JUNE 2019

Monthly Bulletin

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JUNE

5

2019

WORLD Environment Day

THE ASIATIC SOCIETY
(AN INSTITUTION OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE)
1 PARK STREET • KOLKATA-700016
Theme of the World Environment Day 2019: Air Pollution

The United Nations designated 5 June as World Environment Day. The celebration of this day provides us with an opportunity to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in preserving and enhancing the environment. Since it began in 1974, it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in more than 100 countries.

China will host the global World Environment Day celebrations on 5 June 2019 with a theme of air pollution.

Joyce Msuya said “China will be a great global host of 2019’s World Environment Day celebrations. The country has demonstrated tremendous leadership in tackling air pollution domestically. It can now help spur the world to greater action. Air pollution is a global emergency affecting everyone. China will now be leading the push and stimulating global action to save millions of lives.”

AIR POLLUTION FACTS

- 92 per cent of people worldwide do not breathe clean air
- Air pollution costs the global economy $5 trillion every year in welfare costs
- Four million children developed Asthma every year as a result of Air Pollution from Traffic
- Air Pollution is responsible of 65% of death in Asia
- Two Indians die every minute due to polluted air
- Air pollution hurts the poorest most
- Cigarette smoke produces 10 times more air pollution than diesel car exhaust
235th Annual General Meeting and Awards Giving Ceremony of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata will be held on Monday, 3rd June, 2019 as per the following schedule:

A. Election of Fellows
Time: 12:30 p.m. to 03:30 p.m.  
Venue: Humayun Kabir Hall

B. Awards Giving Ceremony
Time: 05:00 p.m.  
Venue: Vidyasagar Hall

4.58 P.M. Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee, Hon’ble Former Chief Justice, High Court of Bombay, will be accompanied by Dr S B Chakrabarti, General Secretary and Dr. Sujit Kumar Das, Treasurer of the Asiatic Society, to the Vidyasagar Hall where he will be received by Professor Isha Mahammad, President of The Asiatic Society.

5.00 P.M. Invocation.

5.02 P.M. Presentation of Bouquet to Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee, Hon’ble Former Chief Justice, High Court of Bombay by Professor Isha Mahammad, President of The Asiatic Society.

5.03 P.M. General Secretary’s Address : Dr. S B Chakrabarti.

5.18 P.M. Presidential Address : Professor Isha Mahammad.

5.33 P.M. Address of the Guest-in-Chief: Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee, Hon’ble Former Chief Justice, High Court of Bombay.

5.48 P.M. Presentation of the Medals/Plaques to the Recipients by Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee, Hon’ble Former Chief Justice, High Court of Bombay.

6.08 P.M. Vote of thanks by Dr. Sujit Kumar Das, Treasurer, The Asiatic Society.

6.10 P.M. National Anthem.

C. Transaction of Business
Thereafter, the following business will follow as per Regulations 50(c):

i. To hear the Annual Report of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata for the year 2018-19, prepared by the Council, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 41, Clause (f);

ii. To consider and adopt the Balance Sheet, the Audited Accounts and the Auditor’s Report of the Society for the year 2017-18, referred to in Rule 59A, along with the observations of the Council thereon, if any. (The Audited Accounts, the Balance Sheet and the Auditor’s Report for the year 2017-18 have already been adopted in the Extra-ordinary General Meeting held on 7th January, 2019.)
iii. Any other business of which notice has been given as provided in Rule 50, Clause (b).

The Annual Report, the Audited Accounts, the Balance Sheet and the Auditor’s Report shall be circulated to all Members at the Meeting, and if it is inconvenient to discuss and adopt them at the Meeting, they may be discussed and adopted at the next Ordinary Monthly General Meeting. A notice of any motion arising out of the Annual Report and the other papers as aforesaid may be given at the Meeting or within seven days thereafter.

All members are requested to kindly attend the said meeting and awards giving ceremony.

Date: 15th May, 2019
Place: Kolkata

(S B Chakrabarti)
General Secretary

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9th Monthly Special Lecture

**Remembering Mahatma Gandhi**

will be held on 17th June 2019 at 4.00 p.m., at Humayun Kabir Hall

**Speaker:**
Professor Kausik Bandyopadhyay, Department of History
West Bengal State University, Barasat

**Topic:**
Gandhi and Cricket in India: A Forgotten Partnership

All are cordially invited

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO BE PRESENT

Agenda

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Ordinary Monthly General Meeting held on 6th MAY, 2019.
2. Exhibition of presents made to the Society in MAY, 2019.
3. Notice of Intended Motion, if any, under Regulation 49(d).
4. Matters of current business and routine matters for disposal under Regulation 49(f).
5. Consideration of reports and communications from the Council as per Regulation 49(g).
6. Adoption of Annual Report, if required, as per Regulation 50(c)(ii),

The Asiatic Society
1, Park Street
Kolkata 700016
Dated the 15th day of May 2019

(S B Chakrabarti)
General Secretary
Indira Gandhi Gold Plaque
*Dr. Manmohan Singh*, Globally Acclaimed Economist and Former Prime Minister of India (2004 to 2014), for his significant Contribution to International Understanding.

Tagore Peace Award
*Sheikh Hasina Wazed*, the current and 10th Prime Minister of Bangladesh, for her significant Contribution to the Development of Human Understanding Towards Peace.

Sir William Jones Memorial Medal
*Professor Padmanabhan Balaram*, Former Director, Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore and Recipient of Padma Bhushan (2014), for his significant Contribution in the Field of Science.

Rabindranath Tagore Birth Centenary Plaque
*Professor Ratan Parimoo*, Art Historian and Painter of Modern India, for his significant Contribution to Human Culture.

Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar Gold Plaque
*Aruna Roy*, Political and Social Activist and Leader of the Right to Information Movement in India, for her significant Contribution to Contemporary Social Activities.

Hem Chandra Raychaudhuri Birth Centenary Gold Medal
*Dr. Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty*, IAS (Retd.) Former Director, Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalya, Bhopal, for his significant Contribution in the Field of Indian History.

R. P. Chanda Centenary Medal
*Professor G Subbiah*, Former Professor, Dept. of Ancient Indian History & Archaeology, Visva Bharati, for his significant Contribution to Archaeology and Art History.

Professor Sukumar Sen Memorial Gold Medal
*Professor Usharanjan Bhattacharya*, Renowned Scholar of Bengali Literature and Former Professor, Department of Bengali, Gauhati University, for his significant Contribution in the Academic Field.

Saratlal Biswas Memorial Medal
*Dr. Shreya Karmakar*, Post Doctoral Fellow, Department of Geological Science, Jadavpur University, for her Best Published Work in Mineralogy and Petrology.

Barclay Memorial Medal
*Dr Dilip Mahalanabis*, Renowned Paediatrician known for his pioneering work in Oral Rehydration Therapy, for his significant Contribution in the Field of Medical Science.

G. S. I. Sesquicentennial Commemorative Medal
*Professor Suzanne Yvette O'Reilly*, Professor of Geology in Australia, for her significant Contribution to Earth Science.

Professor Suhrat Chandra Mitra Memorial Plaque
*Professor Sibnath Deb*, Professor at Department of Applied Psychology, Pondicherry University, for his significant Contribution to Applied Psychology.
Prasanta Roy and Gita Roy Memorial Gold Medal
Professor Lalu Prasad Shaw, Eminent Indian Painter, for his significant Contribution to Lalit Kala.

Meghnad Saha Memorial Gold Medal
Professor Sanjeev Dhurandhar, Professor at Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune and Science Advisor to Indian Initiative in Gravitational-wave Observations Consortium, for his significant Contribution in Physics.

Dr. Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta Gold Medal
Professor Tahir Mahmood, Legal Expert of India, a Prolific Author and a Media Columnist and Former Chairman of National Minority Commission, for his significant Contribution in the Field of Society & Law in Ancient and Medieval India.

Indira Gandhi Memorial Lectureship
Professor Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi, Renowned Architect, for delivering lecture on Cultural Pluralism.

Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar Lectureship
Professor Tanika Sarkar, Renowned Historian of Modern India based at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, for delivering lecture on History.

Dr. Panchanan Mitra Memorial Lectureship
Professor Soumendra Mohan Patnaik, Former Professor of Anthropology, Delhi University and Vice-Chancellor of Utkal University, for delivering lecture on Anthropology.

Dr. Satyendra Nath Sen Memorial Lectureship
Professor Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Renowned Scholar and Former President of Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, for delivering lecture on Social Science.

Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji Memorial Lectureship
Professor H S Ananthanarayana, Retired Professor of Historical Linguistics, Osmania University, for delivering lecture on Linguistics.

Abha Maiti Memorial Annual Lectureship
Professor Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Renowned Poet, Novelist and Academician and Recipient of Padma Shri (2000), for delivering lecture on Indian Women.

Dr. Bimanbehari Memorial Lectureship
Professor Radhavallabh Tripathi, Former Vice Chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi and Former Professor of Sanskrit, Dr. Harisingh Gour University, Sagar, for delivering lecture on Sanskrit Literature in Medieval India.

Swami Pranavananda Memorial Lectureship
Professor Ramaprasad Bandyopadhyay, Former Professor of Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, for delivering lecture on The life of Swami Pranavananda in the light of Upanisad.

Professor Maya Deb Memorial Lectureship
Professor Anjali Roy, Former Professor at Department of Applied Psychology, Calcutta University, for delivering lecture on Psychological Problem of the Downtrodden Indian Rural Women.

Sudha Basu Memorial Biennial Lectureship

Raja Rajendralala Mitra Memorial Lectureship
Professor K Paddayya, Renowned Archaeologist, Professor Emeritus and Former Director of Deccan College, Pune, for delivering lecture on Indological Studies.

Honorary Fellow
Professor Asok Nath Basu, Former Vice-Chancellor, Jadavpur University has been elected as Honorary Fellow of the Asiatic Society for the year 2018.

Special Award
Sri Gautam Pal, eminent sculptor has been awarded for his art work of the Bust of Rajendralala Mitra, installed in Salt Lake Campus of the Asiatic Society.
Obituary

The Asiatic Society Lost Three of Its Life Members

Sivaji Sundar Kayal was born in Kolkata in a middle-class Bengali family on January 23, 1941. Quiet in his temperament from childhood and sober in behaviour articulated with maturing age, he was all through a man given to studies and contemplative wisdom. Such men are always prone to talk less and work more as a very fundamental idiom of life and Sivaji Sundar was an example of an ethical life focused into reality. He received his schooling from Calcutta Boys’ School from where he passed his School Final Examination in 1956. He then entered the Presidency College for his intermediate study and finally graduated from the same college with honours in history in 1960. He did his M.A. in history and Bachelor of Laws from the University of Calcutta respectively in 1962 and 1963. He joined the Scottish Church College in 1963 as a lecturer in History and retired from that college in 2001 at the age of sixty. He was one of the founder members of the Paschim Banga Itihas Samsad and was elected its first Secretary on the day of its foundation in 1978. As a life member of the Asiatic Society since the 70s of the last century, he encouraged many of his colleagues and students to participate in the activities of the Asiatic Society.

Sivaji Sundar was one of the first generations of Bengali talents who read history after independence. Trained in the preserved superiority of postindependence culture of Presidency College he seemed to have absorbed in him the synthesis of a cultural dialectic; the academic discipline of English knowing literati that had grown with the age of the Empire and radiations of indigenous Bengali culture that had survived through subversive revolutions of time. What Kolkata could boast since the nineteenth century was the emergence of a civil society. It was here that urbanity subsumed traditional values with animation of modernity. As a historian, as a teacher and as a civil individual, Sivaji Sundar was a perfect outcome of this urbanity. A frilled humility and mellowed gentlemanliness marked his behaviour. He was not given to self-exhibitionism and eschewed aggressive self-uprightness. This had endeared him to all. His quality of reserved sophistication, his dedication as a teacher, his profundity as a scholar and his affiliation to all values of life will make him ever the human point in which time will always find its fulfilment.

Professor Ranjit Sen

Prof. Sivaji Sundar Kayal (1941 – 2019)

Prof. Satischandra Mahapatra, a well-known personality in the academic world and a life member of the Asiatic Society passed away on 9th April of this year after a brief illness. Born in Moyna of East Midnapore, Satis faced many sorts of difficulties in the early life but nothing could debar him from education. Ultimately he passed the School Final Examination from Ram Chandrapur Raisuddin High School. Satis received higher education in Bangabasi College and Calcutta University. He started the teaching career first at Kamarpukur College, Hooghly and then at Bangabasi College, Kolkata.

From the outset Satis was involved in academic activities related to improvisation of curriculum...
and teaching methods of Economics of Calcutta University. West Bengal College and University Teachers’ Association was another platform where Satis spent most of the time for the welfare of professors. He became an Executive Committee member of the Association and took interest in each and every aspect of problems of higher education. He also functioned as a Senate member and Syndicate member of Calcutta University. During the last decade Satis was the founder General Secretary of the West Bengal College and University Retired Teachers’ Welfare Association and National Secretary of its all-India body.

Satis was very interested in the activities of the Asiatic Society. He was a prominent member in the monthly meetings of the Society. Whenever seminars, workshops, lectures were organised he took participation with enthusiasm. The smiling face of Satis will be remembered by all, especially his students, colleagues and friends.

Dr. Aparajita Basu

An Urdu writer and critic and a Life Member of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, Dr. Iqbal Jaweed was the illustrious son of an illustrious father, Professor Javed Nehal, who was a renowned Urdu scholar of Calcutta whose book on the history of Urdu literature in nineteenth-century Bengal, has ever since been a pioneering work on the subject.

Dr. Iqbal Jaweed was born in Calcutta on the 5th January 1959. After passing his M.A. examination in Urdu with First Class from the University of Calcutta in 1981, he was appointed as a Lecturer in Urdu at the Surendranath College, Kolkata, in 1985.

Dr. Jaweed was appointed as the Principal of the Surendranath Evening College, Kolkata, in 2004. He had also been the Principal of the Milli Alameen College for Girls, Kolkata. Apart from his academic and official engagements, Dr. Jaweed always kept himself occupied in scholarly and literary activities. His research on the life and contributions of an Urdu litterateur, Shakir Karimi, earned him the degree of Ph.D. from the Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, in 2003, while his exhaustive work on the history of Urdu drama in Bengal in the 19th and 20th centuries led him to obtain the degree of D.Litt. from the Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal, in 2016. Besides a number of research articles contributed by Dr. Jaweed to learned journals from time to time, he had to his credit 6 scholarly books, brought out between 1983 and 2015. They are: Tahqiq aur Tanqid (a collection of literary articles); Naqsh-e Jaweed (a collection of critical essays); Agha Hashr Kashmiri: Hayat aur Drama-Nigari; Moraqqa-e Jaweed (a collection of profile writings); Urdu Drama in Bengal (19th and 20th Centuries); and Kaghaz ka Ghar (a collection of science articles).

Besides being a member of the Board of Studies of the Burdwan and Visva-Bharati universities and a member of the Governing Body of the West Bengal Urdu Academy, Dr. Jaweed was associated with several social, academic and literary organisations in Kolkata. Dr. Jaweed was also remarkable for having produced three television documentaries, of which one had bagged the National Award in the 42nd National Film Festival in 1995. The West Bengal Urdu Academy had bestowed upon Dr. Jaweed its two prestigious awards — the Agha Hashr Kashmiri award for his work on Urdu drama in 2003 and the Parvez Shahidi award for his contributions to Urdu language and literature in 2008.

After having served as the Principal of the Surendranath Evening College, Kolkata, for about twelve years, Dr. Jaweed fell ill and remained bedridden for around two years, till his death on the 5th May, 2019.

Dr. M. Firoze
Let me convey, on behalf of the Council of the Asiatic Society, very good wishes to you all on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting and Awards Giving Ceremony scheduled on Monday, 3rd June, 2019. You are already aware that due to 17th Parliament Election of India this year during the month of May, we had to postpone our Annual General Meeting and Awards Giving Ceremony to first Monday of June (03.06.2019). This year also we have a number of high profile academicians as well as celebrities belonging to this country and beyond, who will receive their awards from the Guest of Honour, Justice Chittatosh Mookerjee, Hon’ble Former Chief Justice of Bombay High Court.

Friends, you will feel happy to note that on 3rd June, 1915 Rabindranath Tagore was admitted to Knighthood by the British Raj. It is equally exciting to remember that Tagore had given no second thought in returning this Honour in moral protest against the armed attack by the soldiers of the Raj on the peaceful assembly of the people who gathered at Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919. You will further bear with me that the expression of the letter drafted in English by Tagore carried an intellectual height of a globally acclaimed poet who took upon himself the task to stand for the disturbed humanity all alone at that historical moment the Nation was passing through.

With this Annual General Meeting and Awards Giving Ceremony the present office bearers of the Council will complete three consecutive years in office. It is therefore time to remind ourselves to further accomplish the major pending programmes – both academic as well as administrative – within next one year of the remaining tenure of the present Council.
1. A GHAT OF BANARAS (PROYAG GHAT)

“A Ghat at Banaras” an oil painting, 28” x 40”, in the collection of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta was done by renowned artist Thomas Daniell R.A. (1749-1840) who came to India for a double purpose, on one hand, he had genuine love for painting exotic landscape and the people of the East, their life-styles, culture and also the grandeur of the Nababs and aristocrats, who were his clients, on the other hand to earn handsome money from the commission works for portraits of princely subjects and Nawabs in this rich subcontinent.

Inspite of being a very competent artist he could not have done so much work and earned so much of wealth had he been in England or any other place in Europe.

However, coming back to the painting concerning is of course a ghat which is called the “Proyag Ghat” just adjacent to the West side of Ghat called Dashassamedha Ghat directly connected with the main aterial road of the city of Banaras or Kashi.

This Proyag Ghat is actually a small fortress on the bank of the Ganges, having a high plinth wall on which there are beautiful chajas (Cornish with support) on which 3-storey living rooms are arranged very artistically with ups & down and small Jharokas (balcony) with elegant pillars and carved out stone screens. The whole construction is done with suitable slabs of sand-stone and elaborate steps of the Ghat came down right up to water of the river Ganges.

It appears the preliminary sketch and drawing was done on the spot from a boat anchored on the river Ganges. Division of space in the painting and the distribution of light, dark and middletone is also commendable. The main edifice stands on the right side of the canvas and gradually vanishing towards the left with darker tones has brought a dimension of distance in the painting. The bright light-blue sky with floating white clouds all around has given a feeling of vast panorama of airy space. Daniell has carved out a place in field of painting and engraving by his own right and the painting under discussion should be preserved very carefully for the posterity.

About the painter-

Thomas Daniell was an English landscape painter. He spent seven years in India, accompanied by his nephew William Daniell, who was also an artist and published several series of aquatints of the country.

The artist under our discussion was born in 1749 in Kingston. His father was the landlord of the Swan Inn at Chertsey. Thomas Daniell began his career apprenticed to a heraldic painter and worked at Maxwell’s the coach painter in Queen Street, before attending the Royal Academy schools. Although he exhibited a number of works — mainly landscapes and floral subjects, at the Academy between 1772 and 1784, Daniell found it difficult to establish himself as a landscape painter in Britain. Like many other Europeans at that time, Daniell was drawn to India by stories of the wealth and fame that awaited travellers to the newly accessible East. In 1784 he obtained permission from the East India Company to travel to Calcutta to work as an engraver, accompanied by this nephew William Daniell as his assistant.
They sailed from Gravesend on 7th April, 1785, arriving in Calcutta via Whampoa in China early in 1786. Daniel had studied the new aquatinting process before leaving England. In July 1785 Daniell announced, in an advertisement in the Calcutta Chronicle, his intention to publish a set of views of the City. Executed in etching and aquatint and hand-coloured by local painters, the twelve plates were completed in late 1788.

Thomas had travelled extensively by boat along the river Ganges. He spent in the town of Bhagalpur with the orientalist and amateur artist Samuel Davis, whom Thomas had first met during his apprenticeship in London. In May 1793 Daniell left India and returned to England.

On his return to England, Daniell set about publishing an extensive illustrated work under the general heading title of ‘Oriental Scenery’. He also published ‘Views in Egypt’ and ‘Picturesque Voyage to India’. He was elected a Royal Academician in 1790 and a fellow of the Royal Society of Art.

Daniell never married. He died at his home in Earls Terrace, Kensington on March 19th 1840, aged 91, having out lived both of his nephews.

2. THE CROWNING OF MARIE DE MEDICI

The painting titled as ‘The crowning of Marie dé Medici’in oils on canvas, size 39” x 59”, is actually copy from the original painting by the very famous artist of the post-Renaissance period, Peter Paul Rubens and the original is kept in the Museum of Louvre in Paris and the said painting is titled as ‘Coronation of Marie dé Medici’. Rubens was a prolific painter and he had a big atelier with competent pupil who became famous as an independent Artists like Vandyke and Synder and many others.

However, it appears that probably Robert Home copied this huge painting with highest patience and skill as the painting is having too many figures of high position, like Kings, Knights and the Pope is standing behind the King, blessing the crowning. Gods and Goddesses came flying on the occasion has added extra glamour to the painting. Small details with touches of high-lights in golden yellow and the white scarf dotted with dark-colour flowing down from the shoulder of Marie dé Medici and other two dignitaries towards the left side corner and on the other nearby are quite significant for distribution of light, are commendable. On the right side corner, two dogs of Royal pedigree are quite familiar to show the status of the invited guests.
Although a copy, the painting is good and should be preserved properly.

About the artist -

**Rubens (28th June, 1577 - 30th May, 1640),** Peter Paul Rubens, a Flemish painter whose creation of art is the epitome of the Baroque. His dramatic and courtly style dominates our conception of 17th Cent., powerful, exuberant, sensuous and theatrical. He transformed men into Gods, life into gorgeous pageantry, infusing all of matter with a transfigured animal vitality. He was at the same time the most complete exponent of the Jesuit Counter Reformation, the international painter of the Catholic courts of Europe. His painting was so popular and his services so much in demand that he was forced to maintain a large studio and employ many assistants and collaborators including Van Dyek, Drueghel, Snyders, Devos and others.

Born in Siegen, West Phalia, the son of a lawyer and official in exile, he ‘lived in Cologne until he returned to Antwerp in 1589 after the death of his father. Here he received the classical education, served as scriber to a lady, and then in succession studied art with Tobias Verhaecht, Adam Van Noort and Ottovan Veen. In 1598 he became a member of the Antwerp guild and in 1600 left for Italy where he remained until 1608. On his return to Antwerp he became painter to Archduke Albert and to Isabella, established a large studio and married Isabella Brandt. After the death of his first wife in 1626 he served as a diplomat, undertaking several important missions to Spain and England. He married Helena Fourment in 1630. On May 30th, 1640 Rubens died from heart failure, a result of his chronic gout and was buried in Saint James’ Church, Antwerp, Spanish Netherlands, now in Belgium.

In 1621, the Queen Mother of France, Marie de’ Medici commissioned Rubens to paint two large allegorical cycles celebrating her life and the life of her late husband, Henry IV, for the Luxembourg palace in Paris, consisting of 21 gigantic compositions. This glorification of the queen marks a high-point of Baroque decorative painting. Marie dé Medici focuses on several classic female portrait sitters to the status and importance of his male portrait sitters.

His nudes of various biblical and mythological women are specially well-known. Painted in the Baroque tradition of depicting women as plump, passive and highly sensuous beings, his nudes emphasize the concepts of fertility, desire, physical beauty, temptation, and virtue. Skilfully rendered, these paintings of nude women were undoubtedly created an appeal to his largely male audience of patrons.

With regard to Ruben’s males depiction is equally stylised replete with meaning, and quite the opposite of his female subjects. His male nudes represent highly athletic and large mythical or biblical male. Unlike his female nudes, most of his male nudes are depicted partially nude, with sashes, armour or shadows shielding them from being completely unclothed. Rubens artistically represents to illustrate the male as powerful, capable, forceful and compelling. The allegorical and symbolic subjects he painted with reference to the classic masculine tropes of athleticism, valour in war and civil authority. Male archetypes found in his works include the hero, husband, father, civic leader and King of the highest order.
A five-day workshop on history of science was held at Vidyasagar Hall of the Asiatic Society during 22-26 April, 2019. The theme of the workshop was “Birth and Development of Modern Science in India from 1800 to 1947”.

22 April

The inaugural session was held at 10-30 AM at Vidyasagar Hall of the Society. Dr Satyabrata Chakrabarti, General Secretary of the Society, delivered the Welcome Address. Professor Rajkumar Roychoudhury, Physical Science Secretary of the Society and coordinator of the Workshop, introduced the theme and explained why this particular timeframe was chosen. Professor Ajay Ray, former Director, IIEST, Shibpur, gave the Inaugural Address. Professor Isha Mahammad, President of the Asiatic Society, delivered the Presidential Address. Dr Jagatpati Sarkar of the Asiatic Society delivered the Vote of Thanks. The first academic session was held at 12-15 PM. Speaker of this session was Professor Debashis Mukherjee of S.N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences and the coordinator was Professor Arun Kumar Bandyopadhyay, Historical & Archaeological Secretary of the Asiatic Society. Professor Mukherjee’s talk was broadly divided in two parts viz. 1) “Emergence of modern research in Physics and Chemistry in Colonial Period: The German Connection” & 2) “Some less discussed researches of Raman”. The second academic session was held at 2-15 PM. Professor Arijit Chaudhuri, Visiting Professor, ISI Kolkata, was the speaker and the coordinator was Professor Rajkumar Roychoudhury. Professor Chaudhuri talked about the contributions of Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis.

23 April

The first session was held at 10.45 AM. The Speaker was Professor Manas Pratim Das and the coordinator was Professor Basudeb Barman. Professor Das’s topic was “Science in British India (1800-1947) with emphasis on Mathematics”. In the second session the speaker was Professor Swapan Kumar Pramanick, Vice-President of the Asiatic Society and the coordinator was Professor Manas Pratim Das. Professor Pramanick discussed the interlink between society and development of science in the colonial period and the social perspective. The last session of
the day was held at 2-15 PM. Professor Ashish Lahiri was the speaker and the coordinator was Professor Alok Kanti Bhowmik, Vice-President of the Asiatic Society. Professor Lahiri talked about the life and works of Jogesh Chandra Vidyanidhi and traditional astronomy.

24 April

The first session of the day was held at 10.45 AM. The speaker was Professor Shyamal Chakraborty of Calcutta University and the coordinator was Professor Dhruba Raina. Professor Chakraborty mentioned that the British rulers established a number of societies to fulfil the colonial interest. Nevertheless, every facet of Colonial India was not totally negative. In the next academic session, the speaker was Professor Dhruba Raina and the coordinator was Professor Shyamal Chakraborty. Topic of Professor Raina’s talk was “Science in the early modern South Asia and Colonial India”. In the last session of the day the speaker was Professor Nikhil Chakrabarti of Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics and the coordinator was Professor Rajkumar Roychoudhury. Professor Chakrabarti talked about history of Science Teaching and Research in Presidency College.

25 April

The speaker in the first session was Dr Keka Adhikari Banerjee of the Asiatic Society and the chairperson was Professor Ranjana Ray, Anthropological Secretary of the Asiatic Society. The topic of her talk was “Development of Scientific Archaeology in India during 1800-1947”. In the next academic session, the speaker was Professor Debajoyti Gangopadhyay of Vinoba Bhave University (Hazaribag) and the coordinator was Professor Shyamal Chakraborty. The Topic of Professor Gangopadhyay’s talk was “Revisiting Needham Question”. Speaker of the last session was Professor Ranjana Ray and the coordinator was Professor Asoke Kanti Sanyal, Biological Science Secretary of the Asiatic Society. The title of Professor Ray’s talk was “History of Anthropology: The Science of Man from the Beginning of Nineteenth Century till 1947”.

26 April

In the first academic session of the last day of the workshop was held at 10.45 AM. The speaker of this session was Professor Aparajita Basu of Bangiya Bijnan Parishad, Kolkata and the coordinator was Professor Amalendu Bandopadhyay. Professor Basu discussed various issues relating to the science policy in the colonial period and mentioned the fact that the post-Macaulay India witnessed teaching of English and Western science in India. In the next academic session, the speaker was Professor Arun Kumar Bandopadhyay and the coordinator was Professor Aparijita Basu. Professor Bandopadhyay’s topic was “Professor P.C. Ray and the Indian Science”. A special lecture was given by Professor Sujoy Kumar Saha of IIEST, Shibpur. Title of his talk “Science: The Origin and Beginning--Its Progress And Its Final Destination”. The Valedictory Session was held at 2.15 PM. Valedictory Address was given by Professor Ashoknath Basu, former Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University. There were 53 participants in the workshop. Some of the young participants thanked the Society for organizing this workshop of great help. Certificates of attendance were handed over to the respective participants by Professor Basu. A good number of Council Members attended some of the academic sessions. Dr Sujit Kumar Das, Treasurer of the Asiatic Society delivered the Vote of Thanks.

A scientific cultural show was arranged after the valedictory ceremony. The play “Uncertainty of Principles” was staged by Kalyani Mukhosh. The play was directed by Dr Ayan Banerjee of IISER Kolkata. This programme was hugely appreciated by the audience.
Resource persons of the Workshop

- Rajkumar Roy Choudhury
- Asok Kanti Sanyal
- Sujoy Kumar Saha
- Debojyoti Ganguly
- Dhruv Raima
- Nikhil Chakraborty
- Manas Pratim Das
- Keka Adhikari Banerjee
- Ranjana Roy
- Aparajita Basu
- Shyamal Chakraborty
- Debasish Mukherjee
- Arijit Chaudhuri
- Basudeb Barman
- Swapan Kumar Pramanick
- Jagatpati Sarkar
Drama on Conflict Between Science and Superstition

In this uncertain world, who can predict the future answer and solution which is part of our daily lives? The drama, “The Uncertainty of Principles”, directed by Dr Ayan Banerjee, a faculty at IISER, is based on Heisenberg’s thought. The uncertainty principle is one of the most celebrated ideas in physics. It tells us that there is a fuzziness in nature, one cannot know all things about a particle at the same time. Although, it isn’t a play about the German physicist, but adopts his theory to social situations where rationality and superstition coexist. “Mukhosh”, a theatre group based on Kalyani, represented by scientists and teachers, take this principle and apply it to a family drama. The main characters are Rajat (Dr Pradeep Parrack), Ashima (Dr Anindita Bhadra) their two sons Sreejan (Dr Ayan Banerjee) and Suman (Anandarup Bhadra) and a godman Sankhya Maharaj (Dr Shilanjan Bhattacharyya).

A verbal encounter between the affectionate mother and the superstitious son on the morning of a job interview sets this play rolling. The next scene introduces, the protagonist of the play, Sreejan, a researcher of physics in a prestigious university, socially disconnected but attached only to his mother. On the contrary, his father and brother live in the world completely different from his own – it is full of supernatural beings, powers, and mediators (spiritual gurus). After his brother’s road accident, Sreejan encounters Sankhya Maharaj, a self-proclaimed godman and specialist in tantra who completely dominates his father’s life. The play revolves around the Sreejan’s journey through the crisis period. There are multiple narratives coming out since the incident: 1) superstition versus rationality, 2) religion versus science, and 3) self-proclaimed godman versus common man. In the end, it portrays the triumph of scientists over the godmen, god-fearing attitudes and all the irrationalities.

The script throws up some wonderful moments. Each actor is worth noting, but standouts include Dr Ayan as Sreejan, Dr Anindita as Ashima, and Dr Shilanjan as Sankhya Maharaj. The humor is subtle and the comic timing of each is impeccable. All the members give a fine performance. It’s a small burst of an intellectual play with moments of inspiring dialogue, which seems to be written to rethink its audience about the conflict between science and superstition. The play reminded us of the Satyajit Ray’s classic title the “Kapurush o Mahapurush”. The play truly justifies the ending of the weeklong workshop on History of Science and Technology housed at the Asiatic Society.

Reviewed by Suman Hazra
On the occasion of the centenary of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (13 April 1919), there was a plethora of discussion, conversation, press coverage, and political talks found in India and abroad throughout the month of April 2019. The Asiatic Society organised a half-day workshop on the focal theme called Tagore, Gandhi and Jallianwala Bagh, beginning from 2 P.M. on 29 April 2019. The programme was chaired by Professor Isha Mahammad, President of the Society and it began with the Welcome Address of Dr. S.B. Chakrabarti, its General Secretary, highlighting the urgency of understanding the legacy of the event with special reference to Tagore and Gandhi. There were five invited speakers in the workshop: Professor Pabitra Sarkar, Dr. Amiya Kumar Samanta, Professor Arun Bandopadhyay, Professor Tapati Mukherjee and Professor Susnata Das. The idea was to explore multiple perspectives for the occasion.

Professor Pabitra Sarkar restricted himself to the key question of the role of Tagore and Gandhi on the event of Jallianwala Bagh. For him, Gandhi was a practical politician and Tagore was a visionary and a poet, and their responses to the event were also different. He was also aware of Tagore’s increasing distancing from Gandhi on a number of issues, and he saw Jallianwala Bagh as one of them. However, Tagore’s unique response on the wake of the incident, his angry but helpless repudiation of Knighthood to the British rulers in his well-known letter where both nation and empire figured was seen by Professor Sarkar more as an all-pervasive poetic response than a political act.

By contrast, Dr Amiya Kumar Samanta focused on the historical incident of Jallianwala Bagh, events both before and after that. He gave initial importance to Gandhi for his early experiments in Champaran and Kheda, and saw Gandhi’s call against
the draconian Rowlatt Act as part of his desire to have wider all Indian impact in political movement. He gave an account of political developments in the Punjab from the Hartal of 6 April to the massacre of 13 April, and called it a defining moment of Indian nationalism for more than one reason. The role of Gandhi and Tagore was seen by Dr Samanta more aptly as part of the change.

Professor Arun Bandopadhyay addressed several ‘unresolved’ questions surrounding Jallianwala Bagh. He began with the argument of Kishwar Desai that it was a conspiracy against the Indians but then, following Nigel Collet, came to the re-examination of the question of the military factors that caused it, including the personal role of Reginald Dyer. He also focused on the exact nature of local and national factors, touching on the role of Pal, Kitchlew, Gandhi and Tagore during and after the incident. But his main argument was that Tagore’s response to the incident was both ‘poetic’ with all its subtlety, and ‘historic’ with certain kind of reading on the future course of history at a defining moment of change.

The workshop ended with the presentation of two illustrative and interesting papers. Professor Tapati Mukherjee stated that Amritsar, the place where the Jallianwala Bagh massacre occurred, had been known to Tagore since his childhood, and that he even wrote several bhojans on it earlier. She spoke elaborately on Tagore’s reactions to Jallianwala Bagh massacre with reference to the letter of his repudiation of Knighthood, preserved in Rabindra Bhavan, Santiniketan. She also showed the official response to Tagore’s letter of repudiation, the causes behind the reluctance of accepting it. Professor Susnata Das, in a power point presentation, vividly described the events and characters behind the Jallianwala Bagh incident, and critically examined some of the literature about it. He also showed the massacre incident from Richard Attenborough’s celebrated film Gandhi.

The workshop ended with the concluding remark of Professor Isha Mahammad, the chairperson, that more is expected in the literary, artistic and visual media on the legacy of the fateful event of Jallianwala Bagh in Indian history.

The programme was further enlivened by songs, appropriate to the theme of the seminar, performed by Sri Amit Ghosh and Smt. Suranjana Chaudhury, two of our colleagues in the Society.

Professor Arun Bandopadhyay
ডায়ারের স্মৃতিস্তম্ভ

নজরুল ইসলাম

আমাদের হিন্দুস্থান যেমন কীর্তির শাশ্ন, বীরত্বের পৌরস্থান, সেমনই আবার তাহার রুক অতিচারীর আত্মায় আরামে ছিলনা। সেইসব আমদের কীর্তিস্তম্ভ রুকে ধরিয়া স্থটিতা এই ভারতবর্ধ দুনিয়ার মুক্তবুক্ত দাঙ্গাহইয়া আজ শ্রুতি রুক চাপড়াইয়েছে। অতিচারীরা যুগে যুগে যত কিছু কীর্তি রাখিয়া গিয়াছে, এইখানে তাহাদের সব কিছুহই স্মৃতিস্তম্ভ আমদের চোখে শুণির মতো বিধিতেছে। কিন্তু এই সেদিন জালিয়ানওয়ালাবাগের হত্যাকাণ্ড সম্পূর্ণ হইয়া গেল, যেখানে আমদের ভাইরা নিজের রুকের রক্ত দিয়া আমাদিগকে এমন উদ্দেশ্যকর্ম সােকে গেল, সেই জালিয়ানওয়ালাবাগের নিহত সব হতভাগীরই স্মৃতিস্তম্ভ বোধন-শেলের মতো আমদের সামভন জাগিয়া থাকি, ইহা খুব ভালো কথা, - কিন্তু ইহা সাহেব তাহাদের দৃশ্যম দায়ারকে বদল দিলে চলিবে না। ইহার যে স্মৃতিস্তম্ভ খাড়া করা হইবে, তাহার চূড়া হইবে এত উল্ল যে ভারতের যে- কোনো প্রান্ত হইতে তা যেন স্পষ্ট মূর্তি হইয়া চোখের সামভন জাগিয়া ওঠে। এ-দায়ারকে তুলির না, আমদের মূর্তি জাতিকে চিরসমাজ রাখিয়া যুগে যুগে এমনই জ্ঞান করিয়া, এ-কিংবদন্তি আর্থিক মস্ত বদল মস্তব কথা। দায়ারের স্মৃতিস্তম্ভ যেন আমাদিগকে দায়ারের স্মৃতি তুলিতে না দেয়। ইহার জন্য আমদেরই সর্বাঙ্গে উঠিয়া পড়িয়া লাগিতে হইবে। নতুন আমরা অকৃতজ্ঞতার বদনামের ভাগী হইব। এই যে আজ আমদের নূন্তায় করিয়া জাগরণ, এই যে আজাত দিয়া সূত্র চেতনা, আজ্ঞস্মানকে জাগাইয়া তোলা, ইহার মূল কে? - ডায়ার।

মানুষের, জাতির, দেশের যখন চরম অবনতি হয়, তখনই এইরূপ পরিপিঞ্চ জালিয়ানের আবির্ভাব অতিবাহিক হইয়া পড়ে। মানুষ যখন নিজের প্রকৃতিসম্বন্ধ অধিকারের কথা ভুলিয়া যায়, শত বছরের মধ্যে তাহার জীবনের গতি-চাঙ্গায় হারাইয়া ফেলে, তখন তাহার আর মান-অমানান জান থাকে না, যেহেতু দেওয়া-দানার দানকে গোনামের মতো সে মহা-দান বলিয়া মাথায় তুলিয়া বরণ করিয়া যায় এবং তাহার তৃতীয়-জীবন সার্থক হইল মনে করে। তাহার মন এত ছোটো হইয়া যায়, তাহার আশা এত হয় ও হীন হইয়া পড়ে যে, সে ভাবিতেও পারে না - যে দান মাথায় করিয়া আজ সে পৌরব অনুভূতি করিতেছে, যে দানকে সে শুরুঘুষা করিয়া (অভিলাষ অনুসারে কর্মসংরক্ষণে পেছনে সেনাবাহিনীর মতো বুদ্ধিজীবি মুক্ত-স্বাধীন বিশ্বের কাছে বক্ষ কীর্তি করিয়া বেড়াইতেছে, তাহার দাম এক কথায় 'পাঁচ জাতি'।

মনুষ্যত্বের অবমাননা ও লাঙ্গনা শুধু ভিক্ষুকের জাতিই হাসিমুখে নিজেদের পৌরব বলিয়া মানিয়া।
লইলে পরে। অন্তত যাহারা শৃঙ্গ নির্ম আর ছোটো হইয়া গিয়াছে, আত্মসমান-জন্ম যাহাদের এত অসাড়-হিম হইয়া গিয়াছে, তাহাদিগকে জাগাইয়া তুলিতে চাই – এই ডায়ারের দেওয়া অপমানের মতো ভুল-বেদন।

এই ডায়ারের মতো দুর্ঘট কাশ্চার সেনানী যদি সেদিন আমাদিগকে এমন বুকুরের মতো করিয়া না মারিত, তাহা হইলে কী আত্মিক মতো আমাদের এই হিম-নিত্রে প্রাণ অভিম্ন-ক্ষেত্রে ওমরিরাউ উঠিতে পারিত – না, আত্ম আত্মসমান আমাদের এমন দলিত সর্পের মতো গজিয়া উঠিতে পারিত? কখনই না। আজ আমাদের সত্তিকার শোনীয় অবশ্য সাদা চোখে দেখিতে পারিত্যাহেই এই ডায়ারেরই জন্য।

ডায়ারের প্রায় পদায়ত, পৌষশের নু-নারিকের আমাদিগকে সপ্ত করিয়া আমাদের যুগ্ম হইন অবস্থা সর্বে সচেতন করিয়া দিয়াছে। অর্থে জানাই দিয়াছে, – যে নিত্যীন মাতায় করিয়া প্রস্তুর দেওয়া যে চৌরাস্ত পরিয়া, যে ছিল তুতার মালা গলায় দুলাইয়া আমরা আহমাকের মতো মুনিয়র বাধীন জাতিতের সাবেন দোঁড়াইয়া – গোলামির রুটি পৌরব দেখাইতে গিয়া ওড়ো হাস্যাপছে হইয়াছিল, তাহতে কেহ আমাদের প্রায়সূ তো করেই নাই, উলেট, আরও, ‘ইত যাও গোলাম কা জাত’ বলিয়া অবলোকন লাল্টি য়ঝোটা, বুটের টক্কর লাগিয়াছে। তাহারা বাধীন-আজাদ; তাহারা আমাদের এ-হীন নীচতাত, এত হয় তীরতা, এমন যুগ্ম কাপুরতাতকে পা দিয়া মাড়াইয়া যাইবে না তো কি মাতায় তুলিয়া লইবে? অদ্ব আমার, আমাদের অস্থা দেখিতে পাঈতেছিলাম না, – সে অন্ধকৃষ্ট যুগোর দিয়াছে এই ডায়ার! আমাদের এই বিলোকন কাপুরতাতকে জীম পদাতিতে দুর করিয়া দিয়াছে এই জেনালে ডায়ার! গোলামের সঙ্গে প্রস্তুর সর্বস্ব কীর্তক তাহাই সে নিম্ন কঠোরভাবে জাগাইয়া দিয়াছে।

অন্য প্রাতাকরদের মতো গলায় পায়ে শৃঙ্গল পরিয়া আদর দেখাইতে যায় নাই সে – সে নারীর সাবেন উল্লেখ করিয়া মেথরের হাতে বেঁছ দিয়া তোমার পিঠের চামড়া তুলিয়াছে। গদানে পাঠর চাত দিয়া বুকের উপর হটিয়াছে, তাহাদের পায়ে তোমাদিগকে সিজনা করাইয়া ছাড়িতে। – আর, তবে তোমরা জাগিতে পারিয়াছ। তোমাদিগকে জাগাইতে চাই এমনই প্রচুর নিম্ন কশাই। এই নিম্নমাথে, এমন পিশাচের মতো বেঁধায়ত না করিলে তোমরা জাগিতে না, মা-বোনদের সাবেন উল্লেখ করিয়া হত-পা বাধিয়া পত্র মতো না পটাইতে তোমাদের আত্মসমান-জন্ম ফরিয়া। আমিত না! ডায়ারের বুট এমন করিয়া তোমাদের কলিজা মধ্যে না করিয়া গেলে তোমাদের চেটনা হইত না। তোমরা মুখের সাবেন তোমার আধীন-আধীনার মুখে এমনি করিয়া নুখ না দিলে তোমাদের মানব-শক্তি থেখা উঠিতে না! – তাই আজ আমরা ডায়ারকে প্রাণ ভরিয়া আশীর্বাদ করিয়েছি, ‘থোপা তোমার মসল করুন!’ তুমি যে মসল দিয়া গিয়াছ আমাদের সাবেন আত্মার আধীন-আধীনার মুখে এমনি করিয়া নুখ না দিলে তোমাদের মানব-শক্তি থেখা উঠিতে না! – তাই আজ আমরা ডায়ারকে প্রাণ ভরিয়া আশীর্বাদ করিয়েছি, ‘থোপা তোমার মসল করুন!’ তুমি যে মসল দিয়া গিয়াছ আমাদের সাবেন আত্মার আধীন-আধীনার মুখে এমনি করিয়া নুখ না দিলে তোমাদের মানব-শক্তি থেখা উঠিতে না! – তাই আজ আমরা ডায়ারকে প্রাণ ভরিয়া আশীর্বাদ করিয়েছি, ‘থোপা তোমার মসল করুন!’ তুমি যে মসল দিয়া গিয়াছ আমাদের সাবেন আত্মার আধীন-আধীনার মুখে এমনি করিয়া নুখ না দিলে তোমাদের মানব-শক্তি থেখা উঠিতে না! – তাই আজ আমরা ডায়ারকে প্রাণ ভরিয়া আশীর্বাদ করিয়েছি, ‘থোপা তোমার মসল করুন!’

Remembering 110 Birth Anniversary of Kazi Nazrul Islam

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Remembering 110 Birth Anniversary of Kazi Nazrul Islam

The Asiatic Society
cordially invites you to the Birth Centenary Celebration of Pandit Ravi Shankar

Coordinator: Professor Neela Mazumdar
Venue: Vidyasagar Hall
Date: 21.06.2019
Time: 3.00 p.m.

(S.B. Chakrabarti)
General Secretary
In Memory of Dr. B. V. Subbarayappa, The Renowned Historian Of Science

Mira Roy*

Dr. Bidare Venkatasubbaiah Subbarayappa (b. 1925) passed away in April 8, 2019. With Professor Priyada Ranjan Ray (1888-1982) and Professor Samarendranath Sen (1918-1992), he led a team of dedicated researchers to compose the history of science in India. He joined the project after serving the Survey and Planning of Scientific Research Unit of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi.

The consultative meetings between the three leading scientists used to take place in the Asiatic Society in Kolkata. This was because the Indian National Science Academy (1935) initiated a plan in 1955 in collaboration with the Society to compile history of science in India. Dr. Subbarayappa would come down to the city at regular intervals for the meetings, and on those days he would spend a long time reading in the library the various source materials in its holding. A chemist, he out of his own curiosity, moved into history and philosophy of the natural sciences. In pursuit of traditional scientific knowledge, he engaged in painstaking reading of ancient Indian texts in Sanskrit. Humane, he inspired and guided young scholars collaborating with him. As his intellectual biographer Purushottama Bilimoria observes in his Traditions of science: cross cultural perspectives, essays in honour of B.V.Subbarayappa (2007), ‘the man himself is rather more intriguing, or something of a living institution in his own right, particularly with his astute philosophic perceptiveness and a gentle intellectual disposition, as well as his deep spiritual openness from his own Brahmanic scholarly pedigree’.


* Life Member, The Asiatic Society
wrote on select themes in history of science in Kannada also. Needless to point out, he published a large number of papers in national and international journals.

Among the various institutional positions he held were Executive Secretary of the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, Project Coordinator and Member Secretary of the National Commission for the History of Science in India and Director of the Discovery of India Project at the Nehru Centre, Bombay. He was the first non-westerner to be elected President of the Science Division of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science (1997–2001). He was conferred Honorary Doctorate from the University of Bologna, Italy (1999), Copernicus Medal from the Polish Academy of Sciences (1973), and R C Gupta Endowment Prize and Medal (2003) for History of Science from the National Academy of Sciences, India in Allahabad.

When Dr. Subbarayappa joined the history of science project in the Asiatic Society, he became a part of a discernible tradition of researching history of the sciences in India, initially dominated by European scholars but later marked by significant contributions from Indian scholars publishing in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1832). The creation of the intellectual infrastructure with the establishment of History of Science Board in 1960 drew Dr. Subbarayappa into its fold in late 1960s, when the Board was transformed into the National Commission for Compilation of History of Science in India in 1965. He reportedly observed in 2015 that the grand plan was to set up multiple centres of research within the Indian universities to help codification of researches on India’s scientific heritage – something yet to happen. In his death, scholars in history of science have lost a remarkable mentor.
The Asiatic Society organised, on 8th May, 2019, a lecture by Dr. Anil Mondal, Senior Glaucoma Consultant from LVPEI, Hyderabad who narrated his journey of diagnosing and managing congenital glaucoma cases for almost thirty years. Dr. Tutul Chakravarti, another eminent Glaucoma Consultant from Kolkata, presided over the lecture.

Dr. Mondal demonstrated by his oral and video presentations how different primary congenital glaucoma patients fought the battle and tried to cross the bridge of blindness. From his video presentation the audience learnt how difficult the fight for sight is for a congenital glaucoma patient. Often, repeated surgeries may be needed to cure the cause of glaucoma and more often all the surgeries may not lead to success stories. But one should remember his message that losing sight is not losing vision. He emphasised on taking care on quality of life for such patients.

The interactive session following the lecture was a lively one though more queries were on adult glaucoma. However, the speakers Dr. Mondal and Dr. Chakravarti answered adequately and satisfactorily to their queries.

Dr. Tutul Chakravarti summed up the whole discussion in her concluding remarks. She informed that infantile glaucoma, a problem of raised intraocular pressure with onset in the first year of life, occurs in about 1 out of 10,000 births and results in blindness in approximately 10% of cases and reduced vision in about 50% of all cases. The aetiology is not known and the only known risk factor is genetic—consanguinity and affected siblings. Early detection and treatment are essential to maximise visual potential.
Heritage Matters

Naṭarāja images from the Mahākāleśvara Temple of Village Un

Dr. Swati Mondal Adhikari*

Region and period specific study of temples have been a trend for some decades in the arena of Indian Art History. These are noteworthy as they deal minutely with the architecture, sculpture and related history of a specific region. The region of Malwa is fabulously rich in archeological sources. From this region, famous historical sites such as Ujjain, Omkareswara, etc., enjoyed attention and had their due place in the research. But Un is a place which could not get proper attention of the researchers of art history. It is the sole site where concentration of a group of bhūmija temples can still be found in situ.

Temples of Un are generally attributed to king Udayāditya Paramāra by the scholars because of one inscription which mentions his name and is engraved on the inner wall of the Chaubara Dera temple no.1 located amidst the village of Un. But these temples may be placed in the period of king Bhoja, the predecessor of king Udayāditya Paramāra. King Bhoja of Paramāra dynasty was a great patron of literature, art and architecture. His treatises on art and architecture are still relevant to study Indian temple architecture, sculpture and painting. Since the period of king Bhoja, temples continued to be built in Un and in the adjacent areas. The Śaiva temples were the earlier creations of the place. Annexation of some parts of Paramāra kingdom by Kumārapāla Caulukya of Gujarat in c.1150 A.D. resulted the building of Jain temples at Un. This incidence was followed by the migration of Jain merchants from Gujarat, which resulted in the building of some Jain temples here. So historically Un is a place where Saivism and Jainism flourished at one and the same time.

The Mahākāleśvara No.1, is one of the largest temples, still standing albeit in a dilapidated condition in Un. It is an adjacent temple situated near the Chaubara Dera No.1, the most notable temple in the village.

A school of regional variation of Nāgara order has been described in Samarāṇaṇaśutrādhāra by Bhoja. It had an indigenous origin. This school was executed in the temples of Un. The talacchanda of the temple presents typical bhūmija style like the other temples of the village. Built on a circular-stellate plan, it faces east and consists of a garbhagṛha, an antarāla and a maṇḍapa in the same axis, which is accompanied by pārśvamaṇḍapa. Like other contemporary temples of Un, it apparently had a mukhamanḍapa of which a few traces are left.

This temple is bedecked with beautiful images of Naṭarāja which are presented in different postures and mudrās. In the Western bhadra of the temple the deity can be seen dancing in urdhvajānu posture. Clockwise from lower right hand to lower left hand the attributes in his ten hands are as follows: abhaya, triśūla, indistinct, indistinct, damaru, daṇḍahasta, damaged, vajra, khatvānga, aksimālā. Bejewelled with jatāmukūta and sarpakuṇḍalas, the image is accompanied by Nandi and four musicians.

The multi-handed Naṭarāja is dancing in Urdhvajānu posture housed in the north śūrasenaka of the śikhara of the temple. The hands are all broken but the flux of the shoulder indicates the hands were placed in various directions probably forming an invisible circle centred round the torso. The deity is bejewelled with Vanamālā, chest belt, waist belt and large kūṇḍalas. The placement of Vanamālā in a flowing manner on the torso of Naṭarāja is a unique feature of the temples of Un. A seated devotee

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in aṅjali mudrā is visible near his feet but he has no mount or apsamāra puruṣa below his feet.

The ten-handed Naṭarāja in the south śūrasenaka is noteworthy for the posture. One of his feet is placed on earth and other is up. Though he is standing in the same direction as visitor but by twisting the upper portion of his body at the waist he is looking front towards the visitor. The attributes in his ten hands are: indistinct, trident, damaged, damaged, abhaya, daṇḍahasta, khaṭvānga, indistinct, indistinct, tail of snake. Extreme twist of the spinal cord exemplifying the mark of Indian classical dance posture. He has no mount and standing isolated within the chaitya arch of the Śūrasenaka.

The ten-handed Naṭarāja placed in the west śūrasenaka represents another stance. He is dancing in catura posture. The legs are bent in āyata position, one foot is placed firmly on the earth, and the other is kept on its toes slightly high. His face can be seen in profile and he is looking upwards following his hand stretched up. One left hand is spread upwards. One right hand is folded and the palm is placed near the crown in patākamudrā. The attributes in his ten hands are as follows : damaged, damaged, damaged, damaged, patākamudrā, daṇḍahasta, damaged, khaṭvānga (traces only), damaged, damaged. He is heavily bejewelled but has no mount.

One noteworthy point is that the figures of Naṭarāja were created with their stance and mudrās, which denote the innate relationship of Indian visual arts and performing arts, as the art of sculpting and dance. This is the reflection of the creative mentality of the artisans as well as of king Bhoja, who was a zealous patron of visual arts and performing arts as can be known from Samarāṅganasutradhāra, a treatise on art written by Bhoja himself. These creations show the legacy of Bhoja and the Paramāra period.

Source: Dr. Swati Mondal Adhikari – Some Paramāra Temples from Madhya Pradesh : A Case Study of Village

Un, Bookwell Publishers, Delhi, October 2014, ISBN: 978-93-80574-60-8, Price 1500.00 (pp : i-xvi + 158 pages including 100 B/W photographs,7 ground plans and map)
155 years ago on 5 October 1864 the infamous cyclone took over countless lives and flooded the entire city. The memory of devastation of cyclone always comes to the mind of people of Calcutta as and when there is forecasting of Aila or Fani.

The Asiatic Society was the pioneering centre of the meteorological studies prior to the establishment of India Meteorological Department in 1875 and Piddington was its mentor.

Henry Piddington published 40 papers dealing with tropical storms from Calcutta between 1836 and 1855 in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*. He also coined the term cyclone, meaning the coil of a snake. In 1842, he published his landmark thesis, *Laws of the Storms*. All the papers written by Piddington and by his contemporary Meteorologists are available in the library of the Asiatic Society.


Global warming is indicative of growing intensity and frequency of Cyclones like FANI

– Cautioned by Environmental Scientists

Courtesy : Puja Banerjee
Sustainable Menstruation: A Case Study in Bangalore

Dr. Parama Chatterjee*

Menstruation, which is a normal physiological process, is a very important part of women’s lives. It is especially significant for the adolescent girls because the onset of menstruation is a unique phenomenon for them (Desai, S. et al 2013). Like women’s sexuality, the topic of menstruation is also a taboo subject in the Indian society. Still many women in South Asia are uncomfortable to discuss about menstruation in public. This is compounded by gender inequality and patriarchy which excludes women and girls from decision making process (Fernandes & Mahon, 2010).

Women cannot decide freely on their sexual and reproductive rights and they face discrimination (Petchesky, 2000). Similarly, they do not have the right to menstrual hygiene. They do not have proper access and information regarding menstrual health needs. Talking about menstruation in public is shameful and there is social stigma attached to the process. Although it is a natural process and related to reproductive health of women, menstruation is still a forbidden topic of discussion in the Indian society.

Sustainable menstruation has ecological, economic, educational as well as sociological dimensions. The ecological dimension is concerned with the re-usability of menstrual products and disposability of the products without causing harmful effects on the environment. The economic dimension is concerned about low cost production of menstrual products. The educational dimension is concerned with the knowledge and awareness about sustainable and healthy menstruation, effects of menstruation on sexual and reproductive health of women and experiencing menstruation without social taboos and superstitions.

Around 336 million girls and women in India experience menstruation and it can be safely estimated that about 121 million girls and women are currently using locally or commercially produced disposable sanitary napkins.

The end result is that a staggering 1 billion non-compostable pads are landing up in urban sewers, landfills, as well as in rural fields and water bodies in India every month. 12.3 billion sanitary pads are disposed of in India annually, creating 113,000 tonnes of menstrual waste. The products stay in the ground, not decomposing, and sucking in water, stopping its natural flow. (The Wire, 2018)

In this backdrop, the sustainable menstruation movement originated from southern states of India especially Tamilnadu and Karnataka. The real “padman” of India Mr. Arunachalam Muruganantham comes from Tamilnadu who made low cost machines that make sanitary pads and earned him international recognition (The Hindu, 2018).

In Bangalore there is an organisation named Sukhibhava which works on the issue of sustainable menstruation. Here Dilip, a young man, is working for the menstrual needs of urban poor women. From distributing low cost napkins to organising information sharing, “Sukhibhava” is leading the ignored section of the community to a healthier future. (The Better India, 2018)

Sukhibhava started its journey on 2014 and since then it has been working for the sustainable, environment friendly and taboo free menstruation.

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They organise a fellowship called The Period Fellowship which started in 2017. The Fellowship involves working with motivated individuals who identify themselves as men, women or trans and are enthusiastic about engaging with rural and urban poor communities. It is a year-long programme which will train 40 individuals from diverse fields to educate nearly one million girls in different regions of the country about menstrual hygiene.

Dilip is one of the co-founders of this organisation who mentioned, “While awareness programmes around periods and related hygiene have increased over the past few years, what makes this fellowship different is its design and objective”.

“There are so many menstrual hygiene organisations which have been formed in the last decade. But there is not a single organisation that has touched a million lives till date. The fellowship is focusing on a large scale impact in a short time”, he said.

“Period Fellowship can become an entry point for a lot of dynamic individuals to actually experience the menstrual hygiene ecosystem in India and back their own initiatives at the end of the fellowship programme”, he stated. (Sukhibhava, 2018)

The fellowship conducts induction programme. Their field areas are concentrated in urban slums and rural area of Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. Some of the girls who were part of the awareness programmes later themselves became trainers. In this way the fellowship has a far-reaching impact and sustainability.

Another important aspect of this fellowship is involving men in this issue or dismantling patriarchy. This depicts that men need to be included in this conversation. Menstruation cannot become a non-issue without involving men in the discussion regarding menstruation. It creates safe and brave spaces which are integral. This fellowship teaches the women to make their own menstrual pads so that they can be sustainable, environment friendly and low cost. Thus we can see that this is a step ahead in regard to the decision making ability of women.

Thus we can say that these sort of initiatives are very much progressive and will lead to the empowerment of women by protecting their right to safe, taboo free and environment friendly menstruation.

Bibliography


The Better India (2018) This Young Guy is Breaking the Taboo of Menstrual Hygiene among Urban Poor Available at: https://www.thebetterindia.com/14117/young-guy-breaking-taboo-menstrual-hygiene-among-urban-poor-dilip-kumar-sukhibhava/

“Girls can make the disease, cannot cure” – these words were said by the hero of a story of Achintya Kumar Sengupta. But we can’t deny the fact that the role of female doctors is important in the history of women’s awakening. They had to fight against patriarchy. Their professions were compressed by men repeatedly. In most of the countries of the world, women doctors have become victims of public despair, latent suspicion and voluntary forgetfulness. Once upon a time, in abroad, it had been said about a lady doctor that she was ‘neither a lady nor a doctor’. However, without entering into the depth of this debate, we can turn our attention to the first lady doctor of Hooghly district, Haimabati Sen (1866-1933). In order to understand the life of this woman, a well-written book has been published that was authored by Dhrubajyoti De. The name of the book is Sada Than Theke Sada Apron, which is the story of Dr. Haimabati Sen’s life and times. It is a story of the transformation of a woman from child widow to female doctor. Truly it proves that fact is stronger than fiction!

“Alas! Women have to spend their lives in continuous hassle! One may ask, why do you have to resort to irregular ways? But you well know women have no freedom.” These words were written by Haimabati Sen in the early 1930s. In her last days of life, Sen had written her memoir in Bengali. After a long time of her demise, Geraldine Forbes had collected the handwritten memoir from Haimabati’s granddaughter Namita De. Historian Tapan Raychowdhury had translated the memoir. It was published in the year 2000 under the editorship of Geraldine Forbes with the title, The Memoirs of Dr. Haimabati Sen : From Child Widow To Lady Doctor. In 2011, Forbes had incorporated more details and finally Because I am a Woman: A Child Widow’s Memoirs From Colonial India was published. Dhrubajyoti De has made it clear at the outset that he did not think of translating the book into Bengali again. He has tried to write Haimabati Sen’s biography in brief excluding detailed description.

Haimabati, daughter of Prasanna Kumar Ghosh, a zamindar of Serampore, was born in the year 1866. She was called at home as Chuni Babu; one may find a latent indication to deny the identity of a girl’s birth for the desire of a boy. Since her childhood, Haimabati had an intense interest in studies though there was no tradition of the practice of education among the girls in rural areas. There was a widely prevalent belief that education induced early widowhood. Haimabati got married at the age of ten and became a widow within a year of her marriage. The author has highlighted a trustworthy image of a child widow’s helplessness in the then society. Along with the story of Haimabati’s struggle the author has also highlighted the contemporary social issues, for which appreciations must be given to him. We come to know from this book that according to her own wishes, Haimabati became a ‘Brahma’ by rejecting Brahmanism-Hinduism, gender discrimination and repression of contemporary society. With the help of few well-wishers and friends, in 1890, remarriage of Haimabati was completed with Brahma-religion propagator Kunjabihari Sen. She shed new light on gender relations and advanced our understanding of the self-consciousness of her generation. But on the one hand, Haimabati criticised patriarchal society but on the other, had to accept the domination of patriarchy by handing over her income to her husband. Dhrubajyoti De’s book tells us a great deal about the prevalence of violence against women and its role in keeping women at their place. The appendices on Brahma marriage ceremony system

**New Book from Reader’s Choice**

**Sada Than Theke Sada Apron**, Dhrubajyoti De, Distributor : Ashadeep, 10/2 B, Ramanath Majumdar Street, Kolkata-700009, 2019. Price : Rs. 175, Pages : 127.
and death rituals deserve mention. Addition of several important images has given the book a distinct dimension. One may notice some printing errors, but instead of that, thanks to the author for presenting a pleasant book to the readers. Literally, the book depicts the history of life and times of Haimabati Sen and the title is also worthwhile. While going through the book, the readers will realise the struggle of Haimabati against both gender discrimination and racial discrimination, which has been aptly pointed out by Sabyasachi Chattopadhyay, in his foreword. The readers would also definitely feel that there may be many such other Haimabati(s) still lying somewhere in old shelves of many families still unknown and unheard.

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Open your Eyes and See the Level of Air Pollution

Artist: Sheha Agarwal
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 ix, 673 p.; 24 cm. (77336)
(313.18)
Bibliography : p. 595-625.
ISBN: 978-1-4725-9656-7: £ 140.00 (hbk)

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Bengali Section

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সুবোধ কুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়
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172 पृ.: 18 से. मि. (BN 67927)  
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SNANA YATRA

Tulsi is applied on the whole body before taking them to bath

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