrabarti)  
General Secretary

Dated : 19th December, 2021

***COVID-19 Safety Protocol will be strictly adhered to***

## NOTIFICATION

Annexure - I



# The Asiatic Society

Founded in 1784

(An Institution of National Importance declared by an Act of Parliament)  
and  
(An Autonomous Organization under Ministry of Culture, Government of India)  
Patron : Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal



Ref. No. : 082

Date : 14/12/2021

### NOTIFICATION

*Report under Clause 6 of Bye-Laws IV (regarding election of Honorary Fellowship)  
in respect of Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee.*

Chittatosh Mookerjee (Born 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1929) was the Chief Justice of the Calcutta and Bombay High Court, India. He is the grandson of Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee and the nephew of Syama Prasad Mookerjee. His father Rama Prasad Mookerjee was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court. All the three eminent personalities were the President of the Asiatic Society in different times.

He passed Matriculation Examination in First Division from Mitra Institution, Bhowanipore. He got graduation in Economics in First Class from Presidency College. He got First Class in Preliminary, Intermediate and Final Law Examinations of the Calcutta University. He was Lecturer of Law College, Calcutta University.

He was appointed as an Additional Judge of the Calcutta High Court in 1968 and in 1970 he became a permanent judge of the High Court at Calcutta. In 1986 he was elevated as the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. He was transferred to the Bombay as Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court. Mookerjee was retired from judgeship in 1991. He was also acting Governor of Maharashtra. In 1990 he was the Chairman of Tribunal of Kaveri River Water Dispute. After retirement he was the first Chairperson of the West Bengal Human Rights Commission and served there from 1995 to 1998.

He was conferred Honorary Doctorate Degree from Burdwan University and Assam (Central) University at Silchar.

  
S.B. Chakrabarti

General Secretary

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website : [www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org](http://www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org) | e-mail : [gs.asiatic@gmail.com](mailto:gs.asiatic@gmail.com) / [theasiaticsociety@gmail.com](mailto:theasiaticsociety@gmail.com)



## A French Route to Orientalism: Anquetil Duperron (1731-1805) and the Search for the Roots of Indian Civilisation

**Kanchana Mukhopadhyay**  
Life Member, The Asiatic Society

In the age of discovery, when the overseas world was unfurled, many European nations arrived in India, with almost one goal in mind: that is to explore India's mythical wealth. The French nation, though latecomer, was not an exception. Most French men came to India in search of material wealth barring a very few. Among them, comes first the name of Anquetil Duperron (7 December 1731-17 January 1805). From initial stage, he was determined to search the roots of Indian civilisation, which made India such a melting pot of so many cultures. He was least interested to fabricate his life as a religious or political personality. He wanted to explore Avestan and Sanskrit literature, science and philology. He was mainly attracted by the quest for unknown, the desire to get introduced with those cultures, which remained still unknown in the European world due to time and physical distance.

Though his training in various religious schools initially inspired him to Theology, Duperron's ultimate goal was the scientific research on India's various scriptures such as *Zend-Avesta*, Sanskrit *Vedas* and *Upanishads* along with exploration of the roots of those ancient languages. A pathfinder in this unknown domain, he started his quest as early as in early 1750s. A group of erudite 'savants' were involved in studying oriental scriptures with a scientific view of mind in the Royal College and Bibliothèque du Roi (Royal library) in Paris, who were his torch-bearers.

Already a huge collection of Oriental manuscripts were in their collection. The educated and dedicated Jesuit missionaries already started collecting manuscripts from near-Orient, India and China since the decades of the 1720s and 1730s. As there was no one to work on it, it seemed to Duperron that this huge collection awaited his intervention to be explored. His quest was for those people, who practise the religion following these canons and who speak in these languages. In his *Discours Préliminaire*, Duperron said, "we will have to look to the Orient to find the real enlightenment, but we are searching that in Greek and Latin in vain." The mankind and humanity was his first area of research in an objective and scientific manner. By translating *Upanishads* in Persian, he wanted to throw light on Vedic Philosophy. At the far end of his life, Duperron was involved in composing a dictionary and grammatical text in Sanskrit, which could not see the light. He wanted to introduce a scientific knowledge base of so-called Indianism on all aspects, land, politics, commerce, people, language and religion.

Thus in matters of fact and approach, Anquetil Duperron was the predecessor of William Jones: both have chosen huge trading machinery of East Indian Companies (as officer and judge) just to get an access to this world of undiscovered knowledge bank named 'India' and both of them were determined to have a scientific approach towards their quest for India.

## NOTIFICATION



# THE ASIATIC SOCIETY

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(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](http://www.asiaticsocietykolkata.org)



Ref. No: 85

Dated: 27.12.2021

### NOTIFICATION

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata invites **applications for new membership** from eligible Individuals.

#### Eligibility:

- A post-graduate degree holder (M.A/ M.Sc./M.Com/M.Tech/LL.M and the like) and holder of a professional graduate degree of 4 or more years of duration of study (B-Tech/M.B.B.S/B.A. LL.B/ BHMS and the like) may apply in prescribed form for membership of the Society.
- Preference will however be given to applicants with higher degree /qualifications possessing research degrees.

#### How to apply:

- **Application Form for new membership can be downloaded from the following link during the period from 27.12.2021 to 27.01.2022 up to 05:00 p.m :**  
<http://asiaticsocietykolkata.in/>
- Alternatively, Application Form can be collected in person from the Administration Section of the Asiatic Society from **27.12.2021 onwards during 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in all working days till 27.01.2022.**
- **Cost of Application Form for new membership :**
  - For Indian Nationals : Rs 50/-
  - For Foreigners : \$ 5
- The cost of Application Form can be paid through NEFT/RTGS or in the form of Bank Draft /Pay order in favour of **The Asiatic Society, payable at Kolkata.** The payment in this respect can also be made in

Page | 1

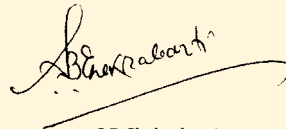
## NOTIFICATION

cash in the Cash Section of the Asiatic Society. The payment particulars should be mentioned in the Application Form.

- Bank details of the Society for payment through RTGS/NEFT :
  - Account Name : The Asiatic Society, Kolkata
  - Bank Name : Central Bank of India
  - Branch : Park Street, Kolkata
  - Account Number : 3489910353
  - IFS Code : CBIN0280108
- The name of the Applicant shall be proposed by one member of the Asiatic Society and shall be seconded by another member of the Society in Part B of the Application Form. **Kindly note that a member may propose up to 2 applicants and may second up to another 2 applicants.**
- Application Form duly completed in all respects along with self attested photocopies of certificates in support of educational qualification etc should be sent to the General Secretary, The Asiatic Society, 1 Park Street, Kolkata -700016 by Speed post/Registered Post/Courier only within **27.01.2022 up to 05:00 p.m.** The Application Form can also be submitted physically in the Administration Section of the Asiatic Society from **27.12.2021 onwards during 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in all working days till 27.01.2022.**

### **Selection Process:**

- After receiving the applications, a Scrutiny Committee (constituted by the Council of the Asiatic Society) will scrutinize the applications and will prepare a list, date-wise and on the basis of eligibility.
- The list will be presented at the meeting of the Council and the Council will refer applications for voting in the next Ordinary Monthly General Meeting . Not more than 30 (thirty) applications in a month will be selected as Members by voting in the next Ordinary Monthly General Meeting.
- Membership Admission Fee:
  - For Indian Nationals : Rs 500/-
  - For Foreigners : \$ 50
- Quarterly Subscription
  - For Indian Nationals : Rs 400/-
  - For Foreigners : \$ 40



S B Chakrabarti  
General Secretary





## The Asiatic Society Kolkata

cordially invites you  
to

### 239<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day Celebration

on Saturday, 15th January, 2022 at 11:00 a.m.  
at Vidyasagar Hall of the Society

### Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar

Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal and Patron of The Asiatic Society  
has kindly consented to grace the occasion as the Chief Guest

### Professor Rudrangshu Mukherjee

Chancellor, Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana will deliver the  
**Foundation Day Oration**

on

### *Tagore and Gandhi: Differing without rancour*

### Professor Swapan Kumar Pramanick

President of The Asiatic Society  
will preside over the function

(S B Chakrabarti)  
General Secretary

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2021  
Place: Kolkata

*The programme will be streamed live on the social media platform (facebook, YouTube and Twitter) of The Asiatic Society*

### Other programmes for the Day:

**09.30 A.M.**

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

**10.30 A.M.**

Flag hoisting at the  
Premises of the Asiatic Society by the President of the Society

## Rajasri Mukhopadhyay

### An Unfinished Journey of former Research Fellow of The Asiatic Society

Rajasri Mukhopadhyay (1970- 2021) was a friend whom I found in my matured years. I met her for the first time in the precincts of The Asiatic Society, Kolkata around 2001. She was a research fellow there working on temple architecture and I was working as a junior faculty in literature in a Kolkata College. Our disciplines were different, universities were different, by nature also we were very different, yet we found a chord of commonness which kept us bound for two decades till she suddenly left us this November 2021 at the age of 51 only after a four months' battle with malignancy. She symbolised positivity, laughter, love and courage. So it feels incredible to write an obituary because none of us ever felt that the fight will be so short.

As I look back to those 20 yrs I can see a girl from being a research fellow gradually blooming as an art historian of repute whose academic range was vast and diverse. Before that she had finished school from Pathabhavan and graduated from erstwhile Presidency College with History major, did Masters in History with specialisation in Indian Art History from Calcutta University and went on to complete her Ph.D in Architecture of Khiching temples of Odisha under the guidance of Dr.Ashok Bhattacharya.

But these are only the official

degrees she had received. Her academic & intellectual sphere was much more expansive which included music, history of textile, indigenous ornaments, digital art, patachitra & patuas, with special emphasis on female patuas. This showed her sensitive acknowledgement of the issue of women empowerment in any form. I remember she never failed to wish on 8th March, International women's day as she strongly believed that it is the women who can acknowledge and support the upliftment of other women.



It is also important to mention that along with her filmmaker husband Supriyo Sen, she had closely worked to create award winning documentaries on Indian partition, the most famous being "Way back home". She also curated exhibitions on Partition Studies. Lately comparative study of classical art & folk art, subaltern art also found importance in her intellectual orbit and she delivered lectures in Folklore Workshops of The Asiatic Society and Memorial lecture series in Academy of Folklore on interesting themes like Rickshaw Art of Bangladesh, Impact of folk art on the creations of prominent artists belonging to Bengal School of Art.

Her intellect and knowledge found recognition in several institutions namely NIFT where she was a faculty. She also served as guest faculty in Art Appreciation

Courses conducted by Indian Museum, Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Rajya Charukala Parshat, Arts Acre to name a few. She taught as visiting faculty in University of Calcutta & Government College of Art & Craft, Kolkata & was an external expert in the research review committee of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies. An eloquent speaker, Rajasri was invited in International Conferences on Art in British Museum and also in Martin Luther University of Germany to deliver lectures. Besides, she was also invited by several art colleges to deliver special lectures, to judge University exams on art, and had published several papers on varied aspects of art & culture.

She had received National Award as a member of the creative team of UGC documentary on architecture of temples of Odisha. She was also a member of the UNO team, which was searching the route Alexander followed from Uzbekistan in Middle Asia to invade India. Her biggest recognition came when she was selected as Tagore National Fellow in Indian Museum.

In all the capacities that she worked, strangely she remained equally passionate and engrossed giving her best, yet finicky enough to go on editing and changing to make every presentation, every class, every article better, which was a mark of a sincere researcher. She was active and thriving even till April 2021 when she spoke in the exhibition of patuas in KNIDS and was researching on changing patterns of Patachitra as a result of pandemic. An avid traveller Rajasri also gave very interesting audio visual presentations about foreign lands she visited.

Her love for both Rabindra Sangit & Western Classical music, Ritwik's films and Western Classics, handwoven indigenous saris, tribal jewellery & knowledge of continental or Italian cuisine got

amalgamated so easily in her personality that it never advertised loudly her range, her talent. Hence she could be genuinely appreciative of achievements of others and could remain humble even in these times of self publicity.

Topping everything she had a very compassionate heart which reached out to those in pain, physical or mental, which made her a real friend to many people including me. She stood by many of us in our bad times, became jubilant in our good times and made us part of her good times as well. But when she had the worst of her time, she bravely fought alone with Supriyo by her side. Even then she didn't fail to ask about wellbeing of others. In her last message she wrote to me " Seeing you will have more positive effect on me than anything". But her unbearable pain after her chemotherapy cycle prevented us from meeting may be for one last time. Still like all her other friends, I also strongly believed that for a fighter, a positive minded soul who celebrated life, everything will not end just like that. But 29th November 2021 proved us wrong and made us accept that a girl who believed life begins at 50 had to leave only at 51. Her 11yrs' old son Megh, husband Supriyo and mother Dr. Chitra Mukherjee probably will never be able to cope with this untimely loss, the academic fraternity will be bereft of a diversely talented scholar and her friends will miss her radiant smile and unconditional love which made her a very different kind of a person who deserved to finish her journey and thus add more to life and work.

Hopefully future will find another able researcher to complete her unfinished work and that will be the truest celebration of her memory.

Adieu my friend.

**Chandramalli Sengupta**

Member, Academic Committee, The Asiatic Society



## *President's Column*

### **Gandhiji and Subhash Chandra Bose: The Relationship that made History of Indian Politics**

The relationship of Gandhiji with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose has marked the history of last three decades of Indian Freedom struggle with greater significance on certain political-ideological mix. Both appeared almost at the same period in the national political scenario when the ruling establishment of political ideologies had been witnessing a new ordeal not just in the Indian National Congress but among common Indian people too. The relationship of two greatest icons was therefore a mark of political ideological polarisation that led to the making of electoral power and social power configurations later in the independent India. The story of relationship was confined in the last three decades of the twentieth century, the perspective of which was decorated with the rise of Gandhian Ahimsa movement on the one hand, swadeshi extremist movements and an organised left-socialist political ideology on the other. Indian National Congress remained at the centre of all three ideological contours as the sole official political platform. It was such a platform that gave socialists, swadeshis, liberal moderates, communists, social democrats and the ruling establishments all respective spaces in a single room to work on a single agenda of freedom. Since non-cooperation movement it was Gandhiji's undisputed call that not just gave a supreme

agenda but united common Indian people also under a call which no other political thought could consolidate at that time. It was on the other hand, a comet like emergence of Subhash Chandra Bose who gave a new revolutionary idea of consolidating people toward a final struggle for freedom that could have been an alternative to the call of Ahimsa movement. Netaji's idea of movement cannot be downsized with the so-called swadeshi extremist movement activities rather was a planned and organised ideological and revolutionary struggle. Could that be a binary alternative to the Ahimsa movement and lead to a structural change of Indian National Congress, a group of the Working Committee leadership influenced by Gandhiji? It had ultimately come out with a clear ideological split on the either sides of Netaji that determined the future of India.

In such a condition, Gandhiji and Subhash Chandra Bose, the two icons of India's freedom struggle led a relationship of mutual respect although there was no possible common space to work for the country together up to the achievement of freedom. The whole perspective was also ideologically very important because of the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 which led a new ideological motion among Indian national leaders to become a true anti-imperialist. The juncture had three ideological ends: one, to

comply with the British Indian Federation to become anti-imperialist globally against the Axis power; two, to become truly 'anti' of the British imperialism in this subcontinent and thirdly to follow Gandhiji's supreme command and wish that used to lead Congress in the past two decades. All streams within Indian National Congress had been facing such ideological face-off on the one hand and that further led to an organisational impasse between the lines of Gandhiji and Subhash Bose. Subhash anticipated Gandhian group of leaders to be complying with the Federation although Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad denied any such compromise on any federation. Gandhian leaders on the other hand had completely rejected to work with Subhash Bose following Gandhiji's personal stance to release Subhash from the presidency of Congress. It was only Jawaharlal Nehru who tried to establish a balance between two stalwarts on every occasion right from the federation issue to the ensuing presidential election, where Gandhiji had a clear nomination of Pattavi Sitaramayya's name as 'his' candidate after Maulana Abul Kalam Azad declined his request to become next Congress President after Subhash's first term.

Rabindranath too had expressed his desire for Subhash to be re-elected as Congress President. In a letter to Gandhiji he even expressed his opinion but Gandhiji was of opinion to release Subhash from that responsibility for certain reasons. Actually the structure of Congress Working Committee was such a pyramidal one where Gandhiji remained at the undisputed top position as per his wish to lead the whole downwardly. He was seen in many of his letters to have developed an idea that Subhash would desire for a free hand to lead Congress movement. The growing popularity of Subhash in many provinces was also giving that kind of signs that led him standing for the election. This 'perception' became very crucial among working committee members that they

found impossible to work with Subhash in contrast to Gandhiji's wish. The whole story had become Gandhiji's wish and nomination versus Subhash's ideology to lead the Congress. The story had also created two ideological signs in CWC: Left and Right. Subhash's followers were known as Left whereas Gandhiji's were marked as Right. These elaborative signs developed within the Congress had doubtlessly configured the future of Indian politics.

Subhash's ideology was gaining popularity in those provinces where Gandhiji achieved landslide victory during 1937 general election. Subhash became Congress President in 1938 for the first time and he did not primarily express his desire to become President for the second time. The only cause that led Subhash to contest for the election was that he wanted an anti-federationist face to become Congress President. The growing ideological rift in the Congress Working Committee left Subhash cornered where Nehru only had initiated to talk with Subhash on the ensuing election issue. The talk however failed to produce any positive outcome for both of them. Subhash in the presidential election in 1939 got a clear majority against Gandhiji nominated candidate Pattavi Sitaramayya that pushed the Gandhian lobby to a corner with a clear message from AICC. Gandhiji considered Sitaramayya's defeat as his own defeat and left Congress along with his group of CWC members resigned from the Working Committee.

The situation became worse in Tripuri Congress when all members resigned earlier from the Working Committee were present in the meeting. Govind Ballav Pant placed a motion that Congress henceforth would follow Gandhiji and his policies wholeheartedly that cornered Subhash in the working committee. The resolution had also stated that the newly elected President had to form new working committee as per the wish of Gandhiji. Subhash had no room to work freely as a president. Even the left

socialist wing of the Congress abstained from the passing of the Pant resolution. Subhash resigned from his office. Within a few months in 1939 he formed a new party Forward Bloc.

The story of such an epic relationship between two torch-bearers of Indian politics had however have a different start which many of today's scholars are trying to establish as the final note of their relationship. 'They had a relationship of love, affection and respect'. Even if this cannot be stated so loosely, Subhash in his initial days, when he left ICS job, considered Gandhiji as his Guru and Leader. Subhash joined Congress and developed his own patriotism deeply influenced by Gandhiji. Gandhiji advised Subhash to meet Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das for working under his guidance. Deshabandhu remained his political Guru. Despite all ideological political differences what Gandhiji said in his address to INA in 1946 was something remarkable. "Your

object, as I have been told, was only to free India, never to help the Japanese. You failed in your direct objective, i.e. to defeat the British. But you have the satisfaction that the whole Country has been roused and even regular forces have been stirred into a new political consciousness and have begun to think in terms of Independence. You have achieved a complete unity among the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Anglo-Indians and Sikhs in your ranks. That is no mean achievement. Above all, you must never beg or throw yourselves on anybody's charity. Because you have risked your lives for India's sake and fought for her on the Imphal plains, you must not expect to be pampered in return."



(Swapan Kumar Pramanick)  
President

## 239TH FOUNDATION DAY ORATION

*Topic:* **Rabindranath and Gandhi: Differing without Rancour**

*Speaker:* Professor **Rudrangshu Mukherjee**, Chancellor, Ashoka University

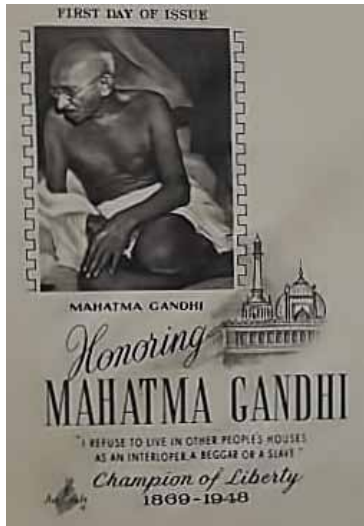
### Abstract

This talk reflects on the long and deep relationship between Rabindranath and Gandhi -- the many issues on which they disagreed openly in published essays and on their profound agreement regarding a vision for a new and different India. Their disagreements were never marked with any acrimony. By disagreeing with respect they created a space for public discussion and debate which is vital for a thriving democracy.



## Gandhi in the World of Philately

Goutam Kumar De  
Philatelist



In the world of philately, Mahatma Gandhi, known popularly as 'Bapu' to everybody irrespective of age, caste and creed, is a unique personality. Different types of philatelic materials, especially commemorative stamps, had been issued in his honour by almost all countries in the world, irrespective of their ways of life and political systems — capitalist, communist, socialist- whether developed or under-developed, aligned or non-aligned, big or small.

The point we wish to make is that in case of politicians, statesmen, national leaders, freedom fighters and other eminent people in the world, their portrayal on stamps in countries other than their own was limited only to those countries whose interests were served by their activities. That is why Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt were honoured philatelically by their allies in World War II. Naturally the defeated countries turned their faces away from these leaders.

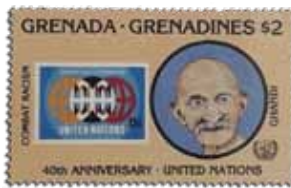


Likewise, it is possible to argue that freedom fighters or national leaders of different countries have found a place on the stamps of their own countries and/or of their neighbours or other countries sympathetic to their struggle for freedom. At the same it is a sad but stark reality, the freedom fighters of former colonised countries have been, in this regard, by and large ignored by the old imperialist powers. The history of stamps in United Kingdom, France, Portugal and the Netherlands, among others, support this.

But Gandhiji is a rare exception. United Kingdom, USA and USSR whose political systems and philosophies are completely different, have

honoured him by issuing commemorative and other stamps. It may not be incorrect to suggest that the reason for this is the new methods he used for leading India's freedom struggle, namely *Satyagraha* and nonviolence. The way he led India's struggle earned him universal respect for steadfastness and consistency in following his methods notwithstanding the difficulties he did occasionally face. His motto was to





free India from bondage, but maintain amicable relationship with the previous ruler. I think this side of Gandhism earned him the kind of adoration which was reflected in the commemoration of his greatness in the stamps issued in his honour. It needs to be emphasised that such honour was accorded to Mahatma Gandhi even by states, ideologically opposed to him.



Gandhiji also encouraged and inspired freedom struggle in many other countries in Asia and Africa. Numerous stamps on Gandhiji from a large number of African and Asian countries are the direct result of it. This type of philatelic homage to Gandhiji emanated out of a debt of gratitude and India for showing them the non-violent way of achieving freedom.



Thus, over the last several decades our 'Father of Nation' has been reigning supreme in the world of thematic philately. More than 100 countries have issued stamps, "perforated or imperforated miniature sheet (a small sheet containing a single stamp, pair, block or set of stamps, with wide, inscribed and/or decorative margins), issued as a commemorative souvenir for collectors of stamps on Gandhiji. Some, but not all, have postal validity in sheet form". (*Philatelic Terms Illustrated*, Russell Bennett and James Watson, Stanley Gibbons, UK),

The countries are as follows—



Asia (28) : Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Cyprus, Fiji, Fujeira, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Khor Fakkan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Myanmar, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mordovia, Nepal, Oman, Palau, Sharjah, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, UAE, Yemen Kingdom, Yemen (South).

Africa (31) : Benin, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad (Tchad), Comoros, Congo, Congo (Democratic), Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania,



Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, St. Thomas & Prince Islands, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia.

Europe (24) : Austria, Belgium, Bernera Islands, Czechoslovakia, Davaar Islands, Easdale Island, Germany, Gibraltar, United

Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, ISO Sverige, Italy, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sanda Island, San Marino,

Staffa, USSR.

America (20) : Antigua & Barbuda, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada,



Grenadines of Grenada, Guyana, Mexico, Montserrat, Nevis, Nicaragua, Panama, St Vincent & Grenadines, Surinam Trinidad & Tobago, USA, Uruguay, Venezuela.

On the basis of issuance of stamps on a particular personality, Gandhiji is the undisputed champion in the world of philately. The nearest person who can challenge him on this ground is Mother Teresa.

The very first foreign stamp honouring Gandhi was a set of two stamps, in the denominations of 4 cents and 8 cents, issued by USA on the 26th January, 1961, in their 'Champion of Liberty' series. It was issued officially in Washington in the presence of the then Indian Ambassador, Mr. M. C. Chagla, the Postmaster General, Mr. J. Edward Dey, the Secretary of state, Mr. Dean Rusk and others. The stamps depict a bust of Gandhiji in the form of a Medallion surrounded by an inscription "Mahatma Gandhi—1869—1948—Apostle of Non-Violence." The design was based upon a drawing by the Indian Artist, R. L. Lekhi.

The citation, which is worthy of reproduction, reads : "The Mahatma Gandhi 'Champion of Liberty' stamps feature the likeness of the frail, little man, who led the Indian people in their struggle for freedom and who won the respect of the world. The 4-cent stamp is saffron, one of the colours used in the tricolour Indian national flag, a symbol of courage, sacrifice, and spirit of renunciation, so eloquently symbolised in the life of Gandhiji. Gandhiji's life was devoted to finding a way to solve human conflict without resorting to war—through moral strength. His was one of the clearest voices of all time, proclaiming the priority and supremacy of freedom. His words serve to remind us today of the vigilance and sacrifice needed to protect and extend the horizons of freedom. ..."

This series covers a number of stamps issued from time to time in honour of distinguished freedom fighters of various countries all over the world e.g., Simon Boliver, Jose de San Martin, President Magsaysay, Giuseppe Garibaldi. This shows the importance and weight of the stamps on Gandhiji issued in this series.

Gandhiji's life, education, family, thoughts, writings, some of the movements(e.g., Dandi march, Quit India movement, Salt preparation etc.), philosophy, politics, relation and exchange of thoughts with contemporary great personalities have been reflected to some extent in the foreign stamps on Gandhiji. These are very useful sources for preparing a philatelic biography of Gandhiji.



A significant number of stamps honouring Gandhiji have been issued by different countries during the Gandhi Centenary(1969) and his 150th birth anniversary( 2019). Apart from this, stamps, miniature sheets, sheetlets were issued to commemorate his birth and death anniversary, the 75th Anniversary of Dandi March, 50th Anniversary of India's Independence (1997) .



For example, Chad issued multicoloured stamps in 1969, 1997, 1999 (130th birth anniversary of Gandhiji, Millenium) & 2005. Mauritania, Hungary, Niger, Nicaragua, Grenada etc. issued stamps on his birth centenary. Grenadines of Grenada issued stamp and MS on his 50th death anniversary.



One of the most attractive of these is the set of 6 stamps issued by Mauritius in 1969. Brief descriptions of these are : Gandhiji as a law student in London (price 2 cent); Gandhiji as a stretcher bearer during the Zulu Rebellion (15c); Gandhiji as Truth-seeker (Satyagrahi) in South Africa (50c); Gandhi at 10 Downing Street, London (60c); Gandhiji in Mauritius—1901 (1 Rupees); and Gandhiji, epitome of Truth and Non-Violence (Rs. 2.50).



Manama( Myanmar), Bhutan, Oman, Sanda Island (a privately owned small island) issued unused stamps on Gandhiji. They are embossed on gold foil (1970, 25th Anniversary of UN); Plastic embossed imperforated (1971, Famous Men Series); 5 different round stamps on silver foil & 5 different round stamps on gold foil ( these stamps have no postal validity); 3 dimensional block of 4 imperforated stamps, each showing two pictures from two different angles (these are without any postal validity) respectively.

The number of new issues on Gandhiji as well as collectors of stamps on Gandhi is increasing. Now it is one of the most popular sections among the thematic collectors, mostly known as Gandhi Philately.



Photo Courtesy: Author

## Scottish Church College: Celebrating 125th Birth Anniversary of its Illustrious Alumnus

**Supratim Das**

Vice Principal, Scottish Church College, Kolkata

As a part of celebrating the 125th birth centenary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the most illustrious alumni of Scottish Church College, an online webinar was organised by the College in collaboration with its Former Students' Association on 12 November 2021 at 6 pm on Zoom. Professor Arun Bandopadhyay, Nurul Hasan Chair Professor of History, Calcutta



Subhas Chandra in His Student Life

University (retired), currently Historical and Archaeological Secretary, Asiatic Society, Kolkata, and Professor Suranjan Das, Vice Chancellor, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, spoke on Subhas Chandra Bose as the two distinguished speakers in the webinar. Dr. Bidisa Sinha, faculty in the Department of Bengali, officially opened the programme, Dr. Madhumanjari Mandal, Principal of the college, delivered the welcome address, Dr. Swapan Kumar Mukhuty, Secretary, Scottish Church College Governing Council, gave the inaugural speech, Dr. Supratim Das, Vice Principal, moderated the webinar, and Dr. Sadananda Bhattacharya, Secretary, Former Students' Association of the College, offered vote of thanks.

In his inaugural speech, Dr. Mukhuty spoke about Netaji's organisational power, courage, charisma and sacrifice that made him a hero in modern Indian history. In post-colonial India, for a long time, Netaji's heroic contributions were covered under a veil. But we must remember that despite differences of opinion between them, Gandhiji described Subhas as a patriot of the patriots and Subhas called him a Mahatma.

Dr. Supratim Das formally introduced the speakers—both of whom were his teachers at Calcutta University and presented a short introduction to Subhas Bose's activities as an alumnus in the Philosophy Department during 1917-1919. Dr. William Spence Urquhart, a noted professor of Philosophy, was then the Principal of the college. As a student Subhas not only stood second with a first class in the final examination of Calcutta University but also left a fine legacy as the Secretary of Scottish Church College Philosophical Society. Subhas presented 2 papers in its sessions in 1918: 'A Defence of Materialism' (February 1) and 'A Defence of Idealism' (September 6). These were 2 contradictory presentations, one focussing on the basic role of materialism in this world and the other explaining the great importance of idealism in human life. We know from the Minutes of the Philosophical Society that Subhas spoke in defence of the ideal of Hegelian monism though his ideas about the Absolute were different from those of Hegel and

Schopenhauer. Subhas framed the Scheme for the Improvement of the Philosophical Society for younger students. He never forgot his college and in a letter written to the Society in 1934 he wrote: "It helped me to discipline my intellect and heart and to sharpen my judgment and thereby prepare myself for the subsequent struggle which has been in store for me."

Professor Suranjan Das spoke on 'Azad Hind Fauj and the Politics of Protest in India'. He reminded us that Subhas Chandra Bose's profound influence on the Indian youth and his loyalty to anti-communal movement, democracy, secular politics and a socialist state are unforgettable. Subhas was truly a patriot of the patriots. In spite of tight censorship in India during the Second World War, the news of bravery, heroism and sacrifice of Netaji and his INA soldiers reached the Indians and gave rise to a new storm of protest and resistance, a new wave of nationalist feeling. Professor Suranjan Das emphasised the need to gather and build up new archival data on the INA which would promote further research on it and help us to have a more vivid, complete and historical narrative of INA's unique role in the Indian freedom movement. The INA trial that started in August 1945 rocked the whole nation regardless of religion, community and creed. A top level British official remarked that the British decision to try the INA soldiers on the charge of war crime would prove to be a victory for the INA and a disaster for the British. Very soon this statement came true. There was a massive student protest in Calcutta in November against the trial of INA leaders leading to spontaneous mob unrest and police atrocities. Thus the INA trial resulted in a furious anti-imperialist struggle not only in Bengal but also in other parts of India such as Hyderabad and Kashmir.

The title of Professor Arun Bandopadhyay's lecture was: 'Netaji's Re-evaluation in Historical Context: In His Time and in Our Time'. As Professor Bandopadhyay pointed out, the historical evaluation of Netaji Subhas Chandra

Bose has long been a subject of a 'contested discourse' mostly for reasons other than historical. The root of the problem lies in the fact that Netaji, so named as one of the most important leaders of Modern India in the twentieth century, has often been taken as an antithesis of Gandhiji, and by that way his entire contribution has been judged on the basis of a narrowly defined model of a conflict between violence versus non-violence for the cause of Indian freedom movement. But the fact is that the impact of Subhas's life, both in his time and in our time, is larger than this narrow model of explanation. Professor Bandopadhyay in his talk tried to identify some of these elements from Netaji's whole life and his proverbial sacrifice.

The talk, first of all, argued that, unlike many nationalists, Netaji's anti-imperialism, nationalism and traditionalism were basic, rooted in his early life, and later developed in an idealistic form in connection with his philosophical and spiritual moorings at the same time. It then tries to identify the very uniqueness of Subhas's attempt to relate himself to Indian nationalism from the beginning. The Gandhi-Subhas-Jawhar triangle has been viewed from a larger historical perspective than merely from any 'context' of selfish personality clashes. A brief review of Netaji's social, economic and political philosophy was made in this context. Finally, Netaji's legacy, and for that matter his contemporary relevance, was sought in a metaphor called 'past as present'. Professor Bandopadhyay here made a modest answer to the vexed question why Netaji became increasingly and significantly relevant both in his life and after-life, where 'history' and 'imagination' worked at the same time. It ends up with a probability when Netaji becomes, and remains for many years to come, as the most important symbol of positive nationalism in India in the long trajectory of many changes that Indian nationalism faced in the past, and continues to follow in the present and future.

—৬ই বৈশাখ, মঙ্গলবার

আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা

# ত্যাগব্রতে দীক্ষিত ভারতবরেণ্য নেতা

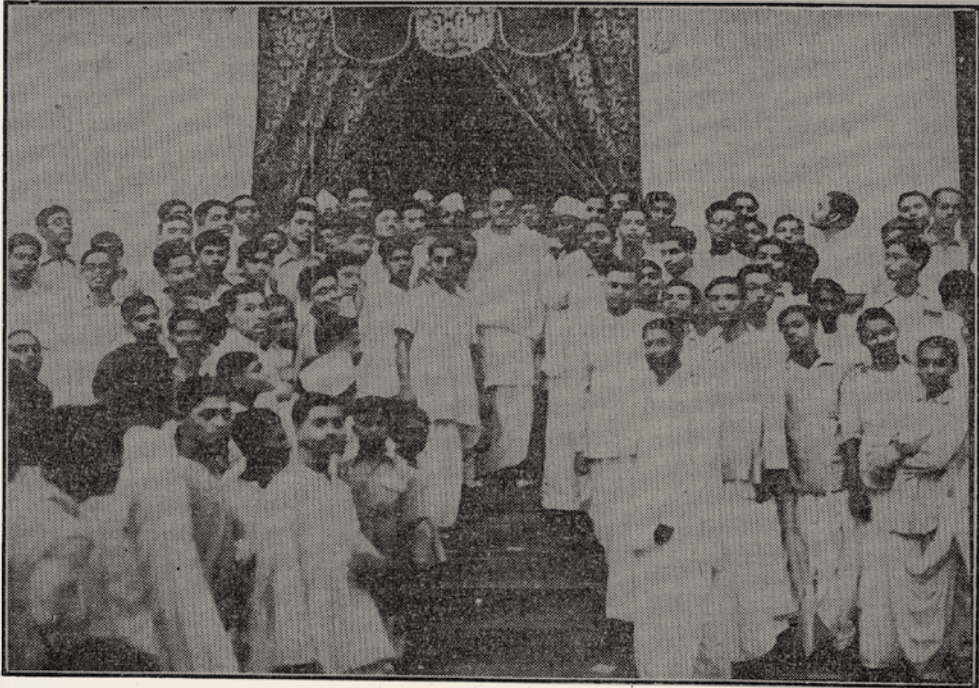
স্ববক ভারতের আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষার প্রতীক

স্কটিশচার্চ কলেজ হলে রাষ্ট্রপতি সুভাষচন্দ্রের সম্বর্ধনা

১০

সম্বর্ধনার উত্তরে সুভাষচন্দ্রের উদ্দীপনা-  
পূর্ণ ভাষণ

স্বাধিকার রক্ষা প্রচেষ্টায় ছাত্রদের সাফল্যে আনন্দ প্রকাশ



শনিবার স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজের ভাষণে রাষ্ট্রপতি সুভাষচন্দ্রকে বিপুলভাবে সম্বর্ধিত করিয়াছেন—  
সম্বর্ধনা উৎসবে রাষ্ট্রপতিসহ কলেজের কতিপয় ছাত্র।

দেশের যুবকেরা যদি স্বাধীনভাবে চিন্তা ও কাজ করিতে শিখে এবং নিজ নিজ নতন আবিষ্কারের জন্ত বিপদের মধ্যেও দুঃসাহসের সহিত ঝাঁপাইয়া পড়িতে পারে তবে যে কোন সমস্যার সমাধান

তাহাদের পক্ষে সহজ সাধ্য হইবে। শত বৎসরের পরাধীনতা সম্বন্ধে জাতীয় জীবনের বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে ব্যক্তিগতভাবে আমরা উন্নতির উচ্চ শিখরে আরোহণ করিয়াছি কিন্তু সমষ্টিগতভাবে আমরা

করিয়াছি কিন্তু সমষ্টিগতভাবে আমরা কিছুই করিতে পারি নাই। যবীন্দ্রনাথ বা গান্ধী যত বড়ই হউক মা কেন তাঁহারা সমষ্টিগত জাতীয় উন্নতির প্রতীক নহে। সমষ্টিগত আঙ্গুচেতনা উদ্বোধনের

ভার সমাজকে গ্রহণ করিতে হইবে তবেই এ জাতি আবার জীবনের সকল ক্ষেত্রে উন্নতির উচ্চ শিখরে আবেগণ করিবে” এই মর্মে রাষ্ট্রপতি স্বভাষচন্দ্র বসু গত শনিবার সন্ধ্যায় স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজ হলে কলেজের ছাত্র ছাত্রীগণ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অভিনন্দনের উত্তরে আবেগপূর্ণ ভাষায় বক্তৃতা করেন।

ছাত্র ছাত্রী ও বাহিরের লোকের জনতা এত অধিক হইয়াছিল যে, হলে তিল ধারণের স্থান ছিল না। স্থানান্তরে অনেককে বাহিরে অপেক্ষা করিতে হইয়াছিল। ডাঃ কালিদাস নাগ সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ করেন। প্রতিকূল অবস্থার সহিত সংগ্রামে জয়লাভ করিয়া স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজের ছাত্রছাত্রীগণ রাষ্ট্রপতি স্বভাষচন্দ্রকে কলেজের হলঘরে অভিনন্দনের আয়োজন করিয়াছিল। অধ্যাপক মিঃ বি বি রায় ভিন্ন কলেজ কর্তৃপক্ষের কাছাকাড় নগ্নের উপর দেখা যায় নাই। কিন্তু ছাত্রদের উৎসাহের-অন্ত ছিল না। ঘন ঘন বন্দে মাতরম ধ্বনিতে হলটা যুধিরিত হইয়াছিল। ভারতীয় দীতি অল্পস্বরে মধুর সমুদ্র স্থান আলপনা ঘারা চিত্রিত করা হইয়াছিল। বন্দে মাতরম সঙ্গীতের পর স্বভাষচন্দ্রকে পুষ্পমালা প্রদান করা হয়। অতঃপর ছাত্র ও ছাত্রীরা রবীন্দ্রনাথের “জন গন মন অধিনায়ক জয় হে, ভারত ভাগ্যবিধাতা” সঙ্গীতটি গান করেন। রাষ্ট্রপতি স্বভাষ চন্দ্র, ডাঃ শ্রীকালিদাস নাগ ও সমাগত অতিথিদিগকে অভ্যর্থনা করিয়া অভ্যর্থনা সমিতির সভাপতি শ্রীযুক্ত সজিদানন্দ রাশগুপ্ত বলেন যে, স্বাধীন ভারত বিশ্বের মুক্তি আনয়ন করিবে তাই ভারতের স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামের অগ্রদূত রূপে স্বভাষচন্দ্র সর্বপ্রকার দুঃখ দৈহিক বরণ করিয়া লইয়াছেন। স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজের ছাত্র ও ছাত্রীগণের পক্ষ হইতে শ্রীবৃত্ত নরেন পালিত অভিনন্দন পত্র পাঠ করেন। তাহার মর্ম এই— এই ভ্যাগব্রতের দীক্ষিত বরণে নেতা, তুমি বাঙ্গলার তথা ভারতের যুবকগণের আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষার প্রতীক, যে সকল সমস্ত যুবকগণের মনকে

আন্দোলিত করিতেছে তোমার জীবনে তাহার সমাধান তাহারা খুঁজিয়া পাইয়াছে; যে মহত্বের আবরণ আজ তোমাকে ঘেরিয়া রহিয়াছে তাহা দুরীভূত হউক, আমরা তোমার সঙ্গে মিলিত হই। যে ধ্রুব নক্ষত্রকে লক্ষ্য করিয়া ভূমি ছুটরাহ তাহা আমাদের দিকে দেখাও, যেন আমরাও সেই লক্ষ্যে গির থাকিয়া জয়যাত্রা করিতে পারি।

অতঃপর স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজের নিম্নলিখিত প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহ স্বভাষচন্দ্রকে মানপত্র প্রদান করেন। মুগলনাথ ছাত্র সংঘ, সাহিত্য সমিতি, অর্থনৈতিক সোসাইটি, ঐতিহাসিক সোসাইটি, হিন্দী সাহিত্য পরিষদ, ইংরেজী সাহিত্য পরিষদ, নাইট ক্লাব, দ্বিতীয় বার্ষিক শ্রেণীর ছাত্রগণ, চার্কশিয়র সমিতি, ও মনোবিজ্ঞান সোসাইটি।

স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজের ইংরেজী সাহিত্যের অধ্যাপক মিঃ বি বি রায় রাষ্ট্রপতি স্বভাষচন্দ্রকে অভ্যর্থনা করিতে উঠিয়া বলেন যে, তিনি কলেজ কর্তৃপক্ষের প্রতিনিধিরূপে অথবা অতিথি স্বরূপেও এখানে উপস্থিত হন নাই। তিনি ছাত্রদের সঙ্গে মিলিত হইয়া রাষ্ট্রপতিকে সম্বর্ধনা করিতে আসিয়াছেন। স্নদীর্ঘ ১২ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা হইতে তিনি বলিতে পারেন এইরূপ বিপুল ও উৎসাহপূর্ণ সভা ইতিপূর্বে তিনি কলেজ হলে দেখেন নাই। যে অভিনন্দন অঞ্জলি স্বভাষচন্দ্রকে দেওয়া হইয়াছে তাহার প্রত্যেকটি শব্দ ছাত্রদের অন্তর হইতে উৎসারিত হইয়াছে। স্বভাষচন্দ্রের অতীত জীবনের দিনে দৃষ্টিপাত করুন, ছাত্র জীবনে তাহার আশ্চর্য্য সাক্ষ্য এবং কর্মজীবনে আত্ম বলিদান ও দুঃখ কষ্ট বরণ বাঙ্গালীর মানসিক উৎকর্ষের ও রাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসের অধ্যায় সম্পূর্ণরূপে উন্মোচিত করিয়াছে।

অতঃপর শ্রীযুক্ত বিশ্বনাথ মুখার্জী, মিঃ কে এম, আমেদ, ও অধ্যাপক মঞ্জী চক্রবর্তী স্বভাষচন্দ্রকে অভিনন্দন প্রাপন করিয়া ও তাহার স্বার্থভ্যাগ ও স্বদেশ প্রেমের প্রশংসা করিয়া বক্তৃতা করেন।

স্বর্ধর্দনার উত্তরে স্বভাষচন্দ্র

অভিনন্দনের উত্তর দিতে উঠিয়া বিপুল বন্দে মাতরম ধ্বনির মধ্যে শ্রীবৃত্ত . স্বভাষচন্দ্র বলেন :—আপনারা যতই আমার প্রশংসা করুন না কেন আমার দোষ ক্ষমী সম্বন্ধে আমি সম্পূর্ণ সজাগ আছি। যে আন্তরিক প্রীতির বশে আপনারা আজিকার স্বর্ধর্দনার আয়োজন করিয়াছেন তাহা আমি বিশেষভাবে অবগত আছি। সংগ্রামের ভিতর দিয়া আসিয়াছেন বলিয়া আপনারদের উৎসাহ বর্ধিত হইয়াছে, যে হলে আজ আপনারা আমাকে অভিনন্দন করিবার অহুমতি পাইয়াছেন সেখানে প্রশংসা করিবার মর্য অতীত ছাত্র জীবনের কথা, আমার চোখের সমুখে ভাগিয়া উঠিয়াছে। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে একথাও মনে হইয়াছে বর্তমান ছাত্র জীবন কি অতীতের সঙ্গে যোগ-স্বত্ব হারাইয়া ফেলিয়াছে যে, আপনারা এই অধ্যর্থনার আয়োজন করিতে এত বেগ পাইয়াছেন। ১৯১৭ সালে প্রাক্তন ছাত্র হিসাবে অতিথিরূপে যখন আমি এখানে আসিয়াছিলাম তখন ত আমাকে প্রত্যাখ্যান করা হয় নাই কিন্তু আজ ১৯৩৬ সালে তাহা করা হইতেছে। ১৯১১ সালে তখনকার কলেজ অধ্যক্ষের অহুরোধে প্রাক্তন ছাত্র হিসাবে কলেজের শতবার্ষিকী উৎসব উপলক্ষে আর একবার আমি এখানে উপস্থিত হইয়াছিলাম। তখন কতকগুলি সর্দে কলেজ অধ্যক্ষকে রাজী করাইয়াছিলাম। সে সর্দে কথ্য শুনিলে আপনারা আশ্চর্য্যাবিত হইবেন—প্রথম সর্দে ছিল—বড়লাটকে শত বার্ষিকী উৎসবে নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা যাইতে পারিবে না। দ্বিতীয় সর্দে ছিল উৎসব উপলক্ষে ইউনিয়ন জ্যাক উত্তোলন করা হইবে না। এই দুইটি সর্দেই কলেজ কর্তৃপক্ষ নানিয়া লইয়াছিলেন, প্রাক্তন ছাত্র স্বরূপে সেই সভায় উপস্থিত হইতে আমার বাধা হয় নাই। আজ এই স্বর্ধর্দনা সভার আয়োজন করিতে আপনাদিগকে

বেগ পাইতে হইয়াছে দেখিয়া আমি বিস্মিত হইয়াছি। যাহা হউক, আপনারদের সফল মনোরথ হইয়াছেন দেখিয়া আমি আনন্দিত হইয়াছি। পৃথিবীর সর্বত্রই কলেজ ইউনিয়নে ছাত্রদের একাধিপত্য আছে। বিচিত্র যতবাদে বাহারা শ্রেষ্ঠ আসন অধিকার

করিয়াছেন ঐ সকল কলেজ ইউনিয়নে তাঁহাদিগকে নিমন্ত্রণ করা হয় যেন ছাত্রের তাহার স্বেচ্ছা গ্রহণ করিয়া উপস্থিত হইতে পারে। আমি আশা করি, অধিকার রক্ষার জন্ত ভবিষ্যতে আপনাদিগকে আর সংগ্রাম করিতে হইবে না।

প্রিন্সডেমসী কলেজের ছাত্র হিসাবে আমাদের একবার হরতালে যোগ দিতে হইয়াছিল। বহুপক্ষ তখন হরতাল-কারীদের মধ্যে ভেদ সৃষ্টি করিতে ও হরতাল ভাঙ্গিয়া দিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছিল। মুসলমানেরা যেন হরতালে যোগ না দেয় সেজন্ত এক মৌলবী সাহেব চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু তাহার কথায় কেহ কর্ণপাত করে নাই। হরতাল সাকফ্যামিওত হইয়াছিল। আজকাল সাম্প্রদায়িকতা আবার মাথা তুলিয়াছে এবং তাহার কুফলও আপনারা চোখের সম্মুখে দেখিতে পাইতেছেন। তৎসঙ্গেও আমি বলিব সাম্প্রদায়িকতার অস্তিম সংগ্রাম সূত্র হইয়াছে। পৃথিবীর সর্বত্র যে আন্দোলন আরম্ভ হইয়াছে তাহা কেবল রাজনৈতিক মুক্তির জন্ত নহে, প্রধানতঃ অর্থনৈতিক মুক্তির জন্ত বটে—এই—অর্থনৈতিক স্বাধীনতার ইচ্ছা সাম্প্র-

দায়িকতার ধ্বংস সাধন করিবে। ভারতের মুক্তি হিন্দু মুসলমান পার্শ্বাধীন অপণিত জনসাধারণের পরিপূর্ণ মঙ্গল আনয়ন করিবে। কিছু দিনের জন্ত কতক লোককে ধাঙ্গলাজী দিয়া ভুলাইয়া রাখা যায় কিন্তু ধরাবরের জন্ত সকলকে ভুলাইয়া রাখা সম্ভব নহে। সাম্প্রদায়িকতা ক্রমশঃ শক্তিশালী ও নিকির্ঘ্য হইয়া পড়িতেছে। স্বার্থের বিষয় ভারতের পৃষ্ঠানগণ জাতীয় আন্দোলনে যোগদান করিতে আরম্ভ করিয়াছে। খৃষ্টান ও হিন্দু ধর্মের মধ্যে অনেক সামঞ্জস্য আছে।

পরাদেশী ভারতের সর্বপ্রধান প্রয়োজন হইতেছে—বিপদকে তুচ্ছ করিয়া নতন আবিষ্কারের জন্ত দিকে দিকে জয়যাত্রা করা গতানুগতিক পথে চলিবার একটা সাধারণ প্রবৃত্তি আমাদের মধ্যে আছে। আমি যখন কলেজে পড়িতাম তখন প্রতিজ্ঞা করিয়াছিলাম—কখনও গতানুগতিক পথে চলিব না। দুঃসাহসের সহিত নতন পথে চলিবার এক আনন্দ আছে। হিমালয়ের উচ্চ চূড়াই হউক, সমুদ্রের স্তম্ভ তলই হউক, কি অনন্ত আকাশই হউক, অজানা রাজ্যের

সন্ধানে যাত্রা করিবার একটা প্রেলোডন আছে। এই অজানার বোঝে বাহির না হইলে ভারতের সমৃদ্ধি আসিবে না। এইভাবে বৃটিশ শক্তি ভারতে বিস্তারলাভ করিয়াছে। তাহারা সমুদ্রে পাড়ি দিয়াছে, অজানা রাজ্যের সন্ধানে সন্ধানে ছুটিয়াছে, জুং ও বিপদকে হাগি-মুখে বরণ করিয়াছে। ইহাই ভারতে বৃটিশ সাম্রাজ্য পত্তনের সাইকলজী। আমাদের পুরুপুরুবেরা তিস্ত, গিঃহল, মালয়, চীন প্রভৃতি দেশে যে সভ্যতার আলোক বিস্তার করিয়াছিল তাহার মূলেও সেই একই সাইকলজী বিদ্যমান। এই নতনের সন্ধানে বিজ্ঞান রাজ্যে হইতে পারে, সামাজিক বা অর্থনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে হইতে পারে অথবা ক্রীড়া ও লক্ষ্যতার ক্ষেত্রেও হইতে পারে। দুর্জয় সাহস ও আকাজক রাজ্য যদি জাতি উদ্ভূত হয় তাহা হইলে অতি শীঘ্র আমাদের দাসত্বমুক্ত মনোবৃত্তি দূরীভূত হইবে।

সভাপতি ভাঃ কালিদাস নাগ চাত্র-দিগকে ডাঃহাদের অধিকার লাভের জন্ত সংগ্রামে ভীত না হওরিতে প্ররোচনা করেন ও রাষ্ট্রপতি স্বেচ্ছাশ্রমের আদর্শ অঙ্গগণ করিতে উপদেশ দেন।

Courtesy: Anandabazar Patrika

## The Fort William Celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh Liberation War



The GOC-in-C Eastern Command, Lt. General Manoj Pande inaugurating the 'Swarnim Vijay Dwar'

'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' was celebrated with much fanfare and fervour throughout 2021 commemorating the golden jubilee of the decisive victory of Indian armed Forces alongwith Mukti Bahini over Pakistan in the 1971 Liberation War that led to the birth of Bangladesh. It was the largest military surrender after the Second World War. Bangladesh was liberated in a span of just 13 days!

The 'Swarnim Vijay Mashaal' that traversed length and breadth of the nation year-long, ended its tour in New Delhi where Prime

Minister Narendra Modi lit the permanent flame at the National War Memorial.

The 'Vijay Smarak' situated at East Gate Fort William Kolkata was made 13 years ago by Eastern Command in memory of the martyrs of 1971 Liberation War. December 16 is celebrated as 'Vijay Diwas' every year when rich tributes are paid to the martyrs in a wreath laying ceremony at the Vijay Smarak. Heads of all Services in the Eastern sector— Army, Navy, Air Force, Indian Coast Guard, NCC, soldiers, war Veterans, Mukti Joddhas lay wreaths in a solemn ceremony. It is a





Signing of surrender document by Gen Niazi



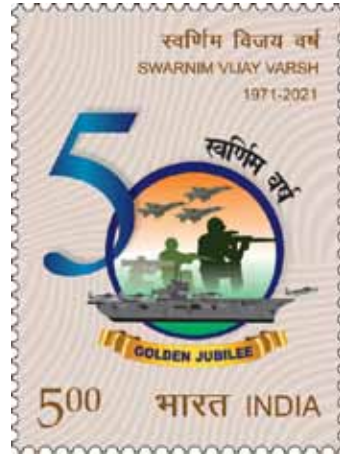
Mukti bahini yoddhas laying down their lives



Tri-Service cooperation



Battle of Gangasagar



Commemorative stamp marking 50 years of India's victory in 1971 Indo-Pak War

grand re-union to celebrate the momentous occasion in history.

As an apt recognition and homage to the supreme sacrifice of martyrs of Indo-Pak War 1971, the GOC-in-C Eastern Command, Lt Gen Manoj Pande inaugurated the 'Swarnim Vijay Dwar' on the eve of Vijay Diwas that provides entry to the Vijay Smarak war memorial. It consists of a main gate and two wing walls along the gate with murals, significant among which is the signing of surrender document by Gen Niazi.

As Indian celebrated 'Vijay Diwas', war veterans recounted their reverberating experiences, braving all odds and facing spine-chilling moments.

Eastern Command culminated the Swarnim Vijay Varsh celebrations with 'Swarnim Vijay Gaatha' held at the Victoria Memorial showcasing a variety of events including a customised Light and Sound show depicting the story of War of Liberation. The symphonic military band of Eastern Command performed patriotic and military tunes with military and Jazz Bands.

*Courtesy : Ministry of Defence, Government of India*

# Revisiting *Deshar Katha*: A Masterpiece of Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar

Swapan K. Chattopadhyay  
Member, The Asiatic Society

The book, *Deshar Katha*, chronicled by Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar (1869-1912), is an evidential document of how the British Government exploited the Indian farmers in various ways, annihilated the Indian industries and siphoned off huge sums of money from our country resulting in extreme penury of the people of British India mainly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In writing *Deshar Katha*, Deuskar depended mainly on three books, viz., Dadabhai Naoroji's *Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India*, Romesh Chunder Dutt's *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule* and William Digby's *The Prosperous British India - A Revelation from Official Records*. In his introductory note, Anup Matilal, former Director, EZCC, at whose initiative *Deshar Katha* was reprinted in 2010 to mark the centenary of the proscription of the book by the British Government, has observed that both the freedom fighters and the youth of the times were immensely inspired by the book.

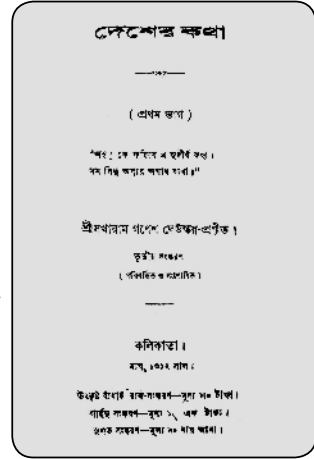
In *Deshar Katha*, Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar has mainly dealt with British India which was under the direct control of the British Government (7 lakh 93 thousand square miles) including Burma (1,68,550 square miles) and Baluchistan (22,400 square miles). This is a narrative of 22,09,28,100 people.

*Deshar Katha* was first published in 1904. In between 1904 and 1910, the book ran five editions and thirteen thousand copies were sold. In the fifth edition of the book, Deuskar included a chapter on the partition of Bengal in which he bitterly criticised the Government's decision to divide Bengal. He wrote, by quoting

an editorial of The Statesman that the object of the Government was to destroy the collective power of the Bengali people and also overthrow the political ascendancy of Calcutta. The chapter rattled the Government, who sensing danger, immediately proscribed the publication by invoking the relevant provision of the Indian Press Act, 1910. By then, however, *Deshar Katha* had already gained huge popularity among the Indian people and played a significant role in inspiring the anti-British movement then.

Deuskar on the basis of various authentic sources revealed how between 1801 and 1875 the people of India died of starvation on account of repeated famines. Citing William Digby, one of the well-wishers of India, Deuskar pointed out that while five million people died in various wars in the world between 1793 and 1900, about 32.5 million people died of starvation in India during the same period.

According to Deuskar, it was the economic poverty of the Indians and not the scarcity of food, which was the dominant factor in the repeated occurrence of famines and the resultant deaths. In the chapter 'Farmers in Distress', Deuskar laid bare the fact that collection of land rent at grossly excessive rates from the people who were dependent principally on agriculture had reduced them to acute economic distress. He cited Romesh Chunder Dutt as saying that in spite of their



poor economic condition, subjects were forced to pay land rent at a rate which was higher than that prevailing in the Hindu and Mughal times.

Deuskar gave a vivid picture of poverty—the subjects of British India were afflicted with during the second half of the nineteenth century by citing various authoritative sources - that about forty million people spent their life in semistarvation daily (Dr. W.W.Hunter), that half the agricultural population 'never knew .... what it is to have their hunger fully satisfied' (Sir Charles Elliott) or that 'nearly one hundred million people in British India are living in extreme poverty'(Pioneer, May 1893); or that notwithstanding an increase of agricultural land by an area of 4.80 crore bighas, the agricultural income declined by Rs 641.16 million as farmers had lost much of their economic capability to increase the fertility and productivity of their land by way of purchasing seeds, fertiliser and other essential inputs (William Digby).

Deuskar attributed this plight of the farmers to the decline and destruction of Indian industries and drain of the country's wealth. He has in this regard drawn on William Digby, who while delving into the causes of the extreme poverty of the Indians of British India, observed: "Because among other things we have destroyed native industries, and besides have taken from India since 1834-35 (according to a calculation made by the Economist in 1898) more than ten thousand millions of Rupees. India, on the other hand, has entirely lost much more than ten thousand millions; this with interest, and if circulated in the ordinary way among the people at 5 p.c. interest value only, would, by this time, have been of the value at least of fifty thousand millions of Rupees."

In the chapter dealing with the annihilation of the Indian industries, Deuskar quoted from Mill and Wilson's *The History of British India* thus: 'The cotton and silk goods of India up to the period 1813 A.D. could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price from 50 to 60 percent lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect

the latter by duties of 70 and 80 percent on their value or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture. Had India been Independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed prohibitive duties upon British goods and would thus have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms'.

Besides referring to the massive unemployment caused among those associated with the boat-making industry owing to the expansion of railways in the country, Deuskar also pointed out the huge repatriation of wealth from India and the transfer of wealth after the Battle of Plassey as principal factors resulting in abject poverty and starvation of millions of Indians.

In the preface of *Desher Katha* (2011) the late Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya rightly observed that *Desher Katha* is not just a book of history, it has become a part of history. He also added that Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar was far in advance of his contemporary political thinkers and that he was a pioneer among the nationalist and economic historians of our country. *Desher Katha*, therefore, says Professor Bhattacharya, is an integral part of India's freedom struggle.

To protect the eternal and inner self of our country, we should unite, said Rabindranath. We should bring back our long misdirected respect towards our own country. He had confidence that *Desher Katha* would help the people of India traverse towards that direction. Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar's *Desher Katha* fulfilled Tagore's expectation.

## গালিবের কবিতা ও সময়ের ভেঙে পড়ার শব্দ

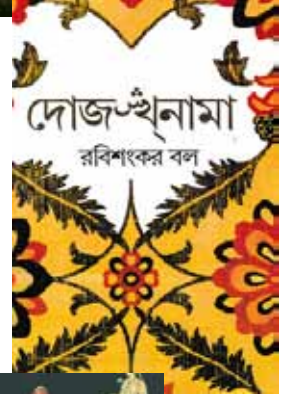
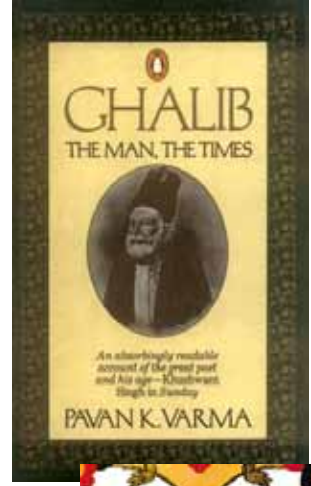
সোমরাজ ব্যানার্জী

বাংলা ভাষাশিক্ষক, আমেরিকান ইনস্টিটিউট অফ ইন্ডিয়ান স্টাডিজ

সময়কে টুকরো টুকরো করে যদি সভ্যতার গালিচায় ছড়িয়ে দেওয়া যায়, সেখান থেকে ডানামেলা সারসের মতো কবিতারা উড়ে উড়ে পেরিয়ে যায় কালের সীমানা। ইতিহাসের নানান অধ্যায়ের পাতা উল্টে পাটে দেখলে বোঝা যায়, এক এক যুগ যেন এক একজন মহাকবির বিচরণক্ষেত্র, যাঁদের কলমে খেলা করে যায় সময়ের আলো-অন্ধকার, হর্ষ-বিষাদ, স্থৈর্য-অস্থিরতা। এই সময়ের গান যে সবসময় সুমধুর হবে, তেমনটা নয়, এই যাপনকাব্যের মধ্যে লুকিয়ে থাকে যন্ত্রণাকাতর জীবনের জলছবি, সময়ের ভেঙে পড়ার শব্দ। মির্জা গালিবের কথায়,

নহু গিলে নগমা হুঁ নহু পরদেশাজ  
ময় হুঁ আপনী শিকাস্ত কি আওয়াজ  
(সূরের পর্দা নই কিছতেই, নই তো গীতের সার/  
আমি শুধুই শব্দ - নিজের ভেঙে যাওয়ার) [১]

ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর মধ্যভাগে দিল্লির রাজনৈতিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক মহল দ্রুত বদলে যাচ্ছে। ব্রিটিশ ঔপনিবেশিক শক্তির রণহুক্কারে ক্রমশ শাশানে পরিণত হচ্ছে বাদশাহের রাজদরবার থেকে হাভেলি, খসে পড়ছে মুঘল আভিজাত্যের ভিত। সম্রাট বাহাদুর শাহ কার্যত পরিণত হয়েছেন ব্রিটিশদের হাতের পুতুলে। তাঁকে নির্বাসিত করে পাকাপাকিভাবে দিল্লির ক্ষমতাকে কুক্ষিগত করার পর ব্রিটিশদের আধিপত্য চূড়ান্তভাবে ঘোষিত হল। ইতিহাসের এই সন্ধিক্ষেত্রে দাঁড়িয়ে গালিব লিখে চলেছেন অন্ধকারের খতিয়ান। ভারতের প্রথম গণ-অভ্যুত্থান মহাবিদ্রোহের আবহে ফারসি ভাষায় রচনা করছেন রোজনামা। এই রোজনামাচাই তখন তাঁর দমবন্ধ করা গৃহবন্দী জীবনের একমাত্র সঙ্গী। যা



পরবর্তীতে প্রকাশিত হয় *দস্তাভু* নামে। তাঁর স্বপ্নের শহর ভেঙেচুরে শেষ হয়ে আসছে, বাতাসে ধ্বংসলীলার রক্তিম গন্ধ, দিগন্তে অন্তগামী সূর্যের স্নান রেখা ক্রমশ মিলিয়ে যাচ্ছে, ঘনিয়ে আসছে অন্ধকার। শহরের অচলাবস্থার অসহায় রূপ ফুটে ওঠে তাঁর লেখায়, “নগরীর সব দরজা বন্ধ হয়ে গেছে। দোকানে না আছে কোনও ক্রেতা, না আছে বিক্রেতা। কোথাও গম পাওয়া যায় না, কাপড় কাচার জন্য ধোপার দেখা মেলে না, চুল কাটানোর নাপিত নেই, নেই মেঝে পরিষ্কার করার কোনও ঝাড়ুদার। এমনকি জল পাওয়াও দুষ্কর হয়ে উঠেছে”। তিনি একদিকে যেমন দিল্লির এই পতন মেনে নিতে পারছেন না, অন্যদিকে সময়ের এক জটিল গোলকধাঁধায় পড়ে ঔপনিবেশিক শক্তিকে নগ্নভাবে সমর্থন করা ছাড়া তাঁর হাতে কোনও পথ নেই। আক্ষরিকভাবে দেখতে গেলে তাঁর লেখায় ব্রিটিশদের প্রতি আনুগত্য ও বিদ্রোহীদের এই ভয়ানক উৎশৃঙ্খলতার প্রতি তীব্র নিন্দাই প্রকাশ পায়। এর পেছনে প্রধান কারণ হল গালিব জানতেন তাঁর প্রাপ্য বৃত্তি আদায়ের জন্য ব্রিটিশদের দ্বারস্থ হওয়া ছাড়া আর কোনও বিকল্প নেই। তাই এই বিদেশি শাসকদের কাছে তাঁর একটা পরিচ্ছন্ন ভাবমূর্তি রাখা খুব দরকার। অর্থাৎ, এই স্তুতি রচনার পেছনে গালিবের উদ্দেশ্য ছিল খুব পরিষ্কার। এবং গালিবের এই স্তুতি কাব্য লেখা কোনও নতুন বিষয় নয়, তিনি এই কাজে ছিলেন সিদ্ধহস্ত, কারণ সামান্য কিছু অর্থ রোজগারের জন্যে তিনি সারা জীবন লড়াই করে গেছেন। এই কষ্টসাধ্য জীবনের পথ তাঁর লেখায় ফিরে এসেছে বারবার, তাঁর সন্তাকে খণ্ডিত করেছে, পরস্পরবিরোধী ভাবধারার স্রোত খেলা করে গেছে হৃদয়জুড়ে, যার হাত ধরে তিনি ভাঙতে চেয়েছে গতানুগতিক ধ্যানধারণাকে, পেরিয়ে গিয়েছেন সংকীর্ণতার গণ্ডী, হয়ে উঠেছেন কবিবর।

এগারো বছর বয়সে গালিব যখন গজল লেখেন, তখন তিনি প্রথমবার ‘আসাদ’ ছদ্মনাম ব্যবহার করেন। পরে তিনি এর সঙ্গে ‘গালিব’ শব্দটি জুড়ে নেন। মির্জা আসাদুল্লা বেগ খান গালিব। তাঁর এই সিংহের মতো তেজ নিয়ে একটা প্রভাবশালী জীবন কাটানোর স্বপ্ন বারবার ভেঙে চুরমার হয়ে গিয়েছে। তবুও স্বপ্ন দেখতে ভোলেননি। গালিবকে বুঝতে গেলে তাঁর খোয়াবের দিগন্তে পাড়ি দিতে হবে। যে খোয়াব তাঁকে তাড়া করে বেরিয়েছে দিনরাত, এমন হাজার হাজার

কামনার ঝড়লঠন তুফানের মতো আছড়ে পড়েছে তাঁর চেতনায়। মীরের গজল বা হাফিজ সাহেবের কবিতার চাদর গায়ে চাপিয়ে গালিব তাঁর নরকে খুঁজে বেড়াচ্ছেন সুখের ঠিকানা। খুব অল্প বয়সে বাবা আবদুল্লা বেগ খানকে হারান গালিব। অভিভাবক কাকা নাসরুল্লা বেগ খানও মারা যান যখন গালিবের তখন মাত্র ৭ বছর বয়স। এরপর থেকেই শুরু হয়ে যায় প্রাপ্য বৃত্তি আদায়ের জন্য লড়াই। ১৩ বছর বয়সে এলাহী বকসের মেয়ের সঙ্গে বিবাহ হয় তাঁর। একের পর এক সাতটি সন্তানকে হারিয়েছেন। বেগম উমরাও-য়ের সঙ্গে কোনও সুমধুর বৈবাহিক সম্পর্ক গড়ে তুলতে পারেননি। শরীরময় হাজারটা ঋণের বোঝা পোকার মতো কিলবিল করে গিয়েছে অহোরাত্র। ১৮২৮ সালে কলকাতায় পাড়ি দিয়ে ব্রিটিশ অফিসারদের দ্বারে দ্বারে ফিরেছেন, স্তুতি গিয়েছেন রাণী ভিক্টোরিয়া থেকে শুরু করে স্যার জন লরেন্স প্রমুখের। দুঃখের সাগরে ডুব দিয়ে তুলে এনেছেন তাঁর একমাত্র অবলম্বন, কবিতা।

গমে হস্তীকা আসাদ কিসসে হো জুজ মার্গ ইলাজ?

শমা হর রঙ্গমেঁ জলতী

(মরার আগে বাঁচার দুঃখ কেমনে শেষ হবে আসাদ?)

ঠিক তো জানো, ভোর হওয়া তক জুলবে শমা রং-বেরং-এ।) [২]

গালিব যখন আগ্রা থেকে দিল্লিতে পাকাপাকিভাবে চলে আসেন, তখন তাঁর বয়স ১৬। ফারসি ভাষায় পারদর্শী গালিব ছিলেন আমির খসরুর দ্বারা ভীষণভাবে অনুপ্রাণিত। সেই সময়ে দিল্লিতে উর্দু ভাষা ক্রমশ তার ডালপালা বিস্তার করেছে। ১৮০৩ সালে প্রথম ফারসি থেকে উর্দুতে রচিত হয় কোরান এবং সেই থেকেই উর্দুর প্রাধান্য বাড়তে থাকে। গালিব প্রথমে উর্দুর এই রমরমা মেনে নিতে পারেননি। কিন্তু ১৮৫০-এ এসে দেখা যায়, ফারসি ভাষা ক্রমশ বিস্মৃতির অন্ধকারে চলে যাচ্ছে। এমনকি মুশায়ারাগুলিতেও ফারসি অবলুপ্ত হয়ে যায়। গালিবের সমকালীন বিখ্যাত কবিদের মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য ছিলেন জাউখ, মোমিন, জওহর, শাহেবাই নাজির আখবরবাদী প্রমুখ। বাদশা বাহাদুর শাহ নিজেও একজন কবি ছিলেন এবং তাঁর দরবারে নিয়মিত মুশায়ারার আয়োজন হত। এছাড়া কবি মোমিনের বাড়িতেও কবিতার আসর বসত। খ্যাতির চূড়ায় থাকার পাশাপাশি গালিবকে ঘিরে বিতর্কেরও অন্ত ছিল না। কলকাতায় এসে এক মুশায়ারায় কবিতা পাঠ করে

জড়িয়ে পড়লেন তর্কাতর্কিতে। জোৎস্নামুখরিত সন্ধ্যায় তালতলার মাদ্রাজা-ই-আলিয়ায় প্রায় পাঁচ হাজার দর্শক উপস্থিত। গালিব শুরু করলেন ফারসিতে রচিত তাঁর কবিতা,

জুজুব-এ অজ অলম বা অজ হালা 'অলম বেশম।  
হমচু মু-এ বুতারা জমিয়ঁ বরখিজাদ।।

(মানুষ অনেক উন্নতি করেছে এবং সে বহু কিছু আবিষ্কার করেছে, কিন্তু ঈশ্বরের দেওয়া প্রজ্ঞাই তার শ্রেষ্ঠ উপহার।) [৩]

সভা জুড়ে খেলে গেল বিতর্কের কলরোল। গালিব জানতেন না তাঁর চিরশত্রু আফজল বেগ খাঁর ভাড়া করা কবিরাও সেখানে উপস্থিত। তাঁরা নিজেদের মির্জা হাসান কাতিলের শিষ্য বলে পরিচয় দিয়ে জুড়ে দিলেন তর্ক, গালিবের বিরুদ্ধে অভিযোগ আনলেন যে তিনি নাকি ফারসি ব্যাকরণ জানেন না। চটে গেলেন গালিব। ফারসি ভাষায় তাঁর দক্ষতা নিয়ে গালিবের ছিল সীমাহীন গর্ব। কাতিলকে কোনোমতেই তাঁর সমতুল্য মনে করতেন না। ধৈর্যচ্যুত গালিব পরবর্তীকালে তৎকালীন ভারতীয় ফারসি ভাষার লেখকদের প্রতি ক্ষোভ উগড়ে দিয়েছেন। গালিবের আত্মসম্মানবোধ ছিল ভয়ঙ্কর, কবিবরের প্রাপ্য সম্মান না পেলে তিনি বেঁকে বসতেন। এই কারণেই তিনি দিল্লি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ফারসির অধ্যাপক পদ গ্রহণ করেননি। গালিবের মনে হয়েছিল তাঁর মতো একজন ফারসি পণ্ডিতের পক্ষে ইন্টারভিউ দেওয়া অত্যন্ত অসম্মানজনক। কলেজের কর্মাধ্যক্ষ জেমস টমসন তাঁকে অভ্যর্থনা জানাতে না এলে ক্ষুব্ধ গালিব পালকি ফেরানোর নির্দেশ দিলেন।

‘শহর বিস্তৃত আকাশলীনা

আমার করতলে দেয় ও নেয় কিছু

জীবন কেটে যায় তাকে ভুলি না’।

- সুনীল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়, স্মৃতির শহর ১

কলকাতায় এসে এই শহরের প্রেমে পড়ে গিয়েছিলেন গালিব। সিমলা স্ট্রিটে আলি সওদাগরের বদান্যতায় তাঁর এক হাভেলিতে থাকা শুরু করেছিলেন। ভাড়া ১০ টাকা। এই শহরকে ভালোবেসে এক বন্ধুকে চিঠি লিখে জানিয়েছেন, সংসারধর্ম না করলে তিনি হয়ত কলকাতাতেই থেকে যেতেন। এখানকার রাস্তাঘাট, বিদেশিদের সমাহার, সংস্কৃতির সঙ্গে একাঙ্

হয়ে গিয়েছিলেন তিনি। আর খেতে ভালোবাসতেন ‘মিঠাআম’। এই বিষয়ে অনেক গল্প জানতে পারা যায়। একবার গালিবকে এক হাকিম বলেছিলেন, ‘গাধারাও আম পছন্দ করে না’। গালিবের তৎক্ষণাৎ উত্তর, ‘বটেই তো, ঐজন্যই তো ওরা গাধা’। কৌতুকবোধে তাঁর জুড়ি মেলা ভার। কলকাতার প্রসঙ্গ এলে গালিবের সেই বিখ্যাত শায়েরিটির কথা উল্লেখ না করলে চলে না,

কলকাতেকা যো জিকর কিয়া তুনে হম নশাঁ  
এক তীর মেরে সীনে মে মারা কে হায় হায়।

(কলকাতার প্রসঙ্গ তুমি তুললে বন্ধু  
তীর একটা বুক মারলে, হায় হায়।) [৪]

জন্মসূত্রে একজন সুন্নি মুসলমান হলেও গালিব নিজেকে আধা-মুসলমান হিসেবে দাবি করতেন। যেকোনও রকম ধর্মীয় গোঁড়ামিকে তিনি মনে-প্রাণে ঘৃণা করতেন এবং সময়ে সময়ে বিদ্রূপ করতেও ছাড়েননি। তাঁর কাছে ধর্ম মানে ছিল মানুষে মানুষে ভ্রাতৃত্বের বন্ধন। নিজে ভীষণভাবে মদ্যপানে আসক্ত ছিলেন। তাঁর কাছে স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য যাপনের সমার্থক হয়ে গিয়েছিল বিলাসী মদ্যপান। একের পর এক আঘাতে যখন তিনি বিধ্বস্ত, মদ্যপানই হয়ে উঠেছিল তাঁর একমাত্র শৃঙ্খল। এই নিয়ে অনেক শেরও রচনা করেছিলেন তিনি। এক একসময় মদ ছাড়া তাঁর কলম চলত না। সুরাই ছিল তাঁর ‘আতিশ-এ-বেদুদ’, অর্থাৎ, ধোঁয়াহীন আগুন। তাঁর সমকালীন এক ধার্মিক কবি ইমাম বক্স সাহবাই-কে উদ্দেশ্য করে বলেছিলেন, “এ আবার কীকরে কবি হল? এ তো জীবনে সুরাপান করেনি, জুয়া খেলেনি, প্রেমিকার হাতে জুতোর বাড়ি খায়নি, বা জেলেও যাননি”।

কলকাতায় আসার পথে গালিব বেশ কিছুদিন বেনারসে ছিলেন। মঠ-মন্দিরের শহর বেনারস তাঁকে আচ্ছন্ন করে রেখেছিল। চিরাগ-ই-দায়ির বইতে ফারসি ভাষায় তিনি রচনা করেছেন বেনারসের প্রতি তাঁর প্রেম। কলকাতার মতো এখানে এসেও তাঁর ইচ্ছে হয়েছিল স্থায়ীভাবে থেকে যাওয়ার, বন্ধুকে এক চিঠিতে বলেছেন, ইনাম ত্যাগ করে হাতে জপের মালা, কপালে তিলক ও গায়ে পৈতে চাপিয়ে তিনি গঙ্গার তীরে বসে থাকতে চান। এভাবেই তিনি হয়ত মুক্তির পথ পাবেন। কাশীর গঙ্গার জলের আয়নায় সূর্যাস্ত দেখতে দেখতে এই মুক্তির নেশা তাঁর হৃদয়কে ঘুড়ির মতো উড়িয়ে নিয়ে যেতে চায়। শৈশবে আগ্রার পথে পথে আনমনে

ঘুরে বেড়ানো বা ঘুড়ি ওড়ানোয় মত্ত হয়ে থাকা গালিব শেষ জীবনে এসে চার দেওয়ালে আবদ্ধ হয়ে গেলেন। জীবন সায়াহ্ন যত এগিয়ে এসেছে, গালিবের আঁধার নরকে বারাবার তাঁকে লাঞ্ছনার স্বীকার হতে হয়েছে। টাকা ধার করে শোধ দিতে না পারার জন্য বা জুয়া খেলার জন্য গ্রেপ্তার হয়েছেন একাধিকবার। কিন্তু প্রত্যেকবারই হেরে যাওয়ার মুখ থেকে ফিরে এসেছেন তাঁর অদম্য জীবনশক্তি নিয়ে। চারপাশের পরিস্থিতি নিয়ে ব্যঙ্গ-বিদ্রূপ করার পাশাপাশি নিজেকে নিয়েও ব্যঙ্গ করতে ছাড়েননি। অভিজাত মেজাজটাই তাঁর সর্বক্ষণের সঙ্গী ছিল। তবু কবি হিসেবে তাঁর যে স্বীকৃতি প্রাপ্য ছিল, তা না পাওয়ার গ্লানি শেষ জীবনে তাঁকে পীড়া দিত। শেষ বয়সে এক এক করে প্রিয়জনদের ও বন্ধুস্থানীয় কবিদের মৃত্যুর ঘটনায় তিনি ভেতরে ভেতরে ভেঙেচুরে যেতে লাগলেন। ক্ষতবিক্ষত হৃদয়ে হাজারটা অতৃপ্ত বাসনার পাতা ঝরিয়ে ১৮৬৯ সালের ১৫ই ফেব্রুয়ারি গালিব হাঁটা দিলেন মৃত্যুদূতের পিছু পিছু, যন্ত্রণাদেশ পেরিয়ে, তেপান্তরের সীমানায় - যেখানে ছায়াঘন অন্ধকার নেই, নেই আঙুনে পোড়া ইতিহাসের ক্ষত, নেই আগত ধ্বংসের আতঙ্ক। শুধু পড়ে আছে লক্ষ রক্ত-ইচ্ছে, কবরের গভীরে; সময়ের শিরা-উপশিরা বেয়ে যা প্রবাহিত হয়ে চলেছে শতাব্দীর পর শতাব্দী, যে প্রবাহ কখনই থামার নয়।

খামোশী মে নিহা খুসস্তা লাখো আর্জুয়ে হায়  
চিরাগে মুর্দই হু ম্যায় বেজবা গোরে গরীবাঁ কা।  
(নীরব হয়ে লুকিয়ে আছে লক্ষ রক্ত-ইচ্ছে আমার  
স্তব্ধ ও নিভস্ত প্রদীপ অদূরের ওই কবরতলে।) [৫]

#### সূত্রনির্দেশ -

গালিবের কবিতার অনুবাদ- [১], [২], [৪], [৫] - গালিবের কবিতা, শক্তি চট্টোপাধ্যায় ও আয়ান রশীদ, দে'জ পাবলিশিং। [৩] - কলকাতায় গালিব, শামিম আহমেদ, অভিযান পাবলিশার্স।

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## Our Heritage Our Pride



Durga Puja finds place on Unesco 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' list. This is the first festival in Asia to receive the recognition. Historian Tapati Guha Thakurta, whose research on Durga Puja and archival material she and her team had collected at the Jadunath Bhavan museum and resource centre, a unit of CSSS, helped prepare the dossier that was sent to unesco by the Union cultural ministry. Professor Guha Thakurta said "Durga Puja is a religious festival that has become a cultural and secular event. It has also become a space for social and artists activities. This prestigious tag will open up this thriving festival to the world."

Courtesy :TOI

### In the Making of Durga Pratima

Isha Mahammad

Former President, The Asiatic Society

In 1980's, when I was the Principal of the Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata -16, residing in the Principal's Quarters at 28, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, a few young people of Bokul Bagan Durgotsab Committee, Bhawanipur, Kolkata 25, came to meet me with a request to make a Durga Idol for their Public Puja and Sarad Festival.

I already knew that this Bokul Bagan Club have been organizing their Sarbajanin Durgotsab with the Deity to be designed and made by one of the renowned Artists of Kolkata from its very inception. Starting from the artists like Nirode Majumder, Paritosh Sen, Sunilmadhab Sen, Rathin Maitra and others had already set the tradition; I accepted the proposal and found that the previous year's image was made by the artist Bikash Bhattacharya in his own style.

However, I decided to create the Durga idol. Mahisasura-Mardini, being perfectly in the tradition and iconography, at the same time eclectically organizing certain units more artistic, such as four offsprings of Mother Gouri are floating around the sky like Navochara, surveying the habitation and

cityscape (Kolkata) below and on the top, Siva (Bholanath), dispassionately made his presence felt.

Another important aspect of the total Image is the light-footedness, descending from her Vahana (the Lion), salvaging the Asura by killing him (Anayasa-Badha), both are staring directly to the eyes of each other, all are in one toted unity, balancing and complementary to each other. In Indian concept of Devi Pratima, the proposition i.e. Tala, Angula, Mana

Bhangi and Bhaba Lavanya and Bamika-Bhanga are equally important. The aabhanga/divyanga Pratima with ten hands including different 'ayudha' have been arranged in such a way that has given a feeling of circular movement in the act of annihilating the evil to establish peace and prosperity in the life and society. The Pratima has been made frilly from clay and on bamboo structure



and thatched straw, no textile has been used for her dress and war-like attire, all painted with soft and soothing colours as per requirement for serenity and aesthetic harmony, which was based on Indian shastras, especially from Pratima Lakshanam.

Extract from *Monthly Bulletin*, September 2018



## A Varahi Stone Image from Dignagar, Ausgram, Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal

Rangan Kanti Jana

Former Curator, Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Burdwan

Several ancient Indian texts record different number of Matrikas. A few texts mention the number either seven or eight or even a thousand. The commentator of Brihat Samhita Utpala states eleven such as Brahmi, Vaisnavi, Raudri, Kaumari, Aindri, Yami, Varahi, Kauberi, Narasimhi, Varuni and Vainayaki.<sup>1</sup> Albiruni describes seven of them namely—Brahmani, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Bhagavati and Camunda. The same author elsewhere states eight Matrikas but does not mention the specific names.<sup>2</sup> The *Salyaparva* of the *Mahabharata* gives one hundred and ninety-four. The *Matsya Purana* indicates nine Matrikas such as—Brahmani, Maheswari, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Yogesvari, Camunda, Kalika (*Matsya Purana* 261.24-37). The *Kurma Purana* notes one hundred. (*Kurma Purana* 27.226-232). The *Markandeya Purana* records seven Matrikas—Brahmani, Maheswari, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Narasimhi, Aindri; the same *Purana* mentions the emanatory goddesses—Sivaduti and Kali (*Markandeya Purana* 88.14-22). Whereas the *Agni Purana* describes seven Matrikas—Brahmani, Sankari, Kaumari, Laksmi, Varahi, Aindri and Camunda, the name Mahalaksmi is also mentioned (*Agni Purana* 50.18-23a), 144.30b-31). Number of images are reported to have been found from Bengal (undivided) and in other parts of India. The Matrikas are found either as single goddess

or in a group after accompanied by the guardian (male) figures.

Here, the main focus is given on 'Varahi', one of the Matrikas. There are several Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu-*Pauranic* Pantheon incorporated in *Vajrayana* Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> These are Mahakala, Ganapati, Ganapatihridaya, Sarasvati, eight Dikpalas —Indra, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, Isna, Agni, Nairrit, Vayu; ten principal Hindu deities, namely—Brahma, Visnu, Mahesvara, Kartikeya, Varahi, Camunda, Bhiringi, Ganapati, Mahakala, Nandikesvara; nine planets— Aditya, Candray, Mangala, Buddha, Brihaspati, Sukra, Sani, Rahu, Ketu; Bahabhadra group—Balabhadra, Jayakara, Madhumara, Vasanta; Lords of the Yakhas, Kinnaras, Gandharvas and Vidyadharas; Twenty constellations and time deities. About the Matrika 'Varahi' Buddhist concept is— Colour : Blue, Arms : four, Symbol : Fish, Vehicle : Owl.

Her form is described thus (according to the Nispannayogavali, p. 62)

*“Vārāhī Kṛṣṇā pecakārūḍhā caturbhujā  
Savyavāmābhyām rohitamatsya  
Kapāladharā dvābhyām kṛtāñjaliḥ”*

“Varahi is blue in colour. She rides on an owl and is four-armed. In one pair of hands she shows the Rohita fish (in the right) and the kapala (in the left). Two others are clasped in anjali.”<sup>4</sup>

A stone image is reported to have been recovered from a pond during renovation from the village Dignagar under Ausgram Police Station of Purba Bardhaman district.



Varahi Image

Provenance : Dignagar village, P.S. :  
Ausgram, Dist. Purba Bardhaman  
Material : Black Basalt  
Size : 1.5 ft x 1 ft.  
Time : Early Medieval period  
(c. 10-11th century CE)

Description : The boar faced female goddess is robust and pot bellied. She is seated in 'lalitasana' posture on a fullblown double petalled lotus. She is four-armed, holding a sword in upper right hand and a shield in the upper left hand. She holds a fish (Rohita) with varada mudra in her lower right hand—it perhaps indicates a tantrik trait as matsya is one of the five 'ma' i.e., 'Pancamakara'<sup>5</sup> and bears an object (indistinct flower?) in her lower left hand. She is adorned and her hair is piled up on the head and secured by a jewelled fillet. Her right leg (pendant) is on a lotus. The pedestal is pancaratha type. Below the lotus seat of vehicle of the goddess a winged male figure, she is placed on the upraised hands. The winged figure has been identified as Garudha.<sup>6</sup> But in the 'Nisapannayogavali', the owl (Nisapannayogavali p.62). It is perhaps the personified form and he is flanked by two devotees. The upper back slab is carved like a 'Pidha deul' type 'Stupa sirsa' with a 'Kritimukha' on the top of the goddess head.

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3. B. Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Calcutta, 1987, pp. 344-383.
4. *Ibid*, p. 364
5. Jitendranath Bandyopadhyay, 'Pancapasana', Calcutta 1994 (second edition) p. 269; Enamul Haque, *Bengal sculptures (Hindu Iconography upto c. 1250 AD)*, Dhaka, 1992, p. 260
6. Mukhlesur Rahaman, *Sculpture in the Varendra Research Museum: A Descriptive Catalogue*, Rajshahi, 1998, p. 231.

# A Corpus of Inscribed Images of Eastern India (Fourth-Thirteenth centuries)\*

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## Introduction

Donation of images of deities on/ for the fulfilment of a vow (*mānasika*) is an age-old tradition in South Asia. Originally it was practiced by the Buddhists and the Jains. Gradually it spread among the followers of the Brahmanical religions. Such donations used to be made at private shrines and common religious centres like monastic sites and so on. A large number of such donative records bear inscriptions which are obviously the product of a literate tradition. The donors include rulers, various ranks of subordinates and men and women following different professions, Buddhist monks and nuns and even lay devotees.

There is no dependable published source on the numerical profile of inscribed images in eastern India, but the number is obviously nothing less than 1000. These can be broadly placed into two categories: (i) images bearing dates in well-known eras like the Śaka/Vikrama *samvat* or the regnal year of the ruler of the area, (ii) undated images that are to be dated precisely on the basis of two kinds of considerations, i.e., stylistic and palaeographic. Thus, a joint venture of the art historian and the epigraphist is necessary in dealing with the

problem. At present there is no corpus of this large gamut of inscribed images of eastern India. Susan Huntington had incorporated 77 dated images from Bihar and undivided Bengal (Huntington 1984). The large number of undated images, therefore, remained unrecorded. Subsequently, several art historical studies have been appended with either 'lists' or 'texts' of inscriptions appearing on sculptural compositions (for major works, Bautze-Picron 2015, Bhattacharya 2000, Sanyal 2014, Sengupta 1990).

## Scope

The project that forms the subject of this report commenced in June 2017 in order to undertake a thorough and comprehensive survey of this epigraphic corpus that has the potential of raising questions on a variety of subjects: the inspiration/s and modes of representation of a bewildering range of visual programmes depicted on them, the wide range of patrons who participated in the processes of dedication of images (Pal 2020), the identity of the 'elusive' artists who possibly travelled across widely separated geographical terrains of Eastern-Northeastern India producing these

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\* Project funded by The Asiatic Society, Kolkata

sculptures in the late first and early second millennia CE, the donor figures that are almost invariably depicted as 'peripheral' visual elements on them and how the varying layers of time can be read on these compositions (for a recent excellent study, Kim 2020), in some cases the essentially esoteric Buddhist environ that resulted in the genesis of these aesthetic creations (Revire, Sanyal and Giebel 2021, Sanyal 2021), the complex interrelation of the habitats and centres, the names of which are inscribed on these images, underlining issues of essentially local historical geographical significance, and so on.

### Fieldwork

The major database preserved in sites and collections in Bihar and Bangladesh could not be examined due to the COVID-19 Pandemic situation and subsequent developments. The only fieldwork in Tripura carried out earlier, however, resulted in the discovery of not only hitherto unpublished inscribed material from Northeastern India, but also allowed us to draw on problems relating to use of rock and rock source in carving sculptures. Thus, as part of this project, our team visited the sites and museums in and around Agartala, Tripura from 28<sup>th</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2018 with a view to have an understanding of the sculptures of the region.

The sites visited were —

1. Tripura Govt. Museum, Ujjayanta Palace, Agartala
2. Udaipur, the old capital of the Tripura kings
3. Unakoti
4. Pilak

The Tripura State Museum has shifted to the heritage building of Ujjayanta palace in September, 2013. Most of the sculptures are from Udaipur, Pilak, Jolaibari and other



**Figure 1.** Inscribed image of Viṣṇu, (photograph Rajat Sanyal, courtesy Tripura Govt. Museum, Agartala)

locations in Tripura. They are dated between the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE (Mitra 1976).

The survey resulted in the critical study of a small set of inscribed sculptures at the sites of Pilak and Unakoti. While the art and archaeology of both of these sites of Tripura have been subjected to regular investigation by archaeologists and/or art historians, no study has so far focused on the literary tradition that manifested itself in the sculptural corpus of the region.

Image inscriptions from the present study area come from two major sites of the State of Tripura, viz. Unakoti, located in the Unakoti district in northeastern Tripura

and Pilak, located in the Shantibazar Sub-division of the South Tripura district. The majority of inscribed sculptural specimens of the region come from the well-known temple site of Pilak, excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India in the last quarter of the preceding century. Of the inscribed pieces from Pilak, one miniature bronze image is preserved in the display collection of the Agartala Museum. The other two inscriptions, engraved again on two other miniatures, are located in the Site Museum at Pilak.

The first inscription is engraved on a miniature bronze image of Viṣṇu found from Pilak. The inscription is engraved on the front and right side of the pedestal. We could not examine if it runs along the back side of the pedestal as well, since the piece could not be dislodged from its fixed location in the showcase. Therefore, only the frontal part of the record could be photographed and examined. The one-line record is written in Sanskrit language and the Siddhamātrkā script of circa ninth century CE. It starts with the usual *siddham* symbol followed by probably the record of *deyadharmā* (i.e., donation) by a dovettee whose name ends with 'śiva'.

Text (extant): *siddham* [symbol] ... ..  
*dedharmmāya ...tra ...śiva*

Two more miniature bronzes from the same site are preserved in the reserve collection of the site Museum at Pilak. But unfortunately, none of these inscriptions could be read as the inscribed surfaces in both the specimens are badly corroded. One of these records is engraved on the pedestal of a Umā-Maheśvara image. Here, only the letters 'ra' and 'da' can be faintly read. On the other images of a seated Buddha, the inscription is written in three lines within the flan circular flan attached to the back of the image. It probably records the *ye dharmāḥ* stanza. Both the records

seem to display characteristics of mature Siddhamātrkā script of ninth century.

The only inscription on a stone image recovered during the present fieldwork is engraved on a massive Caturmukhalinga at one of the locales of the extensive rock-cut sculptural complex of Unakoti. R.D. Banerji referred to an inscribed Caturmukhalinga at Unakoti recording the name of Śrī Jayadeva (Banerji 1933: 165). In the present inscription we could only decipher the letter Śrī close to the top border of the sculpture. It seems that the remaining letters have peeled off from the surface of the rock due to natural weathering. If our identification is accepted, this represents the Caturmukhalinga documented by Banerji.

Apart from materials documented during this fieldwork, we have been able to collate the published database, with the help of Somnath Chakraborty, the Research Assistant of the project, on about 300 inscriptions. These have been incorporated in our interim report on the project.

### Organisation of the Database

The data collected have been classified under three sections: Buddhist and Jain, Brahmanical and Miscellaneous. The last section incorporates unidentified images or fragments where the figural component is missing. The inscribed memorial stones have also been listed under it.

The data has been organised and presented chronologically under the following heads:

- (1) *Subject*: Describes the object on which the inscription has been written, whether it is an architectural fragment like door jamb of a temple or coping stone of a railing etc. Majority are, however, independent images.
- (2) *Provenance and Location*: while in many cases the exact provenance or the context of the images are known, for many of them,

the provenance data is missing from the database of collections of which they form a part. In such cases, either they are recorded under their 'Location' in a museum or private collection, or the provenance details are reconstructed on the basis of earlier publications and/or the accompanying inscription that provides substantial clue to identifying its geographical origin (for a recent case study, Sanyal 2020).

- (3) *Material*: Materials used in writing these inscriptions are either stone or metal
- (4) *Date*: The dates of the inscribed images are much problematic. They have been broadly classified under dated and undated. However, the dated ones can only refer to the approximate age, since they bear dates in terms of the regnal year of the rulers concerned and not the date in an era that can be converted directly into Christian Era. The undated images need to be assigned to their periods on the basis of palaeography which is again a much-debated issue.
- (5) *Language*: The Language of all the inscriptions is Sanskrit. Often, they include local and orthographically peculiar terms which are of much interest from the perspective of the history of languages.
- (6) *Script*: The script of the inscriptions ranges from Late Brāhmī to Siddhamātrikā and Gauḍī.
- (7) *Location*: The location of the inscription in case of images may be (a) on the stele or (b) on the pedestal of the image. Often, they are found in other places like (c) under the hands of the deity; (d) in between the legs; (e) on the rear of the backslab and, seldom, on the (f) underside of the image (Sanyal 2016).
- (8) *Text of the Inscription*: In case of published images, every available version has been included with reference to the source. We have also tried to re-examine the published readings.
- (9) *Translation*: Translations of the epigraphs are based either on earlier editions of the

texts or, when, they are recorded here for the first time, on our own readings

- (10) *References*: Contains all the available references of different editions of the texts have been incorporated.

### Concluding observation:

The study carried out under this project leads us to observe that image inscriptions of eastern India form a potential corpus of epigraphical material that still demands a comprehensive study. They are one of the principal set of sources in interrogating issues of social and economic histories of religion as well as polity in this part of the subcontinent in the early medieval period.

We will soon submit the results of our enquiry, chiefly based on our fieldwork in Tripura, in the form of an essay to the Asiatic Society for consideration of publication.

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## Role of Print Media in Spreading the Boons of Physical Fitness

**Basudhita Basu**

Research Fellow, The Asiatic Society

“The amusements of a numerous people that do not supply the British with a single *sepo*<sup>1</sup> cannot be expected to bear a military character. The god did not make him warlike. Possessed of lax nerves, of a feeble body and of a timid soul, nature has not meant him to handle a gun, or wield a sword.”<sup>2</sup>

The British administrators used to characterize the Bengalis having shortage of masculinity making them inferior to the British and they also used to regard that the Bengalis cannot compete with them in term of “the straight forwardness of Christian honesty” to enjoy order and stability.<sup>3</sup> And the Western influenced Bengali intellectuals also unassertively subscribed into the British hypothetical inference about them regarding their own physical degeneration. The influence of the European culture of physical strength and vigour led them to ponder about creating a strong, masculine Bengali race.

The print media played an important role in spreading the boons of exercises through their articles. Various contemporary writings including the vernacular journal *Swastha Samachar* had emphasized the importance of “Byam” (Exercise) referring it as a must for a person to stay healthy, as well as mentioning the harmful effects, like the weakening of muscles and ligament, due to lack of exercise. If somebody dreams of a healthy body, he should not compromise with his daily Byam<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, it also tries to highlight the role of exercise and games in a child’s life. A

child can learn a lot from a specific game. It also forewarns the reader that all kinds of exercises were not favourable for everybody. An exercise beneficial for a child may not be profitable to an adult. Swimming and walking are two of the usual exercises done by many persons. Immoderate pressure of the school curriculum debarred shut them out from exercising which in return affected their health.<sup>5</sup>

Various contemporary journals counseled the youths to improve their physical strengths. Writer Hemendra Kumar Roy in *Bharati* has lamented over the excessive tendency of Bengali parents to regard education as the main yardstick of successful establishment of their progenies. The parents hardly tried to realize the equal importance of exercise for physical development. He had further regretted about the weakness and fragility of health of the Bengali youth regarding it very deplorable. A casual visit of College Street in the afternoon would witness how the Bengali student community had become physically very weak particularly being pressurized by the University Syllabus. It was regarded loathsome as they were the future of nation. They became too sickly to have the proper digestive capacity resulting havoc of diseases and the premature death in Bengal. The writer thinks the political propaganda and movement for *Swaraj* as hollow because even if the Bengalis achieve independence (*Swaraj*) they won’t be in the position of enjoying that. The author continues that



good physique has immense importance and in this sphere the Bengalis are inferior to the people of all Independent nations. The Bengalis are in the thought that they are capable of protecting their nation after attaining *Swaraj* but unfortunately they are not even able to protect their own house. They mostly appointed security guards of UP and Bihar. Therefore, along with *Swaraj* movements, they should also explore for 'Atmashakti'.

The author also says that the promulgation of Non-Violence in case of Bengal is superfluous as they have already been born with this attribute of non-violence. However, Gandhi's Non-violence has at least offered them a respectable cover for their wimpiness. Some others have advocated that poverty was mainly responsible for poor health condition of our people. It would be fruitless and impractical for those people to invest their time and energy for physical exercises who are deprived of bare minimum food and nutrition. But the writer is unwilling to buy this point. According to him there were many well-off as well as middle class people who are also reluctant to exercise, rather they prefer to be involved in business. Another issue is the parents' discouragement to their children regarding physical exercises on the ground as it might hamper their studies. They do not try to understand that physical exercises also can help them in their studies. Moreover, the writer argues that the Bengalis do not have the required energy for jobs due to their unfit physical condition. Moreover, due to lack of longevity some of the talented Bengalis have breathed their last in an early age like Michael Madhusudan, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.<sup>6</sup> An article in *Sakha* re-iterated the necessity of exercises to keep the health strong and fit. It advises native Bengalees for regular exercises not only to remain fit and healthy but also to become self-sufficient to cope with adverse situation.<sup>7</sup>

Education should be considered as an essential precondition for manhood, as it

promotes the harmonious development of the body and mind. The inclusion of Physical Education makes education holistic by a reasonable cultivation of all the forces and qualities a man is comprised of. The moral effect of physical Education was axiomatic. It gives self-mastery, moral elegance and equilibrium. Thus Physical Education was given importance. He regrets that we are one of the nations who unfortunately did not take up the Science of physical Education as one of the constituent of General Education. The School life had very bad repercussion upon the normal posture of the body hampering the proper flow of lymph and blood and functioning of the system. Studious and Sedentary habits result some degree of contortion of the spine. This deformity of the column distorts the spinal marrow which is the source of the nerves. This again muddles the operation of other organ, shortness of breath, palpitation of the heart etc which are common in Schools.<sup>8</sup>

The Bengali parents usually give complete attention to the cognitive development of their offspring's progress showing no interest in their psychomotor development, which is important for their health being unaware of the influence of physique over their mind, leading their offspring to the impairment of health and fitness causing the breakdown of their health. After that when they come to understand the importance of Exercises it becomes too late. But the author suggests that this concept is completely wrong because a person can exercise at any age. The eminent physical Instructor of Europe Dr. Crazy Usky had corroborated this point.<sup>9</sup> Contemporary Vernacular literature like *Alaler ghorer dulal* shows that so far as the Children were concerned it should be ensured that they should study and play games simultaneously. The importance of Games and Sports lies in the fact that they reinvigorate one's mind increasing concentration and make one healthy. Continuous study leads to weakness and

therefore one cannot learn the reason properly. However, all games are not fruitful, only those games that lead to physical strain were considered beneficial.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the various contemporary magazines were full of articles regarding exercise and its boon for our health. The college magazines emphasize the importance of exercise and the need of staying healthy. It clearly says if somebody wants a healthy body, he should not compromise with 'BYAM' (Exercise). They understood that one cannot be independent unless he/she is physically strong and exercise was a medium to achieve physical strength. Thus once the Bengalis became conscious about their political subjugation, they understood the cause as well as the effect of their fragile physical structure and hence they took the endeavour to create a healthy nation through physical culture movement.

#### Notes

- 1 A term used for colonial soldiers in India .
- 2 Horatio Smith, "Bengali Games and Amusements", *The Calcutta Review* (June 1851); pp. 334-336.
- 3 Unpublished M. Phil. work of Sarbajit Mitra, Circus to Cricket: The drive for Masculinization in Colonial Bengal:1870-1911, (Kolkata: Jadavpur University, 2014) p-4
- 4 *Swasthya Samachar*, First Year, First Number, Baishakh, 1319(B. S)
- 5 *Swasthya Samachar*, Ninth Year, First Number, Baishakh, 1327 (B. S )
- 6 'Bahute Das Ma Shakti', *Bharati*, 45th Year, 5th Number, Bhadra, 1328
- 7 "Bat-ball khela", *Sakha*, January, 1810, 4th Part, 1st Number
- 8 Radharam Sarkar, "The Science of Physical Education", *The Modern Students*, Num II, Vol- III, February, 1935, pp. 697-699.
- 9 "Notun Byam Paddhati", *Bharati*, Aashar, 1328, 48 year, 3rd Sankha
- 10 Tekchand Thakur, *Alaler Ghorer Dulal*, (Kolkata: Manti Book House, 2012), p. 21

## Geology and The Asiatic Society of Bengal

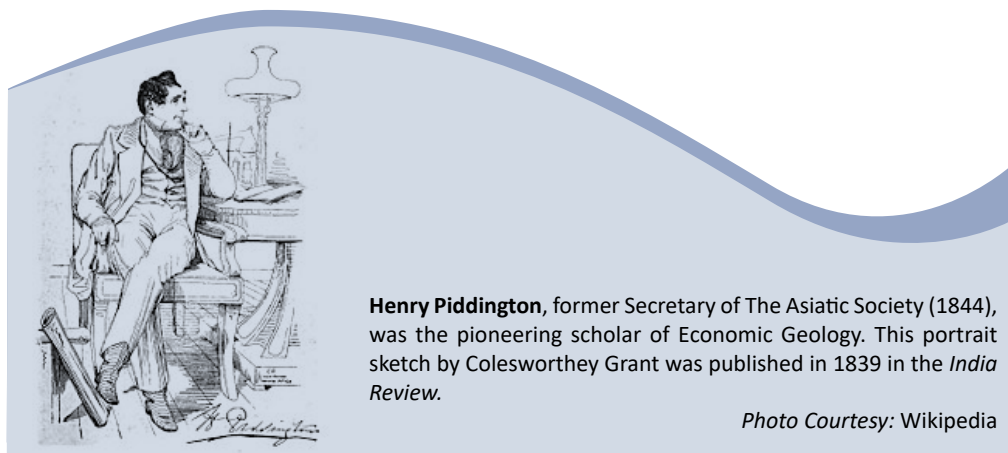
**Poulami Ray**

Former Fellow, The Asiatic Society

The Asiatic Society of Bengal functioned as a mother institution and played pivotal role in the institutionalisation of various disciplines like – Zoology, Botany, Metallurgy and Geology.

In this project we have mainly focussed on the unpublished proceedings of the Asiatic Society between the years 1842 and 1851 to understand the contribution of the Society in shaping geological sciences as discipline in British India. The year 1842 marked the emergence of the Museum of Economic Geology within the Society. It is clearly understood that initially the focus was mainly on data collection, specimen gathering for enriching this museum. Such endeavours were mainly taken up by the engineers, administrators and military heads. In this project role played by these people are highlighted and also focus is given on wide spectrum of issues ranging

from soil specimen collection to reports on mineral deposits, climatic conditions and also about the natural disasters like earthquake and volcanic eruptions which are well-documented in these unpublished proceedings. We also come to know about the budget allotted for such work from these proceedings. From 1846 onwards we find that attention was given on the production of coal and the proceedings were full of letters from the several concerned authorities for fulfilling the objective of establishing the Geological Survey of India which finally came into being in the year 1851. Thus in this project the journey from the Museum of Economic Geology to the establishment of Geological Survey of India is studied here, highlighting the role of various eminent personalities who all contributed in the process of shaping Geological Sciences as a distinct discipline.



**Henry Piddington**, former Secretary of The Asiatic Society (1844), was the pioneering scholar of Economic Geology. This portrait sketch by Colesworthy Grant was published in 1839 in the *India Review*.

*Photo Courtesy:* Wikipedia

## Observance of National Ayurveda Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2021 with an Exhibition of Manuscripts on Ayurveda & Lecture-Demonstration

On observance of National Ayurveda Day (*Dhvanantari jayanti*) on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2021, an Exhibition of Manuscripts on Ayurveda along with lecture-demonstration was organised by the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. The programme began with the welcome address



of Dr. S. B. Chakrabarti, the General Secretary of the Society. The introductory speech about the observance of the day and relevance of such exhibition in the Society was given by Professor Swapan Kumar Pramanick, President of the Society. Professor Tapati Mukherjee, the Library Secretary deliberated her speech on the collection of the Manuscripts on Ayurveda in the Museum of the Society. Dr. Anjalika Mukhopadhyay, Ph.D Consultant, Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, beautifully narrated the importance of Ayurveda and necessity of preserving these manuscripts for future researches. The slokas and excerpts from the exhibited manuscripts were



vidily explained by Dr. Jagatpati Sarkar, Senior Cataloguer and S.S.F.I. Al Quaderi, Cataloguer of the Museum Section. 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 programme was organised physically and an ambience was created by displaying posters on National Ayurveda Day and its theme, original herbs and spices and the books on Ayurveda published by the Asiatic Society. This programme was also live-streamed on the Facebook page of the Society and received over 1200 views and 106 likes. The programme was organised as a part of *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* (Celebration of 75<sup>th</sup> year of Independence).

*Compiled by : Keka Banerjee, Curator, The Asiatic Society*

## Handing over of the Old Lepcha Manuscripts by The Asiatic Society to the Lepcha Development Board

**Satarupa Dattamajumdar**

Member, Publication Committee, The Asiatic Society

There are 182 Lepcha manuscripts known as Namtho Namthar kept as Johan Van Manen collection in the Rijks-museum voor Volkenkunde 'National Museum of Ethnology' in Kern Institute, Leiden Netherlands. Johan Van Manen who collected the 182 Lepcha manuscripts during his stay in India from 1908 to 1943 served as the General Secretary of The (later Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal (from 1923 to 1939). During his stay he studied Tibetology in Darjeeling from 1916 to 1919 and collected these 182 Lepcha manuscripts along with other Tibetan manuscripts. On his appointment as member of the library committee of The Asiatic Society, these Lepcha manuscripts were exhibited at The Asiatic Society in 1918.

Attention of the scholars (of The Asiatic Society, Kolkata), was captured to these Lepcha manuscripts during its project on 'An Enquiry into the Status of Lepcha'.

Later a venture was undertaken by Sri S.S. Bhattacharya, the Philological Secretary of The Asiatic Society and the Vice President

of The Asiatic Society, Prof. Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty, to obtain a copy of these 182 manuscripts. The development in getting the access of the digital collection of 182 Lepcha manuscripts from the Kern Institute of Leiden University as a result of sustained negotiation on the part of The Asiatic Society, Kolkata took place in 2019. Presently these



Members present in the meeting: from the left Sri Shyam Sundar Bhattacharya, Renyu Reena Targain, Prof. Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty, Dr. Satarupa Dattamajumdar, Prof. Swapan Kumar Pramanick, Ren. Lyangsong Tamsang and Dr. Satyabrata Chakrabarti

manuscripts are kept in the hard bound form in the manuscript section of the library of The Asiatic Society, Kolkata. These are the



Prof. Swapan Kumar Pramanick handing over some publications of The Asiatic Society to Ren Lyangsong Tamsang

indigenous literature of the Lepcha speech community which reflects their world view and indigenous knowledge.

On request of Mr. Lyangsong Tamsang, Chairman of West Bengal Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board (WBMLLDB), Kalimpong, the council of The Asiatic Society decided to hand over the soft copy of the 182 Lepcha manuscripts.

On 3rd day of December 2021, Dr. Satyabrata Chakrabarti, General Secretary of The Asiatic Society on behalf of the Council handed over to Ren. (Mr.) Lyangsong Tamsang, the digital version of the 182 manuscripts in the presence of Prof. Swapan Kumar Pramanick

(President), Prof. Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty (Vice President), Prof. Tapati Mukhopadhyay (Library Secretary) and Sri Shyam Sundar Bhattacharya (Philological Secretary). Renyu Reena Targain, (Member-Secretary, West Bengal Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board (WBMLLDB), Kalimpong and Dr. Satarupa Dattamajumdar, member

(scholar of Lepcha language and literature) were present in the meeting. Dr. Bandana Mukherjee (Research Officer), Dr. Pritam Gurey (Librarian) and Sri Banibrata Bhattacharya (Systems Engineer) of The Asiatic Society (who were also involved in the work of printing, binding and preserving of the 182 Lepcha manuscripts) were also present in the meeting.

Ren. Lyangsong Tamsang, Chairman of WBMLLDB expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the council members of The Asiatic Society for fetching those 182 Lepcha manuscripts from the Kern Institute of Leiden University.

In the context of discussion regarding the form and content of 182 manuscripts, Ren Tamsang expressed his keen interest in undertaking a collaborative project for analysing, interpreting, transcribing and translating those old Lepcha manuscripts which are the repository of the invaluable indigenous knowledge and the world view of the Lepchas, an endangered Tibeto-Burman speech community of the Himalayas



Members participating in the meeting

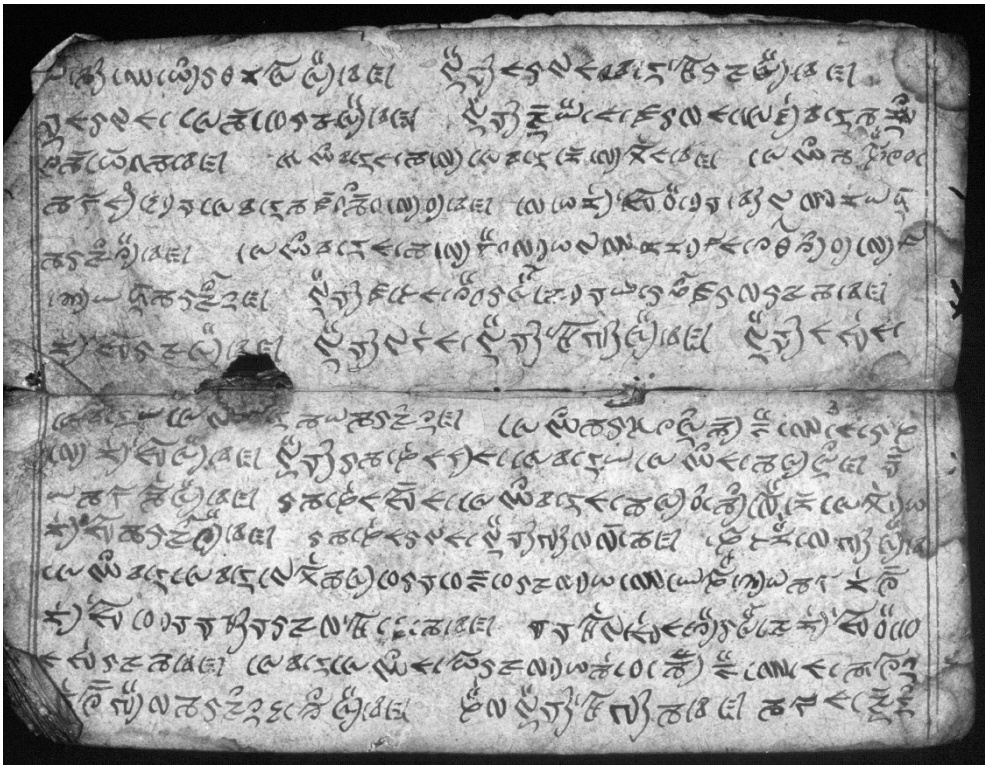
--- of Northeast India. Prof. Swapan Kumar Pramanick, the President of The Asiatic Society reciprocated positively with the possibilities of such collaborative program to undertake such a project in collaboration with West Bengal Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board.



Ren. Lyangsong Tamsang expressing his interest for a collaborative program with The Asiatic Society in documenting, interpreting and translating the old Lepcha Manuscripts.

*Photo Courtesy: Dr. Pritam Gurey*

In this connection it is pertinent to mention that much has been discussed regarding the potentiality involved and the necessity for documentation, analysis, interpretation and translation of these old texts of the Lepcha language. A project has also been submitted in 2019 by Dr. Satarupa Dattamajumdar which is principally accepted by The Asiatic Society, to carry out the work of documentation, analysis and interpretation of some selected Lepcha Namthars. Functional commencement of such a project is an urgent desideratum.



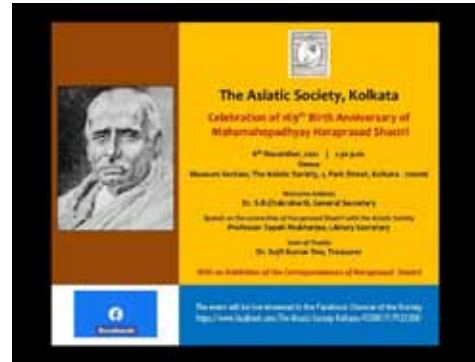
A sample text of Lepcha Namtho-Namthar 'cho-ten mun-lóm' (Ms. No. L53)

## Celebration of 169th Birth Anniversary of Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri on 6th December, 2021

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata organised the 169th birth anniversary of Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri keeping in mind his long and intimate connection with the Society. The venue of the programme was the Museum and Manuscript section of the Society where the collection of manuscripts of MM H. P. Shastri is preserved. The programme began with the garlanding of the photograph of MM H.P. Shastri and followed by the introductory speech of Dr. S. B. Chakrabarti, General Secretary of the Society. Dr. Chakrabarti explained the life and works of MM H. P. Shastri in a very vivid manner and proposed to rename one gallery after the name of MM H.P.Shastri

as 'Haraprasad Shastri Kaksha' during the time of revamp of the museum which will be started shortly. Professor Tapati Mukherjee, Library Secretary, discussed about the collection of huge number of manuscripts and the descriptive cataloguing of these manuscripts prepared by MM H.P.Shastri in a very illuminated manner. Correspondences of MM H.P.Shastri and John Van Manen exhibited on the table and those were explained by Dr. Jagatpati Sarkar and Dr. Archana Ray, Sr.Cataloguers of the Museum section. Professor Sujit Kumar Das also paid his homage and gave his heartfelt thanks for organising this very august commemoration of such personality. Council members, officials and members of the Society were present in this programme. Dr. Keka Banerjee Adhikari, Curator co-ordinated the programme.

The programme was live-streamed in the Facebook page of the Society and has already achieved 837 online viewers.



Compiled by : Keka Banerjee, Curator, The Asiatic Society



## A Brief Report on the Special Lecture 'Visva-Samsar' and the Animated Film Show 'Songs of the Earth'

**Suman Hazra**

Former Research Fellow, The Asiatic Society

On 15th December 2021, the Asiatic Society instituted a special lecture on Visva-Samsar and an animated film show to generate environmental awareness. The programme was held at the Vidyasagar Hall of the Asiatic Society. Ms Jaya Mitra, novelist and environmental activist, was the keynote speaker. In the welcome address, Dr Satyabrata Chakrabarti, General Secretary of the Asiatic Society, introduced the topic of the lecture and keynote speaker to the august audience. He also paid attention to Sir William Jones's vision to man and nature interface, the recent COP26 Summit, and long-neglected issues of environmental justice.

In her inspiring speech, Ms Jaya Mitra shared concerns about the recent changes in climate especially shifting patterns of monsoon, excess rainfalls, frequent cyclones, and floods. The observed monsoon rainfall variability and changes of monsoon across the country are the reasons to worry. In 2021, Kinnar in Himachal Pradesh suffered extremely heavy rains, leading to major flash floods, landslides, and widespread damage. In several areas of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar all major rivers and their tributaries were in spate due to heavy rains in recent years. The flood situation in West Bengal has also changed drastically as climate change progresses. As a result, in 2020, 2002, 2011, the districts in the southern part of the Gangetic West Bengal experienced major



Ms. Jaya Mitra delivering the Special Lecture on 'Visva-Samsar'.

floods. Globally, temperatures are increasing, extreme weather is intensifying, water levels are rising, glaciers are melting, and forests are burning. She pointed that no corner of our country, as well as the earth, is immune from the shocking consequences of climate change.

Ms Mitra opined that the semantic change of the word *prakritik sompod* (natural wealth) to *prakritik upadan* (natural resource) happened in the last few decades which actually reflected the exploitation of mother nature. She focused on the river Ganga and talked over the difference she has seen in the Ganga's present condition and the Ganga many years back. The rapidly changing river course of Ganga, its erosion and deposition, and its pollution have a great environmental impact. Moreover, human activities, i.e., the construction of dams has led to the decay of the Ganga by greatly diminishing the flow of the river. For example, the Farakka Barrage in Murshidabad was originally built to divert the water of river Ganga into the Hooghly River but since then several harmful consequences have been observed on the Gangetic flood plain of West Bengal. Perennial rivers are becoming seasonal, dry rivers are increasing, waterlogging of previously dry regions, changing habitats and altering landscapes are some of the examples.

According to Ms Mitra, culture, civilization, and agriculture are intrinsically interrelated. The folk traditions of our culture, like every culture, are related to the river and nature. However, these river-centric distinctive cultural traits are slowly fading away. We are destroying natural resources in the name of civilization and development. Without thinking about future generations, we are immersed in the dungeons of urbanity and artificiality. But the resistance is slowly rising to create a more beautiful, safe and sustainable environment. Some people are coming forward to protect mother nature from degradation. Some folks are also coming forward rejecting the competition for their own survival. This fight becomes a cultural struggle. At the end of the

lecture, she concluded that only humanity together can bring nature back.

Professor Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty, the Vice-President of the Asiatic Society, delivered the Presidential talk on the theme of the lecture and praised the lucid yet engaging talk given by Ms Mitra. He made us aware of the historical root of human-environment interaction. Finally, Professor Asok Kanti Sanyal, the Biological Science Secretary of The Asiatic Society and the former Chairman of West Bengal Biodiversity Board, extended the vote of thanks in which he expressed the sense of gratitude towards all the guests who spared their valuable time for this occasion.

The programme was concluded with an animated musical short film, *Songs of the Earth* by Soumik Datta which focused on the environmental crisis around the world. The 24-minute film, which premiered at the COP26 Summit in Glasgow, showcases the story of a young girl, Asha from Bengal, who desperately searches for her missing father through the flood plains of the Sundarbans delta, burning forests and melting polar ice caps. With a Walkman in hand and father's voice in her ears, she continues on her quest only to face the dangers and calamities which take place in different parts of the globe and finally overcomes the fear over the hope for a better future. Datta's musical score truly highlighted the deteriorating state of the environment and the contribution of humans to it.



## Academic Events held in the Month December 2021

### 2nd December 2021

Special Lecture on 'India in Egypt'.

Speaker: Dr Tilak Ranjan Bera, Fulbright Fellow, Senior Research Fellow,  
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.

### 6th December 2021

Celebration of 169th Birth Anniversary of Mahamahopadhyay  
Haraprasad Shastri along with an Exhibition.

**Speaker** : Professor Tapati Mukherjee.

### 12th December 2021

23rd Asin Dasgupta Memorial Lecture 2021 in collaboration with the  
Asiatic Society, Kolkata and Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad.

**Speaker:** Professor Rajat Kanta Roy.

**Topic:** বর্গশ্রম ধর্ম থেকে জাতধর্ম : ভারতবর্ষীয় সমাজের দীর্ঘকালীন রূপান্তর. (Varṇāśram  
dharma theke Jātdharma : Bharatavarṣiḥya samājer dīrghakālīn rūpāntar)

### 15th December 2021

Special Lecture on Environment entitled “বিশ্বসংসার”(Visva-Samsar) & A short  
film entitled “Songs of the Earth” directed by Shri Soumik Dutta was  
exhibited.

**Speaker** : Dr. Jaya Mitra.

### 22nd December 2021

Special Lecture, Exhibition & Lecture Demonstration on “Manuscripts on  
Ganitaśāstra” in observance of National Mathematics day.

**Speakers** : Prof. Pradip Majumder, Prof. Rajkumar Roychowdhury &  
Prof. Amartya Dutta.

### 23rd December 2021

অধ্যাপক অনিরুদ্ধ রায় স্মারক বক্তৃতা, ২০২১ (Webinar) in collaboration with the  
Asiatic Society, Kolkata and Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad.

**Speaker:** অধ্যাপক সাঈদ আলী নাদিম রেজাভি (Professor Sayid Ali Nadim Rejavi)

**Topic:** কল্পিত পাথরের সাম্রাজ্য জয়ের শহর ফতেপুর সিক্রি ( Envisioning Empire in Stone :  
Fatehpur Sikri, The City of Victory).

## Understanding Ambedkar in the Passage of Time

**Anirban Bandyopadhyay**

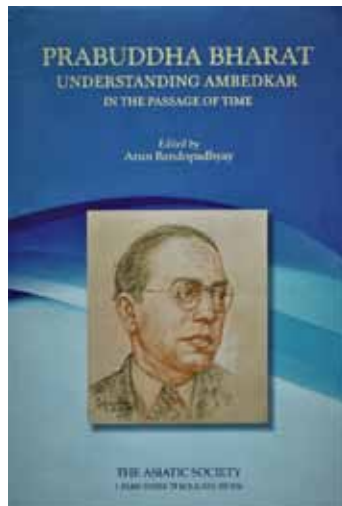
Associate Professor, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar

The Asiatic Society hosted a seminar in August, 2016 to explore how the ideas and legacies of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar held up against the passage of time. Distinguished historian Arun Bandopadhyay later put together a volume of essays based both on a considerable number of revised papers read in the conference as well as a number of invited papers from contributors who did not participate in it in a book which the Society published in August 2020. Broadly speaking, the objective of the project is to set right a wrong. It believes that at the contemporary moment Ambedkar's stature as a public intellectual, meaning one whose thoughts and legacies continue to influence a large number in the country and beyond, is comparable in scale only to that of Gandhi. Yet, serious critical engagement with Ambedkar's intellection and legacies has lagged far behind those of Gandhi. The volume seeks to join a growing corpus of studies on Ambedkar, seeking to explore the entire spectrum of his ideas and influences, beyond the more familiar aspects such as his image as the architect of the Indian constitution or as a messiah for Dalits.

Professor Bandopadhyay, besides setting Ambedkar's uniqueness in thought, his critical public engagement and work in the historical context of modern India in the twentieth century, offers an apt and overall introduction to the thirteen articles in the volume, which is useful. It addresses four broad rubrics.

Some of them, such as the ones by Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Swapan Pramanick, Siddhartha Guha Ray and Raj Kumar, address Ambedkar's explorations of what may loosely be called a rights-based political thinking and action. Umesh Bagade, Padmini Chakraborty, Anindya Sekhar Purakayastha and Shubhendra Bhowmick write on the philosophical and historical implications of Ambedkar's reflections on Buddhism and Swaraj. Maidul Islam, Basudeb Barman and Biswajit Ghosh engage with issues emanating from Ambedkar's thoughts on the ideas of

the minority. Manosanta Biswas and Adapa Satyanarayana address the contemporary Dalit movement, with Ambedkar as both a thinker and a motive force. Raj Sekhar Basu revisits the economic thought of Ambedkar with regards to state capital and planning.



Arun Bandopadhyay (ed.), *Prabuddha Bharat: Understanding Ambedkar in the Passage of Time*, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, 2020, pp xxii+299, Price: Rs. 750

Bhattacharya's tantalisingly brief remarks about the probable moments of Ambedkar's adversarial radicalism as a public intellectual, meaning a politician who thought, read and wrote widely and often, are premised on an understanding that he might have shared more common grounds with his adversaries such as Gandhi and Nehru, than is commonly assumed. Swapan Kumar Pramanick offers a broad and sweep consideration of Ambedkar's general ideas in dialogue with Gandhian and Marxist thought. He reckons that the structural requirements of electoral politics call forth an ideological front based on a convergent understanding of caste and class as a potentially more successful means of fundamental social engineering. As if responding to this search for an appropriate institutional container for Ambedkar's ideas as a viable political project, Siddhartha Guha Roy in his omnibus account of the anti-caste mobilisation in India before, during and after Ambedkar's life, claims that some sections of the Naxalite movement in Bihar and the Dalit Pathers movement in Maharashtra for a brief moment during the early seventies of the twentieth century appeared to emerge as a tantalising institutional option for an emancipatory Dalit politics. Raj Kumar explores Ambedkarism as an emancipatory ideal, meaning the ways in which Ambedkar's ideas were later interpreted by Dalits as a political ideology, as an 'antidote' to Brahmanism. He suggests that the emergence of Dalit literature as a discourse against caste power signified a more desirable institutional receptacle of Ambedkarism as an ideal for emancipation. The thread that binds Ambedkar's thought and Dalit literature is the essential premise that the philosophy of Dalit intellection or politics is a 'total revolution' or annihilation of the caste system in thought and practice. While the institutional structures of electoral politics have made the 'brokenness' of Ambedkarite or Dalit mobilisation appear as a limit condition, Dalit literary discourse as

a counterculture has been more successful in institutionalizing it as a creative and empowering subjectivity. Kumar's passing reference to a purported eclipsing of Ambedkarite consciousness by the Panther consciousness during the 1970s followed by a triumphant return of Ambedkarite poetics in Dalit poetry since the 1990s in particular is tantalising. It hints at strains of internal dialogues within the body of Dalit literature as an evolving discourse which it will be interesting to explore in greater detail.

The question of appropriate Dalit subjectivity animates Umesh Bagade's reading of Ambedkar's excavation of a history of untouchability by means of a unique reading of Buddhism as a revolutionary religion somehow suppressed by Brahmanism as a counter revolutionary ideology premised on the entrenchment of the caste system. He argues that Ambedkar's reading of Buddhism armed the Dalits with an insurgent subjectivity, which required a reasoned attempt to expand the horizons of scientific history. History for Ambedkar signified the premise of change for the better in future, by means of human agency, without which an insurgent Dalit subjectivity is impossible to imagine. Buddhism in Ambedkar's idea of history was an instance of as such a change for the better following reasoned human intervention. Bagade's implied contrast between the domain of myth as less promising than the domain of scientific history as a source for a potentially insurgent subjectivity is revealing. It perhaps speaks to Raj Kumar's passing mention of the rather late development of Dalit fiction.

Padmini Chakraborty shares with Bagade the question of how Ambedkar approached Buddhism. It seems she believes that Ambedkar 'stretched' the features of Buddhism 'to their logical limits' leading to 'drastic deviations from the chief tenets of Buddhism'. But for Ambedkar Buddhism was a means to 'end the alienation of Dalits'. As a philosopher he offered a unique perspective

on the socialisation of religion. A true religion, Ambedkar observed, is about relationships between mortals, not between man and god. Yet, Chakraborty believes Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism sometimes overlooks 'individual psychological intricacies'. Sometimes it risks, according to Chakraborty, hatred of the perceived other, which may contradict Ambedkar's ideal of fraternity. She seems to call for a fresh dialogue of Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism with canonical Buddhism with the objective of bringing in an 'individualistic perspective' with a view to a 'comprehensive transition of the human mind'. Ambedkar the philosopher is a central figure in the paper by Anindya Sekhar Purakayastha and Subhendra Bhowmick. The paper shows that Ambedkar's philosophical ideas can help in working out a genuinely dialogic concept of Swaraj. They call for a new history of Indian philosophic traditions in which arguably suppressed strains of dissent to the central epistemic praxis of Varna or caste-based Hinduism are to be restituted. They appear to argue that Indian philosophers tended to approach schools of thought signifying an 'conclusive rupture from the mainstream' with either a studied non engagement or an incorporation without acknowledgment. They call for a recourse to Ramachandra Gandhi's formulation of Advaita which transcends 'isolationism and hegemonism, tribalism and imperialism', and where a new optic emerges for reconciliation by means of a nativism that remakes philosophical questioning in ways that seek to 'avow an unavowable dream', meaning probably a self that is simultaneously an other.

Basudeb Barman appears to suggest that a faithful implementation of the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles will in future allow for greater participation of the Dalits, Adivasis and in the structures of effective political authority. Ghosh too stresses that solution, though he primarily offers an overview on Ambedkar's intellectual and

political position on questions around caste, gender, class and religion. Islam focuses on the prospects of an effective political alliance between Dalits and Muslims. His rich blend of empirical details and theoretical rigour establishes the desirability of such an ideological and political project, based on a creative expansion of Ambedkar's thought. Perhaps he would like at some point to reflect in greater detail about the impediments before such a possibility.

Manosanta Biswas makes two significant points on historical research on caste in Bengal. First, barring some exceptions writing by non-Dalit scholars tended to underplay the urge of Dalit castes to unify in a common struggle against upper caste hegemony. He argues also that a new body of autobiographical writings by Dalits themselves present a clear and detailed account of the upper caste hegemony in Bengal in practice. Adapa Satyanarayana addresses the influences of Ambedkar on forms of regional Dalit articulations more directly in his essay on the interface of Ambedkarism with aspects of Dalit self-formation in Andhra and Telengana during the 1930s and the 1940s. The paper is rich in detail and nuance, offering a close study of two important variables in Dalit history peculiar to the pre-independence Andhra region: the vacillating but crafty politics of the Nizam and possibilities of conversion to Islam as a liberatory option.

Raj Sekhar Basu emphasised Ambedkar's advocacy of knowledge as an instrument to solve problems, with regard particularly to his study of philosophy and economics. Basu's paper on Ambedkar's history of evolving monetary standards in late nineteenth and early twentieth century highlights Ambedkar's critique of the inadequacies of the government's measures to always control the price of rupee by controlling its minting. Basu showed the ways in which Ambedkar explored the enormous significance of the right to calibrate the issue of currencies,

with regards especially to the ways in which it helped him postulate the idea of a distinct Indian currency system. At the theoretical level, Ambedkar proposed to 'restate the doctrine of the purchasing power parity with the exchange rate'; in an animated engagement with Keynes. He showed, for instance, that the existing calculations of exchange rate were based largely on prices of Indian export commodities while many Indian commodities were not exported at all, making it impossible for exchange rate to reflect purchasing power parities of rupees with respect to all commodities. Finally, his arguments led to the systematic inadequacies of central banking in India, eventually

paving the way for the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India. Basu's extraordinarily detailed paper, rich with many long quotes from Ambedkar's thesis on the problem of the rupee, which he had meant to revise and expand in later life but could not, is a particularly useful addition to studies of Ambedkar's thought.

The volume, rich with contributions in search of a coordinated explanation of Ambedkar's life and legacies, on the whole covers a large part of his thoughts and deeds, along with their afterlives, in an accessible format and style. It will be a ready reckoner for students and the public at large for a working knowledge of Ambedkar's life and work.

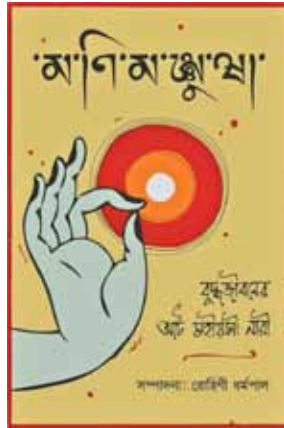
## বুদ্ধধর্ম ও নারীবাদ

পদ্মিনী চক্রবর্তী

গবেষিকা, দর্শন বিভাগ, কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

যুগে যুগেই বৌদ্ধধর্ম সন্ধানীকে জুগিয়ে দিয়েছে প্রতিবাদের নিজস্ব ভাষা। বর্ণবিভক্ত ভারতীয় সমাজকাঠামোয় এই গত শতাব্দীতেই আয়েদকর বৌদ্ধধর্মের মধ্যেই খুঁজেছিলেন দলিত শ্রেণীর আত্মপরিচয়ের পথ। কেননা বৌদ্ধধর্মের হাত ধরেই একদা ব্রাহ্মণ্যশাসিত ভারত সমাজ উচ্চ-নীচের প্রভেদ ভুলতে চেয়েছিল। শুধু তাই নয়, এই উদার ধর্মের প্রেরণায় পুরুষতান্ত্রিকতা-পুষ্ট লিঙ্গবৈষম্যের বিমোচনও যে সমাজকে নতুন দিশা দেখিয়েছিল তার উজ্জ্বল ঐতিহাসিক দলিল হয়ে আছে থেরীগাথা। অবদান সাহিত্য, জাতকের কাহিনী, বুদ্ধচরিত, ললিতবিস্তর প্রভৃতি নানা গ্রন্থ থেকেই ভগবান বুদ্ধের সমসাময়িক ও তাঁর করুণাধন্য নারীদের জীবনকথা জানা যায়। কিন্তু, থেরীগাথার অনন্যতা এখানে যে সেই প্রথম বোধহয় মেয়েরা নিজেদের জীবনের অপ্রাপ্তি ও প্রাপ্তির গল্প নিজের মুখে বলতে বসেছিল।

থেরীগাথা রচনাবলী সম্পর্কে আশা চৌবের বক্তব্য প্রণিধানযোগ্য: "Buddhism and feminism can be seen as particularly linked with each other. Both are concerned with emancipation, with broadening our self-view which would otherwise remain restricted. Both understand the importance of achieving emancipation by attempting to introduce changes in consciousness, hence negating the political philosophy that attaches paramount importance to external changes." (Asha Choubey, 2009, 'Voices from the Yore: Therigatha Writings of the Bhikkhunis', p. 1, in *The*



মণিমঞ্জুষা : বুদ্ধজীবনের আট মহীয়সী নারী, রোহিণী ধর্মপাল (সম্পা.), বইচই পাবলিকেশন, কলকাতা, ২০২০

*Indian Review of World Literature in English*, Vol. 5 No II)

বৌদ্ধযুগের এমনই আটজন অসামান্যর জীবনকাহিনী নিয়ে শ্রীমতী রোহিণী ধর্মপালের সুযোগ্য সম্পাদনায় প্রকাশিত হয়েছে *মণিমঞ্জুষা*। মায়া ও গৌতমী, যশোধরা, বিশাখা, ভদ্রা কুণ্ডলকেশা, মহাদেবী ক্ষেমা, অগ্রশ্রাবিকা উৎপলবর্ণা, ও আত্মপালী- এই আটখানি মণিপ্রভ জীবনের ইতিবৃত্ত লিখেছেন বৌদ্ধবিদ্যা অধ্যয়ন বিভাগের অধ্যাপিকা ঐশ্বর্য বিশ্বাস, কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের দর্শন বিভাগের ভূতপূর্ব অধ্যাপিকা উমা চট্টোপাধ্যায়, সাউথ ক্যালকাটা গার্লস কলেজের অধ্যাপিকা মধুমিতা চক্রবর্তী, কল্যাণী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে গবেষণারত সুমন দাস, যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে বাংলা ভাষা ও সাহিত্য বিভাগে গবেষণারত শ্রেয়সী চক্রবর্তী এবং রামকৃষ্ণ সারদা মিশন বিবেকানন্দ বিদ্যাভবনে শিক্ষাবিজ্ঞান বিভাগের অধ্যাপিকা সম্পাদিকা স্বয়ং। বাণী বসু লিখিত প্রাক-কথন বইটিকে অন্য মর্যাদা দিয়েছে।

প্রস্তাবনায় এই গ্রন্থ সম্পর্কে সম্পাদিকার নিজস্ব ভাবনার জগৎটি উন্মোচিত হয়েছে এবং সে ভাবনা মূলত নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন বা women empowerment -এর জরুরি প্রসঙ্গটি ঘিরেই আবর্তিত হয়েছে। বাণী বসুও তাঁর প্রস্তাবনাতে নারীমুক্তির দিকটিকেই প্রাধান্য দিয়েছেন। প্রব্রজ্যা গ্রন্থে বহুক্ষেত্রেই নারীর একক আত্মপরিচয়ের সন্ধান, কেননা সেসময় সমাজে মেয়েরা হয় গৃহস্থানের কন্যা জায়া জননী - শান্ত দীপের আলো, নতুবা চৌধুরি কলায় পারঙ্গম সুন্দরী বিদূষী জনপদবধু - খর বিদ্যুতের বিচ্ছুরণ। কিন্তু সমাজবিনির্দিষ্ট এই বিশেষ ভূমিকার বাইরে ব্যক্তির আত্মানুসন্ধানের যে যাত্রা, সেই যাত্রাপথের একটি দুয়ার খুলে দিয়েছিল ভিক্ষুণীসঙ্ঘ। এ এক অভূতপূর্ব বিপ্লব বইকি! সংঘবদ্ধ সন্ন্যাসী সমাজের ধারণা ইতিপূর্বে ছিল না, তার উপর কেবল মেয়েদেরই সাধনার জন্য, সেই সাধনব্রতী মেয়েদের দ্বারাই পরিচালিত একটি সন্ন্যাসিনী সংঘ, যে মেয়েরা সমাজেই থাকবেন, সমাজের সকল অংশের সঙ্গে তাঁদের আদানপ্রদানও থাকবে, অথচ কোন সামাজিক-সাংসারিক সম্পর্কের অভিধায় তাঁদের চিহ্নিত করা যাবে না- সেকালের পক্ষে এ এক যুগান্তকারী দিগদর্শন নয় কি? দলে দলে মেয়েরা এসে যোগ দিয়েছিলেন ভিক্ষুণীসংঘে। কীসের তাগিদে এসেছিলেন তাঁরা, কী পাওয়ার টানে কী ছেড়ে এসেছিলেন- তা সাহিত্যিক, ঐতিহাসিক, সমাজতাত্ত্বিক ও দার্শনিকের অনুসন্ধানকে উদ্বিজিত করে। সেজন্যই *মণিমঞ্জুষা* সংকলন গ্রন্থটি নিঃসন্দেহে একটি মূল্যবান সংযোজন।

মায়া ও গৌতমীকে নিয়ে লেখা ঐশ্বর্য বিশ্বাসের প্রথম রচনাটি কেবল এই দুই বুদ্ধজননীর জীবনকথা

নয়। বৌদ্ধ ইতিহাস, সাহিত্য, দর্শন, ভাস্কর্য বিষয়ে এক সাধারণ পরিচয় এ লেখার মাধ্যমে গড়ে উঠতে পারে। সেদিক থেকে এই লেখাটির গুরুত্ব অন্যরকম। বৌদ্ধধর্মের কিছু অপরিহার্য দার্শনিক তত্ত্বালোচনার মাধ্যমে লেখিকা পাঠককে প্রস্তুত করে নেন এই বিশেষ সময়ের বিশেষ ভুবনটিতে প্রবেশের জন্য। কেননা বৌদ্ধধর্ম যতখানি চর্চার, ততখানি চর্চারও। এ এক বিশেষ দর্শন যার সঙ্গে প্রাথমিক পরিচয় না থাকলে ভিক্ষুণী ও উপাসিকাদের জীবনের সম্পূর্ণ পরিচয় অধরা থেকে যাবে। সম্পাদিকা এই লেখাটিকে সংকলনগ্রন্থের প্রথম রচনা হিসাবে স্থান দিয়ে অত্যন্ত সুবিবেচনার পরিচয় দিয়েছেন। লেখিকা সুবিস্তৃত আলোচনায় তুলে এনেছেন বোধিসত্ত্ব ও বোধিসত্ত্ব-মাতা সম্পর্কে ছড়িয়ে থাকা বিভিন্ন তাত্ত্বিক প্রসঙ্গ। সর্বগুণাশ্রিত বোধিসত্ত্ব-মাতার প্রয়োজনীয় যে বত্রিশটি লক্ষণ, তা থেকে নারীর কাম্য গুণ সম্পর্কে সমাজের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিটিও স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে এবং সেখানে তাঁর শারীরিক লক্ষণের অতিরিক্ত যে গুণগুলির কথা বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ করার, তার মধ্যে রয়েছে সাহসিকতা, পাণ্ডিত্য, অমাৎসর্য প্রভৃতি। বৌদ্ধ শাস্ত্রানুসারে মায়া নাকি তাঁর সুকৃতির জন্য পার্শ্বব শরীরত্যাগের পর ত্রয়স্ত্রিংশ স্বর্গে দেবপুত্ররূপে পুরুষজন্ম লাভ করেছিলেন। বৌদ্ধশাস্ত্রে সুপণ্ডিত শ্রীমতী বিশ্বাস প্রসঙ্গ তুলেছেন 'নারী সম্যক সম্বুদ্ধ'-এর সম্ভাব্যতা নিয়ে, কেননা নারী অর্হত্ব লাভ করলেও প্রত্যেক বুদ্ধত্ব লাভ করার জন্য নারীকে প্রথমে পুরুষ শরীর ধারণ করতে হবে এমন অনুশাসনও খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় (উদাহরণ স্বরূপ আমরা ভাবতে পারি মঞ্জিমিনিকায়ের বহুধাতুক-সুত্তের কথা)। ছ'দিনের শিশুপুত্রকে মাসি গৌতমীর স্নেহাঞ্চলে সঁপে দিয়ে মায়া দেহান্তরিত হন। কিন্তু বৌদ্ধশাস্ত্রে তথা সামগ্রিকভাবে ভারতীয় চেতনাজগতে বোধিসত্ত্ব-জননীর সুদূরপ্রসারী প্রভাব সম্পর্কে লেখিকার মতামতটি প্রণিধানযোগ্য- "সমস্ত জাগতিক বন্ধনমুক্ত হলেও সিদ্ধার্থ মাতৃঋণ শোধ করতে পারেননি বলে হয়তো বা অনুতপ্ত ছিলেন, তাই নিভূতে সারিপুত্রকে পাহারায় বসিয়ে অখণ্ড অবসরে মায়ের সঙ্গে কাঙ্ক্ষনিক সংলাপ ও আলাপের মাধ্যমে সৃষ্টি করেছিলেন বৌদ্ধধর্মের অন্যতম শ্রেষ্ঠ দর্শনগ্রন্থ - অভিধম্ম। ...মায়া যেন বৌদ্ধ অতিজাগতিক ও জাগতিক ধর্মরাজ্যের এক অদৃশ্য সূত্ররূপে রয়ে গেলেন বুদ্ধের মাতৃঋণ শোধের রূপকের অন্তরালে - অভিধম্ম-মাতৃকার প্রাকভাষণে। ভারতীয় শিল্পীর কল্পনায় চিত্রে, স্থাপত্যে-ভাস্কর্যে



বা পুত্রকামনারত দেহাতি বধূর অজান্তে নিবেদিত ‘রুম্মেনদেই মাই’য়ের (লুস্বিনীদেবীর পালিরূপ) উদ্দেশে নিবেদিত অর্চনায়।”

রাজমাতা মায়াদেবী ও গৌতমীর পরে দ্বিতীয় প্রবন্ধটিতে শাক্যরাজবধূ যশোধরার আত্মমর্যাদাবোধপূর্ণ সুধীরা মূর্তিটির উদ্ভাস ঘটেছে শ্রীমতী উমা চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের লেখায়। বিবাহ-পূর্ব ও বিবাহোত্তর জীবনে যশোধরার আত্মপ্রত্যয়ী ব্যক্তিত্বটি পাঠককে মুগ্ধ করে। সিদ্ধার্থ তাঁর ভার্যার মধ্যে চেয়েছিলেন সত্য ও ধর্মের সমন্বয়। কুল বা গোত্রের উর্ধ্ব চরিত্রধর্মকেই প্রাধান্য দিয়েছিলেন তিনি। আবার যশোধরার ইচ্ছানুযায়ী শাক্যসিংহকেও দিতে হয়েছিল যুদ্ধ ও শিল্পকলায় তাঁর যোগ্যতার প্রমাণ। প্রাচীন ভারতের এই তেজস্বিনী মহীয়সীদের জীবনের কাছে তাই আমাদের বারে বারে ফিরে যাওয়া প্রয়োজন। বিবাহের পর বহুদিন বহুরাত সিদ্ধার্থের বহু মনোজ্ঞ আলোচনার সুযোগ্য সঙ্গিনী হয়েছিলেন রাজবধূ যশোধরা। তা সত্ত্বেও সিদ্ধার্থ যেদিন সত্যের সন্ধানে ও জগতের দুঃখ দূর করবেন বলে চলে গেলেন সেদিন রাজান্তঃপুরে যশোধরার মানসিক অবস্থা আপাতদৃষ্টিতে কষ্টের মনে হলেও যশোধরা কিন্তু তাঁর সাধন-সিদ্ধ ধী-শক্তিতে এই ঘটনার তাৎপর্য সম্পর্কে সম্পূর্ণ জ্ঞাত ছিলেন। বুদ্ধত্ব অর্জনের পর পিতা শুদ্ধোদনের আস্থানে তথাগত যখন সপার্বদ কপিলাবস্তুর রাজপ্রাসাদে ভিক্ষাগ্রহণের জন্য আসেন তখন ধর্মদেশনার সময় সকলের সাথে যশোধরাকেও আস্থান জানানো হল। কেন যশোধরা সেই আস্থান স্বীকার করেননি তা ভাবার মত। নিজের ঘরে থেকেই তিনি অমিতাভ বুদ্ধের অভ্যর্থনা ও সম্ভাষণ করেছিলেন। সবিচার প্রত্যয় ও প্রখর আত্মমর্যাদাবোধ থেকেই যশোধরা এই সিদ্ধান্ত নেন। এরপর যে রাহুলমাতা বৌদ্ধ শাস্ত্র ও সাহিত্যে মহাপ্রজ্ঞার অধিকারিণী হিসাবে স্থান করে নেবেন তিনি স্বামী-পরিত্যক্তা দুর্গখিনী রাজবধূ নন, তিনি পারমিতা-পারঙ্গম ঋদ্ধিশালিনী মুক্তোত্তা ভিক্ষুণী। যশোধরার জীবনের এই সুমহৎ পরিবর্তনটি অত্যন্ত নিপুণতার সাথে প্রবন্ধে বর্ণনা করেছেন লেখিকা। বর্তমান যুগে নারীর ভূমিকা মাত্র অবগুষ্ঠনে আবৃত থাকারও নয়, আবার মিথ্যা প্রতিবাদ-সর্বস্ব হয়ে সংসার ও সমাজকে ছিন্নভিন্ন করারও নয়। সমস্ত দিক থেকে ধী-পরিচালিত হয়ে নারীর মর্যাদা রক্ষা করতে পারারই দৃষ্টান্ত যশোধরা।

মিগারমাতা বিশাখার কাহিনীটি বাণী বসুর ‘magnum opus’ মৈত্রের জাতকের সূত্রে বাংলার পাঠকমহলে সুপরিচিত। শ্রেষ্ঠী ধনঞ্জয় ও সুমনার

কন্যা বিশাখা রূপলাবণ্য ও চরিত্র বলে অনন্যা এক নারী। সুমনা নিজে যেমন তেমনি আদরিণী কন্যাকেও শস্ত্রবিদ্যা ও শিল্পকলায় সমান প্রতিভাশালিনী হিসাবে গড়ে তুলেছিলেন। শ্বশুর গৃহে এক সম্পূর্ণ বিপরীত পরিবেশের সম্মুখীন হয় বিশাখা। অপদার্থ স্বামী ও প্রতিকূল পরিবেশের সঙ্গে সুরচি সম্পন্না নববিবাহিতা বিশাখার সংগ্রাম তার গভীর মনে জটিল জীবন জিজ্ঞাসার জন্ম দেয়। ভগবান বুদ্ধের আশ্রয়ে এসে সেই গভীরতা ব্যাপ্তি পায় এবং সে নিজেই সজ্জের আশ্রয় স্বরূপা মাতৃমূর্তি হয়ে ওঠে। প্রব্রজ্যা সে নেয়নি। কিন্তু ধীময়ী বিশাখা তার গার্হস্থ্য জীবনকেই বুদ্ধোপাসনার পূজাপ্রাঙ্গণ করে তুলেছিল। অঙ্গুত্তরনিকায়ে স্বয়ং ভগবান বুদ্ধ তার দান বলকে শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব দিয়েছেন। মধুমিতা চক্রবর্তী তাঁর লেখায় বিশাখা-চরিত্রের একটি অপরূপ ভাষ্য রচনা করেছেন।

“ধর্ম কোথায় থাকে সমনগণ? মুখে? বক্ষে? হাতে? পায়ে? যোনিতে? নাকি হৃদয়ে? যে হৃদয় ত্রিশরণ মন্ত্রের অনুগামী হয়েছে, সেই হৃদয়ের ধর্মনাশ কি সম্ভব?” ভিক্ষুণী উৎপলবর্ণার ধর্ষণ হয়েছিল তার ভূতপূর্ব প্রেমিকের হাতে। উত্তপ্ত ভিক্ষুসমাজের কাছে এই প্রশ্ন করেছিলেন স্বয়ং তথাগত। অতলাস্ত যন্ত্রণা থেকে উৎপলবর্ণার উত্তরণ হয়েছিল নির্বাণ ধর্মের সুমহিম শিখরে। এমন সুদুঃসহ দুঃখই বুঝি নিয়ে যেতে পারে এমন সুগভীর প্রশান্তির উৎসে। উৎপলবর্ণা ও আম্রপালীর আখ্যান দুটি রচনার ভার নিয়েছেন রোহিণী ধর্মপাল নিজে এবং সুচারু ভাবে সে দায়িত্ব পালন করেছেন। বিশেষত, উৎপলবর্ণা ও রোহিত উভয়েরই দ্বিধাদীর্ঘ হৃদয়ের ছবিটি পরম মমতায় এঁকেছেন তিনি। মেয়েদের সৌন্দর্য যে মেয়েদের জীবনে কী ভীষণ অভিশাপ বহন করে আনতে পারে আর আত্মসম্মান আর দার্য দিয়ে সেই অভিশাপ ভূমিতে কী সোনাই তারা ফলাতে পারে এই দুই নারীর জীবনচরিত তার প্রত্যক্ষ প্রমাণ।

ভদ্রাকুণ্ডল কেশার রচনাটি লিখেছেন শ্রী সুমন দাস। এ-ও আরেকটি প্রফুল্লসরলা কিশোরীর কাহিনী যে নিশ্চিত্তে নিজেকে ছেড়ে দিয়েছিল তার প্রণয়ীর হাতে। আর নির্মম বিশ্বাসঘাতকতার শাস্তিও দিয়েছিল প্রভুৎপন্নমতিত্বের সাথে। বহু দুঃখের মূল্যে সে চিনেছিল সংসারের অনিত্যস্বরূপ। লাভ করেছিল অমূল্য ধর্ম সম্পদ। লেখক তাঁর রচনায় আধুনিক কাব্যভাষাকে মেলাতে চেয়েছেন ধ্রুপদী রীতির সঙ্গে। মিল সর্বাংশে সফল হয়নি, ফলে বিষয়ের গাভীর্য ক্ষুণ্ণ হয়েছে স্থানে স্থানে।

মহাদেবী ক্ষেমা মগধেশ্বর বিশ্বিসারের রাজমহিষী। রাজাবরোধের যাবতীয় স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য বিলাস ও ঐশ্বর্য ছেড়ে চলে এসে যোগ দিয়েছিলেন ভিক্ষুনীসজ্জ্ব। কর্তিত কেশ ও সামান্য কাষায়বসনধারিণি রাজ্ঞীর মহাপ্রজ্ঞার প্রশংসা বুদ্ধ স্বয়ং করেছিলেন, অঙ্গুরনিকায় তার সাক্ষ্য দেয়। কী ছিল রাজমহিষীর শূন্যতা, কী সেই মহৎ অপরিপূর্ণতা যা মানুষকে কেবলই অন্য কোথা অন্য কোনখানে কোন পরমের সন্ধান করতে বলে, যার লয় নেই, ক্ষয় নেই, যা পেলে আর কিছু পাওয়ার থাকে না? শ্রেয়সী চক্রবর্তীর লেখাটি সুলিখিত, কিন্তু তাঁর রচনায় এই পরমের সন্ধানের দিকটি উপেক্ষিত থেকে গেছে মনে হয়। সম্ভবত নারীমুক্তির জোরালো আলোয় তিনি বৃহত্তর সন্ধানের পথটি হারিয়েছেন। শ্রেয়সী তাঁর লেখার শেষে মহাপ্রজ্ঞাবতী দেবী ক্ষেমার মূল্যায়ন করেছেন এইভাবে- “তিনি.....সূক্ষ্মভাবে বহুকৌণিক মনস্তাত্ত্বিক নিরীক্ষা করেছিলেন, নিজের জীবনে পুরুষের প্রতি পুরুষের ঈর্ষার সঞ্চয় করে..... অন্তত ক্ষেমার জীবনে আগত পুরুষটি শেষদিন পর্যন্ত ক্ষেমাকে ভুলতে পারেননি, এই সফলতার শীর্ষবিন্দুই তো মহারাজ্ঞীর জীবনের অর্জন।” এই সফলতা কোন সামান্য রমণীর জীবনের অর্জন হলেও হতে পারে, কিন্তু পুরুষের মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ কোন আত্মশক্তিময়ী নারীর শেষসন্ধান হতে পারেনা। বিশেষত, এই ধরনের আলোচনার সময় আমাদের মনে রাখতে হবে, নারীমুক্তি বা যেকোন সমাজমুক্তিই বৌদ্ধধর্মের আনুষঙ্গিক হিসাবে আসতে পারে, কিন্তু তা এই ধর্মের ভরকেন্দ্র নয়। দেহতিরিক্ত মুক্তির সন্ধানই এই দর্শনের প্রাণ। ফলে নারী বা পুরুষ যে-ই হোন, দেহাত্মবোধ থেকে মুক্তি না ঘটলে অর্হত্ব দুয়ের কথা, এই দর্শনের প্রথম সোপানেই তাঁর পদার্পণ করা সম্ভব নয়। ফলে যিনি যেখান থেকেই তাঁর যাত্রা শুরু করুন না কেন,

অবমাননা অপ্রীতি বঞ্চনা এইসব নিমেষের কুশাক্ষর পিছনে ফেলেই তাঁর মৈত্রী-করণা-মুদিতা-উপেক্ষার সাধনায় সিদ্ধি ঘটবে। যে নারীবাদ নিজেকে ‘victim’ মনে করে, সেই নারীবাদ বৌদ্ধধর্মের সম্পূর্ণ বিপরীতে দাঁড়িয়ে আছে, কেননা, উৎপীড়িত বোধ থাকলেই উৎপীড়কের প্রতি বিদ্বেষ থাকবে, আর বৌদ্ধধর্মের সাধনা অ-বিদ্বেষের সাধনা, অহিংসার সাধনা। সে অহিংসা শুধু কায়ে নয়, বাক্যে; শুধু বাক্যে নয়, মনে। সে যুগের প্রব্রাজিকা ধর্মচারিণীদের তাই সেই দর্শনের আলোতেই দেখতে হবে। সে দেখা আমাদের একালের খণ্ডিত বিক্ষুব্ধ জীবনদর্শনকে সমৃদ্ধ করবে।

বানানের অপরিশুদ্ধি না থাকলে গ্রন্থটি সর্বাঙ্গ সুন্দর হত। বিশেষত বৌদ্ধ পরিভাষার ক্ষেত্রে এই ক্রটি সাধারণ পাঠককে বিভ্রান্ত করতে পারে। সর্বত্রই ত্রয়ত্রিংশ-কে ‘স্ত্রয়ত্রিংশ’, অনাগারিক-কে ‘অনাগারিক’, ললিতবিস্তর-কে ‘ললিতবিস্তার’ লেখা হয়েছে। পরবর্তী সংস্করণগুলিতে সম্পাদিকা বানানের শুদ্ধির দিকে আরেকটু বেশি নজর দেবেন আশা করি। এছাড়া, ‘সহায়ক বইপত্তর’ বিভাগে একটি সুনির্দিষ্ট বিন্যাসশৈলীর অনুসরণ বাঞ্ছনীয় ছিল।

পরিশেষে একটি কথা না বললেই নয়। সম্পাদিকা তাঁর ভূমিকায় যথোপযুক্তভাবেই *মৈত্রেয় জাতকের* কথা উল্লেখ করেছেন। কিন্তু বৌদ্ধধর্ম ও এই ধর্মের পরিসরে মেয়েদের অবস্থানের প্রসঙ্গে সর্বত্রই মনে পড়ে য়াঁর কথা, তিনি আর কেউ নন- রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্বয়ং। *চণ্ডালিকা* ও *নটীরপূজা* স্মর্তব্য। নারীমুক্তি ও বৌদ্ধধর্মের আলোচনায় তাঁর উল্লেখ বোধহয় অবশ্যম্ভাবী ছিল। রবীন্দ্রনাথ দেখিয়েছিলেন, বৌদ্ধধর্মের প্রেক্ষিতে নারীমুক্তি তথা আত্মমুক্তি দেহ ও দেহের সঙ্গে সংলগ্ন মন দিয়ে সম্ভব নয়। অনাত্ম ও অনিত্যের সাধনা দেহমনের এই নিগড় ভাঙারই প্রয়াস।

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ISBN : 978-93-5391-584-1: Rs. 1700.00.

**823.009954**  
**P192p**

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**891.441**  
**T128g**  
**ed.2**

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ISBN : 978-81-7522-573-2 : Rs. 400.00.

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**R116c, ed.2**

Connell, Kathleen, M. O'

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ISBN : 978-81-7522-499-5  
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**928.91441**  
**T128g**

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ISBN : 978-81-7522-589-3: Rs. 200.00.

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**T128s.r**

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**922.945**  
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ISBN : 81-307-0117-0 (series) : Rs. 8500.00 (set).

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Contents : V.1. Renaissance and reformation. —V.2A. Baroque and Rococo. —V.2B. Enlightenment and revolution. —V.3A. Romanticism and liberalism. —V.3B. Imperialism and impressionism.

Originally published as Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit.

ISBN : 978-1-61952-040-0 (set) : Rs. 25,000.00.

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ISBN : 978-81-307-1718-0: Rs. 3000.00 (set).

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iv, 210p. ; 22cm. **(77863 (c2), 77451 (c.1)), (12.3.2019)**

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# 2022

## JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31					1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

## FEBRUARY

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

## MARCH

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## APRIL

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## MAY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## JUNE

			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## AUGUST

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## SEPTEMBER

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

## OCTOBER

30	31					1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

## NOVEMBER

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

## DECEMBER

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### LIST OF HOLIDAYS

Holiday	Date	Day
Republic Day	26.01.2022	Wednesday
Holi/Dolyatra	18.03.2022	Friday
Mahavir Jayanti	14.04.2022	Thursday
Good Friday	15.04.2022	Friday
Id-UI-Fitr	03.05.2022	Tuesday
Buddha Purnima - .	16.05.2022	Monday
Rathayatra	01.07.2022	Friday
Id-Uz-Zuha (Bakrid)	10.07.2022	Sunday
Muharram	09.08.2022	Tuesday
Independence Day	15.08.2022	Monday

Holiday	Date	Day
Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday	02.10.2022	Sunday
Dussehra (Maha Ashtami) Additional Day	03.10.2022	Monday
Dussehra	05.10.2022	Wednesday
Milad-un-Nabi or Id-E-Milad (Birth Day of Prophet of Mohammad)	09.10.2022	Sunday
Diwali (Deepavali)	24.10.2022	Monday
Guru Nanak's Birthday	08.11.2022	Tuesday
Christmas Day	25.12.2022	Sunday
General Secretary's Discretion	3 days	

*Happy New Year and Season's Greetings*



**Rhododendron Royale**

Rhododendrons of Sikkim Himalayas. A botanical and geographical account of the Rhododendrons recently discovered in the mountains of Eastern Himalayas. Joseph Dalton Hooker, Vice-President of the Linnean Society, Director of the Royal Society of Kew. Drawings and descriptions made on the spot, during a Government Botanical Mission to that country, Reeve, Bensham and Reeve, King William Strand 1849.

*Source:* Time Past and Time Present, 225 Years of The Asiatic Society, p 82